

Workers News



Paper of the Workers International League

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LABOUR RETREATS ON THE POLL TAX

INSIDE

By the Editorial Board

THE POLL TAX must be fought as a class action. Otherwise the campaign against it will go the way of the struggle against rate-capping and the abolition of the GLC in 1984-5. That is the lesson which must be drawn from Labour's landslide defeat in the Govan by-election.

Labour's campaign in Govan - one of its most traditional heartlands - symbolised the crisis and disarray of social democracy. Labour's official policy to submit to the Poll Tax was presented alongside the 'personal' position of Labour candidate and SOGAT official Bob Gillespie that he would not pay. Faced with this treacherous and bewildering combination, working class voters in their thousands swung behind the demagogic tub-thumping of Scottish nationalist Jim Sillars, who posed as 'the real socialist candidate'.

The door was opened wide for reactionaries like Sillars and the SNP by the decisions of the Scottish Labour Party conference in September and the annual conference in October to block a campaign of non-payment. Neil Kinnock's attempt to lay blame on the workers of Govan is as patronising as it is insulting. The confusion must be placed firmly at the door of the Labour leadership. Govan demonstrates the deep mistrust large sections of workers have for their leaders.

The Poll Tax is an attack upon the entire working class. Its aim is a massive shift in the burden of local rates away from the upper middle class and business onto workers, pensioners, youth and their families. Forced frequently to live in cramped and overcrowded dwellings, working class tenants are to be forced to pay through the nose for the privilege. Like the Housing Act, the Poll Tax has a second objective - to break up and asset-strip traditional working class strongholds, forcing large numbers to move out of the inner cities. Labour councils who im-

plement and police the Poll Tax will be forced to make even more drastic cuts in jobs and services, discrediting themselves further in the eyes of the working class.

Such an attack can only be defeated by forcing the mass organisations of the working class to take action. The campaigns supported by 'left' MPs and many revisionist groups which stress individual non-payment as opposed to class action are therefore a diversion from this central task. Workers News states categorically that the attempt in Scotland to campaign against the Poll Tax around a 'Committee of 100', including churchmen, academics, and show-business personalities who 'can pay but won't pay', is based upon a bankrupt illusion that the Tories can be 'pressured' into retreating.

It is not individual consciences which are at stake, but the hard-won democratic rights of workers.

The Labour leadership's policy of strangling opposition to the Poll Tax by offering a reform of the local government rating system under a future Labour government is a reactionary trap. In hundreds of Labour-controlled boroughs tenants are already paying exorbitant rates, while services decline and jobs are slashed. The crisis in local government has an objective source in the crisis of capitalism. There cannot and will not be any return to a 'golden past'. The only future lies in the struggle for socialist revolution, the abolition of the capitalist state and its local agencies.

The first step along this road must be to force Labour councils to refuse to collect, or process any work related to the Poll Tax. We critically welcome the decision of the Labour group in Lambeth to halt preparations for its implementation. However, if this is to become anything more than another stand on 'conscience', words must be translated into deeds. A national conference of Labour councillors must be re-called and the fight taken up throughout the country. Lambeth must be held to its decision, and not allowed to progress in stages back to compliance.

Local government trade unionists must not be led by the bureaucracy up the garden path of reacting

to each local authority 'on its merits'. Irrespective of whether councils are Labour or Tory-led, or whether Labour councils declare for resistance, the trade unions must not be subordinated to the local state apparatus. Special conferences of each local government union

must be called without delay and a policy of complete non-co-operation with the Poll Tax established. A national combine uniting shop stewards' committees and local union branches throughout the country must be created and, in this way, link up with the fight against cuts

in areas such as Bradford and Brent. In each borough and town, this development would form the nucleus of Councils of Action, which would draw in the widest layers of workers, tenants and the unemployed, and organise non-payment on a class basis.



The London day of action on November 28, called by NUPE to protest against the effects of the new nurses' grading structure, was joined by health service workers from more than 20 hospitals. Above, one of the picket lines at Friern Hospital in north London

Irish liberation or 'Time To Go'?

AN UMBRELLA organisation called 'Time To Go', which claims to oppose the 'British presence' in Ireland, held its founding conference in London on November 19.

This 'broad front' has been created to head off the development of a principled opposition to British imperialism in Ireland. The sponsors of 'Time To Go' include representatives of the Socialist Workers Party, three Stalinist factions (*Morning Star*, *Marxism Today* and *New Worker*), right-wing moving council leaders Margaret Hodge and Gery Lawless, Harold Wilson's former press secretary Joe Haines, 'left' and not so left Labour MPs and MPs of two openly capitalist parties

(Simon Hughes of the SLD and Dafydd Ellis Thomas of Plaid Cymru). Also on the list of sponsors are various media and entertainment figures and members of the Catholic clergy.

The campaign says it aims to 'develop the debate about how British withdrawal is to be accomplished', with the goal of 'negotiating a peaceful settlement'.

None of this has anything in common with a consistent opposition to British imperialism. All the political tendencies represented among the sponsors supported the introduction of British troops in 1969, and many (particularly the Stalinists) have resolutely opposed the demand for the withdrawal of British troops

ever since.

'Time To Go' is limited to a pacifist opposition to the worst excesses of British imperialism and the 'debate' it proposes is a debate with the British ruling class on how best to extricate itself from what it describes as 'an endless cycle of pain and tragedy' in the interests of promoting 'good neighbourliness'. It dismisses the heroic resistance of the Irish working class since 1968 as 'twenty wasted years'.

Kevin McCorry of the Irish Campaign for Democracy called upon the conference to campaign for a declaration of intent from Britain, which would allow Unionist politicians 'to play a constructive role . . . in the process of disengagement'.

Although the organisation feeds off the no doubt sincerely-held opinions of some of the sponsors, it will not champion the right to Irish self-determination, nor defend democratic rights in Britain. Its very title implies that British imperialism had legitimate rights in Ireland in the past, and that it is only 'Time To Go' now.

Far from an appeal to the British ruling class, what is necessary is a revolutionary agitation to mobilise the working class in Britain behind the demands:

- Immediate withdrawal of British troops!
- Unconditional support for Irish self-determination!
- Defeat British imperialism - for a united socialist Ireland!

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Health union leaderships prevent united struggle

THE TORY government's determination to break all resistance by the thousands of nursing auxiliaries, nurses and ward sisters who have been downgraded by the imposition of the Clinical Grading Review was reinforced by Health Secretary Kenneth Clarke's statement on November 16.

Following hard on the heels of Health Minister David Mellor's description of escalating strike action by nurses as the work of 'activists' seeking to 'exploit' the situation, Clarke instructed health authorities to deny the right of individual appeals against regrading to those nurses who refuse to work 'normally'. In addition, the government has refused to make extra funds available to health authorities to meet the cost of successful appeals.

In a bid to drive a wedge between organisations representing nurses, and promote the interests of the anti-strike Royal College of Nursing, Clarke stated provocatively: 'Perhaps the RCN will have to look at who it sits down with for a change.' This remark was seized on by the RCN's general secretary, Trevor Clay, on November 17, when he said that the RCN's ruling council would re-examine joint pay negotiating machinery with other unions. Clarke's and Clay's remarks are directed specifically at NUPE and COHSE - TUC affiliates - whose members have led opposition to the new grading structure.

While thousands of their members have been downgraded and robbed of the right to appeal, Rodney Bickerstaffe of NUPE and Hector MacKenzie of COHSE have refused to mount a serious fight.

In 1982, leaders of NUPE and COHSE, acting on behalf of the Labour Party leadership, crushed the

health workers' pay strike. In doing so they opened the door for the Tories' return for a second period of office in 1983. The Tories promptly rewarded the RCN with a nurses' pay review body in an attempt to separate nurses from other health service workers.

Further attacks were left unanswered by NUPE and COHSE when the United Kingdom Central Council, the body responsible for overseeing the professional conduct of nurses, introduced a system of periodic fees requiring nurses to pay for registration of each qualification. The UKCC has also won support from NUPE and COHSE for Project 2000 which will abolish State Enrolled Nurses and deprive student nurses of the right to belong to a trade union affiliated to the TUC.

The strikes led by nurses early this year in defence of jobs and working conditions were again crushed by NUPE and COHSE in the interests of the Kinnock-Hattersley right wing of the Labour Party who sought to take the credit for 'defending the NHS'. Following mass demonstrations on March 5, NUPE and COHSE channelled the nurses' industrial action into a harmless protest against 'tax cuts for the rich' on budget day, and assisted Labour MPs Robin Cook and Harriet Harman to restore their credibility in the eyes of health workers after they had attacked nurses who went on strike.

While Clarke and Mellor have given a pretext to health authorities to discipline nurses, thereby opening the way for the UKCC to take further action against nurses which could lead to them being struck off the register, Bickerstaffe appeals to his members not to take collective action but individually submit to the blind alley of an appeals procedure. Conscious that the thousands of individual appeals would take years to deal with, but resolutely opposed to mobilising all-out industrial action, Bickerstaffe has concentrated on demanding the Tories submit to the 'independent' arbitration of the government/ employer-sponsored ACAS conciliation service.

In concert with COHSE's Hector MacKenzie, Bickerstaffe works to undermine the natural strivings of health workers for unity. He called a NUPE day of action in London on November 28 while his Labour Party colleague MacKenzie declared December 6 as a COHSE day of action. And this when many nurses throughout the country were already on indefinite strike!

In order to defeat the Tory attacks and unite the struggle of all health workers for the defence of jobs, wages

and working conditions it is necessary to pass resolutions demanding joint action immediately. Branches, stewards' committees, district and regional councils must demand emergency recall conferences of their unions to instruct their leaders to launch all-out, united industrial action.

By Ian Harrison

Every hospital must establish committees of nurses to determine safe staffing levels for wards, and to organise strike action and the defence of nursing staff victimised under the Clinical Grading Review. Such committees must be made up on the basis of proportional representation to en-

sure that the majority of places go to student nurses, auxiliaries and SENs.

Joint Shop Stewards' Committees must mobilise in support of the nurses and stand shoulder-to-shoulder with them against Tory attempts to introduce further divisions among health workers. Above all, no confidence can be placed in the existing leaders of the trade

unions, and their attempt to divert the struggle into the ACAS trap must be decisively rejected. A battle must be waged from the ranks to expose and remove all those elected and full-time officials who refuse to mobilise health workers now in a serious co-ordinated campaign to defeat Tory attacks on the gains of the working class contained in the NHS.

**GCHQ
sell-out
by TUC**

By Susan Keepence

THE DECISION to proceed with the sacking of the remaining union members at GCHQ should be taken as a warning by all trade unionists. For all their talk of national security, the Tories have created a precedent: workers can now be dismissed for merely holding a trade union card.

The next stage in the Tory attack on the right to union membership will be to extend the ban to so-called 'essential services'. Workers in the power supply, water and transport industries, along with those in the health service and other areas of the civil service are the most at risk.

On November 7, the TUC and civil service unions organised a token 'day of action' to protest against the sackings. Despite the low-key campaign by the trade union leaders, one result of which was that only two civil service unions - the CPSA and the NUCPS - voted for a 24-hour strike, the rank-and-file turnout and strength of feeling took them by surprise. The unions estimated that around 200,000 workers, mainly civil servants but including local government, dock and engineering workers, came out in support of the sacked GCHQ workers.

Whilst the speakers at the main London rally, which included TUC general secretary Norman Willis and Labour leader Neil Kinnock, showed all the signs of using the occasion to pay their last respects to trade unionism at GCHQ, the thousands up and down the country who demonstrated and those who packed the Central Hall at Westminster testified to the strength of feeling in the working class. Far from indicating a willingness on behalf of the trade union and Labour Party bureaucracy to defend the democrat-



Trade unionists assemble at Lincoln's Inn Fields on GCHQ Day - November 7 - prior to marching through London to a rally at Central Hall, Westminster

ic rights of the working class, the day of action was used to contain the anger of trade unionists. Kinnock pledged that a future Labour government would reinstate trade unions at

trade unions in February 1984, Willis's predecessor, Len Murray, immediately offered the government a no-strike deal in return for continued union recognition. This was flatly rejected by

of union members at GCHQ - from around two-and-a-half thousand in 1984 to 17 today. Thatcher's strategy has been to gradually undermine the union base inside GCHQ using the carrot-and-stick method, confident that she would receive no serious opposition from the labour leaders. This led many to accept the bribe of £1,000 as 'compensation payment' for losing their trade union rights. Those who didn't immediately co-operate were denied wage rises and promotions until they did. By October of this year, the Tories felt confident enough to move against the tiny hard core of trade unionists who were left and sacked four who had refused all offers of early retirement or compulsory transfer.

The purpose of outlawing trade unionism at GCHQ has nothing to do with national security - any doubts on this score are quickly dispelled when the ban is considered alongside the four rounds of anti-union legislation introduced by the Tories since 1979. Much as they would like to, the Tories cannot outlaw trade unions overnight; instead they must shackle them with legal restrictions. The opportunity presented itself at GCHQ to go a step further. That they were able to take that step is the responsibility of the Labour and trade union leaders.



