

International Transportworkers' Federation backs Liverpool

GIVE FULL SUPPORT TO SACKED DOCKERS

THE International Transportworkers' Federation (ITF) is calling upon its affiliated unions to give full support, 'including boycott actions', against any vessels using the port of Liverpool.

This historic decision was taken by nearly 100 ITF inspectors at their annual seminar on 15-19 January in London.

A letter to the Liverpool dockers from Kees Marges, ITF Dockers' Section secretary, explains:

The inspectors, 'based in 40 countries all over the world: from North America to New Zealand, from Finland to South Africa, from Japan to Germany and from Russia to Chile', are 'key figures in the ITF worldwide campaign against the use by shipowners of substandard ships sailing under a flag of convenience'.

The resolution — carried unanimously after Jimmy Nolan, chair of the Merseyside Port Shop Stewards' Committee, addressed the seminar on 18 January — condemns the sacking of the 500 Liverpool dockers by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company and says:

'We call upon our respective unions throughout the world to organise financial and moral support and where possible, to organise industrial action including boycott actions in their respective ports and countries against any vessels known to be loading/discharging cargoes to and from the port of Liverpool.'

In his letter to the dockers Marges added: '[T]he strong wish of the whole of the ITF and its 430 affiliates from 120 countries representing 5 million transport workers is that your fight against casualisation of labour and against de-unionising of the port will be successful.'

Saying that 1996 is the centenary year of the ITF, Marges recalled that the federation was founded when British seafarers carried out solidarity action with striking Rotterdam portworkers in 1896.

'Solidarity with sacked Liverpool dockers is an excellent way to celebrate this anniversary,' said Marges.

'Employers should not succeed in replacing well-trained and experienced dock workers by casuals. Employers should not get the chance to

BY DOT GIBSON

replace unionised workers by non-union labour. Sacked workers who are a victim of this sort of employers' policies should be reinstated'

He recalled what one inspector had said in the discussion, which 'expressed the feelings of all: **"The trade union movement in the UK has lost many battles, this needs to be won"**'.

Marges assured the dockers: 'The ITF will do everything possible to help you to win this battle. In addition I can inform you that in consultation with the ITF's general secretary a contribution of £5,000 from the ITF's International Solidarity Fund will be made available for the hardship fund.'

Delegation

A delegation from the Liverpool strike committee to the Italian port of Salerno reports that dockworkers there have instituted an overtime ban on Gracechurch Container Line and Bouchard Line which operate a service between Liverpool and Salerno.

Members of two Italian dockworkers' unions also agreed to financial support by introducing a £5 levy on each of their members.

Ali Memon, ITF inspector from Bremen, Germany, reported that when the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company wanted to hire tugboats from a German company, the crews had refused to staff the boats when they heard about the sacking of dockers in Liverpool.

Share values of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company continue to fall. To 'rub salt into the wound' 50 Liverpool dockers mounted a picket on the London Stock Exchange!

Community march and demonstration

in support of 500 sacked Liverpool dockers and their families

Saturday 3 February

Assemble Myrtle Parade (near Philharmonic Hall), 10.30am

March to St George's Hall, Rally St George's Plateau, 12noon

Invited speaker: Arthur Scargill

Protest to save ancient hospital



THE Tory threat to close St Bart's hospital in Smithfield met angry resistance when 400 marchers took to the streets of London last Saturday.

They were protesting against plans to close the hospital by 1999. The march was led by the mayors of several London boroughs and a protest petition was delivered to No.10 Downing Street.

Campaigners have been lobbying for four years in Britain and have now launched their fight in the European parliament to save this ancient hospital.

'Rationalisation' plans are already causing chaos as departments are closed and their work transferred elsewhere.

The Save Bart's campaign can be reached at 0171-600 5478.

Photo: Dave Lawrence

Bosnia report: 'I suspect a fraud'

BY CAZIM SARAJLIC
From *Front slobode, Tuzla*

THE BIG imperial policeman, NATO, headed by the big imperial power, the USA, landed with a military technique not seen before on the small and unlucky country of Bosnia last year.

According to the Dayton 'peace', these multinational forces should implement peace in a former multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-national Bosnia and Herzegovina in the next year.

The international community should teach us how to live, anew, together. It seems that 200,000 Muslims have been killed, slaughtered and burnt to force the international community to say: 'A big tragedy has happened!'

