

Workers Power

30p/10p strikers Monthly paper of the Workers Power group

Inside **WRP** 'PABLOISM' And The **INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE**



CRISIS IN THE PHILIPPINES

DEFEAT KINNOCK'S PURGE

FILE COPY

THE FIGHT AGAINST the witch-hunt in the Labour Party now needs to move up a gear. At the 26 February National Executive Committee (NEC) Kinnock got the mandate he wanted to carry through his purge of Militant supporters in Liverpool.

His kangaroo-court investigating the Liverpool District Labour Party (DLP) provided the charge-sheet. The NEC duly acted in the manner of a hand-picked jury, delivering a nine vote majority. The scene is now set for the March NEC to expel leading Militant supporters.

The NEC empowered General Secretary, Larry Whitty to appoint two full-time organisers to run the Liverpool party, re-organise it and replace the DLP with a "temporary co-ordinating committee". This will be less than one tenth the size of the DLP itself and will be responsible for the May election campaign.

Whitty will finally decide how many of the 16 will be expelled and on exactly what charges. The inquiry conveniently leaves Whitty two options with regard to the charges against Militant. The first verdict of the inquiry concerns alleged abuses and breaches of Labour Party rules and constitution. Kinnock lectured the NEC that "This is not a witch-hunt, it is a democratic party using its democracy to uphold democracy".

Of course, Kinnock's attachment to democracy is hypocritical and partial. He is not in favour of the democratic re-selection of Militant's supporter Pat Wall in Bradford, or the democratic de-selection of his own ally Kilroy-Silk in Knowsley. He is not in favour of democratic control of the party over the PLP, or of using democracy as a weapon to unearth and deal with the mass of corruption and wheeler-dealing in the dozens of constituencies controlled by the right in the Labour Party.

Walworth Road's attachment to democracy was well-illustrated in Whitty's attempt to get the

BBC to remove Benn from "Question Time" which went out the day after the NEC to prevent him defending the Militant!

The NEC also lay the charge of membership of the Militant Tendency which would render them ineligible for membership of the Labour Party. It is this charge which will provide the ammunition for the right wing if they choose to launch a full-scale purge, not only of Militant but of other socialist trends in the Labour Party.

Nothing can obscure the fact that this is a political witch-hunt. It is Kinnock's attempt to define the limits of the political spectrum to the left of the party. He made as much clear at the NEC meeting, "People talk of a broad church party. . . Those who would have no boundaries, no limits, no walls for this party simply are not serious about this party and don't deserve to be taken seriously."

Of course, Kinnock and the right 'regretted' the departure of the embryo of the SDP - Jenkins, Williams, Owen and Rogers. There is always a place for vicious anti-working class politicians like these in the Labour Party. Not only are the likes of Healey, Shore and Hattersley safe within the walls of the broad church but they have reserved pews near the pulpit.

The real intention behind the recent moves is clear; by purging the left Kinnock aims to render the Labour Party presentable to the bosses and middle class in the next election and leave their options open for any future co-allition deal with the Alliance.

The witch-hunt will also, by driving out the left an reducing the pressure for radical policies, help to guarantee that if Labour did win a majority in an election, Kinnock's government would clearly be a vicious anti-working class Labour government.

Kinnock has not carried through his attack single handedly. He has been handsomely assisted by those once left-talkers



John Sturrock Network

in the Labour Party and trade unions such as Blunkett, the Labour coordinating committee (LCC) and Tribune. Blunkett, once considered the left-wing leader of Sheffield council, not only supported but voted for Kinnock's witch-hunt.

Blunkett's role, as ever, is to help Kinnock carry through the witch-hunt; and by protesting that it is not because of anybody's political beliefs, trying to avoid civil war in the party by pacifying the soft left. By his actions he has placed himself well beyond consideration for any 'left' NEC slate.

The LCC welcome the findings of the report and called on party members in the city to co-operate in getting the party fully operative again. In similar right-wing terms, the latest Tribune editorial announces overwhelming support for Kinnock and the witch-hunt: "It is essential that the party acts against this conspiracy. . . To that end the NEC had endorsed a set of reforms and measures, which everyone should be able to support, to re-organise the party in the city." (28.2.86) Between now and the next NEC, a massive campaign against the witch-hunt must be launched which goes right through the union conference season and to the Labour Party Conference itself - where any appeal will be heard.

It is not sufficient for Militant to simply cite the abuses of other DLPs in mitigation against the NEC's accusations. That is simply to play by the rules of the Kinnockites.

Neither is it useful to put forward an exaggerated account

Defend surcharged councillors!

ON 5 MARCH the High Court will rule on the cases of the surcharged Lambeth and Liverpool councillors. According to Ted Knight it will almost certainly find against them, despite the £118,000 legal fees paid by Lambeth and the £200,000 by Liverpool.

The councillors were in fact bound to take the case to the High Courts. The ruling of the District Auditors against them was based not on any kind of hearing or trial, but on the District Auditors' opinion alone. No doubt this opinion was shaped by a few guiding words from Patrick Jenkin.

The councillors are accused of 'wilful misconduct' in not setting a rate, and issued surcharge notices amounting to £126,947 against 32 Lambeth councillors and £106,103 against the 49 from

Liverpool. If they lose they will be barred from office (local or government) for 5 years and personally liable for the surcharge. The same would have been true had they not taken the case to the High Court at all.

If the judgement goes against the councillors then a decision has to be made within 2 weeks as to whether or not to appeal. This would cost another £50,000 at least for Lambeth. Such a strategy may delay the councillors' disqualification for a few more weeks but is unlikely to reverse the court's decision. Its only purpose would be as part of a campaign to mobilise the local trade unions and community to take action against the court decisions.

If the councillors are disqualified the Lambeth and Liverpool councils will be left in the hands of Alliance and Tory councillors. But conducting the battle exclusively through the courts is not the way to go. As we have argued at every step, active resistance to the Tories' drive against local government, and mass action is the key to victory.

Council unions must refuse to co-operate with any such bodies and organise all out strike action in the event of it happening. With massive local industrial action, paralysing local services, and refusing to deal with payments to the City, sufficient pressure can be exerted to force the government to retreat. This is the only effective way to deal with the courts. The unavoidable legal battle must be backed up with industrial strength.

Ted Knight has said there will be a local conference in Lambeth, within two weeks of the decision, of trade unions, community organisations and Labour Party representatives. This conference must become a real decision making body, not a rally. It must be a forum where a strategy can be worked out to win the battle. The councillors must come out with a call for all out action from the council unions and other local workers.

Such a conference could also be reconvened to discuss the Labour Party's strategy for this year. Knight's proposed budget which 'muddles through' by selling off the council's capital assets offers no prospect for the expansionary budget which Lambeth needs to provide adequate jobs and services. An expansionary budget based on local working class needs would lead to another confrontation. By mobilising and succeeding on this one the labour movement can swing the balance back in its favour and prevent Tory cuts being imposed on already deprived areas like Lambeth and Liverpool. ■

into how the city party is run. (Militant 28.2.86) This is to be welcomed. But the Liverpool party must go beyond this. They must refuse to comply with any part of the inquiry, including the 'temporary co-ordinating committee', continue to meet as a DLP and prepare to stand its own candidates in the May elections.

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SHOULD SELLAFIELD SHUT?

THE LAST MONTHS have furnished irrefutable evidence that the bosses of the nuclear industry are running it at enormous risk to the industry's workers. They are running it with scant regard for the health and safety of communities located in the vicinity of nuclear plants. Moreover, the industry's bosses, the Tory government and top civil servants have created a web of secrecy and deception to hide this fact.

In mid-January British Nuclear Fuels Limited (BNFL) dumped half a tonne of radioactive waste in the Irish Sea after a failure at Sellafield. At first BNFL publicly claimed the discharge was no more than a few kilos; only later were they forced to change their story.

Less than two weeks later there was a leak of radioactive mist at the same plant. BNFL management claimed that only a few workers were exposed. Later the actual number of workers at risk was shown to be fifteen. Within another fortnight there was yet another leak at Sellafield. This time 250 gallons of radioactive water escaped from a broken pipe contaminating at least two workers. More assurances from BNFL were followed on March 1st by yet another leak and twelve more workers contaminated.

These events have also exposed the lie machine which has been used to cover up the risk that the nuclear industry poses as it is presently run. It is now abundantly clear that a government inquiry into the abnormally high incidence of leukaemia in the Sellafield vicinity was given wildly inaccurate figures concerning the scale of radiative discharges

from the plant in the 1950s. The real total was 40 times the lauded figure given to the inquiry.

Despite this Sir Douglas Black - the inquiry's chief - has refused to modify his conclusion that radiation discharge from Sellafield was insufficient to warrant making a link between the plant and the incidence of leukaemia. His inquiry was in fact a government whitewash job. Even though it was lied to, even though leukaemia rates amongst children living near the Aldermaston and Burghfield reactors are well above the national average, Black is flatly refusing to question the health and safety standards of the nuclear industry.

Evidence of the dangers posed by the industry grows daily. There was a leak of 15 tonnes of radioactive carbon dioxide recently at the Central Electricity Generating Board's plant at Trawsfynydd. But this has not been a freak month of leaks, breakdowns and cover up. Back in 1983 there was a major leak at Sellafield. BNFL announced at the time that there was absolutely nothing to worry about! In the end twelve miles of beaches were closed because of the radioactive risks they posed.

It is now clear that in 1983 BNFL effectively suppressed a report that showed that a minor earth tremor on a scale that is experienced in Britain would destroy reactors at Sellafield and Chapple Cross and cause a risk of a major nuclear explosion. All the evidence shows that the BNFL and CEBG bosses cannot be trusted to run the industry without putting the workers and whole communities at risk.

Faced with the succession of disasters the Tory government

is attempting to dampen mounting concern by dispatching twelve Health and Safety Executive inspectors to scrutinise the Sellafield plant. But, as the Black inquiry showed, this will not break down the wall of secrecy and deceit that surrounds the running of the industry. The government will not even allow Euratom - the EEC's nuclear fuel body - to inspect Sellafield or impose its required safety standards on the plant.

"NATIONAL INTEREST"?

The nuclear bosses and the Tory government have two standard excuses for keeping the workings of the industry a closed book. Firstly they use the argument that it is in the interests of 'national security' to maintain secrecy. At Sellafield Magnox reprocessing mixes both military and civil fuel. This is used to justify top secrecy. On the same grounds the government refuses to say how much plutonium is derived from the CEBG's reactors.

The second defence is the maintenance of 'commercial confidentiality'. It is on these nakedly capitalist grounds that the BNFL justifies its refusal to say just how much spent fuel is being reprocessed at Sellafield.

Faced with the evidence of their preparedness to take risks with workers' lives, it is in the vital interests of the labour movement to break down the wall of secrecy that the bosses and Tories have erected around the industry. It must not tolerate an industry that is allowed to avoid inspection and repeatedly put workers' lives

at risk just so the British bosses can have the means to nuke the USSR or Argentina in pursuit of their interests. It must not tolerate a situation in the industry where safety standards are ignored and where dangers are blatantly covered up in the interests of commercial secrecy. Such secrecy benefits the profits makers but jeopardises the lives of the rest of us.

The entire industry, and its component plants, must be opened to workers' inspection. This cannot be left to civil servants or to 'questions in the House'. It must be organised by the labour movement alongside the workers in the plants and their immediate neighbourhoods. Labour's Dr. Cunningham has already said he thinks BNFL management are doing "a good, effective, open and honest job". Those who apologise for proven liars deserve no trust from the labour movement. A workers inquiry should appoint its own technical experts who are prepared to challenge the bosses' claims. Brushing aside claims for "national security" and business secrecy it would examine the real risks the industry poses to workers, reveal who is responsible for such risks and assess how and when those risks can be overcome. It would fight for an effective veto by the workers against production in any plant that poses a proven threat to the health of the workforce or the surrounding community. The workers should shut down any such plant, either for refitting or demolition, with guaranteed full pay met by the bosses.

In all industries the bosses seek to push down safety standards and shroud their working

in secrecy. Workers in the mines, in the chemical industry and on the building site have a history of bitter struggle to defend and improve safety standards. In the nuclear industry the early stage of its technological development and the new type of risks that it poses make the fight for workers' inspection and a workers' veto absolutely crucial.

WORKERS CONTROL

We do not accept the view of the anti-nuke movement that under all circumstances nuclear power is evil and should be opposed. Such a view is false and pessimistic. Moreover it offers the bulk of the world, particularly the imperialised world where energy needs are desperate, the utopian perspective of solving the energy problem with wind power or wave power!

Marxists counterpose to this unscientific outlook the perspective of mastering the present day problems of nuclear power so that the energy problems of the world can be decisively overcome. But we have no faith in the nuclear power industry's capitalist bosses' ability or interest in achieving this. In the nuclear industry we see most vividly why only workers' inspection and control can defend the safety of workers and deploy its productive potential in the interests of satisfying society's needs. ■

by Dave Hughes



Storage tanks at Sellafield: source of the leaks?

continued from front page

Unfortunately Militant's record elsewhere is not so defiant. In Sheffield, expelled councillor and Militant supporter, Paul Green, has signalled retreat. Under threat from the local DLP who have instructed Intake (Green's ward) to select another candidate by 11 March or have an 'official' candidate imposed on them by the NEC - Green has announced that he will not stand against the 'official' candidate.

The ward on the other hand was prepared to hold firm. Green has also announced that - legal aid permitting - he intends to start legal action against the local party and the NEC to seek 'justice' against unlawful expulsion. This method of using the courts to fight battles within the labour movement is a diversion. It deflects from the political argument and it fails to recognise that over time the courts will back the right-wing since they share a common goal.

Finally, it is particularly crucial that the struggle in the trade

unions is stepped up. Already, John Edwards - secretary of GMBATU - has threatened to take action against Ian Lowes for his role among Liverpool council workers. The very day of the NEC NUPE leaders circulated branch secretaries with the unsubstantiated charges against Militant emanating from Liverpool NUPE secretary Jane Kennedy.

Given the decisive weight of the block vote at the Labour Party conference and the fact that the conference will be a watershed in the fight against the witchhunt we must co-ordinate a national campaign in the unions.

- * Opposition to all witch-hunts; no expulsions!
- * The right of all socialists to remain in the Party
- * The right of organised socialist tendencies to affiliate to the Labour Party
- * For resistance to the witch-hunt up to and including standing candidates against 'official' Labour Party candidates in the case of expulsion or disaffiliation.

GERMAN WORKERS FACE

ON MARCH 6TH Bonn will see mass demonstrations of militant trade unionists. This will be the peak of a campaign that has seen 500,000 workers in Print and Engineering industries down tools on December 10th and 10,000 trade unionists demonstrate in Dusseldorf on December 18th.

Their calls for strike action made it clear that there is now an increasingly militant current in the West German unions. The object of the campaign is the Kohl Government's plans to introduce an amendment to the Employment law. The effect of the amendment (to paragraph 116) would be to stop workers laid-off by strikes from receiving either employment benefit or lay-off pay.

In the German unions strike pay is relatively high, anything between 60% and 80% of wages. In the mid seventies the union leaders used this as an argument to justify a tactic of only calling selective local strikes. These so called 'key point' strikes were designed to knock out whole branches of industry by striking some key production facility.

