WEEKLY PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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FINGPES STOPATEANT C INTERNATIONAL dockers' soli-CONVEYER darity has sent the 36,000-tonne Atlantic Conveyor on a hunt for a port of refuge! Normally it would work the Liverpool-New York run. But because it was loaded by scabs, the shipping company had to try and dodge US dockers' solidarity with the striking Liverpool dockers by

diverting the vessel to Baltimore. A flying picket took off from Liverpool for Baltimore, and the International Longshoremen's Association said they would not cross it. So the Conveyor was sent to Norfolk, Virginia, the US naval shipyard.

Off went the Liverpool picket to Norfolk, where they fell foul of the military police. But with only 30 containers unloaded the vessel was sent on to New York where it has been stopped again by Liverpool pickets hot on its trail. The pickets plan to spend Christmas in the US to make sure it's not unloaded.

In the meantime, not only were pickets flying about but writs as well. Port employers, shipowners, and governments joined hands to take on the 500 sacked Liverpool dockers. But international solidarity pre-vailed. Atlantic Concert remained in the port of Liverpool for well over 36 hours, waiting for the outcome of her sister ship's search to shed her load.

On the other side of the world, Australian dockers awaited the arrival of an ABC Containers NV vessel knowing they would not work it because it had been

BY DOT GIBSON

loaded by scabs. But the vessel seemed to have disappeared into the mist! It never arrived.

Has it been taken to a port in the Far East, and its cargo reloaded to another vessel, to try to avoid a confrontation with the Australian dockers?

One thing is certain. In their efforts to beat 500 dockers in the port of Liverpool the bosses appear prepared to lay out thousands in increased shipping costs.

The Mersey Docks and Harbour Company is said to be meeting the extra cost as a way of assuring the shipping companies that all is well. They will pay thousands to defeat the dockers and smash the union, but for how

The striking dockers say time is on their side. Support is building up. Spirits are high, funds are flooding in! They will hold an international conference of dock workers on 17-22 February in Liverpool.

Workers Press sends its hearty seasonal congratulations to the Liverpool dockers and their supporters!

sticky reception

DIRECTORS of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company and their partners got an unusually 'warm' reception when they turned up to a retirement party. Dozens of 'Women of the Waterfront', Liverpool dockers' dynamic women's support group, were waiting, with their children as well.

The courtyard was so crowded the directors' limos had to park up the road. This meant the party-goers had to run the gauntlet of singing and shouting women and children.

Not only that, but they were so stuck-up that the kids couldn't resist putting 'Support the Liverpool dockers' stickers all over

So not only coats, dresses and trousers were bedecked by the now well-known yellow stickers, but noses, foreheads, chins and red-hot cheeks were covered too!

Directors' It is ONE struggle for workers! Make it a united fight in 1996!

ers and the workers in France and Belgium there are other struggles going on over the Christmas period: the Hillingdon hospital cleaners, JJ Fast Food workers and Wandsworth refuse collectors among them.

All these workers are fighting for better conditions, against casual working, for public services. It is the ONE fight against the attacks on the working class demanded by the ruling class. The

working class needs to bring these forces against capitalism together. That is why there's a conference in February to discuss the need for a new party: 'Crisis in the labour movement'. The employer at JJ Fast Food

has been rattled by the workers' determination for decent working conditions and this has given added confidence to the pickets.

There is a weekly picket at the factory gate near Tottenham Hale from 6am every Friday. Also

today there is a children's party, meeting and social for the strikers. Presents for strikers' children are being asked for for ages two months to 15. Phone 0181-802 9804.

The Wandsworth refuse collectors are balloting for action and working through industrial tribunals.

The firm that sacked the workers is holding an internal inquiry into the shop stewards' sacking. Battersea and Wandsworth TUC: 0171-228 5638.

Campaign strengthens for Bongani Mkhungo

"THE International workers movement contains many different viewpoints and each comrade should be able to express their opinions on how strengthen workers' rights without fear of intimidation,' says a letter to the general secretary of the South African trade union federation COSATU.

The letter from John Perry. secretary of TGWU 1/1148 ACTS branch, conveys the concern of its annual general meeting at 'the treatment of Bongani Mkhungo,

Send donations to

South Africa Solidarity Fund

Workers International,

PO Box 735

London SW8 1YB.

A letter from the secretary of Bexley Trades Union Council, John Peters, reads:

'We were astonished to hear of the attack on Bongani Mkhungo while he was distributing leaflets critical of the leaders and policy of COSATU, an organisation which he helped, along with many others, to found.

'We first met Bongani when he was touring Britain on behalf of NUMSA and campaigning for the release of Moses Mayekiso, who was in prison for organising workers in opposition to apartheid. He spoke to our local antiapartheid group.

'Now he has been attacked and threatened by COSATU stewards that he will be killed if he does not cease campaigning for a change of line in your organisa-

'We condemn these threats without reserve, and call upon you to do the same.'

The leaflet Bongani was distributing called on COSATU to support workers' struggles — specially the 7,000 sacked nurses in the former Transkei - and to end its alliance with the so-called Government of National Unity.

The government is using violence against workers through its Safety and Security Department.

Bongani's family have since been harassed by armed gunmen.

Clearly the work Bongani and other comrades have carried out in South africa has met a response in the working class.

It is imperative to rally international action against this attack and any further threatened violence.

Workers International calls on workers everywhere to send resolutions and letters of protest to COSATU.

Resolutions are already on agendas for trade union branch meetings in January. We need these and others letters sent as soon as possible! If speedier action is possible please take it.

It may be the Christmas sea-son with all the attendant pressures and holidays, but it does not mean that political violence

Bongani Mkhungo and his family urgently need to move to a safer area. They must be protected. This requires funds. Thank you to those who have

made which have enabled us to send £435.70 already.

Please rush donations - large or small! — as quickly as possible payable to the South Africa Solidarity Fund'.

We need to send the next amount as soon as the banks reopen after Christmas and to build up our regular amounts to maintain the work in South Africa.

More information, standing order forms or copies of the leaflet distributed by Bongani and his comrades from 0171-387 0564.

Send resolutions and letters to COSATU Fax: 00 27 11 339 6940

(Copies, please, to Workers International, Fax: 0171-387 0569)



Workers Press Meeting

Saturday 10 February, 10.30am-4pm

University of Westminster, 309 Regent Street, London (north side of Oxford Circus).

■ Workers Press will be taking a break for two weeks in the New Year which will mean there will not be a paper on 30 December and 6 January 1996.

Greetings to our readers

WORKERS PRESS sends seagreetings and best wishes for the coming year to all our readers in Britain and throughout the world. Please note that our next issue will appear on 13 January.

committee of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International'.

Violence was used against Bongani by stewards at the COSATU 10th anniversary celebrations in Durban on 2 December 1995.

The letter concludes: 'The maturity of the international workers' movement will be judged on how minority opinions are treated. I hope that you can write to us with full clarification of the incident?

Russian election, p2 ★ Brixton, p3 ★ Cows, p4&5 ★ A mothers' fight for justice, p6 ★ Sect against dockers, p7 ★ France, p8

Some lessons from the Russian elections

THERE are some important lessons in the big vote given to the Communist Party of the Russian Federation in the recent elections to the State Duma, or lower house of parliament in Russia.

The Communist Party won around a fifth of the total popular vote and will almost certainly become the biggest group in the new parliament. They did so in face of the eve-of-poll threat issued by President Yeltsin that a large vote for candidates of the Communist Party would mean civil war.

No doubt many ex-members of the Communist Party in this country and elsewhere will see this as a positive development. They hope that the old days are returning and that the USSR is about to be restored in the form they believed wrongly was socialism.

But this is not the case.

Many millions voted for the Communist Party not because they want to return to the old Stalinist days. They voted in protest against the enormous hardships that the attempted restoration of capitalism has already brought for millions of people, including the estimated 37 million who are living at or below the poverty line.

They no doubt hoped that the election of Communist deputies to the Duma would halt the slide into economic chaos and bring to an end a situation that has seen 70 per cent of the population suffer a halving of their living standards since 1991.

A similar pattern occured earlier this year in Hungary and Poland where parties originating in the old Stalinist parties gained considerable electoral support.

Workers Press

On a broader level, the vote for the Communist Party represents, in however confused a form, the fight of the working class to defend their past conquests, that is, the gains of the October revolution.

Many were no doubt impressed by the speeches made during the election campaign by Communist Party leader, Gennadi Zyuganov, who made populist promises to halt economic 'reforms', renationalise industry, rebuild the Soviet Union and curtail Western influence on Russia. Zyuganov promised to increase social benefits, improve job security and retirement benefits.

But in his dealings with Russian and Western businessmen, in his recent meetings with President Clinton and other leaders of imperialism he was singing a quite different tune, stressing the need for foreign investment and a so-called 'mixed economy'.

He was in favour of renationalising only those privatised industries where production was falling. The successful ones would be left in private hands, he assured potential investors. The very day of the election he promised to retain the best achievements of the 'reformers', that is those aiming at the restoration of capitalism.

In fact Zyuganov, like Yeltsin, comes from that very Stalinist bureaucracy which was responsible for undermining the gains of the October revolution, including the nationalised property relations which that revolution brought into being.

And the Guardian reported (19 December): 'Eschewing triumphalism, Mr Zyuganov appealed to other parties to join a ''national patriotic coalition'', which could include the left-wing liberal Yabloko and the ultra-nationalist LDPR.'

The LDPR is the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia led by Vladimir Zhirinovski.

In their own way the election results

prove one thing: that the Russian working class is far from being a spent force. In however hesitiant and even confused a manner, its vote in the election has shown that it remains determined to defend its past conquests and to fight against the complete destruction of its country at the hands of imperialism.

