

Socialist Organiser

Murray gets his reward...

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LORD SCAB

Len Murray is going to the House of Lords. Harold Jones is in Armley prison.

Harold Jones is one of 9,000 miners arrested during the strike, and hundreds in prison. Len Murray... well, let him speak for himself.

"I was not looking for this or hoping for this - but I wasn't surprised when it came. It's just one of these things that happen".

Len Murray has been made a Lord, alongside Frank Chapple, for services to the Tory government - for his blatant betrayal of ASLEF and the NGA, and his more subtle treachery to the health workers, the GCHQ workers and the miners.

Harold Jones has been jailed for being a loyal trade

unionist and getting in the way of the police.

Lions led by donkeys? At least the First World War generals who got called 'donkeys' did not accept decorations from the other side in the midst of the battle!

Now Len Murray's successor, Norman Willis, is well on course for the House of Lords himself - mouthing words of sympathy for miners like Harold Jones while doing nothing to deliver the solid-

arity promised by TUC congress decisions.

On Wednesday December 19 the TUC General Council met to consider its response to the legal offensive against the miners' union, and in particular the appointment of a receiver to take control of the NUM's finances.

Arthur Scargill had called for "the most massive mobilisation of industrial action, our movement has ever known". The TUC leaders

called no action at all.

The only action was when the police cleared a lobby from the Mineworkers Defence Committee off the steps of Congress House.

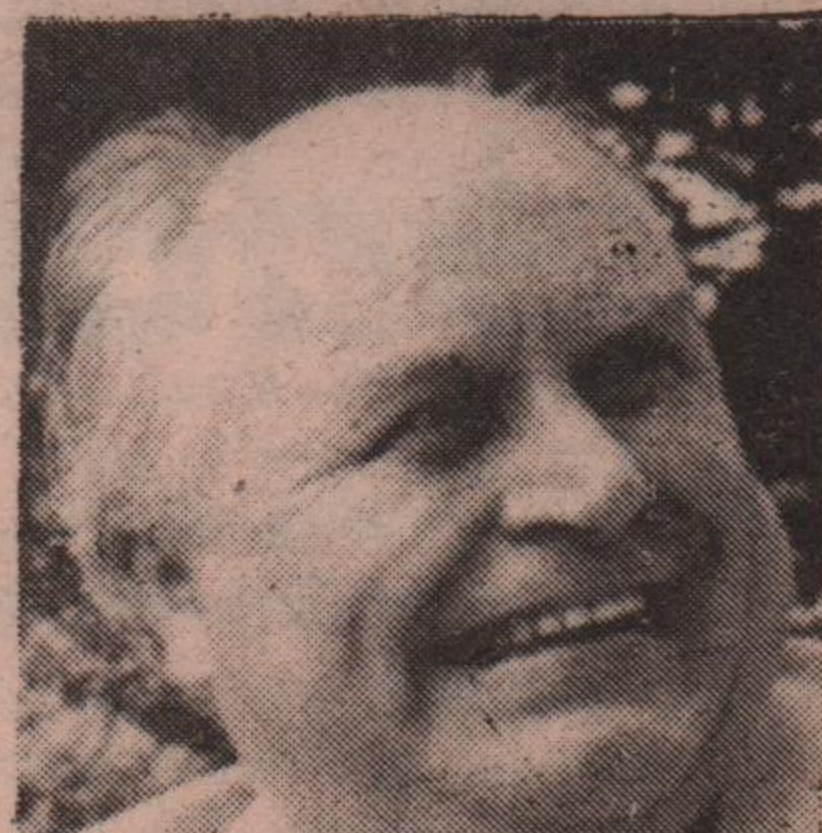
Is it worth bothering with such cowards and traitors? The answer is yes - because they still have authority with many workers.

It is often difficult to remember that these same cowards and traitors called a General Strike 12½ years ago. Of course, that only happened after 300,000 workers had come out because five dockers were put in jail - but it happened and it was enough to get the Tories to surrender.

The TUC leaders did it because they were pushed, and because they were frightened of losing control. They can be pushed again.

Continued back page.

And will Norman Willis make it as Baron Traitor of Corton- wood?



STEFANO CAGNONI (IFL)

... miners get jail!

Sheila Jones's husband Harold was arrested after police invaded their village - Frickley, Yorkshire - to get scabs into the pit on November 3.

Once the clashes between police and pickets had died down, the police started arrests, apparently picking up anyone in sight.

Harold, with two others, was taken to the pit office. They were laid face down and

beaten with truncheons - one of the miners being knocked unconscious as the pit manager watched laughing.

Harold was beaten until he 'confessed' to possessing a petrol bomb - even though no such bombs had been seen in the village.

Later, at Pontefract Hospital, he had to have stitches in wounds on his head. He also had black eyes and heavy

bruising.

Harold had been a regular picket for over nine months. He has never been in trouble with the law before, and says that he is completely innocent.

Send messages of support to Harold Jones, 677335 A2-14, HM Prison, Armley, Leeds.

Photo and story by John Harris (IFL).



Sheila Jones

Labour Party Benn for leader!

By John Bloxam

15 months ago the Labour Party conference elected the so-called dream ticket of Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley to the leadership.

Socialist Organiser's headline that week was 'Not Our Dream'. But as we sold the paper at Labour Party conference delegates cursed us or hurried past silently.

Why were we so critical and pessimistic? Why couldn't we believe that the new leadership would unite the Labour Party and restore its fortunes?

Dozens of the most left-wing Constituency Labour Parties, all across the country had voted for Kinnock.

Now it is different. Striking miners everywhere curse Neil Kinnock as a two-faced windbag. Many of the same Constituency Labour Parties that voted for Kinnock in 1982 have now passed resolutions roundly condemning him.

Beside his role in the miners' strike, Neil Kinnock now appears clearly as an ally of the right wing in the Labour Party and as the prospective leader of a new witch hunt.

At the 2000 strong Mineworkers' Defence Conference on December 2 every reference to ditching Kinnock was greeted with loud applause.

Through long and hectic struggles the Left in the Labour Party won yearly elections for the leadership. There was no point winning this mechanism if it was not going to be used.

It is high time for the Left

to start organising a challenge to Kinnock's leadership.

The obvious candidate against Neil Kinnock is Tony Benn. He has been forthright in support of the miners, a regular figure on the picket lines. Over the last five years he has established himself as the chief standard bearer of the Labour Left. His challenge to Denis Healey for the deputy leadership paved the way for what needs to be done now.

Benn or another - there must be an alternative candidate. If the Left fails to

put forward an alternative now we will be letting down all the striking miners who have joined the Labour Party with contempt for Kinnock but an understanding that he must be dealt with not by distant curses but face-to-face within the Party.

We will be letting down all the other trade unionists who have acted to support the miners, understanding that trade unionism is not about mapping individual paths to the House of Lords but about class solidarity. We will be letting down

the rank and file Labour Party activists who have worked hard to raise funds and other support for the miners, only to find their efforts countered each evening by what their own leaders say on the television.

CLPs, trade union branches and especially NUM branches, should write to Tony Benn and to the Campaign Group of MPs calling for a challenge to Kinnock. And the Labour Left should get together urgently to discuss how a challenge can be organised.



A beggar in India

Aid used as political weapon

By Clive Bradley

THE total flow of aid from the rich capitalist countries to the Third World is declining. At a time when vast areas of the world are suffering from terrible famine, aid is being cut.

The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (the most industrialised capitalist countries) last year decreased its net official aid to \$27.5 billion from \$27.7 billion the year before.

Aid represented 0.36% of total gross national product of DAC members.

It may not seem a large drop (though it is \$200 million). But it is part of an overall trend in declining aid.

UK aid to development has dropped from \$2.19 billion in 1981 to \$1.6 billion in 1983. The US contribution has also fallen, though not as dramatically (in fact in 1981-2 it rose, but has since fallen). US aid now equals 0.24% of GNP, whilst UK aid now equals 0.35%.

From the point of view of the big capitalist powers, aid is an expense that cannot be afforded in times of recession - unless financial or political gain can be made from it.

And the current famines, especially in Africa, are proving politically extremely valuable to Western capitalism.

The World Bank has set up a

special 'facility' for aid to Africa (which they are having difficulty in getting the US or Britain to agree to). According to the Financial Times, the Bank expects some African countries to quickly agree to new programmes coming from this 'facility', and "they hope that successful results in a few countries would rapidly demonstrate the benefits of market-oriented reforms and would encourage others to apply for the bank's aid and policy advice" (FT, December 4).

One country they hope to be convinced by the success of a pro-Western economic programme is Ethiopia.

And the famine in Africa is having an effect on the politics of African states desperate for aid from Western governments.

In the United Nations General Assembly, African representatives have been seriously moderating their declarations and votes.

A detailed declaration on Africa's crisis, agreed by African representatives, omitted usual references to Western blame and accepted "the primary responsibility...for addressing the present crisis".

Also, a number of African delegates have distanced themselves from resolutions that attacked the US by name, and even resolutions on southern Africa have been modified.

Famine is politically useful for the big capitalist powers.

A miner in Belfast

By Allan Thomas,
(South Wales NUM)

I WAS especially pleased to hear the news that the "supergrass" system in Northern Ireland has been blown apart, because I have seen for myself just what a travesty of justice these trials can be.

Together with Dave Brooks, a delegate from Birmingham Trades Council, I attended the Raymond Gilmore supergrass trial at Crumlin Road Court-house. On Gilmore's sole, uncorroborated evidence rested the freedom of thirty-five Derry men and women.

There was an overwhelming presence of some 50 heavily-armed RUC men and prison officers surrounding the spectators, families and friends alike. Gilmore's evidence was completely contradictory, and whenever he was put under any

pressure from the defence counsel, he was taken under Lord Chief Justice Lowry's wing, and allowed to compose himself and put his act back together. The whole affair was a complete farce and for myself, I wouldn't believe Gilmore if he told me the time of day.

The comparisons that can be drawn between the miners' present struggle and the Irish republicans' fight for freedom are not just the obvious ones of police methods, weaponry and tactics: our Irish friends also pointed out the similarity between the way Thatcher callously allowed the Long Kesh hunger strikers to starve to death, just as she is now prepared to let the miners and their families starve if needs be.

I like to think that our presence at the Gilmore trial may have helped in some way to see that justice was done and to smash the whole evil "supergrass" system.



On the women's demonstration in Cardiff, December 8. Photo: Martin Shakeshaft.

Time to fight rail closures

By Rob Dawber (Sheffield NUR District Council, in personal capacity).

the pressure against them. Two more of the workers have recently been given disciplinary notices on charge-

Coalville NUR appeal

From Roy Butlin, secretary Coalville NUR.

ON JANUARY 8 the Rail Federation (NUR/ASLEF) will be having a meeting at Unity House [Euston Road, London NW1] at 14.30 hours.

Owing to the critical situation which has developed at Coalville, we are calling for a lobby at this meeting by NUR and ASLEF members at 14.00.

On December 17 management [at Coalville], using every dirty trick in the book, started to move two coal trains a day. Obviously when the pits reopen on January 7 after the Christmas break the pressure on us will be redoubled.

There are also reports in the papers that they hope to break the back of the secondary action by railway workers who refuse to move coal trains.

The railwaymen willing to move coal trains at Coalville are a small minority. The majority of us stand firm in support of the miners and

are loyal to Federation instructions, in spite of the daily pressure which we are subjected to.

Management were only able to move coal trains by bringing in signalmen who are from outside the area and who are not members of Coalville NUR. They have filled the town with police...

The aim behind the lobby is constructive, to ask the Rail Federation to call for immediate national industrial action. We would like the following demands to be put to the British Rail Board.

1. No movement of coal trains.
 2. For the right of Coalville men to sign on and be given alternative work.
 3. No more scab labour at Coalville - withdraw the signalmen who come from outside.
 4. No more victimisations - reinstate the Coalville signalman who was suspended and demoted...
- Please make your support for our action known to your National Executive, your District Council, and the Federation meeting on the 8th.

es of theft supposed to date from December 1982! One has been accused of stealing three cloths, the other, one cloth and two used batteries. Last September three others faced similar petty theft charges after police raided their homes.

Leaflets from the scab union, the 'Federation of Professional Railway Servants', have been pushed through rail workers' doors, and it seems pretty clear that management supplied the addresses.

Management have also victimised a signalman who recently decided to refuse to signal coal trains. He has been told that he is 'mentally unstable', and offered a job sweeping platforms 17 miles from his home depot.

According to the Guardian "The government is preparing to have its next set-piece

struggle with the trade unions in the railway industry once the miners' strike is out of the way...

"A combination of the increased impact of the miners' strike on the railways and the approach of pay negotiations is beginning to stiffen the backs of rail management. It has been decided to take a harder approach in the New Year with railway workers who refuse to move coal trains..."

Three times already during the miners' strike, opportunities have been passed up by the NUR and ASLEF leaders to come out alongside the NUM. We would be stronger together if we came out now for a withdrawal of the railway closure plan, rather than let the government pick the best time for itself.

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Strikers and families queuing for food parcels near Doncaster. Photo: John Harris, IFL

Stand firm with NUM

The most important development over the last couple of weeks is the decisions by the Notts Area Council.

They've really gone beyond the pale now.

It remains to be seen what action the national union is prepared to take against them, but to my mind there is nothing they can do except expel the Notts Area from the NUM.

We have to ensure that those who have remained loyal to the NUM in Notts are not forsaken and not forgotten. They've shown a tremendous loyalty to the national union. We would expect that loyalty to be repaid.

As regards the overtime ban — it was fully debated inside all the branches in Notts, and a decision was taken to uphold it. They mandated their delegates to the special NUM conference which imposed the overtime ban. The only people who can lift it are those who imposed it — a special delegate conference.

A lot of the lads in Notts are wearing badges: 'Rule 51, expel the scabs' Obviously it is a tactical thing, a question of timing — but for a long time our lads have been look-

Paul Whetton's diary

ing for heads on plates. I don't think the national union has now got any option.

Christmas went off with a swing for the strikers in Notts, thanks to the solidarity shown by rank and file workers in this country and internationally. We got a massive convoy of toys from the CGT in France and donations from Belgium and other countries, which made sure that the miners have had something like a reasonable Christmas.

Tories

The kids are quite pleased with the toys.

But having said that — we're still in the middle of an industrial dispute, and that dispute has got to be won.

Other sectors have got to come in with the National Union of Mineworkers. The rank and file have got to come in. This is a political onslaught against the trade union movement.

The TUC chiefs are going to try to smother everything.

We've got to get out and get to the rank and file of all the other trade unions.

The TUC have done a pretty good job of smothering the action, and yet it still keeps happening. And every day brings about more politicisation. Sooner or later the truth is going to dawn on workers in other industries, and I hope we'll be able to appeal over the heads of the TUC leaders to the rank and file.

