# WorkersPress

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

SATURDAY 9 MARCH 1996

Mersey docks forced to talk with sacked workers' representatives

# SOMETHICHEW **WORLDWIDE** boycott actions against shipping lines MEAR

using the port of Liverpool forced the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company (MDHC) to talks with representatives of the 500 sacked dockers last week.

And amazed Merseysiders opened their newspapers to find 'Tarzan' Heseltine visiting Heswell, saying that Liverpool's reputation 'could be undone unless picketing workers go back to their jobs'!

Well, what can we expect he only represents a government that has the largest shareholding in the company that locked out the dockers.

During the last days of the International Conference of Dockworkers held in Liverpool from 17 to 23 February, the MDHC paid at least £10,000 a throw for a number of full-page advertisements in the Liverpool papers pouring scorn on the Mersey Port Shop Stewards' Committee.

Less than a week later they were appealing to this same committee to call off the international actions of dockers (turning their fire on the shipping companies which use the port) and they would agree to talk.

The shop stewards refused. But the now shaken and frightened MDHC agreed to get round the table with union representatives, including sacked dockers who are elected members of union committees.

Meanwhile: ■ Liverpool dockers and Women of the Waterfront are in Sweden, Germany and Portugal as well as all parts of

■ US East Coast longshoremen, confirmed their decision to respect Liverpool pickets and take boycott actions against giant shipping line Atlantic Containers Limited (ACL) if it continues to send its vessels to Liverpool.

In the week after the conference nternational dockers in the port of Le Havre, France, had a 24-hour strike. 'After such a conference we are inspired to say "enough is enough" to our own employers,' they told the Liverpool stewards.

#### Reported

■ Two days after they returned home the Danish delegation reported that their ports would be carrying out boycott actions.

Dockers in Sweden, Australia and Canada have a boycott of all shipping lines using

the port of Liverpool ■ Delegations from all other ports represented at the conference in Spain, Greece, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Portugal, Ireland and New Zealand are all carrying out appropriate actions.

Nigerian dockers sent a message of solidarity. They

#### BY DOT GIBSON

live under the constant threat of imprisonment.

An ABC container vessel was 'arrested' in the port of Melbourne, Australia for nonpayment of bills. The company owes \$1.8 million in Australia and \$14 million internationally.

ABC ships have been on the receiving end of boycott actions by members of the Maritime Union of Australia in solidarity with the sacked Liverpool dockers.

#### Actions

Following the international conference such actions are bound to increase. Dockers determined to act together against privatisation, casualisation and antitrade-union laws. And not just within their own industry.

They have decided to apply a 'hot cargo' edict on all Irving Oil Limited products upon request from the Canadian Labour Congress. This is in support of 150 oil-refinery workers locked out for 22

They also sent solidarity greetings to imprisoned Mexican bus workers, fighting against privatisation, impris-Argentinian unionists and sacked garbage workers in Copenhagen.

Delegates from Drogheda, Ireland left the conference early to take part in a strike ballot over the sacking of 24 dockers. They took with them a letter assuring them and their families of total international support.

The New Zealand Waterfront Workers' Union asked for and got a decision to, if necessary, 'take whatever realistic action that they [the international dockworkers] can to disrupt fruit cargoes from New Zealand loaded by

non-union labour'. There is definitely something new in the air.

# Dockers' picket

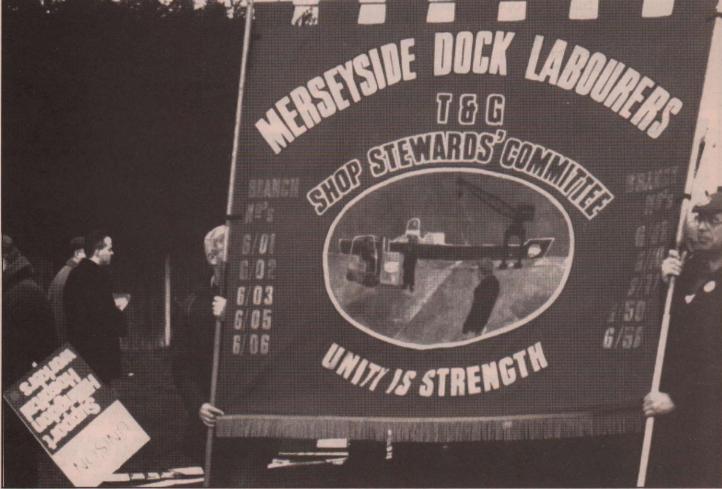
JOE SPRAY, Torside docker, spent a night in hospital after the scabs' bus from Medway swerved onto the pavement.

The incident happened on the Liverpool dockers' picket line on Tuesday 5 March but no arrests were made.

There is currently an investigation into the inci-

#### **STOP PRESS**

Negotiations are still in progress. Shop stewards said that no announcement would be made until they had reported back to a dockers' mass meeting.



Liverpool dockers' banner on Hillingdon cleaners' march, also sacked for demanding decent conditions

# orkers Press

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB. Tel: 0171-387 0564. Fax: 0171-387 0569

To all socialist and working-class organisations and individuals and all fighting the Asylum and Immigration Bill

#### CRISIS IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT — THE NEED FOR A NEW SOCIALIST PART CONFERENCE:

Saturday 16 March, 11am-5pmConway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (Holborn tube) Entrance: £1 (50p concession)

Labour movement conference next week. Together we will be able to discuss the burning issues facing the whole working class and the entire labour movement.

A new party can't be imposed by one or more political group or groups. The working class has to construct it itself.

Already our invitation has been accepted by those involved in the Socialist Alliances and by individual

We warmly invite all members of the Socialist workers' readers to the 'Crisis in the Labour Party. defend s

Students. community groups and unemployed centres will also be represented. Trade unionists who have led or are leading important struggles will be there to relate their experiand knowledge, including the Liverpool dockers' shop stewards and Women of the Waterfront.

Comrades from France, Spain and Hungary will be coming, along with those from the universities who ally themselves with the

struggle defend socialist policies and a socialist programme.

Workers Press's editorial board will participate in and record the event. We see this as a continuation of the discussion at our tenth anniversary meeting a few weeks ago on the need for an independent voice and organisation for workers.

The conference will be fully reported in our 30 March issue. Order your copy now or, better, take up a subscription (see back

## CRISIS IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT' CONFERENCE, NEXT SATURDAY \*

## Off the rails

BRITISH RAIL is not to be sold after all it's to be given away!

The Tory government announced that an estimated £5.7 billion in BR assets — including Waterloo International and St Pancras stations and 121 acres of prime development land in central London — are to be handed over to a consortium of private capitalists free, gratis, 'no charge'.

The consortium, 'London and Continental Railways' so-called, consists of Richard Branson's Virgin, merchant bankers S.G. Warburg and a number of international construction companies. They are to receive the hand-out equivalent to 3p on the basic rate of income tax for every worker in the country — in exchange for a promise to build and operate the Channel Tunnel rail link into London.

To add insult to injury, it emerged that BR could have built the same line seven years ago for less than £1.9 billion of public money.

EARLIER the same week, it was revealed that Railtrack, responsible for the BR rail network and due for privatisation in May, is to have £1 billion worth of debt just written off to sweeten the sale and to satisfy the demands of City sharks.

Then came news that BR's three freight companies — estimated value £3 billion — are to go at the bargain sub-basement price of £225 million. That's just one-twelfth their true worth.

The buyer, Wisconsin Central Transportation Company (WCTC) of Chicago, is notorious for its ruthless cost-cutting. In the US its accident rate is more than three times the industry average. WCTC has already announced its intention to slash jobs and overturn current working practices in its new British acquisitions.

#### WHAT does this tell us about British capitalism in decline?

First, BR privatisation poses a clear and present danger to the livelihood and lives of rail workers. The current onslaught on jobs, pay and conditions is not going to let up — it's going to intensify. Rail workers now face negotiations with up to 40 different employers in place of national bargaining.

While Tories prepare a pre-election tax bribe by asset-stripping the rail service, the Labour opposition-in-name sits on the sidelines knowing full well that a Blair government has no intention of renationalising BR.

Deputy Labour leader John Prescott's proposal to take Railtrack back into the public sector is hopelessly inadequate and would be merely to ensure stability for the private train operators to plunder the service in search of maximum profits.

PARASITIC finance capital is destroying the very productive forces on which the world's population depends. This is what these developments illustrate.

In 1845, in British capital's heyday, some 200,000 workers were engaged in the construction of 3,000 miles of new railway lines. In the 80 years from 1822, millions of rail navvies built 20,000 miles of track in Britain, and thousands more in Europe and the rest of the world.

That system is now to be smashed up at the pleasure of private capital. Billions are to be handed over while the likes of Branson grin into TV cameras so that ONE measly line from London to Folkestone can be built.

Letters

### We DO address problem of new

MIKE HOWGATE (Letters, 2 March) says that the 'problem is how to build a new organisation of the class which can express its real needs' and that 'we [the WRP] nowhere address this problem'.

But has Mike not been following the discussion, in Workers Press and at WRP meetings, that we have initiated in our own ranks and in the labour movement over the last three years?

We have a conference on the 'Crisis in the labour movement' only next week!

Mike says 'the essential prerequisite for any socialist regroupment must start from existing forces, however disillusioned and burnt out, not a willynilly search for "new forces" in the tree houses around Newbury.

The only 'force' that will come forward to build this new party will be the working class itself, not 'burnt out' but overcoming its own crisis of leadership through struggle and the rebuilding of its organisations internationally.

One extremely important aspect of the structural crisis of the system is that it threatens the very existence of life on the planet itself — 'socialism or bar-

Many young people recognise this and want to act now. They are drawn to the various campaigns and organisations based around the ecology movement, the anti-roads protests, the campaigns against nuclear bomb testing in the Pacific and the oil companies' destruction of the environment in Nigeria.

We ignore these 'non-Marxist' campaigns at our peril. I think it is right that Workers Press has followed the Newbury by-pass protest, and we should seek to draw all those involved in these campaigns into a discussion around the environmental crisis and its resolution.

