

# WORKERS' ACTION

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Stop the Dublin hangings

JAMES CALLAGHAN made a special plea for clemency for the Mercenaries sentenced to death by an Angolan court. But he is utterly silent about death sentences nearer home —

those on Noel and Ma Murray who await hanging in Dublin after being tried in a no-jury court. Last Friday (Oct.29), socialists and trade unionists in Leicester acted to bring facts of the case into public eye, by staging occupation of the Irish B in the city centre. The occupation attracted publicity from local radio and press, and interest from passers by. Leaflets about the case were given to the bank staff. More on the Murray case and what YOU can do, on page

## WORKERS HAVE THE POWER TO BLACK THE CUTS!

Inside

WHY THE CHINESE 'RADICALS' LO... THE TO COALITION TA... SPAIN TODAY pp.

THE N.E.C. of the Labour Party has decided to support the anti-cuts demonstration on November 17th.

The Executive, in backing the call of the Public Sector unions to demonstrate, was following up the Labour Party Conference decision to campaign against the cuts and to support local councils who refuse to implement the cuts.

For a long time now the NEC left's voting victories have been of little real importance because the Government and the unions were solidly lined up on the other side.

Now things are changing.

Pressure on the public sector unions has forced them to demand that the Government fulfill its side of that fool's bargain, the Social Contract. The other unions, whatever their general policies, feel obliged to line up with the public sector ones on this issue.

This is gradually recreating the bloc that tore the Labour Party in two in the Sixties over In Place of Strife — the Government on one side and the unions and the NEC on the other.

That bloc has not yet emerged in any strength. In fact, just the opposite situation has prevailed for some two years now.

This vote, however, points to the possibility of an important re-alignment.

The union leaderships themselves are doing as little as possible in support of their own demonstration.

Nalgo recently did a survey which showed that nearly 50,000 posts are unfilled in local government service and that 70,000 more could be lost in the next two years if present trends continue. But Nalgo has refused to call its members out on 17th November.

One of the hardest hit sectors will be education. 20,000 teachers are out of work. Newly trained teachers are being

turned away. Yet the NUT has called for delegations of just ten members to go on the demonstration — and is taking stiff action against its own members who fight the cuts with 'no cover' action. (See back page.)

No-one can doubt the urgency of this demonstration. The Government is gearing up to tell us that the crippling cuts so far are just a trim — and that we must now accept a scalping. 'Elder statesmen' like Macmillan, the press, the CBI — all add their voices to the general chorus. And over the chorus, the voice of the big-gun soloists of the IMF comes through loud and clear: scrap what's left of the 'welfare' state — let the sick and the old go to the wall — let social services wither — above all, double productivity in every school, hospital and local or central government offices, sack thousands, and eliminate hundreds of thousands of jobs altogether.

The united voice of the whole labour movement must come answering back: NO CUTS!

The NEC vote is very important indeed. Most of the Lefts and those Union leaders that are involved want to confine the fight against the cuts to just talk and paper resolutions. The pressure of the rank and file has forced them to make what they expect to be a one-off gesture. Whether it is so or not is up to all of us.

The NEC vote opens the way for militants in local Labour Parties, LPYS, trades councils and union branches to mount an official campaign to turn November 17th into a massive protest — and use it as a booster or kick-off for local solidarity and action to stop the implementation of the cuts.

THE WORKING CLASS, IF IT MOBILISES, HAS THE POWER TO STOP THE CUTS — NOT JUST TO PROTEST ABOUT THEM.



## DEATH OF A SOLDIER

THE SHOOTING of Maire Drumm in a Belfast hospital bed was announced on Independent Television in a special newflash on Thursday night, October 28th.

Two hours earlier a half-hour programme This Week had devoted all its time to detailing the alleged efforts of the Provisional IRA to

drive out a group of Protestant families from a small Protestant enclave on Belfast's Suffolk Estate.

We got the whole works. A good looking, reasonable, soft spoken front-man for the UDA (itself the front for the 'Red Hand Commandos' and the misnamed 'Ulster Freedom Fighters'). Even an elderly grandmother threatened with nailbombing.

Nothing about the fact that sectarianism and sectarian assassination is the speciality of the Protestant paramilitary groups. Nothing about the fact that the vast majority of people intimidated out of their homes are Catholics. Nothing, in fact, but straight Orange propaganda disguised as a 'close-up' of one small area.

And then the newflash... Perhaps the stark savagery of the murder of Maire Drumm will make serious British workers who saw

the Orange murder gain face the fact of British publicity with the butchers killed her.

Maire Drumm was a soldier fighting for the freedom of Ireland from British domination. The victory for the cause she served — end to partition and British occupation — is the only way to peace in Ireland.

When all the 'F Women' are being praised and lauded and feted: Daily Express announce death as the death "Grandma Venom". would have accepted from such gutter-rats compliment. Venom, has 'war to the knife and knife to the hilt' against those responsible for present bloodbath in Ireland — that is what Maire Dr stood for. AND SHE IS RIGHT.

Workers' Action tribute to a fighter for

WORKERS' ACTION We apologise to readers and subscribers for the non-appearance of the paper last week. We have suffered three breakdowns of our typesetting equipment in the space of two weeks, causing us to miss two printers' deadlines. With this issue we return to our normal printing schedule, and include a 4-page special supplement on

**DURING the past few weeks the press has been full of stories of mass demonstrations of millions of Chinese against Chiang Ch'ing and the Shanghai "radicals". In particular, they have dwelt on the demonstrations in Shanghai itself, the 'radicals' base.**

To understand the collapse of the 'radicals' we must look back to their rise to power in the Cultural Revolution, when they became the leaders of the Maoist tendency both in Shanghai and nationally in China.

Shanghai is China's oldest and biggest industrial city. It has a population of some 11 millions and is a major port. Industry includes steel, shipbuilding, textiles and light engineering. It also has a long tradition of working class militancy stretching back to the beginning of the century.

In the 1920s the Shanghai workers launched major strikes against the imperialist powers (Britain, France and Japan).

In 1927 the Shanghai workers seized the city in advance of Chang Kai-shek's armies — and were then massacred by Chang as he turned on the CCP. Over 5,000 workers were killed.

Forty years later, the Cultural Revolution's opening shots were fired in the Shanghai press, where the Maoists were in control. The attack opened with Yao Wen-yuan's article on Wu Han's play "Hai Jui dismissed from Office"

From then on Shanghai was in the forefront of the Cultural Revolution. The crisis brought on by the Cultural Revolution, with Mao encouraging the Red Guards to attack the Party bureaucracy, broke at the end of 1966.

In December 1966 the whole of Shanghai was paralysed by a massive strike. Overwhelmingly supported by the workers but including sections of the Red Guards and CCP, the demands were far from 'cultural': higher wages, shorter hours, better conditions and better social security. But as with the strike waves in Eastern Europe, the strikes did not stop there, but went further. The workers demanded control of the factories and over production. Elected

"anarchism". Yet they had been responsible for triggering off the movement, with their appeals to the example of the Paris Commune, and in encouraging the Red Guards to rebel against the established CCP leadership. And local Party officials, to preserve their positions, initially gave way on many of the economic demands.

However, nationally this was soon denounced by the leaders of the Cultural Revolution and the CCP. The Maoist leaders started to repress the strike movement, bringing in outside forces to crush it. They mobilised support to "oppose economism" or, put plainly, to break the strike. (It is interesting that many of those Maoists around the world who hold up the Cult-



The Shanghai 'radicals': Yao Wen-yuan, Wang Hung-wen, Chiang Ching, Chang Chun-chiao: left high and dry by those they betrayed.

# CHINA

## WHY THE 'RADICALS' LOST

committees were set up, responsible to assemblies of workers, to take control from the old management. Attempts were made to link up with other factories locally and, more important, nationally.

These developments were rapidly denounced by the leaders of the Cultural Revolution as "ultra democracy" and

ural Revolution as a shining example ignore this side of it: the repression of the potential workers' revolution by the Maoist leaders.)

The official Shanghai leaders Chang, Wang and Yao found themselves increasingly dependent on outside forces, especially the Army and the police, to regain control. The Shanghai workers flocked to the banner of

Keng Chin-chang and the "second Regiment" to the left of the Maoist leaders.

This organisation had the support of 1/2 million workers at its height. They aimed not at seizing power from the opponents of Mao but from the CCP bureaucracy as a whole. For a period of 2 months they were strong enough to stop Chang Chun-ch'iao's attempt to gain

control. But Chang had Mao's support, and with it the Army. By the summer of 1967 the Maoists were back in control — on behalf of the whole bureaucracy.

This pattern of events was not limited to Shanghai, but to some extent was repeated in every industrial city of China at some stage of the Cultural Revolution. And in this lies the explanation for the weakness of the 'radicals' in recent conflicts with their opponents in the CCP: they dare not seek mass support for fear that they will be swept away together with the rest of the CCP bureaucracy.



From this brief account of events in Shanghai ten years ago it is clear, too, that the workers can have little sympathy for the 'radicals' who raised their hopes and then dashed them, trampling their aspirations under-foot and retreating behind a solid front of all the bureaucratic forces, of which the 'radicals' were and remained a faction.

As a 'radical' bureaucratic faction they had dared appeal to mass support because in China the Stalinist bureaucracy had led a great mass revolution, rising to power as its leadership. In this they differ from the Russian Stalinist bureaucrats, who rose to power by bloodily suppressing the revolutionary movement and traditions, and who therefore live in mortal terror of the masses.

But even when encouraging and mobilising the masses, the Chinese 'radicals' proved unable to break from the bureaucratic models of control and manipulation. The whole of Chinese political life, then and now, is conducted in a stifling, mind-numbing series of hints, or different interpretations of "Mao's thought" — all designed to prevent rational discussion and real democratic control over the real issues and problems dividing the bureaucrats, issues such as the best course for economic development in China.



Finally these 'radicals' betrayed the workers who had taken their words seriously. They thus cut the ground from under their own feet. Since then, with the support of the supreme bureaucrat of all the bureaucrats — Mao himself — they have lingered on the stage. Mao's demise has brought down on them the consequences of their betrayal of the workers in 1967.

CHRIS WHYTEHEAD

## CRISIS AS POLICE STATE MOVES SOUTH

**THE 26-County 'Republic of Ireland' faces a constitutional upheaval following the resignation of President O'Dalaigh, after being publicly called a "thundering disgrace" by the Defence Minister. The crisis should focus the spotlight on the tensions generated inside the 26-County establishment as that state increasingly comes to resemble a police state.**

The people of the 26 Counties are now paying for their failure to give active support to the republican struggle in the northern 6 Counties. Repression has crept south until it is now as bad as under Orange/British rule in the 6-Counties.

In fact the powers of censorship over news which the 26-County government (a coalition of Labour and the conservative Fine Gael) has at its disposal and which it uses quite bluntly, means that its regime is now more repressive than that of the Northern state.

The masses in the South had grown used to partition and, with the exception of the republican groupings and some socialists, had long wished the conflict in the North would just go away. They heard the bell tolling and decided it wasn't their funeral. They knew of the repression in the North, but did not live under it and sought to forget about it.

Now they are learning the hard way that Ireland is one country — despite the border, despite the delusions that the Catholic minority could be left to 'their' problems safely sealed into the 6-County bearpit.

The alignment of the 26-County bosses with the British state to maintain the partitioned status quo has inescapably driven them into active collaboration in repression. The repression in the North demanded that there be no safe haven in the South for the freedom fighters. Under British pressure and their own fears of the conflict spreading south, the 26-County bosses have been driven to put a political straitjacket on the Southern society.

**Freedom is indivisible because, border or no border, Ireland is indivisible.**

On September 1st, a State of Emergency was declared. On October 4th the Supreme Court decided that the Emergency Powers Act (EPA) was constitutional. Trial by jury has been abolished for any prisoner that the Government designates a threat to the state. In a no-jury Special Court, the testimony of a

## IRELAND

senior policeman that someone is in his opinion an IRA member gets the victim 7 years. "Inviting" or "inciting" anyone to join the IRA carries a 10-year sentence from this Special Court.

This no-jury court has already passed death sentences on two anarchists accused of shooting an off-duty policeman during a bank robbery — which shows how much of normal bourgeois democracy and procedure survives in the South.

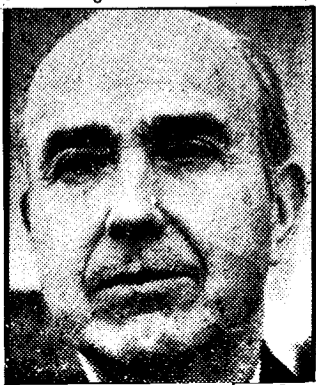
The 'liberal' Labour Party Minister of Posts and Telegraphs Conor Cruise O'Brien has now extended censorship to include any mention of the views of the legal political organisation Sinn Fein — a legal political organisation that holds 26 local council seats in various parts of the country.

It was President O'Dalaigh's insistence on referring the EPA to the Supreme Court for a ruling on the constitutionality of the Act that led to the attack on him by the 'Defence' Minister Donegan, and to his resignation in protest. O'Dalaigh has a Fianna Fail (the other main bourgeois party) background, and was elected unopposed 18 months ago. Now there will be an election.

It is even possible that his resignation was a political ploy by Fianna Fail to test the 'mood' of the country. Inevitably the election will very seriously undermine the governing coalition if its candidate is defeated or badly bloodied at the polls. Irish society has been frightfully affected by the world economic crisis — the real unemployment figure is probably around a quarter of the working population.

The Opposition represents no alternative, however, either on the problems of the economy or as opponents of the police state repression. Despite calling itself the Republican party it has a terrible record of repression against Republicans and Socialists. In the second World War Republicans and some communists were interned by Fianna Fail. Special Military Courts were set up and mandatory death sentences were pronounced against Republicans, and carried out. In 1957 Fianna Fail also brought in internment.

The good thing about the present crisis is that it has already forced sections of the Labour Party and trade union movement to look critically at what the Government they support is doing.



