

# ROVER SALE RIP-OFF

CITY sharks have made millions from the sale of Rover by British Aerospace (BAe) to BMW, the German car maker.

This is one of the biggest privatisation rip-offs by the City.

■ In 1988, the government sold the state-owned company Rover to BAe for £150 million.

This was after millions of taxpayers' money had been pumped into Rover throughout the 1970s.

■ Last week BAe sold Rover for £800 million, and had a £1 billion write-off of its debts.

No wonder shares in BAe leapt 55p on news of the deal, bringing more rich pickings for the speculators.

The scandal is glaring. The Tory government sold the company to private investors for peanuts.

A secret £38 million 'sweetener' was given to BAe when it bought Rover. And in 1989 there were £25 million in tax concessions as a further inducement.

## Brutal

BAe, in collaboration with the trade union leaders, launched a brutal attack on working practices, manning levels, and wages to fatten the company up ready for onward sale.

The Labour leaders gnash their patriotic teeth and weep about the sale of this 'great British asset'. But at every stage they have assisted the Tories and their friends in the City to perpetrate this fraud.

They have dropped all promises to renationalise the privatised industries and services.

## BY THE EDITOR

The demand of John Smith and company that BMW must be 'forced' to honour the promise of no sackings is worthless. BMW have bought Rover with one aim: to make money.

They plan to shift production to Britain, where the wages of car workers are half those of their German counterparts.

Any such move would be at the expense of German workers. Only last week the German economics minister said that the experience of Britain should be studied closely as high costs are driving German firms out of world markets.

■ Workers at the Rover plants in Britain should demand that a future Labour government renationalise the company without compensation.

■ The Rover workforce should immediately make contact with their brothers and sisters in BMW's car plants in Germany, so that a common strategy to defend wages, conditions and jobs can be hammered out.

## Union warns over pay talks

BMW and Audi carmakers were among 80 firms in Bavaria hit by strike action last week, as 40,000 workers downed tools in what leaders of the IG Metall union called a 'warning' to employers to resume pay talks.

Altogether 60,000 auto and

engineering workers came out at 137 factories across Germany. The union called the action after the employers' federation, Gesamtmetall, refused to discuss a real wage increase — so workers were left with less purchasing power.

## S. African elections A most urgent appeal!

THE South African section of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International is standing candidates in the coming national elections.

We know that our readers in every country will be inspired by this news. But our South African comrades need your help — today. Registration of candidates and payment of deposits must be done by 10 February.

Our South African comrades are working in every way possible to stand three candidates: in Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth. The deposit per candidate is 5,000 rand (about £1,000).

Everything depends on international support, in the first place on financial support.

The African National Congress's policy of class collaboration, with the Stalinist Communist Party of South Africa at its

core, must be challenged.

The Workers International in South Africa is fighting for the trade union federation COSATU to end its 'tripartite alliance' with the ANC and SACP. It is fighting for an electoral challenge that will be a step towards the political independence of the working class.

## Lie

The ANC and SACP leaders peddle the lie that apartheid can be ended while capitalism in South Africa remains.

As a matter of urgency please phone, fax or post your donations for this first essential part of the election fund:

South African Elections Appeal, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB, Britain.

Phone: 071-582 8882. Fax: 071-582 8834.



Last Saturday's Bloody Sunday demonstration in London commemorating the peaceful, unarmed protesters killed by British paratroopers in Derry, 1972. See 'The fight for workers' unity in Ireland', page 3

Photo: Mike Cooke

## 'Unite' meeting gets great response

A TREMENDOUS response to the Community and Union Action Campaign's 'Unite the Struggles' conference in Manchester has brought together in an unprecedented way, and on an unprecedented scale, the myriad separate struggles of the working class. It will bring together the trades unions and communities in a fighting unity against current attacks.

Among those planning to come are: Billy Pye from the National Union of Mineworkers executive (in a personal capacity); Women Against Pit Closures (national representatives and women from Parkside who prevented the destruction of the pit); offshore oilworkers; the Construction Safety Campaign; building workers; hospital workers; teachers; Timex strikers; Burnsalls strikers;

campaigners on homelessness, unemployment, and against VAT on fuel; campaigners against the Child Support Act; mental health campaigners; and anti-racist and anti-fascist campaigners, including George Silcott, the Orville Blackwood Campaign and others.

The representative of a Kashmiri socialist party has put off a visit to Geneva in order to come.

## Heart

At the heart of the conference will be the necessity for the working class to unite across the unions and communities against racism and fascism — nationally and internationally.

A crucial part of the discussion will be the necessity to unite against those trade union

and Labour leaders who work to divide the working class — the lessons from the many disputes like Timex and Burnsalls sold out by their so-called leaders.

Issues like benefit cuts, VAT on fuel, homelessness, unemploy-

ment, etc. will be brought in by those coming to the conference.

This will be a completely democratic conference — all those in struggle are welcome to come, and take the fullest part in the discussion and decisions.

## Unite the Struggles conference

Saturday 12 February  
11am-6pm

Manchester West Indian Centre,  
Carmoor Road, Chorlton-on-Medlock  
Manchester M13 0FB

£5 trades unions, £1 community groups  
Free to unwaged

# Workers Press

## The fight for workers' unity in Ireland

THE leaders of imperialism are clearly prepared to adjust many long-standing policies to help the Sinn Fein leadership sell the joint declaration on Ireland by the British and Irish prime ministers, John Major and Albert Reynolds, to the Republican rank and file.

Many obstacles are being removed to present as respectable those previously described as the 'godfathers of terrorism' and to suck the Irish Republican movement into a deal with imperialism.

For the first time in 20 years, the US has granted a visa for Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams to enter the country. Adams is to attend a conference of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy.

This follows hot on the heels of the Dublin government's decision to lift the long-standing ban on radio and television interviews with members of the Republican movement.

Adams — along with the majority of the Republican leadership — is clearly in favour of accepting the main thrust of the Major-Reynolds accord.

Sinn Fein's delay in issuing an official response is because they are not yet able to bring many important elements of the Republican movement with them.

Sinn Fein also fears the consequences of a split, with its rival, Republican Sinn Fein, waiting to recruit dissidents.

Both the Major-Reynolds declaration and the talks between Adams and the Social Democratic and Labour Party leader John Hume, which preceded the declaration, are examples of reactionary diplomacy and hold great dangers for the Irish working class.

Utilising the genuine desire for peace, they promote cynical illusions that a 'solution' — an end to the 'conflict' — can be negotiated in a deal between the Sinn Fein leadership, the Unionists and the British government.

\* \* \* \* \*

**CENTRAL to the Major-Reynolds proposals is the continuance of the Unionist veto. The six-county statelet of Northern Ireland is still to be treated as separate from the rest of the island. The deal, which Adams is trying to sell, does not threaten this partition.**

Imperialism is desperately seek-

ing new ways to maintain its rule in Ireland at a time when British capitalism is in severe crisis.

The moves towards new structures in the north of Ireland are not separate from the international assault on the living standards of the working class — the search for 'a new world order'.

This assault has been accelerated by the collapse of Stalinism, the main prop of the so-called national-liberation movements.

Imperialism desperately needs to channel the nationalist struggle into safe parliamentary and peaceful methods. To achieve this all efforts are made to do a deal with the Republican leaders.

\* \* \* \* \*

**ADAMS's desire to be involved in negotiations with imperialism flows inexorably from the class nature of the political programme of Sinn Fein.**

In any future deal the Irish Republican leaders — just like the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the African National Congress — will be used to police and control the working class.

What is the nature of the struggle in Ireland? Can the fight for independence be separate from the fight for socialism? The main question now — as it has been throughout this century — is the independence of the working class and the necessity of it taking the lead in the fight to remove partition.

The nationalist working class must not be tied to a petty-bourgeois leadership, such as Sinn Fein, with its belief in a united capitalist Ireland. There can be no moves towards the necessary revolutionary unity of the Catholic and Protestant workers without exposing the role of these leaders.

Among the main forces working to perpetuate the myth that the leadership of Sinn Fein is progressive are the revisionist groups which masquerade as 'Trotskyist'.

Foremost among these is the

so-called United Secretariat of the Fourth International (Usec).

\* \* \* \* \*

**FOR MANY YEARS the USEC's section in Ireland, the People's Democracy, concentrated its activities on pressurising the Republican movement to adopt a more 'left-wing' programme.**

Contained by the limits of Republicanism it became virtually indistinguishable from it and naturally, and inevitably, its membership decreased.

Last year People's Democracy was dissolved as a political section, with its remaining members continuing as individual members of Usec. But, needless to say, this revisionist grouping is incapable of learning any political lessons.

At the march last Saturday in London to commemorate the Bloody Sunday killings in Derry in 1972, supporters of Socialist Outlook, the British section of the Usec, distributed a leaflet which — even from this pathetic centrist bunch — was breath-taking in its betrayal of Trotskyist principles.

The leaflet stated: 'We should demand that British imperialism recognises the liberation movement and talks to Sinn Fein in negotiating its withdrawal.'

The Usec obviously has full confidence in petty-bourgeois Republicanism's ability to remove imperialism from Ireland! It is prepared to leave the leadership of the struggle in the hands of the nationalists.

To justify its position Socialist Outlook peddles the view that there is an essential class difference between Sinn Fein and the representatives of Irish capitalism: 'It's a disaster for Sinn Fein to entrust the Dublin government to negotiate with the British on its behalf. The class interests of the Dublin government are totally opposed to those of the working-class people of the nationalist areas in the North.'

So there we have it. Presumably Usec believes that the class in-

terests of the nationalist workers can be safely left to the Sinn Fein leadership.

At its heart this policy holds on to the coat-tails of the 'two-stage' theory, for so long the main theoretical weapon used by the Stalinists to justify tying the working class to bourgeois nationalism.

The fight for socialism in colonial countries was split by the Stalinists and their followers into two distinct and separate stages — first the national-democratic stage, and only after that was achieved was it possible to work for socialism.

