

● The 'Crisis in the labour movement' conference

● Liverpool dockers show the way forward

# NEW TIMES — NEW TASKS

BY CLIFF SLAUGHTER  
WRP secretary

**TO THOSE attending today's 'Crisis in the Labour Movement' conference on the need for a new socialist party, Workers Press extends its warmest welcome.**

Especially do we welcome the Liverpool dockers and Women of the Waterfront.

Present at our conference will be trade unionists and socialists, members or supporters of different parties — or of no party.

What brings us together for joint discussion in the same hall is the growing recognition that something must be done about the building of a new working-class party. New times, new tasks!

Why? We all know the external signs: Clause Four abandoned; anti-union laws accepted by the Labour Party; Blair moving into the arms of big business and wooing the 'middle-class' vote.

And Labour does this while the working class is subjected to mass unemployment, mounting poverty and debt, reduced benefits, savage cuts in education and the National Health Service, and constant attacks on wages and working conditions.

The capitalist class is on the offensive. It aims to take back all the gains won by the working class in past struggles. And in this attack the Labour Party is serving Capital, not Labour!

But, above all, the working-class fight-back against this attack is starting *something entirely new: the reconstruction of the working-class movement.*

We must recognise that this takes place under conditions that are favourable to the working class. There are two main reasons for this:

■ First, the attacks which the ruling class makes everywhere, including the anti-union laws, are not made because of capitalism's strength but because of its weakness, its insoluble crisis.

■ Second, the traditional leaderships which have failed



Liverpool dockers Terry Southers and Herbie Hollinhead with Woman of the Waterfront Doreen McNally speaking at Liverpool dockers' support group public meeting in London, Thursday 7 March. Full report on speeches — centre pages

Photo: Alan Clark

the working class for so long are going into the dustbin of history.

The Stalinist bureaucracy has disintegrated. Labourism (social democracy) is revealing its true nature to millions, as it turns to help Capital:

**Destroy** the 'Welfare State';  
**Destroy** 'full employment'; and,

**Destroy** trade unions' independence from the state — the independence on which the dominance of parliamentary Labour in the working-class movement rested.

It was these considerations which led Workers Press to start campaigning over three years ago for the widest possible discussion in the working-class movement on the need for a new party.

## Believe

*But the situation has changed greatly in those three years, and more especially in the last few weeks! That is why we firmly believe the conference itself must change.*

In 1995 the Labour leadership confirmed what we had said about the need for a new

party by galloping to the right, abolishing Clause Four, abandoning 'full employment' as an aim, accepting privatisation, and continuing to endorse the anti-union laws.

Arthur Scargill announced his 'Socialist Labour Party'. The 'Socialist Alliances' began to spread.

**But now something quite new is on the scene.**

**The Liverpool dock strike is six months old. It is no ordinary strike.**

**The Liverpool dockers' fight must be at the centre of our conference, because they have gone a long way toward answering the question: what kind of party for the working class?**

A strike, a shop stewards' committee, a trade union, are not a party. But this very issue of overcoming the traditional and fatal division of our movement into 'industrial' and 'political' wings is right at the centre of the whole question of building a new party!

■ **THE LIVERPOOL DOCKERS** have worked successfully, against all the odds, for international solidarity.

They have travelled to the

four corners of the earth. And not only have they won solidarity action and moral and financial support. They have held a successful international conference of dockers from 15 countries.

## Struggle

*Their struggle and their conference have inspired new militancy in ports all over the world. They have organised as a workers' international.*

■ **THE DOCKERS** have rallied to their support the community of the ordinary people and fellow workers of Merseyside, in the first place their own wives and partners.

■ **THE WOMEN** of Merseyside are organised independently for the struggle. They are initiating a national mass women's action around the docks on 10 April.

They are stimulating the organisation and solidarity of women workers everywhere, nationally and internationally.

■ **THE LIVERPOOL STRIKE** is solid and strong, and it continues in the teeth of the anti-union laws, and

despite the 'unofficial' nature of the dispute.

By showing that it is entirely possible to fight in defiance of those laws, it encourages the necessary movement of resistance to them.

Here is a political fight that needs the industrial strength of the working class.

■ **THE DOCKERS** are organised with the highest degree of working-class democracy, referring back continually to mass meetings to which their elected stewards are responsible.

Yet at the same time the organisation is thoroughly disciplined and centralised, with authority to take decisions firmly placed in the hands of those elected to do so.

■ **THE DOCKERS** have initiated and published throughout the strike their own paper, the *Dockers Charter*, published by the Liverpool Dock Shop Stewards Committee, which organises, deepens and broadens the solidarity of the strike.

■ **THE DOCKERS** have responded to the propaganda attacks by the company, the

capitalist press and the latter's hired university hacks by enlisting the aid of writers, students and others to turn the attack back to its source.

All these things, essential to the conduct of an 'industrial' dispute, are at the same time political in the first degree! Here we see how the industrial/political divide begins to be overcome in the real movement!

## Change

Let this be the beginning of a historic change! For that division was in essence a mechanism for keeping the working class out of politics, for making impossible its political independence.

From here the next step is blindingly obvious. Out of the very need to fight and win as it comes under attack, the working class needs its own politics, its own party.

We must be guided in our discussion by the understanding that the task is not to 'supply' the working class with a new party, as some think, but to take part in the formation of a party of the working class.



# Workers Press

## Nobody should be fooled

HAVING tried to shackle the trade unions through a battery of anti-union laws, the Tory government now turns its attention to workers who are largely outside the trade union movement.

A leaked document last week exposed the proposal of deputy prime minister Michael Heseltine to stop sacked workers from taking small businesses to industrial tribunals.

His leaked plan met with an angry response, after which it was 'withdrawn'. But nobody should be fooled.

Ian Laing, the President of the Board of Trade, said that the proposal was 'immensely controversial'. Not wrong. Just 'controversial'.

And Prime Minister John Major said that the idea was 'on the back burner — with the heat turned down'. No doubt the heat will be quickly turned up as and when required.

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IF CARRIED, Heseltine's plan would mean that sacked workers would have no access to industrial tribunals where, in some cases, they can protest against unfair dismissal.

Not that this right is much to write home about. Workers at a firm for less than two years have no right to access to an industrial tribunal. Many workers are now on contracts for much shorter periods than two years.

In any case industrial tribunals cannot force an employer to take back workers, even if they deem them to have been unfairly sacked. This was graphically illustrated in the case of the sacked Tilbury dockers where an industrial tribunal established that the sacked men had lost their jobs because of their trade union activities. But they were not reinstated.

The irony is that the system of industrial tribunals was introduced by the Tory government under Edward Heath in the 1970s. The story told then was that as the government was to take away certain rights from the unions the law had to step in to offer some protection to individual workers.

But even the limited rights that workers now have in this area are under threat. The threat involves some 10 million workers who are employed by small firms. Many have no union and are among the lowest paid and most exploited in the country.

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WHY is this attack now launched? The fact is that capitalism, even in the advanced countries let alone the poorer countries, finds it increasingly impossible to tolerate a working class that has any rights. So profound is its crisis that it must reduce the working class to complete servitude.

Capital can no longer tolerate trade unions that defend its members. It can no longer accept laws that give even the slightest protection to workers.

It must quite nakedly reduce what the worker sells, the ability to work, to a mere commodity, something that is bought and sold by an individual worker — a worker stripped of all legal rights, without any organisation to defend him or herself. The capital-labour relation must be reduced to its essential form and content, with no mediation or 'interference'.

This is the corrupt and decaying system that Blair and company have signed up to.

It is this drive of capital that lies behind what the stooges of the capitalist class like to call the 'flexibility' of labour. The worker is to be reduced to a mere object, a 'thing' at the beck and call of capital. Available when needed. Discarded when not.

As the recent Liverpool dockers' international conference showed, this is an international trend. Workers throughout the world are faced with the same attacks, with the same threat of utter degradation.

But the working class, by its very nature cannot passively accept this fate. To do so would be to declare its very non-existence.

The Liverpool dockers have organised and led the fightback against these attacks, not just in Britain, but internationally. This is why their struggle is of the greatest significance. This is why it deserves the support of every worker.

# Letters

## Socialist Labour and the new party

SHOULD we join the Socialist Labour Party or should we form a smaller but more perfect WRP-based socialist party?

One way of looking at this problem is to counterpose the undoubted need for a revolutionary party with the undoubted reformist/centrist nature of the SLP with its outrageously undemocratic constitution.

However imagine the scenario of an election taking place and the working class being offered the alternatives of supporting a 'new' Labour, a Socialist Labour, a Militant Labour and a WRP Labour candidate(s), all of whom could be potentially claiming to be socialist.

I think many in the working class would respond to such a scenario with the view 'a plague on all your houses' and question who on earth was to blame for such a mess.

Of course all the protagonists could blame each other and undoubtedly come up with seemingly fine arguments to justify such a state of affairs, but most workers would think 'why can't these people get their act together'.

I think we should be saying to

these people that the problems of capitalism cannot be solved by reformist measures but at present the class needs maximum unity to defend its interests and we will therefore join with those in the Socialist Labour Party who are fighting for working-class and trade union independence from the state.

The bureaucratic and undemocratic constitution of the SLP we will fight to change at the first available opportunity — not for the purpose of allowing sectarian slugging matches, but to allow for the first time for decades the opportunity for socialists to openly and constructively engage and debate in order to maximise our common fighting potential.

We should also encourage others to do the same.

However there is no guarantee of success in such an endeavour, in which case we can say 'we tried with honesty the path of unity and it is not our fault that this has failed'.

In such a case the SLP would have proved to be a waste of time and we would have been seen to have tried to make the best of it in the interests of the class — we would part company with the respect of many workers.

Alternatively, and hopefully, we would succeed and a new democratic workers' party would come into being, a weapon for the class and an environment in which revolutionary ideas and experiences could flourish.

To finish, I would add that the WRP has for the last few years quite correctly orientated itself to struggles in the class — anti-poll-tax, Crisis in London campaign, Workers Aid for Bosnia and many other strikes and campaigns — on the basis that we should be in dialogue with, assisting and listening to the 'advanced' workers involved.

Many of these workers are now joining the SLP — we should be there with them.

Dave Parks  
Exeter

## Ellis Hillman

I WOULD like to give my own recollections of Ellis Hillman who died recently.

I met Hillman in 1985, the year of crisis and upheaval in the WRP, when he was a lecturer at North East London polytechnic.

He asked why the WRP was giving such unreserved support to Greater London Council leader Ken Livingstone.

A GLC councillor himself, Hillman had some insight into the relations between Livingstone and the right-wing of the GLC Labour group. He maintained that on key questions Livingstone would vote with the 'left' maintaining his credentials, while it was understood the right would win the day.

Livingstone's bluff was called when it came to the Tories' abolition of the GLC. Livingstone

abandoned it in favour of a career in parliament.