There's a whole new round of pay talks coming up. All the workers who are in the pipeline for a pay rise are surely going to realise that now is their golden opportunity. They can virtually ask for anything, and the government has got two options — it either pays them, or it fights them. And the government can't afford to fight on several fronts.

Stewards

I would hope that the shop stewards' movement, the backbone of the working class, are going to realise that and will really put the pressure on.

On the idea of the NUM calling for a one-day general strike to try to push the other unions into action, I'm not sure. It's a hell of a gamble.

I don't like the idea of calling a 24 hour strike anyway. If you can raise the consciousness of workers to come out, then you should keep them out. To call them out, and then 24 hours later to tell them to go back — to me that seems counter-productive.

Also, a call for a strike could rebound on the NUM if the NUM itself called it. If the call came from other

sectors we would have a better chance.

For the NUM to call a one-day general strike would be the last card. It always is the last card in a shop steward's or a branch secretary's hand — if you call a strike and nobody answers, then you've played your last card.

As regards Neil Kinnock — I suppose we're in a very luxurious position. Before we have always had to put our Labour leaders into government before we found out exactly where they are at. But this time Kinnock has been put to the test and found wanting very early on.

Kinnock

Quite large sections in the Labour Party are now saying: If Kinnock behaves like this in a miners' dispute, how far can we trust him if we put him into No.10?

Certainly he should be challenged for the leadership this year. We need someone we can put our faith in. Whether Tony Benn is the right candidate, I don't know.

But for the next month the message is: keep faith, stick with the national union. Having stuck it this far, we've got everything to gain and nothing to lose by standing firm.

Money is very tight now. We managed to get enough funds to carry us over the Christmas period, but obviously now there's going to be a dip.

We've got to redouble our efforts to make sure that we've got sufficient funds to carry the fight on — to send the pickets out to power stations and pits and other points.

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

Power cuts

ENERGY minister Peter Walker claims that there will be no power cuts in 1985.

But if the Tories are so sure, why are they still preventing the normal publication of Central Electricity Generating Board figures? Are they frightened that the figures would be 'useful to the enemy'?

Even if all the Trent power stations worked full blast (without shutdowns) throughout the winter, they provide less than 50 per cent of power for the national grid. At the other main stations, solidarity action by workers inside has reduced stocks and use of coal to a low level. The longer the winter goes on, the more effect this action will have.

Already West Thurrock and Bold power stations are out of action. Drax power station has been stopped because the coal pulverisers were put out of action by rock mixed in with the coal.

Steel workers have been ordered to cut down on high energy consuming machinery during peak electricity-use times (4.30pm to 7.30pm).

The nuclear power stations are now at the end of their legal run before shutdowns for main-

Back the miners



tenance are required.

Voltage reductions have already taken place in key industrial areas, and the Post Office Engineering Union reports that British Telecom have installed stand-by generators to maintain power.

Peter Walker boasted that the government was planning to reduce the amount of oil-burn. What he didn't mention was that the oil burn is now running at over double the theoretical capacity of the existing stations.

And now cold weather has arrived, at a time when there has been no scab coal production over two weeks at Christmas.

The government is aiming to break the strike before the effects on the power stations become apparent. But they probably have very little time to do it — and very little chance of doing it!

The best immediate reply to Walker's claim would be a round of mass pickets on the power stations.

MDC in Scotland

A well-attended public meeting held in Glasgow at the close of 1984, addressed by miners from Valleyfield (Fife) and Muirkirk (Ayrshire), agreed to try to build the Mineworkers' Defence Committee (MDC) in Glasgow.

The meeting had been organised by a number of the local miners' support groups already active in Glasgow. Many of their members are sickened by the limitations imposed upon effective solidarity work by the local labour movement bureaucracy and the NUM Scottish Executive itself.

The Kinnockite/careerists-controlled Glasgow District Labour Party has passed a witch-hunting resolution opposing the establishment of independent local miners' support groups.

The Communist Party-dominated NUM Scottish Executive is opposed to twinning, refuses to call for support for picketing from outside of the NUM, and refuses to call pickets of miners' trials — in case it would appear to be trying to influence the course of "justice"!

Many of the contributions at the public meeting, from both the platform and the floor, were about the need to escalate the level of support for the miners' fight above the rock-bottom level to which the bureaucracy seeks to pin it.

In particular, picketing to prevent the movement of scab coal was emphasised: half a million tonnes of coal is stockpiled in Ayrshire alone, whilst the Longannet power station

(the largest in Britain) will soon have exhausted its reserves.

Building the MDC in Glasgow and the West of Scotland can play a crucial role, both in providing a basis for co-ordination between the different local groups and also in raising the level of effective solidarity work. But the problems that will be faced in attempting to win support for the MDC and its demands in the local labour movement should not be underestimated.

The next meeting to plan building the MDC in Glasgow/West of Scotland is: Wednesday, January 9, at 7.30 p.m., AUEW Halls, West Regent Street, Glasgow.

Mineworkers' Defence Committee

Second conference scheduled for February: precise date and place not yet fixed. Watch out for details

Broad Lefts Organising Committee

Conference: March 23, at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester

Each trade union organisation or National Broad Left can send up to four delegates. Fee £3 per delegate to George Williamson, 11 Sutton Place, London E9 6EB

Get your Labour Party or union branch to sponsor the Mineworkers' Defence Committee and subscribe to its bulletin.

Send this form below to: Jane Stockton, 31 Cranwich Road, London N16.

Name

Organisation

Address

Enclosed £. . . (£5 organisations and waged individuals, £2 unwaged).

Notts strikers need money

Send money or invitations for fund-raising visits to the Notts Miners Rank and File Strike Committees.

North Notts. Strike Centre, Ollerton Miners' Welfare, Ollerton, Notts.

South Notts. Miners' Strike Centre, c/o AUEW, 218 Mansfield Road, Nottingham.



NHS workers' pay battle, 1982

Wage battles looming

By Nathan Jones

WHILE the miners' fight continues, a number of important groups of workers are coming up for their annual wage review.

Civil servants in the CPSA have claimed £15 increase from April 1. Scottish teachers are already taking action over pay (see page 11).

NHS workers are also due for an increase from April 1; local government manual workers have still not settled an annual review due on November 4.

Wage settlements at the end of 1984 were up on the previous year. In the private sector, for the period August-November, settlements moved up from 5.93% in 1983-4, to 7.5%. (These are figures 'weighted' by the size of settlement).

The public sector enjoyed

much less of an increase — in September it had the grand total of 0.0%. But these figures are distorted by peculiar features of the police pay settlement which bring down the average.

The 'weighted' figures for the 1984-5 pay round are dominated by some big settlements in November: Vauxhall (7.95%); Securicor, Jaguar and Amersham International (7.5%).

In the private sector, there seems to have been a consistent increase since May.

Settlements in engineering are up slightly on last year (from 5.3% to 5.42%). In chemical companies, and food and drink companies, increases have averaged the same as last year (6% and 6.8%).

(Information from Labour Research Department).

Notts moves for breakaway

By Gerry Bates

JUST BEFORE Christmas the Notts NUM Area Council voted 27 to 4 for rule changes which mean starting to organise a breakaway company union in the Area. Leicestershire and other scabbing Areas have already indicated that they might follow suit.

The Area Council also voted to 'dissociate' itself from the Working Miners' Committees, and to postpone lifting the overtime ban pending more 'branch consultations' in January. But these votes are little more than a smokescreen for the breakaway.

The scabs admitted at the meeting that they don't need the Working Miners' Committees any more. That organisation's open links with the Tories and the Coal Board are an embarrassment.

The scabs are on course to form a breakaway union like the 'Spencer Union' formed after 1926. This is not so much a blow against the strike — the scabs did their worst when they crossed the picket lines — as against the future strength of the NUM.

To have a separate, strike-breaking union in the second

largest coalfield is a gift to the bosses. Last time it happened, it took many years to break.

Can the breakaway be stopped at this late hour? Any hope rests on the fact that many rank and file scabs retain some loyalty to the national union, and don't want a separate union. (That's why the scab leaders pretend they aren't after a breakaway).

A sharp move to discipline the leading scabs combined with a direct appeal to the rank and file by the national union — backing up the appeal already made by the Notts strikers — could divide the scabs and force them to draw back. It's a long shot, but there is no other way.

The High Court refused to grant the NUM an injunction against the Notts Area Council meeting. This could have been expected. It showed once again what has been clear right throughout the strike — that the judges' bench (like the police and every other part of the state machine) is controlled and run by our bitter class enemies, who are neither going to help us nor give us any justice.

The only justice and help we can get is what we organise ourselves, in our own movement.

Miners' defence ctee plans Feb conference

By John Bloxam

"Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way, I'd rather be a picket than a scab on Christmas Day".

That was the strikers' reply to the Tories' boast that at least half of the miners would be scabbing by Christmas.

The Coal Board played on fears of an impoverished Christmas to drive strikers back to work. For the overwhelming majority of strikers and their families it failed — because of their own determination and the determination of workers both in Britain and abroad — the food convoys, the present for every child and the Christmas parties.

Now the Coal Board and Tories will try again, with the government's confident predictions about no power cuts and the NCB's new series of advertisements in the press promising large money payments again.

But Peter Heathfield pointed out that all this is only more of the same for the strikers: "I don't see the drip even turning into a trickle, and I think the majority of miners will stay out on strike."

When the Tories dug out the "Queen's Remembrancer" before Christmas, to side-step a major clash with the TGWU over sequestration, it was a sign of their fear of a second front. They still aren't using their own industrial legislation against the NUM, and they continue to rely on the scabs to conduct the legal attack.

Meetings

They haven't been able to cripple either the strikers or the NUM financially, and there is little prospect of them doing so. The sequestration has tremendous implications for trade union rights, but is in no sense decisive for the strike.

Also, each new series of newspaper advertisements and individual letters to selected strikers, each new promise of money to be gained by scabbing, carries less credibility than the previous ones. The Tories must know that, with the first power cut, their case will collapse like a pack of cards.

The Tories are worried about the huge financial and political costs of the strike. And those costs could quickly become overwhelming if solidarity action becomes widespread, or if a second front is opened up.

One of the main weapons the NUM leadership used against the pre-Christmas offensive was a series of national rallies and meetings in the mining communities. More than the rallies, the meetings in the communities provided the first opportunity for many rank and file strikers to get a direct report-back on national developments and have contact with the central leadership of the strike.

The NUM leadership will be continuing the meetings into the New Year. On Saturday morning, 5th, for example, Arthur Scargill will be speaking the Worktop Miners' Welfare.

The meetings can be part of a new campaign to re-establish or strengthen links with those strikers who have stayed at home or been inactive. Many came forward when picketing was established at most of the pits; and more during the Christmas celebrations.

Particularly at the children's parties, strikers report meeting



Pickets at South Celynen pit. Photo: Martin Shakeshaft.

other men from their pits whom they hadn't seen from day one.

In the period before Christmas, the focus was very much on picketing the pits against scabs. Mass picketing virtually ceased.

A new round of mass picketing, focused on key power stations, would increase the effectiveness of the action there, tie up more police, re-establish the organisation and morale that existed among the mass pickets before — and also be the best possible answer to Walker's boasting.

Regular pickets are also vital. At West Thurrock the link between regular pickets and the power station workers has been decisive in getting the TUC guidelines enforced on the moving and handling of coal and coal substitutes.

The momentum of the strike is also important in the isolation of any who want to push to compromise the fight.

Over the last two months, there has been a growing response from sections of the movement to Arthur Scargill's often repeated call for not only financial assistance, but also physical assistance on the picket line. In Nottingham, the Trades

Council is now regularly organising pickets of the power stations on Mondays and Thursdays, with much of the organisation coming through newly developed miners' solidarity groups in the different unions.

In Leeds, one of the Constituency Labour Parties helped to organise a morning picket at Ledstone Luck pit just before Christmas. In London, the Mineworkers' Defence Committee helped to mobilise for pickets outside Neasden power station in the week before Christmas.

On the Monday and Tuesday, no material came in. On the Friday, four maintenance vehicles were turned away.

At its last meeting, the Mineworkers' Defence Committee decided to mobilise for similar pickets in the near future (the next major ones are at Didcot on January 16 and at Tilbury on January 21 — called by the SERTUC/Kent NUM).

It will also publicise information on the power station pickets throughout the country, and by helping to organise power station gate meetings with leading speakers like Ken Livingstone and MPs from the Cam-

paign Group.

In the Labour Party, the campaign to force MPs to follow the lead of the Campaign Group — to get on the picket lines and hand over their new pay rise to miners — will be given new leverage by the beginning of the re-selection process.

A boost for solidarity can also come from two conferences scheduled over the next month.

On January 12 the Communist Party's Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions is meeting. With Peter and Betty Heathfield and Ron Todd speaking it promises to be much bigger than other recent LCDTU conferences, but its value even then will be largely determined by whether there is any democracy this time, or real participation in its proceedings.

The Mineworkers Defence Committee's recall solidarity conference was scheduled for February 9 in Sheffield but is still not finally settled. Given the broadness of the December 2 conference, and the possibility of getting a wide spectrum of representative delegates in the campaign through January, this promises to be the more important.

Keresley miner visits Venice

Back the
miners

How Italian workers see the miners' strike

The Committee for Solidarity with British Miners in Padova (near Venice) invited Colin Reynolds, a miner from Keresley Colliery, Coventry, to travel the province of Venice and put the miners' case to Italian workers. Glyn Cousin, who accompanied Colin (to translate) reports on what they discovered.

Some of the men and women back in Keresley who wished us good luck imagined that we would see as many gondolas and historical monuments as factories. In fact the Solidarity Committee in Padova crushed any similar fantasy we may have had; they committed us to a tight schedule of meetings from morn to night for nine days.

We left Italy with only a dim impression of its physical attractions, but our picture of Italian workers, particularly of their warmth and solidarity, was very strong indeed.

We took with us an exhibition of photographs culled from Socialist Organiser: photos of demonstrations, women's participation, police, the picket lines, the soup kitchens, etc. This was invaluable, because many Italian papers and the television reports were as selective as ours in their comments on the strike (though Unita, the Communist Party daily, carries regular and sympathetic reports).

Labour Party

This was also clear from the many questions raised about the Labour Party. Workers scratched their heads and asked: "If Thatcher is as bad as you say, if her union-bashing is at the level you state, if unemployment is so high, if democracy is threatened in the way you describe — why hasn't the Labour Party been able to provide an effective opposition?" Why indeed.

We talked of the unevenness of support. We spoke of the excitement and energy the strike has generated among many workers, the support it has won from progressives and radicals generally, and the unique role played by women.

