# Workers Press

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

SATURDAY 12 MARCH 1994

PRICE 30p

# TUC'S atest TUC general secretary John Monks's 'relaunch betraya programme' is the latest in a long line of betrayals of the working class. No wonder it has been acclaimed by bosses busily sacking workers and Tory ministers pressing ahead with their anti-union legislation and attacks on millions of working-class families.

That the TUC's 'relaunch' comes on the tenth anniversary of the start of the miners' strike serves only to make

Just days after the 'relaunch', a conference on public sector pay was held at the TUC headquarters, Congress House.

the betrayal more obscene.

This was the 'major conference' that the TUC had planned some weeks ago following the government announcement of the public sector pay award (Workers Press, 12 February). It was meant to be part of a 'campaign' on public sector

This conference was attended by 300 union leaders and public service groups, but most importantly, in line with the 'new approach', it was addressed by the Treasury minister Stephen Dorrell.

Unsurprisingly, Dorrell told the conference that public sector pay rises would have to be paid for by improved productivity. The 'Morning Star' reports that 'he received a cool response'

An angry response directed at the organisers of the conference for inviting Dorrell at all BY MIKE COOKE

would have been more approp-

This shabby outcome of plans for a 'major conference' shows the sort of thing that can be expected if the 'public sector day', promised at the same time as the conference, should ever materialise from the bowels of Congress House.

In the meantime, in the words of a press statement on the 'relaunch', 'a sign of the changing work will be a conference on full employment to be held on 5 July when speakers will include European Commission President Jacques Delors, Employment Secretary David **Hunt and CBI Director Howard** 

No sign here of any workingclass content - not even a token Labour Party leader!

Welcoming general secretary John Monks's proposals for the TUC, president Jimmy Knapp said: 'The aim has been to clear the decks and to begin a new, more clearly focused way of working.

'Throughout this process there has been a clear agreement on the part of the general council that radical change was needed. But the driving force behind these proposals has been John Monks.

'In the six months since he became general secretary he has carried forward proposals as far reaching as any seen in the TUC's history.

### Statement

While the TUC's press statement says that the aim of its relaunch programme is 'to concentrate its resources on campaigning and providing services for unions, with particular emphasis on the needs of activists at workplace level', the reality is in fact the complete opposite.

The statement celebrates the fact that the 'new approach, which was agreed by the general council last week, has received wide support from outside the trade union movement.

'Politicians sending messages of support for today's relaunch include Labour leader John Smith, Employment Secretary David Hunt, and Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown, with whom the TUC is to have more detailed discussions on common issues next week (8 March).

'Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission, has also sent greetings.

'Support has also come from business with messages from Sir Denys Henderson of ICI, as well as Howard Davies of the CBI, the British Chambers of Commerce, the Institute of Personnel Management, and the Industrial Society.

The operative word here is that support has come from outside the trade union movement. The movement should throw out these misleaders of the working

They do not lead the working class, they use its strength for their own purposes and to gain themselves a privileged position in society.

In this sense there is little new in the declaration, except that it takes the betrayal to a deeper level.

Monks and co. are clearly desperate to get into the 'corridors of power'.

### Operation

'The campaigning work will focus heavily on Westminster with a new lobbying operation complementing the work now being done at European level through the Brussels office which was opened last year, says the press statement.

The aim will be to present the TUC's case forcefully to all the mainstream political

The TUC 'programme' includes a cost-cutting exercise.

To make this transformation possible the TUC is sweeping aside committee structures which have served it well in the past but are no longer suited to the TUC's modern needs,' says the TUC press statement.

'By putting into permanent suspension 17 policy and industry committees and operating instead through a single executive committee [the "programme"] hopes to free up TUC staff resources to meet its new objectives more effectively.

For 'permanent suspension' read 'abolition' and for 'to free up TUC staff resources' read 'sackings'. To maintain its posi-tion the top stratum of the bureaucracy is turning on its minions.

The 'Morning Star', mouth-piece of a section of the trade union bureaucracy, expressed its dismay at the proposals, but only in the spirit of high hopes dashed:

'The welcome TUC decision to organise a march and demonstration against fascism and racism in London's East End seemed to augur a readiness to act rather than sit back and

'After Wednesday's relaunch of the TUC, these illusions are no longer tenable.

'They have to be swept aside, and the campaign developed from the grass roots up through the executive committees and the TUC itself, to stop the trade union movement offering itself to the Tories and Liberal Democrats as a sacrificial lamb.

The whole tenor of the editorial was to blame Monks. But what about rest of the TUC's general council, particularly its president, and friend of the 'Morning Star', Jimmy Knapp?

■ See comment, page 3.



**HANDSWORTH college lecturers have** defied the High Court ruling that said they couldn't go on strike and have received written warnings. About 55 lecturers defied the injunction saying that the legal action by an employers' national consortium was

an erosion of civil liberties and an attack on the trade union movement and stopped work, despite being warned by the principal that they might be sacked. In the event, a governors meeting decided to warn the teachers in writing and a record

was placed on their individual files. Staff were told any future action would result in dismissal. Nationally the lecturers' union, NATFHE, called off national following the High Court's ruling.

Photo and story by Mark Salmon



Inside: Internationalism in action, p2; Anti-fascist and anti-racist march, p4&5; In memory of Paris Commune, p7

# **Workers Press**

# Internationalism in action

LAST week we published a truly remarkable declaration from a meeting called by Russian and Ukrainian workers and strikers. (See 'Unite republics under workers' power,' Workers Press, 5 March.) Drawing attention to the grave crisis in the republics of the former USSR, their statement made clear that only the working class, organised as 'an independent political force, creating its own workers' ideology and political party', could save the USSR from catastrophe and prevent it becoming a series of 'colonies of the developed capitalist countries'.

There is no hint here of illusions that some 'democratic' road is open to the workers of the former USSR. As the statement indicates: either the working class re-establishes its power, or the republics will relapse into fascist barbarism. What a contrast to the line peddled by the great majority of 'the left' in western Europe!

The conference went on to set up a committee to begin preparations for an International Workers' Party and, as well as its declaration of support for the working people of Bosnia, it appealed specifically to the workers of Europe and America to join in the building of this party.

This is a powerful declaration of the necessity for the working class to reconstruct its internationalism. It is in line with the appeal of the workers of Tuzla for urgent talks with the Workers Aid for Bosnia campaign and the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International about the problems they face and the means of tackling these problems.

It is also striking confirmation of the insistence of the Workers International that the greatest task facing the working class is to rebuild its international consciousness, so badly damaged by years of Stalinist and reformist betrayal.

It is for this reason that we have devoted the maximum possible resources to establishing contact with the workers of the ex-USSR, especially the miners who stand in the front ranks of those fighting against the restoration of capitalism.

'INTERNATIONALISM' is not something to be 'added on' to the struggles of the working class. The working class can fight as a conscious class, a class 'for itself', only to the extent that it acts as an international force. Capital knows no state boundaries — it moves wherever there is profit to be extracted from the labour of the working class.

And the working class can become a conscious international force only through the building of an international workers' party which can unite the whole working class against its enemy, international capital.

We are convinced that such a party is the rebuilt Fourth International, the party founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938 as the product of the struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy's betrayal of the Russian Revolution. But we know that this is a matter for discussion in the working class, in the course of which we will seek to convince others of the correctness of this proposition.

Two other aspects of the statement from Poltava should give all those engaged in the fight to rebuild the Fourth International much food for thought:

■ The recognition that workers from the former USSR and eastern Europe are being used by capital in western Europe to batter down living conditions and

It was precisely such an issue — the use of scab labour from continental Europe against striking building workers in London — that gave a powerful impetus to the formation of the International Working Men's Association (The First International) in 1864.

■ The call from Poltava that workers in the former USSR should commemorate the anniversary of the Paris Commune on 18 March is again a powerful expression of internationalism (see page 7). For the Commune was not simply a French event: it marked the first time in history that the working class took power into its own hands. As such it was, as Marx said, the 'harbinger of a new society'.

In its own way the declaration from Ukraine is also a harbinger: that the struggle of the working class and the fight to rebuild its leadership has entered a new and decisive stage.

Letters

get acquainted with workers from the editorial board who are interested in Russia, our way of living, the reforms, changes in social life, etc.

Working in the Sverdlovsk State Property Regional Fund as an expert in foreign investment, I can provide information about the privatisation processes taking place in our region.

I would also like to invite a member of the editorial board to visit Ekaterinburg, (that is, I would send you the official registered invitation to visit Russia). You could stay with my family for the period suitable

for you. I would also like to visit your editorial office to get acquainted with your style and methods

of work, particularly if foreign investments are involved.

**WE WELCOME LETTERS** 

SEND THEM TO: WORKERS PRESS. PO BOX 735, LONDON SW8 1YB

- OR PHONE 071-582 8882

This could also be done by sending me an official invitation to visit England

I would like to thank you once again for sending me the Workers Press.

Eugene K. Paderin Ekaterinburg Russia

# Scotland chauvinism

Thanks!

Ekaterinburg.

AM very glad to have received

your paper continuously since

1991. I live in a centre of the

Russian Federation, the city of

who regularly post me the Workers Press. I would like to

I am grateful to the people

historian, Terry Brotherstone, who wrote the brilliant essay, Does Red Clydeside matter any more?', can be so muddled and unclear when he writes about John Maclean and the Scottish national question ('John Fordun', 19 February).

What exactly does Terry mean when he uses the phrase the 'Utopian search for a "Scottish road to socialism" '? If I don't know what this phrase means, I am sure that many readers of Workers Press will share my puzzlement.

I remember Terry writing some surprisingly kind things about an appalling Revolutionary Communist Party booklet, 'Is there a Scottish road to socialism?

There was a whole lost world separating John Maclean's road forward and the Stalinists' 'British road to socialism', with its support for parliamentary institutions and imperialism.

The RCP Brits' answer to their own question is that the Scottish road to socialism will not happen unless they impose it on us along the model of Milosevic's regime.