After ex-WRP leader Gerry Healy's expulsion in October 1985, Hillman recalled that previous to the 1953 split in the Fourth International, Healy had been the main supporter in Britain of Michel Pablo.

Pablo had turned away from the working class and looked to 'progressive' elements in the Stalinist bureaucracy and national bourgeois leaderships in oppressed nations.

Healy later followed a similar path in his uncritical support of Arafat, Gaddafi, Saddam Hussein, Khomeni and eventually Gorbachev.

Ellis Hillman entered the Labour Party on Healy's direction but didn't follow instructions to leave it. No doubt he could be described as a 'reformist' (which could not be applied to today's Labour Party).

I would just like to record how he helped me to understand what had happened in our own movement.

KS  
Barking

■ Michel Pablo (Michael Raptis) has recently died in Greece and was given a state funeral there! Workers Press has an obituary of this important and infamous figure in the development of the Fourth International which should hopefully appear next week.



NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION

# TRUMP the RACE CARD



THE JOKER

## MARCH AGAINST RACISM

Saturday  
23rd March

Assemble at Embankment  
12.30 pm ⊕ Temple  
Rally at Trafalgar Square

Speakers: Bary Reamsbottom, General Secretary CPUSA ■ Piara Khabra MP, Indian Workers Association ■ Dev Sharma, Executive Director Commission of Racial Equality ■ Prof. Muhammed Al-Masari ■ Mike Rahman, National Union of Refugee Organisations ■ Rev. Ronald Nathan, General Secretary, African-Caribbean Evangelical Alliance ■ Omar Bakri Mohammed, Muslims against Racism ■ Peg Alexander, Green Party ■ Lawrie Nerva, Board of Deputies of British Jews ■ Lola Onibiyo, Onibiyo Family Anti-Deportation Campaign ■ Narendra Makanji, ARA

Stop the Asylum Bill! Scrap Racist Immigration Laws!  
No More Racist Attacks! Stop Deaths in Police Custody!  
End Religious Discrimination!

## International Trade Unionist Bulletin

International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign, PO Box 18, Epsom, KT18 7YR, Britain. Telephone/Fax: + 01372 721 330

Vol. 2 No. 2  
February 1996  
Price 30p

The latest issue includes articles on the miners' strike in Russia and Ukraine, Bangladesh garment workers, Liverpool dockers, Indonesia, Germany, Pakistan trade unionist barred from Britain to speak, COSATU, Nigerian trade unions, McDonald's and details of the joint International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign/African Liberation Support Campaign international conference (Saturday-Sunday 8-9 June).

The next issue is due off the presses any minute! Send 50p for one issue, 80p for both, to the International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign, PO Box 18, Epsom, KT18 7YR, Britain. Money made payable ITUSC.

South Place Ethical Society  
Library, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL  
0171-831 7723 Fax: 0171-430 1271

Thursday 21 March, 2.30pm

## The Hidden History of Fossils

An Investigation (with lots of specimens) into what our ancestors thought about the remains of prehistoric life.

Mike Howgate MSc

## Uganda '96

African Liberation Support Campaign/Uganda Joint Working Platform for Democracy: 'Building a task force network for democracy'. February to April 1996.

Umoja Theatre, The Base, 59 Bethwin Road, Camberwell, London SE5, 1pm-6pm. Sundays 24 Mar, 7 and 21 Apr

Case 4, Sunday 24 March: The National Liberal Party (NLP) and comparative parties in Africa

Information: Kofi (0171-924 9033) or Alfred (0956 222 497)

## Sam Levy (1920-95)

A memorial meeting organised by his friends in Revolutionary History  
Sunday 17 March, 3.30pm

Fenner Brockway Hall, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1

## Index Bookcentres

28 Charlotte Street, London W1 1HJ  
0171-636 3532  
10-12 Atlantic Road, London SW9 8HY  
0171-274 8342

## SE London WRP

Lectures on Marxism  
Six: Political economy (2)  
Monday 25 March 1996, 8pm  
141 Greenwich High Road (near Greenwich Station)



# Women-to-women call wins solidarity

WOMEN in Teesside Bosnia Solidarity Campaign and the North East region of the public service union UNISON are planning to take a truckload of aid to a Bosnian mining community, in response to an appeal from women there to help rebuild their community.

Although they have been campaigning for support for the Bosnian people since last year, none of the Teesside women have been to Bosnia before. But campaigner Naseem Akhtar, who will be one of the drivers, told Workers Press that they hope their journey will be only the beginning of an ongoing relationship with the Bosnian women.

Before the war there were 10,000 miners working in Banovici, near Tuzla, in northern Bosnia. Like many places in Bosnia, it is a mixed community, with people from all cultural and religious backgrounds used to living and working together.

Whatever damage and deprivation they suffered in the war, Banovici people remained determined to resist the aggression of those who would ethnically divide communities.

On 8 March, International Women's Day, the 'Hand of Friendship' Women's Association in Banovici sent the following letter out to friends abroad:

Dear Friends,  
During the war our fathers, husbands and sons struggled to defend our country — Bosnia — and Bosnian women were their only supporters in those four long years.

As well as supporting her immediate family, the woman of Bosnia worked hard to support her community. The need of women to act in an organised way has been developed in our communities.

In Banovici our association was founded at a meeting of 100 women. Today the association has

many more members. It was established as a non-party, non-national, independent organisation to draw together all women regardless of education, background, age or any other 'category'.

The main decision-making body is an assembly of all members and then we have an organising committee of 11 members, and three members on a supervisory committee. Our main aim is to help women, children and elderly people.

The work is organised into different areas — women, children, elderly people and community institutions like schools, health centres, sports facilities.

Examples of the different work in which we are active:

■ **Community health, mother and child welfare, directly protecting and educating pregnant women and breast-feeding mothers.** Financial support to those in most desperate need.

■ **Education.** Organising pre-school and school activities to encourage creativity and talents in different spheres. Organising play and creative activities in children's clubs.

## Women march in Tuzla

WOMEN and children refugees from the 'ethnically-cleansed' east Bosnian town of Srebrenica led a 5,000-strong march through Tuzla on 8 March, International Women's Day, to demand international action over the fate of their missing menfolk.

Serb forces stormed into Srebrenica last July, driving out over 30,000 people. About 8,000 of the town's men and young boys disappeared. Although some managed to reach Bosnian government-held territory, evidence from eyewitnesses and mass graves has indicated that many were captured and slaughtered by the Serbs.

■ **Culture and entertainment.** Organise plays and other shows in the town.

■ **Fund-raising.** Looking for ways of earning money to run the association.

■ **Information and publicity.** Co-operate with local media to inform the public about association activities.

Up to now we have undertaken many successful activities which have been appreciated by the whole community.

We mainly concentrated on material help (food, clothes, shoes, etc.) to pensioners, school children, invalids and people who wanted to perform in sports activities.

In the future we want to move from bare survival to enabling our citizens to receive better services and facilities.

We want to provide equipment, furniture and educational supplies for the nursery children from one to seven. Then we want to help the seven- to 15-year-olds get proper sports equipment and educational material.

At present if a child wants to have a ball for PE at school they will have to buy it themselves. We

The women have held several protests in Tuzla, where most found shelter, and last month they stormed the International Red Cross Committee centre and government offices, demanding help in finding the 'disappeared'.

The international war crimes tribunal says it hopes to investigate mass graves once the weather improves, and expects protection from the NATO Implementation Force (IFOR).

■ **Left feminists and other women's groups surrounded the European parliament in Brussels on 8 March, in a demonstration of solidarity with the women of Bosnia.**

also have plans to renovate a cultural centre.

We want our hospital to have the proper equipment and medical supplies to care for our 30,000 citizens.

We know that the list of things needed for a dignified life is very long. In the past we used to obtain all these things by our own work and of course we would like to have them again. But now our community is totally exhausted by the war. This is the reason we write to you — women to women, mother to mother — to ask for support, no matter how small.

Politicians quarrel and are unable to settle anything with their conflicting aims, but women throughout the world can understand each other. They have a common thread which connects them and that is that they love their children and look after them. They love and care for their parents. In other words they have warm and open hearts and reach out their hands to all those who need help.

We are writing to you as our friends to invite you to come and visit our miners' families in Banovici. We reach out our hands in friendship, in warmth and love.  
Mersija Avdic

Naseem Akhtar, of Teesside Bosnia Solidarity, says her union, UNISON, in the North East has been helpful, but her group would like to hear from other unions and individuals who would like to help, or help make up a convoy. The Teesside women hope to complete their fund-raising in time to take to the road at the end of this month.

Naseem adds: 'We don't just intend to deliver our aid and leave. We want to meet people, and establish an ongoing connection between their community and the people of Teesside.'

■ **To contact Teesside BSC, call Naseem Akhtar, 01642 81615311.**

BY DOT GIBSON

JOHN BOWERS, president of the International Longshoremen's Association on the US East Coast, brought greetings to the 500 sacked Liverpool dockers at their mass meeting on Wednesday 13 March.

'This is a historic occasion, a tremendous occasion,' said Jimmy Davies, the Liverpool dockers' secretary. And Liverpool dockers' chair Jimmy Nolan recalled how 22 months ago, when Bowers first contacted them: 'For five days at "Peppers" [the local hostelry] the only tune being played on the juke-box was "New York! New York!"'

Transport and General Workers' Union General Secretary Bill Morris told his docker members: 'Thank you for inviting me to this meeting. I am not just pleased to be here, not just delighted to be here, I am proud to be here.' Speaking of the tremendous solidarity which the dockers had won throughout the world, Morris said: 'The dock company will never understand this. This is something you can't buy. It's not on a balance sheet. It is something we owe each other and give to each other.'

He guaranteed that he would be making the Liverpool dock dispute a central issue of the coming International Transportworkers' Federation meeting in Germany next week, saying: 'Unless we make a stand now, and put our mark down, it will be Liverpool today, Copenhagen tomorrow and everywhere else the day after. We want a victory that will change the face of international stevedoring.'

'I am here to confirm the union's commitment to that.'

John Bowers said that when his members refused to cross the picket line in Newark, New Jersey, before Christmas, Atlantic Containers Limited were forced to take a decision that they must pull their vessels out of the port of Liverpool. 'But the company didn't keep that decision. They did cross the picket line,' said Bowers. 'And now they know that they will be in trouble and therefore they have called on the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company to get back around the negotiating table to speak to representatives of the sacked dockers.'

He explained that this wasn't the first time the International Longshoremen's Association had stepped in and given support to dockers in such a situation. 'We had it ourselves in Local 333 and we made a loan of £350,000 to ensure that it

# Textile workers' new union office

BY NICK BAILEY

NORTH London textile workers have opened a new union office as part of their fight against appalling conditions and low wages in the area.

The workers and their supporters gathered on Saturday 9 March to celebrate the opening of the North-East London Textile TGWU branch office.

