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UNCOVERING AND OVERCOMING THE HORROR: 1984 TO 1986

After the miners' strike WRP members discussed and analysed our part in the strike. Was the separation of the WRP from the mass movement simply a bad tactic, or was it more than that? Did we have to study the whole strategy of the WRP? Did we have an opportunist approach to the nationalist leaders, such as Libyan leader Gaddafi, Iraq's Saddam Hussein, and the Palestine Liberation Organisation's Yasser Arafat? The central question of whether or not we were in a revolutionary situation had to be re-examined.

We continued this deep, political analysis of our activities, and a political appraisal of the leadership, over many years. It centred on a critical examination of the role played by Gerry Healy. This task was initially taken up by a group of comrades at the Centre: Dave Bruce, Aileen, Dot, Clare, Robert Harris, and Charlie. We have Dave Bruce to thank for initially taking on the responsibility of the political examination that resulted in the expulsion of Healy. They did not know that it would not be a clean break, but more of a splintering, an explosion, within the WRP and the International. The right issue and timing were key to successfully challenging Healy and his supporters, and it was important not to get provoked into acting prematurely. If Healy had become aware of what was going on he would have created slanders, and accused this small group of 'anti-party activities'. The membership would have been manipulated into supporting Healy, and the dissenters would have been expelled.

It was winter 1984. I delivered the Sunday papers to Healy as usual at about 8.30 pm on Saturday. Dot answered the door; Aileen must have been away. I was asked into the flat. He had two flats, one for sleeping and one for receiving guests and dining. This one was his dining flat. Mitchell must have been away because there was another member of the Editorial Board having a meal. Afterwards they would go through the papers to work out what to discuss at the Sunday morning Editorial Board meeting.

‘Harding,’ he yelled, ‘you’re just a social democrat, just like that Croydon housewife,’ pointing to Dot. I could feel my social-democratic blood rising. I remember thinking: what the hell are you doing surrounding yourself with social democrats? Dot’s eyes said: ‘Don’t say anything’. I was dismissed. As Dot let me out of the flat she whispered: ‘Wait for me down at the car.’ A little while later she came down and got into the car. She said that she was going to tell me something and to make it easy for her would I just listen and say nothing. She told me how Healy had sexually abused countless females at the Centre, irrespective of age. This abuse was conducted with women from all over Britain and also from the international sections. It was mainly carried out against the youth. Dot and Aileen at some point previously had compared notes with some of the youth and started to realise that his abuse was widespread. Up to then each individual thought she was the only one. (Much later, at a meeting we had with an organisation called Incest Crisis Line, we heard how when sexual abuse happens in a family, each one thinks that they are the only one being abused, and how the abuser uses fear to bring this about. The pattern of Healy’s abuse was the same.)

Dot dropped me off at my half-a-flat. I let what I had been told sink in. I put my hands on the mantelpiece and wept; what I had heard broke my heart. Then another thing struck me. I was the only one apart from Aileen and Healy who was allowed to have keys to the two doors leading up to the flats (except of course for those who lived at the flats). I had been seeing the girls who worked late at the Centre home safe to the flats after work, or taken women for afternoon discussions with Healy. Sometimes I would pick someone up from the station at six o’clock in the morning – or earlier – and

let them into the flats, right up to Healy's door. I was the key to the door for everyone, including comrades coming from the international sections. I was especially busy when we were having an International Committee meeting.

Women comrades from time to time would come and see me and say: 'I have to go to see Gerry but I have some time to spare; will you go for a drink with me?' Unbeknown to me then, the absolute dread of going to see Healy must have been heavy on them. This still weighs very, very, heavy on my mind. I am so very, very sorry. I do know that I was not to blame for what happened on the other side of the door. But I feel very bitter at the way dedicated and loyal comrades were treated.

I remember one young comrade being screamed at by Healy in his office. She had been summoned to have a political discussion. She came running out of the office into the yard in a very distressed state. He was still shouting at her in the yard: 'You're hopeless; you will never be trained; you refuse to be trained; you're an opportunist shit.' I wondered what she had done. Had she not understood some aspect of his political lesson? It never entered my head that she was getting this treatment because she had rejected him. I am sure that this 'guilt' played a big part in the build-up to my mental breakdown a number of years later.

