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FIGHTING FOR  
WORKERS DEFENCE

p.4-5

Whilst top officials of the TGWU Midlands Regional Committee prepare to victimise 9 Cowley shop stewards at the meeting of the committee on July 12 for allegedly bringing the union into disrepute, it is revealed that they have been covering up extensive ballot rigging by one of their own Regional Officers, Alan Law.

The ballot concerned was for three positions, one on the Regional Committee, one for the National Committee and one for the General Executive Council.

Law rigged the ballot in his capacity of secretary of the 4,500 strong 5/35 branch which covers road haulage in the Midlands.

Since being discovered he has admitted to casting 'block votes' in the three elections.

The word block voting is frequently used by bureaucrats to make ballot rigging sound respectable.

### Block voting

Block voting means that the secretary or branch officers simply cast all the votes themselves for candidates of their choice instead of allowing the members the right to vote as provided under rule.

Law's actions, which first came to light last November, when the ballot was scrutinised, recently became national news when two shop stewards from the branch took the mistaken step of making a complaint to the police.

This action—the result of months of frustration as union officials blocked their attempts to take the matter up within the union itself—is wrong in principle, since it brings the forces of the capitalist state into the labour movement.

Detectives of Birmingham's commercial squad visited TGWU Regional Office in West Bromwich last Friday and questioned Regional Secretary Brian Mathers.

Detective Chief Inspector Peter Pickard said afterwards that the union's officials had been "cooperative" and inquiries were continuing.

### Own choice

When the ballot was scrutinised last November it was found that Law had personally cast nearly all of the 4,500 votes allocated to his branch in favour of two candidates of his own choice. And this for committees which run an entire union of two million members.

When questioned he said that he had done this because he did not have enough time, and sufficient office staff, to send out the ballot papers to the members!

Yet TGWU branch secretaries receive up to 15% of contributions in commission, which in a branch such as the 5/35 could amount to hundreds of pounds a week.

Branch secretary's commission is the biggest single expenditure of the union, and is paid precisely in order that they carry out such duties as conducting ballots.

### 'Null and void'

It is not the job of full-time paid office staff to do a branch secretary's duties.

The action of the Regional Finance and General Purposes Committee—the same five people who conducted the hearings into the Cowley 9—when informed of the incident last



Mathers (left) with Regional Chairman Davies arriving to sit in judgement on the Cowley 9 in February.

# WITCH HUNTERS COVER UP BALLOT RIGGING!

## Guilty official keeps full time position



Law

November, was to declare the ballot null and void and to ask Law to resign as branch secretary. This Law promptly did.

They also took the opportunity to break up the 5/35 branch into three branches, an action which was more connected with the militant role the branch was playing at that time in the tanker drivers' pay dispute than the irregularities of the secretary.

Law, however, was allowed to continue in his key job as a Regional Official, negotiating for 14,000 Midlands Road Haulage drivers.

Yet in Cowley, unprecedented disciplinary action by this same Midlands Regional F&GP threatens to remove from office an entire factory leadership, only recently elected in a strictly scrutinised shop floor ballot.

Deputy convenor Alan Thornett is recommended for expulsion from the union and others, including convenor Bob Fryer and two other deputy convenors with disciplinary action including banning from all offices for life for such 'crimes' as walking out of a

meeting without permission of the chair, circulating details of branch finances (including the size of the secretary's commission) to branch members, opposing Jack Jones on the question of the social contract and "campaigning" against officers of the union.

Presumably it is considered more serious in the TGWU to campaign against officers, than to rig the ballots in order corruptly to determine who the officers should be!

### Red handed

Militants are witch-hunted and threatened with expulsion because they oppose the policies of the officials, but officials caught red handed committing one of the worst crimes in the trade union movement, ballot rigging, get a slight rap on the knuckles.

There is now clear evidence that Regional Officials intend to proceed against the Cowley 9.

The minutes of the last meeting of the Region 5 Committee held in April, which have only just been circulated, state that the reports compiled on the Cowley 9 by the two Regional

inquiries held in February and March will be "considered" at the next meeting of the Regional Committee.

Although those hearings stand adjourned whilst the status of the "evidence" submitted in an individual capacity by the officers of the Oxford Trades Council is investigated, these minutes can only be interpreted as a declaration that they intend to act against the 9 on July 12.

A 140-strong meeting of the Cowley Assembly Plant shop stewards, numbers of TGWU Branches, and nearly 150 militants within the TGWU have backed the demand that these trumped up charges be dropped at once.

Regional officials are ignoring these demands and proceeding with their victimisation.

In the Law case, too, the TGWU officials are flouting the views of the membership. A mass meeting of 500 drivers held in Birmingham last Sunday unanimously demanded an investigation by branch members and national officers into the conduct of the recent

rigging on an even bigger scale were widely raised in the British Leyland Cowley Body Plant in December 1975.

There, the Regional F&GP claimed that there had simply been a "technical infringement" of the rule and ordered a fresh ballot on this basis.

The "technical infringement" Mathers identified as the destruction of the ballot papers before they could be scrutinised!

If Mathers is right, it means that union bureaucrats can rig ballots with impunity and when they are caught, simply declare it null and void and hold the ballot again!

The Law affair again calls into question all aspects of TGWU ballot procedures.

Great parcels of unmarked and completely unidentified ballot papers are sent to branch secretaries and it is left to two or three branch officers to fill in return sheets and send them to Region.

It is this discredited and corrupt union bureaucracy that is now attempting to hound out its political opponents through the Cowley 9 victimisations.

The answer must come loud and clear.

\*Drop the charges against the Cowley 9.

\*For an inquiry by branch members and national officers into Region 5 elections—with the results open to the membership.

\*Keep the law out of the unions.

\*For new ballot procedures within the TGWU with numbered and identifiable ballot papers.

\*For the right of the individual member to question and scrutinise the ballot.

\*For the election of all officials by democratic procedures.

elections in Region 5. Despite this, no disciplinary charges are being laid against Law and no investigation undertaken.

Whilst accepting Law's guilt in the matter, Mathers argues that the ballot rigging was carried out only in Law's capacity as branch secretary.

No complaints, he says, have been received regarding his position as a negotiator in road haulage—therefore his Regional Officer's position is not in question!

But again very different treatment is being meted out to Cowley 9 victims Alan Thornett and Frank Corti.

All the allegations against them concern their positions as officers of the 9/293 branch, yet Thornett is recommended for expulsion and Corti to lose his steward's card as well as his branch position!

Mathers has said that neither the union or its officers has anything to fear from any investigation since the ballot has been rerun and this has "set the matter right".

This is the same technique used when allegations of ballot



INTERNATIONAL

# Chad guerrillas confront French troops

Flown in by the US air force, troops from the reactionary pro-imperialist regimes of Morocco, Senegal and Gabon are now beginning to replace the French and Belgian paratroopers in Zaire.

The French foreign legion has completed its mission of brutally crushing one phase of the continuing rebellion against Mobutu's dictatorship. But the partial withdrawal of French forces from central Africa does not end the direct military intervention of Giscard's government in the continent.

### Central role

In the western Sahara, French troops continue to fight alongside the Moroccan and Mauritanian occupation forces against the liberation struggle led by the Polisario Front.

Farther east, in the Republic of Chad, French forces are playing an increasingly central role in propping up the military dictatorship of General Felix Malloum.

The French bourgeoisie has a long history of strenuous involvement in this former colony, a massive territory that is sparsely populated and deeply impoverished.

### Popular uprisings

De Gaulle sent in troops to preserve the corrupt and brutal dictatorship of President Tombalbaye against popular uprisings and threats from the military.

After a brief display of pique when this regime was toppled by a military coup, the French government has given its assistance to the new dictatorship of Malloum.

Without this vital aid, the military dictatorship would

undoubtedly have collapsed as the FROLINAT (Front for the National Liberation of Chad) advanced.

The FROLINAT now is in complete control of the mountainous and desert region which makes up the northern third of the country.

As its forces are fighting for control of the central grasslands, uprisings have developed throughout the south of the country in support of the rebel armies.

In the past, Gaddafi's regime in Libya was the principal sponsor and supplier of the FROLINAT.

In exchange for this help, the Libyan dictator seized the chance of expanding his territory along the lengthy border with Chad.

### Beyond control

But now it has become clear that the FROLINAT has passed beyond the control of Gaddafi.

The Muslims of the north have been joined by Christians and animists from the south in their struggles against Malloum.

The rebellion in Chad can no longer be fitted to any schema of racial or religious tensions. It is these mass developments which have alarmed Gaddafi.

This hero of the WRP's daily *Newsline* is now desperately working to arrange negotiations between the Malloum dictatorship and the FROLINAT.

He has been supported in this by the governments of neighbouring Niger and Sudan, Malloum and former leaders of the resistance who, have made their comfortable peace with the dictatorship.

But the present leadership of the FROLINAT has so far refused adamantly to



come to Libya for talks.

These anti-imperialist struggles of the Chad masses must be supported and developed by workers internationally.

It is vital that those thousands of workers who

recently demonstrated in Paris against French imperialism now take up a fight throughout the labour movement for the immediate withdrawal of all French troops from Africa.

## Soweto anniversary police crackdown

At least 600 black militants have been arrested in the last few days in an attempt by the racist authorities in South Africa to prevent any mass mobilisations on the second anniversary of the outbreak of the Soweto uprising.

Over a million blacks are reported to have taken part in commemoration of the anniversary.

Black areas were cordoned off and thousands of police

checkpoints and road-blocks set up.

The authorities had support in their attempt to prevent disturbances from Dr. Nthato Motlana, the leader of the "Soweto 10", along with a number of priests and other self-styled black leaders.

### Hymn singing

These 'leaders' tried to demobilise the anger of the masses by organising a series of church services, hymn singing and sermons, to mourn the 600

or more black South Africans killed by the police in the clashes which began in Soweto in June 1976.

Motlana himself, in a televised speech, demagogically proclaimed that the struggle for black liberation was a "moral struggle" to be fought not with guns but with "moral weapons".

But the demagoguery fell flat and his large audience remained silent and unimpressed, underlining the crucial need for the construction of a Marxist leadership to sweep aside these obstacles to the overthrow of apartheid.

## Maoist murdered

A MEMBER of the pro-Albanian party, the UDP, was murdered by the police in Lisbon on June 10.

The "democratic" Portuguese police were attempting to disperse a UDP counter-demonstration to an officially authorised 300-strong demonstration of fascists.

## Brazil pay strikes

BRAZIL'S FIRST strike for 10 years, which four weeks ago spread like wildfire through the automobile industry in Sao Paulo, has ended, but not before giving an electric shock to the dictatorship.

The strikes on the whole ended in at least partial victories with most employers granting wage increases or at least agreeing to consider them.

Though the regime declared the strikes illegal, it did not dare

to act against them directly.

And the officially supported Presidential candidate General Joao Baptista Figueiredo, head of the security police, was forced to declare himself in favour of a change in the law to permit collective bargaining.

The success of the strike, however, looks likely to spark off further working class actions which will far outpace any "reforms" which the military-backed regime is willing to consider.

# Eritrea's historic liberation fight

David Whitfield traces the history of the struggle of the Eritrean people for self-determination against both imperialist powers and a succession of repressive regimes in Ethiopia. Part One.

The Eritrean revolution is now facing the greatest threat in its long history of fierce and heroic struggles.

The repressive military junta of Ethiopia is massing its armies in the border territories to launch an onslaught of annihilation against the Eritrean war of liberation.

The Derg has fabricated historical evidence to justify its claims to the Eritrean nation.

But it is certainly true that these brutal dictators are not the first to seek colonial rule over the coast-

Ethiopia and the Red Sea. The state of Ethiopia itself was formed only in the late nineteenth century. As feudal and tribal wars racked the region in a process of violent unification, the colonial expansion of the European powers stretched into the 'Horn of Africa'.

The Italian, French and British imperialists seized the coastal areas and divided them amongst themselves.

But the armies of the feudal Emperor Menelik (who now controlled most of the interior) inflicted a humiliating defeat on the Italian army in 1896. His

continue its barbaric existence.

The borders of the imperialist colonies form the basis of the present-day states in the region.

Somalia unites the former Italian and British territories, while the French enclave of Djibouti has now become the Republic of the Afars and the Issars.

Eritrea was a separate colony of the Italian bourgeoisie. Five years of resistance had ended with defeat in 1889.

It was from here that the armies of Mussolini's fascist state invaded Ethiopia in 1935.

