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Capitalist democracy in Brazil: TRADES UNIONISTS MURDERED

TWO leading Brazilian trades unionists, both members of the Trotskyist movement, have been murdered in their home in Sao Paulo by what are believed to be professional assassins.

Rosa Hernandez, a leader of poor agricultural workers in the area, and her companion Jose Luis Sandeman, vice-president of the university workers' union FASUBRA, were found dead by their 19-year-old son, Carlos Eduardo, when he returned home in the early hours of last Sunday, 12 June.

Jose Luis, whose union had recently been involved in a national strike, had been shot twice in the head. Rosa was killed with one bullet.

Joined

Workers Press and the Workers Revolutionary Party have joined with the murdered couple's comrades in the International Workers League (LIT) in condemning the murder and in protesting to the Brazilian authorities. The International Socialist League, British section of the LIT, in a press statement

BY THE EDITOR

from its secretary Martin Ralph says: 'We ask all Trotskyists, socialists, Labour Party members, trade unionists and individuals concerned with fighting for human rights to move their organisations to condemn the assassinations and demand of the Brazilian embassy and the governor of the state of Sao Paulo that the guilty be found and punished.'

Coming as Brazil heads for presidential elections later this year, in which Luis Ignacio 'Lula' da Silva of the Workers Party is expected to do well, the murder of Rosa Hernandez and Jose Luis Sandeman is part of a war of the rich against the working class and the poor.

Capitalist Brazil, with its valuable resources, has some of the richest people in the world, and many of the poorest. Over

30 million Brazilians live in absolute poverty. A documentary shown recently on British television revealed that in the poverty-stricken north-east of Brazil starving children are reduced to scavenging in hospital refuse bins containing amputated human limbs and organs.

In big cities, police and private security guards form death squads, going out at night to murder homeless children. The Institute for Social and Economic Analysis estimates that close to 100 children a month are slaughtered in this way.

In the countryside, where 1 per cent of landowners hold 50 per cent of the land, terror and murder are used against poor peasants and agricultural workers. A Catholic Pastoral Land Commission recorded 1,730 killings of peasants, farmworkers, union leaders, lawyers, and priests between 1964 and 1992.

President Collor had to resign after massive street demonstrations against corruption last October. People know that sewers, roads and water conduits that were paid for from their taxes haven't been built. Senior police officers, politicians and judges have been caught on the make, and the corruption continues. News broke earlier this year of huge sums from criminal rackets being laundered

through the national lottery, with the racketeers being assured winning tickets.

Workers' militancy and strikes have been growing in the industrialised Sao Paulo area, and the Landless Peasants Movement (MST), affiliated to the main trade union federation CUT, has been organising occupations of unused land.

Elections

With elections due in October, Lula's Workers Party is leading in the polls. To the Left of Lula, Convergência Socialista, the party to which Jose Luis Sandeman and Rosa Hernandez belonged, recently joined with others to form the United Workers Socialist Party (PSTU), which has 3,000 members, several of them leading trades unionists and peasant activists.

The murder of Jose and Rosa was the second in less than a month suffered by the LIT, to which Convergência is affiliated. Esteban Balbuena, a peasant leader in Paraguay and member of the LIT-affiliated Workers Party there, was killed last month after threats from a government minister against peasants' leaders.

The stage may have been set for the murders in Sao Paulo by a report the Brazilian military



Farmworkers face terror, murder

intelligence service put out the previous week. The 'Guardian' (7 June) reported: 'The Brazilian intelligence service has accused a peasant organisation expected to support the left-wing presidential candidate Luis Ignacio Lula da Silva of smuggling arms and running guerrilla training camps.'

The military-run Secretariat for Strategic Affairs claimed members of 'paramilitary' peasant organisations were being trained in Cuba, Nicaragua and the former Soviet Union and were 'heavily armed'. The 'Guardian' quoted MST national co-ordinator Joa Pedro Stedile, who said: 'This is psychological warfare against Lula. They want to create a climate of danger so that people will fear Lula's victory.'

Typical of the 'strategy of tension' adopted by military in-

telligence chiefs in many countries, usually in collusion with America's CIA, the talk about 'gun-running' and 'armed peasants' clearly had another aspect — to prepare the way for terrorism against the workers and peasants, and threaten a military coup.

Brazil's cruel poverty shows what capitalist 'free enterprise' means for millions throughout the world unfortunate enough not to be among the capitalist super-rich.

The murder of trades unionists like Rosa Hernandez and Jose Luis Sandeman, with its evident political ramifications, shows also what lurks behind the facade of bourgeois democracy, whenever the ruling class and their corrupt minions feel threatened.

Send resolutions of protest to the Governor of the State of Sao Paulo, Sr Luis Antonio Flery, Palacio des Bandeirantes, Morumbi, S. Paulo, Brazil. Fax number +5511 843 8271. The Brazilian embassy is at 32 Green Street, Mayfair, London. Fax number 071-493 5105.

Resolutions of solidarity to the PSTU, Fax Sao Paulo, 5756093.

A lobby of the Brazilian embassy is planned — call or fax Martin Ralph, 061-707 1584, or Workers Press.

A dirty provocation against Workers Aid for Bosnia

WORKERS PRESS STATEMENT

WORKERS Aid for Bosnia, which has won widespread support from trades unionists and young people for delivering food and medical supplies to the besieged working-class stronghold of Tuzla in north-east Bosnia, has been viciously attacked in the 'International Workers Bulletin', a paper published by David North's Workers League in the United States.

In a six-page feature accusing the Workers Revolutionary Party, which supports Workers Aid, of aiding 'imperialism in the Balkans', it claims:

'It is well-known that the WRP's convoys are involved not just in sup-

plying token shipments of food and medicine. Workers Aid has been involved in bringing satellite communications and other strategic military equipment into Bosnia for use by the Izetbegovic regime and its imperialist backers.

'Its trucks are being operated on the basis of commercial contracts paid for by European arms dealers and others' ('How Cliff Slaughter's WRP aids imperialism in the Balkans', 23 May).

Arduous

Who it is 'well-known' to, we are not told. Why should the imperialists, whose UN trucks and armour trundle wherever they please in Bosnia, use Workers Aid to bring in 'strategic

military equipment', over the most arduous route? Why, if they're backing Bosnia, do they maintain an arms embargo against it?!

Workers Aid convoys have to pass rigorous border checks when entering Bosnia, and are often blocked. Any suggestion of smuggling could endanger the convoy, and the drivers' lives. Is that North's idea? His 'gun-running' allegation echoes that used when French aid workers were kidnapped near Sarajevo in April, and that used in propaganda from the Serb government.

In a letter to the US House of Representatives' Republican 'Task Force on Terrorism', on 8 June, the so-called 'Yugoslav' foreign ministry in Belgrade claimed that 'Muslim' forces — i.e. the Bosnian army — had been the

aggressors at Gorazde, by firing on Serbian tanks that were besieging the town!

'Indeed,' said the letter, 'there is evidence that humanitarian aid convoys, sanctioned by the UN, assisted in the transfer of equipment and goods to Gorazde.'

Attempt

For example, on 14 March, Bosnian Serb inspection teams in the Sokolac heliport discovered an attempt to smuggle electronic equipment, hard currency and Bosnian government documents into Gorazde.'

Defending the bombardment of Gorazde's hospital, the statement claimed 'Muslim' (i.e. Bosnian) forces had placed guns on the hospital roof.

'International Workers Bulletin', finds acres of newsprint (one of many of the items Tuzla needs!) for lies about Workers Aid for Bosnia and the Workers Revolutionary Party, but not a word of sympathy for the people of Gorazde.

Consumed by pathological hatred, David North doesn't give a damn for the workers of Bosnia or anywhere else.

We'll be dealing with North's lies (and political record) in detail later. One thing is clear. His 'Bulletin' article is presented as 'a statement from the International Committee of the Fourth International'; this is the biggest lie of all. It has nothing to do with Trotsky's Fourth International, and everything in common with the Stalinists' murderous lies.

On other pages: Lecturers' dispute, p3; Disabled people fight, p4&5; Kazakh miners' appeal, p8

Hackney council workers oppose new racist laws

MEMBERS of the local government union, UNISON, in Hackney council's housing benefits department voted at a mass meeting on 27 May to boycott racist new government legislation on 'persons from abroad'.

The new laws force council workers to check the immigration status of all benefit claimants not already on income support. In practice this means checking passports and liaising with the Home Office.

Black migrant workers are inevitably targeted by this ruling, and it marks an end to confidentiality. A statement from UNISON number 1 branch at Hackney, north London, said that the 'effect of the policy will be to strike fear into the hearts of all black people in Hackney who apply for their legitimate entitlement to benefits'.