The branch was founded in June 1994 and since then there have been strikes in various factories culminating in the recent victory at Jenny Designers.

This is not your normal union office! The workers have renovated it themselves and want it to be open for any workers to call in and discuss their problems.

The mood at the celebration among the 60 workers, children and supporters was very buoyant. Speakers emphasised the need for unity and the common problems of workers in different industries and countries.

The banner across the shopfront at 72 West Green Road, London N15, read in Turkish and English: 'Long live workers' solidarity!' There were bouquets from various workplaces to greet the opening.

Textile worker Tekin Karrel opened the speeches with a report on their recent struggles.

## Officer

TGWU regional officer Bill Hodge said the opening demonstrated to employers that textile workers would no longer tolerate the present conditions.

Workers can't be defeated by the employers only by themselves, he said. He gave the example of the miners' strike.

He concluded by saying the TGWU's arms were open to workers.

RMT member Steve Hedley congratulated the JJ Fast Food workers. He criticised the TGWU for their handling of that dispute. The union officers had advocated the calling off of the morning pickets. Luckily the workers had rejected this.

The question now was what action and strategy was the TGWU going to use.

'We saw no union officials on the picket line,' he said.

## Union

The union, he suggested, could learn from the struggle at JJ Fast Food. He asked why TGWU General Secretary Bill Morris didn't back his members in Liverpool?

Hedley said the Liverpool dockers must have national backing. Referring to the new office, Hedley said that all union centres should be open and accessible like it was.

Union official Bill Hodges replied that he couldn't comment on the situation in Liverpool and said there were problems with any bureaucracy. The union was always happy to support workers in struggle, he said.

JJ Fast Food leader Ali Yildirim congratulated workers on their victory there. He outlined the course of the JJ dispute and said the union should be for all workers.

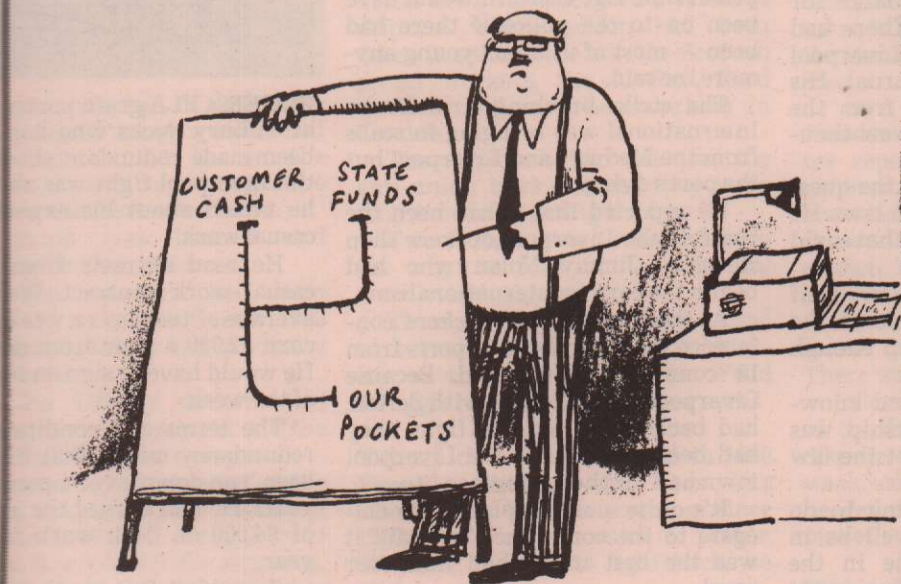
In every fight the boss would try to divide workers. Unity was vital. At JJ, workers from Turkey, Kurdistan, Russia and Cyprus were united in struggle.

A textile worker from Jenny Designs spoke of the important strike there which had won important gains.

'We didn't act individually, we had to fight together,' the worker from Jenny's said. 'It is very important to join the union. The problems we faced are not just ours — they are faced by workers all over the world.'

## US dockers' leader brings greetings to Liverpool dispute

'BEHOLD GENTLEMEN, PRIVATE TRACK'S PLC. NEW WEST COAST LINE'



# Jim Locke

WORKERS PRESS has learned of the death at 59 of Jim Locke, a long-term reader of the paper.

Jim joined the the WRP's fore-runner, the Socialist Labour League, in the 1960s but left following the unprincipled expulsion of Alan Thornett and others in 1974.

Always a working-class activist, Jim involved himself in many varied struggles, from being a militant trade unionist, to campaigning for the legislation of CB radio, assisting workers' communes in Spain, and organising tenants in Newham where he was a particular thorn in the side of the Labour council.

Jim always paid attention to studying history, particularly working-class history, philoso-

phy and Marxism, especially Trotsky's writings.

Among his main enemies he saw intellectual élitism, especially in education where he had worked as a technical instructor.

He was able to 'hold his own' in a debate on philosophy and would then add his ironic quip: 'But then I'm just a worker!'

Jim was restricted in his activity in later years by a serious heart condition but still tried to be of assistance to tenants through his expertise with computers, producing bulletins and using his skills to get vital information.

Workers Press sends its condolences to his sister, friends and neighbours in Manor Park who miss him greatly.

## WORKERS PRESS IS THE PAPER OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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

Please send me information about the WRP

Name ..... date .....

Address .....

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

Send to: PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB



# Inside left Westminster wildlife

TS! They hid in stairwells and  
ed through drains, ran into play-  
ounds, and scared the weans, and if  
are wondering where and when,  
y've scuttled out recently, near  
10 (with apologies to R. Browning,  
d to poetry lovers everywhere).

They're infesting the Grosvenor  
te, not far from the Houses of  
ament. Could they be Labour  
s rattling on their principles? One  
s sighted in a toilet bowl, obvi-  
sly a Tory looking for a safer seat.

Of course, the tenants don't find it  
ny. They blame Westminster  
ncil for not making sure the  
ains were capped.

We pay enormous service charges  
d exorbitant rents to make sure  
se jobs are done,' says Robin  
ams. 'But it's a major disaster.' (no  
n intended, I'm sure — CP). 'The  
ate office has just taken over the  
rk on the estate. Now that they are  
usiness there's lack of care.'

The rats may be coming from the  
w derelict former Westminster  
spital nearby. One ran into a  
ndy house where a child was play-  
g. Had the child been bitten, there'd  
ve been a long journey through  
ffic to the new Chelsea and West-  
nster hospital.

As for the council, though, how  
out a new slogan to attract the  
arists? 'City of Westminster —  
inned with Hamelin!'

And now, consider some creatures  
o live in the West End, feather  
eir own nests, and exploit tourism  
d 'tradition', while defecating from  
airy height on the public. There  
go again with your anti-royalist  
itics of envy, I'm talking about  
geons!

A young unemployed lad has been  
atching them in Trafalgar Square  
d selling them for food. West End  
staurateurs deny using the birds.  
r reporters have ventured to check  
t vagrants' barbecues in Waterloo  
derpass.

It might upset Anita Roddick, but  
ouldn't the *Big Issue* print some  
ripes?'

# Tooting commandos

HE battle of Newbury hit Tooting  
oadway, in south London, recently.  
coach taking security guards for  
e Berkshire road site was held up  
r three-quarters of an hour by pro-  
sters.

I suppose these layabouts have  
thing better to do and they've got  
do something,' said Malcolm Wood,  
erations manager for G and S  
avel, the coach company. 'We are  
ing about our legal business.'

Mr Wood doesn't like the trees  
ing cut down, 'but it is something  
at has got to happen if this country  
going to step into the 21st century.  
is by-pass is needed by people in  
ewbury.'

This dedication to the welfare of  
bers does him credit, even if we  
n't be able to see the trees for Mr  
ood, but isn't he being a bit  
grateful?'

Just think: If it wasn't for the  
yabouts' with nothing better to do  
an build tree houses, or hold up  
aches, a lot more people would have  
thing to do, because there wouldn't  
work for security firms. With no  
curity guards to carry, G and S  
avel might have to lay its coaches  
for the winter, at least; and with  
operations to manage, Mr Wood  
uld find himself forced to become a  
yabout.'

That's the trouble with manage-  
ent, they never think these things  
ough, do they?'

## Liverpool dockers: London support group public meeting

# 'Come and join us

BY MIKE COOKE

A FLYING start was made by the London Liverpool Dockers' Support Group at its 'standing room only' public meeting last Thursday. A packed room of 100 people heard of the dockers' struggle.

There was a new mood — that this was part of the steps being made to reconstruct working-class leadership and working-class internationalism.

Sacked Tilbury dock shop steward **Mickie Fenn** chaired the meeting because Liverpool MP Eddie Loyden unfortunately was down with the flu. Fenn introduced the struggle of the 500 sacked Liverpool dockers who had refused to cross a picket line. Their struggle would be six months old in two weeks. He stressed that their action was 'unofficial'.

Fenn spoke of the fears of the trade union leadership that in supporting particular struggles they might jeopardise the interests of the 'broader membership' through the sequestration of funds. But if the union leadership didn't support workers' struggles, 'what is the point', Fenn asked.

As one example of the trade union leadership Fenn remembered Sam McCluskey of the National Union of Seamen saying during their national strike at a rally on Clapham Common that they'd not give in. A week later he bowed down before the law.

The Liverpool dockers had been defying the law for six months, Fenn said, and they would win if they continued to do so.

**Doreen McNally** — from the Women of the Waterfront support group started by the wives and partners of the Liverpool dockers — described the board of directors of the Mersey Dock and Harbour Company as a 'pest' and a 'nuisance'.

She described how the Liverpool dockers' lives had been made such that they had no social life before they had decided they were 'sick of this'.

She remembered thinking before the dockers had taken action: 'Where's your backbone?'

Her father had been a docker and she couldn't understand why they hadn't taken action but she was 'delighted' when they took a stand.

'The docks are the pulse of our city, everything is port-related,' she said. Liverpool doesn't have manufacturing, it brings things in to distribute to the rest of the country and exports the things produced.

She said that they couldn't allow casual labour. Liverpool had been involved in the slave trade but slavery had been abolished and 'we're not having it back now. We're not going to have them turn us into slaves.'

She reported a comment from a docker from Tenerife at the recent international dockers' conference in Liverpool: 'We know our value.' Workers in Britain had forgotten their value, McNally said.

To those in the room she said: 'Get a sense of your value back. Get your backbone back. The employer can't make money without you. Everyone's got to stand up.'

To encourage others to take action, she talked of what it was like to have no wages coming in. 'We're still here,' she said. She described how the strike committee had arranged for counsellors to come in and discuss things like mortgages and debt. 'After the initial trauma, you find you can cope,' she said.

McNally had been to a meeting in Newcastle and had been told that people there were 'watching' the Liverpool dockers' struggle. But she said it was all very well 'watching' but why didn't they 'come and join

us' in struggle? She urged everyone to come to the rally on 23 March in Liverpool. 'I want everyone there,' she said.

