Workers Press

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY | SATURDAY 17 DECEMBER 1994 | NO. 436 | PRICE 30p

Workers Aid heads to Tuzla for eighth time

XMAS CONVOY IS BOUND FOR BOSNIA

THE eighth Workers Aid for Bosnia convoy is about to leave on its long journey to the mining town of Tuzla in north-east Bosnia.

The nine-strong convoy of lorries from Britain and Spain will take 40 tonnes of aid for the Tuzla miners, the Tuzla district trade union committee, several local schools, and the town's university.

Throughout the war, the governments of the world have backed the brutal efforts of Serbia to break up Bosnia and reduce it to a series of ethnic ghettoes.

The working people of Bosnia, its young people in particular, have fought back heroically against this racist barbarism.

Throughout Europe there is revulsion at the genocide in Bosnia and the complicity of the 'great powers', typified by the onslaught on the United Nations so-called 'safe area' of Bihac.

BY BOB MYERS,
SECRETARY,
WORKERS AID FOR BOSNIA

Solidarity

The Workers Aid convoys are the first to turn this feeling into practical solidarity from outside Bosnia by the organised working class.

When the first Workers Aid convoy in August last year received great public support, cynics on the 'left' said: 'It will only last a few months.'

But only these 'great socialists' soon lost interest and turned their backs on the campaign for international solidarity. The Bosnian people could not 'move on', and they did not give up. The support and sympathy from outside did not 'move on'.

Last week supporters of Workers Aid collected money in the streets of Durham. By the end of the day it was hard to find anyone in the town not wearing a Workers Aid sticker.

It is this sort of support that has made it possible to send a convoy to Bosnia every month. Last week Workers Aid bought two large lorries capable of carrying an extra 16 tonnes of aid on each trip.

Only four weeks have gone by since our last convoy yet our warehouses are overflowing with aid, with more arriving each day. Supermarket collections have been organised all over the country every week.

The Workers Aid phones never stop ringing with calls from people pleading to go on one of the convoys. Our problem is lack of people to deal with this stream of inquiries.

Touring

New Workers Aid groups continue to spring up. A student who went on two recent convoys has been touring the country speaking at universities and colleges about his visits to the Tuzla university.

Students from Leicester and Cambridge are on the present convoy with lorries that they have bought through fund-raising activities. Leeds students are buying a campaigning vehicle for fund-raising in Britain.

Bosnian children in Britain have organised collections in several primary schools, and Workers Aid speakers have addressed several school assemblies, where they have faced a barrage of questions about how the convoys get to Bosnia, what the war is about, and so on.

The Christmas convoy is also taking the rave organisers 'Desert Storm' to Tuzla. 'Desert Storm' have been at the centre of the fight against the Criminal Justice Act, and have raised money to transport their sound system to Tuzla, where a rave party is organised for New Year's Eve.

To get to Tuzla the convoy team will spend ten days driving through bad weather conditions, on dirt tracks and mountain roads. They will sleep in sub-zero temperatures in the backs of their lorries.

But if anyone can get there, it will be the Workers Aid convoy.

This determined fight is now starting to have an impact in the trade unions. The convoys have helped put working-class politics back on the agenda in Tuzla. Our last convoy brought back a letter from Tuzla trades unions calling for the building of an international movement against fascism.

Impact

It is already having an impact in Britain and elsewhere. Several trades union councils have backed a proposal to bring a delegation of trades unionists from Tuzla to tour Europe in order to tell the truth about this war.

A rave going to besieged Tuzla may look far removed from the actions of people who went to fight fascism in the Spanish civil war in the 1930s.

But these convoys are a signpost to the future rebuilding of an international working-class movement that was destroyed at the hands of the fascists and Stalinists in Spain.

Namibian election results

THE Workers Revolutionary Party of Namibia won 952 votes in the general election held in that country on 7 and 8 December. The WRP won support in all but three of the 95 contituencies and made its name known on a national scale.

Victors

The victors in the election were the South West Africa People's Organisation, which secured over two-thirds of the votes cast and won 53 seats in the national assembly.

SWAPO's nearest rival, the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, gained 15 seats and the United Democratic Front two seats.

Although there were over 850,000 registered voters, under 500,000 votes were actually cast.

Demonstrators protested outside the immigration appeals offices in Birmingham on 6 December, protesting at the threatened deportation of Hemlata Patel to India. Hemlata came to Britain in 1986 from India. Two months after arriving she married a man she had met when he made an earlier visit to India. Shortly after the marriage Hemlata was subjected to domestic violence and, on police advice, left her husband. Because the marriage did not last 12 months, the Home Office told Hemlata she would be deported to India.
Hemlata has now rebuilt her life, with a steady job and many friends in the Birmingham area. Her deportation to India would mean she had no job and would face social isolation as a divorced woman. Lawyers say that the latest appeal went well. The result, which could take up to three months, is now awaited. Those wishing to help the campaign to stop the deportation of Hemlata Patel should contact Huhammed Idrish on 021-551 4518.

Photo: Mark Salmon

Seasons greetings to all our readers

WORKERS PRESS sends warmest seasonal greetings to all our readers and supporters, and thanks you for your support throughout the past year, without which we could not have survived. This will be our last issue of the year. Our next issue will appear on 7 January.

Quiz for the holidays, p2 ● Immigration death cover-up, p3 ● Labour and global capitalism, p4&5 ● 'Militant' on Bosnia, p7

Workers Press

Grim reality for young homeless

AS Christmas approaches, the charity Centrepoint has produced a survey of the homeless that gives a vivid picture of the grim reality experienced by thousands of young people in London, as the social crisis engulfs them. The same picture exists in every major city in the country.

Centrepoint's research shows that young people are becoming homeless at a younger age, and are more vulnerable than ever before. The number of homeless young women has increased sharply, and young people from black or ethnic minorities are disproportionately represented amongst the homeless.

Of the 1,500 young people who came to six Centrepoint hostels in London for the first time in 1993-94:

- Over 40 per cent were 17 years of age or under;
- Nearly half (44 per cent) of the people surveyed were from black or ethnic minorities;
- Four-fifths of those entering the hostels had been forced to leave home. Some had been driven out because of family arguments. A third had simply been told to leave home. And some 8 per cent left because of sexual or physical violence; and
- About three-quarters were unemployed. Over 40 per cent of the people seeking hostel accommodation were destitute and had no income whatsoever. Most of these were 16- and 17-year-olds, who can no longer claim benefits.

* * * * *

THOUSANDS upon thousands of young people, barely out of their childhood, have no homes to go to, no income, and virtually no chance of ever finding work.

For a decade and more many groups on the 'left' have repeatedly denounced 'Tory policies' as the cause of this sort of situation. The implication is that 'Labour policies' would put matters right.

Yet the ever-worsening housing crisis results not merely from the 'policies' of this or that government but from the decay of the capitalist system. And this decay is not a British question: it is happening throughout the world.

In Africa, Asia, Latin America and other parts of the world, grinding poverty and lack of employment, housing and other basic necessities of life has been the lot of millions of people for decades.

Of the planet's 3 billion labour force, there are 120 million actively searching for work — the great majority without result or hope.

* * * * *

THIS crisis now comes to the old centres of capitalism with a vengeance. There are 40,000 living on London's streets; some 10,000 on the streets of Paris; over 26 million in the US are today on food stamps — one in ten of the population. In western Europe one in six is currently below the official poverty line.

This is the system to which Labour leaders such as Tony Blair and John Prescott are tied hand and foot. That is why there will be no solution to this crisis under a Labour government.

Just as evidence mounts on all sides of an ever-deepening social crisis, these leaders announce that they intend to get rid of Clause Four from the Labour Party's constitution. This is the clause that commits the party to the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange.

Yet the root cause of the deepening world crisis of capitalism lies in the private ownership of the means of producing wealth — the factories, the land, the sources of finance.

The owners of these means of production exploit them entirely for their own profit, not for the benefit of the billions without whose labour no wealth could be produced.

Here lies the significance of the fight in the labour movement to defeat the Labour leadership's plans to scrap Clause Four.

How do you score on '94?

The year in question in Workers Press. Answers below

1. What character once played by Marlon Brando returned to upset the Mexican government in January this year?

2. We've heard a lot about Bruce Grobbelaar, but in January Tory Alan Duncan's 'dropped balls' led to him leaving his post, over a house. What had he done?

3. Who were asked whether they liked tall women, and whether Queen Elizabeth I was more important than Queen Victoria? And what happened if they got it 'wrong'?

4. In February, John Cahill resigned as chairman of British Aerospace. and received a £3.2 million handshake. How long had he headed the company, and how much of his time was spent in Britain?

5. Which former former White House resident went to Red Square to take tea with sacked vice-president Rutskoi; and why might another Russian he met be called leader of the latter-day 'Black Hundreds'?

Rutskoi

6. Who took a job with top city accountants Price Waterhouse, but was sacked by Islington council in March this year, for absenteeism? What's her present political job?

7. In April, a conference was told how many homes were standing empty in Britain. Was it (a) 100,000; (b) 250,000; (c) 400,000; or (d) 850,000?

8. How many homeless people are there now in Britain?

9. Which trade union complained in April about 'moonlighting' members of parliament taking work from its members?

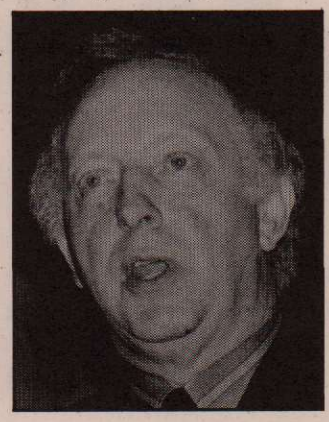
10. Who entered his office in May, but found the cupboard was bare?