If it had not been for the Bosnia-Herzegovina army and our stubbornness things could well have gone the other

way. Our soldiers, even under the arms embargo, could have reached the river Drina. But the world's map creators said: 'Stop! It would be too much for you.'

Staring at the dead plum tree in my yard at the bottom of Gradovrh hill, I meditate: 'Everything is the same, but you aren't there, Bosnia, a country damned to sleep...'

I suspect a big fraud.

Translated by Faruk Ibrahimovic

Bosnia Solidarity Campaign meeting

No cover up of war crimes in Bosnia

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC2.

Monday 29 January, 7.30pm

Speakers: **Zoran Pajic** (Kings College and former professor Sarajevo University) and **Kyran Connolly** (NUJ president)

Workers Press Meeting

Saturday 10 February, 10.30am-4pm

Change of venue: The Falkland Arms, 31 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1. Tube: Holborn.

OUR readers are cordially invited to the 10th anniversary meeting of Workers Press. This is a time for us to review the past ten years, to consider the present and make plans for the future. The editorial board will present a report. We want to know your views, criticisms and proposals. Workers need their own paper, to report on and unite their struggles here and internationally. At this meeting we want to open up the discussion and practically begin the campaign for such a paper. For us in Workers Press our purpose — socialism — is the same purpose as every worker and those intellectuals whose lives are dedicated to the socialist cause.

Crisis in the labour movement

The need for a new socialist party

CHANGE OF DATE & VENUE: Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Saturday 16 March 11am-5pm

We have changed the original date for the conference because of the demonstration against the Tory Asylum Bill.

Millions of workers will vote Labour in the next general election — to defeat the hated Tories — knowing in their heart of hearts that the Blair leadership will continue to attack them on behalf of big business. The working class needs **its own** socialist party — a party that will organise the fight in its own interests. Many people are already organising themselves. We need to unite, we need to discuss, we need to prepare. That is the purpose of this meeting. If you agree with the following demands then you should come along!

- ▶ Down with privatisation! A full and open workers' inquiry of the companies' books!
- ▶ No to casual labour! Demand permanent work for all!
- ▶ Down with anti-trade-union laws! Restore trade union rights!
- ▶ Down with the cuts in social and public services! A full and open workers' inquiry into the state's finances!
- ▶ Down with the racist immigration laws! Demand the right to asylum!
- ▶ Down with the Criminal Justice laws! Demand basic democratic rights!
- ▶ An injury to one is an injury to all! Build workers' internationalism!

Germany next for social strife?

HELMUT SCHMIDT, a retired Social-democratic chancellor of Germany, has produced a drastic programme to prevent the 'creeping erosion of the country's economic basis'.

In a recent article in the political weekly *Die Zeit*, Schmidt points out that Germany has long ceased to be the world-champion export nation.

More than half of the Gross National Product, he explains, flows through the hands of the state, while taxes and other impositions are at record levels.

Nevertheless, the state's income falls far short of its expenditure. Germany's borrowings on the world market put her on a par with Mexico, second only to the United States.

He blames political intervention by the (conservative) government for record and growing levels of unemployment. But while taking account of voices from the media and industry calling for the break-up of state welfare arrangements, he proposes instead his own 'prescription block' of remedies.

For immediate action, Schmidt calls for all state expenditure of whatever kind and all forms of tax relief to be examined with an eye to a wide-ranging programme of cuts.

In this way he hopes to free the hands of the finance minister to tackle the over-valuation of the Deutschmark on world markets which is crippling German exports.

(This itself hardly takes account of the state of the world economy, particularly the actions of the US government, which keep the German currency high.)

Pensions

For example, spending departments of the government must no longer, Schmidt says, be able to divert monies collected for old-age pensions into early retirement packages for redundant employees. Let them live off the dole.

He demands that regulations protecting able-bodied unemployed people from being sent to low-paid manual jobs must be suspended. Penalties for working while drawing benefits must be given real teeth.

He calls for much more flex-

ibility in the labour market, allowing machines to be kept running without premium payments, and for loopholes in the legally-binding wage agreements where they are 'inappropriate' (i.e. when the employer wants to pay less).

Binding

Schmidt says binding agreements that automatically cover whole areas and branches of industry are now 'poison for many threatened firms in the east'.

