

## International dockers' conference in Liverpool

# WE MUST WIN THIS ONE!

**THIS week the Liverpool dockers go forward to their international conference. They are determined to fight for:**

- A world-wide blockade of the port of Liverpool in solidarity with their demand for reinstatement.
- A policy and organisation to make possible international support for actions, official and unofficial, of dockers everywhere.

BY DOT GIBSON

The conference takes place after the Liverpool dockers gave a resounding NO! to the £25,000 offered by the employer to end the strike. This has delivered a blow for workers everywhere against casualisation and anti-trade-union laws.

On 26 January, a mass meeting of the dockers threw out the offer negotiated by Transport and General Workers' Union officials in talks with the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company (MDHC). Now they have confirmed their stand in the union's secret ballot.

On 28 September 1995, the 500 dockers refused to cross the picket line mounted by the Torside dockers in their fight against sackings and casual labour. **They broke the law.**

The company immediately enacted a lock-out. The dockers were sacked. **The company acted within the law.**

The Liverpool dock strike is illegal.

In fear of state sequestration of its funds for contempt of the law, the TGWU decided that it could not officially support the dockers.

The Liverpool dock strike is unofficial.

MDHC's biggest shareholder is the government. It is the government's laws that the company's employees are now breaking, and have been breaking every day for over four months.

At the start of the dispute, MDHC directors boasted to the shipping companies that they would have a union-free port within a fortnight. They based their judgement on the situation existing in the rest of Britain's ports, and their experience of the official trade union movement.

Since the 1989 dock strike defeat there has been no union recognition in any other port except Liverpool.

The TUC will not break the anti-trade-union laws, and this body has never supported workers who have fought against the government, notably the NUM in 1984-85.

The stated position of the Blair leadership is that a future Labour government will not repeal the anti-trade-union laws.

In 1989, it was the Broad Left majority on the TGWU's general executive council that stepped in and voted down the decision of the National Docks and Waterways committee to strike in defence of the National Dock Labour Scheme (NDLS), which gave dockers the basic right to permanent employment.

### Strike

The unofficial National Port Shop Stewards' Committee wanted to take strike action immediately the government announced its intention to abolish the scheme in April 1989.

But the 'lefts', scared that it would be a political strike and in fear of sequestration, wasted valuable time in the law courts and put the dockers through the stress of two official ballots.

Finally the strike was called only after the government had abolished the NDLS.

The MDHC and the government did not understand that this present action is not controlled by the TUC and it is not in the hands of the Broad Lefts. In 1989, the Liverpool dockers went back through

the gates with their union organisation and their elected shop stewards.

A lot has been learnt. This fight is in the hands of the dockers themselves. It is not a protest movement, content with making a 'correct' political point. The dockers are out to win their reinstatement.

Their organisation embodies this goal and is therefore seriously aimed at winning those forces which can ensure victory. How can we view their decision and action to take the dispute to dockers throughout the world in any other way?

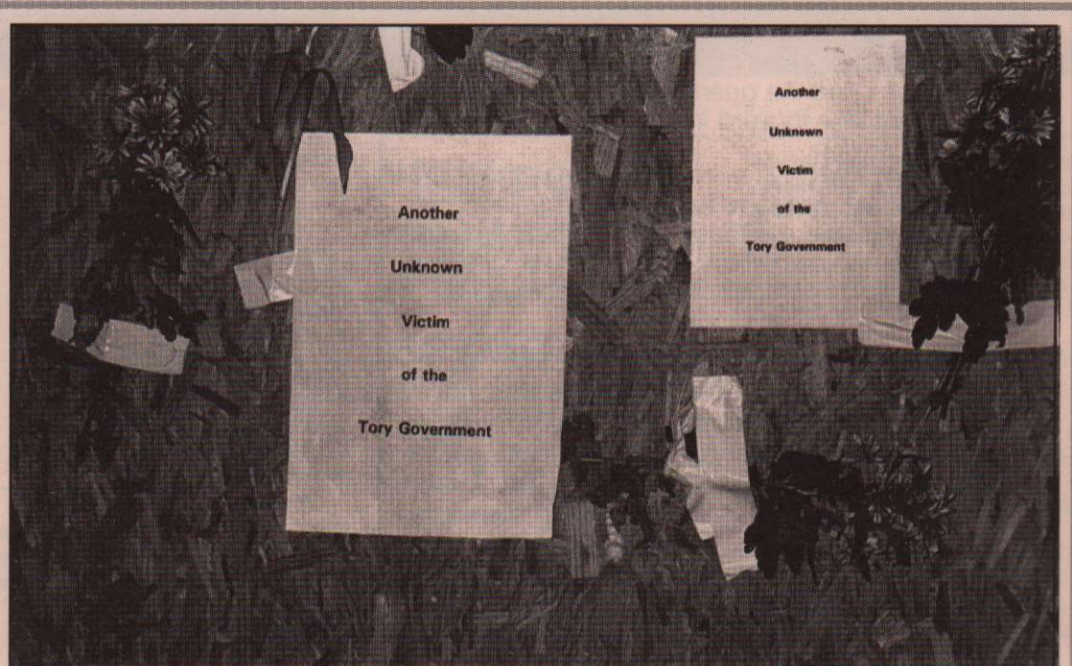
But what did they find? Massive support. Not based on humane gestures, but based on the common knowledge and experience of privatisation, casualisation and anti-trade-union laws. That's why dockers in every other country are saying: 'We' must win this one!

What has been the result? Millions have been wiped off MDHC share values (£4.80 in September 1995, £4.10 now). But the government makes no move to use the law against the dockers.

They know that such action could be the spark that ignites the smouldering anger and frustration in the working class.

Every worker should salute the Liverpool dockers' decision to reject the £25,000. It is not a money question. It is a matter of principle: Reinstatement of the sacked dockers! Down with casualisation! The anti-trade-union laws can be defeated!

All those in Britain who support the Liverpool dockers in principle must now take a practical step to measure up to the solidarity actions of the international dockworkers.



Flowers put up in memory of an unknown homeless man who froze to death in a derelict shop doorway near Conway Hall in London

## Workers Press

WEEKLY PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB. Tel: 0171-387 0564 Fax: 0171-387 0569

To all socialist and working-class organisations and individuals and all those fighting the Asylum Bill

### CRISIS IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT — THE NEED FOR A NEW SOCIALIST PARTY

#### CONFERENCE:

Saturday 16 March, 11am-5pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (Holborn tube) Entrance: £1 (50p concession)

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 conference. We propose to discuss the following demands:

- Down with the racist immigration laws!
- Down with the Asylum Bill!
- No restriction on freedom of movement! Defend the right for people to live in any country!
- Amnesty for all unregistered migrants and refugees!
- Down with privatisation! A full and open workers' inquiry into the companies' books!
- No to casual labour!
- Demand permanent jobs for all!
- Down with the anti-trade union laws! Restore trade union rights!
- Down with cuts in social and public services! A full and open workers' inquiry into state finance!
- Down with the Criminal Justice laws! Demand basic democratic rights!
- An injury to one is an injury to all! Build workers' internationalism!

I want to attend the **CRISIS IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT — THE NEED FOR A NEW SOCIALIST PARTY** conference on Saturday 16 March, 11am-5pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1

NAME .....  
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Organisation (if any) ..... Enclosed: £ .....

Please complete and send this form with your-entrance fee (£1 or 50p concession, cheques/POs payable to Workers Press) to: Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB. Please indicate if you need childcare facilities: we will make arrangements depending on demand.

