



Gorbachev stamps on national minorities

By Bob Pitt

WHEN SOVIET tanks invaded the Azerbaijani capital of Baku shortly after midnight on January 20, smashing through roadblocks and shooting hundreds of civilians, they demonstrated that under the 'liberal' regime of Mikhail Gorbachev, traditional Stalinist methods of political repression are alive and well.

The pretext for these acts of brutality was the need to keep the warring Azerbaijani and Armenian communities apart. Following an Azerbaijani nationalist rally in Baku on January 13, a pogrom was launched against the city's Armenian inhabitants, some 70 of whom were killed. But by the time of the army assault on Baku the pogroms had ceased, if only because no Armenians now remained in the city.

The main purpose of military intervention was not to defend the victims of Azeri racists, nor even to prevent civil war, but rather to restore the authority of central government in an area where the hated Communist Party had been deposed, and power was in the hands of the Azerbaijani nationalist movement. Secession by Azerbaijan would not only involve losing the centre of the Soviet oil industry but, more importantly, would intensify separatist tendencies among other oppressed nationalities, threatening the break-up of Stalinist rule. So, under cover of restoring peace, Gorbachev organised a bloodbath.

Two days before the attack on Baku, a 300,000-strong demonstration in the Armenian capital of Yerevan had demanded that Moscow intervene to protect Armenian lives, and the military action in Baku was given a qualified welcome by Armenian nationalist leaders. It is necessary to state quite clearly that the Kremlin is no friend of any of the Soviet Union's national minorities, who have been the consistent victims of the Great Russian chauvinism of the Stalinist bureaucracy. As we go to press, reports suggest that in Armenia, too, the local Stalinist government has lost control to armed nationalist groups. This is not a situation which Moscow will allow to continue. The troops which are used today against the nationalist movement in Azerbaijan can be used tomorrow against nationalists in Armenia.

The extent of the Kremlin's sympathy for Armenian national aspirations can be gauged by its response to the crisis over Nagorno-Karabakh. The legitimate demands of its Armenian majority for secession from Azerbaijan - within which they have suffered discrimination

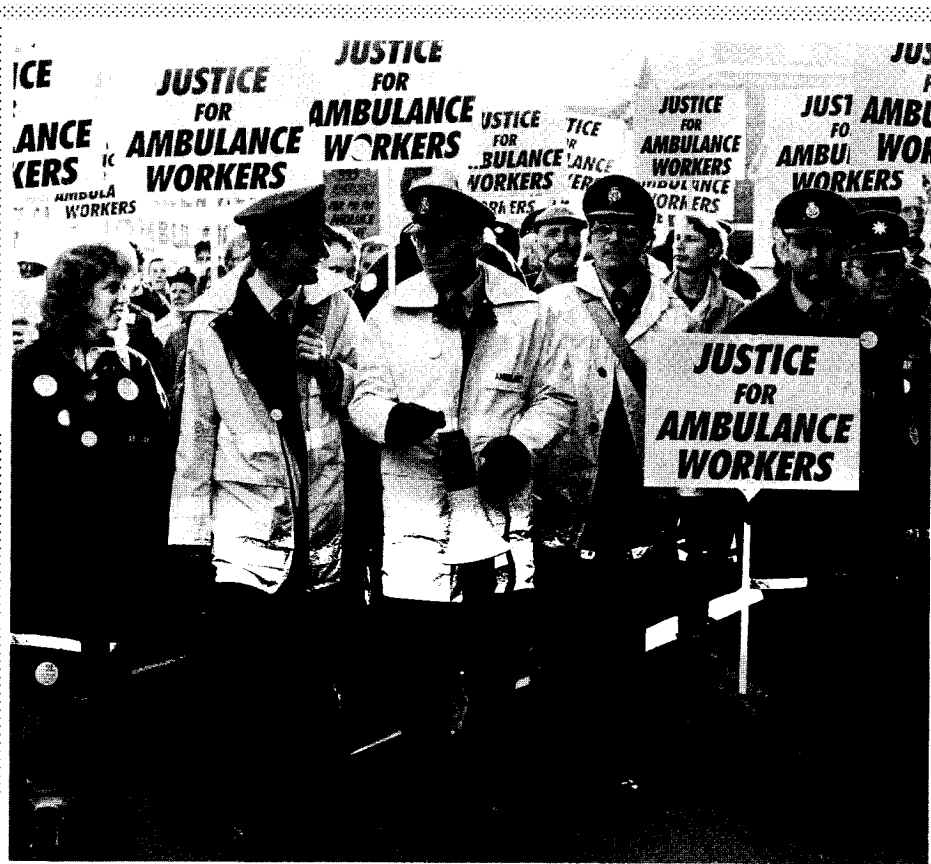
over jobs, housing, and religious and cultural rights - and for unification with Armenia, were rejected. Having initially been placed under a Moscow-appointed administration, Nagorno-Karabakh was recently returned to Azerbaijani control against the wishes of the overwhelming majority of its population.

The repressive role of the Stalinist bureaucracy against both the Azerbaijani and Armenian peoples will certainly be made clear over the coming period. This opens up the prospect of workers in the warring communities recognising that they have a common enemy. It is the Stalinists' economic mismanagement which has reduced the masses in oil-rich Azerbaijan to poverty and unemployment. But their discontent has been diverted by right-wing Azerbaijani nationalists into anti-Armenian racism. Instead of directing popular resentment against the bureaucrats in the Kremlin and their local stooges, these petty-bourgeois reactionaries have organised cowardly attacks on members of another oppressed national minority.

The actions of Azeri militants in smashing down guard towers, security alarms

and fences along the border separating Nakhichevan from Iran, however, are entirely to be supported. The border itself, which divides Azeris united by family, linguistic and religious ties, exists as the result of Stalin's capitulation to imperialist pressure in 1946, when he allowed the Soviet-backed government of Southern Azerbaijan to be smashed and the area incorporated into Iran. The demand for Azerbaijani unification is a progressive demand, striking both at the Soviet bureaucracy and at the Iranian Islamic regime. In the course of their struggle for an Azerbaijani nation, independent of both Moscow and Teheran, Azeri workers can be brought to see the legitimacy of Armenian national demands. On this basis, the real international unity of Azerbaijani and Armenian workers can be established.

- Withdraw Soviet troops!
- Down with chauvinism!
- Down with the Soviet bureaucracy!
- For an independent workers' republic of Azerbaijan, including Nakhichevan and Azeri areas in northern Iran!
- For an independent workers' republic of Armenia, incorporating Nagorno-Karabakh!



Ambulance workers demonstrate in London on January 13

AMBULANCE DISPUTE - see page 2

AFTER CEAUSESCU

AFTER THE heroic workers' uprising which overthrew the hated regime of Nicolae Ceausescu in Romania on December 24-25, powerful elements from the Stalinist bureaucracy have regrouped behind the self-proclaimed National Salvation Front. The workers, women, youth and rank-and-file soldiers who fought the secret police butchers have had their victory hijacked.

Between December 17 and 23, when the rebellion spread from Timisoara to the capital Bucharest and other major cities, the working class, and particularly young people, spontaneously made giant strides towards a genuine workers' revolution. Once it became clear that Ceausescu's days were numbered, large sections of the army joined the insurrection. Among ordinary soldiers and some junior officers this represented a sincere alliance with the working class. At the top, the generals sought to save their own skins and privileges.

Alarmed at the prospect of

political revolution, Chancellor Kohl of West Germany and American President Bush contacted Gorbachev and appealed for Soviet military intervention to stabilise the situation behind a new sanitised regime. Following negotiations between the Soviet bureaucracy and a former minister in the Romanian government, Ion Iliescu, military hardware and fuel supplies were made available to the army, and an agreement reached to sacrifice the Ceausescus. Not only were the army leaders now strong enough to topple the remnants of Ceausescu's regime - they were able to play the role of saviours of the nation and head off the prospect of armed workers completing the struggle for political power.

The decision to execute Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu on Christmas Day was taken with these considerations in mind. Whilst no honest socialist will shed a tear for the corrupt 'Conducator', his successors used the summary trial not as a means of investigating the

By Richard Price

crimes of the bureaucracy but, on the contrary, to cover them up and attribute them to a single 'evil' family.

In an attempt to win itself popular credentials, the incoming National Salvation Front adopted a ten-point plan which included: elections to be held in April; a ban on the export of foodstuffs; an end to the policy of bulldozing villages and resettling peasants in 'agro-industrial complexes'; abolition of the death penalty; restoration of the right to birth control; and abolition of the 'leading role' of the Communist Party. By halting the summary justice given by workers to the Securitate secret police, the Front was forestalling a thoroughgoing purge of the Stalinist apparatus as a whole.

The National Salvation Front is a coalition made up of representatives of petty-bourgeois groups seeking a restoration of capitalism and capitalist democracy, and former Communist Party

chiefs. It is supported by the army generals, religious groups, the Democratic Hungarian Union of Romania, the National Peasant Party and the National Liberal Party. Both the NPP and the NLP have had talks with ex-king Michael. To the right, fascist groups have emerged.

Since the fall of Ceausescu, the Front has demonstrated the content of its commitment to 'democracy'. On December 25, General Stanculescu was appointed Minister for the National Economy, underlining the central role of the military in the new regime. Four days later a student rally in Bucharest was banned. Following angry demonstrations demanding the outlawing of the Communist Party, punishment of the Securitate and an end to food shortages, Bucharest, Timisoara and other cities were placed under the direct control of senior army officers. In further moves to control the situation, the Front has decreed that parties wishing to stand in the forthcoming

elections, now scheduled for May 20, must register with the courts, while announcing its intention to stand its own candidates - giving the lie to its claim to be merely a caretaker government. Meanwhile, it is reported that only 60 of Ceausescu's cronies are in jail, while thousands of leading Stalinists have swung over to the new regime.

Since Christmas Day, the counter-revolution has made successive advances, despite working class opposition. The 'anti-Ceausescu' Stalinists have surrounded themselves with the same social forces which they were forced to expropriate in 1947. The West has embraced the 'revolutionary' government with enthusiasm. The road to capitalist restoration has been opened up.

