

KOMSOMOLS DEMAND RIGHT TO FORM FACTIONS

SOVIET YOUTH IN REVOLT

BY TOM KEMP

THE NORMALLY docile members of the Soviet Union's Komsomol (Young Communist League) have shaken the bureaucracy by demanding the right to form factions and to debate political issues.

They are forcing Mikhail Gorbachev to say where he stands on this basic right in working class organisations which was abolished by Stalin in the 1920s and is still not recognised by the adult party.

The Komsomol is a mass youth movement which is more or less obligatory for Soviet youth, especially those with ambitions. Entry to university, jobs and promotion, as well as to the privileged ranks of the bureaucracy itself depends upon membership.

In the early days of the Soviet regime the Komsomol were noted for their dedication and many supported the Left Opposition in its stand against the bureaucratic degeneration under Stalin. Even loyal members were purged by Stalin in the 1930's. Although there was some re-awakening of revolutionary ardour in the war against Hitler fascism, the Komsomol was brought back under the strict control of the bureaucracy, which stamped on any sign of independent and creative thought. It was notable that the leaders of the movement, appointed by the Party, were generally in their 30's and 40's, hand-picked for

their devotion to Stalin and his successors.

Many Soviet youth treat membership in the Komsomol as a painful necessity. Having to listen to dull speeches and attend dreary meetings has made many youth cynical and given Marxism a bad name. To show their contempt some have turned to hard rock, old-time religion and just plain cynicism. Either they are disgusted with the privileges of the bureaucracy or they see being an obedient Komsomol as the means to get access to them for themselves. The Komsomol organisation is thus a means of controlling the youth and recruiting a new generation of bureaucrats.

Floodgates

Unwillingly and unwittingly, Gorbachev has unlocked the floodgates and criticism is now pouring in even from the Komsomol. At the national delegate conference held in Moscow on the weekend of 15-16 October an opposition wing emerged calling itself the Democratic Fraction. With support from the floor, it forced the leadership to circulate its own alternative eight-point platform, including the right to form factions. It calls for a fundamental change in the nature of the Komsomol, its independence from Party control and full discussion before decisions are made. It demands the abolition of the post of First Secretary and the calling of an emergency congress. It is a commentary on the organisation that a congress is not due for another four years!

It is not surprising that such demands should come from the youth, the least corrupted by the practices of the bureaucracy, and that it should call for real discussion and



Youth were at the forefront of demonstrations, like this one during the summer in Latvia

participation in the making of policy. Trotsky always emphasised the role of the youth and the need to enlist its 'fresh enthusiasm and aggressive spirit' as now being witnessed in the Soviet Komsomol. The Transitional Programme calls for the legalisation of Soviet parties, those which accept the foundations of the Soviet state in the nationalised property relations and the planned economy. It is extremely significant that a section of Soviet youth should,

spontaneously, be taking this road out of their own experience.

If this critical tendency is to be consistent it will have to go much further. It is bound to come into collision with the bureaucracy, beginning with the careerists, appointed for their docility, who make up the leadership of the Komsomol.

'Drive out the bureaucracy, their sons and daughters!' must be the rallying cry which Soviet youth will take up with enthusiasm.

Workers Press

Beria and G.Healy

LAST week, Pravda announced yet another 'rehabilitation' of a victim of Stalinism. Sergei Shchirov was a pilot in the Soviet Air Force during the war, a Hero of the USSR. But he was imprisoned and only released in 1956. His experiences led to his mental collapse, and he died in a psychiatric institution.

Only now is the real story revealed. Shchirov was married in 1944 and was sent on active service a few days later. While he was away, his wife was abducted by Stalin's right-hand man Lavrenti Beria. Like other women in Moscow, she was forced to have sexual relations with this monster. This continued after her husband's return. Driven to desperation, Shchirov got himself arrested with the aim of revealing the whole affair in open court at his trial. But there was no trial.

Now, he has been declared innocent of all charges and his decorations posthumously restored.

For readers of 'Workers Press' this story has many lessons. The degeneration of the first workers' state under the rule of Stalin was inseparable from the personal degeneration of individual members of the ruling stratum. Soviet workers and peasants suffered the most terrible privations, especially during their heroic struggle against German imperialism. Meanwhile, the bureaucrats grabbed for themselves conditions of a luxury rivalled only by those of the highest levels of the capitalist class.

How could a movement be communist, whose leadership concealed the actions of an animal like Beria, and protected him against the workers? How could communist principles survive, when such forms of tyranny were covered with the name 'socialism'?

How could a movement fight for the independence of the working class, when it was dominated by a privileged anti-socialist bureaucracy?

Krushchev destroyed Beria after Stalin's death, and Gorbachev's regime is finding it necessary to allow some of the truth about Stalin's rule to emerge. But the real meaning of this monstrous degeneration remains unexamined, and the essential social character of the regime is unchanged.

Millions of workers and young people, all over Eastern Europe, are asking what happened to the revolution of 1917, and why it happened. The Fourth International fought against the Stalinist degeneration on the basis of the only Marxist answer to these questions. There can be no struggle for socialism without this analysis. But 'Workers Press' readers will see the story of Sergei Shchirov from another angle. Just three years ago, the Workers Revolutionary Party expelled its founder TG Healy, on charges which included the sexual abuse of women comrades.

Healy's supporters, notably Sheila Torrance and Corin and Vanessa Redgrave, opposed the expulsion. At first they denied the charges; then declared that his actions were not an abuse of his position of leadership in the Party. The conduct of his personal life had no bearing on his politics, they said. The overwhelming majority of the WRP knew this was anti-Marxist and anti-working class rubbish. Communism, the struggle for what Marx and Engels called a 'truly human' society, could not co-exist with the use of human beings as objects. Marxism was incompatible with systematic lying and corruption.

It afterwards became clearer that the degeneration of the WRP and its leadership was part of the crisis of the Fourth International as a whole. Healy and his second-in-command Mike Banda both revealed their basic accommodation to Stalinism. Another fragment of the WRP, now calling itself the International Communist Party, has demonstrated other aspects of this anti-communist and anti-human sickness.

But we in the WRP (Workers Press) have seen the expulsion of Healy as the starting-point for the regeneration of communist principles and the reconstruction of the Fourth International on that foundation. The rapid development of the fight against the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR is continually strengthening this work and making its urgency inescapable.

WORKERS PRESS FIGHTING FUND

Total Received: £944.73

As I write this column we need £555.27 to complete this month's fund target of £1,500. In next week's Workers Press we want to be able to announce that we have received this, and have already started on the November Fighting Fund.

You can imagine it is 'nail-biting' time.

Workers Press lives financially from hand to mouth. But we are in good company! An old age pensioner was explaining to me over the week-end that he had received a giro for £10.40 from the DHSS. This had enabled him to buy a birthday card and present for his daughter and great-granddaughter.

How did he come by this great fortune? Well 'they' had decided he is entitled to 80p per week supplementary benefit. (Anything more than that would have meant an increase in his rent). But since this sum would cost too much to send every week, he receives it once a quarter.

He said he was trying to work out what he would do with the 25p extra he will receive next March when he reaches the age of 80, and added: 'I'm glad I don't have to worry about investments in Barlow Clowes - that must be a real headache!

The problem to 'make ends meet' of the old, the unemployed, the sick, the disabled, the homeless and the youth raises the necessity of our theoretical, political and practical work to rebuild the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. Let's make sure that we get our fund this month and start on November's target.

Dot Gibson

Send donations to: Workers Press Fighting Fund
PO Box 735, London, SW9 7QS

LISTINGS

LONDON DISTRICT OF THE WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

The following meetings will be held on Thursdays in Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, starting at 7.30 pm. Entrance £1, (unwaged 50p)

3 November - Meeting, Geoff Pilling: **WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY - THREE YEARS SINCE THE EXPULSION OF G.HEALY**

10, 17, 24 November - a series of three lectures given by Simon Pirani on: **IMPERIALISM, NATIONALISM AND SOCIALISM IN IRELAND**

CITY OF LONDON ANTI-APARTHEID GROUP

'1,000 Days and Nights for Freedom': Bank holiday Monday, 2 December, 10am - 10 pm on the non-stop Picket to free Nelson Mandela (South Africa House, Trafalgar Square).. Pledge now to join us for at least one hour. Rush in your pledge to City AA tel: 837 6050

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Please send me information about the Workers Revolutionary Party

Name.....date.....

Address.....

Trade union.....Age (if under 21).....

Send to:
Secretary to the Central Committee, PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS

50th Anniversary meeting in Scotland

BY JOE EYRE

THE 50th anniversary of the Fourth International was celebrated last Sunday in Glasgow, with a meeting on the history of the Trotskyist movement and the rebuilding of the Fourth International.

