



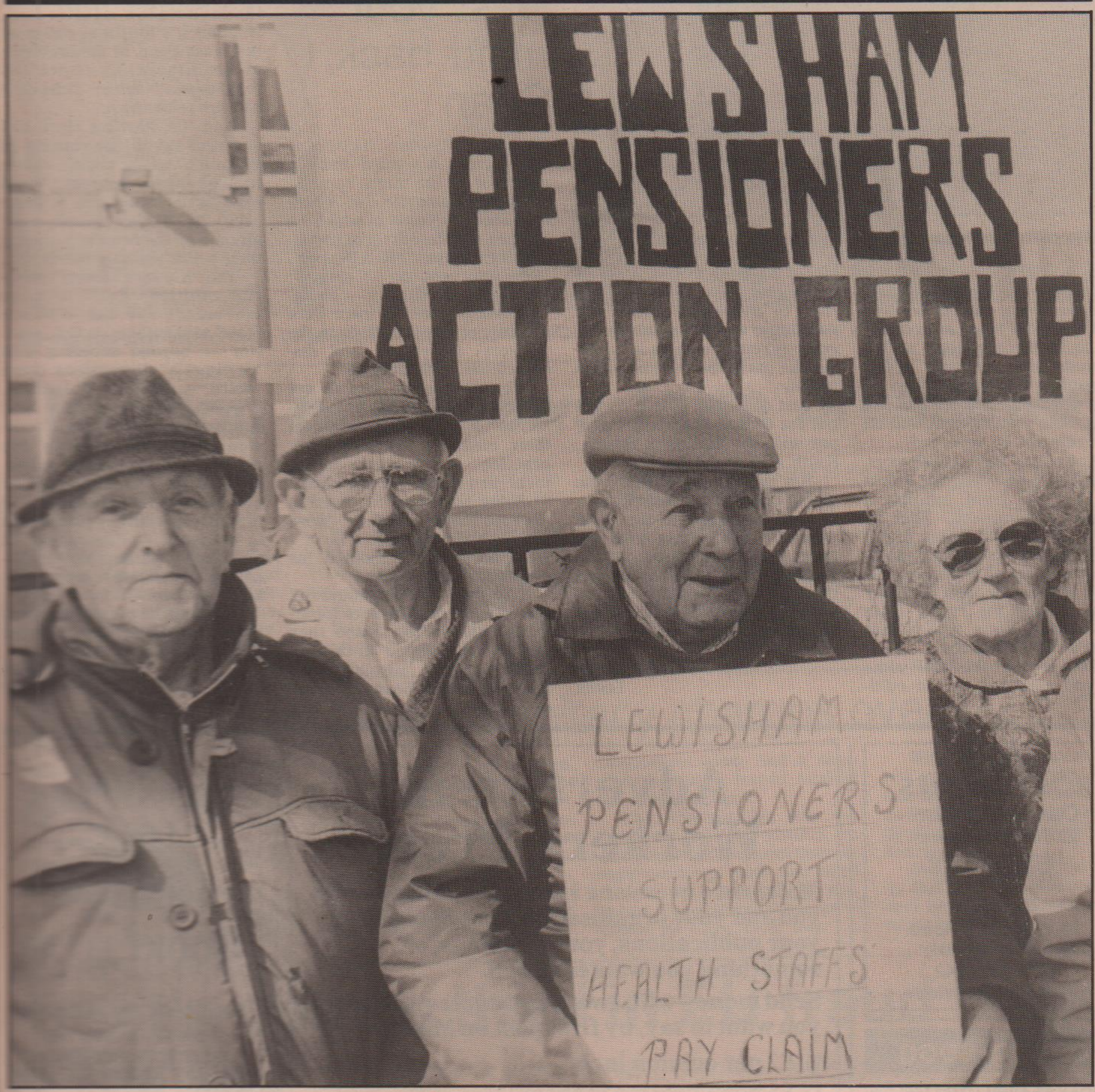
WORKERS PRESS  
419 20 Aug 1994  
450 8 Apr 1995

# Workers Press

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY      SATURDAY 8 APRIL 1995      NO. 450      PRICE 30p

# REJECT FORCED LABOUR FOR UNEMPLOYED

## Hospital workers gather support for better pay



Tens of thousands of angry nurses, ambulance and other NHS workers were joined by people from the community, such as these pensioners in Greenwich, at more than 400 demonstrations around the country against the derisory 1 per cent pay offer that the government is trying to force on them. Workers are demanding 3 per cent across-the-board      Photo: Alan Clark

PILOT 'experiments' on the unemployed are planned around the country to make the poor work for the pittance they get on the dole.

This could happen before the next general election. Recent amendments to the Jobseekers' Bill make this possible, ministers have privately acknowledged.

BY MIKE COOKE

These amendments are understood to be the brainchild of Social Security Secretary Peter Lilley, who sought to include the new powers as a step on the road to US-style 'workfare' programmes.

Parliament will only have to vote once on such a scheme to give it the go-ahead.

Along with other Tory right-wingers, Lilley wants to hit the unemployed hard. The Tories want to portray the unemployed as responsible for their own plight. Some no doubt believe their own propaganda/lies.

But its not just the Tories who are jumping on the get-tough bandwagon. Some Labour MPs, taking their cue from US President Bill Clinton's election slogan of 'tough love', are also sympathetic to the drive.

It is very far from impossible that Labour leader Tony Blair is one of them.

### Eviction

Blair's been making a series of 'rights and responsibilities' speeches that include the call to make the eviction of 'anti-social' council tenants easier.

Also on the Tory agenda is a drive to make councils individually responsible for benefit provision. This is ominously

similar to the nurses pay deal where they are being encouraged to make local deals.

The compulsory work could include a single large contract involving routine low-skill work or a package of a greater variety of tasks in the community.

The local approach to compulsory labour means that there won't be administration costs. It will also divide the campaign against it since it won't affect all the unemployed at once, so reducing the outcry.

### Rules

What the rules mean is that ministers will get the discretionary powers to change the qualifications for benefit and to alter other conditions affecting the labour market.

The jobseekers' legislation proposes stiffer requirements for people to be 'actively seeking work'.

The jobseekers' allowance will replace unemployment benefit and reduce to six months the period of entitlement to non-means-tested pay when out of work.

■ See story on 'Groundswell' meeting, page 6.

## Nightmare journey for Workers Aid member

FROM ALYOSCIA D'ONOFRIO IN TUZLA

THE journey to Tuzla in north-east Bosnia is a nightmare. I arrived on Monday morning (3 April) after a three-day journey from Split, on the Croatian coast.

At Mostar I had been taken off the bus by HVO Bosnian Croat forces. Some of my things were confiscated. I was taken into west Mostar, controlled by the HVO, and interrogated for three hours. After my release I

was left to wander the streets — on the wrong side of the f\*\*\*ing river!

I was 'saved' by the European Union police who dumped me back over the river at the Bosnian checkpoint at Armija. They found me another bus which left Mostar late Friday. This took days longer because the bus became stuck in the snow between Vares and Tuzla.

Having finally arrived I can now get on with the work I was sent to do by Workers Aid/Student Aid for Bosnia — to find out the needs of the town for future convoys.



## Workers Press

# Japan writhes under weight of strong currency

**A STATE of near-panic exists among Japanese big businesses as the yen continues its inexorable rise and the dollar plunges on the world's currency markets.**

Since January, the yen has risen in value by 15 per cent against the dollar. Last Monday, the dollar was worth 86.20 yen, an all-time low. This means that Japanese exporters are finding it more and more difficult to survive against their world competitors.

*A strong currency makes foreign products relatively cheaper than those manufactured within the country. Imports are sucked in in preference to the domestic product. Export orders dry up. A balance of payments crisis results.*

In Japan, with every rise in the yen, some of the biggest Japanese manufacturers are sacking workers as their export orders shrink.

Currency markets have been expecting a reduction in Japanese interest rates — especially since the snap reduction of German rates. But the Japanese central bank is reluctant to reduce the discount rate from its already historic low of 1.75 per cent. It would prefer the exchange rate to become more favourable.

\* \* \* \* \*

**THERE is also hostility on the markets to the Japanese government of Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, as they expect the economy to go into a 'double-dip' recession.**

Toyota, Honda and Sony are all Japanese companies that have been hit by the falling dollar. Toyota loses 10 billion yen (£71.4 million) for each one-yen rise against the dollar.

Suspensions in Tokyo are growing that the US government is deliberately letting its currency slide to give US exports, and so US manufacturers, a competitive edge on world markets.

Last week, the Clinton administration refused to raise US interest rates to try to halt the dollar's plunge.

Tremors have already been felt on the Tokyo stock market as the yen has climbed inexorably. The Nikkei index, which measures activity on the Tokyo stock exchange, as the Financial Times index measures that on London's, has dropped 22 per cent since the start of the year, reaching a 32-month low. On Monday alone, the Nikkei fell 758.66 points to 15,381.29, 4.7 per cent!

\* \* \* \* \*

**SERIOUS knock-on effects have been seen in the balance sheets of the major Japanese banks, which carry a significant proportion of their capital in company stocks. Hence the warning from Shoichiro Toyoda, a leading business spokesperson, that Japan's economy was 'now in a very severe situation'.**

Toyoda called on the Japanese government to implement a public-works programme to boost the domestic market.

A former Bank of Japan executive director, Masaru Hayama, warned that the currency crisis was beyond the central bank's control.

The latest round of the currency crisis has thrown into doubt any prospect of a Japanese recovery. But more important is that it has brought nearer the prospect of an open trade war between the US and Japan. Europe would almost certainly be dragged in to the resulting hostilities.