Resigned — O'Dalaigh

Stop the Dublin hangings

**IT IS now increasingly probable that NOEL and MARIE MURRAY will in fact be hanged in Dublin next month.**

The growing panic of the 26-County government, which has just brought in savage new Emergency police state laws, leaves little hope that they will be reprieved. The ever-stiffer press censorship has brought down a blanket of silence to prevent any questioning of such a sentence being handed down in Cosgrave's summary no-jury Special Court, and the Murrays' main hope now lies in international action and pressure.

Prime Minister Cosgrave (a worthy son of his namesake, the butcher who headed the government that slaughtered 77 Republican prisoners of war during the Civil War of 1922/23) is known to favour carrying out the first executions in Ireland in over 20 years.

The Murrays, anarchists by conviction, were tried and condemned by the Special Criminal Court. There was no jury and the 'evidence' consisted of statements made by Marie Murray under the duress of the torture of her husband and another Defendant, Ronan Stenson (who was so damaged by the police that he was found

unfit to plead and is still in a mental institution). And the torture continues: they are still kept in solitary confinement, allowed neither books nor newspapers nor visitors of their choosing. They may not even see each other.

Meanwhile the 26-County government, feebly panicky in the face of any militant opposition, is nerving itself to show how 'tough' it can be by breaking the neck of Marie and Noel Murray at the end of a hangman's rope.

Refusing to continue with the degrading pretence of the forms of 'justice' where no justice exists, Noel Murray has withdrawn his appeal due to be heard on November 1st.

The Murrays must NOT hang! Workers Action calls on all our readers to support the Murray Defence Committee, which is demanding a re-trial with a jury and proper opportunities for Defence; an inquiry into the arrest and treatment of the Murrays; and the abolition of the Special Criminal Court.

Trade union branches and Labour and Young Socialist organisations and other labour movement bodies should immediately telegraph protests to Prime Minister Liam Cosgrave, c/o Dail Eireann, Dublin, Eire.

# WHAT PRICE 'STANDARDS'?

IN THE wake of Callaghan's 'keynote' speech on educational policy, Education Secretary Shirley Williams has promised a national debate on education. Such a debate there certainly ought to be — because revelations this week undermine assumptions that have moulded British education for half a century.

It has been a very popular belief in this country that 'intelligence' is like the colour of your eyes and hair: you inherit it from your parents and that's that — there's nothing you can do about it. At school, teachers must then find out what each child's given

intelligence is, and treat that child accordingly.

The British education system has thrived for years on this idea with its IQ testing, streaming, 'remedial' classes and so on. It has probably spent more time and energy on *testing and measuring* intelligence than on developing it. And the popular press churn out the idea of a fixed quantity of intelligence without question.

Now the leading figure in IQ testing since the 1920s, Sir Cyril Burt (1888-1971) has been shown to be a fraud.

Last week's *Sunday Times* produced evidence that Burt fixed statistics in order to prove his view that intelligence is far more inherited genetically than affected by environment.

Four main charges levelled at Burt are as follows:

★ *That he often used to guess at the IQ of parents that he interviewed but that later he treated his guesses as hard scientific facts.*

★ *That two of his 'collaborators' named as authors of particular research papers backing his views never existed.*

★ *That some of his conclusions are statistically impossible and can only be explained as fiddled data.*

★ *That he often worked backwards — supplying data to fit*

*predictions of his favourite genetic theories.*

Who was Sir Cyril Burt and why was he so important?

Burt comes close to being the 'father of modern British education' — or perhaps its Godfather. He was knighted in 1946 for his 'contribution to education'. He was the world's first educational psychologist, appointed as such in 1913 by the London County Council, and had a tremendous influence on many government reports. In particular he influenced the 1944 Education Act under which the 3-tiered Grammar, Technical and Secondary Modern system was established.

From 1931 Burt was Professor of Psychology at University College, London. His theories had a very wide influence, and to this day are still the lynch-pin of disciples like Hans Eysenck in London and Arthur Jensen in the USA. Jensen is the man who states that blacks have inferior intelligence to whites and that IQ is 80% inherited and only 20% influenced by environment.

One of the last things Burt did before he died was to lend his authority to the 'Black Paper' — which, based very much on his thinking, is still with us today.

The Black Paper lobby combines a number of themes. With its defence of middle class privilege (the grammar and public schools) goes a reactionary populist 'law & order' bias. It will be interesting to see what these guardians of moral and educational "standards" have to say about the standards of their venerable founder!

The *Sunday Times* inquiry is basically a report of findings by Professor Leon Kamin of Princeton and of work by Dr. Ann Clark and Professor Alan Clark of Hull University. (The Clarks have already produced an attack on another myth dear to the heart of British social policy-makers and homespun philosophers — the myth of the 'need for mother-love'.)

## Wide open

Commenting on the new evidence in Monday's *Times*, Jack Tizard (Professor of Child Development at London University) wrote that it questions the whole of Burt's work on intelligence, delinquency etc. In particular, he says, it is impossible now to believe the research work in Burt's famous books '*The Young Delinquent*' (1924) and '*The Backward Child*' (1937).

*He concludes that the whole field of educational psychology has been blown wide open.*

But there is more to this than just the scandal — though that in itself, putting the reactionary hound-pack of the Black Paper on the defensive, is no bad thing. We should not forget that whole generations of working class children (and the adults they grew up to be) have been maimed and stunted by educational systems evolved on the basis of this man's work; and that schools up and down the country are still putting his phony theories into practice.

Trade unionists must demand a full investigation into the Burt fraud and its effects.

## Coalition: the gleam



## in Macmillan's eye

MARGARET THATCHER and the rest of the Tory right wing must be furious. After the raving optimism of the Tory Party conference and her high popularity ratings, Macmillan steps out of the political shadows to give what, for the ruling class, must be a chilling assessment of the electoral situation: **THAT LABOUR PROBABLY CAN'T WIN AND THAT THE TORIES CERTAINLY CAN'T RULE.**

Macmillan's solution is a 'National Government' or 'Coalition Government'. As to a snap election, he foresaw only a cold civil war: 'If Labour get in with a majority of ten, 15 or 20, are we any better off? If the Conservatives get in with a majority of 30 or 40, will they be able to govern the country? We've got ourselves into such a tight feeling of animosity... I don't remember this sort of bitterness between people of different classes...'

The only possibility of avoiding a massive social upheaval, he believes, is that a Government emerges which is able to combine the total ruthlessness of the Tories (particularly on social service cuts) with the credit of the Labour Government when it comes to 'handling the unions'. In other words: a Tory Government with a credit card marked 'Social Contract'.

The key to the emergence of such a Government, in Macmillan's view, would lie with 'the people who would play the role that Ernie Bevin played in 1940'. Such a person — obviously Jack Jones or his successor — would be the Judas goat for the entire working class.

There is of course opposition to Macmillan's idea within the leadership of the Tory Party. But that does not rule it out. In fact Macmillan's idea is directed less against the Left of the Labour Party than against the Right of the Tory Party.

He says the Labour Left must be hived off. But the 'left' has confined itself to making a few safety-valve noises at each kick in the groin the working class has taken from this government. In contrast, the boneheaded pyromaniac faction of the Tory Party led by Thatcher want to lead the ruling class into a head-on collision with the working class which the bosses could not win — just at a time when the ruling class is winning the battle to reduce workers' living standards, thanks to the alliance of the Labour and trade union leaders.



Thus it is the Thatcherites that Macmillan is out to caution and warn, telling them that they would 'make Britain ungovernable'.

No doubt Macmillan hopes that a coalition of some sort will wreak such demoralisation in the working class that there will once again be a situation in which the Tories can safely undertake to govern alone. Certainly, every notch that living standards are allowed to be depressed without a fight-back, every day that passes without the beginning of that fight-back, must corrode working class self confidence and morale.

For that reason Callaghan and Co., by their success, are undermining the conditions that now make them indispensable to the ruling class.

Coalition is not a project that is going to be implemented right away. It is a plan fraught with enormous dangers for the ruling class. As Robin Day pointed out to Macmillan in the interview, 'the trouble with a coalition is that, if it fails, there is no democratic alternative left...'

What would be best for the ruling class now would be a de facto, informal coalition. (In Italy, for example, the Government can only exist on the support of the Communist Party, which is not actually in the government.)

The pressure on the ruling class for much more drastic cuts in working class living standards than Labour dare attempt at one go is reflected in the 'militancy' of the Thatcherite Tories. Macmillan presents a cold, overall ruling class view of the contradictions, in an attempt to sober up the Thatcherites, to pressurise them into acting the role of informal coalitionists. Nor, despite the noise of the strident — but, for the ruling class, bankrupt — Thatcher Tories, is there such a wide gap in ideas for dealing with the crisis.

The most glaring example of a growing convergence of views is that increasing sections of the ruling class are becoming favourable to the 'left' solution of import control. And they are not so much stealing the clothes of Labour's so-called left, as showing that as socialists the Tribunites have been stark naked all along.



The serious proposal of coalition by Macmillan is a clear indicator of the depth of the crisis of political institutions in Britain, particularly within Parliament. The 'unreliable' but large vote of the 'Ulster', Scottish and Welsh parties, as well as the Liberals, at a time of a tiny parliamentary majority, has sharpened the crisis. And the situation of sterling has removed most of the room for manoeuvre of the bourgeois blocs, creating an ever more favourable mood for a 'national Government'.

The gleam in Macmillan's eye is not immediately a prospect. Should the situation of sterling deteriorate sharply, should there be, for instance, a devaluation of the Green Pound next time round (which would massively escalate food prices), or a series of important industrial failures, the prospect could be on the immediate agenda.

And if it appears that Macmillan was the father of this conception, that will be because the role of the Labour Government itself in bringing about such a creature will have been quietly forgotten.



Sir Cyril Burt

## FIGHT TO BAN ALL OVERTIME

YOU can't beat the TUC for a quiet campaign! Its campaign for a 35-hour week is certainly no exception. The vast mass of trade unionists — even the regular branch attenders — have never even heard of this campaign.

At its recent Economic Committee meeting, however, the TUC decided to circularise a document showing the amount of overtime being done in different industries, and indicating the number of jobs that could be created if no overtime were done.

It makes this calculation on the basis of dividing the number of overtime hours being worked by 40 — not by 35! Still, even by this method of computing the number of job vacancies that could be created, this number bears a close resemblance to the number of workers unemployed in those industries.

Workers Action advocates that overtime bans should be fought for in all industries as the minimum first step towards the gradual reduction in hours to ensure full employment.

Industry	Total hours of overtime	Divide by 40	Number unemployed
Food, drink, etc	1,668,800	41,700	40,240
Coal, etc	93,500	2,300	2,128
Chemicals, etc	669,200	16,700	15,965
Metal manufacture	1,056,100	26,400	26,036
Mechanical engineering	2,098,800	52,500	41,477
Instrument engineering	167,100	4,200	4,657
Electrical engineering	981,000	24,500	30,741
Shipbuilding, etc	614,500	15,400	8,681
Vehicles	1,368,800	34,200	31,166
Other metals	1,039,100	26,000	37,970
Textiles	792,400	19,800	27,252
Leather, etc	72,900	1,800	3,592
Clothing, footwear	122,000	3,100	20,642
Bricks, cement, etc	732,500	18,300	14,050
Timber, furniture	546,100	13,700	14,347
Paper, print, etc	1,033,300	25,800	19,945
Other manufacturing industries	596,100	14,900	17,863
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,652,100</b>	<b>341,300</b>	<b>356,752</b>

# 1 GREASE PAINT ON THE FACE OF FRANCOISM



ESPECIALLY since the death of Franco 11 months ago, the Spanish bourgeoisie has been trying to work towards a more flexible system for exploiting the working class.

They want a system with more democratic safety valves which can get the economic and political backing of the major Western powers.

According to the claims of the present Spanish government, it has already made many democratic reforms. But dabbling on a little cosmetic has

not changed the face of Francoism.

"In the early morning of Saturday 14th August", reported the journal Cambio, "on a beach at Almeria, a bullet ended the life of 18 year old Francisco Javier Verdejo Lucas. Together with three other comrades he was in the process of painting a wall slogan of the Spanish Workers' Party youth group, the Young Red Guards.

"He was painting the slogan 'BREAD, WORK AND FREEDOM', and had got as far as the first letter of the

second word, when he saw a Guardia Civil (police) floodlight and began running in the direction of the beach. He turned to look at one of the police who was following him. At this moment the shot hit him. It went in through the throat and out through the back of the neck."

That is the real face of the 'new' Spanish Government, the Suarez Government. Like its predecessor, the Arias Government, this second Government under the Spanish monarchy, despite all its publicity about an amnesty and "dialogue with the opposition", has given its bloody answer to the calls of the masses for Bread, Work and Freedom: Bloody suppression and murder!

And like the Arias Government, this second Government is a victim of the contradictions within the Spanish bourgeoisie and the pressure of the masses.

PHOTOS: clockwise — Juan Carlos with Arias; ETA members at target practice; Carillo with Dolores Ibarruri; Suarez meets Chirac. Centre — a demonstration in Barcelona.

# The Bunker faces the masses

THIS PAGE IS BASED ON AN ARTICLE IN THE GERMAN PRESS. It will be concluded in two weeks.



# 2 FOUR REASONS WHY ARIAS HAD TO GO

WITHIN seven months of Franco's death the concept of "continuity in change", which had already been battered by the great mass struggles and strikes, was destroyed for all to see when Arias Navarro 'resigned' as Prime Minister. In the face of the deep crisis of Spanish society, the reform of Francoism had been a failure so far.

Already in June the Arias Navarro Government was in the process of being crushed between the die-hard supporters of Francoism (the Warriors of Christ the King, the Falange,

the Organisation of Civil War Veterans) and the mass movement. While Arias Navarro, under pressure from the far right, tried to restrain the speed and scope of reform and prevent the legalisation of the workers' organisations (especially the Communist Party), sections of the Government were, under the pressure of the mass movement, pushing for a more rapid "reform of Francoism", hoping the mass movement could be restrained in time.

The immediate reasons for the collapse of the Arias Government were fourfold.