No confidence should be placed in the National Salvation Front. The creation of factory committees, workers' councils and a Trotskyist party are necessary to complete the unfinished business of the Romanian revolution.

AMBULANCE DISPUTE

No more concessions! All-out strike now!

THROUGHOUT Britain ambulance crews have more than demonstrated their willingness to fight the government's pay policy. But sheer determination is not enough to defeat the Tories. It is necessary to understand the treacherous role being played by the trade union leaders who, one after another, undermined and sold out the wave of strikes last year.

For the ambulance workers to succeed with their pay claim, a struggle against their own leaders is now unpostponable. This means fighting for an all-out national strike and the development of rank-and-file strike committees to prevent the health union leaders, and full-time officials, selling out the dispute.

The team of negotiators acting on behalf of ambulance workers has already made concessions to the government and NHS employers. They are ready to do so again. *The Sunday Correspondent* revealed on January 7 that 'an undisclosed mediator selected by the unions but well-known to Mr Clarke' was acting as a

By Ian Harrison

go-between in an attempt to settle the dispute, behind the members' backs. It is widely known that the negotiators, led by Roger Poole of NUPE, have engaged the services of a firm of management consultants to advise them on the conduct of the dispute. Hence the emphasis placed by Poole and Co on petitions, public opinion polls and the lobbying of Tory backbench MPs.

While ambulance crews demand strike action and a national mobilisation in response to Tory intransigence and the professional strikebreakers from the army and police, Poole and leaders of the Labour Party repeatedly signal their preparedness to sell the dispute out. In fact, as shadow Health Secretary Robin Cook made clear in a speech to parliament, Labour and TUC leaders are prepared to sacrifice the ambulance workers' right to strike in exchange for a pay formula agreement. A number of Labour-led local councils, including Sandwell and Strathclyde, have made no secret of their intention to establish 'emergency services' with local government funds, aimed at undermining

the dispute.

Privately, trade union officials admit that the dispute is slipping out of their hands. Some crews are drifting back to normal working, convinced their leaders are not determined to fight for their claim. But militant ambulance workers, who sense that their leaders are retreating, have organised strike action and occupied depots in defiance of court orders. They recognise the necessity to build on support from other workers and declare an all-out strike.

That is why TUC general secretary Norman Willis stepped into the limelight by calling the national assembly on January 13, and the national 15-minute stoppage on January 30 which, in his own words, had to be done 'with the employer's approval'. By calling for these actions, Willis was attempting to stifle demands for all-out strikes, while at the same time channelling the enormous reservoir of hatred for Tory policies into harmless public protests.

It is necessary to meet this treachery head-on with a programme of action which will force the TUC leaders to



Trafalgar Square on January 13: thousands gather in support of the ambulance workers

act in the interests of their members and those who depend on the NHS. The Tories will only be forced to concede the ambulance workers' claim if they see that everything is at stake for them. There is no time to lose. Organise rank-and-file strike committees now to extend the action!

Ambulance workers must occupy their depots to prevent strikebreaking and demand emergency national

delegate conferences of their unions to vote on making strike action official. Health service unions must be forced by rank-and-file workers to call sympathy strike action, in defiance of Tory anti-union laws, with the aim of mobilising workers throughout the trade union and labour movement. The TUC and Labour Party headquarters must be lobbied by workers in support of the dispute. Force the TUC and Labour leaders to mobilise national demonstrations and indefinite strike action to win the ambulance workers' claim in full!

Ambulance workers must demand that their leaders call off all secret talks. Rallies must be organised in every region and workplaces visited to prepare for the launch of indefinite national strike action.

Reject Willis's spineless capitulation before the Tory anti-union laws! Solidarity with the ambulance workers cannot be made conditional on the support of employers. Defeat the anti-working class legislation which outlaws solidarity action by fighting to bring down the Tories!

Tories cut AIDS research

By Suzy Allen

AT A TIME when the World Health Organisation is predicting that more than 500,000 people will develop AIDS in 1990/91, the Tory government is downgrading the AIDS education programme and directly interfering to prevent the spread of information vital in the fight against the killer disease.

Last autumn Margaret Thatcher vetoed a survey of sexual habits, saying it was an invasion of privacy! At the same time she disbanded the AIDS committees set up in 1986 under Lord Whitelaw. In November, the Health Education Authority cancelled a television campaign encouraging safe sex. A second, magazine advertising, campaign has been postponed. At the end of November, the HEA announced plans to disband its AIDS unit - the final decision on this is yet to be taken.

While essential health education has been cut back, the moralistic campaigns of right-wing pressure groups, such as the Conservative Family Campaign, who in 1986 called for all AIDS victims to be isolated and for homosexuality to be made illegal, and Family and Young Concern, which claims that AIDS amongst heterosexuals is a myth, have found sympathetic support from within the Tory party. It was reported in *The Sunday Correspondent* on January 1 that a video for teenagers produced and distributed to schools by Family and Young Concern, which has alarmed medical experts because of its distortion of the truth, is accompanied by a letter from Conservative peer Baroness Cox (a spon-



Nursing an AIDS patient at the London Lighthouse

sor of Clause 28 of the Local Government Act which makes the 'promotion' of homosexuality illegal). 'The information seemed to me to be accurate and well balanced,' she writes. 'Above all there was a moral message which is all too often lacking from many of the other sources.'

In November, Lord Kilbracken stated that the risk to heterosexuals was negligible as most heterosexuals who were HIV positive had acquired the virus either abroad or through a partner who was in a 'high risk' category.

The same backward and complacent attitude meant that the government's original safe sex campaign was only begun, reluctantly, in 1986 - five years after the first AIDS case was diagnosed in this country, two years after the first heterosexual cases occurred and only under extreme pressure from the NHS, confronted by increasing numbers of AIDS victims needing treatment.

Actual provision for AIDS sufferers has always been

inadequate and largely left to voluntary organisations such as the Terrence Higgins Trust, Body Positive and London Lighthouse. Instead of making sufficient funding available for research and for special facilities for AIDS patients within the NHS - and accompanying this with straightforward medical advice - the Tories concentrated on a publicity campaign which was dominated by the religious, pro-family message to be either in a long-term relationship or chaste. Moreover, material which could have been presented positively, sympathetically, even humorously, was put out as a dire warning, designed to frighten people into conformity. The result has been to create further discrimination against groups who fall into the highest risk category.

For example, on August 27, 1989, it was reported in the *News of the World*, the *Sunday Mirror* and the *Sunday Express* that Scotland Yard had sent a telex to all police officers involved in rescue operations after the

London Thames riverboat disaster, in which officers were warned to wear protective gloves and masks because of a potential HIV risk from the boat's passengers. The telex stated that 'the passengers may have included a number of homosexuals and lesbians... This must be brought to the attention of all personnel who rendered assistance and may have come into contact with blood, saliva, urine, etc... so they can take appropriate measures'.

The recent government cancellation of surveys and education campaigns, added to tabloid press coverage and endorsement of reactionary claims that AIDS is not a heterosexual problem, will heighten anti-gay feeling, and strengthen the idea that gays are 'responsible' for the spread of the disease.

Accusingly and ignorantly labelled 'permissive' by the right-wing 'moral majority', the relationships of gay men are, as a result of hostility and discrimination, often forced to be anonymous, secretive and fleeting. The current repressive atmosphere, in which open, honest discussion of people's sexual habits is even less possible than it was before, will prove ideal for the spread of AIDS.

But the Tory defence of heterosexuality, chastity and 'family values' is more than just a reaction to the AIDS crisis. The family has always been necessary to the capitalist system both as a form of discipline and as an efficient support unit for the worker, whose labour power the capitalist can then exploit more fully. Promoting this ideology could now cost the lives of thousands, and delay the discovery of a cure for AIDS.

COMMENT

Fight to defend the closed shop!

IT IS HARDLY surprising that the present Labour leadership has publicly abandoned the defence of the trade union closed shop. It is entirely in line with its refusal to defend trade unions or fight the Tory anti-union laws over the past decade.

Nor is it surprising that Kinnock's crew, who pose as advocates of 'democratising' the party, should make a policy change without the backing of Conference, or even the pretence of consulting the membership. This watershed announcement was made at a constituency meeting in Sedgefield by employment spokesman Tony Blair - he of the sharp suit - whose record of struggle in the workers' movement on a scale of 0 to 10 rates about minus six.

According to Blair, Labour's new thinking on employment law should 'start with the rights of the individual and recognise that the proper role of the collective is as an instrument for the advancement of the individual'. Whilst this is an accurate reflection of the aspirations of people like Blair, it makes an absolute mockery of the function of trade unionism.

Historically, trade unions arose because workers were unable to bargain with employers as individuals in the sale of their labour power and were forced to combine together. Every struggle of workers, whether it be for higher wages, better conditions or against unemployment is an attempt to enforce their strength over the 'rights' of the individual employer, non-unionist or scab.

Labour's acceptance of the outlawing of the closed shop is based on its support for the EC Social Charter, which grants equal 'rights' to belong or not to belong to a trade union. Blair's support for 'individual rights' is a part of Kinnock's strategy to distance Labour ever further from the unions - the same unions which built the Labour Party and have financed it throughout this century. Indeed, the formation of the Labour Party was strongly influenced by the development of 'free labour' associations - armies of strikebreakers - in the 1890s. Under the impact of a series of legal attacks, the trade unions were forced to break with the party of 'individual rights' - the Liberal Party - and found a workers' party (albeit one with a capitalist programme, and soaked in bourgeois ideology at birth). Those unions which fought for the closed shop formed the backbone of the labour movement.

Kinnock hopes that by deserting the trade unions he will attract middle class voters. In fact the opposite is true. In any confrontation, the wavering sections of the middle class follow whichever side appears stronger and more determined.

Ninety years on from the founding of the Labour Party, Kinnock must not be allowed to turn full circle. Throw out the right-wing Labour leaders! Defend the closed shop!

INVASION OF PANAMA

By Philip Marchant

THE US invasion of Panama on December 20, 1989, and the abduction in January of the hated dictator Manuel Noriega illustrates, above all else, the determination of the Bush administration to maintain by force its interests throughout Central America.

