

## South African comrade attacked

COMRADE NM, a member of the Workers International in Durban, South Africa, was seriously ill in hospital as we went to press. He was shot on Friday 2 August at about 9pm. He was hit by bullets in the stomach and in both hands.

NM, in his mid-30s, is married with five children. His wife and children are shocked and very frightened. NM did not recognise his attackers since they were wearing balaclava helmets.

Our comrade was a victimised trade unionist and his family are currently in great financial need. They also need our moral support. Please send money made payable to 'Workers International', PO Box 735, London SW8.

# No challenge from Labour leaders

# THE GREAT TORY RAIL RIP-OFF

## BIG DONORS to the Tory party will make millions from rail privatisation.

Tory benefactors who have made a killing from the sell-off of BR include:

■ Merchant banker **Hambros**, who between 1979 and 1980 handed over £368,000 to Tory coffers;

■ **Hanson Trust**, which gave £100,000 over the same period;

■ **The Royal Bank of Scotland**, who happen to be the Tories' bankers.

Hambros has got more than its money back. It was adviser of the sell-off of British Rail rolling-stock and was also responsible for calculating the rent for those who won the leases. The Department of Transport has refused to discuss the sums involved because of 'commercial confidentiality'.

In addition, Hambros is a member of the consortium that acquired Eversholt Leasing Company, the most

### BY THE EDITOR

profitable of the former BR companies. Eversholt reported pre-tax profits of £110 million in the period 1994-95.

The Royal Bank of Scotland was part of the group that bought Eversholt. The RBS provided the Tory party with a £19 million overdraft after the last elections.

### Millionaires

The sale of one former BR company, Porterbrook Leasing, to the bus company Stagecoach will bring its

owners an £80 million profit only seven months after it was bought from the nationalised industry. Several Porterbrook managers have become millionaires overnight.

■ Obscenely high profits are again being made on the gross undervaluation of public assets.

■ A good slice of these profits are going into the pockets of companies bank-rolling the Tories.

While this happens, this same Tory party hounds the unemployed by asking all 'good citizens' to report

those who they suspect are doing jobs to eke out their miserly unemployment benefit!

But in the face of this scandal the Labour leaders do nothing — apart from issuing their usual bleats.

■ Labour adamantly refuses to pledge to

renationalise the railway transport service. But in the light of these latest facts what better case could there be for this measure?

Even the tame Clare Short was sacked as opposition transport spokesperson when she simply called for tighter regulations over the privatised rail system.

## Liverpool dockers locked in battle

LIVERPOOL dockers and the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company (MDHC) remain locked in battle after ten months.

■ The dockers demand reinstatement of all sacked men with their union organisation and the removal of scabs from the port.

■ MDHC refuse reinstatement. They want cheap casual labour with no trade union rights.

The government-backed MDHC were convinced that these dockers would accept £25,000 to sell their jobs: £8 million was a small price to pay to rid the port of trade unionism.

WHAT is the current situation?

■ MDHC is trying to keep the giant North American shipping companies ACL and Cast using their scab port.

■ ACL removed their vessels for a month because dockers' boycott actions around the world were costing millions, but they returned to Liverpool when Cast started taking their trade.

■ Dockers' delegations are in European and North American ports discussing with dockers there the boycott of ACL and Cast vessels to ensure the complete blockade of the port of Liverpool.

■ Without any consultation

with the Liverpool dockers, the Transport and General Workers' Union general secretary Bill Morris wrote to MDHC asking for negotiations to be reopened **with no pre-conditions** and then he went on holiday for three weeks.

This is causing great unease among the sacked dockers. Every decision in their struggle is taken at their own mass meetings, and now the union goes behind their backs to the directors who sacked them. What does Morris have in mind?

There can be no limits to our support for the dockers who are placing such confidence in international solidarity.

**Everything must be done to give them the time and the resources to carry out their fight for reinstatement.**

## Mickie Fenn

WORKERS PRESS is sad to have to report the sudden death of Michael ('Mickie') Fenn, dockers' leader and fighter for socialism. We send our condolences to his wife Denise, his five children and to his many friends and comrades in the movement. An appreciation of Mickie's life appears on page 7.



Demonstration in support of Turkish prisoners on hunger strike, report centre pages

### Liverpool dockers

**Monday 12 August:** Mass picket, Seaforth gate, 6am. March and rally, 11.30am Quadrant Park, Derby Road, opposite Elm House pub, near Strand, Bootle, Liverpool.

**Monday 19 August:** Community march, Quadrant Park to Seaforth dock, 12noon.

**Saturday 28 September:** First year anniversary march and rally, Myrtle Parade to Pier Head, 1pm.

### DOCKERS CHARTER

#### LATEST ISSUE OUT NOW!

Available from the Liverpool Docks Shop Stewards' Committee, c/o 19 Scorton Street, Liverpool L6 4AS. Money to 'Merseyside Dockers Shop Stewards' Appeal'. Price 50p (20p unwaged). Add postage. Also send donations. Bulk orders tel: 0151-207 3388.

# Capitalism at the millennium

**FEWER than 400 people on this planet are own more than almost half the world earns.**

This is one of the findings of a recent investigation by the United Nations, hardly one of the staunchest opponents of the capitalist system.

The computer tycoon Bill Gates, founder of US software company Microsoft, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia and 383 other members of the super-rich have more assets than the entire GDP of countries containing 45 per cent of the world's population.

And while the rich get richer the poor get poorer.

One of the report's authors, James Speth, says:

'If present trends continue economic disparities between the industrial and developing nations will move from the inequitable to the inhuman.'

\* \* \* \* \*

**OF COURSE** the very thing about the so-called 'developing countries' is that far from developing they are being driven by imperialism deeper and deeper into the mire of poverty, disease and starvation.

■ Almost 90 countries have a lower level of income per head than ten years ago and in 19 countries, including Liberia, Rwanda, Sudan, Venezuela and Haiti, the incomes per head are lower than they were in 1960.

■ Between 1990 and 1993 the income per head in eastern Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union plunged by an eighth.

The same trends at work within world capitalism are now bringing an ever-greater polarisation in the big capitalist countries between a small number of rich people at the top of the pile and a growing number of poor at the bottom.

The same UN report finds that the richest 20 per cent of the population in Britain earns ten times more than the poorest 20 per cent. The same ratio applies in Australia and the growing gap between rich and poor is only slightly less pronounced in the United States.

In that country the disparity between rich and poor is certain to widen dramatically as a result of the the latest assault on welfare benefits (see page 8).

\* \* \* \* \*

**THIS** is the capitalist system that the reformist leaders of the working class accept hook, line and sinker. As the UN report confirms, it is a system that has already created barbaric conditions for millions throughout the world and one that is now reducing countless others, even in the richest countries of the world, to desperate penury.

So deep is this worldwide crisis that the Labour leaders cannot even promise to make minor adjustments to the system in favour of the working class.

For Blair, all talk of 'income redistribution', or a taxation policy to even modify slightly the distribution of income, is thrown out of the window. Any Labour representative, even the most timid Clare Short, who makes even the meekest noises in this direction, is sacked or demoted.

This is not a reflection of Blair's personal qualities but an expression of the depth and scope of capital's intensifying crisis. It is a crisis that has brought the working class, in Britain and internationally, to the crossroads.

This is the basis for the need for a new party, an international and an internationalist party, to represent the real interests of the working class.

We urge all our readers and supporters to make full use of our pages to discuss these vital matters.

# Letters

## Keeping contact

ON 28 JULY nine members of Brighton Workers Aid for Bosnia and two comrades from east London left Dover for Tuzla with aid requested by the trade union movement.

When in Bosnia it is hoped the comrades will have talks with the

bus workers and the miners, to be arranged by Fikret Suljic, president of the autonomous trade union of mine workers of Bosnia-Herzegovina, who spoke at a meeting of 15 trade unionists from eight trade union branches in Brighton, just before the convoy left for Tuzla.

**B.R. Avey, P. Jeeferys**  
TGWU, Brighton  
**J. O'Sullivan**  
AEEU, Brighton

## An apology

I AM grateful to Brian Pearce (Letters, 20 July) for his 'clarification' of an ill-written passage in a rather breathless footnote to my piece '1956: Tom Kemp and others' in *History, Economic History and the Future of Marxism* (Porcupine, 1996).

It was not my intention to suggest that he took sides in the dispute in the *Times Literary*

*Supplement* in 1991, over the suggestion that Engels had advocated genocide. But what I actually wrote suggested that he did. As Pearce indicated in your columns, his concern was simply to quote what Engels wrote.

I apologise for this mistake and will not repeat it in any future version of the article in question.

**Terry Brotherstone**  
Aberdeen

## 50th Edinburgh International Festival

The 50 annual Edinburgh International Festival (EIF) begins this weekend and Workers Press will as usual be covering this event.