I was very moved by Branka Magas's book, 'The Destruction of Yugoslavia', and her account of the chauvinism of most of the Western left in relation to the Yugoslav' question. I was reminded of what Ernest Belfort Bax wrote about Engels' success in resisting the process of anglicisation.

Despite what Terry says at every opportunity, national identity, like those of class and sex, will not disappear in the foreseeable future.

A hidden part of workingclass and socialist history is that both Eleanor Marx and Leon Trotsky rediscovered and became proud of their Jewishness towards the end of their lives. This rediscovery of Jewishness, and in Trotsky's case Yiddish, was stimulated by chauvinism in the labour movement.

What I want to know is if Terry is repeating the fashionable view that socialism is impossibly utopian, that it cannot come to Scotland before it arrives in the rest of Britain, or is he the real utopian who thinks it will come to all countries at the same time outside of the parliamentary framework?

I am in Terry's phrase an 'unequivocal Scottish historian' (12 February). But I am also an internationalist and one who has always been pissed off with the attitude of the English left to the Scottish national question.

Indeed, I will only be impressed by the English left when papers, like Workers Press, provide really adequate space for the discussion of the Scottish national question from the standpoint of the anti-Unionist, Republican socialist left.

In the meantime, it would be useful if Terry would offer your readers a critical analysis of Linda Coley's deeply reactionary book, 'Britons: Forging the National Identity, 1707-1838'

James D. Young

# Aid anger

IT MAKES me angry when I see the £234m of so-called 'aid' given to Malaysia.

The Labour Party complains it is tied to weapons sales, and the Tories try to pretend it is a one-off problem. Yet everyone

knows all foreign aid is used to buy off governments and individuals and bastardise the economies of third world countries.

The Pergau dam was not wanted by the people of the area. They will get just two hours electricity daily from it. The Malaysian government harasses the opposition, imprisons dissenting judges, and owns the newspapers. So much for democracy and freedom of

The real issue is how aid is used to prop up the friends of capitalism. It is used to make people grow crops for the west that are unsuited to local needs, to make them buy goods from the west which are useless to their populations, and to keep up prices.

It is time papers like Workers Press exposed the whole rotten aid system to its readers. It's no use making demands on Labour — they are as guilty as the Tories for the abuses going on in the name of aid.

When charity is mentioned, look at the names on the headed notepaper and ask what their rake-off is. We can see their politics and actions in keeping up prices for their friends in an event like 'Feed the World'.

They collect money and then buy food at top prices instead of demanding that the food mountains of Europe are sent, and saving our money for storing, security and laboratory testing.

This must be looked at as a class question and exposed.

Stephen Coyle

# Not so great EXACTLY what point is Brian

Pearce trying to make when he

claims that 'Some Muslim politicians have long felt nostalgia. . for their alliance with the Croat fascists in World War II, when they carried out an "ethnic cleansing" of Serbs'

He seems to be using the tired Serb-nationalist formula of associating Muslims and Croats with fascism.

(Letters, 5 March)?

He does not mention that rather more Muslim politicians feel nostalgia for the multi-ethnic Bosnia that existed before 1992, than for a Croat fas-cist state in which Muslims themselves were subjected to terror and persecution.

Nor does he mention the ethnic cleansing carried out by Chetniks against Muslims, also during World War II, or the failure of the Tito regime to grant the Muslims the national rights enjoyed by the Serbs and Croats.

This is perhaps more significant than any privileges the Muslims enjoyed under Ottoman rule in the 19th century.

Even so, as early as the 1830s, autonomous Serbia helped its Ottoman overlords to suppress a Bosnian Muslim rebellion, and Bosnia was the favoured goal of Serbian expansionism for much of the 19th and 20th centuries. The Muslims did not have such a great time under the Ottomans and Habsburgs.

Last November (Letters, 6 November 1993) Pearce argued for the sanctity of Greece's Versailles frontier and Macedonian conquests. Today he uses Serb nationalist smears against the

Whatever next? Maybe he will defend Holy Russia's historic mission to protect Slavdom from the Germanic threat, as some on the left seem now to be

Coming

soon

SATURDAY 19 MARCH: TUC

Unite against Racism' march from

Spitalfields to London Fields.

Assemble Spitalfields Market 11am

WEDNESDAY 23 MARCH: March

on the Isle of Dogs council meeting

against BNP councillor Beackon.

6pm from Jack Dash House, Marsh

Wall, (South Quay station, Dock-

lands Light Railway).
TUESDAY 29 MARCH: Picket of

Thames Magistrates Court for

ower Hamlets 6. Bow Road.

(Liverpool Street tube).

**Attila Hoare** Cambridge

#### Haste, not invention: a correction

I AM grateful to Brian Pearce (Letters, 5 March) for pointing out a clumsy error in my article 'Smash this conspiracy' (Workers Press, 5 February); but I can only plead haste, rather than the desire to 'invent "suitable" historical facts' which Brian imputes to me.

My article dealt with British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd's efforts, along with Germany's Klaus Kinkel, to bring the Turkish government into line on Balkan policy. Following Hurd's pledge that Britain would oppose Kurdish independence, there were Turkish air strikes against the Kurds.

Meanwhile, Croatia's president, Tudjman, and Milosevic of Serbia signed an agreement; and Russian fascist leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky arrived in former Yugoslavia, advocating that Croatia and Serbia divide up Bosnia between them.

About three-quarters of the way through my article I reflec-ted that: '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."

As Brian Pearce points out (Letters, 5 March), by the time of World War I, Bosnia-Herzegovina was no longer under Ottoman rule.

The country had been occupied by Austria-Hungary, with British encouragement, in 1878, and formally annexed to the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1908. What I should have said was that Bosnians and Kurds emerged 'with the collapse of the Central Powers in World War I'

(The Ottoman and Habsburg empires were allies, with Germany, in the war.)
The denial of self-determina-

tion to Bosnians, for reasons of great-power strategy, had thus taken place earlier than I said.

But it did happen; and while Brian Pearce is right to insist on accuracy, I can't see what motive he is suggesting for me to 'invent' such facts.

Although the ghastly reenactment of Balkan wars, and re-appearance of old actors -Serbia, Britain, Germany, Russia, Turkey, etc. - evokes historical allusions, my article did not depend on them, but argued from current events.

Some geopolitical features may recur. British policy at the end of the last century was torn between fear of Russian imperial expansion (through 'Pan-Slavism') and the subsequant desire to block Germany's drive to the East.

Of course, there have been social and political upheavals since. As history's film reels back, it doesn't simply repeat itself, but reveals unresolved problems and conflicts.

As for 'some Muslim politi-cians' 'alleged 'nostalgia' for a 'favoured' place under Ottoman or Habsburg rule, or an alliance with Croat fascism; I'm afraid I'm not familiar with such leaders, nor do I see their relevance.

Brian can't be referring to the people in working-class

Tuzla, who voted against the nationalist parties, nor those around Sarajevo's daily newspaper 'Oslobodjenje', proud of its World War II origins as a resistance paper (maybe that's the 'partisan zeal' Brian was thinking of?).

Reactionary 'nostalgia' and worse, the aim of destroying modern Bosnia's multi-ethnic culture, and emulating past atrocities, is explicit in the Serb Chetnik and Croat Ustashe gangs engaged in so-called 'ethnic cleansing'

Brian Pearce's zeal for correcting our history might look better if he faced up to the present.

**Charlie Pottins** London SW1

## Workers Press £3,000 Monthly Fighting Fund

In so far: £224.25

WE'RE still battling to reach Tuzla with the Christmas Workers Aid convoy. We hope to announce momentous news soon! We have to keep fighting.

Our comrades of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International in South Africa are fighting for resources.

We need to establish how to finance this. The £224.25 collected this month is nowhere near enough. Please send money and ideas to Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

9.30am.

**POLITICS FICTION ARTS MEDIA** WOMEN'S STUDIES FILM ARCHITECTURE EDUCATION

PENTONVILLE RD OPEN 11AM - 6PM MON. TO SAT.

**BELOW HOUSMANS BOOKSHOP** CALEDONIAN ROAD KINGS CROS LONDON NI 70X

# Fighting the betrayals

BY THE EDITOR

THE 'relaunch' of the TUC by John Monks and company (see page 1) reveals yet again the relationship between the trade union bureaucracy and the ruling class in a period of accele-

rating capitalist decay.

As the capitalist system shows itself less and less capable of meeting even the basic needs of millions and millions of people, as the ruling class's unfitness to rule becomes ever-more apparent, so the TUC chooses this very moment to explicitly solidarise itself with the direct representatives of the capitalist class.

What a contrast with the stance of the workers of Ukraine and the former Soviet Union who, in the face of a desperate struggle against the attempted imposition of capitalism by the Russian regime, have made a powerful call for a new International Workers' Party and stretch out their hands in solidarity with their brothers and sisters in Bosnia! (See last week's Workers

That the cowardly leaders of the TUC now invite the very Tory ministers who are inflicting yet more savage cuts in the social services to discuss . public sector pay is only the culmination for the dull-witted office boys of the TUC of a long series of historical capitulations to the needs of the ruling class.

The formation of the Labour Party at the start of the present century represented a step forward for the working class, or rather a half-step forward. But the potential in this advance was destroyed by the dominance of the reformists over the Labour movement during the epoch of imperialism, the epoch of capitalist decay.

#### Condemning

No doubt many 'lefts', some of them self-professed Trots-kyists, will be condemning the proposals of the TUC and calling for the 'preservation of the link' between the trades unions

and the Labour Party. They do so because they are desperate to see that the trades unions remain tied to the politics of classcollaboration.

But this is the same Labour Party that is explicitly committed to the retention of most of the present anti-union laws, and — even in words — has abandoned any proposals for the renationalisation of the industries the Tories have privatised.

Millions of workers are disgusted with the Labour Party; its membership is dropping like a stone; its support amongst workers is waning in many of its former strongholds. In cities like Sheffield Labour councils spearhead the attack against the most vulnerable sections of the working class (see page 5).

