

f future

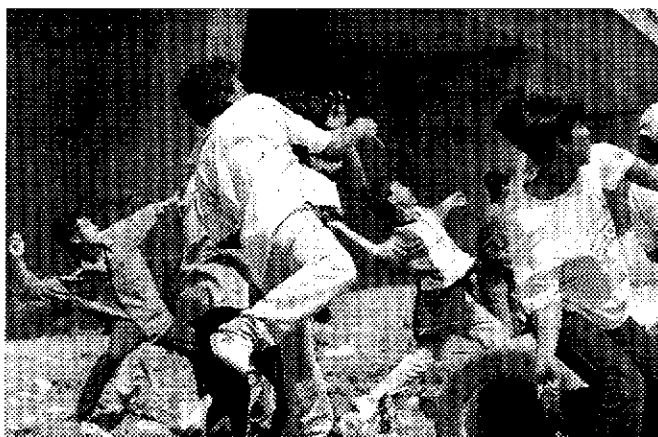
ASIA CRISIS HEADS WEST

The Asian economic and financial crisis, which has brought social and political upheaval in its wake, is beginning to take its toll on the British economy, which is itself in recession.

UK exports to South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia have fallen by half compared with a year ago. The trade deficit widened in March and April and exports in May were at a 15-year low.

British banks were the biggest foreign investors in Indonesia last year. The overthrow of the dictator Suharto came amidst the inability of Indonesia to meet its debts.

Meanwhile, manufacturing employers are sacking workers as export orders decline, hit by



Indonesian youth helping to bring down Suharto

the high rate of the pound and the slump in Asia.

The CBI, the employers' organisation, estimates that 100,000 manufacturing jobs will be lost between now and the end of next year. British Steel is set to shed 12,500 jobs by March 2001.

Attempts to isolate the Asian

crisis from Europe and North America will fail because the world economy is now deeply inter-connected. America is facing a massive surge in imports from cheaper Asian exports while its own hi-tech industries go into slump.

Intel, the manufacturer of most of the micro-processors

used in computers, is sacking 3,000 people and its shares have lost one-fifth of their value since February.

Stock markets throughout the world have see-sawed violently in recent weeks as tension rises in country after country.

In the last month, dramatic changes have swept the world. In **Indonesia**, the collapse of the economy and the demands of the International Monetary Fund brought hundreds of thousands of students and workers on to the streets, forcing Suharto to step down, after a 30-year dictatorship.

Unemployment will reach 15 million by the end of the year, 17% of the workforce. The economy is expected to contract by 10%, while inflation will reach 85%. ☺

Strikes as government policies bite

Support for strike action by firefighters and rail workers against the impact of New Labour's spending and transport policies is mounting.

National sympathy action is expected if the Labour-led Essex council carries out its threat to sack firefighters staging strikes against job cuts.

The council brought in the army on June 9 at vast expense rather than abandon plans to cut 16 jobs at stations throughout the county. Essex is one of a number of councils hit by New Labour's spending cuts. Tony Wright, Labour leader of the authority, which rules with Liberal Democrat

support, said he could not rule out dismissals: "It depends on how long the dispute goes on."

Ken Cameron, general secretary of the Fire Brigades Union, warned: "There is a serious threat that this could turn into a national strike, which we obviously wish to avoid."

Two 24-hour stoppages were planned for June as Essex firefighters battled against a third year of budget cuts.

Keith Hanscombe of the Essex FBU claimed the council could maintain the service from its reserves. He added: "If we do nothing now, there will be a worse service for us all in the future."

Meanwhile, Tube and railway workers have voted to take strike action against threats to jobs and conditions posed by New Labour's privatisation plans and Railtrack's new contracts.

Members of the Rail Maritime and Transport (RMT) union voted by 2,471 (84.2 per cent) to 462 to take action on the Underground. The union's executive then called a 48-hour strike.

The union accused London Underground of refusing to meet to discuss the conditions of workers when parts of the network are privatised under plans announced by John Prescott.

Meanwhile, RMT's 9,000 track maintenance workers have voted overwhelmingly to strike for a total of 11 days in June.

They are angry at the terms of pay restructuring proposals put forward by nine engineering companies under contract to Railtrack.

Jimmy Knapp, union general secretary, said the mainline workers' disruption would have a "considerable impact" on services.

He accused the employers of "asking far too much" of staff, some of whom stood to lose £40 a week while facing more frequent "unsocial hours" shifts. ■

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ASIA CRISIS HEADS WEST

It is thought that 75% of all bank loans cannot be repaid.

