

Socialist Organiser

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TUC: back the miners!

"I am not asking for moral support, or resolutions, but a campaign of industrial action. The trade union movement only emerged because people fought unjust laws".

Arthur Scargill



Scargill at the first of the delegate conferences during the strike. Photo: John Harris

Now that the back-to-work movement has petered out — with very little increase in scab production — the focus of the Tory offensive has switched to court actions.

Offensive

It is an offensive not only against the miners but against the whole working class. The TGWU is next in line behind the NUM.

It has been fined £200,000 because it didn't call off the Austin Rover strike when the High Court told it to. The TGWU executive is deciding its response this week. The union faces the prospect of having its funds seized like the NUM's — unless it betrays the miners and the whole working class by toeing the Tory line.

Bill Whatley the right-wing leader of USDAW, said

that Monday's NUM conference decision to stand firm was "most unfortunate". Unless the NUM backs down and makes a "reasonable compromise", said the wretched Whatley "they are going to see many more in the trade union movement moving away from them".

Such attitudes will sabotage not only the NUM but also the whole trade union movement. The TUC must fight back now, or have its sinews cut by Tory law.

Record

So miserable has been the TUC's record since the resounding declarations of support for the miners at its September congress, that talk of a general strike now seems far-fetched to many activists.

But if the TUC leadership — and especially the TGWU — turn round and start fighting,

then they can quickly change the mood of defeatism.

The time

The rank and file cannot afford to wait for the TUC, and the miners have made it plain that they will appeal over the heads of the top officials if necessary. If this is not the time for solidarity action, there never will be one! Pressure on the official leadership should go hand in hand with rank and file initiative.

*Call industrial action now, organise for a general strike to support the miners and to smash the anti-union laws.

*Recall the TUC congress. Rally the movement, call the leaders to account. End collaboration with the Tory government!

*Victory to the miners! Victory to the working class!

"I have a right to the money. I am the NUM".

Despite those words, lawyer and Tory party official Herbert Brewer has so far failed to get hold of the miners' funds deposited in Luxemburg. His credentials as receiver in charge of the NUM funds, appointed by the High Court because the NUM has refused to obey court rulings and call off its strike, did not convince the bankers.

The NUM will continue

to wage the strike without funds if it has to — in Arthur Scargill's words, "like the Tolpuddle Martyrs, with difficulty but with success".

Tory lawyer

But as Arthur Scargill has also said, the appointment of a Tory lawyer to say "I am the NUM" is an attack on trade union rights unprecedented in Britain.

A series of further legal

threats is following fast behind it. Scabs in South Wales have started moves to get the strike declared unofficial in that area. North Derbyshire and Yorkshire areas could have receivers put in to control their funds.

Another court case seeks to make the national executive members personally responsible for the fines on the NUM, and thus to open the way for jailing them if they refuse to pay.

Strike to defend our unions

NUS conference How to stop grant cuts

By Sally Page

AT the National Union of Students conference, starting on Friday 7th, left-wingers will be arguing for action to force college administrations and Labour councils commit themselves to making the Tory government's cut in student grants unworkable.

A combination of student direct action and pressure through the labour movement could compel the Tories to back down.

The Tory back-bench revolt may make the government modify its plans, but it is unlikely to drop them completely. From September 1985 thousands of students are due to be up to £725 worse off.

Dave Brennan, national organiser of Socialist Students in NOLS, the left-wing in the Labour Party student organisation NOLS, told us:

"Pressure must be put on college administrations to come out against the proposals and to refuse to expel students unable to pay their fees. It is important to link up with campus trade unions on this issue.

"Secondly and more importantly pressure must be exerted on councils which control Local Education Authorities not to levy the fees. We can seek support from council trade unions, who will be expected to cope with a massively increased work load.

If enough Labour-controlled LEAs do not implement, the scheme would be unworkable".

Many students are very angry about the government's plans.

Wednesday November 28 saw the biggest student demonstration for a decade. 30,000 stu-

dents joined a rally in London, and thousands blockaded Westminster and Waterloo bridges, stopping rush-hour traffic.

At present all 500,000 students in universities and polytechnics get a grant and their fees paid for them. The grant depends on parents' income, varying from a maximum of £1775 (£2100 in London) to a minimum of £205.

The Tories propose to end the minimum grant — so that students whose parents' combined income is over £18,000 get nothing — and to make some students pay a contribution towards fees. Students whose parents' combined income is above £13,000 a year will have to pay varying amounts in fees, up to a maximum of £520.

NUS estimates that 183,000 students will have to contribute towards tuition fees and 64,000 will receive no grants.

22,000 of these are students whose parents refuse to fill in the forms.

One group who will suffer particularly are Asian women whose parents do not approve of them continuing their education.

The principle of continuing education being open to all who are qualified meets plenty of obstacles already. Further education students depend on 'discretionary' grants which local education authorities may or may not give.

National Union of Students policy is for £30 a week for all students over 16. The government's plans will make more and more students dependent for access to higher education on the goodwill of their parents.

The Tories' longer-term objective is to increase privatisation in education and replace student grants by loans.

Court threat to students

By Jane Ashworth

NORTH London Polytechnic students' union could face prosecution for voting a £1000 donation to the miners.

Under the charity laws, it has always been illegal for student unions to spend their money as they want.

The law says they can spend their money only on things of 'direct benefit' to students. Donations to strikes or political campaigns are 'ultra vires', i.e. illegal.

Student unions used to get away with ignoring this law or exploiting "grey areas" (mass purchases of 'The Miner', subsidised coaches to demonstrations, large speakers' fees, etc).

But since the Tories were re-elected, student unions have had more and more threats of fines and court cases. Stricter guidelines are pouring out of the Attorney General's office, giving a helping hand to right wing students who want to stop their union doing anything remotely political.

But now is obviously the best time to try to render the laws inoperable. The class struggle is at a high point, workers and students are mobilised and the

labour movement is now well aware of the class nature of the courts. Now is the time when we are likely to win broad support for our right to spend our money as we decide.

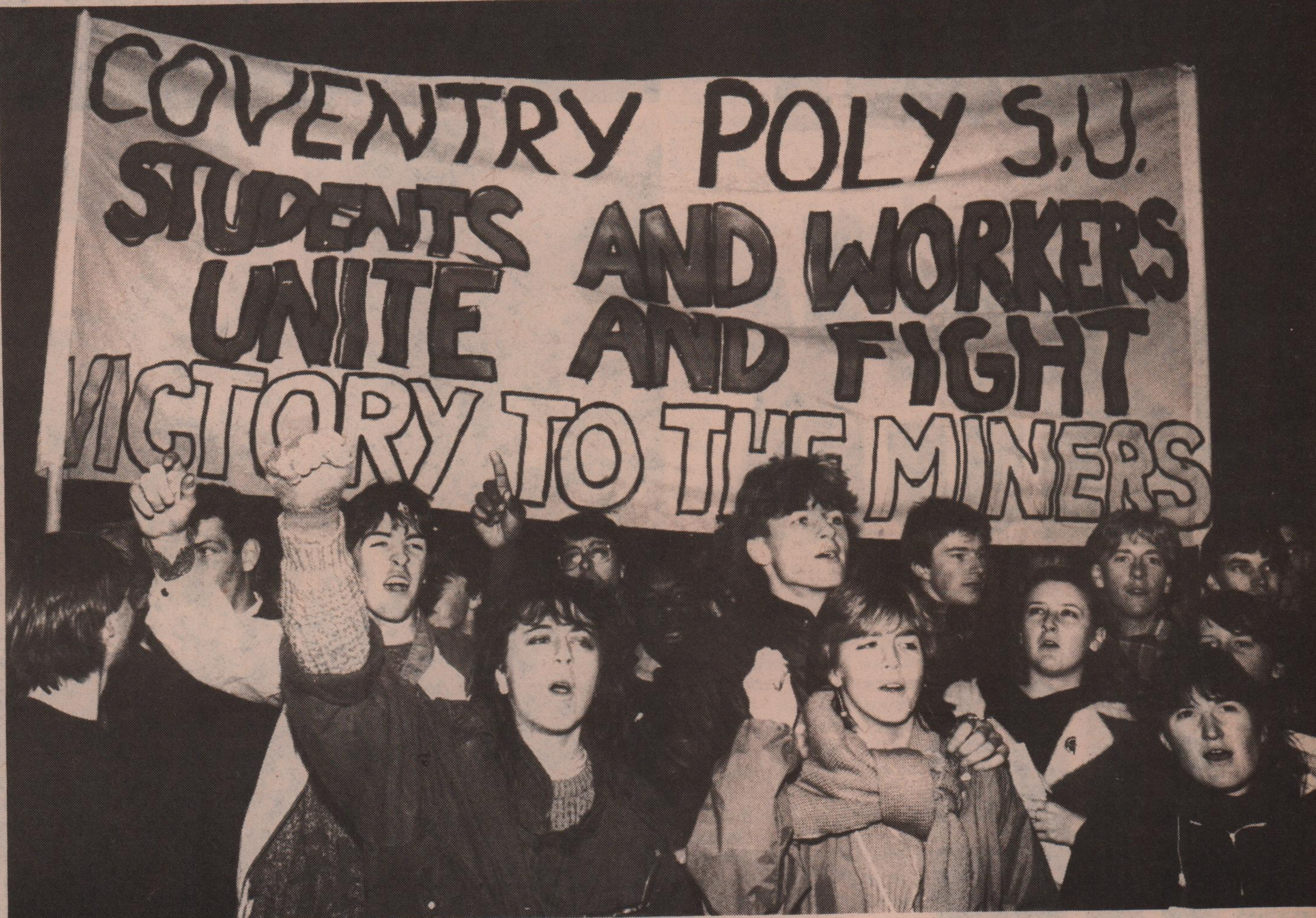
Student unions which are strong; which do have a good deal of active participation; where the general meeting does understand the probable consequences of an ultra vires payment and people are prepared for a long legal battle and even prepared to go to jail, have a great responsibility placed upon them.

When the writs are put on North London Poly, those unions must make direct ultra vires payments. North London Poly

must not be left alone.

We should be well aware that a crushing defeat for any college now would set back activists in every other college in the country. It would give the go-ahead to the right-wing and the labour bureaucrats to stop getting money to the NUM even through the "grey areas".

In the miners' debate at NUS conference, Socialist Students in NOLS supporters have not called for all colleges to make direct ultra vires payments but we have demanded that NUS backs those colleges which do. A motion which calls for ultra vires payments everywhere will probably lose, and thus let the NUS leaders off the hook.



30,000 marched in London on November 28. Photo: Andrew Wiard, Report.



Hundreds of students blockaded Westminster and Waterloo bridges. Photo: Andrew Wiard, Report

Occupation at N. London Poly

By Debbi Hindson,
[University of London
Union executive].

"Civil liberties only extend to citizens...I don't believe that black people can be citizens of Britain...their rights are non-existent" said Nazi Patrick Harrington.

The courts have ruled that to fight this Nazi by picketing to prevent him getting into classes at North London Poly is illegal. They have jailed students Steve Tasane and John Leatham for contempt of court after they carried on picketing.

North London Poly students are occupying their college to bring an end to the dispute. They are saying that if the government can afford to pay the police to stop the pickets and can afford to pay for Harrington to be taught on his own — in a seven-storey tower

block with no-one else in the building — then they can afford not to cut the minimum grant and not to cut back on the colleges.

The National Union of Students Executive support the policy of "No platform for fascists", but they have condemned the anti-racists at North London Poly. All but Karen Talbot (Socialist Students in NOLS) and Sharon Robinson (independent) voted to support North London Poly Student Union Executive's decision to overturn a mandate to continue the picketing.

The Executive have done nothing to organise a campaign for the release of the jailed students.

NUS Executive should be censured for their appalling role.

Class war casualties

FROM behind their massed ranks of heavily-equipped police, the Tories have turned up the volume of their hypocritical denunciations of violence.

As always, Neil Kinnock has echoed them. Most hard-headed cynic of all, SDP leader David Owen seized on the death of taxi-driver David Wilkie to call for a mass return to work.

Wilkie was killed when concrete blocks were thrown at the taxi in which he was taking a scab to work at Merthyr Vale colliery in South Wales.

NUM representatives at all levels have described his death as a tragedy. If miners were responsible, then they have damaged their own cause.

But let's put David Wilkie's death into context.

Five strikers have died on the picket lines. Hundreds are in hospital, many with very severe injuries.

The Tories chose open class war. They provoked the strike with their attempt to decimate the coal industry and break the NUM. They prepared, equipped, organised and deployed their National Riot Police.

Committed

They decided to use whatever force was necessary to get even single scab miners into the pits. According to his mother (quoted in the Guardian, December 3) Wilkie was politically committed to the scabs. He volunteered for the runs through the picket line.

Certainly the government or the Coal Board provided the money to send a single miner to work (where he could produce nothing: he is one of only two scabs at the pit) in a taxi with two police cars and a motorcycle escorting him.

The Tories opted for full-scale class warfare. They opted for violence. They have no right to use the casualties to boost their cause.

For many decades Britain has been exceptional among capitalist countries. Where in other countries — even the prosperous USA — bloodshed and even gunfights on the picket lines have been routine, in Britain we have usually had no more than jostling and shoving and a few arrests.

Now, as British industry decays, the padding is being stripped off the class struggle. The Tories are shifting Britain towards the capitalist norm of violent class battles — and at the same time trying to appeal to the abandoned traditions of relative social peace as a weapon against the miners.

Yes, as the miners' strike continues, more people will die. As always in history, it is the ruling class that takes the initiative to move the struggle onto a higher level of violence, and the working class that has no choice but to respond in self-defence.

Blackmail

Remember the grim fact: if the miners lose, there will be many more deaths.

Deaths from industrial accidents and diseases as weaker trade unionism means worse safety standards. Deaths on the streets as the police feel free to treat demonstrators and protesters, or people they just don't like, such as black youth, like they treated Blair Peach in Southall in 1979.

