

The central issue on May Day is . . .

ACT TO SAVE BOSNIA

SHADOW hangs over May Day 1994. That shadow is Gorazde. The town is being razed to the ground by fascist bands. To their shame, the leaders of the international working class lift not a finger in defence of the Bosnian working class.

■ Behind moralistic hand-wringing about 'peace' and 'not taking sides' these ladies and gentlemen in practice support capitalist 'order' in the Balkans.

■ By their deeds they side in practice with the destruction of the Bosnian working class through ethnic cleansing.

A year ago we said: Bosnia is the main question for the world working class. Apart from the Workers Aid for Bosnia campaign and those who support it, nothing has been done in the working class to come to the aid of our brothers and sisters in Bosnia.

On May Day, when workers throughout the world reaffirm their solidarity in the common struggle against capitalism, we say that these leaders who have betrayed Bosnia should be called to account.

Siege

Wherever Workers Aid has gone it has met with the warmest response from thousands of workers. They want to help the people of Tuzla, Gorazde, and other towns under fascist siege.

In contrast, the official leaders of the labour movement refuse to act because they are tied hand and foot to the ruling class.

On this May Day we demand that the labour movement end this shameful record, take up the fight

BY THE EDITOR

against racism and fascism, and come to the aid of multi-ethnic Bosnia.

Pious holiday words about internationalism are a fraud when not matched by deeds.

Time is running out. If the Bosnian working class goes down to defeat this will strengthen the hand of the fascists throughout the world.

Betray

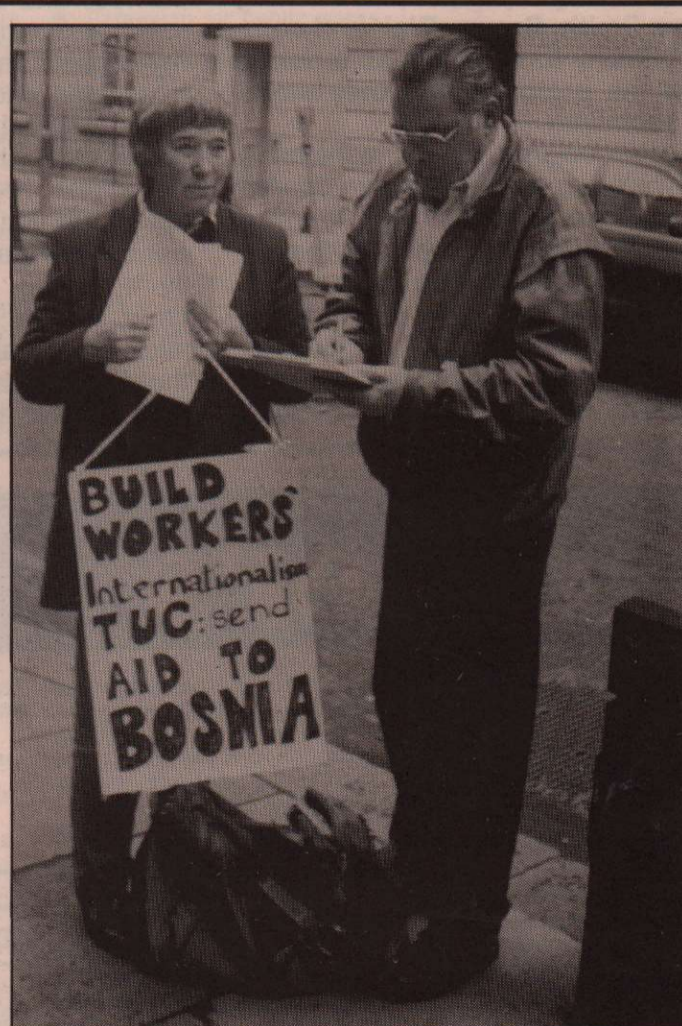
Thus it was with Germany and Spain in the 1930s. So it is with Bosnia today.

These same labour and trade union leaders back the African National Congress in South Africa as it becomes clearer by the day that Mandela and company are the servants of imperialism, and will cruelly betray the millions of Africans who voted for the ANC in the election.

We are proud that our comrades in South Africa, members of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International, stood candidates in the elections in the fight for the independence of the working class and for socialism in South Africa.



A LOBBY by Workers Aid for Bosnia on 27 April called upon the TUC general council to come to the aid of the workers of Bosnia and Herzegovina in their fight against fascism. Lobbyists spoke to John Edmunds, general secretary of the general GMB union (above), Bill Morris, general secretary Transport and General Workers Union, Ann Gibson of the Manufacturing Science Finance Union and Terry O'Neill, president of the bakers' union (BFAWU). They also met members of the Inland Revenue Staff Association who were attending a conference in Congress House. Our picture (right) shows Dot Gibson speaking to Robert Fulton, secretary of the union's Cumbernauld branch.



The tragedy in Rwanda and Somalia is the bitter fruits of empire. Just as workers in eastern and western Europe must fight to re-establish their links, so the workers in the big capitalist countries must fight against their own capitalist class and governments in the pillage of Africa.

The Labour leaders do nothing to halt the racist lie that the massacres in Rwanda and elsewhere, like those in Bosnia, result from native 'backwardness' and tribalism.

Plunder

The real source of the tragedy in Africa is imperialist plunder and the division of the whole continent in the interest of a handful of capitalist parasites.

They are faithfully served in these aims by the reformist and Stalinist lead-

ers of the working class in western Europe and north America.

In Britain there can be no fight against the threat of fascism and the growth of the British National Party without a fight for internationalism in the working class. This means a fight against the present leaders of the labour movement.

For us the burning question on this May Day is how we can take a step forward in the formation of a new internationalist party of the working class; how we can go forward with the struggle to rebuild the Fourth International.

Long live the international working class!

Long live the Bosnian working class!

Forward to the victory of world socialism!

Long live the Fourth International!

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Leicester Education Alliance conference

The Degrading of Knowledge in Education

Saturday 21 May, 10.30am-4pm

Vaughan College,
St Nicholas Circle, Leicester

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

NEXT week council elections will take place in England and Wales.

Two things about these elections are clear.

First, they do not have the importance that the Labour leaders pretend. If power does not lie in parliament it certainly does not lie in the local town halls. The real power in Britain is concentrated in the state: in the police force, the army, the secret services, the courts.

Over this machine the local councils, whoever runs them, have not an iota of control. Just as a Labour government in office is not the working class in power, so a Labour council elected in a local district does not put power into the hands of the working class in that area.

Second, not a single one of the main parties standing in the elections represents the interests of the ordinary people of this country. In the case of the Tory Party and the Liberal Democrats this goes without saying. They are both explicit defenders of the capitalist system, direct representatives of the class enemy.

* * * * *

BUT nor does the leadership of the Labour Party represent the working class. Smith, Brown, Blair and company have long since abandoned even the pretence that they stand for socialism.

They declare quite unashamedly that their aim is to modernise capitalism to make it 'work', that is to make it a more efficient system for the exploitation of the working class.

Their face is turned to the ruling class to assure them how 'responsible' they are and how safe capitalism will be if they form the next government.

Workers Press

The working class and the elections

These leaders stand for the retention of the anti-union laws; they accept the privatisation of the former nationalised industries which have put millions into the pockets of big business and sent costs of the services on which millions depend soaring.

Their attitude to the working class, including the working class in Britain, is revealed in their cynical desertion of the working class of Bosnia, and their slavish support for the Serbian regime of Milosevic.

At the local level Labour-controlled councils have implemented Tory cuts. They have cut services to the bone, willing to see the banks get their pound of flesh before the homeless, the unemployed, the elderly and the sick get adequate services. 'Left' Labour councils, such as those in Sheffield and Camden, have joined in the attacks on services and on their labour forces.

Where councillors have carried out a fight against the Tory government they have been witch-hunted by the Labour Party leadership and in many cases barred from standing for office.

Millions have experienced these leaders at first hand — as employers. For fighting the attacks on local authority spending, council workers have been sacked or threatened with the sack. Many Labour-controlled local authorities have been more than willing to use the law against council workers,

sometimes carrying their attacks beyond what even the present anti-trade-union laws demand.

* * * * *

WORKERS can have absolutely no confidence in such leaders. Nobody should be fooled by what they promise. Time after time, when elections come round, they have made promises only to break them in the most cynical fashion.

From now on the leaders of the Labour Party must be judged not by what they say but by what they do.

Millions of workers face mounting problems. Growing numbers are forced to struggle without proper housing, trying to live on woefully inadequate benefits, and denied decent services. The fascists are able to make their demagogic appeals to people facing desperate problems only because of the treachery of the Labour leaders.

The working class should tell these traitors: 'Whatever you promise, we intend to organise independently in the fight for the things we need: adequate housing, health care, education and social services. We will carry out this fight whoever controls the councils, or whoever is in government at Westminster.'

Despite all these things, we know that millions will still vote Labour in the

elections. Why is this? Because at the moment they see no alternative: as things stand millions will vote against the Tories as the only way they can see to demonstrate their hostility to the government.