In **South Korea**, 100,000 workers staged strikes on May 27-28 against layoffs running at 1,000 a day following the economic and financial collapse. The government, which has only just come to power with the support of workers, responded with arrests and threats to prosecute 143 union leaders. The South Korean Confederation of Trade Unions called for an indefinite strike from June 10.

Unemployment in **Japan** – the world's second largest economy – is at a post-war high. The real total is estimated at over 8.5%. Exports are plummeting at an annual rate of 18% because of the slump in demand in other Asian countries.

Five of Japan's largest banks have had their international stability ratings downgraded after the credit agency Moody's described them as in a slow-motion collapse with a "third wave" of economic crisis threatening "to overwhelm many banks". One analyst commented that the crisis in Japan will aggravate the Asian financial crisis and "knock the global economy off its tracks".



In **Hong Kong**, the economy shrank 2% in the first quarter, its first contraction in 13 years. "We are facing unprecedented economic upheaval," said Sir Donald Tsang, the territory's top financial official. The crisis was prompted by a property slump, and withdrawals by Japanese banks.

Russia is going through a financial melt-down, with interest rates set at 150% in June to prevent a total collapse of the rouble. The spread of the Asia crisis coincided with the failure of a government

effort to sell off an energy company to pay wages owed to workers. A slump in oil prices, together with a dramatic fall in government revenue, has produced state bankruptcy in an economy dominated by what one advisor called "robber barons" who have milked the country dry. Miners responded by blockading railway lines and demanding the resignation of Yeltsin over non-payment of wages. Teachers and other professional workers in Moscow also took strike action. Yeltsin reacted by trying to muzzle the media.

In **India** the rupee hit a record low while in **Pakistan**, all foreign exchange dealings were suspended following nuclear tests by both countries and the threat of war.

In **Denmark**, workers staged a two-week general strike over pay and conditions, while 6,000 truck drivers defied government threats and took action in **Norway**. In **France**, transport and pilot unions hit Air France with action over threats to cut salaries. In **Greece** finance staff, airline staff and public sector workers struck against privatisation measures aimed at driving Greece into the European currency by the year 2000. ■

Nationalism and the nuclear bomb

The testing of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan and the deepening political crisis in the region with the increased threat of war, expresses in a most dangerous form the rapid development of global economic slump.

The inability of the national capitalist governments of India and Pakistan to tackle the growing poverty and inequality in their countries has prompted them to whip up nationalist fervour with nuclear weapons.

Unable to tackle the multi-nationals in India, the right-wing BJP government came to power this year because Congress, which led the struggle for independence, had betrayed the masses with nepotism and corruption in place of socialist policies. In Pakistan, the Sharif government assumed office after yet another betrayal by the Bhutto family, with its penchant for swindling and deals with the military. Benazir Bhutto left office in 1994 with military spending amounting to 25% of Pakistan's limited annual wealth. She is a frequent visitor to expensive Knightsbridge stores.

The hypocrisy of imperialism is clear for all to see. Britain, France and the United States have no intention of abandoning their nuclear weapons. In fact, the USA and its Stalinist friends in Beijing helped Pakistan with its bomb and China supplied the missiles as part of its plan to isolate India. The bleatings about the

"Hindu" bomb or the "Islamic" bomb betray colonial racism of the worst type and economic sanctions must be opposed.

But the nuclear bombs of India and Pakistan are not aimed at imperialism. In fact, they give imperialism an excuse to hold on to theirs. The victims of any nuclear war in the region will be the impoverished workers and peasants of both countries. The national rights of the many peoples in both countries cannot be defended through military might by anti-working class governments.

Quite the opposite is true. In Pakistan, the tests were carried out in Baluchistan, where an oppressed minority struggles for its rights. India used its tests to send a signal that it has no answer to the Kashmir question except force.

As the economic crisis deepens, the threat of war grows on an international scale, not just in India and Pakistan. Capitalism, either of the imperialist or nationalist variety, hastens this process.

To end the testing and the manufacture of nuclear bombs, therefore, requires socialists and workers to struggle for the overthrow of their respective capitalist governments in London, Washington, New Dehli and Islamabad. The horror that nuclear war would bring makes this an extremely urgent task.

Paul Feldman, Editor

Unions must break with New Labour

It is time for the trade unions to think seriously about breaking their links with New Labour and withdrawing their financial support.

The Labour Party was a creation of the unions in 1900, built to win reforms in parliament; but New Labour is an openly capitalist government, an enemy of the trade union movement and therefore of the working class itself.

