



STOP BOSNIA BETRAYAL

THOUSANDS of Bosnians are trapped under fire in the city of Bihac, as another United Nations 'safe area' is turned into a death camp.

While the British and US imperialists tried to score points against each other this week, two things were clear:

■ Bosnia has been betrayed by those in whom it put its trust — the UN and the Western powers. Their main object has been to disarm the Bosnians and carve up the country; and

■ Behind the Serb Chetniks stand the British, French and Russian governments.

The Bush administration wanted to keep Yugoslavia intact, suppressing news of Serb concentration camps. Former secretary of state Henry Kissinger says Bosnia should never have been born. The Clinton administration dithers, unhappy at its European allies' policies, but afraid to seriously challenge them.

Yet the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina was internationally recognised two years ago. The Bosnian people voted overwhelmingly to secede from a Yugoslav federation dominated by Serb nationalists.

Armed

But the Yugoslav National Army armed the Chetniks and fascists, and began a barbaric onslaught on Bosnia's civilians.

Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital, has been continually under siege; the Chetniks have raped and pillaged, rounding up non-Serbs or political opponents, burning and destroying whatever they could not steal. For a time, the Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) army found itself between two fires, as Croat nationalists attacked from the rear.

The Western media shed crocodile tears, and politicians tell lies, about this being a 'centuries-old blood-feud' or 'civil war'. Meanwhile NATO's Adriatic fleet has enforced an arms embargo against Bosnia.

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd said that lifting the embargo would only create a 'level killing field'. The Bosnian government accepted the UN Protection Force, and agreed to 'peace' proposals that would leave the Chetniks holding great swathes of Bosnian territory.

Radovan Karadzic's Bosnian-Serb 'government' said this wasn't enough. The London 'contact group' started working on fresh concessions. The French government tried to broker a new agreement between Serbia and Croatia, at Bosnian expense. When the BiH army tried to break the stranglehold on Sarajevo, the UN military commander, Britain's General Rose, threatened the Bosnians with air strikes. Some 'protection force'!

When the Chetniks attacked relief convoys, UN forces stood by and watched.

While the so-called 'Bosnian Serbs' and 'Croatian Serbs' can use aircraft with napalm and cluster-bombs, Bosnia's airports remain under UN occupation and closed to Bosnians, even for civil use.

The NATO air raid on the Serb forces' Udbina airfield did not cause severe damage, according to Croat military sources. Holes were made in the runway which could take up to three days to fix. No planes were damaged.

Worried

NATO was worried the Croats might take action on the side of Bosnia. General Rose refused to order strikes against Serb artillery which was shelling Bihac.

French, Russian and British leaders had talks in Paris on 18 November to form a common front against any US move to help Bosnia. Inspired stories about mysterious CIA missions and non-existent military airfields duly appeared.

An alleged 'secret' meeting

between US and Bosnian officials turned out to have been an open conference, attended by General Rose among others!

'If we start to favour one side or another, it will turn into an international disaster because it will lead to a greater regional war,' said a senior French official.

This contrasts with the French government's backing the former regime in Rwanda, and the reactionary Islamic regime in Sudan, which is suppressing rebels. Behind the rhetoric lies imperialist *realpolitik*, aimed at securing interests.

Rivals

Still rivals in Africa, the British and French governments have nevertheless moved to form a new political-military bloc in Europe. John Major denied that his government hoped to drive a wedge between France and Germany. Yet the 'Sunday Telegraph', on 21 November, recalled the 'entente' established between Britain, France and Russia during the period from 1892.

This culminated when the shots were fired in Sarajevo that began World War I. Are the British and French ruling classes using Russia as the 'bad cop' in the Balkans, and using the Balkans to make Russia their servant?

Bosnia has the right to take arms from wherever it can, and to use any division among the imperialists to its advantage. If we want to stop a new imperialist war, we must support Bosnia!

The Bosnian people have only one real ally, the international working class. But while the Bosnian workers are shedding their blood to resist fascism and ethnic cleansing, and Workers Aid for Bosnia is rendering what assistance it can, the working-class movement is held back by its leaders.

The Labour and trade union leaders are backing the British imperialists and their allies, including the Chetniks. We must mobilise against them now.



Bosnian Muslim and Croatian forces: fighting Chetniks and UN and Western betrayal

Budget hits poorest

THIS week the budget continued the Tories' remorseless attack against working-class families and the poorest sections of the population, while the Labour leaders made clear their intention to dump Clause Four of the party's constitution.

■ The budget strikes further blows at the unemployed and those on income support. Their housing benefit will in future be frozen.

■ Many middle-class people will also be hit. For those who lose their jobs, the state will now only cover interest payments on mortgages for three months. Individuals will have to take out private insurance to cover themselves when they are unable to keep up their mortgage repayments.

■ Increased duty on petrol

will mean across-the-board price increases for millions.

■ Government spending is to be slashed again, meaning a rundown of already depleted health and other social services

■ The increased VAT on fuel to 17.5 per cent will hit the most hard-pressed. The 'compensation' to be paid to pensioners will nowhere near cover these additional burdens.

These attacks are launched by a government in ruins. It is ridiculed daily in the Tory press. The Conservative Party is split down the middle on Europe, and after the withdrawal of the whip from nine Tory MPs, it no longer has a majority in the Commons.

Also during this week, the Labour Party leadership openly committed itself to scrapping

nationalisation and to accept the 'market economy'.

■ The Times' last week carried the leak of a 17-page document drawn up by Labour Party leader Tony Blair and his deputy John Prescott. The document, approved by senior shadow cabinet members and a number of trade union leaders, makes clear that:

■ There will be no renationalisation of the industries privatised under the Tory government.

■ Empty phrases about 'social justice', 'equality', and 'democracy' replace any commitment to Clause Four.

This gives added urgency to the fight against the scrapping of Clause Four which is now developing in the labour movement.

Workers Aid for Bosnia Bazaar

Saturday 10 December
2pm, Bryant Street,
Community Centre, London E15

Items required are: cakes or other items for the homemade stall, toys, books and records, prizes for the tombola, bric-a-brac, plants, good jumble, small toys for the lucky dip.

Contact: Jill Oxley on 081-555 7045.

Workers Press

North-south divide shakes EU

IT IS not just the 'core countries' of the European Union — those centred around Germany — that are experiencing serious economic and political difficulties. The crisis in Europe is also reflected in the Tory Party, which threatens to be torn apart.

And the crisis in Europe is rapidly engulfing the less-developed countries in the south of the continent, as the 'Financial Times' pointed out in an editorial last week (28 November).

The message in this leading organ of big business is so clear that we can almost let it speak for itself:

'Action to cope with the south's economic challenges has been half-hearted or curbed by political difficulties, or both. This is underlined by developments as diverse as the problems dogging Italy's 1995 budget plans, Spain's rejection of advice on structural reform from the International Monetary Fund, and the delay to Greece's privatisation programme.' And the 'FT' editorial continues:

'These are matters of concern for the whole EU. A growing gap in economic performance between north and south would greatly strain the EU's cohesion. It would further impair the EU's ability to help resolve the troubles on its Mediterranean fringes, increasing the chances that north African instability could spill over to Europe.'

'In addition, by undermining necessary efforts to restructure budgetary and farm support arrangements, a widening north-south gap would upset the EU's planned enlargement to eastern and central Europe.'

Many countries in southern Europe now have severe budget deficits, with government debt in both Greece and Italy equivalent to more than 120 per cent of gross domestic product. Investment by the multinationals is falling in southern Europe, with a consequent dropping off of economic growth and a rise in unemployment.

'In these circumstances, governments seeking a return to sustained growth are walking a tight-rope,' says the 'FT'. 'The south's structural weaknesses cannot be overcome without painful measures, particularly in reforming labour markets and welfare systems. The implementation of such corrective action leads to political difficulties, further lowering investor confidence.'

'Yet without such restructuring, the task of adjustment will become still more difficult. If growth migrates permanently from the south, the EU is unlikely to be robust enough to enlarge itself to the east.'

Capitalist plunder

TWO directors of a privatised Glasgow docks company, Clydeport, have made windfall profits of nearly £5 million out of their shareholdings.

Clydeport was privatised in 1992 in a £26 million staff buy-out. Executive chairman John Mather and managing director David Hunt saw their £75,000 shareholdings soar to nearly £5 million when they applied for admission to the stock market.

Even these figures are small beer compared with the millions and millions the City sharks have made out of the privatisation programme. Capitalism is less and less concerned with producing anything to satisfy human needs. It is involved ever more with plundering state assets.

This is the parasitism of a decadent system that condemns millions to starvation, unemployment and homelessness throughout the world.

Labour spokesman Brian Wilson said: 'It is another example of the enrichment of a very few at the expense of the whole community.'

This is not just empty talk. It is hypocrisy, coming as it does from a man who is part of the leadership of a party that has rejected all demands that the industries flogged off by the Tories at knock-down prices be renationalised.

By their refusal to take back into common ownership such industries the Labour leaders show they are tied hand and foot to this rotten system.

It makes more urgent than ever the need to build up the fight in defence of Clause Four throughout

Letters

Clause Four and other planets

IN REPLY to Alan Clark's criticism (19 November) of my earlier letter, nowhere did I suggest that we should not discuss and persuade Labour Party members to break with social democracy and reformism. We have all been doing this for years and no doubt will continue to do so. What I did say was that we had failed in this task.

Nowhere in my letter did I say that we should tell workers that we want the Labour Party to turn against them. I did say that the Labour leaders had distanced themselves from the working class and the unions.

