

Scottish TUC to meet Tuzla trades unionists

SUPPORT VISIT OF BOSNIAN WORKERS

SUPPORT continues to grow for the forthcoming visit to Britain of Bosnian trades unionists.

The Scottish TUC has agreed to organise two days of meetings in Glasgow and Edinburgh. And the international department of the TUC in London has agreed to meet with the Bosnians.

Trades councils across Britain — from London, Brighton, Norwich, Manchester, Liverpool, Leicester and Newcastle — are organising their own events.

In London, the delegation of Bosnian trades unionists has been invited to meetings organised by the public-sector workers of Camden Unison and by London printworkers.

Over the next few days proposals for further meetings and sponsorship are being put to a wide range of trade union branches.

The problem will be that there will not be enough time for the delegation to go to all the places that they are invited to.

A Unison international officer from East Anglia was very disappointed when he asked if the delegation could spend two days in the region and found they could only come for one evening. But the Workers Aid for Bosnia campaign put him in contact with local Bosnian refugees who would also be willing to speak at branch meetings.

Joined

The delegation, from the Tuzla district trade union committee, is now to be joined by a representative of the Tuzla miners' union if travel permits can be arranged in time. Otherwise a separate visit will be arranged. Contacts are being made for National Union of Mineworkers' areas and lodges to meet this miner.

No doubt those on the left who have refused to lift a finger to come to the assistance of the workers of Bosnia will have been heartened by the news last week that the Bosnian president, Alija Izetbegovic, has identified himself even more in support of Muslim nationalist forces.

Newspapers reported that Izetbegovic, leader of the SDA Muslim nationalist party, had gone to Zenica to speak at a rally of Bosnian Muslim fighters and Mojaheddin supporters from the Middle East.

British newspapers have frequently carried lurid and inaccurate reports of Bosnian 'fundamentalist' fighters, but it is certainly true that divisions have appeared within the leading ranks of the SDA government with some elements still declaring themselves for a multi-ethnic Bosnia and others ready to accept division.

At an international confer-

BY BOB MYERS
Secretary,
Workers Aid for Bosnia

ence in support of multi-ethnic Bosnia in Tuzla last November, SDA supporters openly challenged the idea of a multi-ethnic society.

They argued that the reality of war now meant such a prospect was impossible, and that each of the ethnic groups now must have their own territory.

Here in Britain, learned 'socialist' commentators have argued that all sides in the Yugoslav war are equally in the grip of nationalist ideology. They therefore refuse to get involved — beyond writing more learned articles proving the correctness of their mighty principles.

But if you were a Bosnian worker who had been driven from your town by extreme Serb nationalist Chetnik ethnic cleansers, had seen family members rounded up and killed, had seen the United Nations support this process — what would you do when Islamic countries offer arms and food, provided you wave a green flag?

Convince

Our socialists here refuse to come to the assistance of Bosnian workers because they do not take a 'correct' principled working-class line.

But the workers' movement of Europe has not done enough to help the workers in Bosnia and convince them that they can offer effective political and physical support. And our 'socialists' and anti-fascists have done little to try and change that. So is it any surprise that the beleaguered Bosnian workers' turn to those who do appear willing to help?

Our learned socialists will write their monthly articles charting the rise of division in Bosnia, and when the working class has been divided and shut

up in ethnic concentration camps, like Sarajevo, with nationalistic leaders running each of them, these socialists will say: 'There, we told you that it was impossible to support any side in this war.'

Fought

Only those like Workers Aid, which has fought to move the workers' movement to defend workers in Bosnia, have actually begun to show a way forward for all workers of ex-Yugoslavia in their fight against nationalism and division.

The Bosnian trade union de-

legation is an important step forward in the fight to rebuild the practical working-class internationalism that allows workers to act in defence of their own in any part of the world.

The enthusiasm that the tour is meeting among many rank-and-file trades unionists shows that the cynical cowardice of the learned 'socialists' is not representative of the working class as a whole.

■ If you want to help and support the trade union delegation, pho Workers Aid for Bosnia 071-582 5462.

Public meeting
Tuzla (Bosnia) trade union delegation

'Build international movement against fascism'
Thursday 9 March, 7.30pm

**Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,
London WC1 (tube Holborn)**

Tour of Bosnian workers at forefront of fight against ethnic cleansing.

Tour of Britain: 6-21 March



Workers Aid has fought to move the worker's movement to defend the Bosnian workers

Lessons of anti-veal-trade protests

GEORGE ANGUS comments on the campaigns against the veal trade and motorway building

THE protests over the export of live calves have succeeded in politicising thousands of people from many walks of life who have faced or seen the heavy-handed policing to stop the demonstrations.

The campaign is part of a series loosely co-ordinated by the Freedom Network, which

has an anarchistic political agenda. The success of the Freedom Network lies not in political gains as yet, but in its recruitment and organisation.

The Freedom Network is motivated, well-organised, and prepared to confront the state over its principles. By concentrating a campaign on an issue

as simple and as fundamental as food production the network has brought into sharp relief the iniquity and greed of capitalism, and the violence it will use to defend itself.

The concern of many of the animal-rights protesters, and one targeted by the media, has been that the animals are 'innocent', incapable of defending themselves and are not tainted with politics. Humans, though, are basically 'guilty' and any trouble they get into is somehow

their own fault. We can help animals but we can't help the human race.

This false viewpoint goes some way to explain the success of companies such as 'Body Shop' and 'Real Foods'; under capitalism our only real power is defined by what we choose to consume, we act as individuals within the market exercising our 'free will' to choose. It also explains why Anita 'American Express' Roderick's shares took a dive when her company's

right-on credentials were challenged.

Witness the difference in fines and media attention given to the Alaskan oil spill by an Exxon tanker, and the catastrophe at the Union Carbide chemical plant in Bhopal, India. Pictures of oil-covered seals made better copy than blinded and dying children.

The real causes of the animals' plight, and the Freedom Network is aware of this, is the capitalist system itself. Modern agriculture involves exploitation, overproduction, needless cruelty and grasping for more and more profit.

When Agriculture Secretary William Waldegrave had to defend the sale of his own livestock for veal, he feebly stated that it was not his fault, it was the market.

Global

Taken on a global scale, the activities of the meat market cause a depletion of the rainforests, and destroy viable arable land through overproduction. The industry's search for short-term private gain is causing serious ecological damage. The farming lobby has important links with the Tory Party.

Who can forget the sight of the grinning John Gummer force-feeding his daughter beef-burgers on TV in an effort to show British beef won't make you daft? Or Edwina Currie's downfall after she pointed out that eggs are poisonous?

The Freedom Network is also involved with the campaign against motorway building. This is not just about ecological issues, but throws up questions such as national transport policy, the effectiveness of local democracy, housing, planning.

The Tories are still getting rattled over motorways, particularly in Glasgow where that doughty defender of democracy Allan Stewart, Scottish junior minister, has had to resign after he confronted peaceful demonstrators with a pickaxe handle.

