

## Solidarity action drives giant container firm out of Liverpool

# MERSEY DOCKERS' VICTORY

### Hillingdon hospital workers join postal pickets



Striking postal workers at the giant Mount Pleasant sorting office in London were joined on their Friday 21 June picket by Hillingdon hospital workers on strike for the last nine months against casualisation of services. The Hillingdon strikers received a warm welcome from the postal workers, who are fighting against the harsh new working practices that management wants.

## Bloody attack on Turkish Labour Party

The following report comes from supporters of the Turkish Labour Party in London. Workers Press calls on all its readers to organise protests in the workers' movement against these repressions.

POLICE using tanks have attacked 2,000 supporters of the Turkish Labour Party (Emek Partisi) set up a few months ago (see Workers Press, 25 May).

The supporters were waiting outside the party headquarters, in Ankara, to hear about the Supreme Court decision to close their party.

Hundreds of police encircled the crowd and all the exits and the entrances to the area were blocked. Police demanded that Emek party supporters disperse. They refused and the police launched their attack.

According to reports, 200 people have been injured, 30 seriously. One hundred have been arrested.

All the injured people have taken refuge in the Human

Rights Association building. Police then surrounded this building as well. The protest continued throughout four streets and involved more than 5,000 people.

More supporters came to make a sit-in protest at the party HQ. Police had about 1,000 people surrounded.

### What does the Labour Party stand for?

THE party was found on 25 March by thousands of workers, trade unionists, students, women, government employees, pensioners, farmers, intellectuals, etc. It seeks to be the party of working people.

Its main principle is to promote unity of workers and working people, irrespective of origin, language, religion or gender.

The Labour Party is inspired by the idea of a free world where all forms of

oppression and exploitation have been eradicated.

### Why do the authorities want to close it?

THE Labour Party's programme calls for:

'A democratic popular solution to the Kurdish question:

- an end to the oppressive actions of imperialism, capital and Turkish and Kurdish reactionary forces against the Kurds, an end to their efforts to make enmity between the Turkish and Kurdish workers and labourers;
- lifting all the bans on the Kurds;
- withdrawal of the army and other military forces from the region;
- full freedom and equal rights for all minority cultures, nationalities and languages: a form of state which

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**THANKS and congratulations to the 500 sacked Liverpool dockers! Their principled stand on behalf of all of us has forced giant shipping company Atlantic Containers Limited to pull out of the Port of Liverpool.**

ACL's decision, operative from 22 June, removes 35 per cent of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company's (MDHC) trade.

BY DOT GIBSON

For the past four months a mounting boycott against ACL vessels by dockers in Sweden and the East Coast of America has cost the giant shipping company millions.

Finally they got the message. If they continued to do business with MDH they could expect the boycott of their giant container vessels to continue.

This is a considerable victory for the dockers, sacked nine months ago when they refused to cross a picket line mounted by young dockers fighting against casualisation.

Most of these men have worked for 30 years and more on the docks.

Supported by their families, they have risked everything to defend trade unionism and take a stand against the scourge of casualisation. They refused the £25,000 a head offered by Mersey Docks and Harbour Company to sell their jobs.

Their instant dismissal shocked and angered the people of Merseyside and thousands of trade unionists throughout Britain.

But most of all their firm

stand for principles has won the admiration and support of dockers around the world.

ACL's departure proves the truth of the statement issued by Jimmy Davies (secretary) and Jimmy Nolan (chairman) in *Dockers Charter* (June) that a 'total boycott of the port of Liverpool is gradually being put in place'.

In a desperate attempt to split the dockers, MDHC announced a two-week deadline for acceptance of their offer (£25,000 and jobs for 40 to 60 men — taken from ancillary workers who would be asked to agree severance payments) or it would be withdrawn.

### Deadline

The deadline was 18 June. The dockers did not fall for the company's arrogant bluff.

The real deadline was the one given to MDHC by ACL — the threat to pull their vessels out of the port of Liverpool!

*Lloyds List* (24 June) reported: 'The loss of North Atlantic roll-on/roll-off specialist ACL — one of Mersey

Docks' largest customers — is a major blow for the company. . . . Mersey Docks made another 80 workers [scabs] redundant on Friday, following ACL's decision to pull out of Liverpool. . . .'

Now Canmar and Cast shipping — the Canadian Pacific lines — are next on the agenda for boycott.

In desperation MDHC has issued a writ against John Bowers, president of the International Longshoremen's Association of America, threatening legal proceedings against the union, alleging interference between ACL and Mersey Docks, causing ACL to break its contract.

But, like the unofficial action of the Liverpool dockers, the longshoremen on the East Coast of America took their own decision quite outside their union.

'John Bowers made it very clear that although he sympathised with our plight, he could not and would not agree to organise solidarity action,' said Liverpool port shop stewards' chairman Jimmy Nolan.

'It was our decision to send three pickets to the US, who gave out an information leaflet to East Coast dockers, and it was they who said they would not cross our picket line. We did not even know John Bowers at that time.'

'We were so desperate about what the employers had done to the dockers and their families that we had no choice but to turn to dockers everywhere for assistance. We are glad to say that we got it.'

## National demonstration Support 500 sacked Liverpool dockers!

Saturday 29 June, 11.30am, Myrtle Parade, Liverpool

### Extra lecture!

## Workers Press — May/June lectures Marxism and the history of the British working-class movement

Some lessons for today

By Geoff Pilling, Workers Press editorial board

Lucas Arms, Gray's Inn Road, London.

Thursday 4 July, 7.30pm.

Nearest Tube King's Cross.

This extra lecture will draw some lessons for the working-class movement today. The majority of the time will be devoted to discussion from those who have attended the earlier lectures.



# Workers Press

## A sinking flagship

THE NHS is 'sinking like the Titanic', warned the chair of the British Medical Association, Dr Sandy Macara, at its annual conference last week. He said the 'cash ridden' approach was now actually endangering patient's lives.

It is significant that a person of such eminence should speak out so sharply against the crisis in the NHS, for long regarded as the flagship of the post-1945 'Welfare State'. But it is also necessary to point out that Macara seems to have little idea of the source of the crisis that is undermining the health service.

For many on the left it is 'Tory policies' that are to blame for the present situation, not only in the NHS but in the provision of social services generally. The implication would seem to be that a Labour government, pursuing different policies, could right matters.

Such arguments are not only wrong. They are downright dangerous. The policies pursued by the Tories over the last 17 years have not caused the crisis in Britain, they were a product of just this crisis.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE NHS came into being after 1945 under definite historical conditions. Thanks principally to the betrayals of Stalinism, capitalism in Europe was able to overcome its crisis, at any rate partially. At the same time, US capital, which had emerged as by far the most powerful capitalist interest, was able to pump sufficient funds into western Europe to lay the basis for a renewed period of capital accumulation.

It was under these conditions that the British ruling class, operating at that time through a Labour government, was able to make concessions to the demands of the working class, one of them being the establishment of the NHS.

The conditions that saw the birth of the NHS no longer exist. From the 1970s onwards the 'post-war order' began to disintegrate as the Bretton Woods monetary arrangements broke up, and inflation and rising unemployment produced what became fashionably known as 'stagflation'.

It was in response to this crisis that the Wilson and Callaghan governments from the mid-1970s began the first systematic attacks on welfare spending as well as on trade union rights (Barbara Castle's White Paper, 'In Place of Strife'). Their work was carried on by the Thatcher government after 1979, a government which itself broke with many of the policies previous Tory administrations led by Harold Macmillan and more recently Edward Heath had pursued.

But this policy reversal was not a British issue. As the crisis of capital deepened, as long-term unemployment began to mount throughout the world, government after government was driven along the 'Thatcher road' of severe cutbacks in public spending, of privatisation and attacks on the trade unions and working-class organisations generally.

\* \* \* \* \*

THUS in Germany last week, the leader of the country's Federation of Industry (BDI), Hans-Olaf Henkel, warned: 'Globalisation means that our foreign customers are no longer prepared to pay for German extravagance, such as old age care insurance, high absentee levels and high pension contributions.'

He was immediately attacked by sections of the left, as well as certain nervous elements in the ruling class, as threatening to undermine 'Germany's post-war consensus'.

The fact is that capital can no longer afford the luxury of things such as the NHS and all the associated concessions that it was able and obliged to make to the working class in the aftermath of 1945.

To defend the NHS and rebuild it into a service that serves the needs of millions of ordinary people will involve something far different than the mere election of a Labour government — which it is clear will in any case continue the policies of the present government. It will need the fight for a real socialist programme in the working class, a programme that is directed at solving the present crisis in the interests of the working class.

# Letter from the Bosnian miners

Friends,

We send greetings to the trade unionists we met during our recent visit to Britain.

Under Bosnian law coal mines are state property and at present nominations for directors and administrative boards are being considered. Government policy indicates that it recognises the country's need for coal and electricity and that the state must therefore find solutions to overcoming the economic problems confronting the industry.

On the technical front, in terms of markets, conditions of miners and production equipment, the situation is very bad. For the last few decades the mines have faced growing problems: worn out production facilities, lack of preparation of new coal faces and unplanned use of open-cast mines.

It is impossible for us to overcome these problems through our own efforts. We must have some kind of financial assistance (aid or credit).

We are informed that the electro-industry will pay for all the coal that has been delivered to it during the war. Other big customers will also start to pay for the coal we supply. But hopefully there can be financial assistance from outside the country, either interest free or low-interest long-term credits and also finances or equipment donated from humanitarian organisations or individuals.

Without this help there is little chance of increasing production with the result that there will be no energy supplies to resume production in other industries.

There are great difficulties in terms of employment of miners. All the miners who are being demobilised from the army are being taken back onto the mines' employment registers but there is no work for them.

Our aim is to get every miner into production but that is impossible because of the devastation of production facilities, the

reduced markets and the inability of customers to pay for the coal.

The social status of the miners can only be solved permanently through the restoration of full production. Following negotiations with the government, the miners' wages have been increased to DM220 (£110) a month, but this is inadequate for a long-term solution for miners.

Now we have to negotiate about organising a single, united company to cover all the miners in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the repayment of money owed to the mines, how to ensure full employment for all miners and how to ensure safety at work. The miners' union is working to get successful results in these negotiations but we've a long way to go.

People will remember that during my visit to Britain I explained that the union had no equipment or resources and that unless we overcome this problem we fear we will not have our voice heard in the discussions

taking place with the government and management.

We are also worried that in the run-up to elections some people are trying to form 'trade unions' tied to particular political parties. If this happens we think that democracy, human rights and freedom, which are the hallmarks of the miners' union and mining communities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, will suffer.

Because of all these things we continue to appeal to the whole trade union movement for assistance and particularly to the people we met who promised to help.

