

BACK UNION CONVOY TO TUZLA

WORKERS internationalism took a big step forward when delegates to the Scottish TUC 98th Congress in Perth on 19 April voted unanimously to support the July trade union convoy to Tuzla, NE Bosnia.

The resolution, from Aberdeen Trades Council, congratulated the STUC general council 'on providing a welcome, and platform, in Scotland, for the recent delegation of Trade Unionists from Tuzla'. Delegates had 'learned with enthusiasm of the Trade Union

humanitarian aid convoy', it said, and it called in the general council to: publicise this convoy widely in the trade union and Labour movement;

renew and redouble its fundraising efforts, particularly to support this convoy;

urge affiliated bodies, wherever possible, to supply and equip a lorry to join the convoy;

collaborate wherever possible with requests for assistance from the organisers — the Tuzla Trade Union District, and the British Trade Unionists supporting the operation.

The Scottish trade unionists also 'noted with concern the recent reports of the breakdown of the ceasefire due to end at the beginning of May' and they extended their solidarity 'to the Tuzla miners who displayed their internationalism by their financial support for the National Union of Mineworkers during the 1984-85 strike'.

With this decision the STUC builds on its support for Bosnian trade unionists following its 1994 Congress. After receiving a re-

port of its delegation to Tuzla, a financial appeal was launched 'for assistance to the working people of Tuzla, and in particular the miners and their families'.

This appeal had raised £15,000 at the time of the annual report. £6,000 was used to fund a convoy of supplies sent by Power Aid Logistics an Aid Agency linked to the Engineers and Managers' Association. The remainder was given directly to the Bosnian miners.

Fund

The Leicester Trades Council has set up a special fund for donations to organise the convoy, and already the Communications Workers Union, a number of trades councils, UNISON branches, GPMU printworkers' branches, the National Union of Teachers, Tower Colliery (South Wales) miners, the Bolsover District Council and many others are working for the convoy.

Clause Four: more than just words!

BY WRP SECRETARY
CLIFF SLAUGHTER

To secure for workers by hand and brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service.

(Labour Party constitution, Clause Four, Part Four.)

IS IT only words that are at stake in the fight to defend Clause Four? Why is Tony Blair so anxious to delete this Clause,

after right-wing Labour leaders have managed to live with it, after all, for three-quarters of a century?

For Blair to get rid of Clause Four would mean that a future Labour government would not even be committed to the most elementary measure of renationalising water, electricity, coal and the railways.

Further, by pushing to scrap it, Blair is assuring international big business that he will use the state machine against the working class when it resists, as it must, the attacks on jobs, wages and conditions which capitalism now finds essential.

Blair and Co. want to remove a possible rallying-cry for the working class in the words 'common ownership' as it is

Death for sale — oil for arms

THE People's Embargo for Democracy in Nigeria (PEDEN) will be launched at a public meeting on Britain's arms trade with Nigeria entitled: 'Death for sale — oil for arms'.

Despite the fact that Nigeria has endured 24 of its 34 post-independence years under military rule, Downing Street has maintained and strengthened its links with Dodan Barracks, Lagos, the Nigerian military HQ, as the Tory government has armed and sustained Nigeria's military dictators.

Weapons supplied to Nigeria's military junta include Alvis Scorpion tanks, British Jaguar fighter aircraft and Vickers tanks.

The last few years have witnessed a turbulent and ongoing political crisis in Nigeria. As ordinary Nigerians continue to wage a relentless battle against military dictatorship and neo-colonial exploitation, hundreds of people, including labour activists, student leaders, rebellious peasants, trade union leaders and pro-democracy activists, continue to languish in jails and prisons all over the country.

All this time Britain has played a very significant role in the crisis through its policy of arming Nigeria's ruthless generals.

PEDEN will campaign for

driven to realise the necessity of a socialist solution.

No one should be fooled by Blair's argument that removal of the Clause is an election winner. Win for what? To elect a government called 'Labour' but implementing big business's policies?

These policies mean wholesale attacks not only on the working class but also on the jobs, security, services and savings of Blair's beloved 'Middle England'.

Blair's new 'reborn' Labour Party is a lie! For most of this century 'old' Labour and the trade union bureaucracy served capitalism well. They contained the working class and its organisations within the parliamentary straitjacket and, when necessary, betrayed them outright (1926 and 1984-85).

But unlike in 1945, Labour



Banner ready for the African Liberation Day march on Saturday 27 May, 1pm at Kennington Park, London SE11. Oval tube. Part of African Liberation Awareness Month (ALAM 95)

an immediate sanction on any future sale of arms to Nigeria and also seek to increase public consciousness of the devastating role of the British government in Nigeria's social, political and economic crisis.

Speakers will examine the

arms trade and those involved in it; the impact of the arms trade vis-a-vis Nigeria's development (or lack of it); on-the-spot reports of human rights violations by the military; and the socio-political implications of the trade on the

struggle for African liberation and total emancipation.

■ 'Death for sale — oil for arms', Tuesday 9 May, 7pm. Lambeth Town Hall, London SW2. Brixton tube. This meeting is part African Liberation Awareness Month (ALAM 95).

May Day march: 'Fighting for workers' rights'

Monday 1 May, 12noon
Highbury Fields, London N1
Highbury & Islington tube

Defend Clause Four! Defend socialism!

Lobby of Labour Party special conference
Saturday 29 April, 10.30am
Queen Elizabeth Hall, London SW1
Westminster tube

Market murder

IQBAL Masih was shot dead as he cycled through a village near Lahore, Pakistan, on 16 April. Iqbal was 12 years old, rather young to be martyred fighting for workers' rights; but then, he had been working in the carpet industry since he was four.

There are an estimated 6 million child workers in Pakistan. Their nimble fingers are particularly valued in the hand-knotted carpet industry. They tie the smallest knots, making the best carpets.

Last November, Iqbal told a conference in Stockholm about conditions. 'We had to get up at 4am and work 12 hours. We were chained to the looms, but after work we were usually released and could go home to sleep.'

A few days after his murder, the right-wing Institute for Economic Affairs in London issued a paper declaring that the use of child labour in poor countries reflects legitimately diverse labour standards'. Professor Jagdish Bhagwati, of Columbia University (who presumably didn't spend his childhood knotting carpets) attacked social and environmental campaigns for interfering with free competition.

We've heard similar arguments from Tory ministers, defending unrestricted exploitation. They opposed European Union laws regulating hours worked by children. Instead of raising poor countries' living standards to those in the West, they want to create a Third World Britain.

In March, I moved a resolution at the Jewish Socialists' Group annual conference, supporting those in the Labour Party defending Clause Four and public ownership. Tony Blair's proposed substitute for the clause had just been published, which celebrated 'the enterprise of the market and the scour of competition'. I spoke at the conference about the health service, and housing, or the lack of it, in Britain.

Another delegate reminded us that we'd just been discussing the carpet industry, and hearing about Third World debt-slavery and child labour. 'That's what free market competition means,' he said. The motion defending Clause Four was passed overwhelmingly.

