# Workers Press

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# Join 24 February demonstration SMASH RACIST ASYLUM BILL!

THE Tories' racist Asylum and Immigration Bill is the concern of the whole labour movement. It is the latest attack on sections of workers who must not be left to fight this bill on their own.

Hundreds of thousands of political refugees and unregistered migrants are living in Britain. Thousands, including women and children, have been porcibly deported over the rears using the most barbaric and inhumane methods.

This has resulted in deaths such as that of Joy Gardner who was suffocated by immigration officials and Joseph Nnalue who fell from a third floor window trying to escape police officers.

The Asylum Bill is a continution of this onslaught. It is esigned to put asylum seekers estitute on the street.

It can be defeated if the trength of the workers' movement is united with the wave of position from the refugee and immigrant organisations.

Already the Tories have been forced to pull back. They had originally planned that from 8 January all rights to noome support and other benfits would be withdrawn from nost asylum seekers.

The Department of Social ecurity estimates this will ffect 13,000 immediately with exemptions for families with hildren, pregnant women, isabled or the elderly.

But the depth and strength the opposition has forced hem to delay this aspect of the last Before implementation hey will now have a full paramentary debate in an antempt to buy off many of the beral opponents who are trying to restrict the militancy of he street demonstrations.

The Bill gives Home Secreary Michael Howard the ower to designate countries there it is claimed there is no erious risk of persecution' be so-called 'white list'.

Howard's first list is India, akistan, Poland, Romania, Bularia, Ghana and Cyprus. There re serious allegations and evience of human rights abuses in these countries yet asylum aims will be deemed as atthout foundation'.

Nigeria was due to be be believed in the 'white list' but be world-wide revulsion at the secutions of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his comrades forced the bries to withdraw it — though of course, they con-

#### BY JACKIE VANCE

tinue to deport refugees as in the case of Abdul Onibiyo. His son Ade remains under threat of deportation (see page 7).

Tory MPs have also been promoting Turkey as 'safe' despite the persecution of the Kurdish people. It was only the massacres last year of political prisoners in Buca and Umraniye prisons and the militancy and organisation of the Turkish refugee groups in Britain that has scared the Tories.

Another insidious aspect of the Bill is forcing employers to check for 'illegal' workers. Such sanctions against employers turn the bosses into agents of immigration control on the shop floor.

Immigration controls are an extension of the ruling-class policy of using racism to divide and rule the working class. Workers must have the right to travel wherever they wish to sell their labour or to seek refuge

Immigration laws are a class issue. In Britain they were first introduced in 1905 to keep out Jewish refugees from eastern Europe and since 1962 they have targeted black and Asian people.

The organised workers' movement must not stand aside from the campaign to smash this Asylum and Immigration Bill. Thousands of members of immigrant groups in Britain, many of whom had previously concentrated on cultural and social questions, are now being forced to become involved in political issues at the sharpest point!

Trade unionists must fight for repeal of all immigration controls and work for a massive turnout on the national demonstration against the Asylum Bill in London on 24 February.

Trade union banners alongside the banners of the refugee groups will emphasise the essential international nature of workers' struggles.

■ Smash the Asylum Bill!

■ No immigration controls!
■ Amnesty for unregistered

migrants and refugees!

Unity of British and immigrant workers!



WOMEN of the Waterfront and sacked Liverpool dockers, accompanied by Liverpool MPs Eddie Loyden and Bob Parry (pictured right), took a petition signed by over 100,000 people to 10 Downing Street on 9 February.

This expresses disgust at the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company (MDHC) treatment of the dockers, most of whom have over 30 years' service. The petition also calls for the dockers' immediate reinstatement.

The women's support group has become central to the strike. Outraged at the treatment of their husbands and partners, the women have become a decisive part of the daily picket line.

The women have added a 'spice of life'. They organised Christmas parties for the children and adults, and 'carol singing' round the MDHC directors' houses with Jimmy Nail's 'Big River' as their theme song.

After delivering the petition the delegation of 18 had lunch at TUC headquarters, and spent the afternoon lobbying MPs at the House of Commons.

The dockers are fighting against the return of casual labour. These women explain that this is not just a dockers' question.

Discussions between lobbies of MPs revealed the extent of their similar personal experiences as nurses, home helps, social workers, clerical workers and their own staunch trade unionism.

Frank Field, Birkenhead Labour MP, got short shrift when he told the women he would 'string up' the leaders of the strike who had 'lost the dockers' their jobs by breaking the anti-trade-union laws!

'Yes, we know that Blair has said he will keep the anti-trade-union laws and has even given that promise to the bankers and bosses in Japan and Singapore,' said one of the lobbyists. Another pointed out: 'That kind of thing will lose Labour a great deal of support. Who needs Tories, when you've got the likes of him and you in the Labour Party leadership?'

Somehow a 'Support the Liverpool Dockers' sticker got onto the back of Field's smart suit jacket.

As he took his leave of the women and walked jauntily across the central lobby, smiles could be seen all round as many eyes caught sight of the bright yellow circle.

Photo: Marg Nicol

■ More news page 3



#### Workers Press Meeting

#### Saturday 10 February, 10.30am-4pm

University of Westminster, 309 Regent Street, London (north side of Oxford Circus).

■ This meeting will discuss what sort of newspaper the working class will need in the coming struggle it faces. We ask readers to make every effort to attend.

# Crisis in the labour movement The need for a new socialist party CHANGE OF DATE & VENUE:

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1

#### Saturday 16 March 11am-5pm

Millions of working people hope that after 17 years of Tory government things can only get better. But the accelerating right-wing offensive of Blair and his team makes it clear that a Labour government will continue the Tory attacks. How will the working-class respond? What preparations must we make?

Please note we have changed the original date for the conference

because of the important demonstration against the Tory Asylum Bill.

Deportation threat, p2 ★ Dockers, p3 ★ Nuremberg, p4&5 ★ Socialist invaders, p6 ★ Nigeria and oil, p7 ★ Saudi Arabia, p8

# Lies about jobs

NOT least of the many unsavoury aspects of the Mohammed Al-Mas'ari scandal is the lie being put about by Tory ministers and MPs that the deportation order was made to protect jobs, particularly jobs in the North East.

Since when have Tory ministers been interested in the jobs of workers?

Kevin Flynn, co-ordinator of the Newcastle Unemployed Workers Centre was right when he said (the Guardian, 8 January) that it was 'laughable for a government which had created the highest unemployment levels ever in our area to talk about a threat to jobs, when they had every opportunity to prevent the destruction of the shipbuilding and mining industries and failed to intervene.

In the case of the mining industry, Tory policy was clear: the purpose of the brutal run-down was the destruction of the National Union of Mineworkers and its president, Arthur Scargill, who had led the most significant strike in Britain since the end of World War II.

CAPITALISM is a system that employs workers on one basis: that their labour makes a profit for the owners of capital. As far as the employers are concerned, all other considerations are quite secondary.

It is because the bosses are having evergreater difficulty in extracting such profit that jobs are being systematically destroyed throughout Europe by the capitalist system. The number of unemployed in western Europe is today conservatively estimated at around 25 million, and rising. Even in the 'strong man' of Europe, Germany, government figures admit that the so-called 'recovery' is creating no extra jobs and that unemployment, now at 4 million, is continuing to grow.

More and more workers out of a job are permanently or semi-permanently unemployed, with no hope of any work. Women and young people are particularly badly hit by this intensifying unemployment crisis.

UNDER capitalism every development in science and technology threatens evergreater numbers with unemployment and destitution.

The right of everybody to a job can be assured only when the means of production are taken out of the hands of their capitalist owners and placed under the control of the working class. This is precisely the principle that Blair and his fellow 'one nation' Labour leaders have ditched in their service to big business.

No, the only reason for the intended deportation of Mas'ari is not that his activities threatened workers' jobs but jeaprdised the rich pickings that will come to firms such as Vickers for the supply of Challenger 2 battle tanks to the Saudi regime - part of a £3 billion order that British arms manufacturers are fighting for against intense international competition.

Entirely predictable is the reaction of the Labour Party leaders, one described by the Guardian last week as 'cautious'. The truth is that they have said virtually nothing in defence

The fact is that Blair and company undoubtedly share the position of the Tory government and the arms makers — that 'British interests' (they mean the interests of the City and the merchants of death) must take priority over the right of anybody fleeing persecution from a semi-feudal, reactionary regime.

# Letters

#### Euthanasia corrections

I FEEL I must make a couple of comments about your article on Gill Sweeting, the Brighton councillor whose remarks about hospices and euthanasia have received a lot of media attention (9 December).

Firstly, it is not true to say that Gill is 'unrepentant'. A statement issued to local Labour Party members opens with the words: 'I very much regret the distress that has been caused to people with cancer and their families by the release of my letter on hos-

Note the operative word 'release', since Gill's letter was not intendeed to enter the public domain; it was put there by a combination of Tory malice (the hospice appeal's chairperson is married to a Tory councillor) and the local paper's thirst for sensationalism.

her comments Secondly, appear to have been interpreted by some as advocating compulsory euthanasia.

And while her use of the term put down' is unfortunate to say the least, she has made it clear in the statement that 'if people genuinely want to hang on to the bitter end, then I believe it would be better for advance directives to be used for that purpose — to say that on no account must drugs be increased to a level which hastens death.

As secretary of the Labour Party branch for which Gill is a councillor, I have clashed with her on innumerable occasions.

Indeed, once, when moving a resolution at the general committee, she joked that since it had the support of both the loony left' (meaning me) and the 'rabid right' (indicating herself) everyone else must agree with it too!

However, I think it is important that inaccuracies are put right, and even Gill doesn't deserve to be mentioned in the same sentence as 'dizzy Sloane Di Spencer'!

One other aspect of this issue which Workers Press readers ought to be interested in concerns the local council Labour group's undue readiness to discipline

Without waiting for reactions from local party branches and officials, the group called for

and got - her resignation as chair of the licensing committee, basically because the Tories demanded her head on a plate.