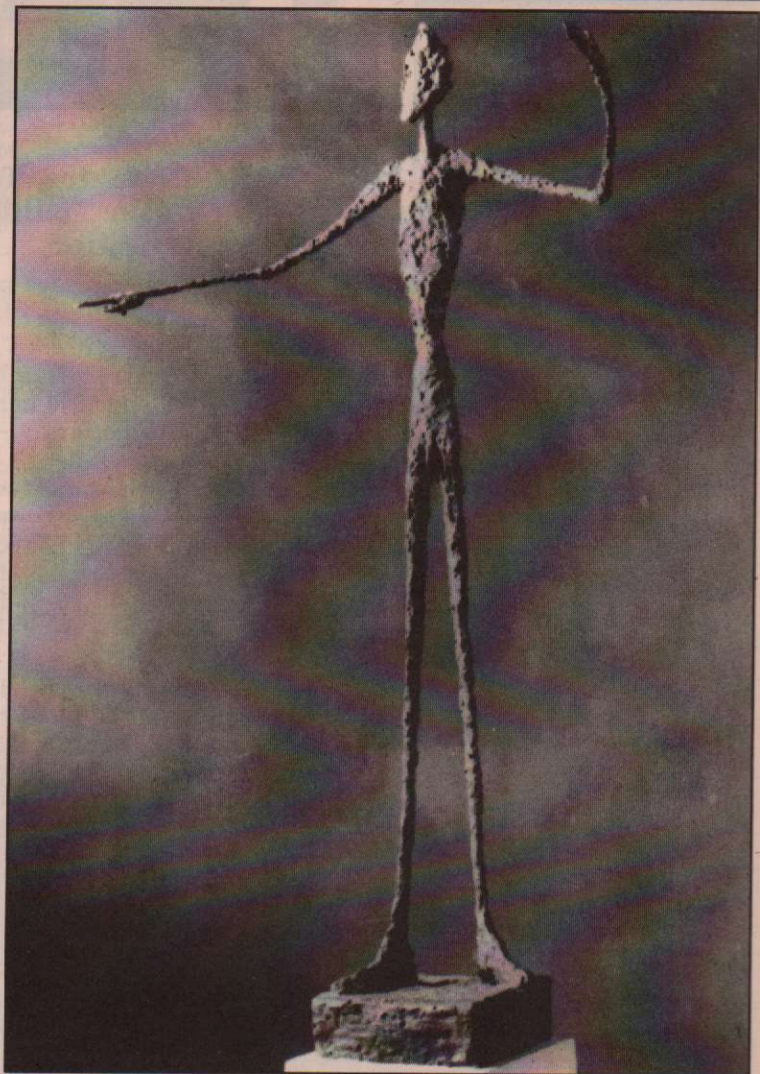
Our interest began in 1987, when the EIF director, Frank Dunlop, made the 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution a central theme. But we have kept reporting on many events and shows with no explicit political connections because we believe that artistic and cultural issues are of great concern for the workers' movement.

Current EIF director, Brian McMaster, for some reason now excludes the fine arts from the official Festival programme. Nonetheless a main attraction in Edinburgh this year will be the first major exhibition in Britain for thirty years of the work of Alberto Giacometti (1901-66). It is at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art until 22 September.

The Italian-Swiss sculptor and painter produced some of the most characteristic images in 20th-century European art — his huge, elongated figures of the late 1940s and 1950s often being taken as emblematic of a world which had experienced Dachau and Auschwitz, Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Yet Giacometti, who had worked with artists influenced by the Stalinist movement in the 1930s, by then denied political inspiration. We shall examine this enigma in a future issue of Workers Press.

Right: 'L'Homme au Doigt' ('Pointing Man') by Alberto Giacometti



## International Trade Unionist Bulletin

Only 50p from ITUSC, PO Box 18, Epsom KT18 7YB. Tel: 01372 817 778.

## Bosnia Solidarity Campaign Who are we?

Statement of aims. Only 50p from Bosnia Solidarity Campaign, 26 Framlingham Close, London E5 9PR. Tel: 0181-806 0249. (Add 26p postage.)

## Cable Street commemoration Demonstration, Sunday 6 October

Called by Cable Street '96 Commemoration Committee, Cable Street Group and Tower Hamlets Trade Union Council

ON 4 OCTOBER 1936, Oswald Mosley attempted to lead his fascist Blackshirts through the heart of the East End's Jewish community in Cable Street.

Tens of thousands of local workers and their families — including Jewish workers and large numbers of Irish workers — tore up paving stones, erected barricades, attacked busloads of fascists and did battle with the police to prevent their passage. They succeeded.

This year will be the 60th anniversary of that event and will coincide with an anti-racist festival that will be part of the commemoration.

But fascism still rears its ugly head internationally. In France,

Germany, Austria and Italy, racists and fascists have used elections to propagate their anti-union, anti-worker, racist programme.

Ethnic partition, concentration camps, genocide and rape have been inflicted on the people of Bosnia, creating barbarism in former Yugoslavia.

In east London itself, the fascist British National Party continues to stand in elections on a racist platform seeking to divide one section of workers from another.

So the Cable Street anniversary is not just commemoration of the past. It is a celebration of workers' unity in common struggle, here and now.

Assemble 10am for rally at Altab Ali Park, near Gardiner's Corner. March 11am to St George's Town Hall, Cable Street. Speakers and festival, 12 noon. Bring your banners! Bring your friends!

■ Tower Hamlets Trade Union Council: 0181-555 7045.

## An Cumann Cabhrach

Irish Republican Prisoners Welfare Group (Breataine), PO Box 4739, Birmingham, B11 1IG.

### IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS IN BRITAIN

Please send birthday cards to all POWs. Cards are welcome at any time.

Name	Prison	Number	Birthday
Martina Anderson	Maghaberry	D25134	16 April
Eddie Butler	Full Sutton	338637	17 April
Derek Doherty	Full Sutton	EN3887	31 December
Hugh Doherty	Durham	338636	7 December
Vincent Donnelly	Whitemoor	274064	25 September
Harry Duggan	Whitemoor	338638	31 October
Pat Hayes	Whitemoor	EN1978	27 February
Thomas Jack	Maghaberry	EN3177	10 September
Paul Kavanagh	Maghaberry	L31888	12 August
Denis Kinsella	Whitemoor	EN1944	12 April
Pat McGlynn	Full Sutton	EN1946	25 March
Sean McNulty	Whitemoor	CL3440	13 October
Liam McCotter	Belmarsh	LB83693	2 January
Gerard McDonnell	Maghaberry	B75882	19 December
Joe McKenny	Frankland	L46486	7 February
Patrick McLaughlin	Maghaberry	LB83694	2 May
Patrick Magee	Maghaberry	B75881	29 May
Paul (Dingus) Magee	Belmarsh	BT3783	30 January
Nicholas Mullen	Whitemoor	MR0639	2 February
Michael O'Brien	Full Sutton	BT3782	11 June
Joe O'Connell	Full Sutton	338635	15 May
Ella O'Dwyer	Maghaberry	D25135	3 March
Liam O'Dwyer	Belmarsh	MT2485	14 December
Thomas Quigley	Maghaberry	B69204	23 July
Liam Quinn	Full Sutton	49930	6 February
Peter Sherry	Belmarsh	B75880	30 June
Jan Taylor	Whitemoor	EN1977	18 January
Vincent Wood	Full Sutton	EN1049	7 August

### Framed prisoner:

Danny McNamee Belmarsh L481616

### Prison addresses:

HMP Frankland, Finchdale Avenue, Brasside, Durham DH1 5YD.  
HMP Full Sutton, York YD4 1PS.  
HMP Whitemoor, Longhill Road, March, Cambridge PE15 0PR.  
HMP Belmarsh, Western Way, Thamesmead, London SE28 0EB.  
HMP Durham, Old Elvet, Durham DH1 3HU.  
HMP Maghaberry, Old Road, Upper Ballinderry, Lisburn BT28 2PT, Ireland. (All Maghaberry prisoners are on temporary transfer.)

**Workers Press also calls for the release of supporters of the Irish Republican Socialist Party in addition to the Sinn Fein supporters listed above.**

# IMF demands plunge Jordan into crisis

BY ROSS COOPER

JORDAN faces serious public unrest because its government has decided to remove food subsidies, at the behest of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Trouble in the strategic Arab kingdom could upset imperialist aims for neighbouring Iraq and Palestine.

The government wants to reduce its \$211 million budget

deficit by stopping the bread subsidy, which has been costing more since world wheat prices soared, from \$175 to \$280 per tonne, since 1995. That could raise the price of bread in Jordan from 85 fils (12 cents) to 250 fils a kilo.

About 30,000 people signed a petition last month against a bread price increase. On 21 July demonstrators broke through a police cordon guarding the parliament in Amman.

Mindful that fuel-price riots

brought down his predecessor Zaid Rifai in 1989, Prime Minister Abd-al Karim Kabariti spoke to some of the demonstrators.

But the opposition Jordanian People's Democratic Party and the Islamic Action Front say many of their members were arrested after the demonstration.

More serious trouble seems inevitable if the government goes ahead with its plans, and the poor have to pay. After bread, it would be rice, sugar and powdered milk

prices that rise. Carved out by British imperialism after World War I, the Hashemite kingdom gained the Palestinian West Bank, and masses of Palestinian refugees, when the Zionist State of Israel was set up in 1948.

Palestinians boosted commercial and political development, and notwithstanding King Hussein's 'Black September' 1970 onslaught, became a significant part of Jordanian society.

US and British economic and

military intervention in 1957 and 1958 kept Hussein on his throne.

During the Iraq-Iran war and after, Jordan was a backdoor for arms shipments to Saddam Hussein, and Iraqi oil exports. War in Lebanon drove some Arab banking and commerce to Amman.

Since the Gulf War, however, Jordan has had to fall back on foreign aid. At an IMF meeting in Paris on 10 July, donor governments agreed \$1 billion aid but demanded cuts.

## Mostar talks

ELEVENTH-hour agreement was reported in talks to end Croat nationalist obstruction of an elected local authority to reunify the Bosnian city of Mostar.

The European Union pressed Croatia's President Tudjman to restrain his supporters, responsible for 'ethnic cleansing' and renewed terror against Muslims to maintain their racketeer 'Herceg-Bosna' regime.

Workers Press next week will report this and other important developments in Bosnia, including the Tuzla arts festival and politics, and goings-on in the 'Republika Srpska'.



President Tudjman

# Arafat blamed for murder

PALESTINIANS in the West Bank town of Nablus, long a centre of national pride and struggle, are blaming 'President' Yasser Arafat for the horrific death of one of the town's best sons, at the hands of Palestinian security police.

Mahmoud Jumayal, 26, spent eight years in Israeli prisons. An activist in the Fatah Hawks, respected by the poor and feared

by drug pushers, pimps and collaborators, he was arrested by Arafat's security forces on 5 December last year, and held without charges.

On 27 July, Jumayal was brought to Jneid prison for 'interrogation'. The following night he was admitted to hospital with extensive burns, a fractured skull, and bleeding in the brain.

Human-rights workers who

went to the hospital with a doctor and a local Palestinian colonel were barred from entering by guards. But it was evident that the young militant had been tortured to death.