Geoff Pilling of the Workers Revolutionary Party Central Committee insisted that the International could only be rebuilt on the basis of really facing up to its whole history: to the political confusion as well as the struggle to defend Marxist principles; to the betrayals as well as the heroic sacrifices.

'The impact of Stalinism almost destroyed the Fourth International; not only in terms of the elimination, the murder of cadres, but in a political and ideological attack too,' said Pilling.

'Our own party was corroded and almost destroyed by these ideological pressures.'

'Stalinism concentrated within itself an attack on Marxism in all spheres,' Pilling stated; there cannot be any narrow programmatic resolution of the problems facing the movement.

Rather, 'the Fourth International is faced with a struggle against Stalinism on all fronts. The revolutionary movement has to turn out to all layers in society.'

Mike Banda - the WRP's former general secretary and now an open apologist for Stalinism - had claimed that the FI's problems were those of incompetent individuals. In fact, the movement had become isolated, the continuator of pure, abstract principles.

One of the lessons of the explosion in the WRP was, stated Pilling, that 'it became clear that we had to turn to new forces to assist us. We turned to layers who had been driven out of the movement, drawing back to Workers Press layers who had fallen away. This is an integral part of rebuilding the Fourth International.'

Quoting Lenin, Geoff Pilling said that Marxism cannot develop spontaneously within the working class, and continued by insisting that we are not trying to build just another anti-Tory movement. Such a move would be doomed to failure.

'Our movement must be based on the whole history of the working class, the negative as well as the positive,' said Pilling.

'The Fourth International is based on the conception that the material basis exists for socialism. The crisis of humanity is the crisis of revolutionary leadership,' he went on.

This means that all human problems are concentrated in this one problem, and it is therefore necessary to struggle to com-

prehend all human problems.

In this struggle, said Pilling, there can be no place for narrowness or philistinism - these have to be struggled against in theory and in practice.

'The question,' stated Pilling, 'is how do we bring about a change in the relationship between our forces and millions of people.'

Pointing out that the central conception of Stalinism - socialism in one country - is now manifestly bankrupt, not only in Eastern Europe but in the USSR itself, Pilling went on to say that the Fourth International needs to connect up with new forces coming forward in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

'In developing an international

centre,' concluded Pilling, 'we recognise that our prime task is the building of the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution.'

Earlier the meeting had heard an eyewitness report of developments in the Soviet Union by Peter Fryer.

The date (23 October) was the 32nd anniversary of the 1956 revolution in Hungary, said Fryer, who reported on the Hungarian revolution for the 'Daily Worker' and was expelled from the Communist Party because he reported the truth.

He praised the revolutionary masses who had fought the Soviet invasion.

Fryer gave a fascinating account

of the highly paradoxical situation in the Soviet Union: the emergence of an organised political opposition and the simultaneous establishment of a new riot squad by the militia; the privileges of the bureaucracy and the shortages in the shops; the development of independent organisations of worker-communists and satirical poetry readings in cities where bureaucrats still drive around in limousines with their curtains drawn.

The discussion that followed centred on Soviet developments and Peter Fryer was kept busy answering questions on Soviet politics, economy and society.

SHIPBUILDING: WHAT FUTURE?

SUNDERLAND once boasted the biggest single shipbuilding town in the world. Now it fights for the survival of its last shipyard.

The 1974 Labour government nationalised shipbuilding. Now local Labour MPs actively campaign for the privatisation of the yards.

Millions of poor people are starving throughout the world for the need of simple engineering equipment, skills, and transport, whilst thousands of workers with these skills are being thrown out of work.

Sunderland has one of the highest unemployment rates in the British Isles. Poverty and hardship have been associated with the town for half a century.

Even when the shipyards prospered the people of Sunderland saw little of this prosperity. Wages were low, the owners hired and fired at will and the majority of shipyard workers lived in some of the worst housing conditions in Europe. Those who are now so enthusiastic about privatisation do well to remember this sorry past.

Sunderland's decline as a shipbuilding and mining town is a direct result of the system of private ownership.

In the days of the British empire, shipyard owners took full advantage of the slave labour in the colonies, cheap labour at home and markets protected by the might of the British navy.

While huge profits were taken out of the yards little or no investment went back. Consequently when the empire broke up, British yards were totally unable to compete against the modern Japanese and German yards.

The owners invested their profits in areas of high reward

while the loyal shipyard workers were condemned to the dole queues.

But the biggest scandal of all was the way shipyard workers and miners were trapped in these industries.

It is now a matter of public record that successive governments, shipyard employers and the National Coal Board conspired to keep out the major car manufacturers from the north east in case they reduced the pool of cheap labour.

It is now adding insult to injury that massive gifts of taxpayers' money is given to encourage the Nissan car plant to create a few hundred jobs - jobs created under the 'Japanese model': low pay and low trade union involvement.

Why are Labour MPS supporting the de-nationalisation of the yards? Does this mean that they are also in favour of the privatisation of the mines and the privatisation of the electricity generating and supply industry?

Socialists have always argued that the nationalisation of the mines, whilst bringing some benefits to miners, has not proved a long-term solution to the problems of miners.

However, no-one who calls himself a socialist can agree to taking a backward step and re-introducing into the industry the old coal owners.

If they are against bringing back the old coal owners to the coal industry, how can they be for bringing back shipyard owners to the shipyards?

But is this not typical of a Labour Party that offers no solution to the working class.

As Thatcher sells off more and more of the state-owned industries to her friends in the city, the more the Labour Party avoids socialist policies.

Many workers are asking two main questions.

1. Is it possible to keep the yards open?
2. If it's possible to keep the yards open, is the job worth fighting for anyway?

Given the lack of enthusiasm from the Labour leaders for engaging in a fight to save the yards, given the low wages of the shipyard workers, these sentiments are understandable - but very dangerous.

The whole history of the working class testifies to one rule: if we retreat then the enemy advances.

If there is no fight to save the Sunderland yards, then everyone to some degree or other will suffer. The first question a shipyard worker has to ask is: 'Is there a need for the job I do?' The answer is, of course, yes.

Millions of people in the world are facing starvation for the want of machinery and technology to develop their economies. The warehouses of Europe and America are full to bursting with food that costs more to store than it does to transport to those in need.

The redundant shipyard and engineering workers in the West could play a vital role in satisfying this need. The whole labour movement must demand that an international plan is developed to satisfy the needs of those who are starving.

We say to the Tory government that it is only your capitalist system that judges everything from the point of personal profit which prevents us satisfying real need. While our short term aim is to save the jobs of thousands of shipyard workers and to halt any increase in the misery of unemployment in Sunderland, our long-term aim is to develop a campaign to eliminate need in the world.

Eisenstein

His life and work

EISENSTEIN: His life and work (1898-1948)

EXHIBITION at the Hayward Gallery, London until 11 December.

At the Cornerhouse, Manchester, from 29 December - 5 February 1989.

I FIRST wrote a lengthy review of this fine exhibition put together by the Oxford Museum of Modern Art with the cooperation of the Eisenstein Archive, Moscow, celebrating it as a feast of detail and insight into the life and work of the brilliant Soviet pioneer of cinema. And certainly it is that.

You must go to it and take plenty of time to relish the notebooks of drawings, the letters, theatrical designs, video displays and all the other examples of the depth and breadth of the work and genius of Eisenstein.

Excellent laid out, you will emerge with a clear notion of the achievements of one of the greatest film makers ever (and make sure you see the films themselves currently on BBC TV).

But over a few days I

began to realise what was nagging away at me.

Eisenstein's life and work are the most exciting expression of the release of which followed the October revolution; but they are also the most poignant and painful expression of the subsequent betrayal and Stalinisation of it. In a very important sense

ended up with a new ending and retitled 'The Old and the New'; that his flirtation with Hollywood produced nothing and that he didn't even see the rushes of the film he shot in Mexico, let alone have the opportunity to cut it, since it was impounded by its sponsor, the American novelist Upton Sinclair.

BY ROY BATTERSBY

he was made and destroyed in that process as much as many others. That's what is not in focus in the exhibition. Yes, it's acknowledged that he was only allowed to make seven films in over 20 years, and that only two of those, 'Strike' (1924) and 'Battleship Potemkin' (1925) were shown in the form he wanted.

It's made abundantly clear that 'October' (1927) was re-edited to remove Trotsky, that 'The General Line' fell foul of the violent swing in agricultural policy and

Similarly, it's shown that 'Alexander Nevsky' (1938) was not released because of the Stalin-Hitler pact and only saw the screen after the Nazi invasion of the USSR; that whilst part one of 'Ivan the Terrible' (1944) won Eisenstein the Stalin Prize, part two (1946) was banned until 1957 and the footage for part three was actually destroyed.

And that 'Bezhin Meadow' (1936-37), Eisenstein's first sound film was similarly destroyed because it didn't fit with another swing in

collective farm policy. And finally that Eisenstein died in 1948, aged only 50, from a heart attack.