The world stage is increasingly being set for a 'devaluation war' in which each country, or trading bloc, allows its currency to fall in an effort to gain a competitive advantage against others on the world market.

This is what happened in the 1930s, in the run up to World War II, with all the grim social and political consequences, including widespread unemployment, that this involved for working people throughout the world.

# Letters

## Spot the difference on Clause Four

WRITING to criticise what I wrote about Clause Four, Dave Smith (Letters, 1 April) says that 'Blair and the rest of them ... have to be gotten rid of but not to be replaced with others of their kind but a revolutionary leadership'. I agree completely.

Smith says 'Labour's ditching of Clause Four is symptomatic of the disintegration of any pretence the Labourites have of socialism'. I agree, but I also think Smith will agree that this disintegration itself is symptomatic of something deeper.

Why must they give up this pretence after all these years?

vate, as Smith suggests we are doing, the illusion that 'by keeping Clause Four in place, at some later stage the Labour Party can be forced into using it'.

Where do Dave Smith and I differ? We are agreed on the *main thing*: as he puts it, 'It is time to organise into a Marxist international revolutionary party in order to take on the ruling class — and this includes Blair and the rest of the parliamentary Labour Party'.

As Smith knows, he and I have never disagreed about this. On the basis of this agreement we can overcome our *disagreement*, which is this: I say we shouldn't *stand aside* from all those who are getting into a fight with Blair on Clause Four, telling them from the outside that they are chasing moonbeams, persisting in their illu-

## Dracula's Irish significance

TOM OWEN in his articles connected with the film 'Interview with the Vampire' (25 February and 25 March) gives his interpretation of the social and psychological significance of Bram Stoker's novel 'Dracula'.

I do not wish to enter the debate between Owen and Roger Horrocks (Letters, 11 March) on the social meaning of vampire films. I am writing to point out, however, that an alternative interpretation of what Bram Stoker intended his creation to symbolise has been offered by his descendant Ivor Stoker Dixon.

According to Dixon, Count Dracula symbolises the cruelty of British colonialism particularly, but not exclusively, as practised in Stoker's native Ireland.

I do not know what either Owen or Horrocks will think of this interpretation. However, it is worth noting that an Irish translation of 'Dracula' was published in Dublin in 1933, 21 years after Stoker's death.

The publishers, the Irish government's publications office (Oifig Diolta Foilseacháin Rialtasais) and the translator, Seán O Cuirrin, evidently felt that, despite the Transylvanian and English settings, 'Dracula' was essentially an Irish novel.

Jim Smith  
London SE6

## Cast your mind back, Sean

IF Sean Matgamna (Letters, 1 April) casts his mind back a month or so, he might remember writing an article in 'Workers Liberty' (No.19) in which he lumped together diverse socialist publications — 'Red Pepper', 'New Interventions', 'Critique', 'Revolutionary History' — claiming those involved in them were all more or less 'adrift' from the workers' movement, and disdained the class struggle.

He complained: 'they do not accept any obligation on themselves to go to work and test their ideas in "revolutionary practice" in the labour movement, and in the working class.'

Some comrades involved in 'Revolutionary History' were waging struggles before he or I were born, and I thought his attack was out of order.

I suspect some members of the Alliance for Workers Liberty thought so too, since they remain represented on the editorial board of 'Revolutionary History' (which Sean conceded

was 'on the whole, a worthwhile publication', before accusing it and 'Critique' of 'helping to shape a whole sub-culture' separating Marxism from the class struggle!).

Of course comrades from different tendencies work together on the journal (something Sean seems to regard as suspect), and we don't always agree. 'Revolutionary History' has its faults and must be prepared to take criticism. But Sean Matgamna offered none. He made sweeping assertions that people were all dodging their duty to the working class, or worse.

The nearest he came to a specific illustration was to say: 'You can get the most weird and wonderful discussions — so I'm told — at a Critique conference! Recently they had a learned discussion about the Welfare State: should socialists defend it? After all, wasn't it the wrong model? So bureaucratic! Many of the 70 people there seemed to think it funny that Workers' Liberty supporters should want to defend the Welfare State.'

Not having been at the 'Critique' conference, I can't comment on what was said there, still less on what people 'seemed to think'. However, after working in the NHS for ten years (and taken part in some struggles), I can testify that the bureaucratic character of 'the Welfare State' is a legitimate concern for socialists.

This has come up in the Community and Union Action Campaign (CUAC), which some 'Workers Liberty' supporters have attended, although 'Workers Liberty' prefers to back a new 'Welfare State Network'. Of course we defend the past gains of the working class, however inadequate or adulterated, whether it's the ideas reflected in Clause Four, or the provision of care in the health service. But that doesn't mean defending Labour reformism.

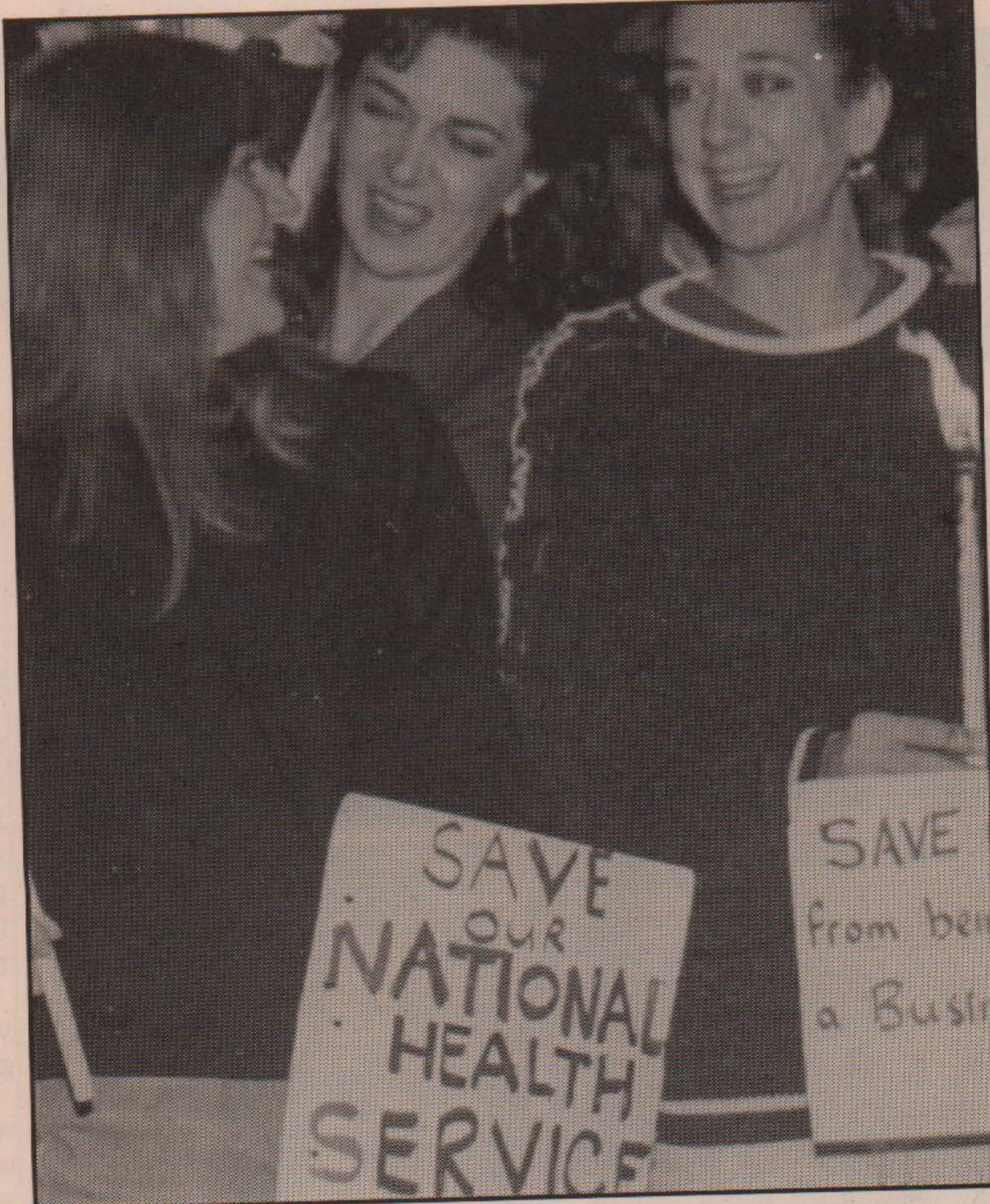
Had the working class had any real say in the running of Britain's nationalised industries or public services, would privatisation be such a push-over? The Tories' friends were already on the boards, planning their perks and pay increases.

The 'Workers Liberty' editorial entitled 'Build a mass movement for the Welfare State' said nothing on this issue. Nor — beyond sneering that 'Critique's' discussions were 'weird' — did Sean Matgamna.

And yet around what was supposedly said in one discussion (and without even one direct quote), he penned a two-page article — the subject of my comments (Inside Left, 18 March) criticised by Matgamna in his letter — denouncing all and sundry, without even establishing the slightest connection between them.

And now he complains when he gets pulled up by me. Come off it, Sean!

Charlie Pottins  
London SW1



NHS is part of the reforms the ruling class must take back

Isn't this symptomatic of the fact that capitalism can no longer make use of Labour leaders who, behind a mask of pretending to be for socialism as the ultimate aim, dispense a few reforms to divide and soften up the working class? Instead capitalism requires now that all past reforms be reversed.