* * * * *

IN A real sense these workers are right. For the truth is that there is, as yet, no alternative to the Labour Party recognised by the working class. If the coming elections demonstrate anything it is that such an alternative must be built.

It is more and more urgent that the working class should be able to fight for its independent interests against the ruling class and all those in the working class who serve the ruling class.

This aim cannot be achieved merely by linking up all existing struggles. To mobilise the strength of the working class, to unite it against the class enemy, means to build a political party that will once and for all settle accounts with Labourism.

It is important that unity be preserved between workers who will vote Labour in the elections — undoubtedly at this stage a majority of workers — and the rest of the working class.

It is for this reason that we urge all workers to vote against the Tories and vote for the candidates of the Labour Party where there is no alternative working-class candidate.

In some areas candidates are standing who have won a basis of support as a result of their struggles against the Labour leaders at local level, or, like George Silcott in Tottenham, who have fought with determination on matters of class justice. We support a vote for such candidates.

Letters

WE WELCOME LETTERS
SEND THEM TO: WORKERS PRESS,
PO BOX 735, LONDON SW8 1YB
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Remember not to breathe

WORKERS PRESS readers might be interested to know how to make some extra tax-free income.

Bernard Trevelyan, who headed the Ministry of Defence's light armoured engineering division, has been jailed for a year.

Judge Michael Harris said he 'knew full well' he was corrupt when he set up a front company to act as a secret pipeline for up to £5,500 a time for his influence in granting MoD contracts between 1985 and 1988.

He was convicted at Southwark crown court last week on four counts of corruption, and one charge of attempted corruption.

Before the same court was

David Oliver, the managing director of defence agents Imvec. He was found guilty of corruption for paying Trevelyan for a report on an armoured vehicle.

Gordon Foxley, a former MoD official, is due to be sentenced next month following his conviction for corruptly accepting bribes worth £1.5 million.

Of course there are drawbacks to these military shenanigans. The US airforce base near Thetford, Norfolk, last week held a four-day exercise on what to do if a nuclear bomb went off.

British and US troops took part with local police, but were warned not to talk to the media.

CND got hold of a copy of the documents which told troops to 'neither confirm nor deny anything to the media'. The documents then go on to state 'there is no danger as long as people

remember not to breathe or swallow in the vicinity'.

So your life is quite safe, as long as you stop breathing!

Roy Thomas
London SW

Challenge on Bosnia history

I AM writing to you again so soon because I have come upon another 'Pottinsism' which should be brought to your notice.

In his review of Noel Malcolm's 'Bosnia: A Short History' (2 April) Charlie Pottins gives readers to understand that the Waffen SS division formed from Bosnian Muslims mutinied in France in September 1943.

What Malcolm tells us, on p.190 of his book, is that 'two

groups of Muslims' (apparently numbering about 150: the division was 21,000 strong), who had been sent to France for special training, mutinied there.

Malcolm follows this information thus: 'While the Handzar division was sent for further training in . . . Silesia . . .'

On p.191 he tells us: 'After many requests for the return of the Handzar division, Hitler finally sent it back to Bosnia in March 1944 [misprinted as 1943] for "peacekeeping" operations.'

'It was stationed in northern and eastern Bosnia . . . where, during the spring and summer of that year, it committed indiscriminate reprisals — murders and other crimes — against the local Serb population.'

Why do you allow such distortions and falsifications to appear in your paper?

Brian Pearce
New Barnet

COMING SOON

WEDNESDAY 4 MAY Workers Aid for Bosnia public meeting 'How to Defend Bosnia and Defeat Fascism'. 7.30pm, Langley Green Community Centre, Crawley, Sussex. Includes report back on recent convoy to Tuzla. Invited speakers Phil Edwards, a teacher and secretary of Tower Hamlets trades council (in personal capacity); and Vaughan Thomas, a busworker who went on the first convoy last year.

Construction Safety Campaign Diary

FRIDAY 6 MAY CSC demonstration at Dover at official opening of Channel tunnel, in remembrance of eight British workers killed on the project.

WEDNESDAY 12 MAY Ludlow magistrates' court. HSE prosecution of Bromfield Sand & Gravel over serious accident with fork-lift truck.

SATURDAY 21 MAY Construction Safety Campaign annual general meeting. 10.30am-5pm, Lyndhurst

Hall, Warden Road, London NW5.

TUESDAY 14 JUNE St Pancras coroner's court, Camley Street, London NW1 (tel. 071-387 4884), 9.30am. Inquest into death of John McLaughlin (45), killed when roof collapsed in January. Christopher Nelson (48) was severely injured. They were working on extension to car showroom in Finchley Road.

WEDNESDAY 15 JUNE St Pancras coroner's court, Camley Street, London NW1 (tel. 071-387 4884), 9am. Inquest into death of Tony Fishendon (27), killed in August 1992 while carrying a scaffold pole near a railway line; a passing train caused the electric current to arc to the pole. Family's solicitor requested that BR director for safety be put in dock, but coroner refused. After judicial review the case has been put back to the coroner. DPP turned down manslaughter investigation. Inquest may be interrupted by further challenges from family solicitor.

Workers Press £3,000 Monthly Fund

In so far for April: £1,757.96

'WRECKERS and splitters', used to be the perennial complaint by the Stalinists against those Trotskyists who fought to uphold socialist principles in the workers' movement.

What the Trotskyists sought to 'wreck and split' was the idea that the working class in a particular country had common cause with its own bourgeoisie, although, it must be admitted, that there was often more than a tinge of sectarianism in the way this principle was upheld.

But now, it can be revealed that it is, and always was, the poisonous Stalinist remnants who seek to wreck and split working-class internationalism — most recently exposed with their spreading smears against Workers Aid by saying that its convoy is carrying arms to the besieged people of Bosnia.

This is not true, as explained in last week's editorial. But more important is that the mo-

tive for this is not that they want to stop arms getting to Bosnia. Their interests are far nearer to home. They just can't stand the idea that Trotskyists of the Workers International are in the forefront of Workers Aid's efforts to get medical, food and working-class solidarity aid to the people of Bosnia.

So, just to get their own back, they attack and 'wreck and split' workers' internationalism! And they do this in the name of socialism or communism. What frauds!

In the months to come there are going to be big political battles ahead for us in the Trotskyist movement. We're going to need every penny to make strides through the Stalinist excrement, towards building international consciousness in the workers' movement.

This is starting with preparations we are making now for this Sunday's May Day —

which we are fighting to make a day of international workers' solidarity with the people of Bosnia, and particularly the besieged people of Gorazde.

Because of the stretched resources for our work it has not been possible to put in the time to make up our normal pages of international solidarity greetings. But if you want to show your solidarity with a donation, we would be extremely grateful. If you make such a donation please mark it as such and I will mention it in the coming weeks, in this column, to show that there are others who stand with us in the fight for working-class internationalist consciousness.

Mike Cooke

Send regular and May Day donations to Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

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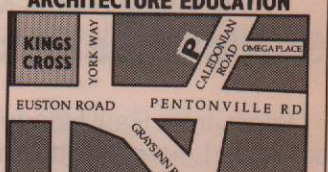
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Populists out to feast

BY DOUG KYDD

SEVENTEEN candidates have been declared for the local elections on the Isle of Dogs. Populists are turning out to feast on the carcass of the local Labour Party.

The BNP is standing in each of the Island's three wards. Last Saturday 30 fascists descended on the Island for a 'leafleting campaign'. Individual fascists dare not operate for fear of being chased off the streets.

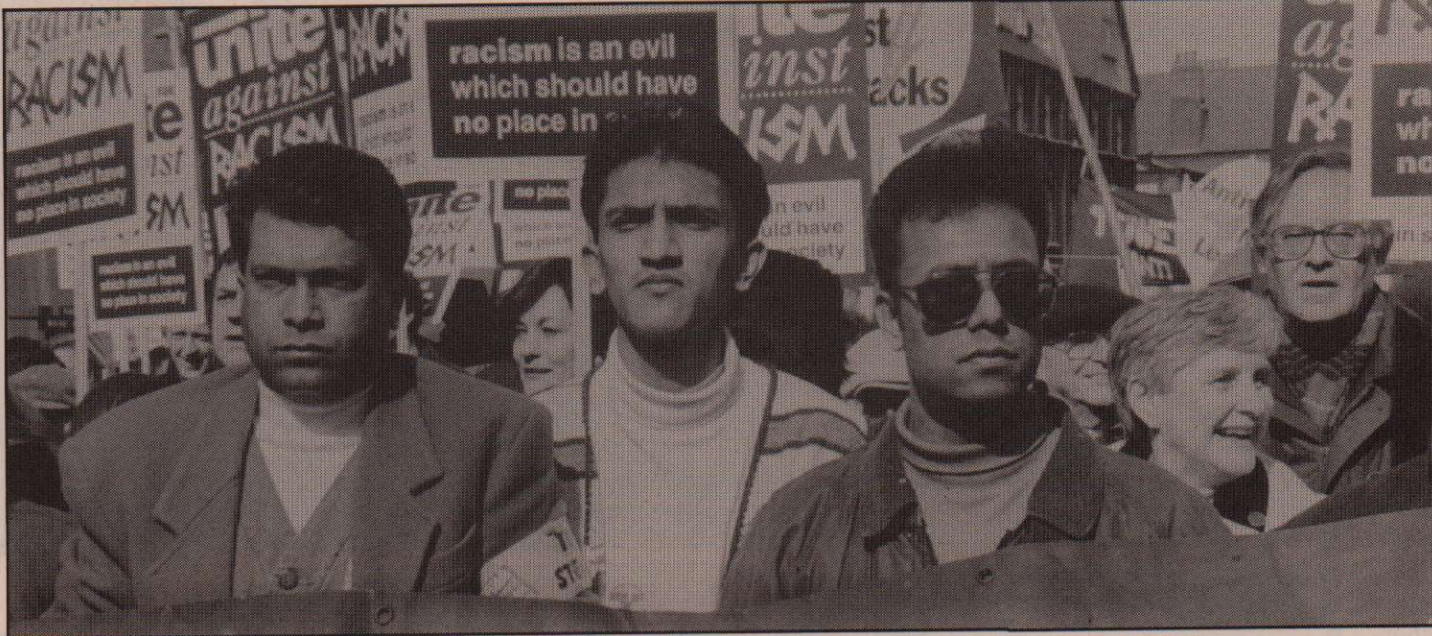
The Liberals have split across the borough, and are standing as Independent Liberals, Liberal Focus, etc. In Globe Town they have taken their internal fights to the High Court.