Deaths because accelerated health service cuts deprive people of care and mean the nearest casualty department is further away. Deaths in prison to join the long list of unexplained deaths in custody.

Deaths from broken health or suicide because of the despair caused by unemployment.

The miners, and the rest of the working class, have no choice but to fight back on the terms that the Tories have set.

Margaret Thatcher has said that the Tory government will introduce "any measures necessary" to strengthen the police. Already — as Greenwich council revealed last week — they are secretly training police in the use of plastic bullets and water cannon.

The working class must resist by any means necessary. Our resistance has to be organised, disciplined, and well-considered. But we cannot and should not be intimidated by the Tories' attempted moral blackmail.



Stoke-on-Trent, Friday 1st: Neil Kinnock spoke alongside Arthur Scargill, but denounced the miners for picket-line violence. Photo: John Harris, IFL

On to victory!

THE arrest and imprisonment of Brenda Greenwood shows just what the state is developing in the way of controls.

On Wednesday she went back onto the picket and just for the fact that she was there, she was arrested and thrown into the slammer for seven days.

Challenge

That is surely a serious challenge to everybody in this country.

I approached Sunday's Miners Support Conference with a little bit of trepidation, because I knew it was going to be a big conference and when I actually got in there and saw how big it was my immediate concern was

Paul Whetton's strike diary

that it would turn out to be a rally rather than a working conference.

However, I think it achieved two things. It was a tremendous rally, but they did get some work done and laid the skeleton of building up support for the NUM.

I'm sure that the next conference in January is going to be a belter insofar as it will actually achieve some work and actually pull things together.

Now just as we expect a little bit of slippage in the form of miners returning to work, there are still some drifting back in their ones and twos, the same applies to the Executive. The pressure is really on them now.

Rank and file

But the rank and file came in and gave 100% full support to the national officials and

said this strike goes on till we achieve total victory.

That the Notts delegates went to the conference is very enlightening. At the last branch meeting we wanted to know why our delegates were not attending the conferences. The striking miners are outvoted by the scabs in Notts and instead of screaming blue murder they just stay away.

The delegates' reply was that if there was a chance of calling the overtime ban off and accepting the 5.2% then they'd go along.

I think they went along to this particular delegate conference thinking they were going to shoot down Scargill, McGahey and Heathfield, and they got their come-uppance.

As far as the reports that sections of the Notts delegation voted for the resolution, we shouldn't forget that there are four striking miners in the Notts NUM Council. They are under tremendous pressure but they are holding their end up. I don't know what the voting figures were but it would be very interesting to find out.

I think that the call by the NUM on the TUC to organise industrial action in the face of this unprecedented action by the Tory government in placing a member of their party in charge of the NUM's assets, is the last chance for the TUC to come up with the goods.

Our message to them is "If you're not going to come in with us, if you are not going to deliver the goods we are going to go directly over your heads to the rank and file and we'll carry this fight on without you".

Paul Whetton is secretary of the Notts miners' rank and file strike committee, writing in a personal capacity.

NUM delegates' decision Defying the courts

FOLLOWING the appointment of a Receiver by the High Court last Friday the union's National Executive Committee and Special Conference have considered their response in light of this decision and the others imposed by the High Court.

1. The National Union of Mineworkers deplors the decision to remove the union's three trustees and to appoint a Tory Party official as receiver with total control over our funds.

2. The conference is not prepared to sanction the payment of £200,000 fine levied against the union, although it recognises that this latest, unprecedented move by the court means that payment

The decision of the miners' delegate conference on Monday 3rd.

will be seized without our consent.

3. Conference is not prepared to 'purge' this union's 'contempt', and reiterates that at all times the union has acted in accordance with its rules and constitution.

4. Conference is not prepared to permit either the elected trustees, or any other officer of the union, to give any assistance whatsoever to the sequestrators, or the receiver, appointed by the High Court to manage the funds and the assets of this

union.

5. The NUM has already asked the Trades Union Congress to call an emergency meeting of the General Council, and has asked that the General Council mobilise industrial action to stop this most vicious threat in our history to the freedom and independence of British trade unionism.

Conference reaffirms there can be no settlement of this nine month old dispute, which has already cost over £4.5 billion, unless the Coal Board's pit closure programme is withdrawn, the five pits kept open and a definition of exhaustion of reserves agreed in line with the Plan for Coal.

LOBBY OF NUR-ASLEF RAIL FEDERATION MEETING

December 20, Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London NW1

Demanding: a full stoppage of all fuels, no victimisation of railworkers; the right of all railworkers in all freight depots to get paid normally.

MINERS' BENEFIT

A night of Irish music featuring The Occasional Shamrock Band and Illegal Assembly with dancers and floorsingers

Saturday December 15 at 7.30 p.m. Caxton House, 129 St John's Way, N19

Bar and Food. Entry £2 (concessions £1)

Bring a toy for a miner's child

Back the miners



Pickets confront police in South Yorks coalfield. Photo: John Harris

The police/NCB offensive

One miner's story

I AM writing this letter to give you a better understanding of the tactics the NCB are using to break this strike.

I am 22 years old, the son of a miner, who is also the son of a miner, etc., etc.

I have played an active part in this strike from day one. I have been arrested twice in Notts and have served a three months prison sentence along with four other miners.

I was jailed for my alleged part in a riot in the village at a time when one of our colleagues was in the intensive care ward in Doncaster Royal Infirmary as a result of our wonderful police force's non-violent tactics at Orgreave.

Violence

The lads were disturbed and angry. They had witnessed the worst scenes of violence in the strike. They had been subjected to police brutality on a massive scale, and as you can imagine the anger was not left in the fields at Orgreave.

It came back to the village. Some windows were broken by stones. A fight with the police followed. Several people were arrested.

A Yorkshire miner — whose name we have to withhold for reasons that the story will make clear — describes his experiences at the hands of the Coal Board and the police

I was asked to visit the local police to "clear a few things up". I went along, and two days later I was released along with eight others, on bail, with an 8pm to 7am curfew attached.

I admitted nothing as I had done nothing. I had six charges against me — as had the others.

That was in June. We eventually went to court for sentencing in September, after a total of four months on curfew.

During that time I was still an active picket. It was their curfew, not mine.

We were advised by our lawyer to admit to some of the charges and therefore split the damage between us. So, out of loyalty to my comrades, I admitted to one charge of criminal damage — a window costing £150.

I received a sentence of three months, first time. The others received sentences of three, four and six months.

This took place at a time when no-one was working at any colliery in the Yorkshire coalfield. Yet we were sacked for "intimidating those wishing to return to work", at 11.30 on a Friday night, at a time when the only things moving on the NCB premises were the mice and the office cat.

I received my notice after I had been in custody ten days.

Sacked

I know of a miner who was sacked for stealing coal to heat his house. He too had been arrested on the Notts picket line. He had faced the colliery manager regularly to fight for the lads' rights.

He was sacked instantly, before he was charged. A few weeks later they sent him his money. He returned it.

The next letter he got was an offer of his job back. If he got on the scab bus with the other "working class heroes", he would

qualify for his own money — after all it is our wages they are offering as an incentive to scab.

This letter was returned as well, with the contempt it deserved.

MacGregor really ought to come and speak to our old lady — if he can look her in the eye — and tell her she is on a definite lost cause while her son, my brother, (also a union official by some strange coincidence) is awaiting trial and is at present in Armley.

He would be packing his bags and flying back to the States, taking Thatcher and Tebbit, Fowler and Kinnock with him.

So, what do you do when you are no longer a miner? Do you sign on the dole?

I inquired and was told in so many words that I would have to wait six weeks before I received any money, even though it was they who sacked me.

No surprise

I showed no surprise at this. I showed even less when I was told I would be lucky if I received a penny until this dispute is resolved.

That is the same kind of logic that determined that the sale of petrol in cans in certain mining areas was strictly out of order. If you run out of juice, then start pushing because you can't take your jerrycan. Good lord, you could be making bombs with it.

We are too proud to sign on the dole. To me that is accepting your guilt.

I am still an active picket (ssshhh). I face charges for picketing soon.

So it will be a Christmas dinner in Armley for me and our kid.

I know how the Jews in the "fatherland" felt now, because we face a similar oppressive regime.

Anyway, there is work to be done, must keep the bobbies on their toes. I hope this letter is of some help to you.

Labour with the miners

Martin Thomas reported from the Labour Party workshop.

THE most basic thing we have to do as the Labour Party is organising at ward level, not waiting for the GCs.

Quite a lot of wards are doing this, but there are still quite a lot that are not. What we have to do is get branch coordinators, to twin wards with pits, to use the electoral machine of the Labour Party to canvass, not canvassing for an election, but canvassing for the miners.

We talked about street collections and the comrades from Brent East told us about their comrades being arrested. By going back each week and increasing the numbers they managed to force their right to take those collections.

What we can also do through the Labour Party is help with trade union work by using the trade unions affiliated to the Labour Party. Some comrades have been sending out bulletins regularly to their affiliated trade union branches. We can hold meetings, we can try and get trade union branches that are not doing anything to set up workplace miners support committees.

One thing that has happened in many areas is that large numbers of striking miners have been joining the Labour Party. We thought

that should be encouraged, though in Nottinghamshire, for example, right wingers have been telling strikers wanting to join the Labour Party, that it is "full up". We have to fight against that.

We must then make sure that those miners are drawn into a fight inside the Labour Party to deal with the leadership. That means demanding that local police authorities take action against police state operations in the coalfields, and it means using reselection against councillors and MPs who do not support the miners.

There was a lot of discussion on the necessity of calling the leadership at national level to account. The overwhelming feeling is that Kinnock and Hattersley should be booted out and replaced.

Most people were in favour of a national Labour Party demonstration in support of the miners, though some people were worried that to campaign for that would divert from other, more important, activity.

Finally it is important to use the Labour Party to mobilise for industrial action. The comrades from Brighton reported that they had gone round there getting people committed to mass picketing and set up a telephone tree for mass picketing, and that is an example we can all follow.



Police block main road to Wooley pit. Photo: John Harris (IFL)

Louise Christian

'To the picket lines'

Louise Christian (Streat-ham Labour Party) reported back from the workshop on the police

WHAT you read in the media is a load of lies. The truth is there. There are plenty of us who have stories, who have photographs, who have absolute proof of the kind of incidents of police brutality and everyday harassment people in the mining communities are having to put up with.

We talked about the police strategy of control which in many ways is actually worse than the police violence, because it is a total strategy of control by mass arrests, by bail conditions, by road blocks,

by riot squads — total intimidation that is aimed at stopping all picketing.

We talked about how to counter that and I think there was general agreement that the best way to counter it is to actually go on picket lines. I would like to say to everybody here 'Go on a picket line'. It's not very difficult to get up to a miners' picket line. It only takes two or three hours.

You can organise a delegation from your workplace, you can organise a delegation from your Labour Party. My Labour Party did that and the six people who went said that it changed their lives. They didn't realise these things were happening, even though they'd read about them in the left press.



Picket of Lea Hall Colliery, South Staffs. Photo: John Harris (IFL)

December 2 solidarity conference

2,000 rally to the NUM

2000 delegates boldly affirmed their support for miners' self-defence on the picket lines at a conference in London last Sunday, December 2.

Moving the conference statement (printed below), Greater London Council leader Ken Livingstone stressed its commitment to aid the pickets "by any means necessary".

Jeremy Corbyn MP, opening the conference, had declared: "If the strike is to be won, as it surely will be won, that means industrial action everywhere else".

The conference was so big that it needed an overflow hall as big again as the main hall. Inevitably it was sometimes chaotic.

But, as well as being a valuable demonstration of support for the miners, it also produced some practical results.

An organising committee will publish a regular bulletin, creating a coordination between local miners' support groups which until now has been lacking. It will convene a second conference in January, at which fuller political discussion will be possible. (Sunday's conference did not discuss amendments to the statement).

Workshop sessions took up half the conference time, and a number of them produced useful practical ideas and link-ups.

The conference was also an achievement in terms of left

unity. The organising committee which prepared it, and which will convene the January conference, united representatives of Labour Briefing, Socialist Organiser, Socialist Workers' Party, Socialist Action, and the Campaign Group of left Labour MPs, with Ken Livingstone as secretary; and it has worked closely with the NUM.

('Militant' and the Communist Party were notably absent).

Arthur Scargill was prevented from speaking only by an emergency NUM executive meeting arising from the latest court case against the union. Tony

Benn spoke, and messages of solidarity came from French trade unionists and from left Euro-MPs.

Several rank and file miners also spoke. Paul Whetton, secretary of the Notts rank and file strike committee, got a standing ovation for his speech, in which he argued strongly for a general strike in support of the miners (see centre pages).