During the 24 hours preceding the invasion, the US garrison of 10,000 which controls the Canal Zone was reinforced with a further 14,000 troops. Guillermo Endara, the leader of the Civic Democratic Opposition Alliance and winner of the May 1989 elections which Noriega annulled, was sworn in as President of Panama on a US base shortly after midnight, and operation 'Just Cause', spearheaded by 1,000 elite Ranger paratroopers, started an hour later.

President Bush explained on TV that the invasion was intended to protect US lives, defend democracy, combat drug trafficking and defend the integrity of the Panama Canal Treaty. But his concern for the welfare of the Panamanian people flies in the face of the blitzkrieg tactics employed by US troops who flattened entire working class neighbourhoods and slaughtered hundreds of civilians in a cynical exercise designed purely to reassert US influence over the region.

Behind all the hullabaloo about the return of 'democracy' to Panama, the reality is that a slavishly pro-US regime has been installed in an invasion which is illegal

U.S. troops install puppet govt

even by the standards of international capitalist law, with the deliberate intention of forestalling any independent action to remove Noriega by the working class. Far from representing a victory for the entire people, the US intervention has provided a much-needed boost for the weak Panamanian capitalist class, who will now step up the exploitation of workers and peasants with the full backing of Washington and the IMF.

What the invasion reveals most clearly is that the Canal Treaty, signed in 1977 by Omar Torrijos for Panama and Jimmy Carter for the United States, is not worth the paper it is printed on. The treaty ended US overall control of the Canal Zone in 1979 and is scheduled to transfer ownership of the canal to Panama on December 31, 1999, ending all US operational rights. For Washington, Noriega's greatest crime was not his abuse of 'human rights' or his multi-million dollar drug trafficking racket, but the fact that he was no longer capable of guaranteeing a stable, pro-American regime in Panama. The US is only prepared to relinquish its statutory rights over the economically and strategically

vital canal if it is able to continue effectively controlling it via a 'friendly' regime.

Since 1960, when he was first contacted by the US Defence Intelligence Agency whilst training at a military academy in Peru, successive US governments have thought that Noriega was their man. In 1966 or 1967, he was formally recruited by the CIA. He remained on the payroll until 1976, when his freelance work for Cuban, Israeli and Taiwanese intelligence services went too far for the liking of his CIA controllers. A few years later, however, the Reagan administration sought to use him in its war against the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. No matter that he had become the leading middleman for the lucrative trade in drugs from South to North America - his decision to permit the US to operate secret bases in Panama to train the Contras outweighed any squeamishness over where his 'income', reputedly more than \$3 million a month, came from.

Significantly, it wasn't until Noriega's popular support evaporated that the US discovered he was a 'tyrant'. In 1985, after Noriega had opposition leader Hugo Spadafora killed in a particularly

gruesome manner, even his anti-US rhetoric failed to stem the tide of revulsion felt for him by the Panamanian people. It was at this point - when it was clear that Noriega could no longer 'deliver the goods' - that the US decided he had to go. The block into investigations into his links with the drug barons was lifted and the process which led to his indictment for drug trafficking in the US courts and, eventually, to the invasion was set in train.

When Noriega declared war on the US on December 15, the state of tension between Panamanian Defence Force troops and the US garrison increased. The following day a US soldier was killed by the PDF and Bush seized the opportunity to authorise the secret inva-

sion of December 20.

From Washington's point of view it was preferable if Noriega - with his wealth of information about the activities of US officials - died whilst 'resisting arrest'. Bush, a former head of the CIA during the period when it ran Noriega, had a special interest in ensuring that the dictator was dead-on-arrival. The use of maximum force had this in mind - Noriega's headquarters was subjected to a sustained bombardment and, according to the Rev Jesse Jackson, at least 1,200 Panamanian civilians were killed by US troops.

When Noriega turned up in the Vatican embassy in Panama City, there was an unseemly squabble as to who should get their hands on him. The Cuban Stalinists were quick to offer him

asylum, presumably in an attempt to head off further revelations about their own part in drug trafficking which came to light last year with the trial and execution of General Ochetto. The Peruvian government also put in a bid. That the Americans were able to extradite Noriega was due to the unerring instinct of the papal representatives to side with capitalist 'law and order'.

Panamanian workers and poor peasants must have no confidence in the puppet regime of Endara. It is for the Panamanians, not the US government, to settle accounts with Noriega. Not the least of Noriega's crimes was his collusion with US imperialism in frustrating the aspirations of the Panamanian masses for self-determination. They must demand the return of Noriega to stand trial in Panama, the withdrawal of all US troops and officials from the country and the immediate transfer of the Canal Zone to Panamanian control.

Burma dictatorship gets aid from China

AFTER THE crushing of Burma's seven-month-long uprising in 1988 in which thousands of students, workers and middle class radicals were massacred, the major capitalist countries were obliged to distance themselves from the ruling military regime in Rangoon by introducing economic sanctions.

The Chinese Stalinist leaders, however, were quick to exploit the Burmese dictatorship's isolation in a bid to resolve their own severe economic problems by gaining access to a new export market and raw materials. Along with consumer goods and petroleum, they have sent technicians to assist in the task of stabilising Burma's economy. In October 1989, a delegation of Burmese military and naval officers visited Beijing to cement the new trading relations.

The murderous assault on the Chinese democracy movement in Tiananmen Square in June 1989 served to bring the two regimes even closer together. On September 30, after a summer in which 5,000-8,000 opponents of the Burmese dictatorship had been incarcerated in slave-labour camps, Brigadier General Khin Nyunt told Chinese engineers working in Rangoon: 'We sympathise with the People's Republic of China as disturbances similar to those in Burma last year broke out in the People's Republic.'

The Burmese regime, which survives on the basis of spreading rumours of 'right' and 'left' coup plots to justify its increasing military repression, is now undertaking a programme of 'Burmanisation', aimed at the forcible integration of the 120 minority peoples. It has also embarked on a major drive

to crush the guerrillas, particularly in the border regions near China and Thailand, to clear a safe path for trade with the two countries. Four organisations representing minorities were outlawed in October 1989 - the Kachin Independence Army, Karen National Union, New Mon State Party and the Karenni National Progressive Party - thus depriving them of their right to nominate candidates for the general election scheduled for May 27.

Also in October, the Burmese military junta began sentencing leading members of the opposition movement arrested in 1988. Win Tin, of the National League for Democracy (NLD), was sentenced to three years' hard labour; Maung Thaw Ka (NLD Central Committee) was given life imprisonment for 'attempting to divide the armed forces and the people'; and Nay Min, a lawyer and part-time correspondent for the BBC, was imprisoned for 14 years. At the same time, all outdoor gatherings of more than five people were banned.

Every prominent oppositionist is now either in detention or under threat of it. On January 15, with the start of the election campaign only weeks away, Aung San Suu Kyi - who has been under house arrest since July 1989 - was barred from standing as a candidate on the grounds that she has connections with a foreign country (her husband is British). As the announcement was made, the army presence on the streets of Rangoon was stepped up.

The Chinese bureaucracy has played a crucial role in extending the life of a brutal bourgeois-military dictatorship, at a time when the imperialist regimes were prevented from doing so openly for fear of provoking retaliation from their own workers and students. However, the imperialists will be quick to exploit the new situation to their own advantage. A stabilised Burma will be used as a base for capital to make further inroads into China and the other deformed workers' states of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

ANC agrees to negotiate

THAT THE South African government is close to unbanning the African National Congress, lifting the state of emergency and releasing veteran ANC leader Nelson Mandela after 25 years of imprisonment is principally the result of the heroic struggle of the black South African masses and the solidarity shown with their cause by the international working class. It is necessary to point out, however, that Mandela and the rest of the ANC leadership are preparing the ground for a rotten compromise with the apartheid regime - along lines laid down by the Soviet Stalinists and promoted inside the ANC by the South African Communist Party (SACP).

The relative isolation of South African big business, the wave after wave of militant uprisings by the black working class and the growth of fascism amongst the white petty-bourgeoisie has convinced the ruling National Party that a negotiated settlement is preferable to a civil war, the outcome of which could not be guaranteed. The decision reflects the increasing dominance inside the National Party of the views of the large-scale industrialists and the financiers. Like their foreign cousins, they recognise that an organised working class, deprived of even the most basic of democratic rights, is a force strong enough and angry enough to sweep them away completely.

When President F.W. de Klerk took office, he immediately held up the carrot

of 'reform', which the ANC leaders eagerly accepted. He announced minor changes to apartheid laws, such as the opening of whites-only beaches to blacks, and offered the prospect of 'talks about talks'.

Three months ago, to consolidate a rightward shift in the positions of the ANC, de Klerk released several veteran ANC leaders from prison, including former secretary-general Walter Sisulu. Although their organisation remains banned, these leaders have been allowed to campaign on behalf of negotiations at mass rallies throughout the country, totally unmolested by the security forces.

The release of Mandela, who has been holding talks with de Klerk for months on the timing of this event, is expected to complete the process of 'overhauling' the ANC. The exiled leadership, despite earlier reservations about Mandela's willingness to compromise, fell into line after de Klerk allowed Sisulu to pay them a visit in Zambia in January. The national executive discussed Mandela taking over as president of the ANC from Oliver Tambo, who is seriously ill in a Swedish clinic, and agreed the policy of a negotiated settlement with Pretoria as proposed by Mandela. Sisulu urged the exiles to use the 'armed struggle' to pressurise the South African government into creating a 'multi-

racial democracy'.

For its part, the SACP, whose members occupy leading positions in the ANC, chose the same week to issue a draft policy statement by general secretary Joe Slovo called 'Has Socialism Failed?'. Marking a retreat even from the treacherous compromise offered by its two-stage theory of 'first the struggle against apartheid, then the struggle for socialism', the document uses the crisis of Stalinism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union to justify committing the SACP unreservedly to supporting a 'multi-party post-apartheid democracy' in South Africa.

According to reports, the Bush administration in the United States has been 'quietly cultivating the ANC'. Meanwhile, the British government has reversed its previous policy and Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd is expected to hold talks with Sisulu if he comes to London next month.