But we also debated the failure of the Labour Party and union leaderships to fight — their ambivalent support or their outright hostility.

In the course of our discussions, workers were developing a growing awareness that Britain is not the genteel democracy that it appears to be in some European imaginations. Many factory delegates, voicing support for us, declared to their



With workers at a factory in the Venice area

membership that the miners' struggle is more than a fight against pit closures. It is a frontal attack on the trade union movement in Britain — and all the governments of Europe may well take pleasure in a miners' defeat.

The erosion of civil liberties in Britain, particularly in the sphere of trade union rights, and the presence of a very authoritarian government in the Common Market, was seen by many workers as a general threat to labour movements throughout Europe.



Interviewed at a radio station

Italian workers dug deep for the miners not only because they were moved by our tales of the extreme hardship the miners and their families must endure, but also in recognition of the political relationship between their own struggles and that of the miners.

In two factories, the factory delegates proposed that workers give two and one hour's pay respectively. They won their motion easily.

In other factories' collections had preceded us. In others, they followed our departure.

Workers sported 'Coal not Dole' stickers and placed NUM posters on their union boards.

We visited many factories, in areas that do not make the travel brochures.

Workers wanted to know what the papers never reveal: why were the miners striking? Next, do they have a chance of winning?

They asked about home support. Why don't other British unions strike in solidarity with the miners?

They asked again and again

why British workers choose indefinite strikers. In Italy, when strikes are called by the three big confederations, workers usually down tools for a day, half a day or by the staggered hour. They are never asked to come out indefinitely.

This kind of orchestrated 'general' strike across the various trade unions made more sense to the Italian workers we met than one section of workers doing battle on its own through an indefinite strike.

The debate was intense on this point. Of course, it's a terrible weakness in the strike that the TUC equivocates and shows no willingness to commit itself to solidarity strikes. We spoke about this frankly and Colin frequently raised the problem of getting people to strike when they fear for their jobs.

But some workers did point to problems with the Italian formulation of a general strike: it's really a one-day stoppage, and this has not always produced the results the Italian labour movement needs, especially now.

Italian workers are suffering their own setbacks and much mention was made of this. They face rising unemployment and a specific attack at the moment on their inflation-linked wages system (which is called the scala mobile).

Weaknesses

Thus the weaknesses of the British trade union movement led us on to some discussion about the limits of the European trade union movement generally.

These discussions made us realise how isolated British workers are from debates and developments across the channel. Italian workers seem to be much better informed than their British counterparts.

Colin left most factories having shaken more hands than the Queen Mum in her lifetime.

We spoke also to peace movements, solidarity committees, partisan associations, Christian

workers, Communist Party branch and regional meetings, trade union officers, Democrazia Proletaria (a group to the left of the Communist Party), the police trade union (the latter meeting deserves its own article), and a 'democratic magistrate'.

We gave a number of local radio interviews, taking questions and greetings from listeners who phoned in. We even managed five minutes at a punk concert.

Each meeting deserves its own account. In general the support was impressive.

On a more sober note — the strike has also provided a focus for the expression of local divisions and factions. For example, the union confederations' plans to give miners' children a holiday is seen by some Italian workers as a cosmetic job, as a way of feigning deep commitment where in fact it is shallow.

Our own argument, and that of many in the solidarity committee, was that any initiative from the union officials is welcome. The point is not to denounce it but to build on it, to place further demands on the leadership, and to create wider rank and file support on the back of official initiatives like this.

There is truth to the view that official leaders promote a sort of internationalism to divert attention from problems on the home-front. It's not all roses in the Italian workers' movement garden — and, of course, the arguments reflected the different political perspectives united in the solidarity committee. But certainly we witnessed a genuine and widespread concern for the future of the British trade union movement.

We came away from Italy convinced that solidarity work of this kind can have many political pay-offs both home and abroad — and more aware of the narrowness of British trade unions.

As Colin said, no holiday in Italy would have brought him so close to Italian workers.

Oops!

We garbled a passage in Stan Crooke's article in the last issue on the Communist Party. It should have read as follows:

Both factions claim to represent the cause of democracy. The Eurocommunists fly the banner of the 'broad democratic alliance' and a critical attitude to the undemocratic regimes in the USSR and Eastern Europe; the Moscow-liners defend their control of the Morning Star in the name of freedom of the press.

Both factions have tried to rally support outside CP ranks.

The Moscow-liners seem to have had more success, getting Tony Benn to contribute a foreword to their 'Class Politics' pamphlet.

In fact the political divisions are not at all clear-cut.

One recent — unpublished letter from six leading Eurocommunists to the Morning Star referred to the 'Hungarian counter-revolution', when they meant the workers' uprising of

1956.

Many Eurocommunists are also utterly hostile to Solidarnosc; and those who are not would be horrified at the notion of the Polish workers making a revolution against the bureaucrats. Their vision goes no further than advising the bureaucrats to be more liberal.

Conversely, the Moscow-liners are not against a 'broad democratic alliance'.

1919 was a year of turmoil all over Europe. The confusion following the break up of the three great empires in World War I — the Russian, Turkish, and Austrian empires — the working class began to assert itself. In Russia the young Bolshevik republic was still fighting for its life. In Bavaria and Hungary short-lived Soviet Republics were established, and in Vienna and Berlin there were socialist uprisings.

Even Belfast did not escape unscathed. At the beginning of 1919 the city experienced the largest and longest industrial dispute in its history. For nearly four weeks shipyard and engineering workers and corporation employees were out on strike and Belfast was without light, heat, trams or heavy industry.

The Belfast strike was part of a general movement for shorter hours which affected all the major industrial centres of Britain as well as Ireland. During the First World War workers in all industries had been forced to accept shockingly long hours and low pay. Resentment had built up especially among the well-organised engineering workers, and already before the war there had been several disputes in Belfast and Glasgow. With the pressure of the war, the workers were determined to get their demands. They were spurred on by the approaching demobilisation of hundreds of thousands of soldiers, and the threat of mass unemployment. Shorter hours were seen as a form of work-sharing to create more jobs.

Hours

The hours worked were intolerable. Engineering workers had a 54 hour week and unskilled workers such as mill-hands and carters worked even longer. Many men never saw daylight except at weekends for most of the year. They all started without breakfast and had a break for it after a couple of hours.

Anticipating an outburst the TUC had negotiated an agreement with the employers at the end of 1918. Engineering workers were to have a 47 hour week from January 1 1919. The workers weren't satisfied and in a national ballot on the agreement they were offered a choice between 54 hours and 47 hours, as a result only 25% bothered to vote.

So the strikes were unofficial and opposed by the TUC and the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE). But workers went ahead. The main centres of militancy were Belfast and Glasgow, though the strikers in both centres had different demands. In Belfast it was the decision to strike was taken before Glasgow, the demand was for a 44 hour week including four hours on Saturday. In Glasgow and some of the British centres it was for 40 hours.

Militants

On August 21 1918, with the war still on, a packed meeting was held in the Ulster Hall and an overflow meeting took place outside. It was called by a committee of militants to pressurise the district committee of the Federation of Shipbuilding and Engineering and Allied Trades into action. James Baird of the Boilermakers Society took the chair and James Freeland, Irish Organiser of the ASE proposed that they call on the Corporation to demand a 44 hour week. It was passed unanimously.

On December 5 1918 another meeting was held with most of the candidates for Belfast seats in the General Election present. Freeland proposed that the meeting call for the 44 hour week to be introduced on January 1 and this was passed unanimously. Several of the Unionists spoke in favour, and none against, though Carson the leader of the Tory-Unionists in Ireland — referred to the 47 hour agreement in Britain and warned against any separate arrangement in Ulster.

Talks

Further meetings were held on December 7 and January 4 when delegates from the Corporation reported on their talks with the employers who refused to give way. The January 4 meeting voted to give 14 days notice but the Federation officers, who weren't keen on a strike, played for time by sending a deputation to Clydeside to find out the situation there.

Finally on January 14 1919 the Federation held a ballot of its Belfast members. It was the occasion for a striking demonstration. Over 20,000 shipyard and engineering workers downed tools at midday and marched to the City Hall for a mass meeting. Then they marched to their union halls to vote. The result was overwhelming.

1,184 voted in favour of a 47 hour week, 2,225 voted for a 44 hour week and an official strike to get it, and 558 voted for the 44 hour week but against the strike to get it. Notice was served on the two shipyards — Harland and Wolff and Workman, Clark — the engineering employers and



Edward Carson

When workers fought the bosses

Belfast 1919

ONE OF the greatest strike movements in the history of the British and Irish working classes began 60 years ago this month, in January 1919.

Many thousands of engineering workers fought for a shorter working week. The main storm-centres of this struggle were Belfast and Glasgow.

In Glasgow 100,000 workers came out, and in Belfast 40,000. Many others were laid off during the strike. Fierce battles took place between the strikers and the police.

In Glasgow tanks were put on the street and machine-guns mounted at street corners. The Belfast shipyards were closed down and so solid were the workers that nothing moved in the shipyards — not even company directors — without a permit from the strike committee.

In Belfast, where the labour movement had long been divided between Catholic and Protestant, nationalist and Unionist, the 1919 strike saw the working class united in action. Nothing like it has been seen there since.

Within 18 months of the strike Catholic workers, together with Protestant socialists, would be driven out of the shipyards by Protestant sectarian mobs. But that was in the future.

The 1919 strike in Belfast took place against a tense political background. The militant Irish nationalists had just won 75% of the Irish seats in the November 1918 British general election. They had pledged themselves to secede from the British parliament and set up an Irish parliament in Dublin. In January 1919 they did that.

Belfast Corporation, that a strike would begin at noon on January 25 if the 44 hour week was not conceded.

Elsewhere strike action began before the 25th but was on a small scale and was short-lived. In Glasgow, the other main centre, no firm decision had been taken by the 14th and the strike didn't begin until the 27th.

January 25 1919 was a Saturday and the shipyard and engineering workers finished at noon anyway so the effect was not immediately obvious, but by 5 p.m. the electricity power station and the gas works were affected. The power supply to the trams was cut off and they returned to their depots while the gas lights were not lit. The Saturday afternoon shoppers had to walk home in the dark.

On Sunday 8,000 workers gathered at the customhouse steps to show their support for the strike and hear speakers from the newly appointed strike committee. They announced that a deputation would meet the Corporation on Monday to discuss essential services and a strike meeting was arranged

for outside the City Hall at the same time.

On Monday the Corporation, mindful of the thousands of strikers outside, agreed to shut off the electric supply to all consumers except the hospitals, for which the strikers agreed to send in a skeleton staff. Since gas could not be cut off to ordinary users the whole gas supply was cut but workers went in to staff the plant.

Picket

Meanwhile, most of the engineering shops were shut down and the shipyards were almost empty. After the meeting at the City Hall, 2,000 workers marched to the shipyards to have a "peaceful picket" and persuade the apprentices and clerical staff to stop work also. They broke through the gates, pulled the apprentices out and stoned the offices.

From then on the yards were closed and pickets prevented anyone from going down Queen's Road without a pass from the strike committee. They even stopped the company

directors. But in north-east Ireland the opponents of Irish independence were strong. That was where the anti-nationalist one-quarter of the Irish MPs had their seats.

The capitalists there had organised a mass movement on the eve of the strike to stop the British government setting up an all-Ireland Home Rule. Protestant workers were opposed to Home Rule, and tens of thousands of them armed themselves in 1914, under the leadership of the capitalists of the north, to fight against it.

This conflict would eventually lead to the partition of Ireland and the undemocratic Six County state. Supposed to defend the rights of the Irish minority, it created an oppressed Catholic minority in the Six Counties — a minority bigger than the Protestant minority would have been in a united Ireland.

But in 1919 — when the Belfast strike occurred — the Irish-British conflict was just going into its final crisis of full-scale war between the army and the secessionist parliament and the British army of occupation. The effect of the strike was not yet powerful enough to shatter working class unity in Belfast.

In the next few weeks Socialist Organiser will publish a series of articles on the 1919 strikes in Belfast and Glasgow. This week we publish the first article by Michael Farrell on the strike in Belfast. The article first appeared in the magazine 'Northern Star' in January 1969.

directors.

The same sort of mass picketing was used at firms like the Sirocco works where the men were reluctant to come out, while the cutting off of gas and electricity and the withdrawal of key engineering workers gradually closed down the Rope works and most of the linen mills in the city.

The press was affected as well and the Irish News, after producing a single sheet on Monday, closed down until February 14. The Telegraph was closed for a week and the Newsletter missed a single issue, but the Northern Whig kept going, though reduced in size and circulation. Meanwhile, the strike committee established their own paper, the Workers' Bulletin, which published 18 issues up to the end of the strike.

By the end of the week, nearly 40,000 workers were out and another 20,000 laid off because of the strike. There was no gas, electricity or transport and all major factories in the city were closed. Snow at the beginning of the week and then slush sharpened the strikes's effect.

