

South Africa election appeal

THE Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International's election campaign has already made an impact in South Africa and in Britain. A report from the South African Press Agency appeared in the 'SA Times' in London last week which summarised the election manifesto of our comrades in South Africa. The full text of the manifesto appears on pages 4, 5 and 6 of this week's Workers Press.

The sell-out by the African National Congress and the South Africa Communist Party is becoming more and more blatant, as reported on page 8.

But, unlike the ANC and SACP compromisers and collaborators with imperialism, our party has no big backers to provide resources. We must turn to our own movement, the working class, and to all who genuinely want to fight capitalism, imperialism and oppression, for funds.

Why should our money go to the politically corrupt ANC, as the trade union leaders, Labourites, Stalinists and their revisionist hangers-on urge? Please give your money to the working-class alternative.

Please rush your donations to: Workers International, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB. Make cheques payable to 'Workers International'. Please fax us on 071-582 8834 and tell us what to expect.

BOSNIA: MORTAL DANGER

THE UN intervention in Sarajevo has brought the carve-up of Bosnia dangerously closer. The immediate aim of the intervention is to complete the implementation of the Vance-Owen plan and legitimise the Serbian and Croatian seizure of territory.

The plan is to force the complete capitulation of the Izetbegovic wing of the Bosnian government.

Far from bringing peace, the UN forces have disarmed the Bosnian army in its own capital, Sarajevo, while allowing the besieging Serb forces to withdraw their guns for use elsewhere — or to place them in the hands of their Russian allies.

Hundreds of Serbian troops chanting 'Greater Serbia' and 'Long Live Russia' gave a heroes' welcome to the Russian paratroopers. Radovan Karadzic, Serbian war-lord, was among those greeting the Russian soldiers.

The Serbs have removed all their heavy artillery beyond the 12-mile exclusion zone and handed in only their light weapons. Coldstream Guards last week described how the Serbs are being allowed to maintain even these weapons, keeping them ready for future use.

The UN force is now an army of occupation that has turned Sarajevo into a detention camp. The UN intervention has one purpose: to make permanent the divisions brought about by the Serbian forces.

Stuck

The Paris paper 'Liberation' last week quoted Elma, a 29-year-old Sarajevo woman: 'What sort of peace is this, without water, without electricity, without work.

'Can we leave here? No! The rest of my family is stuck in Grbavica [a district held by Serb forces] where I can't set foot.

'We live in a reservation, waiting for the next massacre,

BY THE EDITOR

which will upset the good conscience of the West.

'We are like guinea pigs in a cage. The Serbs, the UN, the entire world is making an international political experiment out of us.'

That is why the European powers, led by Russia and France, now demand that the Bosnian capital be placed under UN administration. This will be a prelude to putting the whole of Bosnia under the UN's heel. No wonder the 'Financial Times' headed its editorial of 22 February: 'Now Tuzla and Mostar'.

As the 'Times' pointed out last week, even before a mortar killed 68 people in the Bosnian capital the Serbs had agreed to withdraw their heavy guns if the city was placed under UN control. The United Nations forces have taken over from the Serbs the task of destroying all those who want a reunited Sarajevo.

The UN-Russian intervention has released Serbian forces to concentrate their murderous activities on Central Bosnia.

While now no shells fall on Sarajevo the Serbian bombardment of Tuzla and Mostar is intensifying. Tuzla, the very centre of resistance to the imperialist plans to ethnically cleanse Bosnia, is in terrible danger.

The UN proposal that Tuzla airport be re-opened and placed under its control is part of imperialism's plan to put pressure on those forces in the city who are preventing Izetbegovic from capitulating completely.

The Great Powers were increasingly worried that the Bos-

nia-Herzegovina army, despite its lack of weapons, was inflicting serious defeats on the Serbian and Croatian forces. This army consists predominantly of workers. It has no arms of any consequence, relying on weapons captured from Serb forces or bartered for food.

Its victories are a reflection of the justice of the cause — to preserve an integral Bosnia-Herzegovina and to defend the gains that came from the overthrow of capitalism in the former Yugoslavia. Hence the UN decision to give the go-ahead to Serbian forces to intensify the war in central Bosnia.

Surrender

The deal to surrender their few defending guns to the UN has cruelly exposed the illusions of Izetbegovic and his wing of the Bosnian regime in this instrument of imperialism.

Many often well-meaning liberals believed that UN intervention could defend Bosnia and bring peace. These illusions are being cruelly rewarded.

It is only the working class, in ex-Yugoslavia and internationally, that can now save Bosnia from destruction. The response of the Ukrainian miners to the call for an international conference of miners shows the way forward (see this page).

This must be built on and extended. The great task is to rally the international working class against the growth of reaction, especially in eastern Europe and the former USSR.

The immediate fate of the Bosnian working class now depends on this struggle.

Ukraine miners rally to Workers International call!

BY SIMON PIRANI

UKRAINIAN miners have taken up the call made by the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International for an international conference of militant miners.

A letter proposing the conference — and calling on mineworkers everywhere to support the

Workers Aid for Bosnia convoy to Tuzla in Bosnia — was made front-page news by a miners' newspaper in the coal city of Pavlograd in eastern Ukraine.

The 'Open Letter to Russian Miners' was from Dave Temple, a British miner for 20 years and a Workers International member (Workers Press, 8 January).

It appeared in 'Lava', newspaper of the Ukrainian Independent Miners' Union, Pavlograd

branch, which is circulated to miners' organisations around the former USSR, as well as among the town's 40,000 miners.

Comrades of the Socialist Workers Union, Russian section of the Workers International, have forwarded the letter to miners' organisations in Russia.

The Workers Co-ordinating Centre of the Urals, based in Perm, has distributed copies of it to local miners.



Beating their drums slowly through Birmingham city centre in the snow, fuel-tax protesters last week carried a coffin symbolising thousands of pensioners who die from the cold each winter, and laid it to rest with a wreath at the high street gas showroom. Balsall Heath and Sparkhill Anti-Fuel Tax Group's demonstration

against VAT on fuel was backed by West Midlands Pensioners' Group. Warning that tax on gas and electricity bills would put 10,000 more lives at risk each year, demonstrators promised a campaign of non-payment of VAT, late payment of bills and resistance to cut-offs, to make the fuel tax unworkable. Photo: Mark Salmon

Labour and nationalisation

THERE is a close correlation between the speed at which the disintegration of the Tory government proceeds and the ever-faster shift to the right of the Labour Party leaders.

That there is this correlation is no accident. The crisis engulfing the government is itself an index of the depth of the social and economic malaise of capitalism in Britain.

As loyal defenders of this system, the leaders of the Labour Party know that should they form the next government — a by no means unlikely prospect — they will be forced to continue the attacks of the Tory government against the working class and sections of the middle class.

Last week a document, 'Financing Infrastructure Investment — Promoting a Partnership between Public and Private Finance', produced by Gordon Brown, Robin Cook and John Prescott, signalled the complete abandonment of the policy of nationalisation by the Labour Party.

* * * * *

FOR 70 years and more some have chosen to regard the Labour Party as socialist because of its commitment to Clause Four — the clause in its constitution that says that the party's aim is the nationalisation of basic industries.

Despite the fact that for years there has never been any intention of implementing this clause, elements in the Labour leadership have preferred to retain it in order to try and deceive sections of the working class that the party had something to do with 'socialism'. Now even this pretence is to go.

Labour now wants to see more 'private money' put into hospitals, education and inner-city projects. For once Brown, the shadow chancellor, was speaking the truth when he said that the Labour Party had 'stolen a march' on the Tories, for it is merely extending the Tory policy of privatisation.

To invite further capital into the financing of schools and hospitals is to place them even more firmly under the banks and pension funds, whose interest is entirely concerned with making money, not with providing education and health for ordinary people.

As the 'Financial Times' (21 February) noted, '[Labour's] latest policy for a public-private partnership is intended to replace its traditional stance of support for the remaining state-owned corporations'.

Even the Liberal Democrats attacked Labour's latest move, rightly saying that many of the services people need could not be operated on a commercial basis.

