

Bring down Thatcher!

BUILD REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP

THE CRISIS engulfing the National Health Service has revealed a deep social crisis that will only be solved by the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism.

The forces for this overthrow were present on the 100,000 strong 5 March TUC march in London, as well as amongst the 10,000 who marched in Glasgow on the same day.

All the anger against the Thatcher government was plain to see amongst the miners, teachers, hospital workers, students, seafarers, printers, council workers, old age pensioners, Ford workers, garment workers and others who took to the streets.

One thing was not present. A leadership willing to take this movement forward to victory.

BY THE EDITOR

The working class is sick and tired of Labour Party leaders who every week ask their ritual questions to Thatcher in the House of Commons, knowing what her answers will be.

They are sick and tired of trade union leaders who refuse to unite the working class for an all-out struggle to bring this

hated government down.

Like millions of workers, these leaders know that all the scientific and technical means to solve the acute problems of disease and sickness are available.

They remain unused because they are controlled by capitalist monopolies who are interested not in the health of ordinary people but in the profits of their corporations.

Thatcher's privatisation of the health service means that only the rich will be able to benefit from these advances. The poor, the unemployed, the sick will suffer second-rate treatment, or none at all. They will be

left to live in pain or to die.

Why do the Labour leaders refuse to take up a fight against Thatcher?

They are reformists. They use the working class to win minor concessions from capitalism, but when those concessions are no longer available they become policemen, disciplining the working class on behalf of the capitalist state.

They desperately want to confine the struggle of the working class to futile protests, knowing that this must eventually demoralise the class and lead to its defeat.

This was their strategy

throughout the miners' strike and the year long struggle of printers at Wapping.

The presence of both groups on the demonstration underlines yet again the failure of the trade union and labour leaders.

Tens of thousands of nurses, doctors and other health workers have for years struggled to patch up a crumbling health service. But it can no longer be patched up.

Attempts to keep the service going with inadequate resources leads to lack of attention for patients, growing waiting lists for those desperately seeking treatment and stress illnesses for the hospital workers.

The responsibility for this pain and suffering lies with those leaders in the movement who set out to break up

the fight against Thatcher

A new leadership must be built to replace these time-servers now at the head of the movement.

We must say loud and clear throughout the movement: 'Enough is enough! Either lead the fight against the Tory government or you will be removed.'

The 14 March strike must not remain yet another protest. One day actions must be supported. But they will not remove the Tory government or save the NHS.

Only the mobilisation of the full strength of the working class to bring down the Tories can do that.

The building of a leadership in the working class is the most decisive question of the hour. We urge you to join us in this task.



One hundred thousand turn out for 5 March TUC march for the NHS

Workers Press: a statement

1. In last week's Workers Press we were compelled to make clear that the cost of production of this paper has far exceeded the income from sales and fund. We have now decided to stop publication of the paper.

2. Our international work and the carrying of our policies in the rapidly mounting class struggle in Britain have made it imperative to develop new publications and new forms of work. Together with the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference of Trotskyists, we now intend to publish a theoretical magazine directed at the decisive question of revolutionary leadership — the resolution of the crisis of the Fourth International.

3. Our Party Congress on 20/21 February (see last week's Workers Press) brought a real advance in clarification of the urgency of the task of building the Fourth International, what kind of Party we are building, and of the political questions facing the working class. Rejecting this, a faction of some 10-12 people led by W. Hunter walked out.

4. The newly-elected Central Committee of the WRP meets on Sunday to discuss all aspects of the Party's work, including in particular the form of our publications after this week.

5. The political statement of the Central Committee will be published for all Party members, readers and supporters.

The Political Committee
Workers Revolutionary Party

Workers Press

Apartheid beckons to Moscow

IN a recent speech Mikhail Gorbachev elaborated on his conception on the projected Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. The Soviet government, he explained, was not going to insist on a pro-Soviet regime in Kabul before the army leaves, so long as the US doesn't demand a pro-American one.

This cynical move, with its complete disregard of the rights and interests of the people of Afghanistan, is as much in the long tradition of Stalinist treachery, as the Soviet invasion itself. It was received with rapturous applause in the western press. That was no surprise.

More interesting, however, was the response in Pretoria. General Magnus Malan, Botha's defence minister, took the opportunity in a speech last week of commenting on Gorbachev's remarks: 'We realise', he said 'that a future government in Angola, seen against the tension of East and West, must certainly follow a non aligned and neutral political attitude. South Africa is prepared to live with that'.

Of course, it would be naive to take such a statement at its face value. It is designed primarily to put pressure on the Americans, threatening to undermine Washington's plans in southern Africa, if the US does not give more direct backing to the apartheid regime.

But what is more important is the role that Botha's government sees for Moscow in southern Africa. South Africa's war against Angola gets more and more costly. Angolan forces, now with modern Soviet and Cuban equipment and backing, are forcing greater South African involvement behind the Unita guerrillas.

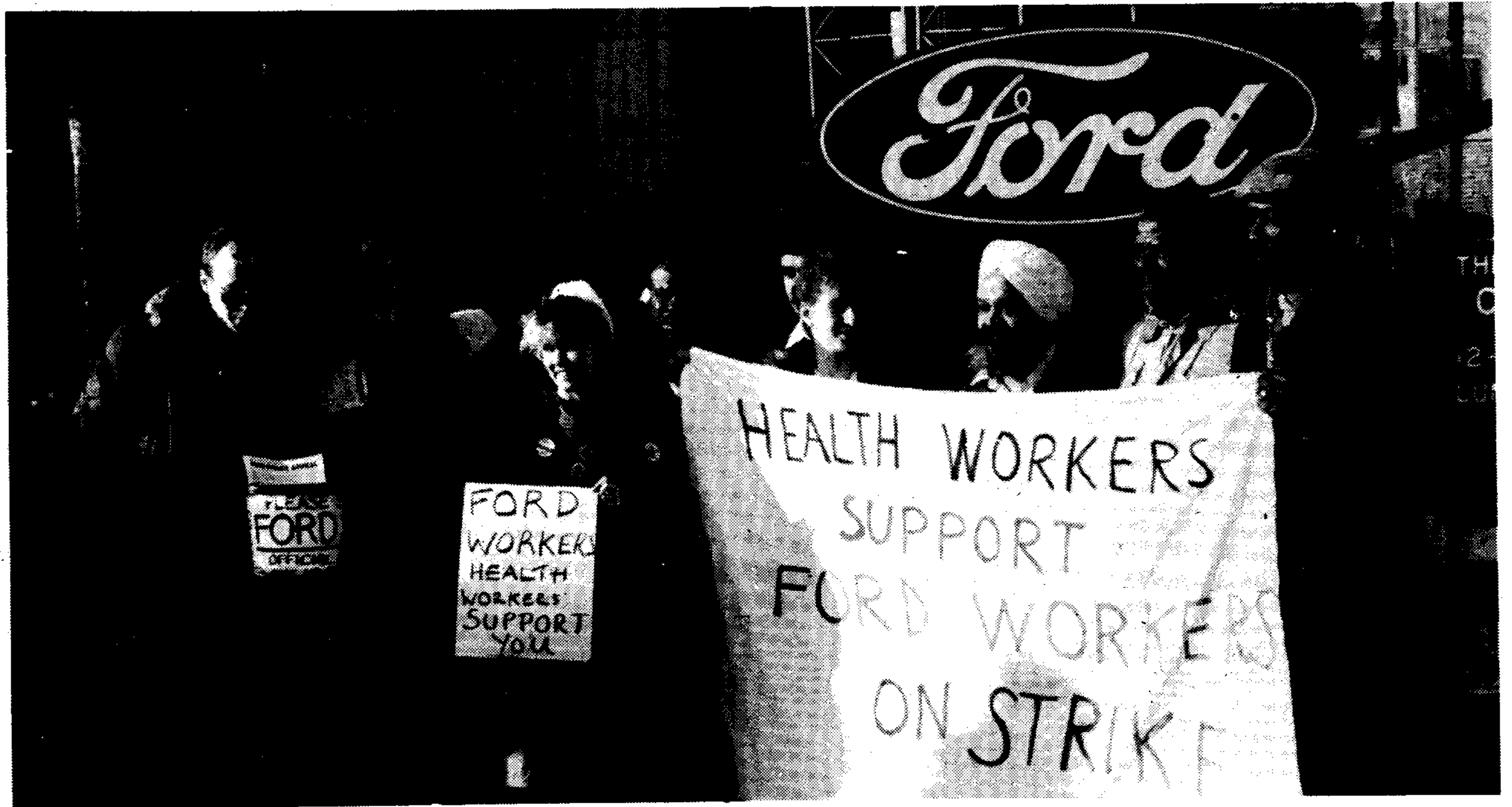
Botha and his friends never cease to express their hatred for communism. But Pretoria's signal to Moscow is clear: perhaps we can find agreement — even ditching Unita if necessary — in the face of the danger of revolution.

The support given by Moscow and Havana to the Angolan government since the defeat of Portugese imperialism was, on the surface, entirely progressive. But, like every other action of the Soviet bureaucracy, it must be seen in the context of the international character of stalinism. Every such 'progressive' action carries with it the opposite significance. All Moscow backing for anti-imperialist struggle becomes a bargaining counter in the deals of the bureaucracy with imperialism.