Unbiased

ANOTHER big union has struck a blow against Tony Blair's attempts to 'modernise the Labour Party,' said the television newscaster on 13 April, referring to public service union Unison's special conference decision to defend Clause Four which commits Labour to 'wholesale nationalisation' (my emphasis).

A sentence later I heard the phrase 'union barons'. Not that the BBC is biased, of course... But Clause Four does not talk about 'wholesale nationalisation'. It engages various forms of public ownership, and democratic control. As for 'modernising', as a euphemism for introducing market forces, Unison members have seen it means loss of jobs and a deterioration in public services, and they rightly rejected it.

A question about Unison's vote to retain Clause Four was first item on Radio Four's 'Any Questions' programme the following evening. Transport minister for London Steven Norris, referring to the clause and its authors, got away with a gibe about it being 'something the Webbs wrote on the back of a cigarette packet'.

Labour MP Ken Livingstone attempted himself with suggesting Blair could win union leaders' support if he pledged Labour to full employment. As though that were incompatible with market 'rigour'!

Charlie Pottins

HOW MAY

THE first call to make 1 May the day on which workers in every country should show their solidarity came at the International Socialist Congress of Working Men, held in Paris from 14 July 1889.

The proposal that joint demonstrations should be held on the following 1 May, 1890, in memory of the courageous actions of the Chicago workers on 1 May 1886, was carried with great enthusiasm. 'This was the best of what our Congress achieved,' Engels wrote to Laura Lafargue after the congress.

There were about 390 delegates present, representing 20 countries, including almost the whole of Europe and two non-European nations — the US and Argentina.

The ceremony that opened the congress was held in the Petrelle Hall, which was filled to capacity and decorated with slogans and red banners, the main one over the stage carrying the slogan 'Workers of all Countries, unite!' The congress was opened with an inaugural speech from Paul Lafargue, one of the leaders of the French revolutionary socialists.

'The delegates from the whole of Europe and from America gathered in this hall,' he said, 'are uniting not under the tricolour or any other national flag, they are uniting under the red banner, the banner of the international proletariat.'

The delegates included Marx's and Engels's old comrades in arms from the International Working Men's Association (the First International, founded in London in 1864) — Bebel, Liebknecht, Lafargue, Longuet and others. There were former members of the Paris Commune, Frankel, Vailant and Jackard. Among the German delegates was the young socialist Clara Zetkin and others prominent in the Russian labour movement, including Plekhanov, Zasulich and Axelrod.

Friedrich Engels had done much to make the congress possible. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s links between workers of various countries had continued to grow. It

GEOFF PILLING looks at the background to May Day, international day of the working class.

became increasingly common to collect funds for striking workers in other countries and the socialist press in each country gave increasing coverage to activities of workers in other countries.

There were joint appeals against threats of military conflict in different parts of the world. For example, when Britain started hostilities against Egypt in the summer of 1882, this action was condemned by socialist and workers' organisations in Britain, France, Italy and some other countries.

The years prior to the Paris Congress had seen the great broadening of the movement, as it recovered from the defeat of Chartism in 1848 and the Commune in 1871. In Britain, for instance, the period prior to the first May Day had seen an enormous expansion of the trade union movement, especially amongst the unskilled workers, who had previously been excluded from the movement.

It was against this background that more and more calls were made for the creation of a new international working-class organisation. The German Socialist Democratic Party made such a call at its congress in October 1887, and this was backed by the French Workers' Party. But the French reformists — known as the Possibilists — also announced their intention to convene an international congress, to be held in the same city, Paris, and at the same time, as the one proposed by the German and French socialists.

This created the real danger that any new international association might fall into the hands of the reformists.

It was now that Engels intervened, against the hesitation of many of his supporters, especially those in France. Engels stressed the decisive importance of holding a Marxist-sponsored congress and that it would be dangerous to combine the two congresses — as had been urged by leaders of the Dutch

and Belgian socialists, for instance.

It was Engels who organised a signature campaign for a congress; it was Engels who drew up a plan for organisational measures and saw to it that these measures were carried out. As a result of this struggle, all the prominent socialists in Europe were drawn into work for the congress.

The congress convened by the Possibilists was attended mainly by trade union delegates, largely from France and Britain. Socialist organisations were represented only by the British Social Democratic Federation (although some delegates had been mandated to attend both congresses).

The resolutions carried by the Marxist congress reaffirmed that scientific socialism was the ideological foundation of the working-class movement. The resolution on international labour legislation and labour protection stated that 'labour and the whole of mankind can only be emancipated by the proletariat organised as a class on an international scale, which must win political power in order to expropriate capital and convert the means of production into public property'.

Other resolutions were carried, including one calling for the breakup of the standing armies and the arming of the people; it declared that the world-wide victory of socialism was the best means of ending war.

The congress dealt with the immediate pressing needs of the working class. It summed up the demands that had long been put forward by the workers of different countries and industries in their strikes. After the resolutions carried at the Geneva and Brussels congresses of the First International some 20 years previously, this was the first programme of the international working-class movement that systematically presented the immediate economic

demands of the workers.

Among the resolutions carried was one demanding the implementation of an eight-hour working day to be established by legislation; the prohibition of child labour; restrictions on juvenile and female labour; special regulations for night work and dangerous occupations; the establishment of a compulsory day of rest; and a call for equal pay for men and women doing similar jobs and 'irrespective of nationality'.

Clearly much of this programme is immediately relevant today, some 100 years later.

Of particular importance was the demand for the legal eight-hour day. For this had been a burning issue in the First International, led and organised by Marx and Engels in the 1860s. Marx and Engels had clashed with the anarchists, led by Bakunin, on this question.

The anarchists were in favour of the eight-hour day, but they were opposed to enacting it through legislation. They held that the workers, in their economic struggle, should impose it on the employers. But as Marx and Engels insisted, this would have created conditions for deeper divisions in the working class. For while the strong, well-organised sections of the movement (in the main, skilled workers) might have been able to impose such a demand on their employers, this was not possible for the weaker, less organised sections.

Marx and Engels insisted on the demand for a legal eight-hour day as a means to unite the working class politically against the employers and the capitalist state. Even at the 1889 Paris congress a small group of anarchists was expelled for their efforts to wreck the proceedings with obstructions during the voting.

At a subsequent congress of the International (at London in 1896) it was resolved that at the next congress only those workers' organisations that recognised the need for political, including parliamentary, struggle would be admitted.

And when the first May Day was



The Turkish Revolutionary Communist Party on a May Day march in London protests against massacres in Kurdistan

DAY STARTED



Turkish children with the red flag on a May Day march in London

celebrated, one of the principal slogans carried on many of the marches was that calling for the implementation of the legal eight-hour day.

Engels was able to watch the London May Day march (held on the first Sunday of the month) as it entered Hyde Park. 'It seemed as though the whole population of London poured parkwards,' said one report. 'There were dockers there in their rough working clothes, kid-

gloved, top-hatted gentlemen depositors, East End working girls in their feathers and finery,' he later reported.

Engels stood with other socialist and trade union leaders on a wagon that served as platform for the rally.

