

Bosnia: no peace for living, or dead

STOP WAR CRIME COVER UP

BRITISH troops in north-west Bosnia have stood by, with orders not to interfere, while Serb nationalist forces got rid of the bodies of thousands of their victims down mineshafts. As many as 8,000 bodies may have been disposed of at one mine.

'Our job is to separate forces, not look for mass graves,' said Lt. Colonel Benjamin Barry, the British commander whose headquarters are only a mile from the pit. 'I don't have the resources to go looking for them. It would be a diversion of soldiers from our main goal' (*New York Times*, 11 January). US commanders at Tuzla have taken a similar line.

British patrols have come across corpses, then seen them taken away by Serb troops.

'Everyone seems to be in a hurry to cover their killings', a British officer who didn't want to be named told reporters. 'There are bodies all over this place. We go in to houses and find floorboards ripped up and holes in the basement. They are working very hard.'

Nobody, including the Bosnian government who were bullied into signing it, thought the US-brokered Dayton agreement meant a just peace.

It has brought thousands of NATO and Russian troops to occupy the country, but delivered neither peace nor justice, for the living or the dead.

Around the iron-mining town of Ljubija people speak of mass graves covered in lime, and bodies mangled by ore-crushing machinery.

They said that in 1992 bus-loads of people were brought into the mine, and shooting was heard, after which the buses went out empty.

In 1993 local people were not allowed to go near the mine.

'Even the Serbs were not permitted to graze their goats in the area,' said a retired Croatian miner.

'We heard the sounds of many heavy trucks on the road to the pit. When we were finally allowed back outside, the pit looked different. It was full of dirt. There were earthen barricades around the pit.'

Arkan's murder gangs, armed and funded by the Serbian government in Belgrade, moved in to this part of Bosnia last Autumn.

Later, people around Ljubija say, Serb troops began bringing bodies to the mine, using machinery and chemicals to disfigure them, and explosions to bury them.

Lately they have been dig-

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

ging up bodies from other graves and bringing them to the mine. The site has remained under armed guard, and approaches are mined.

A number of graves have been identified at Stara Rijeka, a village south-east of Ljubija, and at Brisevo, where the Serbs' Sixth Krajina Brigade is alleged to have massacred civilians who had taken shelter in their basements from mortar-bombardment.

Piles of bodies, including those of children, were found in the Kurevo forest, where people had fled after their villages were destroyed by Serb Chetniks.

Bodies

Some bodies recovered in these areas show signs of torture and mutilation. This could be another reason why the Chetniks are anxious to hide their handiwork.

Ljubija is 12 miles south of Prijedor, not far from where the Chetniks set up concentration camps at Omarska, Trnopolje and the Keraterm factory.

Bosnian troops tried hard to capture this area in their Autumn offensive, but the Dayton agreement leaves it in Chetnik hands.

'There were certainly thousands killed at various camps around the Prijedor area,' said Graham Blewitt, deputy prosecutor for the International War Crimes Tribunal at the Hague. 'We have never had access to the area.'

He said investigators were still being refused permission to enter the Prijedor area despite the presence of NATO troops. Investigators are still waiting to get permission to visit mass graves near Srebrenica, in occupied eastern Bosnia.

■ See advert, below, Workers Aid for Bosnia statement, centre pages, and back page story.

US docker joins Liverpool march

US Longshoremen union leader Jack Heyman joined supporters of the sacked Liverpool dockers on their march through the city last Saturday.

The San Francisco dock shop stewards' chair Heyman [pictured with Liverpool leader Jimmy Nolan on his right] addressed the rally and led the crowd in the chant: 'Scabs out! Dockers in!'

Full report of speeches and article by Heyman, page 6.

Photo: Greg Dropkin



Crisis in the labour movement

The need for a new socialist party

CHANGE OF DATE & VENUE:

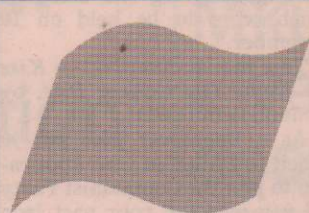
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1

Saturday 16 March 11am-5pm

Please note we have changed the original date for the conference because of the important

Millions of workers will vote Labour in the next general election — to defeat the hated Tories — knowing in their heart of hearts that the Blair leadership will continue to attack them on behalf of big business. The working class needs **its own** socialist party — a party that will organise the fight in its own interests. Many people are already organising themselves. We need to unite, we need to discuss, we need to prepare. That is the purpose of this meeting. If you agree with the following demands then you should come along!

- ▶ Down with privatisation! A full and open workers' inquiry of the companies' books!
- ▶ No to casual labour! Demand permanent work for all!
- ▶ Down with the racist immigration laws! Demand the right to asylum!
- ▶ Down with the Criminal Justice laws! Demand basic democratic rights!
- ▶ An injury to one is an injury to all! Build workers' internationalism!



Workers Press Meeting

Saturday 10 February, 10.30am-4pm

Change of venue: The Falkland Arms, 31 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1.

Tube: Holborn.

OUR readers are cordially invited to the 10th anniversary meeting of Workers Press. This is a time for us to review the past ten years, to consider the present and make plans for the future. The editorial board will present a report. We want to know your views, criticisms and proposals. Workers need their own paper, to report on and unite their struggles here and internationally. At this meeting we want to open up the discussion and practically begin the campaign for such a paper. For us in Workers Press our purpose — socialism — is the same purpose as every worker and those intellectuals whose lives are dedicated to the socialist cause.

Socialist Labour to stand

LEADING Women Against Pit Closures activist Brenda Nixon is to stand for Arthur Scargill's proposed Socialist Labour Party in the Hems-worth by-election. Scargill is to be her election agent.

A traditional mining community, Hems-worth is one of Labour's safest seats. Leeds council leader Jon Trickett is standing for that party. The NUM continues to be affiliated to the Labour Party.

Nixon is standing for public services, repeal of anti-union laws, common ownership and the 'socialist values which New Labour and the Tories have tried to eradicate'. Nixon predicted her candidacy would 'shake up' Blair.

■ Workers Press will carry a full discussion next week.

Bosnia Solidarity Campaign meeting

No cover up of war crimes in Bosnia

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC2.

Monday 29 January, 7.30pm

Labour and the middle class

IN HER recent lecture in memory of the 'mad monk' Keith Joseph, Baroness Thatcher berated the present leadership of the Tory Party for having lost the confidence of the middle class.

She is dead right. As every opinion poll indicates, millions have deserted the Tories for the Labour Party or, in a minority of cases, for the Liberal Democrats.

■ What the press like to call 'Middle England' have abandoned the Tory Party in droves because they are fearful for their jobs.

Traditional areas for middle-class employment such as banking, insurance and finance have seen tens of thousands of job losses.

■ Large numbers of middle class people find themselves trapped in 'negative equity'. They owe more to the banks or building societies than their houses are worth. Many thousands have been evicted because they cannot keep up their mortgage payments.

■ How to survive in old age? Elderly people are being forced to sell their houses, the one asset they thought was secure, in order to pay for care in their old age.

■ The NHS is being cut to ribbons. Middle class people are being faced with a stark choice. Either take out private insurance or join the rest in the queue for shrinking places in hospital.

But what does Labour offer such people? Nothing! Blair now boasts that he is the real Thatcherite, determined to press home the attacks on working-class and middle-class living standards alike.

His 'stakeholder society' is a fraud. Leave aside the homeless, the unemployed, the sick. They clearly have no place in Blair's scheme of things. But this is increasingly the case for large sections of the middle class.

This creates what is potentially a very dangerous situation. For in times of crisis history indicates that the middle class can go one of two ways.

■ Either they are pulled in behind the working class and become its ally in the struggle for socialism.

■ Or they are won by the forces of reaction, fascism for example, and are used as an instrument against the working class.

For the working class Thatcher's declaration is a warning. It underlines the urgent necessity for a party in the working class that can express its true historical interests.

That is why we invite everybody interested in the formation of such a party to come to the conference we will be taking part in on 16 March (see details, page 1).

Women in chains

'AT night warders wrap her chains to stop them rattling and help her sleep', said the caption in the *Independent on Sunday* to a picture of 'Jane'.

This HIV-positive woman, who has not been convicted of any offence and has no criminal record, was photographed in St Mary's hospital, Paddington, while chained to a prison officer day and night. She was on remand, awaiting trial for alleged conspiracy to supply heroin.

Before the 'Jane' case scalded the public conscience we heard about 'Annette', one of several women either shackled to male prison officers during ante-natal examinations or chained during the early stages of labour.

It was this medieval practices like these which caused prison inspectors to abort their unannounced visit to Holloway Prison and walk out in protest. But the home secretary and his sanctimonious sidekick Ann Widdecombe see no harm in those manacles.

How it treats people who are sick or pregnant is a reliable index to the degree of civilisation attained by a country or a society.

Four years before the end of the 20th century, could there be a more potent symbol of the barbarity and inhumanity of capitalist Britain than those sick and pregnant woman in chains?

Letters

Appeal for Zaire workers

I WOULD like to introduce comrade Serge Mukendi who is the US representative of the Workers and Peasants Movement of the Congo (Zaire) and is on its leadership body.

The Workers and Peasants Movement (Mouvement Ouvrier et Paysan du Congo, MOP), though it controls 20 per cent of the national territory, is under heavy repression from the Mobutu government which is trying to destroy it and the independent union (Organisation Syndicale Des Travailleurs, OST), on whose leading body Serge also serves.

Although the OST has been officially recognised since September 1991 (after having been banned for 30 years), when it tries to organise pickets or demonstrations, soldiers attack, shoot to kill.

The wounded cannot be taken to the hospital because the military will kill them there. So the union must spend money on medicines and to organise medical treatment.

Now the government is trying to prevent the collection of dues.

Average wages are about \$3 a month.

Many workers can afford to eat only once every two days in order to stretch the available food.

The OST represents 35,000 workers in mining, public services, teaching, hospital workers, transport, dock work, communications, postal service, electrical.

Healthcare workers have borne the brunt of the Ebola outbreak; along with losing family members, their illness and death has hit the union hard in loss of members and dues.

The Mobutu dictatorship has never provided hospital workers or doctors with the simplest precaution such as gowns or gloves and the union must raise the funds to provide them.

On 8 October 1995 Serge received a call from Kinshasa informing him that his brother, a postal worker shop steward, and 25 other trade unionists had been kidnapped by Mobutu's MILITARY Intelligence.

His brother, Kalombo, had organised many job actions and demonstrations.

In Zaire, when workers strike, the army is called in and they shoot to kill. The sentence for strikers who are arrested is the death penalty.

Indirectly military intelligence has informed the union and the family that they will release Kalombo only if Serge returns to face five death penalties for his political activities.

Since 8 October, the number of trade unionists kidnapped has increased to 105 and 42 bodies have been found. The union is desperately trying to raise funds to pay for lawyers to save not only lives but the union itself.