The East London People's Alliance, formed of ex-Labourites, came and went within three weeks. East London Workers Against Racism, the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) front, is standing on a de-classed anti-racist ticket.

Aspirations

No candidate for Tower Hamlets or the Island represents the true aspirations of workers, tenants, the unemployed or young people. Political confusion, proliferation of candidates, the election of a fascist — this is the crisis of leadership in east London.

The Labour Party has failed to account for last year's election campaign, which led to the fascist Beackon's victory. An internal inquiry carried out has not been published. Jack Straw, Labour's local government spokesman, refuses to discuss



TUC demonstration against racism, 19 March. The Labour Party has failed to account for last year's fascist council election win

Labour's racism on the Island.

In a recent public meeting on the Island, called by the Tower Hamlets trades council (THTC), local residents expressed their suspicion of outsiders with patronising 'answers to their problems'.

Showing their distrust of the local Labour Party they criticised corruption in the Labour-run neighbourhood. Rejecting the fascist BNP and its shadow, the Anti-Nazi League, they were voicing the need for a new leadership to answer the problems of housing, unemployment, etc.

Having lost the docks and the light industrial factories which employed thousands, community feeling has only survived on the council estates. These estates are being broken up by the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC), by the divisive right to buy, and the failure to provide rented accommodation for the younger gener-

ation which is forcing them out.

Only last week another private estate was sold. It is unlikely that the new residents of these 78 luxury flats will be Labour voters. The gerrymandering of Westminster is nothing to the situation in east London.

Launching its manifesto last week, Labour pledged 1,000 homes for rent throughout Tower Hamlets 'by getting the [London Docklands Development Corporation] to release land'.

It also promised a jobs action centre, better health, education and safer streets. Exactly how even these modest proposals are to be achieved is not explained. Nor are we told what Labour will do when the LDDC tells them to get lost.

The WRP stood candidates in the area at the 1979 and 1983 general elections. Since 1985, however, most of our small re-

sources have gone towards rebuilding international working-class leadership by rebuilding the Fourth International. Most recently this has meant coming to the aid of Bosnian workers fighting for their lives against Serbian fascism.

In the absence of socialist candidates to represent the true interests of working people, we urge our readers and supporters to vote Labour in the local elections on 5 May. This vote is a class response to Tory attacks and the threat from the fascists.

In making this call we support the demands recently raised in the THTC's pamphlet 'No More Blood On The Streets'. These are:

- Requisition all empty property on the Isle of Dogs under neighbourhood control and relet it for rent. No compensation to the original owners where these are absent speculators or the property was repossessed by

the banks and building societies;

- If the property is council-owned and cannot be relet because of spending restrictions on repairs, let it immediately and allow tenants a limited rent-free period to repair the accommodation themselves;

- Campaign for public works. Repairs to be carried out and funded from increased business rates on the banks controlling Canary Wharf;

- No racism on the estates. Evict tenants found responsible for racist abuse, intimidation or violence;

- Open an unemployed centre on the Island by requisitioning empty office space without compensation to the owners;

- Start a programme of public works, including the construction of a hospital on the Island, and the building of low-rise houses for rent;

- Reintroduce all bus routes for the benefit of Islanders, not just those working in Canary Wharf;

Demand

- Demand the abolition of the LDDC. Restore local planning control. Compensation for tenants whose ill-health was caused by construction of the Limehouse Link;

- Keep open and properly fund all youth and pensioners clubs. No closure of community centres;

- Completely refurbish all schools. Restore the cuts made in the education budget. Free properly-funded nursery education for all. Introduce language programmes to assist Bengali children with English;

- Nationalise the banks to fund all local services;

- Unite the employed and unemployed. Share existing work and reduce the working week with a guaranteed minimum wage for all. For a campaign to recruit the unemployed into unions at concessionary rates;

- No confidence in the police. Monitor all police activity;

- Arrest those responsible for the attempted murder of Qudus Ali;

- Self-defence is no offence. Defend the young Bengalis arrested in September and demand the charges be dropped. Form workers' defence groups to protect Bengali families under attack.

Workers Aid for Bosnia

Hicks behind smear

COMMUNIST PARTY OF BRITAIN members have moved to block support for Workers Aid for Bosnia in the Transport and General Workers' Union.

They did this at first by stating that tonnes of armaments were being carried on Workers Aid convoys. But once this lie was exposed they changed their line to one of 'we must not mix humanitarian aid with politics'.

This from a group that urges every trade unionist to send aid to Cuba, a call we support.

The attack on Workers Aid has been led by Pat Hicks, a cab driver and brother of CPB national secretary Mike Hicks.

Hicks was supported by Peter Hagger, another member of the CPB and a cab driver.

At a recent TGWU Region 1 committee they spoke against Workers Aid for Bosnia because it linked working-class support to aid for the working people of Bosnia.

The days are over when the old-line Stalinists could lie about the struggles and expect to be taken notice of. The support for Workers Aid for Bosnia will grow in the TGWU because it has roots in the struggle of the working class to rebuild its combativity and its internationalism.

Scottish TUC backs help for Bosnia

TRADES unions affiliated to the Scottish TUC have pledged themselves to donate more than £10,000 for 'food aid to the 60,000 multi-ethnic miners and their families in the Tuzla region of Bosnia'.

The donations came in response to an appeal from Bill Speirs, STUC deputy general secretary, who recently visited the former Yugoslavia, including Tuzla. Speirs acknowledged to Congress that Workers Aid had played a significant part in prompting the STUC initiative.

Nicky Wilson, seconding an emergency resolution tabled by the general council at the STUC annual congress in Dundee,

announced that the NUM in Scotland was giving £1,500.

A total of £5,000 was pledged by UNISON from its Scottish area and nationally. The fire-fighters' union pledged £1,000; the transport workers and the GMB £1,500 each.

No union represented at Congress had tabled a motion on the Balkan crisis. Aberdeen trades council, having missed the deadline for motions because of a defective fax machine, tabled an emergency resolution supporting Workers Aid for Bosnia.

This was not heard on the Congress floor as the general council motion had precedence. ■ See John Fordun, page 6.

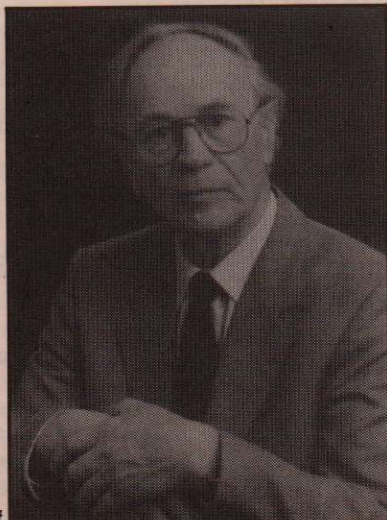
Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International

Memorial Meeting
Tom Kemp
1921-1993

Conway Hall
Red Lion Square
London WC1

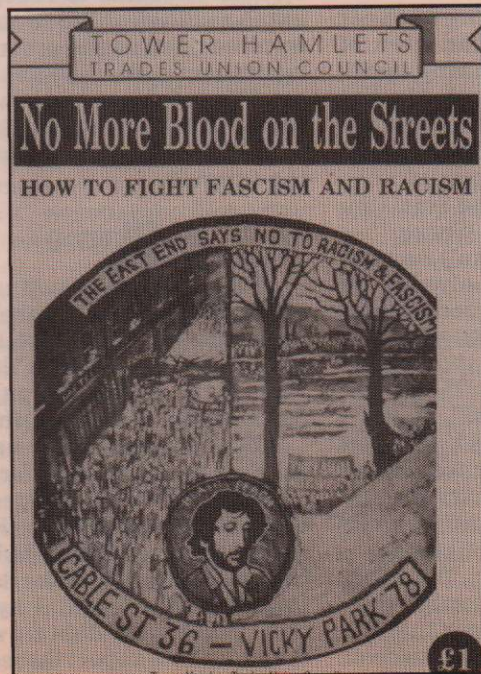
Friday 3 June
7.30pm

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



Just out! 'No More Blood on the Streets' is a booklet on racism by Tower Hamlets Trades Union Council. It is available from Martin Westwood, Tower Hamlets Trades Council, Davenant Centre, 179-181 Whitechapel Road, London E1.