The ANC leaders' 'multi-racial democracy', whilst it may extend the voting franchise and lead to majority rule, will leave capitalism intact. It cannot answer the urgent needs of millions of black South Africans for jobs, homes, better education and healthcare, and a stable family life. The negotiated settlement shaping up will represent a counter-revolutionary alliance - against the black masses.



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EDITORIAL

Defend refugees!

IN THE early hours of December 12, 1989, 51 people were herded aboard a plane in Hong Kong and flown back to Vietnam. They were the first victims of the British government's racist policy of forced repatriation designed to deter Vietnamese refugees from seeking asylum in the colony.

In January, Amnesty International released a report which stated that 'many of the 51 had already been brutally treated when they were forcibly removed from Chi Ma Wan camp before repatriation... a large contingent of officers in riot gear had used partial strangulation, kicks and beatings to force them out of their huts in a dawn raid'. On December 29, after rumours that a second forced repatriation was about to take place, a demonstration by refugees at Chi Ma Wan was put down by 300 armed police using tear gas.

The refugees who reach Hong Kong are only a small percentage of those who leave Vietnam. They are, in the main, Chinese-speaking, and are impoverished traders, craftsmen and semi- or unskilled workers and their families. For most, the decision to leave has been forced on them by the bankrupt policies of the Vietnamese government.

The failure of forced collectivisation in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam's rice bowl, led to the outbreak of famine in a number of regions by 1978. The Stalinist bureaucracy responded by forcing over 3 million people to leave the cities and take up work on the land. Predominant amongst those selected for forced migration were Vietnam's Chinese-speaking peoples. The government provided them with little or no training in agricultural work, facilities or financial support. Many drifted back to the cities to avoid outright starvation and from there escaped overseas. The steady flow of refugees by boat to Hong Kong swelled to a flood after February 1979 when Chinese troops invaded Vietnam's northern border region.

There are now about 56,000 Vietnamese refugees in Hong Kong. They are forced to live in filthy, overcrowded conditions and are denied the right to work. The governments of Britain and Hong Kong regard them merely as another problem for the colony's economic prospects - which are already severely dented by the uncertainty over what to expect after reunification with the rest of China.

Until June last year, when the Chinese government bloodily suppressed the pro-democracy movement, Hong Kong's economic outlook - with the penetration of capital into the adjacent New Economic Zone increasing - looked good. Panic seized the stock exchange and the banking community when the Deng regime refused to give guarantees that the Chinese army would not be stationed in Hong Kong after 1997.

Faced with a flight of both capital and capitalists from Hong Kong, the Thatcher government has responded to this threat to British capitalist interests by granting full citizenship rights to approximately 200,000 of Hong Kong's wealthier inhabitants.

Paradoxically, by allowing the 'elite' the safety net of a home in Britain, the Thatcher government hopes to persuade them to stay in Hong Kong. The reason for this is clear: despite what happened in Tiananmen Square, the Tories recognise that China's economic crisis is so severe that the bureaucracy will be forced to do business with them. After 1997, they hope that Hong Kong will provide the launching pad for creating a capitalist China. Hence the importance of preventing a mass evacuation. Cracking down on the refugees is likewise aimed at making life easier for Hong Kong's ruling and professional middle classes.

Never slow to come to the aid of British imperialism in its hour of need, the reformist leaders of the Labour Party have fully endorsed Thatcher's brutal policy of forced repatriation, whilst effectively aligning themselves with Norman Tebbit's campaign to oppose even the granting of 200,000 Hong Kong citizens the right to live in Britain.

Workers News stands unequivocally for the abolition of all British immigration acts. We support the right of workers to live in any country of their choice. Workers' organisations must campaign against the forced repatriations and in support of the right of Vietnamese and Chinese refugees to asylum in Britain if that is their choice. The solution to Vietnam's refugee problem will be solved by the working class through the instrument of political revolution and the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy. The way forward for workers in Hong Kong is the struggle to overthrow the colonial administration. Such a struggle must be consciously linked to the fight for political revolution throughout China.

Ford betrayal

THE DECISION by 32,000 carworkers to accept Ford's 'final offer' is an indictment of the leadership of both major unions involved who did everything possible to avoid a national strike to win the pay claim. The two-year deal not only falls well short of the Ford workers' claim; it has productivity strings attached which claw the increase back by driving up the rate of exploitation.

Chief negotiators Jack Adams of the T&GWU and Jimmy Airlie of the AEU - both trained in the Stalinist school of collaboration with the employers - used every means at their disposal to dampen the militancy of carworkers. Armed with an 81 per cent mandate for an all-out national strike on December 21, they delayed action for over a month. More than two weeks after the ballot result, the National Joint Negotiating Committee, representing unions and employers, met 'in the mutual interests of both sides in an attempt to avoid a dispute'.

The reaction of Ford workers to their leaders' spinelessness was to mount a series of unofficial strikes at Dagenham, Halewood, Bridgend and other plants. So great was the groundswell that, on January 4, even members of the EETPU voted for industrial action.

Like the 1988 strike, sold out with minimum concessions, and the 35-hour campaign bled dry by the engineering unions in December, the latest experience shows that, to a man, the bureaucrats consider that major industrial battles, whether in defence of jobs or living standards, are an obstacle to Labour's electoral chances.

The revival of carworkers' militancy is a barometer of the movement of the working class as a whole. The current round of wage struggles must reckon not only with the role of the trade union bureaucrats but the threat of gathering recession. A revolutionary leadership must be built among carworkers and the wages fight set itself the goal of smashing the Thatcher government.

After ten years of Tory rule, Britain's police are better paid, better equipped, possess greater powers and are more heavily armed than ever. Even though the annual police budget of £3.7 billion is greater than the overall budget of many small states, only 15 per cent of reported crimes are investigated. Working class families who are burgled are among the lowest priorities.

Serious crimes

AN ENQUIRY into the West Midlands police force by officers from West Yorkshire has resulted in more than 100 allegations of malpractice.

The investigation started in August 1989, immediately after Geoffrey Dear, the West Midlands Chief Constable, had replaced the entire CID operational command structure, including the head of the CID and all his immediate deputies. This followed the disbanding of the Serious Crime Squad in June. Fifty-three officers were transferred to desk jobs and two were suspended. Four others face criminal charges.

The purge followed the discovery that the 'confessions' of two prisoners convicted of armed robbery and theft had gone missing. Dear said he had not acted earlier because there was no evidence of a 'wider conspiracy'. However, last November, *The Independent* claimed that the West Midlands police's internal investigations department knew in July 1988 of at least seven serious complaints against the detectives. Between then and August 1989, at least two more convictions were obtained on disputed confession evidence.

Over the two years since mid-1987, ten other cases brought by the West Midlands squad had been dropped or thrown out of court on the basis of evidence from handwriting experts that confessions were made up and had pages inserted.

Paul Dandy had been prosecuted for wounding a security guard in February 1987. After a year in jail, he was freed when a handwriting expert testified that his statement had been falsified

by adding a forged admission to the offence.

In January 1988, the charges were dropped against six defendants in two armed robbery trials when a request from defence lawyers for the original copies of 'confessions' for handwriting tests was met by a long delay and an eventual announcement that they had been lost!

In June 1989, Ronnie Bolden was cleared of two armed robbery charges when the jury heard that his 'statement' was the work of detectives and that the only person to identify him in a parade was an off-duty police officer.

In July 1989, the Court of Appeal freed Keith Parchment of Erdington in Birmingham. He had served two years of a five-year sentence on the strength of a 'confession' that had been altered by detectives.

The investigation by the West Yorkshire police covers only the period from January 1986, when the Police and Criminal Evidence Act came into effect. However, a former member of the Serious Crime Squad, Inspector Paul Matthews, who was 'required to resign' in 1986, was responsible for interrogating and obtaining an incriminating statement from Paddy Hill, one of the wrongfully-imprisoned Birmingham Six. *The Guardian* recently reported that 11 out of the 20 detectives in the Birmingham Six interrogation team have since been either disciplined, or the subject of legal action for assault or fabrication of evidence.

It was revealed in January that hundreds of documents crucial to the investigation have been shredded as part of official West Midlands force policy.

Car chase deaths

SWEENEY-style car chases are a major hazard to road safety. Last year over 20 people died in incidents connected with high-speed pursuits by police. In 1987, 24 people died in the course of 279 serious accidents involving police vehicles. During 1988 the figures were 14 and 160 respectively.

Incidents in 1989 included:

March 1: Three men died in Hounslow when their car burst into flames after being struck by a stolen vehicle chased at high speed by police.

March 3: A police chase in north London led to a stolen car crashing, killing one man and seriously injuring another.

March 5: A 16-year-old boy driving a stolen car was seriously injured when it overturned after being pursued by police in Surrey.

Three other teenage occupants sustained lesser injuries, while two women pedestrians were struck by the police car.

March 14: A 61-year-old woman was knocked down and killed by a police car on its way to the scene of a crash in Wolverhampton.

March 19: A teenage pedestrian was killed in Stockton-on-Tees as an unmarked police car drove to the scene of a suspected burglary.

April 18: Two men driving a stolen vehicle died when it ploughed into a wall in Puddletown, Dorset, after a high-speed chase.

April 30: A van being followed by police on the A45 in Northamptonshire hit a car head-on killing the driver.

August 5: A woman aged 80 died after being hit by a police car responding to an emergency call.

Last year saw the release of the Guildford Four, 15 years after they were framed, and growing demands for the release of the Birmingham Six. Two major corruption scandals emerged - in the West Midlands and Kent - while police conduct at the Hillsborough disaster was widely condemned.

Workers News reviews the role of Thatcher's thick blue line in 1989.



Hackney Community Defence Association's annual 'We Remember' march prepared. Wreaths were laid at Dalston and Stoke Newington police stations in memory of Rankin Lee and Colin Roach, who all died whilst in police custody.

Systematic racism

RACIAL harassment of the black and Asian communities is so common that even to catalogue incidents would require a major report.

Among the most important events last year were:

- The arrest of 82 anti-fascists, many of them Asian, in Dewsbury in June after a counter-demonstration against the British National

Party.

- A 400-strong police raid on the Broadwater Farm Estate in Tottenham, north London, in September.