11. Whose wife remarked: 'if you bed people that I call "below-stairs class", they go to the papers, don't they?'

12. Why were Bosnians more pleased about a Russian helicopter landing at Zenica than they had been over a British one landing at Tuzla?

13. What led to some South African trades unionists saying they were 'concerned', and what did 200 Cape Town printworkers do about it?

14. Why did some workers in London readily accept strings on Bastille Day; and how did NUM leader Arthur Scargill have to face the music in Durham the previous weekend?



Arthur Scargill

15. How was Workers Press editor Mike Cooke unavoidably detained with comrades from Spain and Greece in August?

16. Who took the appropriately-surnamed Shaukat Ali Kashmiri off to camp, when he wanted to take a trip to London?

17. Whose youth was spent with the Fiery Cross, but thought he had 'come out relatively well'?

18. Where did a Turning Wheel stop the wheels turning?

19. Which well-known MP used to be called 'red', but has stayed in the 'black', and was given 'two bites of the cherry' by the 'Guardian's' literary editor Richard Gott in September?

20. How might a short stay at Ford open prison benefit ex-US president Ronald Reagan, if doctors who examined a certain inmate are to be believed? (Clue: Guinness was good for him!).

21. An official report in Australia estimated that 10 per cent of top solicitors and bankers, more than 20 per cent of employers, and more than 40 per cent of clothing, food and video store owners, were . . . what?

22. Who started a newspaper in San Francisco which achieved an 100,000 circulation, but only lasted a matter of weeks?

23. Where did a cafe once favoured by Pablo Picasso close this year? And, incidentally, what arrangements did the 1945-50 Labour government make for this famous artist's visit to Britain?

24. Cederic Brown was said to have 'won the lottery without buying a ticket'? How? Who is he, and why might you remember him when paying your gas bills?

25. What section of workers, if any, might benefit from the latest cuts proposed for the unemployed? (OK, it's the government's idea of a joke.)

Answers

1. Emiliano Zapata, peasant leader in the 1910 revolution, after whom peasant rebels in Mexico's Chiapas state called themselves the Zapatistas.
2. Duncan, who said he'd been a Tory 'since my balls dropped', resigned as a parliamentary private secretary (though he remains an MP), after it was revealed that he'd 'lent' a neighbour £140,000 to buy his house from Westminster council, then took over the property — now worth £300,000.
3. Southwark council accounts staff. The Labour council paid consultants £400 a day to run 'personality tests' on employees, 19 of whom were then suspended.
4. Cahill had been BAe chairman for 21 months. He lived in Florida and for tax reasons spent no more than 90 days in Britain. Nice work if you can get it!
5. Richard Millhous Nixon. He also accepted an invitation to meet fascist leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky, who can be said to continue the traditions of the anti-Semitic 'Black Hundreds' of Czarist days.
6. Margaret Hodge joined Price Waterhouse, the accountants whose clients included the scandal-hit Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), and which sequestered the miners' funds during the 1984-85 strike. Hodge had to step down from Islington council for non-attendance, but is now Labour MP for Barking, east London.
7. According to Bob Lawrence of the Empty Homes Agency, the number of empty homes was (d) 850,000.
8. Britain has 400,000 homeless.
9. The actors' union Equity
10. President Nelson Mandela took office in May, but found that predecessor F.W. de Klerk had taken most of the office furniture. More seriously, the economy was in a mess and de Klerk's government had run up debts of 60 billion rand without telling anyone.
11. The wife of former defence procurement minister Alan Clark MP, who was being sued by the wife and daughter of a judge.
12. Two defecting Russian officers handed their Mi17 helicopter and weapons over to the Bosnia-Herzegovinan (BiH) forces. A few months earlier, British overseas aid minister Baroness Chalker had landed at Tuzla, but promised aid flights never came. Tuzla airport remains under Russian UN control and closed to Bosnians.
13. South African Trotskyist 'Mo' Shaheed was sacked from his job with the Printing and Paper Workers' Union there for supporting his own party, the Workers International, in the elections. Workers formed a 'Concerned Workers' Committee' to oppose the sacking and defend union democracy, and 200 workers occupied the union headquarters.
14. Workers Aid for Bosnia held a concert on 14 July (Bastille Day), featuring cellist Vedran Smailovic and other leading artists. The previous weekend at the annual Durham miners' gala, Bosnian musicians marching with Workers Aid had stopped and played, as the bands all do, under the balcony where Scargill and other leaders were.
15. Mike and the other five, taking part in a Workers Aid convoy to Tuzla, were seized by Croatian HVO militia and held in a police cell.
16. Pakistani police arrested Shaukat Ali, secretary of the Kashmir People's National Party, and took him to an army camp where he was held prisoner. He had been due to address a conference in London.
17. French President Francois Mitterrand. A new book describes his youth in the fascist Croix de Feu (Fiery Cross) movement, and participation in the wartime Vichy regime. Mitterrand said that he had 'come out rather well'.
18. South African truck drivers, fighting for better pay and conditions, blocked main highways in Natal. Disconcerted with their official union, they formed the Turning Wheel International Workers' Union.
19. 'Red' Ken Livingstone has stayed in the black by channelling his extra-parliamentary earnings from TV and newspaper work into a company, having written the introduction to Corinna Lotz and Paul Feldman's book on Gerry Healy, disgraced former leader of the WRP, he was given a page in the 'Guardian' to 'review' it in September, and repeated his smear that WRP members who ousted Healy in 1985 were serving MI5.
20. Reagan revealed that he is suffering from Alzheimer's disease. Ernest Saunders, convicted in the Guinness shares case, was released after a brief stay as he was suffering from Alzheimer's, but made a remarkable 'recovery' and is back in business.
21. Avoiding income tax.
22. Trades unionists on strike over pay and jobs at Hearst newspapers launched the 'Free Press'. Produced 'on line', it achieved a huge circulation. After a few weeks the workers were able to return to work claiming victory.
23. Butler's, a workers' cafe in Sheffield which Picasso visited, and where he did some sketches, when he came to Britain in 1950. The Attlee government, seeing Picasso as a dangerous communist, authorised MI5 to follow and harass him during his stay.
24. Cedric Brown is the British Gas chairman who awarded himself a 75 per cent pay rise, to £475,000 a year, leading one disgruntled gasworker to say 'it's like winning the lotery without a ticket'.
25. Hairdressers, or barbers. The Tory government's new Jobseeker's Bill authorises Jobcentre officials to tell people to get their hair cut and improve their appearance for potential employers, or have their benefits stopped. Needless to say, there are no proposals for hairdressing allowances, nor more money for decent clothes and shoes.
It would probably be more accurate to say the only people for whom the Tories' measures are making work are the undertakers, but we don't want to spoil the festive season, do we?

COMING SOON

SATURDAY 28 JANUARY 1995
For the right to belong to a trade union! **GCHQ Cheltenham** aniversary protest march and rally. Contact GCHQ Trade Unions, 22 Clarence Street, Cheltenham, Glos. Tel: Cheltenham (0242) 570958. Fax: Cheltenham (0242) 572975.

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National Assembly Against Racism 10am-5pm, York Hall, Old Ford Road, London E2 (Bethnal Green tube). John Monks (TUC), Diane Abbott MP, Ken Livingstone MP, Kumar Murshid (Tower Hamlets Anti-Racist Committee). Workshops, £10 registered delegates, £7/£4 individuals. Details Tower Hamlets Anti-Racist Committee (THARC), 22 Hanbury St, E1.

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Immigration harassment causes another death

THE concerted attack by the British state on black people continued with Poplar coroner's court's inquest verdict on the death in April of Zimbabwean visitor Kwanelle Siziba.

Even though the east London court was forced to note that fear of immigration officers, following the death of Joy Gardner, was most likely a contributing factor, the coroner ruled misadventure.

BY JACKIE VANCE

This is a cover-up for the real causes of a death induced by state intimidation and harassment.

Grieve

Mrs Theodora Swiziba Matthews, sister of the dead woman, said in response: 'I grieve for my sister who is gone today. But we live in a system that has fear built in for all immigrants. How many more lives will be lost? That is why I want to campaign — to stop any more deaths.'

The court heard that a bailiff arrived about 7.15am and threatened to break down the door of the 12th floor flat where Ms Siziba was staying with her sister.

Loud

Evidence from witnesses indicated that Ms Siziba panicked when she thought the loud banging at the door indicated an immigration raid. She attempted to climb down on to the balcony below, but lost her hold and fell.

Ms Siziba was making her third visit to London, this time for her niece's christening.

Mrs Matthews added: 'The bailiff's attitude was very bad. I had spoken to his office the day before and been told I had two week's grace to settle the matter.

'I feel the bailiff's behaviour was very frightening and that he made racist remarks.'

Threat

The court heard that the bailiff had known that he had no authorisation to break down the front door and was making a threat to get in.

Mrs Matthews has approached Hackney Community Defence Association and other groups, which are giving her their support in developing a campaign. She is now taking legal advice on whether to take civil action following the inquest.

In November a Nigerian, Joseph Nnalue, fell to his death in similar circumstances from a tower block in south London during an immigration raid.

A witness to the police's actions in this case has since had his home raided and been brutally assaulted by the police.

The intensification of these state attacks, and the deaths that have resulted, has led to the formation of an Amnesty for Migrants campaign.

Network

One of its aims is to develop a network of contacts which can respond to police and immigration attacks and physically stop deportation attempts.

For further information contact: Julie on 071-924 9033, or Mike on 071-274 6806.

