

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 forcibly deported over the years 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 continuation of this onslaught. It is designed to put asylum seekers destitute on the street.

It can be defeated if the strength of the workers' movement is united with the wave of opposition 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 They had originally planned that from 8 January all rights to income support and other benefits would be withdrawn from most asylum seekers.

The Department of Social Security estimates this will affect 13,000 immediately with no exemptions for families with children, pregnant women, disabled or the elderly.

But the depth and strength of the opposition has forced them to delay this aspect of the Bill. Before implementation they will now have a full parliamentary debate in an attempt to buy off many of the liberal opponents who are trying to restrict the militancy of the street demonstrations.

The Bill gives Home Secretary Michael Howard the power to designate countries where it is claimed there is no serious risk of persecution — the so-called 'white list'. Howard's first list is India, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Ghana and Cyprus. There are serious allegations and evidence of human rights abuses in all these countries yet asylum claims will be deemed as 'without foundation'.

Nigeria was due to be included in the 'white list' but the world-wide revulsion at the executions of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his comrades forced the Tories to withdraw it — although of course, they con-

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!

BY JACKIE VANCE



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

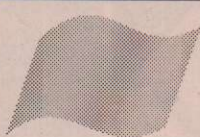
the lobbyists. Another pointed out: 'That kind of thing will lose Labour a great deal of support. Who needs Tories, when you've got the likes of him and you in the Labour Party leadership?'

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.

Inside left

'Red Emma' in Whitechapel

THERE'S a benefit in east London on Saturday night to raise money to publish anarchist Emma Goldman's autobiography, *Living My Life*, in Turkish.

The setting's appropriate. After leaving Tsarist Russia for the United States, Goldman worked in the garment trade, like many immigrants to the East End, then and since. She spoke at the Jubilee Street anarchist club in Stepney once.

'Libertarian' and anarcho-syndicalist ideas had a following among East End Jewish workers around the turn of the century. Sweatshop conditions fostered such militancy. So did the chauvinism of right-wing union leaders, Fabians, and the middle-class 'Marxists' heading the Social Democratic Federation (SDF).

On 13 May 1910 the SDF paper *Justice* carried a sensational allegation. It is not generally known that Emma Goldman is in the pay of the police, though the fact has leaked out recently. At one time she was employed by Mr. A.E. Olarovsky, of the Russian Secret Police in San Francisco, as an agent and spy.

Shop assistants' union leader John Turner, who had anarchist sympathies, protested. 'We naturally expected some such protest,' replied *Justice* editor Harry Quelch. 'We have however nothing to retract.' Quelch claimed his accusations were made on reliable authority. But rather than evidence, he offered generalities.

'We do not say that there are no good men and women among anarchists, but we do say that every anarchist who has been betrayed has been betrayed by a fellow-anarchist, who has been proved to be a police agent; police agents have been the instigators of almost every anarchist crime and plot... the principles of anarchism lend themselves to Azeffism. Azeff was Tsarist secret police chief - CP],... with few exceptions, Anarchists are either agents or dupes of the police.'

Members of the SDF and the Independent Labour Party backed Turner's protest. *Justice* retorted with a letter claiming 'the information concerning Emma Goldman' came from a statement 'made in my hearing by A.E. Olarovsky himself'. Signed 'fraternally, Your Informant', this was hardly convincing.

Battersea SDF resolved: 'the editor of *Justice* has failed to produce any justification for the charge against Emma Goldman, and they desire that the name of the informant be published, or a complete withdrawal of the statement, as the members of this branch desire the policy of the paper to be the same as its name implies - not Injustice.'

Quelch neither withdrew nor substantiated his accusation. In 1919, Goldman was deported to Soviet Russia. Tory papers here called her a 'Bolshevik' - something she never became. In 1924 'Red Emma' published *My Disillusion in Russia*, and returned to the United States. During the Spanish Civil War she supported the anarchists, and persuaded Paul Robeson to perform in a benefit for the CNT unions.

Had anything been unearthed from Tsarist files to incriminate Emma Goldman as a police agent, Soviet authorities would have used it. Under Stalin they normally manufactured such 'evidence'. The *Justice* episode anticipated Stalinist methods, and the 'agent' stories used by the late Gerry Healy and his pupils.

Saturday's benefit, at the Davnall Centre, promises Kurdish, Turkish and Jewish folk groups, and the North London Anarcho-Syndicalist Choir (do they sing in tune without a conductor?). I don't suppose anyone's organising a benefit for Quelch.