* * * * *

THE Labour leaders know that if elected they will have to mount savage attacks on public spending. Former chancellor Norman Lamont last week complained that the supposedly 'fundamental review' of government spending initiated by the Treasury last year had been largely a dead duck. In other words, more spending cuts are needed.

The Tory privatisation programme has been a first-rate scandal. Millions and millions have been made by City sharks who have bought state assets for peanuts.

That is why all the industries privatised must be renationalised without compensation.

This is not to say we want a return to the old-style nationalisation. Introduced by the Labour government after 1945, this was designed to provide cheap services, such as coal and rail transport, for the big monopolists, while at the same preventing the workers in the nationalised industries having any control over them.

Nationalised industries will only serve the interests of those working in them if they are controlled by committees representing their workers and those using their services.

Letters

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The unity of the working class

LAST week's Workers Press editorial tried to tackle the problem of uniting the working class.

It rightly criticised the slogan of the Socialist Workers Party and many others in the workers' movement: 'The workers united will never be defeated.'

The editorial criticised the way the SWP moves from one struggle to the next. It actually was too generous in that it quoted the slogan as: 'The WORKING CLASS united . . .' The SWP talks almost exclusively of 'workers' and not the 'working class'.

I would also criticise the SWP and many working-class militants in their view that it is by simply lumping struggles together that the working class will be united.

At root it assumes that by getting enough people struggling some sort of 'critical mass' will be reached that will set off a 'chain reaction' that will overthrow capitalism.

But the tendency is always for this sort of 'unity', involving 'messages of support', 'donations', etc., to disintegrate as one section of the working class after another becomes exhausted.

While verbal and financial support are indispensable, it is not enough. We must go beyond that to unity in action — but how is that achieved?

At this point the classic demand is for solidarity strike action, thus breaking the anti-union laws. But the problem is not to demand but to organise for such action to take place in a significant way.

What I'm trying to say is that the problem is to make the

struggles interact, become part of each other, to change with each other, strengthen each other. We must move beyond the spontaneous outburst of anger to co-ordination of the working class as a whole.

The working class moving as a political force led by its real leaders — those who lead its struggle for its own interests and don't seek to subordinate it to the interests of the bourgeoisie. These real leaders will form a 'party' in the political struggle against capitalism.

But this party will not be able to do its job without the lessons of the political and theoretical struggle against the reformist and Stalinist misleaders of the working class.

In other words, it must be a party in which the lessons of the struggle for Marxist leadership of the working class — leadership that expresses the needs of the working class as a whole and not of this or that section — are carried forward.

The 'Unite!' paper of the Community and Union Action Campaign must take its place in the linking-up and in making the struggles part of each other, bringing the lessons and experiences of these struggles together into a party with a strategy for the working class to overthrow capitalism.

Mike Cooke
London SW11

'Trapdoor to poverty'

AS A delegate from Southwark UNISON No. 1 Branch to the 'Unite the Struggles!' conference in Manchester, I was pleased by Mike Cooke's full report in Workers Press (19 February).

I appreciate how difficult it

is to record everyone's comments accurately, but I feel I must correct the false impression Cooke may have given by reporting that I said that the Housing Corporation 'doles out' money to housing associations.

This suggests that grants to housing associations are generous. They are not.

The number of new homes funded by the Corporation for rent has declined drastically. Also, the grant allowed per dwelling has plummeted since new legislation, abolishing 'fair rents' for new tenancies, took effect in January 1989.

Since then, housing association rents have increased by a massive 150 per cent. The 11 February issue of the magazine 'Inside Housing' reports a survey of the top 100 housing associations, concluding that rent rises are a 'trapdoor to poverty'.

Not only tenants and the homeless are affected. Building workers, as UCATT member George Fuller pointed out at the conference, suffer attacks on wages and conditions as a result of the corporation's 'lean tendering' policy.

At a demonstration last month at a housing association development site in Stratford, east London, building workers carried placards describing the site as 'Housing Corporation Gulag'. One issue in the demonstration was that a subcontractor called 'Right Brickwork', receiving corporation funding (that is, funding from the taxpayers!) had refused to pay the workers over Christmas.

I was pleased to learn at the conference of the new Building Industry Link-up organisation, uniting building workers with the homeless. When I give my report on the conference to my union branch I shall draw attention to this development.

I hope UNISON members

working in housing will join with Building Industry Link-up in uniting trades unionists and the homeless in the fight for new, good-quality homes at a rent working-class people can afford.

We also need to unite trades unionists, tenants and the homeless against the privatisation of council housing services.

We should call upon trades unionists who work for housing associations to join us in this united struggle.

Jim Smith
London SE6

Nottingham Nazi update

WORKERS Press (22 January) carried two much-appreciated reports by Charlie Pottins about the Nazi raid on Mushroom Bookshop in Nottingham. There were, however, two matters which need correction.

Pottins wrote that 11 men had been charged following the attack. In fact 32 Nazis were arrested. We will not know how many will be charged until they return to Nottingham in mid-March under their bail conditions.

Secondly, I was described as a 'former Glasgow engineering worker'. For the record I do come from Scotland — but not from Glasgow — and although happily proletarian in origin, I was never (apart from a few weeks!) an engineering worker.

Pottins's articles also drew attention to the Red Lion pub in Heanor as the main Nazi hang-out in the area. The good news is that since then public, press and parliamentary pressure have forced the closure of that particular pub.

Ross Bradshaw
Mushroom Bookshop
Nottingham

Coming soon

SUNDAY 6 MARCH: Harold Rosen, author of 'Language and Class', introduces his new book 'Troublesome Boy', about an East End education. A Jewish Socialist Group meeting. Quaker International Centre, Byng Place, London WC1, at 7.45pm. Nearest tube Goodge Street/Russell Square.
TUESDAY 8 MARCH: 'The Challenge of Creationism'. Start of South Place Ethical Society course by

Mike Howgate MSc., 6.30pm-8.30pm (and each Tuesday following in March). At the Conway Hall in Red Lion Square, London WC1. Admission is £1 and the nearest tube is Holborn.

SATURDAY 19 MARCH: TUC 'Unite against Racism' march from Spitalfields to London Fields followed by a demonstration. Assemble 11am, Spitalfields Market, London E1 (tube Liverpool Street).

Workers Press £3,000 Monthly Fighting Fund

IN SO FAR: £1,292.27

WHAT is Workers Press doing? In the last few weeks it's reported on our courageous comrades in South Africa, who are putting forward the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International as the only party there which has the 'overthrow of capitalism' as its aim.

We've also made a big impact with our report of the Algerian asylum-seekers who went on hunger strike in Pentonville jail and were only released after 12 days without food and a picket by Algerians outside. This work was developed at the 'Unite the struggles' conference organised by the Community and Union Action Campaign — and again extensively covered in Workers Press.

Above all, Workers Press has been at the forefront of the campaign for a response in the workers' movement to the barbarism being perpetrated on the people of Bosnia, as so eloquently described by our Serbian comrade Rade Pavlovic (12 February). He was the one to start the campaign in the Workers International, in a situation where the people among whom he lives were caught up in Great Serbian nationalism.

We've also reported how the Workers Aid for Bosnia campaign is making a big impact in the fight

to reunite the working class of Europe — divided for almost 50 years following the carve-up agreed between East and West by Roosevelt, Truman, Churchill and Stalin at the end of World War II. The lead is being taken by comrades in Hungary to organise the convoy for 26 March in Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia, Poland and Slovenia.

But Workers Press is not just a record of experiences, important though they are. We are fighting to rebuild the working class' consciousness of its own interests, independent of the bourgeoisie and the Labour Party leaders, the trade union bureaucracy and the Stalinist bureaucracy, which seek to tie the working class to imperialism.

In fighting for this we fight to rebuild the Fourth International — we know we cannot do one without the other. Hence the discussion, carried forward in last week's editorial, about how the working class is to be united.

Why have I gone through the achievements of Workers Press in just the last few weeks? It is to remind myself, and hopefully you the reader, of why we struggle to get in a £3,000 Monthly Fighting Fund.