And so, as Dave Smith says, 'We should be preparing workers for the fight against a Labour government'. That is, we think, the *main point*. And it is why we are for fighting now to bring together all who come forward to take the lead on every front against the ruling class and against Blair, who is that class's representative.

That is what the WRP aims at, and certainly not to culti-

sions. We have to find ways of convincing them, in the fight, that to overcome Blair and company means, exactly, to come together with us in building the party the working class needs.

Just one other note. I do not put the Clause Four issue 'on a par with the battles in Bosnia, South Africa and Angola'.

But we do know this: the global crisis of capitalism as a system has come to the point when the ruling class must put an end to the insulation of the working class in Britain from the barbarous conditions imposed on the workers of colonial and ex-colonial countries.

Cliff Slaughter  
Leeds

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# Greenwich hospital will not be able to cope

A HEALTH-SERVICE campaign group in Greenwich, south-east London, says the hospital chosen to replace two major hospitals in the borough after their closure will not be able to cope.

The Brook General and the Greenwich District hospitals were to be replaced with a 'fully-equipped' hospital, the government had claimed. But the Queen Elizabeth Military hospital (QEMH) in Woolwich, which has been chosen, is in desperate need of a £25 million refurbishment, says the Hands Off Greenwich NHS (HOGNHS) campaign,

BY ALAN CLARK

in a recently published report.

HOGNHS says the QEMH is system-built of rusting metal cladding. Wards are not fully wired for diagnostics, nor are they plumbed for medical gases. It also needs a new heating system and does not comply with fire regulations.

The London ambulance service says that access to the QEMH is difficult because of its location. It is served by only one bus route.

The health workers' demonstrations on Thursday 30 March are just one expression of the disarray and lack of resources in the National Health Service. We get almost daily reports of it from the media.

Horror stories abound about

patients not being able to get the proper treatment, or having to be sent long distances to find a hospital that will treat them — sometimes with disastrous results.

The Tories are breaking up the NHS. They want a private health-care system — and they don't care how they get it, even against public opinion.

Health Secretary Virginia Bottomley claims that more

money than ever is being pumped into the NHS, but no one believes her.

Hospitals around the country are being closed down or run down. Since 1982, London has lost 10,000 beds and 76 hospitals.

The ambulance service is underfunded and in crisis. Nurses are angry and bitter about the government's miserly 1 per cent pay award. Even the traditionally anti-strike Royal College of Midwives and Royal College of Nurses are thinking of industrial action. Indeed, the RCM has recently ditched its 100-year-old no-strike clause.

Adding to the frontline workers' bitterness is the size of hospital trust chiefs' pay.

## Problems

Greenwich, in south-east London, is typical of the many inner city boroughs that have problems. Unemployment is high — about 14.2 per cent. Last year, a council report said many families were suffering from 'serious poverty'.

For those on low or no pay, the 50p extra slapped on prescription charges from 1 April, came as a bad April Fools' joke.

HOGNHS is battling against the Tory government and its of privatisation of the health-care system. But would a Labour

government reverse the privatisations? On present form, Labour will not reverse any of the Tories' attacks on the working class. Indeed, Labour leader Tony Blair has practically said as much.

But many workers place their hopes in Labour and the people of Greenwich are no exception.

HOGNHS has started a petition to be presented to October's Labour Party conference. It asks that the next Labour government provide the necessary funding to equip and staff all hospitals — including those up for closure. It also calls for:

- All hospital services to be reinstated.
- All hospital trusts to be dissolved.
- GP fund-holding to end.
- Labour to abandon the ideology of the market and establish democratic health-care committees in each area.
- Proper community and primary health care.
- A London-wide health authority.

The HOGNHS petition must be signed by everyone in Greenwich.

But workers everywhere must become active and fight to keep their hospitals open and support the nurses in their campaign for better pay and working conditions.



Nurses demonstrated outside Greenwich District hospital on 30 March demanding a higher pay offer

Photo: Alan Clark

## 'Little Irma' dies in London hospital

BY MIKE COOKE

'LITTLE IRMA' — the seriously injured Bosnian child who Prime Minister John Major was shamed into bringing to Britain for treatment in 1993 — has died in Great Ormond Street children's hospital in London.

Irma Hadzimiratovic developed a blood infection and died in her sleep, doctors said on Saturday 1 April.

Irma was paralysed in the Sarajevo market mortar-bomb attack in August 1993, which killed her mother, Elvira. Surgeons worked by candlelight in Sarajevo to reconstruct her bowels, and to remove shrapnel lodged in her head, stomach and spine. She also developed meningitis in the Sarajevo hospital.

Desperate pleas by doctors that she would die if she wasn't flown out and treated properly failed to move United Nations bureaucrats. These requests had been blocked for six days, when medics, in a last-ditch attempt to get sympathy for Irma, asked foreign film crews to tell the world about her.

When the footage of her twisted body was shown on television, the switchboard at No.10 Downing Street was jammed.

Prime Minister John Major made a demagogic gesture against "red tape" and opened Britain's frontiers to just one

refugee in desperate need and lacking the necessary papers," said Bob Archer in Workers Press (14 August 1993).

Maggie O'Kane of the 'Guardian' was equally critical and described the event as 'a triumph of cynicism masquerading as compassion' (20 August 1993).

Five-year-old Irma arrived in London with her father, Ramiz, on an RAF Hercules aircraft.

She learnt English at the hospital school and went out occasionally in a specially adapted wheelchair. But she remained very ill and couldn't breathe without a ventilator.

## Help

It was right to fly her out and do everything to help her live as best she could after her life was shattered in the bomb blast. There are other children who did not get the same publicity who have died in the war for lack of treatment because of heartless governments, such as Britain's.

And Great Ormond Street children's hospital had been targeted for possible closure a while before Irma arrived — so, if it had been, where would that have left her. Hospitals and wards are being closed, and treatment is being 'rationed', as in the recent case of the Cambridge child who was refused chemotherapy on the NHS.

## London bus crews form breakaway

BY ROY THOMAS

A GROUP of 260 London bus drivers and conductors have set up a breakaway organisation over a dispute with the Transport and General Workers' Union about the privatisation of

the London General Bus Company, which has five bus garages in south London.

When the company was privatised at the end of 1994, the TGWU urged its members to buy shares in the management-worker buy-out.

Bus crews complain this was done without any vote and

that they now feel it is like any other layer of management.

## Buy

The company money that was used to buy shares for the workers should, the breakaway body says, have been paid to the workers. It says the money had

been earmarked for bonuses.

The local TGWU full-time officer says he worked tirelessly to get the best deal for the members.

About 70 per cent of the £8 million it cost to buy London General came from city investors, who are now the real owners of the company.

## Bus managers face conspiracy charges over M2 crash

THE latest stage in the case of the M2 coach crash in Kent in 1993, which killed nine US tourists and the driver, has resulted in the summoning of five managers of the Brelaton company by Kent police.

The managing and finance directors and the operations, assistant operations and reser-

vations managers have all been summonsed to appear at Sittingbourne magistrates' court on 26 April on charges that between January 1992 and November 1993 they, together with others, conspired to cause drivers to falsify records.

A further three managers are expected to be served with

summons soon. And a summons has been issued against the company itself.

The investigation into the crash has looked at whether the driver had worked more than the legal number of hours and failed to take the prescribed rest period. The accident occurred at 9.30am on a dry, clear day.

With the privatisation of the bus and coach industry in Britain there has been much pressure to reduce costs by employing fewer drivers for longer hours.

One way to force drivers to do this is to squeeze wages so they have to work longer hours to make ends meet.

## Britain comes third in EU fraud league

BY PETER GIBSON

BRITAIN's reputation for 'business probity' has taken some knocking in recent years and now has come third in a league table drawn up by the European Union, behind Germany and Italy.

Discovered fraud in the EU doubled last year compared with 1993, to reach £820 million.

is four or five times higher than that. Nearly half the reported fraud is payments made as a result of the Common Agricultural Policy.

The EU commissioner for financial control, Anita Gradin, maintained that the profusion of laws made the fraudster's task an easy one. They can make an à la carte selection of the EU legislation that suits their work best.

Uncovered British fraud was worth 120 million in 1994, about £100 million in 1993.

slightly more real money — between 1991 and 1994. In 1994, there were 201 cases of fraud uncovered, bringing the 1991-94 total to more than 1,000.

Only 2 per cent of the cash has been recovered.

It's clear there's more effort put into nabbing unemployed workers who do the odd job on the side, 'cash in hand', to make ends meet, than into getting those who live it up on the money they con the state and the EU into giving them

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**Inside left**

**Easy rider?**

LAIR is getting an easy ride, 'cause Four campaign or no,' complained a lapsed Labour Party member from south-east London. 'About members' attitudes to their party leader, in an article rejected last month by the left, green and supposedly radical 'Red Pepper' magazine (this column normally deals with stuff that's been published, but I'm not proud).

Labour members were greeting Blairism with 'guilty shuffles' and averted eyes, the writer charged. This is intolerable enough among ordinary members intimidated by the media into choosing the media-friendly Blair as the only electable alternative to a prime minister in whose own party Blair could appear tomorrow morning without any change in political direction.

But when those who have been shabbily treated themselves become gutless mouthpieces of a tasteless nonentity, who appears to have been created on the drawing-board of a cheesy third-rate advertising agency, one is left only to cry words of despair.

Forget that only last summer Blair argued that reform of Clause Four was neither necessary nor desirable. Political necessities change, often overnight. . . . Admittedly, a recent Gallup poll found a majority of [Labour members] supported Blair's reform campaign. But when they read Clause Four a majority . . . actually supported that it said.