And in that fight it will undoubtedly come into conflict with Zyuganov and the Communist Party.

Once again on the new party

ARTHUR SCARGILL's call for the formation of a Socialist Labour Party to replace the Labour has created widespread interest in the labour movement. It has attracted a wide audience, including many who remain for the moment inside the Labour Party.

Why is this? Because the workingclass movement is now at a historical turning point. It finds that its traditional party, the Labour Party, can no longer deliver even limited reforms. This is so, not because of the individuals who lead the party, but because the depth and scope of capitalism's crisis, internationally and in Britain, makes such reforms impossible.

Millions of people in France and now in Belgium are already or shortly will be forced into struggles to defend their living standards and in some cases their very existence. Many of these movements take place quite outside the traditional forms of working-class organisations, including the unions.

Many involve people engaged in struggles for the first time. At the same

time there is a definite turn in the struggles of the organised working class. The number of strikes is growing; while some involve relative small numbers, they are often organised and led by the most oppressed layers in the working class. Meanwhile some unions are starting to gain members for the first time in many years.

The question of a new party is one for the whole of the working class, including especially all those engaged in struggle against the employers and the government. Only if it is a party that meets up to the historical needs of the working class can it be successful. It has to be a party 'of' the working class and not 'for' it.

Scargill has produced a constitution for his proposed new party. We will comment more fully on it at a later date. But among its clauses is one excluding all those who are members of other political organisations.

The proposed constitution says:

'A member of the Party who joins and/or supports a political organisation other than the Party shall automatically be ineligible to remain a Party member.'

In addition it seems that Scargill is even opposed to representatives of community and similar groups being members of the new party. Apart from the regional bodies of the new party itself, the only affiliates allowed will be trade unions

We have already said more than once that Scargill's initiative is to be welcomed. It has helped broaden the discussion in the working class about the nature of its present crisis and the way ahead.

A new party must come out of the new forces thrown into struggle in a deepening capitalist crisis and where Stalinism has collapsed and social democracy is no longer able to deliver reforms. This is the danger of a party based on a highly restrictive constitution as Scargill seems to want.

We welcome the widest discussion on this and related issues in the pages of Workers Press.

Letters

A '[big] bang' or a whimper?

THE letter from F.M. on cosmology (16 December) reminds me of a debate between Simon Kershaw and myself a couple of years ago. The letter also contains some scientific errors and misunderstandings, which I will come to.

Kershaw attacked the 'big bang' and I defended it using my knowledge and research into quantum field theory and high energy physics (my last letter on this was on 3 October 1992 where I also pointed out some errors by Kershaw). Kershaw supported the highly suspect steady state theories of Fred Hoyle.

Like Kershaw, F.M. desperately wants to have a universe that 'is in fact continuously reproducing itself', but why?

I suspect it is because of the common belief that 'big bang' equals god, let there be light', etc. But the universe and science do not need defending from god. If people want to see god they will see her/him/it in anything the 'big bang' continual metanth' or releasing nerve gas into the Tokyo underground millway sys-

The fact is that when scientists search deep into the past of the universe by looking at the objects furthest away, they find that there are differences between the sort of objects around us and the objects far away. There is development.

In the 'big bang' theory, as it is currently articulated, there is the start off on which Hawking has done some work.

It is commonly said he has the universe coming out of nothing. This is not quite true. He starts off with no matter, but there are fields and the equations governing them.

Then out of them develops matter as we know it through quantum development of the fields.

There have been problems with the 'big bang' theory throughout its history. But they hasn't been a scientific crisis. There is some confidence that with increased understanding the problems can be sorted out.

Just abandoning everything and starting again gets you nowhere

F.M. wants to avoid the problems by having a universe that, like Jesus Christ, 'is the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever' (Hebrews 138)!

As an example of FM's scientific errors, light from 'constellations' can't start travelling 14 million years ago or at any par-

ticular time — the objects that make them up are often hugely separated in space.

They are rather like those holiday snaps where it *appears* that a lamppost, palm tree or something is sticking out of a friend's head. We laugh at these pictures because we know the reality is different.

What F.M. obviously meant is galaxies, quasars, etc. Not all stars recede from us, by the way. Some of those closest to us are approaching.

The point is, the further away the object is, the more the cosmological effect of the universe's expansion makes itself felt and more and more rapidly do they recede from us.

To some extent this is because we are looking into the past where they are closer to the 'bang' and so moving faster.

Also to say that the 'big bang' theory is determinist is a gross distortion and misunderstands where non-determinism enters modern physical theories.

The most fundamental nondeterminism is quantum mechanics. It is largely used to deal with minute objects — about the size of atoms downwards. Hawking, who didn't invent the big bang' theory, has tried to use quantum mechanics to describe the early stages when the energy density was of that order. After this classical mechanical 'determinism' is used to deal with the universe's future development.

Einstein and others in the 1920s found that without especially 'fine-tuned' parameters the universe would have to change with time — either expand or contract. The parameter needed for a 'steady state' — the 'cosmological constant' — is in fact within sharply-drawn experimental limits equal to zero and is certainly no help in gaining the 'desired' frozen universe.

Unlike F.M., I don't think black holes that go unstable and spurt matter would help either.

Of course, these theories deal with 'averages' and look for the gross behaviour of the system. Black holes are included in the 'average'. Their effect would be to add to the mass-energy of the universe and make the expansion or contraction faster, they wouldn't stop it.

It is difficult to see how to apply quantum mechanics to this gross behaviour and in these situations 'classical' mechanics is used. It is used as an approximation to the underlying quantum processes.

There is a crude approach to modern physics among 'Marxists': determinism bad, non-determinism good. But in reality there has to be some form of determination.

There cannot be absolute chaos otherwise knowledge, science and life itself would be

impossible. You have to be able to do or perceive things with some confidence of their happening or being an adequate reflection of

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Sometimes, of course, this confidence breaks down, but only at certain points. The conclusion is reached that we aren't seeing the 'whole picture' and a new development is made — or not.

In quantum mechanics itself, there are some aspects of determinism. The Schrödinger equation that gives the time evolution of quantum states is deterministic. The non-determinism comes in from linking the results to observation through an essentially statistical/probabilistic interpretation.

Mike Cooke London SE5

SE London

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A Secular Forum on:

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Friday 26 January 1996, 7.30-9.30pm

Small Hall, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1
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Branka Magas, author of 'The Destruction of Yugoslavia — tracking the break-up'

Melanie McDonagh, leader writer on the Evening Standard and regular visitor to former Yugoslavia

Organised by the National Secular Society (0171-404 3126)

and by police.

Brixton 1995: what now?

BY NICK LEE

THE bourgeois media heaved a collective sigh of relief that last week's demonstrations and vioconfrontations between police and youth in Brixton were not as serious' as the events of 1981 or 1985.

The events came after the death of Wayne Douglas, the third black male to die in police custody during the last twelve months

But in two respects they were more serious.

First they provided another opportunity for New Labour to show how clearly it has distanced itself from the poor and unemployed and from any concern about racism.

Second they showed the utter failure of both the police reforms initiated by Lord Scarman, the liberal judge who headed the inquiry into the 1981 events, and of the 'economic regeneration' of Brixton announced by the Tory government after the 1985 distur-

They showed the beginnings of a US-style abandonment of the inner cities and their populations a wasteland 'surplus to requirements' for contemporary capitalism.

The violence left the now retired Lord Scarman heartbroken: 'This is a complete breakdown of everything I tried to

Only a sprinkling of liberal newspaper editors echoed his anguish.

politicians were Labour remarkable in their new 'tough'

Local Labour MP Kate Hoey was 'particularly sad because so much has got better in the area. I'm sure the vast majority of the people of Brixton will condemn the violence.

Lambeth Labour Likewise leader Jim Dixon: 'the violence is inexcusable and self-defeating."

It took Liberal Democrat councillor Mike Tuffey to call for an independent inquiry into the death of Wayne Douglas. 'An internal police inquiry is just not good enough,' he said.

Against the background of this political consensus it was then easy for Metropolitan Police Commissioner Paul Condon to dismiss the Brixton events, completely unabashed at the furore about his own remarks on young blacks and street crime of a few

They were the activities of just another gang of 'criminals and thugs', he maintained. He went on to threaten prosecution for 'inflammatory speeches' by demons-

trators. Condon, who has shared public speaking platforms with Jack Straw, knew what he was doing. Such remarks by him serve as a signal to further marginalise the liberals and reformists within the police who tried to carry out Scarman's call to improve police and community relations. It's a green light to the hard men.

Not that the liberals have had much success. The majority of young blacks in Brixton feel exactly as they did in 1981, alienated from and victimised by a racist police force.

Some whites would agree. A white community worker from the area told the Financial Times (15 December) that her own sons complained of police harassment. 'Certainly black people feel they are singled out for harassment and searches,' she said.

As important as get tough

attitudes by politicians and police chiefs is the reality of the economy in areas like Brixton.

City Challenge, a private company set up to 'regenerate' Brixton with public and private investment, claims it is creating

The Financial Times bothered to inquire as to how many of them are actually going to people who live in the area.

The paper reported: 'It is understood that some of the new jobs that have been created have not gone to local people because the poor qualifications of potential recruits.'

And who are these young people with poor qualifications? Those who have skived and shied away from government training

No, they are, as the report continued, 'particularly those drawn from Youth Training, the government scheme for young people.'

The result: an unemployment rate of around 22 per cent for Brixton as a whole and, according to the government Labour Force Survey statistics on youth unemployment in London inner city areas, a rate for black youth aged between 16 and 24 of around 50 per cent.