All this is clearly marked. So what's wrong? I began to think of the contemporary struggle by Elem Klimov and the courageous USSR Union of Film Workers for what they call 'the renewal of film art, for the lifting of bureaucratic control and manipulation so that the cinema can be 'honest in everything'.

In a pamphlet published by Novosti, Klimov says, 'Frankly, many of us thought we would never live to see such days. But such days have come'. And elsewhere, 'the moral regeneration of the cinema is an irreversible process'.

Now, surely, it would be a betrayal of such historical efforts not to require more of an exhibition about Eisenstein. I don't wish to appear grudging. I enjoyed everything in it and welcome it.

But what, for example, allowed only 'Strike' and 'Potemkin' to be shown intact? Isn't it now time to open the archive fully on the intervention by Stalin to distort Eisenstein's account of the 1917 Revolution only two years later?

After the success of 'Potemkin' (commissioned to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the 1905 uprising and, incidentally, not allowed by the censors into Britain until November 1929) Eisenstein was called on to make a film for the tenth anniversary of October.

It was ready for October 1927 and called 'Ten Days That Shook The World'. But it was not released until March 1928 and then under its new title 'October'.

The intervening months are known to have been a period of intense crisis for the filmmaker. He was not only required to remove all shots of Trotsky (two glimpses remain) but also a lengthy speech of Lenin's. The final film is still a masterpiece but now it distorts history. Eisenstein's 'revolutionary art without compromises' was under attack,



Scene from 'Battleship Potemkin' (1925)

Workers Press

SUPPLEMENT - THE CASE OF PATRICK SLAUGHTER

BY CLIFF SLAUGHTER

WHEN the Workers Revolutionary Party issued its call - the 'Ten points' - for an international conference for the reconstruction of the Fourth International a final and very important point was included, as follows:

Point 10: Condemnation of the method, inherited from Stalinism, of slanders, violence and frame-ups designed to silence and drive out political opponents. In particular, condemnation of the slanders used against M.Varga (B.Nagy), J.Hansen, G.Novack, T.Wohlforth, N.Fields and R.Napuri.

Readers of Workers Press will know that in July of this year my son, Patrick Slaughter, was one of five young men convicted at Leeds Crown Court of conspiracy to cause affrays in and around football matches in the 1987-88 season. Patrick Slaughter was one of three to receive a prison sentence of four years.

What possible connection could there be between these two things? I believe that I have been responsible for our movement's making a mistake in not having exposed the way in which this court case has been used by political opponents to slander and discredit, and to attempt to silence, me and my comrades in the WRP and the Preparatory Committee.

I propose here and now to correct that mistake. It is our bounden duty to expose and condemn such unprincipled methods, even if they are used by groups whose number and influence are infinitesimal, and who are already held in contempt by those who know them politically.

The group in question is the rump 'International Committee' of David North. North's 'Workers League' publishes The Bulletin in the United States. His followers in Britain, led by ex-WRP member David Hyland, have adopted the pretentious name of 'International Communist Party'(!) and publish International Worker.

On August 12, 1988, The Bulletin carried a full-page article by David North under the headline: 'The Case of Patrick Slaughter; son of WRP Secretary convicted on charges of racist violence'.

The September issue of International Worker (as well as the paper of North's German supporters) reprinted North's article.

Although in his opening paragraphs North seems careful to use the words 'alleged' and 'accused' when referring to the offences for which Patrick Slaughter was convicted, we find in the middle of the article the following sentence:

'In other words, workers should deal with trash like Brown and Slaughter by building defence guards that will acquaint their faces with the pavement and send them on their way.'

And this in an article which is supposed to be refuting my denunciation of North's group as provocateurs!

Here I shall take North's article point by point. I shall also say something about the political meaning of North's vicious campaign, particularly in relation to the lessons of the struggle against Healy and his clique,

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which was so important in renewing the struggle for reconstruction of the Fourth International.

North writes: 'Slaughter, a law student whose only links to the workers' movement is (sic) through his father, was convicted on the basis of evidence gathered by police who, during a covert operation, had infiltrated a racist gang called the Yorkshire Republican Army which allegedly planned and incited football match violence.'

I leave aside the cheap opening jibe. When he is in a position to do so, Patrick Slaughter will speak for himself on that score, as he has done in the past, for example in protecting WRP meetings from the provocations of North's British followers.

North does not say what is true, namely, that

Every youth in Britain, except the tiny depraved minority around organisations like the National Front, and every thinking worker, recognise the class character of the campaign against football supporters; the vast majority find it easy to understand the anti-working-class character of the police. How is it that this elementary class consciousness is not only absent from North's article, but collides with it?

these young men were convicted solely on police evidence. Does he have an opinion about that? He does not say, either, what Patrick's counsel said in the course of cross questioning, namely, that the four 'undercover officers' were agents provocateurs, or what I declared openly from the public gallery, that the judge sent these men down for four years solely on the word of agents provocateurs.

Does he have an opinion about that? Does he not know that for a Marxist not to denounce such procedures is a gross neglect of duty, because it is necessary to warn and prepare the working class and the youth against such methods?

Another thing which North does not say is that the police prosecutors did not produce one single alleged victim of the violence said to have been planned! They did not report a single injury! North covers up this fact by writing simply: '...five men in the city of Leeds were found guilty of conspiring to commit acts of violence during football matches. In at least one case the targets of the violence were black workers and youth.'

Very 'matter-of-fact' reporting, to be sure, Mr. North. Which black workers and youth exactly? Do you have names perhaps? witnesses perhaps? If you have, you should perhaps tell the police, because they had not.

Another thing North does not say is that after the trial, in a celebratory feature in the local Tory press, Sgt Fickling, the leader of the undercover operation, recounted how one day in Balham (London) the group he was with (including Slaughter) was, in his own words, 'led into an ambush' by local black youth. But in court, Fickling and his fellow-officers had given evidence of this incident as part of the case that Slaughter conspired to cause violence! Naturally it would not have helped their case, to say the least, if they had said then that they were led into an ambush!

I must say to Mr. North: you knew about this contradiction when you wrote your article. This can be proved, because you quote from an article of mine where it is reported. Why then were you so dishonest as to omit it, and instead to accept the 'original' police version, on which Patrick Slaughter was convicted? Obviously it served your purpose to conceal the truth, and to add your (very small) weight to the prosecution's frame-up.

They were not just framing Patrick Slaughter and the others who were convicted. This was part of a frenzied campaign against the youth, a 'law and order' campaign whipped up by the Tory Government and the capitalist press in preparation for great class battles.

In the same month several other trials based on undercover operations against football supporters were dropped and the accused set free, because even the capitalist courts in some cases could not stomach the brazen disregard of elementary rules of evidence by policemen who had been encouraged to think that football fans must be given exemplary punishment whatever the cost and without regard to their rights.

Every youth in Britain, except the tiny depraved minority around organisations like the National Front, and every thinking worker, recognise the class character of the campaign against football supporters; the vast majority find it easy to understand the anti-working-class character of the police. How is it that this elementary class consciousness is not only absent from North's article, but collides with it?

Thus North is quite blind to the fact that most workers and youth will find incomprehensible his assertion that 'Cliff Slaughter won't persuade anyone except the politically sickest associates of the WRP that Patrick Slaughter is the innocent victim of a frame-up.'

My dear Mr. North, I must tell you that I don't have to 'persuade' anyone of any such thing! I can assure you that any class-conscious worker will start from the assumption that a frame-up is the most likely thing. Anyone who had spent any time in the working class or even anyone who just knew how to listen would know that, in Britain or in the United States. I understand the difficulties this creates for you.

And now I must ask North: what is this 'racist gang called the Yorkshire Republican Army' of which you say the police accuse Patrick Slaughter of being 'one of the ring-leaders and chief instigator of racist violence...?' Can North tell us anything about this 'gang'? No, he cannot. The police produced not one shred of evidence about it, and I challenge North or his friends in Leeds to produce one shred of evidence about it. I say this with confidence because this gang does not exist!

What is worse is that North actually makes allegations here which go beyond what the police alleged, let alone were able to substantiate. They did not even attempt to establish the existence of an organisation with leaders and members, nor did they attempt to suggest any actual plan or plot in which the accused jointly organised. No! It is North who alleges this, producing no evidence but relying on the fact that the police have had a successful prosecution! It is at this point that the notorious conspiracy laws are important. In order to be able to give exemplary sentences instead of the six months or less possible under the Public Order Act, and in the absence of any actual evidence of violence, the police charged these young men with conspiracy to cause affrays. Less ambitious than Mr. North, the police prosecutor and the judge explained to the court that to prove conspiracy against a group did not require evidence that they all knew each other or plotted together, but only that individuals among the accused had connections with some of the others accused.