NALGO members demonstrating on November 7 outside the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting in central London. They were protesting against the withdrawal of trade union recognition at UKCC on the same day that civil servants struck in support of sacked GCHQ workers

GCHQ, thereby subordinating the struggle for trade union rights to the outcome of a parliamentary election.

Whether or not the Labour and trade union leaders are obliged to call further actions over GCHQ, their aim is to quietly bury the whole affair. When the Tories announced the ban on GCHQ

Thatcher who already sensed that the cowardly TUC bureaucracy had no stomach for a fight.

Though they protested loudly in words, Murray, Willis, Kinnock and Co successfully headed off all militant attempts by rank-and-file trade unionists to oppose the Tory legislation. The proof of this is in the decline

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Thank you for pushing our **£10,000 Building Fund** over the one thousand mark - it now stands at £1,055.13. Let's keep it up. The battery of anti-working class measures outlined in the Queen's Speech and the continuous retreats by the Labour and TUC bureaucrats pose the urgent building of a revolutionary party in the working class. Build the circulation of Workers News, and support its regular **£300 Monthly Fund**. Post your donations to:

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Deficit signals more Tory cuts

By David Lewis

THE OCTOBER trade deficit of £2.4 billion, the worst monthly trade deficit ever, shows that the British economy is heading for recession.

While the Treasury's October prediction for the 1988 total at £13 billion seemed high at the time, it looks modest compared with the current estimate of £16 billion. The deficit has been growing continuously since the beginning of 1987 and reflects the low level of manufacturing industry in Britain, devastated by the policies of the Thatcher government since 1979.

The level of consumer spending in October grew by 1.9 per cent to reach record levels. This followed two months in which retail sales had fallen and took place in spite of successive hikes in interest rates. A further rise in interest rates is therefore now on the agenda. Consumer credit is also maintaining its record rate of growth. In the third quarter of this year, lending by banks and finance companies rose by 3.9 per cent to £41.1 billion, with an annual rate of increase of 17.1 per cent.

Britain has the highest inflation rate of the top seven industrial countries. At 6.4 per cent and rising, it is another expression of the relative weakness of Britain in the world economy. The Treasury predicts that the overall growth rate will fall to below 2.5 per cent a year. The present rate of growth is just under 5 per cent but this is attributable in large part to the growth in services. This analysis is supported by looking at the state of industry. Investment in manufacturing industry fell by 5.3 per cent in the third quarter of this year, according to the most recent estimates of the Department of Trade and Industry. This contradicts the claims of Nigel Lawson, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that investment in manufacturing is set to rise. High interest rates will undoubtedly continue to depress investment.

Officially, total unemployment fell by 191,111 in October to 2,160,200. This dramatic result was achieved by measures such as removing the right of 50,000 16 to 18-year-olds to claim benefit. The Unemployment Unit, an independent re-

search group, puts the real number of unemployed at 2,956,100. For those in work, pay rates rose by 9.25 per cent in the year to September. The Employment Secretary, Norman Fowler, signalled the intention of the Tories to unleash another attack on jobs when he said in November that 'everyone should be aware that the effect of unjustified pay increases is to reduce employment opportunities'.

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Demand ILTA 'lefts' fight cut in supply teachers!

By Terry McGinity

ONE HUNDRED and sixty supply teaching posts have been abolished by the Labour-led Inner London Education Authority.

In direct contravention of an agreement between ILTA and teaching unions made last July which established the amount of emergency cover to be provided by full-time teachers, 350 posts were cut on September 5. ILTA was subsequently forced to reinstate 190 of them.

The leaders of the National Union of Teachers are refusing to mount anything but small-scale protest actions. They called a one-day

strike and rally in London on October 20, and a further one-and-a-half days' selective action limited to targeted schools.

It is not surprising, therefore, that a handful of schools started to mount unofficial no-cover action during October. Weary of a long list of betrayals by their National Executive, they hoped to galvanize teachers London-wide and so force the NUT to call all-out strike action.

The leaders of the union's

Inner London Teachers' Association isolated the four schools concerned and prevented the movement from developing. At an ILTA representatives' meeting, the leadership rejected calls for escalating the action and instead proposed that a 'campaign of willingness' be conducted around schools to test the feelings of the membership.

The so-called 'lefts', who are the majority of the ILTA leadership, were suspended from NUT membership in

1987 for leading unofficial strikes against the compulsory redeployment of teachers. They were only reinstated when they agreed to abide by the NUT rule book and leave the conduct of the dispute in the hands of the National Executive. Their cowardly reluctance to lead any form of action in defence of the 160 supply teaching jobs stems from their fear of renewed suspension.

School NUT branches must bombard the ILTA leaders with resolutions demanding that they either fight to defend teaching jobs or make way for those who will.

Labour mounts savage cuts in Brent services

By Jon Bearman

THE LABOUR administration in Brent, which is carrying out massive cuts in jobs and services, is now being kept in office by the Tory councillors.

At a council meeting on November 9, which gained publicity by the fights which took place outside, a motion of no-confidence in Labour leader Dorman Long by the SLD, supported by the 12 anti-cuts Labour councillors, was heavily defeated by the combined vote of the Labour majority and the Conservative group.

At the same time, Tory central government has acted to drive the Labourites further into crisis by additionally surcharging them £8 million. The £17 million cut being made this year is three times worse than that imposed by the newly Tory-controlled council in Bradford.

It is no surprise that the Tories should line up behind Long and the Labour majority who have responded to the financial strait-jacket by defending their own positions, rather than the interests of the working class in Brent who elected them. Over the last few months, the council has:

- Attempted to impose 4,000 redundancies, including compulsory sackings.
- Raised rents by an average of £7 a week.
- Tried to close two libraries and the Crawford Avenue Respite Centre for children with handicaps.
- Used police to break the subsequent occupations of these centres.
- Provoked strikes with social care workers and housing needs workers, where the cost of resolution would be very little, with the aim of weakening local union organisation.
- Recruited scab labour to do the jobs of some of these workers.



Lobby outside the meeting of Brent Council on November 9

Withdrawn an offer to settle one of these disputes on the grounds that there had been violence outside the town hall (which even the local Tory press had reported as originating on the side of the pro-cuts councillors).

Made cuts in education which have resulted in children being sent home because of a shortage of supply teachers.

Cut the refuse collection workforce by half, provoking industrial action and leading to piles of rubbish on the streets.

Opposition to the cuts has so far been limited to strikes by various groups of workers, one-day stoppages across the borough, demonstrations, lobbies of the council and occupations of some threatened services. Nationally, the Labour and trade union leaders - and in particular

the leadership of the local government union NALGO - have refused to give any concrete support.

An emergency motion from the Brent branch to NALGO's Metropolitan District Council meeting in November, calling for a national day of action, substantial financial support and for the leadership to visit the Brent membership regularly (!) was defeated after the intervention of leading Stalinists. The motion was attacked by Richard Maybin and Ivan Beavis, both members of the Communist Party of Britain's Executive Committee. Maybin and Beavis specifically opposed the call for a national one-day strike. They both stressed that the crisis in Brent was a 'local issue', and this after a list had been read out of assaults on members by police called in to smash occupa-

tions.

Even though Brent has backed down on some of the cutbacks, experience shows that Labour councils faced with determined opposition from the workforce will retreat, only to come back again when they judge that resistance has ebbed away. The reprieve of some services will no doubt be paid for by cuts in others.

The first thing to recognise is that the Labour council in Brent is not 'out of step' with the thinking of other Labour and trade union leaders. Since the betrayal of the rate-capping struggle, there hasn't even been the pretence of a national policy by the TUC, the Labour Party or NALGO to rally the working class against the Tory assault on local services and Labour boroughs.

In fact, what happens in Brent is seen as vital by both

the Kinnockite right wing and the former 'left' Labour authorities who are queuing up to make 'caring' cuts. The NALGO national leadership, for its part, specifically calls on local branches to cooperate with the councils in doing this, and refuses to mobilise the membership in opposition.

The Workers International League puts forward the following programme:

■ A conference must be called of all local working class organisations to set up a Council of Action to fight the cuts. This should consist of delegates from all locally-represented trade unions at the branch and shop stewards' committee level, and draw in all other working class associations, groups and political parties in the area.

■ All services threatened with cuts or closure must be occupied and an indefinite strike of other council staff called.

■ Labour councillors and other Labour Party members who oppose the policies of the majority group must campaign to remove those councillors voting for the cuts, and for their replacement by councillors pledged to oppose all cuts, repudiate all debts to banks and finance companies and withhold the Metropolitan Police precept.

■ A national organisation of representatives from shop stewards' committees and union branches throughout local government must be established to co-ordinate the fight against cuts in Brent, Bradford and elsewhere.

■ Brent NALGO and all other NALGO members resisting cuts should fight to requisition an emergency conference to mandate the national leadership with a clear policy of calling national strike action in defence of jobs and services.

■ Build a revolutionary leadership in the trade unions and throughout the working class.

Namibia-Angola settlement — a trap for the African masses

AFTER SEVEN months and nine rounds of negotiation, representatives of South Africa, Angola and Cuba met in the Congolese capital of Brazzaville on November 30 to sign an initial protocol which grants a cosmetic independence to Namibia, and sets in motion the phased withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola.

The agreement, far from safeguarding the national rights of the Angolan and Namibian peoples, contains grave dangers and must be repudiated by workers throughout the region. Under its terms, the Angolan bourgeoisie have agreed to the dismantling of seven ANC military bases in their country, said to house 9,000 fighters. In addition, 45,000 Cuban troops, which have been stationed in Angola since 1975, are to be withdrawn over a 27-month period. In return, South Africa is due to withdraw its forces from Namibia, following a cease-fire with SWAPO and in the run-up to UN-supervised elections in June 1989.

South Africa's aim is to create an 'independent' Namibia, which is economically, politically and militarily under the thumb of Pretoria, while weakening Angola to the point where it will be unable to resist

By Richard Price

South African policy in the region.

Despite being excluded from the talks, the self-styled 'Marxist' leadership of the bourgeois-nationalist SWAPO has hastened to assure giant South African corporations that it will not challenge their existing control of the economy after independence. At present 70 per cent of all goods consumed in Namibia are South African-produced. Railways only run to South Africa. The giant De Beers group controls the diamond mining, while the British-owned Rio Tinto Zinc owns the uranium deposits. The recently discovered Kudu offshore oil field will remain in South African hands, as will the only major port, Walvis Bay.

In a recent policy document, and at a meeting with



Police break up a SWAPO rally in Namibia's capital, Windhoek

white businessmen in Stockholm earlier this year, SWAPO pledged that it would not nationalise major industries, or institute any significant land reform (60 per cent of land is white-owned). Instead, it issued a vague promise that it would do 'something' about absentee landlords, and argue

in favour of mineowners ploughing back more of their profits into Namibia.

Pushing forward the abject capitulation of the black African bourgeoisie is the Soviet bureaucracy. Although the first hints of a regional deal were in March, the major impetus for the Namibia-Angola accord came in May

with a flurry of meetings between conference mediator Chester Crocker of the United States and the Soviet Deputy Foreign Ministry spokesman Anatoly Adami-shin before and during the Moscow summit. As far as the Soviet bureaucracy is concerned, the masses of Namibia and Angola, like

those in Palestine and Afghanistan, have to be sacrificed in the interests of closer diplomatic and economic ties with the imperialist powers. No wonder the *Observer* of November 20 gushed: 'What is new and so exciting — and what the West has consistently underestimated — is the growing Soviet and American understanding on regional disengagement.'

For the workers and peasants of Angola the prospects are far from 'exciting'. Following an eight-month South African offensive beginning in July last year, the MPLA government is dismantling its Cuban protection, at a point where American and South African aid to the right-wing UNITA forces has reached \$40 million this year. A major new base for UNITA in the north of Angola was established this spring with supply routes from Zaire. Such aid will continue, with the prospect of further South African incursions, and with the aim of toppling the MPLA or forcing a power-sharing agreement with UNITA. Such are the fruits of 'peace breaking out'.

PLO RECOGNISES STATE OF ISRAEL

WORKERS NEWS salutes the heroism, courage and sacrifice of the Palestinian people on the first anniversary of the Intifadah.

The Israeli regime, led by the Likud and Labour parties, has murdered over 500 Palestinians in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem. Over 2,500 Palestinian youths are subject to administrative detention, arrest and imprisonment without charge or trial, and many leading Palestinian trade unionists incarcerated. The committees of the Intifadah, formed throughout the towns and villages in self-defence against the Zionist military occupation, have been declared illegal, their organisers hunted down by the Israeli Defence Force.

The Palestinian masses have stood firm, armed with sticks and stones, while the Israeli regime responded by blowing up their houses and bulldozing villages into the ground. What has emerged from the year of Intifadah, however, is not just the burning desire of the Palestinians for statehood and recognition of their rights of self-determination, but the necessity for a leadership and programme to unite Palestinian and Jewish workers in a combined struggle to smash the Zionist state of Israel.

The deepening economic and political crisis within Israel, the emerging split between US and Israeli Jewry, and the annexationist demands of the Zionist right wing combine to create favourable conditions for uniting the Arab and Jewish working class on the basis of a revolutionary socialist programme.