Minimal

Branch publicity officer Tony Whelan pointed out that the legislation had come into force with only minimal opposition from the Labour Party. Describing it as 'thoroughly racist', he said it was 'just another stage in the present government's ongoing attacks on migrants, especially those with black skins.'

'At a time of mass slaughter in Bosnia, in Rwanda and in other parts of the world, yet more restrictions on the rights of refugees are totally indefensible.'

Whelan added that all migrant workers, 'not just the "illegals" they claim to be targeting', would suffer from fear, uncertainty and delays in the system caused by implementation of the legislation.

He said that the action of Hackney's UNISON members provides an example for action by benefits workers in other councils.

Lecturers raise tempo of contracts dispute

LECTURERS are on strike all over England and Wales, whilst an increasing number of union chapters (branches) seek a mandate from their members as a prelude to action.

One of the institutions affected is Sheffield college, the largest college in Europe. There, union members have forced the principal back to the negotiating table after several days of successful strike action.

'I have to stay at head office every night until seven to sign authorisations for branches to take action,' said Doreen Cameron, president of the university and college lecturers' union, NATFHE.

Owing to the government's employment laws it is very hard for any union to organise a national strike, so NATFHE is fighting with one hand behind its back.

Thuggery

In a particularly outstanding example of legal thuggery, a college branch was given an ultimatum. It was threatened with union derecognition and individual contracts unless the lecturers submitted.

They were unable to take any strike action in protest, the union members were told, because management contracts were deemed insufficiently well drawn up.

The argument ran that the union could not dispute a contract that might itself be illegal.

BY JOHN PETERS

Despite such obstacles, ballots have been synchronised, suggesting that action at national or at least regional level may be possible to organise.

Attracting

Many branches report that membership is up. Even in the one new college in the country, at Truro in Cornwall, where staff began their jobs under the new contracts, a branch has been set up. It has succeeded in attracting most of the teaching staff.

All over the country lecturers are simply returning their new, unsigned contracts to NATFHE, which then passes them on *en bloc* to the management.

At the moment the College Employers' Forum is refusing to offer national negotiations. But this tame government quango is showing signs of nerves.

Apparently some college heads are jittery about picket lines and unfavourable media coverage blighting the image of their institutions. NATFHE is not, though, banking on a speedy resolution.



NUM president Arthur Scargill speaking, in front of a WAPC banner, at a rally at Parkside pit last summer. The pit camp is determined to keep the mine shafts clear

'They shan't fill in our pit!'

PARKSIDE pit camp hasn't taken lying down its recent eviction by 30 court bailiffs and about 120 police officers.

Though a steel-and-wire fence was put up across the entrance to Lancashire's last deep coal-mine, supporters have re-established the pit camp across the road opposite the entrance, and are now keeping up a 24-hour rota system there.

And on 22 May, 200 supporters opened the gates and held a rally, addressed by National Union of Mineworkers president Arthur Scargill and Sylvia Pye, for Lancashire Women Against Pit Closures (WAPC), which showed that neither the eviction order obtained by British Coal nor the new fence will stop them fighting against the pit closure.

'We are determined to physically resist the closure,' says a Lancashire WAPC leaflet.

'British Coal now intends to continue with the closure process, which will involve transporting thousands of tons of limestone to the pit to be used to fill in the shaft.'

'When British Coal attempts to get the stone on site we will set up a picket line with the objective of preventing the stone from entering the pit. We are asking people to be ready to come and join us in what we hope will be a mass picket.'

Lancashire WAPC will give at least a week's notice of the picket to supporters. Anyone who can help in any way should contact Parkside Pit Camp, Winwick Road, Newton-le-Willows, WA12 8EA. Tel: 0925 291799.

Form workers' defence squads

BY JOHN STEELE

ABOUT 2,000 workers walked out of the Harland & Wolff shipyard in Belfast in protest at the killing of a Catholic worker on Friday 10 June.

Maurice O'Kane, 50, a welder, was shot in the back in the hold of a tanker where he had been working.

The murder was claimed by one of the loyalist killer gangs, the Ulster Volunteer Force, and is a continuation of the barbaric campaign against Catholics and supporters of Irish republicanism.

Over the past few months workers have been killed in their homes and at their workplaces and there was the attempted mass murder of 400 people at a fund-raising function for republican prisoners in a Dublin public house.

Married with four sons and two grandchildren, O'Kane had left the shipyard after 15 years' employment but had returned on a contract basis.

Two of his sons are also employed there — one is a plumber and the other is an apprentice.

The loyalist assassination squads are attempting to instil fear into nationalists and to deepen the divisions amongst the working class.

These divisions are strengthened by the system of separate schools and the almost total separation of Protestant and Catholic workers in different housing estates.

This imperialist policy of 'divide and rule', which sets Protestants and Catholics against each other, is being continued at a different level by the killer squads.

Blow

It would be a major blow against the drive for working-class unity if the Harland & Wolff workforce was to become wholly Protestant.

According to the 1972 Fair Employment Commission statistics only 148 of the yard's workers were Catholics.

This followed events in 1970, during the first wave of religious hatred that accompanied this phase of the Irish revolt against imperialism, when about 500 Catholic workers were driven from the shipyard.

At that time, many shop stewards, acting on an individual basis, visited these workers in their homes attempting to persuade them to return, but without being able to guarantee them their safety.

And this, again, is the most important question. How does the trade union movement defend the lives of its members?

Class-conscious workers know that if the killer gangs are successful in forcing all Catholics from the shipyard, then every militant trade unionist who fights for workers' unity is also threatened.

The revulsion at the killing of Maurice O' Kane, which prompted the walk-out by his fellow workers, is repeated every time there is a workplace killing.

The vast majority of the

working class in the north of Ireland has shown many times that it wants an end to the killings and the religious sectarianism.

When the trade union leaders organised protests against the sectarian killings last November, 100,000 demonstrated that they wanted to be involved to stop the barbaric acts.

Dissipated

But the trade union leaders dissipated this movement in pleas for 'peace' and prayers with the church leaders, reactionary Unionist politicians and, even, Tory ministers.

The IRA and the republican movement have shown that they cannot defend the Catholic working class.

Only workers' defence militias, based on the trade union movement and housing estates, and organised around a series of demands that include a fight against unemployment and state repression, can effectively stop the loyalist killer gangs.

Bengali in hiding after calls for her hanging

BY JILL OXLEY

A LEADING Bengali feminist writer, Taslima Nasreen, has had to go into hiding in Bangladesh following demonstrations calling for her hanging by Islamic fundamentalists.

She is supposed to have said in an interview in a Calcutta daily, the 'Statesman', that the Koran should be revised thoroughly and that it was discriminatory against women. But,

when speaking to the Indian media, Taslima claimed that she had been misquoted.

'I hold the Koran, Vedas, Bible and all such texts out of place and out of time,' she is purported to have said. 'They should be kept in a museum.'

This remark incensed clerics more than the first misquotation. Her supporters say that she has adequately clarified her comments on the need for reform of Islamic 'Shariat' law in a changing society.

Bangladesh came into exist-

ence in a fight by men and women for a secular state when it seceded from Pakistan. The state's law has been formally tolerant towards minority traditions but now has a clause banning the expression of sentiments offensive to Muslims.

An order for Taslima's arrest has been issued and, if found guilty, she faces imprisonment for up to two years.

This takes place against a background of increasing tension over free speech in Bangladesh. Three journalists have

been arrested on charges of condemning Islamic fundamentalism.

The 'Defend Taslima Nasreen' campaign is calling for support from women's groups, community organisations and the trade union movement. They are asking for letters to be written to the Bangladeshi government demanding that the charges be dropped and that steps are taken to ensure Taslima's safety.

For details of the campaign please contact Workers Press.

A concert for Bosnia
at the Royal Academy of Music
14 July at 7.30pm

Marylebone Road, London NW1

From Bosnia: Vedran Smailovic, cellist;
Zoran Jancic, pianist; Aida Gavrilova,
pianist; Lejla Ibrahimovic, pianist.

Admission: £12; £5 conc.

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Please send me information about the WRP

Name date

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Inside left

White eagle in Detroit

BACK in April, Workers Press exposed how certain Stalinists and others were trying to sabotage Workers Aid for Bosnia, blocking union funds by spreading a fantastic story that Workers Aid convoys had smuggled 'tons of arms' into Bosnia ('A reactionary slander', Workers Press editorial, 23 April).

