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SUPPORT for the Workers Aid Christmas con-voy to Bosnia is pouring in from various parts of Europe. Contingents were meeting in Germany on their way to Zagreb in Croatia.

They will be joining others, from Europe, in the Croatian

capital today, Saturday 18 December. From there the convoy will attempt to reach the Bosnian mining town of Tuzla along the 75km highway — the

northern route - from Orasje, a Croatian border town.

In Germany, Bosnian refugees have collected over 50 tons of aid to put on the convoy. A team from Britain took four trucks to Stuttgart to take some of this aid to Zagreb.

A meeting of Bosnians living in Germany was held last Tuesday, addressed by Bob Myers, secretary of Workers Aid for Bosnia.

Joined

Supporters of Workers Aid in Germany have donated 8,000 Deutschmarks (£3,150) towards the expenses of the convoy.

Three representatives from Workers Aid in Spain joined the convoy. Lastminute difficulties with insurance stopped a truck from Barcelona joining.

The campaign continues to grow in Spain and it is expected that it will have a powerful presence on the convoy planned for early in the new year.

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Child slave labour

Fascism in Russia

BY THE EDITOR

Irish supporters of the campaign living in London have financed a truck for the Christmas convoy. Irish workers from north-west London raised over £150 for the convoy and the Save Aras na n'Gael campaign donated £15 towards the lorry.

The Irish Workers' Group of the Unison public service union in Brent, north London, has sent in £125 towards the Irish truck.

Appeal

Sean Toibin, a member of the building workers' union UCATT, was driving the truck and an appeal from him for the convoy appeared in the 'Irish World' and the 'Irish Post'.

Trucks organised by trades unionists are being sent from Belgium. Bob Myers met them last week as they were making preparations for further strike action against the government.

In Switzerland Bosnians will be sending a truck and linking up with the main convoy in either Zagreb or

The campaign in Britain grows every day. A total of six trucks joined the convoy from Britain, one loaded in Brighton, another in the North West.

Strong support from trades unions continues and a sound basis is being laid for a powerful British contingent on the next convoy early in 1994 (see report page

A group of young comrades who met on the first convoy form the core of the British contingent. The phone in Workers Aid's office in London has hardly stopped ringing, with offers of aid and requests to send parcels to Tuzla.

■ The Christmas convoy is part of the build-up for a European-wide convoy for early in the new year. The central purpose of this will be to continue the fight for the opening of the northern route to Tuzla.

The United Nations is deliberately blocking this road despite the fact that this is an approved route.

■ Help for the campaign is needed urgently. Please contact Workers Aid on 061-707 1584, or in London on 071-582 5462. Or write to PO Box 9, Eccles SO, Salford M30 7FX.

Season's greetings

THIS is the last edition of Workers Press before the Christmas and New Year holidays. The next issue will appear on 8 January 1994. We wish all our readers the warmest of seasonal greetings and look forward to your continued support in 1994.



Faruk Ibrahimovic and a Bosnian refugee handing in a petition last Saturday at the United Nations offices in London demanding that the UN open the northern route from Orasje, Croatia, **Photo: Anthony Myers**

WORKERS AID CHRISTMAS CONVOY HOTLINE: 071-582 5462

Labour threatens child benefit

THE Labour Party has always presented itself as the 'friend of the welfare state'. In criticising Thatcher and the Tories it boasted that 'the welfare state will be safe in our hands'. Many who continue to vote Labour do so in the belief, or perhaps the hope, that such statements are

The present system of welfare benefits was largely put in place during the lifetime of the Labour government that was in office after 1945. The system was established on the basis of earlier proposals made by William Beveridge, former director of the London School of Economics and a Liberal peer.

In fact right from the start the Labour leaders retreated before the ruling class and failed to implement the full Beveridge proposals.

The minister of health, Aneurin Bevan, also capitulated to pressure from the British Medical Association and trimmed his original plans for the National Health Service.

At the end of the government's lifetime, in the face of a mounting financial crisis, the Labour leaders introduced prescription charges, thus breaching the principle of a health service freely available to all.

But the Labour leaders are now moving far beyond these positions.

IN A REPORT 'Social Justice, Children and the Family', the Commission on Social Justice has signalled an end to universal childhood benefit. At the same time the report admits that one child in five in Britain is now living in poverty!

The establishment of family allowance, as of right, to all but the first child, was one of the benefits introduced by the post-war Labour government.

The commission is not formally a Labour Party body but is a key element in future policy-making, and was set up by Labour leader John Smith specifically for this purpose.

The commission proposes four possible futures for the exisitng child benefit:

Retention of the existing structure.

Taxation of the benefit for either all taxpayers

or for higher taxpayers only.

Conversion of child benefit into a cashable tax credit whereby better-off parents would receive a tax allowance while those below the benefit level would receive a cash benefit.

Restriction of child benefit to children under five. In other words the Labour leaders are now actively preparing for the further extension of the hated 'means test' that aroused such anger in the working class in the 1930s.

Here is an index of the class role that a future Labour government will play. The period when capitalism could grant certain reforms to sections of the working class is now over. The policies of any future Labour government will be quite unlike those its predecessor carried out after 1945.

Despite all the press hype about an 'economic recovery', the prospect is one of rising unemployment and increasing poverty for millions as already severely depleted services are further slashed.

It is this deepening capitalist crisis that lies at the basis of the attacks on welfare benefits and not simply the policy of the Tory government.

It is now urgent that the maximum unity be forged among all those defending welfare benefits and social services. But such a unity can be created only in struggle against all those leaders in the Labour and trade union movement who join hands with the Tories in destroying what is left of welfare

In this spirit we ask all those who oppose the return to means testing, who wish to defend existing services, to come to the Unite the Struggles Conference to be held in Manchester in February.

For details of the Unite the Struggles Conference see facing page.

Letters

Another letter — page 7

WE WELCOME LETTERS SEND THEM TO: WORKERS PRESS PO BOX 735, LONDON SW8 1YB

OR PHONE 071-582 8882

Displaying homophobia and sexism

HAVING been a Workers Press reader for over ten years and having worked with WRP comrades on a number of issues within the Labour movement, I have also had differences with you, particularly on questions of sexism and homophobia, on which I have found the party has held questionable if not downright reactionary positions — especially in the pre-Healy

Recently these subjects seem to have been treated more seriously, but Peter Fryer's 'Personal Column' of 27 November seems to excel in displaying sexism and homophobia

I have been disturbed by previous apparent views of his on mammalian behaviour' and 'date rape', and by the arro-gance of his tone and the personal nature of his criticisms. But the 27 November column is even more disturbing.

I would like to know why the paper of a revolutionary party gives considerable column space to intensely sexist views.

On 'date rape' he produces a vague jumble of reactionary and sexist ideas about women's sexual behaviour with men and their psychological status: 'those neurotic or psychopathic or sadistic women' (phew, quite a choice there!) 'fortunately few' (well, what a relief!) ' who, having aroused their victims with caresses, then say 'at the moment of intromission' (why not just say 'prick teaser' and be done with it? And what about all the men who, having achieved their orgasm, roll over and sleep, leaving the woman frustrated from not having achieved orgasm?) '(or cry rape afterwards)

Perhaps Peter would care to define 'neurotic', psychopathic' or 'sadistic' in relation to women, and reflect that many women have been labelled in these terms for exhibiting behaviour outside of the restrictive role model allotted to us by society. And not only labelled but treated with drugs or committed to mental hospitals.

Why doesn't Peter throw in hysterical' for good measure?

He obviously still adheres to the idea that women 'cry rape', throwing some doubt on whether he believes that rape exists at all. Perhaps he would like to comment on how 'extreme' he thinks the case of Sandra Wignall is, or if he thinks all women have these tendencies?

His pronouncement on sex which can and should be the most beautiful and mutually enriching of human relationships' is also questionable. Sex can be a lot of things including beautiful and enriching; it can also be pleasurable, exciting, casual, playful, painful, emotional or

purely physical, to name a few

of its aspects.

I would be interested to know how Peter's ponderous, mora-listic tone relates to a scientific, or even descriptive, analysis of sex and sexuality. And perhaps he would comment on whether lesbian and gay sex fits into his pronouncements.

On the issue of lesbian and gay sex, why on earth should information on this -'every other aspect of sex education' - be given 'when' (or, if?) ' the child asks the appropriate question or questions, and not before'?

This phrase reeks of homophobia to me. One highly important aspect of the repression of lesbian and gay sexuality is society's attempts to render it invisible and/or filthy and unnatural. Given this climate, neither children nor adults will freely ask questions about it. Fear and shame about lesbian and gay sexuality must be combatted by education and — I agree with Keith Flett (Letters, 20 November) — positive images, in defiance of section 28, not by waiting for questions

Peter also informs us rather loftily that: 'In my view, neither gender nor sexual orientation is a valid criterion for the fitness of any person or couple to bring up children.