Finally one small appeal. Can anyone obtain a few footballs — new or second-hand — and a complete set of kit for one big (but very poor) football club here.

I will be coming to the Durham Miners Gala and look forward to meeting people there.

Until then, miners' greetings — Sretno.

Fikret Suljic  
President

Union of Bosnian Coalminers

## Attackers aim 'to split Bosnia' — Siladzic

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

BOSNIA'S former prime minister Haris Silajdzic, recovering from a brutal assault by supporters of President Izetbegovic's Party of Democratic Action (SDA), has accused those responsible of aiming to divide Bosnia and Herzegovina, and establish their own dictatorship.

Silajdzic had gone to Cazin, north-west Bosnia, to open a medical equipment factory on 15 June. A mob of about 100, carrying Izetbegovic's portrait and SDA posters, and chanting Muslim prayers, surrounded the ex-premier's motorcade, and tried to turn over cars.

Later Silajdzic was hit over the back of the head with a crowbar, and needed hospital treatment. Josip Pejakovic, who was with him, was also injured.

'It was a classic case of attempted murder. I don't know what else one can call it,' said Mustafa Mujagic, a member of Silajdzic's Party for Bosnia-Herzegovina (SBIH), accusing the ruling SDA of an 'organised attack'.

An SDA statement later condemned the attack, denied that police had failed to intervene, and said the SDA remained a democratic party, opposed to violence.

Silajdzic, a former SDA member who was Bosnia's prime minister in three and a half years of war, founded the SBIH to continue the fight against partition and for multi-cultural traditions after the US-sponsored Dayton 'peace'.

Interviewed about the Cazin incident on Sarajevo's TV99, he said Bosnia was sinking 'deeper and deeper'.

'This was a group of extremists who want to divide Bosnia and establish an absolute authority in one part of Bosnia. You can see for yourselves what it looks like.'

'That is why it is necessary that Bosnia and Herzegovina citizens become aware of these groups that want to exploit our victims and suffering in order to have an absolute authority in this part of Bosnia. Citizens must say "no" to this option.'

Zaim Backovic, a member of the SBIH leadership, said members thought the attack had been organised by the Muslim youth association (MOS) that functions within SDA.

Observers from the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) team who were in Cazin agree with criticism of the police, although the federal Defence Ministry claimed officers were injured trying to shield Silajdzic, and said an Interior Ministry team had gone to Cazin to investigate what happened.

The attack on Silajdzic was 'political banditry', commented Gojko Beric in the respected *Oslobodjenje*.

Blaming 'primitivism and basic instincts wrapped in a package of alleged fanatic religiousness', he added that although Izetbegovic and Silajdzic had both signed a declaration for Bosnia's integrity, it was becoming 'obvious they view its future differently'.

The Serb Civic Council, which stood loyally with Bosnia and Herzegovina against Serb chauvinists, said it was appalled by the attack on Siladzic.

'The attack on the leader of this party can also be viewed as

an attack on any other leader and any citizen of Bosnia and is actually an attack on the democratic processes in Bosnia.'

It warned of a descent into anarchy unless the culprits were dealt with.

Some people recalled pointedly that when Silajdzic was prime minister he cracked down hard on two gangs that were terrorising Sarajevo.

There has been an epidemic of intimidation and looting recently against Serbs in the capital's suburbs. Attempts by pro-SDA media to blame the Cazin attack on 'provocation' by Silajdzic or his supporters have intensified anger over the attack.

### Critic

One critic compared the mob violence with Serbian president Milosevic's methods.

'Between 1987 and 1993, Milosevic used mobs to overthrow the governments in Vojvodina, Kosovo, and Montenegro and pack the new governments with militants intent on destroying Yugoslavia as a multicultural society. Now the SDA is copying Milosevic's technique.'

'What concerns me more is the fact that some "Bosniaks" believe that this incident was staged,' said Vanja Filipovic 'When a

Chetnik mortar exploded in Vase Miskin street in Sarajevo, killing over 20 people and wounded many more, Serbian propaganda maintained that the Bosnians had shelled their own people.

The Chetniks repeated the same lie after the 1994 massacre at the Markale market. When it became obvious that they were responsible for this crime, they tried to change their story and say that the soldier who fired the mortar didn't have orders to do so, and would be punished for his actions.

'This time it was not Chetniks who delivered the blow. Nonetheless, those who attacked Mr. Silajdzic are enemies of Bosnia. They are enemies of everyone who believes in democracy and freedom of speech and expression in the world.'

'My suggestion to those who question that this incident happened in the way it was reported in the media is not to look for conspiracies where there are none, but to look for the real perpetrators and condemn them.'

'As long as we are paranoiacly trying to find enemies within our own group, we will never be able to build trust in our own people, much less in others. The enemy in this incident is obvious. Why try to find another, only for some political purpose?'

Workers Aid for Bosnia

## Durham Miners Gala

**Saturday 13 July:** Bosnian miners will be raising their banner in the Market Square, Durham at **9.30am**. We ask everyone who has supported their struggle against racism and fascism to march with them to celebrate workers' internationalism and solidarity. For those who want to arrive Friday night please contact Tony Parker, 0191-263 5029 (daytime), for accommodation.

## Case made for US Labor Party Bookshop Libel Fund

Last week Workers Press published parts of the programme of the new US Labor Party set up in Cleveland, Ohio, by more than 1,300 delegates at its founding convention between 6 and 9 June. Here is an article written beforehand by Cleveland Bakers Local 19 President Barbara Walden Friedman in her union's newspaper.

WHEN the idea of joining a labour-based political party was proposed to me, my reaction was: 'Great — where do I sign?'

I thought anyone who believes in the labour movement would react the same way, but I was wrong. There seems to be some sort of stigma attached to the idea of a worker-based political party, a fear of being labelled communist, or socialist.

Have we forgotten that those

were the very names applied to early trade unionists by those who hated to see their absolute control of people's lives slipping away?

If those early fighters for workers' rights had been scared off by a little name-calling, where would working people, and our standard of living be today?

I think we have to ignore that kind of name calling and concentrate on the idea — is it a good one or isn't it? Are we happy with what goes on in Washington or aren't we?

Trade policies such the North American Free Trade Agreement and GATT have been passed over the strenuous objections of labour, which foresaw massive losses of American jobs and downward pressure on pressure on our standard of living.

Subsequent events have

shown that labour was right. The right of American workers to strike, earned with their very blood, has been lost for all practical purposes.

Agencies such as OSHA, which protects worker safety, and the NLRB, which enforces worker rights, are in danger of being budgeted out of existence. And even as American workers become ever more productive their real wages continue to decline. All this while corporate profits rise to record levels.

Am I saying that labour has no friends among Democrats or the Republicans? No, just that there aren't enough of them, and that the system is too far under the control of corporate interests for them to change from within.

I believe the change has to come from outside, in the form of a new party committed to the belief that the economy should serve the people, not that the people should serve the economy.

■ The US Labor Party can be e-mailed on [lpa@labornet.org](mailto:lpa@labornet.org). There is also a web-site on <http://www.igc.org/lpa/>.

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# Down with casualisation!

BY GEOFF PILLING

AS NEWS broke that one of the port's largest customers, ACL, had withdrawn all business from Liverpool (see front page) a successful London conference was being held last Saturday in support of the 500 sacked dockers.

Chair **Tony Santamera**, National Secretary (Seafarers) RMT and chair of the London Support Group said that the Liverpool dockers were known the world over.

They had always been in the forefront of supporting others, said Santamera, and no group of workers in this country had a record to beat them.

'If any group deserves support from the rest of the working class it is the Liverpool dockers,' he declared.

**Jimmy Nolan**, chair of the Liverpool Port Shop Stewards' Committee, thanked everybody who had helped organise a support group in London.

He brought the news to the conference that ACL, one of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board's biggest customers, had pulled out of the port.

He drew attention to a state-

ment in *The Times* that day advising people to buy shares in MDHC. 'This is a reflection of the contradictions of capitalism,' he said. He warned that shareholders in the company would soon demand the removal of its top management.

He explained that a national support group to be formed in Liverpool on 29 June would be able to organise support for any group of workers facing anti-trade-union laws.

He said that some 4,000 meetings had been organised in support of the dockers to combat the 'economic fear' that many workers felt.

'Who gave Thatcher the right to privatise the national assets built up by the working class?' Nolan asked.

He warned that the Tory government was going to privatise yet more assets and demanded: 'Why don't the trade union oppose this?' he inquired. He urged everybody to participate in a national support committee, saying that 'we can no longer tolerate these laws imposed upon us' and that if we didn't fight 'we will be living like 20th-century slaves'.

Ford Dagenham shop steward and member of the Transport and

General Workers Union **Rod Fynlayson** spoke about the struggle in Fords. He said that where the left were in control in the plant little had been done in support of the sacked dockers.

He said that in his experience, when approached, few workers were unwilling to support this fight.

'We should all be able to unite and fight on this issue,' said Fynlayson. 'I am sure things are going to change. I can't imagine how Blair can lose the election. This will lead rapidly to disillusionment.'

Earlier, **Sue Mitchell** of Women of the Waterfront (WoW) had told the conference that when the employers sacked the 500 dockers on 28 September of last year 'they ignited the fire that was already there'.

## Life

She spoke about the life the dockers before the strike. 'Conditions were disgusting. Men did not know what shift they would be on from one day to the next.'

'Before the strike started the dockers' wives rarely knew each other. But the formation of Women of the Waterfront gave us a chance to get together.'

'I'd never left my home before

the strike,' she said. 'Since then I've been all over the country. We amaze ourselves sometimes.'

She explained that the previous day she and others had been down to the pickets of the striking postal workers in Liverpool.

'I told the postal workers that we'd lost everything, but didn't care.' The post workers' wives were invited to join WoW.

She called for an end to all anti-trade-union laws. 'We are more powerful than the greedy capitalists,' she declared.

A member of the lecturers' union NATFHE, **Liz Knight**, spoke about the struggles in further education and said that the issue was how to link up the struggles.

'The dockers' dispute has begun to overcome the fear in the working class,' she said.

**Hassan** from Iran said that we were facing a social explosion of the working class internationally, because of the attack on wages.

He criticised many political organisations for not having participated in defence of the Liverpool dockers in 'their most important movement'.

Insisting that 'this hall should be full of working-class organisations', he said that 'reliance must be placed on the rank and file'.

'This is the time to develop the traditional organisations of the working class,' he declared.

**Joseph** from the African Liberation Solidarity Campaign commended the Liverpool dockers, 'who are in the vanguard of the struggle of the working class.'

He said he was in favour of the demand of the Liverpool dockers that the TUC should call a one-day strike in support of their fight. This is 'not because I have trust in the labour leadership, but because I think this can lead to a development of the working-class movement'.