Price £1 plus 25p postage.



Ambulance staff reject 1.75%

WHILE the government say they have accepted the review body's recommendation for a 3 per cent wage increase for NHS staff, they have offered only 1.75 per cent to front-line ambulance staff.

This derisory offer has been rejected by the UNISON ambulance men and women.

Maggie Dunn, staff-side secretary, said: 'The government thought a 3 per cent rise was fair and affordable for 60 per cent of NHS staff covered by the review body. This clearly has to be fair and reasonable for the other NHS groups as well.'

'Non-political' agent

WHEN a Mrs Rosemary Murphy was appointed to a £19,000-a-year job in the health service there were widespread protests. Wallasey's Labour MP said it was 'outrageous' that the local health authority should be chaired by a non-elected Tory supporter.

The health authority, which has a budget of £120 million, responded by saying that 'Mrs Murphy had never belonged to a political party, and she is non-political'.

Mrs Murphy was the full-time paid election agent for Lynda (now Baroness) Chalker, Tory candidate for the Wallasey seat at the last election.

Well short of target

THE Child Support Agency, which has targeted well-off fathers and caused so much distress in the last year, has failed to attain government objectives.

The CSA was given the target of saving the Treasury £530 million from social security payments to mothers. But it only managed to cut benefit to those mothers by £285 million — £245 million short of the government's goal.

Perhaps the government should look elsewhere for their savings. The cost of running the prime minister's two residences, 10 Downing Street and Chequers, for example, is estimated at £9.2 million for the 1993-94 fiscal year.

Fruits of capitalism!

DURING the financial year 1991-2, the people of Europe paid their farmers for, and then destroyed:

- 336,992 tonnes of peaches;
- 154,943 tonnes of oranges;
- 13,445 tonnes of lemons;
- 93,653 tonnes of apricots;
- 26,134 tonnes of apples;
- 49,370 tonnes of tomatoes;
- 40,503 tonnes of cauliflowers.

All this was done and paid for by the EEC so as to ensure that you and I paid more for these foods in the shops.

This, we are told, is how the 'free market' works. It seems very expensive indeed!

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Inside left

What difference?

YOU can't make different communities live together, it doesn't work, nowhere in the world, I mean, you only have to look at what's happening in Bosnia. . . .

... it is clear that partition is the only answer; the communities will not willingly live together after two years of bitter fighting.'

Spot the difference? I couldn't — except that the first voice was a socialist in Tower Hamlets speaking, the second is from an editorial in the 'New Worker' (?? April), weekly paper of the New Communist Party (NCP). 'It is blindingly obvious,' it assures us, 'that the Bosnian civil war will only end when the legitimate rights of the Bosnian Serbs are recognised. This must include the right to belong to the state of their choice.'

Having first cleared it of Muslims and other offending minorities? And of those Bosnian Serbs who, with Croat, Muslim and other workers, resist 'ethnic' partition? Maybe 'New Worker' will back South African racist Terre-Blanche's 'white homeland' too.

The New Communist Party broke from the Communist Party of Great Britain after the latter opposed Soviet military intervention in Czechoslovakia. When the Stalinist Husak regime fell in Prague, some wondered whether 'New Worker' would survive. Nowadays it advertises literature from North Korea, and boasts: 'in Serbia and Montenegro, socialist parties retained the upper hand' ('Questions of war and peace', 'New Worker', April).

Denouncing NATO's 'attempts to bully the Serbs' (not a word for the besieged people of Gorazde), its editorial finds hope, as 'the Major government is having second thoughts'. What's more:

Sir Edward Heath, the former Conservative premier, has once again warned of the folly of taking sides in the Bosnian civil war. And doubtless reflects the view of many within his own party who are horrified at the consequences of being dragged into a war which holds no benefit whatsoever for British imperialism.'

Despite rhetoric about Labour leaders' 'slavish support for imperialism', 'New Worker' only blames 'German and United States imperialist circles'. British and French imperialists need only chew 'follies', and ally with Russian and Serb nationalism again! Maybe 'NCP' stands for 'National Chetnik Party'.

Corruption caution

WHILE I was away, 'Weekly Worker', which aims to 'reforge the Communist Party of Great Britain', launched its fund-raising 'Spring Offensive' (I find it offensive all year round!), and its council election campaign. 'From Lambeth to Westminster, Liverpool to Hackney, local government riddled with corruption' ('Class war to tear out corruption', 'Weekly Worker', 31 March).

Labour councils have cut services and jobs, and had their share of corruption. But are councillors' 'backhanders', alleged by Helen Lewis, the big issue? Westminster Council used public money to gerrymander Tory majorities. Lambeth Council was accused of juggling funds to protect its direct labour organisation. There is a difference, from a working-class standpoint. The police case in Liverpool was mostly flop; and in Lambeth, left-wing councillors sued Labour's national government spokesman, Jack Law, for his smears about 'Trotskyism and corruption'. Even if 'Weekly Worker' is careless with its questions, it should be careful of other respects.

Charlie Pottins



On the



Readers revolted as 'Morning Star'

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

READERS of Britain's Stalinist daily, the 'Morning Star', are being sickened by its continued editorial support for Serbian chauvinism, 'ethnic cleansing', and mass murder.

Serb tanks renewed their onslaught on the Bosnian town of Gorazde last week, pouring shells into streets crowded with Muslim refugees whose homes had already been 'torched', and deliberately targeting the town's hospital.

What did the 'Morning Star' ('incorporating the "Daily Worker" — for Peace and Socialism') have to say? 'Serb tanks take Gorazde', its front page lead announced prematurely on 18 April. Along with this were two small items — "Harrowing" Bosnia' on Scottish TUC deputy-secretary general Bill Speirs's return from Tuzla, and 'Rifkind hits out'. The Tory defence secretary had 'condemned armchair critics' and said 'significant progress could be made' in negotiations.

'Talk is the only way', the 'Star' editorial agreed the following day. 'It is now abundantly clear that the Bosnian Serbs can enter Gorazde at

any time they wish. The fact that their leader, Radovan Karadzic, ordered them to withdraw to three kilometres from the city after demonstrating their ability to take it is significant.'

The way was open for an agreed ceasefire, the 'Star' declared.

'But the unwillingness of the Bosnian Muslims to recognise the harsh realities of the situation confronting them on the ground, which leads them to demand unattainable conditions for agreeing to a ceasefire — such as a further Serb withdrawal — does not augur well for the future.'

Blame

'The blame for the Muslim attitude has to be put squarely on the governments in the West, including Britain and the US,' the 'Star' said. 'They have repeatedly painted the Serbs as the villains of the piece.'

The 'Morning Star' had not a word of condemnation for the destruction of Bosnian villages by Serb Chetniks, the merciless shelling of defenceless civilians huddled in Gorazde's streets, or the deliberate targeting of a hospital by snipers and artillery. It didn't even have the honesty to report these horrors.

Nor, after its brief mention of what Bill Speirs had to say, did it report the Scottish TUC's discussion on Bosnia.

Like Tory leaders Rifkind, Hurd and Major, the 'Morning Star' hides behind the pretence that 'all sides' are to blame in Bosnia. 'Serbian nationalism has been a major factor. . . . But so has Islamic fundamentalism and Croatian nationalism' ('Star comment', 19 April). Like far-right 'thinker' (and former Stalinist) Sir Alfred Sherman, its preference is for the Serb nationalists, whose version it presents.

Ex-Tory minister Alan Clark, notorious for remarks about sending black people 'back to Bongo-Bongo land', and for supporting arms sales to Saddam Hussein and any other dictator, shares the 'Morning Star' editorialist's concern that 'the Serb side' should be heard.

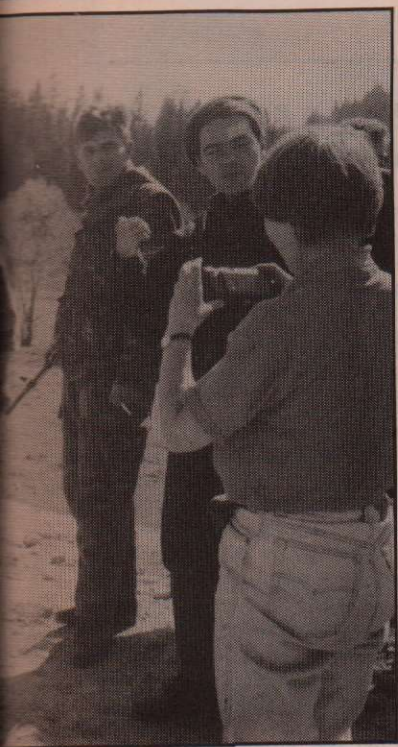
Clark, of all people, told BBC Radio 4 that Bosnian Muslims were smuggling in weapons! But it was left to a 'Morning Star' supporter and member of the Communist Party of Britain to make the ludicrous claim recently that Workers Aid for Bosnia had brought in 'tons of arms'. Calling the Bosnian peo-

ple and forces 'Muslims', the 'Morning Star' ignores the many Serbs fighting alongside Muslims, Croats and others for their country, Bosnia, to remain undivided.