The question of the oppression of lesbians and gay men trying to bring up children and who are now actually prevented from fostering or adopting children — and references to them as comprising pretended family relationships' is more than a matter for Peter Fryer's personal view.

The oppression of lesbians and gay men needs to be understood scientifically and not as a question of individual viewpoint.

I am aware that Keith Flett has replied to Peter Fryer's column but I think he lets him off too lightly. I hope other readers feeling angry or disturbed as I do will not be deterred from expressing the criticisms.

Marie Critchley Leicester

Spite, bile and envy

I AM genuinely puzzled by the letters in Workers Press's 4 December issue which attack Peter Fryer in the most unfair, prejudiced and personal way.

At the very beginning of this intervention in a very tangible non-debate by Paul Henderson ('Grubbing around Freud's dustbin') and Keith Flett ("'Misuse" of sex?"), I want to declare my own bias. As a young socialist who enjoyed Peter Fryer's courageous book 'Hungarian Tragedy' [on the 1956 Hungarian revolution] and later the 'Newsletter' [a forerunner of Workers Press that Peter Fryer edited

I was glad to rediscover both Fryer and Workers Press a few years ago.

Being used to misrepresentation and denunciation from folk like Flett and Henderson for being 'an academic', let me say that I am in workers' language pissed off with what seems to me, as an outsider, to be personally motivated spite, bile and

When I was younger and more innocent of the ways of the world, I did not really understand that spite and envy could exist in the labour movement. But it seems to be the only thing energising the boring, illogical and silly letters from Flett and Henderson.

What else is one to make of Flett's very odd statement that: 'His [Fryer's] view of sex and sexuality seems to me, and this is hardly surprising, that of someone on the left before the watershed of 1968'. Well, as they say in my part of the world, 'That's us auld ones telt'

Will Flett decode this comment, for as it stands it seems to be a nasty, personal attack implying that Fryer's current view of sex and sexuality is not just stuck in a pre-1968 timewarp, but is by its pre-1968 definition reactionary?

It also seems strangely ageist in someone committed to politically correct' language! But perhaps Flett is just saying that all socialist attitudes to sex and sexuality formulated before 1968 (including Trotsky's?) are inherently reactionary. And what was so crucial about 1968 in the development of 'the new sexual politics'?

I don't know if Flett and Henderson are, if I am permitted the expression, 'spiritual twins' or simply spiritual and spirited advocates of the new 'political correctness'. In any case, they make me shudder and fear about the growth of their now tragically commonplace heresy-hunting (of pre-1968ers) in the labour movement.

Besides, if Henderson really wants an intelligent debate about Freud and sex, it does not help to accuse Fryer of lining up with 'the right wing of British psychology' without offering

As someone who was 'an academic' and a militant socialist for over two decades, I'd like Henderson to explain what he means by using the phrase 'the academic equivalent of a gutter press journalist'

In my capacity as a socialist, I have said some sharp things about comfortably off academics of the right and the left. But in doing so, I have never sought to buy ever so cheap popularity by insulting the intelligence of my audience/readers. And anyway, was not Freud an academic too? If Henderson admits that he was, then he is engaging in demagogy. If Freud was not, Henderson has some explaining to do.

However, would Henderson ease explain (in simple lan-

guage) what he means by hi assertion that Peter Fryer i expressing 'the standpoint o bourgeois science and medi cine'? How, where and at wha points do 'bourgeois science and medicine' diverge from social ist ones? And where does social ist medicine exist? Perhaps in Cuba or North Korea!

I suspect that Peter Fryer i much closer to Trotskyist ortho doxy than I am. But then it wa Scotland's national bard who said: 'Orthodox, orthodox Whau believes in . . . ?' Fryer is I think, more of an old-fashioned Marxist 'traditionalist' than am, but what gives his writing its enormous power is that he is steeped in pre-1968 socialis

Finally, I have an importan and challenging question, question I defy Henderson to answer. Is he willing to refute 'rotsky's assertion tha science cannot have an "atti tude""? In a characteristic statement Trotsky said: 'I someone studies astronomy of mathematics he does not have an attitude; he researches.'

Personally, I am much more interested in getting libertarian socialist ideas back on the agen da of world politics than in the horrid thing called 'politica correctness'

When I have shuffled off this mortal coil, I hope some kind comrade or comrades will in scribe the following words or my gravestone: 'He was ofter "politically incorrect", but a his best he tried to keep the faith and fight the good (socialist

James D. Young

Indisputably oppression

MAY I draw the attention of your readers to an unpleasant and almost unbelievable - de velopment affecting workers at London Borough of Hackney?

Although Hackney is a Labour council, and makes noises about equal opportunities policies against racism, sexism and so on, Hackney managers have now taken disciplinary action (two written warnings against two African workers for speaking to each other in their own language!

That may or may not be direct discrimination, in British legal terms, but in ordinary language it is indisputably

We would be interested to know of any other cases like this, and especially of any successful fights against such policies. Meanwhile, we shall treat it as a totally unacceptable act of discrimination, and one which we hope will be widely condemned.

Tony Whelan

Workers Press Coming soon £3,000 monthly fund

In so far: £813.36

IT'S alarm bells, not Christmas bells, this week. After last week's good news, we only managed to scrape up £232.76 since then. I was hoping -I always live in hope — for more. We're off for two weeks but the bills don't go away. With this poor showing the Workers Press Borrowing Requirement is under pressure again.. Come on. Put something in our seasonal stocking.

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

TUESDAY 21 DECEMBER: Picket of Thames magistrates' court organised by Tower Hamlets Nine Defence Campaign; the Nine were arrested outside Whitechapel hospital on 10 September during vigil for Quddus Ali, who is in a coma following a vicious racist attack. Picket starts 9.30am opposite the court, which is in Bow Road, E3 (and close to Bow Rd tube). SATURDAY 22 JANUARY 1994: 'Critique' conference organised jointly with Radical Chains. 10am-7pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (tube: Holborn). Debates: 'Is capitalism in decline?'; 'The new world order'; and 'Whatever happened to the USSR?'. Workshops: 'Marxism and dialectics'; 'International money'; 'The law of value and class struggle'; 'Theory and practice'; and 'Unwaged work'. Speakers include: Hillel Ticktin, István Mészáros and Geoff Pilling. Un-waged £4, waged £8. Details from: 081-348 5399 or 041-339 8855 ext. 4377. Write to "Critique" c/o The Institute for Russian and East European Studies, 29 Bute Gardens, Glasgow University, Glasgow G12 8RS.

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Trades unions rally to Christmas convoy

UNIONS are in the forefront of the support that Workers Aid has won for its Christmas convoy to Bosnia.

■ Shopworkers' union USDAW is to discuss the campaign at the December meeting of its executive council.

The union's secretary Garfield Davies has written to Workers

Aid saying that he will recommend support for the campaign and a donation from the union.

■ Camden branch of the public service union UNISON has welcomed the convoy and is to ask the union's executive to sponsor a lorry to Tuzla as part of the next convoy. A speaker from the Tuzla Logistic Centre in Zagreb spoke to the annual general meeting of the union branch and was given a warm welcome. Camden local authority workers have donated £96 to

■ Representatives of Workers Aid have met with Bill Speirs, deputy general secretary of the Scottish TUC. He expressed sympathy for the

campaign, and will raise it with his executive with a view to launching a call throughout the Scottish trade union movement for a fight to open the northern route - which is the shortest -

Donation

■ In response for a request for help, Transport and General Workers' Union general secretary Bill Morris has sent a donation of £200 on behalf of the

■ The Bakers, Food and

agreed to publish an appeal from the campaign in its union journal. General secretary Joe Marino has agreed to place before the next executive a suggestion that all branches be circulated asking them to back the campaign for opening the northern route. He has agreed to meet representatives of the campaign.

■ Aberdeen trades council is among the recent sponsors of the campaign. It congratulates Workers Aid on its campaign to get to Tuzla and has agreed to

call on the Scottish TUC to give its full support.

Separated

■ Tony Cooper, general secretary of the Engineers' and Managers' Association has written to Workers Aid saying that opening of the Northern Route is very worthwhile campaigning for. He has said that his organisation is at the disposal of Workers Aid on the understanding that any trucks they finance will be separated from the political aims of the campaign.

children are classed under

Home Office rules as 'unaccom-

panied minors', which gives their father the right to come to

Britain to look after them. He

The effects on her children no doubt will last a long time.

Her young son Mirza heard his

mother wandering about the

house and tried to persuade her

to come to bed, but finally fell

asleep. In the morning he found

his mother dead on the couch.

Her baby daughter asks for her

mother, and cries when she sees

week ago, says: 'What can you say? If I had been here every-

thing would have been diffe-

Her husband, who arrived a

her photograph.

got a visa within 24 hours.

Hundreds sleep rough in capital

MORE than 300 people are now forced to sleep rough in the West End of London. With others sleeping in the City, more than 400 people are believed to on the streets of central London each night, often in temperatures only just above freezing.

