

# NATO bombing to divide Bosnia

NATO air strikes against Serb nationalist forces in Bosnia are not aimed at helping the Bosnian people repel aggression and regain their country.

The US government did not launch the attacks to rescue the people of Sarajevo.

Its aim is to expedite its shoddy 'peace' talks aimed at carving up Bosnia and Herzegovina; to recapture the military initiative from the Bosnians and their allies; to avoid demands to raise the arms embargo; and perhaps to revive Clinton's chances before the presidential elections.

The deeper issue which has started to dawn on some Western governments is that the stability of their system is threatened, not only at the level of inter-governmental relations. Public horror over the barbarism inflicted on Bosnia has turned to angry disillusion in the United Nations and imperialism's 'new world order'.

The slaughter of 37 people in Sarajevo market by Serb gunners was not the first, nor the worst, of their attacks on civilian targets. It happened only yards from

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

where 60 civilians were killed in a similar Serb Chetnik attack last year, and only months after they blew 72 young people to pieces with a mortar attack on a café area in Tuzla.

After three and a half years of risking their lives to queue for food or water in a wrecked city, having their children blown apart and their old people targeted by snipers, while the UN did nothing, citizens of Sarajevo reacted as any human being might when they saw their tormentors hit.

'It was beautiful,' one middle-

aged resident told reporters. 'I was wrapped in a blanket on my balcony watching for hours.'

'As NATO planes screamed overhead, a man dashed to the middle of the city's notorious sniper alley and defied Serb gunners. "Why don't you come out now you Chetnik bastards," he shouted, waving at Serb positions, "Why don't you shoot at me now?"' ('Guardian', 31 August).

## Response

We have every sympathy with this understandable, natural response. We have none whatsoever for the whingeing 'lefts', Christian pacifists and Stalinists who have rushed into print to

protest on behalf of poor General Mladic and his men, after refusing to do anything for Bosnia or its people in three and a half years of war.

President Alija Izetbegovic had told Western governments that his government could not be expected to enter peace talks while Serb artillery remained trained on Sarajevo. 'We cannot negotiate with a pistol at our head.'

But let nobody have any illusions in the UN, NATO or the 'Great Powers'. The UN did nothing about the mass expulsion of Muslims from Srebrenica, or the mass murder there.

NATO intervention only came after Croat forces regained the

Krajina in three days of fighting, and the Bosnian army smashed the Chetniks and Abdic's renegade army in Bihac. It came after normally pro-imperialist Muslim states like Malaysia publicly broke ranks on the UN arms embargo.

Bosnia and Herzegovina forces had launched an offensive around Donje Vakuf, in central Bosnia, and were preparing to break the siege of Sarajevo.

If NATO airpower was really being used on the side of the Bosnians (as the apologists for Serb aggression claim), military logic would mean that Bosnian forces be allowed to follow up on the ground. But NATO secretary-general Willy Claes has warned the Bosnian government against taking advantage of the attacks.

Tory Defence Minister Michael Portillo, having made a fool of himself on a tank entertaining the troops, threatened to bomb the Bosnians if they stepped out of line.

In case anyone (apart from the Stalinist 'Morning Star', which defends the Serb Chetniks) has forgotten, the Bosnian army is in Bosnia. It has made no threats to neighbouring countries. Its soldiers are just fighting to return to their homes.

US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrook is pursuing the London 'contact group' plan for the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This would leave Serb nationalists controlling half of Bosnia.

British withdrawal from Gorazde lent weight to reports that Serb forces would be awarded this Bosnian town in return for abandoning the siege of Sarajevo. French premier Alain Juppé proposed this in Belgrade when he was Foreign Minister last year.

'There's no question of us accepting any dilution of Bosnian sovereignty,' Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic insisted.

## Objections

Holbrooke has tried to meet objections by saying that a Serb statelet would remain within the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina. But the basic shape of the imperialist carve-up plan remains unaltered — a Serb statelet with the option later of joining Serbia, a Croat nationalist dominated Herzegovina, and a little Muslim Bosnia in the middle.

Last week Holbrook had talks in Athens with the Greek government, which continues to back Milosevic's Serbia, hoping it will retake Macedonia. The British government has made sure of Milosevic's position at the talks, ignoring his responsibility for unleashing chauvinism and war, starting in Kosovo, which remains under military rule.

It was the partition plans put forward by Lord Owen and others which encouraged aggression and ethnic cleansing. The plans to

concede yet more land to the Chetniks are, as the Bosnian ambassador said, rewarding genocide.

The ethnic bantustans they would enforce are against everything the Bosnian people have fought for in the past few years. Nor would it end there.

One of the government's foremost 'establishment' critics, former diplomat Sir Frances Hibbert, warned a London meeting last week that Western governments were tending to accept 'ethnic cleansing' as inevitable throughout the Balkans.

## Phoney

So an unjust, phoney 'peace' now would prepare more wars.

But whatever is forced upon Bosnia at the conference table will not be the end of the story.

Bosnian General Mehmet Alagic, whose forces are on Mount Vlasica, says his men will not give up the fight until they can return to the homes from which they were driven by the Chetniks.

'We have a few pacifists and partitionists who don't want the war to go on. But my soldiers are older now, and wiser, and someone who stands between them and their home is their enemy' ('Refugee army' vows to fight on', Ed Vulliamy, 'Guardian', 2 September).

The international movement of solidarity with the Bosnian people is growing, and so is the readiness of their supporters to understand the issues and make connections with their own struggles. Nobody trusts the 'statesmen', the governments, the 'great powers' or the UN anymore, and if that means starting to build alternatives based on 'ordinary' working people, then it is the beginning of wisdom.

Even an old Foreign Office hand like Sir Francis Hibbert felt compelled to tell his audience last week that 'the Opposition bears as much responsibility as the government' for British policy. 'If only the Opposition had opposed!', he said.

If we want to help workers in Bosnia, former Yugoslavia, and the rest of the Balkans, who are the only potential force that can unite their countries, our responsibility here is not just to preach 'revolution' from afar, like the Socialist Workers Party.

We must mobilise real solidarity like Workers Aid, fight our government, and oust the rotten Stalinist legacy in the labour movement which has become a Chetnik tumour.

**Stop ethnic cleansing! For the right of return!**

**Against imperialism and the UN! Against ethnic partition!**

**For a united, independent multi-cultural Bosnia and Herzegovina!**

**Forward to a free, socialist Balkan federation!**



SOLIDARITY with the Bosnian people continues growing. Hundreds of people marched through Bradford recently, calling 'For a free and democratic Bosnia-Herzegovina. Lift the arms embargo. No ethnic partition.' Among those taking part were Bosnian refugees, Leeds and Bradford trades unionists with their banners, local Asian youth, Workers Aid for Bosnia supporters, and a strong contingent from Teeside. A rally in the town centre was addressed by Lejla, from Sarajevo, by Labour councillors, and by comrades recently back from the trade union convoy to Tuzla. Geoff Robinson, founder of Bradford Bosnia Solidarity Committee, criticised the Socialist Workers Party, some of whose members had turned up at the start of the march to sell their paper, then gone home. Leicester Bosnia Defence Campaign have called a demonstration on 23 September (see ad below).

## Bosnia Solidarity Campaign BOSNIA FORUM

Central Hall, Storey's Gate, Westminster, London, SW1H 9NH, Saturday 9 September, 10.30am-5.30pm  
For information: Tel/Fax 0171-240 7992.

RAF Spangley Hall, Colindale Avenue, London NW9 1UH  
RAF Spangley Hall is booked for 24 September for another Bosnia demonstration. Get in touch for further details!

## Workers Aid for Bosnia: Music Benefit

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Southwick, Brighton

## Leicester Bosnia Defence Campaign Demonstration

Saturday 23 September. Assemble  
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Let Bosnia defend itself  
Lift the arms embargo**

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# Once more on the minimum wage

THE Transport and General Workers Union is to launch a campaign against 'bad employers'. According to the union's leader, Bill Morris, these are employers currently paying their workers less than £4 an hour.

In launching the campaign Morris stressed, 'This is not a political issue. This is not about the Labour Party... it is about bad employers.' He did not see the Labour position as 'necessarily relevant to this campaign'.

\* \* \* \* \*

Morris is clearly desperate to avoid any clash with the leaders of the Labour Party. In a statement that even by the standards of the trade union leaders can only be described as grovelling, Morris completely accepts the diktat of the Labour leader, 'Mr Blair has said that it is right and proper [!] that the trade unions should bargain with the employers and that is what we are doing.' And what if Blair were to say that it was not 'right and proper'?

As the London 'Evening Standard' commented about the T&G campaign and a similar one announced by the general union GMB '[They] will be welcomed by Labour which has been trying to avoid a damaging row over the introduction of a statutory minimum wage.'

Blair and company have adamantly refused to name a wage level for which they will legislate when they come into office.

Indeed Blair has insisted that any minimum wage will be fixed by a tri-partite body made up of employers, trade union leaders and the government. And when a figure is set it must take 'economic conditions' into account. That is, it will be fixed at a level determined by the employers.

Morris has threatened the employers who pay his members less than £4 an hour with industrial action and has sunk £1 million into a special 'dispute fund'. Morris intends to 'name names'.

But all this strong talk — and talk it will almost certainly remain — is actually an evasion of the real issues facing millions of low-paid workers.

■ Some 300,000 members of the T&G are earning less than £4 an hour. But there are millions, the majority women, quite outside the trade unions who are earning even less. What is to happen to them. How will Morris's campaign help them?

■ Some workers, because of the strength of their bargaining position are able to secure a living wage. Others, such as the unskilled, again because of market conditions, are not able to force their employers to pay a living wage.

Millions are now working long hours, increasingly in more than one job, often under the most appalling circumstances. Most of this latter group are unorganised and the trade union movement has in the main cynically neglected them.

■ And what about the unemployed? As Morris well knows, millions of workers are now permanently or semi-permanently unemployed. What is to happen to them?