In Devon assistant chief constable John Albon warned middle-class, elderly people and those carrying children that sitting down in the road is illegal. They were as much a part of the law-breaking as those throwing the bricks and bottles, he said.

Ultimately the most important question raised by these single-issue campaigns is: what is the state for? And the good citizens of Devon are certainly finding out on whose behalf it acts.

Inquiry into private firm over bus war

BY MIKE COOKE

BRITAIN's biggest bus company, Stagecoach, is under investigation by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission over no less than four issues.

In one of these, Stagecoach subsidiary Busways ran free buses on routes operated by 90-year-old municipally-owned Darlington Transport Corporation (DTC).

Busways ran the free service after its bid for DTC was turned down in July last year. To run these services Busways offered higher pay and £1,000 introductory bonuses to recruit more than 70 of DTC's 90 drivers.

'In the face of this onslaught, and unable to find a new buyer, DTC folded with the loss 50 jobs,' reports this month's 'Labour Research'.

The free buses are estimated to have cost £20,000 a week, but 'that's a lot cheaper than having to buy DTC,' pointed out Nick Wallis, chair of Darlington's transport committee.

Previously DTC had a turnover of £2.6 million and 140 employees.

If the experience of other parts of the country are anything to go by, the drivers' wages and conditions in Darlington will come under pressure sooner rather than later.

Drivers' hours have risen steadily since bus deregulation in 1986. Basic hours for full-time male bus and coach drivers have risen from 39 in 1986 to 40 in 1994. In reality drivers work on average 47.8 hours including overtime, compared with 44.7 for all manual male occupations.

Long hours mean tired drivers and tired drivers increase the possibility of accidents.

Between 1986 and 1994, wages fell from 7 per cent above average male manual earnings to 14 per cent below them.

Most insidious of all is the introduction of two-tier pay, which divides workers into those employed before and those employed after a certain date.

This means it is hard to unite those with higher and lower pays for any increase. The wages bill for the employers becomes steadily less as the older and better-paid drivers retire and move on, leaving the poorly paid younger and new drivers.

In other words, it is a progressive pay cut.



PowerGen chief executive Ed Wallis reckoned last week he was worth every penny he earned, including £700,000 from a £1.2million share option on top of his £400,000 basic salary. PowerGen bosses made a total of £5.3m by exercising share options. 'I think I'm worth what I'm paid,' said greedy Wallis. Workers Press takes a different view. And to take part in the share offer being launched last week investors will need to stump up at least £1,000. So much for the share-owning democracy

Indonesian trades unionists' sentences increased

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

TWO Indonesian trades unionists jailed for their part in a big strike movement last year have had their sentences increased after an appeal.

The high court in Medan, north Sumatra, increased the jail sentence on Muchtar Pakpahan, national chair of Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia (SBSI, the Prosperous Labour Union of Indonesia), from three years to four.

Amosi Telaumbanua, the SBSI's branch chair in Medan,

had his sentence more than doubled, from 15 months to three years. The trade unionists were arrested in April last year along with more than 100 workers accused of taking part in strikes and demonstrations in Medan.

Riots

The government-inspired media sought at first to tie them in with riots and attacks on Chinese-owned property, though SBSI and independent civil rights observers insisted military intelligence agents and hired thugs were behind the violence.

SBSI is Indonesia's main independent trade union, and has won wide support from workers discontented with state-backed unions.

Pakpahan and Telaumbanua were charged under Articles 160 and 161 of the criminal code, which prohibit public criticism of the government. All the evidence presented against them related to leaflets or speeches at union meetings.

Pakpahan was sentenced on 7 November. The evidence against him was that he set up an SBSI branch in Medan in 1992, held a training course for workers recruited to the union,

and called for a national strike last year over pay and union rights.

Telaumbanua was accused of encouraging workers to make banners for the April 1994 strike, putting up notices on trees and telegraph poles, and distributing leaflets during the workers' demonstration.

Workers Press urges readers to raise the issue of Indonesia's anti-union repression in your union, and protest to Indonesian embassies, demanding the release of Muchtar Pakpahan, Amosi Telaumbanua and other jailed trades unionists.

Reunification tensions show in Germany

BY BOB ARCHER

'Die Zeit', the German liberal Sunday newspaper, has condemned the 'new federal states' in the former German Democratic Republic for squandering the huge financial support given by west Germany.

The paper highlights comments by the Bavarian prime minister, Edmund Stoiber, who complained about the huge burden of paying for reunification under the terms decided by Chancellor Kohl.

To put this in perspective, imagine the 'Observer' praising regional security secretary Peter

Lilley for blasting on about people living off the dole.

The Bavarian Christian Socialist Union, which Stoiber heads, is on extreme right of politics in Germany.

But real tensions are emerging over the cost of reunification. As Ralf Neubauer noted in 'Die Zeit':

'The West German population is less inclined than ever before to make sacrifices for its compatriots in the East. A soaring tax burden and rising rents have brought even apparently high-income western households into financial difficulties. Against this background it is not surprising that solidarity begins to crumble.'

The writer urges the territories in the east in their own interests to spend the huge subsidies more wisely.

He points out that the new territories are reliant on aid from the federal budget, particularly 'when it comes to continuing measures relating to the labour market'.

Condemns

The paper specifically criticises the Berlin Social Democrat Walter Momper for attacking Stoiber's 'demagogy'.

It condemns grants of 1,000 Deutschmarks to new-born children in Brandenburg, the territory around Berlin, as absurd

and complains about the 'growing tendency to dole out help to unprofitable large concerns'.

Instead of putting the money into dead-end industrial complexes, the paper wants authorities in the east to encourage the growth of a capitalist 'Mittelstand', a middle-class of small and medium-sized businesses.

It wants money to be invested in 'sensible infrastructural projects' in order to make the area attractive to outside investors.

Many miners, steelworkers, car workers and others have heard similar demands after their workplaces have closed in Britain.

Public meeting
Defend Chechnya!

Thurs. 23 Feb.
7.30pm

Halkevi Turkish and Kurdish Community Centre, 92-100 Stoke Newington Road, London N16

Organised by the North Caucasian Community Centre and the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International

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18 March: Trade Union Centre, Hardman Street, Liverpool

All 10am-4.30pm
Details: 061-220 8435

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Inside left

How it was

ON Easter Monday in 1964, the newspaper headlines reported mods and rockers rampaging through Margate. But the 'quality' papers also commented upon events in Brighton. The Young Socialists (YS) conference there had adopted policies of nuclear disarmament and nationalisation, and elected a national committee of which the majority of members supported 'Keep Left', the paper proscribed by the Labour Party.

'The Times' said Labour's youth movement had shown the 'same disrespect for property' as the seaside hooligans. The 'Guardian' counselled Labour leaders to help moderate' lefts among the youth.

