WEEKLY PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Watch, Crtitical Mass and The Land is Ours. And each day

brings new support from a

upon members and support-

ers to take part in the Liver-

pool dockers' anniversary

march and rally on 28 Sep-

On that day 12 months ago,

500 dockers, having refused to

cross a picket line, were sacked by the Mersey Docks

and Harbour Company

(MDHC), sparking what has become one of the greatest

international labour move-

From the outset of their

dispute the dockers have

rightly maintained that their

fight for reinstatement is not

which embodies the rights of

all workers and future gen-

erations.

personal issue, but one

ment struggles in history.

tember (see ad page 2).

new organisation.

SATURDAY 31 AUGUST 1996

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## RECHAINS E RECLAIM THE FUTURE may well prove to be the most significant coalition of grassroots, direct action, environmental and social justice groups to In it are: Reclaim the Streets, Campaign Against the Criminal Justice Act, Campaign Against the Arms Trade (the East Timor 'Hawk' women), Earth First!, Communities Against Toxcs, Wales Againt Opencast, Youth CND, Justice?, Corporate

#### BY CHRIS KNIGHT

They stand opposed to the anti-trade-union laws, pri-Their first leaflet calls vatisation, casualisation and unemployment.

They support all the oppressed, as is revealed in their sponsoring of the Turkish human rights campaign. They have always refused to handle toxic waste, and they have always been first to act in solidarity with struggling workers in other countries.

In the last 11 months the Liverpool dockers have given a new meaning to 'flying picket'.

They have travelled the world, occupied gantries, organised an international dockworkers' conference, won support from dockers throughout Europe, Australia and the US for a boycott of the fall of 17.1 per cent in MDHC's

It is therefore understandable that those in Reclaim the Future support the Liverpool dockers.

Outside the confines of the traditional labour movement, there have been more than 500 separate 'actions' against the authorities in the past year.

#### Growth

The fastest growth in grass-roots protest has been in city-based groups which have neither membership nor constitutions.

In July in west London, 7,000 young people took over a half-mile section of busy motorway, halting all traffic both ways and holding a

port of Liverpool leading to a street-party from mid-afternoon to midnight.

> Making a total mockery of the Criminal Justice Act, fireeaters, body-painters, magicians, a bagpipe player, drummers, ravers and a smoke-breathing dragon defied van-loads of police and got away with it.

A tip-up truck deposited sand across the tarmac for kids to make castles with. A road-drill appeared, a hole was sunk and a sapling was planted in the fast lane symbolic vengeance for the many oaks felled in building the Newbury by-pass.

High across the M41 fluttered an immense red banner urging: 'SUPPORT THE TUBE-WORKERS!

And they did. When ASLEF

and RMT workers stopped the tubes on 7 August, hundreds of green, socialist and anarchist cyclists in the London area took to the roads in support, converging on Trafalgar Square, contributing to general gridlock and advising commuters to do some gardening or go to the seaside on a tube-strike day.

In a well-planned action, Reclaim the Streets activists on the same day occupied London Transport's Head Offices at St James's Park, unfurling from the seventh floor a banner reading SQUEEZE THE CAR, NOT THE TUBE!

#### Letter

Jimmy Knapp, General Secretary of the RMT railworkers' union has since sent a letter to Reclaim the Streets

'Friends, On behalf of the RMT, I would like to thank your organisation for your gestures of support for the striking train staff last week.

'While my union cannot normally associate itself with the more direct forms of action that your group involves itself with, your defence of RMT and ASLEF members was most appreci-

The cyclists and other activists, delighted, have decided to frame Jimmy's let-

## Cynics

Cynics will point out that a street party is not a revolutionary party; a few hundred cyclists are not the organised working class. But how do you build a revolutionary party, if not by leading and being part of whatever anti-capitalist action is actually taking

You have to start somewhere, and the streets seem as good a place as any. The most active environmentalists are themselves looking for a lead.

Throughout the protest movement, 'single-issue campaigns' are now increasingly felt to be a thing of the past: we all have the same enemy, and we all know that this vast alien threat to life on this planet operates on a global

## **SOUTH AFRICAN** APPEAL

We are proud to be able to tell our injured comrade NM in Durban, South Africa, that comrades in the Iranian Refugee Workers' Association have sent a donation from their meagre resources. Many many thanks to them.

This is not a general appeal. There is a specific, immediate and critical need for finance to assist NM who was severely wounded when six attackers shot him at close range in the stomach and hands. Although he is now out of hospital, he is unable to use his hands, and it is uncertain how much that situation will improve.

Neither NM nor our other comrades in Durban can identify the attackers who were wearing balaclava helmets. Sectarian attacks on workers are rife in Natal. So much so that when we telephoned the hospital for news of our comrade, we were told: 'Oh if he is one of the ones brought in with gunshot wounds, we probably do not even have his name.'

But our comrade has a name and has a place in the fight for socialism. He lost his job because of his principled fight for his trade union. He is dedicated to workers' internationalism. For the moment he is immobilised, shot down outside the home he shares with his wife and five children. We appeal to you to give generously to our appeal.

Cheques/money orders payable to 'South Africa Solidarity Fund', PO Box 735, London SW8.



Taking parliament by storm. On the left 'the people' and on the right the state. Australian Prime Minister John Howard described what happened as 'un-Australian' (see last week's Workers Press), but many others saw it as legitimate protest expressing widespread anger at a government determined to attack the most vulnerable. Future issues of Workers Press will keep you informed!

## Liverpool dockers

Monday 9 September: TUC lobby. Contact London support group (0956 138496) or Unison (0171-388 2366) for details of coaches.

Saturday 28 September: First year anniversary march and rally, Myrtle Parade to Pier Head, 1pm.

## DOCKERS CHARTER

#### LATEST ISSUE OUT NOW!

Available from the Liverpool Docks Shop Stewards' Committee, c/o 19 Scorton Street. Liverpool L6 4AS. Money to 'Merseyside Dockers Shop Stewards' Appeal'. Price 50p (20p unwaged). Add postage. Also send donations. Bulk orders tel: 0151-207 3388.

PAGE 7: Crisis in the labour movement — the need for a new socialist party

## **Workers Press**

# Fight for justice in South Africa

SOUTH Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission was set up by the ANC-dominated Government of National Unity, with Archbishop Desmond Tutu as chair, to attempt to defuse the anger and hatred left behind by

It hears testimonies from apartheid's victims and confessions by perpetrators. Then, like a Catholic priest in the confessional, it absolves those who carried

After a particularly horrible story, Archbishop Tutu will put his head down on his desk and weep. And that's it — no redress, no justice, no nothing.

A few weeks ago the Commission listened to the relatives of Steve Biko - an enormously talented young leader of the Black Consciousness Movement who was murdered after months of torture in an apart-

When Biko was unconscious and dying from his injuries, a police doctor certified him fit to be transferred to another prison and he was tossed handcuffed into the back of an open pick-up truck and driven 500 kilometres to his death.

Despite the opportunity held out to them by the Commission, Biko's relatives are not prepared to forgive and forget, and will prosecute his murderers.

Thus far the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has heard mostly from relatives of the murderees rather than the murderers - but it did hear from former president De Klerk, who explained that it was really the Boers who were under attack all along. So that's OK.

Last week it heard from the ruling African National Congress, which more momentously acknowledged for the first time in public that it had executed 34 members of its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) in the 1980s, after falsely accusing them of spying for the apartheid regime, and that its security organisation had carried out abuses against ANC cadres.

The ANC now admits that a mass popular mutiny took place in the training camps in 1984. It concedes that the demands made by the mutineers were for an end to the abuses committed by the ANC's security apparatus, for the right to fight against the apartheid regime within South Africa, and for greater democracy within the ANC.

Obviously the ANC leadership hopes the Commission will ensure it the same absolution as the apartheid regime is getting.

DE KLERK and the bosses will have no trouble in wiping the slate clean, dependent as thy are on the ANC for the stability of capitalist

But it is a different matter to convince the South African working class that the suppression of all criticism, the systematic use of torture and the killing of dissidents, were merely the 'excesses' of inexperienced members — as the ANC's submission claims.

When, in 1990, supporters of Workers Press and others campaigned to expose the role of the ANC security department and for solidarity with those MK fighters in conflict with the ANC leadership we were told by nearly everyone on the left 'not to rock the

The truth about the vile treatment and injustices being meted out in the camps was ignored because it was said it would endanger the negotiations then taking place between the ANC and De Klerk's government — everything must be subordinated to the removal of apartheid.

This silence on the atrocities in the camps helped pave the way for the ANC in government to renege on every promise about jobs and houses, bring in antiunion, anti-strike laws and continue its support for the suppression of dissidents.

Recently Bongani Mkhungo, a member of the Workers International, was viciously attacked and his life was threatened by COSATU stewards as he was giving out leaflets criticising COSATU's alliance with the government. No representative of ANC has ever condemned this attack.

The ANC's report to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is a whitewash. We repeat the call made in 1990 for an independent commission of inquiry into the events of 1984.

# Letters

WE WELCOME LETTERS SEND THEM TO: WORKERS PRESS, PO BOX 735, LONDON SW8 1YB — OR FAX 0171-387 0569

Letters longer than 500 words WILL be cut

## More on Engels and genocide

DOES Brian Pearce (Letters, 20 July and 17 August) think that Engels advocated genocide against the southern Slavs, the Scottish Gaels, the Bretons and the Basques?

If he does, he is blind to the context within which Engels was

It is true that Marx and Engels's nationality policy in 1848 was in error. According to Roman Rosdolsky (Critique, 18-19, 1986), they were wrong to characterise the Germans, Magyars and Poles as 'revolutionary and the Czechs, Serbs, Croats, Slovaks, Ukrainians and Romanians as 'counter-revolutionary'.

Their major mistake, however, was to misjudge the speed of hisdevelopment. They thought that the revolution would bring the proletariat into power in western Europe. Permanent Revolution would then draw the peasant masses of eastern Europe under the sway of the socialist West.

In hindsight, we can see that a successful revolution would have been isolated. Capital had yet to create a proletariat in the east. In the absense of an agency to take socialism forward, the revolution would have been stopped in its

The errors Marx and Engels made can only be explained by the contradiction between the objective conditions for socialism in 1848 and their revolutionary optimism.

This contradiction trapped them in a mode of expression more characteristic of Hegel and the Enlightenment than their own. For example, by 1848 they had already theorised the proletariat as the only class with the potential of civilising the whole of humanity. Yet they wrote as if economically- and democratically-advanced nations could revolutionary

It is mistaken, therefore, to judge their nationality policy as if it was the same as Lenin's or Trotsky's. Nor is it correct to read into the language they used to characterise nations dominated by decaying feudal relations (but now possessing a mature working class), as a policy of physical extermination of millions of

Such an interpretation, implying that the systematic use of genocide by fascist, Stalinist and nationalist regimes this century was inspired by Marx and Engels, is anachronistic and misleading.