The transformation of Old Labour into New Labour began with the 1974-79 Wilson/Callaghan government. It came into office after the miners brought down the Heath government, and then it refused to repeal Tory anti-union laws.

The engineers threatened a national strike when they were fined by the courts, and the TUC talked of a General Strike. Labour gave way and repealed the laws. But Callaghan's government went on to make deep spending cuts demanded by the International Monetary Fund and to use

troops against public sector and firefighters' strikes.

Blair's government has not only refused to repeal the series of anti-union laws from the 18 years of Tory government but slapped the unions in the face over recognition and low wages.

Unions will have to win the support of 40% of those entitled to vote before employers will grant recognition. Simple majorities are, however, good enough to get elected as an MP. And only one in four Londoners voted "Yes" in the recent referendum on having a mayor and elected assembly in the capital.

Union demands for a minimum wage of £4.60 have been answered with the plan for £3.60 an hour, with nothing for 16-18 years olds and a lower rate for under-25s. John Edmonds, leader of the GMB union, said it would turn under-21s into "second class citizens".

Unison's Rodney Bickerstaffe made

similar comments, although his union had a representative on the commission which made the proposal. She declined to issue a minority report. No wonder Sir Colin Marshall, chairman of the Confederation of British Industry, with Blair sitting beside him, spoke of "our largely mutual philosophy".

This is an employers' government and words of rebuke from union leaders are not even hot air. It is time for the union leaders to break with the capitalist New Labour government and join the debate about an alternative to Blairism.

Rail workers and firefighters have voted to strike against cuts and privatisation, showing they are not tied to Blair.

Socialist Future calls on all trade unionists to join our campaign for a new revolutionary, socialist party in Britain and internationally, and to remove those leaders who refuse to fight New Labour.

John Eden

New party project gets under way

The North East London Committee of the project for a new socialist party has held a successful first meeting.

It discussed the rapid changes in the global economic and financial situation, and agreed that the forces that have produced the crisis in South-east Asia are fundamental and international

This is a unique situation because the global economy has never been so integrated or involved so much of the planet.

It also includes the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe where the crisis has been sharply felt with a collapse of the Russian stock exchange and the imposition of 150% interest rates to support the collapsing value of the rouble.

For us here in Britain this global process offers us an enormous opportunity to organise change. When people's ideas are shaken up they are ready to discuss alternatives to the status quo.

Our party should not be of a parliamentary type peddling the illusion

that sending MPs to Westminster is going to change anything. We may stand in elections but we are not seeking change through that route.

The timing of our work is critical. Had there been a leadership in Indonesia capable of leading the masses to power, there could have been a real change there as opposed to the formation of this new capitalist government.

A plan to extend membership of the committee was agreed, along with proposals for fund-raising and further development of the Manifesto. Propaganda work is to include presentations of the project for a new party on CD-Rom and video. ■

● **Workers, professional people and youth attending a social event in Luton decided to set up the Bedfordshire Committee for a new socialist party. They plan to expand their work in the area and work closely with the other committees on developing the project.**

Socialist Future is sponsoring a project for launching a new party in 1998. The need for an alternative to New Labour has become more urgent as disillusionment with the government's policies increases rapidly. To start a discussion about what kind of party is needed, *Socialist Future* has put forward a number of basic principles upon which it would be founded.

- a commitment to socialist principles and the historical achievements of workers and revolutionaries in every country
- a commitment to lead a struggle for power as the only way to end capitalism
- a constitution that places obligations, as well as conferring democratic rights, on its members
- an understanding that Marxism as a living theory to guide political action is central to the party's work
- a leadership that is decisive, responsive and prepared to develop policies as situations change
- a united front with all those inside and outside the Labour Party who come into conflict with the Blair government
- an agreement that building a new socialist International is the way forward to meet the challenge of global capitalism
- a party programme that appeals to working people, which is based on their having control of economic, social and political life, freeing resources and technology from the profit frenzy.

JOIN

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TODAY

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manifesto

for a new socialist party

The lives, futures and aspirations of working people in Britain and world-wide are subject to the control of small groups of multi-national companies.

They switch production from country to country, leaving unemployment in their wake. Workers are obliged to accept lower wages and fixed or no contracts in the global jobs auction.

As the executives and directors of these corporate giants grow bloated on multi-million pound salaries, workers in factories, shops and offices turn in longer and longer hours with no security whatsoever. Meanwhile, public services like schools, the NHS and social security provision are more and more run like businesses, driven by cost and not need.

