

All CP supporters and followers

Stand up now and be counted

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We know that the British Communist Party serves as the slavish apologist for these bureaucratic repressions. The Stalinists try to mislead the workers of Britain with talk of 'democratic paths to socialism'...

BY CLIFF SLAUGHTER

anti-union laws, while in Poland hundreds of workers are shot dead for demonstrating against price increases and wage freezing. After all your hypocritical talk about the E European workers fighting the same enemy as in W Europe and America...

While you, and many other 'lefts', have worked uncritically alongside the Stalinists, the bureaucracy has not only been preparing its counter-revolutionary repressions in Poland. Here in Britain, while you have been boosting their Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, Communist Party officials have been busy working on a settlement in Sheffield which has involved the loss of a conveyor's job and £3,000 industrial compensation...

Speak now

All the 'left' trade union leaders, all the Bill Joneses who work on the Liaison Committee' for protest against anti-union laws, why do they not speak out now? Mr Tony Cliff of the 'International Socialism' group, so keen to work with the Stalinists in the same Liaison Committee conduct...

Not You cannot support the Polish workers except by fighting international Stalinism, building the alternative revolutionary leadership, the Fourth International. The Polish workers depend upon the development of a Trotskyist leadership, here and in Poland itself.

Here is the warning-signal, if it was still necessary, against the opportunist idea of some 'left' alliance with the Stalinists as the alternative path for the British working class. The Stalinist bureaucracy wants European 'stabilization' through a European Security Pact agreement with the European Common Market...

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Celebrate 20 years of the socialist youth paper! KEEP LEFT!

Saturday January 2, 1971 at 2.30 p.m. East India Hall East India Dock Rd, London E14

National Speaking Contest Special Photo Competition

Report to be given by Aileen Jennings, Editor of Keep Left

Dance to 'the Uptights' in the evening TICKETS 7s 6d Apply to: 186a, Clapham High Street, London SW4.

Same strategy

It is part of the same strategy when the British Stalinists refuse to fight to bring down the Tory government and restrict the movement to a protest. Every socialist and trade unionist in the struggle against the Tory government and its laws must understand this.

Let all the 'fellow-travelers' with Stalinism now stand up and be counted! Condemn the Polish Stalinist repressions! Condemn the British Stalinist complicity in these murders! Tony Cliff will not do that. His tendency provides a support for bureaucracy everywhere. In Britain he has helped the Stalinists cover up for the reformist trade union bureaucrats.

The season's greetings to all our readers!

Workers Press will not be appearing on Christmas Day or Boxing Day. Our next normal day of publication will be Monday December 28.



MERRY CHRISTMAS say the children of St Helens. They come from the town dominated by the Pilkington glass monopoly and most of the people there work in one of its factories. Most, but not all. These kiddies' fathers have been on the dole since they were sacked five months ago by the glass company for striking. The millionaire Lord Pilkington may have sacked their fathers, but their children go on enjoying themselves. And here they are having a good time at the Christmas party organized by the sacked workers' rank-and-file committee.

REVOLUTIONARY peasant leader Hugo Blanco has been released from prison in Peru together with 100 other young workers, peasants and intellectuals imprisoned for their part in peasant uprisings. In the news from Chile that Regis Debray, the French intellectual imprisoned in Bolivia, may soon be freed and flown out of the country.

Farinas is awaiting sentence in New York following his conviction for making revolutionary propaganda inside the US army. The US prisons hold thousands of men and women whose only crime is their opposition to capitalism and war. In Canada, under the War Measures Act, the prisons are swollen with trade unionists and Quebec separatists.

The release of Hugo Blanco and Regis Debray proves that only international working-class action can force the release of class-war prisoners. The labour movement must step up the campaign for the release of the Irish political prisoners held by the British government and its puppet regimes in Ireland.

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Free class-war prisoners!

WELL OVER TOP!

YOU RAISED the magnificent Fund of £1,285 5s 9d and there is still one day left before Christmas and eight days before the end of the month! It is definitely our best effort so far. This is the most effective way to reply to the slanders of Stalinists, Rametson and Gollan. There can be no doubt that the fight for principles carried out only by the Workers Press is now receiving a tremendous response. We promise you, that in 1971, not only will we continue to do everything we can to improve the paper, but we shall make Trotskyism something that thousands will adhere to and be proud of. We do thank you all for this wonderful support. Please don't sit back now. We still need to raise by January 2, a special £2,000 fund. If there is any money left, send it to: Workers Press Special Fund, 186a Clapham High Street, London, SW4.