Paul B. Smith Govan, Glasgow

### Edinburgh on the streets

SERIOUS reviews cannot convey the excitement, exuberance and variety of the Edinburgh Festival, probably the biggest cultural event in the world.

The first impression is of the street theatre: jugglers, fireeaters, knife-throwers, tightrope walking - all this is here. So are the jewellery stalls, hair weavers, balloon moulders. Shiatsu masseurs, portrait artists.

But there is much more. In the Old Town area and down towards Princes Street are dozens of events: a continual rotation of bands and music — Australian Rock, Peruvian pipes, African drummers, a classical string quartet, the Glasgow women's drumming band, 1920s and 1930s dance music, lone bagpipe players, or accordion, saxophone or violin — every conceivable kind.

And that is not all. There are individual acts: a Japanese 'tourist with camera and umbrella, skin completely gilded, absolutely still until someone throws him a coin and he does a few stiff movements; the hilarious Ribeau - a purple and pink silk-bloomered mechanical doll

in a glass box who plays his tiny banjo and flutters his eyelashes at passers-by when they throw in the coins; the black-painted, black-draped man who does a stylised, slow-motion dance with his white-faced, white-draped partner. ('What does it mean?' says someone. I don't know, but 80 to 100 people watched the whole

Then there was the amateur circus of 15 French cousins aged between ten and 18 doing monocycling, juggling, acrobatics and the rest.

If this sounds like a grander version of a normal fair, it is not. First of all because it is only one aspect of a much vaster, multilevel festival. Wherever you go you are handed leaflets for one or another fringe event in Venue 49 or 196 (every available church hall and pub room is pressed into service, some have programmes starting at 9.30am and finishing at 3am, with different events every hour-and-a-half or so).

Sometimes you even see a short excerpt performed on the pavement. The myriad choice can be seen in the Fringe Daily listing, a large double-sided sheet in

Behind all this is the official festival — the Russian National Orchestra playing Shostakovich, Miranda Richardson performing Virginia Woolf's Orlando, to mention but two.

And behind that is the historic city of Edinburgh with the castle and its expensive, heavily-booked Military Tattoo performed during the festival.

Art exhibitions abound, official and fringe (one was of Chinese Art coming to terms with the past). Films, dance . . . everything is there. The atmosphere is one of a

mediaeval fair where all display their wares: incredibly mopolitan, with an echo of Agit-(The hand commercialism is evident but not very dominant.)

Of course not everyone who

lives in Edinburgh is crazy about the festival completely taking the city over for three weeks. Bus drivers and passengers get frustrated with the foreign Englishlanguage students who don't go upstairs but block the front. 'They must be rich,' said one

man bitterly, 'or they wouldn't be able to afford to come here during the festival.'

There are many foreign tourists but also Scottish and English people. I wonder how much people from Edinburgh's housing estates can participate. We left before 'Fringe Sunday' when the council pays some of the Fringe events to perform free in Holyrood Park.

One of our last events was the powerful, disturbing Carmen Funebre performed by the Polish Teatr Biuro Podrozy (reviewed last year in Workers Press, 9 September).

An indictment of the war in Bosnia, this open-air play has few words, incredible visual effects, fire and music, and is performed in a huge quadrangle late at night with terrifying, grotesque soldiers of oppression stalking about menacingly on giant stilts.

This is not entertainment. And its compelling power is magnified by being part of this vast, rich festival with its waves of events and inescapable turmoil of

Wandering pensively through the crowds afterwards, we came to the open air cinema (yes, in Edinburgh!) in the courtyard of the City Chambers: an enormous screen showing the 1947 film Black Narcissus. The bar ran out of beer; the

cheered when the demented nun fell over the cliff instead of the Sister Superior she was pushing; whistling and applause at the end of the film. And at 1.30am when it finished

there was still one Court Jester street artist trying to drum up a crowd.

Clare Cowen

## Conspiracy charges for street party's legal observers BY HELENA FOX

THE only violent people were the

That was the verdict of the London Reclaim the Streets (RTC) weekly meeting following the arrest of 80 people at the street party they organised in Brighton on 24 August.

A police snatch-squad went into the crowd of mainly young and peaceful people, picked on the organisers and lifted them. They even arrested two of the seven observers, charging them with 'conspiracy to commit a public nuisance and obstruct the highway'.

The police obviously decided to go in really hard and they had

to get us out of the way first,' a spokesperson for the observers told the Guardian. Most of those arrested face public order charges. A legal defence committee has been set up.

'One fellow was arrested just for reading a poem!', reported a 'We didn't even get the music

going,' said an RTC member. 'The drummer got his drums out, lifted the sticks and that was it he was arrested.

Another RTC activist said he had been worried about all the people who had come to the party after most of the organisers had

been arrested. 'But they were fine,' he said. 'Some of them told me that they had had a great time, talking and enjoying each other's company.'

'The best bit was all the coloured beach balls — they were all in the air looking like a swarm of insects hovering overhead going up and down,' was the verdict of another young man.

RTC members know that a lot of people think they are 'mad', 'way out', 'wierd' and even 'troublemakers', but they say: 'it is those who inflict violence against our environment, who inflict war, starvation and abuse that they creating for us?" On 2 September the Campaign

Against the Arms Trade are organising a non-violent sit-down blockade on the opening day of the Farnborough Arms

'I went to the last one,' said an RTC member. 'We looked over the fence. In the clearing between the trees we saw a military helicopter being displayed to some arms dealers who were standing around drinking champaigne. We shouted at them and they looked at us as if we were mad. But we're not mad — they are!'

## STOP THE CLAMPDOWN

#### PARADE

SATURDAY 28th SEPTEMBER 1996 at Myrtle Parade, Liverpool, 12 noon.

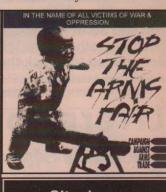
*WORKSHOPS & CHILL* SUNDAY 29th SEPTEMBER 1996

**MASS ACTION MONDAY 30th SEPTEMBER 1996** at Seaforth Dock, Liverpool, 10am.

Info lines:

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Sit-down **BLOCKADE** Farnborough Arms Fair Monday 2 September Assemble: 9am, end of Reading Road (adjoining A325, Farborough Road,

opposite airfield)

## A government exposed and a victory for tube workers BY AN INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT THE recent tube strike deserves

careful analysis. Its successful outcome was undoubtedly down to the determined action of the Underground workers and the chievement of a 35-hour week is of real significance for all other workers, especially for other railway workers.

The claim from the outset was not for more money, as many outside the industry believed, but for reduction in the hours worked. Certainly from ASLEF rail union's point of view, the objective was a 35-hour working week.

The initial stumbling block for London Underground (LU) management was a dispute over how the agreed reduction of one bour from the 1995 pay round was to be paid for. The wording in question related to LU's desire for improvements in efficiency.

ASLEF members rightly said they had given enough in productivity since the days of the 'Company Plan' when LU had been

At first LU appeared to accept this proposition. They established a working party, looking at driver morale, which showed that improved attendance would certainly increase efficiency.

■ ASLEF's position was clear: they wanted shorter shifts and agreed that any further reduction in hours could be offset by limiting future wage claims.

RMT had similar aspirations but wanted to bank time off rather than have the shorter daily shift patterns preferred by

Negotiations collapsed once LU decided that the 1995 deal would after all have to be paid for by more productivity. The 1996 claim for a further reduction in the working week added to the negotiating difficulties.

By the time ASLEF had set up a timetable of strike days LU management had succeeded in uniting the two rail unions in joint action. A position which independently neither union clear joint plan involving a com-bination of reduced shift times and banked time off to achieve the 35-hour week. Further days of joint strike action followed with only the odd train running.

New Labour now succumbed to Tory propaganda, particlarly in the Evening Standard, which demanded that Blair condemn the striking Underground workers. The Blairite solution was 'compulsory arbitration'.

## Reneged

Something for workers to remember. It didn't go down well with the union leaderships either. They had no wish to go back to arbitration on an issue that management had reneged on.

We now know that LU were in a struggle of their own with the Cabinet and their silence at this juncture seems to be down to their hands being tied.

LU suddenly offering a three-year deal which achieved the 35-hour week in return for a 1.5 per cent pay increase this year and a 2 per cent below the cost of living pay increase in the next

This resulted in both the unions agreeing to ballot their members. But the RMT executive opposed the offer and the ASLEF executive recommended accept-

Confusion was thus guaranteed. Conflicting propaganda was produced as reported in the case of the RMT (Workers Press, 17 August 1996).

The ballot results were 354 against and 102 in favour for RMT, and 442 against and 669 in favour for ASLEF.

Both unions won their respective campaigns, but here the similarity ends.

ASLEF accepted the LU offer at a meeting with manage-

RMT had already indicated two more strike days to be taken as part of 'one last push'.

But now left on their own the RMT leadership invented a 'new deal' reached supposedly with management.

This appeared to be achieved by putting back into the equation many issues which had already been rejected (part-time staff, requirement to work rest days, additional productivity and concerns over pensions) so that they could then be taken out

On the strength of this invention and the relatively small ballot turn out of just over 50 per cent, the RMT called off the strike action and in reality accepted the same offer as ASLEF.

#### **Treatment**

RMT members deserve better than this kind of treatment. Those like Bob Crow (RMT assistant general secretary) who purport to offer a new kind of leadership must above all else be

The temptation to use workers for political gain must be resisted

scoring that goes on. In the end only management can win with such in-fighting.

Documents leaked to the Guardian (23 August) reveal that the government had been dictating London Underground's tactics and the LU negotiators had exceeded their remit by offering the three-year deal reducing the working week. The documents suggest that the 35-hour week could now spread throughout the

But it was Catch-22. Ministers were told that if they attacked LU for 'having breached their remit', they would expose the whole remit system.

Unity of purpose and action between the rail unions forced LU to accept the 35-hour week, exposed the government's remit system and revealed what workers can expect from a New Labour government.

The two railway unions can now build on the unity achieved in this strike, laying the basis for future actions which could drive 'a coach and train' through the long hours and low basic pay that has been a feature of railway

# Post workers' casualisation fear

BY NICK BAILEY

POSTAL workers set-up picket lines across Britain on Thursday 22 August in their dispute with

The people here are solid and morale is very good,' said one CWU committee member at the picket outside Hornsey sorting office. 'At the heart of this dispute are two issues: TQM, Total Quality Management (so-called 'team working'), and delivery standard.