## Stop the Asylum and Immigration Bill

National demonstration

Saturday 24 February

Assemble 11am Embankment

Rally Trafalgar Square

Supported by the TUC

## JJ Fast Food Stop press!

BY NICK BAILEY

ON TUESDAY 14 February, sacked JJ Fast Food workers won reinstatement for 26 February from the industrial tribunal. The workers were locked out for joining the TGWU. They will now be seeking full back-pay and a union presence at the workplace.

## Workers Press

## Beyond the IRA ceasefire

THERE should be no equivocation in the workers' movement about the Docklands bomb in London which killed a newsagent and his assistant and marked the end of the 17-month IRA ceasefire.

The blame for these deaths and the horrible injuries inflicted on dozens of others lies with those who maintain and direct the rule of British imperialism in the north of Ireland — John Major and the Tory government.

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IN SAYING this we are in no way avoiding criticising and exposing the role of the leaders of Irish Republicanism. Planting bombs in urban areas will inevitably kill, maim and terrify workers and their families as they go about their everyday business.

These actions and the guerilla attacks of the 'armed struggle' do not take forward in the slightest the fight to remove Irish partition.

But the confrontation of Irish nationalists with the British state continues because British rule in Ireland cannot be maintained without the injustices and murderous repressions which have been its historical hallmark and which were administered by the Tories.

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The Docklands explosion was a reaction to the latest humiliation that the British state felt it could inflict on Irish nationalism. Major — more concerned with protecting his slender parliamentary majority by pandering to the Ulster Unionists and their supporters among the right-wing Tory MP's — chose to ignore the main thrust and proposals of the body on decommissioning arms led by US senator George Mitchell.

Mitchell's proposals for a 'twin-track' approach — the IRA and the loyalist para-military gangs surrendering weapons in conjunction with all-party talks — was devised to get Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams off the hook and incorporate him further into the so-called 'peace process'.

These talks offer no way forward for Republicanism. They would have undoubtedly prolonged the IRA ceasefire for a little longer but there was little chance of them leading to the next stage of the British and Irish governments' Framework Document — a legislative assembly in Belfast with cross-border executive bodies.

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THE contradictions of trying to resolve the aspirations of nationalism with Ulster Unionism inside the context of capitalism were destined to blow the 'peace process' apart.

Despite the condemnations of Adams in the aftermath of the Docklands bomb, Major will continue to make overtures to the Sinn Fein leadership who are still imperialism's best bet for beheading the Republican struggle.

Adams likes to compare the Irish situation to South Africa and Palestine. But in its most essential aspects it is not the same. He does not represent the majority of the oppressed and exploited and cannot deliver any of the demands of Irish Republicanism.

The fight against the border is doomed if contained within the limits of the political programme of Republicanism. Partition will only be abolished if sizeable sections of the Protestant working class are won in struggle by linking its role in dividing and weakening the organised working class with the fight against the increasing economic and social deprivation.

Despite their many appeals to Protestants this task cannot be done by the Sinn Fein leadership who are trapped inside the limitations and impossibility of a programme for a united capitalist Ireland. Nor can it be done by limiting the fight for the unity of Protestant and Catholic workers to purely economic issues.

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THE IRA bombs and the 'armed struggle' are not separate from the class struggle but — even in their grotesque manifestations as in Docklands — are a reflection of the unresolved crisis of revolutionary working-class leadership.

They flow directly from the failure of socialists to challenge and defeat Sinn Fein in the struggle for the working class to be the leadership of the fight against British imperialism. This is now the urgent task.

## Letters

## No laughing matter

THE comments on Cuba in Charlie Pottins's Inside left column ('Tough on grime...', 10 February) seem flippant and do not address the issues that Cuba presents to the working class.

Workers Press seldom mentions Cuba, and the damage to the Cuban economy caused by US imperialism. Charlie's comments could thus give readers a misleading impression as to the internationalist perspective that Workers Press holds.

While Charlie refers briefly to 'three decades of US blockade', his article does not refer to the fundamental task of building international working-class solidarity with Cuba against imperialism.

This task is vital in spite of the many failings of the Castro government. Charlie is correct to assert: 'Workers' democracy and control are what's needed.' However, I'm sure that Charlie will agree that socialism cannot be built in one country. If the working class of Cuba were to establish full workers' democracy, based on workers' councils, tomorrow, this would not in itself solve the problems of Cuba's isolation and the US blockade.

The moves toward restoring capitalism, with the attendant corruption which those moves are bound to entail in a country as poor as Cuba, are not a laughing matter. Genuine socialists outside Cuba will only be able to help the working class of Cuba to resist such measures if they organise international solidarity with Cuba against imperialism.

Workers Aid for Bosnia has not made workers' democracy or workers' control in Bosnia a precondition for support for Bosnia's right to self-determination. To have done so would have cut us off from the Bosnian working class and strengthened the hand of reactionary nationalism.

Internationalism in regard to Cuba starts from the same standpoint — solidarity against imperialism. We do not believe in 'spreading the revolution' in the manner of Castro's famous ally Che Guevara, through armed guerrillas isolated from the

working class. But it is not enough to condemn or ridicule the methods of Castro or Guevara from a distance.

The building of an international working-class leadership — the rebuilding of the Fourth International — which will include the leadership of the working class of Cuba, starts with the rebuilding in practice of working-class internationalism.

This means solidarity with the Cuban people against imperialism.

Jim Smith  
London SE6

## Stay with us!

THE peace agreement for Bosnia which has been signed is giving us strength to believe that years of fear, hunger, suffering and shells are behind us. It's nice to believe it. But we're sure that the fight for Bosnia will last long.

Today we understand that only our human being, our hearts and the spirit of the Bosnian people could survive the suffering that we've been through. World politics kept its eyes closed for three years and tried our patience. They believed in force and arms more than in our dream of freedom.

The world is aware more and more every day of the truth about Bosnia and it is opening the hearts of our friends. All of them are our encouragement and light. Every day we receive letters of solidarity and support.

All your campaigns are of that kind and for the survival of a united Bosnia. When we found out that you understood this aggression as it is, we were very proud and it gave us new strength in the time that is ahead.

Stay with us! Our existence will remain hard. It is not known when we are going to live from our work. Every kind of help you can give will be very precious. The biggest help for us is to tell the truth about Bosnia.

The peace agreement won't mean peace to us if those who made terrible crimes and genocide are not going to all be brought before the world court of justice. Does anyone have the right to ask from refugees that they live with those who hated them, raped them, or sought to

kill them? Such people must leave. Bosnia needs justice and peace. There will be enough room for everyone who knows that Bosnia is another name for tolerance and rich diversity.

It's great happiness to have such friends and allies, to know that we're not alone in our fight. We must do everything we can not to let live the ideology of fascism and 'ethnic cleansing'.

Mevlida Altumbabic  
President, Secondary Teachers' Union, Tuzla

## Tories adopt Serb lobbyist

READERS might like to know that the lobbyist for Serb nationalism Jovan Gvozdenovic [a.k.a. John Kennedy, see 'US intelligence bugged SAS', 3 February] has been adopted as Conservative candidate for Halesowen and Rowley Regis (9,582 Tory majority) in the west Midlands.

Further he is not only a friend of Henry Bellingham MP. He was secretary of the Conservative committee on Eastern Europe and, with Harold Elletson MP (Blackpool North, Tory), founded 'Thunderbolt Ltd.', a PR firm.