Mike Cooke
Money, etc., to Workers Press,
PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

Bristol Marxist Forum conference

Towards revolution: Socialist politics now

Saturday-Sunday 5-6 March

The Bristol Settlement, Ducie Road, Barton Hill, Bristol 5

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Deported to torture and death

ALGERIAN asylum-seekers in Britain, are running the gauntlet between the deportation policies of the British Home Office and the long arm of the Algerian junta's secret-police torturers. They fear the secret police, having begun spying on the community here, may attempt provocations.

Slimani Djar, a 40-year-old father of four who was held in Hasler immigrant detention centre, Portsmouth, for nine months, was deported to Algeria three weeks ago. He was immediately thrown into Beroujthia top-security prison.

Secret

Riad Khassioui, 21, applied for political asylum in Britain but was deported six months ago. On 22 January 1994, secret police came to a flat at 20 Rue

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

Danton, Algiers, where Riad was staying with his brother in law, Mohammed Mazni. The police threw Yacine Zoiche, a friend, from the balcony to his death, then tortured Mohammed Mazni in his bathroom, before murdering him and Riad Khassioui.

Eight Algerians released from Pentonville prison, London, after a 12-day hunger strike still face the threat of deportation. While they were in Pentonville a prison officer told them: 'We don't care about you, and

your government doesn't care about you. As far as we are concerned you can starve to death. That is what happened to Bobby Sands.'

A Zairean who had joined their hunger strike was released on 13 February. Last year an inquest ruled that another Zairean, Omasase Lumumba, nephew of the Congo's first prime minister, Patrice Lumumba, had been unlawfully killed in Pentonville.

Some Algerians legally in Britain find themselves caught between the two governments. A man whose wife is British was

refused a passport from the Algerian embassy, which claimed they had no 'proof' he was Algerian.

The British Home Office demanded he produce a letter of refusal from the embassy, which wouldn't provide one, and ignored two letters from his MP, Labour's Jeremy Corbyn.

As political repression grows worse in Algeria, refugees in London believe an officer at the embassy is directing spying on their community. One man was tailed by a car as he walked from Baker Street station to Regents Park mosque. While he

was away from home, his wife received a phone call falsely claiming that he had been arrested.

Refugees

A man who frequented some London mosques, claiming he could give legal advice to refugees, was found out to be passing files on people to an Algerian official. Mohammed Sekkoum, of the Algerian Community Association, called the police on one occasion because of sinister-looking characters loitering outside his home.

Mohammed suspects that the secret police in Algeria have carried out some of the assassinations blamed on the Islamic opposition. He also points out that the junta had talks with French and German authorities, to have pressure put on Algerian activists.

Algerians in Britain fear that, like the Tsarist Okhrana early this century, their country's increasingly desperate secret-police agents may turn from harassment to provocations, aimed at bringing the British authorities' wrath on refugees here.

Wanstead: what a police state looks like

BY BOB ARCHER

LARGE areas of the east London borough of Redbridge were cut off in the massive police operation against environmental protesters last week.

The protesters had occupied a row of houses in Wanstead due to be demolished to make way for the new road linking central London with the M11 motorway.

In an operation second only to the events of the 1984-85 miners' strike, road-blocks were put up at dawn at dozens of points in

middle-class Redbridge.

The police clampdown was maintained all day, thoroughly annoying large numbers of motorists and bringing a chilling evocation of what a police state could look like.

Sealed

Throughout the day, 800 police officers kept several hundred yards of the A12 around the row of houses completely sealed off. Several hundred more were in reserve nearby.

Even more disturbing were the hundreds of bailiffs and

strong-arm men in blue dungarees and hard hats who strutted around Wanstead all day.

Many of the environmental campaigners are veterans of other anti-motorway campaigns and squats.

They are putting up a desperate struggle against the invasion of concrete and asphalt, which brings big profits for construction companies and their financial backers but only dirt and pollution for the rest of us.

As more and more cars career about on more and more roads, more and more children are suffering from asthma, almost certainly brought on by exhaust gases.

Media sneers about 'new age travellers' are intended to drive a wedge between the protesters and the local residents.

Respect

In fact the protesters earned the respect of many of the journalists who covered the Redbridge siege by their quiet bravery and non-violent conduct.

Some of the environmentalists chained themselves to cement barrels. Others perched on rooftops and perilously high on trees, trying to make it im-



The Wanstead police operation was second only to that in the 1984-85 miners' strike (pictured)

possible for the police to remove them and make way for the new road.

A huge hydraulic lift was deployed by the police, who literally snatched people off the rooftops and swung them down to the ground. It is an absolute miracle that no serious injuries were inflicted

on the protesters in the process.

Many building workers and others have carried out symbolic occupations of various sites and plants as part of industrial struggles.

They should know that the police will stop at nothing to smash such actions. The M11 link protesters have undergone an ex-

perience which provides food for thought for all trades unionists and communities in struggle against the capitalist state.

Attention has now switched further west along the intended route of the link road. Protesters have occupied more buildings and intend to carry on the fight against an unwanted road.

SPECIAL OFFER — EXPIRES END FEB. 1994

'REVOLUTIONARIES THEY COULDN'T BREAK'

BY N.VAN

The fight for the Fourth International in Indo-China

WHEN published in early 1994 this 220 page book will cost about £15. Advance subscribers are offered it for £10. Fill in the form below.

The book and its author

The Vietnamese workers' movement took shape in mortal conflict with the French colonial regime before World War II.

It suffered defeat in 1945, caught between French attempts to reassert control on one side, and an alliance of the Communist party and reactionary nationalists on the other.

A decisive part was played in the workers' movement by the Vietnamese supporters of Leon Trotsky.

As the official Communist Party — under Stalin's instructions — carried out ever-more-ruinous zig-zags of policy, the Trotskyists discredited and defeated them in the workers' organisations.

The Vietnamese Communist Party enforced its power in 1945 by a brutal slaughter of its

Trotskyist opponents — not, as Stalinist mythology pretended, because the latter 'turned their backs on the peasantry' or 'sold themselves to Japanese fascism'.

This book sets straight the historical record after generations of falsification.

It brings alive the political lessons of a period in which the Trotskyist Fourth International and the Stalinist Third International clashed, not in the arena of ideas or slogans, but in life — among workers and peasants who organised and fought in the face of grinding poverty, police dictatorship and war.

* * * * *

Ngo Van was a worker, a Trotskyist and a participant in the events he describes. He was imprisoned in the 1930s by the French colonial regime, and in 1945 escaped the Stalinist massacre.

He fled Vietnam to Europe, where he lives in exile. He combined first-hand experience with years of documentary research to write this book, which is a must for revolutionary fighters of today.

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'Probe Indonesia arms deal'

HUMAN rights campaigners have asked the House of Commons select committee investigating links between British aid and arms exports to Malaysia to extend its enquiries to deals with Indonesia.

Campaign

Tapol, the Indonesian human rights campaign, said 24 British Aerospace Hawk fighter-trainers were sold to the Suharto regime in June last year, two

months after the British government agreed £65 million in soft loans for a power plant in east Kalimantan.

Although Defence Secretary Malcolm Rifkind claimed the Hawks were only unarmed trainers, Indonesian commanders say they can be used for ground-attack. Indonesian occupation forces are fighting guerrilla movements in East Timor and Papua.

The power plant in Indonesia is being built by the same GEC-

Alstom consortium involved in Malaysia's controversial Peragu dam project.

Under a deal signed by former prime minister Thatcher and Malaysian prime minister Mohammad Mahathir, secretly linking aid to arms, Malaysia agreed to purchase British frigates from the GEC-owned Yarrow shipbuilders.

Tyneside shipbuilders Swan

Hunter, now in the hands of the receivers, say they spent £345,000 preparing a bid for the frigate contract before being warned off by the Ministry of Defence.

One of Thatcher's closest advisers is now with GEC's Malaysian subsidiary, while son Mark is a £52,000 a year 'consultant' to Cementation, also engaged in the Malaysian dam project.