In the medium term, Schmidt wants massive deregulation, doing away with a mass of rules and regulations which stifle enterprise. This would affect everything from the tax laws to building regulations.

Together with this, he demands a radical reduction in the bureaucracy in the national, regional and municipal government and in the various branches of social insurance.

Vacancies should not be filled and tenured 'officials' should be replaced by mere 'employees'. He offers the assistance of the SPD in carrying this out.

He calls for technical innovation to be encouraged in order to develop new products for the world market to replace the mass-production goods which can now be made in low-wage economies.

Schmidt proposes much higher research spending in genetic engineering, aerospace, high-performance ceramics, solar-powered transport and so on. He reserves his real venom for the 'widespread rejection of reforms and innovations' and the 'psychotic fears of misguided idealists' with their 'suspicion of new research and new technologies'.

Schmidt reaffirms that 'social progress depends on economic and technical progress'.

Like the Republicans in the United States, he claims that

Lübeck grief — see page 7



'environmental protection has become hysteria'.

Schmidt calls on business managers, the unions and the 'political class' to rally round the chancellor and launch a broad campaign to convince all and sundry to pull together.

The article looks like a desperate attempt to save a basic minimum of the 'social market economy' which has served Germany so well since the 1950's.

Schmidt warns that 'Roman

conditions' (one assumes he means chronic civil war) or 'endless strikes, like in Paris, or class struggle, as in England' will result from any other approach.

In fact the space for manoeuvre between the working class and the ruling class in which the Social-democratic Party (SPD) has traditionally moved has disappeared.

All the SPD can offer is to carry out the attacks on jobs and living standards in a more con-

trolled way, keeping a few basics like pensions and the health service as intact as can be.

Although many workers may be swayed by hopes of preserving past gains through compromise, the basis for the 'social market economy' is actually shattered by Germany's economic crisis.

This is why the SPD has been running round like a headless chicken for the last 18 months.

Party leaders Oskar Lafontaine and Gerhard Schroeder

recently floated the idea of pumping a big dose of money into the economy even at the risk of further indebtedness.

Quoting Helmut Schmidt many years ago, they said '5 per cent inflation is better than 5 per cent unemployment'.

Few commentators took this suggestion seriously. The SPD's own fiscal expert, Henning Voscherau, said 'in fact it is not a real option'. Schmidt's 'programme' is an attempt to pull Lafontaine into line behind other European social democrats, like Blair, Wim Kok and Gro Harlem Brundtland.

However, many SPD activists, although they themselves are middle-class products of political life in the 1960s and 1970s, are close enough to the working class to know there is going to be angry resistance to this road.

Division

The division in political circles in Germany is between those who want to let market forces rip, slash taxes and social expenditure, shut 'uneconomic' plant and let unemployment do its work, and those who want to achieve the same ends in a more orderly manner.

Thus many Social democrats find themselves close to the 'social' wing of the conservative CDU, while the right wingers in the CDU may find friends among the born-again free-marketiers in the Free Democratic Party.

Moreover, the political elite that lubricates and staffs the 'social market economy' is, itself, one of the overheads that many business experts want to cut. This social layer is in a state of considerable confusion. The events in France of last December also weigh heavily on the minds of all German leaders.

Whatever happens, the working class is going to be involved in major social and political struggles which will burst through the shell of class collaboration imposed by the 'social market economy'.

Rats desert sinking Karadzic

SOME Serb politicians are ready to sacrifice nationalist war criminal Dr Radovan Karadzic as a scapegoat, and offer themselves to the new US imperialist master as the 'moderates' with whom to do business.

Serbia's President Milosevic, who sent in the Yugoslav National Army and backed Karadzic to start the war, is one. But Serbian right-wing opposition parties play to the nationalist mob as he did, are just as keen to sell out to foreign capital.

In the Bosnian Serb 'republic' vice-president Nikola Koljevic welcomed NATO deployment. His part in directing artillery fire on Sarajevo civilians diplomatically forgotten, US-educated Koljevic has been tipped as an 'acceptable' replacement for Karadzic.

'The Bosnian Serbs have finally realised that you cannot build a dignified life on the ideology of blood and territory,' says Dr Miodran Zivanovic of the opposition Liberal Party.

'Our main goal now is to take these war criminals, like Karadzic, and put them on trial. The Bosnian Serbs must punish those who carried out these crimes, otherwise in the eyes of the

world, we will bear the guilt of the atrocities they committed in our name.'

