

SOUTH AFRICA: STARK REALITY BEHIND HOPE

'WE ARE free at last', cried Nelson Mandela at a victory rally following the South African elections, which made him the country's next president.

But behind the talk about 'freedom' lies a stark reality.

The 'government of national unity' that Mandela is to head will have one central task: to discipline the South African working class. The great hopes — expressed graphically in the massive queues of people waiting to vote — that many have in the election of the ANC will be cruelly dashed.

The honeymoon cannot last long. The new government — controlled by the old state machine that remains entirely intact, with 95 per cent of senior officials in the central civil service being white — will soon have to turn on the working class as it fights for houses, for jobs, and for an end to the squalor in which millions are condemned to live.

Echoed

The same 'victory for freedom' and 'defeat for fascism and racism' demagoguery used by Mandela and the ANC has been heard from trade union and Labour leaders in Britain in the wake of the election in which the African National Congress won more than 60 per cent of the vote.

The current white South African president, F.W. de Klerk, echoed Mandela in conceding

BY THE EDITOR

defeat when he said that the new government could for the first time represent 'all the people of South Africa'. He said that the ANC leader would soon assume the highest office in the land with all its 'awesome responsibilities'. Mandela was 'a man of destiny', De Klerk said.

'A traveller would sit and admire the view but a man of destiny knows that beyond this hill lies another hill. As he contemplates the next hill I hold out my hand of friendship and co-operation to him.'

Behind the demagoguery, the ruling class is worried that the unsatisfied expectations of the masses will result in social explosion.

That's why Mandela stressed last week that although South Africans might have had their differences (!) they were 'one people'. This was a 'time for healing', he said.

Millions of workers in South Africa have struggled valiantly against apartheid for decades. That cannot be

described as a 'difference'! Mandela gave a foretaste of things to come when he said: 'Go back to your jobs and let's get South Africa working.'

The South Africa he speaks of is one dominated by a tiny handful of bankers and industrialists who monopolise the wealth of the country, including the land.

'We are rolling up our sleeves to tackle the problems of the country,' said Mandela. The 'problems' are glaringly obvious: mass unemployment, homelessness and destitution among millions of black workers.

These problems can be solved in the interests of the work-

ing class only if they take power into their own hands and use the wealth of the country for the benefit of the ordinary people.

Safe

Long before the election, Mandela and the ANC leaders said clearly that they have no intention of mobilising the working class against the power of capital. Indeed, Mandela gave guarantees to big business that its property will be safe under any government he heads.

Long before the election, the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International warned that an ANC government, backed by the South Afri-

can Communist Party, would govern on behalf of the ruling class against the working class.

That is why we fought in the election for the building of a party to represent the interests of the working class and poor people. And why we refused to agree with the left who urged 'critical support' for the ANC.

The tasks in South Africa in the aftermath of the election remain essentially what they were before: to fight for the independence of the working class, including the right to independent trades unions with the right to strike, and to prepare for the big class battles that cannot be long postponed. ■ S. Africa what next? page 8.

Corruption revealed in Zimbabwe

A GLIMPSE of corruption issuing from the 'liberation' of Zimbabwe — where capitalism is still firmly in place — was given by the 'Economist' magazine last month.

An article in its 16-22 April edition said: 'Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe's president, was swept to power in 1980, after 16 years of guerrilla war against white rule, by black peasants who believed his promise to hand back to them the land acquired by white Rhodesians.'

'For years nothing much happened. Now, it seems, his government has begun dishing out the land to friends and cronies. Newspapers alleged last week that state land had been leased to cabinet ministers, army generals, civil servants and other friends of the ruling party. On April 11 President Mugabe belatedly ordered an inquiry.'

Choicest

The article reports that, 14 years after Mugabe was elected, 4,000 big farmers, most of them white, still own half the country's arable land, and the choicest bits at that. 'About 7m blacks remain crowded on the rocky, dry reserves where white rule left them.'

The article adds: 'Zimbabweans have become accustomed to a diet of scandals, kickbacks and embezzlements.'



The Workers International joined the 120-strong Workers Aid for Bosnia campaign contingent, many of whom were Bosnian refugees, on the London march on May Day, international workers' day; the call was for the defence of Bosnia against fascist aggression — see pp.2 and 3

French trades unionists greet Tuzla

FROM OLIVIA MEERSON IN PARIS

A MEETING of more than 100 independent trades unionists in France, called at the end of last month in Paris to launch a movement against unemployment and for a shorter week without wage cuts, sent the following message to Tuzla in Bosnia-Herzegovina:

Trades unionists and activists in various workers' organisations, we are meeting today to defend the social gains of workers.

On the eve of May Day, the international day of workers' solidarity, we express our heart-felt support for the workers and people of Bosnia,

who are being subjected to barbaric aggression and are also victims of the policies of Western governments and the United Nations.

Reviving the internationalist tradition of the workers' movement, we send our warmest greetings to the independent miners' union and the population of Tuzla, a major industrial centre of Bosnia-Herzegovina and which stands at the forefront of the struggle against ethnic cleansing and the right to live in peace in a multi-cultural Bosnia.

Workers must come to the help of workers.

We call on all workers' unions to join in this fight and bring their moral but also material support to the workers of Bosnia and their trades unions.

Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International

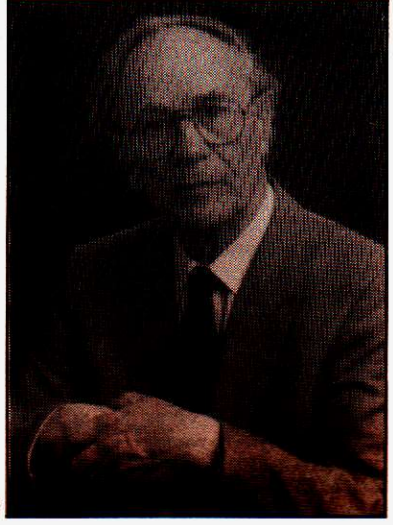
Memorial Meeting

Tom Kemp 1921-1993

Conway Hall
Red Lion Square
London WC1

Friday 3 June
7.30pm

We invite all Tom Kemp's comrades, family and colleagues to join in commemorating the life of an outstanding Marxist, a dedicated teacher and a fearless fighter for the working class and the rebuilding of the Fourth International.



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Thoughts on May Day

BY GEOFF PILLING

MEMBERS of the Workers Revolutionary Party marched with around 100 Bosnians through London on May Day.

In the event (see opposite page) there was only a small representation from the British trade union and labour

movement in the crowd assembled at Kennington Park.

The great majority of those present were members of the Kurdish and Turkish community, some of whose leaders are Stalinists. They came with red banners, some bearing the hammer and sickle, some portraits of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

Banners

When the Bosnians saw the banners and flags many were upset. They would not march

with the 'communists', who were carrying the same colour flags as the Chetniks.

We held a meeting with the Bosnian comrades. We told them that we were not responsible for the composition of the march but in any case were in favour of all workers, whatever their politics, having the right to march.

On this basis the Bosnians agreed to march, as long as the contingent was clearly separated from those with the red flags. As a result a successful

demonstration was held and the contingent made a big impact as it marched through the May Day festival on Clapham Common.

Chants

Its political chants made clear where it stood — for the defence of Bosnia, for the fight against fascism and against the United Nations.

Some thought should be given to this experience. It is a demonstration of the great dam-

age created by Stalinism in general and the rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy in eastern Europe and the former USSR in particular. As a result of their experiences many sincere people do equate the monstrosities of Stalinism with 'socialism'.

The rebuilding of consciousness in the working class, that is the fight for internationalism, is a complex problem requiring much patience and persistence and certainly not something that can be solved with a few simple slogans.