The day after I received the information from Dot she arranged to see me again in the evening. She explained there were others involved in the opposition and told me who they were, and asked if I would take part. I said: 'You bet!' – it was like being recruited all over again. The next comrade I spoke to was Dave Bruce, who said: 'I only want you to take part if you are prepared to go all the way and get rid of Healy.' I agreed. From that moment I was no longer in awe of Healy and had no respect for him whatsoever. I just went on with my day-to-day work. I read and discussed events with the other comrades. We continued to examine our past activities. But we were also on our guard not to give ourselves away. In the past whenever Healy was having one of his rages in the office or in the yard we used to keep out of the way so as not to get involved. But now if I heard a row and he was in one of his tempers I would go into the yard and make sure he saw that I was there. I

was now prepared to intervene if he started throwing his arms and legs about.

When any of us were at the Education Centre we would encourage discussions that questioned the line being pushed in the *News Line*. Comrade Andy Blunden, who went home to Australia shortly after the split, has sent me an email describing his attendance at the school about this time. Comrade Peter, who was with us in the growing opposition group, was the lecturer and I was one of the students. Andy explained how Peter and I working together helped him and others to see what was wrong with a particular article that had just appeared in the *News Line*. In his email Andy says he suspected ours was a deliberate intervention but at the same time did not know what to make of it. Later, Comrade Richard Goldstein and I waited for Terry Brotherstone, a leading member in Scotland, to come out of the telephone box in Parwich. We walked back to the school with him and put our point of view in opposition to something that we were discussing that day.

On Sunday 23 June 1985 I was sent to Bournemouth to lead a *News Line* sales team at the conference of the Trades Union Congress. Labour Party left activists were also there selling the *Labour Herald*, a paper that we produced and printed in collaboration with Labour lefts Ken Livingstone (leader of the Greater London Council) and Ted Knight (leader of Lambeth Council). A number of our comrades worked with them on its editorial board. This paper began to take off in the labour movement. Healy's main interest was to use the paper as a way of snuggling up to the bureaucratic left leaders, not as a paper for uniting the Labour left in a fight against the right wing.

Sales were going well. Then, on the fourth day, Thursday 27 June, I received a message from Clare Cowen (*News Line* organiser) telling me to return to London immediately. She hurriedly told me that Bob Archer (Party member and son of my comrades from Leeds, John and Mary Archer) had reported me to the Political Committee for criticising the Party when collecting the papers in Runcorn. Robert Harris would meet me at London Bridge Station to fill me in with details. My first thought was had I blown it? Were we being pushed into premature action? In Clapham I was put under

'flat arrest' and told to stay there until sent for. I was duly told to report at Healy's office at 12.30 hours. Healy, Mike Banda, and Mitchell were present.

A letter dated 27 June 1985 had been sent to the Political Committee by Comrade Bob Archer reporting a conversation that had taken place around the beginning of March 1985. I denied the contents of the letter. I was told that in this case I should charge Comrade Archer for saying these things about me. I refused. I said that Comrade Archer had every right to report to the PC anyone he thought was working against the party and he was doing this out of loyalty, so I would not bring charges against him. They took it in turns to tell me to charge Comrade Bob. I said no. Healy got up out of his chair, took a step towards me, and screamed: 'Charge him!' I told him to sit down and listen. He sat down. I said: 'No!' Banda threw his hat at the wall and Mitchell looked a little baffled. I do not remember if I was officially dismissed or if I just walked out. What those three did not know was that the office was bugged and Dave, Charlie and Robert were listening to the whole thing in the guard box at the gate, saying to each other: 'Go on Norman, give it to him!' My refusal was reported to the PC who unanimously passed a resolution that an investigating committee be set up to enquire into the accusations made against me and to invite me to appear in front of them. Healy said something about me organising a coup against him. That really did make me feel good; he very rarely paid me a compliment.

The committee of Healy, Banda, Mitchell and Comrade Dave Bruce saw me at 12.30 on Saturday 29 June 1985. I was handed a letter from the PC signed by Healy instructing me to lay charges against Comrade Bob Archer. I again replied no. I was asked by Comrade Banda to make a statement to the committee. I said: 'To lay charges would be detrimental to this inquiry and would be a diversion from the politics of anything I may have discussed with the comrades in Runcorn.' During the discussion Comrade Banda said that Comrade Gilbert had something on me. I asked what, but Mike Banda was not forthcoming. I gave another 'no' to the PC's instruction. I was provided with facilities to make a written statement before 18.00 hours that same day.

