

SOCIALIST HISTORY SOCIETY

Newsletter

May 2016

Issue 1

Volume 5

New Series

The Left and the Easter Rising

To mark the one hundredth anniversary of Ireland's ill-fated Easter Rising, the Society published an Occasional Publication by well-known socialist historian Professor John Newsinger, who is also a member of the SHS. That publication, which is titled *Sylvia Pankhurst, the Easter Rising and the Woman's Dreadnought*, was marked with a launch meeting held on 19 March.

John was joined on the panel by fellow historian and veteran activist Geoff Bell, the author of the book, *Hesitant Comrades: The Irish Revolution and the British Labour Movement*, published by Pluto Press.

Dreadnought

In his talk John described how Sylvia Pankhurst responded to events in Ireland as they unfolded. A young Suffragette named Patricia Lynch was sent over disguised as a school girl in order to obtain eyewitness reports of the situation in Dublin. Her reports were printed in the *Woman's Dreadnought*, Pankhurst's militant Suffragette newspaper which was orientated towards a working class readership.

Lynch had a vivid style and went on to become a celebrated children's writer. She married the socialist historian R M Fox.

Murder

The murder of Francis Sheehy Skeffington was the main focus of the campaign waged in the pages of the *Woman's Dreadnought* as it sought to explain the meaning of the Irish revolt to its British audience.

Its unwavering anti-imperialist standpoint was contrasted with the more eclectic approach taken by the likes of George Bernard Shaw, who was criticised for his contradictory utterances.

Pankhurst was fiercely indignant at the British state's merciless treatment of the Irish rebels and denounced the UK as a "terrorist government" after the shooting of Skeffington. The newspaper did not mince its words. The full

story is recounted in John's excellent above mentioned publication, which members will have received some weeks ago. Additional copies are still available.

Geoff Bell continued on the varying attitudes of the wider British left towards Ireland.

Labour Party

Looking at the official Labour Party response, Bell pointed to J H Thomas's strong opposition to the rising. Thomas was not especially unrepresentative of his party's general approach which was patriotic, reflecting the fact that the country was at war in Europe.

Turning to the socialist press, Bell explained that the vast bulk of the left seemed quite incapable of understanding why a staunch revolutionary socialist such as James Connolly had opted to take part in what was widely dismissed as a romantic nationalist exercise.

This contemporary opinion is in stark contrast to how Connolly is viewed today. He remains a hero of the Irish Republican cause and its unfinished revolution.

The meeting was ably chaired by SHS President Stan Newens.

David Morgan



John Newsinger, Stan Newens and Geoff Bell

And the weak suffer what they must?

Europe, austerity and the threat to global stability

By Yanis Varoufakis, (Bodley Head, £16.99, 2016)

R H Tawney, Harold Laski and G D H Cole stimulated socialist thinking in the interwar period and played an important part in shaping Labour's policies. In the early post-war years John Strachey and Tony Crosland were the only two I can recall who combined political careers with major contributions to socialist theory. Richard Crossman might be added to the list but he was, by choice, more of a journalist than a socialist theorist. Stuart Holland produced a critique of Keynesianism in his book *The Socialist Challenge* (1975) and was influential in working out an alternative economic policy to the Labour corporatism of the Wilson-Callaghan governments. He was probably the last of the line, after him came New Labour which sailed without any ideological ballast.

Think tanks and focus groups

One of the most glaring admissions from the Labour Party's policies put forward at the last general election was the lack of an overarching theme. Think tanks and focus groups no doubt have their place in modern politics, but they are no substitute for a political philosophy. Tony Blair rooted out what was left of Labour's socialist philosophy, filling the vacuum with spin and flimflam. For a time this proved electorally successful but the electorate eventually saw through the shallowness of Blairism, leaving the Labour Party with a huge black hole at its centre. Ed Miliband and his army of research assistants certainly proved incapable of filling the gap.

A new book demonstrates what has been missing. The author, Yanis Varoufakis, a former lecturer in economics, was Greece's Minister of Finance during the protracted negotiations leading up to the European Union's bail out of Greece. Varoufakis became a familiar figure dressed in his biker's leathers as he arrived at meetings on his motorcycle. By all accounts he got up the noses of the EU commissioners and the German negotiators. He was eased out of office after the EU and Greece reached an

agreement on austerity measures.

Although Varoufakis admires JM Keynes for his radical approach to economics he is a member of one of Greece's left-wing parties and has written this socialist analysis of the EU and its works. He points out that the Common Market was founded by right-wing technocrats, who did not favour too much democracy in their venture, and the Coal and Steel Community, a forerunner of the Common Market, was a legalised cartel. The Common Agricultural Policy was designed to protect German and French farmers and is sacrosanct.

Euro

The introduction of the Euro, Varoufakis argues, has proved to be the equivalent of a return to the gold standard which did so much harm to the world economy in the 1920s. He goes on to say that adherence to the Euro is doing great harm to the weaker EU economies at present. The austerity measures imposed on Greece can be compared to the reparations policy imposed by the victorious Allies on the Weimar Republic in the 1920s.

Keynes, of course, opposed both the reparations policy and a return to the gold standard in the 1920s, and Varoufakis gives him full credit for this. Tony Blair was very keen on taking Britain into the Euro and we have Gordon Brown to thank for keeping us out and retaining control of our monetary policy.

Peloponnesian War

I thought before I read Varoufakis book that the title was cumbersome. The author explains, however, that the title is a quotation from Thucydides's *History of the Peloponnesian War* spoken when the victorious Athenians informed their defeated foes that the weak must defer to the strong. Readers should not be put off by the title or by the fact that the book is about economics. This is a first-rate piece of analysis relevant to what is happening in the modern world written by someone who has been on the sharp end of the events he describes.

Archie Potts

A Question of Perspective

David Morgan explains why Tom Driberg's book, *"Guy Burgess: A Portrait with Background"* is still well worth reading.

So much stuff and nonsense has been said about Philby, Burgess, Maclean and Blunt that yet one more comment might seem like superfluous self-indulgence.

Their audacity in foiling the British establishment, from which they came, is a subject that has for long nagged the Sunday supplements and still manages to grab occasional headlines, as it did in early April with the discovery by the BBC of a "secret tape" in the Stasi Archives of a talk that Kim Philby delivered to East German intelligence officers in 1981.

Much of the commentary around this concerned the boast by Philby that he successfully used his intimate knowledge of upper class culture to evade detection; that is, he exploited the "old boy network".