Mike believes that the Socialist Labour Party can become the party of the working class if we are part of it. Therefore we must 'try like hell to get in. We must campaign to be allowed in with our opinions intact but without the paraphernalia of a separate

But Mike on that basis could join the SLP tomorrow. Scargill only says: 'I have given up my organisation [the Labour Party], you must give up yours.'

Therefore if we dissolve the WRP we would be welcome as individual members of the SLP. But is there an identity between the Labour Party and the Fourth International? Do we not have opinions about the paraphernalia?

Such is the depth of the crisis of the system that the Scargill party can be only one possibility that now emerges. There will be others. Militant Labour have set up a Socialist Alliance. There will

I agree with Mike that we must follow the development of the SLP closely, work with it where possible and seek to draw its members into the deepest discussion. Scargill may have his boots on, but I believe Mike underestimates our own preparedness for the struggles in front

> **Andrew Burgin** London N16

#### Scottish angle

MIKE HOWGATE's long letter (2 March) about the Socialist Party merits deep thought and wide discussion.

In Scotland, Scargill's SLP had its public launch a week after that of the Scottish Socialist Alliance. The SSA, like the SLP, will be formally set up in a few weeks.

The SSA has generated enthusiasm among Militant Labour supporters, members of the Scottish Socialist Movement, the Communist Party of Scotland and others. It arises from real joint campaigning experience including some on environmental issues, about which Mike is conservatively sceptical.

On the other hand its practical analysis seems to centre on the need for more united protest coupled with the campaign to get a Labour government to set up a Scottish Assembly in Edinburgh. With proportional representation, the SSA hopes to win seats in such a body.

The SLP appears to focus pretty firmly on Scargill himself, some supporters on the RMT executive, and their idea of a New Model Labour Party led by lions rather than the donkeys and jackals of 'New Labour'.

Neither movement has begun with a fresh analysis of the crisis of the workers' movement as it faces on the one hand the catastrophe capitalism offers the world's masses and on the other the aftermath of the collapse of Stalinism.

Yet without such an analysis there can be no meaningful and genuinely new working-class socialist party.

To ignore either the SLP or SSA would be sectarian folly. To liquidate the discussion about the need for new thinking which Workers Press (whatever its failings) has consistently tried to - would be activist irresponsibility.

I hope SSA and SLP enthusiasts will participate in the 16 March 'Crisis in the labour movement' conference — or at least in the discussion which flows from it. And those taking part on 16 March should also participate wherever possible in the SSA and

My main point is that from Scotland at least, Scargill's SLP is not the only important initiative and recognising that should help guard against any tendency to liquidate the 16 March discussion

**Terry Brotherstone** Edinburgh

#### Which way?

THERE has been a reference to the Socialist Alliances as 'Militant' in Workers Press. Militant Labour are supporting the formation of Socialist Alliances but these alliances are wider than that and are being called by different forces in different parts of the country. I would like to explain more about them.

The Socialist Alliances are an opportunity to bring together and deepen the relationship between forces seeking to give the widest possible political expression to the movement.

The idea for a new socialist party did not arise first in the head of Arthur Scargill. It has been discussed for years in the anti-poll-tax fight, the struggle over Liverpool council, and in many other areas.

The anti-poll-tax movement showed that a new mass party of struggle would have to be based not just on trade unions but on wide layers of workers and their communities outside official organisations

Scargill imposes a constitution which excludes socialist political and anti-capitalist tendencies from affiliation. He also encourages the line of thought of some joining the SLP that Marx, Lenin and Trotsky are now outof-date and irrelevant for today.

This halts serious discussion of the working-class movement's history when there is increasing interest in the history of struggle and an increasing desire for internationalism in the working class. To prevent the fullest discussion on how mass parties were constructed in the past - including the Labour Party - is to accept Blair's new realist ideol-

But members of the SLP are attending the Socialist Alliance meetings. These alliances have begun to be built by those who reject Scargill's method.

There is a discussion about what these alliances should be: An organisation of socialists? OR an alliance which encourages and joins with all those in struggle?

The basis for these alliances is the historic change taking place in Britain. The class movemen today does not find a centralised expression but it is extremely powerful. Britain is becoming, for large numbers of people, a harsh place to live. These people are disenfranchised by the Labour leadership.

**WE WELCOME LETTERS** 

SEND THEM TO: WORKERS PRESS. PO BOX 735, LONDON SW8 1YB OR FAX 0171-387 0569

> There is no framework beyond which the Tories and capitalism will not go.

> They put people in cells six feet by six feet, they sell off the railway not only to a fierce antiunion company but one which has the worst safety record in the US. Nothing will halt this, what ever government is in office, outside of the development of struggle and a true class pro-

Signs of renewed struggle are there: 40,000 marching in Edinburgh against school closures and teacher sackings, Manchester communities mobilising against police brutality where one black man lost an eye while being arrested, the international struggle of dockers, the struggles against deportations and so on.

The alliances should seek to make a national alliance and should seek to develop a new party. If these alliances are based only on socialists they will restrict their ability to build themselves as a new alternative.

**Martin Ralph** Socialist Voice

#### William Morris more than just pretty wallpaper

CHARLIE POTTINS underestimates the strength of the challenge that is going to be made to the revolutionary socialist ideas of William Morris in the centenary year of his death (Inside left, 24 February).

Before long Morris will be lauded as the producer of pretty wallpaper and incomprehensible Nordic novels without any mention of his socialism.

The Democratic Left — whose predecessors the Communist Party of Great Britain did their best to claim William Morris as a proto-British Stalinist - have now launched an appeal to do up their meeting room in Islington with his Strawberry Thief wall-

Even worse Selwyn Gummer is to speak at a major Morris conference in Scarborough in September. Gummer is a big fan of Morris's church architecture apparently. Perhaps he should read what Morris had to say about parliament. As should that other Morris fan, Tony Blair.

**Keith Flett** London N17

#### **Index Bookcentres**

28 Charlotte Street. London W1 1HJ 0171-636 3532 10-12 Atlantic Road, London SW9 8HY 0171-274 8342

#### **SE London** WRP

Lectures on Marxism

Six: Political economy (2) Monday 25 March 1996, 8pm 141 Greenwich High Road

(near Greenwich Station)

#### Sam Levy (1920-95)

A memorial meeting organised by his friends in Revolutionary History

Sunday 17 March, 3.30pm

Fenner Brockway Hall, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1

# **NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION**

Saturday 23rd March

**Assemble at Embankment** 

12.30 pm -O Temple Rally at Trafalgar Square

MÁRCH ÁGÁINST RÁCISM

ing the Solution allegate of the collection of o la a Ranvina de la comune de l tellelije instrusiere

South Place Ethical Society Library, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL 0171-831 7723 Fax: 0171-430 1271

Thursday 21 March, 2.30pm The Hidden History of Fossils An Investigation (with lots of specimens) into what our ancestors

thought about the remains of prehistoric life. Mike Howgate MSc

## Uganda '96

African Liberation Support Campaign/Uganda Joint Working Platform for Democracy: 'Building a task force network for democracy'. February to April 1996.

Umoja Theatre, The Base, 59 Bethwin Road, Camberwell, London SE5, 1pm-6pm. Sundays 10 and 24 Mar, 7 and 21 Apr

comparative parties in Africa

Knfi (10171,024 0033) or

Case 1, Sunday 10 March: The Conservative Party (CP) and

#### BY DANIEL ROBERTSON

THE government's war against wildlife has moved onto a new stage with the neglect that led to the disaster at Milford Haven.

This was not just an accident, but the result of incompetance, greed, contempt for the environment and declining safety standards. It promises to be the worst disaster for wildlife in Britain

The Liberian-flagged, Russian-crewed oil tanker Empress hit rocks at Milford Haven on 15 February after apparently ignoring harbour authority instructions to stay

The captain was apparently trying to save time and money by catching the tide under hazardous conditions. Within days thousands of tonnes of spilt oil had wiped out a colony of rare

These may seem of little importance to most people, but this is only the first step in a series of impending environmen-tal disasters that quite unnecessarily threaten some of Britain's most important wildlife.

Conservationists have been angered by the priority given to saving the ship, rather than trying to limit leakages of oil. It has been clear throughout this fiasco that ship owners and insurers came first in the government's considerations.

The potential for an immense disaster to both wildlife and the local communities that depend on tourism and fishing was of little concern. The government's Joint Response Centre overruled local people who wanted the ship towed out to deep waters, clear of dangerous rocks and strong tides.

#### **Errors**

This could have been done during the first few days of the accident when the seas were calmer. Serious errors were made in calculating the likely fate of the ship if held in the main shipping channel near to Milford

This resulted in storms driving the ship onto rocks and vast quantities of additional oil being released.

An official enquiry has been ordered, but the usual security wraps are already in place with government scientists under orders to stay silent. But what will another inquiry achieve?

the conclusions of the enquiry after the last major marine oil leak in the Shetlands. This recommended that powerful tugs capable of moving damaged ships should provide coverage around

On this occasion it was just chance that a Chinese tug was nearby to help; even this required pulling a waiter out of the local take-away to translate.

Official sources, and their bought scientist spokespersons, have repeatedly downplayed the impact of the spillage — angering conservation bodies such as the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds).

The increasingly outspoken position of the RSPB on issues such as Newbury and Milford Haven is creating a split between them and some of their traditional hunting and shooting 'green welly brigade' members who are becoming distinctly rest-

About a dozen Sites of Special Scientific Interest, two marine nature reserves and several European Special Areas for Conimmediately servation are threatened.

Tens of thousands of sea birds returning to nest over the next few weeks could be devastated, including some of the world's largest colonies of some species.

Unfortunately for the government this is one of the country's most closely studied wildlife areas. The extent of the damage will be meticulously studied and recorded for years.

An important aspect of this incident that has attracted little comment is the multinational nature of marine economic activ-

Workers on these ships lead miserable and hazardous lives. They are frequently super-exploited workers from 'Third World' countries. Their interests attract as little concern as the environmental damage that the oil industry, in all of its activities, imposes on humanity and the world in the name of profit.

Pressure on safety and working conditions threatens both these workers and the fragile environments that the cargo they work can contaminate.

The RSPB has reported that tanker owners have now been using the spill to cover up illegal discharges into the sea. Increasingly large tankers have been built to save transport costs —

The government has ignored these pose ever greater environmental hazards.