Selection challenge to Labour's Vauxhall MP

COUNCILLOR Kingsley Abrams, chief whip of Merton council, south London, and assistant national secretary of the Anti-Racist Alliance, is bidding to unseat Kate Hoey as Labour MP for Vauxhall. The Vauxhall constituency in south London includes Brixton.

In a 1989 by-election Hoey was imposed on the constituency by Labour's national executive in opposition to the wishes of the local party.

Activists in Vauxhall are backing the left challenge of Abrams. At a meeting on 12 December he secured the backing of black activists in Brixton. Abrams now looks set to gain support of several local Labour Party branches, as well as local trade union branches, including the GMB, of which he is a member.

Workers Aid bazaar

OVER £1,000 was raised by east London Workers Aid for Bosnia at their bazaar in Stratford last weekend. There had been a good response from working-class families in the area to door-to-door programme selling before the event.

A display of photographs and newspaper reports of earlier Workers Aid convoys attracted interest from those visiting the bazaar. Most money was raised on the bric-aGRAVE-brac and gift stalls. But there was a variety of other stalls, including refreshments, children's games, and a puppet show.

The organisers wish to thank all those who helped on the day. The money will help provide urgently needed aid for the working people of Bosnia. Winning lucky programme numbers were:

1st Prize 0412; 2nd Prize 0504; and 3rd Prize 0430

Chelmsford bus crews strike against workloads

BY ROY THOMAS

BADGERLINE bus company last week sacked 91 drivers and suspended ten others at its depot in Chelmsford, Essex.

The original nationalised company had been bought for about £4 million in a management buy-out when the National Bus company was privatised, and soon after sold on to Badgerline for £15 million.

Increased

Since 1992 Badgerline has increased the schedules and reduced the workforce. By October the staff had had enough and the Transport and General Workers' Union organised a postal strike-ballot, which produced a 74 per cent majority for action.

At a mass meeting and 'run-in' — return to the depot — of all the buses at Chelmsford on 10 November, the workforce agreed to have a further run-in at 5pm on 18 November.

This time was chosen because the managers and supervisors had driven buses on the day of this first strike, so they could now drive them in the dark!

However, on 16 November the manager called the union committee to a meeting and told them there would be no negotiations.

The union committee stood its ground and the manager rushed to the local post office to send off the prepared letters telling staff they would be sacked unless they accepted the new work schedule. Badgerline is now bringing in bus drivers from all over the country at a huge cost in hotel bills alone.

Skeleton

The scab drivers are costing £400 per week each, plus their fare home every weekend. All the managers and supervisors are working the bus services in Chelmsford so as to provide a skeleton service.

The people of Chelmsford are avoiding the Eastern National buses wherever they can and putting money into the TGWU strike fund.

Campaigners against the Criminal Justice Act staged a sit-down strike in solidarity at the bus station last Saturday.

There is to be a big demonstration today, Saturday 17 December. TGWU busworkers from other Badgerline bus companies and London activists are joining the march through Chelmsford.

Workers Press readers who can join the demonstration should meet at 11am at Chelmsford bus station.

SUPPORT SACKED TGWU BUS DRIVERS
91 sacked and ten suspended
Saturday 17 December 1994
11.30am
Chelmsford bus station
Bring your banner and march through Chelmsford
Safe buses need safe drivers
Cut the working hours

Tom Stratton 1922-1994

A principled fighter for the working class

TOM STRATTON, a founder member of the Workers Revolutionary Party and also a member of its predecessor the Socialist Labour League, died on Sunday night, 11 December, at the Mayday hospital, Croydon, south London. He died within days of his 72nd birthday.

Tom had been a fighter in the working class as a steward in the building workers' union, UCATT, and later in the engineers' union, AEEU, as a steward in the New Marks, Croydon and New Addington plants.

He had sat on the AEEU Croydon district committee and, on retirement, became an active member of the pensioners' movement. He maintained his active membership of the New Addington AEEU, which he represented on the Croydon Trades Union Council, where for many years he was vice-president, and was still an active member of the council's executive at the time of his death.

Strong

A leading and active member of the Croydon branch of the Workers Revolutionary Party at the time of the expulsion of its then leader, Gerry Healy, in 1985, Tom took a strong line against both the policies of Healy and his abuse of party members.

From the time of his youth — he was brought up in very poor circumstances — in Croydon, his wartime experiences and his struggles in industry from 1946 until his retirement in 1987, Tom was always conscious of his class position, and fought for his class and for that class to take power and to control its own destiny.

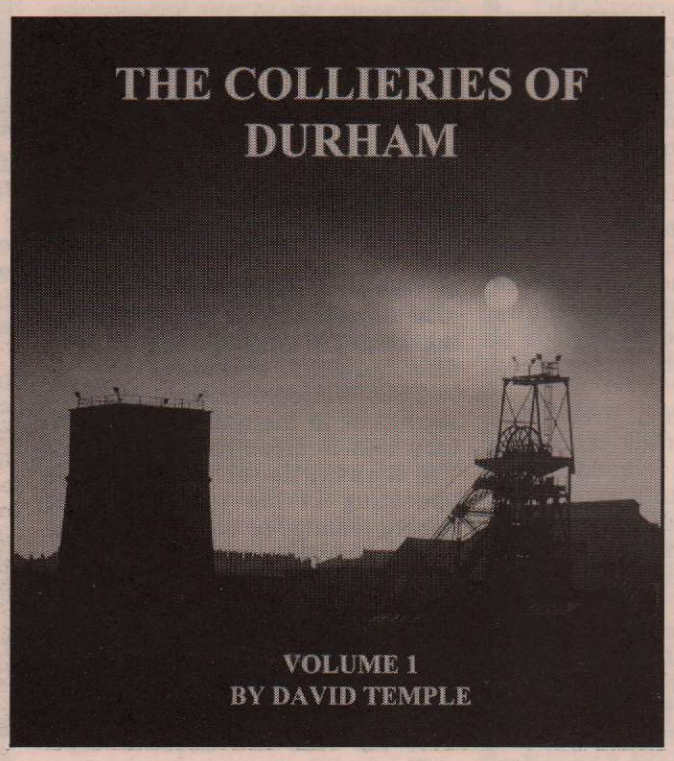
One story tells of the sort of comrade Tom was. During a strike of Stewart Plastics workers, the shop steward, G.B. Singh, was speaking at a meeting and Tom was sitting in the front row. They looked at each other for some time puzzling about where they had met before.

Over a pint after the meeting they discovered that 'G.B.' had been a prisoner in the infamous jail in Singapore during World War II that Tom had opened up with other marines.

The prisoners were starving and emaciated. Tom and some other marines gave some of their clothes and rations to prisoners — for which they were imprisoned by the British army.

Tom Stratton was a comrade greatly respected for his honesty and steadfastness. He will be badly missed.

Sadly, earlier this year Tom's eldest daughter, Margaret, died. We send our condolences to Tom's daughter Ann, his son-in-laws, Terry and Steve, and his grandchildren.



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Inside left

Islington woman

HEARING that Tony Blair had decided to replace Fabian oratory with Brompton Oratory, sending his sons across London for a privileged education rather than chance what the borough of Islington had to offer, the 'Guardian' asked some other middle-class Labourites what they thought.

Among those upholding Blair's right to 'choose' was Margaret Hodge, MP for Barking and former leader of Islington council. Does she really think its schools are so awful? Hodge complains 'a lot of teachers are members of the Labour Party, so we have tended to take a teacher-focused view'.

I used to know some Islington teachers. Dedicated and hard-working, they used to walk home every night with children afraid of racist attack. Labour used to blame its problems on the Tories, now it increasingly resembles them.

Worth remembering

NEXT YEAR will see the 100th anniversary of the death of Friedrich Engels, co-founder with Karl Marx of scientific socialism; and the 150th anniversary of something more significant than that merely biological event, the publication of Engels's 'Condition of the Working Classes in England in 1844'.

'I am up to my eyes in English newspapers and books upon which I am drawing for my book on the condition of the English proletarians,' Engels wrote to Marx, on 19 November 1844. 'I accuse the English bourgeoisie before the entire world of murder. robbery and other crimes on a massive scale, and I am writing an English preface which I shall have printed separately and sent to English party leaders, men of letters and members of Parliament. That'll give those fellows something to remember me by.'

He was then aged about 25. Before he met Marx that summer, Engels had called at the Leeds offices of the radical, working-class paper, the 'Northern Star', and been befriended by George Julian Harney, the Deptford-born former seafarer who had succeeded Feargus O'Connor as editor. In September 1844, the Chartist Harney joined with Polish, Italian and German refugees to found the society of Fraternal Democrats. Its motto was 'All men are brethren'.

'National prejudices have been, in all ages, taken advantage of by the people's oppressors to set them tearing the throats of each other, when they should have been working together for their common good', declared the Fraternal Democrats, therefore 'this society repudiates the term "Foreigner", no matter by, or to whom applied'.

In 1847, these early internationalists invited communists from continental Europe to a congress in London. The Communist League was founded, and Karl Marx was asked to help draft its now famous manifesto. As Reg Groves observes in his long-out-of-print book 'And We Shall Rise Again', '"All men are brethren" became "Proletarians of all lands unite"'.

The new Porcupine press next year intends to re-publish Groves's book, a highly readable introduction to Chartist history. Also, 'Revolutionary History' plans to hold a conference on Engels's contribution to revolutionary theory, and Pluto Press is bringing out a commemorative collection of essays on 'The Condition of Britain', edited by Geoff Pilling and John Lee.

Besides restoring Engels's rightful status as a socialist thinker, these events should show how Marxism developed through its relationship with the workers' movement, already showing its true, international character at the start.