It blames the war on German and European Union recognition of Croatia and Slovenia ('consistent with the long-term anti-Serb stance of German foreign policy going

'Like Tory leaders Rifkind, Hurd and Major, the "Morning Star" hides behind the pretence that "all sides" are to blame in Bosnia.'

back before the first world war' — 'Morning Star', 19 April). Serbian President Milosevic's army had attacked both countries, destroying the industrial working-class city of Vukovar, before this recognition came; but that's not mentioned. Attacking 'Muslim intransi-



oad to Tuzla



CHARLIE POTTINS, who was on the recently returned Workers Aid for Bosnia convoy to Tuzla, explains these snapshots from the convoy (pictures clockwise from top left):

1. On the road — the southern route via Split on the Adriatic coast — through Croat HVO-occupied Bosnia, near Gorni Vakuf we passed burnt-out Muslim homes, the legacy of nationalist war and 'ethnic cleansing'.
2. A little further on, meeting soldiers of the BiH (Bosnian) army. Whatever their origin, Muslim, Croat or Serb, they are all Bosnians, defending their people and their way of life against fascist aggression.
3. Dawn on Mount Milankovic. The coach from Ayuda Obrera, Workers Aid of Spain, needed a tow from Swedish UN troops. If they opened the northern route, scenes like this wouldn't be necessary.
4. Carrying on: Because of the war, he hadn't been paid, but every morning he is out filling potholes, keeping the vital supply route open to Tuzla. He's a Bosnian patriot, a worker, and a Serb — one of those the British media don't tell you about.
5. Carrying on: Battered by shelling, windows broken, but behind the sandbags it's 'business as usual' (almost — there's not much money!) at the bank of Tuzla.
6. Muslim, Croat, Serb? They're just Bosnians. Their neighbourhood had taken Serb Chetnik shelling. The fascists, imperialists and Stalinists want to carve up their country. They want to stay together, and look forward to a better future.
7. Carrying on: 'luxury' transport, Tuzla-style for a family off to an Easter picnic. There were even — a rare treat these days — traditional painted eggs.

(Pictures: 1. Bozena Langley, 2-7 Bronwen Handyside.)

'Morning Star' defends mass murder

gence' in defending what are, after all, their homes, the 'Star' uses pacifist and 'anti-imperialist' phraseology, charging the windmill of NATO military intervention, only to demand that the imperialist UN firmly imposes its 'political solution', so imposing ethnic partition on the people of Bosnia.

The lies behind the 'Star's' phoney even-handedness were attacked by two of its readers on Saturday 16 April. Responding to a previous 'Star' editorial endorsing Serb nationalist claims, Christopher Meredith of Milton Keynes pointed out:

'Before the war started, Bosnia was a multi-ethnic component in federal Yugoslavia, with three communities living side by side and indeed, to a considerable extent, intermingled and intermarried.

'Conflict was fostered from outside by nationalist regimes in Croatia and Serbia desirous of annexing large parts of Bosnia. As inheritors of the greater part of the former Yugoslav army, the Serb forces were particularly successful in this aim.

'Both they and the Croats promoted the atrocities of ethnic cleansing in the hope that their gains

would be made permanent in an ultimate peace settlement. The Bosnian government, now largely but not completely Muslim, has never accepted this solution, which they rightly see as rewarding the aggressors' ('Don't muddy the waters on Bosnia', 'Morning Star' 16 April).

Accusing the 'Star' of 'blaming the victims, or at least equating them with the aggressors', Peter Wright from Leicester wrote that the war in Bosnia was 'not a civil war, but a war of aggression by Bosnian Serbs, backed by Milosevic's nationalist regime in Belgrade, striving after a Greater Serbia'.

Launched

Five weeks before the war was launched, Wright pointed out, 'a referendum of the Bosnian people had confirmed that the vast majority was "in favour of a sovereign and independent Bosnia-Herzegovina, a state of equal citizens and nations of Muslims, Serbs, Croats and others who wish to live in it."

'This population - 40 per cent Muslim, 32 per cent Serb, 17 per cent Croat with 30 per cent of mixed marriages — had lived together for

many decades without serious conflict.

'It was only the aggression by Karadzic's Bosnian Serbs that began to undermine these good relationships.'

Wright asks why the 'Star' keeps calling the Bosnian forces 'Muslims', whereas it doesn't refer to the Serbs as 'the Orthodox Christians'. Bosnian forces 'are not trying to "gain more territory", he points out, 'but to reclaim the territory seized by the aggressor (like the Red Army when it broke out of Stalingrad).

'[I]f you really believe like the UN and EC negotiators that "the present land held by each of the three forces . . . represents a viable base for a lasting settlement," you are condoning, as they do, the Serb aggression and the subsequent campaign of rape and plunder' ('Blame the aggressors — not the victims', 'Morning Star', 16 April).

In his letter too, quoted earlier, Christopher Meredith says he is 'amazed' that the 'Star' should 'describe the various imperialist partition plans as "a viable basis for a lasting settlement"'

is proud to uphold, defended all the crimes committed by Stalin against the working class, including the frame-up and execution of genuine communists, the repression of workers in eastern Europe, and the mass deportation of nationalities, in other words — 'ethnic cleansing'.

Thieves

Defending every twist and turn of Stalin's foreign policy, it was in turn in favour of the League of Nations (the UN's forerunner, which Lenin called 'a thieves' kitchen') and of 'collective security', pacifist and pro-appeasement (during the Stalin-Hitler pact), then becoming patriotic again after the Soviet Union was invaded.

But throughout all these turns in Soviet policy, the pretence was maintained that what was done was for the higher cause of the workers' state, that Soviet nationalities could look forward to a better future, that socialism was being built in the USSR and eastern Europe. (Although, ironically, once Tito fell out with Uncle Joe, he was damned as a 'Trotskyist' and 'fascist' by those now defending Milosevic.)

'During the cold war period,'

writes Christopher Meredith, 'many on the left — and I don't exclude myself — were tempted to accept uncritical knee-jerk judgments in support of "our side" represented by the USSR against "their side" represented by US imperialism and its hangers-on

'It seems to me inexcusable to carry on this attitude to the extent of backing Serb extremism for no better reason than Boris Yeltsin supports it.'

When Serb forces deliberately destroy industrial cities and cultural centres, carry out blatantly racist clearances, and target civilian populations, how can anyone pretend they are trying to 'reunite Yugoslavia', or support them in the name of 'peace and socialism'?

With Russia's present rulers openly restoring capitalism, backing pan-Slav policies, and playing the 'bad cop' for imperialism in the Balkans, even the most loyal 'Morning Star' supporter must feel revulsion as their paper's tattered 'red internationalism' falls away to reveal Russian nationalism.

Why should workers support a paper that lines up with Karadzic the Russian fascist Zhirinovskiy Alan Clark and Sir Alfred Sherman?

Bosnia and Scots trades unionists

ADVICE to aspiring columnists. Never make promises about next week. Either your thinking will refuse to submit itself in time to the required word-length; or something will happen to change your mind.

This week it seems more important to tell you about my experience at the Scottish TUC's annual congress in Dundee than to deliver the Dublin diary I rashly trailed. Union conference-goers will be amazed that the STUC could be more interesting than Ireland. It was Bosnia that made it so.

An STUC delegation, led by deputy general secretary Bill Speirs, went recently to what used to be Yugoslavia. It is very difficult for British trades unionists to see how they can contribute to a constructive way forward, claimed Speirs, moving an emergency resolution.

He reported that the delegation had gone to Tuzla, partly through an invitation arising 'out of discussions with Workers Aid to Bosnia, which was one of the first in the field'. He expressed his shock at seeing 'silent villages . . . which had been, to use the euphemism, "ethnically cleansed"'. But he made no distinction between Serbs, Croats and Muslims who had carried out such operations.

This was in line with the motion, which carefully avoided taking sides with the Bosnian Muslims and Muslim-led, multi-ethnic communities being destroyed by the aggression of the Greater Serbia nationalists. It condemned the Bosnian Serb army's attack on Gorazde, but said nothing about the Muslims' right to effective self-defence.

It rejected a 'military solution', Speirs declaring, in a somewhat Delphic manner, that there is a place for a force on the ground; but that the air strikes had only resulted in retaliatory shelling.

Speirs's comments on the politics of the motion were characterised by the lack of any specifically working-class perspective. With this outlook prevailing, it is no wonder affiliated unions had been silent on Bosnia when formulating Congress motions.

If the international working class is thought to have no independent role, what can its leaders do other than propose mediation, or offer futile advice to imperialist governments and international agencies. The question 'On what perspective do we fight to mobilise the class?' simply does not arise.