Her good comrades on the group presumably thought a macho image was more important than solidarity — despite all she has done for them — and she has been with them on most issues, notably Kinnock's witch-

The apparent immunity of Labour groups from the democratic decisions of party members is part of a process which maintains a powerful minority in control of what is notionally a democratic party.

It should be challenged wherever it manifests itself. And that, of course will include parliament when Labour has a majority.

Jim Grozier Brighton

#### Important Bosnia experiences

I'VE just been reading a Workers Press leaflet calling attention to the conference on 16 March, 'The crisis in the Labour movement and the need for a new socialist party'

It raises some valuable points, and should help promote wider discussion in the working-class movement. As part of that discussion, I want to criticise the section of the statement on Bosnia.

Pointing to the Labour leadership's subservience to Tory foreign policy and its failure to mobilise solidarity with the Bosnian people, you say:

'It should surprise nobody that the Labour leadership remained totally unmoved by the fact that in Bosnia there would be: either the first of a series of fascist and racist advances in Europe; or the first advance by the international working class in halting the fascists.

Then why do you appear sur-prised by it? Labour rarely if ever has broken from Tory foreign policy, and never, to my knowledge, has it led the fight against fascism.

Labour's shadow foreign secretary Robin Cooke did make some remarks defending Bosnia's multi-cultured position, which distinguished him from reactionaries Hurd, Rifkind and Owen.

As with Suez, when the Labour leaders drew back from endorsing Tory aggression, this probably reflected disarray in the ruling class as well as opposition from working-class and middle-class opinion, which we did do something to mobilise.

The Workers Press leaflet goes on to refer to 'The failure of the workers' movement to respond to multi-ethnic Bosnia and through that unite the workers...'etc.

It rightly contrasts the way roads and bridges can be opened to supply the imperialist occupation forces, whereas they remained closed when people were starving and freezing in Tuzla and other embattled cities.

It was Workers Aid for Bosnia that raised the issue of opening these roads, as best it could, yet the leaflet doesn't mention Workers Aid till later, along with 'the many organisations which campaign on ecological and racist

Workers Aid, and the Bosnia Solidarity Campaign, awakened big support from ordinary working people, students and others, and we should take this, rather than 'the failure of the workers' movement ...', as showing the way for a new party.

If we failed to do enough, it was because we haven't yet shifted those leaders in the workers' movement who opposed us; like those union bureaucrats who dreamt up all kinds of reasons not to read out a letter from trade unionists in Tuzla, rather than think of ways to help.

We shouldn't confuse them with the working class, they're a disgrace to it. The sooner members see what they are really like the sooner they'll get the heave-

And we shouldn't forget that some of the biggest enemies of solidarity with the Bosnian people have been certain so-called flefts' and Stalinists, who purport to offer an 'alternative' to the Labour leaders, and claim to lead the fight against fascism.

Neither the late Anti-Racist Alliance nor the Anti-Nazi League had a word to say about 'ethnic cleansing' in Bosnia.

In the name of phoney neutrality the Socialist Workers' Party endorsed the Tory government's arms embargo. People like Benn and Scargill more or less supported the nationalist Serbs.

But then, in Russia we've seen old Stalinists parade with Tsarists

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> and fascists. These are important experiences and should be remembered

when we're discussing what kind of party the working class needs.

Workers Aid campaigner London SW2

Editor's note: The leaflet referred to was distributed at Workers International/ African Liberation Support Campaign meeting: 'We say the Nigerian dictatorship does not

As explained on the front page the date of the meeting on the 'Crisis in the labour movement' has been changed because of the crucial demonstration on asylum.

We therefore issued a leaflet based on the call published in Workers Press on 7 October last year. This could include only some of the developments since

We hope to produce a better version in the near future, to be printed in Workers Press, which no doubt will take into account some of the points made in the letter above.

#### luzla greetings

SOME news of what's happening here in Bosnia:

The recent Workers Aid student convoy to Tuzla had problems with insurance in Mostar yesterday. I hope I managed to sort it out from here in Tuzla without additional payment.

The Northern Route was recently opened for two days for journalists. I was busy with the convoy so I couldn't go.

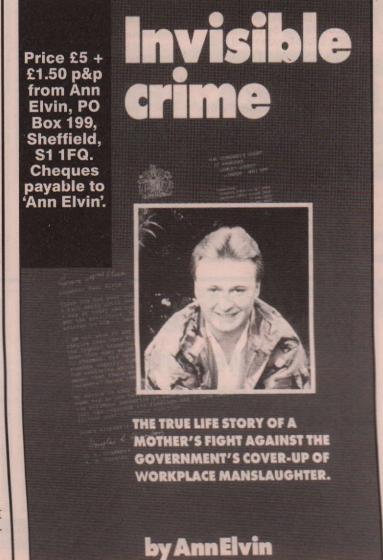
The mayor of Tuzla in his new year's interview had said: 'The Americans will lift the blockade of Tuzla'.

He presumably had in mind the re-opening of this route from the north that is by far the quick-est way into Tuzla. It has been kept firmly closed throughout the war of aggression in Bosnia by the Serb Chetniks, the Croat authorities (both in Croatia and Bosnia) and above all the UN.

But for the mayor's promise on behalf of the Americans to become a reality will need more than a two-day media event.

Best regards and a happy new year to all at Workers Press

Faruk Ibrahimovic



#### **Critique conference 96** The crisis of capitalism and the death of social democracy

3 February 1996, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Registration 9–9.30am. £10 waged £5 unwaged Information/crèche (before 30 January): phone Hillel Ticktin 0141-339 8855 ext. 4377

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Melanie McDonagh, leader writer on the Evening Standard and regular visitor to former Yugoslavia

Organised by the National Secular Society (0171-404 3126)

# Solidarity from US dockers

#### BY DOT GIBSON

TODAY Liverpool dockers hold their eighth community march and rally. Jack Heyman from the International Longshoremen's Association of the US is bringing a solidarity message from US dockers.

One of the main gains of the Liverpool dockers' strike is that they have opened up international actions and exchange of information about working conditions, especially about the universal use of casual labour. This will be a major discussion at the International Conference of Dockers to be held in Liverpool from 17-22 February.

Successful picketing of US ports by Liverpool dockers forced Atlantic Containers (ACL) to tell the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company (MDHC) to get the port of Liverpool sorted out by 15 January or they will withdraw their ships.

This came after major disruption at three US ports:

Although some Baltimore longshshoremen crossed the picket and finally unloaded some containers from the 36,000-tonne Atlantic Concert they refused

ACL's offer of four times their normal hourly rate to unload containers bound for Norfolk and

In Norfolk the longshoremen operated a 'go slow' on the

The total workforce at Newark respected the Liverpool picket line and refused to work the ship. ACL is not the only shipping company exasperated by the chaos created by the provocative and callous action of MDHC when they sacked 500 dockers on 28 September last year.

Ships owned by ABC, using the port of Liverpool are boycotted by Australian dockers. Canadian dockers are also boycotting vessels bound for Liverpool, and Dutch dockers at Flushing (Vlissingen) have asked for a Liverpool dockers' delegation to go over to discuss their handling of cargo to and from the MDHC-owned Medway ports.

The strike, now in its 15th week, is unofficial as far as the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) is concerned and illegal according to government anti-trade-union legislation. But, so far the state has not moved against the dockers, who are organised in the most democratic,

centralised and disciplined man-

Last week Chief Inspector McGarvie of Merseyside police requested a meeting with the shop stewards because of 'major developments in the dispute'. What this meant was not clear, since from the outset peaceful picket lines have been limited to dockers and their families.

It could be that the police have instructions to take a tougher stance. Certainly some unwarranted violence against women as well as men by the police Operational Support Division (OSD) over the past two weeks has caused the shop stewards some concern.

The dockers and their families are not standing on picket lines to have fights with the police. They know that their cause is being fought internationally. When the OSD makes moves to 'up the ante' the pickets merely move away, or have a 'changing of the guard'—the pickets move to another gate and are replaced by others.

Sometimes the pickets come en masse and police HQ gather together their forces, only to find that by the time they arrive, the picket has reduced to six. At one point a women and children's

only picket closed the Seaforth Container Base gates for four hours.

This type of action by the dockers' families reflects the true feelings of workers all over Merseyside. The strike has become a focus.

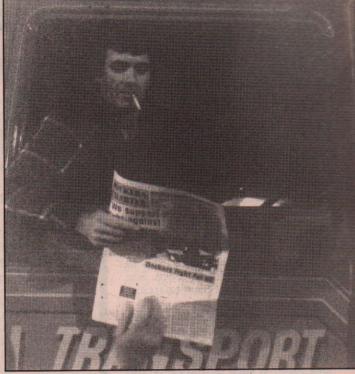
Over 100,000 people have signed a petition condemning the MDHC as a bad employer, and thousands have turned out on the community and union marches and rallies.

Talks between representatives of MDHC and the TGWU are in progress, but no decisions can be taken without a vote at the dockers' mass meeting.

In the meantime the dockers have started their own 'talks'—two coachloads of pickets went to Sheerness last Wednesday to explain the common struggle of all dockers wherever they happen to work.

The next community and union march and rally will be on Saturday 27 January in Liver-

■ The Liverpool strike paper, the Dockers Charter, is available from the shop stewards' committee. A new issue is in preparation. Phone 0151-207 3388 for details.



Getting the message across at Sheerness

# Rail profiteers scoop up state sweeteners

#### BY GEOFF PILLING

MORE than three billion pounds of state money will be paid by the Tory government to big business to build the long-delayed London-Folkestone rail link with the Channel tunnel.

Whoever wins the contract to build the link will be handed property and land worth billions of pounds.

One property dealer said last week: 'This is the mother of all sweetners.'

The sweetners include not only the present fleet of Eurostar trains on which BR has spent £500m of state money but such items as Waterloo International terminal which was financed by £150m of taxpayers' money.

The group that wins the contract will in addition acquire more than 120 acres of land north of Kings Cross station, St Pancras station and St Pancras Chambers, the adjacent Grade I listed hotel.

But the bounty doesn't stop there. For the builders of the link will also receive the 500 houses that BR has already bought along the proposed routes and a £1bnplus cash grant that the government has promised.

