



## Youths framed in 'riot' trial

By Daniel Evans

THE 'show-trials' of youth from the Tottenham area of north London reached the peak of their savage development on March 20 with the sentencing to life imprisonment of three young men. Winston Silcott, 27, Enghin Raghip, 20, and Mark Braithwaite, 19, were convicted of the murder of Pc Keith Blacklock during the disturbances centred on Broadwater Farm estate on the night of October 5-6, 1985.

Since the uprising, provoked by the death of Mrs Cynthia Jarrett during a police raid on her home, 362 people have been arrested and questioned whilst dozens have been sent for trial on charges ranging from affray and riot to murder. The first of those charged were put in the Old Bailey dock in September 1986 and the last are scheduled for October of this year. So far there have been 20 convictions and ten acquittals; 42 youth are still waiting for their cases to be tried. Two re-trials are also on the agenda.

The judge presiding over the trials, Mr Justice Hodgson, recommended that Silcott serve a minimum of thirty years and described him as an 'evil and very dangerous man'. Yet the evidence which convicted Silcott, Raghip and Braithwaite was comprised entirely of their own 'admissions'. These admissions were considered valid by the court despite having been forced earlier on in the trials to drop the same charges against three juveniles because they revealed police methods of extracting so-called confessions.

Illegal detention of juveniles, in one case for three days, refusal to allow access to legal representation, refusal to allow any contact with parents or social workers, endless sessions of interrogation and the added humiliation of the removal of the victims clothes are just a few of the tactics used by the police to obtain confessions that are now public knowledge.

The apparatus of state repression is being 'overhauled' to meet the new conditions of capitalist slump; witness the new Public Order and Police and Criminal Evidence Acts and the barrage of anti-union legislation brought in by the Tory government. They are designed to arm the judiciary to meet with every circumstance.

One senior police officer's post-trial comments noted the fact that Broadwater Farm marked 'the end of old-style public order policing'. Add this to the comments of the Police Federation's Leslie Curtiss concerning the 'probable' necessity during future youth uprisings for the force to be armed and the newly-created tactical support groups 'now' matter-of-course' training in the handling of semi-

automatic plastic bullet guns and you have a clear picture emerging of the future in Thatcher's Britain.

The rebellion of youth in Tottenham, Brixton, Bristol, Handsworth, Toxteth and elsewhere is against the bleak future which faces them under capitalism. Their anger is an expression of the resistance of the working class to being driven into pauperisation, mass unemployment and on to cheap labour schemes. They must be supported by the trade-union movement in a joint struggle to take the lessons of Broadwater Farm to the whole working class.



PHOTO: IDAF

The recent strike at BTR's Dunlop factory in Durban, Natal. South Africa's whites go to the polls — see page 5.

# FIGHT NEW ROUND OF TORY ATTACKS!

By Richard Price

**THE Tories are preparing a new round of attacks on the trade unions, on jobs and on working-class living standards in advance of a general election. Encouraged by the servile Labour Party and trade-union leaders, they have announced proposals for a fourth anti-union law.**

**At the same time, the Thatcher government is seeking to widen the gap between the employed and the unemployed through its budget measures. For those in work, Kenneth Clarke, the Tory Paymaster General, has spelt out the Tories' intention to end the principle of an annual pay increase for millions of workers.**

As the world economic crisis deepens, the need for the Thatcher government to go further and faster in its onslaught on workers' rights sharpens. United States imperialism — labouring under huge budget and trade deficits and with its banks awash with bad debts — is faced with dumping its domestic crisis onto Europe and Japan. This means a further round of tariffs to blockade European and Japanese manufactured goods, which can only further dislocate world trade and add to the instability of the world's money markets.

The suspension of debt repayments by a number of leading Latin American debtor nations

has sent a series of shocks and wild fluctuations through Wall Street, Tokyo and the European stock exchanges.

The gathering clouds of trade war hang over Japan and Europe. Under such conditions the weakest will be driven to the wall. With its industrial output still lower than it was eight years ago, Britain is the least able of the advanced capitalist nations to ride out such a storm.

Thatcher's strategy is not one of 'defending' British industry; it is to subject it to the full discipline of the contracting international market. The major obstacles in Thatcher's path are the trade unions.

The proposals for a fourth round of anti-union legislation contained in the green paper issued in February, 'Trade unions and their Members', were announced hard on the heels of the betrayal of News International printworkers by the TUC and the leaders of the print unions. They amount to a 'Scabs' Charter'.

Under the fraud of 'giving control of the unions back to their members' the green paper hands over to strike-breakers a series of legal means to drag their own unions into court. Individual members will be able to force ballots on strike action and then scab on a majority decision with impunity. At the same time, members and officers of trade unions will be deprived of union support if they are fired while carrying out trade union duties.

While the first three anti-union laws encouraged employers to take unions at a national

level to court, the latest proposals are designed to enable the individual scab to initiate legal actions against his own union. Professional advisers, appointed by the government, will be available to assist any individual to inspect detailed accounts of a national union, or any of its branches.

Further provisions will be made to break up existing closed-shop agreements and to impose compulsory postal ballots supervised by 'independent' agencies. A new commission will be established to oversee the legislation, and assist and advise individuals wishing to take legal action against their unions.

Side by side with the Tories' anti-union measures have come announcements from Tory front-bench spokesmen that they intend to abolish the existing system of national pay bargaining. This would mean ending the long-established round of annual pay awards in both public and private sectors. The Tories aim to end any increases based on the cost of living, and insist that all wages must reflect market forces. In the National Health Service the Tories are proposing lowering rates of pay in areas of high unemployment such as the north of England.

The flavour of what is to come is contained in the imposition of a pay settlement on the teaching profession and the destruction of the Burnham committee negotiating machinery.

The third plank of Tory strategy is to further open up a division between those in work and

the four million unemployed. The Lawson budget in March cut basic rate income tax by two per cent. This serves two purposes: to woo the middle class in the run-up to a general election and to create a split in the working class. By lowering direct taxation on wages and salaries, and increasing indirect taxes on essential household items, the Tories are pauperising the unemployed and the lowest-paid sections of workers. At the same time, the dole queues are used as a threat to discipline those in work and drive down their wages.

The new Tory measures find the Labour and TUC leaders, like the three wise monkeys, hearing, seeing and speaking no evil. They fear, above all, being forced into a direct confrontation with the Tories. Their refusal to mobilise the strength of the working class to defeat the Tories led them to stab the struggles of the miners and the News International printworkers in the back. Their co-existence with the scab leaders of the EETPU strengthens the pro-Tory fifth column in the TUC. In January this year, the EETPU concluded two more no-strike deals at the 'Western Mail' and the 'South Wales Echo'.

The EETPU must be expelled from the trade union movement and its links with the Tories, the CBI and the capitalist state thoroughly exposed. At the same time, full support must be extended to all members of the EETPU fighting to defeat the present leadership.

Neil Kinnock is preparing to lead the Labour Party, in the event of a 'hung' parliament, into a coalition with the union-hating SDP/Liberal Alliance. The TUC leaders are sabotaging every major struggle of the working class under the slogan 'Don't rock the boat — wait for a Labour government'. This cowardice only serves to drive sections of the middle class into the arms of the Tories and their Alliance co-thinkers.

The working class, despite its leadership, has shown in the miners' and printers' long and bitter strikes that it is willing and ready to fight to defend its jobs, living standards and democratic rights. We warn: Labour, if elected, will rule as a capitalist party — it will place the main burden of the crisis on the working class.

Only the working class taking power through the socialist revolution can solve the economic crisis. This requires building revolutionary leadership in the working class without delay. But so long as millions of workers hold any illusions in their leaders, the task remains to expose these leaders in practice.

Kinnock, Hattersley and Healey must be forced into power in full view of the working class. No coalition with the SDP traitors and the Liberals! Demand the TUC mobilise the full strength of the working class to bring down the Tories and destroy the coalition danger!



# Students and the defence of education

By David Lewis

**THE last few months have seen a series of actions in higher education which shatter the myth that students have become passive and non-political, concerned only with keeping one step ahead in the job queue by getting a qualification. The related issues of cuts and state control have been at the centre of these developments.**

This activity by students in Britain follows a massive offensive by students in France against President Chirac late last year. As a result, he withdrew proposals to place restrictions on access to higher education.

Similar proposals in Spain led to battles between police and school students in January and February. Protest and strike action has now spread to Spanish university students as well.

In February 30,000 students demonstrated in London against revived Tory proposals to replace grants with loans. These proposals are the culmination of an attack on students' living standards which has seen the real value of grants reduced by 21 per cent since Thatcher came to power in 1979.

Related are the attacks on student unions aimed at undermining their ability to campaign against cuts and on political issues in general. Actions by university authorities have included a lockout of students at the University of East Anglia and seizure of student funds at Sussex University.

The attacks on students are part of an onslaught by the Thatcher government on education as a whole and higher education in particular. Since 1979, the funding of U.K. universities has been cut by more than 12 per cent. Each year, more than 10,000 qualified students are turned away. Universities have lost one in seven of their academic staff and polytechnics one in 12 of theirs.

The expansion of higher education in Britain started in the 1960s in response to the Robbins

report. In the mid-1970s it reached a high point. Even then, the number of full-time students in Britain was proportionately only half the number in comparable countries such as France, Germany, Italy and Japan and only one-third the number in the U.S.A. Starting from a low relative participation in higher education the Tories have been cutting back even further.

The parallels with Britain's relative industrial position and its nosedive under Thatcher are only too obvious. Alongside both aspects of decline, the drive to crush opposition is also clear. The attack on trade unions is mirrored by the attack on student unions including their right to organise opposition to right-wingers speaking at higher education institutions.

Students demonstrating against the then Tory Home Secretary Leon Brittan when he visited Manchester University two years ago suffered an unprecedented attack by police. This has recently resulted in one student fleeing the country in fear of victimisation.

In order to give this naked state aggression a veneer of respectability the government has moved since to enact legislation to require university authorities to guarantee 'freedom of speech' or, in other words, a platform for reactionaries.

But in late February this year, Whitehall reversed its assiduous approach. The critical finding of the Independent Police Complaints Authority's investigation — that mishandling of a peaceful demonstration by senior officers led to police violence and student injuries — was censured by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The question for students, and indeed for their teachers, is how to fight back in the most effective way. To answer this, it is necessary to recognise the nature of the problem. There can be no prospect of changing the strategic policies of the Tories. Nor should any faith be placed

in a future Labour government.

The question, therefore, cannot be one of defending higher education as an isolated issue. However, this is the way in which the leadership of both students and lecturers present it. The National Union of Students (NUS) attempts to channel the anger of students into parliamentary manoeuvring.

This should be no surprise since the NUS has been a breeding ground for parliamentary careerists and trade union bureaucrats since its inception. A notorious product of this type of training is Sue Slipman, who was a member of the Communist Party while President of the NUS. She has since become a prominent member of the SDP.

At the same time, the university lecturers union, the Association of University Teachers (AUT), has made little attempt to fight the cuts. On the contrary, the leadership of the AUT has collaborated in the closure of institutions and departments over the last six years. Its only real principle has been an insistence on no compulsory redundancies.

This led, at the beginning of March, to the AUT supporting the Department of Education and Science and the University Grants Committee in taking direct control of University College Cardiff out of the hands of the principal, Bill Bevan, who had consistently refused to implement cuts.

It is time for the means of fighting back, the basis for present developments needs to be clarified. Students in higher education are not an independent force in society, nor are they part of the working class as such. In spite of the egalitarian claims of the proponents of expansion, students in higher education are predominantly middle class.

But, further restrictions on access and loans instead of grants will hit working-class youth hardest. This is borne out by experience in other countries. In Denmark, an increasing loan element in student support led to a



Students lobbied a meeting of the ruling body of London University on March 18 to oppose the merger, following government cuts, of Westfield College with Queen Mary College. They fear that the Westfield site in Hampstead will close if highly-regarded drama and language courses are lost.

drop of up to two-thirds in working-class participation in higher education between 1978 and 1982. In Sweden, working-class entry over the last 21 years has dropped by a third as a

result of loans.

Defence of higher education is therefore part of the defence of the basic rights of the working class. These developments in the student movement reflect the

struggle of the working class in its trade unions to resist the destruction of jobs and basic rights.

In their struggle, students can learn about the nature of the state, the role played by the leadership of the unions, and the inadequacy of that leadership. Those students in higher education who genuinely wish to defend not only their rights but those of the working class should join with the working class in its highest point of consciousness, the revolutionary party.

In doing this, they will also develop the basis for a turn to the hundreds of thousands of students in colleges of further education, sixth form colleges and YTS schemes who, even more than potential graduates, face a bleak future under capitalism.

The struggle to build an alternative leadership within the NUS will be part of the struggle to build a revolutionary leadership in the working class.

## Gorbachev and 'openness'

WHAT lies behind the policy being pursued by the Gorbachev leadership in the Soviet Union, known as 'glasnost' (openness)? The term has almost acquired a life of its own and is being used by the Western media as a measuring rod of every change, large or small, taking place in the Soviet Union.

The policy of 'openness' inaugurated at the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February 1986 has seen a package of 'reforms' introduced extending from the economy, industrial management and trade to the media, censorship and the arts. This 'turn' has earned the admiration of capitalist politicians from Thatcher to Reagan (as well as not a few who once counted themselves 'Trotskysts').

Criticism of 'inefficiency' in economic management, the most blatant cases of corruption and the range of goods available to Soviet citizens has been officially encouraged. Numbers of regional party officials have been sacked, expelled and, in a few cases, executed. For the first time in many years, the columns of 'Pravda' have carried critical letters from workers and intellectuals. 'Repentance', a film widely recognised as attacking Stalin,

has played to packed houses. Reporting restrictions on natural disasters and industrial accidents, as well as the riots in Kazakhstan in December 1986, have been eased. In June 1986 Vladimir Karpov, a former inmate of a penal colony under Stalin, was elected to the leadership of the Soviet Writers' Union.

Behind the apparent concessions to the working class, and more especially the intellectuals, lies a deepening crisis for Stalinism. Although the rate of Soviet economic growth, five per cent per annum, compares favourably with that of many capitalist countries, the productivity of Soviet labour lags well behind. The world capitalist crisis has unmasked the fraud of an 'island of socialism'. The fall in world oil prices has hit the main earner of foreign currency — the Soviet oil industry — making the Soviet Union more, not less, dependent on its relations with the capitalist world.

Soviet industry, despite making giant strides since the October Revolution, is extremely uneven in its development and is burdened with

bureaucratic, over-centralised management. In areas such as computer technology it lags decades behind Europe, America and Japan. Soviet industry desperately needs new technology and the only source for this is the capitalist West.

The Stalinist bureaucracy is determined to maintain its bloated, parasitic and counter-revolutionary role in the Soviet state. In seeking to preserve itself, it has embarked on a calculated manoeuvre to offer to the angis of the working class the most corrupt representatives of what it terms 'the Brezhnev era'. It fears the Soviet working class, which has grown in numbers and in self-confidence. Nevertheless it has to bind the working class and collective farmers to a greatly increased tempo of production in order to be able to buy the assistance of the capitalist West in modernising the economy.

At the 27th Congress, Gorbachev announced the introduction of a continental-style three-shift system. This has been joined by the introduction of payment-by-results methods. Public campaigns have been initiated against drug-taking and alcoholism.

### EDITORIAL

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# Jailed miner looks to the future

**Congratulations on your release. How did you spend your time in prison?**

My way was to fight them every inch of the way. I never let up for a day. If I had just laid low as some suggested I don't think I would have survived. I had to keep on fighting.

I found issues in prison as well as following events outside. Prisoners were coming to me in the end almost as a shop steward. In fact the reception screw used to tell new prisoners that my billet was the union room.

If the others still in jail sit back they could come out changed people but I want them to come out the same as they went in — proud miners.

**Why do you think you got such a heavy sentence?**

I've always understood what the role of the state was to me as a worker. It was a case of two miners, myself and Chris Tazey, coming up for trial while the violence was escalating. Our sentences were a big stick to beat the others into submission.