Meanwhile the Labour group on Lambeth council is at one with its Liberal Democrat partners in calling for £30 million cuts!

Part of the blight that such conditions bring is of course a high crime rate, much of it associated with the drugs economy. But how does Labour respond?

Earlier the same week, after the tragic murder of a West London headmaster by teenage gangs at his school gates, Labour's shadow home secretary, Jack Straw, vied with Michael Straw. Howard to show how Labour would be even tougher on young people carrying knives.

If Howard was contemplating two years imprisonment for carrying a knife then Straw would have four, as if any of this would sort out the problem of teenage violence.

Labour's traditional understanding that unemployment and demoralisation of young people might have something to do with

their involvement in crime is now as dead as a door nail.

High crime and racist policing mean that the black community is doubly victimised: by criminals

Lee Jasper, leader of the National Black Caucus which organised the original Brixton demonstration against the death Wayne Douglas, told the Observer (17 December): 'Black criminals get away with more crime because black people fear contact with the police. It makes us more likely to be victims of crime, but also victims of offences committed by the police.'

A socialist policy for Brixton must seek to combine two elements: economic regeneration and civil rights.

The call must be for massive investment in inner city employment, funded through nationalisation of banking and financial services.

Such economic regeneration must be under the control of local communities to ensure a fair proportion of jobs go to people in the area.

This means that training courses with relevant skills must be established and similarly funded.

At the same time policing must be made really accountable to the local community. Police community 'liaison groups' are largely irrelevant talking shops.

A proper system of accountability of the police to locally elected councillors must be estab-

Only in such an environment can police reformers hope to gain support and all sections of the working-class communities participate in deciding what police priorities and safeguards against malpractice, should be.

Though similar policies were advocated vociferously by such Labour politicians as Ken Livingstone when leader of the Greater London Council in the mid 1980s such ideas are so distant from Tony Blair and Jack Straw's 'New Labour' that only the formation of a new independent party of the working class will enable them to be carried



Part of the lively demonstration against the Asylum and Immigration Bill last Tuesday

BY JACKIE VANCE

LAST Tuesday the huge swell of resistance to the Tories' Asylum and Immigration Bill again showed itself on the streets. This time it was right in the heart of imperialism at the British parliament at Westminster.

Asylum seekers, immigrants and black and Asian people who are targeted by this racist bill were at the forefront of a lobby of parliament called by the Campaign Against the Immigration and Asylum Bill.

Over 300 people with placards and banners (see photo) kept up a

BY BOB MYERS

Secretary

Workers Aid for Bosnia

FOUR lorries and an ambulance

formed part of the latest Workers

Aid for Bosnia convoys that left

last week for schools and hospi-

constant chant facing the gates of parliament while 2,000 attended a meeting in the Central Halls, Westminster.

The widespread opposition to the Tory proposals are causing doubts about the state's ability to control the movement building up against them.

The Tories will see the Brixton uprising as a sharp warning that the fight against racism has taken a new, militant turn and they cannot rely on the black community leaders to control

Already they have made a partial retreat over the 8 January date it had set for the stopping of

tals in Cazin, near Bihac. Another

four lorries are heading for the

Tuzla region taking aid for the

trade unions in the towns of

Gradacac and Kalesijia as well as

the Tuzla teachers' union and the

local government workers in

The lorries are joined by two

Christmas convo

Tuzla town hall.

all benefits to two large groups of asylum seekers - those who are awaiting appeals and those who applied after arriving in Britain.

The implementation of this would leave 13,000 people destitute immediately and affect as many as 35,000 a year.

But, alarmed at the growing resistance and the Brixton uprising, the regulations have been delayed as the Tories agree to Labour requests for more time for a full parliamentary debate.

It is not only the Tories who are getting nervous about the nature and militancy of the campaign against this bill.

The organisers of the lobby of

vehicles who went with us in

August, one from Ireland and one

from Rose Aid, a group of young

Among the 18 people going are

UNISON members from Durham,

Glasgow and Camden. A journal-

ist working for the Labour Party

left newspaper 'Tribune' will report on the meetings with fel-

Bureaucracy and snow per-

low trade unionists.

Muslims

parliament switched the emphasis of the demonstration to the Central Hall meeting when it became clear that there would be thousands of people outside par-

As these leaders try to contain resistance to safe parliamentary pressure it will be necessary to reinforce the fight for mass demonstrations which will link the opposition to all immigration controls with the fight against the state terror of the black popu-

This will include the defence of Rudy Narayan currently being vilified for his speech prior to the Brixton events.

Bolton college on all-out strike action

BY STUART CARTER

SOME 140 teachers from Bolton College of Further Education have been on all-out strike since 20 November. This came after management broke off talks and sent out new contracts with an ultimatum that lecturers must sign by 15 December.

The contracts means job losses and worse conditions, and new working practices that could mean a poorer education for stu-Management tried to black-

mail the 140 members of the union NATFHE by witholding the last two years' wage rises, plus next year's unless they accepted the new contracts.

Since action began the management have deducted two day's pay for every day on strike so the strikers have now lost their entire Christmas wage packets!

On 7 December the students and their families marched through Bolton town centre. They were supported by many NATFHE branches from the north of England as well as a contingent of striking Merseyside dockers, plus members of the MSF and local trades councils.

Peter Hick, one of the strikers. said that the strike was to defend icational standards Under th new contracts, he said, students would only get two day's a week tuition, with two days in front of a computer and a day in the library.

Pickets are held outside the college every weekday from 8am

Donations and messages of support should be sent to Bolton NATFHE Strike Committee, 16 Wood Street, Bolton, BL1 10Y. Fax: 01204 493515.

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

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

East End supports Tuzla and Bihac growing steadily in the area.

BY BOB ARCHER

EAST LONDON Workers Aid for Bosnia held a successful fundraising bazaar in West Ham the weekened before Christmas as another convoy prepared to set off for Tuzla and Bihac.

Victoriana and new clothes were popular stalls and the collection of second-hand books and records and a tombola were suc-

cessful attractions. Support for Bosnia has been

Teachers from various parts of east and south-east London have helped collect education supplies for the hard-pressed schools of Bosnia. Bromley teachers have put two vans on the convoy. Newham Unison collected a

lot of food and clothing and students at Newham FE college chipped in with a big collection of clothing, food and money, while Newham Aid for Bosnia has held collections and meetings to publicise the campaign.

mitting, the convoys hope to reach their destinations before Christmas, Large contingents of NATO forces are already stuck in the snow. Another group of Workers

Aid members from Spain will arrive a few days later with aid for the Tuzla miners' union. The Spanish contingent will

be followed by one from Student Aid for Bosnia which hopes its trucks will arrive just before the New Year. Students from Lancaster, Leeds, Cambridge, will meet with fellow students from Tuzla and deliver aid for teachers in the town's university. The convoys will also carry

Brighton, Leicester and London

many copies of the recent Workers Aid statement on the 'peace deal' translated into Bosnian. Drawn at the last national Workers Aid meeting it makes clear imperialism's aim of consolidating the division of Bosnia. It pledges that Workers Aid will continue to struggle for workingclass solidarity against racism and reaction.

The convoy team will be having meetings with our many friends in Bosnia to discover their reaction to the deal and discuss further collaboration with those who reject imperialism's carve-up of their country.

A Workers Aid bulletin containing this statement and news and views from Bosnia will be out in the New Year.

Inside left

piked!

friends running a south-east ndon café are relieved not to be ng home for Christmas. 'Home' ng Banja Luka, in northern Boswhich President Clinton's Dayton reement leaves in the hands of the Chetniks, who 'ethnically ansed' most of its Croat and Mus-

population. Peace and

goodwill to all'? den's father is Serb, his mother pat. His pal Goran is a Croat mard to a Serb woman. Having refused oin nationalist forces, and escaped Britain, they are threatened with portation. Mladen's appeal has adjourned, Goran's case comes in February.

We wrote about them before. here can I go?', Workers Press, 2 cember). Now Casablanca has pubhed an article on the two by wellown journalist Jonathan Steel. It s originally written for that wellown liberal organ the Guardian, spiked. Interesting, don't you

Saving

W here's a little mystery to solve the break. In the Spring of 1944, as ree Trotskyists faced trial for 'enraging' the strike of Tyneside gineering apprentices, the Eighth my News ran a front-page lead: th Army Men Say to Workers: GHT TO STRIKE IS PART OF THE

EEDOM WE FIGHT FOR'. Wladimir Dedijer, who was a oslav partisan commander, says hth Army News got in trouble th censors over its coverage of the goslav war. Questions were asked parliament, and editor Gregson

s court-martialled for visiting a zone without permission.

Hansard records a Commander cker-Lampson MP, complaining out the forces paper's treatment of ger Gracie Fields — but nothing out Yugoslavia. Can any Old eats out there throw light on this? at happened to Gregson?

Marx lost

NFESSION time again! On 23 Sepnber, inspired by shadow home retary Jack Straw's vision, of eets cleared of vagrants, beggars squeegee crews (hadn't Salva-nist Straw heard 'the poor shall rays be with you'?), I referred to a ne in a Marx Brothers film, where rpo is asked whether he's holding wall up. He gets hauled off, and wall crashes down.

I said it was in 'Duck Soup' (1933). A wham reader agreed it was hilaribut told me I'd got the wrong it was 'A Night in Casablanca' 46). This figures. I remember chorat the wall scene as a kid, and sn't born till 1942. In fact, having rowed the Faber and Faber book the 'Duck Soup' script from the rary, I discover — no wall scene.