Nowhere in my letter did I say we should be grateful that the working class is saddled with Blair and his colleagues, just so that we can gloat and say: 'I told you so.' Nor did I imply it. I did say that Blair and his colleagues were doing the job that we have been unable to do and we should be grateful for that.

I do accept the criticism in Norman Harding's letter (19 November) on the question of a new name for the Labour Party. Perhaps it was a flippant remark and we are discussing serious questions. But, yes Norman, I am serious about the Labour Party.

We should remember it is not just Labour's national leadership which has betrayed the

working class. For 13 years local authorities from Land's End to John O'Groats have carried out Tory cuts, sometimes enthusiastically. Some have tried to break the unions trying to defend services and fight for jobs. There have only been a few notable exceptions.

Any Labour Party member who shows militancy is expelled. Whole constituency parties have been expelled. Even MPs have not been immune to expulsion. In a speech two weeks ago, Tony Blair stated: 'There will be no return to pre-1980s politics.' This is a very important statement and is a continuation of Kinnock's changes in the Labour Party.

Over all these years no major campaign has been waged against either the Kinnock or the Blair leadership. There have been a few dissenting voices at the party conference, but no real challenge to the role of the leadership.

I therefore find it incredible that the Workers Press editorial on 19 November can say that 'the implementation of Clause Four, under present conditions, would strike a powerful blow against the ruling class'.

I must be living on another planet for I see no evidence anywhere of any group, or individuals, to carry it out.

For me the question of the Labour Party constitution is not important. Clause Four has been there for generations. When the left was at its most influential after World War II and we had Labour governments, no mention was made of Clause Four.

The WRP is a small party doing extremely important work in South Africa, Namibia, Bosnia, and the former Soviet Union. Of course we must unite and fight and discuss and persuade Labour Party members and others on the best way forward for the working class. But we must not be so sensitive on the question of the Labour Party. Its members will have to face up to what has happened to their party.

The question is for me still valid: has the nature of the Labour Party changed? Does it represent the interests of the working class? If it has, and it does not, what should our attitude be?

Nick Brown
Newcastle

Dead-end allies on renationalisation

NORMAN HARDING (Letters, 19 November) asks what response Marxists can give young people appalled by the move by the Labour leadership to ditch Clause Four of the party's constitution.

Why not try socialist education? Young people can be drawn into discussions on the anti-Bolshevik nature of the clause, the defeat of the working class by social democracy and Stalinism, and the nature of a socialist society world-wide.

He then asks what Marxists

can do with union resolutions on the clause. Why not try amending them? 'Common ownership' can be deleted and replaced by wordings opposing socialism to nationalism.

Direct expropriation of the means of production by the self-activity of the proletariat, the abolition of the wages system, and the abolition of class society world-wide are ideas that will be unacceptable to those Stalinists and social democrats now mobilising around the clause.

The controversy over the clause enables Marxists to intervene on the side of socialists against social democrats and Stalinists.

The latter subscribe to nationalisation in order to maintain their parasitic bureaucratic control over workers.

Nationalisation is now historically discredited. The former USSR was 'state ownership of the means of production'. The nationalised industries and the welfare state prior to the Tories coming to power were 'public ownership'. Both oppressed workers. Neither was socialist.

Those Marxists who campaign for renationalisation will soon find themselves allied with self-interested bureaucrats whose politics are responsible for the deaths of millions of workers.

In Scotland they will find themselves allied to nationalists who think that renationalisation is more likely in an independent Scotland than in the UK.

Both alliances are dead ends. Ditch or confront them.

Paul B. Smith
Govan, Glasgow

More bus safety questions

BY ROY THOMAS

FOLLOWING the news of the falling safety standards on vehicles used by South London Buses (Workers Press, 12 November), the sacking of the managing and engineering directors, and the sideways 'promotion' of the company

chairman comes the demand for a public inquiry into unsafe buses in west London.

Over 160 bus drivers at the Shepherds Bush garage have signed a petition asking two Labour MPs, Glenda Jackson and Clive Soley, to demand the inquiry.

The drivers say that following the fitting of new Cummins engines in the 30-year-old

Routemaster buses there has been excessive noise, vibration and exhaust fumes in their cabs. The drivers also complain of steering and brake problems with the Routemasters.

Drivers were sacked last year for appearing on television and making the complaints public; others have been disciplined for being unwilling to drive buses they sus-

pected of being unsafe or unfit.

Shepherds Bush garage is one of London United Bus Company's garages. The company was recently sold to former London Transport managers, who say they have corrected all the problems caused by the new engines.

If that was the case you would expect them to welcome a public inquiry to clear their name. But after the exposure of the poor mechanical standards of LT buses in south London, that is by no means certain.

COMING SOON

SATURDAY 3 DECEMBER Close Campsfield! Stop jailing refugees! Demonstration at Harmondsworth prison 12noon-1.30pm. March to Southall. Evening rally, 7pm Dominion Centre, the Green.

SUNDAY 4 DECEMBER Join Campsfield march into London. 10.30am Earls Court tube, via Kings Rd and Victoria, to Whitehall, 1pm.

MONDAY 5 DECEMBER Lambeth Unemployed Centre Open Day, with advice sessions, etc., food and entertainment for children. From 12 noon.

MONDAY 5 DECEMBER East Timor under Indonesian occupation. Talk by Elizabeth Exposito. British

Coalition for East Timor, 7pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., London WC1 (near Holborn tube).

TUESDAY 6 DECEMBER TUC lobby of parliament, against great pensions robbery. Demand pensions for all at 60! Assemble 2.30pm, St Stephen's entrance, House of Commons, Westminster.

THURSDAY 8 DECEMBER Violating refugees' rights now threatens your rights tomorrow. Close Haslar holding centre, Gosport. Public meeting 7.30pm, New Road Centre, Balliol Road, Portsmouth. Ken Fero (Migrant Media), Glyn Ford MEP, Charles Kukwikila (support Zaire refugees), Claud Moraes (JCWI).

SATURDAY 10 DECEMBER Workers Aid for Bosnia Bazaar, 2pm Bryant Street Community Centre, Stratford, London E15. Get your bargains and support the people of Bosnia!

THURSDAY 15 DECEMBER 'We make the emblems for Rolls-Royce cars costing £50,000. They pay us £1.50 an hour.' Banner Theatre presents the voices of Britain's low-paid, super-exploited workers in 'Sweat Shop', entertainment for a change, brought to you by South-west trades council. Kennington Enterprise Centre, 42 Braganza Street, London SE17. 6.45pm for 7.30pm, bar open 7-11.30pm.

Advance Notice:
SATURDAY 28 JANUARY 1995

For the right to belong to a trade union!

GCHQ Cheltenham
Anniversary protest march and rally. Contact GCHQ Trade Unions, 22 Clarence Street, Cheltenham, Glos. Tel: Cheltenham (0242) 570958. Fax: Cheltenham (0242) 572975.

SATURDAY 4 FEBRUARY 1995
National Assembly Against Racism 10am-5pm, York Hall, Old Ford Road, London E2 (Bethnal Green tube). John Monks (TUC), Diane Abbott MP, Ken Livingstone MP, Kumar Murshid (Tower Hamlets Anti-Racist Committee). Workshops, £10 registered delegates, £7/£4 individuals. Details Tower Hamlets Anti-Racist Committee (THARC), 22 Hanbury St, E1.

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CHRISTMAS comes but once a year, and the following week is New Year. That is the opportunity for you and your organisation to put your New Year's greeting in the Saturday 31 December edition of Workers Press.

It's your organisation's opportunity to get your message to activists — what you hope to see happen in the New Year, and what your policies and aims will be in 1995. The closing date for us to receive your greeting for the New Year issue is Friday 16 December.

We need to know the text of your message and receive any artwork for logos, etc., by that date.

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Police assault on black activist

POLICE and immigration officials in south London viciously attacked a black political activist last weekend. Yomi Igbo, a 48-year-old Nigerian, was at home in Clapham when eight state thugs hammered on his front door and threatened to kick it down if it was not opened immediately.

They accused him of being an illegal immigrant and a number of them brutally grabbed him and forced handcuffs on him. Yomi says he was pounded in the stomach and choked. There are swellings on his neck and body which have needed medical treatment.

As the police ransacked two bedrooms they threatened two of his children, aged 13 and 15, with their batons. The police eventually found a passport, and Yomi says that £500 and some Nigerian money in it is

missing. On the advice of his solicitor, he has made an official protest to the Police Complaints Authority about the missing money.

Yomi was continually kicked and punched as he was bundled to a waiting police van. He was then told that the charge against him had been changed to assaulting a police officer.

He was locked up in a cell in Kennington police station for over three hours and was sub-

jected to vile racist abuse, being called a 'black bastard' and 'why don't you go back home in a banana boat'.

This assault is a clear warning to all those black people who protest and organise against the British state terror against refugees and immigrants.

Under the pretext that Yomi was an illegal immigrant, the state sent its armed agents to rough him up. They knew it was a fraudulent charge from the start. He has been a well-known activist in the Lambeth area for many years, serving as a Labour councillor from 1986 until this year.

Pretended

Since coming to Britain in the late 1950s, Yomi has been in constant employment, has a national insurance number, owns

his own house, and even pays his council tax. Yet the police pretended he wasn't a legal citizen!

His real crime in the eyes of the state was to publicly denounce the role of the police in the killing of Joseph Nnalue, a Nigerian who recently fell to his death from his home in Clapham as he tried to escape the harassment of police and immigration officers.

After he fell Joseph Nnalue tried to get up, but a policeman sat on him to prevent this and then delayed the calling of an ambulance, which might have saved his life. Despite knowing that Nnalue had slipped, the police said nothing to counter the media suggestion that it was a suicide.