They were political sentences. That's even clearer in the case of the printers' leader, Mike Hicks. He got a year for a case that lasted a few days of the Wapping dispute ending.

**Some say the outcome of the miners' strike was a defeat. What do you think?**

It was a setback in the short term but in the long term I see it as a victory. Four hundred men are still sacked and managers are getting at miners in lots of petty ways. But the strike certainly awoke the working class and the rank and file. There is more thinking going on since the miners' strike. It has caused a lot of divisions among a lot of different parties.

What has come out of the miners' strike is a more aware working class, a battle-hardened working class, more able to appreciate the fights in front and to meet them when they come.

One of the most important effects was on the kids. They saw the picket lines and the arrests. They're learning things at 14 and 15 that I didn't grasp until I was in my twenties.

**In prison you decided to stand for the vice-presidency of the NUM in the elections on March 19. Why weren't you nominated by the Kent Area?**

I stood because I must be the best known sacked miner in the country and therefore stood a better chance of winning than any other rank-and-file candidate. Jack Collins thought it would be a good idea.

However, there's been a job done on me by the Area Council and pressure has been put on other rank-and-file men in other coalfields not to stand. It seems to me that the changes in the rules that seemed to be a major breakthrough in democracy have come to nothing.

Under the old system a vice-president was elected by Area block votes at Conference. Now it's supposed to be by an individual ballot of the members. It's a part time job of two

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years' duration with no salary. We thought this was a move in the direction of more rank-and-file representation but the Areas of the NUM are still hanging on to their power.

Due to the sad death of Jack Collins, Kent has an acting general secretary, Larry Knight, secretary of Snowdown Branch. We also have an acting president through the swift departure of Mr Malcolm Pitt.

I don't want to go too much into his role in the closure of Tilmanstone colliery recently, but I have some photographs of the headgear coming down and I have a good mind to send him a couple — they should take pride of place in his collection.

As a result a number of people have been elected to a step and Snowdown Branch Committee now run the Area. My nomination for the vice-presidential election was passed overwhelmingly at a Betteshanger Branch General Meeting. Snowdown Branch couldn't get a quorum so the Branch Committee took executive powers and went for Sammy Thompson.

At the Area meeting they rejected my nomination and then accepted Thompson's. In effect a small caucus at Snowdown colliery have ridden roughshod over the Betteshanger members who turned out to vote.

**You mentioned Jack Collins' recent death. What would you say about his role in the Kent Area?**

He was a tower of strength, an inspiration to us all, not because he was a great intellectual but because you could identify with the man. He was a class fighter, a real leader.

Now he has gone. I've already described the way the Area Council is made up now. It's a good job he can't see what they're doing. But I believe we will be a strong Area again.

The influence of the Communist Party is there. Jack was a member of the CP for many years but got disillusioned. The CP has come up with this new realism so-called and I can't see much difference between them and Kinnock — a wishy-washy shade of pink.

**What are the main issues in this election?**

Looking at the two main candidates, Eric Clarke is in the Euro-Communist camp, Sammy Thompson is pro-NUM to me and is loosely in the same camp as Arthur Scargill (though his past record doesn't stand too much scrutiny). There is a sacked lad from the Midlands, Eric Lippitt, but I don't know too much about him.

I have to go for Sammy Thompson, not because I agree

with him, but as an anti-Clarke vote. If Clarke were elected then his cohort in Scotland, Bolton, would move up a step and take the national delegate place, putting two more Euro-Communists onto the National Executive. That would isolate Scargill even more.

Clarke, like McGahey, feels the jailed men are a dead issue. What do they want us to do? Join the UDM? Clarke also considers the issue of the sacked men a dead duck and I believe the Scottish leaders always have done. I don't think the Scottish miners have any faith in Clarke or Bolton.

*(Editor's note — Since Terry French gave this interview to Workers News, Sammy Thompson has been elected as the new NUM vice-president. In the final vote Thompson gained 84,802 votes to Eric Clarke's 25,926.)*

**Some elements of the national leadership of the NUM are advocating reconciliation with the UDM. What do you think?**

We're talking about McGahey. Well, I've read a book by Des Warren, a building worker imprisoned in the 1970s. McGahey stood up at the TUC Conference in 1975 and said that if Des were a miner he wouldn't still be in jail. That was McGahey then — but we've had 150 miners in jail. So much for his words.

The people in the UDM know where the NUM is and where they can sign on. That's my attitude pure and simple. The UDM general secretary Roy Lynk said recently that the honeymoon was over. As far as I can see they're halfway through a divorce. The Notts winders came back into COSA, a section of the NUM, a few weeks ago. The UDM are going downhill fast.

Some Welsh leaders put forward the argument that the Coal Board might hive Margam off to private industry and the UDM would take over. Well let them try. I'm not a defeatist. I believe the best form of defence is attack.

**What do you think of the acceptance by the South Wales Area of a six-day week?**

Totally out of order. The leaders had no right to discuss money, overtime levels, etc., at their Conference. The issue should have been the question of safeguarding national agreements. They have no right to make agreements which affect the rest of us.

It's a retrograde step. We fought for years for a five-day week. The Sankey Commission in 1919 said we should have a four-day week and we're still arguing for that.

**What do you see as the future for miners in Kent?**

The active members of the



Liz and Terry French... she took his place on the picket line whilst he was in jail

union are looking to Snowdown Colliery and the Welsh position on the six-day week. If that goes through at Margam then we are sure that once the development of Snowdown is finished the Board will say that it's not profitable unless we accept the new work practices. We believe that Snowdown will be next and then they'll get round to Betteshanger.

**At Jack's funeral, Scargill called for a Miners' International. What is your opinion?**

Companies are multinational. Other unions can't hope to have clout in a multinational world unless they organise internationally. We found that out to our cost in the strike. It was the import of coal and oil that broke us down. A strong Miners' International would have made it far easier to stop those imports. The trade unions must go international.

**What is the best way in your opinion to build the fight within the NUM?**

From the bottom up, but it's going to be very difficult. Durham are showing us a lead now. We have a young workforce, about 34 on average. They have families, kids. But I believe they'll look at those kids and say 'We want the best for them and the only way we'll do it is by fighting for the union we've got and using the union to fight for a better world'.

The fight of 1984-85 isn't finished. That was just the beginning. The Durham lads are showing the way. They're stopping the wheels on a regular basis in support of the sacked men. That's a good start.

In Kent we've taken a right battering. Our Area's at the lowest ebb I can remember but the fight's still there. In the last few years the Betteshanger lads have shown it on three different occasions. When Peter Rees came to the pit they walked out to a man. That was a political decision, not a bread-and-butter issue.

*(Editor's note — On March 13 Betteshanger miners again 'stopped the wheels' for a day in protest against management's refusal to discuss the sacked men and the withholding of bonus payments.)* What do you think of the leadership given by Willis and Kinnock during the miners' strike and the News International printers' strike?

Totally non-existent. In the miners' strike Willis and the General Council were terrified of the power Scargill would have got from a victory. They have a cushy little number up there and they don't want it interfered with.

**What would you expect from any future Labour government?**

Reinstatement of every sacked miner including Dean and Russell, the two Welsh lads. I and the 400 or so of us left fought in the only way we knew how for our communities, for our jobs, and for a future for the kids. We had no option.

I for one am proud of the role I played and I would expect — well, nothing from Kinnock — but I would expect the real socialists in the Labour Party, once elected, to fight for our reinstatement for all they are worth.

**What about the state attacks on trade unions?**

The legislation passed against the trade unions is wrong, but I must say I don't expect Kinnock to repeal it. To tell a worker he can't withdraw his labour makes him no better than a slave.

Both Wapping and the miners' strike involved the sequestration of funds. Now if union leaders take the attitude that we can't do anything or our funds will be sequestered, what use are they to us? I'd rather fight, but they're too worried about their expense accounts and posh cars.

**What was the role of women in the miners' strike?**

It was a major contribution.

The Betteshanger group actually came into being as the result of a discussion between our next-door neighbour and my wife Liz. Before you knew where you were, the business cropped up of the Leicestershire women supporting their husbands in the 'Back to Work' campaign and a coachload of our girls was on the way up there to put the other point of view.

The Betteshanger and Snowdown groups are still going strong and the Tilmanstone women have been incorporated into the two. As for Liz, she got involved right from the beginning. There's no waffle with her — she can never be caught out because she doesn't do anything other than tell the truth and how she feels.

**She stood by me really firmly. For the last two months of the strike she took my place on the picket line and she's been**

all over the country putting forward the case of not just myself but all the victimised miners — sacked and jailed ones. She's done a really great job.

**Is there anything you would like to stress?**

Yes. The 400 sacked men are still there and are starting to feel forgotten by the labour movement leadership.

The Board know who they were sacking. We were all active members of the NUM. Over 200 were involved in the occupation of Betteshanger colliery but the 47 who got sacked could have been seen at any branch meeting before the strike. The Labour Party, if they are sincere, should categorically pledge to reinstate every sacked man the minute they get into power.

We fought for TUC policy in fighting for jobs. We're being victimised by the government and the Coal Board but to a lesser degree by the TUC itself. They just want us to go away but we're not going anywhere. In two years we've only lost two from Kent.



# Jailed miner looks to the future

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Due to the sad death of Jack Collins, Kent has an acting general secretary, Larry Knight, secretary of Snowdown Branch. We also have an acting president through the swift departure of Mr Malcolm Pitt.

I don't want to go too much into his role in the closure of Tilmanstone colliery recently, but I have some photographs of the headgear coming down and I have a good mind to send him a couple — they should take pride of place in his collection.

As a result a number of people have all moved up a step and Snowdown Branch Committee now run the Area. My nomination for the vice-presidential election was passed overwhelmingly at a Betteshanger Branch General Meeting. Snowdown Branch couldn't get a quorum so the Branch Committee took executive powers and went for Sammy Thompson.

At the Area meeting they rejected my nomination and then accepted Thompson's. In effect a small caucus at Snowdown colliery have ridden roughshod over the Betteshanger members who turned out to vote.

**You mentioned Jack Collins' recent death. What would you say about his role in the Kent Area?**

He was a tower of strength, an inspiration to us all, not because he was a great intellectual but because you could identify with the man. He was a class fighter, a real leader.

Now he has gone. I've already described the way the Area Council is made up now. It's a good job he can't see what they're doing. But I believe we will be a strong Area again.

The influence of the Communist Party is there. Jack was a member of the CP for many years but got disillusioned. The CP has come up with this new realism so-called and I can't see much difference between them and Kinnock — a wishy-washy shade of pink.

**What are the main issues in this election?**

Looking at the two main candidates, Eric Clarke is in the Euro-Communist camp, Sammy Thompson is pro-NUM to me and is loosely in the same camp as Arthur Scargill (though his past record doesn't stand too much scrutiny). There is a sacked lad from the Midlands, Eric Lippitt, but I don't know too much about him.

I have to go for Sammy Thompson, not because I agree

with him, but as an anti-Clarke vote. If Clarke were elected then his cohort in Scotland, Bolton, would move up a step and take the national delegate place, putting two more Euro-Communists onto the National Executive. That would isolate Scargill even more.

Clarke, like McGahey, feels the jailed men are a dead issue. What do they want us to do? Join the UDM? Clarke also considers the issue of the sacked men a dead duck and I believe the Scottish leaders always have done. I don't think the Scottish miners have any faith in Clarke or Bolton.

*(Editor's note — Since Terry French gave this interview to Workers News, Sammy Thompson has been elected as the new NUM vice-president. In the final vote Thompson gained 34,802 votes to Eric Clarke's 25,926.)*

**Some elements of the national leadership of the NUM are advocating reconciliation with the UDM. What do you think?**

We're talking about McGahey. Well, I've read a book by Des Warren, a building worker imprisoned in the 1970s. McGahey stood up at the TUC Conference in 1975 and said that if Des were a miner he wouldn't still be in jail. That was McGahey then — but we've had 150 miners in jail. So much for his words.

The people in the UDM know where the NUM is and where they can sign on. That's my attitude pure and simple. The UDM general secretary Roy Lynk said recently that the honeymoon was over. As far as I can see they're halfway through a divorce. The Notts winders came back into COSA, a section of the NUM, a few weeks ago. The UDM are going downhill fast.

Some Welsh leaders put forward the argument that the Coal Board might give Margam off to private industry and the UDM would take over. Well let them try. I'm not a defeatist. I believe the best form of defence is attack.

**What do you think of the acceptance by the South Wales Area of a six-day week?**

Totally out of order. The leaders had no right to discuss money, overtime levels, etc., at their Conference. The issue should have been the question of safeguarding national agreements. They have no right to make agreements which affect the rest of us.

It's a retrograde step. We fought for years for a five-day week. The Sankey Commission in 1919 said we should have a four-day week and we're still arguing for that.

**What do you see as the future for miners in Kent?**

The active members of the



Liz and Terry French... she took his place on the picket line whilst he was in jail

union are looking to Snowdown Colliery and to the Welsh decision on the six-day week. If that goes through at Margam then we are sure that once the development of Snowdown is finished the Board will say that it's not profitable unless we accept the new work practices. We believe that Snowdown will be next and then they'll get round to Betteshanger.

**At Jack's funeral, Scargill called for a Miners' International. What is your opinion?**

Companies are multinational. Other unions can't hope to have clout in a multinational world unless they organise internationally. We found that out to our cost in the strike. It was the import of coal and oil that broke us down. A strong Miners' International would have made it far easier to stop those imports. The trade unions must go international.

**What is the best way in your opinion to build the fight within the NUM?**

From the bottom up, but it's going to be very difficult. Durham are showing us a lead now. We have a young workforce, about 34 on average. They have families, kids. But I believe they'll look at those kids and say 'We want the best for them and the only way we'll do it is by fighting for the union we've got and using the union to fight for a better world'.

**The fight of 1984-85 isn't finished. That was just the beginning.**

The Durham lads are showing the way. They're stopping the wheels on a regular basis in support of the sacked men. That's a good start.

In Kent we've taken a right battering. Our Area's at the lowest ebb I can remember but the fight's still there. In the last few years the Betteshanger lads have shown it on three different occasions. When Peter Rees came to the pit they walked out to a man. That was a political decision, not a bread-and-butter issue.

*(Editor's note — On March 13 Betteshanger miners again 'stopped the wheels' for a day in protest against management's refusal to discuss the sacked men and the withholding of bonus payments.)*

**What do you think of the leadership given by Willis and Kinnock during the miners' strike and the News International printers' strike?**

Totally non-existent. In the miners' strike Willis and the General Council were terrified of the power Scargill would have got from a victory. They have a cushy little number up there and they don't want it interfered with.

**What would you expect from any future Labour government?**

Reinstatement of every sacked miner including Dean and Russell, the two Welsh lads. I and the 400 or so of us left fought in the only way we knew how for our communities, for our jobs, and for a future for the kids. We had no option.

I for one am proud of the role I played and I would expect — well, nothing from Kinnock — but I would expect the real socialists in the Labour Party, once elected, to fight for our reinstatement for all they are worth.

**What about the state attacks on trade unions?**

The legislation passed against the trade unions is wrong, but I must say I don't expect Kinnock to repeal it. To tell a worker he can't withdraw his labour makes him no better than a slave.

Both Wapping and the miners' strike involved the sequestration of funds. Now if union leaders take the attitude that we can't do anything or our funds will be sequestered, what use are they to us? I'd rather fight, but they're too worried about their expense accounts and posh cars.

**What was the role of women in the miners' strike?**

It was a major contribution.

The Betteshanger group actually came into being as the result of a discussion between our next-door neighbour and my wife Liz. Before you knew where you were, the business cropped up of the Leicestershire women supporting their husbands in the 'Back to Work' campaign and a coachload of our girls was on the way up there to put the other point of view.

The Betteshanger and Snowdown groups are still going strong and the Tilmanstone women have been incorporated into the two. As for Liz, she got involved right from the beginning. There's no waffle with her — she can never be caught out because she doesn't do anything other than tell the truth and how she feels.