In 1984, in the engineers' strikes, when the Engineers' Union IGM called out key sections in two areas, the bosses went on the offensive and locked out hundreds of thousands of workers in other areas.

Especially in the car industry, the bosses reckoned on the support of the CDU/CSU government and the law. They reckoned right. The President of the Federal Labour Office, Egon Franke, decreed that no lay-off or short time pay could be claimed by those locked out as a result of the dispute.

The implication of this ruling was clear. Either the IGM had to abandon its strike or it had to pay out to the hundreds of

thousands of laid-off workers and potentially, bankrupt the union. The only other possibility, which the bureaucrats did not want to consider, was to extend the strike, call the bosses' bluff and hit the whole engineering industry. Even so the strike did begin to spread out of the control of the bureaucrats; laid-off workers began to occupy their factories. The IGM leaders could think of no other tactic than to appeal against the 'Franke Edict' to the courts.

"NEUTRAL" LAW

In the face of the heightening tension of the strike and the constant confrontations with scabs at the factory gates, the Welfare Tribunal in Bremen and Kassel decided that it had to try to maintain the appearance of legal neutrality and found against the employers and the Franke Edict.

The IGM strikes showed, once again, that the law and its interpretation, reflect the balance of class forces. With the workers mobilised and angry the courts preferred to defuse the situation. Thereafter, however, with the workers back at work, the powers behind the courts - the capitalists themselves - are prepared to alter the law. They have chosen to do this by amending paragraph 116 of the Employment Act, the so-called 'neutrality order'. This clause, introduced during the Grand Coalition of the SDP and CDU in 1969, lays down that those receiving unemployment pay may not take part in an industrial dispute. This means not only those on strike cannot receive benefit but also those locked out!

After the struggle for the 35 hour week the employers de-

termined to demand a further amendment to the law so that lay-off pay and unemployment benefit will be withheld from workers even outside the geographical 'negotiating districts' and in all branches of industry. They intend to make sure that the law is unambiguous and does not allow for interpretations that might work to the advantage of the unions.

MOBILISE UNIONS

The proposed amendment does not mark a major change of strategy by the ruling class, it is a tightening up of their legal defences. The fate of the government will not be decided by this one clause. All the same it is important that the West German unions mobilise to defeat it. We do not support the bureaucrats' selective strike tactics, they are designed to keep strikes under control and to prevent mass mobilisations of workers. However, not all disputes require a nationwide mobilisation. Local strikes are important in developing organisation and confidence. The proposed amendment would make such strikes difficult to win because the bosses would immediately use the lock out tactic to divide union members.

In the unions we say that the leaders must lead a real fight, not just meetings and demos but strikes and occupations to force the government to back down. The scale of such strikes should be determined by the resistance of the bosses. If they see the amendment as vital to their plans they will not be moved by local or token strikes. We must demand of the unions that they be prepared up to the level of a general

A REACTIONARY STRIKE

THE CRISIS THAT the Anglo-Irish agreement has unleashed in Unionist ranks took on a sharper form with the decision to call a 24-hour Ulster strike on 3 March. Unionist leaders Molyneux, of the Official Unionist Party (OUP), and Paisley of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) are coming under increasing pressure to turn their rhetoric into deeds and step up the action against the agreement.

Paisley and Molyneux have been aware of the inherent weaknesses of constitutional Unionism faced with a Unionist Tory government resolved to stamp out Sinn Fein in concert with Dublin. For that reason they have tried to maintain a protest campaign that was sufficiently vocal to gain concessions while not upping the stakes in a direct showdown with Thatcher.

The resignation of Westminster seats and the by-election 'referendum' was seen as the key to winning a better deal with Thatcher. While Paisley in particular vowed a campaign of boycotting Parliament and making the Six Counties 'ungovernable' after the by-elections, both he and Molyneux intended to take another course. In late February they struck a deal with Thatcher that granted them a few concessions within the framework of the very agreement they had fulminated so fiercely against.

The Unionist chiefs left Downing Street with promises of no more than Loyalist input into a conference on devolution for the Six Counties, an improved arrangement for discussing Northern Ireland at Westminster and negotiations on the function of the Stormont Assembly. Yet these 'intransigents' could not conceal their

relief that they thought they had got themselves out of a corner. Molyneux declared "We are not at the end of the road, the door was not slammed... we have got away from what we anticipated was a deadlock situation."

The problem for the Unionist leaders was their Ulster says no' campaign has opened the way for more militant reactionary elements to increase their audience and influence amongst the Loyalists. The Ulster Clubs, the UDA and other hardline Loyalists have used Paisley's threats and bluster to force him and Molyneux to put up or shut up.

On their return to Belfast from Downing Street both leaders had their negotiated settlement unceremoniously rejected by the Joint Unionist Working Party of top Unionist politicians. Instead of their expected escape from deadlock Molyneux and Paisley were forced to give their backing to the call for a one day strike that had first been floated in UDA and Ulster Club circles. Pressure for this proved irresistible especially given that at the fringes membership of the DUP and UDA overlap.

DECISION

The Tory Cabinet may be dismayed by the decision to strike on 3 March but what is noticeable is the mildness of their attack on the Unionists. Faced with miners at Orgreave or a Wapping picket Thatcher spits blood and encourages the full use of the Tory anti-union laws and intervention of the courts to cripple effective action. But where is the litigation now, where are the sequestrators? Where is the 'trade dis-

pute' that makes this strike lawful? Thatcher's tempered response is motivated by the desire not to push Paisley and Molyneux supporters any further into the arms of the UDA.

The strike places great pressure on official constitutional Unionism. The middle-class and business elements at the core of the OUP have little stomach for a showdown. Molyneux's calls for peaceful protest will not convince them of the value of entering on a collision course of with Thatcher that the UDA want and stand to recruit from. Paisley too had hoped to avoid heightened conflict with the 'evil woman' in Downing Street. Pressure within their ranks, including power from and shipyard workers' leaders forced them to support the strike call against their better judgement.

The paramilitary fringes of Orangism will take heart from the strike whatever its scale. They plan to escalate the action into the summer when the Orange pogromist marching season begins. Their hope is that the leadership of the protest against the deal will pass to them as they challenge the march re-routings that thwart their sectarian intent. As Alan Wright of the Ulster Clubs told an interviewer recently "I don't want to put a date on anything but the marching season could make for a very hot summer." (Fortnight 233)

The rejectionist pressure will put great strains on the united front of Constitutional Unionism. Molyneux will come under attack in his own party both from a more



Orange bigot

intransigent wing and those who want to avoid being kicked into escalating action that involves greater confrontation at every stage. Paisley has come under attack in his own private political party from Robinson who rejected the Downing Street deal that had been struck by his master.

There is a continual process of ideological splintering and disorientation amongst the paramilitary world of Loyalism. None of this is surprising. Unionism and the sectarian Orange state was the creation of Britain. Deprived of full-blooded British support or, as is the case now, in conflict with the British Government it fragments and divides.

Revolutionaries can take

heart from that fragmentation. But they must do so not by dressing up any particular loyalist fragment in progressive colours or conceding an inch to a movement of reactionaries whose objective is to recoup every privilege the Orange bigots think they have lost to the nationalists.

Protestant workers have no interest in heeding the call for this reactionary strike. Those who refuse to heed it will contribute to the fragmentation of the Unionist bloc. That fragmentation weakens the northern state and even opens up the possibility of winning sections of Protestant workers away from the Orange bigots and to revolutionary class struggle. ■

by John Hunt

LEGAL ATTACK



German workers marching in 1984

strike to defeat the bosses. Naturally, in the process of escalation that might lead to a general strike, we would broaden the demands of the movement to include all the rest of the anti-union legislation.

In the SPD, we call for the Parliamentary fraction to take all possible measures to disrupt and block the passage of the amendment. Rank and file members of the SPD should insist that their leaders commit themselves to repealing all anti-union laws should they again form a government after next year's election.

There is a growing current of militancy in the unions and this must be mobilised and organised into a permanent, democratically controlled body of militants. It will be their task not only to pressurise the established leaders but to undertake action independently of them to defend working class interests. The West

German capitalists are preparing a concerted attack on the living standards and conditions of the working class. Paragraph 116 is only one small part of their strategy, the struggle against it must be the starting point of a working class strategy to throw back the whole attack.

We support the demands on the SPD and union leaders to organise the struggle. The workers expect this of their leaders and we should not allow them to escape their responsibilities. All the same we have to warn the workers not to have any blind faith in these leaders. To the workers we say, "Organise yourselves for the struggle, call mass meetings, form strike committees, prepare for the fight now! Only thus will you know friend from foe, only thus will you win this struggle." ■

by a member of
Gruppe Arbeitermacht

SINN FEIN VOTES FOR CUTS

HOPES WERE RAISED in socialist circles within Sinn Fein (SF) when Gerry Adams recently promised "a mass campaign against the Tory-imposed cuts". He argued that this signalled a radical shift away from 'verbal socialism' to the real thing.

These hopes were to be sorely dashed by the antics of SF councillors throughout the North a week later. First in Derry SF voted with the SDLP majority for an 8% increase in local rates imposed as a direct result of the Tory imperialist government's economic policies.

Then in Strabane SF capitulated with one local councillor sounding off about the need for 'an all-party committee' to decide where the cuts must be made in order to keep the rate increases as small as possible.

These increases set by nationalist and republican councillors throughout the north are but the first part of a global increase. The second part will be levied directly by the Stormont administration. The overall effect of them and the cuts made to keep the increases to a minimum will be to hit most harshly those working people whose communities are already blighted by mass unemployment, low wages and poor housing. The latest EEC report describes this poverty as the worst in Europe.

It is from these same communities that SF and the IRA derive most of their support in the north. These people were encouraged by SF to believe that in taking up ballot box politics it continued to stand for resistance against all the policies of imperialism in Ireland. Now SF have not only imposed rate increases but also

cuts in social and cultural amenities at the behest of Tory imperialist dictat.

In Derry, for example, admission prices to the popular recreational and leisure centre will rise, with the financial axe falling on the annual festival and a new museum for the region. No wonder a local Chamber of Commerce and council member (an Independent Unionist) could congratulate the council for its 'responsible behaviour' in minimising the rate increase. Otherwise, he said, the business community - among them Dupont International - would have to consider redundancies.

In the face of this reasoning in the council chamber SF did not even muster an argument. In Derry, the motion for passing a rate was passed in seventeen minutes! So in spite of the so-called 'left-turn' in SF with a series of annual conferences passing ever-so-radical-sounding policies it is increasingly clear that the 'ballot box and armalite' strategy is coming apart at the seams.

When an IWG member in Derry challenged Sinn Fein to justify the increases they were told that there would be no discussion or debate in SF over the actions of the councillors - actions which these particular SF supporters deeply deplored. It was clear, they said, that SF policies in local councils were to appear as 'responsible' as possible against the background of Unionist attempts to obstruct local government.

But it is not only the local council that acted as a forum for SF's opportunism. In the Derry Trades Council, for example, where there is a SF majority and chairperson, SF are both unable and

unwilling to do much more than make empty rhetorical gestures and resolutions about resisting the cuts in social services.

For example, a public meeting at the Derry Guildhall on February 20th was called to discuss the basis for resisting the discriminatory financial cuts made in community groups in republican areas. They have grave consequences for the continued employment of community workers. At the meeting Sinn Fein's trades council members offered nothing by way of a perspective for building a fighting campaign around this issue.

The IWG proposed that the fight to restore the financial aid should be the basis of a campaign to win trade union rights and conditions for these workers and for positive discrimination for Catholic workers within a perspective of one person, one job. Yet Sinn Fein's trades councillors could only reply that if the community workers would join trade unions and then submit resolutions then the Trades Council would consider the issue.

This kind of bureaucratic response comes from a group who previous to achieving its own majority position on the trades council had perfectly correctly criticised the same response from Militant. It illustrates the essential distrust that SF - like Militant - have of organising the rank and file both inside the unions and outside for a real struggle against capitalism. As the attacks on the working people of the North and South continue to erode living standards even further it is becoming clear that the nationalist programme and methods of SF are bankrupt.

Instead of a clear fight to mobilise the working masses in town and country on all fronts against the exploiters and oppressors, SF are being increasingly found in opportunist blocs with the SDLP. ■

by a member of the IWG

IT IS NO accident that the Socialist International's women's organisation, under the leadership of Clara Zetkin, declared for an International Proletarian Women's Day to be marked on March 8th. The date was in honour of New York women workers who demonstrated on that day in 1908 to demand the vote, an end to sweatshop conditions and for child care facilities. It was to be followed by a bitter struggle in 1908-10 by women clothing workers in New York and Philadelphia who struck to improve their appalling working conditions. Again in 1917 it was demonstrations on this day by proletarian women in Russia which sparked off the revolt which overthrew the Tsar. This year on International Women's Day, black women in South Africa are involved in a heroic struggle against apartheid which working women everywhere should salute. □

Today in South Africa, black working women are in the forefront of the struggle against the apartheid regime. Their white bourgeois 'sisters' have long had the vote. Whilst black women were being beaten and imprisoned for resisting the pass laws and land restrictions the white feminists were campaigning for the vote. Their leaders' attitude was summed up when one of these suffragists was asked whether she favoured extending the vote to black women. She replied:

"As a woman, Sir, yes . . . - but as a South African born person, I feel that it would be wiser if we gave the vote to the European only."

They won their battle in 1930 when General Herzog's government granted white women the franchise.

In all countries the oppression of women takes different forms amongst different classes. In our society only bourgeois and upper middle-class women are able to 'offload' aspects of their oppression through the nanny, the 'cleaning lady', the au pair or the boarding school. In South Africa a very large proportion of white women only meet their black 'sisters' as servants or maids. It is little wonder that black women have enthusiastically taken up the struggle against their exploitation and oppression in South Africa.

DISCRIMINATION

The Apartheid regime brutally oppresses all blacks in South Africa, but none more than the women who suffer its harsh discrimination in all aspects of their lives. The most acute demonstration of apartheid is presented to the many black women who are in domestic service - the single biggest occupational group of women. These count for over 25% of all women working in South Africa.

In service the extreme exploitation of women is 'personified' in the black servant. She must cook, clean, run the household and raise the children of the idle whites.

Usually paid extremely low wages and forced to live in an

out-building of their bosses' house, these women are not entitled to have their own families with them. With long hours and few if any holidays, the black domestic servant creates a family life for the privileged white kids, but is lucky to see her own children once a month in many cases. Her husband is not allowed to stay with her even if they are both employed in the same household.

Perhaps more insulting are the still existing petty apartheid laws, such as the fact that a black woman may take off her shoes and paddle in the sea whilst looking after a white child, yet on her own she is banned from bathing on the same beach!

The whole system of apartheid rests on the super-exploitation of African workers, 40% of whom are 'migrants'. They are either 'foreign' - from neighbouring countries in Southern Africa - or internal migrants, African workers allocated to segregated 'homelands' (Bantustans) where they must return if their employment in the urban areas ends.