While upholding the Bosnian people's right to defend themselves, Workers Aid has not carried weapons. Its convoys of food and medicine have to pass numerous one-too-friendly checkpoints. Carrying anything not on the goods documents could endanger a whole convoy, and risk comrades' lives.

Last month the Serb Chetnik regime in Pale captured seven aid workers from the French charity Premier Urgence, falsely accusing them of smuggling arms. Then France's UN ambassador proposed bombing 'any party' which launched an offensive near Brcko — a great aimed against Bosnian forces fighting to eject Serb nationalists, who massacred Muslims here. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) threatened to withdraw from 'enclaves' like Tuzla, the working-class town that shelters thousands of refugees from Brcko.

Despite capitalist and Stalinist distortions and lies, working people can see what's happening in Bosnia, and solidarise with its people against fascist 'ethnic cleansing', and the UN use of aid control to impose an imperialist carve-up.

Workers Aid for Bosnia has won support from many unions, and helped establish links between Tuzla miners and the Scottish TUC. The 'Morning Star' has had to print letters from long-standing supporters rejecting its anti-Bosnian line. The Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), the 'arms smuggling' story angered convoy drivers. Officials suspected of purveying the tale withdrew, saying they 'just wanted to separate humanitarian aid from politics'.

There's something rotten in the state of Michigan. It's D. North's 'International Bulletin', which asserted (23 May): 'Workers Aid has been involved in bringing strategic military equipment into Bosnia for use by the Izetbegovic regime and its imperialist backers. Trucks are being operated on the basis of commercial contracts paid by European arms dealers and others. This is the first time in history that a movement claiming to be socialist has organised gun-running for the capitalist powers.'

Why the imperialists, whose well-equipped UN forces dominate Bosnia's roads and airports, need Workers Aid's second-hand lorries, isn't explained! Nor why, if they're backing Bosnia, they maintain an arms embargo. Bitterly backing our call to open the north-route to Tuzla, North even denies the town denied satellite telecommunications with the outside world.

Condemning Cliff Slaughter of Workers Revolutionary Party having raised 'revolutionary reality' and human rights, North doesn't mention that this was against the activities of former MP leader Gerry Healy, expelled in 1985 for physical and sexual abuse of comrades. Denouncing Namibian comrades for opposition, North supports war criminals responsible for massacres, rape and rape camps in Bosnia. Bosnian cellist Vedran Smailovic, played under Chetnik gunfire in Sarajevo, and has agreed to play for Workers Aid, was warmly received in Detroit in April. Detroit's workers will sweep away North's Chetnik white eagle-droppings.

Charlie Pottins

A bill calling for minimal civil rights for disabled people was wrecked by the Tory government's minister for the disabled, Nicholas Scott, last month. BERNARD FRANKS described in last week's Workers Press how government legislation on special schools had wrecked education opportunities for children with 'learning difficulties'. This week he puts this in the broader context of the struggle for disabled rights as a whole

THE Conservatives' dirty parliamentary tricks campaign to prevent disabled people winning basic civil rights is central to the Tory ethos of striking at the poorest and weakest in society. The Tories do so to defend the wealth and privileges of the richest and strongest.

For disabled people today, it is not so much a question of improving their lot as one of preventing a further rapid decline into misery and want, as their rights to housing, health care, education, income, mobility and jobs come actively under siege.

Nearly half of the 6.5 million people with some form of disability live in perpetual poverty, deprived and humiliated by the system which imposes severe cash limits, degrading medical tests, a lack of access and a lack of support services.

It is the sector where people are most likely to be low paid or out of work, having no savings or supplementary pension, and having benefits as their sole source of income. Families with disabled children are on average 22 per cent poorer than average households, and only 19,000 disabled children

'Acting for their friends and associates in industry, trade and finance, the Tories reacted against the "horrifying cost" of a few ramps and other fixtures, to be provided in an unspecified time'

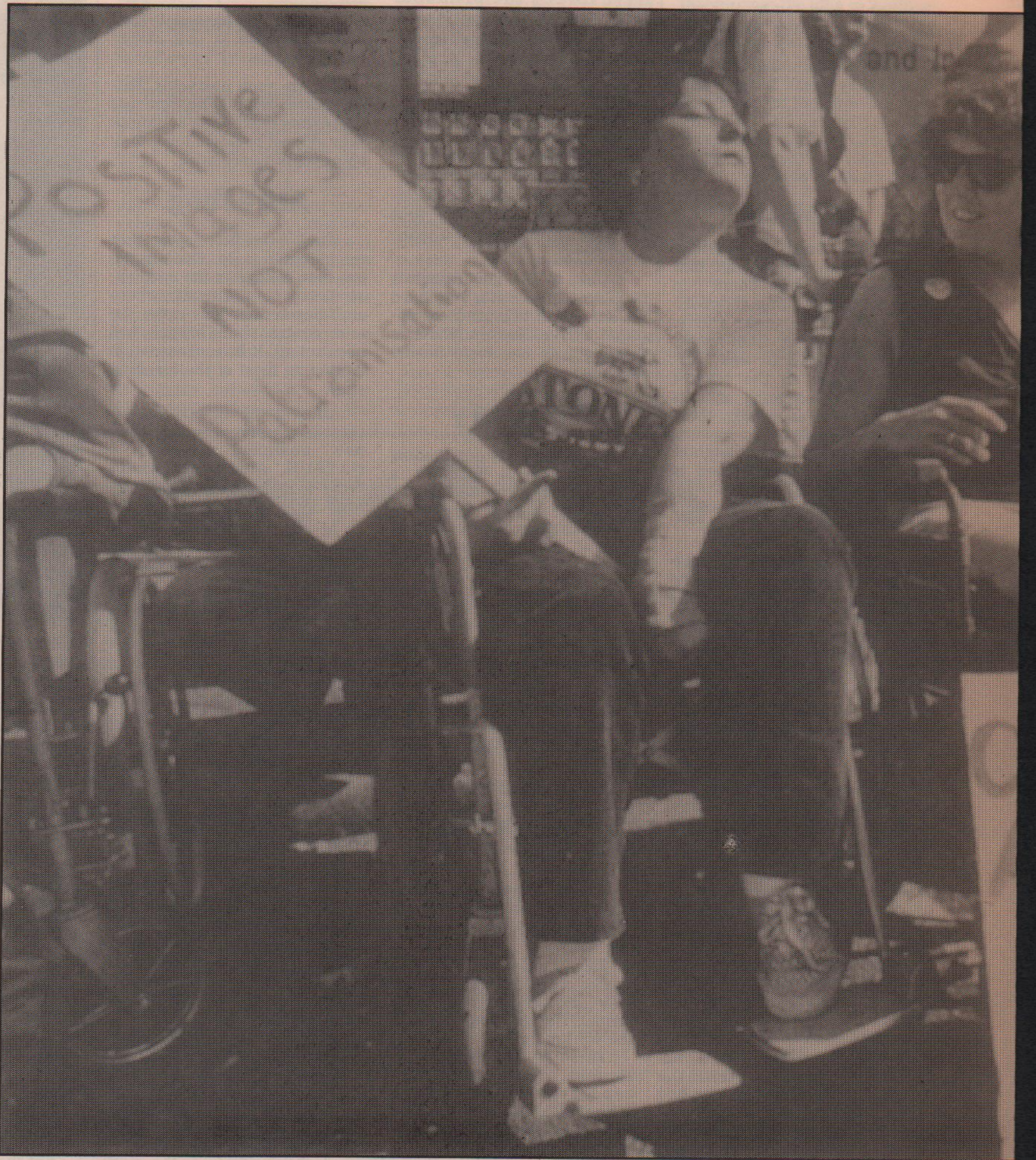
living at home — that is, 5 per cent of the 380,000 total — have access to respite services, the temporary support to give them and their parents a recuperative break.

In all, 1.6 million people in Britain — or one in 40 — are classed as having a severe, permanent physical and/or mental disability of some kind. Of these, more than 360,000 are wheelchair users. Many have more than one disability, and further complications may arise from the side-effects of the powerful drugs necessary to control a condition. There is also the added stress of coping with a disability in extremely difficult housing circumstances, and where uncertainty about the future plays a major part.

Some people have actually been severely impaired by a 'cure': for example, the thousands of victims of Thalidomide, the drug given to pregnant mothers as an ultra-safe sleeping pill and tranquilliser; and the 61 people in Britain who died and the 4,000 seriously damaged as a result of the anti-arthritis drug, Opren.

On the other hand, many disabling diseases can be limited, cured or prevented, and indeed often are, in the advanced indus-

Disabled people for their



The Campaign against Patronage demonstrates at London Weekend Television against the Telethon charity event

rial countries. Polio, TB, peptic ulcers, malaria and cataracts can all be contained, and it is criminal that eradication programmes have been slowed or stopped world-wide.