Sweatshop Britain

BY PETER GIBSON

A JOB for a trainee chef in Faversham, Kent, at a wage of £35 for a 39-hour week (89p an hour!), has been on offer at the local Jobcentre.

The 39-hour week included split shifts and weekend work, and was on offer at the same time as the Labour Party national executive (NEC) pulled back from the policy of a national minimum wage.

Labour leader John Smith told the NEC that the party had not been able to convince the public that a minimum wage was a good idea.

The Tory government and the employers have always argued that minimum wages cause firms to employ less people. John Smith and the Labour Party are not keen to upset the employers.

Created

A study from the London School of Economics, commissioned by the agriculture ministry, has shown that the agricultural wages board created jobs rather than destroyed them. The wages boards and wages councils, which set minimum wages in some industries, have now been abolished by the Tories.

The LSE study also shows that other wages councils had beneficial effects on employment in the industries covered — ones with poor wages, high exploitation and sweatshop conditions.

And the Low Pay Unit has found that 20 per cent of former wage-council protected jobs advertised in government Jobcentres are now being offered at below the old minimum rates.



Strengthen safety laws

WORKERS came together to support the Construction Safety Campaign's march through London for Workers' Memorial Day on Thursday 28 April.

About 800 joined the march with banners from the builders' union UCATT, the Transport and General Workers' Union, the public sector union UNISON. One worker came from Denmark sporting the flag of the Stilladsarbejbernes Branchklub builders union.

They marched behind a banner calling for the strengthening of safety laws in opposition to the governments proposals to deregulate them.

As part of the day workers went to lobby their MPs and more than 30 MPs had signed an Early Day Motion in support of the campaign. There was a public meeting at which Labour's John Prescott was down to speak but he sent a note to say he couldn't make it. UCATT general secretary George Brumwell and a relative of a building worker who died working on the Channel Tunnel spoke.

Photo Alan Clark

A degrading ordeal

BY FRED POTTER

ON Christmas Eve last year Susan Edwards (34), serving three years for non-violent offences, was rushed to hospital in labour and gave birth to a baby girl while she was handcuffed to a prison officer.

Apologies for her ordeal are thick in the air. The director-general of the prison service has apologised; the Home Office has apologised; Wythenshawe Hospital, Manchester, has apologised; and Styal prison, Cheshire, has apologised, saying that prison officers had taken 'too literally' the instruction that Edwards had to be secure at all times.

She had absconded three times, once on a previous visit to the maternity unit at the same hospital.

It has now been revealed that Edwards's 14-year-old son, who had gone with her to the hospit-

al, was left alone there for five hours because neither prison nor hospital had made any arrangements for him to get home.

Apologies won't cut any ice this time round. We already knew that the British penal system is a bastion of soulless inhumanity, particularly in its treatment of women. The strip-searching of Irish women prisoners told us that.

But the treatment of Susan Edwards strikes a new low in barbarity. Even in medieval dungeons, women who gave birth were able to gather their new-born babies into their arms.

The oafs responsible for the decision to treat Edwards like a tethered animal should be kicked out of the service forthwith. And every midwife, every nurse, and every trade unionist should join in a nation-wide storm of protest against a system that allowed her to be treated in such a degrading way.

It's only profits that count

BY ROY THOMAS

THE systematic abuse and disregard for the laws controlling public transport driving hours, and the state of buses and coaches, have been exposed at the inquest into the deaths of a driver and nine US tourists in a coach crash.

The vehicle overturned on the M2 near Faversham, Kent, in November 1993.

At the inquest the coroner warned the jury that it would hear evidence which might make it angry, but that it must remain objective.

The driver of the coach had finished work the night before the crash at 6.30pm. He started back at work at 5.45am the next day. But, in addition to this, he had a full hour's drive to and from his home to get to work. It was reported to the court

that he had only had four and three-quarter hours' sleep the night before the crash. He had also exceeded the legal driving hours limits.

The day of the crash should have been the driver's rest day. Bus and coach drivers must have one 24-hour break every 14 days by law.

Older coaches and buses are also required to have speed regulators to prevent them being driven at more than 70mph. This had been disconnected in the coach that crashed.

Raid

Government vehicle inspectors found a similar situation in a number of coaches operated by the same company — Travellers, based in Hounslow, west London — after a raid on its depot following the crash.

Evidence showed that the coach had been driven at

78mph. The coach's brakes were also found to be defective. Similar defects were found on other Travellers' coaches.

Safety glass on the crashed coach had been removed and replaced with single sheets of glass to reduce weight and so produce more miles per gallon of fuel, it was reported to the coroner.

The Americans killed in the crash had been thrown out of the coach windows and many had ended up under the vehicle as it overturned.

Regulations controlling driving hours were supposed to ensure safety but they are now being broken and disregarded throughout the country. The government's response is not to tighten up on the enforcement of the law but rather to relax the regulations so that the current abuse becomes legal!

Reduced

The inspectorate that checks vehicles is being reduced in size and consultants have put forward proposals on its privatisation.

In the same week as the M2 crash inquest, Somerset council and police checked nine school coaches, following a warning in

March to the owner that they were not up to scratch.

Of the nine coaches checked, eight were found to be defective and one driver was arrested for allegedly driving at over the blood-alcohol limit.

Exposes

The Health and Safety Executive is inviting comments on whether there should be a requirement to report road traffic accidents that occur in the course of work. The government and employers will not want that! Any move which exposes the increase in accidents or bad health arising from long hours or unsafe work practices will cut into profits.

One factor pushing experienced drivers to break the law and drive long, unsafe hours in coaches with disconnected regulators is the very low rate of pay. To earn enough money for a family to survive requires long hours.

Employers will cut every corner, and disregard every regulation and safety law for more profit.

Only when those who work in the industry control it will passengers and workers really be safe.

Leicester Education Alliance conference

The Degrading of Knowledge in Education

Saturday 21 May, 10.30am-4pm

Vaughan College, St Nicholas Circle, Leicester

Details from Paul Henderson, Department of Sociology, Leicester University, Leicester LE1 7RH (0533 707730 or 0533 522748)

Unto those who have shall more be given!

BY PETER GIBSON

THE Banking, Insurance and Finance Union (BIFU) is taking the National Westminster bank to the ACAS arbitration service to get their members a pay increase.

Nothing

NatWest management had offered a performance related pay (PRP) deal, which will mean some, maybe most, of their staff getting nothing. BIFU want a 4 per cent across-the-board increase for all staff.

NatWest staff have noted that John Melbourn, a group deputy chief executive, had a 40 per cent increase this year — putting his pay up to £290,000 a year.

John Owen, chief executive of NatWest Markets, got £300,000 — another 40 per cent increase. Richard Goelitz, the group chief financial officer, got a rise in his basic salary from £200,000 to £250,000; but he was paid £554,238 in 1993, including a PRP bonus of £72,739 and £242,170 to cover the cost of moving from New York to London.

NatWest plans to cut 4,200 jobs this year, but not at the top!

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Please send me information about the WRP

Name date

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

Send to: PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB

Inside left

Look who's coming to dinner

For a mere £500 per head, you and your partner could rub shoulders with the Harpers at the Labour Party's gala dinner at London's Park Lane hotel this month. Peter Harper is chairman of Hanson Industrial.

His boss Lord Hanson was ennobled by Thatcher. This can't have had any connection with Hanson last giving £100,000 to the Tory Party last year. Nor could Hanson subsidiary Imperial Tobacco's donation of 2,000 prime poster sites to the Tories at the last election possibly have influenced government policy on tobacco advertising.