Liverpool docker **Terry Barrett** said that the bosses had to be made to pay for the present crisis. Insisting that there was now a fightback in the working class he said: 'When we will, you'll win.'

**Dot Gibson** from the London Support Group said 'We hear many Labour leaders saying that we are facing years of Tory misrule. But it was these labour leaders who have stopped the working class from uniting against the common enemy.'

'In fact we are not dealing with Tory misrule but with what the employers must now do,' she declared.

'The issue of internationalism must be the essential starting point in every struggle,' she said. Liverpool dockers had been obliged to take their struggle internationally.

She insisted that while great damage had been done to the consciousness of the working class it was nonetheless still forced into battle.

'How do we overcome the lack of confidence that still exists in sections of the working class?' she asked. 'How do we create conditions for the unity of the working class?'

She felt that the conference was a step forward in these tasks, but that we must continue work on the resolution carried at the 27 April conference.

**Pauline Smith** of the London Support Committee said: 'We know from our history that we have to break the law. The main point and task before us is to build solidarity with the dockers.'

In a speech that moved the conference, **Malkit Bilku**, UNISON shop steward of the dispute at Hillingdon hospital, outlined the issues in the nine-month struggle at the west London hospital.

Over 50 women had been sacked when they took up a struggle against the effects of the privatisation of the services in the hospital. She explained that when services had first been privatised in 1986 they had lost many benefits.

## Explained

'We used to come to work, and if not needed we were sent home,' she explained.

She said that apart from a local councillor they had received little support from the local labour movement, including their own union.

She recounted how the striking women, nearly all Asian, had been subject to verbal and physical attack, some of it coming from union members in the hospital. 'The women on strike have been very brave,' she told the conference.

'We are fighting against slavery on behalf of the whole of the working class,' she said to applause.

She appealed for help from other workers, especially on the picket line, saying that, 'Often we don't know what to do.'

**Tekin Kartal** from the North East London Textile branch of the TGWU and activist in the recent JJ Fast Foods' strike criticised many on the left for the manner in which they operated.

'We saw how they worked the JJ dispute,' he said. 'They came to give us advice.'

'But the working class is going to abolish capital by its own hands,' he declared.

## Groups

Many of the left groups had said at the time of the JJ fight that they would not turn up unless the strikers carried the slogans.

'They are able to walk away because they don't have the problems of the working class,' he said. 'They are only concerned with the interests of their own group or party,' he declared.

'We can characterise this as petty-bourgeois attitude,' he said.

He explained that many foreign workers in Britain had no rights — no holiday pay, no overtime. Conditions were often very harsh, he said.

He said: 'We should talk to all workers, whatever party they are in. We should organise them around their problems and the solution to those problems.'

A GMB member spoke about the struggle to get the issue of the Liverpool dockers raised at the union's recent conference in Blackpool.

Criticising the activities of some of the left groups at that conference he said 'sometimes it is necessary for such groups to take a step backwards' in order to assist the struggle.

While the GMB leadership nationally had done little to support the Liverpool struggle, the London Region of the union had donated £600 for a coach to the 29 June demonstration in Liverpool, he reported.

Organiser of the International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign, **Keith Standing**, after drawing attention to the presence at the conference of important visitors from abroad, explained that the national support group would have to work under the direction of the Liverpool shop stewards' committee to organise in the working class in support of their struggle.

■ **Join the 3.30-6pm weekly pickets of Drake Catering, 504 High Road, Wembley. Note that the office in High Holborn has now closed! Therefore the site of the picket is to move on.**

■ **Two dockers are in London to raise funds and publicise the dispute. Tel: 0171-387 4771 (ask for Liverpool dockers).**

■ **Support group meetings first and third Thursdays every month. Lucas Arms, 245A Gray's Inn Road, London WC1.**

# Unison donates £10,000 to Liverpool dockers

BY LIZ LEICESTER

MEMBERS of Britain's largest trade union, Unison, voted last week to give £10,000 to the Liverpool dockers' hardship fund.

Meeting in Bournemouth for Unison's annual conference, the several thousand delegates agreed to suspend standing orders to hear dockers' leader Jimmy Nolan.

He expressed his 'sincere appreciation' for the £10,000 and spoke of the generosity of Unison branches around the country.

Explaining that the bosses never thought the dockers' fight for their jobs would continue for months, Nolan said: 'They never recognised that we could organise ourselves. . . Each and every docker made it very clear that they would never cross a picket line.'

## Action

Nolan said that the bosses knew the dockers' action would be unofficial and that they would be in breach of the anti-union laws. 'The only way we can fight

or defend ourselves is in opposition to the anti-trade-union laws,' he said. Nolan described the important role of internationalism and support from dockers in the US, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Spain, Germany, Switzerland and Sweden.

'It's us as the nation's people who create value,' he said. 'The British working class are suffering economic fear. . . We want a better standard of living.'

Nolan received a standing ovation and Unison branches are discussing how to spread support for the dockers.

# Bloody attack on Turkish Labour Party

● From front page

has been democratised from top to bottom, and which guarantees freedom and equal rights and free unity of the Turks and Kurds based on equality.'

In the indictment before the Supreme Court, the Labour Party is charged with:

■ **Aiming to change the regulations concerning the language and the inseparable territorial and national unity of the Turkish state;**

■ **claiming that there are minorities in the territories of the Republic of Turkey based on difference of national culture or race or language;**

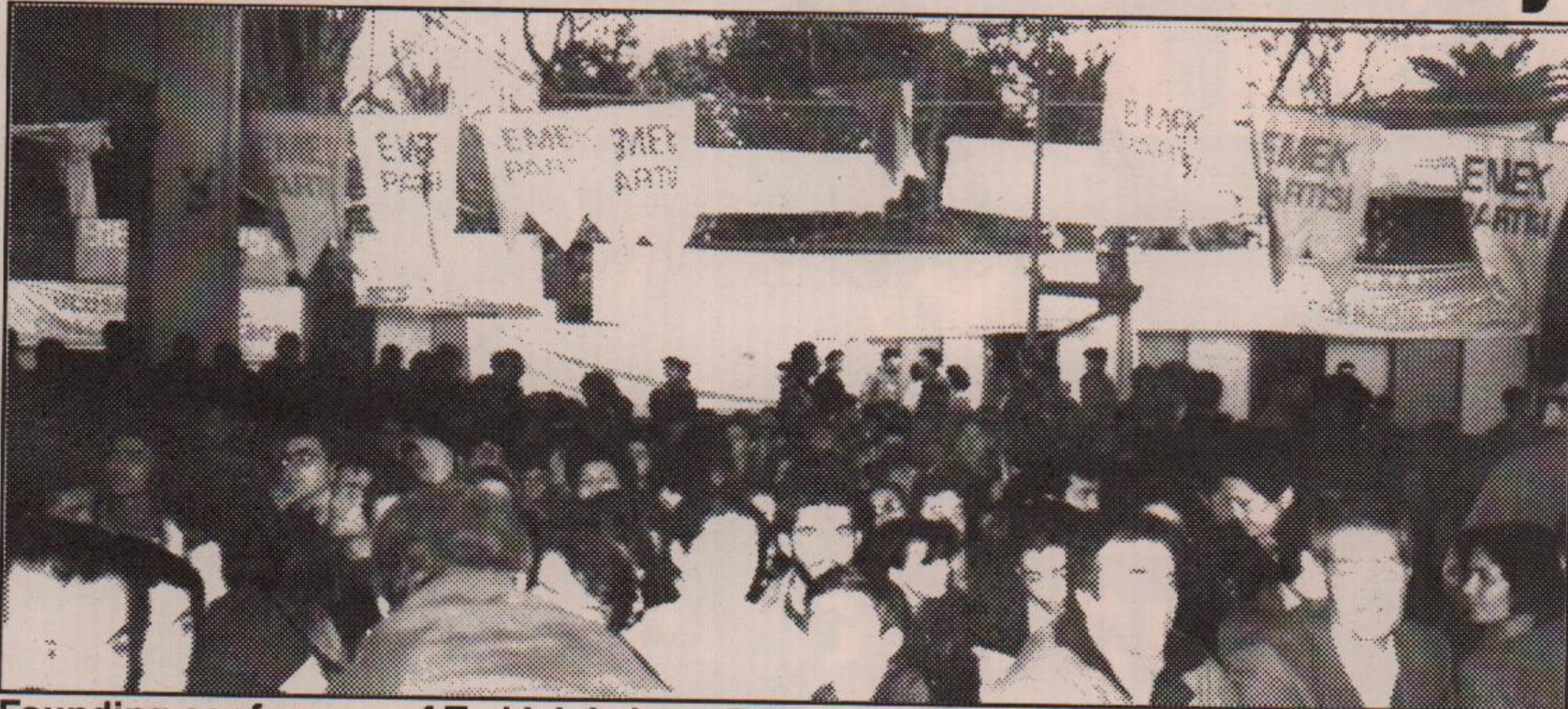
■ **aiming to disturb the unity of the nation by creating minorities in the territories of the Republic of Turkey by protecting, promoting or spreading languages and culture other than the Turkish language and culture.'**

The authorities in Turkey are attempting to ban the Labour Party, which was formed by thousands of workers and working people in the face of enormous difficulty.

The state attorney general has brought the charges above before the Constitutional Court demanding the closure of the party.

What is being demanded is that all political parties accept nationalism as an ideological principle.

The charges are not only aimed against the working people organised around the party. They are also an attack on labour's right to organise and take part in politics and the right to freedom of expression.



Founding conference of Turkish Labour Party

## Attacks on the People's Democracy Party

AT THE same time as the attacks on the Labour Party, HADEP (People's Democracy Party) also came under seige.

Three party delegates were murdered by government authorities in Kayseri on their way back from their party congress. Previously, delegates at the congress in Ankara were attacked and beaten up by police.

When they went to take refuge in the party HQ, some were arrested, including HADEP leader Murat Bozlak, who was seriously injured. Another of those beaten was Tony Lukas, a delegate to the congress from the British Christian Democratic Movement. In Izmir, the HADEP party office was bombed and an unknown number of people were

## Turkish Labour Party must not be closed!

The following petition is being made by supporters of the Turkish Labour Party (Emek Partisi).

TO THE Constitutional Court, Ankara,

The Constitutional Court's attempt to close down the Labour Party cannot be approved. The reason why the Labour Party has been founded is to encourage workers and labourers to organise themselves and take part in politics. But the State Attorney General has brought a case to the Constitutional Court requesting closure of the party. It is claimed that an article in our programme concerning the democratic solution to the Kurdish question poses a threat to the national unity of the state.

close down the Labour Party is to prevent workers taking part in politics, their right to organise, and it is an attack on their freedom of expression. This kind of conduct is a reflection of the constitution established in 1981 by the military government and its reactionary ideas.

The workers' right to organise cannot be banned.