'This is Abu Amar's democracy', said former Nablus mayor Bassam al-Shaka bitterly, calling Arafat by his old nom-de-guerre. Arafat said the young man's death was a 'mistake', and was

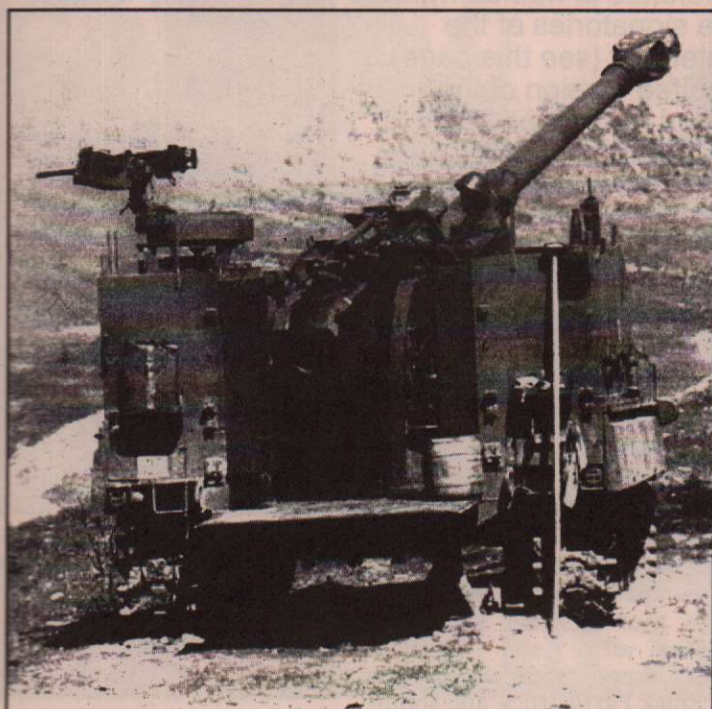
being investigated. The security officers were arrested. 'What kind of mistake was it? They burned him all over his body,' said Mahmoud's brother, Amir.

The family spurned an offer from the Palestinian authority of a military escort and flag-draped coffin. In place of the Palestinian flag over Nablus last week, only a black flag flew in mourning over the family's house.

## Resentment

Economic and social unrest could interact with national resentment against the new Israeli government's arrogance, and Jordan's subordination to imperialism.

Attacking official privileges, and relations with Israel, the newspaper *al-Quds al-Arabi* went on to protest that US planes were flying from Azraq airbase on free fuel which Iraq supplied to Jordan.



Iran, Iraq and Turkey carry out an almost continuous war against the Kurds, crossing borders at will. Here Turkish artillery is aimed at Kurdish PKK fighters in 1995

## Iran invades Iraqi Kurdistan

IRANIAN forces were finally forced to withdraw from Iraqi Kurdistan, on 30 July, after strong resistance by Kurdish forces and pressure from international humanitarian organisations was brought to bear.

The invasion began on Friday 26 July when Iranian armed forces consisting of several thousand men and 200 military vehicles, including tanks equipped with artillery and Katyusha rocket launchers, crossed the border.

Two days later, on 28 July at about 6.30am local time, the invading forces began to bombard Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran bases in the region. At 10am a ground assault was launched. Heavy fighting ensued between KDPI fighters and the invasion force in the outskirts of Koy-Sinjak (Iraqi-Kurdistan).

As a result of the attack, 350 homes in the camp of the Kurdish refugees from Iran were destroyed and 1,500 inhabitants were forced to evacuate the area.

Azadi hospital, created by French medical organisations to cater for the refugees' needs, was hit by shells and was also destroyed.

## Shells

Fortunately there were no casualties since the sick had been removed before the shells started falling.

Many Kurdish, Iranian and Iraqi refugee groups protested against this action by demonstrating outside the Iranian embassy in London. They were joined by International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign members and their banner.

# BSE crisis escalates

BY DANIEL ROBERTSON

THE BSE crisis continues to pose a number of unanswered questions. Developments in the last few weeks have brought some of these to public attention.

The government has been forced to admit that there is a risk of BSE spreading to sheep. Sheep in Britain have long carried a prion disease called scrapie, related to BSE, but known not to infect humans.

It was the hope that BSE may have originated from sheep material fed to cattle that allowed them to originally claim that humans were not at risk from BSE.

However it soon became clear that cattle BSE was a completely new condition, not related to sheep scrapie, and displaying much greater virulence.

Now there is an admission that BSE may spread to sheep causing a 'super-scrapie' that could kill human consumers. This is because of the failure, long after the appearance of BSE, to effectively ban feeding cattle material to sheep.

Experimental infection of sheep with the BSE agent from cattle brain was achieved some years ago — what is new is the discovery that animal feed contains enough of the agent to infect sheep. Infected British animal feed was exported all over Europe with unpredictable long term effects.

The most frightening admission is that BSE can spread from cows to their calves. The persist-

ence of BSE for years after the banning of infected feed was a clear indication that transmission to calves was occurring, but until recently the official line was that this claim was 'rubbish'.

Now scientific trials have conclusively proven that calves born to mothers suffering from BSE have a 10 per cent chance of being infected. Another disturbing aspect of the trial was a number of calves found to harbour BSE born of BSE-free mothers and allegedly having no access to infected feed.

Government claims that the true occurrence under farming conditions would be only 1 per cent have been described as nonsense. Remember all those live calf exports to Europe?

## Blood

The possible mode of transmission from cow to calf raises the possibility that the BSE agent is present either in the blood passing across the placenta, or in milk. If it is present in blood then it must be present in cattle meat. If it is present in milk then virtually every British consumer, even many vegetarians, will have been repeatedly exposed to BSE.

The Tories continue to try to bluff their way out of responsibility by blaming the crisis on European plots — but the continuing development of the BSE saga will eventually explode in their faces. The labour movement must ensure that Blair's response of playing down Tory blame is defeated and that those responsible for this disaster are punished.

# Many interested in new party but fail to be convinced by SLP

SOME 250 people attended a Socialist Labour Party meeting in south-east London — but only six of them were convinced by the arguments to join. Among the speakers was Arthur Scargill.

The purpose of the meeting — held in the Rivoli Ballroom in the Brockley district — had been to 'launch the Socialist Labour Party in Lewisham'. Publicity leaflets told the public they would hear 'why you too need to support Socialist Labour'.

Bridget Bell, of Women Against Pit Closures, described how in the 1980s the women's pit camp were set up and occupations of threatened pits organised. She said this had begun a movement in the working class which now included the dockers, railway workers, postal workers, fire-fighters, etc.

Bell said that even in 1985 when she and other women became involved in struggle they found that they had no voice in the Labour Party and that the working class had to have a political party to be its voice.

Link recently left Labour for the SLP. He described how Lewisham's Labour council was attacking the community and the working class.

Former Southwark Labour councillor Tony Goss told of how the Labour group expelled him and two other councillors in the late 1980s for voting for the party's programme of no cuts and no rent rises, on which they had been elected.

Goss also showed how Southwark and Lewisham Labour councils are now trying to deny workers their trade union rights.

Arthur Scargill spoke on the SLP programme. He promised renationalised of the privatised industries as the first step an SLP government would carry out.

## Withdrawal

After would come further nationalisations, withdrawal from the European Union, a four-day working week and voluntary retirement at 55.

Scargill's speech made several references to 'this nation', and

how socialism would benefit Britain. The tone was reminiscent of the old Communist Party of Great Britain's 1968 version of its programme, 'The British Road to Socialism', with its opening sentence: 'Britain needs socialism.'

Scargill showed the limits of his nationalist politics when he came to address the issue of the European Union. He referred to the mass strikes in France and Germany as proof the welfare rights' provisions in the Maasticht treaty were worthless, but said nothing about solidarity with the French and German workers. Scargill argued if Britain 'left Europe' it would trade instead with 'Cuba, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia'.

Scargill's fondness for projecting his own personality showed in his appeal to the memory of 'great' predecessors. He also showed ignorance of working-class history.

The party was named Socialist Labour Party, maintained Scargill, because that had been the name used by the 'legendary' John MacLean for his party. (In

fact, MacLean was a member of the long-established party of that name for less than a year.)

Scargill added that the SLP membership card quoted the words 'We only want the earth', from another 'legendary' socialist, James Connolly. Scargill seemed unaware that Connolly was once a member of the Socialist Labour Party in the US. This was the party whose policies inspired those of the British SLP.

## Leader

Scargill said it was a miners' leader, Keir Hardie, who first proposed a National Health Service, and another, Aneurin Bevan, who implemented it. The message was clear: in the line of great working class leaders we have MacLean, Connolly, Hardie, Bevan — and now Scargill.

The high attendance at the meeting is evidence that many workers believe a new socialist party is necessary but Scargill's demagoguery and nationalism convinces few that the SLP is that new party.

## 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 .....

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Send to: PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB

# Inside left

## 'Ordinary' people, stormy times

THE first question you're asked in prison is always: "What are you in for?" says Andrea Needham, one of the women who wrecked a Hawk land-attack aircraft destined for Indonesia. "The second question is then: "How did you get caught?"

They phoned a press agency from the hangar, and asked it to notify British Aerospace!

From Risley remand prison, where they were held for six months, she wrote to *Squall* (Summer 96): 'Actually using hammers to disarm the plane seems sensible enough to most of the women in here — it was going to kill people, so we stopped it — but the logic of staying around to face the consequences needs a little more explaining.' Andrea says British aid backs deals whereby Indonesia buys British arms, and British companies exploit Indonesian resources. She believes many people have seen through the government's lies about protecting us, but massive opposition hadn't stopped the Hawk deal going through.

The women decided to do something practical, and take full responsibility for their action, so as to make their intent in public.

Fortunately, a Liverpool jury understood and freed them. But at the time she was writing, Andrea thought they'd be facing jail. Nevertheless, she was free behind bars, because she no longer feared what might happen.