Charlie Pottins

Globalisation of and the crisis of

It is now almost 80 years since Lenin wrote his classic work 'Im changes have occurred in world economy and politics. W indispensable guide to the analysis of world economy today, it repeat what he said. The following article by GEOFF PILLING work which attempts to deal with the main features of capitali the last 50 years or so

WITH the 20th century, capitalism entered the stage of its development, more accurately its decline, known to Marxists as imperialism. Lenin laid great emphasis on the intense socialisation of production that capitalism in its imperialist stage involved.

Referring to those who drew attention to the increasing 'interlocking' of financial and industrial capital, Lenin noted that:

'Underlying this interlocking, its very base, are the changing social relations of production.

'When a big enterprise assumes gigantic proportions, and on the basis of an exact computation of mass data, organises according to plan the supply of primary raw materials to the extent of two-thirds, or three-fourths, of all that is necessary for tens of millions of people; when the raw materials are transported in a systematic and organised manner to the most suitable places of production, sometimes situated hundreds or thousands of miles from each other; when a single centre directs all the consecutive stages of processing the material right up to the manufacture of numerous varieties of finished articles; when these products are distributed according to a single plan amongst tens of hundreds of millions of consumers . . then it becomes evident that we have socialisation of production, and not mere "interlocking."' (Lenin, 'Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism')

Quite obviously the processes Lenin outlines have advanced enormously since 1916, to a point he could only have imagined.

■ **One expression of this socialisation process since World War II was the fact that international *trade* in industrial products grew at two-and-a-half times the rate of the *production* of such goods.**

In other words an ever greater share of the **production** of each country was sold on the world market.

It is instructive to look at these trends in historical perspective. If we break down the period from roughly the start of the 18th century to 1960 into three equal periods of around 80 years each, the following pattern emerges:

In the first period, from 1720 until 1800, world trade increased somewhat less than fivefold; in the second stage (1800 until about 1880) world trade expanded tenfold. In the third period, from 1880 until 1960, it expanded slightly less than tenfold.

Thus, over all, the rise of capitalism is associated with an accelerating growth of world trade. But it is significant to note that in the last four decades of the 19th century the rate of growth suffered a considerable setback.

Restrictions

Here was an expression of the increasing restrictions that capitalism was placing on the growth of the productive forces and the international division of labour.

This was the period of the rapid industrialisation of countries that were already successfully challenging Britain's position as 'workshop of the world'.

Germany and the United States built up their industries behind various protectionist walls, and this found its reflection in the slowdown in the expansion of world trade.

Even more significant are the figures relating the share of world trade to world output, a rough indicator of the division of labour in world economy.

According to these figures, the share of world trade fell back significantly in the last two decades of the 19th century, to rise rapidly again in the period immediately preceding World War I. During that war and in the slump of the 1930s it fell rapidly again.

Even though the share rose steadily in the period after 1945, in 1960-62 it still lagged significantly behind the 1876-80 level.

Comparing the world output of manufactured goods with the volume of exports of manufactures, we find the following: in 1929, exports were equivalent to 89 per cent of production; by 1937 the figure had dropped to 64 per cent; in 1948, on the eve of the post-war boom, it was 55 per cent, and thereafter it rose steadily until the end of the long boom, when it was 123 per cent.

Concentration

■ **The trend towards the concentration of capital, for Lenin one of imperialism's key features, has continued apace in the post-war period.**

Thus, in the United States, the number of company mergers or takeovers in the manufacturing industries and in mining rose from 3,365 in 1955-59 to 8,213 a decade later.

In Britain in the early 1970s 100 firms accounted for half of overall manufacturing production; in France the top 100 firms were responsible for two-thirds of overall manufacturing output. In the United States the top 500 corporations were responsible for over three-quarters of total sales.

■ **This socialisation of production also takes the shape of the increasing weight of multinational corporations in world economy.**

Thus United Nations statistics show that in the quarter of a century 1951-75 alone, the 180 biggest US transnational corporations operating in the manufacturing sphere founded or bought out some 14,000 branches or subsidiaries abroad.

■ **Even more significant as a reflection of the globalisation of economic activity has been the huge increase in the export of capital, over the last two decades especially.**

By the end of the 1980s, direct investment made by the capitalists of all countries outside their national borders had reached $1.5 trillion.

But what is significant is not so much the huge sum involved but the speed of its growth over the previous two decades. For the figure had almost tripled in the 1980s alone.

Put another way: for the period 1983-89, the outflows of direct investment to other countries rose by almost 29 per cent each year, whereas world exports rose much more slowly — at about 9 per cent a year, and world domestic product even less.

And the investment involved went far beyond manufacturing and the extraction of raw materials. To an ever greater extent it involved such areas as finance, real estate, insurance, advertising and the media.

In the 1940s and early 1950s most foreign investments came from US corporations, although Britain, which was able to reinvest earnings from previous investments, was also important in this respect.

But, as part of her relative loss of power, the US had to face increasing competition from other countries in the field of foreign investment.

Thus whereas in 1960 almost half of all direct foreign investment originated from the US, by the end of the 1980s this had dropped to under 30 per cent.

The figure for Japan had risen from under 1 per cent to over 11 per cent during the same period.

■ **There has been an astronomical growth of bank lending across national frontiers.**

In the past such activity was regarded as abnormal. Even as recently as the mid-1960s the volume of international banking reached only around 10 per cent of the combined national incomes of the capitalist countries.

By the mid-1980s that figure had doubled. The comparison with world trade is even more striking.

A normal function of international banking is to facilitate world trade. Some 30 years ago the volume of banking activity across national borders came to about 10 per cent of world trade.

Over the last two decades that volume has swollen out of all proportion with world trade and by the middle of the last decade it actually exceeded the volume of trade of the capitalist countries.

This is how one of the leading financial institution sums up these trends:

'The [economic and financial instability of the 1970s] engendered government deficits and external imbalances that required financing on a scale unprecedented in peacetime and that exceeded the capacity or willingness of the traditionally fragmented financial markets to cover them.

'These financing needs joined with the advances in technology and communications to spawn a host of innovations ranging from securitisation in place of intermediated bank credit to new derivatives including swaps.

'Taken together these financial innovations have helped overwhelm traditional and regulatory segmentation of national markets and thereby have contributed much to the effective integration of financial markets globally' (Morgan Guaranty Trust Company, 'World Financial Markets', April 1991).

Or, as another writer puts it:

'[World trade in goods and services] amounts to around $2.5 trillion to $3 trillion a year. But the London Eurodollar market, in which the world's financial institutions borrow and lend to each other, turns over $300 billion each working day, or $75 trillion a year.

Capitalism develops some parts of the world while hampering and throwing family could eat. In Britain, the Tories have introduced their pit closure pr

f capitalism f Labourism

perialism'. Since that time great hile Lenin's work remains an s quite inadequate if we merely is taken from a longer piece of sm as they have emerged over

a volume at least 25 times that of world trade. In addition, there are foreign exchange transactions in the world's money centres, in which one currency is traded against another.

'These run at about $150 billion a day, or about $35 trillion a year — 12 times the world-wide trade in goods and services.

'Of course, many of these Eurodollars, yen, and Swiss francs are just being moved from one pocket to another and may be counted more than once.

'A massive discrepancy still exists, and there is only one conclusion: capital movements unconnected to trade — and indeed largely independent of it — greatly exceed trade finance' (Peter F. Drucker, 'The Changed World Economy', 'Foreign Affairs', Spring 1986, p. 782).

The figures are so big as to be almost inconceivable and they have certainly shot up since these calculations were made. The *daily* turnover on the foreign exchange markets is now around $1 trillion.

One further striking statistic: at the start of the 1970s, 90 per cent of currency flows across the exchanges were based on trade and only 10 per cent on speculation; today the proportions have been reversed.

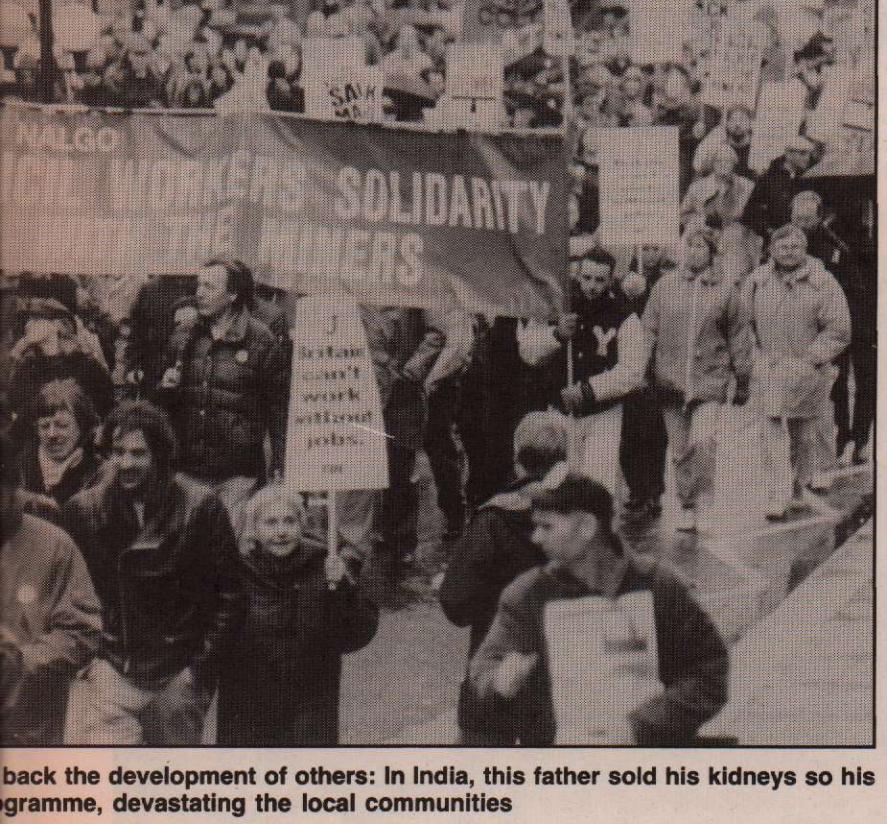
Thus the last two decades have seen an astonishing growth in the funds devoted purely to speculation.