These are the results of a survey from the Association of London Authorities (ALA) and comes only days after the government's false claim that homelessness in the capital was

But this is only the tip of the iceberg, says the ALA. Many hundreds are sleeping out in the suburbs. Over 40 people were recently found on the streets of Croydon in south London.

Brixton, Lewisham and Brent are among the London boroughs reporting sharp increases in the number of homeless forced to sleep on freezing streets

■ POLICE with riot gear and sledgehammers cleared Europe's biggest squat, Rutland Mansions in north-west London. The squatters say that had told Brent council that they were prepared to move out peacefully by 20 December.

The police tipped off the media, who were there in force to see the show of force.

Many of the 40-odd living in the block have been there for almost ten years,

Last week the council sold the block to Paddington Churches Housing Association for

THE Newham Monitoring Project has launched a campaign to combat the British National Party in Newham, east London.

NMP plans a mass leafleting of Rathbone Market, in Canning Town — an area where the fascists have been distributing their racist filth — this weekend.

Meet outside the NMP at 11am prompt, Saturday 18 December. Contact Arif on 081-552

Bosnian rights

BY DOT GIBSON

THE war in Bosnia and the experiences of people from the former Yugoslavia who have come into conflict with their governments and with the UN forces were discussed at a London conference last week.

And the international network was extended of those working to defend the right of Bosnia to self-determination and to fight fascism.

Over 100 specially invited academics, politicians, diplomats and friends of Bosnia, including a representative of Workers Aid for Bosnia attended the conference on 8-9

The theme of this gathering, called by the Bosnia and Herzegovina Information Centre in London and the Kuala Lumpur Friends of Bosnia Action Group, was: 'Where Now for the Peace Process?' To guide the discussion four papers were pre-

Aims

Andreas Zumach, journalist for 'Die Tagszeitung', presented a paper on 'The Background to the Owen-Stoltenberg Plan' (which aims to break up Bosnia), and this was followed by Preventing and Punishing Genocide' introduced by Professor Marc Weller, a member of the Bosnian legal team.

Milos Vasic, a Serbian jour-nalist on 'Vreme', spoke on 'The Military Situation and Prospects for the Continuation of the War'. The fourth paper 'Pre-serving Bosnian Pluralism' was presented by Branka Magas, author of 'The Destruction of Yugoslavia'.

Meeting defends Refugee driven to tragic death

BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE

LAST week Bosnian refugee Lejla Ibrahimovic committed suicide by swallowing a bottle of sleeping pills. She left behind her 20-month-old daughter, and a young son.

She was driven to her pitiful death by the foreign policy of the British government - which colluded in the greater Serbian expansionism which drove her from her home, and then denied her the right to be reunited with the husband she was forced to leave behind.

Lejla came to Britain in an 'unofficial' convoy of refugees organised by a British Muslim group, 'Human Appeal'. Her family had responded to an advertisement in a Zagreb newspaper offering a haven to Bosnians — but which excluded men over 15.

After arriving in Birmingham, she and her children lived for five days on mattresses on

before being shunted around to privately rented houses. Lejla was put in a dirty three-bedroom house in need of repair. She and her two children were crammed into one room, and her sister-in-law's family and another woman shared the other two.

When they complained to the landlord he laughed at them, and asked them what else they expected. After he threatened them with eviction Lejla applied to Birmingham council to be rehoused. They told her there were too many British homeless for them to be able to deal with

Distress

But her greatest distress was caused by the separation from her husband. After the rest of his family had left he applied for a visa at the British embassy in Zagreb and was turned down

Now that Lejla is dead, her

Of the nearly 7,000 refugees from the former Yugoslavia who have applied for asylum in Britain since May 1992, only 335 have been processed. That means that the other 6,665 are in the same position as Lejla with no right to be reunited with

Campaign calls for struggles to be united UNITING all groups in struggle



Tower Hamlets Nine are innocent!

A PICKET is to be held at Thames magistrates' court this Tuesday (21 December) for nine young men appearing after their arrest following a police assault on a vigil for Quddus Ali, who is still in a coma after a racist attack.

The Tower Hamlets Nine charged with riot, under section 1 of the Public Order Act, which carries a maximum of life imprisonment - are guilty of nothing more than defending themselves from police harassment and racist violence, says the defence campaign which is

organising the picket. The vigil on 10 September, called to show support for Quddus Ali and his family, was harassed by the police attempted to force it into a restricted area and then to violently arrest some of those

Injured

One of the youths arrested was so badly injured that he required immediate medical attention for head injuries.

'The police continue to patrol our areas in riot vans constantly stopping and searching and harassing us, yet they claim they are protecting us', says the defence campaign for the nine. The defence campaign demands:

■ Charges against the Tower Hamlets Nine are dropped; An end to police violence and

harassment; and ■ The arrest of the racists who attacked Quddus and the com-

A national demonstration is to held on 19 March 1994, called by the Quddus Ali Support Committee, the Tower Hamlets Nine, and other community groups throughout east London.

Further information from the Tower Hamlets Nine Defence Campaign: 081-548 0099.

prisoners in Britain; and much

to defend basic rights and quality of life into a national movement is the aim of the Community and Union Action Campaign (CUAC). The campaign's first

conference, held in February 1993 in Manchester, brought together leading trades unionists and people fighting inside community groups against the ever-increasing onslaught on our public services and

This was not the kind of conference with platform of famous speakers who tell the audience what to do, but one at which every person who came was able to participate on the most democratic basis in all of the discussions and decisions.

Deepen

Since February 1993 the campaign has worked to contact all those who wanted to organise a second conference, with a wider participation, to extend and deepen the discussion on how to forge the links between all those in struggle.

That second conference will now take place on 12 February in the West Indian Centre, Carmoor Rd, Chorlton-on-Medlock, Manchester M13 OFB. All who agree with the aims of CUAC are most welcome to come.

■ The campaign has now produced the second pilot issue of its paper, 'Unite!'
Articles include: the history

of anti-fascism in east London - by an ex-dockers' shop steward; updates on the Crawley bin workers' fight against privatisation — by a Crawley bin worker; the Timex strike - by a member of the strike committee; Lancashire Women

Against Pit Closures' report on their victory against British Coal; an analysis of the official inquiry into Orville Blackwood's death - by a member of the campaign; the battle against compulsory competitive tendering by the Hertfordshire cleaners; political poll-tax

To subscribe to 'Unite!', which costs 40p a copy, write to the CUAC c/o Lambeth Trade Union Resource Centre, 12-14 Thornton St, London SW9. Multiple orders of 20 or more cost 30р а сору.

UNITE THE STRUGGLES! CONFERENCE

Saturday 12 February

Manchester West Indian Centre, Carmoor Rd, Choriton-on-Medlock, Manchester M13 0FB

Creche available - please contact CUAC to advise how many children you will be bringing £5 trades unions and TUCs, £1 community groups,

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Inside left

No return

IN July 1937 family and comrades were expecting Arne Munch-Petersen, a leader of the Danish Communist Party, back from a stay in the Soviet Union. He never turned up.

Months went by. First the Social Democrats daily, and then others, began asking where Munch-Petersen was. Communist Party members were told the former party secretary, member of parliament, and representative on the Communist International (Comintern) executive was doing vital clandestine work somewhere, perhaps in Hitler's Germany.

In 1939 the Soviet authorities claimed Munch-Petersen was no longer in the USSR, but had left over the southern border. For the party faithful this was further reason to think their comrade must be on a top secret Comintern mission. Fifty years later, the truth came out. In 1989, Danish newspapers reported that Arne Munch-Petersen had been arrested in 1937, the day he was due to return home, and died of TB in a Soviet prison in

IN THE latest issue (no. 3) of the journal 'Socialist History', Steve Parsons provides some of the details of Munch-Petersen's fate, drawing on Ole Sohn's book 'Fra Folketinget til celle 290 - Arne Munch-Petersen skaebne' ('From Parliament to Cell 290 — the fate of Arne Munch-Petersen'). Sohn, Danish CP general-secretary in the late 1980s, has delved into the Comintern archives, and those of Stalin's NKVD secret police.

These reveal that, although Munch-Petersen had loyally endorsed Stalinist policies, condemned Trotsky and Zinoviev in 1927, and supported the 1930s show trials, he was accused of taking part in an international Trotskyist conspiracy. Among charges was that in 1932 he failed to organise mass protests against Trotsky's visit to Copenhagen, and in 1934, while working for the Comintern, he had begun gathering Trotskyist literature (indeed he had, dutifully handing it to his superiors as part of the fight against 'counter-revolutionary' subversion).

According to one scenario produced by NKVD interrogators, Trotsky's accomplice was their former chief, G.G. Yagoda, and the conspiracy included Munch-Petersen, Bela Kun (former leader of the Hungarian Communist Party), Willi Munzenberg (a prominent member of the German Communist Party), and British Stalinists Harry Pollitt and Page Arnot! (Bela Kun was reportedly shot by the NKVD in 1937; Willi Munzenberg was murdered in France in 1940; Pollitt and Page Arnot were spared.)

