

The Example of Savvas Christophorou

"Later on we continued the march -we covered a mile reaching Ciford , the free port of Liverpool. At the square we met up with the picketers. Then happened something that will will always remain with those who lived through it: All the workers held hand by hand creating huge circles and started to dance and sing workers songs; children, women, men, British and those from abroad all dancing different dances together. Fraternity was the dominant feeling; and the faith in worker power bonded everyone together in an all powerful collective.

When the police arrived and they saw the people dancing they pulled back...

We lived a marvellous week - with international solidarity reaching the its highest limits and the faith in the struggle and power of the working class sinking deeper inside us. Lets hope that this International Congress is the beggining of a closer cooperation of the international workers movement. This is the only way forward that remains for us."

**Savvas Christophorou,
Liverpool February 1996**

It was only a couple of weeks ago that Savvas rang me. He asked if I'd received the Report he did on The 18th International Dock workers Congress and an interview of a an old fighter for social justice in Cyprus. He asked me to make whatever use I considered appropriate. But his concern was much deeper: "What are we going to do abbout our youngsters? How do we involve them more in the progessive movement of this country? Why don't we as Cypriot Left in this country build closer ties with the workers movement and take more part in the struggles taking place?" These were precisely my questions but they were addressed to me by someone in the struggles for decades and a veteran I had the greatest of admiration.

I knew Savvas for some time but it was at the last Parikiaki Festival that I really got to discuss politics with him. He joined us at our stall and was telling us of the experience in workers movement. Savvas was 67 but his heart and dynamism was full of youth. From a very yuong age he committed himself to the best values of humanity, socialism and justice. He had been a trade unionist in Cyprus and in Britain when he migrated here was active in the CPGB and AKEL.

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He had for some time, in the last five years especially, after the death of his life long partner and wife, devoted to writing. He was keenly awaiting the publication of a book he had written on the history of the workers and trade union movement in Cyprus, that is to published this autumn. But it wasn't meant for him to see them. In his autobiographical book *I Makrini Poria* he traces the influences and eperiences from his village, Goudi of Paphos to his life in the town and ultimately Britain. This peoples' history is of great value as it comes directly and sincely from the people; not imposed from above. In the case of Cyprus, we as younger generations must encourage our elders to engage in this valuable activity. Savvas, like other progressive veterans, has a lot to say and we can gain a great deal by learning from their treasure of experience and insight, even if we are (and should always be) critical.

Savvas was a man of great sensitvity and compassion; fairness and social justice were the values he committed himself to. He leaves behind him two sons and grandchildren and all those valued him and his contribution to the ongoing struggles for Cyprus, peace, equality and social justice. The glowing example of Savvas, I'm sure, means a great deal to the younger ones as well as the old in the community and in the struggles to follow for the cause he believed in.