Ginger Evans, from the Basingstoke dustmen's strike against private contractors, asked why national union leaders — like Moss Evans of his own union, the TGWU — weren't

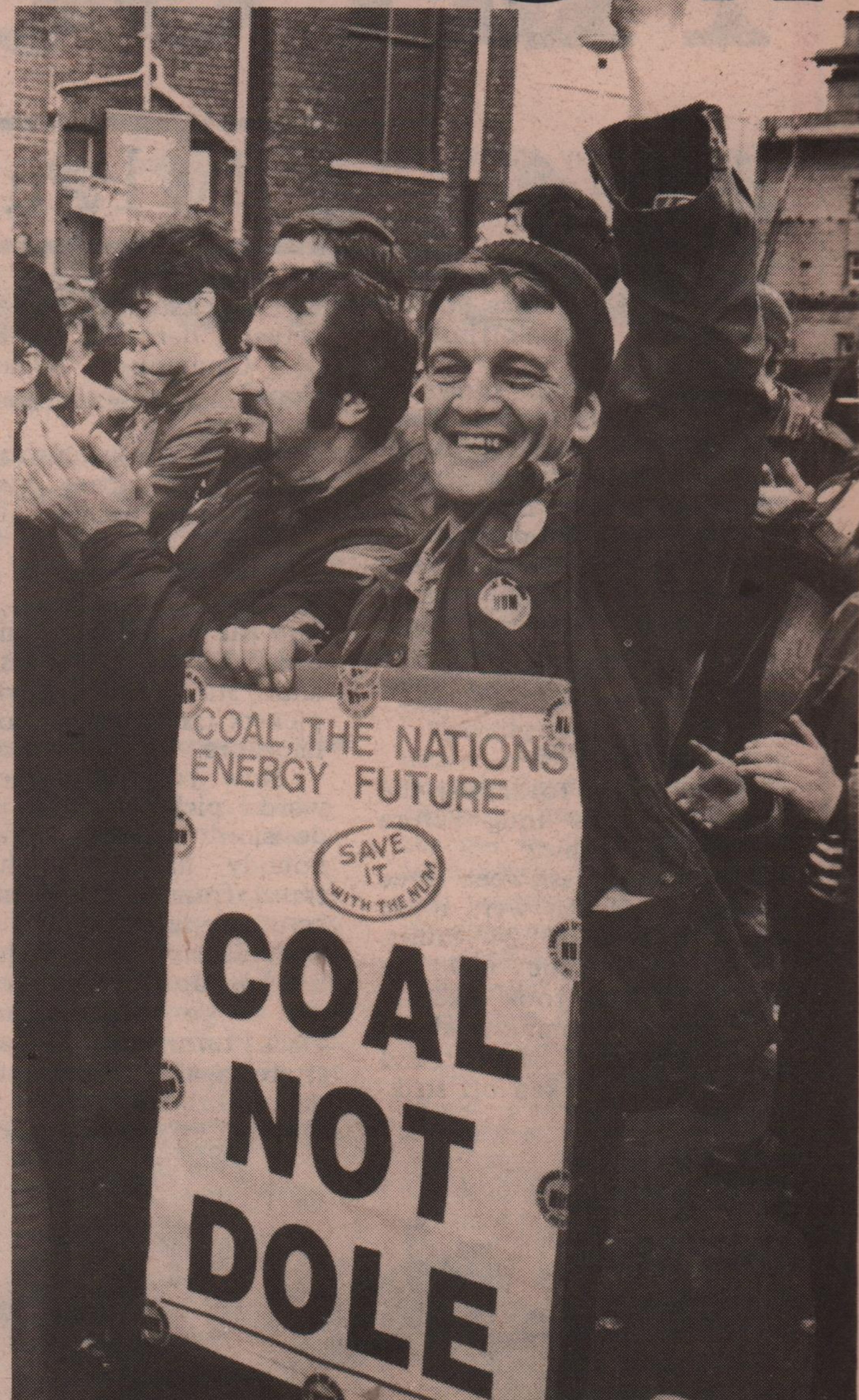
there. He called on everyone to get into their union and Labour Party branches and help replace people like Neil Kinnock and Norman Willis with real working class fighters.

The Socialist Workers' Party were there in force, in line with their recent turn to the labour movement. Unfortunately most of their intervention consisted of speeches in which they said that it was no use making speeches.

On these pages and the centre pages we print the conference statement, plus excerpts from the speeches and the workshop reports.



Arthur Scargill speaking at miners' rally in Cardiff, 28.4.84. Photo: Martin Shakeshaft (IFL)



Lobby of special delegate meeting in Sheffield. Photo: John Harris (IFL)

Conference statement

A national support committee

THIS was the statement adopted by the December 2 conference. It represented the common ground of agreement between the various political groupings involved in the planning of the conference — Labour Briefing, Socialist Organiser, Socialist Workers' Party, Socialist Action, etc., and the NUM. Amendments and additions will be debated at the January delegate meeting.

THIS conference recognises the current industrial action of the National Union of Mineworkers as an official strike, conducted in accordance with the union rule-book; it fully supports the union's demand that the National Coal Board and the government should withdraw the March 6 pit-closure programme, keep open the five pits in line with previous agreements and define exhaustion of reserves in line with the Plan for Coal, the signed agreement between the government, Coal Board and the mining unions.

Conference condemns the Thatcher government's premeditated introduction of state intimidation and violence into what began as a peaceful industrial dispute.

In particular, we condemn the outlawing of normal picketing practices through the use of baton-charges, riot shields, dogs, horses, curfews and armoured convoys on the part of the police.

We applaud the courage of those who have been defending themselves and their communities against such violence and we pledge ourselves to participate in, help coordinate and strengthen such defence — under the guidance of the NUM — by all necessary means.

Condemn

We condemn those speeches made by leaders of our movement in which legitimate self-defence in support of the inviolability of the picket-line has been shamefully equated with the deliberately-planned and executed state viol-

ence of the Thatcher government and its illegally-constituted police force.

Those who urge compliance with such violence thereby collude with it; conference reaffirms, with the miners, our refusal to collude.

Conference recognises:

a) that the Tories and the NCB have set their sights on the total defeat of the miners, and are preparing to move coal from the pit-heads to power stations, etc.;

b) that the future prospects for trade unionism in Britain, along with those for the GLC, Metropolitan Authorities, rate-capped local councils, the unemployed, women, black people and the labour movement generally, are indissolubly linked with the outcome of the miners' struggle;

c) that therefore the full industrial, financial and political resources at the disposal of our movement should be mobilised immediately behind the National Union of Mineworkers, whose struggle must take priority over all other concerns, until a successful conclusion is reached;

d) that responsibility for taking this action rests above all with the leaders of the TUC and Labour Party. We call upon them to implement to the letter their official policy of "total support" for the NUM. Meanwhile, we must be prepared to make the necessary moves ourselves.

Conference therefore instructs the Mineworkers' Defence Committee, having organised this conference, to convene in January the first meeting of a delegate-based committee, chaired by a representative of the National Union of Mineworkers and including

representatives of sympathetic Regional Councils of the TUC, union executives, broad lefts, Labour Parties, shop stewards committees, trades councils, miners' support committees and other bodies committed to a miners' victory.

The function of this committee will be to take all measures necessary to ensure victory.

Mass movement

It will develop a mass solidarity movement based on elected, recallable delegates from all miners' support organisations, and will publish a weekly national bulletin, with regional supplements, giving information as to the mass picketing and other actions requested by the national and area executives of the NUM.

We resolve to abide by all such requests, including:

a) the building of representative miners' support committees or groups in each locality, work-

place and, where necessary, nationally in the trade unions;

b) the stepping up of levies, food collections, etc., in every workplace, meeting, high street, etc. This is a priority, with the collection of Christmas food supplies and toys essential in the remaining weeks before Christmas;

c) the winning of industrial action in support of the miners. This is vital, particularly in light of the legal attacks on the NUM, and with the possibility of attempts to move coal stocks. We should not wait for the TUC before campaigning for industrial action, including trying to win all workers in dispute into a joint fight with the miners against the Tories;

d) the organisation in every workplace of the mass circulation of The Miner, along with bulletins and leaflets to counteract the bosses' media lies. We support the demands of the NUM for free access to all forms of media, and call on media

workers to ensure the NUM's right of reply;

e) the stopping of all movements of coal and substitute fuels in accordance with TUC guidelines, but without waiting for initiatives to come from the TUC before taking action ourselves; we request and expect full support in this from the Parliamentary Labour Party, including the presence of at least one MP on every picket-line;

f) a massive national demonstration in support of the miners, to be organised at a date to be agreed with the NUM. We expect the leaders of the TUC and Labour Party to march at the head of this demonstration.

Ken Livingstone (Chair)

Glen Turner
Jeremy Corbyn
Jane Stockton
Paul Franklin
Valerie Coultas
Peter Alexander
John Bloxam
Chris Knight

Dave Saunders(NUS) Strike freed jailed pickets

I WAS arrested on a miners picket line and charged with besetting. One significant thing happened when I was arrested — the ships on which I worked stopped.

It may not be a big thing in itself and I won't kid anyone — we couldn't have sustained it, but three sailings were missed and it got me released. And in the morning I was given unconditional bail and so was the miner who

was arrested with me.

We've collected over £10,000 for North Derbyshire miners. Our lads have been magnificent and we'll be going back to them and saying you've given us your money, now give us your support. When the try to move the coal at the pit heads, we'll be saying to our members, come on, give us some solidarity, give us some strike action.



Miner is arrested at lobby of Parliament in July. Photo: Andrew Ward, Report.

Energy policy

By Les Hearn

A SMALL number of delegates at the solidarity conference attended a workshop on energy policy. They discussed the way in which the Tory fight to smash the NUM is harming the future of our energy resources.

The Tories have made a political choice to encourage nuclear power so that the NUM and transport unions could be weakened.

The workshop agreed that while coal-burning could be cleaned up to reduce pollution, nuclear energy could never be free of risk. The other alternative, oil, would only last for between one-tenth and one-fifth as long as coal.

So-called economic arguments are "absolute crap" since both oil and nuclear power are much more costly (as we will discover in next year's electricity bills).

We felt that putting forward the arguments about a socialist energy policy could help win more support for the miners. A provisional list of speakers was drawn up. For details, contact the Mineworkers' Defence Committee or Piers Corbyn on 01-701 5691, or myself c/o Socialist Organiser.

All out for total vi

By Paul Whetton

I'd like to say that I bring greetings and solidarity from the police state of Nottinghamshire. But unfortunately that would no longer be accurate. The police state is no longer just Nottinghamshire.

Because it is spreading through this country like a cancer. The stories of roadblocks, of policemen barging their way into houses and dragging people out into the streets and beating them with truncheons, putting handcuffs onto them until their hands bleed, that is not a figment of anybody's imagination.

How long?

You've got to answer the question: how long before they come for me?

Within the last week three crucial decisions were made in a period of 24 hours.

The first one was the argument that took place in the House of Commons about supplementary benefit and the £1 being taken off strik-

ing miners.

I understand that violence actually flared in the House of Commons. Somebody ripped somebody else's speech up.

But that decision was itself an act of mass violence against the people of this country.

This was followed by a High Court decision that said the police were quite in order to erect a roadblock and stop four Yorkshire pickets travelling to Nottinghamshire.

Now you can forget the word pickets. What that decision means is that nobody has the right to travel from A to B in this country any more.

It doesn't matter whether it's a group of women setting off to go to Greenham or blacks turning out to demonstrate against the National

Front, or if it's pensioners on a coach trip to Skegness. If the police see you as a threat, they can stop you.

Crucial

Following that was another crucial decision — that the government was quite in order to ban trade unions at GCHQ. That means the government can, at any time, whether it's a threat to national security, or national economic prosperity, exercise the right to ban trade unions.

Don't think that just because it took place in GCHQ that is it.

If they see it as a threat, whether it's docks, railways, coal lorries or whatever, they can ban trade unions.

Any one of those three decisions was bad enough on its own, but when you take them as a whole, you would have expected some sort of

answer from our organisation — the TUC, the champion of the working class.

But they have done absolutely sod all.

On top of that a woman was last week arrested and sent to jail for seven days for no other reason than being on the picket line. She had broken bail conditions.

What is the TUC prepared to do about all this? The answer is: absolutely nothing.

Then people come to us and say: why won't you let the TUC get a negotiated settlement?

Well I've got a message for the TUC. There is absolutely no way that the rank and file of the National Union of Mineworkers is going to hand this dispute over to be sold out by the TUC like the NGA and GCHQ.

We'll go over the heads of the TUC general council and appeal direct to the rank and

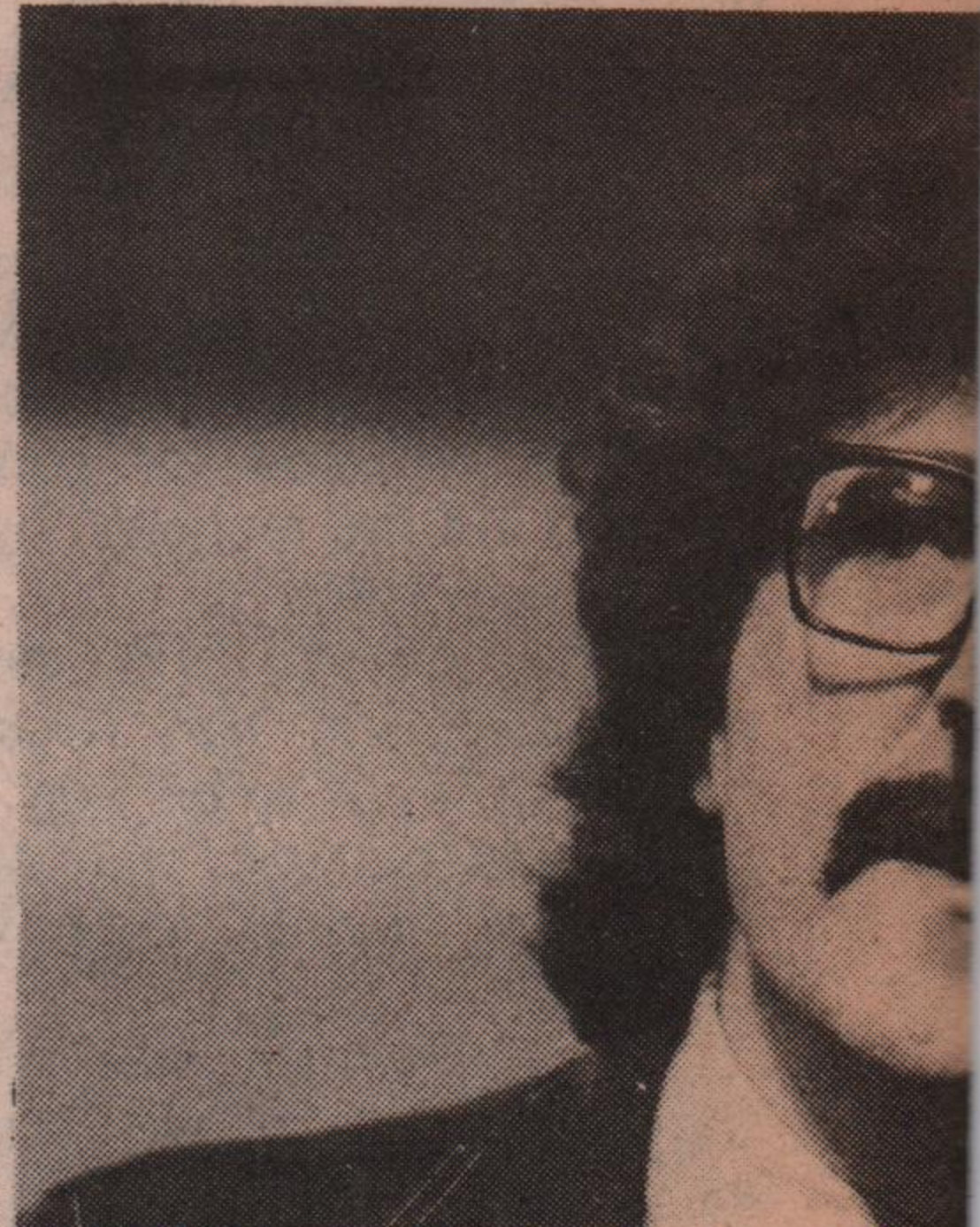
file to bring about mass action to resolve this dispute.