Many other conditions could probably be conquered, if research into them was extended — rheumatoid arthritis, strokes, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, and motor-neuron disease are all currently left to depend heavily on charity for funds.

In practice, disability research is chronically under-funded in Britain, where just £5 million goes to this sector, or 77p each a year for the 6.5 million people afflicted. In particular, spending on epilepsy research works out at just 90p a year for each of the 350,000 sufferers.

Of course many people are born with severe problems or are irreversibly injured at work, in the home, or in sporting and road accidents. In addition, many infirmities appear with age, so that 60 per cent of retired people have a difficulty of some kind.

This means that in a health district of, say, 250,000 people, there

are 1,800 wheelchair users, 11,000 with severe incontinence problems, 2,500 deaf people, 500 with Parkinson's disease, 200 with multiple sclerosis, 6,000 with rheumatoid arthritis, and 1,300 who are visually impaired or totally blind.

Far from finding their rights and conditions improved in the alleged era of citizens' charters and community care, they find themselves under increasing attack, particularly in the areas below.

Housing

The sale of council housing has hit disabled people especially hard, forcing them increasingly into the private sector. And where specially built or adapted dwellings are sold off, it is one less in the council's stock.

Benefits

Income support and the social fund have badly affected the lives of disabled claimants. One in three is unable to afford sufficient food, or else does so only by going without heating. True, their condition may

give them priority status, and also ensure that they receive grants rather than loans when it comes to payments. But the social-security cash limits mean that all suffer when the money runs out. Also, disabled people are no exception to the requirement to track down and apply for entitlements, rather than have them automatically applied.

Jobs

The quota system, which in theory requires employers of over 20 people to ensure that at least 3 per cent of their workforce are from the disabled register, is massively flouted. The ruling was set by parliament in 1944, in keeping with the reforming zeal of the time and in expectation that vast numbers of disabled ex-service personnel would be seeking and expecting jobs after the war.

The Act was reaffirmed in 1958 but still proved to have serious loopholes and escape clauses to the extent that 80 per cent of employers have avoided compliance. Yet nobody is prosecuted for breaking the law.

People fight for rights



Disablement groups say it a disgrace that the situation is even worse in regard to public bodies, the law having been circumvented by 73 per cent of government departments, most county councils, and 336 out of 368 district councils. As a result, an estimated 100,000 disabled people miss out on public-sector jobs that they allegedly have the right to hold. Consequently many see no point in registering for work, and others who do so try and hide their disability, fearing discrimination in terms of job prospects, promotion and pay.

The language of disablement

Continued use of stigmatising and patronising language is being challenged by disabled people. The terms 'crippled', 'deformed' and 'defective', with their demeaning and insulting overtones, have been mainly eliminated. But modern equivalents such as 'impaired', 'handicapped', 'disabled' and 'sufferer' are being closely examined with a view to finding alternatives that do not stereotype people as

victims. Until they actually cease to be victims, this will be a hard task.

Special schools

The 1981 Education Act laid the basis for the systematic closure of special schools for physically and mentally handicapped children and the transfer of their pupils to 'mainstream' schools. The theory behind this — of an integrated, more natural life-style for disabled children, and the benefiting of their unimpaired counterparts by heightening their awareness of disability in society — was used to further smash up services for the disabled.

The carers' crisis

The problem for the 6 million carers in Britain, who look after infirm, sick and disabled people, both young and old, is that social services strapped for funds give support only to those who have no such 'informal' support. So community care is in reality community non-care.

The self-perpetuating problem

with this is that failure to give help to carers increases the likelihood that they in turn will need help all the sooner with facing their own health problems — yet owing to their previously restricted lifestyles they will have no relatives to care for them.

Defeating the euthanasia lobby

People with disabilities are some of the most forthright in opposing the concept of 'the right to die', being far more concerned with the right to live decently. Obnoxious phrases, such as 'imprisoned in their bodies' and reference to death as 'welcome relief' or a 'merciful release', are condemned as remarks out of the pages of the Nazi justification for mass murder of disabled people.

In conditions in which judges and Law Lords can decide on the switching off of life-support systems, it needs emphasising that the dividing line between the right to die and the right to kill is an extremely fine one, particularly in a society where market forces are the main criterion.

Mobility and accessibility

In many regions, barely token consideration has been given to the needs of the disabled to travel and to enter public buildings, shops, restaurants, sports stadiums, education establishments and workplaces. Even where such premises have a ramped entry, they make little internal provision for the movement of disabled people.

Civil rights

Disabled people need revolutionary changes, not token reforms, if they are to improve the quality of their lives. A vital ingredient is the direct input of disabled people themselves, who are rarely represented, never mind make a majority, on the bodies dealing with disablement affairs.

Disabled people are increasingly realising that their rights have to be directly fought for. In the United States, the 1990 Disability Act made discrimination on the grounds of disability a civil rights issue, matching similar considerations in regard to race, religion and sex. US law now requires that all new buses and trains be modified for wheelchair use, that public buildings have wheelchair access, and that telephone companies make special provision for people with speech and hearing difficulties.

In Australia, meanwhile, a new law has made discrimination against disabled people illegal in any aspect of work, accommodation, education, club membership, sport, leisure and public services. Laws are nothing without enforcement, but in many countries even basic legislation cannot be achieved.

In Britain, a severely watered-down disabled people's Civil Rights Bill was talked out and wrecked on 6 and 20 May by Tory MPs such as Lady Olga Maitland and the minis-



Disability Benefits Consortium rally in Trafalgar Square in 1990. Of disabled benefit claimants, one in three is unable to afford sufficient food or heating

ter for disabled people himself, Nicholas Scott.

Acting for their friends and associates in industry, trade and finance, the Tories reacted against the 'horrifying cost' of a few ramps and other fixtures, to be provided in an unspecified time — all that was left of the Bill once Labour had accepted all the bowdlerising amendments.

Action now

Increasingly, people with disabilities are making it clear that they do not want charity or discretionary handouts — they want rights as human beings. They are seeking an end to 'show-us-your-stumps' fund-raising, and in its place some extremely large doses of positive discrimination, not to give them more than others, but to end their situation as second-class citizens.

The Tories have reacted fearfully to this movement, threatening to strike blows at the status and funds of any charity or representative

body which speaks out and campaigns politically on the plight of those they act for.

But a new fighting spirit has arisen among disabled people. In September 1990, disabled protesters held up traffic in London's Oxford Street, causing chaos in the centre of the capital in protest at the lack of access to buses and trains. Large rallies were also held in Glasgow and London to demand proper incomes in place of disability benefits. The Telethon — a television charity-raising junket — was picketed and invaded by 'Rights not Charity' activists, determined to present their point of view.

More recently, demonstrations, pickets and lobbies have been held in support of the Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill. The battle is not over. By forging strong links with the trades unions, pensioner activists and other community groups, disabled people can achieve their rights irrespective of parliamentary chicanery.



In many regions barely token consideration has been given to the needs of the disabled to travel and to enter public buildings and shops

The staying power of 'Staying Power'

PERSONAL COLUMN

IT'S just over ten years since my book 'Staying Power: The history of black people in Britain' was published. Recently it was reissued as a 'Pluto classic', but I wasn't consulted about the decision to give it that accolade.

Had I been asked my opinion I would have demurred. To call any book less than a generation old — i.e. less than 30 years old — a 'classic' seems to me a classic example of publisher's hype.

But I gather that in some feminist publishing circles any book that has been on sale for more than a twelvemonth is now cheerfully boosted as a 'classic'. Thus does language deliquesce.

TEN years on, I've been amusing myself by rereading some of the notices that greeted 'Staying Power' on its first appearance.

There is — or rather, there used to be — a golden rule that an author should in no circumstances answer hostile reviews. This rule I scrupulously observed in 1984; but no doubt that particular statute of limitation may be considered to have expired after ten years.

So readers can now share my merriment: at the sour forecast of 'race relations' expert Michael Banton that 'The influence of *Staying Power* will be greater than might be expected from its historical contribution' ('Times Literary Supplement', 20 July 1984); at the peevish misprision of Trevor Phillips, for whom 'Regrettably, Mr Fryer seems to believe that black lives are only significant when they are the object of, or battling against, racism' ('The Times', 12 May 1984).

But the wooden spoon has to go to John Vincent, a deservedly forgotten academic who had been a bit of a trendy lefty in his youth but later became notorious for his highly paid and highly reactionary contributions to the 'Sun' newspaper.