The anti-Clause Four movement is not about modernisation. After all, Blair himself is happy to be photographed singing away in a building dedicated to the ship of a pseudo-historical figure whose words, uttered and inscribed nearly 2,000 years ago, still appear to have some relevance to him. Then again, maybe not: It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Sounds a bit radical, that.

No, the reform of Clause Four is solely about power . . . the humiliation of opposition. . . .

The democratic reforms of the Labour Party implemented by Kinnock and Smith and being conquered by Blair . . . provide camouflage for the reality of a centralised party: decisions made behind closed doors by leadership; candidates replaced by leadership nominees; policies made and only then offered to the membership for approval; dissent smothered, dissenters exiled; the constitution of the party effectively changed by a speech at a party conference; the membership of a party conspiring in the destruction of their own power and then reveling those who do not conform.

That the final beneficiary of this is the Labour Party should be no surprise: after all, in a [Bolshevik Party] central committee that included Trotsky, Kollontai, Zhdanov, Kamenev, etc., it was the numskull Stalin who finally took control.

Writing before Blair had unveiled his replacement for Clause Four, or spoken about school leavers, the lapsed Labour member Zloty Furburned (must be a pun, not even I could dream up a pen-name) warned against the 'Americanisation' of British politics, with 'our own versions of Democrats and Republicans vying for office with nary a distance between them wide enough to fit a National Identity Card . . .

Prophetic words, unfortunately: Blair plays ID card to trump Blair ran a headline in last week's Observer. 'Tory grand vision to . . .'

# What the death means for working-class

MORE than once over the past two years, I and others in the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International have said that 'strictly speaking, Stalinism no longer exists'.

But, yet, some comrades say, there are still many examples of Stalinism. In China the Communist Party still runs the state machinery and sits on top of that society. In Kazakhstan, the Stalinists are also in control. In the trade union movement, in Britain for example, there are many former members of the Communist Party who still work in the old way of suppressing and diverting workers' struggles.

So, these comrades say, is it not over-optimistic or one-sided to say that the conditions are favourable for the reconstruction of the Fourth International and the reconstruction of the international workers' movement? Don't we need to recognise that the new situation since the collapse of the Stalinist regimes from 1989 is contradictory and complex?

I maintain that such criticisms are wrong.

The reason they are wrong is that they start from definitions of Stalinism that use certain common characteristics that are normally associated with the Stalinist bureaucracy and Stalinist politics.

But Stalinism was not at all merely the sum of all the characteristics of the states and bodies that were 'Stalinist'. When Stalinism existed, each instance — state, party, etc. — was not understandable except in relation to the whole

**'A qualitative change is contained in the collapse of the Stalinist regimes and this has international consequences. The old unity called Stalinism is dead.'**

of Stalinism, of which the instances formed inseparable parts. And 'Stalinism as a whole' had a definite and fundamental relation — economic and political — to the capitalist world, as a whole and in its parts.

To think that what defined as Stalinist a party or the bureaucracies of the states in the Soviet Union, eastern Europe, etc. — Trotskyists have designated these states as degenerated and deformed workers' states — was some shared common features with other Stalinist entities is to adopt a formal-logical approach and not to get to the heart of the problem.

Such a method is like that of sociology, which uses the logic of fixed forms rather than studying, as Marxism must, the changing whole as the unity of contradictory moving parts and relations that in their turn change the relation of the whole to itself. Marxism, if it is to be worthy of the name, adopts this logic of 'dialectics' and not formal logic. This is not to be confused with 'holism' which begins and ends with an abstract undifferentiated 'whole' that is not analysable, saying no more than that the whole

**It is more than five years since the collapse of Stalinism became apparent in the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. CLIFF SLAUGHTER argues that Stalinism is dead and discusses the consequences of this for working-class consciousness**

is greater than the sum of the parts.

The formal-logical, undialectical approach to Stalinism has a series of fatal consequences for understanding. For example, it fails to see that each of the instances called 'Stalinist' previously related to the international class struggle as *part of Stalinism as a whole*. But today these instances relate to the international class struggle, to imperialism and the working class, the main economic protagonists in modern capitalism, in a qualitatively new and different way.

This concretely and specifically is the 'complexity' and 'contradictoriness' of the situation following the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in the USSR and eastern Europe. The complexity and contradictoriness does not consist 'on the one hand' of the collapse of the Soviet Union, favourable conditions, etc., and 'on the other hand' of dangerous Stalinist elements, etc.

**Different functions**

THE essential relation, the unity between all the Stalinist entities was not that they had certain common vital characteristics. On the contrary, the nature and role of each was conditioned by and could only be understood through their particular, specific, that is different, functions in relation to the whole — that is, to Stalinism as a whole and its relation to imperialism.

Stalinism itself, as a whole, could not be understood dialectically except as a dynamic unity of these interacting different parts. Stalinism as such, as a whole, was in reality mediated through these parts to the world, to capitalism and to itself.

The Stalinist bureaucratic apparatus of the Soviet state and economy could only effect its necessary relationship to the economy, politics and military strength of imperialism as part of a whole, Stalinism, in which other, different parts, the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries, worked in a related but *different* way.

They did this by adapting the working-class movement to the relationship between the Soviet Union and their 'own' capitalist classes.

Later, with the growth of national-liberation movements, the winning of national independence and the formation of bourgeois-nationalist governments that balanced between the Soviet Union and imperialism, this differentiation within the unity we call Stalinism developed in new ways.

It would be a big mistake to survey the residue today of the collapse of the Stalinist regimes and conclude 'empirically' (that is by gathering 'the facts') that in places Stalinism continues to exist.

The dialectical approach of Marxism is, to be sure, not so easy to grasp as the approach of formal

logic. But it is the only way that can take the working-class movement forward to revolutionary, socialist conclusions.

A qualitative change is contained in the collapse of the Stalinist regimes and this has international consequences. The old unity called Stalinism is dead.

And what was the essential relation between the different parts that made up the unity of Stalinism? It was that they came from the same source, from the politics of 'socialism in one country' as the ideology of the adaptation of the Soviet bureaucracy to imperialism.

The political line of 'socialism in one country', which was adopted by Stalin's clique in the Soviet Union from 1924, turned the international working-class movement away from the task of building socialism through international revolution to defending the 'gains of October', the gains of the Bolshevik-led Russian Revolution in 1917, important as that was.

But this *common* origin, this whole historical and political line of socialism in one country, the necessity of it and of its development to deal with changing conditions, required precisely the *differentiation* of the roles and functions of the different parts, the Communist Parties and so on.

And the developing necessary interconnections between these parts, all changing as they responded to and developed through their connections both external (to the class struggle in the capitalist countries) and internal (to the Soviet bureaucracy and to international Stalinism), were what formed the changing unity we knew as Stalinism.

**Crucial issue**

SO, again, Stalinism cannot be identified today by finding in a number of particular, individual cases — ones once part of the whole, Stalinism — what they have in common in correspondence with a concept 'Stalinist'.

Similarly, Marx wrote in his 'Theses on Feuerbach': 'The essence of Man is no abstraction inherent in each individual. In its reality it is the ensemble (aggregate, totality) of social relations.'

The same question of dialectical logic is involved in the crucial issue of class-consciousness. Class-consciousness is not a general, common or universal state of consciousness that exists to a greater or lesser extent in each individual member of the working class. Rather, it is the totality (or 'ensemble') of all the relations between consciousness, organisation and practice of the working-class movement.

This totality is internally differentiated, with its parts responding in their own necessary ways to the objective realities of the class struggle as they confront them, and to the totality itself, the

movement as a whole — and its changes in response to the impact of the class struggle as a whole.

At the same time, this 'whole' (the class movement) is a dynamic unity of interacting and changing parts, not an abstraction standing above the parts. This whole cannot relate to the class struggle as a whole, another totality, except through its parts.

This was already pointed out in a discussion on class-consciousness organised by the Workers International in 1993. In response to criticisms by Cyril Smith ('The International', No.15, March 1995), I summarised part of Istvan Meszaros's contribution to that discussion as follows: the 'mass communist consciousness' written about by the young Marx 'has to be fought for through the strategy, the educational work and the leadership in political actions, of the organised Marxists'. (Meszaros's contribution was published in 'The International', No.10, December 1992.)

And in the same discussion, Mirek Vodslon wrote: 'The "subjective factors" . . . are embodied in organisations of a vanguard of the working class and their programme' ('The International', No.10, December 1992).

This fight of the vanguard must not start from some 'ascribed' correct class-consciousness as was thought, for example, by Georg Lukacs (see his 'History and Class Consciousness').

It must start from the real objective struggles forced upon the different sections of the working class from which can be developed that united class movement that is compelled to confront the class enemy as a class, as a whole, challenging for power as the prerequisite of a solution at the level of the social system as a whole.

This historically necessary mobilisation of the working class as a unity, a whole, a class, does not and cannot come about as the result of general socialist propaganda and agitation for socialist revolution. The necessary mediations, from the present life-and-death struggles impelled by the needs of capitalism, to the unification of these struggles against the enemy as a class, represented most decisively by the state, demand revolutionary programme, practice, forms of organisation.

Existing class-consciousness means not just the state of mind of individual workers, but the organisation, strategy and programme of working-class parties, trade unions and other associations, their leadership and mutual relations, and so on.

In today's world situation — the collapse of the Soviet and east European Stalinist regimes, the profound crisis of China, the disintegration of the Communist Parties, the plunging structural crisis of imperialism — how foolish it would be to prescribe the way in which socialist class-consciousness will develop, or to expect the form of that development to resemble that of the past. These forms are new, they are varied and they develop unevenly.