It's easy to be overwhelmed by the power of the state: what can I, as an individual, do to resist? Taking this kind of action, and being prepared to face the consequences, is a very liberating experience.

'We're sometimes asked why we chose to be martyrs for this cause. Our response is that we're not martyrs; we're just ordinary women who are able to carry out a small act of resistance to a great injustice.'

I hadn't come across *Squall* before. (I've probably been mixing in the long circles, and let's face it, getting it) What drew my eye was an item titled 'Raving in Bosnia'. Glasgow-based sound system Desert Storm played at the Criminal Justice rally in Hyde Park.

Amid all the mayhem we'd broken down but we were still playing. There were riot cops everywhere and this crazy Glaswegian called Paddy took his head through the van window and said "I've got to have your phone number".

A week later we were home in Glasgow and I got a phone call from the same guy asking if we wanted to go to Bosnia in three weeks. I mean what could we say? It was definitely yes, we just had to go.'

Joining a Workers Aid convoy to Gaza, they had the 'most exciting New Year of their lives', playing at ten to zero to enthusiastic crowds, with the frontline not far away. People asked "When are you coming back?". They've made three trips.

Writing on poverty in Britain, the ever-worsening housing deficit, and the efforts at self-help are being criminalised — 'They've even set the Antiracist Squad on us now!' — Jim Jones evokes the big squatting movement of 1946, and the Diggers who occupied land in 1649, to back the Landless Occupation in Wandsworth.

In stormy times, 'ordinary' people take 'extra-ordinary' actions. *Squall's* motto is 'necessity breeds creativity'. For our discussion on building a new party, maybe we should get touch.

Charlie Pottins

## Turkey

# 'Gathering moment' forced government

The following report from the Liverpool Docks Shop Stewards' Committee delegation to Turkey has already had a major impact on a Europe-wide scale. Every member of the European parliament was faxed with the report, whose publication coincided with the crisis point of the political prisoners' hunger strike. The report was also circulated by the dockers to their trade union and labour movement contacts worldwide. Turkish and Kurdish organisations in Europe have also publicised it.

The report was used as part of the evidence presented by Labour and Socialist Group MEPs to the European parliament in backing their demand on the Turkish government to concede the political prisoners' demands and prevent further deaths.

The gathering momentum of protest in Europe (with the notable absence of any protest from the British government), as well as in Turkey, along with threat of real economic and political sanctions, forced the Turkish regime to back down at the eleventh hour (after 12 hunger strikers had already died).

THE delegation, along with delegations from Germany and France, went to Turkey at the invitation of Turkish trade unionists and the Emek (Labour) Party:

- to gain support for the 10-month-old dispute of the 500 sacked Liverpool dockers; and
- to show solidarity with the fight for trade union and democratic rights in Turkey and to see for themselves the situation there.

On 13 July, the delegation witnessed in the centre of Istanbul a peaceful protest by families at the disappearance of their relatives in police custody.

The 50 or so demonstrations were surrounded by armoured cars, police marksmen on rooftops, and hundreds of riot police, and after five minutes were violently driven off the street. The demonstrators had been on the pavement and had not even obstructed the traffic in any way.

On 14 July, the delegation attended and spoke at the conference of the Istanbul trade union platform, a gathering of about 1,000 trade union delegates representing the four major trade union confederations, meeting to discuss the issue of basic social security and welfare provision for Turkish workers. Striking oilworkers were present.

Delegates spoke of the employers' and state's onslaught on workers' rights, pay and conditions.

THE hunger strike in Turkey's prisons came to an end on its 69th day. Twelve people died during the strike before the government backed down, among them:

**Aygun Ugur**, TKP (ML); **Altan Berdan Kerimgiller**, DHKP-C; **Ilginc Ozkeskin**, DHKP-C; **Huseyin Demircioglu**, MLKP; **Ali Ayata**, TKP (ML); **Mujdat Yanat**, DHKP-C; **Tahsin Yilmaz**, TIKB; **Ayşe Idil Erkmen**, DHKP-C; **Hicabi Kucuk**, TIKB; **Yemliha Kaya**, DHKP-C; **Osman Akgun**, TIKB.

Thousands and tens of thousands took to the streets to protest in the prisoners' support. Families of prisoners were savagely beaten when

Alex Smith, Roger Barton, Stan Newens, Peter Truscott, Wayne David (European Parliamentary Labour Party leader), Pauline Green (Socialist leader, European parliament) and Tony Robinson (Socialist spokesperson, European parliament) are among the many MEPs, as well as British MPs and many other organisations and individuals, who have given their endorsement to the report and the Campaign for Human Rights in Turkey now being launched by the dockers' delegation.

Next week a delegation of MPs, MEPs, trade unionists, journalists and lawyers will visit the Turkish ambassador in London, with the aim of helping to ensure that the Turkish government does not renege on its commitments to the political prisoners.

All individuals, trade unions, labour movement and other organisations concerned with the defence of human rights are invited to become signatories of the campaign launch statement (see this page). We also publish an edited version of their report on the struggle of textile workers in south-east Turkey/Kurdistan, a model resolution and some useful phone numbers.

On 15 July, the delegation participated in the press conference at the court hearing for the case of Metin Goktepe, who was the journalist from the daily paper *Evrensel* who was seen being beaten to death by police in January this year. The state has since attempted to ban the paper and prosecute its editor.

The delegation pledged support for the campaign to bring Goktepe's killers to justice and to publicise internationally the state's continued judicial murders of those who speak out for democracy.

### Witnessed

On the same day — 15 July — the delegation witnessed police making a brutal attack on demonstrators protesting at the disappearance of hundreds in police custody. The demonstration was made up of about 30 children and women (families of the disappeared).

While peacefully walking down the street they were assaulted, kicked and beaten by riot police and non-uniformed police. Women, including the very young and the elderly, were batoned repeatedly and pulled along the street by the hair. Dozens of arrests were made, including many journalists and photographers.

On 16 July, Billy Jenkins, along with a trade union member of the German delegation, Edgar Wiegler,

they protested outside the prisons. The hunger strike was joined by people outside the prisons: 60-year-old mothers and fathers, trade unionists, some not in Turkey, etc.

Throughout the resistance a demagogical campaign was carried out by the state authorities, the media and propaganda apparatus. They lied, used threats, carried out brutal physical attacks and used every means to attack the movement. But they did not succeed.

Information from DHKC (Revolutionary People's Liberation Front), London Information Bureau, BM Box 8253, London WC1N 3XX. Tel/fax: 0171-272 2621.

went to Gazi Antep in south-east Turkey, where 20,000 textile workers were on strike for trade union recognition and basic social rights (see story this page).

As Billy addressed a rally of 6,000 workers, riot police attacked. More than 60 were arrested. Dozens were injured, some seriously.

Police broke their batons over the heads of workers, then used bricks to continue their assault. Workers were blocked in by police so that there was no escape from the attack...

Police also attacked the strike committee office and assaulted workers there, surrounded the Antep Emek Party office, and simultaneously raided the Istanbul office of *Evrensel* (witnessed by members of the European delegation).

On his return journey to Istanbul, Billy Jenkins was subjected to harassment and attempted intimidation by police. For several days the whole delegation was under security police surveillance.

On Friday 19 July, the delegation met with lawyers (the Istanbul Association of Contemporary Lawyers) campaigning on issues of human rights, and in particular against torture and abuses of political prisoners.

Over two months ago, more than 2,000 political prisoners in 30 prisons across Turkey started hunger strikes in protest at the inhuman conditions under which they are held. Their demands included:

- access to medical treatment;
- prisoners to be located within reach of their families and families allowed to visit without fear of arrest;
- an end to torture and solitary confinement.

More than 207 prisoners were on strike until death. The first hunger strikers to die were Aygun Ugur (21 July) and Altan Berdan Kerimgiller (23 July)...

**Billy Jenkins, Tony Gardiner**, Liverpool Docks Shop Stewards' Committee; **Liz Knight**, London Dockers Support Group  
23 July



London demonstration in support of

## Textile

The following report of the recent strike movement among textile workers in south-east Turkey is based on material from the Liverpool Docks Shop Stewards' delegation to Turkey

AN EXTRAORDINARY victory by 20,000 textile workers in south-east Turkey has just been won. The workers in Unaldi in Gaziantep were on strike for a month during which they were subjected to sustained attacks on every level by employers, the government and the state.

Every demand has been won, including union recognition, an eight-hour day, national insurance benefits, wage increases in line with inflation and no victimisations.

Most of the workers are very young (16-20 years old). They were working in a huge complex of textile factories, in filthy conditions without proper ventilation or air conditioning for 12 hours or more a day, seven days a week, for £20 or less a week.

Accidents were frequent, with many workers losing fingers in primitive machines without safety provision.

Ten thousand came out on strike on 30 June. A few days later another 10,000 workers joined them. Around 100,000 people were involved in the dispute, including the families of the workers.

The employers set to work with state support to try to break the

# um of protest t back-down'



rt of the 2,000 hunger strikers in Turkey, 12 of whom died in the 69 days it lasted

## workers' historic win

action. They used every available form of media to spread lies and propaganda.

They said that national insurance contributions were already being paid; that many of the strikers were already taking other jobs; that they were influenced by terrorists, and that the strike leader, Huseyin Ozdemir, was a terrorist; that they had no popular support; that the strike could not last more than three days; that they would get no financial support and would soon be starved back to work.

The entire national media, with the exception of the daily newspaper *Evrensel* (now in the process of being banned by the government), kept silent on the strike.

A local TV station invited the employers to discuss the strike on camera with Ozdemir. However, when the time came the employers didn't turn up but instead phoned through individually to Huseyin to tell him that they were prepared to make deals with the workers in their own workplaces.

These crude efforts to divide the strikers backfired.

### Help

The Unaldi workers received financial help from workers all over Turkey, as well as from Turkish and Kurdish workers in Europe — in Germany, France, England, Switzerland, etc.

In mid July a European delegation went to Turkey at the invitation of trade unionists and the Emek (Labour) Party (also in the process of being banned by the government).