**She stood by me really firmly. For the last two months of the strike she took my place on the picket line and she's been**

all over the country putting forward the case of not just myself but all the victimised miners — sacked and jailed ones. She's done a really great job.

**Is there anything you would like to stress?**

Yes. The 400 sacked men are still there and are starting to feel forgotten by the labour movement leadership.

The Board know who they were sacking. We were all active members of the NUM. Over 200 were involved in the occupation of Betteshanger colliery but the 47 who got sacked could have been seen at any branch meeting before the strike. The Labour Party, if they are sincere, should categorically pledge to reinstate every sacked man the minute they get into power.

We fought for TUC policy in fighting for jobs. We're being victimised by the government and the Coal Board but to a lesser degree by the TUC itself. They just want us to go away but we're not going anywhere. In two years we've only lost two from Kent.

## Irish election

# HAUGHEY ON THIN ICE

By Colin Harrison

**THE results of the February general election in the Irish Republic have resolved nothing and can only herald a new wave of class battles. The election of the Fianna Fail government headed by Charles Haughey is inconclusive and will compound a social crisis of growing proportions. Like the previous administration of Dr Garret FitzGerald, Haughey lacks a clear majority and cannot have any stable future. If he fails to satisfy his coalition partners by attacking the working class with sufficient vigour a new election and a new governmental crisis must result.**

The general election was provoked by the collapse of the Fine Gael-Irish Labour Party coalition over budget proposals. Fine Gael's attempt to reduce the budget deficit by savage cuts on already meagre health and social welfare provisions created a crisis for Labour. After four years of grovelling collaboration, in which its remaining electoral support in the working class rapidly declined, the Labour leadership opportunistically tried to salvage its position by withdrawing from the alliance.

Ireland, both north and south of the border, is being bled white. According to the Irish Central Bank a total of £2,971 million was exported out of the Republic in 1986 (of this £1,650 million was exported by 'unknown means'). The total amount of capital exported amounts to about 20 per cent of the Gross National Product (GNP). Although Britain still dominates the banking and financial sectors, US, Japanese and European firms have taken over much of remaining manufacturing industry. Despite this influx of new investment, however, since 1980 40,000 jobs in manufacturing have disappeared.

In order to finance the industrial expansion of the 1970s the 26 counties borrowed heavily. The foreign debt now stands at \$19 billion — 133 per cent of GNP — a greater per capita debt than Argentina, Mexico or Brazil. Interest payments on this debt now consume 13 per cent of GNP annually.

As the recession has deepened, unemployment has soared to almost 20 per cent. Taxation has doubled since the 1970s, hitting the working class proportionately harder — the revenue from corporate taxes amounts to only four per cent of the total.

As the EEC withdraws its agricultural subsidies the 20 per cent of the population which works on the land is being pauperised and the land owned by small farmers absorbed into large estates. The net result of unemployment and rural decline is rising emigration, now running at 30,000 per year.

The two main capitalist parties, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, have historically performed a division of labour for the Irish ruling class. Fine Gael represents that wing of the ruling class which has collaborated to the hilt with British imperialism. Fianna Fail plays the 'Green Card' only to betray the national struggle time and again.

Although Haughey was elect-

ed largely by workers' votes on the promise of less severe cuts than Fine Gael, his recent budget proposals are even more punitive than those which led to the collapse of the FitzGerald administration. They include the raising of hospital service charges, the freezing of public sector wages from July and reduced government borrowing which will lead to another sharp rise in unemployment.

In advance of forming a government Haughey pledged to uphold the Anglo-Irish agreement, signed in November 1985, despite implying during the election campaign that it would be scrapped. Behind its cosmetic clauses for an Anglo-Irish conference with advisory powers, the real purpose of the agreement is to preserve the reactionary statelet in the north. It aims both to draw the Republic into a 32-county cross-border policing arrangement with British imperialism and to tie the nationalist community in the north to Dublin in order to break the national liberation struggle led by the IRA.

But in seeking the assistance of the Green Tories in the south, Thatcher has opened up a major division in the long-standing alliance between the loyalists and the Conservative Party. The reverberations of last year's clashes between Protestant paramilitaries and the Royal Ulster Constabulary are still being felt in the Orange leadership which is deeply split.

Haughey's latest piece of duplicity will incur the wrath of the working class, already involved in major struggles in defence of jobs. Shortly after the election the 'Irish Times' noted angrily that 6,000 workers were currently on strike in a number

of disputes, despite threats of disinvestment from multinational companies and dire prophecies from the Industrial Development Association.

Immediately after the general election, John Carroll, president of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and leader of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, offered the incoming government the collaboration of the trade-union bureaucracy in a corporatist national recovery plan. When, a few weeks later, 950 workers ended their strike at Packard Electronics (a subsidiary of General Motors) and a no-strike deal was imposed, Carroll commented that such agreements would become 'a fact of life'.

It is on this bureaucracy that the anti-republican Irish Labour Party is based. Bowing before such 'facts of life' is its way of life. Ducking out of the coalition with Fine Gael has not shored up its collapsing support. In the previous general election it polled 6.4 per cent; this fell to 4 per cent in the 1985 local elections; its latest miserable performance was 3 per cent.

The Stalinist Workers Party, which marginally increased its vote to 3.8 per cent, is the most conscious enemy of the national struggle. Descended from the Official IRA, it follows a thoroughly counter-revolutionary line on both sides of the border. In the north it is the most vitriolic opponent of the armed struggle of the Provisional IRA, upholds the Unionist statelet and supports the Anglo-Irish agreement. In the 26 counties the Workers Party calls for an 'industrial revolution' led by the state sector and the multinationals to prepare the ground for a transition to socialism! Recognising a rat when it sees one, the

southern media gives it fulsome coverage.

Sinn Fein, which entered elections to the Dail for the first time, was banned from radio and television under Section 31. Standing on a platform of support for the armed struggle in the north, demanding the withdrawal of British troops and the creation of a 32-county democratic socialist republic, it received 1.9 per cent of the vote.

The heroic and tenacious national liberation struggle waged by the Provisional IRA against the police-military dictatorship in the north has the support of the best elements of the Irish working class. The Workers International League unconditionally supports this struggle despite our political differences with the Republican movement.

The task confronting the Irish working class of defeating British imperialism and establishing a united socialist republic in Ireland requires the building of a revolutionary party. Such a party would base its programme on the strategy and tactics of the theory of permanent revolution developed by Leon Trotsky. It would draw behind the working class the most oppressed layers of the rural population against the domination of the banks and the landlords.

The British working class must render every possible support to the Irish national liberation struggle. It must demand the withdrawal of British troops and fight for the defeat of British imperialism. This requires a political reckoning with the pro-imperialist TUC and Labour bureaucracy, the main prop of British domination over Ireland, and the building of a revolutionary socialist leadership.

## Brazil in debt deadlock

By Martin Sullivan

SOUTH AMERICA's largest and most populated country, Brazil, is today paralysed by industrial unrest and economic crisis. The desperate measures introduced last year in an attempt to stabilise the downward-spiralling economy have only aggravated the problems of the government of President Jose Sarney.

Towards the end of February, Sarney was compelled to announce the suspension of interest payments on \$68 billion which Brazil owes to foreign commercial banks, denying them some \$500 million a month in receipts.

During a visit to London early in March, the Finance Minister, Dilson Funaro, confirmed that the Brazilian government did not intend to approach the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for assistance but would instead be relying on their friends in London and New York to bail them out. Since the IMF would insist on immediate Draconian economic measures as a precondition for their support, the reason for Sarney and Funaro's reticence is not too difficult to see.

These bourgeois 'democrats' are scared stiff of what the future may hold for them. The growth of the Brazilian working class has been powerfully stimulated over the last two decades as North American and European-based multinationals have increasingly chosen to shift their production away from high-wage Metropolitan countries. But the notion of cheap labour as an antidote to falling rates of profit is coming unstuck as companies confront a huge and militant workforce of their own creation.

Fulfilling the IMF's austerity programme would fuel the working-class offensive against Sarney's fragile and discredited civilian government. This, in turn, would increase the prospect of a military coup. Sarney and Funaro are stealing time from the Western banks to deal with the working class — in their own way.

Suspension of interest payments is a tactic which will preserve much-needed foreign reserves and buy some popular support as an anti-imperialist measure. But it can't possibly resolve the problems of a country which, on top of its \$68 billion debt to the commercial banks, owes the IMF and the World Bank \$40 billion, making it the world's largest debtor nation.

One camp in the Brazilian ruling class is in favour of an even tougher stand against the world banks — certain industrialists are proposing a moratorium on repayments for up to four years. Opponents, among them Sarney and the military, perceive a very real danger to themselves in this plan. They fear it would encourage the working class and peasantry throughout Central and South America, giving an impetus to the struggle to overthrow a string of right-wing governments and military dictatorships.

President Sarney has embarked on a delicate attempt to 'occupy the centre ground'. Appealing to the anti-imperialist sentiments of the masses on the one hand, he is, however, quick to turn to the military when the going gets tough. On March 7, he sent the marines into eleven ports following a strike by 40,000 merchant seamen which

left 180 loaded ships stranded in the docks. Three days later, he sent the army into ten oil refineries to stop them being occupied by 51,000 striking workers.

Both groups of workers were demanding higher wages. The seamen were demanding a 275 per cent rise instead of the 108 per cent offered to them. The refinery workers demanded a more modest 71 per cent against a 38 per cent offer. They need this sort of rise, indeed more, to keep up with the explosion in prices which marked the collapse of the Cruzado Plan at the end of 1986 and which has led to a current inflationary rate of around 400 per cent a year.

The Cruzado Plan was, in essence, a giant confidence trick. Sarney and Funaro introduced it in February 1986 and it included a new unit of currency, the Cruzado, a price freeze and large pay increases. As a result, 200 per cent-a-year price rises were brought down to near zero. They stayed down until October. In spite of the by now faltering economy, the momentum of Sarney's apparent success carried his main supporters, the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party, to victory in the elections in November.

Within a matter of days of the election, the government unleashed a series of savage price rises, claiming that they only hit the rich. The introduction of austerity measures saw cuts in government spending. In December, a one-day general strike against these measures was met by tanks, setting the pattern for the more recent developments.

The use of the armed forces against striking workers is a reminder that the military in Brazil is never far from the scene.

The years of military dictatorship saw the living standards of workers and peasants plummet and the rich double their share of the national wealth. Although Brazil has an abundance of national resources, 65 per cent of its population of 137 million lives in poverty, one-third of all families have an income under \$40 a month and 30 per cent of the adult population are illiterate. In 1983 food production for the home market was 40 per cent less than needed. Under military rule, Brazilian agriculture had been geared to export production.

It was the resistance of the Brazilian working class to the US-supported junta that forced the hand-over to civilian rule. The same working class now presents the ruling class of Brazil and the banks which have funded it with mounting problems. The instinct of the former is to send in the army.

However, tanks and troops will not resolve the global issue which is at the centre of the Brazilian crisis. This is the \$1,000 billion which is owed by the debtor nations to the world's banks. Since 1981, the strategy of the advanced capitalist countries has been to insist that the debtor nations should export more and thus earn enough to pay off their debts.

This strategy is now in direct conflict with the aims of the most powerful of those advanced capitalist countries, the United States. US imports currently stand at record levels and the policy of the Reagan government is to cut these by 'encouraging' other countries to export less. The twin time-bombs of the debt mountain and the US trading deficit make a combination which is potentially lethal.



Protestors outside the Colombian embassy in London demand to know who killed Hebert Marin.

## Name Marin's assassins!

A MASS picket organised by the Hebert Marin Campaign took place outside the Colombian embassy in London's West End on March 18. Over 80 exiles from the South American state were joined by British trade unionists in demanding that embassy officials reveal the identity of Hebert Marin's assassins.

A four-man delegation from the picket — Marin's brother Mario, two Transport and General Workers' Union (TG&WU) offi-

cial and a Labour MP — entered the embassy to demand of the Charge d'Affaires that he contact his government and obtain the names of the murderers.

Marin was a full-time organiser for the TG&WU in London, a founder member of the Colombian Human Rights Committee and president of the Latin American Workers' Association in Britain. He played a leading role in the struggle to organise Latin American workers in the contract cleaning industry in London's Oxford Street area.

Whilst visiting his family and

friends in Colombia last October, he was arrested by unidentified members of the army's Third Brigade. He was subsequently tortured and then murdered; his body was dumped on the outskirts of his native city, Cali.

The Hebert Marin Campaign are picketing the embassy every Wednesday until the identities of those responsible are known. They are appealing to workers and youth to join them. Requests for speakers and messages of support should be sent to: Casa Latino America, Priory House, Kingsgate Place, London NW6.

# Botha regime split as election nears

By Daniel Evans

**ECONOMIC chaos, shattered Afrikaner unity and growing rebellion in the townships are the context in which South Africa's whites-only general election will take place on May 6.**

P.W. Botha, the 72-year-old 'tired and disillusioned' president, will lead his Afrikaner National Party to the polls with his 'reform' programme in tatters and an increasing clamour amongst sections of the 4.8 million whites for a more 'radical' approach than has yet been seen. Numerous States of Emergency, police and security force brutality, torture, murder, imprisonment of children and the execution of many leading black activists has failed to quell the rising tide of revolution. Last month the National Party leadership admitted that their 1981 'Plan for Blacks' was now unenforceable.

The plan involved the establishment of stooge councils in the townships and in the so-called 'homelands', giving the appearance of an extension of political rights. In reality, they were designed to act as tax and rent collecting agencies — an attempt to develop a layer of black collaborators to administer apartheid policy.

F.W. De Klerk, Minister of National Education, announced at a closed meeting of the National Party faithful: 'I can tell you we worked hard to make it succeed. But we have come to the conclusion that it will not work.'

This, too, was the conclusion of the black councillors, those who survived the 'necklace' that is. Their retreat to the safety of heavily guarded compounds turned into a stampede after September 1984 when huge rent increases, the levy of a general sales tax on everything including foodstuffs and rising unemployment, now estimated at between 4.2 and six million, sparked an unparalleled uprising in the townships.

As the threat of a full-scale civil war has grown, the extreme right wing has become more vocal. However, the immediate threat to Botha from a union of Jaap Marais' Herstigte Nasionale Party, Andries Treurnicht's Conservative Party and Eugene Terre Blanche's Nazi Afrikaner Resistance Movement receded as their planned electoral pact broke down in late March.

No sooner had Botha announced the election than a power struggle broke out within the National Party itself and the clamour for more tangible 'reforms' began. Botha's ambassador to Britain, Dr Dennis Worrall, quit his post and returned to South Africa to fight in the election as an independent candidate in the constituency of the National Party's Minister of Constitutional Affairs, Chris Heunis.

His campaign quickly gathered momentum. He was joined immediately by Wynland Malan and Dr Esther-Lateun and together the three apostles of 'enlightenment' issued a joint manifesto in which they declared: 'Black politics must be freed and all discriminatory laws must be scrapped.'

Soon afterwards 27 top academics at the Stellenbosch University, the cradle of Afrikaner Nationalism, launched

an attack on Botha's political paralysis and called for the abandonment of the existing constitution and its replacement with one that would include blacks in a single parliament. Like Worrall and his group they demanded the scrapping of the Group Areas Act which insists on compulsory residential segregation.

Hot on the heels of the academics came a statement from Professor Piet De Lange calling for the 'promotion of inter-group dialogue and understanding'. De Lange is the Grand Dragon of the League of Brothers, the Ku Klux Klan-type organisation which is credited with having invented the policy of apartheid.

But there is nothing 'enlightened' about the proposals of the League of Brothers, the academics or the former ambassador. When asked what his objectives were, Worrall said he believed in a non-racial democracy but not one-man-one-vote in a unitary state. 'Some kind of federation,' was as specific as he would be.

Worrall's departure from the National Party may, in fact, be

a manoeuvre to discredit the present leadership in order to hasten the ascendancy of the wing of the party which he represents. This could set the scene for a policy of co-opting blacks into a fraudulent 'multi-racial' government.