Steve Parsons raises the responsibility of Comintern leader G. Dimitrov, to whom the Danish CP leader, convinced his arrest was a ghastly 'mistake', appealed unsuccessfully for help. It has been suggested the NKVD picked on Munch-Petersen because his colleague Aksel Larsen, being still a Danish MP, was not available.

Munch-Petersen's crucial role moving Comintern archives from Berlin after the Nazis took power could have made him a target. Having contributed to the defeat of the German working class, Stalin had to erase his mistakes, and others' memories. Munch-Petersen's pilgrimage to Moscow was to be a journey with no return.

"Socialist History', post-glasnost successor to the Communist Party's occasional 'Our History', is published by Pluto Press for the Socialist History Society.

Charlie Pottins

Holiday television

Selected films

Saturday 18 December

ECHO PARK (1985). Robert Dornheim's modest and rather neglected off-beat comedy drama abougroup of Los Angeles maritis (11.30pm, Channel 4).

Sunday 19 December

THE LADYKILLERS (1955). Classic Ealing comedy with Peter Sellers, Alec Guinness and Katie Johnson (3.30pm, Channel 4).

BATMAN (1989). With Jack Nicholson as the Joker. This full-length version promises bad language and violence (8.55pm, BBC1).

Monday 20 December

THE JOURNEY OF NATTY GANN (1985). Travelling across once-famous silent screen actress (11.10pm, BBC1).

AMARCORD (1974), Federico Fellini's semi-autobiographical view of provincial life under fascism in 930s Italy (11.30pm, BBC2).

Friday 24 December

THE PHILADELPHIA STORY (1940). Katharine Hepburn, James Stewart and Cary Grant in George Cukor's sparkling champagne comedy (12.55am, BBC1).

Saturday 25 December

BACK TO THE FUTURE PART III (1990). In this, the final episode, Michael J. Fox travels back in time to the Wild West to rescue his mad(1987). John Duigan's touching coming-of-age film about young boy's infatuation with problem girlfriend (11.10pm, BBC2).

THE HONEYMOON KILLERS (1970). Truly spine-chilling horror about couple who prey on 'lonelyhearts' women. Written and directed by the remarkable Leonard Kastle, whose only film this was (12.55am, BBC2).

Tuesday 28 December

DIRTY ROTTEN SCOUNDRELS (1988). Steve Martin and Michael



Catherine Deneuve in 'Belle de Jour', Saturday 25, BBC2

Caine as professional con-artists trying to outdo each other on the French Riviera (8pm, BBC1).

RED RIVER (1948). Cattle baron John Wayne and his adopted son Montgomery Clift in superb Howard Hawks's epic western. Fingers crossed for the uncut version (1.35am, ITV).

Wednesday 29 December

MAD LOVE (1935). Peter Lorre as insane surgeon who grafts the hands of a murderer onto an injured pianist (1am, BBC2).

Thursday 30 December

STAND AND DELIVER (1988). A tour-de-force performance by Edward James Olmos as uncompromising teacher in a tough Los Angeles neighbourhood school (11pm, BBC2).

Friday 31 December

BONNIE AND CLYDE (1967). Arguably Arthur Penn's most celebrated film. Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway as the legendary 1930s bank-robbers (11.30pm, ITV).

Saturday 1 January

ROMUALD AND JULIETTE (1989). Coline Serreau's delightful romantic comedy about relationship between company boss and black cleaning woman (9.35pm,



James Stewart and Katharine Hepburn in 'The Philadelphia Story', Friday 24, BBC1

JEFF JACKSON has once again schedules to bring us this bum appears to have shown remarks choice of films, and says that (" to be something for everyone, i (no prizes for spotting it).



Katie Johnson with the gang in 'Ladyl





In addition to its two-part profile of H Lloyd, Channel 4 is also screening s classic comedies: MOVIE CRAZY (3 Monday 27); SPEEDY (3.15pm, Tues GIRL SHY (2pm, Wednesday 29); TH BROTHER (2pm, Thursday 30); HOT (2pm, Friday 31); SAFETY LAST (12. Saturday 1).



Giulietta Masina and Anthony Quinn, Monday 20, BBC2

father, a 14-year-old girl teams up with a young drifter and a wolf. Terrific period atmosphere (3.30pm, ITV).

LA STRADA (1954). Federico Fellini's unforgettable tale of a brutish circus performer and his devoted waif-like companion. With Anthony Quinn, Giulietta Masina and Richard Baseheart (11.30pm, BBC2).

Tuesday 21 December

SUNSET BOULEVARD (1950). Now a highly successful stage musical — but this is the genuine article! William Holden and Gloria Swanson in Billy Wilder's classic about struggling young writer and BELLE DE JOUR (1967). Luis Bunuel's brilliant study of young middle-class housewife whose sexual fantasies become reality. Absolutely unmissable (10.55pm,

Sunday 26 December

THE BLOB (1988). Unfortunately only the remake of the (surely prophetic) 1958 low budget sci-fi original in which Steve McQueen appeared in his first leading role. A giant jelly-like substance from outer space begins swallowing up a small US town. Beware! (11.40pm, ITV).

Monday 27 December

THE YEAR MY VOICE BROKE



Marx Brothers 'At the Circus' with Jerry Marenghi (Sunday 26, Channel 4)

Holiday television

scoured the holiday er batch of goodies. He ble restraint this year in his uite by chance'!) there seems ncluding the proverbial turkey



illers', Sunday 19, Channel 4

For some Marxists Christmas wouldn't be the same without a season of films by the Brothers. Channel 4 obliges with: MONKEY **BUSINESS** (12.50am, Saturday 25); ANIMAL **CRACKERS** (12.45am, Sunday 26); AT THE CIRCUS (12.40am, Monday 27); HORSE FEATHERS (1.15am, Tuesday 28); DUCK SOUP (1.10am, Wednesday 29); THE BIG STORE (12.40am, Saturday



BBC2 offers an all-too-brief season of short films by the incomparable Jacques Tati: SOIGNE TON GAUCHE (8.40am, Tuesday 28); L'ECOLES DES FAICTEURS (8.40am,

rold

of his

Programme guide

Saturday 18 December

BLOODY BOSNIA WINTER 1993: 'War Without End?'. Jon Snow presents a special programme reviewing the year's events and examining the prospects for a resolution of the conflict in 1994 (7pm, Channel 4).

BLOODY BOSNIA WINTER 1993: TRUE STORIES - 'The Unforgiving'. A repeat showing of this harrowing account of a Serbian couple's search for their dead child's grave (10.05pm, Channel

Sunday 19 December

MOVING PICTURES SPECIAL: Who's Crying Now?'. The rise and fall of the controversial Palace Pictures which produced 18 films including 'Company of Wolves', 'Scandal' and 'Mona Lisa' (8.30pm,

BLOODY BOSNIA WINTER 1993: SARAJEVO DIARY - 'From Bad to Worse'. Bill Tribe's original 'Sarajevo Diary' was part of the BLOODY BOSNIA season last August. This film records his return ten months later to find hope fading among family, friends and colleagues he left behind (8.45pm,

Monday 20 December

TIMEWATCH: 'Chairman Mao -The Last Emperor'. This profile, commemorating what would have been his 100th birthday, reveals Mao to have been a man of private excesses and brutality (9.30pm, BBC2).

Tuesday 21 December

FINE CUT: 'Hobo'. Welcome repeat of John T. Davis's outstanding documentary about an American railroad tramp - a tough, fastdisappearing way of life (9.50am,

40 MINUTES: 'Latin Nights'. Follows two pairs of young ballroom dancers, on the brink of glittering careers, as they prepare for the main event of the year in Blackpool (9.30pm, BBC2).

FROM BEIRUT TO BOSNIA; 'To the Ends of the Earth'. Robert Fisk's concluding report comes



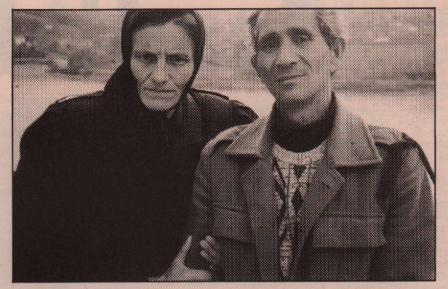
Tina Turner's complete story, 22 December, Channel 4; and her California concert, 24 December, Channel 4

from Bosnia where beleaguered Muslims are struggling for survival (9pm, Channel 4).

THE COMPLETE STORY OF TINA TURNER. The definitive documentary - from cotton-picking to superstardom (9pm, Channel

Friday 24 December

mentional diesection Australia - which



Serbian couple Desa and Ilja Stojanovic search for their dead child's grave in 'The Unforgiving', Saturday 18 December, Channel 4



Bill Tribe returns to Bosnia to find hope fading in 'Sarajevo Diary', Sunday 19 December, Channel 4

ments on Earth (7pm, BBC2).