The only evidence the police produced by way of 'organisation' was a notebook recording payments by people who had travelled to football matches on a coach the hire of which was organised by two of the accused.

At no time was it suggested that there was anything illegal of 'conspiratorial' about this, or that those listed were members of any organisation. Only North suggests this.

Why does North allege the existence of a racist 'Yorkshire Republican Army' when the police did not? He cannot plead ignorance of these details of what exactly happened in the giving of evidence, because the individual members of his own British organisation sat daily in the court taking notes; among them, Stephen Long, Andrew Wilde and Barbara Slaughter. Why did they leave this dirty job to North, who is several thousand miles away, in Detroit? Why, when they read his lies, did they go ahead and reprint the article in their own paper? Why is it that not one of them has the guts to denounce North's lies?

In his article, North rushes to add his own charges to those made by the forces of the state in their witch-hunt of the youth. Like the reactionary judge in the case, he attaches importance to the fact that Patrick Slaughter

We must also say that if Patrick Slaughter (or his lawyer) had decided in his own interests to make no statement, he would have had a precious right to remain silent. North attacks the exercise of that right, and denounces me for having defended it last July. What will he say now, as I write this in the week of the Tory Party Conference, when Home Secretary Hurd proposes, centrally to his 'law and order' campaign against the youth and the working class, to abolish the 'right to silence'?! Let North's members in Britain (the ICP) speak now or forever hold their peace.

did not take the witness stand. He writes: 'Slaughter never took the stand to refute the charges against him.'

To comprehend the depths to which North sinks here, it is necessary to know what North chooses not to say. He does not say that Patrick's lawyer advised him not to take the stand for cross-questioning. She announced in the court that she had so advised him, so there is no question of North's being ignorant of the facts.

But there is more to it. The reason for this advice was that Patrick Slaughter was the only one of the defendants who had made a full statement under police interrogation which did indeed refute every single charge and every single alleged association and incident brought forward by the police! This was said in open court by both sides, and in the hearing of North's members who sat taking notes, for their own purposes, throughout! This statement was the property of the court and constituted a full defence.

Why then does North tell the lie that Patrick Slaughter did not refute the charges? Why do his members in Britain, who were in the court, not publicly denounce his slander? We must also say that if Patrick Slaughter (or his lawyer) had decided in his own interests to make no statement, he would have had a precious right to remain silent.

North attacks the exercise of that right, and denounces me for having defended it last July. What will he say now, as I write this in the week of the Tory Party Conference, when Home Secretary Hurd proposes, centrally to his 'law and order' campaign

Furthermore, he follows in the footsteps of Healy by his callous, one should say scandalous, abuse of the personality and integrity of those whom he decides may be destroyed in the interests of his own purposes. We expelled Healy for precisely this ultimate consequence of the rejection of Marxism, this grovelling acceptance of the capitalist ethic of exploitation of men and women.

against the youth and the working class, to abolish the 'right to silence'?! Let North's members in Britain (the ICP) speak now or forever hold their peace. Their eagerness to denounce Patrick Slaughter, me, and the WRP has fitted them nicely to be recruits to the Tory law-and-order brigade!

But North has more still to say on Patrick's supposedly incriminating actions. North states: 'Nor did his attorneys challenge evidence which placed Slaughter at different football matches all over England where the alleged acts of racist violence took place.'

Does North mean to say, then, that by being at a football match one is incriminated in any act of racist violence which may take place there, and that in order to escape being incriminated one must have an alibi?! It is difficult to take this argument seriously. It is significant only as an indication of the desperate state of mind of North as he looks for sticks with which to beat Patrick Slaughter. He must surely know that there are many thousands of youth who travel to watch their teams every Saturday. Does he want to join those who think that such youth are a priori, guilty, 'hooligans', 'thugs'?

But North must be asked another question on this particular matter. Can he name one match at which the police showed there had been 'racist violence'? Just one, please, let alone 'all over England'! And let alone one in which Patrick Slaughter was involved! If he means only to say that Patrick Slaughter did not deny being present at football matches on Saturday afternoons, then he has hit the bull's eye. What a marksman!

And now, says North, 'Most significant of all, Slaughter never disassociated himself from the other defendants, even though David Brown, alias "Para" Brown, has been publicly identified as a fascist.'

Another lie. As I have already shown, Patrick Slaughter in his statement under interrogation refuted all the associations and incidents brought into the case by the police. His lawyer repeated these refutations in her cross-questioning of the police. North's members heard all this in the court. Why the lies? Why?

North's method is despicable, and dangerous, because it represents a time-worn technique of slandering opponents by 'association'. He pretends to have established 'association' between Patrick Slaughter and a fascist. He has in fact said only something quite different, namely, that Slaughter 'did not disassociate' himself from someone 'publicly identified' as a fascist.

We are not told even how Brown was so 'publicly identified', only that 'it has been reported' (by whom? has North checked the report?) that Brown gave 'lodgings' to a 'Swedish fascist'.

I know nothing of Brown's politics (which is precisely as much as North knows about the subject). What I do know is that first North declares Brown to a fascist on the basis of a 'reported' association with some unnamed fascist, and then proceeds to incriminate Slaughter for not 'disassociating' himself from Brown. No one else has alleged anything like association except the police, and, as I have already explained, they did not suggest (or need to suggest, for their 'conspiracy') any other than a tenuous connection, which they did not prove.

In the 'Ten Points' we publicly corrected and denounced the slander campaign against Joseph Hansen called 'Security and the Fourth International', which used the same techniques to 'prove' Hansen an agent. North persists with the lie against Hansen, of which he was one of the three principal purveyors along with Healy and Mitchell, and now employs the same method against Patrick Slaughter. He has learned nothing and forgotten nothing.

Furthermore, he follows in the footsteps of Healy by his callous, one should say scandalous, abuse of the personality and integrity of those whom he decides may be destroyed in the interests of his own purposes. We expelled Healy for precisely this ultimate

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consequence of the rejection of Marxism, this grovelling acceptance of the capitalist ethic of exploitation of men and women. For this same reason we excluded North's followers from our meeting on the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Fourth International, and we shall continue to exclude them.

I will allow Mr. North to exemplify in his own words the depths to which he has sunk. The following passage from his article against Patrick Slaughter repays study (in the same way, that is, that pathology can be a necessary and rewarding study):

'The Workers Press reports that prior to being sentenced, Patrick Slaughter made a personal statement in which he claimed that "He and his friends were well known among Leeds United supporters and others as consistent and outspoken opponents of racism and the National Front." That statement, of course, was a lie; for as we have already noted, Slaughter's associate 'Para' Brown has been publicly identified as a well-known fascist.'

I have dealt with the alleged 'association', and note only the sleight of hand by which North transforms his allegation of association into the category of one of Patrick's friends. All very ingenious, to be sure: Patrick is alleged by North to have an associate, Brown; North has 'already noted' that Brown is a fascist; a friend is the same thing as an alleged associate; therefore, when Slaughter says he and his friends are known as opponents of racism and fascism, he is a liar! A veritable masterpiece of legal argument!

But there is an even more ugly aspect of this arrogant assertion that Patrick Slaughter's avowal of anti-fascism is 'of course a lie'.

Here is a group of youth arraigned before the capitalist court, framed by an undercover operation in which police acted as provocateurs, in response to a Tory Government buying for blood in the name of 'law and order' and protecting the good name of Britain. Before sentence, one of them, Patrick Slaughter, defiantly declares that he is an opponent of racism, of the National Front, and of 'all forms of bigotry'.

When North, who avows himself a Marxist, denounces this proud statement as 'of course a lie', he brings Marxism into disrepute. He finds himself on the same side as the class enemy, whose police and judicial representatives dismiss the youth as thugs and liars. Having denounced Patrick Slaughter for not taking the stand to refute the allegation that he plotted racist violence, he tries to smack him down when he makes a declaration of anti-racism and anti-fascism to the capitalist court!

Anyone who can descend to this, who can use this kind of language to kick a young man when he is down, put down for four years by the bourgeois state, has abandoned the first principles of working-class solidarity, let alone the understanding that socialism must

carry forward, build on and develop, the capacity for principled struggle, for objectivity, for human integrity in face of the oppressors, which have been fought for by millions of people over thousands of years of class society.

In response to Patrick Slaughter's declaration of anti-racism and anti-fascism, North spews up: 'Patrick Slaughter is a 23-year-old (he is not, CS) middle-class punk who apparently enjoys the company of racist scum like 'Para' Brown'. He adds: 'Like his son, the pampered middle-class bully-boy (Cliff) Slaughter seems to thrive in the company of the excrement of capitalist society.'