Two members of the delegation, Billy Jenkins, from the Liverpool Docks Shop Stewards' Committee representing 500 sacked dockers, and Edgar Wiegler, from the engineering union in Germany, went to Antep to speak to a rally of 6,000 of the striking textile workers.

The police launched a savage attack on all those present, injuring hundreds and arresting all the speakers except the European delegation, along with at least 60 workers.

Among those arrested were: Levent Tuzel (chair of the Emek Party), Sabri Topcu (chair of TUMTIS, the motorised-vehicle workers' union), Ozdemir, two members of the Emek Party executive committee, *Evrensel* journalists and a Human Rights Association representative from Antep.

Ozdemir, chair of the Textile Workers' Support and Solidarity Association, had already been threatened by the police with imprisonment and even death.

However, the courage and solidarity of the workers, along with the support they received from fellow workers in Turkey and internationally, overcame every obstacle and every onslaught.

Even the 500 scabs recruited early

on by the employers were soon persuaded to stop work and join the strike.

The strength and unity of the workers stopped virtually the whole city. Shopkeepers supported the workers, calling on the bosses to accept their demands.

### Critical

The struggle coincided with the critical point of the hunger strikes and never gained the publicity which the hunger strikers (at the cost of 12 lives) eventually did.

But just as the hunger strikers threw into sharp relief on an international scale the brutality of the Turkish regime, so too should the strike of the Antep workers.

Simultaneously their strike and its speedy success indicated something more, something of enormous significance for the future.

The Antep action marks the biggest strike in south-east Turkey (Turkish-occupied Kurdistan) since the military coup in 1980.

Workers all over Turkey are taking up the demands so magnificently won by the textile workers of Antep.

Repression has succeeded only in fuelling the fire. The working class of Turkey is on the move.

■ **Liverpool Docks Shop Stewards' Committee delegation to Turkey. Tel: 0151-207 3388. Fax: 0151-207 0696.**

## 'Evidence of good intentions needed'

Statement to launch 'Campaign for Human Rights in Turkey' by the Liverpool Docks Shop Stewards' delegation to Turkey, July 1996

FOLLOWING the deaths of many hunger strikers in Turkish prisons, and in view of the concession belatedly announced by the Turkish government, we are launching this campaign to ensure that these commitments are honoured.

We call on all governments and organisations which respect human rights, particularly within Europe, to insist on the suspension of the European Union's co-operation agreement with Turkey until the prisoners and their supporters in Turkey are satisfied the threat of further human rights violations has been removed.

Evidence of the government's good intentions must include:

- An end to the practice of imprisoning and torturing people for membership of political or trade union organisations.

- An end to the attempts to terrorise and ban all genuine opposition, whether in the form of political parties, workers' organisations, and

other democratic organisations or the media.

- An end to the terrorising of workers exercising their legal right to strike.

- An end to the barbaric police and army attacks on peaceful demonstrators, including children and women.

- An end to the war against the Kurdish people and the violent repression of other ethnic minorities.

Signed: **Jimmy Nolan**, chair, Liverpool Docks Shop Stewards' Committee; **Billy Jenkins** and **Tony Gardiner**, Liverpool Docks Shop Stewards' Committee delegation to Turkey; **Defend Emek (Labour) Party in Turkey Campaign**; **Tony Benn MP**; **Harry Barnes MP**; **Harry Cohen MP**; **Jeremy Corbyn MP**; **Hugh Kerr MEP**; **Alf Lomas MEP**; **Wayne David MEP**, European parliament Labour leader; **Stan Newens MEP**; **Alex Smith MEP**; **Lord Hylton**; **Keith Standing**, general secretary International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign; **Tony Santamera**, national secretary (shipping), RMT union

28 July

■ **Contact 0171-275 8440 or 0171-275 7245 (Fax) to add your support.**

### Emergency resolution on Turkey for unions and labour movement organisations

① We condemn absolutely the Turkish state's violations of the most elementary human rights.

In particular we condemn:

- their treatment of political prisoners;
- their use of terror and barbaric cruelty against peaceful demonstrators, including women and children;
- their violent repression of the Kurdish people and of trade unionists and working people; and,
- their attempts to terrorise and ban all genuine opposition, whether in the form of political parties, workers' organisations, any other democratic organisations or the media.

We condemn the moves to ban the Emek (Labour) Party and the newspaper *Evrensel*, and defend their right and the right of all other opposition parties, organisations and newspapers to organise and to publish.

② We pledge solidarity and active support to the workers and oppressed people of Turkey. We ask workers not to take holidays in Turkey until the regime has changed.

③ We call on the British government and the European parliament to condemn the gross violations of democratic rights in Turkey, to defend the elementary right to demonstrate and express opposition, and to ensure that the Turkish government honours its recent commitments to political prisoners. To this end we call for the suspension of the European Union's co-operation agreement with Turkey.

**Resolution originally proposed to the British labour and trade union movement by the Liverpool Docks Shop Stewards Committee delegation to Turkey. Liverpool Docks Shop Stewards Committee, 19 Scorton Street, Liverpool L6 4AS. Tel: 0151-207 3388. Fax: 0151-207 0696.**

### Messages of support

Emek (Labour) Party: Levent Tuzel, Hatay 2 Sakak No.20/18, Kizilay, Turkey. Tel: 00 90 312 425 1712. Fax: 00 90 312 425 8556.

### Protest faxes Ankara

Prime Minister N. Erbakan: 00 90 312 417 0476. Interior Minister M. Agar: 00 90 312 418 1795. Justice Minister S. Kazan: 00 90 312 417 3954. Labour Minister N. Celik: 00 90 312 212 0781. President S. Demirel: 00 90 312 427 1330. British Embassy, Political Section: 00 90 312 468 0113.

### Britain

Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind. Tel: 0171-270 1500. Fax: 0171-839 2417. Miss Judi Leon, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Turkish Bureau: 0171-270 3275.

### European parliament

Marlena Lenz, president, Human Rights Committee. Tel: 00 10 322 284 5220. Fax: 00 10 322 284 9220. M. Piquet, chair, delegation to European Union/Turkey joint parliamentary committee. Tel: 00 10 322 284 5986. Fax: 00 10 322 284 9986.

## Off the streets

SOME 20 years ago a woman of my acquaintance started work as a prostitute, partly on the street but mainly in one of the swankier Mayfair hotels.

Like many other prostitute women, she had no intention of staying in the profession for life, but saw it as a way of escaping from poverty by accumulating a serious sum of money fairly quickly.

She asked me one day what I thought of her choice of occupation. I answered that I had no moral objection but couldn't help being concerned for her physical safety.

In fact, she replied, the job was no more hazardous than many and much safer than some. She prided herself on her ability to spot a nutter well before he pulled a knife on her or otherwise put her life in danger.

The real drawback, she added, was the need to pay swingeing unofficial taxes both to the hotel staff, who would otherwise bar her from the premises, and to the police, who would otherwise take her to court far more often than they did. And these unavoidable regular payments, plus the occasional fines, consumed something like 50 per cent of her considerable earnings.

I thought of this woman when I read recently that two chief constables have declared in favour of licensed brothels, to keep prostitute women and their clients off the streets.

Keith Hellawell, chief constable of West Yorkshire, thinks the present law on prostitution is 'absurd'. His colleague Pauline Clare, chief constable of Lancashire, and the first woman in charge of a police force, agrees.

'Prostitutes have been around for many, many years and there's obviously a need for the services they provide', she says. 'I would like to see them regulated in a way that they would be much safer'. Arresting prostitutes was 'not a priority for the Lancashire force'.

The call for licensed brothels, though not new, has aroused predictable cries of outrage. Sir Ivan Lawrence, MP, chairman of the home affairs select committee, says the proposal would encourage moral decline and weaken the fabric of society.

This doesn't seem to have been the experience of Germany and Sweden, where legalised brothels are permitted — nor that of Victoria, Australia, where brothels, legalised under the Prostitution Control Act of 1994, are advertised in the yellow pages and subject to health inspections and taxes, and where street-walking and kerb-crawling are outlawed and, it is reported, 'the sleaze surrounding prostitution has been all but eliminated'.

The proposal of Hellawell and Clare has several obvious merits. It would end at a stroke the daily and nightly nuisance caused to residents in what are known as 'unofficial red-light districts'. It would allow regular compulsory health checks. It would probably make the trade somewhat safer for the women engaged in it.

Above all, it would probably make it harder for children to engage in it — and, as a writer asked in last Sunday's *Observer*, 'What kind of society do we live in where 14-year-old girls have to sell their bodies?'

But these advantages, substantial though they are, do not mean that socialists should automatically support the Hellawell-Clare proposal just as it stands.

Legalised brothels would have to be owned and run by someone. If they were owned by pimps or by the state, there would be room for almost limitless exploitation of the women who choose to work in them. Many women would prefer the independence of the streets, however hazardous, to the certainty of such exploitation.

Whatever necessary regulations were made for health and safety, legalised brothels should be owned and run co-operatively

## PERSONAL COLUMN

by the women concerned. And sex workers, like workers in every other industry, should have clearly defined rights, including the right to organise.

## Marx and Wagner

FOR Marx, the whole Wagner phenomenon was an inexplicable manifestation of bourgeois decadence. Thus wrote Michael Tanner — or maybe the sub-editor who embellished Tanner's article with a cursory list of 'Wagnerphiles and phobes' — in the *Guardian* of 26 July.

Having spent several hours of my holiday looking up what Marx really did write about the composer Richard Wagner (1813-83), I can report that the *Guardian's* summary appears to be sheer invention, disgracefully but unsurprisingly sucked out of a lazy hack's thumb.

Not that Marx cared for Wagner very much. There's no evidence that his dislike was based on his ever listening to a single note of the man's music; he simply wrote him off as a 'state musician', a 'latter-day Prusso-German imperial court musician' whose Festival Theatre in Bayreuth was a 'Festival of Fools'.

Marx also poked gentle fun a couple of times at Wagner's 'music of the future', the composer's own description of his work in his *Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft* (1850) and *Zukunftsmusik* (1861). According to Marx, there were 'more important things in the world' than this 'music of the future'.