The contempt of these profiteers for the people and world around them is unlimited.

MEANWHILE at Newbury the protesters — who are seeking to protect 10,000 mature trees, a series of nature reserves and a dozen historical sites - have offered to move their efforts to the clean up in Wales if the bypass work is postponed for a few

The protests have moved to a new stage as evictions of camp sites begin. These are located in tree tops and are difficult to dislodge. Around 20 sites remain to be cleared, and new people are continually arriving at the site.

#### Hold-ups

The contractors must clear the whole route by 31 March, before the bird breeding season begins. Hold-ups due to finding badgers and rare snails on the route only seem to have been temporary, but the protesters have a fair chance of causing significant delays.

Signs that public opinion has been swinging towards the protesters have prompted a campaign of carefully planted media stories suggesting that the protesters are using violence against the security guards evicting them.

These claims have been contradicted by local people who know that it is the police and security who are being aggressive. Even the local aristocracy have joined the protests - Lady Barber expressed her shock at the violent tactics used by mounted police against herself and other protesters.

Local journalists fear that dangerous police tactics will eventually produce a serious accident. Residents have also been angered as police have prevented them from taking food to the protesters.

One commented: Even prisoners in a Thai jail get food and

Meanwhile national TV coverage is restricted to a pot of urine being deservedly tipped over a security guard!

The craziness of this scheme has been further revealed by a Highways Agency document that admits that the by-pass will shorten most journey times by

Only some rush-hour through



Tens of thousands of sea birds are under threat from the Milford Haven oil spillage

traffic will benefit significantly. It also admits that congested local traffic will stay that way.

However national politicians still fail to speak out, fearing (or supporting) the power of the roads and private transport

Tony Juniper of Friends of the Earth said: 'Hardly a single politician has spoken out against this road, even though millions of tax payers believe that it should not be built.

'Thank goodness there are still individuals brave enough to stand up for what they believe is

The remaining weeks of March will be critical — this is the time when the protesters most need support.

WHAT is it that unites these two disasters? Volunteers in Wales have been drawing the parallels with Newbury and have clearly identified the common enemy big money and big business.

Environmental activists have to go beyond identifying the enemy and protesting against its crimes. The task now is to build a new movement that can replace production for profit with planned production to meet real human needs in harmony with

lar annual event organised by

members of East London WRP.

will raise money for the women at Hillingdon. Our aim is to

already echoed around the labour

February were the Liverpool

dockers and Women of the

Waterfront. 'WOW' is mainly

made up of partners and relatives

of the 500 sacked dockers who

have organised independently to spread support for the dockers

on behalf of Women of the Water-

When Doreen McNally spoke

into the community.

Theirs is a struggle which has

At their demonstration on 17

publicise their struggle widely.

movement.

If you wish to help with practical work for Milford Haven contact the following. You should work with an established group as some activity is hazardous: Dyfed Wildlife Trust (01437 765462) or the RSPB (01686 626678).

(Internet coverage http://www.foe.co.uk/local/cymru/oilspill/index.html.)

To help the Third Battle of Newbury (01635 45544).

## London UNISON backs Bosnia and dockers

#### BY LIZ LEICESTER

MEMBERS of the public service union UNISON in London are to make links with unions in Bosnia, and support their fight for multiculturalism, and against 'ethnic cleansing' and partition.

A motion passed by the union's London regional council at its AGM on 27 February says UN, NATO and US intervention only ensure division of Bosnia on ethnic lines. It stresses the importance of working class unity.

In the same spirit of solidarity the UNISON delegates welcomed a representative of the Liverpool dockers, who spoke about their fight for jobs and principles, the international conference they had just held, and its importance for the whole working class.

The regional council is urging an inquiry into the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company, and agreed to donated £500 to the dockers' strike fund.

The resolution on Bosnia, from Camden local government branch, pledged to:

■ DEFEND the right of the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic society of Bosnia to defend itself against partition;

SUPPORT the struggle against ethnic cleansing and division of peoples;

■ SUPPORT the right of all peoples to return to their homes;

MAKE LINKS with Bosnian trade unions pledged to defend their multi-cultural society and the rights of all their members, whatever their culture or religion; and,

MAKE LINKS particularly with health and other public service trade unions, including organising reciprocal visits and initiatives to take aid and support to them and their members.

A proposal for an all-women picket of the docks from Women of the Waterfront aroused great interest at the meeting. It will take place next month.

### The attack on women's rights International Women's Day is on 8 March. JILL OXLEY

writes on the attacks faced by women and the important

SOME women have been able to make significant gains over the years, particularly those in the well-established trade unions like the National Union of Teacher and the public service union UNISON.

Maternity and paternity leave well above the national minimum, dependency leave for carers of the elderly and sick as well as young children, are rights which have not only improved conditions for women but have raised the question of the dignity and value of women workers.

Now the Tory government is trying to dismantle what it sees as an expensive National Health Service and has brought in privatisation of the nationalised industries, through the front and, in the case of the post office, the back doors.

The trade union leadership has done little or nothing to stop the Tories, baulking at taking on the government's anti-trade-union laws despite their illegal-

ity under international law. But, the trade union bureaumaintain some credibility and so it has unwillingly mounted a few token one-day strikes and selec-

Camden's Labour-controlled council is one employer in the public sector that's trying to cut back on expensive, hard-won reforms and to send a signal to its workforce of a 'new order' in the workplace. On International Women's

tive actions.

Day itself, 8 March, all Camden council workers have to decide whether or not to sign new contracts. These contracts cut back drastically on maternity and paternity leave and on dependency leave, an attack on a workforce that is more than 50 per

Women with young children will have to request leave of absence when a child is sick, and they are less likely to get it.

Cut backs in flexitime will also have a particularly adverse

role women play in today's workers' movement Camden UNISON has voted not to sign these contracts and members are balloting for strike

> Alongside this are the appalling contracts Pall Mall is trying to force on the women hospital workers at Hillingdon. Their new contracts include a cut of £1 an (£35 a week!) to be imposed on workers who already get next to nothing.

#### **Tactics**

These tactics by the employer are the direct result of the government's Compulsory Competitive Tendering which has public sector employers accepting the cheapest bid by a private firm, based on its ability to recruit workers for the lowest pay and worst conditions.

Two hundred women at Hillingdon have now been on

strike for 19 weeks.

front at the recent international dockers' conference, she told of the effects on family life of the deterioration in dockers' working conditions since the abolition of the national dock labour scheme that guaranteed work. She got a standing ovation.

Women of the Waterfront have now issued a call for an allwomen picket of the Mersey docks on 10 April. London

#### **WORKERS PRESS IS THE PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY** British section of the Workers International (to Rebuild the Fourth International)

Please send me information about the WRP			
ame		date	
ddress			

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

## Inside left

#### ying nalevolence

AZI murderers have their apolosts, who play games with numbers, d argue there were no gas chams at Auschwitz. Serb nationalist er criminals are defended by the s-named Living Marxism magane. A better name for it would be ing Bastards.

What's in a "mass grave",' asks nda Ryan in the March issue. 'Few rnalists even thought to question e timing of the release of the picres,' she claims, echoing precisely hat the Foreign Office and BBC said out aerial photographs from Sre-

It looked like a classic diversiontactic ... everybody forgot about at just happened in Krajina.' Evebody? Did Living Marxism writers t watch television? (Mind you, it s August, long hols and that ...)

Attacking reports 'that 8,000 miss-

g Bosnians were murdered', Ryan es on to assert: 'There is no hard idence that 3,000, let alone 8,000, snian Muslims were massacred in ebrenica. The Dutch troops who ere based in the area at the time tesled ... that they saw no evidence' (!). She comments: 'As long as there is hard evidence, there must be ubt about whether or not Bosnian uslim soldiers were massacred.' rial photographs don't satisfy Ms an, and survivors, like the man ho hid under corpses at a wareise near Kravica, 'contradict' each

The International Red Cross Comttee (ICRC) said on 7 February that wing tried to trace thousands of ssing Bosnians it believed they had en killed, but then, 'the ICRC had its

Women refugees from Srebrenica stormed its office in Tuzla flected 'a climate of hysteria', Ryan s created by the USA with the p of the media'.

Were women like Hasija, weeping her 14-year old son whom she saw agged off a bus by Serb soldiers orkers Press, 10 February), victims 'ethnic cleansing', or of a media ax? We didn't notice television rials or satellite dishes in the refue camp. The women demanded they allowed to visit the site where they their loved ones are buried.

nda Ryan doesn't mention that.

Repeating what NATO officers d to excuse inaction, Living Marxeditor Mick Hume objects to a usade' against war crimes. He ticipates 'anybody who resists the sterical cries of genocide, and sists instead upon investigating the s ... can expect to be accused of sphemy.' That's not the accusation ad in mind for Living Marxism.

We've noted its defence of 'rights' people like Holocaust revisionist wid Irving. A West Country reader npared its treatment of Bosnia

h Irving's dirty work.

When feeling for human beings is laced by cynical sophistries and mes with numbers, that's not exism. Reading it leaves one feelfilthied, acknowledging it as part the Left' means the movement is

olipsism

HEN the Revolutionary Commut Party dropped its paper the at Step to concentrate on the ssy Living Marxism, some people it was retreating from active agement. Some time ago, I menned 'class struggle' to a Living raism seller. She looked at me yingly. What "class struggle"?', she

A letter in the current Living raism from Liverpool wonders four months into the dockers' he, they haven't said a word about Dbwiously, it isn't really happen**Bosnia interview** 

# We will never g

The Great Powers have enforced and legitimised the ethnic division of Bosnia through the Dayton peace

Once more the leaders of the US, Britain, Germany, France and Russia have decided on the fate of thousands of human beings.

During the Balkans war they acquiesced in the murder, rape and displacement of a whole people.

Now they enforce a situation where thousands of Bosnian refugees cannot return to their homes because they are in Serb nationalist-controlled areas. They refuse to pursue the war criminals Milosevic and Tudjman. They refuse to investigate the fate of the 30,000 people who went missing during the war, because this would involve the investigation of mass graves, and hence of the war

This is the story of one couple among hundreds of thousands whose lives have been shattered and families scattered by Milosevic's territorial ambitions, and the Western governments' collusion.