Critics of the scheme say that billions could have been saved if BR had been given the contract and the line built years ago.

One of the favoured groups to be awarded this heavily-subsidised contract is Eurorail. Lord Parkinson, former transport secretary under Lady Thatcher is consultant to the group and was until recently its chairman.

Eurorail is owned by some of the most powerful financial and industrial interests in Britain.

Its major shareholders include BICC, Trafalgar House, National Westminster as well as the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation.

It was Parkinson who declared as transport secretary in 1990 that: 'It would be illegal for the government to provide money for the Channel tunnel rail link.'

Parkinson was referring to the clause written into the 1987 Channel Tunnel Act, which made subsidise the publicly-owned British Rail, had the contract to build the link been awarded to BR.

The proposed 68-mile rail link

is expected to generate great profits as the number of international train passengers is forecast to rise sharply. Eurorail and the other favoured group to win the con-

favoured group to win the contract, London and Continental, are desperately playing down the sheer size of the state handouts they are likely to recieve.

But one commercial property adviser reported in the Observer last weekend said:

'In a decade's time, with a bullish property market and a vibrant international St Pancras, the station and the land behind Kings Cross could be worth billions. Whoever owns it would stand to make a killing.'

In addition considerable money will come to the successful bidders from the extra traffic expected from Kent into London, for the rail link will cut some 30 minutes off the typical commuter journey.

Shadow transport spokesperson Brian Wilson says on behalf of the Labour leadership:

Not only are we horrified that public assets are being given free to the private sector after years of the government saying that no public money would be used.

'But they are being given two years before they have to start construction, and seven years to get the link open — and there is no guarantee to that.'

Fine words. But remember that last year Labour's then transport spokesperson Michael Meacher was demoted when he produced a paper — in line with Labour Party conference decisions — for the move towards an integrated transport system.

In the face of the latest scandal, where big business rips the taxpayer off for billions of pounds, the Labour leaders refuse to pledge the renationalisation of the rail system.

But such a pledge would, at a stroke, halt the Tory government plans dead in their tracks.

# Support for Bongani Mkhungo

This is the text of a fax sent to the leaders of the South African trade union federation COSATU concerning the threat against the life of a Workers International member in South Africa, Bongani Mkhungo, at the 10th anniversary celebrations on 2 December 1995 (see Workers Press reports in December):

I AM writing to you to express concern about the situation of Bongani Mkhungo. Workers and socialists in Britain have learned with alarm of the threats made against Bongani and the violence performed against him.

I have met Bongani and some of his comrades during their visits to London. In the course of discussions with them I have learned that they are serious trade unionists and socialists who pursue their ideas with courage and dedication.

It is clear that at present in South Africa their ideas are not supported by a majority of workers. However, Bongani is a workers' leader who has received support from large numbers of industrial workers in South Africa, and he is being victimised for writing and saying things which British workers think need to be said — that the Transkei nurses struggle should be supported, and that the South African government should be more resolute and clear in taking the part of workers in struggle.

I have been a member of the UNISON trade union (and its predecessor NALGO) for over 20 years, and I was a Labour councillor for 12 years in the course of which I welcomed visitors from the ANC to the London Borough of Newham.

I received repeated murder

I received repeated murder threats from fascists in this country when I withdrew my borough's participation in the Chelsea Flower Show in protest against a display by the apartheid government of South Africa.

I energetically supported the campaigns to boycott South African goods throughout the apartheid period. If I lived in South Africa, I hope that I would have the courage to have done and said and written what Bongani has. And I hope that it will not be necessary for people like me to conclude that nothing has been

gained from the many years of struggle against the apartheid regime.

Please let me and my colleagues know as soon as possible that COSATU disowns all threats of violence against Bongani and recognises his right to express views that are at a particular time in a minority but are a valid part of the workers' movement in South Africa and in the world.

John Plant London E7

Send resoltutions and letters to COSATU, fax: 00 27 11 339 6940. Copies to Workers International, 0171-387 0569. Donations to South Africa Solidarity Fund, Workers International, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.

## A dubious 'Prosit' for 1996

#### BY BOB ARCHER

PEERING into an uncertain 1996, political leaders in Germany had sombre new year messages for the electorate.

Federal President Roman Herzog called on Germany to abandon what they were accustomed to and 'show more willingness to take risks'. He recommended Germans to be 'more fearless' because 'fear is paralysing'.

The president said Germans were called upon to 'face with determination the new political, economic, social and intellectual challenges' and to 'have the courage to take new roads'.

Herzog aimed his message both at the state, the 'social forces' and individual citizens. He said this was the only way Germany

#### Workers' revolt in China

Four dead, Beijing authorities order investigation

THE Chinese authorities have ordered an investigation after an uprising of migrant workers in the South China industrial centre of Shenzhen early in December.

Four people were beaten to death or shot by police weilding automatic weapons. According to the Hong Kong Eastern Express about 100 workers were injured during clashes with police and local village watchmen.

local village watchmen.

Eye witnesses reported that two wounded workers died because a local hospital refused to treat wounds unless the employers, a building firm, paid 60,000 yuan (about £4,000) up front.

yuan (about £4,000) up front.

About 500 workers had been involved in violent clashes with

police and village watchmen.
Migrant workers from Hunan
province complained they were
treated like dirt just because we
are poor.

Hong Kong television showed pictures of one person with bullet wounds who had been treated and the body of a man who had been beaten to death.

Shenzhen is a shop-window for China's economic reforms and has experienced an enormous boom. However, there have been many reports of the exploitation of workers from poor provinces.

Shenzhen's factories also have a record of ignoring safety regulations and this leads to serious work-related accidents.

could 'keep up with changes on the road to the information society and the global economy, create new jobs and ensure solid security'.

He specifically warned that 'we take too much for granted', and that more and more demands were being placed on the 'social state' (the German version of the Welfare State).

Difficult decisions would have to be made about what state services were really necessary and what 'should be left to the individual's own responsibility'.

Rita Süssmuth, president of the German federal parliament and a member of the conservative CDU, said Germany faced 'one of the most difficult situations of economic and social change in the last 100 years'.

Since this period includes the crisis-ridden Weimar Republic and the Nazi seizure of power, one must assume that Sussmuth has measured her words care-

She told the Neue Osnabrucker Zeitung that democracy was on trial and would have to guarantee a non-violent solution to the up-coming

The democratic system would have to tackle vested interests and at the same time work out

socially balanced solutions that were viable for the future, she added. She called for new and unconventional thinking and an unpredjudiced testing of proposals from all quarters in overcoming unemployment.

This was a reference to the proposal from the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and many unions of an 'Alliance for Jobs'.

A typical element in this alliance was a proposal at Christmas from Klaus Zwickel, the leader of the engineering union (IG Metall), that workers should work unpaid overtime as needed and set this off against regular working hours.

While this sort of flexi-time working would very much cheapen production, there is no clear reason why it would lead to more jobs. And in any case, is this sort of job worth having?

The employers have already jumped in with counter-proposals that all wage increases should be held back to pay for new jobs for the unemployed.

British trade unionists must be able to draw on experiences in these areas which would help warn and forearm their German counterparts.

The year 1996 is certainly going to be an interesting one in Germany.

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#### Inside left

#### Red Emma' in Whitechapel

HERE'S a benefit in east London on aturday night to raise money to ublish anarchist Emma Goldman's atobiography, Living My Life, in

The setting's appropriate. After aving Tsarist Russia for the United tates, Goldman worked in the garent trade, like many immigrants to East End, then and since. She ooke at the Jubilee Street anarchist

ub in Stepney once.

Libertarian' and anarcho-syndialist ideas had a following among ast End Jewish workers around the urn of the century. Sweatshop condiions fostered such militancy. So did he chauvinism of right-wing union eaders, Fabians, and the middle-class ake 'Marxists' heading the Social Democratic Federation (SDF).

On 13 May 1910 the SDF paper Jusice carried a sensational allegation. It is not generally known that Emma oldman is in the pay of the police, bough the fact has leaked out ecently. At one time she was mployed by Mr. A.E. Olarovsky, of he Russian Secret Police in San rancisco, as an agent and spy.'

Shop assistants' union leader John irner, who had anarchist sympaies, protested. 'We naturally spected some such protest,' replied ustice editor Harry Quelch. 'We ave however nothing to retract.' uelch claimed his accusations were ade on reliable authority. But ther than evidence, he offered gen-

We do not say that there are no ood men and women among anarhists, but we do say that every anarist who has been betrayed has been etrayed by a fellow-anarchist, who as been proved to be a police agent; police agents have been the instigaors of almost every anarchist crime nd plot . . . the principles of anarhism lend themselves to Azeffism Azeff was Tsarist secret police chief - CP], ... with few exceptions, Anarhists are either agents or dupes of

Members of the SDF and the Indeendent Labour Party backed Turnr's protest. Justice retorted with a etter claiming 'the information conerning Emma Goldman' came from a tatement 'made in my hearing by E Olarovsky himself'. Signed 'fraernally, Your Informant', this was

ardly convincing.

Battersea SDF resolved: 'the editor Justice has failed to produce any estification for the charge against mma Goldman, and they desire that he name of the informant be pubshed, or a complete withdrawal of he statement, as the members of this ranch desire the policy of the paper be the same as its name implies ot Injustice.'

Quelch neither withdrew nor subtantiated his accusation. In 1919, **Solution** was deported to Soviet Rusa. Tory papers here called her a 'Bolsomething she never ecame. In 1924 'Red Emma' published Disillusion in Russia, and eturned to the United States. During he Spanish Civil War she supported me anarchists, and persuaded Paul lobeson to perform in a benefit for he CNT unions.

Had anything been unearthed rom Tsarist files to incriminate imma Goldman as a police agent, loviet authorities would have used it. Inder Stalin they normally manuactured such 'evidence'. The Justice pisode anticipated Stalinist methds, and the 'agent' stories used by the ate Gerry Healy and his pupils.