That afternoon returning to London from Brighton, I went with some other Young Socialists to a flat in Victoria. There we were joined by Gerry Healy, then secretary of the Socialist Labour League (forerunner of the Workers Revolutionary Party), of which we were all members. It had been outlawed within the Labour Party.

Healy said Labour under Harold Wilson would win the general election later that year, and face an economic crisis that would most likely force it to devalue the pound. Labour's attempts to curb pay would bring clashes with the working class, which would raise the need for a socialist alternative.

We had already got as far as we were likely to in Labour's youth movement, Healy told us. Labour officials were already expelling 'Keep Left' supporters and closing branches. If we tried to bring in the rebellious working-class youth who'd hit the news that weekend, which we should, we were bound to confront right-wing officialdom.

So from now on, we wouldn't back down. When a local YS branch was turfed off Labour Party premises (often they called in the police) it would open up independently the following week. Recruitment and campaigning were stepped up.

I was expelled from the Labour Party that summer after someone informed on me selling 'Keep Left' at a cafe on the North Circular road. Six of us were either expelled or suspended from membership in Willesden.

We lobbied the constituency general management committee, but weren't allowed in, though three of us were delegates. My own ward and the one I'd previously been in opposed the expulsion, unsuccessfully. Some union branches invited us to speak, thus widening our contacts, and some more Labour Party members joined the Socialist Labour League.

WHAT prompted these recollections was Douglas Vespa's article about Labour youth in 'Workers' Liberty'. He writes about 'Keep Left's' achievements in the youth movement, oddly without mentioning that the guiding hand behind it (as I think it's now safe to acknowledge!) was that of the proscribed Socialist Labour League (SLL). 'Workers' Liberty' editor Sean Matgamna was an SLL member at the time, but disagreed with the turn in our youth work.

Vespa (apparently a pseudonym for a Young Labour activist, nothing to do with those 1960s mods' scooters) thinks 'Keep Left' supporters, 'drunk on their own success', simply 'ducked out of the fight and opted instead for an independent sectarian existence outside the Labour Party'.

That's not quite how it was. And looming over arguments about tactics was the question of what the coming Labour government would mean for the working class — something the article doesn't consider.

New report indicates extent of def living in temporary accommodati

Homeless failed by care sys

We reproduce below, in slightly edited form, a selection of interviews from a report that provides evidence of the widespread failure in the provision of primary and community health-care and other statutory services to Haringey's homeless. The report, 'Mind the Gap?', published on 5 September 1994 by the church-based charity CARIS, is the first survey of homeless households in the borough. Haringey has the highest proportion of homeless people of any London borough, estimated at 4 per cent of the total population. The report suggests that as many as 9 per cent of all children under five in one part of Tottenham are in temporary accommodation. Nearly two-thirds of those in temporary accommodation were found to be refugees. Most had not been registered with a GP. Less than 50 per cent of the children under five had been seen by a health visitor. The homeless of Haringey are swelled by approximately 500 homeless families from Hackney and others from Tower Hamlets. Hackney council will not inform health workers where their families are in Haringey

Interview 2 (White UK, lone parent, fluent in English)

She had been moved into temporary accommodation following domestic violence. To preserve some stability for the children, she had decided to continue taking the eldest child (aged five) to school in her former neighbourhood, since she hoped to be permanently placed there.

The daily bus fares for this journey left her short of money for food. She had been managing by using milk in all the children's food to improve its nutritional content, but her milk tokens had been cut after her child's fifth birthday. The respondent went without to help keep the children healthy.

Anxiety had been generated by the stigma of single parenthood. She felt that her GP had been patronising towards her because of her situation and she had had to fight for respect. Not being willing to face such prejudice again, she had decided not to register with a doctor in the new area, but had stayed with her existing GP.

The uncertainty of not knowing how long they would be living in temporary accommodation was a further pressure, deepened by the respondent's awareness of recent legislation removing single parents from the 'priority need' category.

Interview 5 (Black African, lone parent, fluent in English)

Her disabled child needs speech

therapy but cannot get any.

She complained about the length of waiting lists for hospital appointments. The Whittington hospital had been very helpful with her baby.

Interview 6 (Black African, pregnant, speaks English fairly fluently)

She was concerned about housing rather than health issues, since her family had been threatened with eviction. Her family had turned down an offer of a council house.

Interview 7 (Turkish, pregnant, speaks only a little English)

This respondent, who was heavily pregnant, had not seen the health visitor or the midwife, or received any ante-natal care. She said that the doctor did not understand her even when she took an interpreter with her (a friend), and that he did not listen to her problems. She had been to see the GP several times recently, and he had not helped her at all.

Interview 12 (Black African, lone parent, fairly fluent in English)

The Whittington hospital had provided a good service when treating the respondent's baby after it was burned.

The respondent felt that she should have been visited by a health visitor at some point after she had had the baby, particularly

when the baby was ill.

The baby had sustained severe burns by tipping a cup of boiling water over itself. The respondent felt that this was because of the confined space in their hostel room.

Her housing situation makes the respondent feel depressed, and anxious about her daughter, since she has no space to play. Health and safety is a worry following the accident, especially now that the child is walking.

Interview 13 (Black African, lone parent, fluent in English)

This respondent spoke about her anxiety about health and safety in the hostel, and the lack of space for her child to play.

The respondent was angry about the treatment she had received at the North Middlesex hospital. Her waters had broken after 28 weeks of her pregnancy and she had gone to the hospital. But the doctor and midwife did not listen to her and ignored her. She felt that she needed to be in hospital so she travelled by public transport to the Whittington hospital, where the baby was delivered by Caesarean section.

The baby was born premature, yet she did not receive any visits from the health visitor, even though she requested them. She was registered at a health centre and they were supposed to arrange a visit each week.

Two weeks after leaving hospital following the birth of the baby, the respondent was evicted from



Homeless people like these hostel dw

the place where she was living. This caused her a great amount of stress and affected her health. She ended up living in the hostel.

She also complained about having to wait for more than five hours in the casualty department at

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ers are losing out on health care

the North Middlesex hospital.

Interview 15 (Kurdish, lone parent, speaks no English)

WHEN the respondent showed her doctor the rash on her breast, he

did not listen to her problems and sent her away without a prescription. He said her condition was stress related.

While being interviewed by us, the respondent broke down in tears, since she was so relieved to speak

to someone in her own language about her problems. She did not tell us about her situation until the end of the interview, and then she poured out the story of the abusive relationship she had been in. Her husband had now left her, and she was experiencing anxiety and depression from being stranded, unable to speak English, with two children.

Her eight-year-old son is also wetting the bed, which she worries about and feels is because of the pressure of his father's treatment of them.

While we were there, a letter was put under the front door saying that the kitchen and airing cupboard were to be sprayed against cockroaches the next day. The surfaces were not to be touched for four days following this. The woman in this flat could neither speak nor read English, and would not have understood the letter had we not been there to translate it for her.