I must say one word of caution. It's quite right to support the Christmas appeal. It is quite right that miners, their wives and kids should have some sort of traditional Christmas this year.

But don't lose sight of the fact that we're in the middle of an industrial dispute. And we can't stuff turkeys into petrol tanks to get pickets from pits to power stations on Christmas day.

So we need your support in hard cash to keep this dispute going right throughout the Christmas holidays.

And I'll tell you something else. I've got four kids. The best Christmas present you could give them is for me to go into their bedroom on Christmas morning and say to them: thousands of trade unionists are coming out on the streets with your father to ensure that the best Christmas present you get is a



Paul Whetton. Photo: Andrew Wiara

future, a job.

Now as we know, last Friday morning a taxi driver was killed. It is a tragedy when any human life is taken. And nobody needs to tell miners about that. We've had thousands die in the pits.

But before all the breast-beating and gnashing of teeth I want you to remember this: we've had four of our comrades die on the picket line — murdered. And I wish the

Tony

I AM absolutely confident that the organisation that the NUM and the women's support groups and the other groups at the conference today have been able to achieve is going to transform the British Labour Party.

Because something else has happened in the last nine months — the end of electoral parliamentarianism. — the idea that all you've got to do is to keep quiet, then canvass for a Labour candidate, and then when he or she gets into power wait for another five years, be loyal to everything that's done and then turn out again. That is not the way at all.

The type of politics that we have tended to regard as being the nature of the Labour Party has got to be replaced and supplemented now by the sort of action that the miners and the women's support committees and this conference have done.

Political education

I believe that what has happened over the last nine months, apart from educating people, has been to establish in every single constituency party, miners' groups, women's groups, that have no intention of disbanding when the strike is over, which are instruments ready and able to support any issue that is in the interests of working people — defending women, defending blacks, defending the Irish who are under similar attack, defending the lesbians and gays.

What we are witnessing now is a redrawing of the political map of Britain, where you are on the one side or the other side.

We are seeing now the true nature of Tory institutions, the idea that the BBC is impartial, that the judges are free from political pressure, that the magistrates are just decent citizens doing their job without fear or favour, that the police are



At the rally in Stoke

'It's easy to be a Notts striker'

By Joe Muhammed

I'm a Nottingham striking miner, a black Notts striking miner.

You might think it's hard to be a Notts striking miner. It's not hard. It's easy. Something happened to me to illustrate this.

[Joe Muhammed described how he had gone into the pit during the strike to collect his clothes, and had gone into the pay hall].

I was expecting a verbally hostile reception. Everybody in the pit knows me. I'd got my clothes in a bag on my back. I opened the door, and the reception I got I didn't expect. Within seconds you could have heard a pin drop. Within seconds there wasn't a pair of eyes on me. They were all contemplating their own feet, looking into corners. That's why it's easy to be a Nottingham striking miner. Because you can hold your head up



Miners lobby a special delegate meeting in Sheffield. Photos John Harris

ctory



Report

police had been as quick and as efficient in catching their murderers.

I just want to ask people how much more of our blood you want us to spill before coming to our assistance?

We're not ashamed to ask for assistance. In fact, we've gone beyond that now. We are not asking, we are not urging, we are demanding that you come out and stand alongside us in this fight.

Benn's speech

Renewing the Labour Party

above politics — we've seen all that being exposed.

If we are going to defend rights won by earlier generations, we've got to fight as hard to regain them as they fought to win them.

Fresh demands

We've got to use the energy and commitment released by the miners' strike to make fresh demands: we want jobs for all, because there is work to be done, mainly in the expansion of the public services.

We want education open to everybody. We want homes for everybody. We want a proper health service free at the point of use and comprehensive in its nature.

We want dignity for the old. We want to get rid of Reagan's missiles which will easily destroy the whole of civilisation when he presses

There's only one way to win this dispute and that is mass action. Mass action by all trade unionists throughout the length and breadth of the country. And yes, maybe we are talking about a general strike.

But to those comrades who suggest a 24 hour general strike, let me tell you that as a mineworker who has been on strike for nine months, if you think a 24 hour general strike will solve this, you are living in cloud-cuckoo land.

What a 24 hour strike means to the Establishment in this country is nothing more than another royal wedding.

All out

We're going all out. We've gone too far and suffered too much to accept anything other than total victory. The only way we'll achieve that is all-out mass action by the trade union and labour movement to win this dispute.

Why poverty?

The grey revolution

The political revolution which ended colonial rule almost everywhere in the Third World between World War 2 and 1975 was followed by a 'grey revolution' — an industrial revolution in the Third World.

Yet, side by side with modern factories, poverty in the Third World is increasing. (Fifth in a series of articles by Martin Thomas).

THE capitalist world economy was created not by free trade but by colonialism. The process had very different consequences for the colonised and for the colonisers, for the oppressed peoples and for the oppressors.

In previous articles I have tried to show how colonialism, from the 16th century to the 20th, devastated black Africa, India, and Spanish America. There is a similar story to be told about the Arab world, Indonesia, East Asia, the Caribbean, Brazil, etc.

Undeniably colonial imperialism brought some of the elements of capitalist development to the Third World.

But such features of capitalism as mark it out as an advance on previous societies — literacy, education, scientific health care, individual liberty and dignity — certainly did not reach the mass of the people in the colonies. Sometimes, indeed, they faced the opposite: destruction of their cultures, genocide, racism.

Such was colonialism. Last week's article argued that in Spanish America independence (in the early 19th century) brought little advance. The independence struggles in the rest of the Third World, generally between World War 2 and 1975, were significantly different.

Compare, for example, the nationalisation of the Suez Canal in 1956, which closed 74 years of British semi-colonial control in Egypt.

"Built by hundreds of thousands of Egyptian peasants driven into forced labour under the foreign whip, serving later as the instrument of the financial penetration and direct occupation of British imperialism (British troops were stationed in the Canal Zone), the Suez Canal was, second to the occupation

army, the cruelest symbol of imperialist domination...

"On that evening (when the nationalisation was announced) the Egyptian people could not sleep. Strangers talked to each other in the streets...Every Egyptian was suddenly gripped by joy, pride and the wildest of dreams".*

If liberation from colonial rule took place quietly in some countries, it was only because huge wars and uprisings in other colonies had shaken the European powers. It was a real revolution, marking the end of a 400-year epoch in world history.

And it was not only a matter of "joy, pride and the wildest of dreams". Independence also led to a new era of capitalist development in the Third World.

Nationalised

Throughout the Third World, under both right-wing and left-wing governments, large sections of industry have been nationalised and protective tariffs have been set up. Despite the rise of the multinational corporations, the percentage of local ownership in the economies of the Third World has increased markedly.

Industry has grown fast — and that includes manufacturing industry, not just the traditional

Third World industries (mining, railways to serve the mines, etc).

Manufacturing output in the Third World has grown around 6% per year, and output per head at around 3 to 4% per year, since 1950. This growth is twice as fast as the growth of British manufacturing industry in the 19th century, slightly faster (per head) than the advanced capitalist countries since 1950.

Resources

As late as 1960 the Third World made only 5% of the capitalist world's steel. By 1980 it produced 15%. Manufactured goods are rapidly overtaking traditional raw-material exports in the Third World's trade.

The resources put into education and health by Third World governments are almost everywhere smaller than those put into the armed forces. Nevertheless they are far greater than those invested by the colonial regimes.

At independence only one child in five in India got any primary education. Now 76% do. More than 70 years of British rule in Nigeria produced 15% adult literacy by independence in 1960. 20 years of independence raised the literacy rate to 34%.

These developments were paralleled in Spanish America — especially after the shock of the Cuban revolution in 1959 — by a decline in the power of the traditional land-owning oligarchies.

Land reforms have been proclaimed practically everywhere in the Third World. They have been effective more rarely.

Nevertheless, several countries — from South Korea through Egypt and Algeria to Mexico — have seen dramatic changes in their structure of landholding. Elsewhere, capitalist relations in agriculture develop more gradually but nonetheless inexorably.

Progress? Maybe. But at the same time the mass of Third World poverty is increasing.

The least-developed Third World countries grow more slowly than the relatively developed ones. Thus between 1960 and 1981, while national income per head grew about 60% in the US and about 110% in Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa, and East Asia, it grew scarcely at all in black Africa and Bangladesh.

And the fastest-growing Third World capitalisms also have fast-growing poverty. In Mexico, probably the most developed Third World capitalist country, even before the recent debt crisis the real income of the poorer classes was estimated to be lower than in the 1950s.

Inequality

As capitalist industry grows, so does inequality. As the gleaming skyscrapers reach upwards in the cities of the Third World, the grim shanty towns spread outwards.

The debt crisis adds an extra twist. In the 1970s Third World capitalism grew through state investment financed by international banks, which in turn borrowed from the rich oil states.

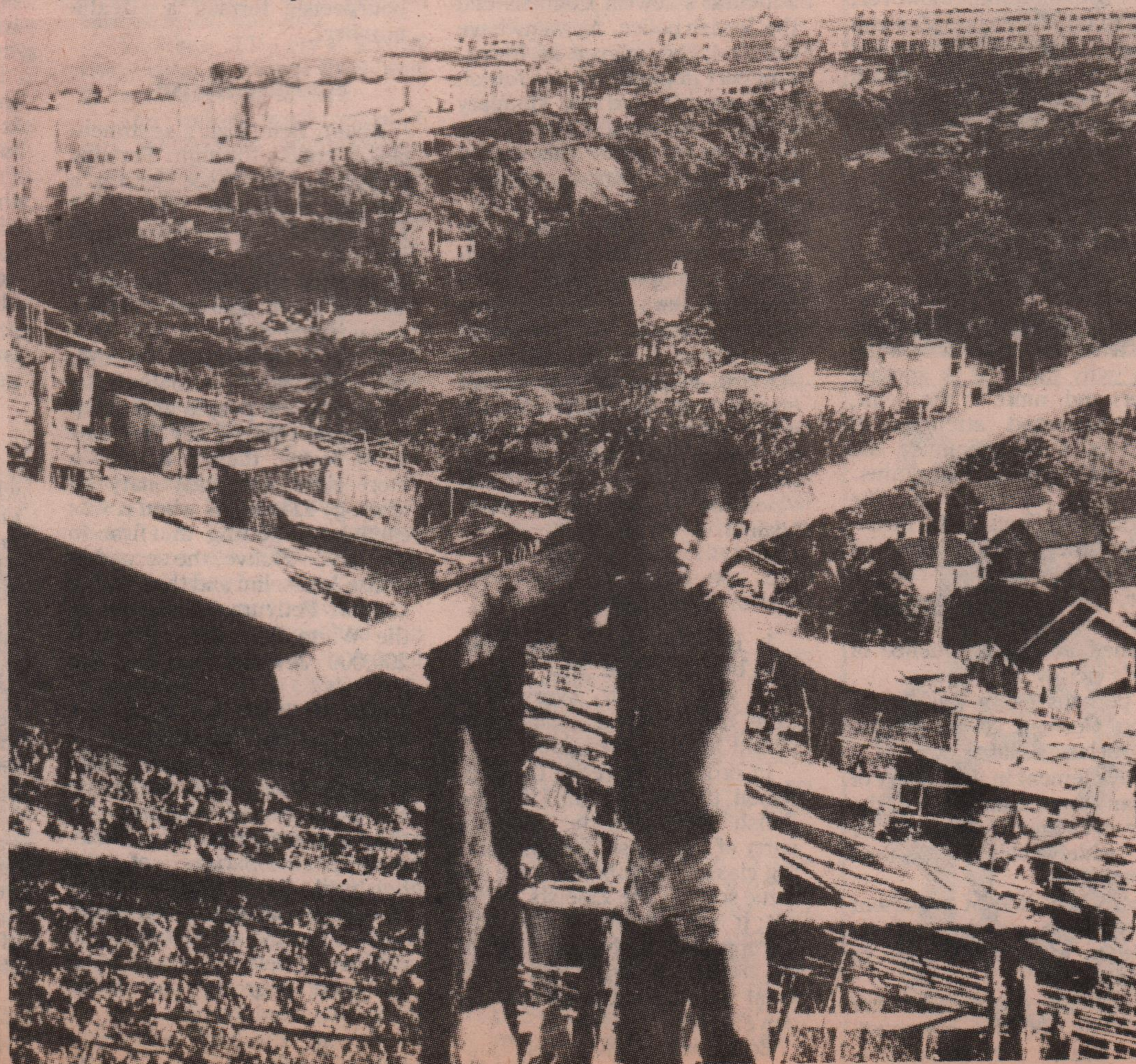
When the big capitalist economies went into crisis after 1979-80, trade contracted, credit got tighter, and the Third World states could no longer pay yesterday's debts from today's profits and new loans.