The real subject of the General's message is therefore the South African revolution itself. The fight to defeat and destroy the apartheid regime is inseparable from the world socialist revolution. As such, it must be threatened by the foreign policy manoeuvres of Moscow, which are aimed at the defence of the interests and privileges of the anti-socialist bureaucracy.

Every fighter for the liberation of southern Africa must take careful note of Malan's friendly wave to Gorbachev.

'Lefts' retreat at Fords



Joe Gordon on far right of picture

SHOP STEWARDS at Ford's PTA plant in Dagenham have carried a resolution by 20 votes to 19 that opposes any 'unconstitutional' action and backs the management in re-staffing jobs in dispute.

This resolution has now become shop steward policy and is being enforced in the plant.

At the moment the decision has been imposed on one section who have been put on six months' 'probation' and will apply to the whole plant when convenor Joe Gordon signs the document with the management.

Workers who now exercise their right to withdraw their labour in order to resist management attacks will not receive the stewards committees' backing and may be laid open to victimisation. Stewards who support their members taking such action are disowned.

This dangerous retreat

was proposed by convenor Joe Gordon and was supported by Steve Riley, newly elected 'Broad Left' member of the T&GWU executive, and is a capitulation to pressure from Ford's management.

Before and during the two week pay strike at Ford, Gordon had been under attack both by the company and union officials for giving a degree of support to stoppages in the plant.

This decision now means that the PTA stewards have the most collaborationist policy of any Ford plant in the UK, condoning scabbing if any sections walk out.

The fact that the apparently most 'mili-

tant' plant leadership in Ford's can surrender the rights of shop floor workers is confirmation of the dire crisis of leadership in the working class and the trade unions.

The developing struggles of the working class do not result in the increased determination of these leaders to fight, but in capitulation, turning them into the 'policemen' of the working class, collaborating with employers and state anti-union laws.

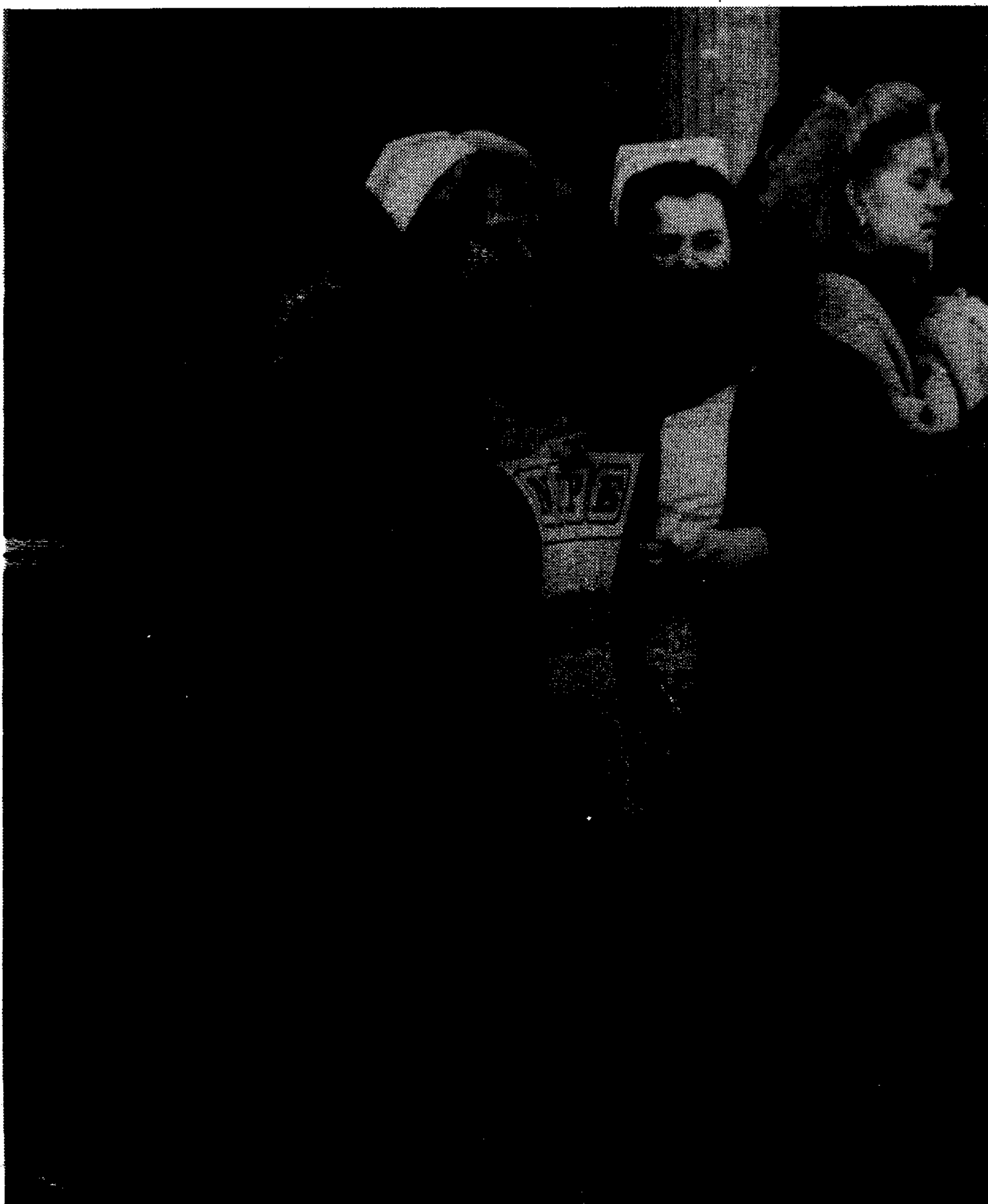
The fight in the unions is not just against the right wing but also against the 'lefts' who, like Airlie, use militant words to cover their betrayal.

This present retreat comes just after the signing of the two-year efficiency deal by the union leaders. The full details of this agreement and the 'undertakings' given to

Ford management by the union leaders have still not been made known to the shopfloor workers, three weeks after the strike ended.

The 'no-strike' policy fought for by Joe Gordon is believed to be part of a deal over implementation of the 'efficiencies', ie that if the unions police their members then Fords will not 'impose' changes but will negotiate them through these same plant leaders!

Ford workers must fight for the overturn of the PTA stewards' decision and the removal of plant leaders who collaborate with management. Out of this struggle new leaders must come forward in the fight for a political leadership in the working class, to fight both the offensive of employers like Fords and the Tory state attacks on the unions.



Currie's hot reception

LEICESTER HOSPITAL workers joined a demonstration at Leicester university on Friday in protest at a talk being given by Edwina Currie Tory Minister for Health.

David Ward, from NUPE, told Workers Press that four NUPE members and four nurses had come to represent the hospital workers when they heard of the demonstration.

'Currie is only a prop in the Tory system,' he said 'we're not just against her but the whole Tory system. The NHS is changing dramatically now. Most of the doctors support our struggle, as they see the need to defend the NHS.'

Two nurses from the Leicester Royal Infirmary, Rachel Bullen and Mandy Graham said: 'She never comes to the hospitals, so we're here to make a fuss to make people realise that we don't support her views. We need more funds and we need them now. We're sick of low staffing levels, untrained staff, bed closures and privatisation.'

Rob the poor give to the rich

STAFF employed by Scotland's regional councils start knocking on doors in April, to register families for the Tories' poll tax.

In every home, they will nominate a responsible person (the 'man of the house' the person who answers the door?) who has to give details of all residents and update them as time goes by.

If the family's grown-up son leaves to live with friends, it has to be reported. If he moves back in because things don't work out, or if elderly relatives move in, it has to be reported.

And if a political refugee arrives from another country... it has to be reported — and the register, more detailed than the census itself, will be publicly available.

You can appeal against being a 'responsible person'. But if your appeal is turned down, and you don't keep the authorities informed, £50 is slapped on your first poll tax payment. It's not a fine, you don't go to court: it just appears on the bill.

There are ways of blocking the poll tax. You can deny being the person named, if asked. You can appeal against being the 'responsible' person which at least clogs up the procedure.

Or, like the most determined anti-poll tax activists, you can refuse to register. This policy is being advised by the Scottish Tenants' Organisation. The Edinburgh-based Labour Movement Campaign Against the Poll Tax, set up in December, are campaigning for it actively.

Refuse

In Govan, Glasgow, four community councils have published a leaflet saying: 'Refuse to register. Not everyone wants to do this, but it is the strongest immediate expression of opposition. Don't return the registration form you will be sent. Tell the poll tax registration officer that you are not in conscience willing to collaborate with an unjust law or give information on others.'

The labour and trade union bureaucracy is more unsure how to deal with the poll tax issue, which is bringing working class communities, and 'non-political' people, into conflict with the Tory government on a massive scale.

On the final agenda of this weekend's Scottish Labour Party conference in Perth are no less than 31 resolutions against the tax. All urge a campaign against it, but none of the trade union motions call for a non-payment campaign. One amendment from UCATT even claims 'illegal actions would... deny us the support of the mass of people'.