'Thunderbolt Ltd.' managed to get conned by an Arab who posed as crown prince of Libya. It couldn't have happened to a nicer bunch of guys.

Elletson one time decided to have a go at those unemployed young people who stay in holiday resorts like Blackpool because they lower the tone of the neighbourhood.

He also insisted the House of Commons kitchen cook a brace of pheasants he'd acquired on a shoot in the country so he could eat them at the palace of Westminster (*Daily Telegraph*, 22 January).

Tom Carter  
Somerton, Somerset

## A jog down Memory Lane

MAY I jog Peter Fryer's memory (Personal Column, 10 February),

and recall another occasion when he met Ellis Hillman?

This was at the conference of the Socialist Forum movement — who called themselves 'anti-Stalinist Marxists' — held at Wortle Hall, near Sheffield, on the weekend of 3 May 1957.

This marked an important turning-point in the socialist movement. Most of those attending were comrades who had left or been expelled from the Communist Party since the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Among them were Professor Hyman Levy, Brian Pearce, and John Daniels. Eric Heffer, who broke with the CP several years earlier, was also there.

Representing 'The Group' (Trotskyists) were Gerry Healy, Jack Gale, Ellis Hillman and myself. The conference was reported the following week by Peter Fryer in the very first issue of *The Newsletter* (10 May 1957).

Norman Hardin  
Leeds

## From Lenin to Stalin

ACCORDING to Peter Fryer (10 February), what Trotsky should have written was: 'Lenin created the apparatus. The bureaucracy created Stalin.'

But he didn't. And, indeed, that would have been pointless. The apparatus that Lenin created itself created Stalin.

Here Trotsky touches — only touches — on the problem of how Lenin's Russia evolved into Stalin's Russia: a problem on which a lot of question-begging verbiage has been spilled.

Whether the 'logic' of my letter is that Lenin should not have taken power is questionable. Perhaps it was a mistake? But are we to write off the great 1789 French Revolution because it led, perhaps inevitably, to Napoleon?

By the way, the word 'criticism' in my letter, as printed, was originally 'criterion'. Perhaps you should have followed Peter's good advice — always use the shortest simple word where possible — and written 'test'.

Brian Pearce  
New Barnet, Herts

## Support for Bongani Mkhungo

This is the text of a fax from the Hungarian Revolution Socialist League of Hungary (section of the Workers International) to the leaders of the South African trade union federation, COSATU. The fax is to protest against the threat made against the life of our comrade, Workers International member Bongani, at the tenth anniversary celebrations of COSATU in Durban on 2 December 1995 (see Workers Press reports from December 1995).

WE WISH to protest most strongly against the physical attack on comrade Bongani Mkhungo at the trade union rally in Durban on the 10th anniversary of COSATU, as well as against the harassment and threats on his family.

Some of us knew him when he came to Europe to campaign, as a known trade union leader of NUMSA, against the apartheid regime and for the release of the union's president Moses Mayekiso.

Now he has been savagely attacked by the steward-thugs while distributing leaflets calling for COSATU to break its alliance

with the government which, on behalf of capital, attacks workers and their rights as it did by sacking 7,000 nurses in former Transkei.

We always fought against violence in the workers' movement which we experienced at the hands of Stalinism. We know that Stalinism has collapsed and that its methods must be rejected for all time. We support the demand for an inquiry by the international working-class movement, to which COSATU belongs, on these attacks on comrade Mkhungo as well as the use of such foul methods.

On behalf of the Revolutionary Socialist League of Hungary

Balasz Nagy

■ Please send resolutions and letters to COSATU, fax: 00 27 11 339 6940. Copies to Workers International: 0171-387 0569.

We are also asking for funds to help arrange for the protection of our comrade Bongani Mkhungo. Donations to 'South Africa Solidarity Fund', and sent to Workers International, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

## SE London WRP

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## DOCKERS CHARTER

No.3 January 1996 issue out! 50p

Published by the Liverpool Dock Shop Stewards Committee. Cheques to 'Meyside Dockers Shop Stewards Committee' and sent to J. Davies, Secretary/Treasurer, 19 Scorton Street, Liverpool, L6 4AS. Include 50p p&p. Large orders phone: 0151-207 3388.

## Football articles wanted

CAN any reader of Workers Press donate books, magazines, videos or anything else to do with football?

One of our members in Crawley, Sussex, has agreed to sell them on his market stall and donate the money towards the expenses for preparing to build the conference (and the work beyond that) on the need for a new socialist party called by Workers Press.

To offer articles phone Workers Press: 0171-387 0564.

# South Kilburn estate demands action

BY SEAN TOIBIN

TWO HUNDRED local residents from the South Kilburn estate in north-west London marched last Saturday to Queen's Park police station and Brent council housing office to hand in letters demanding action to improve conditions on their estate.

The South Kilburn Safety Campaign which organised the march evolved out of council tenants' complaints about the lack of basic maintenance.

Street lighting is totally inadequate. In some areas only one light in six is working. Fire exit doors which are supposed to be closed except in the event of fire are wide open and used as everyday entrances and exits.

Lifts continuously break down, corridors are badly lit and there is no doubt that the tower blocks were badly designed in the first place.

One resident told me that the lights were out of order for three days and everyone had to carry torches with them. Imagine coming up a lift to the 15th floor without any light.

## Mugged

A husband and wife were recently mugged going into that lift after spending an evening in the nearby Marian Centre social club.

The wife sustained fractured ribs and her husband suffered from severe bruising around his windpipe which stopped him eating solids for a week and forced him to live on liquids.

The South Kilburn Safety

Campaign was set up by local people to organise around all issues of safety including personal safety. It held two public meetings prior to the march which were attended by 150 to 200 people.

## Anger

There was anger at both meetings at the recent spate of muggings in the area. The second meeting decided that we should march to the police station and demand a police presence on the estate.

It also demanded that the council must carry out emergency repairs on street lighting and make the blocks more secure.

At the public meeting after the march, campaign chair John Simmance introduced himself as someone who had been a shop steward working in hospitals for 16 years but who had recently been made redundant.

He had successfully represented, at an industrial tribunal, a local resident who was the victim of racial harassment and stressed the importance of building the campaign in the black community.

Father Frank Ryan, the local Catholic priest, spoke about the importance of rebuilding the community spirit which 'has been destroyed by capitalism'.



South Kilburn Safety Campaign demonstration

He described Kilburn as always having been a working-class area and urged everyone to help their neighbours.

'We were all told that the communists were bad', he said, 'but there was one thing about them, they had equality.'

Capitalism, he explained, breeds inequality and that was behind Brent council's treatment of South Kilburn people.

Brent East MP Ken Livingstone also spoke and stressed the

importance of building the local community and of having no confidence in a future Labour government.

There was a lively discussion from the floor and a large collection was taken. A benefit dance is planned as well as another public meeting to which councillors, council officials, and police are invited. A committee has been set up which meets on alternate Mondays and all local people are welcome to attend.

## Hackney meeting condemns Asylum Act

BY NICK BAILEY

A POWERFUL attack on the Tory government was launched at a meeting in Hackney last week by the cousin of a Nigerian asylum seeker who recently died at the hands of the police.

Sogi Lapite, cousin of the asylum seeker Shiji Lapite condemned the government for its support of the brutal Nigerian regime.

'Nigeria is a wealthy country', declare Lapite. 'Why do we find asylum seekers looking to enter Britain?'