No-one need weep for the Third World ruling classes: they stashed away large slices of the loan money in safe US or European bank accounts or property. Now they are cooperating with the IMF and the bank in making the workers and peasants pay the cost of the crisis, on a scale which makes British Tory austerity look gentle.

So the mass of poverty increases. Even if the forms are different — the urbane international banker replacing the colonial soldier and tax-collector — the pillage of the workers and peasants of the Third World continues.

In the remaining articles of this series I will discuss first, three countries which have been taken as models of Third World development (Egypt, South Korea, Cuba); second, the general theory of development and underdevelopment; and third, the solutions that we can fight for.

*Mahmoud Hussein, "Class Conflict in Egypt, 1945-70".



Brazil — poverty alongside modern factories

Tony Greenstein and Andrew Hornung take up a debate with Gerry Ben-Noah's review (SO 199) of Lenni Brenner's books 'Zionism in the Age of the Dictators' and 'The Iron Wall'

TO reply to Gerry Ben Noah's review article, "Re-writing the holocaust" (SO 199), we shall ignore some of the detailed remarks concerning, for instance, Lenni Brenner's books. On some of these questions Ben Noah is right, on others wrong — most of the time his points are simply not relevant.

What we are concerned with are the *central issues* raised by Brenner and others and raised again by Ben Noah; we are concerned with "the sense he makes" (to use Ben Noah's own phrase) of the history of Zionism.

A second preliminary remark: for an article that accuses certain writers of creating a grotesque "amalgam" — of equating Zionism with anti-Semitism — the review itself offers a pretty bizarre example of this very technique when it equates Nazi apologists who rewrite the history of the holocaust (note the title!) with people with a proven record of combatting racism including anti-Semitism.

Running through the article is the argument that there exists a "left" anti-Semitism equivalent to that of the right, as if the Left has, from the days of Marx onwards, constituted a second wing of anti-Semitism.

While examples of anti-immigrant campaigning of a decidedly anti-Semitic character are not hard to find before World War 2, it is the Left, the working class movement, that has proved the most consistent opponent of anti-Semitism.

Nutshell

Indeed, here we have the whole issue in a nutshell: it is the Left (with all its imperfections) that has been the opponent of anti-Semitism while the self-styled movements of national salvation of the Jews, Zionism, has manifestly failed.

That Zionism should seek to falsify this — indeed, claim the contrary — is not surprising. How else should it justify itself? By its colonial conquests alone?

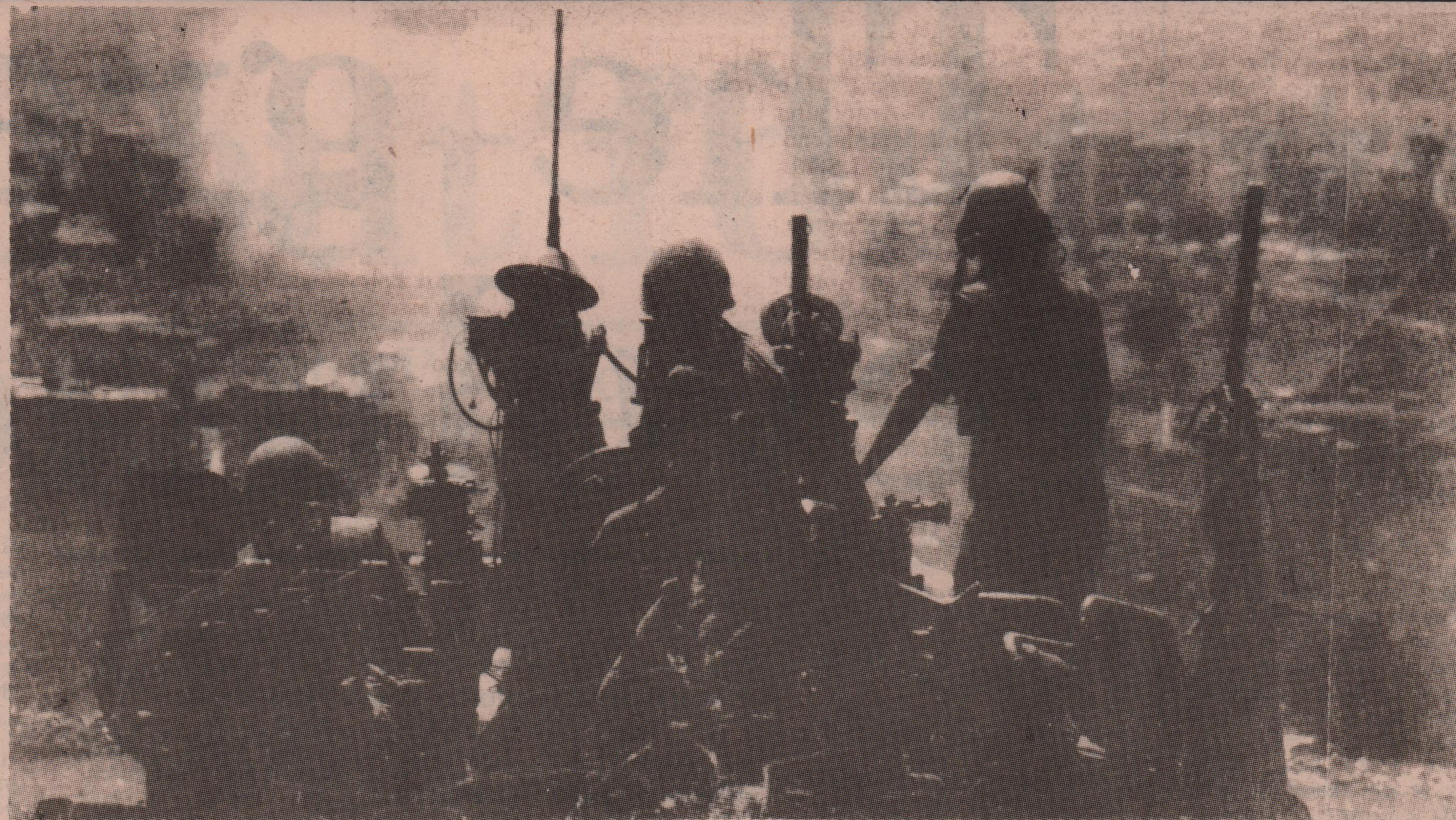
This distortion — the picture of "left" anti-Semitism — is peddled by the Jewish establishment in Britain today. Firstly, it serves as a cover for their own inactivity in fighting the real anti-Semites of the fascist and Tory Right. Whether it has been the Lewisham demonstration of 1977, the formation of the ANL, the fight to exclude Patrick Harrington from North London Polytechnic or other situations where a stand against racism and fascism needed to be made, the British Board of Deputies — the overwhelmingly Zionist "representatives" of the Jewish community in Britain — has opposed them.

The simplest justification for their refusal to fight has always been to claim, falsely, that the Left who organised opposition in these cases is anti-Semitic because it is anti-Zionist.

Of course, the inactivity of the BoD today is hardly different from the inactivity of the BoD before it was overwhelmingly Zionist. Zionism does not determine — in the above cases — the BoD's stand entirely, rather it gives an ideological cover to its inactivity.

No solution

Secondly, Zionism justifies its general programme by claiming that no country, no regime and no social movement can provide a "solution to the Jewish question" because all are inevitably anti-Semitic. It is one of the many crimes of Stalin-



Israeli tanks in Lebanon

Rewriting Zionism?

ism that anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union under Stalin appeared to prove the truth of this view. The consequences of this for Soviet opposition movements can be felt to this day.

Just as it is ludicrous to place the Left in the same camp as the Right when it comes to anti-Semitism, so it is nonsense to talk of a "left" version of fascist revisionism which seeks to deny the holocaust took place. What some Leftists are, however, trying to do is measure Zionism against its implicit and explicit claim to be the movement which saved Jewry and which offered a resistance to fascism that non-Jewish movements could not do.

Collaboration

Stating that the Zionist movement — not merely individual Zionists — collaborated with the Nazis (why they did is another matter) and, more to the point, even obstructed attempts at rescue does not minimise the Nazis' guilt, as Ben Noah states.

To claim as much is like asserting that Trotsky, by insisting on the responsibility of Stalinism for Hitler's rise to power, was minimising the Nazis' responsibility for what happened as a consequence of Hitler's victory.

Or perhaps Lenin was wrong to see German Social Democracy's class collaboration as a decisive element in the victory of German imperialism over the labour movement? Perhaps he was whitewashing German imperialism!

Clearly this line of argument is simply a sentimentalist's confusion. It is utterly alien to Marxism.

Of course, the Nazis were responsible for the holocaust. The Nazis' responsibility, however, should not be used to obscure or conceal the role of

others. Despite the good intentions of many Zionists — and many people joined the Zionist movement when all else had failed, more out of desperation than ideological conviction — we have to say (and Gerry Ben Noah nowhere denies it) that Zionism's starting point was the abandonment of the fight against anti-Semitism.

No wonder then that the Nazis looked to the Zionists to run the Judenrat's Jewish Councils and the Jewish police. As many have testified, they played an important part in pacifying the Jewish communities and in Hungary and elsewhere actually helped in rounding up victims. This is why the Judenrate were so despised and hated.

Let us emphasise one thing: we do not say simply (as an anti-Semite might) that Jews betrayed Jews. It is neither a matter merely of individual Jews nor of Jews in general — we are talking about Zionist organisations. Gerry Ben Noah's whole article bases itself on just the kind of confusion — the confusion between "Jew" and "zionism" — that he rails against.

Small

It is essential to remember that before World War 2 Zionism was almost everywhere little more than a small trend within Jewish communities.

In order to increase the confusion, the article claims that the Polish Bund — the majority party of the Polish Jewish working class — collaborated on the same scale as the Zionists. It did not: it had a record of unswerving opposition to Nazism. Again, we are not talking about individual members but about the movements as a whole.

Ben Noah's defence of Zionism on these matters leads him to try to justify Herzl's meeting

with von Plehve, the Tzarist Minister of the Interior and a noted anti-Semitic pogrommist. But it won't do simply to brush this off as a "hard-headed calculation", an alliance with the devil by a movement with its back to the wall.

The fact is that Zionism sought to ally with Russian autocracy against the progressive forces amongst whom the Jewish workers and petty-bourgeoisie formed a sizeable number.

Sentimentalism

Again, Ben Noah's sentimentalism breaks through. Perhaps he would prefer to see Herzl as a basically noble man. Who cares? The argument is not about good and bad persons, people acting in good or bad faith. The argument is about political affinities and political logic.

If Herzl, Weizmann — and, yes, why not? — Jabotinsky were all good people and devoted to the survival (as they saw it) of Jewry, then it is all the more clear how reactionary an ideology Zionism is when it was capable of getting the first to praise von Plehve, the second to praise Mussolini and the third to support Petlyura, the leader of the White Russians with over 200,000 Jewish lives on his hands.

Note well: Jabotinsky did not simply parley with Petlyura, he supported him against the Left!

To Ben Noah this is all "tragic confusion", the product of desperate circumstances. Weizmann's comparison of the bolshevik Revolution with the advent of Nazism was perhaps such a "tragic confusion" — a confusion between those who outlawed pogroms and those who instigated them!

Perhaps the leaders of Hungarian Zionism whose "Rescue Department" worked under the

aegis of Eichmann and Becher and without whom Nazism could never have been so successful in their exterminatory drive in Hungary — perhaps they were also tragically confused?

Or perhaps the economic transfer agreement between Nazi Germany and the Zionist settlement in Palestine — an agreement approved by the Zionist Congress of 1935 — which helped break the anti-Nazi boycott was both a "hard-headed calculation" and a "tragic confusion".

The only "confusion" here is in Ben Noah's own head. And it is a double confusion: firstly, he is confused about the facts (Weizmann was well aware of the genocidal drive of Nazism as his speech in 1937 to the 20th Zionist Congress made clear) and secondly he is confused about the point under debate.

No one argues that the Zionists were just as willing to kill six million Jews as the Nazis.

Disarmed

The point under debate is whether or not Zionism as an ideology disarmed its followers in the face of persecution, whether it minimised the implications of anti-Semitism by its belief in the worthlessness of Diaspora Jewry (Weizmann in the above mentioned speech refers to the millions about to perish as "dust, economic and moral dust in a cruel world") and whether as a movement it didn't always put the building up of the Jewish settlement in Palestine before the saving of Jewish or other lives...even to the point of obstructing emigration if it wasn't to Palestine and of rounding up Jews for the gas chambers.

Let Gerry Ben Noah answer the simple question as to whether Zionism as an ideology and as a movement disarmed its followers in the face of fascist

attack and obstructed efforts at saving Jewish lives. If he believes it did not, let him say what part of the overwhelming evidence — "events (which) are real and publicly known", as he himself calls them — is wrong.

The truth is that the overwhelming evidence demonstrates that Zionist leaders were concerned about the fate of European Jewry only insofar as it concerned the establishment of a Jewish state. To understand why, it is necessary to realise that Zionism was never about saving Jews but redeeming them.

To the logical Zionist, then, a great stream of refugees to non-Nazi Europe or the US could only marginalise the effort to build up a Jewish state — the precondition for "redeeming" Jewry from its Diaspora mentality — and threaten the existing communities in the countries of reception.

Ben Gurion put it most succinctly when he said, by way of warning the Zionist Executive at its December 17 1938 meeting: "If Jews will have to choose between the refugees, saving Jews from concentration camps, and assisting the national museum in Palestine, mercy will have the upper hand and the whole energy of the people will be channelled into saving Jews from various countries. Zionism will be struck off the agenda not only in world public opinion, in Britain and the United States, but elsewhere in Jewish public opinion."