Haile Selassie—the ruth-

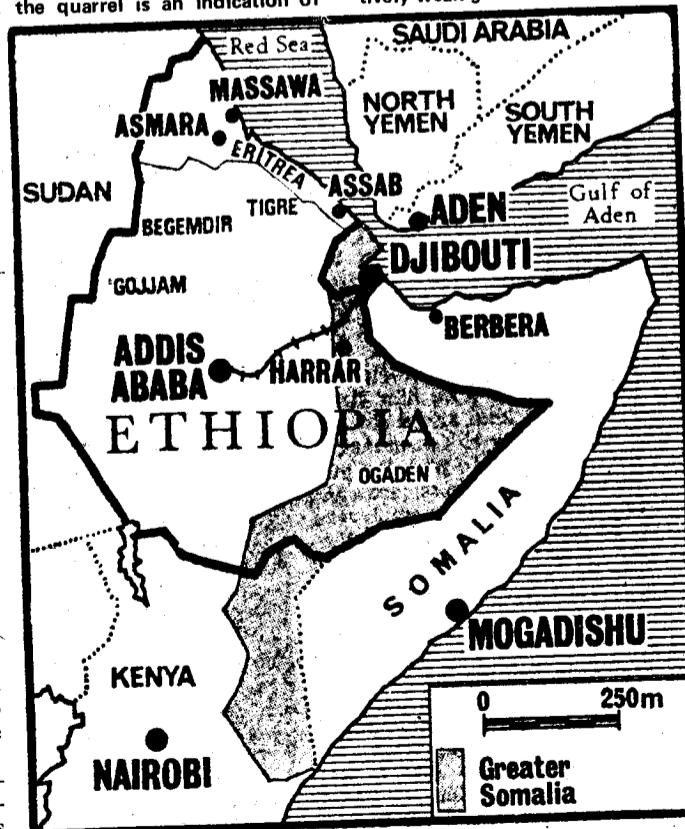


lessly ambitious autocrat who had finally gained power after Menelik's death—was forced to flee to England, and take up exile in Bath.

But the Italian occupation was never able to overcome the mass struggles which continually erupted any more than it had been able to subjugate completely the resistance of the Eritrean people.

In 1941, the armies of the British state "liberated" Ethiopia and Eritrea. Despite popular opposition, Haile Selassie was restored as Emperor.

His despotic rule was maintained solely by the

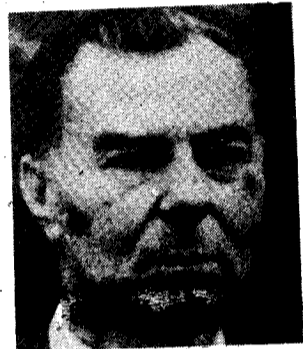


strength of British imperialism, and it was British troops and bombers which savagely repressed the most serious of the many uprisings, in Tigray in 1943 and in the Ogaden in the same year.

But Eritrea was ruled directly as a British colony. Imperialism was not willing

to delegate the patrolling of the strategically vital Red Sea coast, even to so servile a client as Haile Selassie, and still had the power to enforce its naked rule.

Continued next week



Tindemans

## European coalitions hit snags

A full-scale government crisis has arisen as a result of a difference between the Premier Tindemans' Social Christian Party and its coalition partners the Socialists plus two small regional parties.

The Tory-Labour coalition is split over economic policy. Tindemans wants new cuts in public spending when unemployment is already in percentage terms the highest in Western Europe.

The Socialist Party is treacherously prepared to accept the cuts, but wants some obvious quid pro quo in the form of greater regional autonomy for the French and Flemish speaking communities.

Last week Tindemans resigned. King Baudouin's request to him to stay on and patch up the quarrel is an indication of

the Belgian capitalists' fear of the explosive consequences of a break in the class collaborationist coalition.

In neighbouring Holland, economic problems have also caused major problems for the government.

The mainly Tory government failed last week to announce, as it had promised to do, a new austerity budget.

The reason was a reported split in the cabinet, some members fearing that the exceptional harshness of the measures proposed by the Finance Minister could provoke a wave of working class protest which would unseat the already relatively weak government.

INTERNATIONAL

# Mao's heirs develop Stalin's line

"One theme emerged particularly clearly. Our shared views outweigh our differences. We both oppose efforts by others to seek a monolithic world. Neither of us dispatches international marauders who masquerade as non-aligned to advance big power ambitions in Africa. Neither of us seeks to enforce the political obedience of our neighbours through military force".

(Applause).

The speaker, not surprisingly was Brzezinski, chief hawk of the Carter administration.

But he was not speaking in some two-bit Mid-west town in the USA but at a banquet in Peking.

Chairman Hua in reply denounced not only "social-imperialism" throughout the world, but also Vietnam's role in aiding USSR expansionism in S.E. Asia.

To make it absolutely clear that in no way would they support the struggles against imperialism and its agents in Africa, Huang Hua, Chinese Foreign Minister, rushed out to see the dictator Mobutu to assure his regime of Chinese support and to join in with the growing anti-Communist witch-hunting currently directed against the Soviet Union and Cuba.

## Not new

Huang also mounted the rostrum at the United Nations session on disarmament to denounce the USSR as the "most dangerous source of a new world war".

Now, it is true that these statements are not new coming from the Chinese bureaucracy.

During the struggles in Angola they supported the pro-South African forces against the Cuban-backed MPLA liberation fighters.

What is new is the growth of a cold war situation. The Chinese bureaucracy makes these statements now under conditions of the developing economic crisis of capitalism and increasingly predatory advances towards the workers states.

The actions of the Chinese leadership serve only to aid imperialism and are used as a weapon against the developing struggles of the working class internationally.

How is it then that the bureaucracy of one (deformed) workers state can have arrived at such a situation as to endanger the existence of the other workers states?

It is also to be remembered that revolutionary China was considered by many to be less bureaucratic and with a less Stalinist leadership than existed in the USSR.

Many of the contradictions and pressures on the Chinese leadership are not peculiar to China.

## Most experienced

Stalinism internationally balances between the pressures of world imperialism and nationalised property relations.

When it comes to making deals with imperialism and holding back the struggles of the working class, the Stalinist bureaucracies are the most experienced and vicious force in the workers movement.

The reactionary "theory" of socialism in one country imposes insoluble contradictions on the development towards a socialist society.

These states are forced into compromises and making concessions to imperialism.

In the case of China, which unlike the USSR is not surrounded by dependent buffer states and still has a predominantly peasant economy, the problems are immense.

75% of China's 950 million people live in the countryside. Unmechanised but intensive production is the rule.

Total production of foodgrains, despite great efforts, has remained at about 0.3 tonnes per person per year ever since 1952.

This is about the lowest possible consumption to keep people alive and in reasonable health.

## Splendid isolation

Industrial production too, although far greater than in other developing countries, has not provided the material basis on which to build socialism.

Both steel and coal production, for example, have had a growth rate of only 1.5% per annum.

The methods adopted by Mao and expounded by the so-called "Gang of Four" were ones of splendid isolation and moral exhortations to the Chinese masses as during the "Great Leap Forward".

The new bureaucratic clique around Teng and Hua



Petty bourgeois refugees from Vietnam wade into China

however favour capitalist style methods of material incentives, bonuses and heavy penalties for any dissenters.

Along with these measures goes the new emphasis on training technocrats and a party and military elite.

The most chauvinist, anti-foreign culture aspects of the Mao era have been discarded.

## Enshrined

But agreements made out of necessity have been exalted to the level of great components of communism.

Thus, for example, piece-work is enshrined in the new constitution, adopted on March 5 this year, as a 'socialist principle' as is the right to accumulate personal wealth. The new official position is that "the fight for production takes precedence over the struggle of the classes".

Because the new bureaucratic clique has continued with Mao's "ultra-left" Stalinist line that "social-fascism" and "social-imperialism" are the main enemy, they cannot turn to the other more developed workers' states, especially the USSR, for assistance.

They also reveal their Stalinist position by placing no confidence in or reliance upon the world working class.

Instead, following the example of Stalin in his 1939 pact with Hitler, the Chinese bureaucrats turned to imperialism looking for favours in return for their anti-Soviet diatribes.

## First pay-off

Trade agreements have lately been made with Japan, Britain, West Germany, France and the USA—who agreed only last week to supply the People's Republic of China with sounding equipment for mineral deposits which could be put to military use.

No doubt this is just the first pay-off for the bureau-

## Dominican Republic: Reaction's new mask

There is still no official result of the presidential election in the Dominican Republic.

This is because supporters of ex-dictator Balaguer who appears, against all expectations, to have lost, have lodged numerous protests about electoral fraud by the apparently victorious Antonio Guzman of the so-called Dominican Revolutionary Party.

## Conceded defeat

But, after receiving the firmest instructions from Jimmy Carter and the CIA to call off the military coup initiated during the counting of the votes, Balaguer has conceded defeat to Guzman.

It is now becoming clear, however, that far from losing power, Balaguer and the most reactionary sections of the military have gained in political strength.

Because they will now exercise power through the new "revolutionary" President.

The CIA has organised a filthy deal in which Guzman

is allowed to become president only on certain conditions.

These include no changes in the senior military staff, no changes in the anti-working class economic policies of Balaguer and military approval of major cabinet appointments.

Guzman has gone along with this with relish.

It means, he hopes, that he will have the support of the army, the CIA and even Balaguer, and he can treat with contempt any pressure from the masses who elected him to carry out the reforms he promised.

He has already made several speeches squirming before the "self-sacrificing armed forces".

## "Counsellor"

Dictator Balaguer, says Guzman, will be "a counsellor of my government" and the cabinet will be composed of "the best men from all parties, including the Reformist Party".

So the "victory for revolution" is the same extreme reaction wearing a new mask.



US imperialist hawk Brzezinski poses with Chinese sailors

cracy's pro-imperialist stand.

The crises brought about by the national positions of the Hua-Teng clique become more and more frequent and acute.

The present conflict with the Vietnamese CP leadership stems entirely from an anti-internationalist standpoint.

Two million people of Chinese origin live in Vietnam, particularly in the south.

Many of them fled after the 1949 revolution and set up businesses in the town of Cholon.

## Vital measure

The flight of 70,000 overseas Chinese from Vietnam, some to China, and others to capitalist countries, began after the 27 March nationalisation measures in the south.

Clearly this step was a vital measure in the organisation of a planned economy in Vietnam.

But far from supporting a neighbouring workers' state in this action and taking a united class position, the Chinese leadership has attacked the Hanoi regime as being the same as Ngo Dinh Diem's.

They further accused the Vietnamese government of persecuting "Chinese people" and forcing them to

flee, and they have even sent boats to "rescue" them!

## Purges

Chinese television time has abounded with the sight of fleeing petit-bourgeois after they have been stripped of the booty they tried to bring with them.

At the same time as these international positions "develop", internal conditions show the attempts to consolidate a pragmatic, rigidly controlled society.

The *Le Monde* China correspondent A. Delain claims:

"... the new leading team manifests a liking for the concrete, order and discipline. They show more realism in their projects.

The credibility of the regime has been enhanced by this, and by increases in wages and the cancelling of some taxes, e.g. those on bicycles."

Alongside this has gone the purges, the reintroduction of the death penalty and the continuing attacks on the "Gang of Four".

## Protected its own

These purges, however, have been notably more numerous in the lower levels of the party.

The bureaucracy has in

general protected its own. On the Political Committee, besides the "Four" only Wu Kuei-hsien has been "eliminated".

In the provinces and the military regions only six of the forty First Secretaries have disappeared from political life.

On the level of vice-presidents of revolutionary committees in the provinces however, only one-quarter of the 380 have maintained their posts since 1976.

Obviously as Trotskyists we do not differentiate as regards supporting one section of Stalinism against another.

## Leadership

This latest squabble between bureaucracies hog-bound by national interests merely highlights the crisis in this counter-revolutionary force and the crisis in working class leadership.

The Sino-Soviet split does not pose a major threat to the struggle of the world working class and makes more urgent the task of the Trotskyist movement to build a revolutionary leadership in China and the other degenerate workers states for the political overthrow of the reactionary Stalinist bureaucracy and the defence of the progressive nationalised property relations.

# 'Let us protect you'

## -police chief

## tells black

## workers

A wave of racist shootings and knifings in the Lewisham area in S.E. London has resulted in proposals by the local black community to set up self-defence squads.

The move came at a meeting last Thursday, chaired by David Foster, chairman of the Lewisham 21 Defence Committee.

David Foster's son Chris, is one of the Lewisham 21—a group of youth arrested in a dawn police raid early last year and still awaiting trial at the Old Bailey on charges of conspiracy to steal.

David Foster's other son, Carl, who has in the past been active in the Lewisham 21 Defence Committee was one of three blacks who have been shot in the last two months.