We the undersigned express solidarity with the working class of Turkey and strongly protest all attempts aiming to close down the Emek Party. We call upon all people respecting democratic principles to join us in order to develop an international solidarity campaign.

■ **Please send completed petitions, with names, occupations and signatures to Emek (Labour) Party, c/o Former Library Premises, Howard Road, London N16 8PR. Tel: 0171-275**

## DOCKERS' CHARTER LATEST ISSUE OUT NOW!

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# Inside left

## Generosity

WITH a palace in Mexico, a daughter in Pakistan and a French seat in the European parliament, billionaire Sir James Goldsmith is clearly no 'Little Englander'. His generosity knows no limits. After bunging 100 grand to right-wing Tory MP Bill Cash for his pro-Septic 'think' tank, he granted a full-page interview to the left-wing Labour *Tribune* (21 June).

Sir James says his Referendum Party is 'neither of the Left nor the Right'. I wonder what odds his old pals in the Clermont sporting club (see Lord Lucan) would give on that?

Goldsmith's knighthood came in Harold Wilson's famous 'lavender' list, but he generously donated £100,000 to Howard Heath for 'the European Cause', and backed the Centre for Policy Studies for Thatcher and Keith Joseph. Although denying he ever met 'spycatcher' Peter Wright, Goldsmith is a friend of Colonel David Stirling, leader of the SAS and the Great British 75 (GB75) strikebreaking organisation. He put money into Zeus Security, which has spied on citizens for MI5 and the government. (One target was anti-nuclear protester Hilda Murrell, though this surveillance was subcontracted to a private detective agency. Murrell was murdered in 1984.)

In February 1980, right-wing publicist Brian Crozier used Goldsmith's magazine *Now!* to launch an image-boosting campaign for Franz-Josef Strauss, leader of Bavaria's right-wing Christian Social Union, and candidate for German federal chancellor. Strauss was heavily defeated. *Now!* is defunct. If a left-wing paper must give space to someone like Sir James Goldsmith, these are questions they might raise. Some of them appear in Mark Seddon's *Tribune* interview. Next time I want to see a house whitewashed I'll know how to ring.

## Moderation

COLONEL David Stirling's declared intention in launching GB75 was to counter a General Strike or one involving the amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU) and the Electrical Trades Union (ETU) (confidential memo published in *Peace News* August 1974, and *Britain's State Within the State*, New York 1980).

Later, the ex-SAS colonel launched the Movement for True Industrial Democracy (TRUEMID), to work with 'moderate' (right-wing) union leaders against left-wing 'subversion'. Its first pamphlet was *Towards an Open and Classless Society*, by Sir James Goldsmith.

Nowadays, the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union (AEEU) is not the very model of a 'moderate' union. Its leaders supported the 'modernisers', it collaborates with big employers, and it has embraced (some say, been taken over by) the smaller, but richer, EETPU electrical union, suppliers of scabs by appointment to Rupert Murdoch.

On 1 May, the AEEU abolished district shop committees, and district shop meetings, where members could pool experiences and develop strategies. But the union is looking for members, some more than others. One section can now retire up to ten years early, on full pay of £40,000-plus, a £50,000 lump sum, and keep their car or BMW cars. A good deal?

Well it was negotiated by professionals, for professionals — union executive council members rendered useless by the merger.

Stories like Brian Mawhinney have been fun at Labour's expense, recalling how he asks about company bosses' golden parachutes. Some AEEU members regard the possible departure of Gavin Laird or Jimmy Airlie as not worth it. They might also regard the package offered union officials as a good, 'moderate' pace-setter for future bargaining with the employers. We won't drag up the AEEU leadership's record on the legal minimum wage. Charlie Pottins

## International workers' conference

# 'Dayton solve

The international workers' conference (8-9 June) called by the International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign and the African Liberation Support Campaign heard many reports on the tasks facing the working class in many countries. This week we report on the speeches made on Serbia, Ivory Coast and Brazil. We also print a letter from Sudanese exiles in Greece.

### Report from Serbia

RADE PAVLOVIC — who in a message to the conference that founded Workers Aid for Bosnia in 1993 had suggested making convoys to Tuzla — gave a report on the situation in his country Serbia.

He said that he didn't represent a trade union and was not a member of one. Further, he didn't represent anybody, 'hardly even myself'!

He asked the question of where the working class was in Serbia. He answered by saying it was in the same place as the working class in Ivory Coast. There were advantages and disadvantages in that. The Ivory Coast was just breaking out of colonialism and there was a freshness in a rising of a new working class.

Under Stalinism in Serbia, the working class had carried out a revolution after World War II. Having smashed the bourgeoisie, spectacular progress was made.

But with Tito's death, this working class had reached an important turning point by the end of the 1980s.

Tito had held together Yugoslavia by overturning the bourgeoisie and

expropriating politically the working class. But the bureaucracy didn't have the strength to confront the working class directly. After Tito's death, that bureaucracy had to flee forwards and resort to nationalist propaganda and war.

It was necessary to physically destroy the working class. In the course of 50 years the working class had become by far the most important social force in Yugoslavia.

In the last year there had been a profound change. The Serbian bureaucracy wasn't able to carry on and had had to make a political turn. Its policy in Bosnia has completely exhausted it and there was exhaustion in Serbia itself.

The Dayton deal has stopped the artillery without anything being solved. This means workers could take the initiative again.

### Unemployment

THE Serbian working class was not strong enough to be able to oppose the bureaucracy's war — and it is paying very dearly for that. Hardly 10 per cent of productive capacity is working. Unemployment is at 60 per cent.

Before the war in Bosnia there was a car factory that produced 240,000 cars a year with 17,000 workers. Now it produces at most a dozen a year. The market has been broken up and there is no way to get it going again and everybody knows it.

The working class's resources have been reduced to less than the minimum needed for life — 80 per cent of workers don't get enough money to feed their children. Their electricity bills were bigger than their wages. Over the last four to five years the standard of living had fallen four or five times.

Those who think ask themselves how they let these things happen. The Bosnian war was a blow to the heart of the working class. 'Many involved in that war will tell you privately about the crimes committed there,' said Rade.

There is a real crisis in the consciousness of the working class — no left working-class alternative, no party, no socialist group.

The bureaucracy (represented by the so-called 'Socialist Party' of Milosevic) is in power — the state apparatus is in its hands.

With one in 100 people in the police force, Serbia is the most heavily policed country in the world. They are Milosevic's Praetorian guard.

The bourgeois and petty bourgeois opposition have no social basis and live off hand-outs from the Western embassies. These opposition leaders follow the advice of these embassies and are very discredited. This is a good thing for the future.

Also the parliamentary system is discredited. Five years ago it was Stalinism that was discredited and there was a thirst for political freedom. Now people see that parliamentary democracy solves nothing.

So 60 per cent won't vote for anybody, 25 per cent support Milosevic and the opposition leaders get between 3 and 4 per cent each.

Trade unionists have to pay close attention to the spirit of the masses. There has been a 180-degree turn in that spirit since 1989-90 when Milosevic held mass meetings to drum up nationalist hysteria.

Now people are starving and there are hunger marches — marches of despair.

### Discontent

WHATEVER political party is in power, the working class has to fight. It would take a little thing to bring these rivulets of discontent into one big river.

Things are going to happen in Serbia in the coming autumn, Pavlovic predicted.

The masses in Serbia are still in the old trade unions, which have changed their names to 'independent' unions. The people haven't thought through why they're in these unions. They're led by Milosevic's people and are transmission belts for the authorities.

They have called strikes, but their purpose was to exhaust the strength of the working class. On the other



The international workers' conference ending with singing the 'Internationale'



# ed nothing'

hand, there are whole branches calling for the resignation of the union presidents and for that of Milosevic.

There are some truly independent unions of the most militant working-class fighters who come under threats, blackmail. If they call a strike they get their notice the same day.

Milosevic allows the fascist parties to operate and management the right to sack on the nod. He never could have done this before.

The first to come out as independent unionists were journalists at the TV station. About 1,000 refused to follow Milosevic's line and formed their own union when they were sacked.

But since then they have fallen under US influence. They have become honorary members of the US journalist's union, have received training sessions on privatisation and have adopted these liberal policies in their reporting.

These journalists opposed the Bosnian war and the Serb-nationalists in that war.

There are also independent unions in engineering and metal-working, but there is no political party to guide their activity.

The journalists work with the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois opposition. The engineering workers have problems with that — the big problem is the privatisations that the bourgeois opposition are pushing (and the journalists supporting).

Milosevic is trying to slow the pace of the privatisations but is at the crossroads. The Serbian national



Photo: Alan Clark

bank is in favour of the IMF moves but the government won't allow it.

The bureaucracy's last card is Kosovo, with its Albanian majority, but there are big risks. If it can't stay in power it will have to tie itself more closely to imperialism.

The trade unions are defence organisations and schools for the working class. During peaceful times

they can get some concessions, but in times of crisis there is nothing more to be got.

If it doesn't move to seize power the working class loses its reason for existence.

The working class can't solve the problems of the people in Belgrade with trade union consciousness. It needs a political party.



Student demonstration against Milosevic, 1992

## Gross abuses of human rights in Sudan

This letter of greetings from Sudanese exiles in Greece was sent to the ITUSC international workers' conference:

I WISH first to extend my cordial greetings and best wishes to your august gathering, on behalf of the opposition Sudanese National Democratic Forum, in the hope that your meeting will achieve its desired objectives, and especially with regard to the universal continued struggle for peace and for the strengthening and consolidation of relations of co-operation and solidarity among the various peoples and nations all over the world and especially among workers.

As some participants in this gathering may be aware, the Sudan, as a nation, today faces many challenges and threats as the result of the usurpation of political power by the present minority dictatorial Muslim fundamentalist regime in Khartoum

since 30 June 1989. This fascist minority dictatorship has governed the Sudan with impunity and imposed a bloody 'jihad' (holy war) against the so-called infidels in southern Sudan and in other marginalised areas of the country, with the resultant gross abuses of fundamental human rights — detention without trial, torture and political repression and racial discrimination among citizens of one country — as reported by both international and local human rights organisations since 30 June 1989.

In its vain efforts to establish a theocracy and to export elsewhere its so-called Islamic revolution, the present Khartoum rulers have so far caused much damage domestically, especially in the national economy, the civil service, the national defence forces and in many other sectors of Sudanese society, including relations with most of her neighbours.

## International workers' conference

# Trade unionists face jail

### Report from Ivory Coast

TOURE MOUSSA ZEGUEN from the Ivory Coast, a French-speaking country in West Africa, drew comparison between the repressions in his country and those in Argentina. Ivory Coast is one of five ex-French colonies in Africa, with very similar problems for the working class. The other countries are Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Niger.