But workers are just as disgusted with the trade union leaders who are 'flesh of one flesh' with the Labour parliamentarians and who have betrayed every single fight against the employers and the Tory government for the last ten years and more.

Monks and co. want to trans-

see as 'non-political' bodies. But there are no 'non-political' trades unions. They must either become instruments for the disciplining of the working class to the reactionary needs of capital, or they must become revolutionary instruments for the liberation of the working class. There is no middle way.

#### Crisis

A full and wide-ranging discussion in the working-class movement is required about the crisis in both the unions and the Labour Party. The unions have considerable political funds. But can these funds continue to be handed over to the Labour Party which makes no pretence at defending trade unionism?

We surely cannot allow Monks and his friends to use these funds to finance their partnership with 'industry (actually with the capitalist class which owns and controls this 'industry'), the capitalist state and capitalist parties.

Such a discussion must also

include the question of demo-cracy in the labour movement. Who said the TUC could invite Treasury axe-man Stephen Dorrell to speak to them?

It was in opposition to these betrayals that a representative of the Workers International at the recent Community and Union Action conference in Manchester raised these matters. Since the conference some of its organisers have been approached for discussions about the possibility of standing candidates against Labour, starting with local elections. This proposition should certainly be considered most seriously.

The International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign was formed to fight on the question of the political independence of the unions from the capitalist state and of workers in their unions from the pro-capitalist bureaucracy.

Once again we invite any trade unionist or worker who has opinions about these issues to write to Workers Press and help develop the discussion that is now urgently needed.

**Anti-union law** attacks right to strike ballot

JUST balloting for strike action could now be 'illegal' under the anti-union laws. London Underground management is threatening the National Union of Rail Maritime and Transport Workers with legal action if it carries out a strike ballot against job cuts.

Management says it has not been notified by the union over strike plans, as required by the anti-union laws. If the argument is accepted by the judges, this is taking the legislation into new territory which further attacks the trade union movement.

## Giro walk-out

A GIROBANK strike last Tuesday was given added determination by the news that the bank's chief executive's salary had increased by £600 a WEEK.

Staff at the bank are only asking for a flat rate of £450 a year more, rather than the 1.5 per cent offered by manage-

National Communications Union members picketed two Girobank buildings in the City, in a series of one-day actions.

# Police seek more 'stop and search' powers

AN AMENDMENT to the Criminal Justice Bill is being put forward by MPs supported by the Police Federation.

They want the power to stop and search ANYONE within a given area for a period of seven days. Present regulations say that police have to have 'reasonable suspicion' before they can 'stop and search'. Of course, 'reasonable suspicion' is a vague term that could apply to anyone.

In case this is felt to be too strong, a Labour member of the committee considering the bill, Mike O'Brien, has come to the rescue of the idea. He has tabled an amendment that specifies six hours instead of seven days.

The Police Federation wants the Home Secretary to crack down on violent attacks in pubs and clubs, rock concerts, etc. Tucked away in this list is demonstrations. To strengthen the hand of the source of violence on demonstrations, the police, is to increase its likelihood in future. The police, of course, would far prefer to take away the right to demonstrate altogether.

# Death in the 1990s

A COMPUTER error meant that an 88-year-old widow's pension was stopped for eight months before she was found dead in squalor.

It was not clear if Ellen Hutchin died of malnutrition because her body was so extenelectricity had been cut off. There was no food in the house and she had just 60p in cash.

She was owed £8,000 by social services, which took over her pension in January 1990. Giros had been sent out up to 16 June 1993, but Mrs Hutchin last cashed one in March 1992.

Her niece, Jean Taylor, has said that she will be making a complaint against Camden social services.

# Lords votes to stay in Middle Ages

IF YOUR ancestors were landgrabbing barons, and you were born in the right bed, you can help rule Britain. It doesn't matter what you've got between your ears, so long as you've got the right gear between your

On the eve of International

Under Norman laws, only

Women's Day, members of Britain's House of Lords voted by 75 to 39 against a move to give the right to inherit a peerage to the oldest child, regardless of

of sex is morally wrong as well as being unlawful'; and he warned opponents they were giving 'a ready handle to those who would denigrate this House.'

But Tory historian Lord Dacre accused him of wanting 'to sweep away all the rights and Patents that have been issued in the last seven centuries by 30 kings'. He said the bill smelled to him of 'political cor-

legitimate oldest sons can in-

minister turned Liberal Demo-

crat Lord Diamond argued it

was now 'universally accepted

that discrimination on grounds

Former Labour cabinet

rectitude'

Notorious right-winger Lord Sudely, who claims descent from a 7th century Bishop of Metz (it was legal then) and a Norman earl was worried the bill would separate land from title. Labour Lord Strabolgi thought it was 'frought with difficulties'. Lord Shrewsbury said it would create problems for the College of Heralds.

'Like the House of Lords itthat works,' he claimed. Lord Hesketh said the bill would make hereditary peers a laughing stock, and hasten the day when the hereditary element of the Lords was swept

So the Lords voted to keep their medieval anachronism as it is, once again reminding us what a load of antiquated garbage continues its part in ruling

### Pablo rules out fascist danger in East We reprint here an article on fascism from the Greek paper 'Vima' (6 January), which seeks to play down the threat of fascist organisations emerging in the eastern European countries. It was written by Michel Raptis (Pablo),

who was expelled from the Fourth International in 1953. His article is dangerously misleading in suggesting that a fascist movement is in principle impossible in the former Soviet Union or in eastern Europe. In fact, former elements in the Stalinist bureaucracies in these countries are leading movements that aim to break

up and atomise the working class, as part of the process of opening up these states to imperialist plunder.

Pablo's position is a product of his longstanding apologia for the Stalinist regimes in these countries.

He was last year admitted to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International's (USec) Greek section. He was admitted by the international leadership of the USec, headed by Ernest Mandel, and against the wishes of the membership of that organisation. Recent reports suggest that he is no longer a member of the USec.

MUCH has been written in the international press about the revival of 'fascism', particularly after [Russian fascist] Zhirinovsky's electoral success. But the term 'fascism' has a specific historical origin and meaning.

Not every regime or dictatorship which uses 'fascist' methods can be described as such. A concrete socio-political analysis is needed. This is of theoretical and practical importance.

For example, in the past, a movement and regime of great importance for the whole of Latin America — Peronism — was characterised as 'fascist'.

Today there is a danger of describing as 'fascist' movements as dissimilar as Islamic fundamentalism and Russian or Serbian nationalism.

Some 'Lordships' in full regalia, including former Labour 'ex-chequer' Dennis Healey!

Rebuilding the Fourth International

This confusion is due to the influence of the vulgar 'Marxism' prevalent under 'real existing socialism'.

Fascism appeared historically in Italy and Germany. In both cases they were advanced industrial countries in crisis. It gained a mass social base mainly among the unemployed and the rapidly impoverished petty bourgeoisie.

### **Powerful**

This base turned initially against big capital, and then against 'socialism', represented in this period by the powerful 'socialist' and 'communist' parties, which were unable to form a united front.

The disappointed and deceived masses eventually supported Hitler and Mussolini. Despite their anti-capitalist demagogy, they were instru-ments of big capital in its attempts to find a solution to

Fascism as a mass movement and regime does not occur in Third World countries, or countries like those of the former eastern bloc. It occurs in advanced capitalist countries if they fall into crisis.

Fascism is a special form of dictatorship that combines anti-capitalist demagogy with the abolition of parliament, parties, trades unions, in short

every structure of the bourgeois parliamentary democracy. So, when sections of the

Western intelligentsia spoke of the 'fascism' of Peron in Argentina, they committed the huge mistake of ignoring the fact that it was a socio-national movement based on the new labour class of the country. This promoted its industrialisation at the expense of British and American capital.

Argentinian workers - former peasants who emigrated regarded Peronism for decades as their golden age. Today when hardline Islam is called 'fascism', it indicates a failure to grasp the socio-economic conditions that caused the eruption of this phenomenon, and consequently a failure to understand

As far as the inevitable explosion of nationalisms in former 'socialist' countries is concerned, it is totally wrong to consider as 'fascist' a movement or regime in these countries.

On the other hand, we do face a fascist movement and danger in France, with Le Pen, in Italy, with the MSI, and in Germany. A prolongation of this crisis could lead to the establishment of dictatorial regimes of fascist mentality, methods and absolute power.

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

Please send me information about the WRP

	Address
	The Paris of the P
	Trade union (if any)Age (if under 21)

Send to: PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB

# Inside

# ollow the

IE tragedy of Bosnia and its ple — Serb, Muslim and Croat has been that too many outside wers have meddled in their airs to suit their own agendas' angers of meddling', 'Morning Comment, 22 February).

It is this Russian involvement ich is the new factor in the situan. It creates the possibility of ding a way out' ('New factor es hope', 'Morning Star' Comnt, 24 February). So 'meddling' DK; it wasn't 'too many outside wers', but one too few.

Up to now, outside involvement taken a predominantly antib character. . . . But there is not ingle easily identifiable villain of piece in this drama. Serbs, oats, and Muslims all share reonsibility for the crisis', the ar' added.

So if Serb forces stop shelling rajevo and Tuzla, and Croat forstop bombarding Mostar, Bosns — or, as BBC television news the 'Morning Star' call them, uslims' — should withdraw their guns from around Belgrade and reb? Sounds fair enough, ext . . . they haven't any.

Immediately (sic) following the ss killing in Sarajevo market – which a UN inquiry was unable apportion blame, though without evidence the media found the bs guilty — the international mmunity intervened. UN troops separate the combatants' ouble standards', 'Morning r' Comment 2 March, advocat-UN troops for occupied Paleswhose problems began with a ague of Nations British mandate Soviet-backed UN partition!). never understood the 'mystery' out the Sarajevo market-place lling. There'd been enough preus bombardments. But then, I'd ively assumed the obvious culs were the forces besieging the And the UN assured us ages that the siege of Sarajevo had

Perhaps Serb guns trained on rajevo only fired blanks, Bosans set fire to their own national rary, and children faked having eir legs blown off for the camera? rajevo people complaining ey're still under siege should be ateful: they've lost weight, saved ergy, and been kept apart from latives (sorry combatants) so ey don't kill each other.