Another revisionist group which misrepresents the nature of the struggle in Ireland is Workers Power. In this group's writings on Ireland the two-stage theory also finds an echo. A centre-page article in the January issue of its paper expresses this clearly: 'Workers' unity is a complete abstraction unless the fundamental political obstacles to it are removed.'

'These obstacles are not the religious ideas in the minds of two sections of the working class. They are the British occupation of the six counties and the British state's refusal to allow the whole Irish people to determine their own future free of foreign interference.'

Here again is the separation of the national question from the fight for class unity and consciousness. According to Workers Power, workers' unity is not possible until the end of British occupation. It should, of course, be the other way round!

\* \* \* \* \*

**IN THESE matters we are far from nit-picking. They pose the most essential theoretical and organisational questions facing the workers' movement. Does the demand for the removal of partition and independence from imperialism interlace with socialist demands or is it separate?**

All the revisionist schools of thought aim to subordinate the interests of the working class to those of nationalists such as Sinn Fein, with their anti-socialist programme.

The nationalist workers must have no faith in the Sinn Fein leaders. Workers' unity and the smashing of the Major-Reynolds agreement will only be won in the struggle to wrest the independence fight from the petty-bourgeois leadership of Sinn Fein.

### WORKERS PRESS £3,000 MONTHLY FUND

IN SO FAR: £1,272.27

WE'VE made some progress this week in getting back on target for the fund. Many thanks to JR for his £400, which has really helped us get over the seasonal hump.

Other large contributions from BL and JO are also much appreciated.

Although we have turned the corner, we're still not even making the £700 a week that is necessary to keep the paper going.

Please send the desperately needed money, which helps us produce this paper, to Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

Mike Cooke

### Coming soon

**SATURDAY 26 FEBRUARY:** 'Council for Academic Standards and Academic Freedom' meeting, 1-3pm, Mary Fisher room, Quaker International Centre, 1-3 Byng Place, London WC1. Nearest tubes Euston and Goodge Street.  
**TUESDAY 8 MARCH:** 'The Chal-

lenge of Creationism'. Start of South Place Ethical Society course by Mike Howgate M.Sc., 6.30-8.30pm (and each Tuesday following in March). At the Conway Hall in Red Lion Square, London WC1. Admission is £1 and the nearest tube is Holborn.

## Letter

### Eastern Europe

I WOULD like to make again a few comments on eastern Europe after re-reading more carefully some material the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International has published.

The resolution of the second congress states that 'by the end of 1992 . . . we now had what could be characterised as bourgeois states of a special kind . . . profoundly unstable, very weak and vulnerable, because hybrid and lacking a sound class struggle, deeply debilitated and deficient "comprador" bourgeois states . . . many

of the leaders of the Usec fall into the trap of seeing today's situation as one in which the working class is in retreat' (pp. 2-3).

The 'International' No. 13 (August 1993), p.9, says that 'the revolution of 1989-91 would have created a confederation or commonwealth of independent nation-states under modernising bourgeois democracies, had its gains not been largely destroyed by Milosevic's counter-revolution'.

So in eastern Europe we have the transformation of distorted or degenerated workers' states into bourgeois ones. As far as I know Trotsky would

have described this process not as revolution but as counter-revolution, and he would have considered it a defeat for the working class of these countries no matter whether the emerging bourgeois states were modern democratic or fascist.

It is true that he supported the self-determination of Ukraine in the late 1930s, but he supported an independent Soviet one.

From all his writings it is clear that he would not have supported an independent modern bourgeois democratic Ukraine.

What do you think of the attitude of the Bolsheviks in 1921

when they attacked Georgia? Georgia had a Menshevik government, and the Bolsheviks could not tolerate it becoming a basis of Entente.

The 'Second-and-a-Half' International accused the Bolsheviks of violating the right of nations to self-determination.

In contrast with Afghanistan in 1980 there was not even a civil war going on.

The exiled Georgian Bolsheviks took power thanks to the Soviet intervention.

In short, I may be wrong, but I think the position you hold is opposed to that of Trotsky.

Panos Athens

WE WELCOME LETTERS  
SEND THEM TO: WORKERS PRESS,  
PO BOX 735, LONDON SW8 1YB  
— OR PHONE 071-582 8882

# Workhouse diet better than income support

**CHILDREN going hungry is the meaning of the 'back to basics' war cry from last year's Tory conference.**

A survey from the children's charity NCH Action for Children shows that the 1.5 million families on income support don't even have enough money to

BY MIKE COOKE

provide the same amount of food as the hated Victorian workhouses.

And every night, the charity survey estimates, 9,000 children go to bed hungry, half a million are on a poor diet and 810,000 families have built up debt to maintain the *basics* of life itself:

water, heat and food. Many parents go without to maintain food for their children.

The charity based its workhouse calculations on a breakdown of income support from 1986 — the last time the Department of Social Security published such figures — and came to the conclusion that £4.15 a week is currently allowed for food for a child under 11.

But the costing of workhouse

diets came to £5.46 for 1876 and £7.07 for 1913 at today's prices! These are 30 per cent and 70 per cent more than the estimated £4.15 income support allowance.

In 1876 a child in a workhouse received a breakfast of bread and gruel; a lunch of bread, pea soup and suet pudding, or meat and potatoes three days a week; and a supper of bread with cheese, milk or broth.

But our thoroughly modern Tories think even that's too much for today's children of the poor.

## Scandals

After the series of sex scandals left the 'morality' banner of the 'back to basics' crusade in tatters, we now see what the Tories' 'basics' really are — the

basics of life and death for thousands of children in Britain.

'It is appalling, as we approach the year 2000, that even an 1876 workhouse diet is too expensive for the families of one in four of our children,' said NCH Action for Children's chief executive Tom White, commenting on the survey.

Another measure of increasing child poverty — the number of free school-dinners — has risen by 60 per cent in London since 1991. That's one third of the children in the capital!

A DSS spokesperson maintained that, since a wider range of foodstuffs was available today than in Victorian times, people of all incomes could buy the makings of nutritious meals. An obvious question is: has this person ever lived on income

support? A 'British Lifestyles' survey by the market research group Mintel, published the same day as the NCH Action for Children report, showed some of the problems the poor have with eating a decent healthy diet.

Besides the expense, poor families often don't have adequate cooking facilities and cannot afford to experiment with meals that may be rejected by children.

The 'British Lifestyles' survey also showed where the money taken from the poor had gone — to the rich. More money is being spent on domestic servants and gardeners. Private education and medicine are booming 'industries'.

Since 1983, the amount spent on school fees has risen from £1.4 billion to £5.4 billion.

## Unite to fight attack on the homeless

BY LIZ LEICESTER

MANY homeless families would end up on the streets if the government's latest proposals on public housing became law.

No longer would local authorities have a duty to provide permanent accommodation for homeless people with children. Instead, they would only have to secure temporary accommodation, for a limited time, for those in priority need in an immediate

crisis through no fault of their own.

The proposals have been condemned in a letter signed by 22 tenants' and homelessness organisations, which says that the real purpose of the proposals is to conceal the 'government's appalling record on housing'.

### Shrunk

The number of homes available for rent has shrunk by 1.5 million since the Tories came to

office in 1979. Long council waiting-lists would be the only route to permanent local authority housing. This would discriminate against refugee families, victims of domestic violence, and anyone who has not lived in Britain for a very long time. Getting affordable housing in the public sector would be almost impossible.

The government consultation paper, 'Access to Local Authority and Housing Association Tenancies', claims that there is a 'growing belief that the homelessness provisions are frequently used as a quick route into a separate home'. This is a belief that Tories would no doubt wish to encourage as a way of continuing to attack the most vulnerable groups in society.

### Severe

The recent election of the British National Party fascist councillor in Tower Hamlets, east London, was partly the result of the severe housing crisis caused by Tory attacks and Labour's refusal to fight and connivance in massive cuts.

Homelessness groups, tenants' associations, and trades unions urgently need to unite to oppose these latest proposals.

## Benefit cuts for the under-24s

THE Tories are to again slash the amount of benefit given to unemployed people between 18 and 24.

Peter Lilley, the social security secretary, said legislation will be presented to the next session of parliament proposing the reduction, which will cut £300 million from the social security budget.

Under the current arrangements, people over the age of 18 who become unemployed receive weekly benefit of £44.65 in the first 12 months out of work.

After this they switch to income support, getting £34.80 if aged between 18 and 24.

Under the new arrange-

ments they will receive a job-seekers' allowance for the first six months, the level of which has yet to be fixed, and after that they will move onto income support.

Last week Lilley told a Commons select committee: 'There will be a lower benefit level for those under 25 reflecting the lower earnings expectation of people in that group.'

■ The government has admitted that a million people are in fact unemployed but are not claiming unemployment-related benefits. The admission came in a parliamentary written answer from employment minister Ann Widdecombe.

## Tower Hamlets youth claim round one

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

CHEERS rang out outside Thames magistrates' court, in London's East End, on Tuesday as the 'Tower Hamlets Nine' — young Asians arrested at an anti-racist vigil last September — came out to announce a partial victory.

Three of the youth have been freed, and 'riot' charges against all nine, under Section 1 of the Public Order Act, have been dropped. The remaining six still face charges of 'riotous assembly' and 'assaulting police officers'.

### Vowed

Demonstrators, many of them young teenagers, had gathered opposite the court all morning in a biting cold wind, chanting that the nine were innocent, and denouncing police racism. They have vowed to continue the struggle, and will take part in a national march against racism on 19 March, for which Tower Hamlets trades council has won TUC backing.

A local youth, 17-year-old

Quddus Ali, was viciously attacked by a gang of white racists on 8 September 1993 and has been lying in hospital in a coma. The attack was part of a wave of violence after fascist British National Party (BNP) supporters moved into the area, working to elect their first local councillor. The BNP's east London organiser was among those charged after a beer-glass attack on a black passer-by.