Interview 16 (Turkish, speaks no English, although her husband does)

The respondent was angry about her treatment at the GP's surgery. She said the doctor was dismissive of the problems her seven-month-old son had with his ears. She finds it difficult to communicate at the GP's surgery, even though her husband accompanies her each time.

This respondent told us that the GP had taken her family off the list for two months, during which time she was without a GP. They finally realised that they had made a mistake and re-registered her. Her son had been left out of the medical check at school when all the other children had been seen. The dentist turned her away when she was pregnant.

This respondent showed us the burn on her child's leg, which the child had received from the radiator in the hostel room. Her children also suffer from respiratory problems, which she felt were related to the bad conditions in the hostel.

Interview 17 (Turkish, speaks English fairly fluently)

This respondent complained about

her treatment at the doctor's surgery. She said the receptionist let others be seen before her who had been behind her in the queue, and the doctors were dismissive and did not listen to her problems.

A week after she came out of hospital with her newly born baby, the baby had diarrhoea. She took the baby to the surgery and was prescribed medicine. She gave it to the child who became jaundiced and yellow, so she called out the emergency doctor. The doctor never arrived, and did not call to explain why. In the end, she took the baby to the hospital, and the doctor there said the particular medicine prescribed by the doctor was not suitable for the child.

She also had a problem with breast-feeding. The doctor did not know what was wrong, but warned about infection and prescribed antibiotics and paracetamol. She now had hardly any breast milk and wondered if the antibiotics had led to this.

The baby's eyes get itchy which she felt may be related to the environment. Her room is sprayed against cockroaches once a month. There are no doors in the rooms in the hostel, and the baby's sleep is disturbed by the noise from the adjoining room.

This respondent also complained of racism from other residents. Being one of several Turkish/Kurdish families in the same hostel, she felt they are often treated as a group and not listened to as individuals.

Interview 18 (Turkish, respondent and her husband speak a little English)

She complained about her treatment at her GP's surgery, saying her problems are not listened to. Her son has recurrent tonsillitis and the doctor has not paid any attention to this.

Her husband gets tightness in his chest which she worries about, but he will not go to the doctor. The last time he went he was made to wait a long time, and then told to come back the next day. As a result of this, he will not go at all.

Interview 21 (Black African, fluent in English)

This respondent felt very angry about the unwelcoming treatment shown by the receptionist, to the extent that he wants to change GP. The receptionist had lost his family's files.

His son is disabled with cancer of the leg and he needs help to get a bus pass for him to go to college. He said that communication between the GP and the hospital was not good. Treatment at the hospital had been very good.

Interview 24 (Kurdish family, adults speak no English, but children speak some)

One of the residents in this household had been persuaded not to register with the local GP by the other members of the household. She had recently married one of the sons in the household and had moved in with the family. She is pregnant. She has to travel to get medical help.

The other householders mentioned language problems at the surgery. A translator is no longer provided.

The main concern expressed was about housing. Seven people now live in the house, and the daughter-in-law is pregnant.

Interview 25 (Kurdish, speaks no English)

She complained that her GP does not listen to her problems. Language is a real problem at the surgery. This respondent goes to the chemist to get what she needs for the baby.

The respondent was so concer-

ned about her child that she took her to a Turkish private doctor, who did not charge her for the service, and recommended a change of diet for the child. This had made the child better. (The GP had said that there was nothing that could be done for the child.)

A problem with damp in the temporary accommodation was a worry for the respondent.

Interview 26 (Turkish Cypriot, speaks only a little English)

This family's problems were acute and complex. They had only been resident in the UK for three months, having arrived as refugees from Cyprus.

The mother was anxious because she had had a prolapse, but felt unable to communicate this to the GP since the only interpreters available were male. The doctor had asked her to have her medical records sent over from Cyprus, but this was impossible.

The couple explained how their six-year-old child is unable to walk, so the mother carries him to school. He falls over continually at school, which they attribute to a vaccination that went wrong. They said this disability remains undiagnosed. Their GP had seen the child but there had been no contact about it since.

The disabled child's problems with his legs were made worse by the cold and damp in the house. The previous tenants had left large unpaid arrears on the gas bill, and so the meter deducts £10 every time money is put in. This family has no money and so cannot use the gas.

The couple also expressed concern about their home, which is damp and unsuitable for their child.

Interview 27 (Black African, lone parent, fluent in English)

This respondent was primarily concerned about the damp in the temporary accommodation she had been allocated. She had also experienced communication problems and racial discrimination by her GP.

On one occasion, the receptionist by mistake asked her to come immediately for an emergency appointment for an ante-natal check up. The respondent went to the surgery and the doctor became angry with her, even though it had not been her fault but the receptionist's.

On another occasion, she received a card asking her to come for a blood test to find out her blood group. She had already been through the procedure in Tottenham, where she had previously lived, and had been informed of the blood group. She took the card to the GP to query it. The doctor had been patronising towards her, reading the card out slowly as if the respondent could not speak English, and told her to go for the test.

She went for the test again, and was made to wait for two hours and then told to go home, since she had already had the test.

Interview 28 (Kurdish, speaks no English)

The children of this family have been in the country for two years but have not seen a dentist.

The children (aged five, seven, nine and 16) were not given school places for over a year after their arrival. They have since found it difficult to learn English.

They have had no vaccinations in Britain, and the five-year-old has not had any injections at all. His mother has not been told when to take him for these injections.

Copies of 'Mind the Gap?' are obtainable, for £1.25 payable to 'CARIS', from CARIS Haringey Homeless Families Project, 107 Hampden Road, Hornsey, London N8 0HU.

Avenging our martyrs

IT MUST be 50 years since I read John Steinbeck's early novel 'In Dubious Battle'.

But I vividly remember the strike meeting on the book's last page. The strike had been about to crumble, but one of the strikers has just been murdered, by police or company goons.

The strike leader gets up to rally the weary men who have been fighting for weeks with less and less food in their bellies, with less and less hope in their hearts.

'He didn't want nothing for himself', he begins. And the reader senses that this is a turning-point, that the dead worker hasn't died in vain, that his comrades will carry on the struggle with more determination than ever.

A movement that gains a martyr becomes a force to be reckoned with. The tragic death of Jill Phipps, crushed to death after falling under the wheels of a lorry carrying live animals for export, has given an incalculable impetus to the cause for which she laid down her life.

As agriculture minister William Waldegrave put it, 'there is a tinderbox atmosphere out there' — thus expressing his deepest fears, the fears that have haunted the imaginations of Britain's rulers since before Peterloo.

Some of his own party colleagues helped to create this 'tinderbox atmosphere', by reading out pages of the telephone directory in the Commons in order to stifle a bill that would have prohibited the export of live calves.

And the police helped to strike sparks from the tinderbox, by dragging demonstrators by the hair and otherwise treating them in ways that horrified the citizens of Shoreham and Brighton and Portsmouth.