Palestinians

If we allow a separation between the refugee problem and the Palestinian problem, we are risking the existence of Zionism."

Ben Noah knows that such quotations can be produced in great quantity from spokespersons of every wing of Zionism. He knows Zionism opposed the anti-Nazi boycott; he knows Zionism opposed the opening of the US to Jewish refugees in excess of the numbers stipulated in pre-war rulings; indeed, he recommends to us Nathan Weinstock's excellent book, "Zionism, False Messiah" as an alternative to the books he condemns though that book tells us (p.136) that, "The role of the Zionist Organisation's refusal to contribute to the rescue of European Jewry elsewhere than in Palestine remains to be written. Sometimes, this attitude was akin to outright sabotage."

So what is he saying? That Ben Gurion was joking? That he was lying to the Executive, playing a diplomatic game as Herzl had done with von Plehve? Or simply that the coincidence between the words and actions of Zionism's leaders is just that...a coincidence, a fluke of history?

In the final analysis, all Ben Noah has to say is this: even if Zionism as an ideology aided the Nazis and other reactionaries before them and even if there are documented acts of collaboration between Zionists and reactionaries (not just diplomatic agreements), the ultimate aims of the Zionists and those of the anti-Semites were different: the former wanted to redeem Jews while the latter didn't.

Needless to say, that is not something we deny, nor is that very surprising. But that is not what the dispute is about.

Socialist Organiser

A final word to Socialist Organiser. It is a good thing that you publish views that you don't agree with. This only becomes a problem when it is not clear what your own position is. Is it the position contained in a review some time ago which did not dispute the interpretation that Gerry Ben Noah attacks or is it Gerry Ben Noah's? Or have you no view at all?

It is time you pinned your colours to the mast before others do it for you.



Riot police at Scunthorpe. Photo: John Harris, IFL

'Selling' riot police

Panorama (BBC-1) returned to the miners' strike on Monday 3rd.

Entitled "To the Bitter End", the programme tried to focus on the back-to-work move, coupled it conveniently with highly emotive incidents of violence showing a burned-out house and badly-injured scab miner Michael Fletcher, and tried to generalise for the North Yorkshire area. Neither of those incidents took place in that specific locality.

It didn't work. The programme tried to build up an image with elaborate presentation of the police's planning meetings, with earnest discussion based on a series of anonymous tip-offs about petrol bombs, explosives, and nails being strewn on roads. But it showed nothing happening to the police beyond routine picketing and patrolling!

Cameras accompanied the police to picket lines, on escort journeys with scabs, through villages and across country, along motorways

Labour Against the Witch-hunt AGM 1984

Saturday December 8: registration from 11.30am at County Hall, London SE1

The meeting will review the year's work, consider future activities, and elect a Secretariat for the coming year. Make sure your Labour Party or trade union organisation is represented

Contact: Keith Lichman, LAW secretary, 11 Wilderton Rd, London N16.

Susan Carlyle reviews the Panorama TV programme [Monday 3rd].

and back to the police centres.

The main interest was the police talking about their tactics and their 'need to adapt to the new pattern of violence'. They could have been discussing a new product in an advertising campaign and how to sell it painlessly.

The programme showed an alarming machinery of intelligence-gathering, movement of individuals, convoys, vehicles and picketing. General Frank Kitson would be proud to see his "counter-insurgency" methods being used. But on TV they got the stamp of approval.

Tolerance

The police chiefs back at HQ talked of their tolerance but said they needed "positive firmness, because no miner likes a softie. They would be the first to see through it". So that's why so many pickets have been injured! Just in case they suspect the British police might be soft!

The programme showed the escalating cost, four times higher since the summer at £600,000 a week for the area. The operation is too big for local forces to cope and 560 extra police from Avon are permanently drafted in. Crime is generally increasing and the detection rate has dropped.

This section was rounded off with a clip that seemed straight from a Tory political

broadcast. A police chief, looking straight into the camera, said:

"I have confidence in us to get you back to work".

Maggie Thatcher would be proud. Saatchi and Saatchi should book him up.

Another TV crew spend their time at picket lines and in cars following scabs.

The union, with resigned but methodical competence, was tracking each scab as they left the bus in order to keep a record of who was going in to work. No scab could expect to have a job come the end of the strike but any miner who only went in for a day and then came out again would not face retribution.

Was this harassment, Panorama asked. "We have a divine right to speak to our members. They're our members, not the police's members, not the NCB's. If they believe they're right, then they've nothing to hide."

One scab approached the union car and complained about violence. Challenged, he admitted that no miners from that pit had been intimidated!

The media now provide every scab's excuse.

"We saw violence at the picket line. The team had been told to go and film behind police lines, and we saw a young copper being restrained by a senior officer after using his truncheon."

Panorama remarked how different the picketing looked from the picket's angle. What

an admission after months of picket-baiting!

The film showed the North Yorkshire panel meetings. The representatives weren't in a winning mood. The secretary was cagey. His feeling was one of being bound to fellow miners. "You can't be isolated in a pit... It's unique our union. It describes the life you lead where you're dependent on each other."

"We've fought nine months for issues, not for Arthur Scargill, but for loyalty to the National Union of Mineworkers".

Lacking direct material on violence, the film had to keep dipping back to Michael Fletcher on crutches.

Nobody apart from scabs and management had anything to say about it. It just was not part of the strikers' experience or apparent intentions in those areas.

Candid

Only one candid striker was prepared to say that scabs must know what they were doing when they went out and betrayed not only themselves, but their father's and grandfather's jobs.

"For months Notts men and wives have been living surrounded by scabs, and have endured intimidation and violence. Where were you reporting then? There's no mention of the violence they experienced".

For the scabs in Yorkshire there is virtually nothing to do except drink tea and do odd jobs on the surface. No coal is being mined and the police operation must be highly 'uneconomic', but it's good practice in counter-insurgency.

AIDS and bigotry

By Les Hearn

THE last few weeks have seen an outburst of prejudice aimed against gay victims of AIDS, most virulently in Australia, but with echoes in Britain.

The news that several people had died of AIDS after receiving blood donated by a gay man was greeted with a disgusting anti-gay outburst, ranging from a law in Queensland banning homosexuals from giving blood (on pain of two years' jail) to demands from some MPs that the blood donor be charged with manslaughter.

Meanwhile, a second haemophilia sufferer in Britain has just died from AIDS. He had received injections of Factor 8, a blood product that helps blood clots form to stop bleeding.

Factor 8 that is contaminated with AIDS virus is almost certainly of American origin. However, government and NHS spokespeople have asked gays in Britain not to give blood, using arguments designed to make gay blood donors feel guilty and diseased. And this in the absence of any evidence of AIDS virus in donated blood in Britain.

Hepatitis

However, screening of blood donors already takes place and it is possible that there should be more. Doubtless AIDS will become more common in both gay and non-gay populations, but more common already are virus diseases such as hepatitis.

The North London Blood Transfusion Centre lists such reasons for not giving blood as: acupuncture, ear piercing,

jaundice (hepatitis virus), cancer (various viruses), intravenous drug users (hepatitis, AIDS viruses), "practising" homosexuals, people born in Haiti, Zaire or the Congo and their sexual partners (AIDS), people who have travelled to a tropical area (various viruses) as well as anyone "not feeling 100% fit".

Viruses

Other ways of dealing with the threat of viruses in blood include the following:

*Testing donor blood for AIDS etc. This can already be done but government finance is not forthcoming.

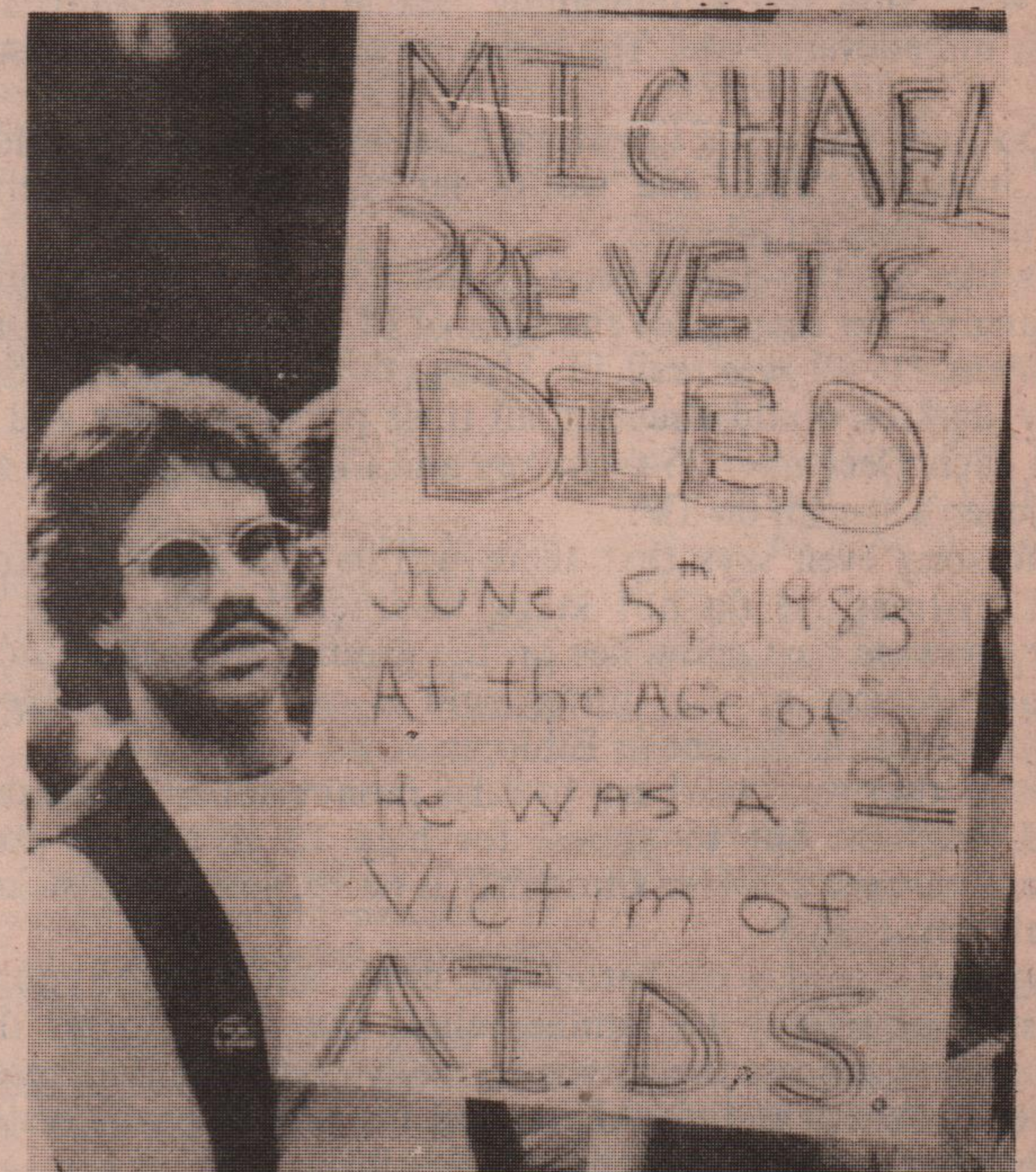
*Treating blood plasma by heating to 68 degrees centigrade for 24 hours. This kills the AIDS virus without damaging Factor 8.

*Stopping imports of blood products from the US. Britain could be self-sufficient in Factor 8 if not for past Tory cuts.

*cloning Factor 8 in large amounts. This has already been achieved on a small scale. The gene for Factor 8 has been extracted and cloned in animal cells. These cells produced functional Factor 8.

*Screening recipients of blood. AIDS seems to affect particularly those with a weakened immune system.

In any case, there is no reason to refuse blood from donors in any of the higher risk groups. Their blood can still be used for routine testing and research purposes, so there is no need to make such donors feel rejected or guilty.



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The 'Feed the World' record features a wide range of singers, including Bananarama (above).

Bandaid or surgery?

The famine in Africa needs not just Band-Aid but social surgery, argues Edward Ellis.

A LOT of people have been disturbed and sickened by the suffering from famine in Africa. Some rock stars have felt the same way.

They have got together — under the name of Band Aid — to put out a record, 'Feed the World'. It was organised by Bob Geldof of Boomtown Rats.

All proceeds will go directly to the starving in Ethiopia. Steps have been taken to prevent a repetition of the Bangladesh fiasco, when very little of the money raised by George Harrison got beyond embezzlement by state bureaucrats.

Band Aid brings together almost everyone you can think of from Paul Young to Boy George, Simon le Bon to George Michael, Paul Weller to Midge Ure, Spandau Ballet, Bananarama and on and on. David Bowie was brought in to introduce the promotion video on TV.

A very good and well-meaning idea. But the record itself is almost unbelievably bad. The lyrics are so inane as to be insulting.

"Do they know it's Christmas time at all?" the star-ridden choir intones. "Feed the world. let them know it's Christmas time" they all join in.

It's like a latter-day version of the 19th century missionaries bringing (so they said) the light of Christianity to the Dark Continent. If all was well in Africa, the song suggests, then happy darkies would abandon all their pagan customs and sit down each December 25 to turkey and Christmas pudding and the Queen's speech on TV.

The song even says that there will be "no snow in Africa this Christmas". I do not know whether the rock stars are really unaware that snow lies on the ground all year round in parts of Africa, or that bitter cold is one of the problems compounding the famine in Ethiopia.

Better that rock stars try to raise money for Ethiopia than for themselves: but to appeal for help to give these poor, ignorant savages a better Christmas is naive, and rather sickening rubbish.

Buy the record — or, better still, don't, and give the equivalent sum of money to famine relief. But don't forget that governments possess the means to really deal with the present disaster in Africa and elsewhere, and the private profit system is to blame for making the disaster possible.

Don't let up on political campaigning to force the governments to act and to change the system. And don't swallow the song's patronising attitude to black Africa.