Firstly, there was the crisis of leadership within the bourgeoisie, the contradictions within the ruling class, and the growing and successful opposition to the "reform of Francoism" by the Bunker, the ultra traditional Francoist rearguard. This opposition reached its peak in the disagreements over the legalisation of the political parties, and the law reform.

Arias Navarro was unable to solve these contradictions. Instead he gave in more and more to the pressure of the Bunker.

Secondly, the Arias government was incapable of initiating a serious policy capable of solv-

ing the economic crisis. This crisis had become sharper still in the last weeks of the Arias regime — for instance, the cost of living rose by 4.58%.

The third reason was Arias's lack of credibility abroad, branded as he was with the legacy of Franco and being the personal representative of the continuity of Francoism.

After the King's visit to the United States it was obvious that the USA had followed the line of the West European countries and demanded 'cosmetic' reforms in exchange

for massive foreign support for Spain with a view to restoring 'normal' business conditions for imperialism.

This last question has become even more urgent with the drop in foreign investment in Spain.

Finally — and most decisively — was the continuing and ever widening mobilisations of the masses for their elementary democratic rights and against the unloading of the economic crisis on their shoulders. These mobilisations, which didn't even die down over the hot summer months, embraced even sections like pensioners

# 3 THE BUNKER'S MAN TAKES OVER

THE POST that Arias vacated did not, as might have been expected, go to Foreign Minister Areilza — the man who had urged support for "democratic change" and who had declared himself in favour of a "national pact" with the opposition. The post went to the candidate of entrenched, traditional Francoism: Adolfo Suarez.

Suarez was the little known leader of the "Movimiento" (United Fascist Party), and his victory was a clear victory for the traditional forces of Francoism — both the Catholic-technocratic wing connected with the Opus Dei grouping, and the wing connected with



finance and industrial capital, especially the large banks and the electrical industry.

It is now absolutely clear who was behind the nomination of Suarez: a primarily Torcuato Fernandez-Miranda, who is President of the Cortes (Council of State), President of the Council of the Royal Empire, and among other things President of the Banco de Credito Local.

In addition there were the members of the Oviol family in

the Council of the Royal Empire and the direct representatives of finance capital, particularly the Banco Espanol de Credito.

Suarez is in a unequivocal position to represent these traditional sources of Francoist support, as is shown by his political career.

He emerged from the Catholic organisation, Accion Catolica; later he was programme manager for Spanish television; he has been governor of Seville, vice-secretary of the 'Movimiento', and its

general secretary from March 1975; and he was the founder and sometime President of the right-Catholic UDPE (Union del Pueblo Espanol) which is connected with Opus Dei.

This nomination was thus a clear indication of the rightward movement within the government and the direct control being exercised by the Bunker over the Government.

Clearer still was the refusal by the ministers of the Arias Government who had stood for the more conciliatory line to-

ward the "democratic opposition" — Areilza, Fraga, Garigues — to serve under Suarez. Their positions have now been occupied by the Falangist Martin Villa, by Osorio (a member of the ultra-right Union Democratico Espanol) and by the right-Catholic Condellino Caviello.

This government revealed its true nature within the first few weeks. Repression continued without any let-up. The Suarez Government was soon bathing its hands in the blood of murdered students and oppositional workers. On 9th July Alfonso Altafar, a shop steward at Standard-Madrid, was seriously wounded by a shot from the Guardia Civil while on a demonstration of solidarity with the striking workers at the firm of Vers; on 14th August Verdejo Lucas was shot dead by the Guardia Civil in Almeria...

The national Conference of the Comisiones Obreras — the Workers' Commissions — remains forbidden under Suarez; likewise meetings of the Coordinacion Democratica, and those of the organs of the different nationalities in Spain are not allowed.

On 13th July the Cortes passed a law legalising political

# Bunker Masses

MAN PAPER SPARTACUS.  
time



and invalids, and were not stilled by the repeated offers of the "democratic opposition" to negotiate with the regime.

It became necessary to drop Arias. New credit had to be won for the concept of the "reform of Francoism"; a dialogue with the opposition had to be set up to channel the mobilisation of the masses while at the same time painting for the benefit of foreign observers the picture of a real process of democratisation.

On 1st July, Arias Navarro was forced by King Juan Carlos to resign.

parties; but the ban remains on parties which "have as their aim the violent overthrow, or destruction, of the legal, social or economic order" or which "are subordinate to an international discipline aimed at erecting a totalitarian system". This leaves most of the left illegal.

The amnesty of political prisoners announced with so much ballyhoo on 30th April is nothing more than a charade. On the one hand it excludes from the outset a large number of political prisoners found guilty of "crimes against the life of persons": these prisoners are mainly members of the Basque eta or the Maoist FRAP.

On the other hand, the vague formulation of the amnesty decree allows a great deal of delay, so that by last month only a small number of the announced 500 have been freed.

At the same time members of the opposition, for example the ugt, have been arrested. And on 28th July, members of an illegal trade union in Pamplona were sentenced to 7 years and 15 years imprisonment for alleged bombings. (Bombings carried out by the extreme right on July 18th and 30th, however, have not been investigated.)

THESE developments have had an enormous effect on the Basque organisation ETA (Euskadi ta Askatusuna - Basqueland and Freedom), which up to now has been in the forefront of the anti-Franco movement.

Under the pressure of the mass movement, mobilising more and more layers of workers, and of the needs of the masses to create their legal organisations, at least one wing of ETA (because of its isolation from the mass struggle) wants to fundamentally revise its previous policy. This wing is led by Eduardo Moreno Bargaretxe.

In a recent interview, representatives of this wing declared "The situation is in the process of changing, and the only feasible solution to the situation is the organisational separation of the political and

4

## 'A FIRST STEP' TOWARDS SUAREZ

IT IS clear that the Suarez government represents an attempt to save the concept of "continuity in change" while at the same time reassuring the Bunker by giving it direct representatives at the head of the Government.

The major opposition groupings, wanting to come to terms with the government, have for their part seized on Suarez' minimal moves toward liberalisation (his promise of a referendum and election some time in the future, his token amnesty and equally token legalisation of political parties) to give credit to this second attempt at the "reform of Francoism".

Thus the Cordinacion Democratica said in its declaration to "the people of Spain" last July: "The Cordinacion Democratica renews its wish to negotiate and come to agreement with all sectors including the state power who accept the need to adopt these aims (amnesty, freedom, democratic rights)."

Leading representatives of the Cordinacion Democratica have shown their willingness to respond to the Suarez initiatives. Thus Tierno Galvan, chairman of the Popular Socialist Party, described the amnesty decree as "a positive step", while Garcia Lopez of the Social-Democratic Party of Spain (PSDE) called it "a first dramatic step towards dismantling the dictatorship."

Apart from the Communist Party all the significant oppositional parties have been having talks with the Government: Suarez trying to win time to bring the opposition to a position of "wait and see"; the opposition trying to ensure good political conditions to work in, the better to hold back the masses and tie them to the institutions of bourgeois society.

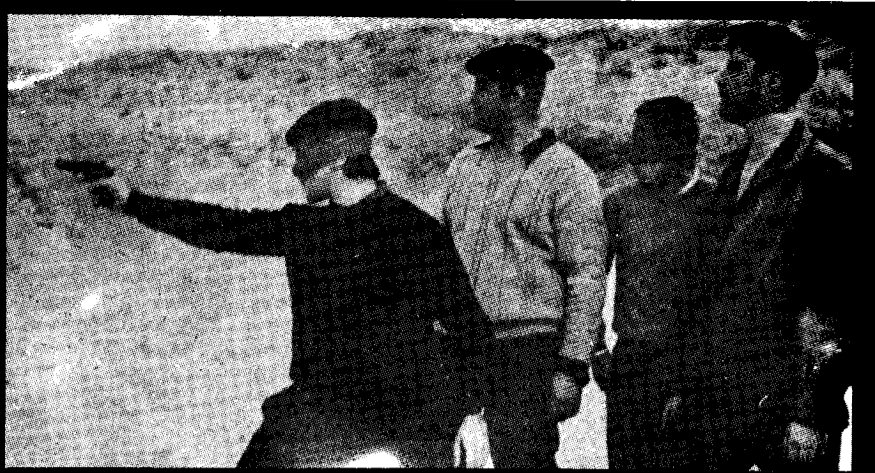
The opposition parties are also busy trying to strengthen their bases in time for the promised elections so that the masses, who at present are in the process of creating their traditional organisations (parties, unions etc.) will be unable to threaten bourgeois society and go beyond it.

5

## E.T.A.: TALKS, NOT BULLETS

armed struggles... The political struggle demands structures, a practice and a dynamic completely different from clandestine struggle. It is necessary to bring about a political turn in ETA. Concretely we demand the setting up of a party: a party which would still be illegal under present conditions but which would not be subject to the same measure of repression as is ETA; a strictly political and not an armed party which would participate at all levels like other parties."

The opportunist consequences are even clearer in the statement on the Suarez Government: "We see the present Government as a transition,



and that it serves to introduce the democratic process. Suarez will burn himself up and have to give way to people like Areilza or Felipe Gonzales. The basis for negotiations with them is very difficult: we demand an improvement in the situation of our political prisoners as a first point; and total amnesty with a return of all exiles. The fulfillment of these conditions would open the way to negotiations."

In the same edition of the magazine Cambio which carried this interview it was reported that there had already been, unofficially, talks between ETA and the Government. And it is noticeable that ETA

has not led a single armed action since Suarez became Prime Minister.

The central demand of ETA's programme is for a "provisional Euzkadi Government formed by the democratic forces which wish to belong to it." The bourgeois nationalist nature of ETA revealed in this programme is now coming to the fore as a major weakness. After all its previous bravery and militancy in fighting the Franco regime, ETA is politically disarmed in the face of the impending agreement between the Cordinacion Democratica and the Government. Capitulation to class collaboration is inevitable.

FELIPE GONZALES, the general secretary of the PSOE, is preparing to take on in Spain the role so adroitly played by Soares in Portugal: by means of verbal radicalism and an attack on the Communist Party's bureaucratism (above all on the trade union question) he hopes to undermine the CPE's present predominance and pull a section of the working class over to the PSOE.

To this end - again imitating Soares - the PSOE was accepted last July as an observer-member of the EEC's Union of Socialist Parties. Massive support from the West European, in particular West German, Social Democratic parties has already been forthcoming.

That the PSOE is gearing up to play the counter revolutionary role the SP played in Portugal is well understood by the Government. Suarez said recently in an interview that he and Felipe Gonzales were "practically of the same opinion on all problems"

To play this role the PSOE is busy trying to bring under the umbrella of its authority all the existing social democratic groups - thereby bringing them under the direct influence of the West European parties. In this process it uses lies and slanders against socialist organisations, like the Socialist Party of Andalusia, that are not prepared to chain themselves to West European Social Democracy. And at the same time it is discussing fusion with explicitly right wing social democratic parties such as the Popular Socialist Party.

The policy of the Spanish has been a great aid to the PSOE. The true face of 'Eurocommunism' - the line pioneered by the Italian CP - showed itself at the July Central Committee meeting of the PCE, when offers to co-operate with the present regime were made. And the CPE has repeatedly shown the Spanish bourgeoisie that it is prepared to keep the mass movement under control.

Thus it has acted as a brake on the strike movement.

Likewise, in an attempt to bring itself in line with the law on legalising political parties, it

6

## SOARES AND CUNHAL: AN ACTION REPLAY

zealously emphasises its disagreements with the Soviet Union, denying all international connections and discipline.

The PCE has in fact gone as far as to endorse the concept of the monarchy! Thus Santiago Carillo, the PCE's General Secretary, has announced not once but repeatedly that "If the monarchy begins a constitutional period and subordinates itself to the decision of the people, and the people say they want the monarchy, then the monarchy is no longer the one that Franco wanted, but the one which the people themselves have freely chosen."

The charade of the amnesty the PCE describes as "a step towards the reconciliation of the Spanish people... a healthy precondition for negotiation which could create the way for democracy in peace and civilised co-operation."

Given such positions the PCE, although it is the indisputable representative of the majority of the Spanish proletariat because of its resistance to Franco in the last decades, is losing ground to the verbally more radical PSOE. As it cannot regain this ground by either practical or even verbal militancy, the CPE attempts to maintain its position of dominance bureaucratically.

By so doing, it opens the door for the hypocritical PSOE propaganda for trade union freedom and plurality. Once again the Portuguese events look like being re-enacted.



THE MAOIST organisations, particularly the PTE-ML and the ORT (which arose as left splits from the PCE) gained increasing influence over the workers' vanguard which formed itself in the '60s and '70s. But today they are allowing the traditional parties of the working class to re-assert their influence with these layers which had in the past empirically broken away in search for more radical measures and methods.

Meanwhile, the Maoists are turning rightwards. The ORT has entered the Cordinacion Democratica, the PTE & ML already being members. Explaining its position, the Central Committee of the ORT declared that "the best way to ensure that the Cordinacion Democratica speaks clearly for a united democratic alternative is to join it."

Thus even before the outbreak of struggles on the scale of the events in Portugal after the fall of Caetano, the traditional counter revolutionary parties within the Spanish working class have pledged themselves to class collaboration. Learning their lines from their Portuguese counterparts, the leaders of the traditional Spanish working class parties have not even waited for their cues to announce their capitulation and treachery.

These policies have given Suarez the time he needed for a second attempt at the "reform of Francoism"

# ORGANISING THE PROLETARIAN PARTY

LAST month's split from the International Communist League, the fragmentation of the revolutionary left over the last few years, and the recent international drive for 'left unity' by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (In France, negotiations with the PSU; in Italy, orientation to Democrazia Proletaria; in Britain, the 'Faction and Party' articles in 'Red Weekly'), have all provoked discussion among socialists on the question of party organisation.

**WORKERS ACTION** has carried statements and letters on the I-CL split, and this week we print the 2nd of three parts of a discussion article contributed by Martin Thomas. We welcome further contributions to this debate, from socialists both inside and outside the Labour Party.