Saturday's benefit, at the Davmant Centre, promises Kurdish, brikish and Jewish folk groups, and he North London Anarcho-Syndicalst Choir (do they sing in tune atthout a conductor?). I don't suppose myone's organising a benefit for

**Charlie Pottins** 

NUREMBERG: DEATH TO NAZI CRIM TRIAL SERVED TO COVER

It is 50 years since the start of the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal where the Nazi leaders were tried at the end of the World War II. Now, in the Hague, a War Crimes Tribunal has been set up to investigate war crimes in Bosnia. We publish an article by BILL HUNTER, first published when the Nuremberg 'Process' had just been completed in 1946. The article comes from the Trotskyist SOCIALIST APPEAL Organ of the Revolutionary Communist Party (British section of the Fourth International) (October 1946)

NUREMBERG TRIAL, WHICH BEGAN ON 20 NOVEM-BER 1945, HAS ENDED. GOER-ING, RIBBENTROP, STREICHER AND OTHERS — LEADERS OF FASCIST GERMANY, PORTED AND ENCOURAGED BY ALLIED STATESMEN IN THEIR HAVE BEEN SEN-TENCED TO DEATH OR TO LONG TERMS OF IMPRISON-

BUT SHACHT, VON PAPEN AND FRITSCHE HAVE BEEN RELEASED. THEIR GUILT, LIKE THAT OF THE BIG FINANCIERS OF GERMANY, IS NO LESS THAN THE GUILT OF THE OTHER NAZI GANGSTERS.

BUT LIKE THEIR COUNTER-PARTS IN OTHER COUNTRIES, THE INDUSTRIALISTS AND BIG FINANCIERS WHO PROFITED FROM THE WAR, THEY ARE TO ESCAPE THEIR JUST DESERTS.

#### **Battle against** German workers

FASCISM systemises and accentuates all the repressive brutalities and horrors of capitalism in decay. A harrassed and desperate ruling class, utilising the sweepings of human rubbish, reaches ghastly lengths of bestiality.

That much was known by every socialist worker, long before the Nuremberg trial, but the catalogue there of Nazi atrocities, of tortures, of the systematic working to death of slave labour, have served to

The working class of the world, and least of all, of Germany, have no cause for tears over the fate of the Nazi leaders. The statement of General Von Fritsch, quoted in evidence

at Nuremberg, made it clear that one of the major Nazi aims was 'to win the battle against the working

The German workers experienced to the full that aim, experienced it in terms of tortures and executions, police repression and concentration

They experienced it at a time when members of the British and American ruling class, now parading a new found love for democracy and a profound disgust of the Nazi atrocities, were to be found at Hitler's banquets, hailing the bulwark against Bolshevism.

#### The real purpose of the trial

FOR over ten months the Nuremburg trial has run its course. It has focused the attention of a mixed array of international jurors, and the gradually waning interest of the working class.

The stated purpose of the display of legal talent, the accumulation of evidence, of accusation and counteraccusation, of film, radio and press publicity was the bringing to book of the criminals responsible for the last world slaughter.

However, it is clear, the real reason for the trial lies, not in its stated purpose. It is clear that the events in the Nuremberg courtroom during the 300 days, were a performance staged by those equally guilty with the Nazis, but attempting to hide their guilt by hypocritical denunciations of their fellow bandits.

The balance sheet of the six years shows a tremendous expenditure. Millions of lost and shattered lives, of broken bodies and minds; and now

amidst the devastation of economies, rage the followers of war: pestilence and famine.

Workers
of All
yLands

NUREMBERG: DEATH TO NAZ

TRIAL SERVE

Nuremberg was an effort, on the part of the Allies, to convince the world working class that once the Nazi leaders pay their reckoning, the account is closed. It is an attempt to shift the blame they share completely on to the shoulders of the

It is this real reason for Nuremburg that justifies us in calling the whole trial a farce, a hundred times more farcical than Al Capone indicting and trying Dillinger for gangs-

#### Hypocrisy of

DURING this ten months, while the prosecutors of Britain, France, America and the Soviet Union, listed the sickening crimes of Nazism, world events showed the hypocrisy of the prosecuting Allies. Even while the aggressions of the Nazis were being recounted.

British imperialism was maintaining a regime of terror and oppression in Greece, suppressing the colonial peoples struggling for freedom, and strafing Indonesian villages.

The British prosecutor prated about justice. Meanwhile, Dr Kiesselbach, according to Tribune 6 September a declared opponent of de-Nazification — was placed by British imperialism in charge of the German 'Central Office of Jus-

While the courtroom resounded with castigations of Nazi oppression and racial discrimination, American imperialist suppression was active in the Phillipines, and lynch law was rampant in the Southern

The prosecutors denounced the occupation methods of the Nazis. Yet, even while the French prosecutor mouthed phrases of indignation, the agents of French imperialism were torturing the natives of Indo-China and burning their villages.

The miseries of slave labour under the Nazis were related to the court at the same time as 10 million Germans were uprooted and wandered homeless as a result of the wholesale expulsion policy of the Soviet bureaucracy.

In the face of world events during the trial, who can deny that at Nuremberg, the pot called the kettle black, blackening itself still further even while doing so?

#### **Our rulers** assisted Nazis

AS THE trial dragged on, the crimes of the Nazis since 1933 were catalogued by the prosecution. That the



The 22 most important Nazi leaders at the International Tribunal in Nuremberg



British, French and American ruling class held up their hands in horror at the war preparations of the Nazis was a blatant hypocrisy which must have been evident to every politically conscious worker.

It is common knowledge in the labour movement — the facts have been repeated from a thousand platforms — that the British, American and French rulers gave political, financial and moral support to Hitler, regarding the Nazi barbarians as the saviours of civilisation from the menace of Bolshe-

They assisted Hitler to strengthen himself by the seizure of Austria and Czechoslovakia for the purpose of making war on the Soviet Union.

Goering taunted them for their role during this period when he declared that 'all foreign governments had recognised the Hitler regime and the entire diplomatic corps came to the Nuremberg ral-

Before the war, the chemical, plastic, oil and rubber monopolists of America aided their German counterparts and divided the world up between them. That was shown in a government anti-trust inquiry in America.

Gunter Reiman, in his Patents for Hitler, disclosing that Sir Henri Deterding of Royal Dutch Shell [oil company] was one of the earliest financial backers of the Nazis, gives his reasons that 'he was interested in discovering those forces which would eliminate once and for all the dangers of social or colonial revolutions'

This sums up the attitude of the British ruling class. Part of the profits of Royal Dutch Shell, together with a stream of political and financial aid, went to bolster Hitler as a barrier against revolution and for war on the Soviet Union.

It was only when it became evident to the rulers of Britain and had decided to match its strength against them first, that this policy was ended. Hitler's gravest crime in their eyes was that he double-crossed

#### Stalinists stand guilty too

THE Soviet bureaucracy also stands guilty of aiding the Nazis. Stalin's cynical disregard for the world working class, led him into the pact with Hitler.

In violation of the Leninist principle of self-determination for all nations, and open diplomacy, he made a secret agreement for the division of eastern Europe.

It was revealed at the trial that, in this pact, Hitler and Stalin defined their spheres of influence in Poland, Finland the Baltic countries and Bessarabia.

Stalin agreed not to permit an

active hostile position to be taken up by Turkey, or to permit the passage British or French warships through the Dardanelles.

We can comment, in passing, that recently Soviet propaganda against Turkey attacked her for remaining neutral during the war and taking up the very position which Stalin in 1939 guaranteed Hitler he would ensure.

During World War I, Lenin was a consistent and bitter opponent of secret diplomacy. When the Russian workers and peasants made their revolution, the Bolsheviks immediately opened the Tsarist archives and published the secret international agreements to the consternation of world imperialism.

That the Stalinist bureaucracy felt the same consternation when reminded of this pact with the Nazis was shown in Nuremberg the Soviet prosecutor objected to it being taken as evidence as 'the court was investigating the case of the major German war criminals and not the foreign policy of the Allies'.

The secret agreement divided out Eastern Europe and the Soviet bureaucracy thus covertly agreed to the invasion of Poland by Nazi imperialism.

At Nuremberg, the Nazis ironically introduced evidence to justify invasion by quoting the approving telegram which Stalin sent Ribbentrop when the pact was

The friendship of Germany and the Soviet Union is based on blood commonly shed and has all the prospects of being enduring and steadfast'.

Later in 1939, Molotov could talk of the permanent friendship with Germany and sharply attack the British blockade for violating international law.

#### 'I shall shake hands with Stalin'

TODAY, it is the Nazis whom the Soviet bureaucracy accuse of violating international law. However, it was with these same Nazis that the counter revolutionaries of the Kremlin negotiated their secret agreement on 22 August 1939.

Hitler spoke to his commanders, stating: 'Our economic position is such because of our restrictions that we cannot hold out more than a few years.' Then he declared in triumph: Within a few weeks I shall shake hands with Stalin, and undertake with him a new distribution of the

#### **Embarassing** evidence hidden

HAD all the war criminals been on trial in Nuremberg, prosecuting and prosecuted alike would have been in

the dock. In his concluding speech, General Rudenko, with almost lyrical hypocrisy, declared that on the battlefield the Allies 'had determined the sublime and noble principle of international co-operation, morality of mankind and the human rules of social community'.

The mud-slinging, the recriminations at the new thieves' kitchen of the United Nations Organisation, which were a continuous background to the trial, were giving the lie to this statement even while it was being uttered.

The tribunal at Nuremberg steered a wary course, trying its utmost to prevent any echo from the squabbles at the UNO entering the courtroom. At the same time it kept a quick eye out for any revelations embarassing to those in high places in Britain, America and the Soviet

The contents of the German-Soviet pact were refused as evidence. At the same time a statement of Rosenberg's relations with the Hearst press [empire] and his communications with the ruling class of Britain was ruled out as irrel-

#### **Purpose of Nuremberg: To** whitewash Allies

It is evident that, during the ten months of Nuremberg, there was no real attempt to sift out those guilty of the monstrous crime against the working class, which the past six years of slaughter represent.

How could there be when those responsible for the indictment were as guilty as those indicted? The Nuremberg trials were not meant to create a basis for future peace, their purpose was to whitewash the Allied criminals.