\* \* \* \* \*

The only way in which the low-paid can be united with their better paid brothers and sisters is through a political campaign that establishes a statutory minimum wage — and clearly £4 an hour is a ludicrously low figure — to which all state benefits are related.

It is just such a political campaign that Morris and the trade union leadership refuse to lead and organise, either now under the Tories or under any future Labour government.

# Letters

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## A one-sided approach

SIMON PIRANI (Letters, 2 September) says he remains unconvinced that 'the defiant refusal of the Tuzla workers to capitulate to nationalist pressure' will succeed in preventing a Serb-Croat carve-up of Bosnia. For, he says, 'we cannot avoid the fact that in the struggle the working class may yet pay dearly for the legacy of Stalinism and the damage it has done to the class's consciousness and organisation.'

I believe we have here a one-sidedness which, if persisted in, could be very dangerous but at the same time one which goes to the very heart of the problems that we today face in the reconstruction of the working class and its leadership, that is, the Fourth International.

For, in assessing the prospects for the struggle in the former Yugoslavia, or anywhere else for that matter, it is not enough simply to point to the (undoubted) damage that Stalinism has done to the working class movement.

For to do so would be to miss out the crux of the matter. Namely that the collapse of Stalinism has released new forces in the working class movement and amongst intellectuals that transform qualitatively the conditions for the re-building of the working-class movement and the Fourth International.

For decades the best elements in the working class were betrayed by the Stalinist bureaucracy, not least because that bureaucracy was able to present itself as the heir and defender of the Russian Revolution. No more.

Stalinism has collapsed and this creates a qualitatively new situation that transforms all the old relations between the working class and the ruling class and thereby all the relations within the working class.

I say that comrade Pirani's position is dangerously one-sided because it misses out the critical fact that the Stalinist bureaucracy did not simply betray the working class but in so doing it simultaneously constituted the main prop of imperialist rule for the whole period since the end of World War II.

The collapse of the Stalinist bureaucracy has therefore undermined the major force on which the relative stability of capitalism has depended for the past five decades and more.

So when (Comment, 26 August) comrade Pirani says that 'the imperialist powers are hard at work for a "settlement" to carve up Bosnia', he forgets that the imperialists are deeply divided over their aims and policies in the Balkans. And it is the collapse of Stalinism that has been a potent factor in exacerbating these deep, and deepening, divisions.

One final point, and for me the most important. It is not a question of abstract speculation about the outcome of the struggle ('I am not convinced that this struggle will succeed...'; the working class 'may yet' pay dearly for the legacy of Stalinism). Speaking philosophically, this is the standpoint of the isolated individual, not that of revolutionary practice.

To put the matter a different way: the worst outcome to the struggle in the former Yugoslavia would be not the defeat of Bosnia, terrible though that would be.

The very worst situation would be the absence of a response in the working class movement to the struggle for the independence and integrity of Bosnia. For given such an absence the international working class as a whole would sustain a serious defeat, with the continuity of its struggle endangered.

But in Workers Aid, and in the increasing support it is raising in the working class movement, there has been a revolutionary response to the needs of the working class of Bosnia.

Our central task is to build up this movement by every possible means, not to conjecture abstractly ('abstractly' in the sense of being outside of our own purposeful activity) on the outcome of the struggle.

And to organise and lead this movement, without reservation, on the firm understanding and conviction that we do so in quite unprecedented and favourable conditions for the working class and for the re-building of its leadership.

Geoff Pilling  
London W3

## 'Readers are owed an apology'

I AM moved to write by the way that Simon Pirani has been treated by the last two issues of Workers Press. He wrote an initial article (Workers Press, 26 August) of 26 column inches.

It was responded to by two, comments — one from the editor and one from Cliff Slaughter which covered about 46 column inches. A week later comrade Pirani produced a letter covering about 14 column inches.

That copy of Workers Press carried an assault on Simon of 38 column inches from Charlie Pottins and 44 column inches from Bob Archer.

It would not be so bad if the point was to carry out a reasoned discussion and to enlighten readers of the paper. But much of the comment was out of order.

Addressing any sympathiser of the labour movement, let alone a very long term member of the WRP, in the way that comrade Pottins does is inexcusable. I would ask readers to take another look at his words. He starts with a paragraph that drips with sarcasm.

The article later includes the sentence 'Still unclear Simon?' and continues in the vein that Simon (an ex-editor of Workers Press) is some kind of fool to be patronised.

Bob Archer's piece was also over the top: 'Simon wants us to hare off suddenly on a hunt for Croat fascists.'

This is not borne out by reading either Simon's original article or his subsequent letter. His reference to the Croatian fascists did not suggest that we rush off to fight them at the expense of any other struggle. Bob also said: 'If Simon thinks the existence or not of fascist groups is the key question... Nowhere did Simon say that it is the key question.'

I think that when Simon wrote he meant what he said. I do not attribute false motives. Yet Bob Archer seems to make such an attribution.

Simon said that he did not equate the actions of Croatia in Knin with that of the Serb nationalists in Zepa and Srebrenica. This is turned into: 'he is equating Croat behaviour in the

Krajina with Serb ethnic cleansing.'

This method of falsifying a critic's point of view for some polemical purpose is very dangerous.

Overall it seems to me that Simon put down his thoughts and concerns about Workers Press coverage of a dramatic change in the situation in former Yugoslavia. He admitted that he was not an expert. As a reader of Workers Press he has a right to express his point of view and concerns.

He deserves a serious and dignified response and not the wild excesses we have seen. I feel that he now also deserves an apology from the editorial board.

Moreover our readers also need an apology. They need to know that Workers Press will not produce pages of attack on a point of view. They need an assurance that it will not vilify and distort the ideas of critics.

Many long term readers will know that Workers Press has been fairer than any other left paper in the way that it has dealt with controversy. This well-deserved reputation should not be undermined now.

Geoff Barr  
Exeter

## Fascism in ex-Yugoslavia

RAYMOND Challinor in his letter (2 September) describes the Serbian regime as not being fascist. I don't believe that Workers Press throws around the term 'fascist' without having already given this description a good deal of thought.

If big business, as Raymond states, is not behind the Milosevic regime, then what are the capitalist countries of the West doing, if they are not backing Serbia (these Western states being backed by big business)? Also backing Serbia are the intelligentsia of that country, they give Milosevic and his nationalist cohorts credence.

What I object to in Raymond Challinor's article is the way he examines the question of what is happening in ex-Yugoslavia. Fascism this is, but in a different guise. To conclude that ex-Yugoslavia has to have the same traits as Germany is, I believe, a metaphysical way of analysing the truth.

Things do not move in a circular manner starting at the beginning and remaining the same when events have moved full circle. Rather, events move in a spiral and are forever changing. Hence I believe that 'ethnic cleansing' and the mass murder of civilians is the form that fascism takes today in ex-Yugoslavia.

Ken Singer  
Dundee

## The 'bloody awful' RCP

THE Socialist Workers' Party has often been chasing its own tail and displaying a characteristically wet stand on the Bosnia conflict. But they are not as bloody awful as the Revolutionary Communist Party.

Ever since the outbreak of the Yugoslavia conflict in 1991, the RCP and its limp organ, 'Living Marxism', have been the principal cheer leaders for the Serb Chetniks on the left.

Joan Phillips, their so-called Balkan specialist, has the unmitigated gall to say that the RCP

does not take sides in the conflict, but the lie to that is given by her decision to put on a photographic exhibition in London early in 1993 by a member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences: Bojana Isakovic.

The Serbian Academy of Sciences played a leading role in the revival of Chetnik fascism. It was responsible for the notorious 1986 'Memorandum' which argued that after the Liberation of Yugoslavia in World War II an 'alien' (that is, federated) model of Yugoslavia was imposed on the Serbian nation.

The main culprit, the Memorandum stated, was the Yugoslav Communist Party which had blindly followed the Communist International's anti-Serb 'policy of revanchism, including genocide' during the war and by endorsing the federal structure, exposed the Serbs after to discrimination.

Secondary culprits were the Slovene Kardelj and the Croat Tito who 'created a social and economic order in accordance with their needs and interests' which was inimical to the Serbs. The 1974 constitution was an anti-Serb conspiracy.

More culprits came in the form of domestic quislings: 'the hardened opportunism of generations of Serb politicians since the war.'

Branka Magas condemned the Memorandum's 'xenophobic nationalism and Chetnik echoes'. Dragisa Pavlovic condemned it as 'a primitive, anachronistic and sick Serb consciousness, ignorant and intolerant of Serb diversity. Its understanding of national equality betrays a bureaucratic mentality — it is a moral negation of any true democracy in Yugoslavia.'

Dragisa Pavlovic is Serbian, by the way.

But the company of such treasonous clerks is entirely welcome to Phillips. At that time (1993), an exhibition by a Serb Academician was as welcome as one by a member of Dr Goebbels's Ministry of Propaganda would have been in the late 1930s.

Joan Phillips is the Chetnik answer to David Irving.

Tom Carter  
Somerset

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TUC conference 1995

# Workers need new socialist party

BY CLIFF SLAUGHTER  
WRP secretary

THE TUC this week holds its annual conference and its leading body, the General Council, is hoping, as ever, to get it over with in the usual routine way.

To treat the issues confronting the working class as anything like routine is always dangerous, but today, in 1995, it would be positively suicidal.

Britain is not the only country in which anti-union laws have been enacted in the last 20 years.

The capitalist class in every country has discovered in experience that in today's world it cannot afford to tolerate an organised working-class movement which is independent of the state and potentially able to unite the various sections of the working class in their unions.

The right to strike, to picket, and to act in solidarity with other workers in struggle have now been abolished or severely restricted in every major capitalist country.

For most of this century — that is, throughout most of the life of the TUC and Labour Party — the capitalist class of the imperialist powers like Britain had to and could afford to have trade unions whose independence and resources were protected by legislation.

At the same time, there was the gradual integration of the unions into the capitalist state. But effectively, British imperialism in its long-drawn-out decline in the 20th century had no option but to rule through the class collaboration of the trade union and labour leaders, in or out of government office.

