

BLACK FLAG

FOR ANARCHIST RESISTANCE

MAR 90

30p

THE WALLACE AFFAIR

MIS's MAN CONTINUES THE SMEARS

ONE OF THE main plotters in the MI5 destabilisation campaign of the late 60's, early 70's and who leaked some of the information that became the foundation of Colin Wallace's dirty tricks campaign, is currently behind another smear campaign against well known politicians and organisations. Documents forming the basis of this campaign are in the possession of *Black Flag* and are quoted from below.

The current campaign is being spearheaded via regular briefing papers that purport to provide 'intelligence' on political leaders, political and other organisations, and 'subversives'. These papers are aptly titled *British Briefing* and are circulated to 'interested parties' within industry, the media, and within the expanding 'think-tank' establishment of the free market right. *British Briefing* is coordinated by one person—a former colleague of Peter Wright, the ex-MI5 officer—and distributed by an organisation funded by MI5 and which also receives finance from British industry.

The coordinator of *British Briefing* is Charles Elwell (also known as Charles Elton); its distributor is the Economic League, the blacklisting agency, and no doubt League Watch, the anti-blacklisting research agency, will be providing more information on this connection.

British Briefing does not deal in facts, but is a mixture of innuendo, low level intelligence and reports taken from both mainstream and left-wing newspapers stirred up with a good deal of red-scare paranoia. It rarely makes direct accusations but uses selected quotes from a variety of sources in an attempt to make its smears credible. It finds 'dissidents', 'infiltrators' and 'subversives' in the Home Office, the House of Commons and even the Church of England (C of E). In an extensive review of a recent 'study' into the C of E it suggests that 'C of E ordinands are recruits to an organisation in which kindred views abound and may prevail, if not yet to the extent of including Lenin and Marx as well as Martin Luther King in their calendar of Saints' and that 'it is well known that their (the C of E's) tendency is anti-Conservative, anti-capitalist, anti-nationalist and pro-socialist', this being illustrated in the study by quotes by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Durham.

It then goes on to echo claims also made by both the Prime Minister and the Economic League that many charities—Shelter, Child Poverty Action Group, War on Want, Oxfam and Christian Aid in particular—are motivated by radical politics, having (this time using an article by Peregrine Worsthorne in the *Sunday Telegraph* 'been infiltrated by sixties radicals and the Left in order to undermine the system'. The efforts of Downing Street, however, to be involved in the drafting of a new Charities Act however were fended off by 'dissident elements in the Home Office'.

There is a review on the development of the Anti-Economic League Campaign with reports on both a meeting organised by Maria Fyfe MP—whose 'communist sympathies are well known to *British Briefing* readers'—in support of her Blacklists (Access to information Bill) and of the conference held by Leeds Trades Council (after which League Watch was founded).

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GREEK YOUTH UPRISING

BLACK CROSS FORCED UNDERGROUND



Anarchist Michalis Kaltezas was murdered by police in Athens. Who's next?

GREEK ANARCHISTS and students have staged a wave of protests and demonstrations in Athens, over the last six weeks, which show signs of increasing intensity as we go to press. The protests are over the acquittal of police officer Melistas for the murder of a young anarchist in 1985 and began with the occupation of Athens Polytechnic.

Michalis Kaltezas was shot dead five years ago without warning or provocation. The trial of officer Melistas finally ended on January 19th, when he was allowed to walk free from the charge of murder. Enraged protestors, mainly anarchists and students, occupied the Polytechnic and there were clashes between police and 5000 demonstrators on the following nights. The occupiers stated that since the police were now able to murder with impunity they were taking the action for their own protection. Their demands include the quashing of Melistas' acquittal, a retrial and the sacking of the Ministers for Justice and Public Order—Stamatis and Manikas.

In the weeks following the initial occupation the protestors received the support of other anarchists and students who have occupied three Centres for Philosophical Studies, about 50 high schools and another two universities. Demonstrations called by the anarchist movement have brought 20,000 protestors onto the streets on at least two occasions, as well as numerous other demonstrations around the country. Workers in the large tobacco growing area outside Athens have gone on strike in sympathy.

Police attempts to evict the Polytechnic in-

cluded firing large quantities of CS gas into the buildings, but overall they have been frustrated by the refusal of the Dean of the institution to allow the police to enter Polytechnic premises, to criticise the protestors or demand their eviction. A law in Greece, for right of asylum, prevents the police from entering university premises without the permission of the authorities, in order to preserve academic freedom. The Dean, Mr Noutsopoulos, is now to be prosecuted for supporting 'criminals' and refusing access to the police. However, by a bizarre turn of events, since the coalition government collapsed on 12 February he has been co-opted into the provisional government as Minister for Transport and Telecommunications!

The students and anarchists have since decided to end the occupation anyway, on their own terms, and take the protest onto the streets. Meantime, the Ministry for Public Order has released the names of 19 wanted anarchists who they intend to charge with various offences, including causing 10 million Drachmas worth of damage to the Polytechnic. This move has been widely seen as an attempt to provide an excuse for an illegal eviction and although the occupation has now ended, the charges have not been withdrawn. Since the collapse of the Government, the police have become increasingly threatening and are unlikely to back down in their attempts to nail people. The list of wanted people includes the Anarchist Black Cross contact, who is still managing to supply information to us even though he has gone underground.

The issue of asylum is one of the most

crucial to the protestors, as the way the law is interpreted will determine whether or not people are ultimately charged and convicted. The police are saying that the protestors have violated the asylum principle by occupying the Poly, although the protestors point out that the asylum principle exists to protect students. While this issue will dominate the much of the protest in the next few weeks, the anarchists and students will also ensure that the murder of a fifteen year old anarchist by the State is by no means forgotten.

With the occupation over a new march is planned and a campaign is to be launched to draw attention to the real reason for the unrest. True to form the Greek media has managed to turn the whole affair upside down—ignoring the fact that a young man was murdered by the police and promoting the usual propaganda about criminals, lefties and terrorism. The campaign will also seek to disrupt the next general election, planned for April 8th.

Although the progress of events has been subjected to a total media blackout by the Greek government, preventing newspapers here and elsewhere from reporting anything, news of the protest is being circulated daily through the channels of the International Anarchist Black Cross.

LATE NEWS: We have heard that the Director of the psychiatric clinic at Korydallos Prison—Marias Maratos—has just been killed by unknown people. Maratos had been responsible for the torturing of patients, the raping of female inmates and had directly caused the suicide of many at the clinic.

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For a social system based on mutual aid and voluntary co-operation - against State control and all forms of government and economic repression. To establish a share in the general prosperity for all - the breaking down of racial, religious, national and sex barriers - and to fight for the life of one world.

SORRY WE'RE LATE...AGAIN

Our working editorial collective having been reduced by half owing to people leaving London, a bug hit us making it impossible to produce the paper for February. Sorry. Let's hope we can overcome.

The article on Chile (last issue) was the first part: the second part is not yet translated owing to the translator still being off.

Anarcho -Quiz

1. Wartime Australian Prime Minister Menzies was nicknamed 'pig-iron'—was this due (as some press obituaries suggested) to his stubbornness of character?
2. Why did the early settlement of Australia lead to an increased value of pocket-handkerchieves in England?
3. What fundamental privilege enshrined in the British class system is severely curtailed in Australia?
4. When the Duke of Norfolk managed the visiting English cricket team and was advised not to expect Ozzies to call him Your Grace all the time, how did he adjust to democracy?
5. When Capt. Bligh offered indigenous Australians nails and worthless beads for their lands—and unlike some native American tribes, they refused—what conclusions did he draw?
6. What Anarchist took a prominent part in the Paris rising, visited Australia and pioneered squatting in South London, before returning to France to start a propaganda paper?

answers on page 8

1990 Competition for British Press Fool of the Year



WILLIAM
LANGLEY

We intend awarding a fool's cap of newspaper to the British journalist who manages to be the most incompetent ass in this highly competitive industry in the early part of the New Year. The coveted lead so far goes to William Langley, *London Evening Standard* political correspondent in Paris. For testimony to lack of political knowledge, use of the English language, and French modern history with the struggles to the death between Anarchists versus both Royalists and Nazis, this is hard to beat: 'The (recent Royalist boules) Paris bombers almost certainly belong to one of the twisted anarcho-Nazi factions who like to describe themselves as Royalists and who are still riding out the perverse wave of support they received during the centennial' (bi-centennial of the French Revolution). (*Standard* 12.1.90)

HOME NEWS

WAPPING: AFTERMATH OF WAR

A Northamptonshire police inquiry into the Battle of Wapping leaked to the BBC and taken up by the press criticises the conduct of the police during the lock-out at News International. Nevertheless, it is a white-wash. One had only to see the TV coverage, let alone be there, to see that the police behaved like an occupation force smashing down the local resistance. They charged into the crowd, beat up elderly people, could scarcely be restrained from killing younger more active demonstrators, hit out at women and men alike, in some cases women with accompanying children were not spared, and all for just being there. It wasn't just a hit back at incensed activists. The enquiry states some of the force acted in a 'violent and undisciplined way'. Nevertheless this is a lie and enables a further lie to be told by police apologists that maybe some fraction of the police, perhaps junior officers, lost control under violent provocation.

The attack on the demonstrators against Rupert Murdoch's scab operation was violent, but it was not uncontrolled. All along senior police officers kept command and discipline was maintained. Had it not been, some police could have been expected to run away or at least hold back—would they all have rushed forward on their own initiative, putting themselves at not inconsiderable risk, just in favour of getting the *Sun* and *Times* out on time?

Sogat was attacked, indeed fined, for not being able to 'control' all demonstrators, though anyone could, and did, turn up. Nobody turned up to support the police. Those who were there were under orders, and remained so.

From personal experience: I was standing in a bunch of people (which was later charged by horses) just happening to be between an official Sogat platform, with union leaders speaking (actually dissuading violence) and the police. When a woman got up to speak I heard a voice from the police ranks clearly say, 'That's Brenda Dean'—I couldn't see if it was the new Sogat boss or not—and a shouted chorus came



from their ranks 'Let's get the bitch'. There was no media hype against Brenda Dean: no whipped-up hysteria as there was, say, against Arthur Scargill during the miners' strike. To the bourgeoisie she presented an image of moderation. The only people (putting on one side the dislike of her activist members!) who hated her, for putting the case on television clearly and convincingly in terms acceptable to the Murdoch readership, were Murdoch's minions.

