

**THIS SATURDAY
MARCH 28**

Support the Scottish TUC demonstration!
Support the Caterpillar workers' sit-in!

Assemble 10a.m. Blythswood Square, Glasgow
March 11a.m. to a rally at George Square

**AFTER THE RALLY, at 1p.m.
MEETING**

'CATERPILLAR: THE WAY FORWARD'
City Halls, Candleriggs, Glasgow

Speakers: A Caterpillar shop steward
Geoff Hartnell (victimised Durham miner)
Joe Eyre (Strathclyde EIS — personal capacity)
Sammy Morris (SOGAT, Lairds printers — personal capacity)
Brian McKee (FTAT Morris of Glasgow striker)
Followed by discussion and practical proposals
Organised by the Workers Revolutionary Party/Workers Press

CATERPILLAR SIT-IN MUST GO ON!

'If we go on with the occupation, and the court finds us in contempt and decides they want us physically removed, we will call on the trades unions and unemployed to come and physically defend the plant.'

This was the defiant answer of Caterpillar shop stewards spokesman John Gillen to Lord Clyde's Wednesday judgement ordering the Caterpillar workers to quit the plant.

This judgement has raised point blank the fact that in fighting unemployment and defending its most basic rights the working class is now in a head-on fight with the capitalist state and its anti-union laws.

LABOUR CAMPS FOR YOUTH?



Ministry of Labour instructional camp in Sunderland in the 1930s, with overseer on the right. Is this the Tory plan for youth today?

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The lesson of the 1983-1984 Warrington printers' fight, of the miners' strike, and of Wapping, is being spelled out again at the Caterpillar factory occupation in Lanarkshire.

'The company want total and unconditional surrender. They want revenge,' John Gillen said on Wednesday.

'Continuing unlawfully is of no concern to us,' he told a Caterpillar womens' support group meeting. 'The whole history of the working-class movement involved going against the law.'

'We will demand the presence of the Labour Party, the SNP and anyone else who has pledged support.'

The legal order to quit the plant came after a highly charged meeting voted 418 to 354 to carry on the fight.

Answering company and press calls for a secret ballot, convenor John Brannan said: 'There is no need for one. You need more than an "X" on a bit of paper to commit yourself to the sort of struggle we are in here, with all the pressure we are getting from the company and elsewhere.'

The vote appeared close on a show of hands, so the 'ayes' and 'noes' divided, and filed past two church ministers who counted them: first those who wanted to abandon the struggle, to angry cries of 'you're selling the jobs of this community', then those voting to fight on.

John Brannan had told the meeting international support was already mounting. The next two speakers said the sit-in was 'hopeless' and that redundancy was the only choice.

Then came angry reactions: one worker raised a huge cheer when he ripped up the threatening letter from the company and said: 'I'm going to fight to the end.'

Another declared: 'I'm 61 years of age and I could go dancing down the road with a cheque tomorrow; but I'm not going to, it's the community I'm fighting for.'

One worker said the five

BY SIMON PIRANI

years on the dole between his two spells at Caterpillar had convinced him he had nothing to lose in the present struggle.

At Thursday's meeting — during which the writs arrived by post — the shop stewards decided to continue the sit-in until the company agreed to make the plant available to any other employer; desist from any asset stripping; remove all the sacking notices.

The company then agreed to talks but there is no indication that it has reversed its decision to close the plant.

John Gillen is right: this fight is not for Caterpillar workers alone, but for the entire working class. Like the NGA printers at Warrington, the miners during their strike, and the SOGAT members at Wapping, the Caterpillar stewards have declared their readiness to fight the Tory government and defy the law.

The trade union and Labour leaders, on the other hand, have conspired at every turn to isolate those workers fighting the state.

● At Warrington, Len Murray and the TUC Finance and General Purposes Committee overturned General Council decisions to back the NGA — and left them to face police violence and sequestration orders alone.

● During the miners' strike, 'Morning Star' supporter Ken Gill was one of the first union leaders to break the TUC decisions to fight the anti-union laws, and appeared in front of a judge to purge contempt over the Austin-Morris strike. The TUC, instead of attacking Thatcher, attacked the miners for fighting for their jobs.

● At Wapping, the National Union of Journalists failed to expel scabs, and SOGAT called off the mass pickets — all

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Workers Press

Hands off black sections!

LAST week's decision by the Labour Party National Executive Committee to discipline all those involved in the black sections of the Labour Party is the latest warning that the right wing leadership of the Labour Party and the trade unions is hell-bent on stamping out any opposition, from whatever quarter, to its reactionary policies.

By a 19 to 9 majority the NEC threatened disciplinary action against anybody who took part in the Labour Party black section conference in Nottingham earlier this month.

There are currently six black prospective Labour candidates for the coming general election. They have now been gagged, threatened with disciplinary action if they continue to support the statements of those favouring black sections in the Labour Party.

Kinnock charged that the advocates of black sections were acting in a 'divisive' manner. This is a lie. It is Kinnock's right-wing leadership which is the source of the divisions in both the Party and the working class. On every major question this leadership has in practice sided with the Thatcher government against the working class: over the invasion of the Malvinas, during the miners' strike, throughout the Wapping print struggle to name but three instances.

It was Kinnock's cowardly support for Thatcher's predatory war against Argentina that gave the Tories victory at the last election and condemned millions to suffer at the hands of another Tory government.

Most important of all, Kinnock and his friends support the Tory immigration laws. They have made clear that these laws will not be scrapped if they form the next government.

And for Kinnock to talk about caucuses in the Party is rich indeed. Has he, for example, forgotten the clandestine meeting he had last July with a group in the union that plotted to oust Arthur Scargill from the NUM leadership?

The issue is not whether Workers Press considers that the establishment of black sections in the Labour Party is the best way to combat racialism and fight for the interests of those in the black communities.

Immigrant workers face a series of acute and growing problems: chronic unemployment, the worst housing conditions, continual attacks from the police. Under these conditions we defend their right to organise within the Labour Party and the trade unions if they so wish.

The Kinnock-Hattersley witch-hunt comes immediately on the heels of the judgement handed down in the Broadwater Farm case.

The trial was a near-farce: the case against the youth was already prejudged in the capitalist press which carried out a systematic campaign against the defendants while the so-called trial was in progress.

Before any judgement and sentence had been passed the establishment had found the accused guilty.

The trial was based entirely on the extracted confessions of the defendants under police interrogation. This method mirrors that used in the case of the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six, who received the longest sentences in the history of British 'justice'.

'British justice' is a synonym for ruling-class vengeance when the state is dealing with Black youth, Irish people, or militant trade unionists.

The remarkable similarity in treatment of the Broadwater Farm defendants and the Irish framed prisoners shows the determination of the British state and its agencies to crush any force fighting against capitalist rule and racism.

The state — the instrument of suppression against the working class and oppressed minorities — has again been wielded against a section of the black community. Even the judge had to criticise the way police used illegal methods in their treatment of juveniles.

But as with the beating up of students in Manchester, or last year's attack on the 'hippy convoy' in the West Country, the police are confident that once any group has been targetted by the capitalist press, they can go in heavy, as a law unto themselves, using whatever methods they like.

Just as Thatcher intends to crush any opposition to her reactionary plans, so Kinnock has again indicated he will stamp out any opposition to his policies within the Labour Party. Kinnock has again served notice about the nature of any future government he might lead, whether it be a Labour government or a coalition with the Alliance.

The widest possible campaign must be launched against last week's NEC decision to witch-hunt black sections.

● For the right of black workers to organise in the Labour Party!

● Force the next Labour government to abolish all immigration controls!

The Mafia, the Met and the City

money men

MAFIA FILES WIPE-OUT

DETAILED files on Mafia drug operations in Britain have disappeared from Scotland Yard's computer data banks. Customs officers are hinting they suspect someone at the Yard of being on the Mafia's payroll.

The scandal of the missing files comes amid repercussions following the trial of Mafia heroin baron Francesco di Carlo, the so-called 'Woking Godfather'.

While government ministers and the Tory press shed crocodile tears about drug addiction, and moan about rising crime, Thatcher's free-and-easy money market policies provided the background for 'respectable' rich City businessmen to welcome Mafia proceeds.

'Your dirty money laundered here, no questions asked John, know what I mean?' could be the new motto for the City of London coat-of-arms.

As for the Met, while they were sending the blue meanies out by the trainload to raid Brixton cafes or East End pubs, and rough-up any-

one with an ounce of grass on their person, they left di Carlo's £75 million heroin ring untouched for six years.

Among the missing computer files are understood to be twelve telex messages from Italian police giving addresses used by Di Carlo in England.

In 1980, when the Italian police issued a warrant, the Yard claimed they could not find the Mafia chief. A newspaper printed his name and a Croydon address where he was living.

Boss

Customs investigators moving in on the drugs boss were reportedly told to lay-off by the Yard, that it was their pinch. But they took their time.

Meanwhile a key woman witness was crippled in a hit-and-run attempt on her life. And frustrated Italian police and customs men began to conclude the Mafia had a friend in the Yard. Someone who is now wiping out his tracks.

A SECRET report being prepared by the Monopolies Commission is part of a new Tory plan to attack rail unions and jobs.

News of the Tory rail battle-plan was leaked last week as Southern Region drivers were taking unofficial action on behalf of a suspended colleague.

Relieved from the hopeless pretence of curbing City takeovers and monopoly, the Commission has been found alternative work by the Department of Trade and Industry, supposedly probing 'Network SouthEast' (that's Southern Region in trendy-talk) London commuter services.

According to inspired leaks in the press, what it's really coming up with is a directive to British Rail to attack union organisation and rank-and-file representation — or as the papers say, 'break the power of shop stewards.'

Among other things, the draft report is said to recommend abolition of local de-

RAIL WAR IN SOUTH-EAST

partmental committees, to undermine shop stewards.

Behind the strikes by Southern Region drivers is what locomen call 'The Big Bang' in their union ASLEF.

That was the day when union leaders sold out on the fight against new work practices which result in the removal of the driver's mate from many train cabs.

This means a significant drop in train safety levels — and, of course, job losses.

The unofficial strike at Gillingham, Kent, bringing two days of chaos on London commuter routes affecting nearly half a million commuters, was caused by Southern Region management sending home a driver who refused to stand in for a sick colleague.

The driver refused because it would have broken a work-to-rule to do shunting duties.

The 142 train drivers who walked out were soon followed by 110 guards.

The Gillingham drivers have been demanding extra payments for working shunting locomotives without an assistant. They also want time off for stewards to study new rosters.

Although the workers at Gillingham voted to return on Tuesday night, the vote was by no means unanimous, branch secretary Joe Brown has pointed out. Feeling at the depot is still strong.

The Gillingham drivers are continuing their work-to-rule. Opposition to the deal negotiated by the ASLEF leadership is also developing rapidly in the big stations in north London.

Hurd passes sentence

HOME SECRETARY Douglas Hurd has ordered Viraj Mendis to pack his bags and go.

Hurd promises not to storm Viraj's sanctuary in the Church of the Ascension, Hulme, but threatens if Viraj steps out of the door he will be arrested as an illegal immigrant.

Meanwhile all sorts of tricks have been used to try and get Viraj outside, including bomb hoaxes and offers of protection from fascist thugs.

Hurd has told Bob Litherland, Viraj's MP, 'I hope you will now feel able to advise Mr Mendis that it would be appropriate for him to accept the decision that has been taken in accordance with the law and leave the church, and return to Sri Lanka.'

Bob Litherland, who has been pressing Hurd to overrule Immigration Minister David Waddington's deportation order on humanitarian grounds, has said he will appeal again.

Viraj, who has now been in sanctuary for more than 100 days, has said the decision must be seen in the light of a run-up to an election.

'They want to show people how totally ruthless they are,' he said.

State behind INLA feud

A PICTURE of an organisation reeling under prolonged and savage state repression was painted by an Irish Republican Socialist Party speaker in Glasgow last week.

One of the roots of the present internal conflict, said Eamonn Mullen of Belfast IRSP, was the 'supergrass' trials, in which Republican Socialist leaders were jailed for over two years before the state prosecution case collapsed.

'With the introduction of the paid perjurer system, many of the leadership were put behind bars,' said Mullen. 'Hugh Torney, Thomas Power and others were removed in one fell swoop. There was a lack of middle leadership to replace them.'

Mullen recounted the conflict in the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) between the General Headquarters faction, which is supported by the IRSP, and those in the 'army council' faction and the Irish Peoples Liberation Organisation (IPLO).

'During the "supergrass" trials, Gerard Steenson, Jim Brown and others were in jail and said that the Republican Socialist movement could not function without them. A decision was taken to expel them,' claimed Mullen.

On release from jail, Steenson, Gerry Roach and Tom McAllister had formed groups which were criminal rather than political, gathering arms and money for their own personal ends, he stated.

In January this year, negotiations had failed and the INLA (GHQ) was set to separate itself from these groups. But just before a meeting at Drogheda, where this separation was supposed to be finalised, Thomas Power and John O'Reilly were killed, and Hugh Torney injured, and the strife worsened.

The IPLO then issued statements saying their objective was to wipe out the INLA (GHQ), and then hand their own weapons to the IRA. Later statements by the IPLO claimed they hoped to form a new 'Marxist' organisation.

Mullen said he had no proof of state infiltration in the various factions. But he claimed that the IPLO and INLA army staff faction

operated in Belfast with impunity, carrying their weapons openly.

In the Divis flats, for example, which is under permanent camera surveillance by the British army, one of these factions carried out armed patrols unhindered.

Members, supporters, and even relatives of people in the IRSP had been victims of the feud: often the army arrived on the scene literally hours after the killings had taken place.

Mullen said that the INLA (GHQ) had attempted to limit its attacks to leaders of the opposing factions, and not the rank-and-file members or supporters. He claimed that, unlike the other factions, it had support in the nationalist community, as the 900-strong crowd at Mickey Kearney's funeral proved.

The Republican Socialist movement's aim was to undergo a 'major re-think' politically, said Mullen, starting discussion on documents written by Thomas Power.

The attitude of Sinn Fein and the Republican movement to the INLA split has been, for the last eighteen months, to call for the disbandment of both factions.

Earlier this month Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams said of the INLA (GHQ): 'With regards to the question of whether or not the Republican movement supports the rights of individuals to come together and organise politically, the position is that we certainly support that right. However there is no room inside the nationalist community for another armed group which, besides being incapable of ever reaching or matching the capabilities possessed by the IRA, would inevitably and eventually descend into factional feuding once again.'

Of the 'army council' faction's claims that they would hand their weapons to the IRA, he said: 'Frankly, neither I nor any Republican I know believes a word of that, and we suspect that is what is really taking place — under the cover of a lofty objective — is a power struggle after which the name INLA may certainly disappear from the vocabulary but the personnel and weapons will resurface under a new title.'

There was no difference, said Adams, between the Army Council faction's activities and that which they had condemned in the other faction — degeneracy and corruption.

The IRSP was founded in December 1974 by members of the Official Sinn Fein and Official IRA, who rejected the permanent ceasefire with Britain announced by the Stalinist leadership. The IRSP stood for national liberation and a socialist political programme.

The Officials used assassinations and knee-cappings against members of the new party as soon as it was set up, and in 1977 its leader Seamus Costello was killed in Dublin.

The organisation has never been free from brutal attacks both by the Stalinists of the Officials and the British state. In 1984 it announced it had 'adopted the political heritage of Marx, Engels and Lenin'. But before the new line could be developed, the mass round-ups in the 'supergrass' trials struck terrible blows.

Mullen is the first representative of either side in the split to explain its case to those in Britain who support the Irish liberation struggle.

Certainly it is an occasion to restate the basic principle, that we defend the right of all working class and anti-imperialist movements to organise politically, and that we defend them from the murderous and bloodstained British state.

TORIES TO SCRAP THE DOLE

THE ORGANISATION of all school-leavers into conscript youth gangs will be at the centre of the Tory manifesto for the coming general election.

The right of school leavers to dole money will be abolished if Thatcher wins the next election.

The older unemployed are to be herded on to state work programmes where all able-bodied people will be forced to do the most menial jobs in return for minimum state benefit.

Similar Workfare schemes in America organise unemployed into gangs of road sweepers, litter collectors, lavatory cleaners and park workers. If they refuse the work all state benefits are immediately stopped.

Tom Sawyer, deputy

general secretary of NUPE, urged the labour movement not to allow 'our school leavers to be used as a conscript army to keep dole figures down'.

Labour's shadow employment spokesman, John Prescott, said: 'I am not sure it is going to stop at youth — it may be extended to ???th as well'.

Transport union leader Ron Todd asked: 'What on earth are they going to propose next? Are they going to take young people out and

shoot them to keep them off the registers?'

These are fine-sounding words, but quite empty ones. For the Tory cheap labour schemes could not have operated a single day without the collaboration of the TUC.

Despite all their verbal objections to Tory plans they remain members of the

Manpower Services Commission.

It is Willis and company who have allowed the Tories to window-dress rapidly rising unemployment by dragging some 800,000 on to cheap labour schemes which are a direct threat to the wages and working conditions of the entire trade union movement.

Conscript youth gangs in Manifesto

THE latest warnings of Tory plans underline the urgency of fighting for the following demands:

● **Force the TUC to end all collaboration with Tory cheap labour schemes! Leave the MSC immediately!**

● **For the right of every young person to a job or to or to proper training!**

● **All Training schemes to be organised by the unions, with rates of pay and conditions determined by the unions!**

Unemployed occupation fights smear campaign

BY CHRIS BOYLAN

'WE ARE not prepared to hand over £92,000 worth of resources to the unemployed,' was the word from the Labour council in Leicester.

They were answered by a strong picket of the occupied Unemployed Workers Centre last Friday by local supporters and by unemployed campaign groups from Birmingham, Northampton, Lichfield, Peterborough and Coventry.

The occupation, which was mounted after the Labour-controlled City Council began moves to change primary use of the Centre to the detriment of the unemployed, is continuing in full strength despite a campaign of hostility and misinformation from the City Council and from sections of the trade union movement in Leicester.

The telephone at the Centre was cut off on the day of the mass picket, presumably on the orders of the City Council.

Occupation member Mark told Workers Press: 'We are getting support from ordinary people who know about the occupation, especially the unemployed.'

'We had a good response from the dole offices after we leafleted them and the other night members of the Claimants Union raised £300 in a collection around five pubs.'

'However, we are very concerned about rumours being spread in trades unions and trades councils that we are anti-union and we would like to kill these stories.'

'We do want to keep an unemployed-only presence in the actual occupation but we would expect the unions to understand that we, the unemployed, have to have the right to organise our own affairs.'

'We welcome the support of the unions as obviously we are in the same struggle and stand in unity with them.'

Other members of the occupation pointed out that the Labour council had

it has given in to every demand of the occupation, refuses to meet or speak to the occupiers.

Councillors have been invited to visit the occupation but one of them, Cllr Phil Swift, said that he would not come unless he could bring 'all my councillors and an Attorney'.

The occupiers stress that every 'offer' by the council involves the organisation of the unemployed by some other body.

'This is in opposition to one of the basic demands of the occupation,' they point out. 'Birmingham Claimants Fight Back already run their unemployed centre on exactly the lines that we are demanding from Leicester city council, so it is not an impossible demand.'

'One of our demands has been for an Unemployed Management Committee. The council has replied that they are not going to hand over £92,000 of resources to the unemployed.'

'It appears to us that the council may be afraid of seeing the centre better managed by the unemployed after serious mismanagement by the council.'

'We have now organised a full time-table of workshops and more activities are taking place than when the centre was organised without consultation with unemployed individuals.'

The occupiers made the following statement through Workers Press:

'We urge any political organisation, trades union, trades council to support us financially and officially. Also we call on the unemployed scheme workers and part-time workers to come and use the facilities available at the Centre and to support the occupation.'

We would be happy to send representatives to meetings to explain our case and welcome any queries on the situation.'