"Team working" will make our working lives a misery and we believe it will worsen the service to the public. It will mean more work for less money.'

A leaflet given out by the postal workers said: 'Working "teams" with "team leaders", we will be expected to make management decisions, to bring peer-group pressure to bear on our colleagues who are not "coming up to scratch" and to

bring an atmosphere of competition within the workplace to achieve greater productivity.

There will be no place in this set-up for union representation on the shop floor to protect against intimidation, the victimisation and abuses of the conduct code that many postal workers suffer under heavy-handed and bullying managers.

'All national agreements will be disregarded and there will be no chance to protect ourselves against increasingly unfair working practices.'

The aim of Royal Mail is to have 95 per cent of post to go out on the first delivery. At present the first and second deliveries are split 60 and 40 per cent. Postal workers could be carrying up to 130lbs weight on a round. This means 60 per cent of postal workers would have to start off at 4am, rather than the current 6am, to complete this massive amount of

'Our main fear is that it would open the door to casualisation and part-time working,' said the worker at Hornsey. 'Royal Mail did their own survey that found that the public don't want things like junk mail in the first deliv-

('Probably not in the second delivery either!', joked another of

'Now they intend to put all this out in the first delivery. What would be the point of hav-ing the second delivery?'

### Leaflet

The workers' leaflet points out: 'The "benefit" of this is that over a period of time, full-time postworkers can be replace by

'Team working' would leave no place for the union. 'Team' members would be ultimately responsible for covering all sick absences at no extra cost to Royal

'We are even protecting management jobs as many of these would go under Royal Mail's proposals,' said the Hornsey picket.

And as the leaflet puts it: 'We are striking to protect full-time jobs for the future and to protect our rights under national Health and Safety agreements.'

A considerable number of postal workers would be financially worse off.

At the massive Mount Pleasant sorting office in central London there has also been a very good response to the action. CWÜ branch committee chair Dave Murton said: 'Out of 3,500 people only nine have gone in.'

He reiterated the points made the Hornsey pickets and added: 'We've been offered shifts starting at 3am.' Murton was critical of the Labour Party's silence on the dispute. 'They're a bunch of wimps,' he said.

## International dockworkers take stock

BY DOT GIBSON

DOCKWORKERS from countries attending a conference in Liverpool on 31 August and 1 September will be taking stock of their activities over the six months since their conference in February.

They will be sharing experiences of their boycott of giant shipping companies' container vessels in Europe, Australia, US and Canadian ports. This has successfully blockaded the scab port of Liverpool where 500 dockers were sacked by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company (MDHC) for refusing to cross a picket line in September 1995.

The Liverpool Dockers Shop Stewards' Committee will report on the present stage of their fight as they approach the one-year

■ MDHC is in dire straits. All customers while there is a threat of a dockers' international

They have already shown a half-year fall in profits of 17.1 per cent. If the dockers can keep up the pressure then there is every likelihood that MDHC will be forced to reinstate them.

■ The company has hope that the Transport and General Workers Union will come to their

rescue. General secretary Bill Morris, has already written to the MDHC offering talks with 'no pre-conditions'.

And from the outset Labour leader Tony Blair issued instructions to MPs not to show any support for the dockers. Clearly they aim to split the dockers' ranks and isolate the shop stewards as a way of getting this embarrassing dispute over and done with.

■ But the issues remain clear. A victory for the Liverpool dockers will have a knock-on effect throughout the industry, not only in Britain, but internationally.

Reports to the Dockworkers International Conference in February revealed that every dockworker faces the same

### Renewal

the big shipping companies have for renewal and every port pulled out of the port and the company cannot get new MDHC—casual labour and cuts in wages and conditions. The best way forward for every docker is to stand firm now for a victory in On 9 September the Liverpool

dockers will be lobbying the TUC in Blackpool, and will speak at a fringe meeting in the evening. They will demand that the TUC launches a solidarity fund and they will call upon every trade unionist to act in their support.

## To make a profit invest in Shanghai

#### BY CHEN LEI

PRIVATE FIRMS BOOM', shouts the headline in the Shanghai Star. These firms now pay 208 per cent more in taxes than they did this time last year, it reports.

However, the local observers expect this increase in tax revenue has more to do with a crackdown on ensuring payment as well as preferential government policies to encourage the private

In 1995 the Shanghai administration of industry and commerce had registered 155,672 privatelyowned businesses, but of these only 32,400 were paying taxes. This number has grown by 1,600 every month this year.

If you are a foreign-funded enterprise in Shanghai, and there are well over 2,000 of these, then you have a further two years preferential tariff and will not have to pay the full tax on anything you import. If you are a big enterprise investing more than \$30 million, you get a third year of preferential tariff.

To show just how big the foreign investment is in the Shanghai area alone, in the three years ending last April, the customs office had exempted duties on \$1.65 billion.

There are now more than 400 overseas-funded enterprises in the Pudong Economic Zone' engaged in the processing of manufactured goods. Between January and March this year, a



futher 108 overseas-funded ventures were registered with Pudong customs with a combined investment amounting to \$1.58 billion, an increase over the previous quarter of 516 per cent.

Now even the US Reed Travel Group has opened up an office in Shanghai. OAG, a Reed division, expects to provide up-to-date information to business travellers and overseas corporations in both Shanghai and other Chi-

Five high-profile Taiwan corporations have recently added their investment to the other 100 Taiwan corporations with money in Shanghai.

Clearly China is seen by many outside as a good place to make a profit. But those who are able to move around and see the conditions under which many people work will well understand the way these profits are made.

In engineering plants, unguarded machines, no protective equipment or clothing, and in older factories no fume or dust extraction, mean health and safety of workers are disreguarded for profits.

Increasingly peasant farmers are being forced off the land by capitalist agriculture and herded into the big cities as a source of dirt-cheap and easily-exploited labour. But the same process will create fresh forces for the Chinese working class to be able to rise again, as it did in the 1920s.

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British section of the Workers International (to Rebuild the Fourth International) Please send me information about the WRP

Trade union (if any) ...... Age (if under 21) .....

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## Inside left

## Sham deal

TWE years ago, we reported a dispute wer conditions on a south Kensington wilding site. Vascroft Contractors Ltd. would not allow officers of the Transport and General Workers' Union or the builders' union UCATT on to the set to talk to their members.

Workers were ordered to resume formal working within two hours, or esacked. But Vascroft denied it was anti-union. It flourished a single union greement with the EETPU electrical mion, signed behind workers' backs me day into the dispute. And it sacked

he shop stewards.

The EETPU had not organised the te. Vascroft hired non-union electricians at below the minimum rate. But hight-wing EETPU leaders hoped to exploit problems in UCATT at the time to elbow their way into the contraction trades, even if it meant winning over the employer, rather than the workers. (Ironically, back in the 1960s, the union displined a member on the Royal Garden hotel site, also in Kensngton, for acting as federation steward for building workers.)

The sequel appears in the Summer EPIU Bulletin, journal of the T&G-inked Electrical and Plumbing Industries Union. An industrial tribunal has bund in fayour of the sacked stewards.

The chair said Vascroft's deal with the EETPU was 'a sham', aimed solely preventing the T&G and UCATT from representing their members and seeking to improve conditions. Having lost two appeals and an estimated 100,000 in legal fees, Vascroft has decided to drop its single-union deal with the EETPU.

The trouble with procedures is, they ake time. The men were sacked, the ob was completed, and the EETPU rentered the TUC by merging with the engineering union. Having vouched for its good behaviour, leading officers of the AEEU engineers can retire with somewhat more generous pay-offs han the £15,000 awarded sacked T&G teward Chris Clarke. But the tripunal's verdict does re-inforce a point.

What kind of 'union' is chosen by imployers, out to avoid agreed conditions and combat genuine trade unions.

## History lessons?

HE issue of the EETPU is mentioned n passing by Tom Cowan, reviewing we pamphlets on the 'Blue Union'—he National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers (NASD)—in the latest Revolutionary History.

Acknowledging the turn to the Blue' 'originated in the dockers' movement, in which it was very popular', lowan still blames Trotskyists for the liscontented northern dockers' decision to move from the Transport and Jeneral to the NASD in 1954.

Castigating the WRP today for dvocating 'independent trade unions' is independent of employers and the tate), he refers to 'the debacle of the tocks episode and the more recent militant electricians' breakaway'.

But it was the EEPTU leadership which broke away from trade union rinciples, most notably by recruiting cas for Rupert Murdoch at Wapping, and encouraging right-wing breakways in other industries. Those who med the EPIU weren't just being militant', they wanted to remain aside with the labour movement.

Cowan's recalled wisdom from 1954 s that once a militant and democratic independent union like the NASD tracted large numbers of workers, 'it would constitute a threat to the trade nion bureaucracy and the stability of the capitalist system, and would therefore be crushed.'

So his lesson is, not to go beyond ink-and-fileism, and threaten the ureaucracy or the system!

Charlie Pottins

Bosnia

# One of the new people to

RADE PAVLOVIC, a Serb working-class activist, and Olivia Meerson, a member of Workers Aid in France, met Mevlida Altumbabic, president of the secondary school teachers' union in Tuzla. Rade writes about the meeting.

WE MET Mevlida in Saint-Denis, a working-class borough in the famous 'red belt' around Paris. She was there with her colleague Dzenana Hadzimehmovic to accompany ten or so Tuzla children who had been invited for a holiday by the borough council of Saint-Denis.

The council secretary Silvie Ritmanic brought about this collaboration between the two working-class towns

It is understood on both sides that the children should be chosen from those who have lost a parent in the war. A boy called Sherif and another child have lost both parents in the bloody re-drawing of the map of Bosnia.

In a lovely old building surrounded by a park with century-old chestnut-trees, which the council has made into a children's centre, we came upon a crowd of children brought by the various pacifist, working-class and cultural organisations who show solidarity with Bosnia: children of every colour, since Saint-Denis is a town of immigrant workers of every race and nationality.

Olivia and I had set out to meet a Tuzla trade unionist. We were greeted by a whole festival of popular solidarity, French people, immigrants, Bosnians, the joyful clamour of children inviting us to sit down and eat their mothers' superb homemade Arab cakes, and who accepted us as one of their own from the very start because of our work for Bosnia, especially that of Olivia.

Workers Press has reported on various Tuzla miners' delegations to Britain and has carried interviews with other Tuzla trade unionists like Raza Gulamovic (6 July). Mevlida Altumbabic's story also deserves to be told.