But strong resolutions from the Edinburgh CLPs, and from Livingston, Linlithgow, East Kilbride and Strathkelvin and Bearsden CLPs, call for industrial action and mass demonstrations, for regional councils to re-

fuse to prosecute individuals who won't pay, and for all local authorities to refuse to provide information for the register.

In addition, they insist on a democratically-organised 'Stop It' campaign open to a broad range of individuals. A campaign of non-payment, say these branches, should be prepared now in the event of other measures against the tax being unsuccessful.

The conference will be lobbied on Saturday lunchtime by the supporters of the Labour Movement Campaign Against the Poll Tax.

A coalition of all opposition parties in Scotland — not only Labour but the capitalist Scottish Nationalist Party, what's left of the SDP and Liberals, and churches — has been brought together under the chairmanship of Scottish TUC secretary Campbell Christie, to decide what to do about the Poll Tax.

On a local level, the Labour Party and Communist Party are divided. While Brian Wilson, one of the leading lights of

'Stop It' has opposed any illegal action from the outset, the Edinburgh group are demanding a national conference to try to overturn this policy. They are concerned that the official line will be used as an excuse by the Labour leadership to stifle strong rank-and-file action.

This issue hits at fundamental working class rights and civil liberties like nothing else that Thatcher has done. No wonder they are not introducing the tax in the north of Ireland — a part of the 'United Kingdom' where traditions of civil resistance runs deep.

Workers Press says:

- Demand that Labour councils refuse to cooperate with the tax. In areas like Strathclyde, where Labour councils command huge majorities and have already agreed to introduce computers and employ staff to operate the tax, these decisions must be reversed.

- Build a campaign in the labour movement. Demand the Scottish TUC and TUC liaise with council and civil service unions to find ways of non co-operation with the tax.

- Labour councils and community organisations must draw up plans for local government funding based on ability to pay, to avoid job losses and cuts in public spending, and take control of how the money is spent.

- Committees must be built in the community to resist. Don't pay the poll tax.

Coal in jeopardy

George Bolton, Euro Communist Area President of the Scottish National Union of Mineworkers, claimed to see 'a chink of light' and a secure future for 4,000 mining jobs in Scotland following Wednesday's announcement of further talks between the South of Scotland Electricity Board (SSEB) and British Coal.

The announcement coincided with a mass lobby of parliament by Scottish miners, protesting against the electricity board's threat to end its contract with British Coal thus jeopardising the whole future of the Scottish coalfield.

They feel that the government and British Coal are merely using the soon-to-be privatised SSEB as a stalking horse for their plans to end deep-mined coal production in the area and sell off the profitable open cast operations.

And they are horrified that Bolton and area secretary Eric Clarke, an NEC member of the Labour Party, are refusing to warn of this possibility and to organise resistance.

It is widely believed that Bolton — who recently announced acceptance of the closure of the Seaford Colliery, Fife before the men had even had a chance to vote — has no policy other than offering to capitulate over six day working and flexible shifts.

The prostration of the Scottish area leadership was further exposed last weekend when it was revealed that Scottish miners had voted — against the national trend — to support president Arthur Scargill by maintaining their over-time ban.

Forced to murder

YOU can either serve with the South African army shooting black people in Soweto and Namibia, or you can serve in the Israeli army shooting kids in Gaza.

That's the choice which three English judges have given to Steven Miller, a young white South African, who asked for political asylum in Britain.

Miller came to this country because he does not want to serve in the racists' army fighting for the Apartheid system against the Black masses.

But the three Appeal Court judges in London have ruled that Miller is not eligible for political asylum, because if he does not wish to return to South Africa and be conscripted, he can, as a Jew, go to Israel under the Zionist state's 'Law of Return'.

Miller accepted that he has no wish to go to Israel either. (He has been there, which is doubtless reason enough). But this did not alter their decision.

The Steve Miller case is part of the ongoing struggle for the right of South African war resisters to take refuge abroad.

The judges' decision typifies the worsening treatment of refugees in general under the Thatcher government, seen most graphically in the brutal handling of Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka.

Those fleeing Khomeini's regime in Iran could be next. Lawyers dealing with refugee cases have heard that the Tory government intends to tear up interna-

tional and EEC conventions if necessary to pursue its racist immigration policies.

If the Miller case is allowed to become a precedent, what you also have in effect is legalised anti-Jewish discrimination in Britain, in the form of 'compulsory Zionism'.

The immediate consequence of the case is that Steve Miller is being told that if he does not want to serve in the South African racists' army, he must face conscription into the Israeli army instead, whose brutal repression of the Palestinian people has shocked the world.

Last week, a reader wrote to Labour's shadow Foreign Secretary and former shadow Home Secretary Gerald Kaufman MP, expressing concern over the Miller case and urging that it be raised. The reply he got was that Mr. Kaufman could not intervene as the case did not involve one of his constituents.

Just as incredible has been the silence so far from the national Anti-Apartheid movement and similar bodies. They are aware of the Miller case, yet are not giving it publicity nor organising any campaign.

There are posters around London from the Committee of South African War Resisters supporting Dr. Ivan Thoms, who is on trial in South Africa for refusing to serve in the forces. They are advertising tee shirts.

Fine. But what is being done about the British state and judiciary acting as military policeman for the Apartheid regime and the Zionist 'Iron Fist' occupiers?

Stirling response

UNION delegations from as far apart as Ross and Cromarty and Ayr took part in last Saturday's 10,000-strong march through Stirling against privatisation in the Scottish health service.

The demonstration was greeted by a huge banner strung across the windows proclaiming 'Raploch supports the NHS workers', as it set off from a housing scheme on the outskirts of the town.

Patients and staff from a small geriatric hospital along the route lined up in the cold to applaud as the marchers went by. Shoppers also warmly welcomed the demonstration into the city centre, many voicing their own reasons why they would like to see the back of the Tory government.

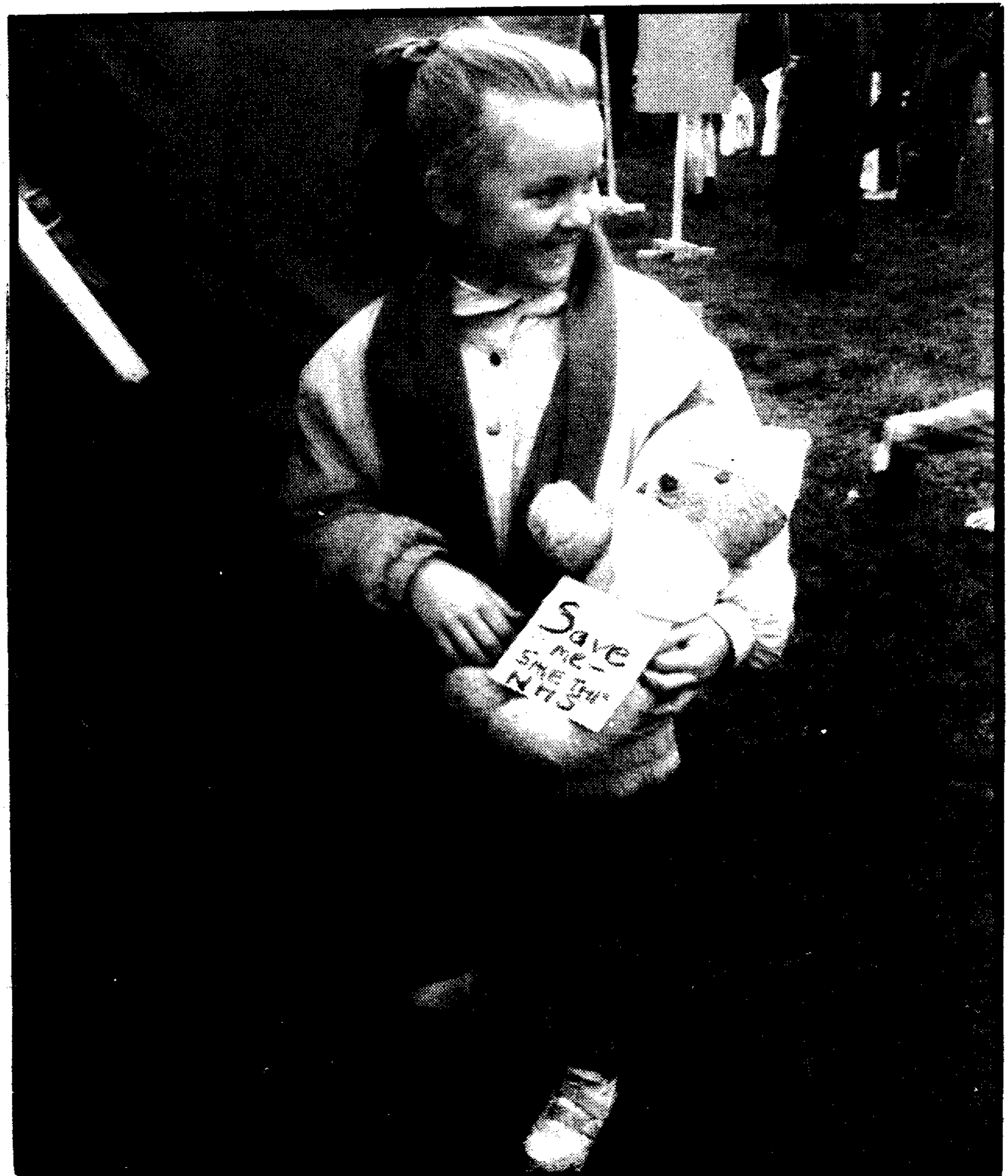
Motherwell NUPE branch were one of the many militant delegations who had also taken part in the Scottish NHS day of action ten days previously. 'We must keep up the momentum now,' said branch secretary Cathy McCann. 'We need to involve the public at large. We are not just a single group as the miners were — everyone is involved in this fight. I would go along with the call for a general strike.'