Yet the workers can learn from Nuremberg. From the recital of the crimes and atrocities of fascism they can learn that there is no brutality or horror to which capitalism will not stoop in defending its decadent sys-

And let no worker believe those burtalities could not happen here. The thin veneer of capitalist civilisation soon disappears in a capitalist state rendered desperate and endeavouring to find a way out by crushing the working class.

We must learn also that the genuine struggle against the war criminals is a struggle against imperialism the world over, and the counter-revolutionary Soviet bur-

As war criminals, responsible for the suffering of millions of the world's workers, we must indict, not only the Nazis and the ruling class of Germany, but the landlords, financiers, monopolists and their politicians, ruling the Allied capitalist nations and with them the bureacuracy in control of the Soviet Union.

# City Lights

# What price unification?

AS A new year opens, how goes the German economy? This is a question. increasingly exercising the minds of ordinary German people as they find the burdens of German economic union mounting by the day.

It was in July 1990 that German financial union was made effective with the establishment of parity between the eastern Mark - the Ostmark — and the Deutschmark of western Germany. The German finance minister, Theo Waigel, interviewed that month said, with an air of confidence that is now largely a

We are going to finance German unity out of the higher economic growth resulting from German unification.

This wasn't just Waigel's opinion. As a recent report from the Frankfurt's BHF Bank recalls of the heady days of monetary union:

'In those days there was confidence that, with growth induced by unification and the ending of costs caused by division, German unity could be financed automatically.'

Today's figures reveal a quite different situation. In money terms, between 1990 and 1994 German gross domestic product (GDP) increased by some DM780bn.

Over the same period around DM600bn went in public transfers to the five eastern Länder (the former German Democratic Republic). In other words, some 80 per cent of all newly-created wealth was transferred from west to east.

In retrospect the decision to move to a rapid parity between the two currencies has proved something of a disaster. Yet if the country was to be unified — or even if the first steps towards unification were to be taken such parity was unavoidable.

The idea of the less far-sighted bourgeois leaders was that such monetary union would stimulate a rapid flow of investment to the east, where low wages would help generate big profits and this, coupled with more efficient organisation of work, would soon generate a second German 'economic miracle' of the sort that had supposedly taken place in western Germany after 1945.

But in an economy that had been almost completely shut off from world economy for 40 years the reality was somewhat different. Because of the high conversion rate of the old Ostmark, many products from the east were almost unsaleable and this situation was aggravated by the loss of the traditional markets for east German exports in the rest of east-

Within a year of the monetary union industrial production in east Germany had shrunk by a third of the 1989 level and on present trends t will take a further 12 months for that production to regain its 1989

Today some 90 per cent of eastern Germany's production facilities are considered to be obsolete and it would take an annual investment of at least DM230bn every single year for the next decade to reach the same level of investment per head of the population as in west Germany.

A recent investigation by economists at Frankfurt's BHF Bank calculates that the annual volume of public transfers from west to east is not likely to drop below the DM100bn level until at least the end of the decade unless living standards in the east are to be allowed to fall dramatically.

The question is whether the German economy can withstand costs on this sort of scale. For those who remain optimistic the latest predictions from the Federal Labour Office make disquieting reading. For the FLO estimates that unemployment is about to hit the 4 million mark, compared with the figure of 3.6 million as recently as November.

And this rise is occurring when the economy is in a so-called 'upswing', with the economy expected to grow by 2 per cent in the coming year. In other words the Germany economy is undergoing what in the United States is known as a 'jobless recovery'. But even the 2 per cent estimate for growth is considered by many to be optimistic. The figures for industrial production certainly do not correspond to such an estimate for they show a year-on-year drop of 3.7 per cent to last November. The country's biggest companies,

such as Daimler-Benz, are continuing to cut their workforces by thouwhile the middle-sized companies, the so-called Mittlestand, have still not recovered from the last recession. Nor has it reverted to its traditional role of absorbing the country's unemployed. In addtion the decade-long expansion of the building industry, artificially proplonged by the reconstruction in the east, is running out of steam.

Pleading for more government spending to raise the level of employment, Hans Jacob, speaking on behalf of Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB), the German trade union umbrella organisation, said last week:

'If there is no political initiative, the labour market is bound to remain weak and we will not have reached the low-point for a while vet. If you leave it to the self-healing powers of the markets, this situation is going to get a lot worse.'

But whether the German government can spend its way out of trouble along traditional Keynesian lines is extremely doubtful. The trade union leaders offer wage restraint in return for extra jobs, or at least no further sackings. Thus last November Klaus Zwickel, head of the metalworkers' union IG Metall, suggested his 'contract for labour', in which he wanted a zero percent wage deal in real terms in return for a contractual commitment by the employers to hire 330,000 workers over a three year period.

Even this capitulation failed to impress the employers. They now demand an end to collective bargaining over wages. Their leader, Klaus Murman, wants collectively negotiated wages scrapped and replaced with a three-tier structure, made up of a basic minimum wage, a voluntary contribution by the company, and performance-related pay.

The German economy, the 'strong man of Europe' enters 1996 in a far from healthy state. Recently the spotlight has been on the French economy and whether it could meet the terms of the Maastricht criteria for monetary union which require that the deficit on government spending be reduced to 3 per cent of GDP by 1997. Only last week Jacques Delors expressed his disquiet about the wisdom of continuing on such a course.

Yet the question now is whether even Germany can meet this target without further cuts in government spending and increases in taxation which would threaten Europe with an outright recession.

#### By their friends.

TONY BLAIR's New Labour is winning new friends in the City by the day. The reason is not hard to seek As that old reactionary Peregrine Worsthorne noted in his column in the Sunday Telegraph (7 January), 'Why are bankers and businessmen switching to Tony Blair? Not because he is nice, but because, on balance, new Labour today seems a more reliable weapon for cutting expenditure than do the Conservatives.' Yes indeed.

Threadneedle

#### The underworld of Mammon

SHE claims to serve God. That's why, in a blaze of publicity not long ago, she joined the Roman Catholic church. But, when the chips are down, it turns out that she serves Mammon.

Was there ever a more nauseating sight than the Blessed Ann Widdecombe justifying on television the Tory government's decision to deport the Saudi dissident Mohammed al-Mas'ari to the Caribbean island of Dominica?

Hitherto this sanctimonious Home Office minister has been best known for her commitment to the Christian religion and Christian morality.

Last week she laid aside the mask of Christian piety and charity and admitted with icy frankness: 'We have close trade relations with a friendly state which has been the subject of considerable criticism by Mr

The next day the Home Secretary confirmed that Mas'ari was being deported in order to pro-'commercial links' with Saudi Arabia. Those links, of course, involve the sale of arms worth billions of pounds.

And on Sunday John Major added his little puddle of poison. Mas'ari was an 'illegal immigrant' as many of those fleeing persecution perforce are - who had been trying to create an 'unsettled relationship' with Saudi Arabia, relations with which were critical to the stability of the Gulf and British interests.

So at last we have it in blunt terms: this government has given in to blackmail in the most craven and despicable fashion.

It has turned its back on the tradition of granting asylum to victims of political persecution; and it has done so for fear of losing lucrative business from the sale of weapons to one of the most repressive and corrupt regimes in the world, a regime that is a byword for medieval backwardness and cruelty.

When greed comes into conflict with democratic traditions, greed wins hands down. For greed is the highest Tory value of

MOHAMMED AL-MAS'ARI was imprisoned and tortured in Saudi Arabia for the crime of political protest. One of his colleagues had his head chopped off there last August, after a trial in which he had been permitted neither legal representation nor legal advice.

Since coming to Britain in 1994, Mas'ari has done all he can to expose a regime which has jailed and ill-maltreated hundreds of people for their political or religious activities — a regime under which public executions, public flagellation of women, and the public amputation of limbs are commonplace.

Last year alone, 192 prisoners were beheaded with swords in Saudi Arabia, including a mother decapitated daughter together in the market-place of Dammam. In the past three years at least 11 women have been publicly beheaded.

Both the feudal Saudi rulers and a cohort of prominent arms and aerospace companies, foremost among them British Aero-space and Vickers (one of whose non-executive directors Andrew Green, Britain's ambassador-designate to Saudi Arabia), have been putting pressure on Downing Street, the Home Office, and the Foreign Office to get rid of this 'trouble-maker'.

Startling proof of this came soon after the Widdecombe statement, when the Guardian published a confidential memorandum from Sir Colin Chandler, chief executive of Vickers and formerly head of arms exports at

the Ministry of Defence. Addressed to David Hastie, international relations director of Wickers (and another former defience ministry official), this manument reveals that the Bertian government passed to the Sand's warret intelligence reports on Section Hussain, in an early effort to appeare South anger almost Wastlerils activities as a

#### PERSONAL **COLUMN**

But the most sinister aspect of this astounding document is its references to the possibility of Saudi intervention' against Mas'ari (though such intervention, it concedes, 'could be difficult') and to a possible 'attempt to stifle him personally' a very macabre phrase indeed.

The campaign against Mas'ari in Britain is eagerly supported by the usual gang of venal Tory MPs, among them Archie Hamilton, a former defence minister.

WHAT a disgusting underworld is opened up to view by the Mas'ari case and that leaked memorandum!

It is an underworld where human rights and freedom of speech are bought and sold along with death-dealing weapons; where government ministers and arms barons lick the backsides of filthy-rich feudal rulers; where the possibility of political murder is calmly considered.

In this criminal underworld of international capitalism, Christian and Muslim alike bow down before Mammon.

#### Comic Telegraph

ON 19 December the Daily Telegraph explained to its readers, in an article on the Russian State Duma elections, that the 'policies of Russian Communists differ slightly from [those of] their Soviet predecessors'.

And, under the heading of 'Foreign Policy', it offered this thumbnail sketch of one such difference: 'Soviet - world revolution. Russian — Rebuilding the

The Telegraph is woefully behind the times. For it's precisely 60 years since Stalin and party not merely softpedalled the idea of world revolution but categorically abandoned it.

