

## Unemployed, sick and students bear the brunt

# TORIES SLASH THE DOLE

THE unemployed, the sick and students are the prime targets of the Tory government's budget.

■ Unemployment benefit will be paid for only six months. Everybody with £8,000 savings will lose all right to benefit. Even those with less than £8,000 will see their benefits reduced.

The scrapping of unemployment benefit and its replacement in 1996 by a 'job seeker's allowance' is a further step in hounding the 3 million plus unemployed, and another move towards testing their benefits.

### Boast

Chancellor Kenneth Clarke's intention to slash £15 billion from public spending will further hit the poorest sections of society.

His boast that the government will now 'sort out public borrowing once and for all' and his insistence on the need for

### BY THE EDITOR

'sound finance' are a declaration of war on the sick, the unemployed and the elderly.

Local authority spending is to be further slashed with the worst cuts coming in the already run-down housing and roads programmes. Tens of thousands of jobs will disappear.

■ Invalidity benefit is to be abolished and replaced by an 'incapacity benefit'. This will be paid only to those people who satisfy a more stringent medical test.

■ Student grants are to be cut immediately by 10 per cent. This is a cruel blow to thousands of students already trying to study in conditions of dire poverty. By 1997 the government

intends that half a student's income will come from loans and only half from their grant.

■ A further £7 billion will have to be cut from government spending each year for the next seven years, if the government is to balance its books by the end of the century, as Chancellor Clarke has announced.

### Rise

And while government spending is to be further slashed, taxes are to rise.

■ Cigarettes will rise by 11p a packet.

■ The price of petrol will rise by around 12p a gallon as a result of increased tax, putting up the cost of all goods.

Nor do sections of the middle class escape the Tory attack.

■ Personal allowances are to be frozen for the second year running.

■ Mortgage tax relief is to be reduced to 15 per cent, hitting tens of thousands already struggling to keep up with their payments to building societies.

These measures come on top of those announced in last March's budget which will

come into effect in April next year. Their combined effect more than wipes out the average wage rises gained this year:

■ Extending VAT to domestic fuel bills, adding 8 per cent to everybody's electricity and gas bills. VAT on these items will rise to the full 17.5 per cent by April 1995.

The 'concessions' granted on the VAT increases to old age pensioners in Clarke's budget will cover only half this increase, Age Concern calculates.

■ Workers' contributions to national insurance will rise from 9

to 10 per cent, effectively a tax increase that takes £1.7 billion out of people's pockets.

The Tories have announced that the most vulnerable must pay for the capitalist crisis.

### Unite

More than ever all those under attack need to unite against these attacks.

All those who want to take part in this fight are invited to come to the second conference of Community and Union Action Campaign in February (for details see page 3).

## Convoy campaign forges ahead

BY BOB MYERS

TRANSPORT workers in the North West are in the forefront of the campaign to make a stand on the responsibility of the workers' movement to come to the aid of the Bosnian peoples.

Transport and General Workers' Union Region No. 6 officials, including Eddie Roberts, Tom Hart, and others are circulating material from Workers Aid for Bosnia calling for a Christmas convoy and the opening of the northern route to the town of Tuzla.

Two brothers from Skelmersdale, now chemical workers but former long-distance lorry drivers, want to drive on the spring convoy to Bosnia, and a big campaign in support of the convoy is being launched in the town in support of Workers Aid.

The campaign continues to grow in LIVERPOOL, where a recent public meeting was addressed by Bosnian refugees. An aid worker, recently returned from Croatia, asked: 'What are you going to do about the United Nations?'

In MANCHESTER regular street collections are organised and there is a public meeting on Friday 10 December, Manchester town hall at 7pm. Professor Adrian Hastings from the Alliance for the Defence of Bosnia will be one of the speakers.

Talks with city councillors continue and a city-wide collection is being arranged for the Christmas convoy.

A group of Bosnian refugees

living in HULL are now actively helping Workers Aid and have attended meetings in Manchester. A meeting has been arranged for 5 December, 1.30pm at the Islamic Centre, Hull. A campaign is underway to get people from the local trade union and labour movement.

Refugees from Tuzla have been particularly active in supporting Workers Aid, and a refugee from there is busy contacting others from Tuzla living in Australia, Germany, France, Slovakia and elsewhere.

A meeting with convoy members and other Workers Aid supporters was held with Labour MP Calum MacDonald in the House of Commons last week.

MacDonald pledged support for the fight to open the northern route to Tuzla and said he would help to raise the issue as widely as possible in the labour and trade union movement.

Money for the campaign continues to come in, amongst the latest donations being £100 from the executive of the Graphical, Paper and Media Union.

■ Please send your donations to Workers Aid for Bosnia, PO Box 9 Eccles SO, Salford M30 7FX. Ring us at Workers Aid on 071-582 5462 or 061-707 1584.

### WORKERS AID PUBLIC MEETINGS

#### HULL

Sunday 5 December, 1.30pm  
Islamic Centre, Hull.

#### MANCHESTER

Friday 10 December, 7pm  
Manchester town hall.



Campaigners and supporters in Sheffield with the first convoy — please help the second, Christmas, convoy Photo: Tony Myers

# The James Bulger case

THE conviction of the two 11-year-old children for the tragic murder of James Bulger has been the occasion for a great outpouring of anguish, much of it orchestrated by the Tory press.

The trial judge described the murder as an act of 'unparalleled evil and barbarity' and called for a renewal of the debate on the effects of violent videos on children's behaviour. The police officer who led the investigations referred to the 'terrible chilling smile' of Robert Thompson, one of the convicted, claiming that 'you could look into the eyes of Robert and knew you were looking at evil'.

All this despite the rarity of such cases of murder of children by children. Since 1950 only two children aged between 10 and 13 have been convicted of murder and two of manslaughter. The last case of child murder was that of Mary Bell who strangled two young boys in 1968.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE case attracted the publicity it did for a number of reasons. The fact that there was a criminal trial itself forced what is really a problem of deprivation — both material and psychological — into the strait-jacket of a case that was supposedly about 'morality' and 'personal responsibility'.

Having been deliberately set up in this way, the trial acted as a focus for a growing sense of insecurity and powerlessness in the face of rising unemployment, the demolition of the system of welfare benefits, and in particular rising rates of violent crime among young men. The feeling was whipped up: if we can't even stop 11-year-olds committing murder, we can't do anything.

This insecurity is cynically manipulated by the Tory government and the press. Education minister John Patten seized the opportunity of the trial for his latest scheme — 'truancy watch', which would encourage the public to round up children on the streets thought to be playing truant.

The Tories now call for more religious education to help children understand the difference between right and wrong and the church is attacked for concentrating too much on 'social issues' and too little on inculcating a proper sense of morality in the young.

\* \* \* \* \*

THIS is the essence of the Tory agenda: to separate out issues of 'morality' and 'personal behaviour' as things completely unrelated to worsening social conditions. Criminality, violence, marital breakdown, can then be dealt with as problems arising from a lack of 'moral fibre', while the government proceeds to smash up the remaining system of welfare benefits.

Even more to the liking of the Tories, crime among young men can then be blamed on young single mothers who fail to marry because they are supposed to be able to live in comfort on welfare.

Or crime can be attributed to the personal irresponsibility of men — such as the father of one of the two children convicted of James Bulger's murder — who run off and avoid family responsibilities.

Either way, say the Tories, children grow up lacking a male 'role model' and hence develop the need to 'prove themselves as men' through violence, while state welfare benefits are actually blamed as the cause of rising crime!

Such views try to divert our attention away from the fact that violent young criminals are produced not by any 'modifications' to capitalism, or even by its 'imperfections' in the shape of bad housing and long-term unemployment.

People learn crime and violence precisely by emulating the core of what capitalism teaches them: that the morally 'correct' way and, indeed, the only way to get on is through aggression, and if the chequebook is not available as a weapon then the fist — or worse — will do.

# Letters

## What kind of historian?

WHEN I gave the interview to Geoff Pilling relating some of the experiences of the 1953 split it was evident that to bring out its full meaning for today very much more needed to be said than I was able to do in that three-page interview (23 October).

More needed to be written about events leading up to the split, particularly in France. At the time of the interview I had already decided to write a pamphlet — I intended to concentrate on this.

However, I am driven to comment on the letter of Al Richardson (20 November) because this is from someone who was a co-author of two books on Trotskyist history and it does not speak well for a historian to bring forward so many errors in such a small space.

Only someone conditioned by the 'bad man or woman' theory of history could believe Pablo and his revisionism was the 'explanation of the crisis of the Fourth International'. It must be said that Al Richardson is himself very much influenced by this view.

His remarks on Cannon and the US Socialist Workers Party, in this letter and in a recent article in 'Revolutionary History', seem to be subjective spite.

For example, he concluded that Cannon joined Trotsky only because his faction was losing out in the Communist Party.

To see only personal, opportunist motives in the break of a leader from the Communist Party, at the age of 40, to the persecuted Left Opposition, is really a bad case of the 'bad man' theory.

Revisionism applies to 'the class theory of the state, particularly in the Bernstein/Kautsky dispute in the early years of this century,' writes Richardson, perhaps oversimplifying to do away with the necessity of thinking.

Revisionism is, however, the revising of the principles of Marxism. Bernstein wrote his revisionist articles in 1898, influenced by Fabianism. He declared that capitalism was changing itself and putting forward a programme of reformism.

His chief antagonist was Rosa Luxemburg and it was Lenin, early this century, in 'What is to be Done?', who first showed the international split in social democracy over the class struggle and the role of the working class.

He plucks out the 'structural assimilation' theory of the east European states like someone who is name-dropping.

Nobody learns anything by this reference. His implications are wrong but that will have to be dealt with elsewhere because of lack of space.

Richardson attacks all sides in the 'Pablo dispute', very like Ted Grant's group in 1953, who two or three years later were to join Pablo. According to

Richardson, the struggle for the Fourth International is a tale of disreputable idiots — the 'lot of them'.

If you are in an ivory tower you can keep your hands clean. But then you are not a revolutionary historian, capable of dealing with essential processes according to the criterion of Trotsky:

'Only a revolutionist — provided, of course, that he is equipped with a scientific method — is capable of laying bare the objective dynamics of the revolution.'