This is a real EMERGENCY. Serge has appealed to 35 US and Canadian unions. They've mostly responded positively in terms of writing to the Zaire embassy in the US and/or Canada, to the State Department, the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, etc.

But for financial aid they say they must wait a month until their executives, etc., meet.

In the instance LOST TIME EQUALS LOST LIVES.

Money has already been paid, a year ago, for the funerals of 800 trade unionists. Cheques can be written to the Fund for Zaire Trade Unionists and sent to PO Box 2919, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10017, USA.

The New York office telephone numbers of Serge are 212-261-2284 or -2281.

A little international solidarity can go a long way.

Barbara A. Zeluk
USA

Euthanasia

WHILE Jim Grozier's letter (Workers Press, 13 January) helps put Brighton Labour councillor

Gill Sweeting's remarks on hospices and euthanasia in some perspective, I don't think it detracts from what Workers Press reported.

Jim acknowledges that Cllr Sweeting's use of the words 'put down' was 'unfortunate'. He assures us the councillor's remarks should not have been interpreted as advocating compulsory euthanasia. I'm glad to hear it.

In that case, why didn't she restrict herself to saying that terminally ill patients should have a choice? If someone uses a phrase like 'put down', which normally applies to treatment of animals, how do you expect it to be interpreted?

We know the Tory press seizes on any unfortunate gaffe or lapse made by people in the labour movement. But Councillor Sweeting's ill-considered remarks were not just made in private conversation or thoughtless pub banter, they were committed to paper in a letter to a public charity.

You can hardly blame the displeased recipients for making it public.

For the councillor then to express regrets to her local Labour Party for the distress caused cancer sufferers and their families 'by the release of my letter' doesn't strike me as a satisfactory apology, or sign of repentance for what was said.

Maybe Brighton council's Labour group acted with undue haste, as Jim says, in disciplining the councillor without waiting for local party branches to have their say (although removing someone as chair of the licensing committee is not exactly a draconian punishment, is it?).

Disciplining people at the behest of the Tory press is wrong.

But surely Cllr Sweeting was displaying 'a macho image' when she said people should be 'put down'? And don't forget, it is the electors, not just Labour Party members, who put councillors in office.

If offended, they could decide to put political parties out of their misery (Ooops! hope that's not misinterpreted!).

Peter Jones
London SW1

Quelch and choirs without conductors

CHARLIE POTTINS' Inside Left column (13 January) provokes a couple of comments.

Firstly on Harry Quelch and his outrageous treatment of Emma Goldman. Charlie is quite right — it was unforgivable. But it would be regrettable if that episode was all that was remembered of Quelch's long career in the movement.

Lenin wrote several times about the generous help and support he received from Quelch and other members of the Social Democratic Federation both while he was in London and later. Quelch's son Thomas was part

of the BSP delegation to the 2nd congress of the Communist International in 1920 and was warmly welcomed by Lenin, who enquired after the health of his friends in Clerkenwell Green.

Jonathon Rae, contributing to *Critique* 20-12, describes Quelch translating and publishing Marx's *The Poverty of Philosophy*, for which he was berated mercilessly by Hyndman, and left broken and sobbing.

A surprisingly direct and physical demonstration of Cyril Smith's assertion that 'the Marxists' have always tried to force Marx into their own mould.

Secondly, Charlie pokes harmless fun at the anarcho-syndicalist choir, and wonders if they will sing in tune without a conductor.

Richard Stites, in his wonderful book *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (which every revolutionary should read at least once a year) devotes a section to conductorless orchestras, which flourished in the 1920s and were acclaimed by music critics and audiences.

Otto Klemperer is quoted as saying that: 'If this kind of thing catches on, we conductors will have to find another trade.'

John Plant

jplant@cix.compulink.co.uk

Who Azeff was

NO, *pace* Charlie Pottins, Azeff was not a 'Tsarist secret police chief' but one of history's most notorious double agents (13 January).

As a leading member of Russia's Socialist-Revolutionary Party he betrayed to the Tsarist police, between 1901 and 1908, numerous activists in that party's terrorist organisation.

His exposure caused a sensation throughout the world's revolutionary movements, and 'Azeffism' became the word for the activity of such provocateurs.

To Bill Hunter's interesting article in the same issue, a footnote.

The incident which, more than anything else, exposed the 'selectivity' of the Nuremberg charges, was the inclusion in the indictment, on insistence by the Soviets, of their accusation that the Germans had killed the several thousand Polish officers whose mass grave was found, in 1943, at Katyn.

During the trial the falsity of this shameless reversal of the truth became obvious. When the verdict was published, that point in the indictment was simply omitted — neither 'guilty' nor 'not guilty' stated — so as to save the Soviets' face.

Some years later, when Polish exiles in London wanted to erect a memorial to the victims they came up against official objections, at first, because the simple inscription — 'Katyn 1940' — was sufficient to put blame where it belonged.

Brian Pearce
New Barnet, Herts

Book review

Romanian Axis

I MANAGED to pick *Third Axis, Fourth Ally: Romanian Armed Forces in the European War, 1941-45* up in Yeovil when it was remaindered.

An unworthy and undignified fate for this valuable work by Mark Axworthy, Cornel Scafes, and Cristian Craciunoiu which fills a gap in our understanding of a little-known side of the Russian Front in World War II.

Romania was the third largest Axis power from 1941-44, and Hitler's main source of non-synthetic oil. She provided the second largest Axis army on the Russian front, and after 1944 the fourth largest Allied army, even though she was not recognised as a co-belligerent.

During the Stalinist epoch the only military histories of World War II published in Romania were biased accounts of the 1944-45 campaign, praising the Stalinist Romanian Communist party to the skies and ignoring the very serious problems caused by the 'fraternal' Soviet Union.

The army that fought that campaign was largely royalist and nationalist and treated as little better than cannon-fodder by Stalin.

The 1941-44 campaigns were ignored completely. As a result, military historians had to rely exclusively on German or Soviet accounts, and Balkan history students on novels like Olivia Manning's *Balkan Trilogy* and the dissident Petru Dumitriu's *Incognito* (1962).

Romania had a fascist party, the Iron Guard. Also known as the 'All-for-the-Fatherland' Party or the Legion of the

Archangel Michael, it got 16 per cent of the vote in the 1937 election.

Until suppressed in January 1941 it also shared power with Romania's strong man, Marshal Ion Antonescu.

Furthermore, in 1946, there was a pact between Anna Pauker, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and three senior Iron Guardist leaders in Austria, providing for all Iron Guard members not guilty of murder to return to Romania, to help the Stalinists disrupt meetings and rig the elections which were to be held on 19 November.

This pact is described in *Kiss the Hand You Cannot Bite*, by Edmund Behr (1991).

As a Bucharest joke put it: 'When you filled in your application to join the Communist Party did you mention your past Iron Guard affiliation?'

'Yes, I thought it would help.'

In the light of the above circumstances, it is extraordinary that apologists for Serb nationalism like Sir Alfred Sherman and Nora Beloff, who excuse every Chetnik excess by referring to the wartime excesses of the Ustashe, do not excuse the excesses of Gheorghiu-dej and Ceausescu by reference to the Iron Guard. Nor do they refer to the time when Marshal Ion Antonescu was the third most important man in the Axis.

Tom Carter

■ *Third Axis, Fourth Ally: Romanian Armed Forces in the European War, 1941-45* by Mark Axworthy, Cornel Scafes, and Cristian Craciunoiu (Arms and Armour).

Critique conference 96

The crisis of capitalism and the death of social democracy

3 February 1996, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC2.
Registration 9-9.30am. £10 waged £5 unwaged. Information/crèche (before 30 January): phone Hillel Ticktin 0141-339 8855 ext. 4377

A Secular Forum on:

BOSNIA — IS A SECULAR SOLUTION POSSIBLE?

Friday 26 January 1996, 7.30-9.30pm

Small Hall, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1
Nearest tube: Holborn. Admission: Free.

Speakers:

Branka Magas, author of 'The Destruction of Yugoslavia — tracking the break-up'

Melanie McDonagh, leader writer on the Evening Standard and regular visitor to former Yugoslavia

Organised by the National Secular Society (0171-404 3126)

4,000 Nigerian port workers face sack

Report from KEITH STANDRING
Organiser, International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign

NIGERIA'S military rulers have initiated the sacking of some 4,000 port workers as part of plans to restructure government agencies.

Billy Oro, president of the Nigeria Port Workers' Union

said: 'The sack letters were distributed to the affected workers on 5 January. The workers were sacked on grounds of old age, declining productivity, indiscipline and divided loyalty.'

The sackings, as well as the retirement in December of 21 managers at the ports, is part of a restructuring exercise recommended by a panel, one of about a dozen set up by military ruler General Sani Abacha last year, to investigate allegations of mis-

management and dwindling performance in public agencies.

The panels recommended a substantial reduction in staff strength and the restructuring of most of the agencies.

Since then many workers have been dismissed from state-owned firms such as the Nigeria Petroleum Corporation and the national carrier, Nigeria Airways.

The Nigerian National Shipping Line was liquidated out-

right last year with the loss of thousands of jobs. There have also been big reductions in the staff at the Federal Civil Aviation Authority and the Airports Authority of Nigeria.

According to the Federal Civil Service Commission, which regulates jobs in the public service, the redundancies will spread to many more federal agencies (or ministries) this year.

The government in Abuja said in a statement at the end of 1995 that a list of redundant staff was being compiled and their 'sack' letters would be distributed by the Federal Civil Service Commission in due course.

A senior official of the Commission said the dismissals would be followed by promotions of deserving staff as well as recruitment of recent graduates.

The International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign (ITUSC) understands the number of workers to be dismissed by this latest exercise to be in excess of 38,000.

The ITUSC supports the Campaign for Independent Unionism and its condemnation of these inhuman and callous attacks on Nigerian workers and their dependents by General Abacha and the other instruments of imperialism which maintain military rule.

The International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Union (IDEM) and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) are currently discussing a 'high level' delegation to Nigeria.

The ITUSC is pressing Bill Morris, John Edmonds and Roger Lyons, general secretaries respectively of TGWU, GMB and MSF, to ensure a senior British trade unionist is included on the delegation, since it is the British state, and Shell petroleum, that are the mainstays of the military regime.

While four activists from Nigeria's oil supervisors' union PENGASSAN, were recently released, after 14 months in detention, Frank Kokori, general secretary of the oil workers' union NUPENG, still languishes in detention, where he has been since September 1994.

In seeking to explain this contradiction, the Minister of Labour and Productivity Alhaji Uba Ahmed said the release of Frank Kokori was not in his power. He explained that 'Kokori is a union employee and not a trade unionist as widely believed.'

He told reporters that he did not hesitate in pleading the cause of the four labour leaders

recently released by the federal government, because, according to him, they are trade unionists.

Ahmed explained that the four were released on grounds of compassion 'and mostly because peace has returned to the unions.'