But all the police facing us charged forward as one. (Stones from elsewhere dispersed them). Why would police officers want to 'get the bitch' if not following Murdoch's line, the only conceivable reason for which can be cash hand-outs sanctioned from the top?

On another occasion I was driving a car on the public highway at the moment when the vans wanted a clear run out of the besieged building and I was told to get it away as the road was closed off for the time. I handed them the visiting card of a local GP (for some reason they thought it was mine) saying I lived round the corner. I was told 'Don't argue, doc, or we'll smash the car in'. They did not in fact smash the car but expertly manoeuvred it on to the pavement (illegal parking?) as the vans came out at dangerously high speed (illegal: on one occasion resulting in death). Strict discipline was maintained and a sergeant was present. The surging crowd, which threatened to block the outgoing vehicles, was then stormed as, at a word of command, horsemen rushed in, batons flaying, like the Charge of the Light Brigade. Where and when had the nerves snapped, the discipline broken down, the senior officers lost control? They knew perfectly well what they were doing. It is an excuse to let off the men at the top.

Some rankings have now been charged on the fairly inescapable evidence that gross violence was perpetrated (any violence on the other side of the barricades having long since been heavily punished). But in view of the 'unreasonable delays' in bringing evidence many have not gone for trial and their cases have been dismissed. Was it that long ago? Let us hope this law also applies to the case of Pottle and Randle, now awaiting trial at the Old Bailey for their part in releasing a prisoner twenty years ago, following the recent 'revelations' of a dead masterspy and the consequent urging of Tory back-bench dinosaurs.

AM.

AMBULANCE DISPUTE

ACTION NOT WORDS

THE AMBULANCE strike tempts one to some cynical remarks. It has had more widespread popular support—for what good that does—than any since the nurses strike. There is positive hatred of the miners among the upper classes—they think their houses are kept warm by a scullery maid with a bucket of coals and the eminers are a subterranean menace. The middle classes hate the transport workers—they see lorries as blocking the roads and think their goodies come from the supermarket. The workers on the whole oppose the passenger transport workers—if they are there, they grumble about lateness, if not, they complain of the inconvenience. The chattering classes hate the printers, whom they blame for printing their rivals' lucubrations and not insisting on only printing theirs. But everyone realises that they can get knocked down and would have to rely on the ambulances, even if they can afford to pay for private hospitalisation, and would still need nurses.

The snare is that the union leadership is determined to keep the sympathy of the public even though it is confined to throwing donations in the collecting buckets and honking horns outside pickets. They would be better off if they were generally hated like property speculators! Of course a health emergency service, like fire-fighters or health workers, is bound to consider the people whom it serves. But a strike that ends the dispute quickly is infinitely better for the stricken than a slow drain of the profession, such as the senior doctors have staged, moralising all the way to the fleshpots of the USA that they could never dream of striking.

These remarks are not so offbeat as some of the suggestions for settling the dispute. Some worthy doctors, taking up the obvious lessons of the cuts in the National Health Service and

the plight of the nurses, the ambulancemen and the junior doctors, have hit on the not-so-obvious solution of starting a Health Party. They are going to campaign through the ballot box, in the charade of parliamentarism we laughingly call democracy, to get the health service considered. Some election, with candidates parading their concern for health, for ecology, for or against the death penalty, even the old stalwart against road accidents, in competition with the politicians with their professed concern for everything and everybody!

The plain fact is that it is no good waiting until grievances are forced upon one to ask for solidarity from everyone else. The workers as a whole need to get back to supporting every strike, to offering solidarity by way of action and not words or noises after the dispute has taken place, as a matter of sheer individual survival. We are all suffering under the attack made now by a government that has ceased to bother to conceal it, as in the days of consensus. An injury to one has to be recognised once more as an injury to all.

Steely Squatters

Council tenants in London who have put up steel doors to protect themselves from break-ins have been ordered to remove them. The excuse is that it is unsafe—the fire brigade in one case couldn't break in to save a couple. However other councils are putting in the same type of steel doors, taking hundreds of pounds from tenants' rents, to stop squatters.

Squatters harm no-one. Those who break in to, more or less violently according to circum-

Q & A on Anarchism

Q What is lifestyleism?

A Lifestyleism is the belief that following a particular lifestyle has some political significance or is in some way an indication of social change or even revolutionary significance. It is a perfectly harmless form of adaptation to the existing system as long as it is recognised for what it is. It does not prevent one from being a revolutionary, a radical or conservative, though it sometimes is an inducement to indifference.

The belief that following a particular bohemian or punk lifestyle has affected many would-be anarchists in English-speaking countries, and is spreading, but is totally negative.

There has always been a notion that following particular dress fashions is an indication of liberal or revolutionary beliefs—hats, coats, men's beards and moustaches or the way of cutting them, women's hair, have all in their time been used as indications of belief, which is fair enough. But the notion that anything positive is achieved by this is absurd. One can buy oneself a bowler hat, striped pants and an umbrella and live in a detached house, but it takes more than that to become a capitalist. It's easier to wear old clothes and live in a squat, but one doesn't automatically become a revolutionary far less an anarchist, not that it prevents it either.

stance. But councils cannot bear to see empty flats go to squatters.

Those who break in occupied flats are deterred by steel doors, because time is of the essence. Squatters, who go to derelict ones, are less so. All they do is to hacksaw through the securing rods or use a 15 mm spanner to unscrew bolt and washer.

Source: Ship News

Australian Tramworkers Sold Down The Line

ON THE FIRST day of the new decade, tram workers in Melbourne, Australia, turned the new realism of Labor on its head and declared workers control. They kicked out management and ran the transport system without bosses. The Labor government and union bureaucracy took the challenge seriously and within 24 hours the decision was made by the state authorities to close the transport system down completely rather than risk collectivisation.

The authorities erroneously believed that with no trams on Melbourne's roads any public support for the tram workers would collapse; but the opposite was the case. John Kennan, the minister in charge of transport in Victoria, miscalculated just how much the public relies on tram conductors—which he wants to get rid of. Kennan hopes that new style ticketing will make conductors obsolete—but the public are not swayed by fatuous arguments over cost-saving and believe that human resources are needed to retain high safety levels. The dispute escalated into disruptive action, blockades of the streets by trams and finally—with the crunch date arriving for the introduction of the new tickets and the 'redeployment' of the conductors—the takeover of the trams by the workers. Prior to Christmas pressure mounted with action by trammies taking a drastic toll on the revenue of Melbourne's biggest stores. Millions of dollars of business was lost as shoppers chose to shop locally and office workers took 'sickies'. The industrial action was solid and depots began organising for 'D Day'—trammies came to work as normal but refused to accept the new contracts. Instead they took the trams out and depots in different parts of Melbourne declared that the trams were being run directly by the workers. One depot hung out a banner announcing 'Under New Management: Workers' Control'. On previous occasions during the dispute trams had been run with the public being allowed by the workers to travel free—the response from management was to dock the trammies' pay. On January 1st the talk in the

depots was for the workers to print up their own, workers' controlled, tickets that would bring in revenue from tram users direct to the trammies. This was too much for the right-wing Labor establishment—such direct action had to be halted at all costs.

On the evening of January 1st rumours abounded that management was going to force a lockout. Hearing of the crisis some trammies cut short their festive vacation and came in to give a hand. Volunteers in the dead of night drove the trams to the centre of the city: The police failed to stop them, being told by the trammies that they were carrying out 'legitimate industrial action'. Within hours virtually all the trams were out in the centre blocking the main tram routes. By early morning pickets were set up by the trams and in the depots.

The action was further escalated when trammies in some depots forced any remaining managers to leave. In these depots the entrances were sealed and there were cases of managers being literally hosed out of the buildings. It was not long before the authorities took the drastic action that trammies had been predicting all along: centralised power was cut off from the system to prevent tram workers from continuing to run the trams without bosses. Without power the trams were permanently stranded in the city centre. It was stalemate: workers couldn't run the system and the authorities were unable to get the trams back to the depots. In effect it was a lockout.

The next day there was an attempt by the authorities to forcibly tow some of the trams back to the depots. But this plan was foiled when a bus driver drove his bus in front of the long line of trams and let down all its tyres. Scuffles broke out between police and pickets and members of the public came to the support of the trammies. No further attempts were made that day to move the trams and later that night a few people made their way to the centre and, taking matters into their own hands, welded iron bars to tram tracks in five different parts of the city.

With a lockout enforced—the trammies were not on strike but wanted to run the system directly and could not while the power remains off—the situation developed into a state of psychological warfare with both sides of the dispute upping the odds to force through a solution. The union executive asked for a three month moratorium (which was rejected), that would only succeed in delaying the struggle. Kennan—who personally made all the running on behalf of management—stated he wouldn't budge an inch.

The head of the union, Lou di Gregorio, had succeeded in most people's eyes in establishing himself as a 'militant' and the same applies to John Halfpenny, the secretary of the Trades Hall Council—but both have their careers to think about and their interventions were the prelude for a behind-the-scenes deal. Halfpenny portrays himself as on the extreme left, but has his eyes on Parliament. Di Gregorio won his union post with the support of Labor Unity, the faction that backs Bob Hawke, the Prime Minister. Not long after Di Gregorio's victory it was leaked that Labor Unity had backed him in order to deal with the 'left anarchism' within the union—ie. the rank and file tendency to push for direct action. It was this tendency that had been at the forefront in the push for workers' control. The dispute also demonstrated the importance of active community support. Local support groups established themselves not long into the dispute and soon became a mainstay of the locked-out trammies. At support group meetings references were made to the support network of the miners strike in Britain. Financial support was essential to keep up morale but to win the dispute it was recognised that industrial and community isolation was the prime enemy. Solidarity had to be fought for on all fronts. At the local level money and food was collected and local businesses gladly contributed bulk food and larger donations. The support groups also played a major role in tackling government disinformation: posters and leaflets were produced and distributed, pointing out that the dispute did not involve strike action. The support widened with the public being urged not to use the new ticketing system, imposed upon other forms of transport—trains and buses. A campaign escalated for the boycott of the new tickets and of the ticket outlets.