'Apprehending thought in general is not contemplative, but active. The element of will is indispensable for penetrating the secrets of nature and society' (Introduction by Trotsky to Harold Isaacs's 'Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution').

Bill Hunter  
Liverpool

## Not the political revolution

I WOULD like to stress a few points on the recent events in Russia and more generally in eastern Europe.

As I remember you cheered the failure of the August 1991 coup, stressing that the workers should place no confidence in Yeltsin. During Yeltsin's recent coup you condemned equally both camps. What does the fact that some fascist groups were among the anti-Yeltsin rivals imply? (Some supported him.)

The question for every type of front is; what are its goals? If revolutionaries keep total political independence they do not give up the right to criticise their temporary allies, and they do not liquidate themselves (as the Chinese Communist Party did in China in 1926-27 into the Kuomintang).

From what I know the Marxian theoreticians did not put weight on the question of who participates in the front (bourgeois, democrats, nationalists, etc.) but what are its goals and how it promotes the struggle of the workers.

The fact that on the streets (as was shown by Cable News Network footage) many of the demonstrators were waving red flags or Soviet flags seems to be a mere detail for you.

Actually, if I grasp the inherent logic of your analysis, the victory of Yeltsin was the lesser evil compared to the greater one of Ruskoi-Khasbulatov. Yeltsin's rivals were an alliance of Stalinists and fascists who, on coming to power, would have applied ultra-nationalist policies.

You consider that in the eruption of war in Yugoslavia the principal — if not the only — causes were the politics of Milosevic and the attempts of the Serbian bureaucracy to stay in power.

In contrast, in the former USSR, despite the existence of Russian minorities in other countries of the ex-Soviet Union, there is no major conflict between Russia and them —

thanks to Yeltsin's policies.

You stress, as if it were something of minor importance, that both camps agree in principle to the restoration of capitalism, but disagree on the pace.

But this did not seem to be a matter of minor importance to the leaders of the imperialist countries. They did not keep equal distance, but backed Yeltsin from the beginning of the confrontation. Their class instinct indicated to them that Yeltsin's victory would be a boost to capitalist restoration.

It is worth noting developments in China and Russia. The Chinese bureaucracy is undoubtedly ideologically bankrupt, the regime is extremely authoritarian, it moves towards marketisation of the economy, there are concentration camps and so on, but for the vast majority of the population it is preferable to the Russian alternative.

In past years economic figures indicate that the economy has developed whilst in Russia, thanks to Yeltsin's liberal policies, it is on the eve of collapse and the overwhelming majority of the population is impoverished. They have more democracy but less food.

In eastern Europe the process of capitalist restoration is not completed yet, but it is the actual process which has taken place over the last four years.

The class struggle will determine the final outcome, but there has been up till now a clear and indisputable shift in the relation of power in the world in favour of capital and against labour.

Millions in eastern Europe face gloomy prospects, whilst in capitalist countries there are intensified attacks on workers' rights by the governments.

It is obvious that the events of 1989 were not the pretext of political revolution, but social counter-revolution. Do you consider the defeat of Stalinism in these circumstances a positive event?

Panos  
Athens

## British working class?

I JUST want to say how much I enjoyed James D. Young's letter (20 November) in reply to Nick Lee's review of Beatrix Campbell's book, 'Goliath: Britain's Dangerous Places' (13 November).

I was grateful to him for raising the question of male chauvinism in the working-class movement.

In the former NGA '82 print union there was a general practice — apparently enshrined, I was told by the National Women's Officer Brenda Philbin, in the rule book — of excluding women from the union.

Only in 1984, with the introduction of new technology, was this no longer possible, as more and more women began to work in the industry — including myself.

I will certainly read James

D. Young's two books as the titles themselves appear very exciting.

I am glad to see him making a distinction between *Scottish* and *English* working-class women in the title of the book, and not using the amalgamated word 'British' working class.

I recently read the second volume of Smout's 'History of the Scottish Working Class' which deals with the subject up to the mid-1950s. I enjoyed it very much. It was like a breath of fresh air.

It made me aware how distinct Scottish people are. How their strong traditions of democracy and socialism were deeply rooted and stemmed, on the one hand, from the living and working conditions of the people and, on the other, from the religious and educational upbringing cultivating these qualities.

Here I see the connection with Marxists like Rosa Luxemburg, who was one of the few not afraid to write about religion without a hint of contempt, which she only reserved for institutionalised churches.

I must admit that I cringed when translating a small piece about the Workers Aid convoy to Bosnia from the Polish paper 'Dalej'.

It 'paid tribute to the British working class' for organising this convoy, including the Timex strike committee's involvement and other volunteers on the convoy.

Workers Press itself never said that approximately half the volunteers on the convoy were Scots. On the other hand it appears that the French newspapers called it 'a convoy from Scotland' and a 'Scottish convoy'!

From the pictures of the convoy printed in the paper it would appear that hardly any women took part. But I know for a fact that at least five joined the convoy. Yet another example of capitulation to British male chauvinism.

Bozena Langley  
Brighton

## A big learning process

MANY thanks for Peter Fryer's useful comments on 'Journal of Trotsky Studies' (20 November).

Producing the first issue was a big learning process for me. As the person who typed, edited and printed the whole thing I must take the blame for the misspellings. All mistakes will be corrected in the second issue which is being proof-read by all contributors.

However I hope that, whatever its failings, issue one is still worth reading and that the project will go from strength to strength. Readers of Workers Press wanting to subscribe to the journal (£5 annually) should contact me at the Institute of Russian and East European Studies, Glasgow University, 25 Bute Gardens, Glasgow G12 8RS.

Ian D. Thatcher  
Glasgow

## Workers Press £3,000 Monthly Fighting Fund

In so far: £1,855.94

PREPARATIONS for the Xmas Workers Aid for Bosnia international convoy are going apace and plans have been laid to set up collection points for money and aid. Obviously we need to give money and time to the convoy preparations. To produce Workers Press also requires money and the paper must be sold around the movement. But it's not an either/or question.

In our work around the convoy we must continue to sell Workers Press — don't be shy! There are

many possibilities of getting postal subscriptions so we don't lose touch with old and new contacts.

Many people are also willing to give an extra donation to fight for a paper that will organise and unite the working class in its self-emancipation. As we have said, Bosnia is the sharpest point of the struggle for working-class internationalism.

The fund is up £570.17 in the last week, whereas to make the target we have to get in £700 a week on average. So we were about £130 short of what we

needed. On top of a very low figure, and the fact that the fund will have closed by the time you read this, this means that I will be surprised, to say the least, if we make the £3,000 in November.

But it's particularly important this week to get money in as several bills fall due that can really put needless pressure on other expenses and on those of us who work to produce Workers Press. Join our fight for this paper. Please help.

Mike Cooke  
Send donations to Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

## INDEX BOOKCENTRES

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# Turkish state forces terrorise Kurds

BY ANTON MOCTONIAN

A SYSTEMATIC regime of terror and repression was uncovered by a delegation of trades unionists to the Turkish-held area of Kurdistan.

The delegation was detained by the Turkish authorities after it disclosed damning evidence of state crimes in the area.

The delegation included members of the Manufacturing Science and Finance union, the public service union UNISON, the National Union of Journalists, the building workers' union UCATT and Women Against Pit Closures.

At a news conference held at London's Heathrow airport, Brenda Nixon of WAPC broke down as she gave a vivid account of the attacks on Kur-

dish villages. Details were given of the harassment experienced by delegates, including being stopped by the army and their arrest and detention for 27 hours.

NUJ member Mary Brodwin described how she had been fired at by a soldier at Diyarbakir airport.

'He cocked the trigger, came about two feet away from me, fired and put a bullet into the floor,' she said. 'I was absolutely terrified and thought the next shot was for me. If I was Kur-

dish, I am sure it would have been.'

Describing the effects of this experience, she said: 'I never really felt safe until I landed at Heathrow.'

Full-time UCATT convenor for Islington, Peter Gates, told Workers Press how the delegation was detained following a visit to the village of Birik.

'After following a mud track, we arrived in the hamlet. Immediately we became aware of the atmosphere of fear and terror. We discovered that Birik had recently been attacked by the Turkish army.

'A woman came running towards us screaming hysterically and telling us to run away or we would be killed.'

## Executed

Delegates heard details of how inhabitants had been placed against the wall and summarily executed by the military. They saw how Kurdish homes had been burnt and heard about how villagers had 'disappeared'.

'While we were in the village, a wail was heard as one of those wounded in the Turkish attack died.'

Before reaching Birik the delegation had learned that 14 people had 'disappeared' from the village and four villagers had been murdered.

It was following this visit that the delegation was arrested and held for more than a day. They were sat in chairs and denied access to beds.

'During the period of our arrest, we were very anxious about the safety of two Kurdish women with us,' reports Peter Gates.

'We tried to stop the Turkish



Soldiers patrol the streets of the town of Lice, a town in the Turkish-held region of Kurdistan

soldiers from separating them from us.'

The harrowing incidents at Birik were not the only examples of Turkish state violence in the area:

■ There is a system of government agents called 'village protectors', who are paid £100 a month to finger anyone with pro-Kurdish sympathies.

■ On the way to the barracks where the delegation was imprisoned, they witnessed the terrorising of Kurdish farm workers. The workers were taken from their tractors and forced to run while soldiers pointed guns at them.

'We saw the look of sheer

terror in their eyes as they were forced to run past us,' reports Peter Gates.

■ The delegation also uncovered important evidence of widespread destruction by the Turkish state forces in the town of Lice. They saw houses that had been systematically burnt using phosphorous, and spoke to inhabitants of the town who had hidden in their cellars as the burning went on above them.

The delegation also spoke to several teachers. They gave details of eight pupils and one teacher who had died during the Turkish attack.

'As a union official I spoke to local trades unionists about

wages and conditions — however, the discussion soon came back to the atrocities perpetrated by the Turkish state,' said Gates.

The delegation plans a series of report-back meetings and hopes to produce a lengthy report into its findings. It also emphasised the importance of trade union links between British and Kurdish workers.

Clearly there is an urgent need for a workers' inquiry into the Turkish regime's crimes against the Kurdish people in this area. The world working class must be alerted and urged to take action against these crimes.