I do not mean this as a revelation. But Speirs speaks like a man trying seriously to wrestle with great issues. He does not thump tubs. The process by which he domesticates the conclusions from his careful investigations within the constraints of the bureaucratic machine seems worth exploring.

I WAS a delegate from Aberdeen trades council, which had submitted its own emergency motion calling for support for Workers Aid. We got the choice of having that motion circulated but not discussed; or of speaking in support of the general council motion.

Despite its, in my view, reactionary politics, the general council motion went on to enable the STUC to organise a substantial aid operation for Tuzla.

I concluded that it would be wrong to oppose, since Workers Aid has been demanding that the unions take on this task. I thought it would be misunderstood in Tuzla if a Work-

ers Aid supporter appeared to oppose this STUC initiative.

How, in three minutes — the time allowed for supporting speeches — do you say something meaningful on this burning question, in the context of a resolution half of which you strongly oppose?

'I speak in critical support of the motion,' I began, 'because Aberdeen trades council is a supporter of Workers Aid for Bosnia, to which the deputy general secretary referred.' It was 'set up early last summer to begin the process of organising workers' aid. And to call on the British and European labour movement to support unequivocally all those people in Bosnia-Herzegovina who are fighting to sustain their multi-ethnic communities'.

Reports from Gorazde that week had finally demonstrated 'that we do no service to the Balkan working class, nor to the members we represent, if we pass resolutions correctly condemning neo-fascism and racism, but refuse to state that, with their brutal policy of ethnic cleansing, the . . . Serb nationalists have raised the spectre — indeed the reality — of racism and fascism in Europe as never seen since the 1930s.'

I welcomed the delegation to Tuzla and the proposal to send aid to the miners there; and recalled that the first Workers Aid convoy had gone 'from Timex here in Dundee to Tuzla, linking those in the forefront of the struggle for workers' rights in the West and the East'.

The Tuzla miners had sent financial aid to the NUM in the 1984-85 strike. 'They did not ask of the British miners: "Has there been violence on both sides?", but recognised fellow workers under attack and fighting for basic principles.'

I went on: '[The] fate that has befallen Gorazde threatens other Muslim-led . . . communities, no matter what temporary truces may be patched up. This situation is not going to go away. If we in the labour movement do not develop a clear policy, we leave the perspectives of the working class [to] the media and the so-called international community.'

The Clinton administration, despite earlier fine words, 'now proposes no more than a military slap on the wrist to the Serbs when they go too far and their atrocities are seen on Western television. The UN commander admits that his operation became a cover for Serb aggression and, therefore, ethnic cleansing. The Russian special envoy says the Serb authorities are out of control'.

I recognised it is 'a difficult situation with no exact historical parallels . . . and with brothers and sisters in all parts of the former Yugoslavia with whom we would wish to associate . . . Workers Aid for Bosnia was set up on the initiative of a Serbian socialist and has been backed by Croatian trades unions'.

But the difficulties, I argued, don't make the situation incomprehensible. 'You cannot equate the systematic racist atrocities of the Serbian nationalists with actions, however wrong in themselves, of those under attack.'

'To use analogies from the 1930s, the first part of the emergency motion evokes the stench of Munich, when what is required is something nearer to the spirit of the International Brigades. The second part of the motion takes a small practical step towards reviving something of that spirit.'

With great reservations I therefore advocated support. But this could not be 'the end of the matter'. It should be 'the beginning of an urgent discussion throughout the labour movement, on the outcome of which, I believe, the future of the European working class may hang'.

T.B.

Television

Making a killing in Soweto

Review by Hilary Horrocks

MESOTHELIOMA — a tumour of the lungs and associated tissues, which can result from exposure to asbestos — is comparatively rare. But not in Washington, Co. Durham, where the international conglomerate Turner & Newall made asbestos lagging for ships and industries, employing a large proportion of the local population.

TAKING LIBERTIES: 'An Acceptable Level of Death' (BBC2, 14 April) detailed how the company — 'Please call us T&N now', said the chairman coyly to reporter John Ware — had concealed for decades its knowledge that asbestos could cause cancer.

When, in the late 1960s, some of its employees began dying with mesothelioma, the company's chairman refused to allow details to be released for medical research on the carcinogenic potential of asbestos fibres.

A confidential internal memo advised 'token' compliance only with the new stricter laws governing working with the substance — a defiance so blatant and reckless that it forced the company doctor to resign.

Victims

Turner & Newall made sure that all its company documents were filed away inaccessibly in Manchester. But a breakthrough for the increasing number of victims came when the powerful Chase Manhattan Bank decided to sue the British firm for fire-proofing the bank's skyscraper in New York with asbestos, while knowing the risks it presented.

US law gave the bank's attorneys much greater rights of access to T&N's files than had even been granted by a British court — and they were able to prove exactly how much the company knew, but concealed, about the dangers to its workers.

This new evidence has been taken up by lawyers acting for the company's UK victims, and used to good effect in winning settlements — but so far, only for the bereaved.

This was a rightly angry

film, effectively contrasting the plight of stricken employees and their families with the dinner-jacketed junketings of the T&N top brass, caught by the camera sharing a fatuous moment with Tory minister John Gummer.

'We're not allowed to release these documents to the press', spluttered current T&N chairman Christopher Hope, when cornered by Ware about the in-

township dwellers themselves to provide commentary for much rarely-seen footage detailing the development of this famous black area in South Africa.

With an arrogance typical of state town planners from Johannesburg to Glasgow, the first black townships were termed by their white administrators 'a paradise', but contained no shops, no power supply, and



In 1976 at Soweto 500 died — a watershed in its history

criminating internal files. Ware had actually only asked him why they were not released to the courts — but Hope's apoplexy spoke volumes.

THE link between mesothelioma and certain types of work first came to light in 1958 among black mineworkers in South Africa. All the TV channels are running programmes — of varying quality — as a background to the first multi-racial elections in that country. The best of them have been rich in such social detail.

The first two parts of 'Soweto — A History' (Channel 4, 11 and 18 April) allowed some of the

only roofless, floorless houses.

Over 12,000 people were forcibly moved to Orlando, which later formed part of Soweto (a contraction of the words South West Township), under the South African government's 'Slum Clearance Act' of 1933.

Blacks who had flocked to Johannesburg since early in the century to work in the gold-mines had crammed into overcrowded inner-city areas along with poor whites: the lack of segregation in these communities was, as this documentary showed, anathema to the white ruling class.

The state's initial separation of black and white workers was

followed, under Verwoerd's apartheid policy in the 1950s, by the enforced separation of different black ethnic groups in the townships, thus further undermining communal solidarity.

The social tension thus engendered, in conditions of extreme deprivation, was further exacerbated by the government's decision, despite huge opposition, to site single-sex hostels for migrant workers among the families of the townships.

Another major social tension was between the generations. Many of the younger blacks felt ashamed of what they saw as the compliance of their parents with the apartheid regime. Their anger, particularly against the imposition of Afrikaans as the language of instruction in the schools, led to the mass walkout and demonstration of schoolchildren in 1976.

Brutality

The police responded with unprecedented brutality to this peaceful protest, and the event was seen as a watershed in Soweto's history.

'We wanted the marchers to disperse', remembered one of the organisers, recounting how the slaughter of the children began. 'But where to? We lived there and the police were now there among us — we had nowhere to go.'

'Whenever I talk about 1976, it revives terrible memories', recalled another, telling how relatives and friends just 'disappeared' when the police arbitrarily shot them in or near their homes, and their corpses were loaded onto wagons and driven away.

Over 500 township dwellers were killed by the security forces during that period — far more than the government's official estimate of 95.

But, as another participant said, 'there was a kind of euphoria — almost like something had happened that people had been waiting for'. The programme captured well the defiance and cultural assertiveness of the township, as well as its experience of oppression.

Programme guide

Saturday 30 April 'Notes from the Underground'. A unique journey through Moscow's labyrinth of tunnels, public and secret, home to petty bureaucrats and petty criminals, drug-addicts and prostitutes, Satanists and neo-Nazis (8.30pm, BBC2). **BITE THE BALLOT: 'Citizen Locke'.** David Edgar's dramatisation about the reluctant father of Western democracy. With John Sessions and Saskia Reeves (11.05pm, Channel 4).

Sunday 1 May BITE THE BALLOT: 'Greenpeace — End of an Era?' In the 1970s it was the world's best-known environmentalist group. Now a multi-

million-dollar organisation, is it too bureaucratic, too conservative? (7pm, Channel 4).

Monday 2 May CHAMPIONS: 'Battle of the Bikes'. Rivalry between Olympic gold medalist Chris Boardman — with a superbike built by Lotus and backed by a team of professional trainers — and Graeme Obree, a bike-shop owner gone bust who built his own machine (9pm, Channel 4).

Tuesday 3 May OMNIBUS: 'Duke Ellington — Reminiscing in Tempo'. First of two-part documentary. Seven years in the making, it contains much previously unseen footage and

features over 40 of the Duke's finest tunes (10.55pm, BBC1).