This is an atmosphere in which fundamental political lessons can be learnt, about the nature of capitalism, the role of the capitalist state, and what must be done to smash them. But revolutionaries — those who have already learnt these lessons — can't hope to teach them to others from outside. Their place is inside the living movement, sharing the daily drudgery and the hardships and the risks.

That's what leadership means. And that's the only way to build a movement that draws together all the disparate threads of resistance — a movement capable of overthrowing capitalism and thereby avenging all our martyred dead.

A slap in the face

BLACK seafarers and soldiers from Africa and the Caribbean, as well as black skilled workers, made a notable contribution to the British war effort in two world wars.

World War I took a huge toll of black seafarers. From Cardiff alone, according to the 'Western Mail' (14 April 1919) 1,000 were killed at sea and another 400, rescued after their ships were sunk, were taken back to the port to die of the effects of exposure.

Many black soldiers were wounded, crippled for life, or killed in battle. The British West Indies Regiment alone lost 1,256 men. Many members of this and other units, such as the West African Frontier Force and the King's African Rifles, were decorated for gallantry in battle.

In World War II, 5,000 colonial merchant seamen died at sea — one-sixth of all those killed.

Hundreds of thousands of East and West Africans fought in the North African theatre of war; 6,000 Afro-Caribbeans of both sexes served in the Royal Air Force and Women's Auxiliary Air Force in Britain.

PERSONAL COLUMN

And hundreds of skilled workers in the West Indies volunteered to come and work in British factories.

British imperialism was glad enough at the time to have such willing hands and such a copious supply of cannon-fodder. But memories in high places are notoriously short.

None shorter, it seems, than the memories of the World War II Commemoration Team — representatives of the Home Office, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the Ministry of Defence — which is in charge of arrangements for the government-sponsored commemorations next May.

At a meeting three months ago, it now emerges, the team ruled that there would be no Caribbean or East or West African representatives at the World War II commemorations.

Two reasons were given for this shameful decision. First, that the commemoration is not of World War II as a whole, but of 'victory in Europe' (hence the May date). Second, that the contributions of the neglected territories 'were not at brigade strength'.

But if all that's being commemorated is 'victory in Europe' why then does the team bear such a misleading title? And what about the precursor to 'victory in Europe', the victories in North and North-East Africa, in which the countless 'brigades' of East and West African troops numbered over 370,000 men?

'Brigade' is a conveniently loose concept, of course. In the infantry it usually consists of two or three battalions; in practice it can number anything from 5,000 to 15,000, depending on location and use.

It is rumoured that the government may be having a change of heart, and may after all invite the Trinidad and Jamaican governments to send representatives to the commemorations.

If this as yet unconfirmed rumour is true, it would come under the heading 'too little too late'. It would signal not so much belated repentance as belated recognition of the deep offence given, not just to black veterans of World War II but to the entire black community in Britain. They have been slapped in the face.

A few days ago I had a letter from Marika Sherwood, secretary of the Association for the Study of African Caribbean and Asian Culture and History in Britain. She wrote:

'As this is to be the only government-sponsored commemoration, it is impossible to understand why it should not include the whole war and all those who fought for Britain.'

'Why exclude the 374,000 East and West African troops, the 10,000 Caribbeans in the military or the 5,000 merchant seamen who died?'

'Shouldn't we acknowledge the innumerable planes, tanks, ambulances and mobile canteens paid for by public subscription in the colonies? For example, Trinidad, with a total population of less than half a million, had donated \$2.8 million by 31 March 1943. The average daily wage, for those lucky enough to have a job, was about \$1 (4s.8d. or 24p.).'

'Does the government expect its Commonwealth partners and Black Britons of African and Caribbean descent to accept such an insult with equanimity?'

'Can this government not bring itself to thank those who fought and died and worked for Britain's freedom? (No, not their own. Post-war, they were denied both freedom and democracy.)'

Peter Fryer

Free Winston Silcott!

THE Winston Silcott Defence Campaign is being relaunched as there is a greater need than ever for the campaign demanding his freedom. It is now 1995, ten long years since Winston was unjustly imprisoned.

We remind you that in 1984 Winston accidentally killed a man called Anthony Smith. This man, along with two others, launched an entirely unprovoked knife attack on Winston at a party. Winston was handed a knife and in the process of defending himself stabbed Anthony Smith, who died two weeks later as a result of his injuries.

Winston voluntarily gave himself up to the police but this clear case of self-defence was turned into something different by the Broadwater Farm disturbances of 1985 and the killing of PC Keith Blakelock. Winston was out on bail when these events occurred.

The police, thirsting for revenge and looking for scapegoats, arrested Winston along with Mark Braithwaite and Engin Raghup, charging them with the murder of PC Blakelock.

Demonised

Winston, who was particularly vulnerable while out on bail, was 'singled out' and demonised in an extremely racist, sinister and frightening manner by the British media. All three protested their innocence but received life sentences. On appeal their innocence was proven. They were victims of a police frame-up.

Mark Braithwaite and Engin Raghup were released. But Winston remained in prison, serving a life sentence for the accidental death of Anthony Smith. The publicity surrounding the Blakelock killing adversely affected Winston's trial for the Smith killing, which took place soon after the events at Broadwater Farm.

It is manifestly obvious that the British state and judiciary are not remotely interested in guilt or innocence in Winston's case.



Winston Silcott (right) with his brother, George

Last week Home Secretary Michael Howard admitted that when he refused to grant Winston leave to appeal last year, he had failed to disclose all evidence known to him on the case, thereby acting unlawfully.

This same man has to look again at Winston's case and make a decision on his right to appeal. Winston said: 'I have never really expected Mr Howard to look at my case with anything but bias and prejudice. I am not surprised he has been forced to concede that his decision in my case was unlawful.'

Meanwhile Howard yet again gets off the hook while

Winston continues to languish in prison.

The gutter press, not surprisingly, choose to continue portraying Winston as a heartless murderer who does not deserve compensation for his wrongful conviction, rather than condemning the unjust system which keeps him incarcerated. All this is meant to seriously demoralise Winston and the defence campaign.

Winston is a political prisoner, a hostage of the racist British state and establishment and we will not be demoralised. We will continue to struggle for justice and urge all who read this article to raise the campaign

within the political, trade union and working-class movements and to support all campaign initiatives.

Show your support to Winston personally by writing to: Winston Silcott (B74053), HMP Swaleside, Sheerness, Kent ME12 4AX.

Let's prove that 'an injury to one is an injury to all' and stand shoulder to shoulder in working-class solidarity with Winston, his family and the defence campaign. Let's demand they 'Free Winston Silcott'.

Winston Silcott Defence Campaign
PO Box 6796
London N15 4PB

OBITUARY

The quiet revolutionary

Margaret Dewar

12 February 1901 — 26 January 1995

with the Gestapo closing in, Margaret fled to Prague in 1936 and went on to Paris in 1937.

In Paris, Margaret met Hugo Dewar, a member of the Trotskyist 'Balham Group', and a few months later they were married in England.