The 'Morning Star' blames the er on 'Germany's longstanding licy in the region, going back to fore the First World War' (24 ebruary). Maybe its non-intervenonism will not last. It is planning special anniversary issue for -Day.

# Unmentionable

WHAT does 'Socialist Worker' say bout him?' asked a comrade who eard I was writing about former ocialist Workers Party (SWP) fullime organiser Roger Rosewell, ow employed by the 'Daily Mail' nd linked with former Westminter council leader Lady Porter see last week's Workers Press).

Writing to the 'London Review of sooks' on 27 January, 'Socialist Worker' editor Chris Harman reerred in passing to 'defectors like ormer "News of the World" editor Wendy Henry, "Daily Mail" leader riter Roger Rosewell, "Sun" colmnist Garry Bushell and the Daily Express's" Peter Hitchns'. (Quite a school of journalism!) But 'Socialist Worker' itself, re-

orting the row in Westminster, asn't mentioned Rosewell. Unlike he other alumni, he didn't just eass through the SWP ranks, he as a leading member. Can't they ive him a reference?

Charlie Pottins

# Build for 19 March an Sweep the fa

EVERY worker should help to mobilise for the demonstration against fascism and racism on 19 March, called by the Trades Union

Following the election of the fascist British National Party councillor Derek Beackon in the Millwall ward on the Isle of Dogs in Tower Hamlets, east London, last September, Transport and General Workers' Union general secretary Bill Morris called for a demonstration against racism.

Tower Hamlets trades council was invited to meet the TUC, where they made a series of proposals, including a march through east London. Only weeks before the election, the trades council had told the TUC about the gang of thugs who had kicked and beaten Quddus Ali in Tower Hamlets. Ali remained in a coma for months after.

Only now, on the eve of the May elections, when several Labourcontrolled wards are likely to be challenged by the fascists, has the TUC decided to respond.

The TUC resisted all demands for the march to go to the Isle of Dogs, and is instead marching to Hackney. It even began by calling

## 'The working class must organise internationally to defeat fascism'

for a cross-party march. The trades council said that this would not meet with the approval of those in the local community who had been victims both of Tory legislation and a racist and corrupt Liber-

Weeks before the march, TUC general secretary John Monks with support from TUC president and National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers general secretary Jimmy Knapp invited Tory Employment Secretary David Hunt and the financial secretary to the Treasury, Stephen Dorrell, to be 'guests' at TUC meetings and conferences, in what was billed in the press as a 'relaunch' of

The 'Guardian' (2 March) quoted Monks as saying: 'We are changing boldly and decisively.' Hardly has

PHIL EDWARDS, the secretary of Tower Hamlets trades council, comments on the national march against racism and fascism to be held in that borough next Saturday

the announcement of public service pay cuts left the lips of these scoundrels, than Monks is shaking hands

with the Tories. This is the same John Monks whose name appears with thanks for 'advice and encouragement' in a booklet produced in 1978 by Tower Hamlets trades council's forerunner, the Bethnal Green and Stepney trades council. 'Blood on the streets' detailed increasing racial violence in Tower Hamlets, and the Bengali community's growing resistance to it. This was the period when the National Front was organising in local elections.

## 'No justice, no peace'

IN A period of deepening international economic crisis, in which local Labour-controlled councils assist in attacks on the working class, fascism is rearing its ugly head again. Months before the May elections, Mukhtar Ahmed, a 19-year-old Bengali student at Tower Hamlets college, was viciously beaten and kicked by a gang of racist thugs. Like Quddus Ali, he lies in a coma on a lifesupport machine fighting for his

It's hardly surprising that the slogan being raised at the benefit to raise money for him and his family is 'No justice, no peace'. Young Bengalis are seriously asking how they can defend themselves and fight back against these racist scum.

What justice can they expect from the courts and the police? In the first week of March, in neighbouring Newham a 21-year-old and a 23-year-old were given 'sentences' of 200 and 150 hours' 'community service' for beating two members of the Newham Monitoring Project around the head with monkey wrenches in another brutal

The two victims had minutes before visited an Asian family who had themselves suffered a racist

side the London hospital, where Quddus Ali lay in a coma, was attacked by mounted police and riot police with dogs. Nine young Bengalis were arrested on riot charges. 'No justice, no peace.'

Now, long after the police attack on the anti-racist demonstrators against the BNP's 'bookshop' in Welling, south-east London, the press are helping in the round-up of protesters so they can mete out more 'justice'.

Remember that the TUC and the Anti-Racist Alliance (ARA) leader Marc Wadsworth told workers not to go on the Welling march if they wanted to avoid trouble. What help can young anti-racists expect from those who side with the state and grumble about the decline of law

There are now 140,000 reported racist incidents a year. Attacks in east London have more than trebled this year. Over the past weeks, organised bands of racists have been seen in Tower Hamlets. There have been several attacks. In one incident, a grown man attacked two 15-year-old school children with a Stanley knife and a broken bottle.

There needs to be widespread and co-ordinated action - involving trades unions and the community.

### Stand united

SINCE September, Tower Hamlets trades council has called two public meetings in the Whitechapel area and a further one on the Isle of Dogs

The emphasis in this campaign has always been to discuss how to resolve the specific problems of the working-class community on the Isle of Dogs, in terms of housing, employment, transport, etc., whilst stressing that the working class must stand united against the attacks it faces on living conditions.

There are others in the movement who simply say 'Vote Labour'. They turn their backs on those sections of the working class A 300-strong vigil last year, out- who clearly feel that they have

been left isolated by Labour and the trade union movement.

When the TUC met the trades council and local community groups at the end of last year, it was clear that these groups feel that the TUC has let them down. Meeting a delegation of trades unionists on the Isle of Dogs, the TUC was told that the local community needed to be reminded of the strength of the trade union movement and that a march to the island would demonstrate this. Instead. the TUC rejected this and so did ARA and the Anti-Nazi League.

The TUC has worked closely with the ARA to set up the march. There has been wide publicity in the trade union movement. But apart from calling for the Asian and black community to organise themselves, which is already happening anyway, ARA only demands a 'Racial Harassment Bill'.

In its March/April bulletin, ARA complains that the government fails to defend black people. And this to a government that used the 1993 Asylum Act to jail a plane-load of Jamaicans over Christmas and recently detained ten Algerians. sending one back to his death, in breach of the Geneva convention.

And the capitalist state will use the fascist gangs to smash up the organised working class when it can no longer tolerate resistance or concede any further reforms.

### Political vacuum

THE parliamentary parties that ARA addresses in its demands are fragmenting. As these parties' poli-

# Greek g

BY DIMITRIS HILARIS

AT THE very moment that NATO sent the ultimatum to the Serbian army to withdraw from Sarajevo, the Greek government decided to close down its consulate in Skopje, the capital of the Republic of Macedonia.

It also decided to block the movement of oil and other goods to Macedonia through the Greek por of Salonica; 70 per cent of Macedo nia's imports come along this

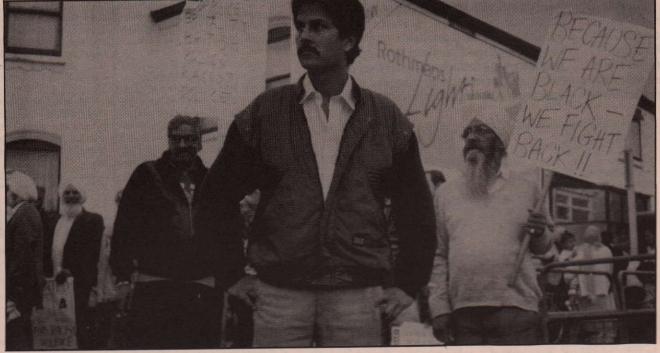
NATO is preparing further milit ary intervention in Bosnia, which can only bring blood and destruc tion. The contention that it is done to protect the Bosnian peoples is simply a joke.

The Greek government - the social-democratic PASOK party has chosen the same time to pro voke an even bigger crisis in the area, increasing the potential for the war to expand to the south of the former Yugoslavia.

Its decision has condemned the people of the Republic of Macedo nia to live without oil and other basic necessities. This helps nation alists in that country, and in Greece it helps to hoodwink the people.

Greece's government has taken its decision because land and pro fits are up for grabs on all sides and its wants an even bigger share.

Greek capitalism is the strongest in the Balkan area. Greek firms operate throughout the Bal



Widespread and co-ordinated action against racist attacks is needed, involving unions and the community

# ti-racist protest scists off the streets

ies become less and less distinuishable from each other they will oalesce and jointly confront the vorking class. A political vacuum as been left on the Isle of Dogs. It s being filled by the fascists — at he moment. This cannot be llowed to continue.

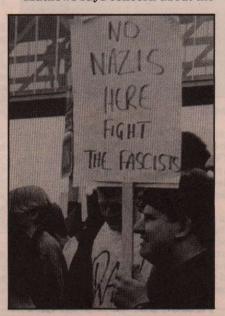
James Hunt and Ted Johns of he Island Labour Party have both efected to join the local East Lonon People's Alliance. This is not a eft split', however. Hunt is a right-vinger. He has denied concocting alse canvas returns — leaked to he local papers — during last Sepember's election to make it appear nat the BNP was gaining ground.

Hunt has accused his campaign gent, Steve Molyneux, Labour's ast London organiser, David Wilinson, and local member John siggs of conspiracy in leaking the eturns. Biggs and Wilkinson have enied the charge and Molyneux as declined to comment. Scare actic or not, Hunt lost the seat.

Three Liberals face expulsion or pandering to racism following he recommendation of the inthony Lester QC inquiry into the ocal Liberals. They are threatenng to form an 'independent' party f this happens. The inquiry recomnendations have not only been ignored but one of the accused has been made the local party's political adviser!

Jonathon Mathews, one of the three, has been adopted for the Millwall ward in May's elections. He was responsible for a leaflet in September that called for 'local homes for local people'. He has said that he saw nothing discriminatory in this.