Selected films

KANAL (1956). Second of Andrzej Wajda's celebrated trilogy about a wartime incident in 1940s Warsaw (Saturday, 11.20pm, BBC2). **ONCE UPON A TIME IN AMERICA (1983).** Sergio Leone's homage 'to the kind of films I love' (Sunday and Monday, 10pm, Channel 4). **AN AUTUMN AFTERNOON (1962).** Yasujiro Ozu's last film. An ageing company auditor, having married off his daughter, finds himself alone (Friday, 12.45am, BBC2). JJ



Chris Boardman in midflow in 'Champions: Battle of the Bikes, Monday on C4

BBC refuses to expose Tory corruption

THE 'non-political' BBC has again decided not to screen a programme critical of the Tories.

Just before the last general election it was a 'Panorama' programme on the effect of the depression. Now, on the eve of the local elections, the BBC has caved in to the Tories and decided not to show a programme on corruption in the Tories' famous flagship, Westminster council.

The programme was due to be screened a few days before

the 5 May elections, and was to follow up the District Auditor's report which showed that Dame Shirley Porter's ruling group spent millions of pounds 'buying victory' in the elections.

The programme was to have made fresh allegations about gerrymandering.

While Conservative central office had refused to comment on the failure to show the programme, it is known that they had protested several times during the actual making of the documentary.

'Old School Tie' replaces the CPSU party card!

FEE-PAYING British boarding schools, feeling the pinch of recession and cuts in overseas armed forces, are looking East — to the former Soviet Union and eastern Europe, as well as Hong Kong and Korea, for pupils.

Jonathan Leigh, headmaster of £10,500 a year Blundells School, at Tiverton, in Devon, expects four new pupils as a result of a recent visit to Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kiev. His school has also taken boarders from east Germany and the Czech Republic.

The Independent Schools Information Service is to exhibit details of 80 schools at Moscow university. It says there have already been enquiries from Russia, Latvia and Ukraine.

Top Soviet bureaucrats — the 'nomenklatura' — used to reserve places for their offspring at certain Moscow schools, providing a head-start for privileged positions.

Now the 'entrepreneurs' who are taking their place may require an 'old school tie' for entry to privilege, just like in England!

Going to the people

I'm standing for justice, says George Silcott

THE CAMPAIGN for justice for Winston Silcott is hoping to win more support with the announcement that his brother, George, is standing in the coming local elections.

Winston Silcott was not released with Mark Braithwaite and Engin Raghip when the Tottenham Three were acquitted of the murder of PC Blakelock during the Broadwater Farm riots in north London.

He was detained in prison for the murder of Anthony Smith at a party in 1984. Smith, a leader of a north London gang, attacked Silcott with two fellow gang-members for sheltering a 15-year-old youth they were chasing.

All three gang-members were armed with knives. A knife was passed to Silcott so he could defend himself, which he did. Smith subsequently died.

Winston Silcott voluntarily offered statements to the police, knowing that he had acted in self-defence. He was released on bail because even the prosecution papers showed the case was clear. Eye-witness reports, voluntarily given, all stated that Silcott was not the aggressor, and had acted in self-defence.

Damage

While he was on bail for the Smith trial, Winston Silcott was arrested for the murder of PC Blakelock. Winston has recently said that 'the Blakelock farce was originally used as a police tactic to damage my chances of ever having a fair trial in the Smith case'. A friend of his said: 'He knew they would use what happened on Broadwater Farm to get him on the Smith thing, even though everyone knew it was a cut-and-dried case of self-defence.'

The Smith trial was attended by senior detectives from the Blakelock case. The jury was given special protection to promote the idea that Winston was a dangerous man. There was no fair trial. (The police officers who headed the investigation will finally come to trial for perjury and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice this June.)

There had been a long and concerted campaign against him. His mother, Mary Silcott, explained: 'They were always making trouble for him. If Winston went up the road to the record shop they used to lock him up. Sometimes they would pick him up three or four times in one day.'

'They used to tell him all the time they were going to get him. Right in front of me they said to him that if so much as a pin dropped on Broadwater Farm they were not going to come for anybody but him. And they did.'

The police had determined that Winston would be convicted, and the media willingly portrayed him as a vicious maniac.

Pressure

At this point Winston's lawyers wrongly advised him to deny stabbing Smith, in spite of a freely-given statement to that effect, and eye-witness accounts of his self-defence.

Unsurprisingly, given the pressure he was under, including days of interrogations for the Blakelock inquiry, Winston took this advice. This meant that his self-defence plea had been abandoned, and he was convicted of murder.

A recent statement from the lawyer involved in the case admits that there was impropriety on the part of Anthony Steele and Co, his solicitors at the time. The firm has since closed due to other charges of malpractice.

Winston's lawyers presented a dossier of new and unheard evidence to the home secretary in June 1992. The home secretary has recently refused him the right of appeal.

Against this background, George Silcott is standing on a platform of justice for the victims of state frame-ups. Winston has said of the election campaign that his brother is 'standing to highlight and correct all injustices'.

Aside from his brother's case, George calls for justice for: Oliver Campbell, the M25 Three, and the hundreds of innocent people imprisoned in Britain; the hundreds of



George Silcott (left), who is standing in the local elections, with his brother, Winston

asylum-seekers harassed, tortured and imprisoned without trial; Joy Gardner, murdered by immigration police; the Tower Hamlets Nine, victimised for protesting against the fascist attack that almost killed Qudus Ali; all victims of racist and fascist attack; Sara Thornton, who killed her violent husband; and poll-tax prisoners, who were victimised for being poor.

His final demand is 'Justice for all those victimised by this abusive system, which denies the people the most fundamental of all human rights — the right to a decent job, education, housing, social welfare and health.'

Winston explained that 'working-class black and white people are being scapegoated every day in some way . . . it could be poll tax,

unemployment, racist attacks or homelessness, they are all unjust . . . Things have got worse and more and more people are ending up in prison as cheap labour for the bosses'.

■ The Winston Silcott Defence Campaign (WSDC) can be contacted at 79 Tangmere, Broadwater Farm, London N17 6NB. Tel: 081-365 0448.

Grand, if you have the money . . .

CLARE COWEN sends a postcard from Leipzig with her impressions of the situation in that east German city and its environs after the reunification of Germany

INITIAL reaction at Leipzig airport: a language and culture shock. Our first night was in nearby Taucha, a dreary little town with old cobbled streets, trams and little to recommend

Next to our hotel were several large industrial sites, apparently closed, and the railway station, in the middle of blocks of flats (prewar and rather run-down, but all with the pot plants and window decorations you see all over Germany). Alongside were a dentist, a children's playground, a driving school, a new west German fashion store, a welder, and a few other things — all mixed in together.

Shops in the town centre were sparse but the market was open with the usual life-saving snacks of sausages and potato salads.

At the end of the town we took a road through vast agricultural fields which went on forever, with no turnings and an ever-worsening surface. After 10 minutes we reached a deserted village where time seemed

to have stood still — I expected a 1920s character from the first 'Heimat' TV series to walk round a corner.

This was our introduction to the former German Democratic Republic: immediately you are aware of contradiction and flux.

The two nearby cities, Leipzig and Halle, present a different picture. Leipzig is a sprawling, confusing conurbation, sparsely signposted, with large housing areas (postwar, prewar and much older), trams everywhere, roadworks and diversions.

A huge empty site had signs saying 'no photographs — military establishment' and the mind boggled at the enormous army or Stasi forces that used to operate from there.

The city centre is protected by a ring road. Relatively traffic free, it is an amazing mixture of buildings, medieval through to socialist realism.

As an exhibition centre Leipzig must have been an international city all along and many old buildings were well main-

tained, but everywhere restoration was underway.

The city of Halle is again different — not so famous and more neglected. A major crossroads has an amazing Stalinist monument with clenched fists and revolutionary dates engraved on it. Two things will stick in my memory forever:

First of all, the countless 18th- and 19th-century apartment blocks in disrepair and dereliction, some still lived in, others emptied and sealed off, awaiting repair or demolition. Vast beautiful old buildings with postwar flats nearby.

There was something very distressing about these streets of derelict buildings and I question the economics of building anew instead of conversion.

Dazzling

Repairs and restoration are taking place, with occasional dazzling examples of brightly coloured buildings. Strange to think that this grey city was once pink and orange and yellow and blue.

The second indelible memory was the city centre completely free of cars, but unlike Britain's pedestrian centres, trams rolled through all the time, snaking their way down the old, winding streets. A spa-

cious market-place full of people, criss-crossed by tram lines: clearly a different approach to public transport.

The government road show was in the market-place handing out leaflets about the new Germany to throngs of takers . . . Opposite was a dreadful example of Stalinist architecture with signs removed and usage changed. Also ancient churches, the Handel museum.

On the outskirts of the city, huge housing estates, trains, trams and district heating conduits, bad roads.

On to the country and a 1,000-year-old castle in Quedlinburg, a small ancient town with such minimal street lighting that I had to rethink how much our bright lights have to do with crime-prevention and personal safety — or habit and extravagance.

The owner of our pension (boarding-house) had a lot to say about the changes in Germany.