This period witnessed the appearance of quite new exotic financial instruments that have the most tenuous connection with the production or even circulation of commodities but which both extended greatly the credit base while at the same time opened wide the gates for speculation.

For instance, financial futures markets, where bets are laid on what interest rates will be at a specified date in the future, first emerged in the early 1970s and are now reckoned to total over $1 trillion dollars world-wide, although in truth nobody really knows how big they are.

There has been an even faster growth in interest and currency swaps.

These consist of swaps between two parties who possess interest-bearing securities or future-currency contracts, the purpose being to hedge and/or seek additional speculative gains.



back the development of others: In India, this father sold his kidneys so his gramme, devastating the local communities

There are now over $2.5 trillion worth of such contracts outstanding in the financial markets, yet they were almost unknown before 1980.

Thus the tendency towards socialisation does not come to a dead halt with the arrival of the epoch of imperialism.

It does however take on more perverted, even crazy, forms.

And second, it is a tendency subject to violent and inevitable disruptions which threaten the future of humankind.

Thus the present century has been marked by two world wars, the slump of the 1930s, when economic nationalism, protectionism, and even autarky (the absence of any trade) reasserted themselves with great force.

In short, imperialism, in its own way, unites world economy while at the same time breaking it up.

As Trotsky put it:

'By drawing the countries economically closer to one another and levelling out their stages of development, capitalism, however, operates by methods of *its own*, that is by anarchistic methods which constantly undermine its own work, set one country against another, and one branch of industry against another, developing some parts of world economy while hampering and throwing back the development of others.

'Only the correlation of these two fundamental tendencies — both of which arise from the nature of capitalism — explains to us the living texture of the historical process' (L. D. Trotsky, 'The Third International After Lenin', New Park, p. 16).

Two points should be made about this increasing globalisation of capital.

■ **Far from creating the conditions for a smoothly operating world economy, as some day-dreamers hope, it was itself a response to the intensifying contradictions of the capitalist world economy.**

The great increase in the export of capital seen over the last two decades or so was an expression of the growing rivalries among states and corporations as they sought out more surplus value to counteract pressure on the rate of profit.

Speculation

Similarly, with the arrival of the 1970s the explosion of debt and speculation became an increasingly important prop for the big capitalist powers.

Government budgetary deficits, along with the mushrooming of corporate and personal debt, shored up demand and helped sustain the production of goods and services.

■ **Deregulation of financial markets, the growth of international telecommunications, and the creation of highly sophisticated computer software have not only encouraged aggressive speculation in new financial instruments.**

They have rendered virtually impossible attempts by any state, even the largest, of carrying out an 'independent' economic policy.

Indeed it is now perfectly possible for the speculators, should they object to a particular government's policies, to create a run on any currency they choose.

The speculators are so powerful that they have: 'effectively created an international market in government policies. Speculators who doubt the ability of a national government to maintain a particular exchange rate can destroy the government's position by betting against the currency, as George Soros did to great effect in 1992.

'The search for market credibility has already imposed a deflationary strait-jacket on European economies, led by high interest rates across Europe in the last 15 years, and the power of individual economies to buck these trends is severely restricted' ('Social Justice: Strategies for National Renewal', Vintage, 1994).

(The fact that this could appear in the report of the 'Commission on Social Justice', the body set up by the late leader of the British Labour Party, John Smith, is highly ironic.)

In other words, we are witnessing a rapid return to the 1930s, when the 'bankers' ramp' forced governments out of office, including the British Labour government in 1931.

City Lights

Industrial alarm

THERE is considerable alarm among Europe's top industrialists that they are continuing to fall behind US and Japanese corporations in the fight for shares in the world market.

A body called the European Round Table, which represents Europe's top 40 industrialists, has issued a report pointing out the dangers of a continuing exodus of production to the Far East and North America, brought about by higher costs in western Europe.

The report warns that European Union trade with the rest of the world is falling behind trade within the EU. Higher energy costs and taxation levels (in Europe these absorb 46 per cent of national income, as against 31 per cent in the US and 34 per cent in Japan) are blamed for Europe's poor performance.

Welcoming the report, the 'Financial Times' (25 November) called for some tough measures to deal with this situation:

■ The 'imbalances' in state finances, which 'are weighing increasingly on the private sector', must be corrected. In other words, government spending must be further cut.

■ There must be a tougher stance against state aid to industry, much greater 'deregulatory reform', and all 'unnecessary burdens on industry' must be eliminated.

The FT notes that the business leaders of the European Round Table 'wisely avoid lecturing trade unions about flexible labour markets. Because recovery is generating so few extra jobs, employment rigidities are softening even in Europe's most closely regulated economies, while real take-home pay for most people in Europe is still falling. Few bosses have had to face such sacrifices.'

You can say that again!

No real aid for eastern Europe

THE European Union's strategy towards central and eastern Europe is deeply flawed, according to a report by economists at the London-based Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR). Early proposals from Sir Leon Brittan, the EU's chief trade negotiator, have been significantly whittled down by the governments of the EU.

A scheme has been turned down for the EU to provide loans to eastern and central Europe for structural adjustment and to assist with balance-of-payments problems. Suggestions have also been rejected for the common agricultural policy to be reformed to grant central European countries more access to EU programmes.

Agricultural products are to be excluded when the EU's free-trade agreement with Bulgaria and Rumania comes into force next month. In other words, the countries of eastern Europe are to be denied access to the markets of western Europe.

Proposals to increase the EU's Phare programme of technical assistance to eastern Europe were also rejected.

One reason for the toning down of the original Brittan proposals is the mounting north-south tension within the EU. The countries of southern Europe, including Italy and Spain, would see much of their agricultural sector damaged if it had to compete with eastern Europe.

'Any kind of serious trade integration will put pressure on the

Suzanne Gahler, an economist with J.P. Morgan in London.

The six CEPR economists say that the EU proposals in no sense constitute a strategy towards central and eastern Europe. 'They are piecemeal and much more limited than steps previously under discussion. They will be perceived only as reluctant concessions,' they complain.

The powerful agricultural lobby in the EU will not tolerate competition from eastern Europe, while integration into the EU structure would cause even more dislocation in the eastern countries. It is estimated that the cost of integrating even four of the countries of eastern Europe — Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic — into the EU would cost upwards of £40 billion.

As Jean Pisani-Ferry, director of France's Centre d'Etudes Prospectives et d'Information Internationales in Paris, says: 'Market rules must reach deep into individual economies for the single market to occur, and adjusting to them proves tough even for some of our countries.'

In other words, the restoration of capitalism in eastern Europe is proving far from the straightforward process that many people fondly imagined.

House-owning nightmare

THE 1995 outlook for the housing market is grim indeed. Prices seem set to stagnate, mortgage arrears to mount and house repossessions to start growing again. The Tory party's 'property-owning democracy' looks set fair to turn into an even bigger nightmare, with tens of thousand of people forced out of their homes.

Even before last week's rise in borrowing rates, house transactions were, according to the Inland Revenue, at their lowest level since 1980, with house prices at below their level of a year ago.

The latest rise in interest rates will mean the number of houses repossessed by the building societies and banks will rise to the level of early this year, when lenders were taking back almost 1,000 homes a week. The figure fell somewhat in the second six months of the year, but this will be merely a temporary respite.

'We think the figure will begin to plateau,' said a representative of the Halifax building society. Rob Thomas, housing analyst with stockbrokers UBS, believes that the number suffering from 'negative equity' — that is those who owe more on their house than it is currently worth — will start to rise again. There are over 1 million homes with loans larger than their market value at the end of the third quarter of this year.

This represents a total of almost £12 million uncovered debt. And there is more of the same to come, with widespread expectation that the current level of interest rates of 6.25 per cent will hit 8 per cent during 1995.

Not only have interest rates risen, but tax relief on mortgage interest payments was cut to 20 per cent last April and is to go down to 15 per cent next April, bringing increases in monthly payments to most borrowers, including those on fixed rates of interest.

From next October the Department of Social Security will pay no more than 'standard' interest to those out of work, which in many cases will not cover borrower commitments. This, combined with the decision that people taking on new mortgage will be prevented from claiming income support, is also bound to increase the number of repossessions.

Thirst unquenched

PERSONAL COLUMN

THE scene: a ward in a Scottish teaching hospital. The patient: a woman dying of liver cancer. The notes: by three observers.

5.50pm. Patient tried to reach a drink on her locker without success.

6.05pm. She rolled over and tried to cover herself with her sheet.

6.50pm. Glass of water placed on the locker. There was again no contact.

8.15pm. Nurse asked the patient if she would like tea or coffee. She tried to raise herself to reach the drink on her locker but it was beyond her reach.

She struggled but eventually laid [*sic*] back exhausted. She continued the struggle for half an hour, moaning as nurses passed.

9.20pm. Patient calls to nurse and indicates she wanted her drink. Nurse gives the patient a drink and leaves.

The patient tried to drink but could not keep her head up. She could not put the glass down on the locker.

Observations were halted and the patient helped to drink.