Yomi Igbo was a witness to these police actions and gave press statements condemning them. He has also been involved

in the setting up of a campaign calling for amnesty for all refugees and unregistered migrants in Britain.

This was launched on 17 November at a public meeting organised by 16 groups, mainly from the black community, and opened by Pauline Watson, the mayor of Lambeth.

Raid

The main speakers were Theodora Matthew (sister of Kwanele Sizibe, who also fell to her death during an immigration raid), Mike Rahaman (Chair of the National Union of Refugee Organisations), and Julie Southey (African Refugees and Migrants Monitoring Project).

The meeting was unanimous in declaring that the increased intimidation and harassment of

black people that has produced the pattern of deaths of refugees could only be defeated in a mass political campaign. The meeting called for:

■ The establishment of a quick response network to deal with emergency cases of arrest and deportation;

■ Intensification of the campaign for the repeal of the racist Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act, and a stop to the state terrorism associated with its implementation.

■ Linking up with a campaign against the Criminal Justice Act.

■ A march to Downing Street in May 1995 to protest against British state terrorism on immigrants and the connivance of the British government in selling arms to prop up repressive regimes that cause black people to flee their countries.

Bosnia: 'why we should fight for unity'

STUDENTS at Leicester university will discuss the Workers Aid for Bosnia campaign on 12 December. One student who will be especially interested in the success of the meeting is 20-year-old Emina Atic, a second year student from Tuzla in Bosnia.

'People tend to ask "are you a Bosnian Muslim, Bosnian Serb or Bosnian Croat,"' says Emina. 'My answer to this is that I am none of these. I am a Bosnian. My best friend is from a "mixed marriage", so how could she answer this question?'

'I know that most young people in Bosnia would agree with me. The only way in which I can relate to these sub-divisions is to look at Tuzla. Here there is a city where no single national party won the elections in March 1992, and the stated view of the Tuzla people is for unity.'

'It is due to this unity of the people that the infrastructure of Tuzla has held together better than any other part of Bosnia. No one is discriminated against in Tuzla, although we are united against external aggression.'

Emina came to Britain in 1992, at the beginning of the war. Her family — mother, father, sister and grandparents — is still in Tuzla.

'People in other countries should support Tuzla and help it stay united because we can see from ex-Yugoslavia that any country can break up unless an active fight for unity is put up, and people respect each other's rights,' she says.

Broken

'In ex-Yugoslavia we have seen the country disintegrate, with broken homes and broken families, not to mention the barbarity of rape, torture and genocide.'

'A whole generation is growing up brutalised and if we don't support the people who are fighting against this, we will not be able to fight it in any country.'

'I have had to watch my 14-year-old sister grow up with hatred in her heart. She has not been allowed to be a youth and future generations world-wide will pay for the tens of thousands of youths who are like this.'

Emina thinks Workers Aid for Bosnia has a wider significance.



Workers Aid's significance is beyond aid, to unity and solidarity

Photo: Anthony Myers

'I first heard about Workers Aid for Bosnia through its first convoy, when a massive effort was made to get food through to Tuzla — just when it was most needed,' she says. 'As I got involved I realised that it was more than just a charity issue.'

'Although food and other material support is required, it is also important to build an

understanding in all countries of why we should fight for unity and solidarity.'

Emina points out that the Tuzla miners were well aware of these issues in 1984, when the British miners were on strike. Then, miners in Tuzla gave a day's pay each to Britain's miners, for every month of the strike.

'I hope that we have a good meeting on 12 December,' says Emina, 'and that we at Leicester university can follow the example of other universities who have set up big branches of Workers Aid.'

Taken from an interview in the current issue of 'Ripple', the student union paper at the University of Leicester.



Getting the placards together at the Leeds march

Leeds marches against fascism

BY SETH DRYSDALE

A RECENT rise in fascist and racist attacks in Leeds sparked last weekend's protest march through the city by 3,000 trades unionists and members of community and anti-racist groups.

The attacks include Nazi terror group C-18's on the homes of local socialists and trades council members.

The march was followed by a well-attended rally outside the City Art Gallery. Ex-soldier Maurice Beckman described

how in 1945 he and his fellow Jewish ex-servicemen formed the 43 Group to confront and physically smash the resurgent fascist movement.

Dan, from Youth Against Racism in Europe, spoke of the spread of racism 'from fascist ministers being elected in Italy, to asylum-seekers' hostels being burnt down in Germany, and the ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia'.

He criticised the 'mainstream political parties' for failing to resolve the conditions of unemployment and poverty that give rise to fascism.

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Inside left

Local internationalism

IN November 1936, Battersea trades council in south-west London set up a sub-committee 'which would consider ways of helping Spain', at the time of the civil war. Over 1,000 people had already attended a public meeting at the town hall where Aneurin Bevan warned that 'if Madrid fell to fascism, it would be Paris next, and then London'.

During Aid Spain week, 6-13 December 1936, members of the local Labour League of Youth and the Young Communist League (YCL) wheeled barrows around the streets collecting tinned milk, sugar and food. Of the 93 tonnes of food sent on the Spanish Youth Food Ship, a tonne came from Battersea.

Mike Squires's recent booklet, *The Aid to Spain Movement in Battersea 1936-1939* (Elmfield, £4.50), points to earlier internationalism in the borough: workers opposed the Boer war, and the borough council sent greetings to the 1905 Russian Revolution. Battersea elected West Indian-born John Archer as councillor and mayor, and Indian Shapurji Saklatvala as Labour MP, then Communist.

Mike Squires notes there was some hostility towards the Communist Party in the Battersea labour movement in the 1930s, although he doesn't examine the possible reasons, concentrating on the party's more heroic aspect.

DAVID GUEST, son of Labour MP Hayden Guest, came down from Cambridge in 1933, and established a left-wing bookshop on Lavender Hill. As shopworkers' union delegate on the trades council he moved the resolution on Spain, seconded by Tom Oldershaw of the woodworkers' union. In December 1936, Guest urged sending a fully equipped ambulance to Spain.

The cost of this was £750. Early in 1937, only £100 had been raised. Guest went ahead with arrangements, and the ambulance was sent, with a plaque inscribed: 'From the Workers of Battersea to the Defenders of Democracy in Spain.' Guest was reprimanded by the committee.

A huge placard over Guest's bookshop showed the route to Madrid, saying 'Battersea to Spain, 750 miles, £750'. The North Battersea Women's Co-op Guild held a bazaar and cabaret, opened by Saklatvala's widow. But it wasn't until August 1938 that the trades council had passed its target.

DAVID GUEST was killed in action in Spain in July 1938. If some details of fundraising for Spain sound familiar to comrades active in Workers Aid for Bosnia, this extract from Guest's 'Open Letter to the Youth of All Countries' should also provoke thought:

'In this struggle we have lost many of the finest of our comrades, the best representatives of the youth of all countries. They have been sacrificed to the murderous fascist war machine because the governments of democratic countries have denied to the Spanish Republic the right to purchase arms for its self-defence.

'We ask the youth of the democratic countries this question. How long are you going to permit your governments to carry through this infamous betrayal of democracy, to be the accomplices of Hitler and Mussolini in this murder? Can you be satisfied that you are doing all that is possible to change this policy?'

Accused by a local paper of helping 'to prolong this suicidal struggle in Spain', Battersea's Labour Party and trades council replied that the aid sent 'had been used for saving lives'; but that it fully supported the Spanish republic's right to acquire arms.

Charlie Pottins

The struggle for

SACP's 'eight introductory theses'

The South African Communist Party's 'eight introductory theses' to the socialist conference

Thesis 1. Millions of South Africans, workers, youth, women, rural poor, and intellectuals look to socialism as a solution to their problems. This mass groundswell support for socialism springs from years of direct experience of the depredations of capitalism that we, South Africans, have had firsthand. We have also witnessed the complicity of capitalism in colonialism, racial oppression, patriarchy and the destruction of the environment.

Thesis 2. The mass support for socialism in South Africa is a tribute to the rich traditions of socialistic organisation, theory and struggle in our country. Today there are many things that unite socialists in South Africa. We are drawn together by, amongst other things:

- Our common conviction to socialism itself. At the very least, we all understand socialism to mean a broad social ownership and control of the economy, within the context of a society based on meeting social needs, not private profits;

- Our common conviction that capitalism lies at the root of the deep crisis that afflicts our country, our continent and the world;

- Our commitment to the leading role of the working class in the struggle for socialism, democracy and peace;

- Our belief that social emancipation is essentially the self-emancipation of the oppressed majority;

- Our internationalism, that is, our conviction that the struggle against oppression and exploitation in South Africa is intimately linked

to common struggles throughout the world;

- Our conviction that formal representative democracy, an important victory in our country, is only one aspect of democracy and that all power must be democratised;

- Our principled commitment to combat all forms of narrow nationalism, chauvinism, ethnicity and sexism;

- Our commitment to the demilitarisation of our country, our region and the world;

- Our concern at the way in which an economy premised on private profits is wreaking untold havoc on the environment.

These are just some of the broad common commitments that unite us.

Thesis 3. Nevertheless, despite the mass popularity of our cause, despite our own rich traditions and many shared convictions, socialist currents and organisations in our country have not been free of tendencies towards mutual intolerance, dogmatism and sectarianism.

We believe that it is absolutely essential that we discuss and debate together, that we exchange information and knowledge, that we learn from each other, and that we seek, where possible, to consolidate and enrich common perspectives, platforms and projects.

Thesis 4. However long it may take to consolidate socialism in South Africa, we all share a common conviction that socialist theory, morality, organisation and struggle must also have an immediate practical relevance.