The strikers were making their own pickets and they were felt as well. For several days they roamed the streets smashing windows in shops or offices where electricity was used, and stoning the offices of the Telegraph which was not a working class view. The strikers condemned this "hooliganism" and appointed strike pickets to patrol the streets with the police to

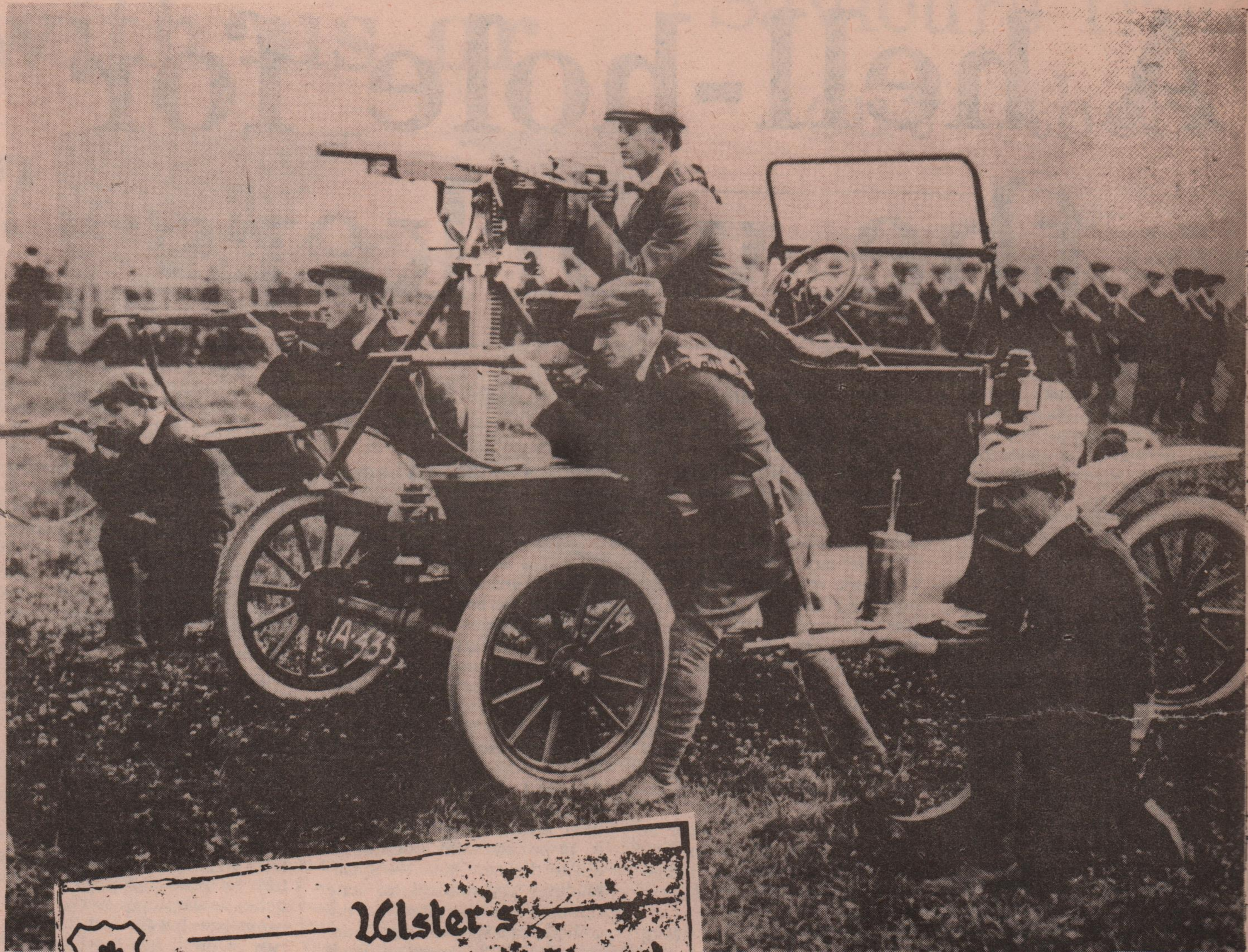
Demonstration

On Tuesday a massive demonstration was held with thousands of workers marching from Carlisle Circus to the City Hall for a mass meeting and a meeting was held at the City Hall. The extra steps where the extra pickets were shown by the strikers. Minutes of silence in memory of the late Director of Harland and Wolff just died.

In Glasgow there were



The strike was for 40 hours.



1919

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however. There the strike was not as complete as in Belfast and trams were still running though most of the shipyards and engineering works closed down. But there were still 100,000 out on strike, and the strike committee had demanded that the Lord Provost call on the London government to intervene.

Baton charge

On Friday January 31, a huge crowd gathered outside the City Chambers in George Square to hear the government's reply. A deputation went in to see the Provost and while the crowd was waiting the police made a baton charge. Then the Riot Act was read, mounted police made repeated charges to clear the square, and two members of the deputation, Willie Gallacher and David Kirkwood were batoned and arrested.

Later in the day Manny Shinwell, chair of the strike committee (later an MP, and now a centenarian Lord) was arrested, and that night Highland troops were drafted into Glasgow. The city awoke to find tanks in the Saltmarket, machine gun posts in George Square and troops with fixed bayonets in the streets. The strike was broken. Confused, frightened, and leaderless, some men drifted back to work on Monday and by the end of the week it was all over. On February 12 the strike committee admitted defeat and recommended a return to work. But the long term effect was different.

The Glasgow workers had seen the brutal reality of a bosses' government in action and it hardened the mood of industrial and political militancy that was developing on Clydeside. The only comment in Belfast at the weekend came from a strike committee speaker called Clarke at the Custom House who said "they seemed to have made a mess of things over there and (he) contrasted the occurrences there with the peaceful and well organised manner in which the strike was being conducted in Belfast." (Northern Whig).

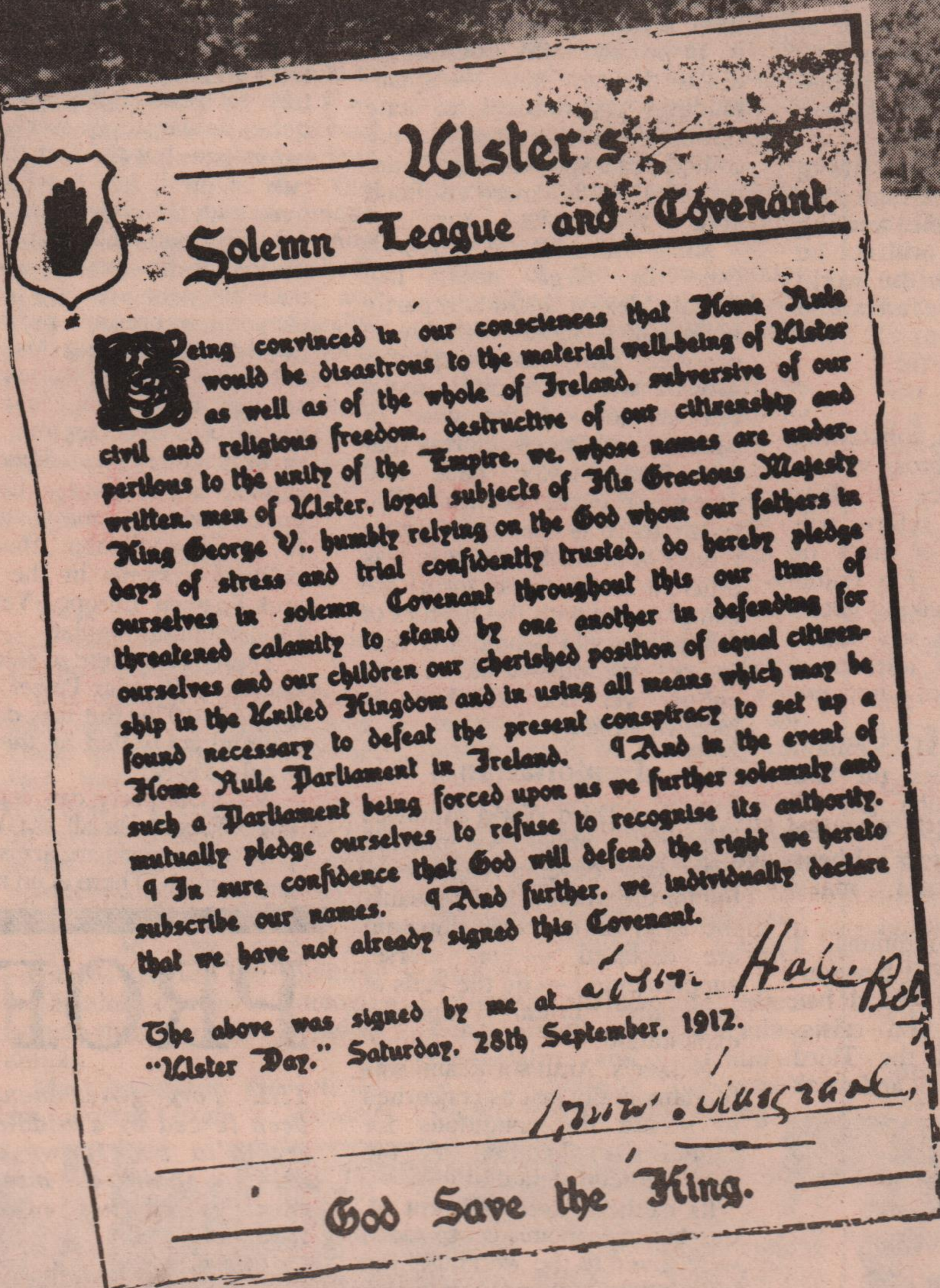
As the strike entered its second week things took a graver turn. The strike com-

Top: Ulster volunteers in training, 1914. Above: Covenant signed by hundreds of thousands of Protestant workers.

mittee had relied on the principle of the short sharp attack. They had expected that a week without public services would bring the city to its knees and have the prosperous citizens begging the shipyard and engineering employers to settle with the men. They had not bargained for a long drawn-out struggle where the workers stood to lose more than the bosses, trying to exist on meagre strike pay — or in the case of the 5,000 ASE members no strike pay at all, as their union refused to pay it.

Tighten

It became clear to the strike leaders that if they were to win this contest they would have to tighten the screws a little. So far, apart from heavy engineering and the mills, whose owners could afford a few weeks stoppage, business had not been unduly disrupted. Shops could get supplies and if prices rose somewhat it hit the working class hardest. But the strike committee had a promise of support from the transport workers, the dockers, carters and railwaymen. If they called these men out, commerce would come to a total standstill. It would be tantamount to a general strike. The strike committee hesitated. They



cation — but now the Newsletter launched an all-out attack. "One of the (strikers') deputation boasted that they had set up a 'workers' parliament'. That is the language of the Bolsheviks and Sinn Feiners and it should open the eyes of the authorities, and also of the vast majority of the men, who are loyal and law-abiding, to the real objects of the strike committee. These objects are not industrial, but revolutionary, and if they were attained they would bring disaster to the city." (February 4, 1919).

For the rest of the strike the Newsletter continued in this vein, calling for a ban on all strikes by workers in the public services and the prosecution of the Belfast strike leaders whom they described as "Bolsheviks, Anarchists and the hirelings of Germany" (February 8, 1919). The Whig and Telegraph were not far behind.

On Monday February 4, the Grand Orange Lodge of Belfast issued a manifesto to the strikers. They claimed to be neutral on the question of hours but appealed for an immediate resumption of work to await settlement on a national (i.e. UK) basis. This was exactly what the employers wanted. The workers only chance was to force a concession in areas of strength like Glasgow or Belfast and then campaign for parity elsewhere. But the Grand Lodge had also some comments on the origin of the strike.

"It is perfectly clear that the condition of affairs today has been to a great extent engineered by parties who are neither employers nor employed but who have taken advantage of a trade dispute to attempt to bring discredit on the fair name of Belfast. These parties smarting from the defeat which they have suffered recently at the General Election are endeavouring to get the working men of Belfast into a position from which, in a short time, they may find it very difficult to withdraw."

This was a reference to the prominent position on the strike committee of James Freeland of the ASE and Robert Waugh, Ulster Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners (ASCJ). Both had been Labour candidates in Belfast in the 1918 election.

The attack of the Newsletter and the Orange Order, and even the appearance of a lorryload of armed Royal Irish Constabulary men didn't prevent a huge march of strikers on Tuesday from Carlisle Circus to the City Hall, where four platforms were required so that all the strikers could hear something.

The Orange Lodge's manifesto was attacked, but there was no sign from Waugh or the other Orangemen on the strike committee that they were resigning in protest. The meeting ended with an extraordinary scene. The funeral of Cuming, the Managing Director of Harland and Wolff, passed the City Hall, and members of the strike committee led many of the workers in joining the cortege.

Continued next week

were not sure that they could handle the chaos that would ensue and organise the rationing and distribution of essential supplies. On Monday February 3, a delegation met the Corporation again. J. Milan of the ETU asked the Corporation to set up a committee jointly with the strikers to administer supplies. "The transport workers would come out at any time" he said, "but they hadn't called them out as the strike committee wasn't sure that it could run the city". (Belfast Newsletter). The Corporation ignored the request and the transport workers were never called out.

Meanwhile the strikers' enemies moved onto the offensive. Already the Lord Mayor had tried to split the movement by appealing to the corporation employees to return separately. He pointed out that the Corporation automatically paid the standard rate in the city so they would get the benefit of shorter hours won in the dispute without having to strike at all. He also pointed out that the (London) secretary of the Municipal Employees Association had instructed them to return to work. He was unsuccessful.

Now the Newsletter took a hand in the fray. From the beginning of the dispute the Newsletter, Whig and Telegraph had been hostile to the strikers — the Irish News had been sympathetic until it ceased publi-

Why poverty?

A hell-hole for the workers

CAN Third World countries escape underdevelopment? Yes and no. Last week's article looked at Egypt, Cuba and South Korea. Those three countries have "developed" dramatically. But how, to whose benefit, and at what cost?

South Korea is now an industrial power. But it is a hell-hole for the working class.

Its factories probably have the longest working hours in the world — 60 hours normally, often 80-odd, and that at an incredible pace. It has the highest industrial accident rate in manufacturing in the world, after Sri Lanka: in its huge Masan Free Trade Zone, one worker in five has a serious accident each year.

Wages are higher than in most other Asian countries: but in 1980 they averaged only £60 a month in manufacturing.

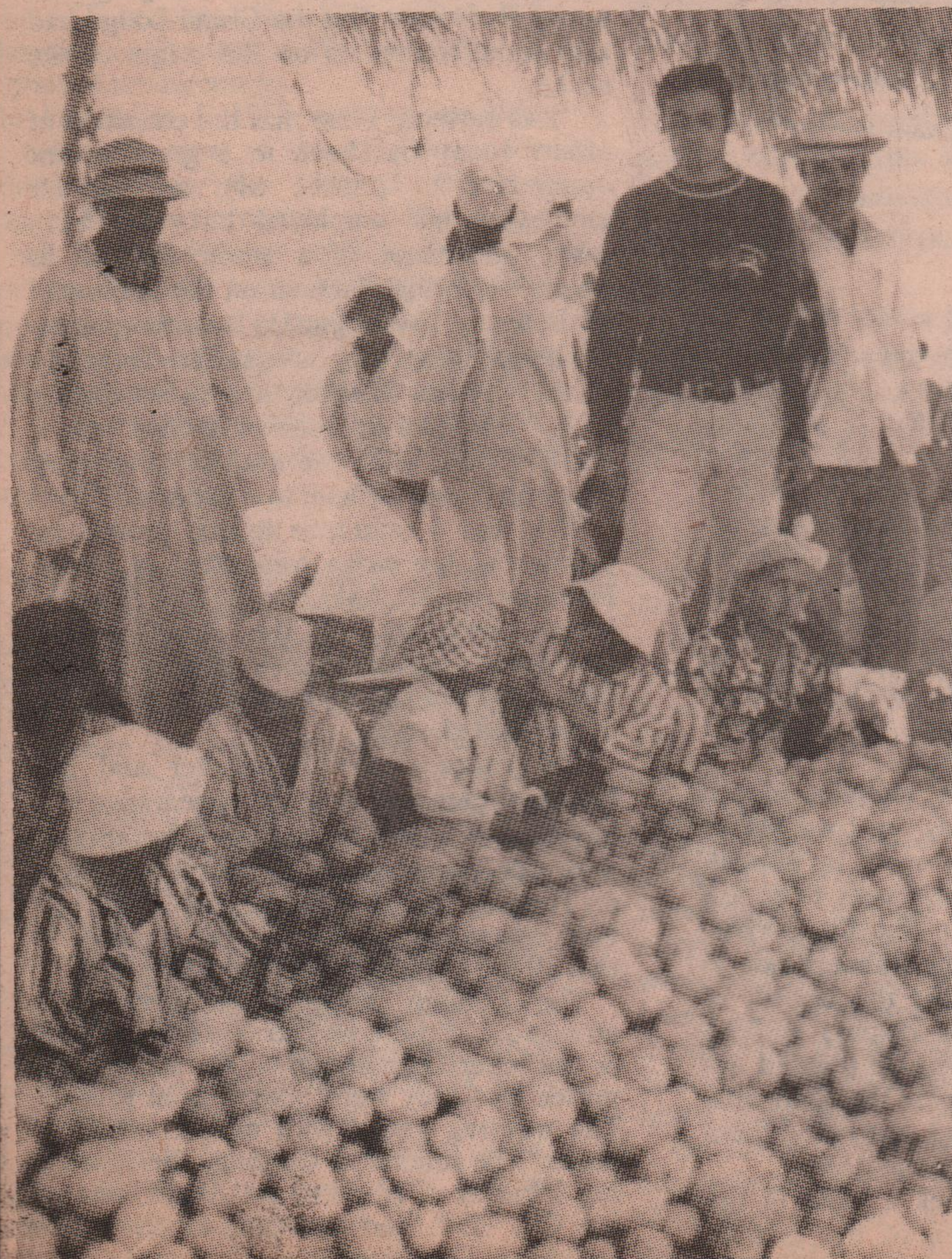
The trade unions are extremely weak and kept under tight control by the dreaded Korean CIA. It is illegal to form new unions. Strikes are banned. According to the sober Financial Times (25.6.84): "There is a real climate of fear. In many cases union officials will consult the police before putting any grievance..."