Mr Vincent called me 'a Marxist of integrity' — a poison label within a floral border if ever there was one — said my work had to be 'taken with a pinch of salt politically', and wrote:

'Mr Fryer's blacks are stereotyped. All are paragons. They live moving and courageous lives, write noble prose, and sacrifice themselves for their fellow men. They bear their sufferings without bitterness, improve their minds, and write autobiographies which are naturally not self-condemnatory. There are, it appears, no bad blacks' ('Sunday Times', 16 May 1984).

This sneering paragraph has to be taken with a whole ton of salt, politically and otherwise. There is in fact a black slave-dealer and pimp on page 20 of 'Staying Power'; a black murderer and a black burglar on page 87; a black rapist on page 73; and a black plagiarist on page 288.

'Bad blacks' were clearly what Mr Vincent was chiefly interested in, as are others of his kidney; perhaps these five were not quite 'bad' enough to seize his attention?

But in fact does 'Staying Power' have a marked political or ideological bias? A good case might be made out for saying that it doesn't, or at any rate much less than it ought to have had.

A writer in 'New Community' (XII/1, winter 1984-85) called it only 'vaguely Marxist in orientation' and 'intrinsically a radical populist history', whatever that means.

James Walvin, who at first

praised 'Staying Power' to the skies, though finding the title 'hard to understand' and objecting to my use of 'black' as a political term covering Asians as well as people of African descent ('Immigrants and Minorities', IV/1, March 1985), has lately revived the poison label, cunningly sandwiching it between two slabs of praise.

In 'From the fringes: the emergence of British black historical studies', in 'Essays on the History of Blacks in Britain: From Roman Times to the Mid-Twentieth Century', edited by J.S. Gundara and I. Duffield (Aldershot, Avebury, 1992), Walvin writes:

'As a compendium of detail and information on the history of the Black community, it remains a major achievement; a source book for any future student of the history of the British Black community. Its ideological bent and emphasis will not appeal to everyone. But there is no doubt that it is now the book one would recommend to a newcomer to the field as the place from which to start a plan of reading' (emphasis added).

You have been warned. Of the favourable comments made about 'Staying Power' over these ten years, none has given me greater satisfaction and pride than that of the great Kenyan novelist, thinker, and freedom fighter Ngugi wa Thiong'o, in his book 'Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms' (James Currey, 1993):

'Not least of the significance of the testimony in *Staying Power* is the fact that the book is written by a white person; and, according to him, it was a chance remark during the 1981 riots which finally led him to start this massive compilation of data which finally grew into such a gripping story of black people's presence and their contribution in Britain over so many years.

'In other words, it was an act of resistance to racism by its bruised recipients which prompted him to attempt a general re-evaluation of the black presence in Britain.

'The book itself is, in part, a record of that resistance and of the staying power of black people. . . . Many brilliant minds jump out of its pages to illuminate our perception of the history of Britain and its dialectical link to that of an Empire now reborn as neo-colonies. . . .

'But the real staying power is that of the struggles of labour, black labour and other people's labour, ordinary men and women whose names will never appear in history text-books.'

THE study of British black history hasn't stood still in these past ten years. Much work has been done, notably by the late Paul Edwards, on the pre-capitalist period, between the third and 15th centuries AD, when military and trading activities brought a trickle of Africans to end their days in the British Isles.

But perhaps the most notable growth area in this field is local history. This is not an easy area to work in, for the records of black lives often lie buried deeper than deep in the archives, needing laborious research to bring them to light.

All credit therefore to the latest of these local historians, Jim Layton, whose 'Black People in Warwickshire's Past: part one, 1600-1914' (Leamington Spa, Educational Development Service, 1994) is in all respects a model of how such work should be undertaken and presented.

Peter Fryer

Television

A poet of the medium

Review by Hilary Horrocks

'THE TRUTH is that we need to be mortal, we need to die.' A startlingly relaxed conclusion for someone who has recently been told that his illness is terminal, and that he has only a matter of weeks to live.

Dennis Potter, the television playwright who died of cancer on Tuesday 7 June, said in a last interview he gave (recorded in early April and re-transmitted by Channel 4 two days after his death) that he would be satisfied if he managed to finish the plays he was working on before it was, as he put it, 'Goodnight Vienna'.

Potter's last interview — astonishingly optimistic, given his situation — provided him with the opportunity to say everything hitherto unsaid. Ideas and anecdotes tumbled out one after the other, scarcely allowing interviewer Melvyn Bragg to get a word in edgeways, which was no bad thing.

Vivid

It was a vivid contrast to the rather diffident Potter speaking about his work in interviews during the 1970s, clips from which were shown in a fascinating tribute to the playwright on BBC2 on the evening of his death.

Potter was passionately committed to television right from the start. 'I saw it as a medium that could help emancipate us from a class-ridden culture.' It was democratic, he thought, in the sense that it was widely available: and it was revolutionary because it allowed much more sophisticated technical effects than any other art form. 'Switch on . . . Tune in . . . And grow' is how Potter saw the potential of television in its early decades.

There must be thousands who remember the impact in the 1960s of the new television playwrights, of whom Potter was one. Here were people giving articulate voice to your confused intuitions about what was wrong with our society. They must surely have played a large part in the politicisation of many young people at the time.

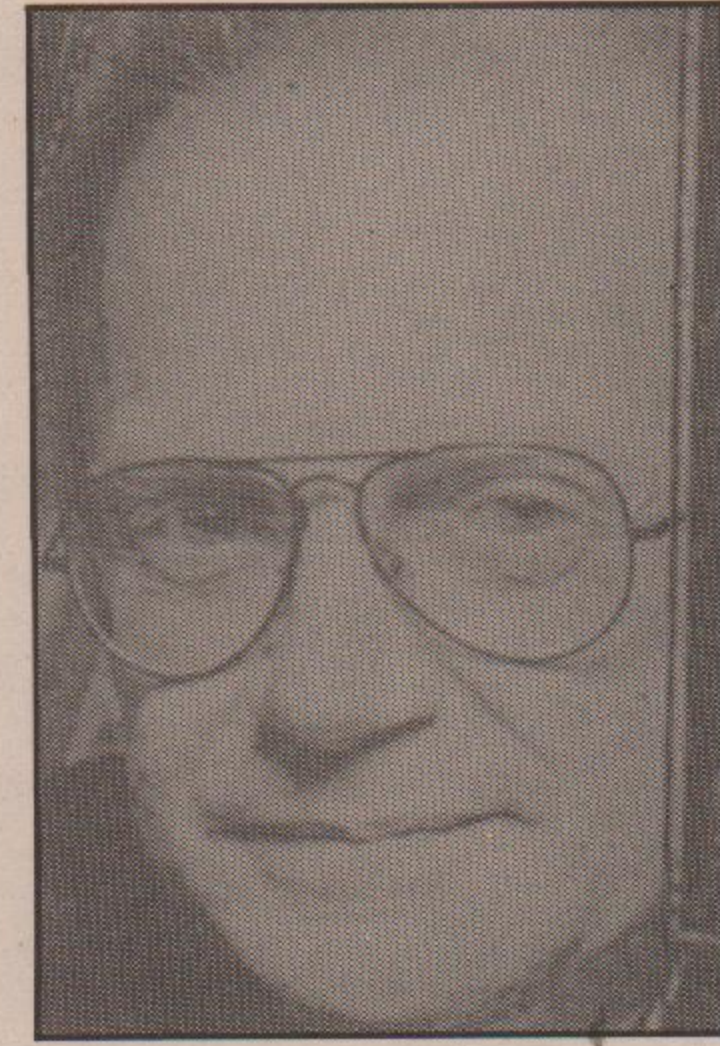
'The 1960s and 1970s were probably the most democratic period of writing for TV', commented Alan Plater, himself one of the young playwrights who were given their head during this period — with more confidence, perhaps, than the BBC has ever mustered since.

Potter's early work for TV was documentary — about the mining community in the Forest of Dean where he grew up — and then fictional, but very much based on his own experiences. The Nigel Barton plays, acted in a way that now seems terribly overdone, drew on Potter's feelings of estrangement both from his working-class background and from the privileged environment at Oxford university, to which he won a scholarship.

Soon Potter began to realise how suited the medium of TV was for portraying the innermost thoughts and fantasies of his characters. He wanted, he said, to portray their 'darkest secrets'. This new direction coincided with the onset of the disease psoriatic arthropathy, which was to dog the writer for the rest of his life, often rendering him house-bound and even bed-bound. ('You'd think it would lay off now, wouldn't you?' Potter joked during his last interview.)