Ex-convener slams Sheffield Stalinists' sell-out

The Devey affair

A MAJOR crisis has blown up inside the Communist Party in Yorkshire over the winding-up by the CP-dominated Sheffield district committee of the Amalgamated Engineers and Foundryworkers of a key reinstatement strike.

Having led a seven-week strike for the reinstatement of their victimized convenor, only to see him finally resign his job, members of the strike committee at the Wadsley Bridge Batchelor's Foods plant are urgently demanding some answers from AEF district secretary George Caborn—a leading member of the local Communist Party.

Commenting on a Tuesday night AEF district committee resolution criticising the settlement, Caborn claimed he 'just negotiated the settlement'. Acceptance had been the responsibility of the shop floor. Maintenance men's convenor and AEF district committee delegate Terry Devey—at that time a Communist Party member and leading local spokesman of the CP-dominated Liaison Committee for Defence of Trade Unions—was sacked by Batchelor's towards the end of October, ostensibly for holding an unauthorized meeting in working time.

RETURN

Last Thursday, the company's Sheffield and Workson plants returned to work following maintenance strikes lasting seven and five weeks respectively.

Devey remained outside the gate. The management agreed to withdraw his dismissal if he would resign in return for a £3,000 pay-off.

Now the CP's Yorkshire district committee has condemned the Batchelor's settlement as 'a retreat before the same forces which are behind the Industrial Relations Bill' and announced that Devey's 15-year CP membership has ended.

Devey has resigned from the CP 'so that I can raise freely the things Caborn is doing in Sheffield'.

The Communist Party has seen fit to make me the whipping-boy for the mistakes of George Caborn', he says. This is the bare outline of a defeat which has rocked the trade union movement in S Yorkshire.

The actions of the Stalinist greybeards who dominate the engineering union's local leadership can only mean they have accepted the implications of the Tory government's Industrial Relations Bill before it is even halfway through the House of Commons.

HALF-TRUTHS

The CP lie machine is already at work peddling rumour and half-truths in a bid to cover up its members' role in the Devey affair. The Yorkshire district committee statement forms part of this process.

Our own investigation, however, establishes certain points—full significance of which will become clear shortly—beyond any question: 1. The strike won considerable moral and financial support both from other plants in the Sheffield area and inside the Unilever-Batchelor-Bird's Eye combine nationally. 2. A fortnight ago, the strike committee was confident that if the strike could be carried through Christmas it would be as good as won. 3. An offer that local union officials would consider conditions on Devey's reinstatement was made in talks with management and a Department of Employment conciliation officer on December 14—without any consultation with the strike committee. 4. On the morning of Thursday December 15, AEF official Caborn placed before the strike committee what amounted to an ultimatum to end the strike. 5. Striking electricians and

plumbers believed they faced expulsion from their unions if they did not call off their action. 6. Letters sent out by union officials calling a mass meeting on December 16 told strikers to be prepared for a full return to work the following day. The strike began when Devey was dismissed after a factory-canteen meeting with contractors from an outside firm ran 20 minutes into his working time because of questions.

DOSSIER

Maintenance stewards from all five unions involved compiled a comprehensive dossier on incidents involving far greater encroachment than took place in this instance. The sack was not even threatened in any of these cases. Shortly after Devey's dismissal, AEF secretary Caborn insisted: 'We have victimization on our hands'. The strike was immediately supported by the Sheffield branch of the All Trades Unions Alliance, which stressed the sacking's connection with the forthcoming anti-union legislation and called for the strike's extension. An appeal for financial support was carried by Workers Press. Strike action was backed solidly by all 120 maintenance men and some 600 production workers were soon laid off. After a fortnight, the Wadsley Bridge men were

A WORKERS PRESS INVESTIGATION

joined by most of the 45-strong maintenance section at Batchelor's nearby Workson plant. By the beginning of this month, both management and the Department of Employment had become seriously worried that the strike could spread further. Moves for a one-day strike in Devey's support throughout the combine were gaining ground.