Within that framework, organised workers were able to use their trade union strength to reserve and advance their living standards, often for long periods, and outside of economic slumps and depressions. But, as Trotsky said, 'every British worker has in slaves working for him in the colonies!'

Today, trade unionists know very well their 'leaders' in the TUC and the Labour Party have no intention and no plan to work for the repeal of the anti-union laws. They did nothing to oppose their introduction and ten years ago they did nothing for the miners in their 1984-85 strike who had to resist alone the blows of the capitalist state machine armed with the beginnings of new laws.

## Struggles

The working class faces in the immediate future great problems and great struggles — probably more than a Labour government — where it will need to muster all its unity and independence, organisational and political. This means big changes.

Blair talks about a Labour Party independent of the trade unions — that is, independent of the working class — and free to rule the ruling class without let

or hindrance. Blair should be told that the working class certainly needs to be independent of him and his collaborators who lead the Labour Party, of their friends like Rupert Murdoch and the rest of big business who expect Blair to deliver the goods.

## Questions

There are three outstanding and inseparable questions facing the working-class movement:

■ What kind of struggle must the working class prepare for, and why, and against what enemy?

■ Why has the existing TUC leadership failed to prepare for these struggles, and what can be done about them?

■ Why should the resources of the trade unions, built in a century and a half of struggle and sacrificed, be used to support the Labour Party?

A party that accepts and will use the anti-union laws, and wants to be completely independent of the unions — except to take their money until there is state funding of parties. A party that has removed all mention of common ownership from its constitution. Why continue to feed the mouth that bites you?

Blair proposes 'partnership' with employers. He refuses to fix a figure for the minimum wage until after consultation with unions and employers. In other words, it will be at a level employers say they can 'afford'. How is this different from the Tory government's policy on wages?

The Labour leader says its his government's job to govern — the unions should stick to workplace issues. But what of unemployment and sackings — the biggest question? In Western Europe the real figure for unemployment tops 20 million people. In Britain it's well over 3 million.

Every capitalist mouthpiece is now telling us the state can no longer afford pension and unemployment benefits to the growing army of unemployed and old people — as they also can't 'afford' free trade unions and the right to strike.

In reality it is the working class that cannot afford capitalism. Capitalist development is accelerating this process beyond any control.

Two weeks ago, a merger in the US created the world's biggest bank. It has assets of \$297 billion! This is capitalist 'growth'. Would a 'partnership' with this employer reduce unemployment? Since 1988, 52,000 bank workers have been laid off — just in New York. The latest merger — one of many — is to lead to 100 of its 470 branches being closed. And in Britain thousands of sackings have taken place in banking.

But banks — finance capital



A Spanish dole queue: unemployment is no longer a temporary problem but is structural

— are the dominant, strongest, richest part of capital in today's world. Their massive 'rationalisations' and its results for their employees are not in any way exceptional.

Glaxo recently took over Wellcome for £9.4 billion and last week announced that 10,000 sackings were needed.

'The Times' has naively reported that recent 'growth' has been in 'labour-saving technology'.

So this hectic capitalist 'growth' and concentration produces and will continue to produce a more pronounced trend towards unemployment and poverty.

Can trade unions fight these employers, fight unemployment, by sticking to workplace issues? Can they trust Labour's 'partnership' with these same big employers?

Today's unemployment is not temporary, not Marx's 'reserve army of labour'. It is structural, permanent and will inevitably grow. It is drops in unemploy-

ment that will be temporary. This upward trend cannot be fought except by policies which go from resistance to closures and plant occupations to the taking over of the big monopolies and the banks by the working class.

The same for the millions of workers in the public service unions. So long as these services are made to work for profit — the 'internal market', privatisation, Compulsory Competitive Tendering, etc. — and are subject to government cuts in capital's interests, they will continue their catastrophic and agonising decline.

The great banks and monopolies which control industry and finance are international. They have the economic strength and influence on governments to be able to dispense with thousands of workers at a time.

The trade union movement has to be organised internationally if it is to be able to defend any but the most elementary interests of workers. Its resources must be put to use at an interna-

tional level. The trade union movement must have socialist policies aimed at the expropriation of the multinationals.

To carry this out it needs a new leadership. It is necessary to organise politically in the unions; to develop a leadership that takes up the real issues and is able to drive out and replace the existing trade union bureaucracy.

Employers in every country have had to press for anti-union laws in response to the enormous growth in concentration of capital, the tendency for the rate of profit to decline, the necessity for 'productivity' increases, and the servery of monopoly competition. All this is compounded by trade rivalries resulting from the straitjacket of the nation state.

And, whether they know it or not, with the collapse of Stalinism comes the need for even more repressive laws and actions. The fall of the Stalinist bureaucracy has not created new vistas of capitalist development, but great economic problems for world capitalism. Above all it removed the Stalinist grip on the world working-class movement.

Every political, social and military explosion takes place in the context of the collapse of the old 'world order' where there is

no longer a Stalinist bureaucracy to control these outbursts. No Stalinist bureaucracy to manufacture a compromise in the interest of 'peaceful coexistence and peaceful competition between the two systems'.

On the contrary, the recurrent crises and explosions, inevitable in the imperialist era, create openings for the development of an independent working-class solution. Workers Aid for Bosnia, now rallying real material support from sections of the trade union movement, is the outstanding example, a precious lesson on which to build.

The TUC General Council is shamelessly and scandalously impotent on this question — even though nationalism, racism, 'ethnic cleansing' and the destruction of multi-ethnic unity are potential weapons in the hands of the capitalist class in every country as the social crisis deepens.

The same goes for the Labour Party leadership and the so-called parliamentary 'opposition', with a few honourable individual exceptions.

## Peace

The TUC bureaucracy and the Labour Party leadership made their peace with capitalism long ago. This capitalism's only future is to increase accumulation at the price of the imposition of barbarous conditions of life. Even in times of 'peace' it causes the extinction of millions of people as in Africa and before that Vietnam.

Blair is completing the Labour Party's transformation into a 'party of government' — a third openly capitalist party separated completely from the working class.

Rightwing TUC leaders talk about preserving and not risking the resources of the trade union movement by complying with the anti-union laws. They want to protect the funds that guarantee their salaries, expense accounts, company cars and top pension schemes.

Like their counterparts in the top echelons of big business, these leaders protect their place in capitalism. In government, the career bureaucrats and politicians will 'transfer' to directorships just as easily as their Tory friends.

For two years, Workers Press has been working for a labour-movement-wide discussion on the need for a socialist, working-class party in these new conditions. These matters need the attentions of every worker and socialist at the TUC.

Our paper is open to all who want to participate in this discussion with the urgent purpose of uniting all class-conscious workers, youth and intellectuals in a new, really socialist party.

A campaign should be started now to call a conference early next year of Trade Unionists for a Socialist Party. There is no time to lose.

## Dockers hang on the end of the line

BY PETER GIBSON

Waiting by the phone waiting work is part of life for British dockers. Miss the 'tail' and miss a day's work, workers at any dock will tell you.

Six years ago the docks were nationalised and the 48-year-old Labour Scheme abolished.

Now a dockers will only get half a day's work a week, yet a full day's work can result in a £150 take-home pay.

Liverpool, hours being lost are often worse than in other ports. A Liverpool dockers told

us 'They can call you two hours early and make you stay two hours late, or work you whatever hours they want'.

This dockers regularly works ten hours a day.

In Hull, dockers often work double shifts — two eight hour shifts without going home. One group is reported as having worked 36 hours non-stop so as to turn a ship around and get it out of port.

As a result the accident rate has doubled between 1985 and 1993.

Leading Transport and General Workers' Union, Tilbury

dockers' activist Colin Coughlin, victimised in 1989, said: 'These men are living in fear. Anyone contesting dismissal is told not to bother — the employer will write out a cheque for the maximum possible compensation there and then. That's how arrogant they are.'

## Reduction

Despite the reduction of the dockers' workforce from 70,000 to 10,000 and the potential for big profits, the quick and easy sale of the publically-owned ports has not been possible.

One of the most automated

container ports, Thamesport, valued at £150 million, is only expected to fetch £30 million. No one wants to buy Dover either.

Deregulation and privatisation have resulted in the loss of tens of thousands of jobs, lower pay, longer hours, more accidents and little or no profits.

Capitalism's 'market forces' aren't the answer.

The solution of these problems can only come from an industry publicly owned, and controlled and managed by those who work in it.

I hope Dockers for a Socialist Party will write in with their

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

British section of the Workers International (to Rebuild the Fourth International)

Please send me information about the WRP

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

Address .....

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

Send to: PO Box 735, London SW8 1YP



**Inside left**

**But is it fascism?**

many Bosnians, Workers Press their battle against partition as of the war against fascism. We evoked the 1936-39 Spanish Civil in terms of international impor- arms embargoes, and the duty the workers' movement to take This upsets some people.

... Bosnia is not Spain in 1936', wrote Callinicos in *Socialist Worker* (July). True, of course: Spaniards k wine, Bosnians drink slivovica, this is 1995! In Spain, this thinker ained, an elected government military rebellion led by reac- ary nationalist generals, whereas osnia...er...

en Livingstone MP, left-wing alists like Christopher Hitchens Francis Wheen, the socialist film- er Ken Loach, and others with a ar background, have become e defenders of the Bosnian cause, rked Callinicos. He forgot to ion his former comrade John er, who has written twice slat- *Socialist Worker's* 'neutral' line.

There is the revolution in Bos- Callinicos demanded rhetoric- 'where are the workers councils here are the popular militias?' He at have asked where the Bosnian king class was. Not in *Socialist ker*, which kept quiet about the to Britain by Tuzla trade union- and efforts to build working- solidarity such as Workers Aid the recent trade union convoy.

alling the Bosnian people's sup- ers 'left-wing advocates of inter- ion', Callinicos didn't mention imperialist UN arms embargo, ld by HM government and the alist Workers' Party. He even dlerised what happened in Spain, rring to 'the West's failure to vvene' (i.e. an arms embargo, e Hitler and Mussolini helped eco); and 'the Republican govern- t's refusal to rely on and indeed realise the revolution' (it crushed ith the help of the Stalinists!). n it comes to lying, the Socialist ers' Party are as bad as the Stal- s.