He wrote a few days afterwards to the German movement: 'As far as the eye could see there was an ocean of heads, 250,000 to 300,000 people were there, out of whom

more than three-quarters were demonstrating workers . . . What wouldn't I give for Marx to see this awakening . . . I carried my head two inches higher as I climbed down from the old wagon.'

But Engels did not simply watch the proceedings. He participated in organising the London demonstration and helped his supporters to break down the resistance of the reformist trades union leaders who wanted to limit the number of de-

monstrators and ban political demands.

A central committee was formed to organise the demonstration. This made sure of the participation of the new unions of the unskilled workers, as well as radical workers' clubs and socialist organisations. 'This is our first great victory in London,' Engels wrote on the eve of the demonstration.

Much water has passed under the bridge since Engels wrote these

words. Stalinism, with its theory of socialism in one country, struck an enormous blow at the internationalism of the working class, encapsulated in May Day. The reformist trade union and labour leaders have more and more turned their backs on May Day, trampling this great tradition into the mud.

One of the tasks of the rebuilding of the working-class movement is the revival of May Day, international workers' day.

Internationalism and 'The Red Flag'

TO KEEP the red flag of defiance flying in good and bad times has always been an inspirational as well as a symbolic act of immeasurable importance.

But the Stalinist left has never taken 'The Red Flag' very seriously. In reflecting the strong parliamentary bias of British labour historiography, Eric J. Hobsbawm's book 'Industry and Empire' (1968) achieved the feat of writing about British labour history without mentioning 'Big' Jim Larkin, James Connolly or the Clydeside socialist John Maclean. Moreover, Hobsbawm referred to the British labour movement's anthem, 'The Red Flag', without mentioning its author, Jim Connell, by name.

This was no accident. Hobsbawm was reflecting the Anglocentric bias of the Labourist and Stalinist 'left'. Since Connell was a defender of extra-parliamentary agitation, it was inevitable that he would not fit into the 'respectable' pattern of British parliamentary socialism. An opponent of H.M. Hyndman's English chauvinism

As millions of people the world over suffer from and struggle against unemployment, poverty and social injustice, celebrating May Day on 1 May 1995 will be more important than ever before. JAMES D. YOUNG writes on the Labour movement's anthem 'The Red Flag'

and support for British imperialism, very little has been written about Connell's anti-imperialist socialism from below.

James Connell was born at Kill-skyre, Crossakiel, County Meath, in 1850. Though not much is known of his biography, he was, according to Henry Boylan's 'A Dictionary of Irish Biography' (1978), 'a sheep farmer, labourer, journalist, and self-taught lawyer'. He came to London at some point in the 1880s, and he lived in Glasgow for a spell in the late 1890s. In Glasgow he helped the Scottish ultra-left or 'impossible' critics of Hyndman and the dominant leadership of the Social Democratic Federation (SDF); and in the early 1900s he taught Glaswegian workers Marxism.

'The Red Flag' was written dur-

ing the great London dockers' strike of 1889, and its publication in 'Justice', organ of the SDF, guaranteed Connell's place in the pantheon of 'Labour's mighty dead'.

Enjoying a history of its own, Connell's song or hymn 'The Red Flag' was reprinted, together with 'The Internationale', in 'The Socialist Sunday School Song Book' (1910). In the following year it appeared in 'The Socialist Sunday School Hymn Book', though the words in these two small booklets were very different.

In the best-known version of 'The Red Flag', the opening verse asserts that:

*The people's flag is deepest red;
It shrouded oft our martyred dead,*

*And ere their limbs grew stiff and cold
Their heart's blood dyed its every fold*

Chorus:
*Then raise the scarlet standard high!
Within its shade we'll live and die.
Though cowards flinch and traitors sneer,
We'll keep the Red Flag flying here.*

In the final verse, the words are intended to inspire all those who want a new society of equals:

*With heads uncovered swear we all
To bring it forward till we fall,
Come Dungeon dark, or gallows grim,
This song shall be our parting hymn.*

At the very core of Connell's understanding of universal history was the view expressed by the Italian Marxist Antonio Labriola that 'History is like an inferno'. It might be presented as a sober drama,

entitled 'The Tragedy of Labour'.

Consequently, when I interviewed the veteran Fife communist, Bob Selkirk, who was an anarchist before World War I, he told me that, in the late 1920s, the CPGB scratched out the verse which read:

*We hail the living heroes, too
who now in anguish pine
who wait for death in a German fort
or deep in Russian mine.*

By then, this verse was being used as a criticism of a Russia without Soviets.

Popular in post-1916 Dublin and Glasgow, 'The Red Flag' was to upset the king of Great Britain in 1924. Consequently, Labour leader James Ramsay MacDonald tried to get rid of it, though unsuccessfully.

Tony Blair's attempt to get rid of Clause Four of the Labour Party's constitution seems to be more successful. But the ever-relevant sentiments of 'The Red Flag' will become a material force by gripping the imagination of working folk.

The message of May Day

'NO man is an Island, entire of it self', wrote the poet John Donne, refuting some 350 years in advance Margaret Thatcher's notorious assertion that there is no such thing as society.

Next Monday is May Day, the day when we are called on by long tradition to remember that no national working class, either, is an island complete in itself.

Different languages, different skin pigmentation, different national cultures and national flags: these are trifles compared with the international character of the working class.

May Day is the day when we reaffirm our internationalism and dedicate ourselves afresh to the cause of international working-class solidarity.

On May Day we declare once again our confidence that the world's workers will help each other to throw off their chains and take into their own hands the world that is theirs to win.

No other force can turn back the rising tide of barbarism, racism, and fascism. No other force can put an end to world capitalism and build a new and truly human society.

FOR too many British workers this internationalist message of May Day was long forgotten or unheeded or vitiated — largely as a consequence of Britain's pre-eminence as a colonial power.

Many British workers enjoyed the crumbs that came to them from British imperialism's super-exploitation of its colonial possessions. That was the economic basis for the rise of a 'labour aristocracy', partly cushioned from the worst effects of recurrent capitalist crisis.

At the same time, schools, mass-circulation newspapers, children's comics, churches, and trade union and Labour Party leaders joined in an unholy chorus of support for imperialism.

'I'm here to see there's no mucking about with the British Empire', declared Labour's Colonial Secretary, J.H. Thomas, when he took office in 1924.

That the people in Britain's colonies were child-like 'savages', whom Britain was ruling over in their own best interests and was introducing (very gradually, of course) to the benefits of 'civilisation': this was a central, and widely believed, tenet of popular racism.

Within the British working-class movement only a small minority held out against the propaganda of empire and gave unswerving support to the colonial liberation movements.

Reawakening the spirit of internationalism in the British workers' movement means among other things taking a fresh look at that movement's history.

And on Monday morning, in their contribution to the May Day march — and as a fitting start to their African Liberation Awareness Month — our African comrades in the African Liberation Support Campaign (ALISC) will be doing just that.

THEY are organising a 'Black Davidson Contingent of Pan-African Freedom Fighters' to commemorate the 175th anniversary of the public hanging of William Davidson on 1 May 1820.

Davidson, born in Jamaica in 1786, was a cabinet-maker by trade. In 1819 he was appointed secretary of the newly formed shoemakers' trade union — the kind of position that only an exceptionally brave and resolute person would take on in those days of the Combination Acts, which made trade union activity a punishable offence.