Christian missions in the working class areas have been smashed up by the police. Even the mildest forms of political opposition to the government are ferociously repressed.

Every citizen is registered, with their fingerprints, in a central computer bank, and kept under watch by a government-organised neighbourhood surveillance scheme.

The condition of the working class in South Korea combines the suffering typical of early industrialism with those typical of modern, high-technology capitalism.

The examples of South Korea, Egypt and Cuba indicate that three things are necessary for national development in the Third World. All represent a radical break from the heritage of colonialism.



Child labour being used to sort potatoes

Some Third World countries have 'developed' dramatically. But this 'development' is often a hell-hole for the working class.

(Seventh in a series of articles by Martin Thomas on the roots of Third World poverty).

There must be a land reform, to release resources trapped by out-dated methods of exploitation. A strong state machine must be constructed, capable of effectively enforcing the land reform and constructing the groundwork for late 20th century industry — education and health services for the working class, roads, airports, telephone systems, efficient administration.

The state itself will have to organise major industries like steel and the energy industries: no other unit will be big enough.

If the state is not strong enough to maintain a high rate of exploitation of the working class, then industry will not be able to compete on the world market against more advanced capitalisms.

Funds

And, generally, a substantial flow of funds from abroad will be necessary to finance all this: otherwise the land reform will collapse back into a mass of poverty, with only a few rising capitalist farmers making good, and new industries will falter because of lack of infrastructure and balance-of-payments crises.

South Korea got \$12.5 billion from the US between the late '40s and 1970; Cuba got \$8 billion from the USSR between 1961 and 1976; Nasser's Egypt sought funds from many sources.

Listing these conditions, I think, tells us why the development of the Third World has been so uneven and crisis-ridden. Almost all the Third World states are small and weak

units in a world overwhelmingly dominated by the big multinationals and banks based in the richer countries. South Korea got massive aid on easy terms for political reasons: most Third World countries still get ripped off by the richer capitalisms.

To write a land reform law is easy, and almost every Third World state has done it. To enforce it against the opposition of the landowning classes is more difficult. Having enforced it, to provide sufficient resources to the new units — small-holdings, cooperatives, or state farms — so that they do not collapse in a spontaneous 'counter-reform', is more difficult still.

Some Third World states — especially large ones, like Brazil, Mexico, India and partly Indonesia — have been able to promote fairly fast capitalist growth without radical social reforms (or, in the case of Mexico, with social reforms that have been rolled back and corrupted over decades). The result there is that the horrors typical of South Korea (if in less efficient and ruthless form) are compounded with the horrors of a huge mass of people in absolute poverty, pushed out of agriculture yet not absorbed by modern industry.

Exploitation

So: can Third World countries escape underdevelopment? They can develop capitalism, but for the workers and peasants the evils of underdevelopment are replaced — or, worse, supplemented — by the evils of especially brutal capitalist exploitation.

Nasser's 'Arab socialism' was fundamentally just as concerned to secure the conditions for capitalist exploitation as the South Korean dictatorship.

Its methods were different. A number of economic concessions were given to the working class (protection against sackings, legal limits to the working day), and for many years Nasser undoubtedly had mass support. He wished to form an alliance between the working class and the middle class which he represented, against the old upper classes and against imperialism.

But he suppressed independent working class action: the trade unions were government-controlled, and strikes were banned. And once the middle class had itself become the upper class, the methods shifted.

Under Nasser's successor Sadat they became more similar to those in South Korea.

In fact, the gulf between regimes of the Nasser type and regimes of the South Korean type is by no means as wide as it appears. The Nasser-type regimes tend to shift towards the South Korean pattern over time: and South Korea has a large dose of state capitalism and nationalism.

It is not just a production platform for the multinationals. In fact foreign direct investment in South Korea is quite small — no

more than 2% of the total capital. The government directly owns a greater share of industry than in the UK, and heavily controls the rest through its command over credit.

Other fast-industrialising Third World countries have a bigger presence from the multinationals: Brazil, for example. But there, too, the local state has the "central role in the process of accumulation", allying with but also bargaining with and imposing restrictions on the multinationals.

So local capitalist classes can develop themselves in the Third World today — but with the aid of a state machine which they use heavily against the working class.

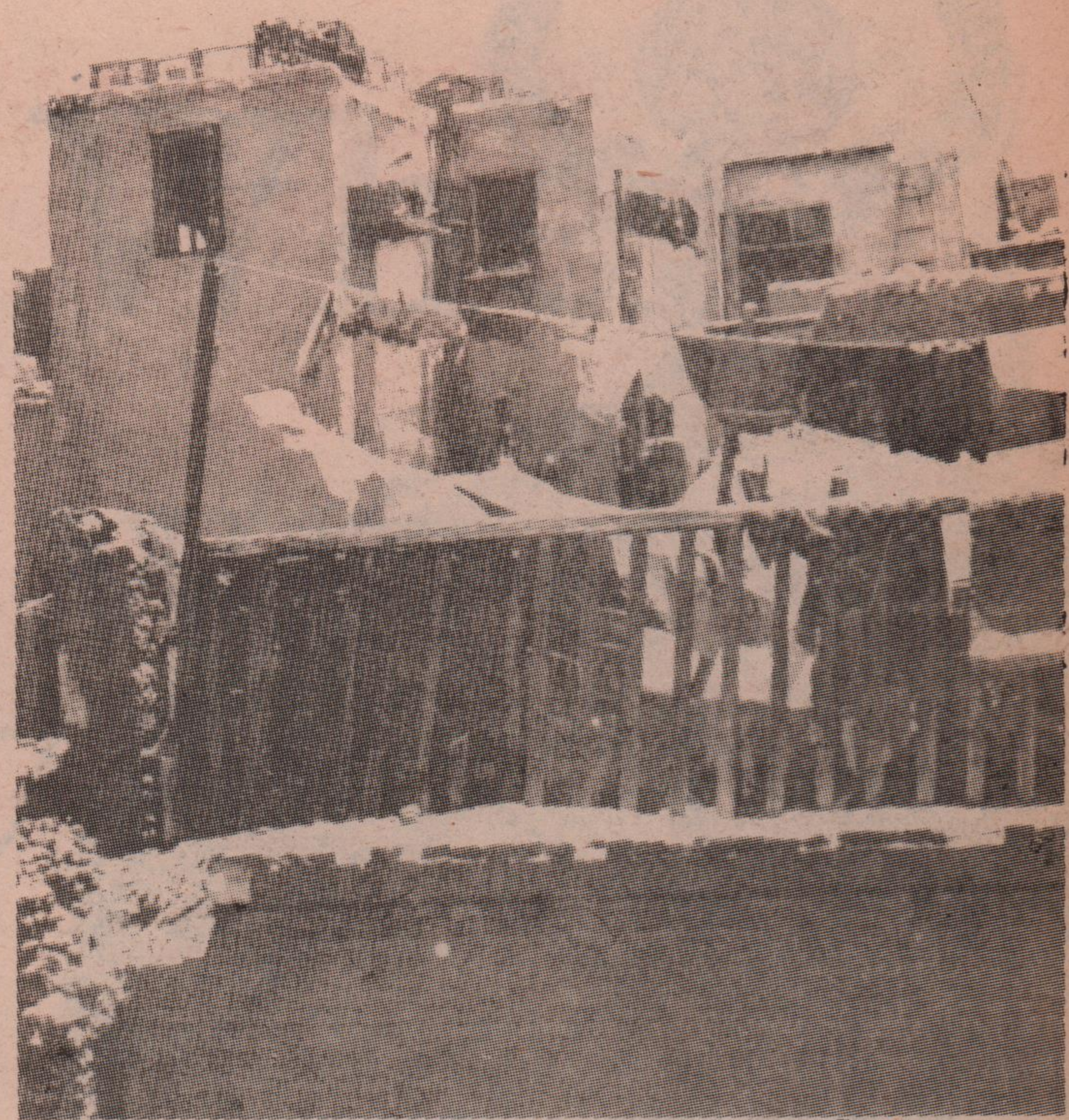
Cuba

What about Cuba's alternative? A static 'snapshot' picture of Cuban society looks quite similar to Nasser's state capitalism, but the fact that the rule of profit has been broken makes its dynamic quite different. The nationalisation of the means of production and the establishment of a planned economy represent permanent gains for the working class.

Most Cuban workers, it seems, feel freer now than under the old regime, even though their formal democratic rights are fewer. Castro's government has mass support. It is more flexible than the political systems in the USSR and Eastern Europe. Yet it is fundamentally similar.

There is a system of elections, known as Popular Power, introduced in 1976. But it is dominated and controlled by the Communist Party.

No other party can organise. The CP controls all the media. The trade unions are arms of the government. There is no right to



Squalid living conditions of Egyptian workers

strike.

There is not even any right to form factions inside the CP. In fact, the CP is not in any real sense a party. It is an administrative machine. Its first congress was held in 1975 — 16 years after the revolution. All major decisions of national importance are taken by a few people round Fidel Castro.

Friend

Rene Dumont, a French socialist and firm friend of the Cuban revolution, wrote in 1970: "The delegation of full powers to those whom Fidel trusts is almost feudal...His right-hand men have just received, free, luxury Alfa-Romeos...that they can use for their personal needs..."

"Add in the beautiful villas of the magnificent beach at Varadero, where the officials and their families take free holidays...Add in the sexual privileges of the 'new class', which count for a lot in Cuba..."

"And so a new leading group is being constituted in Cuba, certainly benevolent towards workers and the poor people, but in a sense often paternalist; for the latter no longer have the right to speak out if they become

too critical".**

In time the Cuban workers will rebel against the austerity they face and the lack of true freedom. They will want to form their own trade unions, like Solidarnosc. They will want a new revolution, to establish direct workers' power.

In the meantime, Cuba is not socialist. Its experience is in fact a new proof of the impossibility of socialism in one country.

For a period in the 1960s Castro and his comrades tried to act as revolutionaries internationally. But the USSR bore down on them; and they submitted to the USSR.

National development is possible in the Third World, in various ways. But it is suicidal for working-class socialists to set such development as their aim. It can be realised only on their backs. National revolutions can truly serve the working class only if they become bridgeheads for an international working class struggle.

*Peter Evans, 'Dependent development: the alliance of multinational, state and local capital in Brazil'.

**Cuba, est-il socialiste?'

PROFITS & POVERTY

THE Tory government has been forced by a middle-class revolt to back down on its plans to abolish the minimum grant for higher education students.

But they will still be charging tuition fees to many students. And they will still be continuing their cuts in money for higher education.

Cutting back extravagance? No. Britain (as of the latest figures, covering 1981) has a smaller proportion of young people getting higher education than any other advanced capitalist country except Switzerland.

The number in higher education is 20% of the population aged 20-24. The figure for other industrialised countries varies from 58% for the US, through 37% for Sweden and 30% for Japan, to 21% for Southern Ireland.

Many Third World countries educate their children better than Britain does. Thailand has 20% in higher education; the Philippines, 26%; Cuba, 20%; Jordan, 27%; Argentina, 25%.

The Financial Times on Monday 10th reported "a growing trend among major British public companies to make small donations to the Alliance parties, alongside

larger contributions to the Tories".

Contributors include Pearsons, Commercial Union, General Accident, Norwich Union, Tate and Lyle, John Swire, and Morgan Crucible.

"Dr David Owen", the FT notes, "has started a series of lunches in the City with leading businessmen which have apparently produced promises of financial support".

The Guardian on Wednesday 12th reported on "murder, ambush, rape, torture, and the burning down of entire villages" to make way for agribusiness and mining projects in the Amazon region of Brazil.

"The EEC is investing \$600 million in the Greater Carajas project, a vast mining and agri-business complex covering thousands of square miles. The project has involved building a 1,000-mile railway, the world's fourth largest hydroelectric dam, ports and factories and developing more than 2,500 miles of navigable rivers.

"Father Ricardo Resende, from the Church's Pastoral Land Commission said that 28 peasant farmers and small-holders have been killed this year. Some 2,500 families are

threatened with eviction.

"Brazilian congressmen believe that the violence is an attempt to clear the region of peasant farmers for the mechanised farming projects of the Carajas scheme. The landowners behind the violence, who reportedly buy judges, bailiffs and police with bribes, claim the land so they can then sell out for high prices when the agribusiness projects get underway.

"The government appears to do nothing to prevent the violence in the belief that foreign investors will find an area free of subsistence farmers more attractive."

The shape of things to come? According to the Financial Times (December 11), Hitachi has invited all workers aged 35 or over at its television factory in Hirwaun, South Wales, to quit, offering a £1,800 tax-free pay-off.

The Japanese company has told its workers that over-35s are too slow and inflexible.

This move would bring the factory a step towards the norm in the electronics industry in the Third World, where the vast majority of the workers are young women aged 14 to 25. Above the age of 25 they are considered worn-out and too slow.

Science - with us or against us?

Gerry Ben-Noah reviews 'Sci-Tech Report', edited by Jon Turney. Pluto Press, £8.95.