He might have added that the number of trade unions will be reduced from 42 to 29 by military decree and that in April elections to the executives of trade unions, including the NLC union federation will be conducted under the auspices of the military rulers.

The ITUSC, together with the CIU calls for:

1. The immediate release from detention of labour activists, including Frank Kokori, jailed journalists and all political detainees.

2. Immediate elections into the executives of the NLC, NUPENG and PENGASSAN to be organised by the unions themselves.

3. A halt to the planned redundancies.

4. An end to the Structural Adjustment Programme, privatisation of public enterprises, commercialisation of social services, redundancies and all anti-poor and anti-working-class economic and social policies.

International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign, PO Box 18, Epsom, KT18 7YR (Britain).

Camden Unison supports Nigerian workers' fight for democratic rights

BY LIZ LEICESTER

CAMDEN Unison has called a fringe meeting on Nigeria at the union's national conference in June. Welcoming a resolution from the national executive committee deploring the barbarism of General Abacha's military regime, the north London local government branch agreed to donate £200 to the Campaign for Independent Unionism (CIU), set up to fight for the Nigerian working class's democratic rights.

In a call to the Unison national executive committee to circulate information on the CIU to all branches, Camden also asked the NEC to invite a speaker from CIU to the fringe meeting.

The resolution passed by the NEC on 6 December 1995, calls for:

■ Shell, Chevron, Mobil to stop the extraction and refining of oil in Nigeria and not to start any new project for the extraction of natural gas;

■ The NEC of Unison, the TUC, Scottish TUC, Wales TUC and international trade union

organisations to put pressure on international banks to freeze the overseas assets of the Nigerian generals;

■ The exclusion of Nigeria from all UN institutions until trade union and human rights are restored.

It also supports the suspension of Nigeria from the Commonwealth and protests against the recent death sentences and summary executions carried out. Finally the motion calls for all governments to cease the deportation of individuals to Nigeria.

Smash racist Asylum Bill!

BY JACKIE VANCE

IN THE face of widespread opposition, including some Conservative MPs, the Tories have been forced into a partial retreat on one aspect of the new Asylum and Immigration Bill.

The Social Security Secretary Peter Lilley announced last week that the 13,000 asylum seekers who lodged refugee claims since October 1995 would continue to get welfare benefits until their claims and appeals were rejected.

Under the original plans these asylum seekers were to lose all benefits and be thrown destitute on the streets from 8 January.

Some local councils had jumped the gun and sent letters to this effect to many refugees

and the Refugee Council and the churches had made preparation to set up emergency shelter and feeding centres.

However Lilley confirmed that the government intended to implement the remainder of this racist bill.

From 8 February new asylum seekers who do not make a claim as soon as they arrive in Britain will automatically lose all right to claim welfare benefits — about 70 per cent of cases.

Other measures include introducing a list of so-called 'safe' countries from which asylum claims will be considered to be without foundation and this is coupled with further powers to fast-track appeals and deport asylum seekers.

Employers are to be made

legally liable for the immigration status of their employees.

This makes the bosses agents of immigration control on the shop floor and is bound to increase race discrimination in employment.

The proposals also include a new legal definition of 'immigrant' covering every person who 'requires leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom'.

All so-called 'immigrants' are excluded from automatic entitlement to welfare benefits.

This is the fifth act of legislation aimed at immigration control by the Tories since they came to office in 1979.

Every one of these bills has been an attack on those seeking refuge from oppression and persecution.

These laws have sought to deny basic rights such as housing entitlement. But even the Home Office has described this bill as a 'sharp break' from existing legislation.

However Lilley's retreat shows that it can be defeated. This is a weak and crisis-ridden government which does not match up to the requirements of capitalism.

Immigration controls and restrictions on asylum rights weaken the fighting ability of the workers' movement.

It is essential that there is a huge turnout of trade unionists and labour organisations on the national demonstration called by the Campaign Against the Immigration and Asylum Bill in London on 24 February.

Sacked workers go to industrial tribunal JJ Fast Food support bites

BY NICK BAILEY

A SACKED Liverpool docker spoke to the 100-strong final picket of JJ Fast Food sacked workers and their supporters on 13 January.

'You are facing the same type of employer as we are confronting in Liverpool,' he said. 'But the working class is beginning to rise again. We need fighting trade unions that are prepared to stand up to the anti-trade-union laws.'

The Turkish and Kurdish workers have won widespread support in the community since 31 October when they were sacked.

A local group of pensioners were on the picket with their banner, together with the banners of the Haringey trades council and passport office workers — members of the CPSA.

The sacked workers expressed

their concern that, reluctantly, they are taking their cases for 'unfair dismissal' to the industrial tribunal. This move was recommended by the Transport and General Workers Union.

But workers have no confidence that they will get their jobs back through the courts.

Liz from the JJ Fast Food Support Group said that only 2 per cent of industrial tribunal cases result in reinstatement. She claimed that union officials had not given wholehearted support to the strike. Just at the point when the union decided that this was the only way forward, the campaign in support of the strikers was beginning to bite.

Harrow council had ended its contract with the company; Southwark and Enfield were expected to follow shortly. Not only councils, but schools and burger-bars were cancelling their contracts with the company.

Stop the Asylum and Immigration Bill

National demonstration
Saturday 24 February

Assemble 11am
Embankment

Rally Trafalgar Square

Supported by the TUC

MSF backing for Bongani Mkungo and Liverpool dockers!

BY SIMON BURGESS

SOUTH AFRICAN Workers International member Bongani Mkhungo was defended by members of the Manufacturing Science Federation Crawley branch.

Members heard how Bongani was attacked by COSATU stewards while handing out leaflets at the 10th anniversary celebrations of the South African union federation on 2 December 1995.

Crawley MSF defended Bongani's right to criticise the policies of the COSATU leadership. The branch also donated £100 to help ensure his safety.

■ At the same meeting, Crawley MSF enthusiastically received copies of the Liverpool dockers' paper, the Dockers Charter (see page 6). They agreed to take 30 copies of the paper and donate £100 to the strike fund.

■ Send resolutions and letters in support of Bongani to COSATU, fax: 00 27 11 339 6940. Copies to Workers International, 0171-387 0569. Donations to South Africa Solidarity Fund, Workers

JJ Fast Food support group meetings
every Wednesday at 72 West Green
Road, London N15 5NS.
7.30pm prompt.

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

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Inside left

Holy profit

SCHOOLS must teach our children the difference between right and wrong, says Tory government expert Dick Tait (rhymes with Dictate). What, haven't the clergy been teaching us all by precept, and our political leaders by their example?

The reason there's confusion isn't 'political correctness' nor moral relativism, but failure to move with the times. Seeing the slaughter in Rwanda and Bosnia, and the treatment of homeless people in Britain, the Church of England has decided it no longer needs the ultimate deterrent. Shouldn't it also follow the example of Labour's 'modernisers' and revise those antiquated ten commandments, and gospels?

How about: 'Thou shalt not kill — except when protecting vital national (i.e. capitalist) interests';

'Thou shalt not bear false witness but you can be economical with the truth';

'Thou shalt not commit adultery — unless you're royalty, and/or have already negotiated with one of the Sunday papers';

'Honour the Sabbath day for the employer's profit; six days shalt thou labour, but consider it an honour and don't ask for double-time if the boss asks you to come in on Sunday'.

Canon Peter Dodd is showing the way. Some North East trade unionists condemned the government's hypocritical pretence that it was concerned about jobs when it decided to export Saudi dissident Mohammed Al-Masari.

But Canon Dodd, an industrial chaplain in Newcastle, was more understanding. He said Vickers had invested 'a great deal of money' on the inside, and people were grateful... The issue of arms exports versus free speech was 'an intellectual poser' of only remote interest (*Guardian*, 8 January). Bit like those obscure Middle Eastern riddles about camels passing through the eye of a needle, really.

Whoever counselled: 'O put not your faith in princes', clearly did not foresee the extent of Britain's vital interests in the Saudi kingdom. What shall it profit a man if he gaineth his soul but loses an important arms contract?

They held a cathedral service in Coventry the other week for cars. The church could bless tanks, Tornados, aircraft, and those electric batons from the Royal Ordnance which Saudi police use for persuading political prisoners to speak freely. But clerics still lag behind some of the moral leadership coming from Westminster.

'Hell hath no fury' like Ann Widdecombe, who left the C. of E. for Roman Catholicism because she didn't think women should be ministers. Assisting the ever-truthful high priest Michael Howard, Miss Widdecombe demonstrates her belief in the Family by reporting members to Nigeria, then washes her hands like Pilate, blaming the tribunal.

Visiting Holloway prison, Miss Widdecombe saw nothing wrong. A tough army officer took one look at conditions and refused to continue his inspection. Still, women giving birth while shackled in chains is symbolic of 'back to basics'.

But the Conservatives have no monopoly on such piety. Labour MP Frank Field is a devout churchman who gave the Tories their Family Support Act.

The TGWU-sponsored member for Birkenhead doesn't share trade unionists' belief that they are their brothers' keepers. He charitably told the Women of the Waterfront on 9 January that he'd 'string up' striking Liverpool dockers.

If Mr Field is familiar with the book of Esther, he might ponder the fate of a politician called Haman.

Charlie Pettis

The Bosnian 'peace deal' — racism, ethnic division

The Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International endorses the following resolution issued by Workers Aid for Bosnia. Workers Aid has fought for international solidarity to defend the democratic struggle for the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the defence of its multi-cultural society through which is expressed the unity of its working class. Workers Aid convoys were initiated by a proposal from a member of the Workers International in Serbia.

The principled struggle against division is the only basis for peace in Bosnia — it is also the basis for peace in the Balkans as a whole. The military and political defeat of the various reactionary nationalist leaders will open the way for the establishment of a federation of independent republics of former Yugoslavia.

The terror unleashed in Bosnia, Rwanda, Chechnya and many other places more and more reveals that the domination of the planet by capitalism is not just hindering the development of human society but reducing it to barbarism and worse.

European capitalist politicians talk of a united Europe. The war shows what a myth this is. Every government in Europe collaborated with the Greater Serbian nationalists (or stood aside) as they divided Bosnia. The European capitalists may dream of a united Europe in order to confront the USA or Japan but every day they have to face the workers' movement of Europe and seek ways to divide and rule.

In Bosnia nearly everything that was won by the partisan revolution in terms of living standards lies in ruins. But the desire for a united Bosnia also contains the aspirations to defend all that was positive in the old society. There will be a great struggle as imperialism — with the assistance of Bosnian bureaucrats, war profiteers and others — tries to exploit the resources of Bosnia

SHUT away in a US airforce base, the presidents of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia have agreed a peace deal. After three years of refusing to defend the victims of aggression, the US and UN politicians are now imposing a 'peace' which endorses 'ethnic cleansing'.