Mathews says concern about the



BNP is exaggerated. But the BNP could win another two seats in May, according to the 'Observer'. This would put them in control of the five-seat Isle of Dogs 'neighbourhood council' set up by Liberal-Democrat-controlled Tower

region Liberal Democrats and the national party were aware 'long before the scandal' of the leaflets' contents, but they had made no protest. The TUC is sidling up to this party in its 'bold' popular front.

The working class's response must be different. Workers Aid for Bosnia campaign is bringing a contingent of Bosnians to this march in the week before its convoy reaches the Croatian border with Bosnia. This is because Workers Aid recognises that the working class must organise internationally to defeat

The working class needs to help every struggle of workers against the state and in defiance of the trade union and social-democratic bureaucracies, not just in defence but in preparation for offensive struggles. We have to begin that struggle now.

## Hamlets. The neighbourhood council has a budget of £23 million. Tom Winnifrith, another of the three, stated on TV that the London

# Supertram.

TGV (the French high-speed train), is to run from Attercliffe - now known as the Meadowhill shopping complex — through the post-industrial wasteland of the Lower Don Valley to the city centre, then out through West Hillsborough and the Netherthorpe and the University areas to Hillsborough near another

The main problem with this ambitious project is that this Victorian city, with its crumbling infrastructure, cannot carry such an advanced transport system, so that the central arteries of an overtaxed urban network have become a continuous construction camp.

The city has been transformed into a snakes-and-ladders game of diversions and traffic jams, giving the city — which boasted 'the cleanest air in Europe' — one of the worst records of air pollution in Britain. It is believed that the tram's prototype has already cut a car in half and has demolished a double-decker bus.

The fares are forecast at £3 a trip, and the stops are so far apart that passengers will have to catch buses to reach their eventual destinations. Meanwhile hundreds of small shops and businesses face ruin simply because people cannot

tling public amenities.

The libraries have a 'rolling programme' of opening hours, the schools are being 'rationalised' through closures, and the local-authority-funded sector of adult education will most likely cease to exist in September, with the loss of

One of the political ironies is that central-government funding of the schools' building programme and the 'adult precept' has not been cut in the last four years. The Labourites are claiming that they have to finish their commitment to adult education to prioritise the needs of children. But this pious playing off of one against the other will no longer wash.

In education, one of the fears that drives the local education authority (LEA) is that it will cease to exist because the number of schools opting out of its control under local management of schools (LMS) - whereby schools control

A tram to nowhere

IF YOU want to open up a conversation with anyone in Sheffield nowadays, just mention the traffic. Every morning and every evening the city experiences Americanstyle 'gridlock'.

This is not just the result of the deregulation of public transport, nor of the chronic state of disrepair of some of our highways. The immediate reason is that we are experiencing yet another of the city council's grandiose schemes, the

Rather like the 19th-century Russian gentry, the Sheffield Labourites live in a world of 'grandiose dreams and petty deeds', which now threaten to make, like their petty aristocratic counterparts, 'superfluous men' and women. As with previous grand schemes for the World Student Games and the Sheffield Tertiary Education Reorganisation Plan, the Supertram is proving to be a nightmare.

The tram, a kind of municipal

get near them.

BUT in the prosaic world of 'petty deeds' the Labour group is busy 'defending our people' by disman-

hundreds of part-time jobs.

their own budgets — is now critical. If only one more secondary school opts for LMS, then the LEA will have to wind up.

The straw that may well break the camel's back is the once- prestigious King Edward VII school, a listed early-19th-century building in former poet laureate John Betjeman's favourite suburb, Broomhill. This is in such a state of disrepair that recent safety reports claim that it is unfit for use. It is quite on the cards that the largely middleclass parents will opt out to save the school, and the government will only have to point to its buildings repair allocation to discredit the city council.

The present round of cuts are Treasury-driven and the traditional 'left' is helpless. The deficits are a result of the era when 'creative accounting' and 'political realism', instead of class struggle, sent city politicians scurrying to the international financial institutions for massive loans, whose repayment is now in full

If the liberal middle class are disaffected by the Labour Party's policies, then the response of the working class is one of increasing bitterness. This expresses itself at a number of levels. Sheffield city council is the largest employer of labour and the largest landlord in South Yorkshire.

In the last ten years it has driven up rents and shed thousands of jobs. Last year it negotiated a pay cut of 3.5 per cent with the main unions, thanks to a sweatheart deal with ex-Stalinist officials.

This year the council is required to make a further budget cut of £30 million and has sent out statutory redundancy notices. What particularly embitters its workers, some of them ex-Stalinist industrial workers, is that their jobs are being 'franchised out' to the Junior Chamber of Commerce and sundry

The meaning of 'partnership' is a more refined and ruthless form of asset stripping. It is not just plant and property that the Labourites are dispensing with, but the cultural acumen and labour-power of the class they are supposed to represent. Sheffield represents a nasty materialisation of the Labour frontbench Brown-Cook-Prescott document, 'Promoting a Partnership between Public and Private

WHICH brings us back back by a circuitous route to the 'magic tram', which is precisely a product of such a deal. I hear from building workers engaged in the rebuilding of selected Sheffield sewers that the next grandiose dream is a 'flying' bus, which will zip around the city centre on a monorail. The estimated cost is more than £15 billion.

\* \* \* \* \*

Meanwhile the unthinkable is possible — a Liberal-Democrat majority in the council chamber. Labour has already lost key working-class wards, such as Brightside and Walkley, and fears to lose many others.

These wards are historically embedded in the national and international traditions of the working class, centres of the World War I shop-stewards' movement and, earlier, of the violent birth of the trade union movement. Sheffield is selling off its silver.

Tom Owen

# ovt blockades Macedonia

kans and they have a special im-

portance there.

The oil trade throughout the area is controlled by Greek capitalists, and Greek banks control an important part of economic life. The Greek drachma is the hard currency of the Balkans.

When the crisis started, Greek capitalism tried to defend its dominant position and to start a new rush for profits in two main ways.

First, it tried to put political pressure on the Macedonia republic to force it to change its name. Secondly, it supported Serbia, which has long been Greece's foremost ally in the area. Greece and Serbia have a common religion in orthodox Christianity.

All Greek governments whether the Tory 'New Democracy' or the ruling PASOK party have supported the criminal nationalists, Serbia's President Milosevic and Bosnian-Serb leader Karadzic, both economically and politically within the European Union and NATO.

### **Partition**

Within Greece they try to create the impression that the Serb people are the only victims of the war, while forgetting the Serb aim of a 'Greater Serbia', the activities of the fascist chetniks, and Karadzic's use of ethnic cleansing to try to achieve the partition of Bosnia.

They continue to retail the racist argument that Bosnians are Muslims and therefore have a lower culture, and that Bosnians are the agents' of Turkey — a traditional enemy of Greece.

The Bosnians are blamed for all the damage, even the shells that struck the market in Sarajevo. The Greek media claimed this was the action of Muslims.

The Greek government fosters this nationalism at home. For two years it has used all the resources of bourgeois society - schools, the Church, the media, etc. — to instil a nationalist feeling in the population.

It has held marches of nationalist hatred and rhetoric against neighbouring peoples under the watchword of 'The name of Macedonia, a symbol for 4000 years'. The most recent of these marches was organised by the Church.

Moreover, in recent years every internationalist voice raised against the politics of the government has faced the threat of legal action. This climate has encouraged fascist groups to act.

However, the Greek people have not been nationalistic, although many of them have followed this kind of politics out of confusion and a fear that Greece is threatened.

Certainly there is no organised and powerful reaction against it from the working class.

The main reason for this is that its leadership identifies with the nationalist options presented by the government. Last year, for example, the GSEE (the Greek TUC) hosted a visit to Athens by Karadzic. Most sections of the 'left' turn a friendly face to Serbia.

This is the result of the long domination of the Stalinist tradition over the Greek left. Many left-wing organisations and generations of militants have been influenced by the Stalinist theory of 'stages', 'national independence', and 'national defence'.

As a result they are unable to confront Greek nationalism or defend the right of Bosnia and Macedonia to self-determination and they believe Serb nationalism is an anti-imperialist force.

Even so-called Trotskyists like Michel Pablo (Michael Raptis) and Savas Michael in many ways support Serbia.

### Duty

The only social force which can end the war is the working class. There are many historical examples of the working class throwing off militarism and national hatred and turning against the warmongers and bosses. This is what the Russian and German workers did in World War I.

Workers' unity is not just laudable aim but a duty. It can only be achieved by the international solidarity of workers and the isolation of the nationalists. The Workers Aid campaign's convoy to Bosnia is an example of how this solidarity can be organised in action.

Here in Greece, very close to the crisis, the necessity of building an internationalist and anti-war movement has a special meaning. And we are going to do it.

## John Fordun

# Life in the forces

DEREK JARMAN died, aged 52, on 19 February, losing his prolonged battle against AIDS on the eve of the House of Commons votes to lower the age of consent for gay men from 21 to 18, but not 16. It was a symbolic moment for him to go.

Jarman was, amongst other things, one the most talented of English film directors. He was perhaps the artist who did most to bring homoeroticism into the mainstream of British cinema, beginning with his Sebastiane in 1976. He did so with originality, seriousness and wit. Philistines and prudes fought against his work being shown, but his art overcame them.

Jarman's work was intensely political, and not only in the sense of its place in the fight for gay rights. For him, in the 1980s, that battle merged with the struggle against Thatcher-

The lady claimed that she was making England great again. In Jarman's bleak film The Last of England, made in 1987, the idea that she was the leading agent of the country's destruction is never far from the surface.

Our MPs' recent votes on the age of consent for gays showed two things. First, that the Thatcherite moralists' crusade against 'the permissive 'sixties' has failed. Something much more vicious than mere parliamentary reaction will be needed if their goals are to be achieved. SSecondly, however, Westminster remains a palace full of prejudice masquerading as representation.

Neither thing would have surprised Derek Jarman.