## Part 2

The split of the Burnham-Shachtman-Abern combination from the American Trotskyist movement in 1940 had a similar significance[\*1]: freeing the organisation from dilettante elements. During the faction fight that led up to the split, Trotsky opposed any organisational threats against

The Third International was not an effort to rebuild the Second International, in the hope that they would "do better next time". It was built on radically different principles.

Kautsky had written: "The Socialist Party is a revolutionary party; it is not a party which makes revolutions. We know that our aims can only be achieved by a revolution, but we also know that it is not in our power to make the revolution, as it is not in the power of our adversaries to prevent it. We therefore have never dreamt of provoking or preparing a revolution".

The Third International, on the contrary, stressed the role of the proletarian party, not only in general organisation and education, but in **planning and organising the actual seizure of power.**

For that task, the party had to be equipped to help the working class develop that awareness of its class aims which is necessary to make the proletariat an effective independent force in history; to guide the working class in resisting the snares and diversions laid by the bourgeoisie and its agents in the labour movement; and to have the necessary internal coherence and clarity to steer an accurate course in periods of tumultuous crisis when 'a day or two can decide the fate of the revolution'.

According to these conceptions, the idea of the proletarian party embracing all those "on the side of the workers" was rejected. The communist party was defined first as an ideological selection, on the basis of proletarian politics. The communists broke not only from those who had sided with the bourgeoisie (the reformists), but also with the waverers (the centrists).

### The International degenerates

Men like Lazzari or Serrati in Italy, Lebedour in Germany, Martov in Russia, Fritz Adler in Austria, even Robert Williams or George Lansbury in England, clearly sided with the working class — according to their lights. Yet the communists, concerned to build a party as a sharp instrument which would not shatter in a revolutionary crisis, did not hesitate to break with them, when that break was necessary to establish a clearly revolutionary policy in the party.

Equally, they advocated a more intense internal debate and democratic life in the party — for without an alert democracy in the party, the rapid reorientations necessary at sharp turns in struggle would be impossible.

However, by the time that this new conception of the proletarian party was being given its most brilliant codification — by the Italian Communist Antonio Gramsci — the Communist International itself, under the weight of the growing Stalinist bureaucracy in Russia, was sliding into centrism.

FROM 1923 in Russia, and from the late '20s internationally, the Trotskyists fought against Stalinist centrism with a perspective of "reforming the Communist International". In 1933, they changed their orientation to one of building a Fourth International. Their change was not made on the grounds that 1933 marked the point where the Stalinists definitely crossed the class line.

In 1926-7 the Stalinists openly allied with the Chinese bourgeoisie. In 1935 they began a whole world orientation of alliance with "democratic imperialism". Their "crossing the class line" could be dated from 1927 or from 1935 — but certainly not from 1933.

In fact, since the late '20s Trotsky had argued that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was not a party in any real sense; it was a bureaucratic machine. The CPSU was undoubtedly the leading party of the Comintern. Thus from the late '20s — according to Trotsky's analysis — the Comintern was already politically dead at the top.

The estimation underlying the orientation of "reforming the CI" was that the great social crises of the period would so shake up the CI as to open cracks through which the Trotskyists could gain access to the mass of revolutionary workers who adhered to the CPs as being the parties of the October Revolution. The point about Hitler's victory in 1933 was not that Stalinist policy, having been wrong previously, but 'not too bad', now 'went too far'. Indeed, one crucial fact was that Stalinist policy didn't change in the aftermath of Hitler's victory.

see their relation to the party.

Inside a Second-Internationalist party which sees itself as gradually organising and educating the class, will be currents seeing themselves as gradually re-organising and re-educating the party. Inside a 3rd Internationalist party, fighting in the mass arena to defeat reformism, will be currents fighting for leadership on issues of mass struggle. (There is almost no classic case of this because the Stalinist degeneration of the CI came so soon: the post-1917 faction fights in the Bolshevik party come nearest).



A commission sits during the Second Congress of the 3rd International in 1920; on the far right are (seated) Sylvia Pankhurst, and (standing) the writer John Reed.

The point was that a political crisis of the greatest dimensions failed to produce cracks in the Comintern's bureaucratic monolithism. It was that which proved the CI "dead for the revolution".

In retrospect, the International Left Opposition of 1930-33, formally a faction, was in fact a party; just as in retrospect the Bolshevik faction of 1903-12; was in substance a party. But the Trotskyist "party" of 1930 and afterwards was not a party (like those of the 1st and 2nd Internationals) working to organise and educate a raw proletariat, nor (like the 3rd International) a mass party contending with reformism for hegemony in the working class. It was a propaganda group (not yet a party in the proper sense) fighting for its ideas "against the stream" in a labour movement dominated by Stalinism and social democracy.

That reality called for different norms, different procedures, different methods. In an organisation whose main current task is propaganda — detailed explanation of complex and controversial ideas — a militant who, while agreeing on the general ideas of communism, disagrees with most of the specific ideas of the specific tendency, will not easily find a role. There need not be, cannot be, and should not be, any regulations forbidding membership to people with such wide differences — but in practice a propaganda group will inevitably be unable to accommodate as wide a variety of different views as a fully-formed mass party.

### Trotsky and the Right Opposition

Thus Trotsky commented on the Right Communists (the tendency of Brandler-Lovestone-Sellier-Tasca etc) that, while such currents could and should play a positive role within a Communist International with a healthy regime, in the actual conditions any fusion of the Left Opposition with the Right Communists would be politically disastrous.

Trotskyists have remained fighting as a propagandist minority ever since (bar one or two exceptional situations). That has not prevented sharp debates, faction fights, and splits within Trotskyist organisations. The best-documented history of a Trotskyist organisation — that of the American movement — shows, on the contrary, very sharp fights and splits.

That is, in part, logical. As the party sees its relation to the class, so also currents within the party will tend to

Inside a Fourth-Internationalist group which is essentially a polemicist, a critic in the labour movement (albeit one fighting for ties with the masses and their struggles), one expects the sharpest internal battles.

But this is too schematic. The sociological base of a party also affects its internal life.

A petty bourgeois sect's relation to the class — disdainful, aloof, or sometimes fawning — corresponds to an internal regime either of despotism or of discussion-circle amorphousness. And the Trotskyist movement, being a small minority current with an unfavourable social composition, has always been plagued with sects and sectarian tendencies, with self-regarding circles content to discuss among themselves and to hang together for mutual satisfaction, without ever really seeking a road to principled penetration of the workers' movement.

### The split with Burnham-Shachtman

Many of the most important splits in the early period of the international Trotskyist movement were those which sloughed off the elements of circle politics — Landau, Frey, etc (and circle politics is sectarian in essence, even when — as often — it makes "anti-sectarianism" its point of honour).

These splits did not take place, necessarily, over a plain and straightforward difference of stated political positions. Indeed, often the principled basis of the split was the unprincipled nature of the methods of the groups which split away.

Trotsky at one time had to fight against a proposal to expel Landau from the German Left Opposition; but when it came to a showdown with Landau and his Austrian allies in the 'Mahnruf' group, Trotsky had this to say:

"But what shall we say of the 'Mahnruf' group that changes its 'tendency' seven times in the interests of the self-preservation of the old clique and in doing this does not halt before the dirtiest methods? Judgment must be based on the fact that it is an altogether unprincipled clique... which does not take ideas seriously, and with whom we must watch not their theses but their fingers. What is important is not the theses that Landau will present tomorrow, but the fact that he will approve everything on China, even on America and the other countries, insofar as it does not affect his position of power..."

what he bluntly called "the petty bourgeois opposition". He argued that even if by chance Burnham-Shachtman-Abern won a majority, the faction in political solidarity with Trotsky should not split: they should remain loyal, confident that the Burnham-Shachtman-Abern majority could only be very temporary. But when Burnham-Shachtman-Abern had defined themselves by splitting, Trotsky commented: "If we take the political differences as they are, we can say they were not sufficient for a split, but if they developed a tendency to turn away from the proletariat in the direction of petty bourgeois circles, then the same differences can have an absolutely different value... their inner social feeling was such that it was impossible for them to go together with us".

Some groups did split from the International Left Opposition or the FI movement on the simple bases of political positions outside the framework of Trotskyism. The most obvious example is the Italian-based ultra-left Bordigist tendency. Why did the Trotskyists part way with the Bordigists? Even after the division, Trotsky stressed that he considered the Bordigists to be a serious communist revolutionary tendency. But a party which — in line with the Bordigists' ideas — rejected democratic demands in the crisis then underway in Spain, would never be ideologically capable of leading a revolution. And thus for the Trotskyists — whose raison d'être was the defence of a programme which would fit a party to lead a revolution — fusion with the Bordigists was excluded. (In a mass Communist International with a healthy internal regime, of course, the struggle against Bordigist ultra-leftism could be — and was, from 1920 to 1926 at least, conducted as an internal debate, without a split).

### Tendencies "referring to Trotskyism"

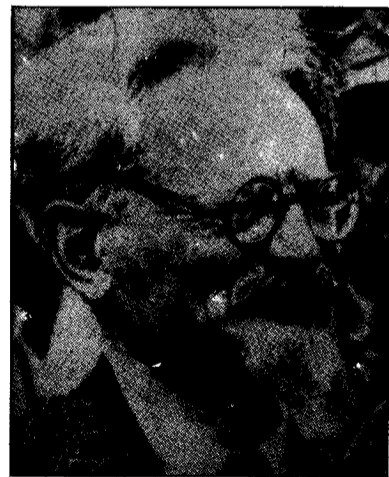
Today, however, even the question "inside or outside the framework of Trotskyism" is useless as a guide to the ideological demarcation of the proletarian party. There are some groups who think we should seek the unity of all tendencies "referring to Trotskyism". Lutte Ouvriere advocates that; so also, less clearly, does the United Secretariat of the Fourth International [\*2].

But it would mean uniting with tendencies like the French OCI:



Heinrich Brandler

semi-Zionists, supporters of the stooges of French imperialism during Algeria's war for independence, people who regularly describe bourgeois social democratic governments as 'workers' governments'; people who at the height of the revolutionary upsurge in Portugal could find no better slogan than to call on Mario Soares — head of the Portuguese party of NATO — to form a government. In short, semi-reformists. And semi-reformists calling themselves "Trotskyists" are ten times worse than sincere and open semi-reformists — just as Struve was ten times worse as a claimed Social Democrat than as an open liberal, and Bernstein's theories ten times more enervating because they had the label 'Marxist'.



Leon Trotsky

\*1. The new 'Workers Power' split from the I-CL are an example of today's successors of the politics of Landau, Frey and Naville. Circle politics is their dominant trend, more so than their openly expressed workerist bias. Their drive is not so much to do anything in relation to the 'industrial work' which they championed, as to impress themselves and their friends that they are "serious about industrial work".

\*2. The 'Faction and Party' series in Red Weekly constructs a mechanical division between "organisational" and "political" issues — while at the same time divorcing the question of organisation from its sociological base. It reinvents Second-Internationalist party-building principles without at the same time reinventing the mass proletarian base which underpinned them.

To do this, it uses Marxism as a collection of quotations, as an attorney uses law books. It lacks the slightest notion of Marxism as a militant science allowing action to be guided by lessons of previous struggles and by foresight — for example, in relation to the need for a decisive struggle against centrism even while the centrist leaders are, without a doubt, fighting against the bourgeoisie.

Indeed, centrism is not mentioned at all. And that is unsurprising. As Trotsky wrote: "A centrist readily proclaims his hostility to reformism; but he does not mention centrism..."

TO BE CONTINUED

250 militant workers gathered last weekend in Birmingham for a conference on 'Wage Control and Union Democracy' called by the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement, an organisation initiated by the Workers' Socialist League (WSL).

The conference heard from one of the recently victimised Cowley stewards, from Keith Vaness (who is appealing against expulsion from Islington North CLP), and from one of the delegates who had fought disaffiliation by the TUC of Oxford Trades Council. All of these speakers concluded strongly from their experience the necessity of fighting the trade union and Labour bureaucracy.

The resolution from the conference organising committee was moved by Alan Thornett, leading member of the WSL. In his opening speech and in his reply to the debate he emphasised that in his view the key issue facing the working class was wage control; during the next few months major battles would erupt over wages — the Government's policy is 'now extremely vulnerable' — and that in order to fight against wage control the working class would have to confront the bureaucracy.

## Policy

A successful offensive involved a battle for 'leadership, programme, policy, principle' inside the working class. We were present at this conference, he reiterated, to discuss the 'key questions of programme'.

Given this emphasis on the programme, *Workers Action* supporters were surprised at the totally inadequate programmatic demands presented by the conference organisers.

A conference called to discuss trade union democracy was offered just two demands on this question: the regular election of all full-time officials at branch meetings, and no more than the average wage of their members for these officials. Careerists would thereby be driven out of their positions, we were assured, and trade union democracy was presumably guaranteed.

In reality, of course, the vast majority of trade union branches would still remain inhabited by 'two men and a dog', as one speaker put it during the debate. Disturbingly, Comrade Thornett explicitly rejected amendments seeking to make union officials responsible to mass meetings of the whole membership. The

# RANK AND FILE MEETING STUCK ON ONE IDEA

right wing sometimes uses mass meetings as a manoeuvre to bypass branch leadership, he explained.

Such a position *abandons* the struggle for real democracy in face of the possibility of defeat at the hands of the right wing in the battle for rank and file leadership. And it turns its back on the vital battle for rank and file initiative and involvement in political struggle.

The extent to which the conference organisers had failed to grasp the problem of fighting for union democracy was shown again by the fact that their resolution made no mention whatever of the need to fight for the rights of women as trade unionists; no mention, either, of the struggle against racism and for the rights within the labour movement of black workers.

These omissions were so glaring that the organising committee were obliged to accept amendments which to some degree took up these points. (In the process, it is worth noting, they pledged themselves to 'full support for the campaign and demands of the *Working Women's Charter*; this at any rate is a step forward for the WSL, which until now has refused to support the WWCC.)