The success of such a plan, according to Fredrick van Zyl Slabbert, former leader of the Progressive Federal Party — the party of the wealthy English-speaking establishment and the main opposition — would rest on 'the dream of an Afrikaner-Zulu alliance'. A new National Party leadership, says Slabbert, could lure the Zulu leader, chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, into such an alliance.

KwaZulu is the proposed 'homeland' of South Africa's six million Zulus, the largest ethnic group in the country, and is part of the Natal region on the eastern coast. 600,000 whites and 670,000 Indians constitute the rest of Natal's population.

Buthelezi refused to accept 'independence' for KwaZulu, of which he is Chief Minister, and claims to have 'broken the

government's homeland policy'. Instead, he determined that KwaZulu and Natal had to be unified and the Natal Indaba (council) was born encompassing nearly forty organisations representing a span of political and racial tendencies including whites.

Buthelezi is also the charismatic leader of the largest political organisation in South Africa, the SS-type Inkatha movement, which has a paid-up membership of over one million and which he uses to brutally enforce his dominance in KwaZulu.

But resistance to Inkatha is widespread as a recent underground document from residents in KwaZulu testifies: 'In August last year,' says the document, 'the first rumblings of mass resistance since the 1973 Durban strikes were experienced in Natal. The gradual build-up of pressure against apartheid started spreading beyond isolated townships.'

In the Empageni area (Northern Natal) three townships had engaged in a month-long campaign against bus fare increases. Local trade unions developed relationships with the boycott committees which linked the townships. Inkatha intervened to prevent the development of mass organised action against apartheid. In trying to assert its control in the townships and in the Natal as a whole, Inkatha was prepared to unleash its vast repressive machinery against those who stood in its way.

It is this fierce war raging between Inkatha and the black working class and youth, nominally headed by the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the African National Congress (ANC), which recently led Buthelezi to appeal to Adrian Vlok, the Minister of Law and Order, to 'untie his hands' by allowing him to issue firearms to his followers and handing over control of police stations in 'troubled areas'.

Increasing opposition to Buthelezi and government stalling on the Natal question has forced the pace of the power struggle in the National Party and led to the emergence of the impatient, 'enlightened' group around Worrall. Their idea of a federalised South Africa dominated by a powerful white region with considerable military and



PHOTO: IDAF

Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi... his Inkatha movement is meeting growing resistance

economic muscle at its disposal depends on the ability of Buthelezi to deliver the goods. He could only do this by terrorising the black working class into submission.

The magnitude of that task is clearly illustrated by recent events in KwaZulu where the apartheid regime was forced to withdraw its plans for an 'independent homeland' following fierce resistance by the population and the blowing to bits by a car bomb of Piet Ntuli. Ntuli was the prospective KwaZulu Minister of Interior and leader of the vicious Mbokhotha vigilante gang.

Also floundering are the 'homelands' of Transkei and Ciskei. They are practically at war with one another and pauperised peasants forced to live on the barren land within them are threatening mass exodus in search of fresher pastures elsewhere in South Africa.

The emergence onto the political scene of the 360,000-strong National Union of Mineworkers is a sign that the struggle of national liberation is intensifying. James Motlatsi, the union's president, announced at its fifth Congress in March: 'Today the government's plans lie in ruins. It was the rising tide of opposition, which was increasingly gaining a national and generalised character, that forced the government to declare a national state of emergency. What the state has failed to understand is that to stop the liberation march, it will have to stop the nation.'

Buthelezi and his Inkatha thugs are the last chance of striking a deal which avoids any concessions to traditional white supremacy. Increasingly the in-

dustrial and financial bourgeoisie, at home and abroad, though keeping a close eye on Worrall, are coming to the conclusion that only a deal with the leadership of the ANC, handing over rule to the black majority, can safeguard their investments and the future of South African capitalism. This would not, however, solve the problems of the black working class whose main obstacle to real liberation is the continued existence of capitalism and not merely the absence of their right to vote. Should such a deal come about, imperialism would maintain its dominance, exercising political control through its economic power.

Trotsky's writings on the South African revolution are more pertinent today than ever before:

'Insofar as a victorious revolution will radically change the relation not only between the classes but also between the races and will assure to the blacks that place in the state that corresponds to their numbers, thus far will the social revolution in South Africa also have a national character.'

'We have not the slightest reason to close our eyes to this side of the question or to diminish its significance. On the contrary, the proletarian party should in words and in deeds openly and boldly take the solution of the national (racial) problem in its hands.'

'Nevertheless, the proletarian party can and must solve the national problem by its own methods. The historical weapon of national liberation can only be the class struggle.'



PHOTO: IDAF

South Africa's President P.W. Botha

## EMERGENCY APPEAL

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# A BALANCE SHEET

**THE split which took place in the Workers Revolutionary Party in October 1985 has had the most far reaching consequences. The disintegration of one of the largest parties in the world claiming the name of Trotskyism, which could trace its history back to the earliest Trotskyist groups in Britain, has without doubt posed the tasks of building a revolutionary leadership more acutely than at any other stage in the history of the Trotskyist movement.**

The past two years have witnessed the completion of a process of degeneration of the entire Old Guard leadership of the WRP. This leadership which measured its political experience not in years but in three, four and five decades has been dispersed to the four winds. This leadership which played a proud role in the struggle against the revisionism of Michel Pablo, leader of the Fourth International in the early 1950s, who attempted to liquidate Trotskyism into the Stalinist movement, has itself taken the Pablo road with a vengeance.

Gerry Healy, a Trotskyist since 1937, and undisputed leader of the WRP until 1985, is today moving in the orbit of Stalinism, an admirer of the Gorbachev 'reforms'. Michael Banda, together with his brother Tony, with four decades in the Trotskyist movement prior to 1985, has become an open apologist for Stalin and Stalinism. Cliff Slaughter, a Trotskyist from 1956, and for two decades secretary of the International Committee of the Fourth International, is today attempting to 'regroup' a centrist 'International' of flotsam and jetsam, much of it emanating from the Pabloite movement.

To draw a political balance sheet on this degeneration which extends throughout the length and breadth of this Old Guard is not only a necessary but an urgent task in order to rearm a Trotskyist cadre, under the conditions today of great upheaval in the world economy and the class struggle. On more than one occasion Trotsky remarked that the highest duty of the revolutionary party was to tell the truth to the working class. This duty, which is the precondition for the development of the revolutionary party, cannot be told by those leaders who have flagrantly abandoned the fundamental principles of revolutionary Marxism — Trotskyism.

The Fourth International was founded in 1938 under the leadership of Leon Trotsky, during a period of huge defeats for the international working class, as the continuation of Bolshevism. Trotsky declared its task to be the resolution of the fundamental crisis of humanity — the crisis of revolutionary leadership. This task of necessity demanded a life and death struggle against Stalinism as the main counter-revolutionary force in the working class. Despite the massacre of its cadres by both the fascists in Nazi-occupied Europe and by the Stalinists in Russia, Greece, China and Vietnam, the Fourth International successfully reorganised its youthful forces in the post-war world.

Under the leadership of Michel Pablo and Ernest Mandel however, its very ex-

istence was threatened. The 'turn' advocated by Pablo towards Stalinism based upon an 'impressionistic assessment of its strength, involved liquidating the Trotskyist movement into the Stalinist parties, recognising the inevitability of 'centuries of deformed workers' states' and an imminent Third World War which would compel Stalinism to 'project a revolutionary orientation'.

The historic decision taken in November 1953 by the Socialist Workers Party of the United States together with the British and French sections to break decisively with Pablo and to rally all 'orthodox' Trotskyists under the banner of the International Committee of the Fourth International forms the basis of the modern Trotskyist movement.

Alone this movement refused to capitulate to the forms of appearance of the post-war 'boom' which sustained the revisionist theories of 'neo-capitalism' and the 'permanent arms economy'. As a result of its struggle to comprehend theoretically the source of Pablo's revisionism in the post-war boom and the temporary strength of Stalinism, the British section was able to make deep inroads into the working class and lay the basis for the building of a revolutionary party.

Through its intervention into the Stalinist crisis of 1956 it won important layers of intellectuals and workers, and as a result the Socialist Labour League was founded in 1959. The road taken by the American SWP back to Pabloism culminated in 1963 in its unprincipled 'reunification' with the Pabloites in the so-called United Secretariat. The SLL responded to this blow with redoubled energy, rallying the forces both nationally and internationally to build the ICFI. While the British Trotskyists won a majority within the Labour Party youth movement in 1964, the same year saw the largest section of the United Secretariat, the LSSP of Sri Lanka, joining the bourgeois coalition government of Mrs Bandaranaike. Only as a result of its implacable struggle against the reformist and Stalinist bureaucracies was the SLL able to train a cadre, and in 1969 launch the first

Trotskyist daily paper in the world, the 'Workers' Press'.

The capitulation of the French OCI in the midst of the revolutionary events of May-June 1968, its refusal to raise the burning issue of the revolutionary seizure of power by the working class, and its subsequent desertion from the ranks of the ICFI in 1971, left an even greater international responsibility upon the shoulders of the SLL. The SLL led the fight to train new international sections of the ICFI. In 1973 the SLL was able to transform itself into the WRP through the analysis of the political implications on a world scale of the break-up of the Bretton Woods Agreement in 1971 and the opening of a period of deepening world crisis.

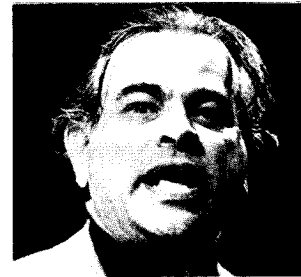
The Workers International League proudly defends this history of struggle which was led by the renegades of today, Healy, Banda and Slaughter. However much they trample upon it now, it remains an imperishable contribution to the history of Trotskyism.

The protracted development of a world crisis of immense proportions brought with it not only entirely new opportunities for the development of Trotskyism on a world scale, but qualitatively new pressures upon the revolutionary vanguard.

The rapid influx into the newly-founded WRP of considerable numbers of actors won from the struggle within the Equity union, and their rapid promotion into leading positions on all the committees of the WRP diluted the working class composition of the party. In the immediate aftermath of the wave of struggles against the Heath government, culminating in its bringing-down by the miners in 1974, this layer proved to be highly unstable in the struggle against the Wilson and Callaghan governments of 1974-79. From a claimed membership of about 7,000 in 1974 little more than 2,000 were left by 1979. That social democracy proved, despite its treacherous role, assisted by Stalinism and revisionism, a good deal more durable than the expectations of 1973-4, required above all a serious elaboration by the revolu-

## The collapse of the Wo

tionary party of strategy and tactics to 'win the masses'. Instead as the middle class elements won in 1973-4 funnelled out of the door to make their peace with reformism, the WRP adopted increasingly impressionistic perspectives couched in a series of ultimatums to the working class. The Special Congress of 1977, taking as its point of departure the public spending cuts introduced by the Callaghan government, the Social Contract and the struggle at Grunwick's, declared the struggle for power directly on the agenda in Britain. In a memorable contribution at this time Cliff Slaughter stated: 'Future historians will look back to July 12th 1977 (The peak of the Grunwick struggle, as the beginning of the English revolution. All that was missing were the guns.' A small omission indeed!



Mike Banda

This was no temporary relapse into impressionism. The Third Congress of the WRP held in 1978, after the betrayal by the TUC of the firemen's strike, was convened under the banner 'The British Revolution has begun'. The accession to power of the Thatcher government in 1979 was greeted by light-minded assessments that it would not last beyond Christmas. This line of juvenile 'leftism' was supplemented by galloping opportunism on an international scale. From 1977 onwards Healy used the WRP's principled defence of the Palestinian people as a calling card to establish in quick succession a series of unprincipled 'alliances' with various bourgeois national movements and governments. In place of the principled criticism he had conducted of Pablo's liquidation of the Trotskyist movement into the Algerian, Cuban and Sri Lankan regimes, Healy abandoned the struggle to build Trotskyist sections in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, in favour of a series of diplomatic manoeuvres. The pattern established by a 'joint communiqué' issued by the WRP and the Libyan government in 1977 rapidly blossomed.



Blidworth Colliery, Nottinghamshire, in March 1984. The min

**STATEMENT BY THE WORK**

# NET OF REVISIONISM

## Workers Revolutionary Party



Strike accelerated the crisis throughout the WRP leadership

In the Zimbabwean liberation struggle the WRP backed the right-wing of the national movement, Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU, and conducted a whitewash of the Lancaster House talks which enshrined landlordism and whites-only seats in parliament. Once Robert Mugabe's ZANU swept to power in the post-independence elections, it completed an about face somersault. In Iraq, the WRP leadership extolled the Ba'athist regime of Saddam Hussein, which drowned the Iraqi working class in blood. It extended its support well beyond the moment Iraqi forces attacked the Iranian revolution. The WRP, having greeted the Iranian revolution enthusiastically, once more surrendered any independent class analysis of the social forces contained within the Iranian revolution and maintained a diplomatic silence on the class struggle within Iran.

This new 'turn' by the WRP and the ICFI enshrined in the Seventh World Congress perspectives of 1977 was presented to the party membership as a system of 'powerful' and 'unbreakable' alliances with allies who would act as the midwives of the British socialist revolution. The other side of this process was the increasing indifference and contempt on the part of the WRP leadership towards the sections of the International Committee; it had, after all, bigger fish to fry and charismatic leaders to meet. What began as an attempted short-cut to the movement of the Arab masses became a thoroughgoing compromise of Trotskyist principles. As the world crisis intensified, so did the class struggle in the Middle East and one by one the Arab bourgeois regimes took it in turns to knife the struggle of the Palestinian masses in the back. Yet Healy subsumed the entire Arab world, reactionary feudalists and all, into a single, indivisible Arab revolution! Not least among his considerations was the continued flow of what he termed 'resources'.

How starkly the blank cheque given to the Saddam Husseins, Mugabes and Nkomos to betray the colonial revolution contrasted with the short shrift given to the national liberation struggle within the country most directly oppressed by British imperialism — Ireland.

For five years — 1979 to 1984 — not a single WRP delegation of any size supported any demonstrations demanding Irish self-determination or in defence of Irish republican prisoners. Hiding behind its pious 'differences' on the Irish question the WRP leadership not only abandoned its international duties in Britain; it systematically sabotaged work to construct an Irish section of the ICFI. Healy believed it was impossible to build an Irish Trotskyist party — it would inevitably be infiltrated or run by police agents — and urged Irish members of the WRP to take out British citizenship. We may also remark that the South African revolution was largely ignored over a similar period, leaving the

field clear for the Stalinists.

As its 'powerful alliances' broke up one by one, and its casual assessment of the probable life-span of the Thatcher government was confounded, the WRP swung to the right. Declaring a Tory 'counter-revolution' to be in full swing the WRP's 'Manifesto '81' ditched the 'immediate struggle for power' and in its place lamely demanded that the 'TUC must fight the Tories' — truly a slogan which could mean all things to all men. In place of campaigning to establish a fighting agreement with the mass organisations of the working class to defeat the Tories, to defend jobs, living standards etc., was substituted back-stage manoeuvrings with the London Labour-lefts grouped around Ken Livingstone. The vehicle for fighting the 'counter-revolution' and to defend the local councils facing major Tory cuts was to be the Community Council. Palmed off as a soviet-type organisation of workers' power, it was in fact designed to embrace not only Labour councillors and local trade unions, but rate-payers' groups (!), local businessmen (!! ) and, according to some WRP leaders, would include, at least at the outset, all (!!!) political parties.

This period not accidentally saw the abandonment in large sections of the party of all serious revolutionary work in the trade unions, without which, as Trotsky remarked, no revolutionary party could win the working class in Britain. Under the nominal guidance of M. Banda, Peter Gibson returned from hibernation to head the party's industrial wing, the All Trades Unions Alliance, with dreams of turning it into a Broad Left-type, non-party caucus for ageing opportunists such as himself.