- The planting of drugs at the well-known Mangrove Club in Notting Hill, west London.

- Allegations made by a former Liverpool policeman that widespread racism ex-

Gamekeepers turned

THOSE two hardy annuals, fitting up innocent people and corruption, were alive and well in 1989. While the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad and the Kent police made the headlines it was business as usual for other forces.

- In January, two former police constables admitted supplying information from the national police computer at Hendon to a team of private detectives in return for money. The information included details of criminal records and ownership of vehicles.

- Allegations were made in March about the relationship between a former head of criminal intelligence at Scotland Yard and an informer. It came hard on the heels of the trial of cocaine dealer Roy Garner which raised questions of his links with

Detective Superintendent Anthony Lundy of the Flying Squad.

- Police Constable Gerald Corley from Manchester was jailed in May for 17 years - 15 years for setting up an armed robbery and two years for supplying the gang with a shotgun. In the previous ten years, Corley had happily survived 23 public complaints, including ten alleging assault, as well as handling stolen property, dealing in drugs and organising brutal initiation ceremonies.

- Detective Inspector Graham White, head of the Nottinghamshire Drugs Squad, was retired on medical grounds in July following an enquiry into allegations that he possessed illegal drugs.

- Retired Merseyside police inspector Alan Singleton was jailed for two-and-a-half

Think of a number

HALF WAY through November 1989, Kent police raided five police stations in the county and took away papers which crime reporters believed were connected with the rigging of detection rates.

The raids followed allegations made by a...

They came a matter of weeks after the conclusion of a three-and-a-half year investigation into similar claims made by a Kent police constable, Ron Walker.

In January 1986, Walker, who is a firm believer in the possibility of an honest and accountable police force...

ly doing our duty...

A year in the life of 'the best police in the world'



to leave Hackney police station on January 8. May Hassan, Aseta Simms, Michael Ferreira

Class justice in action

A LONG-running farce was played out in the course of 1989 – one which trade unionists should remember each time their leaders tell them to place their confidence in the due process of law.

On the evening of January 24, 1987, 15,000 trade unionists demonstrating outside Rupert Murdoch's Wapping plant in support of sacked printworkers, were attacked by a force of over 1,000 police. More than 150 pickets were injured and as a result, 440 separate complaints against police actions were filed.

An enquiry mounted by the Northamptonshire police in conjunction with the 'Independent' Police Complaints Authority had access to 500 photographs of the events and 15 hours of film.

Finally, on January 12, 1989, 24 serving and two former officers of the Metropolitan police had summonses issued against them alleging offences including conspiracy, attempting to pervert the course of justice and actual bodily harm. This followed two previous applications for summonses which magistrates threw out on technicalities. Fourteen of the serving officers were

suspended from duty on full pay.

In May, Bow Street magistrates dismissed charges against six officers, allowing them to go back to work, on the grounds that there had been too long a delay in bringing the prosecution. Three months later the remaining eight police had their suspensions lifted and they too returned to duty.

The Director of Public Prosecutions attempted to reopen the cases in October. Judgement was deferred until December, when – surprise, surprise – the High Court upheld the magistrates' decision to dismiss charges against the six officers on grounds that the time elapsed was prejudicial to those charged and that to proceed with a trial would amount to 'an abuse of the process of the court'. At the same time a magistrate's decision that the case of a policeman accused of wounding a Wapping picket could proceed was overturned.

Although the DPP announced its intention to appeal against the High Court ruling, three years after the event, the number of police officers convicted still stands at zero.



Printers' wives demonstrate at Wapping, 1987

THE MODERN capitalist state arose more or less in line with the industrial revolution from the late 18th Century through the 19th. As the capitalist class developed manufacturing on an unprecedented scale, herding peasants into the burgeoning towns to work in factories, it initially relied on the army and gangs of hired thugs to put down isolated rebellions.

But these methods, hand-governed from feudal times, proved increasingly inadequate. A new class had been brought into existence – the working class. Because the individual members of this class had no means of acquiring the necessities of life except by selling their labour power in return for wages, organisation became imperative. Only by collective struggle could those who owned nothing defend themselves from being pauperised and starved by those who owned everything.

Bosses in uniform

The capitalists and their political representatives realised that the arbitrary methods of the past were useless against organised mass resistance in urban areas. A professional body was needed whose central task would be to defend capitalist law – that is, the right of the minority to own and control the means of production, and use it to exploit the majority. Just as the army defended the capitalist nation externally, so this new force would defend it internally. In 1829, the then Home Secretary, Sir Robert Peel, established the Metropolitan police for this very purpose.

Since that time, the police have developed sophisticated methods for use against the working class, not least of

which is a secret network of organisations supplementing its public uniformed face, dedicated to the infiltration of trade unions and left-wing political parties.

Elsewhere on these pages are references to the police overtly acting as the armed organisation of the capitalist class – for example, during the 1984-85 miners' strike and outside Rupert Murdoch's Wapping plant. The police are not a 'neutral' force, however much they may appear to be so, and cannot be reformed, democratised or made accountable as liberals, Labour Party and trade union leaders and many 'lefts' would have us believe. Workers and youth should place no confidence whatsoever in so-called 'independent' bodies like the Police Complaints Authority or local authority police monitoring committees.

The police cannot be relied on to act against the racist thugs who terrorise the black, Asian and other ethnic minorities. Neither will they counter attacks by scabs or fascists on picket lines, or on trade union or Irish republican demonstrations and meetings.

On the contrary, they will quietly applaud such events. The working class must therefore take the defence of its organisations and communities in its own hands by building workers' defence squads.

Because the English bourgeoisie finds himself reflected in his law, as he does in his God, the policeman's truncheon which, in a certain measure, is his own club, has for him a wonderfully soothing power. But for the working man quite otherwise! The working man knows too well, has learned from too oft-repeated experience, the law is a rod which the bourgeoisie has prepared for him.

Frederick Engels: *The Condition of the Working Class in England*

cism

isted in the force.

- A paramilitary-style operation carried out by police in riot gear in the St Paul's area of Bristol in September.
- Complaints by the Hackney Community Defence Association of 29 incidents of racist violence, abuse and other forms of harassment by police in the east London borough.

poachers

years in October. He had admitted stealing #45,219 in fines money over a six-year period from the warrants office where he worked.

- Detective Constable Frederick Swann from Leicester was imprisoned for 15 months in November, having stolen jewellery from both a robbery victim and a suspect held in connection with the raid.

Meanwhile, a staggering total of 124 prosecutions of football supporters collapsed during the year either due to lack of evidence or because they were thrown out on appeal.

In a less publicised case, Ramon Canale had a six-year sentence for conspiracy to rob and a firearms offence quashed in November. Flying Squad detectives had fabricated evidence against him.

Catalogue of violence

POLICE violence and intimidation are a daily experience for thousands of workers and youth on the streets of Britain's cities:

January 20: The Crown Prosecution Service decides there is insufficient evidence to prosecute seven policemen who allegedly beat up a man during a pub brawl.

February 27: John Atkinson, who nearly died after being shot through the heart on suspicion of conspiring to rob a Securicor van, sues police for £28,000 damages.

April 13: Dermot McWard of Hackney, whose leg was broken when police arrested him during a demonstration in support of the miners' strike in 1985, is awarded

£8,700 damages against the Metropolitan police.

July 1: Jamie Stewart, a 22-year-old black man, dies in a Holloway police cell after being arrested for an alleged driving offence. Early the same morning, tenants on an estate in Stamford Hill witness a young black man being brutally beaten in the back of a police van.

July 31: Two police constables, Hamish Montgomery and Patrick Shevlin, who had been convicted in May 1988 of murdering Owen Roberts at a police station in Morecambe, have their convictions reduced to manslaughter.

September 22: The Police Complaints Authority

announces that Chief Supt Graham Melvin is to face disciplinary charges over his treatment of a suspect arrested after the death of Pc Keith Blakelock at Broadwater Farm in 1985.

October 12: Constable Peter Anderson is jailed for seven years for raping an 18-year-old woman in his patrol car after agreeing to give her a lift home.

October 26: The PCA announces that it will not be bringing disciplinary action against police officers who falsely imprisoned, assaulted and maliciously prosecuted 73-year-old Kathleen Gibbons, who was arrested whilst selling *The Yorkshire Miner* in Charing Cross Road

in 1985.

November 10: The Metropolitan police are cleared of using excessive force to disperse students protesting against student loans in 1988.

November 13: Vincent Lee seeks damages against the Metropolitan police for malicious prosecution, wrongful imprisonment and damage to his property. In 1985 police planted drugs on Lee and falsely accused him of being a drugs dealer. In 1986 a court cleared Lee of all charges.

December 1: Alan Scott, a Liverpool social worker, is awarded £5,000 in damages after being arrested in Hackney in 1986 on suspicion of driving while over the alcohol limit. He sustained injuries when police pushed him to the ground, handcuffed him and threw him into the back of a police van.

December 14: Eric Ranger, Junior Ranger and Charles Foley – three young men beaten in an unprovoked attack by police in Holloway, north London, in 1983 – are allowed by a High Court judge to claim damages against the Metropolitan police, despite having already received settlements of £1,000 and £3,000.

number, then multiply by three

27-page statement. This alleged that over 60 officers had boosted their crime detection figures by persuading criminals to take responsibility for unsolved crimes, some of which had not even occurred! Liberal application of this technique meant that, in parts of Kent, the clear-up rate was double the national average.

Initially, the Metropolitan police carried out an enquiry. It took them six months to get round to raiding 13 police stations for evidence, by which time only one document had not been shredded. Not long after this, just as the enquiry was about to be dropped for lack of evidence, a former police-woman came forward to

corroborate Ron Walker's claims.

Hampshire police then carried out a second enquiry. They reported to the Director of Public Prosecutions, who decided in September 1988 against criminal charges. Instead, 33 detectives, all still on duty, were disciplined, one was dismissed and one took early

retirement on health grounds.

As for Ron Walker, his authorship of the original statement, given 'in confidence', was known throughout the force within days. He has been on sick leave for four years, during which time he has been ostracised by his colleagues and ignored by the investigating teams.