WHAT on earth is going on here? Why, what else but a piece of 'non-interventional' research designed to bring to notice 'defects in the care of dying patients'?

Such an aim, it goes without saying, is entirely praiseworthy. But is this the right way to achieve it?

Here was a dying woman struggling on and off *for four hours* to reach a glass of water. And the three observers — all of them, let it be noted, medically qualified — left her to get on with it.

They did however record that she had 'a severe thirst'.

Reader, can you imagine yourself sitting there, watching such a sight, and letting your pen trace those words 'a severe thirst' in your notebook?

Wouldn't your pen burn your fingers for very shame? Wouldn't the paper you were writing on redden with indignation? Wouldn't your own mouth go dry, and your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth, in sympathy?

But sympathy was a latecomer to that ward in that Scottish teaching hospital. The observers went on observing imperturbably for four hours before mercy 'halted' their research and one of them finally held a glass to the patient's parched lips.

Nor was this an isolated incident. These researchers heard another dying woman begging for a drink for 30 minutes. They monitored her requests and made notes which were no doubt scrupulously accurate.

But they didn't lift a finger to help her.

Such 'non-interventional' research is currently the subject of controversy in the 'British Medical Journal'. Critics like Nicholas Albery, director of the Natural Death Centre — a charity campaigning for better care for the terminally sick — say it is 'grossly unethical' to ignore a dying patient's pleas for water.

It is more. It is much, much more. It is monstrous, abominable cruelty. Reading the brief report in one of last weekend's Sunday papers, I found tears in my eyes.

Tears of anguish for the doomed helpless women whose pitiful struggles to fulfil a basic human need were so meticulously recorded yet so callously disregarded.

Tears of frustration and rage at the fractured sensibilities of those who chose, or had been instructed, to behave in such a way to a fellow human being in deep distress.

WE KNOW the names and occupations of those three researchers who sat coolly and calmly making notes, from time to time carefully consulting their watches, while within easy reach of them one or another dying woman lay moaning and begging for water.

One is called William Macrae. He is a consultant anaesthetist.

Another is called Huw Davies. He is a research fellow at Dundee's Ninewell hospital and medical school.

The third is Mina Mills. She is a former nurse tutor.

The ugly style in which their report is couched — those cock-eyed lurches from past to present tense and back again, that glaringly illiterate past tense of the verb 'to lie' — strongly suggests individuals whose level of general education lags sadly behind whatever technical training they have received.

But what can be said of these people's moral education? One hesitates to suggest that they would have treated a mother or sister of one of them in so shameful a fashion. But who knows?

Once someone has been brainwashed to the extent of believing that such behaviour is good and right, since it seems to serve an end that is palpably good and right, there are no limits to the rationalising power of the suborned conscience.

OBVIOUS questions arise. First of all, of course, how much more of this kind of thing is going on in our hospitals, unreported and therefore — since dead patients tell no tales and 'whistle-blowers' these days risk instant victimisation — never the subject of protest?

But there is a still more important question. We know the names of the three researchers; what we now badly need to know is who dehumanised them. For the finger of blame points not merely at them, but at others.

Who trained them? Where were they trained? And above all who supervised this particular piece of research and gave these three individuals permission to anaesthetise their natural human feelings and set aside the accepted code of medical ethics?

More generally, have those who instruct doctors and nurses learnt nothing from the abominable acts of inhuman cruelty that litter this century's history?

Wherein lies the moral difference between the sort of vile experiments the fascists carried out on their victims and these instances of deliberate neglect of patients' elementary needs and elementary rights?

The excuse the fascists offered was that their bestial actions would add to knowledge. The excuse the Macrae-Davies-Mills team offer is identical in substance.

'Our work was aimed at uncovering defects in the care of dying patients which might then be addressed to [*sic*] the benefit of future patients', they wrote in last week's 'British Medical Journal'.

Capitalist society in deep decay throws up case after case of people being treated as less than human, as mere things to be manipulated and observed.

If being a socialist means anything at all, it means protesting and fighting with every ounce of our strength against such dehumanisation and those responsible for it.

I should have liked to write in a lighter vein this week. But for me the Christmas spirit has been largely quenched by reading about the unquenched thirst of those dying women.

Their unheeded cries for water haunt me, and will ring in my ears for a long time to come.

Peter Fryer

A feast of jazz music

TOM OWEN comments on the seemingly boundless talent of jazz saxophonist Michael Hassim, who is playing at the Leadmill, Sheffield

SUNDAY is a dreadful day in Sheffield, especially in the autumn and winter months. The city centre is deserted, the urban heart arrests, and the population recedes into a series of urban villages.

A sociologist friend of mine who visited the city after some years' absence noted how, as he drove through the city one Sunday, he saw the middle classes huddled outside their churches in leafy Fulwood, and workers in Hillsborough and Parson Cross queueing outside the pubs for their Sunday comfort.

One Sunday recently I also managed to join a queue, outside the Leadmill. This establishment is a kind of club, still financed by the dodgy practices of local authority 'creative accounting'.

It was originally a centre for inner-city, deprived working-class youth as a wholesome social-democratic alternative to the nightclub scene.

In fact it quickly became a middle-class recreational haven. Having said this, the Leadmill has provided a venue for top jazz and blues musicians from around the world, and hosted the Hurlfield Jazz project for BBC2.

Sunday dinner-time jazz at the Leadmill is a kind of institution. You can hear good local and, sometimes, international live performers.

But I often have to grit my teeth. The broadsheet readers chat away incessantly, not observing the basic courtesies of an audience to musicians.

What is more, they wave their health-food Sunday 'lunches' under your nose as a marker of their sobriety and correctness.

This particular Sunday there was a sea-change. The broadsheeters were there, but also a large contingent of Sheffield engineering workers of that generation that followed jazz as a political commitment alongside the politics of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Stalinist 'Peace Movement'.

These enthusiasts knew that they were to experience a feast of jazz music, and they were not disappointed.

Michael Hassim hails from Manhattan island and the 'tunes' that he plays take you to the world of Johnny Hodges, Billie Holiday, John Coltrane, Cole Porter and even Aaron Copland.

Hassim is a sax player of seemingly boundless talent. His public repertoire is what I suppose is defined as mainstream. Listening to him makes you realise the richness of American 'popular' culture.

> 'These enthusiasts knew that they were to experience a feast of jazz music, and they were not disappointed.'

His rendition of popular melodies like Porter's 'You'd be so nice to come home to', and the Billie Holiday classic 'Good morning heartbreak' brought you into the presence of something unique. Partly it is because of my memory of sitting, at the age of 17, in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, listening to Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis or Dave Brubeck. But also it was those sound tracks to all those films on urban American alienation, even the B-movie cop stories.

It is not only Michael Hassim's masterly technique that gives you the sense of his artistry, but the 'shock' of his invention. He weaves his melodic lines in a complex web of rhythmic patterns, teasing you back to sustained passages of sheer lyrical grace.

Dry

Spoken and written language are inadequate media to describe wordless art forms in their execution or performance.

There is the technical vocabulary of course, but this is too dry to capture the aura of a live performance.

In Hassim's case this is very noticeable when the set stops and he becomes an unassuming and sociable man with a repertoire of wicked jokes about the Clinton regime. So if you can, go and see him and talk to him.

Praise for WRP (Namibia)'s gallant stand in elections

This message of solidarity with the Workers Revolutionary Party (Namibia), in support of its stand during the national elections on 7 and 8 December, was sent by the African Liberation Support Campaign (ALISC). The message is responding to the election manifesto issued by the WRP (Namibia), which attacked the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) — in government since independence in 1989 — accusing it of serving to protect the interests of capitalist multinationals. 'SWAPO's role was to pose as revolutionary socialist while actually making Namibia safe for capitalism,' says the manifesto. 'That is why it crushed the SWAPO Youth League in 1976 . . . They claimed they were rooting out spies. A lie!'
The message also comments on the law and order crackdown, supported by the opposition, that confronts the working people as they fight for basic democratic rights, wages and conditions

WE of the African Liberation Support Campaign (ALISC), committed to support the struggles of all African peoples against foreign domination and for self-determination, commend the gallant stand that the Workers Revolutionary Party (Namibia) has taken against the hijacking of the Namibian people's independence for the purpose of serving South African, American and European capitalist multinationals.

We agree that Namibian national independence is meaningless so long as the majority, workers and peasants, remain in the stranglehold of capitalism, which is manifesting itself at its highest stage of imperialism in Namibia and other parts of Africa.

ALISC therefore supports the efforts of the Workers Revolutionary Party (Namibia), during the current Namibian elections, in opening the door for the working class to take people forward to complete the struggle for total independence.

1989 elections: despite independence, workers and peasants remain in capitalism's stranglehold

WE BELIEVE that a government that does not respect the lives of its own people has no right to govern.

For too long, across the length and breadth of Africa, from Ghana to Uganda and from Nigeria to South Africa, movements have hidden behind the banner of revolutionary socialism to mask the tortures and killings they have meted out to their own people. This must stop. We therefore fully support the demand for an account to be given of all the missing Namibians in Angola.

The workers and peasants of Namibia are also justified in demanding accountability for the profits that have been made from their sweat, blood and tears. The multinationals and all the other exploiters must declare to the Namibian people how much they are siphoning out of the country.

The Workers Revolutionary Party (Namibia) has correctly read the ploy of [some] opposition parties, which whip up sentiments about law and order to justify the imposition of repressive measures against the majority. This is a classic tactic used by fascist regimes to divert attention from their inability to address the root causes of economic failure and social disintegration.