TINA TURNER: 'What's Love, Live'. Concert performance from California (9pm, Channel 4).

XMAS IN NEW YORK: 'Diana Ross, the Lady Sings'. Live performance accompanied by an orchestra of top-flight jazz musicians (11.05pm, Channel 4).

Saturday 25 December

'Harold Lloyd: The Third Genius'. Kevin Brownlow and David Gill's centenary celebration (in two parts) of the great comic movie stunt-artist (12.05pm, Channel 4 the concluding half is tomorrow, 11.35am).

'The One And Only Groucho'. Portrait of the most famous of the Brothers Marx, by way of introduction to a short season of their films (1.50pm, Channel 4).

XMAS IN NEW YORK: 'The Alternative Queen's Message'. From the sumptuous surroundings of the famous Plaza Hotel, Quentin Crisp delivers a heart felt

Christmas speech (3pm, Channel

'Swan Song'. Sir John Gielgud in dramatisation of the Anton Chekhov short story about an ageing actor. Directed by Kenneth Branagh (8.30pm, Channel 4).

Sunday 26 December

'The Harmfulness of Tobacco'. Edward Fox as the hen-pecked husband giving an impromptu talk to an all-female audience. Based on Anton Chekhov's short story, directed by Nick Hamm (8.30pm, Channel 4).

Monday 27 December

'The Queen of Spades'. Glyndebourne Festival production of Tchaikovsky's tragic tale, based on a story by Pushkin. The London Philharmonic is conducted by Andrew Davis (4.10pm, BBC2).

Tuesday 28 December

'Marilyn Monroe: The Last Interview'. Two days after giving this interview to 'Life' journalist Richard Meryman, the Hollywood actress was dead (5pm, BBC2).

Wednesday 29 December

'The Decisive Moment: The Year in Pictures'. Photographers talk about the pictures which illustrated the key news stories of 1993, from Bishopsgate to Sarajevo. Washington to the Sudan (7.20pm, BBC2).

XMAS IN NEW YORK: 'Harry Connick Jr'. A performance given at the Paramount theatre (8.30pm,

'Deadly Currents'. An award-winning documentary in which Israeliborn Canadian film-maker Simcha Jacobovici records the action and voices of the West Bank, where the Palestinian uprising has created a world of soldiers, activists and international news crews (11.20pm, BBC2).

Thursday 30 December

'Magpie in the Dock'. Among the evidence presented at this mock trial of Britain's most resourceful bird there promises to be some spectacular film sequences (8pm, BBC1).



Harry Connick Jr croons in New York, 29 December, Channel 4

SCREEN TWO: 'The Railway Station Man'. Julie Christie and Donald Sutherland in Shelagh Delaney's dramatisation of the novel by Ulster writer Jennifer Johnston (9pm, BBC2).

Friday 31 December

'The Callas Conversations'. Soprano Maria Callas in discussion with Lord Harewood. First of two programmes, made in 1968, being shown on successive days (4pm and 6.20pm, BBC2).

'La Traviata'. A performance of Verdi's opera recorded at La Fenice, Venice. With Edita Gruberova as the doomed courtesan (7.55pm, BBC2).



Chubby Checker reputedly started the Twist, 24 December, Channel 4

Wednesday 22 December

'Twist'. Chronicles the evolution of the rock 'n' roll dance craze (7pm, Channel 4).

ANIMAL DRAMA: 'Inura the Dingo'. A young female dingo struggles for survival in the IN RESERVE AS THE DESCRIPTION OF PERSONS ASSESSED.



Quentin Crisp addresses the nation on Christmas Day, Channel 4

Shouting for joy

BACK in the 1930s, when Bruce Turner was an adolescent misfit his own expression first heard the sound of real jazz coming out of one of those old ten-inch gramophone records that revolved 78 times a minute and lasted for hardly more than three minutes, his young life was transformed.

'I felt as if I wanted to shout for joy', he wrote many years later.

So, with all the inevitability of a natural process - like sunshine breaking through clouds, as it were - he taught himself to play clarinet and alto saxophone and spent the next 50-odd years joyfully pouring his heart out in the company of like-minded players and

Turner's recent death at the age of 70 deprives the British jazz world of one of its central, most respected, and best-loved characters.

His 'philosophy' of jazz, his understanding of what it was all about, was no less profound and wise for being extremely simple. He summed it up in two passages of his racy autobiography Hot Air, Cool Music (Quartet

Explaining, for the benefit of readers who had not yet grasped it, the essential difference between the 'classical' music he respected and listened to and the jazz music he loved and lived for, he wrote: 'A symphony is like a great novel . . . but jazz is more like an urgent conversation.'

Those 15 words could not be bettered. Like Turner's music, they 'contain multitudes'. There are many books on jazz that say no more, and some that say a lot

Later in the same book, explaining what makes a good jazz drummer, Turner wrote that he or she 'listens carefully to what is going on and then provides exactly the right accompaniment'

Simple it sounds, this explanation goes to the very heart of the matter. For, again, there lies behind it a whole vast world of musical experience, which applies to other jazz musicians besides drummers and has to do with team-work, with listening to and learning from each other, with subordinating individual egos, with blending individual voices into a collectively fashioned texture that is more than the sum of its parts.

TURNER grew up and found his jazz feet in that distant epoch when lovers of the music, and record collectors, were split into irreconcilable camps that hated each other's guts with a passion and ferocity rarely encountered outside small political groups.

Broadly speaking, you were either a traditionalist or a

The traditionalists, known to their enemies as 'mouldy fygges', could play or listen only to jazz which stood four-square within the early New Orleans style and, for preference, copied note for note the classic recordings in that style.

Any deviation from that apogee of excellence - even merely the inclusion of a saxophone in the ensemble - was total anathema.

To the modernists, some of whom sported dark glasses, goatees, and black leather jackets in imitation of their idols, the traditionalists were locking jazz up in a dusty museum case and refusing to let it live and develop.

Turner was drawn to neither of these camps. He was a middle-of-the-road jazzman who enjoyed good jazz, indeed all good music, wherever it could be found and whoever could be found playing it.

And, because he had something urgent to say, he never refused to join, when given the opportunity, in the 'urgent

COLUMN

conversations' of those whose chosen idiom was very different from his own.

He was very much in the jazz mainstream', long before that label was coined. He played with Humphrey Lyttleton both before and after the latter 'sold out', as some put it at the time; and he played in one bebopstyled group in the late 1940s without surrendering either his principles or his individual

Such cheerful eclecticism made him highly unpopular with the musical bigots. At one gig in Birmingham a group of locals greeted him, when he stood up to take his first solo, by unfurling a gigantic banner bearing the words: 'GO HOME DIRTY BOPPER'.

But Turner went on blowing, however much his vigorous lines soared right over the heads of those incurably deaf to their beauty, lyricism, and

He was a modest man, who saw nothing out of the way in approaching jazz players whose work he admired and taking lessons from them, as he took lessons from Lennie Tristano and Lee Konitz in New York.

Yet, at the same time, he was his own man. And, as many remember, he was a staunch eccentric who grazed between sessions on the cream cakes he adored (his 'little box of assorted pastries'); who never touched alcoholic drinks (and that was indeed being eccentric, in the early days), preferring a cup of hot milk and Marmite to a late-night glass of beer; and who called every male he met, friend and chance acquaintance alike, by the monosyllable 'Dad'

This last eccentricity only ever caused him one problem. That came when he met his father for the first time after several years, and found him-self at a loss how to address

MANY older readers will recall that Turner dabbled with politics in his youth. For a time he was a member of the Communist Party, and both before and after that he was vaguely interested in Trotskyism. He says in his autobiography that Trotsky's 'sheer boring intellectualism appealed to me'; this is characteristically self-deflating rather than hostile or dismis-

It was Bruce Turner, and not, as is generally thought, Benny Goodman, who first took a real jazz band to the USSR.

Tom Scott Robson, who got to know Turner in recent years and whose wife Pat was an enthusiastic attender at the Bruce Turner Jump Band gigs at the Piccadilly Club in the late 1950s — tells me that, 'like so many who had never really broken from Stalinist ideas', Turner was 'saddened and conmany socialist "gains", as he saw were being systematically smashed with the advance of history'.

Turner was a man with a social conscience.

'He never refused an invitation to play at workers' meetings', says Tom, adding:

'He and the band played at many of the big Young Socialist summer fairs held in the 1970s, and I recall especially him playing at a very successful benefit we organised in support of sack-

ed Pilkington workers. A lifetime of shouting for joy is over. But the joy survives, for Bruce Turner's music can still be heard on over a dozen

And it's something to shout

PERSONAL Fragile victory for Italian 'left'

THE LIBERAL press of western Europe drew a sigh of relief after the Italian local elections on 5 December.

Various fascists and 'extremist' candidates for the office of mayor in 129 towns and cities, including all major cities in the country, were defeated.