The first part of an extended obituary in which **Bob Pitt** assesses the life of the former WRP leader

The rise and fall of Gerry Healy

WHEN GERRY Healy, the former leader of the Workers Revolutionary Party, died on December 14, 1989, his ambition to establish himself as a figure of world-historic significance lay in ruins. Despite his final efforts to curry favour with the Soviet bureaucracy, Healy ended his life in almost complete political isolation. His followers, who stuck with their infallible leader to the finish, number no more than a hundred or so internationally, and in Britain are reduced to a mere handful of acolytes – mainly from the theatrical profession – whose roots in, understanding of, and influence over the labour movement are precisely nil.

Yet Healy's contribution to what passes for Trotskyism lives on in a bewildering variety of groups, most of which would react with outrage to accusations of 'Healyism'. The leaders of the WRP/Workers Press, whose political credentials rest on the part they played in expelling Healy in 1985, nevertheless firmly identify themselves with the traditions of the International Committee, the tendency Healy helped to found after the split in the Fourth International in 1953. And the International Socialist Group, in which many long-time opponents of Healy are prominent, names its journal *Socialist Outlook* after the paper around which Healy organised entry work in the Labour Party from 1948 to 1954, and has published glowing references to the Healy 'Group's' activity in the British labour movement of the 1950s.¹ Indeed, the groups which lay claim to this or that aspect of Healy's political heritage are too numerous to mention. The memory of Thomas Gerard Healy, it might be said, weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living!²

What is striking is that these groups which base themselves on, or seek to emulate, episodes from Healy's past adopt entirely conflicting political approaches to the present. They are able to do so because Healy's career comprised a series of unprincipled zig-zags, in the course of which he furiously denounced political positions which he had earlier enthusiastically supported, and eagerly embraced policies which he had once bitterly



Gerry Healy in characteristic pose

opposed – invariably carrying out these abrupt reversals without the slightest trace of self-criticism. Retrospective identification with particular points on Healy's political trajectory can thus be used to justify virtually any political line: from Stalinophobia to the promotion of illusions in Stalinism's revolutionary potential; from sectarian abstention on struggles within social democracy to liquidation into left-reformism; from a formal defence of the permanent revolution to sycophantic adulation of bourgeois nationalists. A clear analysis of Gerry Healy's political evolution, therefore, is not merely of historical interest but has direct relevance to the struggle to rebuild a genuine Trotskyist movement today.

The details of Healy's early years, following his birth in Cork on December 3, 1913, remain obscure. According to Healy himself, he joined the Young Communist League in Britain in 1928, although this may be just another of the myths he cultivated about his own history, along with claims that his parents were murdered by the Black and Tans and that he smuggled Communist Party literature into

Nazi Germany. By 1936, Healy was living in Belgrave Road, Pimlico, and was a rank-and-file member of the Communist Party's Westminster branch.³ He was then still a party loyalist and a fervent anti-Trotskyist – to the extent that he became a regular member of a group of Stalinists who went to Hyde Park to argue with and, on occasions, physically assault Trotskyist speakers.

Quite what influence Healy's years in the Stalinist movement had on his later politics is difficult to establish, but it seems improbable that he remained unmarked by these formative experiences. His period of CP membership saw a trans-formation of the party line from the ultra-leftism of the Third Period to the class collaboration of the Popular Front – a lurch from sectarianism to opportunism which Healy would subsequently accomplish with facility in both directions. And Healy's later organisational practices in his 'own' groups bore all the hallmarks of Stalinism; certainly they had no precedent in the Trotskyist movement.

One regular victim of the attentions of Healy and his fellow Stalinists at Hyde Park was Jock Haston who was then a member of the Militant Group, a Trotskyist organisation led by Denzil Harber which worked in the Labour Party. In the course of their repeated arguments, Haston succeeded in winning Healy over to Trotskyism, probably in the early summer of 1937 (though Healy always claimed to have broken from Stalinism a year earlier). Healy then moved up to Yorkshire, where he helped to run open-air meetings for the group and sell its paper. According to John Archer, a leading member of the Militant Group in Leeds who worked with him at that time, Healy was almost entirely ignorant of Trotsky's writings but made a favourable impression with his energetic activity on behalf of the organisation. At the Militant Group's national conference in August 1937, on the proposal of Harber and Archer, Healy was for-

mally accepted into membership and joined the group's Paddington branch.⁴

It was false allegations against another new recruit to the Paddington branch, Ralph Lee, concerning his past activities in the South African labour movement, which formed the basis of a split in the Militant Group within months of Healy joining. In December 1937, Lee walked out of the organisation in protest at his treatment, accompanied by seven supporters including Jock Haston, Millie Lee, Ted Grant and Healy. Although the Militant Group's leadership undoubtedly mishandled the situation, it seems likely that this served as a pretext for a split by young activists dissatisfied with what they saw as the conservatism of the older leaders. Lee and his supporters formed a new organisation, the Workers International League, and Gerry Healy became the editor of its duplicated journal, *Searchlight*.⁵

When James P. Cannon intervened on behalf of the international Trotskyist movement to unite the British groups into the Revolutionary Socialist League, the WIL refused to join, arguing that the unification agreement – which allowed those Trotskyists opposed to Labour Party entry to engage in open work – was a violation of democratic centralism. In 1938, the founding conference of the Fourth International recognised the RSL as the official British section and censured the WIL for having split over mere personal grievances. 'All purely national groupings,' the official statement read, 'all those who reject international organisation, control and discipline, are in their essence reactionary.'⁶ Healy, it should be noted, fully supported the WIL's decision to reject the authority of the Fourth International and retain its autonomy. The subsequent fragmentation of the RSL he saw as a vindication of the WIL's position. 'Comrade Cannon,' Healy was fond of saying, 'came to Britain and unified four groups into seven.'⁷

Healy's energy and organisational ability were no doubt an enormous asset to this small group of Trotskyists as they fought to overcome their isolation from the working class and build a revolutionary cadre. Even Sam Bornstein and Al Richardson – scarcely paid-up members of the Gerry Healy appreciation society – recognise that Healy 'made a real contribution' in this early period.⁸ Nor is there any evidence at this stage that Healy had carried the politics of Third Period Stalinism with him into the Trotskyist movement, as has sometimes been suggested, for he was a firm advocate of work in the Labour Party because of its historic links with the trade unions.⁹

But, with the Labour Party rendered moribund by the wartime electoral truce, the WIL soon came to concentrate on work in the trade unions, and Healy, as the group's industrial organiser, played an important role in recruiting a new layer of industrial militants to the WIL. His ability to do so was facilitated by the WIL's adoption of the Fourth International's 'Proletarian Military Policy', which centred on the demand for military training under trade union control. When a minority headed by Jock Haston criticised the WIL's interpretation of the military policy as capitulating to patriotic sentiments in the working class by portraying the British bourgeoisie as defeatists and the Trotskyists as the true advocates of military victory over Hitler, Healy vigorously defended the WIL's political line. The WIL, he wrote, told the working class that 'we are not against the defence of the country, only the capitalists are not fighting to defend the country but only for profit and loot'. The task of revolutionaries was to explain to workers that 'to fight Hitler you must take control into your own hands. Britain must be *your* Britain and not the Britain of the coal, steel and iron kings'.¹⁰ In addition to justifying Haston's criticisms, Healy's contribution to this controversy further demolishes attempts to portray his political deviations as consistently ultra-leftist.

What became increasingly clear, however, was that Healy's egotism, contempt for group discipline and subjective hostility to other leading comrades were not easily compatible with the requirements of a Bolshevik organisation. In 1939, when it was decided to change *Youth for Socialism* (successor to *Searchlight*) from a duplicated to a printed paper, Healy resigned from the WIL because he, as the nominal publisher, had not been consulted. Later that year, after the outbreak of war, Healy joined the group established by the WIL in Ireland in anticipation of illegalisation. There, as a result of a clash over minor tactical issues, Healy again resigned, declaring that he would join the Irish Labour Party 'to fight our organisa-

tion', and for this he was expelled from the Irish group. Only after an intervention by Jock Haston, who was anxious not to lose Healy's organisational talents, was the expulsion rescinded.

Healy was sent back to Britain where he worked energetically for the WIL. But in 1940, he used his position as industrial organiser to build up factional support for his attempts to reframe the WIL constitution on a federal rather than a centralised basis. Not only had he failed to inform the leadership of his differences beforehand, but when his actions were criticised Healy 'failed to put up any defence whatsoever, but instead launched into a slanderous and personal attack upon two of the leading comrades in the centre and "resigned" from the organisation...'

Towards the end of 1942, Healy yet again came into conflict with the WIL leadership, this time over his campaign to build a broad-based anti-Stalinist organisation in the trade unions, primarily in co-operation with Trotskyists working within the Independent Labour Party. The formation on his initiative of the Committee to Co-ordinate Militant Activity in the Trade Unions was no doubt seen by Healy as an important achievement. The committee met weekly, held a successful public meeting in London early in 1943 and declared itself 'a great step forward towards the unification of the revolutionary left inside the trade unions'.¹¹ But it was opposed by the WIL Political Bureau, ostensibly because it was a paper organisation which represented no real movement in the class and duplicated the WIL's own industrial work – but also, we might suspect, because the committee provided Healy with an independent power base outside WIL discipline.¹²

Matters came to a head at a Central Committee meeting in February 1943 when, at the conclusion of his industrial report, Healy announced that he was resigning from the WIL to join the ILP, stating that his decision 'was not motivated by political differences but his personal inability to continue further work in our organisation in conjunction with J. Haston, M. Lee and E. Grant'. If Healy hoped by this ultimatum to force the leadership to endorse his industrial policy, the attempt badly misfired. The Central Committee voted unanimously for his expulsion, and the Political Bureau issued a statement denouncing him to the membership.¹³ Gerry Healy's turbulent career in the Trotskyist movement appeared to be finished.