He needed an operation to remove a pellet, fired

from a high velocity air rifle, from his intestines.

The response of the police to the proposed defence squad was to immediately condemn it as "gross irresponsibility".

Lewisham's police commander Maurice Taylor said:

"These matters should be left to the police. We are the people charged with the responsibility of preserving law and order in the streets".

But in the words of Mr. Foster:

"You can say we are taking the law into our own hands but the situation is so desperate that it requires action from us now".

### Racist matter

And as if to underline the need for the working class to take action, Commander Taylor, commenting

on the shooting of Carl Foster said:

"Whether it was a racist matter or a personal feud we don't know and will not know until the person who did it is found".

In other words the police have no intention of finding the racists responsible for this and the other shootings and are prepared to invent a "personal feud" as an "alternative explanation" of the shooting to divert from the real search.

Time and again, at Grunwicks, Lewisham,

Ladywood and Hyde in Manchester, the police have shown that their real job is to act on behalf of the capitalist state and against the working class.

This may mean smashing picket lines or defending fascists from the justified wrath of the working class.

And as the toll of racist attacks mounts in every major city the urgent need is for the establishment of workers defence squads based on the mass organisations of the working class.

Police "protecting" black youth on Grunwick picket line

Trade union branches, Labour Party wards, trades councils, tenants associations and the political parties of the labour movement must all take up the question of forming workers defence squads to protect the black population, to defend picket lines like that at Garners which has been attacked by racists, and to defend public meetings from fascist attack.

This, not surprisingly, was not the position taken by the Socialist Workers Party at last Thursday's

Lewisham meeting.

Through their organisation for black workers, Flame, they called for black self-defence (their slogan is Black Self Defence—No Offence).

The latest issue of their black workers' paper *Flame* also repeats their call for industrial action by black workers against racist attacks.

The SWP continually panders to the existing consciousness of the working class and these two demands continue in that



PHOTO: Andrew Wiard, Report

# REDS ON CARPET

The British Monarchy last week received one of its periodic visits from the Romanian head of state.

The affabilities surrounding President Ceausescu's visit were, however, marked by the sort of frictions which Romania's ruling families generally seem to bring in their wake.

One of Ceausescu's predecessors as head of state, King Carol, visited London for the funeral of George V in 1936.

The solemnity of the occasion, however, was regrettably marred.

### Hung-over

King Carol, finding the fleshpots of London so much superior to those of Bucharest, was too royally hung-over to walk erect in the funeral procession.

Hustled from an over-rapid resuscitation in a Turkish Bath he had to be supported along the route by a white coated masseur who duly appeared in the gutter press across the world providing the unbridled support to the Romanian Crown.

Thus when Nicolai Ceausescu (who is, among many other things, not only head of state, but President of the State Council, General Secretary of the Communist Party, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and Honorary President of the Romanian Academy) came to visit along with his wife, Elena, (who is on the Politburo and the Executive Committee of the Communist Party and also director of the National Institute of Chemistry) the Romanian Embassy were conscious that the dignity of a dynasty was at stake.

After all, leading and lucrative positions in the Romanian state are also held by Ceausescu's four sons, Nicu (head of the Union of Communist Youth), Ion, (Deputy Minister of Agriculture), Valentin and Flores, his daughter Zoe, his brothers Ilie and Marin, his brother in law Manea (Prime Minister) and his two nephews Ion and Corneliu (both Deputy Prime Ministers) to mention only a selection of the closer beneficiaries of nepotism.

So when Madame Ceausescu decided to add a further dignity to her person—an Honorary Degree at the Polytechnic of Central London—the Embassy passed on the message that the Communist First Lady wished to walk on nothing but red carpet everywhere she went in the Polytechnic—a total of over half a mile. (No red flags were requested!)

### Pomp

The worthy Poly administrators are no strangers to extravagant pomp. But this seemed a bit steep especially while they were trying to convince students and staff of the need for economies.

So . . . Buckingham Palace—no less—was asked graciously to intervene in the cause of moderation.

# PRESS GANG ALL THE QUEEN'S MAN

President Ceausescu of Romania demanded red carpets, an open carriage and his own room in Buckingham Palace.

He was clearly determined not to miss out on any of the traditional customs of the British

working class as he arrived with his expressions of international solidarity and his calls for revolution.

Admittedly his solidarity was reserved for the Queen and her state; the revolution was in trade relations between British businessmen and Romanian factories.

It confused the British press not a little. Ceausescu's visit to Britain was spelled out in an interview in the *Guardian* as part of the play by various factions of the workers states' bureaucracies in searching for capitalist allies.

Ceausescu in his own right would have been material for political assassination in the bourgeois press. But as an opponent of the Soviet bureaucracy he has become an acceptable figure.

Even the *Daily Mail* which (Bernard Levin apart) is the most determined smearer of the workers states, confined itself to calling Ceausescu 'This battling Balkan bear-baiter'.

The first Warsaw Pact leader to make a state visit to Britain is praised for his international diplomacy, his 'proud nationalism', the 'romantic ring' to his name and his vigour.

Attacks on the police state are confined to a few vague paragraphs near the end of a long article. The *Daily Mail* is aware of its political obligations, concluding:

'Romania is in a vulnerable part of the world—and it is this which makes Ceausescu's visit so intriguing'

The *Guardian*—having secured its exclusive interviews—was less deferential, mocking the Romanian leader's progress through the fuming motorists of London.

'The arrangements clearly pleased the President who waved like a windmill at Victoria and was still going vigorously at the gates of Buckingham Palace. The Queen sat beside him in her landau, looking a bit frozen, as the presidential hand whipped past.'



PHOTO: Andrew Wiard, Report

Thinks . . . "What a common little man he is".

tradition.

By arguing only for black self defence and black strike action, the SWP condemn the black community to isolation from the labour movement and encourage illusions amongst blacks that they can solve their problems by themselves.

At the same time these demands permit the SWP and those blacks who support them to ignore the urgent task of mobilising the whole of the labour movement to build workers defence squads—class organisations that can strike blows at the fascists who are a class enemy determined to use their racist policies to build a party to attack and destroy the organisations of the labour movement.

Because the fight for such a mobilisation is "difficult" and fraught with "problems" like confronting racialism head-on where it exists within the organised labour movement, the SWP prefer to aim their demands where they can be sure of a sympathetic hearing.

The Workers Socialist League will continue to raise the class issues involved in the anti-racist struggles and in particular fight for the establishment of workers defence squads to put an end to the fascist terror campaign of which Carl Foster is a victim.

The Daily Mail noted last week that Metropolitan Police Commissioner, David McKnee's attacks on the bail system "do imply a presumption of guilt not yet established by the courts".

But they do not let that stand in the way of a little morale boosting for the forces of the state.

"Men freed on bail, who use their conditional liberty to steal and mug and attack young girls, are being permitted to do damage to this country far in excess of the actual crimes they commit".

It is this, says the Mail, that has stung McKnee "a taciturn man by nature", to his attack. Nothing of course to do with the desire of the police to use custody as a means of locking up strikers, political activists and other undesirables on whom they are unable to make charges stick.



Part of last Tuesday's meeting

PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report



# Workers' defence call suppressed at protest meeting

Some 500 workers and youth—black and white alike—flooded into a stormy public meeting, in Spitalfields last Tuesday to register their hostility to the racist rampage by 150 youth the previous weekend.

Called by 'community action' figures and reformist immigrant leaders, the meeting was intended to hear GLC Councillor and Tory housing spokesman Mrs. Tatham.

Tatham is the person responsible for formulating the already infamous ghetto housing policy, according to which Bengalis should be allocated to special blocks of flats from which white residents would be excluded.

She attempted the futile task of defusing the explosive situation by claiming she had been 'misquoted' and terribly maltreated by the media generally with regard to her desire to herd the immigrant community together for their 'own protection'.

Arrogant and reactionary to the marrow, this poor man's Margaret Thatcher was met with bitter hostility by the overflowing 500-strong audience—composed not only of the Bengali community, but also of white working class families in the Spitalfields area.

A right-wing Labour Councillor fared no better, as angry tenants correctly blamed the violence of fascist thugs and racial tension on the chronic housing conditions, lack of amenities and dead-end prospects of their area of East London, which is centred heavily on the sweat-shop clothing trade.

## Betrayals

All these conditions have been worsened under Labour and Lib-Lab governments.

An Asian youth denounced the betrayals of the Labourite leaders and the attacks of the Tories, explaining that the fight against racialism involved not only the destruction of the divisive ghetto plans but a struggle for an end to Spitalfields social problems.

Contrary to the picture painted by the press the meeting showed the hostility of the white working class for the National Front fascists who have exploited the frustration of sections of youth in the area.

The traitors and class enemies on the platform were howled down time after time as they offered feeble apologies for their systematic attacks on the working-class.

Mark South, a supporter of Socialist Press received stormy rounds of applause when he explained the need to organise a fight back against the Labour traitors and the Tories.

## Council of Action

He argued that the meeting was only called as a protest and must go further.

The police protected the fascists from the working class and had done nothing to track down the fascist thugs who murdered Bengali machinist Altab Ali in the area, he said.

A Council of Action, based on the white and immigrant working class organisations in the area should be established to lead a struggle for jobs for youth, decent housing and living standards and to organise defence guards to deal with the fascists.

At this point the organisers of the meeting snatched away the microphone, ensuring that no resolution on this question could be taken.

Then began their practice of suppressing speakers who showed any sign of militancy by claiming that they came from 'outside the area'.

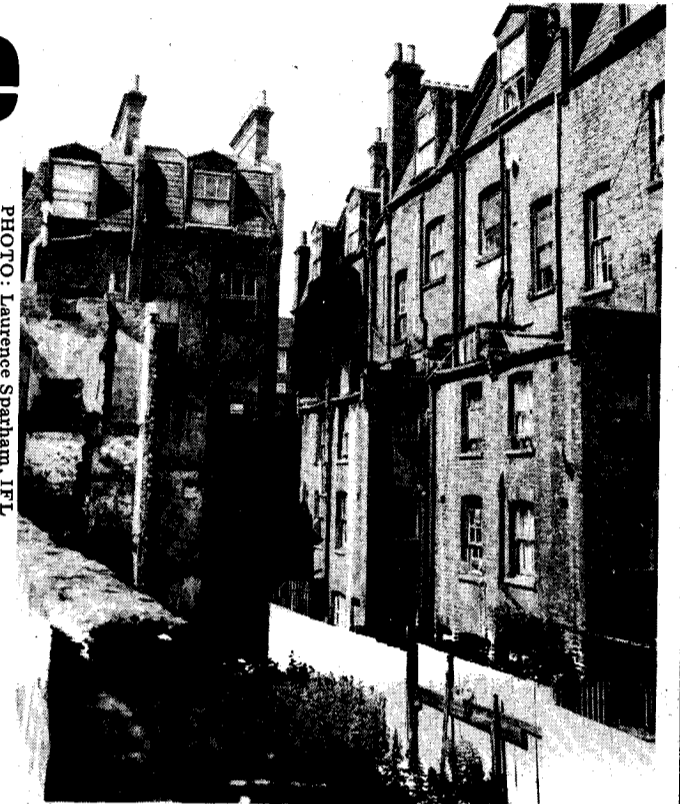


PHOTO: Laurence Spaham, IFL

Housing conditions in Spitalfields

In this they were assisted by a self-styled 'libertarian socialist' who warned the meeting of 'Trotskyists' and a group of radical 'community types' called the 'East London People's Alliance' whose star performer, Phyllis Barber, raged about 'outsiders' and 'troublemakers' from the sidelines of the meeting.

The enormous frustration let loose in the meeting demonstrated the readiness of the working class to fight and to respond to revolutionary policies.

## Tame protest

At the same time it demonstrated the crisis of working class leadership, in the form of the tame protest resolutions put from the platform, and the collapse of pretenders to revolutionary politics like the 'Socialist Unity' and the Socialist Workers Party whose speakers refused to take up any call for workers defence guards, or anything else that could lay down a challenge to the class enemy.

The GLC is now in crisis over its ghetto plans and is unable to implement them in the face of massive hostility.

Labour Party wards and GMCs must press resolutions denouncing the support given by leading London Labour councillors Sir Ashley Bramall and Ken Livingstone to the Tory 'ghetto' policy, and calling for the removal of its defenders.

But the struggle will not end there. The material conditions remain for the explosion in East London that will terrify all those who wish to chain down the working class to reformist protest politics.