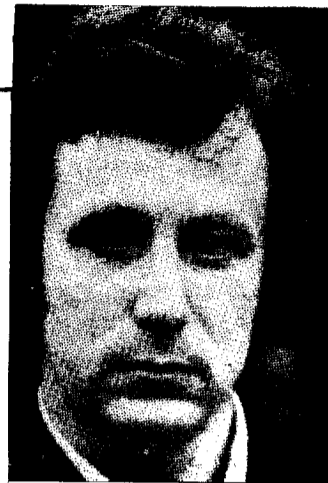
## Pillars

Yet they rejected inclusion of any demands relating to the rights of the unemployed or the need to link the struggles of the employed and the unemployed.

This last point was especially surprising since Comrade Thornett admitted in reply to the debate that the Social Contract rested on three pillars: wage control, the cuts, and unemployment. Why no mention of unemployment, then?



Thornett (below seemed blind to the meaning of the Trico victory



The answer to this question must lie in Thornett's conviction that wage control is *the* vital issue. He and his co-thinkers have constructed for themselves a scenario of what will happen in the next year: under the pressure of the capitalist offensive the working class will rise up against wage control.

Now this *may* or *may not* happen; socialists must be prepared for an explosion on the wages front (obviously as well as trying to bring it about, insofar as our forces allow) and must arm themselves and the working class with programmatic demands adequate to the situation.

But to *declare* that this, and by implication *only this*, is going to happen, leaves you unprepared

for other, equally possible happenings. Indeed, Comrade Thornett seems to have so blinded himself by his conviction, that crucial events in the class struggle have passed him by.

The most astonishing example of this was provided by the conference itself. Apart from the speakers mentioned earlier, the conference was addressed by

Sally Groves, representing the victorious strikers at Trico. She ended her speech by pointing out that the Trico women had succeeded in breaking the 6-pound limit. This victory indeed represents the biggest and furthest-reaching breach of the pay limit yet achieved by any group of workers, and the fact that a speaker from Trico addressed the conference was of course excellent. *Yet nowhere, in five pages of resolution submitted by the conference organising committee, was there a single reference to Trico. There was not a sentence about women's rights. There was not ONE WORD about equal pay at all.*

## Doubt

*Workers Action* supporters at the conference spoke in favour of a resolution from the NUJ Book Branch, which took up all of the points made above on the question of an adequate programme for fighting against wage restraint and for union democracy.

Very little of this resolution was accepted by the organising committee, and there must be doubts as to whether the campaign will show itself adequate to the massive tasks it has set for itself.

Without the elaboration of an adequate programme of demands, and without recognising the necessity of developing this programme as the weapon of a rank and file movement uniting all sections of the working class, the bureaucracy will not be destroyed.

JAMES RYAN

# 'CONDEMN THIS VIOLENCE'

## Open letter to IS from Northampton supporters of WA

ON October 14th an incident took place in Northampton which can only harm the socialist movement and cast doubts on the seriousness of your political ideas.

A supporter of the socialist newspaper *Workers Action* entered a public meeting on 'State Capitalism' which was advertised in the public meetings column of *Socialist Worker*. He was alone, and was told by an IS supporter twice his size to "keep quiet during discussion time or you'll get a punch on the nose". To the reply that this was a brave thing to say in view of their difference in size (14st. to 8st.) he received a punch on the nose, was thrown to the floor and punched and kicked.

At this point two other WA supporters arrived and rescued their comrade. Then having removed his glasses and regained his composure, the WA supporter who had been attacked returned to the meeting room and hit his attacker with a chair, then left.

This incident we relate truthfully and with no pleasure in order to defend ourselves from the slander that *Workers Action* supporters provoked a fight; and to challenge IS nationally and locally to repudiate and condemn their comrade's conduct.

The background to this dispute undoubtedly lies in the local IS's inability to resist the national decline of IS and their inability to answer and debate charges by WA supporters and others that they were irresponsible in their advice to workers at the Chamberlain Phipps dispute

which led to four workers being sacked. Also their inability to substantiate their slanders that if only *Workers Action* militants had followed IS's advice, they would not have lost an important dispute at Blackwood Hodge.

At Chamberlain Phipps in an inter-union/union-boss fight some workers were mistaken in thinking that they could rely on the District Committee and District Secretary of the union in an attempt to change a NUFLAT closed shop agreement to an AUEW one.

IS members reinforced these mistaken ideas and promised, through the Right to Work Campaign, mass pickets and blacking of goods. The WA supporters who stressed the need for unity of the workforce, if necessary on a dual union basis until the pressure could be brought for the change the workers wanted, were called defeatist.

Encouraged by IS, four workers refused to join NUFLAT and were sacked; from then on nothing went right.

The course chosen by IS led not only to the women being sacked, but to their isolation from the rest of the workers in the factory and therefore to the loss of the only real strength they had. The mass pickets never materialised, the blacking was never mentioned again. All the pressure was taken off the union officials who were able to defeat the workers at every turn.

When attempts have been made to learn the lessons of this dispute and to discuss the different approaches of *Workers Action* and IS, we have been answered with the same stock response: "Oh well, it's water under the bridge now". NO com-

rades! You have made serious mistakes, committed the kind of blunder with almost any trade union militant could have avoided. As socialists we need to learn from those mistakes by discussing them openly and fully.

At Blackwood Hodge, a shop steward was victimised and made redundant with five other workers. An official strike took place for 2½ weeks but was only supported by 65% of the workforce. The *Right to Work* supporters arrived on the scene and were rebuffed and laughed at when their only contribution was to suggest (as a way of stopping the scabs) that the strikers chop down the trees across the works entrance. When the strikers turned down such offers of help the *Right to Work* members started to spread the slander that *Workers Action* supporters had lost the strike because they would not listen to this brilliant advice.

The opportunity has existed for IS or anyone else to go to the *Socialist Engineers* meeting in the town and make their criticisms of *Workers Action* public to a gathering of serious industrial militants. This has never been done because no 'proof' exists for these lies.

The local *International Socialists* have been challenged to a debate on the role of revolutionaries in the trade unions. To that challenge we add a further one: Are you prepared to repudiate violence within the labour movement or let an independent inquiry of trade unionists examine the affair of violence on 14th October.

NORTHAMPTON  
WORKERS ACTION  
SUPPORTERS

# workers' ACTION supporters' groups

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Write for details of meetings and activities to:  
WASG, 49 Carnac Street, London SE27

# WIDIRKLEERS IN ACTION

## Hospital shutdown

ACTON Hospital's operating theatre is now shut down. At Hammersmith Hospital, a casualty department built to handle 20,000 patients a year is dealing with 130,000; an X-ray department designed for 12,000 copes with 50,000. Overstrain at that hospital leads to it being closed to admissions 50% of the time and there are 2,000 on the waiting list for a bed there. "Shortage of linen is causing acute problems in the nursing of patients", according to the Unit Nursing Officer.

Those are a few aspects of the state of National Health facilities in North Hammersmith, West London.

Acton Hospital is to be transformed into a psychiatric hospital and all other patients transferred from it to further intensify the overloading at Hammersmith Hospital. 22,000 pounds will be cut on linen, beds, cleaning materials etc. Casualty facilities are to be alternated between Hammersmith and Charing Cross hospitals, to be available at Hammersmith one day and Charing Cross the next. Too bad for those who get the days mixed up in a rush... And too bad if a life depends on speed.

The Tribunites — it is well known — oppose such cuts. But

what is Tribunitary policy for action against these cuts? They say: campaign, demonstrate, agitate, write letters to your MP, lobby Parliament — and then listen to your MP saying that he can't vote against the cuts because it might bring the government down...

But Labour and trade union militants should reject this 'loyalty card' argument.

We should fight for *NO CUTS*; for defending and extending the NHS; for nationalisation without compensation of the drug industry; for an end to private practice.

Fighting for policies means direct action, not just resolutions. The Hillcrest hostel occupation in Bury (see recent WAs) and the recent hospital workers' occupation in Park Royal are actions which need active support from local trade union and Labour Party bodies.

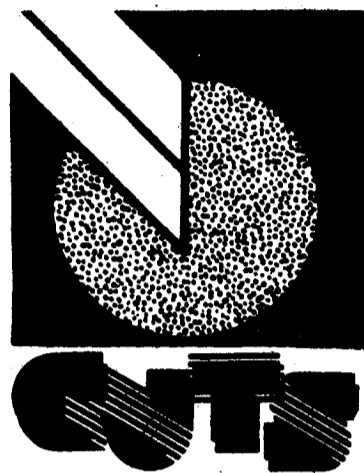
The Hammersmith Hospital Joint Shop Stewards Committee has called for opposition to all cuts. They state a policy of *no covering* for vacant or frozen jobs.

But West London health workers could learn from another fight against cuts in their area, on the buses. At Shepherd's Bush bus garage, the local TGWU branch decided not to drive buses which were not completely roadworthy. They took the decision not to work any route on Wednesdays. On two Wednesdays no buses ran from that garage. *Several new engines and engine parts arrived promptly!*

JHT/MT

# TOWARDS

# NOV 17TH



## ANTI-CUTS TEACHERS SUSPENDED BY NUT

COLLABORATION between the NUT Executive and the employers runs like a cancer through the victimisation of NUT members at Little Ilford Comprehensive School, Ilford, where members have been suspended from the Union for fighting the Cuts with an unofficial 'no cover' action.

In support of a member threatened by the headmaster over "breach of contract" after refusing to cover for a teacher away on maternity leave, NUT members struck for the duration of one lesson.

This brought down on their heads immediate threats from NUT Head Office, with General Secretary Jarvis quoting the infamous 'Rule 8' (allowing for summary suspension of members for unofficial action), and saying he would write to the Local Education Authority to tell them the action was not sanctioned by the Union.

He also demanded the names of those who had taken part in the action, and threatened that the school NUT rep, Birendra Singh, would be held personally responsible.

Next, Executive Office Jim Swift arrived at the school, handing to each Union member a form which they should sign undertaking to cease their action and never to do such a thing again.

He was told that the matter would be discussed at a special school NUT meeting 4 days later. And at this meeting Swift was there again, handing out new forms before the old ones could even be discussed. If they were not returned by the next day, he told them, they would all be suspended from the Union.

His bullying tactics were condemned even by those members who hadn't favoured the unofficial action, and a vote was taken 21-3 to do nothing about the forms.

Swift had not even been able to argue his case (if he had one, when 20,000 teachers are out of work). He was merely the "servant of the Executive".

Support was immediate. Newham Council was picketed the next night to protest the threat of victimisation. The picket (called by the London Education Cuts Action Committee and attended by 200 teachers from across London) was followed by a meeting which planned widespread leafleting of

local schools in preparation for the following week's local NUT branch meeting.

At this meeting an emergency resolution to allow the suspended Little Ilford teachers to attend and put their case was ruled out of order by Newham Teachers' Association President George Talbot (of the Communist Party...) — who was promptly and overwhelmingly challenged and responded by walking out. He took with him just 20 of the 150 members present.

The meeting proceeded to resolve *not to recognise the suspensions; to call on all branch members to implement immediately the same no-cover action that Little Ilford had taken (together with another school which has not so far faced Union discipline); to strike if any teacher is sacked or suspended by Newham Education Authority; to join with Lambeth and East London Associations in calling for 1/2-day strike action against the cuts on November 17th; to demand that the Executive calls all members out that day and that it organises a national demonstration against the cuts; and to demand that the Executive implements immediate, indefinite national no-cover action for any absences of more than one day.*

The Association also agreed to sponsor a meeting on 10th November called by East London, Wandsworth and Westminster Teachers' Associations to discuss action on November 17th. (This meeting is at 7.30pm at LSE Old Theatre, Houghton Street, WC2).

The meeting also elected a Little Ilford Defence Committee to draw other sections of the labour movement into the fight against these victimisations and the cuts. (Contact the Defence Ctee at 3a Wolferton Road, London E12.)

Resolutions condemning the suspension of these workers for fighting the cuts should be sent to Fred Jarvis, Gen. Sec. NUT, at Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1. And NUT members should support those victimised by coming to a picket at Hamilton House after school on 6th November.

IAN HOLLINGWORTH

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## KIRKLEES WORKERS FIGHT CUTS

THE TORY controlled council in Kirklees, Yorkshire, has been preparing to cut jobs by 20%. Already hundreds of jobs have gone and the final figure is expected to be 4,000.

On Monday October 20th, as a step in the fight-back, Kirklees trade union Liaison Committee called a meeting at Huddersfield Friendly & Trades Club. 140 local trade unionists turned up.

Paul Jagger of NUPE told the meeting that the Kirklees council had already cut many jobs by not filling vacancies. It had also cut the quality of school meals and imposed rent rises on its care-takers. Although old people's and children's homes are still being opened, 4 old ones were closed to pay for them so that "We are running like hell just to stand still".

Bro. J. Dakers of the NUT and Bro. J. Price of Nalgo both told a familiar story of budget cuts leading to falling standards and staff cuts. The fight-back has already started by refusing to cover for any lost jobs and, like the porters at Huddersfield Polytechnic, by the rejection of any productivity-based bonus scheme.

The meeting carried a resolution to contact the local trades council and do everything in our power to get as many workers as possible to the November 17th demonstration; and for the Committee to organise a local demonstration and a delegation to Kirklees Council.

Prominent local members of the AUEW and other unions in the audience promised their support for the resolutions and the NUPE representative invited all workers to travel free in the train being organised by his union to join the London demonstration on November 17th.

## EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Block ads, 5 pounds per column inch; paid ads, 8p per word. Send copy to 'Events', 49 Carnac Street, London SE27 to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's issue.

THURSDAY 4th NOVEMBER. Liverpool W.A. Readers' Meeting. 'Which Way for Southern Africa'. Speakers: K. Katsandl (ZANU), Bas Hardy (Edgehill LPYS). 7.45pm at The Mitre, Dale Street.