Safeta (53) and Mesud Karabasic (64) are from Prijedor, in north-west Bosnia. They now live in a small council flat in east London.

Mesud told their story to Bronwen Handyside

I AM from Prijedor in the north west of Bosnia. I came to Britain on 17 December 1992 with my wife.

We were pushed out of the town and had to apply for refugee status.

It started in April 1992. We kept hearing on the news about the war in the east of Bosnia-Herzegovina, but it was still quiet in our area. It was like an oasis of peace.

We had had elections and Izetbegovic's party, the SDA, won by a small majority.

The war was intensifying more and more when the SDS (Serbian Democratic Party) — the political side of Serbian aggression — occupied the major buildings in Prijedor and seized power on 29 and 30 April.

The former Yugoslav army had been ethnically mixed but all Muslims and Croats had to give their weapons back. The only ones left with weapons were Serbs.

When we got up on the morning of 30 April, we could see all the flags with the Serbian insignia.

Then almost all the Muslim and Croat population who were working were sacked from their jobs.

I was already retired from my job as a mechanical engineer on the Bosnian railway, but I was a consultant. My wife was an accountant for a

paper factory. There were only two Muslim directors in Prijedor. The Serbs had dominated the most prominent positions before the war — for example, the Communist Party had been mostly run by Serbs. The police in Bosnia were Serbs.

After the Muslims and Croats had been sacked from their jobs, the situation became increasingly tense. Any incident could have sparked it off.

Prijedor was already occupied by armed soldiers.

The outlying villages had mainly Muslim populations. Serbs were coming to the villages and they were just going through because they were in uniform. But the Muslims in these towns could not travel, they

Then one day, two Serb soldiers were going back to Ljubija, about seven miles away. They had to pass through a village and a Muslim barricade. They told the Serbs 'no problem, you can go through, but you've just got to leave your arms here.'

They were drunk and they wouldn't, they just went through, as if they were gods, and the Muslims shot them.

So more than likely, the incident was provoked.

That village, Hambarane, was given one day to surrender all their weapons. They refused — not that there were many arms there. All their rifles were bought for Deutschmarks from Serbian soldiers — who gave them useless weapons.

Twelve noon came and the Serbs started shelling from Prijedor which is built on high ground. They bombarded them for six hours, and then the army went and fought to the death with them in the streets. There were a lot of casualties there from the bombing, and the fighting when the army came.

Next was Kozarac, a small town of about 10,000 people, seven miles from Prijedor. The people had some arms there and they were trying to protect themselves. But they didn't have much chance against such a huge army - they could only use guerrilla tactics. Again the Serbs gave an ultimatum: 'You're next.'

Tanks came from Banja Luka way. Once they were in Prijedor, they bombed for 24 hours a day. After Kozarac was completely flattened there, the soldiers went in again.

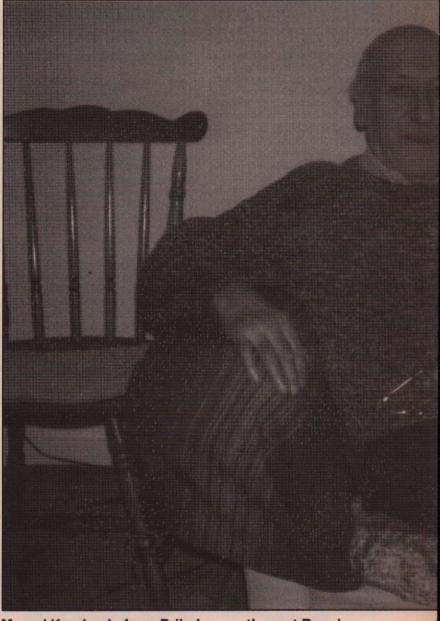
Again there was a killing field. Any people who had any contact with arms and those who resisted were murdered.

The Chetniks took people to two concentration camps they had set up Omarska and Trnopolje.

After Kozarac, came Prijedor itself. There were stories going around that Prijedor was attacked by the Bosnian army, the Green Berets. But there was some confusion there, I think the attack on Prijedor was camouflaged.

#### **Explosions**

It started early in the morning of 1 June. Explosions and fighting erupted at 5.30am. We got up, and could see through the window that there were Serbian snipers on the buildings high up. We pulled the curtains down, but they were old and split, and we could see through them. But you couldn't go near the window for fear of a bullet.



#### Mesud Karabasic from Prijedor, north-west Bosnia

We saw grenades landing on the main hotel in Prijedor. No one was there with artillery from the Bosnian side, because they didn't have artillery, let alone anything else.

I am sure it was a provocation. The Chetniks who were around Hotel Prijedor started firing back on them, and then shooting started all over the place.

In the morning there was chaos sporadic fighting and explosions, I saw some soldiers in camouflage uniforms, hitting other soldiers, but I think they were all Serbs, because the Bosnian army was not that pre-

Later in the day the Serbs drove the tanks over to the old town of Prijedor, which was 100 per cent Muslim. They went from house to house, and shelled them.

You could hear people screaming. They destroyed the ancient mosque.

In another part of the town they moved in and just started killing people. That went on for a couple of

In the middle of the bombardment they would stop for an hour and would start chasing people out. They cleared out the women and the children, still in pyjamas, and took them to one of the sports halls in town, and then on to Trnopolje.

Any house with connections with the SDA was destroyed. The intellectuals were murdered - lawyers, doctors, engineers — maybe 60-70 per cent of them, killed on the spot.

One of my son's friends was taken from his house. He said: 'Let me put my shoes on, just tie them up.

They told him: 'Well for that, you'll never have time,' and just boom, they shot him. He was 35 years

After two days of slaughter, they were taking people out, they were cleaning Prijedor. They went into the flats, wherever Muslims and Croats were living.

Then they came to our flat, saying that someone was shooting from our building, and asked 'Do you know anything?

They held a gun to my head as they questioned me.

#### Soldiers

Two soldiers took my wife into the other room. They threatened her, and one wanted to rape her. Some other guy — luckily there is always one better than the others — came into the room and told them to leave, that there was nothing there. He probably recognised me from my firm. They were all wearing balaclavas — and were there to either kill or rape.

When the Croatian and Muslim flats had been checked out, we had to put white cloths on the windows, to show that they were clean - there were no weapons, and no connections to the Green Berets.

The Chetniks went around the villages one by one, after Prijedor. Tarakovo was the next on the list, and many many others.

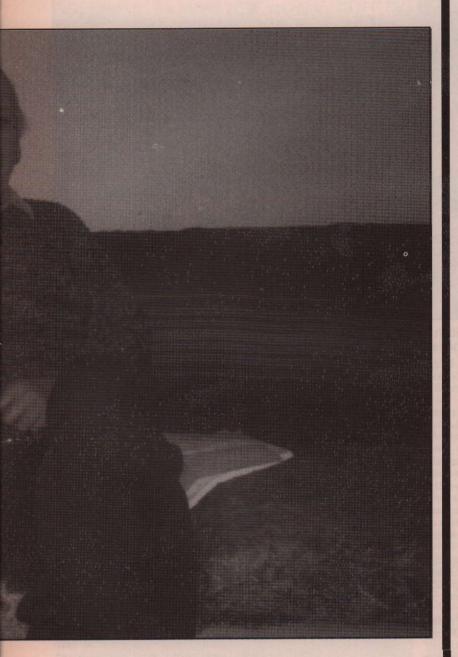
Tarakovo surrendered their arms but they killed them anyway. I think 80 per cent of the population was killed. Some people managed to make their way through the woods

towards Bihac. Not many escaped. In these villages, one half were killed, one quarter escaped, and one quarter ended

up in the camps. The Serbs organised 20 buses to transport those who survived to the free territory of Bosnia.

While they were carrying out this ethnic cleansing — Serbian television was saying that they were rescuing Muslim people from the Bosnian Green Berets.

# o back'



I saw a programme where behind the cameraman soldiers were hitting old men and women, and the Serbian announcer was saying that they were protecting people by putting them into buses and sending them

away from the town.

But even after those people had been forced to leave, the buses were being stopped at Serb checkpoints, and they were taking money, any gold, and taking some of the men of fighting age and shooting them. There are witnesses who survived this and they can tell you what hap-

So even after they had been thrown out of their homes, they were not allowed safe passage.

After the killing started to cool down, they went to all the people who still had flats or houses, and pressured them to to sign papers saying they were giving the flat away.

Every day they changed the laws. One day you would have to pay DM300 (about £150) for transport, DM50 for gas, and so on. They kept taking more and more money.

After all that initial shooting and killing it didn't become any easier. For any non-Serb it was possible to be picked up on the street, imprisoned or killed. If a Serb had a grudge against you from five years ago, now was the time to settle it. They were beating and killing people.

I didn't go out for three months. We had no money because we were not working, and when I went to my old firm to get my pension they refused to give it to me — after 35 years of work. We had no heating, no

electricity, nothing to eat. At one point I was taken to the police station to be interrogated for nothing. A car came and picked

Luckily one of the neighbours -

member of the police force. He persuaded the others that I was needed to build a checkpoint against the imaginary attacks from the Green Berets. So the police came and picked me up to do that — otherwise I could have ended up in Omarska.

One thing I want to say: it wasn't only Omarska that was a camp, the whole of Prijedor was a camp. It was extreme in Omarska, but people were being tortured in their flats in

At the end of July my son who lives in Britain started trying to get us out. It took four months.

First the United Nations offered help. We were waiting for the UN officials to turn up, and they never came. They were there in the beginning and then they just disappeared. Then we went through the Red Cross, and eventually after a long and painful journey we got to Brit-

#### Camps

Many of my wife Safeta's family were in the camps. Two of her sister's sons were there. Her brother's son was beaten to death in Omarska as soon as he arrived. He was 28 years old. My sister, who is now a refugee in America, saw it happen.

Before the war there were 5,000 Muslims out of a population of 65,000 in Prijedor. Now there are hardly any. None of our family is left. They are scattered all around Europe, in Sweden, in Norway, in Germany in

We are homesick for Prijedor. But there is nothing to see there now. Anything to do with Muslims or Croats has been destroyed. We miss Prijedor as we knew it — but not Prijedor as it is now, and after what we survived.