On Friday 10 September, during a vigil outside the east London hospital where Quddus Ali was lying, young people were harassed and provoked by police, before riot police moved in with truncheons and dogs, injuring several people and making nine arrests. One of those arrested required hospital treatment for head injuries, and another nearly had his arm broken.

Local youth complain of constant harassment by police, who patrol the area in riot vans and stop and search young Asians, and of the lack of protection for victims like Quddus Ali. They contrast this with the way police looked the other way when racist skinheads rampaged through Brick Lane.

THERE is anger amongst rank-and-file Southwark council workers at their union leaders, following the fate of 19 suspended workers involved in the 'personality tests' row.

The 19 were targeted after a 'personality test' was imposed on over 200 workers. They were asked to answer Yes or No to 460 questions including 'I like tall women' and 'When I was a boy I looked up to my father'.

The suspended workers were from the finance department of the Labour-led south-east London council — and were escorted off the premises before Christmas.

The new leadership of No 1 branch of Southwark UNISON, the public sector union, was elected at December's annual general meeting amidst allegations of ballot-rigging involving the 'Unity Slate'. This dishonestly stated that only those on this slate had been involved in the branch's activity during the year.

This unprincipled grouping failed in its first test when it did nothing to prevent the suspension of the 19 workers.

At a general meeting on 27 January the new branch secretary, Terry Matthews, failed to explain why he had not implemented the vote for a ballot on strike action agreed at December's AGM.

The union leaders prefer secret talks with the employers to open negotiations for which they are accountable to the members.

Southwark council is constantly seeking to reduce staffing levels and attack terms and conditions in the interests of saving money. Yet it paid a private company, the Waltham Group, £400 per day to administer the test.

### Adapted

The test was the 'British' version of one used in the US, but adapted to include such questions as 'Queen Elizabeth I was more important than Queen Victoria'.

The absurd nature of the exercise was compounded as the test was designed for senior managers, and Southwark council imposed it on low-grade administrative workers.

Despite widespread public ridicule, the council has not reinstated the workers. Nine have accepted voluntary redun-

dancy, and Southwark UNISON is supporting five in grievance procedures. Several workers have been demoted to lower grades. A few have been promoted, an obvious divisive device.

Having initially defended the test, Labour council leader Jeremy Fraser is now saying that he was 'misled by senior officers' as to its nature.

Fraser's about-turn followed unanimous censure by Southwark Labour Party's local government committee. Fraser has now promised that the test will not be used again to select workers for redundancy. This is little comfort to those who have been sacked, and the test may still be used for staff recruitment and promotion.

Southwark's two Labour MPs, Tessa Jowell and Harriet Harman, have said nothing. Harman is a former employee of the National Council for Civil Liberties, but is apparently unconcerned about this 'thought-police' invasion of workers' mental privacy.

The test is part of a campaign by the Labour council to attack its workers as it aims to privatise 70 per cent of council services. It has already passed proposals to cut maternity leave and annual leave to the national minimum, and abolish paternity leave and sick pay for the first day off sick.

**Bristol Marxist Forum conference**  
Towards revolution: Socialist politics now  
Saturday-Sunday 5-6 March  
The Bristol Settlement, Ducie Road,  
Barton Hill, Bristol 5  
Saturday — 1.30pm-5.30pm; Sunday — 10am-2pm  
Details from: J. Clarke, 23 Monmouth Road, Bristol BS7 8LF. Tel. 0272-423435

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

Please send me information about the WRP

Name ..... date .....

Address .....

Trade union (if any) ..... Age (if under 21) .....

Send to: PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB

**IRISH NIGHT FOR BOSNIA**

**FRIDAY FEBRUARY 18**

**8.00 - MIDNITE**

**KENNEDY HALL  
CAMDEN IRISH CENTRE  
MURRAY STREET  
LONDON NW1**

**JACKET POTATOES  
HIGH AS A KITE  
THE TREETOPS  
SPECIAL GUESTS: MARGARET  
KENNEDY, ALAN YOUNG.**

**DISCO**



**BUFFET**

**ADMISSION: £3 / £2 Concessions**

Mr Hurd and 'Militant'

BEFORE Christmas, under the heading 'Bosnia aid?', 'Militant' had a letter from a Hull reader, expressed by a speaker who had returned from the first Workers Aid convoy to Bosnia.

The blockade of Bosnia would be lifted tomorrow if it fitted in with Western designs. The Workers Aid convoy had exposed imperialist policies, showing up the United Nations as an instrument of oppression.

But why was there no coverage in 'Militant'?, he asked. 'I know another political group was behind it but is that a valid reason for behaving like the "Daily Mail"?' He wondered whether 'Militant' would support the next convoy.

'What do "Militant" readers think?' asked the editor coyly (letting the 'Daily Mail' comparison pass!). But what does 'Militant' itself say? Must we make do with the letter to its 14 January issue, 'Should Bosnian arms embargo be lifted?'

'Like anyone else, I support humanitarian aid,' claimed Derek McMillan, 'while recognising that it will not solve any of the problems of the Balkans'. McMillan, from East Grinstead in Sussex, said he had been approached on Crawley high street by a Workers Aid campaigner.

'Suppose I had supported breaking the arms embargo,' McMillan agonises, 'suppose the Bosnian capitalists had greater access to arms? How would I feel if those arms were used to massacre Serbs or Croats? I put this to the petitioner and he "made an excuse and left".' I know some of the comrades campaigning for Workers Aid in Crawley. One of them was on the first convoy (and always insists people read any petition he's carrying). I can't imagine them retreating.

The person who is making excuses is McMillan; although his letter doesn't mention it, he is a long-standing 'Militant' supporter.

While people in Bosnia resist the imperialists' attempted carve-up, massacres and 'ethnic cleansing', he feigns agony that the victims might 'massacre Serbs and Croats'. Refusing to help the Bosnian people, and conjuring up 'Bosnian capitalists', he makes excuses for the Western imperialists' arms embargo! As Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd said, lifting it would only create 'a level killing field'!

"'Militant' quite rightly concentrates on attacking the main enemy - the Tories and their system,' claims McMillan. 'That seems a good enough reason not to cover "International Workers Aid" when such coverage would inevitably involve extensive criticism of the opportunist tactics of its organisers.' I dare say they can take that risk.

Don't tell us you're fighting the Tories, Mr Militant, if you won't challenge their foreign policy. And don't lie about 'attempts to mislead the general public' because you fear some of your members agree with Workers Aid.

Charlie Pottins

Rebuilding the Fourth International

THE response from the working class in Europe, east and west, to the Workers Aid convoy to Bosnia is striking proof that a new situation, great new responsibilities and new possibilities must now be faced.

It was on the initiative of the Serbian section of the Workers International that the Workers Aid convoy was organised.

In the year that preceded the war, half a million workers demonstrated in Sarajevo shouting 'Down with the bureaucracy, down with nationalism!'

Then on 5 April 1992 the workers attempted to march again to dissolve the impotent parliament.

But without their own political party they could go no further. They were turned back at dawn by Durakovic, a non-nationalist, but chief of the former party of the 'communist' bureaucracy.

He dissuaded the 50,000 Tuzla

International did everything they could to mobilise support for Bosnia.

Then, in June 1993, came the proposal for a workers' aid convoy.

The political openings this convoy has created must be the basis of a step forward in the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

It was therefore at the centre of the proceedings of the second congress of the Workers International on 14-16 November 1993, and of the 22-23 January meeting of the executive committee which it elected.

The implications were most clearly indicated by a Czech comrade in the congress discussion.

At stake in the fight for international solidarity action with the workers of ex-Yugoslavia, he declared, was the question of whether, in the aftermath of Stalinism's collapse, the international working

'The Hungarian miners' union of the Tatabanya region explicitly voted and acted on a resolution of support for "the convoy organised on the initiative of the Serbian section of the Workers International".'

miners from marching on Sarajevo, 'To save human lives' he said.

In September 1992, based on a report from the Serbian section, the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International issued a resolution.

This said that the only way that the Bosnian people and all the Yugoslav peoples could open the way to a new life together was with 'a programme of revolutionary workers' unity, a programme for one power, one state, one army, one militia - workers' power, based on workers' councils in the mines, factories, cities and countryside.'

This is the programme of the Fourth International. This is the programme of active solidarity of the international working class and in particular the European working class.

'The workers' movement must organise its own network of real aid and solidarity with the working class of Yugoslavia' the resolution stated. Each section of the Workers

class would suffer the first of a series of historic defeats or would begin to turn the tide and succeed in its reconstruction.

Introducing the main resolution on the international situation and our tasks, Cliff Slaughter, on behalf of the international executive, began:

'The reconstruction of the Fourth International is part of the reconstruction of the workers' movement, its most essential part.