Industrial solidarity from workers in other in-

dustries and other sections of the transport industry was patchy. In the immediate aftermath of January 1st bus drivers came out in support but after a few days went back when the union executive decided for 'tactical reasons' that they could serve a better purpose in work contributing funds to trammies locked out. Rail workers remained at work but took some limited action in the form of one day affairs and by not fully operating the new ticketing system. Building workers 'blackbanned' work on government buildings, but constructive direct action was on the whole short from other organised workers. It is this kind of support that would have had an immediate effect on the progress of the dispute. In the past railworkers have been let down by tramworkers, now the trammies feel let down—its the usual tactics of divide and rule. There is a clear argument for one public transport union—not a 'super union' modelled on existing lines, but one directly controlled by the members.

On the wider political scene the tram workers union, against the wishes of its executive, agreed to disaffiliate from the Labor Party. This took effect from January 1st and the decision to do so is an important step in the union's move to independence.

But the sell-out had in effect begun from day one, when the union executive chose negotiation instead of escalation. It ended on February 2nd, after five weeks, when the union leadership signalled their total capitulation to the government and made certain that the rank and file militants were outmanoeuvred at a mass meeting called to decide on whether to back the leadership's recommendation. The meeting was stacked with bus drivers who had no interest in the dispute at all and who were prepared to use their vote to ensure the dispute did not escalate in their direction. As a result a clear majority voted for an end to the occupations.

The end, when it came, was bitter and divisive. The mass meeting was volatile, to say the least, and there was talk of punch-ups and lynchings. The press and TV were all over the place, eager to film any violence that might erupt. The moment the trammies union boss, Lou de Gregorio, walked on to the platform scores of angry trammies pelted him with tomatoes, eggs and even pieces of liver. Abuse was exchanged throughout the hall between militants and those supporting the leadership. Sporadic fighting broke out, chairs were thrown and it seemed that the meeting might have ended without anyone saying anything. But it went on. Attempts to declare the meeting illegal (not enough notice had been given) and to allow speakers from the floor were blocked. After the vote, the meeting erupted as some tried to get Gregorio and his pals and others attacked the

buses taking the scabs back to the depots. The trammies from the most militant depots then marched back, with their support groups to Brunswick depot to decide what action to take next.

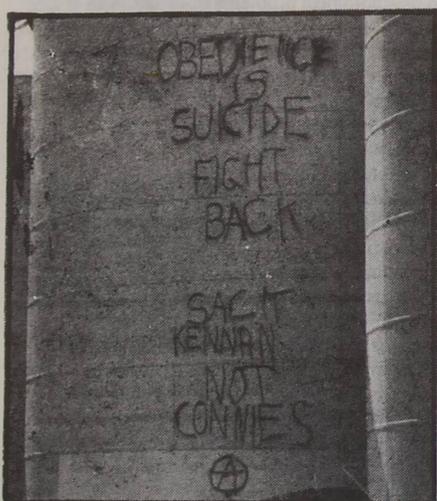
Back at the depot everyone agreed that although the vote had been lost the dispute was by no means over. The trams would run again, but everyone would do what they could to achieve their original objectives—to retain two-person operated trams and to stop the new ticketing system—by employing 'guerilla' methods such as go-slows and work-to-rules, alongside any escalation of community resistance.

Later that day trammies began to move the trams back from the blockade (rather than allow non-union labor to tow them back) but making certain this was done as slowly as possible by insisting every operational regulation was adhered to.

The real truth about how the dispute had been sabotaged by the union leadership only came out towards the end of the dispute and by then many trammies had already given up the fight, demoralised by their executive and the weeks of stalemate. The leadership had persistently thwarted every effort made by the trammies to escalate the dispute, condemning the picketing of the main railway yards and the buses. Precious little 'strike' funds were given to the members—most received nothing but relied on their support groups who collected food and money locally. A 'tramathon' was held on one radio station, collecting \$14,000 but the union never passed this on. The union holds over \$300,000 members funds in investment accounts—but this money was never distributed.

The union leadership is now claiming that the deal they negotiated will mean no tram conductors will lose their jobs—but this is patently untrue as the whole strategy of the Government is to make massive savings by getting rid of all conductors and replacing them with the new scratch tickets. Community resistance to the new tickets is still strong and a disabled pressure group is still awaiting a court hearing to get the new system banned. Public transport users have made it clear that they are interested in a safe transport system not one where profits come first.

Tram workers as well as workers in other sections of the transport industry have witnessed once again how their interests and those of their industries users have been sabotaged by the politically ambitious within the trade union movement and by the union social democratic mafia. This practice will only be broken when permanent links between rank and file members are achieved so that leaderships become redundant.



After some Anarchists daubed the Melbourne Times highrise building with graffiti, their reporter set out to find how they managed to get up the steep sides (they abseiled). They gave him the interview, allegedly in masks, inducing him to give it in his own flat (a good idea, as they're less likely to distort if they know there's a comeback). However, it turned out after all to be the usual journalistic combination of distortion and piss-take.

SPAIN

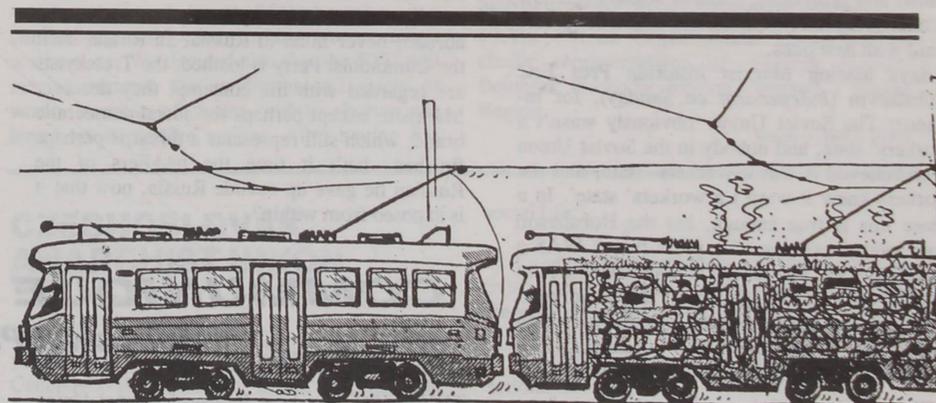
POLICE RAID CENTRE

IN THE SUMMER the Libertarian Centre (The Idea) of l'Hospitalet (Catalonia) was raided by fascists at a time when it was unoccupied. After a piece of minor vandalism in which one of them cut himself, the police then barged in using the action as an excuse to destroy the centre which so far had been independent.

The police sealed the centre (not bothered by the fact that a cat was left inside which starved to death) and began raids on those who used the centre (not those who had vandalised it!)

The Libertarian Centre 'The Idea' nevertheless will continue in one place or another.

source: Solidaridad Obrera



SPOT THE TRAM WITHOUT THE CONDUCTOR...

JOHN PEROTTI ASSAULTED

IWW PRISON organiser, John Perotti was recently been beaten up by two prison guards. Notified by the Anarchist Black Cross emergency response network *Black Flag* contacted the prison and was told that John had been 'for-

cibly restrained' because he had been 'un-cooperative'. When we asked about his injuries we were told that this was classified information, but that he was being monitored daily.

Letters of protest should be sent to: Terry Al Morris, Southern Ohio Correctional Facility, PO Box 45699, Lucasville, Ohio 45699-001-000, USA.

SOVIET UNION

POWER TO THE PEOPLE NOT THE PARTY

Report of the 1st Congress of the Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists (KAS), Moscow May 1st 1989

'This is an historic moment. For the first time in 60 years we intend to create an anarcho-syndicalist organisation in the Soviet Union. And we are doing it in a country with a strong libertarian tradition, with names like Bakunin, Kropotkin and Tolstoy. The anarcho-syndicalist movement was strong from the beginning of the revolution, now it isn't. But the movement was smashed by the repression and not its own weakness. Now we begin again'.

And so the congress was opened. It took place in a small room a couple of kilometers from where the usual May 1st parade was taking place. Ironically the room belonged to one of the Communist Party's organisations and on the walls the posters displayed the quotes of Gorbachov and Lenin. Andrej, a student of 25, addressed the meeting and with Lenin staring down from the portrait behind him proposed a minute silence in memory of the thousands of comrades who have been repressed over those 60 years. Everybody stood up.

All knew that they were probably being watched by the KGB. In the eyes of the state the KAS does not officially exist as it is not registered and has no official permission to operate. One member from Novocherkassk had been arrested the previous day for pushing a police officer when they tried to stop a political meeting.

The delegates began by reporting and discussing their local situations and the active resistance around the USSR. Demonstrations, discussions both within and outside official organisations, aiding people who have lost their jobs, printing underground papers, petition campaigns demanding changes in the law, campaigns for a boycott of the March '89 elections as undemocratic, support for those who wanted to run as candidates, work with ecology groups and much more.

Igor, from Dnepropetrovsk, told how he had tried to build a union in the early '80s. They were able to organise 80 people within a few hours before the police took action. Igor was sent to a psychiatric hospital. Again, after his release he had tried and again the group was repressed. The Communist Party said they were 'too early'. He also told of a printing office who wanted to print his local group's paper and as a result, that all the workers at the print shop were either fired or transferred.

Alexei told how he had been listening to the BBC's Russian language service when they quoted from the anarchist paper *Obschina*. He then realised he was not alone 'and now I am at this Congress'. He had also taken part in a strike over dangerous working conditions. He was fired and now alone.

A delegate from Charkov related that the local Communist Party newspaper had written that anarcho-syndicalism was the most dan-

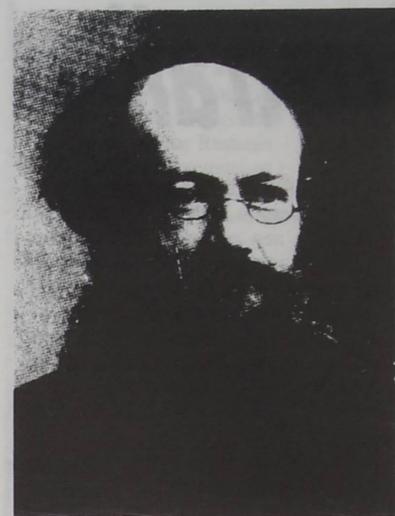
gerous threat to the party and noted with satisfaction what a good propaganda point it was.

Later several resolutions were adopted, including one condemning the use of tear gas against demonstrators in Tbilisi, Georgia. They also decided to send a telegram to Gorbachev to protest at the arrest of the comrade from Novocherkassk. The congress proposed that it and all the other 'unofficial' opposition groups adopt a common declaration against the use of violence as a method of political action. This would counter the propaganda in the mass media that portrays the opposition as terrorists and violence-prone.