Those hacks, who prattle on incessantly about treachery, are especially irked that the so-called "Cambridge spies" had betrayed their own class and remained entirely unrepentant. But this cold war perspective never really uncovers the true personalities and what inspired them despite the fact that books continue to trundle off the press recycling old material and repeating even older arguments. To satisfy its readers, a book must get the tone right and do justice to its subject no matter how controversial. In this respect, Tom Driberg's *"Guy Burgess: A Portrait with Background"* (1956) is a neglected classic and remains one of the best books on Burgess to date.

Spy Mania

Driberg challenges some of the misconceptions deliberately fostered about Burgess and anticipates an end to the Cold War. In the 1970s, during a renewed period of "spy mania", Driberg, a former Labour MP and journalist, was himself the victim of unsubstantiated allegations of treachery made by Chapman Pincher and Andrew Boyle. His book highlights an anniversary that has largely been missed: the press conference at a Moscow hotel on 11 February 1956 when the two missing British diplomats, Burgess and Donald Maclean, resurfaced after nearly five years absence, to announce to a surprised world that, "We both of us are convinced that we were right in doing what we did." Later that same year, Driberg flew out to Moscow to interview Burgess at his suite in the Moskva Hotel, where the two discussed at length world affairs, his political motivations

and life in the USSR. He describes Burgess as an "Englishman nurtured in the Radical tradition" and a person of much principle. As Driberg explains, Burgess also had a dacha in the countryside and shows that his lifestyle in exile was far less austere than the one portrayed in, for example, Alan Bennett's drama, *An Englishman Abroad*, where Glasgow and Dundee doubled up for the Soviet capital.

While in Moscow Burgess was to work for the Foreign Literature Publishing House and proudly tells Driberg of his successes in getting them to translate and publish more good English fiction such as Graham Greene and E M Forster.

Lurid Charges

This long out-of-print book refutes many of the more lurid charges laid against Burgess and Maclean by their detractors in particular that their actions led to the deaths of American soldiers in 1950 during the Korean War. Driberg describes attacks on Burgess's character and private life as "irrelevant" muck raking and the product of the "familiar transatlantic technique of the smear". He concludes that, "having talked at length with Guy Burgess, and satisfied myself of the passionate sincerity of his convictions, I respect him for his courage in doing what he thought right" in order to "secure world peace".

Treason

The book ends with a suggestion that it is high time to re-examine the whole concept of treason and looks forward to improved relations between East and West. Sadly, sixty years on these aspirations remain forlorn and extremely elusive. Discarding the cold war view of Burgess as a traitor to a single state or patrician class, a shift in perspective allows him to emerge as a hero of humanity.

A Different View of ED Morel

Peter Frost's article in the last edition of the Newsletter about ED Morel deserves a response. Morel was an anti-imperialist with an impeccable record of anti-war and anti-colonial activity to his credit. But there was another side to Morel that Peter failed to mention and it is worthy of mention.

Morel in 1920 published a pamphlet called, *"Horror on the Rhine"*-it led to a shameful episode in British labour history.

Germany, defeated in the 1914-18 war, was faced with massive reparations for its alleged war guilt. Further humiliation was imposed upon the impoverished nation by the French military occupation of the Rhineland in 1919. Part of the occupying force was made up of troops from France's colonial territories. In the German press stories began to appear of the alleged rape of German women by these soldiers. Subsequent investigations showed little evidence for these allegations but the seeds of racism had been sown and they soon blossomed among the fertile soil of a conquered nation, fanned by a right wing press.

Colonial Troops

Morel readily accepted the claims and in April 1920 brought out the first edition of what became for a brief period a notorious pamphlet, namely, *"The Horror on the Rhine"*. In it he denounced the use of up to 40,000 French colonial troops from Algeria, Morocco, and Senegal in the occupation. He also took exception to the creation of brothels for the soldiers, a pretty standard practice in any occupying army. And he repeated the accusations of rape made by the press.

Morel was pleased to tell his readers that not only had he brought out a pamphlet devoted to the issue but he had also persuaded *"The Daily Herald"* to publish the information and this had been reproduced all over the world.

Race

His objection to the colonial troops was based purely on race:

"It was only then that the general public became aware that French militarist policy defeated in war included the quartering of African conscript levies upon that deafened enemy in time of peace".

Morel accused the victorious powers, i.e. Britain and France, of *"maintaining on European soil an army of African mercenaries, which can*

be used as a handy instrument for its domestic as well as for its Imperial policy".

He also argued that because the occupying troops were Muslims they were used to having a number of wives and therefore were more sexually active than Europeans. As a consequence they would be more ready to prey on European women.

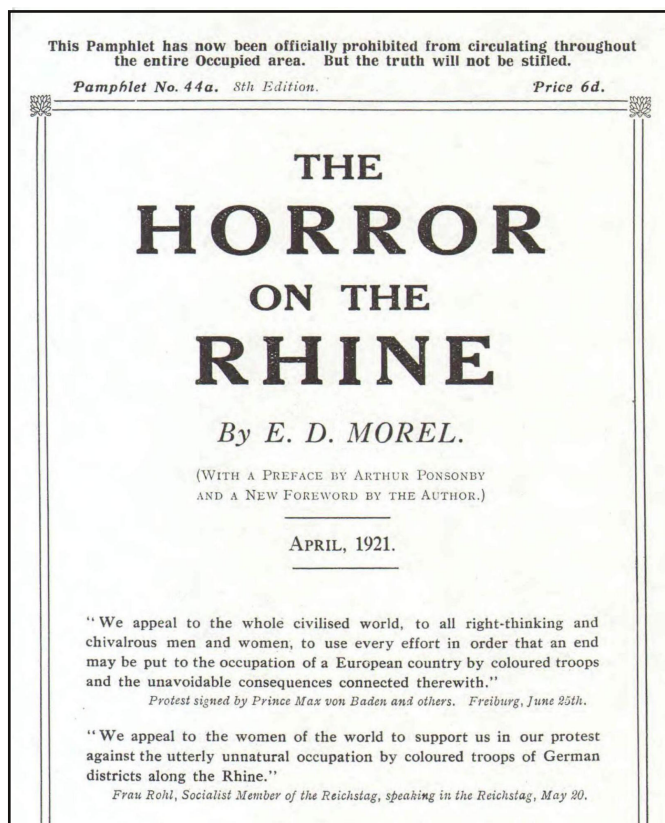
Racial Stereotype

Morel, in his pamphlet, managed to feed into every racial stereotype imaginable.