Mark South—called for Council of Action and workers defence squads

# Broadcasting YS bankruptcy

WITH THE final offending footage snipped from the film on the instructions of the right wing, the Labour Party Young Socialists' own 10-minute party political broadcast on behalf of the Labour Party was screened last Thursday night.

On the theme of Youth the broadcast was a recruiting exercise aimed at tempting Britain's youth to join the Labour Party.

The LPYS is dominated by the self-proclaimed "Trotskyists" of the Militant group, who would have us believe that they are opposed to the right wing Labour leaders and their anti-working class policies.

But once the broadcast got going we were treated to ten minutes of solid illusion-mongering in the reformist

Labour Party by these so-called Marxists.

The broadcast maintained a bogus left image by stringing together a few facts on the ownership of wealth by a small minority and then proceeded to explain that the Labour Party is a "democratic socialist" party committed by its constitution to the nationalisation of the wealth of the land.

The Tories were (correctly) fingered as the enemy of the National Health Service, blacks, state education and the working class in general.

Young workers were urged to join the ranks of the "13 million strong labour movement" and the LPYS National Secretary was interviewed to explain the importance of voting for the Labour Party in order to change society.

At no point, however, did these so-called Marxists point to any of the attacks launched by the Lib-Lab coalition against the working class or the abandonment by the Labour leaders of the constitutional policy of nationalisation.

Not a mention was made of Callaghan and Healey's attacks on the NHS or education or the 1½ million workers on the dole or the three years of wage controls.

If further proof of the total bankruptcy of the Militant group's politics were needed, this was it.

As cheerleaders for the Labour bureaucracy they help provide the necessary left cover to deceive layers of young workers into placing their confidence in the Labour Party.



PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

Ghetto advocate Tatham



*Banda*



*Mitchell*



*Healy*

It is characteristic of political tendencies that adopt an opportunist position in current struggles that they light-mindedly turn their backs on the lessons of the past.

This has particular irony when the tendency concerned—as is the case with the Workers Revolutionary Party—was formerly a determined defender of programmatic principles central to the continuity of post-war Trotskyism.

Indeed, until 1975 (when WRP General Secretary Gerry Healy and his followers swung to uncritical support for the Vietnamese Stalinist party at the time of the defeat of the US puppet regime in Saigon) the leaders of the WRP and its forerunner, the Socialist Labour League, had, with few deviations, established a 22-year record of consistently emphasising the necessity of constructing Trotskyist parties in every country to lead workers' struggles against both imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracies.

It had been on this correct basis that in 1953 Healy and the British Trotskyists had followed American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon in signing the famous Open Letter.

**Open struggle**

The gist of this letter was that, sooner than capitulate any longer to the political line of the Fourth International leader Michel Pablo, the US Socialist Workers Party called on other "orthodox Trotskyist" forces throughout the world to join them in an open factional struggle.

This initiative was not wholly adequate, and certainly belated. But it was a correct challenge to Pablo's line.

Pablo had first invited such a response as early as 1949 when he began to advocate a liquidationist policy of "deep entry" into the mass Stalinist parties of Europe, which he anticipated would be forced by "objective processes" to break from their counter-revolutionary role and "project a revolutionary orientation".

This view, which flies in the face of Trotsky's analysis of Stalinism, was shared by Pablo's henchman Ernest Mandel, who argued in 1951 that in particular the mass CPs of France and Italy could be forced by pressure into breaking from their counter-revolutionary nature and leading revolutions (a false position that Mandel as the present-day leader of the 'United' Secretariat of the Fourth International, has recently revived in his assessment of so-called "Eurocommunism").

As a result of the Open Letter at the end of 1953, the International split into an openly revisionist International Secretariat—led by Pablo and Mandel—and the International Committee, which attempted the defence of orthodox Trotskyism.

Cannon, in the course of the split, spelled out the essence of Pablo's attack on Trotskyism:

"And if our break with Pabloism—as we see it now clearly—if it boils down to one point and is concentrated in one point, that is it: the question of the party . . . Pabloism aims not only to overthrow Trotskyism; it aims to overthrow that part of Trotskyism which Trotsky learned from Lenin."

"Lenin's greatest contribution to his whole epoch was his idea and his determined struggle to build a vanguard party capable of leading the workers in revolution . . ."

"That is written into the Transitional Programme, that Leninist concept of the decisive role of the revolutionary party. And that is what the Pabloites are throwing overboard in favour of the conception that the ideas will somehow filter into the treacherous bureaucracy, the Stalinists or reformists, and in some way or another, "In the Day of the Comet", the socialist revolution will be realised and carried through to conclusion without a revolutionary Marxist, that is, a Leninist-Trotskyist, party. That is the essence of Pabloism. Pabloism is the substitution of a cult and a revelation for a party and a programme".

*Speeches to the Party*, pp.181-2.



*James P. Cannon: right in 1953, wrong in 1963 on role of Marxist party.*

Cannon's final sentence certainly has added significance in relation to the WRP's line on Libya today!

**Capitulate**

But while Pablo's revision of the Trotskyist programme and abandonment of the perspective of building Trotskyist parties to lead an independent struggle began in 1949 on the question of Stalinism, the upsurge of colonial liberation struggles in the late 1950s soon demonstrated that the same "Trotskyist" leaders were equally prepared to capitulate politically to spontaneously emerging petty bourgeois nationalist forces—in particular the petty bourgeois leadership of the 1959 Cuban revolution.

**'Natural Marxists'**

In describing the Castroites as 'natural Marxists', and 'unconscious [sic!] Trotskyists', and in looking to them as the means of extending revolution throughout Latin America, the Pabloites showed clearly that their method in approaching workers struggles excluded the element most vital to Trotskyists: the sharp fight for the building of Trotskyist proletarian parties as the only conscious force able to combat reformism, Stalinism, and bourgeois nationalism and assert the political independence of the working class.

But in this capitulation to Castroism, the Pabloites found themselves rejoined politically by Cannon and the SWP leadership, who threw aside their correct attacks on Pabloite liquidationism, and thought they

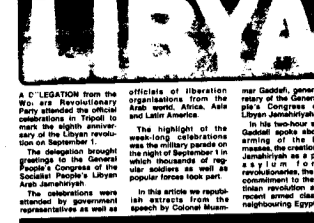
'Newsline' of September 14 last year summed up the liquidationist line of the WRP in a short polemic against the WSL:

*"The Workers Revolutionary Party has openly declared its political alliance with the revolutionary movements in the Arab world, Africa, Ireland and Latin America.*

*"These represent the continuation of Trotsky's struggle to resolve the crisis of leadership in the working class and build the world party of socialist revolution"*

*But the task of the Trotskyist movement is to construct Marxist revolutionary parties, not to fuse with or tail in behind spontaneous petty bourgeois groupings or bourgeois nationalists.*

PAGE 2 The News Line Wednesday September 14 1977



EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE



A DELEGATION from the W.P.A. Revolutionary Party attended the official celebrations in Tripoli to mark the eighth anniversary of the Libyan revolution on September 1.

The delegation brought greetings to the General People's Congress of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Republic.

In his two-hour speech, Gaddafi spoke about the anniversary of the Libyan Revolution as a pointer to the future of the Arab world.

In this article we report on the speech by Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, general secretary of the General People's Congress of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Republic.

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**GADDAFI SPEAKS**



'Our Libyan Arab people on this date, the date of the eighth anniversary of the upsurge of the Great Revolution, stand with power in their hands, with wealth in their hands and with weapons in their hands...'

... the revolution, until it was prepared by the masses of the people. The revolution in Libya, let me repeat, is the people's revolution. The revolution in Libya, let me repeat, is the people's revolution. The revolution in Libya, let me repeat, is the people's revolution.

**WRP LEA JUNK THE TROTSKY**

saw in the emergence of the Cuban Revolution a short cut around the difficulties of building proletarian parties in the USA and elsewhere.

While the SWP and the Pabloites crawled to Castro, searched the world for further Cubas (with dreams of similar developments in Algeria) and prepared to formally reunite their forces, the British Socialist Labour League (forerunner of the WRP) was equally unable to analyse the Cuban events.

In place of the Pabloite view that Cuba had been transformed by the Castroites into a workers' state and that therefore Castro was a Marxist, Healy and the SLL argued that since Castro was not a Marxist, Cuba could not be a workers' state!

**Certain virtue**

Both positions were false in their approach and false in their conclusions.

The SLL position however, did have a certain virtue in that by ignoring a real change it succeeded in apparently preserving political independence from the Castroites and retained the old insistence on the need for a Trotskyist party.

But the SLL clung onto these notions under conditions of clear theoretical confusion. The problems that Healy's analysis of Cuba created for an understanding of the post-war overturns of capitalism in Eastern Europe under Stalinist leadership had to be brushed aside.

And the partial attempt by US Trotskyist Tim Wohlforth within the International Committee to come to grips with some of these contradictions in his *Theory of Structural Assimilation* was ignored and suppressed by Healy—and abandoned by Wohlforth himself.

This work has only now been republished by the Workers Socialist League (see page 9).

In the wake of the Cuban events the Pabloite International Secretariat was politically "reunited" with the US Socialist Workers Party in 1963 (though the SWP remains barred by reactionary US legislation from international affiliation).

The joint document that they produced at that time, *The Dynamics of World Revolution Today*, was extensively criticised by the Socialist Labour League in

Spring 1964 in terms which bear a heavy irony in the light of Healy's current political subservience to Gaddafi and the anti-communist Iraqi regime.

**Adaptation**

The SLL correctly showed that Pabloite capitulation to Castroism had led to a wholesale adaptation by Pablo to the nationalists of the Algerian FLN in the independence struggle. Despite the fact that the International Committee's record had been far from exemplary, the SLL correctly pointed out that:

"Pablo then turned certain of his sections into little more than errand-boys for the national-bourgeois leadership of the Algerian FLN, turning away from the industrial working class itself in Western Europe . . ."

*Fourth International*, Spring 1964, p.9.

"... a phrase is not enough! Those who have drafted the Resolution in fact conduct their 'defence of the Algerian Revolution' by subordinating themselves to Ben Bella, by saying and doing *nothing* about the construction of independent revolutionary parties in Algeria and the colonial countries . . ." (p.10).

**FIRST OF SEPTEMBER REVOLUTION**



However, we would like to see a revolution that is not a revolution of the bourgeoisie, but a revolution of the proletariat. We would like to see a revolution that is not a revolution of the bourgeoisie, but a revolution of the proletariat. We would like to see a revolution that is not a revolution of the bourgeoisie, but a revolution of the proletariat.

**COMMENT**

**Renegades line up with Sadat**

ON JULY 21, 1977 the Sadat regime invaded the Libyan Jamahiriya following a series of provocations which included the kidnapping of Libyan police and civilians. It is a well known fact that the Sadat regime is a puppet of the American imperialists. The whole article has been published in the New Line (May 23) and is a very good example of the kind of revisionist line which the WRP has adopted. It is a well known fact that the Sadat regime is a puppet of the American imperialists. The whole article has been published in the New Line (May 23) and is a very good example of the kind of revisionist line which the WRP has adopted.

(...) When these revolutions occur, Marxists have no alternative but to participate in them 'whole heartedly', i.e., they must not appear as opponents of the petty bourgeois leaderships. In Cuba, for example, they must enter Castro's party and work loyally within it. In Algeria they must work for Ben Bella, and join with him in denouncing and imprisoning any opposition movements, Right or Left (...). It is precisely in the revolutionary situations of Algeria and Cuba that the building of the independent party has been most blatantly abandoned, on the assumption that the petty-bourgeois leaders will become revolutionary Marxists... (pp.20-21).

We still agree with all these criticisms of the Pabloites made by the SLL in 1964—though the SLL itself was not without blemish.

But how do these correct points tally with the crawling capitulation by Healy and the Newsline staff to Gaddafi, to the murderously anti-Communist Iraqi regime, to the PLO leaders, to the Vietnamese Stalinists today?

Why is it that the WRP in repeated theoretical articles—most recently 'Stalin is Brought Back into the Fold' in Newsline April 28—now sets out to cover up the fact that Pabloism is not simply a capitulation to Stalinism but, in the SLL's words of 1964:

"Pablo's original capitulation to Stalinism was only one variety of capitulation to the petty bourgeois bureaucracies upon which modern imperialism depends". Ibid, p.7.

**Produce evidence**

We challenge the WRP to produce, from amongst their voluminous coverage of Gaddafi's speeches and actions over the last two years, evidence of one public call for the building of a Trotskyist party in Libya.

And, remember the SLL's point against the Pabloites "a phrase is not enough", "unless the whole concentration of Marxists is upon the construction of independent proletarian parties, then the masses will be betrayed".