The Specials' song 'Free Nelson Mandela', connecting with the black working class in South Africa (Nelson Mandela is a jailed anti-apartheid fighter), was a lot nearer to the real issues and the real struggle that will win a decent life for the workers and peasants of Africa.

Rigged poll in Grenada

THE results of Grenada's first election since the US invasion last year have not been officially released as we go to press. But there is little doubt that the conservative coalition — the New National Party — will have secured a considerable victory.

The Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement, named after Grenada's revolutionary leader assassinated shortly before the invasion, may not win any seats at all. They decided to run late in the day — so many of their supporters did not register to vote in time, and the first-past-the-post electoral system does not favour them.

Also, it seems clear, the election has been rigged. The NNP was put together with US backing. It has been aided in its campaign by the US embassy and has got foreign financial support.

Roy Chasteau, who was supervisor of the election until his recent sacking, has claimed that the pro-US authorities, under the control of the police chief from Barbados, have printed extra ballot papers. The MBPM has also claimed that its supporters have suffered phone-tapping, mail interference and even deportations.

Electorate

With a small electorate — only 48,000 — some of the Grenadan Parliament's 15 seats could be decided by a handful of votes. The NNP is expected to win nine of the seats, with the remainder going to the Grenada United Labour Party, led by Sir Eric Gairy.

Gairy ruled Grenada until his overthrow by Bishop in 1979. Despite his record of brutality, he has some support amongst Grenada's poor. He himself is not standing, in return for being allowed by the US to return to the island from exile in California.

Election rigging only partly explains the likely success of the NNP. When the US (along with its Caribbean stooges) invaded Grenada in October 1983, it was determined to set back all those in favour of radical reform, and to bring about a shift to the right in Grenadan politics.

The US invasion was a cynical imperialist move. Its stated objectives (which frequently changed as the absurdity of each one became clear) were simply cover for attempts to roll back the reforms of the Bishop government.

The invasion was also a test-case for a possible future — and still increasingly threatened — attack on Nicaragua.

Despite propaganda claims to the contrary, the US marines met with fierce resistance from the Grenadan people. However, they were defeated: and defeat and demoralisation have helped provide a base for the US-sponsored status quo.



US invasion troops disembark in Grenada

Right wins in Uruguay

By Clive Bradley

URUGUAY'S first election since the military took power in 1973 has resulted in a victory by a big margin for Julio Sanguinetti's right-wing Colorado Party.

There were some violent flare-ups, and rumours of 'irregularities' in the balloting, but the elections themselves — for president, congress, and city councils — were greeted with widespread enthusiasm.

The military regime had been fiercely repressive, like other Latin American dictatorships. Independent trade unions — despite strong resistance, including a general strike against the 1973 coup — had been forced underground. Militants were arrested, tortured, exiled — as many as one in every 50 Uruguayans has been arrested for political reasons since 1973.

Average incomes in the country — which historically is one of the continent's wealthiest ('the Switzerland of Latin America')

— have been halved in the years of dictatorship.

The labour movement has not emerged very strong. Also, it lacks a distinctive political voice.

The two main opposition parties are the Blancos — a capitalist party that has been the Colorados' rival since the last century — and the Frente Amplio (Broad Front), which unites several more radical parties, including the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, and the Christian Democrats.

The Broad Front — which polled some 383,322 votes — cannot be considered an independent workers' party. It does include a coalition of far-left groups and independent trade unionists called the Independent Democratic Left (IDI). And the Christian Democrats are a small-

er factor than in Chile, for example.

But its best-known leader is a General, and its programme is vague. Calling for land reform, nationalisations, and an amnesty for political prisoners, it appears to be quite similar to the Blancos' programme.

Chief electoral officer Col. Jose Khatcherian has claimed that the election saw "irregularities previously unknown in Uruguay". The Financial Times (November 27) reports that he "showed reports two vote tallies in which votes cast were not registered on the final total. In both lists none of the votes cast for the Broad Front and the Blancos were included".

Whether as a result of election rigging or not, the Colorados won even in Uruguay's capital, Montevideo, where nearly half the population lives. The Broad Front, which was expected to win the city council, finished third.

A small would-be Trotskyist group, the Socialist Workers' Party (PST) — aligned with the same international group as Socialist Action in Britain — supported the Broad Front, and in particular its radical wing, the IDI, whose programme went much further, calling for class struggle and the socialisation of the means of production.

The Colorados' victory means that repression and economic austerity can be expected to continue. However, the return of parliamentary democracy of a sort to Uruguay, with the military rulers thoroughly discredited, gives some room for manoeuvre to the labour movement.

In neighbouring Argentina, where elections last year returned a right-wing government, the democratic space has led to a resurgence in working-class militancy. We can expect the same in Uruguay.

Mitterrand sends out troops

THE FRONT pages in France over recent weeks have been dominated by New Caledonia — a group of islands in the Pacific which is one of France's numerous remaining small colonies.

The native people of the islands — the Kanaks — have declared an independent Republic of Kanaky. The French Socialist Party government, which was promising independence in 1989, is now planning a referendum on independence within two months.

Simultaneously, it is sending an 'anti-terrorist' special squad, together with 1500 police and gendarmes, to try to reimpose French government control now.

The chief problem for the Kanaks is that after 130 years of

French rule they are now probably less than half the 140,000 population of the islands.

35 per cent of the population are French settlers, and the rest, from Indochina or other former French colonies in Asia or the Pacific, generally ally with the French.

The settlers — rallied behind the local Gaullist party — are determined to keep the islands French.

The French socialist weekly Lutte Ouvrière explains the issues:

"The problem in New Caledonia is above all that a half of the population, the half whose country it originally was, have been relegated to the poorest

regions of the territory.

24,000 Kanak peasants have to share 163,000 hectares of the worst land, while 2,500 white farmers have 400,000 hectares. The Kanaks do the heaviest jobs in the nickel mines (the islands' main wealth), while all the profits go into the pockets of the settlers.

Understanding between the two communities is impossible without, as a precondition, a real social revolution in the islands, which will break the privileges of the settlers.

Such a revolution would at the same time break the privileges, smaller but nonetheless real, of the Kanak bigwigs and middle class..."

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CPSA claim

A 35 hour week now!

THIS Thursday (December 6) the largest civil service union — CPSA — is holding a special conference to decide on its pay claim for 1985, and the strategy needed to win it.

Looking at the 400 motions submitted, CPSA seems set to confirm a policy of a flat-rate increase of £15 a week, with a minimum weekly wage of £100. More contentious will be the question of whether or not to add to this two items that are already union policy on paper — the 35 hour week and six weeks' annual leave.

The majority on the National Executive Committee are arguing against the inclusion of these claims. Politically this majority represents those who recently left the Broad Left to form a new organisation (Broad Left '84), i.e. the Communist Party and 'soft' Labour Left.

Those who have remained in the original Broad Left are fighting to include hours and annual leave in the claim. Otherwise, these items are

likely to remain as meaningless 'policy' for years.

The Executive argues correctly that all-out strike action will be necessary to win the claim. The 1981 Pay Campaign of selective strike action, which lasted 21 weeks and achieved next to nothing, still leaves a bitter taste in the mouths of most activists.

Previous campaigns have also been bogged down by consensus at all costs with the other unions in the Coun-

cil of Civil Service Unions — which are largely for managerial and professional grades.

CPSA claims such as a flat-rate increase rather than a percentage rise tend to go out of the window.

CPSA should encourage all possible unity in action, but not at the expense of a serious campaign for low-paid workers. We should aim for a wider alliance with other public sector unions outside the civil service, and try to coor-

dinate industrial action. Such links should be built at the local, as well as the national level.

This is the kind of alliance that could shake a government that has already stated its intention to keep civil service pay increases down to 3% in 1985.

For too many years, CPSA members have had pathetic pay increases forced on them. Now is the time to turn the tide.

Vote yes for the miners

BY December 14, members of the civil service union CPSA will have voted in the National Executive Committee's consultation exercise on support for the miners.

The leadership is recommending members to vote for the union to offer the NUM an interest-free loan of £100,000, plus donations "in a form that will avoid sequestration by the courts" of

£5000 each month.

In May, CPSA conference voted to support the miners' strike, and a left-wing dominated Executive Committee was elected.

A donation of £25,000 was made to the NUM, but this led to a backlash in some areas, with members leaving the union in protest.

The backlash made many of the leaders jittery about

further financial support.

But a yes vote cannot be the end of the matter. Activity in support of the miners must be stepped up across the union at all levels. Many branches have been very successful in collecting money and food: now we must mobilise members to visit mining communities and picket lines.

Full-timer sinks rail strike

"WE strongly condemn the people who are leading this unofficial action. They claim to be representing the union. They represent only themselves. The sooner they get back to work the better".

This was National Union of Railwaymen full-timer Andy Barr's verdict on the recent strike by members of the Transport Salaried Staffs Association (TSSA) and the NUR on the North Clyde Helensburgh to Airdrie line, near Glasgow.

Aidan O'Donnell, a member of the North Clyde Action Committee which led the strike, spoke to Socialist Organiser about the background to the dispute and its outcome:

"In June of last year the Highways and Transportation Committee of Strathclyde Regional Council produced a document proposing certain experiments to reduce the running costs of the rail network.

One of these experiments involved de-staffing stations on Sundays and using ticket-machines instead. But this was the thin end of the wedge: in the long run it would lead to all suburban stations being de-

By Stan Crooke

staffed completely, and inevitably to redundancies.

We called a one-day strike on the Friday (November 16), as a pre-emptive strike to show the extent of opposition. The following day management started visiting stations to issue the ticket machines. When our members refused to sign for the machines they were sent home.

As soon as word about the suspensions got round the other stations, the staff there also immediately walked out. On the North Clyde line as a whole, 200 of the station staff were on strike, and 100 guards came out on strike in sympathy as well.

The real damage to our strike was done the day Barr's attack appeared in the Evening Times. Our people have not got a great tradition of militancy and when they saw they were not getting support from their own unions they began to swither.

Barry Watson, a TSSA official, was also quoted as criticising us. He says that he was mis-quoted. But Barr still stands by his position.

'Communist Manifesto' of Marx and Engels, beforehand, and then discussed how to present an educational on these pamphlets — what points to emphasise, what questions to bring up, how to make educational real discussions rather than lectures.

In the practical sessions comrades learned some layout techniques and everyone had a go at speaking to a street meeting.

To help comrades to learn to write for the paper, everyone interviewed Socialist Students in NOLS organiser Dave Brennan about the student grants cuts and wrote an article. Then we went through the articles we had written.

Finally we discussed estate sales and went out and did one, selling 22 papers in half an hour.

By the end of the week we were afraid that the strike might collapse, given Barr's statement and its effects. So we thought it best to go back rather than see the strike collapse and a small minority left isolated.

We demanded that the suspension of nine of our members be lifted before talks began again with management. But they refused to lift the suspen-

sions until we agreed to the Sunday de-staffing "experiment", which is what finally happened.

The next stage will be total de-staffing of the Carntyne-Coatdyke section of the line, as another "experiment". The TSSA instruction not to cooperate with the scheme still stands, so the whole issue is still far from settled."

Homeless occupy Town Hall

By councillor Susan Carlyle

CAMDEN Town Hall in London is being occupied by homeless families demanding immediate re-housing from 'death-trap' hostels or hotels.

The occupation follows the death of a Bengali mother and her two children in a fire at a hostel.

Survivors from the fire say that management negligence made the hostel a fire trap. There were several incidents of fire only days before the tragedy, yet the fire alarm had been turned off; fire extinguishers were empty; fire exits were blocked with builders' ladders and stairs were unlit.

The hostel has never been issued a fire certificate.

The families are demanding:

*A public inquiry into the circumstances of the death of Mrs Karim and her children.

*That Mr Karim be substantially compensated for the suffering caused by the death of his wife and children.

*That disciplinary action be taken against the senior management found responsible for negligence.

*That all families in these death trap hostels be moved immediately to property in Camden's own housing stock of an adequate standard and appropriate to the needs of each family.

*That all homeless families be moved from bed and breakfast accommodations within six months.

The Labour council has responded by making bland promises, trying to blame NALGO workers recently on strike, and on one occasion calling the police.