Social inequality in Britain is now greater than at any time since the Industrial Revolution as the rich get richer and the vast majority struggle to live. Yet the globalised capitalist system is now on the edge of a precipice, facing the greatest slump in its history. The South-east Asia economic and financial collapse is spreading outwards, shedding millions of jobs and provoking social conflict.

The truth is that capitalism cannot control what the revolution in technology has helped it produce – a

fantastic expansion of productive potential. What could benefit humanity is, instead, a threat to its future.

If we could liberate the technology and the new production methods from the grip of a handful of corporations, it would be possible to satisfy human needs rapidly. Social ownership and control could create a new dynamic in history, free from the tyranny of profit and greed.

Similarly, people's savings and pension plans are tied to the fate of the stock markets, which are heading for a big crash. The only way to secure their future is to end speculation and put pension funds and other savings under the control of contributors and depositors.

Political parties which once claimed to represent workers' interests are willing servants of these multi-nationals. New Labour under Tony Blair is just such a case. It cuts benefits, is anti-union, is extending privatisation to the Tube and the NHS and does behind-the-scenes deals with the multi-nationals. The millions who swept the Tories out in May 1997 did not vote for this. We can build a new movement based on the mass rejection of Toryism and a general loathing of big business and finance.

Socialist Future has, therefore, launched a project for a new Party in Britain and internationally, to organise a challenge to the multi-nationals and win support to take their power away and hand it to the people.

Read our suggested Programme for a New Party and join the project!

Socialist Future magazine presents this manifesto as the first step towards developing a socialist programme for the 21st century.

This is a draft, presented for discussion, amendment and action.

Send your views by post to *Socialist Future* PO Box 942, London SW1V 2AR or by e.mail to sfg@sfuture.demon.co.uk

Some frequently asked questions

Q WHAT IS SOCIALISM?

A The means of production and employment, as well as finance, will be owned, controlled and managed by those who work in industry, commerce, education, health care, transport, entertainment, the arts, culture and other sectors. Priorities for production and public spending will be decided by elected committees of producers, consumers and users to form the basis for local, regional and national plans. Parliament and capitalist state structures will be replaced by new bodies based on mass democratic control and directly representing different sections in society. The legal, police and military systems, which exist to protect and reinforce private ownership, will also be reorganised, and the monarchy will be scrapped.

Q HOW WOULD THE ECONOMY BE REORGANISED?

A Instead of putting people out of work, new technology would be used to reduce working hours with no loss of pay. The anarchy of the multi-national market economy would be replaced by planned production for need and not for profit. Priorities would be housing, food, education, medical care, social provision, transport, sport and culture. Financial institutions like banks, building societies and the pension funds would be placed under social control with full protection for depositors and contributors. These resources would be switched to public projects.

Q SURELY WHAT HAPPENED IN THE SOVIET UNION PROVES SOCIALISM CAN'T WORK?

A When the Russian Revolution took place in 1917, 80% of the country were peasants. There were no democratic traditions and the country became isolated. Stalin and his supporters undermined the revolution and imposed a dictatorship. As a result, socialism was never reached and the dictatorship collapsed. Britain has a far more advanced economy than Russia did in 1917 and technology is capable of launching a rapid improvement in living standards.

Q IS IT REALLY NECESSARY TO HAVE A REVOLUTION TO ACHIEVE SOCIALISM? WHY CAN'T WE VOTE THEM OUT?

A History has shown that powerful classes based on privilege and wealth do not give up their power without a struggle and eventually have to be overthrown. But if a new party builds mass support for change, the creation of a socialist society could be achieved in a relatively peaceful way, as it is in the interests of the vast majority.

Q WITHOUT THE PROFIT MOTIVE, WHAT INCENTIVES WILL THERE BE?

A Profits are only an incentive for the small minority of capitalists and shareholders. The vast majority simply work to earn a wage. Technology will have a new "incentive" – to satisfy human needs, help reduce the working week and

improve the quality of life. The way medical science develops in the NHS shows you don't need a profit motive to make progress.

Q WOULD SOCIALISM ABOLISH THE MARKET?

A At the moment, goods are put on the market in the hope they will sell. Huge expenditure on advertising tries to get people to buy more than they actually need through credit (and debt!). As a result there is huge waste, unsold goods pile up, people lose their jobs and economies go into slump. In a socialist economy, the mechanism of the market would play second place to a plan for the economy. The market will be a means of distributing goods that committees of producers and consumers have decided are needed. If people don't buy the goods, priorities will have to change.

Q WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO SMALL BUSINESS AND SHOPS?

A They will not be affected by socialist forms of ownership. The real targets are the big corporations and financial institutions which dominate the economy. A socialist economy would encourage co-operative forms of enterprise.