Thousands of US coal miners are on strike last year against another Hanson subsidiary, Peabody Holdings, accusing it of closing union mines and sacking miners so it could open new mines with non-union labour, and so destroying hard-won conditions.

Peabody is among the multinational vultures eyeing what's left of the British mining industry. Good thing there's no longer a representative of the National Union of Mineworkers on the Labour Party executive; it would be embarrassing if there were some spectres at the feast!

Brief encounter

At London's May Day festival on Finsbury Common, among visitors to the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International stall, was an earnest young fellow asking whether we characterise Serbia's Milosevic regime as a fascist state. He concedes that its actions in Bosnia are fascist; but does it fit Trotsky's 'classical definition of fascism'? Wasn't Milosevic a Stalinist? We argue that the real historical movement seldom fits previous 'definitions' — witness events in the former Soviet Union; Milosevic wouldn't be the first Stalinist to come a fascist; and the Serbian regime's reactionary nationalism taken it halfway to fascism.

We recommend some reading, particularly articles by our Serbian comrade Radoslav Pavlovic in various issues of the 'International'. As our visitor is leaving, I ask he belongs to any political group. 'I'm in USec,' he shrugs, meaning the United Secretariat of the Workers International. (Unlike some USec members, he doesn't attempt to dignify it by calling it 'the Fourth International'.)

'What's USec's position on this question?' I ask. 'Well, it depends which section you ask!' he grins, turning to go. Seems the more serious some members of the 'United' Secretariat are about their ideas, the less seriously they take their organisation.

Outshooting police

Now it can be told, at the risk of setting certain 'tankies' (hard-core Stalinists) in the trade union movement, who support Serb aggression but have a pacifistic nodder at the thought of workers shouldering arms. Some Workers Aid for Bosnia convoy members invited along to a shooting competition in Tuzla weren't content with watching, or cheering on friends. Three of them took part, beating a Bosnian police team (though Tomattersby modestly puts this down to pot luck) to come second from the bottom. Before anyone who has spotted the occasional inaccuracy in my column says anything, no I wasn't in the side, fortunately!

Charlie Pottins

Three members of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International were recently invited to a conference held on 18 April in Pavlograd, Ukraine, of independent miners' unions from all regions of the former Soviet Union. This is the text of the letter the three submitted to the conference

To the Ukraine miners from British visitors to your conference.
Dear Comrades,

WE WRITE as British workers active in the trades unions, and as internationalists. We thank you for your invitation to the miners' conference in Pavlograd and we hope our participation in it will be another step towards uniting the workers' movement East and West for our common aims.

We write this letter to put forward proposals to develop our united action for common goals.

We salute the workers' movement in Ukraine and throughout the former Soviet Union. It is to the good of the working-class movement everywhere that it has made such great steps forward in the last few years. Above all, it has built workplace committees, strike committees and unions independent of the state, of government, of managers and employers.

The independence of workers' organisations is a fundamental principle which we share, one of the principles on which we can wage a common fight. We hope the proposals we put here will take this fight forward.

For an international conference of miners and energy workers

OUR first proposal is: to work together to organise an international conference of militant miners and energy workers, in line with the proposal already made on behalf of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International by our miner comrade, Dave Temple, in his open letter to Russian miners. This would be an important step towards united action for common goals.

All the struggles of miners and energy workers, East and West, point to the need for such a conference — none more so than your own struggle.

The hyper-inflation and the crisis of payments, which have led you to call a warning strike on 4 April, are not 'Ukrainian' problems but international problems. They are the results of decisions to open up the

former Soviet Union to the so-called 'free market', and the manner in which this opening-up has been conducted: an unrestricted free-for-all.

Western companies are invited to plunder the economy and the resources of former Soviet republics — but none of them is prepared to provide what industry desperately needs: investment.

The general course of this 'opening-up' has been agreed to by both the Russian and Ukrainian governments. Among the vast majority of politicians and industrial managers — notwithstanding differences about the pace of this so-called 'reform' — no systematic opposition to this plunder has been voiced.

It is we, the working-class movement — Ukrainian, Russian, all nationalities — who must work out the means to resist closures and continued cuts in living standards.

You demand an assembly of the board of Gosugleprom [the nationalised coal industry] to include workers' representatives, and also to include the president and prime minister of Ukraine. We are certainly in favour of such an assembly, and you will no doubt use it for good purpose, to compel the president and prime minister to give specific commitments to the coal industry.

But we all know what promises politicians are worth. We believe the most important thing is for workers' organisations to take on the problem of budgets, and demand control over these budgets. Any negotiations with Western or Ukrainian companies — whether about existing enterprises, or about natural resources — should be carried out only under the control of, and by agreement with, workers' organisations.

We believe this would be the first step to resisting the effects of plunder and colonisation.

This is exactly the kind of issue which requires common discussion, common action, between workers of all nationalities.

The demand you make, and which we agree with, that a viable price be set for Ukrainian coal, must also be discussed and developed on an international level.

As we all know, energy prices are determined by the world mar-

Ano unity East

ket, to suit the needs of the large international corporations which supply the world's energy. These corporations can decide to shut down mines in one country, and invest in high-technology mining in another country where labour is cheaper because workers are poorer.

We need to develop links so that in these cases workers can take direct solidarity action to support each other. A general political strategy to advance the interests of energy workers, of all workers, is needed. The conference we propose could advance such common discussion and common action.

Since comrade Dave Temple wrote to you, miners in Hungary, Slovenia and Bosnia have expressed interest in this proposal. It has also been discussed with miners in Britain, France and Spain. We propose that when we visit Ukraine we take some further practical steps towards organising this conference.

Material support for Tuzla miners

COMRADE Dave Temple's letter also referred to 'Workers Aid for Bosnia', the international campaign to send material aid to the people of Tuzla in Bosnia. This mining town has fought to maintain its

multinational working-class character, despite the pressure on it from Serbian forces on one side and the United Nations on the other.

Since Dave Temple wrote to you, some of the 'Workers Aid' convoys which he told you about, taking aid from western European and Hungarian workers to the Tuzla workers, have arrived. As we write, another convoy is on its way with sections both from western Europe and a contingent of 70 trucks from the Slovenian miners.

The Tuzla miners' organisations report that they need not only food and supplies but also the equipment to restart production and prevent the collapse of their industry. They are in need of helmets, portable gas detectors, methane detectors, air velocity monitors, pressure monitors and other equipment.

Some British miners, and Hungarian miners, are now discussing organising a further convoy, specifically to get this equipment to Tuzla.