Durham ex-steelworker loses bungalow murder appeal

FORMER steelworker Albert Dryden, who shot and killed a council official leading a team to demolish his bungalow, which had been built in breach of planning regulations, has had his appeal against life imprisonment turned down.

Dryden, from Baisfield in Co. Durham, was convicted at Newcastle Crown Court in April 1992 of the murder of the council official, Michael Denton, and of wounding a BBC reporter and a police officer who had witnessed the shooting.

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Hello and
goodbye!

FORGIVE an excursion from the left-wing press. It's not often we see a former member of the central committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party grinning from the front-cover of 'Hello!', the magazine that tries to brighten our humdrum existence by showing us how well-to-do celebrities live.

On 12 February, promising 'a rare and candid interview at home with Vanessa Redgrave', 'Hello!' showed her sitting on the settee, standing by the piano, in front of the mantelpiece, with and without another Corin, and wearing three outfits (Corin managed two). She was asked about her daughters' success, about becoming a grandmother, and whether she was good at keeping friends.

'I guess I must be,' replied Ms Redgrave. Scanning the pictures over her mantelpiece, I couldn't be any of former WRP leader Gerry Healy. When the WRP expelled Healy in 1985, for failing to answer charges of violence, slander and sexual abuse of young members, the Redgraves went with him. Their children hadn't been abused. Vanessa Redgrave claimed five different intelligence agencies had conspired against Comrade Gerry'.

Vanessa Redgrave and Healy went to Moscow together. Convinced Korbachev was leading the 'political revolution' that would save the USSR, they founded the Marxist Party. Since Healy's death, Redgrave has appeared with a claimant to the Russian throne (also in 'Hello!') and shaking hands with Princess Diana (in the London Evening Standard). She is helping NICEF, the children's fund.

'Vanessa, do you feel you have been misunderstood in your public life?' asked 'Hello!'. Yes and no, said Redgrave. I'd say yes, definitely. For almost a decade she had been believing she wanted to be a revolutionary!

As for 'keeping friends', after Healy died in 1989, Vanessa Redgrave Enterprises Ltd sacked his secretary, Corinna Lotz, who'd been with him before they were, announcing her as a 'provocateur' with a touch with 'a CIA agent'. This didn't impress an industrial relations tribunal, which found it an unfair dismissal.

Redgrave has a picture in her dressing room of Dustin Hoffman, with whom she starred in 'Agatha', about detective-story writer Agatha Christie's disappearance. What became of the Marxist Party's promised international investigation into Healy's death remains a mystery. At this 'Miss Marples's' career can hold few surprises anymore.

Turnaround

UNION colleagues of Bob Pitt have asked me to record his latest political turn. About six months ago, at the London booksellers' branch of the workers' union USDAW, Pitt firmly opposed giving any support to the Workers Aid for Bosnia convoys.

Reminded that the Workers International League, of which he was a member, supported Workers Aid, Pitt told his branch meeting that he had left the WIL precisely over this issue. As workmates collected aid, and anxiously followed the first convoy's progress, he cheered about 'beans for Bosnia'.

This month, however, Pitt proposed the branch should affiliate to the 'International Workers Aid', the breakaway engineered by Steve Meyers, Alan Thornett and the 'United Secretariat of the Fourth International'. Change of tune, or change of tactics? Funny old game, isn't it? With some funny people.
Charlie Pottins

Election manifesto of

The workers
the
break

Below we reproduce the election manifesto issued by comrades of the Workers International in South Africa, who are standing candidates in the national elections in April. They are fighting the elections on a revolutionary programme that calls for the overthrow of capitalism in South Africa and in opposition to the Stalinist alliance of the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party.

THE apologists for imperialism gleefully proclaim that socialism and communism are dead, that socialism has no place in the future of humanity because it has proved itself unworkable. The proof they give for these lies is the collapse of the regimes in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

If they are correct, then humanity is doomed to plunge deeper into the abyss of darkness and barbarism. This is so because under imperialism — the last and highest phase of capitalism — the further development of the human race and its liberation from hunger and poverty are impossible.

In fact the capitalist system, which is in rapid decay, can only increase the drudgery and misery

worsening cycle of poverty, suffering and violence is by overthrowing this rotting capitalist system and building in its place a socialist society. This task falls to the working class, which has no stake in capitalism and which has the power to overthrow it.

Under socialism the means of production — land, factories and mines — and the banks and all big business must be placed under the control of the working class. To achieve this aim the working class must be organised in its own independent revolutionary party. This will have to be an international party — for us, the rebuilt Fourth International.

We repeat: it was not socialism or communism that collapsed in

'It was not socialism or communism that collapsed in the USSR and eastern Europe but a brutal, anti-democratic, anti-worker system headed by the Stalinist bureaucracy.'

of the vast majority of the world's population. Millions are dying of starvation in Africa and Asia while thousands of tons of food are dumped in Europe and north America.

Who can ever forget Ethiopia and Somalia? Numerous wars and civil wars are carried out or supported by the imperialists against democratic and progressive forces of the oppressed peasants and the workers' movement of Africa, Asia and south America. War is declared wherever the interests of imperialism are threatened.

Under imperialism, illiteracy and the absence of basic housing, health care, education, and jobs are the norm in all the poor capitalist countries, and are spreading to the advanced capitalist countries as capitalist decay accelerates.

Today in Europe and north America democratic rights, such as trade union rights, jobs and social security are under vicious attack.

The only way to break this

the USSR and eastern Europe but a brutal, anti-democratic, anti-worker system headed by the Stalinist bureaucracy.

* * * * *

STALINISM is the ideology of the social caste that crystallised around Joseph Stalin. In the Soviet Union and eastern Europe, as in other countries, Stalinism was based on installing and keeping in power the new elite — the state and party officials (bureaucracy) — who were the new rulers.

The source of the wealth of the bureaucracy was nationalised economy, which it exploited and plundered for its own gain. In order to protect its privileges, a regime of violence and terror was organised over the working class.

Any genuine struggles elsewhere in the world presented a threat to the Stalinists' privileges and anti-socialist policies. Hence

they used their might to behead any genuine socialist struggles across the world, by misleading workers and by killing thousands of revolutionaries, including Leon Trotsky in 1940.

The Stalinists and their policies led to the defeat of many revolutionary struggles, for instance the Chinese and Spanish revolutions and, later, the Hungarian revolution in 1956. Stalinism was and remains the grave-digger of the socialist revolution and the protector of imperialism.

Today it is the Stalinists who are spearheading the restoration of capitalism in the former Soviet Union and eastern Europe, allowing the imperialists to gobble up these countries for peanuts. In fact, many new capitalists in these countries are 'former' Stalinists who are plundering their countries anew.

In this new role of theirs, the Stalinists have now completely and unambiguously revealed their true pro-capitalist nature. In countries such as South Africa the Stalinists are in the forefront of extolling the virtues of capitalism.

But from the very beginning Stalinism has been opposed by comrades who fought heroically against selling out the principles on which the Russian revolution was based. Many paid for this with their lives.

Out of these struggles the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution, was founded in 1938. The Fourth International was committed to continue the fight for genuine revolutionary international socialism, and therefore pitted itself against Stalinism.

It was persecuted by imperialism and Stalinism alike. It suffered a severe crisis in 1953 owing to the pressure of Stalinism and the opportunist policies of its own leadership. But the struggle did not end there — it continued under the most difficult conditions.

Today, we, in the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International, are an organisation fighting to reconstruct the Fourth International so that it can fulfil its historic mission — the total vanquishing of capitalism and the total liberation of humanity.

South Africa has its own Stalinist party that has over the years supported Moscow's every bloody deed. The South African Communist Party (SACP) implements the politics of Stalinism in our country, in alliance with the nationalist African National Congress (ANC).



Facing police bullets: evidence proves

These two parties have a history of dealing mercilessly with opposition. The detention, abuses, torture and murder of its own fighters in exile being a case in point.

It comes as no surprise to us that today the supposedly 'communist'



South African police search through a township

South African Trotskyists

Working class: Power to the cycle



that violence in the townships is sponsored by the South African regime

SACP is in the forefront of those trying to tie the working class to the wagon of the bourgeoisie.