The Palestinian people, in common with the Kurds, have been systematically suppressed and exploited by imperialism since the fall of the Ottoman Empire during World

COMMENT

War One. In common with the Jews, they have been the victims of imperialist barbarism. For the generation of youth born under the occupation who daily stand in the front-line of the Intifadah, it is necessary to draw revolutionary conclusions from that history and the role played in it by the 'thieves kitchen' of imperialism — the League of Nations and its successor body, the United Nations.

Workers News warns that the declaration of an independent state of Palestine in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with east Jerusalem as its headquarters, made by the Palestine National Council in Algiers on November 15, 1988, is a cover for capitulation to and recognition of the imperialist-created state of Israel.

By giving recognition to UN Resolution 242, the PLO are obliged to renounce violence or a state of 'belligerency' against the Zionist regime, and recognise its right to 'secure borders', as it prepares to unleash a fresh assault to crush the Intifadah. The right-wing Zionist groups which emerged with the deciding vote in the Israeli elections are not renouncing a state of 'belligerency', but preparing new means of violence to drive the Palestinians from the West Bank and annexe more territory for Israel.

A crucial role in the drafting of the PNC resolution, the decision to recognise the state of Israel and calls for a UN-sponsored 'peace conference' has been played by the Stalinist bureaucracy in Moscow and their representatives inside the PNC. The Soviet bureaucracy strives to subordinate the legitimate struggle of the Palestinians to its own diplomatic ends as a bargaining counter with US imperialism.

Gorbachev's new era in East-West relations will be conducted at the expense of, among others, the Palestinian and South African working classes. The history of Stalinism in the Middle East shows the refusal of the Communist Parties there to fight for a common programme to unite Arab and Jewish workers.

Every Palestinian should note that it was the UN action on behalf of imperialism which was responsible for robbing them of their lands through the partition of Palestine on November 27, 1947. The Soviet Union was the first state to recognise the founding of Israel — an outpost of imperialism, established as part of the post-war settlement. The UN set its seal of legitimacy on the Zionist occupation which drove a wedge between Arabs and poor Jews. The UN admitted Israel as a full partner into the General Assembly, while giving the Palestinians only observer status.



ARAFAT

The declaration of an independent state by the PNC will not resolve the problem of the Palestinian right to self-determination. It renounces the pledge to arm and mobilise the Palestinian people's revolution in a fight to the finish with Zionism, contained in the PNC Charter of 1968.

The PLO-PNC, backed by the Arab bourgeoisie, have used the Intifadah as a cover to launch their latest diplomatic manoeuvre. While the heroic uprising of the Intifadah temporarily coincides with the needs of the PLO-PNC and the Arab bourgeoisie, it cannot be carried forward to its conclusion through the renunciation of violence or a UN-sponsored peace conference.

A new leadership must be built which will unite Arab and Jewish workers against Zionism, world imperialism and Stalinism. This calls for the building of a Trotskyist Party, theoretically armed with the programme of permanent revolution. Defeat Zionism! Defeat imperialism! For a socialist state of Arab and Jewish workers — Build a Palestinian Trotskyist Party!

TWO VENEZUELAN fishermen who survived an army massacre on October 29 in El Amparo, near the Colombian border, in which 14 of their workmates died, were arrested three weeks later by a military court responsible for investigating the affair and charged with 'military rebellion'.

The soldiers are reported to have dressed the fishermen in the uniforms of a Colombian guerrilla group and poured acid over their bodies to prevent identification. Students launched mass protests against the atrocity in early November.

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Bush stalls on spending cuts

ON THE most pressing problems facing the US ruling class – the giant budget and trade deficits – president-elect George Bush is maintaining a low profile.

Since his defeat of Democratic nominee Michael Dukakis in the presidential election early in November, Bush has been assembling the new Republican administration which will take over after he becomes the 41st president on January 20.

Bush's election platform of no increases in taxes and no reduction in defence or social security spending, and his soothing assurances that no drastic measures are required to control the deficits, have unnerved Wall Street and the international money markets. Bush claims that the federal budget deficit (\$155 billion this year) and the deficit on external trade (expected to exceed \$130 billion this year) will be rectified by continued economic growth combined with a policy of 'flexible freeze', whereby some areas of spending will be cut whilst others are increased, and overall spending will be held to the level of inflation.

The drop in the value of the dollar and the slide in the Wall Street stock prices which greeted the announcement of Bush's victory is an indication that, although they supported his election, the bankers and financiers are pressing him to get on with the job. In their view, there is only one way to proceed – by forcing the working and middle classes to pay through tax increases, unemployment and cuts in welfare.

The alternatives are fraught with too many dangers for the ruling class. In a dire warning about the state of the economy, which was subsequently disowned by Bush, one of his senior economic advisers, Martin Feldstein, said that the dollar would have to fall by 20 per cent against other leading currencies over the next three years if the deficits were to be tackled in this manner. However, whilst this would reduce the trade deficit, it would fuel inflation and lead to a rise in interest rates which, in turn, would increase the repayments on the \$1,800 billion national debt and the corporate debt which is running at about \$600 billion a year.

Feldstein is not, in fact, advocating such a course of action. His statement is in-

Opposition parties are to be allowed in Hungary for the first time since 1948. Forthcoming legislation, announced on November 10, will sanction the establishment of petty-bourgeois and pro-capitalist parties which the Stalinist regime led by Karoly Grosz – a fervent admirer of Margaret Thatcher – is anxious to harness to its 'reform' programme.

By Philip Marchant

tended to put further pressure on the new administration to introduce wide-ranging attacks on the working class. His fears of the inflationary impact of a declining dollar have been echoed by the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, Alan Greenspan.

Behind the bland assurances that the deficits can be reduced without hardship, Bush is preparing to launch an assault on living standards. US workers must place absolutely no confidence in the ability of the Democrats, whether of the Bentsen, Dukakis or Jackson persuasion, to defend them. They must confront the attacks of the ruling class by building an independent, revolutionary Labour Party.

SINCE THE beginning of the year, Peruvian leader Alan Garcia has retreated from the flights of anti-imperialist rhetoric which coloured the first two-and-a-half years of his presidency, and set in motion a series of attacks on the working class designed to solve the country's raging economic crisis.

The response to repeated 'austerity programmes', the first of which was launched last March, has been a rising tide of militancy amongst workers. Thousands of mine, steel, electricity and transport workers have taken strike action, government finance offices have been stoned, the mine-owners' headquarters fire-bombed and there is growing support in the towns for the Maoist-inspired guerrilla organisation, Sendero Luminoso.

The social democrats of the ruling American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) party are seriously divided on how to tackle the

crisis – their 1988 congress has just been postponed for the fourth time. Sections of APRA members, who took the party's 'left' reputation and pledges to oppose the IMF and the world banks at face value, are resisting the about-turn in policy.

On November 22, the then Finance Minister, Abel Salinas, announced the latest package of measures intended to curb the huge budget deficit caused by food subsidies, boost exports to improve the foreign currency reserves, and control inflation estimated unofficially to have reached 1,800 per cent in the last 12 months. ● The price of food has immediately more than doubled, and all food subsidies are to be removed over a period of six months. Fuel prices have risen by 140 per cent and household kerosene by 737 per cent.

● The Peruvian currency,

the inti, has been devalued by 50 per cent to make exports cheaper and encourage an inflow of dollars.

● The minimum wage has been increased by 60 per cent to 24,000 intis (£22) a month.

Garcia's 'challenge' to imperialism was to limit payments on Peru's \$15 billion external debt to 10 per cent of export earnings. This was coupled with an attempt to 'grow out of recession' – stimulating domestic demand and new jobs through a policy of holding the currency value high and interest rates low.

The subsequent hard line adopted by the IMF and the World Bank, depriving Peru of any major credit facilities for the last two years, and the draining away of foreign currency reserves as a result of the spending boom, are now leading to economic stagnation and hyperinflation.

The differences in the APRA leadership are between those who want to openly return to the bosom of the IMF, and introduce the stringent financial and economic policies demanded by it, and those who agree on the need for harsh attacks on the working class but want to conceal the fact that the IMF is calling the tune.

Four days after the new round of austerity measures was announced, Finance Minister Salinas and his deputy, Javier Abugattas, resigned. Both men had been working closely with the IMF and World Bank representatives on the details of the plan and opposed the 'watering down' of their recommendations by Garcia.

In fact, Garcia's intervention was thoroughly fraudulent, designed to bolster his flagging support amongst Peruvian workers. His insistence on a rise in the minimum wage of 60 per cent, whilst agreeing to raise prices by an average of 150 per cent, will lead to the overnight impoverishment of hundreds of thousands of workers and poor peasants.

Alongside the draconian attack on living standards has come a stepping-up of the campaign against the guerrilla movements. Last June, Garcia 'declared war' on the Sendero Luminoso, indicating that he was changing his legally-framed anti-insurgency policy in favour of giving the army a free hand to wipe out the guerrillas. A death squad, known as Comando Rodrigo Franco after a prominent member of APRA who was assassinated last year, was, according to an APRA official, 'formed by high authorities in the government'. It has already murdered a lawyer, a trade union leader and a teacher,

all thought to be sympathetic to the guerrillas, and attempted unsuccessfully to blow up the offices of a pro-Sendero newspaper. The three members of the group who attacked the office were all linked to APRA, and the sole survivor was given police protection and released without charge.

Besieged on one side by the IMF, Peruvian bankers and industrialists, and their supporters in APRA, Garcia is now coming under continuous fire from the working class. The day that the new round of attacks was announced coincided with a huge demonstration through the capital, Lima, by striking miners, textile workers, civil servants, transport workers and others, calling for higher wages and improved living conditions. On the same day, guerrillas destroyed 10 electricity pylons, causing power cuts throughout the country, and mortar-bombed the headquarters of the anti-terrorist police unit.

Garcia's attempt to balance between the working class and the native bourgeoisie, using a combination of populist demagoguery and economic policies that brought a temporary 'boom', has merely intensified the economic and political crisis and greatly increased the possibility of a military take-over. Only the armed mobilisation of the workers and poor peasants on a revolutionary socialist programme can challenge the domination of Peru by imperialism.

Stalinists abstain

FRANCE's 1989 budget was approved in the National Assembly on November 18 after the 25 Communist Party deputies agreed at the last minute to abstain. The manoeuvre was designed to avoid causing the minority Socialist Party government the humiliation of making the Bill an issue of confidence.

Though the Stalinists made it clear in advance that they had no intention of bringing the government down, they are anxious not to jeopardise the current negotiations for a pact with the Socialist Party in the municipal elections next March.

The wave of sector industry strikes since October, which the Stalinist leaders of the CGT trade unions have been obliged to support, is the result of the policy of 'budgetary austerity'. With the successful passage of the Bill, the government of Prime Minister Michel Rocard will be able to introduce further public spending cuts next year.

Peruvian workers resist IMF's economic package

By Eugene Ludlow



Demonstrators outside the Malaysian Embassy in London on October 27 calling for the release of 17 opponents of the regime of Dr Mahathir Mohamad

Malaysian government still holding 17 without charge

A PICKET outside the Malaysian Embassy in London on October 27 marked a year since the arrest of 107 activists under the 1960 Internal Security Act. The Human Rights Group of Malaysia and Singapore demanded the release of 17 of those arrested and still detained without charge or trial.

The 1987 crackdown was implemented by Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad in an effort to shore up growing divisions in his United Malays National Organisation (UMNO). Taking advantage of rising class and racial tensions within Malaysia, Mahathir enforced the ISA, which allows for

By Terry McGinity

60 days detention without charge and a further two years without trial renewable under his discretion as Minister of Justice.

The ISA is just one of many anti-working class laws that successive governments have used to suppress opposition since the takeover from British rule in 1957 by a national bourgeois coalition, now called Barisan Nasional, of which UMNO is a part.

Besides the October 27 detainees, there are many hundreds more incarcerated and described by Mahathir as 'hard-core communists'. The recent detainees include op-

position MPs, trade unionists, dramatists and academics. On October 27, they all began a week-long hunger strike, demanding either to be released immediately or charged and tried in court.

A spokesman for the picket stated that Mahathir's policies were losing electoral ground, as in the case of a recent by-election in Johore. He also said that the current £1.5 billion arms deal being negotiated with the Thatcher government was particularly ominous when seen in conjunction with Mahathir's moves to tighten the constitution, giving even more power to his presidency.

EDITORIAL

Yugoslavia at the crossroads

THE PAY-OFF for decades of Stalinist rule in Yugoslavia is daily more apparent as the deformed workers' state totters on the edge of disintegration. Having split into warring factions along nationalistic lines, the bureaucracy can offer the Yugoslavian working class only the stark choice between complete separation or Serbian domination over the five other republics and two autonomous regions.

The only thing uniting the different cliques within the bureaucracy is their agreement on an even greater economic integration with the West. Combined with the prospect of a weaker federation, this will present the greatest opportunity for foreign capital to undermine the nationalised property relations, strengthen immeasurably the restorationist elements within Yugoslav society and create the conditions for counter-revolution.