The military regime in Nigeria — armed, aided and abetted

by the British government — had forced thousands to leave the country. Workers who opposed the government were jailed or simply disappeared, he told the meeting. It was sheer hypocrisy for the Home Office to attack the resultant asylum seekers.

He appealed to British workers to help Nigerian workers in whatever way they could.

Speakers at the meeting included Labour MPs Diane Abbott and Brian Sedgmore, a local vicar and a speaker from the Colin Roach centre.

Called by the Campaign against the Immigration and Asylum Bill, it contained several people who were under the threat of deportation.

Speakers called on local councils and the unions to refuse to cooperate with the laws.

The Autonomous Refugee Centre in Hackney (ARCH) has occupied an empty building and aims to prepare it to house and feed people made destitute by the bill.

# Camden calls for strike action

ONE THOUSAND members of the Camden branch of the public sector union UNISON have voted unanimously to continue their struggle against mass sackings and the attempted imposition of new contracts by the Labour council.

A branch meeting of 8 February voted for a programme of resistance that included:

■ Taking at least six days strike action.

■ Continuing to refuse to sign a letter from the council agreeing to the new contracts.

■ Signing a Unison letter refusing the new contract but declaring that members intended to continue working for the council and noting the council's intention to dismiss and re-engage all workers on the old contract.

■ Calling in the Greater London Whitley Council — the joint union/employer body that can arbitrate in disputes.

The packed meeting heard a report from branch secretary David Eggmore that accused the council of not wanting a settlement to the three-year dispute.

By withdrawing the improvements that had been gained through negotiations a week before with the union, the council had shown that they were never serious and instead were intent on confrontation, he said.

Moving the motion from the

union executive committee, Liz Leicester stressed the importance of remaining united in the face of a very difficult situation.

She explained that the executive committee had had a long and heated debate about the action to take but the main aim was to develop the collective strength of the branch and the union.

'The Labour Group is split over the issue', she said.

'Only 22 of them voted to sack us, 11 voted against — this means there were 16 abstentions or absences. They must be concerned.

'Rank-and-file members of the Labour Party are very concerned

— they don't want this council to be remembered as the council that sacked 3,000 of its workforce.

'We cannot guarantee that the action we have outlined will make the council reconsider. But we can guarantee that if we do nothing now, we will have the new contracts imposed on us and three years of fighting may be lost', she said.

Cleaners from Hillingdon Hospital, who were sacked for refusing to accept big pay cuts, spoke to the meeting.

A Liverpool docker spoke about the importance for the whole of the working class of the action they were taking in defence of their jobs.

# Corruption evidence mounts against Indian government

From PETER GIBSON in India

WILL there be an election? Or will there be an election? That is the problem now confronting all India's major political parties.

Evidence of corruption involving leading political figures, including prime minister Narasimha Rao, mounts daily. The Rupee fell by almost 5 per cent last week, only then to shoot up days later, for no apparent reason.

Last week's currency fluctuations left exporters sitting pretty with importers panicking as they tried to cover their costs.

The *Weekender* newspaper in its last editorial accused the Indian finance minister Manmohan Singh and the State Bank of India of being the biggest speculators against the rupee.

Between April 1994 steel production fell by 9 per cent, production of petroleum was down 3 per cent and the output of steel ingots dropped by 9 per cent. The production of copper, pig iron, cloth

The total currency reserves, measured in real terms, fell by 10 per cent in the same period.

While deregulation and the growth of the 'free market' has generated a lot of activity and rich pickings for the upper strata, rising prices, unemployment, the rising costs of education and medicine have already started hitting the ordinary man and woman as never before.

Writing in the magazine *Infocus*, B.K. Bhargava, Reader in Economics at Rajdhani college, says:

'The "New Economic Plan" has done precious little, or does not make any reference to India's problems of poverty, unemployment and environmental degradation.'

## Critics

Critics of the NEP in India now see it as the attempt by the IMF and World Bank to dictate India's priorities and thus constitute an undue interference in India's economic affairs.

India are up in arms, and the struggle against the effects of the NEP can be seen on all sides. The five trade union federations representing port and dock workers in India gave notice of a national strike to start on 26 February.

Within days the government had agreed to their demands for the removal of a ceiling on monthly pay which had resulted in 50 per cent of workers not getting the last pay increase.

Some will get back-dated increases from 1992. The 4500R (£90) per month upper limit of earnings will go, resulting in a 19 per cent increase for some.

In the port of Mormugao at the iron-ore handling plant the 400 workers are still on strike after seven days as a result of a security guard beating one of their members.

The port employers, and the Minister of Labour for Goa, Luisinho Faleiro, have denounced the strike as illegal.

At the same time the National Alliance of Peoples Movements (NAPM) has raised widespread

ment plans for a 'Free Port', and for the use of very big trawlers along the coast which will, the NAPM say, destroy the fishing for traditional local inshore fishermen.

## Nylon

The NAPM has already been able to mobilise people to stop the construction of a nylon 6.6 plant in Tamil Nadu in south India. The movement has also opposed the project by the US-funded Taj hotel group to build a Disney theme park on the lighthouse headland in north Goa, and the proposal to build a golf course to attract high-spending Japanese tourists.

Mr Chittaranjan of the NAPM is quoted as saying 'If the East India Company could keep the country enslaved for so many years, one can imagine what could be the plight of our nation if hundreds of multinationals were allowed to have a free hand!'

There is no sign that any election, if and when it comes, will solve any of these problems.

## Anti-union laws threaten Newbury protesters

BY DANIEL ROBERTSON

TORY anti-trade-union legislation is being used to threaten the Newbury by-pass protesters.

Police have charged several people under section 241 (3) of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act of 1992 for preventing tree fellers from getting to work.

They locked themselves to vehicles travelling to the site causing a 4-mile traffic jam. This reflects growing desperation by the pro-roads lobby.

The protesters' camps have been declared 'illegal' but this has had no effect on their resolve. This attitude reflects growing popular willingness, for instance by the Liverpool dockers, to defy repressive Tory laws.

Meanwhile two new groups have joined the protest. Cambridge University students have

made their own camp on the by-pass route joining 25 others already in place. They join a group of security guards who defected to the protest and joined Friends of the Earth after being sickened by the violence used by former colleagues, none of whom had been arrested by police.

In a further blow to the pro-roads lobby, Friends of the Earth and Transport 2000 have found that Railtrack is considering plans to carry lorries on trains from the Midlands to Southampton. Developing a trunk route covering this journey is the government's secret reason for building the by-pass, which will only have a temporary effect on relieving traffic through Newbury.

This 'piggy-back' concept would cost a fraction of the bill for the by-pass as well as being environmentally very attractive.

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# Inside left The dosh

WHEN workers ask for more money they are told they must compete in the marketplace. If an unemployed person is caught trying to fiddle a few pence out of the system, this is cited as proof that the poor must be persecuted by ever more stringent checks.

But members of parliament, insisting what's good enough for the nurses is nowhere near enough for them, say they must have better pay to attract the best people for the job. If they're not to be tempted into shady but profitable sidelines, they warn, their salaries must be doubled. Meanwhile they accuse teachers of failing to tell children the difference between right and wrong.

When Dave Nellist was Labour MP for Coventry South East (1983-92) he made a point of only drawing the average pay of a skilled worker in his constituency. Pat Wall and Terry Fields did the same.