What's more, it wasn't Rufus irefly (Groucho) who hired the spies Pinky and Chicolino, but Sylvanian ambassador, Trentino. ere goes my reputation as a film Anyway, I think the falling wall me would have fitted nicely at the inning of 'Duck Soup' . . . Maybe I mid join the hindsight school of

And recalling how British and us governments swept aside ciliation attempts at the start of Malvinas and Gulf wars, how's s for a snatch of 'Marxism, tennce Groucho?

TRENTINO: I am willing to do whiling to prevent this war. FIREFLY: It's too late. I've

endy paid a month's rent on the mile frield

Charlie Pottins

Season's greetings.

Should we eat th

Just before you tuck into the seasonal round of eating, drinking and generally going mad, DANIEL ROBERTSON writes to put you off some of your food

'MAD cow' disease is back in the tim gradually slides into a vegetative news. A young mother has died of Creutzfeld-Jakob Disease (CJD) shortly after giving birth by Caesarean operation just in time to save her baby. Two teenagers have also recently died.

A recent World In Action television programme revealed that the government's own advisers feared that only one in three cattle with the disease were being detected.

A leading brain surgeon has advised against eating beef products. And now school-catering organisations are removing beef from school

Is this response just hysteria — or are the government, its Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Foods (MAFF) advisers, and their friends in the meat industry, correct to assure us that there is absolutely no risk of 'mad cow' disease infecting humans and indeed that we should be encouraging children to eat more

To understand the reasons for this controversy we have to review the known science behind this outbreak.

What are **BSE** and CJD?

'MAD cow' disease (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy or BSE) and its human relative CJD are related diseases. They are characterised by a deterioration of brain structure and

In humans there is loss of memory, personality change and loss of control over bodily functions as the vic-

state. Death is inevitable.

The condition is associated with an infective protein structure called a prion that prompts the accumulation in the brain of protein fibres causing a sponge-like consistency. Prions are mysterious in structure and function.

All other living organisms require the presence of DNA or RNA to reproduce themselves. The prions seem to spark off production of protein fibres (themselves prion material) by the host's genetic system, probably by modifying a normally produced protein. Prions are highly resistant to heat and chemical treat-

Which animals are affected?

SEVERAL species of animal suffer from encephalopathies. A well known condition in sheep is scrapie. This has been present in British flocks for centuries.

Sheep, like several other species, show a genetically-based variability in susceptibility to the disease by individuals. Scores of deaths of domestic cats in Britain have been caused by exposure to BSE in cat

In humans CJD was first described in the 1920s. The best known outbreak (Kuru) was among cannibals in New Guinea who practised the unfortunate habit of eating dead relatives' brains.

Kuru is a variety of CJD with some additional symptoms similar to those suffered by BSE infected cattle,

including shuddering and an unsteady gait.

Some incidences of human CJD seem to be totally genetically determined. Rather than the infecting prion modifying a normally-produced protein these individuals suffer a mutation causing direct production of the prion without

exposure to infection.

The spurious argument that deaths of vegetarians from CJD disproves an animal origin are thus probably not true. Some studies have suggested a connection between CJD and eating black or white pudding and some other pork or lamb products and recently with consumption

CJD is so dangerous and infective that hospitals have been known to refuse admission to sufferers.

When did **BSE** appear?

CATTLE BSE first occurred in 1985

It is still largely restricted to Britain, limited outbreaks abroad being due to imported animals. Unlike here the response abroad has often been immediate and decisive - infected herds have been slaughtered.

MAFF has been persistently slow to act or has tried to belittle concern about this new condition.

The first medical paper on BSE, in the British Medical Journal in 1988, warned of the threat to humans but was ignored.

Official response

SINCE 1985 there has been a slow reluctant programme of restricting contamination of the human food chain with BSE material.

There have been bland reassurances, distorted statistical information and restrictions or abuse directed against concerned scientists.

Imposition of controls has been nominal — a recent survey found that half of all slaughter houses inspected were not following procedures. Routine examination of cattle brains was rejected as being too expensive.

The earliest bans were on less commercially valuable materials such as tonsils and brains. Profitable liver and kidney materials were

Now the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens is advising laboratory workers handling BSE infected material to take stringent precautions handling materials that are still finding their way in some quantity into the human food chain.

government sponsored Southwood Committee set up in 1988 projected that the outbreak would be limited to no more than 20,000 cattle and would be virtually over by 1995.

As of late 1995 around 150,000 cases have been confirmed and countless more have slipped through the wholly inadequate net of detection and control. It will be years before the BSE is eliminated.

This is partly because government claims that the use of animal-derived foodstuffs (effectively making cannibals of vegetarian animals) were uniquely to blame for its spread are wrong. It can in fact be passed from cow to calf.

The 500,000 veal calves exported from Britain every year (and subject to no effective BSE controls at all in Europe) contain some nasty surprises for their ultimate consumers who apparently favour sweetbread materials that may be loaded with the BSE agent!

Large numbers of infected corpses have been illegally buried in land-fill dumps where they risk infecting surrounding areas for years to come.



There are presently over a billion cattle on this planet. They take up nearly 25 per cent of its surface and actually weigh more the

e cows?

The claim that BSE originated from feeding cattle sheep material seems to be undermined by the differences between BSE and scrapie.

Its origin and range of potential hosts is essentially unknown. Changes in the manner in which animal material (everything from dead cattle to cats corpses collected from vets) is processed before being fed to cows to improve their milk yields probably made it easier for the infective agent to spread.

Government claims that the disease would not spread beyond cattle, and could thus be no threat to humans, have been proven to be

BSE has been found to infect over 20 other species, including pigs and monkeys that are often used to model human susceptibility in drug trials due to their physiological similarities to humans.

CJD experts have not been consulted for their views. BSE research programmes are actually being run down. No research is being pursued on means of combating a possible spread to humans.

A massive research programme should be in place. Instead concerned scientists are harassed and the public fed meaningless reassurances.

What are the risks?

What are the risks of humans being infected? CJD is increasing, but nobody can be sure if this is due to a real increase or just better detection.

What is clear is that the recent apparent increase shows some disturbing characteristics. Four dairy farmers have died from CJD. The statistical probability of this happening by chance is minute. A new type of CJD, similar to Kuru, is responsible for the recent increase.



n the total human population

Traditional CJD has been of types one and two. This new third type has a short incubation period.

It has killed several British teenagers (teenage deaths world were previously almost unknown). It also shows symptoms very similar to cattle BSE and quite distinct from normal CJD. It seems possible that we are seeing the beginning of an epidemic.

Canada is currently experiencing a scare over the possibility that blood transfusions from CJD carriers may spread the disease.

Could this factor further spread CJD in Britain? Can it be caught from consuming milk or other dairy products? Is the gelatine prepared from beef bones carrying the agent?

Gelatine is used in a very wide range of foodstuffs. Perhaps the genetic susceptibility factor will protect most people from it. Studies on CJD caused by infected growth hormone treatments or transplanted tissue suggest that perhaps 1 in 200 people are susceptible.

Big business

HOW much BSE material has to be eaten for infection to occur? At present we have no idea of the answers to these questions.

How could this have been allowed to happen? The beef industry is very big business indeed. There are presently over a billion cattle on this planet. They take up nearly 25 per cent of its surface and actually weigh more than the total human popula-

The environmental and economic impact of beef farming has devastated many countries. The promoters and profiteers of this industry are powerful and violent men and can easily sway political debate to protect their interests.

In South America they do not hesitate to use death squads to impose their will. Allied to them in Britain are the food processing and retailing industries and the government scientists that protect them.

Scientists speak out

SCIENTISTS who speak out against this insanity have been ridiculed. Richard Lacey, who has campaigned vigorously on this issue, has been described as a 'bogus professor' and 'in need of psychiatric treatment'.

A particularly outspoken scientist - Dr Harash Narang - has been hounded out of employment as a microbiologist. He has developed simple tests for rapid and simple detection of both BSE and CJD that the government fear will produce embarrassing results.

He has been burgled and scientific evidence stolen. His car has been repeatedly tampered with in a manner designed to threaten his life.

Protecting profits

THE decision to expose the public to this terrible risk was taken to protect profits, by men who care nothing for human (let alone animal) well

This disease is a symptom of a wider disease in society - domination by a system that has profit as its only motivation and in which people are only a means of making more profit. We will continue to be threatened by this irresponsibility until there is a settling of accounts.

* Quiz of the year *

Quiz-master CHARLIE POTTINS has rumaged around the year's events to give you something during those low moments of the festive round

- 1. On New Year's Eve 1994, a strike ended at Keatons engineering works in Sheffield. How long had the workers been
- 2. What kind of storm hit Tuzla, in Bosnia, on New Years day?
- 3. On 4 February, Workers Press republished an article from the Daily Telegraph, with a comment. Who wrote the article, and what was it about?
- 4. Which country's Interior Ministry ordered five Americans out for spying, in February
- 5. Whose invitation to the White House, on 17 March, occasioned a stiff letter from **Downing Street?**

- symbol of communism' to children?
- 10. It was sold for less than the price of a British Rail sandwich, and Labour's then transport spokesman Michael Meacher said he'd refer the sale to the Commons Public Accounts Committee. What was it?
- serious trouble lately). 18. By what name is Zeljko

Raznatovic more notorious?

How did citizens of Zagreb,

the Croatian capital, show their

appreciation of President Franjo

17. Who was accused of using

improper influence to obtain a

luxury Paris flat, and agreed to

move rather give up his job?

(clue: he's been in more

- 11. Who turned up at a House of Commons meeting in July, and boasted that he was 'proud' to have acted as an adviser to Serb Chetnik leader Radovan Karadzic?
 - **20.** Whose execution caused world-wide outrage on 10 November 1995?

Tudjman in October?