These elections are being widely interpreted as the key to the probable line-up in the next general election.

It was taken for granted that the 'old regime' - the Socialists and Christian Democrats would be decimated.

The exposure of the epidemic proportions of corruption in business and national politics, sustained during the cold war years as the bastion against communism, has left the parties that ruled the country since the end of World War II in disarray. Both the masses and the ruling classes are looking for a new governing class'.

And at first sight they seem to be looking to the reformed 'ex-Stalinists' of the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS). PDSsupported candidates won the big cities, beating both the fascist MSI and the northern separatists of the Lombard League into second place.

This reversed the decline of the PDS vote, which reached an all-time low of 16 per cent in the 1992 general election. News of PDS victories sent the lira and share prices up as the prospect of inevitable confrontations following fascist victories were postponed

The bourgeois press is now marvelling at the paradox of the ex-Communists as the new sta-bilising force in Italian politics after the tumultuous events of the last two years.

Over 3,000 senior business and political figures have come under investigation for corruption and links between respectable politicians and organised crime have been brought to light.

But, the real significance of the elections is the polarisation of politics following the collapse of the corrupt centre.

Despite their failure to secure any big cities the fascist MSI made tremendous gains, frequently taking votes of around 40 per cent and above. This, in combination with the fragility of the PDS victory, is the key to developments in the next period.

The PDS is of course going all out to present itself as the new 'party of government', but its weaknesses are clear. The PDS campaign was an alliance, including liberals, 'Greens', disaffected socialists and the 'unreformed' Stalinist hardliners of Communist Refoundation. that will fall apart under stress.

Fascists

Francesco Rutelli, the PDSsupported candidate who beat the fascists into second place in Rome, based his electoral campaign on an emphasis of his independence from the PDS.

In Trieste the PDS was even in alliance with disaffected Christian Democrats. Of the five largest cities, only in Naples was the winning candidate actually a member of the PDS.

This precarious balance of power occurs under circumstances in which the national government has already strong bonapartist elements in the form of Carlo Ciampi, ex-head of the Bank of Italy, with his cabinet of 'honest technocrats' trying to re-stabilise the country through massive cuts in public spending and the privatisation of state industries demanded by both the IMF and Brussels.

'Left' PDS leader Achille Occhetto (left); and far-right Lombard League leader Umberto Bossi

Last week's gains for the Democratic Party of the Left in Italy's local

elections was hailed by many as a blow against the fascists. But,

polarisation of politics following the collapse of the corrupt centre

NICK LEE argues, the real significance of the elections is the

As recently as 2 December Bossi asserted that 'the League is anti-fascist and will not deal with fascism'

Certainly the idea of break-ing up Italy into regional federations does not fit easily with the centralising tradition of Mussolini represented by the MSI.

littered with all manner of opportunism characterised by parties whose main social base is the petty bourgeoisie.

gio Calabria trebled its vote to 17 per cent and proposed an alliance with the PDS! At a national level MSI leader Gianfranco Fini is calling for a na-

Umberto Bossi meanwhile is not only smarting from the failure of the League's hitherto un-

'adjusted' in the classic fascist abandon the poorer south - has tradition of ideological opportunism. And there are maverick king-makers like the media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi who

could doubtless help this alliance along. Berlusconi, owner of several TV channels which have given him an ample platform 'above politics', declared himself for Gianfranco Fini as MSI candi-

date for Rome. Berlusconi is already talking

of a 'new grouping' If the national political configuration established at the next general election mirrors that now established at a local level, a rapid consolidation of the extreme right will parallel the growing crisis of the PDS alliance as the latter moves

against the working class. The return of participation in government by the extreme right would then become a distinct possibility.

Fallen

In last week's edition of the news weekly 'Panorama' the internationally-respected Italian philosopher Norberto Bobbio writes: 'Now that the Berlin Wall has fallen, and the Communist Party has transformed itself into the Party of the Democratic Left, into that type of left which has had the responsibility of government in several European countries, it seems that in Italy too the right moment has arrived to return to normality.

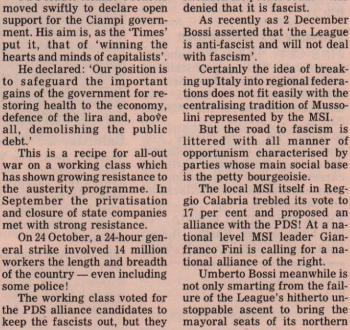
But this normality is in crisis! The ending of the cold war is also the ending of the period of world capitalist expansion which provided the conditions for the very 'democratic consensus' and 'stable government' in western Europe that Bobbio is celebrating.

Our preoccupation should surely be with the crisis of the democratic bourgeois state in the epoch of imperialist decay.

History never repeats itself in exactly the same way.

We should nevertheless be asking how far the experience of Italy in the inter-war period was an exception and how far a rehearsal for the future.

A discussion of the nature of fascism - not just as gangs of racist thugs but as a political system - must be carried into the workers' movement in every European country.



PDS leader Achille Occhetto

'The working class voted for the PDS alliance candidates to keep the fascists out, but they will continue resistance to the austerity programme and will come into open conflict with Occhetto.'

will continue resistance to the austerity programme and will come into open conflict with Occhetto.

At this point the strong showing of the fascists and extreme right becomes an important factor. The right are currently divided.

In the south the established fascist party, the MSI, increased its support but not by enough to win major seats. In Naples Alessandra Mussolini, grand-daughter of the Duce, was narrowly beaten by the

PDS. In the north Umberto Bossi's Lombard League remained strong but failed to live up to its expectations, being defeated in the big northern cities of Genoa. Trieste and Venice by PDSbacked coalitions. However it remains the largest single party

The League, with its secessionist rhetoric - wanting to

power base, but has seen his party treasurer become embroiled in the corruption scandals that exposed the decadence of the ruling Christian Democrats.

The point is that the League and the MSI have the same power base, the classic constituency of fascism, the lower middle class and small business. After the elections Bossi responded that 'the League cannot remain isolated'

With the MSI's base in the south and the League's northern strength, an alliance will become an increasingly attractive

proposition. The League's racist attitude towards the south - characterised by its chief ideologist Gianfranco Miglio as the 'Mediterranean mentality', where the heat prevents hard work and industriousness, and lumps Sicilians together with Libyans, Moroccans and Greeks - can easily be

Do they know Two it's Christmas? Bronven Hand Two matic How to

BY BOB ARCHER

TWO hundred million children in the world earn their own living or work as slaves to pay their parents' debts.

This is the official figure in the International Labour Organisation's report for 1993, but ILO experts say the figures could be three or four times higher.

Anti Slavery International talks of 25 million children enslaved by landlords and businessmen in the Indian sub-continent, 8 million performing forced labour in the Andes region, and hundreds of thousands in Brazilian plantations and working as domestic servants in

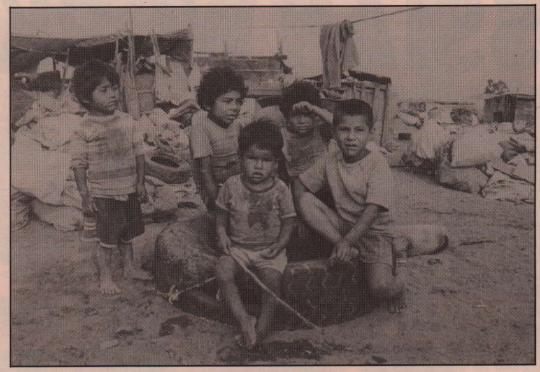
International agencies combatting the evil of child labour find that parents and trades unions connive in the practice in the poor countries most dramatically affected.

Woven

And people in the 'prosper-ous' West and North buy the products of child labour - like oriental carpets, Brazilian orange juice, or Pakistani leather - with remarkably few

The problem is difficult to solve because it is woven into the very nature of capitalist economy. Slave labour is the only way for these children and their families to live at all - and it is a living death.

'If you don't watch what you are doing, you can do more damage than good,' an ILO expert recently told 'Spiegel', the German news magazine. The United Nations convention on children's rights is ratified by a large number of countries which deliberately ignore the misery on their own doorstep.



Slum children in Peru: 8 million are performing forced labour in the Andes region

- One Pakistani minister himself kept children in a labour camp on his estate.
- Children toil to harvest the sugar cane used in Brazil's state gazahol industry.
- Criminals in Bangkok trade in young lives with the connivance of police and government.

Forcing

Desperate ILO officials place their hopes in forcing governments to introduce compulsory education, but as one observer says: 'This is a 19th-century solution to a 20th-century problem.'

In any case, a number of countries who make education a priority now see masses of qualified school-leavers without jobs or hope.

US senator Tom Harkin has suggested marking products with 'ethical' labels to show no child labour was involved. This 'smacks of protectionism', according to the French Terre Des Hommes group. The measures would guarantee jobs for American textile workers, but put children in Bangladesh out

Sanctions, compulsory education, training schemes have all been tried but still the abolition of child labour seems a utopia.