At the second session we were able to discuss the politics behind what I had said. The first point raised against me was that I had discussed in Runcorn that during the recent miners' strike, Arthur Scargill's signed photograph, thanking the WRP for its help, appeared above the platform of a London area aggregate meeting in the place usually reserved for the founders of our movement, Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky. Scargill was a militant trade union leader who stood by the members of the NUM against attacks from the Thatcher government. I told my inquisitors: 'Maybe the place for it was on a separate table as a tribute to the miners. He is not a political revolutionary leader. We are constantly saying that the TUC and the trade unions cannot produce the necessary leadership to take the working class to power. This will have to be done by the revolutionary party. To have the plaque where it was only strengthened confusion.'

I had also criticised our attitude to Ken Livingstone. Other labour movement papers – but not the *News Line* – criticised Ken Livingstone because they believed he had abandoned the campaign for the GLC and its workers in the face of Thatcher's decision to close it down. After I had stated my position on this, Healy in his quiet mode said: 'Norman, it's a question of understanding dialectics and leadership. Livingstone is, if you like, on a pendulum. He has swung from the left to the right. If we attack him now and knock him off the pendulum, when the pendulum swings back he will not be on it for us to take him off it.' I looked straight at him and replied, 'You must be f***** joking.' That's done it, I thought. I have challenged his 'dialectics'.

I was then questioned about a statement I had made that Healy had lost touch with reality. This arose when British Rail was refusing to accept our parcels of *News Line*, or any of the other stuff that we sent by train. Our contract had been terminated and they would only accept items paid for over the counter. Although there were the odd times when railway workers slipped our stuff through free of charge, the new British Rail policy was causing huge problems for us both in Runcorn and in London. Comrade Bob had discussed this with Comrade Dot and she had told him not to raise it with Healy and 'make waves'. Bob approached me asking me if I knew

why she had said not to make waves. I replied that Healy would not understand the reality of the situation. 'Is he ill?' Bob asked. 'I have just told you,' I said and, later that night, I did tell Bob that Healy had lost touch with reality. Much later he accepted this opinion himself and played his part in expelling Healy and his supporters.

I have known Bob from his childhood when he and his brother Peter used to play at 'having meetings'. Even though we now have political differences, I will always have a great respect for Bob. During the inquiry I am sure that neither of us had bad feelings for each other. And, in the real meaning of the words, we remain comrades and friends.

In the middle of all this Comrade Lorenzo reported a discussion with Comrade Les Ford who told him that Healy had destroyed layer after layer of Young Socialist leaders. Later, Les told me that he felt he had better go back to Portsmouth before he spilled the beans altogether. Little did he realise how close the beans were to being spilled and that he would soon be back helping to clear up the mess.

Before Healy brought the meeting to an end he looked straight at me and said: 'Norman, what I would like to know is, where are you getting your strength from?' He didn't know that the 'Clapham Six' had organised so well that Comrade Dave Bruce was on the investigating committee, alongside Healy, Banda and Mitchell. My interrogation was adjourned on the Saturday night, to reassemble at 10 am on Monday, 1 July 1985. We could not meet on the Sunday because the national march of the Young Socialists was due to arrive at Alexandra Palace for a mass rally.

As I was still under flat arrest I went back to have a nice quiet day and to get some more of that strength Healy was on about. I was looking forward to Monday morning. I reported at the Centre at the appointed time. Charlie opened the gate. 'Ah, Norman! There will be no meeting for you this morning. The letter has gone in.'

June 30th 1985

To the Political Committee.

During the course of action on the Manchester Area certain practices have come to light as to the running of Youth Training



Above: Platform at the 30 June 1985 rally in Alexandra Palace after the Young Socialists' national march to release the jailed miners. Left to right: Lambeth Labour Council leader Ted Knight, WRP General Secretary Mike Banda, Gerry Healy, Young Socialist Simon Pirani, and a leader of the miners' support groups

by a homosexual and the dangers this holds for the party in relation to police provocation. I believe the Political Committee was correct in stating that a cover-up of such practices endangered the Party from a serious provocation.