Before 1990, there were no unions in Ivory Coast. Workers couldn't operate openly in trade unions without facing jail. During the 1980s only teachers and university lecturers were able to start to organise to some extent. Otherwise workers had to organise clandestinely if they wanted independent organisation.

All the five former French colonies continue to come under pressure from the French government. Since 1990 in Ivory Coast there have been

some strikes and two new independent trade union federations have been formed. But the campaign for union organisation can't be won without bringing in political consciousness.

Because of the repression in Ivory Coast many people have had to leave the country. The opposition parties also don't back the unions because they want to be able to control workers in their turn when they come to office.

The workers live in abject poverty. The population of 12 million suffers 70 per cent unemployment. Since elections in Mali and Burkina Faso, the bourgeoisie have attacked the working class.

Toure raised the problem of how to mobilise the rank and file when the majority aren't organised. It has to be on the basis of class struggle and revolutionary understanding of the our common problems as working people. The struggle has to be taken up against the exploiters and the bureaucratic union leaders.

# Internationalism concrete task

### Report from Brazil

BERNARDO from Brazil brought greetings from the the International Workers League/Fourth International (LIW/CI) and the United Socialist Workers' Party of Brazil (PSTU). He reported that imperialism was carrying out an economic propaganda campaign in Latin America. 'New methods' are being used to cover for old methods of exploitation.

The bureaucratically-led trade unions have tried to negotiate some changes in the 'modernisation' plans but they haven't fought. On the other hand, the workers fought.

In Bolivia and Paraguay there have been general strikes. In Paraguay the strike lasted two days.

The actions were against privatisations and for social security. In 1995 in Brazil, oilworkers were

on strike for 30 days and were only defeated by a government invasion of the oil refineries using tanks and the army. The leaders of the strike were sacked.

The Liverpool dockers' fight against casualisation is worldwide.

In France and Germany the fight is on against the destruction of social security.

Internationalism is a very concrete task for the working class, said Bernardo.

For the Third World, like in Brazil, the issue of repression is very important. Bernardo described how three workers were killed by Turkish police on 1 May and a Trotskyist comrade died after release, from police custody.

In Brazil, the issue of land is very important. Landless peasants have carried out 100 occupations, involving 120,000 people, in recent times. These were protests against the concentration of land in the hands of a few landlords in Brazil.

Besides, the ruling junta has continued to practice political, religious and racial discrimination including the policy of 'racial cleansing' in certain parts of the country, as the Khartoum rulers do not recognise the ethnic and racial diversity of the Sudanese people and that has been a source of pride for the country's population.

Today the National Democratic Forum — composed of all opposition political parties, trade unions, professional organisations and the rebel SPLM/SPLA movement — is extending every effort aimed at the overthrow of the ruling minority regime, for the restoration of democracy and the separation of state and religion in the building of a 'new Sudan', in which all citizens will be equal irrespective of their race or religious beliefs and in which the rule of law will be the main arbiter.

Since its formation, shortly after

the 1989 *coup d'etat*, the National Democratic Forum has drawn its plans with regard to building a new Sudan following the expected fall of the country's current dictatorship.

On this occasion, please allow me to extend my thanks and appreciation to all Greek workers and their trade unions for their continued solidarity with Sudanese people in their genuine struggle for the restoration of democracy and for their basic rights.

Long live the struggle of Sudanese workers and people for democracy and their basic rights!

Long live the solidarity of Greek workers with the Sudanese people in their struggle against dictatorship and for the restoration of democracy!

Mansour Shashati

Chair, Greek branch, National Democratic Forum, Kefalinias 2A, Kipsely, Athens, Greece.

Tel: 00 30 1 823 5944.



# A warning to us all

## PERSONAL COLUMN

who came on the scene, was able to communicate adequately with people of Kurdish origin.

And it adds that its organisation 'represents a peace-loving community, which aims to support Kurdish refugees in London, disadvantaged... as people whose homeland is occupied by hostile armies and ruled by central governments which recognise no human rights.'

'It is vital that the Kurdish people are not treated as second-class citizens nor as criminal suspects in the pursuit of their right to equality.'

NONE of the above will come as a great surprise to readers who have followed the emergence in this country of a full-blown police state — which is what we now have, according to no less an authority than the former chief constable of Devon and Cornwall, John Alderson.

Under Michael Howard as home secretary, Alderson added, the control of crime 'is constantly being equated with the diminution of liberty'. The police raid on the Kurdish workers' premises shows how atrocious doctrine is put into practice.

None of that aggressive macho performance by police on the evening of 19 June was necessary. The Kurdish actors had bent over backwards to make sure they complied with the law. They had told the police well in advance what they were doing. They were law-abiding citizens going about their legitimate business in private premises.

A quiet word with a responsible official of the organisation, coupled with production of the National Theatre's document, should have been enough to set police minds at rest. And there was a time when a quiet word, in such circumstances, would indeed have been enough.

But the day when police would listen to reason and use their intelligence, such as it is, has gone for good. Nowadays they relish every opportunity they get to throw their weight about, and to hell with people's rights and liberties.

The Kurds' rights and liberties counted for precisely nothing. They had to watch their property — paid for, be it noted, exclusively from the contributions of low-paid refugee workers — quite unnecessarily vandalised.

They had to watch, powerless and appalled, as one of their number was, again quite unnecessarily, brutalised and then humiliated by being made to sit publicly in handcuffs for two hours.

In their outrageous treatment by the British police, the Kurds share the bitter experience of every other group of migrant workers, and of their British-born children, in this country. The police now regard them as fair game.

The British labour movement cannot and must not stand by and see this happening without protest. And we have two grounds for protest.

First, it is contrary to long tradition for those who come to these shores in order to escape persecution to be persecuted afresh by the British state. In the 19th century, the British ruling class boasted that their treatment of refugees showed how humane and civilised they were.

That boast can be made no longer. The Metropolitan Police are barbarians who know and care nothing about tradition, just as they know and care nothing about culture.

Second, if we let this kind of behaviour go unchecked, the workers' movement as a whole will increasingly come under the police lash. Let the raid on the Yeni Yasam theatre group be a solemn warning to us all.

*Peter Fryer*

URGED by a concerned citizen to arrest or otherwise suppress a newly unveiled Epstein statue, a London policeman sucked his pencil long and thoughtfully, then wrote in his notebook, in large capital letters, one word: 'RUDE.'

Ever since that day we have known that in this uncertain world one thing at least is certain: police and culture don't mix. And when the culture has any kind of political flavour the combination is, as it were, not of oil and water but rather of oil and fire.

Consider what happened on 19 June at the Kurdistan Workers' Association's Centre in north London, when the Yeni Yasam (New Life) theatre group was rehearsing a scene from a forthcoming play by Harold Pinter.

Entitled *Mountain Language*, this is a play about the brutality of the Turkish army towards the Kurdish people who live within Turkey's borders.

Some account of that brutality was given in this column on 25 May. Turkish troops, readers will remember, go in for mass evictions, the razing of villages, the burning of woodland, the indiscriminate slaughter of livestock, the torture of pregnant women, and the mutilation in quite horrible ways of the bodies of captured freedom fighters.

In one scene of Pinter's play the Turkish army is shown making arrests. The Yeni Yasam theatre group had hired plastic 'prop' guns from the National Theatre and, on the previous Sunday, had taken the precaution of informing Stoke Newington police about the rehearsals. They were assured that they needed no special permission to use the 'prop' guns.

At 8.30 in the evening a neighbour, catching sight of the scene being rehearsed, concluded without further inquiry that the guns were real and called the police.

The moment the police arrived the actors showed them the National Theatre's hire certificate. This however cut no ice with the police, who, despite a full explanation by two responsible officials of the KWA, said they were obliged to take all necessary precautions and treat the incident as if the neighbour's version were true.

So the firearms squad were called in. Though the Association's officials provided them with keys, these gentlemen preferred to storm into the building and smash down doors in their intensive two-hour room-by-room search.

A large amount of gratuitous damage was done to external and internal doors, door panels, locks, partition walls, filing cabinets, and storage cupboards.

Meanwhile a voluntary worker at the KWA Centre, who runs the bookshop, was subjected to a totally unprovoked attack by four police officers who wrestled him to the ground and caused injuries to his feet and the back of his head.

Though he was not involved in the rehearsal and had said or done nothing to provoke the attack, he was handcuffed and made to sit on the pavement for two hours.

The police found no dangerous weapons on the premises. In fact, they found nothing of an unlawful nature. They issued de-arrest certificates to those they had detained; confirmed the authenticity of the National Theatre's hire certificate; videotaped the damage they had caused; and, as they left, apologised.

The Yeni Yasam theatre group has apologised to its neighbours for the misunderstanding, and has invited them to attend the performance of *Mountain Language* when it takes place.

The KWA has expressed concern at the fact that no one, among the many police officers

## Book review

# A devastating case against Serbia's president

ONE of the central flaws of the Dayton agreement is that the NATO powers are relying on one of the biggest war criminals to implement it.

Paul Williams and Norman Cigar have prepared their case on evidence which is public. This makes their short book, *War Crimes and Individual Responsibility: A Prima Facie Case for the Indictment of Slobodan Milosevic*, all the more devastating.

Consider what Tim Sebastian's American friends (*Mail on Sunday*, 25 February) told him about Milosevic: 'He's the main fox. And what you do is ask him to round up all the other foxes.'

'As far as we're concerned, Milosevic is the least bad option and we have to keep him on side. He's the most powerful person in the region. You have to get him to purge the most powerful Serbs.'

'A political agreement is paramount... The package had to include two things: the permanent lifting of sanctions and guarantees of Milosevic's personal safety. For us he was, and still is, the means for securing a peace deal.'

Another of Sebastian's US sources said: 'Our people went into Dayton warning that if the Serbs insisted on immunity for war crimes as a pre-condition for peace, we'd be hard-pressed to resist.'

Washington is quite clear what it has on Milosevic. It knows that Belgrade was providing all the command and control of the Bosnian Serb army and was targeting US and NATO planes. But a lot of the information remains classified.

For example, although America has released a satellite picture of the mass graves at Konjevic Polje, satellite pictures of the massacres at Srebrenica *actually taking place* remain out of the public eye.

Paul Williams said at the book's launch that he could not

find 'the smoking gun' which would provide the clincher.

But the evidence that is public is enough to make a case against Milosevic. He is directly responsible for ordering, planning and instigating war crimes by the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) and Republic of Serbia forces and also of ordering federal and Serbian forces to aid and abet the commission of war crimes by Serb paramilitaries.

He is also complicit in genocide by virtue of his command responsibilities in failing to prevent or punish war crimes by the JNA, Arkan's Tigers, Seselj's Chetniks and Jovic's White Eagles.

A formidable case indeed. But who will bell the cat? This is election year. Dayton is there to ensure four more years for Bill Clinton!