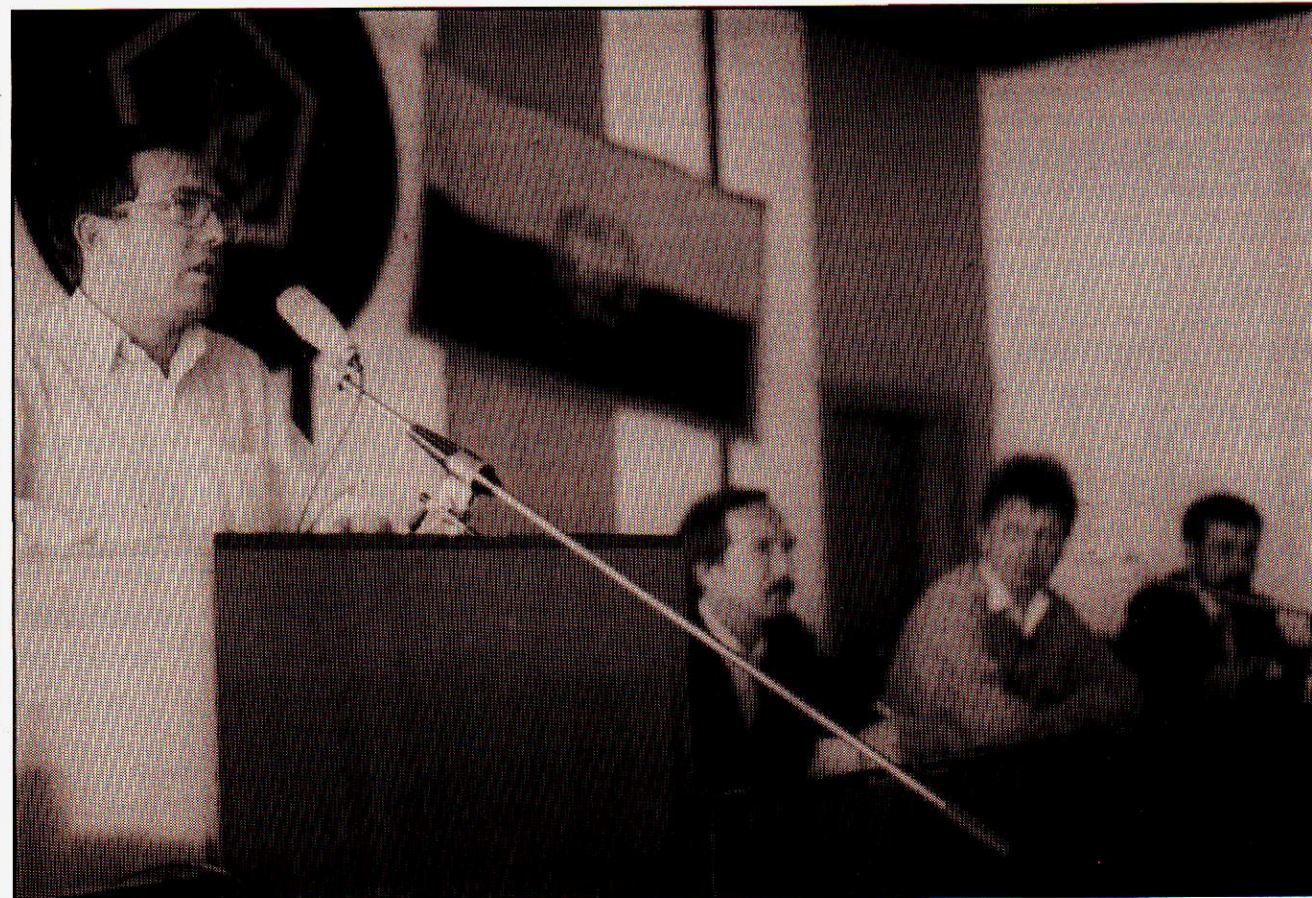
We propose to you to join this international campaign to support the Tuzla miners — to show them, not in words but with real practical aid, that the international working-class movement will not allow their community to be starved or broken up by the 'great powers' (Russia, France, Britain, the US etc.) which are trying to impose a settlement on Bosnia.

We make this proposal in the full awareness that you, too, are in a more or less desperate situation and may not be able to send material aid as you would want. But for the miners of the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] to join the campaign for Tuzla would be of great importance.

Tuzla is the foremost among those communities in Bosnia which have refused to succumb to the pressures of national division, whose workers have refused to turn against each other in the name of divisive 'nationalism'. The Tuzla miners are the main force standing in the way of the permanent division of Bosnia that the 'great powers' and the Serbian regime seek to impose, a division which would be a serious defeat for the working class, East and West.

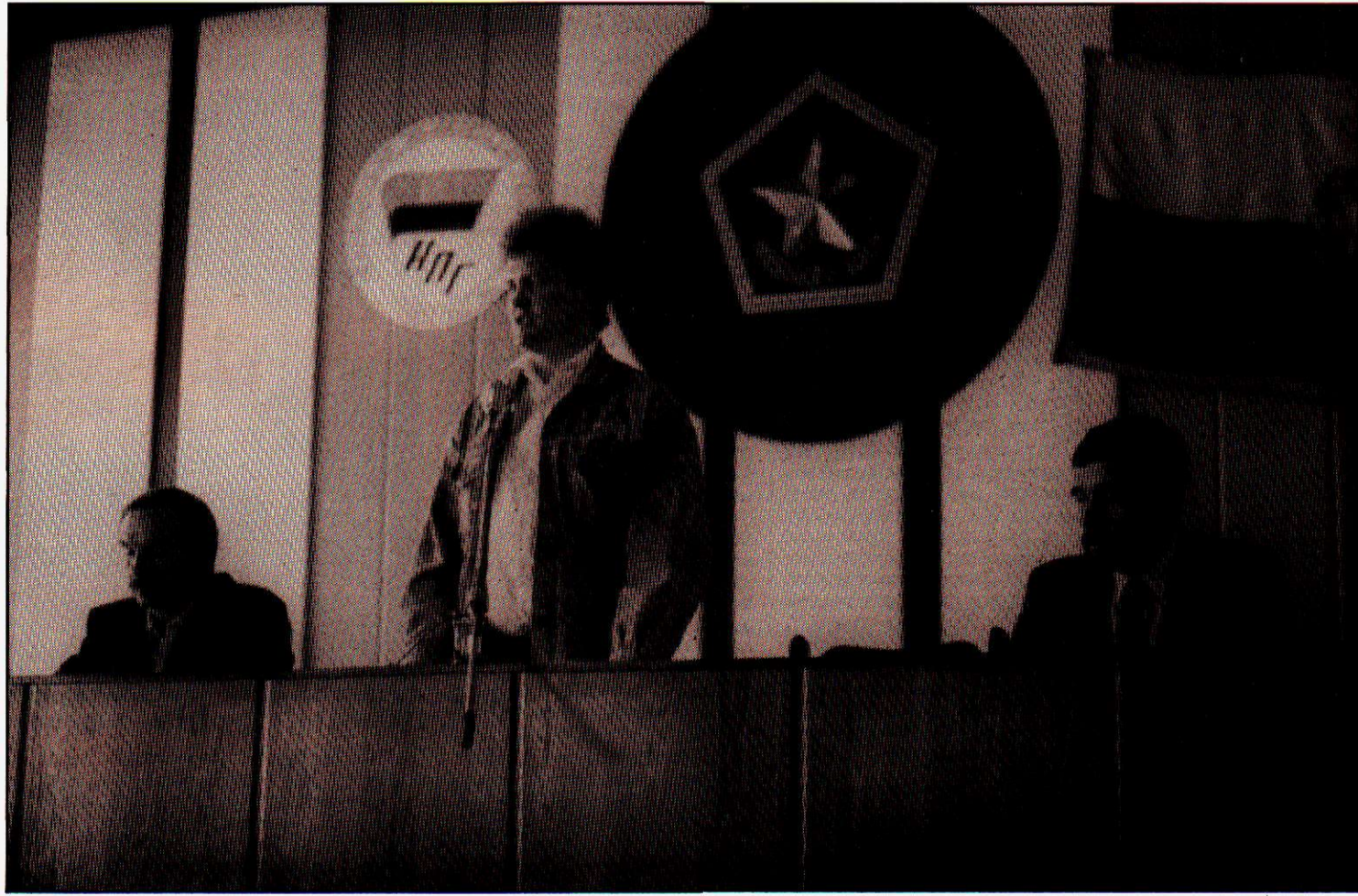
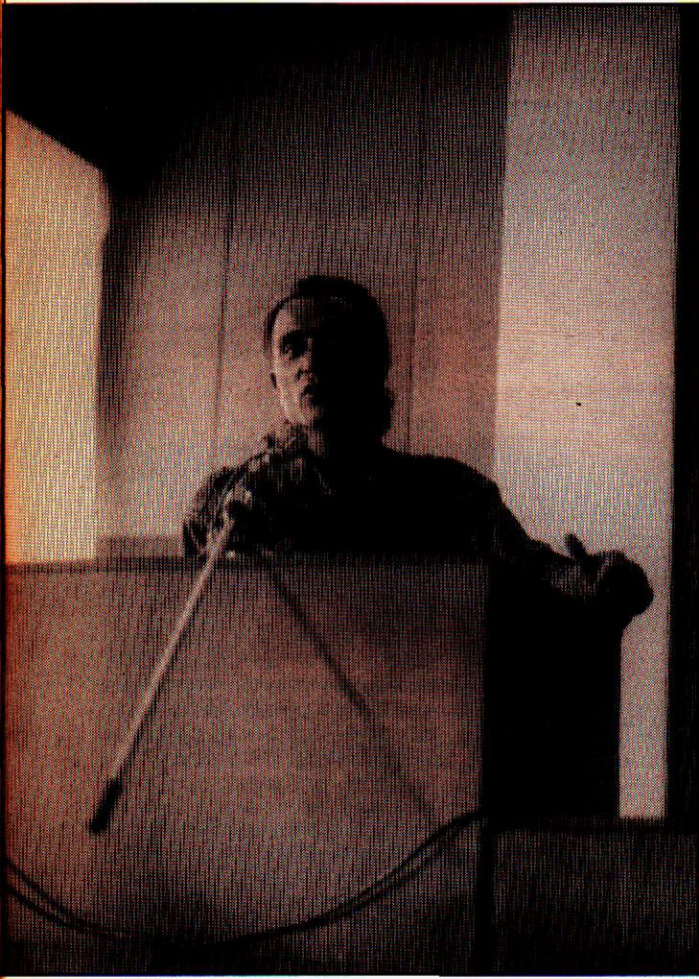
The pressure on Tuzla is now greater than ever, because of the formation of the Bosnian-Croat federation in Bosnia — which the UN sees as a step towards the permanent division of Bosnia.