This betrayal was already indicated, though not yet fully spelt out, at the 7th World Congress of the Communist International, held in Moscow in the summer of 1935. In the following year Stalin gave an interview to Roy Howard of the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain, in which the following exchange took place:

Howard: May there not be an element of danger in the genuine fear, existing in what you term the capitalist countries, of an intention on the part of the Soviet Union to force its political theories on other nations?

Stalin: There is no justification for such fears . . . I fail to see what dangers the surrounding states can see in the ideas of the Soviet people, if these states are really firmly seated in their sad-

Howard: Does this statement of yours mean that the Soviet Union has to any degree abandoned its plans and intentions to

bring about a world revolution? Stalin: We never had any such

plans or intentions. Howard: You appreciate, no doubt, Mr Stalin, that much of the world has for long entertained a different impression.

Stalin: This is the product of misunderstanding.

Howard: A tragic misunderstanding?

Stalin: No, comic. Or perhaps tragi-comic.

Seven years later Stalin dissolved the Communist International which Lenin had founded.

Lenin had said at the Comintern's founding congress in 1919: '[T]he world revolution is beginning.... The victory of the proletarian revolution on a

world scale is assured.' That the Daily Telegraph equates Stalinism with Leninism, counter-revolution with revolution, drags down a once serious bourgeois newspaper to the level

Peter Fryer

A pessimist of the intellect but a stubborn, if sober, optimist of the will, the labour historian JAMES D. YOUNG considers the question:

# Is there an 'Invading Socialist Society' in the 1990s?

cal and almost 65-year-old socialist internationalist living in the small Scottish town of Falkirk, where the industrial revolution was cradled in the 1770s, it is hard not to be pessimistic about the human condition and about socialist prospects.

As a pioneering historian of Scottish, Irish, and other labour movements, I know something of the history of labour in this interesting and history-conscious town. But, far from socialists constituting a noisy 'invading society', labour is now silent and invisible most of the time.

The Falkirk trades council, founded in 1896, no longer exists. Throughout Scotland, as in large parts of western Europe and America, huge constituencies of organised labour have collapsed. disappeared, or been wiped out.

With a decades-old cumulative process of de-industrialisation, large congregations of workers have disappeared.

Labour and social-democratic parties have moved to the right to an extent unimaginable in the 1970s. In many parts of Scotland the only members of the Labour Party with principles of any sort are the Catholic-hating members of the Orange Order.

In contrast to 1988, when the local Tories and barflies would ask me in my local pub, 'Whaur's your Karl Marx noo?, they now

To get out of the subjective prison of loss of confidence that most socialists find themselves in today, we need to persuade our fellow human beings of the difference between Marxism as a 19th-century critique of the existing world and 'Marxism' as a 20th-century ideology in the Marxist sense of 'necessarily false

As a young socialist in Falkirk in the 1940s I enjoyed debating with Tories and other reactionaries the relationship between capitalist society and 'the freedom of the individual'.

In 1996 the left has no difficulty in exposing the nothingness of the all-important individual of bourgeois 'wisdom' as classless, nationless, ageless and sexless. This is one of the gains we should

In analysing the crisis of world socialism in 1996, the signposts offered by the Italian historian Ferruccio Gambino ('Only Connect', in C.L.R. James: his Life and Work, edited by Paul Buhle) are helpful.

By focusing on the enormous waste of socialist energy on behalf of 'socialism in one country', he acknowledges what is often ignored. As he puts it:

'That dedication burned out a large part of a generation who would more often identify with foreign lands than with their native grounds as potential crucibles for deep social changes.'

Incidentally, in looking at the important national struggles in Scotland, Ireland, and Israeloccupied territory, it is crucial to remember Frantz Fanon's distinction between 'national consciousness' and nationalism in contemporary national and class struggles.

I suggest that the new and unique reasons for socialism's apparent irrelevance, for the unprecedented multi-dimensional crisis of socialist internationalism in the 1990s, are basically subjective.

#### **Hearts**

Socialism no longer lives in the hearts and minds of millions of men and women so passionately and intensely as it did in the past. And this is a critical question that the genuine left continues to ignore.

By rubbishing the idea of socialism as human emancipation from exploitation, racism, and alienation, the 'end of history

propagandists have succeeded. They have done so because nost thinkers, writers, and historians had assumed that the collapse of Stalinism in Russia and eastern Europe and the extirpa-



Durham miners' meeting, 1926 General Strike: Socialism no longer lives in the hearts and minds of millions of men and women so passionately and intensely as in the past

tion of apartheid in South Africa would result in socialist regimes rather than 'free market' capital-

Moreover the capitalists' international counter-revolution and accompanying ideological victories have occurred in a context of de-industrialisation, of the demobilisation and disbandment of labour organisations almost everywhere.

For the time being capital rules the roost in a way that not even Jack London conceived of in his ultra-pessimistic novel, The Iron Heel.

After a lifetime of agitating for socialist internationalism, it strikes me that socialists should ask the irreverent, relevant, and important question: 'Where did Marxism itself come from?"

According to Karl Kautsky, modern socialism originated 'out of the heads of the bourgeois intellectuals', not out of the 'primitive' class struggles of European workers.

Against Kautsky's view, Antonio Labriola argued that Marxism came out of the workers' class struggles. Indeed, he described the shoemaker Bauer, the tailors Lesser and Eccarius, the mini-Pfaender, ature-painter watchmaker Moll, and others' as 'the first conscious initiators of our movement'.

But, although Kautsky's viewpoint remains more popular than Labriola's, the Italian was a deeper and more original thinker whose relevance to the coming 21st century will become increasingly obvious.

It seems to me that what Labriola said is more relevant to the role of the democratic, classstruggle left in developing new signposts for the future.

Even so, it needs to be acknowledged that the most radical Marxists in this century have usually been the most optimistic.

And sober optimism will be needed to counter the 'explosion' of the world-wide, multi-dimensional and continuing counterrevolution of the ruling classes. The collapse of the left's facile optimism was born out of rulingclass successes in and after 1989.

Here and there socialists are beginning to analyse the material and psychological reasons for the apparent crisis of the socialist idea, almost amounting to the 'death agony' of socialism.

The American socialist Peter Wermuth, in a perceptive article, ackowledges that 'the 1989 East European revolts brought down Stalinism only to be instantly sucked into the vortex of "free market" capitalism and before the downfall of apartheid in South Africa' and 'a demobilization of its mass movement'.

Since the good health of socialism has always depended upon an

accurate analysis of the specific health problems facing capitalism, before the administration of appropriate medicine, we need to recognise the unprecedented depth and scope of the multidimensional crises of late-20thcentury socialism.

Before 1989 most advocates of class-struggle socialism from below, including Workers Press, assumed that capitalism was suffering from its imminent death

#### Libertarian

Most anti-Stalinist socialist groups have assumed that libertarian Marxism was born in 1917. But to find a way out of our collective prisons in 1996, socialists as I have already said — need to study the origins of Marxism.

In his great book The Pilgrim's Progress, the 17th-century English revolutionary thinker John Bunyan suggested that we possess the keys to unlock the doors of our own prisons.

But it is not enough to say that Marxism will do this for us here and now. We must recognise the possibility that we might be imprisoned by a born-again capitalism for a long time to come, and remember Trotsky's comment about developing a programme to defend the slaves of a new totalitarianism.

Most libertarian left-wing papers assume that Stalinists were a part of the left. Moreover, in portraying the Holocaust and 'ethnic cleansing' in Bosnia and Rwanda as irrefutable evidence of 'human evil', sections of the American left in particular are encouraging a doom-and-gloom pessimism that helps to keep socialism off the political agenda.

Repeating conventional wisdom about the alleged uniqueness of 'the Holocaust', some American socialists have helped to conceal the genocide in Israel, Russia, and elsewhere after World War II by suggesting a time-gap in such ruling-class behaviour between 1945 and the early 1990s.

Just as socialists need to insist that it was counter-revolutions that devoured the 'children' of revolutions, so they need to emphasise that 'the Holocaust' was only one such incident throughout history.

Rather than let ruling classes exploit genuine pessimism about the world of the late 20th century, we must recognise that some of the fine ideas of the intellectuals of the Second International remain as valid now as they were

between 1889 and 1914. For example, Labriola's picture of most history as 'the tragedy of Labour', and as 'an inferno' that destroyed millions of workers, could be used to inspire countless men and women with the libertarian socialist message: the urgent need for a new society to free people from exploitation, genocide, racism, and militarism.

By turning fashionable bourgeois pessimism into a weapon in the struggle for socialism, we should not forget the role of capital in creating 'man's inhumanity to man'; nor should we forget that capital creates its opposite, labour.

To survive in the late 20th century, labour will continue to struggle for bread and dignity. And within such struggles Marxism must offer a vision of the possibility of a better world to come.

For, despite every real cause for pessimism, I remain soberly optimistic. Millions everywhere are increasingly encountering basic problems of survival, and neither the people nor the problems will disappear.

Besides, employers once again have the whip hand in a scarce labour market, where workers are often paid dirt-cheap wages, and there is much more mass disaffection from the dominant capitalist class than ever before.

Exploring and mapping out the characteristics of this cultural disaffection, as well as the visible youth counter-culture, ought to be an urgent task for all

#### **Perceptive**

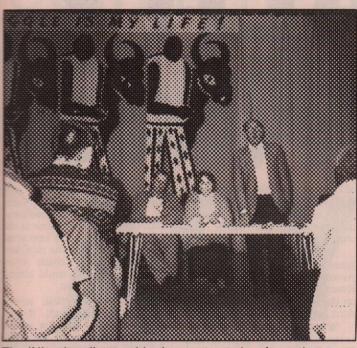
The disappearance of mass Labour and Communist parties is not automatically a negative development; and Marxism as a critique has always urged socialists to look for the seeds of revolt in the lowest and most oppressed layers of existing society. Besides, it was the critical and perceptive Trotsky who wrote:

'For decades the oppositional criticism is nothing more than a safety valve for mass dissatisfaction, a condition of the stability of the social structure. Such in principle, for example, was the significance acquired [before 1917] by the social-democratic criticism.