Margaret Dewar

During World War II, Margaret worked as a radio monitor for the British United Press. After the war she worked for the Royal Institute of Foreign Affairs, writing 'Foreign Trade with Eastern Europe 1945-1949'

Labour Policy 1917-1928', published in 1956.

The Dewars retired to a bungalow in Lindfield, near Haywards Heath in Sussex, during the 1960s. When Hugo died, journalist Paul Foot, who was a close friend, implored Margaret to return to London, but she preferred to stay in Lindfield where she loved her home and garden.

Revolutionary politics was her first love, but she was also a member of Amnesty International and she had a deep and wide-ranging love of literature and the arts. In later life she joined the Socialist Workers Party but she maintained an interest in the journals and papers of other revolutionary groups.

Despite rejecting any idea of a parliamentary road to socialism, she was entirely non-sectarian and enjoyed friendly debates with local Labour left-wingers. In 1989, she received a presentation from Mid-Sussex Labour Party in recognition of 60 years' service to socialism. She was active in the Mid-Sussex Anti-Poll-Tax Union demonstrations — despite being nearly 90.

Her fierce independence was finally frustrated by increasing incapacity and immobility.

overtaken her youthful vigour, her revolutionary zeal remained undiminished and undimmed.

Her autobiography, 'The Quiet Revolutionary' (Bookmarks, 1989), ends with a quotation from one of her husband's poems:

*For he that his whole youth denies
is surely dead before he dies.*

She added: 'Hugo died in 1980, as convinced a Marxist and revolutionary socialist as he had been throughout his adult life — as, I hope, I will.'

'Obviously I am disappointed that it is taking so long for the revolution to materialise. But come it must, if exploitation of man by man is to end and mankind is to survive. It is now up to the younger generation to give a lead.'

Margaret spent her last years in the Lucastes Place residential home, Haywards Heath. Admitted to the Princess Royal hospital at Christmas, she finally passed away peacefully at Paxhill Park nursing home, Lindfield, a few weeks before her 94th birthday.

Her funeral, for which there was an atheist service addressed by Paul Foot, was at Worth Crematorium, Crawley, on Friday 3 February.

Margaret Dewar was a fighter to the end. She will be sadly missed by her relatives, friends and comrades.

Major's dilemma

BY JACKIE VANCE

ONCE again the 'Irish question' threatens to bring down a British government. Following the withdrawal of the Tory whip from nine of his MPs, John Major has been forced to lean heavily on the votes of the Ulster Unionists in the Commons.

His vulnerability was recently shown when a majority of the Unionists voted against the attempt to increase VAT on fuel and ensured its defeat.

Major's extraordinary rush last week to give a national television broadcast in which he tried to reassure Unionists that no political changes would take place without their agreement demonstrated his great fear of losing their support.

The broadcast came in response to the leaking of sections of the framework document for a restored Stormont parliament currently being prepared by the Dublin and London governments.

Unionists had reacted strongly when the leaked report confirmed that the two governments were set to agree a 'joint North/South Irish authority'.

Major's dilemma is acute. He knows that the Tories, in order to try and stay in power, must foster the support of the Unionists. But the plans for new forms of capitalist rule for the six counties, as revealed in the framework document leak, inevitably means a confrontation with them.

Discrimination

This cannot be avoided. The days are over when imperialism ruled only through the Ulster Unionists, defending the anti-Catholic discrimination and ferrymaning with the full weight and repression of the British state.

One important reason for this is the wholesale decline in the material base for Unionist privilege — the traditional manufacturing industries whose owners fought ruthlessly to maintain the link with Britain and its markets.

A more important factor now for imperialism is to ensure that the nationalist revolt is headed. The cross-border authorities which the Dublin and British governments propose will undoubtedly facilitate some small business and commercial trading.

But the cross-border bodies are essentially a sop to the Sinn Fein leaders — a token for them to present to their membership as the prelude to a united Ireland.

Gerry Adams, the Sinn Fein president, is safely in the pockets of the capitalist politicians. But the continual fear for them is that the administrative concessions will not be enough to contain the nationalist youth.



Sinn Fein vice-president Martin McGuinness at a meeting in Birmingham: the Sinn Fein leadership is safely in the pocket of the capitalist politicians
Photo: Mark Salmon

Adams ('Irish Times', 6 February) confirms that he is willing to participate in a six-county assembly provided that it is a 'transitional' arrangement — exactly the words that Michael Collins used when accepting partition in 1922.

Already it is clear that the Unionist resistance to the new forms of rule — with the all-Ireland institutions — is not as strong as when these ideas were previously attempted.

Ian Paisley's objections were relatively muted, James Molyneux, the Ulster Unionist leader, muttered that they were

only proposals and, most significantly, this was also the response from representatives of the loyalist killer gang, the Ulster Defence Association.

Strike

When an all-Ireland body was attempted as part of the 'power-sharing' Stormont administration in 1974 it was brought down by the strike called by the Ulster Workers Council.

And in 1985, when the Anglo-Irish agreement was signed, 250,000 people took to the streets of Belfast in protest.

There was a long period of bloody confrontation between sections of the Protestant population and the British forces, including the police. In today's changed situation, the IRA and loyalist ceasefires have produced a feeling of 'peace' which is a genuine desire not to return to the assassinations, bombings and army repression.

Any Unionist leader will have great difficulty in mobilising large numbers against the Dublin and London proposals. The tragedy is that in all the negotiations there is no independent voice of the working class.

US capital muscles in to Ireland

ON 24-26 MAY the United States government is hosting a 'White House Conference on Trade and Industry in Ireland' in Washington.

Over 1,000 delegates from the US, Britain, and Ireland will attend this conference, which represents the most extensive engagement by Washington in the economic and political life of any western European country since the Marshall Plan after the World War II.

It will be chaired by US President Clinton and is a remarkable indication of the involvement of his administration in attempting to shape the development in the north of Ireland.

Clinton and leading members of the Democratic Party with Irish connections were important players in the lead-up to the IRA ceasefire — in spite of strong protests from the Unionists and sections of the Tories, Clinton granted a visa to Gerry Adams a year ago.

The promise of American economic investment was a major factor in enabling Adams to convince the republican movement to agree to a ceasefire.

Clinton's involvement is no doubt influenced by a need to play to the huge electoral constituency of 40 million Irish-Americans. One of his election promises — which he quickly reneged on — was to send a special envoy to the six counties to investigate the nationalists' grievances.

But the main reason for the investment conference is that, on the backs of the ceasefires and the Sinn Fein leadership

capitulation, the US monopolies recognise an opportunity for increased exploitation and profits.

Clinton has instructed that the conference is presented with a strategy report on new investment initiatives. It is being prepared by Ron Brown, the US commerce secretary, and Charles Meissner of the US commerce department and a former top World Bank official.

US companies already make huge profits from their plants in Ireland — particularly in the southern state where the company tax is the lowest in western Europe at 10 per cent.