In Bosnia itself, such a carve-up would legitimise the results of 'ethnic cleansing', which has been permitted by all the 'great powers'. It would strengthen the ruling cliques who seek to turn workers



Workers International member Simon Pirani speaking in Pavlograd at last month's miners' conference

Another step in unity of workers, East and West



Local Pavlograd miner Sasha (left) at the rostrum; and the meeting being opened by Vasily Mijasnikov, leader of the Pavlograd region of the Independent Miners Union

against each other, who want workers to cut each other's throats while bosses and bureaucrats feather their own nests.

In Serbia, it would strengthen the Milosevic regime — against which Serbian workers have fought before and during the war — while the misery and degradation of those workers increases with hyperinflation. Across Europe and the former Soviet Union, such a settlement would encourage fascism and dictatorship. For the miners of Ukraine, of the CIS, to join the international campaign for Tuzla would be important for another reason: it would be a clear declaration that the working class will not allow the catastrophe that has befallen the workers of the former Yugoslavia to be repeated in the former USSR, and that the working class will oppose the nationalist forces who would take it down that road.

We know that, after decades of the mistreatment of Ukraine, and the abuse of Ukrainian national rights, within the USSR, many Ukrainian workers believed that the country would be better off on its own. We accept that it is a fundamental right of nations to make their own future, but Ukrainian workers cannot make their

future together with the nationalism of the Kiev government or the new Ukrainian 'businessmen'. They must do it themselves, through their independent organisation, united with the workers of the former Soviet republics and all countries.

We also know that in Donbas the idea of 'autonomy' is being put forward as a solution to the desperate economic problems. It may appear that such autonomy, combined with closer links with Russia, could overcome many of the area's problems. But this is an illusion.

The economies of Russia and the whole of Ukraine have become more and more closely integrated over many decades. Moscow decided to smash up these economic ties, both to 'teach Ukraine a lesson' and to foster the divisions between workers. Those who want the 'autonomy of Donbas' would do still more damage to the economic ties, and deepen these divisions between workers still further.

It is in the interests of the working class not to break up that integrated economy, but to extend it in such a way that the technology existing in the West can be used to develop it. That is why the first step for the working class is to develop a strategy for the economy to be

reformed, under workers' control, and in the interests of all workers — Russian, Ukrainian, and others — and not in the interests of multinational companies which want to plunder the former USSR instead of developing it.

You, Ukrainian miners, who already have very close links with those in Russia, Byelarus, Kazakhstan and other former Soviet republics, are in a strong position to develop these links further, to embrace workers both East and West. For you to support the Tuzla miners will be a practical step on that road.

For an international workers' solidarity organisation

THE campaign to support Tuzla has shown the way forward for the working class: real, practical international solidarity — not the phoney 'solidarity' of trade union bureaucrats visiting each other and making speeches.

We believe this working-class internationalism needs a real organisational framework, and since 1991 we have worked to build the International Trade Union Solidar-

ity Campaign (ITUSC) for this purpose.

The ITUSC was initiated by our political organisation, the Workers International, on the basis of the principles of international solidarity, internal democracy within the

shows that such joint international action is possible. Such action is needed on many fronts — to support your own struggle against hyperinflation and closures, to support workers in South Africa struggling to ensure the independence of



A Kuzbass miners' leader addressing the conference

unions and independence of the unions from state and employers.

The purpose of the ITUSC was not to create a fake trade union 'front' for a political group, but to work towards an organisation in which militant workers can work together and discuss together for common aims and on common principles, whatever their politics. The campaign to support Tuzla

their organisations from the state, to support workers in Latin America fighting against child labour and super-exploitation.

We propose to you to work together to form an international organisation of militant workers along these lines.

John Ballantyne
Keith Scotcher
Simon Pirani

A partisan still marching

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

AMONG the workers marching in south London on May Day last Sunday was a 68-year-old retired print mechanic whose fight against fascism began in his Bosnia homeland over 50 years ago. Esad Jordanovic was 17 when, in 1943, he joined the Yugoslav partisans fighting Nazi occupation.

On May Day Esad marched with other Bosnians, some too young to have ever associated the red star with ideas of liberation. A placard he had written said: 'Stop novi Hitler Zhirinovski', 'Stop the new Hitler, Zhirinovski', referring to the Russian nationalist leader, a declared admirer of Hitler, who backs the Serb onslaught on Bosnia.

The ex-partisan wants to tell the workers' movement, and the younger generation particularly, about the real international significance of the Bosnian people's struggle, and the danger of fascism in Europe. 'I have spent my whole life fighting fascism. In World War II I fought Hitler's fascists. Today we are fighting [Serb] Chetnik fascism. Today it's Bosnia; tomorrow it could be Macedonia, Kosovo, and perhaps Albania.'

Destroyed

'If we don't stop Serbia now, in the next five years it will be Zhirinovski who gains the advantage. Remember, Hitler did not have atomic weapons. Russia does. Today, Mostar and Sarajevo are destroyed; tomorrow, it could be Paris or London.'

Esad's home town is Zenica, in central Bosnia. Having joined Tito's partisan army, he also fought in the north and still speaks some Slovene, as well as his native Bosnian variety of 'Serbo-Croat'.

'In the partisans we were all mixed, Muslim, Croat, Serb,

Tito was popular because he took all peoples and joined them together to fight against fascism. In the Bosnian army today we have Serbs and Croats, as well as Muslims. Even when there was fighting between Croats and Muslims, like at Mostar, we had a Croat brigade in Tuzla region fighting for Bosnia.'

When Esad Jordanovic returned from the war in 1946, he became an organiser for the Communist Party's youth movement. But he also found his struggles were not over. 'Muslim people still did not have national rights, and Bosnia's status was less than that of Croatia or Serbia. Tito wanted to unite every nation in Yugoslavia, but to keep power. He had a very strong police.'