CHALLINOR (Letters, 2 Sep- er) is nobody's hack, but a ected and well-liked socialist his- n. Ray charges that 'many left odicals, including Workers Press, miscuously fling around the word ist'. It is in danger of becoming y a term of general abuse.'

ut the terminology of abuse is fficant! Baroness Thatcher called ia 'communist'. Bosnian former ans, like printworker Esad Jor- vic (Workers Press, 7 May 1994) professor Muhammed Filipovic August 1995) say their people are ting fascism'. 'No, it's the crug- s' shouted a young Asian Muslim. nk the Bosnians are right.

'e don't say Serbia is 'fascist'. Our an comrades warned it was 'one away from open dictatorship it needs only a small transition t to become a fascist dictatorship'. y said the state used 'fascist gangs by Seselj and Arkan' against ical opponents, as well as in Bos- see discussion, Workers Press 30 1994 and letter from R. Pavlovic, ugust 1994).

erbian fascism would not be the e as Hitler's Germany, which Ray s as typical. Nazi Germany dif- d from Mussolini's original, but all both 'fascist'. History does not at itself, and no two countries are ame'. Yet, as Dave Temple said the butchery at Srebrenica, 'if s not fascism, what is?' Without racting certain aspects, there'd be ssues from history', and nothing g. And say something we must.

Charlie Pottins

**Interview with Mauritian Trotskyist**

**Mauritius and the**

**RAMA VALAYDEN is a young lawyer from Mauritius who was recently in Britain. He spoke to Workers Press about the situation in his country, about the campaign in defence of Bosnia that has been organised in Mauritius, and about his own political views**

**WP:** I understand that you are a lawyer visiting Britain on a case before the Privy Council. How did you come into contact with Workers Press?

**RV:** It is good that you asked me this question, for it is an accident that I came into contact with you. I asked my friend to stop the car in front of the non-stop picket for Bosnia near Downing Street so that we could meet the courageous soldiers who were on the line. But the police would not allow the car to stop and it was only the next day that I got there.

I was very impressed by the dedication of the members of the picket line, who not only seem to understand the nature of the problem in Bosnia, but also seem to be dedicated to a fight against the system on a world-wide level. This, the internationalist aspect of our fight, is very important. Somebody on the picket suggested that I rang you.

**WP:** Could you tell me something about the group you have in Mauritius?

**RV:** It is called the Association of Mauritian lawyers. It was formed in October 1993, following the increasing interference of the executive in Mauritius with the independence of the judiciary.

A woman from Sri Lanka was working in Mauritius as a foreign worker. She was eight-and-a-half months pregnant. The government had included in the contract of all foreign workers clauses prohibiting them from marrying or from having children.

The government wanted to deport her, and the case went before the Supreme Court in Mauritius. Even before the case was heard by the judge, who was well known for his progressive stance, the prime minister and the interior minister proposed her summary deportation.

There was a public outcry at this abuse of human rights, and the fact that the prime minister criticised the judge in the National Assembly on the basis of unfounded facts merely added to the outrage.

The Mauritian Bar did nothing. I was still a student barrister at the time, but called on friends to decide what we must do as a gesture of solidarity with a fellow worker from Sri Lanka.

She was from a Tamil family, and she was being sent back to a country at civil war.

We had to decide whether to respond on an *ad hoc* basis or to do something more general. We decided that we must have the courage of our convictions and be committed to what we believed in.

So a group of young radical lawyers decided to launch an organisation after a meeting with students, workers and other human-rights activists.

**WP:** What were the aims of this organisation?

**RV:** We decided that the goals of the movement should be as follows:

1. To help build a world where there will be no class system, where there will be no frontiers, no racism and no famine.

2. In Mauritius, to defend human rights defined in their broadest sense: the right to strike, the right to a job, the right to proper health care, the right to a fair environment, the right to de-select MPs. We aimed to go more and more towards the participation of people in their own affairs.

3. We had two further pet subjects: in the first place to fight against the death penalty in Mauritius and elsewhere; and second to humanise the country's penal system. Since then we have been able to build a group of some 75 full members.

**WP:** Tell me something about Mauritius.

**RV:** It is a small island of about 720 square miles, with a population of some 1.1 million people. It obtained its independence from the British in 1968. It is part of the British Commonwealth, although it became a Republic in 1992. Its highest court of appeal remains the Judicial Council of the Privy Council in London, which sits at 11 Downing Street, near to the non-stop picket.

Until the late 1970s we had a monoculture, the economy being dependent almost entirely on the sugar industry, which is controlled by 13 families. Nearly all of them are of French descent, what we call Franco-Mauritians. They comprise only 1 per cent of the population.

In the early 1970s, a serious attempt was made to attract tourists. Tourism is now a booming industry, with 600,000 visitors a year, coming mainly from France, Britain, Germany and South Africa. This industry is almost entirely controlled by the 13 families.

In the 1980s, the countries of south-east Asia, including Hong Kong, began to invest in the textile industry, which in the last ten years has become the country's largest export earner.

Like the rest of the economy, the textile industry is now controlled by the Franco-Mauritians.

**WP:** I understand that a lot of Mauritians are now living abroad, many in Britain?

**RV:** Some 300,000 Mauritians are currently forced to live abroad. In the 1960s, the fight for the independence of Mauritius took place not along ideological lines, but along communal lines.

Mauritius is a very mixed country, with people coming originally from many parts of the world.

You have Hindus, Muslims, a small Buddhist community, as well as a

Christian community; there are people of Indian, African, and Chinese origin.

The Hindus voted for independence, with the non-Hindus voting against. When Mauritius obtained independence in 1968, the non-Hindus made every effort to leave the country because they were frightened of being what they called 'Indianised' and many therefore left for France, Australia and Britain.

But about the same time, with the economy in a very poor state, the government set up a ministry for emigration. They encouraged people to leave the country, on the grounds that it was over-populated.

They succeeded in sending a lot of people to France and Britain, both of which in the late 1960s and early 1970s were looking for cheap labour. Today there are officially about 60,000 Mauritians in Britain, but the figure is definitely higher.

In London they are concentrated mainly in the Seven Sisters, High-bury and Finsbury Park areas and in the south in Tooting Balham and Clapham, where they have traditionally worked in the local hospitals. They are concentrated in low-wage jobs, although some have managed to buy houses, but these like others are faced with the consequences of falling property prices.

**WP:** Could you tell me something about Bosnia and the activities of your group in connection with this issue?



Rama Valayden



# The fight for Bosnia

**RV:** You remember that we stand for a world without racism, and we feel that an injury done to anyone in the world is an injury done to us.

When the Bosnian crisis occurred we believed that, after analysing the situation in the Balkans, that it is again a struggle against fascism. This crisis has been spurred on especially by the IMF, by its policies imposed on Yugoslavia to 'liberalise' its economy.

When we received information about the ethnic cleansing it was clear, especially to people living in the sort of society we have in Mauritius, that we support all those being oppressed in the former Yugoslavia.

We felt we had to alter public opinion about the true issues there and to explain to the people of Mauritius that it not a Muslim problem or a problem of Islam, but one that is fascist in nature and fascist in substance. We also explained the need to reform the United Nations.

**WP:** A lot of people in Britain — Tony Benn, the SWP and so on — have seen this as a civil war. What is your view about this?

**RV:** It is very simplistic to look at it in that way. If we equate 'ethnic cleansing' to a civil war, we are looking for an excuse to do nothing.

We know very well that this is not a civil war: there have been strikes by workers, even in Serbia, and they have been well supported by people of all ethnic origins.

We are now seeing the Milosevic regime whipping up all possible fears about the defects of the system and using this as a tool in order to keep their system in place.

**WP:** What did you do in practice about Bosnia?

**RV:** We called a meeting of students, who were on holiday at the time, as well as people from a variety of organisations. It was from the youngsters in fact, 16- and 17-year-olds, that the initiative came. We felt we must have a quick demonstration to judge the amount of support that we had.

Within ten days we had held 20 meetings up and down the island and two days before the demonstration we held a big meeting in Port Louis, the capital, which was attended by nearly 800 people. This was very good, given the short notice. Everybody wanted to have their say.

Two days later we held the demonstration which, according to the police, attracted more than 3,000 people.

Leaders of different political parties came along because they sensed an upsurge in popular support and, believing in the electoral system, they knew they had to try and get support, make a certain capital out of it. So they joined the demonstration.

**WP:** What were the demonstration's slogans?

**RV:** They were 'Stop fascism'; 'No ethnic cleansing'; 'Arm the Bosnians!' In fact we are agreed that the Bosnians can defend themselves, that the sanctions on arms should be lifted.

The young people, perhaps looking at it from a Third World point of view, wanted the resignation of the secretary-general of the United Nations, for being a passive witness to the events in Bosnia.

We didn't want to stop with the demonstration. On 2 September we are holding a one-day seminar to explain to all those who have come to the defence of Bosnia what the real issue is. It is important, when people join you for different reasons, that we know why we are fighting on Bosnia and how this fight can be linked internationally.

We are preparing for 24 October a big demonstration, accompanied by an exhibition, which will be called Solidarity with the Oppressed of the World. It will range from, of course, Bosnia to the Tamils of Sri Lanka and the Aborigines of Australia.

**WP:** You said to me earlier that you had come into contact with the ideas of Trotsky?

**RV:** It was when I was 12 and at school. We had a teacher dealing with world affairs. When it came to the 1917 Russian Revolution, he told us that the main figures were Lenin, Stalin and Trotsky. When we asked him what had happened to Trotsky, why he was forced to leave the coun-

try, he was not able to explain. My inclination was to want to know what had happened to him.

This was a catalyst for me to learn more about Trotsky, and I wrote to my cousin in France and asked him to send me all the books he could about this man Leon Trotsky.

That was when I first started to read and find out about his assassination. That I discovered his real name was a matter of real ego for me. I used to go up to people and say: 'What is the real name of Trotsky?' I was proud that I knew it and others didn't.