Pressure

In the north this tax rate is the same as in Britain, 33 per cent, and one purpose of this capitalist forum will be to put pressure for this to be reduced.

But the main obstacle to increased investment by the monopolies is still the strength of the organised working class, especially as demonstrated in the wages and conditions of the longer established international subsidiaries.

A good example of this can be seen in Derry where shift workers in the Du Pont factory consistently earn wages of around £400 per week while next door the more recently opened Fruit of the Loom plant is paying only £160 for similar shift working.

Any increased investment in Ireland will have to be accompanied by a drive against the general level of wages. This aspect of the 'peace process' will be anything but peaceful.

Emigrant vote fear

The 26-county southern Irish state is one of the few in the world — and the only one in the European Union — not to allow its emigrants to vote in domestic elections.

In an attempt to head off a consistent and growing campaign the Dublin government has proposed that Irish emigrants are permitted to elect three members of the Seanad, the upper house of the Irish parliament.

This plan is a miserly concession which does not answer the demands of the emigrants. Irish emigrant groups have been campaigning for the right to vote in their home constituencies, where they are familiar with the issues, for members of the Dail, the lower house.

A representative for Glor na Deorai in Britain said, 'the Seanad is not an appropriate forum for the voice of the Irish abroad'.

Most of the political parties in the southern Irish state are committed in principle to providing voting rights for emig-

rants. But in reality they are mortally afraid of the consequences.

The granting of this basic democratic right — the right to vote — has revolutionary implications in the Irish situation.

Since the inception of the 26-county state every other person born there has emigrated. The majority have been forced to leave the country to find employment. In many cases they left behind families who were dependent on the money that was earned on the building sites of London and in the bars of Boston.

Many are filled with hate for the system that made them emigrate and for the politicians' cowardly refusal to allow them a say in elections. Given the opportunity to vote they would undoubtedly register a huge protest and throw them out.

Emigration always acted as a safety valve for capitalism in Ireland. Now the organising of the emigrants around this demand for full voting rights threatens that very system.

Letters

More letters page 2

WE WELCOME LETTERS
SEND THEM TO: WORKERS PRESS,
PO BOX 735, LONDON SW8 1YB
— OR PHONE 071-582 8882

Not necessary or sufficient

WHAT a shame that Paul Henderson (28 January) has avoided the real arguments in his response to D. Smith (21 January).

Henderson implies that revolutionaries have to politically support the campaign to defend Clause Four of the Labour Party's constitution in order to be in a position to talk to those people in the campaign who are 'receptive to the idea of an alternative party'.

A brief examination is sufficient to convince that Paul's line represents liquidation into left reformism.

that Trotskyism has to give political support to the campaign as a supposedly necessary means to talk to potential revolutionaries.

Secondly, it should not be sufficient to convince us that someone is a potential revolutionary simply because they believe in an alternative party to Labour. Many forms of reformism lie outside the Labour Party.

Perhaps if Paul was concentrating on building a Trotskyist party, that is, one based on the political independence of the working class, he would be able to address the question of how to prevent the alienation of working-class powers into the line of reformism.

But the truth of the matter is

that such issues cannot be addressed without a theoretical struggle within Trotskyism. All those of us who are interested in proletarian revolution must earnestly hope that Workers Press will cease evading such a debate.

Jane Williams
London N4

Tyranny uncovered

WHILST greatly appreciating your internationalism and commitment to the poor, I find your Trotskyism abhorrent, as much as I do Stalinism.

I regard Trotsky — the butcher of Kronstadt and the

anarchists — potentially as tyrannical as Stalin, and indeed I think that the various Trotskyite groups have taken on the mantle of Stalin since the demise of the Communist parties.

Until you follow [John] Lilburne [English Leveller, 1614-57] and Connolly, rather than Trotsky and Lenin, I will not support your paper, though I wish you every success in publicising the struggles of African and 'Third World' peasants and workers against Western monopoly tyranny.

I suspect that as theorists you are — as Caudwell succinctly put it — mirror revolutionaries, overlying powerful bourgeois tendencies.

David Kessel
London E14

Public meeting Vietnam: revolutionaries against colonialism and Stalinism

Monday 6 March, 7pm

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1
(nearest tube: Holborn)

Speaker: Ngo Van

A worker and a Trotskyist, Ngo Van was imprisoned in the 1930s by the French colonial regime and in the 1940s by the Vietminh. His book, 'Revolutionaries They Could Not Break: The Fight for the Fourth International in Indochina 1930-45', is being published by Index Books in March.

Meeting sponsored by Workers Press and Revolutionary History Enquiries: PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB. Phone: 071-582 8882.

How UN 'peacekeepers' help Serb aggression

FRENCH United Nations troops in Bosnia have shot and killed four Bosnian soldiers on Mount Igmon near Sarajevo.

And by keeping the Bosnians off high ground around their own capital, the UN's 'peacekeepers' are helping Serb nationalist Chetniks keep the city under siege.

The imperialist-dominated UN wants to 'freeze' present ceasefire lines into a 'peace' under which the Serb aggressors would keep 70 per cent of the country.

In Sarajevo, people are freezing without fuel, electricity supplies, even firewood. Food is short, often hijacked by corrupt officials and black-marketeers.

Sarajevo's multi-ethnic population remains defiantly opposed to racist partition. But now in their third winter under siege they are despondent at the 'civilised' world's failure to help them.

Hope

Greta Ferusic, a Bosnian Jewish survivor of Auschwitz, said that at least in the Nazi camp they had hope. 'We didn't know how long it would be, but we knew liberation would come. Now we don't know anything' (The 'Guardian', 7 February).

On 26 January, a few hours after the arrival of British Lieutenant-General Rupert Smith to replace Lt-General Sir Michael Rose as UN commander, the Chetniks seized Sarajevo television reporter Namik Berberovic, 60, from a UN armoured vehicle. Berberovic was travelling into the city from the UN-controlled airport in a Russian armoured personnel

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

carrier, on a road supposedly under UN control.

The Russian vehicle drove up to the Serb checkpoint, and allowed the Chetniks to take the journalist.

Bosnia's other airport, at Tuzla, which the UN reopened with great publicity a year ago, remains closed to relief supplies and to Bosnians. The Chetniks threatened to fire on incoming aircraft.

But Bosnians were outraged last month to learn that General Rose had brought a Serbian liaison officer, Colonel Slavko Guzvic, to the airfield without informing the Bosnian government. The Serb officer was effectively smuggled into the airfield after being driven to Tuzla from Sarajevo in one of Rose's cars.

The Tuzla-based 11th Corps of the Bosnian army protested by blockading UN forces in the Tuzla area in their barracks for a week, and the government told the UN to leave the airport by 1 March.

The Serb forces' extended supply lines, dependence on heavy weapons, and shortage of fuel, enabled Bosnian troops to drive them back and regain ter-

ritory last year. The Serbs then demanded that 50 per cent of all fuel brought in by UN forces be handed to them; and the UN complied. So Serb tanks and heavy artillery were thrown back into attack, fuelled by the 'peace' force.