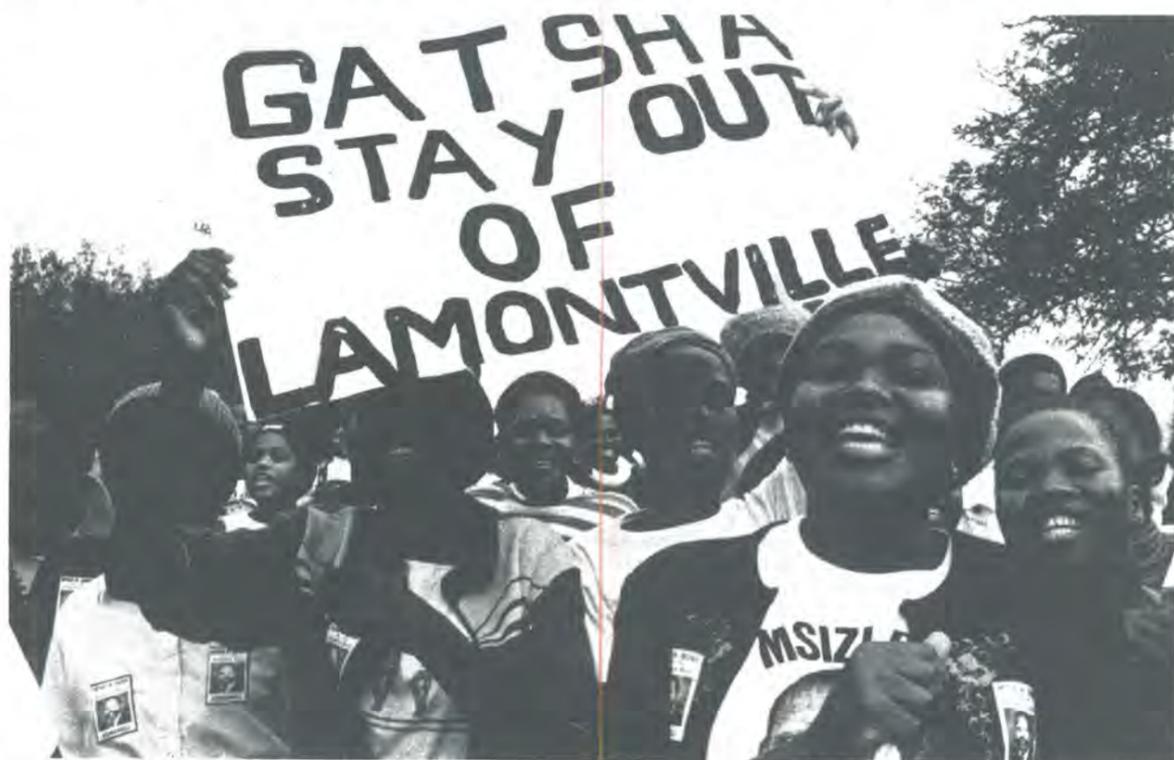
The use of migrant workers enables the South African bosses to pay extremely low wages, since they largely exclude any element in the pay for the workers' family. They try to get out of paying for the reproduction of the next generation of workers. The Nationalists' view was summed up by one of their MP's in 1969.

"The African labour force must not be burdened with superfluous appendages such as wives, children and dependants who could not provide service."

The task of caring for and rearing the next generation is left to the women, many of whom have been forcibly confined to the 'homeland' areas. In these areas 5 million women are expected to survive by scratching a living off tiny plots of land.

Extreme deprivation exists in the homelands with over two-thirds of the population landless and the majority living well below even official poverty levels. Acute land hunger makes the people living there (mainly women, children and the elderly) dependent on remittances from the

BLACK WOMEN AGAINST APARTHEID



Organised protest against the Homelands system

migrant workers who live in the urban townships.

Women have to wait for money from husbands and sons who they may only see for two weeks a year - a holiday granted out of necessity to allow a minimal level of procreation to occur. In the townships many workers live in single-sex, barrack-type accommodation. Because of the caricature this creates of 'family life' the incidence of marriage is low. Only 23% of African women are married compared to 46% of white women.

Many black women now work in jobs outside the homelands - either as agricultural or domestic

workers or increasingly in manufacturing industries. Low wages due to lack of equal pay make black women a profitable group to employ - wages are 20% lower than for men doing the same work.

The government showed its contempt for black women when in 1983 it introduced new legislation to remove pay discrimination against all women teachers, except African women teachers.

Despite the enormous oppression that black women suffer in South Africa they have formed a militant vanguard in many struggles against Apartheid. Back in 1913 when the pass laws were used against women in the Orange Free State large demonstrations of defiance occurred.

A widespread campaign was launched in which many women were arrested, refused to pay fines and the gaols became too full to hold all the prisoners. Although this movement was basically sporadic and eventually subsided, it formed the basis for the first real political organisation of black women, the Bantu Women's League.

During the 1950s the government extended the Pass laws to include women, the majority of whom had until then been excluded. Again the determined resistance of the women was a lesson for both black men and white South Africa. It took the regime eleven years, from 1952 to 1963, to enforce the laws.

Women demonstrated, refused to carry passes, faced mass arrest and imprisonment. In August 1956 20,000 women protested in Pretoria. Their demonstration was banned, so they waited around in groups of three, flooding the city with these women dressed in the green and black colours of the ANC.

In the period before the pass laws were imposed on women, illegal trade unions were being formed. Once again women were in the vanguard since the legislation governing the right to organise excluded 'Pass-bearing natives' - at the time women did not have passes so could act as leaders in the building of the unions.

Many such women were imprisoned, some still remain there, but their effect on the trade unions has remained. Even in 1983 there were 24 women general secretaries out of 240 unions - a ratio considerably higher than in countries like Britain.

Perhaps the best known example of the courage and determination of black women in South Africa is their role in the squatter camps such as Crossroads. In the 1950's the government tried to forcibly remove black workers from the Western Cape. Thousands were shifted to the Bantustans. Necessity brought them back, but this time not as family groups of commuters but as migrant or contract workers, setting up home in illegal 'squatter' camps.

Crossroads was one of these. In 1977 the government moved in to evict these 'squatters'. In some areas, such as Modderdam, a population of 10,000 were forcibly evicted.

But at the Crossroads camp there was organised resistance - a Women's Committee was responsible for sit-downs in front of bulldozers, and vigilantes to prevent demolitions and removals. They became, in the words of the government:

"a symbol of provocation and blackmail of the government, and we want to destroy that symbol at all costs."

Women in South Africa have a great tradition of struggle and resistance. Organised in the communities to oppose passes and removals, to run consumer boycotts and the like, but also in trade unions and political organisations fighting for economic and political demands.

ORGANISATION

A network of tens of thousands of women, giving the lead in the current struggle, already exists in South Africa. This network needs to be developed into an organisation embracing millions of black women. A working class women's movement can and must be built in South Africa. It can and must play a full role in the struggle to destroy this vile regime.

The power and determination of black women needs to be organised in a struggle not only against apartheid but against the class society - South African capitalism

- which will maintain the oppression of women as long as it exists. Only socialist revolution points the way for the full liberation of black women in South Africa/Azania. ■

by Helen Ward

A WASTED OPPORTUNITY

ON MARCH 1ST the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) held its first Trade Union Conference for four years. Some 400 delegates gathered hoping to discuss and debate the ways in which workers in this country could aid black workers in South Africa in their struggle against the racist regime.

Unfortunately, many of the delegates were to leave disappointed. Why? In the first place, the AAM obviously viewed the conference as a discussion school, rather than a forum in which debate about the way forward could take place (motions and voting were disallowed). Complementing this, the conference was treated to a succession of worthy speakers, like that well known friend of the working class, Ron Todd General Secretary, TGWU.

Secondly, it became clear that, as far as the AAM was concerned, the central purpose of workers' action in this country was to "embarrass the government" (Mike Terry Executive Secretary, AAM) into implementing sanctions against South Africa in line with United Nations directives. That

is to say, the strategy of the AAM remains pressurising government and big business into action against Apartheid - with the working class a mere adjunct in this campaign.

The highlight of the conference was the address by Andy Lewader, one of the Portsmouth health workers boycotting South African foodstuffs since January 13th. This is exactly the sort of direct action that needs to be extended during the AAM Trade Union week of action, April 14th-20th.

But little lead can be expected from either the trade union leaders or the AAM. Ron Todd called for the week of action to "relaunch the consumer boycott". And the AAM confined itself to calling for "meetings and leafletting, lobbying management for disinvestment, symbolic (emphasis added - WP) boycotts". All these things have their part to play in educating workers about Apartheid. But rank and file trade unionists should use the opportunity of the week of action to campaign for what is really necessary - workers' boycotts. ■



workers power

March 1986

Theoretical Supplement

10p if sold separately

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE



Pablo

No Alternative To 'Pabloism'

by Mark Hoskisson



Cannon



Lambert



Healy

THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY Party has followed up its expulsion of G. Healy by breaking with the "International Committee of the Fourth International" after the latter had suspended the WRP. The IC groupings, especially Dave North's Workers League (US), could not go along with the denunciation of Healy's frame-up campaign against the late Joseph Hansen and the leadership of the SWP (US). They had sunk too much of their moral and political capital in this repulsive slander campaign to be able to extricate themselves from it. In addition they were up to their necks in law suits arising from the issue.

The Workers Press has opened a discussion on the question of the International Committee. Contributions from two senior participants in the IC's history Mike Banda and Bill Hunter (W. Sinclair) have raised fundamental questions about the IC but in our opinion they have not given the WRP members any answers. Mike Banda's "Twenty-Seven Reasons why the IC should be buried and the FI built" takes the most 'radical' swing at the IC tradition and in doing so virtually writes off the history of the FI since 1938. Banda regards the FI as stillborn, puts the blame for its degeneration fully on James P Cannon's shoulders, accuses the SWP of a 'semi-defencist' position on the Second World War and a consistent Stalin-phobia.

In response to Banda's onslaught Bill Hunter has written "Mike Banda and the Bad Men Theory of History", defending Cannon against the charge of Stalin-phobia. Now while this defence is largely accurate it centres on a secondary question. Banda's more important charge, that Cannon abandoned defeatism, is not rebutted by Hunter. He argues in relation to Cannon's *Socialism on Trial*:

"I think we will find that, in respect of war, all Cannon's testimony is based on Trotsky's articles." This is not at all true. Cannon utilised only the tactical compromise involved in Trotsky's military policy. He did not situate it in the context of Trotsky's strategic position of revolutionary defeatism, of the main enemy being at home. Proof of this charge exists in *Socialism on Trial*:

"Q. Is it true that the party (SWP - Eds) is as equally opposed to Hitler as it is to the capitalist claims of the United States?
A. That is unanswerable. We consider Hitler and Hitlerism the greatest enemy to mankind." (our emphasis)

This is a clear departure from revolutionary defeatism and the principle that the "main enemy is in your own country". It was a serious concession to "democratic" US imperialism which Cannon justified (in his debate with Munis) as a pedagogic adaptation to the consciousness of the US workers. But Cannon and the SWP did not collapse into social patriotism.

As we have pointed out in our book *The Death Agony of the Fourth International* the SWP's left-centrist waverings were not unique - far from it. Yet in our view the FI groups emerged from the Second World War weakened but not politically dead. Indeed the re-constructed FI remained up to 1948 the only revolutionary tendency on the planet.

The 1944 "Theses on the Liquidation of World War II and the Revolutionary Upsurge" charted a revolutionary policy of combat against the Stalinist and social-democratic counter-revolutionary forces trying to strangle this upsurge. The FI called for the transformation of the imperialist war into civil war, for the utilisation of democratic slogans and transitional demands "to advance the struggle for soviets and for power". It stood resolutely against the tide of anti-German chauvinism whipped up by the Allies and their 'socialists' and 'communists'.

In short we believe that in the years 1944-48 the FI repeatedly manifested the potential for a thoroughgoing political regeneration. At the Second Congress in 1948 the FI came out clearly for revolutionary parties and proletarian revolution in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. It characterised all the Stalinist parties as counter-revolutionary. The problem for the FI was twofold. Could it re-adjust its perspectives to the triumph

and stabilisation of democratic imperialism and Stalinism and could it analyse correctly the overthrow of capitalist property relations by the USSR in Eastern Europe and by national Stalinist parties first in Yugoslavia and then in China? To do this meant creatively re-elaborating Trotsky's perspective and Transitional Programme - developing both on the basis of Trotsky's method.

Cannon, Pablo, Mandel, Healy and Hansen all failed to do this. A confused discussion erupted in the FI which the most consistent revisionists won. Pablo and Hansen dragged the hesitant and suspicious Cannon and Mandel into a fully centrist position - embodied in the documents of the Third World Congress (1951). Cannon proved himself merely a dogmatist with regard to Trotsky's perspectives and programme and Mandel, in the final analysis, revealed himself to be a very clever scholastic. When 'reality' (the Stalinist overturns) contradicted their dogma and scholastic resistance to Pablo they collapsed before it. Pablo's 'success' gave him the brief to 're-arm' the FI with a centrist programme and perspectives.

The Tito-Stalin split shortly after the Second World Congress triggered the programmatic revisions that the fake perspectives had always threatened to bring about. Having converted Trotsky's perspective of Stalinism's imminent demise, as if it were a programmatic truth, the Yugoslav events were seized upon as confirmation of this perspective. Stalinism's essential social patriotic nature - and therefore its tendency to fragment along national lines - was entirely forgotten. A break with the Kremlin was therefore hailed as a break with Stalinism. While the FI debated whether Yugoslavia was yet a workers' state all the FI's leaders agreed that Tito had broken from Stalinism - under the pressure of the masses - and was some sort of centrist. Pablo pushed the more hesitant leaders to the conclusion that Yugoslavia was a more or less healthy workers state - not in need of political revolution or a Trotskyist party distinct from the YCP. The latter and its leaders could be won to the FI. Pablo generalised the Yugoslav 'experience' at the Third Congress to other communist parties, drawing revisionist conclusions about Stalinism.

While the FI debated whether Yugoslavia was yet a workers' state all the FI's leaders agreed that Tito had broken with Stalinism - under the pressure of the masses - and was some sort of centrist.

In order to understand the scale of revision that the entire FI sanctioned it is necessary to re-state the key elements of the Trotskyist analysis of Stalinism and programmatic challenge to it.

Stalinism possesses a counterrevolutionary reformist programme expressing the world view of a bureaucracy that has usurped power from the proletariat. Its essential politics are those of 'peaceful coexistence' with capitalism; a strategic commitment to a 'democratic' national revolutionary stage prior to a later 'socialist' stage; and popular front alliances that tie the working class to supposedly 'progressive' sections of the bourgeoisie.

The working class has paid with its blood for this counterrevolutionary programme. In the states where the bureaucracy rules its power has been maintained by the systematic persecution of the proletariat's revolutionary vanguard. Elsewhere Stalinism has repeatedly led the struggles of the working class to physical annihilation at the hands of fascists and bourgeois nationalists.

Within the workers' state the Stalinist bureaucracy consciously blocks the transition to socialism by buttres-

sing its own privileges and depriving the working class of political power. It repeatedly obstructs the international expansion of the revolution. It seeks to subordinate class and anti-imperialist struggles to its own self-preservation. The Stalinist parties are strategically committed to class collaboration and submission to the bourgeoisie.