As our phones have been cut off all correspondence, donations, letters of support etc. should be sent to: Leicester Unemployed Workers Centre, 100-102, 104, 106, 108, 110, 112, 114, 116, 118, 120, 122, 124, 126, 128, 130, 132, 134, 136, 138, 140, 142, 144, 146, 148, 150, 152, 154, 156, 158, 160, 162, 164, 166, 168, 170, 172, 174, 176, 178, 180, 182, 184, 186, 188, 190, 192, 194, 196, 198, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208, 210, 212, 214, 216, 218, 220, 222, 224, 226, 228, 230, 232, 234, 236, 238, 240, 242, 244, 246, 248, 250, 252, 254, 256, 258, 260, 262, 264, 266, 268, 270, 272, 274, 276, 278, 280, 282, 284, 286, 288, 290, 292, 294, 296, 298, 300, 302, 304, 306, 308, 310, 312, 314, 316, 318, 320, 322, 324, 326, 328, 330, 332, 334, 336, 338, 340, 342, 344, 346, 348, 350, 352, 354, 356, 358, 360, 362, 364, 366, 368, 370, 372, 374, 376, 378, 380, 382, 384, 386, 388, 390, 392, 394, 396, 398, 400, 402, 404, 406, 408, 410, 412, 414, 416, 418, 420, 422, 424, 426, 428, 430, 432, 434, 436, 438, 440, 442, 444, 446, 448, 450, 452, 454, 456, 458, 460, 462, 464, 466, 468, 470, 472, 474, 476, 478, 480, 482, 484, 486, 488, 490, 492, 494, 496, 498, 500, 502, 504, 506, 508, 510, 512, 514, 516, 518, 520, 522, 524, 526, 528, 530, 532, 534, 536, 538, 540, 542, 544, 546, 548, 550, 552, 554, 556, 558, 560, 562, 564, 566, 568, 570, 572, 574, 576, 578, 580, 582, 584, 586, 588, 590, 592, 594, 596, 598, 600, 602, 604, 606, 608, 610, 612, 614, 616, 618, 620, 622, 624, 626, 628, 630, 632, 634, 636, 638, 640, 642, 644, 646, 648, 650, 652, 654, 656, 658, 660, 662, 664, 666, 668, 670, 672, 674, 676, 678, 680, 682, 684, 686, 688, 690, 692, 694, 696, 698, 700, 702, 704, 706, 708, 710, 712, 714, 716, 718, 720, 722, 724, 726, 728, 730, 732, 734, 736, 738, 740, 742, 744, 746, 748, 750, 752, 754, 756, 758, 760, 762, 764, 766, 768, 770, 772, 774, 776, 778, 780, 782, 784, 786, 788, 790, 792, 794, 796, 798, 800, 802, 804, 806, 808, 810, 812, 814, 816, 818, 820, 822, 824, 826, 828, 830, 832, 834, 836, 838, 840, 842, 844, 846, 848, 850, 852, 854, 856, 858, 860, 862, 864, 866, 868, 870, 872, 874, 876, 878, 880, 882, 884, 886, 888, 890, 892, 894, 896, 898, 900, 902, 904, 906, 908, 910, 912, 914, 916, 918, 920, 922, 924, 926, 928, 930, 932, 934, 936, 938, 940, 942, 944, 946, 948, 950, 952, 954, 956, 958, 960, 962, 964, 966, 968, 970, 972, 974, 976, 978, 980, 982, 984, 986, 988, 990, 992, 994, 996, 998, 1000

KEEP THE PRESSURE UP



COUNCILLORS attending Exeter city council's meeting on 17 March were again met by demonstrators opposing plans to spend £60,000 on celebrating William of Orange's arrival in Devon on his way to the English throne.

Exeter Anti-Fascist Action will be lobbying every council meeting to demand that the council reverse its policy on this issue.

In gathering signatures on a petition to present to the

council, Anti-Fascist Action have found an enthusiastic response.

Whatever Labour councillors may think, there is deep concern in the community at the Orange Order and the National Front being given a chance to strut around the city.

The lobbyists were taken aback when one Labour councillor blamed them for National Front activity on this issue. She seemed to think that if £60,000 was spent on publicity the NF wouldn't notice.

Robin Hood in Liverpool

A MAN who had broken into a Liverpool carpet shop started handing out luxury Chinese rugs to grateful passers-by.

Dozens of people began queuing up. But a policeman, seeing two women carrying carpets through the streets in the early hours of the morning, arrested them and went to investigate.

He saw the man handing out carpets through a smashed shop window to an eagerly waiting crowd.

When the policeman tried to make an arrest, obviously expecting the crowd to come to his assistance, he was kicked, head-butted, and punched.

Then the crowd joined in — beating up the policeman.

This shows the tremendous support for the local police by the working class in Liverpool — especially under Thatcher's government.

Pickering resignation

THE CHAIRMAN of the General, Municipal, Boiler-makers and Allied Trades Union has resigned because of severe political differences with the majority on the union's National Executive Council.

Dick Pickering, who is also a full time Branch Secretary in Manchester, is to fight the executive's right-wing policies from the floor of the union's annual congress in June.

Butch Cassidy hits Wales

● **YOUTH** from mining villages in the Cynon Valley, Mid-Glamorgan, are continuing their campaign of hijacking coal trains.

The government's attack on the mining villages and the

His positions inside the union are said to have a lot of support among members in the North-Western Region, East Coast area, London and the Midlands.

Although he is in a minority on the union's executive, he is fighting to change the present structure of the union which is said to keep positions of rank-and-file members away from the discussions at the annual conferences.

coal industry has left many of them without pocket money.

Air rifles were used by a group of about 30 youths last week in an attempt to hijack a coal train in the area.

This time the coal remained in the hands of British Coal because the youths were spotted and are now being hunted by the police.

Sharpeville remembered

OVER 200 people turned out on a torch-lit demonstration last Saturday, when Merseyside Anti-Apartheid commemorated the Sharpeville and Langha massacres.

The march was part of a full day's activities in response to a call from the African National Congress for an International Day Against Racism.

The march gathered support as it went around shouting 'No more Sharpevilles', 'Thatcher-Botha, Wanted for Murder', and 'Maggie, Maggie, Out! Out! Out!'

At the end of the march, ANC speakers thanked the demonstrators for turning out to show solidarity. The day ended with a social featuring Ebony and The Blood Group.

A GREAT START!

A WELL organised and well attended first public meeting of the campaign to Free the Framed Irish Prisoners took place in Kilburn Park, on 18 March.

It followed an equally impressive picket of Downing Street which had launched the new campaign on 18 February.

The meeting began with a video showing of Yorkshire Television's First Tuesday: 'A Case that Won't Go Away'.

The programme brought to light new evidence that Paul Hill, one of the four young people convicted for the Guildford and Woolwich pub bombings in 1974, could not have been involved. Hill's 'confession' implicated the other defendants.

After the video, chairman Gerry Downing explained the issue of the framed prisoners strikes at the heart of the Irish community and every socialist and fighter of oppression throughout the world.

What had taken place in 1974 with the frame-ups of the Guildford Four, the Birmingham Six and the Maguire family and their friends was not a miscarriage of justice.

The state knew what it was doing and did it for a political purpose: to intimidate anyone who was coming forward and exposing the role of British imperialism in Ireland.

The first speaker was John McDonnell, a consistent supporter of the campaign, formerly deputy leader of the GLC.

BY JEFF JACKSON

McDonnell said pressure on Home Secretary Douglas Hurd, who has called back the papers on the case, was crucial.

The background to the cases was a period of anti-Irish racism in this country, he said. He listed the people who were involved in the frame-ups.

The police chief in charge was a man called Hibberd — now Commissioner for the Metropolitan Police. The prosecutor, Sir Michael Havers, Thatcher had since appointed Attorney-General; and the judge, Donaldson, is now Master of the Rolls.

'So we have the highest echelons of the British legal system implicated in a major frame-up.

'To expose that,' McDonnell went on, 'is to expose the role of the state in Ireland.'

McDonnell said he also welcomed discussion in a campaign for two other categories of Irish prisoners languishing in British jails: those framed on the evidence of bribed supergrasses, and those imprisoned as a result of their involvement in the armed struggle to free Ireland, the Republican POWs.

He called for their repatriation and their release.

Charlie Walsh of the Workers Revolutionary Party said the question of the framed Irish prisoners has to be taken into the labour movement and put before every working class person.

If they refuse to defend the right of Ireland, and refuse to campaign for the freedom

of the framed Irish prisoners, they could not fight for other framed prisoners when this government and this system do the same thing to the working class as it has done in Ireland for 800 years.

'Unless people learn the lesson of what happened in Ireland in 1987 they will not be in a position to fight to defend their own rights in Britain in the struggles to come,' he said.

Three of the Guildford Four have expressed support for the campaign, said Walsh.

Maire O'Shea, president of the Irish in Britain Representation Group, said the most important thing to have occurred in these cases was what Lord Denning said when he refused the Birmingham Six leave to proceed with their action against the police for brutal treatment when they were extracting their confessions from them.

Denning said if the action was allowed to proceed and the men won, it would mean that large numbers of the West Midlands police had been guilty of serious criminal behaviour and of perjury.

This would create such a scandal that no sensible person could be expected to say it should go ahead, Denning had said, thus letting the cat out of the bag.

'That is something that mustn't be forgotten,' said Maire O'Shea, 'and that is what proves that these cases are frame-ups.'

In winding up she told the audience the Birmingham Six's appeal was to be heard in November, almost a

whole year after the Home Secretary announced his decision in January — a further illustration of the state's inhumanity.

Messages of support were read from Brent councillor Mick Woods and City Group Anti-Apartheid.

Maggie from the Revolutionary Communist Group drew a parallel with the Broadwater Farm case (the jury were still out at the time of the meeting) where the only evidence against the three men charged with the murder of PC Blakelock was their own statements and no corroborative evidence was presented except that of the three juveniles who had since been acquitted, one of whom was mentally retarded.

Maxine, on behalf of the Campaign, was the last to speak from the platform. Contributions from the floor included greetings of solidarity from Workers Power; Irish Freedom Movement, an RCG member involved in the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign and a supporter of the Republican movement.

The collection and door-takings covered the very expensive hire charge of the hall. There was also a big selection of reading material at the bookstall, reflecting all political aspects of the groups involved in the campaign.

The meeting, which drew an audience of between 50 and 60, was a credit to all the comrades who had worked for its success.

A further picket of Downing Street, to take place on Wednesday, 1 April at 6p.m. was announced.

REPUBLICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

LONG LARTIN
HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 5TZ
LIAM BAKER: 20-year sentence, 464984.
JAMES BENNETT: 20-year sentence, 464989.
EDDIE BUTLER: Life sentence, 338637.
ROBERT CUNNINGHAM: 20-year sentence, 131877.
GERRY CUNNINGHAM: 20-year sentence, 132016.
JOHN MCCOMB: 17-year sentence, B51715.
ANDY MULRYAN: 20-year sentence, 461576.
PATRICK MULRYAN: 20-year sentence, 461575.
NOEL GIBSON: Life sentence, 879225.

PARKHURST
HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX
PATRICK HACKETT: 20-year sentence, 342603.
GERRY McDONNELL: Life sentence, B75882.
PAUL NORREY: Life sentence, 863532.
TOMMY QUIGLEY: Life sentence, 69204.
PETER SHERRY: Life sentence, B75880.

WAKEFIELD
HM Prison Love Lane, Wakefield, W Yorks. WF2 9AG
HUGH DOHERTY: Life sentence, 338636.
NATALINO VELLA: 15-year sentence, B71644.

ALBANY
HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5RS
MARTIN BRADY: Life sentence, 119087.

HARRY DUGGAN: Life sentence, 338638.
BILLY GRIMES:
SEAN KINSELLA: Life sentence, 758661.
SEAN HAYES: 20-year sentence, 341418.

GARTREE
HM Prison Gartree, Leicestershire, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 7RP
RONNIE McCARTNEY: Life sentence, 463799.
STEPHEN NORDONE: Life sentence, 758663.
JOE O'CONNELL: Life sentence, 338635.
ROY WALSH: Life sentence, 119083.

FRANKLAND
HM Prison Finchale Ave, Brasside, Durham
WILLIAM ARMSTRONG: Life sentence, 119085.

BRENDAN DOWD: Life sentence, 758662.
PAUL HOLMES: Life sentence, 119034.
CON McFADDEN: 20-year sentence, 130662.
EDDIE O'NEILL: 20-year sentence, 135722.

LEICESTER
HM Prison Welford Rd, Leicester, LE2 7AJ
PAUL KAVANAGH: Life sentence, 1888.
BRIAN KEENAN: 21-year sentence, B26380.
PATRICK McGEE: Life sentence, B75881.

WORMWOOD SCRUBS
HM Prison, PO Box 757, Du Cane Road, London W12 0AE
DONAL CRAIG: 4 years.

LIVERPOOL
VINCE DONNELLY: Life sentence, 274064.

DURHAM
HM Prison Durham, Old Elvert Street, Durham.
MARTINA ANDERSON: Life sentence, D25134.
ELLA O'DWYER: Life sentence, D25135.

REMAND PRISONERS: BRITTON
HM Prison, Jebb Avenue, Britton, London SW2 5XF.
MICHAEL J MCKENNEY: L46486
G. (DANNY) McNAMEE: L48616

WORMWOOD SCRUBS
LIAM QUINN: L49930

INNOCENT MEN AND WOMEN FRAMED BY THE BRITISH POLICE:
CAROLE RICHARDSON: 290719, HM Prison Sneyd, Wiltshire, Cheshire
PATRICK ARMSTRONG: HM Prison Gartree.

PAUL HILL: 462778, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.
GERARD CONLON: 462779, HM Prison Long Lartin.
JUDITH WARD, HM Prison Durham.
HUGH CALLAGHAN, 509499, HM Prison Gartree.
JOHN WALKER, 509494, HM Prison, Long Lartin.
BILLY POWER, 509498, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.
GERARD HUNTER, 509495, HM Prison Frankland.
RICHARD McILKENNY, 509498, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs.
PADDY HILL, 509496, HM Prison Gartree.

KOREAN WAR DEAD

BY JOSEPHINE BARRIE

BRITISH imperialism's new monument to participants in the Korean war has been condemned by a Korean newspaper 'Rodong Sinmun' as an attempt to fuel anti-communist hysteria in Britain.

The paper goes on: 'Britain sent its soldiers to the Korean front during the Korean war in compliance with the demand of the USA and committed unpardonable atrocities, murdering the Korean people.'

Imperialists and their stooges should know that the British people and the people of the world have a fresh memory of the aggressors' crimes against the Korean people and they will never allow such things to be repeated.

Hugh Stephens, secretary of the Korea Friendship Committee, commented:

'The matter should be viewed in the light of the Thatcher government's servile attitude to the US warmongers, who are at this moment engaged in the provocative "Team Spirit 87" air, land and sea exercise involving 200,000 US, south Korean and Japanese troops.'

The British government sends "observers" to such exercises and has on some occasions sent naval vessels to make "goodwill" visits to south Korean ports while the exercises are in progress.

The British government has not changed its colours in the 34 years since the end of the Korean war. The unveiling of this "monument" is a further sign of this, if only the names of the war were

Unequal health

RATES OF death and illness are substantially higher for the poor, confirmed a report published by the Health Education Council last week.

Even in relatively prosperous East Anglia people in unskilled jobs, the unemployed and their families have a substantially higher mortality rate, and the gap is much wider in regions like the north west.

The report, written by medical researcher Margaret Whitehead, states explicitly what has never been so thoroughly demonstrated: **unemployment causes bad health.**

'All the major killer diseases now affect the poor more than the rich, and so do most of the less common ones,' says the report.

It gives evidence for a whole list of problems experienced by what it coyly calls 'the less favoured occupational classes.'

These include higher rates of chronic sickness, babies born with lower birth weights, and children who are shorter and more sickly.

The Health Education Council report also shows that the gap between rich and poor has been widening, and points out that 30 per cent of the population, 16.3 million people, now live in poverty.

This is a rise of more than

five million since the Tories were elected in 1979.

The official press launch of the report, called 'The Health Divide', was cancelled by the chairman of the Health Education Council, Sir Brian Bailey, after he was summoned to the Health Ministry.

The suppression moves are reminiscent of the way the Black Report on 'Inequalities in Health' was treated six years ago, when a handful of poorly reproduced copies were all that were available, and it was left to health campaigners to publicise the findings.

Sir Douglas Black, chair-

Thamesmead's fate

THE London Residuary body which took over the assets of the abolished GLC is to be forced by the government to sell off the giant Thamesmead estate to a private Trust headed by Clive Thornton.

The GLC invested £200 million to build houses, flats shops and community facilities on the flood-prone marshes of southeast London.

The London boroughs inherit what remains of the debt — and the private Thamesmead Trust will take over without a price being negotiated.

The government will decide

man of the earlier inquiry, launched the new report at a privately organised press conference — and the HEC's director, Dr David Player, announced that if necessary he would arrange a private printing of the study.

The government is abolishing the Health Education Council and replacing it with a new Health Education Authority, a body under closer government control. This decision was no doubt influenced by the publication of research like this, as well as the HEC's earlier outspoken attack on smoking and the tobacco monopolies.

later how much they will have to hand over; all that has been agreed now is that the Trust will make a down payment of £2.5 million, and make further payments as and when they sell off the Thamesmead houses.

It is estimated by the Association of London Authorities that to pay even another £17 million, the Trust would have to sell 3,600 of the 5,500 homes over the next 12 years. They expect that two thirds of these will be sold not to existing tenants, but by evicting the tenants to sell with vacant possession.

Hands off our homes!

HANDS OFF our homes! say Tower Hamlets tenants at a march and meeting on 28 March.

The council has already sold three blocks to private developers, Naval Row, Riverside Mansions in Wapping and most recently Waterlow Estate in Bethnal Green, where Barratts unveiled their refurbished show-flat, on sale at £70,000-plus.

The Tower Hamlets Cam-

paign Against Estate Sales say that disposing of flats and houses to private developers, housing associations, management co-operatives or trusts mean:

- longer waits for those on the housing list or waiting for a transfer
- no future homes for their children
- more homelessness
- the loss of council jobs

● profit for private developers from public resources
March assemblies 12 noon on Saturday 28 March in the carpark behind one of the threatened blocks, Bacton Towers, at the junction of Roman Road and Globe Road near Bethnal Green Tube.
Meeting 2p.m. at Hague School, Wilnot Street (near Woolworths on Bethnal Green Road).

March against the Public Order Act

MARCHERS will protest against the restrictions on demonstrations in the Public Order Act next weekend.

An 'illegal' march will assemble on Saturday 4 April at 1p.m. at Malet Street, London W1.

From 1 April the Public Order Act comes into effect, severely curtailing rights won over generations.

Police will be able to limit the size, duration and location of demonstrations. Organisers who defy them can be jailed.

People who take part in 'sit-down' protests can be fined £400.

Riot is redefined in the Act, and anyone who waves a fist or shouts 'burn it down!' risks ten years imprisonment for 'threatening violence.'

The most senior police officer at a demonstration, march or picket can lay down conditions of any kind if he or she 'reasonably believes' it may result in serious disorder, damage to property or disruption to the community, or if its purpose is 'intimidation.'

Two last minute clauses were added to the Act. One carried a maximum 10-year sentence, and is for 'consumer terrorism', contaminating or interfering with goods as animal rights campaigners have done.

The other new clause means police can direct people to leave land if two or

more are trespassing, if damage has been done to the land or the owner has been threatened, or if 12 or more vehicles have been brought onto the land.

Refusing to leave, or returning to the land within three months, risks three months imprisonment.

Travellers, as well as groups like the peace convoy, are the target of this section of the Act.

How the Act limits protests:

- **March** organisers must give 6 clear days' notice in writing
- **Marches** must keep to the agreed route and comply with any conditions given by police, either in advance or on the day
- **Police** keep the power to ban marches altogether set up by the 1936 Public Order Act
- **An 'assembly'** of 20 or more people standing in a public place wholly or partly open to the air can start without giving notice — but the police can ban it in advance
- **The most senior police officer** present can impose conditions on the duration, location and size of such an assembly or picket, and they must be obeyed
- **Organisers** who break these conditions face three months' jail and £1,000 fine; **participants** risk £400 fine

Maternity Emergency!

MATERNITY rights are in crisis and the welfare of many women and their children is under siege.

Babies born to the poorest mothers are twice as likely to die early as those from the richest homes — and this difference could grow worse.

This is the view of health visitors who care for babies and their mothers throughout the country.

After only ten years of maternity rights for working women, the government's Social Security Act has cut all available benefits for pregnancy and its new White Paper, 'Building Businesses... Not Barriers', further threatens the limited protection given to working mothers-to-be.

The 1980s saw two improvements in maternity benefits and rights: the maternity grant became a universal benefit; and paid time off was introduced for antenatal care.