CAPITALISM presents contradictory images of science and technology. Sometimes, as in the BBC's 'Horizon' series, science is a tool which reveals and solves the mysteries of the universe. Or else, as in 'Tomorrow's World', science is a wonderful bag of tricks, from which flows a never-ending stream of useful technological goodies.

Occasionally, though, we catch a glimpse of the dark side of science - nuclear weapons, chemical and radiation hazards, job-destroying automation and computerised surveillance by the State.

These same contradictions run through socialist ideas about science. For Engels, Marxism presented a true picture of the world because it was scientific. Lenin, who knew that the revolution could not take over and use the bourgeois state machine, believed that it could make good use of capitalist technologies of production, including "scientific management".

Argument

There is a curiously unbroken line of argument which stretches from the German Social-Democrats, through Lenin, and Stalin, and back to Harold Wilson, which claims that the "white heat of the technological revolution" is above politics.

On the other hand, some socialists, confronted with a capitalism in which racism and sexism are paraded as justified

by scientific truth, and in which the jobs, lives and communities of the working class are being reshaped by a seemingly autonomous and alien force called technological progress, have concluded that science is an inherently oppressive tool in the hands of the ruling class.

Revolutionary socialists have tried to reconcile these contradictions, often with this formula: science and technology were, in themselves, good things, but in the hands of the bosses they were being put to bad uses; when we took over the would be put to good uses.

The formula is not entirely wrong, but it is insufficient, and rapidly becoming more so. In the very midst of the recession, capitalism is busily restructuring itself, using science and technology to transform the organisation of production and consumption - both domestic and industrial - and thereby seeking to take the initiative in the class struggle.

Entire sectors of the economy are being reconstituted; new sectors are being created, and existing ones being destroyed.

Microprocessors

Microprocessors offer the opportunity to impose tighter work discipline in the mine, the factory and the office, and to do away with many jobs entirely.

New technologies of communication and information offer rich pickings to those in a position to exploit them, and new biotechnologies, which will ultimately remake the energy, food, chemical and drug industries, are claiming life itself for the capitalist market.

All this does not come cheap. If the ruling class has its way, the workers will pay the bill - and especially in the "Third World", many workers will pay with their lives, as parts of the



Harold Wilson - "technology above politics"?

production process are shifted to cheap-labour zones, where repressive regimes guarantee a strike-free environment, and whole armies of workers are broken and blinded in factories where nineteenth century conditions meet twenty-first century products.

But if the working class is to successfully resist all this, if we are to put science and technology to work for us rather than against us, then the first requirement is that we understand what is going on. We must know what the new technological developments are, and what they mean politically; and we need to know about plans and projects that are still on the drawing boards in universities and offices around the world, not just about technologies that are already arriving in the factories.

Excellent

There is no better place to start than with Sci-Tech Report. The book is excellent.

It is organised as a series of short articles, 2-3 pages long. There are about 200 of these, each including basic information and references to sources for further reading. They do not assume a high level of scientific knowledge, and should easily be understood by the average SO reader; in any case, the emphasis is on the political implications of new technology, rather than on the technical details.

Most important, the articles are written from a socialist

perspective - which makes a welcome change from most accounts of new technology, which effectively ignore the class dimensions of scientific advances.

The book is arranged in three sections. The first, "Technological Horizons" looks at the uses to which new technologies can be, and are being, put in industry, agriculture and medicine. The second part, "Producing Science and Technology" looks at the organisation of research - and the experiences of the often-forgotten scientific workers - at laboratory, national and international level.

The final section considers the impact of science on everyday life and culture, at home, at work, and through education and the media. Of special interest, for obvious reasons, will be the item on the future of coal as an energy source, and the one on the politics of technical progress in the car industry.

But many of the other articles, especially on apparently "non-political" areas of science, will also prove to be extremely valuable. Of course, the politics of the book are not beyond criticism; with more than 100 contributors, there is bound to be some variation, and some of the items are closer to a reformist than a revolutionary socialist analysis.

Overall, though, the collection is virtually essential reading for socialists; and is an antidote to an overdose of 'Tomorrow's World', it takes some beating.

Saviours from out there

Socialist Action, apparently demoralised about the class struggle in Britain, is looking, if not for 'saviours from on high', at least for 'saviours from out there'. Third World revolutions, they say, are the only immediate hope of progress. Colin Foster reports.

BEFORE THE French general strike in 1968 quite a lot of socialists in the US and Western Europe thought that revolution was impossible in the richer countries and would have to come first from the Third World.

Socialist Action seems to be going back to that view.

On the centre pages of SA of November 16, John Ross argued that the revolutions in Central America are the pivot of politics today. And "the conquest of power by the working class is far... further away in time than the conquest of power by the working class in a whole series of semi colonial countries".

Ross put the same argument that workers' revolution will be possible here only "in a later phase" in a centre page on January 13 this year. This time he spells it out further, saying that revolution was not even on the agenda in France in May/June 1968. "Since the Second World War, with the arguable exception of Portugal in 1974-5, the objective conditions for a working class socialist revolution have not existed in any imperialist country..."

Now obviously the situation in Britain today is nowhere near revolutionary. But to recognise this is different from saying that revolutionary explosions are ruled out for a whole historic era.

As recently as 1976 the same John Ross and his comrades had the opposite view. They were insisting that all southern Europe, including France, was already in a "pre-revolutionary situation" and "revolutionary upsurge", and Britain would be the same within "12 to 18 months".

Their somersault into pessimism does not make for clear ideas. In 1973-4 they shouted 'general strike' every week. Last week's SA (December 14) features Tony Benn's call for a general strike in support of the miners. But editorially it proposes only a 24 hour general strike, very diffidently and as a *second string* to SA's main proposal, a national demonstration to back the miners.

The courts are out to break the NUM - and the revolutionaries' main answer is a march through the streets of London! No wonder they think revolution is so far in the misty future!

Ross's ideas are also not very good for political guidance in the Third World countries that he sees as prospects for revolution. In those countries, especially the workers' movement has often been diverted and subordinated by Stalinism. But Ross, in the whole of his long article, has not a word of criticism of Stalinism.

Also, his panorama of world revolution since 1945 omits all mention of the workers' uprisings against Stalinism. Hungary 1956. Czechoslovakia 1968. Poland 1980-1.

His scheme shifts the axis

of politics from class struggle to a conflict between power blocs: US imperialism on one side - and the Stalinist states, the Sandinistas, the El Salvador rebels, etc., and (doing a little bit as best it can) the working class on the other.

Fortunately two other Socialist Action writers, Phil Hearse and Bob Pennington have taken Ross to task in SA of December 14. "the logical conclusion of his position would be to make... solidarity work with the colonial revolution the decisive task of revolutionaries".

But there is more ammunition than just John Ross's wayward pen. Another startling article, by Oliver Macdonald, appeared in SA of December 7.

"The Kinnock-Chernomir-Moscow agreement... was a triumph", Macdonald declares excitedly. "We can have security guarantees from the Soviets that will take Britain out of the target area and make Britain more secure than at any time in the last 35 years". The editorial introduction says that "the left has to take up and campaign on the Soviet offer".

Naive

If the left takes this advice we will look very naive indeed. In a blow-up leading to World War 3, is a bit of paper going to stop the USSR re-targeting its missiles? Are we really going to campaign in the factories and on the doorsteps with the message trust the Kremlin?

What do we say to the people who retort: tell that to the Afghans and the Poles (And what do we say to the people who ask us why we're so sure that a threat to the security of Britain' could only come from the USSR?)

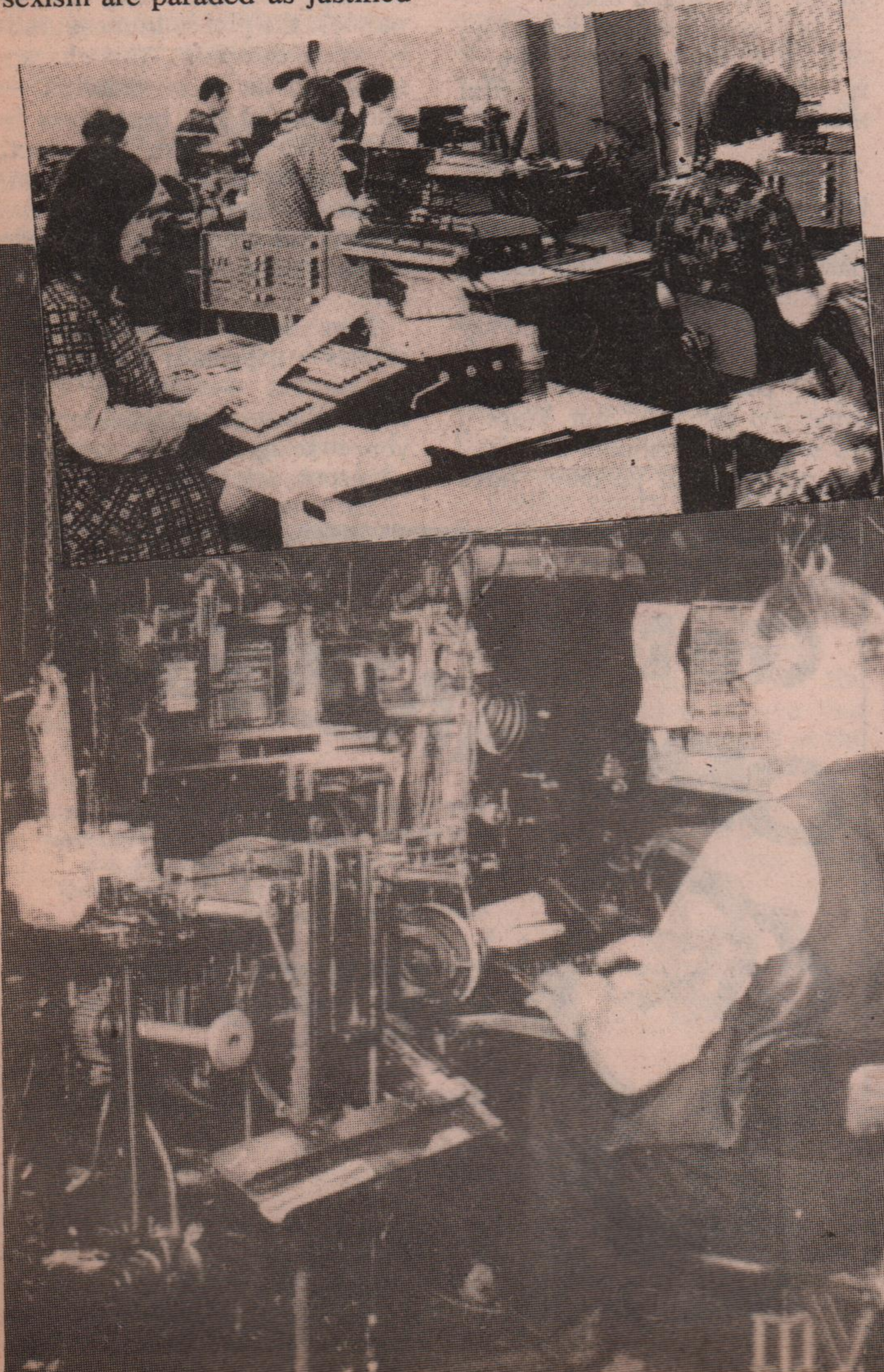
The realistic argument for unilateral nuclear disarmament is not that it would somehow make Britain a little patch of peace in the event of a nuclear holocaust. It is that every working class must disarm its own ruling class, and not wait for the warmongers to agree among themselves to disarm.

Trotskyist

Macdonald and SA, probably think that their position is somehow based on the Trotskyist policy of defence of the nationalised economy in the USSR against imperialism. If so, they are wrong. The economic base of the USSR is one thing: the bureaucracy that rules it and lives parasitically off it is another. If the economic base is potentially progressive, does not follow that the bureaucrats are well-meaning kind-hearted peace-lovers.

Oliver Macdonald recently suggested in SA that the left should try to develop the 'good sides' of the USSR while combatting the 'bad sides'. Exiled Solidarność leader Zbigniew Kowaleski wrote (I thought) a convincing reply, arguing for a revolution against the Stalinist system.

Let's hope some SA writers do an equally good reply to Macdonald's latest piece. But more important, let's hope some SA readers start putting two and two together, and concluding that SA's editorial board is far from the solid Marxist leadership claims to be.



'Entire sectors of the economy being reconstituted': new technology in the print.

A Private Function

Mick Ackersley reviews Alan Bennett's film

Alan Bennett's "A Private Function" is a funny film which unfolds like a satire on Margaret Thatcher's Britain.

It is 1947 and Labour-governed Britain is in the grip of an icy austerity worse even than it was during the war. Most everyday essentials are rationed. The bacon ration, for example, is one rasher a week.

Everyone is on the scrounge for food and the black market flourishes. While rationing decrees strict consumer equality money and the black market subvert it. Everyone tries for what they can get.

In a small Yorkshire town the Gentry, led by the odious Dr. Swaby (Denholm Elliott), plan to celebrate the wedding of Princess Elizabeth and Philip Mountbatten with a dinner. Meat will come from an unregistered pig called "Betty" who is being reared for them on a farm outside the town.

But Betty is stolen by a social-climbing Chiropodist, Gilbert Chivers (Michael Palin), driven by a demonically snobbish wife, Joyce (Maggie Smith).

The Chivers eventually blackmail their way into the civic banquet, albeit at a seat next door to the lavatory.

Into this story about small-town society, Bennett packs a mass of true and precise observation about snobbery, class, greed and the market-ruled "war of all against all" which regulates capitalism.



Secret consultations about the black-market pig

It is Mrs Thatcher's world of thrifty shopkeepers on the make in a society presided over by an upper class mafia. The film's world is strange, historical and distant in its forum, but it is nevertheless identifiably our own world of poverty, shortages for millions and naked Thatcherite elitism, triumphant, unashamed and fervent in its devotion to its idolatrous god — "market forces".

George Orwell arrived at "1984" by turning around 1948, the year in which he wrote it, and projecting forward the trends he saw in 1948. Bennett has done something like this in reverse. His story of a small town black market in 1940s Britain is a scale model of Thatcher's Britain — stripped to its roots.

Bennett describes Joyce Chivers as a distant relative of Lady Macbeth, but she plainly is also a relative of Lady Margaret.

Dr. Swaby is a full-blooded Thatcherite — choleric

facing the prospect of the coming of the welfare state which today's Thatcherites are dismantling.

He explodes against the prospect of a National Health Service (it started in 1948):

"God, it's a nasty piss-stained little country now is this. It's like this new Health Service. Do you realise any little poorly pillock is henceforth going to be able to knock on my door and say: 'I'm ill. Treat me'. Anybody! Me!"