The boarding-house had been owned by his mother-in-law, who was not allowed to charge rent to her lodgers adequate to finance repairs and maintenance.

'Everyone in public housing had hot water, central heating and repairs. Private owners couldn't afford it,' he said.

But although his pension and

'pub' means he now has an income, he is unenthusiastic about the changes.

'We lived well in the past. We had everything we needed.'

'Now we go into supermarkets and see all the things we can't afford to buy.'

'There are people in this town earning DM10-15,000 (£4-6,000) per month, while a single mother can no longer work because childcare provision has collapsed and is prohibitively expensive.'

Competition

'Unemployment is at 22 per cent. The nearby Leuna chemical works, one of the biggest in Europe, used to employ 25,000 workers. It was one of the things that worked well under the GDR.'

'It used to export chemicals to Cuba and the other eastern countries.'

'But it was seen as competition to the Western chemical firms like Bayer, so they closed it down and now it employs only 2,500.'

During the week he has six Dutch building workers lodging with him: a sad irony.

'Now the local unemployed are watching a firm of Dutch contractors building a labour exchange for them.'

'Unemployment is a new experience for us. The unemployed feel like food-processing machines, useless in any other sense.'

'In the past people looked at the West and thought everyone was a millionaire with a Mercedes, holidays in Spain . . . The big illusion!'

'Freedom is there — if you have money!'

On the way to Leipzig the sub-standard roads are peppered with those glories of Western culture: out-of-town shopping centres and car showrooms. Past closed mines, glass- and paper-recycling bins in every town, then huge, flat agricultural fields, ploughing, no livestock in evidence — strange.

Fleeting memories: the plaque in Leipzig's amazing railway station hall commemorating the revolutionary sailors, soldiers and workers who demonstrated there in the 1918 uprising; streets named after Clara Zetkin, Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg; another plaque in central Leipzig commemorating the 1968 demolition of the ancient university church with a pledge never to allow such a thing again; a photo in an exhibition of a modern monument protesting at the closing of pits after 750 years of mining . . .

Elections rigged to save capitalism

This week's elections in South Africa were a fraud, claimed the country's Trotskyist party, the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International (South Africa), on the eve of the elections. The elections 'have been rigged in favour of capitalism', declared the South African Trotskyists in the following press statement, dated 24 April:

THE Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International (South Africa) condemns the latest Inkatha Freedom Party-National Party-African National Congress accord allowing the IFP to participate in the 27 April elections.

NP-ANC, together with the Independent Electoral Commission, are prepared to accommodate the right-wing pro-capitalist forces.

5) The amendment (in Addendum A of the agreement) allows provinces (in legislative and executive structures) to have different constitutions from the national constitution.

This is in effect federalism. It will have serious implications for the working class in terms of unity in action, centralised bargaining and even national union structures. This latest compromise aims to further divide the working class to ensure control and continued wage slavery and exploitation.

Condemn

6) We further condemn the statement from the Congress of South African Trade Unions leadership hailing this as a victory with 'no new concessions'. In fact the accord goes against even the watered-down resolutions adopted at the 1993 COSATU National Congress.

The accord further illustrates that the elections are a fraud. They have been rigged in favour of capitalism.

The only hope for the working class is to build their own revolutionary working-class party to lead the fight for control of their lives despite and independently of the incoming government of 'national unity'.

1) The participation of the IFP is an attempt to undermine a possible two-thirds majority of the ANC in the National Assembly and thereby entrench the hold the free-market capitalists have over the outcome of the elections.

2) The constitutional entrenchment of the Zulu kingdom and any other kingdom entrenches tribalism and apartheid divisions of the past. Irrespective of how the masses vote, this will be an unchangeable constitutional principle!

3) The commitment to amend the 1993 constitution, even after the elections, by international mediation undermines the democratic process and, irrespective of how the masses vote, places the fate of the constitution in the hands of the imperialists!

We have only to look at the division of Bosnia to see what the role of the imperialists will be.

4) Other parties had strict time limits for application for funds, yet at the eleventh hour the IFP is accommodated and given millions of rand, even though it has not even applied. Here we can see how the

International Ukraine miners' meeting

FROM DNEPOPETROVSK

UKRAINIAN miners hosting an international meeting on the way forward for trades unions heard a warning from British trades unionists on the dangers of pro-capitalist 'reforms'.

In his opening address, Vassili Myasnikov, whose Independent Miners' Union of the Western Donbas called the meeting, told trades unionists assembled in Pavlograd that the formation of independent unions in 1990 had been a historic step forward. Previous unions had been bureaucratic 'schools of communism'.

Warning of the threat of closures and sackings, Aleksender Sergeev, president of the Russian Miners Independent Union, reported that unions in Russia had forcefully rejected approaches from the extreme Russian nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy.

Warned

From the Byelarus Independent Miners Union, Nikolai Zimin warned that unions' internal democracy was being 'weakened'. He criticised union members who wanted their independent unions to resume functions formerly carried out by the 'official' unions, such as distributing holiday vouchers.

After these speakers and discussion, the British delegation was given the floor.

It comprised London TGWU bus driver John Ballantyne, delegated by Tower Hamlets trades council; Ford's engineering worker Keith Scotcher, secretary of the International Trades Union Solidarity Campaign;



The historic 1989 Kuzbass miners' strike — a fifth anniversary celebration is planned in July

and Simon Pirani, a member of the National Union of Journalists and frequent contributor to Workers Press.

Durham miner Dave Temple had intended to attend, but was on urgent international work in South Africa.

Simon Pirani told the conference that the working of the capitalist market, and the refusal of TUC and Labour Party leaders to fight had combined to close the majority of British pits. 'This is one of the richest countries. Do you think the international companies who control the energy market will be kinder to Ukrainian miners?'

Definite actions were needed, said Pirani, like the aid convoys to miners in Tuzla, in Bosnia. He reported the proposal by the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International, to organise an international conference of militant miners.

Answering questions about

the 'free market', Pirani said capital wanted the 'freedom' to exploit workers in the former USSR, but wouldn't give them the freedom to emigrate to western Europe. In reply, Yuri Bodyrev a former Independent Miners union leader, now a member of the Ukrainian parliament, criticised Pirani's demand to lift immigration controls, saying it would speed up a brain drain to the West.

Questions

John Ballantyne said the working class must face all questions about the 'market' by fighting for its own control. 'We should decide who works where,' he said.

Bodyrev's argument was forcibly rejected by Aleksander Mameyev, from the Pavlogradskaya mine, who accused the MP of having 'gone over and become part of the administration' from which

miners were fighting to be independent.

Members of the independent union of machine-builders, iron ore miners from Krivoy Rog, and a delegate from the Lugansk miners joined in the discussion.

The day after conference, the Independent Miners Union decided to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the historic 1989 miners' strike this July, in Kuzbass.

The event will be organised by the International IMU, the former IMU of the USSR, which brings together unions from Russia, Byelarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

The British delegation was treated to great hospitality, and invited to address workers at pit-head meetings, as well as appearing on a local independent television station sympathetic to the union. A letter from the delegation was published in the Western Donbas IMU's weekly newspaper.

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No.14 February 1994 Price £2.00

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Argentine 'miracle' crumbles

BY OUR LATIN AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT

ARGENTINA's President Menem was returned again for the fifth time in five years, but with crumbling popular support. His vote slipped from 40 to 38 per cent.

Memem's 'economic miracle' — reduced inflation, economic liberalism and privatisation — was made on the basis of suppressing the working class. But already there are parts of the country in near revolt. Presidential candidate Colosio was assassinated. Investors are asking questions about economic growth and political stability in Argentina.

Late in 1993 a popular revolt set fire to the government house, a court and the parliament of Santiago del Estero province in north Argentina. There is 4 per cent unemployment and 10 per cent casual labour there. The public debt doubled against a background where a public-sector worker earns \$250 a month to an MP's \$18,000.

And for three months these workers didn't get paid at all! Large numbers took to the street. Despite army intervention the people's anger simmers and deepens. Leading Peronist and Radical Party members' houses have been attacked.

Finally the wages were paid and the governor sacked. Promises were made that MPs' wages were to be reduced.

Three weeks later another violent demonstration erupted in Jujuy province, also in the north. Public-sector workers took to the streets to demand a promised wage increase. Government repression was extremely violent.

Eighteen trade union leaders were imprisoned but were released in 48 hours because of the public outcry.

There has now been a call for a general strike in the province and other protests and tensions are increasing in the north.

These violent explosions of the Argentine working class against the wholesale sell-off of industry and the election results express a process which has been underway for some time. The newly formed Frente

Grande — composed of sections of the populist Peronist movement, small social democratic parties, Christians, the Communist Party — was the big winner in the elections, with 37 per cent of the vote.

They concentrated their campaign against government corruption but did not criticise its economic plans.

There was also an increased vote from 11 per cent last time to 13.2 per cent now for the right with former military man Rico as leader.

The collapse of the traditional Conservative Party (UCR), which has held sway in Argentina with the Peronists for more than 50 years, was marked with only 19.9 per cent. They got 30.2 per cent in the last election.