Nowhere was the piling up of mistakes by the WRP more glaring and damaging than in its interventions into the major class battles of the early 1980s. Beginning with the steelworkers' struggle of 1979-80, through the seven-month hospital workers' dispute of 1982 to the NGA struggle at Warrington in 1983-84, the 'News Line' consistently shielded the reformist trade union bureaucracy. Steelworkers' leader Bill Sims, shortly to float the idea of a rival right-wing TUC, was defended to the hilt; Rodney Bickerstaffe, the future traitor of Barking, Addenbrookes and Hammersmith, who refused to call an all-out strike, was said to be 'close to his members'; the NGA leaders who called off the struggle against Eddie Shah were described as 'politically moderate' craft union leaders. In return for this indulgence the middle ranks of the trade union bureaucracy began to take seats of honour on WRP and ATUA platforms.

Concurrent with, and assisting the opportunist drift of the WRP was the liquidation of any effective inner-party democracy. Habits and methods of effective leadership being confined to a tried and trusted inner circle were understandable and even necessary in the period of a small group during the boom, when the SLL conducted a major struggle against Pablo's liquidationism. All the 'plusses' of the previous period were transformed into 'minuses', once the slump propelled fresh layers of workers and youth into the WRP and the Young Socialists. Under the excuse of 'exceptional conditions', Healy entrenched his

authority over the party through a one-man, so-called Central Committee Department which exercised day-to-day control over the most minute aspects of party activity.

Far from arresting the rightward degeneration of the party's Old Guard, this absence of internal democracy accelerated it. The group of well-heeled academics of the Slaughter breed happily continued their own lives undisturbed. Slaughter held the party membership in such contempt he boycotted his own branch meetings in Leeds for years, and yet could always be on hand to supply Healy's political line with a gilded phrase. Not least among the assets of the leadership was its increasingly bloated and disoriented apparatus of ninety full-time workers.

Healy's two-week summer 'cadre' schools at the party's College of Marxist Education had by this time thoroughly negated the SLL's important turn to studying Lenin's Philosophical Notebooks in the 1960s. Following an entirely predictable course, they were designed to show, by the middle of the second week, that the party ranks were entirely composed of incurable idealists only able to continue their miserable existence courtesy of the 'infallible' leadership.

The WRP entered the miners' strike of 1984-85 — the greatest class battle in Britain in sixty years — with an ambivalent attitude to the trade union bureaucracy. It was indulgent towards the NGA leadership and hostile to that of the NUM. Banda who had made an extensive study of the emerging struggle in the mining industry, began the strike as an ultra-left critic of Scargill and ended it as his uncritical supporter. Within the party leadership clear political trends began to emerge behind the facade of 'unanimous' agreement. Midway through the strike the Banda brothers urged Cammell Laird's workers occupying an oil rig in defence of jobs to abandon their struggle and bow to a court injunction. Alex Mitchell, 'News Line' editor, took off to Australia for three months. The party intellectuals, Slaughter, Pilling, Smith and Kemp, retreated deeper into their studies. Bill Hunter and Peter Gibson longed to make their peace with reformism and take up soup-kitchen politics. Sheila Torrance held that Scargill would inevitably betray but the miners would never return to work. Healy balanced between these tendencies, moving like Banda towards an uncritical support for the NUM leadership. Many of Banda and Slaughter's supporters, who claimed subsequently to have been inspired by the miners' strike in their struggle against 'Healyism', were noticeable largely by their absence from the party's intervention into the strike.

Within the party membership and particularly the youth, however, there was a great response and initiative shown in relation to the tasks of revolutionary leadership. By developing its agitation for the TUC to call a general strike, and through a correct orientation to youth, dozens of miners and hundreds of workers were won to the WRP — in spite of the political disorientation of much of its leadership. Within the space of a few months the situation in Britain was deemed successively 'the beginning of civil-war', 'pre-revolutionary' and then 'revolutionary'.

Halfway through the strike the demand for the TUC to call a general strike was changed to the demand that the ranks of the trade unions 'Organise the General Strike'. This apparently small shift contained the music of the future: the leaders were already sufficiently exposed; the masses would flock automatically into the WRP.

The Seventh Congress of the WRP held in December 1984 and the 10th World Congress of the ICFI held in January 1985 took to a new level all the accumulated theoretical errors of the past.

The joint perspectives document drawn up for both congresses by Slaughter held that a 'common level of struggle' existed in every country; worldwide Bonapartism existed; the 'immediacy of the struggle for power' was already taking place across the planet. This thoroughgoing repudiation of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution (paid lip-service to as recently as the WRP's 6th Congress) marked the further descent of the WRP's Old Guard into Pabloism. Compare for instance the 7th Congress' assertion that 'the objective laws of capitalist decline now operate without hindrance' with the 'super-objectivism' of Pablo over three decades before: 'The objective process is, in the final analysis, the sole determining factor, overriding all obstacles of a subjective order.' This 'super-objectivism' amounts in reality to the renunciation of the struggle for leadership (the subjective factor) in the working class and a capitulation behind very 'left' phrases to Stalinism and social democracy.

The Seventh Congress asserted that revolution predominated over counter-revolution. By downgrading the role of conscious revolutionary leadership it gave the period an altogether 'automatic' character; but within weeks this heady optimism would give way to the most abject pessimism. At the Tenth World Congress these perspectives were used as a stick with which to beat the remaining sections of the ICFI. A series of greater or lesser 'misdeemeanours' were prepared by the Congress leadership of Banda and Slaughter, orchestrated behind the scenes by Healy. Together with David North of the Workers League of the United States, they threatened to split with the other sections, who were accused of capitulating to their respective ruling classes. Consider the stupendous arrogance of the British leadership — Slaughter, who had spent as much time in recent years on the racecourse as building the revolutionary party, lecturing international delegates on their practice; Healy, who could happily take substantial sums from Kuwaiti crown princes, upbraiding the Socialist Labour League of Australia for accepting election expenses off the Australian state; Banda, who had accepted £1,000 of party money to holiday in France during the miners' strike, denouncing the Sri Lankan section for failing to fight the state.

The fruits of the Tenth World Congress were not long in emerging. Having staked everything on the role of a left-centrist group on the TUC and the London Labour 'lefts', the WRP leadership was thrown into total confusion when the miners were forced back to work. At the



# A BALANCE SHEET OF REVISIONISM

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Sheffield conference of the All Trades Unions Alliance in February 1985 Healy said that the miners returning to work was 'unthinkable'.

Within a month of the 'unthinkable' happening, the party leadership was plunged into the fiercest internecine warfare. The proposal by Sheila Torrance, then WRP Assistant General Secretary, to mount a national series of youth marches for the release of jailed miners was voted down by all the remaining members of the WRP Political Committee. This was the prelude to a vicious campaign waged by Healy and Banda against Torrance. Matters came to a head when, at a shameful Central Committee meeting on April 27th, Stuart Carter, a CC member from Manchester, was assaulted by Healy, suspended and subsequently expelled for having the temerity to vote in support of Torrance.

Healy proceeded to commandeer the marches armed with a bogus philosophical cover provided by Slaughter, having decided to have Torrance expelled or at least sent into 'exile' in the provinces. What were coming sharply into conflict were party generations. The older generations of party leaders viewed the post-miners' strike situation with horror. Their 'perspectives' in tatters, they lashed out against the most active of the party's middle generations, which in turn rested on the youth. Healy used the party's May Day rally to launch a major provocation against the leadership of the London District Committee as a further route to 'get at' Torrance.

Once the National Marches to Release the Jailed Miners were on the road from May 18th to June 30th they gained wide support in the working class. Within the party however civil war

reigned, with Healy and Banda drawing up lists of members to expel, notably the leading youth. The final 4,000-strong rally which greeted the marchers on June 30th was, on the face of things, a major success. Healy's speech dwelt on the imminent dangers of fascism. Following the speeches he closed down the party's recruitment stall.

The following day Healy was torpedoed amidstships — and from the most unexpected quarter. Members of the Political Committee arriving at the meeting of July 1st received letters from Healy's long serving secretary, Aileen Jennings, outlining a record of gross sexual abuses of female party members by Healy. Having listened to a vigorous defence of Healy's practices by Banda (who compared his 'weaknesses' to those of Tito, Mao and General U.S. Grant), the Political Committee, with four votes against and one abstention, denounced the letter as a 'provocation'. Fantastically, it then moved on to next business.

The following day there began to emerge details of a vast financial crisis involving debts totalling £250,000. Knowledge of these debts had been, whether out of fear of Healy or as they subsequently boasted deliberately, withheld from the party by a group centred in the party's finance department. This group of long-standing full-time party workers — Dot Gibson, Dave Bruce, Robert Harris and Clare Cowen — not known previously for any opposition to the party line, were rapidly revealed as a right wing within the party.

These two thunderbolts unleashed a terminal crisis of the old WRP. By the end of the week Sheila Torrance had hauled Banda off to get a secret written undertaking from Healy that he cease his sexual malpractices forthwith. This agreement, whilst not bringing Healy to book, knocked his inbuilt majori-

ty on the Political Committee for six. Faced with the enormous dilemma of how to try to prevent the party from being smashed and to bring out the political differences which lay behind the intense factional struggle, Torrance demanded a written political discussion.

The first product of this discussion was a document submitted on July 23rd by Banda with the approval of Healy. It was attacked on the Central Committee by Sheila Torrance and Richard Price in relation to its capitulation to the 'lefts' on the TUC which it stated 'refuse to capitulate to the Bonapartist state' and its silence over the betrayal of the rate-capping struggle by erstwhile ally Ken Livingstone.

Banda's response was to become further disoriented, announcing he intended to 're-evaluate' the previous thirty-five years of the Trotskyist movement. This was clearly a prelude to junking the entire his-



Gerry Healy

tory of the Fourth International.

A second document on the United Front by Dave Bruce written in August challenged the party's ultra-leftism — from the right. Like all organic opportunists, Bruce was able to attack the party's ultra-left disguise while, aside from attaching himself to the criticism of relations with Livingstone, remaining si-

lent on its opportunist content. The Gibson-Bruce faction represented that element of the party which saw a road opening up to occupying a centrist niche within the 'mainstream' of the British 'labour movement'. What characterised this group above all was its duplicity and cynicism. While the ranks of the party laboured all summer to raise a £100,000 emergency fund to bridge the yawning financial crisis, this group carried on manipulating the party's finances.

With Healy now largely absent from the day-to-day leadership of the party, a new 'power-sharing' leadership of Mike Banda (now moving strongly against Healy) and Sheila Torrance emerged. After a number of demands from party members for a control commission investigation into Healy's activities were received, the majority of the Political Committee continued to block and deflect these. In doing so, whatever the 'good intentions' of preserving party unity, a serious error was committed, opening up the PC to charges of unconstitutional action. Moreover the youth rallied in the initial struggle between Torrance and Healy were thoroughly alienated.

On September 6th an agreement was drawn up between Healy, Banda and Torrance for Healy's retirement. This included a clause which specified that no discredit would be placed on Healy's forty-nine years in the Trotskyist movement. As such it was presented as a fait accompli to the Political Committee and, in a sanitised form, to the first of two meetings of the Central Committee held during September.

In the Banda-Bruce-Gibson camp (now joined by Slaughter back from six weeks' holiday in Greece) openly right-wing manifestations were emerging. In Liverpool Tony Banda opened secret negotiations to discuss entry into the Labour Party, whilst contact was also established with the right-wing renegade, Alan Thornett (expelled in 1974). Peter Gibson began to turn the WRP's industrial factions towards the increasingly discredited and Stalinist-dominated 'Broad Left' in the unions. In one of the stranger episodes Mike Banda, on receiving a report from a member returning from South Africa on the developments in the settler community, began discussing seriously founding a section of 'leftward-moving Boers'.

While Tony Banda was angling for a comfortable seat in the Liverpool Labour Party, he drafted a statement on behalf of the North West District Committee of the WRP which called for the 'charlatans, quacks and traitors' of the Militant group to be driven out ('News Line' October 5th 1985). Under conditions of a major witch-hunt against 'Militant', this constituted an open invitation to the Kinnoch leadership to step up its attack, with the approval of Banda's 'North West District Committee'.

The hallmark of Banda's political direction came in the attitude of his faction to the youth rebellions in Brixton, Handsworth and Toxteth in September. In a letter written with Banda's approval to the 'News Line', Central Committee member Dave Good could find very little fault with Her Majesty's police force; but the youth of the inner cities he described as 'lumpen', 'backward' and 'racist'.

A provincial democrat speaks! Fortunately for him the oasis of Bracknell remained fairly quiet during these troubled times. For the 'News Line's' temporary editor, John Spencer, the main worry was whether 'riots' might spill over into....Wandsworth.

Meanwhile the political discussion on the Central Committee proceeded. A second Central Committee meeting was called in September. It was proposed by Sheila Torrance to take on the agenda correspondence relating to demands for a Control Commission. At Mike Banda's insistence this correspondence was referred to the next CC meeting scheduled for October 12th.

A further document was issued by Sheila Torrance, on September 21st. Whilst identifying the rightward direction of Bruce and co., it proved unable to elucidate any of the questions thrown up by Bruce's document — in particular the relationship of the WRP to the mass organisations of the working class. Drawing a false comparison with the position facing the mass German Communist Party in 1923, Torrance implied in the spirit of the 7th Congress that the party faced an immediate struggle for power.

In retrospect, it is clear that Torrance had one line for the members of the London District Committee who supported her, and a secret link established from late September reopening relations with Healy.

The immediate struggle for power which was on the agenda was in the party — and this she seriously underestimated. On the eve of the split in the WRP political tendencies were emerging rapidly, but political confusion reigned. Banda and Slaughter did not want to extend the political discussion any further, for fear it would smoke out their reactionary positions. Instead, they took advantage of the confusion to launch a coup in the party, under cover of a frenzied hue and cry against Healy. On October 10th — two days before the Central Committee was due to meet — supporters of Banda and Slaughter seized control of the WRP print shop in Runcorn using physical violence. They then closed down the paper, called a strike of the party's bookshops and finances, and ferried their supporters down to London to 'lobby' the Central Committee.



Cliff Slaughter

The consummate fraud of the proceedings of October 12th-13th was that Banda and Slaughter proceeded to indict the thirteen members of the CC who refused to go along with them as responsible for 'covering up' and 'supporting' Healy's sexual abuses. Of the thirteen only three — Corin and Vanessa Redgrave and Alex Mitchell — could be said to be part of Healy's inner clique. Banda produced an extensive dossier of Healy's abuses over two decades.

Had Banda and other members of the Old Guard now with the 'Workers Press' group turned a blind eye to this over a long period? To this day we do not know. If they had not, it seems astonishing that such a body of evidence (the bulk of which we have no reason to doubt) could have been accumulated in such a short time. So here we have Banda and Slaughter — two of the oldest party members — engaging in a death-bed repentance on condition that those least responsible do penance for their

own defects of leadership.

Mike Banda and Cliff Slaughter proceeded to produce a new revision of Marxism — that Healy's sex life determined his politics — and, entirely in keeping with Banda's rejection of the history of the Fourth International, rubbish the entire history of Healy. Tony Banda injected a dose of racialism, calling Healy 'an ignorant Irish peasant'. Torrance he later described as a 'Jewish businesswoman'.

Did Healy constitute the main danger to the WRP in October 1985? No. He had been in retirement and political disgrace since September. Banda launched his coup in the name of a majority of the Central Committee. Why could that majority not have waited two days, called a Control Commission and proceeded speedily to deal with the case of Healy? Precisely because Banda needed a cover for his lurching liquidationism, which has today taken him across the river of blood into the arms of Stalinism. *The main danger came from the right, represented by Banda himself under whose sole authority as General Secretary the coup was carried out.* Healy's sexual abuses, his debauched relations with female members of the WRP, were the distorted reflection of a lengthy period of developing opportunism for which the Old Guard as a whole bear a responsibility.

Banda and Slaughter rejected the road of re-educating the party and took the road of split, preparing lists of expulsions. After two weeks of intense struggle and physical intimidation by Banda-Slaughter 'heavies' the WRP split with the Central Committee 'minority' proclaiming a separate party on October 26th.