As somebody very young the real idea in Trotsky that attracted me was that of the Permanent Revolution. I was then a young person in revolt, with myself but also with the family. Then slowly, as you grow older, the more you become convinced that what will really matter in this world is the idea of Permanent Revolution.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the near-collapse of Stalinism throughout the world, with a few remnants here and there, it is clear that we cannot transform the world in isolation.

In a small country like Mauritius, we are more aware of the idea of the Permanent Revolution and the need to link hands with people and workers around the world.

**WP:** So your group sees itself as a Trotskyist group?

**RV:** The group is inspired a lot by the work of Trotsky, especially the idea of the Permanent Revolution. But we are very short of books and materials on Trotsky. Many are not available and we will have to translate them into Creole, which is an oppressed language. English is still taught to a primary level, but hardly any ordinary people use it. But the idea is that French and English must still be taught.

**WP:** Do you know much about the history of the Trotskyist movement, about the various divisions that have occurred within it?

**RV:** This is one of the problems. When we go abroad we have a tendency to lump everybody together. When we see a newspaper that is Trotskyist we will read it without knowing what happened in the Fourth International. If you come to stay in Britain for a short time it is difficult to differentiate one group from another.

**WP:** Thank you for the interview, and I hope that from now on we will be able to collaborate closely.

**RV:** I look forward to that and to somebody coming to visit us in Mauritius. We must meet again when I return to Britain — in October or next January.

## The Edinburgh Film Festival by Terry Brotherstone

# Bosanci u Edinburgu

AS THE last flames flickered into the nothingness of the night air, and the actors lined up to take their bows, Nermin Omic pushed his way through the audience bearing flowers. He presented them to each member of the cast. The applause redoubled.

It was more than a routine end-of-run ceremony. Fine weather and good reviews had brought the audience, during last month's Edinburgh Fringe festival, to a school playground to see *Carmen Funebre* (Funeral Song), an award-winning, 40-minute piece of street theatre by the Polish **Teatr Biuro Podrozy**. A burning indictment of over half a century of oppression in Europe, it put to shame the hypocritical complacency of much of the recent British VE and VJ Day celebrations.

It was also inspired by, and created alongside, Bosnian refugees — hence the connection with Nermin Omic. He is a member of the **National Theatre Tuzla**, which, earlier in the week, had completed a five-day bus journey across Europe to perform in Edinburgh. As he presented the flowers, the greasepaint was barely wiped from his own face. An hour or two earlier, he had played the king in Zlatko Jugovic's *Requiem for Ricardo* at the Demarco European Art Foundation a few hundred yards away.

*Carmen Funebre* is a distillation, and a heightening, of the best in the physical theatre Polish companies have been bringing to Edinburgh festivals since impresario Richard Demarco began staging their work in the 1970s.

Huge threatening figures on stilts, human embodiments of camp watchtowers, beam flashlights over the audience and select their victims, who are hounded, stripped, and driven through the gates. The gates of Auschwitz? The gates of Hell?

Later there are flaming torches, and much conflagration. The clothes of victims burn. At the end the gates are torched. Is this a symbol of hope — of the oppressor's fires turned against him? Or of ultimate destruction, total despair?

The ambiguity, the open-endedness, the *challenge*, is there earlier too, when small parchment houses, lit by candles from within, are tied to children's balloons and floated captivately into the dark sky, borne by the east-coast wind towards the sea.

Is this tender image a cruel deception, a symbol of the unending exile of the human spirit? Or is it a message of survival and of hope? So much bitter Polish history, and so much present Bosnian horror, is compressed into these few minutes.

*Requiem for Ricardo* is a warning too, but the Bosnians' theatrical method is different.

### Satire

Their play is a broad-brush satire, lampooning arbitrary authority, with its need for outward display to mask inner insecurity, for ministerial sycophancy, and for sexual subservience. The many virtues of the Demarco European Art Foundation do not include the provision of English-language synopses, but the main points come over even to the

linguistically challenged.

'It is influenced by Shakespeare's *Macbeth*,' playwright Zlatko Jugovic told me. 'Ricardo is a king from the Balkans, and the play is about power and what someone exercising it does, or rather what he doesn't do. He has characteristics drawn from Hitler and from Mussolini. He is fascist and nationalist. He symbolises what is happening in the Balkans now.'

'But audiences should not be deceived. It can happen in any other country... The show is intended to be a warning against militarism, totalitarianism, fascism'

*Requiem* is popular with audiences in the Tuzla area, says Jugovic, but he adds wryly that there are exceptions. 'People in power often pretend they cannot understand it. It is saying to them: "Do not become like Ricardo!"'

Jugovic, Nermin Omic, and other cast members, also spoke about their theatre in Tuzla. It was founded in 1896 and has been operating ever since. Five plays run in repertory, war or no war. But there have also been performances taken to soldiers at the front.

The repertoire is a mixture of classical and modern plays. Shakespeare is popular, especially his plays about the corruption of authority.

'The war must stop sometime,' says Omic. 'All we want is for people to be able to live their own lives. In Tuzla, except for those poisoned by the politics of the war, we live normally together. We don't care what nationality anybody is, or what their ethnic origins are.'

The theatre is very important, the

others explain. 'There is no big cinema in Tuzla, so it is the only public entertainment. We often perform comedies and people need them.'

The opportunity to visit the Edinburgh Festival, on the invitation of Demarco and Linda Graham of the European Art Foundation, is much appreciated.

### Chance

It is the company's first chance to perform outside Bosnia-Herzegovina, and, on the way home, they are to play in Leicester, London, Paris, Verona and Vienna. Members of their youth theatre were also in Edinburgh, performing their own pieces and collaborating in a joint project with pupils at a Lothian school. They all hope to come again.

As the Tuzla performers were travelling to Edinburgh, the Film Festival was also paying its tribute to their country's struggle. Its opening gala — Ken Loach's *Land and Freedom* — was attended by Elma Hadziredzovic and Almir Palata of Sarajevo's **War Cinema Apollo**, in town to select movies for the second, week-long, **Edinburski Filmski Festival u Sarajevu** (Edinburgh Film Festival in Sarajevo), later this year.

And Film Festival director Mark Cousins gave a prominent slot to a two-hour *Bosnia Debate*, at which Jill Craigie's documentary, *Two Hours from London* was followed by a discussion. This included a fine exposition of the historical context of the present war by Noel Malcolm, author of *Bosnia: a Short History*, and a supporter of the Alliance to

Defend Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Two days later, a meeting organised by an Edinburgh Bosnia Support Group, supported by Workers Aid for Bosnia, attracted over 50 people. They included Eddie Harrison, a Glasgow teacher who recently went to Mostar and, with Mondo Ghulam, made a video-film *A Journey into Bosnia* (later afforded a special Film Festival billing by Cousins); and, as a main speaker, Bill Speirs, assistant secretary of the Scottish TUC, recently returned from Tuzla himself. There were speakers too from the Tuzla theatre.

The Demarco European Art Foundation — which this year mounted performances in Dundee and Fife as well as in Edinburgh — was again the focus of Eastern European work at the Festival. The Belarus company **Freestage Theatre** did a terrific, pared-down version of Shakespeare's *Richard III*, in which a dragging sleeve was all that was required to suggest the schizoid king's deformities. Of two Serbian companies, I saw **Z Theatre's** *The Midge*, an escapist, exuberant reworking of a Renaissance comedy ('The trouble with these plays,' remarks the comper in excellent English, 'is that you can never tell who is bonking whom!').

Elsewhere, at the Churchill Theatre, Kiev's **Golden Gate Theatre** performed *Murder*, an intense, compressed version of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. The committed, collective style of acting from such companies remains *prospekts* ahead of what we normally see in Western Europe.



## A timely antidote

## PERSONAL COLUMN

A DROUGHT, in the sense of a shortage of water, there may or may not have been this summer. But of ballyhoo to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II there has been no drought at all, but an absolute flood.

And what a spate of chauvinistic and racist poison it has unleashed, this drum-banging, flag-waving campaign directed largely against the Japanese, as if all other imperialist armies were composed of Galahads — and as if that supreme atrocity, the nuclear obliteration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and most of their inhabitants, had never happened.

This state-sponsored, media-circulated poison cries out for an antidote. Which makes Raymond Challinor's timely and iconoclastic book *The Struggle for Hearts and Minds: Essays on the Second World War* (Whitley Bay, Bewick Press, £5.95) so welcome.

This book tears down many veils that have long concealed the truth about a war that was supposed to be against fascism and for freedom and democracy but in fact was nothing of the kind.

So it is essential reading for all who want to know what was really going on in those six bloody years when ruthless and deceitful governments were sending a generation of young men to slaughter and be slaughtered, while press and radio were muzzled by censorship and used for the blackest of black propaganda.

Challinor has made the 1939-45 period his own, and this short book — some of the essays in which were first published in various periodicals, including *Workers Press* — offers only the first fruits of lengthy research that will in the fullness of time, I gather, yield a longer and more comprehensive study.

Challinor places centre-stage a great many unsung heroes, such as the workers at a Manchester furniture factory who downed tools in April 1940 to force the reinstatement of a workmate sacked because he refused to register for military service (though in the same month Yeovil glassworkers took a different view, and went on strike because they wouldn't work alongside a conscientious objector).

Another unsung hero was conscientious objector Private Kenneth Makin, who left prison declaring that he still wouldn't do military service. His army comrades hailed his courage in defying the brass hats; as they put it, he had shown that he wasn't prepared to eat chicken shit.

Then there was the Brighton Medical Officer of Health, Dr R.L. Worrall, who put out a leaflet denouncing the decision to evacuate London children to Brighton. He was fined £100 and sacked — but was swiftly reinstated when a German bomb on a Brighton cinema during a children's matinee killed many of the evacuees.

Challinor devotes a chapter to the odd case of George Armstrong, a merchant seaman from Newcastle upon Tyne and allegedly a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain — though Challinor strongly doubts this.