Q WILL EVERYONE EARN THE SAME?

A No. But the great inequalities that now exist would end. A socialist society could not allow a nurse to scrape by while consultants earned large sums.

Q HOW CAN WE TAKE OVER MULTINATIONALS IF THEY OPERATE ON A GLOBAL BASIS?

A Capitalist owners cannot produce without workers and certainly cannot make profits without them. Let the capitalists go away. We will still have the skills of workers and the technology to maintain and run production.

A socialist programme for the 21st century

THE ECONOMY

Today there is growing inequality, with fewer and fewer companies controlling the economy. Finance is mostly used to speculate and create further instability.

We propose:

- ❑ Social ownership of the major companies
- ❑ Control and management of the workplace by those who work in them and those who buy products or use services
- ❑ A reduction in hours with no loss of pay to end unemployment
- ❑ The use of technology to cut the working week
- ❑ Groups of producers and service workers to formulate local, regional and national plans for the economy
- ❑ Wage levels determined by those who work in the sector as part of the plan
- ❑ Abolition of financial speculation
- ❑ All financial resources to come under social control and management

EDUCATION

Education, like everything else, is dominated by cost pressures and the needs of industry. **We propose:**

- The running of all educational institutions by committees of staff, students and parents
- Limits on class sizes decided by teachers and students
- An emphasis on creative learning, the restoration of arts subjects to the primary curriculum
- Closing down of fee-paying education and its integration into the state sector
- An end to mass exclusion of "difficult" pupils and proper support for those with learning problems
- Full living grant for post-16 students. Abolition of fees
- Free adult education

LONE PARENTS

Lone parents have no rights under this society and face either poverty wages or poverty at home. **We propose:**

- The right to bring up children is treated as work and paid accordingly by the state
- Those who work part-time will have their income made up to the average salary by the state
- Free childcare up to school age

PENSIONS AND CARE

Retired people often live in abject poverty on miserly pensions or lose their savings when they go into care. **We propose:**

- ❑ Social ownership of pension funds to stop speculators losing people's contributions through gambling on the stock market.
- ❑ Minimum pensions to be set at the average wage and retirement reduced to 60
- ❑ Free care either in the home or in residential accommodation for older people unable to look after themselves

SOCIAL SECURITY

The present system is designed to humiliate people and drive them into low-paid jobs. **We propose:**

- ❑ An end to means-testing. All benefits to be paid at average wage levels. Retraining at full pay

FOOD

Most of what we eat is saturated with chemicals and dangerous. Scandals like BSE and salmonella are the result of intensive farming driven on by the supermarket chains. **We propose:**

- The phasing out of intensive farming based on abuse of nitrates and phosphates

- An end to chemical treatment of food
- The use of the super-profits of the supermarkets to produce organic food at affordable prices
- End the maltreatment of animals
- The food industry to be placed under the control of consumers and farm workers
- No application of new scientific techniques without full testing under public scrutiny

ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

The planet is threatened by environmental catastrophe. Big US oil companies are determined to wreck any controls. **We propose:**

- Development of non-petrol cars and a ban on the use of existing cars in city centres
- Protected cycle lanes along all major roads
- Rapid development of integrated and "clean" public transport at affordable prices
- Intensive research into alternative energy forms to replace nuclear and fossil fuels
- Protection of the countryside from intensive cultivation
- Public right of access for walking and rambling

HEALTH

The NHS is being torn apart for lack of resources while the big drugs companies make super-profits. Dental care is for the wealthy. **We propose:**

- ❑ Social ownership of the drugs monopolies and the use of their profits to expand the NHS
- ❑ An end to privileged private care and its integration into the NHS
- ❑ Hospitals placed under the control of staff and patient representatives
- ❑ Free prescriptions, dental and eye care

A socialist programme for the 21st century

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Big business and the arms industry uses science for its own ends. When things go wrong, it seems that science is the threat. **We propose:**

- Take the profit out of science
- All scientific discoveries to be put at the disposal of society
- No application of breakthroughs without full testing free from commercial pressure
- The use of technology to improve the quality of life by, for example, reducing working hours

HOUSING

Many people either live in overcrowded conditions, pay extremely high rents or mortgages or are homeless. **We propose:**

- Requisition of all empty properties to house the homeless and those in urgent need
- The building of 100,000 new homes for rent each year
- Housing costs to be set at no more than 15% of net income
- Social ownership of the building societies, which are now just profit-hungry banks
- Mortgage debt reduced by revaluing homes to reflect the cost of their replacement rather than market value. Major reduction in rents
- All land to be owned and controlled by elected local bodies

ARTS AND CULTURE

Culture is, like everything else, dominated by profits. As a result, creative talent is crowded out.