But these improvements were outweighed by a whole series of changes which progressively undermined working mothers' benefits and rights.

Since 1979 scarcely a year has gone by without some erosion in job protection and financial support around childbirth.

Maternity benefits have been allowed to fall in value and maternity rights at work have been increasingly restricted, with less protection against unfair dismissal and additional hurdles for women seeking reinstatement in their jobs.

From 6 April this year, maternity benefits will be available only to a minority of mothers. Many women will receive no financial help at all to meet the costs of a new baby.

And the government's newest proposals on employment rights would further limit equal opportunities at work.

'These changes represent the most substantial reduction in mothers' rights that Britain has ever witnessed', says Maternity Emergency, a campaign launched by the Maternity Alliance.

Since 1979 Tory governments have savagely attacked maternity rights by:

- Cutting back the maternity allowance and help for pregnant women on Supplementary Benefit;

- Making it harder for women to get maternity leave;

- Giving fewer women protection against the sack; and
- Removing the right of thousands of women to be moved to safer jobs in pregnancy.

Further attacks on maternity rights come into operation from 6 April (see right).

The Health Visitors' Association resolution condemning the government's 'continuous onslaught' on maternity rights at the TUC women's congress in Blackpool earlier this month was passed unanimously.

It calls on the TUC General Council to campaign for rights and benefits to be restored in line with Common Market countries and proposes further reforms for adequate maternity grants and allowances to all mothers and full job protection.



FROM 6 APRIL:

Going: £25 maternity grant

The £25 maternity grant for all mothers will disappear. Single payments worth up to £187 to help mothers on Supplementary Benefit will also go. Instead there will be just one payment for mothers on the lowest incomes. At £80, this is a cut of up to £100 for the poorest mothers and most mothers won't get anything at all.

Going: Weekly maternity benefit for 74,000 mothers

One in five pregnant working women will lose the right to weekly maternity benefit of £32.85, a total loss of £530. Employers will pay the benefit instead of the DHSS — so women in small, non-unionised firms will suffer. Because the payment is taxable, women may lose as much as £10 a week.

Gone: Right to maternity leave in small firms

Since 1979 women in firms with fewer than six workers have lost the right to get their jobs back after having a baby. Now this could extend to firms with fewer than ten employees. Future plans could put at risk the right to maternity leave and protection against the sack for women who work part-time. The qualifying period for protection against unfair dismissal — a common peril for pregnant women workers — has been raised from six months to two years.

In addition, free milk and vitamins will no longer be available to pregnant women and children on low incomes.

MATERNITY benefits in Britain are the lowest in the Common Market and only in Britain do women have to work two years in the same job to get maternity leave — with so little pay. The Thatcher government has vetoed the parental leave that exists in Common Market countries.

In Denmark, for example, women can get 28 weeks' maternity leave with at least 18 weeks on 90 per cent of

normal pay after six months in work; fathers get leave too.

In Italy all working women can get up to one year off with five months on 80 per cent of normal pay; fathers can take part of the leave instead.

In Finland women can get a year's leave with minimum pay of £6.50 a day; fathers get leave too.

Britain's £25 grant (now being abolished) compares with £146 in Belgium and £627 in Luxembourg.

Maternity Emergency

RALLY

Monday 6 April, 11a.m. till late
Central Hall, Westminster, London SW1

Tube: St James's Park. Buses: 11, 24, 70, 88

Speakers, Music, Entertainments

Creche: contact Maternity Emergency, c/o Maternity Alliance, by Monday 30 March at 59-61 Camden High Street, London NW1 7JL, tel: 01-388 6337

London's bus workers go into battle

BY ROY THOMAS

REPRESENTATIVES of 16,000 London Transport bus drivers and conductors have voted to ballot the workforce for industrial action against the closure of bus garages and the handing over of routes to private bus companies.

Over 300 London Transport building workers are already on strike over threatened compulsory redundancy.

Within 24 hours of the delegate conference decision to ballot, all London Transport unions were called to a meeting and informed of the bus workers' proposal.

Further meetings with bus garage engineering unions took place on Monday, and proposals to co-ordinate both the ballot and the industrial action were discussed.

London Transport has announced plans to close up to eight more bus garages in the next 12 months, besides the eight closed since control of London's transport was taken away from the GLC.

In spite of the loss of 3,000 jobs, and a reduction of nearly 1,000 buses, London is still short of more than 600 bus drivers.

Private bus companies that have been given London Transport routes are finding it hard to get drivers to work at the low wages they pay, and stories of unqualified engineers and inspectors driving buses are commonplace.

In 1986 London Buses dismissed over 500 drivers as no

longer fit to drive. Some of these are now driving for private bus companies under tender to London Regional Transport.

The London Bus delegate conference of the Transport and General Workers' Union has rejected as 'derisory' an offer of a 4 per cent wage increase with productivity strings that came in response to the union's claim for an increase of £15 per week and no strings.

A further meeting with London Bus management on the wage claim has been arranged for early April.

It is clear to these building workers, bus crews, canteen staff, and Underground workers that a major battle has started with London Regional Transport, the government-appointed quango.

Like the health service, education, and housing, public transport is a vital part of working-class families' standard of living.

Attacks on public transport through de-regulation have left many parts of the country with no bus services at all. In other areas massive fare increases, reductions in services, and reorganisation of routes to produce profit have caused hardship to many families.

London's bus workers must now fight to keep garages open and save jobs. They must also develop proposals to take over public transport and organise a massive expansion of bus and rail services to meet Londoners' needs and put control of the transport system firmly in the hands of those who use it and who work on it.

Higher education under attack

COLLEGES of higher education throughout Britain are currently being severely rationalised.

In an operation paralleling that in many industries, ruthless closures of alleged secondary, inferior, or outdated units is alternated with modernisation and expansion on a few selected primary sites.

In the latter case staffs are also cut and working practices are redrawn using business efficiency methods to maximise output.

In higher education, the aim is to bring to an end the right of anyone with the requisite qualifications to take up courses, instead reducing the student body to a select few able to pay extremely high fees.

The Tory plan for replacing grants with loans is a step towards driving the working class and lower middle class out of higher education, leaving it peopled by the rich alone.

It is also seen as a way of restricting independent student activity, which has supported such causes as the miners' strike and the struggles of South African workers, as well as defending higher education itself.

Once rationalisation is achieved, the much-reduced but potentially highly profitable college provision would be ripe for privatisation.

Some London colleges face the threat of heavy job losses and cuts in courses as part of this drive to rationalise and privatise higher education.

● Several hundred staff at Queen Mary College, London, heard the chief administrator say the college faces a 10 per cent cut in establishment 'across the board' be-

BY BERNARD FRANKS

cause of a shortfall in funding.

The only alternative, they were told, was a massive input by private companies towards the cost of teaching and research.

Branch officers of the main unions at the college (AUT, NALGO, ASTMS, AEU, NUPE, and NUS) warned that this was the thin end of the privatisation wedge throughout higher education.

Computer science staff put out a leaflet expressing concern that a current plan to cut their department's funding by two thirds will mean loss of 25-30 of the 40 university-funded posts there.

Workers at the college point to the huge discrepancy between the hard luck stories about staff costs and the multi-million-pound development plan currently involving the building of a new college library, a medical school, and a large shopping and student-accommodation complex on the east London site.

● Students at Birkbeck College in central London are angrily opposing a report produced by a review committee, chaired by Sir Barney Hayhoe MP, which proposes that its science-based

degrees should be 'broadened out'.

This would mean that single subjects such as biology, physics, and mathematics would be replaced by more general courses.

The plan is seen by students and staff as a scheme for down-grading the college. It will cut technical staff by 22 per cent, clerical staff by 28 per cent.

Birkbeck is important to the university system because its degree students are part-timers, many of whom are in full-time work.

Last year a vigorous campaign was fought to win a reprieve from a funding formula which would have cut the college's budget by 30 per cent.

Cut

● A £3 million cut in the grant to Goldsmith's College, south London, will mean its Camberwell and Deptford annexes will be closed, science and arts courses wound up.

Branch officers of the three main trade unions on site (NALGO, NUPE, and NATFHE) say £1 million of the money to be 'saved' is to come from the staff budget.

According to NALGO this must mean 'a significant diminution in cultural and

education provision in south-east London'.

● Science departments at Westfield College in north-west London have already been closed; they were lost to a 'merger' with Queen Mary College four years ago.

Now the remaining arts departments are to be shut down and the college closed. Staff believe a lucrative property deal is in prospect, involving the sale of Westfield's 11-acre prime Hampstead site — currently valued at £30 million — as a private hospital or college.

Everywhere students and staff clearly need to strengthen and unite their organisations against a direct threat to courses and jobs.

Their activities will have to include demonstrations, strikes, and occupation of threatened units, with a call to local communities and trade union bodies for support.

At the same time, there is a need to draw up a socialist alternative to rundown and privatisation, looking towards a properly equipped and properly housed higher education system open and free to all and divorced entirely from the influences of private industry and commerce.

Labour candidates in the general election must be lobbied by college students and staff and asked where they stand on this issue.

College snatch

THE GOVERNMENT plans to snatch the polytechnics and 57 other colleges away from local authorities. A White Paper is expected to pre-empt the recommendations of the National Advisory Body whose report, due on 7 April, will argue for greater autonomy for colleges, but within local government.

Higher education colleges and polytechnics are at present closely linked with local communities, and provide education for many local students, especially many older students who missed out on higher education straight from school.

The Tory plans for centralised higher education will sever those links. They are also directed at colleges whose local authorities — notably the Inner London Education Authority — have shielded them from the worst effects of cuts.

Ruhr workers defend jobs and community

BY TRUDI JACKSON

AN ENTIRE community took to the streets in defence of its future in the West German steel town of Hattingen earlier this month. Car dealers and chimney-sweeps, housewives and shopkeepers in this Ruhr community turned out with their banners behind those of the IG Metal union steelworkers whose jobs are threatened.

Shopworkers, inland revenue staff and several thousand school students took part in the 60,000-strong demonstration, the biggest Hattingen had ever seen. The local choral society contributed in song to the occasion.

Some 20,000 to 30,000 jobs are threatened in the West German steel industry. The giant Thyssen coal and steel combine wants to sack 6,000 workers in the Ruhr towns of Oberhausen and Hattingen. The threat to an entire town's jobs and livelihoods, to trade prospects and the future of its young people brought out the whole community.

The local Social Security office, which closed for the day of action along with other public offices, already deals with 11,000 claimants. Unemployment in the area is currently at 17 per cent and would soar to 30 per cent if the sackings go through.

There were greetings of solidarity to the rally from workers across Germany, particularly the shipyard workers and metalworkers who receive Ruhr steel supplies.

After the destruction and suffering wreaked in the Ruhr by World War II, workers rebuilt industry and communities — only to face the threat again today from their capitalist owners. The indignation was echoed by IG Metal speaker Koenig with his warning to West Germany's rulers: 'When the Ruhr is on fire, there will not be enough water in the Rhine to put out the flames.'

Volkswagen Scandal

THE FIFTY-MILLIONTH Volkswagen rolled off assembly lines recently, but the company had to cancel plans for lavish celebrations, and withdraw the invitations.

Volkswagen bosses are trying to cover up an enormous scandal over misuse of their company's funds, leading to debts amounting to £160 million last year.

The company got into trouble venturing into what is normally regarded as the province of banks and finance houses.

Huge sums went into unsecured currency speculation. Profits were calculated on the assumption of a rising US dollar.

The dollar was allowed to fall precisely so US industry could compete better with European concerns like Volkswagen. So the West German company's efforts to gamble its way out of crisis only resulted in it being hit not once, but twice.

Volkswagen shareholders won't get anything from 1986, because the debts have wiped out any profits. With the scandal bound to come out, will Volkswagen bosses dare try to take it out on their workers?

Capitalism being the system it is, they may well do so. But there could be hell to pay if they do.

BRITS RECRUITED FOR SRI LANKA WAR

THE British 'security' company KMS, run by former SAS officers, and suspected of undertaking dirty work for the Foreign Office, is still recruiting mercenaries to fight in Sri Lanka.

British officers despatched by KMS have been training and leading Sri Lankan army special forces in the murderous war against Tamil freedom fighters in the north of the island.

The London 'Daily News' says it has a tape of KMS director David Richard interviewing a former British Army explosives expert for work in Sri Lanka. The company has been accused of

Miscarriage

A PALESTINIAN woman who suffered a miscarriage under brutal treatment by Israeli police interrogators has been released on bail on health grounds — four years later.

Naila Ibrahim Ayesh, a 26-year old medical laboratory technician from Gaza, was several weeks pregnant when arrested by Israeli troops in February 1983, accused of membership of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

She miscarried while in police custody, after vomiting and haemorrhaging, when left outside in the cold, and having her head slammed against a wall.

Lawyer Felicia Langer said her client's release was the first time anyone held for belonging to an outlawed organisation had been freed on bail by the Israeli authorities. She thought media publicity in the case had



Steelworkers on an earlier march. Now entire community has been aroused to fight sackings plan.

'We'll use army'

—Yugoslav prime minister

YUGOSLAV prime minister Branko Mikulic has threatened to use the army to put down unrest.

The threat came as thousands of workers continued strikes against new pay freeze laws, which amount to enforced pay-cuts for many.

The president of the Confederation of Trade Unions, Marija Todorovic, said last week that 28,000 workers had joined in strikes.

In an effort to reduce workers' opposition, the federal government announced on 21 March that it would halt further price increases on food, clothing, tools and furniture.

Under the new law introduced on 27 February, wages are to be reduced to the levels of 1986, and future increases tied to productivity. The law came at a time when workers were facing big price increases on essentials.

Yugoslavia is having to cope with 100 per cent inflation, and a \$20 billion debt to foreign banks.

Prime minister Mikulic promised the international bankers last week that his government would not follow the Brazilian example by halting interest repayments. But he appealed to creditors to be understanding for his country's difficulties.

Besides attacking wages, the government has announced curbs on inter-enterprise lending and domestic credit, and tighter controls on enterprises' book-keeping.

Mikulic has rejected criticism that the new Intervention Law, as it is called, attacks the Yugoslav system of workers' self-management.

'We have to ask ourselves, however, what prospects will self-management have if inflation is so rampant,' he told reporters.

The government admits there have been over 70 strikes against its new law. Although there has been unrest in Yugoslavia before, including big student demonstrations in 1968, the strike movement has been described as the first country-wide resistance to central government measures since the Communist Party took power at the end of World War II.

The workers' challenge comes at a time when the government has been concerned over political opposition groupings. Several journalists were sacked recently for supporting a 'solidarity' declaration with anyone subject to political repression.

Insisting his government will not back down on austerity measures, Mikulic told reporters last week: 'There should be no doubt in the country or abroad that we shall defend our system with all means, and that includes the army.'

The prospect of the army being used against workers is not one the Yugoslav government can contemplate lightly. Up to now, Yugoslavia's security has depended on a combination of military readiness and popular patriotism, the legacy of the partisan struggle.

This has included civilian participation in military training manoeuvres.

'As a people's and revolutionary army, the Yugoslav People's Army cannot and must not stand aside from the main social currents', General Milan Daljevic, an under-secretary in the Defence Department, said in a magazine interview last week.

'But at the same time, it has never had nor can it have any ambitions to impose itself on society and act as its arbiter.'

The open discussion of this prospect is a sign of the seriousness of the crisis for the Yugoslav state.

Palestinian women protest

BY PETER RICKARD

FIVE HUNDRED Palestinian women held a demonstration at the entrance to Bourj el-Barajneh refugee camp in Beirut last week, demanding that they be allowed to leave the camp at the entrance controlled by the army.

This demonstration was called because of continued killings by right-wing Muslim militias. A Palestinian spokeswoman reported 21 women shot dead after being allowed to leave the camp to get much-needed supplies.

The only entrance open at the moment is controlled by the Shia Amal gunmen

who have been laying siege to the camps. What is very clear is that the arrival of the invading Syrian forces has not changed the position much for the Palestinians.

Renewed attacks on the Palestinians in the camps come at the same time as Israeli Air Force planes have made two attacks on Palestinian positions in the South.

Fortunately, the death toll in the Israeli raids was not high. Fatah forces, who had been the target of the bombings, said that by observing Israeli over-flights they had been able to withdraw their fighters in time.

AQUINO ARMY BOMB PLOT

A CAPTAIN in the Philippines army has been arrested in connection with the bomb explosion at the country's military academy thought to have been intended for President Corazon Aquino.

Four people were killed and over 40 wounded in the explosion, which happened during rehearsals for a passing-out ceremony at which the president was due to speak a few days later.

At first, authorities suggested the bomb might be the work of the left-wing New People's Army (NPA), whose guerillas are fighting government forces.

But the NPA promptly denied this in a press statement. 'What are the revolutionaries to gain from an act that will yield neither guns nor propaganda mileage?' they asked.

Suspicious that the bomb plot was an inside job were

strengthened when the officer in charge of investigation, Brigadier-General Jesus de la Cruz, revealed that a B-40 anti-tank rocket used in the bombing was part of a shipment of weapons captured by the army 15 years ago, and held in military arsenals.

When Mrs Aquino's husband, leading opponent of the Marcos regime, was murdered by army officers in 1983 they tried to blame that on communists, too.

Former Military Academy commandant General Zumel, a Marcos-diehard, has been subject to an arrest order since January for alleged involvement in military coup plots.

The bomb incident more or less coincided with complaints from US Defence official Richard Armitage that the Aquino government lacked a 'comprehensive counter-insurgency plan' to beat the NPA.

Turkish workers defy repression

SOME 90,000 Turkish workers have taken on their employers and the repressive right-wing regime in a concerted strike action for higher wages.

Encouraged by the victory of workers in the Netas telecommunications factories, whose strike became a focal point for solidarity, workers are defying a regime which has banned the DISK (Revolutionary Confederation of Trade Unions) and jailed hundreds of trade unionists.

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

Rubber workers in the Laspetkim-Is union came out at the Derby factory while the four-month Netas strike was approaching victory. Among those now on strike are 4,000 of the 15,000 workers in the oil industry. Workers have come out in Istanbul, Izmir, and Ankara.

On 23 December the trial before a military court of 1,470 members of DISK ended with jail sentences of one to 15 years for 264 defendants.

The heaviest sentence was

on miners' leader Cetin Uygur, accused of links with the banned 'Dev Yol' (Revolutionary Road) organisation.

All the defendants had been charged with conspiring to 'establish the rule of one class over another' — through trade union activity, educational work, and strikes.

So long as the capitalist class rules, of course, that is called 'democracy' for Turkey is a good NATO mem-

ber, a bastion of what Thatcher and Reagan call the 'Free World'.

Former Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit was sentenced to 11 months at the beginning of this year for making political speeches while forbidden to do so during a by-election campaign. The sentence on the reformist leader could mean an additional ban from politics for life.

Cases continue to be reported of political prisoners being tortured, dying under interrogation, or simply 'disappearing' after arrest.

One policeman, found guilty last year of torturing to death an alleged communist, Mustafa Hayrullahoglu, was promoted chief of police of an Istanbul district.

The ban on DISK has not prevented workers' organising. Turk-Is, previously regarded as the more 'moderate' trade union confederation, and affiliated to the In-

ternational Confederation of Free Trade Unions, has begun to reflect rank-and-file workers' pressure for their rights.

A year ago, 100,000 workers turned out for a Turk-Is rally in Izmir, and former chair Halil Tunc told the confederation's congress last December: '1987 will be the year when we take back our democratic rights and freedoms which were lost.'

A right-wing group discredited by collaboration with the post-1980 military junta was overwhelmingly defeated in elections and ousted from Turk-Is leadership.

Although the Turkish working class is still in the process of establishing its political independence, as well as struggling for its rights, the militancy and working-class unity revealed in the Netas strike — and now spreading — brings the working class to the forefront of Turkish politics.

Subversive maps!

FOR the second time in recent years, Turkish authorities have banned an atlas because it includes historical references to Armenia and Kurdistan on maps of eastern Turkey.

The 'National Geographic Atlas of the World' is one of over 20 foreign publications the regime has just banned.

A list published in the official government gazette also includes German language editions of 'Marx for Beginners' and 'Lenin for Beginners', and several works in French or German dealing with the Kurdish and Armenian minorities.

On 20 March, police in Istanbul confiscated the current issue of 'Yeni Guldem',

a left-wing magazine, because it included an article on the Kurds, with an interview given by the head of a Kurdish cultural centre in Paris.