Both the legends propagated today by the 'Workers Press' and the 'News Line' are a mockery of what took place in October 1985. It was neither 'opponents versus supporters of rape' nor was it 'revolutionaries versus counter-revolutionaries'. Such was the sudden and explosive culmination of the split that no such clear demarcations existed. It is possible to estimate the forces each group mobilised at the time of the split at about 450 for the 'majority' and 320 for the 'minority'. By far the bulk of the party's paper membership of 9,000 took no part in the split, and melted away.

The split had no less far-reaching consequences on an international scale. Four sections of the ICFI together with the Workers League of the US supported the majority; two (the Greek and Spanish) supported, not so much the minority, as the individual, Healy.

On November 2nd Banda wrote that 'the party has been split not on tactical and programmatic issues, but on the most basic question of revolutionary morality'. In the new-found freedom of the Clapham headquarters Banda was the hero of the hour. Hamlet had finally plucked up courage after being misled so long to deal with his demonic uncle. Polonius-Slaughter dutifully played second fiddle, and composed tributes to Banda's 'courage'. The gutter press and television were invited in, given hospitality, plied with internal documents and given the addresses and telephone numbers of supporters of the minority. Within this swamp the liquidators continued and accelerated their rightwards lurch. Behind the form of 'anti-Healyism', the content was the *abandonment of the entire history and principles of the ICFI.*

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## Editorial

The common thread of this policy is to place the burden of 'modernisation' firmly on the back of the working class. Time and again Gorbachev's speeches return to the need to establish 'discipline'. Encouragement to criticise individual lazy and inefficient bureaucrats by no means extends to any rights to criticise the privileges of the bureaucracy as a whole.

The bureaucracy consumes a vastly disproportionate amount of the surplus of production. In order to deflect attention away from this, it has begun to offer a trickle of consumer goods previously unavailable to Soviet workers and the pledge of a home for every family by the year 2000.

Gorbachev has consciously sought a base of support among the intellectuals. Restrictions are being eased in film production and publishing, and certain works by writers such as Pasternak and Akhmatova, previously unobtainable, are being issued.

The Soviet Union has still to catch up with the weakest of the advanced capitalist countries. The Stalinist theory of 'socialism in one country' declares it possible to build a self-sufficient 'national' socialist economy. Only

two roads can overcome the isolation of the Soviet state. Either the extension of the world socialist revolution and the purging of the Stalinist bureaucracy through a political revolution or the overthrow of the nationalised property relations and the restoration of capitalism.

The Gorbachev reforms give the lie to the dogma of 'socialism in one country'. Far from being self-sufficient, the bureaucracy is straining to develop its trading relations, not least with Britain. This is the essential background to all the attempts to reach agreement on arms control with US imperialism and the lavish welcome given to Thatcher. Moves are being made to re-establish diplomatic relations with the Zionist state of Israel and the 'capitalist roaders' of Peking. Gorbachev's diplomacy gives Reagan a free hand in Latin America and joins with imperialism in condemning 'terrorism'.

The decision to honour the debts of the Tsarist monarchy — cancelled in 1917 — is more than a symbolic gesture. It announces the willingness of the Stalinist bureaucracy to open up the Soviet Union to foreign investment and to undermine the monopoly of foreign

trade, which Lenin called 'the cornerstone of the planned economy'.

Limited measures of private enterprise have been permitted, as have the introduction of co-operatives on a modest scale. Within the bureaucracy there exists a spectrum which undoubtedly includes a trend in favour of restoring capitalism.

One generation of Trotskyist leaders headed by Michel Pablo capitulated to Stalinism in the 1950s during the period of Krushchev. A second generation, led by Mike Banda and Gerry Healy, has embraced Gorbachev's 'openness'. Fifty years ago Trotsky wrote that the future of the Soviet state 'will be decided by a struggle of living social forces, both on the national and the world arena'. The direction of Gorbachev's 'openness' exposes the healthy foundations of the Soviet state to all the dangers of imperialist encirclement and penetration of the Soviet economy. Only the Political Revolution can restore workers' democracy and safeguard these foundations. This requires, above all, the building of the Trotskyist movement to lead that struggle.

To be concluded



# THE 'BIG LIE' OF WORKERS PRESS

## STATEMENT BY EDITORIAL BOARD

ON the evening of May 3, 1986, shortly after 10.00pm, Phil Penn, a leading member of the Workers Revolutionary Party ('Workers Press') group, carried out a vicious assault on Eric Rogers, a rank-and-file member of the Workers Revolutionary Party ('News Line') group. As a result, Rogers, an active member of the National Union of Railwaymen with over ten years membership of the WRP, suffered serious damage from glass splinters from the spectacles he was wearing and has been unable to resume work as a British Rail guard at Liverpool Street station.

Penn's attack came in the aftermath of violent police charges of pickets outside Rupert Murdoch's scab News International plant at Wapping. Police directly witnessed the assault and immediately arrested Penn. Following a court case in February 1987, Penn received a 12-month prison sentence with eight months suspended.

The evening of May 3 saw a demonstration of 25,000 join the final leg of the Glasgow to London Printers' March for Jobs. No sooner had the demonstration reached Wapping than mounted police charged the pickets. In subsequent clashes over 100 printers and their supporters were injured and 86 arrested.

Penn had, together with another member of the 'Workers Press' group, Zbigniew 'Bish' Wojcik, approached the 'News Line' contingent on the demonstration near to the Wapping plant with a string of provocative remarks and personal abuse.

Following numbers of mounted police charges, stewards from the 'News Line' contingent decided to escort youth and female members to safety. Penn caught up with a group of six WRP ('News Line') members, three men (Eric Rogers, Richard Price and Paul Williams) and three women (Kay Wrightson, Susan Keepence, and Mary McEntegart), as they were walking in the direction of Tower Hill station and were midway between Thomas More Street and the end of East Smithfield.

Penn, walking in the roadway, separated from the six on the pavement by railings, immediately began taunting them that they were 'running away from the police'. He continued this for 150 yards despite being told firmly to 'clear off'.

At the point where the railings ended Penn launched himself with fists flying towards Richard Price (then London District Secretary of the 'News Line' WRP) shouting: 'This time you're going to get it.' Rogers and Williams who were closer to

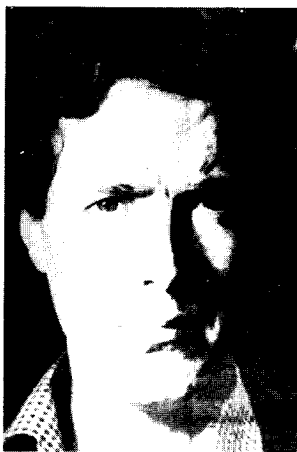
parry his frenzied attack. In the ensuing scuffle, which lasted less than 30 seconds, Penn grabbed the hood of Rogers' anorak and punched him repeatedly in the face, smashing his spectacles.

A police car was parked in a lay-by only 30 yards away and a coach, with about 40 police in it, 50 yards away. The police, having witnessed the entire incident, ran over within seconds and arrested Penn as the only person offering violence. With Eric Rogers' face covered in blood from cuts, Penn said as he was arrested that he hoped he had seriously injured Rogers. Police then took the names of two women witnesses to the assault.

Since the court case 'Workers Press' has engaged in a filthy slander campaign, accusing the victims of Penn's thuggery of themselves attacking Penn and 'collaborating with the state'. Although very few trade-union branches have responded to the campaign, the jailing of Penn has become a cause célèbre for every brand of international revisionism. We shall, therefore, repudiate the lies, slanders and inaccuracies of the 'Workers Press' one by one.

'Once away from the main body of demonstrators, he (Penn) came across members of the Healy-Torrance ('News Line') group. They verbally abused him, taunting him with quotes from the above-mentioned article. He refused to be provoked' ('Workers Press' 14/2/87).

Penn, as we have stated, initiated the provocation, accusing WRP ('News Line') members, who had participated in the



Phil Penn

Wapping struggle from Day One, of cowardice.

Four of them, Richard Price, Eric Rogers, Paul Williams and another man, then attacked him physically — in Price's case with banner-poles — and knocked him to the ground. In defending himself, Phil damaged the eye of one of his assailants. Only Phil was arrested' ('Workers Press' 14/2/87).

First of all consider the difference between this statement and Penn's evidence in court. There he maintained that he had been jeered at by a group of 50 to 60 people, had felt physically threatened and had decided that 'attack was the best form of defence'. Penn never claimed in court that he had been knocked to the ground. He admitted that having decided 'attack was the best form of defence' he struck out with both fists as hard as he could. He also admitted stating that he hoped he had hurt Eric Rogers seriously. Within days of his evidence the '50 to 60' people have narrowed down in the 'Workers Press' report to four: one of them unnamed.

The mystery of this 'fourth man' is easily solved. By the time Penn was arrested a fourth man had indeed arrived. His name is Joe Alefounder, a British Telecom worker, who had been 30 to 40 yards behind the group Penn attacked. As to the infamous 'banner-poles', Richard Price was indeed carrying two banners on poles. He did raise these to protect himself as Penn rushed towards him. However, Penn never made contact with Price or the poles as Rogers and Williams were nearer to him.

Consider the 'evidence': Long-standing members of the Trotskyist movement with no record of resolving their political differences through physical violence suddenly decide to attack Penn in front of hundreds of printworkers and under the gaze of the police. This is stretching imagination beyond belief!

'Unfortunately Eric Rogers' eye was damaged in the fracas' ('Workers Press' 21/2/87).

This is the most disgusting cynicism. 'Unfortunately' implies it was all a 'mistake', while it is conveyed that it was a comparatively minor aspect of the affair. Some members of the 'Workers Press' group are spreading the lie that there was no serious injury — others main-

tain a diplomatic silence. They should be clear that they are taking issue with the written evidence of a surgeon from Moorfields Eye Hospital.

Kay Wrightson, a member of the WRP for 11 years, who witnessed Penn's attack, is referred to as Kay 'Riddick' ('Workers Press' 14/2/87). She has not been known by this name for eight years. Referring to Richard Price, the same edition repeats the scandalous allegation that he attacked Penn. It goes on: 'He didn't take the witness stand — but his long time associates reliably toed the line while claiming not to know him!' Another lie. Among the unnamed, long-time associates presumably is included Kay Wrightson. She truthfully told the court that as a rank-and-file member she did not know Phil Penn, not that she didn't know Richard Price.

Penn's attack followed months of systematic violence by the Michael Banda-Cliff Slaughter group during and following the October 1985 split in the WRP. We will recall only the most glaring incidents.

On the night of October 10, 1985, a mob of deranged Banda supporters (most of whom have now left politics) attacked, with iron bars, WRP printers who were attempting to bring out the News Line. Among those attacked was the Runcorn printshop manager Ray Efford who had a known heart condition.

On October 13, 1985, Banda and Slaughter's 'Central Committee majority' voted to set aside charges against Banda arising from his serious assault on Corinna Gilbert, then a member of the 'News Line' editorial staff.

During the following months Banda and Slaughter's Yorkshire supporters several times 'roughed up' Ray Athow, a WRP Central Committee member who had suffered a heart attack a year before.

On November 28, 1985, and February 27, 1986, WRP ('News Line') public meetings held at Conway Hall were subjected to a 'lobby' of screaming, spitting, punching and kicking WRP ('Workers Press') members. On one occasion Central Committee member John Eden was kicked in the head and concussed.

At Deal on January 23, 1986, WRP ('Workers Press') members attempted to 'occupy' Betchanger Miners' Welfare to prevent a 'News Line' public meeting going ahead. They ferried down with them members of the highly dubious Spartacus League, who are well known for carrying out physical provocations in the United States.

The most vicious attacks were carried out at 'News Line' public meetings held in Liverpool and Manchester on December 3 and 12, 1985, by a team of thugs led by Tony Banda. Together with his brother he has now become an open Stalinist.

The 'Workers Press' group is currently circulating an 'open letter' addressed to 'rank-and-file members of the group which publishes "News Line"' ('Workers Press' 21/2/87). In it a shameful amalgam is made between the grotesque sexual prac-

tices of former WRP leader G. Healy and the outlook of members of the 'News Line' group. This serves to 'justify' the Penn assault. The 'open letter' ends by appealing: 'No doubt you have regard for the basic principles of the working class movement.' Here you have it! First you beat them senseless then you appeal to their principles! For good measure you call for them to be driven out of the labour movement as if they were fascists.

This group have adopted Stalin's techniques of thuggery, frame-up and the 'big lie' in relation to their political opponents in the labour movement. No 'principle' can justify this method of solving political differences. They are engaging in a bogus 'refounding' of the Fourth International. It serves their purposes in rallying the rag, tag and bobtails of international revisionism to have a 'hero' and a 'martyr'. This is the real purpose behind the ballyhoo surrounding the Penn case.

'Workers Press' counsels: 'If you have the slightest doubts about these events, if you are in the least degree dissatisfied with the explanations you are being given, follow them up. Look into history' ('Workers Press' 21/2/87). We have and we will!

History does not redound to their credit. On the contrary it condemns them. Throughout the 1930s the Stalinists conducted a civil war on an international scale against Trotsky's supporters through beatings and assassinations. Trotsky wrote that Stalin revised Marxism 'not with the theoretician's pen but with the heel of the GPU'. Slaughter's 'Workers Press' group are, to be sure, not lacking in comfortable political 'commentators', nor are this group Stalinists. What is instructive is the nice division of labour between the armchair academics and the group of political hooligans they head. 'Special duties' of breaking up meetings and beating-up opponents are not for gentlemen. Slaughter's 'revolutionary morality', however, does not prevent him from turning a blind eye to his followers' handiwork, or applauding Penn as a 'highly respected' member of his Central Committee.

The 'Workers Press' group attempt to justify their activities by pointing to Healy's use of physical violence against political opponents. Whilst we condemn all such assaults, it must be said that the 'Workers Press' group has, for all its protestations of 'breaking with Healyism', continued and extended these methods well beyond anything carried out by Healy.

Their second line of defence is that Penn was justifiably provoked by the printing of a crude attack on him in the 'News Line' Workers Notebook column two days prior to the events of May 3. Whilst dissociating ourselves from this vulgar and non-political piece, we note that Penn himself launched an equally crude attack on members of the 'News Line' group on April 19, 1986, in a 'montage' in the 'Workers Press' entitled 'Another

Unanimous Decision'.

Finally we will deal with what the 'Workers Press' parades as the 'fundamental principle' of the Penn case — the presence in court as witnesses of members of the 'News Line' group. If this is the 'fundamental' principle then the question of Penn's assault is a lesser question, a 'personal' matter, which it is hoped will be forgotten. No such absolute principle exists. Had Penn wished to make an out-of-court settlement or even an apology he had nine months in which to do so. At no stage did he attempt to contact Eric Rogers. Instead he chose not only to cover up his own reckless actions but he sought to try and frame his victim as 'violent'. This is reminiscent of the Stalinists who after their first attempt to kill Trotsky accused him of 'self assault'.

Workers' political parties under persistent violent attack have every right to use whatever means necessary to defend themselves. As shrieks go up from the revisionist camp, we refer them to Trotsky. Having insisted to the American Trotskyists that the Stalinists were a legitimate part of the workers' movement, he went on: 'Of course, we consider the terror of the GPU control, differently; we fight with all means, even bourgeois police' ('Stalinism and Trotskyism in the USA', New Park, p.22).

Revisionism in the workers' movement is synonymous with reactionary politics. The political apparatus gathered around Healy prior to the split of 1985 was a thoroughly corrupted and demoralised one. Penn, although a subordinate in this apparatus, was, until his sudden conversion in mid-summer 1985, one of Healy's most ardent sycophants and arrogant lieutenants.

Following the miners' strike he spied for Healy on any leading member of the WRP suspected of political sympathies with Sheila Torrance (then Assistant General Secretary). Also in this period he played a despicable role in 'framing up' the Management Committee of the Brixton Youth Training Centre. On July 1, 1985, when Aileen Jennings' letter containing allegations of Healy's sexual misconduct came before the WRP Political Committee, Penn vehemently denounced it as a 'provocation'. In the week which followed Penn mounted 24-hour guard on Healy, whilst continuing his spying activities.