\* \* \* \* \*

ONE little-mentioned episode in Jarman's life concerns his brief relationship with the Workers Revolutionary Party. In a diary published in 1984, he records being collected at 4.30am one November Satur-day in 1980, by Vanessa Redgrave - a well-known actor who was then a prominent WRP member.

Outside it was grey and freezing - powdery snow drifted across the streets while we drove around collecting people. At 7.30 we joined the bus at King's Cross, which took us, with several stops, to Liverpool. [There we] assembled for the march and Vanessa stuck scarlet banners in our hands.'

He is impressed by the size of the march, which takes three hours to pass one point. But, like other demonstrations he has been on that year, he finds it 'oddly internal and ritualistic'.

On New Year's Eve Redgrave phones and, detecting that he has nothing on, persuades him to go out on a doorto-door sale of the party paper, 'News Line'. Soon she abandons him, and he sells a couple of papers on his own before going

The denouement comes on 24 January 1981, at the 'Eleventh Year of the Trotskyist Daily Paper' celebration at Kensington Town Hall. Jarman arrives to find Redgrave drinking tea, chain-smoking, and 'selling tickets for lectures and film shows'. She 'shakes as she speaks of conspiracies'.

Then to the rally. Redgrave sits at the end of a long table draped in red under a huge portrait of Lenin . . . 'Spread along the table 'the committee-members look like Leonardo's "Last Supper". Instead of bread and wine we are given words. Meanwhile, not one printing worker takes the rostrum, nobody involved in the actual production of the newspaper.'

'I left early,' reports Jarman. 'Thereafter the lines [from Redgrave] went dead.' I wonder how the scene would have looked if Jarman had ever included it in one of his films.

\* \* \* \* \*

OCTOBER 1976. The opening of Sebastiane. This is a film which speculates about how St Sebastian - the one you see on the walls of art galleries hanging on a cross and pierced with arrows might have come to such a desperate end.

The dialogue is in Latin, the cast composed mostly of scantily clad men, sometimes caught in passionate embrace. It contains, so Jarman claimed, the only fully-fledged erection in the history of British cinema. The story is of conscripted soldiers stationed in a remote corner of the Roman empire, without women, and with little

The premiere was attended by the film-maker's parents, Air Commodore and Mrs Jarman. Derek's relations with his father had been strained. He was a man, so his son thought, psychologically withdrawn as a result of the violence in which he had been involved in World War

Jarman senior's response to Sebastiane was not just as a moment of reconciliation between father and son; it deserves a place in the cultural history of post-war Britain.

After the showing, one of the actors, trying to make conversation, remarked, 'I don't suppose forces life was ever like that'. The air commodore's reply surprised everyone: 'I was out in the Middle East before the war,' he said, 'and it's really quite accurate.

\* \* \* \* \*

I SAW Jarman several times at the Edinburgh Film Festival; and once went to a meeting in a small cinema where he was 'in conversation' with aficionados. He had already been through his first major AIDS-related illness, but seemed then in good

His personality inspired his listeners. He talked mainly about his new film — a version of Marlowe's Edward II — and the small assembly was keen to quiz him on every detail of its making. It hardly seemed the time to put the question which was on my mind.

I wanted to ask about Jarman's public dispute with the actor, Ian McKellen, who had by then emerged as the gay rights campaigner the government was prepared to talk to. He had earlier in the year become Sir Ian.

While others proferred their congratulations on this one knight stand, Jarman saw McKellen's acceptance of the honour as a sell-out of the gay community.

The parallel with trades unionists and Labour Party members appalled when their leaders are ennobled for services rendered to the ruling class seemed exact to me, and I wondered if Jarman agreed.

Had I asked him, perhaps the discussion would have gone further than the one he must have had with Vanessa Redgrave more than ten years earlier. Or perhaps not.

It is too late to find out. But not too late to explore the need to relate gay issues to the struggle for socialist leadership in the workers' movement. A Marxist analysis of the life and work of Derek Jarman could be one way of putting that question more clearly on the agenda.

**Television** 

# Elitist neglect of rock/pop

THE BBC has always regarded pop music with suspicion and disdain. I remember in the late 1950s listening to the Light Programme, praying that they would eventually play a genuine pop record!

These thoughts prompted me to scrutinise several weeks' television on all channels to see how contemporary rock and pop music is treated.

As I expected, the BBC resembled a desert with a few oases. Most interesting and enjoyable is 'Later with Jools Holland' (Saturdays, BBC2), which has live performances from all branches of popular music, including country music and blues, as well as rock/pop.

Thus the programme for 26 February had Lenny Kravitz, Gloria Estefan, the sublime Björk (of whom more later) and Crowded House songwriter Tim Finn. What a relief to get away from the ubiquitous music

The other bright spot is 'Un-plugged' (Saturdays, BBC2) which each week highlights an individual singer or group—recently including k.d. lang, REM, Crosby, Stills and Nash, and Elvis Costello.

#### Restrictive

Ironically 'Unplugged' is in fact made by MTV and sold to BBC — I say 'ironically' since MTV is the televisual ghetto for rock music today, OK if you like endless pop videos, and a res-trictive playlist which excludes most black music and most women musicians. Dead white male rock is alive on MTV!

The main problem with 'Unplugged' is that it is rather reverential, and plays down the sexual energy present in much rock and pop. None the less it was nice to see Crosby, Stills and Nash still producing those astonishing harmonies, though perhaps a bit shaky on the high REM had some excellent

moments - their singer

**Review by Roger Horrocks** 

Michael Stipe has probably the best voice in country rock — but they are so melancholy! This is true of many bands at the moment — I suppose a kind of recession blues?

BBC1 still has its dinosaur -'Top of the Pops' (Thursdays) which has been forced to use live music now, but still has a rather desperate air about it.

The commercial channels give more air time to pop,

live music, interviews and so

ITV also showed the inane 'Brit Awards' (15 February). Here is pop presented most meaninglessly: a string of 'awards' voted for by an anonymous panel and presented by

The only bright spot was the ferocious live number by Björk and P.J. Harvey, who sang 'Satisfaction'. The Icelandic sinPerfect Beat — Rap' (ITV, 27 February). I missed the second one, but the Arena programme was both stimulating and irritating.

Irritating because it tended to pathologise black music, and implicitly black people, by focusing on 'gangsta rap', with its at times violent and misogynist lyrics, and on the homophobic lyrics found in a few Jamaican ragga records.

But the musicians themselves showed some political awareness: 'Don't talk to us about violence — ask the US government about what they did

### Discontent

What was missing in the commentary was an understanding that rap arose on the streets out of a discontent with mainstream music business.

Also the fact that rap is speech is important — there are plenty of things that black men and women want to say! And most rap is neither violent nor homophobic nor mysogynist and there is plenty of female rap, which was largely ignored in the Arena programme. Such programmes are tanta-

lising, and show what can be achieved with a serious and intelligent discussion of pop/rock. In the main TV neglects rock and pop. However it is not uni-que in this, but merely reflects the elitist stratification in British culture.

A combination of upper-class and petty-bourgeois snobbery has perpetuated the 'high' and 'low' culture split, within which the icons of 'British culture' (Shakespeare, Dickens, etc.) are actually used to vilify the spontaneous vitality of grassroots culture.

■ APOLOGIES to Hilary Hor-



Björk: freshest talent for years

although most of their programmes need a VCR, as they are on at bizarre times (4am)! ITV's Chart Show' (Saturdays) consists of about 15 videos strung together under various categories. ITV also has programmes on

dance music ('BPM', Saturdays), heavy metal ('Noisy Mothers', Fridays), albums ('The Album Show', Wednesdays). These are again based on music videos, but have some

ger Björk is a crossover from indie pop, with a voice that could break glass, enigmatic lyrics, and strange melodies that go off in directions you never expected. She is the freshest talent in pop for years.

One thing that is lacking on TV is some intelligent analysis of pop/rock. Two exceptions recently were ARENA's 'The Dark Side of Black' (BBC2, 16 February) and THE SOUTH BANK SHOW's 'Looking for the

rocks for leaving her name off of last week's TV review, 'Connivance and complicity'.

# Programme guide



A patient treated in Lijiang (Monday, Channel 4)

Saturday 12 March 'The Giant Awakes: Moving the Mountain'. First of three-part series on China as it begins to embrace an 'open-door' policy (7.50pm, BBC2). ARENA: 'Theatre Without Actors'. How film-maker Robert Drew and candid photographer Alfred Eisenstaedt pioneered the Cinema Vérité movement in the early 1960s (9.15pm, BBC2). Sunday 13 March THE MONEY PROGRAMME: 'Jobs'. As US President Clinton summons leaders of industrial countries to take part in his 'Jobs Summit' in Detroit, a report on the plight of the long-term unemployed (8pm, BBC2).

Monday 14 March BEYOND THE CLOUDS: 'The Value of Life'. Part five of this remarkable series about life in the Chinese town of Lijiang. Part six is on Thursday (9pm, Channel 4). CHINA IN REVOLU-TION: 'The Mao Years'. From 1949 to the 'Great Leap Forward' of 1958, which led to catastrophic famine and the death of 30 million people (10.55pm, Channel 4).

Wednesday 16 March EAST: 'Race to the Polls'. The local community in Tower Hamlets assesses how spiralling racial violence has affected the buildup to the elections in May

#### Selected films

42ND STREET (1933). The definitive backstage musical. Sensational Busby Berkeley production numbers (Saturday, 12.15pm, BBC2). LE BOUCHER (1969). Claude Chabrol's memorable study of a psychopathic personality set in a picturesque French village. With Stephane Audran and Jean Yanne (Saturday, 12.15am, BBC2). LA NUIT DE VARRENNES (1982). Ettore Scola's extraordinary historical road movie during the time of the French Revolution (Sunday, 12.35am, Channel 4).

# **Employers rob the low-paid**

BY MIKE COOKE

LOW-PAID workers are no longer being legally underpaid because the wages councils were abolished last August.

In 1992, before abolition, 14,779 workers were illegally underpaid to the tune of £1,999,915 - money they could ill afford to lose. Despite this, only 12 prosecutions were made against employers.