The break-up of the Stalinist regimes in eastern Europe after two generations, and in the USSR after



# of Stalinism working class

mean the working class struggling to reconstruct its class movement in ways hitherto unknown.

The workers are obliged to start from the real conditions of breakdown and disintegration in these states. That is, they start with their own experiences, which are unlike anything considered in Marxist writings until now.

To use Lenin's phrase, it would be 'infantile leftism' to work politically on the basis of expecting these workers to respond to preaching about the evils of the market and capitalist exploitation or the fraud of 'democracy'.

As well as the 'battle of ideas', there are the real, life-and-death battles forced upon workers by the disintegration of the Stalinist-ruled social order — and not just of the political superstructure. The vicious forces of nationalism and organised crime, prepared and nourished by Stalinism itself, are flourishing in conditions where millions are forced into the daily struggle for individual survival.

## Bosnia struggles

IN BOSNIA, these struggles have erupted with extreme force. The workers of that country take their place now in the fight for the re-

construction of the international working-class movement, but not because they were first convinced of the need to do that.

The Bosnian working class has found itself threatened with destruction by the nationalist and fascist forces bred and released by Stalinism, its crisis and its disintegration. The struggle for survival by this working class cannot but begin with a class-consciousness determined by its past, in particular by its experience of Stalinism and the resistance to it.

Now, in the unavoidable fight of the working class against the reactionary forces led by Bosnian Serb nationalist leader Radovan Karadzic and Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic, the necessities of the struggle itself — and not only of our understanding — dictate that there begin also a fight to go forward from that level of class-consciousness.

In this fight the working class of Tuzla, north-east Bosnia, has begun by defending its 'multicultural' nature, that is, in a certain very important sense, it defends its unity against the attacks of the enemy.

It is only in the real struggle of these workers that this vital element of class-consciousness will

become part of the development of that socialist consciousness necessary to overcome the crisis of working-class revolutionary leadership, and arm the working class in the former Yugoslavia and internationally with the understanding, the strategy and the organisation necessary to overthrow capitalism.

## Rebuild movement

WORKING-CLASS consciousness will not develop anywhere except in and through the fight to reconstruct its internationalism. The social democracy of the Labour Party and other European 'working-class' parties, which supported the ruling classes of their 'own' countries, had first to destroy this internationalism during World War I. So, later, did the Stalinist bureaucracy.

The struggle of the Left Opposition in the Soviet Union in the 1920s, the International Left Opposition (1920s and 1930s) and the Fourth International (from the 1930s) against this discontinuity, the destruction of internationalism, contains the continuity of the struggle for Marxism by the Trotskyist movement.

That means that the reconstruction of the working-class move-

ment and the reconstruction of the Fourth International are a unity, a unity rooted in the objective world and its necessities, and not merely a well-worked-out idea, an ideal.

At the very worst, a crushing defeat is possible in Bosnia at the hands of imperialism and the nationalist and fascist forces. Against this threat of a first and tragic defeat of a section of today's European working class by fascism, it is essential to fight to bring the international working class into the struggle.

## Developing parts

TO CONCLUDE. The actual, objective, not the idealised and prescribed (or 'ascribed') totality of working-class consciousness is made up of developing, contradictory parts each with living and changing roots in the struggles forced by capitalism on the working class.

Marxist theory and the worked-over experience of the international working-class movement have to be brought into a living relationship with that objective totality for the working class to learn from, build upon, negate and go beyond its spontaneous, partial struggles, its 'embryonic' class-consciousness, overcoming the obstacles that stand in its way — most importantly, the consequences of Stalinism.

For Stalinism to have the grip it had over six decades on the international working-class movement was a very different thing from today's situation, in which the working class is confronted everywhere with the need to overcome the consequences of the break-up of Stalinism.

Without Stalinism the capitalist post-war boom could not have happened. As World War II came to an end the deals made between Stalin, Churchill, and the US leaders Roosevelt and Truman were imposed on the international working class through the transmission

belts of the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries. European social democracy was thus given a new lease of life as a political representative of the working class.

Now, as the contradictions of capitalism's historical crisis resurface with renewed force, the working class has been disarmed by the past destructive work of Stalinism and poisonous role of Stalinism's remnants. But there is also no Stalinism to play the decisive role of rescuing the capitalist system as at the end of World War II.

The Workers Aid for Bosnia campaign, which has sent a number of convoys to the mining and working-class town of Tuzla and has fought to take internationalism and support for multi-ethnic Bosnia into the labour movement, shows that the keystone is the struggle to reconstruct working-class internationalism and not some abstract and sectarian conception of the

'Working-class consciousness will not develop anywhere except in and through the fight to reconstruct its internationalism.'

development of revolutionary class-consciousness.

There is a danger that the movement to reconstruct the Fourth International, the movement to reconstruct working-class internationalism, will remain on the sidelines of the real development.

But it was to a great extent forced into this position during the long years of Stalinism's domination of the international workers' movement and maintenance of capitalism's relative stability. And today Stalinism is no longer there!



In the former Yugoslavia the vicious forces of nationalism were prepared by Stalinism: Workers Aid is has been fighting for workers' internationalism. Top, the first Workers Aid convoy sets off from the Timex picket line in Dundee in 1993 (Photo: Rex Dunn). Above, the first convoy at the Brandenburg gate in Berlin



## Keeping the home fires burning

### PERSONAL COLUMN

WAS an everyday sight in Britain's mining areas between two world wars, especially during the winter.

Out-of-work miners and their families and children would spend hours searching for bits and pieces of coal on the slag-heaps. Starved and practically homeless, they had no other way of putting a fire in the grate.

Sometimes, when things were really bad, a group of desperate men would organise a raid on loaded coal-wagons in the railway sidings.

The bosses had robbed them of their health, their vigour, and finally their jobs; the meanly administered Means Test had robbed them of their human dignity. And to these men from whom so much had been stolen, keeping their children warm was more important than keeping the commandment 'Thou shalt not steal'.

But this argument cut no ice whatever with police or magistrates, interested only in upholding property rights. Miners caught taking coal from wagons would normally be jailed; the gatherers on the slag-heaps would often be arrested, charged, and fined for taking a few paltry lumps of coal that would otherwise have gone to waste.

All this is ancient history, isn't it? Those were the Bad Old Days of 60 or 70 years ago and things were different now?

Not all that different. During the 1984-85 miners' strike, mining communities remembered that 'raiding' slag-heaps — duff-heaps, as they call them in Durham — was the traditional way of keeping the home fires burning.

Miners were warned that this wicked activity would lose them their jobs. In practice all who were sacked on this pretext were reinstated but lost their seniority, so that they were treated as newcomers to the industry for such purposes as redundancy payments — a typical piece of management vindictiveness that was successfully challenged in the courts.

CONSIDER now the recent case of 26-year-old Gary Lewis, a work-lift truck driver who has been out of a job for three years.

When his wife Amanda came home from hospital with their new-born baby Chelsea, Gary found himself short of money to heat the house for them and for his three other children.

He had spent all his spare cash on bus fares, visiting his wife and new baby in a hospital 20 miles away. A bag of coal would have cost him £4.70, but he couldn't afford it. He was desperate.

There was a hole in the perimeter fence at the privately owned Lindsay colliery in nearby Ammanford. Gary put his hand through and took six little lumps of coal.

As his wife commented later, 'the coal he took was hardly enough to keep a fire going'. It was in fact valued at the princely sum of £2.

The police saw him committing this heinous crime and arrested him, and the Crown Prosecution Service decided to prosecute. He came up before the Ammanford magistrates.

'I knew what I was doing was wrong,' he told the court, 'but I had to look after my family.'

The chairman of the magistrates told him: 'Thieving of any description is a quite serious offence, no matter how small the amount. However, in these circumstances and because of your extremely poor financial circumstances, we grant you a conditional discharge.'

made no application for compensation.

Bringing this case — bringing this dangerous coal-thief to justice — cost the Crown Prosecution Service £750, a sum which would have provided the Lewis family with 159 bags of coal.

Alan Williams, MP for Carmarthen, said he was reminded of the days when people were hanged for sheep-stealing, and added:

'The CPS often seem reluctant to prosecute serious cases, but they have pursued this trivial matter with vigour. This case should never have been brought to court. A caution would have been sufficient.'

The Crown Prosecution Service refused to comment.

*The fault is great in man or woman*

*Who steals a goose from off a common;*

*But what can plead that man's excuse*

*Who steals a common from a goose?*

So wrote an anonymous radical in 'The Tickler Magazine' in 1821. Anatole France made much the same point just over 100 years ago, when he wrote of 'the magnificent evenness [égalité] of the law, which forbids rich and poor alike to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread' — or, as it might be, coal.

The estimable Ammanford magistrates believe that thieving is a serious offence. But their decision in the Gary Lewis case shows that even they recognise that in this offence there are degrees of seriousness.

The rich who between 1760 and 1840 stole the common land from the common people of Britain by large-scale enclosure, with piddling compensation to the dispossessed commoners and smallholders, were thieves on a grand scale, and they went unpunished.

What were the notorious 'Highland clearances', the brutal eviction of thousands of Scottish crofters in favour of huge sheep-runs in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, but an organised system of unpunished thieving on a vast scale?

And what indeed is the whole capitalist system but a mechanism for gigantic licensed theft, whereby the class that owns the means of production pockets the surplus value produced by the labour of the propertyless class whom it exploits?

Gary Lewis said that he knew what he was doing was wrong. I disagree with him. What he did was right.