**Exhibition** 

# An 'ordinary' man in Auschwitz

outing, various documents with foreign stamps; and some images of the grim side of the 20th century.

The little bloke snapped working on a Bermondsey market stall looks no different to a million others. His life story started ordinarily enough - born in the East End, left school to work as a hairdresser, did a bit of amateur boxing, met a girl at a youth club, married, had one kid ...

It would only be when Leon Greenman rolled up his sleeve and revealed a number — 98288 — tat-tooed on his forearm that you'd know there was more to this story.

In 1938, Leon was in Rotterdam with his wife Else, staying with her grandmother. They heard Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, back from Munich, saving on the BBC that there would be no war.

Relieved, they decided to stay in Holland, where Leon was working as a bookseller, for the time being.

On 17 March 1940, their son Barney was born, and they registered his birth at the British consulate.

The consul promised to warn them in good time if it became necessary for British subjects to leave the

Two months later, the Nazis invaded Holland. The British consulate shut up shop and departed without a word, and the Greenmans were stranded.

Leon tried to obtain papers proving his British nationality, but neither the police nor the Swiss consul were much help.

On 10 October 1942 the Greenmans and grandmother were rounded up with thousands of other Jews and sent to Westerbork transit camp, from whence the next stop was Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Selected for forced labour, Leon caught one last glimpse of Else wav-

SOME family photographs, some ing with little Barney from a wintry worn children's shoes, a youth club railway platform. He would never see them again.

A fellow-prisoner at Auschwitz told him that that papers confirming his British nationality, which might have saved the family, had arrived at Westerbork shortly after the train for Auschwitz left.

Leon spent two years slave labour behind the sign that said 'Arbeit Macht Frei', with very little food, witnessing hangings and floggings.

In 1945, as the Red Army approached, some 10,000 of the Auschwitz slaves were marched west through blizzards, then put in cattle trucks for a journey that many didn't survive, to Buchenwald. There Leon Greenman was liberated on 11 April 1945 by American troops.

After hospital treatment for his damaged feet, Leon was re-united with those of his relatives who had survived, and returned to England.

Like others after the war his main concern was to make a living and rebuild what he could of his life. He struggled on 35 bob a week, managed to get extra cash and coupons for a winter overcoat, went on markets, even did a bit of singing.

In 1962, Leon Greenman, survivor 98288, stood in a crowd in Trafalgar square, and heard Colin Jordan, leader of Britain's new Nazis, declaring that Hitler was right, and Britain must be freed of 'Jewish control'. The crowd pelted Jordan and his Nazis.

Leon went home and started writing down what he had experienced. Some years later he began speaking at schools and colleges.

Now in his 80s, Leon Greenman is fighting racism and fascism in whatever way he can. He was at the front of the Welling demonstration against the British National Party, savagely attacked by the police.

In 1994 he found himself 'behind the wire' again — a protective steel mesh covering his windows after threats and attacks from fascists.

This exhibition, arranged by London's Jewish Museum - with the help of young Dutch and German volunteers — skilfully interweaves the Greenman family's story with the historic events of which it was

I've one or two criticisms of the narrative. It tries to explain the rise of Nazism without referring to big business backing, although Monnowitz where Leon Greenman was enslaved was part of the IG Farben industrial empire. And although it's good to see tribute paid to the February 1941 Amsterdam general strike against deportations, it's a pity not to mention the knokkploegen, Jewish youth who fought the fascists.

Taken on the whole, however, this exhibition manages within a small space to strike a blow, not just for past victims of racism, but for those fighting it today. 'Racism and fascism are again present throughout the world, the commentary says. Terrible crimes have been committed recently in the name of "ethnic cleansing" against people of different races or religions in, for example, former Yugoslavia and Rwanda...

And for future generations. Several school groups have already visited the exhbition, some have met Leon Greenman. One pupil writes: 'The trip made a lasting impression ... It has changed my outlook towards racism, no longer will I sit back and let people make racist com-

**Charlie Pottins** ■ The exhibition is at the Jewish Museum, 80 East End Road, London N3 2SY. Tel: 0181-349 1143. Tube: Finchley Central. Buses: 143, 260, 112, 82, 13. Open Monday-Thursday 10.30am-5.00pm, Sundays 10.30am-4.30pm. Admission £2, concs. £1, children free.



### Not so much 'verve' as anger

READERS of this column were left last week musing on the chutzpah of three German academics, two of them university teachers of 'political science', who lambaste the author of Aspects of British Black History (1993).

Because he 'emphasises the racist character of the whole of British society, and particularly the state and police, with particular verve', this author is con-'thoroughly politically, not to say ideological-

ly, motivated'.

Life itself has a way of swiftly hammering critics of this kind into the ground. And I recommend to Herr Alexander Gallus who wrote the above-quoted words in the 1994 issue of the Jahrbuch Extremismus Demokratie - and to Herren Uwe Backes and Eckhard Jesse, editors of that esteemed publication, that they make a close study of Human Rights and Racial Discrimination, published by Liberty last Monday.

This is a 47-page report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimi-

nation. It points out: That racial discrimination and violence are daily facts of life for millions of people who live in

That, by the British government's own admission, there are more than 300 racially motivated attacks every day in this country i.e. some 9,000 every month, or

well over 100,000 every year;
That the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which Tony Blair's Newlabour is now supporting, is being used 'to target black and ethnic minority people' — and that it is only the latest piece of legislation allowing organs of the British state to 'act on prejudicial

That black and Asian men are 10 times more likely to be stopped and searched by the British police than are white men; and

That the Asylum and Immigration Bill, if it becomes law, will create an arrestable offence of illegal entry by deception, and that this 'will lead to a greater number of unauthorised arrests'.

This damning report, written in consultation with an alliance of non-governmental organisations, gives chapter and verse about discrimination against Irish people, Jews, and Travellers as well as against black and Asian people; and it expresses special concern about the dissemination of anti-Jewish literature and an increase in physical attacks on

It is of course open to our three respected German academics to claim that this report, too, is 'thoroughly politically, not to say ideologically, motivated'.

But facts are stubborn things, and not even teachers of bourgeois 'political science' can avert their gaze for ever from the facts about 'the racist character of the whole of British society, and particularly the state and police'.

NEEDLESS to say, these gentlemen are themselves completely free from all political, not to say ideological, motivation.

From their ivory tower at Chemnitz-Zwickau Technical University they gaze across at Britain with complete impartiality. So here are some more facts they may have missed:

Between June 1994 and June 1995 . . . [t]he total number of people ... removed from the UK under Immigration Act Enforcement Powers was just over 5,000 - nearly 100 people

per week. The total number of people against whom enforcement action was newly initiated and who are awaiting removal was 13,100 - nearly 300 people per

With every hour that passes, two black people will be notified of the Tories' intention to deport them.'

I take these facts from the first issue (winter 1996) of Anti-Deportation News, newsletter of the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns, which

# **COLUMN**

was formed last May to 'bring together all anti-deportation campaigns in England, Scotland and Wales within a supportive

So far over 40 local campaigns are taking part in the Coalition, whose address is 22 Berners Street, Lozells, Birmingham B19 2DR. Tel: 0121-554 6947.

Its newsletter features not only disturbing news of actual and threatened deportations from Britain, and the 'iceberg of human misery' that these cause to sundered families, but also heartening news of recent victories against deportation.

For, given the necessary courage and determination, the Home Office can be defeated.

It was defeated by Hema Patel, a 26-year-old woman in Handsworth, Birmingham, who came to the UK in 1986 to marry a British citizen. When she left her husband the Home Office slapped a deportation order on her - but her appeal against it has been

The Home Office was also defeated by Mamta Chopra, who fled from an arranged marriage, obtained a divorce, remarried, was threatened with deportation under the 12-month rule (rule 132), and has now been granted a year's stay after the birth of her

The 12-month rule says that any woman coming to Britain after an arranged marriage is dependent on her spouse for the first year. If during that period she leaves the marriage for any reason at all she must leave the

This rule is used, almost universally, against black women entering this country, and it gives men who abuse their wives power to threaten them with deportation and thus, in effect, hold them prisoner.

### Silly words and silly Deedes

THIS year is not yet three months old, but already there's a strong contender for Clanger-Dropper

My nomination goes to W.F. Deedes for a piece in his Daily Telegraph column last Monday referring thus to the 1924 'Zi-

'Whether it was forged or not is still a matter of historical dis-

The 'Zinoviev letter', as many readers will know, was published in the Daily Mail just before polling day in the 1924 general election. It purported to give instructions from the Communist International to the Communist Party of Great Britain.

There are strong arguments against its being genuine', wrote the late A.J.P. Taylor in his stand-ard English History 1914-1945 (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1965).

'No original was ever produced; some of the phrases are in it are wrongly described.... The way in which it came into circulation counts strongly against its being genuine...

[C]opies reached the Daily Mail and the Conservative central office as soon as one reached the foreign office, or perhaps earlier. This points to its being the work of the well-known factory of documents run by White Russian émigrés in Berlin.'

Two years later, in The Zinoviev Letter (Heinemann, 1967), Lewis Chester, Stephen Fay, and Hugo Young revealed exactly who forged the letter, how it was planted in MI5, and how the Tory Party contributed £5,000 to the cost of the scam.

Can Deedes name one single reputable historian who still believes this letter was not a for-

Peter Fryer

# 'We must rediscover our history and culture'

In this contribution to the discussion on a new socialist party, the Scottish labour historian JAMES D. YOUNG says we need to foster socialist idealism among workers and intellectuals

IN THE Workers Press report on your tenth anniversary meeting (17 February), I was particularly interested in Cliff Slaughter's stimulating comments.

Though I have waited for a long time for a Marxist with Slaughter's theoretical clout to acknowledge that Lenin's interpretation of the origins of class consciousness was 'one-sided', Slaughter's assertion that '[f]or about 100 years, the workingclass movement has been restricted politically to parliament' simply did not apply to the Celtic fringe.

Those English socialists concerned with the important task of building a new socialist party from the bottom up will need to divest themselves of such biased Anglocentric attitudes.

Surely Cliff Slaughter is aware that Scottish and Irish socialists had no representation in the House of Commons or illusions about what Royden Harrison calls 'a very English [parliamentary] socialism' during the mass agitations on 'Red Clyde', 1914-24, or in and around Dublin before and after the 1916 Easter Rising.