Elections are due late this spring. Karadzic is not allowed to stand under the Dayton agreement. US officials expect General Mladic to retire under pressure from Belgrade.

Chris Hedges in the *New York Times* (4 January) says it isn't clear whether Karadzic will be replaced by someone from his own nationalist circle in Pale or by 'a more compromise-minded figure' from Banja Luka.

'But the demonisation of Karadzic as an extremist who corrupted the cause of Serb nationhood has appeal across the spectrum now — in part because it allows Serbs to distance themselves from the war's brutality.'

'This has become a battle between a small political clique, led by Karadzic and backed by the Serbian Orthodox Church, and the majority of Bosnian Serbs who want to build a Western democratic state based on

human rights and free enterprise,' says Mladen Ivanic, of the Serbian Intellectual Forum, which recently broke from Karadzic.

'Banja Luka feels it paid the price for Karadzic's determination to take Sarajevo...'

'It soon became clear that the siege was doing us a lot more harm than good. The front lines around Sarajevo never moved from the start of the war, yet we shelled the city indiscriminately every day, and all this was transmitted to the outside world by the international press.'

Isolated

'In the end we were totally isolated, we could not even get help from Belgrade or the Russians,' says Dragutin Ilic of the Milosevic-backed Socialist Party.

'We had no money and no allies in the end. It became suicidal to continue the war. The leadership knew it was ruling a small, poor state but thought it

did not need the rest of the world. This was very foolish.'

'As Karadzic's grip on power slips many around him are abandoning him, hoping for a place in a new system. Those who remain are the war profiteers, those who made fortunes smuggling in gasoline, and the worst war criminals.'

'These people know that once Karadzic goes they will lose money and maybe their heads. There is a lot of rancour and bitterness now, even though Karadzic understands he is finished. We could see some volatile incidents before he goes.'

Many Bosnian Serbs, workers and intellectuals, remained loyal to a multi-ethnic Bosnia from the start, and like deputy chief of staff Jovan Divjak, fought for it.

They were the forgotten people, so far as imperialist governments and media (and some on the 'Left') were concerned.

General Divjak's visit to London last Summer, like Bosnian ambassador Filipovic's remarks about Serbs opposing Karadzic, went unreported by the BBC.

Today's opportunists are different. They blame Karadzic not for starting the war, but for losing it. They're extending a hand — for the dollar.



Radovan Karadzic

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British section of the Workers International (to Rebuild the Fourth International)

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corridor to their eastern enclave of Gorazde, but unlike in the original plan this would not include the key town of Trnovo to the south of Sarajevo. Indeed, a new road would have to be built to make the corridor to Gorazde workable.

The biggest Bosnian territorial loss was the Posavina region, the most strategically crucial territory in all Bosnia, that Serbia was to have given up under all previous Western 'peace plans'.

Posavina controls the 'corridor' between Serbian-occupied territory in western and eastern Bosnia, and had a pre-war Croat relative majority, making the Croat members of the Bosnian delegation in particular reluctant to accept its loss.

But the Americans met Bosnian protests over Posavina with the argument that Tudjman and Milosevic had already agreed that the territory should go to Serbia, and that there was no more to be said for the matter.

From the wreck of Posavina the Croats were able to salvage only the town of Odzak, while the fate of Brcko, the most important town, is to be decided by 'arbitration' a year after the signing of the agreement.

The Bosnians and their Croat partners did make a gain in relation to the original plan, namely, the economically worthless, strategically marginal and largely Serb-inhabited region of south-west Bosnia that they had captured in their autumn offensive.

Conceded

The only significant Bosnian territorial gain was territory in and around Sarajevo, which Milosevic, who spent much of his time at Dayton the worse for wear, whimsically conceded to Izetbegovic on the grounds that the Bosnian president 'deserved' it for having lived in the capital throughout three years of siege.

But Milosevic was sober enough to keep Mt Trebevic to the south of Sarajevo, from which Serbia can rain shells on the Bosnian capital in any future conflict.

This territorial settlement, extremely unfavourable to the Bosnians, was combined with a military settlement that is still more unfavourable.

Dayton stipulated a balance of armed forces between Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia of 2:2:5 in favour of the latter.