Given a choice between letting a mother and her new-born baby shiver with cold in an unheated house and taking £2-worth of coal to make a fire for them, which of us would hesitate for a moment?

Faced with such a choice — though God forbid that those upright guardians of law and order should ever find themselves upon such an excruciating moral rack — I suspect that even the Ammanford magistrates would take the coal.

As for the benighted officials of the Crown Prosecution Service, with their strange penchant for crushing an unemployed man with a £750 steam-roller while rich fraudsters notoriously go scot-free, they too might in certain circumstances discover that there is a moral code higher than the jungle law which makes poverty a crime.

Under the present inhuman system it is our right, and may be our duty, to keep the home fires burning.

*Peter Fryer*

# 'I have never given up Marxism' — Japanese socialist

BY PETER GIBSON

TOKUZO HIGUCHI is a 67-year-old militant and organiser, who has been sacked five times for his trade union activity and expelled from the Japanese Communist Party twice. 'But I have never given up Marxism,' he says.

Last week Higuchi was in Britain meeting trade unionists and political activists and he spoke to Workers Press.

'I am an internationalist,' he said, and 'I have met trade union shop stewards here and realise that Japanese and British capitalists are doing the same things.'

He explained that the Japanese labour movement had learned about organisation from the British working class and about socialist thought from Germany.

'We were very impressed by the mineworkers' strike in 1984-85 and by their leader Arthur Scargill and the way they conducted that struggle.'

Higuchi said that the socialist left in Japan were the only ones to invite Scargill to visit Japan to speak about the NUM struggle.



Miners in Japan: 'We were very impressed by the mineworkers' strike in 1984-85 and by their leader Arthur Scargill'

'It is absolutely necessary to build on the strength in the workplace, and you must go on changing society from below in every part of the country, creating solidarity between agricultural and industrial workers.'

'But most important, as Marx said, trade unions must fight for wages and conditions,

but the wage slave system must be abolished and therefore the trade unions must also be socialist.'

In the course of his stay in Britain Higuchi met with the International Trade Union Solidarity Committee in London, and with Transport and General Workers' Union shop stewards

at the Ford Motor Company in Dagenham.

He also met with groups of political exiles in Britain and members of the National Union of Teachers and printers in the GPMU.

Higuchi's tour was organised by the Iranian Refugee Workers' Association.

Acknowledging this, he said, he considered that the most important problem that must be overcome in the working class is the division between workers in the imperialist countries and those struggling in the underdeveloped countries.

## Movement

'The movement in Germany, France, Britain and Japan has not done enough to support those struggles,' he said.

Higuchi ended his interview with Workers Press in a way that summed up his life's struggle:

'Our task for the 21st century is to rebuild workers' internationalism for socialism.'

He is still working and organising as general secretary of the Research Institute for Socialist Economy and as co-ordinator of the Workers' Collective Centre.

## Unemployed take steps to organise

BY KEN SINGER

RESISTANCE to the proposed Job Seekers' Allowance (JSA) was the main topic at a conference called to organise the unemployed.

The 'Groundswell' conference was attended by about 50 people and the main groups represented were from various organisations including the anarcho-syndicalist groups and other anarchists and revolutionary socialists.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the ways to work among the unemployed with the aim of forming an unemployed workers' union.

A brief introduction was given by each of the ten unemployed groups attending the conference. They each told of the functions carried out by their group.

A report was given of an occupation of the Edinburgh unemployed centre, which ended in a police assault and the arrest of 21 people.

The Bridgewater Commun-

ity Defence Campaign, formed during the 1984-85 miners' strike, reported on work in the postal workers' union on the questions of the union's leadership and the cuts in local services.

One suggestion on fighting oppressive legislation directed against the unemployed, such as 'action signing' (offering Restart or Job Club courses) and telling signers that they would be cut off if they did not cooperate, was to work with members of the Civil and Public Services Association.

Two forms of organisation were proposed: a regional and federated structure, or a centralised form of working. The federated system won the day, but it was decided that the Oxford branch be responsible for sending out leaflets and literature in general.

Another meeting will take place in July.

Should Trotskyists work with anarchists, who adopt a philosophy opposed to Marxism? I would say yes and, further, that we need to join the unemployed groups influenced by them.

## Irish Republican prisoners still in jail

THERE are 28 Irish Republican prisoners held in Britain, another eight are on temporary transfer and two on permanent transfer to Maghaberry jail in the north of Ireland. Saoirse is campaigning for their release in the light of the 'peace process'.

Conditions for prisoners in Britain have always been harsh, but in the last six months conditions have deteriorated. The relative of one prisoner has described their treatment as the most degrading ever, an opinion mirrored by their solicitor.

Irish prisoners in Belmarsh prison had been refused visits for six months until two of them were granted a visit a few weeks ago. But even then, when their relatives arrived from the north of Ireland they were told that they could not visit. A variety of reasons, such as lack of high-security facilities, were trotted out, changing from day to day.

The prison governor refused to say when they might be able to visit their loved ones, except to say it wouldn't be for six months. The authorities finally told the prisoners' solicitor that the visits could go ahead — on the day after the relatives were due to return to Ireland.

### Delayed

The relatives had secretly delayed their return and were able to visit for half an hour. Both visitors were shocked at the conditions suffered by their relatives — they showed phys-

months. One of the prisoners had lost two stone in that time.

Belmarsh is not alone. In other prisons, relatives are given the runaround, prisoners are subjected to maltreatment, and any speaking or written material in the Irish language are strictly forbidden.

### Dark

'The peace process does not seem to have penetrated the dark recesses of the prison service,' says Saoirse in its March newsletter. 'One can only speculate on the motives of the Home Office at whose behest the prisoners are being treated in this way. It does however underline the urgency of Saoirse's campaign.'

Causes for concern are:

- Eleven prisoners are now serving their 20th year in jail.
- The government refuses to hold prisoners in a prison close to their families.
- Prisoners in Belmarsh have not had visits for more than six months.
- Irish is the only language not allowed to be spoken in British jails. Visits are immediately terminated if Irish is spoken.
- Compassionate parole is refused to Republican prisoners.
- Ghosting, the practice of moving prisoners suddenly, causes great hardship to visiting families.
- Prisoners are held for long terms in the notorious special secure units (SSUs), which are a class within a prison and lead

Irish Republican prisoners currently in jail are:

Martina Anderson/Martina Nic Andrea	Maghaberry TT	D25134
Eddie Butler/Eamonn Le Butleir	Full Sutton	338637
Derek Doherty/Derek O Dochartaigh	Full Sutton	EN3887
Hugh Doherty/Aodh O Dochartaigh	Full Sutton	338636
Vincent Donnelly/Uinscann O Donnghaile	Frankland	274064
Brendan Dowd/Breanain O Dubhda	Whitemoor	758662
Harry Duggan/Anraí O Dubhagáin	Frankland	338638
Robert Fryer	Full Sutton	EN1341
Noel Gibson/Nollaig Mc Ghib	Full Sutton	879225
Patrick Hayes/Pdraig O hAodha	Frankland	EN1978
Thomas Jack	Frankland	EN3177
Paul Kavanagh/Pol Caomhanach	Maghaberry TT	L31888
Patrick Kelly/Pdraig McCallaigh	Full Sutton	EN1194
Denis Kinsella/Denis Cinnscalach	Frankland	EN1944
Sean Kinsella/Sean Cinnscalach	Full Sutton	758661
Pat McGlynn/Pairic MacFhloinn	Frankland	EN1946
Sean McNulty/Sean MacAnultaigh	Full Sutton	CL3440
Liam McCotter/Liam Mac Oitir	Belmarsh	LB83693
Gerard McDonnell/Gearoid Mac Domhnaill	Maghaberry TT	B75882
Joe McKenny/Seosamh MacCionaoith	Frankland	L46486
Patrick McLaughlin/Pdraig MacLochlainn	Maghaberry TT	LB83694
Gerard Mackin/Gearoid Mac Maicín	Frankland	EN3885
Patrick Magee/Pdraig Mag Aoidh	Maghaberry TT	B75881
Paul Magee (Dingus)/Pol Mag Aoidh	Belmarsh	BT3783
Nicholas Mullen/Nioclas Maolain	Whitemoor	MR0639
Stephen Nordone	Frankland	758663
Paul Norney/Pol Norney	Frankland	863532
Michael O'Brien/Micheal O Briain	Full Sutton	BT3782
Joe O'Connell/Seosamh O Conaill	Full Sutton	338635
Ella O'Dwyer/Ella Ni Duibhir	Maghaberry TT	D25135
Liam O'Dwyer/Liam O Dhuibhir	Belmarsh	MT2485
Feilim O hAdhmaill	Full Sutton	
Thomas Quigley/Tomas O Coighligh	Maghaberry TT	B69204
Liam Quinn/Liam O Cuinn	Whitemoor	49930
Peter Sherry/Peadar Mac Searraigh	Belmarsh	B75880
Jan Taylor/Jan Tailluir	Whitemoor	EN1977
Vincent Wood/Uinseann Wood	Full Sutton	EN1049
TT=Temporary Transfer		

March 1995

HMP Frankland, Finchale Avenue, Brasside, Durham DH1 5YD.  
HMP Full Sutton, York YO4 1PS.  
HMP Whitemoor, Longhill Road, March, Cambridge PE15 0PR.  
HMP Maghaberry, Old Road, Upper Ballinderry, Lisburn BT28 2PT.



# Support May Day!

MAY DAY is the day of international workers' solidarity — and has been so for 100 years.