"A Private Function" is also very, very funny. It is the best film I've seen in ages.

DUNE

Reviewed by Clive Bradley

"Dune", Frank Herbert's science fiction classic, was a good epic adventure story. It was compared, reasonably enough, to "The Lord of the Rings" and similar tales.

They have been making a film of it for a very long time. And it is, indeed, very good film material.

It has everything: swashbuckling sword fights, elaborate martial arts that involve telepathy, and weird half-human monsters, as well as super-technology, space travel and ray guns.

If "Dune" the movie had appeared before "Star Wars", its sequels, off-shoots and imitators, it would probably have

seemed a novel and exciting idea.

At the end of 1984 it seemed, for the most part, thoroughly boring. It has big advantages, as a story, over the "Star Wars" movies: the plot is immeasurably more complex, the characterisation far more detailed — and many of the best ideas in "Star Wars" were, I suspect, inspired by (if not stolen from) Frank Herbert's book.

But, unfortunately, very little of this really comes over in the film.

There are some good special effects — especially the monster sandworms — but "a world beyond your experience, beyond your imagination", as the adverts say, it is not.



George Orwell

GREMLINS

Reviewed by Edward Ellis

EVERYBODY knows what "Gremlins" is about: a sweet little teddy-bear type animal which rolls its eyes and sings, and is not to be brought into contact with bright light or water, or to be fed after midnight.

Water, it turns out, makes it reproduce; and early morning feeding makes the offspring change into nasty little monsters.

What you might not know — or at least I didn't — is that the original sweet little one (called Gizmo) stays sweet and little all the way through. I won't say whether it survives or not.

What I will say is that I want one. They are great. Okay, you have to be careful with them, but you have to be careful with any pets you have. Admittedly, a careless splash of tapwater

could mean you end up with a lot more than you bargained for...but I want one anyway.

"Gremlins" is one of those films where people get terrorised, tormented and slaughtered, but nobody really gets hurt — except the poor little gremlins who are crushed, beheaded, liquidised and incinerated in great numbers.

It's not really fair, in my opinion. They're more mischievous than evil. And if all-American teenagers and their dog can save the world from them, they can't have been that much of a threat in the first place. The brats at St. Trinian's were more of a menace.

Anyone wishing to supply Edward Ellis with a gremlin should send it c/o Socialist organiser, 214 Sickert Court, London N1. The first person to send one will receive an autographed copy of the complete works of Edward Ellis by return of post.



An Ewok

Caravan of Courage

"Caravan of Courage" is a spin-off from the Star Wars movie, aimed at very young children and featuring lots of furry Ewoks. The press has dismissed it somewhat scathingly. Socialist Organiser decided to get an expert opinion and sent Thomas, who is six and a half, to investigate. This is his review, dictated to his dad.

CARAVAN of Courage begins when a family crashes on the Moon of Endor. Endor is covered in trees. There are lots of strange animals living on Endor.

For instance there are big dog creatures. They are as big as two bears. They hunt Ewoks, but they find other creatures to eat too.

The Ewoks are furry teddy-bears. They made lifts which were different from our lifts. They need these lifts because it is easier to go by lift than hang-glider to get to the Ewok village in the trees. They wear brown Ewok balaclavas.

The story is about this big boy and his little sister and the group of Ewoks who go with them to rescue their father and mother.

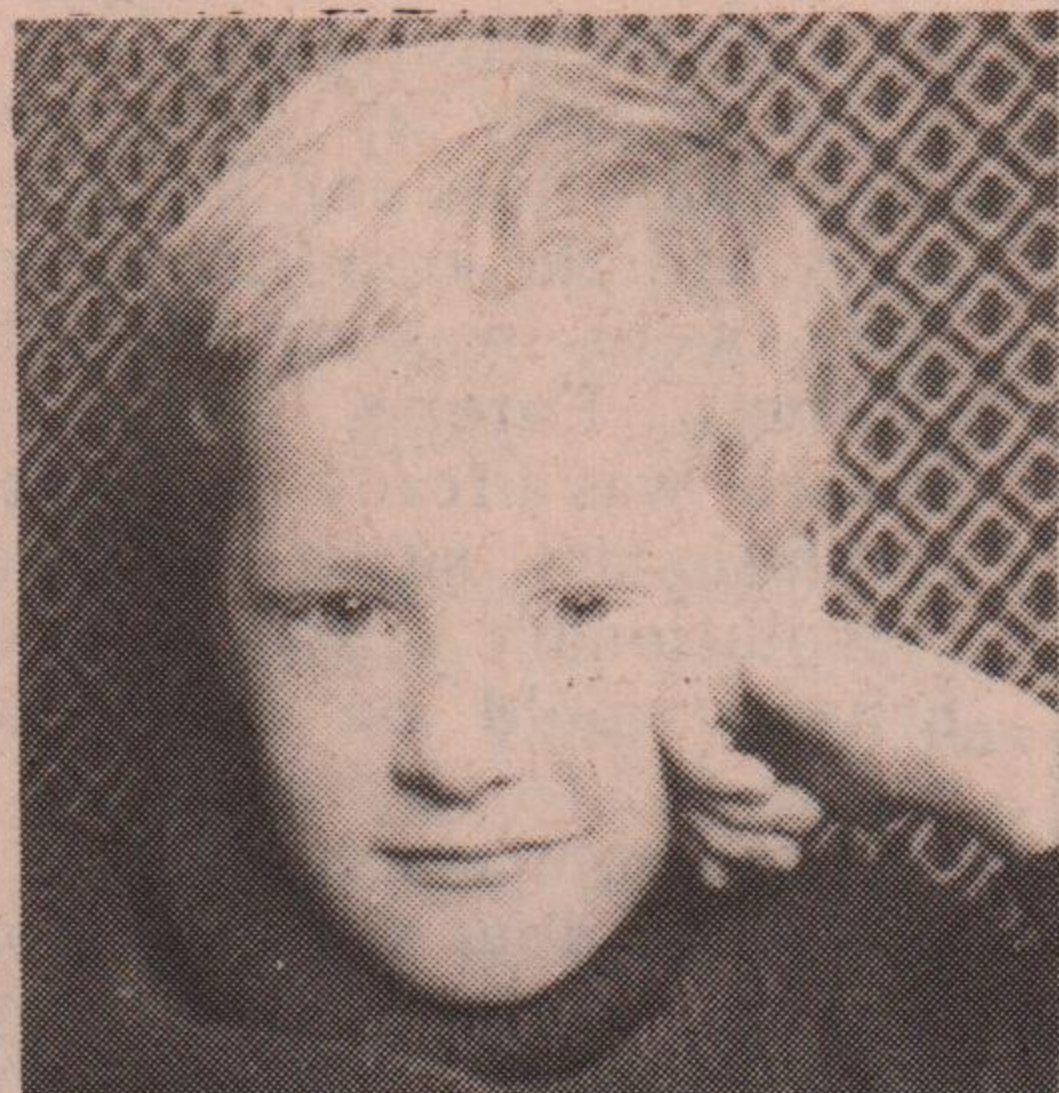
Their father and mother have been captured by a rich Gorak. A Gorak is a giant with horns as big as two televisions.

The caravan searches for two months. Once the big boy Arne touches some water with his finger and disappears. He is trapped under the water. They try to get him out, but fail.

Then the little girl says to Wicket, an Ewok boy, "wicket, use your magic stick" and he used it. It pulls the boy out.

Wicket was in "Star Wars".

Soon, they come to the rich Gorak. They find their way by Arne's magic stone. Arne had



thrown it away because he didn't know it was magic, but Wicket kept it for him.

To rescue their parents they have to go on the giant spider web. They have to cut it down because a big spider was on it.

Then they came to the Gorak's kitchen. They saw the Gorak's horrible face going Grrrr! Grrrr! Grrrr! at their parents. The parents were in a cage.

One Ewok was being stupid and he walked under a basket. They then got their father and mother out of the cage, but the silly Ewok died.

They punished the Gorak for killing their friend. He fell down the hole where the web was and got killed.

I liked Caravan of Courage very much. It reminded me of two things: A. The Thief of Baghdad, and B. Return of the Jedi.

The End.

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK

New issue now out, 20p plus postage from 8 Aubyn Square, London SW15.

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Scottish teachers

What tactics on pay?

Ian McCalman reviews the current state of the Scottish teachers' pay campaign, and continues a debate on tactics with Callum McRae (Socialist Organiser no.208).

I THINK the recent letter of Callum MacRae (SO 208) raises questions of general significance as to how socialists behave in the trade unions.

The call for a Pay Review campaign for Scottish teachers was initiated from within the Council of the EIS [the main teachers' union in Scotland] and came before the 1984 AGM of the EIS with the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

I and others within the Campaign for a Fighting Union (CAFU) decided that there were, on balance, sufficient arguments for supporting the Pay Review campaign as a tactic.

We were strongly attracted by the possibilities of initiating industrial action from August onwards and building up the combativity and consciousness of the membership through a series of escalating struggles. That perspective has proved to be correct.

Since the beginning of the session we have had a very effective ban on any curricular development for the new S Grade to replace the present O level and Higher exams.

George Younger, the Secretary of State, had invested a good deal of prestige and money in the launching of these new courses.

The devolved nature of the campaign has also enabled activists to intensify action at a local level. In Ayrshire there has been picketing of in-service courses and in Glasgow a tussle between Left and Right in the local leadership over a ban on administrative duties.

There have been two one-day strikes in the course of December, with an 80% turnout on the first day and hopefully an equally good response on the second day, December 12.

Finally, there is now to be a ballot on intensified industrial action in January with a strong "yes" recommendation from the Executive.

Keyed up

Never before in my 15 years of teaching have I seen the membership so keyed up for action on an officially-led wages campaign.

Would that have been possible without the Pay Review focus? We think not.

More likely we would have gone through the motions of drawing up a claim and then left it lying around, as we have seen the NUT do in England and Wales, until the annual ritual of pay-jousting began in February and fizzled out in April. It was precisely to avoid that scenario that we went for a Pay Review and have so far been vindicated in that.

Callum does not dispute any of the foregoing. But he raises the spectre of the Pay Review being a trojan horse for a pro-

ductivity deal which will trade off conditions of service for more money.

Surely Callum is guilty of a certain naivety on this score. He must know full well that wages and conditions of service are negotiated through the same body, and the management try to link the two issues on some sort of "productivity deal" at any time, irrespective of Pay Reviews.

There are added dangers of such an approach with the Pay Review tactic. So we in CAFU moved a resolution against any "trade off" at this year's AGM, and it only missed being endorsed by 30 votes.

We have not let up on that issue. As a platform speaker at a rally in Glasgow last week, I again spelled out the message that "we have nothing to sell", to strong support from the audience.

Non sequitur

Callum's remark about placing "our future wage levels in the hands of such an unaccountable committee" is a total non sequitur. The demand is for a Pay Review, comparable to the Houghton Report in 1974 or the Clegg Report five years later. It is not for a standing Pay Review Board which, as Callum knows, is completely against union policy as spelled out at previous conferences.

If the Pay Review demand is such a fiendishly clever manoeuvre dreamed up by the right wing in which the middle-headed CAFU supporters have become enmeshed, why is it that Younger should not have seized the offer with both hands? Why is it that he should have resisted since August, and now, after a good deal of sustained pressure, seems likely to reply in the negative?

Can it be that he realises that any such Review will reveal a 30% drop in real wages for teachers since 1974 and that this will then provide a focus around which teachers will mount an even more intense campaign of disruption?

We enter a truly Alice in Wonderland situation when Callum tells us that the extraction of such a Review from the Secretary of State would be a blow to Scottish teachers. That view can only have validity if it is based on the assumption that we will passively await its findings and their implementation or non-implementation.

Callum refers to a statement by "the leadership" (which body he does not say) that there will be a "moral obligation" on the government to honour the findings of such a Review. I doubt that a majority of the national executive believe that the government will hand us the findings of a Review on a plate. In any case, such innocence is not shared by CAFU, whose supporters have always been



Glasgow teachers' day of action against cuts in education. Photo: Rick Matthews (IFL)

well aware that a major campaign of industrial action will be needed to implement such findings.

From the beginning of this campaign CAFU supporters have spelled out consistently on paper and platform that the Pay Review campaign is a tactic, to mobilise the membership and provide a focus for the struggle. If, by the end of January, Younger is still holding out against a Review, then the focus must change to this year's claim to be submitted in February.

CAFU supporters gave notice of this change in emphasis at the November Council and will fight for that shift in focus by the February Council meeting.

In comparison to the record of CAFU — endeavouring to tie down the national executive to no "trade off"; initiating and leading action since August onwards, especially through our positions on the Glasgow Committee of Management; trying to grapple with the changing nature of the campaign — what has been the record of Lothian Rank and File? Monotonously to reiterate their demands for the NUT claim and all-out strike action.

Single scale

I have not read the fine print of the NUT claim. I gather, however, that it is not a simple "across the board £1,200 claim" as Callum suggests. It contains, I believe, much larger percentage increases for the promoted.

It certainly does not appear to be applicable without modification to Scottish conditions where we have fought a long battle for a salaries strategy which prioritises weighting towards the upper end of the unpromoted scales and the achievement of a single salary scale with a common maximum.

Once we have studied these issues fully, CAFU will formulate our view of the 1984/5 wage claim. We are not in the

business of mindlessly reproducing other people's slogans.

What of that other demand — "all-out strike action"? A recent Lothian Rank and File leaflet calls for "All out action in January"

R-r-revolutionary

I presume that means all out, indefinite, unpaid strike action from January 9 onwards. Why then was that specific demand not raised at the November Council meeting by Lothian Rank and File supporters?

How many schools in Lothian, or anywhere in Scotland, have passed that specific demand? (In how many has it been even put forward as a motion?)

I have not heard of any, but would be thrilled to learn that such an advanced level of consciousness existed among teachers. Or is it just another slogan dreamed up to prove how r-r-revolutionary its authors are?

Callum's points on the SWP are also germane to the argument. Callum refers to my "trying to exclude them [the SWP] from the organisation of a Scottish left teachers' conference".

Just for the record — I work amicably with members of the SWP in a local miners' support group. I have collaborated with SWP teachers to organise a meeting billed "Teachers in Support of the Miners" in Glasgow. And I have circulated to Lothian Rank and File and Dumbartonshire and Lanarkshire Action Groups a paper proposing a socialist teachers' conference on a delegate basis, specifically stating delegacy for the SWP proportionate to their influence in the union and their participation in the affairs of the organising bodies. I await a reply from Lothian Rank and File.

The politics of the SWP are intrinsic to this debate. CAFU and Lothian Rank and File emerged out of the break-up of the SWP-dominated Rank and File Teachers, abandoned in 1981/2 as part of that political group's sectarian binge.