In north-west Bosnia, well-equipped Serb nationalist forces operating from Croatia's Krajina region went on the offensive against Bosnia, helped by Serbia with the UN's connivance.

The Bihac pocket, a so-called UN 'safe area', was subjected to heavy shelling for weeks on end.

Asked recently why the United Nations forces did nothing to stop it, General Rose claimed that 'Bihac involved a four-sided conflict and it was difficult to decide who was

doing the shelling' ('The Times', 28 January).

What the British general ignored was that three of the 'sides' — Serb Chetniks operating from Croatia and Bosnia, with renegade Bosnian warlord Fikret Abdic's forces — were attacking the fourth, the Bosnian army.

How could the Serb Chetniks deploy so many missile launchers and other heavy equipment in the Bihac region, when they were supposedly being denied supplies?

The answer appears to be that while the UN, and particularly the British, French and Russian governments, insists on keeping an arms embargo on Bosnia, they have connived in weapons and supplies reaching the aggressors.



Serb missile launcher: UN has connived in Serb aggression

Lord Owen's loophole in Serb blockade

SERBIA's president Slobodan Milosevic government announced last August: 'The border of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is closed for all transport toward the Republica Srpska, except food, clothing and medicine.' The Republica Srpska is what the Chetniks call the Bosnian territory they hold.

This caused the UN to ease trade sanctions on Serbia. But the Serbian government and European Union representative Lord Owen interpreted the statement to mean that goods going to Chetniks in Bosnia were stopped, but those destined for the Krajina Chetniks could go.

'Lord Owen's interpretation of the blockade is that goods going from Serbia to the Krajina are allowed through,' said Charles Thomas, the senior US official working on Bosnian peace negotiations. 'We are working hard to change this, but we have not been able to up to now.'

Owen, whose partition plan for Bosnia became the Chetniks' green light for land-grabbing and ruthless 'ethnic cleansing', is the EU's 'peace' negotiator, and one of the two men responsible for reporting to the UN secretary-general on Serb compliance with the blockade.

Owen would not comment on

the reported loophole. But his assistant, Maggie Smart, said: 'If the goods are on their way from Serbia to the Krajina, then that is agreed. That is our interpretation. The goods are certified at both the Bosnian and Krajina border.'

American officials claim supplies included food, fuel and possibly arms.

According to Croatia's deputy prime minister, Mate Granic, Russian-made surface-to-air missiles used by Serb forces in the Bihac region were smuggled into the area through Montenegro, Serbia's remaining partner in the rump Yugoslavia.

Granic told the United Na-

tions General Assembly in December that the monitoring of the border was insufficient to stop the flow of weapons to the Bosnian Serbs. The General Assembly passed a resolution recognising the borders of Croatia and describing the areas controlled by the Serbs as occupied territory.

But the great powers' contact group and UN negotiators treat the so-called Serb Republic of Krajina government as a Knin, like Karadzic's Bosnian Serb 'government' at Pale, as legitimate authorities.

The so-called 'peacekeepers' are intent on carving up Bosnia.

Russian miners strike

ALL 26 coal mines in the Rostov area, southern Russia, have been closed by a strike of 55,000 miners, mechanics and transport workers who are demanding unpaid wages.

Workers have had no pay for months, and mine maintenance is falling behind, because of lack of funds. Russia's coal output has dropped in recent years, yet accidents have soared through deteriorating conditions and equipment.

'We are not asking for hand-outs, we only want the funds

that have been legally budgeted for our industry,' said Vitaly Budko of the Independent Union of Coal Miners.

The strike could spread to all Russia's mines. The industry has been hit by power and steel industries not paying their bills, and by the government's failure to come up with 800 billion roubles (£120 million) in subsidies.

Waging war in Chechnya while trying to reassure the IMF and foreign banks over its debts, the Yeltsin government risks growing workers' unrest.

Yeltsin's 'sick' general and rotten regime

BY DAVID DORFMAN

AFTER two months of war against the people of Chechnya, Russia's defence minister, General Pavel Grachev, has gone into hospital with 'battle fatigue', amid allegations that he headed a corrupt empire of illicit arms sales and secret bank accounts.

Casualties

Accusing the general of 'cowardice', the newspaper 'Segodnya' claims his sickness has nothing to do with the war which has caused thousands of military and civilian casualties, but is linked with other criminal matters.

'President Yeltsin's administration possesses a document saying that the Russian defence ministry is the sole owner of a huge account in the Deutschebank, of which the president and the government had no knowledge until recently,' the Moscow daily has alleged.

The paper claims that when Yeltsin showed Grachev a copy of the document, showing £13.7 million in the account, at a

meeting of the national security council last month, the defence minister tried not for the first time to blame military finance chief Colonel General Vasily Vorobyov. But soon after the meeting the minister went into hospital.

Last year a Russian journalist who had written articles exposing corruption in the army and the defence ministry was blown up by a suitcase bomb.

He had been told to collect a case, supposedly containing revealing documents, from the left luggage office. It blew up back at his office, killing him and a woman clerical worker.

The funds accumulated in secret accounts have allegedly come from massive sales of Warsaw Pact arms and equipment from bases in eastern Europe.

Weaponry

Some of this weaponry has turned up in Serb Chetnik hands in Croatia and Bosnia. According to 'Segodnya', money was transferred to a Deutschebank account in the Berlin suburb of Zossen, and used for purposes as yet unaccounted for.

Despite an increasing return to censorship to hide true casualty figures, the war in Chechnya remains highly unpopular.

Some Russian newspapers have been speculating that Yeltsin would try to shift blame on to military chiefs, starting by

sacking Grachev.

In the old days, embarrassing trials and political nuances could be avoided by treating people in hospitals so they didn't come out. Then again, it's possible that Yeltsin is trying to forestall a move by the army to replace him.

Youths jailed in Montenegro as political unrest grows

REPORTS from the Montenegro, the only former Yugoslav republic that remains linked to Serbia, suggest that simmering political unrest is starting to blow the lid.

Twenty youths from the city of Cetinje have been sentenced to a total of 17 years in prison on charges of slandering Montenegro president Momir Bulatovic.

Six of the Montenegrin youth were also accused of obstructing a parliamentary session.

Almost the entire leadership of the Muslim-based Party of Democratic Action for Montenegro (SDA) have also been jailed, accused of separatist activity. Their lawyer claimed they had

been physically and psychologically tortured. The SDA has support in the Sanjak region bordering Serbia.

The Montenegrin authorities have also sentenced a right-wing Serb nationalist MP, Acir Visnjic. Visnjic, a member of the Serbian Radical Party, was sentenced to five months for publicly 'slandering the state and the president of the Republic of Montenegro'.

Although linked by tradition and culture to Serbia, Montenegro has its own identity. Many Montenegrins say they want to remain part of Yugoslavia but don't wish to be swallowed by a chauvinist Greater Serbia.

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