The Congress agreed on a minimal program and decided that their principle motto would be 'all power to the people, not the party', the slogan of the Kronstadt workers and sailors during the uprising of 1921. They outlined a model of a federalist society based on the collective ownership of the land and factories, on self-management and the maximum decentralisation of the economy.

Finally there was a debate on the federation's symbol. Up until the Congress they had used the black flag with a red star. The red star received a lot of criticism and after some discussion it was decided to adopt the red and black banner of the international anarcho-syndicalist movement.

source: WSA-IWA & Libertarian Labour Review.



Happy birthday, Peter, all's forgiven

THE USSR plans to rehabilitate Peter Kropotkin—plans are being made for the 150th anniversary of his birth, with a commission to study his works, the reopening of the Kropotkin Museum (foretold in these columns some time ago)... the erection of a statue, opening of a library, reprinting of his works and even the minting of a Kropotkin rouble!

Should please the 'what size were Kropotkin's underpants' school of research thesis writers that form an expanding industry here but hopefully anarchist activists should be able to intervene in the cosy arrangements.

THE LAND OF THE GREAT LIE

THE WHOLE of the Bolshevik conquest of power was based on a lie. The revolution had been defeated by Lenin's seizure of power. The institution of the Party's tyranny was in direct succession to the Tsar's rule of terror. Stalin's rise to power was a consequence, not an aberration. The other lie—now being peddled in Russia by Western stooges—that this was because of the break with Tsarism and in contrast to Western democracy—is equally a lie. There was a direct line from Nicholas through Lenin to Stalin.

Average Russians knew this, bombarded though they were by propaganda and indoctrination. A lot of workers elsewhere did not appreciate this, misled as they were by journalists and professors, some of whom even now persist in the old lies, others of whom come forward with new ones.

Says leading Marxist historian Prof Eric Hobsbawm (*Independent on Sunday*), for instance: The Soviet Union 'obviously wasn't a workers' state, and nobody in the Soviet Union ever believed it was a workers' state, and the workers knew it wasn't a workers' state'. In a sense this is true enough, but the Hobsbawm type kidded everyone for years that it WAS a workers' state. Not just rigid Stalinists like him. The Trotskyists also claimed it was a workers' state and had to be defended as such, ascribing the errors of Stalin to the 'bureaucracy', a handy excuse used by all abusers of power.

The civil services, administration, bureaucracy, call it what you wish, carries out the routine demands of the rulers. There is no case of its initiating policy. It is conveniently claimed that the CIA or the secret service acts on its own initiative. In fact, somebody somewhere manipulates it and doesn't want to be seen doing so. It was not the bureaucracy that committed the great crimes in Russia: it was the whole system of government and the ruling class. That the ruling class did not fit in with the Marxist classification of what a ruling class should be composed of did not mean that it did not exist (the most casual observer walking down a Moscow street could see, before and after glasnost, who was in the ruling class and who was in the working class, far easier than in London, where the great lie is that everyone is middle class.

Now surely everyone knows—and the Soviet press almost daily produces further evi-

dence—of the mass concentration camps for millions. They were not the concentration camps—in reality extermination camps—of Nazi Germany, a drag on the economy and the war effort: they were essential to the State, the whole system depended on them. They were the economy. They had to exist and only incidentally were they made up of criminals and political prisoners. Crimes had to be invented to provide the workforce. The Soviet state was built on slave labour. That was how Tsarist Russia ran and when it gave it up, it had to face the problems faced by having free workers. But slave labour is notoriously inefficient and wasteful. By the time Stalin's legacy had dispersed, it could no longer be relied on nor could the repression be kept up. Stalin's long years of dictatorship made it impossible for anyone else to build up the terror credibility needed in a dictatorship.

Now that it is plain to all that State Communism was in fact a slave state, where does that leave the Marxist Leninists, the Communists and the Trotskyists and other brands, abroad, never mind in Russia? In Russia itself the Communist Party is loathed, the Trotskyists are regarded with the contempt they deserve, Marxism, except perhaps the social democratic brand, which still represents a threat, is perhaps finished. Isn't it time the peddlers of the Russian lie gave up outside Russia, now that it is exposed from within?

COMMUNIQUE OF THE SMOT Moscow & Paris 1989

THE SMOT (the Free Interprofessional Union of Workers) was founded in 1978. The aim of the SMOT is the foundation of independent unions which are able to contribute to satisfying the essential needs of the people—social, political, religious and cultural needs—to be fulfilled outside the control of the Party or State apparatus in the Soviet Union.

Fighting against totalitarianism and the lack of respect for the law in the USSR, struggling on the ground of the declaration of Human Rights of Helsinki in 1975, SMOT is directly opposing Nomenklatura, the new dominating caste.

The organ of coordination of SMOT is the Council (Soviet) of Representatives, consisting of the elected representatives of the groups. Besides the Council of Representatives a 'working commission' is in charge of the technical aspects

of the work.

Since the middle of 1987, SMOT has partly been able to leave clandestinity thus having the possibility to spread its ideas wider—above all through the organisation of an information agency 'IAS' (Information Agency SMOT), then by establishing an independent library.

The members of SMOT recognise organisational principles, but in no case do they accept any hierarchies, ranks or 'big-wigs', any leaders within the union.

Each person is born free and equal in their rights in relation to the others, without distinction of the colour of the skin, the religious conviction or culture.

In consequence of the principles explained above, SMOT refuses to accept any aid from states or governments. The only thing SMOT counts on is the solidarity of the workers.

THE RUSSIAN SPRING

WHAT IS happening in Russia can only be appreciated if we realise that the tremendous hype of pseudo-Marxists over the past seventy odd years has been deliberate deception, and the reaction by counter-revolutionaries to it has been solely to tarnish revolutionary communism with the brush of Leninism lest real revolutions spread elsewhere.

Lenin inherited a vast slave empire. The enormous Russian bear had woken from its slumbers, turned over and gone to sleep again. Tsarist repression repeated itself, this time with renewed enthusiasm from the now invigorated ruling class, no longer an effete aristocracy which went into exile but the new power conscious elite.

Tsarism could no longer work. Capitalism was unable to work: it was soon to break down in the West too, with mass depression and poverty, it was totally incapable of taking over in Russia. Could it have done so, Lenin would have introduced it, but for years there was nothing so much dreaded by Western powers as another competitor rising in the East. State communism was tried out, with modifications

first by Lenin and then by Stalin, but that wouldn't work either. They don't have depression and mass unemployment: what they have is scarcity and starvation, which comes in similar cycles; which was treated in the West by the 'remedy' of dictatorships or diversionary wars, there by famine.

The fact that economic systems don't work does not imply that life stops. It carries on with misery, the regimes have to be reinforced with terror. It is an inevitable cycle and nothing to do with psychological problems of dictators as bourgeois historians like to think. The strain of power may drive them crazy, but seldom so crazy as to give up before they are forced to. Rarely can they groom a powerful heir to the chain of command-and-obey, lest that be the one that pushes them out.

The dictatorship built by Lenin and Trotsky & Co, taken over by Stalin (who had snatched power from the dying Lenin) lasted a long time, but when Stalin died it was doomed. Nobody was available to snatch power credibly from him; there was no Trotsky to sell the idea that even so this would still be the workers' country.

Like the Tsars, Stalin threw his energies into the Patriotic Myth, and this has strengthened the power of the Red Army and the enormous achievements of space technology, leaving the country in ruins: an economy that can fly to the Moon but with the living standards of the Third World down here.

Yet space technology brings knowledge, and in particular the knowledge that the economic system doesn't work satisfactorily.

The path the Russian workers are going to take—whether deluded by the empty promises of the Right Wing reinforced by chauvinism, the divisive blandishments of Nationalism which break down class unity for rule by the national poets and playwrights, or the realisation that they can have freedom without yielding to capitalism, and that their only strength is in their own unification—is theirs to decide.

One thing is certain: the recommended economic reforms (perestroika) won't work.

The somewhat different aspect of the crisis within the Soviet Empire is the break-up of nationalities similar to the 'wind of change' in the British and French empires after the war. National independence, certainly in the south, is bound up with the fact that every nationality hates the national minorities within the same countries, and just as imperialism meant minority or foreign power, independence would mean internecine warfare, worker against worker in the name of racial ties. It is a race to see if federal internationalism can be introduced by class unity in time to prevent what tsarism and state communism fostered.

ROMANIA: In the land of intrigue

The Rumanian background

THE AFTERMATH of the Russian Revolution against the Tsar was echoed in Hungary by an upsurge of the working class, who formed Soviets, speedily taken over by the Communist Party leadership under Bela Kuhn. Reactionary Rumania, under a colonel's dictatorship followed by peasants under clerical influence, intervened to help crush the Hungarians. There was no conscious workers movement in Rumania, and capitalism was in its infancy (except for foreign oil companies). The monarchy led it into a type of semi-feudal clerical-fascism, then common (complicated by its king's love affair with a Jewish lady, which was difficult to reconcile with the type of mystical anti-semitism that went with his type of regime).

When the Nazis moved eastward, the king's son (who now wants to come back) led the country into support for the Axis in WWII his (though at the same time the government tried to remain neutral!) It tried switching sides in 1944 to get American support: it was traded off to Russian influence instead. The Communist Party that took power was minuscule: the new leaders were hangers-on of the old regime. None were Communists of long standing. They continued the traditional policy of intrigue. Rumania (as it now styled itself) was the the American dark horse within the Soviet bloc. It recognised West Germany and Israel, in defiance of Stalin, and had friendly relations with China. It angled for American aid, yet remained economically dependent on the USSR. Ceausescu had a foot well in the Western camp in case anything went wrong with his dictatorship (including a fortune in Switzerland). He concluded arrangements with Britain and France while remaining in the Soviet bloc. He received honours from the Queen of England (at the instigation of Dr David Owen, then Foreign Minister).

His Western connections didn't do him much good in the end when they dropped him like a hot potato after the so-called revolution. Except that he was as ruthless a dictator as any other—East or West—he was the least Stalinist of the Eastern lot, for all they now say now none of his former pals have a good word to say for him. What happened? Was there a revolt 'against Stalinism', as some said? Was there a rising against communism? Or were the Hungarians having a historical revenge on Rumania?

It may be mentioned that his mass murders, now heralded, were on a scale nearer British and French colonial rather than Nazi, American or Russian, examples.