In order to accomplish this deed, the tri-partite alliance with the ANC and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)

has been set up.

The purpose of this alliance is to allow Stalinism and nationalism to exercise political control over the workers in COSATU. The COSATU and the trade union leaderships — almost wholly members of the ANC

and/or SACP — regularly break their mandates and have sold out the workers to the pro-capitalist politics of the ANC and SACP.

These leaders are now telling workers not to fight against capitalism, which oppresses them, but

rather to tighten their belts whilst the capitalists grow richer.

For workers to successfully defend their interests against capitalism, they will have to take COSATU out of this Stalinist-nationalist alliance and have to pursue internationalist revolutionary politics.

The main issues we are fighting for:

1. For a revolutionary workers' state.

Under capitalism the state rules on behalf of the capitalist class. In overthrowing capitalism the working class will have to break up the capitalist state machinery, including the security forces, and have to build a new kind of state — a workers' state.

A workers' state will consist of representative organs of workers' power, such as elected workers' councils operating at all levels of society. The workers' state will be defended by a revolutionary workers' army.

2. Nationalisation under workers' control.

End the ownership of the economy by a handful of capitalists. We stand for the nationalisation of the mines, factories, banks, the capitalist farms, and all other sections of big business, without com-

pensation and under workers' control. Then the profits that used to be pocketed by the rapacious capitalists will be ploughed into the development of society for the benefit of all.

3. The land must be redivided.

All the capitalist farms must be nationalised under the control of those who work them. All peasants should get full ownership and control over their plots of land. Those communities that were robbed of their land under apartheid must have it restored to them.

4. Workers' internationalism.

Capitalism is an international system and the capitalists are internationally united against the working class. Solidarity with workers' struggles in other countries is one of our very important principles.

Furthermore, the struggle for socialism is itself international. Only after the overthrow of capitalism in every country will socialism be a reality, and will humanity be free from misery and suffering.

It is for this reason that the revolutionary party of the working class must be an international party — the rebuilt Fourth International.

5. We reject the pro-capitalist and undemocratic negotiations and agreements.

Negotiations have left capitalism firmly in place, and are aimed at further strengthening it. The entire process was conducted by unelected individuals, most of whom do not represent the masses but have long histories of repressing and massacring the oppressed. The negotiations were also characterised by numerous secret meetings, where deals were struck behind the backs of the masses.

To add insult to injury, all the deals had to be approved by the illegitimate, racist and undemocratic tri-cameral parliament. Thus the 'new' South Africa will be an approved product of the apartheid state. Is it possible that this reactionary parliament can give birth to democracy? Most certainly not.

Can anyone still doubt that democracy in the 'new' South Africa will be an abortion? We reject the whole process, with its agreements that are so heavily stacked against the interests of the working class.

Principally:

- We reject the property clause, which protects the rights of the capitalists against the working class and the dispossessed.

- We demand the publication of the minutes of all the secret meetings held during the past four years as part of the negotiations process.

- We demand a sovereign consti-

'There can be no lasting peace without the total destruction of the capitalist state and its security forces and reactionary surrogates. This is the task of the working class.'

tuent assembly, in opposition to the rubber-stamp puppet assembly that was negotiated. The principles upon which the new constitution is to be based have been agreed in advance by the unelected negotiations forum and tri-cameral parliament. We stand for a constituent assembly unfettered by previous agreements, and elected in a constituency-based election.

- We reject a so-called government of 'national unity'. The parties that the ANC and SACP will be uniting with do not represent the masses. Such a government will not unite the working class or the oppressed. It will unite the capitalists and reactionaries with the nationalism of the ANC and the Stalinism of the SACP.

It will be a government united against the working class.

We oppose racialism and stand for a centrally united state. The purpose of breaking the country up into regional governments is threefold — firstly it divides the working class and its organisations; secondly it provides a political niche for regional reactionary forces; and, thirdly it entrenches tribal consciousness.

This is one of the most serious attacks on the unity of the working class, and is a second edition of the Bantustan policy. First you divide them, then you rule them. Our country must be united.

- We oppose the repayment of apartheid debts, and we reject the

● TURN TO PAGE 6

S. African Trotskyists' election manifesto



Mines, factories, banks, capitalist farms and other big business must be nationalised, without compensation: the ownership of the economy by a handful of capitalists must be ended

● From page 5

taking of new loans from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which are imperialism's police.

■ We insist on the complete destruction of apartheid, roots and all.

We stand for the complete dismantling of apartheid's structures, such as the state, the security forces and the courts. We stand for the removal of privileges gained through apartheid.

We stand for the tearing down of apartheid monuments, and for the replacement of all apartheid names (e.g. streets) and symbols. All forms of racism must be rooted out.

■ The election is a fraud. The majority will decide at the ballot box which party they want to rule over them. However, the major-

negotiated settlement to the masses.

6. The violence against the masses must be stopped

Eye-witness accounts, court cases, and other evidence proved long ago that the vice-like grip of violence in the townships is sponsored by the regime, the Inkatha Freedom Party and elements of the Afrikaner rightwing.

New evidence is surfacing that British secret agents are supplying AK47s to reactionary instigators of the violence.

The violence is aimed against the black working class, in order to destroy its fighting capacity, thereby keeping it under control.

Many thousands have already

working class. We fully support the formation of armed self-defence units that are completely accountable to the communities they are defending.

7. Imperialism out of South Africa and the region

Imperialism's presence in South Africa is, as always, to further its own interests. Imperialism is fully behind and an integral part of the counter-revolutionary negotiations process; on the one hand, strengthening the regime and the reactionary forces, while, on the other, supporting the ANC.

The imperialist observers have shown themselves incapable of stopping the violence, their presence rather legitimises and institutionalises it, helping the murderers to hide themselves.

In fact new evidence shows the British imperialists are supplying AK47s to those responsible for the violence. Even where there is peace, the monopoly on violence is left in the hands of the culprits, who can at their leisure decide to start again.

We also stand for:

- A guaranteed living wage for all workers, which must be linked to inflation.
- Work for all or a living unemployment benefit and full job security.
- An immediate end to retrenchment — retrench the bosses.
- State-provision of decent housing for all. Houses must be adequate for the needs of the people, and at low, subsidised rents.
- Free adequate health care and education for all. Compulsory education until matriculation level or the age of 18.
- Pensions and other social allowances must be adequate and liveable.
- The elderly and infirm must be

properly cared for by the state.

■ Introduction of extensive subsidies on bread and all other basic foods.

■ Public transport must be adequate, safe and cheap.

■ Peasants and small businesses must be assisted by means of easy access to cheap credit, and all other reasonable measures.

■ Workers must have the right to form unions of their choice, to strike without fear of dismissal or harassment, and whatever other rights decided on by the workers themselves.

■ An end to discrimination against women in law, in the workplace and at home.

■ The creation of the conditions needed by the youth to develop intellectually, academically, culturally and physically. The youth must be enabled to play a meaningful role in society, and must have guaranteed employment.

In conclusion:

THE leaderships of the ANC, SACP and COSATU have sold out on all the main demands of the oppressed and exploited in favour of unity with the capitalists and reactionaries.

They promise us all sorts of freedoms after the April elections. But what good will these freedoms be if people do not have money for the bus fare to look for a job? Freedom of movement then becomes meaningless.

There will be freedom of speech, they say, but the media (newspapers, TV, radio), through which ideas can be expressed, is controlled by the capitalists. There will be housing, they say, but the vast majority will not be able to afford it. What good is equality before the law if the poor man/woman cannot afford the same lawyers as the rich?

'We call on the working class (urban and rural), the peasants, the lower rungs of the middle class, and all genuine democrats, to support us in our revolutionary quest for real equality, truth and democracy.'

The youth must have the right to happiness.

■ The complete scrapping of Value Added Tax.

■ Sound environmental policies. Capitalism and Stalinism are destroying the environment we live in. We stand for policies that would prevent further harm to the environment, and that would protect and revitalise it.

■ All children must have the right to a loving home, adequate care, security and protection.