- 12. Why was the Nine o'Clock news a 'body blow' to the Church of England in August, and who was the Brain behind
- 21. Why was the 36,000 tonne



- 6. Figures released in April showed a big increase in the number of people in Britain working in temporary and part-time jobs. What was the total figure estimated at?
- 7. The World Health Organisation reported in May 1995 that the greatest single cause of sickness and death was that listed in the International Classification of Diseases as 'Z59.9'. What is
- 8. What date was set aside in Yugoslavia as 'Youth Day'? Why was it given a grim significance for people in Tuzla this year?
- 9. What did authorities in central Java, Indonesia, ban this year, for 'introducing a

- 13. He staged a hunger strike in September, nine years after being inveigled out of England. He is serving an 18 year sentence for 'espionage because of a newspaper article exposing his country's nuclear weapons programme. Who is
- 14. Whom did the French army pronounce innocent this year, over 100 years after he was framed on spy charges and sent to Devil's Island?
- **15.** Union leader Mukhtar Pakpahan flew into London to meet friends in October. He'd been released from jail in the spring. Where?
- **16.** Where was the picture taken of the homeless family printed above?

- 'Atlantic Conveyor' diverted from its port of destination in November?
- 22. An expedition is due to probe the wreck of the biggest ever British ship lost at sea. What is the name of the ship?
- 23. He sailed to plunder the Spanish main, they ship in scabs to rip off the Mersey dockers. What's the link?
- 24. What well-paid, if dirty, job has been landed by Stephen Lander?
- 25. If the memorable answer was: 'G'way you wife-swapping sodomites!', what was the question?



■ The answers to 'Quiz of the year' are on page 6



When murder is no crime

IT WAS the year 1781. The Zong, owned by the Liverpool slave-trader and banker William Gregson and his partners, set sail from West Africa for Jamaica with a crew of 17 and a cargo of some 470

Less than three months later seven of the crew and over 60 of the slaves were dead, and many of the other slaves were so ill that their deaths seemed imminent.

Captain Luke Collingwood told his officers that if the sick slaves died a natural death the ship's owners would have to bear the loss - and he himself would have had to bear a share of it.

But if the slaves were thrown into the sea alive, on the ground that the ship's safety demanded it, the insurers must stand the

When the mate protested, the captain told him that 'it would not be so cruel to throw the poor sick wretches into the sea, as to suffer them to linger out a few days under the disorders with which they were afflicted'.

The captain himself picked out 133 slaves and ordered the crew to throw them overboard in batches. That day 54 were thrown into the sea; the next day, 43. One of the second batch managed to get hold of a rope, hauled himself back into the ship undetected, and survived.

On the third day the 36 who were left put up a fight, so they were shackled before being drowned. The last ten, choosing to die as heroes, pulled away from their captors and jumped over

The owners claimed from the underwriters the full value of the murdered slaves, since scarcity of water had made it essential to dispose of them in order to save the crew.

In fact, on the first day of the murders the ship had 200 gallons of water, which had not been rationed; and it berthed in Jamaica just before Christmas with 420 gallons to spare.

The black leader Olaudah Equiano and the anti-slavery campaigner Granville Sharp launched a campaign to bring the murderers to justice.

The solicitor-general, representing the owners at a hearing in the high court, spoke these

'What is all this vast declamation of human people being thrown overboard? The question after all is, Was it voluntary, or an act of necessity? This is a case of chattels or goods. It is really so; it is the case of throwing over goods; . . . they are goods and

[A] person [i.e. Sharp] was in Court . . . who intended to bring on a criminal prosecution for "but it would be madness; the Blacks were prop-

Despite Sharp's letters to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty and to the prime minister, and despite the support he received from several leading churchmen, the murderers were never brought to justice. It seems that the rich and powerful West India lobby, which included 40 or more MPs, was able to block a prosecution.

IT WAS the year 1992. The container ship Ruby set sail from West Africa for France with a crew of 23 Ukrainians and with nine African stowaways on board.

Three days into the voyage, the stowaways - eight Ghanaians and a Cameroonian — were discovered. One was killed outright. The rest were ordered to the bow deck in groups of two or three, were robbed of their money (£1,700 in all) and were beaten with iron bars and a rifle-

PERSONAL COLUMN

One man, in fear, jumped overboard. All but one of the rest were shot with a machine-gun and their bodies were thrown over

survivor, 25-year-old Kingsley Ofusu, an unemployed docker, managed to hide. For three days this only surviving witness to the crime, who had seen his own brother butchered before his eyes, was hunted like a rat through the bowels of the

The crew scattered flour on walkways to pick up his foot-prints and rigged up trip wires between containers. Hiding in the ceiling girders, he was so des-perately thirsty that he tried to drink his own urine.

But when the Ruby reached Le Havre Ofusu clambered through a ventilation shaft and escaped.

Last week, at a Rouen court, the captain and first officer were jailed for life, and three crew members were each jailed for 20

Their crime flowed directly from laws, passed recently by France and Britain and several other European governments, designed to control immigration.

Enshrined in these laws is the comparatively new principle of 'carrier liability', whereby the owners of any ship or plane caught carrying illegal immigrants are liable to swingeing fines. In the past seven years Britain has imposed on carriers fines totalling £75,700,000.

The crews involved could lose wages or even their jobs. So the crew of the Ruby, like the captain of the Zong 211 years earlier, were acting out of economic self-

Europe will thank us for what we did', said one Ukrainian crew member to the French police who were interrogating him.

THERE are obvious differences between the Zong massacre and the Ruby atrocity.

In the 1780s rising capitalism, 'dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt', as Marx famously put it, was ruthlessly accumulating capital out of the profits made from the forced labour of transported

In the 1990s capitalism in its terminal crisis erects impassable barriers around Fortress around Europe'. The purpose of these barriers is to shut out the latterday victims of centuries of imperialist exploitation, fleeing from unemployment and starvation in the desperate hope of starting a

But there are obvious similarities, too, between these two massacres of Africans. Today, just as in the 18th century, African lives are valued less highly than European lives.

That was the essence of racism when a law officer of the crown, no less, saw Africans as merely 'goods and property', so that throwing 133 of them wasn't murder and it was 'madness' to say it was.

That is the essence of racism when a Ukrainian seafarer educated, let us not forget, under Stalinism, in a country that made grandiloquent claims to be 'socialist' — declares that 'Europe will thank us' for snuffing out the lives of eight African stowaways.

And that is also the essence of racism when a young man of African descent dies in police custody in Brixton - the 51st black person to die in police custody in this country since 1969 and the media cheerfully conspires to conceal his murder.

To conceal it, that is, until the elemental protest of local people, described by the Metropolitan Police Commissioner as 'a small minority of thugs and criminals', forces it at last onto the front

Peter Fryer

Book review

Invisible crime

PAUL ELVIN, aged 24, was electrocuted on 11 November 1988 on his first day on a job constructing shop fronts in Euston Station (London). The alluminium pole which he was carrying touched an overhead electric cable and he received a 25,000 volt shock. He died in hospital the following

Invisible Crime tells us about Paul's life and death and about his mother's struggle to discover the truth. It is a book written very personally, and for that very reason it is written for all of us. Ann Elvin is saying: this could happen to you.

She allows us to see, hear and feel her fear, her shock, her realisation of the truth, her anguish and her anger. When a mother looks at her grown-up child she also sees her baby, her toddler, her teenager — all in one glance. A mother who loses her child visualises the future which is not

Paul's daughter Kylie was born three months after he died. Ann dedicates the book 'to my son Paul with loving memories of the past. And to his daughter Kylie for the joys and love of the present and the future.'

Armed only with these feelings of love, Ann and Paul's part-Lorna, together with the whole family, struggled to under-stand why Paul was killed and who was to blame. They discover that there is one law for the worker and another for the

Following the nightmare of Christmas without Paul, Ann suddenly realises that she is being told lies. She experiences something new: 'I felt something more than pain. I felt anger.'

She thinks that the truth will be revealed in the inquest on 7 March. But a verdict of 'accidental death' raises a hornets' nest of questions. There are three employers involved: British Rail, GBR Windows (Paul's direct employer) and Cawberry's, a con-

Why was Paul carrying the alluminium pole through an unofficial opening in the safety barrier? Had he been warned that these cables were there? Who had removed part of the barrier to make the unofficial opening? Why was Paul moving a pole, 18 feet long, when the cables were only 10 feet above the ground?

Mr Ted Golding of GBR Windows had not seen the BR Track Safety Handbook before a meeting called by British Rail on 18 November 1988 (seven days after Paul was killed). Paul had never seen this handbook.

To assist her to know what to



expect at the inquest, Ann had read reports of accidents on BR property. She speaks about two young lads who were killed, and it called to my mind the tragic death of two teenage British Railways track workers which I witnessed in the 1970s.

They were walking between the lines with the rest of the gang when two express trains passed on either side. Unlike the other workers, the two lads were not yet fully grown and therefore lightweights. They were sucked against one of the passing trains. Their limbs were torn off. They died instantly.

I will never forget the distraught faces of the gang members standing on the embankment beside the dismembered bodies of the two youngsters. Afterwards it was revealed that in the British Railways' handbook workers are advised to lie down flat on the ground when two express trains pass.

In her search for the truth Ann Elvin discovered that, during 1988, 300 railway staff and contractors died or suffered major injuries on the railways compared with 160 in 1984 - a rise of 87 per cent.

In the same period the number of 'non movement' injuries to contractors, employees and other persons rose from 24 to 133, a 454 per cent increase. The same report showed that there was a 40 per cent drop in workplace inspections.

Ann and Lorna contacted the London Hazards Centre and with

the help of their MP, Simon Hughes, they followed every lead. The responses shocked them.