This year the London May Day March Organising Committee — based on workers' organisations from London and the South-East and international workers' organisations — is holding events at a time when, as the committee's leaflet says: 'The Tories are trying to stop May Day. To destroy what we have won in years of struggle. To take away the public holiday. As they have attacked workers' rights and conditions for 16 years.'

Workers must support May Day, the day for workers around the world to unite.

Since the first international demonstrations for the eight-hour day were held on 1 May 1890, May Day has been used as a day to celebrate workers' internationalism.

A few years before, on 3 May 1886, Chicago police had killed six pickets on strike at the McCormick reaper plant, during a struggle for the eight-hour day.

Anarchist trade unionists called a peaceful protest in Haymarket Square the following night but as it broke up police attacked the crowd. An unknown person threw a bomb at the police, who opened fire on the crowd. Seven police and four workers were killed. Known radicals and labour leaders were rounded up and arrested.

August Spies, Albert Parsons, Adolph Fischer and George Engel were hanged on 11 November after a trial in which no attempt was made to link them to the actions in Haymarket; they were convicted solely on the grounds of their anarchism. Louis Lingg managed to commit suicide the day before the execution. Oscar Neebe, Samuel Fielden and Michael Schwab were given 15-year sentences and imprisoned until their pardon in 1893.

## Martyrs

Today a small plaque put up by US trade unionists commemorates the 'Haymarket martyrs'. On the other hand, the ruling class of Chicago put up a statue of a policeman in 1889 to thank the forces that protected their interests.

The statue was surreptitiously destroyed by workers in 1893 after the pardon. It was restored and put under 24-hour police protection, but protests and a runaway tram levelled it again. The statue had to be removed and placed in the courtyard of the Chicago city police station, where it stands to this day.

The Haymarket martyrs are not alone in the battle for working-class rights, and May Day itself has seen many workers killed over the years, particularly in Russia, Turkey, Kurdistan and Iran. And trade union-

ists are regularly murdered in Latin America, Indonesia, and other countries.

The London May Day March Organising Committee has issued a leaflet to gather support for its march and rally on Monday 1 May and 'International Evening for May Day' on 29 April.

The committee is supported by the Greater London Association of Trades Councils, the South and Eastern Region TUC, the London region of the public service union UNISON, No.1 region of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), London region of the general union GMB, the Greater London Pensioners' Association, and international organisations from Turkey, Kurdistan, Iran, Iraq, Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Italy, Spain, West Indies, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India,

march. Bring banners. Bring workmates.

■ If you can't come any other way book this as a holiday — mark workers' day. One day a year that stands above all others for workers' unity. For you.

■ Show the Tories our united strength.

■ Support the May Day march and other events.

To the question, 'What is May Day?', the committee replies:

■ For over 100 years May Day has been workers' day around the world. International workers' day. Always on 1 May.

■ It has been a celebration and a day to mark workers' demands. There will be mass demonstrations in South Africa, Turkey, France, Italy, the US, Chile, Ireland — in virtually every country in the world.

■ The right to freely organise in trade unions — against Tory anti-union laws.

■ The right to decent wages and conditions.

■ The right to live in peace — against racism, fascism and discrimination.

■ The right to proper health and social services.

■ The right to decent pensions.

■ The right to housing, transport and education.

■ The right to democratic protest — against the Criminal Justice Act.

■ Rights for all workers irrespective of nationality or race.

■ The right and duty of international solidarity.

THE MARCH, 'Fighting for workers' rights', assembles at 12noon on 1 May at Highbury



Celebrations in London on May Day, international workers' day

Ireland, and others. Answering the question 'Why should you support May Day?', the leaflet says:

■ May Day is workers' day. ■ It is the day for all workers to unite.

■ To celebrate our life and struggle.

■ To join with workers across the world. Standing for the many against the few.

■ May Day has been a celebration for centuries. Since the 1880s, 1 May has been recognised as international workers' day.

■ The Tories are trying to stop May Day. To destroy what we have won in years of struggle. To take away the public holiday. As they have attacked workers rights and conditions for 16 years.

■ Fight back. Defend May Day. Stand together. Stop the Tory attacks. When the health service is being cut, privatisation is making the rich richer and services poorer, when jobs are being cut every day the need for unity could not be clearer. ■ Come to the May Day

Even when demonstrating carries great risk.

■ In the 1960s and 1970s London's May day march was a focus for action against the first anti-union laws — both Labour's and the Tories' Industrial Relations Act. In the 1970s building workers walked off sites across the capital to support May Day, joining dockers and print workers. It also showed solidarity with the miners. In the mid-1980s we marched to Wapping.

■ The 1974-79 Labour government, faced with a growing campaign for a public holiday on 1 May, decided to make the nearest Monday to May Day a public holiday — thereby adding to confusion. Since then continuous Tory attacks on unions and union members have caused additional problems. But May Day in London has continued with magnificent support from international organisations.

'It is the day to unite all struggles in one call for workers' rights,' says the leaflet, for:

■ The right to work — for full employment.

Fields, north London. Nearest tube Highbury & Islington. The rally at Clissold Park will have speakers who include National Union of Mineworkers' president Arthur Scargill.

THE 'International Evening for May Day', on Saturday 29 April, at 6.30pm, is at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (tube: Holborn). Music, dance and food from around the world. Entrance £2, £1 concessions.

THE May Day March Organising Committee can be contacted c/o CLWTC, Derry House, Penfold Street, London NW8.

THERE is a London GMB and Battersea & Wandsworth TUC free family May Day festival on Sunday 30 April, 12noon-8pm, on Clapham Common.

SEND details of May Day events in your area to Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB. We would also welcome greetings for May Day from your organisation — see advertising rates, page 2.

Bronwen Handyside reports

## Two nations



### Tony Blair's education gobbledeygook

WHILE surfing on the Internet one of my colleagues came across the following 'Open Letter to Tony Blair' from Jack Lane, governor of St Aloysius Catholic Comprehensive School.

'I am a Labour Party representative on the governing body of the Catholic comprehensive school nearest to your home in Islington, St Aloysius in Hornsey Lane. I would be very grateful if you would advise me on how I can continue to defend Labour Party policy on grant-maintained schools, when the issue next comes up — as it has to at least once a year — on our agenda.

'What I have heard you say so far would be dismissed by my colleagues as, at best, a lot of gobbledeygook.

'You say that you do not want to make a choice for your son on the basis of what is "politically correct", i.e. crazy.

'Why do you suddenly stigmatise Labour Party policy as "politically correct" when it does not suit your personal preferences? Does the fact that it does not suit you personally make it "politically correct"?

'You say that "what is important is that we do not deny other people the choice we made and I haven't done that". But, if you come to power on present policy, you will be denying people this right — or has the policy changed without me noticing?

'Is it possible that you will allow no more "opting out", but leave opted-out schools effectively as they are? This would be very convenient for you personally. But surely Labour Party policy is not going to be made according to your personal needs?

'Party sources rushed to your defence, claiming "There were only a limited number of Roman Catholic schools in London which Euan [Blair's son] would be eligible to attend".

'There is no reason that I know of why he could not attend any Roman Catholic school in London and there are certainly enough of them for the Catholic population.

'Apart from anything else would sending your son to your local Catholic school not be an expression of real commitment to your much-vaunted community values? Or are community values also to be disregarded when they don't suit you personally?

'Your colleagues have come up with the argument that choosing a grant-maintained school is no different from choosing a trust hospital for medical treatment.

'I'm sure you recognise that this is a mere debating point. There is no valid comparison between hospital treatment and education, as regards choice of facilities available or personal needs.

'So the question remains — why? You have never mentioned academic achievement. The school you have chosen, the Oratory, is very good for the simple reason that it chooses its students to guarantee good results. That is a fact, despite your claiming that it has no selective policy. A selective policy does not have to be emblazoned on the doorway to exist.

'St Aloysius Comprehensive has all human life represented in its 1,000-plus roll. Its results could also be made to look very

each exam year. But it's in business of giving maximum opportunity to all and not selecting a chosen few.

'It also achieves very academic results. This year of its GCSE students got 100% A grades and that would have some very valuable "added value" (to use current jargon) to his educational results from getting them a comprehensive school. So don't think you need fear that your son would in some way be prevented from achieving academic success here.

'The only distinctive feature of the Oratory and such schools that I am aware of is the small value attached to them, which of course an "added value" some people.

'Could it possibly be that this is the real reason you have made your choice? Until you convince me otherwise, I must assume that it is. As I now get queasy feeling in my stomach every time I hear you, or see you on TV, I hope you can convince me otherwise.'

### A little light-hearted banter

SURFING a little further on the information highway, my colleague found the story of Anita Gaze, an Abbey National trainee financial adviser.

Anita made the mistake of refusing the invitation of her examining supervisor, David Moberly, to visit his hotel room at two o'clock in the morning the night before her building society examination, to 'talk about it over a cup of coffee and whatever else might come up'.

When Anita turned his door down, David Moberly stared menacingly back at her. The next day, she failed her examination, though Moberly had previously praised her selling skills, and as a result she was sacked from her job.

In giving his judgement against her claim for unfair dismissal at an industrial tribunal the chairperson, a Mr P... offered this comment:

'We find that in this case the was all part of the light-hearted banter of which the applicant was well aware at the time.'

'The probability is that she now seeks to explain her shortcomings in the assessment by suggesting that it was deliberate down-marking by Moberly because she refused his proposition.'

Mr Moberly, with his light-hearted banter, is only one example of the thousands of men who use their positions of power in the workplace to sexually harass women, and much less frequently, men.

The overwhelming majority of those who sexually harass others are men — they do not do so because they are men, but because class society is structured so that men have an unequal share of power and wealth.