■ All fighters for democracy who returned from exile, especially those who were wrongfully detained and tortured by the ANC and SACP, and including all demobilised soldiers against apartheid, must be provided with adequate housing, and decent jobs or a living unemployment benefit.

■ Forward to the united socialist states of southern Africa.

The list of what is unobtainable for the working class under capitalism is unending. Freedoms and rights mean nothing if there is no money to implement or enjoy them. Real equality, real emancipation from poverty, hunger and degradation, can only be achieved through the destruction of private property relations and the establishment of a socialist economy.

The Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International is counterposing a revolutionary, internationalist socialist programme to the capitalist programmes of the other parties. We call on the working class (urban and rural), the peasants, the lower rungs of the middle class, and all genuine democrats, to support us in our revolutionary quest for real equality, truth and democracy.

The struggle continues!

'The leaderships of the ANC, SACP and COSATU have sold out on all the main demands of the oppressed and exploited in favour of unity with the capitalists and reactionaries.'

ity party will not rule after 28 April, but a government of 'national unity' that will prevent the will of the majority from being implemented.

The elections will favour minorities. In addition, the negotiations partners are opportunistically seeing the elections as a means whereby the masses will endorse the deals negotiated against their interests.

The masses will vote, not for this reason but despite the deal. They will vote in order to kick the Nationalist Party out of power thereby bringing closer freedom. We oppose the undemocratic nature of this election, and will participate in it in order to expose its true nature and the nature of the

died, and the killings are continuing unabated. The ANC and the SACP have proved themselves incapable of ending this violence.

By calling on people to throw their guns into the sea, by refusing to arm the masses, by reining in MK [Umkhonto we Sizwe, the ANC's military wing], by embracing Buthelezi and Inkatha, and by signing peace accords with the murderers, the ANC and SACP have become a contributing factor to the violence.

There can be no lasting peace without the total destruction of the capitalist state and its security forces and reactionary surrogates. This is the task of the



Deals were struck behind the backs of the masses

Television

Lynchburg to Nuremberg

Review by Charlie Pottins

AMONG chilling episodes which remain in my mind from films is one from Kevin Brownlow's low-budget, black-and-white 1960s 'It Happened Here', which imagined Britain as it might have been under Nazi occupation.

A nurse who volunteers to work for the Vichy-style collaborator regime is sent to a pleasant-looking country nursing home, where she administers injections to prisoners. The following morning, the sun shines into an empty ward. Outside the window, birds are singing, and staff in the grounds are filling in graves.

Escaped

In a week in which Stephen Spielberg's 'Schindler's List' was released, BBC2 discussed Hollywood and the Holocaust, and ITV showed a documentary on children who escaped the Nazis. The programme that grabbed my attention was 'The Lynchburg Story' (17 February, Channel 4), in the 'Secret History' series, about an asylum in Virginia, set up as a colony for epileptics, where during 1922-72 over 8,000 people were compulsorily sterilised.

They were, as the narrator said, Virginia's ill-educated poor whites. Teenagers who had run away from home were brought to Lynchburg by 'welfare' workers. An 11-year-old girl was told 'You've got to be operated on'. 'For what?' 'For

your own health.' She nearly died under the operation. In adult life, her marriage broke down because she couldn't have children.

Able-bodied inmates at Lynchburg were worked as virtual slaves, for 25 cents a week. Those who broke the rules or upset staff were thrown in cramped punishment cells for up to 90 days. The girl who had been sterilised at 11 saw a woman beaten to death by a warder.

US courts have refused to rule that people's constitutional rights were violated at Lynchburg. 'Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness'? Virginia had been a slave state, its famous son Thomas Jefferson, who wrote those fine words in the constitution, was a planter. From regarding blacks as bred for hard labour, to eliminating 'worthless' poor-whites who 'degraded' their 'race' wasn't hard.

What happened at Lynchburg was not a peculiarly Southern, or American, affair. In England, Sir Francis Galton pioneered the idea of 'eugenics', selective breeding of human beings to eliminate the undesirable. A government information film asserted mental as well as physical qualities were inherited. Fabians like H.G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw

and the Webbs were keen on the idea, and Winston Churchill favoured the kind of programme carried out at Lynchburg.

While 'Roaring Twenties' America Charlestone through the 'Jazz Age', racists marched not only under klansmen's hoods but in the white coats of pseudo-science, warning of 'race degeneration'. Eugenics legislation drafted by Dr Harry Loughlin provided for compulsory sterilisation of the blind, deaf, tubercular, criminals, mentally-ill, paupers and homeless; in fact anyone whom the authorities deemed 'feeble-minded' or 'social misfits'.

Carrie Buck, raped where she worked as a servant, ran away and bore an illegitimate child. The family she lodged with reported her. Carrie was taken away to Lynchburg, while they kept the child. Carrie was used in a test case for the legality of forced sterilisations. Dr Harry Loughlin, who'd never met her, gave 'expert evidence' that Carrie typified 'the shiftless, worthless and anti-social whites' who should be eliminated.

Hollywood, which produced some sharp social documentaries at this time, exposed some of the misery that eugenics was inflicting on individuals. But California had more sterilisations than Virginia.

Adolf Hitler's laws for sterilising mental patients and others 'unfit' for the 'Master Race' were based on those in force in the United States. Harry Loughlin received an honorary doctorate from Heidelberg. Those in charge of Lynchburg observed that 'Germany is catching us up at our own game'.

Step

The programme showed it was a logical step from eliminating 'undesirable' characteristics to exterminating people.

We might add, those fleeing Nazi persecution ran up against racist US immigration laws, drafted under the same ideological influence as the sterilisation programme. After World War II, some of those who drafted Germany's race-laws found themselves in the dock at Nuremberg.

While America led the 'free world' during the cold war, Lynchburg continued sterilising people and employing slaves. No one has paid for it, nor has anyone been compensated.

When capitalism's 'experts' blame society's victims for their plight, talk about genetically inherited inferiority, or claim they can identify 'criminal types' at five (not those of their own class, of course!), think on. We have been down that road, from Lynchburg to Nuremberg.

John Fordun

An absence of politics

Hare, Naughton reported, was disgusted.

A GERMAN theatre critic, attending a Bertolt Brecht premiere in the 1920s, found himself in the midst of a riot. The show so outraged the bourgeois audience that it erupted.

The critic sought to convey the atmosphere to his readers. There was a couple seated beside him, he recounted. In the midst of the m  lee the woman suffered a heart attack and asked her husband to take her home. He refused, explaining that what was happening was far too important to miss.

Although I would not wish even a minor cardiac arrest on anyone, as a theatre-goer, I wish I could imagine something like that happening in Britain today.

There seemed cause for hope last autumn when controversy arose over David Hare's play about recent British politics, 'The Absence of War'. On a recent visit to London I went to see it in that concrete corral on the South Bank, the Olivier auditorium of the National Theatre.

The show got a polite audience response and the nearest thing to a riot came at the interval over the price of ice creams.

'The Absence of War' is about the defeat of the Labour Party at the 1992 general election. To research it, Hare was given privileged observer status on the Kinnock campaign team.

But the play, he insisted, is a work of creative fiction. Hare's Labour leader, George Jones, is not a balding, red Welshman, but a white-haired, London bachelor, played by Inspector Morse (or John Thaw as he is known to his immediate family). The doubtfully loyal shadow chancellor, Malcolm Pryce (Richard Pasco), is not a bespectacled Scots lawyer with a negative charisma count.

A meeting between Jones and Pryce at a crisis point in the campaign, however, results in one of a number of moments when fiction and real life merge.

Jones calls on Pryce to 'talk up' his leadership. The latter expostulates: 'The whole parliamentary party has lined up... waiting for you to... deliver the one hammer blow... And instead, we've watched you... fumble. Oratorical free fall! The "Oxford English Dictionary" on speed! Every bloody time you funk it!'

Kinnock, it was reported, was displeased.

AFTER the play's opening in October, Hare was invited on to 'The Late Show', the BBC2 programme in which a group of media 'intellectuals' take it upon themselves to judge what is important in cultural life.