Inferior Africans, more advanced Europeans, vulnerable white women being prone to Muslim rapists and the white German population subjected to the wholesale building of brothels, which, according to Morel, *"under the French occupation the brothel ranks as a military institution"*.

"The Horror on the Rhine" is littered with cases of alleged rape by occupying French African soldiers. Morel's pamphlet went into eight editions in the space of a year and received widespread publicity. The stories of

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A Different View of ED Morel

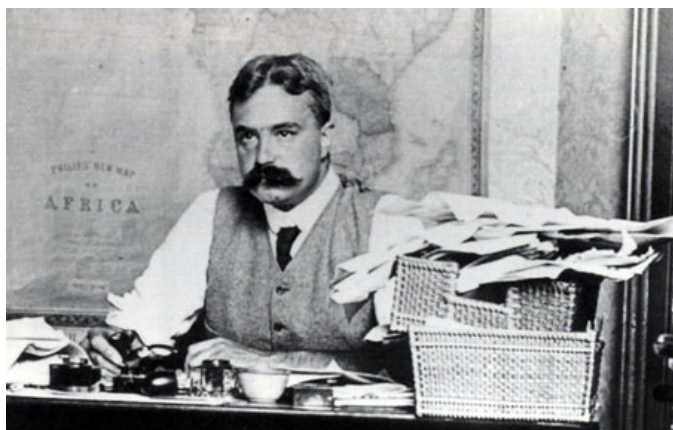
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rape he outlined were carried not just by "*The Daily Herald*", still the fiery leftwing daily and supporter of the Russian Revolution, but also by "*Labour Leader*", the paper of the Independent Labour Party. In February 1921 the paper carried an editorial with the same title as the pamphlet and was pleased to note that the pamphlet was now in its 7th edition. Earlier issues of the paper quoted "*the excessive sexual appetites of negroes*" and reported that meetings were being held in the United States in protest against "*this unspeakable crime against humanity*".

Morel, who had broken with Liberalism during the First World War and joined the ILP and was briefly a Labour MP until his untimely death in 1924, was undoubtedly a fervent opponent of colonialism. Along with Roger Casement he exposed the barbarity of what was happening in the Belgium Congo under King Leopold's rule. He was imprisoned for his opposition to the war and played a leading role in the Union of Democratic Control.

He was perhaps worthy of memory by the miners of Chopwell for all those credible and worthwhile activities that Peter Frost had referred to. But let us not forget that ED Morel for all his good intentions maintained, like millions of others living at the heart of a colonial system, an ideology of racial superiority. These were the ideas sanctified in his pamphlet and writings about the occupation of the Rhine. Although Morel's intentions may not have been to encourage racism that is exactly what the pamphlet did. That is not so worthy of memory.

Mike Squires



ED Morel

Zabelliana

Life & Art of the Magnificent Polymath

On 6 April, Khatchatur I Pilikian presented a celebration of the work of Zabelle Boyajian, a painter, writer and translator, who was born in Diyarbakir, modern Turkey, in 1873 of a British diplomatic family and lived most of her adult life in London. She published an English translation of "*Armenian Legends and Poems*" in 1916, many of which she illustrated herself. Boyajian died in 1957 and is buried in London.

Armenian folklore

Khatchatur Pilikian's appreciation of her various achievements proved to be a fascinating introduction to her work. Her paintings and illustrations are reminiscent of William Blake and Walter Crane but deal with subjects from Armenian folklore. She studied at the Slade School of Art.

The very well attended meeting held at Marx House was jointly sponsored by Iraqi Women Solidarity and the Centre for Armenian Information & Advice. Iraqi writer Haifa Zangana chaired the discussion.



Haifa Zangana and Khatchatur Pilikian

Notice to Members
SHS Annual General Meeting 2016
1.00pm, Saturday 11th June
Marx Memorial Library,
37a Clerkenwell Green

Followed at 2.00pm by a public meeting
with *Greta Sykes* speaking on

Goddesses,

Empresses

and

Sphinxes

Matriarchy at the crossroads to patriarchy

A Pioneering Socialist

Duncan Bowie reviews

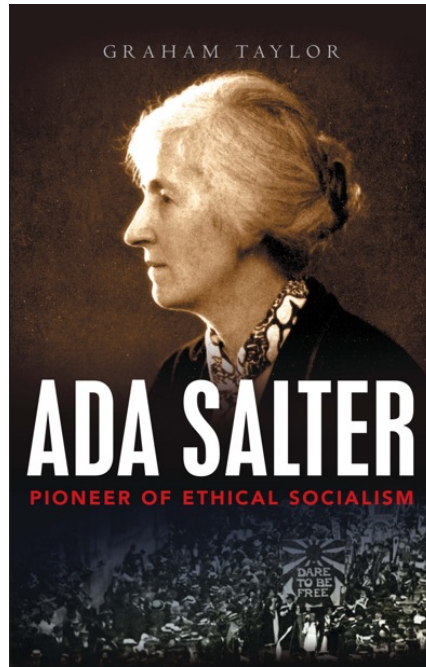
Ada Salter by **Graham Taylor** (Lawrence and Wishart, £18.99)

This is an important book. It is important as a biography of a neglected socialist, who was active at a local, national and international scale, but it is also a fascinating local study of socialism in power and a testament to what a small group of committed socialists can achieve to improve the lives of their fellow citizens. As a long-term resident of Southwark, which now incorporates Bermondsey, I felt the book both inspirational and provided a message for Labour councillors of today who struggle against the constraints imposed by central government.

It is now 67 years since Fenner Brockway in 1949 published his biography of his friend and fellow ILP activist, Alfred Salter, the MP for Bermondsey. This new book rightly pays attention to his wife, Ada, who was in many ways a more important political figure. In Bermondsey, they were a powerful wife and husband partnership and Taylor effectively demonstrates that it was often Ada, local and LCC councillor rather than MP, who played the leading role. It was however Ada who was a national and international figure through her role in the Women's Labour League (of which she was president in 1914), and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Bermondsey Revolution

Much of the book focuses on the "Bermondsey revolution", when the Salters, active in the Bermondsey settlement established by John Scott Lidgett, led a group of working class socialists to take control in 1922 of Bermondsey Council. Scott Lidgett was a leading Methodist who went on to be leader of the Liberal Progressives on the London County Council. The Salters however broke away from the progressive alliance to establish an Independent Labour Party branch - this was significant as the ILP had not historically been active in South London. The municipal reform programme established by the ILP in Bermondsey led to impressive workers' housing based on the garden suburb model, a public health programme including public baths, a groundbreaking municipal maternity



service and a programme of municipally produced films, which toured the streets in a cinema van. The council, on Ada's initiative, undertook a programme for beautifying the area with a programme of trees, parks and children's playgrounds. Ada Salter was to become the president of the National Gardens Guild and sought to spread the Bermondsey approach throughout the country. Ada also established a municipal bakery.