The Turkish regime refuses to recognise Kurdish nationality, and is currently waging war on Kurdish guerrillas in the east of the country.

In recent years, a resurgent Armenian nationalist group has attacked Turkish targets abroad.

A few years ago, the 'Times Atlas of World History' was banned because it referred to the existence of an Armenian state in eastern Anatolia between 1918 and 1921.

GOD\$ OWN COUNTRY

ORAL ROBERTS won't be going to heaven just yet, thanks not to God but to Dog. A millionaire dog racetrack owner has come to the rescue.

Radio and television evangelist Roberts shocked theologians and rival preachers in January by announcing on his coast-to-coast programme that he'd received a stark message from God: either raise £3 million by March 31 or get 'called home' early.

Aged 69, and in no more hurry than the average believer to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, Roberts appealed to viewers to save his life.

On 22 March, having climbed to the top of a 'prayer tower' at his Tulsa, Oklahoma, headquarters, saying he'd fast until the money was in, Oral got his reprieve, from Florida dog-track owner Gerald Collins.

Collins, whose fortune is estimated at \$75 million, flew to Tulsa to present the evangelist with a cheque for \$87,000, telling reporters 'He doesn't have to commit hari-kiri now'.

As it happened, a spokeswoman for Roberts had already issued a statement saying there was no question of a starvation fast — it would just be nine days' 'intense prayer'. And Roberts himself said he would not stay up the tower the full nine days, but come down to meet 'the regular needs of my life'.

Although the money was said to be for medical missionary work, informed people in Tulsa say the Roberts gospel empire, employing 2,000 people, is in big financial trouble.

The lavish Oral Roberts Building, of which the gilt-and-glass prayer tower is just part, has been costing more to run than its income in recent months. As for the huge City of Faith medical complex, built 'on God's instruction', Tulsa authorities say the grandiose project serves no purpose.

Only a fraction of its 777 hospital beds are occupied. The figure 777 apparently has some mystical significance for Roberts. (Suppose it suffered cuts, and 111 beds were removed? As any arithmetical Bible-basher will know, that would really raise the Devil in Oklahoma.)

Meanwhile, observers of the Healy-Torrance missions in London, England are watching anxiously to

see if a gilt-and-glass tower in Stockwell would get planning permission from Lambeth council.

When flesh is weaker than Pentecostal spirit

MEANWHILE, all is not well either in another of God's Little Acres — well, to be exact, 2,300 acres forming the Heritage USA religious theme park in South Carolina.

It's just part of the Praise the Lord Ministry Organisation, also in the TV-gospel business and pulling \$86 million a year.

Praise the Lord (and pass your chequebook?) has been placed temporarily in the hands of 'Moral Majority' crusader Reverend Jerry Falwell, as a result of weaknesses-of-the-flesh bringing down former head Reverend Jim Bakker.

Bakker resigned, saying he'd been blackmailed and 'wickedly manipulated by treacherous former friends', as a result of which he'd had to 'appease persons who were determined to destroy this ministry'.

The minister says he's had to pay £79,000 to silence a 21-year old secretary of the Pentecostal Church with whom he had been 'lured into an encounter'.

Bakker's wife and gospel partner Tammy — the two hosted a cable-TV programme called 'Jim and Tammy' — has entered a drug rehabilitation clinic.

Rival and now Divine Receiver Falwell was widely credited with much of Ronald Reagan's political success. And it was a board member of Praise the Lord, James Watt, who as Reagan's Interior Secretary banned the 'Beach Boys' from performing in Washington on 4 July, for fear they might incite drunken and lewd behaviour.

P.S. A sequel to our two religious tales. Oral Roberts was doing a broadcast defending fellow-preacher Jim Bakker, accusing unnamed enemies of plotting against them. He invited Rev. Bakker to say a few words for himself. At that point, there was thunder and lightning over Tulsa, and the radio went off the air. No kidding!

Who owns Canada?

OUT of every dollar spent by Canadians on food, 76 cents goes to just six big grocery store chains, which have carved the country up between them.

Most other shopping is done with just three department store chains, whose owners also collect the rent from most shopping precincts, enabling them to elbow out competition.

This is the picture that emerges from a new book, 'Controlling Interest: Who Owns Canada?', published in Toronto.

Describing how wealth has become concentrated in fewer hands, and profits piled up, author Diane Francis quotes Edgar Bronfman of the Seagram's whisky distillers:

'Turning \$100 into \$110 is hard work. Turning \$100 million into \$110 million is inevitable.'

Chunk

Bronfman, his brother Charles, and cousins Peter and Edward, own a sizeable chunk of the country's urban real estate between their property companies, Cadillac-Fairchild, Trizec and Bramalea.

Edward and Peter also own Lablatt's brewery, one of three — the others being Molson and Carling-O'Keefe — which control 93 per cent of Canada's beer trade.

Canadian's daily bread is mostly supplied by Westons;

their daily newspapers are largely in the hands of the Thomson empire, Maclean-Hunter, and the partnership of Southam and the Atkinson family (who own the 'Toronto Star', business columnist Diane Francis' own paper.)

Thomson also owns department store chain Bay and Simpson's. The other big two in retail are Eatons of Toronto, and the US-owned Sears chain.

(Manufacturing industry in Canada has consisted usually of branch-plants for big US companies, and the Conservative government's answer to slump is to bid for more US investment.)

Studying 32 families which along with five big conglomerates control a third of Canada's wealth other than banking and insurance, Francis found combined wealth had doubled in the past four years.

Their revenues amounted to \$123 billion in 1985. The Canadian government's total income the same year was only \$80 billion.

One company, Bell Canada Enterprises, had a cash flow of \$3.2 billion — greater

than that of the Canada Pension Plan, Canada's national insurance scheme.

A distinctive feature of Canadian capitalism is the role of powerful individuals. Of the 400 largest corporations, 374 have a single shareholder with a controlling interest. (a minimum of 25 to 30 per cent voting stock).

In the province of New Brunswick, oil, shipbuilding, timber and much else is owned by one 400-company group, the empire of one K.C. Irving. With \$8 billion assets, Irving's empire holds sway over a quarter of all goods and services produced in the province.

A more up-to-date kind of empire is the big conglomerate holding company which acquires companies right across industry and the country, asset-stripping when necessary to provide the liquid capital for another round of acquisitions.

Shares

Through Edper Investments, brothers Edward and Peter Bronfman control a hundred companies, employing over 100,000 workers. 'Edper can control Company C without owning any of its shares', Francis explains, 'by purchasing 50 per cent of Company A, if A owns 50 per cent of Company B,

which in turn, owns 50 per cent of Company C.'

Francis' book does not deal much with the part played in Canada by the big banks. Five of these, the Royal Bank of Montreal, Commerce Bank of Nova Scotia, and Toronto-Dominion, take over 80 per cent of all deposits.

In 1981, there was a wave of take-overs, a huge outflow of capital, the Canadian dollar threatened with collapse, and the fear of a banking crisis.

'The takeover thing had gone haywire,' said Royal Bank chairman Rowland Frazee. 'The banking system was running out of capital. I told MacEachen (then Finance Minister) he had to order an end to it.'

The government duly ordered a moratorium on all takeovers. It didn't last too long. Between 1980 and 1983, Edper grew by 86 per cent.

'Between family empires, management fiefdoms, and governments, there is not a great deal of room — or opportunity — left for real entrepreneurs,' laments Diane Francis, romantically sighing for capitalism's lost youth.

But free competition must end with winners — that is, monopolies. The logic of capitalism leads to the lunacy of fictitious capital, frenzied take-overs, mass unemployment, food mountains, and world poverty.

As Canada's dole queues lengthen apace with the concentration of wealth, we leave the last word to Richard Thomson, chairman of the Toronto-Dominion Bank:

'I worry about the political backlash if it is not dealt with. This could lead to socialism.'

Hooper

ACTOR Jimmy Cagney, hard-talking movie gangster and fleet-footed hooper, was one jump ahead of the FBI's J. Edgar Hoover in real life. Documents recently released show the Feds kept files on Jimmy as a suspected 'communist', though all they could prove was that he once donated to striking farmworkers and helped raise money for an ambulance for the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War.

An open letter to rank-and-file members of the group which publishes 'News Line': from the Political Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party

Dear Comrades,

Police Witnesses and Principles

ONE of our comrades, Phil Penn, is in jail and your organisation provided the only police witnesses in the case. It is a long-established principle in the working-class movement that political differences are never regulated in bourgeois courts or by reliance on the police.

This is not the first time leaders of your organisation have acted in this way. Six of them appeared as police witnesses in Sheffield Crown Court in January of this year after an incident between members of your organisation and the International Communist Party. On this occasion the court did not believe them and the defendant was found not guilty.

After a demonstration at Wapping on 3 May 1986, Phil, who was on his own at the time, was attacked by four members of your organisation — Richard Price, Eric Rogers, Paul Williams and another man. They knocked him to the ground and Richard Price attacked him with banner poles. Unfortunately Eric Rogers' eye was damaged in the fracas. Phil Penn was the only one arrested.

The background to these events is as follows: In 1985 Gerry Healy, leader of the Workers Revolutionary Party, was expelled. He was charged on the following counts: systematic sexual abuse of female party comrades, physical violence against party members and slanders against a leading member of a Trotskyist organisation in the United States. He refused to appear before the Party members to answer these charges, and has since disappeared from public life. Phil Penn is part of the majority that expelled Healy.

Those of us who expelled Healy from the Workers Revolutionary Party in October 1986 were, for a long time, party to much of his anti-communism and we have never sought to hide this from the working class movement. It is not a crime to make mistakes, even serious ones. **But it is a crime, and a grievous one, to lie about such mistakes and refuse to struggle in practice to overcome them.**

We are working with others in the international Trotskyist movement to analyse our history, overcome the unprincipled past of the movement and take our place in the ranks of those striving to build the Fourth International as the party of world socialist revolution.

Healy was supported by Vanessa Redgrave, Corin Redgrave, Sheila Torrance, Alex Mitchell, Ben Rudder, Simon Vevers, Penny Bloor, Ray Athow, John Eden, Frank Sweeney, Dave Oatley, Ray Efford, Linda Efford, Paddy O'Regan, Claire Dixon, Richard Price, Paul Feldman, Ian Harrison, Stuart Eames, Chris Eames, Dave Gilbert, Corinna Gilbert, Sue Laird, Judith White, John Graham, Jim Kane, Graham Fenwick, Bill Rogers, Eric Rogers, Roberta Colling, Steve Colling, Slav Colling, Paul Williams, Mark Harrison, Frances de la Tour, Kika Markham, Tom Kempinski, Mick Blakey, Mary McEntegart, Kay Riddick, Billy Cummins, Jean Kerrigan, Kathy Hilton, Kathryn Davies, Mair Davies, Wilf Downing and Martin Booth.

The leaders of this group shielded Healy from the membership although they knew the charges against him to be true — and he never denied them. Instead they called their own conference, and set themselves up as a bogus 'Workers Revolutionary Party', publishing a daily paper, 'News Line'.

Sheila Torrance and the Redgraves have never dared face the

working class on the question of Healy. Sheila Torrance told some that the charges were false; to others she admitted they were true, but said that Healy's so-called 'personal life' did not matter.

But the practices of leaders of the movement most certainly do matter, and Healy's actions involved a fundamental break with Marxism and communism. He used the membership for his own sexual and personal gratification and in so doing destroyed many members, especially amongst the youth.

Acts of this kind cannot be hidden from the light of day for ever. Nor can they be kept from the working class. The same abandonment of revolutionary principles which led Sheila Torrance, the Redgraves and others to lie about and cover up for Healy in 1985 caused them to attack their opponent, Phil Penn, in 1986 and, as police witnesses, put him behind bars in 1987.

Contrast this with the fact that when Phil Penn was again attacked by members of your organisation in Leicester on 8 June 1986, this time with a club and a knife, the police wished to prosecute, but Phil — who was again on his own at the time of the attack — refused to act as a police witness. The case could not go forward.

Although Eric Rogers, Kay Riddick and Mary McEntegart were the police witnesses, they alone are not responsible. This action was undoubtedly planned and sanctioned by Healy, Torrance and the political committee of your organisation. In fact 'News Line' carried an anti-political and provocative attack on Phil Penn three days before the Wapping attack.

We are asking you to insist on accountability from your leaders, just as trade unionists are insisting on their leaders accounting for their actions. We realise that any new members of your organisation may be confused about what they are told about Healy's expulsion. But you should not have to suffer the political anger in the working class that will now break over your heads for the reactionary practices of your leaders.

Those who disagree with members of your organisation being put up as police witnesses should make your opposition known in the working class just as you should ask Sheila Torrance to explain her remark about Phil Penn at Wapping on Saturday 7 February. She said: 'He should have got longer.' Can you stomach such rank anti-communist behaviour? A communist leader does not act on hatred and revenge, but on Marxist principles.

If you have the slightest doubts about these events, if you are in the least degree dissatisfied with the explanations you are being given, follow them up. Look into history. Read about these things. Principles are the bedrock of the movement; they cannot be traded for opportunist alliances and protection of those who are wrong. Wapping has again shown that if principles are traded (in this case the right to free trade unions) the working class alone will suffer.

We make this appeal to you: take notice of those in the labour movement who can explain the basic principle that you must never use the police against other members, even if you have fundamental disagreements. No doubt you have regard for the basic principles of the working class movement. Leaders must be accountable. We invite you to discuss these matters with us.

Yours fraternally,

Political Committee, Workers Revolutionary Party (Workers Press)

21 February 1987

What you can do. . .

- Raise the jailing of Phil Penn in your union branch, trades council, support group, etc. Phone 01-274 7271 for copies of the circular letter explaining the case.
- Write to Phil Penn: No. L27055, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs, PO Box 757, Duane Road, London W12 0AE (registered post is best).
- Send messages of support for Phil and reports which we can print in Workers Press. We have a special column each week while he is behind bars.

Greetings from Paris

Paris, 14 March 1987

Dear Comrade Phil,
News of your jailing has come as a shock to all our members and we assure you of all our solidarity!

Considering the continuous repression against the youth, the workers and political activists, we strongly denounce all those who, claiming to be part of the working-class movement, do not hesitate to collaborate with the bourgeois state and its police forces.

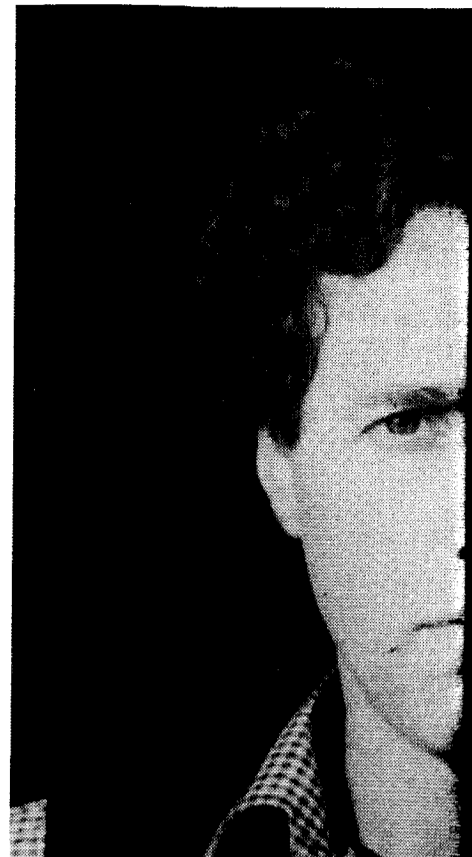
We denounce your jailing and are sure that the vast solidarity campaign which is developing will be a step forward to banish those practices from within the working-class movement.

The Healy/Torrance group have taken another step forward to put themselves out of the working-class movement! We will not have them soil your reputation as a working class militant and leader of the WRP, nor that of your organisation!

As part of the solidarity campaign our next issue will include an article expressing our firmest support as a contribution to the struggle in which you and your comrades are engaged.

With best wishes to your family, warmest Trotskyist greetings.

On behalf of the LST
Comrade Cécile



Phil Penn

Best wishes from Cambridge

Dear Phil,

We are sending you our warmest revolutionary greetings.

This action has surely finished the Healy-Torrance degenerates for good in the working class. This is certainly what we found in Cambridge. It is fitting that it should be through an attack on you that they were finally done for good. You deserve the honour for that!

You have the support from all principled workers, not only in Britain, but the world over. We are all eagerly awaiting the day of your release.

With the very best wishes and in Trotskyist solidarity.

WRP Cambridge Branch



In earlier days Phil ran a motor-mechanics' course for youth

Appeal to the Healyite young

THE latest issue of your Young Socialist paper contains a draft resolution written for your annual conference. It contains major political errors which you must question your leaders about.

For those of you who do not know, and most of you who have joined in the last year and a half won't, your group consists of a few 'youth' who deserted the Workers Revolutionary Party in October 1985 after the expulsion of Gerry Healy for sexual abuse of party comrades, and formed a bogus group, now publishing the 'News Line'.

You claim to be Trotskyist, but your group collaborated with the state in jailing Phil Penn, a member of our organisation.

You tried and failed to use the state to settle your political differences with the International Communist Party, but your party tries to keep quiet about these, preferring ignorance to debate.

Your draft resolution states: 'In every country of the world youth are in the forefront . . . particularly in Britain

youth have defiantly challenged the government. . .'

Why particularly in Britain?

Why not particularly in France or Spain, where there have been massive student revolts, far bigger than anything yet seen in Britain? You say particularly in Britain because your group is suffering from nationalism, believing the world revolution centres around Britain. You say:

'Britain is the centre of the world economic crisis.' How can you say this when in the same paragraph you say 'Britain has gone from once "ruling the waves", to being the dustbin of the world.'

You say: 'We support the Iranian revolution, under the leadership of Khomeiny, and support them in their war against Iraq.'

How can you, as Trotskyists, support a government based not on socialism, but controlled by a bourgeois theocracy? They have an appalling record on women's rights, and have also executed many members

of the Communist (Tudeh) Party.

Supporting one side in a bourgeois war is completely anti-Marxist.

'The YS is leading the campaign to Arm the African workers,' you say. What campaign? Have you raised a single penny for guns yet? No, because your 'campaign' is just an abstract slogan cut off from reality.

You have not even considered where you get the guns from, and who you give them to.

You certainly won't give them to the ANC (because they are Stalinist-led), and presumably you won't give them to any other groups (PAC, AZAPO, etc.) for similar reasons. There would be nothing wrong for a real campaign to arm the progressive sections of the South African proletariat in the oncoming revolutionary struggles, but at least think the slogans through before saying them.

You say that the 'Thatcher regime has rejected capitalist parliamentary democracy and placed herself out of parlia-

THE JAILING OF PHIL PENN

That night at Wapping

I was with Phil Penn earlier on the evening of May 3 at Wapping. The police had plainly been told to go in hard. I remember stepping back on to the pavement as mounted police charged up the street, then realising we were trapped up against the wall, and more police were riding onto the pavement on our flanks, attacking the crowd.

Later, I watched print union stewards pleading for an ambulance to be allowed through for a colleague who had collapsed, and hard-faced coppers ignoring them. I saw injured trade unionists, heads bleeding, being helped away by their mates.

Whatever the differences on the Left, the prevailing mood among the crowd was working class unity, and hatred for Thatcher's uniformed thugs.

As the workers and youth regained confidence, and held their ground, Phil was in the thick of things. He seemed to be calm, and in good spirit throughout — a great boost to our morale. As someone said, a great comrade to have by your side.

It dawned on us, that while it was all happening, someone ought to get photographs for Workers Press! Phil had parked near Tow-

situation, what would workers do with such a group?

Sandra has remarked that the judge was probably influenced by the 'Wapping factor' in deciding on a jail sentence for a first offence.

Friends and comrades from various groups and campaigns have testified to the respect Phil earned through his principled attitude and dedicated activity in the past year.

Knowing what we do about how Britain's political police operate, isn't it likely Phil Penn's name popped up on some computer as soon as he was arrested?

The Healy-Torrance group used to be quick enough to denounce others as 'agents' and collaborators with the state. That is just what they have shown themselves to be.

As Liverpool comrades pointed out, it's in line with what Healy did in having photographs of Iraqi communists passed on to the Iraqi bourgeois state. Whatever differences may have cropped up between Healy and Torrance since, she has never condemned that action.