In 1992, Serbian nationalists — Chetniks — invaded Bosnia-Herzegovina. They aimed to annex most of its territory into a Greater Serbia. Bosnia's multi-cultural society, where Serbs, Muslims, Croats and others lived side by side, had existed for generations and was further strengthened by the partisans' victory over fascism and division in World War II.

The present attack on this tolerant society was triggered by the majority vote of the Bosnian people for an independent country with a constitution guaranteeing equal rights for all citizens.

Seventy per cent of Bosnian territory was seized in a military operation directed by the Serbian regime in Belgrade under the leadership of Yugoslav President Milosevic — the leader of Serbia's grotesquely misnamed 'Communist Party'.

Seized

In areas seized by Chetniks, all non-Serbs and anti-nationalist Serbs were murdered or driven out, often, by openly fascist gangs working under Belgrade's control. An orgy of racist murder, rape and terror left 250,000 dead and millions of people driven from their homes and scattered around the world as refugees.

The UN and Great Powers prevented Bosnia from obtaining arms while the Chetniks had the entire arsenal of the old Yugoslav army. UN troops, sent in supposedly to protect the supply of humanitarian aid, assisted the ethnic cleansing.

The present peace deal is a product of US diplomacy aimed at advancing US influence in the region by supporting different nationalist politicians and using them to divide and control the population.

Unlike Britain and other European Union powers, the US has carefully courted elements inside the Bosnian government, particularly those willing to abandon the defence of multi-cultural society and accept

a mini-state for Bosnian Muslims.

Sixty thousand NATO troops will pour into Bosnia to protect the hold of nationalist politicians and war lords over their various territories.

Any Bosnian who now tries to continue the struggle to reunify the country and restore its multi-cultural way of life will be attacked by NATO forces. Their guns are not aimed at the Chetniks.

The Serbian regime have got what they wanted. Once Milosevic has whipped the Bosnian Serb nationalist leaders into line, Belgrade has control of half of Bosnia.

The tremendous resistance to the division of Bosnia by the majority of its people prevented the outright military victory of the Chetniks as well as the Croatian government's attempt to join in the plunder.

Indeed, that resistance was turning the tide of war. The timing of the present US intervention had more to do with the growing collapse of morale in the Chetnik army and the possibility of its defeat than with a search for peace.

The determination not to accept the destruction of Bosnian society and its replacement with ethnic ghettos destroyed all the previous UN 'peace' plans that openly recognised the nationalists' conquests as permanent.

The resistance to division is acknowledged in the wording of the present deal. It recognises the pre-war boundaries and calls for the election of a single government for the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina. It forbids the annexation of parts of the country which is the dream of both the Serbian and Croatian regimes.

Until recently the world's politicians said Bosnia was dead and that the 'realpolitik' of war had to be recognised.

Forced

Now they have been forced to acknowledge the continuing, deep opposition to division even after three years of slaughter. But united, multi-cultural Bosnia has been destroyed and cannot be rebuilt while most of its regions are under the control of nationalist forces who have carried out genocide.

The recognition of a united Bosnia is meaningless unless it is made clear

while working people try to reassert their pre-war way of life in terms of health care, education, housing and working conditions.

But the attack on workers' rights is not just confined to Bosnia. The Croatian government is imposing all the Thatcherite anti-union legislation. In Serbia the deteriorating living conditions that led to the massive pre-war anti-government demonstrations have worsened.

The defence of workers' rights and living conditions, everywhere, is inseparable from the defence of an undivided Bosnia-Herzegovina and from the struggle to rebuild internationalism and unity in action of the working class.

Bosnia was dragged into war with an economy based on public ownership of most elements of production. Already there has been an attempt by the government to assume direct state control over the factories and mines in order to privatise them. This was stopped by the workers. It is vital that the workers rebuild their trade unions in order to control production themselves. Otherwise the vultures from the world's banks will strike and seize everything that has been built by the workers for their own benefit since 1945.

But Bosnian workers will no more be able to win that struggle on their own than they were able to overcome the international forces that have descended to reinforce ethnic division. Workers' organisations around Europe must join them. They must share with them their own experiences of privatisation, their own experiences of the fight against the destruction of welfare services (as in France recently) and they must do everything they can to assist the workers of Bosnia rebuild their shattered industry.

how the nationalist forces are going to be destroyed.

The peace plan does the opposite. Fifty per cent of the country will remain under the control of Chetniks — in reality under Belgrade's control. Other areas are under Croatian rule.

The peace plan protects and perpetuates their influence. The Chetniks, not the Bosnian government, will control the army, police, law courts, education and the media in half of Bosnia.

They can continue their tyranny over ordinary Serbian people, whipping up racist fervour against Muslims.

The Croatian government's attitude towards the areas of Bosnia-Herzegovina it controls is clear from the recent Croatian elections in which all Bosnian Croats were encouraged to vote. Croatian President Tudjman sees these territories as part of Croatia not as part of Bosnia.

Endorses

The peace plan endorses the right of return for the millions of refugees but who will return to homes they were forced out of while the influence of the nationalist murderers prevails?

Even as Clinton was announcing the 'peace', people were still being driven from their homes or killed. European governments are preparing to force over a million refugees to return to Bosnia despite the fact that many of them will be in danger if they return to their homes.

The peace plan calls for the prosecution of war criminals, but will the real criminals be prosecuted? Milosevic, the chief architect of the war is now the 'great diplomat'.

Tudjman, who presided over the Croat nationalist murder of east Mostar, is another 'great statesman'. What about the UN military and political leaders who handed over thousands of Bosnians to be slaughtered in Srebrenica — will any of these people who have played a part in genocide ever be indicted in court as war criminals?

THE only basis for peace is a united, multi-cultural Bosnia brought about by the defeat and destruction of nationalist forces and their ideology

of ethnically pure states. Such a victory is possible.

The Chetniks only managed to inflict defeats because the Bosnian people were left to defend a united society alone.

The US and the Great Powers are only able to impose this deal because the Bosnian people are without powerful allies. They have been denied weapons, blockaded and starved. They have gone without a friend to the treacherous tables of international diplomacy.

Where are the mass demonstrations in the capitals of Europe that opposed apartheid rule in South Africa?

Strangled

Multi-cultural Bosnia is being strangled because the people of Europe — above all its labour movement, its trade unions, socialist parties, anti-fascist groups — have not yet come to defend the people of multi-cultural Bosnia against racist genocide.

People now ask the question: 'Will the peace hold?' For working people this is the wrong question. What should be asked is: 'Are we prepared to accept this consolidation of ethnic division? Are we prepared to allow our governments to send their armed forces to protect the division lines created by barbarism?'

If we do, the consequences for the rest of Europe are serious. Ethnic cleansing will not stop at the borders of Bosnia.

For most Bosnians the 'peace' will be a bitter pill to swallow. Thousands will feel that they will never be able to return home.

The people whose relatives and friends were murdered will see the killers go free. Muslims, Croats and Serbs who never succumbed to nationalist propaganda will feel betrayed.

The labour movement, students, all the working people of Europe can stop this betrayal. Take the side of an undivided Bosnia-Herzegovina! Speak out against an unjust peace! Speak out against your governments and let all those Bosnians who refuse to accept this shameful 'peace' know that they have allies.

The question of whether the fighting will stop or resume in a year is not the key issue. Fascism is

'Deal': Support for Bosnia and genocide



The unjust 'peace' agreed by Milosevic, Tudjman and Izetbegovic won't bring peace to Bosnia

reemerging in Europe. The Bosnian people have tried desperately to fight it, but isolated and alone, they have been unable to defeat it.

It is now clear that the war against ethnic cleansing and division cannot be won by the Bosnian people alone. All the major world powers have intervened to reinforce division.

The Bosnian army could defeat the Chetniks but to defeat the imperialist armies it will need supporters in every country to campaign against their governments' support for intervention.

People who allow their own government to strangle Bosnia are helping to tighten the noose around their own necks.

In Britain, France and elsewhere, campaigns against privatisation, social service cuts, unemployment and destruction of the environment will all be met with attempts to divide and weaken the movement as is now happening in Bosnia.

But this is not Germany after the rise of Hitler. It is not too late to stop the consolidation of these barbaric 'ethnically' pure ghettos. Bosnian resistance is still alive.

The Croatian nationalists failed to win the overwhelming victory they expected in recent Croatian elections. They lost control of Zagreb.

Anger

In Serbia, there is growing anger from people towards nationalist politicians who used them with their promises to defend 'all Serbs' but who abandoned them in Slavonia and elsewhere when it suited them.

Everything must be done to agitate in the ranks of those disillusioned with the Serbian and Croatian regimes for a principled defence of multi-cultural undivided Bosnia.

The labour movement must act

send delegations to Bosnia, to Croatia, to Serbia, to Kosovo: organise for people from all parts of former Yugoslavia who oppose the carve up of Bosnia to visit other countries to speak about their situation.

The Bosnian government must spell out the plans for reuniting the country in reality, not on paper, or it will have joined the ranks of those who have abandoned Bosnia, real Bosnia, in exchange for rule over a ghetto.

Unjust

The Bosnian government says an unjust peace is better than another year of war. But the injustice must be righted or there will never be peace.

So far the only perspective for reunification put forward by the Bosnian government is the hope that US aid will pour into Bosnia for reconstruction making it more attractive to ordinary Serbs than the occupied areas.

Many Bosnians also put hopes that a supply of US weapons will allow the retaking of lost territory in the future. Both these perspectives are false.

The US has made promises of massive aid to every country in eastern Europe and has delivered peanuts. The US supply of arms will go hand in hand with its work to turn the Bosnian army into a force to control the Bosnian people — exactly as they have done with the PLO in Palestine.

The NATO troops will not be there just to deal with those who continue their efforts to end division. They will also be there to oversee the rapid passing of Bosnian communal property into private hands, into the hands of war profiteers, members of the old state bureaucracy and above all into the hands of US banks.

Industrial production in Bosnia has been destroyed. The communal agricultural lands, factories and

mines will now be picked over by the vultures from the foreign capitalists.

This was always the subtext of the war and the reason for the UN support for ethnic division and the destruction of possible workers' opposition to privatisation and foreign control.

Every worker in Europe who has fought against privatisation should extend a hand of solidarity to Bosnian workers who are soon to be robbed of the fruits of their labour. Let them know what privatisation means.

Workers Aid for Bosnia has campaigned for three years to rebuild international solidarity against the destruction of Bosnia.

Banner

Over 100 lorries have taken aid to Bosnian trade unions under its banner. The money, drivers and supplies for each of these lorries has only come from a campaign that urged the working people of Europe to take the side of an undivided multi-cultural Bosnia, that called for the lifting of the arms embargo, that opposed the UN intervention, that called for a victory for the Bosnian army. We will continue this work.

Three years of superpower complicity in genocide leaves us in no doubt that a united Bosnia will not come from the efforts of any of the present world politicians.