However, the specific contradictory character of Stalinism is given by its material base in a series of bureaucracies whose power and privileges rest on post-capitalist property relations. Whatever the class collaborationist intentions of the Stalinists this fact places the bureaucracy under permanent threat from imperialism against which, in defending itself, the bureaucracy is forced to defend historic gains. It is even occasionally obliged to mobilise or support anti-imperialist or class struggles in its defence.

Usually these mobilisations are restricted within bourgeois limits. However the particular circumstance of an extremely powerful dynamic within an anti-imperialist struggle and weaknesses on the part of imperialism can result in the overturn of capitalist property relations and the creation of a degenerate workers state. China and Yugoslavia demonstrate this.

That workers state will be qualitatively identical to the USSR and therefore degenerate from birth. But this does not necessarily mean that it will be permanently subordinated to the Soviet bureaucracy. The fragmentation of world Stalinism has seen Stalinist bureaucracies with their own national material base and particular mechanisms of international class collaboration break with the Kremlin without breaking with Stalinism in any fundamental sense. Once again China and Yugoslavia are the key examples.

Stalinism's lack of an internationalist perspective gives it an inherent tendency to fissure along national lines and enter into sharp conflicts with its fellow bureaucracies in other degenerate workers' states (up to and including armed conflict).

Even when Stalinism does overturn capitalist property relations or defends such an over-turn it does so in a manner that is counter-revolutionary from the vantage point of the transition to socialism and the internationalisation of the revolution. In the USSR it deprived the working class of political power. Elsewhere it politically expropriated the working class prior to over-throwing capitalism. This was the case throughout Eastern Europe, Asia and Cuba. The Stalinist bureaucracy at every stage savagely persecutes the revolutionary vanguard.

Revolutionary Marxists must recognise the highly contradictory character of Stalinism. It is committed to class collaboration with capitalism yet to that very end is forced to defend, and even extend, post-capitalist property relations in order to defend itself. For that reason we must reject unmarxist characterisations of Stalinism as being simply counter-revolutionary or 'counter-revolutionary through and through'. However we must not artificially separate Stalinism's class collaborationist and 'bad' acts from its progressive acts. On all occasions the predominant character of Stalinism is counter-revolutionary.

Only a political revolution - whereby the working class, led by a revolutionary vanguard party, establishes or re-establishes the rule of the soviets - can smash this bureaucracy and open the road to socialist construction and world revolution.

Trotskyism, and the Fourth International came into existence as the extension of Marxism and Leninism to combat the degenerative process afflicting the world's first workers' state. The post-war Fourth International was unable to develop its analysis and programme on the expansion of Stalinism. Collapsing into centrist fragments it has oscillated between Stalinophile and Stalinophobe positions. In the late 1940s it was the former that was dominant. The Third Congress documents on Stalinism stated:

"We have made clear that the CP's are not exactly reformist parties and that under certain exceptional conditions they possess the possibility of projecting a revolutionary orientation." (Fourth International November/December 1951)

The Trotskyist position on Stalinism as a counter-revolutionary force within the workers' movement was unceremoniously junked. The programmatic consequence was the abandonment of the call for political revolution. As the Third Congress resolution stated:

"In Yugoslavia, the first country where the proletariat took power since the degeneration of the USSR, Stalinism no longer exists today as an effective factor in the workers' movement, which, however, does not exclude its possible re-emergence under certain conditions." (Class, Party and State in the East European Revolution)

Mao's China was soon to be added to Yugoslavia to buttress this perspective. Pablo's triumph was complete. No section voted against him. After the Congress he rapidly developed the tactical and organisational conclusions flowing from his programmatic revision - 'entrism sui-generis' within social democracy, Stalinism and in the semi-colonial world, within petit-bourgeois nationalism. Trotsky's guidelines and norms for the entry tactic were explicitly rejected. This liquidationism met no serious opposition until it clashed with the national perspectives of the majority leadership of the French PCI.

The 1953 Split

They did criticise aspects of Pablo's politics as early as 1951, but not from a revolutionary standpoint. Mandel tricked the leaders of the PCI into delaying the publication of their document, *Where is Comrade Pablo Going?*, in 1951. But this document merely criticised Pablo for failing, at this point, to recognise that it was not a Stalinist CP that was victorious in China:

"In any event, it is absurd to speak of a Stalinist party in China." (International Committee Documents 1951-54 Vol.1)

Where Pablo was beginning to emphasise the revolutionary possibilities of Stalinism itself, the French insisted that the party had broken with Stalinism. Their fear was that Pablo's enthusiasm for Stalinism would, as indeed it did, lead him to argue for entry of the PCI into the French Stalinist party. It was over this issue that they eventually split with Pablo - only to be severely attacked by Cannon for doing so. Moreover, Healy actually blamed the PCI for putting Pablo under pressure that was leading him to make what Healy regarded as organisational errors. Healy wrote:

"Pablo suffers badly from isolation in Paris. That French movement is a 'killer'." (Trotskyism versus Revisionism Vol.1)

The French opposition to Pablo only came into favour with Cannon and Healy when they themselves in 1953 moved into opposition to Pablo over his factional interventions within their organisations.

It is important to analyse the IC in the context of the FI's actual degeneration into centrism from 1948-51. Unless this is done then merely the fact of the IC's opposition to Pablo rather than the political content of their opposition can lead to a false belief that the IC was at some stage a revolutionary opposition at best, a lesser evil at worst, to Pablo, Mandel and their International Secretariat (ISF).

Mike Banda leaps over this period thus avoiding the collapse of the FI. Bill Hunter does not deal with it at all, but does hint that the WRP needs to be positive about the IC tradition. Our own view is that the leaders of the IC - in particular Cannon and Healy - were complicit in the centrist degeneration of the FI from 1948-1951. They compounded that by blocking with Pablo from 1951 until 1953. Their eventual opposition to the IS did retrospectively include certain valid criticisms and correct positions which we would stand by. However, they never



Tito and goat

corrected or even questioned their complicity in the 1948 to 1951 period. They built the errors of that period into their respective politics - as we shall see. They never constituted a revolutionary alternative to Pablo.

The split in the FI in 1953 was ill-prepared, an organisational fiasco and politically reduced to a series of questions about the immediate events of the class struggle, rather than about the FI's strategic errors. The timing of the split was a product of the SWP's narrow factional interests in their struggle with the Pablo sponsored Cochran-Clarke faction in their ranks. Healy willingly assented to the split because of the organisational difficulties he was having with Pablo's agent, John Lawrence, in "the Club" and on the editorial board of *Socialist Outlook*. The PCI had already had Pablo bureaucratically replace the critical majority leadership around Bleibtreu-Favre with his agent Michel Mestre. In the split these organisational considerations were paramount. This is testified to by the fact that until the SWP's 'Open Letter' denouncing the secret cult of Pablo (!) neither they nor the British had published a single document critical of Pablo's line since 1951. The 'Open Letter' came like a bolt from the blue and confused the world movement. It certainly did not rally the majority of the FI to a fight against Pablo. In fact it is worth remembering that the 'Open Letter' was issued in November 1953. That very September Cannon wrote to Healy:

"We are not so apprehensive about a possible 'crisis' over this question in the International movement, and we are not even thinking of a split". (Trotskyism versus Revisionism Volume 1)

This is not surprising. The SWP and Healy actually agreed with the substance of Pablo's positions. In response to Pablo's 1951 documents - the codification of the centrist politics that he won the FI to - the SWP Political Committee wrote:

"With the above positions we are in complete agreement." (Trotskyism versus Revisionism Vol.1)

They added a rider on Stalinist parties:

"If such parties go along with the masses and begin to follow a revolutionary road this will inescapably lead to their break with the Kremlin and their independent evolution. Such parties can then no longer be considered as Stalinist, but will rather tend to be centrist in character, as has been the case with the Yugoslav CP." (Ibid)

And of course as every Marxist knows centrist parties can be won to a revolutionary position. Thus the SWP encouraged Pablo's project of wooing Tito to the FI. Indeed when Cannon's closest co-thinker in Britain, Sam Gordon, criticised aspects of the 1951 documents Cannon was furious. Gordon rightly criticised their emphasis on the 'automatic process' - of revolution, of the decline of Stalinism. He cautiously suggested that this denigrated the role of revolutionary consciousness, that is, of the FI. Cannon responded sharply:

"I was surprised and disappointed at your impulsive action in regard to the Third World Congress documents. We accepted them as they were written . . . we would be greatly pleased if you can see things this way and co-ordinate yourself with us accordingly." (Ibid)

Unfortunately Sam Gordon yielded to Cannon's pressure, and the SWP split in 1953 still protesting its adherence to the centrist 1951 documents. The 'Open Letter' criticised Pablo's refusal to support the workers of East Germany in 1953 when they rose against the USSR. It derided Pablo's tendency to take the Soviet bureaucracy's liberalisation schemes as good coin. And on the French general strike it attacked Pablo's undoubted softness on the Stalinists. But that is all. Or rather apart from the good old demonology of the 'secret cult' of Pablo, that is all.

Yugoslavia and the FI's attitude towards Tito are not criticised. What is more, in the document that backed up the letter, *Against Pabloite Revisionism*, Mao and the Chinese Stalinists are blithely referred to as 'the Asian revolutionists'. The French were quick to echo this view in their document *The Successive Stages of Pabloite Revisionism*. Worse the Chinese Trotskyists' justified fears with regard to Mao and their refusal to simply enter the CCI were stigmatised as 'sectarian errors'.

In Britain the 'fight' against Pabloism was of a piece with that in the USA. Healy had a long history as Pablo's man. With Pablo's backing he broke up the RCP. With Pablo and Cannon's assistance he bureaucratically gained a majority in a manner that foreshadowed the treatment of the PCI in France. When Ted Grant and Tony Cliff took cognizance of the clear signs of a developing boom Healy accused them of calling:

"... for a complete revision of our programmatic estimation of capitalism. It means that capitalism in Britain is becoming more virile - something which is obvious nonsense." (Quoted in *British Trotskyism*, by John Callaghan)

Here we can clearly see Healy's tendency to confuse perspectives (held to dogmatically) with programme (which he was absolutely light-minded about). Moreover from this one-sided insistence on crisis he drew politically alarmist conclusions. Healy insisted that the Tories had abandoned all hope of winning any more elections and were turning 'towards extra-parliamentary measures' (Ibid).

Healy's catastrophism was learnt at Pablo's knee. Not for him Trotsky's revolutionary realism - a recognition that so long as capitalism survives it will be subject to booms as well as slumps and that Marxists have to use their programme and their tactics in all circumstances. The impending crisis is left to accomplish the tasks revolutionaries should be taking up. The shattering of democratic illusions is left to the Bonapartist actions of the ruling class. The crisis will shatter the hold of reformism. Thus Healy can bide his time, carrying out 'deep entry', posing politically as a 'centrist' Bevanite whilst waiting for the catastrophe.

In the name of this sort of perspective Healy and Pablo broke up the RCP - the only unified revolutionary organisation to have existed in Britain since the early 1930s. This piece of political vandalism was Healy's first major 'crime' and one that should not be forgotten.

Healy was amongst Pablo's greatest fans. As late

as May 1953 he was still hoping against hope that a political break with Pablo could be avoided. Amongst his praises were such gems as:

"He (Pablo - Eds) has done a remarkable job and right now he needs our help . . . This man wants to do the right thing - of that I am sure, but right now only a strong political line can make him see reason." (Trotskyism versus Revisionism Vol.1)

At this point the only 'political line' that Healy and Cannon were looking for a change in was that Pablo should abandon factionalising within their sections.

Even several years later Healy was still unable to see much wrong with the way Pablo had politically led the FI up to 1951. In 1956 he wrote:

"Pablo wrote 95% of the 3rd World Congress resolutions in a way which won our applause, but it was the 5% which had the sting in the tail." (How Healy and Pablo Blocked Reunification, Education for Socialists)

It is interesting to note that whilst the French PCI and the American SWP did contribute analyses and documents to the struggle with Pablo the British did not. Indeed their journal *Labour Review*, which began life in 1952 does not contain a single reference to the FI or the IC until the summer of 1959 (Vol.4 No.2). *Trotskyism versus Revisionism* reveals this paucity of political documentation on a crucial event in Trotskyism's history very clearly. All we get are Healy's private letters to the SWP leaders and an account of Lawrence and Healy's sordid - and sometimes violent - struggles in and over the print shop.

In the light of all this we see no reason to change our estimate of the IC, at the time of the 1953 split, from that contained in our book *The Death Agony of the Fourth International, and the Tasks of Trotskyists Today*:

"The principle forces who organised the 1953 split with the Pablo-led IS - the SWP(US), the PCI (France) and the Healy group in Britain were not a revolutionary 'Left Opposition'. The International Committee (IC) that they formed does not constitute a 'continuity' of Trotskyism as against Pabloite revisionism. They failed to break decisively with the liquidationist positions of the 1951 Congress which paved the way for Pablo's tactical turns. They did not criticise (i.e. including self-criticism) the post-war reconstruction of the FI and the undermining of Trotsky's programme and method that this involved.

The IC embodied the national isolationism of its three largest components, each of which only opposed Pablo's bureaucratically centralised drive to implement the perspectives of the 1951 Congress when it affected them. In the IC itself they rejected democratic centralism outright. Moreover, by not going beyond the framework of a public faction, they refused to wage an intransigent fight against Pablo-Mandel.

"The split of 1953 therefore, was both too late and too early. Politically it was too late because all the IC groups had already endorsed and re-endorsed the liquidation of the line in the period 1948-51. It was too early in the sense that it came before any fight within the framework of the FI to win a majority at the following congress. Indeed, the decision to move straight to a split pre-empted such a fight. The IC groupings had no distinct and thoroughgoing political alternative to Pablo-Mandel and, therefore, they remained immobilised in a position where factional heat was a substitute for political light.

Developments within the IC after 1953 confirm this analysis. The 'Open Letter' declared:

"The lines of cleavage between Pablo's revisionism and orthodox Trotskyism are so deep that no compromise is possible either politically or organisationally."

Yet seven months later Cannon was back on the road to unity with the IS. He wrote to Leslie Goonewardene of the Ceylonese LSSP that:

"Even with good will for formal re-unification, there is no certainty that it can be re-established. But, in my opinion, there is still a chance - if your proposal for postponement of the Congress is eventually accepted." (Trotskyism versus Revisionism Volume 2)

'Under A Stolen Flag'

Despite Pablo's revisionism Cannon will consider unity if an organisational concession (the postponement of a congress) is met. This speaks volumes for the attitude of the IC to the political questions involved in the split. Indeed, from 1954 on the SWP ceased any form of polemic with the IS. This was a signal to the critical elements within the International Secretariat's grouping that the SWP was not serious about the split. If a speedy re-unification was possible given only organisational concessions why on earth should the LSSP, or the Italians risk a break with Pablo or join the IC. That the IC continued to exist had far more to do with Pablo's intransigence than Cannon and his co-thinkers.