NOTES

- For example, Jane Kelly in *Socialist Outlook* No. 12, February 1989.
- Information from Arthur Shute, a contemporary of Healy in the Westminster CP who also broke from Stalinism and went over to the Trotskyists.
- S. Bornstein and A. Richardson: 'Against the Stream', Socialist Platform, 1986, p.25.
- S. Bornstein and A. Richardson: 'War and the International', Socialist Platform, 1986, pp.3-5.
- Ibid.*, pp.21-25.
- WIL internal bulletin, September 11, 1943.
- 'War and the International', p.7.
- Ibid.*, pp.7-8.
- WIL internal bulletin, May 19, 1941.
- New Leader*, February 20, 1943.
- WIL Political Bureau and Industrial Committee statement, February 14, 1943. Despite their hostility to Healy's initiative, within months the WIL leadership established the Militant Workers' Federation on almost identical lines.
- WIL Political Bureau statement, February 15, 1943. The statement summarised Healy's record of 'continued disruptive acts'.

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A fight against both traditions

Dear Editor,

At the beginning of an article exposing the fake Trotskyism of Ernest Mandel, leader of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International (*Workers Press*, November 4, 1989), Janos Borovi of the Hungarian League of Revolutionary Socialists makes an extraordinary attack on the Argentinian MAS. The Stalinist bureaucracy is prepared to consider anything to keep its power, he argues. 'Even the possibility of an alliance with pseudo-Trotskyists can be considered, as that of the Argentinian Communist Party with the Movement to Socialism (MAS).'

Why so long in speaking out, Comrade Janos? Could this be the same MAS and the same alliance of 1985 that WRP leaders Cliff Slaughter,

Simon Pirani, Geoff Pilling and Bill Hunter defended so ably against attacks from without and within, and which bothered WRP leader Cyril Smith, and Michael Varga and Janos Borovi of the Preparatory Committee, so much that they were struck dumb? Or is Comrade Janos just another in a long line of troublemakers trying to suggest that the MAS/CP alliance was a great betrayal and that the proposed merger between the WRP and the MAS was unprincipled opportunism?

Remember that Simon Pirani proposed immediate fusion with the MAS without discussion on their programme or history, and that Slaughter took the line that it was wrong to criticise the MAS because it would frighten them off. This it did as soon as Cyril Smith suggested that given all the fuss

maybe we should, after all, see what they represented. The same Cyril Smith tearfully accused Geoff Pilling of pulling a 'dirty centrist trick' on him at one very heated Central Committee meeting where he was advancing this timid proposition. Bill Hunter, of course, went off and joined the pseudo-Trotskyists.

However, although past crimes have inadvertently been acknowledged, a new outrage is being perpetrated. In Argentina this Popular Front in name and fact (it called on bourgeois parties to join) is OK, despite the still unreputed position of Slaughter and Pilling that 'Stalinism is the most counter-revolutionary force on the planet', but in Namibia a principled Trotskyist United Front policy cannot be pursued to expose SWAPO before the masses.



Supporters of the collaborationist DTA celebrate an election victory in Okahandja district, Namibia

The electoral alliance which was used to justify the 'no vote for SWAPO' policy of the WRP of Namibia was 'an extraordinarily broad alliance', says *The Guardian* of November 14. It included collaborators with apartheid, according to an amazing admission by *Workers Press* on November 4. This should

give Slaughter no problems, however. He has never renounced his view, expressed in 1969 and repeated so provocatively in the midst of the conflict with the Irish Workers League, that loyalist mobs who came into conflict with state forces preventing them from murdering nationalists were acting objectively against capitalism.

The WRPs of Britain and Namibia have forgotten to identify the main enemy in their haste to condemn SWAPO. There is practically no mention of the South African murder machine in all the *Workers Press* coverage, but there is a return to the old Third Period Stalinist/Healyite methods. Does the consciousness of the masses and their illusions in SWAPO ever enter the equation? If Stalinism is imperialism's main agent in the workers' movement, does this mean that no conflict of interests exists between them which the workers can exploit to their advantage? The Trotskyist method of United Front and Transitional demands obviously has no place in Namibia and those who advocate them are counter-revolutionary according to Slaughter. But then, as all the notes on the piano are equal, why need we tactics? Perhaps the entire WRP is like the unfortunate Cyril Smith who is not interested in tactics, only in Marxism, as he sagely pontificated during the conflict with the South African Trotskyists. This must be how he managed to miss the occupation of the London School of Economics, where he is a lecturer!

To illustrate the seemingly opposite position, SWAPO's record is defended uncritically in *Labour Briefing* of November 22 by Ben Campbell. It seems, from this follower of Mandel (or perhaps he is just a reformist Labourite - so hard to tell the difference!), that it is aiding imperialism to expose the crimes of Stalinism. Here lies the essential political character of both sides of the 1953 split, the International Committee and the United Secretariat.

The 'blunted instrument' theory of Ernest Mandel is applied by Campbell. He even goes as far as saying that 'SWAPO was the only party to put forward a comprehensive programme of radical reform, but its leadership seems not to be trusted by a minority of black ethnic minority groups'. Perhaps this had something to do with the campaign of assassinations of dissidents, leftists and intellectuals carried out by SWAPO over the past number of years?

If a Trotskyist party is not necessary to mobilise the masses to seize power then the next best will have to do, and to hell with the 'SWAPO detainee issue'. This is only the old Social-Democratic argument that Trotsky should have stayed silent on the crimes of Stalinism for fear of discrediting socialism!

However, Campbell does give us a pragmatic analysis of the outcome of the elections. All the opponents of SWAPO who were elected, bar one, were apartheid collaborators. This includes the four United Democratic Front allies of the WRP. The one-sided emphasis on the crimes of SWAPO resulted in a right-wing reaction. It could not be otherwise.

Slaughter, on the other hand, must perform the most amazing gyrations to justify this betrayal. The November 18 edition of *Workers Press* reports him as saying that 'the South African ruling class, the imperialist great powers, the Stalinist bureaucracy' are the conspirators, and that their instrument is 'principally SWAPO'. He goes on to say that the SWAPO leaders 'represented directly the interest of the capitalist class'. There was an imperialist/Stalinist plot that SWAPO had to get 67 per cent of the votes to form a government, according to Slaughter. How foolish these Stalinists were to set themselves such a target when 42 per cent was enough for Thatcher!

As if remembering some Stalinism from his past, Slaughter justifies his criminal sectarianism against South African Trotskyists' demands for United Front tactics with exactly the same arguments which German Stalinism used against Trotsky: 'The United Front From Below'. 'We will direct propaganda and proposals for united action to the rank and file of SWAPO... against their treacherous leaders.' As Trotsky said, if the masses saw their leaders as treacherous, then they would abandon them. It simply amounts to a demand that the SWAPO rank and file join the WRP!

The Third Period of Stalinist leftism was no less disastrous than the subsequent Popular Front class collaboration period. The International Committee tradition, which the WRP lays claim to, was no less disastrous for Trotskyism than the United Secretariat tradition. The Fourth International can only be reformed by an unyielding struggle against both traditions.

Yours fraternally,
Gerry Downing

Experiences in the ICP

Dear Editor,

In March 1988 I broke, with others, from the WIL on the grounds that it was 'a petty-bourgeois nationalist party', intent on maintaining its independence from the Fourth International, as we characterised the North-led ICFI. Our experiences within its British section, the International Communist Party, rapidly proved to us that the ICFI has no claim to be the Fourth International. It is a bankrupt sectarian organisation, whose politics are akin to those of Third Period Stalinism.

Our group joined the ICP during the seafarers' dispute and immediately came into conflict with the ICP's abstract propagandism. While the general secretary of the NUS, Sam McCluskie, re-

sisted rank-and-file demands for a national strike and even called off two national strikes in support of the seafarers at Dover, the ICP refused to fight for this demand, characterising it as an evasion of the fight for international action. McCluskie faced bitter opposition from NUS members on this question, including an attempt by delegates at the NUS conference to remove the National Executive Committee. Yet the ICP refused to fight on this issue, advising the seafarers that 'what is required is a political offensive... on the basis of a socialist programme'. When a worker asked ICP National Secretary David Hyland, at a public meeting, how the seafarers could win, Hyland replied that he had no advice for

them other than the necessity of implementing a socialist programme. In short, in Hyland's opinion the dispute could not be successfully resolved this side of the overthrow of capitalism in Britain. The Central Committee of the ICP even prohibited members from collecting funds for the seafarers while selling *International Worker* on the grounds that this was an opportunist practice!

This method of hectoring the working class from the sidelines of disputes (placing demands on rank-and-file workers to remove their leaders and build the ICFI), while abstaining from any concrete struggle against the bureaucracy within the labour movement, runs like a thread through all the activities of the ICP. In practice, such a method only lets the bureaucracy off the hook.

Trotsky said that for a sectarian the problems of a programme and building a party were simply resolved by waiting until the working class gathered around 'the sectarian rostrum'. This is the practice adopted by the leadership of the ICFI. At the ICP's rally commemorating 50 years of the Fourth International in September 1988, Secretary of the ICFI Peter Schwarz stated that 'the isolation of the Fourth International will meet up with the isolation of the working class'. It is commonplace within the ICP to denigrate any call for a mass party as in-itself a sign of opportunism. The membership, fed on a thin gruel of hysterical denunciations, are told that they have to wait until the working class comes to the ICFI.

The size of an organisation is not a problem if it is armed with the correct programme and tactics, but the ICFI counterposes itself in an undialectical ultimatum fashion to the mass organisations of the working class. To a revolutionary, isolation is a hardship which must be borne, proudly at times; to the leadership of the ICP it is a virtue. Hyland repeatedly denounces any call for a turn to the masses as symptomatic of opportunism.

While the ICP grasps that there are explosive contradictions in world economy, it leaps over the tasks of thoroughly exposing the main prop of imperialism in Britain - the labour movement bureaucracy - and of winning the leadership of the working class. The ICP repudiates the method of the Transitional Programme and instead calls on workers to expel the bureaucracy from the mass organisations and build the Fourth International. It characterises the Campaign group of Labour MPs as the leadership-in-waiting of a Popular Front whose task is to prevent the ICP leading the working class to victory. ICP members are sent to Socialist Conferences armed with vitriolic denunciations of these lefts, but empty-handed in terms of a programme of action capable of acting as a bridge between the consciousness of workers today and the conquest of power tomorrow. The few workers who attend these gatherings can only be repelled by this method of intervention.