Charlie Pottins

NUREMBERG: DEATH TO NAZI CRIMINAL 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)

THE NUREMBERG TRIAL, WHICH BEGAN ON 20 NOVEMBER 1945, HAS ENDED. GOERING, RIBBENTROP, STREICHER AND OTHERS - LEADERS OF FASCIST GERMANY, SUPPORTED AND ENCOURAGED BY ALLIED STATESMEN IN THEIR DAY - HAVE BEEN SENTENCED TO DEATH OR TO LONG TERMS OF IMPRISONMENT.

BUT SHACHT, VON PAPEN AND FRITSCH 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 COUNTERPARTS 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 harassed 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 underline it.

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 class'.

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

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 Nuremberg 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 counter-accusation, 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.

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 Nazis.

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

Hypocrisy of Allies

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 Kieselbach, according to *Tribune* 6

September a declared opponent of de-Nazification - was placed by British imperialism in charge of the German 'Central Office of Justice'.

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 States.

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

CRIMINALS ALLIED WAR GUILT

COMMUNIST APPEAL

OCTOBER, 1990

Price 2d.

Organ of the
Revolutionary
Communist Party
BRITISH SECTION of the
4th INTERNATIONAL

CRIMINALS TO COVER RELEASE THE PARATROOPERS

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 Bolshevism.

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 rallies'.

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 recent 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 America that German imperialism 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 them.

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 of 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 when 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 this invasion by quoting the approving telegram which Stalin sent Ribbentrop when the pact was signed.

'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' — Hitler

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 world.'

Embarrassing 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 embarrassing to those in high places in Britain, America and the Soviet Union.

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 irrelevant.

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 system.

And let no worker believe those buralities 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 bureaucracy.

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 bureaucracy 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 thing of the past:

'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 eastern Europe.

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 it will take a further 12 months for that production to regain its 1989 level.

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, com-

pared with the figure of 3.6 million as recently as November.

And this rise is occurring when the economy is in a so-called 'up-swing', 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 figure 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 thousands while the middle-sized companies, the so-called Mittelstand, have still not recovered from the last recession. Nor has it reverted to its traditional role of absorbing the country's unemployed. In addition the decade-long expansion of the building industry, artificially propelled 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 yet. 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

Nice friends they have, these Tories SAUDI BRUTALITY, BRITISH BUSINESS

WHEN Shadia el-Deen heard that her 10 year-old son Alaa had suffered a brain haemorrhage, 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 London.

Since coming to this country in September, she says, she only received 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 people.'

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, unwelcoming unless you've got loads of money.

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

Brutality towards the servants 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 of the Middle Ages.

Foreign workers there have been punished for holding religious services, and police raided their children's Christmas parties.

Nearly 200 people were publicly executed last year, and others given public floggings.

Raped

Sarah Balabagan, a 16-year old Filipina housemaid, was sentenced to death for killing her employer in self-defence when she was 14, as he tried to rape her. Following an appeal, the family agreed to accept blood-money, and she was flogged instead.

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 among her belongings.

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 right to assembly.

The Saudis have bought much of the Arab media in London and elsewhere.

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 deportation.

Saudi Arabia is a source of huge wealth, from oil and big arms contracts, for a few influen-

tial people. Companies like Vickers, GKN, GEC, Rolls Royce and British Aerospace are supplying the Saudis with Tornado fighters, tanks and helicopters under the £20 billion al-Yamamah 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 by the Pergau aid deal in Malaysia.)

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-Yamamah 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 dissident....'

'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.

The memorandum was addressed to David Hastie, Vickers director of international affairs, who also spent time at the MoD. The Scott inquiry into arms for Iraq heard that the minister seconded him to British Aerospace in 1989 so he could attend the Baghdad air show.

While 50,000 British troops were defending Saudi Arabia against Saddam Hussein in the Gulf War, the men in Whitehall and the boardrooms who had supplied both sides knew that whoever lost, it wouldn't be them.

If Labour wasn't intent on joining them it would denounce the Tories' hypocrisy about 'protecting jobs', and expose the merchants of death conspiring behind the rotten facade of Westminster 'democracy'.

It's time for working people in Britain and the Middle East to apply something like the traditional Saudi way with thieves to those with their hands in our pocket. Time we servants took stick to our masters!



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 harassed.'

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

Please send solidarity messages and donations to:
Amirul Haque Amin, General Secretary, National Garment Workers Federation, GPO Box 864, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Fax: Attn. Amin 880-2-867485

Workers Press
SUBSCRIBE
to the socialist weekly that tells the truth

Please send me
 10 issues for £5.60
 50 issues for £27.60

INTERNATIONAL RATES: Europe and Near East, £7.70 for 10 issues, 50 for £38.50; Africa, Americas and India £12.70 for 10 issues, 50 for £63.50; Australia, Japan and E Asia 10 issues for £13.70, 50 for £68.50.

Name

Address

I enclose £..... for my subscription, and
an extra donation of £.....

Make cheques, POs payable to Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW8 1YB.