We challenge the WRP to spell out their attitude to the Iraqi dictatorship, which only a few days ago admitted having executed 21 Communists and stepped up repressive measures against the Communist Party.

Only two months ago, on April 28 the self-styled 'Trotskyist' Newsline carried in bold type an uncritical report of the conference of the General Federation of Trade Unions in this same state of Iraq, including the following amazing points:

"The three day conference has adopted the slogan 'Central objectives: to defend the revolution [!] and deepen its accomplishments and to press on with the Arab working class struggle."

"The conference is discussing ways of developing the productive skills of the working class and consolidating the role of the trade union movement in the socialist transformation of Iraqi society". (Emphasis added).

**Come clean**

We challenge the WRP to come clean. Do they see the Ba'ath Party as a Trotskyist Party?

If not, then how does this talk of the 'socialist

transformation' of Iraq bear any relation to their notion of Marxist theory?

If Cuba is, in the WRP view, still not a workers' state, how could Iraq or Libya become workers' states without the building of a Trotskyist Party?

But this unprincipled grovelling to the nationalist regime of Iraq has also led to an outright WRP attack (Newsline May 23) on the legitimate struggle by the workers and peasants of Kurdistan.

All of a sudden Newsline editor Alex Mitchell announces that because of the corruption and collaboration of some of the Kurds' leaders with the CIA, the Zionists and the Shah of Iran, the Kurdish struggle is a 'plot' against the Iraqi regime.

**No explanation**

Since Mitchell's article characteristically makes no effort to explain what basis of principle the WRP considers should apply to the acceptance of material assistance by the Kurds, the question arises: does the WRP condemn the historic Kurdish national struggle simply because of its bourgeois leadership? Why not apply the same line to any national liberation struggle?

Does the WRP not even demand of the so called 'revolutionary' Iraqi regime that it concede the right to secession to the Kurds should they wish it?

And perhaps most strange of all is the fact that it is bourgeois journalist Alex Mitchell (who was the only person on the WRP Central Committee obviously overjoyed by the expulsion in 1974 of Alan Thornett and the forces fighting for a return to the principles and the method of the Transitional Programme) who has now come to the forefront of polemical writing in the pages of Newsline.

Nobody seems quite sure as to Mitchell's political history prior to his rapid promotion by Healy to the WRP Central Committee at the very point where the WRP itself was turning towards liquidation into frenetic 'mass recruitment'.

Certainly at the time of the expulsion of the forces around Alan Thornett Mitchell admitted to knowing nothing of the history of the Fourth International.

**Suspect judgement**

His ignorance and political backwardness and suspect judgement is still clearly stamped on Newsline today, in the form of passing sideswipes at the gay movement and ridiculous 'conspiracy' theories according to which, for example, the Anti Nazi League is no more than an elaborate Zionist plot!

But this same Mitchell is given free rein to write feature articles attacking the Kurdish national struggle and empty polemics against the WSL in which brazen lies jostle with backward jokes and outright abuse, in a desperate bid to substitute vitriol for politics.

**Abandonment**

At every point in this analysis of the revisionist positions adopted by the WRP the central issue has been the abandonment of the fight for the revolutionary party and the opportunist abandonment of the principles of the Communist International on the national question.

This amounts to a wholesale liquidation of Trotskyism by the WRP leaders.

There had, of course,

been hints of such deviations as far back as 1968—when present General Secretary Mike Banda wrote an uncritical eulogy of the Vietnamese and Chinese Stalinist leaderships as an Editorial to the February issue of Fourth International.

**Disclaimer**

But within the International Committee and the SLL at that time there were forces that fought such a position, and an apology and a disclaimer was published in the next issue—stating that the article expressed only Banda's personal views!

In 1974 however, the WRP was convulsed by a faction struggle in which the Healy leadership witch-hunted and expelled all those that spoke up in defence of the Trotskyist Transitional Programme.

Some 200 members, including three Central Committee members and all but one of the factory cadre at British Leyland's Cowley plants were driven out of the movement.

The core of them came together to form the WSL and continue the fight for a return to the Transitional Programme.

One of the grounds on which these forces had taken up the fight against Healy was precisely the growing trend towards liquidationism within the WRP.

As opposition leader Alan Thornett spelled out in his first document:

"Members are now



'Natural Marxist' Castro with Ethiopian dictator Mengistu.

recruited after a few minutes discussion, with no idea of the politics involved, to a section of the Fourth International. The vast majority of these recruits will never come into the party and the impact on the branches in trying to bring them in under impossible conditions will be considerable. Thus the 'drive outwards' which is so vital to the party and could have been so powerful in different circumstances, became a drive towards liquidation".

The Battle for Trotskyism, p.24.

A second document—suppressed by the leadership by expelling its defenders prior to the WRP conference—challenged, among other things, the WRP's opportunist positions in relation to the PLO leadership and the United Nations.

None of these points have ever been replied to by the WRP leaders, who instead resorted to the most brazen falsifications and hysterical smear campaigns in order to head off discussion.

**Vicious attack**

The WRP, having trampled on those who wished to fight for Trotskyism, has since that time

plunged ever downwards.

In 1975 they launched a vicious attack on the WSL for our defence of the record of the Vietnamese Trotskyists murdered by the Stalinists under Ho Chi Minh in the post-war period. The WRP in reply came out in uncritical support of the Stalinist regime.

By early 1976 the collapse of the WRP's seven year old daily paper Workers Press, signalled the extent of the crisis within the organisation.

The unexpected launching later that year of the new enlarged daily Newsline was accompanied by no apparent enlargement of the WRP's forces, but by a sharper than ever lurch towards opportunism.

The launching of Newsline also marked the start of the WRP's cosy relationship with the Gaddafi dictatorship, and with the PLO, which was quickly branded "the spearhead of the Arab revolution as a whole" (June 14, 1976)

**Petty bourgeois**

WRP leaders have repeatedly denied that this opportunist line is related to cash subsidies to support the paper, which is virtually unobtainable in large areas of the country.

Yet they have been unable to show any basis in the principles of the Trotskyist movement for their political adaptation to bourgeois and petty bourgeois nationalism.

Since then the WRP leadership, now composed almost entirely of petty-

bourgeois forces with little or no awareness of the historical positions of their own movement, (let alone the Fourth International as a whole) have not cast so much as a glance back at the principles of the Communist movement.

One after another, Newsline reporters, WRP leaders and film crews have made meek homage to the Middle East to join Libyan celebrations on the anniversary of Gaddafi's bonapartist coup or to crawl unashamedly to the PLO leaders.

Such positions are equally as crude and liquidationist as many of those formulated in the 1950s and 1960s by Pablo himself.

Those within the WRP who see themselves as orthodox Trotskyists must begin to draw up a real assessment of the line of their leaders, and conclusions as to where the continuity of Trotskyism lies: whether it is with those now in the WSL who fought Healy's liquidationism in 1974 and were expelled; or with Alex Mitchell, the Redgraves and the current leaders of the WRP who know nothing of Trotskyism and are blown by every breeze that wafts in from oil-rich Middle East nationalist regimes.

By John Lister

**OLD FASHIONED**

"Here the words 'the revolution' are an abstraction with no meaning, an abstraction at far too general a level for any political, class orientation. Like the phrase 'colonial revolution' it is however at a level of abstraction which is perfectly adapted to acceptance of the existing leadership of the national liberation struggles. Any more exact abstraction, based on the class content of the struggle and the contradictions within the fight for political independence, would be precisely against the interests of the petty-bourgeois leadership, who also prefer non-class formulations—the Algerian revolution, the Arab revolution, Arab socialism, etc. etc." (p.11).

"... What is not discussed in the Resolution is the actual relation of the practical politics of the revisionists to these petty-bourgeois governments. In Algeria, the revisionists, as we have seen, in fact give support to the petty-bourgeois, nationalist government. They express similar uncritical approval of Castro in Cuba. There was even published an article by one Sadi both in the SWP International Socialist Review and the Pabloite Fourth International advocating 'entry' into Nasser's national movement, and specifically disavowing any organised independent political opposition. A class characterisation of nationalisation is incomplete and turns into its opposite, if it does not sharply define the role of the proletariat in opposing the petty bourgeois nationalists". (p.13).

"... This passage [from the Pabloite document, JL] is a fitting end to our long series of quotations. It contains the conclusion which excuses everything: because of 'new factors' working class power can be obtained without there necessarily having been constructed Marxist parties

"... It might be argued that it is only a question of emphasis. But this is just the point: unless the whole concentration of Marxists is upon the construction of independent proletarian parties, then the masses will be betrayed. For the revisionists, it is quite a different matter; the existence or non-existence of such parties before a revolutionary situation may or may not be decisive!..." (p.12).

# Probing the essence of Stalinism

JOHN LISTER concludes his two-part review of *Communists Against Revolution—Two Essays on Post-war Stalinism*, by Tim Wohlforth and Adam Westoby, published last Thursday by Folroë Ltd., 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR, price £1.75 plus 20p p.p.

It is significant that the publication of this volume should coincide with a sharp new turn in the relationship between Stalinism and imperialism in the African continent and with a further lurch towards Stalinist class collaboration in Europe.

Both the essays contained in *Communists Against Revolution* start, as did Trotsky, from the necessity to analyse Stalinism as a counter-revolutionary international system operating on a world scale, and shot through with all the contradictions of the degenerated Soviet state.

In Europe the movement of the mass Communist Parties towards "Eurocommunism" is part and parcel of their move into Popular Front formations with bourgeois parties in which they now play a key role in defusing and containing the militancy of the working class.

## Smokescreen

In Spain, veteran Stalinist and arch Eurocommunist Santiago Carrillo combines 'left' talk of 'rehabilitating' Spanish centrist leaders murdered by the Stalinists in the 1930s and of Trotsky's role in the Russian Revolution as well as criticism of the repression of dissidents in Eastern Europe, with the practical act of signing the wage-cutting Moncloa Pact with the Francoist regime and abandoning even the pretence of Leninism.

In every instance the "Eurocommunists" use a smokescreen of left talk and apparently open attitude to discussion with "Trotskyists" of the USFI to help cover the most reactionary collaboration with their own crisis-ridden bourgeoisie.

Eurocommunism is not a new phenomenon, but a latter-day version of the Popular Front betrayals of the 1930s in which, under Stalin's orders, Communist Parties used the 'left' pretext of the 'anti-fascist' struggle to form counter-revolutionary political blocs and alliances with "progressive sections of the bourgeoisie".

## Drawn closer

But whereas in the 1930s such class collaboration took place as part of the Kremlin strategy to head off

revolutionary struggles and stabilise a 'peaceful coexistence' between Stalinism and imperialism in Europe, in the 1970s the bureaucratic leaders of the mass CPs of Western Europe are being drawn ever closer to direct collaboration with their 'own' bourgeoisie, irrespective of the wishes of Moscow.

## Unease

To a certain extent, the Kremlin bureaucrats can remain content that these parties are so tenaciously carrying out their struggle to prevent any revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

Certainly that was the exclusive task allotted by Brezhnev to the pro-Moscow Portuguese CP during the struggles of 1974-6.

But at the same time there must be unease in the Kremlin at the extent to which these CPs in their urge to collaborate fully with their 'own' bourgeoisie have publicly committed themselves to side with imperialism in the event of a confrontation with the Soviet Union.

The present move towards a revival of Cold War propaganda by the imperialists will further reveal the extent to which this separation has developed.

But, as ever, rejecting any idea of defending the USSR through the revolutionary mobilisation of the working class internationally, and unable to find a way around the entrenched Stalinist parties of France, Spain and Italy, the Stalinists have attempted to compensate for this loss of influence on the European CPs by securing strategic bridgeheads in Africa.

## Alliances

Again bureaucratic-military rather than revolutionary means have been adopted, and the Stalinists have sought out alliances with bourgeois nationalist leaders in areas where imperialist rule had virtually collapsed (Angola, Mozambique) and with the reactionary military dictatorship in Ethiopia, sooner than champion proletarian and anti-imperialist struggles in Africa.

Elsewhere Stalinism's 'left' face in Africa is shown in such a way as to avoid offending the imperialists, and to hold back or head off revolutionary struggles for national liberation, as in the case of the Zimbabwean

Patriotic Front.

Any analysis of these changes on a country-by-country or event-by-event basis must be futile and disorientating for revolutionaries.

Stalinism in the post-war system is and acts as a world system of bureaucratic counter-revolution which seeks in its own way to defend both its privileges and power, based as they are on nationalised property relations and its "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism.

The political, military and economic processes through which the policy of 'defensive expansion' brought capitalist property relations to be overturned under Stalinist leadership in the East European 'buffer states' and in North Korea, North Vietnam and China are the main subject matter of Tim Wohlforth's *Theory of Structural Assimilation*.