The best hope of combatting this abuse is the self-organisation of the children involved.

Child Workers in Asia, and the 'movement of children from

Christian families' in Peru have struggled for a number of years to build such organisations.

Now there are signs of a change in attitude among the children who are starting to organise their own defence.

Links

All trades unions have a basic duty to help such organ-isations. Visits by Bengali textile workers' union organisers to Britain must be followed up with active links.

British trades unionists should organise fact-finding visits and finance field-workers to help organise drives on the spot. This is part of the work of regenerating the working-class

Bad times for the Windsors

THE last two years have been bad news for the British royal family, crowned most recently with a high-ranking clergyman's declaration that if Prince Charles's marriage vows were broken before the confetti was swept up from the church, then he is not fit to be king.

My objection to Charles's lifestyle comes from a slightly different direction, in that I think that if you are a fabulously wealthy prince then you could at least kick over the traces with a bit more style — rather than dallying with a woman who looks like the north end of a horse going south, and referring to the person of the king-to-be as a 'tampon in the toilet bowl of life'. This is not my idea of a good time.

The results of a Gallup poll taken in February 1993 show that 67 per cent share my disenchantment with the Windsors, and complain that, whereas George VI and his family went out of their way to share the dangers and privations of their subjects during the last war, Elizabeth and her brood of parasites were not showing the same spirit during the current recession.

But public feeling also ran high against the royal family during the war and the period of austerity following it.

The Mass-Observation archive from this time shows many felt the royals lived in luxury, in spite of a huge propaganda campaign to convince the nation that they lived under much the same conditions as everyone else. (Hardly surprising of course, because they did.)

Many were cynical about their much-publicised sympathy with air-raid victims because they themselves owned many houses. When the king and queen were in London they stayed at Buckingham palace during the day, and returned to the relative safety of Windsor castle at night — a luxury de-nied to most of their subjects.

Food shortages were not a problem because game, fish, fruit and vegetables were never rationed, and the royal family, like other landowners, were provided with such items from

their estates. The queen, who had a reputation for dressing well, continued to do so during the war - in an effort, it was said, to cheer and inspire and thereby 'help

morale'. (Whose morale, is the

question uppermost in one's

Office details unpublished infor-

A file in the Public Records

avoid huge ships

nations

Bronwen Handyside reports

FIRST prize in the Oddest of the Odd Book Titles award went this year to 'Proceedings of the Second International Workshop on Nude Mice'.

Second place went to 'Big and Very Big Hole Drilling', an engineering textbook.

The shortlist for the prize, presented by the 'Bookseller' magazine, included: 'Oral Sadism and the Vegetarian personality'; 'The Joy of Chickens'; my favourite — 'How to Avoid Huge Ships'; and 'Versailles: the View from Sweden'.

Louis Baum, editor of the 'Bookseller', said: 'What could be of more use to a navigator than "How to Avoid Huge Ships"? You mustn't be too fussed about little ships or medium-sized ones, it's the big ones you have to look out for.'

mation on extra clothing coupons given to the royal family. During the war, the queen and several relatives got an average of 1,277 clothing coupons a year for personal use - in addition to the normal ration, which was gradually reduced from 66 to 48 a year.

There is evidence of public resentment at royal privileges in the late 1940s. Board of Trade officials were concerned that royal coupon demands had 'increased considerably since the end of the war . . . and our efforts to check this tendency seem so far to have been unsuccessful'.

Controversy broke out over the royal South African tour in 1947, which coincided with the fuel crisis and renewed rations cuts. A total of 4,329 additional coupons were secretly issued for the tour but news photographs of the new wardrobe fuelled public criticism.

The present queen's extravagant 1947 wedding was supposedly aimed at providing a spectacle to brighten up the population's drab lives. But the scheme backfired when thousands of women who had to scrape together every scrap of cloth for their own weddings complained about her special treatment. A parliamentary request for additional clothing coupons for all brides was turned down.

A Public Records Office file shows the palace asked for 800 coupons for the wedding - at a time when the ration was 48-54 a year. Fear of public censure scaled the request down to 100, with extra coupons for bridesmaids and pages - justified in a public statement saying the event was a 'unique occasion of great national importance'.

After rationing ceased, public criticism of the royal family died down, but has reasserted itself with a bang over the past

The unspoken bargain has been that the royals retain their privileges as long as they set a good example to the nation. But they don't make princesses like they used to any more.

few years.

Happy Christmas everybody

IS NOTHING sacred? After mass privatisations of most of the nation's assets, the Royal Mail has now privatised the answering of children's letters to Santa Claus.

From this year, while Santa letters are answered individually by hundreds of post office staff in Edinburgh and Cardiff, the English operation has been handed over to Metromail, owned by the holiday company

Postal union officials say Metromail workers are paid only 7p for each reply — half what post office employees used to get.

And the service has deteriorated. While the Scottish and Welsh postal workers write each child's name and sign the letters personally, the privatised letters are all completely printed, with no recognition of the individual child.

If you have any material for this column, please send it to me a Workers Press, PO Box 735,

London SW8 1YB.

Letter

More letters - page 2

WE WELCOME LETTERS SEND THEM TO: WORKERS PRESS, PO BOX 735, LONDON SW8 1YB

- OR PHONE 071-582 8882

Clearing the dead past on eastern Europe

I THINK that my original letter (20 November) which drew such a confused reply from Bill Hunter (4 December), and seems to have puzzled others as well, may have been written in too condensed a form, so I wonder if I could trespass on your space in to unravel the concepts contained in it.

I will try to limit myself to them, for I do not propose to trade insults on the personal level suggested by the 'ivory tower' Hunter believes I inhabit, or the title 'What kind of historian?'

I can only conclude that the latter is somehow connected with the advertisement for Bill's own book on the history of the dockers which occupied the facing page. Nor did I describe anyone as 'disreputable idiots' these are his words, not mine.

To begin with, I find it very curious to be called a supporter of the 'bad men' theory of history for objecting to the label Pabloite revisionism' being applied to a tendency that had removed Michel Pablo from its ranks nearly 30 years earlier (compare my remarks in 'Revolutionary History' vol. IV, no. 3, p134), whose basic concepts were shared by both sides in the 1953 dispute, as the documents of the 'Third World Congress' of the Fourth International make abundantly clear.

As far as [US Socialist Workers Party leader] J.P. Cannon is concerned, the plain fact of the matter is that in the 1920s he was a supporter of Zinoviev, not of Trotsky, and had helped to expel Ludwig Lore for 'Trotskyism' at that time.

His change of po is so obviously connected with the fortunes of his faction in the American Communist Party that it should not need to be demonstrated.

And the main point at issue in the 'revisionist' controversy was indeed the class theory of the state, for Bernstein envisaged the gradual transformation of the capitalist state by piecemeal reforms to the benefit of the working class.

Perhaps Hunter should do a little more reading on this, for he might then discover that the 'chief' antagonist of Bernstein and Kautsky at this time was Ernest Belfort Bax, not Rosa Luxemburg, whose greatness still lay in the future.

Cause

I did not 'pluck out' or 'name drop' the theory of 'structural assimilation' as a major cause of revisionism in the Fourth International. The Fourth International maintained that the states of eastern Europe were capitalist states right up to the

Stalin/Tito split, and then elaborated this theory afterwards to account for their sudden discovery in the spring of 1948 that they were indeed workers' states.

The theory they produced was that by structural assimilation - gradual reforms of the state and at the economic level by nationalisation — what had been bourgeois states became workers' states. This is pure reformism, and obviously so.

One of those who combatted it at the time was one Bill Hunter, who helped Jock Haston draft the amendments to the documents of the 'Second World Congress' proving that the new states were workers' states, and even had something to say about it of his own in an article on Czechoslovakia in 'Workers International News', if I recall correctly.

The point about the polemic against 'Pabloism' is so glaringly simple that I am surprised to have to spell it out. In 1953 some of those who had previously adopted a social-democratic theory of the state now objected to the 'revisionism' of those who were now leaning in the direction of Stalinism. This to me is straining at the gnat while swallowing the camel.

In the case of the Lambert group at least it is no doubt due to their position in the 'Force ouvrière' social-democratic

trade union, as opposed to the major French trade union federation dominated by the Stalinists.

Sam Bornstein and myself attempted to explain the real mechanism behind the formation of the eastern European states along the lines indicated by Dennis Vern and Sam Ryan in 'War and the International' Vern and Ryan had explained in their documents the connection between the theory of 'structural assimilation' and the betrayal of the Bolivian revolution.

Confusion

Perhaps the confusion arises because Hunter was never shown them. They certainly make no appearance at their appropriate place in volume one of the carefully selected series 'Trotskyism versus Revisionism'. I wonder why?

Little is to be gained, in my opinion, by continuing to invest the split of 1953 with a significance it did not have. The roots of the problem go back much further, to the crisis of the perspectives of the Trotskyist movement at the end of World War II. Until this is realised, the dead past will continue to lie like a mountain of dead dogs on the brain of the living.