Tom Carter

■ This important book can be obtained (price £5) from the publisher: The Alliance to Defend Bosnia-Herzegovina, 0171-912 0275. Also Index Bookcentres, 28 Charlotte Street, London W1 1HJ. Tel: 0171-636 3532. Also in Brixton, 10-12 Atlantic Road, London SW9 8HY. Tel: 0171-274 8342.

## Strikes banned, but Milosevic listens...

SERB President Milosevic's rump Yugoslav parliament has adopted a new law banning civil servants or the police from going on strike.

The new law also lays down that strikes by teachers, hospital workers or others providing essential services must not 'interfere with the work process', and other strikes must be confined to the company's premises.

es. But the Milosevic regime is listening to the people.

More than 300,000 phones are tapped, according to Belgrade lawyer Milenko Radic, of the Fund for the Development of Democracy.

Former police officers say 150,000 people are under surveillance, carried out without judicial permission. A 'Service for Internal Affairs'

within the secret police keeps tabs on political opponents, journalists, and other dangerous elements, former state security Inspector Bozo Spasic told the daily *Nasa Borba*. Calls are recorded in special rooms at secret police HQ.

Spasic said police chief Jovica Stanisic took state security information straight to President Milosevic.

## Video

# Undercurrents of resistance show the way

UNDERCURRENTS is an alternative news bulletin on video produced by activists using camcorders. Published quarterly, number four was reviewed in Workers Press back in February.

The fifth issue has just appeared and maintains its reputation as a source of news on campaigns around the world.

IT STARTS with a hilarious account of a leisurely stroll around Oxford by Sir George Young — but with a difference. Everywhere he goes he is pursued by anti-roads protesters making his day a misery. Even his attempts to escape in his car are ruined as the protesters drape it with protest banners.

A section on 'Global News' has short clips of world-wide protests. These include Norwegians protesting against racism, Polish women organising against domestic violence, an anti-roads mass cycling rally against cars in Adelaide, Australia, and protests in Russia, Ukraine and the USA.

A MAJOR feature is an account of members of the Selar Open Cast Campaign and Earth First! trying to stop forests being demolished in Wales to make way for open cast coal mining.

A 70-mile series of these scars on the countryside now stretches across South Wales. Celtic Energy — the major culprit — claim to be restoring the land when their work is finished. But the result is a barren monoculture of rye grass and hawthorn that leaves the locals in despair.

Local people had tried every legal means of protest up to

appeals to the European Union, but all to no effect.

Their feelings were of defeat until late one night the 'ecowarriors' appear on their doorsteps offering to help.

At first their response to these bizarrely dressed, dreadlocked young people is horror, but gradually they are won over by their obvious commitment. Soon old ladies are sitting in the roads to block vehicles and taking on the police.

A high point is an occupation of the head quarters of Celtic Energy. But eventually the protesters are violently forced out of their tree houses and destruction of the land begins.

A local man commends the young people for the way they have encouraged local people to empower themselves. The immediate battle is lost but they are confident they will eventually win the war.

THE Advertising Standards Authority has gained a bad reputation in recent years for growing censorship of 'political' charity adverts.

An example is shown of a censored advert against the mahogany trade. Many lives of adults and children have been lost due to the murderous activities of the logging companies who do not hesitate to massacre native peoples who obstruct their greed.

The ASA banned the advert because they were not convinced that enough deaths could be proven to back the claims of the advert — an absurd claim as these activities by loggers are well documented.

All charities that try to draw

political conclusions from their work are coming up against growing state obstruction of this kind.

The campaign to expose the Western cover-up of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus reminds us of the contrast with the response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. But Cyprus has no oil and Turkey is a member of NATO.

British government collusion is clearly exposed and a long list of MPs supporting the invasion completes this section.

AN EXTREMELY funny feature exposes the snooping activities of the state as a hunt saboteur tries to gain access to his police files. We are reminded that MI5 keep files on around a million people considered to be a threat to the state.

The MI5 headquarters at Thames House is visited, as well as 81 Newgate, the centre of BT's Operation Tinkerbell, which organises phone tapping. The camcorder team succeeds in getting well into these institutions by sheer bravado before being thrown out.

A telephonist at GCHQ denies all knowledge of such things but acknowledges that strange sounds on the phone are more likely to be due to engineering problems (in other words if you are being tapped you will not know it).

The intrepid team eventually ends up being directed to a BT show room!

A quote from a former MI5 agent — Gary Murray — sums it all up: 'God help the outspoken anti-nuclear protesters, environmental groups, writers and oth-

ers probing into the murky activities of government and the security services; Big Brother is here to stay.'

THE film next moves to the Isle of Skye to cover protests against the recently imposed toll bridge. This is a privately owned toll introduced with considerable secrecy.

Once this had been imposed the government obligingly closed the ferry, forcing locals to pay £5 every time they drove over this very short bridge.

A local says: 'We are the victims of the most experienced imperialists in the world — but this was one move too far!'

The government clearly saw this as a test case for imposing privatised transport on people for whom the established ferry system is vital.

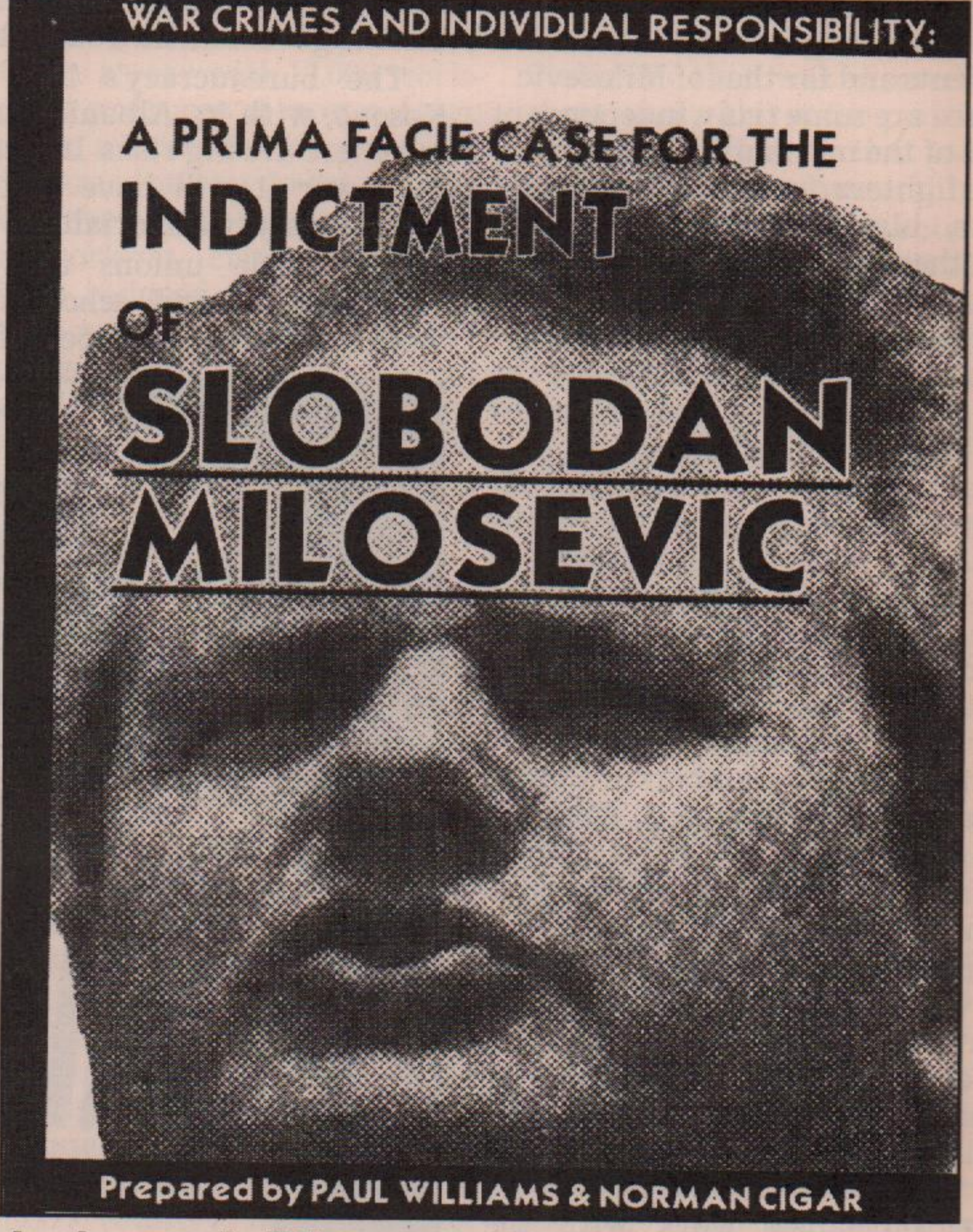
But these placid and law abiding people have responded with mass civil disobedience — even the local brewery produced a highly hopped bitter Extortion Ale to reflect the bitter feelings of the locals.

The courts are now cluttered with a massive backlog of cases involving people who will contemplate going to prison rather than pay fines.

■ Much else of interest can be found on this video magazine — the message is that resistance is growing everywhere and often takes unexpected forms.

Undercurrents Publications can be contacted at 16b Chervell St, Oxford OX4 1BG, Tel: 01865 203662.

E-mail: underc@gn.apc.org.





# A revolutionary optimist

## Jack Williamson 1939-96

JACK WILLIAMSON was born in the mining village of Throckley, in the house of his grandfather, a retired miner.

His father, an engineering worker, was employed in various factories that dominated the west end of Newcastle. Unlike most of the working-class lads of the village, Jack went to the local grammar school and later studied for a degree at Durham University.

It was there that Jack, already interested in politics, joined the Socialist Labour League, the forerunner of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

I first met him outside Doxfords shipyard in Sunderland in the company of Bill Hunter during a millwrights' strike. I was 19 at the time and prided myself that I knew something about politics, but in reality my political education was about to begin.

At this time Jack was living with his wife Anne and their two small children Ruth and Hellen at Peterlee, a new mining town in east Durham surrounded by a network of old colliery villages. It was among these mining villages that Jack worked tirelessly to build the Young Socialist movement.

Jack's life seemed to consist of perpetual movement between the villages, organising meetings and selling papers. Always short of money, walking and hitch-hiking became a necessity.

The right wing dominated the Labour Party in the area, the Labour Party dominated the lodges of the National Union of Mineworkers, and the lodges totally dominated the life of the villages.

This did not make the life of a young revolutionary easy, particularly when in 1964 Jack was expelled from the Easington Constituency Labour Party.

A simple question of a place to meet was fraught with difficulties. The miners' welfare and clubs were the only rooms available and all were controlled directly or indirectly by either the NUM or the Labour Party.

Despite all these difficulties Jack recruited and introduced a generation of young miners to revolutionary politics.