Charred street of housing burned by state forces in Lice

## NHS chiefs make in the cash

HEALTH SERVICE chief executives have received average pay-rises of 9 per cent — and some got as much as 33 per cent — an Incomes Data Services report has shown.

This is while ordinary health service workers were expected to survive on a 1.5 per cent increase.

Average pay for managers ranged from £46,567 for running ambulance trusts to £73,727 for certain other units.

According to the report the former chief executive at Guy's and Lewisham, Peter Griffiths, has paid £137,000 in 1992-93 — a rise of 33 per cent.

Griffiths denied the figure saying it included 'an element of performance-related pay for

my salary from the previous year'.

But why increase the pay of managers? They are the ones who are carrying out the offensive on the health service and they are being well-rewarded for their endeavours.

## Fine for Chunnel death

THE Channel tunnel consortium has been fined £200,000 for breaches of the Health and Safety at Work Act, after the death of David Griffiths.

Despite a series of such decisions there is little evidence that the Health and Safety Executive has gone in to make a general inspection and enforce the law. The HSE only seems to go in when someone has died on the Channel tunnel project.

## Unite struggles in workplaces and communities

Statement by the Community and Union Action Campaign

BRITAIN'S public services are being privatised or dismantled, and millions of men, women, children, and old people now lack the most basic necessities of life. Many literally cannot afford such things as water, heating, or food.

This onslaught is dividing and destroying our communities — amongst other things by fostering racism (the shortage of council housing in Tower Hamlets meant the election of a fascist to the local council).

It is time to unite ALL our struggles. It is clear to all that no group of workers can win their battle alone — that every fight now is the responsibility of the whole of the working class. The community needs the support of organised workers in the unions — and organised workers need the support of the community.

We in the CUAC are a group of trades unionists and community activists, and we have made a beginning towards this unity.

Our founding conference in

February 1993 in Manchester brought together teachers, hospital workers, building workers, anti-racist groups, anti-poll-tax groups, unemployed groups, oil workers, miners, bus workers, people campaigning against the Child Support Act, and others.

We aim to unite all the struggles now taking place in Britain's workplaces and communities. We think that the struggle for unity first of all means a fight against all those who divide us — like the present leadership of the Labour party and trade union movement.

## Opposed

They have opposed at every stage the uniting of the working class — as their betrayal of the miners' strike of 1984-85 and every battle since, including the miners' fight against pit closures, shows very clearly.

We are calling for the formation of committees in all areas in defence of all services.

We do not propose this in

opposition to any other initiatives, but as a way of supporting them. We also know that the public services from their beginnings were never adequate to people's needs. We are not fighting for them as they exist, but as they must be.

We have produced pilot issues of a newspaper called 'UNITE'. This is not the paper of a party but of a movement, so while you will not find any one party line in its pages you will find accounts of workers and communities organising themselves.

Our second conference will be held on Saturday 12 February 1994 in Manchester. We aim to make it a forum in which trades unions and communities can link up through the most open and democratic discussion.

If you agree with our aims, you are welcome at the planning meetings. The next is on Saturday 16 January 1994 at 12 noon.

Get in touch with us through CUAC, c/o Lambeth Trade Union Resource Centre, 12 Taunton St., London SW9.

## They knew why they fought

BOOK on dockers' struggles since World War II is to be published early next year.

Its author, Bill Hunter, has been in the Trotskyist movement since 1937.

'This book does not have its origins in academic considerations of writing history,' say Hunter in the preface to 'They Knew Why They Fought'.

'For most of my active life I have been associated with dockers' struggles, with the unofficial leadership of the dockers with attempts to give Trotskyist leadership to the working class.'

It was this lifetime's experience which convinced me that there was an imperative need to write about the key aspects of the dockers' history since World War II.

'There are lessons to be drawn from this history which will be extremely important for the whole working class in the years to come, lessons that show the great capacity of working-class people for struggle and for the development of their own autonomous leadership and organisation.'

## Militancy

The book covers the break to the 'Blue' union in northern ports, which lasted from 1955 to 1982, and shows what shaped dockers' militancy and their way of life.

It traces dockers' struggles and that of their unofficial leaders against casualisation, harsh working conditions and union bureaucracy.

The book also deals with the 1989 strike against the abolition of the Dock Labour Scheme. In the book, dockers describe their struggles with typical humour.

The final chapters draw up a balance sheet of the 'Blue' union and concludes:

'On the one side, in the post-war period, there is a sorry tale of leaders whose policies revolve only around their own bureaucratic interests and who are far removed from the feelings, aspirations and traditions of trade union membership.

'On the other side, there is a magnificent story of workers' will to fight and solidarity.'

Hunter is confident in a socialist future and draws out the lessons from the past as to how this is to be achieved.

This book will not only in-

terest dockers, workers of the time and their communities. It will also command a wider audience in universities, libraries, among trades unionists and all students of working-class history.

■ 'They Knew Why They Fought: Dockers — Unofficial Struggles and Leadership, 1945-89' by Bill Hunter.

Advance copies can be obtained for a minimum of £6 (plus £1 post and packing).

Trades unionists who wish to help the publication are being asked to give an extra donation.

The book will have more than 40,000 words plus photographs and will cost more than £6 in the shops.

Make cheques payable to Bill Hunter and send to PO Box 9, Eccles SO, Salford M30 7FX.

### WORKERS PRESS IS THE PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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## Inside left

### The patsy for assassination

THE remark by Lee Harvey Oswald, after being arrested for the assassination of John F. Kennedy, rang out from the television documentary shown on the 30th anniversary. 'I was a patsy', he claimed. In other words, a stooge, set up deliberately.

Realising that, did Oswald guess what would happen next? His murder by Jack Ruby shut his mouth, and launched an industry in speculation. Last week's TV documentary left many questions unanswered.

If the picture of Oswald posing in his backyard with a rifle and left-wing paper wasn't faked, why had he posed for two versions? In one, he brandished the 'Militant', paper of the Trotskyist US Socialist Workers Party, in another it was a Stalinist paper.

'He was playing ball, writing letters to both elements of the Communist parties, I mean he was playing ball with the Trotskyites and the others,' observed then Congressman Gerald Ford on the Warren Commission. 'This was a strange circumstance to me.'

'But the FBI get people right inside you know,' CIA director Allan Dulles replied. 'They don't need a person like this on the outside. The only place where he did anything was with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee.'

The rifle snap was supposedly taken by Marina Oswald on 31 March 1963. In April and May of that year, Oswald wrote to the Fair Play for Cuba Committee — in which the Socialist Workers Party was involved — ordering literature and membership cards. He said he intended forming a New Orleans branch, and was 'thinking about renting a small office at my own expense'.

He ordered 300 membership cards from a printer. But the New Orleans chapter had only one member, its president, 'A.J. Hiddell' — the same alias Oswald used sending for a mail-order rifle. It nevertheless started acquiring publicity when Carlos Brinquier, an anti-Castro Cuban exile, attacked Oswald as he was leafleting in the street.

A few days earlier, Oswald had visited Brinquier at his store, and written to Fair Play for Cuba's New York office describing a street incident before it happened! Taken in by the police with his assailant, Oswald asked to see an FBI man, John F. Quigley. New Orleans police officers thought there was something phoney about the whole business, but couldn't figure out who was using who.

AFTER the assassination, fearing anti-Red hysteria, Socialist Workers Party secretary Farrell Dobbs 'joined with other leaders of the American radical movement to explain why the Marxist movement is completely opposed to assassination. His declaration was published in the "New York Times" . . . Dobbs also issued a short statement to the press expressing personal sympathy for Mrs Kennedy . . .' (Joseph Hansen in 'World Outlook', a Unified Secretariat publication).

The SWP leaders' condolences for widow Kennedy were repeatedly thrown at them in polemics. Many years later Alex Mitchell wrote in 'News Line' — the WRP's former paper — about the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. But former WRP leader Gerry Healy's sweeping charge, that the SWP was 'agent-run', muddied the waters for proper investigation.

Charlie Pottins

# The split on the convoy to Bosnia

ON 17 October I moved the following resolution at a meeting of the Workers Aid convoy team, then in Croatia. This resolution was carried.

'The International Workers Aid convoy cannot reach the workers of Tuzla on this occasion. It has been forced to turn back only 75km from the town by the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and those who speak and act for the United Nations in the region.

'Our appeal for finance, food and medical supplies received an overwhelming response from workers and their trades unions on the journey through Europe, but UNPROFOR has done everything to prevent that aid, collected in the international working class, from reaching the besieged and starving workers of Tuzla.

'The mandate of this convoy — international working-class solidarity — made it different from other humanitarian aid convoys. This convoy openly opposed and challenged the imperialist Vance-Owen plan to strangle Bosnia, which gives the main power to the Stalinist-fascist, nationalist alliance of [Serbian President] Milosevic and [Serbian Radical Party leader] Seselj who aim for a Greater Serbia.

'The International Workers Aid convoy upheld the demand of the

**'Our work in Zagreb had proved our position — the UN does not intend to give Bosnia access to the outside world until the Vance-Owen "ethnic cleansing" agreement has been signed. It therefore keeps the supply of aid to a minimum (and only to refugees) in order to bring Bosnia to its knees.'**

Tuzla region that the 75km highway between the Croatian border (near Zupanja) and Tuzla should be a free passage for aid.

'The UN forces, having refused protection to the convoy, then worked to prevent it from contacting the Bosnian Serb front-line forces on the road (at Loncari) to negotiate a passage. It was not therefore the Serbian forces that stopped the convoy.

'UNPROFOR did everything to turn the convoy, with no protection, into hostile Serbia (at Lipovice), or areas like the Split route, which without protection is a very hazardous road where the starving and displaced local people form themselves into small bands, fighting each other and robbing the aid.

'Under these circumstances the convoy decided to distribute some aid to refugees and place some in

**A political division took place amongst the Workers Aid for Bosnia convoy team — which during August to October travelled from the Timex factory in Dundee aiming for Tuzla, Bosnia — when a minority of convoy members decided, against the majority, to proceed to Tuzla via Split, in Croatia. They took 'blue cards' from the United Nations and took the Workers Aid logo off their trucks.**

**DOT GIBSON, a member of the convoy, reports on the background to these political differences.**

warehouses for later distribution to Tuzla.'