Armstrong had apparently jumped ship in Boston, Massachusetts, where undercover British agents, working in cahoots with the FBI, saw him talking with a German official in a public park. Though the US was neutral, Armstrong was extradited and executed in July 1941 — the first of 16 British subjects hanged as spies during the war.

According to a shipmate who had sailed with Armstrong on his last voyage, the real purpose of his execution was to persuade British seafarers — 500 of whom had attended an unofficial meeting in Baltimore to protest against poor pay, food, and conditions — to keep to themselves their opinions about the war.

Of great interest is a chapter

called 'Franco's Spain: Britain's Silent Friend'. Amongst other shameful episodes, this shows how former Spanish Republican soldiers in Britain were treated like criminals, 500 of them being held in a prisoner-of-war camp in Lancashire even after the end of the war.

And when 136 refugees from fascist Spain turned up at British ports the Labour government, because these men and women had no papers, sent them back to face probable torture and death.

Six who jumped overboard were fished out of the water and sent back to Spain by air. And this at a time when German war criminals were being admitted to Britain because of the contribution they might make to British industry.

Challinor's final chapter, on 'The Origins of the Cold War' comments that the Big Three — Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin — 'displayed a barbaric depravity reminiscent of the worst of the Roman emperors'.

At first glance these are strong words, but when you read Challinor's quotations from the exchanges at the 1944 Tehran conference and the 1945 Yalta conference they turn out to understate the case, if anything.

And behind the agreement to kill an unlimited number of Germans and carve up Germany lay 'an even greater kinship of interests: the desire to crush revolutionary forces that were emerging in every country as the war drew to a close'.

AN ADMIRABLE feature of this book is its inclusion of a dozen or so contemporary political cartoons, including one from the Trotskyist *Socialist Appeal*, one from the *Glasgow Forward*, and four from the anarchist *War Commentary*.

Though for the most part crudely drawn, these all have a sharp class bite to them, as in the ILP's *New Leader* cartoon where a top-hatted, cigar-puffing capitalist tells a British Tommy: 'GO — my boy, defend your freedom and MY CASH!'

'This is your quota' says the billeting officer in the *Socialist Appeal* cartoon as he ushers child evacuees into a house on Workers' Avenue while behind him the Hotel de Luxe ('service day and night, every modern comfort') stands undisturbed by evacuees.

Also reproduced is a leaflet reprinted from the April 1942 issue of *Socialist Appeal* showing, with gruesome photographs, that Japanese troops had beheaded Chinese soldiers in Manchuria in the early 1930s and British troops had beheaded Burmese freedom-fighters in the same period, putting their heads on public display to terrorise the rest of the population.

IN CONCLUSION, I have to point out two flaws:

A word ('close', I suppose), is obviously missing from a sentence on page 30 stating that in 1940, during the Finnish war, 'Anglo-French and German forces came to fighting against the Soviet Union'.

The absence of an index is a great pity. An index would have added little to the cost of producing this book, and much to its utility.

But these are venial flaws in what is a major contribution to our understanding of a conflict in which, as the German socialist Karl Liebknecht said in an earlier imperialist war, the enemy was at home.

It still is.

Peter Fryer

## Edinburgh Festival Fringe

# 'Play' to arouse awareness of death in police cell



One of the most striking performances at this year's Edinburgh Festival Fringe was not strictly a 'performance' at all. Stephanie Lightfoot Bennett, Jeremy Weller's *20/52* plays, or rather *is*, herself in a production during which art and real life merge uncomfortably. Performed at the Traverse Theatre, it tells of Stephanie's efforts to establish the truth about the death of her brother Leon in a Denton police remand cell at 1.20am on 27 November 1992. Her description of the state of the body, and of the ensuing legal cover-up, is almost mind-numbing. She has been waiting since November 1994 to hear if a date will be set for a *third* inquest. In the 'play' she bares her own crisis with a frankness which shocks, in an effort to arouse public awareness. At the end, she steps out of the drama and addresses the audience straight: she *will* have the truth, she insists, and until she gets it, 'I'm going to keep doing this play.'

Photo: Bruno Beloff

# Ideological crisis behind Sheffield's cult scandal

## FROM A SHEFFIELD CORRESPONDENT

'A BODY BLOW' to the Church of England, claimed a *Guardian* headline (23 August) as more revelations of sexual abuse, psychological manipulation and financial 'sacrifice' emerged in the Sheffield Nine o'clock Service scandal. NOS, as it is called, has been revealed to be a religious cult with all the classic characteristics, nurtured within the established Church of England.

Victims were said to be in 'safe houses'; villains didn't know if they were 'victims' too. Help-lines were buzzing, counsellors were counselling. People, of course, were talking to the tabloids.

When the story broke it made the first item on BBC 1's *Six o'clock News* and provoked a discussion among experts on BBC 2's *Newsnight*.

The cult's personality, the Reverend Chris Brain, went into hiding and ended up in an expensive mental hospital.

A tricky problem for the red-faced church hierarchy is to find an explanation of how these practices could have gone on under their noses.

Brain had been disciplined 18 months previously and had been placed outside the 'aegis' of the Sheffield diocese. The Sheffield Archdeacon, the Venerable Stephen Lowe, says he had received allegations of sexual abuse last April.

The church was also aware that a trust fund had been set up to support the radical alternative 'service' and that it contained several hundred thousand pounds — all donated by followers of the cult.

Brain lived well. He ran an expensive car with a mobile

phone, had expensive holidays and wore designer clothes. He was donated an £80,000 house, which he sold, and had the use of or was given another £200,000 house.

Meanwhile many of his followers impoverished themselves by huge tithes from their wages and salaries. Others moved to Sheffield, especially to the Crookes area, to be near to the 'mother church' of St Thomas. Some gave up their jobs for the cult.

If the church hierarchy didn't know about the goings on, the people of Crookes and surrounding neighbourhoods certainly did know the St Thomas nutters.

The changes that took place in the area in the late 1970s laid the groundwork for the scandal. Crookes, an old artisan working-class area to the north west of the city with an ageing population, suddenly began to attract many younger middle-class university-educated couples who deliberately chose to live in the area to attend St Thomas's church.

Nearly all of them had undergone a 'conversion' process while at university and had been in contact with sinister sects and groups like the American-inspired 'Navigators'. In fact the Sheffield University chaplain at the time had warned the authorities and students union about the activities of this sect.

St Thomas is an early 17th-century mock Saxon church at the centre of what was old Crookes village. In the late 1970s it was virtually rebuilt with lavish extensions, all financed by parishioners' donations. At the same time it established itself as the nationally-known centre for the evangelical and charismatic wing of the C of E.

Indeed, the last incumbent is

now heading up a 'Carey's Decade of Evangelism' campaign.

It was into this charged atmosphere that Brain arrived, and then flourished, in the early 1980s. Anglicanism's long-term decline provides ideal opportunities for contemporary witchdoctors and charlatans like Brain to operate.

To attract young people, get bums on pews, and bring a generation to its knees, is an attractive proposition to the increasingly isolated, schism-riven clergy.

In fact the Brain scandal has exacerbated the crisis and the capitalist media are very much aware of this. Brain's mixture of rave music, New-Age gibberish, hi-tech-induced hysteria was a heady brew the church authorities were prepared to live with as long as nothing went wrong or, to put it more cynically, as long as no one got caught. In fact many of the hierarchy attended the NOS and saw it as a model for other initiatives in Glasgow and Gloucester.

## Scholastic

Former archbishop of York Dr John Hapgood made the typically scholastic distinction between the public ministry, which was approved of, and the personal ministry, which was condemned. Brain will no doubt be defrocked and, if someone comes forward to the police, possibly prosecuted. But these events' significance?

There has been a great deal of sociological theorising about sects and cults, but what of their political significance at this time?

For the *Guardian* (editorial, 25 August) there was a clear political lesson: 'First, what the church is grappling with here is affecting all society. Political parties and trade unions are experienc-

ing exactly the same difficulties in overcoming young people's distrust and disillusionment with all institutions and their dislike of hierarchy and organisations.'

The fact that a radical alternative, tacitly supported by the establishment, abused them more ruthlessly than the conventional forms of traditional religion is seen as a dangerous blow to the *status quo*.

This is the perspective of the liberal establishment, but what is far more dangerous to the working class and the left is that considerable sections of middle-class youth and young adults are being drawn into the orbit of irrationalist and 'charismatic' decadence.

The ideological point was made quite succinctly by a woman priest on television when she claimed there was a rejection of the protestant Enlightenment rationalism and a search for a 'more emotionally-oriented faith'. If she fully understood what she was saying — and I doubt it — she and those like her are rejecting the foundations of the British ruling class's hegemony and its roots in the work of the philosophers Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and John Locke (1632-1704).

This is a sign of the real degeneration of Anglicanism. The syncretic, rag-bag theology of Brain's 'planetary theology' — a mish-mash of ecology, eastern mysticism, sexual hysteria and a host of other reactionary ingredients — has more serious and disturbing significance than the titillating coverage of the bourgeois media has given it. Syncretic ideologies are the stuff of fascism.

The fact that quite large numbers of young, predominantly middle-class people are susceptible to this kind of poison should be a warning of what could be to come.



# NATO acts — to divide Bosnia-Herzegovina

## Science focus

A monthly column by Daniel Robertson, principal scientist at a leading bio-technology company

Resolution adopted by Workers Aid for Bosnia, Saturday 2 September

THE torment of the people of Sarajevo continues with another barbaric massacre inflicted by the Chetniks — the Serbian nationalists and fascists. The slow death of the ancient city and its culture has aroused feelings of anger and sympathy in millions of people around the world.

The 'reprisals' by NATO and the UN for the massacre — shelling the Chetnik positions — were welcomed by many people. 'At last the UN has decided to act.'

Certainly the UN and NATO have acted — but not to help the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The raids are the newest tactic by the UN, NATO — and the Great Powers they represent (Britain, France, the US and Russia) — to blackmail the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina into accepting the ethnic partition of their country.

Under the guise of bringing 'peace', the Great Powers propose a solution to the war identical to that sought by the nationalists and fascists.