A programme of public works in the housing, power and water supply sectors will not only provide much needed services for Namibians but will reduce unemployment, which is a major contributing factor to crime. The Workers Revolutionary Party (Namibia) must be applauded for being the only party to propose serious, practical steps to tackle the root causes of crime.

OTHER parts of Africa are weighed down by the yoke of imperialism, with its finance capital administered through the International Monetary Fund/World Bank Structural Adjustment Programme. Health, education, and the right to a pension remain in the domain of the rich ruling class.

The institution in Namibia of a national health service with equality of service and of a system of free education must definitely be fought for.

We salute the struggle of the Workers Revolutionary Party (Namibia) for self-determination, anti-imperialism, popular democracy and equitable prosperity.

ALISC,
London, 23 November 1994.

The WRP (Namibia)'s manifesto and ALISC's solidarity message were published in the election special issue of 'The Worker' (November/December 1994), paper of the Workers Revolutionary Party (Namibia).

Bosnia: workers *must* take sides

One positive thing about the bloody war unleashed by the Serbian regime against Bosnia is that it has exposed the reactionary politics of many of the organisations on 'the left'.

Chief among these has been the Militant tendency. Like the Socialist Workers Party it has adopted a stance of so-called 'neutrality' in that war, refusing to take sides, thereby treating as equal the Serbian oppressor with the oppressed nation, Bosnia.

They do so under conditions where there is a real danger in Europe of fascism and reactionary nationalism preparing to inflict what could be the first of a series of attacks and defeats on the working class, in the conditions following Stalinism's collapse.

The main responsibility of the international working class is to *stop this now in Bosnia*.

A recent letter from a member of the Workers Aid to Bosnia campaign to the 'Militant' (25 November) criticising the paper's line resulted in a full-page reply from it: 'Bosnia — should socialists "take sides"?' (9 December). This reply is highly instructive and demonstrates what this 'neutrality' actually amounts to: support for the Serbian regime and thereby support for the foreign policy of the British state. GEOFF PILLING comments on this reply

1. 'Militant' starts by glibly referring to the 'Bosnian catastrophe'? But these are crocodile tears. For who is responsible for this catastrophe? Obviously the leading imperialist powers, and Russia, which are all vying with each to gain dominance in the Balkans as part of securing their place in the 'new world order'.

They are joined by the ex-Stalinist regime in Serbia, which backs the fascist gangs in Bosnia. But the Stalinist and reformist leaders of the working class, by refusing to fight for the defence of Bosnia, are accomplices in the Balkans tragedy.

True to form, 'Militant' says not a single word about the betrayal of such leaders. And by their silence they reveal in the loudest terms their own complicity.

2. In more than one place 'Militant' writes on the assumption that the fascist Radovan Karadic speaks for the Serbs living in Bosnia. Thus, at one point, we find: 'What does "support for Bosnia" mean when the Serbian and Croatian minorities have if effect already forcibly seceded?'

This is a grotesque lie, equivalent to saying that Hitler spoke for the working class of Germany. It is the fascists bands and their backers who have deliberately set out to terrorise anybody who disagrees with their plans for the annexation of large parts of Bosnia.

> 'It is the first duty of socialists to defend the struggle of an oppressed nation against the oppressor, even when the leadership of the struggle is in the hands of bourgeois forces in the oppressed nation.'

3. Like the imperialists themselves, 'Militant' characterises the war as 'an ethnic civil war'. This is a racist term designed to obscure the fact that it is the first duty of socialists to defend the struggle of an oppressed nation against the oppressor, even when the leadership of the struggle is in the hands of bourgeois forces in the oppressed nation.

4. 'Militant' bases its reactionary position on the fact that US imperialism is backing Bosnia. They implicitly ask: how can you support Bosnia when it is backed by the leading imperialist power?

As Marxists have many times pointed out, this is an infantile method of 'reasoning'. You simply take a position that is 'opposite' to that of your enemy. In any case 'Militant' ignores the fact that US imperialism in no way supports the right of Bosnia to its independence. What it does do is use Alija Izetbegovic's Bosnian regime to pursue its geopolitical interests in the area.

'Militant' also ignores the fact that French and British imperialism, as well as the Russian regime, either openly or in disguised form supports the Serbian regime to the hilt. In other words, there are deep inter-imperialist rivalries at work in the Balkans.

5. Unlike the 'Militant', the WRP/Workers Press's defence of the right for Bosnia to its independence does not in the slightest degree depend on the character of the present Bosnian regime.

The WRP started from similar class considerations in the case of the 1991 Gulf war. Its defence of the Iraqi regime during that war was unconditional, because Iraq was an oppressed nation under attack from imperialism.

The WRP separated itself from all those 'Trotskyists' in the labour movement who, denouncing Saddam Hussein's brutal dictatorship, refused to come to the aid of Iraq in its war against US and British imperialism.

Precisely the same was true at the time of the invasion of Argentina. The only revolutionary position was to fight for the defeat, military and political, of British imperialism. To take a 'neutral' position in such a conflict is, in fact, to side with the imperialist aggressors.

From this point of view what 'Militant' says about the reactionary character of Izetbegovic's Party of Democratic Action (SDA) in Bosnia is entirely beside the point, an evasion of the issue in fact.

6. Equally reactionary is the attack on the Bosnian regime for accepting arms supplies from 'the Muslim world'. This makes the earlier statement, 'We oppose the partitioning of Bosnia and support the right of the Muslims — and also Serb and Croatian communities — to armed defence of their communities', sickening hypocrisy.

'Militant' 'supports' the right of Bosnia to defend itself, so long as it gets arms from sources of which it approves! Likewise, on the one hand, 'Militant' says it 'supports' the right of a multi-ethnic Bosnia to exist [very decent of it!], but at the same times declares this to be cloud-cuckoo-land. 'Talk of a "multi-ethnic Bosnia" within its 1989 boundaries is now pure utopia,' it says.

7. Our worthy warriors 'advocate' [!] 'the building of a democratic workers' defence force' in the former Yugoslavia. How nice! But in the meantime? And with what input from our worthy 'advocates'? From where? With what engagement? With what risk?

'Militant's' lofty-sounding phrases are a cowardly cover behind which the central issues are avoided: namely the rousing of the international working class for the defence of Bosnia. This is the *main* task before the international working-class movement today.

Yet the page-long 'Militant' reply says not a single word about the international working class. It says nothing whatever about the betrayal of Bosnia by the reformist and Stalinist leaders of the working class.

These leaders have almost without exception either taken the side of Serbia or, like the 'Militant', declared their 'neutrality' between the so-called 'warring factions'.

Workers Aid for Bosnia, and all those many thousands who have helped to build and sustain it, can be proud that it has led the fight to bring international solidarity to the workers of Bosnia, demonstrating to them in practice that they do not fight alone.

8. 'Militant' says: 'We have consistently advocated the building of democratic multi-ethnic defence committees. Where such defence organisations exist they deserve the support of workers internationally.' Again, how very nice!

Does the person who is able to dispense this sort of platonic 'advice' actually have the slightest idea of what is really going on in a Bosnian town such as Tuzla? The great majority of the most active elements in the working class are currently at the front, fighting the Serbian bandits.

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> '"Militant" pins responsibility for the resolution of the crisis in the the Yugoslavia onto the working class in those countries, thus evading the responsibility *now* of the workers in the rest of the world . . . to defend Bosnia.'

The working class has the responsibility to resolve the crisis, to defeat the fascists. The working class is international. It is in the rebuilding of this internationalism that the labour movement must engage.

'Militant's' chauvinistic position criminally mis-educates the working class, and the young layers in the working class in particular.

The WRP believes that Bosnia is today the key to the international situation. If Bosnia goes down to defeat without a real fight being taken into the international working class, who will be next?

We appeal to all members and supporters of 'Militant' to consider seriously the positions stated here, and engage in discussion with the WRP on the position of your organisation on Bosnia.

Bosnian women and children dodging the bullets in Sarajevo

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Chechen people defy 'Tsar' Yeltsin's tanks

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

RUSSIA'S drunken overlord 'Tsar' Boris Yeltsin may have met his match in the tough mountain peoples of the Caucasus.

The Chechens, who have broken away from the Russian federation, were last week defying more than 40,000 Russian troops sent with tanks and planes to crush them.