The crisis of the Yugoslav Stalinists is the sharpest expression of the general crisis running through Stalinism world-wide, magnified by the particular conditions of Yugoslavia's post-war history. Unlike the other Eastern European states, the workers and peasants of Yugoslavia played a decisive role in the smashing of capitalism. This gave the Stalinist leadership under Tito a distinct advantage in its dealings with Moscow. A firm adherent of the outlook of socialism in one country, Tito naturally assigned to himself a more important role than mere functionary of Stalin. When it became clear that the economic relationship favoured the Soviet Union, Tito embarked on his own 'national road to socialism'. The formal break with the USSR in 1948 led to Stalin imposing an economic blockade.

Yugoslavia was now propelled by Tito on a disastrous course of forced collectivisation of agriculture to finance the rebuilding of the war-shattered economy. Stubborn resistance by the peasantry ruled this out and Tito dumped the idea of a fully state-owned and centrally planned economy in favour of 'self-managing market socialism'. In practice, this meant the elevation of an all-powerful bureaucratic-managerial caste, the strengthening of the private sector, and economic development concentrated in the more prosperous republics. Cut off from Soviet economic aid, Tito turned to the West to finance this scheme.

The periodic emergence of economic crises since this time, each one worse than the last, has been met by the bureaucracy with an affirmation of the correctness of its policies. An ever-greater reliance on loans from imperialist banks and the growth of bureaucratic cliques with conflicting interests has weakened the federal government relative to those of the republics. One of Tito's last acts before he died in May 1980 was to enshrine in law this domination of the parts over the whole, thus putting an insurmountable obstacle in the way of central planning of the economy.

The legacy of these policies is a raging economic crisis, surpassing anything which came before it, and a hopelessly inefficient, outdated and unevenly developed industry. Inflation stands at 250 per cent, many state-run enterprises are 'bankrupt', unemployment is over 1.5 million and the foreign debt is a crippling \$21 billion.

Confronted by determined resistance from the working class to austerity measures recommended by the IMF, the Stalinist leaders propose 'more of the same'. Imperialist capital is to be given the green light to enter Yugoslavia unhindered, small businessmen can now become big businessmen with the removal of laws which once restricted the number of workers private companies were allowed to employ; and, in a bid to divert workers' anger at wage-cuts, the removal of food subsidies and unemployment, a reactionary storm of anti-Albanian racism and chauvinism has been stoked up, led by the large Serbian petty-bourgeoisie.

Serbian CP leader Slobodan Milosevic is in the process of establishing his, and the Serbian bureaucracy's, domination over the rest of the federation. On the back of a series of enormous demonstrations in Belgrade, he has all but declared war on the Albanian population which lives in the autonomous region of Kosovo. Frightened by the movement of the working class, the bureaucracies of the other republics are slowly falling in with Milosevic's plans despite their unease at his ambition for overall control. This is particularly true of the bureaucracy in the richest republic, Slovenia, sections of which openly state that 'socialism' is a mistake and that Slovenia should break away and join the EEC.

Working class resistance to the economic policies of the bureaucracy, however, is not slowing down. Strikes are a daily occurrence and have been so for the past two years. In Kosovo, 6,000 miners, striking against wage cuts, initiated the four days of protests against Serbian attempts to remove Kosovo's autonomous status which culminated in a 100,000-strong demonstration in the region's capital, Pristina, in November.

Any regime headed by Milosevic would be the expression of the widening class differentiation taking place in Yugoslavia and would be extremely unstable. It could be toppled either from the left or the right.

The only force capable of defending Yugoslavia and building on the gains of the post-war nationalisation of industry is the working class. Workers have nothing to gain from a 'democratic capitalist' alternative to Stalinism - the overthrow of the nationalised property relations would mean the carving up of Yugoslavia amongst extreme right-wing regimes, the smashing of all hard-won rights, and the economy being thrown back decades.

But the working class requires a Trotskyist leadership, armed with the programme of political revolution, in order to realise its goal. Only then could it sweep out the bureaucracy and establish workers' democracy. The monopoly of foreign trade would be restored and the economy would be planned centrally, whilst cultural differences would be respected. Most importantly, it would reject the reactionary theory of 'socialism in a single country' and place its confidence only in the international working class and the overthrow of capitalism in the West.

The revisionism

SHOWERED WITH praise by the author's co-thinkers as 'a work of excavation' and 'a powerful weapon in the international struggle for Trotskyism' comes 'The Heritage We Defend' - a 500-page self-styled 'critical history' of the Fourth International written by International Committee leader David North.

It represents the most extensive attempt yet to mount an 'orthodox' defence of the 35-year history of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) and, in particular, to uphold the 'heritage' bequeathed by James P. Cannon, leader of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States, and a co-founder of the ICFI. As such it merits a serious reply, and it is a measure of the bankruptcy and indifference to theory of the various WRP remnants led by such veterans as Slaughter, Hunter and Torrance that they have been unable to do so. The vacuous effort by Ray Athow in Torrance's *News Line* to deal with the theoretical and historical questions raised by the book in a few sentences deserves nothing but contempt.

North's book is, in fact, a superficially sophisticated attempt to block a real understanding of the development of revisionism in the post-war Fourth International. North produces yards of quotations whose purpose at the end of the day is to prove that the rump international tendency which he leads is the undisputed heir to an unbroken struggle for Trotskyism.

Having shouldered the task of defending to the hilt the 'heritage' of the ICFI, North - who considers himself to be a slayer of revisionism on a world scale - is led inexorably to conciliate with, and cover-up for, definite revisions of Trotskyism.

'The Heritage We Defend' is the product of a 35-part reply to ex-WRP general secretary Michael Banda's document '27 Reasons Why the International Committee Should be Buried Forthwith and the Fourth International Built', which was published in February 1986 during the latter's rapid conversion to Stalinism. Today, Banda is West Hampstead's leading exponent of peasant guerrilla warfare.

North's book succeeds in demolishing Banda's most outrageous and factually incorrect slanders - that the SWP capitulated to the Socialist Party of America, that it failed to defend the Rosenbergs, that it refused to recognise the Communist Party as part of the workers' movement, etc.

Otherwise, what we have is a recital of the 'victory-crowned' achievements of the ICFI, leading unswervingly up to its 'veritable

The Heritage We Defend
By David North
Labor Publications £10

Review by Richard Price

renaissance' after the 1985 split, in which it lost over 80 per cent of its international membership. Neither Trotskyism can be defended nor Banda's bullish Stalinism defeated by North's accumulation of half-truths and evasions.

Trotskyism and the Second World War¹

Banda, in his hurry to defame the entire history of Trotskyism, launched a vicious and ill-informed attack upon the history of the Fourth International during the Second World War, accusing it of, among other things, abstaining from the resistance struggles of the working class and abandoning revolutionary defeatism. North's reply sets out the heroism and fidelity to principle of Trotskyists throughout the world, although he adds very little to existing accounts.² In doing so, however, North falls into the opposite trap of ignoring the opportunist errors which did take place. North indignantly defends to the hilt SWP leader James P. Cannon, whose Minneapolis Trial speech in 1941 Banda seizes upon. North's predecessor as leader of the Workers League, Tim Wohlforth, was far more circumspect in his book 'The Struggle for Marxism in the United States', written in 1964: 'Defensive formulations shifted over into a defensive pose in which the opponent is seen, at least at present, as democratic and peaceful, and we must prove to our opponent - and the working class which is seen as agreeing with our opponent - that we also are democratic and peaceful.'³

Nobody (except perhaps Banda) could doubt the courage of the French section of the Fourth International which produced 73 clandestine issues of *La Verite* under the Nazi occupation. Here, however, there were waverings of a semi-patriotic character, which the Fourth International subsequently recognised and fought to correct.

In November 1940, *La Verite* argued: 'We are obliged to make the maximum efforts to influence the bourgeois side to create with us a party, a national resistance movement.'⁴ And, although *La Verite* opposed the anti-German chauvinism of the Stalinists, it spoke of counterposing 'the nationalism of the washerwoman to that of the bourgeois'.⁵ In February 1944, the European Secretariat of the Fourth International decided that 'the position taken

by the French section on the national question, the theses brought out in the name of the European Secretariat of the Fourth International, at that time exclusively controlled by French comrades, represent a *social patriotic* deviation which must once and for all be openly condemned and rejected as incompatible with the programme and the general ideology of the Fourth International'.⁶

But while North passes over these important questions, his British disciple, Dave Hyland, has recently engaged in a virulent attack upon the youthful British Trotskyists of the Workers International League, denouncing its 'completely nationalist and opportunist orientation' and describing it as 'politically criminal' and 'syndicalist'.⁷ The WIL had been formed under the circumstances of a malicious provocation against Ralph Lee. Rejecting the warnings of the Fourth International, the WIL refused to join the united British section in 1938. Without diminishing the significance of its mistakes, it is necessary to state that the WIL fought substantially on the programme of the Fourth International under the most difficult circumstances and corrected its wrong positions when it fused with the RSL to form a unified British section, the RCP, in 1944.

Five months ago, Hyland promised that the 'history commission' of the ICP would be publishing a series of articles on the history of British Trotskyism. So far none have seen the light of day. This is perhaps not unconnected to the gaping holes in the 'official version' of ICFI history. As we shall show, both North and Hyland are no strangers to straining on Trotskyist gnats and swallowing revisionist camels.

Cannon's American Theses

North writes (p.129) that James P. Cannon's 1946 'American Theses', adopted by the SWP convention of that year, deserve 'an honoured place in the documentary record (?) of the history of the Fourth International'. In doing so, he performs without explanation a 180-degree turn in relation to the positions he and the ICFI have held for the previous quarter of a century. He ignores Wohlforth's judgement that the theses 'were based on a totally false understanding



Police raid on the SWP headquarters

of the objective situation in the world economy at the time as well as of the relationship of American capitalism to the world capitalist system'.⁸ Four years ago, North republished a 1975 article entitled 'What Makes Wohlforth Run?', in which he described the 'American Theses' as a 'false perspective', responsible for planting in the SWP 'the seeds for the subsequent emergence of open liquidationism and capitulation to bureaucracy in its ranks'.⁹ For our part, we do not subscribe to either of North's exaggerated versions. The 'American Theses' did not mark any definitive rupture with Trotskyism on the part of Cannon or the SWP, but reserving them an 'honoured place' serves only to compound the confusion.



JAMES P. CANNON

Cannon's central argument - that no possibility existed for the expansion of the US domestic market, nor was there any prospect of US exports finding an outlet in the world market - was erroneous, and led to the conclusion that the socialist revolution in the United States was placed 'on the order of the day'. North argues with some justification that by 1946, the post-war stabilisation and subsequent boom was a means apparent

Stalinism North defends



Minneapolis in 1941

he leaves the subject. Entirely dubious, however, is his contention, which rests on a crude syllogistic logic, that the 'American Theses' were an entirely positive contribution to Marxism because they were directed against the pessimistic right-wingers Goldman and Morrow.

The 'American Theses' had an after-life. In the developing struggle against the Cochran-Clarke faction in 1952-3, Cannon attempted to revive them. Having had, by Cannon's admission, little attention paid to them for six years, the theses were unearthed, under conditions in which the 1946 perspective was thoroughly falsified. Yet Cannon believed that the task was 'to make all party work and education revolve around them'.¹⁰ They formed the basis of his series of lectures 'America's Road to Socialism'. This pedestrian attempt to re-arm the SWP almost entirely omitted any discussion of Stalinism. Hence, although Cannon was able - correctly - to identify the Cochran-Clarke faction as a group of conservative trade unionists intent on liquidating the party, his reliance on the 'American Theses' made him unable to grasp the source of the factional opposition. He thought it lay in American conditions, when it was in reality rooted in world developments. He was powerless to combat the authority claimed by Cochran-Clarke from the Third World Congress documents, because he held that the theses formed a 'unity' with them.

Cannon's resurrection of the 'American Theses' was an attempt to continue the collaboration with Pablo, by restraining the political discussion to 'American' questions: 'We had discussed up to then, [May 1953] only on a national plane. We

for our part, had not raised any international questions. We tried, for five months, to confine the discussion to the problems of the American SWP, which are fairly important in themselves and well worth a discussion.'¹¹

The Yugoslav Revolution and the Buffer Zone debate

In his haste to answer Banda's accusation that the Fourth International failed to appreciate the significance of the Yugoslav revolution, North invokes the authority of the open letter addressed by the Fourth International to the leadership and membership of the Yugoslav Communist Party in July 1948. In doing so, he lends his support to the political origins of Pabloism and the ancestor of all subsequent theories of 'revolutionary' Stalinism or Stalinism 'of a special type'.

Up to and including the Second World Congress of April 1948, the Fourth International considered Yugoslavia and the 'buffer zone' states of Eastern Europe still to be capitalist states. Following the Stalin-Tito split of June that year, the Fourth International embraced Yugoslavia as a workers' state (and implicitly a healthy rather than bureaucratically deformed one). The open letter went well beyond a critical defence of Yugoslavia and raised the possibility of the Yugoslav CP mutating from a Stalinist party to a revolutionary party, and that it could establish - without a political revolution - a genuine workers' democracy. Only a few years previously, Tito had executed a group of Belgrade Trotskyists led by Slobodan Maculic.¹² Far from being a 'tactic' aimed

solely at the CP ranks, the letter concluded with a call to form a new International: 'Yugoslav Communists, let us unite our efforts for a new Leninist International for the world victory of socialism.'¹³ Having quoted a full four pages of the open letter, North leaves out this sentence!