'I think that MPs need a halving of their wages not a doubling,' Dave says. A workers' MP on a worker's wage', *Militant* 9 February), 'to bring them to the real world of what the majority of ordinary working-class families have to live on.

Once Labour MPs get down to London they're mixing with consultants, PR people, bankers and journalists. They get sucked into that sort of world and pulled away from the people they're supposed to represent.

What's needed is for them to have the same sort of life, with all its problems, financial and otherwise, as the vast majority of ordinary people have to live.'

As regards expenses imposed by the job, Dave Nellist points out that they can claim over £60,000 a year on top of their salaries for this.

As *Militant* points out in an editorial on Hemsworth, at the 1992 general election Nellist won 10,551 votes (19 per cent) as Independent Labour, and since then he has won 40 per cent in local elections.

In 1991, despite vicious abuse, *Militant* supporter Lesley Mahmood gained 2,613 votes in Liverpool Wallasey, knocking the Tories into fourth place. Terry Fields gained 5,952 votes (22 per cent) in the 1992 election standing as 'Socialist Labour'.

So whatever one thinks of Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party, and how its first effort fared, the possibilities for an electoral challenge from the left are not as far out as Blair's supporters might like to think. How about all would-be candidates, Labour, SLP or whatever, being asked if they'll follow Dave Nellist's example, and forego inflated pay?

WHAT raises another question. A letter in one of the papers recently observed tartly that if Jack Dromey had beaten Bill Morris for the Transport and General Workers' Union general secretaryship, he and spouse Marriet Harman could have sent their offspring to Eton.

Many years ago the Socialist Labour League (forerunner of the WRP) used to demand that trade union leaders be paid no more than the average wage received by their members.

This was seen as a counter to bureaucratic careerism and an incentive to fight for the members. I wonder what comrades think of this demand today, and how widely it could be supported?

## Workers Press meeting

# Crisis in the labour movement need for a new

Last Saturday, Workers Press held a meeting to celebrate ten years of publication and, more importantly, to look forward to the kind of paper needed by the working class. About 60 people participated. MARTIN WESTWOOD and MIKE COOKE report

IN WELCOMING everybody to the meeting, **Geoff Pilling** on behalf of the editorial board said its main purpose was to discuss what developments in Workers Press were necessary in the new political situation we were now in.

He stressed that this new situation was marked by the collapse of the Stalinist bureaucracy and the inability of parties such as the Labour Party any longer to deliver reforms for the working class.

'This is an international trend,' said Pilling. The depth of the capitalist crisis now made impossible the granting of further concessions to the working class or indeed to sections of the middle class, he said.

Quite the contrary, all the historic gains made by the working class in Britain and other countries must now be taken back by the ruling class and to take them back would be the task of any future Labour government.

The meeting was taking place in the midst of ever more obvious signs of capitalist decay. In the colonial and semi-colonial countries the picture was clear: poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, infant mortality were endemic.

But in the developed capitalist countries of Europe and north America similar social and economic problems were now appearing. In Europe some 20 million people were without work, even according to official figures. More and more of the unemployed were without hope of ever working again.

All around were signs of decay: the crisis in the inner city, the lack of education for millions of working-class children, the destruction of the universities as centres of learning were just some examples that could be quoted, said Pilling.

This crisis was now hitting the middle class. The casualisation of labour was not simply a problem for the working class. It was hitting workers in banking, insurance, university teaching, he said.

In this situation of growing social and political crisis, what should be the role of a workers' paper be? In answering this question it was necessary to understand that the working class and the exploited generally were not simply passive forces. There were important movements developing in Britain.

Pointing to the ecological movement he said that this was a well-founded movement in that capitalism did more and more threaten nature, the very basis for life.

### Depth

Because of the sheer depth of the crisis the most oppressed sections of the working class were being propelled into struggle. He pointed to the Hillingdon hospital workers as an example.

In Liverpool the previous weekend, addressing a rally of striking dockers and their families, the women from Hillingdon said that their fight was against starvation wages and was therefore a fight for the whole of the working class.

He spoke of the recent work of Workers Press in the Liverpool dockers' strike. This was a strike that from the outset had been international. The dockers' leaders had made an appeal for support internationally and had been amazed by the response their fight had won.

'This is the working class recon-



Hillingdon hospital cleaner speaks at Liverpool dockers' rally. She said their fight was against starvation wages and was therefore a fight for the whole of the working class

structing its international organisation and consciousness,' said Pilling.

Many struggles today were taking place outside the Labour Party or the trade unions, but it would be a mistake to turn our back on such organisations.

What was our task? It was to turn our paper firmly towards the forces now impelled into struggle.

'We must have the confidence to place our paper into the hands of these forces,' he said. Workers Press must reflect, express and help organise this growing movement, he insisted.

He proposed that we now work towards an expansion of the editorial board of the paper that would draw into its work those engaged in struggle against the employer and the state.

We must give space to let such workers, students, the unemployed, single-parent families and many others express themselves, to provide an arena in which they could speak to each other, a paper that could help them organise their common struggles.

Such a new paper had to embrace the widest cultural concerns: the destruction of the educational system, the destruction of increasing numbers of young people through drug addiction.

Only the working class, together with its allies in the middle class, could defend the cultural conquests of the past and prevent them being destroyed at the hands of capital, he said.

THE meeting was then opened up to discussion and many made their particular contributions. **Charlie Pottins** criticised the way left-wing political groups assumed that the way forward was for the working class to come behind the 'vanguard' party because it consisted of people who had 'read the books'.

In the last couple of decades, the working class has been ahead of such people,' said Pottins. He referred to the 1984-85 miners' strike, the Liverpool dockers and the 'libertarian-anarchists' at Newbury, who were better organised than many of the supposed 'vanguards', as examples.

He stressed the need to overcome conservatism, and the attitude that wants to live in the past and was determined to stay there.

Charlie proposed that Workers Press readers' groups were set up across the country. He hoped that these would develop from being readers' groups to also making contributions by becoming correspondents for the paper, sending letters, articles, cartoons, pictures, etc, and would become involved in distribution of the paper.

### Groups

This would be a real basis for a new party, he maintained. It wouldn't be a matter, then, of just the left groups coming together.

**Daniel Robertson** thought it was a pity that Workers Press had such a small readership. He thought that there were possibilities of getting some of the material published elsewhere — possibly for money!

He also said that, in spite of the hype, there were new opportunities on the internet to get the message across.

**Mike Howgate** praised the recent articles on the Liverpool dock strike and lock-out, but was critical of the lack of coverage of the Socialist Labour Party, led by Arthur Scargill. He said that the paper had to build a bridge to those going in and should orient itself towards that party. Articles like last week's centre spread which were just critical of Scargill was no way to begin the discussion, he maintained. We needed to build our sphere of influence.

**Clare Cowen** talked of her experience of 20 years on the *Newsline* (the daily paper of the WRP up to 1985) and Workers Press. She also thought that the rich history of papers in the working-class movement should be studied, for example, the German Social-democratic Party's 90 daily papers before World War I.

**Bronwen Handyside** thought Workers Press needed and had begun to break out of the closed circle existence towards the new socialist party. This development had come from the recognition that the working class was reconstructing

itself and had been released from the bonds of Stalinism.

**Ed Hall** of Lambeth Unison talked of the ten years of Workers Press. He was critical of the way socialists had accepted the destruction of the planet and their ideas were too much centred on our species.

He was critical of Mike Howgate's view that the Socialist Labour Party was the most important arena. He said that the politics of his Unison branch were still more sympathetic to the traditional Labour Party.