International

Taylor rightly also focuses on Ada's international role. She attended conferences of the Women's Socialist International at Stuttgart in 1907 and Copenhagen in 1910. In January 1915, the German Clara Zetkin, Secretary of the Women's Socialist International, proposed a conference in Bern in neutral Switzerland. Ada Salter, together with Margaret Bondfield (later Minister of Labour in the 1924 Government) represented the ILP. Lenin was in Bern at the time and the Bolsheviks dominated the Russian delegation, which included both Lenin's wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya and his lover, Inessa Armand. The British delegates joined the Dutch and German delegates and successfully resisted the Bolshevik argument that the working class should turn their weapons on their capitalist governments.

No-Conscription Fellowship

The Salters had a significant role in the anti-war movement, with both active in the No-Conscription Fellowship. Alfred was treas-

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Ada Salter *continued*

urer, while Ada organised maintenance for the dependents of conscientious objectors and set up a convalescence arm for conscientious objectors in Kent. Ada had been active in the suffrage movement and supported the Women's Freedom League rather than the more moderate NUWSS, whose leaders Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst supported the war effort. Ada joined the International Committee for Women for Permanent Peace (ICWPP) which later became the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and represented the British section at the post-war congress in Zurich in 1919, which was aimed at influencing the peace conference at Versailles and advocated a non-annexationist and non-punitive treaty. Finding starving children in Vienna, Ada took a group home with her to Bermondsey.

London County Council

Taylor's final chapters follow Ada's later career, both in Bermondsey and on the London County Council, the Socialist League, the Peace Pledge Union, the struggle against the growth of fascism and the attempt to avert a second world war. Ada survived until December 1942 and she has been commemorated with a statue in Bermondsey near the river.

This is one of the best socialist biographies I have read and certainly the best study of a local socialist movement. Congratulations are due to both author and publisher. Buy the book, read it and be inspired.

This review was first published in Chartist magazine.



Ada Salter at Tanner Street

Letters

Facing the facts

The society has put us all in its debt by publishing the occasional paper *Stop the First World War!* The attitude of the labour and socialist movements and the working class for which they spoke is a subject of enduring interest. I make my own position plain by saying that those people who preferred prison to fighting were the heroes of the period worthy of the greatest veneration.

Nevertheless, as historians we owe our first loyalty to the facts. As Keith Laybourn shows in his article, the majority of members of most labour organisations, let alone the population as a whole, accepted the torrent of pro-war sentiment which came almost unanimously from politicians, press and pulpit. These were not the only pro-war influences. As the American historian Adam Hochschild has recently written: "*When the guns were firing and the pressure from friends and family to support the war effort was overwhelming, it took rare courage to resist.*" It is hardly surprising that few men had that rare courage. Something like six million men served in the British armed forces between 1914 and 1918; about twenty thousand men refused to join the war effort.

My own expertise is limited to the city of York where I live. There were heroic war resisters in York but they were relatively few in number set against the toll of perhaps as many as 2,000 local men who died in or after battle. The local Independent Labour Party did little to oppose conscription and in May 1917 fourteen of its members were serving in the armed forces. In November 1918 a resolution of York City Council that Germany should pay the entire cost of the war was carried with only five opponents. They were all Liberals. The six Labour men either supported the resolution or abstained. There are well attested cases of initial opponents of the war who later recanted and subsequently attained high office - the railwayman and Labour stalwart Will Dobbie was one of them.

It cannot be reiterated too often that in time of war patriotism is what politicians say it is. The job of socialists is to construct an alternative form of patriotism which is equally or more appealing than the declarations of warmongers.

David Rubinstein

EASTER RISING 1916-a note on resources

It is a hundred years since a small rebel army took on the British Empire in Ireland. Over six days some 1,600 men and women from the volunteers and the citizen army laid the foundation of an independent state. Their action also inspired later mutinies and insurrections (Russia and Germany) which brought the inter-imperialist slaughter of the First World War to an end. An important event, whose meaning is contested, it is perhaps worth looking at some sources of information which can aid our discussions and thinking about the events of Easter 1916.

A Decade of Centenaries

The Irish political class has a problem with the Easter rising. It was an armed insurrection led by a revolutionary socialist, James Connolly. Ireland today looks nothing like the country envisaged in the proclamation read by Pearse, which aimed for a country with wealth held in common, "*cherishing the children of the nation equally*". Instead, it has become a tax haven for transnational companies. The people of Ireland have suffered seven years of poverty and austerity.

There is a fear that remembering 1916 might inspire a new rising. The fiftieth anniversary was celebrated quite widely: schoolchildren were given copies of the proclamation and parades were held in towns and villages throughout Ireland. Three years later armed conflict broke out in the North. Some felt that it had not been a good idea to popularise the notion of "dying for Ireland".

Former Taoiseach John Bruton even went so far as to condemn the leaders as "violent separatists" and for helping to "put the gun" into Irish politics. This view is not held by most of the political class which view them as "martyrs" who woke the nation. The approach today is to join together a number of different centenaries from Irish history putting the Dublin Lockout, the Battle of the Somme, the Ulster Covenant and the Easter Rising into one "decade".

The aim is to reconcile the two "nations" (Green and Orange) and promote harmony in the island of Ireland, which mirrors the "Peace Process" in the North, in place since April, 1998. Critics have pointed out that reinforcing

identity politics may strengthen community division and set back the goal of Irish Unity.

Resources for the Centenary

Two years ago the Irish government launched a video *Ireland Inspires 2016*. It included pictures of Bob Geldof, Ian Paisley and the Queen (!) but no mention of Pearse, Connolly and the other leaders executed in May 1916. It was withdrawn after public protest.

The latest version *A Vision for Ireland*

(<http://www.ireland.ie>) contains news from the *National Museum of Ireland*, a full listing of centenary events and a textual history of the events of Easter 1916. *The Irish Times*

(<http://www.irishtimes.com>) has a section: *Remembering the 1916 Rising* which includes photos, articles, profiles of the leaders of the rebellion and an article on Women in the 1916

Rising. *RTÉ* (<http://www.rte.ie/>)

(Century Ireland) has an archive of pictures, interviews, newsreel footage and a street view tour of Dublin at the time. The *Digital Repository of Ireland*

(<https://repository.dri.ie/>) has facsimiles of key documents, pictures of artefacts and pictures of participants e.g. the suffragette, Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, who also has an entry in the *Women's Museum Of Ireland* (<http://womensmuseumofireland.ie/>).