We propose:

- Local bodies to make funds available for co-operative facilities for use by and employment of creative artists
- Musicians, painters, writers, film-makers and others to have the right to state assistance without controls or censorship

- Free entrance to galleries and museums
- Access to entertainment at reasonable prices
- An end to advertising-driven TV programming

SPORT

Sport is now big business. Ordinary fans can hardly afford to watch, either live or on TV. **We propose:**

- An end to the control of football and other clubs by big business and globalised TV companies
- Sport to be run and controlled by committees of players, fans and administrators
- Admission to events to be at prices available to all
- An end to the buying and selling of players and free movement between clubs
- A rapid expansion of playing fields, swimming pools and other facilities with free access for local people

THE STATE

The existing state oppresses people and creates political and social apathy. Its role is to uphold privilege, profiteering and exploitation. **We propose:**

- Replacing the parliamentary talking-shop with powerful new local, regional and national councils of working people.
- Direct representation of different sections of the community: workplaces, the young and the elderly, minority peoples, small traders, lone parents, creative workers, the disabled and unemployed.
- Delegates to regional and national bodies to constitute the other tiers of government. All delegates will be paid an average salary and subject to annual election
- National resources will be devolved to local and regional bodies on the basis of need

- Abolition of the monarchy and hereditary privilege
- A different type of police force, accountable to and controlled by the local community
- Closing down the secret spy organisations MI5, MI6 and GCHQ and making public their files on people. A new armed forces accountable to popular political control.
- Closing down detention centres for refugees and an end to immigration controls for workers and asylum seekers
- An end to the brutalisation of people in prisons and an emphasis on rehabilitation

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

Democracy in Britain is a fiction. The trade unions have no legal powers, the newspapers are controlled by a few millionaires and the real decisions are taken behind closed doors. **We propose:**

- The complete independence of the trade unions from state interference, with automatic recognition in the workplace
- Constitutional rights to freedom of speech, assembly, asylum and to form political organisations
- Basic rights to work, housing and health

INTERNATIONAL POLICY

International policy at present is dominated by the interests of the multi-nationals. **We propose:**

- Cancellation of debts owed to the capitalist banks by developing countries
- Support for the right of nations to self-determination
- Free technological and other support to developing countries
- The publication of all secret treaties
- A perspective of a socialist Europe to replace the capitalist European Union

Low-tech finesse

BY CORINNA LOTZ

Goro Hasegawa's sculptures seem to arise from a process of natural growth. They do not conform to a rigid pre-planned structure. Instead they are the result of painstakingly adding on little by little.

Out of this simple process of adding quantity to quantity, some impressive objects emerge. Goro has just completed the BA degree course at London University's Slade School of Art. He is one of the most original and thought-provoking of the young artists to graduate this summer. Like some of his

contemporaries, he does not make many objects which can be bought and sold. Instead, they are made for certain locations, often public places, where people can only see them for limited periods of time.

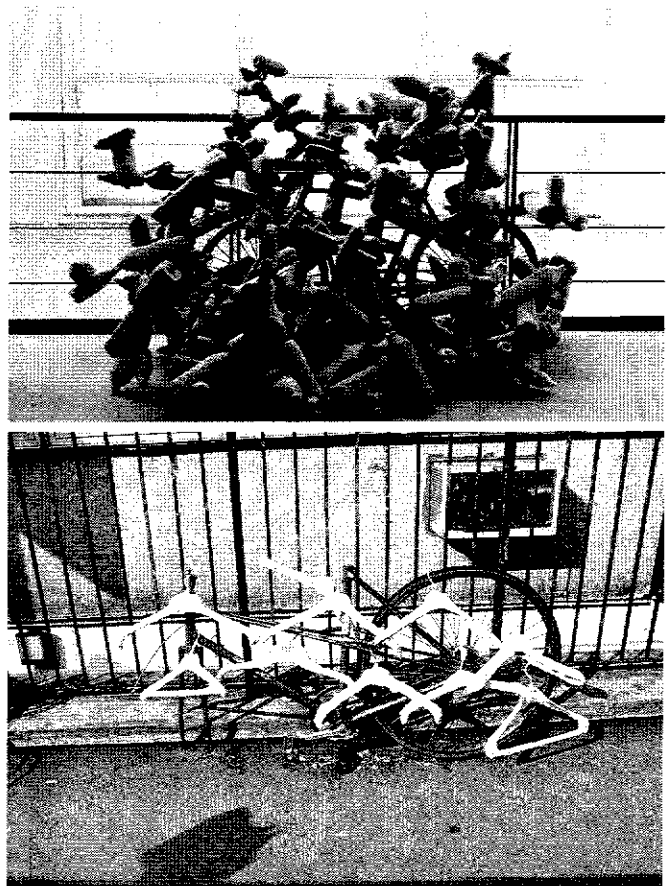
This gives them an immediacy, in which there can be an artistic or political message. The simple activity of attaching one object or piece of matter to another is systematically explored. The result of such work, which in each part can be quite boring and apparently pointless, can result in a spectacular, provocative or intriguing production.