A MEMBER of the United Secretariat (USec), Mick Woods, moved a counter-resolution on 17 October, which was defeated. It read as follows:

'The International Workers Aid convoy has returned from Zupanja to Zagreb because it is now clear to us that we cannot reach Tuzla by this route. Although we were only 75km from our goal we recognise that UNPROFOR's hostility to opening this route and the deteriorating military situation makes our task impossible.

'This is the shortest aid route to Tuzla and if UNPROFOR were to open the 10km of the Brcko corridor it would allow Tuzla and other areas of central Bosnia to be adequately supplied with food and other humanitarian aid.

'It is clear that UNPROFOR is not in Bosnia to guarantee the movement of humanitarian aid but to enforce the division of Bosnia via the Vance-Owen plan and is prepared to use starvation as a weapon against the Bosnian people.

'We are forced to contrast the support of the European workers' movement to the Bosnian people to the manoeuvres of the UN and its puppets, especially the support shown by the Croatian people in contrast to the obstruction we have faced at the hands of the Croatian authorities.

'The convoy reiterates its determination to open the aid route across the Brcko corridor. We will for the moment investigate alternative routes in consultation with our friends in ex-Yugoslavia and beyond. We will further investigate the desirability of unloading some aid to refugee camps.'

### Different approaches

I WILL here try to explain the differences between these two approaches.

In my resolution I aimed to state the truth of the situation and what action was necessary arising from the fact that 'The international Workers Aid convoy cannot reach the workers of Tuzla on this occasion', and I blamed the United Nations for this.

We, the convoy team, had to make a decisive stand on that main question — the United Nations. We

had to keep the team together and return to report back to the thousands of workers who had contributed to the convoy, in order to bring them into the fight. We had to take up the demand of the Tuzla region for the opening of the northern route.

What was Woods's proposal? Having explained UNPROFOR's opposition to opening up the northern route, he ends, not by calling for a campaign on the main lesson learned, but 'reiterating our determination'. He does not propose any action but an 'investigation'.

Steve Myers, another USec member, said that he saw good in both resolutions and wanted to have a 'composite motion'.

The thinking behind the successful resolution was:

1. That we must call upon the team to act on the main question — the role of the United Nations in imposing the Vance-Owen break-up of Bosnia. This had been our position from the start, but the majority of the team joined the convoy purely for humanitarian reasons.

Our work in Zagreb had proved our position — the UN does not intend to give Bosnia access to the outside world until the Vance-Owen 'ethnic cleansing' agreement has been signed. It therefore keeps the supply of aid to a minimum (and only to refugees) in order to bring Bosnia to its knees.

2. We had a responsibility, not only to members of Workers Aid for Bosnia, but to the workers of Tuzla to take these 'findings' back and campaign in the workers' movement to lift the blockade and to open the northern route. This would enable us to focus the workers' movement on the main point. (Subsequently Mr Hutic, who is responsible for humanitarian aid in the Bosnia and Herzegovina Embassy in Zagreb, told us: 'The most humanitarian thing to do is to open that route'.)

3. It was correct to raise extra money earlier in our fight in Croatia, but now we had been able to expose the role of the UN, and the team had been through enough experiences to understand this. This had to be taken back into the workers' movement.

At that point we had just enough money to pay for the return journey. Even though none of us wanted to face the fact that we could not get to Tuzla, it would be wrong to appeal for money to stay longer just to make further experiences.

4. It was impossible to get UN protection for the convoy. The other routes were either through politically hostile Serbia or from Split. Our team, although gathering some experience, was far from being a politically centralised and disciplined group. The Split route is notorious for snipers and bandits. Some of our vehicles were very slow and others would not make it on the mountainous road.

### 'Leadership' claims

THE USec members' resolution, although referring to the UN's opposition to opening the route, put this to one side and then called upon the convoy team to stay in the area

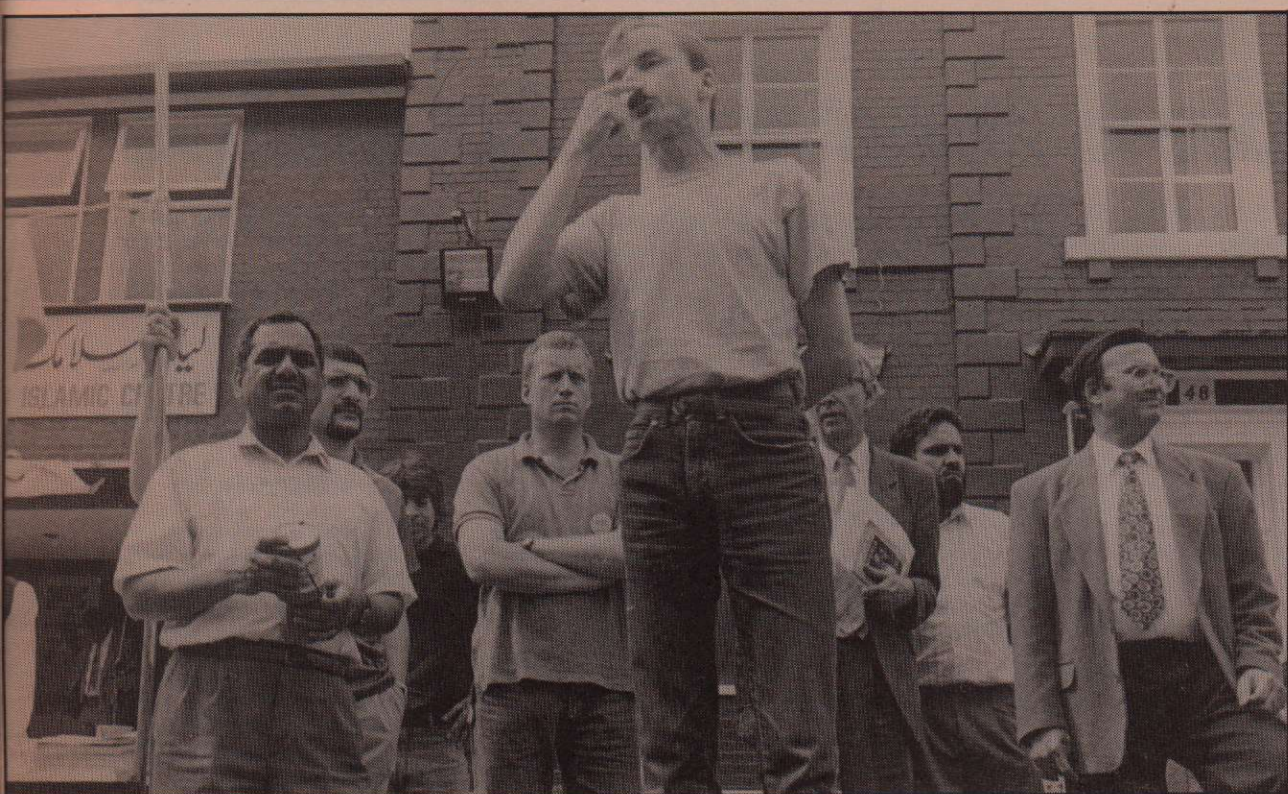


Bosnians queuing to get water: the UN

in order to make further investigations.

Despite being experienced members of what claims to be a 'leadership' organisation of the working class, they took no responsibility for the overall needs of the team or of the campaign.

Finally, four convoy members — two USec members, a worker from Manchester, and an anarchist from Sweden — stayed in Croatia, negotiated with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and obtained 'blue' identity cards, took



Workers Aid campaigning in Leeds in August on its way through Britain

Photo: Anthony Myers

the Workers Aid logo off the van, and travelled to Tuzla on the Split route.

We made it clear that this was the action of individuals, and not that of leaders. They did not propose that the whole team would decide who would carry out this action and which vehicles would go — their method was to break up the convoy team. 'Anybody who wants to come with us should come to a meeting of the "stay-behinds"; they announced!

The majority of the rest of the team, although taking a different course, had a 'live and let live' attitude. Although members of the Workers International — the WRP is its British section — on the convoy team never agreed to the actions of those who took the logo off the side of the vehicle, we merely stated that we saw this as an expression of different political positions (centrism).

We had no authority over these centrists. They would do what they wanted as individuals. We made sure that they had the same sum of money as everybody else (the return home fare and subsistence); we remained in Zagreb for a fourth

Swedish Workers Aid, Danish Workers Aid, Belgian Workers Aid, and comrades from Britain have decided to continue the attempt to investigate further routes into central Bosnia and Tuzla.

'We consider that after one serious attempt to get to Tuzla we should not all return to western Europe. Parachuting into a region is not the way to build and deepen east-west European co-operation between workers and unions.

'A small team is remaining behind to investigate other routes and to try to get the medical aid and personal parcels to Tuzla to make

**'Convoy members had already proved that they were prepared to make personal sacrifices. It was hard for them to take a decision to return without having got to Tuzla, and they took it only on the basis that they would campaign against the UN to open the northern route.'**

direct contact with Tuzla workers and people.

'We need to prepare properly for the next much larger convoy. By developing military knowledge, and route knowledge and deepening our working relationships with workers, trades unions and anti-fascist, social and peace groups and others in the ex-Yugoslavia, we are actively engaged in building a genuine international solidarity organisation. We must prove we are serious.

'The offer from the main union in Croatia, that we establish a permanent International Workers Aid Office in their national HQ in Zagreb, should be accepted willingly. This should soon be co-ordinated by a Croatian Workers Aid.'

At the same time the 'International Co-ordinator' Myers's 'Report No. 7' — he had been putting out reports in the campaign's name — was found accidentally. This said:

'The situation is that the vast majority of British comrades have to get back home for a variety of personal, work, family or study commitments. But this suits the situation here as it is far too expensive to keep a large team of people here without an immediate route into Tuzla.'

This was a lie. A lie which suited the USec members' rationalisation for their decision to split with the team. Myers's 'reports', which were sent out internationally, were not circulated to the convoy team.

You can imagine the anger which this report provoked amongst a team of people, some of

whom had been on the road for three months. They had already proved that they were prepared to make personal sacrifices. It was hard for them to take a decision to return without having got to Tuzla, and they took it only on the basis that they would campaign against the UN to open the northern route.

For an important small number of those who had joined the convoy on a purely humanitarian basis, this was their first political decision. They had begun to see themselves not just as 'friends' but as comrades in a fight.