John Naughton, the 'Observer's' television critic, protested about what ensued. The playwright complained, wrote Naughton, that 'The Late Show' people had stitched him up. They invited him to take part in a discussion about the social issues raised by his trilogy of plays, which culminates with 'The Absence of War'.

Instead he found himself part of a panel reviewing the plays themselves, although, of those present, only one, Michael Billington, was a theatre critic.

Billington also testified that he did not realise he would be 'part of a hanging jury'. The show's discussion was chaired by 'Late Show' groupie Michael Ignatieff who, observed another commentator, 'sneered loftily'.

NAUGHTON exposed this episode because he is a scourge of abusers of media power. The Late Showers who skim with megalomaniac superficiality over serious cultural issues are a prime target.

Interesting though this quarrel was, there are other things to be said about 'The Absence of War'.

Hare had tried to bring real political issues into mainstream theatre and his right to proper treatment on television must be supported. But 'The Absence of War' dramatises the crisis of the Labour Party: criticism from the standpoint of the working class is called for.

The trades unions get no serious mention in the play: not even a minor character is a trade union leader. Nor is there any character who can make even the beginning of a socialist critique of the Labour leadership.

At one level this must reflect Hare's experience as campaign eavesdropper. Labour's election 'experts' in 1992 were determined that trades unionists would play no visible part. References to socialism were taboo.

But the playwright must analyse, not just observe. Hare presents a picture of what happened to the Labour Party as though it were all a matter of the leader's dilemma, a personal tragedy.

One scene does show an old-timer being swept aside as the platform party sallies forth to their version of a Nuremberg rally. But Hare seems unable to grapple with the idea that the crisis of Labour's leading personalities is dramatic, not in itself, but because it is tied up with a historic crisis for the working class.

At the end, George Jones stands centre-stage, a year on from 'my bruising experience' in the failed campaign. He bemoans being told that 'everything I love and value no longer meets the needs of the day'. He asks:

'Is this history? ... Could we have done more? Was it possible? And how shall we know? If that reads as pretty naff, think how it sounds in the theatre, delivered to the strains of Purcell's 'When I am laid to earth may my sins create no trouble in my breast! Pass the sickbag, usher, please!'

None of this would be important if Hare were not a passionate anti-Thatcherite, and a playwright who wants to make theatre matter politically. He is also taken seriously by fine critics like John Naughton.

Hare's mastery of playmaking, the professionalism of the National's actors, and the often irrelevantly extravagant sets serve to sustain interest in 'The Absence of War'. But to what end? The intellectual and emotional content is minimal.

Maybe the play is a cry of alarm from that section of the intelligentsia which, bruised by Thatcherism, is seeking a way forward. Maybe the fact that it was put on at the National does represent a turning-point: one at which the nation's crisis was shown to be so acute that a concerned and able playwright could, for all his good intentions, say little dramatic about it.

A play which seeks to turn the spotlight on the crisis of politicians ends up turning it back on to the playwright and his circle. This is a situation to which Marxists should pay attention.

Would that Workers Press had the resources to report more consistently on the performing arts in London. There is an important discussion out there waiting to happen!

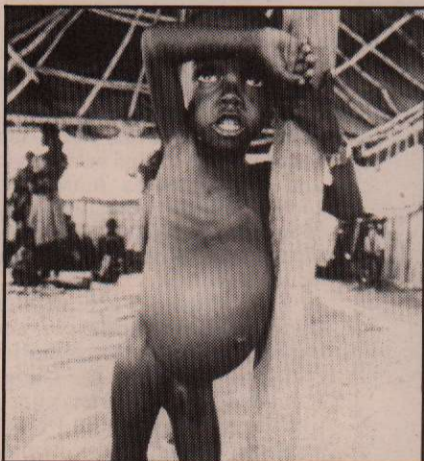
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Programme guide

Sunday 27 February ENCOUNTERS: 'Lost Children of Angola'. In the last 15 years the infrastructure of civilisation has all but vanished from this, the potentially third-richest African country (7pm, Channel 4). **THE SOUTH BANK SHOW:** 'Looking for the Perfect Beat - Rap'. Susan Shaw's film explores the world of rap and hip hop, from its origins in the streets of the south Bronx to the explosion of 'Gangsta' rap in Los Angeles (10.40pm, ITV).

Monday 28 February BEYOND THE CLOUDS: 'A Small Town in China'. First of a seven-part series by award-winning documentarist Phil Agland, who was accorded unprecedented access by the Chinese government. Part two is on Thursday (9pm, Channel 4). 'China in Revolution'. Begins a four-part examination of the lives of Chinese people from the fall of the last Emperor up to the death of Chairman Mao (11.10pm, Channel 4).

Tuesday 1 March ASSIGNMENT: 'Naked Washington'.



Lost child in Angola's conflict (left), Sunday, C4; and life in a small town in China, Monday, C4



Considers the increase in hostility towards US presidents over the last three decades (7.45pm, BBC2).

Friday 4 March PUBLIC EYE: 'Home Truths'. Questions whether there is a hidden agenda behind the government's plans to end the rights of homeless families to permanent homes (8pm, BBC2).

Selected films

LAUGHTER IN PARADISE (1951). Practical joker leaves fortune to four relatives providing they carry out certain tasks. Mario Zampi directs a cast of familiar British character actors (Saturday, 1pm, Channel 4). **LES ENFANTS TERRIBLES** (1949). Jean-

Pierre Melville's screen version of a Jean Cocteau novel about the enclosed world of a brother and sister (Sunday, 12.45am, Channel 4). **JUNIOR BONNER** (1972). Steve McQueen plays an ageing rodeo star in this sublime Sam Peckinpah western (Friday, 12.15am, BBC2).

JJ

The 'International' focuses on Russia

NEW ISSUE NOW OUT! £2 plus 70p p&p

THE history of the Soviet Union and the changes taking place in its former territories is returned to in the just-published issue (no. 14) of the 'International', journal of the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International.

The break-up of the Stalinist dictatorship in the former USSR has opened a door for revolutionaries in the East and the West to start a serious political exchange for the first time since the 1920s.

In the summer of 1990, the Workers International organised a rally and meeting in Moscow to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Trotsky's assassination.

A major result of this work was the establishment of a small Trotskyist group, the Socialist Workers Union of Moscow, which is a section of the Workers International. One of

the leaders of this group, Alexei Gusev, is a prize-winning historian of opposition groups within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) during the 1920s.

He has written an article on the struggle of the CPSU in 1923, the year that saw the birth of the Left Opposition. Lavish use of original documents, which have only now become available, bring to life the struggle for Bolshevism against Stalinism which our movement embodies.

Fruitful

Comrade Gusev's article should launch a fruitful discussion, especially as he is critical of the way in which the Left Oppositionists waged the fight within the CPSU. It does contribute greatly to our knowledge of the period and its importance for the workers' movement.

Recent developments have painfully exposed the poverty of what passes for an 'analysis' of the Soviet Union among many of the so-called Trotskyist groups. One pathetic side of doctrinaire sloganeering is the search for a progressive force among the remnants of the old bureaucracy that is squabbling over the right to rule Russia.

In an article on 'The Nature of the Bureaucracy in the Former Soviet Union', Simon Pirani rebuts this view as represented by the League for a Revolutionary Communist International. His article points out the long and injurious tradition behind the view that Stalinism has a 'progressive' side.

Russian and Ukrainian miners have been at the forefront of the working class in struggle both before and after the break-up of the Soviet

TRAP SET FOR SOUTH AFRICAN WORKERS

AS SOUTH AFRICA lurches towards what the bourgeois press bills as its 'first democratic elections', in April, more and more of the compromises with reaction made by all parties in the secret negotiations come out.

Amendments to the constitution designed by the African National Congress and the National Party government to woo the Freedom Alliance of rightwing parties, including Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party, include a provision for the investigation of the feasibility of an Afrikaner state. That is, for a hard apartheid state within the 'new' South Africa.

Using the language of 'self-determination', specific recognition is given for such rights of 'any community sharing a common cultural and language heritage, whether in a territorial entity within the republic, or any other recognised way', subject only to there being 'substantial proven support'.