Having realised this I must therefore say to the Committee that I can no longer go on covering up a position at both the office and in the flats at 155 Clapham High Street which also opens the Party to police provocation; namely that whilst for 19 years I have been the close personal companion of Comrade Healy I have also covered up a problem which the Political Committee must now deal with because I cannot.

This is that the flats in particular are used in a completely opportunist way for sexual liaisons with female members employed by the Party on *News Line*, female members of the International Committee and others [26 individuals were then named].

On any security basis one of these or more has to be the basis of either blackmail by the police or an actual leak in security to a

policewoman. I am asking the Political Committee to take steps to resolve the position for the Party in the present political situation.

In 1964, after the Control Commission of Investigation Comrade Healy gave an undertaking that he would cease these practices, this has not happened and I cannot sit on this volcano any longer.

Yours fraternally
Aileen Jennings

The PC decided the letter was nothing else but a provocation and many, including me, were asked if we knew where Aileen was. While her disappearance had been planned before the letter went to the PC, only one or two comrades knew where she was. I was not one of them. I had to wait some fourteen years before I saw or spoke to her again. Rumours were rife as to what had happened to her. Had she run off with Healy's 'escape' money? Was she in some hospital or other? Some comrades even thought she had been done away with. When Healy asked me, my reply put fear into his mind. 'Maybe it's a repeat of the time when Sylvia Frankland [the secretary of the leader of the American Trotskyists] was exposed as a government agent.' This fed his fear of the state. After all, he continued to say that if the miners were defeated fascism would not be far behind.

It had been arranged that a small group of abused young women would tell close friends or family during the rally at Alexandra Palace on Sunday 30 June what had happened. Aileen's letter followed the next morning.

For a period of time Healy came in to the office as usual. His main concern was to get to the bottom of Aileen's disappearance. He was trying to monitor who was talking to whom, as had always been his practice; he was constantly breaking up conversations between comrades, no doubt running scared that his activities were being discussed. He was more eager to stop the youth from talking to each other in case they were comparing notes. The establishing of relationships had always been completely taboo.

During this time political positions were taken. Dot Gibson had the unenviable task of remaining at her post to keep close to Healy's

movements and activities. At first Sheila Torrance supported the exposure of Healy and worked for it with the others, but then her position changed. She supported a proposal that Healy should sign a statement promising to 'cease his activities with the youth'. Others said they would withdraw their demand for a Control Commission of inquiry if this was done. The following letter dated 8 July 1985 was signed by G Healy.

To Comrade Mike Banda – General Secretary
To Comrade Sheila Torrance – Assistant General Secretary

Dear Comrades

In accordance with our agreement dated 5/7/85. I unreservedly undertake to cease immediately my personel [sic] conduct with the youth.

Yours fraternally
G Healy

A number of comrades, led by Dave Hyland, who later collaborated with Dave North, leader of the American Trotskyists, began demanding a Control Commission. The London youth committee demanded a Control Commission. Mike Banda, the General Secretary, was very prominent in opposing this, saying it would damage the party. At a meeting of the Central Committee, an American delegation led by North opposed the expulsion of Healy and said that they had come here not to take sides but to bring the two factions together. He then led his delegation out of the meeting.

It was very difficult working at the Centre at this time, made easier by comrades from the branches coming in to see us and talk to us throughout the day and night, showing their solidarity and support. Naturally this started to establish where comrades stood in the struggle to oust GH and his supporters.

London aggregates and national meetings of all members were held in the warehouse at the Centre that by now had been converted into a decent-sized meeting hall. These meetings were, to say the least, very lively. At one such aggregate meeting Comrade Slaughter

outlined Healy's misdeeds, and at one point attacked Healy's personal behaviour very forcefully. Many comrades were very moved and upset at what he had to say. The Redgrave supporters of Healy heckled him, calling him 'petty bourgeois' and 'puritanical'. Comrade Slaughter then revealed that the section of his speech which they were attacking as 'bourgeois' was a quotation from Lenin.

Corin Redgrave said that what Healy did in his spare time was his affair and was to be separated from his politics. Corin went on to say that he was 'neither for nor against rape' but 'for the social revolution'. He went on to say that Aileen's letter was a provocation orchestrated by the state machine in order to smash up and destroy the WRP. (This line was later supported by Ken Livingstone.)