We know that many Bosnian people will not give up hope of restoring the kind of society that existed before nationalism and intolerance destroyed it. We share their hope and will continue to work outside of Bosnia for a movement against ethnic division.

We will be discussing with as many organisations as possible, inside and outside of Bosnia, who share that perspective to decide how to continue our work.

Science focus

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

Science forum

THE responses to this column, and recent articles on science topics in Workers Press, have been very encouraging.

Readers have clearly appreciated coverage, from a socialist perspective, of a range of issues that are not often treated politically. This has prompted the idea of forming a science forum. This will be open to readers and contacts who want to contribute to the development of a Marxist analysis of scientific issues.

We hope to bring together a group that can write for Workers Press, talk and discuss on science issues of the moment to a variety of audiences, and contribute to producing cheap, popular publications for distribution to people involved in struggles around these problems.

Environmental destruction through industrial pollution, inhuman intensive farming, road building and wasteful consumerism have all prompted large sections to come into conflict with the system.

These people often have some understanding that capitalism is the cause of these crises. But there is a widespread feeling that political movements are somehow destructive to the success of what essentially become 'single issue campaigns'.

This reflects disillusionment with the traditional major parties of protest that are seen, correctly, to have totally capitulated to capitalism. Radical left groups have also antagonised these movements through their sectarianism.

Independent groups such as Greenpeace are widely admired, but have really had minimal impact on dealing with fundamental problems.

We aim to find ways of reaching out, to contribute to the process of bringing particular issues together, as part of a broad resistance that must find wider political forms to be successful.

An orientation that includes support for a rebirth of the labour movement and the establishment of a new socialist party must be built.

Some victories around particular campaigns will be possible, but a settling of accounts with capitalism is the only solution that will ensure the resolution of problems that are threatening the very existence of the planet and all life.

The environmental crisis will not be resolved by capitalism — it is a product of the very nature of capitalism itself. This puts Marxists — if they are capable of working in an innovative and non-sectarian way — in a powerful position to mobilise more effective resistance.

The seriousness with which capitalism takes the potential of these movements can be seen in police mobilisations to deal with them, often in the face of overwhelming popular sympathy for the protesters.

The threat to bring MI5 into day-to-day policing reflects a fear of new mass movements, arising from unexpected sources, that have the potential to threaten the system.

Some of the many issues that require a Marxist scientific treatment include the damage to health by the food industry, attempts to rationalise attacks on welfare and the most oppressed sectors in society by attributing problems to 'genetic defects', and the horrific nature of new weapon systems being developed to protect the 'new world order'.

If you wish to become involved with the work of the science forum please write to me at Workers Press. Anyone with an interest is welcome — you do not have to have a science background.

Warfare on the streets

CHEMICAL agents banned from use by international conventions could soon be used by police on the streets

of Britain! A number of recent incidents in which the police have emerged the worst for wear in violent confrontations with criminals have prompted demands for the issuing of chemical weapons.

If authorised for use against criminals their use against protesters would follow very quickly.

Readers may remember how the massive use of CS gas against Catholic families in Ireland was justified by renaming it CS smoke to get around concerns over the use of what is effectively gas warfare against civilian communities. Deaths of children occurred as a result.

What is being proposed now is the use of pepper sprays and foams. These are made from extracts of red peppers. They have an immediate incapacitating effect which can be fatal.

Since their introduction in the US 61 people have been killed as a result of their use. Asthma sufferers are particularly at risk. Long-term effects include cancer, breathing and circulatory damage.

They are banned from use in warfare by the Geneva Chemical Weapons Convention and the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention. But use in civilian policing seems to be allowed.

Manufacturers of these agents are blatantly promoting them for public order applications, with names such as Riot Extinguisher, Devastator and Mobstopper. And the police claim they are only for self protection!

Ebola's back

THE deadly Ebola virus that I wrote about in an earlier column has emerged again. The gaps between its appearances seem to be getting shorter.

A refugee from the civil war in Liberia has been diagnosed as having Ebola. A colony of chimpanzees on the Liberia/Ivory Coast border has also recently been decimated by this terrible disease — its source among animals is unknown, but there are fears that it may be able to spread from monkeys to humans.

The fears are that an outbreak among people displaced by the instability in these countries may occur.

Fortunately this particular strain of Ebola seems to have low virulence, but the increasing political instability in this part of the world, and resulting movements of refugees subjected to poor hygiene conditions raises the possibility of a virulent strain becoming established.

To date all outbreaks have been stamped on rapidly, restricting their ability to spread widely. The spread of terrible diseases such as Ebola will be one of the products of the disintegration of human communities around the world as the uncontrolled ravaging effects of the crisis of capitalism continue.

Meanwhile down on the farm

ONE of the delights of walking in the countryside is avoiding stepping in the cow pats. This is becoming more of a problem as a result of intensive farming.

The use of chemical treatments, particularly a worming agent called Ivermectin, is making cow pats toxic to the small creatures that include them in their diet, thus recycling them rapidly back into the soil.

This is extending the lifespan of the average cow pat from 20 to 60 days.

In my teens I was a keen reader of science fiction and I recollect a story in which aliens came to earth to buy vast quantities of cow pats which were a great consumer attraction.

Is this the real reason for the alien abduction nonsense which is attracting so much media attention. Perhaps crop circles are really markers for particularly juicy long lived supplies!

The passing of the last Bohemian

I WAS greatly saddened by the death last week, at the ripe age of 87, of the poet, novelist, journalist, and critic Hubert Nicholson.

In 1945 I was put in touch with Nicholson by a mutual friend who admired both his poetry and his left-wing allegiance, and thought he might have a good influence on me.

So we met in the bar just inside Hull's Paragon Station and drank a lot of beer together. Whereas he was a successful 37-year-old writer, all I had at 18 was vague literary aspirations, long hair (by 1945 standards), a hugely knotted tie, and a pair of green corduroy trousers.

It turned out that we had much in common. I was then a reporter on the *Yorkshire Post* in Hull, where he had started his working life as a copy boy on the once distinguished but long-defunct *Eastern Morning News*.

Nicholson, like me, had spent long boring hours in the local police court, waiting for the occasional funny or sensational case that would make good 'copy'.

Dozing there one morning after a boozy late night, he woke to hear a defendant asking the magistrate if her name could be kept out of the papers and receiving the sweet reply: 'Don't worry, madam, the reporter is asleep.'

Nicholson and I shared also a love of jazz, particularly the low-down New Orleans jazz of the 1920s: merely swapping titles such as *Clarinet Marmalade* and *Struttin' with Some Barbecue* brought a smile of camaraderie.

Above all we shared a deep love of our natal city; a fascination with its waterfront pubs and dives and the *louche* characters that haunted them; a fondness for remote parts of Holderness with names like Spurn Point and Sunk Island, where the overarching sky seemed to meet the flat land at an infinitely far horizon.

Nicholson urged me — after half a century the memory remains intensely vivid, more so than many a more recent conversation — to 'be a live wire', to 'make things hum around you' wherever I found myself, to throw myself whole-heartedly and passionately into whatever I undertook, to act always and everywhere as a piece of 'human yeast'.

Though my own energies were largely poured into political activity, rather than the poetry readings Nicholson loved to organise, I should like to think that this wise advice has borne some fruit along the way.

A few months after this meeting I took out of the library Nicholson's highly readable autobiography, *Half My Days and Nights* (1941), which struck an immediate chord.

Nicholson had spent his childhood just round the corner from my own home near Pearson Park (a leafy quarter much later to become Philip Larkin country), and I was thrilled to find him quoting a mysterious local imprecation I had heard from my great-aunts: 'I look over your head to a dark wall.'

I was amused to read how he had scandalised his family by sitting reading quietly each evening until about ten o'clock and then putting his coat on and sloping off to carouse in some notorious drinking-club or other.

My family didn't greatly care for unconventional behaviour, either, and a couple of years later, with £2 in my pocket, I decided to move to London. Though I did not acknowledge it — or perhaps realise it — at the time, Nichol-

PERSONAL COLUMN

son's advice and autobiography helped me to come to that decision.

BUT the iron discipline of the Young Communist League soon proved stronger than any Bohemian inclinations. As a recruit to the editorial staff of the *Daily Worker* I had to get my hair cut, wear flannels instead of corduroys, clean my shoes from time to time, and stick to a strict timetable of work and study.

Yet, in such spare time as I could find, I still followed in Nicholson's footsteps — to the extent of visiting the Wheatshaf in London's Fitzrovia, where before the war he had famously heard Dylan Thomas improvising verse.

By 1948, however, to my disappointment, this famous pub had ceased to be a haunt of poets; some of its regulars were now plain-clothes policemen trying to lure gay men into the lavatories.

I read eagerly everything else from Nicholson's pen that I could lay my hands on: his poetry, which never completely discarded a marked surrealist influence; his novels, which never found the wide readership they deserved, perhaps because of their unfashionable East Riding regionalism, strongly marked even in the disturbing *Patterns of Three and Four* (1965); not least, his criticism, also sadly underestimated.

If, for instance, there has been in the past 50 years a more intelligent, fruitful, and stimulating discussion of Lewis Carroll's Alice books than is to be found in Nicholson's *A Voyage to Wonderland and Other Essays* (1947), then I should like to hear about it. (And, yes, I do take into account the work of Martin Gardner, Roger Lancelyn Green, Harry Levin, and Patricia Meyer Spacks.)

The young Hubert Nicholson makes a brief and wholly recognisable appearance as 'Herbert Shand' in a novel called *Anna Craft* by Richard Ford, which was withdrawn from sale soon after publication in 1936 because it libelled a woman journalist.

The character based on Nicholson is said to be 'the only journalist in the town who could cover intellectual events'. He 'always sipped pink gin, for which he was teased, but he cared not a fig for their remarks'.

He 'spoke nasally, and with an attractive lilt'. 'His voice could almost have been termed mellifluous had it been devoid of Yorkshire dialect.'

But there is a touch of malice: 'He was wearing a plum-coloured shirt and a grey tie, and every now and then he ran his fingers through his thick, greasy curls, and twisted his mouth into a lopsided smile, which was said by young women to be captivating'. His 'reputation in the town as a lover was notorious' (this is Hull, remember, in the early 1930s).

Literary and artistic Bohemianism belongs to the distant past. Perhaps it was never so alluring, outrageous, innovative or creative as we imagine it to have been — not even in its heyday, when Baudelaire was leading his pet lobster round the Paris streets on a pink ribbon, in order to shock middle-class philistines.

Many self-styled Bohemians were mere poseurs; a few had real talent. Hubert Nicholson was one of the latter. He went to a lot of bottle parties; but he also published more than 30 books, which enriched many people's lives.

He was the last of the Bohemians. And I bid him farewell with respect and gratitude.