It was at this point that the Communist Party apparently decided to throw in the towel. One former Party member betrayed by it following his own sacking three years ago—subsequently suffering a long period of victimization—told Workers Press 'they decided things were getting out of their control.' 'Once the rank and file looked like getting a hold of the strike, Devey had to go.' On Thursday, December 10, the union officials agreed to meet management under the chairmanship of a senior Leeds official of the DEP the following Monday.

NOT CONSULTED

Leading members of the strike committee have assured Workers Press that they were not consulted about this move until the morning of Monday, December 15. Presented with what amounted to an accomplished fact and still confident in their ability to win the strike, the committee assented to the meeting going ahead. At 9.30 p.m. that night, committee members were summoned to their strike headquarters and told by the full-time officials that the company had offered to withdraw his sack notice against Devey if he would resign. He and his family would receive a £2,000 ex gratia payment from the company if its terms were accepted. Bitter criticism greeted this

statement and the meeting was adjourned until the following morning after a lengthy argument. What the officials—representing the electrical, plumbing, engineering, transport and sheet metal unions—did not explain to the committee was their conduct of these negotiations. Management's stance was a simple refusal to take Devey back. Our information is that in a bid to make a bridge to them, the officials threw out an offer of conditions on the reinstatement.

The company rejected this. But the DEP official chairing the talks must immediately have recognized the position of abject prostration in which it showed the Sheffield Stalinists to be. The talks are believed to have continued with a statement from Batchelor's representatives that they were prepared to go to arbitration on the dismissal. It must have been obvious to both management and the DEP that this feint would be rejected by the unions, which it was.

But then the conciliation officer moved in with the cash pay-off clincher. At 8.30 a.m. on Tuesday, December 15, the strike committee returned to its headquarters to meet the officials again. Caborn, who had already been busy during the weekend telling other shop stewards in the area that the company was determined not to take Devey back, said that Batchelor's was as hard as ever. Strike committee members claim he then insisted that acceptance of the £2,000 was the only chance Devey had of assuring his family a future, since he would not get another job in Sheffield again. They could either let him take the money and go back without him or carry on for another two weeks, be defeated and have ruined his chances. Faced with no alternative but that its offer would be withdrawn if it were not taken up immediately. Officials of the electricians' and plumbers' unions then addressed the meeting. Strike committee members say they took the burden of their remarks to mean that cards would be withdrawn from members of these two unions if they continued the strike, although this interpretation has been denied by the officials concerned.

NONSENSE

Subsequent claims by Stalinist members of the AEF district committee that the calling-off of the action was forced by these unions are described as nonsense by strike-committee members belonging to them. Their total membership at the plant accounted for only 25 of the strikers, and there is no doubt that these men would have defied any pressure if the AEF core of the strike had held. Faced with an unshamed retreat by the engineering union's local leadership, the strike committee, agreed to the formula presented by Caborn as a basis for a return—in-sister only that the officials went back to management and obtained more money and a company reference for Devey. 'It was the hardest and bitterest decision of our lives,' one strike leader told Workers Press. Notices calling a mass meeting and warning the strikers to be ready for a return to work were sent out after fulfilment of these demands later the same day. Visiting a meeting of the AEF district committee that evening, strike committee members were bitterly critical of Caborn's role in the dispute.

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## All CP supporters and followers

# Stand up now and be counted

IN POLAND, the Stalinist bureaucracy has suppressed the strikes and demonstrations of the workers in the Baltic ports with tanks, bullets and tear gas.

Many hundreds of men, women and children, working-class fighters, have been killed.

We know that the British Communist Party serves as the slavish apologist for these bureaucratic repressions. The Stalinists try to mislead the workers of Britain with talk of 'democratic paths to socialism', while in fact representing the interests of the privileged and tyrannical bureaucracy of Moscow and E Europe.

But another question arises! Where do all the so-called 'lefts', who run along with the British Stalinists in the trade unions, stand on this question?

### Speak now

All the 'left' trade union leaders, all the Bill Joneses who work on the 'Liaison Committee' for protest against anti-union laws, why do they not speak out now?

Mr Tony Cliff of the 'International Socialist' group, so keen to work with the Stalinists in the same Liaison Committee conduct, friendly debates with them.

What about Stalinism and the Polish events? Will you explain to trade unionists in Britain how it is possible to work alongside the Stalinists, supposedly to fight

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anti-union laws, while in Poland hundreds of workers are shot dead for demonstrating against price increases and wage freezing?

After all your hypocritical talk about the E European workers fighting the same enemy as in W Europe and America—what about the Stalinist enemy?