An underlying cause of the IC's immobility and even enthusiasm for re-unification was the desertion of the International Secretariat by Pablo's factional agents - Clarke, Lawrence and Mestre at the 'Fourth' World Congress. This removed the most hateful obstacles to re-unification to Cannon, Healy and PCI leader Lambert. On the other hand they were left disarmed when Pablo failed to liquidate the FI - i.e. to organisationally dissolve the central organs or the sections into the Stalinist



Revolutionary Hungarian workers topple Stalin's revolting statue

movement. Pablo accepted 'orthodox' amendments from the LSSP in the 1954 Congress, drawing back from the most extreme Stalinophile formulations and policies towards the 1951 positions where it was difficult for the IC to attack them.

The Hungarian and Polish risings against the Kremlin and the development of 'national' Stalinists like Nagy and Gomulka doused Pablo's enthusiasm for self-reforming Stalinism and strengthened the hand of Mandel whose inclination in the aftermath of Khrushchev's secret speech was to adapt to 'anti-Stalinist' forces within the Stalinist camp. Between 1954 and 1956 the IC was dormant as an international body. It had no conferences, no common political platform and certainly no pretence at democratic centralism. However, the revolutionary events in Eastern Europe in 1956 and the subsequent unity offensive by the ISFI stirred the IC into a degree of activity. In November 1956 the Pablo-led International Executive Committee (IEC) sent out a call for unity. Cannon declared to the SWP Political Committee in March 1957:

"... the Pabloite line on all the big events and developments of the past year has been very similar to ours. It would be absurd for us to deny or ignore these important facts and to refuse to recognize they constitute a number of the most important pre-requisites for unification." (How Healy and Pablo Blocked Re-unification).

The SWP pursued this line and began to make specific proposals for unity. These proposals did not centre on any political issues that remained to be thrashed out. On the contrary they were a series of elaborate organisational proposals aimed at ensuring parity on leading committees and non-interference by the International into the affairs of national sections. It is no surprise, therefore, that the SWP were extremely annoyed when the Healy group jeopardised the organisational manoeuvre by publishing W. Sinclair's (Bill Hunter) *Under a Stolen Flag* (May 1957). The SWP did not know of Hunter's document until they received a copy from none other than Pablo! Lenin and Trotsky rejected the idea of the International as a mail box for the national sections. It seems that the IC was not even a mail box! The document had been sent to a Ceylonese contact of the IC who had promptly passed it on to the International Secretariat. An angry Jim Cannon wrote to Healy in July 1957:

"Our opinion out here is that you made a mistake in accepting the Germain thesis (Mandel's document *The Decline and Fall of Stalinism* - Eds) as the central point of discussion... Moreover, it is our opinion out here in Los Angeles that Sinclair made an extremely exaggerated criticism of the Germain document, misinterpreted it in some respects and in other respects even appears to have misrepresented it." (Ibid)

In fact *Under a Stolen Flag* was the first and certainly the best contribution made by the British to the analysis of the FI's degeneration. It mounts an effective attack on the notion that the *Decline and Fall of Stalinism* (1957) represents an advance over the *Rise and Decline of Stalinism* (1953). This was precisely the claim being made by the SWP as a justification for the unity perspective. Hunter admirably attacked the earlier Pablo notion of a self-reforming bureaucracy (via its Liberal wing) and showed how the mere use of the term 'political revolution' after 1956 marked no qualitative change, since the IS still looked to Nagy and Gomulka to carry forward this process. He showed that 'political revolution' for Mandel, Pablo, et al really meant an 'evolution' towards democratisation'. He specified the characteristics of this approach to political revolution. "It is a process. More it is an irresistible process". It is "a disembodied 'revolution' separate from its content

of mass action". (Trotskyism Versus Revisionism Volume 3)

Hunter showed how this worship of the objective process and this turning of revolution into a sort of moving spirit absolves revolutionaries from party-building and active intervention, turning them instead into passive commentators:

"History grinds onwards, irresistibly to its predetermined goal. And the role of the advance guard, the conscious revolutionary force? ... to persuade the Soviet bureaucrats not to resist the laws of history." (Ibid)

Under a Stolen Flag certainly constitutes an attempt to mount a critique of 'Pabloism' which goes beyond the organisational issues of the 1953 split. It was a product of the left turn of the British section in the post-1956 period. Yet it did not complete its analysis of the degenerative process within the FI. Hunter points to the period of the Cold War (1947-1953) as the period of Pablo's ascendancy in which he:

"under combined pressures of European Stalinism and world imperialism began to revise and reject the fundamental principles, criteria and method of analysis of the Trotskyist Movement." (Ibid)

He puts this down to a pessimistic world perspective. Based on an imminent and inevitable world war, the lack of time to build parties and the incapacity of the proletariat to break from Stalinism, Pablo believed the world war would turn into an international civil war. The Stalinist Parties would turn to the left and would carry out a roughly revolutionary line. The resulting workers' states might be deformed and take centuries to bring up to full proletarian democracy. Now whilst this is a correct description of Pablo's perspective in the late 1940s and early 1950s it does not go to the root of the question of the nature of the Stalinist led overturn and how the programme of social and political revolution can be fought for within them. Nowhere does Hunter criticise or correct the FI's position on Yugoslavia. Indeed he effectively endorses this when he says:

"Unlike the Yugoslav CP, however, the Chinese CP leadership has attempted - up to the present - to maintain its differences with the Soviet bureaucracy within the framework of an unprincipled alliance." (Ibid)

But the "pressure of the revolutionary working class of China" (Ibid), was causing the bureaucracy to re-think its position. Hunter maintains that a Chinese section of the FI is necessary but does not make it clear that its tasks are those of the political revolution. The echo of 1951 still rings in Hunter's work. The possibility of the Chinese CP breaking from Stalinism by virtue of a break with the Kremlin under the pressure of the masses is entertained. Hunter's views on China were expressed publicly by Mike Banda in *Labour Review* in 1957. He wrote:

"... without ever realising the far-reaching manifestations of their historic victory, the Chinese Communist leaders helped to undermine the ideological and material basis of Stalinism." (LR Vol.2 No.2)

It was positions such as this that paved the way for Healy's later enthusiasm for the Mao wing of the CCP during the cultural revolution. The failure to completely break with the 1951 positions on Stalinism was decisive.

It was not only with regard to China that such errors were made. In late 1957 a *Labour Review* editorial argued:

"No-one would wish to belittle for a second the contributions of the Yugoslavs and the Poles to the fight against Stalinism in the international labour movement; but recent events have shown that centrist politics (for that is what Gomulka and Tito practise) lead inevitably back to the blind alley of Stalin-

ism. Stalinism... is a special form of centrism." (LR Vol.2 No.6)

Trotsky broke with such a definition of Stalinism in the 1930s and replaced it with the characterisation counter-revolutionary, something quite distinct from centrist. In the light of all this we would characterise Hunter's critique of Pabloism as correct in many respects, but flawed and still essentially on the terrain of left centrism because of its failure to come to terms with the 1948-51 revisions of Marxism carried out by the FI.

There can be no denying that the British response to the 1957 unity-mongering was to the left of the SWP's. But the very fact of this difference underlines the absence of a common IC position. It re-affirms our view that there is no such thing as an "IC tradition". Ironically Healy's own letters from the period confirm this absolutely. He was insistent that the IC lacked political cohesion. He wrote to Cannon in June 1956 (almost 3 years after the IC had been formed):

"The urgent thing is for our International Committee to adopt a clear political line." (How Healy and Pablo Blocked Re-unification)

He even came close to arguing for the rejection of the 1951 Congress positions. He wrote that the IC had failed

"to appreciate the thoroughly revisionist character of the Third World Congress." (Ibid)

However, neither Healy nor Hunter carried this re-evaluation of the Third Congress any further. They were still, at that point, subservient to the SWP and, albeit reluctantly, went along with the SWP's unity dance with Pablo and Mandel. Furthermore the British Section's opposition to Pablo was marred by their continued embrace of deep entryism, or "entryism sui generis" as Pablo called it. They were particularly worried because Pablo had enlisted Ted Grant's small Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL) as his British section.

Friction between Grant and Healy went back to the struggle in the RCP over entry. Grant's RSL was still pursuing an 'open' policy, as against Healy. This led Healy to fear the organisational consequences of a re-unification even though politically, on the question of entry, Healy stood closer to Pablo! On entryism Pablo had written that events had provided "a brilliant justification of our 'entryist' tactics" (How Healy and Pablo Blocked Re-unification). On the same question Healy wrote to the IS in July 1957:

"The Grant group are in favour of the ex-RCP policy of 'open work' and we, for our part, have no desire to resume the old divisions of the forties." (Ibid)

Prominent in Healy's calculations, therefore, were purely factional and organisational considerations since on the key tactical questions of the day he and Pablo remained in agreement.

The IC And Algeria

The other prominent section of the IC, the French PCI played only a minor role within the forces of "Orthodox Trotskyism" after 1953. Perhaps this was because its principal leader Bleibtreu was expelled within a year by the redoubtable Pierre Lambert for reasons Healy and Cannon were deeply suspicious of.

Both, privately, accused Lambert of sectarianism and proposed to investigate the expulsion. He called their bluff by threatening to take the PCI out of the IC invoking the non-interference clause on which the latter was founded. By the mid-1950s developments in the anti-colonial struggle in Algeria prompted Lambert to urge the IC into a disastrous course which further undermined its prestige. He wanted to give privileged support to one wing of the national liberation forces, the MNA led by Messali Hadj and to condemn the Ben Bella-led FLN.

The position of revolutionaries on such questions is clear - we support all those nationalists genuinely fighting imperialism. Supporting only the MNA was wrong. This error, bad enough, was compounded by describing the MNA as a proletarian movement that could, and would, evolve into a socialist party. Mike Banda, in an article which he now repudiates, wrote:

"Whereas the FLN in its social composition and its programme is predominantly petty bourgeois, the MNA, because of its overwhelming proletarian composition and its long traditions of struggle, is, though not a socialist party, the precursor of a revolutionary socialist party." (LR Vol.3 No.2)

Now while it is good that Mike Banda disavows this position, the lessons of the error need to be learnt. Support for the MNA in France served Lambert's factional purposes against the Pabloites. Mandel has alleged that Lambert actually received money from Hadj. If this is true then for sordid organisational gain the IC abandoned permanent revolution and scabbed on the struggle being waged by the FLN.

They excused the quisling machinations of the MNA with French imperialism and only changed their position after Hadj welcomed de Gaulle's accession to power in 1958 as a semi-Bonaparte and openly betrayed the Algerian revolution.

This aspect of "the IC tradition" was repeated in all its essentials by Healy in relation to Libya, Iraq, Iran and the PLO. It is a political question. Mike Banda says he was forced to write the article we have quoted by a 20-1 vote. Regardless of this the position of the Healy group in this crucial colonial revolution was no better politically speaking, to Pablo's grovelling before Ben Bella. It was an element of an overall political outlook that kept the left-centrist opposition to Pablo over Stalinism in check, prevented the Healy group developing

in a revolutionary direction and confirmed the bankruptcy of the so-called IC tradition.

Pablo's organisational intransigence in refusing parity to the IC scuppered the first attempt at reunification. And although they sent Farrell Dobbs to the IC's first ever conference in Britain in 1958, the SWP had, in effect, given notice that no political issues separated them from the IS. With the Cuban revolution in 1959, and the imprisonment of Pablo in the early 1960s, the political convergence was speeded up and the principal organisational barrier to unity (Pablo the demon!) was temporarily removed. The process that led to the formation of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI) in 1963 was begun. Thereafter the SLL and the Lambert group were the only major forces left in the IC. Following the Japanese section's earlier example, the SWP forgot its 'cleavage' with Pabloism and decamped into the ISFI, to turn it into the USFI.

The events of 1957 had had the opposite effect on the British and French, to that of the Americans. It hardened their factional resolve.

Confusion On Cuba

The formation of the SLL in Britain in 1959 had given the British section a solidity it had previously lacked. Its cadre in general, and Healy in particular, felt able to take a stand on international questions independently of the SWP. Subservience to Cannon was no longer Healy's automatic response with regard to the problems of the FI. This was reflected in a 1959 editorial, "In Defence of Trotskyism" in *Labour Review*. Fully aware that Cannon, Hansen, Dobbs and co were moving closer to the ISFI by the day this article attempted to outflank the unity mongers by repeating the SWP's own sentiments in 1953:

"Between Pabloism and the Marxist ideas which guide the practical activity of the Socialist Labour League there lies an unbridgeable gulf. The Marxist cadre of the future cannot emerge without a consistent struggle against Pabloism." (LR Vol.4 No.2)

The SWP, themselves primarily interested in their national problems, paid little heed to what were, in fact, coded warnings from the SLL. With Castro's victory in early 1959 - a revolution in the Americas - the SWP moved with breakneck speed towards a rapprochement. In 1960 Joseph Hansen stepped forth as the theoretician of the SWP to explain the evolution of Castro into an unconscious Marxist and his Cuba as a workers' state which was neither degenerate nor deformed but "pretty good looking".

In fact Hansen was applying the same criteria to Cuba as the FI had done from 1948 on to Yugoslavia. Ergo, the call for political revolution and a Trotskyist party was dropped altogether. All of this was justified by the fact that Castro was not a Stalinist by origin but a revolutionary nationalist.

Hansen and Cannon's liquidationist produced an opposition within the SWP around Shane Mage, Tim Wohlforth and James Robertson, future leader of the Spartacists. While they correctly criticised the SWP leadership for abandoning the programme of Permanent Revolution, they fell into the fatal trap of putting a minus where Hansen put a plus.

Hansen's empiricism and liquidationist appetite had led him to register the fact, at the end of 1960, that capitalism had been overthrown in Cuba. The opposition refused to recognise this overturn, seeing this denial as the only barrier to Hansen's opportunist conclusions. Nevertheless they were unable to argue convincingly that it was still capitalist. As a result they developed the completely unMarxist notion of a "transitional state" which was neither capitalist nor proletarian in content! The opposition was soon split by Healy's man Wohlforth,



Castro and Hansen - spot the unconscious Stalinist

who rapidly abandoned his previous positions on Cuba and adopted those of the IC. Robertson, who soon recognised Cuba as a "deformed workers' state" never broke fundamentally with Mage's "transitional state" discovering instead a "petit bourgeois government" which had completely broken from its class moorings and become "autonomous from the bourgeois order".

This confusion arose from the question of the class character of Castro and the July 26th Movement. Hansen insisted that they were not Stalinists, indeed that they were proletarian revolutionaries, 'unconscious Trotskyists'. The non-Stalinist origins of most of the Castroites confused Hansen's opponents. It led Robertson and the Spartacists to give the petit-bourgeoisie as a class and its political representatives, a special role never before accepted by Marxists - that of creating a workers' state.

In fact a close examination of developments in Cuba would have revealed the transformation of the July 26th Movement from a popular front alliance of Stalinists, petit-bourgeois and bourgeois nationalists into a Stalinist bureaucracy via a series of splits, through fusion with the Cuban Stalinist party and an alliance with the USSR.

Wohlforth had been groping towards an extension of the concept of "structural assimilation" which the post-war FI had discussed with regard to Eastern Europe. Its advantage would be that it would deny to Stalinism and to petit-bourgeois nationalism a revolution-making capability. It did however carry serious revisionist implications with regard to the Marxist theory of the state (that the same state machine could be passed from bourgeoisie to 'proletariat' without a process of 'smashing').