This in a situation where 7.018 workplaces were found to be underpaying, an increase of 18 per cent. Hairdressing was the worst area with an average underpayment of £230.10 a year. Wages inspectors found that 37 per cent of employers visited were underpaying.

The money lost in 1992 is

week's wages each per year. Wages councils used to set minimum rates of pay for 2.5 million workers in low-paid industries like hairdressing, hotels and catering and textiles.

Since 1986 abolition has been on the cards and most employers acted as if it had already happened.

The Low Pay Network says that one in every five job vacancies is now being advertised at below the former wages council rate. Wages councils set pitiful rates ranging from £2.71 to £3.17

Low-paid workers generally have difficulties organising against employers for a decent wage. Intense pressure on the poor will come from VAT on fuel, rising inflation and unemployment as the 'recovery' fails people out of work and intensifying exploitation. TB soars

pushing and fighting for higher pay to counteract what will be a

pay cut in real terms. Em-

ployers will respond by putting

# among homeless

CAPITALIST decay and stagnation is bringing back the scourge of the past — tubercu-

The disease had almost died out before the 1980s but now homeless people are 150 times more likely to suffer the disease than the rest of the population.

the bacteria causing the disease thrive in damp, cold conditions. One in 50 homeless people is estimated to have TB, following

chest X-rays carried out by the campaigning charity, Crisis.

These are similar to the rates found in underdeveloped countries, where healthcare is

too expensive for most of the population. Four TB cases were found out of 250 homeless people who came forward to have the X-rays. Another three were likely to have TB, but were lost to further study. 'Old', inactive TB was found in 17 of the X-

In the past six years, cases have increased by 20 per cent. Doctors expect 6,000 cases to be reported this year. The disease

mainly hits, at the moment, poor inner-city areas and the

# In memory of the Paris Commune

The Paris Commune, set up by the workers of Paris on 18 March 1871, represented a turning-point in the history of the international working class. For the Commune marked that first moment when the working class held state power.

Marx, together with Engels in the leadership of the First International (the International Working Men's

THE decision of the conference of Ukrainian and Russian miners and strikers — held in Poltava, Ukraine, early last month — to call for the celebration of the Paris Commune on 18 March shows that those heroic events in Paris 123 years ago lives on in the memory of the working class, not least the working class of the former USSR.

Why should this be so? Because the Commune of Paris constituted a turning-point, not simply for the French working class but for world history. For it marked the first time that the working class held power, becoming, if only for a short period of 72 days, the ruling class.

It demonstrated in practice what Marx and Engels had anticipated in theory: that the working class, having seized power, could not simply lay hold of the existing machinery

Association), was at the heart of the whole experience of the Commune, and Lenin was later to study its lessons intensely as part of the preparation for the October Revolution.

Here GEOFF PILLING pays homage to the heroes of the Paris Commune, thousands of whom were murdered by the French bourgeoisie.

to be assured of final victory. to br

The Commune sprang up spontaneously. Like many revolutions it was born of war, in this case the unsuccessful war of France against Germany and the privations suffered as a result of the siege of the French capital by the German army.

### Roots

Its deeper roots lay in the manifest degradation of the ruling elite, the breakdown of the old machinery of state, chiefly of the army, the cowardice of the bourgeoisie, its inability to administer the nation, the drastic deterioration of the conditions of life of the working class, and the ruination of the lower middle classes

It was these conditions that came together and led to a revolution that for the first

'What flexibility, what historical initiative, what a capacity for sacrifice in these Parisians! . . . However that may be, the present rising in Paris — even if it be crushed by the wolves, swine, the vile curs of the old society — is the most glorious deed of our Party since the June insurrection in Paris.'

Karl Marx

of state, but would first have to abolish this bureaucratic machine and the police and army on which it rested.

A long theoretical and political battle inside the international working class, waged by Marx and Engels against the enemies of Marxism, had prepared theoretically for the

This battle was to reach its high point in the fight against the anarchism of Bakunin inside the First International, which had been founded in 1864, and of which Marx became the de facto head.

#### **Obliged**

This is the meaning of Engels's statement that the Commune was 'undoubtedly the child of the [First] International intellectually, although the International did not lift a finger to produce it'.

The Commune showed in practice that the working class was obliged to create its own machinery of state adapted to its own needs. And last, but not least, the Commune, this time in a negative way, demonstrated that the power of the working class cannot exist even within the limits of a capital city but must embrace the whole country to have any chance of being strengthened and must sweep over a whole number of capitalist countries

time in history placed state power in the hands of the working class and sections of the lower middle class.

The Paris Commune marked the first proletarian state in world history. But the working class, a class exploited by capital, cannot dominate politically unless it breaks the chains that tie it to capital: that is why the Commune had a profound social content, that is why it set out to destroy the very foundations of the existing social order.

Precisely because revolutions are not 'planned' the movement that erupted in Paris was extremely amorphous. It was joined by many patriots who wanted to re-open the war with Germany; it won the sympathy of many small shopkeepers who were facing ruin unless there was a postponement of the payment of rents and state debts; finally it won support from bourgeois republican elements who feared the return of the monarchy.

But only the workers remained loyal to the Commune to its very end. The bourgeois elements decamped when they sensed the Commune's revolutionary working-class content; the lower middle class quit when they sensed it was nearing defeat. And the Commune's defeat that drove many frightened petty-bourgeois and reformist trade union leaders

to break with Marx and desert the First International.

In this sense the Commune was doomed to defeat, as Marx sensed from an early stage. The entire bourgeoisie of France joined forces against it. Germany's chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, released a hundred thousand French prisoners of war to help crush revolutionary Paris which, despite support from workers in other towns, including Marseilles and Lyon, was left

abolition of the standing army and political police, the separation of Church and state, the introduction of a democratic suffrage, the accountability and removability of officials and the equalisation of their wages with those of the workers.

During the period when the workers held power, night work in bakeries was ended and the system of fines against workers was abolished. All factories abandoned by their owners were turned over to associations of workers and production in them resumed. The Commune, aiming to win the more exploited sections of the lower middle class, cancelled rent arrears, placed a moratorium on commercial bills and quashed interest on them — what Marx called 'master strokes'.

The bourgeoisie, sensing that such measures threatened the beginning of its demise, unleashed a wholesale and brutal slaughter of the Communards. ious, and while he criticised its indecision, his attitude was the very opposite of a fatalist. He worked might and main to intervene at every stage of the Commune. It was on Marx's motion at the general council of the First International three days after the start of the revolution that a delegation was sent to attend workers' meetings in Paris to explain the essence of the revolution and express sympathy with its aims.

The general council sent one of its leading members, Auguste Serraillier, to Paris and it was his letters that provided Marx with valuable information which helped him to analyse the unfolding events and prepare for the final denouement.

Marx also led the fight to defend the Communards from the horrendous persecution that followed defeat. Despite ill health he worked tirelessly to secure safe passage to England for as many Communards as eral council of the International acted concurrently as a committee to aid the Commune's refugees.

Writing to Engels from Geneva in October 1878, Walery Wróblewski, a Polish revolutionary and hero of the Commune, recalled with gratitude the consideration that Marx and Engels had shown him in that trying period: 'During my exile in London your home, and that of Marx offered a sole and truly fraternal refuge where so much friendship and kindness was shown to me on your part.'

#### **Transform**

Marx felt that his single most important task was to analyse the lessons of the Commune, which would help transform the spontaneous sympathy amongst workers towards the Commune into a conscious desire to continue its cause through to the end.

Like Chartism in England some 30 years earlier, the Commune came 'too soon'. France was as yet a poorly developed capitalist country, with the majority of the population artisans, shopkeepers and peasants. The epoch of imperialism had not yet arrived, although the events of 1871 represented an anticipation of that epoch.

At the same time there was no effective workers' party, with the result that the working class was unprepared. Neither the Blanquists, who commanded the greatest influence in the Commune, nor the anarchist followers of Proudhon were capable of giving revolutionary leadership to the Commune.

Many of the most determined and loyal members of the Commune often found the right road, but this road was discovered in opposition to the

'Working men's
Paris, with its
Commune, will for
ever be celebrated
as the glorious
harbinger of a new
society'. Karl Marx

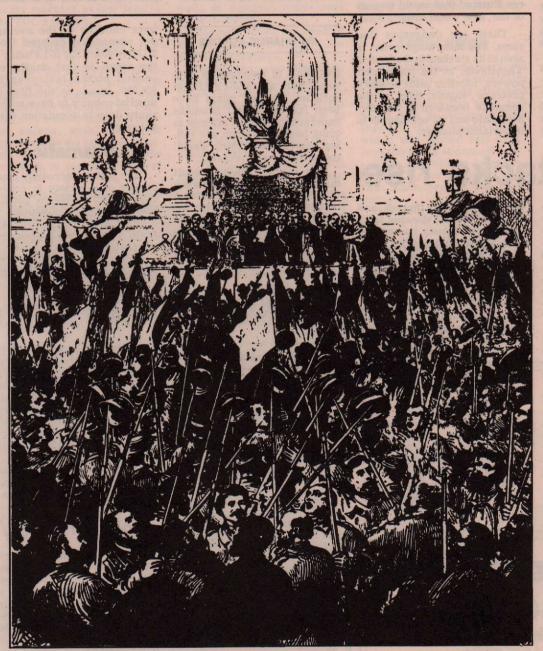
petty-bourgeois doctrines which as yet still influenced them. Without a revolutionary party, the working class was unable to retain the power it had won and to carry out a thorough-going transformation.

DEFEATED though it was the Commune lives on — as our brothers and sisters in Ukraine and Russia have recently reminded us.

After 123 years our protagonist is Marx's protagonist: 'working, thinking, bleeding Paris... radiant in the enthusiasm of its historic initiative', in contrast to the hypocrisy and brutal savagery of the bourgeois world, personified by the executioners of the Communards, those 'bloodhounds of "order" who had lost all sense of humanity.'

Long live the Communards, who dared to 'storm heaven'! Long live the international

working class!