Myers said that their decision to return 'suited the situation' because it was 'far too expensive' to keep them there! Two other members of USec, Jenny Mees and Mick Woods, defended him on the basis that it was a mistake and he had now withdrawn this report. We would not give their statement the convoy's 'rubber stamp'. Only the five who put it forward voted for it.

## Nauseating position

I HAVE no animosity towards these comrades personally, and was very relieved to hear that they were safe after their journey on the Split route. Having got to know them on the convoy, I did not find it surprising that they took this decision. (As Myers said: 'I have joined USec because anybody can have any opinion and take any action they like in that organisation.')

Certainly it will be important to meet up with them again to hear their experiences, and to discuss our differences. What I find nauseating is the position of Alan Thornett — a leading member of USec's British section, the International Socialist Group — and Myers towards these comrades.

The same Thornett who said that the convoy was a disaster, was too dangerous to proceed with, and that it should have returned from Slovenia before it had even made a fight, now tries to use the actions of his members against the campaign in Britain.

The same Myers, who stated in one of his 'International Co-ordinator' reports that he thought the convoy should return, now gloatingly issues leaflets announcing that these comrades will be going on a report-back tour.

When the statement calling for support for their action was lost at the convoy meeting, Myers said that the vote against it could not be taken seriously. When the vote at the convoy report-back meeting, held in Manchester on 30 October, went against their position, USec said that they 'refuse to recognise its legitimacy'.

Presumably if they had won, these votes would have been described as 'legitimate'!

# City Lights

## Have you drawn a blank?

THE 'Financial Times' has been running a series of articles on the crisis in the welfare systems of various countries. The latest piece (24 November) concerned French welfare — which was deemed to be in a 'terminal state'.

A common feature of the articles is that they all blame the crisis in the system of welfare benefits on changing demographic patterns. It is because the population is steadily aging, meaning a smaller proportion of the population is actually working, that the burden on the state's finances is becoming intolerable.

The problem has been compounded by the depth of the current recession, which has meant reduced tax revenues for governments along with the need for increased welfare payments, especially for unemployment.

In short, the capitalist crisis is blamed on a 'natural' factor: that people are living too long.

At the start of the last century it was the Reverend Thomas Malthus who proposed that society's development was constrained by an equally powerful natural law: the tendency of population to rise geometrically (2, 4, 8, 16, 32 . . .) while the means of subsistence could rise only arithmetically (1, 2, 3, 4, 5 . . .).

Engels condemned this 'theory' from parson Malthus as a 'libel on the human race'. In fact it cannot be graced with the name 'theory' because it simply asserts what has to be proved. There is no reason whatsoever to believe that the production of food can increase in only arithmetic progression.

Only if we assume an unchanging level of technique could such a conclusion be even remotely feasible. But given constantly improving methods of cultivation and given the possibility of applying such improvements to the production of things to meet human needs, then Malthus's 'population law' has not the slightest scientific content.

It is perfectly understandable that the ruling class should wish to blame nature for what are essentially social problems. For in so doing the capitalist class turns attention away from the real source of the crisis in the system of welfare benefits: the degeneration of capitalism, which is increasingly unable to meet even the most elementary needs of millions of sick and elderly people.

'It has appeared', said Malthus, 'that from the inevitable laws of our nature some human beings must suffer from want. These are the unhappy persons, who, in the great lottery of life, have drawn a blank.'

In the 18th century it was Adam Smith who argued that the aim of capitalism should be to reduce by every means possible the number of unproductive workers. Smith had in mind all those hangers-on from the pre-industrial system, especially those connected with the court and the Church.

Writing at the start of the 19th century David Ricardo qualified Smith's position, suggesting that what mattered was not the absolute numbers of unproductive workers but the ability of the productive workers to sustain the unproductive workers out of the surplus they generated.

Ricardo rightly pointed out that it was an index of economic progress that a smaller number of productively employed workers —

those producing surplus value — should be able to sustain ever greater numbers of unproductive workers.

The capitalist crisis arises not because too much provision is made for welfare services. On the contrary, it is a clear expression of the crisis that capitalism can no longer sustain such payments, and now drives millions into penury — and this in the 'advanced' capitalist countries.

We know what form is taken by Malthusianism in the present century. In the 1930s fascism declared a whole section of the population surplus to requirements. It proceeded literally to work this population to death, or to exterminate it in slave camps or gas chambers.

## One law for the rich . . .

YOU will no doubt have seen that last week fraudster Roger Levitt got away with 180 hours of community work, after the trial following the collapse of his financial empire in which investors lost £34 million. This works out at some £170,000 an hour.

Roger Levitt's treatment is in stark contrast to that of those found guilty of making fraudulent claims to the DSS; they are now routinely given custodial sentences, despite the fact that the offences involve infinitely smaller sums of money.

More than this. Levitt, who admitted to lying to City regulators, got away with a token sentence because of decisions taken in the Serious Fraud Office.

In an unsuccessful bid to keep afloat, an array of bogus documents were handed to the City regulators when they began investigating Levitt shortly before his company crashed in December 1990.

The bogus paperwork purported to show fees of almost £21 million had been received by the company as a result of personal advisory work performed by Levitt.

It was the SFO who decided a week into the trial that the 21 most serious charges would not be proceeded with. In return Levitt pleaded guilty to a severely limited part of the indictment against him, assuring himself of only a light sentence.

The judge said that, while fraudulent trading carried a maximum of seven years' imprisonment, he felt that justice 'required him' to compare Levitt's crimes with the less serious offence of making false and misleading statements. He also took into account the fact Levitt had admitted his offences and thus saved the court a lot of time.

It was a bad week for the SFO. As Levitt was walking from court, an Old Bailey jury was dismissed and charges thrown out against a group of businessmen over the marketing of shares in Duralite Manufacturing.

The three men had denied charges of conspiracy to contravene the Prevention of Fraud Act by inducing prospective investors of Duralite with misleading or false promises and forecasts, which showed the company had gold-mining and gold-producing assets of a value commensurate with its share price.

The judge said that the evidence, brought by the SFO, was insufficient for a jury to convict.

Threadneedle



stopped the convoy reaching Tuzla

er day so that the papers for the vehicles which they were driving could be separated from the rest to enable them to stay behind.

## Anger provoked

AT THE convoy meeting following the passing of our resolution the four who were to travel the Split route, plus Myers, called upon us to vote for the following statement:

'Convoy comrades representing

## Anguish in the waste land

IT WAS sheer anguish to hear and read the details of the abduction and murder of James Bulger.

Each successive day of the three-week trial of the two boys who tortured and killed him brought renewed anguish.

But the subsequent exchanges of platitudes by a congeries of slack-tongued experts and pundits and instant moralisers — blaming everyone but themselves — were perhaps most painful of all.

Let's begin with the trial. It was a trial that should never have taken place. In no other country in the world but Britain can a child of 11 be hauled into an adult court with all its pomp and formality and majesty, with all its dread symbolism of an all-powerful judge in archaic fancy dress towering high above the wretched children on whom he sat in judgement.

Who benefited from this simulacrum of justice? What was the point of it?

The trial may have given the bereaved family, months after their infant son was murdered, the transient satisfaction of some kind of vengeance. But what has that to do with justice?

The trial certainly enabled the judge to deliver a homily, which most judges enjoy doing, but which was here quite unnecessary since 'detention during her Majesty's pleasure' is the only permitted penalty for murder by a child. So what had the judge's remarks to do with justice?

The trial may well have done something for the egos and the professional reputations, and therefore the future careers, of the barristers involved. What has that to do with justice?

But the trial's main beneficiaries were the national and international media, who sent over 100 reporters to ensure saturation coverage.

Here was a sensation-hungry monster with 200 gimlet eyes which daily watched, sketched, and described in detail every slightest movement of both the 11-year-olds, and succeeded in turning a terrible tragedy into a piece of theatre, a horror story whose manner of telling, as much as its content, left every compassionate onlooker sickened and ashamed. And what has that to do with justice?

IF the interests of justice were ill served by this charade, the interests of understanding were equally ill served by the gush of comment and blame that followed.

Pride of place here must go to David Maclean, the junior minister who took the first opportunity to tick off the Church of England for not teaching children the difference between right and wrong.

This is a member of a government which for 14 years has done its utmost to turn this country into a physical and spiritual waste land — and has largely succeeded.

It sees nothing wrong in making the rich incalculably richer and the poor incalculably poorer. It sees nothing wrong in throwing millions out of work, condemning them to starvation benefits, threatening them with swingeing increases in fuel bills, forcing countless youngsters to a life of penury, begging, and homelessness.

It sees nothing wrong in wrecking the health service and the schools with 'market principles', closing libraries and nurseries, cutting social services to and beyond the bone, basely destroying everything in this country that might help the poor and deprived to have the slightest chance of a civilised life.

Right and wrong? What does this government of hypocrites, of seasoned and degenerate liars and hypocrites, know about the difference?

Those pathetic clutches after moral certainty who insisted that the two 11-year-old murderers were evil, and that

## PERSONAL COLUMN

was all that could usefully be said on the matter, were also refusing, in their own way, to admit the nature of the society in which those boys have been brought up.

THEY were born into a waste land, and they have been brought up in one.

Disadvantaged from birth; deprived, it seems, of the most elementary tenderness; seldom cuddled or otherwise touched by a loving adult; frequently chided and blamed and bullied; incessantly told how useless and bad they are; put down into a lower class at school to drive that message home; left to roam the streets until one in the morning in search of some excitement to fill their desolate little lives; what a hell these children lived in.

If you force young children to live in such a hell, is it so surprising that they will suck up greedily the fantasies of violence and revenge so easily available in horror videos?

And is it so surprising that sooner or later, unsure as pre-pubescent children often are of the boundaries between fantasy and reality, they will act out such fantasies and incorporate a helpless living victim into their shared nightmare of hatred, torture, and murder?

These two young killers reflected and introjected — incorporated, that is, into their psyches — the waste land that is decaying capitalism.

No one showed them a different way; no one showed them how to love; no one showed them that younger children are not toys to be roughed up and discarded but human beings to be cherished and protected.

And because their lives were so empty, dislocated, and devoid of meaning they became sick, just as the society that moulded them is terminally sick.