She talked of the worries that a Labour government wouldn't help. 'Labour's got to worry about the groundswell of discontent,' she said. 'After all this time wanting to remove the Tories, there is a real possibility that people will not go out to vote for this Labour Party.'

She said there was a tremendous amount of support for the Liverpool dockers but they wanted physical support in struggle. 'Go back and be prepared to take action,' she said. 'This is everybody's fight.'

RMT national officer of the seafarers' section **Tony Santamera** from the London support group spoke in a personal capacity. He said there was a myth about the law. The trade union movement was scared of its own shadow.

Santamera described how during the seafarer's strike, when he was secretary of the NUS's Liverpool section, the union had its funds sequestered. But in Liverpool a van took all their stuff to the Transport and General Workers' Union office and the union operated from there for six months.

Santamera was disappointed that there wasn't that kind of support now for the Liverpool dockers. But there was a different sort of momentum which had shown the ingenuity of the Liverpool dockers.

He said the employer was still hoping to starve them off the picket line and we had to make sure they weren't. Donations to the dockers were political.

## International

Santamera explained the source of the massive international support the Liverpool men had seen: it came from years of solidarity from the Liverpool dockers to the rest of the world. They never refused solidarity.'

He said that in the case of the NUS this solidarity had unfortunately been one-way traffic because most of the vessels operating around the world were foreign-owned and foreign-staffed. While dockers could close down the port, British seafarers couldn't stop vessels coming in and out.

But now there was a chance for him to help the dockers. There had been a half page on the Liverpool dockers in the RMT's journal. His own union and seafarers from the US and Australia had given thousands of dollars.

Santamera then tackled the question of the anti-trade-union laws. He said there were two things that could be done.

We could confront the law itself but that was only possible if the movement could muster up enough support for a general strike.

But in the meantime, and knowing what the TUC leadership was like, we had to work to get the law changed.

The Tories weren't going to do this, but Labour might well be in government at some time in the future. The trade union movement had some influence in the Labour Party that it could use.

The noises from Labour's Tony Blair leadership was that nothing was going to change in terms of the anti-union laws. Santamera responded to some laughter in the audience by asking if there was another party that would be in gov-



London public meeting to support Liverpool dockers, Thursday

ernment in which the trade union movement had some influence. 'It's not around at the moment,' he said.

Helping the Liverpool dockers financially was part of getting the law changed.

In place of Liverpool dockers' shop stewards chair Jimmy Nolan, who was involved in negotiations, the Liverpool dockers were represented by **Terry Southers** and **Herbie Hollinhead**.

Terry Southers said that during the day they had been to a meeting on the struggle for human rights which made their struggle pale almost into insignificance. 'But we'll carry on,' he said.

Liverpool was the only union port left in the country but the men had been biding their time since the 1989 dock defeat. Young men had been brought on to the port who 'had a backbone of their own', he said.

The current Liverpool struggle had started as a small dispute which the employer had engineered into a big dispute. The employer had thought that the dockers had become brain-dead. In the first few weeks after being sacked the dockers had been in a state of shock, but then they started fighting back.

They had learnt from other people's mistakes. They made sure there were no fights with police on the picket line. 'Age Concern would have been on to the police if there had been — most of us aren't young anymore,' he said.

The strike-breaking firm Drake International was bringing in scabs from the Medway and Liverpool but the port's dying.

He reported that it had been the chair of the Liverpool dockers shop stewards Jimmy Nolan who had begun the turn to internationalism.

At the international dockers' conference there had been 17 ports from 15 countries represented. Because Liverpool council, along with Sefton, had backed the dockers' fight, they had been able to use the Liverpool town hall for the conference.

It's quite a smart place. One delegate to the conference had said it was the best union hall he'd ever seen!

The delegates had made promises at the conference for support and now that they'd gone back every single one was materialising. Even during the conference Greek dockers had gone on 24-hour strike.

A docker from Barcelona had been disappointed that his port didn't operate ship to Liverpool.

Dockers around the world could see these attacks coming their way. Spain and Australia had just voted in conservative governments. Within a week of the new government, attacks had begun on the Australian dockers.

Internationalism had so far been the mainstay of the Liverpool dispute. The Liverpool dockers understood that people were frightened and they had broad shoulders. They could take it on.

Southers ended by quoting James Connolly: 'If you don't fight you lose, if you do fight you can win.'

Herbie Hollinhead had been a docker for 30 years. 'I got sacked for not crossing a picket line,' he said. 'It's a basic right that.'

Support was coming from all over the world, even Russia, China and Japan.

The employers were hitting workers where they could. They wanted us touching our caps.

'After six months I still wouldn't cross a picket line,' he declared.

Jemal from the JJ Fast Food dispute

# 'When y the uni

ROGER, a PLA grain porter working at Tilbury docks who had recently been made redundant showed what the Liverpool fight was about when he talked about his experiences of casual work.

He read extracts from his new casual work contract. Working an average of two days a week, he could earn £2,000 a year from dock work. He would have to sign on for the rest of the week.

The terms and conditions of his redundancy meant that his job had been 'run down' over a period of two years. He had earned the grand sum of £4,000 on dock work in the last year.

'I couldn't live on that and so of course I signed on. So you pay for me.'

He reported that the grain terminal made £2 million profit a year and employed only 50 permanent dockers. The rest are casuals.

He had never been a registered docker.

When the National Dock Labour



# s in struggle'



7 March Photo: Alan Clark

said that despite winning the industrial tribunal it was still going on.

'When we turned up for work the boss went back on his undertaking to recognise the union,' he said.

Jemal was also critical of the contract being offered by the boss. 'It's very bad,' he said. 'We want our rights not just what he wants.'

'We did something but we can do more. We have to fight we have to go to other workers. We have to start other disputes and take up other problems.'

He described how workers in boroughs like Southwark and Harrow had refused JJ Fast Food material for school meals, etc.

'Two hundred schools broke their contracts to support us,' he reported.

One of the JJ Fast Food support group members, **Liz Knight**, elaborated on their dispute. She said that many of the workers were political refugees from Turkey. Some were Kurdish. They already had big experiences of struggle — some had been imprisoned and tortured in their home countries.

The conditions at JJ Fast Food had

## you lose on . . .

Scheme was abolished in 1989 many at Tilbury hoped things would be all right. Nobody would be 'on the register' any more. They thought the employer would look after them.

The union was banned and recognition had been removed.

The shop stewards had been immediately sacked and since 1989 all the union activists had gradually been removed.

Now the Tilbury dockers had their heads on the ground all the time and had lost all self-respect.

He was an active member of the union and a branch officer. He hoped that if the Liverpool struggle was successful it would lift the situation. He was surprised that the union was not doing more.

Of the Tilbury port employer he said: 'Nothing is ever enough for them.'

They were offering less than £6 a hour for casual labour and wanted to push the rate down even further.

'When you lose the union you just go down and down,' he said.

been very bad. No lunch or tea breaks. A 70-hour week for between £130 and £180.

The JJ Fast Food workers had fought against all the odds and against police and thug violence. Some injured workers had had to be taken to hospital by helicopter ambulance. One police officer had broken the leg of a picket. Water cannon had been brought to the scene and the police had taken over a warehouse as an operations' centre. Police vans were everywhere.

They had had mass pickets but the workers had also escalated the dispute in other ways. The TGWU hadn't given official recognition to the dispute so there was no strike pay. There was hardship money from the union which was £35 a week which wasn't sufficient to keep the workers' families.

The support campaign had gone to other workplaces and got support. Despite some obstruction from the leadership, ordinary union members had put themselves out, particularly in the public service union UNISON. They had risked their jobs by refusing to handle JJ produce.

## Dawn

The JJ Fast Food workers and supporters had felt part of the Liverpool dispute. She described the terrific feeling when at dawn one morning, Liverpool dockers had joined the JJ Fast Food picket at its Tottenham Hale plant in north London.

She also described the knock-on effect of the JJ Fast Food dispute where workers in the textile industry in Hackney, east London, had ignored the anti-union laws and taken on the employer. In 24 hours the employer caved in and their dispute had been won.

The meeting was then made open to discussion and questions. An **Iraqi socialist** expressed his support for the Liverpool dockers. He said that during the long wars in the Gulf many workers had killed each other and said that the capitalists fought each other by the workers' hands.

**Peter Gibson** stressed the need of those at the meeting to go back to their organisations and get another donation for the dockers.

The TGWU executive had supported the Liverpool dockers but had ducked the issue of the anti-union laws. He described a series of disputes where action had been taken in spite of the law: the Scottish postal workers, the JJ Fast Food workers and now bus workers in London.

The employers had not used the anti-union laws because they were frightened of lighting the fuse.

Two donations to Liverpool from the organisations at the meeting were 'overdue', he said.

There was a need to build a head of steam in the unions, he said, pointing to the way the JJ Fast Food struggle had sparked off other areas.

Tilbury dock leader sacked in 1989 **Frankie Shilling** said that this attack had been happening since 1980 after Thatcher came to power. 'We have to start to fight back,' he said.

'The fight back was started in 1984 with the miners but we ducked out.' It was not only the dock industry but the working class that was under attack.

He was not surprised at the press boycott on the Liverpool dispute except for 'the periodicals we print'.

He described his four years at the

industrial tribunal after he was sacked at Tilbury. 'The employer is out to attack organised Labour,' he said. 'Liverpool is in the vanguard of the fight.'

He described how in 1989 Tory minister Norman Fowler had said there would be no casualisation on the docks. 'The Tories will tell you lies to placate people going into dispute,' he said.

He called on the 'factions' at the meeting to organise support for Liverpool. It was an 'attack on all of us by organised capital'.

London support group member **Simon Donovan** came from a dockers' family in Bermondsey. Once everyone there and in Newham had worked on the docks but now the jobs were gone. He said it was inspiring to hear how the Liverpool dockers were fighting for the younger generation.

He was critical of the way London had been slow to come to Liverpool's support. It was key because there were tremendous resources in the capital and a lot of money could be raised.

**Dot Gibson**, part of the London support group, talked of how internationalism had dominated the Liverpool dispute. She had worked politically with dockers, particularly at Tilbury, since 1989.

Replying to those who criticised the Labour leaders but offered no alternative but an abstract 'building of the party' she said: 'The leadership is here in the Liverpool dock dispute. It is being constructed. The leadership of the working class is being reconstructed.'

'The socialist groups, the Socialist Workers' Party, Militant, the WRP are all welcome to take part but under one condition: that they understand that the leadership of the dispute is in the hands of the Liverpool dockers.'

She reported that Women of the Waterfront were organising a women's day on 10 April. This was to start at 11am with a march to the main gate, a picket and speeches, lunch and a meeting in the afternoon. Doreen McNally represented those who had never met or taken part in such activities before. It was important to listen to what people are experiencing today.

At the international conference McNally had said that when the women had met they realised that their men were not alone. They were being treated like machines, to be turned on and off like a tap. It was the same at Fords and other workplaces.