The only other Marxian reference to Wagner that I've been able to find comes in a footnote to chapter 2 ('The Family') of Friedrich Engels's *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884).

Engels quotes there a letter written by Marx in 1882 and apparently lost, where he 'expresses himself in the strongest possible terms about the utter falsification of primeval times appearing in Wagner's Nibelung text' (i.e. the text of the four-evening drama *Der Ring des Nibelungen*), which includes the question: 'Whoever heard of a brother embracing his sister as his bride?' According to Marx in this letter, incest between brother and sister was in fact regarded as moral in the earliest stage of human society.

In the fourth edition of *The Origin of the Family* (1891), Engels adds to this note by quoting and answering a comment on it by a 'French friend and admirer of Wagner'.

And that, it seems, is all there is on the subject of Richard Wagner in the entire massive literary output of Marx and Engels. Not a word, not a syllable, about 'an inexplicable manifestation of bourgeois decadence'.

Of course, if any reader knows of a reference to Wagner by Marx that I've missed, I'd appreciate being told about it. Meanwhile it looks very much as if Michael Tanner, opera critic of the *Spectator*, or whoever else invented that spurious quotation from Marx, is just one more in the long line of pretentious idiots who think they can palm off on Marx any nonsense that comes into their heads, and get away with it.

Not this time, though.

## Correction

APOLOGIES for a misprint in this column on 20 July. In line 7 of the tenth paragraph, 'unpaid conditions' should have read 'improved conditions'.

Peter Fryer

## The need for a new socialist party

# Ensuring a transition to a new party

The conference called last March by Workers Press under the title 'Crisis in the labour movement — the need for a new socialist party' decided to set up a steering committee to continue its work. Here we report on the highly successful meeting of the committee held in London on 30 July.

Below are three responses to the initiative taken by the Workers Revolutionary Party towards the building of a new socialist party. Each week we aim to print a selection of views on this matter.

Anybody interested in taking part in this discussion should mail, fax or e-mail (see back page) your contributions which should be 300 to 400 words in length.



Liverpool dockers' fight is at the heart of the discussion

## An urgent issue

I BELIEVE two recent events have made the building of a new socialist party an urgent issue.

The first is the complete and abject abandonment by New Labour of the interests of working people against big business.

Along with Clause Four, Blair and his henchpersons have dropped even the pretence of improving wages, education, health or welfare. Instead they concentrate solely on manoeuvring ignominiously to convince banks and financial institutions that they can keep capitalism going better than the Tories.

The second event is the collapse of the Soviet political system. After decades of bankrupt policies for developing socialism within the Soviet Union and internationally, leading to massive mismanagement and repression, the system collapsed as the bureaucrats fell out, unable to meet workers' demands for improved living conditions.

The role of old Labour was to force a compromise between the British working class and capitalism by separating the industrial strength of the unions from the political struggle for socialism by falsely equating parliamentary power with improving living conditions.

Whenever capitalism is threatened, Labour leaders (and their social-democrat equivalents abroad) come to its rescue by organising the cutting of wages and benefits 'in the national interest'.

The role of the Soviet Union wherever it had influence was to force a compromise between the international working class and imperialism by falsely separating the development of socialism in the Soviet Union from the building of revolutionary socialist movements in other countries. But these two events did not

WHATEVER name is finally chosen for the new organisation, the steering committee meeting agreed that the foundation for the new political organisation to work for a new party had to be Marxism and its development.

The proposition for such a new Marxist political organisation was put forward by Cliff Slaughter on behalf of the WRP, whose recent congress had decided to call for this.

The congress resolved that if such an organisation was agreed upon then the WRP would cease to exist as a separate organisation and that Workers Press and all other resources would become the resources of the new organisation.

The 26 comrades at the meeting came from a wide variety of backgrounds: Labour Party, Communist Party, Socialist Workers Party, Militant, WRP, United Secretariat, Iranian Refugee Workers' Association, Kashmiri

International Front and the African Liberation Support Campaign.

All were convinced that the starting point was the need for the unification of the working class itself.

At the centre of the discussion were the views of comrades who are living in London not out of choice but out of necessity because of the brutal nature of the regimes in their own countries.

'What has happened to all those who came here as fighters — forced out of their own countries? The "left" has not made any connections with them,' said a comrade from the Ivory Coast.

'In Europe the people now have a chance to make an alliance with workers from the "Third World" and London can play a major role in the international affairs of the workers,' said a Kashmiri comrade.

Hassan, from Iran told the meeting: 'The "left" always have more important things to do than take part in the workers' struggles.'

'It is very bad that they are not doing enough for the Hillingdon strikers who are under attack and face racism.'

'Then there are the Underground workers. The "left" was absent in front of the tube stations during the strikes. We are not the vanguard, we are part of the struggle because the workers have got a vanguard.'

The fight of the Liverpool dockers was at the heart of the discussion.

One comrade said that Cliff

democracy is no longer a viable tradition, and that a Blair government in Britain will move rapidly against the working class and the poor.

But most important of all, it recognises that these changes are of such magnitude that the old belief in the expansion of the existing left groups — here we are, come and join us, a line still epitomised by the SWP — is completely inadequate for the new struggles which lie ahead.

The statement by Cliff Slaughter in Workers Press (20 July) recognises the importance of new social groups — women, youth, ethnic minorities — in the struggles which lie ahead. It also recognises that profoundly new issues are being put on the agenda alongside old ones because the global crisis of capitalism penetrates every aspect of human existence.

Family and sexual relations, science and culture, the environment, the collapse of the city and the crisis of modern living: issues which don't immediately translate into class struggle. The task of a new party is to show how they can only be solved by overcoming capitalism and therefore that links must be built between the working class and new social movements until there is a united front against capitalism which truly unites masses of people across the world.

Such a new party cannot be old wine in new bottles — a 'new' WRP to match Scargill's 'new' Labour Party. We have to recognise that the deep cynicism — particularly among young people — about politics applies not just to the bourgeois parties but also to the traditional far left groups. We must therefore be open minded about what form a new party and its methods of work and organisation will take.

Putting the resources of the Workers Press and the WRP at the service of such a new party without preconditions is a courageous and adequate response to

Slaughter was 'spot on' when he had said, 'We are not saying "join us" we are saying we want to join you — we want to join workers in struggle.'

This comrade and others insisted that it is necessary to study the way the Liverpool dockers organise themselves and others.

'The dockers have organised the greatest support for internationalism. Now they can add to this their campaign for human rights in Turkey,' he added.

Another comrade said 'We should not be prepared to create a new party in isolation from the vanguard of our class and then present the class with this party beautifully prepared and gift-wrapped.'

Summing up the discussion Cliff Slaughter said: 'It's not just that the organisation is transitional, but there are struggles now and big struggles in the period ahead. We must fight to bring together all those who will ensure that it is a transition to a new party.'

**NEXT MEETING:**  
7.30pm, Tuesday 3  
September, Room 301  
Gray's Inn Centre,  
Sidmouth Street,  
London WC1 8JB.  
(Nearest tubes King's  
Cross/Russell Square).  
Information from the  
coordinator, Steve  
Ballard, 0181-889 7255.

the challenges that lie ahead, in many ways a small beginning but, in my opinion, an absolutely correct one.

Nick Lee  
Workers Press contributor

## Please amplify

I WOULD like to amplify some remarks I made to the 30 July meeting of the steering committee (see main report, this page).

In the question of the name of the new party, the proposal is that this is a *transitional* organisation and I think that the name should indicate this.

If the new party is composed entirely of Marxists then the whole project will fail before it has started. We have to turn outwards and transform ourselves from a Marxist sect into a socialist party.

On the issue of dissent. The legitimate concerns of those comrades who have had bad experiences in organisations like the CPGB and the WRP must be discussed and adequately met.

This question cannot be separated from democratic centralism, so I think we should have a discussion on this too.

The latter part of point 2 of Cliff Slaughter's article in the 20 July issue of Workers Press reads: 'It [the new party] will aim in all its work at the building of a world party of socialism of which it will be part.'

This proposal needs to be amplified and explained, particularly on the question 'What will be the relation between the new party "International" and our new party?'

An *early* clarification on this point would be appreciated so that it can be discussed before our conference in November.

Don Cuckson  
Workers Press reader  
East London

## Deepening crisis

THE strategy of 'Marxists for a Socialist Party' recognises that the deepening crisis of world capitalism poses the alternatives of 'socialism or barbarism' far more starkly than ever before. It recognises that social

# Dockers' leader and courageous fighter for socialism

## Michael ('Mickie') Arthur Fenn 1938-96

MICHAEL (MICKIE) ARTHUR FENN, London docker, died suddenly of a heart attack, aged 58, on 28 July.

Well over 200 people attended his funeral held in London last Monday. His coffin arrived draped in the 1972 dockers' banner famous for its call 'Arise Ye Workers,' and led by the London and Liverpool dockworkers' banner carried and accompanied by some of his best friends and comrades.

It was a fitting tribute to the life of this socialist, anti-racist fighter and staunch trade unionist who stood in the finest traditions of the British and international working class.

Mickie died just four days before 1 August — the seventh anniversary of the infamous meeting of the general executive council of the Transport and General Workers Union that voted to end the 1989 dock strike.

Mickie was contemptuous of this left leadership that was running scared in front of the anti-trade-union laws and the threat of sequestration of the union's assets.

He said that leaders who considered the union's assets to be its money, buildings and cars and not its members and their families were not worthy to be called trade unionists.

Mickie, along with 136 other Tilbury men, was victimised and sacked — never to return to the docks. It was a stab in his very heart.

Like so many of his peers, his father, grandfather and great-grandfather were dockers. It was a way of life, a way of struggle.

And a struggler, a fighter, he was. He and other stewards had warned that the union must prepare for a fight to defend the National Dock Labour Scheme.

Finally, after two national ballots and high court hearings, the union called an official strike, but only as the Scheme was being abolished by the government.