Arrested

Esad spent three years in the forces, working as a flight mechanic at a military airfield. Three times he applied for a pilot's licence to fly light aircraft. Each time he was turned down, with no reason given. 'I was a Muslim. If I'd been a Serb, I'd have been given a chance. But the Serbs wouldn't tolerate any other nationality in the higher ranks of the forces.'

Ironically, Esad was arrested in 1948 for opposing Stalin's Cominform [the Communist Information Bureau, set up in September 1947], which expelled the Yugoslav Communist Party later the same year. 'Stalin was pressing Yugoslavia to enter a military pact. Because I was a partisan fighter, I did not oppose socialism; but Russia did not care about how people were living, Stalin only cared for power. I had fought against Hitler, and in 1948 I saw Stalin was prepared to use the same means as Hitler.'

Esad was sent to prison as a member of the Young Muslim organisation and for wanting a multi-party system. He spent six months in Sarajevo's central

prison and a further 18 months at a smaller prison. Because he was an ex-partisan, and for his good behaviour, he was released. At the urging of his old partisan comrades, the authorities acknowledged he was not a threat to national security and he was rehabilitated.

'We were not against communism,' he insists, 'but we said we must have more than one party. If Tito did best, he would remain president. Tito was a Croat, and personally a good man. But the ministers around him were mostly Serbs. In Yugoslavia, Serbs held important positions in the army, government, management,

key. Later Tito removed him. 'Later, Milovan Djilas, who had been a partisan leader with Tito right from the start, asked for a multi-party system. He was arrested, spent two or three years in prison in Belgrade, then had to leave the country, and live in America. He came back, and was reconciled with Tito.'

'Now he is home in Montenegro, and he fights against [Serbian President] Milosevic politically. Many Montenegrin people are against fascism, but they lack power.' [Montenegro is part of the rump controlled by Serbia.]

After his release from pris-

ons, Esad Jordanovic went home to Zenica, worked in the youth organisation and as a driving instructor. But his troubles weren't over. Because of police harassment he had to leave town, going to Zagreb where he obtained a job as a printing mechanic at the newspaper 'Vjesnik'. 'But my prison record followed me, wherever I went.'

Police harassment kept him on the move from job to job, town to town, till he'd had enough. 'In the 1950s I decided to go over the Alps to Austria. But I was caught by guard dogs on the border. I was held at Kranj in Slovenia, then sent to Sarajevo prison again.' This time Esad was subjected to prolonged torture, being held down for long

periods with ice-cold water dripping on his forehead, till he feared for his sanity. Tried in secret, he was sentenced to five years.

In 1962 Yugoslavs were asked to register their nationality. In the 1968 census they were asked whether they were Croat, Serb or Slovene, but not until 1971 was 'Muslim' recognised as a national category. 'When the Turks ruled the Balkans, we were just "Bosniaks", but under Austria-Hungary we were classified as Serb, Croat or Muslim.'

In 1957, after Esad's prison ordeal, friends helped him find work at the Sarajevo daily

responsible for massacres, we must bring them to justice, it does not matter who it is, president or whoever. If [Serb fascist] Arkan, Milosevic or [Bosnian Serb leader] Karadzic escape justice, they or others like them will do these things again. We must say "Never again!" In the United Nations, I think they defend these Serbs legitimise what they're doing.'

'I will try to teach people not to hate other nationalities. Not all Serbs are Chetniks, just part of them, but that party has power. In the Bosnian army we have a Serb commander and we have a Croatian, Schreiber. We have Croats, Serbs, Jewish people, Gypsies and others serving together.'

Support

Esad Jordanovic was pleased to hear about the Scottish TUC's decision to help Bosnia, and about Workers Aid for Bosnia's campaign for support from the British TUC. It's not just that trades unions could render badly needed humanitarian help to his people, but that he sees the link between the struggle for union rights and the battle against Stalinism and fascism.

'In our country the unions did not have a chance to say "We defend the working class". Tito had an island, Brioni, with a very nice palace, and a yacht. Others did not live so well. We did not have strong unions.' In a crisis, the bureaucrats tried to maintain their privileges by becoming Serb nationalists. 'Each defends himself or herself, not the working class.'

'They held out the dream of a Greater Serbia. [Croatia's President] Tudjman and Milosevic had a meeting to discuss how to divide Bosnia, between Croat and Serb. Tudjman asked for Herzegovina.'

'If we'd had a strong international trade union movement we could have stopped this war in Bosnia.'



Esad Jordanovic (in centre in dark glasses) on the May Day march in London last weekend

Serbs, even if they had low education, were promoted to top jobs.'

'Towards the end of the war, if a Serb was a Chetnik, or a Croat had been an Ustashe [that is, a fascist], they could join the partisans and, after it took power, the party.'

'Tito did not discriminate against any nationality, but his ministers did. Someone like Rankovic, who had committed the same crimes as Draza Mihailovic [the Chetnik commander] in killing many Muslims in Bosnia and Albania, after 1944 joined the partisans. Tito took him on as a minister. 'As a minister he carried out ethnic cleansing of the Sandjak, sending a million people to Tur-

on, Esad Jordanovic went home to Zenica, worked in the youth organisation and as a driving instructor. But his troubles weren't over. Because of police harassment he had to leave town, going to Zagreb where he obtained a job as a printing mechanic at the newspaper 'Vjesnik'. 'But my prison record followed me, wherever I went.'

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'Oslobodenje' ('Liberation'), and he stayed there for six years, still under police surveillance. In 1964, he returned to Zenica, and married. He was in Britain on a visit to his son when the war broke out in Bosnia. He still has another son in Zenica, and a sister in Tuzla.'

'After this war finishes, I will return. I've been a fighter all my life. I'm too old to fight now, and not in good health, but I want to fight fascism politically. I want to talk to young people about the dangers of nationalism and fascism. Because we cannot forget 30,000 people are dead, and 2 million refugees.'

'Because a Serb massacred Muslims we do not want to reply in kind. But if someone is re-

Film review

The remains of aristocratic culture

TOM OWEN sees a film, 'The Remains of the Day', that looks under the surface of an aristocratic British household in the 1930s

THE OTHER day I happened to see that bizarre figure Lord Longford, the 'Labour peer', deliver a eulogy to the aristocratic virtues of the House of Lords: politeness, civility and erudition were the chief qualities that had been nurtured there over 1,000 years of civilised tradition.

On the same Channel Four programme, Roy Hattersley, self-confessed lifelong opponent of the 'other place', commented that their lordships were always indulging in these claims.

Asked by the ever flippant Andrew Rawnsley whether he would refuse a peerage, Hattersley replied that this would be a purely personal decision: whether to submit to the line of the Labour Party or to the allure of his Sheffield Wednesday season ticket. Surely a poignant conflict of powerful interests!

If Longford and Hattersley represent to us a peculiar manifestation of the alliance of Liberalism and the aristocracy of labour, then what about the remains of the real aristocracy?

Well, there is plenty of evidence of their remains: the great houses with their art treasures, gardens and cultured landscapes like that of Chatsworth House, which Capability Brown designed to flourish for a millennium, as he believed his patrons would.

This 'civility' of the aristocratic remains would not blind anyone to the

fact that they have been thoroughly integrated into capitalist forms of ownership and commercial agricultural production for more than three centuries.

Other aspects of their culture, such as their 'country pleasures', link them back directly to their progenitors, the robber barons.

That other side of the aristocratic culture — arrogance, brutality, decadence, and philistinism — still find their expression in the exemplary behaviour of the aspiring lordling of the Blenheim estate, the Marquess of Blandford.