Of Bosnia's portion, one third is to go to the Chetniks' 'Republika Srpska'. The remaining two thirds are to be divided between the Bosnian government and the army of their partners in the 'Muslim-Croat Federation', the Zagreb-backed 'Croatian Defence Council' (HVO).

Dayton therefore enforces a Serbian military preponderance of 63 per cent to 37 per cent over the Bosnians and Croats combined.

Given the hostility of Croatia and its HVO proxies to their nominal Bosnian ally, the latter's military strength in proportion to its two predatory neighbours is of the ratio of 7.4 per cent compared to 29.6 (HVO) and 63 per cent (Chetnik).

In the event of a future Serbian-Croatian military campaign to partition what is left of Bosnia, the latter would be at a military disadvantage of 7.4 to 92.6 per cent in relation to its enemies.

This is justified in the text of the Dayton agreement on the grounds that the military balance must reflect respective population sizes, though Serbia and 'Republika Srpska' do not enjoy a 17:10 advantage in population over the Croats and Bosnians, even if one counts as Serbian citizens the nearly two million Kosova Albanians, who are unlikely to derive much benefit from the Serbian army in question.

Population sizes are not, of course, used to determine the military balance in other parts of the world: in the Middle East, for example, the Americans maintain an oversized Israeli army precisely on the basis of little Israel's 'legitimate security needs' in relation to 100 million Arabs.

The Dayton settlement destroys multi-ethnic Bosnia not only in practice, but also in principle. The text of the agreement announces that the 'Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina' is henceforth to be known as 'Bosnia-Herzegovina', replacing a name connoting political unity with what is essentially a geographic expression.

The Bosnian-government and Croatian-controlled areas are to comprise a 'Muslim-Croat Federation', reduced in Dayton terminology to an 'entity' equivalent to the Chet-

niks' 'Republika Srpska', which receives official recognition.

The two 'entities' are to share a loose central government, but will maintain separate armies and powers of taxation and a veto of central-government legislation.

They also have the right to establish 'special parallel relationships with neighbouring states consistent with the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina', in other words effectively to become adjuncts to Serbia and Croatia, respectively.

Dubious

While refugees have the extremely dubious right to return to their homes on the territory of either 'entity', members of the presidency and upper house of the central state are to be ethnically determined.

This means that Muslims and Croats living in 'Republika Srpska' cannot be represented in these bodies except by Serbs; likewise, Serbs living in the territory of the Muslim-Croat Federation can only be represented in these bodies by Croats and Muslims.

Dayton therefore legally enshrines elements of apartheid into the constitution of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The entire settlement will be enforced by the presence of NATO troops, who will keep the Bosnian Army within the boundaries of its 'entity' but who will have no power to enforce fair elections in 'Republika Srpska', or guarantee the safety of refugees attempting to return to their homes on the wrong side of the ethnic divide.

But let us look on the bright side: Clinton has achieved a foreign policy triumph that he can parade before the American people in the upcoming elections; the cause of a damaging division in NATO ranks has been removed; and Western politicians need no longer be embarrassed by the pictures of suffering Bosnians on our television screens.

Clinton was even generous enough to allow the formal signing of the peace treaty to take place in Paris, to satisfy the west European craving for some share in the glory. Never let it be said that a small Balkan country was sacrificed for nothing.

Poverty and unemployment

THERE are some 50 million people now living at or below the poverty line in the European Union. This is a jump of almost 10 millions over the last 15 years.

These are among the findings of a recent series of studies, *Old and New Poverty: The Challenge for Reform*, published by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

Poverty is defined by the authors as households with a disposable income of less than 50 per cent of the average disposable income of the country concerned.

According to this definition, some 20 per cent of all non-elderly households in the United States, among the richest countries in the world, fell below the poverty line by the mid-1980s and the situation has undoubtedly got worse.

One of the contributors to the book, Klaus Funken, distinguishes between the past kind of poverty in which people fell temporarily when out of work or sick, and the now almost permanent type of poverty which has resulted from mass unemployment and the cutback of welfare provisions in western Europe and north America.

It is this sort of poverty that is being passed on from one generation to another, the children of unemployed parents being far more vulnerable to unemployment and poverty themselves.

Whereas previously poverty used to hit elderly people it is now the young who are facing the brunt of the crisis. Thus in Britain between 1974 and 1991, the number of children under 16 dependent on state benefits rose fourfold.