Experience has now convinced me that the WIL was fundamentally correct in rejecting the pretensions of the North-led ICFI, which shares with the *News Line* group a refusal to examine honestly the history of the Trotskyist movement. This refusal is probably congenital. As *Workers News* has correctly pointed out in the review of David North's selective history of the ICFI, 'The Heritage We Defend', the book's omissions are eloquent: in particular, the absence of a serious analysis of the period 1975-85, leading up to the break-up of the ICFI in October 1985.

My experiences within the North-led ICFI convinced me that its leaders are incapable of facing their own history, drawing the lessons from it and correcting their practice. I have now broken with them, and write this letter to you in the interests of correcting the political record.

Yours fraternally,
Colin Harrison

Sam Bornstein (1920-1990)

SAM BORNSTEIN, who died at the age of 69 on January 8, was one of a small but important group of young workers who turned to Trotskyism in the late 1930s, repelled by the betrayals of Stalinism and reformism. He was responsible for moving the successful motion which affiliated the Independent Labour Party Guild of Youth to the Fourth International in 1938.

During the war he was active in the 'unofficial' British Trotskyist group, the Workers International League, which fused with the official section, the RSL, to form the Revolutionary Communist Party in 1944.

When the RCP minority, led by Gerry Healy, entered the Labour Party in 1947, Sam Bornstein remained outside with the majority. After 1949, when the majority followed the minority into the Labour Party, his differences with Healy's group increased. He was expelled from the entry group (like many others from the former majority) in 1950 when he

attacked Healy's slavish support for the Tito regime in Yugoslavia. He was subsequently a member of the Revolutionary Socialist League - the British section of Pablo and Mandel's International Secretariat, formed in 1956.

In recent years, Sam Bornstein made an important contribution to the study of the history of Trotskyism, both through the journal *Revolutionary History*, and in two volumes co-written with Al Richardson, 'Against the Stream' and 'War and the International'. It is not necessary to agree with every conclusion in these books to recognise the debt the present generation of revolutionaries owe to his meticulous work in rediscovering the heritage of the 1930s and 1940s. In addition to making available his extensive collection of archival material, Sam Bornstein was generous and patient in the assistance he offered others. *Workers News* sends its condolences to his family and to his comrades associated with Socialist Platform.

Workers News



8

February 1990 25p



The annual Bloody Sunday commemoration march in London in 1989

RELEASE ALL IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS!

BLOODY SUNDAY, 1972

Murder on the streets of Derry

By David Lewis

ON SUNDAY January 30, 1972, British soldiers of the First Battalion of the Parachute Regiment shot dead 13 unarmed civilians on the streets of Derry. The dead were all participants in a 15,000-strong anti-internment march through the nationalist areas of the city, organised with the support of virtually all civil rights and nationalist groups.

Internment without trial had been used many times in earlier periods by the British authorities in Ireland, in an attempt to smash the republican movement. It was introduced on August 9, 1971, to counter the growing strength of the Provisional IRA. On the same day, Brian Faulkner, the British-appointed Prime Minister of the 'Northern Ireland' parliament at Stormont, banned all marches in the Six Counties.

Marches protesting against internment were frequent and drew broad support. On January 22, 1972, a march along the beach to the newly-opened Magilligan internment camp had been attacked by the British army and the Royal Ulster Constabulary and turned back before reaching the camp. The demonstration on January 30

was planned to be so big that it would be impossible to halt and would therefore in practice defeat the ban on marches.

The march assembled in the Creggan estate and made its way down to the Bogside. While no attempt was made to stop the march by invoking Faulkner's ban, the Parachute Regiment had blocked off all the exits from the Bogside. At the end of the march, although the majority of marchers went to the rallying point, a few hundred faced the paratroopers near the Rossville flats and some stones were thrown. When the soldiers responded with tear gas and water cannon, the demonstrators retreated. At this point, without warning, the soldiers opened fire and continued shooting, deliberately and methodically. When they stopped, 13 were dead and 29 wounded, one fatally.

There is evidence to show that the killings were not a spontaneous response to 'provocation' - a 'mistake', as the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Widgery, was later to describe the events of that

day - but a planned attack aimed at cowering those opposed to British domination. Firstly, a source inside the Parachute Regiment had given advance warning that the army was preparing to attack the march. Secondly, the Parachute Regiment is one of the most highly trained and disciplined units in the British army.

Allegations from the army that the paratroopers were fired on first by the IRA, or petrol-bombed by the people they shot, were subsequently withdrawn. This is hardly surprising since not one soldier was wounded and none of the journalists present heard IRA gunfire. The IRA was, in fact, neither on nor near the march, in accordance with the wishes of the organisers.

Two days later, the British embassy in Dublin was burned down by angry demonstrators. On February 22, the Official wing of the IRA bombed the Aldershot headquarters of the Parachute Regiment, killing seven, and in early March, a loyalist bomb in the Abercorn restaurant killed two and injured 126. On March 24, Stormont was suspended and the Tory government under Edward Heath took direct control of the Six Counties, with the overwhelming support of the Labour opposition under Harold Wilson. William Whitelaw was appointed as Secretary of State for 'Northern Ireland'.

In April, a cover-up masquerading as an enquiry, under Lord Widgery, found that the army had done nothing wrong. To underline this official endorsement of the killings, the officer commanding the paratroopers was given an OBE in the Queen's honours list in 1973. However, for the people who marched against British oppression, the Derry city coroner came nearer the truth when he referred to the events of Bloody Sunday as 'sheer unadulterated murder'.

ANYONE who still believes the Tories when they claim that there is no shoot-to-kill policy against republican fighters is either living on another planet - or is a leader of the British Labour Party.

After an undercover unit assassinated three petty criminals who were attempting to rob a bookmaker's in West Belfast on January 13, the best the Labour front bench could muster was a half-hearted call for an enquiry.

Not, of course, an enquiry into why British forces are using illegal methods to crush a legitimate national struggle, but an enquiry into the unfortunate circumstances of this particular incident. Because for the Labour servants of imperialism, it isn't what you do, it's the way that you do it.

THE ORIGIN OF SHOOT-TO-KILL

A BOOK published last year written by a former British army officer confirms that there has been a secret shoot-to-kill policy in operation in the north of Ireland since the early 70s.

'War Without Honour' is an account of how Fred Holroyd's military career came to an end when he began to question the 'counter-terror' methods employed against the republican movement. In 1975, Holroyd was removed from active service in the north of Ireland, where he was a Military Intelligence Officer working with MI6, on the grounds that he was mentally unstable. He claims that he was, in fact, a casualty in the battle between MI5 and MI6 for control over intelligence operations.

Holroyd opposed the methods used by MI5, which took over MI6-run operations in 1975, from a professional, not a moral, point of view. Committed to destroying the IRA, he nevertheless felt that the MI5/SAS approach, by alienating the nationalist population, made a political settlement more

difficult. The value of his book is that it both corroborates and expands on earlier, less detailed exposures of the, undercover war waged by British forces in Ireland.

Holroyd explains that SAS-style units were operating covertly in the north of Ireland probably from 1969, under the guise of the 'Mobile Reconnaissance Force' and various 'pseudo' or 'counter-gangs', based on Brigadier Frank Kitson's counter-insurgency theories. These groups were led by officers with an SAS training. He also shows how the SAS was eventually unleashed with the succession of MI5 over MI6.

Holroyd was recruited to MI6 by 'Bunny' Dearsley shortly after his arrival in the north in 1973. Together they built up an intelligence-gathering network which included a Garda officer across the border in Monaghan. The 'Badger', as he was known, supplied information on IRA volunteers in the south and profiles of members of the Irish Republican Socialist Party. In 1975, 'Badger' was to lead Holroyd

By Terry McGinity

right to the top when he arranged a meeting with the Garda Assistant Commissioner, Ned Garvey, in Dublin. Among other things, Garvey supplied MI6 with 'some 150 photographs of individuals involved in the INLA inside the Republic, along with names and other details'.

It was only during Holroyd's later research that he was able to connect MI5 and the SAS with a number of notorious events of which he was aware during his tour of duty. The MRF liaised with loyalist assassination squads, and recruited from their ranks. Former MRF member, Albert 'Ginger' Baker, now conveniently incarcerated in a British jail, has admitted to 30 murders, many of them carried out with the help of the RUC. Bombs planted in Dublin in 1972 to create the climate for anti-terrorist legislation were also the work of an SAS-led squad. But with the MRF's cover blown in late 1972, it became necessary to estab-

lish more 'professional' SAS units.

According to Holroyd, MI5/SAS activities played a key role in sabotaging the Sunningdale power-sharing executive, which was brought down in May 1974 by the loyalist Ulster Workers' Council strike. Two days into the strike, bombs exploded in Dublin and Monaghan, killing 33 people - the work, according to Albert Baker, of an SAS-trained gang of which he was a member.

One SAS unit worked out of a camp at Castledillon, Armagh, using the name of '4 Field Survey Troop, Royal Engineers'. It was here, Holroyd maintains, that Captain Robert Nairac was based. In January 1975, Nairac shot an IRA commander, John Francis Green, and later gave Holroyd a polaroid photograph of the corpse as proof. Holroyd points to evidence linking the weapon used to kill Green with one used in the slaughter of the Miami Showband by the UVF in July of the same year. Nairac, he implies, set up the operation and provided the

explosives and weapons. The murder of the three musicians, Holroyd says, was intended by MI5 to bring about a complete destabilisation to justify stepping up the war against the IRA.

What Holroyd, and those who have assisted his campaign like Labour MP Ken Livingstone, completely fail to see is that the turn to assassination tactics in the mid-70s marked a change in policy by the British ruling class. As more 'orthodox' methods of repression failed to defeat the nationalist struggle - for instance, internment - shoot-to-kill occupied a more and more central place. The SAS and MI5 are not 'running amok'; they are carrying out the requirements of British imperialism. If there are differences in the intelligence services, they are a reflection of differences in the ruling class itself, but the majority opinion in the government is clearly in favour of shoot-to-kill.

'War Without Honour' by Fred Holroyd with Nick Burbidge; The Medium Publishing Company; £6.95.

Troops out now! Self-determination for the Irish people!