The Uprising

One day he was addressing the adoring masses, conditioned to admire the Great Leader; suddenly there was a look of horror on his face when he realised they were shouting him down, inspired by the changes all over the Soviet bloc. He answered by having his Securitate (Special Branch) shoot them down. The people rose up and (unusually in such circumstances, especially bearing in mind recent events in China) the army sided with them. Not however the army in revolt—the disciplined army under control of its officers. This is what triggers off the suspicion there might be a military coup hidden in it somewhere. It was pretty damn quick that the officer class decided they were in power and were forming a Government of National Salvation. The ordinary people were poised to take over but the 'salvationists' were too quick for them. They'd had their revolution!

The changes that are coming over the Soviet bloc is the result of a great depression reaching famine proportions chiefly because of mismanagement. This is basically what inspired the Romanian people. Gorbachev solved his problem by allowing people to say what they thought: the Romanian salvationists by letting them think they'd had a revolution. It is significant that immediately—not in a few weeks but days—ample food and supplies were available. Had somebody been stockpiling them? Ceausescu, avaricious as he was (almost up to British ruling class standards), wasn't storing all that food for his family use. The bureaucrats in power before and after were had to have something in hand for the day of 'salvation': the other reforms they gave rapidly—such as legalised abortion, end of capital punishment etc—were the sort of thing they could give without harm to their own economic interests. (The abortion laws were also a sign they weren't going back to clerical domination and it was intended to be the mixture as before).

There are some well known lessons confirmed by Romanian events:

- 1) that the existence of a secret police in whatever country is against the people's interests.
- 2) that an uprising without workers organisation will lead to a vacuum in which organised reaction, probably the Army, will take over (or some vested interest may put up a 'star' intellectual leader such as the dramatist Havel in Czechoslovakia—as after WWI the musician Paderewski in Poland).
- 3) that economic crises are artificial.

But this hasn't been a revolution. It looks more like a well known old Romanian politicians ploy of preparing to join the next in power and if need be sacrifice the figurehead they put up themselves (Mr & Mrs Ceausescu stayed to get shot: King Carol beat it out in time to live in luxury with Mme Lupescu in Portugal for ever after). It's good to see a dictator bite the dust. But we're not sure whether Romania's oppression is over.

The people rejoice that the Ceausescu family rule is no more, just as the people of Panama rejoice that Gen. Noriega and his police are no more. But the way of their going is not quite a clearcut victory for the people.

Polish call for solidarity

THE POLISH Anarchist Federation have put out an appeal for money. One of their most urgent problems at present is the publication of propaganda. The anarchist press in Poland is badly produced and issued irregularly. This is not proportional to the actual strength of the anarchist movement in Poland but is due to the fact that access to printing facilities is limited. There is only the State printing offices and the



Letter from Poland

Dear Friends,

In July 1989 we founded, together with our friends from Szczecin, the Federative Trade Union. Most of the co-founders of our Union are in the alternative military service. We are convinced about the necessity of a trade union to exist that would struggle for the welfare, shortening of the working time to 6 hours, and the dignity of man and citizen. The only way to achieve this through strikes—then every authority, even the one which is at present shaping itself in our country, will have to reckon with the laws created by society. This includes the right to live in welfare and freedom. It is a stage to taking over the means of production by society. By now all factories are in the hands of elite—state. It is going to change soon—ex-state functionaries, official trade unionists, Solidarity activists, individuals and corporations from the West will become the owners of the factories. They will constitute a new elite that we will have to face.

On the first meeting we wrote 'Propositions on the Federative Trade Union'. In the first point we stated: 'Alternative service is a part of the FTU'. It means that we treat objectors working in factories as one of the branches, in a similar way as shipyard workers, transportation workers etc. We decided also that the FTU will aim to improve the conditions and safety of work, increase of wages and to shorten the length of alternative service. After having fin-

ished the service, objectors can still be active in another branch. We think this would be the first step to demilitarise production and thus society.

Please support the call to raise cash for the purchase of a printing press for the Polish anarchist federation.

Send any contribution to the giro account: CCP Rey 306404 G, Nantes Cheques, 44000 Nantes, France.

Further information is available from the Polish Anarchist Federation representative in France, Marcin Rey, c/o Christian Veron, 6 Rue de Hauts Pavés. 44000 Nantes, France.

As we are a specific branch, our activity must be specific. For the present it is self-organisation, writing petitions to Sejm, organising a general congress which will finally decide the shape of our trade union, boycotting the authorities, strikes, hunger-strikes, burning military booklets and magazines. Interim Propositions on the Federative Trade Union.

1. Alternative service is part of the FTU.
2. All groups and individuals can join the union.
3. The union does not restrain the autonomy of its local groups.
4. Local groups cannot speak for the whole union.
5. Local groups can make decisions on their own behalf.
6. Final decisions and opinions are undertaken by the general congress of the FTU.
7. The base of FTU activity is protecting the interests of its participants—independently of their ideologies or opinions presented.
8. The general congress will make the final decisions about the shape of the union.
9. By federation we mean common activity and help of different socio-professional groups.
10. The Interim Organisational Committee includes representatives of: Gdansk Region, Pomorze Zachodnie Region, Warmii i Mazur Region.

Source: WSA-IWA

CZECHOSLOVAK ANARCHIST UNION

Anarchists in Czechoslovakia, in October last year, came together to publicly found the Czechoslovak Anarchist Union (CAS). The Union intends to integrate anarchists within Czechoslovakia in order to build a more effective Anarchist movement. In its founding statement it included the following six goals:

- 1) To try and organise free groups, facilitate contact and collaboration between individuals and to support individual initiative and solidarity as the two most important elements of

social life.

- 2) To support information and publication activity and to gather anarchist literature, both theoretical and for propaganda.
- 3) To support every antimilitarist or anti-nationalist movement.
- 4) As a branch of the international movement to make contacts with Anarchists from from other countries.
- 5) To support every information and formation activity.
- 6) To take a clear position against terrorism.

NOW BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD

To govern you need an army of steeled revolutionary Communists. We have it and it is called the Party. All this syndicalist nonsense

about mandatory nominations of producers must go into the wastepaper basket. To proceed on those lines would mean thrusting the Party aside and making the dictatorship of the proletariat impossible.

V.I. Lenin—Report to the Second All Russia Congress of Miners (1921).

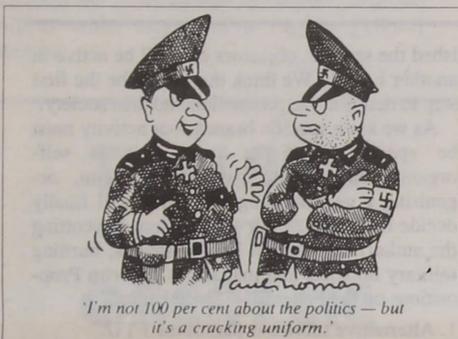


Soldier arrests Securitate member

A History of Censorship

OFFICIAL NEWS blackouts or self-imposed censorship has become a customary image in the West German media. We as producers and distributors of counter information are and will continue to be affected, directly or indirectly, and therefore wish to examine once again article 129/129a and its consequences. Furthermore we want to create the foundations necessary for open discussion. We want to work against the intimidation and fear created by the vague 129/129a and 130a articles because our feelings of solidarity with one another and all those opposing the State's arsenal of oppressive measures.

Over a century ago article 129 was entered into the Reichs penal code next to other articles for the 'protection of the State'. At the time its advocates explained that it was directed against 'completely normal organised criminals'. However, together with the 'Socialist codes', especially the law against those or that 'dangerous to the public efforts to the social democracy' (1878), the legal foundation was created for not only the criminalisation of the political opposition, but also for the oppression of simply the discussion of 'elements hostile to the State'. In this way the entire participants of an 1888 socialist congress in Copenhagen were sentenced by the Reichs Court. Article 129 was also carried over into the Weimar Constitution and during this time was used, above all, to persecute the KPD (Communist Party of Germany) which had recently been banned.



The practically boundless expansion of the term 'enemy of the State' permitted an unrestrained use of the penal article against opposition political opinion: publishers, distributors, reporters, authors and printers of communist publications and also bookshops were prosecuted for 'high literary treason'.

In the new 1951 'law for the defence of the State' the article was extended. Firstly, the support of a 'criminal organisation' was made a

punishable offence. 'Support' is, as defined by the BGH (German supreme Court), 'perpetration of independent assistance', meaning that actions which in themselves are entirely legal can be prosecuted under article 129 as solidarity with members of illegal organisations. In 1954 members of the KPD were prosecuted simply because they were ready to accept applications for the second meeting of the FDJ (the KPD youth organization). This was enough to convict them of a plot to support the readiness to be active for the 'propaganda' of an illegal organisation.

In 1976, in a phase of widespread 'terrorist' hype whipped up by the middle class press, article 129a was created. Its contents hardly differed from article 129, except that the word 'criminal' was replaced by 'terrorist' in order to include political aims and content and also to defame politically motivated actions as indiscriminate activism. The term 'terrorist' made it possible to justify every measure in order to wipe out political opponents (ie torture through the 'white terror' of solitary confinement etc). Solicitation for a 'terrorist organisation' was added to support and membership as a punishable offence. Solicitation as defined by article 129a does not just mean the solicitation of members, but also propaganda for the solicitation of sympathisers. This interpretation, among other things, was aimed at hindering the bringing of attack communiques and writings into the open through the media. In this way, four printers were sentenced to 12 months in prison in 1979 for the distribution of a newspaper which contained statements from the Red Army Fraction and the Revolutionary Cells. Furthermore, there have been proceedings against the lawyers and relatives of prisoners because of their criticisms of prison conditions or because they have publicised prisoners statements. Just the spray-painting of the letters RAF has been enough for months long detention. Distributors of leaflets during the 1981 RAF hunger strike were sentenced to one and a half years without parole.

In the meantime, newly originated activities such as the house squatting in protest against the Start-bahn West (a NATO runway project in Frankfurt), initiatives taken against munitions transports, Wendland, Wackersdorf and Brockdorf (nuclear power plants) and other activities have led to the State further extending article 129a. At the end of 1986 and in early '87 sections were added covering the 'dangerous interference of rail, naval and air traffic', 'disruption of public works' and 'destruction of important resources for manufacturing'. Now actions such as the felling of electricity pylons or railroad blockades are no

longer punished as damage to property, but as terrorist acts. This has also created a means to attack strike and other direct action which uses blockades to disrupt the plant delivery paths.