A decade later, when I started work at Murton colliery I encountered a layer of young miners who were ex-Young Socialists, and had great respect for Jack. Some of these miners played a leading role in the 1984-85 miners' strike and in bringing about the final defeat of the right wing in the Durham NUM.

It was Jack who introduced me to the art of selling papers around the pit villages. To do a

paper sale with Jack was itself an education. He had a rapport with miners that came from his deep understanding of their history.

Many of the older men were still dominated by the defeat of 1926, and it was on this conservative layer that the right wing relied for their support. There were also the left-wing miners who came from a different tradition in the coalfield.

Jack knew which pubs they frequented and what seats they sat in; he knew which landlords were sympathetic and which club secretaries had the authority and inclination to let us sell our papers.

Often we would get separated and on retracing my steps I would find Jack in animated discussion with a bar full of miners oblivious of the time. No matter how deep the political divide, there was never any suggestion that the situation would get out of hand. Jack's engaging manner always kept the conversation within the bounds of a friendly discussion.

The bus rides between the collieries were educational interludes where Jack would discuss such diverse subjects as the mathematics of judging show leeks (the North-East miners' passion), and the labour theory of value.

Before Jack joined the Socialist Labour League, the continuity of the Trotskyist movement in the North East had been broken. Many who had been members of the Revolutionary Communist Party, such as T. Dan Smith, had defected to the right wing.

### Passion

We were all in our teens or early 20s, and inexperienced. Bill Hunter was sent into the area to organise, but in the main the task of education fell to Jack.

He had a real passion for theory, and engaged us in a struggle to understand political economy. We poured over Marx's pamphlets 'Wages, Prices, Profit' and 'Wage Labour and Capital'.

Often on meeting, his first greeting would be 'I've got it, this is how it works' and then go on to explain how the tendency for the rate of profit to fall was a 'tendency' and had to be understood as such. It is true to say that Jack learned Marxism by teaching, by sharing each step of his understanding with others. By his sheer enthusiasm he enthused us.

Jack was by profession a teacher, but was desperately unhappy with working in the educational system. His first job was teaching disabled children, for which he was paid less than the average industrial wage.



Jack Williamson

His family economy was placed on a severe austerity programme, with Jack relying heavily on the resources of his wife Anne who struggled to feed the family, employing the traditional North-East skills that were born out of hard times.

Jack's political work was not confined to miners. He followed with great interest the progress of the Seamen's Reform Movement, the unofficial movement among seamen in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He contacted the movement's leaders and spent hours discussing with them.

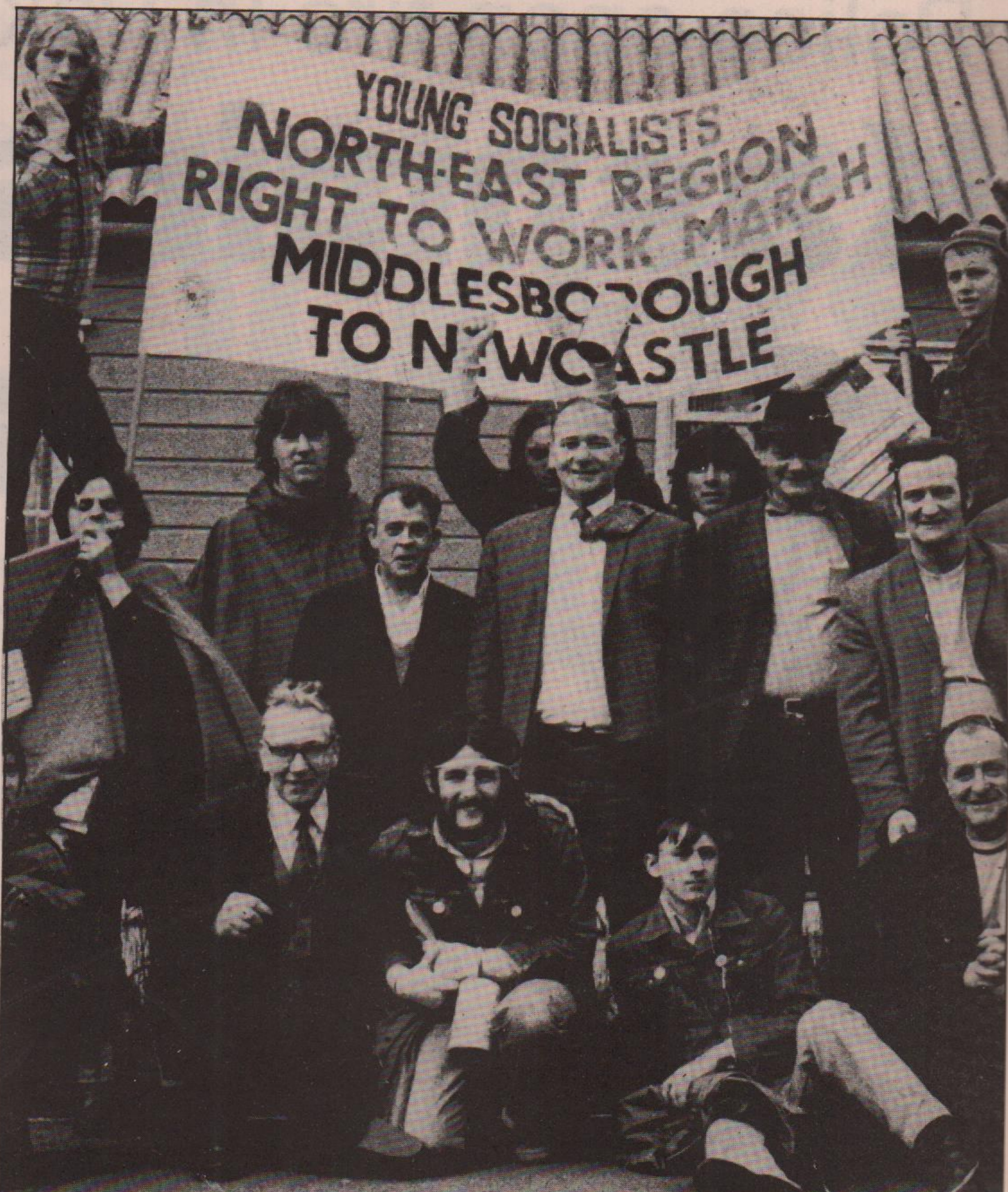
By 1966 the leadership of the National Union of Seamen had changed to the extent that a national strike was called.

Such was Jack's reputation with the local leaders that he was virtually co-opted onto the Sunderland strike committee and asked to attend its meetings and take part in its discussions.

### Moved

In 1968 Jack moved to Teeside and continued his political work, building branches of the Young Socialists in Stockton, Middlesbrough, and Hartlepool. I joined him a year later and got a job in the main power plant at ICI Wilton, where I was elected shop steward.

We were now beginning to gain support among chemical and steel workers in the area. All were active in their trade unions and one was a convenor at the



Young Socialists' right to work march in the Durham coalfields in the early 1970s

Wilton plant. Now we were not just theorising about the class struggle but actively planning the fight against the productivity deals of that time.

Assimilating these workers into the party and educating them was a new task and Jack's by now considerable grasp of Marxist political economy and philosophy was vital to the work of the branch.

In 1970, when the war for the independence of Bangladesh erupted, Jack followed its course in close detail. The antiquated steel industry on Teesside had attracted a community of Bengali workers who were employed in the lowest-paid and most unpleasant jobs.

During the course of the war Jack became completely immersed in this community. He was so knowledgeable on all aspects of the war that he was quickly accepted as the 'authority' in the community.

When meetings were called by the leaders of the community Jack was called upon to make the opening report. In his strong Tyneside accent, speaking fluently and without notes, he would go through every aspect of the struggle holding the audience spellbound.

On one occasion a speaker had been sent up from the new London embassy. Jack as usual gave the opening report. The visitor from London listened to it intently. He was then introduced to the meeting, and his opening remarks were simply to say that in view of the contribution of the last speaker there was no need for anything further to be said!

### Paper

On the day of Jack's funeral, Peter Burnett, a party member at that time, handed me a piece of paper on which he had written these words:

'I knew Jack in the early 1970s. One of his qualities was really remarkable. Due to tremendous outgoing charm and energy he was able to win friends from every section of the community.'

'At the time when Bangladesh was in struggle for national

able to cross the language/ethnic divide and link with groups of Bengali workers in the North East in a way I have never seen anybody else do.'

Despite these tremendous qualities, Jack was not popular with the Healy/Torrance leadership of the WRP. The finance required to keep the daily paper going began to dominate the party, and areas were valued more in terms of the revenue they rendered to the London centre than the respect they were gaining from workers.

Jack was incapable of being a party tax-collector. In any case he was working with predominantly poor people who had little money to give. This created constant acrimony between the party in the area and the centre.

The party machine, instead of being an aid to us, became a burden and in many cases destroyed what was being built.

In 1972 Jack reached a crisis. He had always been unhappy at work, he was far too creative to be stifled in a school. He longed to work with his hands. He was a musician, and a painter.

The party had become more and more centred on the one activity — selling the daily paper. There was no time for individual development. Jack decided to decide to end his formal membership of the party and in 1978 he left his job as a teacher to become a self-employed landscape gardener.

Jack was intrinsically political and could not cease to be a Marxist, and he continued to read and to analyse. When we were in need of help he was always there to lend a hand.

In 1985, when Jack was told of the excesses of Healy, he was profoundly shocked, but he never hesitated in supporting the expulsion of Healy.

The collapse of Stalinism and the demise of the Soviet Union in the years that followed was for Jack a totally positive development opening up huge possibilities for the Trotskyist movement.

It was however when faced with death that he showed his

When I telephoned him six weeks ago his first words to me were: 'Can you get me some books? I can't find *Revolution Betrayed* and I want *Capital*.'

When we made our last journey together to the dockers' conference in Liverpool on 27 April, Jack was a very sick man but was determined to make the journey.

Without a trace of self-pity and with incredible objectivity Jack explained to me his illness and all the possible prognoses.

### Fly-fishing

We discussed all aspects of the economic crisis and the new situation that the working class was experiencing. We talked of the magic of fly-fishing, of his recent visit to see his daughter Helen in Australia, of the camping excursions he had enjoyed with his son Edward and the study the visit had provoked him to make of the history of the aboriginal people of Australia.

He was profoundly moved by the atmosphere of the dockers' conference, their fighting spirit and the important step they had taken in forming a committee to broaden the struggle. He was particularly moved to see his old comrades from the 1960s: Bill Hunter, Dot Gibson, Cliff Slaughter and Geoff Pilling.

Jack died on 14 June and was cremated after a secular service held at the Durham crematorium. The number that crowded into the chapel to take part in the service was testimony to the many people Jack's life touched and their warm regard for him.