Witness statements of participants in the rising were carefully collected over the years and deposited in the *Bureau of Military History* archives at Cathal Brugha barracks (Rathmines, Dublin 6). Here can be found statements by many of the activists, including Dr Kathleen Lynn, a medical doctor with the ICA.



Easter Rising leaders – left out of Government centenary video

EASTER RISING-a note on resources *continued* New Titles

In London, (*The Photographers' Gallery*) Sean Sexton has put together a useful exhibition of still photos. One photo shows a rural family being evicted, a record of the violence and poverty in Ireland in the 19th Century. Another is of Constance Markiewicz posing with a pistol and wearing a hat, a reminder that women played a key role in the Rising. The *British Film Institute* has some footage of the trial of Roger Casement. The *Imperial War Museum* has books about the rising and some footage without commentary of the destruction of Dublin, including some wounded soldiers in hospital. The *UK National Archive*

(<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>) has put together a guide: "Ireland's Easter Rising 1916" which gives search terms and shows how to access primary source material e.g. intelligence files, military reports etc. The BBC's Feargal Keane, (YouTube) has a short summary of the history of the 1916 rising and his own family's involvement.

Libraries and Books

The *Marxists Internet Archive* (<https://www.marxists.org/>) has an online collection of James Connolly's works, including classics such as "Labour in Irish History".

Connolly used to go, after working, to study Irish history in the *National Library of Ireland* (Kildare Street, Dublin 2). The library has manuscript collections of material by Connolly in collections such as the William O'Brien papers. Much has been digitised and is of great interest-it includes, for example Connolly's last letter to his wife, before his execution in May, 1916. For copyright reasons, many items can only be viewed in the Library's own reading rooms.

The *Marx Memorial Library* recently discovered a collection of papers, photos, letters, telegrams and memorabilia donated to the library, many years ago, by Connolly's youngest daughter Fiona. Some of this is to be found in a fine book by Dr John Callow: "James Connolly and the Reconquest of Ireland" (London, Evans Mitchell, 2013). The literature on the Easter Rising is quite large- a bibliography can be made by doing a subject search at the online catalogues of the *National Library of Ireland* and the *British Library*.

Here, to conclude are just a few new titles, which may be of interest. James Heartfield and Kevin Rooney: "Who's afraid of the Easter Rising? 1916-2016" (Zero Books, 2015) are of interest for their analysis of the historiography; they also place 1916 within the context of previous international struggles. Kieran Allen's "1916: Ireland's Revolutionary Tradition" (Pluto, 2016) is a very lucid account of Ireland's history. It challenges the myth of the "blood sacrifice"- the rising was well prepared and the people who took part were just fighters who hoped to win. It also had popular support. Connolly's problem was that he saw the war would only end by revolution, but he did not have sufficient forces to carry it out-but he tried-at a time when many "socialist" leaders fell behind the war efforts of their own countries. Allen's book points out that the period was one of social revolution involving mass workers' action such as The Limerick Soviet. The Treaty and Partition backed by the British Government is seen as counterrevolution. Bookmarks is in the process of producing, in their very readable "Rebel's Guide" series, one on Connolly by Sean Mitchell, 2016.

From below

A hundred years ago a war that was started by politicians, capitalists and generals was ended by the actions of ordinary people. Dublin, 1916 was a key part in this. It is to be hoped that in this centenary year a new generation will look again at this event and at the thought and life of James Connolly who was an able exponent of socialism "from below".

N. Norman,
formerly Subject Librarian, Politics and History,
London Guildhall/London Metropolitan University



Raphael Samuel on History Workshop Journal: A Bibliography

On 3 May 2016, History Workshop will release a Virtual Special Issue of Raphael Samuel's pioneering contributions to History Workshop Journal. In advance of that special issue, we're releasing a complete bibliography of his work published in HWJ.

The Virtual Special Issue will include free access downloads of articles marked with an asterisk*.

Editorials

- Volume 1: Sociology and history (with Gareth Stedman-Jones)
- Volume 6: Art, politics and Ideology*
- Volume 12: History and television (with Susan Barrowclough)
- Volume 20: Ten Years After (with Gareth Stedman Jones)
- Volume 39: Rethinking the idea of place (with Felix Driver)
- Volume 40: British Dimensions: four nations history*
- Volume 40: Introduction to Scottish dimensions: history, literature, politics

Articles

- Volume 3: The Workshop of the World: steam power and hand technology in mid-Victorian Britain*
- Volume 27: 'Philosophy teaching by example': past and present in Raymond Williams*
- Volume 29: Grand narratives (part of a feature on history, the nation and the schools)*
- Volume 30: History, the nation and the schools: an introduction*
- Volume 32: Reading the signs*
- Volume 33: Reading the signs, part 2: fact-grubbers and mind-readers*

Critique

- Volume 9: On the methods of History Workshop: a reply (to David Selbourne)*

Archives and Sources

- Volume 1: Local History and Oral History*
- Volume 5: The Bishopsgate Institute*

History at Large

- Volume 41: Art and Power (with Alison Light)

Letters etc.

- Volume 17: Peter Sedgwick papers (with Tariq Ali and others)
- Volume 28: Stephen Yeo – or the Ruskin election
- Volume 35: Response to E.P. Thompson

Obituaries

- Volume 2: Eva Reckitt

- Volume 7: Jim Dyos (with Gareth Stedman Jones)
- Volume 29: Ewan MacColl*
- Volume 30: Tim Mason (contribution to memorial feature)*
- Volume 35: David Widgery
- Volume 38: Ralph Miliband*
- Volume 39: Hannah Mitchell (with Alex Potts)*

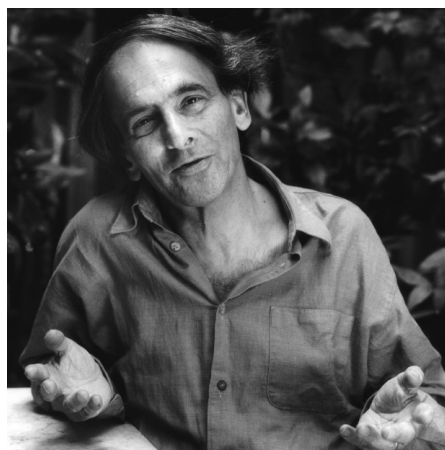
Report Back

- Volume 1: Forum histoire, Paris (with Anne Summers & Anna Davin)
- Volume 6: Dublin History Workshop
- Volume 15: History Workshop
- Volume 15: Television History Workshop