Besides, in his book The Wobblies (1967), Patrick Renshaw

'[T]he most significant feature of Wobbly activity in Britain was that it took place among the same culturally alienated groups who found direct action attractive on the other side of the Atlantic.

'The Industrial Workers of Great Britain was not strong in England as such. Its advocates were either Scottish, Irish, or Welsh, the "immigrant" workers from the Celtic fringe.'

It was not Lenin but Karl Kautsky who first developed the élitist and counter-productive socialism-from-above orthodoxy about socialism coming from the heads of 'the bourgeois intelligentsia'. Kautsky said 'it was out of the heads of this stratum that modern socialism originated'.

Arguing that it was they 'who communicated it to the more intellectually developed proletarians, who, in their turn, introduce it into the proletarian class struggle where conditions allow that to be done', Lenin eventually accepted Kautsky's comment that class consciousness came from without rather than within the class struggle.

#### Basic

Despite my basic disagreement with the optimistic argument my friend Raymond Challinor developed in Workers Press two or three years ago that 'our prospects were never better', I do think that the radical Left could now begin to rebuild a mass labour movement. To do so, revolutionary socialists will need

1. Look critically at international socialist history since the rise — and fall — of Stalinism;

2. Rediscover those aspects of our history and culture that have been marginalised.

Reducing much of human activity, including poetry and imaginative literature, to a crude and functional 'class truth', whether during the phase of 'class against class', the years of the 'Popular Front', or whenever, the Stalinists almost detroyed the idea of socialist idealism in the sense of living according to one's egalitarian and libertarian ide-



Dublin in ruins after British bombardment during the Easter Rising, 1916: Irish socialists, like James Connolly who led the rising, had no illusions in the House of Commons

als. (And we should not forget that some corrupt Stalinist ideas penetrated some of the Trotskyists' heads, too.)

It was the mature Marx who. discussing the sacrifices he had made to complete the first volume of Capital, wrote:

[This] is the biggest missile ever fired at the head of the bourgeoisie. I laugh at the so-called practical" men and their wisdom. If one chose to be an ox, one could of course turn one's back on the sufferings of mankind and look after one's own skin.

'But I should have regarded myself as impractical if I had pegged out without completely finishing my book, at least in manuscript.'

From the standpoint of Antonio Labriola in his book Essays on the Materialist Conception of History (1903), the shoemaker Bauer, the tailors Lessner and Eccarius, the painter of miniatures Pfaender, the watchmaker Moll and others were 'the first conscious initiators of our move-

In comments much more helpful to active socialists than anything Kautsky wrote on the question, Labriola also said:

'[Critical communism] mingles itself with the proletarian movement, but it sees and supports that movement in the full intelligence of the connection which it can have, and which it must have. with all the relations of social life as a whole. In a word, it is not a seminary in which superior officers of the proletarian movement are trained, but is neither more nor less than the consciousness of this revolution and especially the consciousness of its difficulties.'

Down to 1917 the dominant intellectual tendency of classical Marxism did not conceive of working-class consciousness as something that developed from

No matter how oblique their critique of capitalism might be, Dickens, Thackeray and Mrs Gaskell were contributing to socialist consciousness.

Writing in the New York Daily Tribune in 1854, Marx said:

'The present splendid brotherhood of fiction-writers in England, whose graphic and eloquent pages have issued to the world more political and social truths than have been uttered by all the professional politicians, publicists and moralists put together, have described every section of the middle class from the "highly genteel" annuitant and Fundholder who looks upon all sorts of business as vulgar, to the little shopkeeper and lawyer's clerk.'

As S.S. Prawer pointed out in his brilliant book Karl Marx and World Literature (1976), Marx often saw what he called 'unconscious socialism' in the works of English and European poets and

Before 1917 a number of Marxists wrote about working people's 'unconscious socialism'.

When Eleanor Marx and Edward Aveling wrote their book The Working-Class Movement in America (1891), they commented on the 'unconscious socialism' they found in workers' clubs, institutes and trade unions:

'Again and again people came to our neetings and said: "Yes, if that is socialism, we are socialists, too." One of the greatest benefits of our journey was that this unconscious undefined socialism was turned into conscious socialism for hundreds, nay for thou-

#### **Dogmatic**

Since 1917 dogmatic 'vanguardism' has done immeasurable damage to democratic, class-struggle socialism from below. Even when the English working class was 'a class in itself' and not yet 'a class for itself', Marx and Engels saw and wrote about its 'unconscious socialism'.

In a comment on the May Day celebrations in London in 1890, Engels wrote about 'the English proletariat, newly awakened from its forty-year sleep'. Then in 1892, in a new preface to The Condition of the Working-Class in England, Engels returned to the theme of 'unconscious socialism' when he said:

'Needless to say that today there is indeed "Socialism again in England", and plenty of it socialism of all shades: socialism conscious and unconscious. socialism prosaic and poetic, socialism of the working class and of the middle class, for verily, that abomination of abominations has [become] respectable.... At the same time, we have no reason to grumble at the symptom

As well as jettisoning some of the heritage of our recent past about the pernicious 'vanguardism' - as distinct from socialists' crucial avant-garde directing role in ongoing strug-gles — socialists will need to reevaluate their role in developing class struggles.

Moreover the ideas of major thinkers like Franz Mehring and Daniel De Leon will require to be examined and discussed anew. (Incidentally, in my work as a labour historian, I find the insights of Mehring and De Leon more valuable than those of Kautsky.)

Besides recovering the socialism of the Celtic fringe, socialists ought to focus on the theoretical richness of pre-1917 socialist thought. Almost every contemporary Marxist knows De Leon's comment that: 'In all revolutionary movements, as in the storming of a fortress, the thing depends on the head of the column, upon that minority that it so intense in its conviction, so soundly based on its principles, so determined in its actions, that carries the masses with it, storms the breastworks, and captures the fort.

'Such a head must be our socialist organisation to the whole column of the American proletariat.'

Yet, in contrast to Ernest Belfort Bax of the Social Democratic Federation, who insisted that 'Socialism did not signify everything by the people, but everything for the people' — and who believed that the revolution would be accomplished 'by the active minority from out of the stagnant inert mass' - De Leon said: 'The proletarian army cannot consist of a dumb driven

As in De Leon's time, so in the late 20th century socialist move-ments will only be built by those who believe in the creativity and potential of working people.

'I bank my hopes wholly and build entirely upon this senti-ment of rebellion within you', De Leon told striking workers in Massachusetts in 1898.

'The initial revolution must be accomplished in your minds', he told other strikers three years later. 'You must have divorced vourselves from the habits of thought that have been used for your enslavement; you must have come to an understanding that you are the sole producers of wealth.

The new socialist party envisaged by a growing minority of socialists in Britain will need to internalise an authentic antiimperialist socialist internationnsitive anti-imperialist theoretical heritage of the De Leon who described the Union Jack with its 'three crosses quartered' as the symbol of 'the practically forceful annexation of Scotland and Ireland to England'.

In 1996 the first real signs of a socialist revival in the western world are again evident, though as a result of the whole heritage of Stalinism we face greater problems and barriers than did the generation of Marx and Engels or of Mehring and De Leon.

We could begin by getting left-wing books printed and published and into public libraries, and by generally developing a socialist counter-culture in the communities where we live and work. Above all, we will need the powerful socialist idealism that, a hundred years ago, made a humane and sensitive critique of capitalism - and moved mountains of prejudice before its onslaught.

# The working class needs

The 'Crisis in the labour movement' conference sponsored by Workers Press is next Saturday, 16 March in Conway Hall, 11am-5pm.

To prepare, we asked WRP secretary CLIFF SLAUGHTER to write on the need and perspectives for a new working-class socialist party

THE idea is growing that the working class needs a new party. Why? Because the Labour Party is moving farther and farther away from the working class which founded it nearly 100 years

Blair and his team are remote from working people and their mounting problems. Blair and Co. have removed Clause Four ('common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange') from the party's constitution. They support the antitrade-union laws, yet the Labour Party was founded above all to protect the legal independence and rights of unions.

Blair and Co. now make their appeals to the better-off sections

of the middle class and to big business. They have abandoned the aim of full employment. They have entirely different standards for themselves than they do for the working people they expect to vote for them, in terms of wages, health care, etc.

The blatant hypocrisy of Blair and Harman in choosing their children's schools starkly shows this difference.

What alternative is there? In the past, convinced socialists sometimes turned to the Communist Party. But since 1989 the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union and internationally the system they controlled has totally collapsed. The Communist Party is no more.

And it is no answer just to proclaim a 'Socialist Labour Party', like Arthur Scargill, without a thorough study and explanation of the historical reasons for this crisis in the labour movement.

The new party that is necessary will only come into existence on the basis of big movements, mass struggles, big shocks and not just by proclamation or argument or explanation.

Only through experience will the working class — or a significant section of it — give up the mass political party which brought it into political life: the Labour Party. We can expect that the inevitable attacks on the working class from the coming Labour government will provide just such experiences.

THE problem of a new party did not arise yesterday. Seventy years ago the working class all over the world needed new parties. The 'socialist' parties had gone over to their 'own' capitalist ruling classes in the 1914-18 war. Ever after these parties have been used as instruments of rule over their own supporters — working-class people.

#### **Dead-end**

The Communist Parties formed after the October 1917 Russian Revolution became first the victims of the dead-end theory of Stalin and the Soviet bureaucracy, 'Socialism in One Country', and, after that, of the illusion that they were defending socialism in the Soviet Union through 'peaceful co-existence with capitalism' and Stalinist tyranny.

Now the remnant of these parties have openly gone over to the politics of the 'socialist' or 'social-democratic' traitors. Men and women who joined those parties

will be among the forces who build a new party.

Followers of Leon Trotsky—the leader of the Russian Revolution who was exiled and then assassinated by Stalin's agents in 1940 — for 70 years defended Marxism and the aims of internationalism and socialist revolution against these false leaders. They explained that this crisis of working-class leadership must be resolved, as the key to the crisis of all humanity caused by capitalism's decay.