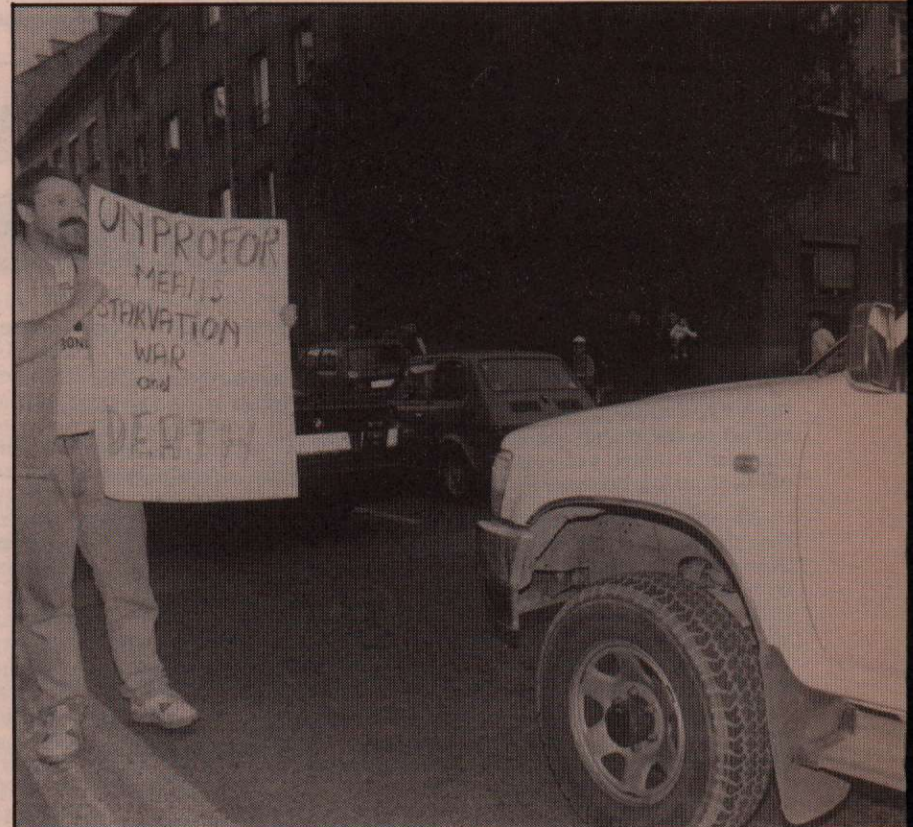
'Why? Because at the heart of the reconstruction of the workers' movement is the rebuilding of the political class-consciousness of the working class; in the first place, of its internationalism.

'And this requires the building of an international party of the working class, the Fourth International.

'This is not an aggregate of national revolutionary parties, but means the construction of a leadership, initiating, centralising and carrying out political work at the international level.

Consolidating the advance

This is a report from the second congress of the Workers International of the Fourth International that met on 14-16 November and the 22-23 January, of the executive committee that was elected.



Blockade of UN Protection Force HQ in Zagreb, Friday 1 October 1993

'It means waging a struggle against the massive destruction of that consciousness over three generations by Stalinism, and through a real reckoning with Stalinism.'

Not the least of the changes achieved by the work around the convoy has been the direct relationship established between the work-

ing-class movement in western and eastern Europe.

The Hungarian miners' union of the Tatabanya region explicitly voted and acted on a resolution of support for 'the convoy organised on the initiative of the Serbian section of the Workers International'.

From there, support was gained from miners in Slovakia, Bosnian miners and other trades unionists in Croatia and Slovenia who responded to the campaign of the convoy against the United Nations in Zagreb (the convoy blockaded the UN Protection Force's HQ there for one-and-a-half days in protest against UN refusal to let the convoy pass).

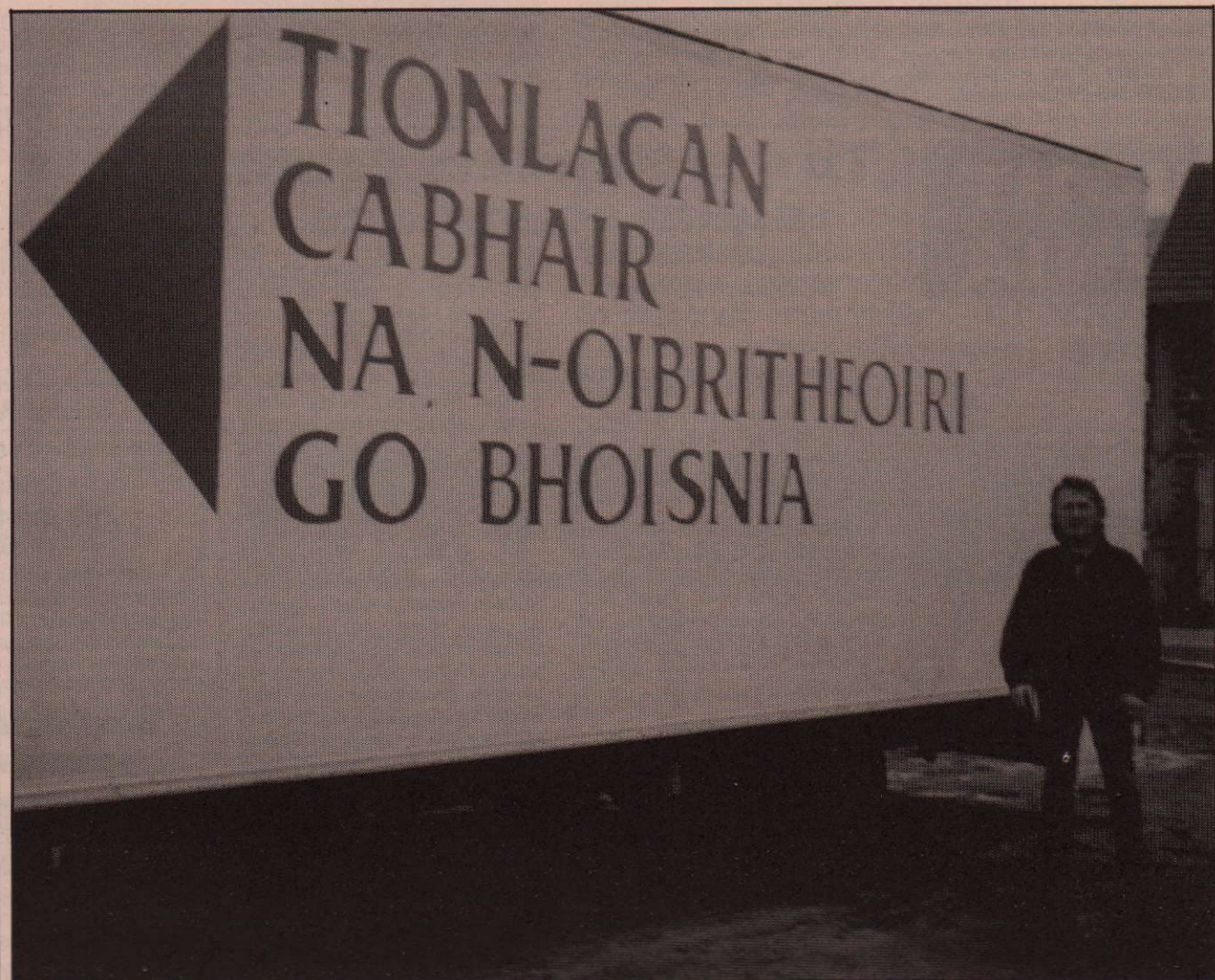
Through this fight the convoy was able to develop the demand for the opening of the northern route from Orasje to Tuzla.

This was not known in advance, but came out of collaboration with the people from Tuzla, based on political, military and geographical knowledge of the situation.

The Workers International congress, and the executive committee meeting that followed, welcomed the decision reached by Workers Aid for Bosnia for a further big convoy to be campaigned for throughout the European working-class movement. And steps were taken to consolidate and advance this important beginning in the reconstruction of internationalism in the working class.

The resolution on organisation says: 'The International Trade Union Solidarity Committee could in a certain sense be the backbone of the Workers Aid campaign because it bases itself on the most organised part of the working class, militant trade unionists.'

It is therefore proposed to organise a special miners' conference to establish a miners' network against closures.



The Irish community in London supplied this truck for the Christmas Workers Aid convoy.

# late nce

International to Rebuild the  
first meeting, on 22-23  
ed by the congress.

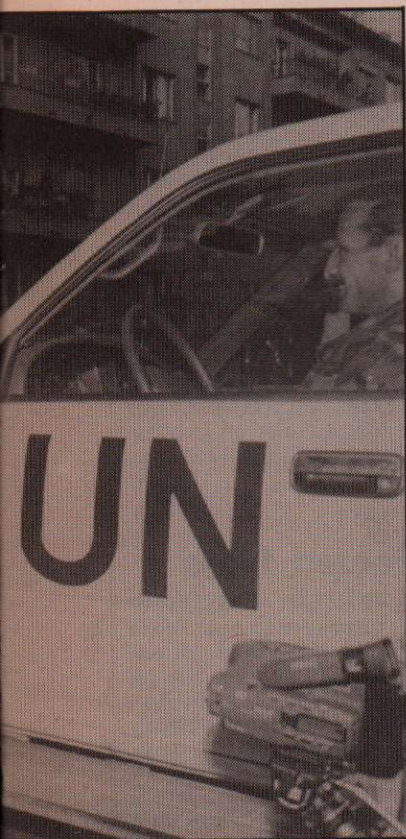


Photo: Anthony Myers

This becomes the first immediate responsibility of the secretariat elected by the executive committee to centralise the Workers International.

A further decision was to begin discussions to prepare for a Balkan conference.

Every section of the Workers International is faced with answering in practice the question posed in the congress report:

'In what form will the relationship between the Workers International and these new forces develop?

'What are the next steps in the reconstruction of the working-class movement and of the Fourth International?'