North praises the 'prescience' of the open letter 'in evaluating the perspectives of the Yugoslav revolution', and claims to discern a 'stark contrast between the method of this document and that which was to become characteristic of Pablo's later work'. In fact it was the edge of a slippery slope, down which Stalinism would, by 1951, be accorded the ability to perform revolutionary tasks under the impact of 'mass pressure'.

North's treatment of the 'buffer zone' debate is scarcely more enlightening. It consists of a balancing act, reciting the various contributions of Mandel, Stein, Hansen and Cannon, without ever arriving at any firm conclusions. The participants in the buffer zone debate, faced with qualitatively new theoretical problems, tended to divide along two lines - one tendency accepting the existence of workers' states in Eastern Europe based upon empirical, sociological criteria; the other denying their existence, basing themselves upon the recapitulation of existing programme and perspectives. Those who were prepared to recognise workers' states on the grounds of the existence of nationalised property relations opened the door to theories of 'revolutionary Stalinism'. Those who refused to admit the possibility of the Stalinist bureaucracy creating deformed workers' states were holding fast to an atrophied theory.

Having thrown his lot in with the latter group, North is unable to explain how Pabloism filled the theoretical vacuum. Neither tendency (the 'orthodox' SWP included) was able to develop a rounded understanding of the nature of the bureaucratic overturns in Eastern Europe, with the consequence that revisionism spread like a bush fire, and swept the 1951 Third World Congress (the heterodox opposition of the French section notwithstanding).

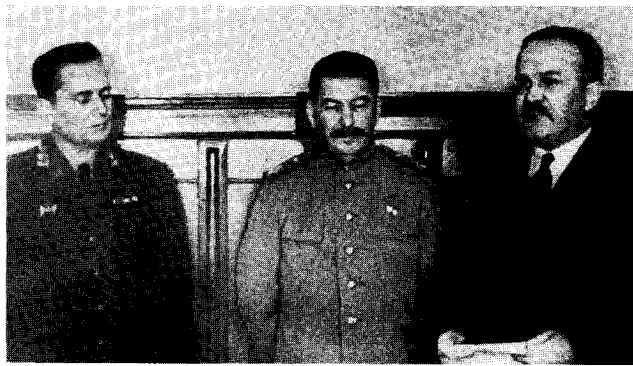
'Deep Entry' into the Labour Party

Astonishingly, for somebody claiming to write a 'critical' history, North devotes precisely four sentences to the nine years of entry work conducted by 'the Group' inside the Labour Party between 1948 and 1957. On page 119, North tells us that 'Healy correctly fought for an entry line in relation to the British Labour Party', while

200 pages and six years on in the narrative he remarks that the Group 'was carrying out intensive activity within the Labour Party and among the most militant sections of workers'.

Either North knows very little about the subject or, as seems more likely, he has consciously set out to avoid it, aware of the problems it presents to the legend of 'orthodox Trotskyism'. Indeed, in so far as North refers to entryism at all, it is to introduce subterfuge. He argues that any criticism of the type of entry practised by Healy and the Group is tantamount to 'regurgitating the old arguments thrown up by Haston, who soon deserted the Trotskyist movement and became an out-and-out anticommunist'. Very pompous, Mr North, but very unconvincing! You are in fact providing a smokescreen for opportunism, safe in the knowledge that most of your members have not read the *Socialist Outlook* (published by the Group from 1948 to 1954) and will take your word at face value. The fact that Jock Haston was opposed to Labour Party entry full stop, and that Michael Banda developed some differences with the Group's activities 35 years after the event, will not deter any Trotskyist from a serious examination of this period.

First, it is necessary to disentangle the two issues North is trying to tie up. In and of itself, the decision of the Healy-led RCP minority to enter the Labour Party in 1947 was not a mistake, although the opportunities were probably substantially



The Yugoslavian Stalinist leader Tito (left) with Stalin and Molotov

less than had existed in the period of radicalisation in 1944-5. The type of entry carried out, however, with the full agreement of the international leadership, was to be a prototype of the 'deep entry' proposed by Pablo after 1951. It involved the membership of the British section burying their Trotskyist credentials as unobtrusively as possible in the interests of a propaganda bloc with left-reformists and Stalinist fellow travellers.

The twin vehicles for deep entry in Britain were the paper of the Group *Socialist Outlook*, founded in December 1948, and the Socialist Fellowship, launched by a group of left Labour MPs, including Ellis Smith and Fenner Brockway, in the summer of 1949. (It is instructive that a six-part obituary published this year in the

paper of North's British section, the *International Worker*, under the attractive title 'Fenner Brockway, a centrist traitor dies', failed to mention Brockway's involvement in the Socialist Fellowship or the fact that he wrote for *Socialist Outlook*).

From the outset, the policies of *Socialist Outlook* were uncritically adapted to those of its reformist bed-fellows. The struggle against Stalinism was almost entirely shelved for much of the paper's life, with the exception of its fulsome support for Tito during the Tito-Stalin split. This was entirely in line with the Group's collaboration with the likes of Tom Braddock, S.O. Davies and Jack Stanley who were all to a greater or lesser extent sympathetic to Stalinism.

While Pablo and Cannon were both enthusiastic that 'real' work was now being done in the 'mass movement' for the first time in Britain - Cannon contemptuously referred to the 18 years which preceded 'entry' as 'the pre-history of British Trotskyism' - the real worth of the extended bloc with the reformists around *Socialist Outlook* was tested in three sharp crises. First the Socialist Fellowship leaders, Ellis Smith and Fenner Brockway, capitulated over the Korean War and resigned. Then, when the Socialist Fellowship was proscribed by Transport House in 1951, *Socialist Outlook* faithfully reported (and endorsed) the submission of the SF leaders to the decision: 'As loyal members of the Labour Party who have

ment for Colonial Freedom than to the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution.

The corrosive effects upon the cadre of the British section can be judged by the lengthy review of Aneurin Bevan's book 'In Place of Fear' which appeared under G. Healy's name in the May/August 1952 edition of *Labour Review*. It contains a series of concessions to reformist parliamentarianism and concludes with the following four-point summary of 'conditions' for the success of the struggle for socialism in Britain:

1. Complete reliance on the organised power of the working class.
2. No confidence in Britain's capitalists or America's imperialists.
3. Finish without delay the job of nationalising, democratising, and reorganising industry along Socialist lines.
4. Put into effect a Socialist and democratic foreign policy.¹⁶

This was British Pabloism in action, at a time when revisionism in the Fourth International was flourishing all down the line. The fact remains - and we challenge North to prove otherwise - that the 'deep entry' work carried out in Britain remained outside all the polemics which raged both before and after the split of 1953, for the good reason that Pablo and Co had no quarrel with Healy on that score. It is a matter of record that this period has also earned the special praise of Mandel¹⁷, of reformist and anti-communist Mark Jenkins¹⁸ and of Alan Jones of the IMG.¹⁹ And who described *Socialist Outlook* as 'the best product of revolutionary working class journalism in the entire international workers' movement'? None other than those arch-liquidators, the Cochran-Clarke faction of the SWP in April 1953.²⁰

NOTES

- 1 Since this article was written, *Revolutionary History* (No3) has published a number of documents relating to the history of the Fourth International during the Second World War.
- 2 See for example M. Pablo: 'The Fourth International (A History of its Ideas and Struggles)', SWP, 1973.
- 3 T. Wohlforth: 'The Struggle for Marxism in the United States', 1971, p.94.
- 4 Quoted in *Fourth International*, Winter 1973, p.141.
- 5 Quoted in I. Birchall: 'Workers Against the Monolith', Pluto, 1974, p.21.
- 6 Quoted in G. Vereeken: 'The GPU in the Trotskyist Movement', New Park, 1976, p.281.
- 7 *International Worker*, July 9, 1988.
- 8 Wohlforth, p.100.
- 9 'The Fourth International and the Renegade Wohlforth', Labor Publications, 1984, p.53.
- 10 James P. Cannon: 'Speeches to the Party', Pathfinder, 1980, p.238.
- 11 James P. Cannon, 'The 25th Anniversary Plenum of the SWP', IC Documents, Vol.3, SWP, 1974, p.158.
- 12 Birchall, p.232.
- 13 Quoted in S. Bornstein and A. Richardson: 'War and the International', Socialist Platform, 1986, p.219.
- 14 M. Jenkins: 'Bevanism, Labour's High Tide', Spokesman, 1979, p.104.
- 15 L. Trotsky: 'Writings on Britain', Vol.2, New Park, 1974, p.222.
- 16 See James P. Cannon: 'Speeches to the Party', Pathfinder, 1980, p.364.

TO BE CONTINUED

PART NINE

In defence of the theory of permanent revolution

LENIN'S OFFENSIVE, conducted throughout the First World War against the vast majority of leaders of the Second International who had descended into social chauvinism, had as its goal the construction of a new revolutionary International. As early as November 1, 1914, the Bolshevik Central Committee adopted a resolution calling for a 'proletarian International, freed from opportunism'.

In 'Socialism and War' (jointly written with Zinoviev in 1915), Lenin wrote: 'We are firmly convinced that, in the present state of affairs, a split with the opportunists and chauvinists is the prime duty of revolutionaries . . . To our party, the question of the expediency of a break with the social-chauvinists does not exist, it has been answered with finality . . . The immediate future will show whether the conditions are mature for the formation of a new and Marxist International. If they are, our party will gladly join such a Third International, purged of opportunism and chauvinism.' (Lenin: 'Collected Works', Vol.21, pp.329-30).

The selection of genuinely revolutionary elements, in distinction to centrist currents, was the content of the Bolsheviks' work within the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences.

On his arrival in Petrograd in April 1917, Lenin placed this international responsibility on the order of the day: 'No other country in the world is as free as Russia is now. Let us make use of this freedom, not to advocate support for the bourgeoisie, or bourgeois "revolutionary defencism", but in a bold, honest, proletarian, Liebknecht way to found the Third International, an International uncompromisingly hostile to the social-chauvinist traitors and to the vacillating "Centrists"' (Lenin: 'Between the Two Revolutions', p.107).



Lenin speaking at the Second Congress

The creation of a general staff of the world socialist revolution, the Communist International, could not be realised for a further two years, owing to the continuation of the First World War and the Russian Civil War which followed.

The difficulties of travelling to Russia, and the uncompleted struggle within the social-democratic parties of Europe were such that the Founding Congress of the Communist International in March 1919 was, despite its historic significance, confined to a relatively small representation. Fifty-one delegates represented 35 organisations.

By Richard Price

The tasks of the Congress centred upon drawing out the most essential experiences of Soviet power as the basis of the world party. Although there was no major debate on national and colonial struggles, the Congress heard reports from delegates representing workers' organisations in China, Korea, Persia and Turkey.

An essential part of the struggle against the chauvinism of the old leaders of the Second International was the championing of emerging national liberation struggles and the construction of Communist parties within the colonial and semi-colonial countries. As the Persian delegate to the Second Congress of the Communist International in July 1920, Sultan-Zade, observed: 'At most of its Congresses the Second International studied the colonial question and drew up choice resolutions on it which could never be put into practice. Very often these questions were debated and decisions taken without the participation of representatives of backward countries. What is more, when the first Persian revolution was suppressed by the Russian and English hangmen and the Persian Social Democracy turned for help to the European working class, which was at that time represented by the Second International, it was not even given the right to vote on a resolution on that question.' ('Second Congress of the Communist International', Vol.1, New Park, 1977, p.133).

The degeneration of the Second International had been revealed in its refusal to take a principled and unequivocal stand against the colonialism of its 'own' oppressor nations. The Amsterdam congress of 1904 avoided an open confrontation with advocates of a 'socialist' colonial policy, and limited itself to a reform programme. The Stuttgart congress of 1907 compounded the retreat with over 40 per cent of delegates supporting a resolution which stated that 'under a socialist regime, colonisation could be a force for civilisation'. The debates on immigration at the two congresses showed that a fringe of outright jingoists and racists existed within the Second International, demanding the restriction of 'unnatural' immigration by 'black' and 'yellow' races. (see 'Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International', Pathfinder, 1986, pp.1-20).

It was against this back-

ground that Lenin undertook his monumental work on the national question and self-determination, both before and during the First World War. This in turn formed the basis of the Communist attitude to the national question in the non-Russian soviet republics and at the Second Congress of the Communist International.

Modern revisionism has frequently attempted to distort and undermine this work, by falsely attributing a division between Lenin's position on the right of nations to self-determination and Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. By

These distinctions obscured the contradictory nature of the colonial bourgeoisie . . . More dangerously, this division encouraged the illusion - capitalised on by the Stalinists - that some national movements could grow over into "workers' and farmers' governments" and even institute a socialist regime.' ('Documents and resolutions of the Sixth Congress of the WRP', pp.13-14).