In 1992, people in Bosnia-Herzegovina voted for a constitution giving equal rights to all citizens in a multi-ethnic society. It is this society that is being defended by the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina (falsely called 'Muslims' by the media) against an aggressor that sought to tear people apart and drive them into ethnic ghettos or 'bantustans'.

As the first attacks on multi-cultural society took place, the UN imposed an arms embargo on the region in the full knowledge that the aggressors had a plentiful supply of weapons from the Serbian-controlled Yugoslav National Army — the fourth largest force in Europe. For the first two years of war UN governments refused to take any action against the Serbian nationalists as they brought death and destruction to Sarajevo and the rest of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

### Massacre

A massacre in the Sarajevo market in March 1994 (the same spot as the recent outrage) was the pretext for moving UN forces into positions around the besieged city. The people of Sarajevo hoped this would end their nightmare.

In fact the UN forces rather



Bosnian people flee the 'ethnic cleansing' of Srebrenica

than lifting the siege of Sarajevo became accessories to the besieging Chetnik forces, preventing Bosnian government troops from breaking through the aggressor's lines. The UN used their control of food supplies to keep the city in a state of starvation and dependency.

The presence of the UN with its huge military resources made no difference to the Chetnik gunners: the starvation continued, the isolation continued.

But despite everything the Bosnian army began to beat back the nationalist forces and started to win support from people around the world for their stand against fascist genocide and ethnic division. The refusal of the UN to defend their so-called 'safe havens' led many people to support the right of the Bosnians to obtain arms to defend themselves.

The UN and NATO have acted not in response to the plight of Sarajevo but to try and head off this growing movement in defence of multi-cultural society and the right of all people to live together in peace. This movement was recently given a tremendous boost by the defeat of the Chetniks in Croatia and the raising of the siege of Bihac — something that the UN with all its military might said was impossible.

NATO and the UN have changed their tactics but not their goal. The latest massacre in the Sarajevo market — in which Serbs, Muslims and Croats all

supplies and the people of Sarajevo would starve.

The people of Europe must not stand back and allow this blackmail. Acceptance of the US-NATO-UN 'peace plan' will mark a victory for the Chetniks, the victory of a barbaric nationalism, the rise of a new fascism in Europe. The effects of a UN-imposed division will be felt far beyond the borders of Bosnia.

The people who have a mounted a round-the-clock protest outside Downing Street since the UN betrayal of Srebrenica have shown what can and must be done by everyone in Europe and the US to repudiate the policies of their governments. Trade unions, political parties, anti-fascist and anti-racist organisations, student unions and the millions of people who at present belong to no organisation must make their voices heard.

The Bosnian people have the right to demand such help. They are defending a way of life on behalf of all humanity.

The UN-enforced arms embargo must be lifted so that the Bosnian people can defend themselves — if they can defend themselves, factories can be rebuilt and they will be able to feed themselves.

The July Tuzla Trade Union Convoy was a step forward in the campaign initiated by Workers Aid to link workers and young people across Europe with organisations in Bosnia fighting against racism and fascism.

The British Communication Workers Union now has a rolling programme of sending food and other supplies to communication workers in Bosnia.

The workers of Europe must take the supplies that Bosnia needs to survive until production can be resumed and in this way take responsibility for the defence of multi-cultural life against fascism in the whole of Europe. An end must be put to the UN's ability to use its control of 'humanitarian aid' as a weapon of war.

The trade union federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina has called for a European-wide day of action and solidarity on 14 October. They are asking for demonstrations of support for an undivided multi-cultural Bosnia-Herzegovina. We give our fullest backing to this call and will seek to work with all other supporters in Britain to organise demonstrations in as many towns as possible.

died — is being used by the Great Powers to advance their plans for Bosnia: the creation of ethnic ghettos ruled by various nationalist politicians subservient to the Great Powers. This is their so-called 'new world order'.

The UN and NATO forces 'responded' to the new atrocity. But the shells were not aimed at stopping the Chetnik nationalist aggression and the timing had little to do with the massacre. Where was the response to the Tuzla massacre of 72 people in May or the murder of thousands in Srebrenica only weeks ago?

### Action

The NATO action was designed to force all parties at the current Paris negotiations to accept the US 'peace plan' based on ethnic division. But peace can only come about by the defeat of the nationalist, racist and fascist forces who have vowed to destroy Bosnia-Herzegovina's multi-cultural society.

The UN continues to equate the aggressor with the victim. British government ministers have warned the Bosnian army that any military offensive to retake control of Chetnik-occupied territories or relieve the besieged towns will come under NATO attack. Defence Minister Michael Portillo spoke on behalf of all the superpowers when he stated that if the Bosnian government did not comply with their plans then the UN could stop food

## Letters

More Letters — page 7

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### The NATO bombing

THE bombing of Serb targets around Sarajevo, Tuzla and Mostar by imperialism through NATO is in its interest in partitioning Bosnia along ethnic lines. And, contrary to the propaganda of the likes of Tony Benn, to reward the Serbs with 49 per cent of Bosnia, and for that 49 per cent of Bosnia to become part of a Greater Serbia.

Such is the background to the bombing. But the opportunity for such a plan was handed to imperialism by the policies and fascist-like aggression against firstly Croatia and then Bosnia by the ultra-nationalist Stalinist coalition government in Belgrade.

This use of aggression and genocide has resulted in hundreds of thousands of Bosnians being massacred and thousands more unaccounted for, raped and put into concentration camps. Around 1 million people have been 'ethnically cleansed' from their homes.

These are the unpalatable

facts that Benn et al — left Labourites and Stalinists — are unable and unwilling to accept.

Furthermore, the war in Bosnia is not a civil war but one of aggression, intimidation and jack-boot-like fascism against Bosnia and its people by Serb Chetniks led by Mladic and Karadzic, aided and abetted by the Milosevic regime in Belgrade — the initiator of all the war and bloodshed in ex-Yugoslavia — and by imperialism through the United Nations.

But not all Serbs in Bosnia are Chetniks, nor do the majority of Serbs in Bosnia support Mladic, Karadzic or Milosevic. There are many Serbs in Bosnia who support a multi-ethnic Bosnia and have done everything in their power to support the efforts of the working class in Tuzla and other areas of Bosnia. They resist, and have resisted for the last three years, the attempts to divide Bosnia along ethnic lines.

Long live the working class in Bosnia. Long live the struggle for a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious Bosnia.

Charlie Walsh London SW1

### The editor replies...

LAST week, Raymond Challinor (Letters) criticised Workers Press for being among those who 'promiscuously fling around the word "fascist"'. He then tried to show how Serbia was not a fascist state.

As editor I reject this criticism because *we do not say that Serbia is a fascist state!* We do say that the Chetnik forces led by the Bosnian Serb commander Ratko Mladic and his political associate Radovan Karadzic are fascist, but that is not the same thing.

We also say that these fascist forces are backed by Serbia and supported by the United Nations. But the big backers and supporters of a fascist regime are not thereby fascist themselves — although they may be close to it. For the imperialists, the fascists at times are taken up as tools to carry out tasks of suppressing the working class that the ruling class cannot perform directly.

I think that Raymond Challinor's error lies in amalgamating the concepts of a fascist state and a fascist movement. The logical conclusion of such an amalgamation, it seems to me, would be to argue that the British National Party and the more sinister far-right paramilitary group C18 were not fascist because the British state is, at present, a bourgeois democracy.

Trotsky opposed the misuse of the term 'fascist' because it undermined the fight against fascism in Germany. Communist Parties falsely labelled the social-democratic parties as 'social fascist' and allowed the real fascists to take over the Weimar state.

In Bosnia we are calling for the working class of Europe to unite to defend multi-ethnic Bosnia. The Chetnik fascists are opposed to this and act on behalf of imperialism to carve up to Bosnia and break up its working class.

Mike Cooke Workers Press editor

See also Inside Left, page 4 and 'Fascism and ex-Yugoslavia', page 2.

### Out there somewhere

MANY readers will have seen the film, shown recently on Channel 4, of what is claimed to be an autopsy performed on alien creatures. These were supposedly recovered from the remains of a UFO that crashed at Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947.

UFO enthusiasts have argued that a government cover-up tried to suppress reports of recovered UFO parts and even dead or dying extra-terrestrials.

Now, 50 years later, this story has taken on cult status as a series of people, allegedly witnesses to these events, come forward to make fortunes from their stories.

As well as the alleged film there is a photo circulating that appears to show technicians applying final touches to the 'alien' body ready for the film in best Hollywood style.

This probably says something telling about its origin. UFO mythology has become a massive money spinner that sustains its own myths as well as a highly profitable film and publications industry. But I wonder to what extent the whole phenomena has been manipulated for political purposes.

During the final years of the cold war the United States faked up 'Star Wars' weaponry tests to suggest that they had developed invincible technology that the USSR could not match. During this period fantastic stories began to circulate that the USA had gained access to extra-terrestrial technology, perhaps from crashed UFOs.

Were these stories planted to frighten the gullible Russians who appear to have taken such things seriously? The UFO mythology now lives on as part of the paranoid world view of the US fringe right, many of whom believe in alien abductions with covert government complicity in exchange for military expertise.

### Close encounters of the other kind

Now for concerns over close encounters of a quite different kind. Alarm bells have been ringing for some time over claims that the human sperm count is declining.

This may seem embarrassingly amusing, but is actually serious. A rapid rise in reproductive disorders of all kinds has been observed around the world, in both animals and people.

The effects in humans include mammary and testicular cancers, as well as a remorseless decline in sperm count, volume and quality. Continued indefinitely this will lead to a decline in human fertility perhaps leading to the science fiction scenario of a rapidly disappearing population.

This problem is caused by the enormous proliferation of artificial chemicals that have been put into the environment since the industrial revolution.

The human body has evolved over millions of years to deal with most of the chemicals that we regularly encounter in our diet and environment, but is now being exposed to an avalanche of artificial chemicals against which it has little defence.