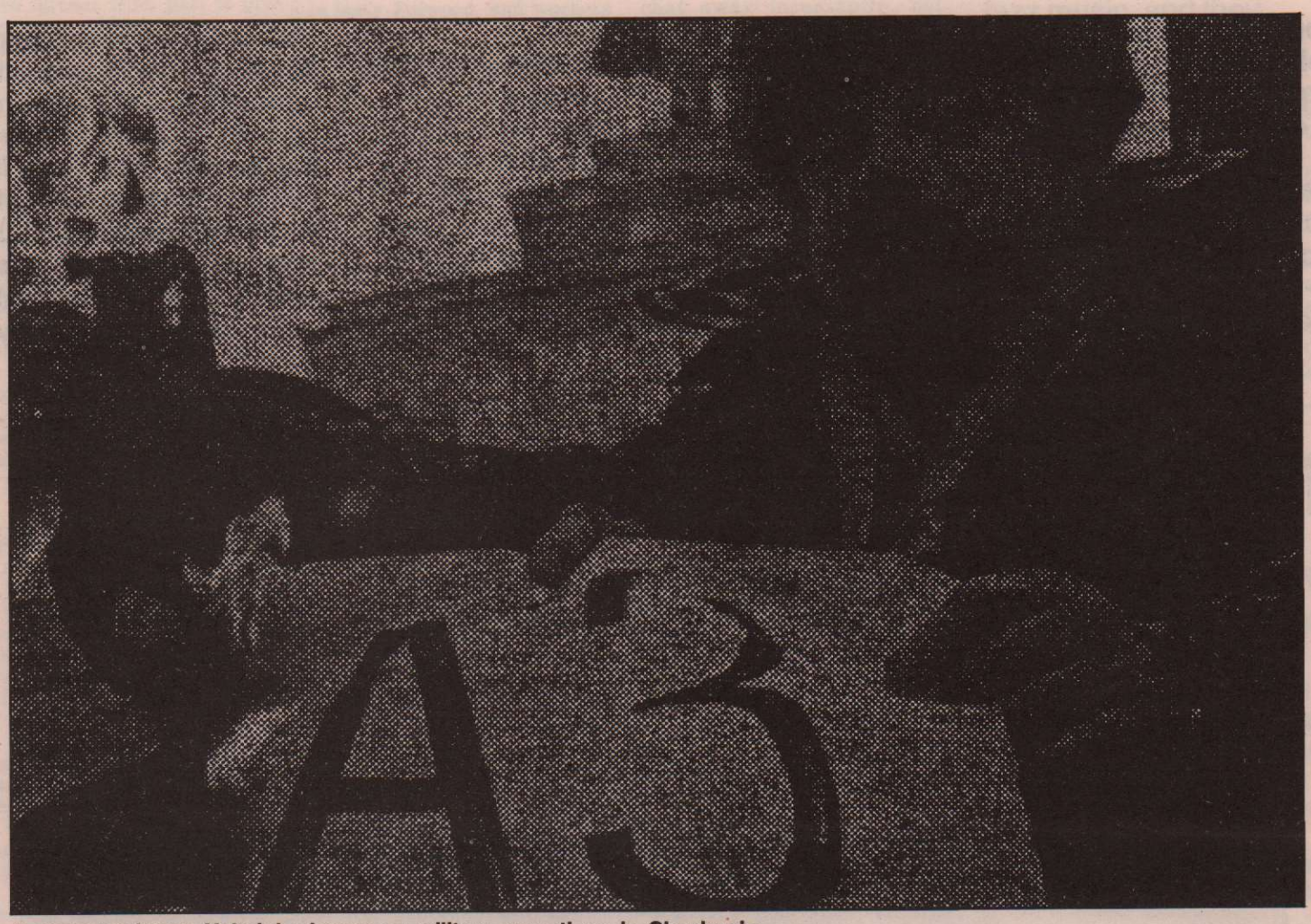
Their neighbours have come to their aid.

To the west, Ingush villagers halted advancing Russians, and, though a village was strafed by a helicopter gunship, managed to torch 30 Russian vehicles.

Ingush president Ruslan Aushev said it was 'spontaneous solidarity' with the Chechens.

In Dagestan to the east, a Russian armoured column heading for Chechenia was held up by local people who persuaded the commanders to get out of their tanks to argue, and then took 47 Russian troops captive.

Chechen troops and rocket batteries opened fire on Russian forces heading for the Chechen capital, Grozny, near which Russian fighter-bombers had attacked positions.



A protester burns Yeltsin's decree on military operations in Chechenia

Opposition

Opposition to Yeltsin's invasion came from another important source — the Russians themselves.

About 3,000 people took part in a demonstration in Moscow's Pushkin Square, some with red hammer-and-sickle flags, others with the white-blue-red Russian flag.

Among those taking part was a committee of soldiers' mothers.

They said they did not want their sons dying in a war against people with whom they could live in peace.

'This war against Chechnia has been provoked by Yeltsin to accomplish his own political ends,' charged Alexei Borisov, a leader of the Democratic Union, which formerly backed Yeltsin.

'He wants to cancel the next elections and play the role of a Russian Pinochet.

'The state of emergency in Chechenia will soon be extended to all of Russia.

'It is now clear that Yeltsin camouflaged himself in the robes of democracy in order to gain power.

'Now he has power he wants to kill democracy.'

Others freely compared Yeltsin's aggression against the Chechens with his brutal suppression of the Russian parliament last year, when he used Stalinist opposition as a pretext to bring in the tanks and seize dictatorial powers.

Ironically, or maybe not, Ruslan Khasbulatov, one of the leaders of the Stalinists at this time, has been Yeltsin's ally in his moves against the Chechens.

He has enjoyed covert Russian backing to try and topple the Chechen government.

By contrast to the resistance in Chechenia and Moscow, Yeltsin's aggression met with no opposition from Western imperialists.

President Clinton said it was an 'internal Russian affair', and the United States counselled Russia to restore order with a minimum of violence.

US Vice-President Al Gore and Defence Secretary William Perry flew into Moscow for prearranged talks on co-operation.

A White House spokesperson said it would be different if Yeltsin had invaded an independent state, but 'Chechenia is part of Russia'.

Chechenia is not and never has been 'part of Russia'.

It was the last outpost of resistance to incorporation in the Russian Empire, and its people remain fiercely independent.

In 1944, accusing them of collaboration with the Germans, Stalin emulated Nazi methods and sent KGB troops to deport almost half a million Chechen and Ingush people from their land.

Thousands were killed in the process. Not until the late 1950s were they allowed back.

Now it is the KGB's successors, the YFK, and interior ministry troops who are spearheading the assault on Chechenia.

US and European interests are rivals for Caucasian oil fields, and therefore for Boris Yeltsin's hand, if he can succeed.

The invasion of Chechenia follows the recent European Conference on Security and Co-operation (CSCE) in Budapest.

Alliance

There, while berating Clinton for wanting to widen NATO, Yeltsin strengthened his alliance with British and French imperialism against Bosnia.

The CSCE has now become the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

As the Kremlin's tanks and bombers went into action, against Chechenia, spokespersons for the so-called 'peace' movement in Britain — the United Nations Association, the longstanding Stalinist front National Peace Council, and CND — were urging that the OSCE should become a fully-fledged military alliance integrating NATO and Russian forces for 'global security'.

These 'peaceniks' have become 'policeniks' for imperialism's new world order!

Behind the Irish crisis

BY JOHN STEELE

THE political turmoil and rapid political changes in Ireland over the past few weeks have confirmed the bankruptcy of Irish republicanism.

It is clearly a political programme without relevance to the problems of the working class.

In the midst of the Dublin upheavals which forced the resignation of the Taoiseach (prime minister) Albert Reynolds, and the ejection of his Fianna Fail party from government, the Sinn Fein leadership has been most marked by its pleading for 'political stability'.

Any political party based on the interests of the working class (never mind one with revolutionary pretensions!) would have been fighting to bring down the disreputable coalition government of Fianna Fail and Labour which had consistently attacked living standards.

But Sinn Fein has been more concerned that a change of government might effect its place in the so-called 'peace process' — the series of talks engineered by the London and Dublin governments aimed at beheading the nationalist struggle and bringing Sinn Fein into new administrative structures for the six counties of the north.

It is becoming clearer every day that this 'peace process' will bring no peace to the northern working class.

This is vividly illustrated by the central role that the 'Investment Conference', promoted and opened by John Major, is playing in this process.

The US commerce secretary, Ron Brown, accompanied by 11 representatives of American monopolies, attended this conference at the request of US President Clinton.

These international parasites will only invest if high profits are to be made.

They will want to know that their investment is safe from an organised working class and its political parties.

Sinn Fein is not opposed to these monopolies but believes that they, and the US administration, have an essential role to play in the new structures for the six counties. It is no wonder that Clinton is the most active supporter of its involvement.

The resignation of Reynolds and the subsequent failure of Fianna Fail, under a new leader, to reach agreement with Labour over the coalition was sparked off by a case involving a paedophile priest.

Against the wishes of the Labour leader, Dick Spring, Reynolds insisted on appointing as president of the High Court the attorney general, Harry Whelehan. He had delayed extradition to the north of a priest wanted on child-abuse charges.

This delay was in sharp contrast to the speed with which he had acted to prevent a 14-year-old rape victim going to England for an abortion.

It is no accident that a refusal by the state to deal with a paedophile priest brought down the government.

Its collapse reflects the deep problems that capitalism has in Ireland in attempting to overcome its traditional reliance on the morality and discipline of the Catholic church.

This reliance — which involved the incorporation of Catholic morality with its reactionary emphasis on 'family values' into the laws of the state — now clashes with imperialism's needs for changing work practices such as more women working and 24-hour shift work.

Ireland's semi-colonial economy is based on attracting investment from foreign monopolies. It has the lowest rate, 10 per cent, of manufacturing profits tax rate in the so-called developed world and US companies make more than twice as much on their investment in Ireland than anywhere else in Europe.

The Labour and Fianna Fail coalition had led a concerted attack on the wages and conditions of skilled craft workers in the state and semi-state industries as a necessary condition for the continued attraction of foreign investment.

The new coalition now being cobbled together of Labour, Fine Gael and Democratic Left will carry on with these attacks.

It is the pace of development of the economic and social crisis that has brought together these political parties which even recently seemed irreconcilable enemies.

Democratic Left is the ex-Stalinist remnant of the Workers Party — which originated in the 1969 split within the IRA and Sinn Fein. Fine Gael emerged from the pro-treaty forces which accepted partition. A section of them formed the fascist Blueshirts which fought in Spain with Franco.

Less than two years ago Fine Gael was resolutely opposed to any talks with Democratic Left. Now they are joining a coalition government in order to defend the capitalist system.

In Ireland this system has left one-third of the population living below poverty guidelines and chronic long-term unemployment, which even the steady flow of emigration cannot eradicate.

There can be no avoiding the major class battles that are ahead for the Irish workers.

There is no doubt which side of the class lines the Sinn Fein leadership will be on.

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