A flood of preliminary proceedings were brought under article 129a, but these led to few convictions (between 1982 and 1985 94% led to acquittals). Thus article 129a is meant to have an intimidating and preventative effect. Its goal is force self-censorship before the authorities have to get involved. It is an attempt to make meaningful discussions in the form of meetings and publications, within the left, impossible.

In Hamburg itself actions have been brought against 'the unknown authors, producers and distributors' of the information collective SABOT. There have been repeated police searches and seizures of material from bookshops and printers as well as private apartments.



Article 129a is being used against the left media as a censorship law. Because the 'self-censorship' of publications hostile to the State has not taken place, the production and distribution of this literature is therefore claimed to be 'propaganda for the enticement of sympathisers'. Article 129a is so broadly and unclearly written that it can be used as a boundless tool of censorship against every bit of unwanted printed material. Before, the distributors of communiques from armed resistance groups were persecuted, now the publication of any 'topics relevant to attacks' is targeted.

We call on the Media and everyone else to unite in the fight against articles 129, 129a and 130.

Freedom of speech and the press is not guaranteed, it has to be fought for.

Ekomedia Hamburg,
c/o Schwartzmarkt,
Paulinenstrasse 15,
2000 Hamburg 50,
West Germany

Mandela—what next?

THERE CAN have been few spectacles so dramatic or even comic as that of Nelson Mandela turning the tables on the South African government and stating his terms for agreeing to his own release. After years of harsh confinement this prisoner is telling a ruthless government that he would not go out unless there is a genuine political reform, not the one they're offering and they are listening to him. A government that shoots down protesters, burns townships, brings out whips against the old and sick and turns dogs on children, could not inform him that they are not in the hotel business and call a couple of beefy warders to put this elderly gentleman out of doors! How are the mighty fallen!

Meanwhile the rest of the world, including some governments not in the least yielding to South Africa in the manner of brutality and oppression or how long and under what conditions they keep people in jail, fall over themselves to praise Mr Mandela and say how wicked it is to have confined him all these years. Streets are named after him, he is honoured by statues and memorials in countries not a whit less oppressive than South Africa when it suits them, and his name is invoked as a symbol of freedom. What a feeling it must be for a long-term prisoner to be visited by Cabinet Ministers humbly asking what he will be prepared to take politically if he lets them off the hook!

He is not compromising nor even does he need to.

Blacks in South Africa are among the most deprived sections in the world yet their col-

lective mass action has caused an overriding terror (hence it is dubbed in modern jargon 'terrorism'). Some in ruling circles fear revolution or at the least civil war and this is what has governed the actions of the South African government both in its repression and now at the times of its alleged concessions. There is a fringe of the white upper class which is liberal minded and sees the Blacks as no threat if they get a vote, have Archbishop Tutu at the head of a church they don't attend or even a government that doesn't bother them, and have some restrictions lifted in the bargain: the great liberal Helen Suzman's constituency—every voter with their own swimming pool—is typical of the lib-



eral attitude which sponsors non-violent protest. The poorer whites, on the other hand, fear that the Blacks will fit into capitalism and thus represent a threat to them for the jobs at the bottom of the ladder for which they will take less wages. Here most of the populist anti-Black feeling lies. The government is now trying to persuade the White population that, after all, they are brought up by Black servants, who run their homes and on whom they are dependent for their labour, so rather than face war, what is the slightest harm in letting the blacks on the beaches or sit down in the same hotels? Those who can afford it can always control who sits next to them by price ranges, a small price to pay for social harmony that works well for the upper and middle classes in Europe and America. The Afrikaner backwoodsmen have to be persuaded that a bit of parliamentary involvement will transform the most ardent revolutionaries, as it has elsewhere.

But will this work?

Undoubtedly the concessions held out by the government will seem attractive to many who have been without anything, even the right to secure living in hovels for so long. But there will certainly remain a core, it may be even a majority, who won't be satisfied with anything less than a revolutionary change in the whole society. Nelson Mandela will remain perhaps a symbol but the impetus in this struggle will come from the organised workers. One thing you can depend on: there won't be any of this so-called sympathy from international governments when the revolution is on. The sympathy is there precisely because the revolution is not on and they pray it never will be.

CUBA: Untouched by Glasnost

WE HAVE received further information from Latin American Black Cross, set up independently by Cuban anarchists in Miami in defence of all class struggle prisoners, not just those in Cuba although it gives much valuable information of the Resistance workers in Cuba, which has not been touched by the events taking place in Eastern Europe. It publishes *A Mayor* (the big A) in English and Spanish.

A Mayor tells how persecution, imprisonment, and assassinations have been the destiny of union activists and the working class in general since the beginning of the proletariat in Cuba until our own times. The death sentence in 1983 of three young workers, Carlos Garcia Diaz, Angel Donato Martinez and Benito Garcia Oliveira, is convincing proof of the extreme cruelty of the totalitarian Castro-ist State. Their sentences, for the crime of trying to form an independent union, have been commuted to long sentences, after they managed to smuggle information to the outside. Caridad Pavon, called Le Gallega (the Galician), feminist leader of the syndicalist group the Zapata Movement (which calls for an agrarian revolution) was mysteriously found dead while undergoing interrogation.

In 1981 Omar Villavicencio, 24, a railway worker accused of industrial sabotage, was taken naked to the prison in Havana and killed. Another worker activists, agrarian Emilio Re-lova Cardulis, was assassinated at the execution wall.

The agro-syndicalist movement carried out its first major effort in 1982 after which two of its activists were shot, others sentenced to 30 years in jail.

The roll call goes on not only of workers shot for protest; but of the huge percentage of accidents with industrial safety precisely as it was when the industries were operating as private industry under the old dictatorship thirty years ago.

The same ecological disasters, with factories draining their wastes in the rivers, exist in Cuba as in the United States and elsewhere. But strike action is deemed industrial sabotage.

As yet Latin America Black Cross is not part of the established Black Cross network, but hopes to be so in the near future—more info as we get it.



FREEDOM FOR RED KNIFE

STEVE LAYTON (Melah Lutah, Red Knife), is a North American Indian Activist, who has been imprisoned for the last 9 years. His unswerving activism in support of Indian and other prisoners rights have earned him constant harassment from the prison authorities. In 1981 after a prison riot at the South Dakota Prison in Sioux Falls against inhuman conditions, Red Knife and another inmate were framed up as ringleaders. The case against him was frivolous, even the guard he was accused of assaulting said he did not know who assaulted him. As well, other dirty tricks were used in the court room including illegal use of prior conviction, denial of impeaching of a prosecution witness and denial of discovery information. Finally an admitted racist prisoner was brought in to fabricate a story to convict Red Knife. Since then he has successfully beat a murder rap, survived an attempt on his life and spent four years in the Super Maximum Marion Penitentiary.

Red Knife Defense Network
c/o Survival Network Information Centre,
302 N 'J' ST, no3

Tacoma, WA
98403 USA

Steve Layton, no36283,
PO Box 1059,
Santa Fe, NM
87501 USA



Other Labour MPs mentioned include Ken Livingstone, Michael Meacher, former MPs Stan Newens and Nick Raynsford (who contributed to *Marxism Today* in January 1984!), Tony Benn, Brian Gould, Chris Mullen, Harry Barnes ('quite a vigorous stalinist underminer of parliamentary democracy'), John McAllion, Bill Spiers, George Galloway, Dennis Canavan, Dick Douglas and Willie McKelvey along with others in the Trade Union movement, the arts and the legal profession—notably Lord Gifford.



Colin Wallace

British Briefing is classic smear material in the same mould as material published by far-right groups at the height of the MI5/Clockwork Orange campaign. This is not surprising given that Elwell provided much of the original material that fueled that earlier campaign. It was Elwell, of MI5's D branch (later renamed K branch) who passed on allegations made against Labour politicians to certain journalists and far-right groups—allegations originating from a Czech defector, Josef Frolik. The debriefing of Frolik was undertaken by Elwell. Among the politicians smeared by Frolik were Will Owen (who was widely suspected anyway of dealings

with the Czechs), Tom Driberg (a known double agent) and John Stonehouse. The allegations made by Frolik were known only to Frolik's handlers, to the heads of the intelligence establishment and of course to the PM, but it was not long before Chapman Pincher, of the 'Daily Express' had possession of most of the facts. The allegations were also passed on to Aims of Industry, the far-right propaganda organisation. Elwell, together with Peter Wright and Michael McCaul (another Wright colleague) all had direct dealings with Frolik and therefore must be presumed chief suspects in the leaking of the smears. In 1974 these smears were also passed on to Joe Josten, of the Free Czech News Agency (an MI6 front) and a council member of the National Association For Freedom (now known as the Freedom Association); the same information was also sent to Forum World Features—a 'news agency' set up by CIA contacts and which was headed by Brian Crozier and Robert Moss—prior to the general election. Newspapers were not excluded from this confidential information either: in 1970 William Massie of *Sunday Express* was given all the details; a briefing passed to *The Times* was later given to sympathetic contacts at Private Eye. Colin Wallace cites Forum World Features as being one of the several agencies that acted as conduits of disinformation and smears and which were a source of material for his Clockwork Orange notes.

Clockwork Orange also included the smear stories that Wilson was brought to power by the 'murder' of Gaitskell by KGB agents, and that Wilson himself was controlled by an official at the Russian Trade delegation, Vayguskas. This story was handled by a colleague of Elwell (and Wright), namely Harry Wharton, who debriefed the defector Oleg Lyalin on the allegations. By 1971 the story had surfaced in the *News of the World* and later *Private Eye* (with the latter it was suspected that the Eye's author, Auberon Waugh was given the information by Wharton via a relative of Waugh). Similar allegations against Wilson, regarding the Vayguskas connection (via Wilson's friend, the industrialist Joe Kagan) and the 'murder' of Gaitskell, were made by another defector, Golitskin, who had also been

debriefed by Elwell, Wright and McCaul, but who was really the direct responsibility of James Angleton, the head of counter-insurgency at the CIA. All three MI5 officers, including Barry Russell-Jones of K branch (later moved to FX) were confidants and hero-worshippers of Angleton, who was determined to oust Wilson, who he believed to be working direct to the Soviets. It is not unreasonable to assume that Elwell, McCaul, Russell-Jones (and Wharton) were the main MI5 officers at the centre of the Wilson plot, which in turn was part of a much wider plot that included Clockwork Orange and targeted political leaders seen as enemies to MI5 plans.