The 1871 Paris Commune was a turning-point for world history — it was the first time the working class held state power

effectively isolated.

But despite its bloody defeat the Commune pointed the way ahead. Already in September 1870, as Paris lay under siege by Bismarck's forces, there appeared on the walls of the city a poster known as the first 'red poster' (Affich rouge) setting forth a programme and declaring that it was the task of the working class to defend the rebublic.

The programme — much of it later to be implemented by the Commune — included the

The Paris municipal council paid for the burial of 17,000 executed people and as many as 30,000 Parisians were shot down; a further 45,000 were arrested, many later to be executed. Around 10,000 were sentenced by military tribunals to hard labour, imprisonment in fortresses, or exile to New Caledonia. In all, Paris lost 100,000 of its best people, including some of the finest workers in the city's many trades.

While Marx sensed that the Commune could not be victor-

possible. He and Engels — who by this time had moved from Manchester to London — were in the forefront of the fight to supply escaped Communards with housing and with the necessary money to provide clothes and household utensils. Marx's family took a leading part in this work.

Marx, the outstanding theoretical leader of the whole movement, saw it as part of his internationalist duty to give his undivided attention to these matters. For a period the genPage 8

Saturday 12 March 1994

Newsdesk 071-582 8882

# No illusions in Bosnia 'accords' THE Croatian-Bosnian ceasefire and the talks on a federation between their governments' representatives is the result of the determined resistance of the Bosnian people to ethnic partition, and the victories won by the Bosnia-Herzegovina army against Croatian forces. Despite the fact that all the great powers remain determined to crush Bosnia,

they are by no means united on how this is to be done. The Vance-Owen-Stoltenberg plans for partition would have required 50,000 troops to police, and have been severely modified by the US - which is sponsoring the current ceasefire and talks - itself unwilling

region.

The US is anxious to build up a counter-balance to Serbia, now openly backed by Russia under the UN flag. Meanwhile Germany works through its traditional ally, Croatia, to secure its own interests in the former Yugoslavia.

to commit any forces to the

Promises of financial assistance by the US have drawn together the Croatian and Bosnian presidents, Franjo Tudj-man and Alija Izetbegovic, for the moment at any rate.

#### **Anxious**

Many Bosnians have little confidence in the ceasefire but see it as giving a temporary breathing space, allowing them to concentrate their forces against the Serbian aggressors. They are particularly anxious that the 'ordinary people' of Serbia are now drawn in.

A year ago Tudjman agreed on an alliance with Serbia's President Slobodan Milosevic By DOT GIBSON in Croatia and KEITH SCOTCHER in London

against Bosnia. But Croatian forces suffered defeat after defeat by the newly-formed and organised Bosnian army, which fights with justice on its side.

These defeats - plus growing working-class resistance to anti-union laws, privatisation and the war in Croatia - have persuaded Tudjman to switch alliances, for the time being at any rate.

In Bosnia, the Izetbegovic government, virtually a prison-er of the UN in Sarajevo, looks to US imperialism for help, instead of the international working class. Some elements in the government present the war as being fought against the 'old eastern Europe' for a 'new eastern Europe' that would be part of the 'new world order'.

These are dangerous illusions. The new world order is seen at its starkest in the former Yugoslavia, as the imperialist powers, together with Serbia's protector, Russia, fight for the complete break-up of the former state and its opening up to imperialist plunder.



Russian UN soldiers in Bosnia:

# Russia: a matter of life and death

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

INSTEAD of catching up with wealthier welfare-capitalist societies, as they might have been led to expect, Russians undergoing Yeltsin's attempt to bring back capitalism are fall-ing behind poor 'Third World' countries in vital respects.

The average Russian adult male now has a life expectancy of only 60 — that's shorter than that of men in Indonesia, the Philippines, or parts of Africa. Infant mortality rates have been rising for some years.

With many Russian couples too worried about the future to

have children — the average per woman has dropped from 2.17 five years ago to 1.4 today the result is that deaths exceeded births last year by 800,000. Russia is the first industrial country to have such a sharp drop in population with-

#### **Dramatic**

'It's just an incredibly clear picture of a society in crisis,' says Oxford university population expert David Coleman. 'A decline in life expectancy this dramatic has never happened in the post-war world.

'It shows the malaise of society, the lack of public health awareness and the fatigue associated with people who have had to fight a pitched battle their whole lives just to survive.'

Last year the death rate soared to 14.6 for every 1,000 people, an increase of 20 per cent over 1992. The birth rate last year was only 9.2 per 1,000, a 15 per cent fall.

Among factors lowering average male life expectancy are widespread alcohol abuse, and environmental pollution. The suicide rate has also risen in the last two years, accounting for

shortages in antibiotics; an lack of basic supplies in Ru sia's hospitals.

The old Stalinist regime statistics were deliberately do tored to conceal the harsh rea ties of life and death in the Soviet Union and present a ro picture.

### Bad

But experts say this does n explain the fall in male life e pectancy — 'bad even by the standards of the Third World according to Yevgeny Mikhailov of the State Comm tee on Statistics, who says on poor agrarian countries ha

# Tuzla attacks rise

THE price for the Croatian-Bosnian ceasefire may be the abandonment of the workingclass-dominated northern region of Tuzla to the Serbian aggressor.

Tuzla has come under increased bombardment since the UN's Sarajevo deal freed Serbian forces to concentrate their attack in the north.

It is possible that a Serbian push to the south will be made to try and cut off the only remaining roads along which supplies reach Tuzla.

UN commander General Rose now sits down with the Bosnian Serb leader, the fascist Radovan Karadzic, to discuss terms for opening Tuzla airport, which was closed in May 1992 after Serbian artillery damaged

its two runways.
It is reported that Serbia has agreed that two air-corridors be

opened, one from Zagreb and one from Split. Following talks in Moscow, Russia has agreed to make sure that no arms reach Tuzla, although it is still not clear whether the Bosnian government has accepted this proposal.

It is all the more urgent that the working class be rallied to the defence of the Tuzla region. There is a widespread understanding in Tuzla that the intervention by the UN and NATO has given Serbia a free hand to commence operations against the city.

The imperialists have changed tack, but their conspiracy continues against Bosnia and working-class resistance to imperialist plans to carve up the country for exploitation.

Defence of the Tuzla region is now the key question for workers internationally.

**Workers Press** 

almost one-third of unnatural deaths. Infant mortality rates are kept high by the number of abortions, which leave many women unable to bear children;

Russian miners strike under closures threa workers at oil- and gas-prospe ing enterprises began a hung strike on 1 March, protest that they have not been p wages since last June. T

> ■ Ukraine and Russia h crisis talks last week after F sia cut gas supplies to Ukra by 70 per cent. Ukraine owe

#### The ITAR-TASS news agencondemned the action as cy reported that oil and gas

BY SIMON PIRANI

HUNDREDS of thousands of Russian miners took strike action on Tuesday 1 March, demanding the payment of wages owed and assurances about the future of the industry.

### Militant

The strike was solid in the Pechora coalfield in northern supported both by the Independent Trade Union of the Coal Industry (the former 'official' union with a new name) and the Independent Miners Union.

Most of the Kuzbass coalfield in western Siberia did not join the strike. Individual workplace collectives supported it, but the Kuzbass co-ordinating council

workers' collectives 'premature'

Fear of pit closures hangs over all the mining areas, and the strikers demanded payment of a 500 billion rouble (£250 million) debt to the coal industry, and a 12,000 billion rouble investment plan.

The miners' strike was just one of a series of workers' actions over the last two weeks.

workers, meeting in Nizhnevartovsk, threatened to strike over non-payment of wages; timber workers demonstrated at government offices in Moscow; workers at a nuclear submarine plant threatened a stoppage over non-payment of wages; and non-emergency ambulance staff in Moscow were on strike.

In Evenk, Siberia, ten women

have been reduced to feed their children on mixed ani fodder, they told journalists

15,000 billion rouble gas bill

#### Tea and sympathy with 'Tricky Dicky Siberia, which includes the militant Vorkuta mines, and Sakhalin Island in the Far East. It was October's attempt to topple DISGRACED former US Presi-

dent Richard Nixon took tea with sacked Russian vice-president Alexander Rutskoi in Moscow last week, wishing him and his 'boys' good luck. Nixon also planned to meet President Yeltsin and fascist leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky.

Rutskoi was jailed after last

Yeltsin, but has been freed in an attempt to accommodate 'hardline' Stalinists and nationalists.

'Tricky Dicky' Nixon's career led from anti-communist witch-hunting in the 1950s, through trying to bomb Vietnam into the Stone Age, and ended when the Watergate scandal

said his Moscow visit had b cleared with President Clin

Fascist leader Zhirinov who has called for Russia Germany to carve up Pola and Serbia and Croatia to div Bosnia between them, thrown out of the ex-Yugo republic of Slovenia last we

### workers in pay

GERMAN workers last week walked out in a new round of strikes in their efforts to force a realistic pay offer from the employers.

The largest public service union, öTV, said that the strikes would target the northern state of Lower Saxony, where the engineering employers and the IG Metall union have recently agreed a pay deal that avoided strike action.

## Paltry

Following the engineering pay deal - which awarded workers a paltry 2 per cent pay deal for the last seven months of 1994 - employers in the public sector have renewed

o Street Newcastle upon Type NF1 2PQ (091-222 0299)

their call for a wage freeze. ■ Two factories struck in

Poland as a protest movement began against the government's budget proposals. Refusing to organise a united didion, the trade union Solidarnosc called for workers to stop work for a few hours at a time on different days and in different places.

Maciei Jankowski, leader the union's Warsaw branc said: 'Our purpose is not spectacular victory, but start talks with the government - talks that really solve t problems and don't look or for immediate solutions." T budget has been imposed on t government by the Internation al Monetary Fund.

# 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. Address. I enclose £...... for my subscription, and an extra donation of £...... Make cheques, POs payable to Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

SUBSCRIBE

to the socialist weekly that tells the truth

Please send me

☐ 10 issues for £5.60 ☐ 50 issues for £27.60