Camden UNISON chair **Liz Leicester** reported that her branch had given support to the Liverpool dockers and were themselves under threat from the Labour-controlled council. The council wants to impose a new contract. The council was threatening to sack the workforce *en masse* to impose the new contract. There was a strike ballot in progress.

Leicester stressed the importance of the Hillingdon hospital cleaners dispute. They refused to take a £30 a week cut and were sacked. They needed support on their 56-strong picket.

Mickie Fenn reported that under very difficult conditions, and with the possibility of sacking, somebody with 'incredible guts' on the Tilbury docks had managed to go around the workers there and collect £1,700 for Liverpool.

■ Details of London support group meetings: phone 0171-627 8666.

## Science focus

A monthly column by Daniel Robertson, principal scientist at a leading bio-technology company

### Chemical warfare threat

NO not the threat of imminent chemical war — but the dangers posed by massive stockpiles of nasty weapons left over from the cold war.

What can you do with several thousand tons of mustard gas and over a million chemical weapons — all prone to leaking and destined to be destroyed under the Chemical Weapons Convention?

These massive stockpiles are not stable. Like any manufactured product they deteriorate with time and have to be contained at great cost. A big problem is the 300,000 M-55 rockets containing sarin nerve gas.

Unfortunately they have found that after several decades the sarin corrodes its aluminium casing and leaks through to chemicals that prevent the rocket fuel from spontaneously igniting.

The result is potentially explosive. About 10,000 rockets are believed to have already started to corrode and are having to be contained in progressively larger containers as the leaks accelerate. So the US could soon be waging chemical warfare on itself!

The safest solution is to incinerate the stockpiles, even though the cost has escalated from under \$2 billion to over \$12 billion and is still growing.

The incineration programme is ten years behind schedule and has only disposed of 3 per cent of the material. The chief safety officer at a new incinerator plant was fired for warning of 119 design and operational problems.

If the US is having such headaches with rotting chemicals of death just think of the former Soviet Union's even greater chemical armoury.

### Nature's chemical war

NATURE can conduct its own forms of chemical warfare in response to human irresponsibility.

Warmer oceans, overloaded with untreated sewage and fertiliser drained from intensively farmed land, are becoming ideal breeding grounds for species of deadly microbes that kill fish and threaten human health.

Under ideal growth conditions these bugs can stain the oceans red for hundreds of miles. They produce toxins that have killed up to a billion fish at a time. Even if not fatal, the fish may stop breeding. Poisonous fumes given off by these blooms have poisoned fishermen. Lab workers handling cultures have been affected by symptoms such as dramatic memory loss.

Paralytic shellfish poisoning, which is killing growing numbers of people, is also caused by these organisms. The cumulative but unknown effect of sub-lethal doses in sea food is a growing cause for concern.

These red tides will increase in regularity and scope as global warming and environmental pollution increase. The full effect is unpredictable but serious — until another 'red tide' washes away the crazy system that exposes humans to such a threat.

### Nightmare returns

IT IS difficult — except for the very oldest generation and those of us with our roots in 'Third World' countries — to imagine a world where many of one's brothers and sisters fail to survive to adulthood.

Big families were the answer to the scourge of diseases that took away many young lives. Of course this is all still familiar to many people in underdeveloped countries — but could it return here?

Diseases such as diphtheria, which had largely been eradicated internationally by immunisation programmes, are again on the increase.

The collapse of health programmes caused by attempts to

reintroduce market economics to eastern Europe is one cause.

Programmes in poorer countries are also under pressure, after several decades of progress. The corrupt military junta in Nigeria has allowed that country's previously effective programmes to collapse.

The result is an epidemic of meningitis that has killed 15,000 children. This has been compounded by the high cost of drugs that ordinary Nigerians cannot afford. The measles vaccination programme that even five years ago covered a majority of children has almost disappeared.

Oppressed countries' health programmes have been battered by IMF 'reforms'. The free market seems to bring disease wherever it touches.

And antibiotic-resistant super-diseases are causing epidemics in hospitals. Over-reliance for too many years on antibiotic treatments causes resistant strains to develop.

Resistance to disease also reflects quality of nutrition.

Increasing poverty here and failing health programmes around the world — combined with the emergence of new, or drug resistant diseases — could bring back this forgotten nightmare.

### You are what you eat

HAVING been recently nagged by my doctor to give serious thought to my diet, I have been scouring the shelves for 'healthy' food. I have been surprised how little food available deserves this description.

I am paying the price for many years of apparently rich and varied, but no doubt unhealthy eating habits. But to what extent is healthy eating a matter of concern to capitalism — and how practicable is it to eat healthily?

The poor are denied access to the basic but nutritious food that their parents could enjoy to maintain a minimum standard of health and are forced to fall back on processed junk.

Government nutrition advisers, despite heavy state censorship, are warning that millions of people in Britain are at threat from declining nutritional standards.

They secretly acknowledge that this is caused by growing poverty. In the last century the symptoms were scurvy and rickets, now Britain almost leads the developed world in cancer and heart disease, caused by poor eating.

Diets low in essential vitamins and minerals mean quite bluntly malnutrition. This is increasingly the fate of workers in declining industrial areas. Supermarkets have moved out of town, cutting non-cash owners off from fresh food. Cooking skills in the young are disappearing under the McDonald's onslaught. Local shops stock little fresh produce — poor families do not have the freezers necessary to stock up on healthier food.

The affluent consumer is bombarded with heavily promoted fancy foods which pose a continuing threat to the value of the fresh fruit and vegetables that such people are able to afford.

Much of the fancy fresh fruits and vegetables in supermarkets is now freighted around the world, causing unsustainable levels of pollution and increasingly distorting food production in 'Third World' countries away from feeding local people.

This two-fold assault on human health by the capitalist market is a threat to all — from the single mother isolated in a tower block, starving herself so she can feed her children, to the complacent middle classes stuffing themselves towards their first heart attack.

A socialist society would ensure that its citizens were informed of the importance of diet, had access to plenty of nutritious food that is largely produced locally in an environmentally-friendly manner and that the promotion of poisonous junk for profit ends for ever.



## What we owe to eastern music

FOUR years ago there was a heated controversy about the teaching of music and musical history in the national curriculum. In that controversy two sharply opposed views emerged.

The traditionalists, as they may be called, held that since there was new emphasis in the national curriculum on the 'western cultural tradition', teachers should 'expose children to that heritage'. So said David Pascall, chairman of the National Curriculum Council (as quoted in the *Guardian*, 14 January 1992).

The innovators countered that 'it goes against our recent experience of music — where tradition has dissolved, where Indian ragas are as accessible as [the 14th-century French composer] Machaut, where Balinese music can rub shoulders with rap and pop — to limit our experience to the great classics (with Lennon/McCartney as a sop to the contemporary world)'.  
And Nicholas Kenyon, who wrote these words (*Observer*, 2 February 1992), added: 'It is odd and disturbing that the Education Secretary [Kenneth Clarke] should seek to reassert the primacy of this Western "tradition", as if nothing had happened to the musical repertory in the last 20 years and school music was still defined by the pieces in Associated Board piano exams.'

Now, the notion of a pure western musical tradition, that has developed in isolation from music outside Europe, is highly dubious. Its validity was first challenged as far back as 70 years ago by the prolific scholar Henry George Farmer (1882-1965), whose work on the Arabian influence on western music and on European musical theory, led to a heated debate.

I came across some of Farmer's work in the early 1980s when I was writing my book *Staying Power: The history of black people in Britain* (1984).

Valuable information on the black musicians who worked and played in British army bands in the 18th and early 19th centuries is to be found in Farmer's *Rise and Development of Military Music* (1912), *Handel's Kettledrums* (1950), and *History of the Royal Artillery Band* (1954).

Recently I've been doing some research on Farmer's life and work; some of my findings were unexpected and may be of interest to Workers Press readers.

Henry George Farmer was not only a scholar but also a practising musician and composer. He was born in Birr Barracks, Crionchoill (Crinkle), Ireland in 1882, the son of a soldier in the Leinster Regiment.

At the age of 14 Farmer joined the Royal Artillery Band as violinist and clarinetist, and was soon appointed its principal horn player.

Discharged from the army in 1911, he became a conductor of theatre orchestras and for 33 years served as musical director of Glasgow's Empire Theatre. In 1919 he founded the Glasgow Symphony Orchestra, which he conducted until 1943, giving Sunday concerts in the Winter Gardens and in public parks.

As a young man he wrote for socialist and freethought periodicals. In 1911 he contributed to *The Social-Democrat*, the monthly review of Harry Quelch's Social-Democratic Party (soon to become the British Socialist Party), a series of four articles on 'The intellectual life of the Paris Commune'; and G.W. Foote's *Freethinker* ran articles by him on 'Art and pessimism' (1907) and 'Freethought and the Army' (1914).

I don't know whether Farmer formally joined the socialist movement, but he was clearly running a risk in merely writing for its press while he was in the army. In the manuscript of an

## PERSONAL COLUMN

unpublished biography of the music critic Ernest Newman, written in 1962, he states: 'For my political and religious heresies I was being systematically victimized.'

Farmer's series on the Paris Commune contained a vigorous defence of its policy on the arts and on education. For many years he was an active member of the Musicians' Union, being elected to its executive in 1927 and editing its journal from 1929 to 1933.

FARMER's interest in Arabian music was kindled when he read the first-hand account of the subject by Francisco Salvador-Daniel (1831-71), a Saint-Simonian who was director of the Paris Conservatoire of Music under the Paris Commune and, as one of the Commune's defenders, was captured by government troops and shot out of hand.

It was typical of Farmer's thoroughness that his 1914 translation of Salvador-Daniel's *La Musique arabe* (1863) was much more than a translation. He added 90 pages of 'Notes on Arab Music and Musical Instruments' and, while working on those notes, decided he must learn Arabic in order to study the sources at first hand. To this end he enrolled as an external student at Glasgow University and, though busy conducting every week-night, graduated MA in 1924.

From then onwards there poured from his pen a constant stream of learned papers and books on Arabian music and its influence in Europe, beginning with the provocative 'Clues for the Arabian Influence on European Musical Theory', published in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1925).

Besides showing that 'Arabian sciences played an important part in the intellectual awakening of England', this early challenge to the Eurocentric view of cultural history listed innumerable debts that European music owes to the Arabs.

Lute; guitar; rebec (a bowed instrument, usually three-stringed); naker (kettledrum); tabor (small drum); shawm (a kind of oboe); Europe borrowed from the Arabs not only all these instruments but also their names.

Farmer claimed also that the English word 'fanfare' is derived from Arabic; that our solmization syllables (do, re, mi, etc.) are of Arabic provenance; that 'hocket' (division of a melody among several instruments, each playing a single note) is an Arabic word; that 'fret' (a ridge on the fingerboard of a stringed instrument) comes from an Arabic word meaning 'notch'; and so forth.