By sheer chance I was fortunate to see an immensely absorbing and penetrating film which dealt with the political role and function of a section of the aristocracy in the 1930s: 'The Remains of the Day', starring Anthony Hopkins, Emma Thompson and James Fox.

On the surface it was one of those films in which nothing seemed to happen but which gripped your attention for nearly three hours. It is set in the late 1920s and the following two decades, and follows the fortunes of a large country house in Oxfordshire, 'Dartington Hall'.

The main focus appears to be on the relationship between the head butler, played by Hopkins, and the housekeeper, played by Thompson.

What seems to be the usual 'upstairs-downstairs' format is in fact an oblique mechanism for the exploration of much larger social, political and moral issues — of the crisis which was to engulf Europe and the rest of the world in the barbarism of fascism and war.

Initially the world of the film is presented through the moral and political myopia of the figures played by Hopkins and Thompson.

Hopkins, usually an actor who relishes parts to which he can bring bravura and that impassioned eloquence the Welsh call hwyf, produces a magnificent portrait of a limited, repressed and 'spiritually' inadequate individual: a 'gentleman's gentleman'.

If he is invisible in his public role as a retainer, he is highly visible as the sergeant-major of the servant classes, whom he polices through the elaborate rituals of deference.

Absurdity

The film has some wonderful moments of absurdity, like the daily ironing of 'The Times' or the precise measuring of the positions of wine glasses and plates on a banqueting table.

The housekeeper is first presented as a competent young career woman who is less concerned with the arcane house culture than with efficiently managing a large domestic workforce.

But she begins to show her limitations under the emotionally and

sexually repressed regime of this manorial institution. If the butler seeks consolation in moments of privacy and sentimental novels, she looks for some form of satisfaction in an emotional relationship with an ex-employee who has gained some political independence from the regime. But this break is only achieved after a humiliating moral crisis.

The aristocrat, played by James Fox, is first presented sympathetically as a cultured and 'liberal' representative of his class, guided by a sense of

'What is so powerful about the film is not just the sense of waste, but the way in which politics breaks into domestic life with such devastating effect.'

'honour'. Through a fragmentary view of the servant classes' routine we begin to see the disastrous consequences of his intellectual and political blindness.

He is a Germanophile racked with guilt about the humiliating conditions imposed by the allies on the Germans after World War I.

As the narrative unfolds we see that he has become a catalyst for the appeasement faction of the British ruling class, offering his country seat as a centre for political intrigue and sec-

ret diplomacy, at first with the European powers and the US over the rearmament question, later with the Nazis and their British sympathisers, the blackshirts.

The moral crisis which politicises the domestic life of the house is the aristocrat's decision to sack two young women, Jewish refugees from Germany, whom he had previously given refuge as servants. This means their inevitable deportation and destruction.

Threatens

The butler hides his responses and claims that the master, in his infinite wisdom, knows best.

The housekeeper threatens to resign, but is too afraid to face the world and its insecurities. It is after this personal defeat that she chooses marriage, to an incompatible partner.

After World War II the aristocrat dies a broken man, dishonoured as a traitor, his estates taken over by a wealthy American who had attended the pre-war conferences as a critic of British amateurism in the world of 1930s *realpolitik*.

The butler tries to persuade the housekeeper to return to her former role, but she is drawn back to her ex-husband solely to look after her new grandchild.

What is so powerful about the film is not just the sense of waste, but the way in which politics breaks into domestic life with such devastating effect. Above all, it shows how ruling-class and aristocratic 'politeness and civility' are also a mask for barbarism.

Analysing the South African election in the light of the revolutionary upsurge of the 1980s, BILL HUNTER dissects the mistakes of 'Militant' writer Peter Taffe and asks: What next in South Africa?

THE colonial revolutions which broke up the great imperialist empires in Africa after World War I were stopped short. Now, throughout Africa, most governments are in the hands of local capitalist rulers directly or indirectly bound to imperialist combines in joint exploitation of the masses of the people.

Which way will the revolution in South Africa go? The way of Zimbabwe, Zaire, Nigeria, Algeria? Or is the revolution of the masses that made a great surge forward in the 1980s going to be carried on to workers' government and socialism, which were then being demanded?

That great 1980s upsurge built powerful trades unions which had 'Socialism' and 'Workers' Charter' on their banners. These unions expressed the mass demand for the end of capitalism and the victory of a black government that would nationalise the industries.

By the conditions in which it was formed, the South African working class could not but be

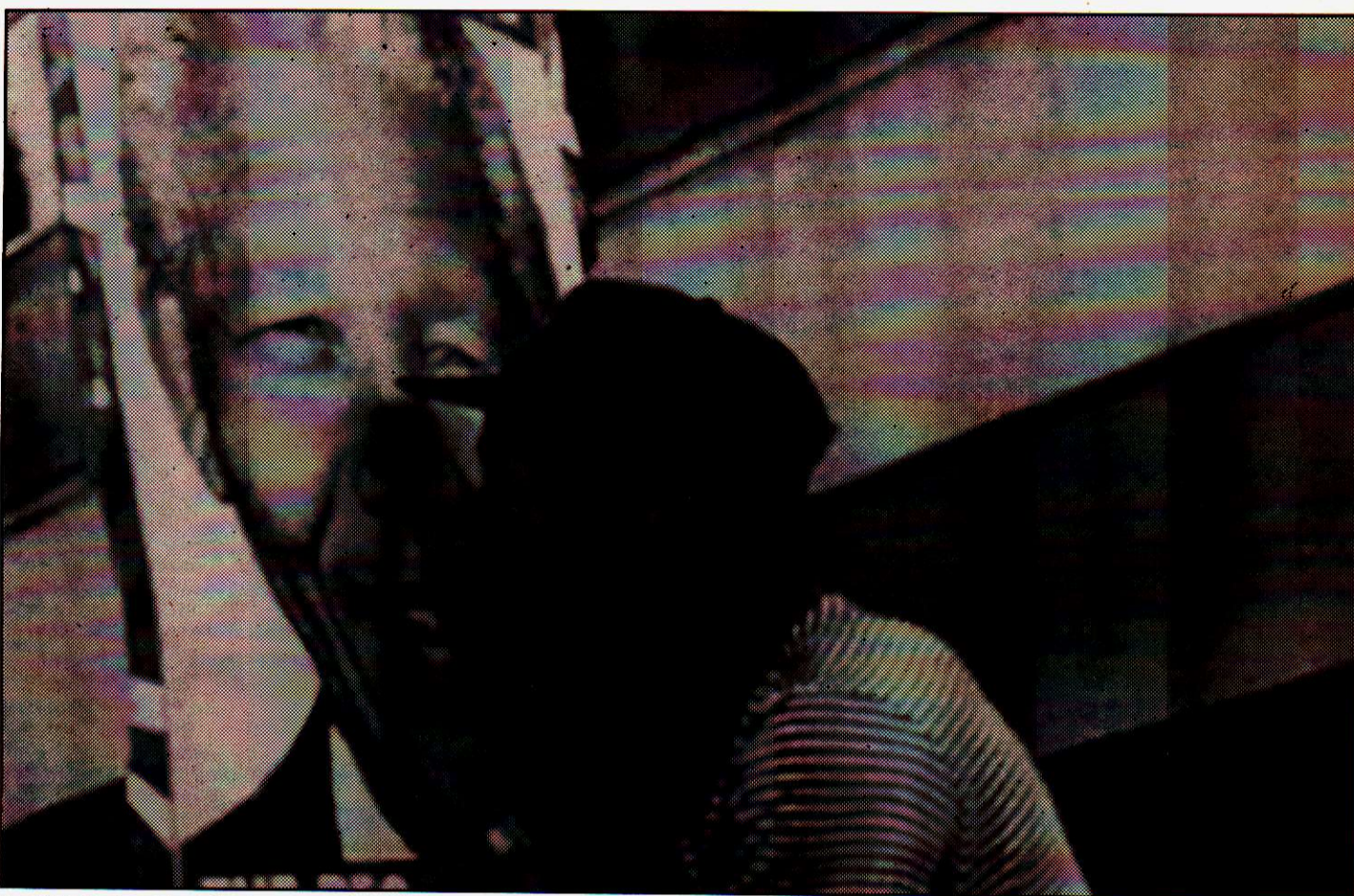
The power of the masses, however, brought South Africa's rulers to the edge of crushing defeat. At that point Mandela was released (in 1990), as South African and world capitalism decided that the only way to avoid catastrophe was with the help of the African National Congress (ANC) leaders and the South African Communist Party (SACP).