It is for this reason that we are determined not just to confine ourselves to an absolutely neces-

Below we reprint on these pages two documents submitted to the recent 'Socialist conference for reconstruction and development' held in Johannesburg on the weekend of the 5-6 November. Called by the Congress of South African Trade Unions, it was originally intended by its proposer — the metalworkers' union, NUMSA — to be a conference on socialism. But its purpose was changed by the organising committee in the hope that the discussion would be diverted to one centred on the government's

reconstruction which is a capitalist... The two documents by the South African... the response to the International... International (S... exposes the pro... and its efforts... International, f... international c... Stalinism.)

sary and ongoing critique of capitalism. As socialists we commit ourselves to elaborating and struggling for concrete programmes of transformation that begin to address the crisis into which capitalism and racial oppression have plunged our country.

Thesis 5. It is for this reason that we have called this conference a socialist conference for reconstruction and development. Since the April elections a wide range of social forces have tried to wear the mantle of 'reconstruction and development'. Particularly grotesque have been various attempts by neo-liberals, neo-monetarist forces, both locally and internationally, to project themselves as the cutting edge of South African reconstruction and development.

We believe that it is only a socialist perspective that can ensure the fullest consolidation of democracy, of reconstruction, of sustainable development directed to the meeting of social needs. The title of our conference, however, does not imply that all of us accept the specific 'reconstruction and development programme' of the African National Congress-led alliance.

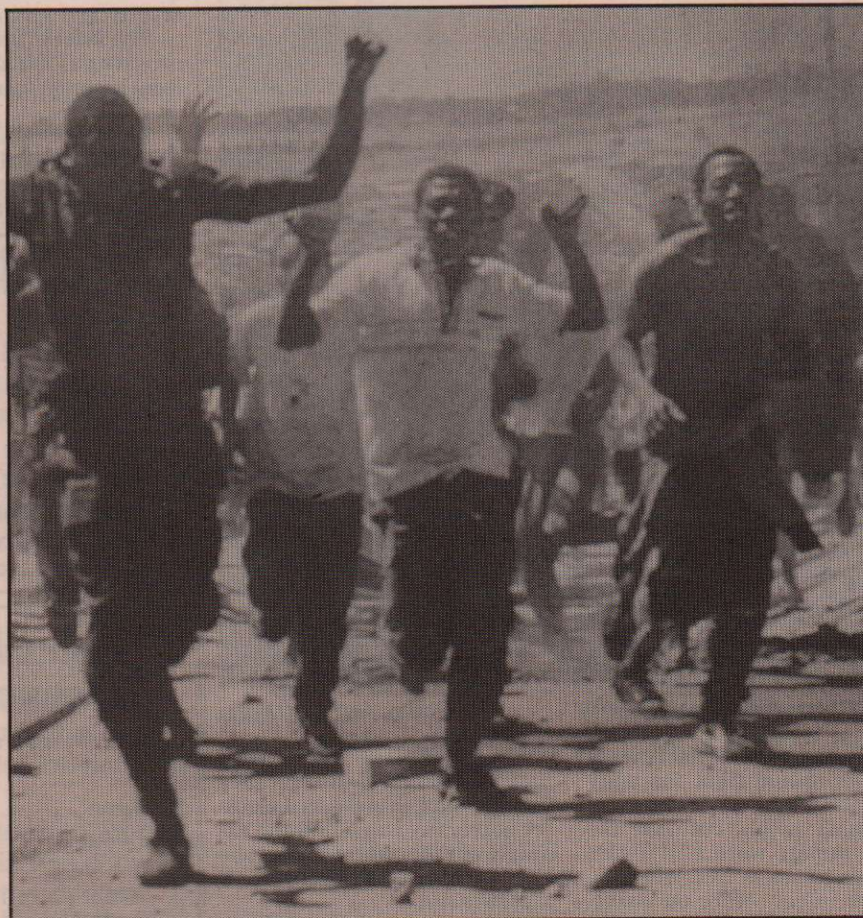
Thesis 6. The eyes of many thousands of South Africans are on this conference. Internationally, a very wide range of socialist and progressive forces is also following our proceedings. The visible and ongoing mass support for socialism in our country inspires positive widespread expectations. We are very mindful of the responsibilities imposed on us by these expectations.

We harbour no illusions about the difficulties we confront, nor about the limitations of a single conference. We are determined, however, to ensure that our meeting becomes an important step in the much broader process towards building socialism in our country, our continent and the world.

Thesis 7. The decade of the 1990s, the first post-cold-war decade, began with a mood of imperialist triumphalism. The market, monetarism, and the rapacious individualistic values of Reagan and Thatcher were supposed to represent the culmination of history. Now, just four years later, at the end of 1994, these vainglorious claims stand increasingly exposed in all their bankruptcy.

Globally, capitalism has proved singularly incapable of transforming its cold-war victory into even the semblance of a stable, legitimate and sustainable answer to the problems facing humanity at the end of the 20th century.

Thesis 8. Now, more than ever, it is essential to advance a clear, practical and confident socialist alternative. Let us, as South African socialists, from our different legacies and traditions, collectively unfurl our common red banner of socialist struggle.



Workers are now asking what happened to the claim that the road to socialism would open up after the first victory of democracy against apartheid

After the ANC's electoral victory (top), national unity' with the ANC and the N... workers of other countries against the ANC/SACP decisions was shown receiving military wing members to join the same

socialism in S. Africa

and development programme, capitalist programme. The theses submitted by the African Communist Party, and the one submitted by the Workers Party to Rebuild the Fourth Republic (South Africa). This response to the capitalist nature of the SACP to cover up its past. (The Fourth Republic was founded in 1938, was the Communist opposition to

Workers International's criticism of the SACP's eight theses

A criticism of the South African Communist Party's 'eight introductory theses', submitted by the Workers International (South Africa) for discussion at the socialist conference

Thesis 1. Yes, it is true that millions of workers — young and old — poor rural people, and intellectuals see socialism as their only future. But they are asking *now*: what happened to the message, given by their leaders, that the road to socialism would open up when the first victory of democracy against apartheid was achieved?

Thesis 2. It is declared: 'The mass support for socialism in South Africa is a tribute to the rich traditions of socialist organisation, theory and struggle in our country.' This is not a time for mutual backslapping. This sentence should be rewritten, in accordance with *reality*, as follows:

'The mass support for socialism in South Africa is a tribute to all those workers who have organised and struggled and sacrificed and striven to master Marxist theory, and who persist in their burning socialist convictions *despite* the distortions and repressions by Stalinism, which misled thousands of class-conscious workers for more than two generations!'

You cannot — must not! — cover up this history and its precious lessons with a bland list of 'what draws us together'. This past must be negated and overcome, not swept under the carpet.

■ Your definition of socialism is half-hearted. You say: 'a broad social ownership and control of the economy . . . a society based on meeting social needs not private profits.' But socialism today has to be distinguished from the bureaucratic *distortion* of socialism in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe which *your party* always told us was 'really existing socialism'.

Socialism is the common ownership of the means of production, a classless society in which free men and women plan their own production, and control their own lives. It is achieved by a socialist revolution of the working class, which destroys ('smashes') the capitalist state, replacing it with workers' councils.

With this *workers' state*, the working class organises the expropriation of the capitalist class and the construction of socialism. As this socialist construction is completed, the state becomes unnecessary and withers away, since the state is but the instrument of one class against another.

In contrast to this, as nobody will now deny, the Soviet workers' state fell under the control of a privileged bureaucracy which brutally suppressed all democracy in party and state. The Stalinist bureaucracy 'exported' these repressive methods to the workers' and national liberation movements of the rest of the world.

With the collapse of this degenerated Stalinist apparatus, the conditions now exist for us to *reconstruct the workers' movement along truly socialist lines*.

All talk of socialism and 'what unites us' without this *definitive*

reckoning with Stalinism is hypocrisy. It is dangerous. It is time to face the truth, and to begin in theory and in practice from socialist internationalism. **That is why it is necessary for the working class that the Fourth International is reconstructed.**

■ The theses state that 'capitalism lies at the root of the deep crisis that afflicts our country, our continent and the world'. Yes, but this has been true for the whole of this century. What has prevented the working class from overcoming it is the *crisis of working-class leadership*, first in the shape of Social Democracy, then of Stalinism.

And secondly why do you, the SACP, participate in a government with the open representatives of this very same capitalism which afflicts us? Do you propose to keep on saying one thing and doing another?

■ You speak of the 'leading role of the working class'. Very good: for the working class to play a leading role, it must be *politically independent* of the capitalists with whom you join in government; but to establish its independence the working class will have to make its reckoning with Stalinism.

■ Social emancipation is 'self-emancipation', you say. Yes, 'the emancipation of the working class is the task of the working class itself' (Karl Marx). Why, then, do

narrow nationalism, chauvinism, ethnicity and sexism'. *But* your party is calling for *national* unity. Forgive us for reminding you of such elementary things, but working-class unity means unity with the workers of other countries *against* the capitalists of your own country and every other country.

Ministers of the government in which your leaders sit are ordering the arrest and deportation of workers who enter South Africa. And you have not repudiated the basic Stalinist doctrine of 'socialism in one country', the denial of internationalism. You appear to want to escape from your past by *concealing* it. It can't be done.

■ You are for 'demilitarisation'. Yes, we are against imperialist war, and for the disarming of the class enemy. But the working class — and the workers' state when it is won — will have to defend itself. The end of war will come only with world socialism.

■ You write of 'concern' at the havoc wrought by an 'economy based on private property'. Yes, and so we must find ways to begin the *expropriation* of the profit-makers, the capitalists, instead of sharing government with them in Pretoria and wooing them in New York.