At a London aggregate meeting it was revealed that *News Line* photographers had been asked to take photos for the Saddam Hussein regime of Iraqi Communist Party members on a demonstration. This was an indication of Healy's unprincipled relation with bourgeois national leaders.

Ted Knight, who was an ex-Party member and former full-time worker of ours, and who was now the Leader of Lambeth Council, did not to my knowledge ever make any statement on Healy and the accusations against him. How this fitted in with the fact that he used to receive an envelope on a Friday I do not know. Maybe what was in the envelope was a note of thanks from Healy. I know he received these envelopes because I took them to him in the Lambeth Leader's office. This still happened on the Fridays when many of us received only a very small note of thanks or no note at all.

Discussion of communist relations or, more to the point, the lack of them in the WRP, was bitterly opposed by the Healyites who constantly tried to prove theoretically that Healy's actions against the youth had to be kept separate from his politics, and that we were just middle-class moralists and, of course, social democrats.

By this time Mike Banda had joined us, and at a high point of anger at one of these meetings tried to get our supporters to leave the meeting. Wayne Poulsen and I pushed Mike and the others back, telling them not to abandon the meeting to Healy's supporters.

Healy himself never once had the courage to attend any meetings or face the members. So much for the claim that Healy always led from the front! There was a lot of passion around at the first meetings. The Runcorn comrades turned up ready to smash the place down. Dave Hyland was telling comrades not to go into the meeting because the place was going to be blown up.

Whenever there was a Central Committee meeting members from all over Britain used to make their way to the Centre and hold a continuous meeting in the warehouse. Central Committee upstairs, members downstairs. I often found myself chairing the downstairs meetings and trying to answer the questions of the worried and angry members. I was often asked if I had known about the activities of Healy. When I answered no, I would be asked why not. Did I know and choose to keep quiet? My answer to that one was always an emphatic no. It was very difficult for the comrades to understand how and why I, and others at the Centre, did not know.

The demand for a Control Commission to be set up to investigate the contents of Aileen's letter was finally conceded by the Central Committee. All this time Healy was holed up in his flat leaving his supporters to fight his corner. The Control Commission elected at the previous annual conference consisted of former Liverpool dockers' leader Comrade Larry Kavanagh, experienced Party organiser Comrade Jean Kerrigan, and me. I acted as secretary to the inquiry. Our job was to establish whether the contents of Aileen's letter were true or not, and report our findings and recommendations to a national conference of all Party members.

The identities of all those who were victims of Healy's abuse have to be protected. We took verbal, hand-written and typed statements from everyone we interviewed. They are all owed a great deal of respect and recognition for their courage in coming forward to make their statements. Everyone during these interviews held on to the basic principle of the need to fight for a socialist society. After the Commission had been sitting for a couple of weeks Jean Kerrigan failed to turn up for a session. She had decided to split away from the WRP with the group led by Sheila Torrance, Healy and his supporters. They were all expelled from the WRP at the next Central Committee meeting.

I gave the following Report of the Control Commission to the Special Conference of the Workers Revolutionary Party on 26 and 27 October 1985.

THE REPORT

We have to start by saying that we were appalled at the way Comrades were pressurised into withholding their claims for the Control Commission to investigate their grievances. It is the right of every member to be able to approach their Control Commission without the interference of committees or leading members.

While we were involved mainly in investigating the contents of the letter of Comrade Aileen Jennings dated 30 June 1985, it has become very obvious that the Commission will have to investigate further because of the introduction of other aspects and complaints.

What follows will be an example of the way Healy either broke down the will to resist his advances or was able to keep the Comrades under his domination. One Comrade who was a member of the International Committee gave in her written statement a vivid example of how he operated.

‘In the middle of 1975 I explained to GH that I wished to finish the personal relationship. According to his reaction he was obviously prepared for this. He feigned to be offended. Of course I am old, of course I am not young any more. But don’t you see it is a political relationship. He ended up by stating, if you finish the personal relationship you finish the political one.

‘I found myself in a difficult situation. I had the responsibility for my section and could not light-mindedly break the political relations towards one of the most important leaders or even make him my enemy without thinking exactly about it.