This kind of hysterical hyperbole has only one significance. It is the language of a man at the end of the line, bankrupt of all rational argument, unable to justify his political existence, unable to face his past or his future. It tells us nothing about the persons against whom it is directed, but it indicates unerringly the crisis of North himself and his politics, the dead-end to which his organisation has been brought by his leadership.

Here is a group of youth arraigned before the capitalist court, framed by an undercover operation in which police acted as provocateurs, in response to a Tory Government buying for blood in the name of 'law and order' and protecting the good name of Britain. Before sentence, one of them, Patrick Slaughter, defiantly declares that he is an opponent of racism, of the National Front, and of 'all forms of bigotry'. When North, who avows himself a Marxist, denounces this proud statement as 'of course a lie', he brings Marxism into disrepute. He finds himself on the same side as the class enemy, whose police and judicial representatives dismiss the youth as thugs and liars.

When I say that North and his followers find themselves, in this matter, siding with the class enemy, I mean this in all seriousness, and not as some rhetorical flourish.

North, trying to give his article the appearance of socialist respectability, writes: 'There is no doubt that the use of undercover police in a covert operation represents a threat to the workers' movement, even if the immediate target of police activities is, as in the Leeds case, right-wing and neo-fascist elements.'

Lies, and dangerous lies! The 'immediate target' of the police operation was not at all 'right-wing and neo-fascist elements'. The target was chosen in a nationally coordinated and Government-prompted series of such operations and directed only at working-class youth, who are being witch-hunted as scapegoats for the social crisis of capitalism and Toryism.

The fact is that the National Front fascists are openly on show at every Leeds United match, selling their papers and proclaiming their racism. They are known to the police. They were not the target of the police operation. They were ignored by the police investigating team. In the course of the trial, we went out of our way to have Patrick Slaughter's counsel ask the leader of the undercover police team directly if their planning took any account of the National Front. They replied that it took no account what-

soever. They did not attempt to investigate them or to infiltrate them. Asked to explain why, they said they could not.

Yet North tells the lie that the 'target' was right-wing and neo-fascist elements. Even the police themselves do not claim this virtue. Why does he tell this lie? Why does he refer to the verdict and sentences on Patrick Slaughter and four others as an 'exemplary prosecution of a handful of racist thugs'. Why does he not refer to the article in which I proved that the undercover officers were themselves racists? Why does he persist in this lie, even though his own morbid representative was sitting in the court taking notes of precisely the cross-questioning of the police to which I have referred?

Why does he foster the illusion that the police can prosecute a campaign against racism? He points out that such prosecutions 'will do nothing in the long run to prevent the growth of a fascist movement'. And in the short run, Mr. North?

There remain a few other points in North's article. I first wrote on this question in Workers Press because after the sentence on Patrick, some of North's members, in Hull and in Manchester, had declared to members and supporters of the Workers Revolutionary Party that he was 'a fascist'. I named one of these slanderers, John Upton, who lives in Hull, and I will if challenged name the one in Manchester.

(Incidentally, I must here interpolate a reference to North's 'defence' of Upton. North says, in response to my warning that WRP members and supporters should not be provoked by the ICP's slanders: '...the very individual whose activities are cited as an example of menacing behaviour, John Upton, is a disabled ex-construction worker who has been confined to a wheelchair for years.' What sort of an answer is this? I know Upton well. I did not say that his 'activities' (a nice general term, to be sure!) were an 'example of menacing behaviour'. I said what was true: that he had slandered Patrick Slaughter as a fascist.)

North finds it necessary to say, 'The fact is that until now neither the ICP (his group in Britain) nor any other section of the International Committee had issued any public statement on the case of Patrick Slaughter. But that is just the point! They preferred to engage in a vicious campaign of gossip, and had to be smoked out.'

And that is what has now been done, for everyone in the workers' movement who encounters this exchange to see the cesspool that is North's 'International Committee'. We never said that they had issued any public statement. We said what was true, that their members were slandering Patrick Slaughter as a fascist. Why the niceties about 'we never made any public statement'? Are we then to renounce the right of answering your slanders?

Anyone who can descend to this, who can use this kind of language to kick a young man when he is down, put down for four years by the bourgeois state, has abandoned the first principles of working-class solidarity, let alone the understanding that socialism must carry forward, build on and develop, the capacity for principled struggle, for objectivity, for human integrity in face of the oppressors, which have been fought for by millions of people over thousands of years of class society.

Not likely! You won't get away with it, now or in the future.

North thinks it necessary to add: 'Except for the fact that he happens to be the son of the WRP's political secretary, on what basis is the WRP proclaiming Patrick Slaughter a martyr of the labour movement?' Every reader of Workers Press knows perfectly well that at the WRP never proclaimed any such thing. What we did was to expose the state conspiracy against those convicted and answer the slander that Patrick Slaughter was a fascist. That is all, and North knows that it is so.

It is not easy to see what North is driving at here. He continues: 'At no time in the trial was there any reference made by the prosecution to the political activities of Cliff Slaughter or any indication given that the purpose of the trial was to attack the Workers Revolutionary Party.'

What is this nonsense? Why on earth should the question arise of the prosecution's referring to my political activity? Neither we nor anyone else has suggested that the case was directed at Cliff Slaughter and the WRP.

It was directed at the working-class youth on behalf of the 'executive committee of the ruling class', the state machine and the Tory Government.

In the same vein, North refers to what he calls 'a sickening comparison between Patrick Slaughter and Des Warren.' This again is deliberate misrepresentation.

In my own article, to which North refers, I had drawn attention to the dangers of the conspiracy law in its use against the working-class movement, and cited the case of Des Warren, victimised building workers' strike leader, now suffering grave illness because of his incarceration and mistreatment in prison.

That is all. I did not do anything so stupid as to 'compare' Patrick Slaughter with Des Warren, but only pointed out that the same law was used in both cases and must be recognised as a real danger to the working class.

Does North consider this to be true or false? Blinded as he is by sectarian hatred, North seeks only to use such a serious issue to abuse the WRP.

North concludes his sorry little piece in characteristic style, hoping that an excess of abusive words will substitute for logic and information. He says: 'No politically conscious worker will hold against the ICP (his friends in Britain) its hatred of everything Patrick Slaughter represents.' He has now 'proved', that Patrick Slaughter 'represents' fascist reaction, and so the working class will recognise the correctness of the ICP's hate campaign! What a weird and wonderful world, which functions only to confirm your delusions! Is this not the end-product of that Healyite messianism which we had to fight our way out of in 1985?

It is from this same bunker of delusions and political paranoia that North hurls his last colourful but very damp squib, to be treated with the contempt it deserves. He shouts: 'Cliff Slaughter is addressing his appeal to the most reactionary elements in the lumpen-proletariat and middle class who hate the workers' movement and are likely to feel sympathy for the politics and plight of Patrick Slaughter.'

A gratuitous insult? Yes. But North is confirming what I said in my first article on this subject. He is acting as a provocateur. He knows that the feeling against 'football hooligans' is being whipped up precisely against the working class by the enemy class. It does not need a Marxist to know that.

He is telling any anti-racist youth who might chance to read his paper that I, the WRP, and Patrick Slaughter, are people who address ourselves to the fascist and potentially fascist layers of the population.

It is a gross slander and, I repeat, a provocation, and it should be denounced by everyone in the workers' movement. Silence would be irresponsible.

We print here a message of support from The Group of Opposition and Continuity of the Fourth International (GOCQI) to Cliff and Patrick Slaughter and the Workers Revolutionary Party

USING the fights that have broken out around football grounds, the British bourgeoisie and its state, with Thatcher, have mounted a huge police provocation against the youth.

At the forefront of the world bourgeoisie, they are striving to break the youth in order to forestall a general outbreak of its fury, to destroy its revolutionary potential as an indispensable reserve and arm of the proletarian revolution.

There is no co-incidence in the fact that this provocation, based on a deliberate frame-up and 'evidence' that the lawyers have demolished, has affected the family of a comrade Cliff Slaughter, a leader of the Workers Revolutionary Party in Britain.

The bourgeoisie and its police and judicial machine try to make out that the young defendants were terrorists, drug-peddlers and fascists all rolled in one.

The bourgeois press is conducting an hysterical campaign against these youths -- and through them, against comrade Slaughter, whose son is one of the accused.

We energetically denounce this campaign and the whole of this provocation, and express our solidarity with the youth against the state apparatus of the bourgeoisie, and in particular with comrade Slaughter and his family,

through whom the bourgeoisie are aiming above all to strike at the Workers Revolutionary Party.

The bourgeoisie have helpers. North's group in England, led by a certain Hyland, is particularly active in the attack against comrade Slaughter.

Its members even go so far as to provoke him at the court and, picking up the police provocation, slander him with collusion with the fascists.

Following the example of Healy who, a few months ago, used the police to have comrade Phil Penn of the WRP jailed, the North group, too, has earned the contemptible title of assistant agent provocateur of Thatcher's police.