Nor does 'economic growth' — the panacea to poverty trotted out by the Labour leaders — appear to alleviate the problem.

Thus the book shows that in the case of Germany, while economic growth has amounted to some 70 per cent in real terms over the last 20 years the total number of poor has more than doubled.

With the economy now almost stagnant and the German government looking for ways to slash social welfare benefits, it is not hard to see that those suffering poverty will now grow dramatically.

The fact is that with or without 'economic growth' the number of jobs is falling rapidly throughout Europe. Thus in the case of Britain, since 1991-92 — when we have supposedly enjoyed an 'economic recovery' — the number of jobs has dropped by at least 800,000.

The figures — which come from the *Labour Force Survey*, a quarterly survey of a large sample of individuals in Britain — indicate that if the rise in part-time jobs is taken into account the fall in full-time equivalent jobs is around the 1.1 million mark.

Equally significant is the fact that the decline in employment has been greatest among the 18-24 age group, down by about 880,000.

It is these sort of figures that help explain why the so-called 'Welfare State' is in terminal crisis. Introduced by the Labour government under intense pressure after 1945, it was designed to provide a 'safety net' for the short-term unemployed as well as for the sick and elderly.

The Welfare State was, and is, quite incapable of dealing with the sort of structural crisis in which capitalism, in Britain as well as Europe and north America, is now locked.

Part-time earnings

IN A recent article the *Financial Times* suggested that one of the rea-

sons that the much trumpeted 'economic recovery' in Britain was having so little effect on consumption levels was that any increase in jobs taking place involved the expansion of part-time jobs which were hardly above the level of state benefits.

The sort of earnings that the *FT* was referring to can be judged by the April 1995 *New Earnings Survey* (*NES*) which reveals that median earnings of female manual workers were £3.68 an hour. For non-manual female workers the median rate was £4.94 an hour.

(The median rate — that is, the midpoint of the earnings distribution where the number of those above is equal to the number below — is a more significant measure than the simple average earnings figure which is distorted upwards by a relatively small number of high earners.)

Even these figures under-estimate the lousy wages on which increasing numbers, mainly women, are forced to try and survive. For the *NES* excludes those whose earnings are below the income tax threshold of £68.00 per week.

The *NES* estimates that about a fifth of all part-time workers, mostly women, are not included in their survey.

Germany's stricken giant

ACCORDING to its chairman, Daimler-Benz, Germany's industrial flagship group, is facing 'gigantic pressures' following losses of over £2 billion on its overall operations.

Its electronics giant, AEG, and the Dutch-based aircraft manufacturer Fokker, are responsible for a considerable slice of these losses.

AEG is to be broken up and the company has been in negotiations with the Dutch government about the finance for a rescue package for Fokker.

So far the Dutch government — itself the owner of an 11 per cent stake in the company — has failed to come across with any cash. Given a growing budgetary crisis it is highly unlikely that it will provide funds on the scale needed to keep Fokker in business.

Unless the government changes its mind Daimler has threatened to pull the plug on Fokker and allow it to collapse, with dire consequences for the company's near-8,000 workers.

Daimler, after Royal Dutch Shell Europe's second largest company, acquired Fokker in 1993. It bought the company — which specialises in regional aircraft — as part of the purchase of overseas assets designed to avoid the consequences of a stagnant domestic market and rising wage costs at home.

It was in the 1980s that Daimler embarked on a whirlwind, £10 billion plus, expansion aimed at diversifying what until then had been a company almost entirely confined to the making of cars.

The expansion took it into aerospace, industrial electronics, consumer goods and financial services. The dream was to create a giant firm able to compete with the largest outfits in the United States and Japan.

Now the dream is turning into a nightmare.

Whodunnit?

SIR MARTIN JACOMB, chairman of the Prudential, once infamously declared that 'insider trading' — taking advantage of inside knowledge to make money on the stock exchange — was a 'victimless crime'.

Now, following the acquittal of the Maxwell brothers, we seem to be faced with something equally paradoxical: a crime with no perpetrators.

Threadneedle



Milosevic 'whimsically' conceded Sarajevo saying Izetbegovic 'deserved' it for staying there

Mass graves near Brcko and Srebrenica

MORE EVIDENCE OF GENOCIDE

MORE mass graves have been found in Bosnia, grisly evidence of the genocide carried out by Serb nationalist forces. Graves located near Brcko, in north-east Bosnia, may hold the remains of some 3,000 people murdered in 'ethnic cleansing' operations in June 1992.