The 'darkest secrets' were of course also the darkest secrets of society, and their exposure in a popular medium evoked a terrified response from the BBC bosses and the predictable hypocritical outrage from the tabloids, who dubbed Potter 'Dirty Den' ('The Sun') and 'TV's Mr Filth' ('News of the World').

In 1976 BBC director-general



Potter: darkest secrets

Alastair Milne banned Potter's drama 'Brimstone and Treacle', about the rape of a disabled girl by a mysterious stranger who has charmed his way into her parents' house. In contrast, fellow writer Trevor Griffith's reaction to the play was: 'He was so offensive, you just wanted to cheer.'

Throughout his life, Potter was utterly scathing about the management of the British media. For him television was

about discovering something you didn't know, and maximising an audience was the antithesis of that.

In his last interview Potter confided that he had christened the malignant growth in his pancreas 'Rupert' as a fitting way of expressing his contempt for media tycoon Rupert Murdoch. He fantasised to Bragg about the deeds his imminent death might give him the freedom to perform, saying of Murdoch 'I'd shoot the bugger if I could'.

Indulged

I suspect, though, that the 'democratic medium' probably had its revenge on the 'outrageous' Potter towards the end of his career. Germaine Greer in the BBC tribute correctly identified Potter's 1989 series 'Blackeyes' as the point when things began to go wrong, the point at which he began to be too much indulged by the medium he hitherto challenged.

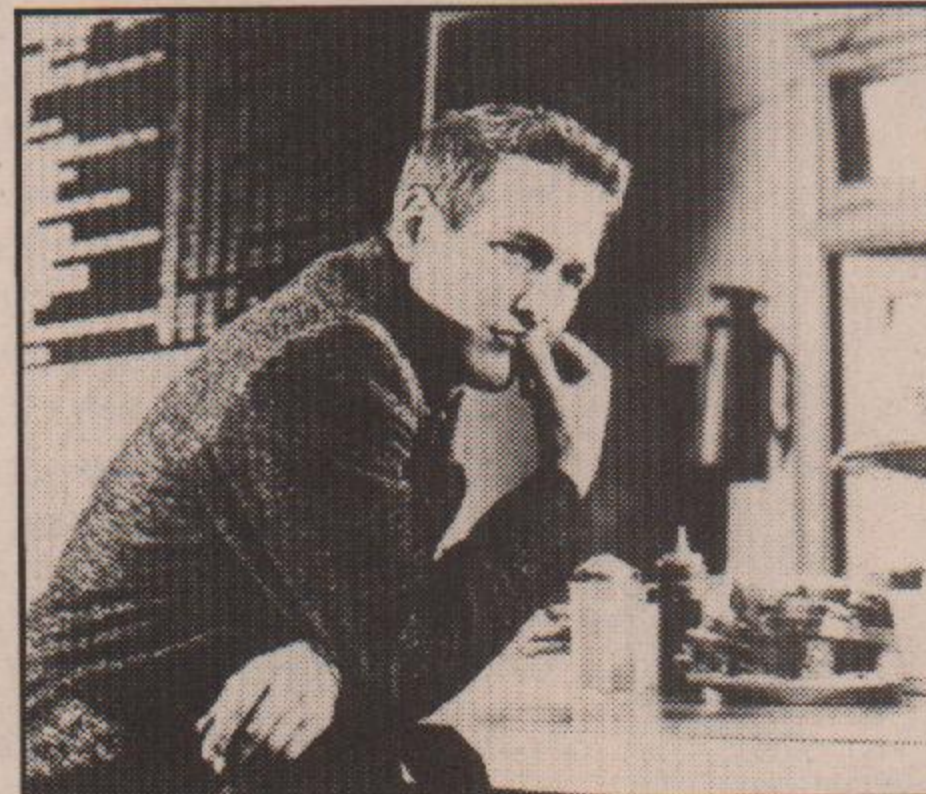
'He was a poet of the medium, and not a strategist', said Greer. And Potter himself conceded to Bragg that, in seeking with 'Blackeyes' to accurately portray the alienation of women in a male-dominated society, he had created a piece which was itself alienating.

That is why it will be tremendously interesting to see his posthumous works, the two plays 'Karaoke' and 'Cold Lazarus'. Potter, with opportunistic flair, took advantage of his last interview to appeal to TV bosses Michael Grade (Channel 4) and Alan Yentob (BBC2) to collaborate on a joint transmission.

Even then, in the circumstances, could hardly do otherwise.

Programme guide

Thursday 23 June TRUE STORIES: 'Silverlake Life — The View From Here'. A repeat opportunity to see Tom Joslin's award-winning study of what life with AIDS means. Joslin's powerful video diary records the slow death from AIDS of both himself and his lover of 22 years, Mark Massi. By prior agreement the work was completed after their deaths by friend and former student Peter Friedman (9.30pm, Channel 4). FOURMATIONS. 'Love in the Cold'. One of the two films being shown tonight in this season of animation is 'George and Rosemary'; Alison Snowden and David Fine's whimsical and hilarious romantic comedy about two senior citizens who sit behind suburban net curtains fantasising about each other and trying to pluck up courage to make the first move (11.30pm, Channel 4).



Great thinkers . . . Paul Newman hustles, Sunday on C4; and George fantasises, Thursday on C4

Friday 24 June '4 Goes to Glasgobury'. The start of an eight-programme schedule over the three days of this annual music festival (3.50pm, Channel 4).

Selected films

THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES (1946). William Wyler's

classic about three returning World War II veterans trying to re-adjust to civilian life. With Frederick March, Dana Andrews and Myrna Loy (Sunday, 1.15pm, Channel 4). THE HUSTLER (1961). Young pool shark Paul Newman challenges champion Jackie Gleason (aka Minnesota

Fats). Written and directed by Robert Rossen (Sunday, 11.30pm, Channel 4). BROADWAY DANNY ROSE (1984). Woody Allen as a theatrical agent with a collection of some of the most bizarre clients in New York (Friday, 12.15am, BBC2).

JJ

US army sprayed Minnesota with toxic war-chemicals

THE US army sprayed toxic chemicals throughout Minnesota during the winter and summer of 1953 as part of its biological warfare-testing programme.

On a local TV station, 'Newsnight Minnesota' reporter Melody Gilbert last week uncovered the story about the US army's experimental testing of toxic chemicals on unknowing citizens of the Twin Cities, including school children, from January to March 1953.

Gilbert discovered that between 21 August and 18 September of that year the army sprayed zinc cadmium sulphide a total of 39 times: 12 times in

downtown Minneapolis, 13 times near Clinton School in south Minneapolis, and eight times over the city as a whole.

In Rosemount, Minnesota, during September and October 1953 an army plane sprayed 850 pounds of zinc cadmium sulphide mixture in the area of Jensen Field.

Reports

The army sprayed 21 times during that time over a four-mile area, according to official reports.

Gilbert reports that the army carried out similar activities at the Chippewa National Forest

from January to August 1964, although no details are as yet available about these tests.

Senator Paul Wellstone said he feared that these incidents were 'just the tip of the iceberg' and demanded that the US defence department turn over all documents detailing where it sprayed and what it knows about the environmental effects of zinc cadmium sulphide on people, the soil and the air.

Wellstone said that since the initial report exposing the US army's activities he had received a large number of calls from outraged residents, including some who may themselves have been victims.



US toxic spraying in Vietnam

Workers Aid for Bosnia

Humanity not enough

Humanitarian aid has been used throughout the war against multi-ethnic Bosnia. TOM BATTERSBY, who has been to Tuzla on two Workers Aid for Bosnia convoys, reports

GUNS and bombs are not the only weapons being used in the attempt to destroy the multi-cultural community in Bosnia. In a starving, desperate country the distribution or non-distribution of aid is an equally powerful tool.

In the Tuzla region, three large agencies pursue policies which serve to increase the divisions which are fuelling the war.

The United Nations is the grandest of the group. Only refugees, via the UN High Commission for Refugees, receive food from their supposed protectors. Those not fortunate enough to have suffered military defeat and ethnic cleansing get nothing.

The logic of starvation dictates that people are better off cleansing themselves and heading for the nearest camp. Local people are penalised for defending their homes.

Two religious organisations, Caritas and Merhamet, pursue similar ends, though more covertly. In theory both work closely with the Logistic Centre in Tuzla, a local government department.

Again in theory, this means equitable distribution to all citizens regardless of race or creed and using all available collection points and vehicles. This amicable pooling of resources sounded excellent.

We became a trifle suspicious of all this friendship, however, when I and several other convoy members witnessed an argument between the chief of the Logistic Centre and a local leader of Merhamet, the Muslim relief agency.