We vigorously condemn them as abject. The North group has proved that there is no place for them in the workers' movement.

We call on all organisations in the workers' movement, especially those who claim to be Trotskyists and members of the Fourth International, to condemn this provocation, to express proletarian solidarity with comrade Slaughter and to declare that the North group is excluded from the workers' movement.

Paris, June 11, 1988
Group of Opposition and Continuity of the Fourth International.

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COMMUNIST SOCIETY AND MARXIST THEORY

BY CYRIL SMITH

Was Marx an economist, a sociologist, a philosopher? Unlike many academics, the author of this book says no to all of these. He examines the development of Marxism from bourgeois thought, that of Hegel especially. He demonstrates that the concept of communism as the 'truly human society' is central to Marx's revolutionary world outlook.

Cyril Smith, born in 1929, has been a Trotskyist since the early 1950s. Trained as a mathematician, he lectures in statistics at the London School of Economics. He has written and lectured on Marxist philosophy and is a member of the central committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party and a regular contributor to Workers Press.

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Scene from 'October' (1927)

along with the revolution itself but always, of course under a cover of 'criticism' e.g. the cut of Lenin was said to be necessary because the actor playing him was not very good!

Reviewing a publication about 'Que Viva Mexico' for the film workers' union (ACTT) journal in the mid seventies, I called then for the release of the original version of 'October', or for a new edition to be made containing the out-takes.

Perhaps this material does not exist, but then again, perhaps it does.

We can't know from this exhibition, despite the collaboration of the Moscow Eisenstein Archive in mounting it.

Similarly, what is the full story of the butchery of 'The General Line'?

Also, why not a complete account of the Upton Sinclair affair? We know the Soviet film authorities were offered the Mexican footage at a cost by Sinclair but refused to buy it.

There are many other factors involved, not least the role of the American Communist Party. Why was Alexandrov, Eisenstein's assistant, not able to make an edition of the film in accordance with Eisenstein's original plans for it as he ann-

ounced he hoped to do when showing the reconstituted rushes at the National Film Theatre 20 years ago?

Again, why was it always claimed that 'Bezhin Meadow' was only accidentally destroyed in a bombing raid during the war?

What was Ivor Montagu's attitude to all this, Eisenstein's most active British supporter and friend?

It is said that Eisenstein was close to suicide during the grim years after his return to the USSR in 1932.

It's known that a special congress of filmworkers was set up to bully and browbeat him into toeing the line.

Certainly he was forced to write abject letters of self criticism to the General Secretary and Central Committee

And he did die at only 50 years old, after the many bitter experiences of being made to betray his heart and mind.

It's fine to celebrate his (and any other great artist's) life. But the truth of such lives is always contradictory and painful.

We all know that the circumstances in which art is created, like human life itself, are not chosen, that we

are all made and unmade by them, that we also have to recreate them continuously, to teach them 'to sing to them their own music.'

But that struggle must be profoundly understood, not superficially glossed over by being merely noted.

'Whilst the dictatorship had a seething mass basis and a prospect of a world revolution it had no fear of experiments, searchings, the struggle of schools, for it understood that only in this could a new cultural epoch be prepared.

The popular masses... were thinking aloud for the first time in a thousand years. All the best youthful forces of art were touched to the quick. During those first years rich in hope and daring were created... the best productions of revolutionary literature. To the same times belong... the creation of those excellent Soviet films which, in spite of a poverty of technical means, caught the imagination of the whole world with the freshness and vigour of their approach to reality.'

Writing in 1936 on Culture and Soviet Bureaucracy, Trotsky goes on:

'The present ruling stratum considers itself called not only to control spiritual creation politically, but also to prescribe its roads of development.

'The method of command without appeal extends in like measure to the concentration camps, to scientific agriculture and to music...

'The bureaucracy superstitiously fears whatever does not serve it directly, as well as whatever it does not understand.'

With the re-birth of the revolution in the USSR now is the time to try to tell the whole story on every subject.

We owe it to all those who suffered and to the future.

When I made 'The Bolsheviks' in 1979 the original opening to it became the subject of a bitter fight with Healy.

Less than a year after capitulating in that struggle I left the Workers Revolutionary Party. That opening contained these further words of Trotsky's:

'You can juggle quotations, hide the stenographic reports of your own speeches, forbid the circulation of Lenin's letters and articles, fabricate yards of dishonestly selected quotations..

'You can suppress, conceal and burn historic documents.

'You can extend your censorship even to photographic and moving picture records of revolutionary events.

'All these things Stalin is doing. But the results do not and will not justify his expectations.

'Only a limited mind like Stalin's could imagine that these pitiful machinations will make men forget the gigantic events of modern history.'

Eisenstein will never be forgotten.

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Midwives under attack

MORE than one woman has observed to me, not without bitterness, that if it were men who had to bear children the human race would long ago have become extinct.

Yet the giving of physical and moral support to women in labour, after being the exclusive province of women for tens of thousands of years, has in our culture largely come under the control of men.

This process began in the 17th century with the emergence of the 'man midwife', who did his work under a sheet, incidentally, and who by the early 19th century had developed into the all-knowing and all-wise and often positively god-like obstetrician.

In the USA midwifery as a profession has virtually ceased to exist, though there are signs of a rebirth of midwifery there as an increasing number of women demand midwife care. Here in Britain midwives feel themselves to be an endangered species.

Only those who work within the hospital system, under the rigid control of an obstetrician and as junior members of his team, are free from the constant threat of investigation for the crime of making, and acting on, their own professional judgments.

At this point I should perhaps declare an interest. I was present at the birth of each of my three children, the last two of whom were born at home with the help of a midwife.

This uniquely profound experience taught

me much that isn't relevant here. But it also taught me much about the role of the midwife in parturition, which is far from being limited to purely physical and verbal assistance.

It is my strong conviction that we deny or curtail or abolish or interfere with that role at our peril.

Yet, though three babies in four are still delivered by midwives, we have already gone dangerously far along the road of subordination of midwives to a hierarchy dominated by male obstetricians for whom pregnancy is a special kind of disease and labour is a process that has to be 'managed' - by them.

The obstetrician's training, unlike that of the midwife, is dominated by three fallacies: that his speciality is a branch of pathology; that, armed with hi-tech equipment, he always knows best; and that the midwife is essentially a superior kind of nurse who should stick to rigid rules and never take any initiative.

The trained midwife sees things very differently. For her, childbirth is a normal process, not a pathological one. For her, no amount of technology can substitute for a close relationship - an empathy - with the mother. For her, in short, midwifery is an art as well as a science, and rigid rules are a dangerous irrelevance.

Three recent cases show the kind of attack to which intelligent and independent-minded midwives are currently being subjected, as they respond in a professional way to the problems caused by cutbacks in the maternity services.

Jilly Rosser transported a haemorrhaging woman to hospital by car instead of waiting for the ambulance. She had telephoned the mother's doctor and the hospital registrar,

but couldn't get through.

Both mother and baby are well, but the midwife whose presence of mind may well have saved their lives has been struck off the register.

Chris Warren of Croydon (which has a policy that two midwives must be present at every birth) was sacked because the colleague she summoned got there only as she was lifting the baby into the mother's arms. She won her appeal a couple of weeks ago and is to be reinstated.

Caroline Flint wrote an article in 'Midwifery' describing how, instead of summoning a doctor, she took prompt and successful action to treat a woman who was bleeding heavily.

'I found myself in a situation in which it was impossible to stick to the rules', she wrote. For that article she is now under investigation.

The profession is controlled by a body calling itself the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting. Out of the Council's 45 members, only four are midwives - and those four are administrators, not working midwives.

Sheila Kitzinger, whose important book 'The Midwife Challenge' (Pandora, £6.95) has just been published, writes that 'the upper echelons of midwifery seem to be in the process of destroying midwifery by the imposition of a punitive disciplinary system which throws out some of the very best midwives because they have not followed the rule book'.

It's time to halt this process. Midwives should be free to practise their art. And pregnant women should be free to choose what kind of supervision they themselves prefer.

AS I SEE IT

BY TOM OWEN

Dick Baines and Kit Marlowe

IN last week's article on the 'demonic preoccupations of some English writers and artists I used Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus as a source.

Of course Marlowe did not invent 'Faustus' but drew from a number of European sources which dealt with the 'damnable life and deserved death of Doctor John Faustus.' Marlowe's other plays also explore the forbidden areas of experience, real politics and sensuality.

It is not surprising then that his own short life as one of the 'bad boys of English letters' provides a fascinating glimpse into the turbulent world of late 16th century England. The proverbial wisdom of 'only the good die young' has only purchase in this case on the magnificence of his verse and the boldness of

his spirit. From the fragmentary evidence we have of his life we can construct a general narrative outline but the gaps and inconsistencies have led to numerous myths - the most preposterous, that he feigned his death, fled to France and wrote Shakespeare's plays.