Hasegawa's work shows the influence of his instructor, Phyllida Barlow, a pioneering installation artist.

He is also inspired by Franz Kafka's writings on *The Great Wall of China*. Kafka describes how workers would spend months or even years in what seemed an endless and even hopeless toil. To encourage the builders, a festivity was organised to celebrate the completion of 500 yards.

He has a refreshing modesty of approach, which brings him close to those who live at the margins of society and on the streets. Hasegawa based one installation on Hans Christian Andersen's sad story of *The Little Match Girl*, and relates it to the homeless who are forced to live on pavements.

His wall-sculpture, which was only seen by people passing through the corridors of University College, was made from thousands of matches. "Matchboxes and



matches are a symbol of labour for me, in which mass production makes cheaper and cheaper objects," he says.

He uses things that are very cheap or that have been thrown away, such as empty plastic bottles, coat hangers or stick-on labels. By gathering them and re-forming them, he shows that even the most mundane and useless thing can have a use, and its own beauty.

Covering empty water bottles with papier-mâché seems a simple, even childish process. In Hasegawa's hands, the bottles acquire a new life.

The rough, grey tones and texture of the raw papier-mâché makes the attached bottles look like cactus plants, with the pale blues and greens

of the original plastic showing through at the ends, providing a colour contrast.

Hasegawa also uses materials such as fishing lines, twigs and wires to create organic flows and movement.

The low-tech image, the sense of construction, the use of re-cycled materials, combined with a light, even feathery touch, a delicate sense of composition, sensitivity to colour and texture brings together oriental finesse with the most contemporary installation ideas.

There are no gimmicks or commercialism, but a concentration on structure and art as a process of discovery, rather than reiterating the already known. ■

AUBREY WILLIAMS RETROSPECTIVE

Born in Georgetown, Guyana in 1926, Aubrey Williams was a pioneer in both painting and politics. In the 1940s, he led small farmers to claim their rights against the British-owned sugar plantations, and was banished to a remote area of Guyana. There he came into contact with the native Warrau tribe. Later he became part of the New Vision group in Britain, bringing with him unique ideas of colour and form. Williams was also a founder-member of the Caribbean Artists Movement. His first British retrospective is at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, until 16 August, open Tue-Sun 11-5, Wed until 8pm, admission free.

Kurdistan's hidden history



Kurdistan: In the Shadow of History

by Susan Meiselas

published by Random House, New York

When the victorious imperialist powers divided up the Middle East at the end of World War I they erased Kurdistan from the map of the world.

The Paris Peace Conference of 1919 had accepted a proposition from US President Wilson that nationalities formerly under the rule of the Ottoman empire should "be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development".

The Kurdish delegation, led by General Sherif Pasha, asked that the Wilsonian principle be applied to the Kurds, who had sustained an integrated and independent society and culture throughout the period of Ottoman rule.

In a memorandum to the conference they wrote: "We demand that independence which is our birthright and which alone will permit us to fight our way along the road of progress and civilisation, to turn to account the resources of our country and to live in peace with our neighbours."

They asked for Kurdistan to be established within historic frontiers and in accordance with the principle of nationality, including all those territories where the Kurds were the majority.