During the 28 days of that fateful strike Mickie fought like a tiger, organising delegations to win support from dockers in the rest of Europe, mounting flying pickets to encourage the dockers in the smaller ports, and setting up meetings everywhere. His

response to the anti-union laws was to break them!

Mickie had started on the Royal Group of docks in 1965 and joined the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers (NASD, the 'Blue' union).

The dockers' elected shop stewards were not recognised but they had established an unofficial Liaison Committee and Mickie soon joined dockers such as Jack Dash and Vic Turner on this Committee.

In 1969, when the ban was lifted, he became a shop steward and was instrumental in setting up the Unofficial National Port Shop Stewards' Committee. Later he became its secretary.

In 1972 registered dockworkers were being sacked and their work was being transferred to inland container bases with cheaper labour.

The dockworkers' rank-and-file leadership, including Mickie Fenn, started picketing Midland Cold Storage amid cries that the greedy dockers were trying to take the food out of the mouths of the workers and their families.

But the conspiracy was exposed. The giant shipping and dock company owned by the Vestey family also owned Midland Cold Storage.

Five dockers were arrested and imprisoned in Pentonville. Mickie was tireless in the struggle for their release.

### United

A united mass movement was built throughout the country involving in its leadership the NASD, the TGWU and the Unofficial Port Shops Stewards Committee, with the banner 'Arise ye Workers'.

Mickie would go out fly-posting all over docklands: 'No locks on the docks!'

The government backed down



Mickie (centre) chaired the London support group for the Liverpool dockers' launch

and the men were released. But the break-up of the docks continued.

The Royals closed down, the Surrey closed down, the West India closed down and soon what was left of the docks' workforce was assembled in Tilbury, where the big battle was to take place in 1989.

Mickie was never a Labour Party man. In about 1966 he joined the Communist Party but he left in 1972.

He was deeply affected by the CIA's bloody intervention in Chile, the bringing down of the legitimate government, the assassination of President Allende, and the murder of thousands of workers and students.

He could no longer stomach a

policy of a parliamentary road to socialism. He remained politically active, now a supporter of Trotskyism who later joined the International Socialists (forerunner of the Socialist Workers Party) and the Anti-Nazi League. He later left and concentrated on being a dockers' shop steward.

Mickie was 'at home' as secretary of the Unofficial Port Shop Stewards Committee. He never looked for a union officer's job and could not stand those on the official committees who always thought they must tell the others what they should be thinking. He was contemptuous of elements in the union's 'broad left' who used it to promote their own ambitions.

He was always an internationalist. He knew dockers all over the world, kept in touch with and organised support for their struggles.

He always put more into the movement than he got out of it.

In the 1984-85 miners' strike Mickie was in the leadership of the two-week unofficial dock strike in support of the miners. He was always going around, bucket in hand, making solidarity collections.

Later he became active in Women Against Pit Closures.

After the 1989 sacking, a number of shop stewards and other activists, including Mickie, took their case for unlawful dismissal through the Industrial Tribunal. It took four years!

Their case was proved, but

they were not reinstated. With the money he received in compensation he took his whole family on a world tour. They visited his dockworker comrades in many countries, including Australia.

Recently in the last nine months of the Liverpool dockers' dispute Mickie became active in the London Support Group. He chaired two public meetings, took part in pickets, and went with a delegation of Liverpool dockers to France.

He was proud to see that Jimmy Nolan, chair of the Unofficial Port Shop Stewards Committee, and the other stewards were leading a fight against casualisation and anti-trade-union laws.

### Liverpool

It was fitting that Mickie's family requested that there be no flowers at his funeral and that tributes should be made by way of contributions to the Liverpool dockers.

Mickie was a cultured man, who fought for standards of behaviour and relations between people of equality and trust. He fearlessly marched in front of a demonstration in opposition to those London dockers who struck in support of the racist propaganda of right-wing Tory Enoch Powell.

He not only knew and loved London's East End, where he was born and lived throughout his life: he knew it intimately. He was able to take a recent ANC delegation on a tour, showing them where Lenin held his meetings, got his paper printed and where Marx had lived and worked.

He was somewhat dour, not one to tell a joke. But there was always that wry grin. He was known and respected by one and all as 'straight as a die' and completely honest. He was compassionate but not sentimental.

He loved deeply, and was profoundly proud of, his wife Denise and his five children. He was a good friend and a good comrade.

We are proud to have known him.

Kevin Hussey, Frankie Shilling, Colin Coughlin, Dot Gibson

### Interview from the archives

## All out on Monday 2 October [1989]! DOCKERS TO LOBBY LABOUR

The following interview with MICKIE FENN by Dot Gibson appeared in Workers Press on 16 September 1989

SACKED Tilbury docks shop stewards will be lobbying the Labour Party conference on Monday 2 October [1989] to try to get a commitment that a Labour government will repeal the Tory anti-union laws and introduce legislation similar to the National Dock Labour Scheme', Mick Fenn told Workers Press.

Fenn is one of the 16 Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) shop stewards and 132 other Tilbury dockers sacked for their part in the recent dock strike. He is also secretary of the (unofficial) National Port Shop Stewards' Committee.

'We are asking dockers from other ports to come with us. In fact all trade unionists will be welcome to join our lobby and come to the meeting, because every trade unionist is in danger of getting the same treatment as us,' said Fenn. And he explained:

The truth of the matter is that we were sold down the river by the general executive council of our union with the compliance of Bon Todd [TGWU general secretary] and the cowardice of the Southern...

'Now dockers working in Tilbury are being threatened with the sack for the slightest misdemeanour.

'We've got good trade unionists working inside the Tilbury dock who cannot put forward the views of the union because they would be victimised and eventually sacked.

'We have to say to the Labour Party: "That's what this legislation means, and you want to maintain it". It's not a difficult message to put across, and if we put out leaflets that's what we will be saying.

'People just do not believe that trade unionists have to operate in secret in the target port in the country or get dismissed.

'My grandfather was a member of the TGWU. So was my father. Now the so-called left-wing general executive council considers the union's £76 million to be more important than the members.

'If that situation goes on then we can expect the TGWU to do the same thing again. But the defence of trade unionism is a basic principle, and it is still our job to reorganise the union in Tilbury, because dockers working in there are prisoners.'

Fenn said the Tilbury stewards are anxious to avoid some of the political groups they met on...

concerned to listen to their own voices.

'They misrepresent our strike and never listen to what we have to say,' he told Workers Press.

The question of anti-trade-union laws is a serious matter for all workers, and it is serious workers we went to encourage. A number of us on the National Port Shop Stewards' Committee were prepared to give up everything for the strike.

'We had discussed matters with our wives and we definitely would not have given in if the state had sequestered our assets [homes] and imprisoned us for contempt, whatever that meant for our kids.

### Contempt

'If I had been accused of contempt of court, I would have told them: "Yes, I have seen the courts at work over the past weeks [the legal actions of the port employers against the union] I hold them in nothing but contempt". I would have said: "I am a political prisoner." Jimmy Nolan [Liverpool docker and chair of the unofficial committee] and other stewards would have said the same.

'You have to be prepared to put our money where your mouth is in a fight. The state is bugging the telephone. They knew this was

the employers that the strike would escalate if they took action against us, and instead they used state funds to buy the strike.

'They sacked us and gave us redundancy money paid by the government. We don't want the money. We want our jobs, but we would not go back to work in a dock that doesn't recognise a trade union.

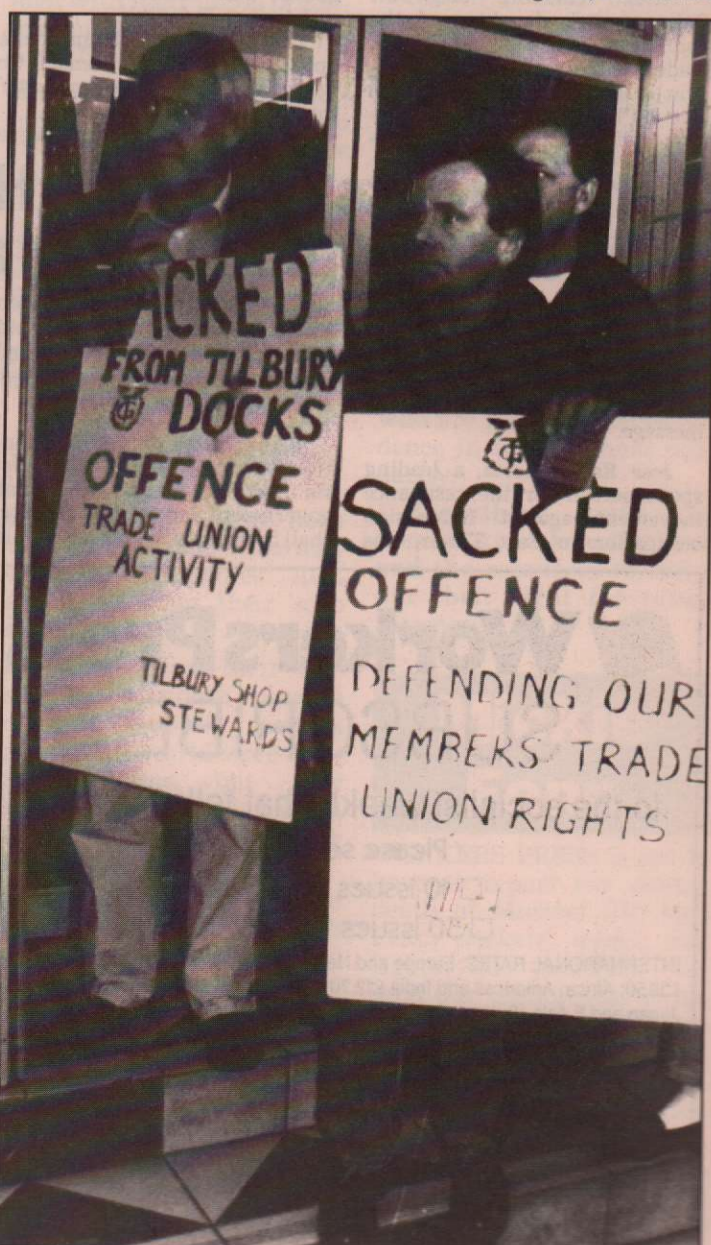
'That's why we are lobbying the Labour Party to ask for our commitment to repeal all the laws.'