Thesis 3. Against dogmatism, intolerance and sectarianism, you

'All talk of socialism and "what unites us" without this *definitive reckoning with Stalinism* is hypocrisy. It is dangerous. It is time to face the truth, and to begin in theory and in practice from socialist internationalism.'

you say one thing to your own members ('there are dangers from the class enemy within the government', etc.), and another to the working class ('let us go forward together in a government of national unity')?

■ You write of 'internationalism, that is, our conviction that the struggle [against oppression and exploitation] in South Africa is intimately linked to common struggles throughout the world'.

Again, this is half-baked. The question is: *who* can and must organise internationally against the global powers of capital? Only the working class, reconstructing its internationalism and, once again, making its final reckoning with Stalinism. You are *avoiding* this.

■ 'All power must be democratised', you say. To put it this way is to leave the door open to all the 'Euro-communist' and revisionist rubbish about socialists' 'taking over' the existing state power. The real task is to recognise that the state is an instrument of capitalist rule.

The job is not to 'democratise' the state, or to 'democratise' the economic power that it defends (capital), but for the working class to smash it and replace it with its own 'power', that of the workers' councils. That is workers' democracy.

■ You say 'combat all forms of

say. Yes, we also are against sin . . . 'Discuss and debate together', you say. Yes! We hope that this and all our other documents and all others submitted to the conference are subjected to full debate and discussion.

Thesis 4. Not just critiques and words, you say, but 'concrete programmes of transformation that begin to address the crisis'. The *main point* is missed in all this. It is the working class that will get rid of capitalism, and there can be change in the direction of socialist revolution *only* through the strengthening of the revolutionary socialist consciousness and organisation of the working class.

Capitalism cannot be 'transformed', just as the leopard cannot change (even!) its spots. The problem is to build the working-class force that can *defeat* capitalism.

Thesis 5. This is about the definition of the purpose of the conference. Here it only needs to be said that as a *socialist* conference we mean by reconstruction and development something completely different from the meaning given to these terms by anyone else.

We are concerned with the *reconstruction* of the working-class movement after the enormous damage done to it by the long years of Stalinist domination, which, as we know, led to and ended with the

present process of restoration of capitalism. And by *development* we mean development that leads to socialist revolution.

Thesis 6. You say that the eyes of workers and other socialists throughout the world are on the struggle in South Africa. We agree. For this reason we think it is wrong that the conference has been kept so small and its preparations short, and that minority organisations are (or were at first) poorly represented.

What is necessary is the widest possible discussion throughout the workers' movement on the way forward to socialism and to the kind of working-class party we need, its programme (socialist, revolutionary and internationalist) and its theory (Marxism).

Thesis 7. Yes, the capitalists were able to create the illusion that an era of capitalist prosperity had been opened up with the fall of the Stalinist bureaucracy, and now the truth is coming home after four short years. But, but! *Why* did the alternative system that you called socialism fail? How could it come about that the masses in the Soviet Union expected more from capitalism?

In the course of its fight to reconstruct itself in the struggle against imperialism internationally, *how* will the working class overcome the legacy of Stalinism and the restoration of capitalism in the land of the October Revolution? You cannot run away for ever from these questions.

And you must not lecture us on the evils of capitalism, we repeat, while sitting down to dinner with the capitalists in your 'government of national unity' and in the banqueting halls of New York.

Thesis 8. And so, when we do what your conclusion says — unfurl the 'red banner of socialist struggle' — let us *not* delude ourselves and the working class by referring to our 'different legacies and traditions' behind a 'common' red banner. The red banner of the international working class was trampled in the mud by Stalinism. It is no use trying to hide this with fine words — everybody knows!

The fact that a river of blood came to divide Stalinism from the working-class internationalists led by Trotsky was *not* the result of 'different traditions', but of brutal persecution and assassinations by the Stalinist bureaucracy in defence of its power and privileges.

We are *not* saying that only those who make exactly the same balance-sheet as us can unite in common actions. But we *do* say — and the working class will say — that you cannot sweep under the carpet 70 years of the past struggles of the international workers' movement with smooth talk about a common red banner, meanwhile participating in a government with the class enemy and condemning workers on strike as 'ultra-left'. *With whom*, in this case, do you have a 'common banner'?

The working class needs a real discussion about socialism, not 'kiss and make up' talk that serves to conceal the truth about both past betrayals and present-day class-collaboration.



workers do not need a 'government of national Party, but unity with the capitalists of all countries. Anger at the refusal of many ANC members to join the army as apartheid state forces

Dress rehearsal in Rio?

AN ACQUAINTANCE who flew from Rio de Janeiro a few days ago has given me a disturbing account of recent developments in that city, where the army has occupied the shanty-towns (*favelas*).

My informant sees this occupation as a dress rehearsal for a repeat performance of the military coup of 1964.

Right-wing commentators are unanimous in praising the 1964 takeover and brushing aside as trivial the crimes that went with it (which included the torture of left-wing protesters with electric shocks to genitals and anus).

Already several people have 'disappeared' from the *favelas*; some reports put the number as high as 18. The army is also active elsewhere in Rio, stopping buses and searching passengers.

My informant regards this as the implementation of a two-pronged plan worked out shortly before this year's presidential election campaign got under way.

Measures to slow down inflation, however temporarily, were one aspect of the plan. The new currency worked for a time, and persuaded many people to vote against the Workers' Party. Now, as inflation creeps up again, the plan's other aspect is brought into play.

This is presented as a 'crack-down against the drugs trade', and is cunningly designed to appeal to the Rio middle class.

For months the press has whipped up middle-class public opinion about the control the cocaine barons allegedly exercise over the *favelas*; about the internecine struggle between two rival gangs, the 'Red Command' and the 'White Command' (neither name has any political significance); about the armed resistance to police who tried to enter the *favelas* to arrest drug-traffickers.

In fact the 'White Command' is purely a creature of the Rio police, who control and profit from a high proportion of the city's cocaine trade. Moreover, at least 99 per cent of the people who inhabit the *favelas* have no connection with that trade.

During the run-up to the election the police sparked off nightly exchanges of gunfire at the entrances to the *favelas* — exchanges clearly audible in the adjacent middle-class neighbourhoods. These fake battles were in effect electoral propaganda for the successful right-wing candidate Cardoso.

How long will it be, my informant wonders, before army occupation of the Rio *favelas* — which, incidentally, has done nothing whatever to diminish the availability of cocaine — is extended to the rest of the city and the rest of the country?

Five years without an answer

MY colleague Charlie Pottins's recent reference ('Inside Left' column, 19 November) to Militant Labour's shining new recruit Phil Hearse reminded me of some unfinished business between the ex-editor of 'Socialist Outlook' and myself.

Five years ago a column of mine ('Trotsky on the box', 14 October 1989), criticising a BBC2 documentary, drew from Hearse an angry letter (11 November 1989).

Hearse called my comments on Broué's contribution to the film 'grotesquely... unfair' and 'sectarian'. Had I, he demanded, read Broué's biography of Trotsky, published in Paris the previous year?

'Why this hostility to Broué?', Hearse wanted to know. 'To snipe at a few television snippets is plainly ridiculous.'

In my reply ('A funny sort of

PERSONAL COLUMN

hostility', 18 November 1989), I pointed out that, far from being hostile to Broué, I had spent some time and energy 'trying to persuade British publishers to commission a translation of his biography of Trotsky (can Phil Hearse say the same?)'. I added:

'If Hearse has "a minimal amount of revolutionary integrity" [his own expression] he will now... publicly withdraw his slur that my reference to Broué was motivated by sectarian hostility.'

Though I ventured a gentle reminder a month or two later, Hearse never saw fit to reply. Nor did he ever respond to Cyril Smith's letter (18 November 1989), challenging him to say where he stood on Trotsky's analysis of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Doesn't Hearse's transmigration, after more than 20 years, from Ernest Mandel's 'United Secretariat of the Fourth International' to the equally stagnant waters of 'Militant' afford him an ideal opportunity to face these five-year-old challenges? To wipe the slate clean, as it were, before starting a new life?

Not that a clean record as a controversialist matters a toss to either Hearse or his new chums. I wish him and them joy of each other.

Kora and guitar

AFTER the talk I gave at Lambeth town hall last month, entitled 'A European looks at African music', a member of the audience challenged something I had said about the *kora*.

This beautiful 21-stringed harp-lute of the Gambia, Guinea, Mali, and Senegal had not, I said, crossed the Atlantic so far as I knew, unlike such instruments as the *kalam*, the five-stringed long-necked lute from much the same region which, in the US, had become the banjo.

My questioner insisted that the *kora* had travelled to the New World, where it had developed into the guitar.

It would be interesting to see the evidence for this, if there is any. But I doubt whether there is, for two reasons.

In the first place, though both are stringed instruments, the *kora* and the guitar are otherwise completely different, in both their structure and the way they're played.

The *kora*'s strings don't run parallel to the neck, but pass over a perpendicular notched bridge, which divides them into two rows, 10 on one side, 11 on the other. So it is in effect a double harp.

Each of the 21 strings sounds one note only, and the player never 'stops' them — i.e. they are never shortened to obtain a higher note.

The strings of the guitar, by contrast, run parallel to its neck, and they are 'stopped' by the player's fingers.

Second, the guitar, as is now fairly well known, developed from the plucked lute that the Moors took with them to Spain well before the 14th century, by which time the guitar had spread throughout Europe.

There is no evidence that the *kora*, at any rate in its present-day form, is anything like such an ancient instrument. There is no mention of it anywhere until 1799, when the Scots surgeon and explorer Mungo Park referred to it, in his 'Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa', as 'the *korro*, a large harp with eighteen strings'.