Peter Fryer

How labour can make a difference

JACK HEYMAN of the San Francisco Longshoremen and Warehousemen's Union spoke at the Liverpool dockers' community rally on 13 January (see report below). Here is his May Day 1995 article published in the OPEN FORUM column of the *San Francisco Chronicle*

IN FEBRUARY [1995], when the aristocracy of labour gathered for the AFL-CIO [US trade union federation] executive council in plush Bal Harbour, Florida, something strange occurred.

For the first time in anyone's memory, criticism was voiced of President Lane Kirkland, although none of the nine officials questioning his leadership (representing 40 per cent of the group's 16.7 million members) called for his resignation.

From these staid, often boring, proceedings, a palace revolt is brewing with Kirkland's head spared the guillotine... until the organisation's convention in November.

Even more ominous was the brashness of about 70 strikers from Decatur, Illinois, wearing red T-shirts saying: 'I'm union and proud of it.'

On strike against three companies for over a year, they had come from the class wars of America's heartland to demand of their leaders a 'solidarity bank' to aid their struggles. They, of course, were not permitted to speak.

So, why all the uproar in the labour movement?

For one thing, organised labour is down to a mere 10.6 per cent of the private sector, 15.5 per cent of the total workforce — less



Jack Heyman

than half its peak 50 years ago of 35 per cent.

If organised labour's numerical strength is waning, so is its fervour and direction. Its dinosaurian leadership remains mired in the anti-Communist Cold War swamp and sinking fast, unable to confront employers' new-found combativeness or the impact of an increasingly globalised economy.

Clearly a gap exists between the trade union bureaucracy and the ranks. While workers' anger is high with the Democrats over issues like striker replacement, the North American Free Trade Agreement and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade,

few union leaders support breaking away from the Democrats and organising a Labour Party.

Furthermore, none will lead unions out of the anti-labour legal morass that has ensnared their ability to win strikes.

A bold defiance of picket-limiting injunctions and labour laws like Taft-Hartley, which bans solidarity strikes, could turn the tide of labour defeats.

Civil disobedience used by the civil-rights movement in the 1960s to win inspiring victories against seemingly insurmountable odds ironically was learned from the labour movement's tumultuous class struggles of the 1930s.

And the pendulum of public support is swinging toward unions as seen in the Bay Area's recent grocery and newspaper strikes.

Criticism of Kirkland has been rife in the rank-and-file for some time, and he is derisively referred to as 'Lame' Kirkland.

During the hard-fought Masters, Mates and Pilots Union strike of 1985, when mates were being handcuffed and dragged down ships' gangways by police in West Coast ports, Kirkland, who is ostensibly a merchant marine officer and a member of the MMP, did nothing.

His own membership in San

Francisco, enraged, voted to censure him.

Unless the AFL-CIO initiates an aggressive organising campaign it will continue to atrophy.

Yet a paltry 5 per cent of its budget is all that is allocated for organising, while millions (funded by the US government) are spent on 'teaching' Russians about 'Democracy in the Workplace'.

Nearly 110 years ago today in Chicago's Haymarket Square [May 1886], American workers, in their multitude of nationalities, led the struggle for the 8-hour work day.

May Day, which commemorates the martyrs and their struggle, is universally celebrated as labour's holiday. Everywhere, that is, except America.

Can a labour movement still be a catalyst for social change? Certainly.

When Nelson Mandela toured this country in 1990, he credited the San Francisco longshore union with reigniting the anti-apartheid movement in this country by its protest strike against a ship from apartheid-riven South Africa.

This rank-and-file solidarity action shows the way forward for labour, for although it may have been an illegal strike, it inspired broad support and won.

Dockers and supporters oppose Asylum Bill Liverpool marches for sacked portworkers

BY GEOFF PILLING

DETERMINED striking Liverpool dockers, their families and supporters were on their eighth community march and rally through Liverpool last Saturday, expressing the determination of the whole of Merseyside that the 500 dockers must win their battle for re-instatement.

The lead banners on the march were of the trade unions at Pendleton ice-cream factory in Kirkby and the Kirkby Unemployed Centre. The dockers banner came behind them.

Opening the rally after the march, one of the strike leaders, Bobby Moreton explained that the Kirkby banners were given pride of place in memory of Steve Alcock who died in his early 40s two days before the march. Steve had been convenor of stewards at Pendletons.

Moreton explained that Steve had always been a staunch friend of the Liverpool dockers. He was a founder member of the Kirkby Unemployed Centre and secretary of Knowsley Trades Council. He expressed condolences on behalf of all present, especially to his widow and baby.

Everybody joined in a minute's silence.

Jimmy Nolan strike leader, welcomed the many children who had participated in the march and warned that unless the strike was won the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company would bring about a deterioration of the whole industry and the city of Liverpool.

Nolan demanded that the £55 million government stake in the MDHC be used to put the port on a viable basis. He challenged the working class of Merseyside: 'How long will you stay at work? You must rally behind us,' he said.

particular at the Mersey tugmen but he also called on the workers at Vauxhall and Fords to organise a 24-hour stoppage in defence of the dockers' struggle.

Nolan drew attention to the international scope of the struggle and announced the 17 February International Conference of Dockworkers. He declared that shipping firms would be attacked wherever they were.

'We are going to advance the interests of dockers throughout the world,' he said to great applause.

Secretary of the Liverpool dockers' shop stewards committee, Jim Davies condemned the press blackout of the struggle. He said, to laughter, that his committee had considered kidnapping princess Anne in the hope that they might get a single line in the *Daily Mirror*.

Davies told the audience that the picket was completely solid and that 100 dockers had the previous week gone to the Medway port of Sheerness to win support for their fight.

He reported that international support was growing daily. A delegation was presently in Israel; that other dockers were due to leave for Italy the following day.

He warned the leaders of the Transport and General Workers' Union that they would accept no half measures. All 500 workers had to be reinstated or the strike would continue.

Davies also demanded that the TGWU should provide money to sustain the strike.

Mike Carden, member of the TGWU general executive council and the shop steward responsible for international communications, said the issue in the strike was 'dead simple'.

'We've given up everything for a principle. It's our port and we're going back there.'

'Other workers in this great city must come out in our support,' said Carden.

Michael Black Lord Mayor of Liverpool, brought greetings to the strikers:

'I have never seen a strike with such popular support.'

Liverpool Labour MP, Eddie Loyden said that the strike would continue until all 500 men got their jobs back.

'We have seen something over the last 16 weeks that could never have been imagined,' he said. 'This fight is for the working class of the world.'

Bayo Omoyola, a Nigerian under attack from the Home Office explained that he had come to Britain in 1989 and had been employed by the Liverpool city council. His request for a work permit was rejected but since 1991 the council had paid for him to campaign for his rights. His appeal had been finally turned down last September.

'I am seeking the support of the white public,' he declared. 'The right to work and the dignity of labour must be stressed.'

After this speech, Nolan called for a vote of opposition to the Asylum Bill. His call met with unanimous support.

Jack Heyman, chair of the San Francisco docks shop stewards committee, brought greetings of solidarity to the Liverpool strikers. He led the crowd in the chant: 'Scabs out! Dockers in!'

Pledging support for the previous speaker from Nigeria, Heyman reminded the audience that British imperialism had always

used racism to divide the working class.

He said he was delighted to find that the class struggle was still alive in Liverpool. The strike was a message to the Tory government. The 500 dockers must be reinstated and there must be no victimisations.

Some ships might still be leaving Liverpool said Heyman but with international solidarity those ships could be stopped at every port throughout the world.

To loud cheers he said: 'The port employers want to bring the dockers to their knees. We will bring the employers to their knees!'

One of Liverpool's firefighters still in dispute also spoke.

STOP PRESS:

MDHC shares dropped 29 points to 3.91p in the first two days of last week.

Israeli dockers decided to boycott ships from Liverpool resulting in Zim Line shipping company calling on the MDHC to settle the dispute or they would take their ships elsewhere.

Jimmy Nolan was invited to speak at the International Transport Federation Conference in London on 18 January.

While there is a news blackout in Britain, news of the Liverpool dockers' strike can be followed 'every hour, on the hour' in Israel!

DOCKERS CHARTER

No.3 January 1993 issue out! 50p

Published by the Liverpool Dock Shop Stewards Committee
Cheques to 'Merseyside Dockers Shop Stewards' Committee' and sent to
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Sam Levy 1921-95

HIS acquaintances were shocked to find out that Sam Levy had been found dead in his flat by the police towards the end of the last week in December.

Sam had survived two previous heart attacks, but his manner was so robust that he seemed to be indestructible.

The fact that he had not been a member of a Trotskyist group for some 20 odd years does not mean that he ever wavered in his loyalty to the movement, or in his conviction of its ultimate success.

He enjoyed attending the meetings of his local WRP group right up to his death, and contributed frequent letters to the Workers Press.

Sam was brought up in a Jewish working class family, and entered the tailoring trade as a trouser cutter. He was one of the last of a sadly diminishing species, the self-taught worker intellectual.

Leaving school at 14 with little formal education, by hard application he made himself into a Marxist thinker of considerable stature.

Work

His major theoretical work was directed to analysing the nature of the period in which we live, producing a series of splendidly argued pamphlets, *The New Epoch, the Etatist Stage of Capitalist Development, Permanent Revolution Since 1945, A Letter to an American Comrade*, and his book *The Epoch of Trotskyism*, which came out a year ago.

Sam first encountered Trotskyist ideas from members of Denzil Harber's Militant group in the Labour Party in the East End, and was early convinced of the falsity of the Moscow Trials.

Workers Press was saddened to learn of the death of long-standing Trotskyist SAM LEVY in December of last year. Although he had not been a member of our movement since the early 1950s, in recent contacts many WRP members had been impressed with his defence of Trotskyism against those who would abandon it.

At his last appearance in public he fiercely defended the Fourth International's view that the Soviet Union had been a degenerated workers' state and affirmed his confidence in the struggle of the working class to overthrow capitalism today.

It is for this sort of principled defence of the Fourth International that comrade Levy will be remembered. We hope to publish some personal memories of him in future issues.

Here we publish an obituary by AL RICHARDSON, who for many years was one of his closest collaborators

But he looked upon the Militant as a passive organisation and joined instead the Workers International League (WIL) faction inside the Independent Labour Party Youth led by Sam Bornstein, which in 1938 succeeded in gaining the support of the Guild for the Fourth International.

For the next ten years the two became known as 'the two Sams', and their stall selling the literature of the WIL and the Revolutionary Communist Party became an established feature of Sunday market life in Whitechapel High Street.

After the RCP liquidated itself in 1949 he joined the central committee of the 'Club', the predecessor of the modern WRP, but was expelled shortly afterwards.

Then he functioned as one of the main activists in London for the Liverpool-based Interna-

tional Socialist group of Ted Grant and Jimmy Deane, until this united with some other small groups to set up the Revolutionary Socialist League, the British section of the International Secretariat of the Fourth International led by Michel Pablo and Ernest Mandel, in 1957.

But two years later, objecting to its inadequate grasp of the entry tactic, he split off along with Frank Rowe and Morry Solloff to set up the Socialist Current organisation.