Cathy's feelings were echoed by many individuals on the march, from sections as diverse as firemen, busmen, printers, engineers, seamen, dockers, builders, tobacco workers and teachers. The EIS teachers' union in particular had mustered a very large and im-

pressive delegation which was much appreciated by the health workers.

But the marchers found precious little inspiration from the speech by STUC secretary Campbell Christie at the rally which ended the demonstration. Offering no perspective for extending the anti-privatisation action among hospital workers, let alone among other trade unionists, Christie claimed that the demonstration was one against 'extremism' — as though a 'reasonable' Tory government was both possible and acceptable!

He said in a time-honoured formula, that this was 'only the start of a long campaign' by the STUC. But to speak of a long campaign in this context is highly irresponsible, since the deadline for tenders for ancillary services to be submitted to the Scottish health boards is less than a month away. And some union branch officials, such as one from Glasgow's Western Infirmary GMBATU branch, have publicly admitted that their unions are discussing specifications for a tender — presumably with STUC blessing.



A youthful demonstrator on the Stirling march for the NHS

International Women's Day

Lenin, in conversation with Clara Zetkin:
 'We must by all means set up a powerful international women's movement on a clear-cut theoretical basis.'
 'It is clear that without Marxist theory we cannot have proper practice.'
 'Here, too, we Communists need the greatest clarity of principle. We must draw a sharp line between us and all other parties.'
 (from 'My Recollections of Lenin' by Clara Zetkin)

AS MUCH as we look around at all the 'celebrations' taking place on 8 March, almost nothing remains of the original political content of International Women's Day.

To go back in history we find in 1907 the first International Socialist Women's Conference, in Stuttgart.

This came into being through the struggle of Clara Zetkin (the editor of 'Die Gleichheit' ('Equality')) who became the international secretary of the International Women's Committee at the founding conference at which Lenin took part.

Over a period of 25 years, from 1891, Clara Zetkin wrote many articles in which she fought the bourgeois women's liberation movement and argued for an orientation towards the proletarian woman's struggle to become a total human being.

This struggle is clearly not directed against the privileges of the male world but against the power of the capitalist class.

'The proletarian woman,' she wrote, 'cannot attain her highest ideas through a movement for equal rights for the female sex but by fighting for the emancipation of labour.'

In 1892 the 'Gleichheit' sold 2,000 copies and in 1913 had 147,000 subscribers.

At the second conference of the Socialist Women's International, in Copenhagen, Clara Zetkin's proposal was accepted to carry out demonstrations on 8 March to fight on International Women's Day for the rights and socialist liberation of women and to lead the revolutionary forces in the proletarian women's movement in the struggle.

In 1911 one million women took to the streets against the imperialist war preparations and for socialism.

The international character was emphasised and the reason for the war explained in the social antagonism in the capitalist form of production.

In March 1915 delegates came from Germany, England, France, Holland, Italy, Poland, Russia and Switzerland

the Second International.

Clara Zetkin was arrested for 'attempted high treason' but released after three months because of ill health.

Demonstrations of many thousands were brutally dispersed by the police. Often women with their children in the forefront thought this would stop the armed intervention of the police.

The October Revolution of 1917 brought about a world historical turning point. Clara Zetkin greeted this triumph of Bolshevism, full of excitement.

BY TRUDI JACKSON

to a socialist women's congress in Berne.

Nadia Krup'skaya represented the Bolsheviks and a draft resolution by Lenin condemned social chauvinism as well as centrism, and called for a changing of the imperialist war into a revolutionary civil war.

More than 100,000 copies of the manifesto were distributed in Germany.

In 1917 the opportunist and centrist leaders closed down 'Die Gleichheit' which had not ceased to expose the treacherous politics of

We can still read the discussion Clara Zetkin had with Lenin in 1920 and the Third Communist International decided in its first days of existence how the question is to be drawn into and become a part of the revolutionary struggle of the working class.

After Lenin's death Clara Zetkin was robbed of her influence and died in 1933, at 76 years of age.

The foundations and history of the international revolutionary com-



CLARA ZETKIN

munist women's movement have to be reconquered.

In 1884 Engels wrote 'The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.' The October Revolution was to secure the rights of women, to have access to all forms of economic and cultural work. The functions of the family were to be completely absorbed by institutions of the socialist society, uniting all generations in solidarity and mutual aid.

Private domestic work became converted into public production.

With the emergence of the Stalinist bureaucracy the Revolution was betrayed and women were made to return to their pots and pans — to the old slavery.

The people were forced by the bureaucracy to glue together again the shell of the broken family.

To come up-to-date, for the first time a critical article about the 'new men society' was published recently in the USSR.

The Russian novelist, Maya Ganina, wrote 'As long as I live, I am hop-

ing', which was published in the literary magazine 'October'.

She describes how people are arrested when they protest about the abuse of power, how women in the USSR have to work double; in the fields, on building sites and factories as well as housewives and mothers.

In the countryside conditions are especially difficult where wood is still used for heating and water is hand-pumped.

Clothing and footwear are of very poor quality. The shops are frequently empty and, as payment by goods has disappeared, money is unable to buy anything.

Women are working 12 to 14 hours a day in the factories with no time off. They complain of being hungry and of feeling the cold, wearing only torn clothing.

Not a single woman is in the Politbureau and there is only one on the Central Committee: the secretary for social work and women's questions, Alexandra Biryukowa.

'Let us be honest,' the author says: 'There are no equal opportunities for boys and girls.'

With the rebuilding of the Fourth International along the lines fought for by the Preparatory Committee, the programme for the political revolution to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy in the deformed and degenerate workers states must be advanced. In capitalist countries we defend the gains of October and go forward to the victory of world communist society and the liberation of mankind.



Textile worker's strike 1903-1904

Exploitation of school-age workers

BY BERNARD FRANKS

EXPLOITATION of the labour of school age children and young people exists in Britain on a massive scale across a wide range of employments.

Protective legislation governing children at work exists but 'is a mess' and 'being broken systematically every day' according to a new report from the Anti-Slavery Society: 'School Age Workers in Britain Today'.

Possibly two million young people, or 30 to 40 per cent of 10 to 15 year olds, are in jobs ranging from the 'traditional' paper rounds, baby-sitting and milk rounds to the long hours and sustained exploitation of markets, shops and supermarkets, clothing sweatshops, hotels, restaurants and cafes, petrol stations and car washes, building, hairdressing and farming.

The Society's interviews of 449 young people (238 boys, 211 girls) found individual examples of work on mini-cab switchboards, in fairgrounds, mending roofs, loading vans and picking up litter.

Around 10 per cent had more than one job and a few had a combination of several.

Homeworking and work in their parents' business also featured and in fact involved some of the worst cases of hardship.

Girls especially were found spending most of their leisure hours helping their mothers on piecework operations in the garment trades.

Why do they work? Many interviewed said that it gave them something to do or that they needed the money to live on equal terms with friends. However, there was evidence that many were contributing indirectly to the income of poor households by easing the pressure of their own needs, particularly for clothing and food.

The report warns against the assumption that young people are not likely to be seriously exploited or endangered. It quotes other findings which show them to be grossly overworked and underpaid (Tynemouth school survey) while nearly a third of boys and 29 per cent of girls reported some accident or injury received at work (Low Pay Unit).

Its own conclusion is that most children in Britain who work do so illegally: they are too young, their hours are too long and they are in occupations barred to them by local bye-laws.

The paper-round

This is the most common job to be found among children. By-laws in all parts of the country stipulate no work before 7 a.m. yet

according to the report 'there is scarcely a corner of Great Britain where the law is not being broken'. Rounds beginning at 6a.m. and 6.30a.m are not unusual.

Payments ranged from a 13 year old Glasgow boy earning £20 from 5 separate rounds to two 14 year old girls in Nottingham receiving 27p an hour for a 12 hour week. Recent cases have indicated real dangers of serious assault and worse, of young people working alone outside daylight hours.

Milk rounds

Boys of 12 to 14 years of age were found earning £1 to £1.25 an hour beginning work at 5a.m. A 13 year old Cardiff boy earned just £6 for a 22 hour week.

Markets, shops and supermarkets

Many young people enjoy market work and can earn £2 to £2.50 an hour.