About the Railway Inspectorate and the Health and Safety Executive, Ann says they: 'gave me the impression that I was a pest and they didn't want to bother with me nor the fact that my son was killed.'

The Daily Mirror and South London Press published their story. The Construction Safety Campaign contacted them. They were amazed to discover that there are three deaths at work every week in the construction industry. They attended a lobby of parliament with the Construc-tion Safety Campaign, and assisted in setting up a Relatives' Support Group for Justice.

They gave out leaflets about Paul's case and collected 6,000 signatures on a petition calling for a manslaughter charge. When Ann asked why there was no prosecution, she was told by Mr Kevin

O'Reilly, the Health and Safety solicitor working on Paul's case that she had no right to know his professional opinion of his client (British Railways).

Fourteen months after Paul's death, answering a request from Simon Hughes for the completion by 15 January of the Railway Inspectorate's report, Michael Portillo, Minister of Transport at the time, pointed out:

'If you insist on an announcement in January, the [Railway Inspectorate may be forced to abandon the case altogether rather than go ahead on evidence of doubtful adequacy . . . it is a matter for the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Four months later Mr James R.H. Coussey, General Casework Division of the Crown Prosecu tion Service announced that there was insufficient evidence to warrant a prosecution for man

Finally in November 1990 assured there would be no man slaughter charge, Cawberry's pleaded guilty to a charge of breach of regulations under th Health and Safety at Work Ac and was fined £5,000 and £5,00 costs. No witnesses were called.

It took another three years fo Ann Elvin to assemble the docu ments about Paul's death at worl Then she was told that the tim delay was too great for the case t be re-opened. 'All the evidence in thes

documents was available a wee after Paul died. But it took fiv years to get them. And even the the law slams the door in you face once again,' she says.

'Invisible crime' ends:

'We owe it to the future t make the workplace safer. W owe it to our children, and ou children's children. I have wri ten this book in the interests of safety. And because I will have the last word on why Paul died **Dot Gibso**

■ Invisible Crime by Ann Elvi Price £5 + £1.50 p&p from An Elvin, PO Box 199, Sheffield, \$

African Liberation Support Campaign & Workers International to rebuild the Fourth International

Invites you to a

PUBLIC DISCUSSION MEETING

We say the NIGERIAN **DICTATORSHIP DOES NOT ACT ALONE**

The execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight of his comrades by the Nigerian dictatorship on 10 November 1995 shocked and angered millions of people throughout the world. The Nigerian dictator, General Sani Abacha may have put the rope round the necks of these brave fighters, but who gave him the confidence to

■ The British government has continued to supply arms to the Nigerian government despite the known brutality of the dictatorship. The British government is deporting asylum seekers and people who have lived in this country for years to an unknown fate under the Nigerian dictatorship.

■ Shell, the British-Dutch oil company, has laid waste the Niger delta. The rich farmlands and rain forests have been polluted by the leakage of crude oil. While the multi-nationals get rich, the poor people do not have even the most ordinary amenities clean water, roads, electricity. Speakers will give their views and discuss what can be done.

There will be time for people to participate.

Camilla Berens — Journalist and member of Freedom

Ronnie McDonald — Gen. Secretary — OILC (Offshore oil

Jimmy Nolan — Chair — Liverpool Dockers' Shop Stewards'

Julie Affiong Southey — People's Embargo for Democracy

Cliff Slaughter — Executive Committee of Workers Internation 7.30pm Friday 5 January 1996

Brixton Recreation Centre, Station Road, Brixton. PO Box 735, London, SW4 1YB. Telephone: 0171-627 8666.

* Answers of the year *

- 2. Glasgow-based sound system 'Desert Storm' hit town with a Workers Aid convoy.
- 3. Labour MEP Ken Coates wrote the article, defending Clause Four. He'd given it to the *Telegraph* after it was turned down by the Guardian and Independent.
- 5. Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams.
- 6. 1.5 million.
- 7. Poverty.
- 8. 25 May. This year, 71 young people celebrating their holiday in Tuzla's cafe area were killed by a Serb nationalist mortar bomb.
- 9. Inflatable toy hammers.
- 10. Red Star parcel service, sold to management for £1.
- 11. Former Thatcher adviser Sir Alfred Sherman 12. Reverend Chris Brain went into
- hiding after revelations of sexual abuse, psychological manipulation and other cult features in his Sheffield 'Nine o'clock Service'.
- 13. Israeli nuclear technician

- 14. Captain Alfred Dreyfus. 15. Indonesia. 16. Not quite Beverley Hills, perhaps,

cleansing'.

- but it is Los Angeles, California. 17. French prime minister Alain
- Juppé. 18. 'Arkan', Serb gangster responsible for brutal 'ethnic
- 19. The majority didn't vote for him, and his party also lost the city
- environmental campaigner Ken Saro-Wiwa 21. Because of the Liverpool dock

strike. New York longshoremen

20. Nigerian writer and

- warned they'd black it if it was unloaded by scabs. 22. The 90,000-ton Derbyshire, which
- went down off Japan in 1975. 23. Sir Francis Drake(1540-96); and Drake International
- 24. He's to succeed Stella Rimington as head of MI5. 25. Reporters had asked the leader
- of Ireland's 'No Divorce' campaign where its funds came from. People voted by a small majority in the

North sect out to stab dockers in back BY CHARLIE POTTINS WHO are these people working

for?, asked a Liverpool docker at their demonstration a couple of weeks ago as he read a leaflet put out in the name of the International Worker. Others angrily threw the leaflets in the bin.

Headed 'Dockers must reject fake internationalism', the leaflet accused docks shop stewards of concealing the isolation of the dockers by claiming that they are winning powerful support internationally from other unions. This internationalism is a fraud.'

Dismissing the threat by American east coast dockers in the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) 'to black the Atlantic conveyor' (sic), it alleged the big US dock union had extensive Mafia connections and a history of working with the US State Department and CIA', and therefore could not be trusted to defend jobs.

As for support from Australian unions, the Australian Congress of Trade Unions had only pledged support to Liverpool dockers 'to give credibility to its campaign to get a Labor government elected'.

What sort of people purporting to be on the 'left' would set out to undermine workers' morale by jibing at genuine international solidarity in this way, with smears redolent of the Tory press? That American spelling of Labor', which recurs throughout the leaflet, is a clue.

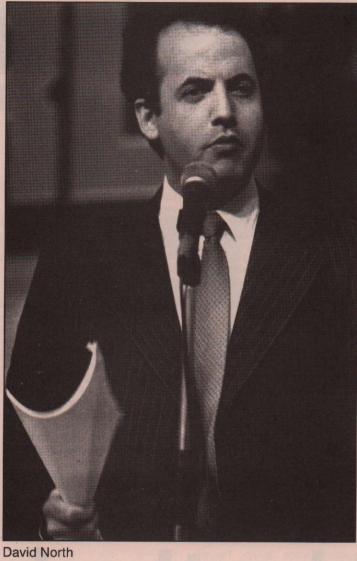
Although the address given on the leaflets was a postbox in Rotherham, Yorkshire, the text was probably written in Detroit. The International Worker is an offshoot of the US-based Workers League, headed by David North.

Their contribution to the Liverpool struggle so far has been two leaflets, both attacking the docks shop stewards. First they denounced them as 'Stalinists', now they imply they're working with the Mafia and the CIA! Neither leaflet proposed any action in support of the dockers' strug-

Genuine

They say the unions in Australia and the USA 'cannot be relied upon to give genuine support'. Well there's one thing you can rely on. Neither David North nor his Yorkshire sidekicks, David Hyland and crew, will lift a finger in support of the dockers or anyone else in struggle.

Trying to excuse their backstabbing, their leaflet advises Liverpool dockers on how 'to mount an international struggle' something of which they them-



selves have no experience): 'It is only possible to unite workers across national borders on the basis of a socialist programme.'

What this programme is, it doesn't specify, but you can guess that until the dockers see the errors of their ways and come to North's sect, they're doomed!

Anyone listening to these people would think no one had heard of socialism or internationalism till their little sect came along. It's crap, and those who show such sectarian attitudes only display their ignorance.

The first organisation in Britain uniting workers and radicals from different countries was the Society of Fraternal Democrats, founded 150 years ago by the Chartist George Julian Harney, a former seafarer.

It didn't begin with a 'socialist programme', although it did encourage a certain Dr Marx to draft a manifesto.

The First International began with a meeting in 1864 between British, French, German and other trade unionists. Karl Marx enthusiastic without waiting for it to adopt a 'socialist programme'.

Doubtless if sectarians like the International Worker crew had been around they would have denounced Karl Marx as an 'opportunist' for associating with trade unionists like engineers' leader William Allan, Applegarth of the carpenters' union, and George Odger, secretary of the London Trades Council.

But as Marx said on another occasion: 'Every step forward in

the real movement is worth a dozen programmes!'

The growing international solidarity with the Liverpool dockers' struggle is a real movement. The working class is international, and dockers by the very nature of their work know the strength of international solidar-

Merseyside dockers raised the socialist demand for nationalisa-tion of the docks back in the 1960s. They have exercised international solidarity more than once; not just in industrial struggles, but on the political plane, as when they blacked Namibian uranium in support of the freedom struggle there. They have maintained a bastion of organised labour in their port since 1989, against the employers' offensive.

Now they have gone to other trade unionists around the world to win the backing they deserve. But because they had the audacity to do so without obtaining permission from the likes of North and Hyland, they must be condemned!

Waiting

Instead of waiting for such sectarians to mobilise anything (which would mean a damn long wait!), they went to whatever unions had members in the ports, whether the ILA or the Quebec workers' union.