Later Elwell, after leaving K branch, was promoted to section head of F branch (domestic subversion) where he was responsible, among other things, for the surveillance of the NCCL. In 1982 (according to Richard Norton Taylor and Mark Hollingsworth in 'Blacklist') he left to work for Common Cause and/or Brian Crozier. He now operates apparently as an individual, but possibly with unofficial help from MI5 contacts, using the Economic League as a base. This relationship between MI5 and the Economic League goes back many decades. Colin Wallace claims that the Economic League is financed through the 'Secret Vote' and in a letter to the *Lobster* people Sir Walter Walker, the main organiser of one of the 'private armies'—Unison/Civil Assistance—during the early to mid-70's, stated that his 'army' had received financial assistance from a long-time senior figure of the League, namely Lord Cayzer, who is still associated with the blacklisting organisation.

More recently Peter Shipley, an adviser to Mrs Thatcher, undertook research on behalf of the League for the infamous '101 Damned' advertisement of left-wing MP's (allegedly with connections to Militant and/or left wing groups) that appeared prior to the last general election. Around the same time Russell Walters, the head of the League research department collaborated with David Hart, an adviser to Mrs Thatcher, on smear advertisements against the Labour Party that were published by the Campaign for Free Britain (backed by 'coup' stalwarts Sir James Goldsmith and Robert Moss). Other smears put out by League people include

material passed on to the *Sunday Telegraph* and the Research Foundation for the Study of Terrorism or the so-called Hurricane Gang (ourselves)—the go-between here being John Dettmer, a member of the League's Central Council.

Today, *British Briefing* provides a steady stream of allegations and smears that invariably get taken up by various agencies, including the press. It's exposure is significant, because it provides a direct link between the Clockwork Orange smears and the propaganda organisations that helped to spread those smears.

The full details of the earlier campaigns were revealed by Wallace through *Lobster* and subsequently via books on the period by David Leigh and Paul Foot. Thatcher is now under pressure to admit to Clockwork Orange—if she does she will be admitting to a campaign that helped to engineer her own success. It is more likely therefore, that the facts will be revealed through outside pressure and through investigative research (we are aware that a certain national newspaper also possesses a copy of *British Briefing*). *British Briefing* provides documentary proof that one of the architects of the earlier campaign is continuing to act with impunity. Furthermore Charles Elwell provides a contemporary link between organised blacklisting and the intelligence services. The current version it can be argued is alive and running and based at 7 Wine Office Court (the League's HQ) off London's Fleet Street. T.I.

Police Dirty Tricks

NICK BURBRIDGE co-authored *War without Honour*, with Fred Holroyd, which alleged that Colin Wallace was framed for manslaughter at the time he was trying to expose the Kincoira scandal. Since then he got used to his phone being tapped and to visits from the local CID, but he did not expect the police to take an active interest in him as the singer/songwriter of the folk-rock band McDermott's Two Hours.

On the 18th January local officers stepped in to ensure the cancellation of a benefit gig in aid of the Birmingham Six, he informs us. They visited the venue, the Richmond in Brighton, and said plainly that if the gig went ahead they would turn up in substantial numbers to 'prevent any trouble'. There has never yet been any trouble at McDermott's gigs, but the (commercial) licensee was given to understand if he did not cancel the benefit, at the last minute, they would be less than willing to co-operate with him in the future. The gig would have been a sell-out, but it was cancelled. Nick accepts that his music is political but no official censorship is supposed to exist and if one cannot even play music for what many recognise as a good cause, what freedom have we?

Just at the moment when this type of political police action is tending to wane on the other side of the international divide, it is waxing over here.

IN BRIEF

DRACULA BITES KING KONG

A DELICIOUS example of thieves falling out is the leak over the fury of Mrs Thatcher threatening reprisals against the banks for withdrawing from the student loan scheme. The idea that students got no more grants, but loans to get them through university which they later paid back sounded great to the banks until students threatened boycotts and the banks couldn't trust each other not to break ranks.

Lloyds have other worries: they introduced the £12 charge on credit cards and thousands of cardholders withdrew from the scheme. Now they've gone to their competitors (who will also introduce charges if Lloyds get away with it but not if it loses too many punters). Lloyds, putting a brave face on it, claimed most of the withdrawers were only freeloaders anyway—which in Newspeak means people who settle their bills regularly each month and don't like to get into debt. That used to be the highest bourgeois morality; now if you're not paying interest you're not interesting.

REVIEW

AIDS: THE GOVERNMENT PLAGUE

A GERMAN-MADE film shown on Channel 4 TV (22nd Jan). 'Monkey Business' (produced by Max Schneebaum) documented the facts known about Aids of which the public generally are kept in ignorance (similar disclosures, gathered from scientific publications, have appeared in *Black Flag*). The African green monkey, who bit someone and started the virus, is as mythical as the 'wrath of God on homosexuals' spilling over on to everyone else. The only monkeys known to be affected with the Aids virus are those in captivity in American labs. The plague did not start in Africa (that is unsupported propaganda), it started in the USA. It did not come from out of the blue, and while it has spread by sexual contact and blood transfusion, it was not originally generated by any other cause than artificial.

The inescapable fact when reviewed by scientists not in the financial grip of the US academic and military Establishment is that it was a result of experiments on biological warfare and how to kill people without harming property. It was in Army labs the virus began and research is still under military supervision. It may be that tested on human guinea pigs (prisoners volunteering in exchange for release, a slightly more ethical approach than the Nazi one) it spread to the population (and exploded like a bombshell through promiscuous groups). The dangerous scientific experiments nowadays conducted with impunity led to the disease, though the scientists in the film were only prepared (or permitted) to say the experiments might have gone wrong. On the other hand, of course, the policy might just possibly have been deliberate. There are two possibilities (especially if it was thought the plague would only hit a sexually deviant group): one, a mad Fundamentalist Christian playing God; two, a planned method of extermination (like the oldtime selling smallpox-poisoned blankets to indigenous peoples), which afterwards could be used in international war, but which did not foresee what would actually happen.

Warning: Governments may seriously damage your health.

The Assassins
F.A. Ridley (Socialist Platform £5.50)

THIS EXTRAORDINARY work dates back to 1938 when it appeared in an Indian edition. Though Frank Ridley wrote it before WWII it retains its freshness and relevance.

Assassination as a political technique has been perfected since the first 'assassins' strutted onto the historical stage in the wake of the Crusades. The Assassins represented a tendency deeply rooted in the crisis and subsequent evolution of Islam from its cradle in the Middle East. According to the author, they 'represented a sect of philosophers who evolved a philosophy of survival, a defensive terrorism wherewith to terrorise an age of terror'.

Although too weak to contend with the Seljuk Turkish Sultans of the Near East or with the iron-clad Western Crusaders, these Assassins were able to survive by evolving a method of secret killings.

Here we are told the story of the 'Old Man of the Mountain' (Hasn-ibn-Sabah), founder and father of the Assassins; the techniques of terror they employed and the many political and quasi-religious sects, some Christian (such as the Templars and Jesuits) who derived a great deal from their teachings and practices. The late Ayatollah Khomeini, president of the Islamic Revolution in Iran was a representative of the Shiah sect whose followers now apparently elevate him to the rank of Imam along with his fellow-Persian, the Old Man of the Mountain.

It is interesting to discover, as a footnote to Frank Ridley's book, that A.A Bogdanov—one of Lenin's philosophical critics—also described the founder of Bolshevism as 'The Old Man of the Mountain' in his science fiction novel 'Red Star' (as far back as 1908).

Ellis Hillman

The *State Adversary* is the lively young anarchist paper from Auckland (NZ): the latest issue received (Dec 89) states in a mickey-taking Commonwealth Games front page banner it is 'official supplier of anarchist zines and propaganda to the 1990 steroid games'. We look forward to the next issue as to how anarchos have fared in the stonethrowing, shit-stirring, mud-slinging and swimming against the stream events.

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Esther Dolgoff

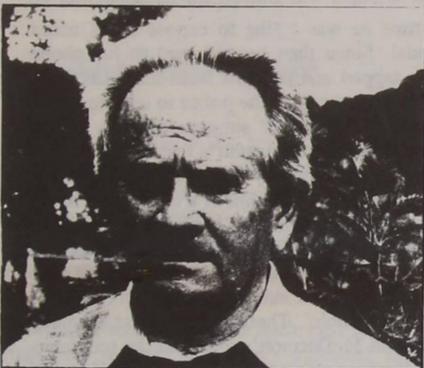
Our dear old comrade Esther Dolgoff died in New York this Autumn.

Many will know her if only through the biographical recollections drawn from a lifetime of anarchist struggle, *Fragments*, by her long time companion Sam Dolgoff, to which she self-effacingly contributed much—both to the struggle and to the book recording it. Those who had the privilege of knowing her will remember a warm hearted anarchist, 'grandmother' to many outside her family.

We were privileged to introduce the Dolgoffs a few years ago on a visit to both our London scene and the Northern groups of the DAM.

Jose Peirats

Jose Peirats was one of the old school of Spanish anarchism and its most faithful chronicler. Born in 1908 in Castellon (Valencia), he got his education in the Libertarian School of Sants, and became a building worker and member of the CNT at 14. He struggled through the years of dictatorship helping to found anarchist papers and building the anarcho-syndicalist movement, despite police harassment, and took part in the revolution of 1936, opposing participation in the bourgeois anti-fascist government. After Franco's victory he made his way with others over the Pyrenees but was able to get a ship to Venezuela, returning to France in 1947. There, in old age and poverty, he wrote numerous books on the history of the movement, many of them, taken out of context, serving as sources for academics living on comfortable salaries. An English translation of his great three-work History of the CNT, like many other worthwhile and original works, awaits a publisher.



Lola Iturbe Arizuren

Those who saw the video 'Toda la Vida' (All our lives) recently on tour—it's still available for showing—will remember an interview with Lola Iturbe Arizuren, who has died at the age of 87 in Gijon, on the 5th January this year. She was one of the founders of the Mujeres Libres (Free Women).

She was born in calle Riereta del Raval in 1902, when it was an Anarchist stronghold, like many parts of Barcelona then, and a 'no go' area to the police, (it still houses Anarchist activities). Her mother was unmarried and didn't even put her on the civil registry—until Garcia Oliver helped to provide her with an identity card during the civil war so she could get back news for from the front for 'Tierra y Libertad'. Only in old age were her documents finally sorted out.