Al Richardson London SW17 FASCIST DANGER FACES

THE over-40 per cent vote given to the populist and right-wing nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky does not mean that there is a mass fascist RUSSIAN WORKERS

that there is a mass fascist movement in Russia. But it shows that there is the real danger of one emerging.

Zhirinovsky's 'programme' was a combination of an appeal to a virulent Great Russian nationalism and an appeal to millions of people tired, cold, and hungry as a result of the pro-capitalist 'reform' movement of the Yeltsin regime.

Life savings have been wiped out by the almost uncontrolled inflation of the last two years. Unemployment is rapidly approaching 10 million. Industrial production has dropped by 10 per cent for the last two years.

Workers are owed months and months of back pay. Those in low-paid jobs cannot live off their wages, even if they get them.

Mafia

On the other hand the mafia grows apace. The rich flaunt their wealth in front of the poor. More BMWs have been sold in Moscow this year than in any



Some of Russia's millions of tired, cold, and hungry from the pro-capitalist 'reform' movement

other city in the world.

The bureaucrats who plunder the state property are the richest of all. They are buying this property for a few roubles, exporting products from their cheaply acquired assets and salting the proceeds away in the Western banks.

Millions of Russians face this rotting form of capitalism—the only variety on offer in this epoch of history—with a past in which the names of 'socialism' and 'communism' have been

dragged through the dirt.

In the elections not a single candidate even claimed to represent the working class as a class.

The independent workers' organisations who until recently had given their support to Yeltsin called on workers to withhold their votes from candidates 'who were more worried about getting elected than in getting the workers their months of back pay owed to them'.

The Socialist Workers Union,

Russian section of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International, called on workers to boycott all candidates.

It was little wonder that many ordinary people either did not bother to vote or responded to Zhirinovsky's rhetoric about punishing criminals and making Russia great.

In Russia the true internationalism of the working class was long ago replaced with the doctrine of the 'socialist fatherland'. Great Russian nationalism, directed against Ukrainians, Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians — and above all in a racist way against the peoples of the Caucasus — has been nurtured by all 'Soviet' leaders from Stalin to Yeltsin.

As Marx observed, history repeats itself, first as tragedy, then as farce. So does 'anti-fasc-ism'

Yegor Gaidar, Yeltsin's 'reformist' prime minister, appealed to the 'Communist' party to unite against Zhirinovsky.

He 'forgot' that it was the Stalinist bureaucracy which prepared for the chaos and danger of reaction that now stares Russia in the face.

Gaidar, whose mentor Yeltsin spent the election trying to bar candidates who opposed him, spoke in the name of 'democracy': 'Stalin opened the way for Hitler in Germany by splitting the anti-fascist front. It will be very sad if, by failing to work together, Russia's democrats play a similar role.'

This was followed by an appeal for unity against Zhir-inovsky with the very 'Com-

to blow up in the Russian parliment building a few weeks ag

Gaidar's historical analogis false. The force that Stal disarmed was not the anti-facist front but the German arinternational working class.

Eliminated

Meanwhile Stalin terroris the Russian working class, de troyed its organisations ar physically eliminated almost entire revolutionary leadershi

Gorbachev and then the openly restoration arose on the basis of this detruction.

All talk of 'resisting fascist outside the task of mobilish the working class as a revol tionary force is a cruel decetion.

The potential for such movement is clear from the strikes that swept Russia in the weeks before the election, with the uprising of the gasworke in Nadym, the miners' strike and the condemnation of Yelts by the Independent Mine Union, previously his close

Capitalism kills more workers in China

BY MIKE COOKE

CHINA's workers continue to die in the special economic zones set up by the Communist Party government. A fire in a textile factory

killed 60 workers in south China within a month of a similar disaster in Shenzhen that killed 81 women and injured 40. In Shenzhen, the factory doors were locked to prevent theft and unauthorised work breaks (see Workers Press, 27 November).

The fire last Monday, in

Fuzhou, took six hours to bring under control. The factory is a part-Taiwanese-owned joint venture.

A blowout at an oilfield in northern Hebei province killed six and injured 585. Crops were

ruined up to six miles around the well.

The Chinese Communist Party is letting foreign capital rip through its 'special economic zones' where investors can find dirt-cheap labour among the poor peasants who migrate towards the promised land of the cities.

In 1991, official figures show, 14,686 were killed in industrial accidents — that includes a massive 10,000 death-toll in the mines. Fourteen miners died for every million tons of coal produced.

Guangdong province, which includes the city of Shezhen, had a 60 per cent rise in industrial killings and more than 1,000 factory fires last year.

An investigation revealed that workers were doing shifts of between 10 and 16 hours.

Rebuilding the Fourth International

Once again on Pablo and the United Secretariat

THE following letter has just reached Workers
Press. It deals with the controversy surrounding
the re-admission of Michel Pablo (Michael Raptis)
into the so-called United Secretariat of the Fourth
International.

It was Pablo along with Ernest Mandel who led the attack on the programme of the Fourth International in the early 1950s when they argued that Stalinism was a force that could lead the working class in the overthrow of capitalism. Pablo, today an unashamed Greek chauvinist, has never repudiated these views, even after the collapse of Stalinist regimes throughout eastern Europe and in the former Soviet Union. Despite this and despite his current political views Pablo was re-admitted to USec by its leader Ernest Mandel. As this letter makes clear, this was in opposition to Mandel's own organisation in Greece.

The International Socialist Group, Mandel's organisation in Britain, has so far refused to

organisation in Britain, has so far refused comment on this matter.

TO THE UNITED SECRETAR- our view of Pab

IAT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL FROM OKDE (GREEK SECTION OF THE USFI)

Dear comrades.

To our surprise we received the decision of the IEC to accept the accession of Pablo to the FI. Our disappointment grew when we learnt about the procedures used by the comrades of the IEC.

We regard it as unacceptable that the debate on the accession of the IRMT [Pablo's group] was held during the meeting of the IEC on 29 May, while the letter of the OKDE from 12 February had not been given to the mem-

bers of the IEC.
In that letter we expressed

our view of Pablo's group in Greece and also enclosed a translation of two articles which Pablo had published in 'Ta Nea'.

In our opinion, your procedure has nothing to do with the proper democratic functioning of the International. Your decision is also contrary to the statutes of the FI because only the World Congress has the authority to accept accessions of sections and consequently that of international tendencies.

Differences

But there are also political differences regarding questions of principles with Pablo's group in Greece. We don't know if there are similar problems in other countries, but there is no doubt that Pablo is a Greek social patriot.

Even if we could take his support of Milosevic and Karadzic as an expression of some sort of anti-imperialism, it is impossible for us to accept his view that the Republic of Macedonia and Turkey, instigated and led by American imperialism, threaten Greece.

He states that 'in the event that Turkey attacks Greece we have to defend our country and in the case that Greece is proved to be the aggressor, we have to reject such an act'. As you understand, this attitude is not compatible with revolutionary defeatism. In propagating such a view he has been and is warmly invited by the daily press to write articles for them.

He has also been welcomed

by the leadership of PASOK [the Greek Socialist Party]. He therefore lines up with the views of the Greek bourgeoisie in its political leadership and particularly with the views of A. Papandreou [now the Greek prime minister] which suggest that Greece should ally with Serbia as in World War I in order to defend its national interests.

The 'Christian-Orthodox axis' should be opposed with the 'Muslim axis' (Albania, Macedonia, Bosnia, Turkey) as well as with Catholicism which is trying to penetrate the Balkans through Croatia and a minority of the Albanian population. Behind this so-called anti-imperialism hide the most obscurantist and social-patriot views.

His articles, especially when they concern Greek affairs, create illusions in the policies of PASOK as the party which probably will govern in the future.

[PASOK has since been elected In our opinion, a critical at

tude towards PASOK can't restricted to anti-right policie As a typical Don Quixote suggests a united front of the whole left, of course without e plaining which policies it should be suggested in the plaining which policies it should be suggested in the suggest

Concerns

Pablo's group in Greece cosists of three persons. We wount refuse to co-operate withem in the framework of unite front tactics if they act, but it clear that we cannot coexist in unified organisation because concrete programmatic agreement doesn't exist. This concerns the type of organisation we want to build and the dutiwhich derive from the analysis of the political situation.

After the proposal of ti USFI we had some discussion with Pablo's group last winte We inquired about the possib ity of unification. In these di cussions however the about mentioned difference appeared about which we info med the USFI in our letter date 12 February 1993.

Unification with Pablo group was considered impossible due to the political differences, which were, and are, at the centre of the discussions and determinations owing to the growth of Greek chauvinism.

The views on the 'nation question' expressed by Pablo the bourgeois press would e pose OKDE to the criticism all the public which it addresses, without giving perspective in which to address other broader layers.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE OKDE (7 November 1986)

Workers Press

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