He was soon bitterly attacked in the *Musical Standard* by a musicologist called Kathleen Schlesinger, who thought [t]he Arabs had nothing new to offer' and that the theoretical principles set forth in their writings on music were all cribbed from the Greeks.

A long and heated controversy followed, during which Farmer published his magisterial *History of Arabic Music* (1929), praised with faint damns by Schlesinger in a characteristically ungenerous review.

Farmer wound up the debate, and finally silenced Schlesinger, with his voluminous *Historical Facts for the Arabian Musical Influence* (1930).

We have no need to reinvent the wheel. The Eurocentric approach to music history was trounced by H.G. Farmer 60-odd years ago, and that forgotten controversy, which I hope to write about in detail elsewhere, proves how much the vaunted Western musical tradition owes to the music, musicians, and musical theorists of the east.

Peter Fryer

# Crisis in the prisons

Home Secretary Michael Howard wants to pack even more people into Britain's overcrowded prisons. NICK LEE comments

LAST SUNDAY's *Observer* obtained a letter, smuggled out of Eastwood Park prison near Bristol from a woman on remand, describing new cells, measuring an incredible six feet by eight — a claustrophobe's nightmare — into which prisoners were locked for 22 hours a day. These cells, the *Observer* noted, breach international rules as well as Prison Service standards.

Hardly a week passes without some fresh revelations of the increasing crisis in the prisons. Last December an investigation team led by the new Chief Inspector of Prisons, General Sir David Ramsbotham, walked out of Holloway Prison complaining of overzealous security and 23-hour lockups for convicted prisoners.

At Holloway, England's leading women's prison, media attention focused on human rights abuses as in the case of a young woman jailed for benefit fraud when her baby died after she was forced to lie on her stomach when six months pregnant.

Another young woman gave birth with handcuffs to the bed frame removed only ten minutes before birth and then replaced shortly afterwards.

On top of this come demands for funding cuts. The new head of the Prison Service, Richard Tilt, (replacing Derek Lewis who was sacked by Howard in a storm of publicity) told prison governors, last December that they must cut costs by 15 per cent over the next three years to get into line with cost levels in the private sector.

Private prisons are few in England but they are acting as an important trend setter for cost cutting. Wolds prison in Yorkshire, run by Group 4, the private security company, is 40 per cent cheaper to run than a state prison.

The chair of the Prison Governors Association, Chris Scott, said recently that governors would be forced to choose between poor conditions with prisoners spending most of their time locked up, or reducing staffing to such levels that control would be endangered.

Unsurprisingly governors are warning Howard of the increasing likelihood of revolts, the number of which has increased steadily over the last decade — from 38 in 1985-6 to 146 in 1993-4.

While another 'riot' on the scale of Strangeways in 1990 would create difficulties for the Tories it is important to understand how the role of the prison is



Chicken-hutch cells will only make the next wave of prison revolts even more determined

changing in a capitalist society in deepening crisis and changing in such a way that the odd 'disturbance' here or there is no longer to be regarded as a failure of the system.

After the revolt at Strangeways prison in 1990 a judge, Lord Justice Woolf, headed the investigation and issued an influential report which established that inhumane treatment was a prime cause of the incident.

Woolf reasserted some of the classic principles of liberal penology: prison should aim at rehabilitation of offenders, not just punishment, and prisoners should be well treated — imprisonment is of itself a form of punishment, not somewhere people are taken to be punished.

The Tory government gave formal commitment to the Woolf proposals, a White Paper in 1990 admitted that prisons were an 'expensive way of making bad people worse' and the 1991 Criminal Justice Act continued the traditional 'bifurcation' strategy — a tough but civilised regime for serious offenders while keeping as many less serious offenders as possible out of jail and on probation or community service.

## Dumping

But the agenda was already changing: from the prison as somehow concerned with the reform of the offender, to the prison as simply and directly a dumping ground for those surplus to capitalism's requirements.

At the end of January Bob Johnson, a leading prison psychiatrist, resigned. He wrote to Howard that 'the harshness of your current prison policy has finally ground my therapeutic endeavours at Parkhurst to a sickening halt.'

Howard's speech to the Tory Party conference last September and his White Paper due soon will announce, among other

things, mandatory (automatic) life sentences for rapists and other repeat violent offenders and mandatory prison sentences for adult burglars and drug dealers after a second offence.

This has met with a furore of opposition from virtually the entire senior judiciary. Within hours of his conference speech Howard was publicly rebuked by the Lord Chief Justice himself, Lord Taylor.

In February, 30 leading Judges met Howard to protest and last week Lord Taylor returned to the attack arguing that there was no evidence that mandatory sentences 'will achieve anything beyond a bonanza for prison architects...'

What their Lordships are up in arms about is the drift to a regime in which once you are convicted then the length of sentence is automatic and not decided by the judge taking into account the particularities of the individual case.

This is quite different to a defence of the rights of ordinary people to a fair trial, something bourgeois justice is incapable of delivering. Indeed, it has been the judges who, using their individual discretion in each case, have been sending increasing numbers of people to prison.

Mandatory sentencing will further accentuate an already existing trend. After a brief fall following the Woolf report, the size of the prison population has continued to rise.

Howard's proposals, according to prison reform groups, could add another 20,000 to the existing 52,000 prisoners, already a record level.

## Argued

Lord Taylor argued last week that there is no doubt that what primarily deters crime is the likelihood of detection rather than the harshness of the sentence. This would be a rebuff to Howard if the agenda was still deterring crime.

Likewise if the agenda was still the reform of offenders during their time in prison, Howard would have to remain committed to the Woolf strategy, not chicken-hut warehouses.

But deterrence and reform are increasingly being replaced by simple 'incapacitation' as the main justification for imprisonment.

## A principled socialist?

DIETER SPOERI heads the lists of Socialist Party (SPD) election candidates in the south-west German state of Baden-Wuerttemberg.

He has based his campaign on two issues: European Currency Union must be postponed, and the mass 'return' of the descendants of Germans who settled in Eastern Europe and Russia centuries ago has to be stopped.

As with the descendants of British colonialists wishing to return to the UK, 'patriality' laws favour entry into Germany for these asylum seekers over 'non-patrials'.

As Howard is fond of saying: 'if you are in prison then you can't commit crime. The implication of this is of course longer sentences and the logical conclusion becomes 'lock them up and throw away the key.'

The tabloids have rallied around Howard by capitalising on victims' concerns, no longer about when, but about whether their attacker will be let out of prison.

Increasingly the debate around the undesirability of releasing murderers serving life, such as Myra Hindley influences the debate about releasing anyone at all serving a prison sentence.

## Conditions

In such circumstances civilised prison conditions become a minor concern.

You'll still have to commit an offence to go to jail, but widening the definition of criminal activities — harsher penalties for drug offences, the catch-all scope of the notorious Criminal Justice Act — will see to that.

Automatic prison sentences for two serious burglary offences will become a conveyor belt shifting the poor and homeless into jail. Yes a few really nasty thugs will end up inside but they'll come out complete psychopaths.

Howard's model is the United States where between 1980 and 1995 the prison population rose from 330,000 to 1.5 million and in some states chain-gangs are back for the first time since the 1930s.

Crime rates in most states have fallen simply because there are so many people in prison.

As the US commentator Michael Massing put it recently 'The old debate over the ability of sanctions to deter criminal seems obsolete; with so many people now in prison, it's their sheer removal from the streets that's making the difference.'

But the cost of this massive removal of the inner city poor from the streets is a massive increase in costs. Imprisonment is a very expensive way of holding people.

Which is where privatisation, minimal staffing and cuts in spending come in. The chicken-hutch cell is one 'solution' to this problem which of course will only make the next wave of prison revolts even more widespread and determined.

## When is a 'Rechtsstaat' not a 'Rechtsstaat'?

BY BOB ARCHER

THIS untranslatable German word implies 'a state based on law', a state where the rule of law guarantees the constitutional rights of all citizens.

The German Federal Republic boasts a Constitution and a Basic Law which are supposed to do just that. Crowning the edifice is a Federal Constitutional Court in the town of Wiesbaden which has in fact often interpreted the constitutional law in a way that protects the citizens' rights.

Particularly citizens like those pacifists who some years ago ran a sticker campaign based on the slogan 'soldiers are murderers'. They were dragged before the courts for libelling the armed forces of the Federal Republic, but the Constitutional Court found that they were within their rights.

Now the government — a coalition of Christian Democrats (Conservatives) and Free Democ-

rats (Liberals) has decided that the 'honour' of the armed forces must be protected by law.

The Justice Minister, Edzard Schmidt-Jorzig, is a Free Democrat, and in years gone by the Free Democrats, representing the famous middle class — 'Mittelschicht' — used to be the most vigilant defenders of the rights of the individual.

Not any more. Professor Schmidt-Jorzig has rushed to prepare a new law, using the chapter of the Criminal Code aimed at protecting the armed forces from sabotage and espionage.

He is obviously mindful of the fate of his predecessor in office, Mrs Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger. She resigned after a majority of the members of the 'Free' Democratic Party voted in favour of giving the state powers to carry out electronic eavesdropping virtually at will.

As the economic crisis in Germany sharpens, there seems to be more and more 'Staat' and less and less 'Recht'.



# Victory to Liverpool dockers!

## City Lights

### In your face capitalism

HOW are the monopolies, faced with intensifying world competition, trying to make money? By raising sales? By producing more efficiently? By searching for new markets?

If you entertain any such notions, I recommend a close reading of an article in the latest copy of *Newsweek*: 'The Hit Men' by Allan Sloan.

'There's something different in the air these days when it comes to people's jobs,' says Sloan.

'Yes, we've had corporate layoffs ever since business was invented. We've had greedy and isolated and insensitive chief executives that long, too. Not to mention hungry shareholders and anxious workers.'

'But lately,' he continues, 'all these usual suspects have combined in a way that forms something new and nasty.'

'Call it "in your face capitalism". You lose your job, your employer's stock prices rise, the chief executive officer gets a fat raise.'

He quotes companies such as AT&T, Chase Manhattan and Scott Paper as examples of US companies that had laid off thousands in the recent past and seen their stock prices soar.

'Once upon a time, it was a mark of shame to fire your workers *en masse*. It meant you had messed up your business.'

No longer so. 'Today, the more people a company fires, the more Wall Street loves it and the higher its stock price goes.'

No wonder wits at AT&T joke that the chairman Robert Allen will soon fire everyone but himself and AT&T will stand for Allen and Two Temps.

'Firing people has gotten to be trendy in corporate America, in the same way that building new plants and being considered a good corporate citizen gave you bragging rights 25 years ago.'

'Now you fire workers — especially white collar workers — to make your corporate bones.'

'You can practically smell the fear and anger in white-collar America, because no one in chief executive-land seems to care.'

And when workers complain? Cheer up, they're told, you're serving the greater good by being blown away by what the economist Joseph Schumpeter christened 'the gale of creative destruction'.