A careful reading of the Second Congress minutes shows that there is no substance in either of the two contradictory claims made by the WRP. It is also necessary to state that, although he became a vehi-

the representative of bourgeois capitalist relations' ('Second Congress of the Communist International', Vol. 1, New Park, 1977, pp.110-111). Lenin laid stress on the importance of a correct attitude to the peasant mass: 'It would be utopian to think that proletarian parties, insofar as it is at all possible for them to arise in these countries, will be able to carry out Communist tactics and Communist policies in the backward countries without having a definite relationship with the peasant movement, without supporting it in deeds' (Ibid, p.111).

It is clear that Lenin was



Delegates to the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920 (M.N. Roy in centre at top of steps)

claiming to rediscover in Lenin the theoretician of 'anti-imperialist' multi-class struggles, opportunism tries to find a justification for wholesale adaptation to bourgeois nationalism.

Such was the position of the WRP in 1977 when it published the minutes of the Second Congress of the Communist International in English for the first time, at the point where it was developing close relations with the PLO, the Libyan Jamahiriyyah and the Iraqi Ba'ath Socialist Party. Six years later, with the WRP/ICFI's 'alliances' breaking down, Michael Banda had the impudence to suggest that Lenin's acceptance of M.N. Roy's supplementary theses on the national and colonial question was the original sin of revolutionary policy in the oppressed countries: 'In the course of this discussion a concession was made to those who, like M.N. Roy from India, made an invidious distinction between "national revolutionary" movements and "reformist" movements in the colonies.

cle for the implementation of the disastrous Stalinist policy of worker-peasant parties in the east in the mid-twenties, M.N. Roy did show promise in the early twenties as the first Indian Marxist to make a detailed analysis of class relations in the classical colonial country. (See for example 'India in Transition' in his 'Selected Works', Volume 1, Oxford, 1987).

Lenin's report to the Second Congress sought to bring to the delegates from colonial and semi-colonial countries the lessons of the Russian revolution and their application in the context of the emerging national liberation struggles of the eastern countries. As for suggesting that bourgeois-led movements 'grow over' into socialist regimes, Lenin gave a categorical answer: 'There can be no doubt of the fact that any nationalist movement can only be a bourgeois-democratic movement, because the great mass of the population of the backward countries consists of the peasantry, which is

far from according 'unconditional' support to the bourgeoisie in the colonial countries in the manner of the SLL/WRP/ICFI over two decades. Whilst unconditionally supporting the bourgeois-democratic liberation struggle, the Communists must strive to win the support of the rural poor through the formation of peasant soviets in opposition to the national bourgeoisie which tended towards agreement with the imperialist bourgeoisie. Where Lenin speaks of supporting bourgeois freedom movements only 'if these movements are really revolutionary and if their representatives are not opposed to us training and organising the peasantry in a revolutionary way' (Ibid, p.111), what he had in mind were limited agreements for the purpose of common struggle.

Lenin also devoted a section of his report to the countries of the east in which pre-capitalist relations predominated, and discussed the possibility of such countries avoiding the capitalist

phase of development. The consolidation of the national bourgeoisie, the enormous growth of the proletariat and the predominance of capitalist relations have surpassed the provisional character of Lenin's prognosis. Yet over sixty-five years later the half-baked 'theoreticians' of the WRP/News Line group have attempted to find in these formulations support both for their opposition to the building of Trotskyist parties in countries such as Iran, and for their contention that 'the bourgeoisie can still play a revolutionary role in the East'.

Such a position is an explicit repudiation of Lenin's theses which required sections of the Communist International to carry out a struggle against the influence of pan-Islamism, and against feudal remnants. A further warning was issued by Lenin against attempts 'to put a communist cloak around liberation movements that are not really communist in the backward countries. The Communist International has the duty to support the revolutionary movement in the colonies only for the purpose of gathering the components of the future proletarian parties - communist in fact and not just in name - in all the backward countries and training them to be conscious of their special tasks, the special tasks, that is to say, of fighting against bourgeois-democratic tendencies within their own nation. The Communist International should accompany the revolutionary movement in the colonies and the backward countries for part of the way, should even make an alliance with it; it may not, however, fuse with it, but must unconditionally maintain the independent character of the proletarian movement, be it only in embryo.' (Ibid, pp.181-2).

Roy's supplementary theses did not contradict Lenin's position in any essential respect. Indeed, Roy stated that 'the most important and necessary task however is the creation of Communist organisations of peasants and workers in order to lead them to the revolution and the setting up of the Soviet republic'. (Ibid, p.118). In opposing himself to Lenin's and Roy's position at the Second Congress (as opposed to Roy's later evolution), Banda was in company with the Italian delegate, Serrati, whose centrist opposition on the national question was condemned by several delegates, including Zinoviev, the chairman, on behalf of the Russian delegation. In claiming the authority of the Second Congress for its uncritical boosting of bourgeois nationalism, the News Line group set themselves against all the leading contributions, including those like Sultan-Zade from the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

Try as they may, the opponents of permanent revolution cannot find any comfort from Lenin or the platform of the early Communist International.

TO BE CONTINUED

Faction struggle grows as mullahs turn on workers

THE CEASE-FIRE between Iran and Iraq announced in July has led to the intensification of the class struggle in Iran and deepening factional struggles within the Islamic regime.

Re-establishment of full trading relations with the capitalist world market threatens to split the regime and government currently held together by the authority of the ageing Ayatollah Khomeini. The main line of division within the Islamic regime is between the so-called 'radical' and 'pragmatist' factions led respectively by Prime Minister Hussein Musavi and Parliamentary (Majlis) Speaker Hashemi Rafsanjani. A third faction of so-called 'moderates' is led by Ayatollah Montazeri, designated as Khomeini's spiritual successor.

The factional struggle has been fuelled by the destruction of the Iranian economy which, official estimates indicate, will cost \$400 billion to rebuild. The official Islamic Republican News Agency recently reported that 266,000 factories, oil and chemical plants, stores, mosques, schools, hospitals and houses had been destroyed in the industrial western border region during the eight years of war with Iraq.

In the same period, Iran's main foreign exchange earnings through the sale of oil plummeted to pre-revolutionary levels of \$8-10 billion. Declining oil reven-

By Ian Harrison

ues, due to a slump in world demand, have been further aggravated by Saudi Arabia's decision to flood the world markets with crude oil since August this year in an attempt to restore dominance over its main competitors, driving oil prices down a further \$2 a barrel.

While the working class and poor masses in Iran have been subject to forced conscription, harsh repression and constant austerity measures throughout the war, the bourgeoisie amassed a private fortune of 13 billion rials (approximately \$194 billion). Increasingly cut off from the prospect of trade on world markets, the bourgeoisie refused to reinvest in an economy turned over to war production. As the war dragged on with no prospect of an Iranian victory, the bourgeoisie hoarded wealth as a lever against the 'radicals' of the Islamic revolution. They found their voice through army generals, and 'moderates' supporting Montazeri who called on Khomeini to end the war.

Ex-prime minister Mehdi Bazargan has been a prominent spokesman on their behalf and was allowed by Khomeini to form Iran's only legal party in 1987. The



Ayatollah Sadeq Khalkhali, the Islamic republic's most notorious executing judge

official Islamic Republican Party was disbanded in the same year on Khomeini's instructions. Supporters of the 'moderates' have distributed leaflets in public on several occasions in the last 18 months denouncing the war and the 'radical' faction's pursuit of fundamentalist extremism and exposing corruption within the regime. But not without cost. Recent statements from the office of Ayatollah Montazeri reveal that at least 32 mullahs, including ex-MPs, were executed by the regime in

November, and about 200 jailed.

The statements have been followed by a claim from the Mujahedin e Khalq, based in Baghdad and responsible for terrorist assassinations against the regime, that 5,000 political prisoners have been executed in Iran's prisons since the end of the war in August.

Cyprus Weekly stated in its edition of November 4-10, 1988, that a UN report on human rights in Iran calls the international community's attention to reports of a

renewed wave of executions just before and immediately after Tehran's acceptance of a cease-fire in its war with Iraq. Among others reported executed recently are 31 members of the Tudeh Party (the Iranian Communist Party), including the editor of its paper and ten members of the Central Committee, and Kurdish oppositionists.

If the so-called 'moderates' have been the main casualty within the Islamic regime thus far, the 'radicals', who have been the target of much criticism and led the government during the war, are now losing ground to the 'pragmatists'. Leading 'radical' prime minister Hussein Musavi, stung by criticism from the 'moderates' and embittered by the cease-fire, wants to pursue the Islamic revolution by increasing state control over the private sector and the introduction of taxation for the rich. While continuing austerity measures for the poor, he is opposed to calls made by the 'pragmatists' Rafsanjani and President Ali Khamenei to allow foreign investment

and technology to assist in restoring Iran's economy. In August, following the cease-fire, Musavi declared: 'The foreigners must be kept at bay, we are not going to let foreign investors come to this country and put it under their domination.'

While Japanese, South Korean, West German and British businessmen and bankers line up with credit to assist reconstruction, the Iranian bourgeoisie is determined to seize its opportunity to break into world markets. 'Pragmatist' Rafsanjani, appointed head of the armed forces in the wake of defeats early this year, has merged the Iranian Revolu-



RAFSANJANI

tionary Guard, on which he rested throughout the war, with the regular army, and has come forward as the leading spokesman for normalising relations with Britain and the US. Following Khomeini's public rebuke delivered to Musavi when he attempted to resign in September, and a call for unity within the government, Rafsanjani is attempting to balance between the wealthy bourgeoisie and the 'radicals' who could prove dangerous to him in the event of Khomeini's death. He stated to the radical paper *Jomhuri Islami* early in November: 'There is also a middle course in which we should neither open the doors all the way and keep the country dependent with a consumer economy, nor keep the people in hardship, in need of even basic goods. This is what we are talking about.'

Resistance holds up 'reform' programme

FACED with mounting resistance from the working class and rural poor, China's Stalinist bureaucracy has been forced to call a temporary halt to so-called 'liberalisation' measures and 'economic reforms'.

The decision to abolish the guarantee of a job for every worker, enshrined in the constitution during the rule of Mao Zedong, has been suspended, as have measures to abolish state subsidies on basic food items and vital services. The bureaucracy has been obliged to take a step back in order to prepare a new assault on the working class.

The state-controlled trade union federation, ACFTU, has reported a massive escalation in the number of strikes and actions taken by the working class in defence of living standards. (The right to strike was written out of the constitution in 1982 during the so-called era of 'liberalisation' and 'reform'!)

By Martin Sullivan

While the bureaucracy met in July at the seaside resort of Beidahe and agreed to a temporary halt to the attack on workers' living standards, plans were completed for the establishment of a new police force with which to discipline workers and unemployed youth. Under the cover of a press campaign against rising crime, prostitution, gambling and wholesale looting of warehouses and railway goods' vehicles, new policing measures have been introduced.

In July, the Minister of Public Security, Wang Fang, warned the bureaucracy that 'the problems affecting public order may deteriorate to become factors of political instability'. He followed this up in September with the statement that 'some people regard the beating of public security and judicial cadres, and other law enforcement personnel, as an act of legitimate defence'.

A new police force has been created for use against workers and unemployed youth who are drifting in their millions into the overcrowded east-coast cities in search of work and a higher standard of living. Modelled on crowd control units in Poland and other Eastern European states, the force is being deployed on university campuses, near warehouses, along coastal railways and in areas designated by the bureaucracy as 'sensitive'. The bureaucracy has also sent specialists to study methods used by the police in the United States and other capitalist countries.

The complete inability of China's parasitic bureaucracy, which is estimated to number 48 million, to plan for the needs of the working class and rural poor, has resulted in the wholesale collapse of industries in the cities and major failures in agriculture. This year's

grain harvest has fallen short by at least ten million tons of the required 410 million tons and 20 million peasants now face acute food shortages.

The bureaucracy, ever-sensitive to its source of privileges, has been alarmed by the growth of resistance to its authority. In 1983, a campaign was launched to clean up its image of corruption and incompetence. Since then over 150,000 party members have been sacked and the death penalty increasingly used for so-called 'economic' crimes.

By throwing a few minor party officials to the wolves the bureaucracy attempts to keep its upper echelons intact. Behind all talk of so-called 'liberalisation' and 'relaxation of party control over planning and production', the Stalinist regime is observing the old ruling class maxim that it is necessary to change - in order to remain the same.

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**Special
feature
by David
Lewis**

Fight the Tory takeover of education!

THIS YEAR has seen the Tory government step up its attack on education at all levels. The Education Reform Act, which introduced centralised state control of what is taught in schools, took polytechnics out of the control of local authorities and universities out of the control of academics, became law on July 29 and provides a blueprint for the implementation of a Tory vision of education. Since then, further developments include a move to turn schools into direct training grounds for the needs of business and the introduction of student loans.

There are three main threads running through all the legislation and directives emanating from this government. The first is the replacement of education in the broad sense by 'training', the second is the reduction and eventual elimination of access to good quality and advanced education by working class and lower middle class youth and the third is the destruction of what the Tories consider to be potential sources of opposition in schools, colleges and universities.

The eventual outcome of all these developments would be to turn back the clock to the situation which prevailed before the 1944 Education Act, when only a small fraction of workers received a full secondary education and virtually none went on to higher education.