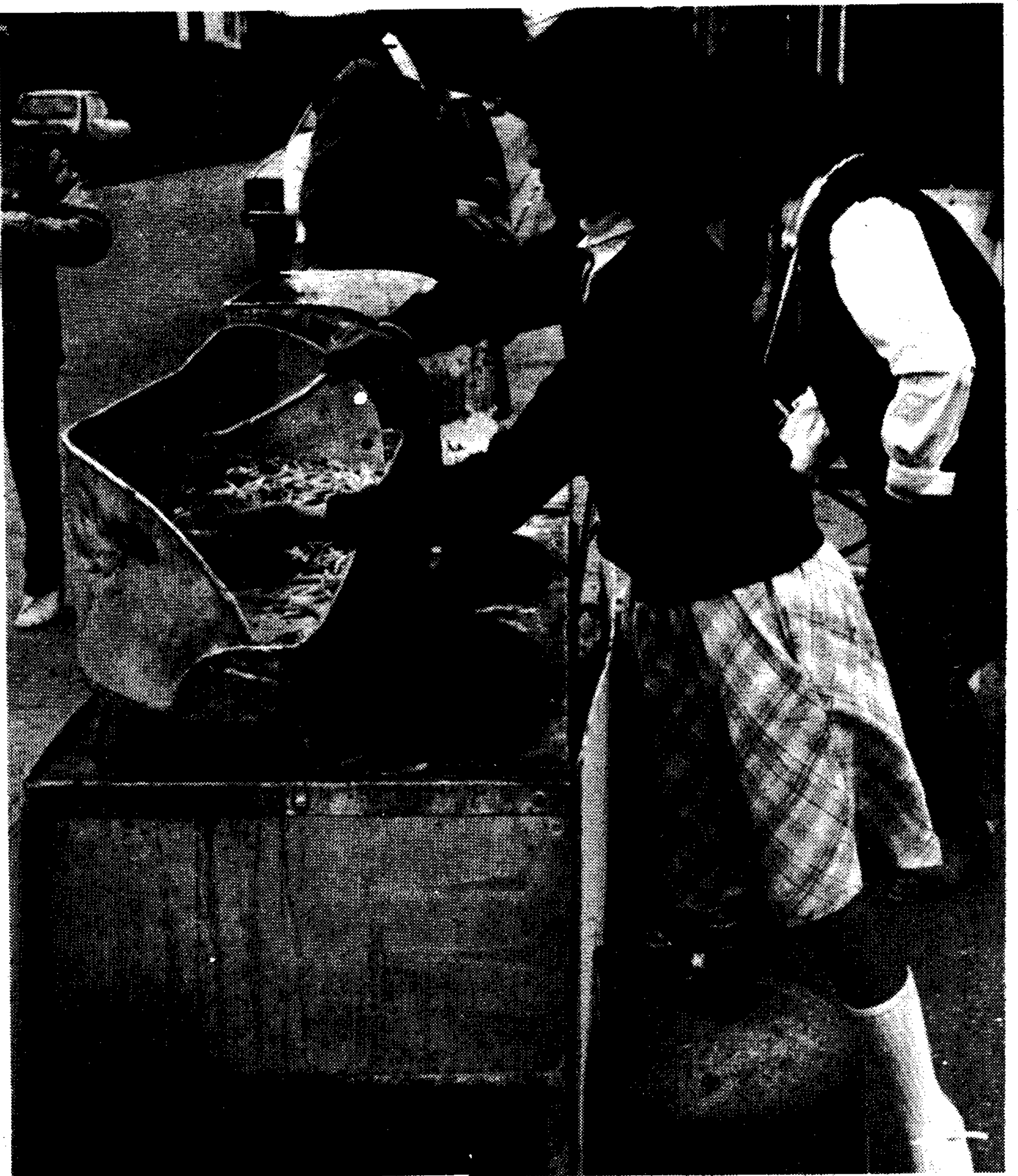
90 of the young people spoken to had jobs in the retail trade. Mostly they are on extremely low pay and have hours of work that contravene the bye-laws.

Hotels, restaurants and cafes

Although totally prohibited by all by-laws from working in commercial kitchens, young people were found washing up, cleaning and preparing food as well as making beds, vacuum-cleaning and waiting at table.

Hairdressing

Seven girls between the ages of 13 and 15 worked for hairdressers. Only one men-



Young girl selling shrimps on a Saturday

tioned any attention paid to safety in what is a dangerous environment.

Petrol stations and car washes

Eleven boys and seven girls either helped in garages — cleaning, sweeping, changing tyres — or in car wash businesses which rely heavily on child labour. Wages were around £1 per hour and scant attention was paid to safety, yet working in indoor car washes, children spend several hours inhaling carbon monoxide fumes.

Farming

The most dangerous industry after the building trade. High technology leads to horrific deaths and injuries. Some of these are children. One fifteen year old from the fens cleaned out pigs for five hours a day at weekends for £1.50 per hour and he also drove tractors which is illegal.

Van work

This can be the heavy work of loading and unloading and can be dangerous in terms of leaping on and off moving vehicles. Just over £1 an hour was a common wage.

Hours of work

The report states: 'We found between five and eight hours was normal for a Saturday job though a few worked 12-hour stints.'

Accidents

In 1985 the Low Pay Unit found that 30.8 per cent of 1,712 children interviewed had suffered some kind of injury at work.

Appalling exploitation of children in factories, mines and mills in the 19th century led to major battles for protective legislation. Furious industrialists fought a rear-guard action to protect their right to employ six and nine year olds for a 72 hour week at a wage of three shillings (15p) a week.

The report lists what it terms a patchwork of laws which are supposed to provide protection today. In fact the system is shot full of holes — 'the lack of uniformity of the multitude of by-laws and provisions make for confusion and uncertainty' while 'anomalies are legion'.

In addition enforcement appears to range from the minimal to the non-existent.

The three bodies responsible — the environmental health officers, the health and safety inspectors and the education welfare officers (EWOs) — give only the

smallest fraction of their time to child employment 'and what little surveillance is carried out is done mainly by EWOs working in their own time on voluntary patrols.'

Prosecution rates are low (12 London boroughs surveyed had not prosecuted a single employer in the previous three years) and no national statistics are kept.

Meanwhile children work in hairdressing salons where there are strong chemical fumes, in kitchens with powerful processing machines and in garages dodging among moving vehicles. It has also come to light that under-age young people have been exposed to high levels of radiation in factory work, for example in the dismantling of obsolete trim phones which have luminous dials utilising radioactive tritium.

The Anti-Slavery Society's recommendations are farcical in the extreme — join CBI-TUC guidelines, a 'government-led' poster campaign, a parliamentary select committee and the appointment of local ombudsmen.

But exploitation is fundamental to capitalism, no incidental, and its agencies will do nothing willingly to interfere with the processes. As long as private enterprise continues it is down to the labour movement alone to force adherence of employers and extension by government of existing law while ensuring that young people who come within the legislation are fully organised and receive proper pay, guaranteed condition and total safety protection a work.