Also, since Cuba was far from contiguous with the USSR and the CPSU, and the Red Army could hardly be presented as carrying through the overturn, Wohlforth reached an impasse which he resolved by capitulating to Healy's simpler solution - Cuba was still capitalist!

Factional opposition to the SWP and an inability to present a Marxist answer to Hansen progressively blinded the British and French sections to the reality of Cuba. Healy recognised the clear convergence of the "Pabloite" IS with the SWP on the characterisation of the Cuban Revolution. Again where Hansen put a plus, it was necessary for Healy to put a minus to do battle against the fusion. While correctly attacking Hansen for his slavish capitulation before the Castroites, for abandoning the fight for a Trotskyist party, for workers' democracy, soviets, etc, they refused to recognise the overturn of capitalism in Cuba. Thus in 1962 they declared:

"In our opinion, the Castro regime remains a Bonapartist regime resting on capitalist foundations." (Trotskyism Versus Revisionism Volume 3)

This analysis was clung to by the Healyites over the next two and a half decades! In 1972 despite having recognised that Castro had "moved completely into the policy orbit of world Stalinism" (Perspectives of the IC's Fourth Congress) they still insisted that Cuba was not a workers state. Rather Castro was, "a Bonapartist caretaker for the Cuban bourgeoisie", who no doubt were merely on holiday in Florida!

Such a position was completely at variance with the analysis by the Fourth International, that the SLL had endorsed of Yugoslavia, China, etc a fact that Hansen was able to exploit to the full. The French section of the IC at least recognised this, and adopted a significantly different position to the SLL. While agreeing it was a capitalist state (albeit a 'phantom' one!) they were willing to declare it a "Workers and Peasants Government". Further they recognised that to do this meant revising the previous analysis of Eastern Europe, China, etc, and adopting a form of "structural assimilation" analysis. Thus the "added ingredient" was the proximity of the Soviet Union and the fact that these 'Bonapartist states' that emerged in the "buffer" zones could be seen as mere arms of the Kremlin bureaucracy.

The SLL however was stuck with justifying both the 1948-53 analysis and their characterisation of Cuba as capitalist, an untenable position which was resolved by a retreat into philosophy and "dialectics" whereby "facts" however awkward could be shown to be at variance with a higher "reality".

The International Spartacist tendency (IST), whose leaders were to be unceremoniously booted out of the IC's 1966 conference, argue that the SLL's opposition to the SWP proved that Healy had taken over from Cannon as the embodiment of the revolutionary continuity of Trotskyism. At least he was until he and Robertson fell out. Then this prestigious title - continuity - fell to him. The IST base this claim on an SLL document called "The World Prospect for Socialism". This was adopted, and subsequently amended, by the 1961 SLL conference. So impressed is the IST with this document that they have reprinted it as proof that the IC tradition was a healthy one up to the point of their own departure.

An analysis of this document, published originally in the Winter 1961 volume of *Labour Review*, proves the opposite of the Spartacist's contention. It proves that despite a reflex reaction against the SWP and ISFI, the SLL once again proved unable, and by now probably unwilling, to re-examine the political roots of the 1953 crisis.

This document which the IST say they stand by contains the one sided and partial definition of Stalinism as "the ideology and programme of the Soviet bureaucracy" (LR Vol.6 No.3). Thus the Yugoslav and Chinese parties can be defined as not Stalinist:

They remain centrist currents guided by their own immediate national interests . . . In China and Yugoslavia the bulwarks erected against the spread of revolution by international Stalinism were broken down by the elemental force of the popular revolutionary movement". (Ibid)

There is no essential difference between this analysis of the YCP and CCP and Pablo's. In the same document the usual catastrophism is mixed in with the belief that in Britain the traditional reformist leaderships "are being seriously challenged". While the SWP are mildly warned that "a diversion from the true course can creep up unsuspectingly" (Ibid), no serious criticism of the SWP line on Cuba is included. And while Pabloism is castigated for its liquidationism via deep entryism into refor-



Hussein (above) and Gaddafi

mist parties there is no honest accounting of the Healy group's almost fifteen years spent deep inside the wards, the Bevanite circles and the Tribune forums.

As with "Under a Stolen Flag" there are positions within the 1961 document that revolutionaries can agree with. But, taken as a whole it clearly did not provide a rounded revolutionary alternative to the SWP/ISFI, still less to the USFI. On Stalinism it was wrong. On Britain it was catastrophist. On Cuba it was grossly inadequate. And on the history of "the Club" and the SLL in the Labour Party it was dishonestly silent.

The Road To Infamy

By 1964 the IC had become a rump, an unprincipled coalition between the SLL undergoing an ultra-left phase, and Lambert's La Verite (later OCI) group which was embedded in the anti-communist Force Ouvriere union federation and showing signs of remarkable softness towards social democracy and Stalinophobia.

Throughout the second part of the 1960s, the SLL demonstrated time and again their bankruptcy on key questions of the international class struggle. This was to be revealed yet again by the SLL's response to the NLF offensive in Vietnam. Remembering the IC's 1954 resolution on Ho Chi Minh's victory over the French at Dien Bien Phu, which hailed this Stalinist uncritically, the SLL, speaking for the IC in 1968 wrote:

" . . . the Vietnamese people, led by Ho Chi Minh, today stand on the threshold of what certainly promises to be one of the most important victories of the anti-imperialist and socialist revolution . . . It demonstrates the transcendental power and resilience of a protracted people's war led and organized by a party based on the working class and poor peasantry . . . Vietnam is the revolution in permanence; Cuba is the revolution aborted." (Fourth International Vol.5 No.1)

Ho Chi Minh was a Stalinist. He led the Vietnamese Communist Party. His party butchered the leaders of the Vietnamese FI and helped abort the revolution in 1945 and 1954. Yet, here he is being lauded, just as Tito was, as a revolutionary hero.

Since the split with the OCI in 1971 (with the OCI going off to pursue a consistently rightist course in the OCRFI and now the FI-ICR), the IC has moved from the realm of sectarianism to the realm of infamy. On the Arab national question it has conveniently forgotten the struggle for "conscious leadership" and hailed Gaddafi, Arafat, Hussein, the butcher of the Iraqi CP, and Khomeini.

In Poland it substituted a clear headed analysis of Solidarnosc's nature and the tactics needed towards it, with generalities about "the essence of its struggle is Trotskyism" (Fourth International, October 1982). Objectivism from Pablo's pen is reviled. But from the pen of the SLL/WRP it is good "Trotskyist coin".

Yet the later deviations were, as we have shown, not accidental. They were connected by an unbroken thread to the very origins of the IC. It is not a red thread of revolutionary continuity. Rather it is an unbroken chain of centrist errors dating back to the FI's collapse between 1948-51. Unless that is understood and unless the IC tradition is explained in these terms then the WRP of today - despite Banda's fulminations and Hunter's apologies - will not arm itself for a revolutionary future.

MITTERRAND'S YEARS PAVE THE WAY FOR THE RIGHT

MARCH 16TH, the date of the French parliamentary elections, has been on the lips of all the politicians for the last six months: every newspaper and news bulletin have echoed the cry - "the election campaign has been going on since September!" These elections are of particular importance because of their constitutional implications and also because they take place at a time when the working class movement in France is in a weak state.

Under the constitution of the Fifth Republic, the President is elected every seven years, the Assembly (parliament) every five. When Mitterrand came to power in 1981 he dissolved parliament gaining a thumping socialist majority. Now the Assembly is due to be re-elected, and Mitterrand is about to reap the bitter fruit of 5 years of 'socialist' government. From all the opinion polls, it seems certain that the right wing RPR/UDF coalition will gain a majority in the Assembly, with about 55% of the poll in a new one-round 'proportional' representation system of election. If so Mitterrand will be faced with a right-wing parliamentary majority.

COALITION

The key word of the past period has been 'cohabitation', that is the mechanics of a 'coalition' between an RPR/UDF government and a Socialist Party (PS) President. Mitterrand has made it quite clear that he will stay on, whatever. His eyes are firmly fixed on 1988 when he, or one of his PS acolytes, will try and repeat the Presidential victory of 1981. Faced with Mitterrand's regal intransigence, the right wing are divided. Giscard and Chirac are both too hungry to regain the reigns of power to let a little problem like Mitterrand get in their way. They are ready to 'cohabit' with the Socialist President. Raymond Barre, of the UDF, is playing a rather more wily game. His sights are set much higher - on the Presidential palace itself. He has repeatedly said that he will not vote for a cohabitationist government, nor will he participate in one. He wants to force Mitterrand to resign.

So what has happened in the last five years? How have the dancing crowds at the Bastille on the night of Mitterrand's election become the disaffected voters of today? 74% of the public expressed their 'confidence' in Mitterrand in 1981 - 35-40% over the last two years. And perhaps most graphically, how is it that the once powerful Communist Party, which once regularly polled around 20% is now struggling to keep its percentage in double figures?

HONEYMOON

The economic and political situation in France over the last period has closely mirrored that in Britain, except that, for the period 1981-82, there was a socialist 'honeymoon'. Mitterrand made grand plans for the socialist expansion of France. Unfortunately, he overlooked one 'small' problem: the economy was still in the hands of the capitalists, and they refused to pay for the growing economic crisis.

To give some indication of the turn-around in Mitterrand's plans, let us take the coal industry. In the period immediately after his election victory, Mitterrand sanctioned the hiring of 10,000 miners. Wages were increas-

ed, the working week was cut and output was planned to increase by 33% over the decade. In 1982 under pressure from French and international capital, the tide turned in favour of the bosses. State aid to the coal industry was frozen. Plans were made to reduce production from 18m tonnes to 10m tonnes by the end of the 1980s. Around 50% of miners jobs were threatened. And all this from a 'socialist' government.

The situation in the rest of the economy has been similarly depressing, as the Table shows. Unemployment has rocketed, production has dropped and wages have lagged behind inflation. As in Britain, the drop in the rate of inflation is the government's proudest boast. However, the inflation rate in Germany, a major industrial competitor, is around 1.8-2%, lower than France's current 4.2%. Over the period 1983-86, prices in Germany increased by a mere 6.5% - in France by 22%!

On the wages front, things are equally bad. As the Table shows, in the three years, take-home pay has failed to keep pace with inflation. Half of male workers earn less than £140 a week. Half of women earn less than £120! In France there is no Supplementary Benefit system: once your dole runs out, that's it. Over a million unemployed workers receive **nothing** from the state. Many of these are youth, who are being schooled as a scab workforce, non-unionised, employed on 200,000 fake job schemes where they get paid a pittance for low-grade and dangerous jobs.

ATTACKS

Apart from attacking jobs and wages, Mitterrand's government has been stealing other key policies of the Right. The first steps towards denationalisation have been taken, especially with respect to the Post and Telecom services. Attacks on the working week and the lifting of legal restrictions on the bosses power to sack workers have been introduced under the name of 'flexibility'. A sharply pro-imperialist policy has been carried out in the South Pacific (New Caledonia, Rainbow Warrior) and in Chad.

Finally, all the parties have been keen to steal the National Front's (FN) racist clothes, such as Thatcher did with the NF in 1979. In a recent TV debate between Chirac and Socialist Prime Minister Fabius, Chirac called for the repatriation of unemployed immigrants. Fabius replied that he thought there was a 'fundamental agreement' between the two parties over the question of immigration! As a consequence, the feared take-off of the fascist FN has not taken place: they seem to be stuck with 'only' 6-7% of the vote, but may still get 20 seats.

Until July 1984, the French Communist Party (PCF) had four ministers in the government. As the Table shows, the working class



Police attack CGT workers

was suffering the effects of the government's policy long before the PCF left office. Their responsibility for the current situation is clear. Yet, for obvious reasons, the PCF would dearly like everyone to forget that they ever had anything to do with the government. Over the last few months the tone of their attacks against the PS and Mitterrand have become ever more strident, stronger frequently than their attacks against the right. This anti-PS campaign has been coupled with calls for workers to fight against the bosses attacks.

The PCF used the change of Prime Minister in July 1984 to escape from an electorally disastrous situation. As members of the government, they were seen by their working class base

as partially responsible for the attacks on jobs, pay and social conditions. At the June 1984 Euro-elections, the PCF scraped a mere 12% of the vote - their lowest figure for decades. They barely managed to beat the fascists. This result scared them to the bottom of their electoralist boots. Hence the change of tactics.

Despite their anti-crisis rhetoric, however, nothing much has changed. Their talk about a working class fightback has proved hollow. They organised a striking 'commando' attack by a few hundred militants on the riot police during the occupation of the SKF plant at Ivry, on the outskirts of Paris in August last year, but were unable to bring out thousands of workers in the Renault plants in October.

The level of unionisation in France is pitifully low - around 15% of the workforce, with all federations losing members. The Communist-led union federation, the CGT, probably organises around 6% of the total workforce, not a very strong base in numerical terms, but probably comprising the bulk of the most militant workers. The CGT has organised a number of 'days of action' to protest against the government's policies and to beat the electoral drum for the PCF. These protests have not been widely supported, and the Paris demonstrations have not mustered more than 30-40,000.

UNEMPLOYMENT

The level of working class struggle is equally low. In 1984, a feeble 109,000 days were lost through strike action. In the first nine months of 1985, a mere 52,000 days. These figures are the lowest for twenty years. And, as in Britain, it is unemployment which has been the key to the taming of the workforce, coupled with a feeble response from the reformist union bureaucrats.

Faced with little prospect of getting a job if you are sacked, workers have been unwilling to take action, especially given the changing tactics of the PCF/CGT between 1981-84 and 1984-86.



Mitterrand

| | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 | 1984 | 1985 |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Unemployment | 7.3% | 8.1% | 8.3% | 9.7% | 10.5% |
| Number of jobs (millions) | 13.87 | 13.75 | 13.72 | 13.50 | 13.42 |
| Production growth | -1.3% | -1.3% | -0.7% | 1.5% | 1.0% |
| Overall growth | 0.6% | 2.0% | 0.7% | 1.3% | 1.0% |
| Balance of Payments deficit | 25.8 | 79.3 | 35.7 | 6.6 | 0.0 |
| Inflation | 14.0% | 9.7% | 9.3% | 6.7% | 4.7% |
| Growth in pay | 14.4% | 12.6% | 10.1% | 7.6% | 5.6% |
| Growth in buying power | 2.8% | 2.6% | -0.7% | -0.7% | 0.0% |

And yet, despite this overall picture, there is a militant minority of workers, mainly around the CGT, who are looking for a political, programmatic answer to the twin crimes of capitalism and of the labour movement. Between September and December 1985 there were eleven major occupations (Renault, steel plants, iron and coal mines), and over 25 important strikes (railways, docks, post, Peugeot, the Paris Metro, shipyards, etc).

PROGRAMME

These militants deserve better than the "anti-capitalist" rhetoric of the PCF and the bureaucratic manoeuvres of the CGT. They need a fighting programme - based on demands meeting their real, immediate needs. For example, job sharing with no loss of pay; a sliding-scale of wages; occupations of all plants declaring closures; for all-out combine-wide strikes against sackings; workers defence squads for strikes and occupations; a workers united front against racism and fascism. Coupled with these demands there needs to be the perspective of a decisive confrontation with the bosses and the overthrow of their system. Such a programme will be necessary whatever the outcome of the elections. Mitterrand will not change his course now, even if he wins.