Their barren, brutalised lives, and their abduction and murder of James Bulger, hold a pitiless mirror up to this society.

They show us what capitalist Britain has become. And they warn us about the even worse nightmares that may be in store for us as capitalism lurches into barbarism.

## After the Comintern

IT HAS been suggested to me that 'Comintern', in Stuart Griffin's recent 'Guardian' obituary of the Japanese Stalinist Sanko Nosaka, which I mentioned last week, was a mistake for 'Cominform'; and so it seems to have been.

Brian Pearce tells me that Nosaka was indeed criticised in the Cominform journal 'For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy' of 6 January 1950.

He quotes Tetsuzo Fuwa's pamphlet 'Stalin and Great Power Chauvinism' (1983), which says the Cominform promoted 'an ultra-left, adventurist line' in Japan, and which adds:

'It identified the situation in Japan, a developed capitalist country, with pre-liberation China, on the ground that Japan was occupied by the USA. Its aim was to apply the "people's war" line of China to the revolutionary movement in Japan.'

Brian Pearce also makes the point that while denouncing Stalin for 'dissolving the Comintern', we should not overlook the continued 'guidance' of foreign Communist Parties by the CPSU's 'International Department' after 1943, and the 'quasi-Cominternish' role played by the Cominform.

*Peter Fryer*

## Television

# Complex reactions to soaps

Review by Roger Horrocks

WHY is 'Neighbours' (BBC1, Mondays-Fridays) so popular? Should Workers Press with its precious few pages take any interest in such TV programmes?

These questions began to bother me over the past couple of years while doing some research into popular culture.

'Cultural studies' is one of the fastest growing subjects in colleges and universities, and its work tends to dissolve the distinction between 'high' and 'low' culture, which has been pronounced in Britain.

### Treat

Whereas the old-style critics dismissed popular art — such as horror and sci-fi films, pop music, TV, romantic fiction — as rubbish, the new cultural critics treat them seriously as complex and sophisticated works.

But should a Marxist newspaper take any interest in these developments? Traditionally the British left has viewed much popular culture as 'bread and circuses', anaesthetising or diverting workers politically.

However this can become a

paternalistic attitude, and crucially ignores the audience's own reactions and feelings.

My feeling is that the new work on culture should be treated seriously, and that Marxists should be interested in the whole of culture.

In relation to TV soaps, research has found that audiences have very complex reactions. Len Ang, in her book 'Watching Dallas', found a very wide spread of responses to 'Dallas' — irony, distaste, hatred, adulation.

Many viewers found it very pleasurable, and Ang argues that this pleasure is important, for it is opposed to what she calls 'bourgeois aesthetics'.

She also notes how ashamed people are of enjoying 'Dallas'. And some people who hated it still watched it avidly.

Is 'Neighbours' pleasurable? Apparently 15 million people think so. I watch it periodically while eating dinner with my family. These are the aspects of 'Neighbours' I enjoy: it focuses exclusively on people's emo-

tions, and on conversation.

It is hugely melodramatic — every episode has multiple crises going on, which are eventually resolved, whereupon new ones arise.

There is a lot of emotional intensity — marriages break up and reform, parents and kids quarrel, feuds arise between people, somebody goes missing. There is no 'action' to speak of. The narrative is endless and circular, therefore quite unlike most conventional fiction.

There is little overt political discussion, yet arguably the whole thing is politically reactionary, in the same sense that it ignores the external world, and focuses in an almost claustrophobic way on families.

But some feminists have argued that TV soaps rediscover a suppressed feminine world, to do with feelings and relationships. However the argument tends to shunt men and women into social and psychological ghettos.

'Neighbours' is popular with children, and I sometimes

watch it with a group of them. What amazes me about their reactions is how sophisticated they are about narrative structure, and the mechanics of TV — camera movements and angles, and so on. They are able to guess from this information what's going to happen, who's in trouble, who is feeling what

### Hooping

Children also participate — they shout advice at the screen, get mad at characters. In fact Ang found that adults who watched soaps with friends react in similar ways, shouting, hooping with laughter, groaning in disappointment, and so on. This is a very different kind of 'art', not contemplative but interactive.

Is 'Neighbours' simply escapist rubbish? I would say no, in the sense that it gives people a reflection of something important that gets suppressed under capitalism: their emotional vitality and expressiveness. Obviously 'Neighbours' isn't anti-capitalist — on the other hand it's not simply a reactionary sedative.

## Programme guide

Saturday 4 December PERFORMANCE: 'The Entertainer'. Michael Gambon and Billie Whitelaw in John Osborne's famous play (8.15pm, BBC2).

Sunday 5 December HIGH INTEREST: 'Executive Coach'. Management advice expert Ginny Ditzler offers corporate counselling to directors of multinational companies (5.15pm, Channel 4). EQUINOX: 'Video Games'. As people perceive the real world as becoming increasingly out of control, video games are safe and user-friendly. The programme looks at the industry's latest technological developments (7pm, Channel 4). 'The Rape of Tutankhamun'. The world's most precious archaeological site, Egypt's Valley of the Kings, is threatened today as never before — tombs are cracking, irreplaceable paintings and reliefs are crumbling. Why is so little being done to protect these monuments? (8.45pm, Channel 4).

Monday 6 December PANORAMA: 'Race, Violence and the Law'. Presenter Margaret Gilmore talks to some of the people behind the statistics which indicate an alarming rise in

racially-motivated violence (9.30pm, BBC1).

Tuesday 7 December FROM BEIRUT TO BOSNIA: 'The Martyr's Smile'. The first of a three-part series in which Robert Fisk examines the wave of Islamic militancy sweeping the Muslim world (9pm, Channel 4).



Scarlett Watt and Max in 'Distant Voices, Still Lips', Channel 4, Friday 10 December

Wednesday 8 December STATES OF TERROR: 'Men of God'. Two acts of terrorism forced the US out of the Lebanon in 1983. The programme examines its no-deals-with-terrorism policy which was undermined by covert operations sanctioned by the president (9.30pm, BBC1).

Thursday 9 December THE PLAGUE: 'Fighting For Life'. Third of this four-part series about the history of AIDS covers the struggle of the victims and pressure groups who demanded government action and access to drugs (9pm, Channel 4).

Friday 10 December SHORT STORIES: 'Distant Voices, Still Lips'. Documentary about Britain's only black ventriloquist, Scarlet Watt (8pm, Channel 4).

### Selected films

THEY SHOOT HORSES, DON'T THEY? (1969). Sydney Pollack's exploration of the desperation of couples competing in a dance marathon during the Depression years (Saturday, 10.45pm, BBC2). SHANE (1953). George Stevens's classic west-



Egyptologist John Romer comments on the threat to the Valley of the Kings in 'The Rape of Tutankhamun', Channel 4 on Sunday

ern. Alan Ladd as the gunfighter who comes to the assistance of a family of struggling homesteaders. With Van Heflin, Jean Arthur and Brandon de Wilde (Sunday, 10pm, BBC2). THE BIG CHILL (1983). Reunion of a group of former college radicals at their friend's funeral. Excellent performances all-round. Directed by Lawrence Kasdan (Friday, 11.10pm, ITV).

# Cannibalism alleged during the 'cultural revolution'

BY MIKE COOKE

GRISLY allegations of cannibalism during the period of the so-called 1968 'cultural revolution' in China must sicken and give pause to all of us who are fighting for socialism.

In 1968, many middle-class radicals in the West were attracted by this 'revolution' to the teachings of Mao Zedong, the leader of the Chinese Communist Party that seized power in the 1949 Chinese revolution.

The anti-elitist, anti-intellectual Maoist rhetoric became part and parcel of a left gloss to a reactionary and philistine movement to devalue education. Intellectuals and city dwellers were seen as the 'counter-revolutionary' enemy, and not the bourgeoisie, and the virtues of the backward peasants were extolled to the skies.

The most extreme expression of this doctrine, until the new revelations, had been the infamous 'Year Zero' of Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, where people were even massacred as intellectual 'counter-revolutionaries' for merely wearing glasses! Pol Pot used the countryside's suspicion of the

cities as the basis for his rule.

The 'cultural revolution' in China, like the 'great leap forward' of the 1950s, was used by the Beijing leadership to flush out and break opposition to the Communist Party's rule. It allowed, for a brief period, criticism of the central leadership and then used the backward peasants to ruthlessly crush it.

But in the city of Wuxuan in Guangxi province the logic went a step further if secret official documents, obtained by a Chinese anti-communist living in the West, are to be believed.

The eating of human flesh seems to have begun with the 'sacrifice' of two students belonging to the 'small faction' of Mao's Red Guards. On 4 May 1968, spurred on by the 'ultra-left' around Mao's wife in Beijing, the small faction in Wuxuan had killed a 'large faction' leader in an attempt to seize the local harbour office and requisition its funds.

### Hung

The two students were later hung on trees and then butchered. Their hearts and livers were removed, cooked with pork and eaten communally. The head and feet of the small

faction's leader were cut off and displayed in the market place.

In the blood-bath that followed many school teachers were killed. At least two were eaten by their students. At first victims were butchered in a secluded place, and their flesh mixed with meat from other animals. But a month later people were being dismembered on the main street. Others then 'swarmed around to remove the flesh', according to official reports.

Many of the most active in the butchery were former young members of the small faction seeking to show their loyalty.

The killing only stopped when it was reported by a former official who had been sent to Wuxuan in the late 1950s for criticising party policy.

He was horrified by the scenes of the slaughter on his way to work, and his wife had been terrified when she tried to go to the local hospital on two occasions for an abortion.

He sent the information in a letter to a relative, hoping that it would be forwarded to an old friend from the revolution.

In July a long military convoy came to find out what was happening. The commander went straight to the head of Wuxuan's 'revolutionary committee'.

'How many people have you eaten here?', he bluntly asked. 'Complaints have been made to Beijing! Why didn't you stop it? Why didn't you report it? From tomorrow, if one more person is eaten I'll make you pay. I'll blow your head off.'

The killing stopped. The person who reported the cannibalism was sent to a labour camp after a friend had revealed his name under torture. But he wasn't killed as town leader feared investigations if he was

### Demonise

It is likely that other occurrences of cannibalism in Guangxi during the 'cultural revolution'. Official estimates say that more than 90,000 people died during this period. The real figure will be much higher.