He shows that these overthrows took place only as



The old Stalinist monolith is now visibly cracked

part of an overall strategy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism which involved Stalinist complicity in upholding—even restoring—capitalism in the remainder of Europe and Asia.

And Wohlforth explains that because these overthrows were neither fully planned nor executed by revolutionary means, the pace of the process varied enormously within the buffer countries themselves and, in the case of Austria and Finland was actually reversed despite the control exercised after the war by the Red Army.

But his account is not without its weaknesses and its errors, which must be understood if the approach of his *Theory* is to be applied with any success to an analysis of events today.

Take for instance the question of Cuba.

The decision of the Kremlin bureaucrats to use Cuban troops as their chosen intervention force in Africa highlights the way in which the Castro leadership has been absorbed into the Stalinist system in the period following the 1959 revolution by petty bourgeois forces.

## Explored

But this points the finger clearly at the major weakness of Wohlforth's *Theory*: it does not come to grips with the Cuban revolution, which was in the first instance the reason why the essay was begun!

Wohlforth actually declared in his introduction that:

"It is now far easier to see than it was in 1961 that the limits of the expansion of Stalinism were essentially reached with the victory of the Chinese Revolution,



Soviet troops liberate Romania in World War II

against the main imperialist states: the most obvious difference [with Eastern Europe]—important, but not absolutely so—is that Cuba is not adjacent to the Soviet Union". (p.134).

Tracing the growth of economic, political and military dependence of the petty bourgeois Castroite leadership on the Kremlin, whose military power shielded the Castroites from a Santo Domingo-style US invasion, and whose economic aid sustained Castro in the face of a US economic blockade, Westoby shows that:

"Taken as a whole . . . the Cuban revolution confirms, precisely in its 'exceptional' features, the general thesis of 'structural assimilation'". (ibid).

Another problem with Wohlforth's essay was highlighted last week when at the same time as Castro proclaimed that Cuba had played no role in assisting Katangan rebels in their recent invasion of Zaire, another Stalinist bureaucracy—the Peking regime—was actually proving its support for Mobutu's imperialist puppet regime.

## Sharpened

The splits in world Stalinism brought about by the logic of 'socialism in one country' have sharpened even since Westoby's commentary was completed in late 1976.

Westoby investigates the reasons why Wohlforth in 1964 underestimated the "real, if limited, political independence of both the Chinese and Yugoslav CPs"—and stresses the fact that each bureaucracy though originally dependent upon the Kremlin, tends to develop its own national roots:

" . . . each national bureaucracy which, in its own right, takes or begins to take state power does so not as part of the international revolutionary movement of the working class, but in the attempt to secure, protect and extend its own national interests". (p.140).

## Contradictions

It is particularly along this line of enquiry—the contradictions and splits emerging within world Stalinism today—that further work needs urgently to be undertaken by Trotskyists in order accurately to assess the changes that are taking place and producing apparent incon-

sistencies in the actions of various wings of the bureaucracy.

Westoby's essay shows which important aspects of Wohlforth's *Theory* stand in need of correction, extension and amplification in the light of more recent events and an objective analysis of the International Committee with which Wohlforth was then politically aligned.



Mandel—shot to ribbons

But it also draws out the inner strengths of the *Theory*, which provides us with a key to understanding the complex process of development of post-war Stalinism.

And in doing so Westoby demonstrates clearly why this 1964 essay, which contains sufficient to shoot to ribbons the impressionist schemas of the USFI and the wooden and self-contradictory "orthodoxy" of the Healyite International Committee, has been suppressed by both sides for 14 years.

In publishing these two essays and fighting to stimulate the widest discussion on the problems they analyse and illuminate, the Workers Socialist League is continuing to pursue its stated aim of fighting for an objective assessment of the historical problems and the present disorientation of the international tendencies calling themselves 'Trotskyist', and for a serious turn to resolving the theoretical and practical problems that have for 30 years dogged the Fourth International.

Now Trotskyists can freely obtain the text suppressed by 'Trotskyist' leaders for 14 years, and hopefully decide to join with us in undertaking the overdue task of developing a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of post-war Stalinism.



The 13 month strike of coal miners at the Brookside pit in Harlan County, Kentucky, during 1973 and 1974 was marked by a series of phenomena which will be familiar to anyone who has participated in any similar battle.

First there was the memory of battles fought and won by the generations that had gone before.

Harlan County was the scene of many violent confrontations and at least five deaths during the 1930s, and some of these are recorded in films and still photographs.

Then there is the sense of deteriorating conditions and accumulated grievance which, as always in mining, was particularly harsh and violent.

#### Determination

There are the disasters and deaths, and in the end the realisation that matters can only improve by the recognition of a union that had won better conditions on a national level than prevailed at Brookside.

As the Harlan County strike developed, and the employers grew more intractable, the workers shared the same determination that they always will when faced with such a challenge.

The strikers were then confronted with the usual panoply of courts, police and scabs and won particularly tenacious support from an auxiliary organisation of women relations, who maintained and developed the picket line.

As the struggle dragged on, there was the same battle that there always is to maintain the continuity of the picket line to push aside and deal with the divisions and differences that inevitably intrude, and to ensure that solidarity was maintained until the end.

#### Reform candidate

The Harlan County strike also saw the inevitable union bureaucrat (in this case, fresh from his victory as the "reform" candidate in the UMW presidential election) lead hundreds of supporting miners in a demonstration around the town.

"Left" bureaucrat Arnold Miller, with all the tactical panache of the Grand Old Duke of York, was elected as the "rank and file" opponent of the corrupt and murderous Tony Boyle but was determined to isolate the strikers behind pious words and militant phrases.

Besides so many details whose form will be familiar to any participant in such a struggle, the Harlan County strike had some special features of its own.

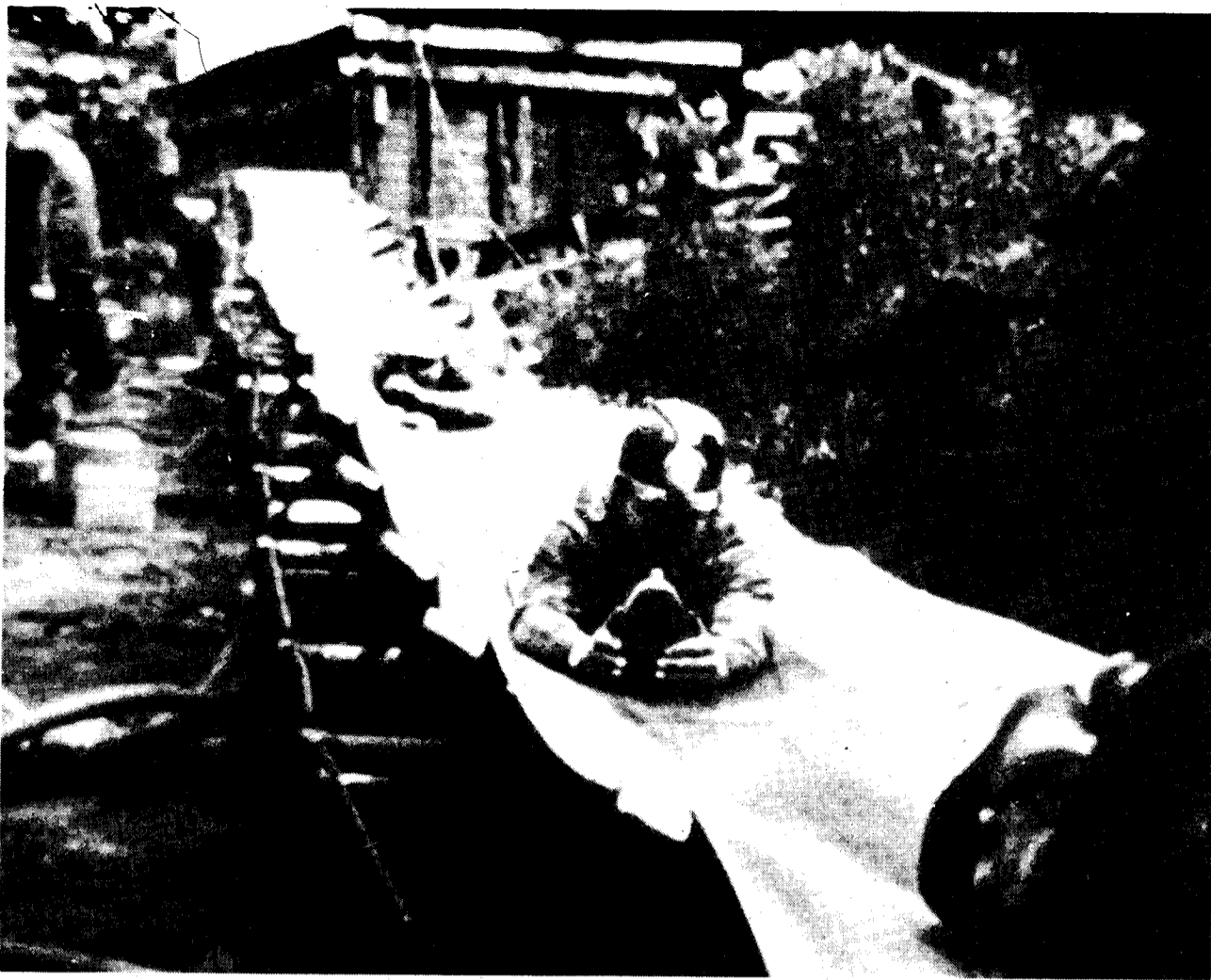
One of these was the very active participation and sacrifice of the women, which is more than adequately portrayed in the film.

The women are shown not only arguing for proper picket duty and carrying it out themselves against intimidation and violence.

#### Armed

They are also to be seen arguing out and rejecting the view that they must worry first about their personal lives, "holding on to their husbands" and so forth.

The film shows palpably how it is the struggle itself that seizes hold of these women, and shows the physical revulsion of one of them when she is arrested.



Scene from Harlan County USA, miners go to work by conveyor belt

# Limits IN REVIEW

## of the straight documentary

Review of Harlan County USA directed by Barbara Kopple in 1976, distributed by The Other Cinema and now showing at the Scala Cinema, 25, Tottenham St. London W1.

and realises that she "can't stand the scabs at all".

The women find it necessary to be armed, not just with the clubs shown in the picture but also taking steps to protect themselves with guns.

Those familiar with the history of class struggle in the United States will not be surprised by this.

No employer in the world uses organised violence more viciously and blatantly than an American boss, be he Andrew Carnegie, Henry Ford or the faceless men behind the Duke Power Company owners of the Brookside mine.

#### Scabs

In this particular strike, the employers first of all used court injunctions and state troopers, whose confrontations with the strikers are vividly portrayed.

They then brought in as vicious and anti-communist a bunch of scabs as you could hope to see.

Some bourgeois reviewers have said that it is one of the strengths of the film to show how "human" these people are.

This very "fair" and "liberal" view of the matter is a little in conflict with the pictures shown of bullet holes in strikers' homes, shooting on the picket line itself, and finally the murder of a young miner called Lawrence Jones.

#### Movingly portrayed

This death is movingly portrayed in the film, along with the anguish of his wife, mother and brother

miners.

Although the event provided the pretext for the settlement of the strike, the film is less certain about the precise terms of this settlement, and to what extent it represented a realisation of the original aims of the strikers.

#### Dynamic

The many subsequent struggles in the American coalmining industry which are depicted in the film and which later culminated in the national strike this year, indicated clearly that the battle of Harlan County was by no means the end of the war.

The film shows successfully the feel, the image of the struggle of this group of workers.

It goes beyond this to show how the dynamic of this strike fitted into the context of a bitter battle for leadership within the miners' union with the murder of Yablonski in 1972 during his efforts to secure election as President.

#### Disillusionment

Barbara Kopple and her collaborators even go so far as to portray the inadequacy of the "left" Miller leadership which emerged in the union in the next period, and the disillusionment of some younger workers with this leadership's role in the Harlan County strike.

Yet it must be said that the film suffers from great political inadequacies.

The fact that it has been taken up by the

"radical chic" sections of the establishment and even awarded an Oscar, shows this clearly.

It has even received the ultimate accolade of being praised in the *Socialist Worker* for its portrayal of militancy.

However the form of the film and the political views of its creators make it impossible for it to show workers a way to go beyond their own spontaneous militancy.

The documentary form certainly makes it possible to portray realistically and movingly the bitter struggle of the miners and of the women.

But although the makers of the film do not choose at

random what to portray in the end they show only images of the struggle itself at its own level.