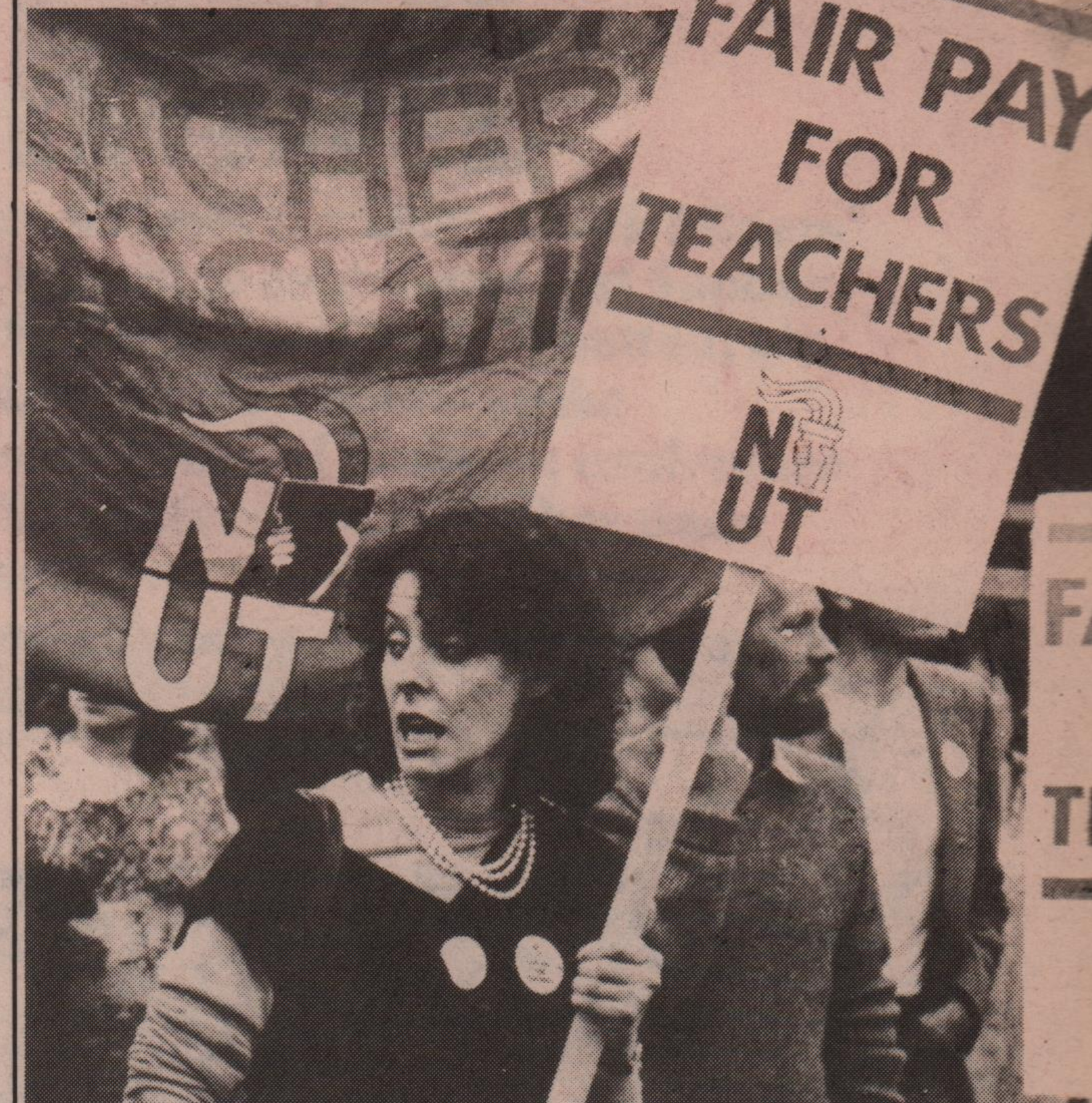
It's another proof how left wing administrations can set up paper policies, and local government machinery with race units and monitoring, but don't fundamentally support black people taking a stand for their basic rights.

Only Camden's Labour Council can retrieve those other families from the danger of living in those slums by improving and extending their accommodation and housing all homeless people adequately. They can't fight rate-capping and rally support until they give decent treatment to their homeless people, the majority of them black, on whom they will increasingly depend for votes.

Even worse, the local Labour Party activists have mostly done little to help build and support the occupation.

As long as Labour General Committees endorse or condone racist practices by councils, no blacks will look to the Labour Party.

Letter



Teachers north and south of the border are supporting the demand for a £1200 increase.

Pay review or straight claim?

I do not intend to take up the curious logic which allows Ian McCalman to (reasonably accurately) dismiss SWP teachers in Scotland, as "marginal" one minute and then devote nearly two-thirds of his report on the teachers' pay campaign to an attack on them.

Instead, I would like to take up his position on the EIS (the main Scottish teachers' union) claim for an "independent pay review".

Ian, as part of the Glasgow based Campaign for a Fighting Union, of which he is a leading member, has declared his support for the official union demand for an independent pay review. In this, he stands in opposition to the demand for £1200 on the basic scales being put forward, not just by the SWP (which he mentions) but also Rank and File Teachers — the main East Coast left teachers grouping, and the NUT in England and Wales.

Illusions

In calling for a pay review instead of a straight claim, the EIS's right wing leadership clearly sow illusions in the ability of such bodies to serve the interests of teachers, or any workers for that matter.

Certainly, such a review would not be independent or fair — look at what happened to the nurses.

An insight into what the management input into such a review would be can be gained by looking at the situation in England and Wales. There, a management review has come up with the proposal that every teacher should be subject to an annual assessment of his or her suitability by his or her head-teacher. (And in case the head-teacher is too sympathetic, there would be an additional assessment by the education authority every third year).

Pious union claims that "no deals on conditions will be countenanced" ring hollow in the ears of those members who have watched conditions deteriorate over the past few years.

"The employers would be under a moral obligation to accept the decision of such an independent pay review body," say the leadership. Wonderful — but by the same token, so would we.

We cannot place our

future wage levels in the hands of such an unaccountable committee.

At the time of writing, George Younger, Secretary of State for Scotland, has still not pronounced on the call for a pay review. Almost certainly he will say no. (God forbid that he says yes, because if he does then all the current teachers action will be suspended indefinitely while we sit around waiting).

If he says no, then CAFU should use the opportunity to immediately change its line to straight support for a united cash claim in line with English and Welsh teachers.

Action has already started and should therefore continue on the grounds that this is a catching up exercise and there is no need to wait for the April settlement date.

If Younger does say yes, (possibly with conditions attached), then CAFU, as the left group with the greatest credibility in the West of Scotland will bear a great deal of responsibility for having backed the leadership's conducted tour of the garden path.

One final point on the SWP teachers. I can understand Ian's deep suspicion of the SWP teachers as they suddenly emerge from the woodwork after their long hibernation.

Edinburgh

In Edinburgh they have found themselves in an absurdly illogical position. When they left Rank and File Teacher at the start of their "turn", they said it was because R&F (which they had originally set up) had become a hollow shell which would collapse without them.

In the last few weeks — still claiming their line hasn't changed — they have rejoined it (yes, it didn't collapse) because it is a genuine broad front.

But if Ian wants to criticise their inconsistencies he should guard against his own. In his report he tells of CAFU's willingness to cooperate with the SWP. Yet he has recently been trying to exclude them from the organisation of a Scottish left teachers' conference.

If they are as marginal as both he and I believe then what is the point of putting all this effort into attacking them?

Callum MacRae

Socialist Organiser

FIFTEEN comrades came down to London for a Socialist Organiser activists' school last week-end.

It was the first of a series which will help comrades to learn more about the politics of Socialist Organiser and some practical skills.

We discussed the history of Socialist Organiser in the context of the whole history of Trotskyism internationally and in Britain.

Educational materials were available on basic Marxist economics, Trotsky's theory of 'permanent revolution', the Left Opposition and Stalinism.

We also had a session on how to give an educational. Comrades read either Lenin's 'State and Revolution', or the

Socialist Organiser

Jailed for shouting 'scab'

Jenny Dennis from Kiveton Park, South Yorkshire, told Judith Bonner about an unprecedented attack by magistrates on a witness.

A Rotherham stipendiary magistrate has sentenced Derek McVann to be bound over to keep the peace for 12 months for £250 or a

six-month sentence.

Derek, a miner from Rawmarsh, appeared in court as a witness. The magistrate asked him why he was at Kiveton. He replied "to picket".

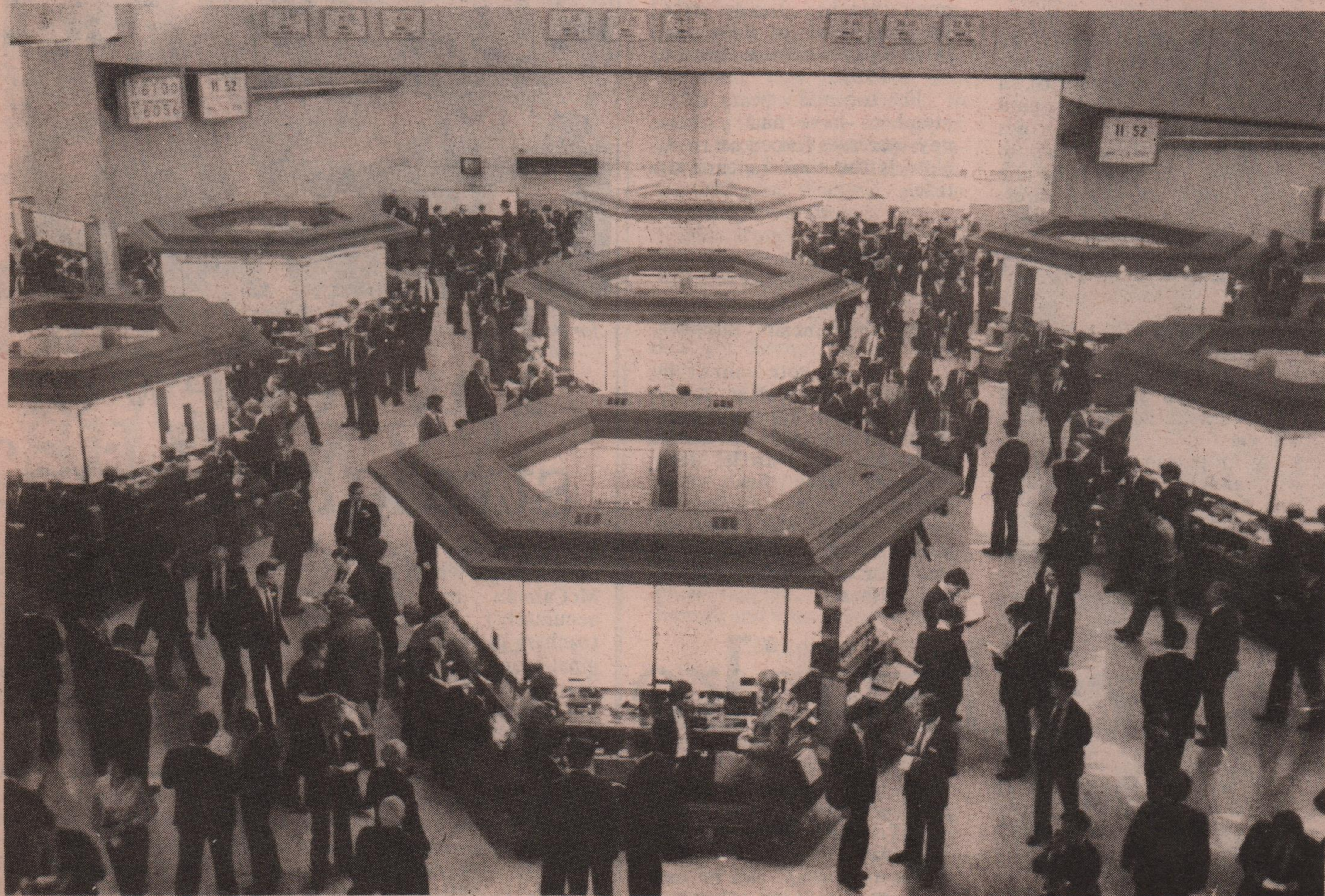
"And what were you intending to do?"

"I intended to shout 'scab' when the van went past."

With no further questioning, the magistrate bound Derek over!

He was not charged, and he has no right of appeal.

This means that a precedent has been set to intimidate witnesses who help to defend pickets.



City bankers have made £180 million on the sale of BT. Photo: John Harris

An early Christmas for the City spivs

THE City of London is getting its Christmas presents early.

British Telecom shares opened on Monday over 80% above their offer price. Even though City speculators who were too greedy and tried to buy over £100,000 worth of shares did not receive any, many were more cunning and put in multiple applications, not in their own names but in those of friends and relatives. They have made thousands of pounds profit.

The issue has brought quick gains not only to those who bought shares, but also to the City institutions, principally the merchant bankers, and contributed thousands to the Tory Party last year.

£52 million has been paid in commission and £22 million for underwriting the issue. This includes an unprecedented 2% commission. Normally it is 1¼%. In total it is estimated that the issue will have cost £180 million,

including £17.5 million in advertising.

The Tories claim that the BT privatisation heralds the start of a share-holding, property-owning "democracy".

But how many of the two million shareholders come from the working class or the unemployed? This issue has benefited the upper and middle classes. It is a payment for "services rendered" in voting for a Tory government.

It must also be remembered that only 47% of the shares have been issued to individuals. The balance has been sold to the big City institutions and overseas investors.

The attitude of the Labour leadership to the issue has been inadequate, to say the least.

The only effective policy would be one based on the promise of renationalisation with no compensation, and a call on the trade unions in the industry to create conditions which at least put a doubt in the minds of speculators.

Once in power the Labour Party must ensure that nationalisation is based on workers' control, not the old bureaucratic state corporation, distant from the workers in the industry and working people in general.

Once workers really feel that they control their own industry and have the full benefits of their production it will be impossible for the Tories even to consider privatisation without fearing a considerable backlash from workers in the industry.

Fund emergency!

Our £800 emergency appeal is still dragging out. We need another £59.32.

Thanks this week to Mike Burton £5; SE London reader £10; Jim Denham £12.95; Penny Campbell £6.05; Ian McCalman £10.

Send money to Socialist Organiser, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

Accountants embarrass NCB

THE Coal Board's arguments about 'uneconomic pits' are "fundamentally flawed". That is the verdict of an article in 'Accountancy' magazine.

The article is so devastating that the Coal Board went berserk and forced the magazine to postpone the article from the December issue to January.

However, Socialist Organiser has a copy of the article. It argues that the standard accounting statement for pits, called the 'F23', "may be used for control purposes but does not provide a sensible basis for pit closure decisions or public debate on them."

Unreliability

Reasons for the unreliability of F23 include:

*Inter-pricing between the coal, oil, gas, the CEBG and other nationalised industries means that "there are major problems in determining a fair and reasonable figure for proceeds for the NCB, and individual collieries in particular".

*The F23 is "an historic account". It predicts future capacity, costs and net cash flows. "Inevitably such estimates rely on judgements and

are capable of being challenged" - but the NCB has not produced its estimates for public scrutiny.

NCB statements that pits are 'uneconomic' are often 'self-fulfilling prophecies', because the 'uneconomic' pits don't get investment and thus become economic.

Difficulty

The article concludes by noting "the difficulty of informed public debate about pit closures on 'uneconomic grounds'. The question remains about how 'uneconomic' is defined, from what perspective, and over what period".



MacGregor: embarrassed

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