Cannibalism accusations have often been used to demonise an enemy. But in China they do seem to have been a long tradition of 'revenge' cannibalism. In the 1851-64 Taiping rebellion soldiers ate prisoners' hearts to make them bolder and in World War II, notes the official report on the 1968 outbreak, Japanese soldiers who raped Wuxuan women were eaten.

# Letters

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## Serbian re-armament

IN SPITE of UN-imposed sanctions (so-called), the new Republic of Yugoslavia, now reduced to just Serbia and Montenegro, is rebuilding its military industry.

This was initiated by the SDPR, the federal armament department, in 1989, as war was raging in Slovenia before it went on to engulf Croatia and Bosnia.

To recreate the military industry, tooling and rigs were brought back from these war-torn republics. Determined to have their own armament industry, the Serbs are also pursuing two other objectives: selling armaments to Third World countries at competitive prices, while gearing up for another conflict with Croatia.

Five major armament manufacturers have been earmarked for the project and will concentrate on the production of military hardware: Cacak, Lucani, Trstenik and Uzice in Central Serbia, and Valjevo (90km south of Belgrade).

Lucani and Uzice specialise in ammunition, explosives, repairs to fighting vehicles, and air-defence equipment. The Trstenik plant manufactures sophisticated products, including the guidance systems for M-84 and T-55 MBT, and specialises in the maintenance of aircraft and helicopter hydraulic systems. At Pancevo, near Belgrade, aviation technicians are upgrading the J-22 Orao fighter-bomber by fitting it with two 23mm guns.

The most advanced project revolves around the G-5 Super Galeb ground attack aircraft, which has been upgraded by the addition of a 23mm gun, a ventral tank, and four racks for rockets or missiles.

Following a request from the ground forces, armament engineers are evolving an armed version of the Gazelle, fitting it with two pods of 68mm rockets, AT-3 Sagger anti-tank missiles or SA-7 Strela missiles.

The ground forces have not been neglected, and the 'federal' armament industry is producing a new smooth-bore 100mm gun to arm a tank prototype derived from the M-84. This combines the M-84 turret with a chassis designed to be better proof against anti-tank rockets.

A locally-designed new bridge-laying vehicle derived from the MTU/20/T-55 is being issued to armoured forces. The Serbs are also manufacturing a new towed 100mm anti-tank gun, known as 'Topaze', a conversion resulting from the replacement of the D-30's 122mm howitzer with a 100mm gun.

Allan Brown  
Brighton



Fleeing the massacre in Stupni Do, Serbia is making arms

true, and that Frederick Crews is a very clever man.

I am also prepared to believe that in terms of scientific validity (as assessed by empirical science) much of Freud's work was indeed fraudulent.

However such comments are wide of the mark. The work of Freud, which brought together into a single theory work carried out in France, Germany, the United States, Britain, broke decisively with previous, contemporary (and indeed current) forms of psychological understanding and, in so doing, incurred the wrath of the medical establishment everywhere.

As Peter notes, Hitler banned the work of Freud. Hitler was not alone. Virtually every fascist regime has taken the same view, usually bracketing Freud with Marx. A good example is a speech made by Admiral Emilio Massera at the Universidad del Salvador in Buenos Aires at the height of the Argentinian junta of 1976.

Justifying the massive scale of book-burning that was taking place, the admiral claimed that all of the ills of modern society could be traced to three people: Marx, Freud and Einstein (see Andersen, Martin: 'Dossier Secreto: Argentina's Desaparecidos and the Myth of the "Dirty War"' 1993).

Such a hatred for Freud was based on Freud's work, as it appeared in his writings. If these fascists had known of the material mentioned by Peter they would have leaped on it with glee, but they would still have burned the books for the ideas that they contained.

The fascists reserve a special hostility towards Freud for several reasons. Firstly, the method of work of psychoanalysis assumed that problems experienced by people had psychological causes, and could not be cured by medicines, electric shocks, amputations, etc.

Freud opposed what is known now as the 'medical model', and in its place put forward a conception of human beings that located them squarely in their social context, tracing the roots of their problems to this same context.

Neither was deviant behaviour 'in-born' or to be found in racial stocks or low 'breeding'. Freudianism opened the door to a view of mental illness, sexual orientation, and other understandings of our behaviour that was reliant almost totally on upbringing and social experience.

The only thing that was in-born was our drive for pleasure, which was handled in different ways in families, resulting in different types of personality and behaviour type.

No wonder Freud's views were and are anathema to the medical profession, whose typical answer to mental illness is either a) pills, b) a huge electric shock passed through the head, or c) the surgical removal of part of the brain, or all of these.

No wonder Freudianism is anathema to Eysenck, who believes that nothing is scientific unless it can be measured, and that people are born with different 'amounts' of intelligence, and that this stays with them throughout life.

In place of all this rubbish Freud placed the whole person as a part of society at the centre of the stage. As Marx said in the 'German Ideology': 'We begin with real, active men, and from their real life-process show the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process.'

A third reason for the hostility shown to Freud and psychoanalysis is the view of the Freudians that the family is a system torn by conflicts and struggles for power. Those who place 'the family' at the centre of society and civilization, with the innocent child, the loving mother and the just but firm father as an integral part of this picture, clash with the Freudians' view.

Sadly for this 'happy families' viewpoint, Freud's view has more power when it comes to questions of child abuse, but that does not make psychoanalysis many friends in high places.

There are many criticisms of Freud and psychoanalysis that seem more useful than the 'Freud is a fraud' bandwagon.

Hillman and Venturi, for instance, make the point that a practical consequence of psychoanalysis has withdrawn many generations of people (especially Americans) away from the struggle to change the world and encouraged them to look inwards into themselves and backwards into their past — anywhere but outwards to their present society.

Such a criticism as this seems to me to carry forward the strengths of Freud's contribution in a positive way, without blinding us to the negative issues.

It is a far cry from the sterile and bankrupt criticism that grubs around like the academic equivalent of a gutter press journalist to find the 'dirt' on Freud, as the same people will do in due course with Marx, with Lenin, with Trotsky, etc.

It is also far removed from the criticisms of the empiricists (e.g. Eysenck), which try to use the methods of the 'natural' sciences, of precise measurement, of laboratory methods, as a stick to beat the 'human' sciences, which need to develop methods appropriate to their subject matter.

Freud can be criticised, although I would not choose to do this from the standpoint of bourgeois science and medicine which, sadly, seems to be the standpoint taken by Peter.

Paul Henderson  
Leicester

## Over the top

PETER FRYER paints a very black picture of Freud (20 November), based on Crews's article in the 'New York Review of Books', and concludes: 'He was a fraud.'

This is over the top. I work as a psychotherapist, and I find many analytic ideas absolutely indispensable in my work. I frequently go back and read Freud's original writings, since they are so rich and complex. There is no doubt that Freud

was a megalomaniac, did things that would now be considered unprofessional, and could be quite nasty. However, I think that Peter Fryer is underestimating the primitive nature of psychology at that time.

Freud was literally inventing a new discipline, under ferocious attack from the respectable bourgeoisie. It doesn't surprise me that he became paranoid and ruthless.

A crucial question: does Peter think that psychoanalysis itself is a fraud? I certainly think some aspects of it have been reactionary. Some examples: Freud saw women as castrated men, doomed to lament their lack of a penis. American psychoanalysts tended to vilify homosexuality and saw it as a 'sickness' to be 'cured'.

Analysts in America also tended to encourage people to adapt to capitalism — the German analyst Erich Fromm had some scorching things to say about this.

But Freud also laid bare the hypocrisy of the bourgeois family, which beneath its halo of sanctity was revealed to be a hot-bed of ferocious conflict, in which children often come off worse.

In the end, psychoanalysis and Freud are both extremely contradictory. There is both a radical and a conservative aspect to Freud.

I think at its best, psychoanalysis does work: it does help people unravel ancient infantile conflicts that still sabotage their lives. And the left wing of the analytic movement — people such as Fromm, Karen Horney, Wilhelm Reich — began to make links between psychology and Marxism that are unsurpassed to this day.

Roger Horrocks  
Fulham

## 'Misuse' of sex?

THOSE that give criticism must be prepared to receive it so I will be making no complaint about Peter Fryer's description of me as a 'turkey' ('The misuse of sex', 27 November) or of his continuing critique of my errors and deviations, which are no doubt legion.

I would merely note here that I am aware of the excellent work that Fryer has done in opening up discussion of sex and sexuality. But my underlying disquiet with Fryer's analysis remains. His view of sex and sexuality seems to me, and in a sense this is hardly surprising, that of someone on the left before the watershed of 1968.

Fryer's theory of sexuality appears to be psychologically based. Most socialists in the last 25 years have accepted that while there may be some element of psychopathy involved with some sexual acts, and I think this remains unproven, that sexuality is primarily determined by cultural and social circumstances.

From this flow important political conclusions. Namely that it should be up to each individual to determine, in so far as they can within the constraints of capitalist society, what their sexuality is.

Secondly, that socialists should focus on sexual liberation, and the important material demands which underwrite this, such as free abortion on demand, easy access to contraception and so on, rather than banging on about the 'misuse' of sex.

To talk of the 'misuse' of sex suggests that there is some way of defining what a proper use of it might be, and that is talk firmly rooted in the period before 1968 when Stalinism and Fabianism all but killed the flowering of thought on sex and socialism that developed after 1917.

Keith Flett  
London N17

Bronwen Handyside reports

## Two nations



## Single parents — the enemy within

THE Tory government is trying to overcome its £50 billion budget deficit by cutting public services, and benefits.

One of its more ingenious wheezes has been to instruct the newly formed Child Support Agency (CSA) to save £6 billion by tracking down absent parents (mainly fathers) and making them pay maintenance for their children. Single parents will not get any benefit from this, because their benefit is cut by the same amount that their ex-partners provide.

When CSA officials found they were falling far short of their financial target, they decided not to waste money tracking down truly absent parents, but to raise the maintenance paid by easy-to-find fathers who have already made arrangements for their children.

In one case Tony Pye was forced to give himself up to police when a warrant was issued for his arrest after the CSA increased his maintenance from £7 to £144 a week.