At a time when Britain was seething with discontent, and a popular uprising was thought to be imminent, 'Black Davidson', as he was known, was a member of a small revolutionary group that thirsted for revenge on the

PERSONAL COLUMN

government of murderous tyrants, held responsible for the 1819 Peterloo massacre in Manchester.

One George Edwards, a policeman's brother, infiltrated this group and acted as an *agent provocateur*. He persuaded the group to kill the ministers as they sat at dinner, an act which would serve as the signal for a mass popular uprising.

As they were about to set out from their loft in Cato Street, where the group kept their store of weapons and ammunition, police stormed the loft.

Davidson and four of his comrades stood trial for high treason before the Lord Chief Justice and a series of carefully selected juries.

Edwards did not give evidence, but was sent to Guernsey to save his skin. The five accused were sentenced to be hanged, to have their heads severed from their bodies, and to have their bodies divided into four quarters; but the king graciously remitted this last part of the sentence.

Davidson, according to a contemporary newspaper account, 'ascended the scaffold with a firm step, calm deportment, and undismayed countenance. . . . [H]is conduct altogether was equally free from the appearance of terror, and the affectation of indifference.'

He called to the crowds: 'God bless you all! Good-bye.' The five were hanged; half an hour later a black-masked 'resurrection man', earning his fee of 20 guineas (£21), cut the heads from the bodies with a knife, then held up each head in turn and named each victim three times as a traitor.

The crowd — the largest that had ever turned out for an execution in London — went wild with fury. They hissed, groaned, shrieked, and shouted: 'Murder!' It was England's last public decapitation.

THIS was how the British working-class movement was founded and built — not by the Tony Blairs of the 19th century, but by resolute men and women prepared to face imprisonment, transportation, and even execution.

And there were Africans and men of African descent among them: 'Black Davidson'; Robert Wedderburn, the black tailor who was sent to jail for fighting for press freedom; William Cuffay, the black leader of the London Chartists, transported to Tasmania in 1848 for 'levying war on Queen Victoria'.

ALISC's initiative in commemorating the judicial murder of William Davidson is the first public acknowledgment of this kind, so far as I know, of one of those black workers who helped to build the British labour movement.

So it is a welcome initiative, a piece of practical internationalism, a reminder to us all that the workers' movement in this country was born and took shape, not within narrow national boundaries, but as a joining together of Europeans and Africans in a common cause, against a common enemy.

Hardly less welcome is another event on the African Liberation Awareness Month programme: the commemoration on 9 May of the 195th birthday of John Brown.

Brown was the white abolitionist whose two sons were killed in the 1859 anti-slavery rising at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, and who was himself hanged for insurrection, treason, and murder soon afterwards. That Brown's 'soul goes marching on' is another part of the internationalist May Day message.

Peter Fryer

Book review

Testimony to a nightmare

'Wild Swans, Three Daughters of China', by Jung Chang, Flamingo, 1993.

'AT THE age of fifteen my grandmother became the concubine of a war lord general, the police chief of a tenuous national government of China.'

Thus begins one of the most remarkable personal family testimonies I certainly have ever read. This beautifully written book, 'Wild Swans, Three Daughters of China', by Jung Chang, has captivated an English language readership because of its political and historical content and its high literary quality.

It is also an account of the nightmare of Stalinism that deserves to be read in the company of other great works on this tyranny.

What is different about this book is that it is written by a Chinese woman who chronicles the lives of three generations of women — her grandmother, mother and herself — from the turn of the century to the present day. It also tells the story of 'ordinary' people whose lives, suffering and fate would have remained in shameful obscurity.

It is not just the epic sweep of the work that deepens its humanity, otherwise it would be just an account of 'ignorant armies' clashing by night, of

'One of Chang's clear perceptions is that the extreme puritanism of the Red Guard leaderships claimed to free women but in fact enslaved them.'

endless personal suffering.

The shaping of this work is the 'coming into being' of the generations in China during the period of the book — survival has been a monumental achievement in the conditions of 20th-century China, but there has also been a struggle for consciousness, for what Marx called the 'rich human being'.

This work, or any other literary activity, cannot complete this process, however rich the work might be. But neither must we say that this incompleteness is because the writer had no access to Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution.

Chang's work enriches and confirms Trotsky's theory — and the 'incompleteness' of our grasp of it, along with the majority of the European left who regard themselves as Marxist and even anti-Stalinist.

The important issue is what we make of the relationship between our knowledge and theory with such a testimony, because the collapse of Stalinism and its surrogate nationalist movements will, no doubt, mean the publication of many more such testimonies — some of them literary and artistic, others more directly political.

The other important dimension to this book is that it writes about three generations of women and their relationships with men and women on a domestic and social historical level.

In stating this I am not repeating the simplistic nostrums of a stage in Western feminist literary criticism that the mere fact of a woman writing makes her work progressive.

The women's lives are distilled and focused in the book through the experience of one young woman's struggle to both understand and free herself from the straitjacket of Maoist Stalinism. Jung Chang's formative experience is that of the 'Cultural Revolution' launched by a wing of the Chinese bureaucracy in 1966.

One of her clear perceptions is that the extreme puritanism of the Red Guard leaderships claimed to free women but in fact enslaved them, just as the turn to the largely illiterate peasantry in the 'Cultural Revolution' served to destroy a generation of the intelligentsia

traditional poetry as a kind of personal vice.)

Her book begins with the disintegration and overthrow of the Manchu dynasty and the collapse of the new republic into warlord fiefdoms. Chang's grandmother was sold as a concubine by her ambitious father to General Xue, a local police chief and warlord.

She escapes the world of the concubine 'marriage' where a woman's survival depends on vicious intrigue, treachery and, occasionally, on mutual sympathy and support. She marries the ascetic but sympathetic Dr Xia, a man much older than herself, but is plagued by the rivalries and jealousies of his children from a previous marriage.

Chang's mother is born at the point when Japan invades Manchuria and creates the pup-

pet state of Manchukuo. In 1945, after the surrender of the Japanese, and during the civil war between the nationalist Kuomintang and the Communists, her mother, now a student leader, joins the underground and meets her father, the partisan fighter, communist and cultivated, self-taught worker-intellectual.

Chang's mother is born at the point when Japan invades Manchuria and creates the pup-

pet state of Manchukuo. In 1945, after the surrender of the Japanese, and during the civil war between the nationalist Kuomintang and the Communists, her mother, now a student leader, joins the underground and meets her father, the partisan fighter, communist and cultivated, self-taught worker-intellectual.

Chang's mother is born at the point when Japan invades Manchuria and creates the pup-

pet state of Manchukuo. In 1945, after the surrender of the Japanese, and during the civil war between the nationalist Kuomintang and the Communists, her mother, now a student leader, joins the underground and meets her father, the partisan fighter, communist and cultivated, self-taught worker-intellectual.