Should workers in Britain support the Polish workers and their demands? Of course. Your own Chris Harman, writing in 'Socialist Worker' (December 19), says:

'We must welcome the struggle of the Polish workers to resist such attacks.'

What treacherous double-talk!... welcome the struggle indeed—and meanwhile work with the British Stalinists, adopt their policies, but under no circumstances criticize their Stalinist politics.

No! You cannot support the Polish workers except by fighting international Stalinism, building the alternative revolutionary leadership, the Fourth International.

The Polish workers depend upon the development of a Trotskyist leadership, here and in Poland itself.

Tony Cliff, your treacherous theory that the Stalinist bureaucracy was the ruling class of some new order of society ('state capitalism') had always the reactionary impli-

cation that the bureaucracy was a progressive historical force. Now you have accepted the full logic.

You are in the political camp of Stalinism. That is why you fought alongside them for the British troops to stay in Ulster.

While you, and many other 'lefts', have worked uncritically alongside the Stalinists, the bureaucracy has not only been preparing its counter-revolutionary repressions in Poland.

Here in Britain, while you have been boosting their 'Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions', Communist Party officials have been busy working on a settlement in Sheffield which has involved the loss of a convenor's job and £3,000 industrial compensation—after a seven-week strike!

The events in Poland have once more highlighted the true, counter-revolutionary nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Here is the warning signal, if it was still necessary, against the opportunist idea of some 'left' alliance with the Stalinists as the alternative path for the British working class.

The Stalinist bureaucracy wants European 'stabilization' through a European Security Pact agreement with the European Common Market (including Britain and Ireland), 'normality' in France, Britain, Czechoslovakia, Poland, the USSR!

Imperialists everywhere support the Polish Stalinists' repression of the strikers.

### Same strategy

It is part of the same strategy when the British Stalinists refuse to fight to bring down the Tory government and restrict the movement to a protest.

Every socialist and trade unionist in the struggle against the Tory government and its laws must understand this. No way forward against the Tories alongside the butchers of Gdansk and Szczecin!

The Polish workers were once misled into supporting Gomulka as a way of 'reforming' Stalinism. They have learned in the tragedy and bloodshed that there is no reform of this bureaucracy, only the revolutionary struggle to defeat it.

Let all the 'fellow-travelers' with Stalinism now stand up and be counted! Condemn the Polish Stalinist repressions! Condemn the British Stalinist complicity in these murders! Tony Cliff will not do that.

His tendency provides a support for bureaucracy everywhere.

In Britain he has helped the Stalinists cover up for the reformist trade union bureaucrats.

He did all this knowing full well the real situation in Poland, and the inevitability of violent repressions.

The thousands of militant workers and youth now coming into struggle will know better!

● No truck with Stalinism!  
● Solidarity with the Polish workers against the Stalinist bureaucracy!

● Forward to the building of the independent Marxist leadership—the Socialist Labour League!

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We promise you, that in 1971, not only will we continue to do everything we can to improve the paper, but we shall make Trotskyism something that thousands will adhere to and be proud of.

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And there is news from Chile that Regis Debray, the French intellectual imprisoned in Bolivia, may soon be freed and flown out of the country.

But delight at these long-overdue freedoms is tempered by the knowledge that there are thousands of class-war prisoners around the world, many of whom are in acute danger.

Black Panther Angela Davis was transported across the United States yesterday to face trial in California on charges of murder, kidnapping and conspiracy. She faces a possible death sentence if convicted.

American Trotskyist Juan Farinas is awaiting sentence in New York following his conviction for making revolutionary propaganda inside the US army.

The US prisons hold thousands of men and women whose only crime is their opposition to capitalism and war. In Canada, under the War Measures Act, the prisons are swollen with trade unionists and Quebec separatists.

In fascist Spain, the 16 young Basque revolutionaries tried in Burgos are still awaiting sentence, which has now been postponed for nearly two weeks. Thousands of other political prisoners are held under appalling conditions in Franco's dungeons.

The release of Hugo Blanco and Regis Debray proves that only international working-class action can force the release of class-war prisoners.

The labour movement must step up the campaign for the release of the Irish political prisoners held by the British government and its puppet regimes in Ireland.

We must not forget the prisoners in the Greek colonels' hands and the detainees held by the S African government, many of whom have been detained for years without trial.

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