More graves, thought to be those of massacred Bosnian prisoners of war, have been found near Srebrenica, the Bosnian 'safe area' in eastern Bosnia overrun and 'ethnically cleansed' last summer, after the UN decided to give it up to the Serbs.

There may be more than a dozen graves near Brcko, where people were killed on the streets and at detention centres like that at Luka dock, near the Serb Orthodox church.

Witnesses say bodies were dumped in the river Sava at first, and later some were cremated. They also allege that four mass graves may have been dug up, and the bodies destroyed in a nearby animal feed plant.

Brcko is in the contested Posavina corridor where east-west Serb supply routes cut the northern route to Tuzla. Under

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

the Dayton agreement it remains in Serb nationalist hands, with US 'peacekeepers'.

Reporter Scott Peterson (Daily Telegraph, 22 January) says the mass grave he has been to is a stone's throw away from the main Brcko-Bijelina highway along which NATO military convoys are passing.

The UN war crimes tribunal requested assistance from the Implementation Force (IFOR) last week, but IFOR's US commander-in-chief Admiral Leighton Smith said: 'NATO is not, I repeat NATO is not, going to provide specific security, or in other words guarantee security for teams investigating these grave sites.'

He said his troops would report, but not interfere with, any suspicious activity around the graves.

Reporters who have been to

the graves at Glogova, north-west of Srebrenica, say they could easily hold hundreds of bodies of Bosnians murdered by the Serbs. Jonathan S. Landay says one is a 50 by 20 yard rectangle, the other roughly circular with a 30 yard diameter.

'Several human leg bones were embedded in the rectangular swath, nearby sat the crown of a human skull. A human jawbone with teeth, one of which was missing a filling, was found at the far end.'

'Several more human bones were embedded in the circular swath, where the odour of human flesh could be smelled. Also frozen into the middle of the circular patch was a shirt sleeve or trouser leg containing a bone. Several boots stuck out of the earth of both patches, and a strip of gauze bandage lay on the rectangular swath' (*Christian Science Monitor*, 19 January).

Glogova, the site of a Muslim hamlet destroyed by the Chetniks in May 1992, is three miles west of Bratunac, a Serb-held town. Reporters reached the area by back roads, evading Serb checkpoints. Four other grave sites were discovered near Srebrenica in August and October.

Not far from the Glogova graves is a former warehouse, now used for farm animals. Bullet-scarred walls testify to what went on there after the fall of Srebrenica.

Some 40,000 residents were expelled from the town when the UN withdrew its 'protection'. About 10,000 men and boys set out across country, marching at night, to reach Bosnian government-held territory. Some were lured into an ambush by Serb Chetniks disguised in UN uniform.

Captured

Hakija Husejnovic was one of those captured when their column was ambushed by the Serb forces. General Mladic, the Chetnik commander, war criminal, and member of the 'Yugoslav' army general staff, told them: 'We evacuated your families. You are all going to be evacuated yourselves in one or two days.' They were marched to the warehouse at Kravica.

'As soon as we got to the warehouse we sat down, and they started to shoot,' says Husejnovic. The shooting lasted two or three hours. As night

fell, and the shooting abated, he managed to pull two bodies on top of himself. He hid like this in pool of blood for 24 hours.

'The following morning the Chetniks came back to finish off any survivors.'

'At 10 am a bulldozer rammed through the wall, and began loading corpses on to trucks which drove off towards Glogova. The operation lasted until dark, when Husejnovic escaped.'

'Virtually everyone who was in the warehouse was killed. We think this may well be the place where they are buried,' said US assistant secretary of state for human rights John Shattuck, who led a team to Glogova last Sunday (*Guardian*, 22 January).

They were escorted through Serb checkpoints not by IFOR troops but by Serbian police, part of the Milosevic regime's attempt to distance itself from its Bosnian Serb allies.

The involvement of forces from Serbia itself in the onslaught on Srebrenica and Zepa, which the British media tended to play down, has been highlighted again by the revelation that some people from this part of Bosnia were detained in

camps in Serbia. And war crimes prosecutor Richard Goldstone charged on 19 January that the Serbian government was still refusing to co-operate with his investigations.