The difference *now* is that the need for a new party is becoming clear to far wider circles of people through the collapse of the Soviet bureaucracy, the Communist Parties and the open abandonment of socialist aims by the Labour Party and its equivalents in other countries.

Only socialism — not capitalism — can solve unemployment, homelessness, destruction of welfare services, health care, education, the environment. Only socialism can stop the revival of fascist reaction and war.

WHO will found the new party? All the existing groups calling themselves Trotskyist, the WRP among them, were formed in the particular conditions of the domination of the world working-class movement by Stalinism. This has meant that Trotskyist organisations 'swimming against the stream' remained small and largely isolated from the mass of workers who supported the traditional working-class parties.

But the new party the working class needs must bring together members from all sections of the working class and win its confidence.

Working-class struggles are now being inescapably prepared because of the historical, structural crisis of the whole capitalist system. Stalinism's collapse and Labourism's final bankruptcy are powerful expressions of and contributions to that deep crisis.

a new party

Some socialists fear that the collapse of the 'traditional' parties weakens the working class as it comes to confront the struggles ahead. They say it is a very unfavourable time to be working for a new party.

#### **Opposite**

The very opposite is true. Stalinism and social democracy (Labourism) have done enormous damage to the working-class movement (organisation and consciousness), but it is the years of their domination, not their collapse, that have done that damage!

Socialists who pull back, saying 'working-class consciousness is damaged', are missing their time in history. They are falling victim to the ideological pressure of middle-class 'intellectuals' who cannot see beyond capitalism, who retail the rulers' ideological message: 'Socialism has failed, Marxism is dead.'

Some Marxists, looking at the smallness of the forces they have been able to build and retain in long years of relative isolation imposed by Stalinism, draw the conclusion that the forces for a new party able to bid for leadership of the working class do not yet exist.

We must turn our eyes and our thinking to the masses of working people who are most certainly being forced into movement, who are due to experience great historic shocks to their existing way of life and consciousness, and begin to provide the living 'culture' within which the working class will become conscious of what it must aim at, how it must organise, and how thousands will come forward to organise, inspire and lead their fellow men and women.

In Britain since the great oneyear-long miners' strike of 1984-85 and the printworkers' heroic battles at Wapping, we have seen the mighty anti-polltax movement and the mass mobilisation against pit closures in 1992-93

Workers Aid for Bosnia has organised real solidarity from the labour movement for the struggle of the Bosnian people.

And now working-class internationalism takes a great step forward in the Liverpool dockers' strike, their work for international solidarity and their international conference (reported last week in Workers Press).

NO ONE to form a new party? There are thousands of people to form a new party! Mahomet must go the mountain! That is what the Marxists must learn — now!

Unless Marxists can *immerse* themselves in the movements, struggles, the thinking of all those who are now driven into action, they have no future, only a noble past.

Trotskyists must fight their way out of isolation, subordinate everything to the vital life-and-death task and decide to break out, to be the most disciplined and determined fighters for a new working-class socialist party.

We must put all our political resources at the disposal of the new forces coming forward, so they can forge themselves into a new party.

We, like all others coming forward, have to fight night and day to show the necessary socialist direction of the many struggles and demands now building up, not in the spirit of 'intervention', but as part of this mighty, growing movement, part of a new (reconstructed) self movement of the working class as a class.



Greek delegate speaks at the historic international dockers' conference in Liverpool two weeks ago

#### Socialist Labour Party

## Our main field of action will be extra-parliamentary'

#### Newham

BRENDA NIXON, the Socialist Labour Party's first parliamentary candidate who stood in the Hemsworth by-election was the main speaker at a public meeting in the east London attended by about 100 people.

Local solicitor Imran Khan and Bob Crowe, deputy general secretary of the RMT union, also spoke.

Imran Khan is the solicitor for the Stephen Lawrence family. They made legal history by taking out a private prosecution of Stephen Lawrence's suspected killers. Stephen, a young black man, was brutally murdered in south-east London.

RMT executive member Bob Crowe has just resigned from the Communist Party of Britain, one of the fragments of the former Communist Party of Great Britain. Seven other members of the RMT executive have joined him in the SLP

Brenda Nixon said she joined the Socialist Labour Party out of total disillusionment with the Labour Party, which she left in disgust at the right-wing Tory

policies brought in by Tony Blair.

'Although the Labour Party
and the press were against us in
Hemsworth we went out and convinced 1,200 people to leave the
Labour Party and join us,' she

'People were waiting for something to happen, for a party to spring up,' she continued. 'The feeling was, people are interested. We must build support and be ready to take over from the Labour Party when they fail.'

Imran Khan gave many examples of the violence and racism suffered by black people in Britain.

He outilined how racialism had been a generalised, all-pervasive prejudice in the years after World War II, but had become entrenched in the immigration acts as institutionalised racism.

'The SLP will take up rather than give up the fight against class exploitation. The SLP will take up and not give up the fight against racism,' he said.

#### Listening

Bob Crowe said he had been listening to people say 'there is a general election round the corner' for 17 years. When he first heard it the TUC still had 12.5 million members.

He ridiculed the idea that workers had stopped voting Labour because of the nationalisation of industry: 'Only 8 per cent of industries were ever nationalised in this country, and 4 per cent were, like Rolls Royce, retirealized by the Torics.

nationalised by the Tories.

'Clause Four was taken out to appease big business and the stock exchange. Tories, Liberal

accept the free market and capitalism.'

'This is not just a Labour Party mark II', he went on. 'Our main field of action is extra-parliamentary. We will support the people fighting against the Newbury by-pass and struggles like that against the M11 link road in east London. The SLP will support protests against the veal trade, and if a movement arises such as the poll-tax campaign, the SLP will play a leading part.'

He emphasised that the SLP stood for the repeal of all antiunion legislation.

He mocked people who wanted the SLP to allow other parties and groups to affiliate, quoting a Glaswegian who had said: 'You can't play for Celtic and Rangers at the same time.'

Crowe emphasised that party conference would be the SLP's governing body. He said there would be no separate policymaking parliamentary party.

He asserted it would be easy to introduce a four-day, 32-hour week and thus ensure everybody had a job, simply by taking the profits of the top 200 companies, the money spent on the Trident submarines and missiles and all the money spent on the dole.

Crowe said the SLP supported Ireland's right to exist as a united and independent country and called for safeguards for the rights of minorities.

Southwark
THE abandonment of the Labour

Party's Clause Four was linked to the formation of the Socialist Labour Party, Terry Dunn informed a meeting of about 50 in Southwark, south London.

Terry was an NUM member sacked in 1984-85 and is currently in the Transport and General Workers' Union. The public meeting he chaired had been called to raise the profile of Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party.

Terry had helped draw up the SLP's constitution at a meeting at the Great Northern Hotel, he reported. He had also moved the affiliation of his T&G branch, ACTS 14785, to the SLP, but was informed in a fax from Bill Morris that 'such affiliations are not permitted under the rules of the union'.

RMT executive member Pete Skelly had been a member of the Labour Party and had always argued the case for working in Skelly attacked the Labour Party for abandoning Clause Four and for its failure to give a commitment to abolish the antitrade-union laws. He also asked at which party conference it was that the membership decided to call itself 'New Labour'?

There have been meetings up and down the country called by the Socialist

Labour Party, led by Arthur Scargill. As reported here, a majority of the RMT

transport union executive has joined the initiative and left whatever parties

the individual members were in, including the Labour Party and the

Communist Party of Britain. BOB ARCHER and ANTON MOCTONIAN

report on meetings in London on Wednesday 21 February

Skelly stated that the Labour Party was now 'fully committed to capitalism' and that this could not be changed.

Skelly maintained that the Hemsworth by-election result was a tribute to a party that was only three weeks old in a constituency with five generations of Labour Party voters.

'Consider the vote the SLP would get three to four years into a Labour government,' he said.

Skelly also attacked Blair's rail policy as a microcosm of all that was wrong with New Labour after poll on poll had shown that people wanted a publicly-owned rail network.

If only Blair would announce that he would renationalise the rail system the 'Tory policy would collarse'. It 'would over he

a vote-winner', Skelly maintained.

Skelly also announced the SLP's programme to end unemployment which included a 35-hour week, a ban on compulsory overtime and retirement at 55. Skelly ended by appealing to Labour Party members to join the SLP.

The SLP's Hemsworth candidate Brenda Nixon spoke on her experiences in the by-election and of the positive aspects of her

A Militant member stated that he intended to join at the end of the meeting but was told he couldn't because of the SLP's constitution banning membership of other organisations.

WRP member Simon Pirani reported Workers Press's support for Nixon at Hemsworth, asked about the SLP's position on internationalism and invited the audience to come to the 'Crisis in the labour movement' conference, sponsored by Workers Press, on 16 March.

Anton Moctonian

Page 8

Saturday 9 March 1996

Newsdesk 0171-387 0564

Send your letters and photos — Deadline Monday Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB Telephone: 0171-387 0564 Fax: 0171-387 0569

E-mail: s0gp@exnet.co.uk

# WE WANT EQUAL POWER

# Bosnian miners strike over unkept pledges

BOSNIAN miners who carried on working without wages during the war have been on strike because the government did not honour its promises to resume payments. The Kakanj miners are anxious not just about pay, but about jobs, and the threat of privatisation. They are determined to maintain union organisa-

Before the war there were 20,000 miners employed in Kakanj's open-cast and deep pits, which supply the steel works in nearby Zenica. Now there are

Before the war there were plans · for British steel to modernise Zenica's steel industry, with the loss of thousands of jobs. The war put a stop to production anyway.

'The union has been been maintained throughout the war,' says Luka Bradaric, president of the Kakanj Miners' Union. We have a committee of eight men and we have been determined to make sure the union keeps going, helping the workers as much as possible. From BOB MYERS Kakanj, Bosnia

'Sadly in the mines of nearby Zenica the union has collapsed as no one there was willing to keep

'In the future we will have to fight to make sure the union is properly recognised. We want equal power as the government.

'We need the kind of unions that exist in Britain. But this is going to be very difficult. Because of the war we have no money and no resources of any kind. I am being paid by the mine

'During the war we co-operated with him very closely, but being paid by him and not by the union we are not properly independent.