Mr Rich finds it perfectly natural that a man in a position of power will abuse a woman in a position of weakness.

How strange it is then to find that the first film to come out of Hollywood purporting to deal with sexual harassment is of a woman abusing a man.

If you have any material for this column, please send it to me

## Chechnya: oppose Yeltsin's fascist methods

This appeal has been sent by three Russians protesting about the criminal nature of the Yeltsin regime and its fascist methods in the war against Chechnya

Dear friends,

We are compelled to write to you from the feeling that the terrible crimes committed by Russian authorities and armed forces in Chechnya are not accidental. And because we feel responsible for these crimes.

These crimes (according to the testimony of the journalists, defenders of human rights and mothers of the soldiers fighting there) include not only bombing towns and villages inhabited by civilians, but also the capturing of hostages, robberies, the organisation of camps where

beaten, tortured, maimed and murdered.

All these actions should be characterised as genocide and a crime against humanity. They cannot be considered merely as an internal affair of Russia. The Chechen crisis is not accidental. It reveals the criminal essence of the political regime that is being formed in Russia.

The most dangerous aspect of the present situation is the absence of a clear appreciation of this fact. Instead in the public opinion, especially in the West, there still exists the myth that Russia is moving towards

cists of the type of Zhirinovskiy will take over.

We consider this opinion as deeply erroneous. While supporting democracy and human rights in words, the regime is persecuting them in a cynical and brutal way.

### Beatings

Many facts give evidence to this. For example, beatings and killings of the honest journalists and human rights defenders who get and publish information dangerous to the regime, about the criminal and corrupt methods of privatisation, and many other things. Now there is an attempt to annihilate a whole nation, Chechnya.

Using fascist methods, the regime uses Zhirinovskiy and

is not moving by the path of democracy and human rights. A new regime, unusual in its cruelty and falsehood, is being born.

Whether the criminal regime or democracy with a human face will take over in Russia will in the first place depend on people in Russia, our ability to understand the danger and take responsibility, our courage and will to stand against evil.

However the realisation by people in the West of the true state of affairs in Russia, and their support of democracy, not Yeltsin, are also crucial. We ask your help in spreading our letter.

A. Belavin, E-mail: belavin@cft.sherna.msk.su V. Drinfeld, drinfeld@ilt.kharkov.ua



# NATO helps Turkish war on the Kurds

**TURKISH planes attacking alleged Kurdish rebel 'bases' in the United Nations' so-called 'safe area' in Iraqi-Kurdistan have had help from Turkey's NATO allies.**

Aerial photographs of the Kurdish areas taken by their supposed protectors — RAF and French airforce planes — have been shared with Turkish officers. Intelligence gathered by AWACS electronic surveillance planes has also been given to the Turks at Combined Task Force headquarters, Incirlik, Turkey.

## Invasion

British and other European Union governments have expressed 'concern' over the Turkish invasion.

'We urge Turkey to pull its troops out as soon as possible and spare the civilian population,' Germany's foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, said on 31 March. He warned it might otherwise be difficult to ratify Turkey's customs agreement with the European Union.

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd endorsed Kink-

BY DAVID DORFMAN

el's warning, although last year during his visit to Ankara he expressed 'understanding' for the Turkish regime's war against the Kurds.

Kani Yilmaz, a spokesperson for the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), who came to Britain in October to address MPs, is still in Pentonville prison. The Tory government says Turkey should 'tread carefully'.

The Clinton administration has backed the Turkish offensive, and the Turkish government is counting on continued US support.

Turkish prime minister Tansu Ciller pretended at first that the invasion was just a short-term operation, but her top adviser, Emre Gonensay, said on 24 March:

'We realise now that there is no point in just going in and pulling out, this is not sufficient.'

Those who criticise us for going in and staying there should find a solution with us.'

The Turkish government has suggested its troops could remain in the area under US command.

The Turkish invasion and bombing, ostensibly in pursuit of PKK guerrillas who have been harassing Turkish forces occupying north-west Kurdistan, has been condemned by Kurdish and Iraqi opposition leaders. It came hard on the heels of renewed air and artillery attacks on Kurdish towns by Saddam Hussein's Iraqi government.

Kurdish leaders deny harbouring PKK guerrillas, and

say Turkish forces have attacked refugee camps and rounded up Kurdish civilians for deportation.

The UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has also said civilians were attacked. But UN forces have confined their activity to moving some refugees away from the firing

line, and this only after mass protests.

The Iraqi Communist Party and the Communist Party of Kurdistan have warned of collusion between regimes in the area to alter borders and crush the Kurds.

In Turkey itself and Turkish-occupied Kurdistan there have

been widespread arrests and detentions of Kurdish militants and civil-rights campaigners. Members of the Human Rights Association have been detained in Diyarbakir, Adana and Istanbul.

Last month, riots in Istanbul, sparked by the murder of members of the Alawi community by right-wing terrorists, spread to Ankara, the capital.

In both Istanbul and Ankara, Turkish and Kurdish workers took over the streets together and defied the army and police. This is likely to have spurred the government into launching its all-out aggression — a war over the border to reinforce its war at home.

## Blair sacks frontbench MPs

LABOUR leader Tony Blair has sacked foreign affairs spokeswoman Ann Clwyd MP for going to Kurdistan to see for herself the war there.

Clwyd has condemned Iraqi government attacks on the Kurds, as well as the treatment

of Kurds in Turkey, which she says led to the war.

Blair said she missed important Commons votes. Will Labour be saying anything about the war, or is it leaving foreign policy to the Tories, as usual?

# Guatemalan death squad on CIA payroll

BY VIC CHARLES

THE United States' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has been exposed as the paymaster of professional killers terrorising the people of Guatemala.

CIA agents are working with G2, a Guatemalan secret police unit operating against trade unionists and Maya Indian peasants in the central American state.

US Congressman Robert Torricelli has received an anonymous letter from within the National Security Agency (NSA), which oversees US intelligence operations, saying CIA and Pentagon military officials knew about the murder in Guatemala of Michael Devine, a US hotelier, in 1990.

His informant says the NSA has shredded important documents about the killing.

New Jersey Congressman Torricelli, a member of the House intelligence committee, last month named Colonel Julio Roberto Alpirez as the Guatemalan officer who ordered the murder of Devine, whose body was found by a roadside.

## Ordered

Torricelli said the colonel had been on the CIA payroll, and in 1992 he had ordered the death of Efraim Bamaca, a left-wing guerrilla leader.

This revelation came as Jennifer Harbury, Bamaca's US-born wife, was on a hunger-strike outside the White House demanding to know what had



Colonel Alpirez denied involvement in the Devine and Bamaca murders

happened to her husband. Last year she held a 32-day hunger-strike outside the US embassy in Guatemala City.

'This did not come as a surprise to me,' she said after the information came out. 'I think I knew my husband was dead all along. This is the first time I have been told the truth in two years.'

Torricelli said: 'The CIA knew for several years exactly what happened and who was responsible and why. The Clinton administration learned about it several months ago.'

White House officials have said President Clinton only recently received the information from the CIA.

Guatemala has long been

known as a classic 'banana republic', the fiefdom of the United Fruit Company. In 1954, US bombers and CIA-backed right-wing mercenaries ousted Jacobo Arbenz's elected government, which was attempting to introduce land reform.

The US imperialists denounced Arbenz as a 'communist', and replaced him with Colonel Armas's right-wing dictatorship, launching a pattern.

The Bush administration cut military aid to Guatemala, after news of atrocities against Maya Indians. But the CIA secretly made up the shortfall.

And according to the news magazine 'The Nation', CIA agents have operated through G2 for decades.

'Working out of the US embassy and living in safe houses and hotels, these agents work through an elite group of Guatemalan officers who are secretly paid by the CIA and who have been implicated personally in numerous political crimes and assassinations', the US weekly said.

Thousands of Maya refugees fled into Mexico in recent years, only to find the government there waging its own war against the Chiapas peasant communities. The refugees are 'starting to come back, anticipating a peace agreement between the Guatemalan government and left-wing forces. But G2 agents are reported to be continuing threats.'

# Barbarous logic of Grozny Chechens gained from war, Russian official claims

AN UNBELIEVABLE claim that the war in Chechnya was beneficial to Grozny was made on BBC2's 'Newsnight' last Monday.

An administrator sent in by the Russians to run what little is left of Grozny said that before the war a petrochemical plant, which had been flattened in the bombardment, had caused 'ecological' problems. Now the plant could be rebuilt further away from Grozny.

The official added that the high-rise housing now conveniently demolished had caused

social and psychological problems. But now the people of Grozny will be able to live in low-rise housing of not more than two floors!

## Dead

What he didn't say was that there will be less need for housing or any social services for that matter, since many of the people of Grozny are now dead. The presence or not of a polluting chemical plant will no longer have much relevance to them.

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# Trade union militant murdered

KIDNAPPED Guatemalan trade unionist Alexander Yovani Gomez Virula has been murdered. The missing man's body was found at the bottom of a ravine, battered and decomposed nearly beyond recognition.

Gomez disappeared while on his way home from his union's offices on 13 March. He was treasurer of the union branch at the RCA factory, where workers were fighting closure (Workers Press, 1 April).

Byron Morales, of the Guatemalan Workers' Trade Union, UNSITRAGUA, said

Gomez had been fighting for severance pay for himself and 75 other workers after RCA closed down illegally and without warning last August.

## Question

The victim's father accused the police of inaction in the case. 'The police never helped us. They didn't send any detectives to investigate or question the last person to see him alive,' he said.

Union leaders said RCA factory owners should be the first to be investigated in the killing.

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March 1995

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