During my brief previous visits to France the Bosnian friends I have met have all more or less been beaten down by the catastrophe which engulfed their country.

They struggled to defend it, trusting more or less in Western governments, but the more these governments showed their complicity in deed if not in words in the bloody partition of their country, the more beaten they felt.

But Mevlida is something else. She is a mature woman with two children and a confident bearing, direct gaze and energetic voice. She knows what she wants. People of this calibre make good leaders, and are often as good as two or three.

She is also very sensitive: she came close to tears as she told how frightened she was for her pupils, listening impotently to the long whistle of the shells before they hit their target.

Mevlida Altumbabic is a teacher at the building trade technical college. She is president of the secondary school teachers' union which covers 15 schools, 10,000 pupils and 600 teachers. She comes from a family which has lived in the city for several generations, born and brought up in Tuzla, married in Tuzla and teaching in Tuzla.

## How did she become a trade unionist?

'BEFORE the war I was a party member for 20 years. It wasn't me that left the party, it was the party that left me,' she said. The League of Yugoslav Communists, which had ruled the country since 1945, broke up wretchedly in 1989.

Swearing loyalty to the working class and to socialism, it had long since become the party of the inert mass and of the ruling bureaucracy. It abandoned Mevlida and thousands of honest communists to the demagogy of militant nationalism.

Since then, Mevlida has been distrustful of parties. That is why she chose the trade-union slot, where she is near to her rank-and-file colleagues and where her energy and capacity for work can find expression without her becoming a transmission-belt for her superiors.

She described what it had been like in the school under the artillery bombardment: 'Two stories were given over to refugees from Zvornik, Bijeljina, Bratunac, two stories remained for the teachers and pupils.

'At the height of the Serb aggression in 1992 teaching stopped, but the teachers had to report in at the school each day. Nobody knew why, but we came in on foot, surrounded by danger and risking being hit by shellfire.

From October we planned to continue schooling in cellars, but that was impossible for the secondary and technical schools. We went back to work in the buildings we shared with refugees, living with the con-

stant fear of a shell landing on the classroom.

'Karadzic's army fired at random on the town, but there was a sort of pattern. They shelled us for four months. At certain times they would shell all the time. At Vidovan 1993, the Serb national festival, they fired 600 shells. Whenever the Bosnian Army advanced anywhere, the Serbs would shell civilians.

'The worst thing was the shelling of schools during lessons. The pupils were our responsibility and we had them on our conscience.'

The shell which murdered more than 70 civilians in the main street put the whole town into mourning:

'They were clearing away the blood when I was there. I lit a candle, but thinking about all the blood in front of me, I went numb for I don't know how long. And they dared to say that we did that ourselves!

'We worked without wages



Mevlida Altumbabic

throughout the war. Every penny went to the war effort. What the soldiers did at the front, we did in the rear. The school did not close, we kept up the necessary standards, we fed the young people with knowledge. What would have become of them without the school where they could forget the war for a few hours?"

Not all the heroes are at the front.

'Outside of school, although we were all town-dwellers, we became farmers. Parks were turned into vegetable gardens. Trees were cut down for heating fuel. We had no petrol or electricity for two years, we went everywhere on foot.

'We all lost a lot of weight. There was a televison journalist who was so fat before the war he filled the whole screen. Afterwards he was just a long streak in the middle of the screen. It didn't take away his sense of humour, far from it.

'Humanitarian aid was given to

the refugees as a priority. Not everybody was starving. In 1994 there was a famine, the food parcels given out by the town hall were no longer enough.

'That's how we started to organise ourselves as a trade union. The Lille convoy supported us. Workers Aid tried to go through the northern route. There was a trade union round-table, we told the truth, we saved our dignity, and we felt an enormous need for contact, for new friends. That's how it started. We set about writing hundreds of letters.

From September, there was a full-time representative of International Workers Aid, a Belgian called Sebastien, who sent our letters on, brought the first sums of money. The people had become terribly poor, they sold anything of any value.

'We adopted trade union rules and we had a stamp made. We still don't have branches or official minutes.

'People have started to recognise our union, we have significant co-operation with Denmark, who have given us 15,000DM for wages. The retired teacher Vagerassmusen, who has been to Tuzla nine times, has unified all the aid to primary and secondary schools.

'In October 1995 there was the Verona Forum in Tuzla and there too we received 7,000DM for broken families. The Belgians gave us alot of help in wages and in educational material. We have strong links with the Slovenian unions. We are in the process of uniting at an all-Bosnian level.

'In Tuzla there were tensions at the beginning between the primary and secondary teachers' unions, since we should have been paid alternately, half by the Sarajevo government and half by the Tuzla municipal government, but the municipal government had no money and it was the turn of the primary school teachers.

'I recognised the fact and since then I have been on good terms with the president of the primary teachers' union. There was an attempt to politicise the strike against the municipal government when it didn't pay us, but we refused to be taken in. We want paying regularly, however little. We want it to be regular, that is our demand at the moment.'

#### In conclusion?

'WE WERE all Yugoslavs, but Yugoslavia was destroyed, starting from Serbia. Now I am a Bosnian.

o from Serbia. Now I a

Bihac ('Thugs kill Bosnia's election hopes', Julian Borger, *Guardian*, 23 August).

Victimisation of opposition supporters is reported from Sanski Most, where the mayor is General Mehmet Alagic, and Zenica, where General Mahmuljin is in command, and Muslim irregulars have thrown their weight around.

General Atif Dudakovic, the army commander in Bihac, is no religious fanatic — he resisted pressure to oust non-Muslim officers from his command — but he has taken his place alongside the other two generals on the SDA election list.

The warrant against Abdic has been issued, and the prosecutor proposed the trial in absence and the expropriation of his property as a side punishment. The prosecution submitted a list of 56 witnesses, a number of written documents and reports from international human rights organizations.

Prosecution of Abdic may help clear the air; but the war has heavily damaged Bosnian society, and in places like Bihac, the SDA-military alliance looks dangerously like the warlords it fought.

# Abdic aims to stay in game

AFTER losing a war, and being indicted for war crimes, Bihac's exwarlord Fikret Abdic is setting a record for chutzpah by running in next month's Bosnian elections.

Abdic did win Bosnia's last prewar presidential election, despite a jail sentence for fraud under the old Yugoslav state. As head of the Agrokomerc corporation he had issued millions of dollars worth of unbacked promissary notes, but brought passing prosperity to his Bihac region, so people figured this capitalism might be OK.

Alija Izetbegovic took the presidency in an obscure deal giving Abdic's man the Ministry of the Interior. Abdic joined the collective presidency, but stayed away from Sarajevo. When war broke out, he conspired with Serb and Croat separatists, and used his food processing business as base for a private fiefdom around Bihac, declaring an autonomous province of western Bosnia in September 1993.

With headquarters in a 13th-cen-

tury castle in the town of Velika Kladusa, Abdic and his followers imprisoned opponents in work camps, fought the Bosnian army's 5th Corps, and helped Serb forces besiege Bihac, blocking humanitarian aid convoys to starving refugees.

An indictment raised by the Bihac court on 10 August accuses Abdic of breaking the Bosnian constitution, and of imprisoning 5,000 people in camps where they were maltreated. He is also accused of collaborating with the Serb war criminals Martic and Karadzic, and of ill-treating prisoners of war.

It was the fall of Martic's Serb nationalist stronghold in the neighbouring Krajina, and Bosnian army success around Bihac that brought Abdic's downfall. He fled Velika Kladusa with 30,000 followers, many of whom have now returned to their homes under Bosnian rule.

But Abdic, once the ally of nationalist Serbs, is now living in the Croatian port of Rijeka, where his Agrokomerc offices have relocated.

From Croatia, he has launched his bid for the presidency, and made forays into parts of Bosnia held by Croat separatist forces. He is not free to roam into Bosnian governmentheld territory. In June, four Bosniaks and a Croat, detained in Senj, were convicted by a Croatian court of plotting to kill Abdic in Rijeka.

At a press conference in Zagreb, Abdic claimed his Democratic People's Union was running at parliamentary and local level, and had 17,500 signatures for his nomination. He predicted victory in the UnaSanta canton of north-west Bosnia he used to rule, declaring: 'We are the only serious opposition party in Bosnia, and that is why they are obstructing us so much.'

The AID security police and toughs linked with President Izetbe-govic's SDA party have reportedly beaten up many suspected Abdic supporters in Velika Kladusa. Canadian IFOR troops who raided AID premises in the town on 6 August claim to have found death lists.

It was nearby at Cazin that former prime minister Haris Silajdzic was attacked by a gang from the Muslim Youth Organisation. There have also been attacks on the Social Democrat Centre there, and the Social Democrat party has complained of police harassment in

# arise

Fascism tried to destroy Bosnia, but it did not succeed. Bosnia is raising its head again. Bosnia is the first line of defence for the whole of Europe, because if fascism crushed Bosnia, it could only spread all across Europe.

'At the most difficult time in the war, my husband and I thought about leaving this hell. Now, there is no question of that any more. Our struggle for the future was a struggle for our children. Defending our country was to educate the children, give them knowledge.'

Mevlida would also like contact with the comparable trade unions in Serbia. I propose an international trade union conference of teachers in former Yugoslavia — Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, Macedonia and Kosovo — with trade unionists from Western Europe and others, in Hungary, because the job of knitting together international links has made progress and it can be done in

Everybody agrees with this. There is no doubt that the Bosnian unions will be at the centre of such a conference, for if Yugoslavia was murdered on the body of Bosnia, the renewal of the trade union and political movement of the workers of the former Yugoslavia will come from Bosnia.

the near future.

The surest guarantee of this is the new people who have arisen in Bosnia. Mevlida is one of them.



Mostar divided by the war in Bosnia

## vina Croats steer Croatia's politics Herzego

Travelling through Herzegovina before the Croatian elections last autumn, you passed hoardings with President Franjo Tudjman's sinister portrait and the words: The right man, the right time, the right party'. It was the wrong country. But the Croat nationalist 'Herceg-Bosna' statelet, centred on 'ethnically cleansed' West Mostar, still obstructing re-unification of Bosnia and Herzegovina, has been an important bastion of Tudjman's regime — much to the resentment of other Croats, says MARINKO CULIC, one of the journalists Tudjman intends to prosecute for 'defamation' next month. The following article is by Culic, written from Split, Croatia.

SINCE President Franjo Tudjman came to power in Croatia in 1990, Herzegovina Croats have played a disproportionately large role in Croatian politics.

Only about 200,000 out of 4.5 million Croats in the former Yugoslavia live in this traditionally impoverished region. But by energetically

supporting Tudiman when he stepped onto the political stage, Herzegovinians were able to gain political prominence in Croatia.

