International human rights in crisis: we’re working on it...

Since the last issue of Socialist Lawyer there have been a number of important events in which Haldane members have participated.

**Istanbul solidarity conference**

On 7th to 9th September in Istanbul, at the building of the Istanbul Bar Association, the second international conference of solidarity with our Turkish comrades took place. It was entitled ‘Dark Side of the Moon – The normalisation of the state of emergency and the situation of judiciary in Turkey’ (the title comes from the legendary Pink Floyd album issued in 1973). ELDH (European Lawyers for Democracy and Human Rights) was one of the co-organisers. The conference was very well attended, with a number of international speakers, including ELDH president and Haldane joint international secretary (with Carlos Orjuela) Bill Bowring. Bill’s speech was entitled ‘The crisis of the European Court of Human Rights in the face of authoritarian and populist regimes’, analysing the excessive deference being shown by the Court to Turkey, Russia and the UK. The full text of his speech and others can be found on the ELDH’s website, together with many photographs (there is more information on the Istanbul Bar Association’s website as well).

**Istanbul trial observation**

On Monday 10th September lawyers from Austria, Belgium, England, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, The Netherlands, and USA (about 30 altogether), dressed in their robes, observed the first day of the trial of our colleagues – lawyers from the People’s Law Bureau – at the Heavy Penal Court in Istanbul. They are all members of our sister organisation ÇHD (Progressive Lawyers Association), among them the ÇHD President Selçuk Kozagaçlı. Seventeen of them have been in pre-trial detention for almost 12 months, Selçuk for 10 months in solitary confinement. Selçuk was able to make a 90-minute speech as to the position of the defendants. At the end of the week’s hearing the accused were released on bail, but were promptly re-arrested. ELDH was represented by Michela Arricale, Bill Bowring, Nicola Giudici, Clemens Lahner, Fabio Marcelli, Dimitra Stavromitrou, Thomas Schmidt, and Maria Tzortzi. Other organisations represented were AED-EDL (European Democratic Lawyers), Avocats sans Frontières, Legal Team Italy, Lawyers for Lawyers, Fair Trial Watch, and the Berlin Bar Association.

**International People’s Tribunal on The Philippines**

The International People’s Tribunal on the Philippines, which delivered its judgment on 19th September 2018, was also a big success. It took place in Brussels, and was supported by ELDH and the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL – Carlos is a member of its bureau). It received a lot of international attention, and was denounced by President Duterte. It concentrated on the extrajudicial murder of those said to be connected to drugs. President Duterte was convicted of human rights abuses.

**Haldane delegation at SAF in Paris**

On Saturday 6th October a Haldane delegation composed of Debra Stanislawski and Bill...
Bowring was invited to attend the executive committee meeting in Paris of the Syndicat des Avocats de France (French Lawyers Union – SAF – www.lesaf.org), which is a founder member of the parallel European Democratic Lawyers organisation, AED, but with which Haldane and ELDH have close relations. SAF has branches all over France, commissions on a range of topics and specialisations, and has a splendid office and meeting room in Paris. Its motto is ‘Avocats engagés, solidaires’ (advocates who are engaged and in solidarity). About 25 members were present.

Debra made a presentation in excellent French on the crisis of access to justice and criminal defence in England and Wales, especially through the use of video transmission of defendants and witnesses. There were many questions. Bill had brought large numbers of copies of two issues of Socialist Lawyer, and also spoke (‘in a kind of French which seemed to be understood’).

In the afternoon Debra and Bill went with our SAF comrades to the Place de la Republique to take part in a large demonstration ‘Appel de SOS-Méditerranée pour l’Aquarius’, expressing solidarity and support to the many people in peril on the Mediterranean. There were several bands and drummers, numerous paper-sellers and stalls from the PCE, Lutte Ouvrière, the new Partie Anti-Capitaliste – just like home.

Our SAF comrades will come to London for the January Haldane Executive. Maximum attendance is requested!

Forthcoming solidarity conference and ELDH Exec in Izmir
The Second International Human Rights Academy of the Aegean will take place at the Nesin Maths Village, Sîrince, İzmir, Turkey, from 2nd to 4th November 2018, on the theme ‘International Human Rights Regime in Crisis’. It is organised by ÖHD, Lawyers for Peace, an affiliate of ELDH. Bill Bowring, who spoke at the first HRAA last year, will be attending with Carlos Orjuela, both of whom will present a paper. The academy will be followed immediately by the Executive Committee of ELDH, which now has members in 21 European countries. Haldane was a founder member.

International Criminal Court and Palestine
On 5th to 12th December 2018 there will be the Assembly of State Parties of the International Criminal Court in The Hague. IADL are considering organising a side meeting at the Hague on Palestine, encouraging the prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, to move from a preliminary examination into war crimes in Gaza to a full investigation. IADL are also trying to get as many individuals and organisations as possible signed up to their petition on prosecution of crimes committed against the Palestinian people (see the IADL website).Maximum participation is requested.

IADL Bureau in Lisbon, Congress in Algiers
There will be an IADL Bureau meeting in Lisbon from 30th November 2018 to 2nd December 2018 to prepare for the IADL Congress, which is held every four years – Haldane members have attended previous Congresses in Brussels, Hanoi, Havana, and Cape Town. The next Congress will take place in Algiers in 2019. Let’s ensure that there is a big Haldane delegation!

Labour law conference in Germany in 2019
On 15th to 16th February 2019 European Lawyers for Workers ELW, ELDH and IG Metall (the biggest German trade union) are organising a conference on European labour law at the headquarters of IG Metall in Frankfurt am Main. The themes will be: new forms of labour; new corporate structures; and trade union and legal strategies. Speakers will include Haldane vice-president John Hendy QC. Participation will be free of charge for trade union members, students, and people without work. Trade union lawyers from Haldane are invited to participate in the preparation of the conference by Skype. If you are interested please e-mail Thomas Schmid; thomas.schmidt@eldh.eu.

Bill Bowring

25: Millionaire retailer Philip Green was revealed to have been accused of bullying and sexual harassment. A member of the House of Lords named Green using Parliamentary privilege as Green had obtained a privacy injunction to prevent the media from naming him.

28: Brazil votes for far-right presidential candidate Jair Bolsonaro, who will assume office in January 2019.

3: Hundreds of people in Liverpool prevented a far-right rally in the city, with many of the so-called ‘Frontline Patriots’ having to get trains straight home as they were unable to leave the station.

Socialist Lawyer October 2018 13