Articles about Raphael Samuel

- Volume 43: Raphael Samuel 1938-1996 (Editorial by Stuart Hall, Alun Howkins, Sally Alexander & John Walsh)
 - Volume 43: Working with Raphael (J Cameron, from the Ruskin College commemoration of Raphael Samuel, 5 July 1997)
 - Volume 52: Rummaging through Raphael's bag (Peter Claus)
 - Volume 64: The Genesis of East End Underworld: Chapters in the Life of Arthur Harding by Raphael Samuel (Stan Newens)
 - Volume 76: Ruskin, Radicalism and Raphael Samuel: Politics, Pedagogy and the Origins of the History Workshop (Kynan Gentry)
- For more information see:

<http://www.historyworkshop.org.uk/raphael-samuels-writings-for-hwj-a-bibliography/>



SHS News

Getting the year off to a flying start

At our first meeting of the year, Professor Willie Thompson delivered an inspiring talk based on ideas in his latest book, *Work, Sex and Power – The Forces that Shaped Our History*.

As recommended reading, he mentioned Jared Diamond and Michael Mann, whose numerous works he had used as part of the research for the book. One of his main arguments was that the history of civilisation was simultaneously a history of forced labour. Misogyny was another key component. Past societies were all founded on different forms of forced labour, whether as slavery, serfdom or modern waged labour. Under the Roman Empire, he stated, slavery was the main mode of production as it was on later cotton plantations. Slavery was also to persist in different ages even when it was not central to the economy. However, women have been domestic slaves throughout history. The growth of agriculture was a turning point in human fortunes and came about as a result of the retreat of the Ice Age, which in effect was a form of climate change and first defined by V Gordon Childe as the Neolithic Revolution. The Nile, Eurasia, China, the Americas and Europe developed separately but about the same time. Another valuable insight was Thompson's explanation of the significance of debt in the social relations of power; in some countries, he said, the words for "debt" and "sin" were exactly the same.

Why not China?

The use of fire distinguished man from all other species and the discovery of new energy sources became vital motors of social change, he explained. That process began with the use of human labour and animals followed by wind and water power. Later artificial sources such as fossil fuels were used. Discussing the invention of the steam engine, Thompson asked why the Industrial Revolution had not occurred in China when it had been ahead of Europe until the 18th century. According to historians, China was led by a conservative hierarchy which was not conducive to entrepreneurs. The Industrial Revolution had not been planned but was driven by the desire to make money. An essential factor in human history was resistance to oppression and inequality, evidence of which can be found in

the earliest societies. For example, he explained that tribute was key mode of forced labour in Egypt but this met repeated resistance which can be traced back to 4,500BC. In ancient China, successive popular uprisings led to millions of casualties.

In conclusion, Thompson argued that popular resistance to achieve social change remained vital in the context of confronting today's ecological crisis. The progressive ideas embodied in the principles of the French Revolution needed to be kept alive and the responsibility of historians lay in studying social change in an analytical way.

The meeting was a great success and saw the sale of about 25 of Willie Thompson's books, which is something of a record.

Conference: Before 1968: The Left, activism & social movements in the long 1960s

The two-day conference organised by Socialist History, the SHS journal, and the School of History at the University of East Anglia proved to be a huge success. Attendance exceeded expectations and the range of talks, all based on new research, proved to be highly stimulating, provoking an ongoing discussion.

In total over 55 delegates including the speakers and visitors travelled to Norwich over the weekend of 13 and 14 February. This was to be a genuinely international event in terms both of speakers and themes debated. It included participants from Canada (2); the USA (3); Austria (1); Sweden (2); the Netherlands (2); Portugal (2); Spain (1); Finland (1), along with several from the UK.

Special Edition

In all there were 24 presentations, six of them given by SHS members, including Bill Pelz, Tobias Abse and David Morgan. The event was extremely well organised by three SHS members based in the UEA School of History, namely Chris Jones, Ben Jones and Francis King. We must put on record our thanks and appreciation for all their efforts in putting on a successful event with minimal resources. Members of the society who were unable to attend can look forward to a special edition of the journal which will contain a small selection of the papers presented over the course of the two days.

David Morgan

The EU: Better In or Out?

A discussion among SHS members

Please note that all the contributors to this debate write in a personal capacity. The SHS as a body does not take a position on the matter.

Popular Struggle is the Guarantee of Our Cherished Rights, Not the Brussels Bureaucracy

David Morgan

Washington is eagerly awaiting the result of the British referendum on the European Union and is openly seeking to influence the vote. US President Obama flew into London on 22 April and delivered a barely concealed threat to the British people to vote to stay in the EU. The issue is a big one and its outcome will influence the future for generations to come.

“Europe” however cannot be reduced to or defined by the entity known as the European Union or conceptually confined within its borders. The history of Europe is an inspiring one and encompasses the Enlightenment which has shaped what it is to be modern and it remains one of the great world civilisations. The Enlightenment values of popular rights, women’s liberation and basic human equality represent part of the fundamental legacy of humanity.

The European Union is not even a shadow of the real Europe; it is simply a political project created out of intensely ignoble motives of gaining advantage and realpolitik. The EU is actually a deeply flawed and anti-European phenomenon that excludes as much as it contains.

The EU is a historical institution, not a permanent feature of civilisation; still less is it a democratic model of government. A strong case can be made for arguing that no EU identity exists; there is clearly little evidence of any groundswell of pro-EU feelings or sense of attachment or affection among the peoples of Europe for the EU.

The EU is nevertheless lauded by its assiduous proponents as the ultimate guarantor of peace, freedom and democratic rights. It is erroneously asserted that only the existence of the EU has kept the peace in central Europe since 1945 and that it has ensured that the rival powers won’t ever repeat the cataclysmic mistakes of the 20th century.

What those who make these specious arguments shamefully fail to acknowledge is the role of the USSR in defeating Hitler’s fascist regime. This is one of the great dishonesties in the case made for the EU.

By an ideological sleight of hand they try to give all credit to the EU when it should rightly lie with all the peoples of Europe – East and West - who gave their lives in the last world war. This includes the 20 million-plus Russians, whose descendants are now treated as enemies by the EU.

The EU emerged in the Cold War era when it was established as a means of institutionalising the East-West division of Europe. Its recent eastwards expansion right up to the borders of Russia, in tandem with NATO’s aggressive designs, demonstrates that it remains decisive to the continued division of Europe and the exclusion of Russia, which itself is one of the greatest of European cultures.