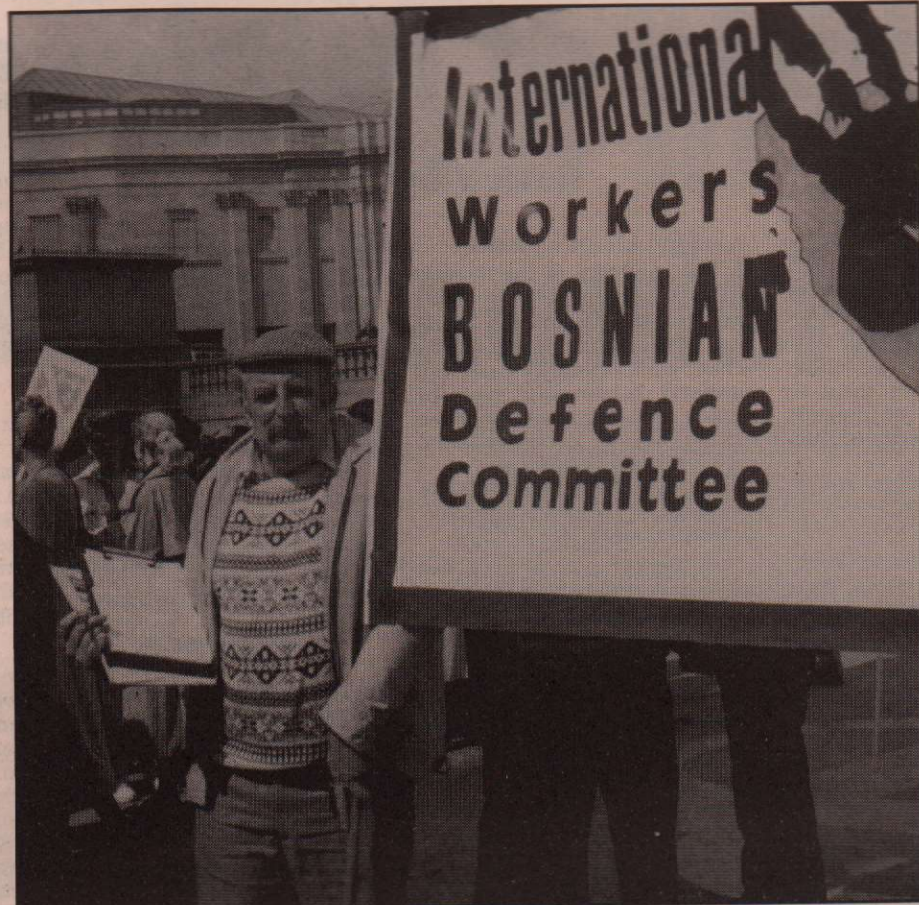
And the report warned: 'It is sectarian, and a resignation to impotence, simply to repeat every

**'The . . . openings  
this convoy has  
created must be  
the basis of a step  
forward . . .'**

day, "Here we are, with a correct programme — join us", even if we find ourselves in a new situation in which real initiatives, like the Tuzla convoy, will bring us new members.

'We need much more work on the implications, for the whole question of party-building, of our understanding that the Fourth International can be reconstructed only through the reconstruction by the working class of its own movement.

'Here is perhaps the biggest question facing the Workers International.'



Building the campaign in defence of Bosnia after the September 1992 Workers International executive meeting (top to bottom): banner of the committee established by the ITUSC before Workers Aid for Bosnia on a demonstration in Trafalgar Square, Easter 1993; Workers Aid for Bosnia banner on a march against the closure of Parkside pit in Lancashire, June 1993; Workers Aid campaigning in France, August 1993.

## Whitehall corruption

THE report from the Commons public accounts committee, which contains a majority of Tory MPs, makes devastating reading. It has brought together 17 separate reports spread over the past four years.

The survey lays out a catalogue of fraud, mismanagement and incompetence that covers 26 different scandals involving many millions of pounds.

They range from unnecessary Concorde flights and free house arrangements to massive waste — for example the £20 million lost by Wessex regional health authority, or the £80 million lost in 'doubtful and incorrect payments to training providers'.

There are now 3,000 unelected, unaccountable boards and the number will rise to 7,700 by 1996. Already they spend more than the elected local authorities do on the provision of local services.

Over £24 billion of services have been transferred from the control of local authorities to the boards, not taking into account the £30 billion spent by unelected, unaccountable health boards.

Some 40,000 people, the majority Conservatives, have been appointed to these boards.

Even Liberal leader Paddy Ashdown condemned the 'corruption' revealed by the report. Labour leader John Smith was content merely to point to the 'incompetence' of the Tory government.

## Tory lessons

THE German government is set to embark on a huge privatisation and deregulation programme as it tries desperately to pass onto the backs of the working class the cost of a growing social and economic crisis.

The German government is studying closely the experiences of the British government: 'We intend to look very closely at concrete British experiences', says economics minister Gunter Rexrodt.

The Thatcher privatisation drive from the early 1980s onwards was motivated by the need to break up the trades unions in the state sector. One useful by-product was that it put millions into the hands of Tory supporters in the City and elsewhere, who made a killing out of the sale of state assets at knock-down prices. No doubt the German government has similar ambitions in mind.

The monopoly over gas and electricity distribution is to be broken up; legislation controlling price reductions in shops is to be ended; and the government's monopoly over the employment service is to be scrapped.

This only underlines the fact that the break-up of state services, the destruction of nationalised industries, was not the result of 'Thatcherite ideology' but a trend at work in capitalism internationally.

## Watch your pension

THE 'bosses' union', the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), is demanding that crucial elements in the reforms to pensions laws be modified to reduce costs for the employers.

In particular the CBI has expressed concern about the provision of minimum solvency stan-

dards for pension schemes, which was one of the proposals by the pension law review committee, chaired by Professor Roy Goode.

Goode would require employers to add reserves to schemes if their assets fell below 90 per cent of that required to pay all pension liabilities if the scheme were wound up immediately. This could happen if, for example, an employer became insolvent.

The CBI has also proposed that participation in an industry-funded compensation scheme should be optional.

These developments make even more urgent the control by workers themselves of the contributions they make to pension schemes. Otherwise more Maxwells are certainly on the way.

## Stormy times ahead

'IF YOU choose a day, and make a total of the movement of money that has taken place that day, and you then calculate the sum of all transfer of merchandise that has taken place, you will find it represents only one thousandth part of monetary movement. This is terrifying.'

So says the latest star of political economy in France, Alain Minc. His latest book, 'Le Nouveau Moyen Age' (he has already had a dozen books published, which is not bad for a 45-year-old), is rapidly achieving the status of a fictional disaster blockbuster.

Minc will almost certainly prove a nine-day wonder but his deep pessimism about the future of capitalism is worthy of note.

Minc is of the opinion that historical optimism has been wiped out and that we are helplessly mired, perhaps for centuries, in a new 'Middle Ages' that has lost its centre and all direction or purpose.

Not surprisingly, therefore, Minc takes a fatalistic attitude to the operation of the money markets. Nothing can be done to check what he calls the 'mob rule' that now reigns there.

Financial calamities are inevitable and unavoidable he says: 'They are phenomena like the weather. When there is a storm there is a storm.'

Minc attributes the sombre prospects for capitalism to the 'collapse of communism'. He says the collapse in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union was the greatest shock the world has experienced since the fall of the Roman Empire. In comparison the crushing of the Ottoman Empire was merely a 'regional adjustment'.

What he calls 'Communism' provided the West with a permanent scapegoat. But now all excuses have been removed: all that goes wrong in the world can now be blamed on 'liberalism' — that is capitalism.

But liberalism is already being rapidly discredited he believes, proving quite incapable of dealing with rising unemployment, for instance.

He fears that increasing areas of the world will fall into the hands of bodies which are under no control and cites the Mafia as the leading example of this danger.

Minc also warns of the consequences of the 'arrogant triumph of the financial markets'. He foresees a future 'accident' besides which the 1987 crash will seem 'peripheral'.

There is a certain irony here. Minc was at one time in charge of Olivetti's operations in France. He bossed at the time, Carlo De Benedetti, has recently been indicted for corruption, charged with being a member of the 'kleptocracy'.

Threadneedle

John Fordun

## Homage to Tom Kemp

PETER FRYER is away for a few weeks — promoting family values so I'm told — and the editor has asked me to keep this space warm. But fear not, Fryer-fans! Peter will be back with his pen recharged. On no account cancel your subscription.

I have decided not to follow the BBC's absurd example. When that vastly overpaid original, Terry Wogan, got his hols from his interminable chat-show, they used to wheel in a vastly overpaid surrogate. The ensuing verbal flan was then called 'Wogan, introduced by Sue Lawley', despite the fact that the only sign of the tritely talkative Tel was his agent picking up the royalty cheque. This is not going to be 'The Peter Fryer column written by Terry Brotherstone'.

\*\*\*\*\*

IT IS still a personal (and not an editorial) column, however, and subject to all the brickbats that some may wish to aim at the genre.

It is just that it is being written by a different person. Different age, different background, different political history, different . . . oops! I nearly said nationality. Why it is called the John Fordun column will be revealed in a week or two.

The clue is that there is a Scottish connection. A generous prize to anyone sending in the correct explanation. In the interests of fairness, however, all Workers Press readers, their relatives and friends are debarred from entering the competition.

\*\*\*\*\*

THERE is, alas, only one way that I can begin a personal column in this newspaper early in 1994. Our comrade, Tom Kemp, died at home in Gravesend, Kent, just before Christmas. His life was movingly remembered by the editor in the first Workers Press of the new year. To me fell the melancholy honour of responding to Tom's family's request that someone from his party should be amongst those speaking at the funeral.

It was a dignified, and, so far as was possible, relaxed, family occasion (though with an impressive turnout of WRP members and supporters) held at the Medway crematorium on Wednesday 29 December.

It was beautifully conducted by Tom's daughter Renee. Tom's younger brother spoke first — about their family background, Tom's teens, how he became a political person, and his time in the war.

Close your eyes and it could have been Tom's voice. It was done so naturally that you almost forgot why we were there. It was, as they say, a hard act to follow. I was glad I had decided I should speak from a prepared text. Here is the gist of my remarks.

I thanked the family for requesting a party speaker. It was appropriate because Tom was, in his politics, a party man. In his youth he had joined the Communist Party to fight against unemployment and fascism.

'Tom's belief in a truly human future was grounded in his study of Marxism. While others allowed themselves to be diverted into a less troublesome life by the partial regeneration of the capitalist nations after World War II, Tom remained loyal to his revolutionary socialist and internationalist principles, not least because they were inseparable from his

knowledge of Marxism, and particularly Marx's "Capital".

'It is appropriate that two of his lasting memorials will be his books on reading "Capital" today and on "Theories of Imperialism". These will long remain important to class-conscious young workers and to intellectuals who want to contribute to the future of socialism and to the socialist future.

'So also will Tom's book on "Stalinism in France", a second volume of which remains to be published. It is one of the few serious history books to analyse in detail the degeneration of the communist movement from a truly communist standpoint. It is the work of a scholar who faced up to the truth about his own movement long before it became fashionable on the left to draw attention to the crimes of the Stalinists.'