With the help of Herzegovinian emigres in the United States, Australia, and Canada (including the No.2 man in Croatia, Defense Minister Gojko Susak), Herzegovinians provided critical financing for Tudjman's electoral victory over the com-

These favours are still being paid for: a significant number of Herzegovinians hold top positions in the Croatian government and military or are among the narrow circle of nouveaux riches whose business empires emerged overnight with the direct support of the state.

Croatia also continues to back Herzegovina Croats stubbornly striving to secure the utmost autonomy for their para-state in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the self-declared Republic of Herceg-Bosna.

If not for the Dayton agreement, the de facto union between Croatia and Herceg-Bosna would likely become de jure.

The Herzegovinians' strong position is not appreciated by many of the Croats in Croatia proper. According to a recent poll, Croats generally have greater antipathy toward Croats newly arriving from Bosnia-Herzegovina than they do toward newly arriving Muslims.

At the same time, Bosnian Croats who see their future in a unified, ethnically mixed country have been pushed aside to the political side-

#### Favoured

THE special relationship between Herzegovinian Croats and Tudjman's party is particularly evident in the struggle for control of the Croatian Democratic Community Bosnia-Herzegovina. in Nominally the sister party of Tudjman's, in reality it has become simply a branch of the Croatian HDZ.

The first chairman of HDZ in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Davor Perinovic of Sarajevo, was replaced after a short period for resisting Tudjman's supremacy over HDZ policy in Bosnia. But his replacemnt, Stjepan Kljuic, also from Sarajevo, quickly came into conflict with Zagreb and Tudjman for the same reason as his predecessor.

Kljuic's conflict with the Herzegovinians was equally severe, reflecting fundamental differences between the Croats of Bosnia and those of Herzegovina.

Bosnian Croats have traditionally lived integrated with Muslims as well as Serbs, and thus have had no choice but to seek cooperation with one or both groups.

The Herzegovinians, by contrast, live in a fairly compact area that borders on Croatia and view their territory as an ethnically pure extension of Croatia.

Kljuic tried to convince Zagreb that the interests of Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina lie in preserving the country's unity, while the Herzegovinians argued for a high degree of autonomy for Croats, Serbs, and Muslims alike (although, in reality, the Herzegovinians wanted to divide Bosnia-Herzegovina into three parts and to unify the Croatian part with

Croatia). In early 1992, the Herzegovinian conception prevailed and Kljuic was forced to step down. He later left the party.

Kljuic's position was given to Mate Boban, a Herzegovinian under whom the HDZ in Bosnia-Herzegovina was completely assimilated into the HDZ of Croatia. Also under Boban's leadership, Herceg-Bosna waged war against the government in Sarajevo for most of 1993.

After the Washington agreement of March 1994 brought a tenuous peace between the Croats and Muslims, Boban left his posts in Bosnia-Herzegovina for a high-level position in the INA oil company in Zagreb that is widely regarded as an HDZ sinecure. But he continues to have a great deal of influence in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

After Susak, considered by many to be the unofficial governor of Herzegovina, Boban is probably the powerful Herzegovinian. Thanks to them, the continuity of radical nationalists, mainly Herzegovinians, has been preserved in the Herceg-Bosna statelet.

### The racketeer

THE stone desert of western Herzegovina boasts more tinted-windowed 1995 Mercedes and fewer indoor toilets per capita than any other region in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Mladen Naletilic Tuta, the local 'godfather', probably owns an equal number of both.

Tuta admits to carrying out more than 90 terrorist acts across Europe for the 'Croat cause'; he prides himself on his links to Carlos the Jackal, to the IRA and to Croatian Defense Minister Gojko Susak.

His resume includes casino manager, Croat 'convicts' brigade' leader and Bosnian federation saboteur. Though he suffers from migraines caused by the shrapnel lodged in his head, Tuta is flourishing.

Winked at by Croat police and politicians and unmoved by the laments of Mostar's European Union administration, he and his militant allies have caroused freely for four years - allegedly hijacking humanitarian relief convoys, running drug

and prostitution rings, and doing utmost to stuff their foreign bank accounts and divide Bosnia.

During a recent military parade the Herzegovina Croats showcased a daunting arsenal of heavy hardware in the same stadium where they tortured and starved Muslim prisoners in 1993.

Dressed in Darth Vader black, Bosnian Croat local commander Mladen Misic appeared on West Mostar television, unrepentant about violating the EU rules.

'Here we are dealing with a handful of lepers, and we will not succumb,' Misic vowed, adding, 'If we had only received high-level orders from our leaders long ago, these people not only would not have approached [Mostar] but would not be here at all.'

He said Muslims have no place governing Bosnia: 'Tudjman was given Bosnia, Milosevic Kosovo and the Sandzak province, and everything has been signed.'

After the signing of the Dayton accord, Tuta permitted a Croatian

govina. He said he wasn't sorry for the role his soldiers played in the destruction of Mostar's 16th-century bridge, Stari Most, exclaiming, 'I would have destroyed it to get even for a damaged nail on a child's little

Tuta has no faith in Dayton: 'I gave the survival of never Yugoslavia any chance.... But I give even less of a chance to the survival of Bosnia-Herzegovina. I do not know why they want to create another powder keg.'

From Samantha Power New Republic, 21 February.

## **Priests for Pavelic**

ON HOLY DAYS the priests go from house to house in the villages of western Herzegovina, the villagers anxiously awaiting their blessing.

In Bobani, Mike O'Connor of the New York Times met Reverend

journalist unusual access to his Vinko Mikolic doing his rounds. The of the Nazi period, Ranko Boban, in Croats would never accept the Bosnian government:

That is a government of Muslims,' Mikolic said. They are no better than the Turkish occupiers from our history. We cannot let them occupy us again, never.'

For Sister Maximila, Bosnian Croats are simply resisting another blow by mortal enemies, as they have for centuries. In their lonely struggle, as she explained it, they have often been misunderstood.

Before a mural covering the wall behind the altar of St Stephen's Church, on a hill above this village, she pointed out scenes in the painting, titled 'The Suffering of the Croat People'.

There is their defeat by the Turks, their battles with the Serbs through history, and the establishment of a Nazi-backed Croatian fascist movement during World War II known as the Ustashe.

On the mural, next to images of Franciscan priests, is the local hero

nationalists who killed hundreds of thousands of Serbs, Jews, and Muslims, as well as Croatian opponents.

They say bad things about the Ustashe,' Sister Maximila said. 'But to us they were defending Croat culture, and they are heroes.'

The photograph of Ante Pavelic, leader of the wartime, pro-Nazi Croatian state, is proudly displayed in the home of two Catholic priests.

They explained that people who think the Ustashe regime was guilty of genocide have been duped by anti-Croatian propaganda.

The priests described their opposition to the Bosnian peace agreement as part of the Croats' historic effort to defend Christianity against Islam, to protect the West from the

'The Muslims have a holy war with us,' Maric said. 'We cannot accept the Dayton agreement. No. No.

> Report in New York Times 13 February.

# A tawdry portrait

(1886-1946), novelist, Utopian, and historian, was one of my earliest teachers. Between the ages of 10 and 12, I was devouring everything by him that I could lay my hands on, cheerfully skipping whatever I couldn't understand.

Wells's Short History of the World (1922) was, I think, the second history book I ever read.

Nowadays it would get short shrift for being incorrigibly Eurocentric, as well as for countless other flaws. But in the late 1930s it wasn't at all a bad book to fall into the hands of a boy for whose benighted schools the only history worth knowing happened on this island, began with the Norman Conquest, and ended with Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee.

By chance I tackled some of Wells's so-called 'discussion novels' before discovering what today we would call his sciencefiction. Passages of Joan and Peter (1918) I almost learnt by heart, so sympathetically did Wells get inside the minds of his child characters.

Tono-Bungay (1909), gripped me, with its drawings scattered through the text, though re-reading it some years ago I realised how much of it had gone over my head. And Ann Veronica (1909), The New Machiavelli (1911), Mr. Britling Sees it Through (1916), and The World of William Clissold (1926) had none of them much to say to a pubescent youth.

The Time Machine (1895), The Invisible Man (1897), The War of the Worlds (1898), The First Men in the Moon (1901), and The Food of the Gods (1904) were a different matter entirely, and I read them again and again and wished there were more.

These books sowed the seeds of an enthusiasm for the genre that soon would lead me back to Jules Verne and Voltaire's Micromégas (1752) and forward to Astounding Stories and Amazing Stories, with their lurid covers depicting bug-eyed monsters that out-Wellsed Wells.

Until, that is, his film Things to Come (1935) reached our local cinema. I pestered my mother to take me a second time, and a third. Then she put her foot down.

For me, this apocalyptic film - with its vision of an imminent world war, followed by the collapse of 'civilisation', a recovery spearheaded by black-clad aviators in gigantic splendid flyingmachines and tall, futuristic gas-masks, and finally the dispatch of a rocket to the moon represented Wells at his finest.

In fact, of course, it was Wells at his most utopian: well aware of, and highly articulate about, the discontents and anomalies and beastlinesses of capitalist 'civilisation', but wholly blind to the social and political realities that might enable humanity to replace capitalism with something better.

GIVEN this fondness for H.G. Wells dating back nearly 60 years, you can imagine how keenly I was looking forward to the two-part television portrait of him, shown last weekend. But I'm sorry to say this portrait was - largely but not entirely - a cruel disappointment.

Not entirely, since no couple of hours on television that includes old film showing, among other people and events, Maxim Gorky, a young Lord Beaverbrook, and pre-1914 suffragist demonstrations, can fail to hold some interest for the late-20th-century

(Though, to repeat in passing a complaint I made here some years ago, I can't for the life of me fathom why those who put these things together don't correct the

# COLUMN

jerkiness of the old footage: it can be corrected, without a great deal of trouble; it should be corrected; and failure to do so suggests ignorance, incompetence, or downright laziness.)

Here was a portrait far less concerned with Wells's ideas and his writing than with his amatory exploits and, in particular, his far from infinitely interesting relationship with the minor writer Rebecca West, by whom he fathered a son.

Wells was a notorious womaniser. As he grew older, he was less and less able to keep his hands off any personable woman he encountered. The film informed us that in 1934 he 'pawed' a young woman in Moscow whose mother and grandmother before her had been the objects of his attentions thus, as we were smugly told, 'encompassing three generations', or at any rate trying to.