I'm told that when the issue of political executions in Iraq was raised in the Party, Torrance's reaction was 'why worry, they



er Hill, and decided to nip back to fetch his camera.

I didn't see him again that night, but assumed he was somewhere else in the crowds.

It wasn't till the next day that I heard he'd been arrested. Later, Phil remarked how ironic it was. He told me he'd realised there was a danger of being injured or arrested that night, but hadn't dreamt it would come about the way it did!

We hadn't seen much of the Healy-Torrance group that night, once the trouble started. As soon as we'd arrived at Wapping with the march, I remember, I saw one of Torrance's leading 'cadres' arguing with some youth, to get them to come away.

These are the people, remember, who insisted as a matter of faith that we are in a 'revolutionary situation'. But as soon as they see workers battling the state, they decide it's time to clear off.

The Healy-Torrance group didn't want to get caught up in any trouble with the law. But they were not averse to starting a punch-up with a communist, comrade Phil.

In fact, they helped the police make it one more arrest at Wapping, and went into court to get our comrade locked-up.

If this really was a revolutionary

were only Stalinists anyway.'

The sexual abuse and ill-treatment of young women comrades by Healy were well-known to Torrance, yet she has been prepared to lie her head off pretending it never happened, or else say it doesn't matter.

How can any credence be attached to anything such people say? Surely this is an alien, rotten presence in the labour movement, and should be booted out.

I've known Phil and Sandra for several years, worked with them, discussed with them, enjoyed their hospitality.

The night a Labour Party member and myself were attacked by a Zionist gang some years ago, it was Phil who rushed down the hospital casualty, was supportive, and stayed late to give us a lift home.

I rejoined the Workers Revolutionary Party after Healy and Torrance were chucked out. Discussions with Phil and Sandra helped convince me I was making the right move, and helped me understand the split. Phil's political integrity and grasp of issues was also a great help in the period that followed.

Charlie Pottins
South West London

A letter to Equity members at Action PIE

Dear Action PIE,
I am writing to you regarding the jailing of Phil Penn, a WRP member, and the particular part played in this by a political associate of most of you, Equity member, Mary McEntagart ('Tag').

She has been part of one of the greatest political crimes in the Healy-Torrance group's history and your position on this requires clarification. I am enclosing a copy of our Chairman's letter on the case to remind you of the facts of the case as reported in court.

On 6 February Workers Revolutionary Party member Phil Penn was convicted of assault and sentenced to 12 months imprisonment (8 months suspended).

This was a state prosecution and there were only three police witnesses: Kay Riddick, Eric Rogers and 'Tag' McEntagart — all members of the Healy-Torrance group to which most of you belong.

(I realise that you have now split with Torrance and gone with Healy, but the two camps clearly buried their differences for the court case).

The action of these three, clearly working on the instructions of your leadership, is a fundamental breach of the principles and traditions of the working class movement. Political differences in the labour movement are to be resolved in the class struggle — not in the capitalist courts. So where do you stand on this basic class question?

This situation has a particular irony for two of your number — Caroline Stubbs and Geoff Gilham. These two were both members of the Standing Conference of Young Peoples' Theatre periodical (SCYPT Journal) editorial Committee which in 1985 accused Greenwich YPT of blacklisting two theatre workers.

When GYPT threatened legal action unless you withdrew these allegations (which you promptly did) you accused them of silencing the editorial team and stopping the debate being resolved at a higher level.

If it was unprincipled for one group to threaten another with legal action over a political question in that instance, how do you justify your political 'party' attempting to settle political differences at the lowest level — i.e. in the capitalist courts and in open collaboration with the state.

Remember — there are no precedents for these actions amongst principled sections of the workers' movement. Revolutionary socialists who follow basic principles do not work with the police and the courts against other workers — it's as simple as that.

In the 1985 SCYPT Conference we campaigned together for SCYPT members to attend a WRP lobby of the TUC conference in support of the Jailed and Sacked Miners.

How do you think jailed miners, printers and Republican prisoners of war must feel when they hear of Phil's imprisonment? These men and women have had their own taste of British justice and will give short shrift to any collaborator with it.

Des Warren, ex-class war prisoner and one of the 'Shrewsbury Two' says it clearly — he was 'gutted' by the jailing.

In my search for your possible justification for supporting McEntagart's actions I can only come up with the following: Your perspectives may run thus:

1. Phil Penn is (in your eyes) an expelled member of the WRP.
2. This makes him the class enemy.
3. Therefore we must use means at our disposal — including the courts and the police — to try to silence him.

But even leaving principles aside, do you seriously think this action will break Phil politically? Quite the reverse.

As Des Warren says, it will strengthen and sharpen him politically and Phil will be back to take



Equity member MARY 'TAG' McENTAGART — police witness against Phil Penn and supporter of G. Healy since he was expelled from the Workers Revolutionary Party for violence and sexual abuse



Torrance-group supporter KAY RIDDICK — one of the two women who turned up in court to give evidence to get Phil Penn jailed

his place in the class struggle (only he won't be enlisting the help of Thatcher's police and judges).

So to sum up, I am calling on you to publicly dissociate yourselves from the actions of your group:

1. Condemning the actions of McEntagart, the other police witnesses and your political leadership for collaborating with the State in this way.
2. Resigning from the G. Healy WRP immediately.

I realise that I am asking you to make a political 'about face' that you will probably find impossible to make but I am appealing to you to apply the same integrity, principles and courage you have for the most part shown in your own campaign against closure to the case of Phil Penn.

Finally, let me make it clear that this issue in no way affects my support for your campaign against closure. The rights of all artists to express political views in their work without interference from the state or the employer is a fundamental right which has to be defended.

I look forward to receiving a principled response from you.

Yours fraternally,
James Quinn,
Manchester WRP

socialists

ment's control . . . has become a Bonapartist dictatorship in which parliament is just used as a cover.'

If we are in a dictatorship, as you claim, how come the printers' strike went on for a year? True, the state attacked the printers via the police, but surely any sensible dictator would have got the army on to the streets to stop them?

Perhaps Thatcher couldn't have done that because she would have lost popularity with middle-class Tory voters, but you say she is 'out of parliamentary control'. Can you explain this?

You must question your leaders on these and all other points you are uncertain of. Never be afraid to question anything, however much they try to tell you otherwise.

If you are interested in joining a real revolutionary youth movement, contact:

WRP Youth Faction
PO Box 735
London, SW9 7QS

Jolyon Ralph
WRP Youth Faction

THE WORKING CLASS AND INTERNATIONALISM

THE article on Hungary by Comrade Newman of the Revolutionary Communist Group, and the reply to M. Ralph, reveal that the RCG are convinced advocates of the theory of socialism in one country.

This is used against any theory that analyses and explains the contradictions and history of a real workers' revolution.

The RCG attitude to the class nature of the Hungarian state (or of Cuba etc.) reveals precisely where they stand on theory.

They refuse to discuss the role of the working class. They talk only in terms of certain gains made possible by the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, and attribute these gains to the bureaucracy.

Here are two opposed views of what socialism is and how it can be fought for, maintained, and expanded. We are forced to conclude that we are not fighting for the same thing.

Central to the theory of the Permanent Revolution is the independent role of the proletariat and the necessity for an international proletarian revolutionary party.

To understand the class nature of a state we have to analyse not only how it came into being, and the ways in which imperialism tries to destroy revolution, but also the exact role of the working class in conjunction with the development of the world revolution.

In the states that Trotskyists call degenerated and

BY MARTIN RALPH

deformed workers' states, could the RCG explain where elections to soviets based on the working class and peasantry take place?

Is there free discussion of economic plans? Is there the right of immediate recall? Are the trade unions independent of the state? Is there workers' democracy within them?

That there is a strong authoritarian and parasitic state without any control over it by the working class shows how far from socialism these states are.

There is however a deeper lie within the RCG's theory. It is contained partly in Newman's assertion that '30 years of political stability and economic growth later, the standard of living of the masses of the Hungarian people is incomparably higher'.

Here is Stalinism crudely justified by alleged results. But another great god steps in as well: what was done was due to the pressure of imperialism.

Trotsky analysed both the

This is the second reply in a discussion with the Revolutionary Communist Group that started with an article on Hungary by Patrick Newman in their paper 'Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!', numbers 64 and 66.

strength and weaknesses of the Soviet Union. Stalinism, by the 1930s, characterised any criticism of the Soviet Union as 'counter-revolutionary' and 'fascist'. The RCG dare not go so far today, but they accept the essential Stalinist position.

In Hungary joint ventures have been set up in many areas of the economy between the state and imperialist banks and businesses, the largest being involved with Citibank of New York.

This process has meant the penetration of the Hungarian economy by the West. Where is this leading? Does it not undermine the nationalised property relationships within Hungary?

Now we enter the land of farce, or the land of the 'accomplished fact'. According to the RCG, 'a communist party in Britain cannot be built except as part of the process to reconstruct the Communist International' (Manifesto of the RCG, page 150).

Yet 'the Communist Party of the Soviet Union found it necessary to dissolve the

Third (Communist) International in 1943' (page 149). Leaving aside the meaning of 'necessary' here, according to the RCG we have had decades of 'political stability and economic growth'.

If that meant anything for socialism it would mean an unprecedented development for the world revolution and productive forces on a level not yet seen. A revolutionary International would have been built decades ago.

The Workers Revolutionary Party/Workers Press has issued a call for an International Conference to reconstruct the Fourth International.

It stands for the Permanent Revolution implacably opposed to Stalinism and its so-called international leadership since 1924.

The immense betrayals that are covered up or falsified by the RCG have to be understood as part of the fight for an International.

The Stalinists misled the working class in many countries between 1924 and 1933, and there were consequent defeats.

Stalinism's line in Germany proved to be the most disastrous, the leadership prevented joint action with the social-democratic workers and allowed Hitler to come to power. After the event Stalin justified their policies and actions.

Some of the leaders of the RCG certainly know about these events. But they remain silent.

In the Moscow Trials Stalin finished off almost the entire Bolshevik leadership that had been on the Central Committee in 1917. In 1940 he had Trotsky assassinated.

Even Gorbachev is forced to open the door a little on these crimes against the working class. The RCG is silent.

Kamran Mashide of the RCG says in a letter to 'Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!' that the 1979 Iranian Revolution was betrayed by the Iranian Communist Party. We ask: when did the betrayal start?

We appeal to the RCG to come clean. Are you for or against the Stalinist killings in the Soviet Union, Spain, Mexico, and elsewhere? Are you for or against workers' democracy now and in the past?

We understand the repulsion the RCG feel towards the politics of the Socialist Workers Party, the then International Marxist Group and the WRP (before October 1985).

The Fourth International

that had degenerated will be built in implacable opposition to all those 'Trotskyist' tendencies that repelled the RCG as well as in opposition to reformism and Stalinism. Not to do so would be to miss the real meaning of the explosion in the WRP and the new developments within the international working class.

The only force capable of smashing the state, expropriating capitalist property, and destroying the labour lieutenants of capital is the working class.

This requires the building of a Marxist international party. Such a party, as it fights for leadership of the working class, brings to that class all the historical lessons of the labour movement.

One such lesson is the necessity for democracy within the workers' movement. It is an essential part of how the working class develops a revolutionary consciousness before, during, and after the socialist revolution.

We have issued a call for an International Conference that in its 10 points briefly summarises the fundamental lessons for the re-building of a revolutionary International.

We ask you to study it.

Patrick Newman, in his second article, accuses me of the very mistakes he commits. The falsifications have been dealt with many times before and will be dealt with in subsequent discussion.

'A CALL TO SCOTTISH COMMUNISTS'

The Communist Party is facing liquidation 'as an organisation rooted in the working class' in one of its last remaining bastions, Scotland.

This claim is made in a document, 'A Call to Scottish Communists', addressed by the Communist Campaign Group (CCG) to Communist Party members there. It presents a picture of bureaucratic degeneration.

In Glasgow, the party is in disarray: branches in Partick and Govan have been dissolved and their members refused current party cards, while in North Kelvin and Govanhill, members have been expelled for refusing to finger 'Morning Star' readers.

The situation in Edinburgh is no better. Three weeks before the Scottish congress, all nine branches were dissolved and re-organised into three, under convenors appointed by the Scottish party secretary.

Current party cards have been refused to CP branches in Ayrshire, Dumfries, Paisley and Rigside.

Stirling branch is under investigation and Aberdeen is not allowed to meet without a minder from the Scottish executive present. Some Clydebank members were not notified of the Scottish congress because of their political differences with the leadership.

'Political discussion has been stifled,' says the document. 'Marxist education ended. Any independent

BY JOE EYRE

has now become a settled style of work.'

Claiming that such practices are opposite to democratic centralism, the document goes on: 'If this style of work is allowed to continue, it will mean the death of the Communist Party.'

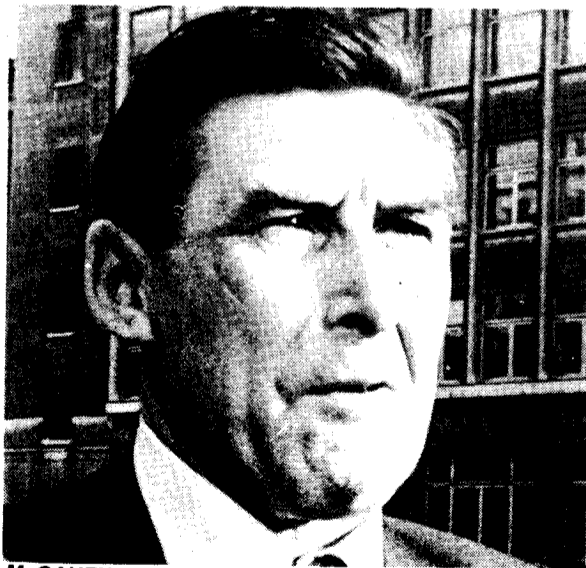
All this arises from the faction fight which has raged in the CP between supporters of 'Marxism Today' and those of the 'Morning Star'.

So bitter is the dispute that the document bluntly accuses the CP industrial department of being 'openly divisive in the great industrial struggles of the last three years' and of collaborating with the capitalist press.

The CCG, supporters of the 'Morning Star', claim to be a 'left opposition' to the present executive. Their claim is bogus. Their reformist tone will be a disappointment to workers who have joined the CP to work for the socialist transformation of society.

While paying lip service to the leading role of the working class in the struggle against capital, the group states without a blush its central theme: 'There is no time to be lost if we are to mobilise the movement to win a Labour victory at the next election.'

Not even a Labour government pledged to socialist policies or even to the nationalisation of monopolies! Not a mention of workers' control! And this at a time when the Labour lead-



McGAHEY

its party, and making it abundantly clear that left policies are not on the agenda.

The CCG, far from making transitional demands to unite the entire working class against capitalism, proposes that the labour movement develop 'a radical programme for social reform' — an Alternative Economic Strategy Mark II, perhaps.

They catalogue the effects of eight years of Tory policies on Scotland, and call for campaigns to restore manufacturing industry, the social services, health and education. Demands are made for opposition to the EEC and the anti-union laws.

Socialists of every hue would find such demands unacceptable. But it is a measure of the depth of the political degeneration of both wings of the CP that their demands are indistinguishable from the Labour left, or

indeed, TUC and Labour officialdom.

The CCG assumes the role of a PR outfit for Gorbachev, 'who is impressing millions of people with the sincerity and scope of the Soviet Union's disarmament policies.'

By acting as spokespeople for the 'sincere' Gorbachev, the CCG help to cover up the crimes of the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy which he represents. That bureaucracy, like the British labour leadership, bears responsibility for great defeats of the working class.

The failure to challenge the right-wing betrayal of the 1926 British general strike, the slaughter of Chinese Communist Party members by the Moscow-supported Kuomintang the following year, the failure of the German CP to challenge Hitler, the sabotage of the fight against Franco by the Spanish CP's class-

collaboration methods, the handing-back of Indo-China and a series of Asian and European countries to imperialism after the war, the crushing of the 1956 Hungarian revolution and the Czech uprising of 1968 — the responsibility for all this lies at the door of that bureaucracy.

More recent events in Poland and Afghanistan clearly show that the nature of the beast has not changed. There is not a hope in the world that Gorbachev's 'sincerity' could ever extend to an honest exposé of these crimes.

In covering up the bureaucracy's crimes the CCG covers up, too, the systematic murder of thousands of revolutionists, Trotskyists and others, who dared to speak out against betrayal, particularly in the 1930s.

If CCG supporters or other CP members are serious about fighting bureaucracy, they will support the growing demand for a review of the cases of all defendants in the infamous Moscow Trials.

As Trotskyists the Workers Revolutionary Party defends the Soviet Union unconditionally: we do so despite the existence of the parasitic bureaucracy which lives off the back of the working class.

We stand for the defence of the nationalised property relations, the monopoly of foreign trade and the other gains of the October revolution. At the same time, we call unequivocally for a political revolution to overthrow the bureaucracy, Gorbachev and all, which is the greatest single threat to the gains of October.

The CCG's defence of the Soviet bureaucracy is in

flagrant contradiction with communist principles. So too is their opportunistic political perspective for Scotland.

Their number one priority for Scottish Communists is to 'lead the demand for Devolution'. And the justification for prioritising such a craven demand, for a bourgeois mini-parliament for Scotland? 'If we don't, others will.'

Behind the rhetoric — mass struggle, communist principles, the leading role of the working class — is the real reformist face of the CCG: trust Gorbachev and the bureaucracy, trust Kinnock... and work like hell for a Scottish Assembly!

What has this to do with socialism, the transformation of society and the ending of class exploitation? Any serious communist would ask such questions.

The difference between 'Marxism Today' and the CCG is not on how to release the working class from the trap of reformism — but on how best to ensnare them in it.

While the CCG leans towards the Soviet bureaucracy and 'left' trade union leaders, 'Marxism Today' has abandoned even formal references to the working class as the motive force of change, and concentrates on building up alliances with sections of the middle class and ruling class.

In returning to the basic principles of communism — the revolutionary role of the working class, and the need to resolve the crisis of its leadership — CP members will of necessity come into sharpest conflict with the leaders of both wings of British Stalinism.

The SBIB organised the working class

IMMEDIATELY after 19 July 1979, the SBIB sent groups of its members to organise the factory workers.

Their first target was the imperialist companies located in the tax-free 'Zona Franca'. Their methods were very simple. They went to the factories and organised meetings of the workers.

Without fail every worker in each factory came to the meetings organised by the revolutionaries.

The meetings were opened so that the workers themselves could discuss everything from their grievances against the boss to their boss's relationships with Somoza. In every case the meetings culminated in the organisation of a union and the election of a workers' committee.

Among the ranks of the SBIB were members of Trotskyist organisations from many countries with considerable union experience who acted as advisers to the newly-elected workers' committees.

The military force of the SBIB was put at the disposal, and under the control of, these committees in their struggle against their bosses.

This is how companies such as Coca Cola, Pepsi Cola, Plywood, Metalurgical Metasa (steel) and many others were organised. Between 20 July and 3 August 1979 the SBIB organised 70 factories and almost 35 per cent of the total industrial working class in Managua.

On 11 August 1979 the Simon Bolivar International Brigade organised a plenary meeting of delegates from nearly 40 factories from Managua.

More than 120 delegates representing 6,000 workers met in the Brigade's headquarters and voted to join the effort to build the CST (Central Sandinista de Trabajadores — Sandinista Labour Federation). A Sandinist National Liberation Front (FSLN) delegation was at the meeting.

Within a few days of that meeting, the SBIB expanded its activities to other cities (including Granada, Masaya, Leon and others) and organized unions in the same way. By mid-August, it had organised over 100 unions throughout Nicaragua. At the Montelimar Sugar Cane Industry, where the SBIB organised over 900 workers, the newly-elected general secretary of the union Alejandro Estrada Arauz had this to say about the Brigade in his acceptance speech:

'Thanks to the International Brigades' continuing contributions, not only in the military field, but in the social struggle. I ask for a very big round of applause for these comrades.'

The sugar company belonged to one of the most powerful capitalist families in Nicaragua (*Nicaragua: Reform or Revolution?*).

What was the Brigade's programme for these new workers' organisations? It was very brief and revolutionary, including the following points:

1. Have confidence only in your organisation and strength
2. Demand the advance of the revolution towards working-class objectives
3. Operate only on the basis of workers' democracy
4. Fight for a government of your own in alliance with the peasantry
5. Put the factories and plants under your own control
6. Arm yourself to defend the gains of the revolution

In the atmosphere of workers' democracy that permeated these new organisations, the SBIB argued for its point of view, suggested and advised the steps to take, but never went over the heads of the workers' organisations and democratically-arrived upon policies.