The about-turn of a large portion of Healy's servile apparatus into his most rabid opponents has not altered their essential political character — they were and remain centrists. In their hue and cry against 'Healyism' they seek to off-load their own political responsibilities and at the same time bury Healy's revolutionary past, in the interests of their bogus 'regroupment' campaign.

We challenge the 'Workers Press' scoundrels — in place of trial by slander, submit your evidence on the Penn case to a commission of inquiry composed of respected figures in the labour movement acceptable to all parties.

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# EYE - WITNESS IN NICARAGUA

FOR six weeks during 1986/87 I was one of 29 people from Britain who volunteered to pick coffee as part of an international expression of solidarity with an embattled people of a small country in Central America. That country is called Nicaragua.

By Eugene Ludlow



In this article it is my intention to substantiate that solidarity on my return by helping to counter a comprehensive campaign of terror, misinformation and disinformation mounted against Nicaragua by the United States of America. The USA has been, and is being, supported in their campaign by many countries in Western Europe. Most notable among these has been the United Kingdom.

Coffee makes up 30 per cent of Nicaragua's total export earnings and this year's harvest (1986/87) is hoped to bring in \$130 million. Before the revolution, thousands of seasonal workers flooded in from Honduras and El Salvador. Escalation of the civil war in El Salvador and the presence of the Contras on the Honduran border have strangled that labour supply.

Paradoxically, another reason for the labour shortage has been the redistribution of land by the FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front) government since it took power in 1979. Before this, many campesinos (peasants) did not have enough land to support themselves and had to sell their labour at harvest time. Now they have received more land, people no longer need to do this.

These factors, taken together with an economic blockade mounted and maintained by the United States, plus its funding and supplying of a mercenary counter-revolutionary army on Nicaragua's borders, has certainly contributed to the drain on labour needed in the production of coffee.

Nicaragua is a small country no bigger than England and Wales. The population is just over three million. In order to combat US aggression, the FSLN decided to adopt similar methods to those used by the National Liberation Front in Vietnam, that is, to take the struggle to the outside world. This was the impetus behind the 'Nicaragua Must Survive' campaign launched by Vice-President Sergio Ramirez in 1984. It was an appeal to all those sympathetic in Western Europe to help Nicaragua survive the attacks being made on its right to determine its own future by the most powerful, and arguably the most arrogant, state the world has ever seen — the USA.

Because of the war and the US



PHOTO: DEBBY ALLAN

A Nicaraguan soldier relaxes at Laguna de Jiloa

trade embargo there are now serious shortages of many basic goods. Organisations such as War on Want and the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign (NSC) have been responding to this call. Just how chronic are these shortages and the appalling suffering they cause among the people of Nicaragua was to become apparent the moment Nicaragua's capital, Managua, came into view below our Iberia DC10.

Most of the city was razed to the ground in the earthquake of 1972 when 20,000 people died and thousands more were made homeless. This earthquake was double-edged in that besides producing misery and destruction, it also highlighted the corruption of Anastasio Somoza's regime. The National Guard went on the rampage, looting and stealing, and the National Emergency Committee institutionalised the misappropriation of emergency relief as it flooded into the country in the wake of the catastrophe. These developments helped galvanise the resolve of the FSLN to step up the struggle against Somoza and the National Guard — a struggle they had then been waging since 1961.

As the wheels made contact with the tarmac, a great cheer went up from the 'Nicas' on board who had joined our flight at Havana. They had been away in Zaire on various training schemes for two years. These people were happy to be home and as the plane braked and slowed, they waved to the anti-aircraft gun crews alongside the runway (Managua airport was attacked by Contras using CIA-supplied planes in 1983). To my amazement the soldiers, men and women, smiled and waved back. This would not be the last time I was to witness such expression of relaxed solidarity. The aura of commitment and resolve was something tangible, physical and reassuring. Time and again over the next six weeks, during moments of confusion and uncertainty, I was to dip into this ever-present reservoir of group confidence.

My first impressions of Nicaragua from the ground were of a strong, warm wind blowing across the 200 yards or so of tarmac where a small group of flat, white airport buildings was framed by exotic trees and shrubbery, backed by an azure blue and slate grey sky. Entrance formalities over, our brigade assembled in the small waiting area beyond Customs. We were welcomed by the NSC representative in Nicaragua, Dave Thompson, who has been resident there for nearly three years.

The heat in Managua comes as a shock to the whole system. Nicaragua is situated below the Tropic of Cancer, on the same line of latitude as Dakar in Africa, Madras in India, and Bangkok in Thailand. For a visitor from the northern hemisphere Managua brings new meaning to the word 'hot'.

Airport weary and jet-lagged, we waited for the bus that was to take us to lodgings on the out-

skirts of the city. Transport was organised through the CNSP — the Nicaraguan Solidarity Committee — who co-ordinate the political and human side of solidarity work. Transport anywhere in Nicaragua is at a premium, and it was a great privilege to have a bus put at our disposal.

The bus, a blue and yellow GM ex-Greyhound circa 1955, duly arrived and everyone pitched in to help the driver and his honcho load our assorted bags of kit on to the roof. A quick head count, and we were off on the first leg of an unforgettable journey. This journey was to provide me with a deeper insight into the meaning of such words as capitalism, imperialism, colonialism — oppression, poverty, and revolution.

The region of Matagalpa is situated north-east of Managua, roughly in the centre of the country. This is a mountainous area some 700 metres above sea level with peaks rising the same height again, and characteristic vegetation: pines higher up, deciduous trees at the middle altitude and meadowland in the valleys. Some of the finest Arabica coffee grows on these mountain slopes.

The Pan American Highway runs up from Costa Rica in the south, bears right around Lake Managua and continues north to Honduras through the regions of Matagalpa, Esteli and Madriz respectively. It is one of only two international routes in the country and the main north-south highway. The flat plain between the Rio Tipitapa and the Meseta de Estrada seemed endless and shimmered under a merciless sun. Large buzzards soared above while infrequent villages and scattered ranches were visible from the road.

Five times our bus lost power and ground to a halt. Each time, the driver and his mate would persuade the engine to continue while we sought the limited

shade of parched trees. Most of the other vehicles on the road were agricultural or military, with the odd campesino astride a donkey or burro. Horses are a luxury here. As we started the climb up to the Meseta de Estrada the bus packed up for the last time and the whole fuel system from tank to engine was bled there and then by the side of the road.

Neither of the Nicaraguans seemed perturbed by these developments, and an hour or so later we were being officially welcomed by a delegation of the Co-operative in whose area we were to pick coffee. We travelled by open truck up into the mountains that were to be our home and place of work for the next month.

Cutting coffee is extremely exhausting work. The day begins around 6am and continues through the heat or rain till 4pm, when the beans are weighed and bagged. The beans are encased inside a pulpy berry about half the size of a rosehip. They vary in colour from green to a deep cherry red. These produce the top quality coffee. Inside these berries nestle two or three actual beans which, via various processes, are extracted, washed, graded, dried in the sun, then reprocessed to remove a finer papery husk and finally packed for export.

Coffee as we in the West know it is not available in Nicaragua. All of the crop is exported. The 'coffee' consumed by the campesinos is made from the reject and unripe beans picked in error and known locally as 'pintos'. These are boiled up with sugar and water and bear a vague resemblance to actual coffee. This, along with fried rice, boiled kidney beans and a tortilla was served up for every meal.

In 1984/85, 200 coffee pickers were killed, 60 work centres destroyed and 11,000 hectares abandoned, coffee pickers hav-

ing been regarded as prime targets by the Contras in their campaign of terror and economic sabotage.

Nevertheless, an impressive display of national determination ended in January 1985 when the last of the Nicaraguan coffee harvest was gathered in. Thirty-thousand volunteers worked alongside 50,000 campesino coffee pickers which helped ensure their country's economic survival for another year. The volunteers came from all walks of life. About 1,000 came from other countries, including the U.K.

Due to the subsequent successes of the Nicaraguan army, and the now well-defended coffee-growing areas, 94 per cent of the 1986/87 crop was able to be picked.

In the next issue of Workers News I will document further Nicaragua's tenacious struggle against the forces of US imperialism. In anticipation of this, I end with a quote which speaks for itself from Edgar Chamorro, the former Director of the 'Nicaraguan Democratic Force', one of the Contra groups attempting to overthrow the Sandinista government.

'It is cynical to think that the "Contras" respect human rights. During my four years as a Contra director, it was premeditated practice to terrorise civilian non-combatants to prevent their co-operation with the government. Hundreds of assassinations, mutilations, tortures and violations against civilians were committed in pursuit of this policy.'

'Only when these practices were denounced in the United States and by human rights groups did the "Contras" feel obligated to do something about it. But no serious effort has been made to stop them because terror is the most effective weapon of the "Contras".' ('New York Times', January 9, 1986.)

## Part two to follow

### FUNDS

#### £300 MONTHLY FUND

Workers News will provide an urgently-needed Trotskyist analysis of the world economic and political crisis in the fight to build a revolutionary socialist leadership in the working class. To do this we need your assistance in raising the additional income we need every month to cover our costs. Please send a generous donation.

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# Trotsky's notebooks published

By Ian Harrison

*Trotsky's Notebooks, 1933-1935, Writings on Lenin, Dialectics and Evolutionism. Translated, annotated and with introductory essays by Philip Pomper. Russian text annotated by Yuri Felshinsky. Columbia University Press, 1986. ISBN: 0-231-06302-4 \$23*

**THE publication for the first time of Leon Trotsky's notebooks compiled during the period of his exile in France — 1933 to 1935 — reveals Trotsky's preparations for the defence of dialectical materialism as the world scientific outlook of Marxism.**

Trotsky was unable to complete his studies on Lenin and the history of the Bolshevik Party, contained in the second notebook, which were intended to answer the Stalinist bureaucracy's revision of party history and at the same time defend the platform of the Left Opposition as the continuation of the Leninist Bolshevik Party. From the notes it is also clear that Trotsky was concerned to counter the work of a number of bourgeois authors on the history of the Russian Revolution (including Count Carlo Sforza's book 'Makers of Modern Europe', published in 1930) and the role Lenin played in it.

The Moscow Trials, which began in 1936, forced Trotsky to put aside his studies on Freud and the role of the unconscious, contained in the additional notebook, as well as his notes culled from articles in the bourgeois press revealing recent advances in science and scientific technique.

The struggle to defend dialectical materialism as the science of Marxism and democratic centralism as the Bolshevik form of organisation was, however, to be taken up again in 1939 through the fight to defeat the revisionists Burnham and Shachtman in the Socialist Workers Party — American section of the Fourth International.

This, however, does not mean that the notebooks for the years 1933-35 are of purely academic interest. The substantial body of notes contained within the second notebook do share a common theme with the notes in the first and third notebooks, specifically, the transformation of quantity into quality — Hegel's first law of dialectics.

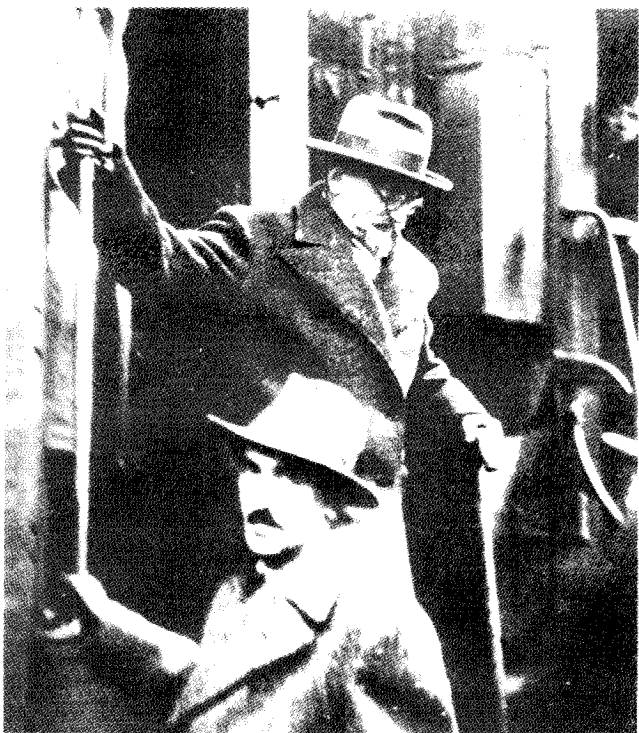
The reader who is familiar with Trotsky's polemics published in 'In Defence of Marxism' will find in the notebooks a number of ideas in an embryonic phase of their development.

For example: 'Contrary to a photograph, which is the element of formal logic, the (motion-picture) film is "dialectical" (badly expressed).'

Again: 'Cognizing thought begins with differentiation, with the instantaneous photograph, with the establishment of terms — conceptions, in which the separate moments of a process are placed but from which the process as a whole escapes. These terms-conceptions, created by cognizing thought, are then transformed into its fetters. Dialectics removes these fetters, revealing the relativity of mo-

tionless concepts, their transition into each other. (S. Logik, I, S.26-27) (pp.97-98).

The germ of this analogy between photography and dialectical cognition containing Trotsky's note '(badly expressed)' was reworked and refined as follows: 'Dialectical thinking is related to vulgar thinking in the same way that a motion picture is related to a still photograph. The motion picture does not outlaw the still photograph but combines a series of them according to the laws of motion. Dialectics does not deny the syllogism, but teaches us to combine syllogisms in such a way as to bring our understanding closer to the eternally chang-



Trotsky arriving in Paris on December 6, 1932, with his secretary, Jan Fraenkel

ing reality. Hegel in his 'Logic' established a series of laws: change of quantity into quality, development through contradictions, conflict of content and form, interruption of continuity, change of possibility into inevitability, etc., which are just as important for theoretical thought as is the simple syllogism for more elementary tasks' ('In Defence of Marxism', Pathfinder Press, pp.50-51).

At every stage in its history Marxism has had to do battle with bourgeois ideology, the academics and sociologists, as well as the form taken by bourgeois ideology within the ranks of the Marxist movement, including the revisionism of the Bernstein's, Bogdanov's and, in the notebooks of 1933-35, that of Max Eastman.

Eastman wanted to revise Marxism by dispensing with dialectics and proceeding with a socialist programme allied with Darwinian and Freudian ideas. But what attracted Eastman to Darwin and Freud were the weakest sides of their outlook. The notebooks perform an extremely valuable task in laying down a defence of the best side of the work of Darwin and Freud through a ruthless critique

of their weaker sides — a method that finds greater scope in Trotsky's notes for his work, never to be completed, provisionally entitled 'Lenin and the Epigones'.

The first notebook reveals Trotsky studying Hegel, the role of the concept and 'The negation of the concept in itself'. This study is deepened through its application to the development of the revolutionary movement in Russia. The connection is already made with the third group of notes on Darwin and dialectics when Trotsky highlights the concern of dialectics with 'transitional forms' which provoke 'the indignation of systematizers', but are 'exceptionally interesting to dialecticians, for they smash the limited boundaries of classification, revealing the real connections and consecutiveness of a living process' (p.77).

At a moment of crisis for the Marxist movement, when the

bulkhead. From this issues the most stubborn opposition in the conservative Anglo-Saxon world to dialectical thinking, which destroys all impermeable bulkheads' (p.89).

Just how 'conservative' and 'impermeable' the 'bulkheads' are is revealed today by the fact that 'Trotsky's Notebooks' were published last year for the first time in any form. Yet in Britain, which boasts a profusion of groups claiming to adhere to Trotskyism, not a single notice or review of Trotsky's work has appeared!

The history of the development of the revolutionary movement in Russia, the role played within that movement by the Bolshevik Party and, within that party, the role of Lenin as leader, will be of especial interest to Marxists in Britain. The struggle to build the Trotskyist movement in Britain has gone through many phases of development. Trotsky remarks of the years after 1905 that: 'The character of the collapse of the Bolshevik Party in these years was almost total and complete. Provide a picture (of it)' (p.80). (The reader's attention is drawn to the article on pages 6-8 of Workers News).