Chang's mother is born at the point when Japan invades Manchuria and creates the pup-

pet state of Manchukuo. In 1945, after the surrender of the Japanese, and during the civil war between the nationalist Kuomintang and the Communists, her mother, now a student leader, joins the underground and meets her father, the partisan fighter, communist and cultivated, self-taught worker-intellectual.

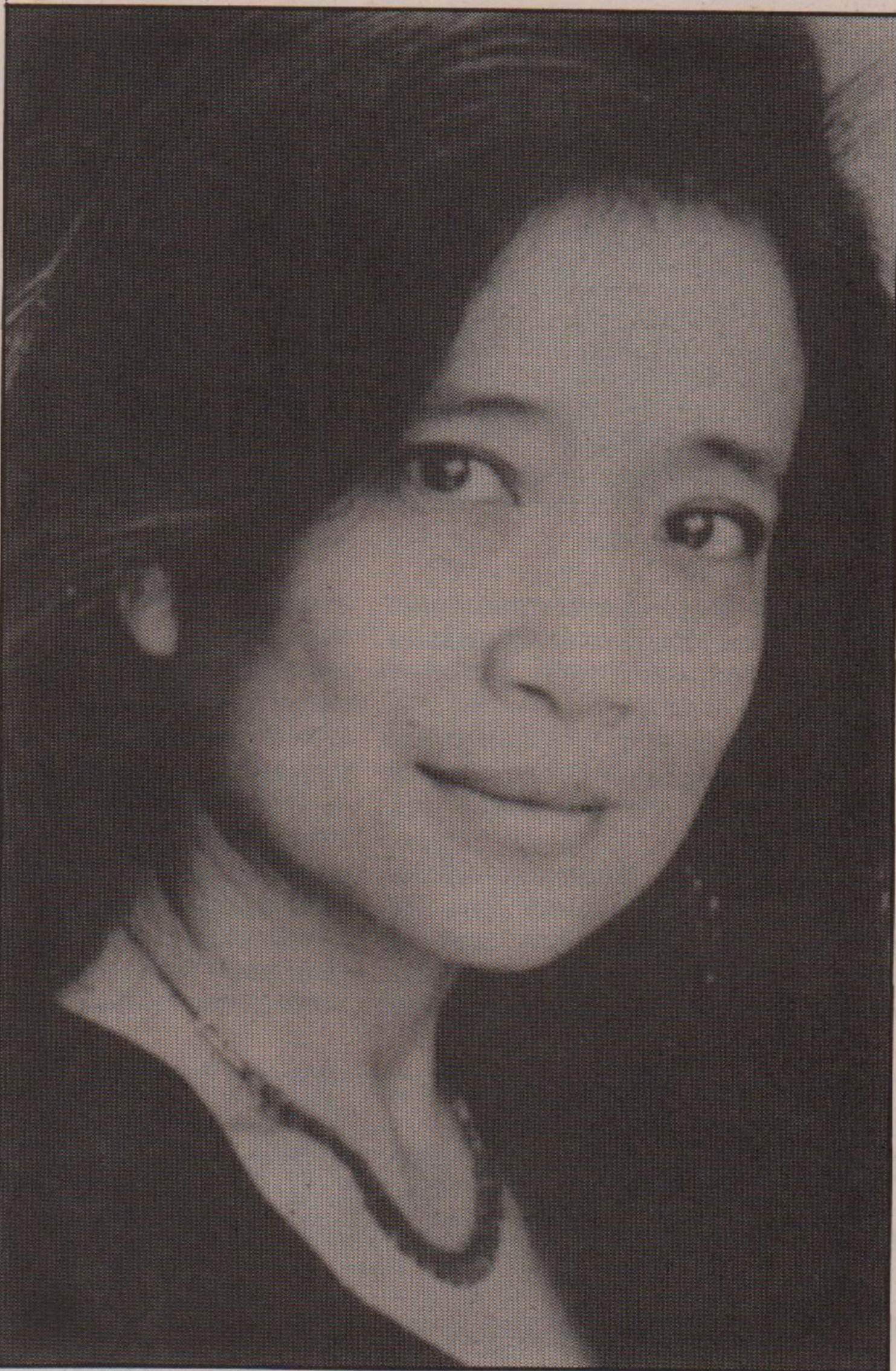
Chang's mother is born at the point when Japan invades Manchuria and creates the pup-

pet state of Manchukuo. In 1945, after the surrender of the Japanese, and during the civil war between the nationalist Kuomintang and the Communists, her mother, now a student leader, joins the underground and meets her father, the partisan fighter, communist and cultivated, self-taught worker-intellectual.

Chang's mother is born at the point when Japan invades Manchuria and creates the pup-

pet state of Manchukuo. In 1945, after the surrender of the Japanese, and during the civil war between the nationalist Kuomintang and the Communists, her mother, now a student leader, joins the underground and meets her father, the partisan fighter, communist and cultivated, self-taught worker-intellectual.

Chang's mother is born at the point when Japan invades Manchuria and creates the pup-



Jung Chang

and specialists. In a similar process, the working class, denied its hegemonic role in a 'Marxist-Leninist' state, was doomed to a struggle for sectional survival.

After the death of Mao and the return of Deng Xiaoping in 1977, Jung Chang gained one of the few scholarships open to Chinese students for them to study in the West, where she studied English literature and linguistics. Whatever her experiences were in the West, and whatever the joy she felt about her personal freedoms, she was impelled to return to China, to retrace her family's epic personal and political journey, to discuss, record, remember and recreate in meticulous detail the struggles they went through.

Chang's fine story-telling is prompted by her own political imperatives but also fed by an ancient oral tradition and a suppressed aesthetic and poetic sensibility which she shared with her father, a Yenan partisan guerrilla leader. (Both Chang and her father mastered the difficult forms of Chinese

and specialists. In a similar process, the working class, denied its hegemonic role in a 'Marxist-Leninist' state, was doomed to a struggle for sectional survival.

Chang's fine story-telling is prompted by her own political imperatives but also fed by an ancient oral tradition and a suppressed aesthetic and poetic sensibility which she shared with her father, a Yenan partisan guerrilla leader. (Both Chang and her father mastered the difficult forms of Chinese

and specialists. In a similar process, the working class, denied its hegemonic role in a 'Marxist-Leninist' state, was doomed to a struggle for sectional survival.

Letters

WE WELCOME LETTERS
More letters, SEND THEM TO: WORKERS PRESS,
page 2 PO BOX 735, LONDON SW8 1YB
— OR PHONE 071-582 8882

Dockers' breakaway was inspiration not manoeuvre

HAVING a discussion with Tom Cowan (Letters 15 April) brings no development. To paraphrase Omar Khayyam, evermore we come out of the same door wherein we went.

And that is because Cowan meets everything with a priori conclusions that have been settled for him for a long time and which he brandishes as fetishes.

In his comments in Workers Press on 1 April about 'the mass exodus from the White Union (Transport and General Workers' Union) to the Blues (National Amalgamated Stevedores' and Dockers' Union)', Cowan implies a dark deed from a report of John Archer about a report attributed to Bob Pennington of a meeting where Healy, Ratner and Pennington met three dockers.

The issue of a break to the Blue union was discussed many times by members of our group and it was dockers' leaders who

pressed us to support it. That is because it came up several times in the unofficial struggles of the 1940s and 1950s.