At 16 she joined the clothing syndicate of the CNT whose centre was based in the same part of Barcelona where she was born. In 1934 she helped create the Mujeres Libres. It opened up the 'casal de lka dona treballadora' (Catalan: working woman's house) with nearly 30,000 members.

After 1939 she lived in exile in France. Her companion, Juan Manuel Molina was a well known FAI Resistance worker who was arrested in Spain in 1946, and served six years jail. Afterwards he returned to France, but they both returned after the death of Franco.

Death of a Renegade

Herbert Wehner, Social Democrat Minister, died recently in Germany. He was originally in the anarcho-syndicalist FAUD but was persuaded by Lenin's Revolution & Counter-Revolution that anarchism was a petty bourgeois deviation. Many of his British counterparts who fell for that line finished in court dress as Cabinet Ministers and Privy Counsellors: Wehner stayed a Communist until the war, being exiled from Nazi Germany; he returned a Social-Democrat. The Germans, humanely, don't make their chief Ministers wear knee breeches but the principle is the same'.

Dear Black Flag,

The comments you made following my letter (no.195) on unionism and syndicalism in the Eastern bloc show up the weaknesses in Black Flag's rigid adherence to syndicalism. If you argue that syndicalism is about workers taking over their own industries and this is what makes syndicalism revolutionary, then you are overlooking a couple of basic points. Perhaps workers don't particularly want to take over 'their' industry. And if they do want to take over 'their' industry, is it really in their own interests or in the interests of other workers, that they do so?

I am currently working as an administration assistant in an office in Reading, The place where I am working is just a small dingy office building full of piles of paper a few telephones and a photocopier. The building produces absolutely nothing of material use to society, it wouldn't even be suitable for housing the homeless or holding an acid house party in. If anything resembling a mass strike or uprising broke out, there would be no point in me and my colleagues at work taking over 'our own' industry, we would simply be wasting our time taking over a useless building! If a mass strike wave breaks out, it would make far more sense for me and other rebellious workers in the office to disrupt the administration, rip off any equipment that might be of use, and then leave the workplace to team up with other workers from other industries in a mass assembly or mass picket around a more important central target.

A mistake syndicalism has often made in practice is to accept the existing arrangement of production under capitalism and the workers down to the particular industry, workplace or community that capitalism has stuck them in at the moment. If workers think that the industry where they happen to work at the moment is 'their' industry then they are halfway to thinking that the country where they happen to live in 'their' country and of-course that is a serious mistake. What is important is not that workers organise in the workplace to take over the industry they are in at the moment but on the contrary to break out of the confines of the workplace, and link up with other workers and seize economic resources which are of interest to them. The problem with unions therefore is not simply one of leaders and bureaucracy but also one of sectionalism; accepting the capitalist separation between units of production as enterprises and therefore playing a role in the market place. Unions compete with each other and buy and sell labour. Now syndicalism does not necessarily change that, self-managed self-managed competition is still competition, self-managed buying and selling is still buying and selling; in short self managed capitalism is still capitalism! This is the dream of the anarcho-capitalists.

With regard to Russia, the point I was trying to make was that the militant strikes in the

Dear Comrades,

I was interested in the Secret History of the Trotskyists in Spain you published. One thing that gets me is that the trots make so much of the fact that some Anarchists entered the anti-fascist Government which admittedly was a betrayal of principle, but also of the POUM entering the Government. The Government was a bourgeois one, but do trots believe in supporting one or not? Not only have they been in the semi-fascist government in Sri Lanka, as you have recently pointed out, and in semi-government positions in Algeria, but I find it hard to believe that the Militant Tendency MPs in the Labour Party intend, if a Labour government is elected, to refuse Ministerial posts if offered or decline to support the Government (and presumably go into Opposition with the Tories). Yet the British Labour Party is more to the right and far more bourgeois than the Popular Front government of Spain in 1936. Could you see it even after the event legalising workers' occupations? The Republican government's worst action in sealing the fate of the revolution was to make the workers' militias into a structured army: could you see the Labour Party ever needing to do that?

I really believe we may yet see a trot Under-Secretary for State in a Labour administration, still bemoaning entry into that bourgeois government long ago and far away and still quoting Felix Morrow... Unless, like American trotskyists (such as the one-time leader James Burnham) they give up and land up in a tory administration.

EAS

LETTERS

mines and railways have shown that the bureaucratic centralised command economy is vulnerable to attacks from the workers. This is precisely why 'independent' unionism is being encouraged by those who want liberal economic reform in Russia, It will be used to sectionalise workers, help to break up industry into smaller decentralised separate enterprises competing with each other and encourage capitalist projects like commercial co-operatives, industrial democracy and Western style worker share ownership. Also some of these unions are manipulated by nationalist, racist and religious elements. The choice therefore is mass proletarian struggle or unionism boredom!

P.P. Reading

REPLY: We fear our correspondent is echoing the 'anarchist morass', which we quite love in its muddled way, but see as anti-authoritarian package-dealers who take their enthusiasms from music, their causes from the political left, and their criticisms of anarchism from the situationists, often before passing on to 'practical' authoritarianism. Yet he perceives the answers, only assuming he needs to teach his granny how to suck eggs.

Trade unionism is not syndicalism; though as sometimes on the Continent the terms are interchangeable (due to degenerated syndicalist movements) it is necessary to use the term 'anarcho-syndicalism' to which we rigidly adhere. For the sake of clarity one speaks of 'independent unions' but this does not imply independent (conventional trade) unions.

Situationism purports to be not against revolution because it is anti-revolutionary but because it is so revolutionary; not against anarchism because it is anti-anarchist but because it is so anarchist; not against working class etc.—but it is never into workers revolution, only for the aggrandisement of the 'intellectual', and no one is fooled but this 'anarchist morass'.

Surprising as it may appear to PP, anarcho-syndicalism, though in favour of workers taking over 'their own industry' (i.e. the one they are in, where they have power, not one to which they are bound by some mysterious tie) does not advocate it for no reason whatsoever than to carry on as before. Taking over breaks down the source of power and wealth, so the workers can do with society what they please. The office in Reading presumably deals with power or profit and is not just a time waster like the YTS. Obviously such a place would need to be abolished: just as if by some incredibility Buckingham Palace workers were organised on revolutionary syndicalist lines it wouldn't be with the object of serving breakfasts at a more convenient time for the butler and maids! Some areas of work are essential to society; under Statism a great many are as irrelevant as Buck House and more oppressive. To refrain from taking them over means allowing them to con-

tinue with the power they represent. Prisons need to be taken over, but not so that prisoners can reform the slopping-out arrangements.

It is typical situationism to refer to the 'mistake syndicalism has often made'—when?—in accepting the present arrangement of production, since this is precisely the ground on which it challenges orthodox trade unionism (and the English variety in particular). The whole conception of 'workers clubs' or industrial halls is alien to the conception that what you're in now, you must be in forever.

PP, like many in the morass, confuses anarcho-syndicalism with non-bureaucratic, or reformed, trade unionism, and thinks it supports the very sectionalism which its whole idea of industrial solidarity opposes. It is typical of English trade unionism in particular that you're 'born' into a union card: no card no job, no job no card. All anarcho-syndicalist unions have opposed this conception and some syndicalist unions, like the IWW, formed specifically against such separatism.

Then he goes on to talk of 'self-management' as if it were syndicalism. Self-management is a desirable reform under capitalism, like higher wages, but that is all it is (arrange one's own rosters etc). Progressive trade unions struggle for self-management under capitalism, and some have achieved it now and again (not even political change is necessary); but it has nothing to do with anarcho-syndicalism (except in the sense a non-capitalist society will be self-managed). His idea of initiatives under capitalism reminds one of the bourgeois press's naive belief that the Catholic so-called 'workers control' at Mondragon (Spain) today has somehow something to do with the collectivisation during the Revolution.

No ruling class encourages the creation of even reformist unionism. That is a myth. All regard it initially as a threat. When unionism flourishes, the bosses do their best to discourage it. Later they may come to an accommodation with a leadership, especially under a Labour government, but which even so, as we can see from English experience, is conditional and may vanish. The suggestion that in Russia 'independent unionism' is being encouraged—against the official unions?—and that any syndicalist movement arising must be created by the State, however it is persecuted and however much it spontaneously wins by strikes and rebellion, flies in the face of commonsense, but leads to a typically situationist slogan 'mass proletarian struggle or unionised boredom!' The 'anarchist morass' referred to is bored by preparation for revolution and only stimulated by package-deal demos for the political left; as for 'mass proletarian struggle' without workers organisation, what this in practice means is seen in Czechoslovakia and Romania, when a distinguished dramatist, or an Army general, takes over to fill the vacuum.

Answers to Quiz

1. In a way!—it was due to his insisting on selling pig-iron to the Japanese up to the declaration of war and using the military (supposed to be defending Australia) to break a dock strike against handling it. (Afterwards the Japanese returned it in another form, and in individual quantities Australian dockers hurled some a him).
2. As many poor women were prone to snatching pocket-handkerchieves (worn by gentlemen in the top pocket), and women were needed for settlement, the value of such finery was raised to bring this minor theft to the level of a transportable offence. (Thus one lifted handkerchief might entail life banishment, years of slavery and often mass rape; but the authorities wanted to adjust the imbalance of sexes).
3. Property rights in England are forever, and can mean wealth and power for favoured families for over a thousand years; but Australian property rights—conferred by the English ruling class—stop short at the invasion 200 years ago.
4. He earnestly requested everyone he met 'Just call me Sir'.
5. That they had no commercial sense and had to be treated as mutineers against the Crown.
6. Louise Michel was sentenced to convict settlement in New Caledonia after the Paris Commune, but escaped by way of Australia to London, and later founded *Le Libertaire* (now *Le Monde Libertaire*).

Sorry to disappoint you but the bombing of poll tax office in Cambridge was shown on BBC 1 East at the time!

RF



Isn't it a bit ridiculous of your reviewer to say (of the ALF) 'any organisation that causes six million worth of economic damage every year can't be all that bad?' On that basis I suppose we should support Shell, BNFL, the Tory Party?

H.J. (Kingston)

Comment: Aside from any value of the actions of themselves, economic damage must refer to the capitalist economic system (the only one going on this side of the international divide, whatever is happening over there). It is Labour Party thinking that the Tories or Big Business damage the capitalist economy (and they claim they could do better). This is perhaps confusing the environment—which is something positive and tangible—which they undoubtedly damage; with the economy—something which from their class point of view they manage very successfully.