The military aspect of the EU has been repeatedly admitted by NATO which has been warning that a vote to leave will only give comfort to Moscow by weakening the western alliance.

The Head of the US Army in Europe, Lieutenant-General Frederick “Ben” Hodges, indicated that the EU is a central plank of the NATO military alliance.

A “Brexit” would weaken the West’s capacity to resist alleged Russian expansionism in Ukraine and Syria, Hodges told the BBC.

Thus, the EU should not be confused with the cultural richness of Europe as a historic entity or the geographical limits of the European continent.

European greatness has far more substance than any temporary institution like the EU, which is really just an opportunistic alliance.

Furthermore, to credit the EU with securing people’s rights and liberties is to belittle the history of popular struggles that have taken place in varying degrees within each European country.

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The EU: Better In or Out? *continued*

Our civil rights and liberties simply do not depend on the fate of the EU at all but are the outcome of the strength of organised labour and the struggles of many diverse social movements.

It is an affront to the memory of all those who faced state violence, blacklisting, imprisonment, transportation and discrimination in the protracted fight for social change in Britain over many decades and centuries.

True internationalists have been driven by a burning determination to right injustice and a desire to correct the ills of society rather than seeking to create a Common Agricultural Policy, common currency or common defence policy. The EU is not the embodiment of people's democracy but part of the preservation of the free market and defence of corporate class power.

The honourable traditions of international solidarity cannot be conflated with the unelected European Commission or identified with its largely powerless and so misnamed Parliament, elected but lacking in democratic powers and legitimacy.

The history of popular struggles is erased from public memory and utterly dismissed by the invidious attempts to portray the EU as the apex of democracy – when in truth our democratic rights, which we tend to take for granted, have been hard won by Chartists, Suffragettes and trade unionists.

Opposition to the EU need not be seen as a xenophobic option because true freedom and democracy do not reside in the remote Brussels bureaucracy. A vote against the EU is emphatically not to oppose Europe's revolutionary traditions; quite the contrary, it is to begin the process of recovering them from an overweening corporate power that oppresses us all.

The Case Against Leaving the European Union

Stan Newens

One of the principal reasons for the formation of the European Union was to prevent war between its member-states after centuries of armed conflict culminating in two horrific world wars. The fact that we have had 71 years of peace in Western Europe is a measure of its

success. Surely it is preferable for Germans, French, British and other nationals to work together in union, rather than fight one another at a cost of millions of lives?

The idea that British membership means accepting overall dictation of legislation from Brussels is nonsense. The House of Commons Library found that EU laws amounted to 13.2% of the total. Many of the regulations from Europe are, furthermore, highly desirable. Limits on the hours that people can be made to work, health and safety at work, maternity rights, the right to parental leave, holiday entitlement, protection against racial, gender, sexual or disability discrimination, should be supported.

When UKIP and right wing Tories complain about EU regulations, it is items such as these to which they object and which they would prefer to abolish.

The idea that such regulations are imposed by a huge bureaucracy is completely untrue anyway. EU proposals have to be debated and passed by elected national governments and the elected European Parliament, including British MPs and MEPs. Unfortunately, electors in Britain and some other member-states have, in recent years, returned Conservative and reactionary majorities. As for bureaucracy, the European Commission's employees number no more than a large local council in Britain.

As for the costs of the EU, contrary to the claims of Nigel Farage that we pay £55 million a day or £20 billion per year, after the rebate Britain pays about £13 billion a year of which about a third comes back in the form of a variety of grants of great value to recipients. The budget for the whole EU is just 1% of GDP – about 2% of our national public spending.

As for the arguments about migrants, there are as many British citizens living in Europe as Europeans in Britain – living particularly in France, Spain and Portugal. Many migrants are brought in as cheap labour, and more needs to be done to secure higher pay for fruit pickers, etc., which might then attract more British workers.

Half of British exports go to the EU, creating employment for perhaps 3.5 million workers here. If Britain leaves the EU, many of these could be adversely affected and British export-

The EU: Better In or Out? *continued*

ers would still have to follow EU regulations – but without the right to shape them. The idea that Britain could substitute trade with the rest of the world does not hold up. Britain exports more to the Netherlands than to China, and replacing European markets elsewhere is quite unrealistic.

On issues like climate change, fighting crime and terrorism, relations with developing countries and other international issues, Britain needs to co-operate with other European countries. The idea that Britain can ‘go it alone’ is out of date, and if Scotland goes independent as the result of a British decision to leave the EU, our influence on international affairs important to all will greatly diminish.

There is a lot wrong with the EU which, as socialists, we should fight to change, but leaving the EU would be a catastrophic mistake. As socialists and internationalists we should organise against Brexit.

In, in, in – why a backward-looking critique of the EU won’t get us what we want

Greta Sykes

There exists in many romantic and Trotskyist minds the intuitive view that the state is something we have to fight against at all costs, and if only the state/corporate Europe disappeared, we ordinary people can begin to forge our fate with small-scale markets, foraging, exchange of goods without money and building up our idealistic vision of humankind’s future.

I have also heard it said that we need to start again from scratch, because the EU is just not up to ‘it’. The same kind of thing was said about the GDR and the USSR. They were not ‘real socialist countries’. The results of abandoning and berating those early attempts at socialism are there for all to see: We are living in a world bordering precariously at several abysses, financial, climate, global wars and refugee issues. Global monopoly capitalism is at its heart.

All complex societies ended up having a state from Mesopotamian days onwards. The EU is now seen by some as a capitalist form of state that combines all the evils in one. Yet, it is only doing what national governments decide to do. The fact that it has become a cumbersome

body, too large without appropriate governing legislation, therefore too undemocratic and too divided in its politics is not due to its original conception but due to the machinations of Britain – as it used to be called ‘the Trojan horse of the US in Europe’ and the gambles of global capital.

The EU was set up with the expressed aim to preserve peace in Europe. The Enlightenment, the French Revolution and all the aspects of culture that Europeans cherish and see as being theirs, including all their trade union rights form its backdrop. The EU could never fulfil all the aims and aspirations contained in its historic background.

It was set up as a market for goods and people, and it has fulfilled many of these aims, ie legislation for Erasmus/young people’s programmes, environment, animal protection, human rights legislation, ecological programmes, alternative energy, to name but a few. The EU is also part of the ever forward drive of global monopoly capitalism. This is our common enemy. Do we fight this gigantic enemy better on our own in a small island, or do we join forces with more points of view and a wider perspective by voting to stay in the EU?