'Several discreet meetings were held,' reports Harry Ratner in his 'Reluctant Revolutionary'. And they had to be discreet, because the reporters of the capitalist press were always looking for meetings of revolutionaries with dockers, or meetings of dockers' unofficial leaders, particularly with Harry Constable present, seeking to report them with sinister connotations of a 'hidden hand' at work.

Tom Cowan (April), who made a great to-do about us discussing the Blue union in 1953, two years before the break happened, now suddenly tells us that his group, the Socialist Workers League, raised the idea of a break in 1949-50! Do we conclude that our group was not alone in the conspiracy?

Discussion on this level is ridiculous. To believe that the break came about by an adventurous conspiracy of a small group of 'politically motivated men' who manoeuvred 16,000 dockers; and to be able to discuss nothing but that about this period, means that my appeal in Workers Press (28 January) has had no effect.

I wrote: 'If Tom Cowan wishes to help fill in gaps in the history of dockers' struggle then I, for one, would welcome it. But let him do it seriously, objectively and with a sense of proportion.'

Cowan ignores the important things that dockers did and said. He does not discuss the statements and deeds in the book that show the support for the Blue union.

Cowan tells us that 'I was always active myself in trade union affairs'. But with what perspective? He says he does

not consider that the trade unions can be transformed into the class combat organisations that are necessary in the struggle for day-to-day needs and the long-term struggle for socialist revolution. For what reason then was he ever in a union? To tell workers that the union was a waste of time?

In one fell swoop he has abolished (in his own head, but certainly not in the heads of fighting workers) all the traditions, conquests and lessons of 200 years and more of British working-class history. He has also abolished all tactics in the struggle of dockers, or any other workers, in relation to union organisation — because there is no purpose for them anyway.

Tom Cowan may be able to tell us he was in the working class. But he was not of it. According to medieval superstition a witch or a warlock walked

in the rain without getting wet. One feels that this describes Cowan in relation to the whole period he lived through in the two decades after the war, when time and again in various industries and unions the workers' struggles were hammering the union bureaucracy, which had consolidated in the 1930s in a period of defeats.

And, as quite often happens with a position like Cowan's, it has its own conservatism. He is overawed by the power of the union bureaucracy. The structures of the unions are sacrosanct and not to be broken. However, that is not the attitude of revolutionary Marxists to unions — and certainly not of Trotsky.

Loyalty

To be sure, revolutionaries, so to speak, measure their cloth several times, before supporting a breakaway. But that has to do with the consciousness of workers, particularly workers such as the British workers, whose traditions in struggle gave them a loyalty to their organisations and mean that, almost invariably, unlike in France and Italy, militant British workers are members of a union. (In 1968 in France, 10 million workers went on general strike with only 10 per cent in unions.)

I wrote in my book, 'They Knew Why They Fought', the circumstances which led to the break to the Blue union, and of its validity. Cowan repeats his

conclusion without taking up the specific conditions of the time or the actual movements of men.

The most united and powerful actions of dockers to be seen in Merseyside, Manchester and Hull took place in defence of the Blue union. The book shows how they included Transport and General Workers' Union (the White union) members, National Amalgamated Stevedores' & Dockers' Union (the Blue union) and 'non-unionists'.

Behind Tom Cowan's conservative position is also the feeling that the break was not correct because it was not successful. So does that mean that the breakaway from the TGWU in 1923, which formed the dockers' section of the NASDU, or the formation of the Scottish Transport and General Workers' Union out of a breakaway in Scotland were not adventures?

But was the struggle of the northern men not successful? Read again what Peter Kerrigan said about the spirit in his area in the Blue union. (Only he and Joe Cubbin were members of the Trotskyist group.) Consider the pride in their struggle of those dockers of the Blue, who are alive in Hull, Manchester and Merseyside today.

You have to be completely bloodless not to feel the least inspiration or the least necessity to discuss the real struggles and to bring it all down to a level of manoeuvres, conspiracy and dogmatic assertions.

Bill Hunter
Liverpool

My late mother-in-law and a little sectarianism

MY LATE mother-in-law, who lived in south London, had an interesting Tooting working class turn of phrase. She used to say of a certain person: 'He likes to go out with himself.'

I regret to say this came to my mind when reading Tom Cowan's letter (15 April) on the fight by the Blue dockers' union in the 1950s for recognition outside London.

I found his attitude smug, patronising and worse, because in his inflexibility he repeats so many mistakes of the past, not least being purer than pure.

Cowan's main argument is, in reality, that trade unions cannot be transformed into 'class combat organisations' and therefore 'the break to the Blues' was 'a mistake'. Why can trade unions not become such organisations?

Combat

Cowan is judging trade unions of the past by the bureaucratized unions of the present. The early struggles by unskilled workers (for example, the match girls) were in new unions which were combat organisations. The struggle for the 'Dockers' Tanner' was also conducted by a similar 'combat union'.

Tom Mann and other socialists (including Eleanor Marx) organised unskilled workers into the 'New Unionism' set up usually in opposition to the right-wing-dominated craft unions, which were uninterested in such workers. In America, the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organisations) came out of the American Federation of Labour and played an important part in the struggles of the 1930s, particularly in the car industry.

There is no Marxist 'rule', or indeed of the working-class movement, that says that for all time we must only participate in existing unions. Surely, the only criterion is that which is best for the working class.

The Marxist movement has to evaluate the situation and intervene in order to help that class and, in so doing, raise its consciousness and simultaneously build a party that intends to fight for a socialist transformation of society. That may well mean building a new union — or in the 1950s transforming

an old union (the Blue).

There was no conspiracy and no 'bureaucratic manoeuvre on Healy's part (due to entryism)', as Cowan maintains. Bill Hunter says in his book 'They Knew Why They Fought': 'The Trotskyists supported and assisted the break to the Blue union in the north...'

Harry Ratner, in 'Reluctant Revolutionary', says the same, albeit in different words.

My recollection is the same as Hunter's and Ratner's, and like them I was on the national committee of the Trotskyist 'Club'.

We openly supported and encouraged the move and influenced 'Tribune' to do the same. The opposition to this move of the dockers included the Communist Party, the right wing of the unions and Labour Party, the TUC, the employers, and the right-wing press. Why do you think that was, if this development did not threaten all of them?

This motley crew spat out their venom because had the Blue union been strengthened and the White (Transport and General Workers' Union) weakened, it would have enormously strengthened the left in the Labour Party and unions — at that time centred around the Bevanites — and simultaneously pushed forward the campaign to democratise all the unions, which were then in the grip of the right wing.

As it was, although the trade union bureaucracy was able to defeat the move (only just!) by masses of dockers to the Blue union, this development was an important factor in the sharp conflict between TGWU general secretary Arthur Deakin, Labour Party leader Hugh Gaitskell and Co., and the Bevan group at that time.

For Tom Cowan to understand this whole movement as an 'opportunist' manoeuvre is to substitute a subjective analysis for objective reality, to belittle the independence and political awareness of the dockers, and to completely omit or underestimate the opportunities opened up to the small group of revolutionary socialists attempting to find a mass base among an important section of workers.