He was critical of way socialists treated race and gender issues as being 'too cold'. During the Brixton uprising recently, when 'the police started running after protesters they didn't look for SWP members but for young black people. There is an



Collapse of Stalinism: the fall of

# movement — the workers' paper

antithesis between socialists and black people.' He was critical of the preaching of a 'Victorian' socialism that did not relate to the modern day.

**Dave Temple**, an ex-miner, talked of his experiences and problems of selling *Newslines* during the miners' strike. Because it reflected the miners' own struggle and boosted their morale, the sales of the paper went up from a handful to 80 in the welfare centre.

He also remembered how *Newslines* had had a fireman's diary during the 1977 strike. People would read it first to see how he was getting on. This reflected interest in people's lives as part of the human condition.

## Difficulties

**Paddy McCloy**, who came in contact with Workers Press through Workers Aid for Bosnia, described the difficulties involved in trying to get students at Cambridge involved in discussions on the new party. Only a few might turn up and it would be those who talked the same old language. Those who didn't didn't return!

He contrasted this with the way it was easy to get 40 people out collecting and organising for Workers Aid for Bosnia convoys. He also talked of recent moves to set up camps to support the fight against the Newbury by-pass.

These two examples showed the spirit of people was that they wanted to do something. Paddy said he occasionally saw that spirit in Workers Press and we needed to invite people with that spirit to contribute and change the paper.

**Quentin Hoare**, of the Alliance to Defend Bosnia-Herzegovina, said that he had become a reader of Workers Press because of its coverage of Bosnia. He had been impressed not just by its political line of support for Bosnia but because it reflected a desire to do something in the real world and also that it was possible to do something.

He had been in the revolutionary movement but had not been in any organisation for a long time. Revolutionary theory could only arise in relation to what happened in the real world. Unless it was a response to exploitation, war, genocide, ... it was useless.

He criticised the way most left groups, like the SWP and those in the Labour Party, had been indifferent to the Bosnian warcrimes, which were of a genocidal character. They had displayed a moral bankruptcy that had not been the case with Workers Press.

**Peter Fryer** said it had been a refreshing meeting. He made some criticisms of the heavy appearance of Workers Press and said that it must become more of a shop window for the movement. There was a need to train workers to act as journalists. There was 'no mystique about it, 99 out of a 100 can be trained. There is nothing very grand about it.'

He said there was a need for more money and human resources so people could be sent out. He also considered that cartoonists drawing for the paper would make an immense improvement. He finished by thinking the unthinkable and asking if a change of the paper's name might be appropriate.

**Andrew Burgin** thought the meeting on Workers Press should have come after the 'Crisis in the labour movement' conference on 16 March.

He considered that extended editorial meetings for Workers Press, once a month, would be a very constructive development.

**Alfred Banya**, of the African Liberation Support Campaign, said Workers Press had raised important issues for the working-class movement in Africa. The WRP election campaign in Namibia had made a good impact there and in the rest of Africa.

It was necessary to extend that kind of work to Uganda, Nigeria and target workplaces in Africa. There

were already structures available to make these opportunities.

**Mike Howgate** returned to the discussion to again criticise the lack of attention given by Workers Press to the Socialist Labour Party and said that articles 'slagging off' Arthur Scargill did not help the discussion. The SLP was a 'very political' part of the discussion and wasn't like a trade union struggle that was defeated or won. 'The SLP is an ongoing thing.'

**Geoff Pilling** made 'a plea of defence' for Workers Press. 'It is nonsense to say we "slagged off" the SLP.'

Workers Press had welcomed the Socialist Labour Party in that it broadened the discussion we had already started on a new socialist party. Workers Press had called for a vote for the SLP candidate in the Hemsworth by-election. For many years Workers Press had defended Arthur Scargill against the numerous witch-hunts launched against him.

Where Workers Press did criticise Scargill was in his ambition to go back to the 'old' Labour Party and rewrite history, for example, of the 1945-51 government. The old Labour Party had died for profoundly historical reasons. In contrast, Scargill thought Blair had robbed the working class of old Labour.

**Cliff Slaughter** said the discussion about what kind of new party would go on for some time, including with those who still thought that changing the Labour Party was still the way forward.

For about 100 years, the working-class movement had been restricted politically to parliament. It didn't believe that that it could break through politically except by voting and leaving things to the politicians.

## Feeling

There was a strong feeling that Blair was the only hope for getting the Tories out, in fact more hope than a left-wing leader would have!

The New Labour government was going to be a big shock for many.

The overthrow of capitalism was not going to happen today but that overthrow was not a millenium away. We needed to build for that decisive moment. Workers Press needed to be the organiser of the new forces and to be put at the disposal of those forces. The purpose of Workers Press must be to work for new party. It could become the organiser of forces forming a new party.

Slaughter criticised the view that Marxism was like the Ten Commandments. It was a strategy for needs. He also criticised the one-sided appreciation of Lenin's *What is to be done?* that bourgeois intellectuals brought 'socialist consciousness' to the working class. In reality, 'socialist consciousness' was built inside the working class. Theory has to be realisation of the needs of the masses.

**Nick Lee** referred to some criticism made in the meeting that Workers Press might become a 'bullet board'. 'If the paper was to become more open it might well become that,' he said. Struggles and reports would come into Workers Press.

The meeting finished with a number coming forward to participate in the proposed monthly extended editorial meetings and a collection of £121.72 was made to support Workers Press's coverage of the Liverpool dockers dispute.

# City Lights

## The great break-up

A DECADE ago Lord Hanson was the business face of Thatcherism. Starting from humble origins as owner of a small Yorkshire haulage firm, he and business partner Gordon White built one of Britain's biggest companies through a series of ruthless take-overs.

How the mighty are fallen! His company is to be broken up.

What is the balance sheet of the Hanson experience? What was achieved, for whom and at what cost?

Hanson always prided himself that the chief object of his concern was the small shareholder. Yet the record shows that over the last decade the company has greatly underperformed on the stock market. As the break-up of the British-US empire was announced its share price stood at 197p, a third lower than its all-time high reached in the early months of 1994.

If those who bought shares in the recent past have not done very well, this is hardly true of the company's directors. Hanson and his fellow directors for years collected some of the biggest pay packets in Britain.

Last year Hanson got £1.37m, chief executive Derek Bonham took £1.2m and Lord Hanson's son Robert pocketed £257K. Even the non-executive directors, who included former home secretary Kenneth Baker and former US ambassador Charles Price II, were not badly done by, receiving between £30,000 and £85,000 a year according to seniority.

Some directors have accumulated large shareholdings. Hanson owns £11.8m and has options on a further 2 million shares.

Hanson bought some of the biggest companies in Britain including British Every Ready, United Drapery Stores, London Brick and Imperial Group. Last year he jumped on the privatisation bandwagon when he acquired Eastern Electricity.

His main targets were US companies — leading to the understated words of the TV commercial: 'a company from over here doing rather well over there'. Whatever he bought and wherever he bought it, Hanson's formula was the same. Shut down the HQ, strip out the top layer of management, sell off everything that was 'underperforming'. Between 1964 and 1986, two-thirds of all acquisitions were got rid of in this way.

If Hanson and his associates did well out of these predatory operations, his workers didn't. His asset stripping destroyed tens of thousands of jobs. Latest victims are 2,300 workers due for the chop at the electrical retailer Powerhouse, a loss-making part of Eastern Electric.