Child workers in the coalmines USA 1911

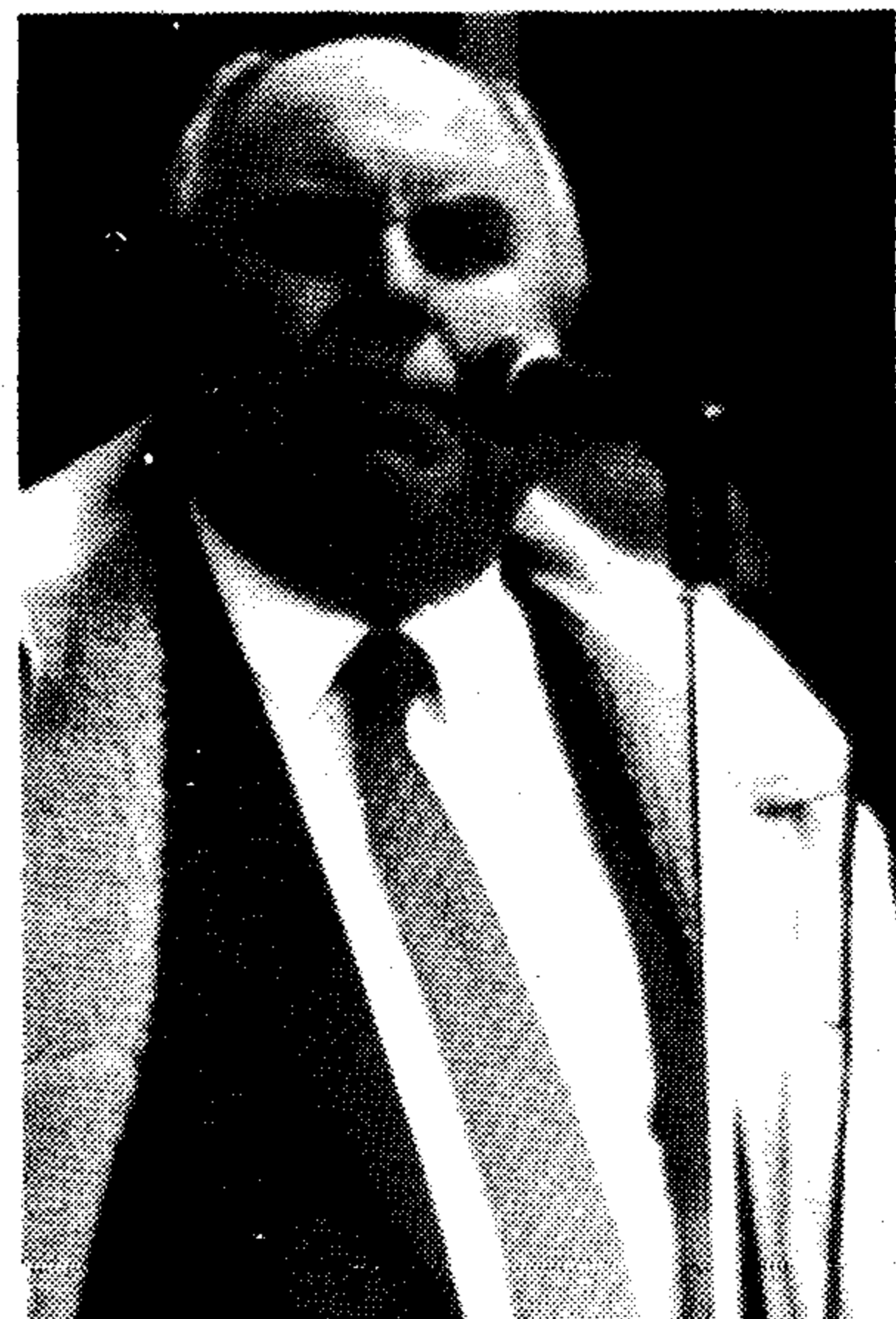
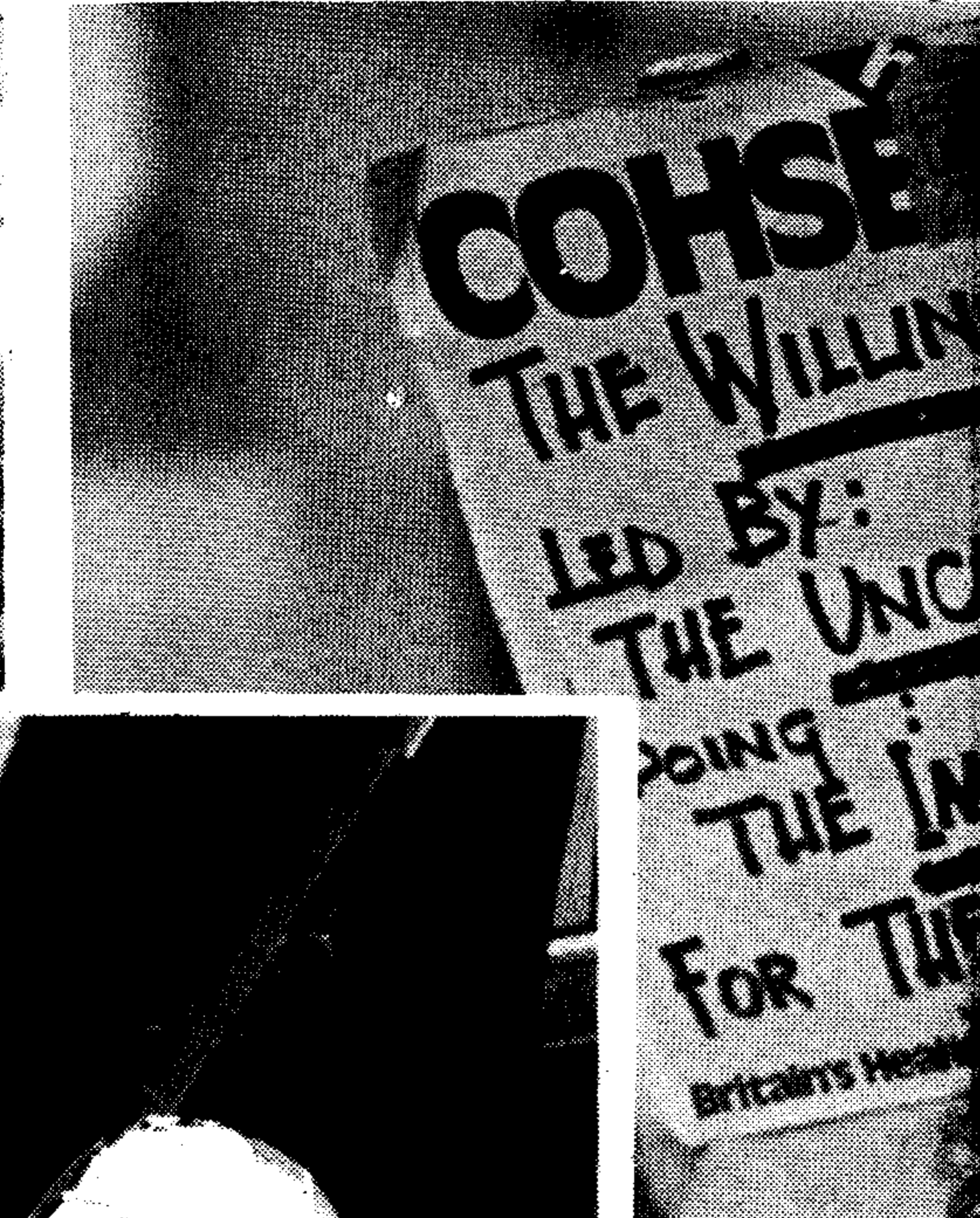
● Colin, aged 15, lives on a large housing estate near Perth, Scotland. He works every evening and Saturday morning in a local cash-and-carry. His job consists of loading customers' cars, unloading delivery vans and filling shelves. For a seven and a half hour week he earns £20. He gets home at 9.30 p.m. each evening, then eats. Homework begins at 10 p.m.

● The lowest pay encountered was received by

Stuart, a 13 year old working in a garage. He spends all his free time there taking tyres off cars, making tea, cleaning and running errands. For a 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. day (at week-ends and in school holidays) the proprietor pays him £2 (22p per hour).

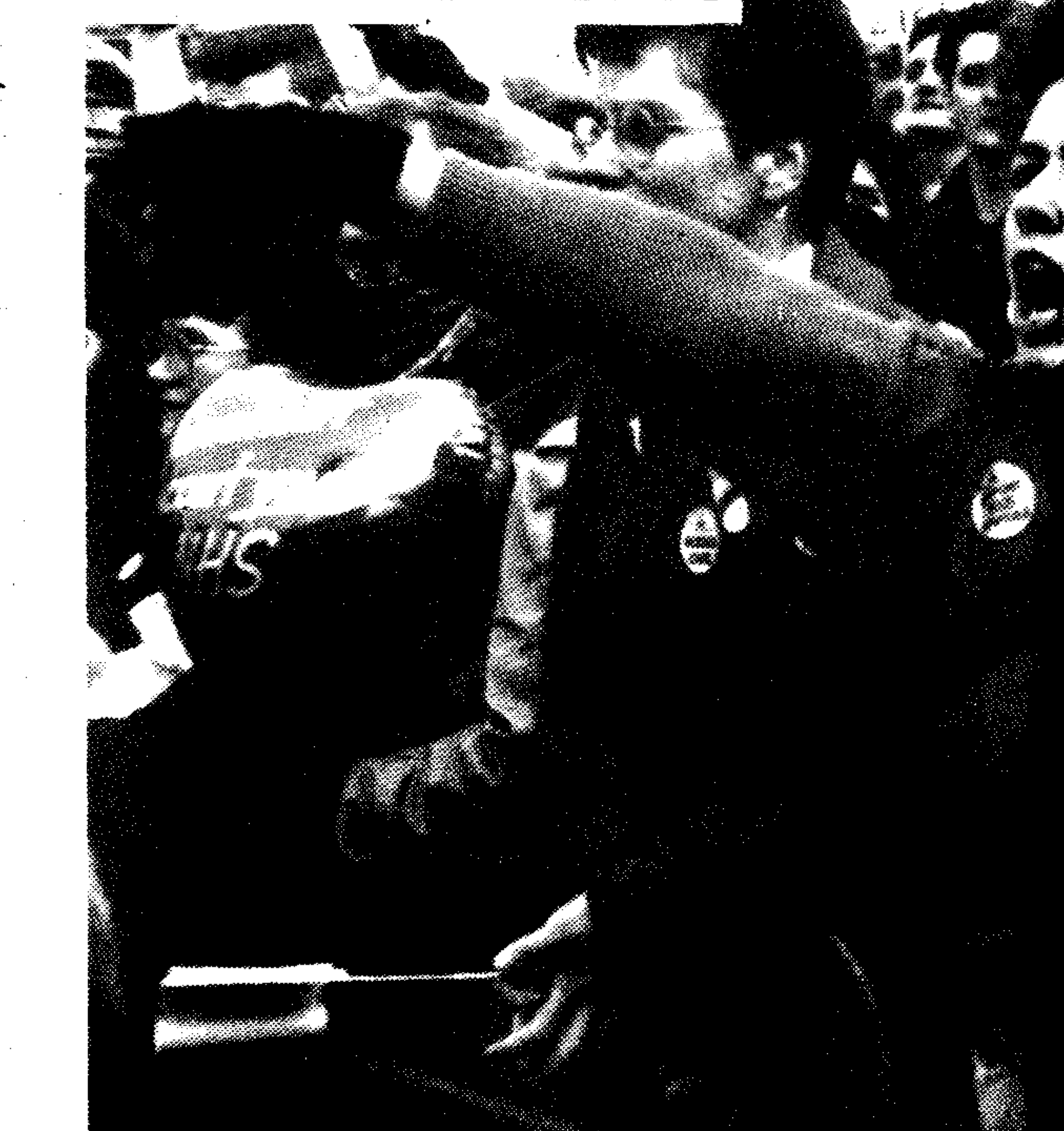
● Martin, 14, from Leicester works Friday and Saturday evenings 6 p.m. to 11.30 p.m. in a restaurant washing up and helping to clear away. He gets a meal and £10 for each evening.