I am not saying that the sex life of a dead writer is of no interest or importance whatever. But I deplore the tendency of modern biographers to make this aspect of a subject's life the very fulcrum on which the entire story is bal-

And I abominate the eagerness with which television apes this trend. Where writers are concerned, we should do well to remember that the tool of their trade is the pen (or typewriter, or word processor), not any fleshly organ, and that what they do at the desk is more significant, in the long run, than what they do in

I was a trifle surprised that Michael Foot, who surely knows better, let himself be roped into this tawdry exercise. For the concentration on Wells as Great Lover left precious little room for umpteen other aspects of his life and work. In particular, it left little room for a rounded-out discussion of those facets of Wells's thinking which nowadays we would call racist.

Some months ago Foot was soundly trounced in a controversy on Wells's views on 'race', and I suppose he thought he might as well have another bite at this cherry.

In the event, he was allowed to mount a brief and feeble defence of his hero on this score. But, with all respect to Foot, it cannot be denied that Wells, like Shaw and the Webbs, was influenced by the views of Darwin's cousin Sir Galton (1822-1911), Francis founder of the 'science' of eugenics, and by the latter's pupil Karl Pearson (1857-1936), for whom some 'races' were 'inferior'.

Though, in fairness to Wells, it should be added that he was far from consistent in his thinking on racial 'inferiority' - and that he was one of the guests at the London sessions of the third Pan-African Congress in 1923.

A portrait of Wells that had no room for a mention of the film Things to Come, or of its progenitor The Shape of Things to Come (1933), that extraordinary exercise in writing future 'history', was indeed Hamlet without the Prince. What possessed the makers of this programme not to include a brief clip from Things to Come?

The account of Wells's interview with Lenin in the winter of 1920-21 was so short as to be almost meaningless. Wells called Lenin 'The Dreamer in the Kremlin'. Readers interested in what Lenin thought of Wells ('What a petty-bourgeois! What a Philistine?) should read Trotsky's tart little essay "The Philistine and the Revolutionary' (1924), included in On Lenin: Notes towards a Biography (Harrap, 1971).

Peter Fryer

# PERSONAL Prison doesn't work

#### Comment by NICK LEE

LATE last week the prison service issued an amendment to Prison Standing Order 3C, which deals with release calculations.

On Wednesday 21 August, 33 inmates of Haverigg jail in Cumbria found themselves out on the streets, free. They were joined over the next two days by 50 more from various jails before Home Secretary Michael Howard intervened to stop the process.

The basis for this extraordinary turn of events was a 'discovery' by the prison service that sentences had been wrongly calculated. The 1967 Criminal Justice Act stipulated that the time inmates spend on remand before trial should be deducted from the length of the sentence.

Up to now this has been regarded as a once and for all deduction. But the Act has now been re-interpreted to read that where prisoners serve several sentences consecutively then the time spent on remand should have been taken into account for each sentence.

The result: a large number of multiple offenders have been locked up too long.

In the light of these new calculations it is estimated that 400 to 500 inmates are due for immediate release.

Up to 5,000 prisoners in the 138 jails in England and Wales (Scotland has a separate penal system) are likely to have release dates brought forward.

The immediate reaction of the media has been to see all this as another balls up for which Howard should — but of course won't — take ministerial responsibility and resign. Labour home

TURKISH AND KURDISH

workers living in Germany have

played a key part in a successful

tour of that country recently con-

Hollerhead were invited by the

IGM (metalworkers' union) and

the öTV (public sector workers' union), along with the DIDF (German Federation of Demo-

Meetings were held to explain

the dockers' case, raise funds and

Every discussion re-emphasised one point: a victory for the

Liverpool dockers will be a set-

back for the employers' strategy everywhere, and a victory for

workers everywhere. What is at

stake is the very survival of trade

unions as independent organisa-

been prominent in the struggle

was after a dockers' delegation

returned recently from Turkey

that a human rights campaign

Pressure

the international pressure that helped force the Turkish govern-

ment to make some concessions to

the political prisoners and hun-

ger strikers. The task now is to

ensure that the regime does not

renege on its promises, and to

racy (for example, elections) the

regime daily violates elementary human rights. More disappear-

ances in police custody take place

in Turkey than in any other country in the world. Torture of

detainees is routine. Any demon-

stration of genuine opposition

can expect to be met with repres-

struggle for national liberation.

At the same time the workers'

Kurds continue their

In spite of its facade of democ-

keep up the pressure.

The campaign became part of

for numan r

was launched.

The striking dockers have

organise continuing solidarity.

cratic Workers Associations).

Terry Southers and Herbie

cluded by two Liverpool dockers.

affairs spokesperson Jack Straw, in a muted criticism, simply echoed the prevailing view shared by some Tories - that Howard is 'not up to the job. He has failed to manage the [prison] service and build up any trust with his staff.'

Howard, meanwhile, is claiming he was not informed about the decision to release inmates a claim denied by prison service spokespeople. He is apparently so completely thrown that he is waiting for one of the prisoners whose release he has halted to sue him so that the law on remission of sentences can be clarified in the courts!

Meanwhile prison governors bracing themselves for revolts in major jails.

With overcrowding rising as prison numbers skyrocket (from 46,000 in 1993 to 56,000 last July) the fear is that the intolerable situation of continuing to lock up inmates apparently entitled to immediate release, while some are already free, could bring the men out on to the rooftops.

### Heated

As Mark Leech, editor of the UK Prisons Handbook commented late last week: 'I have had telephone calls from prisoners all over the country in the last few days about this, tempers are becoming heated and incidents are on the horizon.'

Needless to say there has been little concern in the media with the injustices to inmates involved, nor with the fact that sudden release means many have nowhere to go. Rather the preoccupation has been with the thought of dangerous inmates suddenly being let out on the

In a week in which a rape victim was forced to undergo a 16-hour cross-examination in court by her attacker, and in which organised child sexual abuse across Europe was headline news, the main issue for many was the release of rapists and violent offenders onto the streets.

The Observer (25 August) found a man whose fiancée's exboyfriend is still serving time for attempting to poison her. Now we hear he could be coming out. Jane has built her life around knowing he's in jail. She's completely destroyed by this.'

Such sentiments could lend support to the view that serious violent offenders should never be released. Many women understandably feel this about men who raped or physically attacked

But the idea that if such people remained in prison a while longer then something would be done to help them come to terms with their actions could not be further from the truth. Prison is a completely brutalising experience for most inmates.

Meanwhile the probation service has suffered cutbacks in resources and is currently in crisis due to Michael Howard's determination to expunge any residual rehabilitative focus and turn the service into a more punishment-oriented institution.

But was the ambiguity in the 1967 Criminal Justice Act really the cause of last week's fiasco? Informed commentators point out that the ambiguity has been known for some time. Why suddenly and chaotically try and resolve it now?

The answer might be found by going to the core of Tory prison US-style criminal justice policy - in particular compulsory long sentences for repeat offenders is part of a general shift in focus.

A shift from punishment and rehabilitation of individual offenders to that of warehousing the permanently unemployed population surplus to the requirements of capitalism. A return to the Victorian fear of the 'dangerous classes'.

## **Expensive**

In the United States one in four young black men are in prison or on probation. Howard wants this here. But there is a contradiction.

As the Americans are discovering, putting large numbers of people in prison is expensive. As inmate numbers climb steeply, so does the cost and the overcrowding which carries the risks of more prison revolts.

As The Times (23 August) put it: 'Ironically, the early release of inmates could ease the accommodation problem facing the prison service. The prison population has been rising at the rate of 250 a week as sentencers take note of the tough law and order rhetoric and "prison works" policy of Mr

Meanwhile the prison budget is shrinking and there is a projected cut of 1,000 in the number of prison officers.

In a state of panic over rising numbers could it be that the prison service chose such a desparate measure to give itself a breathing space by flushing out the system?

If so, it has backfired badly. We just might be seeing a policy starting to fall apart under the weight of its own contradictions.

## Kurdish and Turkish workers in Germany support Liverpool dockers BY LIZ KNIGHT London support group for the Liverpool dockers



the 1980 coup, is being regenerated across Turkey.

prevent the recent victory of the 20,000 textile workers in Gazi-Antep, Kurdistan, on strike for union recognition and the eighthour day.

It is the joining of the Kurdish liberation struggle with the workers' movement which the Turkish regime most fears. The success of the Islamic card, now being tested out by sections of Turkey's ruling class, can be undermined only by a united, worker-led movement.

The Emek (Labour) Party, founded earlier this year, is consistently working to build just such a movement - which explains why the government is taking measures to ban it, and to close down the newspaper Evrensel which defends the same position. The HADEP (Kurdish) Party is also under threat.

Mutual solidarity between the

workers and the oppressed peoples of Turkey and workers in Britain and internationally has never been more important.

Turkey, crossing continents and standing between eastern and western power blocs, is key to the stability of the new world order and uniquely susceptible to conflicting pressures from outside (the United States, Europe, Russia and the Middle East) as well as from within.

#### Weakest

In 1917 Russia was described as world capitalism's weakest link, and as the year 2000 approaches, it may prove to be Turkey.

The dockers' campaign demonstrates in action that the defence of workers' rights means defence of all human rights - not just in one country, but across the globe.

The Human Rights in Turkey Campaign has, to date, the support of MPs, Euro-MPs, trade

unionists, and many individuals including the film-maker Ken Loach, playwright Harold Pinter, Lord Avebury and Lord Hylton.

The next session of the European parliament opens in Brussels on 10 September. The question of European aid to Turkey is expected to be on the agenda. The campaign plans, with the support of MEPs, to hold a press conference at the beginning of the session.

The aim is to prepare a coordinated platform of opposition to further aid unless the regime gives satisfactory evidence of a changed stance on human rights.

Before this, the Liverpool dockers are planning a working meeting on Turkey open to all supporters of the campaign, to take place in Liverpool.

For further details contact the following. London: 0171-275 8440 (Fax 0171-275 7245). Liver-0151-207 3388 (Fax 0151-207 0696).

movement, brutally smashed in

Massive state force could not

## The need for a new socialist party

## Forging working-class unity

JOSEPH ODUSANYA came to Britain in 1947 and until his retirement had a variety of jobs in various parts of the country, including a spell in the shipyards at Wallsend.

Describing himself as 'a bit of an adventurer' he came originally to this country to see how other people lived and find out what people in Britain thought of the peoples of Africa.

He joined the Communist Party soon after arriving in Britain, but also came into contact with Trotskyists, including leaders of the dockers' union in Lagos. He met Workers Press through his involvement with the African Liberation Solidarity Campaign and has been a member of our editorial board for some time.

THIS NEW organisation is most important for forging the unity of the working class in Britain and internationally. This unity is

The conference called last March by Workers Press under the title: 'Crisis in the labour movement — the need for a new socialist party' decided to set up a steering committee to continue its work.