It concerned the ownership of a truck load of aid. Merhamet threatened legal action as delivery had been to the centre and



Humanitarian aid from the UNHCR and religious groups can reinforce division in Bosnia

not to the agency's warehouse.

It seemed odd that such good friends would fight so. After all, they would've given the aid to the same people anyway. After asking around, a less rosy picture of the activities of Merhamet and its Catholic equivalent, Caritas, emerged. These agencies give aid preferentially to Catholics and Muslims respectively.

For example, a Croatian family living on the outskirts of

Tuzla told me that their house had never been blessed by a priest. They were not on the Caritas register and they were rejected when they went to 'their' church for aid.

Having witnessed the desperate situation it is not difficult to imagine a long queue for the priest's services.

Merhamet is not to be outdone and Tuzla's first fundamentalist school has been

opened. This comes against a background of an increased Iranian presence in Bosnia. Both the Croatian regime and the Bosnian regime sanction it and seek growing tripartite relations.

This rapprochement culminated in what Bosnian President Izetbegovic called 'certain deals' of a military and economic nature being signed in Tehran.

Lessons on anti-fascism and east London

MANY teachers were active in different ways during the run-up to the May local elections in various parts of east London.

The Isle of Dogs in particular was the focus of much activity following British National Party (BNP) member Derek Beackon's election in Tower Hamlets' Millwall ward last October, by the narrow margin of seven votes over Labour.

Although media attention has recently been focused on the European elections, which fascists throughout the continent have contested, it is important to look at the implications of the May results, particularly on the Isle of Dogs.

National Front and BNP candidatures in the recent Newham and Barking by-elections are also worth noting. In all the target areas for the fascists, working-class voters are deeply disillusioned with the incumbent administrations.

The direct anti-Nazi cam-

This is an edited version of an article by PHIL EDWARDS, originally in 'Chalkface', journal of rank-and-file teachers in the NUT

aign suffered from a lack of clarity. Neither the Newham Monitoring Project nor the public services union Unison, which published a leaflet attacking the fascists, called for a Labour vote.

Whilst establishing a clear critique of the Labour Party is important, in the absence of independent working-class candidates they are the people to support against Beackon and Co.

Premature

The Labour party did regain the ground it lost in previous elections — ousting both Beackon and the Liberal Democrats. The celebrations are, however, premature.

In one ward the BNP came in only 64 votes behind the Tory candidate. Meanwhile the Tories' platform on housing was

openly racist — claiming as they did that illegal refugees were being housed before good British whites.

Whilst the most anti-racist groups celebrated victory, Shah Mohammed Ruhul Alam was lying seriously injured in hospital after being attacked, stabbed and almost killed by a ten-strong gang of fascists.

The BNP's vote on the Isle of Dogs stands at around 5,000 in all wards contested. Although defeated, Beackon's vote rose significantly from 1,480 to 2,041.

The Anti-Nazi League's response is to declare the threat dead and concentrate on ousting the Tories at national level.

They fail to address the still very real fascist threat. They also fail to notice that the last Labour administration in the area was ousted because of a

the famous watch to Nadir from Tory minister Michael Mates? Remember how he ended up in Turkish North Cyprus?

So far, from the £1.5 billion which Polly Peck was worth on the Stock Exchange, only £1.7 million has been recovered. However the recovery of that money has cost £33 million.

The administrators, Coopers & Lybrand and Touche Ross, have said they were sticking to

estimates that they would only recover between 3.7 and 12.5 pence per pound of debt. However, whether there will be anything left after the accountants have had their slice of the cake is questionable.

Is this a case for performance-related pay?

Smelling a rat?

job as chief executive of Laura Ashley after a boardroom row. He was paid £399,000 up to 29 January, under a two-year rolling contract.

He is now expected to get about £800,000 compensation for loss of job, plus £400,000 later this year as a pension. Human resources director of the same company since 1992, Denise Lincoln is also to leave and will be

City Lights

Inflation and wages

WHILE Tony Blair and the other would-be leaders of the Labour Party blather on about the need for a 'hi-tech, high wage economy', the employers are singing a quite different tune. They are calling for wage cuts to combat the renewed threat of inflation.

The sharp collapse in bond prices across Europe immediately following the declaration of the European election results underlined the growing fear of inflation on the part of the bankers and big business chiefs throughout the European Union.

Big institutional investors are specifically worried that in those countries where the government suffered big losses — such as Britain or France — there could be the temptation to pursue expansionary policies to court electoral popularity.

The German bond market was particularly badly hit last week after news of rising producer prices for the second month running.

In Britain a sharp acceleration in the money supply last month has ruled out hopes of interest rate cuts and made more likely a tightening of the money supply to try and check a new inflationary surge.

Banknotes and coins circulating in the economy (the so-called M0) rose by over 7 per cent during the past year, against the government target of 0-4 per cent. Over the last six months the supply has risen by 9.2 per cent. The Bank of England said it was disturbed by these trends.

Inflation fears have been further fuelled by the results of the latest survey from the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply showing that raw material shortages and capacity constraints are again driving up prices in the manufacturing sector.

The leaders of the Confederation of British Industry last week warned that greater productivity gains in rival European economies had wiped out the advantage for British exporters gained from the devaluation of sterling two years ago.

Devaluation, by lowering export prices and simultaneously raising import prices, normally gives an advantage to exporters.

It is clear that that the enforced exit from the European Monetary System and the devaluation of the pound brought only a short respite for Britain.

A survey by Trade Indemnity last week revealed that over eight out of ten exporters are struggling to compete in world markets.

CBI chief Howard Davies, a man much favoured in TUC circles, last week said:

'In spite of our sizeable devaluation in 1992, we can no longer say that across the board we have a significant cost advantage.'

'Our low wage costs are offset by — in Germany — higher labour productivity arising from greater investment.'

The bosses' answer was predictable. Sir Bryan Nicholson, CBI president, said in a speech to businessmen in the west Midlands:

'It is critical that we hold the line on labour costs. This is our clear responsibility as employers.'

More City scandal

SEVERAL of the City's top firms have come under fire in the long overdue report from the trade department (DTI) into

monwealth (BC), a financial-services group once rated by the market as worth £2 billion.

Among the firms heavily criticised for their role in BC's collapse are the merchant bank MN Rothschild; BZW, the investment arm of Barclays bank; and, Spicer and Pegler, the accountants now owned by Touche Ross.

The collapse of BC followed its purchase of Atlantic Computers in the 1980s.

Two of BC's directors are criticised for not warning the board about the parlous state of Atlantic's finances, which made BC's published accounts for 1988 and 1989 highly misleading.

When the black hole at the centre of Atlantic's finances was discovered, confidence in BC evaporated and it was put into administration along with Atlantic.

The DTI report says that from the start Atlantic's financial arrangements were highly suspect. The company, first floated in 1983 with the backing of Rothschild and Spicer, was in effect a scam from day one.

It seems that throughout its life, its accounts were highly suspect and that it may never have made a penny profit in its entire existence, even though it claimed profits of nearly £40 million in 1987 alone.

As usual the lawyers are having a highly profitable field day out of the writs now flying around. There is hardly a leading law firm in London not involved in a plethora of legal actions following BC's collapse.

The administrator, Ernst & Young, itself has issued a £1 billion writ against BZW alleging it gave negligent advice. Writs to the tune of a further £1 billion are out against six of BC's former directors.

World Cup

FROM the financial point of view the World Cup, which has just kicked off, bids fair to be the biggest turkey in sporting history. Despite huge sums spent on publicity most Americans appear to be unaware that the event is taking place.

According to pollsters of those that do know about the Cup, very few intend to watch the matches. Most Americans find football boring and 'slow scoring'. More important advertisers don't like it because, unlike basketball, baseball and American football, it has few 'natural breaks' where firms can plug their wares.

Despite this, leading companies such as Coca-Cola and McDonald's have paid up to \$19m each for the privilege of having their logos displayed on boards at all nine stadiums where the games are being staged. A further 300 companies have paid up to \$3 million each for the right to stamp the World Cup logo on their products.

It is these smaller companies that face big losses if the World Cup fails to take off.

'Recovery' hiccup

WHILE the government is desperately seeking to hype news of the feeble economic 'recovery', the CBI has come in with a report which shows that sales volumes in the year up to May were less than retailers expected.

A month ago the CBI reported that there were 22 per cent more retailers reporting increases than decreases. Now this figure has dropped to 12 per cent. One other thing looming is that it may be some time before the full impact of April's tax increase will be felt.

Despite this, the CBI declared in its report that the 'recovery' in the high street was

Performance-related pay needed for accountants?