Yet this program and method has been branded as 'ultra-left' by everyone from the 'Washington Post' to the 'The Militant', and the FSLN itself.

Thousands of workers belonging to these committees, started to take over the factories, in some cases demanding nationalisation under workers'

SIMON BOLIVAR INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE

PART III

THIS article is taken from the February 1986 issue of 'Working Class Opposition', journal of the US section of the International Workers' League (LIT), the Trotskyist organisation responsible for founding the SBIB. Part IV will appear next week.

control. In other cases, they demanded judgement of the owners and factory managers for complicity in the crimes of the Somoza regime

In every case they demanded workers control over production, better working conditions and other improvements in their standard of living. In very few cases, however, were their demands strictly economic.

In mid-August, thousands of these workers signed a petition demanding Nicaraguan citizenship for the non-Nicaraguan members of the SBIB.

By this time the bourgeois press in Latin America, the United States and Europe was already complaining about the actions of what they described as the 'left wing' of the revolution, claiming it represented a threat to the 'moderate' policies of the newly established government.

Bluefields. They were joined by a contingent organised by the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT) of Costa Rica, another Trotskyist organisation.

Like the majority of the population of Bluefields, a number of the PRT members were black descendants of slaves 'owned' by the English and spoke the English language, the major language of the Black people on the Atlantic coast.

On their arrival in Bluefields,

are reversed. The city and the entire region are isolated from the rest of Nicaragua by jungles.

Traditionally the area was controlled by a handful of Somocistas who owned the lands and the industries, along with the few American companies. Between the two, they owned virtually all the considerable natural wealth of the region.

In this area are some of the last gold mines of Nicaragua and all its potential oil reserves (still untapped).

a fishing-boat factory, a spare parts factory and three piers.

Despite the natural wealth of the area, 80 per cent of the population was unemployed or worked only part time. Super-exploitation and racism were rampant on the part of the tiny Somocista and American elite which controlled this politically and culturally isolated enclave.

The local population derisively labelled the Somocista entrepreneurs 'espanoles' because only the local rulers spoke Spanish.

The priests were also part of the local power structure. Small businesses were dependent on the larger businesses and the government for their survival.

The small group of FSLN soldiers did nothing to challenge this situation in Bluefields. In fact, on the day the internationalists arrived in town, they found Robert Barreth, manager of Booth's Fishing company and former Vietnam mercenary, driving the car of the FSLN's local commander.

Barreth was known to the local population as 'The Devil' (*The Revolutionary Experience of Bluefields*, by Carlos Jose Herrera, El Socialista, Bogota, 31 August 31, 1979.)

The SBIB organised the working class

IMMEDIATELY upon their arrival, the SBIB detachment changed the whole situation. First they organised the workers of Pescanica and Cucra Hill.

The union organised at Pescanica adopted a ten-point programme of demands from the bosses, who were forced to grant them all because of the newly-formed union strength and the armed presence of the Brigade.

At Cucra Hill, the workers expropriated the company and drove out the administrators, former agents of Somoza.

At first the FSLN 'commanders' intended to defend the Somocistas, but backed down when confronted with the overwhelming opposition of the workers to these agents of the toppled dictator.

Two more unions were organised in Bluefields. Then the SBIB began to organise workers' militias. Following the Brigade's advice, the local FSLN joined in this work. Within three days, 12 more unions were organised.

While all this was taking place, the administrators expelled from Cucra Hill were meeting with the local bourgeoisie in Bluefields to form an alliance. They hired about 60 mercenaries to act as their armed force, and enlisted the support of local priests and small businessmen.

They chose a local 'anti-Somoza' bourgeois named Moises Arana as their figurehead and formed a government which demanded recognition from the FSLN 'commanders'.

After some hesitation, the local FSLN recognised them. (*The Revolutionary Experience of Bluefields* by Carlos Jose Herrera). Then a list of factories to be nationalised arrived from the central government in Managua. Among them was Booth's Fishing company, the famous 'Barreth Barrer'

Carrying out the instructions from Managua, the SBIB led a

group of workers and local militias to take over the factory. But 24 hours later the order from Managua to nationalise Booth's was countermanded by another order from the central government. The workers in Bluefields and the internationalists opposed this second order.

The local FSLN took no position at first. With the local priests and Moises Arana in the lead, the local bourgeoisie and their armed mercenaries took over the local school and began organising a counter-revolutionary coup.

Their thugs however committed the mistake of firing against the centrist forces of the FSLN, who until that point had been uncommitted. Immediately after the attack, the FSLN joined the local workers' militias and the internationalists. For three days an armed battle raged in Bluefields.

In the end, the bourgeoisie and their mercenaries were defeated. The SBIB proposed forming a workers' and peasants' government, centred in Bluefields.

Then a large contingent of FSLN armed forces arrived from Puerto Cabezas. They disarmed the local workers' militias and returned the expropriated properties to the local bourgeoisie.

Two days later a representative of the central government arrived in Bluefields with two American stockholders of the Booth's company. The FSLN representatives officially returned Booth's to its imperialist owners. Moises Arana and the other counter-revolutionaries were freed and the internationalists were ordered to return to Managua.

At this point, 14 August 1979, a hysterical campaign was launched by the bourgeoisie in Nicaragua against the 'anarchist' forces who were accused of 'disrupting the economic life of the country'. The next day the major newspapers of the imperialists in Europe and the US began a campaign of 'public pressure' on the Sandinistas to get rid of the 'extremists'.

The reaction of the bourgeois government and the FSLN

THE ROLE of the SBIB was simply to provide the revolutionary leadership to the upheaval of the working class, instinctively looking for a way to advance the revolutionary process. The FSLN, however, perceived the advance of the revolution as a danger to their own plans.

By encouraging land and factory occupations, the SBIB was conflicting with FSLN plans to reconstruct the economy on a capitalist basis. By encouraging workers and peasants to arm themselves, the Brigade was conflicting with the Sandinistas' plans to organise a new bourgeois army and police force, tightly controlled from the top down, as the cement of their alliance with the 'anti-Somoza' capitalists.

For the same reason, the FSLN was opposed to the workers' democracy encouraged in the mass organisations by the SBIB, for these organisations also had to be controlled bureaucratically from the top down, to guarantee they would not turn against the (patriotic sector of the bourgeoisie', whom the FSLN was allied with.

The Nicaraguan bourgeoisie saw the Brigade as the main obstacle to its plans to gain a breathing space and time to reorganise itself after Somoza's fall. By the same token, the FSLN saw the Brigade as the main danger to their strategy to compromise with imperialism and the 'anti-Somoza' sector of the local ruling class.

US and European imperialism saw the internationalists and their growing base of support as a threat to their efforts to twist the Sandinistas' arms and make them sing to the tune of the bankers and other 'interested parties' in the exploitation of workers and peasants in Central America.

All these forces, with Chamorro, Pastora and Robelo in the lead, united to attack the Simon Bolivar International Brigade.

TO BE CONTINUED



Youthful Nicaraguan fighters

The imperialists evidently were very aware of the need to stop the growing organisation of the Nicaraguan working class. Unfortunately, the FSLN agreed with them.

The Simon Bolivar Brigade smashed a counter-revolutionary coup

AT THE end of August a detachment of the Simon Bolivar International Brigade was sent to the Atlantic coast to the city of

the detachment from the Brigade found a group of FSLN combatants formally in control of the city. Yet the FSLN had not touched the local Somocista bureaucracy and administration, nor had they implemented any of the directives from the FSLN central government in relation to the former supporters of Somoza.

Bluefields has a population of about 25,000, about 50 per cent black, and many of the rest Miskito and Rama Indians.

In the countryside of the Atlantic coast, the proportions

It is an area rich in grain and sugar production, the centre of a thriving fishing industry and an important port.

About 6,000 industrial and semi-industrial workers are concentrated in the area, about 20 per cent of the population. They in turn are concentrated in the port (Puerto Cabezas), the Bluff and the Cucra Hill (two sugar towns outside of Bluefields) and in Pescanica.

Pescanica, owned 50 per cent by Somocistas and 50 per cent by Americans, was a complex worth \$80 million that combined

LETTERS

Letters do not necessarily reflect the view of the Editorial Board. Letters over 500 words will normally be cut. Letters should arrive by first post Monday at: Workers Press, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS, and should include sender's address.

Wolverhampton demonstration

WE WERE angered and disturbed by Chris McBride's report in Workers Press (14 March 1987, page 3) about the demonstration for Clinton McCurbin held in Wolverhampton the previous Saturday.

McBride acknowledges that Workers Against Racism (WAR) played a major role in organising for the demonstration, and it is true that we mobilised some 600 of the 2,000 who attended the march. We brought coaches from most major cities in the country.

However he goes on to report an event which never took place. McBride claims that WAR 'led the main body of the march away from the street where McCurbin was killed. This left the attempts of the local black community to march down that street isolated in the face of the riot police.'

A number of points need making. First, the police had sealed off the centre of town to ensure that the march was prevented from passing the NEXT shop where police murdered Clinton McCurbin.

A member of the family was eventually allowed to place a wreath outside the shop. Those from the march who attempted to follow were not allowed to do so.

At this point the WAR contingent was at the front of the march. Myself and WAR's chief steward were constantly approached by march organisers from the Black Community Action Group and Avtar Joughl from the IWA to continue marching.

We refused to do so until the McCurbin family were back at the front of the march and the Black Community Action Group contingent had reformed. Only at this point, with the march reconstituted and moving, did we allow our contingent to proceed.

We are not sure of McBride's motives in distorting the events, but it is a worrying sign. Even more worrying are McBride's objections to the statement in 'The Next Step', 6 March, that we wish to 'teach' the police a lesson.

He interprets this as meaning that WAR seeks to

educate the forces of the state into being more friendly in their dealings with the black community. His misrepresentation of the meaning of the word 'teach' is reminiscent of the WRP lie machine in the dark days of Gerry Healy.

We hope readers of Workers Press are discerning enough to realise that there is a world of difference between 'unless we teach these hired thugs and killers of the establishment that we will not stomach their attacks on black people, they will continue their campaign of violence', and a reformist desire for community policing and educating the police into a more acceptable role.

As far as WAR is concerned the two-pronged approach of combining community policing with stockpiling plastic bullets and teargas is central to the whole strategy of containing the anger of the black community.

We are for an anti-racist movement that is entirely independent of any relations with the police. Indeed our main slogan on the Wolverhampton demonstration was 'Police Off the Streets', something McBride forgot to mention!

In addition we consider the drawing of a wide layer of black and left activists into police committees and police accountability forums as a huge victory for the establishment in its efforts to get the black community off the streets and back around the table.

We hope that McBride will enlighten us about the real motives behind his disgraceful attack on WAR and outline his differences with our actual positions as outlined in our book, 'The Roots of Racism', available by phoning (01) 729 0414.

Keith Tompson
WAR National
Organiser

● Comment by Chris McBride: This letter indicates that we have considerable differences with the RCP about the manner in which racialism is to be fought. A reply to 'The Roots of Racism' will appear in a coming issue of Workers Press.

Healy's abuses must be included in international discussion

THE TWO comrades who have recently written to Workers Press on the need to re-examine Healy's sexual abuses have made valuable contributions to the discussion (Workers Press, 7 and 21 March 1987).

It seems to me, however, invalid to suggest, as the comrade did in last week's paper, 'that Healy's crimes cannot be determined as rape, because to do so would imply that our women comrades had put up with rape for years without defending themselves, and therefore there must be something wrong with them as revolutionaries'.

Healy politically destroyed many of his victims, some of whom went with him after he was expelled in October 1985.

Others, of course, were in the forefront of the struggle to expose and overthrow him, thus highlighting the very contradictory nature of the terrible experiences they underwent.

Only when the objective conditions were favourable, with the developments which took place in the miners' strike, were they, with other members, able to free them-

selves and the Party from Healy's bondage.

The Party membership in general, and for decades, likewise perceived something was 'wrong'; they were, as we have all since come to realise, made to believe it was themselves.

Without wishing to give offence, it must be said that not all rape victims are immediately aware of the violation that is done to them. This is particularly so in long-standing sexual relationships where one partner is subjugated to the unwelcome demands of another.

As stated, this happened to us all politically to a greater or lesser degree in our efforts to subordinate ourselves to the so-called revolutionary authority of Healy and his bureaucratic clique.

A second point I should like to make is the one raised in the earlier comrade's contribution. This is in regard to leading members' inability to come to terms with the need for an ongoing discussion on the question of Healy's personal degeneration 'because they find it too painful'.

In a sense, this also poses the question of their ability

likes of Murdoch, McGregor and their class be prevented from destroying the lives of thousands of workers.

Unity demands conscious, political leadership for our class, a leadership which, by its class consciousness, is revolutionary, leads to workers control of the means of production and state power and to socialism.

This we can all work for. One crucial, immediate task is to set up workers' self-defence committees with their own funds in our organisations so that financial assistance can be speedily given to workers dragged before the courts.

Until we do this, we have to resort to appeals. We are now appealing to you as a matter of urgency to contribute to our heavy legal costs which already amount to over £1,000.

Please send donations to: Pat Brady, Treasurer, THPWSG, London College of Furniture, 41-71 Commercial Road, London E1.

Please give generously to the Tower Hamlets Print Workers Support Group £1,000 legal appeal.

Yours in comradeship,
Pat Brady
Tower Hamlets Print
Workers Support Group.

Support group appeals

THROUGHOUT the 13-month struggle against Murdoch and the state, the Tower Hamlets Print Workers Support Group has been engaged in continuous activity in support of the sacked print workers.

We have organised leafletting of the local area, collections, and nine residents' demonstrations to 'Reclaim Our Streets'.

These have involved us in confrontation with the police resulting in assaults, arrests and court appearances. Consequently we have incurred legal expenses, fines, and, in some cases still pending, face possible jail sentences.

We have all learnt bitter lessons from industrial struggles but especially from the print and mineworkers' strikes where the lack of a strong political lead for the working class in the wider labour movement left these workers standing alone.

Only through the unity of the working class can the

TASKS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

A Magazine of Marxist Theory
Volume 1 Number 1 March 1987

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Not 'supernatural', but social

IT MIGHT be a good idea if Ken Moxham were to think before leaping into print. To help him think about the relation between science and individual scientists it wouldn't do him any harm to look at a book called 'Anti-Duhring', by a chap called Engels, another 'humble practitioner' of scientific socialism.

'Is human thought sovereign? Before we can answer yes or no, we must first inquire: what is human thought? Is it the thought of the individual man? No. But it exists only as the individual thought of many millions of past, present and future men... the knowledge which has an unconditional claim to truth is realised in a series of relative errors: neither the one nor the other can be fully realised except through an unending duration of human existence.'

If comrade Moxham wants to learn a science he must gain his knowledge not as something supernatural, but something super-individual. You can't be a physicist on the basis of your own opinion as 'an animate being', but only as a part of the objective sum of human knowledge, with all its limitations and approximations at this particular stage.

As one humble practitioner to another may I suggest that this applies to scientific socialism too.

Cyril Smith

Understanding, trust and respect

IT IS with a greater knowledge and an even better education of class struggle that we personally leave the print dispute with News International, knowing that we did all that was possible to win not only the dispute, but the right of workers to control their own destiny; we are proud to have been involved in the struggle, and losing this chapter does not mean we surrender — it makes us more determined to win overall.

Having never had the full support of our own union as printworkers, it makes it even more of an honour to have the support of our own comrades within the Lambeth Print Support Group, prepared to give every effort to defend trade unions against the odds — we have never considered such comrades as outsiders as was first promoted by the bureaucrats in the so-called 'leadership'.

The efforts to organise regular meetings of the LPWG, public meetings, benefits, workplace meetings, flyposting, picketing at unearthly hours — and in the worst freezing conditions — for hours on end cannot be matched by words of repayment. Only to say that we obtained a common understanding, trust and respect for each other that will stand the test of time.

It is now the duty of every printworker to make their union accountable to its members and have a recallable leadership, and to build for one union for the industry, but upon a revolutionary membership with revolutionary demands.

We purposely mention no individual comrades for we are as one.

Yours in solidarity,

Larry Hyett
Bert Large
John Murray

LISTINGS

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FREE THE FRAMED IRISH PRISONERS Picket of Downing Street, For a Public Inquiry into the beating and framing of the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four Wednesday 1 April, 6.00p.m.-7.00p.m.

1967-1987: 20 YEARS OF THE ABORTION ACT Planning Meeting, organised by National Abortion Campaign, Saturday 28 March 10.30a.m.-1.00p.m., London Women's Centre, Wesley House, 4 Wild Court, London WC2 (near Holborn tube).

ASBESTOS VICTIMS ORGANISING CONFERENCE of the Peoples Asbestos Action Campaign, 3-5 April, Sheffield. Details from Frances Carter, PAAC, c/o SCAT, 31 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1R 0AT. (01-253 3627)

SOCIALIST POLICIES FOR A LABOUR VICTORY! Labour Briefing Weekend Conference, 28-29 March, Lambeth Town Hall. Speakers include Eric Heffer, MP and Jeremy Corbyn MP. Registration begins 10.30a.m. each day.

SOUTH AFRICA — BREAKING THE BRITISH CONNECTION Public Meeting, Thursday 2 April, 7.30p.m. Tolmers Square Community Centre, Euston NW1. Organised by Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!

NON-STOP PICKET OF SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE. For the release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners in South Africa. For sanctions against the racist South African government. Outside South Africa House in Trafalgar Square, London. Organised by City of London Anti-Apartheid.

DEFEND THE WOMBORNE 12 Defend Lesbian and Gay Rights. Planning meetings every Thursday at 7.30p.m., The Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N7 (Finsbury Park tube)

BRING BACK VICTORIA WILLIAMS! Campaign meetings take place on second and fourth Wednesdays of every month at, UCA, Acton Technical College, Mill Hill Road, Acton (7.30 p.m.)

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More dates in Irish history

I AM sorry P.M. Winters (7 March 1987) was confused by my letter on Irish history. May I correct a couple of points?

The 'principal date' spoken about in my letter was the date at which a detailed Trotskyist analysis should commence. It was the Trotskyist movement of the International Committee in Ireland which considered this matter, and they thought about 1916, 1798, and then — under Healy's influence, in his Cromwellian period — 1641.

I am a historical materialist and agree that this is the basis of 'a Marxist analysis of society in history'. Unfortunately, all history is not equally important to materialist analysis.

Quite simply, the historical record becomes very thin as we go into the 17th century in Ireland and the economic record almost non-existent, unless my researches in the archives have missed the vital sources.

If we are serious about fighting the bourgeois state and are not simply prepared to go along with nationalist prejudice, then we should identify in particular the origins of that state.

It is not a matter of extolling the virtues of the 'Glorious Revolution', so called by the 'gentlemen' who carried through the compromise to establish 'the embryonic state'.

It should be of significance to Marxists, but more so to Irish revolutionaries, that this revolution hinged on events in Ireland. The 'democratic' British state was established by ushering into Ireland penal laws disestablishing not only Catholics but most Protestants and introducing laws to consolidate the power of a parasitic Irish landlord class known as the Ascendancy.

It is a matter of some real pleasure for me that the bourgeois Irish state was founded on fundamental contradictions. The fact that the Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, introduced the revolutionary teachings of John Locke into the curriculum ahead of any other university is just one of the contradictions.

It is not for Marxists to try and rationalise the contradictions of the bourgeoisie; but we must understand these contradictions. Contradiction, after all, is the elementary basis of dialectical materialist's approach to any historical problem.

There is no virtue for us in the 'democratic British state', especially when this state is viewed from Ireland. The question is, P.M. Winters, what can we as Trotskyists teach the working class about history, materialism, republicanism, and fighting to achieve a victorious revolution?

N.M.
Dublin

PERSONAL COLUMN

The other Moscow trials

THE statement on the Moscow Trials in last week's Workers Press sent me back to some of the material on the trials published at the time and since.

The verbatim, or near-verbatim, reports of the three great public trials of 1936-1938, scrofulous documents printed in the USSR 'on grey paper with blunt type', are well worth re-examination.

One of the charges against Bukharin in the 1938 trial was that he had plotted to seize power in 1918, and to murder Lenin and Stalin at the same time.