■ NEXT **MEETING:** 7.30pm, Tuesday 3 September, YWCA, 16-22 Great Russell Street. London WC1. (Tubes: Russell Holborn or Square.) **PLEASE** NOTE change of venue.

This week we have three more responses to the initiative taken by the Workers Revolutionary Party towards the building of a new socialist party. Each week we aim to print a selection of views on this. Anybody interested in taking part in this discussion should mail, fax or e-mail (see back page) contributions which should be 300-400 words in length.

vital if we are to achieve the task of engaging our class, the working class, in a successful struggle against the class enemy.

This is where the attention of the African Liberation Solidarity Campaign is most closely focused.

At this juncture no country can be an island unto itself.

In light of the current offensive of the ruling class the world has never been more threatened than it now is. Every gain that our forefathers made, in Africa and the world generally, is being gradually withdrawn.

Therefore in our actions we have to be able to link up this international struggle and take up the challenge thrown down by the ruling class seriously.

## Scientific socialism

SCIENCE, in the definition of Trotsky, is 'information that gives us power' - power to predict events and act on the world.

Scientific socialism is the knowledge of our own power as a class. I am a scientist working on the evolution of human culture the area where politics and ideology most inevitably impinge on scientific endeavour.

Questions like 'What is human nature?', 'What does it mean to be human?' and 'How did we become arouse the fiercest political controversy across the related fields of evoltuionary biology, anthropology, archaeology, history and economics.

in these disciplines now rou-

tinely discuss and describe the 'Human Revolution', referring to the evidence for an explosive birth of human culture in Africa around 100,000 years ago which was subsequently carried across the planet by modern humans.

The most controversial theory at the centre of these debates among scientists is that culture language, art, ritual, religion and labour itself - started on a prehistoric picket line.

Culture was born, not piece-meal, but in a massive social and sexual revolution, led by African women as they established that 'No means no! Sexual morality arose on the basis of a simple rule: 'No one crosses a picket line.'

developments These palaeoanthropology bear out remarkably Engels's insight that the more ruthlessly and disinterestedly science is pursued, the more it finds itself in harmony with the interests of the workers.

Only the organised working class can realise this science. As the exploiting classes pursue their sectional interests, maximising their profits, they necessarily impede and obscure knowledge of what made us human.

The vanguard of the working class, currently the Liverpool dockers leading the international struggle against capital, themselves become scientists discovering in practice how to reclaim this tradition and mount a picket line across the planet.

Another radically alternative constituency to organised labour, the coalition of environmental, Yet, even bourgeois scientists anti-roads and youth protest movements, are asking and coming up with their own answers to the question: 'What makes us human?

It's no accident that the 'Freedom to Party' resistance against the Criminal Justice Act draws inspiration from tribal traditions of ritual, used consciously to express defiance of Western consumerism.

With their 'Save the Planet' internationalist outlook, these groups have enormous energy to contribute and practical experience of organising resistance to state control.

The main ingredient missing from these movements in the past has been the leadership role of the working class. It is very significant that sections of the environmentalist movement are now reaching out to the dockers and other trade unionists. It would be unforgiveable for 'Marxists' not to support the forging of such connections.

The environmentalists, with the protection of the planet as their objective, think internationally as a matter of course. As a global movement, environmentalism cannot be constrained by the frontiers of the nation state. In this sense, there is an important parallel with the intrinsic environmentalism of science.

The only true international language we have is science; and the only truly international community is the scientific commu-

The scientific revolution can be consummated by researchers who put science first over and above all ideological pressures and vested interests.

As the current revolution in the life sciences gathers pace, it increasingly polarises the scientific community into rival camps: one that buckles under the pressure of outside ideology, becoming irredeemably racist, imperialist; the other that pursues science whatever the consequences, becoming emancipatory and ready to align itself with workers in struggle. This is what Marx meant by 'scientific socialism' — that part of socialism which puts science first. As a scientist, I look forward to joining the new party of the working class on that basis.

Camilla Power

## **Questions** and answers

DAVE GRAHAM is right to raise the questions he does (17 August) but I think wrong to expect completed answers.

The WRP in its present form grew out of the final crisis of Healyism, and has served a transitional role allowing members and former members to re-evaluate their political strategies and

For some, such as former WRP member Cyril Smith, this process has not yet been deep or thorough enough. But nobody who reads the WRP's documents, Cliff Slaughter's material in particu-lar, can fail to observe a marked gathering of pace over the last 18 months or so.

(And I write this as a non-member of the WRP with no access to their internal discussion documents.)

Most notably, it must be clear that Slaughter is advocating a departure from one of the major concepts of the 'Leninist party' that has bedeviled the relationship between Trotskyists and the working class — namely the view that the party's role is to 'provide leadership' and 'inject consciousness' into the class and for the

As Chris Knight so lucidly put it at the last steering committee, the plan now is not to say to workers in struggle 'join us' but rather 'we want to join you'.

A change of this kind has enormous implications for organisation and function, and requires all the old ideas about 'democratic centralism', factions, members' rights and responsibilities to be re-examined in detail from a purely practical stand-

We no longer need to agonise over (for example) the Comintern's conditions of membership, or the banning of factions by the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) — we need to work out ways of operating here and now that build and reinforce links with and between struggles.

Of course this does not mean throwing overboard the results of past experience and study. On the contrary, it means carefully re-examining everything we used to feel certain of, and making better use of it.

This will not be a painless process, and success is by no means guaranteed. It would be unwise to expect the new organisation to consist, at the beginning, of new forces, and the WRP's habits and culture will carry over.

In addition, the problem of the new organisation's relationship with the Workers International and the LIT/CI will have to be worked out — many people have invested a great deal of time and work in nurturing the WI and will not wish to see that wasted.

Dave Graham refers to other tendencies on the left who are reinventing themselves. Like Dave I welcome and support that process. Unlike Dave, I think the WRP is overcoming many of the problems of its past and is making profound changes in its thinking.

John Plant

For more information about the steering committee and its plans for the future contact the coordinator. Steve Ballard, 0181-889 7255

tional socialism, so many and var-

ied were his outstanding contri-

butions to the movement, to

which he gave his time, his gen-

nal differences' with 'the Old Man' did not detract from their

sense of outrage over Stalin's ter-

a free press still existed, socialists

lamented the passing of the Rus-

sian revolutionary socialist. In

Switzerland, Norway, Denmark,

Holland and Sweden, the major-

ity socialist newspapers, though

differing with the Trotskyists on

a whole range of questions, pro-

of Scandinavian socialists, the

editor of the Norwegian Arbei-

derbladet asserted that 'Leon

Trotsky has sacrificed his whole

life for the sake of the world

working-class community, in the

way that he thought would be

Voicing the general response

tested against the assassination.

The ILP's 'personal and doctri-

In European countries where

ius, and, ultimately, his life'.

rible deed.

# How the world saw Trotsky's murder

The Scottish labour historian JAMES D. YOUNG recently completed a book on socialist martyrs from 1886 onwards. Here he descibes reactions to the assassination of Leon Trotsky 56 years ago. His views are of course not necessarily those of Workers Press

THE MURDER of Leon Trotsky on 20 August 1940 by one of Stalin's agents marked a major turning-point in the history of socialist internationalism.

The socialist movement and the international proletariat', wrote the West Indian socialist polymath C.L.R. James, 'are like a ship on a vast ocean, not uncharted, but sown with perils old and new'. The movement had lost the pilot who had guided it through many stormy seas'

Unlike the orthodox Trotskyists, Victor Serge, the novelist and independent thinker, was very pessimistic about the future prospects for socialism. In an article in the American Partisan Review he offered a long list of Stalinism's socialist victims. He summed up:

'As I write these lines, as names and faces crowd in on me, it occurs to me that this kind of man had to be extirpated, his whole tradition and generation, before the level of our time could be sufficiently lowered.

Men like Trotsky suggest much too uncomfortably the human possibilities of the future to be allowed to survive in a time of sloth and reaction.'

At a time when Partisan Review was still committed to independent revolutionary socialist politics and published some of the best intellects in the world. Trotsky's death inspired some fine writing from the pens of Paul Goodman, James T. Farrell and Dwight Macdonald.

It is interesting that Goodman, then at the beginning of his career as anarchist writer and teacher, focused on Trotsky's

Explaining that the US State Department would not let Trotsky's body be brought to New York for burial lest it become 'an object of revolutionary ardour' and 'perhaps open street-fighting', Goodman summed up: 'But in the end the body was burned in fire and the ashes given over to Trotsky's widow.'

#### Song

Then, in memory of Trotsky, he quoted an old Hebrew song:

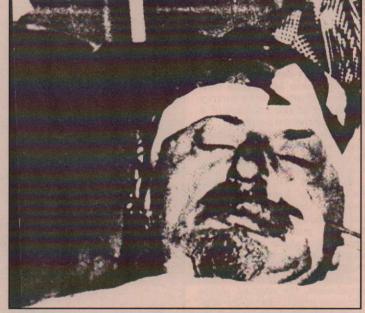
Our land we work nır ıana we work We have already ploughed And we have seeded it Have not yet harvested Have not yet harvested.

Some six years before Farrell, the distinguished American novelist, wrote Bernard Clare in honour of Trotsky's struggle for socialist internationalism, he contributed his own tribute to Partisan Review.

'Neither Stalinism nor the capitalist world can forgive Trotsky', he wrote. 'They will hate his memory, but they will never succeed in erasing it.'

Dwight Macdonald, another young American writer, was at one with Serge in grasping the political significance of Trotsky's

'Trotsky was the one man still living', he wrote, 'whose name and prestige could have become a rallying-point for a mass revolution in almost every part of the world, and especially in Russia. And even more important, as long as he lived there was a centre of revolutionary Marxist con-



Leon Trotsky seriously ill in hospital after the fatal blow

sciousness in the world, a voice which could not be frightened or corrupted into silence.'

However, the American Left was far from unanimous in regretting Trotsky's murder. Speaking for the Socialist Party of America, the editor of The Call

'We cannot pretend to weep any bitter tears over the death of Leon Trotsky. The shades of Russian working men and peasants whom in his days of glory he caused to be shot down rise between us and his bier.'

Independent left-wing socialists all over the world were bitterly divided over Trotsky's murder. The crucial factor dividing their responses to the assassination was Trotsky's role at Kronstadt in 1921 in putting down the revolt of 'Red sailors with great brutality.

The American anarchist and feminist Emma Goldman, who

spoke in Glasgow in 1938, simultaneously published a pamphlet on Kronstadt entitled Trotsky Protests Too Much.