New round of college mergers

ANOTHER round of mergers between higher education institutions is about to take place. The City of London Polytechnic is planning to merge with the Essex Institute of Higher Education in Chelmsford and the Cambridgeshire Institute of Arts and Technology in Cambridge. In London University, Imperial College and Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, both the products of the first round of mergers, look set to link up.

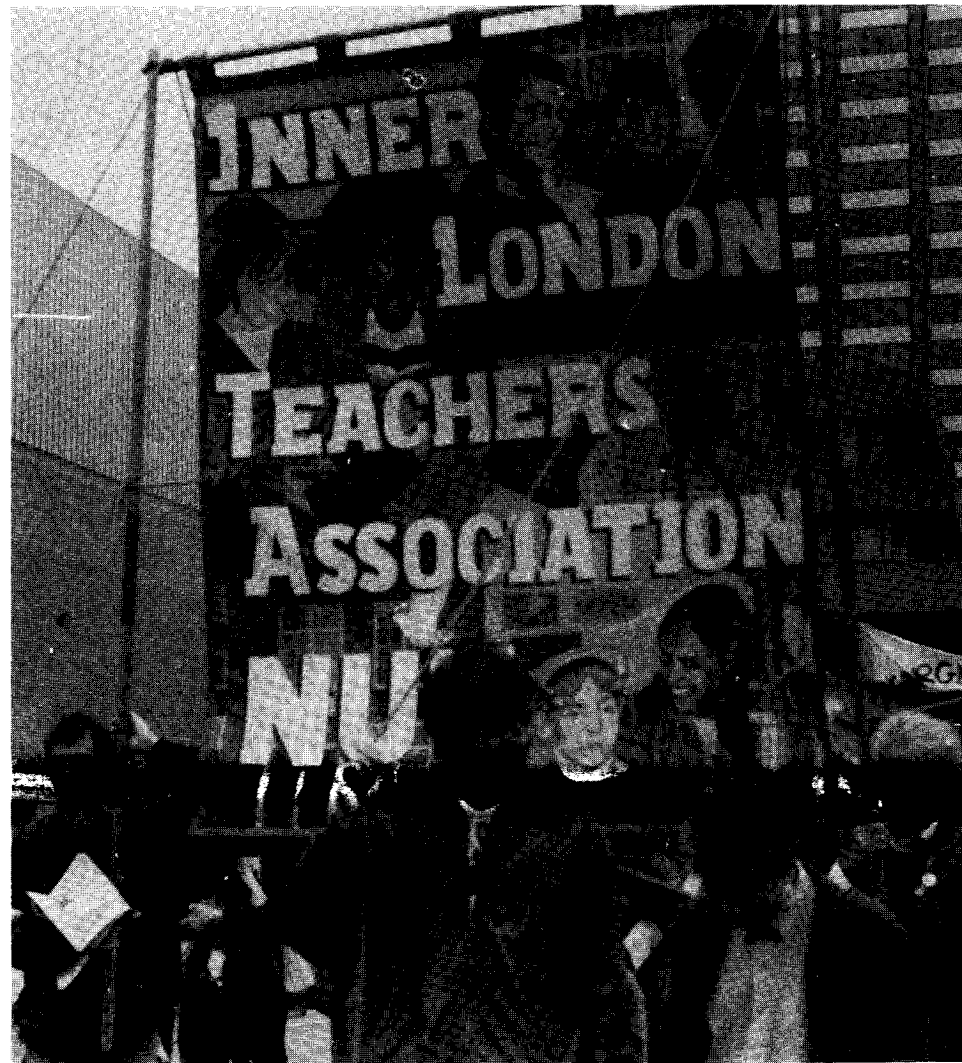
London University as a whole is currently running a deficit estimated at £9 million per year and is expected to have an accumulated deficit of £43 million by 1992. Of that total, more than £13 million will be accounted for by the largest London college, University College, which has seen a 30 per cent cut in funding since 1980 and 117 job losses in the last year alone. In common with many other institutions, UC has been forced to turn to industrial and military sources for money.

Long before that happens, the comprehensive system would be replaced by a rigid division of levels of school tailored to fitting children into their allotted places in society.

In the schools, the provisions of the Education Reform Act follow up the destruction of teachers' negotiating rights by putting what they teach into a state-imposed strait-jacket through the national curriculum. The requirement to emphasise Christianity in the prescribed religious content of the curriculum will divide children along religious and racial lines. The provision to allow parents to vote to take 'their' school out of local authority control will divide teachers from parents and from their pupils. Schools which opt out in this way would be allowed to discriminate in which pupils they take and would be free to employ untrained teachers.

The Tories' emphasis on training as opposed to education is expressed in the growth of the Youth Training Scheme and its more recent variants. However, all these schemes, although involving the education system through the Colleges of Further Education, are separate from the schools as such. In a highly sinister development, schools face being transformed explicitly into training centres.

On October 22, John Butcher, the junior education minister, announced plans to form direct links between businesses and schools. These plans go beyond the measures already taken by the Tories to involve employers in education. Their main vehicle within the schools has been the Technical and Vocational Educational Initiative, which was introduced in selected areas in 1983. Two reports published in



Teachers marching in London on October 20 against the Inner London Education Authority's cut back of supply teachers' posts

November, from the National Foundation of Educational Research and Leeds University, advocate greater involvement of employers in the classroom, even suggesting that they help to set the curriculum. It is now planned to extend TVEI to all areas, with £900 million from the government.

This would capitalise on the changes in the Education Reform Act which ensure that every school has at least one business representative on its board of governors and that every school

pupil is taught under the national curriculum laid down by the Tories. It would also mean more pupils spending even more time in local shops, offices and factories gaining work 'experience' and not being paid for the privilege, naturally. In reality, this is the extension of cheap or, rather, free labour to the under-16s. Outside, and in competition with, the schools, the establishment of City Technology Colleges sponsored by businesses is an even more direct method of attack. At the same time

as the first one was opened in Solihull recently, the local council announced plans to close a local school.

Paralleling developments in the schools, the Enterprise in Higher Education, launched by the Manpower Services Commission in 1987, is aimed at enabling university and polytechnic students to cope with 'practical realities in a real economic situation'.

In fact, the real economic situation in higher education is one of cuts, cuts and even more cuts. Those which have taken place under Thatcher since 1979 have resulted in the loss of more than 20 per cent of jobs, the closure of whole departments and, in London, the disappearance of many colleges through merger. At the same time, universities are being reviewed, subject by subject, so that, eventually, each will end up doing only what the reviewers consider they are good at. Some will do no research, some will teach only a fraction of their present range of subjects. There will be first class, second class and third class universities.

The cuts have also made it

increasingly difficult to obtain a place to study for a degree at a university or polytechnic. On top of this, rises in student grants have been held below the increase in the cost of living. Both these factors mean that working class youth are now less likely to get a degree place than at any time since the Robbins report prepared the way for the expansion of higher education in the 1960s and 1970s. The introduction of loans to supplement, and eventually replace, grants, announced by the Education Secretary, Kenneth Baker, in a White Paper published on November 10, and the associated withdrawal of housing and unemployment benefit rights will mean that all but the children of the rich will find it difficult or impossible to go to college or university. Just in case this is not a sufficient deterrent, the Higher Education Minister, Robert Jackson, has plans to force students to pay £500 towards their tuition fees. In such ways, the third strand of Tory strategy takes shape.

The elimination of potential centres of resistance to the government has already proceeded at a rate which warrants the raising of the alarm in the working class and throughout the trade unions. The destruction of the negotiating rights of teachers, the abolition of the Inner London Education Authority, the removal of polytechnics and colleges from local authority control, state control of universities, the abolition of academic tenure, schools opting out of local authority control and the bolstering of 'parent power' are all aimed at crushing, fragmenting or smothering opposition. At the same time, there has been a significant growth in the activities of extreme right-wing elements within colleges and universities.

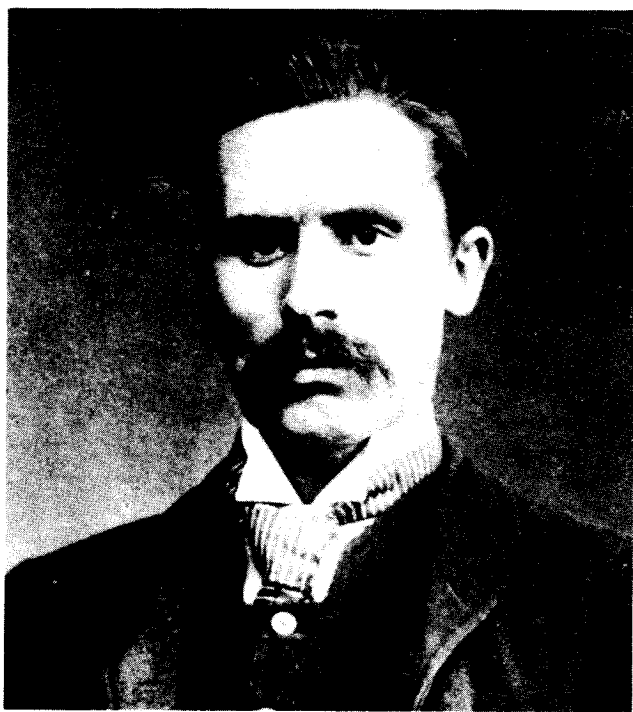
Resistance to the Tory onslaught on education cannot be left at the token actions, loud protests and parliamentary lobbying to which all the education unions, including the National Union of Students, have so far confined themselves. What is required is a programme to defend and extend education and the building of a leadership throughout these organisations committed to fight for it.

- Full secondary and higher education for all, with index-linked grants for all over 16!
- Restore housing and other benefits for students!
- Occupation of all sites or departments threatened with closure or cut back!
- Defend academic freedom!
- TUC and Labour leaders must organise a boycott of cheap-labour schemes!
- Full training for youth on adult rates of pay and under trade union control!
- Break business links with education! Defend the principle of full state funding!
- Schools, colleges and universities to come under the control of trade unions and labour movement representatives!

Ex-FCS members still active

THE FEDERATION of Conservative Students was, until it was disbanded by Norman Tebbit two years ago, the centre of right-wing activities amongst students. Many of its leading figures have continued their work after leaving college through other extreme right organisations such as Pulse, a pressure group which promotes health service and local authority privatisation, and the International Freedom Foundation, which recently brought the Nicaraguan Contra leader, Adolfo Calero, to Britain.

They also continue to work amongst students. The fortnightly student paper, *London Student*, recently reported that Douglas Smith, a former leader of FCS, was behind a survey handed out at a meeting in September of the Campaign for Student Freedom, an anti-National Union of Students body organised by the Freedom Association, at the London School of Economics. The survey aimed to gather information about students involved in 'subversive' organisations such as the Anti-Apartheid Movement and CND.



TOM MANN

The limitations of 'British socialism'

THIS BOOK makes available a useful selection of writings by Tom Mann (1856-1941), one of the major figures in the history of the labour movement in Britain.

A participant in the 'socialist revival' of the 1880s, Mann became a member of the Social Democratic Federation, the first organisation in Britain claiming adherence to Marxism, and later of the Fabian Society and the Independent Labour

Tom Mann: Social and Economic Writings
 Edited and introduced by John Laurent
 Spokesman/Amalgamated Metal Workers'
 Union of Australia £5.95

By Bob Pitt

Party. He achieved fame as a leader of the 1889 London dock strike, the crucial episode in the rise of the 'new unionism', which brought previously unorganised, unskilled workers into the

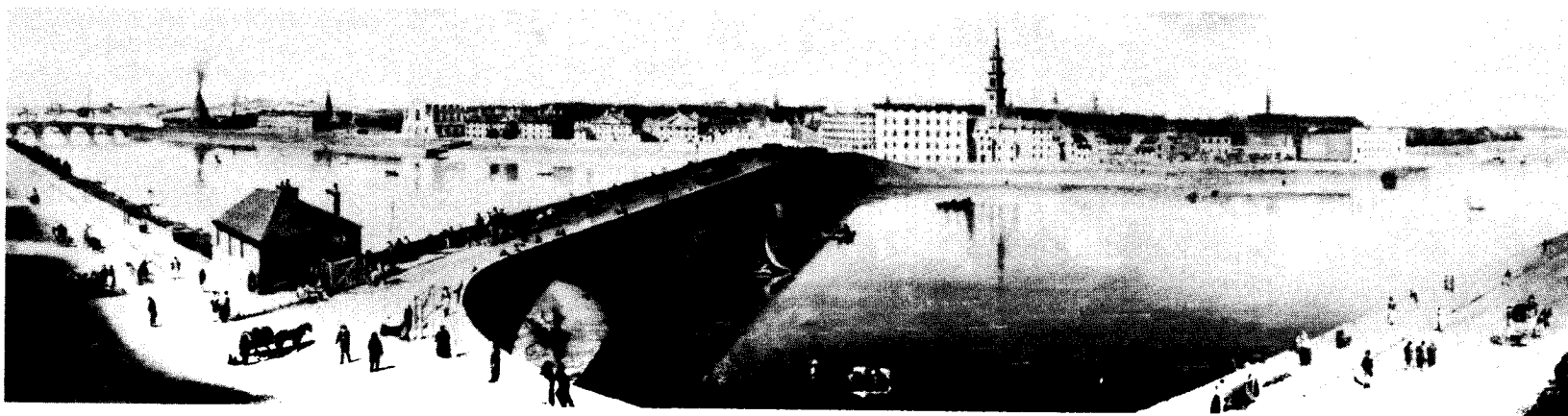
trade union movement.