It is estimated that there are around 60,000 artificial chemicals in the environment in significant concentrations. The ones causing the problems are 'oestrogen mimickers', that is chemicals similar in effect to the hormone oestrogen. There may be as many as 3,000 of these. A recent report from the Institute of Environment & Health suggests that some of these may be responsible for the sperm decline.

Environmentalists have urged the government to ban suspect chemicals because of the potential problems they may be causing. The government predictably replies that it will not ban any chemical until there is overwhelming evidence.

The real reason is that a large number of very profitable chemi-

cal companies depend on producing these poisons. Newly developed chemicals with no immediately obvious dangerous effects are authorised for use after only 2 years.

In fact side effects may only be obvious after decades. We are the guinea pigs in capitalism's laboratories — the real evaluation takes place on us. Lets hope that none of these experiments are irreversible.

### What's a human life worth?

I wrote recently on the threats posed by the Ebola virus through the failure to provide elementary health care in underdeveloped countries. Now there is evidence that another terrible health threat — the HIV virus — is being aggravated by lack of basic health care.

According to an article in *Lancet* a recent study in Tanzania has demonstrated that HIV transmission is accelerated in people infected by other sexually transmitted diseases.

Measures to treat these can drastically slow the spread of the virus. The rate of HIV infection in some Tanzanian cities is up to 20 per cent of the population, a future disaster in the making.

Now that there is evidence that elementary treatment can greatly slow the spread of HIV will the required flow of medical help from advanced to underdeveloped countries occur?

If AIDS were infecting heterosexuals in Western countries at the rate it is now spreading through Africa, Asia and Latin America there would be instant action. But lives outside the Western world are considered expendable. This is a form of genocide.

Further evidence of the low value given to the lives of black people is afforded by another scandal. A report from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has attempted to measure the cost effectiveness of measures to combat global warming by balancing the cost of effective action against the value of the lives likely to be harmed or even lost if no action is taken.

In their calculations the lives of people in the most advanced Western countries are valued at \$1.5 million per head, against only \$100,000 for people in semi-colonial countries. They calculate the cost of stopping global warming will be greater than the 'value' of the black lives involved.

### I'm not addicted — I just like the taste

One of the most disgraceful examples of the prostitution of science under capitalism has been the efforts of scientists retained by the tobacco industry to prove that smoking is harmless, or even healthy.

American anti-smoking activists have been campaigning to demonstrate that tobacco industry scientists have long known about the dangerous and addictive effects of nicotine. They have worked to expose the manner in which tobacco companies have manipulated the nicotine content of tobacco to keep smokers addicted.

Now they have found evidence that, despite their denials, the tobacco companies have long had scientific proof that nicotine is addictive. Their research findings have been kept strictly secret. The reason is that final proof of these facts will oblige the US Food and Drug Administration to declare nicotine a controlled drug! The companies themselves insist that they only conduct research on nicotine because it is 'important for tobacco flavour'. They insist that smoking is the choice of free adults acting in a free market.

They are about as free as the rats purposely addicted to nicotine in the tobacco companies' experiments!



# Thousands of children have no place to learn

**THE education of children is being seriously undermined because of homelessness, according to a report issued by the housing charity Shelter.**

The scale of the problem is enormous. Some 60,000 people live in temporary accommodation in England and Shelter estimates that last year over 11,000 children per month were accepted by local authorities as homeless.

The report, 'No Place to Learn' by Professor Geoff Whitty, Dr Sally Power and Deborah Youdell of the Institute of Education in London says that the main problem comes from the constant disruption of children living in temporary accommodation.

They are moved from pillar to post. One mother has had to move nine times in the last four years, and at one point her children were in three different schools in one year.

Once a new school is found, which is a difficult enough job, the child then has to deal with settling into the new school, making new friends and dealing with basic procedures like claiming dinner money.

According to headteachers surveyed such things affect the whole school. Rapidly changing school populations require more resources, which are usually not available.

'No Place to Learn' describes: ■ The difficulties children face continuing their education while living in temporary accommodation, such as missed school time, nowhere to do homework, the problem of making new friends, and enjoying all the opportunities school presents;

■ The problem parents have in finding new school places for

## BY THE EDITOR

their children at a highly stressful time, while at the same time trying to find a permanent home;

■ The extra strain on teachers who have to change lessons and settle new children who may only be with them for a few weeks;

■ The effect of the National Curriculum and league tables on schools' willingness to accept homeless pupils.

## Disgraceful

Chris Holmes, director of Shelter, said:

'It is utterly disgraceful that children's education is suffering because of the problems of homelessness. Education is one of the most obvious ways that people can be encouraged to help themselves, yet it almost impossible for children living in temporary accommodation to get a decent education.

'And sadly that's only part of the tragedy. This cannot be dismissed as a problem for only a small section of the population. Homelessness affects the whole school. If you have a child at school, any school, then your child's education could be suffering because of the housing crisis.'

Shelter is demanding that the government withdraw its proposals in the Housing White Paper, which it says will make the situation worse by dumping even greater numbers of families into the misery of temporary accommodation.

## Labour's war on the homeless

THE Labour leaders have launched a virulent attack on Britain's homeless, calling for an all-out war by the police to clear the streets of 'winos, addicts and squeegee merchants'.

Leading the charge, Jack Straw, Labour shadow home secretary, called homeless beggars in the streets 'obstacles faced

by pedestrians going about their lawful business'.

Straw said he was not concerned about whether people thought a policy was 'harsh or horrible' but whether it worked.

Straw's call for the streets to be cleared comes straight from a strategy developed by the police commissioner of New York, Wil-

liam J. Bratton, and the city's new mayor, right-wing Republican, Rudolph Guiliani.

Guiliani has carried out wholesale sackings of teachers, dismissed welfare workers and given the police new powers to deal with beggars and the homeless.

Straw visited New York last

month and was impressed by the campaign to clean up the streets of Manhattan.

This vicious attack on some of the most disadvantaged people in Britain is a warning of what workers can expect from a Labour government in which Straw would be a leading member.

# Bosnia denied arms, but used as showground

## BY CARL PETERSON

WHILE maintaining the arms embargo denying Bosnians the means to defend themselves, the Tory government is cynically using Bosnia as an exhibition ground for overseas weapons sales, with the British Army as demonstration team.

Mine detectors and even boots are deemed out for Bosnians defending their democratic rights and country, but reactionary regimes and right-wing dictators have only to wave their chequebooks to 'buy anything they want.

A report in the 'Daily Telegraph' (Monday, 4 September) says GKN, which makes the Warrior armoured troop carriers used by British troops in Bosnia, is hoping for orders from Middle Eastern countries.

So far Warrior has only been exported to Kuwait.

Leyland Trucks are looking forward to increased sales of the four-ton army lorry and larger DROPS vehicle used by the Army.

'As a result of Leyland's performance in Bosnia, the firm has won a contract to provide about 40 four-tonners for an Indonesian medical battalion, as well as open-competition tenders with the United Nations to provide lorries for work in Liberia, Lebanon and Syria,' said John Gilchrist, the firm's chief executive.

The Army, which brought 1,522 DROPS lorries as ammunition carriers, has been so impressed by their performance in Bosnia that it has ordered 55 more.'

The 105mm guns which 19

Field Artillery has deployed on Mount Igman recently, only arrived in Bosnia in June.

British Aerospace, owner of the Royal Ordnance factories where they are made, recently clinched a deal to sell 56 to Spain, on top of 700 105mms already exported since the 1970s. The company says Portuguese and Belgian forces are interested, and it is hoping its use in Bosnia will attract further orders.

The 'Telegraph' report forgets to mention the use which Serb forces have made of British-manufactured weaponry, such as the cluster bombs from Hunter Engineering, supplied to the Yugoslav air force; or the Heckler and Koch sub-machine guns and sniper rifles reportedly made under licence by Enfield (part of Royal Ordnance) and used by the Chet-

niks. It's an ill wind that blows the arms bosses no good.

But the Tories always decide to draw the line somewhere, usually on their maps dividing up Bosnia, but also against letting the Bosnian people obtain arms, lest in Mr Hurd's memorable words, this creates a 'level killing-field'.

The hypocrisy of the Tory government is hardly news worth commenting upon.

What helps them is the chorus of pacifist claptrap from some Labour 'lefts', Stalinist fellow-travellers and SWP-ers complaining the arms embargo against Bosnia is not working, or that lifting it 'would only benefit the arms manufacturers'. (They often specify 'American arms manufacturers', as though worried that Britain would lose trade!)

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# They worked for others (Miners' labour lost)

From Mirza Mukic in Tuzla

*Tuzla miners planted corn and vegetables on the fields made on former colliery tips. But the harvest was gathered by usurpers of their property...*

BEFORE the aggression against Bosnia-Herzegovina, Tuzla's miners produced about 12 million tons of coal a year. In these war years production has dropped to less than ten per cent, but the miners have relieved the people's suffering by supplying the generating plant with coal to produce electricity and hot water for the central heating system.

The miners worked in extremely diffi-

cult conditions, very often hungry, but they understood the importance of the coal in these days and they bore the misfortune of war stoically.

They could not expect, however, that their misfortune could be worsened by their people, by their town that they gave so much to. In the area of Tuzla there are a lot of fields degraded by surface casting. On these 'Moon landscapes' the miners decided to establish their own farms, a worthwhile undertaking from both the ecological and economic perspective.

On the other hand, the miners disabled through many years of hard labour worked on these fields and honestly earned their bread. Corn, vegetables and fruit yielded very well this year.

The management of the mine decided to improve the quality of food prepared for

miners in their canteens with the produce of this harvest. But instead of having a harvest they found stubble.

They could not even imagine what had happened. On order from the mayor of Zivinice, where all these recultivated fields are located, the civil authorities harvested the crop and thus robbed the miners. Allegedly more food was needed for the Bosnia-Herzegovina army, but this was just an excuse for this unseen usurpation.

The miners protested tumultuously and their manager Enes Atic sent numerous letters of protest to various state authorities but no response has yet been received. The miners' stores and kitchens are empty. However this matter is settled, a black spot will remain.

Mirza Mukic is a journalist from Tuzla.

Translated by Faruk Ibrahimovic.