Dave Finch
Croydon



Strikers voted to join the Blue union at a mass meeting, with reporters present

Move wasn't totally planned or totally spontaneous

I WAS disappointed with Tom Cowan's latest letter on the Blue union (15 April). The disappointment did not arise from him disagreeing with my analysis of what happened on the Hull docks in 1954. Rather, it seems a pity that Tom tries to suggest that my argument is solely based on one headline in our local Tory rag, the Hull 'Daily Mail'.

This is unfortunate as I have sent Tom a draft of a pamphlet in which I develop these points in far more detail.

There are three key sources deployed in my pamphlet that previous writers on the dispute have not used. These sources are: Albert Hall, the Hull strike leader; Harry Constable, the nationally known unofficial leader who was a leading industrial member of the Healy Group in the 1950s; and the detailed news reports of the Hull 'Daily Mail'.

Readers who wish to read the full argument will have to wait for the finished pamphlet (due out soon!). However, I will respond to some of Tom's points.

Tom tries to draw some significance from the fact that the Hull 'Daily Mail's' main headline on 18 August 1954 stated 'Dockers Break Away From Union'. Tom says: 'Note that it merely refers to dockers leaving a union.'

Unfortunately for Tom, the heading immediately below it on the same article said 'Move to Join Amalgamated Stevedores of London'. The text of the article states:

'Lack of official backing from their union, Transport and General Workers' Union, led to the decision by the strikers to join the Amalgamated Dockers and Stevedores Union, of London.'

Decision

Tom asks who made the decision. 'A mass meeting? Committee meeting?'

The decision was made at a mass meeting held on the afternoon of Wednesday 18 August 1954. Tom wonders about the source of the Hull 'Daily Mail' story. The reality is that 'Mail' reporters were present at the mass meetings, which were held on open ground, not in smoke-filled back rooms. The strike committee had also met the editor of the Hull 'Daily Mail' on the first day of the strike.

The coverage in the Hull 'Daily Mail' was contradictory. Its editorial line was consistently hostile, as would be expected. However, its news coverage was detailed and factually correct, according to those involved in the strike.

A detailed reading of the different editions of the 'Mail' for the duration of the strike is essential to understanding what happened. The different editions enable a chronological account of the strike to be built up, which has helped considerably to stimulate the memories of the dockers involved in the strike.

The whole thrust of my argument has been to try to go beyond the previously published accounts by producing new information and analysis. In particular, I have tried to go beyond accounts that rely on a few articles in 'Socialist Outlook' in 1954.

I have emphasised the importance of James Murphy, the former Hull docker, who was the personal link between the

Hull men and those, such as Harry Constable, who were leaders of the unofficial movement nationally.

Essentially, I have tried to carry out a concrete analysis of a concrete situation. I have gone beyond a position of the Hull move to the Blue either being totally planned or totally spontaneous. It would be helpful if others in the debate could do likewise.

Keith Sinclair
Hull

While the editor welcomes contributions from participants on the events of the dockers' struggle 1954, the issues raised by Tom Cowan have been answered and this correspondence is now closed.

THEY KNEW WHY THEY FOUGHT
by Bill Hunter
Index Books, £7.95

'The historic struggle of the dockers' movement and the part played by workers from the Royal Docks are told in a fascinating new book' (Catherine Howard writing in the Newham 'Recorder').

Available by post from Index Books Centre, 28 Charlotte Street, London W1P 1HJ. Add 65p for mail orders

MAY DAY 1995: socialism or barbarism? — the stark choice facing humanity

CAPITALISM has brought us to this brink. In Rwanda: adults, children and babies, dead and dying thrown into open sewers; thousands forcibly marched without food or water to another hell-hole. The imperialist powers deliberately exacerbate ethnic and 'tribal' divisions, and arm their rival stooges to slaughter the people.

In the US and Japan, neo-Nazis and right-wing cults wreak havoc and murder. In Britain, Germany, France, Italy and Belgium, fascists and racists combine electoral politics and thuggery; in Bosnia: concentration camps and ethnic cleansing. Yet we are told to celebrate the end of the War in Europe, as the end of fascism!

Not a single day of peace in the world in the 50 years since the end of the war. Look at Korea, Vietnam, the Middle East, Cambodia. Capitalist 'peace' was established by the brutal suppression of the workers' movement in many countries. Where workers won certain gains, like the National

Health Service, or public ownership of railways and mines, these are now being carved up and privatised, whilst the Labour leaders ditch any commitment to common ownership.

We salute all those workers and oppressed people in Africa, India, Latin America, the Middle and Far East and China, who bravely, stubbornly and with dignity organise and fight for their human, trade union and political rights. On this May Day we remember our comrades Jose Luis Sundermann and Rosa Hernandez, murdered in Brazil, and the thousands of others assassinated and 'missing', fighting for the working-class.

But neither the brute-force of imperialism, nor its loyal servants like Yasser Arafat and Nelson Mandela, can stem the rising tide of the millions of workers and the oppressed. Imperialism has lost its main weapon against the international working class — Stalinism is dead!

Released from the Stalinist

lie that socialism existed in the former USSR and eastern Europe the workers begin to see the leaders of the 'liberation' movements in their true light.

In South Africa, workers are striking against the so-called Government of National Unity. Whose unity? The white apartheid capitalists and their ministers with the black would-be capitalists, to share luxury while preaching 'restraint' to the workers!

In Palestine, the masses reject the so-called peace agreement reached behind their back, which surrenders their land, their rights, their aspirations. Whose peace? Zionist occupation and land-grabbing continue, young Palestinians are detained or killed, only the uniforms of the police and jailors change.

Nigerian oil workers lead the struggle against the British-armed military dictatorship. Workers demand an end to the poisoning of their environment by the oil companies.

In Iran the 50,000 workers

living in the south Tehran shantytown Islam Shahr are being terrorised and killed for requesting the simple and basic right to drinking water.

The Kurdish people are fighting for their freedom against the NATO-backed Turkish state which is the enemy also of Turkish workers. The Chechens, victims of Stalinist genocide, are resisting imperialism's ally, Yeltsin. The Bosnian people, and above all the workers, are fighting UN conspiracy, and ethnic cleansing.

In Bolivia over 1,000 trade unionists have been arrested in the midst of a general strike before May Day. In Mexico, peasants and workers resist capitalist depredations, but corrupt union leaders call off May Day demonstrations, helping their government to do the bidding of Washington and Wall Street. Workers all over the world face the same big employers and bankers, who can move billions around the globe, and communicate instantly over 'privatised' telecom air-

waves; yet the workers have no common voice.

The death of Stalinism opens a new, favourable situation for the working class to reconstruct its internationalism. But as the wars in ex-Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union show, the Stalinist bureaucrats-turned-gangsters, competing for imperialism's hand, and allied with open fascists, exploit all the ideological confusion, backwardness and chauvinism they have fostered to divide and oppress the workers. Socialism has been besmirched, internationalism remains a small voice. But on this May Day, international workers' day, we say socialist internationalism can be rebuilt, not just in words, but deeds.