Once the fighting left can restore its shaken confidence and vision, rebuild mass constituencies of militant workers and intellectuals, and 'accentuate the positive', anything will become

In the meantime, millennial dreams, pessimistic or optimistic. of the advent of fascism or socialism, should be discouraged by all socialists.

It is the role of socialists and socialist newspapers to create the vision of the better world to come in which an endless history will replace the search for bread with the pleasures of wine and literature by raising, as the young Norman Mailer put it, 'man's tragedy to a higher level'.



The 'Nigerian dictatorship does not act alone' meeting

#### Ken Saro-Wiwa's closing statement at his 'trial'

We all stand before history. I am a man of peace, of ideas.

Appalled by the denigrating poverty of my people who live on richly-endowed land, distressed by their political marginalisation and economic strangulation, angered by the devastation of their land, their ultimate heritage, anxious to preserve their right to life and to a decent living, and determined to usher this country as a whole a fair and just democratic system which protects everyone and every ethnic group and gives us all a valid claim to human civilisation, I have devoted my intellectual and material resources, my very life, to a cause in which I have total belief and from which I cannot be blackmailed or intimidated.

I have no doubt at all about the ultimate success of my cause, no matter the trials and tribulations which I and those who believe with me may encounter on our journey. Neither imprisonment nor death can stop our altimate victory.

I repeat that we all stand before history. I and my colleagues are not the only ones on mal Shell is here on trial and it is ss well that it is represented by counsel said to be holding a watching brief.

The company has, indeed, ducked this particular trial, but

WIGERIA's military rulers:

■ Have been in power since

MS and keep postponiong hand-

ing over to an elected govern-

r democratic rights.

Regularly arrest campaign-

■ Remove and often imprison

useful to it. For there is no doubt in my mind that the ecological war the company has waged in the Delta will be called to question sooner or later and the crimes of that war be duly punished. The crime of the company's dirty wars against the Ogoni peo-ple will also be punished.

On trial also is the Nigerian nation, its present rulers and those who assist them. Any nation which can do to the weak and disadvantaged what the Nigerian nation has done to the Ogoni, loses a claim to independence and to freedom from outside

I am not one of those who shy away from protesting injustice and oppression, arguing that they are expected in a military regime.

The military do not act alone. They are supported by a gaggle of politicians, lawyers, judges, academics and businessmen, all of them hiding under the claim that they are only doing their duty, men and women too afraid to wash their pants of urine.

We all stand on trial, my lord, for by our actions we have denigrated our country and jeopardised the future of our

As we subscribe to the subnormal and accept double standards, as we lie and cheat openly, ducked this particular trial, but as we protect injustice and oppression, we empty our class-

**Defend trade union** 

BY MIKE COOKE

MAKING international solidar-

ity real was the central concern

of those who attended the 'We say

the Nigerian dictatorship does

not act alone' meeting on Friday 5

can Liberation Support Cam-

paign and the Workers International (to Rebuild the

Fourth International) after the

brutal execution of Ken Saro-

Wiwa and his eight comrades by

ing as chair by explaining that its purpose was to bring together those in the fight for internation-

Workers International executive member Cliff Slaughter

asked a series of questions about

the British and Nigerian govern-

ments, the Shell oil company and the right of asylum in Britain. He

Dot Gibson opened the meet-

the Nigerian military regime.

It was organised by the Afri-

rooms, denigrate our hospitals, fill our stomachs with hunger and elect to make ourselves the slaves of those who ascribe to higher standards, pursue the

truth and honour justice, freedom and hard work.

I predict that the scene here will be played and replayed by generations yet unborn. Some have already cast themselves in the role of villains, tragic victims, some still have a chance to redeem themselves. The choice is for each individual.

I predict that the denouement (climax, conclusion, culmination, finale, outcome, resolution, solution, termination, upshot) of the riddle of the Niger delta will soon come. The agenda is being set at this trial. Whether the peaceful ways I have favoured will prevail depends on what the oppressor decides, what signals it sends out to the waiting public.

In my innocence of the false charges I face here, in my utter conviction, I call upon the Ogoni people, the peoples of the Niger delta, and the oppressed ethnic minorities of Nigeria to stand up NOW! and fight fearlessly and peacefully for their rights.

History is one their side. God is on their side. For the Holy Quran says in Sura 42, verse 41: 'All those that fight when oppressed incur no guilt, but Allah shall punish the oppressor.'

from Nigeria had been granted political asylum in Britain in the

He talked about the meaning of the so-called 'white' list of 'safe' countries to which people can be deported without danger.

They are only safe in the sense that they are safe for capital the pursuit of profit at any expense,' Slaughter said.

He listed those who refused to condemn Saro-Wiwa's execution, including Tony Blair and Nelson Mandela.

'The only international allies the Ogoni people have are workers. All the politicians are tied to capital and its needs. The only way out of this is the overthrow of capital.

This is not on the immediate agenda and we need to build solidarity. Capital is not all powerful. The force of the working class, if it can be built, is much stronger in revolutions, overturns and emancipations.

Ronnie McDonald, leader of the non-TUC-recognised oilworkers' union, the OILC, spoke of how the fight to protect safety on the North Sea has led to the founding of his union.

He said that North Sea oil had a similar composition to that from the Niger delta. He had come to the meeting because he wanted to find ways of getting in touch with oilworkers in Nigeria, not just union bureaucrats.

McDonald also reported that 47 per cent of the gas flares of member countries of the oil-producers' organisation OPEC came from the Niger delta. This massive creation of greenhouse gases came from a lack of infrastructure in Nigeria and lack of care

Only now was Shell proposing to install a £1.5bn gas-gathering system. The purpose would be to liquify and ship out gas to the advanced capitalist countries.

Meanwhile, the World Bank says that the electrification of Africa is 60-70 years away! The energy source would be gas. 'Does the World Bank want the military dictatorship to carry out this plan?', McDonald asked.

He described how the OILC had close links with the OFS Norwegian oilworkers' union. They had issued a joint statement on the Nigerian oilworkers' strike in calling democratic and workers' rights. They called for the workers' leaders to be released from detention and reinThey also demanded that 'no further investments should be made in Nigeria until democracy is established and secured'.

There hadn't been a response from the oilworkers' leaders because they were in prison. But the Nigerian embassy in Norway did: 'It will please you to know that the Nigerian government did not arbitrarily set out to arrest and detain trade union leaders. Indeed, those arrested committed criminal offences.'

Later in the letter it becomes apparent that these 'criminal offences' were not taking part in meetings with the Nigerian government or attending an Industrial Arbitration Panel

The oilworkers' leader Frank Kokori, according to them 'went underground to give the impression that he was arrested'!

The Nigerian embassy advised the OFS and OILC to 'cross-check your facts in order to ensure you are not supporting labour just for labour's sake'.

'Supporting labour for labour's sake is what I'm doing,' declared McDonald.

Self-professed 'outlaw' Bob Ritchie said that it was his privilege as a Liverpool docker to have taken part in international solidarity actions around the world: Namibia, South Africa, Nicaragua, Chile. Ritchie described the current situation where sacked Liverpool dockers had appealed for and got support from dockers around the world.

Julie Southey of the African Liberation Support Campaign maintained that the one person granted political asylum from Nigeria last year must have been from the political class.

The execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his comrades was the first. Now the detained trade union leaders were under threat.

Nigeria's military ruler General Abacha had waited for the Commonwealth summit to carry out these executions to test and expose these leaders. It had given him the confidence that he had and continues to have.

Southey also pointed to the way that Workers International member in South Africa Bongani Mkhungo had been physically attacted and victimised by the COSATU trade union federation.

But, Abacha was merely a house servant for Downing Street and Whitehall. 'Why go to the master to complain about the servant?', she asked.

Southey said she wanted to

highlight the fact that Nigeria wasn't special. The same situation was all over Africa, for example, the Ashanti goldmines in Ghana owned by Tiny Rowland.

It wasn't a question of exotic ethnic groups under threat, as the liberals would have us believe. These types of attack on people were typical and fundamental, not exotic. At its core, the struggle was for people to control their own destiny.

When oil was discovered in the 1950s, Nigeria was going through the so-called 'independence' process. The colonial government structures remained intact with black faces replacing white. The hanging of Ken Saro-Wiwa was a continuation of what happened under direct British

Southey criticised left groups like the Socialist Workers' Party and the Alliance for Workers Liberty that said there was no imperialism and that each country had its 'own' bourgeoisie that workers had to fight against. Imperialism needed military regimes like in Nigeria to impose the IMF/World Bank Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) on African people 'to hold us down'.

There were even petrol shortages in Nigeria as a result!

The SAPs were support by the 'opposition' politicians. They were not in opposition, they were in disagreement. They put themselves forward to imperialism as better able to carry out the SAPs.

In the 1994 oil strike there was no question of welfare or strike pay. Strikers lasted for eight weeks with no money coming in. The army brought in hardware and most probably military 'consultants' from Britain.

The strike couldn't be maintained. The situation today would have been very different if it could. The Campaign for Independent Unions in Nigeria was working towards being able to do this in future.

The oil strike leaders were put in jail and replaced by government administrators. It was like TUC leader John Monks being replaced by Michael Portillo!

In the discussion, a member of Ken Saro-Wiwa's defence team spoke. He said that Ken was killed because he was the first to mobilise the grass-roots against a multinational. He criticised the gas liqification programme designed to profit the oil companies and the West and not the

# Support Ade Onibiyo

ON Thursday (11 January) there was a judicial review at the High Court on behalf of Ade Onibiyo who is fighting deportation to Nigeria. The Onibiyo family has been

thrown into turmoil since the deportation of Ade's father Abdul on 26 October 1995.

Nothing has been heard of Abdul since he was placed in the hands of the Nigerian military on that date.

Ade has been detained by the British state since August 1995. He has been continually threatened with deportation and at one stage was taken to Gatwick airport ready for the Lagos flight.

Ade even had to complete his A-levels in detention, and is currently a student at the North West college having previously attended Lilian Baylis school.