The African contribution to the world's music is demonstrably vast and many-sided, and doesn't need to be enhanced at the expense of the equally important Arabian contribution.

Peter Fryer

Television

Power and limitations

Review by Roger Horrocks

TWO programmes recently have shown both the power and the limitations of television.

First the *Panorama* programme on 14 November (BBC1) exposed how old people who are ill are being abandoned by the NHS and by social services, and forced to pay for their own nursing care.

This programme had a big impact on people: I heard my neighbours talking about it for days.

It seems inconceivable to people that the NHS — into which they have paid all their lives — can turn its back on them precisely when they need it most.

Programme

But this programme also demonstrated how television on its own — despite its claim to be 'investigative' and hard-hitting — is powerless.

The government was able to weasel out of the controversy with a few well-chosen meaningless platitudes.

The Labour Party splutters

and makes noises of protest, before producing its own platitudes, which in the end often mean that they won't reverse Tory policies.

Powerful

Television will only really become a powerful medium when it is controlled by grassroots movements, and when it is backed up by a powerful working-class movement that refuses to accept the bromides offered by politicians.

Community TV would then become a true form of agitprop — but of course government will fight to keep cable and satellite TV out of the hands of local communities, and in the hands of wealthy businessmen.

A completely different kind of programme made me ponder the real meaning of the 'classical serial'.

After the great success of 'Middlemarch', the BBC has

trumpeted its production of Dickens's 'Martin Chuzzlewit' (BBC2, Mondays).

And there is plenty to admire again: a gallery of fine British actors, headed by Tom Wilkinson playing the hypocrite Pecksniff with a wonderful oiliness; fine sets; wonderful costumes and domestic interiors. I sometimes catch myself exclaiming aloud: 'Just look at that wallpaper!'

Unctuous

There are, however, some problems with 'Chuzzlewit'.

One major problem is that the central character — the Dickensian hero Martin — is almost impossible to play, he is so boringly good and victimised.

The actor playing him looks palpably nervous to me, but who can blame him?

Dickens's heroes are notoriously unctuous, whereas his villains and eccentrics are won-

derful caricatures and make great television.

But there is something else disturbing about these productions.

It strikes me that, in the actual sumptuousness of their 'production values', they are trying to evoke a sentimental picture of England rather akin to John Major's fantasies of village cricket matches and old ladies cycling to evening communion.

Both TV productions of 'Middlemarch' and 'Chuzzlewit' — brilliant as they are in many ways — could be seen as part of a retro-idealisation — a kind of Heritage TV that is desperate to escape from modern Britain with its disintegrating capitalism and its urban decay.

Of course, they are wonderful to watch, but then pre-op anaesthetics are rather delightful too.

It reminds me of the way Shakespeare has been hijacked by the Little Englanders in the Tory Party: we have Shakespeare the Churchillian patriot, in fact Shakespeare the Tory!

Creating creation myths

TOM OWEN looks at the history of Mary Shelley's 'Frankenstein', currently doing the rounds in a new film version

'MARY SHELLEY's *Frankenstein*', directed by Kenneth Branagh, is the latest of a series of money-making British-produced, internationally-financed, films.

The subject has become a modern myth — archetypal mad scientist constructs giant monster from charnel-house detritus; released upon the world it wreaks mayhem and vengeance on its maker.

The name *Frankenstein* has become popularly synonymous with the monster rather than his creator. Few of the audience will have heard of Mary Shelley or have read the novel on which this production is based.

Branagh's naming of the author in the title should carry with it the artistic responsibility for veracity to the text. Otherwise we just get chic horror.

The extraordinary novel by the 19-year-old Shelley is the cautionary tale of a humanitarian scientist, driven by a morbid but humanitarian obsession, who dares to create life.

He rejects his creation, which turns to vengeance fuelled by a resentment born of terrible isolation.

The novel is richly suggestive, operating symbolically on a number of levels and open to many interpretations in different historical contexts. It is a far more enduring work than the celluloid flicker of a giant with a bolt through his neck might suggest.

Mary Shelley was married to the rebellious poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley, with whom she eloped at the age of 17. Her parents — Mary Wollstonecraft, writer of 'A Vindication of the Rights of Women' (1797), and William Godwin, Dissenting minister turned atheist, whose 'Enquiry Concerning Political Justice' attacked all 'positive institutions' (the state, religion and the family) — were demonised by reactionaries as 'the English Jacobins'.

They were in fact Enlightenment Rationalists who, under the influence of the French *philosophes*, criticised the 'irrationality' of feudal tyranny.

Mary Wollstonecraft did not survive her daughter's birth. But the Godwin household remained a centre of political



Coleridge (left) and Percy Bysshe Shelley, attracted to the Godwin household

radicalism. It attracted literary figures, including the young Romantic writers like Coleridge, Hazlitt, and Shelley himself.

Others included the poet and botanist Erasmus Darwin and the early chemist and radical Humphry Davy, whose essay 'A Discourse, Introductory to a Course of Lectures on Chemistry' (1802) Mary read in 1816. That work is mirrored in her fictional lectures at the University of Ingolstadt.

The tension in these circles between Enlightenment optimists, wishing to marry the arts and sciences for the betterment of humanity, and romantic idealists, rejecting reason and English materialism as a fetter on their imagination and creativity, is at the heart of Shelley's novel.

The novel was inspired by an evening at Lord Byron's villa on the shores of Lake Geneva. After speculating on the 'principle of life and the experiments of Erasmus Darwin with "galvanism" [electricity]', the evening's 'amusement' was to write a horror story.

Mary recalled how the story came to her — 'I saw the pale student of unhallowed arts kneeling beside the thing he had put together.'

'I saw the hideous phantom of a man stretched out...'

From this reverie emanated one of the 19th century's most pregnant narratives and also that enduring literary symbol of alienation, which reverberated through the century's novel in various forms, the orphan/demon

The tale is in the 18th-century letter form. The narrator, another obsessive, is an arctic explorer driven to seek a land beyond the ice.

Captain Walton becomes the confidant of *Frankenstein* and his creation at the end of their conflict. The deathbed confession is a moral tale of the usurpation of 'god' by man and the myth of man's fall because of his aspirations for forbidden knowledge.

Although the novel has the Gothic quality of a medieval 'cautionary tale' its references are contemporary.

Frankenstein, an enlightened Genovese bourgeois, studies at Ingolstadt, a centre of Enlightenment radicalism and secret revolutionary societies.

His creation, similarly, is a child of the Age of Reason. He achieves literacy through a covert reading of Volney's 'Ruins of Empires' and Milton's 'Paradise Lost'. From the former he learns of inequality and class society, from the latter he comes to understand his own predicament.

The 'monster' has a moral and aesthetic sense and is repelled by cruelty. At the same time he craves a social existence in a world of beauty, but responds to its rejection with vengeful despair.

In this he follows the logic of his prototype, Milton's Satan, whose resentment only finds ease in destruction. The destruction of *Frankenstein's* family is the destruction of the beautiful bourgeois people by a monster of their creation which is beyond their control and their

comprehension. The monster's account of his alienation is a prophecy for the majority of humanity: 'Of my creation and creator I was absolutely ignorant, but I knew that I possessed no money, no friends, no kind of property.'

The monster is an atomised proletarian, an expression of what Marx described as the domination of living labour by dead capital. Nineteenth-century popular imagination was quick to seize on the monster's image and use it as a political stereotype to describe Luddites, Chartists and Fenians.

Mary Shelley's work now appears on academic syllabuses thanks to feminist critiques of its 'masculinist metaphor' of science 'penetrating' the secrets of nature.

Branagh's film will even disappoint the A-level market. Whilst formally following the novel he either profoundly misreads, or cynically distorts, the text. The 'mutual ruin' of creator and created is triggered by *Frankenstein's* refusal to create a female mate.

Shelley's scientist recoils from the creation of a female, but Branagh does not. He makes a female by stitching the head of *Frankenstein's* wife Elizabeth onto her servant Justine's body.

This embroidery of the original does not reinforce male hubris. It is merely a tasteless extravagance.

The only person to emerge with any integrity is Robert De Niro, who plays the Monster as if he has read the book. And that, after all, is a hard act to follow.

Haiti's other invasion

BY PIERRE DUPONT

BEHIND the US tanks and helicopters, Haiti faces a more insidious invasion planned by the US Agency for International Development (AID), the World Bank and other institutions. The troops are 'experts' armed with 'development' projects, 'modernisation' plans, and lots of money. Their aim is to impose 'neo-liberal' capitalist economics, create 'political stability', and co-opt political leaders.

The goal is to tie Haiti to the world market as an appendage of the US, dependent on foreign producers for necessities, paid for by export crops and the exploitation of cheap labour.

A member of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's transition team says his government has practically given up in those fields targeted by AID for 'democracy enhancement'. 'We realised we can't fight this huge machine.'

'Structural adjustment'

AT A meeting in Paris on 26 August with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Inter-American Development Bank and other funders, the Aristide team was pressed to accept a 'structural adjustment' plan, including privatisation, free trade, payment of debts, and few restrictions on foreign capital.

Also implied was a reduction in the already pitifully inadequate social services, and an increasing reliance on 'non-governmental' institutions and the private sector. No mention was made of raising Haiti's minimum wage, which stands at about US\$1 per day. Asked during his visit to Haiti on 15 October whether such a measure might be possible, AID chief Brian Atwood said: 'I don't think that this economy is ready to consider such measures.'

'The representative of the Haitian government kept saying "We have to show this is working or the money won't be forthcoming,"' reported a person present at a Washington meeting about the Paris plan. 'He said they [the US and the funders] need to put something irreversible in place because they don't know who will be taking over from Aristide.' (Aristide's term expires in 16 months.)