In 1987, just after Hanson's pounce, Imperial Tobacco employed 11,026 people. In 1994 under 3,000 remained when the factory closed down.

The City did rather better. Over three decades, Hanson spent millions on his activities, the biggest beneficiaries being the merchant bank Rothschilds and the stockbroker Hoare Govett. Ernst and Young, the accounting firm, also had rich pickings from Hanson's operations.

The Tory Party also did very nicely, thank you, from the Hanson years. Over £1m has flowed into Tory coffers over the last ten years, with a further £150,000 going to the party think tank, the Centre for Policy Studies. Telling shareholders only last week, 'Our help is more than ever needed', £100,000 was passed on.

Last week local Labour councillors in Peterborough, where Hanson is building a £500m new town, claimed the deal was a quid pro quo for contributions to the Tory party.

If the Tory party has fared well, the exchequer has done less well. Through a series of offshore tax havens, Hanson has kept his bill to a minimum. A series of companies located in exotic places like Panama, the Cayman Islands and the Netherlands Antilles helped keep his tax

Hanson represented the 'new breed' of capitalist that came to prominence in the 1970s and 1980s with little interest in production. They made their money, short-term, by buying and stripping assets, sacking workers and in so doing amassing fortunes for a small handful of their cronies. How the great breaker-upper of companies came to break itself up is a topic to which we must return.

## Privatisation fraud

A RECENT research report finds that a firm that runs the contracted out school meals service in Bromley also runs the water system in Buenos Aires, builds roads in the Czech republic and has been convicted of bribing the mayor of Grenoble in its attempts to win a contract for the supply of water in Grenoble.

Privatisation has allowed a handful of multinational companies to dominate public-service provision in Britain and the rest of the world. This has resulted in cartels, combines and widespread corruption, says the report, *Privatisation Network*, published by the Public Services Privatisation Research Unit.

The Tory myth that companies tendering for privatised services are engaged in bitter competition is exposed in detail. The true picture is that firms combine resources to deal with large projects and make sure that states provide guarantees against financial default. Available from PSPRU, 1 Mabledon Place, London, WC1H 9AJ.

## Japan

THE majority of Japanese firms with investments in Britain are dissatisfied with their profit levels, it was reported last week.

During Mrs Thatcher's time in office Japanese firms made a big rush to Britain to take advantage of the low level of taxation and the relatively cheap labour power that existed here. Much to the distress of the French and the Germans, Japanese companies saw the electronics and car plants they built in this country — often on greenfield sites — as a Trojan Horse into the European market.

A survey of 70 top Japanese firms with investments in Britain, carried out by the accountants KPMG, finds that 53 per cent are facing below anticipated profits, and in some cases outright losses. The low profits were blamed on the slump in the European economy, the soaring yen which made imported components expensive, and intensifying competition from new entrants into Europe from such countries as South Korea.

## Consumer will pay

FAR more important than the early retirement (with a pension of £250,000 a year) of British Gas chief Cedric Brown is the news that the company is to be split into two. One part, British Gas Energy (BGE), will deal with the supply of gas to the consumer, while the bigger of the two, TransCo International, will be responsible for gas exploration and the ownership of British Gas's 267,000km pipe system.

So what's the big deal? Not least of the catastrophes that Brown superintended during his highly-paid time as head of British Gas were contracts signed for the supply of North Sea gas. Stretching over as much as 20 years into the future these are likely to land BGE with losses of at least £1.5 billion as a result of the collapse in world oil prices.

Who is going to pay for these wild misjudgements? By loading them exclusively onto BGE it is the consumer that will pay, with the much more powerful and lucrative TransCo being insulated from Brown's folly.



the Berlin Wall, 1989





# Bosnians grab Chetnik General — and expose Dayton sham KILLERS CAUGHT!

**TWO high-ranking Serb nationalist officers arrived in Scheveningen prison, near the Hague, last week, escorted by NATO soldiers. It was the first time anyone had been extradited by the International War Crimes Tribunal, and it was entirely due to action by Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) forces, fed up with waiting for the NATO-led implementation force (IFOR) to act.**

General Djordje Djukic, an aide to General Mladic, Colonel Aleksa Krsmanovic, and six others, were seized by Bosnian forces on 30 January.

According to Bosnian Serb sources, the senior officers were on their way to talks with IFOR in Sarajevo. British Brigadier Andrew Cumming, in charge of

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

NATO's joint operations centre, said he was unaware of any meeting being scheduled.

Cumming said Djukic, Krsmanovic and their driver were arrested after taking a wrong turning, into Bosnian government-held territory.

Djukic and Krsmanovic are accused of killing civilians during the siege of Sarajevo.

'We have evidence that not only did they participate in killing civilians, but they also helped organise the killing of civilians,' said Bosnian security chief Bakir Alispahic.

'Since there exists evidence that both officers were involved in committing war crimes against civilians, we were authorized and obliged to start an investigation.'

Three others detained — Tese Tesic, Petar Todorovic and Dusan Borovic — were suspected of killing civilians in eastern and

southern Bosnia. The general's driver and two other arrested Serbs would be set free after being questioned, the Bosnians said.

The Bosnian action caused alarm among the imperialist 'peacekeepers' reluctant to do anything about war criminals, as well as among the Chetnik war criminals themselves.

'We have decided to stop negotiations and not to go to the Muslim part any longer until we get the ... Serbs released,' said Chetnik spokesperson Dragan Bozanic.

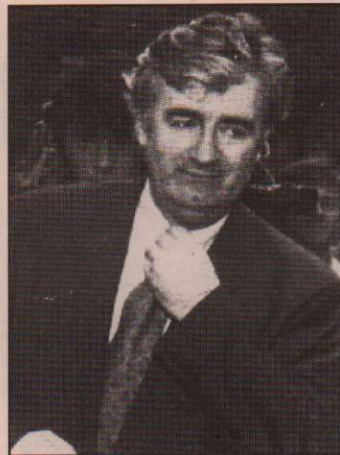
'The problem is someone is not obeying the Dayton agreement ... We are expecting NATO to help us solve the problem.'

A Chetnik commander threatened: 'There are 3,000 cars that travel through Ilidza every day ... But you can be sure that if we are not given free passage we will not give free passage to them. They are making a grave, grave mistake. If these men are not freed the Muslims will find themselves once again trapped inside Sarajevo.'

## Danger

'This is a development which risks putting in serious danger the implementation of the peace accords and the ability of various communities to live together in the Bosnian capital,' said Italy's European Union presidency.

European High Representative Carl Bildt said legal rights must be respected. Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev,



**Radovan Karadzic: Officers of the Light Dragoons claimed not to know whether he'd been indicted at the Hague tribunal for war crimes!**

butcher of Chechnya, called the detentions 'unjust'. Brigadier Cumming described the arrests as 'provocative and inflammatory'.

Bosnia's new prime minister Hasan Muratovic said that after four years of war the events could not endanger the 'peace process'. 'Whatever happens there is so much pressure on us that I cannot describe. You know that we all have to deal with war criminals ... There will be no peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina until war criminals are taken to the Hague tribunal or some other court.'

'It is undecipherable what crime was done in Bosnia-Herzegovina. You know only part of it.' 'So we must search for crimi-

nals. And it may be that we sometimes arrest innocent people ... If they are not war criminals, they will be freed,' Muratovic added.