Plenty of defenders of Stalinism, and plenty of naive people, were around 50 years ago to accept these and similar allegations.

Some, like the British lawyers Dudley Colard and D.N. Pritt, were merely gullible. They swallowed everything they were told by their friends in the Soviet bureaucracy.

Others knew better, but defended the trials all the same. One of those was J.R. Campbell, whose book 'Soviet Policy and its Critics' (1939) included a long chapter on the trials.

I know that Campbell knew better because he told me so himself, in the summer of 1956.

He said that 'of course' he had known what was going on when he visited the Soviet Union in 1938. But he had chosen not to speak out about the purges, because of his loyalty to the Soviet Union.

Not only did he not speak out: he wrote 'Soviet Policy and its Critics', fully aware that much of what he wrote there was utterly false.

One of that book's purposes was to counter the impression made on honest readers by 'The Case of Leon Trotsky' (1937), the verbatim report of the commission, headed by the American philosopher and educator John Dewey, that investigated Stalin's charges against Trotsky.

Rereading this report immediately after rereading Campbell is a strange experience. In the darkest hours of his career, with his enemies turning whole forests into newsprint bearing lies against him, Trotsky put down a marker for future generations.

The day he foresaw has arrived. We have now reached the point where nothing can prevent the systematic unravelling of the skein of lies.

The record is going to be put straight, and the Campbells of the 1980s can do nothing to prevent it.

* * *

Most people think of the Moscow Trials as only three in number — or four, if you include the secret trial in 1937 of Marshal Tukhachevsky, deputy commissar of defence, and other senior Red Army officers.

Of the three public trials, the first was that of the 'Trotskyite-Zinoviev Terrorist Centre' (1936), involving Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others.

The second was the trial of the 'Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre' (1937), involving Pyatakov, Radek, Sokolnikov, and others.

The third was the trial of the 'Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites' (1938), involving Bukharin, Rykov, and Krestinsky (three members of Lenin's Politburo), as well as Rakovsky and others.

Few people know — I didn't myself until quite recently — that in addition to the Moscow Trials with which we have been familiar, there was a second layer of clandestine Moscow Trials, on an even greater scale.

These are the words of Robert Conquest, in a paper on 'The Historiography of the Purges', published in the Winter 1976 issue of 'Survey'.

Conquest identifies five clandestine Moscow Trials, the first two of which involved leading members of the Society of Old Bolsheviks, an organisation that was dissolved in May 1935.

A month later the Society of Former Political Prisoners was likewise dissolved. Its offence

had been to protest against the persecution of old Bolsheviks.

Defendants in the first of the clandestine trials were Abel Yenukidze and A.S. Kiselev, both party members since 1898; V.P. Milyutin, Lenin's commissar for agriculture; S.S. Lobov, a member of the party's Petrograd Committee in 1917; and A.I. Muralov, a man 'with a most distinguished underground record' and a former commissar for agriculture of the RSFSR.

The accused in this case were executed in October 1937.

In the following month the accused in the Komarov case were put to death, among them N.P. Komarov, former chairman of the Leningrad Soviet and a party member since 1909; Y.S. Hanecki, a party member since 1896, who had secured Lenin's release from jail in Austria; and N.M. Nemtsov, a party member since 1897, a deputy in the St Petersburg Soviet in 1905, and former secretary of the Society of Old Bolsheviks.

In February 1938 the accused in the Byeloborodov case were executed. They included A.G. Byeloborodov, a former Central Committee member; G.N. Kaminski, former mayor of Moscow and commissar for health; and G.M. Musabekov, former premier and president of Azerbaijan.

The fourth clandestine trial was the Rudzutak case. The victims, executed in July 1938, comprised 11 politicals, 15 army officers, and the playwright V.M. Kirshon.

Of the politicals, Y. Rudzutak was a Politburo member, and Pyatnitsky and Knorin represented the Soviet Communist Party on the Executive Committee of the Communist International. Of the army officers, Y.K. Berzin had formerly been effective commander-in-chief of the Spanish Republican Army.

Lastly, in February 1939, those arraigned in the Kossior case were executed. S.V. Kossior, a Pole, had been first secretary of the Ukrainian party; V. Chubar was a former premier of the Ukraine; B.P. Pozern, a Leningrad party secretary, had been a party member since 1903; A.V. Kosarev, whose trial is said to have lasted just 15 minutes, had been secretary of the Komsomol (Young Communist League).

The world-wide campaign for rehabilitation now launched should not overlook these lesser-known victims of Stalin's physical destruction of the party of Lenin.

A London glade

SPRING will be a week old when this is read. At this time of year, when there's a promise, however tenuous, of warmer weather, I find my thoughts turning to my favourite outdoor spot in London.

A short walk from my home, it's a glade in the middle of a wood that is one of the remnants of the ancient Middlesex Forest.

All around rise old tall oaks, but on the edges of the clearing are young silver birches and beeches and a lime tree or two.

The glade is at its best on an early summer morning, when the sunshine slants down through the oakleaf canopy. If you sit quite still the birds hop near, and squirrels come, and after about a quarter of an hour an immensely fat dove-grey rabbit noses its way out of the undergrowth and lollops about.

Though this enchanted place is only a few minutes' walk from the main road, it's surprisingly quiet. So in fine weather it's an ideal place to sit and read, or write, or just relax.

Very few people know of it. I'm not going to say where it is — though I've dropped a few clues for those who know their London — because Old Privatiser and her gang, lineal descendants of those who used to steal a common from a goose, would assuredly spoil it if they got to hear about it.

After all, it's the second-best free thing in London. And the best free thing in London — the Reading Room of the British Library — is almost certainly going to be taken away from us, all too soon.

So it's as well to be cautious.

Peter Fryer

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PETER MARSHALL provides a useful assessment of the Cuban revolution which points out both the advances and gains of the revolution begun in 1959 and the shortcomings, failures, and bureaucratic nature of the Cuban regime.

Marshall is a libertarian and criticises Cuba from that standpoint. He describes the ideology of Castro's regime as 'strictly Marxist-Leninist' where we would not.

Nonetheless, the book is extremely useful in its historical presentation of events and eyewitness account of Cuba.

Cuba under Spanish rule

COLUMBUS landed on Cuba in 1492 and began 400 years of Spanish rule of the 760-mile-long island.

Within 50 years, the estimated half million indigenous peoples were virtually wiped out. Black slave labour was imported and the dense mahogany forests were cleared for their wood and to establish cattle ranches. The first slave revolt was recorded at a gold mine in 1533.

Settlers cultivated the tobacco the 'Indians' had previously enjoyed. White 'criollos', descendants of Spanish conquistadores, dominated the difficult and skilled cultivation of tobacco, jealously guarding their independence, and leading several revolts against Spanish monopolisation of trade.

Britain seized Cuba in 1762 and gave it back to Spain in exchange for Florida, but with trade restrictions ended.

Sugar, produced by black slave labour, soon overtook tobacco as the main product and Cuba became known for the finest quality tobacco and the greatest quantity of sugar.

In 1791, inspired by the French Revolution, the slaves in neighbouring Haiti, led by Toussaint L'Ouverture, rose up and ended French rule. In Cuba an uprising by whites, blacks, and mulattos together in 1795 was defeated.

Between 1819 and 1824 the armies of Simon Bolivar and José Martí drove the Spanish colonists out of mainland Latin America in wars of liberation. Slave revolts took place in Cuba in 1812 and 1844: an attempt at annexation by the US Southern states failed in 1850.

A rebellion began in 1868. In this 'Ten Years' War of Independence' 200,000 Spaniards and 50,000 Cubans were killed. US President Grant refused support and arms to the rebels and the struggle died down.

Slavery was abolished in Cuba in 1886. A labour movement had begun to emerge, and the first trade union, of tobacco workers, was formed in 1865. The main political influence among the workers was anarcho-syndicalism.

The US began to take over and dominate trade and investments.

Independence and US domination

AFTER a revolt in 1895, Spain was forced to grant independence, but within months US marines landed in the Spanish-American War (1898), in which the US gained possession of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines for the loss of 266 dead.

Cuba was granted nominal independence in 1902 and the 'pseudo-republic' came into being, with the US retaining the right to bases and intervention under the Monroe Doctrine (1823).

Cuba was virtually a colony of the United States: 74 per cent of its imports were from the US, and Cuban sugar came under US control.

US troops intervened in 1906 to prevent a Liberal coup and in 1912 to put down a 'Negro rising'. There were 3,000 killed.

The marines came again in 1917 to stop another Liberal insurrection.

In the 1920s a sugar boom brought an orgy of extravagance in the main cities. New buildings, hotels, clubs, and casinos were built, while most Cubans lived in poverty.

Other industries were not developed: investments went into real estate. The sugar workers, who worked only four months of the year, were left to starve.

In 1924 Gerardo Machado was elected, ostensibly as a Liberal. His rule soon degenerated into gangsterism and dictatorship, and martial law was declared in 1930.

The Cuban Communist Party was founded in 1925. It soon took the leadership of the working

Cuba Libre: Breaking the chains? By Peter Marshall. Victor Gollancz, £14.95

class from the anarchists.

A general strike by the communist-led trade unions in August 1933 forced Machado to leave Cuba, and a provisional government took over.

A month later students, workers, and soldiers staged a coup. Among them was Sergeant Fulgencio Batista.

Sweeping reforms were introduced, including an eight-hour day, votes for women, a minimum wage, and the right of peasants to the land they were farming.

The rule of Batista

IN January 1934 an American-owned electric company was nationalised, but the very next day Batista (now a colonel), backed by the US and the army, seized power.

Although he crushed a general strike in 1935, Batista co-operated with the Communist Party. This was legalised and political prisoners were freed.

As army leader, Batista ruled through puppet presidents. When he assumed the presidency himself between 1940 and 1944 he introduced a new constitution along corporatist lines with the façade of socialist reforms.

Two CP leaders took ministerial posts and CP leader Blas Roca sat in the National Assembly. All three were to become prominent under Castro.

The CP played a key role in shoring up Batista's regime by controlling the trade unions.

Graft, nepotism, violence, and gangsterism characterised political life, with assassinations of political opponents and union leaders.

When the Ortodoxo party was poised to win the 1952 presidential election Batista seized power and began seven years of military dictatorship.

Castro's armed struggle

ON 26 July 1953 some 200 Ortodoxo dissidents led by Fidel Castro, a 26-year-old lawyer, carried out armed attacks on army barracks, the Palace of Justice, and a milit-

Partido Socialista Popular (PSP), denounced Castro and his fighters as bourgeois putschist adventurers and continued to collaborate with Batista.

A general amnesty in 1955 brought Castro's release and, though widespread strikes and student riots showed that political struggle was still possible, he went into exile 'because all doors of peaceful struggle had been closed.'

In Mexico, he founded the July 26 Movement (M-26-7) which he said was 'not a political party but a revolutionary movement', organised along military lines with himself as commander-in-chief. It had a liberal democratic programme.

Castro recruited exiles and a 26-year-old Argentinian doctor, Ernesto 'Che' Guevara who had read some Marx and Lenin and was convinced of the need for armed struggle against imperialism.

After military training, 83 guerrillas set off for Cuba in a cabin cruiser, 'Granma', but were discovered soon after they landed. Sixty were killed, ten captured, and just 12 reached their destination in the mountains.

Peter Marshall makes clear that conditions in Cuba were already ripe for revolution, with great unrest among the city workers and peasants.

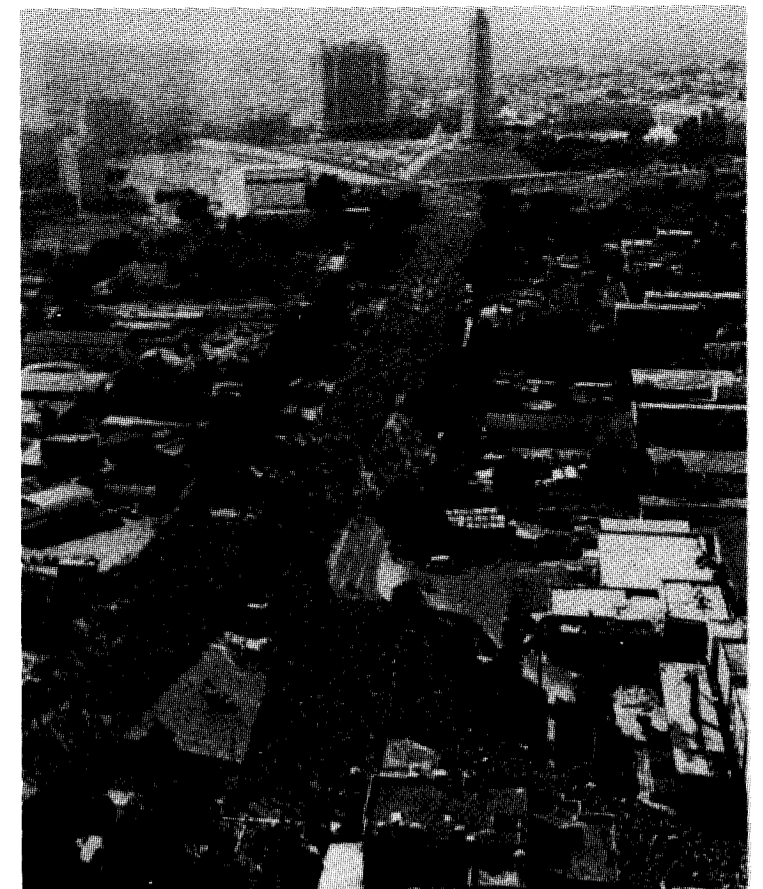
By May 1957 Castro had 80 guerrilla fighters and was able to skirmish successfully with government forces; but he could not have survived without urban support.

The struggle in the cities was more significant and widespread but lacked revolutionary leadership.

Castro and Guevara rejected the Marxist concept of an urban-based revolution led by the working class. They saw the peasantry as the revolutionary class, and believed it was for the country to liberate the city and not the other way round.

They showed little interest in the working class and the problems of its leadership.

For them, the issue was guerril-



Crowds in Havana surging towards Revolutionary Square

guerrillas punished landlords and bandits, which gained them more support from the peasants.

Castro sent two columns towards the capital and that led by Guevara defeated Batista's forces at Santa Clara.

With the government forces demoralised and refusing to fight, Batista, whose regime had murdered 20,000 opponents, fled by plane on 1 January 1959. The regime collapsed, with 30,000 troops surrendering to 1,500 guerrillas.

Early days of the Castro regime

TO prevent the generals' forming a new government, Castro called for a general strike and entered Havana on 8 January at the head of his forces, welcomed as heroes and liberators.

Castro declared his programme to be 'humanistic democracy' based on liberty with bread for all, promising free elections, independent trade unions, and 'no dictatorship by one man, no dictatorship by classes, groups, castes. Government by the people without dictatorship or oligarchies'.

Both Castro and Guevara were determined not to share power

seizures of land and takeovers of factories.

More information on the role of the masses in forcing the pace is necessary in order to understand the inner dynamics of the revolution.

Mass demonstrations against the new president took place which Castro adapted to and marched at the head of. With a great revolutionary fervour unleashed, Castro assumed leadership of the mass movement and replaced the moderate bourgeois politicians with his comrades from the Sierra Maestra. Guevara became director of the National Bank in November 1959 and later Minister of Industry.

The new regime's first measure was to reward its rural supporters with an agrarian reform law. Land ownership was limited to 1,000 acres. The plantations, large farms, and major properties were nationalised with co-operatives and state farms set up.

The small farmers, who owned 30 per cent of the land, were given credit, the priority being to diversify agriculture to reduce dependence on sugar.

A central planning board was set up under Guevara to direct rapid industrialisation.

Up to this time, US interests had owned 75 per cent of Cuba's fertile soil; 90 per cent of public services, mining, and oil production; and 40 per cent of the sugar industry; 75 per cent of Cuba's exports went to the US and 80 per cent of imports were from the US.

In the autumn of 1959 the trade unions held elections and voted out the old Stalinist PSP leaders, replacing them with both left- and right-wingers.

At the time the anarchist press was being suppressed and a purge was begun against anti-communist elements in M-26-7.

By May 1960 Castro had dropped his pledge of elections and denounced them as a corrupt and fraudulent betrayal of the people. Democracy in the form of soviets was never allowed to develop.

The central planning board under Guevara set out to transform the private enterprise system into a 'socialist' one, with rigid state control of the economy and extensive planning.

Foreign enterprises, constituting the country's main industries, banks, and most large and medium industrial and commercial enterprises were nationalised in October 1960 to break the US stranglehold on the economy.

Casinos and brothels were closed, and the communication media were taken over.

Guevara argued that it was possible to skip certain historical stages and move directly to communism despite the underdevelopment of the country. But he would have no truck with workers' control or self-management; it was to be a paternalistic 'socialism' controlled from above.

He attacked strikes and made it clear that the unions would not be allowed to strike against the state to protect the workers' interests.

Asserting that capitalist alienation had now been eliminated, Guevara proposed that production



Camilo Cienfuegos and Fidel Castro enter Havana on 8 January 1959

ary hospital, hoping to start a general uprising.

The raids went disastrously wrong: 165 were captured and 70 of them murdered. Castro was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment.

His programme had called for reforms through state legislation, not workers' struggles. In his speech from the dock he referred to Tom Paine, but not to Marx.

Castro says that while in prison he read 370 pages of Marx's 'Capital', was impressed by Marx's and Lenin's polemical style, but saw himself as more of a Caribbean Robespierre.

The Cuban CP, now called the

la struggle, which demanded will power and severe discipline under Castro's unquestioned leadership. The guerrilla leaders were in fact all urban middle-class who had donned the garb of peasants.

Castro's forces in the Sierra Maestra produced a newspaper and set up Radio Rebelde.

A general strike failed in April 1958 through PSP opposition, and in May Batista sent 10,000 troops into the Sierra Maestra, where they were outmanoeuvred.

One battalion surrendered and its commander joined Castro; the rest, demoralised, fled in disarray.

In the areas they liberated, the

with other groups who had been in the forefront of the revolutionary struggle in the cities.

The student Revolutionary Directorate was obliged to give up its arms.

A rival guerrilla group in the Escambray mountains was dissolved, as was the Civic Resistance Movement.

Castro took command of the armed forces and appointed a government of moderate Liberals; meanwhile armed militias were set up to 'counterbalance' the army.

Marshall's book lacks details of the initial resistance of Castro's first government to spontaneous

CUBA

— A COMPLEX KIND OF BONAPARTISM

be based on voluntary labour, that distribution take place without the medium of money, and that the transformed social relations would herald in the New Man, with work becoming 'meaningful play.'

The reality was that workers were expected to work longer hours without pay, which was replaced with ration cards.

Services such as telephones, transport, and medicine were to become free, but the workers were losing their trade union rights.

This loss was tolerated in the initial stages of the revolution because workers were enthusiastic for the changes and ready to make sacrifices.

During this period the PSP was out in the cold and generally regarded with contempt, though Castro had already sought alliances with them.

At the beginning Castro had declared that Cuba was with the west in the Cold War. But now, with the growing hostility of the US to the seizure of their interests, the US actively supported and financed counter-revolutionary forces.

US oil supplies were cut off, exports suspended, and sugar quotas cut. Pragmatically, Castro turned towards the USSR for help.

In April 1961, 1,500 exiles landed in the Bay of Pigs invasion and were defeated after 72 hours of fighting, after which President Kennedy imposed a total trade embargo on Cuba.

Castro turns to the USSR

IN July M-26-7 was merged with the Revolutionary Directorate and the PSP. The elected trade union leaders were purged, including both the anti-PSP left and the old Stalinist leaders imposed by the regime.

No further elections took place in the trade unions and, with Guevara abolishing the right to strike, the unions were soon to become instruments of the state in increasing production and tightening labour discipline, under the control of the Ministry of Labour.

The revolution had brought a flowering of publications, including 'Revolucion' and its literary supplement 'Lunes', which published works by many authors including Marx and Trotsky.

The threat of counter-revolution was used by the regime as an excuse to tighten its ideological grip. Accused of 'trying to split the revolution from within', 'Revolucion' and 'Lunes' were suppressed in November 1961.

The next month Castro declared he was now a 'Marxist-Leninist'. Because of the US economic blockade, Cuba became heavily dependent on the USSR.