TUESDAY 9th NOVEMBER. Workers' Action and Red Weekly Joint Meeting in CAMBRIDGE. 'Fight the Cuts — Smash the Social Contract'. Speakers include Jack Sutton (NC member of NUPE, in personal capacity). 8pm Mawson Hall, Mawson Road

WEDNESDAY 10th NOVEMBER. Workers' Action Readers Meeting: 'Participation — Fake Democracy, Fake Control'. Andrew Hornung, Hammersmith Town Hall King Street, Hammersmith, 7.30pm.

TUESDAY 16th NOVEMBER. CARDIFF Workers Action Readers' Group meeting on 'What is Working Class Internationalism'. 7.30pm at Rhymney Hotel, Adam Street, Cardiff (opp. Fire Station).

DEBATE  
between the  
INTERNATIONAL-COMMUNIST LEAGUE  
and the  
INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP  
on  
'FACTION & PARTY'  
SPEAKERS:  
Martin Thomas (I-CL)  
Speaker from IMG

SUNDAY  
November 14th  
7.30pm

'The Roebuck', Tottenham Court Road, W1

## CARDIFF NURSERY CUT

THE decision to close the nursery at the large tax office in Llanishan, Cardiff, in two years' time is being viewed with alarm by many IRSF members on the site. One of the immediate effects it will have will be to force many women with small children to leave the job. Once this has happened it is unlikely that any of the vacancies created will be filled.

The closure decision, coming straight from the Labour Government in the shape of the Lord Privy Seal, gives a graphic illustration of who the cuts in public expenditure are aimed at. Not only is it an attack on working mothers but on the jobs of all tax officers. Yet the local IRSF branch leadership are using the fact that it is government-inspired to claim that very little can be done about it!

Together with the official side, they pin their hopes on persuading the Lord Privy Seal to change his mind, using arguments about possible recruitment problems when full employment returns.

These appeals will fall on deaf ears. The Government are not interested in the problems of full employment at the moment. Their strategy is to make savage cuts in spending at the expense of facilities and jobs. Getting rid of the nursery makes complete sense from their point of view!

## DAGENHAM STRIKERS RETURN

FIVE DOORSETTERS who had been on strike over the sacking of another doorsetter (Ken West) were forced last week to return to work in the Body Plant at Ford Dagenham Management, encouraged both by their victory in the layoff and conditions dispute in the previous weeks and by the isolation of the doorsetters (the rest of B-shift had voted against strike action over the victimisations) had sacked the doorsetters and tried on a number of occasions to get their job manned by scabs.

The unions blacked the work. The striking doorsetters, to help the implementation of this blacking, got back into the plant — despite massive Ford Security attempts to keep them out. No work was done of the job.

The strike ended last week after an agreement reached by the trade union officials. This had been preceded by a vote of confidence in their handling of the issue by shop stewards in the Body Plant.

The deal was to return to work if Fords lifted the sacking of the 8 doorsetters. But Ken West remained sacked. So indeed do the other 5 workers who had been victimised the previous week.

The end of last week and the beginning of this week have also seen the rejection, in mass meetings of the PTA and shop meetings in the body plant, of management's offer in the recent pay claim negotiations.

If the IRSF leaders are serious in their aim of saving the nursery then they will have to fight this strategy. At a local level this means forcing the management to refuse to carry out the run-down and making the government pay for any deficit incurred.

On a larger scale the IRSF must combine with other public sector unions in fighting all cuts. A first step towards this would be a massive turnout of IRSF members on November 17th for the demonstration in London.

Militants in the union must start pushing for this straight away.

## Redbridge teachers

TEACHERS at Gilbert Miles School on 3-day no cover action have won a moral victory. At the recent Redbridge Teachers Association meeting their NUT school rep, Ian Murray was top of the poll of the 10 members elected to go on the November 17th demonstration against the public sector cuts.

Why a moral victory? Redbridge Local Education Authority is the first in the country to put ALL its new teachers, regardless of scale and previous service with other LEAs, on a one-week notice contract (the norm is one school term's contract). In early October, over half the teachers at Gilbert Miles, including some yet to join the NUT, voted to take unofficial 3 day no-cover action.

The Head, within legal limits, gave support to his staff, and has obtained a supply teacher every time someone was absent for more than 3 days, which is the aim of the action.

The union leadership's response, by contrast, has been scandalous. The school rep received an intimidating letter from the Union's Deputy Gen. Sec., and a visit from the President of Redbridge Association. Under threat of disciplinary action, he reluctantly agreed to call off the action. But later at the school branch meeting the members were so incensed that they voted to "postpone" the decision to stop their unofficial no-cover policy.

At the Redbridge Teachers' Association meeting, all resolutions of support for the Gilbert Miles teachers were ruled out of order. Members at the meeting therefore expressed their support in the only remaining way, by voting overwhelmingly for Murray when the meeting selected delegates for November 17th. Murray received more than 70 votes from the 100-strong meeting, while the branch officers received only 40-50 votes each.

It was a moral victory. But a more effective one would have been a resolve, such as some other Associations have taken (see this page) to participate fully in the actions on November 17th, instead of just sending the ten delegates the Union has permitted.

Cheung Siu Ming  
Lambeth NUT



# DIARY OF EVENTS 1918-1958



# HUNGARY 1956

Twenty years ago this week the Hungarian working class was waging a life or death struggle for socialist democracy. From the capital Budapest to the smallest village on the great plains, workers and students, often armed with little more than petrol bombs, were desperately resisting the invasion of thousands of 'Red' Army tanks. It was in the industrial area that the fighting was the fiercest; areas like Czepele — 'Red Czepele' because it had such a high proportion of Communist Party members.

The Russians knew that, despite their own lying propaganda about "fascist counter-revolution", their real enemy was the Hungarian working class and its workers' councils. It was against the proletarian neighbourhoods that the greatest fire-power was concentrated; at the end of four days' fighting, Czepele and Dunapentele had been pounded into ruins.

## Abuse

Throughout the world the Stalinist press heaped abuse and lies on the uprising, describing it as "Fascist inspired", "funded by imperialism" and "a return to capitalism". The Daily Worker made its own contribution to this systematic distortion by at first rewriting and then suppressing altogether the reports of Peter Fryer, its own correspondent in Budapest.

All the squalid dictators of Eastern Europe, fearful for their own safety, supported the Russian intervention; even Tito, erstwhile opponent of Stalin, made his peace with the Kremlin. Now,

on the 20th anniversary, they all keep SILENT about their bloody victory against an alleged 'return to fascism'!

Our 'democratic' capitalists also mute their voice on this anniversary. True enough, twenty years ago they squeezed the Hungarian workers for every drop of anti-socialist propaganda. The death count in Hungary made good ammunition in the Cold War, and their crocodile tears salved many a conscience tender after the Suez adventure

## Tragic

But in reality the Western powers had no intention of aiding the proletarian revolution. The world had been carved into 'spheres of influence' at Yalta, and following the logic of this, Dulles, then US Secretary of State, openly defended the legality of Soviet troops in Eastern Europe. At the height of the struggle the New York Times reported that the US Government was opposed to the uprising and embarrassed by it.

The years between the Hungarian Revolution and today have shown it to be only one particularly dramatic and tragic episode in the continuing crisis of Stalinism. The revolt of the Czech workers in Spring 1968 and the recent strikes in Poland show many of the same characteristics, although none has yet reached the proportions of an armed uprising. In each case we see the working class demanding not a return to capitalism but an end to bureaucratic tyranny, and that control of social and economic life pass into the hands of the proletariat itself.

ated from fascism in order that "ordinary" capitalism might continue. To this end the Russians set up a Provisional Government of social democratic, Communist and peasant parties. Its first proclamation was announced on Radio Moscow in December 1944. It stated that "The Provisional Government declares that it regards private property as the basis of economic life and the social order of the country, and will guarantee its continuity". It was read by General Bela Miklos, Knight



- 1918**
- Oct. Defeat of Germany in first world war results in collapse of Hapsburg Empire.
- Nov. Hungary declared a republic, and government formed under premiership of MIHALY KAROLYI. Communist Party of Hungary founded under leadership of Bela Kun.
- 1919**
- March Karolyi government falls, and Hungarian Soviet Republic established. Coalition government of social democrats and communists set up under BELA KUN.
- Aug. Hungarian Soviet Republic falls. ADMIRAL MIKLOS HORTHY comes to power as leader of counter-revolutionary forces, and heads right wing régime which rules Hungary until end of second world war.
- 1941**
- Hungary enters second world war on the side of Germany and Italy.
- 1943**
- Hungarian government enters into secret negotiations with the Allies for an armistice and Hungarian withdrawal from the war.
- 1944**
- March German army occupies Hungary.
- Oct. Hungarian regent, Admiral Horthy, arrested by Germans. Hungarian "nazi" party, the Arrow Cross, forms a government under Ferenc Szalasi.
- Dec. Soviet army advances into Eastern Hungary. Provisional government set up at Debrecen.
- 1945**
- Jan. Hungarian Provisional Government signs armistice in Moscow with Allies.
- Feb. Soviet army liberates Budapest.
- March Provisional government decrees major land reform. Minister of Agriculture is Imre Nagy.
- April Whole territory of Hungary liberated from Germans. Provisional government moves to Budapest.
- Nov. General Elections. Results: Smallholders' Party 57 per cent, Social Democrats 17.4 per cent, Communists 17 per cent, National Peasants' Party 7 per cent. Coalition government formed from representatives of these four parties.
- 1946**
- Hungary proclaimed a republic, inflation halted and first measures of nationalisation implemented.
- 1947**
- Leading members of Smallholders' Party forced out of government, a three-year economic plan announced, and the banks nationalised.
- 1948**
- Further nationalisations, fusion of the Communist and Social Democratic parties, and formation of new government in which Communist Party holds all key posts. First measure of agricultural collectivisation. Cardinal Jozsef Mindszenty arrested.
- 1949**
- "Single slate" elections. Consolidation of one party state. LASZLO RAJK and other leading "native" communists arrested as "Titoists" tried and executed. Nationalisation extended to all establishments with more than ten employees. State security police, AVH, established as an independent force responsible only to the cabinet.
- 1950**
- First five-year plan. Further growth of police terror. Many former members of Social Democratic and Smallholders' parties arrested.
- 1951**
- Several prominent "native" communists including Janos Kadar, Gyula Kallai, Geza Losonczy and Ferenc Donath arrested. Mass deportations and internments in forced labour camps, increasing persecution of the churches, and stepping-up of agricultural collectivisation.
- 1952**
- High point of Stalinist dictatorship. General Secretary of the Communist Party, MATYAS RAKOSI — "Stalin's best Hungarian disciple" — becomes Prime Minister.
- 1953**
- March STALIN dies.
- June Hungarian Communist Party leaders including

THE origins of the Hungarian Stalinist bureaucracy lie in the advance of the Russian army at the end of 1944. The fascist Horthy regime collapsed in the path of the Russian advance. But Stalin had no intention that it should be replaced by working class power. Throughout Eastern Europe the Red Flags raised above the factories were ordered to be lowered, and the managers and owners were restored.

Stalin had decided that the workers and peasants were to be liber-

# DIARY OF EVENTS

Matyas Rakosi, Erno Gero and Mihaly Farkas, together with Imre Nagy, summoned to Moscow for a meeting with the Soviet leaders. On return to Budapest, Communist Party leadership reorganised in spirit of "collective leadership", and Central Committee passes *June Resolutions* criticising the party's former policies.

July IMRE NAGY replaces Rakosi as Prime Minister and announces his government programme — *The New Course* — to the Hungarian parliament. Nagy's programme includes amnesty for political prisoners and abolition of internment camps, as well as economic and social reforms. RAKOSI remains First Party Secretary.

## 1954

Release of several communist and social democrat political prisoners. Resistance to Nagy's reforms within party and state bureaucracy sparks off first stirrings of revolt amongst *Szabad Nep* journalists.

## 1955

March Central Committee denounces Imre Nagy and the policies of the New Course as a "rightist deviation".

April IMRE NAGY removed from all party posts, including positions in Politburo and Central Committee, and replaced as Prime Minister by ANDRAS HEGEDUS.

May Warsaw Pact set up with Hungary a founder member. Khrushchev and Bulganin visit Yugoslavia and declare Stalin's allegations against Tito to have been false. In Hungary, Miklos Gimes criticises Rakosi and is expelled from the Communist Party.

## 1956

Feb. TWENTIETH CONGRESS of Communist Party of Soviet Union. Nikita Khrushchev delivers his "secret speech" denouncing Stalin. In Hungary Bela Kun, executed in stalinist purges in Moscow in 1939, is rehabilitated.

March First public meeting of Petofi Circle. Rakosi declares Laszlo Rajk innocent of crimes for which he was executed, but places all blame on state security leaders. Calls for Rakosi's resignation made at Writers' Association.

April Many of remaining political prisoners released. PETOFI CIRCLE holds series of debates on application to Hungary of decisions of Soviet Twentieth Party Congress.

May At Petofi Circle meeting Rajk's widow, Julia Rajk, demands clearing of her husband's name and bringing of his murderers to justice. At a further meeting, Tibor Dery and Geza Losonczy call for change in party leadership and return to power of Imre Nagy. Central Committee condemns (and later bans) Petofi Circle and expels Tibor Dery from Communist Party. Workers' demonstrations in Polish town of Poznan, put down by Polish army, find echo in wave of strikes and disturbances in Hungary.

June RAKOSI resigns as Party Secretary and is replaced by ERNO GERO. Janos Kadar and other "centrists" brought into Politburo.

Sept. Annual Congress of Writers' Association elects new presidium, throwing out party-slate and electing several non-communist writers. New wave of critical and rebellious articles in press and literary journals.

6 Oct Ceremonial reburial of Laszlo Rajk brings 200,000 people onto streets of Budapest.

14 Oct Imre Nagy readmitted to Communist Party.

15 Oct Party and government delegation headed by Gero and Kadar travels to Belgrade for discussions with Tito.

16 Oct Meeting of students in Szeged decides to set up new student organisation, MEFESZ, and calls for support from universities throughout Hungary.

21 Oct In Warsaw, despite Soviet opposition, Wladislaw Gomulka is elected as new First Secretary of Polish Communist Party.