I referred to Tom's decision to leave the Communist Party after the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, but not to abandon communist principles. He became, and remained, a Trotskyist for the remainder of his life. 'It was Tom's independence of mind and critical spirit which led him to take this course. It was no easy option.

'The Trotskyists were few and isolated, and only recently has it become possible to begin fully to analyse the effect this had on the movement. Tom's party, for too long, was not an organisation which welcomed his independent and critical thinking.'

Tom, however, was a tireless writer and lecturer for the party and he did not avoid the practical work such as factory sales and paper deliveries. His own background 'and the enormous strength of his family life lay at the basis of [Tom's] ability to be both a disciplined working-class fighter and an independent critical spirit.'

I spoke briefly of Tom's academic reputation and of how the books which earned it can be seen as 'an integral part of Tom's whole intellectual enterprise'.

'It is tragic that Tom, whose main failing was that he was excessively modest, came too late to see that it would be important to write a "testament" about his own remarkable life.

'This is now a gap which can never be entirely filled. But there are those who can help us reconstruct the story as best we can. I hope that, as we prepare for an international memorial meeting in the spring, they will feel able to do so.

'For Tom was a man of whom it can be said that it matters that future generations of socialist fighters and scholars should be able to find out about who he was and what he did.

'I hope that to know that this is how his party sees his life, that this is the esteem in which it holds his memory, may offer some consolation, some additional strength, to the wife and family whom he loved and whose support he treasured.'

\*\*\*\*\*

IF YOU are someone who has reminiscences about Tom Kemp, or comments on the history of the Trotskyist movement when he was a member of it, please send them to Terry Brotherstone, University of Aberdeen, Department of History, Old Aberdeen, AB9 2UB.

And if you are one of those mysterious correspondents who keep popping into Peter Fryer's personal column as prompters of his provocative thoughts or correctors of his rare errors, your contributions about the possibilities for, and the deficiencies of, John Fordun, between now and the early summer, may, I hope profitably, be sent to the same address.

TB

## Television

# Glimpse of ruthlessness

Review by Jill Oxley

IN THE third of its five-part series UNDERCOVER BRITAIN, 'Living in Fear' (Channel 4, 25 January), we were all too briefly shown a series of incidents in which tenants in Manchester call on Housing Aid for help with their landlord.

These landlords are either threatening to evict them or have already done so illegally by changing the locks on their door.

### Evict

The tenancy relations officer reassures tenants about their legal rights. Whether the rent is overdue or the tenancy agreement is up, the landlord cannot legally evict them without going through the courts.

The officer, an employee of the city council, visits the landlord to confirm the legal situation, almost invariably getting a negative reaction, often accompanied with abuse. In one case, however, the landlord

agreed to accept a caution.

The majority of the tenants are on housing benefit and usually agree to let the DHSS pay the landlord directly. But when, as is often the case, the property becomes in need of repair and the landlord does nothing about it, the tenants sometimes changes this arrangement and holds onto the rent in lieu. Some 'do a runner' with the money.

In another type of case, the video camera of one of the team confirms allegations of sexual harassment by a landlord of a young woman tenant.

Although the programme was made in conjunction with professionals, the script comes across as very much as under the control of Manchester city council's tenancy relations team. The landlord is seen as a predator on the weakest stratum of society: the old,

women and the unemployed.

The team's response to a call for help is, however, very much dependent on the law. But the law is not always sufficient. What about the tenant whose landlord replaced the locks illegally but still ended up in a bed and breakfast?

Or the elderly woman whose action in calling Housing Aid provoked the landlord to take out an injunction to get her out of the property and who decided instead to simply disappear?

### Violence

'A threatened eviction every two days, a threat of violence every week, and over 400 cases a year. I wish I could say we got things sorted for every tenant who phoned but, frankly, I can't', concluded one of the team.

Housing is one of the most fundamental human needs, as

basic as food, and should not become the means of extracting profit. We have already seen the effects of the housing policy of local Labour parties, and now the Liberal Democrats in Tower Hamlets, which has led to the election of a fascist councillor

### Harassment

In the programme every landlord except one was an Asian; the remaining one was Greek. 'I am a respectable business man,' said the owner of 5 properties and 17 previous instances of harassment on his file.

Furthermore, every tenant in the programme was white which made me feel distinctly uneasy. What about immigrant tenants who are too frightened to appeal for help? The Manchester team did not discuss this glaring anomaly but surely should have. Another omission was the lack of any national statistics.

## Programme guide

**Saturday 5 February** 'Tomorrow's Socialism'. First of two parts in which Neil Kinnock traces the origins of his beliefs and identifies the key ideas defining his philosophy (7.35pm, BBC2). **KINGDOMS IN CONFLICT: 'The Desert and the Deep Blue Sea'**. The vast mysterious country of Mauritania, on the coast of west Africa, is one of the world's most important wintering grounds for wading birds — but inland, the dry, hot Sahara is tightening its grip: it hasn't rained there for 16 years (8pm, Channel 4).

**Sunday 6 February** **THE MONEY PROGRAMME: 'Pensions'**. With the government increasingly emphasising the importance of private rather than state provision, is the personal pensions industry fit to provide for the nation's future? (7pm, BBC2). **MOVING PICTURES**. As the controversial Hollywood feature about the Guildford Four ('In the Name of the Father') opens in Britain, the thin line between dramatic licence and misrepresentation is discussed



Are 1,600 Greek Cypriots dead or alive? Thursday, Channel 4

(8.10pm, BBC2).

**Monday 7 February** 'Soil of Avellaneda'. Daniele Incal-



Mauritanians land their catch on Saturday, Channel 4

caterra's film about the relatives of the victims of Argentina's military dictatorship and the project to identify the remains of the bodies of those who 'disappeared' (11pm, Channel 4).

**Thursday 10 February** **SECRET HISTORY: 'Dead or Alive?'**. A total of 1,619 Greek Cypriots are still unaccounted for after Turkey's invasion of

Cyprus in 1974. And 20 years on, dispossessed Greeks are powerless against an occupying force of 30,000 (9pm, Channel 4).

### Selected films

**THE HEIRESS** (1949). First-rate performances from Olivia de Havilland, Montgomery Clift and Ralph Richardson in William Wyler's screen version of a Henry James novel (Saturday 12.15pm, BBC2). **ALICE IN THE CITIES** (1974). Often touching and very funny Wim Wenders road movie about world-weary photographer and his young companion's search for her grandmother (Sunday, 12am, Channel 4). **THE MARRYING KIND** (1952). George Cukor's bitter-sweet comedy with Judy Holliday and Aldo Ray as divorcing couple recalling their disintegrating marriage through a series of flashbacks (Friday, 2pm, Channel 4).

JJ

# BBC preparing for Bosnia carve-up?

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

BBC television's early evening news last Saturday led with a report that 'Muslim authorities in Bosnia' were questioning four suspects in connection with the killing of a British aid driver.

For a moment I wondered how religious leaders had taken over criminal investigations in that country, until I realised that this was the BBC's way of describing the Bosnian police force!

I telephoned the BBC to point out that Bosnia was a legitimate state, still officially recognised by Her Majesty's government, the European Union and the United Nations — and that if the BBC knew of a change in policy, they should say so!

### Caught

This wasn't the first time I'd caught them at it. A recent report said 'the world' (they probably meant the British Foreign Office) was 'losing patience' with 'the Muslims'. I phoned to remind them that Bosnia was the victim, not the instigator of aggression; that Muslims were the main victims of massacres and 'ethnic cleansing', but the

people under siege in Sarajevo and Tuzla were all Bosnians.

As for 'the world' being impatient, I added, most of us were fed up with seeing these brave people denied the means to defend themselves.

The night last October that the Workers Aid for Bosnia convoy besieged the UN Protection Force's headquarters in Zagreb, Croatia, I phoned the BBC

to tell them I'd heard this, and tried to interest them in the news.

You can telephone the BBC on 081-743 8000, ask for the duty officer, and make your point about any television programme or news item. They have to note your comment, and pass it on to the programme makers. You're not obliged to give your name or address. It may be an idea to write down the points

you want to make, so you can speak calmly and clearly. There's no need to feel nervous (remember, your licence pays their wages!), and once you've done it, you'll acquire confidence.

Despite my call last Saturday, the phrase 'Muslim authorities' was used again later that evening, suggesting it was not just a mistake made in haste by some ignorant reporter, but expressed deliberate policy. The British government backs the carve-up of Bosnia into ethnic enclaves. Has the BBC been told to prepare public opinion for the destruction of Bosnia?

### Pretend

Calling the BBC may not change much, but at least it means they can't pretend innocence, can't claim nobody objects to what they're saying, and can't think they're getting away with it. It's something anyone with access to a phone can do in a few minutes, and if enough of us do it often enough, we might even get a result!

Workers Aid for Bosnia should start a network of supporters who can monitor the news, liaise with each other, share information and experience, and bombard the media with letters and calls.



Inhabitants of Sarajevo queuing for water in May last year

# State education defended in France High stakes in fight against 'Inquisition'

BY JANOS BOROVI

THE huge protest in Paris on 16 January in defence of state education and against cuts in public spending (see Workers Press 22 January) was the largest demonstration since the 1968 general strike. One million teachers, parents, young people, and trades unionists occupied the streets from 11am to 8pm.

As we reported, the aim of the demonstration was to protest against the Balladur government's aim of removing the last obstacles to complete public financing of 'private schools' (which are 95 per cent in the hands of the Catholic Church).

This new law is only the latest attempt by the Catholic Church to get state funding for its schools. The 'Socialist' governments after 1981 offered the Church enormous gifts. Just before the 1992 elections the 'Socialist' education minister Jack Lang made a shameful deal (including, amongst other things, a gift of more than £250 million) with Father Cloupet, the general secretary of the Catholic education system.