Even in the 1980s, the ANC leaders were meeting regularly and quietly with sections of 'liberal' South African and Western businessmen; and at the end of 1988 the ANC leaders began amending the Freedom Charter, which had been adopted in 1955.

In mid-1989, the big unions in COSATU were demanding that the ANC have a Workers' Charter, since the Freedom Charter represented a limited programme which did not, in itself, guarantee working-class emancipation.

It was a major task of the Communist Party to divert this movement and bring about the

What next in South Africa?



An ANC-led national unity government will not be able to meet the expectations of the working class in South Africa

'The South African CP became a major instrument in persuading the trade union leaders to support the ANC leaders' betrayal of the workers' socialist demands.'

imbued with a deep hatred, not only of apartheid racist brutality but also of the monopolies and smaller capitalists who benefited from state repression.

The advance guard of South African workers was also critical of the road taken by other African states, such as Zimbabwe, where independence had meant the growth of a local capitalist class, repression of workers' democratic rights, and continued economic domination by multinational corporations.

In the insurrectionary upsurges of the 1980s, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) grew, together with wide and combative movements in the townships and homelands, where men, women and children struggled unceasingly against instigated thugery, arrests and murders, and for the right to speak, meet and organise.

The state brutally tried to destroy organisations and leaders and terrorise the mass of the population.

COSATU was banned from political activity. Union offices were bombed and leaders abducted and detained. Vigilantes killed workers with the help of the police.

political corruption of those leaders with a record of struggle.

They had some success, because there was no alternative national leadership able to organise workers in a conscious struggle for a workers' policy against the ANC leadership allied with the SACP.

The South African CP became a major instrument in persuading the trade union leaders to support the ANC leaders' betrayal of the workers' socialist demands.

According to the Stalinists, there had to be a 'two-stage' struggle: first, freedom from apartheid; then socialist demands.

The ANC began to change even the vague phrases of the Freedom Charter, to oppose nationalisation and radical land reform, which would return the lands stolen from black South Africans who had been moved far from their traditional homes.

Mandela and the ANC leaders have agreed with F.W. de Klerk on a coalition government — 'power-sharing' — which they have declared is for five years. But leading commentators are saying that it will have to exist indefinitely.

Meanwhile the delay in their revolution has already cost the South African working class

dear. Unemployment has grown; living conditions have worsened for the black population.

Yet, in a confused article in the January-February issue of 'Militant International Review', Peter Taffe adopts the 'two-stage' theory of Stalin and asserts that the South African revolution is now passing through a democratic phase.

'This revolution', he writes, 'has not been "aborted", diverted into "safe channels", but is presently going through a democratic phase. Such periods when there is a lull or the movement appears to have receded is an unavoidable phase in any revolution. Such was the period which followed the February revolution in Russia or during the Spanish revolution of 1931-37.'

Taffe describes the period, incorrectly, as one of dual power. However, even in the February revolution of 1917, when there was certainly dual power, the most important question for Lenin was not the 'democratic' phase but the independence of the working class and the necessity for the soviets to take power.

The most important thing for Taffe, however, is that the ANC should be supported and 'fully' tested out. Everything must be subordinated to victory for the ANC.

Thus he attacks the demand for a workers' party as premature, declaring that the working class has first to test out the ANC in action.

So he is found in the position of Stalin in Trotsky's historic struggle (1926-27) against the liquidation of the Chinese Communist Party that was demanded by the [nationalist] Kuomintang leaders; Trotsky insisted that an alliance in the Kuomintang with Chiang Kai-shek was a betrayal if the political independence of the working class was not preserved.

Taffe is against taking forward the experiences that the

South African workers have been making. While Mandela was negotiating with De Klerk, workers struggling against their oppressors have clashed with the ANC leaders and criticised Mandela's concessions.

In the teeth of the ANC leaders' reluctance, they forced a

of the most powerful and militant unions in COSATU, after a stormy discussion at its conference, passed a resolution demanding nationalisation without compensation — and there was strong support for a workers' party.

Taffe takes the election as

but one written by somebody in a watch-tower.

So he gives a picture of objective conditions bringing in reforms, when the extremely explosive processes move towards revolution. In fact he repeats several times that reforms will be granted to the masses — concessions on health and housing 'with the help of international capital'.

It is not just 'pressure growing'. Even before the election was over, British television was showing scenes outside South African townships of black families staking out government land into equal plots on which they were now going to build homes.

A Mandela government is not going to be able to drive these movements back by demagoguery. History gives them an explosive content for years, and even within the memory of young black South Africans there have been brutal evictions of black people from the land.

The great upsurges which brought the vote and have been temporarily stopped short of victory nevertheless brought a confidence to the South African masses.

The new South African government can no more solve the problems of poverty and unemployment than that of Zimbabwe. It must very shortly be revealed as a government of crisis.

The most urgent task is the construction of a leadership that will lead forward the independent movement of the working class on the road of the revolution they desired in the 1980s.

That the masses of South Africa will explode in struggle there is no doubt whatever. Our duty is to help them build a leadership that can carry that struggle forward to victory — a victory that will be a beacon to their suffering and oppressed brothers and sisters elsewhere on the African continent.

'While Mandela was negotiating, workers struggling against their oppressors have clashed with the ANC leaders and criticised Mandela's concessions.'

mass strike against De Klerk's austerity plan. There were calls for the arming of workers and for a general strike against the government when peaceful demonstrators were massacred in Ciskei.

This is the independent movement of workers which Taffe in practice says it is wrong to give leadership to.

The South African CP opposed and opposes the independent political representation of workers' organisations, subordinating them to the ANC. It defeated or politically corrupted leaders of the COSATU who in the past sought political independence in the ANC and fought for a Workers' Charter.

The South African CP, which grew after Mandela's release as workers began to be critical of the other ANC leaders, opposed the Workers' Charter and declared that 'first we must get democracy and then we can talk socialism'.

Nor is it just 'sects', as Taffe claims, that are raising the demand for a workers' party. The National Union of Metal Workers, which has always been one

meaning majority rule and the end of apartheid — even though he is forced to talk of the ANC already agreeing to 'power-sharing' for five years, and asks the question:

'How long before the ANC government sends in the police and army units against striking workers or rebellious inhabitants of the African townships?'

This question is purely rhetorical. Taffe does not concentrate on warning revolutionary workers, and the South African working class generally, to build now in preparation for this.

On the contrary, to him there is an objective perspective of two stages: first, the coalition; and then '[p]ressure will grow for a homogeneous ANC government and undoubtedly that would develop at a certain stage. . . . The plan for a five-year time-scale can be considerably shortened under mass pressure.'

Nowhere does Taffe propose the demand that the ANC should refuse a coalition and form a government. His article is not that of a revolutionary leader

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