However the bulk of the working class are still far from accepting this perspective. In their millions they will vote for the PS or the PCF on March 16th. To one degree or another, they place their confidence in the ability of these parties to defend their interests. We do not accept that these reformist parties are capable of doing so, and we point to the last five years as clear evidence of this.

The working class has learned to its cost what it means to place faith in a 'socialist' majority in the Assembly. Still less can they expect Mitterrand to protect the labour movement from a right-centre government. Nevertheless, Mitterrand will seek to present himself as a 'socialist protector', thwarting and delaying the attacks of the RPR/UDF in the Assembly.

STRUGLE

French workers would be foolish to rely on anything but their own strength. In the coming elections it is the task of revolutionaries to place clearly before the French working class a programme of struggle which can organise them against the bosses' attacks and prepare them for the inevitable betrayals of the reformist bureaucrats.

But in a situation in which the vast majority of workers are not convinced by our propaganda, we need to take a step in common with these workers and call for a vote for the PS or the PCF in the elections. Every vote for the PCF can be used to test their 'anti-capitalist class struggle' rhetoric. Every vote for the PS will be a test of their 'socialist' pretensions. The hollowness of such claims may be plain to revolutionaries, but the workers are not yet convinced. It is only by this principled united front - common action to put the reformists to the test, coupled with clear criticism and the fight for the revolutionary programme that a revolutionary party will be built in France.■

Emile Gallet.
(POUVOIR OUVRIER)

PHILIPPINES: PROPPING UP THE DOMINO

TWICE IN THREE weeks the US Air Force had to save their "staunch friends" from popular revolt. First Baby Doc in Haiti and now Marcos in the Philippines.

Cory Aquino was swept into the Presidency by "peoples power" and the withdrawal of US support for Marcos after an election that was so fraudulent and violent that even the computer technicians at Comeloc (Commission on Elections), Marcos' "official" supervisory body, walked out protesting against the manipulation of results.

The US's paramount interest in the Philippines is in maintaining the Subic Bay Naval Base and Clark Air Base, both vital to US presence in East Asia. Laurel, Aquino's vice president, had returned from the US just before the election claiming tacit approval from Washington for an Aquino-Laurel ticket.

Publicly, Mrs Aquino had said that she would honour the bases agreement until it expires in 1991. Then she would ask the Americans to leave as long as she is assured that no other power will intervene. (Far Eastern Economic Review (FEER) 23.1.86) However, classified documents from the State Department before the election showed that the US embassy in Manila was confident "that the opposition could be expected to act responsibly".

At a meeting in the embassy it was made very clear to Aquino and Laurel that "the importance of avoiding being portrayed as antibases" and that US support for the election depended on the bases issue being kept out of the campaign. (New Statesman 21.2.86)

Immediately after the election, Reagan accepted the rigged result, even suggesting that there may have been cheating on both sides, and that the election showed the establishment of a robust two party democracy in the Philippines.

Why then had Reagan been so reluctant in backing Aquino in spite of increasingly strong pressure from Senate and Congress to stop aid and ditch Marcos, even at the risk of losing the US bases? Senate and Congress were worried that a totally discredited Marcos government would drive Philippines into the arms of the CCP and the NPA.

COSMETIC REFORMS

On the other hand, the White House was concerned that if Aquino had been brought to power with popular support and the support of the bourgeois and nationalist left, the way would be open to the demands from the left for reforms and to get the American bases out.

Better, they argued, to shore up the devil you know and press for cosmetic reforms, such as the advisory Council of State which Mrs Aquino was invited to join. It was only when Marcos was completely losing his grip on the country and the armed forces that Reagan was finally convinced that the futility of maintaining support for Marcos.

Aquino's candidacy for the presidency was endorsed by a unified opposition which included almost the whole spectrum of political parties in the Philippines: the Liberal Party, the Philippine Democratic Party (PDP-Laban) and the Unido (United Nationalist Democratic Organisation), under the umbrella electoral organisation of the National Alliance Council. However, it is a very fragile unity, based solely on removing Marcos.

More importantly, she is supported by the Catholic church. The Philippines are 85% Catholic, and the church has powerful influences which it used to Aquino's advantage. Manila's Archbishop,

Cardinal Jaime Sin was instrumental in bringing together the Aquino-Laurel alliance. The church supports Aquino not only because she is a devout Catholic but also because it is concerned about reducing the influence of the Marxist Christians - the Church for National Liberation (CNL) in its own ranks.

Cory Aquino favours a bourgeois democracy based on "leadership by example", and emphasises the need for sincerity and morality. In a speech to the Makati Business Club (Makati is the business and financial centre of Manila), she stressed that the private sector should become "the engine of the economy" with a reduced government role. However, she added that "market forces must yield to the demands of conscience" and that she would try, if elected, to correct "structural injustices" within the economy, primarily by way of land reform.

BIG BUSINESS

She stressed domestic investment for domestic industries and that domestic food production should take precedence over food production for export (e.g. sugar). She would abolish the coconut and sugar monopolies at present dominated by Marcos' cronies. Also she would seek easier terms for the debt repayments; support labour intensive rather than capital intensive urban industries and try to reduce the government budget by making the ministries more efficient. (speech reported in FEER 16.1.86)

Cory Aquino has the support of many Makati businessmen, including Concepcion, who has interests in flour milling and food processing; Jayme, President of the Private Development Corporation and leader of the Bishops-Businessmen's conference for Human Development and Ongpin, president of Benguet, one of the countries largest mining corporations. They wanted a share of the profits and government funds previously monopolised by Marcos' cronies. Many businessmen were involved in the opposition as they saw their:

"Job is to try and make sure that there is viable opposition that can present itself as an alternative to maintain stability". (FEER 4.4.85)

Ongpin is now the Finance Minister and Concepcion the Trade Minister.

Vice-President Doy Laurel is a member of a large land-owning family with wide economic interests. He has substantial property interests and owns a bank, the Philippine Banking Corporation. He is the leader of the Nacionalista Party which was Marcos' party before Marcos imposed martial law in 1972. Laurel is a right-wing

politician, and owes his candidature as Vice-President to the fact that his party had the only organised electoral machinery amongst the (then) oppositionists.

Marcos' fall was precipitated by the desertion of Lt-General Fidel Ramos and Juan Enrile, both previously staunch supporters of Marcos and executors of his policies. Enrile is now Minister of Defence in Aquino's cabinet, and Ramos is the Chief of Staff for the armed forces. Other former associates of Marcos have been included in Aquino's new government.

Not surprisingly, although Cory Aquino promised an amnesty to Marcos' political prisoners, including the communists, the only ones so far being released are those who do not pose a threat to the armed forces. In fact the revamped armed forces' leadership warned communist guerrillas that it would clamp down on them, in spite of a pre-election call for a truce and dialogue from Cory Aquino.

With such a line-up in Aquino's government, and her politics, it would be foolish to expect the honeymoon to last very long. The last three years have seen increasing economic crisis in the Philippines (see Workers Power 77). A week after the elections, the IMF delayed a review of the country's economic performance in the fourth quarter of 1985. This review is a pre-requisite for the release of the final tranche of some \$692.4 million worth of credit extended in late 1984 in support of the economic recovery programme in order to satisfy the IMF and the multinational banks (mainly US-owned) and to obtain US economic and military aid (worth up to \$200 million), Aquino will have little choice but to maintain US bases in the Philippines, and crack down on the communists and left oppositionists.

C.P. HOLDS BACK

A plenum of the CPP (Communist Party of the Philippines) on 23 December in Nueva Ecija province formulated the policies towards the election: they officially boycotted the election, but increased raids and ambushes against the military to keep them away from the polls.

Bayan (Bagong Alyansang Makabayan or New Nationalist Alliance), the legal front of the CPP dominated National Democratic Front also argued for a boycott. But in many places e.g. Northwest Mindanaw, a stronghold of the NPA (New People's Army, military wing of the CPP) Bayan organisations actively campaigned for Aquino. Jun Pimentel, Bayan chairman in Surigao



Ferdinand Marcos

del Sur province, remembering the failure of the boycott of the National Assembly in 1984, said members of Bayan were not endorsing the boycott this time. (FEER 30.1.86)

Though the CPP was correct in arguing for a boycott against this election, it has no effective tactic against electoralism. Simply arguing for a boycott cannot relate to the democratic illusions of people who genuinely want an honest replacement for Marcos. Ocampo, leading CPP member, said that:

"The NPA, CPP and even the NDF would only be interested in participating in an election that would be leading to the type of government where some basic changes can be attained, but not in a scheme like this, where you just change people". They would like to see "a political coalition that would have significant representation of the majority of the people, the workers and the peasants as represented by the mass organisations" (Interview in FEER 2.1.86).

This reinforces the illusion that a clean and fair democratic bourgeois election leading to significant representation of the workers in government can bring about "basic changes". In reality, the CPP's strategic programme for power has so far been one of armed struggle and guerilla warfare. Yet, in the recent surge of "peoples power", when hundreds of thousands of people were on the streets physically blocking Marcos' loyal troops and tanks from the rebel army camp, the CPP did not call for the arming of the people by the rebel troops.

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

Revolutionaries in the Philippines must now raise the call for the dissolution of the present National Assembly (where two-thirds of its members belong to Marcos' KBL party) and the removing of the power of the presidency. They must call for the immediate convening of a sovereign constituent assembly with the full participation of the workers' and peasants' organisations, including the lifting of the ban on the CPP and the NDF.

Meanwhile immediate demands must also be placed on Aquino's government: US out of the Philippines; nationalisation of the cronies industries without compensation; repatriation of Marcos and his entourage for trial and return of the loot; release of all political prisoners; and land reform on the large haciendas. ■

by Din Wong



Cory Aquino and Doy Laurel

continued from back page

pickets aimed at stopping the papers getting out of Wapping. They have spread scare stories amongst their members about troublemakers in 'fringe' groups. They have used regular marches from Tower Hill past Wapping to allow steam to be let off. Marchers have then been prevented by officials from picketing properly. And, where rank and file printers and their supporters have tried to stop lorries they have been condemned, and officials have been ordered to collaborate with the police thugs. So desperate are the leaders to stop mass pickets taking place they asked Jack Taylor to stop Yorkshire miners coming down to support the printers. Taylor obliged, but

militant rank and file miners are, thankfully, ignoring him.

To counter the moves towards a betrayal by Willis and Co., and to go on to win the dispute, militant printers must take urgent action. First, the strikers need to organise across their old chapel lines by forming rank and file joint Father/Mother of Chapel committees. Such bodies must not only build for effective mass pickets but also spearhead a campaign to rouse other Fleet Street workers. They should address them directly, arguing that action is needed now to defend jobs in the whole industry. Every other newspaper group is planning to copy Murdoch. Redundancies, in the name of 'competing' with Murdoch,

are being planned in **The Guardian** and elsewhere. This action must involve occupations and trade union control of new technology to ensure the hours are cut, not the jobs. Of course no workers should buy any of Murdoch's papers. But a boycott cannot win the dispute. As a strategy it relies on individual action instead of organised strength. A strike by all of Fleet Street's workers could, however, begin to turn the tide on Murdoch and thwart the job-cutting plans of the other employers.

The use of the laws in this dispute are an attack on the whole of the trade union movement. A campaign for an all-out national print strike should take this as its starting point. All print workers

are under attack from the courts. All of them should strike now, against this attack. If they do then Murdoch can be put to flight and the possibility for generalised strike action by the whole class against laws which have made trade unionism in Britain unlawful, will be brought a lot nearer.

MASS PICKET WAPPING !

BRING OUT FLEET STREET !

FOR AN ALL-OUT NATIONAL PRINT STRIKE !

NO TUC SELL-OUT !

VICTORY - THE ONLY HONOURABLE SETTLEMENT !

Marxism vs Anarchism

REVIEWS

Karl Marx and the Anarchists
by Paul Thomas RKP 1985
pp406 £8.95

IN THIS BOOK, Paul Thomas concentrates on the most important anarchists of Marx's day: Max Stirner, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, and Mikhail Bakunin. A detail account is provided of the theoretical differences that lay at the root of Marx's many disputes with these figures, and a careful outline given of the historical and political context in which they took place.

Despite the fact that the ideas of Stirner, Proudhon and Bakunin were radically different on a whole range of questions, it can be seen from this book that in one key area they were programmatically united: all were opposed to the Marxist conception of proletarian dictatorship, the idea that the working class should itself take political power from the bourgeoisie and established its own state.

In his book *The Ego and His Own*, Max Stirner identified all conflict as being between the individual and all types of system, whether theoretical, social or political. Far from even advocating collective struggle of any kind, Stirner claimed that the burning necessity was for individuals to assert their own interests and creativity above everything else, writing that, "my purpose and deed

are not a political or social but (as directed toward myself and my oneness alone) an egoistic purpose and deed."

Marx attacked Stirner's theory in *The German Ideology*, pointing out the difference between the desire of the oppressed for expression of their individuality, and the self-seeking individualism that figures so strongly in bourgeois ideology. Most importantly he attacked Stirner's idealist view of how the individual is to become free.

Because the existence of class society is not "a mere idea, against which he (Stirner) frees himself merely by protesting against it" but is a material reality, Marx was clear that more than changes in individual consciousness were needed. He wrote that "The difference between revolution and Stirner's rebellion is not, as Stirner thinks, that the one is a political and social act while the other is an egoistic act, but that the former is an act while the latter is no act at all..."

Unlike Stirner, Proudhon had influence in the emerging workers movement and for that reason his ideas were attacked all the more vigorously by Marx. Proudhon argued that workers, peasants and artisans should establish small workshops which would produce and exchange goods in a non-capitalist fashion. As he believed



Pierre Proudhon

that this moral and economic example would force capitalism's collapse, Proudhon rejected political action outright, stating that, "to indulge in politics is to wash one's hands in dung."

In fact, Proudhon was really concerned to establish what he saw as a natural equilibrium in society, which would be made possible by the harmonising value of work. Therefore although the state was seen as an agency promoting disorder and strife, so too were forms of working class struggle such as strikes, which Proudhon considered barbarous.

Marx pointed out that Proudhon's hostility to revolutionary upheaval and yearning for small-scale production in a decentralised society were an indication of the petit-bourgeois class basis of his

thought. This reactionary approach can also be seen in Proudhon's attitude to struggles outside France. His opposition to all 'centralisation' of state power led him to support the slave-owning South in the US Civil War and to oppose national struggles in Italy, Poland and Hungary.

Partly because of their profoundly anti-revolutionary character, Proudhon's ideas were to prove unpopular within the First International. However, Mikhail Bakunin, a fervent advocate of violent revolution and collectivism, was to win significant support for anarchist ideas within the International, causing a great many disputes with Marx.

Bakunin stated his principal difference with Marx and his supporters very clearly in 1868: "I am not a communist because communism concentrates and causes all the powers of society to be absorbed by the state...while I want the abolition of the state."

Bakunin, therefore, bitterly denounced Marx as an 'authoritarian' socialist wishing to impose on the workers and peasants a new state as tyrannical as the ones they were being exhorted to overthrow. He even saw Marx' attitude towards the organisation and discipline of the International as evidence of this 'authoritarianism', to Bakunin, the International should have organised in such a manner as to prefigure the form that a post-revolutionary society should take.