Regardless of the leadership, which is a matter for the workers in these unions - they called upon them for solidarity as trade unionists, and they won it. But in the upside-down world of International Worker, this real solidarity is 'fake', whereas its own empty verbiage is 'real'!

North's sect, said to number about 50 members in the United States and 17 in Britain, stemmed from Gerry Healy's old International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), of which the Workers Revolutionary Party was part. It still uses the ICFI name.

As Healy's man in the United States, North co-authored a project called 'Security and the Fourth International' which set out to 'prove' that longstanding leaders of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) there were lifetime FBI agents, intent on destroying Trotskyism everywhere.

Marxist polemics,

ground and married Kermit

Johnson, a labourer who was one

tragedy as well as union success.

Her two small sons died in a traf-

broke up and she married fellow-

socialist Sol Dollinger 51 years

ago. She is survived by him and

their son Ronald and two grand-

into the Hall of fame of the Michi-

gan Women's Historical Centre in

Lensing. She has been called a

foremother of the women's lib-

national labour and trade union

movement who understood and

She was a heroine of the inter-

Last year she was inducted

Her marriage to Johnson

Her early life was marred by

of the sit-in strikers.

fic accident.

children.

eration movement.

might serve to educate the movement, by dealing with the politics of our opponents, were replaced with paranoid conspiracy theory.

Even the shooting of a young comrade in Brooklyn, and the murder of another in Sri Lanka, were laid at the door of the SWP. When the SWP sued the US government over FBI infiltration. Healy and North claimed this was a ploy to obtain government

They then backed a former SWP member, Gelfand, to take his party to court, alleging that government agents in its leadership had expelled him, thus infringeing his right to belong to the party of his choice!

Troubled

It doesn't seem to have troubled them that this legal action, if successful, would have given the bourgeois courts the right to tell workers' parties whom they must accept as members.

After the WRP ousted Gerry Healy in 1985, charging him with sexual abuses, violence, and slander (including calling North, who'd differed with his 'dialectics', a 'CIA agent'), comrades urged that 'Security and the Fourth International' be dropped, and that the Gelfand case should be settled.

North organised a split, around the Hyland family and friends, and keeping 'Security and the Fourth International' The Gelfand case was pursued, to a debacle which only benefitted the lawyers.

Just how sectarian this Hyland group became had to be seen to be imagined. Having called a picket in London over the persecution of Trotskyists in Sri Lanka, it complained to bewildered police because WRP members had turned up to join the picket in solidarity!

In Australia, North's co-thinkers are the Socialist Labour League (SLL). In October 1990 a former Labour MP, George Petersen, protested to New South Wales police at the arrest of an SLL paper seller in a shopping

But in a letter to the SLL, Petersen criticised its sectarianism. The result was a 75-page SLL pamphlet denouncing 'George Petersen: Servant of the capitalist

Worse was to come in Britain. With the National Union of Mineworkers fighting to stop British Coal making free with the Mineworkers' Pension Fund, Hyland's International Worker denounced union participation, declaring 'class collaboration is rife throughout the coalfields'.

One of North and Hyland's provocations dirtiest launched against Workers Aid for Bosnia last year, just after its first convoys had taken aid to the Tuzla miners, and it had won important support from trade unions, including the Scottish TUC.

International Worker alleged Workers Aid had been bringing 'strategic military equipment into Bosnia for use by the Izetgovic regime and its imperialist backers. Its trucks are being operated on the basis of commercial contracts paid for by European arms dealers and others.

"This is the first time in history that a movement claiming to be Trotskyist has organised gunrunning for the capitalist pow-

No evidence was offered for this absurd allegation. We weren't told the names of the 'European arms dealers'. (Workers Aid's worried bank manager would have been greatly relieved to hear it had found a better

source of income than street collections.)

Nor were we told why the capitalist powers, while maintaining their arms embargo on Bosnia, were relying on Workers Aid's second-hand trucks and volunteer drivers to struggle over the mountains with 'strategic military equipment', when their own troops and heavy vehicles were all over Bosnia, and controlled its airports.

Don't expect logic, this is North and Hyland we're talking about!

Having accused the WRP of serving the Labour and trade union leaders (and of being about to join a Tory-led coalition government!), Hyland circulated Labour MPs and trade unions with his allegation about the WRP and Workers Aid. Most

treated it as a joke. There was a serious threat behind the fantastic story, however. That April a French humanitarian aid team trying to reach Gorazde in eastern Bosnia had been kidnapped by Serb nationalists, who accused them of 'smuggling arms'.

Tuzla was under renewed attack, and a young Workers Aid comrade reported mortar shells landing nearby as she delivered supplies to the hospital.

The Serb nationalists have gents in London, and friends in Whitehall and the media. We had to reckon with the danger that the arms story could be picked up, and used as a pretext to attack Workers Aid convoys.

When this was pointed out, the response of the North-Hyland sect was to sneer that if anything happened to our comrades, it was our own fault.

In August last year, International Worker attacked the Fightback Conference called by Sefton UNISON (two of whose members had been fined for defying the anti-union laws).

Chris Marsden said the union bureaucracy were 'well-paid policemen of the capitalists who will never fight in the interests of the workers.

Insisted

Differentiating between unions and leaders was 'com-pletely false', Marsden insisted, the unions have become a second arm of management and adjuncts of the state.'

UNISON members demonstrated outside their union headquarters, and the executive had to withdraw disciplinary action that had been threatened against the Sefton members. No thanks to the likes of Marsden and International Worker!

behind the smoke screen of 'left'-sounding rhetoric, the North-Hyland group are telling workers that resistance is futile, the employers have won, and you may as well not have a union, nor elected shop stewards.

The International Worker leaflet distributed in Liverpool on 2 December says Australian unions backing the Weipa miners' fight against individual contracts and discrimination 'cynically used the brave stand of the 75 Weipa workers to protect their position as the enforcers of the employers' terms on the workforce.

The Hyland group's leaflet doesn't attack the employers, the Tory government's anti-union laws, the TUC or even the TGWU leadership, but says Liverpool dockers must fight 'in opposition

who are on the side of the dockers, but the cry of deranged sectarians trying to disrupt support. Who are these people working for? It's certainly not the working

to their shop stewards' This is not the call of people

Pioneer US automobile union leader Genora Johnson Dollinger 1913-95

THE last time I saw Genora was when the BBC brought her to Britain to make the documentary The Great Sit-down Strike'. In 1979, she was featured in the Academy Award-nominated Babies and Banners'.

These documentaries described her work as a 23-year-old when she organised women to support and shield workers during the formative years of industrial unions in the USA

On Christmas Eve 1936, 2,000 workers occupied a crucial Fisher Body Division plant in Flint,

The sit-in lasted for 44 days and ended with the company giving in and recognising the union.

The strike crippled General Motors and was a turning point

for the growth of unions representing industrial workers. Genora organised

Women's Emergency Brigade and she and other women stood off Flint police, Pinkerton guards and industrial bosses at the gate of the strategic Plant No.4 where Chevrolet engines were made.

Her women's auxilliaries went from house to house to calm worried mothers and wives and to gain their support. They collected cash and food for their soup kitchens and Genora had her Women's Brigade wielding clubs, marching up and down the iron main gates and barricade to put their bodies between Pinkerton agents and their husbands and brothers inside the plant.

They wore red berets and armbands, carried American flags and sang 'Solidarity Forever' and 'Hold the Fort'.

When spirits flagged during the long confrontations her

resolve stiffened the will of the 'sit downers'.

Genora was blacklisted in Flint and moved to Detroit where she continued as a union

She was the victim of a leadpipe attack during a wave of anti-union violence which included the shootings of Walter and Victor Reuther, both veterans of the 1937 strike at General Motors.

In the 1960s, Genora was development director of the Michigan American Civil Liberties Union. She was an early president of Women for Peace. After moving to Los Angeles she led a quiet life concentrating on gardening and sculpting.

She was born into a prominent family. Her uncle was vicepresident of General Motors!

She rebelled against her back-

organised the power of women in the class struggle. Mildred Gordon MP Page 8

Saturday 23 December 1995

Newsdesk 0171-387 0564

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France: Not the end, a new beginning Last weekend brought 2 million There were around 160 demonstra-

workers onto the streets of the towns and cities in France.

tions throughout the country and for the first time union delegations from abroad,

including workers from Germany and Britain, took part. They were greeted with enthusiastic applause.

But the strike is in a strange state. More and more trains and tubes are running and fewer schools are on strike. But people do not feel that this is the end of the strike. Workers are voting not to end the strike action but merely to suspend it.

Last weekend's demonstrations were the continuation of previous demonstrations which had been of similar size. But at the same time it was also a different movement. On the previous Tuesday the central slogan remained: 'Withdraw the Juppé 'Tous ensemble, tous ensemble, oui, oui' ('all together'), was also heard.

But a new slogan also appeared prominently: 'Juppé démission!' — Juppé resign! The movement started to raise political slogans, but without being able to answer its own demands.

Those shouting 'Juppe resign!' asked themselves: 'Who will take his place if he does resign?' 'Who would be better for the working people of France?' Nobody at this stage could give an answer.

From JANOS BOROVI in Paris

By the end of the week the sentiment that the government will not withdraw its plan started to predominate. The strike started to decline. The big union leaderships had not changed their position: neither the CGT nor the Force Ouvrière (FO) have called for a general strike of public service workers.

As one railwayworker said: 'The leadership of the CGT and the FO never intended to call a general strike. They were terrified of the thought of it.

'The movement ran the risk of being too spontaneous, too independent. The union leaders pulled in the reins when the idea of neighbourhood strike committees was launched.'