The Haitian representative referred to was Leslie Delatour, whom the US government would like Aristide to install as 'moderate' prime minister.

An aide to former Haitian tyrant Jean-Claude Duvalier's finance minister, Delatour was finance minister himself under the US-installed dictator General Namphy in the 1980s.

At the time tens of thousands of people took to the streets to protest against his privatisation plan. One participant in the popular mobilisation was Father Aristide, who denounced the plan in his sermons and speeches.

The World Bank and other funders have told the Aristide team that international finance will depend on the 'openness' of the new government. They want a 'government of reconciliation' in Haiti to guarantee 'stability and a sound economic environment'.

Almost \$600 million is slated for projects aimed at bringing 'stability'. Most of this money will bypass the Aristide government, going straight to the private sector, 'non-governmental' organisations, or local leaders chosen by AID teams and organisations like the Washington-based Center for Democracy (CFD). In Haiti there is also the US-backed Programme Intègre pour le Renforcement de la Démocratie (PIRED), headed by anthropologist and long-time Haiti resident Ira Lowenthal.

An Aristide government member explained: 'Everything that is happening is about the US imposing everything. They are not consulting the Haitian government.'

AID plans a 'local governance' project with \$5 million slated for organising community groups and projects; a \$1 million 'jobs creation' programme, where 25,000 to 50,000 will work for \$1 per day for two months; and a 'demobilisation and reintegration' programme for former Haitian soldiers, including those guilty of rights abuses.

A \$20 million elections assistance project to help the government create an electoral council will also support 'civic education' campaigns by non-governmental organisations, media training and other activities.

Funding the 'right' stuff

IN EARLY January over 2,000 parliamentary, regional and local seats are up for election. US officials openly admit plans to foster and even build parties. 'Those elections are the insurance policy for our aid,' an AID official said.

An AID document leaked last

spring advocated assisting 'responsible elements within the popular movement' and 'moderate Duvalierist factions'.

The fund was denounced by human rights groups working in Haiti. The only indigenous rights group to accept the money is one already on the PIREB bankroll.

PIRED promoted the US asylum processing programme, through which thousands of grassroots militants were interviewed extensively

'human rights groups' linked to political leaders and parties.

About \$200,000 went to a foundation associated with Port-au-Prince mayor Evans Paul, who has been tipped as the US choice to succeed Aristide. The 'Wall Street Journal' says Paul is 'very different' from Aristide, and 'has matured from leftist street agitator to statesman'.

When Paul was reinstated in his office in October, Lowenthal was there looking, as someone remarked,



Evans Paul, last month installed as Port-au-Prince mayor, has 'matured from leftist street agitator to statesman' and is tipped as US choice to succeed Aristide

about their activities, enabling the US government to create a detailed database of the democratic movement, which many speculate has been used for more than immigration matters. Lowenthal and PIREB are already overseeing a \$15 million, five-year 'democracy enhancement' project that has pumped hundreds of thousands of dollars into unions, peasant groups, 'foundations' and

'like the proud father'. When general Cedras, the military ruler forced out by the US, gave his resignation speech from the balcony at army headquarters, Lowenthal was there too.

'Lowenthal is basically running the show,' explained a transition team member. 'He is like the new governor of Haiti. All local programmes go through him.'

The team member added that

when the government asks about AID projects in preparation for the return of constitutionality to Haiti, US officials say: 'It doesn't really concern the Haitian government.'

AID 'successes' exposed

MANY new AID programmes will be run through the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI). OTI will work with PIREB, the Office of International Migration (OIM, which helped the US Immigration and Naturalization Service carry out its extensive asylum interviews) and the New-York-based Planning Assistance (PA, which has already carried out pilot 'local governance' projects in Les Cayes and Gonaïves).

The head of the PA's 'local governance' project in Haiti, Joe Coblantz, has said that his organisation had been working with people in Les Cayes and Gonaïves, including members of FRAPH (the CIA-backed paramilitary force set up to counter left-wing and democratic activity), for a year and a half.

Coblantz said he was worried that the return of constitutionality would mean local participants in his programme would not allow 'opposition' members like FRAPH to participate. He said the two FRAPH people in Les Cayes were 'the most civic-minded members' of the community committees PA had set up.

One AID-funded project, the Centres pour le Développement et la Santé (CDS), which has 12 health centres around the country and received at least \$4 million in AID funding last year, has had FRAPH members — including those accused of brutal murders — on its payroll.

CDS has a database that includes records on about 10,000 people (most of the town). According to residents of Cite Soleil, the poor neighbourhood where CDS offers the only health care, after the presidential elections in 1990 people who admitted to voting for Aristide were turned away.

If FRAPH does not emerge as a political party in its own right, as its leaders have promised, it will reinvent itself, and receive funding and support from its traditional sources — the army and the CIA.

Faced with the kind of US interference and domination seen elsewhere, particularly in Latin America, Haitians who resisted military rule are preparing themselves for a longer struggle.

Hitler's man in the north-east

BY RAYMOND CHALLINOR

YOU should read Nigel Todd's 'In Excited Times: the People against the Blackshirts' (Bewick Press, £5.95). In my opinion it is the best regional history of fascism, a study that extracts valuable, and often forgotten, national lessons from what happened in Tyne and Wear.

Most authors mistakenly dwell on the foot-soldiers of fascism, the politically small men with large chips on their shoulders. But whenever fascism gains power these are cast to one side; capital, the paymaster of the blackshirt rabble, asserts itself and calls the shots.

It isn't Sid Yobbo, replete with his bother-boots and razor-scarred face, who rules the country. Rather it is, as Daniel Guérin pointed out, in his classic 'Fascism and Big Business', a politician acceptable to the high and mighty of the land.

In north-east England the aristocracy remained at the forefront of reaction. In the early 1920s the Duke of Northumberland, disturbed by working-class militancy in his collieries and the birth of the Soviet Union, sought to restore class harmony with what Nigel Todd terms 'Jurassic Fascism', but

In the 1930s Lord Londonderry became a close friend of Hitler, being his personal guest in Germany on three occasions. A book, 'Germany and Ourselves', where Lord Londonderry seeks to dispel what he regards as the commonly held prejudices against Nazism, even contains a letter from the Fuhrer praising it.

Leading British fascists, such as John Beckett and William Joyce (later known as Lord Haw-Haw, because of his wartime broadcasts from Germany), sought to make north-east England their stomping ground. But they encountered growing opposition.

Workers created their own defence force. This sought to protect socialist organisations and minority groups from fascist attack, as well as preventing the fascists from establishing a physical presence in the area. To a large extent, thanks to mass action, these aims were achieved.

Volunteered

Not content with fighting fascism at home, Nigel Todd shows how Geordies carried the struggle abroad. He deals with those who volunteered to fight in Spain. Most joined the International Brigade, which was Communist Party-controlled, but



Lord Londonderry (left) with his friends Hitler and Ribbentrop in Berlin in 1937

others joined the Independent Labour Party contingent, recruited by Tynesider John McNair, and fought alongside the POUM (Workers Party of Marxist Unification).

Another Tynesider, Spike Robinson, showed the efficacy of strike action against fascism. Aboard the SS Linaria, docked in Boston, US, in 1937 he discovered the ship's next assignment was the transporting of strategic war material to the part of Spain occupied by

Franco. The crew refused to obey orders, whereupon the British consul in Boston threatened them with prosecution under the Merchant Shipping Act. Still the seamen did not comply. Prosecution ensued, and eventually a fine of £2 per head was imposed. Yet, on appeal, even this was lifted and costs were awarded against the employers. It could be regarded as a complete victory, except for the fact that shipowners, displaying pro-fascist sympathies,

blacklisted Spike Robinson and he never went to sea again.

One of the most fascinating aspects of this history arises from the use of police and intelligence reports. They show how the authorities strove to co-ordinate their response to fascist/anti-fascist conflict. In most places, of course, the authorities adopted an attitude distinctly in favour of Oswald Mosley and his British Union of Fascists. In Newcastle, however, the chief constable was a

maverick. It was not that F.J. Crawley was in any way a progressive — he had ordered a mounted police onslaught on an unemployed demonstration in Sunderland, where many had been seriously injured and one killed. But, being proudly patriotic, the chief constable detested the fascists, seeing them as agents of a foreign power.

As a consequence, Mosley's men not only had the hostility of the general populace, the blackshirts were also denied the friendly protection of the boys in blue.

Blows

This book is well illustrated and, like all Nigel Todd's books, well written. My main criticism is that he leaves the story unfinished. Perhaps this is not accidental — it would have involved him in delivering some heavy blows to the Labour Party.

For the post-1945 Labour government, not wanting to embarrass the British establishment, suppressed most of the records of the British Union of Fascists and of the German Foreign Office. It would have helped to conclude the work on a deeply satisfactory note had we been told what post in the government of a Nazi-occupied Britain Hitler planned to give Lord Londonderry.

Defend Zhang Lin!

BY COLIN PENDLETON

CHINESE workers' rights activist Zhang Lin has been brutally tortured by guards at the labour camp where he is being held.

In a letter smuggled out of the camp in Anhui province, Zhang, a 31-year-old physics graduate, says that, for one hour on 1 November, a guard at the Nanhu labour camp repeatedly punched and kicked him and subjected him to electric shocks with a 15,000-volt electric baton.

He writes that this was inflicted on him because he could not work due to constant pain in his hands and feet.

Zhang Lin also refers to 'his illness becoming more serious', without giving further details.

He says that 'his hands and feet hurt all day' and that he has requested medical treatment on more than ten occasions but has been refused each time.

Arrested in May this year, Zhang Lin was sentenced in late August to three years of 're-education through labour', a form of administrative detention imposed without charge or trial.