The Workers Revolutionary Party welcomes the sacked Tilbury shop stewards' decision to lobby the Labour Party. We have consistently warned that Kinnoch has no intention of repealing all the anti-trade-union legislation.

In fact the decisions carried at the TUC at the beginning of September make it clear that they intend to keep laws which expose the so-called unofficial leaders to legal sanctions.

The dockers' stand makes it possible to fight this out with the Labour leaders in front of important sections of the working class.

The fight against the anti-trade-union laws is central to the defence of the basic democratic rights of all sections of the community. We call upon all our members and supports to rally



# US scraps welfare

**US PRESIDENT Bill Clinton has agreed to the most dramatic changes to the US welfare aid programme since the 1930s.**

Critics have warned that the Clinton-backed steps will plunge an additional 5 million people into poverty. More than 1 million of them will be children.

The heart of the new measures involve:

■ Restriction of welfare payments to two years after which no benefits at all will be available.

■ Imposition of a life-time limit of five years on welfare payments to any family.

Right-wing Republican speaker of the House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich, is the driving force behind this dramatic change in social policy.

Clinton was immediately condemned even by elements in his own party, including Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New

BY GEOFF PILLING

York, who called the measures 'the most brutal act of social policy since Reconstruction'.

The bill shifts responsibility for welfare from federal to state governments. At the moment states administer welfare programmes but their funds are topped up by the Federal government if the numbers they have to deal with rise and they therefore run out of money.

The new bill means that once a state's money is exhausted it will either have to raise extra taxes or to cut back on provision.

If states choose, they can slash

spending to the bone and thereby force the poor into other areas of the country in a manner reminiscent of John Steinbeck's classic novel of 1930s depression America, *Grapes of Wrath*.

From now on there will be far less money to play with, with states getting £35 billion less over the next six years. Most of the cut back is in money for food stamps on which millions of the poorest people in the US depend for survival.

## Rust

Areas which would be hardest hit are those of the great rust belts in Michigan, where industry has closed down as US firms have lost out in the fierce competitive battle with industries in Japan and the Pacific Rim.

Immigrants would come under the hammer for the new

measures withdraw benefits for all legal immigrants yet to become citizens.

The representatives of big business not surprisingly welcome the Clinton-backed bill. An editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* (2-3 August), significantly titled 'It's over', said:

'With the repeal of an automatic federal entitlement, welfare as America has known it for 30 years is over.'

'The 60-year Democratic philosophy of social welfare as a federal responsibility has been broken.'

And this organ of the banks and big business added:

'The important thing this week is to recognise that something happened that transcends the daily, often numbing, grinding mill of Washington politics.'

It may be only coincidence that a half-century of welfare

policy is being changed profoundly on the eve of the 21st century. But the significance is impossible to miss. This is a big deal indeed.'

## Elections

Clinton's acceptance of this Republican-sponsored bill is no doubt motivated by the coming November presidential elections.

But the scrapping of the New Deal welfare system goes far deeper than that. For it shows that not even the most powerful capitalist state can afford the sort of welfare system that it allowed even in the slump of the 1930s.

All the leading capitalist countries, including the United States, are now suffering from such severe structural imbalances in their state finances that they are unable to maintain the sort of welfare benefits, inad-

equately though they were, that they have been paying out since the end of World War II.

Clinton's brutal measures throw down a challenge to the whole American labour movement.

The working class internationally is now at a decisive turning point in its development, and the working class of the United States is no exception.

The Democratic Party has in the past pretended to be 'the friend of labour' and the most disadvantaged sections of society, and it has traditionally received backing from decisive sections of the trade union bureaucracy.

Clinton has now brutally exposed the party for what it really is, a party of the ruling class which is now driven to destroy the benefits of millions of workers as well as significant sections of the middle class.

# Dare the Indonesian dictators dismount?

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

AFTER ruling Indonesia with a rod of iron for over 30 years, General Suharto's military clique confront a dilemma.

It is riding one of south-east Asia's biggest 'tigers' — a population approaching 200 million, whose Gross Domestic Product has soared from \$100 to \$900 per head in 25 years.

But foreign capitalists who have invested billions in Indonesia's cheap labour and expensive, corrupt military regime are anxiously asking whether the dictatorship can safely dismount.

After removing Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of the country's first president, as leader of the main legal opposition Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI), and evicting her supporters from the PDI headquarters,

the regime was hit by riots in Jakarta, the capital, at the end of last month.

As government buildings and banks blazed, the Suharto regime sent in troops, with British-made Tactical Armoured Vehicles, and some reports say, Scorpion tanks.

Over 250 arrests were made, including union leader Mukhtar Pakpahan, charged with 'subversion'. Pakpahan was a guest of the British TUC last year after release from a previous sentence.

## Protested

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has protested, and US human rights groups have demanded an arms embargo on Indonesia.

The regime has blamed the opposition People's Democratic Party and banned 'communists' for the riots.

Around 500,000 people were

killed in military-organised pogroms against communists, trade unionists and peasant activists 30 years ago.

Many people remained incarcerated in camps for decades, and Marxist literature is banned.

In recent years the regime has massacred opponents in East Timor, which it seized in 1975, but as well as resistance there, it has faced increasingly defiant trade union opposition in the factories (many contracted to Western firms), and students demanding democratic rights.

Bright-lit shops and signs of wealth exacerbate the anger of Indonesia's poor. But army officers enriched by bribes fear that relaxing their methods of rule would expose them to retribution from those they have oppressed, as well as loss of their ill-gotten gains.

# Timor thanks 'Seeds of Hope' women: 'You did it without firing a single shot'

WHILE they were in Risley prison awaiting trial, the four women who took their hammers to a Hawk jet fighter destined for Indonesia received an important message.

Jose Ramos-Horta, a leading spokesperson for the resistance movement against Indonesian occupation in East Timor, was

paying a lecture visit to London when he heard about the 'Seeds of Hope' women who wrecked Hawk number ZH 955 at British Aerospace's Warton test site.

BaE gained a £500 million contract to supply Hawks to Indonesia in 1993, backed by the British government. Indonesian Air Marshall Sibun said the planes would

be used not just for training but for 'emergency air-to-ground attacks'.

Inspired by the Biblical vision of 'beating swords into ploughshares', Lotta Kronlid, Andrea Needham, Joanna Wilson and Angie Zelter wrecked the Hawk's nose cone, radar, and bomb attachments. It was the third such action in Britain, and the 56th around the world.

Ramos-Horta wrote: 'Dear Lotta, Andrea, Jo and Angie, "There are no words, language, rich enough to enable me to express my emotions and gratitude for your generosity and courage in standing up to the mighty British arms industry.'

## Missions

'The people of East Timor will always remember the four women who disabled a British fighter plane on the ground, before it took off for its bombing missions.'

'In 20 years of resistance, we were never able to shoot down an aircraft. You did it without even firing a single shot and without hurting the pilot.'

'I will be ready and more than happy to appear in court to testify. In the meantime, keep up your courage. Justice will prevail! A big hug to you all!'



Demonstration in Jakarta, 1 August

# Labour, the FO, and Indonesia

THE British Foreign Office backed right-wing army officers who seized control of Indonesia in 1965 and massacred up to half a million people.

It happened during Harold Wilson's Labour government.

It has long been known that America's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was involved in the 30 September 1965 coup.

In a book published two years before the coup, former CIA officer William Kintner warned that 'Indonesia may be the first south-east Asia country to be taken over by a popularly-based, legally-elected communist government.'

The CIA's answer was that the military must be encouraged to 'liquidate' communist movements. General Suharto, Indonesia's dictator since 1965, trained in 'Civic Mission' — political mobilisation — at the Indonesian Army Staff and Command School (SESKOAD) under a US military aid programme.

British forces were engaged in the 'confrontation' with Indonesian-backed rebels in Brunei, and on the Malaysian border.

In March 1965 a letter said to be from British ambassador Sir Andrew Gilchrist appeared, referring to a US and British conspiracy, 'together with local army

friends', to topple President Sukarno. The letter was damned as a forgery.

But Foreign Office documents quoted recently by writer Mark Curtis ('British role in slaughter of 500,000', *Observer*, 28 July) suggest that if the Gilchrist letter was not genuine, it was remarkably close.

In a letter to London the ambassador remarked: 'I have never concealed from you my belief that a little shooting in Indonesia would be an essential preliminary to effective change.'

## Arrangements

General Suharto had contacted Malaysian, and hence British, officials. The political adviser to the British commander in Singapore recommended 'arrangements for distribution of certain unattributable material' through the media.

From Malaysia to New York, stories appeared in the papers about China smuggling arms to the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI).

The Foreign Office advised Gilchrist: 'While the present confusion continues, we can hardly go wrong by tacitly backing the generals.'

Referring to the border 'confrontation', Gilchrist suggested 'We should get word to the generals that we shall not attack them while they are chasing the PKI [Indonesian Communist Party]'

The Indonesian army withdrew reliable crack units from the border to Java that summer.

According to Edward Luttwak, (*Coup d'etat: A practical handbook*, Allan Lane), 'though Communist-infiltrated army units were very powerful they were in the wrong place; while they sat in the Borneo jungles the anti-Communist paratroops and marines took over Jakarta, and the country.'

Although the 'confrontation' began under the Tories, Labour was in office at the time of the Indonesian coup.

The Foreign Secretary from January 1965 to 1970 was Michael Stewart, who had been Attlee's under-secretary for War during the Malayan 'Emergency' (the suppression of Communist Party-led guerrillas).

Labour's responsibility didn't end then and there. When back-bench MP Alice Mahon tried to challenge the Hawks deal in parliament, Labour whips smothered the issue, arguing the party mustn't prejudice jobs at British Aerospace.

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