This isn't how the world is supposed to work is it? moans Sloan.

But this is exactly how it does work and under the reign of capitalism *must* work.

And not simply in the US. Only last week two Swiss pharmaceutical companies agreed to a £41 billion merger, the largest ever in corporate history.

The financial press seized on the fact that this will lead to 13,000 job losses, and no doubt to increased pickings for the large institutional shareholders who have arranged the deal.

In the case of Britain, business surveys show that any increase in the number of jobs over the past 15 years has taken place in small firms, with big companies in general employing fewer and fewer people. No wonder the government is now contemplating sweeping away any employment protection and other rights that workers in small firms have.

The fact is that capitalism at the end of the century becomes ever more parasitic. It is less and less involved in producing anything of use. Naturally, from the outset capitalism has been inter-

increasingly sees profits arising from takeovers, mergers, as well as speculative activities such as currency dealing, engagement in 'futures' markets and the like.

And where de-mergers take place, they are usually to avoid taxes or to write off losses, as in the case of the recently proposed splitting of British Gas.

And this is the system to which the Labour leaders are tied hand and foot.

### Fraud epidemic

LEADERS of the capitalist world have been urged to make business fraud a top priority in the coming meetings of the G7 — the leading industrial countries.

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) has launched a worldwide campaign to alert investors, banks and business to the 'epidemic proportions' of current financial fraud. The ICC wants governments to pass legislation to make it easier to bring fraudsters to book.

Given that many of the world's leading politicians are themselves up to their grubby necks in corruption, this might strike the cynics among you as a less than realistic proposal.

The typical fraud involves, it seems, the issue of bogus securities often called 'prime bank instruments' which come in many varieties, some of which involve the mis-use of genuine instruments, but the majority of which are figments of the fertile imagination of the issuer.

In Germany alone such fraud and bad investment advice tops DM40 billion every year. Recent victims include small British firms, the Chicago Housing Authority and banks in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, some of which have been bankrupted in the process.

Recently in the US the mayor of a town in Alabama was caught soliciting a \$200 million bank loan. For collateral he offered an impressive \$4.6 billion worth of bonds which his town (population: 814!) had issued on the back of 'prime bank instruments'.

'If we pool our resources,' says the ICC, 95 per cent of this fraud can be stamped out.

Some chance.

### Spanish legacy

THE bitter legacy left by Spain's 'socialist' party of Felipe Gonzales is clear for all to see, and provides yet another warning of what can be expected of a Labour government in Britain.

After 14 years the 'socialists' have left office in the midst of a severe economic and financial crisis that is bound to lead to savage attacks on the workers and poor people of the country.

Spain's unemployment rate, at 22.9 per cent, is more than double the European average. Today 43 per cent of young Spaniards under 25, mostly women, are jobless, and 60 per cent of those on the dole have been there for more than a year. Much of the country's industry is out of date and in need of 'restructuring' which will inevitably bring mass sackings.

Gonzales and the election winner, José Maria Aznar's Partido Popular, promised greater labour 'flexibility' as the answer to the crisis — that is, an attack on wages and working conditions that was the hallmark of Thatcherite economics.

It is certain that Spain's unemployment benefits — generous by European standards — are bound to come under almost immediate attack, as will the linking of wages to the rate of inflation.

## dockers!

you give it and when you need it you demand it, no matter what the laws says.

In relation to international law — almost everywhere it becomes more and more difficult to strike legally.

Also, almost everywhere such welfare benefits as exist are becoming harder to obtain. We must come to understand this in terms of the global crisis of the world economic system.

As this system collapses on itself, it is the working people who are being made to pay for this crisis. Mass unemployment, repression, deprivation, to different degrees, are a common factor



Billy Pye

among workers the world over.

It is also true regarding the crisis and laws in different countries that the so-called New World Order has contradictions inherent in it which are as plain to see as they are abhorrent to any basic sense of humanity.

For example: one of the results of the crisis is that it creates more repressive regimes and at the same time creates laws which deny people asylum from these regimes.

In a nutshell: politicians of every hue and nationality applaud the end of apartheid in South Africa and openly or tacitly support the creation of apartheid on a global scale!

We should never forget the name of Joy Gardner and the countless others who die now and in the future as a result of British imperialism's laws.

We can rightfully question the position taken by politicians who purport to represent our interests in particular as to where they stand on this question.

In relation to Britain, where will they stand in the future on the repeal of legislation like the Criminal Justice Act, the Asylum and Immigration Bill and the anti-union laws? Will they/do they support basic human freedom or not?

In conclusion: these mounting attacks all go beyond Britain and beyond unfair employers and unjust laws. These things are rooted in the capitalist system and its crisis.

If we had to learn one lesson from history and one lesson alone let it be that this system cannot ultimately be made to work on our behalf.

I believe the course of the dispute you have begun leads us to see that what is needed, and what is embodied in this conference, is an international and internationalist association of workers, an alliance of worker with worker, with a universal understanding that the class struggle is as alive now as ever it was.

As well as a realisation that there are those, relatively few in number on this planet, who control the lives of millions of human beings through their ownership and control of the means of production, distribution and exchange.

It is only when the ownership and control of these things change over into the hands of us — the majority — that we will begin to control our present and secure a proper human future for our children.

We do, I think, have a world to win. This is a moderate demand under the circumstances.

**Victory to the Liverpool dockers!**

We publish here ex-miner BILLY PYE's speech at the International Dockworkers' Conference in Liverpool 17-23 February. He was 15 years old in 1980 when he became a trainee coalminer at Parkside colliery. After six weeks he was down the pit and at the age of 20 took part in the momentous year-long miners' strike. In 1986 he was elected to his NUM branch committee, in 1988 was elected pit delegate to the union's area committee and in 1991 became the youngest member of the NUM's national executive council. Soon after his father died in 1980, his mother Sylvia started work in the pit canteen and joined the NUM. Together mother and son, with others, established the Parkside Pit Camp and led the fight against closure of the colliery. But it was not to be and Billy became one of the thousands of sacked miners. He now studies at Lancaster University.

MY GREETINGS to the 500 sacked dockers and to this international conference. I am honoured to be able to speak here to fellow-workers who are engaged in a dispute which will stand out as one of the industrial landmarks in this country.

In 1984-85 there was the miners' strike, in 1985-86 the printworkers' dispute, and now in 1995-96 the Liverpool dockers' strike.

But I also want to thank you for the tremendous support we received as a community and as a union in our dispute from dockers around the world.

There are many similarities between the dockers' dispute and ours. The official labour and trade union movement turned its back on the miners' union with similar excuses as those used in relation to you now. I feel that it is important to bring the benefit of our experience here today.

I know that this conference is discussing the anti-union laws here and in every other country and so I want to highlight what we have to come to know about these employment laws.

No matter in what country they have the same driving factor — the crisis and collapse of the world economic system. They are one of the attempts to offset this crisis.

Speaking of the trade union movement in Britain: there are three types of trade unionist:

1. Those who've convinced themselves that class struggle is over and who believe the interests of the workers are the same as the interests of the owners of factories, mines and docks.

Once that view is taken, then such 'trade unionists' have to dis-

tance themselves from those workers who take up a fight against the employers.

2. Those who offer nothing more than verbal support. They argue in the face of unjust laws that only compliance with the law is possible.

This type of trade union leader would rather have a union with money in the bank and no members. Whereas most of us believe that a union with no money which still has its members is preferable.

Remember effective trade unionism was not inaugurated when the union had enough money, it was carried forward by people like you — people who have nothing to lose but their chains.

It is often argued when solidarity is being sought that a strictly legal path must be followed to ensure the survival of this or that union.

My answer is: look at the National Union of Mineworkers which still exists and continues to fight on behalf of members despite what it has had to go through.

It has to be admitted by even the most committed 'new realist' that what is left of this government is hardly about to start using anti-union laws — let alone take on several unions at once!

That's an argument for universal strike action in support of the dockers.

3. The third path begins and ends with simple universal principles, namely:

■ That you never cross a strikers' picket line, no matter what the law says.

■ When solidarity is asked for

### Film review

## 'Trainspotting' — an absolute beezer

DO YOU think that 'Four Weddings and a Funeral' would have been improved as 'Four Funerals and a Wedding'? Were you overcome with relief when you heard of Stephen Fry's decision to quit acting for a blameless life led incognito in Belgium? Do you long for Emma Thompson's next remake to be 'The Texas Chainsaw Massacre' enacted with real chainsaws?

Have you had enough of that effete troupe of flaudulent moochers that pass for the British thespocracy?

If you can truthfully answer yes to all these questions then help is at hand. 'Trainspotting' is the film for you and happily, despite the media hype, intensive advertising, and relentless *Guardian* coverage, it turns out to be an absolute beezer.

Based on Irvine Welsh's first novel of the same name, the team who made 'Shallow Grave' have successfully translated the author's vivid style of neon realism to the screen.

The story is an excerpt from the lives of four young men who use heroin, and a dangerous psycho who uses lager, from the outlying schemes in Edinburgh set in the mid 1980s 'boom' years of Maggie Thatcher.

None of these people is particularly interested in the straight world of jobs and consumer durables.

### Charlie

Largely because of its depiction of working-class drug abuse from the drug users' point of view and the sympathetic portrayal of addicts, the film was touted as being 'amoral' and, unlike a line of Charlie, has got right up Lady Olga Maitland's nose. (Funny that, when you consider that her Ladyship was a keen supporter of nuclear weaponry.)

'Trainspotting' is a morality play, it's just that its morals don't coincide with those of certain reactionary commentators. People take 'drugs' because they enjoy them, pure and simple. The reasons why they enjoy them so very much are not however so pure or so simple.

Irvine Welsh doesn't 'give a fuck' whether people choose to use... the state-sponsored poisons of alcohol and tobacco or the 'private sector' 'drugs' such as heroin, cocaine and ecstasy.

### Abuse

In fact Welsh is very clear on the social conditions that inevitably produce drug abuse, but he totally repudiates the knee-jerk reductionist argument so often used to condemn 'drugs' out of hand.

Welsh knows what he's talking about. He was recently lifted outside Firhill on 'the suspicion of being Drunk and Disorderly' shortly before kick-off. But to be fair, the daunting prospect of sitting through 90 excruciating minutes of Partick Thistle and Hibs would have even the Marquis de Sade reaching for the Buckfast.

The film has much of the relentless energy of the novel but one of the most wretched scenes has been turned into a surreal comedy sketch and in general the celluloid creation's tone is more upbeat.

But the film is still outstanding and has the author's endorsement, since he's in it. It is by turns horrific, tragic and painfully funny. It is also notable for the erotic gloss on Archie Gemmill's goal for Scotland in the 1978 World Cup — a most interesting use of football commentary.