IF YOU cast your mind back you will recall that Asil Nadir did a bunk when investigated for fraud over the failure of the Polly Peck group. Remember

KAZAKH MINERS FIGHT FOR RIGHT TO STRIKE

TWO THOUSAND miners in Kazakhstan, struggling for the right to strike, have appealed to trade union organisations throughout the world for financial help.

'From the history of the international working-class movement we know that trade union solidarity is an appreciable force', says the appeal signed by Gennady Ozorovsky, chair of the Independent Miners' Union of Kazakhstan.

'We trust in the victory of the struggle we have begun, a victory which your support will help to bring nearer.'

As reported in Workers Press last week, the strike that started on 18 May for better pay and working conditions was on 3 June declared illegal by a court — even though the union, unlike the administration of the Karagandacoal industrial association, had followed the labour disputes procedure to the letter.

Even before the judges' decision, mine managers began to take illegal measures against miners who had gone on strike.

BY FRED POTTER

missals. Making it clear that the IMU has not accepted the judges' decision that the strike is illegal, Gennady Ozorovsky's letter adds: 'We are preparing an appeal in the Kazakhstan Supreme Court. We are taking court action to demand the reinstatement of the dismissed members of the IMU.'

'In defiance of the republic's laws, the area administration has denied leaders of the IMU the opportunity to use the mass media to address the public, and members of the IMU itself, about the judges' decision and our response to it.'

The strikers are already in serious difficulty. Miners' earnings are on average \$30-40 per month — but they are not paid in full or on time.

Moreover the strikers will not be paid for the days they were on strike, between 18 May and 6 June. They have also lost bonuses totalling about half of their pay, and other additional benefits. Their family budgets

are seriously affected.

The IMU is asking trade union organisations for financial help for these men, and also for financial support for those whom the administration has illegally sacked for taking part in the strike.

The IMU asks to be informed about any decisions taken to give material support.

Donations should be sent to: Settlement Account 695960 at Kredsochbank of Karaganda, MFO 191801513, Index 470055, Kazakhstan.

Any document authorising the transfer of money should indicate that it is a 'Charitable Contribution for Authorised Activity' (in Russian *Blagotvoritel'nyy vnos na ustavnuyu deyatel'nost*), otherwise half the money will be removed for taxes.

Expressions of support in telegrams and faxes were very much appreciated by the strikers. You may directly send mes-

sages to the Kazakhstan IMU (fax number 7-3212-577293), and also, to urge a settlement of strikers demands and reinstatement of dismissed workers, to the president of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev (fax numbers 7-3272-626544 and 7-3272-637633) and the general director of Karagandacoal, Grigori Present (fax numbers 7-3212-580795 and 7-3212-592466).

Pressure

To bring pressure to bear on the government of Kazakhstan, for infringing the international laws covering the rights of trades unions and hired workers, the Kazakhstan IMU also suggests protests to the Administrative Council of the International Labour Office (CH-1211, Geneva 22, Switzerland).

Workers Press would also appreciate being informed of any expressions of solidarity at fax number 071-582 8834.

An appeal we must support

Leading WRP member and former north-east miner Dave Temple writes:

MINERS in Kazakhstan, in the former USSR, are in a bitter dispute over wages and conditions.

Several British trade union organisations sent messages of support to the Kazakh miners and in response we received the letter reported on this page.

This correspondence has come to me because I travelled to the mining town of Pavlograd, Ukraine, in 1991, as a representative of the National Union of Mineworkers (North East Area), to express support for the Soviet miners.

I ask all workers' organisations to respond to our Kazakh comrades' appeal.

Please contact me (c/o Trade Union Printing Services, 30 Lime Street, Newcastle) if you need more information.

Dismissed

At the Malkudukskaya mine 15 members of the IMU were dismissed; these dismissals were in breach of legislation and were carried out before the judges' ruling that the strike was illegal. At the Karagandinskaya mine four IMU members were dismissed.

At many other mines, management verbally threatened to sack strikers. So it is quite likely that there will be further dis-

Hi-tech boost to BiH army

A SURPRISE addition to the Bosnia Third Army Corps has come with the apparent defection of two Russian officers piloting a Russian Mi17 helicopter.

The helicopter, which landed in Zenica in Bosnian-controlled territory, is the most advanced piece of military hardware the Bosnian army now has.

The defection from Serb lines has raised a number of questions. The helicopter came in painted in civilian colours with the Serb red, blue and white emblem painted near the tail rotor.

'The Times' (14 June) reported: 'A Bosnian military policeman who had seen the pilots afterwards said that at first the Mi17 had Russian markings, but they had since been sprayed out.'

Role

So what was the role of the Russian pilots in the Serb forces?

While the Third Corps command denied all knowledge of the arrival of the helicopter and the Russian pilots, one officer remarked: 'They are honourable men, the pilots, and have been accepted as friends. We

need more like them. They will not stay with us as mercenaries and it does not matter what they did before. It is the technology we need.'

The helicopter has been flown round Zenica on a number of occasions since Wednesday 8 June. It has two bullet impacts on its fuselage.

Weapons

Local sources suggest the helicopter may have been carrying more people than the pilots. Some refer to spare parts for other Bosnian Mi8 helicopters and other weapons.

Insiders say the helicopter left Serb Chetnik-held Mount Vlasica, west of Travnik. It spent a considerable amount of time circling Zenica before landing, possibly negotiating terms. The Bosnian government has remained silent on the defection.

'The Times' reports one Bosnian officer as saying, after the defection: 'If someone attacks you with a hammer, then who is your aggressor, the man or the hammer? The Serbs are a hammer for us. Maybe we don't have such a problem with the Russians. Maybe it is the West who is our real enemy.'



The great powers refuse to allow refugees to return home Bosnia ceasefire broken

THE one-month ceasefire in Bosnia, agreed at Geneva on 8 June, was broken when Serb Chetnik guns fired on Brcko.

Serb Chetnik leaders had called for a six-month ceasefire in order to consolidate their control over 70 per cent of Bosnia. With such terms it is no surprise it was rejected by the Bosnian leadership.

The so-called 'contact group', of US, Russian and European Union foreign ministers, met in Istanbul to draw up a map carving up Bosnia — 51 per cent for the Bosnia/Croatian federation and 49 per cent for the Chetniks. Moscow pressed for the lifting of sanctions on Serbia at the meeting.

The US was considering 'punitive action against the warring factions' if the deal was rejected. This included lifting sanctions on Serbia if the Bosnian leadership refused to sign. Bosnian calls for 'grey zones'

— areas currently ethnically cleansed where expelled Bosnian and Croats could return to their homes — were rejected by the 'contact group'.

The United Nations was to step up its 'monitoring' with the intention of establishing 'better liaison with Bosnian Serb forces in particular'.

The 'contact group' wanted military observers to get into hitherto inaccessible areas — especially in northern central Bosnia (Brcko) where the UN has none.

At Bihac, not covered by the ceasefire, the Bosnian army had recaptured Krakace and other villages from the forces of the black-marketeer Fikret Abdic who broke away from Bosnia to establish his own relations with the Serb forces.

Abdic became a millionaire with the help of French UN troops who ferried in his goods in UN trucks.

From Namibia to South Africa

FIFTY people in Cape Town came to hear about the situation in Namibia following the elections that led to that country's so-called independence but which have not resulted in better conditions for working-class people and rural workers.

The meeting, organised by the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International (South Africa), was addressed by Hewat Beukes, Namibian member of the Workers International's executive committee.

Beukes drew the lessons of the experience of Namibian 'independence' for the working people of South Africa and

spoke of the pressing need to build a revolutionary party of the working class in southern Africa. The audience came from a wide range of ages and social background.

South Africa election fund

AS REPORTED in the last few weeks we have been asked to continue the fund started when our comrades in the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International (South Africa) stood in provincial elections in Natal and the Western

Cape. In all they received more than 5,000 votes.

One letter we have received from a comrade in Durban says:

'Thanks for your generous and moral support during and after the elections.'

'Without your support we couldn't get where we are now in Durban. Several active new comrades have come forward to join our organisation. That is very challenging to us. We need to meet these challenges.'

'In order to meet this crucial task we still appeal to you to give us more support until we become self-sufficient mate-

rially. More specifically we need to obtain some equipment and operating material for the office. In particular, we require desks, chairs, filing cabinets, a computer and printer and/or a word-processor, a fax machine and a photocopier.'

'We have conducted a survey of what it would cost to furnish the office with used equipment — we need at least R2,000 to get the office operational!'

With an appeal like that, do we need to say more?

Please rush your money to us payable to the 'Workers International', PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

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