We aim to unite the struggles of all workers and reconstruct the Fourth International founded by Leon Trotsky and his comrades in the Left Opposition against Stalin and Stalinism. The million-plus votes for the Trotskyist group, Lutte Ouvriere's candidate, in the French

presidential elections shows the possibilities for building an alternative leadership expressing working-class revolutionary internationalism.

Internationalism is being put into practice in the Trade Union Aid Convoy to Tuzla, Bosnia in July this year. Three trade unionists from Tuzla received a huge response from workers in France and Britain when they called for their support for this July convoy. Now we must take up this call throughout Europe.

Actions like this show that internationalism is not just a word for May Day speeches. It exists in the heart of every worker and must be brought forward into our consciousness, in our solidarity actions, in our fight for socialism against capitalism.

Full support to the July trade union convoy to Tuzla!
Long live May Day!
Long live Socialism!

**Workers International
(to rebuild the Fourth International)**

Socialist candidate takes lead in first round of French poll

BY VERONIQUE RAKOSE

LAST SUNDAY, the results of the first round of the French presidential elections gave Socialist Party candidate Lionel Jospin 23 per cent putting him in front of right-wing Gaullist Jacques Chirac on 20 per cent.

The extreme left, Lutte Ouvriere, scored 5.33 per cent, while the Communist Party vote rose to 8.8 per cent.

At nearly 20 per cent, the vote for the extreme right came as a shock. Le Pen's National Front scored 15 per cent and with this new powerful showing has every chance in the near future to be represented in government.

Here also is a clear warning to the politicians. Not one of them passed the 25 per cent mark, as has been done in the past. None of them has popular support.

The results, however, are not really surprising. They are directly related to 14 years of so-called 'Socialism' and the betrayal of the working class by the Communist Party (that is the Stalinists).

French people are looking for a new way out.

Their votes clearly condemn the traditional parties. This explains the good result for Lutte Ouvriere and the agitated political climate in which many strikes have taken place during this campaign. Normally there is a period of 'class peace' during an election.

The evidence is clear. True representation is desperately needed for workers in France. A true representation that will combat the rise of fascism and racism and build a true workers' state. This can only be done through workers uniting their struggles nationally, and most importantly internationally.

Release Bolivian trade unionists

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

BOLIVIAN trade unionists and political refugees are asking for world-wide protests in solidarity with the Bolivian working class against massive state repression in their country.

More than 1,000 trade unionists, student and peasant leaders, and socialists have been arrested and taken to remote military camps in the Amazon jungle or the mountains.

Police and troops using tear-gas broke up a conference called by the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB), Bolivia's TUC, and arrested everyone taking part. Trade unionists and news reporters were clubbed with rifle butts. The mineworkers' union headquarters was also raided.

The government proclaimed

a state of siege on 19 April, banning all meetings of more than three people, and imposed a strict curfew. The military has taken control of streets, schools, universities and workplaces.

This brutal state repression is President Sanchez de Lozada's answer to a three-week general strike called by COB in support of teachers, who are fighting against privatisation of education, for higher pay and an increased education budget.

Siege

It was Lozada who, when economics minister ten years ago, froze wages while introducing huge price increases. Then, too, the government had to declare a state of siege against strikers. In August 1986 the army was mobilised to stop

miners marching on the capital La Paz to protest against pit closures.

Lozada has broken up the state-owned Comibol mining corporation. He is selling off state-owned companies at knock-down prices to his capitalist friends, and sacking workers wholesale.

Facing food prices reaching European levels, yet earning, like other Bolivian workers, less than £100 a month, the teachers launched a national strike which won wide support from parents and students. There were marches in the mountains and in the cities, where general strikes were called in support.

Telecommunications workers and miners have also struck against privatisation. In La Paz, teachers and other demonstrators clashed with police several days running. Defying the

state of siege, workers held demonstrations and barricaded streets. COB has set up an underground resistance committee to continue the struggle.

Behind the Bolivian repression are the big capitalist interests which are ravaging economies and attacking working people throughout the world. Workers in every country must demonstrate solidarity with the workers and peasants of Bolivia!

■ There was a demonstration outside the Bolivian embassy in London on Wednesday, demanding an end to the state of emergency and release of all trade union and political prisoners.

Add your voice to the protests by writing to the Bolivian embassy, 106 Eaton Square, London SW1. Fax: 0171-235 1286.

Workers Press

SUBSCRIBE

to the socialist weekly that tells the truth

Please send me
 10 issues for £5.60
 50 issues for £27.60

INTERNATIONAL RATES: Europe and Near East, £7.70 for 10 issues, 50 for £38.50; Americas and India £12.70 for 10 issues, 50 for £63.50; Australia, Japan and E Asia 10 issues for £13.70, 50 for £68.50.

Name

Address

I enclose £..... for my subscription, and an extra donation of £.....

Make cheques, POs payable to Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

Clause 4, not just words

● FROM FRONT PAGE
Labour government must be prepared now!

The working class needs its own party, a socialist party to unite this fight!

Socialists in the labour movement — trade unionists, those who want to build the force that can stop the fascists and racists, those who value health and education for their children — are faced with the, for many, painful question: Are you loyal to Blair's party or are you loyal to the working class and socialism?

It is now essential to break with Blair and his followers. We must take up the gauntlet that Blair has thrown down and fight him and his cronies. He must not be allowed to remove the working class from politics.

Surely the political funds of the trade unions can't be spent on a party that will keep anti-union laws?

These funds must be put towards building a movement that raises the question: What kind of party does the working class need to defend itself against the next Labour government?

The policy of the WRP, decided at its last congress in February, is this:

It is necessary and entirely possible to build a party which will not be merely a parliamentary appendage to the establishment, but can organise throughout the country to develop a

SOME facts behind the much-trumpeted support for Tony Blair's changes to Clause Four of Labour's constitution from the Communication Workers' Union.

Only those who pay the political levy were entitled to vote — 240,017 ballot papers were duly despatched.

programme against big business and the banks, for social ownership and control, for production and services for use and not for profit.

What is the lesson of the Clause Four fight? It is that no compromise is possible with Blair and his supporters.

Don't accept Blair's plan to sterilise the workers' movement. Begin to form organisations that can politically arm the working class with a party that is socialist.

■ Write to Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB, if we can help you in any way to do this.

Of these only 41,063 were returned — a vote of 17 per cent! The result, hailed as 'democracy in action' by Blair, was 36,000 for, 4,036 against and 196 spoilt.

The nine-to-one 'landslide' would have been treated somewhat differently if it had been against Blair!

Danish workers fight sell-offs

DANISH workers are rebelling against the Social Democrat coalition government's attempt to impose privatisation and so-called 'free market' competition on the country's public services.

More than 50,000 transport workers walked out on 20 April, in solidarity with 84 bus drivers sacked in the port of Esbjerg for opposing privatisation. Because of anti-union legislation which imposes heavy fines for secondary action, the workers' action was unofficial, but powerful nevertheless.

1 MAY 1995
The African Liberation Support Campaign and the International Trade Union Support Campaign invite you to a meeting/social evening on May Day.
7.30pm, 365 Brixton Road, London SW9.