Jack was a product of a North-East mining village and embodied all that is best in the human spirit. He was straightforward, honest and naturally friendly and totally unselfish. He proceeded through life confidently, sometimes to the point of recklessness, but always with an infectious enthusiasm.

Above all Jack was an optimist — a revolutionary optimist.

Our sympathies are with his first wife Anne, his daughters Ruth and Hellen. His second wife Margaret and son Edward, his





# Police open fire in Pakistan-occupied territory Kashmir's struggle for human rights

**A CURFEW has been imposed in the city of Gilgit and the army called in to take charge of the situation after police opened fire on a peaceful protest by thousands of local people against unemployment and against the sacking of 75 Kashmiri policemen.**

According to the *Daily Jang* (Pakistani paper in London) government buildings, the government guest house for high officials and the police station are burning.

Government vehicles have been set alight in response to yet another attack on the rights of the people in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (northern areas).

The Kashmir International Front reports that four people have been killed, dozens injured and 800 arrested. All have been taken to secret military interrogation centres.

The immediate cause of this latest outburst is the racist-sacking of the 75 Kashmiri policemen on grounds that they were not tall enough. The height of these policemen (from the part of Kashmir which borders on China) was not a problem when they joined the force!

Everybody knows that the real reason for their dismissal is that they cannot be relied upon to go along with violence against the people as they protest against unemployment and the rigged 30 June election.

On 21 June peaceful marchers from each of the district headquarters in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir started their journey to Muzaffarabad to highlight in a non-violent manner their struggle for human and democratic rights.

## Plight

In vain they have called upon world governments and the media to expose the plight of the people of Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, controlled from Islamabad.

According to the *Daily Jang* more than 7,000 unarmed protesters in Gilgit were fired on by security forces killing people and turning them hostile. The Pakistan authorities now use the situation, inflamed by the police, as a pretext to crush the democratic movement for social justice.

BY DOT GIBSON

In other areas, as thousands of people joined the long march to Muzaffarabad they were allowed to continue peacefully through the villages and towns of the countryside, but when they reached quiet and deserted areas 200 leaders were arrested and others were prevented from continuing their journey to the capital.

## Fear

Knowing the terrible tortures meted out by the Pakistan state police, there is great fear for the safety of those arrested.

Meanwhile people gathered together in peaceful protest in Muzaffarabad on 22 June awaiting the arrival of the long marchers.

The protest is over the rejection of nomination papers of election candidates in 36 constituencies because these candidates refuse to sign affidavits agreeing to Pakistan's occupation of their country.

The area of Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir is 32,000 square miles, but elections are taking place in only 4,000 square miles. Gilgit and Baltistan have been expressly excluded.

Resolutions of protest presented by Afzal Tahir, chair of the Kashmir International Front, were unanimously agreed at a meeting in London on 18 June.

The meeting brought together representatives of BOPIO, an Indian organisation representing the 'untouchables', the (socialist) National Liberation Front of Pakistan, the International Trade Union Solidarity Campaign, the Kashmir Cultural Forum UK, and the Hackney Kashmir Welfare Association. They decided to set up the 'International Solidarity Campaign for the Kashmiri Long Marchers'.

A similar committee has been

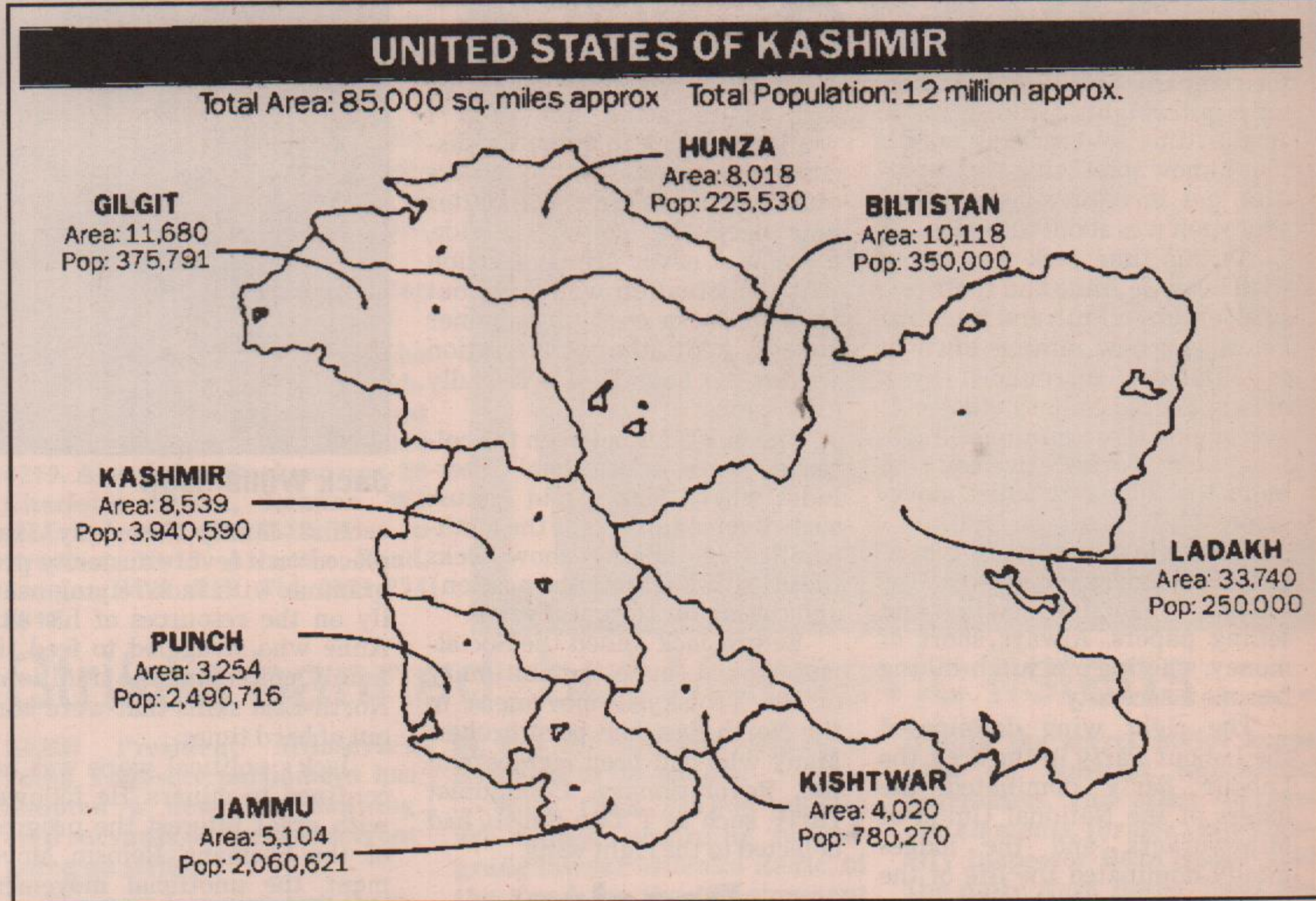
set up in the north of England by Kashmiri people.

To call upon the people of Kashmir to agree the ideology of the Pakistan occupation makes it impossible for a popular mandate to emerge in the territory.

'We demand that the rulers of Pakistan submit to their own admitted obligations and repeal the notorious and laughable condition which requires people to pledge their faith to a ridiculous impossibility,' said Tahir.

## PICKET

Pakistan High Commission,  
35 Lowndes Square,  
London SW1  
(Knightsbridge)  
Saturday 29 June,  
3pm-5pm and Sunday 30  
June, 12noon-3pm.



# 'Whole city was turned into a torture cell'

ABUSE of human rights in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir has been brought to light yet again by the testimonies of eye witnesses and eight imprisoned students.

These testimonies are published in 'Human Rights Report on Pakistan-held Kashmir', jointly compiled by the Jammu Kashmir National Awami Party and the Jammu Kashmir National Students Federation.

Khoja Hassan Mehmood, Mehmood Baig, Ashiq Mugal, Amir Khoja, Mumtaz Swati, Mohammad Salem Awan, Shaukat Dar and Javid Dar were either

arrested while taking part in a peaceful procession or were abducted in police raids on their homes between 8 and 11 February.

They report that, under the supervision of Sho Kabir, the officer in charge of Muzaffarabad police station, they were subjected to violent interrogation in which they were accused of 'getting money and arms from a foreign soil' and being 'led by foreign agents'.

They were offered 'money and an excellent job' if they would become police agents. If they

refused they 'would be subjected to unimaginable torture and if [they] died [the police] would not acknowledge [their] arrest and [their bodies] would be thrown into the river.'

We must expose the horrific torture inflicted on these students over a period of two to three weeks.

After removing their clothes they were hung upside down, kicked and beaten with rifle butts which turned their bodies 'into a blood bath'. When they lost consciousness they were placed on ice pallets.

On coming round again, they found their legs and hands were tied with rope. They were placed in a Shakanja (a machine to grip the human body in order to twist it) for two or more days.

Still tied they were sat in a chair and again fixed into a Shakanja. A roller crushed the leg of one student. One has a serious head injury as a result of crashing to the floor.

## Spread

One student tells of being made to stand on a Charpa'i (bedstead) while in the nude and told to spread his legs which were then tied up in that spread position while the Charpa'i was lifted up and a stick with chili powder was applied to his anus.

The stick was also stuffed into his mouth, breaking one of his teeth.

'When he said he was hungry human excrement was forced into his mouth. A small stick was inserted into his penis and he was then order to run.

The 123 eye witnesses named in the report say:

'It was the worst violence in

the history of Azad Kashmir by the police force against peaceful rallies. There are no words to describe the cruelty and barbarism by police and state secret agencies.

'Women were beaten on the road like a conquering army. What we were watching and listening to about Indian Kashmir, we have seen with our own eyes on the streets of Muzaffarabad... The whole city was turned into a torture cell.

'Students were subjected to torture in a way as though an invading army were advancing. Whenever students organised rallies in Degree College, police used to be there beforehand to attack and baton charge.

'Students would be followed to their homes. If not found then police took their fathers and brothers.

'On 11 February, a peaceful rally was attacked by police with commandos and in front of our eyes Hassan Mehmood and Mehmood Baig were severely beaten up and ruthlessly thrown into a vehicle and then police sat on their bodies. Shaukit Ganayia and Salem Awan were beaten up without any reason.'

The medical case sheets of the tortured students are included in the report and also the death certificate, dated 1 January 1996, of 38-year-old Muhammed Amjad. This reports that he died of 'cardio-pulmonary arrest' and gives as the underlying cause: 'shattered brain due to a bullet injury'.

More information can be obtained: c/o United Kashmir International, 234b Wood Street, London E17 3NA. Telephone: 0181-223 0560. Fax: 0181-925 2414.

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