There have always been many more socialists, communists, greens from the rest of Europe than there were from the UK. Should we not work together with them, or do we choose the eternal ‘little Englander’ mentality? That is the question. Let no one make the mistake to think war in Europe is not on the cards any more.

Romantic perspectives focus on the past and nostalgically mourn bygone struggles of the working people. No one is denying them. However, as an internationalist we need to look to the future as well as the past. And the future is going to be an almighty falling apart into petty nationalist and racist countries squabbling over the remainder of the EU corpse and money, if we go it alone - Hungary and Poland are waiting in the wings - rather than combine our common wisdom with our fellow Europeans and try to minimise the mess we have made in the world and our continent and stay in Europe.

And yes, war can happen again, especially as most people on our continent have never experienced it.

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The EU: Better In or Out? *continued*

Neither London nor Brussels

Steve Cushion

"The executive of the modern state is nothing but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" – Marx and Engels, "The Communist Manifesto".

The major argument in the press is about whether the European Union is good for business or not. This demonstrates the split in the British ruling class, neatly reflected in the split in the Tory Party. I would like to look at the decision from the point of view of the international workers' movement.

The idea that the European Union is just a "Boss's Club" equally applies to the United Kingdom. From the workers' point of view, therefore, there is in principle no difference between whether the United Kingdom is a member of the European Union or not. The decision on voting to remain in, leave or to abstain therefore comes down to a decision based on the particular political conjuncture when the voting takes place.

In the current circumstances, the major problem with the United Kingdom leaving the European Union is that David Cameron has said that he will renegotiate the terms of leaving and the new relationship between the UK and the EU. This presents us with the danger that the new arrangement would adopt all the business-friendly elements of the EU while abandoning the few advantages that the workers have gained. Amongst these there are the free movement of labour, the European Court of Human Rights and some social legislation such as the Working Time Directive.

The UK government is currently threatening to deport US and Australian citizens who earn less than £35,000. If they treat white, English-speaking, Protestants that way, what chance for a Polish, Catholic plumber? The British labour movement is not able to defend our fellow workers who are citizens of other EU states, so we have no right to support a measure that threatens their rights. The sub-text of the right-wing of the No campaign is racist and anti-immigrant. On this point alone, I shall be voting to remain in, if only in order, in a minor way, to put one in the eye of the racists and to show solidarity with our fellow workers who happen to be citizens of other countries.

The Dishonourable Member

"Resign, resign, resign!"

No stay, it's perfectly fine

If the public are resigned to the fact

That they no longer need to resign?

However disgraced, however disgraceful

These acts of parliamentarians

Between the sheets, in the streets

A culture secretary with such curious tastes

Coarse culture, acquired taste

For whips, chains and rubber

More than a bit of rough

And various other strange stuff

He's no doubt a wonderful lover

And very kind to his mother

A good constituency MP

A model for all to see

With the "full confidence of the PM"

He's free to enjoy his whips and lashes

"Handcuff me to the bedpost dear

But don't forget to keep that key near"

It's a perfectly natural peccadillo

For a nation in a state of decay -oh

Dear! We outdo Emperor Nero

With our most dishonourable members

Dragging us all in the dirt

For a piece of latex skirt

Rubbing the public's face in the muck

Our misfortune, their good luck

While they jaunt off, jerk off,

Turning our world into one gigantic bordello

For the delectation of each most honourable fellow.

DM

Extracts from an **Open letter to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to think again on the planned World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul** signed by Noam Chomsky and many others

We learn with disbelief that the first World Humanitarian Summit will be hosted by President Erdogan in Istanbul. Of all locations where such an international event could be held, Turkey, at the present time, is the least suitable. The conflict that has been unfolding in Turkey's southeast over the past few months is one such conflict that needs to be urgently resolved. It is precisely because the Turkish government has turned to an unwinnable military solution to the Kurdish conflict that a humanitarian disaster is now looming in many parts of the southeast. This ongoing conflict makes the location of the forthcoming UN Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul wholly inappropriate.

The government headed by President Erdogan has consciously exacerbated a conflict with its Kurdish minority population since the result of last year's first national election which saw the pro-Kurdish HDP achieve a dramatic breakthrough that denied the AKP its majority. One of the main themes of the planned summit is to be, "Serving the needs of people in conflict", which surely renders it utterly inappropriate for Turkey to be hosting the event, given the current humanitarian disaster taking place in cities across the country's southeast which have been subjected to curfew, bombardment and deliberate destruction by Turkish state forces.

It is a time when President Erdogan has been taking ever more divisive steps that are fostering fear and conflict among communities in the country.

It is a time when independent Turkish journalists, academics, lawyers and creative artists are harried, intimidated and prosecuted for exercising legitimate rights to free expression.

It is a time when basic democratic, political and human rights are under serious assault from an increasingly authoritarian government run by the AKP.

It is a time when the Kurdish people as a whole are collectively targeted and punished mercilessly for alleged support for the PKK.

It is a time when Kurdish men, women, children, old people, are indiscriminately bombarded by Turkish military operations against towns and villages; a time, when hundreds of thousands of entirely innocent people have been forced to flee their homes in fear; a time, when largely erroneous accusations are levelled by the Turkish government at Kurdish people branding them as sponsors of terrorism.

In view of the worsening situation inside Turkey today we must strongly urge the UN to reconsider its decision to select Istanbul as the venue for this important event. Please think again even at this late hour.

It is widely alleged in particular that Ankara has been assisting ISIS with the supply of weapons; that it has facilitated illegal trading by ISIS; that it is turning a blind eye to ISIS fund raising, permitting the transport and delivery of lethal military equipment across Turkish territory and likewise permitting volunteers to travel through Turkey to join the ranks of ISIS. There is much more than circumstantial evidence to indicate that Turkey is heavily involved in the ISIS support network and as such these allegations need to be subject to a thoroughgoing, independent investigation. While such question marks hang over Turkey and its record, the policies of the AKP government should give grave cause for concern for the UN and all who uphold freedom and democracy. We therefore genuinely believe that the country at present constitutes a totally unsuitable host for the forthcoming humanitarian summit.

To hold a humanitarian summit in Turkey will be an affront to the Kurds and all those who are now suffering under the oppressive measures pursued by the government of Erdogan, who is seeking to acquire more and more presidential powers.

In order to maximise the potential success of this humanitarian summit and to command universal support, we urge you to think again and to relocate the summit to a more suitable location.