TUC MUST CALL GENERAL



Clockwise from top left

- Arthur Scargill and Mark Jones (father of Davy Jones, killed on the picket line during the miners' strike) push an NUM banner. The experiences of the miners' and printers' strikes are contained within the struggle to defend the NHS
- A nurse sums it all up with the placard behind her on 5 March
- Angry Nurses at the end of the TUC march on 5 March. Not a single hospital worker had been asked to speak. The nurses demanded that they be represented and eventually forced their way onto the platform after drowning out Willis' speech. The call was raised for a general strike on 14 March.
- Parents, teachers, and children turn out on the thirty thousand strong march in defence of the ILEA and local government services organised by ILEA and London Bridge
- Norman Willis looking rattled as nurses demand to speak on the TUC platform at the end of the NHS march
- In the centre a young supporter of the NHS — everybody was there



Pictures by Alan Clarke and Simon Burpess

DEFEND NHS! NO COUNCIL

STRIKE!



L CUTS!

For an International Conference in 1988 for the Re-organisation of the Fourth International

MOSCOW TRIALS CAMPAIGN PUBLIC MEETING

CLEAR THE NAMES OF STALIN'S VICTIMS!

Sunday 20 March 1988

2.30 p.m.

**Kingsway Princeton College,
Sidmouth Street
(off Grays Inn Road) WCI
(near Kings Cross)**

THE WAY FORWARD

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR RE-BUILDING THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

MANCHESTER

Sunday
March 27th, 2 p.m.
Committee Room 10,
Manchester Town Hall,
St Peters Squ are.

CARDIFF

Thursday
April 7th, 7.30 pm,
Brownhills Hotel

GLASGOW

Sunday
March 20th, 11 a.m.
Blythswood Hotel,
320 Argyle Street.

LONDON

Sunday
April 17th, 2 p.m.
Kingsway Princeton
College
Sidmouth Street
off Grays Inn Road
London WCI

LEICESTER

Wednesday
March 23rd, 7.30 p.m.
Unemployed
Workers' Centre
Charles Street

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF MARXISM

Lectures at Room 301, Kingsway Princeton College, Grays Inn Road, London WC 1
All lectures start at 7.30pm

Thursday 3 March

The Russian Revolution, Stalinism and Trotskyism

SEVENTY years ago, the Russian workers, led by the Bolsheviks, overthrew Tsarism and capitalism, and the world socialist revolution began. The rise of a bureaucracy within the Soviet state led to the betrayal of the revolution, but not its destruction.

Thursday 10 March

The Fourth International Today

FIFTY years ago, Trotsky led those who fought to continue the work to prepare the world revolution in the foundation of the Fourth International, World Party of Socialist Revolution. After decades of crisis, the time has come for the re-founding of the Fourth International.

Thursday 17 March

The Significance of the Preparatory Committee

THE Workers Revolutionary Party has issued a Ten Point Call to revolutionary Trotskyists throughout the world to prepare a conference in 1988 for the re-organisation of the Fourth International. The campaign for the Preparatory Committee and its work in progress sheds new light on many fundamental problems of revolutionary leadership.

READING:

Cliff Slaughter, *Marx and Marxism*
Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*
Marx, *Wage Labour and Capital*
Lenin, *The State and Revolution*
Trotsky, *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*

£20,000 Special Fund

THE FUND STANDS AT: £1,973.92

WE received £49 this week for our Special Fund.

The Central Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party is meeting this week-end and will be laying the plans for its future work and publications. Already we have agreed to collaborate with other member organisations of the Preparatory Committee to publish a theoretical journal as a major part of the development of the work for the International Conference of Trotskyists.

kylists.

We believe that this is the most important work we must carry out in the period immediately ahead. Help us in this work. Every donation, large or small will be greatly appreciated. Please send your donations to:

Workers Revolutionary Party Special Fund
PO Box 735 London, SW9 7QS

How not to report PLO

CHARLIE POTTINS' report of the remarks of PLO spokesman Khalid el Hassan should surely not have been printed by Workers Press without comment.

The paper of the Workers Revolutionary Party cannot be a publicity medium for the dominant leadership of the PLO, which is anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist but at the same time not socialist. Its aim is an independent Palestine, but a Palestine in which capitalist enterprise will exist, a capitalism with its 'normal' relations with the rest of the capitalist world

For all the sacrifice and courage of the PLO fighters, it has to be said that the PLO leadership restricts them to the horizons of this utopian illusion, in reality tying them to the policies of Arab capitalist state, and through them to imperialism. That is one of the main reasons why one defeat after another has been suffered by the oppressed and homeless people of Palestine.

We say one of the reasons, because the main reason is that counter revolutionary Stalinism still predominates in the international working class, standing in the way of the unity of the world socialist revolution, cutting off the struggles of oppressed nations from the proletarian revolution in the advanced capitalist countries and from the conquests of the October Revolution.

In the last few weeks the Palestinian workers, especially the young ones, have come forward

in a totally unprecedented wave of struggle against the Israeli occupation. Is it just a matter of a rising tide of the same kind of resistance that we have seen before, a demonstration of mass support for the PLO, whom the masses identify with the liberation struggle and its leadership?

This is what the PLO spokesman would have us believe. No one can deny that the PLO fighters have overwhelming popular support. At the same time it must be remembered that the dominant Fatah leadership is one of several political groups and tendencies in the Liberation Army. The Fatah leadership does not lead social movements of the workers and landless poor, but rather rests on the mass of the people to supply fighters, material and moral support for the military struggle.

In that struggle, Marxists in the working-class movement internationally defend them unconditionally.

Khalid el Hassan, however, spoke at the House of Commons meeting in a way that tried to hide what is new in the recent struggles, even

saying that the thrusting forward of the youth and the working class was just what the PLO leadership wanted. In reality, signs that these forces are organising in their own committees and general strikes are of great importance, going far beyond anything that a bourgeois-nationalist leadership wants or can create.

According to Khaled el Hassan: 'The youth were doing what the PLO had advocated, without waiting to be told.'

If the PLO did not tell the youth to do these things, just where and when did the PLO leaders 'advocate' them? The spokesman also said: 'In each camp now, there is a committee. We get daily reports. You all know that the people support the PLO. Our duty now is to support these people, not theirs to support us.'

The real question is to see behind the claims of blanket support for the PLO to the social, class character of the movement. Despite all the complications of political pressures from the other Arab states as well as from Israel and imperialism and from the diplomatic manoeuvrings of the Stalinists (in the United Nations and at the 'summit' meetings), the independent strength and organisation of the working class is emerging; the great question which predominates is that of a Marxist, independent working-class leadership to express its interests.

That is why we should start from the problems of how to build, internationally and in each nation, sections of the Fourth International based on the programme of permanent revolution, able to build the leadership necessary for the working class to win state power as the only way to national liberation and all the demands of the democratic revolution.

That working-class power will go directly to socialist

measures. The Fatah leadership's concern, voiced by Khaled el Hassan, is to keep any spontaneous striving towards these objectives within its own control. It is not here a question of evil intentions or even worked-out strategy, but of a sure class instinct.

Even non-socialist reporters have given a glimpse of what is new in the recent movements. In the French newspaper 'Le Monde' (Feb 19), their Middle East Correspondent writes of 'committees of young militants', and in general strikes, like that of February 16, there were signs of a 'unified leadership of the uprising'.

According to this correspondent, it is the 'autonomy of the committees' which 'gives suppleness to the actions'. These committees exclude 'notables' and 'old cadres'. This can only mean that a new generation of organisers is testing itself in struggle, and is finding new, working-class forms of action. Again in the words of the 'Le Monde' correspondent, 'many young militants consider that they (the "notables" and old cadres) would not be able to adapt themselves to this new form of resistance'.

This is only a report, not an analysis, but it strongly suggests a striking confirmation that the conditions are rapidly maturing for reevolutionary struggles in which the working class strives to take the lead, so that the question of building independent revolutionary working-class leadership becomes paramount. Precisely for this reason, Workers Press, fighting first and foremost to play its part in resolving that very question, as part of the fight for an International Conference on Rebuilding the Fourth International, must deal with the question of Palestine, like all questions, in a way consistent with that objective. That is why the report on the PLO's meeting should have

been commented on critically.

This leads us to one last point. Charlie Pottins drew attention to the fact that Labour Shadow Foreign Secretary Kaufman, who spoke from the same platform, had declared that 'violence' by the Palestinian people was 'inevitable, if it is the only way they can assert their right to self-determination'. Charlie Pottins suggested Kaufman tell this to Kinnock, who had ended his nauseating performance in Palestine by urging the Palestinians to be non-violent. This is surely not the right way to deal with Kaufman, who is no better and no worse than Kinnock, as Charlie Pottins knows better than I do. If these 'labour lieutenants of capitalism' ever do become Prime

Minister and Foreign Secretary, they will order and defend the shooting (in the back if necessary) of strikers and demonstrators in Palestine, in Ireland, and in Britain, whenever that is necessary to defend the capitalist order on which they depend, and which depends on them.