22 Oct Mass meeting of Budapest students in Technological University votes to join MEFESZ. Students formulate their demands in 16-point resolution, calling for withdrawal of Soviet troops, democratisation of Hungarian political life, and new government under Imre Nagy. Meeting calls demonstration for following day in support of their demands and in solidarity with the events in Poland.

23 Oct Student demonstration in Budapest calls for reforms and return to power of Imre Nagy. Gero, First Party Secretary, speaks on radio denouncing demonstrators as enemies of the people. Nagy addresses crowd before Parliament. Stalin statue pulled down. Fighting breaks out at radio building and continues throughout night. Government calls in Soviet troops and tanks to put down revolt.

24 Oct Radio announces IMRE NAGY's appointment as Prime Minister. GERO remains Party Secretary. Martial law declared. Street battles in Budapest against Soviet tanks. Demonstrations and armed conflicts spread throughout country.

FROM PAGE ONE

Grand Cross of the Iron Cross, and Stalin's choice as new President of Hungary.

Many other fascists were to find amenable positions in the administrative apparatus of the new government — especially in the AVO (the Security Police). It was by tight control of the police that the Communist Party came to dominate the government. The Stalinists used the method later described by Rakosi as 'salami tactics'. Through the Ministry of the Interior the Party brought trumped up charges against leading members of the other parties who were "removed". The process was continued until virtually all the other parties had been sliced away, leaving only a rump of intimidated yes-men.

The working class played absolutely no role in this process, and Rakosi later revealed that discussions of it were limited to only the innermost circle of the Party leadership.

## Terror

Neither did the workers play any role in the nationalisations and land collectivisation of 1948, which followed on the opening of the Cold War. Over the Easter holidays the now CP-dominated government briefly announced that large scale industry had become state property. The nationalisations involved working class direct action even less than in Britain!

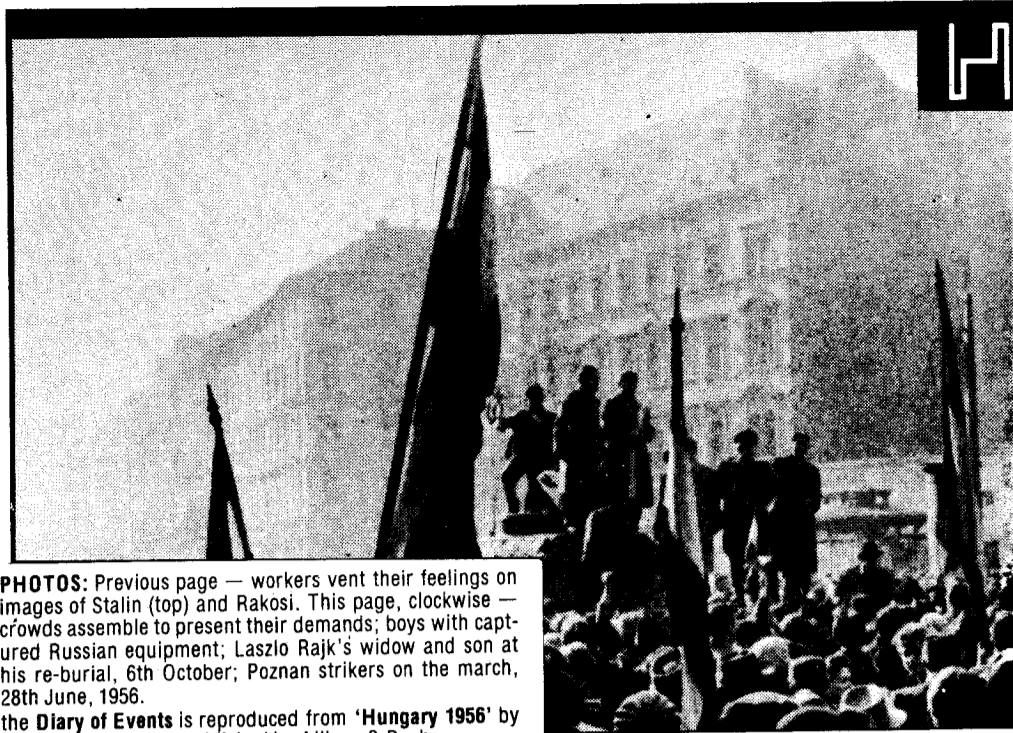
The years 1948-56 were the coldest years of the Stalinist deep freeze. The Rakosi regime maintained itself by systematic terror. The AVO played a key role by constructing a pervasive spy network. The so-called trade unions became simply policemen of the draconian labour laws introduced in 1950. Those found guilty of even minor crimes were given long sentences in labour camps.

The Hungarian economy was transformed into a milch-cow for Russia; in 1948 Finance Minister Erno Gero announced that 25% of national expenditure went to pay Russian war 'reparations'. This placed an enormous burden on the Hungarian workers and peasants.

## Into line

These were also the years of the 'personality cult' of the "Great Stalin" and the "Wise Rakosi". It is recorded that Rakosi admonished a Central Committee member for describing a Party decision as "wise" — that term, he pointed out, was reserved for himself! This mockery of party democracy was enforced by terror. Between 1948 and 1950 almost half a million party members were purged, and a large number paid for even the mild-criticism with their lives.

The most notorious show trial was that of Laszlo Rajk, veteran party leader, who was executed in 1949 after "confessing" that he was a secret "Tito-Trotsky-Fascist". These judicial murders were common to the whole of Eastern Europe. A feature of them was that those Communist leaders who had been exiled in Moscow were used as a battering ram against the 'indigenous' Party leaders of the wartime underground, as Stalin whipped the parties into line.



PHOTOS: Previous page — workers vent their feelings on images of Stalin (top) and Rakosi. This page, clockwise — crowds assemble to present their demands; boys with captured Russian equipment; Laszlo Rajk's widow and son at his re-burial, 6th October; Poznan strikers on the march, 28th June, 1956. The *Diary of Events* is reproduced from 'Hungary 1956' by Bill Lomax, recently published by Allison & Busby.



IN HUNGARY the 'problems of de-stalinisation' were slower to develop and initially took a different form. In April '56 a group of young communists formed a literary discussion club called the Petofi Circle. It soon became a centre for critical discussion and demands for literary and intellectual freedom were voiced by it in 'Hirodalmi Ujsag' (Literary Gazette). Thousands began to attend its meetings, and as they did, their political demands grew.

At one meeting Julia Rajk, widow of Laszlo, demanded that those guilty of his execution should be punished. By July there were calls for the resignation of Rakosi. After futile attempts to suppress the Circle, the Government began to bend. Rakosi 'resigned' and Rajk's corpse was re-buried on October 6th. His funeral quickly assumed the character of a political demonstration, as 200,000 marched behind his coffin.

The execution of Rajk had become a symbol of everything the masses hated.

Throughout September and October the Hungarian people had watched events in Poland. As it became apparent that the Poznan rebels were being lightly treated, and that the Polish government had succeeded in defying the Russians, confidence grew.

The Petofi Circle called for a demonstration of solidarity with Poland. In the absence of Erno Gero, Party Secretary, the Government sanctioned the demonstration. Fearing the effects of a ban, they hoped to lead it in a relatively harmless way. When Gero returned on 22nd October, a day before the demonstration was due, he demanded that it be banned. An announcement to this effect only stiffened the determination that it go ahead.

## RAKOSI CLIQUE

The next day a crowd of 100,000 marched through Budapest to the statue of General Bem, a Pole with an honoured place in the struggles for Hungarian national independence. Here, a resolution from the Writers' Union was read out which called for the removal of the Rakosi clique, for the formation of a new government including Imre Nagy, free elections, control of the factories by workers and specialists and equality of social and economic relations between Hungary and Russia.



THROUGHOUT the period leading to the '56 uprising, some resistance was growing. The conditions precluded strikes or demonstrations, but slumping productivity, soaring absenteeism and sickness, and indifference to quality were all symptoms of working class opposition. When the Kremlin announced in March 1953 that Stalin had died, the East European workers began to strike blows against the regime of oppression that had been forced upon them. In Plzen, Czechoslovakia, there were mass demonstrations in June, and two weeks later the workers of East Germany rebelled.

Although the German revolt was crushed by Russian tanks, it led the Kremlin to ease up. In Hungary, there

As the crowd moved on to the Parliament building, Gero broadcast denouncing them as "fascist rabble". Outside Parliament, the march halted as dusk fell. A delegation was sent to see the Party leaders. After an hour the delegation had not returned, and people grew restive.

Almost jovially, the huge bronze statue of Stalin was toppled. Demands for the return of the delegation grew — hurled through the dark at the AVO guards. Machine gun shots rang out and several unarmed demonstrators were killed.

At last, patience snapped. The AVO were overpowered and street fighting continued throughout the night as the rebels seized all but the main public buildings. By morning, Budapest being under rebel control, a desperate bureaucracy installed Nagy as Prime Minister. Later that day, martial law was declared, and an announcement made that Russian troops had been called in.



be replaced by the more 'liberal' Imre Nagy. However, he remained in complete control of the Party, the real power centre.

From then on for two years there was to be a tug-of-war between the 'liberals' who formed the 'face' of the regime and the Rakosi-ites who had the real power, and frustrated their opponents' efforts at reform.



But whenever tyrants make concessions, they must take care that they are not interpreted as weakness. The Kremlin vacillated. By mid-1955 Nagy was expelled from the Party as an 'incorrigible right deviationist'. Beneath the surface, however, a new mood was developing amongst both the workers and the intellectuals.



THE 23rd October demonstration ended the first phase of the revolution. Up until then, the writers and students had made up the vanguard. But although they could spark off rebellion, they had no means of pressing it home. For example, the demands of the Writers' Union contained no clue as to how they might be carried out. Suspended in this way, they were more appeals to the government than a programme for action. A more astute and sensitive operator might have calmed the situation down by selectively accepting the demands. Gomulka had managed something like this in Poland, and the Hungarian bureaucracy saw a similar role for Nagy.

But the were too late. By now the Budapest working class had begun to affirm itself. Throughout September unrest had been growing in the industrial areas as the news from Poland filtered through. Copies of the Literary Gazette had found their way to the shop floor.

The first demands of the workers were for genuine trade union democracy and workers' control. Initially the Party tried to fob them off with promises. Now the workers seized control themselves.

On the evening of the 23rd, the workers of Csepel Island struck. Armaments workers distributed guns around the factories. By the next morning the strike was general throughout Budapest, and each factory had elected a workers' council to represent them.

Within the day, these had linked up to form a Revolutionary Council, whose authority was accepted by virtually the whole population. Eight years of cynical propaganda had made an impact. The

workers had been told that the factories and the state were theirs. Through the workers' councils this lie was transformed into a reality.

Throughout the other towns of Hungary, the same phenomenon was seen. The workers of a factory would strike and elect a council. The factory representatives would link together, seize the radio station, disarm the AVO and begin the distribution of food and supplies. By the end of Wednesday 24th effective power lay in their hands throughout the country.

## Councils

The next step, of linking the councils together, was never fully completed. The first Russian intervention tended to isolate them, especially as it was the Councils which usually organised the resistance. However, in the lull between the first and second interventions regional links were made. And on the 29th a widely representative meeting was held in Gyor.

Many western observers find it ironical that the Russian tanks were confronted with a working class organised in a form virtually identical to the Soviets of 1917. This is ironical only if Stalinism and Communism are identified.

The Hungarian workers rejected only Stalinism, and with it they repudiated all symbols of 'Communism': the red star, the hammer & sickle, etc. All of these they correctly identified with their oppression as workers and as Hungarians under the domination of Russia.

BUT they did NOT reject the essence of the Communist programme: political and economic control by the working class democratically expressed through their own state organisation.

But except for its most hardened members, the bureaucracy saw Nagy as a last chance to save themselves, a 'liberal' figurehead who might quell the rebellion by his reputation and sweet promises.

Nagy himself had a vision of Hungarian communism at bottom no different from that of the other bureaucrats. But he did want to cleanse the regime of its more obvious corruptions and injustices. Above all, he wanted the regime to take on a more 'Hungarian' flavour: less

bureaucrats were worried. Cautiously at first, changes were made; "disgraced" Communists like Gomulka were brought back into the leadership and in September when the trial of the Poznan workers began, defence rights were given for the first time. Sentences were relatively mild and further trials were abandoned.

When in October Krushchev himself suddenly arrived in Poland, accompanied by large-scale troop manoeuvres on the border, armed groups of workers appeared on the streets. Negotiations were carried on between the Polish Party leaders and Krushchev for a tense 24 hours. But at the end, only ritual declarations of friendship were made. It was apparent to all that for the first time a satellite state had refused to

The programme of the workers' councils was never fully proclaimed. It was often confused or partial, and expressed undue confidence in men like Nagy. But everywhere three things came clearly through:

- ★ that the workers control economically and politically;
- ★ that the corrupt Stalinist bureaucracy be overthrown;
- ★ that small nations like Hungary have the right to self determination.

Nowhere do we find the workers demanding that the factories and large estates be returned to their former owners. It is true that there were demands for the return of land to the small-holding tenant farmers, and for the right of the Catholic Church to freely worship. But genuine communists have never argued for the forcible collectivisation of small peasants or the forcible suppression of religious belief, however reactionary we may consider it to be.

## Fluid

Stalinists to this day proclaim that had the Russian tanks not intervened, the result would have been the restoration of capitalism and landlordism. In reality the situation was fluid. Right wing elements may well have seized the chance for themselves. But are we really to believe that the workers having claimed their right to rule, would quietly hand over control to their former oppressors of the Horthy regime?

In any case, a struggle for socialism by a genuine mass workers' movement is preferable to any amount of bureaucratic manoeuvring. Thousands of Hungarian communists themselves chose the former, and aided the rebellion. As an organisation, the CP virtually collapsed during the revolution.

crude control from Moscow and more freedom for intellectuals.

From the beginning, he tried to serve both the Russian bureaucracy and the workers. He ended up satisfying neither. He welcomed the workers' councils, but cautiously, as healthy new groups with which to sweep out corruption, rather than as organs of working class power. At the same time he sincerely believed that he could 'win the confidence' of the Russians, and persuade them that he was capable of retaining Hungary inside the Russian bloc.