Yet, despite Trotsky's unrepentant role at Kronstadt, Guy Aldred, the English — though Glasgow-based — anarchist, tried to build an alliance with the Trotskyists between 1929 and

## Stress

Alienated from the Trotskyists because of their excessive stress on the need for a 'vanguard' party in which, in Antonio Labriola's words, 'the superior officers of the revolution' would be trained, Aldred and his supporters would not join the Fourth International when it was founded in Paris in 1938.

A surprisingly large number of leftist newspapers and magazines were already under Stalinist influence. Kingsley Martin,

published a long editorial denouncing Trotsky and the Trotskyists: 'Violence and the barricades were the breath of life to him; and

editor of the New Statesman,

his personal vanity and temperamental inability to work well outside the limelight made his defeat in the obscure battle of intrigue and counter-intrigue with Stalin almost inevitable.' From a very different per-spective, Karl Korsch, the exiled

German socialist, published his magazine Living Marxism to promote libertarian socialist ideas in America. In the most absurd of the many articles published on the significance of Trotsky's murder, Korsch insisted Trotsky could not be regarded as 'a socialist martyr'.

Arguing that Hitler taught Stalin a great deal about how to get rid of revolutionaries in his own party, Korsch insisted that the Russian revolution was the first chapter in the opening up of a latent international fascism.

That was why, in his view, 'a final evaluation' of Trotsky's role in history would have to 'place him in line with Lenin, Mussolini, Stalin and Hitler as one of the great leaders of a world-wide movement attempting, knowingly and unknowingly, to prolong the exploitation system first devised by Bolshevism, then completed by German fascism'.

But not all the unorganised socialists who commented on Trotsky's assassination were as silly and superficial as Professor Korsch. Important sections of the international labour movement. like the Independent Labour Party, protested. On the ILP's behalf, Frank A. Ridley insisted that Trotsky was indeed 'a socialist martyr'.

Acknowledging, in Paul Buhle's phrase, 'the artist as revolutionary', Ridley wrote: 'One could almost style him as the "Leonardo da Vinci" of internamost beneficial to ultimate working-class emancipation'. **Irrationalism** 

August 1940 was characterised by irrationalism and a murderous anti-humanism in many parts of the world. Italian and German fascist newspapers, reporting Trotsky's murder, gave vent to anti-Semitism.

With that murder, the history of the first three Internationals had come to an end. The cumulative crisis of socialism which existed before August 1940 would continue for another half-cen-

But with the collapse of socalled 'communism' in Russia and eastern Europe in 1989, the preconditions for a rebirth of libertarian socialism from below would at the very least ensure that the memory of socialist martyrdom would contribute to the possibility of a socialist renaisPage 8

Saturday 31 August 1996

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# Silajdzic to boycott Bosnian election

FORMER Bosnian prime minister Haris Silajdzic, tipped as the most serious challenger to President Izetbegovic, says he will boycott the general election in two weeks time because he fears the elections will be used to legalise the country's ethnic division.

Silajdzic told visiting US Secretary of State Warren Christopher this would be 'ratification of genocide'.

The former prime minister quit the governing party of Democratic Action (SDA) to form his own Party for Bosnia-Herzegovina aimed, he said, at maintaining the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural traditions fought for in the war. Polls have showed Silajdzic to be the one politician most Bosnians respect.

People are angry to see Serb nationalists maintaining their 'ethnically cleansed' separate Republika Srpska and terrorising opponents, and at the equally arrogant stance of Croat nationalists backed by President Tudj-

With the war criminals still at large, the only aspects of the USbrokered Dayton agreement being carried out are the installation of NATO's massive Implementation Force (IFOR) and the elections, which Clinton wants before he goes to the polls in November.

Serb nationalists are intimidating Muslim refugees from returning to vote, and denying non-nationalist parties the right to stand. In Doboj, the Serb

WATCHED by police with semi-

automatic weapons and tear gas

canisters ready, some 7,000 strking public service workers at a

rally in Harare, the Zimbabwean

capital, heard union leader Give-

more Masongorera call on Presi-dent Robert Mugabe to be 'man

thing to do is to face the problem

right in the face, acknowledge

our stance that we are not going

Hospitals, mortuaries and air-

to accept insults, and pay us."

ports have been affected strike, for pay rises of over 20 per

cent to catch up with inflation.

enough' to meet their demands. 'Intimidation is not the right approach', said the Public Service Association president. The manly

#### BY CHARLIE POTTINS

nationalist SDS told Serb refugees they must register to vote where it told them, or they would not get humanitarian aid.

Croat refugees have protested that the nationalist HDZ wants to use them as voting fodder in places like Prozor, in Herzegovina, thereby accepting their 'ethnic cleansing' from other areas.

Bosnia's SDA government

stands accused of acquiescing in 'ethnic cleansing', by allowing intimidation of Sarajevo Serbs, and moving Muslim refugees from Srebrenica to replace them.

#### Condemned

After adverse publicity the government condemned the campaign in Sarajevo. Izetbegovic has also sought to dissociate himself from his supporters' recent disruption of opposition meet-

The president said those responsible had no right to use his name, that he wants people to be free to think and speak, and that the attacks only damaged

But as well as violence against

Labour Minister Florence Chi-

tauro announced on television

that: 'All the civil servants who

did not return to work are fired

and they will not be permitted to

sion and so we cannot be fired on television,' Masongorera replied.

There were procedures and the

strike was 'illegal' and remarked provocatively that this might be

the opportunity to reduce the public service. But it was reported that the government

would probably have to turn to

President Mugabe claimed the

government must follow them.

'We were not hired on televi-

return to work.'

political opponents, and placing SDA hacks in state and management positions, SDA media have been whipping up chauvinism and religious prejudice against opponents like the Social Democrats, who head the city council in

In parliament speaker Miro Lazovic said his Social Democrat party and its allies was considering an election boycott.

The International Group, consisting of former premiers, foreign ministers, and other public figures urged that elections be postponed, and a new Dayton-style agreement worked out.

On Tuesday it was reported that the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) monitors had recommended postponing municipal elections, though not the general

See centre pages for Bosnia background, and interview with teaching trade unionist.



Haris Silajdzic

# **Shoot-out settles** Serb sacking

POLICE attempting to remove a distillery manager exchanged automatic weapon fire with opponents holed up in the distillery in the Serb nationalist-held town of Teslic, northern Bosnia. The town was sealed off while the police stormed the factory.

It was the latest incident in a burgeoning civil war in the so-called Republika Srpska, between Radovan Karadzic's Serb nationalist SDS, which controls the police, and its opponents. Distillery manager Rade Pavlovic (no relation to our comrade of the same name!) was forced to step down because he is the local

linked to Serbia's Presiden Milosevic.

Biting the hand that once fee it, the SDS has aligned itself with Milosevic's right-wing oppo nents, such as Seselj's Serb Radi cal Party. Socialist party candidates have been attacked

Karadzic's successor as leader Mrs Biljena Plavsic, who boasts o being a lifelong anti-communist says after the Dayton agreemen she told Milosevic 'it is a real pity the Serbs don't have a prope leader, as the Croats have in Tudj

## 'When you get in there, forget about human rights'

# The ANC's prison camps

#### BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE

THE ANC deeply regrets the excesses that occurred.' For the first time in public the African National Congress has admitted that it executed 34 cadres in in its camps in Angola in the 1980s.

But its 300-page report to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission plays down the scale of the oppression against its own members. It attempts to portray the abuses as the mistakes of a few inexperienced people.

As the truth begins to find a larger audience a pamphlet produced in 1990 becomes very relevant and its opening paragraph:

'It is time that the people of South Africa heard about the events in the camps in Angola and Tanzania: about the use of corporal punishment in the schools, the abuse of girls and women, the organisation of smuggling rings, the use of tor-ture and the meting out of brutal punishment, the conduct inside notorious prison camps, the suppression of all criticism.

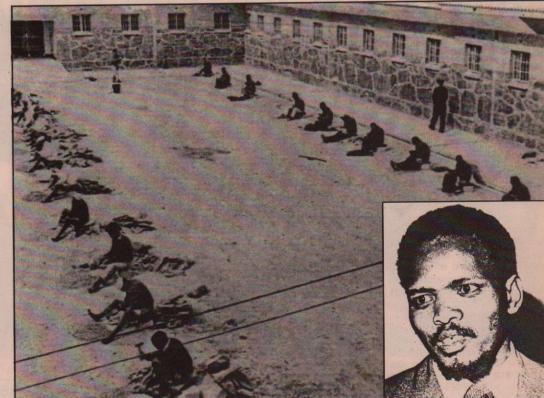
The pamphlet, 'Mutiny in the ANC, 1984' includes an 'Open let-ter to Mr Mandela from ex-ANC Detainees'.

Its main article, 'A Miscarriage of Democracy: The ANC Security Department in the 1984 Mutiny in Umkhonto we Sizwe', was written by five of those who mutinied against the abuses committed by the ANC's security apparatus.

It speaks of the young men of the security apparatus and how they were put into place as a response to the growing dissatisfaction among the young ANC

The main cause of discontent was the suppression of our uncontrollable desire to leave Angola and enter into South Africa to supplement the mass political upsurges of the people.

'Alongside this were also complaints about inefficiency of the front commanders and suspicions



De Klerk has sought absolution from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for brutalities like the hard labour at apartheid's prison camp at Robben Island and the death of Steve Biko (inset), but the victims' families seek justice (editorial, page 2)

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that they were treacherously involved in the failure of many missions, leading to the mysterious death of our combatants in South Africa' (page 2).

'Mutiny in the ANC' goes on to say: 'The security organ of the ANC, which till then had just been composed of a few old cadres of the 1960s, began to be reorganised in all the camps.

'Young men from our own generation who had recently undergone courses in the Soviet Union and East Germany were spread into all the camps. It was during this time that construction of a prison camp . . . was speeded up, which later took the form of the dreaded Quatro.'

The ANC report to the Com-

actle upon Type NF1 2PO (0191-222 0299)

mission is forced to refer to 'Quatro' (known also as camp 32 and the Morris Seabelo centre).

'Mutiny in the ANC' quotes Saba Maledza, a former inmate, as making the best description of Quatro: 'When you get in there, forget about human rights.'

The five mutineers say of the prison camp: 'Quatro became worse than any prison that even the apartheid regime - itself considered a crime against humanity—had ever had.'

The administration of Quatro was limited to members of the security forces, mostly young members of the underground South African Communist Party. The Stalinist methods were learned in Stalinist schools.

## Read 'MUTINY IN THE ANC, 1984'

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