‘At the end of 1975 I explained again that I wanted to finish my personal relationship. He grumbled and said: “It is a privilege to speak with me; others may not see me at all. Why do you say it is a personal relationship. It is a political relationship. If you cut off the personal relation I cut off the political relation.”

‘Confronted with my responsibility for the section and the fact that GH was the most important contact to the International Committee, that I felt myself completely isolated in the IC and had no real political contact with anybody, I did not see myself going into a confrontation with GH.

‘After my marriage the relationship with GH became a burden to me. Each time I went to the IC I thought if he goes to bed with me I do not go to England any more. When I was called to GH I stared at him full of hatred. He complained about this: “She wants out but I do not let her out, I do not know who she is, CIA or anything. If something comes out here I will deny everything.” After he had accused me of being CIA he opened his pants to undress and said lowly: “I don’t care I rape her.” My reaction was: “Please, if you imagine this is it, you can take my body but you will never own me,” and I looked to the side.

‘The affairs with GH led to a psychological instability as early as 1975 and to depressions till I arrived at the conclusion to look for a friend. When I had a kidney operation in 1976 this was connected with my psychological instability so I had to take treatment. It was a connection of political pressure and the burdening personal relationship from which I could not free myself.’

The following is an extract from a statement made by a youth comrade.

‘I was regularly called in for discussions with GH in his office and at his flat. Approximately one month after I had started work at the Centre while in one of these “discussions” at the flat he cuddled and kissed me as I was leaving. I thought that this was very strange behaviour and pulled away. He immediately became angry and said: “What’s wrong, am I a leper or something?” Because I didn’t understand what was happening, and after all he was the leader of the party, I ignored it although it worried me.

‘The next evening when I was again called in for a discussion, he told me to sit on the bed, which I did. He started telling me that he had a “political relationship” with me and that he would “train” me. He said that he had been watching me for some time and could

train me to be a revolutionary leader. I was grateful that he was paying so much attention to me. He then came and sat down beside me on the bed and started patting my knee and kissing me. I pulled away again, this time in tears. He again got angry and said: "You think I am an animal, you're just an idealist who does not want to be trained". I couldn't stop crying so he sent me out of the room.'

Within minutes this comrade had gone from one who could be trained as a revolutionary leader, to one who was an idealist who didn't want to be trained. The only thing that had happened in those few minutes was that she had rejected GH's advances.

'The following day he kept calling me into the office saying: "I don't know if you can be trained; I'm not satisfied with your development, we may have to send you home."

'That night I was called into the flats again. I was terrified. This time he told me to take my clothes off. I thought he was joking and just laughed. But he started shouting: "What's so funny?" And he sent me packing out of the flats. The next day continued as the day before with me being called into the office and shouted at. He said [other comrades] would be very disappointed with my "opportunism". He then told me that he wanted me to come to the flats that afternoon.

'He said that I had to tell no one where I was going and was to tell the guard at the gate that I was going shopping. This time I was so terrified that I asked another comrade to come with me. She asked me why and I told her what he had been doing to me. We went to the flats, he opened the door for us but when he saw the other comrade with me he shouted: "What do you think I am – a dirty old man?" He then had a brief discussion with us and sent us back to work.

'That night he called me into his flat again. He was undressed wearing just a dressing gown, which was open. He told me to sit on the bed again which I did. He then started to tell me that I was an opportunist because I expected to be trained without going through the training. He said that I showed real idealism and backwardness and wasn't sure if he could continue training me.

He said that I only thought of superficial considerations, young boyfriends and not the politics of the man. He said that I was an individualist and told me that to be trained I had to subordinate myself to the leadership of the party and he was the party. He kept stressing this point of subordination. [. . .]

‘He then became very angry and said if I told anyone about this he would denounce me as a police provocateur and have me thrown out of the party.

‘He said that if I refused to subordinate myself I would be expelled for backwardness. He said: “Do not try to raise this on the Political Committee, because I am the Political Committee and they won’t believe you.”

‘By this time I was in a complete state. I did not want to go through with it, but I knew that he was capable of having me thrown out and that would not only have meant breaking with the party, but with [friends] as well. I knew that if I left the Centre he would say that I was backward and in political retreat. [. . .]

I was still crying when he told me to take off my clothes. I eventually did this.’