'We consider this the first serious challenge to the Dayton agreement,' said US Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke, who flew into Bosnia last weekend to persuade Bosnian and Serb leaders to compromise. He admitted however that the Dayton agreement was supposed to provide for arrest of war criminals.

## 'Crusade'

NATO officers don't want to hunt for war criminals or cooperate with the search for evidence. They complain their relationship with the Serb military command could be spoiled by a 'moral crusade' (an insensitive term when the war criminals are accused of butchering Muslims, with the blessing of their church).

Lieutenant Colonel Mark Rayner of IFOR said soldiers had been told they were not there to hunt for war criminals. Giving them photographs of those indicted 'would send a confusing message'.

As a result IFOR soldiers 'won't necessarily recognise a war criminal or know that they bumped into one, and they can't be expected to.'

Chetnik leader Radovan Karadzic, already indicted by the Hague tribunal, has been travelling unhampered through IFOR checkpoints, appearing on television, and addressing political meetings.

As Karadzic took a stroll in Banja Luka (where many Serbs are opposed to him) a British NATO jeep was seen parked nearby.

Officers of the Light Dragoons stationed not far from the Chetnik leaders' hotel claimed they were 'not sure' whether he was on the indicted list. They did not remember what they had done with the list.

General Djukic and Colonel Krsmanovic, the only high-ranking officers so far arrested, were taken to the Hague for questioning as part of a compromise under which the Bosnian government agreed to only arrest suspects on an agreed list. The other four officers were freed as a gesture of goodwill.

■ Establishment-connected Serb nationalist lobbyists in Britain intend to run a smear campaign against the Hague Tribunal in the Tory media.

A memorandum which Workers Press has seen attacks Judge Richard Goldstone and members of his tribunal, singling out African and Asian members.

'Western concepts of impartial justice mean nothing to them,' asserts the writer, a British author whose own strong pro-Chetnik partiality has extended to condemning World War II support for Tito's partisans. A person connected with the Serb Information Centre in London has circulated the memorandum to key supporters.

## IFOR troops loot Sarajevo centre

AS if three years of war hadn't done enough damage to Sarajevo, French troops of the US-led peace-implementation force IFOR have gutted the Bosnian capital's Skenderija sports centre.

A report in *Oslobodenje* (3 February) said soldiers being moved from the sports complex to a barracks in a Serb-held suburb spent some days dismantling the centre's restaurant, shower area and bathrooms, leaving 'only the tiles on the walls'.

Sarajevo police said they had no authority to intervene. An IFOR officer told Bosnians they would get the property back some day if they could prove ownership.

'If they continue taking away everything at their hand's reach,

the 3.5 million war damage of Skenderija centre will be increased by another 1.5 million,' the centre's director, Sadik Hasanbegovic told a press conference later.

'We informed the city authorities and the republic and the state committee for cooperation with the UN but received no reply.'

Amir Hadziomeragic, assistant of the state committee for cooperation with the UN said a written request had been made to IFOR to stop removing items from Skenderija to the Rajlovac barracks, in a still occupied part of Sarajevo, without even taking an inventory in the owner's presence. The government was also demanding return of all that had been taken away.

## Visa racism bars Pakistan trade unionist

A CAMPAIGN fighting for rights for trade unionists in Pakistan had to cancel an important London meeting last week because the main speaker, a leading woman trade unionist, was refused a visa to enter Britain.

Shahida Jabeen, international secretary of the Pakistan Trade Union Defence Campaign, was coming to meet trade unionists and members of the Pakistani community in Britain, and had been invited to address a series of meetings.

The trade union defence campaign says the refusal of a visa to her is 'yet another case of the British government's racist policy towards those who would wish to enter this country for whatever reasons.'

The British High Commission in Islamabad asked for evidence that Shahida's visit was for bona fide reasons, and would not be 'abused'. Letters were provided from several organisations, and from MP Tony Benn, but apparently this did not suffice.

The High Commission also wanted bank statements and tax

documents, not items poor people in Pakistan usually possess. As usual, racism and class bias go hand in hand.

Trade unionists in Pakistan are struggling on several fronts — against anti-union laws, privatisation, women's oppression, and the brutal exploitation of bonded child labour.

Writing in the Pakistan Trade Union Defence Campaign's bulletin no.1 in December, Shahida Jabeen said a million children work in the carpet industry. More than 300,000 children work as bonded labour in the brick kilns.

Children are used to clean inside oil tankers. Pakistan police, far from enforcing labour laws and protecting children, run a protection racket, locking children up and beating them if they don't pay a 'bhatta' (bribe).

Iqbal Masih, a 12-year-old who exposed conditions of child labour in the carpet industry, was murdered last April.

Arif Shah, secretary of the Punjab Labour Federation was assassinated in January last year,

and Usman Ghani, a banking trade unionist was murdered in September.

Shahida Jabeen, who is general secretary of the Pakistan People's Party Women's Wing, became politically involved in the fight against General Zia's dictatorship. Shahida was jailed for 12 months in Rawalpindi in 1978, along with her five-month-old daughter.

Rearrested in 1982, she was beaten and tortured in the Fortress at Lahore, and spent eight months in solitary confinement. After going on hunger strike she was transferred to Kot-lakhpat prison, where she was held until 1984.

Shahida's brother, accused of 'terrorism', was hanged by the dictatorship on 6 August 1984. She was arrested and held again several times from 1985-88.

Eight years ago she was given a visa to enter Britain without any problem, so why is the British government blocking her visit now?

The Pakistan Trade Union Defence Campaign says it is both

racist and political discrimination.

'Denying a leading trade union movement activist the right to visit and speak to trade unionists in this country is an attack on the rights of the labour movement here,' the campaign's London office says.

■ Messages of protest to the: British High Commission, Immigration Section, Diplomatic Enclave, Ramna 5, Islamabad Pakistan. Fax: 00 92 51 822 313.

■ Keith Standing, secretary of the International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign (ITUSC) has written adding its voice to the protest.

An article by Imran Ali, of the Pakistan Trade Union Defence Campaign, appears in the January 1996 International Trade Unionist Bulletin, and there will be further coverage in the coming issue.

The bulletin is available from ITUSC, PO Box 18, Epsom KT18 7YR, England. Send £5 for 12 issues, or 55p to sample one issue.

**Uganda '96**

African Liberation Support Campaign and Uganda Joint Working Platform for Democracy: A series of discussions on an African case of a fight-back against military dictatorship — 'Building a task force network for democracy'. February to April 1996. Umoja Theatre, The Base, 59 Bethwin Road, Camberwell, London SE5, 1pm-6pm. Sundays 25 Feb, 10 and 24 Mar, 7 and 21 Apr. Case 2, **Sunday 25 February:** The Democratic Party (DP) and comparative parties in Africa. Information: Kofi (0171-924 9033) or Alfred (0956 222 497)

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**Indian army enters politics**

From PETER GIBSON in India

THE army in India seems to be taking much more interest in the activity of politicians.

In Maipur, two personnel from the Assam Rifles were found in the office of the governor of Maipur and Nagaland, O.N. Srivastava. They were in civilian dress, and carried no identity

cards, and when questioned gave the wrong names.

At first the army command said the men would be court-martialled, but later said that since the two soldiers were there to mend a phone line and had wandered into the wrong room, there was no case for a court-martial.

Army personnel are also in the police headquarters and stations, as well as in the Imphal telephone exchange. It is said that this activity is to direct calls to army camps. But some are worried that there might be more sinister motives!

■ More news — page 3.