He was born in Canterbury, the second son of a reasonably prosperous shoemaker in 1563. Before his 15th birthday he obtained a scholarship to King's School and from there to Corpus Christi Cambridge. His university career seemed uneventful and undistinguished. He took his Bachelor of Arts in 1583 and his Master of Arts in June 1587. Both his scholarship and his course of study would suggest that he intended to take holy orders.

But the university authorities seemed reluctant to confirm his further degree until the Queen's Privy Council insisted. Against the charge that he had intended to join a Catholic seminary in Rheims he declared that, 'in all his actions he had behaved himselfe orderlie wherebie he had done her Majestie good service to be rewarded for his faithful dealinge'.

It seems clear from this statement that Marlowe had been involved in some form of political mission for the government.

After leaving Cambridge, he had less than six years to live and what we know about this

period is hazy.

He did not enter the church but lived in London and Kent. Like many of the bright young sparks of the time variously described as 'university wits' or 'foreward wits' he sought a precarious living in the literary and political underworld of the 1580s and 1590s often doing hack work for the burgeoning theatres of London or the scandalous pamphleteers. The company he kept included poets and dramatists, Nashe, Kyd, Chapman and Greene, the latter two he seems to have offended by a quick and impulsive temper.

He also seems to have had powerful political allies such as Thomas Walsingham and the freethinking poet and adventurer Sir Walter Raleigh.

In 1589, he was involved in a swordfight in which his companion Thomas Watson killed a man. Watson was seen by the authorities to have acted in self-defence. Just over two years later a constable and under-constable sought legal protection against Marlowe. He shared a room in 1591 with Kyd, which was searched and amongst material discovered were certain 'atheistic documents'.

Whether to save his own skin or out of malice Kyd reported that Marlowe had dared to, 'jest at the divine scriptures gybe at paires, and stryve in argument to frustrate and confute what has been spoke and wrutt by

prophets and such holiemen'.

On 30 May 1593 Marlowe spent a day in a Deptford tavern with Ingrain Frizer, an agent of Walsingham, Nicholas Skeves, a swindler and Robert Poley, perjurer and double-spy. In the course of a row over the bill, Marlowe attacked Frizer who drove a dagger over his eye and killed the dramatist.

Two weeks later a certain Richard Baines submitted one of the most extraordinary depositions ever lodged against a literary figure. Whether it was mendacious or not it remains an astonishing piece of iconoclastic debunking of sacred cows.

Baines testified against Marlowe's 'damnable judgement of religion, and scorning of God's words'. Marlowe had claimed, it was accused, that Moses was a juggler, that the human race was older than Genesis, that 'Christ was a bastard and his mother dishonest', that the twelve disciples were 'base fellowes neyther wit nor worth' and that 'religion was only to keep men in awe'.

Amongst other outrages he is reputed to claim that, 'they that love not tobacco and boyes were fooles'. However colourful the life of the myths that surrounded Marlowe his verse and plays are a powerful demonstration of the living forces that were to break the dominion of feudal absolutism some 50 years later.

50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

We print here the messages received at the October 9th meeting to commemorate 50 years of the Fourth International

Message from South African Trotskyists

THE repressive conditions under which we are forced to exist in our country prevent us from joining openly with you in this commemoration, but we...are in complete solidarity with you in the struggle to rebuild the Fourth International as the World Party of the Socialist Revolution with its sections in every country.

The principal enemy against which the Fourth International has to be re-built remains the Stalinist liquidators of Marxism headed by the Soviet bureaucracy.

In Southern Africa we are experiencing very concretely the world counterrevolutionary role which Stalinism ever more assiduously continues to play. In Angola, Namibia, and already in South Africa, the Kremlin bureaucracy led by Gorbachev is pursuing its policy of 'peaceful co-existence' with imperialism, in an attempt to cut off the head of the proletarian revolution in the region...

In South Africa, as an integral part of the imperialist and Stalinist counterrevolutionary moves in the rest of the region, the alliance of the South African Communist Party and the African National Congress is presently waging a vicious campaign against all those who oppose their treacherous two-stage conception. They are determined to stamp out the calls for socialism that took root in the black trade unions and township organisations in the period 1984-86...and at the same time they are vigorously wooing sections of the bourgeoisie with calls for a broad 'united front' of all anti-apartheid forces which, to use their words, 'goes beyond the UDF and COSATU'...

Under these conditions...it can be seen why the building of the independent revolutionary leadership of the proletariat, which can only be the Fourth International, is so absolutely vital. It is proof of why the Pablo-Mandel (U-Sec) anti-Trotskyist perspective of a 'dual nature' of the Stalinist

bureaucracy is so false and dangerous...

We believe that the task of tasks is to train and develop an international vanguard of revolutionary leadership that will be able to link the struggle to rebuild the Fourth International with all the concrete struggles of the world proletariat and oppressed masses...this can only be done in a struggle against Stalinism and the many revisionist centres which reflect this pressure of Stalinism on our movement....

...Apartheid's draconian laws may thus for now prevent us from adding our voices to yours at this historic gathering but these laws will not be able to prevent us from marching under the banner of the Fourth International with you, the only banner of world revolution, because it alone unites the socialist revolution against the world bourgeoisie with the political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

...The vanguard of the undefeated black working class has all the potential to play a leading role in the struggle for the Fourth International and to provide a mighty impulse to the incipient world socialist revolution.

We South African Trotskyists reach out to you, firm in our conviction that this meeting will be more than just a symbolic commemoration of the founding, but indeed a vital step towards the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

Forward to a World Conference of Trotskyists! Forward to the re-building of the Fourth International!

Message from Oscar Hippe

Hippe is a life-long revolutionary and knew Trotsky personally. He was formerly the leader of the German section of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) and gave us wholehearted support in 1985 when the Workers Revolutionary Party expelled Healy and his clique supporters.

DEAR COMRADES and friends of the WRP and Workers Press in Britain.

You have made an enormous step-forward to rebuilding the Fourth International - the only way for the international working class to accomplish its historic task today. It will only be able to do this alongside the struggle to create the revolutionary socialist party and that is the Fourth International.

On 9 October this year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of Trotsky's decision together with other international communists to found the Fourth International.

The first days of August 1914 saw the social democratic and socialist parties of the Second International join forces with their own national bourgeoisies - going against their own decision in 1907 in Stuttgart and confirmed in 1912 in Basle. In the face of this betrayal, revolutionary groups formed in many countries which were united in Germany in the International Group.

It was the Spartakusbund which carried on the struggle against the war... Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht fought against the betrayal of the social democrats and the USPD which took the reformist road. The German Communist Party, the leading mass party, broke up and came to an end in 1928/29 because of the policies of the Stalinists. All who took up the struggle for revolutionary leadership within that party were forced outside it through expulsion.

For the second time after 1923 when the German revolution was called off, we experienced the betrayal of Stalinism and fascism came to power with the defeat of the German working class.

The hope we cherished in our struggle, that of carrying forward the mantle of October 1917 as the beginning of world revolution is still to be fulfilled.

Today we are confronted with so-called Trotskyist groups emerging in all major countries who have as their slogan: 'Purity before Unity'. Following the expulsion of Healy from your party in October 1985, you are the first group to have found a way to rebuild the Fourth International on the basis of forming sections in all countries. My hope is that you will succeed to bring to an end the movement of sects!

This is my greeting and my hope. I hope I have found the right words to assist you with the rebuilding of the Fourth International.

With revolutionary socialist greetings, Oskar Hippe.

Message from Switzerland

WE WISH you a dignified and powerful rally to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Fourth International.

Every day we have fresh evidence which shows that world revolution is at stake.

We are confident that you will take another step forward in rebuilding the Fourth International.

Fraternal greetings W & S

LETTERS

THE RECENT Picasso exhibition at the Tate recalled to mind the story that Stalin looked at a Picasso painting and asked 'Would a worker like that?' When the required answer 'No' was forthcoming, all the paintings in the exhibition were taken down. Such was the degeneration of Stalinism, that art and literature and music were reduced to the criteria of 'Will the man in the street like it?' This is reminiscent of the 'Sun' newspaper, not the communist movement.

Revolutionary Marxism has a duty to pay attention to developments in modern art and literature and other cultural forms. The twentieth century - above all a revolutionary century - has produced absolute ferment in art, and the imperative need in

the artist to go beyond previous limitations, to break down formal conventions and practices, in fact to disrupt and disturb our sense of reality.

Is it surprising that in an epoch which continually seeks to break up the 'stability' 'permanence' of capitalism, that great artists such as Picasso have been compelled to break up accepted and expected norms of visual reality? Cubism, which is only one phase in Picasso's monumental career, dismembers and reassembles reality.