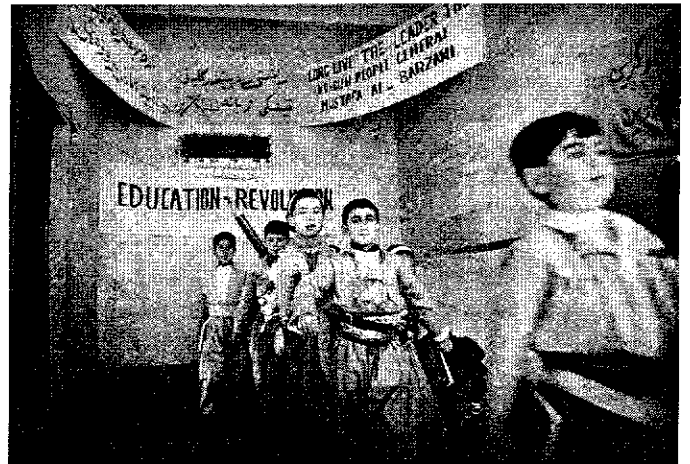
But imperialist interests, in particular the interests of oil companies, overrode national rights. Since that time the Kurds have lived a divided existence in Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and the Transcaucasian and Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union. The new nation states established by imperialist agreement went on to carve out their own national identity, but often at the expense of minorities. The Kurdish culture and language were repressed and the very existence of the Kurds as a people denied.

Magnum photographer Susan Meiselas first went to the Kurdish area of Iraq after the Gulf War and was horrified by the devastation she saw. As she grew to know and respect the Kurdish people and their struggle, she realised the importance of defending historic truth against those who wanted to rewrite it. She began to trawl the archives and to meet with people all over the world, seeking out material to re-establish the historic existence of the Kurds as a nation.

The many-layered book she has produced is so comprehensive as to be at least the foundation stone for a Kurdish national archive. It includes oral histories, national myths, government



Opposite page, top left: *Pesh Merga rally in Iraq, 1974*; top right *Shaikh Abdul Kadir, Mesopotamia 1920s*. This page above: *A Kurdish girl, Persia, ca 1890-1910*; right top to bottom *Leyla Zana, a member of the Turkish parliament, on trial in 1993 for backing Kurdish rights and sentenced to fifteen years in prison*; *Schools offering education in the Kurdish language are a major part of the struggle, Iraq, 1970s*; *Babies in swaddling, Iraq, 1960s*.



documents, newspaper cuttings and photographs taken by travellers, missionaries, anthropologists, colonial administrators and journalists, as well as Kurds themselves.

The material stretches from the late 19th century to the present day and the commentary by Martin van Bruinessen gives an excellent summary of Kurdish history.

The full horror of the repression of the Kurds is recorded, but also their courageous struggle for national rights which continues today. A picture emerges of a proud and independent nation, generous to the travelling foreigner but protective of their own identity.

Susan Meiselas documents some of the adventures she had in gathering her material. Not only were her own contemporary photographs taken in the midst of war zones, but she also carried photographic paper and chemicals to secret locations to copy precious glass photographic plates brought out from secret hiding places. She discovered that it can be as dangerous to keep a photograph as to keep a gun, because it records an historical case which cannot be denied. (For details of where to obtain the book in the UK contact Hi-Marketing on 0171 738 7751) ■



Theatre at its most explosive

Copenhagen by Michael Frayn, directed by Michael Blakemore, in repertory at the Cottesloe Theatre, South Bank, London, reviewed by Simon Kellaway

"Oh dear", I thought. "Just a round floor, three chairs and some moody lighting." But three minutes later I was having to modify my initial reservations, and two hours later I had concluded that, when written and performed like this, the theatre can be a deeply involving and emotional experience.

Copenhagen is, on the surface at least, centred around a meeting in 1941 between Niels Bohr and his protégé Werner Heisenberg, both giants in theoretical physics and quantum, or wave, mechanics in particular.

Indeed it was this subject matter that had originally tempted me in to the Cottesloe. Why did Heisenberg go to significant effort and risk to meet again with his father figure? The device used by Michael Frayn to examine this is extremely effective, and allows for many possible solutions to this conundrum.

But in examining the motivations driving these two men, we begin to explore the moral dilemmas faced by many scientists, and here in particular the potentially catastrophic consequences of exploiting nuclear fission.

How would the world be now if Heisenberg had correctly applied a diffusion equation to Uranium 235? (or perhaps he did, if only subconsciously). *Copenhagen* will naturally appeal to physicists and engineers, and at times an understanding of



Sara Kestelman (Margrethe Bohr) and David Burke (Niels Bohr)

Heisenberg's uncertainty and Bohr's complementarity will lend an extra frisson of enjoyment and participation. But others should not be discouraged from experiencing this dazzling and deeply affecting performance.

The script is a joy, the acting is without equal, direction, sound and lighting all add at a very deep level to the very profound experience of *Copenhagen*. If you have the merest possibility of a chance to go yourself, do not hesitate. But be warned, *Copenhagen* will be with you for the rest of your days. ■

"When political memories are growing increasingly short, it is good that the effort has been made to record the life of Gerry Healy, a revolutionary Marxist who had a massive impact on the working class socialist movement, in Britain and internationally."

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