He left them after many years when they refused to agree with his support for the state of Israel. He was a founder member of Revolutionary History, but parted company with us also a few years ago.

The truth was that Sam had an autodidact's weaknesses as well as strengths. He did not function

well in any organisation, and it was only the small size of Socialist Current that enabled him to develop his theoretical talents to the extent that he did.

Sadly, towards the end of his life he antagonised many of his old friends, including the writer of these lines, by intemperate attacks on them.

Independent

But his independent cast of mind and his refusal to accept ideas merely on the say-so of authority alone had served him well until then.

Along with Jock and Millie Haston he had opposed the defencist interpretation put on the Proletarian Military Policy by Ted Grant and Gerry Healy in 1941.

As the main theorist of the Open Party Faction he had exposed the plans of Haston, Tease and Ward to liquidate the RCP in 1948. He had refused to accept the catastrophist perspectives of the 'Club' in 1951, whilst avoiding the opposite trap of accepting Mandel's theories of 'Late Capitalism'.

He had shown that the attempt of the RSL in 1959 to follow an entry and an open policy at the same time was simply not feasible. His personal failings do not detract so much as an iota from his splendid contribution.

Al Richardson

■ *The Epoch of Trotskyism: an analysis of the latest phase of capitalist development and its consequences* by Sam Levy is available from Index Bookcentres (10-12 Atlantic Road, Brixton, SW9 8HY. And, 28 Charlotte Street, London, W1P 1HJ. Tels: 0171-274 8342 and 0171-636 3532). Also available from John Plant: jplant@cix.compulink.co.uk.

Two nations



An explanation

THIS column's title comes from Benjamin Disraeli's novel *Sybil*, or *Two Nations*, published in 1846.

The book describes the appalling poverty and degradation suffered by the British working class in the heyday of developing capitalism — and the enormous wealth accumulated by the capitalists.

According to one of Disraeli's characters, Britain consisted of 'two nations between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts, and feelings as if they were dwellers in different zones or inhabitants of different planets who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners, and are not governed by the same laws.'

Recently released studies by the European Commission and the Washington-based Joint Centre for Political and Economic studies found that Britain has experienced the sharpest increases in poverty and income inequality in Europe in the 1980s.

Between 1979 and 1991, the average real income of the bottom tenth of households (after housing costs) fell by 14 per cent. The richest tenth had a 50 per cent increase.

The 1994-95 Family Expenditure Survey shows that while the top 20 per cent of households had an average gross income of £854 per week, the bottom 20 per cent averaged £79 a week.

The same inequalities were reflected in expenditure. The top 10 per cent spend an average of £626 each week, in contrast to the £82 spent by the poorest 10 per cent.

The government's Office of Population Censuses and Surveys published a report on child health in September last year which showed that at all ages, but particularly under the age of five, children in lower social class households are more likely to die.

A report from Barnardos in October showed that there were 62,900 homeless households in Britain, compared to 9,300 ten years earlier.

The latest statistics on social security benefits show that the number of income support claimants increased by 32,000 to 5,675,000 between May 1993 and 1994. More than half of claimants had been on benefit for more than two years.

The average income support payment in May 1994 was £55.78. At May 1994 there were 2,980,000 dependent children living on income support.

Disraeli's two nations continue to exist, and are becoming more polarised.

Tony 'one nation' Blair

SO HOW do things differ from 1846? Well now we have Tony Blair to share with us his fresh golden vision of a Britain no longer in thrall to boring old class divisions, but one happy united nation of stakeholders.

It is a pity that both his new slogans — 'one nation' and 'stakeholding society' — turn out to have been purloined from various hoary old Tory initiatives. But never mind, he has produced a most gratifying three-way squabble between Tory left and right, and the Labour party over who owns, or wants to own these ideas.

The main problem with Tony's vision is that it is, though golden, a bit misty.

Labour MP Frank Field has shed a little light on what Bambi is getting at.

According to him, the stakeholding society will include workers paying compulsory pen-

sion contributions and getting benefits only if they undertake training, education, or work (the emphasis being on the 'work' here I suspect).

'What I hope it means,' says Frank robustly, 'is a society where attitudes change so people do things for themselves.'

Bambi himself sprang to the defence of his proposal and explained a little more:

'A stakeholder economy is not about giving power to unions or women's cooperatives [God forbid] or any of the rest of the rubbish that the Conservatives have been saying this week. A stakeholder economy is about empowering people and saying that people have got to be given a stake in the country's economic future.'

'You cannot move this country on economically and socially unless all its citizens are getting the chance to benefit in the wealth that is being created.'

It sounds remarkably similar to Maggie 'mad cow' Thatcher's proposal for a 'property-owning democracy', which bit the dust at the end of the property boom in the 1980s.

Who gets a stake?

BABY Jodie was born in March 1994. At the age of three months she was rushed to her local hospital with bronchial pneumonia, a hole in the heart and a narrowed artery.

She was immediately transferred to the Special Care Unit of Guy's Hospital, London, where she had to stay until she was strong enough for surgery.

Both Jodie's parents were on benefits. In the space of a month, her mother had spent £120 on travel to and from the hospital — but because she and her partner had not been claiming income support for the statutory six months, they were not eligible for any help from the Social Fund.

They could not afford a telephone, making it extremely difficult for the hospital to contact them in an emergency.

The local council's social service department said they could not help due to 'lack of resources'. In desperation they went to the local public library (luckily not yet closed by the council) and found the name of a charity in a Health Care Consumer Guide which gave them some assistance.

It is interesting to speculate what could have happened if Jodie's parents had not had the nous to go the library, and if there had not been a charity in place to deal specifically with such problems.

It is also educational to wonder what would have happened to them under a Labour government.

Jodie's parents are two among the two million unemployed in Britain. Tony Blair's new Labour party has no plans to put such people back to work — Frank Field thinks they should have to 'do things for themselves', instead of getting welfare handouts.

New Labour has no plans to increase benefits to a living level — on the contrary, they are looking for ways to cut them further. They will not abolish the whole system of the Social Fund — another long horror story in itself. They have been slashing local council Social Services budgets with gusto for years.

Labour former NEC member Jack Straw let the cat out of the bag last year when he attacked the victims of poverty as beggars, winos, and squeegee merchants.

So where exactly do Jodie's parents fit in the stakeholding society? Let's hope they're the ones that get to plunge the stake they are holding through Bambi's heart.

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

Arnold Thompson and Stan Boyd: two comrades from an important period

IN THE past weeks, two comrades in the North West have died — Arnold Thompson and Stan Boyd — who were connected with a very important period of the Trotskyist movement in Britain in the 1950s. Both were 62 years of age when they died.

ARNOLD THOMPSON was a worker for the Co-op in Wigan when he and his brother, Ron, joined the Young Communist League. In an interview he gave to me at the beginning of last year Ron told how their background was very much a political background.

Their grandparents and relatives had been associated with Socialists.

'They were very class conscious people; they knew where they stood in the world, knew their own class and had a pride in it. In that setting I was brought up to believe in certain fundamentals with regard to how to treat other people.'

Together Ron and Arnold joined the Young Communist League in 1950. Arnold was 17 years old. In 1954 Ron was elected to the national committee of the YCL.

The two brothers attended two World Youth Festivals which were organised in eastern Europe every two years: one at Bucharest in 1952 and another in Warsaw in 1954.

Ron has described how they were disturbed by what they found with Arnold expressing most worry.

The conditions in Warsaw were much worse than in Bucharest,' said Ron, 'and were not as we considered they should

in a socialist country. They had all these slogans about "Peace and friendship" and there was the idealisation of Stalin — everywhere there were the pictures of Stalin. But you could see the poverty on the streets and in the way the people lived and dressed.

'We began to feel there were a lot of questions needed to be answered; three of us from the North West felt that there was something wrong when we saw the conditions of ordinary people.'

A few months later there came the 20th congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Khrushchev's speech, first printed in the *Sunday Observer*, which shattered all the conceptions of Stalin as the great leader and the Soviet Union as the leading force for socialism.

'Arnold was more annoyed and angry than anybody,' declares Ron. A large number of YCLers on Merseyside soon after joined the Trotskyist group and all would speak highly of Arnold, who read avidly and had a desire for theoretical study.

At the end of the 1950s he participated in the building of a powerful Young Socialist branch in Wigan Labour Party which could gather a 200-strong youth contingent on May Day.

At that time he left his mark on the development of a revolutionary movement.

A decade later he became a full-time organiser for the USDAW shopworkers' union in Liverpool and was there for 20 years.

At his funeral there were seven of his comrades who had participated in the building of the Wigan Young Socialists including Mike Farley, the secre-

tary of Wigan Trades Council. They all expressed the feelings that this period had been one of the most striking experiences in their lives.

His brother registers most vividly the feelings of those who broke from Stalinism with Arnold:

'What I feel about the work we did at the end of the 1950s was that we were released from a prison; we'd been chained up and we were confident the Trotskyist movement was the right organisation and we dedicated all our activity to it.'

'The loyalty we had for that movement is beyond belief. We only had three or four people in Wigan but when you get convinced people acting together in the same way with the same ideas, as we showed later, you can move a lot.'

STAN BOYD, who died two weeks after Arnold, also left his mark.

He and two other young miners joined Trotskyism around 1954 and helped form the Liverpool Trotskyist branch together with the Nigerian comrade — Wari — who had been at Leeds University, two West Indians and a Liverpool docker.

Stan with another comrade worked at Crompton pit on the outskirts of Liverpool and they discussed Khrushchev's speech and Stalinism with another miner at Crompton — John Connor, a member of the YCL.

In this way we made our first contact with the Liverpool Young Communist League and we went on to win the leaders of the Merseyside YCL plus Ron and

Arnold Thompson in Wigan.

Five or six years later, Stan was responsible for recruiting Mike Farley who became a leader in the Young Socialists and in the North West building trade.

Stan was active in the last years of the 1950s in supporting *The Miner*, which was a fortnightly paper. The lodge committee in Bradford pit, Manchester, on the initiative of our members, published this paper at the end of 1958, with Jim Allen, who later became a play-wright, as editor.

At this time the National Coal Board was closing 36 pits and sacking over 10,000 miners. *The Miner* later built around it a national group of militant miners who campaigned against pit closures, publishing a pamphlet *The Miners' Task*.

Stan participated in the campaign, travelling to other pits.

He later found a job in the chemical industry and for many years was convenor of a factory in Kirkby. He did not join the WRP but became a sympathiser, generous with his donations.

Two of his younger brothers became Trotskyists and his son, also called Stan Boyd, was a member of the Young Socialists for many years.

He was a big man — physically and in spirit and loyalty to Marxism. I spoke to him when he called me in the street two months ago when he was out shopping with his wife, also a friend. The big man was weakened and gaunt, but not in spirit. 'I am going out fighting,' he said.