Harlan County has been praised by the middle class and the syndicalists who see no alternative to this bureaucracy in its "left" or "right" form except spontaneous, non-political militancy and heroism.

#### Spontaneous

The film maker intervenes as an outsider goes deeper and deeper into the consciousness of the workers, but never transcends this trade union, bourgeois consciousness, or the spontaneous level of struggle.

The intervention of a



Miners' wives confront the scabs

conscious disciplined force in such a struggle not simply raising the questions of leadership but also seeking to answer them, is something that the film cannot show, and of which, we assume Ms Kopple does not even dream.

The politics of class betrayal is nowhere mentioned except as corruption, or wickedness.



UMW 'left' President Arnold Miller

The politics of the alternative, with dedicated disciplined understanding of the rhythm of the class struggle, and a determination to raise that struggle to a political level in conflict with workers' illusions, is nowhere to be seen.

One reviewer said that it is notable that the film does not mention socialism.

To us it does not seem surprising, because such a concept is outside its terms of reference.

Could a film raise such questions about the course of such a struggle about the need for a revolutionary alternative and how it could be built?

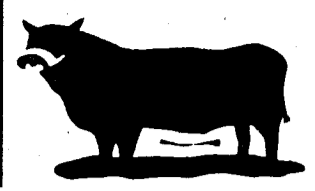
#### New methods

Within its pure documentary form probably not. Such issues were more effectively raised in Roy Batterby's *Leeds United* and Jim Allens *Days of Hope* though often simply in the form of discussion away from the real action.

It is only as revolutionaries themselves begin to intervene in workers' struggles to fight for them to transcend the trade union level that artists will be able to conceive new methods of portraying that on film.

In the meantime see *Harlan County* for its portrayal of this heroic struggle, and think of what it has missed in terms of the next questions to be raised.

By John Docherty



# Garners: TGWU leaders must stand and deliver

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## The Workers Socialist League

The Workers Socialist League is a Trotskyist organisation fighting to construct a principled revolutionary leadership in the working class in Britain and internationally and for the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International on the basis of the Transitional Programme.

The WSL fights at every step against the existing leaders of the trade unions and the Labour Party—now firmly harnessed to the bourgeois politicians of the Liberal Party in an unspoken coalition arrangement.

Against their policies of class collaboration we put forward instead a programme which points to the independent class interests of the working class, its need to organise independently to overthrow capitalism, destroy its repressive state machinery and establish a socialist planned economy.

Only in this way can workers resolve today's problems of tumbling living standards, mass unemployment, slashed social services, racial, national and sexual oppression.

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On 22nd June, twenty-one weeks to the day after the beginning of the Garners Steak House strike, a support conference meets at Transport House to discuss further action to win it.

This vital recognition battle is now stronger than ever before with more and more support on the picket line, less and less business for the firm and increasingly active blacking.

The pickets at the Oxford Street, Argyll Street, Haymarket Whitcombe Street and Trafalgar Square branches are continuous now during the main business period, and the scabs inside need to resort to increasingly desperate measures to win customers.

**Physical assault**

At most branches, the management has taken to physical assaults on possible customers, and at Haymarket to rows of flowerpots and large anti-communist notices in a vain attempt to attract custom.

Deliveries, post and much else has been turned back and the employer has been forced further afield to get supplies.

More and more union branches and trades councils are appearing on the picket line, though many other unions have been stronger in their attendance than the TGWU.

**MP's picket**

On Tuesday 13th June, the appearance of four 'left' MPs on the picket at Haymarket for an hour shows that this strike has now really 'arrived' in terms of national prominence and publicity.

MPs Audrey Wise, Jo Richardson, Ian Mikardo and Ted Fletcher brought money, and press cameramen appeared like bees round a honeypot. However, such guest appearances alone will do no more than at Grunwicks to guarantee the strikes' success.

The big question being asked by the strikers at this stage is when and whether the TGWU leadership is going to support the struggle with the immense resources it has at its command. Without the use of these resources this strike can soon



PHOTO: Mark Risher, IFL

turn the way other similar struggles have done—'drowning in support, and thirsting for action.'

On two previous occasions now, the bureaucracy has been forced out into the open in the course of this strike.

At the last Transport House conference on 13th April, Executive Council member Brian Nicholson and Jack Dromey of the SE Region TUC promised a great deal in terms of support for picketing, blacking and much else besides.

And on 20th May Nicholson, former Regional Secretary Ron

Todd and many others appeared on the demonstration and congratulated the strikers on their militancy.

But it was less clear what they intended to do themselves, and since 20th May neither they nor Dromey have been seen or heard of around the strike.

The re-call conference will provide an opportunity for those on strike and their active supporters to call to account the leaders who agree the strike is vital but who do as little as possible to win it.

Why do TGWU members still turn up with deliveries of goods

at the Garners restaurants? Why is it that the strikers continue to receive only £6 a week from the Union?

How is it that no full-time official can be found to devote time to the problems of the strike and its development—with catering officer George Abrahams always 'somewhere else' and with little sign of interest from elsewhere in the bureaucracy?

**Shouted down**

At the support committee meeting on 13th June those who said that the conference is needed to discuss such questions as these were shouted down and told that the bureaucracy can only be got to move if everyone is politer to them!

There is no evidence for the truth of this statement.

**Little proof**

We understand that the strikers certainly found little proof of this during a polite conversation with Les Shorter, (Regional Official) on June 14th.

It is not possible to persuade people like extreme right-winger Shorter and 'left' Nicholson to go as far as possible in mobilising support and resources.

But in drawing out their real role it is however possible to force these bureaucrats to go much further than they have gone already and in doing so to win wider support within the TGWU for the endorsement of a levy and to organise a further demonstration accompanied by strike action.

## Stewards refuse to bow to bullying

**THE PRINCIPLED** stand of the Emergency Bed Services members in continuing to send patients to the EGA after Ennals' original announcement of closure produced a large demonstration on 14 June in their support before the disciplinary hearing.

Most of those involved had received a 'warning' following on their suspension, thus making it more likely they will be sacked should they take further action.

The EBS stewards remain unrepentant, however, and are determined to do the same in the event of other threatened closures at the Bethnal Green Hospital and elsewhere.

\*During the EBS dispute management tried to get Ansaphones installed but they were blocked by the National Executive of the Post Office Engineering Union and the ordinary phones have had to be manned by supervisors.

## Boycott Ennals' EGA post mortem

During the last week, the reasons for Health Minister Ennals' postponement of the closure of the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital on the Euston Road, until after 21 July have become clear.

He has been forced to make a temporary retreat, but only in order to try and defuse the movement against the closure; to try to get the closure more easily and to absorb the EGA as a unit into some other part of the hospital system.

On June 15, Ennals said in Parliament that the enquiry he now proposed to have was not about whether the EGA should be closed, but on how it should be moved elsewhere.

This statement is in clear contradiction to the recollection of the stewards who met him a week before when the postponement was announced.

The stewards saw the enquiry proposed by Ennals as a method of arguing for the extension of the facilities provided by the hospital and the long-postponed mending of the lift.

They must now boycott Ennals' enquiry, organise to get further support for the EGA's facilities and prepare industrial action for the next inevitable closure date.

The importance of trade union action needs to be emphasised throughout the campaign.

The resolutions passed on this in the South Camden Joint Shop Stewards Committee and St. Pancras COHSE for strike action in the event of closure, clearly represented important steps in this direction.

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# OFFICIALS BLOCK SPARKS' REINSTATEMENT

After EETPU leaders Chapple and Sanderson intervened in a strike by electricians at Winsford's Metal Box Company, the men were abruptly sacked.

This attack could not have been carried through by the employers without the total support—indeed insistence—of one of the CBI's star performers in the trade union movement, Frank Chapple, General Secretary of the EETPU.

## Evidence

If anyone doubts that Chapple and his national officer Sanderson were in fact the principal culprits behind the sacking of the 16 electricians at Metal Box, supporting evidence has appeared in the statement by the local weekly paper after the electricians had applied for reinstatement.

"A Metal Box spokesman said the Company were now awaiting a decision from the electricians' Regional Office on whether they should be reinstated."

## Bitter battle

At a meeting of sacked electricians, *Socialist Press* was told of their bitter three month battle against the Company's attempted introduction of 11 precedent-setting points and the shifty manoeuvrings of the EETPU officials.

The determination of the electricians was only matched by the determination of the EETPU bureaucrats to see them victimised.

"Treacherous and bloody rubbish", was how electrician John Smith described his national leaders.

"Clear the lot out" was amongst the more printable comments.

## Offensive

However, it has emerged that the joint attack by management and union leaders upon the electricians was a carefully prepared offensive against all trade unionists at Metal Box, Winsford.

A decision by TGWU members to return to work following their six week lay-off proved to be a fatal one and encouraged management, who immediately imposed no less than 60 precedent-setting points on them and 45 speed-up conditions on AUEW members, backed by a threat to close the factory within 90 days should their speed-up attempts be rejected.

Such blackmail must be flatly rejected by both unions.

The company's closure threat must be answered by a decision to occupy the plant, open the books of management and reveal the huge profits extracted from the Metal Box workforce, as part of the fight throughout the combine to mobilise a struggle for nationalisation of Metal Box, without compensation, under workers management.

The legitimate frustration felt by electricians and other Metal Box trade

unionists at the treachery of their leadership must be developed towards the construction of a conscious alternative, revolutionary leadership based on the struggle for the independent interests of the working class.

## Workers Socialist League

### Public meeting

"Trade union democracy and the fight for revolutionary leadership"

Sunday 2 July at 7.30

Wheatshaf Hotel  
Delamere St.  
Winsford

In the aftermath of the special pay conference, which a week earlier had supported continuing wage controls, NALGO's annual conference was marked by NEC efforts to strengthen its class collaborationist position.

This process met only occasional resistance, highlighting the bankruptcy of NALGO's various opposition movements.

Nowhere was the inability of the opposition to formulate an independent programme more evident than in the Local Government Group meeting.

In response to the Chairman's report that the employers had offered a 9½% wage rise and consolidation, the SWP-dominated NALGO Action Group abandoned their £15 demand and moved an emergency resolution for 'not less than 10% and consolidation'.

## Collaboration

Nobody was surprised when the bureaucrats agreed to this.

The theme of the NEC's contributions was to be one of collaboration with government as a solution to the problems facing NALGO members, and an insistence that the members would refuse to fight for pay and conditions.

He went on to call for continued "moderation" as a solution to inflation. The heckling was continuous.

The central debate on pay policy was based on an attack by the Stalinist dominated branches which was beaten off without undue difficulty by the NEC, despite the skilled oratory and eloquence of the opposition. Technique is no substitute for programme.

On what conference regarded as more basic trade union issues the NEC had more difficulty.

## Smaller majority

They held off attacks on their betrayal of the firemen's strike but with a smaller majority than they expected.

Basic trade union democracy was defended by conference when it reasserted its right to determine policy on industrial disputes, rejecting the Court of Sessions ruling in the notorious Patterson case.

In the same mood, conference insisted on the expulsion of three scabs from Edinburgh and voted to defend a member sacked for wearing an Anti Nazi League badge.

In the final minutes of conference there was a desperate scramble to drive through an instruction to the NEC to take account of the policies of councils in conference towns when selecting venues.

This was an attack on Scarborough's anti-gay discrimination.

A general picture emerged of the bureaucratic juggernaut beginning to run into serious opposition from the membership but of no alternative leadership being available.

## Platform

The Stalinists of the NALGO "Progressive Alliance", tail-ended by the IMG, are preparing a national organisation but without clear policies for fear that they would scare off supporters.

The NALGO Action Group struggles on under the burden of SWP centrism and syndicalism with a hopelessly inadequate programme.

The time is ripe for building a Trotskyist opposition platform.

# BL craftsmen led down blind alley

The climbdown by British Leyland toolroom leaders of last year's crippling four-week strike signalled much more than a sell-out of that one struggle.

The refusal of Fraser and the unofficial committee to press home their advantage and win their parity claim has opened the way to new attacks by the employers, who have introduced corporate bargaining and made moves towards job-evaluation

and a company-wide pay structure.

But because the toolmakers gained nothing from their strike the unofficial leaders have remained under pressure to reopen the action—and this bitterness, reflecting the feeling on wages among other sections of workers, has been echoed among other Leyland crafts unions.

In each case the leadership of these unions is right wing, and determined to avoid a confrontation with management.

Last week's one-day toolroom strike therefore saw Fraser complaining of his problems in forcing other workers to accept the company's wage structure.

Now a similar one-day strike is planned by craft unions.