The Onibiyo Family Anti-Deportation Campaign has consistently petitioned Home Secretary Michael Howard to exercise his right of discretion and allow Ade to stay in Britain and for Abdul to return.

home for more than 20 years. The British government is guilty of an extraordinary injustice.

Public support for the Onibiyo family has come in from across the country.

There is solid and widespread opposition to the brutality of detaining entirely innocent peo-ple and deporting them despite genuine concerns for their safety.

Ade Onibiyo must stay!

Onibiyo Family Anti-Deportation Campaign, 6a Acre Lane, London SW2. Tel: 0171-737 2134.

#### The actions of the home secretary have split the Onibiyo family that has made Britain its

Black Quest for Justice Campaign (BQJC) invites ALL to the 1st Black Unity Convention in Quest of Justice

#### 'Building a principled unity of action in carrying out a Black agenda for justice'

Saturday-Sunday 20-21 January 1996, 1-6pm.

ABENG Community Youth Centre, 7 Gresham Road, Brixton, London SW9 7PH. More info: 0171-924 9033 or 0171-733 5996 or 0956 132143.

#### union activists and leaders. ■ Refuse to allow some trade unions the right to elect their The Campaign for Independent Unionism (CIU) was founded Free Frank Kokori! Reinstate

in 1994 by trade union activists inside Nigeria after the oil workers' leaders were removed from office and imprisoned for leading a strike against military rule. It fights for trade unions to be democratic and free from state

freedom in Nigeria control so they can fight for the interests of working people.

The oilworkers' union NUPENG general secretary Frank Kokori has been detained since September 1994 and has been replaced by government administrators.

The oil supervisors' union PENGASSAN president Wariebi Agamene spent 14 months in detention and has been replaced by a government administrator.

Wariebi Agamene! No to unelected sole administrators (General Abacha's agents)!

The catalogue of the military dictatorship's denial of democratic and workers' rights has

In 1993 presidential elections were annulled. In 1994 workers protested

against the military dictatoship which then retaliated with bru-In 1995 the junta attacked the

labour movement by hijacking all the unions and imposing sole administrators. And already, in 1996, govern-

ment agents have burnt down newspaper/magazine premises and hundreds of workers rendered jobless. In Britain, supporters of CIU

arew working to build practical support and solidarity for the campaign in Nigeria. CIU can be contacted c/o PO Box 256, London SE11 5TH. Tel: 0181-202 6292.

Saturday 13 January 1996

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

ants is what you expect from representatives of a bastion of

the 'free world' like Saudi Arabia,

a barbaric kingdom with an all-

powerful monarchy and laws out

Foreign workers there have

been punished for holding reli-

gious services, and police raided their children's Christmas par-

Nearly 200 people were pub-

lically executed last year, and others given public floggings.

Raped

Sarah Balabagan, a 16-year old Filipina housemaid, was sen-tenced to death for killing her

employer in self-defence when

and she was flogged instead.

among her belongings.

right to assembly.

elsewhere.

**Workers Press** 

of the Middle Ages.

Brutality towards the serv-

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# Nice friends they have, these Tories SAUDI BRUTALITY, BRITSH BUSINESS

WHEN Shadia el-Deen heard that her 10 year-old son Alaa had suffered a brain haemmorrhage, she naturally wanted to get home to care for him.

The rich family she worked for said she couldn't go.

'They said that even if they cut me into pieces, no one would know about it for years. I told them I did not want to work for them anymore. So he got a stick and they

started hitting and beating me. 'Blood was running down my nose. They tried to stop me screaming but the neighbours came to the door. Then they left me alone.' The next day Shadia ran away.

This wasn't far away and long ago. It happened a few weeks ago in London. Mrs Eldeen, 38, turned up at Paddington Green police station on 30 December.

The Egyptian mother of two had come to work abroad to try and raise money for medical treatment for Alaa, her eldest son.

'Until then I had only worked in the fields. I found the job through an agency in Cairo. The neighbours look after the children' (Guardian, 9 January).

The job involved cleaning, cooking and washing for a Saudi diplomat and his family in Lon-

Since coming to this country in September, she says, she only recieved her monthly wage of £90 twice. 'I slept on the lounge floor. The heating was off. Once I had to cook for a dinner party of 36 peo-

In December, while in Jordan with the family, Shadia heard from her brother that Alaa had had a haemorrhage. She asked if she could fly to Cairo, but was told she must carry on working.

#### **Beating**

When they returned to London, Shadia came back with them, believing she would be given her passport back and allowed to go home. The employers gave her a beating instead.

Ill-treatment of domestic servants is a recurrent scandal in London. Diplomats, oil princes and other rich parasites exploit poor people who don't know their rights, and may fear going to the authorities, in a strange, unfriendly country, unwelcomers, GKN, GEC, Rolls Royce and British Aerospace are supplying the Saudis with Tornado fighters, tanks and helicopters under the £20 billion al-Yamanah deal signed by Margaret Thatcher and King Fahd in the 1980s.

Deputy prime minister Michael Heseltine was at the centre of this deal, and one of Malcolm Rifkind's chief jobs both as Defence Minister and Foreign Secretary has been to keep the Saudi regime happy.

The Saudis were allowed to pay in oil — 600,000 barrels a day but this may conceal more curious aspects of the deal.

According to a classified document sent to Labour MP Jeff Rooker in 1989, the Saudis agreed to pay 120 per cent over RAF prices for aircraft, so the British government and British Aerospace could pay 45 per cent commissions to certain Saudi royals and middlemen.

Cementation, a company with which Baroness Thatcher's son

Mark was linked, received airport contracts. (It also benefitted the Pergau aid deal in

Mark Thatcher, who recently acquired a luxury home in South Africa, was allegedly responsible for a Tory party 'fund' along with Saudi businessman Wafic Said, a business partner of Tory MP Jonathan Aitken.

Rooker passed the document on to the Commons public accounts committee and sent a copy on to ('Mumsy') Thatcher, who said she would pass it to the 'appropriate authorities'.

In 1991 the National Audit Office produced a critical report on the al-Yamanah deal, which was suppressed before the general election.

The 'classified' 1989 document referred to 'constant phone calls between Mrs T and King Fahd and Sir Peter Levene and Prince Sultan'.

Vickers chief executive Sir Colin Chandler was head of export services for the Ministry

of Defence when the al-Yamamah deal was signed.

A memorandum from him, dated 6 September 1995, and obtained by the Guardian, says:

Bearing in mind the importance of Saudi Arabia to British Aerospace I had a word with Dick Evans [BAe chief executive — CP] on the telephone about this dissi-

'What Dick told me was rather interesting . . . It appears that King Fahd had for a time not been altogether unhappy about the activities of al-Misari.

'Most of the dissidents' attacks have been directed at Prince Sultan and, as you know the relationship between the two brothers is not always a happy one.... But even the King recognises that this cannot go on much longer' (Guardian, 6 January).

Chandler's memorandum went on to refer to the possibility of 'direct Saudi intervention' aimed at 'stifling' al-Masari. Vickers have refused to comment on what this might mean.

addressed to David Hastie, Vick ers director of international affairs, who also spent time at th MoD. The Scott inquiry into arm for Iraq heard that the ministr seconded him to British Aero space in 1989 so he could atten the Baghdad air show.

While 50,000 British troop were defending Saudi Arabi against Saddam Hussein in th Gulf War, the men in Whiteha and the boardrooms who ha supplied both sides knew that whoever lost, it wouldn't be then

If Labour wasn't intent of joining them it would denounce the Tories' hypocrisy about 'pro tecting jobs', and expose the mer chants of death conspirin behind the rotten facade of West minster 'democracy'.

It's time for working people i Britain and the Middle East t apply something like the tradi tional Saudi way with thieves t those with their hands in ou pocket. Time we servants took stick to our masters!

#### she was 14, as he tried to rape her. Following an appeal, the family agreed to accept blood-money, Any form of political or religious dissent is outlawed. One woman was tortured to death last year because police found a picture of Ayatollah Khomeini The Tory government has decided to deport a Saudi dissident, Mohammed al-Masari, at the behest of the Saudi rulers and their British business friends. Al-Masari, who was tortured in Saudi Arabia, upset the regime by exposing its corruption and calling for basic freedoms like the The Saudis have bought much of the Arab media in London and It was revealed last week that Orbit Communications, owned by a cousin of King Fahd, used its satellite relay station in Rome to black out BBC Arabic news broadcasts on the al-Masari ठाक शिक्षाट हर्ना Saudi Arabia is a source of arms contracts, for a few influen-

Bangladesh: 500 women sacked, 5 raped, 3 killed

### 'No more labour slavery total leave on Friday a must'

FIVE hundred garment workers in Bangladesh have been sacked, five women raped and three women killed because of their campaign for the right to one day's holiday (Friday) each week.

Since 25 July 1995, the National Garment Workers' Federation of Bangladesh has mobilised a courageous campaign under the heading:

'No more labour slavery

total leave on Friday is a must.' They have won widespread support in the teeth of vicious anti-trade unionism by the bosses and the government.

There are over one million workers, mainly women and children, in the garment industry. They work long hours in small factories in very bad and often dangerous conditions, with low pay, no holidays and no day off.

Although there is the legal right to Friday as a holiday, this is not observed and workers are sacked for demanding it.

Addressing a rally in Dhaka, observing World Human Rights Day on 10 December 1995, Amiral Haque Amin, general secretary of the National Garment Workers' Federation said:

'More than 100 workers were sacked from garment factories in November for their involvement in the trade union activities, and more than 400 were given no reason for their dismissal.

'At the same time five women workers were raped and three were killed.

Ten factories were closed without giving the workers due wages and overtime payments. More than 100 factories had not paid the workers their due wages and overtime payments for the

last three to four months.' Amin claimed that garment

workers have to work 14-16 hours a day without a weekly holiday. Sometimes workers have to

tolerate physical torture and women workers are frequently harrassed.

'They do not have housing medical or transport facilities.'

Please send solidarity messages and donations to:

Amirul Haque Amin, General Secretary, National Garments Workers Federation, GPO Box 864, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Fax Attn. Amin 880-2-867485

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