'We have applied to be recog-nised by the European Federation of Trade Unions and we hope we will get that soon. This will help with the development of the union. But the basic problem is to increase production at

'Only if we restore production can the union really become strong again. For this we need help, we need machinery.

'Throughout the war we recieved no wages. Only some food parcels. With the end of the war the government promised that we would start to be paid from January. We should have recieved DM70 (£35) a month. But we did not get paid.

'Most of our coal now goes to the electricity generating plant. they have now started charging their customers for electricity but they did not pay for the coal. So we got no money.

'In February we went on strike for five days. Everyone in the town supported us as they knew we only wanted money for the work we had done.

'Eventually they promised we would recieve our money and we went back to work. Now there is a lot of talk about privatisation, but down here no one knows what is going to happen.'

At the beautiful country club owned by the Banovici Miners Union we spoke to Ferid Zenunovic, the union president. He told us:

'Before the war, miners and their families and other workers could come here for the weekend or for longer and relax, enjoy themselves. We had a very high standard of living.

'During the war we had to close the club but now we are trying to open it again, but we are worried about its future. We have big problems in the mine.

'It is very hard to maintain production with what machinery we have left. Now there are hundreds of miners who volunteered for the army being demobilised. They have to be given their jobs back.

'The government is talking about privatising the mines and we know that things like this club may then be taken away

A delegation from Workers Aid for Bosnia and Student Aid has been in Bosnia, meeting trade unionists, students, and political activists such as the Tuzla Civic

#### **Darkness**

We reached Tuzla via the direct, northern route, so long closed to our aid convoys. We crossed the River Sava as darkness fell, which meant entering Serb Chetnik-held territory in the night. We were stopped at a checkpoint on a desolate country road by a policeman of the Srpska Republika, and he started to menace Ivana when he found she had

Eventually we passed through,

regularly crossing by the north ern route, and even going to se relatives living in Chetnik area but they are still very scared.

One day on the road back from Zenica we picked up a woma hitch-hiking. In the car she burs into tears. The previous day Croat man had come up to he and asked her name.

When she gave a Muslim nam he shot her two-year old boy sh was carrying in her arms. Th local Turkish IFOR troops hav flown the boy to Turkey in a heli copter, but she had no idea wher he is or whether he is all right.

Her husband was killed in th war. They had tried for many years to have a baby. This is al she has left.

There may be peace but no normality. The Serb war crimina Karadzic moves freely around the country. Admiral Leighton Smith says he cannot arrest him because he always travels with guards. Leighton-Smith has 6,000

## Atrocities don't advance Palestinian cause

#### BY DAVID DORFMAN

WE condemn the killing and maiming of Israeli civilians by Islamic mujahedin in recent bombings in Ashkelon, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

There was no pretence at hitting military or political targets. Those targetted were people going to work on a morning bus, shoppers, children in Purim fancy-dress.

That Israeli armed forces killed Arab children before, when they bombed Beirut, or fired into homes in Gaza, and will kill more innocent Palestinans in their crackdown against Hamas. does not alter the case.

When Palestinian Lebanese fighters blew up Israeli military headquarters or US marines they struck a blow on behalf of their peoples against powerful military machines.

When youth in the Intifada took to the streets with catapults against well-armed troops, like David beating Goliath, they demoralised their occupiers and won world-wide recognition.

the White House lawn reflected the bankruptcy of bourgeois nationalist leadership.

We understand the frustration of young Palestinians in places like El-Fawwar camp, the 'reservoir of human misery' from which two of the bombers came. Their country remains occupied by settlers

But Hamas offers no way forward. Behind unreal visions of an Islamic state, its leaders want to supplant the PLO at the conference table and strike their own deals with the Zionists.

#### **Provoke**

Elements within the Israeli state who connived at the murder of prime minister Rabin may have calculated when they struck down a Hamas leader that they would provoke the response they did, so they could launch bloody repression.

Blood-feud reinforces misery and reaction, and postpones liberation. Without detracting from the courage of those who sacrifice themselves, the working-class movement must say this is not the way. Socialist international-That this was exchanged for a ism must map a real future for mess of pottage at Oslo and tea on the peoples of the Middle East.

**Workers Press** 

SUBSCRIBE

to the socialist weekly that tells the truth

Please send me

 $\square$  10 issues for £5.60

 $\Box$  50 issues for £27.60

£38.50; Africa, Americas and India £12.70 for 10 issues, 50 for £63.50; Australia,

Address .....

I enclose £..... for my subscription, and

an extra donation of £.....

Make cheques, POs payable to Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

.....

......

INTERNATIONAL RATES: Europe and Near East, £7.70 for 10 issues, 50 for

Japan and E Asia 10 issues for £13.70, 50 for £68.50.

#### BY CHARLIE POTTINS

RESISTANCE to ethnic carve-up of Bosnia and Herzegovina has moved from the battlefield to the political field; and the political opposition is forming links across the battlelines.

Announcing that he would form a new political party last month, former prime minister Haris Siladzic said Mostar must not remain divided.

Urging re-integration and democratisation to put an end to ethnic ghettoes, Siladzic said this must go for Croatia and Serbia too, 'because Bosnia cannot be an island or democratic oasis'.

Siladzic charges old colleagues in the ruling SDA with being prepared to appease Croat and Serb nationalism in return for getting their own privileged way in a rump, Muslim Bosnia.

The same day he made his

announcement, the weekly Svijet quoted Bosnian army deputy chief of staff General Jovan Divjak, who is a Serb, as saying President Izetbegovic wanted to force him into retirement.

Almost a fifth of the Bosnia and Herzegovina army is non-Muslim, but critics accuse Izetbegovic of trying to subordinate it to his Muslim SDA party.

Izetbegovic, who had a heart attack recently, says his government has its hands full, with refugees wanting to return, and demobilised soldiers having no jobs to go to.

SDA deputy Ganic says Muslim voters will back 'those who will secure survival', and reject 'those who break (Muslim) unity.'

The war criminal Karadzic continues running his Chetnik 'Republika Srpska', and staged the 'flight' of Serbs from parts of Sarajevo with NATO collusion.

Supporters of Croatian Presi-

dent Tudiman's HDZ have not only resisted reunification in Mostar, but want to obstruct unity in the capital too.

The HDZ in Sarajevo wants a two-tier district assembly, with Serb and Croat parties in the upper house effectively able to veto legislation.

But anti-nationalist forces are mobilising. Bosnian Serb opposition deputies from Banja Luka, led by Miodrag Zivanovic of the Liberal party, have met with Bosnian MPs in Sarajevo, led by Social Democrat leader Sejfudin

Their joint declaration called for the participation of opposition parties in organising the coming elections, renewal of economic contacts, punishment of war criminals, and the right of refugees to go home.

An economic delegation from Banja Luka will visit Tuzla. Zivanovic said democratic forces oppose 'the reduction of life to ethnic background and the ideol ogy of blood and evil'.

on makes links

Members of Circle 99 from Sarajevo and the Citizens' Forun from Tuzla, visited all major cit ies in Serbia and Montenegro las month to inform the public or

Their visit was covered extensively by the independent papers NasaBorba, Vreme and Monitor while the Milosevic government media were quiet.

The most common question they were asked at meetings was whether a multicultural Bosnia was possible.

The visitors replied that in Sarajevo and Tuzla they don't ask this question, but simply live

They were surprised how little people from rump Yugoslavia knew about events in Bosnia besides what they had picked up

from official war propaganda.

# Yale wage-share backs strike

#### BY MURIEL H. COOPER (AFL-CIO News)

YALE University's 2,600 clerical and technical employees began an innovative six-week strike on 7 February, relying on support from a sister local, which is waiting its turn to strike if the administration does not address issues of work rules, wages and retirement benefits.

The workers, members of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE) Local 34, have been in contract negotiations since 2 November, along with HERE Local 35, which represents 1,100 service and maintenance employees. Local 35 will continue to work and share their wages with the strikers.

Local 34 members said they would remain on strike until an agreement is reached or until March 25, whichever comes first. If no agreement is reached by late March, Local 35 may strike the New Haven university while members of Local 34 return to work, union spokesperson Deborah Chernoff said.

'It was clear that Yale was going to try to starve us out ... in an effort to weaken the union. We had to figure out a way to outlast them,' she said.

The university has offered to extend both contracts to allow negotiations to continue without a strike, but was not willing to extend one union's contract while the other one went on strike.

'We've been through this with them before,' Chernoff said.

'Yale isn't serious about settling. It's not about a lack of time, it's about their lack of will to settle. They want to make the workers feel that they can't win.'

#### Massive

The school wants to implement massive subcontracting, a two-tier wage system and lower health benefits for future retirees. But Chernoff said the workers' main concern is job security.

'People don't go on strike for a quarter-an-hour raise. They feel their livelihood is being threat-

Local 35 will make weekly donations to Local 34. The unions also will be working with various community organisations on fundraising events.

This is the second time in less than a month that the university

has been the scene of a labour dispute. About 75 members of the Graduate Employees and Student Organization went on a 'grade strike' in January in an effort to receive lower health insurance costs, higher teaching stipends, smaller classes, more training and a formal grievance proce-

The university said that the teaching assistants, who were trying to organise under HERE, were students and not employees, and thus not entitled to bargain

When they returned from the winter break, many of them had lost their jobs.

'Yale behaved like any unionbusting corporation, using illegitimate tactics to crush dissent, Diana Paton told the Philadelphia Inquirer.

Graduate assistants increasingly have sought to unionize at large and small campuses over the past decade.

In 1993, the Communications Workers organized 4,000 graduate teaching assistants at cam-puses of the State University of New York. At the University of California at Berkeley, graduate teaching assistants, members of UAW Local 2165, were on the picket line for more than two months in 1993

#### Shootings in Argentina

MORE than 100 people were wounded in a police attack on a demonstration in the Argentinian city of La Plata.

Among the wounded was Hebe de Bonafini, head of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo (mothers who want to know what happened to their disappeared sons and daughters during the military dictatorship).

Civilians, paramilitary forces and police fired on the student

demonstration. A journalist received six shots in the legs for covering the news. Over 250 people got arrested

and were transferred to a former 'Centre for Detention of Subversives' used during the military dictatorship.

Sixteen students have disappeared! Protests should be urgently raised against this act of overt repression in Argentina.

Martin Ralph