The success of the demonstration wasn't simply due to the proposed funding of the Church. Hundreds of thousands have reacted angrily to the Catholic offensive against secular education.

Publicly the Church says that religious schools give the same type of education as state

schools. But secretly the Church speaks of the 'new evangelisation' of its schools.

The celebrated 'père Cloupet' clearly explained what was meant by this. He said that the schools have to give 'a Christian view of the world, including mathematics and physics'.

Almost 400 years ago, in 1600, the Italian scientist Giordano Bruno was burned in Rome because he wrote on 'the infinity of the Universe'. Today the 'Holy Inquisition' is trying to make a comeback.

## Offensive

It is difficult to imagine what 'Catholic physics or mathematics' would be in 1994, but it is clear that there is a large ideological offensive against philosophical materialism. The aim is to go back to the period before the Enlightenment of the 18th century.

But the stakes are higher. This offensive is part of an attack on Marxism, on materialist dialectics. This is the general trend of the world bourgeoisie, in which they are supported by all kinds of ex-Stalinists and renegades.

Some 80 famous French scientists have protested, in the name of the defence of rational thought, against Father Cloupet's declaration. This is a good response, but the question still remains: is it possible today to defend materialist



A demonstration in Paris in 1991 defending health provision — now state education is under attack

thinking without a defence of Marxism?

This is a very concrete question. In the defence of the state education system, all trades unions and all parties — the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the centrists — have defended the secular state against the integration of religious philosophy.

It is beyond question that the separation of the state from the Church represented a step forward as emerging capitalism developed. The development of science, industry, education and the productive forces needed to smash the direct influence of the Church on the bourgeois state apparatus.

Secularity (the independence of the state from religion) was a progressive idea during the ascendant period of capitalism. But even then this period that independence was only relative.

## Reaction

Last month's demonstration expressed a mass reaction against the imposition of religion on society. But the bureaucratic leadership of the labour movement is trying to divert this healthy reaction of the masses, by turning it towards the so-called 'defence of the lay Republic'.

For the labour bureaucracy the very existence of this mythical, abstract, 'lay Republic', which has no class content, would constitute a barrier against this religious offensive. This is a lie.

This 'pure' and 'secular' state never existed, not even in

the 19th century. In the imperialist stage of capitalism, the bourgeoisie can no longer afford this luxury. It needs the concrete help of all religions in its attempts to smash all the material, ideological and political conquests of the working class.

The defence of secularity demands the unmasking of all attempts to present the bourgeois state as 'neutral', and demands the clear stating of its class character — in short, a revolutionary policy.

The first immediate step is a fight in the unions to transform the real anti-clerical feeling into a mobilisation against the capitalist state:

- Not one penny more for private schools!
- Denounce all laws and agreements between the 'private' educational system and the state!
- Nationalisation, without indemnity, under workers' control, of all private schools built and financed by state funds!

All religions are trying to re-found their obscurantism on the ruins of Stalinism. In the name of the so-called 'immaterial' nature of their religion, the churches want to subordinate the working class to the so-called 'eternal, basic values' of religion.

These values serve to disarm the toilers all over the world in the face of state attacks on their conquests, their democratic rights, etc.

The fight for the defence and development of Marxism is inseparable from the fight against the new clericalism, against the new 'Holy Inquisition'!

## 'Red vicar' aims to revive fortunes

THE Redgraves, Corin and Vanessa, are proposing to set up an 'international theatre group' based at the Bridge Lane Theatre, Battersea, in south-west London.

Its first production will star Corin Redgrave, appropriately, as 'a red vicar' who raised the red flag over his church during the 1926 General Strike.

Actors will be asked to work for the Equity union's minimum of £200 before deductions, which

Redgrave himself admits is not a living wage.

The Redgraves have £140,000 set aside in order to underwrite costs.

## Flagging

Cynical actors may consider that this plan for a 'peoples' theatre' has more to do with reviving the flagging fortunes of the Yeltsin-supporting Redgraves than anything else.

Bronwen Handyside reports

## Two nations



## Labour's policeman

THE Labour Party was thrilled to death when, for the first time in years, the Police Federation appointed a Labour member to represent its interests in parliament. Mike O'Brien, MP for Warwickshire North, was the lucky candidate.

A little later Liberty and other civil rights groups were shocked when Labour abstained rather than opposed the Tories' new Criminal Justice Bill — you know the one, it removes the right to silence.

Further unpleasant surprises followed when O'Brien tabled a series of amendments to the Bill together with J. Michael Shersby, his Tory counterpart for the Police Federation.

Where the Tories propose only to criminalise gatherings 'in the open air' of '100 persons or more', O'Brien has added the words 'in a building', and left out any mention of numbers.

This gallant little campaigner also wants to make Tory attacks on young people more vicious by adding the proviso that police should have the power to remove two — rather than ten — people and their vehicles if they suspect they have turned up for a 'rave'.

## Worse than Bosnia

IT MAKES you wonder if Mr O'Brien would count the casualty department of south London's King's College hospital as a gathering detrimental to public order?

An aid worker forced to endure an 18-hour wait in the accident and emergency department shortly after returning from a humanitarian mission to Bosnia said conditions were worse than in hospitals in the besieged town of Mostar.

Shelagh McDonough (59) said: 'It was like going from one war zone to another. I couldn't believe that conditions in a major London teaching hospital could be so bad.'

She was not given a drink until 11 hours after arriving at the casualty department at 10.30pm suffering from a leg infection. She was in great pain, but was placed on a trolley to wait for a bed. When the trolley was found to be too small, leaving her leg dangling over the end, she was forced to sit all night on a plastic chair in a cubicle.

The last time she went to the hospital with a suspected deep-vein thrombosis nine years ago, she was given a bed within the hour.

## Get in the queue

BUT Shelagh McDonough did not have it so bad, relatively speaking. She only had to wait 18 hours for a bed. Government inspectors announced last week that disabled people have to wait an average of 11 months for their needs for aids and adaptations to be assessed by occupational therapists.

In one local authority applicants were enduring waits of up to two years, and another said its lists were so long that some people would never be seen.

## Homeless hit

THE Tory government plans to introduce new stricter legislation on homelessness, by giving

homeless families six-month leases with private landlords rather than permanent rehousing.

In the meantime it has been revealed that the Ministry of Defence owns thousands of homes which are being left lying empty.

The total number of vacant houses in Britain has risen to a record high of 864,000 compared to less than 700,000 ten years ago. Nearly 90 per cent are privately owned, but thousands are in the public sector, most belonging to the MoD. Part of the 'peace dividend' has been the vacating of family homes in army camps, airfields and naval bases.

In addition, it is estimated that in London alone there is at least 25 million square feet of empty office space. At the same time the number of homeless people has shown a dramatic increase.

## Social trends

A NEW government survey shows that inequalities continue to deepen in Britain. This might have something to do with Labour MP O'Brien's enthusiasm — along with his friends in the Tory party — for the erosion of civil liberties.

In 1994, 10 per cent of the population owns 50 per cent of the nation's wealth, a figure unchanged since 1976. If you exclude money tied up in houses, that becomes 5 per cent of the population owning half of all the wealth.

For the poorest 20 per cent the share of national income has fallen from 10 per cent in 1979 to 6 per cent. On the other hand, the richest 20 per cent have increased their share from 35 per cent to 41 per cent.

And inequalities exist between the unequal — unemployment is 30 per cent among black people, and 28 per cent for Pakistanis and Bangladeshis — but less than 10 per cent for whites. One in 15 men who are working has a part-time job, compared with one in two women; among those in full-time work, men have 15 hours more free time a week than women.

## Bankers prosper

WHILE some among us are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet — single parents, old people, and couples with children, who make up 15 per cent, 27 per cent and 38 per cent of the poorest respectively — others, most decisively, are not.

Martin Taylor, who became chief executive of Barclays Bank at the beginning of this year, is being paid at least £737,500 a year. It is the highest salary for a senior executive of the Big Four banks — but it pales into insignificance beside the £18 million given in bonuses to Peter Wood of the Royal Bank of Scotland.

A few days after Mr Taylor joined the bank's board in November 3,000 job losses were announced for Barclays' front-line staff.

To add to the despondency of those 3,000 low-earners, the social security department has recently announced that the value of unemployment benefit as a percentage of average earnings has fallen from 41.1 per cent in November 1977 to 22.8 per cent in April 1993.

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

## SPECIAL OFFER — EXPIRES END FEB. 1994 'REVOLUTIONARIES THEY COULDN'T BREAK'

BY N.VAN

The fight for the Fourth International in Indo-China

WHEN published in early 1994 this 220 page book will cost about £15. Advance subscribers are offered it for £10. Fill in the form below.

## The book and its author

The Vietnamese workers' movement took shape in mortal conflict with the French colonial regime before World War II.

It suffered defeat in 1945, caught between French attempts to reassert control on one side, and an alliance of the Communist party and reactionary nationalists on the other.

A decisive part was played in the workers' movement by the Vietnamese supporters of Leon Trotsky.

As the official Communist Party — under Stalin's instructions — carried out ever-more ruinous zig-zags of policy, the Trotskyists discredited and defeated them in the workers' organisations.

The Vietnamese Communist Party enforced its power in 1945 by a brutal slaughter of its

Trotskyist opponents — not, as Stalinist mythology pretended, because the latter 'turned their backs on the peasantry' or 'sold themselves to Japanese fascism'.

This book sets straight the historical record after generations of falsification.

It brings alive the political lessons of a period in which the Trotskyist Fourth International and the Stalinist Third International clashed, not in the arena of ideas or slogans, but in life — among workers and peasants who organised and fought in the face of grinding poverty, police dictatorship and war.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ngo Van was a worker, a Trotskyist and a participant in the events he describes. He was imprisoned in the 1930s by the French colonial regime, and in 1945 escaped the Stalinist massacre.

He fled Vietnam to Europe, where he lives in exile. He combined first-hand experience with years of documentary research to write this book, which is a must for revolutionary fighters of today.