So here was a position where subordination to the party was reduced to subordination to him. If she refused, she would be sent home, sacked or expelled as backward or in political retreat. She was in this state of mind when he told her to take her clothes off and she submitted to him. It is at this point that what can only be described as rape took place. There are many other examples of a similar nature described by other comrades.

The following is an example of how terrified Healy was of being exposed, and how he had to break up any relationships his victims were having. Six months after one female comrade started working at the Centre GH found out that she was still in touch with a boyfriend. He went mad, and said that this was proof that she was untrainable. She was sent home for two weeks. Her father was pulled to London to be told that she had flouted party discipline and that she had to go before the Party Congress to apologise for being untrainable.

We will try now to give a picture of the conditions that those who worked closest to Healy had to work under.

The special International Committee school of 1980 was closed down because GH sat down on a toilet seat that had just been cleaned and was damp. The comrade responsible for the school was charged with not providing the proper conditions for the school to operate. Comrades had travelled from all over the world for this meeting, which would have cost many thousands of pounds to organise. Some comrades, particularly from South America, would have travelled at significant personal risk to themselves.

During the three-month cadre school the comrade in charge of the school advised one of the girl students to go for a pregnancy test as she was concerned about her condition. The comrade in charge of the school was then charged with lowering the moral standing of the school and destroying three months of political work.

Another example was when the manager of the school was called down to Healy's bedroom where he complained that the sheets were damp. He left in the middle of the night to go back to London. The next day the two comrades were summoned to London to attend the Political Committee and were charged with trying to kill him – such as catching a cold, etc. The Commission was also told that during a row with a leading female comrade he proceeded to hit and kick her continuously and finished by throwing her against a wall.

Then in 1979, following a PC meeting, the same comrade was sweeping up a broken glass that GH had broken while in a rage. He grabbed the broom from her and began to smash the windows. She tried to stop him; he then proceeded to attack her with the broom and struck her across the hip and back. This blow caused her permanent injury. She has one shoulder two inches lower than the other, and the whole of that side of her body is damaged in some way or another.

This continuous physical and sexual abuse of comrades; the knowledge that many more young female comrades, not only in the British section, but also from the other international sections [were in danger], also the added knowledge that after the 'Release

the Jailed Miners March', due to end on 30 June, another layer of young comrades would be taken to the school and exposed to his domination: Aileen felt at this point that she had to send in her letter.

Throughout this physical and sexual abuse the comrade stayed at her post in spite of her injuries. At one point she went into hospital for an operation, and her doctor told her that this was as a result of injuries to her back. So great was her loyalty to the party that she never told anyone the truth of how the injuries had been sustained. She said it had happened when she turned round in the car to lift a heavy package off the back seat.

Compare this loyalty to the accusations made against her after she had left the letter and 'disappeared'. That is, to accuse her of going off with the party funds and of being a police agent. In fact, all the other female comrades who were victims showed just this kind of loyalty to the party and their determination to fight for the revolution and stay within our party. They never told anyone of their personal experiences with Healy. They did not go to their parents, they did not go to the bourgeois courts which would have opened up the party to enormous provocations.

On two occasions Healy told two of the girls not to go with black men as black men carried diseases. This can only be described as a racist remark and not the remark of a communist.

We have met for the last eight days. We have interviewed nine comrades who appeared on the original list. Seven say that the accusations are true. One said that it was true but nothing happened to her. The other said that advances were made on many occasions but she always managed to put him off. There was also another statement saying it was true from a comrade who was not on the list and was from another section of the International.

The evidence gathered from those on the list as well as from many parents and older comrades who have been in the party a long time made it obvious that stretching over the last 25 years or so, many more comrades had been subjected to this abuse. Further investigations will be necessary.

We must stress that the party owes a great debt to comrades AJ and all [those] who have come forward to expose this

degeneration and corruption which has dominated this party for so long. Their loyalty to the party gives great confidence that we will build the British section of the Fourth International.

Although the investigation is going to continue, we already have enough evidence of the anti-communist activities of Gerry Healy, involving the grave abuse of his authority and position in the movement, to say that the decision of the Central Committee on 19 October 1985 to expel Gerry Healy was correct.

That is the end of the report.

Norman Harding

Larry Kavanagh

The front page of the *News Line* on the next Monday carried the news of Gerry Healy's expulsion from the WRP.