Pressure

The union leaders have accepted negotiations, then under pressure of the strike they appear to 'harden' their position. The government has tried to demobilise the core of the strike among rail workers.

The government made some concessions to these workers: the plan to privatise the rail system is 'frozen' and some concessions have been made on the pensions question

Other public sector workers also got some verbal promises about the safeguarding of their

This has been passed off by the French Communist Party (PCF) as a big victory, a springboard for other victories. But nobody really believes this, not even the train drivers, who won the most.

All the promises are in stark opposition to the Juppé plan. Everybody says that the promises will not be kept because they are incompatible with Maastricht and the conditions for a single currency.

One thing that held back the development of the strike was that workers in the private sector did not participate on a large scale. Apart from the fear of the sack another factor was the absence of a national strike leadership and a political alternative.

While last week millions took to the streets, the radio and TV increased its lies, saying that the strike was almost over, that the strikers were isolated from the rest of the population, that the underground was almost working.

Because of these factors, the strike movement started to decline. But it is not over.

Demand

The demand for Juppé's resignation has almost disappeared, an expression of the fact that in the absence of a political alternative it is widely felt that it is useless to fight for his removal. But there is a deep feeling that the unity of the strikers, their assemblies and committees, forged in struggle against the government must be preserved.

Understandably there is much bitterness. Wages have been lost and the gains are small and fragile. The main goal of the strike movement, the protection of the system of welfare benefits, could not this time be won.

But this bitterness does not predominate and it is this that is new. Workers have discovered that they can fight back, can establish the unity of the rankand-file, can build workers' democracy. These feelings are

always formulated in the same way millions do feel that something changed at the end of 1995.

One CGT shop steward quoted in 'Le Monde' said:

'This movement was eseentially different from a purely social dispute. It turned out to be a criticism of the elites, of a liberalism that is forced down the throats of the people, of the slimming down of the labour force, of the monopoly of wealth, of a society oblivious of men.

'The movement had reached a point where it had no alternative but to be political. It has given rise to new types of consciousness and as such was not to be betrayed.'

There has been a qualitative turn in France during the last days which puts the task of rebuilding the workers' movement in a new light. For even if the strike movement is suspended or called off by the trade union bureaucracy this political development will continue.

For a minority in the strike a period for a new political outlook, perspective and organisation has opened up.

The exisiting political organi-

sation of the 'left' (the Communist Party and the Socialist Party) failed lamentable in front of the political tasks raised by the

The so-called 'Trotskyists' of the USec, Lutte Ouvrière and PT of Lambert were unable to offer a political alternative.

But hundreds and hundreds of new contacts have been made among the most militant, conscious and fighting workers by those who initiated the call for a 'new party' of the working class.

Secret

Everything must be done to prevent the trade union bureaucracies and the leaders of the Communist and Socialist parties from betraying the movement through secret negotiations with the government.

The most important thing is to preserve the militancy of the vanguard formed in the course of the movement.

It is very encouraging that even where the strike has been suspended assemblies have been convened to discuss how to continue and fight against the Juppé

Toys aren't fun for some

SPARE a thought for Santa's little helpers — the kids for whom toys mean work, and Christmas means overtime. Their labour was one of the issues raised by a delegation from Hong Kong workers' organisations when it called on the manufacturers' organisation, the Hong Kong Toy Council, earlier this year.

Hong Kong firms have invested in toy factories in mainland China and other Asian countries. Two years ago a fire at the Hong Kong-owned Kader factory in Thailand killed 189 workers and injured 400. A fire at the the Zhili factory in Shenzhen, China caused 87 deaths.

Hong Kong unions have drawn up a 'Charter on Safe Production of Toys' which they presented to the manufacturers. They demanded fire prevention measures, and safe workplaces, and said where workers sleep in dormitories these must be in separate buildings.

The Toy Council denied any member firms used child labour, Ithough evidence was presented that some sub-contactors use children, and that a child labourer was killed working in a Hong Kong-owned toy factory in China this year. Toy Council secretary Warren Kwok said the council had signed a memoran-dum banning child and prison labour, but it could not be expected to visit every factory.

Seventy per cent of industrial accidents in China's Guangdong province were in joint ventures (those with outside capitalist investment) and that the province had the highest accident rate in China. Kwok said this was 'the price of economic development' for any 'developing country'.

The Toy Council secretary said he agreed with the Toy Charter on fire safety, and labelling of dangerous substances, but would not accept workers' inspections to monitor safety. On overtime, the Toy council insisted that factory owners need 'flexibility', especially during Christmas.

The Hong Kong Toy Campaign Coalition has been set up to intervene wherever workers rights are violated'. Fax: 00 852

Bosnia: the battle for the truth

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

VLADIMIR LOJEN is still waiting to hear from his old employers. He spent four years working for the Croatian section of the BBC World Service.

In a letter sent to senior BBC officials three months ago he accused the corporation of ignoring its own guidelines, and the advice of experts, and stifling common sense and the truth.

'If one were to take the BBC World Service as the only source of information, the result would not be a credible and truthful picture of the war on the territory of former Yugoslavia,' Lojen wrote. 'How could it be, when the BBC uses sentences like "all three warring sides agreed to call a halt to aggression" in Bosnia. Who, besides the BBC World Service, describes a legitimate, internationally recognised government as a mere warring faction and its actions as aggression? Well, there are those who do that, but they do not claim to be a "credible, unbiased, reliable, accurate, balanced and independent" broadcaster.

'Accurate it is not, when the Bosnian government and Army are referred to as "the Muslims" or "Muslim forces". Credible it is not, when in June 1995 a news story contains the following sentence: "Targeting of residential districts of Sarajevo with mortars and rockets, apparently from Bosnian Serb positions, is a relatively new development". "Apparently"?? "New development"??"

'Let's face it,' Lojen says, the BBC has bent over backwards to find a 'balance' between Serb Chetniks and the victims of their aggression.

In 1993 the World Service broadcast reported that the UN had forbidden 'all three sides' from using air power. Only the Serb forces had 'planes in the

'The wording came from the Defence Correspondent, who during our conversation justified it by the fact that British intelligence sources suggested the Bosnian Croats had two helicopters!

'British intelligence sources? The same sources who after the fall of Srebrenica suggested that its defenders simply gave up an idea that found its way straight into BBC World Service news and dispatches. That the UN had impounded the defenders' heavy weapons two years ago was somehow forgotten to be mentioned. "The sad fact is: Ministry of

Defence and Foreign Office briefings have been seeping in an undiluted form into the World Service programmes.'

This Summer, police in Serbia rounded up thousands of Serbs from Croatia and Bosnia, sending them back as unwilling conscripts for the Chetnik (Serb nationalist) forces ('Beaten, handcuffed and sent to war', Workers Press, 15 July). The BBC had this story before we did.

But the British government's line was that Serbia's President Milosevic was trying to bring peace. So the World Service reported: 'The Serbian interior ministry

has acknowledged that non-registered refugees have been expelled to prevent crimes, but has denied any enforced mobilisation.

Lojen says that in 1992, the BBC World Service newsroom

'killed' Malcolm Brabant's report on mass rape of Muslim women, claiming it was too implausible. But it carried Chetnik leader Karadzic's statement denying his forces were shelling Sarajevo. 'Now, how's that for implausible?

But the story does not end there. Brabant's dispatch was later used by a World Service training course as an example of bad journalism!'

Neither Sam Younger, managing director of BBC World Service, nor Bob Jobbins, head of News and Current Affairs, replied to Lojen's letter, which the Alliance to Defend Bosnia-Herzegovina has published in issue 12 of its 'Bosnia Report' newsletter.

Subsidised

The BBC World Service has long been subsidised by the Foreign Office. But we have observed the same bias in domestic broadcasts. Radio Four's Today programme responded to Chetnik shelling of Tuzla on 25 May, when 71 young people were killed, by interviewing a London apologist for the Chetniks.

A Bosnian spokesperson interviewed on BBC2 was repeatedly referred to as a 'Muslim spokesman', although he repeatedly explained to the interviewer he was not, in any sense, a Muslim. ('So far as our viewers are concerned, "Bosnian" and "Muslim" are the same thing,' they told him. 'They think that because it's what you keep telling them,' he replied).

Presenting the war as between 'ethnic' factions, or 'tribes' (who naturally have to be kept apart by 'our boys') suits the British imperialist tradition as well as the BBC's notion of 'balance'. When a delegation from the Serb Civic Council came to Britain, including General Jovan Divjak. deputy chief of staff of the Bosnian army, (see Workers Press, 19 September), the BBC knew how to handle this complication. They ignored it.

With the Dayton agreement, we were subject to nightly television scenes from Serb-held Sarajevo suburbs like Ilidza and Grbavica, of Chetnik-mobilised crowds supposedly fearful of falling under 'Muslim rule'. Whether the armed Chetniks in the background would have tolerated anyone saying anything different is another matter. The way these areas were rendered ethnically 'pure' Serb suburbs wasn't dwelt on, nor their use for denying essential supplies to Sarajevo, and pounding the city with shells.

But when 3,000 Sarajevans of all backgrounds demonstrated for unity, where were the cameras? 'Nadzija Culovic, a 70-year old Muslim whose home is in the Serb-held frontline district of Grbavica, wept as she told how a Serb kept her clothed and fed while she was a refugee during the war,' reported Associated Press. 'I want to return to my home.

'This is not a meeting against our neighbours, like their meetings of protest,' said Radovan Bukan, a Serb taking part in the unity rally. This is a meeting for truth, for co-existence in the future.' But as trade unionists in Britain know only too well, voices for truth don't often get heard on the BBC. That's why you need Workers Press.

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