## Best paid

But in each case the leaders are deliberately avoiding naming a figure for a pay claim, merely insisting—in line with company policy—that craftsmen should be best paid.

At the craftsmen's meeting at the Cowley Body Plant a call was raised for a claim of £90 per week—only to be opposed by the leadership.

Meanwhile AUEW President-elect Duffy has attempted to defuse any possible danger from this rank and file movement by promising to achieve £90 per week for craftsmen by November.



Phillips

They forgot to point out that they have consistently avoided the duty of leading the members in that fight.

This view of the trade unions as an extension of the state was central to the Presidential address by right wing spokesman Glyn Phillips.

He argued for a virtually corporatist economic policy in which pay controls are as important as government controls on prices, employment and expenditure.

A similar approach is exhibited by next year's President, Alderton, who regards trade unionism as 'another pillar of the realm like church and state'.

Chancellor Healy was the main guest speaker.

He spend some time in defending the recent economic package against attacks by Thatcher.

# Hospitals witch-hunt

The great danger of witch-hunts against trade union organisation in the health service was made clear in the disputes which broke during last week in the health service.

The threatened selective strike action by the electricians, called off late last Friday, was based on about the most justified claim that could be imagined.

In 1973 an independent enquiry promised the hospital electricians parity with those in electricity contracting.

Since that time Tory pay policies both from Tory and Labour ministers have prevented this coming into effect.

Contract electricians are now on £70 a week basic and the hospital electricians get under £60.

This dispute has thus been rumbling on for at least five years. Finally, on 9 June a meeting of delegates representing hospital electricians from all over the country voted to commence industrial action.

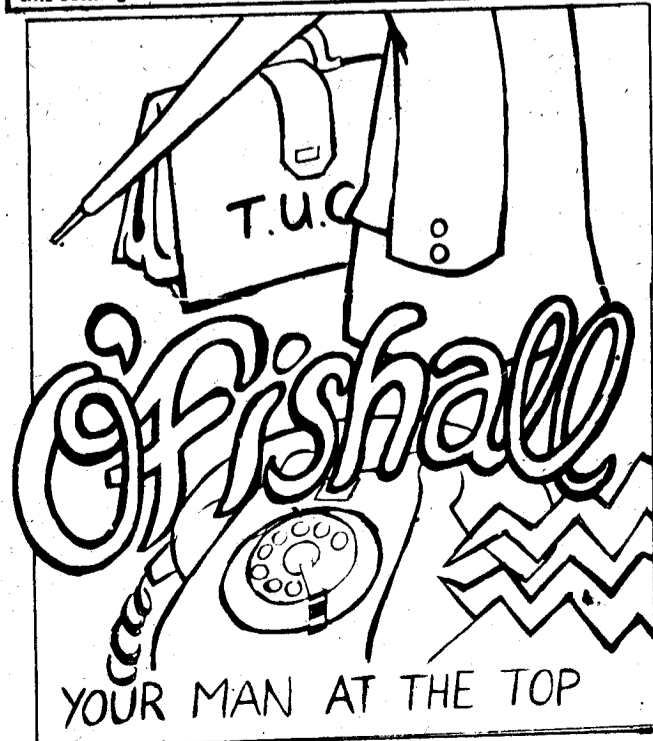
For two days newspapers were full of statements that 'patients will die' if the electricians took limited action of striking in four London hospitals and working to rule elsewhere.

This sudden and ferocious witch-hunt nationally had the desired effect of bringing about a 'postponement' of action, not by a further meeting of the

delegates, but by EETPU bureaucrats Frank Chapple and Peter Adams giving in to the pressure without as far as can be discovered, achieving anything.

It remains to be seen how the electricians can break the government's policies to achieve their just demands. But the first step must be the recalling of the conference of electricians delegates to discuss the renewing of industrial action in support of their claim

While it was going on, another dispute broke out at the Greenwich District Hospital. Here there was the unusual spectacle of nurses coming out over an issue which had its origins in the attempted cut-backs in the service, efforts to give their jobs to less trained people.



# SOCIALIST PRESS ★

## CP VOTE 'NO' TO DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

It has been a bad week for the leaders of Italy's "historic compromise" between the major political parties of the bourgeoisie and the working class, the Christian Democrats and the Communist Party.

Through its campaign for the referendum of June 11 the CP has been forced to expose even further its gross betrayals of the interests of the working class.

And as a result of the sudden and ignominious resignation of President Leone, virtually confirming the truth of accusations against him of tax fraud and accepting bribes from Lockheed, the Christian Democrats' deserved reputation as the party of corruption and dishonesty, has been reinforced.

### Referendum

These events have led to the political initiative slipping even further from the hands of the CP and Christian Democratic leaders, some of it passing to the smaller parties of the left and the right.

The referendum was about whether two laws should be removed from the statute book or maintained.

The first of these was the law which grants state finance to parties with parliamentary representation (and so allows the parliamentary parties and party leaderships more independence from their rank and file).

The second law was the so-called Reale law, passed in 1975, which granted increased powers of repression to the police—it facilitated the carrying and use of arms, increased powers of search, telephone-tapping and arbitrary arrest.

### Arrested

Several militants of the left have lost their lives (shot dead in demonstrations) in the last three years as a result of the Reale law.

For instance, Francesco Lorusso was killed in Bologna in March 1977 by a policeman called Tramontani against whom no action was taken.

In Rome, Giorgina Masi's murder by disguised armed police has been confirmed by film records. She was participating in a protest against the CP Mayor's ban on public demonstrations.

Hundreds of other socialists and militant trade unionists have been arrested or harassed in other ways. Party offices have been raided.

When this law was introduced the Italian CP criticised it as a "bad law" and did not support it in parliament.

### "Mistake"

CP Secretary Berlinguer said at the time that the party "rejected the idea that public disorder and economic difficulties result from imperfect laws".

Such ideas, he said, were "a serious mistake, because they



3,000 demonstrators demanding a 'Yes' vote

are obstacles to the necessary research into the real causes and into solutions that can really safeguard democracy".

But for the last few weeks the CP leadership campaigned alongside its Christian Democratic allies in favour of keeping the Reale law, just as during the kidnapping of Aldo Moro, the CP was the outstanding supporter of even stronger moves towards the police state, directed nominally at the Red Brigades but already used against other left-wing organisations and militants.

The CP, like the smaller Socialist Party, gave a hypocritical reason for its support of the "No" vote ('No' to rescinding the law).

They claimed it was still bad law but it was in the process of being amended in Parliament—so the referendum was redundant.

The referendum took place

because the 'left' petty-bourgeois Radical Party (an amalgam of feminists, "ecologists", etc)—later joined by left groups, especially supporters of the newspaper *Lotta Continua*—collected 700,000 signatures to demand referenda on 9 different laws.

### Majority

Some of these proposed referenda were declared unconstitutional; others were made unnecessary by a change in the law by parliament.

Most importantly, against the opposition of the Christian Democrats and the Vatican, a law was passed last month permitting abortion.

On the two remaining referenda the Radicals and the left called for a "Yes" vote while all the parties of the parliamentary majority campaigned for a "No" vote.



Berlinguer

The overall result never seemed in doubt.

The question was the actual majority and in both cases this turned out to be a major shock for the main parties.

In an 81% poll 43.6% voted for the abolition of the law on party finance while 56.4% voted against.

And on the abolition of the Reale law, 23.1% voted in favour and 76.9% voted against.

### Abolition

The parties of the "historic compromise" gained well over 90% of the vote in the last general election, but were barely able to get a majority for the law on party finance.

But the larger majority on the Reale law is perhaps a more significant political defeat.

Although the fascist MSI also campaigned for a "Yes" vote, it seems certain that many of its electoral supporters voted "No" with the Christian Democrats.

That means that despite the hysterical campaign for "law and order" after Moro's killing, nearly a quarter of the Italian electorate voted for the abolition of the Reale law.

And probably the majority of those were normally supporters of the Communist and Socialist Parties, in revolt against the lies and opportunism of their leaders.

Many CP and Socialist Party voters and even members attended the rallies called by the Radicals and the far left against the law.

It is, therefore, the CP which has been smarting most as a result of the referendum.

The party newspaper *L'Unita* tried to conceal the setback by declaring the result "extremely positive".

Sounding for all the world like a Tory backbencher, the

article went on:

"The decisive victory of those who voted against the abolition of anti-criminal legislation is particularly important and of great political significance.

"The great majority of the electorate has demonstrated its agreement with the need for strong and tough measures to ensure the preservation of public order and to safeguard the rights of citizens".

In reality, however, the results confirm that a growing number of workers in Italy realise that the citizens whose rights the CP is protecting are the capitalists and the police.

The CPs consciousness that its worst fear—that of losing support to the left—is being realised very likely explains why this week it added its voice (though discretely) to the demands which have been made for several weeks by the Radicals, the four left wing MPs and the Republican Party for the resignation of President Leone after the charges of corruption levelled against him by the "left wing" bourgeois magazine *L'Espresso*.

No Christian Democrat leader dared to tarnish his own reputation by defending Leone. So Leone had to go.

But his going contributes to a further worsening of the crisis of authority for Italy's ruling class and its Stalinist and reformist allies.

The only agreed replacement for Leone is dead (Aldo Moro). The next most likely candidate is the Prime Minister Andreotti.

But if he becomes President a new search must begin for a Prime Minister able to hold together the historic compromise without running the risk of a mass revolt by the rank and file of the CP.

## Oxford Fete brings £400 Fund boost

THE FIRST EVER Workers Socialist League Summer Fete, held in Oxford last Saturday, was a huge success.

An estimated 400-500 people came through the gates of Redfield School on the large Blackbird Leys council estate to take part in games and amusements or to buy from a range of stalls offering cakes, plants, gifts, books, jumble and refreshments.

An outdoor disco, ice cream, pony riding, helium balloons, a fortune teller and a bottle stall were other attractions in an event that had been carefully planned by the WSL Oxford Area Committee.

A special feature was the sale of a number of original cartoon drawings by *Socialist Press*

cartoonist Tim, which raised £20, while a darts stall offered workers and youth the chance to win a Cuban cigar by spearing Margaret Thatcher or Denis Healey.

A prize draw, with first prize a portable TV set, raised £170, and the total sum raised by the event was £394.

We extend our warmest thanks to all those members and supporters whose time, energy and generosity helped to create this successful event.

With a grand total of £429.85, most of it from the Oxford fete, collected over the last seven days, our total now stands at £1629.51 towards a final target of £2,000 by the end of July.

There can now be little

doubt that we will meet this target on time providing all the money promised arrives.

The question is how much over the top we are going to go?

Advanced sales of our new book, 'Communists' Against Revolution, have gone very well and we plan many more publications in the next few months.

So let's see how far over the top we can get by the end of July.

All readers and supporters of *Socialist Press* are invited to help us in the raising of this fund.

Donations should be sent to: Socialist Press Special Fund 31, Dartmouth Park Hill London NW5 1HR

## ANL PRAISE FOR COPS

2,000 workers and youth marched through the East End of London on Sunday 18 June.

Their aim was to protest against fascist attacks on the immigrant community organised by the National Front the previous weekend.

To the forefront of the march were hundreds of Asian youth, many of whom had marched only a few weeks ago to protest the fascist murder of Bengali machinist Altab Ali, 25, in the same area.

The demonstration wound its way along Brick Lane in Spitalfields where the fascist rampage had occurred, through Bethnal Green and finally returned to a rally at Brick Lane via Whitechapel.

It was at this point that the utter bankruptcy of the Anti Nazi League became clear to many youth who had marched.

Dan Jones of Stepney and Bethnal Green Trades Council and a sponsor of the ANL thanked the police Special Patrol Group for "protecting" the march against the fascists.

### Insult

This cringing tribute to a gang of vicious anti-working class thugs was an insult to the determination and militancy of all those who wish to seriously fight against fascism.

The SPG had lined the route of the march blocking off side streets which contained tiny groups of jeering NF supporters.

The role of the police was certainly "protective" but only for the fascists.

But for the cops these vermin would have been given a taste of their own medicine that they would not have easily forgotten.

The Workers Socialist League and the Socialist Youth League in the demonstration made no apologies for the need to organise workers and youth politically and where necessary on the streets to crush the fascists.

Despite the protests of reformist immigrant leaders a large contingent of Asian youth took up the slogan "Drive the fascists off the streets—workers self defence" and "Police protect the Nazis".

This fact and the good response to the first issue of *Red Youth*, paper of the SYL, showed that wide layers of youth can be won to the building of a revolutionary leadership that can crush the fascists as part of the preparation of the working class for power.

See pages 4-5