Other parents have seen the agency double or triple the amounts they have arranged with their estranged spouses either privately or through the courts.

Brian Gorton hanged himself after a court doubled payments to his ex-wife. His second wife told the coroner's court: 'It appeared we would never be free of this burden. It is fair to say we rowed. Although quite willing to pay for his children, he took it quite hard.'

Mrs Gorton explained that they encountered financial difficulties when her husband was out of work for nine months. When the payment was increased, the couple went back to court several times saying it was too much, but 'became resigned' to the fact it had to be paid.

A huge chorus of protest is growing from those parents who cannot maintain their second family because of the amount of money they are being forced to pay for the first.

## How to stop being a single parent

BUT never let it be said that this system has left them with no way out.

If you can't afford to pay for your kids, just wait for them to get seriously ill and then try to take them to hospital.

The British Paediatric Association reports that National Health Service cuts mean that thousands of critically ill children are being shunted around from one underfunded hospital to another. As a result, some have died, and some have been permanently disabled, because they were not treated in time.

There are only 209 intensive care beds for children in Britain, and more than a third are specialist beds for burns, brain surgery and so on. Of the 209 beds, 85 per cent are described as underfunded.

There is not one hospital in the country which has not turned patients away because of lack of resources. According to the report, at least 280 general intensive care beds and 1,000 nurses are needed.

## Feminism and far-right

AND — fascinatingly — it is sections of the feminist movement which join the far-right of the Tory party in cheering on the pursuit of absent fathers.

## Compare and contrast

FRAUDSTER Roger Levitt, whose company collapsed owing £34 million, was sentenced at Southwark Crown court to 180 hours community service and disqualified from serving as a director for seven years.

While he was building his business empire, Levitt paid himself nearly £1 million a year and embraced a celebrity lifestyle. He had a box at Arsenal football ground, and smoked £900 worth of Davidoff cigars a month. Asked why they did not have a house in the country his wife Diana replied: 'Who needs a place in the country when you have an acre in town?'

Mr Levitt said on emerging from the court — to all intents and purposes a free man — that his experience had given him faith in British justice.

And sure enough, good old British justice was justifying Mr Levitt's faith in a few other courts around the country.

In Liverpool, 22-year-old diabetic Samantha Evans was given an 87-day prison sentence for failing to pay her poll tax. She was eight months pregnant, living on sickness benefit, and had just come out of hospital after a threatened miscarriage.

Another poll-tax defaulter, Tina Brewer, took the oldest of her three children, who was four, to her court hearing because she did not realise she faced a jail sentence. When she was carted off the child was abandoned alone in the court.

Kelvin Perch, a mentally-disabled 39-year-old, failed to return home one day. His absence was reported to the police, who denied all knowledge of him.

Six days later one of his neighbours happened to visit a relative in prison, and found that he was sharing a cell with Mr Perch, who had been jailed for non-payment of the poll tax. He was only released when campaigners contacted lawyers.

In Croydon, south London, a 60-year-old stroke victim who had been unable to work for seven years was fined for stealing food for himself and his cat.

John Francis told magistrates he found it 'difficult to manage' on £38 benefit a week. Although he admitted stealing groceries worth £25.61 from Safeway, like Mr Levitt, he did not consider himself a criminal.

## Take a Bow

ANOTHER angle on the Tory drive to cut the public sector borrowing requirement is provided by the Bow group. Members have been overheard discussing privately the need for breeding-controls on the poor and criminal classes.

The logic of the discussions on the 'demographic' problem — the disproportionate increase in older members of the population who are a burden on the state, and the decrease in the young, who contribute by working and paying taxes — must be, in the end, the gas chamber.

If you have any material for this column, please send it to me at Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

## Grubbing around Freud's dustbin

I WAS disappointed to read Peter Fryer's denunciation of Sigmund Freud in Workers Press 20 November ('Was Freud a fraud?'). Disappointed because, in spite of all our correspondence, Peter still shows himself capable of lining up, albeit unintentionally, with the right wing of British psychology.

It is not in question that Freud snorted cocaine and that much of his work was done whilst he was on a 'high' or possibly a 'low'. As Peter points out, cocaine was thought to have medicinal qualities in Freud's day. As to the other comments about Freud's private life, I am sure that they are probably

# Betrayal lies behind IRA's secret talks

**THE IRA is preparing to carry out a historical betrayal of the Irish working class.**

This is the main feature arising from revelations of the secret dealings of the Irish Republican Army and Sinn Fein with the Tory government.

Last week the British government released details of some of the recent exchanges between itself and Sinn Fein.

A communiqué from Sinn Fein of 2 November pleaded with the government to open a dialogue in 'the event of an end to total hostilities' and a 'total end to all violence' on the part of the IRA.

Unless negotiations started immediately Ireland 'could be at the point of no return,' said the same plea.

## Message

According to Northern Ireland secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew's Commons statement, the secret exchanges started as early as 22 February with an oral message from the IRA which said:

'The conflict is over but we need your advice on how to bring it to a close. We wish to have an unannounced ceasefire in order to hold dialogue leading to peace.

'We cannot announce such a move as it will lead to confusion for the volunteers because the press will misinterpret this as a surrender.'

It is clear that at least a section of the Sinn Fein and IRA leadership is preparing for open capitulation to British imperial-

ism, needless to say behind the backs of their followers.

These leaders are ready to renounce explicitly what has formerly been a central plank of their declared political platform: a united Ireland.

For the Tory government has made clear that any talks would be held on the basis that the present division of the country remains in force unless the 'consent of the people of Northern Ireland' was given to any other arrangements.

In other words, the matter is left in the hands of the Unionists.

Here is a betrayal on a par with that of the PLO's capitulation to Zionism. For more than two decades Irish workers have fought heroically against the occupying forces of British imperialism. Countless numbers have been killed and imprisoned.

## Senseless

But for the IRA leaders this heroism has been cynically used as a bargaining counter in its relations with British imperialism. There has never been a real 'armed struggle' against British imperialism.

The senseless shooting of



For over two decades Irish workers have fought heroically against British occupying forces

workers — both Catholic and Protestant — has merely played into the hands of British imperialism as well as served the interests of the IRA.

Both these forces — the British state and the IRA — have a vested interest in the continued division of Ireland. This division not only divides the Irish working class, but it acts as a barrier to united action by the British and Irish working class.

The sheer hypocrisy of last

week's exposures sets new standards even for the Tory government.

Only yesterday Prime Minister John Major proclaimed that the very thought of negotiating with 'IRA murderers' was enough to turn his stomach over.

Yet even as he uttered these words he knew full well that talks with the leadership of the IRA were at an advanced stage.

And while measures con-

tinued to stop the voices of Gerry Adams and other Sinn Fein leaders from being heard on radio and TV, the Tory government was in discussions with the representatives of these very same people.

But despite the exposure of the persistent lying of Tory ministers one thing is certain: the collusion between the leaders of the IRA and the Tory government will carry on. This was made clear not simply by

Mayhew but by the Labour opposition, and, by implication, by the majority of the Ulster Unionists.

And while Democratic Unionist leader Ian Paisley may rant and rave and be excluded from the Commons, he is determined that he and those he represents will not be excluded from any horse-trading that is being prepared.

Not only is the Tory government exposed again as hypocritical liars, the perfidy of the Labour opposition is clear for all to see. 'We do not want to make a party issue out of this,' declared Labour leader John Smith and company.

## Accused

The Labour spokesman on Ireland, Kevin McNamara, simply accused Major and company of 'mishandling' the matter but urged that progress must be made in the 'peace process'.

But what else could be expected of these leaders? It was their predecessors, at the time of the 1969 Wilson Labour government, who first sent the British army into the north of Ireland on the grounds that it would be a 'peacekeeping force'.

These leaders have maintained a 'bipartisan' policy on Ireland with the Tories throughout this whole period, just as they have in practice collaborated with the Tory government on every major attack it has launched on the British and Irish workers.

## European austerity policies spark strikes and protests

ANGER at austerity measures has sparked a series of strikes and demonstrations across Europe.

Last week, Belgian unions carried out a general strike as the latest of a series of actions against the Christian Democrat/Socialist coalition government.

A strikers' blockade of Brussels airport was only broken up when local police cleared the roads with high-powered waterhoses. This is reminiscent

of the 1961 general strike when demonstrations were broken up when firefighters used hoses on protesters as marches passed their stations.

Strikers also blocked the port of Antwerp. Dutch-speaking Flanders and French-speaking Wallonia were paralysed by the strike.

There have recently been massive demonstrations against austerity measures in Spain, Italy, France and Germany.

## Carve-up is aim of latest Bosnia talks

BY MIKE COOKE

TALKS aimed at the ethnic carve-up of Bosnia are due to restart.

Pious declarations from European Union (the former European Community) foreign ministers, as they launched the initiative, that they were demanding a reversal of ethnic-cleansing and the return of territory acquired by military force, are a cruel attempt at a confidence trick that should fool no one.

The 11-day-old agreement for free access for humanitarian aid had been reaffirmed by Bosnian, Croat and Serb military leaders, Belgian foreign minister Willy Claes announced. But, as yet, this agreement has been more honour'd in the breach than the observance.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata has accused all three groups of reneging on the agreement.

Serb general Ratko Mladic boycotted the meeting from which Claes emerged to make the announcement.

The presence of Lord 'Count Dracula' Owen hovering over the EU initiative confirms that it is a revised partition plan — not the withdrawal of hostile forces from Bosnia-Herzegovina, the only real guarantee of peace and the end of ethnic-cleansing and barbarism.



A victim of the Bosnian war

## Bosnians die in food-parcel drop

DESPERATION drove a crowd of Bosnians to risk death and injury by collecting food from a US air-drop that had landed in the middle of a minefield, Maggie O'Kane reported in last Saturday's 'Guardian'.

At least one woman died and many more were injured as they were taunted by Serbian Chetnik forces who watched them. 'Come on you Muslims,' said the Serbs. 'Come on over here and we'll

give you some food. 'Come on Muslims, get your American parcels,' said five Serb soldiers approaching a man and a woman. They ran and the woman was blown apart by a mine.

Warnings from Bosnian soldiers could not stop the desperately hungry people. 'Don't go on,' the soldiers said. 'The field is mined. The Chetniks are at the end of the field, stay away.'

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