He asked his family for the 'Internationale' to be played at his funeral. He had a favourite Liverpool song that his family were singing to him as he died.

Bill Hunter

European money crisis intensifies

WHICH European country today meets the Maastricht conditions for European monetary union? Answer: Luxembourg.

For only this tiny country, population some 500,000, actually meets the Maastricht requirement of a budget deficit of no more than 3 per cent of Gross Domestic Product.

Last week it was revealed that the German budgetary deficit now stands at 3.6 per cent of GDP and will almost certainly rise sharply in the coming year as increasing sums are paid to the growing numbers of unemployed.

The Italian deficit will hit over 7 per cent of GDP by the year end; the French deficit will be around 5 per cent, a similar level to the expected British deficit.

The Swedish figure is estimated at over 7 per cent, with Spain's deficit rising to 6 per cent and Austria's expected to reach almost the same level.

And should governments, especially the French and German, take measures to bring their deficits into line with Maastricht — this would mean higher taxes and severe reductions in state spending — then an already stagnant European economy could plunge into severe slump.

It is above all the mounting

BY PETER JEFFRIES

economic and political problems of Germany that are throwing a dark shadow across the prospects of a common European currency.

This currency has a name, the Euro, but whether it will ever be born is quite a different question.

Germany, the once mighty power of Europe, sees its economy stagnating, with virtually no growth over the past year. Not only does unemployment grow at a pace that now begins to alarm the trade union leaders but much of it is structural.

German companies, put off by high domestic wage and social security costs, are increasingly investing abroad (\$26 billion in the first nine months of last year) not only in the low wage countries of eastern Europe but also throughout Asia and even in Britain.

The medium-size German

companies — the so-called Mittelstand — have traditionally absorbed unemployment in time of recession. No longer.

In an increasingly competitive world, many of them are being driven out of business. The banks, fearful for the future, and already having burnt their fingers — due principally to the collapse of many small business in eastern Germany — are no longer willing to advance money to the Mittelstand.

This led only last week to the demand from the small company sector for their own stock exchange so that more capital might be raised to stave off further bankruptcies.

Worried

At the same time many heads of small family businesses are worried that a public listing on the stock exchange will bring greater costs as well as increased exposure to possible take-overs.

The publication of the latest European Union survey of business and consumer confidence has been delayed so that its authors can consider how best to present what will be a grim pic-

ture. As Peter Praet, chief economist at Belgium's Générale de Banque, says:

'There is a real risk of a vicious circle developing where latent consumer pessimism causes companies to revise down their investment plans, which has a broader impact.'

Nor is it likely that there will be an export-led recovery in the European economy.

The latest report from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development thinks that the rate of expansion in exports from the EU has already begun to slow down and that this trend may intensify. The OECD thinks that any chance of renewed growth must come from a rise in consumer spending within Europe.

But with unemployment mounting and fear of job losses

growing among not only working-class people but among professional and middle-class people who no longer believe they have jobs for life, this seems highly unlikely.

In any case Germany remains the key. The stagnation of the German economy has immediate implications for France whose main market lies in Germany.

Plunge

A further slowing down of the French economy will force up spending on unemployment and other benefits and plunge the state's finances into further difficulties.

The German employers are now raising their demands for a fundamental revision of the social security system which they rightly say places them at a cost

disadvantage compared with their rivals in other parts of Europe, especially in Britain.

Last week the main German employers' organisation called for an immediate 5 per cent reduction in the contribution they are currently obliged to make in social security provisions for their workers.

They want more power given to local workers' councils to negotiate pay on a regional or even plant-level basis. They are also demanding that all new laws be checked to see that they have 'negative effects' on labour costs.

In the case of the engineering and electrical industries, employers are demanding more 'flexible' working to allow machines to run longer. In the same spirit, many employers want to scrap the present premium rates for Saturday working.

Papua rebels in Irian Jaya force world attention on freedom struggle

BY COLIN PENDLETON

THE seizure of 24 hostages, four of them British, by rebels fighting Indonesian rule in West Papua (Irian Jaya), has forced the media to pay attention to an area where repression and atrocities against the people frequently go unreported.

Three Scotland Yard detectives flew to join British diplomats, including military attaché Colonel Ivar Hellberg, on the scene. Indonesian dictator Suharto's son in law, Brigadier-General Prabowo Subianto took part command of troops hunting down the guerrillas.

The hostages, working with various wildlife institutions, were marched through thick jungle, and held in an area 9,000 feet above sea-level.

While various British bodies seemed to be wrangling over responsibility for the four Cambridge graduates' safety, the Free Papua Movement (OPM) made no demands but said it wanted international attention.

OPM leader Kailik Awalik asked for Catholic Bishop Munninghoff and three priests to help negotiations, but Indonesian authorities said they wouldn't negotiate.

The OPM has been resisting since the western half of Papua-New Guinea was handed over to the Indonesians by the UN in 1963.

It was Munninghoff, Bishop of Jayapura, who produced a report last August documenting Indonesian military atrocities, among them the killing of eleven people, including four children and a protestant minister, when troops opened fire on villagers holding a prayer meeting at Hoesa on 31 May last year.

Although West Papua has not had much media attention — BBC news bulletins about the kidnapping referred to first merely to 'a remote part of Indonesia' — it has the world's biggest gold and copper mining operation, jointly owned by the Freeport Indonesia Corporation,

a subsidiary of the US company Freeport McMoran, and the British RTZ company.

Freeport-RTZ, accused of clearing tribal people from their lands for its mining operations, and causing environmental damage, featured in the Munninghoff report several times.

Some 20 Freeport workers, accused of taking part in an OPM flag-raising ceremony in Tembagapura, a company town, on Christmas Day, were tortured to sign confessions.

A group of men who had to obtain permission to spend Christmas at their old village, near Tembagapura, were stopped at a Freeport security station, and accused of being OPM rebels. Arrested by soldiers and held in Freeport containers, they were kicked and beaten. Later one man was shot, and three others taken to the Freeport workshop, where they were beaten again, and died of their injuries.

The Indonesian army has acknowledged co-operation from Freeport-RTZ, including use of company aircraft and vehicles, and designated the mine a 'vital national project'. The Amungme tribal council accused Freeport of being 'the root cause of human rights violations'.

If people on wildlife expeditions weren't aware of trouble in Indonesian-occupied Papua, Western governments and companies were. On 10 October, America's Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), which provides risk insurance for US companies, told Freeport it was cancelling its contract, to comply with the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act, by ensuring 'that overseas investment projects do not pose unreasonable or major environmental hazards'.

In New Orleans, where Freeport McMoran is based, students at Loyola University have protested its funding of a chair in environmental studies. Demonstrators outside company president Jim Bob Moffet's office chanted: 'OPM is here', 'Free West Papua!' and 'Jim Bob Moffet kills for profit!'

Australian diplomats who visited Timika in West Papua reported that indigenous people 'continue to perceive themselves as a group distinct from, and often incompatible with, other Indonesians. This sentiment reciprocated and is reflected in the patronising character of central government administration in the province and occasional in human rights abuses by the security forces.'

The team, including military attachés and intelligence officers, estimated that at least 22 people had been killed in and around the Freeport concession since June 1944. Senator Evans, the Australian foreign minister, reportedly urged the Indonesian authorities to mount an independent investigation.

This did not prevent Australia's Labour government signing an agreement on Maintaining Security with the Indonesian regime on 18 December. The agreement regularises Australian military training facilities for the Indonesian army, and will allow Australian firms to supply military equipment.

Prime Minister Paul Keating said the agreement made clear 'what our strategic intentions are towards each other' and would 'give full expression to the kind of relationship I believe we should have always had with Indonesia.'

Jose Ramos Horta, whose Fretilin movement is fighting Indonesian rule in East Timor, said Keating had signed a pact 'with the devil'. Some 100,000 people have been killed in East Timor since Indonesian troops invaded the ex-Portuguese colony in 1975, including 273 massacred on 1 November 1991.

This November, as troops and police flooded Dili, the capital, to counter demonstrations, journalist Hugh O'Shaughnessy reported British-made Hawk aircraft flying overhead.

Tory government and British Aerospace spokespersons have always denied the planes would be used in East Timor.

Bosnia: no justice, no peace

ATTACKS on civilians have not stopped since the Dayton agreement. Several people were kidnapped while travelling through the Serb-held Ilidza suburb of Sarajevo.

On 9 January one person was killed and 19 injured, including three children, when a crowded rush-hour tram in the city centre was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade fired from Serb-held Grbavica.

Momcilo Krajisnik, standing in for war criminal Radovan Karadzic in talks with NATO, had promised 'bloody incidents' if the deadline for Serb withdrawal was not set back.

In Mostar, 1996 began with 17-year-old Alan Mustovic being shot dead by Croat HVO police as he drove past their checkpoint with friends on New Year's Day.

A few days later two Muslim policemen were wounded by

Croat gunfire. A Croat police officer was shot in revenge the next Saturday, after which Croat forces fired rocket-propelled grenades into the Muslim area.

European Union officials said privately they suspected the HVO had deliberately exacerbated tensions.

Mostar has remained divided despite the official end of Croat-Bosnian hostilities in March 1994.

Muslim east Mostar, which suffered badly from both Chetnik and Croat-nationalist bombardment, is struggling to rebuild.

On the Croat side, capital of the so-called 'Herceg-Bosna' statelet, and 'ethnically-cleansed' of Muslims, the HVO and local mafia have prospered from European Union subsidies, Catholic charity funds, and extortion rackets.

Under the Dayton accord the city is supposed to be reunited,

but the Croat mayor called for permanent division.

European Union administrator Hans Koschnick appealed to Croatia's President Tudjman to exercise more control on the 'Herceg-Bosna' statelet, which his government funds, and relies on for votes.

German deputy-Chancellor Klaus Kinkel paid a visit to Mostar, after being told by Bosnian President Izetbegovic that he expected Germany to use its influence.

Meanwhile, Dario Kordic, named as a war criminal but promoted by Tudjman, remains prominent in the Herceg-Bosna state.

The Serb war criminals General Mladic and Radovan Karadzic have doubtless noted this and drawn confidence.

The US government's promise to arm and train the Bosnia and Hercegovina army, offered as a 'sweetener' with the Dayton agreement, is looking in doubt. Karadzic's foreign affairs spokesperson Aleksa Buha claimed Admiral Leighton Smith had assured him the US would not help the Bosnian forces.

'I talked about it with Mr Leighton Smith who promised that, while he is in Bosnia, there will be neither training nor instructors,' Buha told the Croatian daily *Slobodna Dalmacija*.

According to *Time* (15 January), Pentagon officials have told the Bosnian government that it will be months before they can expect any weapons, and that meantime they should hire private US military outfits like Military Professional Resources Inc. or Science Applications International for instructors.

Assistant secretary of state Richard Holbrooke, who brokered the Dayton agreement, said training 'can begin as soon as the contracts are worked out'.

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