Marx' criticism of this specific argument deserves close attention. He wrote with irony, "In other words, just as the medieval convents presented an image of celestial life, so the International must be the image of the New Jerusalem...The Paris Communards would not have failed if they had understood that the Commune was 'the embryo of the future human society' and had cast away

all discipline and all arms, that is, the things that will disappear when there are no more wars." In answering Bakunin on this question Marx therefore goes right to the heart of his disagreement with anarchism. To Marx, the International was to prepare not for the uninterrupted dawn of a new and golden age, but for the struggle of the working-class for state power.

Marxists share the anarchists' goal of the abolition of the state, but also recognise what the realisation of that goal entails. Seeing the state as bodies of armed men in defence of specific property relations the lesson that Marx and Engels drew from the experience of the Commune was that the proletariat should have made more use of "the authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie" that is, more use of state power.

It follows that if the state is an instrument for the suppression of one class by another, then the progressive destruction of the bourgeoisie as a class and the elimination of capitalist property relations will, in turn see the 'withering away' of the state, as its functions change from coercion of people to 'the administration of things'.

Common to all brands of anarchism is the fatal rejection of the need for the working-class to seize state power and wield it against the capitalists. In the Spanish Civil War fifty years ago the anarchist leaders believed that since the workers in Catalonia controlled the factories and the peasants had collectivised the land, the revolution was complete. Because they were not prepared to lead the workers to a dictatorship based on their own democratic workers' councils and militias, they allowed the capitalist state to effect a bloody counter-revolution. The anarchist 'rejection' of the state is in fact profoundly non-revolutionary, leaving power in the hands of the bourgeoisie. As Paul Thomas quotes Plekhanov against the Russian anarchists, "The Utopian negation of reality by no means preserves us from its influences."

by Richard Gerrard

THE FIRST HAITIAN REVOLUTION.

The Black Jacobins by C.L.R. James. Riverside Studios, London, February 21st to March 15th.

It is highly appropriate that the first performance in 50 years of C.L.R. James' play, "The Black Jacobins", takes place at a time when the masses of Haiti are still trying to settle accounts with the legacy of Duvalier's dictatorship. For the play portrays the struggle of the first successful slave revolt which won independence for San Domingo (now Haiti) in the French Empire.

The play opens with the slave rebellion of 1791. Over 500,000 black slaves toiled on the sugar plantations in San Domingo, producing fabulous wealth for the

30,000 French planters and for France itself. The impact of the French revolution is brought home early in the play as three lieutenants in the new army of liberated slaves discuss the meaning of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" and rename themselves Marat, Robespierre, and the Duke of Orleans.

Indeed the cynical plottings of the imperial powers in the area, France, Britain, Spain and the USA provide the essential backdrop to the problems facing the new black leaders. In the revolution's leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, excellently played by Norman Beaton, they find their match.

The 'slave' army successively

held off the French with the help of Spain, defeated the Spanish with the help of the French, went on to crush a British expedition (Britain lost 100,000 men in the Caribbean between 1795 and 1799) and finally defeated Napoleon's 60,000 strong expedition sent to reimpose colonial rule.

At the same time James' play does not seek to present an uncritical picture of the black generals. Much of the play centres around the three leading figures of the struggle - Toussaint and his two generals, Dessalines and Christophe.

Toussaint is shown to be a compromiser, as he was in real life. A man with enormous illusions, not only in the revolutionary French Republic of Robespierre, which had declared all France's slaves free, but in Napoleon's counter-revolutionary regime.

He is shown willing to put to death one of his own generals, Moise, who came to represent the demands of the masses for land and for an end to the planters' estates protected by Toussaint.

The uncultured and ruthless Dessalines, played by Trevor Laird, unfortunately comes across as both power crazed and stupid. Yet here was a general, a brilliant strategist, who defeated the best army in Europe - that of Napoleon. He saw, far more clearly than Toussaint the need to break with colonial status and struggle through to the end for independence. He was ruthless, cunning, and undoubtedly a despot, but not stupid. Mona Hammond, as "Mata Hari" and later Dessalines' wife gives an accomplished performance, and plays a central role in the play.

All in all the Talawa theatre company should be congratulated for putting on this much neglected play. James, as playwright, succeeds in the daunting task of transferring his long and complex book onto the stage, pithily and without blunting its politics. Those who see it (and if you are in London, do so) will be inspired to read, or re-read, James' book, written while he was still a Trotskyist, and a landmark in marxist historiography.



Letters

Dear Comrades,

Two mistakes or omissions in your history/critique of the Healy group come immediately to mind (Supplement, *Workers Power 80*).

One; that in the early fifties Healy not only adapted to Bevan, but, despite his criticism of Pablo, was on an international level - particularly over Korea - less critical of Stalinism than was Pablo. Incidentally I was told by one early SLL dissident that Healy had to be outvoted within the committee of the group over Hungary and that he personally supported Gale's line that the Russian intervention was justified and progressive.

Also, adaptation to Bevan had failed to make any significant resistance to Suez events. The *Labour Review* that was on sale at the Brighton LP Conference in 1957 gave unconditional support to Bevan, attacked 'sectarians' who raised questions like workers' control which might detract from support for Bevan, and avoided the issue of unilateralism.

Two; you treat the proto-New Left groups that came out of the CP as moving rightwards "towards" reformism ("social democracy") as if Stalinism was not reformist. In fact on many issues the New Left was well to the left of the CP. For instance, at the time of the Suez demonstrations, the Young Conservatives were wandering round the demonstration saying "but even the Daily Worker doesn't condemn the invasion and doesn't support this demonstration", and they came armed with copies of the *Daily Worker* to prove it. They were

amazed to find that no one was very impressed (and that includes many who were then still in the CP and a few months later were to launch the groups that later became the New Left).

Though, industrially, the CP briefly swung left, by the time of the South Bank builders' strikes the CP was opposed to them although the New Left supported them.

Similarly the CP denounced the formation of CND as a Trotskyist plot, while in the early days the New Left formed the backbone of the campaign and saw in it a policy of "probing the limits of reform".

Laurence Otter.

WE REPLY:

We thank Comrade Otter for reminding readers of Healy's adaptation to Stalinism in the early 1950s. While we would not deny this, we would contend that, in terms of his strategy for building a group in Britain, Healy's practical adaptation to left social democracy was more important than his softness on Stalinism over Korea.

On the 'New Left', the CP's rightism did produce episodic leftist responses from Thompson and Co. However, in tendency they were clearly moving to the right. From early on they conflated Leninism with Stalinism and, in so doing rejected Trotskyism - authentic Leninism - as an alternative.

Politics abhors a vacuum and in place of Trotskyism the 'New Left', in their majority, went soft on social democracy. By 1964 many of their luminaries were hailing the election of Harold Wilson as an advance towards socialism.

A TALAWA THEATRE PRODUCTION

THE BLACK JACOBINS

Toussaint L'Ouverture & The San Domingo Revolution

a play By CLR James

Starring Norman Beaton • Trevor Laird • Mona Hammond • Brian Bovell

Directed by Yvonne Brewster. Original by Andrea Montag. Music by Terri Quaye. Lighting Design Richard Moffatt

February 21 — March 15

riverside studios

Crisp Road Hammersmith W6 Box Office 01-748 3354

workers power

BEWARE PRINT SELL-OUT!

THE DANGER OF a sell-out in the News International dispute is looming large. Following Hammond's agreement to abide by the TUC's requests, a letter from EETPU members at Wapping has called for an 'honourable settlement'. Enter Norman Willis to start negotiations going with Murdoch's man at Wapping, Matthews.

Alarm bells should be ringing loudly amongst rank and file strikers. The TUC has in practice sanctioned Hammond's scabbing by only requesting him to inform his members that they are scabbing. By refusing to expel the EETPU the TUC has encouraged it to continue scabbing.

A TUC negotiated deal would be of a piece with its rotten dealings with Hammond. It would involve accepting virtually all of Murdoch's demands on work practices and job cuts. In exchange a handful of SOGAT and NGA members would get jobs at Wapping. Thousands would still be jobless and every newspaper proprietor in the country would charge through the breach in the unions' wall.

The possibility of a betrayal on this scale is not simply due

to Hammond or Willis. The leaderships of the NGA and SOGAT - the Dubbins and Dean double act - have played their part in it. Before the dispute started both leaders made plain their willingness to meet most of Murdoch's demands. Dean, fresh from signing away 1,600 jobs at the Daily Mirror, was prepared to countenance job flexibility, binding arbitration and mass redundancies. Dubbins, too, signalled his willingness to give up everything apart from his union's right to exist and bargain. In *Print*, the NGA journal, he wrote:

"We are prepared to change. We are prepared to negotiate. We are prepared to reach agreements which take on board new conditions and working practices." (February 1986)

Throughout the dispute these leaders have pursued a fatal, conciliatory line. They have sabotaged even limited solidarity action - threatening Daily Mirror workers with expulsion if they refused to print extra copies of Maxwell's rag! Their hope was to escape attacks from the courts. Their reward? SOGAT's funds were seized by a judge who brazenly admitted that he didn't have "the foggiest



idea" what SOGAT was up to. The NGA were hit by huge fines.

So extensive has been the legal battering of SOGAT and the NGA, and so abject has been their response that *The Economist* has been able to gleefully record:

"British unions have the worst of both worlds... they do not have positive rights (to organise, to strike, and so

on), and the News International dispute shows how far they have lost many of the compensating advantages of legal immunity." (15/2/86)

And while the unions' assets have been hammered by the courts, the members have been hammered on the picket line. Dubbins and Dean have been determined to sabotage mass continued on page 6 ▶

ON MARCH 8TH a women's picket is being organised at Wapping in support of the printworkers. The picket is to mark International Women's Day. It must be built for by women trade unionists, miners' wives support groups and organisations up and down the country. We must all converge on fortress Wapping on March 8th.

Up against the law

AS WE GO to press five striking building workers face imprisonment. Under the terms of a High Court Injunction awarded to their employer, the multinational builders John Laing, the five strikers are forbidden to attend any meetings in pursuance of the dispute or to picket any Laing's site in Britain, including their own. They can even be imprisoned for discussing the strike with other workers!

The injunction is the most draconian use of the Tories' Employment legislation to date. But the five strikers, members of the building workers union UCATT, have stuck two fingers up to the anti-union laws. In so doing they are not only standing by TUC and UCATT policy of no compliance with the anti-union laws but they are continuing to pursue the strike in the same

militant fashion that they have from the outset.

The strikers, a bricklaying gang, were first locked out in October 1985 by Laing's subcontractor, Jonoroy, at Surbiton. The dispute centered on the 'lump' (a cash in hand system of payment which allows the employers not to pay insurance) and was sparked off when one of the gang was sacked. The rest went on strike. Within days they were taken back with their demands for reinstatement and employment on the cards (wages plus DHSS payments and holiday pay) met in full.

A week later they were dismissed again. By now the gang realised that they were on Laing's blacklist of union militants. It was a clear cut case of victimisation. So the gang picketed-out the Surbiton site. As one of the gang told *Workers Power*, "We realised we had to go for Laing's themselves, not their subcontractors, for the king not the pawns."

A series of guerrilla pickets at Laing's sites in London, including the prestigious £110 million British Library job at King's Cross, brought Laing's to their knees and crawling to the National Conciliation Panel. Again the gang won re-employment, this time at a site in Banstead.

No sooner had the gang started work at this site than Laing's tried to victimise them and split the gang up. This they were determined to resist, because split up they would be an easier target for Laing's to knock off (literally), "During one of our pickets at Earls Court in November concrete was thrown at us from the 5th floor". Nor was this an isolated incident.

The strikers were finally locked out on January 27th and re-started the guerrilla pickets. Laing's went to the courts.

But it has not only been Laing's that have been trying to break the strike. So have UCATT

and TGWU (Building Group) officials. In the words of one of the Laing's strikers, "The officials scabbed on us. Not only did they not give us strike pay, or make the strike official, they actually wrote to the drivers telling them to cross our picket lines. This gave the green light to Laing's... so they took us to court using Maggie's laws against us. They could never have done this unless the trade union officials isolated us".

This betrayal hasn't surprised the strikers. Among their number are supporters of the Rank and File Building Worker which has as one of its aims, "a strong organised rank and file movement" in the building unions. The actions of the UCATT bureaucrats in this dispute, their headlong flight towards scab unionism (including talks with the EETPU and UDM) and capitulation to the lump, prove that a rank and file movement in the building industry is a burning necessity.

The High Court Injunction served upon the strikers is an attack on the rights of all workers and their ability to organise and fight. It must be countered by mobilising full support for the Laing's strikes. The recent demonstrations outside the High Court and the mass pickets outside Laing's sites in defiance of the injunction show that the support is there.

If the Laing's strikers are jailed, militants in UCATT must campaign for an all out national building workers strike. Resolutions demanding this must flood into the EC. But no trust must be placed in the officials. They didn't lift a finger when Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson were jailed in 1972. And they won't do anything this time round unless we force them. A national building workers strike can not only defend the Laing's strikers but, linked to the print workers' strike, lay a real basis for a general strike

which will rip up the Tory anti-union laws once and for all.

VICTORY TO THE LAING'S STRIKERS

by Jon Lewis (UCATT)

Thanks to the Laing's strikers for talking to *Workers Power*.

Donations, messages of support, requests for speakers to Laing's Defence Committee, PO Box 551 London SE5 8JJ.

Quarry workers' strike

THE COLLECTING TINS in Blaneau Ffestiniog, North Wales, recently used to collect for the striking South Wales miners, are being rattled again. This time they are for the local workforce at the three slate quarries of the Ffestiniog Slate Company - owned and managed by one millionaire family.

The quarry workers have been on strike for over 6 months against a Victorian style management. The dispute centres around the owners' attempted introduction at one quarry (Gloddfa Ganol) of a new bonus scheme which involves a 40% increase in output for management and a £28.50 cut in weekly bonus for the workforce. The average weekly wage is a mere £70!

In September last year all 18 strikers at one quarry were sacked. The manager/owner declared that "they refused my invitation to return to work and hence sacked themselves".

After more than 6 months

the strike remains solid. In addition to the demands for a decent bonus scheme and the reinstatement of the 18 sacked men, the strikers at Gloddfa Ganol quarry are also demanding a contract of employment and equal pay for the women workers. Management have refused even to meet to discuss the demands.

The strikers, all TGWU members, have received official union backing but little material support. Some more militant strikers, together with the women's support group, have organised speaking tours around the country.

The FBU, Fleet Street print workers and South Wales miners have all given good support. Particularly miners from Abernant pit who were twinned with Blaneau miners support group in the strike.

The strikers at Blaneau Ffestiniog are determined to defeat the Victorian attitudes of management and win the strike. Union militants, particularly in the TGWU, must fight for the solidarity action and support needed for victory.

Pete Ashley

Donations, messages of support, speakers to Ffestiniog Quarries Dispute Fund.

TGWU Office
17 Segontium Terrace
Caernarfon
Gwynedd

Women's Support Group
c/o Iona Price
7 Unicorn Terrace
Blaneau Ffestiniog
Gwynedd



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