Several of the people involved in both campaigning groups are former members of the SWP. Some have managed more than others to break from the economic and sterile dogmatism of the SWP. The politics of Lothian Rank and File remain strongly tainted by that residual legacy.

I know that Callum does not agree with that brand of politics in general; I can see no good reason why he should be influenced by them in this particular respect.

Militant invites witch-hunt

By Stan Crooke

AT its most recent meeting the General Management Committee of Springburn Constituency Labour Party (Glasgow) voted to shut down the constituency's Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS) branch, while further enquiries are made into events at the LPYS branch meeting of November 15.

The reason given was that at that meeting the Militant supporter chairing the meeting had allowed two non-Labour Party members to vote, in an attempt to ensure that Militant supporters were elected as delegates to the LPYS Scottish regional conference.

This decision by the CLP, backed by both the right wing and the Labour Co-ordinating Committee supporters, is a witch-hunting move. Militant deserves unconditional support against any witch-hunt.

But it must be said that Militant virtually invited the latest attack by the undemocratic machinations of its supporters. Socialists have to condemn such actions.

There are a number of other current examples in Scotland of Militant behaving less than democratically and then finding themselves on the receiving end of a witch-hunt.

The Labour Party Scottish Council has recently carried out a survey of Scottish LPYS branches to establish how many members they have. (It turns out that there are only 700 official LPYS members in Scotland — just over ten per branch). Anyone who believes that the LCC-dominated Scottish Council will not use the contents of the survey for witch-hunting purposes is naive in the extreme.

But Militant's protests are weakened by the bureaucratic manner in which it controls the LPYS and stifles attempts to set up the democratic forms of organisation which would have denied the Scottish Council the pretext for holding its survey.

The Scottish Council is also asking LPYS branches for details of how much money they have collected for the miners and stressing that all money collected should be sent to the

NUM itself (as opposed to individual pit villages). This constitutes an attempt to break the growing links between mining communities and the rank and file of the labour movement.

Yet it cannot be denied that Militant's ultra-sectarian behaviour in many miners' support committees and their subordination of support for the miners to their own factional concerns have left it isolated and wide open to attack on this issue from the Scottish Council.

And Militant has left itself open to attack in many other ways. The well-known refusal of the Militant-controlled LPYS paper Socialist Youth to print articles expressing non-Militant points of view, for example, must weaken its own denunciation of undemocratic attacks on itself.

Similarly, when Militant supporters in Glasgow Pollok CLP voted for the expulsion of a socialist (myself) and other Militant supporters in Glasgow Central CLP successfully opposed my attempt to re-apply for membership of that CLP that did nothing to strengthen its arguments against the expulsion of its own supporters.

Militant is 100% correct to say that a witch-hunt is underway in Scotland. When the latest issue of the LCC's Scottish magazine states that "nowhere else in the Party would such intolerance and sectarianism be accepted — there is no reason why we should accept it in the LPYS", it is clearly no merely an abstract attack on "intolerance and sectarianism" but a very specific attack on Militant as part of a general witch-hunt.

And Militant is also 100% correct to expect the serious left to defend it against this witch-hunt. But the serious left has consistently done this, even in the face of Militant's persistent refusal to involve itself in united opposition to witch-hunts.

What Militant cannot expect though, and what no socialist should be prepared to provide, is freedom from criticism for its factional, often dishonest sectarianism.

Labour women step up fight

By Josie Edwards

THE Annual General Meeting of the Labour Women's Action Committee, held on December 8 1984 in Birmingham, agreed to step up WAC's campaign for a fairer say for Party women.

Anne Pettifor moved to the key new post of National Organiser, to be replaced as Secretary by Judy Sadler. The organiser post has been created to increase WAC's influence in the unions, and to build on the great and growing support for WAC's aims among Labour women nationwide.

The AGM also voted for a new regional WAC structure, with representation nationally, to enable input into WAC's decision-making for Party women throughout the country.

The AGM also agreed to establish a network of supportive women at constituency

level to help feminist candidates for parliamentary seats to be selected.

WAC will be circulating a list of women candidates committed to transforming Parliament to represent more fully the interests of working class women.

Protesting at the rejection of the WAC slate of five women for the Women's Section of the Labour NEC by the arty and union men that elect the Women's Section, the AGM also resolved to support the same five women next year — Margaret Bennett, Clare Short, Diane Abbott, Frances Morrell and Joan Maynard. And it also voted to campaign for the Labour National Women's Committee to stage shadow election to the Women's Section, to take place at the 1985 Women's Conference.

Ally with the miners

By Callum McRae (EIS rep., in personal capacity)

SCOTTISH teachers in the EIS have threatened an escalation in the level of action over pay when the new term starts this week.

Action in the closing stages of last year took the form of a one-day strike followed by a week of 'rolling strikes' so that every member has now been involved in two days of strike action. (10-20% of membership scabbed, but for teachers an 80-90% turnout represents a high level of support).

There has been a lot of media support, and this has fed the idea that the 'militant moderation' of the EIS leadership has a real chance of success.

This new-found credibility for the leadership is undeserved. EIS general secretary John Pollock was happy enough to let a token one-off collection sheet for the miners go round schools with a routine EIS mailing a few weeks back — but now that teachers are taking strike action, Pollock denies any link between teachers and miners.

When the Lanarkshire president called for an anti-Tory alliance of miners, teachers, students and others, Pollock was onto the press with shameless speed to deny any such ideas.

A realistic strategy must involve serious, sustained industrial action in alliance with the miners.

Socialist Organiser

Conscript labour for 16 year olds



Tories set cuts targets

By Richard Bayley

which will obviously make it easier for the government to cut them at will.

The 18 councils on the rate capping hit-list face a variety of cuts. 13 of them are being ordered to cut their budgets by next April so as to correspond to a lower rate — Leicester council a 56% lower rate! Basildon, Merseyside, Thamesdown, Brent and Camden face budget cuts corresponding to slightly increased rates.

Jenkin's plan provoked complaints from Tory wets as well as protests from the Labour Party and trade unions. The government has, however, managed to head off any Tory back bench revolt by giving lenient grant terms to low-spending authorities, as well as proposing to re-allocate money

to these councils which will be gained by penalising high spenders.

Seven major trade unions, in a joint statement, claimed the proposals would cause the loss of 75,000 jobs. Leaders of Lambeth council, Ted Knight, (where a 10% cut is threatened) re-iterated his support for the illegal "set no rate" option, which he claimed would lead to the council running out of money within six weeks.

Patrick Jenkin says that he thinks Labour councils (which include 16 of the 18 on the hit list), will not go through with their policy on non-compliance with the cuts. But council trade unionists are organising to make sure that councils fight the Tory proposals — and that they ignore the advice of the Labour Party front bench to avoid illegality at all costs.

IN mid-December, Environment Secretary Patrick Jenkin announced details of the latest round of local government cuts. He announced the rate and expenditure targets for the 18 councils due to be rate-capped this year, as well as the 1985-6 Rate Support Grant settlement.

The government plans to cut grant to English and Welsh councils from last year's planned £11.9 billion to £11.8 billion. In real terms, this is a cut of 5%.

Even those councils not on the rate-capping hit-list face a tougher regime this year. The rate at which they lose grant for overspending is to be increased to 15% above the previous government guidelines, and consistent "overspenders" will be penalised on a totally separate scale. They face "moving" financial targets,

be scrapped first time round because school leavers and unemployed youth just wouldn't go on them.

The Tories' plan is to turn youth into a pool of cheap labour. Since 1979, 16-17 year olds have suffered a 6% cut in real earnings. Pay rises for school leavers have fallen up to 30% behind the increase in adult workers' pay in the same period.

Miserly

Bosses' representatives on the Manpower Services Commission are trying their hardest to make sure that a TUC-backed resolution that was passed in December to raise pay on YTS does not get implemented. The proposal was to raise the trainees' weekly allowance from £26.25 to a still-miserly £34.

TUC and the miners

Cont'd from front page

Last September the TUC Congress voted much stronger support to the NUM than the leaders wanted. That could happen again, if there were a

campaign for a recall Congress.

The General Council is not going to implement last September's decisions on solid-

arity — a recall Congress could get the ball rolling.

A much more effective push could also come from action from beneath — even if it was only for one day, and only included those workers who have solidly been behind the NUM from the beginning.

The NUM has the authority to name a date and call such a one-day strike. There would have to be a major drive to organise for it.

Thousands

But even if it involved only hundreds of thousands, it could change the situation — put pressure on the TUC, flex the muscles of the rank and file and increase confidence by showing what can be done.

In the meantime, support for the NUM from other trade unionists has to be increased at rank and file

level.

Fund-raising which slowed down over Christmas has to be re-started. Money is running low in the pit villages. And local support committees must organise hundreds of workers to join the miners on the picket lines.

STOP THE LESBIAN AND GAY BAN!
Lobby of Rugby Council meeting
Tuesday January 8
outside the Town Hall from 6.00 p.m.
Candle-lit march through town from about 8.00 p.m.
followed by rally

Socialist Organiser

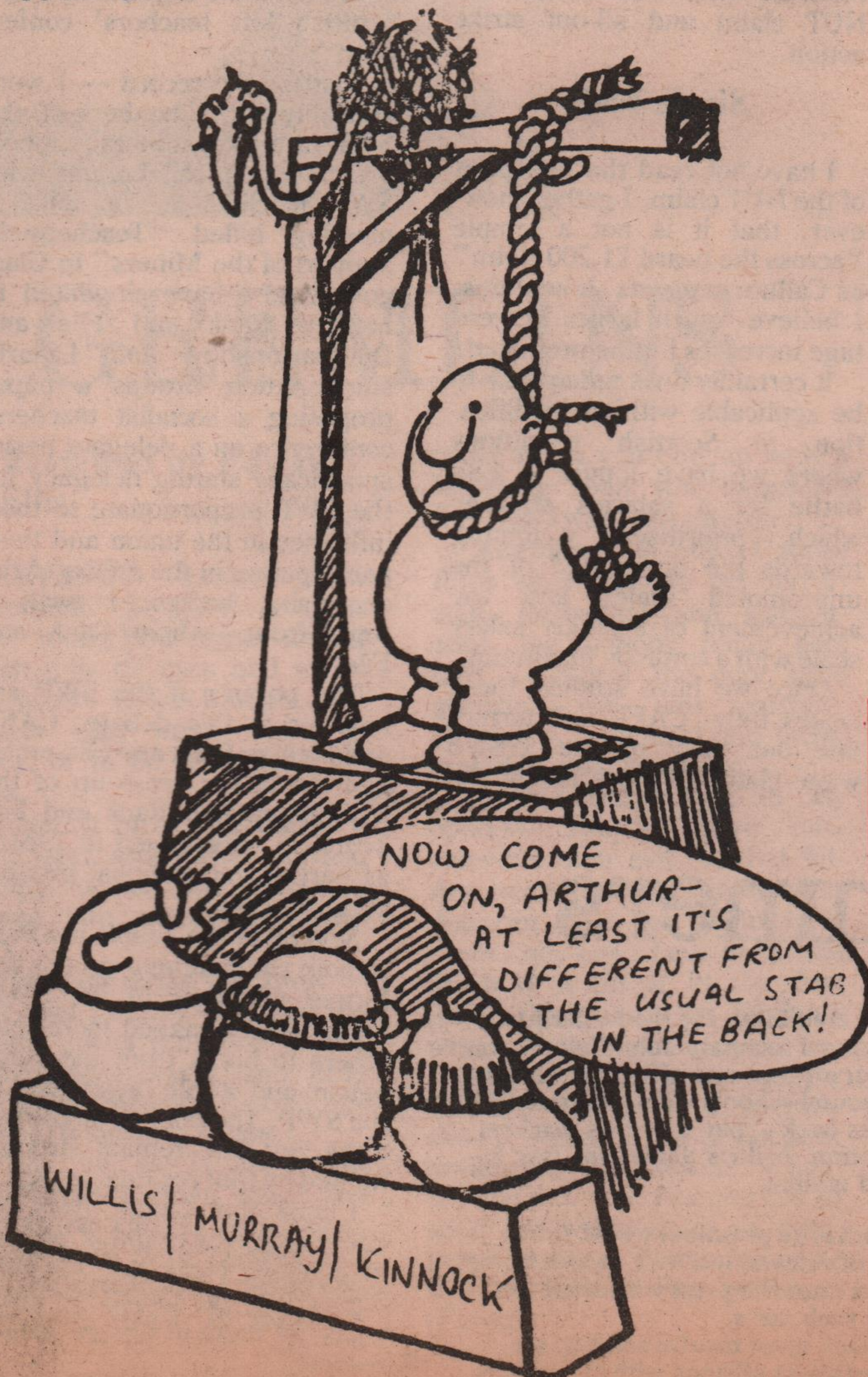
AT the last Socialist Organiser delegate meeting, on December 16, we discussed a checklist on paper sales for delegates to take back to their local groups.

Does every comrade in the local group sell the paper at work? Do they carry the papers with them all the time, or bring them out only occasionally for meetings?

How do you go about selling the paper at meetings — standing wearily at the door as people stream out at the end, or by arriving early and asking potential buyers individually?

Do you have a weekly round of regular door-to-door deliveries? Do you do estate sales? street sales?

Local groups will be discussing these questions and — we hope — coming up with new ways to raise their sales.



JUST before Christmas the Tories announced proposals to cut off supplementary benefit for 16-17 year olds.

Thatcher piously announced that "unemployment ought not to be a choice up to the age of 18". In other words, the government's Youth Training Scheme (YTS) is to be made compulsory — conscript labour.

Since the start of YTS, youth have been threatened with benefit cuts if they turned down schemes. If the Tory proposals go through, school leavers will have no choice whatsoever.

The government will have to launch a massive attempt to create new placements. Possibly it will re-launch YTS schemes in the armed forces, which had to



FUND

FUND income finally swelled from a trickle to a decent flow in the last two weeks of December, with a total of £267.30.

Thanks to: South London reader, £10; Surrey well-wisher, £10; Cheung Siu-Ming, £10; Ian Swindale, £2.50; Pete Gilman, £1; Stan Crooke, £3; Steve Harvey, £5; Bruce Robinson, £27.50; Juliet Rodgers, £2; Jim Denham, £20; East London reader £10; Geoff Ward, £1; Ivan Wels, £50; Ian Somerville, £1.80; overseas reader, £100; Glasgow readers, £13.50.

On the new premises we're still held up waiting for replies from the landlord's agents. We can hope for faster progress once the Christmas/New Year holiday is over.

In the meantime — this month we need £570 regular fund income to balance our regular budget, plus some extra that we can put aside into the premises fund.

Send donations to SO, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

Join the Labour Party.
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