Please send me .... copies of 'Revolutionaries they Couldn't Break'.

I enclose £..... (Cheques to: Index Books)

Please debit my Visa/Mastercard/American Express

Card No..... Expiry date .....

Per copy: £10 plus £1.40 postage & packing (Britain). (£10 + £2.50 Europe: £10 + £4.25 outside Europe).

Name .....

Address .....

Return to Index Books, 28 Charlotte St, London W1P 1HJ.

# SMASH THIS CONSPIRACY

**BRITISH Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd wants the Turkish government's help to make Bosnians accept the destruction of their country. In return, Hurd has promised that Britain will oppose the establishment of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq.**

Hurd had talks with Turkish prime minister Tansu Ciller and Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin on 21-22 January.

On 28 January, Ciller announced that over 50 Turkish planes had attacked a Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) camp across the border at Zaleh, in Iraqi-occupied Kurdistan.

Kurdish sources say 26 villagers have been killed in Turkish cross-border attacks. The Western Allies placed Iraq-Kurdistan under their 'protection' after the Gulf war. The raids must have their approval.

Besides restraining Bosnia, Turkey, a NATO member, is required to influence 'Islamic' states against effective aid to the Bosnian Muslims.

NATO governments are also worried that if conflict spills into Macedonia or Kosovo, and embroils Albania (with which Turkey has a treaty already), it could escalate into a major war between Turkey and fellow-NATO member Greece.

Hurd was joined in Ankara by German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel.

Meanwhile in Geneva, presidents Milosevic of Serbia and Tudjman of Croatia (who has ties with Germany) exchanged warm smiles and handshakes as they signed an agreement to develop 'political and economic links'.

Milosevic is sacrificing the Serbs of the Krajina region to Croatian rule, in return for a pact against Bosnia.

Acknowledging that the Serb-Croat agreement would be a military alliance, European Union negotiator Lord Owen, whose partition plan set the scene for the Bosnian war, said he welcomed the deal's 'wider implications for the former Yugoslavia'.

## Visit

Hurd flew on from Ankara to visit the Coldstream Guards base at Vitez, central Bosnia, a few days ahead of a visit by Defence Minister Malcolm Rifkind. There has been fierce fighting near Vitez between Bosnian and Croat forces.

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

With the arrogance of an old-time colonial ruler 'cutting' the natives, the British foreign secretary deliberately ignored the Bosnian government during his visit.

Bosnians were not the only ones to notice the snub. Responding to British and French calls for pressure on Bosnia to accept ethnic partition, US State Department spokesman Mike McCurry said Bosnians were 'the aggrieved party'. Forcing a deal on them required 'a very strange moral calculus'.

## Embargo

The US senate has voted to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia, although its resolution is not binding on the administration.

Condemning British and French 'appeasement', US congressman Frank McCloskey said that by preventing Bosnians from defending themselves the United Nations violated its own charter.

The British government was pro-Serb, or anti-Muslim, McCloskey told BBC Radio 4.

If British troops withdrew, while maintaining the embargo, 'Mr Hurd and Mr Major and parties in the British government will have hands dripping with blood, even more so than is the case now'.

Meanwhile, Russia's megalomaniac fascist leader Zhirinovskiy arrived in Belgrade last week, reviving 'Pan-Slav' dreams of Tsarist days, together with visions of a fascist new order.

After meeting an associate, Berlin businessman Werner Girke, in Slovenia, Zhirinovskiy said Russia and Germany should partition Poland between them, and Serbs and Croats should do the same with Bosnia.

Zhirinovskiy warned that any air-strikes against Serb forces would be treated as a declaration of war against Russia, and threatened that Russian troops still in Europe could be used. It



**Serb tank in Bosnia: Russian weapons and nationalist mercenaries have gone to Serbia**

is doubtful whether Russian garrisons are in any fit state for war, or wish to be, but Russian weapons and nationalist mercenaries have gone to Serbia.

Zhirinovskiy visited Bosnian Serb forces in Bijelina, a town about 30 miles from Tuzla which was 'ethnically cleansed' by forces under the notorious commander 'Arkan'.

When the Ottoman Empire was destroyed in World War I, Bosnians and Kurds emerged at opposite ends, only to be denied their rights as peoples because they were a 'nuisance' to imperialist plans.

During the Gulf war, the Western imperialists who had armed Iraq and watched the gassing of Kurdish villagers with indifference, suddenly dis-

covered that Kurds were oppressed under the tyrant Saddam Hussein!

Having bombed Iraq into ruins to reassert their domination of Middle East oil, the imperialists are ready again to betray the Kurds.

The Bosnian people are being starved, killed and denied the right to defend themselves, because they are in the way of a new imperialist carve-up.

As the 20th-century map unravels into renewed Balkan wars, imperialist geopolitics resurrects in ghastly form the great power rivals of the past — Russia, Turkey, Germany and, of course, Anglo-French imperialism.

We can have no illusions in the Western Allies, nor in reac-

tionary Islamic states, let alone the corrupt imperialist UN. But that means socialists must offer an alternative.

Together, we can beat the imperialist conspiracies. Workers Aid for Bosnia has shown that the working class, internationally, can assert itself independently of its rulers.

The Workers Aid initiative has won support from Bosnians, and from Croat and Serb workers opposed to this reactionary war.

The Workers International should follow it up by assisting working-class and democratic forces among all the Balkan peoples and others to come together in a congress that can forge an alliance for their future.

## France's strategy against Bosnian unity exposed

FRENCH Foreign Minister Alain Juppé has revealed in an interview with the 'New York Times' the strategy of France and allied countries, Britain and Russia, to put pressure on the Bosnian leadership to accept partition along 'ethnic' lines.

He maintained that the Bosnian leaders' refusal to accept the Vance-Owen or Owen-Stoltenberg plans to divide their country was the main barrier to 'peace'.

Juppé said that proposals for concerted international pressure on 'the three warring parties' would shortly be disclosed by the French government. He also attacked the US government for appearing to encourage Bosnians to fight on, which would be 'a catastrophe'.

Meanwhile the breakaway Bosnian Serb leadership has declared all-out mobilisation and forced conscription in areas it holds. Bosnian Serbs who fled to Serbia have been rounded up by the authorities and handed over to the Bosnian Serb military for

forced military service.

Crack units of the old Yugoslav army under Serbian control have been sent into Bosnian Serb-held territory giving the lie to Milosevic's claim that Serbian forces are not involved within Bosnia.

An offensive by the Bosnian army has succeeded in liberating six towns in recent weeks as it gains strength and experience.

## Avoid

The extent to which the UN wants to avoid opening the northern route into Bosnia was shown when ten Leopard tanks were supposed to join Nordic troops based in Tuzla.

They failed to get in via Serbia because massive transit charges were being demanded. Instead of being driven down the road from Zupanja to Tuzla, the tanks were transported to Split where they still remain, as they are unable to negotiate the southern route.



Serb President Milosevic

## Algeria claims German plot

ALGERIAN authorities confronting armed Islamic insurgents, who have already claimed several lives, say they are probing a link with the German federal intelligence service, the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND).

They claim German companies are hoping to replace French and Italian interests in the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) takes power.

Algeria's military-backed regime last week appointed General Lamin Zeroual, its defence minister, as president.

He said the army would try to re-unite Algerian society. Exiled FIS leaders said the government's days were numbered, while from Iran, Tehran Radio claimed dissident military units had joined an Islamic Liberation Army.

Other opponents of the government, like Hocine Ahmed, one of the original leaders of the struggle against French rule, now exiled in Switzerland, blame corruption in the state for the growth of the Islamic movement, and allege that former president Mohammed Boudiaf was murdered because he threatened to open the book.

Although German security services have been accused of complicity with Iranian operations against socialist and Kurdish opponents, the allegation that they are backing terrorism in Algeria is new.

As well as the presence of leading FIS figures in Germany, the Algerian authorities point to a speech by German ambassador in Morocco last October, saying 'Terrorism is legitimate in a war of liberation,' and 'could be legitimate against leaders who behave like the French did'.

They accuse BND chief Klaus Radtke of letting the FIS have arms and training in Germany, and blame former BND chief Klaus Kinkel, now Germany's foreign minister.

Meanwhile, as murders of secular Algerian intellectuals and foreigners continue, former officers of Britain's SAS are making their fortune advising oil companies on security.

## Unite Kashmiri Workers

KASHMIRI youth who wanted free their country from foreign rule, mainly Indian, rule were misled by Muslim Mojaheddin under Pakistani officers, after becoming disillusioned with what they saw in the Pakistani-occupied zone, according to 'Unite Kashmiri Workers', a new paper produced by exiles in Britain.

'They were lined up and shot and their beheaded bodies thrown on the outskirts of Muzaffarabad as a warning to others who might nurse ideas of returning to their villages and parents,' says a report from Human Rights for All.

It also denounces atrocities in the Afghan city of Jalalabad by Mojaheddin run by a general from Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI).

Published by the Jammu Kashmir People's National Party whose programme calls for an independent Kashmir with equal rights for all its peoples, whatever their religion, 'Unite Kashmiri Workers' says intellectuals and students must join the working class in opposing 'Pakistani theocratic terrorism as well as the government of India'.

The new paper is available from the Jammu Kashmir People's National Party at 770 Adelphi Road, Rawalpindi, Pakistan, or from 75 Upper Walthamstow Road, London E17 3QG (081-52617).

## Workers Press

### SUBSCRIBE

to the socialist weekly that tells the truth

NEW RATES

Please send me

10 issues for £5.60

50 issues for £27.60

INTERNATIONAL RATES: Europe and Near East, £7.70 for 10 issues, 50 for £38.50; Americas and India £12.70 for 10 issues, 50 for £63.50; Australia, Japan and E Asia 10 issues for £13.70, 50 for £68.50.

Name .....

Address .....

I enclose £..... for my subscription, and

an extra donation of £.....

Make cheques, POs payable to Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.