Guevara toured the Soviet bloc countries and obtained credit and commitments to build factories. He also reached agreement on nuclear weapons being based on the island. Kennedy's response was the naval blockade on Cuba in October 1962.

With Soviet ships heading for Cuba, a confrontation seemed inevitable. Khrushchev wired Kennedy and proposed the withdrawal of the missiles if the US agreed not to invade Cuba. The deal was done and the US turned its attention to Vietnam.

Stalinism gains ground

THE diversification of agriculture proved to be a disaster. Castro had called for farmers to destroy the cane fields and plant vegetables and fruit on land that proved unsuitable for these crops.

The sugar crop was halved but not enough food was produced for home consumption.

Industrialisation ground to a halt and was abandoned. The country returned to monoculture of sugar — and survived by exchanging sugar for oil from Russia.

In 1964 Castro negotiated to supply Russia with 24 million tons of sugar over five years.

Following the failures, Guevara began to criticise 'guerillismo' in the running of the country and called for a 'war against bureaucratisation'.

But without workers' control or soviets this led to greater authoritarian centralism.

Stalinists, like Blas Roca, who had collaborated with Batista were brought into the leadership and gained increasing power.

The Cuban Communist Party was proclaimed in 1965 with its

ordination by the CIA. He was captured and killed in 1967.

Following his death 'Che' was iconised and his Christ-like image appeared everywhere as an example of self-sacrifice to be emulated.

Militarisation of labour

FROM 1965 a Stakhanovite system was introduced, with 'vanguard' workers' groups setting the pace.

Trade unions were disbanded and reorganised along the lines of economic or industrial sectors in order to promote production increases. Wages were reduced if quotas were not met. Children sometimes had to help their mothers reach their quotas.

The mass mobilisation of voluntary labour through exhortation, as promoted by Guevara, increasingly gave way to the militarisation of labour.

The efforts to increase production had rebounded, resulting in the alienation of workers, absenteeism, and slackness, especially among the youth.

The workers were merely state employees who had no control

his pro-'Soviet' followers.

Escalante and his 'microfaction' were put on trial, with Castro acting as judge, prosecutor, and prosecution witness. They were sentenced to 15 years.

This was more a matter of showing who was boss, for within months Castro was supporting the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia.

His rule took this complex contradictory 'Bonapartist' form of an alliance with the Stalinists (via the USSR) while resting on the 'peasantry' and small farmers of Cuba — within a nationalised economy.

Because of the retreat of revolutionary fervour, military mobilisations of labour were resorted to. With a widespread youth 'problem', youth were conscripted to work.

A mass mobilisation of the workforce and the army took place in 1969 in order to produce a record sugar harvest of 10 million tons. Even office workers were sent to cut cane.

When the target was not met, Castro called it a serious moral and political defeat.

More and more he now accepted Russian plans for Cuba's economic survival, eventually joining COMECON in 1972.

The technocrats took over production and planning, and introduced incentives and profit-sharing in co-operatives.

In 1980 the small farmers, who still owned 30 per cent of the land, were allowed to sell surplus produce on the free market: this led to complaints that they had become a new aristocracy.

Castro had often said that the farmers were the bedrock of the revolution, but in July 1986 he had to admit that 'we have created a class of newly rich' and had to clamp down on this private sector.

Today the Cuban Communist Party is seen as elitist and difficult to join.

Its members comprise 2 per cent of the population — and no other party is allowed to exist.

Only 13 per cent of the members are women, and although half the population are black few of them hold high office.

The ruling group is still that of the guerrilla leaders from the days of Sierra Maestra.

Castro is Head of State, Commander-in-Chief, President of the Council of Ministers (whom he personally appoints), and First

is reflected in a puritanical attitude to marriage and the family and hostility towards homosexuals.

In the early 1960s, homosexuals, including intellectuals who supported the revolution, were rounded up, sent to work camps to be 'rehabilitated', and barred from membership of the CCP.

Cuba today

IN recent years, Castro has tried to project Cuba as a champion of the 'Third World' and less of a satellite of the Soviet Union.

As president of the Non-aligned Movement he hosted a conference on international debt, held in Havana in 1985. It was attended by several right-wing Latin American politicians, military officers, and prominent churchmen. Castro called for a debtors' strike.

Talk of armed struggle in Latin America has been dropped, and Cuba now supports the Contadora group of countries calling for a negotiated settlement in Central America.

The Cuban economy remains predominantly agricultural, with debts to the USSR of \$10 billion, and 90 per cent of sugar being sold to the USSR.

Marshall shows that bureaucracy, waste, and corruption are prevalent.

Revolutionary energy is channelled into military action overseas. For example, thousands of youth volunteered to fight in Angola, but Castro has swapped his jungle fatigues for a resplendent military uniform.

Now a new layer of technocrats are taking over, known as 'Fidel's golden boys', and the workers remain at the bottom of the pile.

Peter Marshall draws from some 300 sources as well as his own personal observations of Cuba in 1984.

He writes with sympathy for the revolution and tries to reveal the source of its failings. His book should be read along with John Lister's book, 'Cuba: Radical Face of Stalinism'.

Castro's Cuba summed up

TO summarise: A national democratic revolution broke out in 1958. Without revolutionary leadership in the working class, the leadership was taken by radical middle-class revolutionaries.

The collapse of Batista's regime led to mass upsurges of a revolutionary character.

The first measures taken under Castro were land reform, then nationalisation of imperialist interests, the country's main industries. Workers were not allowed to take control.

The democratic aspect of the revolution, which could only be truly realised through soviets, was suppressed, as were the independent trade unions.

Despite its radical anti-imperialist face and mass support the regime took the form of bureaucratic-military rule.

With US economic sanctions, Cuba became acutely economically dependent on the USSR and the leadership merged with the Stalinists, who became the most conservative force in the government.

All enterprises were nationalised by 1968 except the small farmers.

Differences with the Stalinists emerged at various times which reflected the contradictions of the regime.

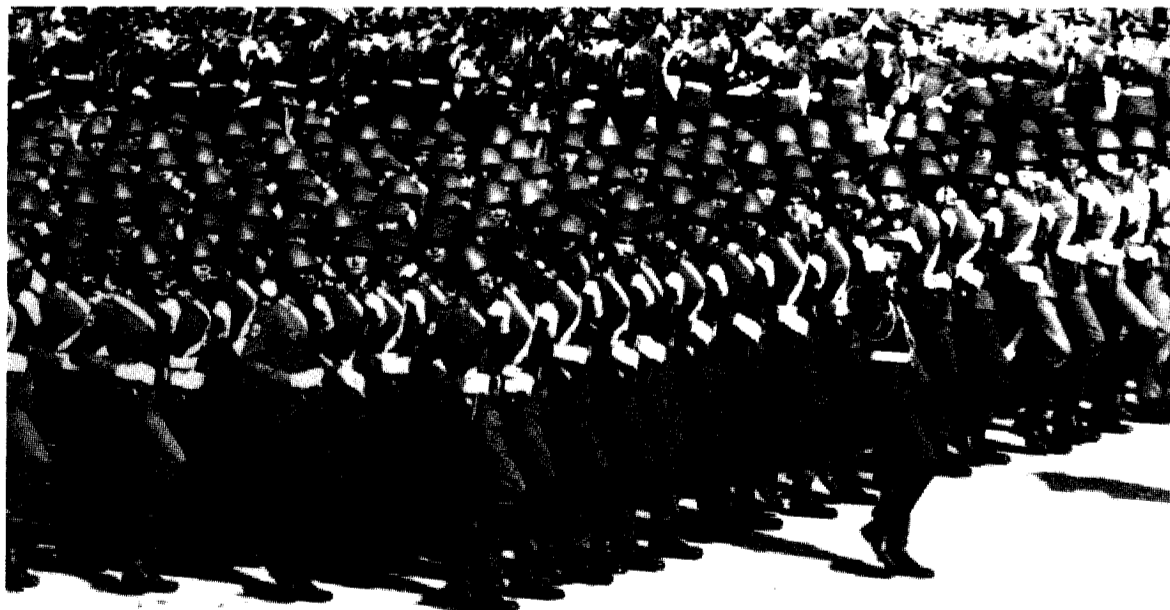
To conclude, the revolution was not completed and it still remains for the working class to take power in a political revolution. This demands the building of a Trotskyist party in Cuba.

The SLL/WRP in the past avoided an analysis of the contradictory development of the Cuban revolution and maintained a fixed definition of Cuba as a bourgeois state.

On the other hand, Joseph Hansen said as early as 1961 that an 'anti-Stalinist' revolution had taken place and that Cuba was a workers' state ('International Socialist Review', Winter 1961).

A Marxist analysis is long overdue.

KEITH SCOTCHER



Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces show their might. Cuba now has the most powerful military force in Latin America

members appointed to posts without election. (The first congress of the Cuban CP did not take place until 1975.)

Political leadership was part of the military command, with Castro as commander-in-chief.

The fate of Guevara

THE USSR opposed Castro's calls for armed struggle in Latin America, which clashed with the South American Communist Parties' commitment to parliamentary roads.

Apparently frustrated at the failures, and antagonistic to the peaceful co-existence of the Stalinists, Guevara left Cuba in 1965 to 'extend revolution' by training guerrillas in the Congo, returning in the autumn of 1966 before he went to Bolivia.

His writings make it clear that he never broke from the idea of the vanguard guerrilla group based on the peasantry.

In Bolivia with just 20 men, Guevara was isolated with no urban support, facing a hostile CP and an enemy trained and co-

over the means of production.

Work files were introduced. These kept a check on every worker's performance, behaviour, and attitude, and no worker could get a job without presenting his file.

Absenteeism was made a criminal offence, with penalties of up to two years' hard labour.

A complex kind of Bonapartism

THE Great Revolutionary Offensive in March 1968 saw 57,000 remaining private enterprises taken over and the nationalisation of bars, shops, restaurants etc.

Castro attacked the 'calcified leaders' of a 'pseudo-revolutionary church', asserting that 'nothing is more anti-Marxist than dogma and petrified thought. No one has a monopoly of ideas, and of revolutionary ideas least of all. No one is a repository of all revolutionary truths.'

He denounced the old PSP leaders for their lack of struggle. This was the preparation for a showdown with Anibal Escalante and

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Caterpillar fight goes on

● FROM PAGE ONE

in order to stay the right side of the law.

Did all this signify that the working class won't fight Thatcher, as many 'learned socialists' say? No. It highlighted the fact that the task of defeating Thatcher, and the ruling class she represents, is bound up with defeating the cowardly bootlickers that dominate the TUC and Labour leadership.

There is no doubt that if a Labour government led by Kinnoch were in office they would use the laws built up under Thatcher to try and crush the struggle of the working class, including that at Caterpillar.

The Caterpillar occupation has underlined the crisis of leadership in the working class.

While the workers have stood firm for nine weeks, the Scottish TUC leaders, in particular, have made time-wasting appeals for support to the Tories, instead of mobilising the working-class movement behind the sit-in.

The fight at Caterpillar must not be allowed to fall under the union leaders' control. The whole working class must be involved. Responding to the shop stewards' call for physical support must be the immediate

task of support groups and all trades unionists.

Caterpillar must be made the centre of a national fight against unemployment. A campaign of demonstrations — on working days, not Saturdays — should be mounted. Other factories threatened with closure must be occupied. Blacking must be extended.

In building the 'Pink Panther' the Caterpillar workers have raised a vital question for the whole working class. The products of British industry are desperately needed to fight world famine.

But these resources are locked up by capitalism which is interested in one thing — profit — even if this means unemployment for workers in Britain and starvation for millions throughout the world. To free these resources means to nationalise all basic industry, the sources of finance under workers' control.

The fight must start at Caterpillar: Nationalise the plant under the control of the workforce! This must be the demand fought for throughout the working class.

● The stewards are to hold a mass meeting at 10a.m. on Monday. They have called for mass support at the factory gates while this meeting is taking place.

Women's support group meeting

BITTERNESS against unemployment erupted at the Caterpillar women's support group meeting last week, and those present vowed to stand by their men through thick and thin.

'My husband was in General Motors ten years bar a month,' said one woman. 'He went in on the back shift at 3p.m. and at 6p.m. he was out with his books in his hand.'

'They didn't have a fight then. But there is a fight for Caterpillar. This is my husband's fifth job in three years; this is the fifth time he's been told he's going.'

'He's a welder to trade with all the certificates. He says if this place closes Lanarkshire can forget it.'

One contribution was short and to the point: 'The only thing Caterpillar has offered any of the men is 20-odd years on the b'roo: that's all they are going to get.'

Another woman pointed out: 'My husband went to the

funeral of a man in the Caterpillar. He was docked half a shift. That's the meanness of the people you're dealing with.'

'They won't give a penny more than they're legally due to.'

That point was underlined by plant convenor John Brannan who opened the meeting by saying that after 20 years' service he was due little more than £4000 redundancy payments. That's why the fight goes on.

'Caterpillar will never come back to this place. Another way will have to be found,' someone pointed out.

The meeting had been called to organise fund-raising activities and give information. It also became an opportunity for women to voice their opinions and worries.

Inspiration came from several letters received from miners' wives. 'At first I felt terrible asking people for money. But I don't feel ashamed now. It was right to fight for jobs,' said one.

'For as long as it takes . . .'

'I AM not for giving up after 10 weeks: I'll be here for as long as it takes,' said 27-year old Caterpillar worker Bill McCabe after Monday's meeting.

He condemned those who wanted 'to go against traditional trade union methods' by 'hiding behind a ballot paper'.

'Men got up at that meeting and talked about what five years on the b'roo is like. That's what this struggle is all about,' said Bill. 'I myself was made redun-

dant in 1982 and started back 18 months later.'

'I don't think guys here look at the wider political aspect. They are looking at it from the point of view of their wives and families, their future. But obviously this has to be a good thing for the trade union movement as a whole.'

'We have proved that there is a real need for this type of vehicle, to cultivate land in the third world. But because of profit Caterpillar are not interested.'



A meeting after a demonstration of the Ancoats occupation

'Why we've occupied Ancoats Hospital'

BY MARTIN RALPH

Ancoats Hospital casualty department, in Manchester, has been occupied for six weeks by local residents who have opposed its closure.

The attack on health facilities comes in an old working-class area already hard-hit by Tory policies. It was revealed earlier this year that in some central Manchester districts one in two people is out of work.

Workers Press interviewed members of the Ancoats Occupation Committee, Pat, Billy and Phil.

WORKERS PRESS: What are you fighting for in this sit-in?

PHIL: We want a casualty unit that gives a 24-hour coverage in this area. It is not only the people of Ancoats, it is the neighbouring districts like Miles Platting, Hardwick, the centre of town, New Cross, Beswick, Newton Heath, Droylsden. The people from these areas use our casualty unit — or did before they tried to close it.

They try to make out it is a unit just for Ancoats, but it is for all these areas.

BILLY: The nearest casualty is the Manchester Royal Infirmary, but that comes under a different health authority.

We come under the Northern Manchester District

Health Authority, and the next casualty unit is the Northern Manchester General Hospital, which is four and a half miles away.

We have no direct bus routes to it from Ancoats, and there are few from the surrounding areas.

It is at least a two-trip bus ride. It could cost anything up to £4 for a round trip.

Access is one of the biggest problems, with the unemployment. Local families don't own cars and they don't own houses. They are just normal people.

PHIL: This area is in the middle of town. We get people who live in Ashton and other areas outside Manchester coming here each day. Some people travel 30 miles to Manchester every day, and they are not aware there is no casualty department here.

If a lift shaft breaks, a train crashes at Piccadilly, or there's a crash on the motorways, there is literally no service here for them.

BILLY: Local workers expect a local casualty service and managers do not expect workers to need a day off at the casualty department.

PAT: I could sleep when Ancoats was open. The family could run over and get treated — you can't now.

If kids are poorly on a Wednesday night and we have no money, what do we do? Where do we go from here?

It has boiled down to the question of death. By the time you get to be seen at

North Manchester, you might not need them.

WORKERS PRESS: What is the Health Authority saying about the casualty unit?

PHIL: I live across the road from Ancoats, and people in our road still think it's going to reopen. The Health Authority has implied this.

The consultative document which says a full service will be renewed in September, but it won't be.

The other options include closure and a first aid post. We got given the report because we made ourselves into the Ancoats Action Committee and occupied the casualty unit six weeks ago.

Consultation is in June, July and August. The decision comes in August, but people need to act now, not in August. By then it will be too late.

PAT: By law, they have had to have consultation. Six weeks ago, when they closed the unit, they said 'until further notice'.

This document is a way of getting around closing the unit.

PHIL: When they realised people were opposed to the closure, they put out this three-month consultative document. We forced them to do this.

Everybody should have got this document, but the public haven't.

PAT: The more we fight, the more information we get.

The manager of the Health Authority has been surprised

how much we know.

They are in fact trying to balance the books by closing this unit. Professor J R Moore, chairman of the District Health Authority, says that he is trying to make ends meet.

He says if we reopen Ancoats, we will have to close an old people's home in Middleton. It is blackmail.

That is his position. He is saying that there are not enough people that need the casualty unit.

Since we've been here, over 200 people have come to the unit. Only three people have come from Ancoats.

We have told more people about the closure than the Health Authority.

BILLY: One of our first priorities was to ask for a taxi service to transport people in need of treatment. The Health Authority refused, because if they supplied a taxi they would admit a need exists.

PAT: At the start we got used to buying our dinner at the hospital, but when Dr Sylvester, the chief administrator, saw us doing this he told the staff 'Do not serve those squatters that are in casualty.'

He told us 'You'll have to get out of my hospital.'

At one meeting we were told the beds in all the wards would be emptied next. That means they are thinking of closing the whole hospital.

PHIL: They want to privatise the hospital for the city gents or sell it off to industry.

Thatcher is gearing it for privatisation.

DEFENDING LONDON SCHOOLS

TRADE unionists in the Inner London Education Authority have set up a London Education Defence Committee (LEDC) to defend jobs and services.

At a meeting to discuss future action, all delegates recognised the dangers present in Education Minister Kenneth Baker's dictate on trade union rights for teaching staff, which was followed by threats to take away the right to strike from workers employed in 'essential services'.

Discussion centered on 'A Call To Action' in the form of a 'Charter of Demands for Education'. Demands include:

- No redeployment of teaching staff.
- Labour group to stop doing Tories' dirty work.
- Support for strikes and occupations by ILEA workers.
- No to privatisation and asset-stripping.

There was unanimous agreement to support any ILEA Labour Group members who wish to fight, and to take strike action in their defence if they were charged under Tory law. But if Labour councillors try to impose Tory attacks, strike action should be used to smash them.

It was agreed that the LEDC should be open to parents, students, community users and governors willing to join in the fight.

Education is a right, not a privilege, and those engaged in it have the right to free and independent trade unions. LEDC believes the fight for this right can be won, and all those wishing to fight should join it.

The next meeting will discuss the background to the crisis in education, and proposals for the LEDC charter. Delegates and supporters are asked to attend with proposals for the charter and for officers to co-ordinate the Committee's activities.

● The LEDC will meet again on Friday 27 March at 10a.m. in the NUPE Offices, Pear Place, 150 Waterloo Road, (near Waterloo Station). For details phone 01-708 0756.

It looks like Sammy

BY CHRIS McBRIDE

SAMMY THOMPSON will be the next vice-president of the National Union of Mineworkers, informed sources indicated last week.

The election result — to be announced at the beginning of June — is expected to show that Labour Party NEC member Eric Clarke has been defeated by Thompson, who was supported by union president Arthur Scargill. The election follows the retirement of Euro-Stalinist Mick McGahey.

Thompson's campaign was based on support for national policies in opposition to the leadership of the union's South Wales area who have agreed in principle to the introduction of six-day working at Margam colliery.

Clarke was supported by the right-wing and the Communist Party.

If the information is correct the attempts of Communist Party and other right-wing union leaders to rally miners behind the Labour Party's 'don't rock the boat' policies will have suffered a major setback.

Meanwhile South Wales NUM President Des Duffield, who supported Clarke, last week described Scargill's fight for the union policy of a four-day week as casting a 'slur on the loyalty of the South Wales men'.

Attacks on Scargill's stand and support for the Welsh leadership are being carefully orchestrated. Latest to join the witch-hunt against Scargill is Labour leader Neil Kinnoch.

In a letter addressed to South Wales NUM General Secretary George Rees, the Labour Party leader congratulated 'the area NUM's stand for jobs in South Wales.'