In one memorable scene, geeky Spud has been collared by the dole. He has to go for an

automatic Renton gives him advice — you have to appear keen so as not to get the dole stopped but not too keen or there is the danger of getting the job — 'it's like walking a tightrope'.

It's true. Spud is caught between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea. Using commendable initiative he takes enough speed to blow the wax out of a bull elephant's ears and gibbers his way to freedom in a triumphant interview scene.

Here we have an interesting confrontation between the straight world and Spud. The straights don't even know what's on the agenda.

The film is rivetting from the moment it starts until the final credits. The camera work is punchy and innovative using a fast-cut technique which is visually sophisticated, vital and compelling. The soundtrack of the film is the soundtrack of the characters' lives.

### Overdose

The juxtaposition of Lou Reed's 'Perfect Day' with Renton's overdose and subsequent arrival at accident and emergency is a mater stroke. It speaks volumes about the mind set of a heroin addict.

'Trainspotting' is not some worthy piece of social realism, nor does it herald the resurrection of 'British cinema'. But it does have a lot to say about the hypocritical bourgeois mores that persist in contemporary Britain.

Welsh has become a publishing phenomenon and 'Trainspotting' is set to be the most 'successful' British film in years. In my view this commercial success is well deserved and the more people who see the film and read Irvine Welsh the better.

For once the publishers and film distributors are punting a product that actually has some originality, energy and artistic merit.



# SARAJEVO — ONE AND FOR ALL!

**MORE than 100 residents of Sarajevo's Ilidza suburb have formed the Democratic Initiative for Sarajevo Serbs, aimed at protecting the rights of Serbs who choose to stay there as the Bosnian capital is reunited under Bosnian government rule.**

This effort to overcome the bitterness of war came as Serb nationalist police and gangs continued looting, killing and destruction to the bitter end.

Drunken Serb police ransacked and set fire to Ilidza police station and the courthouse before moving out. French firefighters had to rescue 20 people trapped in burning blocks of flats.

In Grbavica, the only central area held by Serb forces, Sadeta Mehanovic, a 65-year-old Muslim schoolteacher, was murdered in her home after begging UN police officers for protection.

A French officer said when people came to them they notified the Serb police. A school was burned down as NATO forces stood by. The district is due to come under government control on midnight 19 March.

Italian troops and local firefighters looked on as local people and aid workers tried to keep fires under control. Serbs who wanted to stay were as threatened as Croats or Muslims.

'Anyone who stays here is an enemy,' said a Serb fireman, '... Why should I help them?' (Julian Borger, Guardian, 12 March)

In Vogosca, the first of five Sarajevo suburbs returned to Bosnian control, original residents expelled by Serb 'ethnic cleansing' in 1992, returned to find houses and flats stripped bare, many even with the doors, windows, wiring and bathroom fittings ripped out.

'It's destroyed, but it's fine,' said 18-year-old Edin Spanic, surveying his wrecked apartment. 'I'll fix everything. In a month, I'll be living here with my grandmother.'

Returning residents were urged to use caution, as explosives were found in some basements and one apartment was booby-trapped with a grenade attached to its door.

## Psychologist

Serb nationalist leader Dr Radovan Karadzic is a professional psychologist who works to generate phobias, not cure them.

Many Serbs believed what the nationalists' radio and television propaganda told them. People packed their bags to trek over the mountains to refugee camps, rather than stay to experience 'Muslim rule.'

'Propaganda scares people,'

## BY CHARLIE POTTINS

Vlado Koprivica, who chose to remain in Vogosca, told reporters. 'A lot of people would have stayed, but they were told they were going to be killed.'

Many Serbs feared that Bosnians would take reprisals for what they suffered at the hands of Serb Chetniks.

## Together

Some of those who left had not been residents of Sarajevo before the war, and were in Muslim houses. Some accepted the nationalists' line that people cannot live together.

'If we wanted to live with Muslims and Croats, we wouldn't have fought this bloody war in the first place,' said Nedjo Antic.

Alexander Ivanko of the UN civilian police in Sarajevo, described the Serb nationalist politicians as 'masters of manipulation of human suffering.'

Kris Janowski of the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) condemned Serb nationalist leaders for inciting panic, but also attacked NATO's Admiral Leighton Smith for letting Serb army trucks come in to evacuate people.

'We want them to stay,' he said. 'The whole of Sarajevo is at stake here, and the issue of multi-ethnicity of the country.'

UN aid workers said the Serb army trucks were helping people loot public property as they left, with NATO escorts, after some Sarajevo youths had been throwing stones.

'Day by day, things like the telephone exchanges, electricity cables, crucial parts of the water system are disappearing. They are being removed by the Serb authorities and gangs of thieves,' Janowski said.

A UN aid warehouse was looted and set ablaze. Serb police looked on as furniture was stolen from the Ilijas municipal offices and a cinema.

Bosnian prime minister Hasan Muratovic said what the Serb leaders had demanded was apartheid.

'They were willing to stay in Sarajevo if there would be exclusively Serb municipalities and Serb authorities. We could not make any concessions in this regard.'

Not everyone was going, however.

'We could have lived together for a thousand years. There was never a problem. My neighbor across the hall was a Muslim, and both my neighbors upstairs were Muslim. We were like a family,' said Vlado Koprivica, a Serb who will stay in Vogosca.

'I want to stay, because maybe I still believe in some bit of humanity. I want to try,' said Milojka Ivanovic, an Ilidza Serb resident who maintained contact with Muslim and Croat friends in Serb-besieged Sarajevo centre during the war.

Those friends have urged her to remain, she said.

'I will test some details of the Dayton agreement with my own skin,' said Maksim Stanisic, who was deputy mayor under Serb nationalist occupation and plans to try and work in the so-called 'Srpska Republic' while living in Bosnian government-controlled territory.

The Bosnian authorities appear to have made an effort to reassure those who stayed. Reflecting Sarajevo's pre-war 'ethnic' mix and continued multi-cultural character, the first Bosnian police sent to patrol Vogosca included 14 Serbs, two Croats, and 16 Muslims.

Dragan Knezevic, 72, who had

intended leaving but had no transport for his belongings, said he was not afraid anymore. 'Some of these officers came to my home yesterday and gave me bread. Then they asked that I stay and this freed my mind.'

One of the Bosnian officers, a Serb who stayed in Sarajevo centre throughout the war, admitted it was difficult for him to cheerfully greet his former enemies each day, and then visit his gravely wounded father and daughter each night — civilians injured in a Serb Chetnik mortar attack.

'We just have to keep in mind that these are people too,' said Bojan Marjanovic, another Serb officer with the Bosnian police. 'These are not the war criminals who tried to destroy us.'

## Admitted

Some Serbs leaving Vogosca admitted that the Bosnian officers had done nothing to attack or intimidate them. 'They are all very polite,' Serb refugee Jadranka Bosiljevic told reporters. 'But I am in a Muslim house, so I don't dare stay.'

As Muslim and Croat civilians returned some did harass remaining Serbs.

Miroslav Spiric, who risked his life to save Muslims during

the war, was threatened by men who came to his home and told him he and his wife had no right to stay.

Emka Bajramovic was among neighbours who urged the couple to stay.

'If it weren't for them I would be dead. They saved my life, they sheltered and fed me,' said Emka, whose husband was killed while being forced to dig trenches for the Serb army.

Bosnia's deputy president Ejup Ganic told Sarajevo's police chief, Enes Bezdrob, to visit Spiric and his wife. Bezdrob said the matter would be taken care of, and urged Spiric and his wife to stay.

On the main road north of Sarajevo a makeshift market sprang up, departing Serbs selling what they couldn't take with them to returning Bosnians. But some were not there to buy or sell, but to meet friends they hadn't seen in years.

'I feel strange,' said Mirjana Radic, a Serb from nearby Ilijas, who cried as she hugged a Muslim friend from Visoko. Amo Rudic, a 79-year-old Muslim refugee, saw his own furniture being sold by a Serb from occupied Sarajevo who had taken over his home, but made no attempt to claim his property.

'What can I do?' he said. 'There

was war, and what I see here is peace.'

The fear is that Serb nationalist leaders wanted the exodus from Sarajevo not just to make their propaganda point that a multi-ethnic Bosnia won't work, but to use the people they take out to settle other areas 'ethnically cleansed' of Muslims, and as forces for renewed war.

## Sabotage

They weren't the only element out to sabotage reunification. In Hadzici about 100 Croat police, apparently from Mostar, had to be removed from the local police station where they had arrived overnight, claiming the right to 'police' the area. It is thought they were hoping to do the same thing in Ilidza.

Moments after withdrawal, Bosnian sappers moved in and detonated an explosive device that had been wired to a door inside. There were no injuries. Windows and doors were shattered. Asked if the door was that of the police chief's office, Bosnian Interior Minister Avdo Hebib replied with a smile: 'It seems likely because that would be the best door to wire, don't you think? But this is not unusual; we have found such devices in all the town stations entered so far.'



Bosnian Serb refugees: Serb-nationalist leader and psychologist Dr Radovan Karadzic plays on fears of reprisals

## Social Democrats slam Europe's rule fix

SARAJEVO — Bosnia's strongest opposition party, the Social Democrats, have slammed election rules introduced by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), saying they threaten to wipe out democratic opposition.

Social Democrat party vice-president Gradimir Gojer, said the regulation according to which it is necessary to gather 10,000 votes for registering a party, could result in having only one or two parties participate in local elections in 50 to 60 percent of municipalities.

It is obvious that the dictate of the international community can completely extinguish the demo-

cratic ambience in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and even [Bosnia] itself,' he told a news conference.

The Social Democrat Party says by treating the Bosnian federation and the Serb republic as separate entities rather than one country, the European commission is disenfranchising Serbs in the federation.

## Complained

Mustafa Beganovic, a member of the SDP presidency, complained that Social Democrats in Sarajevo were being 'pushed out.' He said the SDP in the Novo Sarajevo municipality is not allowed to appoint the president

of the transitional municipal council although the party won the 1992 elections there. President Izetbegovic's Democratic Action Party (SDA) had 'usurped power' in the municipality and appointed its own official to the post, he said.

Former prime minister Haris Siladzic, who has accused the Muslim SDA of using Stalinist methods to dominate the media and armed forces, says the SDA, the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) are effectively out to divide Bosnia between them.

'Karadzic's main goal is the carve-up of Bosnia. If they drive Serbs out of Sarajevo, he knows

that Bosniaks and Croats cannot return to Republic Srpska, that is the aim in whose realisation the international community takes part too, as it suits them.'

Several prominent Tuzla officials have reportedly met to form a branch of Siladzic's Democratic Party of the Centre, but didn't want to talk about it, according to *Oslobodjenje*. They included Tuzla postal company director Ramo Demirovic, and Tuzla radio director Zoran Kapetanovic.

In Sarajevo, Mirko Pejanovic, Serb Civic Council president representing Serbs who remained loyal to multi-ethnic Bosnia, said they might consider an alliance with Siladzic's party.

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