It proclaims that visual reality is not photographic image; it transcends the orderly product of perspective and formal arrangement that is found in art of the great bourgeois periods. In a later series of paintings such as the 'Artist and his Model' sequence, different points of

view are shown simultaneously, different points in time are collapsed into the one image, different components of the object are separated and rearranged.

Picasso is not actually giving us 'a painting of a woman'. He is challenging our view of reality. He is breaking down perception itself, he is exploring more deeply the nature of objects, and relations between objects, and the dialectical nature of the subject-object relationship.

Art in this sense is not a 'luxury' or an 'indulgence' - it is a vital part of human social existence, and the struggle to comprehend nature and overcome the contradictions within nature.

It is interesting that children enjoy Picasso and respond in a more direct way than adults, since they are not so encumbered by notions of what paint-

ings should look like, and their own drawings and paintings do not adhere to spatial and temporal conventions.

One of the tragedies of Picasso's life, as a tenuous Communist Party member, was the way in which the Stalinists used him - either treating him as a tame mascot, or, whenever Stalin's philistinism was the order of the day, condemning him for not following run-down and exhausted bourgeois conventions of visual expression. Trotskyism should not hesitate to support revolutionary and experimental movements in art, literature and music, and must support the right of the artist to experiment as he thinks fit, to break down conventions, and at times to shock and bewilder us.

Roger Horrocks

News Briefs ... Doing more time

OVERCROWDING in Britain's prisons now stands at more than 15 per cent; 6 per cent more than in 1980. In its annual report, the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders says 'the system as it is can only reinforce crime and criminality sent into it'.

All the efforts made to rehabilitate prisoners 'are swamped by pressure, by bad conditions and low morale,' the report states. The number of remand prisoners rose by over 1,000 from 1986 to 1987, approximately from 10,000 to 11,000, and the average time spent in custody awaiting trial has nearly doubled in the last ten years.

Colourful Kohl

WEST German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, was portrayed in glowing terms on Moscow News last week, just as he was preparing to sign a controversial agreement to supply the USSR with a high temperature nuclear reactor. Although it has still to be approved by the 16-nation Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Exports Control, the companies involved in the project were said to be optimistic of the outcome.

Kohl, who not so long ago was quoted as comparing Gorbachev's propaganda method's with those of Herman Goebbels, was described in the news broadcast as 'a colourful figure' on the European political scene who had previously been unlucky with the Soviet press.

A reform too far

News reports of liberalisation in the Soviet Union have been banned by Peking's propaganda department, and there is to be a nation-wide drive to 'educate' the Chinese people and 'unify their thinking and actions' in a bid to establish centralised control of the economy. 'They do not want glasnost in China,' said a Communist Party spokesman. There are also to be much tighter restrictions on the press; newspapers and magazines are apparently being told to halve the number of their pages. This of course won't apply to the Party's official publications.

Late news

DETAILS of a survey of rivers which has been in the possession of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food since March was made available only last weekend.

A Friends of the Earth disclosure that pesticide levels in many rivers were much higher than official safety requirements was seen as the reason for the eventual release of the commissioned report. Dieldrin, one of the highly-toxic pesticides involved, ceased being manufactured here in 1987, although it is still being produced in Rotterdam. Britain is the only EC country where its use is permitted.

Tory ban on 'Right to silence'

BY SIMON PIRANI

'THOU shalt not broadcast interviews with people supporting banned organisations', the Thatcher government has decreed. But what are this commandment's implications?

What do the BBC do - asked the 'Observer' this week - about Labour Committee on Ireland member Clare Short MP, who has 'family connections with Crossmaglen' (is that a crime?!). She is due to appear on 'Any Questions' in Belfast, and might say something which could be construed as supporting a banned organisation.

And what about the audience-participation programmes? The day after the stone tablet was handed down from Mount Downing Street, Sinn Fein's London representative Gerry Machlochlainn appeared on the 'Kilroy' discussion programme. Will Mr Kilroy-Silk be prosecuted?

And what about local radio stations in the six counties? Will Derry council's Finance and General Services committee chairman Mitchel McLaughlin be banned from talking about dustmen's overtime, or road repairs, because he is in Sinn Fein?

The unknowns are endless, and the BBC are compiling a dossier.

This is mainly because the censorship was announced by Northern Ireland secretary Tom King in a written answer in Hansard. There was no parliamentary debate.

The right of silence for arrested suspects was also ended by proclamation last week. In this case King made a draft order-in-council to cover occupied northern Ireland; this was followed up with a written answer from Home Secretary Douglas Hurd indicating that England and Wales would soon get the same.

Labour leader Neil Kinnock was against the measures because they would help the IRA more than hinder it. His Northern Ireland spokesman Kevin Macnamara compounded pro-imperialist cowardice with ignorance, stating that the 'right to silence' had been a principal feature of common law 'for almost a thousand years'.

In fact this right was established - along with 'press freedom', the right of association, Habeas Corpus and indeed the constitutional monarchy itself - by the English bourgeois revolution of the 17th century. (Revolution is not, of course, something Labour Northern Ireland spokesmen like to talk about).

That revolution began with a civil war and proceeded through the execution of a king, the establishment of a ruthless military dictatorship, the opening and closing of various parliaments, the Restoration of the Monarchy and then the 1688 compromise

between the aristocratic and bourgeois sections of the ruling class.

So delicate was this compromise that there could be no written constitution, as issued from the American or French bourgeois revolutions. Edicts, laws and Law Lords' interpretations have been piled upon one another from that day to this.

'If the essence of the state, as of religion, is mankind's fear of itself, this fear reaches its highest pitch in constitutional, and particularly in the English, monarchy', wrote Friedrich Engels in 1844, when he had only just become a communist. ('The Condition of England: the English Constitution', Marx and Engels Collected Works vol 3, p 491).

The 1688 'balance of powers' was 'the most perfect expression of mankind's fear of itself'.

Today there is a new balance of power, between the go-getting financiers and the manufacturing bourgeoisie. But 'mankind's fear of itself' is still perfectly incarnated in the British state.

Capitalism, its stay on earth prolonged by the treachery of reformism and Stalinism, has overseen the mushrooming of TV and radio communication over the past 30 years. Cable TV is on its way in. News from Australia can be flashed by satellite - but if there's an 'Australian Aid for Ireland' member speaking about the centuries-old struggle for national self-determination... they must be silenced!

Here is mankind's fear of itself. A leader who talks about having 'defeated socialism', but

feels compelled to sack GCHQ civil servants for being in a union. A leader who is scared to let Irish Republicans talk on TV, or stay silent in the barbaric torture-chambers of Crumlin Road jail.

Thatcher's fear is of the working class. Her only respite is its treacherous leadership which creates the impression that she is to be feared. But their time too is running out.

Broadcast ban footnote: The National Union of Journalists are planning a day of action against the censorship of TV and radio. It is to be hoped it will be better-organised than the defence of Jenny McGeever, who was sacked by RTE in Dublin (where the Irish bourgeoisie have had the ban operating since the early 70s) - and did not have a minute's strike action called in her defence.

The NUJ should call the action on November 7th, when civil servants go on strike in defence of the GCHQ union members. The issue of democratic rights as a whole should be raised throughout the working class movement.

'Right to silence' footnote: One of the twisted accusations by the mis-named 'International Communist Party' against Patrick Slaughter, son of WRP secretary Cliff Slaughter, was that in the recent case against football fans in which he was jailed, he chose to stay silent.

The case is dealt with elsewhere in this week's 'Workers Press'. But it's worth noting that on the 'right to silence' the ICP see eye-to-eye with Thatcher.

LAWSON GETS HIS SUMS WRONG

A £15 BILLION trade deficit faces the Tory government next year. This is the forecast in the European Commission Annual Report, a figure four times greater than Chancellor Lawson estimated at the time of his March budget.

The deficit is worsening in Britain's newest industries: electronics, data processing, information technology and computers.

So much for Thatcher's 'economic miracle' which the 'new realists' and Stalinists have swallowed hook, line, and sinker.

The Thatcher boom has been sustained by North Sea oil which is rapidly running out, by the wholesale selling of state assets, and by a credit boom - which has produced the greatest trade deficit in the history of British capitalism.

The bosses union, the Confederation of British Industry, has started to complain that record high interest rates are beginning to undermine sections of industry, especially the smaller, weaker firms.

David Wigglesworth, chairman of the CBI's economic situation committee, said last week: 'There is a real danger that persistently high interest rates will thwart industry's plans for expansion, particularly among smaller companies.'

Yet high interest rates will continue in Thatcher's struggle to control a new burst of inflation which further threatens to undermine the competitiveness of British industry.

Lawson made this clear in last week's Commons debate when he said that the threat of inflation would mean interest rates 'as high as it takes as long as it takes.'