Unlike others from this generation of working class militants - John Burns or Will Thorne, for example - Mann never made his peace with capitalism. After a

period of work in the Australasian labour movement, he returned to Britain in 1910 to launch his version of syndicalism, which aimed at securing socialism through industrial action, and to play a leading role in the pre-war 'labour unrest'. In 1920, Mann helped to found the Communist Party of Great Britain, of which he remained a member until his death - although this did not prevent him campaigning in 1933 for the release of Ch'en Tu-Hsiu, Peng Shu-Tse and other jailed Chinese Trotskyists.

Tom Mann's strength was as an agitator and organiser of enormous drive and energy. His weaknesses included a lack of theoretical rigour which led Engels to describe him as politically 'soft . . . a man without backbone'. Nothing, therefore, could be more ridiculous than the attempt by the editor of this volume to elevate Mann into an important socialist theoretician. We are even told that Mann's conception of scientific socialism marked an advance on that of Engels! This distorted perspective is not unconnected with Spokesman's aim of constructing a specious tradition of British 'socialism', free from the alien, revolutionary taint of Bolshevism.

In fact, this collection, which covers the period 1886-1909, while revealing Mann as a vigorous, popular propagandist for socialism, makes clear the limited theoretical base from which Marx's early British followers intervened in the class struggle. Contrary to Spokesman's intentions, this only proves the enormous political advances which the founding of the Communist International made possible for the revolutionary movement in Britain. It also underlines the need for a full-scale biography which would put Mann's work in its proper political and historical context - something which this book entirely fails to do.



Panorama of the City of Glasgow by John Knox

The nineteenth-century perspective

THE BARBICAN Art Gallery is currently staging an exhibition history of the panorama, from its beginnings in Edinburgh in 1787 down to the present day.

Panoromania!
 Barbican Art Gallery, London EC2
 Until January 15

By Robert Williams

The earliest example of the panorama, which reached the height of its popularity in the 19th century, was a prefabricated circular enclosure within which a view of a city or scenic countryside was painted all the way round the inner wall in one unbroken sweep. By standing in the enclosure's centre, spectators could scan the painting through 360 degrees.

Robert Barker, an Irish-born painter and inventor of the panorama, built a vast rotunda in London - the

Leicester Square Panorama - in 1793. For the next 70 years its largely middle-class audiences were entertained with depictions of foreign cities, the landscapes of Africa and Asia, even sea-battles (all with musical accompaniment), on canvases of up to 10,000 square feet. Presented by entrepreneurs as instructive and educational novelties, providing accurate representations of the material world, panoramas rapidly spread throughout Europe and North

America, with mobile versions penetrating to the more provincial towns.

The diorama - a more sophisticated successor to the panorama - was the 'cinema' of the 19th century. Developed in Paris by Louis Jacques M. J. M. Daguerre (best known for his pioneering work in photography), it used lighting and translucent moving screens to create illusionistic atmospheric effects and visual transformations. Along with the panorama, its aim was to

bring a more truthful representation of human visual perception to art than could be obtained from conventional techniques. Daguerre's Regent's Park Diorama opened in London in 1823 and became one link in an international chain featuring the latest dioramic views. In the course of the century, photography became ever more important for the production of images while the subject-matter of panoramas and dioramas turned more towards dramatic scenarios on military and biblical themes.

'Panoromania' mainly relies on sketches, engravings, paintings, descriptions and posters for its historical presentation. The one recon-

structed panorama (of London) and one diorama (of Venice) are small and unexciting. Although the influence such shows exerted on easel painters and schools of painting in the early 19th century is usefully illustrated, there is little attempt made to unravel the more complicated ideological and commercial webs that bound together audiences, entrepreneurs and designers. It is hoped that the Regent's Park Diorama will eventually be restored and made into a museum; until then Moscow's massive panorama of the Red Army's defence of Stalingrad - completed by the Studio of War Art in 1982 - is probably the best anywhere.

Lapland adventure

THE FIRST feature film made in the Lapp language is an event in itself, but *Pathfinder* has much more than curiosity value and deserves a wide audience.

Set in the snow-covered wilderness of Lapland in northern Scandinavia a thousand years ago, it is based on an old Lapp folk tale about a boy who, after witnessing the slaughter of his family by a brutal invading tribe, leads the fight to save his people.

If that sounds like a familiar theme, it's also one of the keys to the film's success. Director Nils Gaup obviously realised that the

timeless attraction of the 'people versus overwhelming odds' formula (the stuff of many a Western) would make the unfamiliar setting acceptable to an international audience.

Well paced and with an excellent but unobtrusive score influenced by traditional Lapp music, 'Pathfinder' conveys its sense of menace as much through the harshness of the environment as through the unwelcome intruders.

BASED on a true story, *Stand and Deliver*, directed by Ramon Menendez, is one of the few films to deal

seriously with education. It tells the tale of Bolivian-born Jaime Escalante (played by Edward James Olmos) who gave up a well-paid job as a computer scientist to teach maths at a run-down school in east Los Angeles' Hispanic ghetto.

In the face of hostile opposition from the head and other cynics at the school, he instils the pupils with the desire to rise above their environment and study seriously. They do so well at the calculus exam set them, to select high school seniors for university scholarships, that cheating is suspected.

R.T.

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Died at the hands of police

By Graham Fenwick

AN INQUEST into the death of a young black man whilst he was under arrest has once again been used to defend the brutal methods employed by the police.

The jury investigating the case of 24-year-old Clinton McCurbin, from Wednesfield, near Wolverhampton, returned a verdict of death by misadventure on November 1.

On February 20, 1987, police were called to the Next menswear store in Wolverhampton after the supervisor, Darren Scully, suspected that McCurbin was trying to use a stolen credit card. McCurbin's death whilst being arrested by two officers sparked off two days of clashes between police and youths.

The inquest was told that one of the arresting officers, PC Michael Hobday, had restrained McCurbin using an arm lock around the head. This was in conflict with medical evidence which identified the cause of death as asphyxiation. It was suggested that PC Hobday's arm must have 'slipped around McCurbin's neck'.

Darren Scully said that during the struggle, McCurbin had been held face down, one officer holding him 'fairly firmly' round the neck, the other holding the lower part of his body. A shop assistant, Simon Oates, said that McCurbin appeared to have difficulty in breathing but that he was not resuscitated because the police officers thought he might be faking unconsciousness.

In his summing-up, the coroner effectively ruled out a verdict of unlawful killing by referring to the decision of the Director of Public Prosecutions not to bring any criminal prosecution and to the internal police inquiry which cleared the two police officers involved of any misconduct.

After the verdict, the West Midlands Chief Constable, Geoffrey Dear, justified the killing of McCurbin by claiming that he had been 'very violent'. In fact, independent eye-witnesses say that McCurbin did not behave 'violently' - all he did was try to leave the shop. It is also clear that the initial statement released by the police - that McCurbin had died from a heart attack induced by drugs - was known at the time to be without any foundation.

Behind Algeria's youth rebellion

IN THE FRONT line of the recent revolt in Algeria against the FLN government of President Chadli Bendjedid were young workers, students and school youth. Of the 4,000 people arrested during the week-long series of demonstrations and protests at the beginning of October, more than 900 were under the age of 16.

Chadli crushed the uprising by brute force - a spokesman for the regime admitted that nearly 200 protestors had been killed, though independent reports put the figure at over 500. Of those detained, more than 100 were tortured, murdered or 'disappeared' as the police and army took their revenge.

The FLN came to power in 1962 after fighting a long war against French colonialism in which a million Algerians died. It has relied on the export of oil and gas to bolster the economy, and allowed the profits to be turned into personal fortunes rather than develop agriculture and other industries - 90 per cent of Algeria's food has to be imported.

The fall in the world prices of oil and gas, combined with this year's drought, has led to intensified economic problems for the government. Its 'austerity' programme lies behind the current social conflict.

Workers News spoke to a group of young Algerians studying and working in London. They were in no doubt that high prices, the lack of consumer goods and unemployment were the main causes of the uprising.

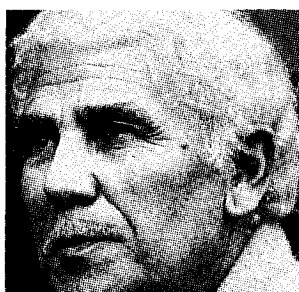
'Even if you have money, you cannot find food to buy,' said B.C. 'It's got worse, especially over the last two years. It wasn't so bad four or five years ago. At the same time, it's government policy to export crops abroad.'

'My father has to spend all his earnings on food,' added

In October, the anger of Algerian workers and youth at the economic policies of the FLN government erupted onto the streets in a week of protest. Lizzy Ali and Alastair Wrightson spoke to a group of young Algerians, who have recently arrived in London, about the events.



Muslim fundamentalists pray in the streets of Algiers for the hundreds killed during the week-long uprising against the Chadli government



CHADLI

N.E. 'To get food you have to queue. If you're not strong, you don't get it! Skilled people, even those with degrees, can't get jobs. A lot of young people are unemployed. They don't get any state

benefits so they are forced to live off their families.'

Asked about the role of Islamic fundamentalist groups in the October events, N.E. replied that, though they took part, they don't yet have a large influence. 'But it's getting bigger,' he said. 'They're getting more support, especially from the young people.'

T.K. explained that opposition to the FLN government is split along different lines. 'Some want Islam, some don't - it's very mixed. But the government do what they want. You don't have to say much for them to arrest

you and put you in prison.'

'The young people have nothing,' he said. 'You finish work, you go home, you drink coffee and you do nothing. If the young people from England went to live there, they'd kill themselves after a month with the boredom!'

'Someone with a family gets only about £120 in a month. Even a teacher can't do his job properly because he has nothing. The government are corrupt capitalists. They have four, five or six villas each. Their children have everything.'

The wave of resistance to the government has led to hurriedly introduced constitutional changes intended to 'widen democracy'. In a national referendum on November 3, over 90 per cent voted in favour of the 'reforms' - which Chadli claims will make the prime minister and the government answerable to the National Assembly. However, opposition parties are still unable to organise openly and for this reason, the groups linked with exiled former president, Ahmed Ben Bella, called for a boycott of the referendum. The fundamentalists also boycotted the poll because

the changes do not introduce the strict observance of the religious teachings of the Koran which they favour.

There are no socialist parties of any size and influence, said N.E., and the trade unions are still dominated by the FLN. 'I don't think we can say that Chadli got the support - it was for the reforms,' he said. 'The young people didn't vote for Chadli to stay in power.'

Since October, Chadli has replaced some of the most hated figures in the FLN leadership, including the army chief of staff responsible for the brutal suppression of the uprising, Major-General Abdellah Belhouche, and the head of the security forces, General Medjoub Ayat. He has sacked his deputy, Mohamed Cherif Messadia, reputedly an opponent of the 'reforms', and appointed Kasdi Merba as the new prime minister with the special task of putting an end to corruption.

Behind the smokescreen of 'liberalisation' and 'economic reforms', Chadli is, in fact, proposing even greater attacks on the Algerian working class and poor peasants by opening up state-owned sectors of the economy to private investment.

Conditions for most of the population are already terrible. 'You find six or seven brothers and sisters living in the same room. You find someone of 35 or 40 who can't even get a room to rent. He's forced to stay single. Many of the young people are leaving Algeria,' said T.K., pointing around the room to the large group which had gathered during the interview. 'Recently, Canada was asking for immigration,' N.E. said, 'and on the day when people heard about it there was a very long queue. The government took away their passports.'

T.K. continued: 'The government housing programme was so corrupt that even if you had money you couldn't get a flat - only if you knew a government official. I know a man who works in a factory. He has 15 or 16 children and he has one room! Can you imagine that? Some of his daughters are 24 or 25 years old. His wages are about £80 or £100 monthly.'

The changes in the government are intended to 'confuse the people and gain some more time' but 'the people will strike and riot again,' said N.E. 'Even if they do bring in the changes promised in the referendum, it won't change anything,' added B.C. 'They still have a foreign debt of \$23 billion!'

Tories revive 50-hour week

A NEW Employment Bill outlined in the Queen's speech to parliament on November 22 aims to step up the exploitation of young workers. The present laws which protect 850,000 16 to 18-year-olds at work are to be torn up. The Bill will abolish the provisions of seven existing Acts which prevent young workers from starting work before 7am, finishing after 8pm, and working more than 10

hours per day or 48 hours per week. The right to a meal or tea break after four-and-a-half hours will also go, as will all current restrictions on weekend, shift and night work.

Continuous retreats from defending young workers' rights by TUC and Labour Party leaders have encouraged this latest attack on what Tory ministers describe as 'outdated' and 'unnecessary obstacles' to the free

market. The new legislation will work hand-in-hand with the withdrawal of benefit from unemployed school leavers, and the introduction of compulsory 'employment training' to drive youth into the worst forms of sweat-labour.

Another provision in the Bill reduces the range of trade union activities for which shop stewards can claim time off from work.