But what if the community's 'self-determination' depends on the oppression of others? The right to 'self-determination' of the bourgeoisie depends on its right to exploit wage labour.

Despite the compromises, the Freedom Alliance rejected them as not enough. The Alliance was convinced that they had come as part of its pressure and obviously hopes there will be more where they came from: the alliance of the ANC and the National Party government.

In Natal, 15 young ANC supporters, one as young as 12, were murdered, it is thought by Buthelezi's Inkatha supporters, last weekend. Police described the slaughter as among the most brutal they had seen. The ANC supporters were mowed down by four men with AK47 assault rifles. They were then hacked to pieces with knives. Only one ANC supporter escaped.

Smokescreen

These young people were carrying out a government programme of 'voter education'. But, behind the smokescreen of 'parliamentary elections' and 'voter education', the ruling class is preparing its riot police and hit squads, its concentration camps and jailers.

The 'power-sharing'

preached about by the ANC and South African Communist Party leaders, Nelson Mandela, Cyril Ramophosa and Joe Slovo, means the misleading of thousands of fighters from the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK).

MK fighters are told to stop fighting imperialism and instead to join its armed forces. This is happening now, before the elections.

BY MIKE COOKE

Forces

'Voter education' teams are part of this, but in addition the ANC forces are already joining the security forces, ready to put down strikes, and suppress 'subversives' and enemies of the capitalist state.

Buthelezi 'condemned' the killing of the ANC 'voter educators' and went on to say: 'All my life I have striven for peaceful means to bring about a democratic South Africa.'

Those who don't support Inkatha haven't noticed this. The day after the massacre, Reuters's cameraman Peter Rudden reported that he had seen buses taking Buthelezi supporters home from a rally. They stopped on a dirt road near a cluster of grass-roofed huts in Edendale township. The Inkatha supporters opened fire with automatic rifles and shotguns.

Local residents returned fire — they obviously have not been convinced by Nelson Mandela's call for weapons to be thrown into the sea! Two houses were set ablaze. 'It was like a mini-war out there,' Rudden said.

Yet the compromises with Buthelezi go on. Part of the amendments was that the province of Natal be renamed Kwazulu/Natal.

The elections do not even offer any 'choice'. The result has been determined beforehand in the negotiations: a place in a government of 'national unity' for all parties that gain a certain proportion of the

vote. Any government that comes out is sure to be dominated by the banks and big business. This is also the case in Britain and other bourgeois democracies, but the domination is even more explicit in the way that the negotiations have proceeded in South Africa.

Apart from our comrades in the Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International, who are standing in the western Cape and hopefully elsewhere, there appears to be no one who is not prepared to compromise in some way or other.

The Pan-Africanist Congress — renowned for its anti-white

slogan 'one settler, one bullet' — is trying to pick up the pieces from a potential split in the ANC.

Accuses

It accuses the ANC of 'collaboration with the white oppressors'. Its president Clarence Makwetu says the elections would not 'mark the beginning of *uhuru* [independence] and the end of exploitation of the masses . . . a new government would change its complexion but the status quo would remain'.

But the PAC has recently

suspended its 'armed struggle' and anti-white rhetoric has been toned down. Its famous slogan was not heard at its unexpectedly small launch of its election manifesto in front of only 7,000.

More importantly, the manifesto does not insist on nationalisation and says vaguely that all land should be the property of the nation.

'We promise you land — our land — taken away by foul means,' Makwetu told the small crowd.

'Unlike those who promise to buy land back from those who stole it, we shall never buy it back. They did not pay for it.'

Meanwhile the 'independent observer' business is gearing up with its swarms of monitors, clipboards, etc., ready to converge and feed on the April election.

An Independent Electoral Commission is planning to set up 9,000 polling stations staffed by 171,000 people, which includes 10,000 official monitors.

And the UN is sending 1,770 observers, the European Union 320, the Commonwealth 70, the Organisation of African Unity 50, and other foreign governments 600. Other non-governmental organisations could send more than 5,000.

Workers Aid for Bosnia

French miners' march

From JANOS BOROVI
in Paris



Besieged people of Tuzla, the north-east Bosnian miners' town

SUNNY skies over Paris last Saturday were filled with smoke and explosions as more than 10,000 miners marched from Montparnasse to the Assemblée Nationale, the parliament building.

The miners were voicing their anger at pit closures, and expressing their determination to defend their jobs. The miners came from potash, iron, mineral and coal mines in all French mining regions to the demonstration, which was called by all the trades unions.

French supporters of Workers Aid for Bosnia were present with their banner. They distributed a leaflet with the call of the Bosnian miners of Slovenia to their brothers all over the world.

The bureaucratic union leaderships did everything possible to isolate the miners from other workers. There were no slogans proposing unity against pit closures and unemployment.

The Communist Party head of the CGT trade union federation launched the slogan 'French coal, French coal!'. This nationalist demand was

taken up by very few miners.

Workers Aid's demand for international solidarity was well received. Miners, particularly from the ranks of the CGT, flocked to pick up the leaflets, which quickly ran out.

A few hardline bureaucrats threatened our comrades, but they remained isolated.

Contact was made with representatives of the potash miners in Alsace. They had already heard about the convoy.

Like miners all over the world, French miners are desperate and angry. Saturday's march has shown that the crisis-ridden trade union bureaucracy is less and less able to control the rank and file, and that miners are hearing the voice of internationalism.

Two German demonstrations

DEMONSTRATIONS against the war in Bosnia attracted around 1,500 people at Mannheim and 4,000 in Frankfurt, Germany. Both demonstrations were almost entirely composed of Bosnians.

None of the German anti-fascist or left groups joined — apart from followers of Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat of the Fourth International in Mannheim. They distributed leaflets asking for help to buy lorries to station at the start of the southern route, Split. As a wounded Bosnian soldier said, the Split route exists only for the benefit of the black market.

Also absent were the trade union and labour leaders in Germany, who have done nothing to organise solidarity and support for the besieged workers of Bosnia.

Workers Aid speakers addressed both demonstrations. At Mannheim a young student from Tuzla explained the campaign for the northern route. At Frankfurt, Workers Aid secretary Bob Myers talked of the opposition in Britain to the plan by European Union envoy David Owen to carve-up Bosnia.

Frankfurt had a speaker from the CDU, the rightwing party of government in Germany and the biggest supporters of the Croatian government which seeks its own piece of the Bosnian carve-up.

Support grows in France

OLIVIA MEERSON reviews the results and developments of the campaign for Bosnia in France

SIXTY people came to our Workers Aid meeting on Friday 18 February.

Jean René Chauvin, who had been in concentration camps in World War II before serving as a journalist in Yugoslavia, encouraged the meeting by recalling that the fight against fascism was always the act of a minority to begin with, and that our orientation towards the workers' movement and the unions was the most important fight.

It was also highlighted that protesting letters and phone calls flooded the offices of 'L'Humanité', the daily paper of the Communist Party, PCF,

every time it published its scandalous opposition to Bosnian resistance.

Many messages of support were read out, bringing information about developments of the campaign in other cities.

The meeting ended with a vote on the Stuttgart resolution. This was carried, with no votes against and only four abstentions. A collection raised about 1,000 francs.

■ In Bretagne, material is already being collected for Radio Tuzla, and preparations are being made to participate in the March convoy. They are thinking about two or three trucks. A demonstration in support of Bosnia at the beginning of the week gathered together some 10,000 people.

■ In Brest, the 'Committee for Peace in the Former Yugoslav-

via' is collecting aid for refugees in Croatia. They will make their lorry available for collecting goods from warehouses in Zagreb to join the convoy.

■ Workers Aid's committee in Toulouse already has a bus to put on the convoy. After a meeting last week between the town authorities and the Bosnian ambassador, Nicola Kovac, they are now talking about another bus and two or three trucks.

■ Since the beginning of the year, Slavko Mihaljeck has oriented the committee in Thionville to the opening of the northern route. This culminated in a public meeting of all the workers' unions and political organisations. A committee of 20 members is now active with many young people working as part of it. They are planning two trucks.

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