He was held incommunicado until 4 September, when his wife and other relatives were allowed to visit him for the first time since his arrest.

He was then held at a detention centre in Bengbu city, in northern Anhui province.

According to his wife, he went on hunger-strike for a week in late August after police informed him of his sentence and of plans to transfer him to a coal mining labour camp in Anhui province.

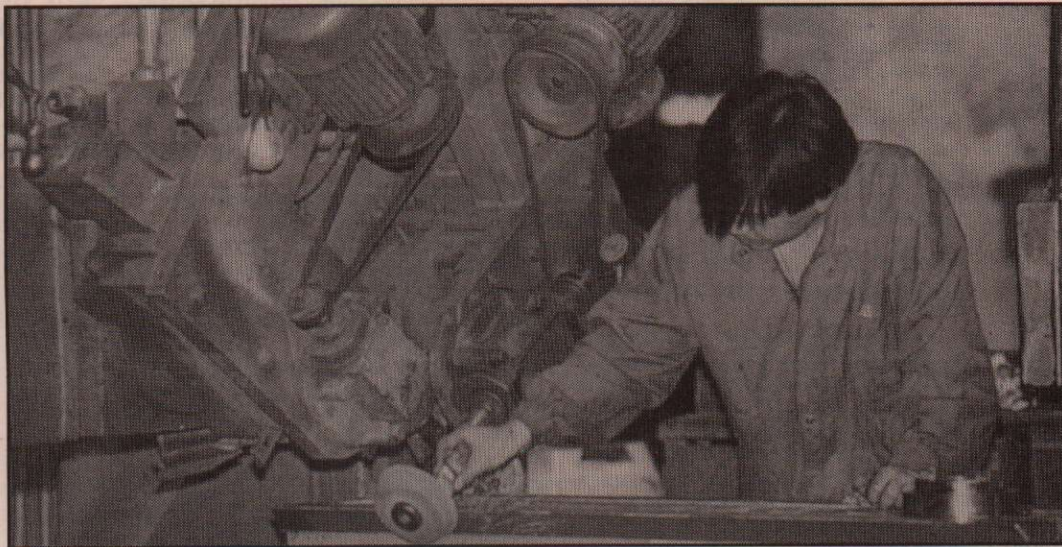
Health

She reported that he was then generally in poor health and suffering from a nervous complaint.

The family was not given any formal notification of the reasons for his sentence or the identity of the labour camp to which he was going to be transferred.

He has been denied family visits since his transfer, which is presumed to have taken place in September or October.

Zhang Lin is reported to have been a leading member of the League for the Protection of the Rights of Working People, formed in Beijing early this year. Several supporters of the league



A Beijing worker adjusts a machine with his bare hand: Lin is a leading workers' rights activist

were arrested in the spring.

A nuclear physics graduate from Qinghua University, Zhang spent two years in jail during 1989-91 for organising students in his home town of Bengbu during the 1989 pro-democracy activity which climaxed in Tiananmen square.

Zhang Lin was detained in Beijing on 28 May and transferred to detention in Bengbu on 2 June.

His sentence to three years of 're-education-through-labour' was imposed without a trial and no formal charges were brought against him.

He was reportedly told by police that he was being sentenced because his marriage licence was not in order and because he had too many contacts with foreign journalists.

Workers Press urges trades unionists and students to voice

concern to the Chinese authorities about the reports that Zhang Lin has been ill-treated at Nanhu labour camp in Anhui province, and that he is in poor health and has been denied medical treatment.

■ Demand that he be provided with all appropriate medical treatment, and that reports of his ill-treatment are publicly investigated.

■ Demand that Zhang Lin, who has been sentenced, without trial, for the peaceful exercise of basic human rights, be released immediately and unconditionally.

■ Demand that labour camps like Nanhu are opened up for inspection by an international workers' commission of inquiry.

Letters should be sent to:
The Procurator-General of the Supreme People's Procuratorate of the People's Republic of China
Zhang Siqing Jianchazhang
Zuigao Renmin Jianchayuan
147
Beiheyuan Dajie Donganmen
Dongchengqu Beijingshi 100726
People's Republic of China

Telexes: 210070 FMPC CN or 22478 MFERT CN
(Please forward to Zhang Siqing Jianchazhang)

Telegrams: Procurator-General of the Supreme People's Procuratorate
Zhang Siqing, Beijing, China

Also write to: His Excellency Mr Ma Yuzhen, Embassy of China, 49-51 Portland Place, London W1N 3AH or the Chinese representative in your country.

Hit-squad murders Communist building worker in Colombia

RIGHT-WING gunmen in Colombia have murdered a Communist Party member and wounded another in an attack on the party's headquarters in Medellin, on 17 November.

Building worker and union activist Rodrigo Florez was killed when the killers opened fire from a moving car. Oscar Charriaga, also a building worker, was wounded in the same attack. The building had been under police guard until 30 October, when the guard was withdrawn without explanation.

Manuel Cepeda, the CP's only senator, was killed on 9 August, and three trades unionists were killed in Antioquia the following day. All four killings were claimed by the paramilitary group Colombia sin Guerrilla (COLSINGUE, Colombia without Guerrillas).

In July, COLSINGUE released a press communiqué in which it threatened members of

opposition political parties, trades unionists and political activists. No one has claimed responsibility for the latest killing.

In early October 1992, the advocate for the people, Dr Jaime Trivino Cordoba, published a report which concluded that the main perpetrators of violence against left-wing activists were paramilitary groups, members of the security forces and hired gunmen.

According to the official report 717 activists had been killed since 1985. Colombian human rights organisations place the figure at over 2,000 activists.

This latest attack illustrates the Colombian authorities' failure to stop the continuing killing, harassment and intimidation of working-class activists, and to bring to justice members of the paramilitary groups and the security forces involved.

Dozens grabbed in Mexico's rebel state

BY PIERRE DUPONT

DOZENS of people have been grabbed off the streets and taken away by police in Mexico's troubled Chiapas state, where peasant rebels, inspired by the legendary revolutionary Emiliano Zapata, staged a rising at the beginning of this year.

On 16 November, scores of people were seriously injured when security forces broke up a peaceful demonstration in the town square of Palenque, Chiapas. The whereabouts of dozens of detained people remain unknown and there are fears for their safety.

On 21 November, ten more people were grabbed by the police while taking part in a march in the city of Comitán, also in Chiapas. At least one other person received gunshot wounds when the demonstrators were dispersed.

Those held on 16 November were Ch'ol and Tzeltal Indian activists. Indian peasants from Patricio, Sabana Perdida and El Naranjo, near Palenque, had been demonstrating against evictions by the big landowners.

During the attack by state police, municipal officials and armed thugs, men, women and children were beaten, forced into trucks and driven out of town. Dozens were released

later during the day, but the whereabouts of 70 detainees remain unknown. There are fears they may be 'disappeared', or have been tortured.

Chiapas has long been the scene of continuing human rights violations by the security forces, as land disputes and allegations of electoral fraud have continued. These violations have included arbitrary arrests, torture, ill-treatment and political killings.

On 1 January, hundreds of armed peasants, calling themselves the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), took control of several towns in Chiapas. There was heavy fighting for several days.

On 12 January the government declared a ceasefire, although there were reports that attacks by the armed forces continued.

An Amnesty International delegation visiting the area in late January confirmed reports of a number of human rights abuses, including the extra-judicial execution of at least five rebels and the torture of rebel and civilian detainees at the hands of the security forces.

Since this year's elections, which many people are convinced were rigged for the government, there have been demonstrations by the opposition, and 'disappearances' of opponents by the security police.

Namibia: a question of workers' confidence

FRANK GIRLING reports on the election campaign of the Workers Revolutionary Party (Namibia), which is standing 72 candidates in Namibia's polls on 7 and 8 December

LIKE so many other unemployed workers in Namibia, Dorcas Koita was dismissed from her job with no rights and no explanations from her employer.

From nearby Angola, Dorcas knows what it is like to live in a country at war, and she has no hesitation in fighting in Namibia's elections as a Workers Revolutionary Party (Namibia) candidate for the party's internationalist programme.

The WRP knows that the issue is not merely what government is in office after polling day, but whether the working class can gain confidence in its

ability to organise and fight for its own independent party.

Hewat Beukes, a long-standing leader of the Namibian WRP, says that the trade union bureaucracies of the trades unions affiliated to the ruling South West Africa People's Organisation, and of the so-called independent trades unions, have launched a scathing attack on the WRP in the press and on radio. They claim that the party has been telling workers that the trades unions are affiliated to it.

'This is a sign of their fear that their members will fight for socialist policies in the unions,'

he says. 'We have had four TV appearances and seven radio broadcasts, in most languages, and we have participated in two one-hour panel discussions in this campaign, and we have never made such a claim.'

'What we have done is to campaign for workers to build the International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign, and fight for its three basic principles: trades unions independent of the state, democracy in the trades unions, and workers' internationalism.'

In the last week of the campaign:

■ The WRP has a special issue of its paper, 'The Worker', with its manifesto, an interview with veteran socialist and candidate Werner Mamugwe, news and statements.

■ Trades unionists in Walvis Bay have called a meeting to hear WRP candidates, and members of the South African section of Workers International, who have travelled from Cape Town to join the election campaign team.

■ Young campaigners for the WRP will set up a new youth organisation — Socialist Youth League of Namibia.

At a press conference the WRP will release a statement from an Angolan socialist and ex-member of the that country's ruling MPLA, who was forced to flee the country in a life threatening situation. This statement, which exposes the role of Stalinism and imperialism in Angola, will be published in next week's Workers Press.

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