On July 15, 1934, while fighting to arm the movement for the Fourth International following the defeat of the German working class, Trotsky wrote: 'The vast practical importance of a correct theoretical orientation is most strikingly manifested in a period of acute social conflict, of rapid political shifts, of abrupt changes in the situation. In such periods, political conceptions and generalizations are rapidly used up and require either a complete replacement (which is easier) or their concretization, precision or partial rectification (which is harder). It is in just such periods that all sorts of transitional, intermediate situations and combinations arise, as a matter of necessity, which upset the customary patterns and doubly require a sustained theoretical attention' ('The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany', Pathfinder Press, p.437).

The crisis of leadership, which the Fourth International was founded to resolve, remains unresolved. The struggle to develop and train cadres in the method of dialectical materialism has not lessened with the passage of time, any more than the need for a party of the Bolshevik type, organised on the basis of democratic centralism. The disintegration of the Workers Revolutionary Party once again provides the sceptics and enemies of Marxism with an opportunity to attack dialectical materialism. Leon Trotsky's notebooks, in the context of this struggle, provide important lessons for the revolutionary cadre and are an invaluable supplement to his writings of the 1930s, in particular 'The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany', 'The Revolution Betrayed', 'The Workers' State, Thermidor and Bonapartism' and 'In Defence of Marxism'. If you cannot afford to buy this book you are strongly recommended to get your local library to order a copy.



Gerulf Pannach as Drittemann

## Raising the ghost of Cain

By Philip Marchant

'Fatherland' (GB W.Ger/Fr 1986); directed by Ken Loach; screenplay by Trevor Griffiths.

**WHEN Klaus Drittemann, an East German singer/songwriter critical of the Stalinist regime, is forced to leave his country on a one-way visa, he is under no illusion about what life will be like in the West.**

He knows that the bureaucracy's assertion that East Germany is 'socialist' is false — a beguilement used as a means of policing the dissatisfaction of the working class. 'I want true socialism, not their "real" socialism,' he tells his mother before he leaves.

When she, a convinced Stalinist, accuses him of putting his personal needs before those of the people, he explains to her that censorship of his work has prevented him from ever 'addressing the struggles of the people'. Socialism cannot be won by a leadership which avoids the uncomfortable truths about its own history and refuses to analyse the world as it really is. 'If I sing lies, I spit in their faces — and they will spit back, that is their right.'

But the particular strength of 'Fatherland', an ambitious first-time collaboration for film-maker Loach and writer Griffiths, lies not in its demonstration of the congruence of two different social systems on the question of political freedom. It attempts and achieves much more than this. Drittemann (played by Gerulf Pannach, a musician who was himself forced to leave East Berlin to continue his work) knows, even as he crosses the border from East to West, that monopoly capitalist domination of the music industry has the same effect in practice as the stifling hand of the bureaucracy's censor in his own country.

The driving contradiction of the film is not, then, the conflict between the expectations of a dissident and a system which cannot match them. 'Fatherland' is an examination of Europe's recent political past, stimulated by Drittemann's experience of Stalinism and capitalism, which takes him to a new level of understanding.

Brushing aside the attempt to market him by a 'progressive' West Berlin record company's slick publicity chief (a horribly accurate portrait by Cristine Rose), Drittemann heads for England in the company of a

French journalist, Emma (Fabienne Babe), to search for his father who defected from the GDR in 1953.

The detective thriller-style pursuit of the shadowy figure of his father provides a series of shocks which unseat his political self-confidence. The truth about his father, celebrated as a hero of the Spanish Civil War, is worse than he could have possibly foreseen. But this isn't just a personal tragedy. Drittemann, refugee from Stalinism, discovers that he never knew the worst side of the beast he was fleeing from. His confrontation with his father is his political coming of age.

Emma suspects that Drittemann's father, now known as James Dryden and living quietly in Cambridge with a new family, operated as a Nazi spy inside the Dutch Resistance during World War Two. At first outraged by this suggestion, Drittemann is eventually persuaded that it may be true. He visits Dryden — a fine performance by Sigfrid Steiner as the shell of a man, haunted by tortured faces from his past, waiting to be executed by one or other of the agencies he has served.

Dryden's 'heroic' role in Spain was to enforce the Comintern's criminal two-stage theory which held that the bourgeois democratic Republic must triumph over Franco's fascism before a struggle for socialism was possible. Anyone who offered resistance to this policy was in line for summary execution by the GPU secret police.

When Drittemann asks about Holland and the forty Resistance fighters betrayed to the Gestapo, Dryden is unimpressed: 'Forty was it? In Spain we killed thousands.' 'They were fascists,' says his son. 'No, we killed our brothers, anarchists, socialists, Trotskyists.' Dryden goes on to reveal that when Holland fell to the Allies, the Nazis handed him over to the Americans, who, in 1945, 'plugged him in' to East Germany as their own agent.

Ken Loach and Trevor Griffiths have combined their talents to produce a film which has both dramatic tension and high political integrity. It is stunningly photographed by Chris Menges. This is the most conscious film critique of Stalinism, on the one hand, and the reliance of so-called 'democratic capitalism' on fascism, on the other. It is playing at the ICA Cinema in The Mall, London SW1, where you will also find a three-week retrospective of Ken Loach films running from April 6.



## 'Workers are entitled to dignity'



MARK EDWARDS is 22 years old and has worked in the Post Office for 18 months. He is a member of the Union of Communication Workers. He spoke to Alistair Wrightson about the conditions at his workplace:

THERE are many layers of management, too many chiefs and not enough Indians. I have a lot of superiors at different levels. I don't like the way I am treated and spoken to by many of these people.

If you conform to their ways it would leave you with no pride and no self-respect. I think that workers should as far as possible have some respect for one another. Workers are entitled to dignity. It seems especially bad when you are a young person.

I have also experienced racism. As a black youth, I have been called various racist terms by fellow workers. Terms such as mugger, ethnic, nigger, Kaffir. In fact, I must say racism is rife where I work. I can't always cope well with the tension this causes in me, but if I happened to lose my self-control and retaliate I would probably lose my job. I haven't found the union representatives where I work do anything about this kind of problem.

There was an occasion when I was struck by the PED (Postal Executive Grade D) while I was hand-stamping packets and told to put some first class letters on the sorting bay. I was very angry that he had struck me and I told him never to put his hands on me again. I was accused of refusing an order and told to go into the office.

In the office the PED said that if I complained about the incident and made a report against him, as a young probationary, there were ways available to him to get me sacked.

I refused to listen to these threats and left the office intending to find the trade-union rep and report the incident to him, but he had finished his shift and had gone home.

I was then approached by the Assistant Chief (the manager in overall charge of the floor) who said I was over-reacting and that, as the PED was of Asian extraction, he had different ideas and ways. I said I was going to report it to the union but he asked me not to and if I ever had any problems in the future to come to him and have a chat.

I did make a report, a written report, for the trade-union rep, but that was more than seven months ago and nothing has been said or done about the incident.

Although I am a member of the union, I don't yet take an active part in my branch but I still feel it is wrong for trades unions and the TUC to support the Manpower Services Commission which forces youth onto low-paid work schemes. I don't think it's

the place of unions to support thousands of young people working for slave wages in bad and dangerous conditions, with no hope of a permanent job and living wage at the end of it.

There are Youth Training Schemes in the Post Office, but I think they get their allowance topped up. We also have casual workers, but I think they have been accepted by the union. There was a blow-up some months ago when they brought in casuals. We thought it would affect our bonus system and we would lose earnings and even jobs. After reassurances from our union man that our jobs and bonuses were safe, things calmed down.

**THE introduction of Job Training Schemes (JTS) represents a new stage in the development of a cheap-labour economy in Britain. Work experience for youth still at school will now be complemented by 'work for your dole' schemes when they leave school.**

Lord Young, the Tory Employment Secretary responsible for cheap labour, outlined proposals for the JTS at last year's Tory Party conference. Measures taken by the Tories in relation to Social Security benefits now constitute a mine-field for claimants.

was done.

Abbus explained how, once they had been moved onto the estates, essential services began to slowly disappear. On the Shadwell Gardens estate in Spitalfields, refuse collection and maintenance work were all but halted.

'It is institutionalised racism. The trouble was we had very few Bengalis within the structure to fight for these things for us.'

1975, then, saw the first radical youth involvement through the issue of housing. The next major movement of youth came in 1978.

'That was to fight the fascist movements. Two Bengali men, Altab Ali and Ishaque Ali, were killed by racists. Through their brutal murder the youth came out, organised and fought to get people to realise what was happening.

'We set up groups that could campaign and fight against the fascist menace.

'The National Front (NF) were rampaging up and down Brick Lane and would sell their paper at the end of the street. We would usually try to get there before they did and take over the spot. One memorable photograph from that time shows a solitary NF paper seller surrounded by over 400 police trying to protect him.'

'After the '78 trouble was over the groups returned to their patches and began to create the facilities that we needed. For instance we could not go into white youth clubs in the area — we would just be threatened with getting beaten-up — so we started our own. We wanted to build a safe environment to live in.

'As separate groups, however, we found that the white institutions were trying to use us — playing one group off against the other. We had to unite and we needed a national platform to campaign on issues which were acute to all Bengalis, all over the country.

'That was why we formed the FBYO which has affiliates nationwide including Birmingham, Bedford, Sunderland and Manchester. Through it we have made some gains and through pressure got Bengalis into positions where they can represent

## Bengali youth defend community

By Graham Fenwick

THE youth organisations built by Bengali immigrants to Britain are quite unlike any other, according to Abbus Shukur, a founder member of the Bangladeshi Youth Movement and later the Federation of Bangladeshi Youth Organisations (FBYO) which now has 23 affiliates nationwide.

'We look after the elderly and most other elements of the society,' says Abbus. 'We hold welfare and immigration advice sessions, mother-tongue classes for youngsters; we have youth club facilities for 11 to 20-year-olds, women's groups and English classes. But it is all run and staffed by young people whose average age is 20. Nobody else was taking these things on so the youth did.'

Ever since Bengalis first began arriving in Britain in any significant numbers during the late 1950s and early 1960s, they have faced a bitter struggle for even the most basic rights.

Racism in all its 'institutionalised' varieties has been wielded against them from day one. But it did not take long before a struggle for those rights began and in the forefront were the youth.

'You have to look back at the beginning of racial attacks against the youth in order to get an idea of how things got to where they are now,' says Abbus. 'Most Bengali youth began to organise for the first time in 1975. It started when the Greater London Council (GLC) brought out a plan which we called "the ghettoisation plan". They earmarked some of the most run-down estates in the East End of London upon which exclusively Bengali families were to be housed. We said "No! This is pure ghettoisation".'

'But they kept up the pressure and the youth were the first to come out against the plan. The GLC then said they would withdraw it and the protests died down but, in reality, the plan went ahead. White council officers were in charge of housing allocation and that is how it

# 'WORK FOR DOLE' SWINDLE

By Lizzy Ali

Eighteen to 25-year-olds will now have to work for their dole under Manpower Services Commission (MSC)-backed managing agencies. The agencies will profit by receiving £58 per week for each trainee plus an average income of £20 on top from sponsoring employers.

The JTS will consist of six months unpaid work on employers' premises with only 150 hours off-the-job training (about six hours per week). The trainees, at the end of the course, will receive a certificate but no job.

Unlike the cheap-labour Community Programme and Youth Training Schemes, area local MSC boards and trade unions will have absolutely no role at all

in monitoring or approving the JTS.

For the Tory government, the necessity for the introduction of a new scheme arises because of the continued decline of the British economy. In order to compete with South Korea, Taiwan and Japan the Tories are driven to cut the cost of labour.

They have been testing JTS through the introduction of ten pilot schemes. In January this year it was officially announced that the schemes would be expanded to 200,000 places nationally. Where the schemes have been tested the Community Programme has been withdrawn. This currently pays a maximum of £65 a week and is only temporary but the JTS will

not even pay that.

The attack on wages is accompanied by the destruction of conditions under which the youth have to work. Truly a return to slave labour!

Responsibility for monitoring the health and safety standards on the new JTS programme rests with the Standards Advisory Service (SAS), currently responsible for monitoring the Youth Training Scheme (YTS). According to the charity Youthaid, the SAS only has enough inspectors to cover existing schemes once every three years and this under conditions where they are not able to enter a site until a scheme is already in operation.

The decision of the MSC to suppress damning revelations contained within the report coincides with an attempt by the Tories to withhold the report of the Health Education Council which establishes a direct relationship between the decline in health of working men and women and areas of high unemployment.

Youthaid also stated that on leaving the JTS youth will have to re-register as new claimants on the dole. The option of a place on the Community Programme will be lost to them until they have spent another six to 12 months on the dole as will the Jobstart allowance which tops up wages of less than \$60 a week to \$80 for six months.

The schemes are designed to drive a wedge into the working class by creating a large pool of unorganised, unemployed labour. One of the most sinister aims of these schemes is that they place the youth under the control of private management agencies.

But what are the Labour Party and trade-union leaders doing about these attacks? The TUC leaders continue to sit on the MSC boards while the Labour Party leadership have sidestepped the issue by slapping the TUC leaders over the wrists for not criticising the JTS. It should not be forgotten that the first schemes of this kind (YOPs) were established under the Callaghan Labour government with the full co-operation of the TUC leaders. They were seen then as a means to cover-up their refusal to lead a fight against unemployment particularly among school-leavers and youth. To this day the TUC leaders see the schemes, which the Tories have taken over, as their 'baby'.

The Tory attacks are of concern to all workers, not just the youth. The schemes go hand-in-hand with attacks on the trade unions and a new round of anti-union, anti-strike legislation.

While conditions emerge for uniting trade unionists with unemployed workers and youth, TUC and Labour Party leaders continue to collaborate with the Tory attacks. The struggle to defeat these attacks against youth and the trade unions requires a programme to mobilise the whole working class. At the centre of this programme will be the following demands:

TUC must withdraw from participation in the MSC.

Full trade-union membership must be extended to all unemployed and youth.

Trade-union branches must refuse to endorse MSC schemes.

Full trade-union rights for all youth on MSC schemes.

TUC must campaign for full training and apprenticeships under trade-union supervision and rates of pay.



Shukur (centre) working with younger members of FBYO

us.

'In Spitalfields for instance, the Labour Party would not recruit new members so we put up three independent candidates in the council elections as a protest vote. We won two and Labour just held the other by about 23 votes. That really shook them up. We've got five Bengali councillors now.

'Tower Hamlets council has never been that great. We had the Labour right wing in for years and they did nothing for anybody, let alone ethnic minorities.

'You could say we have made a dent and are slowly moving forward, but in order to get beyond that we need far more pressure. We all realise that it cannot be done by us alone. We need allies as well. People who truly believe in an anti-racist society rather than in window-dressing.

'So many groups and institutions will pay lip-service to anti-racism and I think we are too tied up in middle-class verbiage like "positive discrimination". We don't want that, we just want our fair share of the cake.

'We can't work with white middle-class ideas — categorising people and using words to cover for doing nothing.'

'The problem is that as we

have got wiser so have the fascists,' said Abbus. 'The NF are not marching down Brick Lane like they did in 1978. They go around in small groups attacking individual targets. They organise around school gates. But those are the thugs. The clever ones are moving into institutions. The fascists on the street we can cope with. If you can identify an enemy he is easier to fight than when he is hiding behind a big desk somewhere.

'The biggest problem at the moment is institutionalised racism within all fields: housing, employment, education and above all immigration policies. There are still people who have been separated from their families for five, ten, 15 years.'

'The youth growing up here now are third generation Bengali immigrants and the sooner society realises they are here to stay the better. If we give them a cultural identity they will be better equipped to fight. If you are stripped of that you've got no base from which to argue back against the racists.'

'Racism is based on ignorance and fear and both are capitalist tools. The education system in this country breeds ignorance. It is geared to fail 80 per cent and not the other way around.'