Indicted

'Nothing has changed since the Dayton agreement even though it commits the signatories to help detain indicted war criminals and ensure their speedy transfer to the international court in the Hague,' he said.

Meanwhile in Zagreb, UN officials blamed computer thieves for the disappearance of information on atrocities in Croatian Krajina from their headquarters.

Some Serbs from western Bosnia have been dumped in ruined and plundered Srebrenica. Under cover of the UN's treacherous 'protection', the British and French governments intended to hand Srebrenica, Zepa and Gorazde over to Serbian rule in a deal with Serbia's Milosevic.

Under the US-brokered Dayton agreement, only Gorazde remains in Bosnian hands, still surrounded by Serb Chetnik guns. Genocide has so far not been punished, but rewarded.

Palestinian voters deliver message

PALESTINIANS in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza, using their first opportunity to vote in national elections last week, delivered a mixed message to their leaders.

With 88 per cent of votes, PLO chairman Yasser Arafat is President, still without a state. About three quarter of a million people, some 75 per cent of those registered to vote, did so, defying harassment from Israeli settlers in Hebron and intimidation by Israeli secret police in Jerusalem.

Those who voted also ignored boycott calls from Islamic militants and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

Arafat's lone brave challenger, elderly welfare campaigner Samiha Khalil, got less than 10 per cent. But despite the absence from the lists of the PFLP and Democratic Front, and (officially

at least) of Hamas, and despite the invasion of some polling stations by Arafat's ' heavies', his Fatah movement did not get a walkover.

In East Jerusalem, where Fatah's candidate was a millionaire businessman, liberal critic and academic Hanan Ashrawi topped the poll as an independent, one of three women winning there.

In Gaza, Haider Abdel Shafi, who criticised Arafat's tendency to one-man rule and willingness to accept whatever the Israeli government offered, was elected. In Ramallah, Abdel Jawad Saleh, whom the Israelis exiled for 20 years, easily defeated Fatah.

Arafat's police continue doing the Zionist state's dirty work. The Palestinian 'self-rule' council will have few powers. But evidently many Palestinians want to use it as a platform to articulate their views.

US backs Yeltsin blitz, but Chechens defiant

MORE Chechen guerrilla attacks, perhaps in the heart of Moscow, have been predicted after Chechen fighters made a mockery of Russian President Yeltsin's blundering military might, and his Western imperialist backers.

Russian troops attacked the village of Pervomayskoye in Dagestan for four days with howitzers, multiple rocket-launchers and helicopter gunships to dislodge a small Chechen force and, supposedly, save its hostages.

US Defence Secretary William Perry, doubtless mindful of his own armed forces' feats in Vietnam and elsewhere, said the Russian response was 'entirely correct'.

Russian generals lyingly claimed the Chechens had begun shooting hostages. When the smoke cleared, Pervomayskoye was in ruins, cattle were killed, and some of the hostages lay dead alongside guerrillas — victims not of their captors but of their supposed 'rescuers'.

General Barsukov, the Russian commander, and Interior Minister General Anatoly Kulikov were appearing at a Moscow press conference to claim victory, and promise ruthless action in future.

Reports from Chechnya said the guerrilla leaders had all escaped, taking 20 Russian soldiers with them as hostages. 'No

one is trying to shoot them,' guerrilla Maksud Ingulbayev assured reporters. He described Russian military action as 'chaotic'.

In Turkey, hijackers of a Black Sea ferry carrying Russian passengers, gave themselves up peacefully, and the boat resumed its voyage.

Although Yeltsin had criticised the Turkish government for not taking tough action against the pro-Chechen hijackers, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin thanked Turkish Prime Minister Ciller for the way the crisis had been handled.

If heavy-footed reliance on hardware didn't indicate already low morale in the Russian armed forces, the fiasco at Pervomayskoye will certainly not raise it. Nor is it likely to terrorise the Chechens into submission.

Yeltsin's war in Chechnya may enjoy sympathetic backing in Washington and London, but it has been a disaster for Russians and Chechens alike, and has now brought tragedy to Dagestan.

Without defending the use of civilian hostages, let alone the corrupt politics of Chechnya's President Dudayev, we must demand with our comrades of the Socialist Workers Union in Russia the withdrawal of Russian forces from Chechnya, so that the Chechen people can be free to resolve their own problems.



Bodies of Chechen rebels after the four-day battle

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