But a situation of dual power allows for no such compromises. The situation moved too quickly for subtle and diplomatic manoeuvres. As the workers drew revolutionary consequences, he tailed behind them — but was visibly unwilling to draw those conclusions himself. Russian confidence ebbed, especially as his constant appeals for the rebels to lay down their arms met with no response. When Nagy, in response to mass pressure, reluctantly declared Hungarian neutrality and withdrew from the Warsaw Pact (the Russian-dominated alliance set up in the early '50s as a counter to NATO and the imperialist re-armament of West Germany) this was too much for his Russian masters.

On the 30th October Nagy announced that the Russians had agreed to withdraw. Within two days, it was crystal

Soviet troops ends in massacre at Parliament. JANOS KADAR replaces Gero as First Secretary of Communist Party. Nagy and Kadar denounce counter-revolutionary elements, but promise reforms once order is restored.

- 26 Oct Heavy fighting throughout country. General strike declared, workers' councils set up in factories, revolutionary committees in provincial towns. Colonel Pal Maleter joins revolution and takes over command of Kilian barracks.
  - 27 Oct Formation of new government under Imre Nagy which includes non-communist politicians Zoltan Tildy and Bela Kovacs.
  - 28 Oct Government orders ceasefire. Imre Nagy promises withdrawal of Soviet troops and disbandment of AVH.
  - 29 Oct Soviet troops begin withdrawal from Budapest, but fighting continues in some places, e.g. Kilian barracks.
  - 30 Oct Siege of headquarters of Budapest City Communist Party in Republic Square ends in massacre. Imre Nagy announces abolition of one-party system, and reorganisation of democratic parties of 1945 coalition. Inner cabinet set up including representatives of non-communist parties. Cardinal Mindszenty freed.
  - 31 Oct Meeting in Kilian barracks to form National Guard. Pal Maleter appointed Deputy Minister of Defence. From Gyor comes news of formation of Transdanubian National Council; from Miskolc reports of new Soviet troops entering Hungary.
  - 1 Nov Imre Nagy announces Hungary's withdrawal from Warsaw Pact, and appeals to United Nations to defend Hungarian neutrality. Janos Kadar announces formation of new communist party to be called Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. Janos Kadar disappears.
  - 2 Nov Hungarian towns and airports surrounded by Soviet troops. Continuing reports of new Soviet troop movements into Hungary. Imre Nagy protests to Soviet ambassador and repeats appeal to United Nations.
  - 3 Nov Remaining stalinist ministers resign from government. New coalition cabinet set up which includes Pal Maleter as Minister of Defence. Cardinal Mindszenty broadcasts on radio. Hungarian-Soviet negotiations begin for withdrawal of Soviet troops.
  - 4 Nov Soviet troops launch attack on Budapest at dawn. Announcement of formation of new all-communist government under JANOS KADAR and FERENC MUNNICH. Imre Nagy and several of his colleagues seek refuge in Yugoslav Embassy. Heavy fighting rages throughout country.
  - 5-11 Nov Fighting continues in waning pockets of resistance. Working-class centres offer strongest resistance to Soviet invasion. Budapest industrial district of Csepel is one of last centres to fall. Mass flight of refugees to the West.
  - 12 Nov Revolutionary workers' council of Ujpest issues appeal for formation of a central workers' council.
  - 14 Nov CENTRAL WORKERS' COUNCIL of Greater Budapest formed at Egyesult Izzo factory in Ujpest. Delegation from Central Workers' Council meets with Kadar who declares his support for a multi-party system and free elections.
  - 21 Nov Conference called to establish a national workers' council is prevented from meeting by a force of Soviet tanks. 48-hour general strike declared in protest.
  - 22 Nov Imre Nagy and colleagues seized by Soviet troops on leaving Yugoslav Embassy after being given promise of personal safety by Hungarian government. Deported to Rumania.
  - 23 Nov Everyone keeps off the streets for an hour to commemorate the revolution.
  - 25 Nov Conference between leaders of the government and the Central Workers' Council in the parliament building.
  - 4 Dec Silent women's demonstration in Budapest to commemorate victims of Soviet intervention.
  - 6 Dec Wave of arrests of intellectuals' and workers' leaders.
  - 8 Dec Meeting to create a National Workers' Council proclaims 48-hour protest strike against the increasing repression, and calls for international strikes in solidarity.
  - 9 Dec Government bans the Central Workers' Council and arrests many of its leaders. Sandor Racz and Sandor Bali evade arrest and seek refuge with the workers in Beloiannis factory.
  - 11 Dec Racz and Bali arrested at Hungarian parliament after accepting invitation to meet Kadar. Government declares state of emergency, and bans Revolutionary Council of Intellectuals and all territorial workers' councils.
  - 12 Dec General strike against arrest of Racz and Bali.
  - 13 Dec Government decree establishes detention without trial and special courts of summary jurisdiction.
- 1958
- 17 June Official communiqués issued in Budapest and Moscow announcing sentencing and execution of the leaders of the revolution IMRE NAGY, PAL MALETER, JOZSEF SZILAGYI and MIKLOS GIMES. GEZA LOSONCZY said to have died in prison. Long prison terms for other leaders.



Imre Nagy

clear that he had been deceived, and on November 4th the second assault on Budapest began. For a week an all-out battle raged, until in the end the insurgent workers were crushed by overwhelming military might. The Russians, who had had to withdraw the troops used in the first assault because they were 'infected' by the spirit of those they were fighting and had become 'unreliable', brought in fresh troops for the final showdown. They had been primed with the lie that those whose resistance they were to smash were fascists and counter-revolutionaries.

As the Russians approached, Nagy found that overnight the bulk of his 'government' (a government in name only) had reneged and capitulated. He and a handful of supporters took refuge in the Yugoslav Embassy. A Government entirely subservient to Moscow was installed, led by Janos Kadar — who is still there to this day. Nagy's fate was to be different. Leaving the Yugoslav Embassy with an assurance of safe-conduct, he was arrested together with Pal Maleter; in 1958 he was shot.

The fate of Imre Nagy shows clearly that those who hope for a self-reforming bureaucracy will be disappointed. The road to socialism in Eastern Europe, as elsewhere, is the road of independent working class action. The Stalinist bureaucracy is an obstacle on that road, and the working class will have to destroy it utterly.

The Hungarian workers were defeated because they were isolated and overwhelmed by force of superior arms. But the cancer at the heart of Stalinism is still eating away — even in Russia itself. When the rumblings there explode into a mass movement for workers' power, the bureaucracy will be hard pressed to find a means to crush it.

The heroic action of the Hungarian proletariat in 1956 lacked an organised revolutionary party which could raise the struggle to a higher level of effectiveness. That such a vacuum should have existed underlines that we should remember the Hungarian revolution not just as a historic struggle in the battle for socialism, but as a sharp injunction to our international duties and responsibilities today.



Janos Kadar

# BUREAUCRATS LEARN THE LESSONS

THE HUNGARIAN Commune of 1956 was not the first act of resistance against Stalinist totalitarianism. In 1953 there had been an uprising in East Berlin, and in June 1956 an uprising in Poznan in Poland. Both began directly from the intolerable work conditions and living standards endured by the working class: and because these conditions were imposed by jackboot Stalinist bureaucratic rule, they had quickly escalated into a challenge to that rule.

But Hungary was by far the most significant. Arguably it was the most important working class rising since the repression of the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919.

The many great struggles of the working class since that date — the Spanish civil war, the French general sit-in strikes of 1936 and '68, etc — all, despite their great importance, pale beside the revolutionary working class upsurge that reached the stage of creating a network of workers' councils (Soviets in the original sense) and an armed struggle for state power.

No workers' upsurge in nearly four decades had reached such a stage.

Ironically, it was against the tyranny of a degenerated workers' state ruled with terror by an oppressive bureaucracy — a state which originated in a successful carrying through of the sort of revolution the Hungarian workers attempted — that this workers' movement emerged.

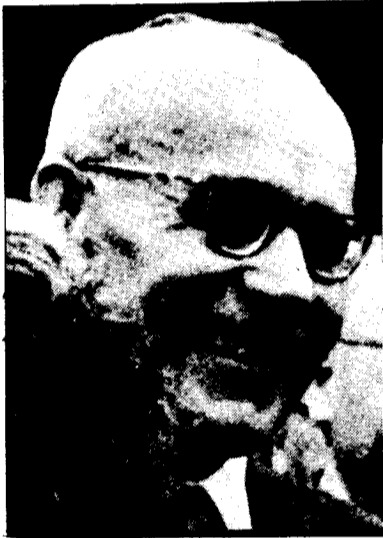
Political confusion there certainly was. Russian tanks apart, it was not actually guaranteed that there would be a victorious consolidation of a democratic workers' state. But then, in all genuine revolutionary upsurges, there almost never is such a guarantee available.

In Hungary, the Russian's puppets and the 'Red' Army had in 1948 already created the economic framework for a collectivist economy and society. Because this had been done, it is a certainty that any counter revolution involving the restoration of bourgeois power and ownership of the means of production would not take place quickly, easily and without major class struggles in defence of nationalised property — whatever the political confusion.

Paradoxically the extension of the 'Russian model' — itself the product of the degeneration of the greatest revolution in history — and the creation of a deformed workers' state in Hungary created the conditions where an active working class could, perhaps, have groped its way to its own social control, could have had time to create and re-group a revolutionary working class party armed with Marxist theory and real knowledge of the classic working class revolutions and the tasks facing the Hungarian working class.

The bourgeoisie, in the period of its revolutionary conquest of power from feudalism, could grope its way towards power half consciously because it had already a high degree of social control

Wladislaw Gomulka



East Berlin 1953

turned to power to balance between the demands of the working class and the Russians. Just when his counterpart in Hungary, Imre Nagy, was falling in this task — a failure which helped produce the blow-up there — Gomulka was successfully stabilising bureaucratic rule in Poland. Thus Hungary was isolated.

And the 'liberal' Stalinist Tito played his part too in isolating the Hungarian workers, supporting Russia's bloody repression.

Hungary was a turning point in the history of the international socialist workers' movement. The Hungarian workers were returned to bureaucratic 'slavery', but the minds of many socialists and Communists in the west were liberated by the experience of the revolt.

## Explosive

The very ideal of socialism and communism had been corrupted by the acceptance, over decades, of Stalinist police state "socialism" as the answer to capitalism. For thousands of workers desperately looking for an alternative to capitalism, an attack on the Stalinist system seemed to be an attack on socialism itself. Then came October '56, with workers on the streets of Budapest and every town in Hungary fighting the armies of the rulers of Russia.

It was then that a whole generation of stolid, loyal members of the Communist Party (especially in Britain) were forced to ask why it had come to that, and to look closely at the nature of Russia's rulers. For many, the criticisms of the Stalinist bureaucracy made for decades by Leon Trotsky and his supporters explained everything. The anti-socialist nature of the bureaucracy, and the need for a supplementary working class revolution

The bloody victory of the Stalinist bureaucracy in Hungary showed that against their military power an isolated revolt has little chance. But the fact that the Russian rulers had to use such blunt and bloody methods demonstrated the chronic antagonisms within the Stalinist bloc.

Since then, the Stalinists have found various ways to ride out these antagonisms.

The struggle for national liberation against Russian national oppression had in Hungary united with working class and peasant discontent to spark an explosion. Mercilessly, it was crushed.

In Poland, the same components existed. The Gomulka section of the bureaucracy controlled and manipulated the workers and avoided an explosion. And since then the Polish bureaucracy has learned more subtle manipulative techniques and an impressive adaptability. They successfully rode out a storm of working class indignation and revolt in 1970 and again earlier this year, both events of potentially explosive power.

Along with the increased sophistication of the internal methods of control has come a new assertion of political separateness from Russia. Such independence is limited, but it is real and powerful. In 1948 Tito was anathemised for attempting to resist Russian national oppression and fight off marauding economic parasitism of the Russian bureaucracy. The 'reconciliation' between Stalin's successors and Tito in 1954/55 accepted Yugoslavia's rights. After 1956, beginning with the limited but successful national self-assertion of Poland, the same process continued.

The open break between China (with Albania in tow) and Russia from 1960 onwards has allowed a loosening of Russia's grip. No longer mere puppets, the national Stalinist bureaucracies in East Europe have asserted greater or lesser degrees of independence from Russia — though they do this within an overall framework of Russian hegemony, and in continuing economic subservience to Russia.

## Rigid

The power of this Russian hegemony and its will to act was shown in the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 — prompted by fear of the contagious effects of the liberalisation policies of the Dubcek regime. Rumania asserts more independence than the Czechs did — and gets away with it. The difference with Dubcek's regime is that the Rumanian rulers maintain a rigid Stalinist anti-working class repression: as far as the Russians are concerned, if this proves contagious, that's all to the good. But the Prague Spring threatened, like the Poznan Summer of '56, to interact explosively with workers' class aspirations in East Europe and Russia itself.

The central lesson of Hungary is that the Stalinist bureaucracy is parasitic and anti-working class, and therefore terrified of the unleashed creativity of the working class. Czechoslovakia proved that even more clearly — because the main issue there was one of simple elementary freedoms of communication.

In each case it was not national bureaucratic rivalry that brought the Russian tanks in, but the potentially international

the 17th Century or of France in 1789, the working class under capitalism has no social control at all. It needs to take state power and to seize control of the means of production. Thus it needs the greatest ideological clarity, and a revolutionary party as the crystallisation of that clarity in a scientific consciousness, in order to take power.

In theory the situation in Hungary after the destruction of bureaucratic control might have allowed the working class, already formally owning the means of production, to grope towards consolidation of power over a period of time — especially as revolutionary Marxists were active and could have created a revolutionary party.

IF... IF the Russian intervention had not smothered in blood that development. IF the upsurge that smashed the state apparatus in Hungary had spread to the other Stalinist states.

But it didn't. In Poland a limited rising had been put down and in September



Bloodstained Czech flag: end of the Prague Spring