We do not oppose the PLO seeking support from public opinion and using Labour politicians where it is useful. But our job is a different one: to build a leadership against these Labour traitors, whose continued political existence is a threat equally to the Palestinian people and to the working class in Britain and internationally. Therefore our reporting should ruthlessly expose them.

Cliff Slaughter

RELEASE JAILED MINERS

SOUTH WALES DEAN HANCOCK: Oakdale - Eight year sentence. Gartree Prison, nr Market Harborough, Leicester.	DURHAM MICHAEL STEPHENSON: Wearmouth - Three year sentence from June 1986. RF8756 HM Prison Acklington, Morpeth, Northumbria.
RUSSELL SHANKLAND: Taff Merthyr - Eight year sentence. Gartree Prison, Market	

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

Please send me information about the Workers Revolutionary Party.

Name date

Address

Trade Union Age (if under 21)

SEND TO:
Secretary to the Central Committee
PO Box 735, London SW9 7QS

ROBSON'S CHOICE

On Saturday, at 1p.m.(C4), an animated version of George Eliot's *Silas Marner*. At 1.30p.m. (Radio 3), the first of three programmes of Baroque ensemble music, *An Italian Sound*. At 7p.m. (BBC2), *Live from the Met: Ariadne auf Naxos* (simultaneous broadcast with Radio 3). Among the singers appearing in Richard Strauss' one-act opera are Jessye Norman, Kathleen Battle and Tatiana Troyanos. At 9.40p.m. (BBC2), Max Ophul's 1955 film *Lola Montes*. At 10.20p.m. (Radio 3), *The Rational Rabbit* in the last of Saltykov's *World*.

On Sunday, at 6.30p.m. (Radio 3), first of three programmes on the origins of modern humans *And Then There Was Us*. At 8.45p.m. (C4), last in the *Tei Great Writers* series explore: *Franz Kafka's The Trial*. At 9.55p.m. (C4), Anthony Mann's excellent 1954 western, *The FBI Country*. At 11.45p.m. (C4), Zeki Okten and Yilmaz Guney's *The Herd*.

On Monday, at 7.40p.m. (BBC2), *Open Space* is given over to Goldsmiths' College Media Research Group. They set out to prove that right-wing attempts to show Labour-controlled councils as paid-up members of the 'loony left' are based on lies and fabrications designed to 'justify' government attacks on local democracy. At 7.45p.m. (Radio 4), *Science Now*. At 8.15p.m. (Radio 4), *Sanctions*, a play about a South African political prisoner and his family's efforts to have him released, by David Cauter. At 9p.m. (C4), first of two documentaries following a doctor and a midwife who leave the UK for a two year stint *Into Nicaragua*. At 9.30p.m. (BBC1), *Panorama* looks at *The Underclass of 88*

On Tuesday, at 2.05p.m. (Radio 3), part-two of *An Italian Sound*. At 7.30p.m. (Radio 3), a comedy of theatrical life in a provincial town by Alexander Ostrovsky, *Artists and Admirers*. At 8.30p.m. (BBC1), *Wildlife on One*. At 10p.m. (C4), exquisite Woody Allen film, *Zelig*. At 10.45p.m. (ITV), a documentary entitled *Martin Luther King: The Legacy*.

On Wednesday, at 8.10p.m. (BBC2), issues from science today in *Antenna*. At 9.20p.m. (Radio 3), part-two of *And Then There Was Us*. At 9.40p.m. (BBC1), a curiosity on Q.E.D., *The Snooker Machine*. At 10.20p.m. (BBC2), another documentary in the series *Up North*. At 10.30p.m. (C4), a TV version of August Strindberg's classic play, *Creditors*. At 12.45p.m. (C4), *The Last of the Blue Devils*, recounts the great days of Kansas City jazz in the 1920s and 1930s (Count Basie, Charlie Parker, Lester Young, Dizzy Gillespie et al).

On Thursday, at 9.30p.m. (C4), Charles Gormley's film, *Heavenly Pursuits*. At 12.25p.m. (Radio 4), *Flying the Flag*. At 12.30p.m. (C4), Akira Kurosawa's masterly *Throne of Blood*, loosely based on Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

On Friday, at 10.45a.m. (Radio 3), *The Operatic Oboe*. At 11a.m. (Radio 4), *Analysis* looks and the political implications of Argentina's deepening economic crisis. At 2.35p.m. (Radio 3), final part of *An Italian Sound*. At 9.30p.m. (BBC2), *Arena* looks at controversial New York photographer Robert Mapplethorpe.

Tom Scott Robson

REPUBLICAN PRISONERS OF WAR

LONG LARTIN
HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 5TZ
LIAM BAKER, 20-year sentence, 464984.
JAMES BENNETT, 20-year sentence 464989.
PETER JORDAN, 15-year sentence H22338.
EDDIE BUTLER, Life sentence, 338637.
ROBERT CUNNINGHAM, 20-year sentence, 131877.
GERRY CUNNINGHAM, 20-year sentence, 132016.
JOHN MCCOMB, 17-year sentence, B51715.
HUGH DOHERTY, Life sentence, 338636.
VINCE DONNELLY, Life sentence, 274064.

MAIDSTONE
HM Prison County Road, Maidstone Kent
SHAUN McSHANE, B75898
DONAL CRAIG, 4-year sentence, L40579.

PARKHURST
HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX
PATRICK HACKETT, 20-year sentence 342603.
PAUL NORNEY, Life sentence, 863532.
TOMMY QUIGLEY, Life sentence 69204.
PETER SHERRY, Life sentence, B75880.

WAKEFIELD
HM Prison Love Lane, Wakefield, W Yorks. WF2 9AG
NATALINO VELLA, 15-year sentence, B71644.
NOEL GIBSON, Life sentence, 879225.
WILLIAM ARMSTRONG, Life sentence 119085

ALBANY
HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5RS
MARTIN BRADY, Life sentence, 119087.
HARRY DUGGAN, Life sentence, 338638.
BILLY GRIMES, 10-year sentence, 78647.
SEAN KINSELLA, Life sentence, 758661.

GARTREE
HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Rd, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 7RP
RONNIE McCARTNEY, Life sentence, 463799.
STEPHEN NORDONE, Life sentence 758663.
JOE O'CONNELL, Life sentence, 338635.
PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, 30-year sentence.
ROY WALSH, Life sentence, 119083.

FRANKLAND
HM Prison Finchale Ave, Brasside, Durham
BRENDAN DOWD, Life sentence, 758652.

PAUL HOLMES, Life sentence, 119034.
CON McFADDEN, 20-year sentence, 130662.
MICHAEL J MCKENNEY, 16-year sentence, L46496.
EDDIE O'NEILL, 20-year sentence, 135722.

LEICESTER
HM Prison Welford Rd, Leicester, LE2 7AJ
PAUL KAVANAGH, Life sentence, 1888.
GERARD McDONNELL, Life sentence, B75882.
BRIAN KEENAN, 21-year sentence, B26380.
PATRICK McGEE, Life sentence, B75881.

DURHAM
HM Prison Durham, Old Elvert Street, Durham.
MARTINA ANDERSON, Life sentence, D25134.
ELLA O'DWYER, Life sentence, D25135.

REMAND PRISONERS:

BRIXTON
HM Prison, Jebb Avenue, Brixton, London SW2 5XF.
LIAM McCOTTER, LB83693
PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, LB83694.
LIAM QUINN, 49930

INNOCENT MEN AND WOMEN FRAMED BY THE BRITISH POLICE
CAROLE RICHARDSON, 290719, HM Prison Sway, Wiltshire, Cheshire
PATRICK ARMSTRONG, HM Prison Gartree.
G.(DANNY) McNAMEE, 25-year sentence, L48616, HM Prison, Parkhurst
PATRICK McLAUGHLIN, 30-year sentence, HM Prison, Gartree
GERARD CONLON, 462779, HM Prison Long Lartin.
PAUL HILL, 462778, HM Prison Long Lartin.
JUDITH WARD, HM Prison Durham.
HUGH CALLAGHAN, 509499, HM Prison, Long Lartin.
JOHN WALKER, 509494, HM Prison, Long Lartin.
BILLY POWER, 509498, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs.
GERARD HUNTER, 509495, HM Prison, Gartree.
RICHARD McILKENNY, 509497, HM Prison, Wormwood Scrubs.
PADDY HILL, 509496, HM Prison, Gartree.
Wormwood Scrubs, Ducane Rd, London, W12 OAE.

They are all serving life and in the case of Carole Richardson, indefinite detention.

We thank An Cumann Cabhrach, British section, for supplying and updating this information.

KURDISTAN WORKERS ASSOCIATION

Invites you to a
KURDISH NEW YEAR
NEWROZ 88
CELEBRATION
To be held at
Shoreditch Town Hall,
380 Old Street EC1.

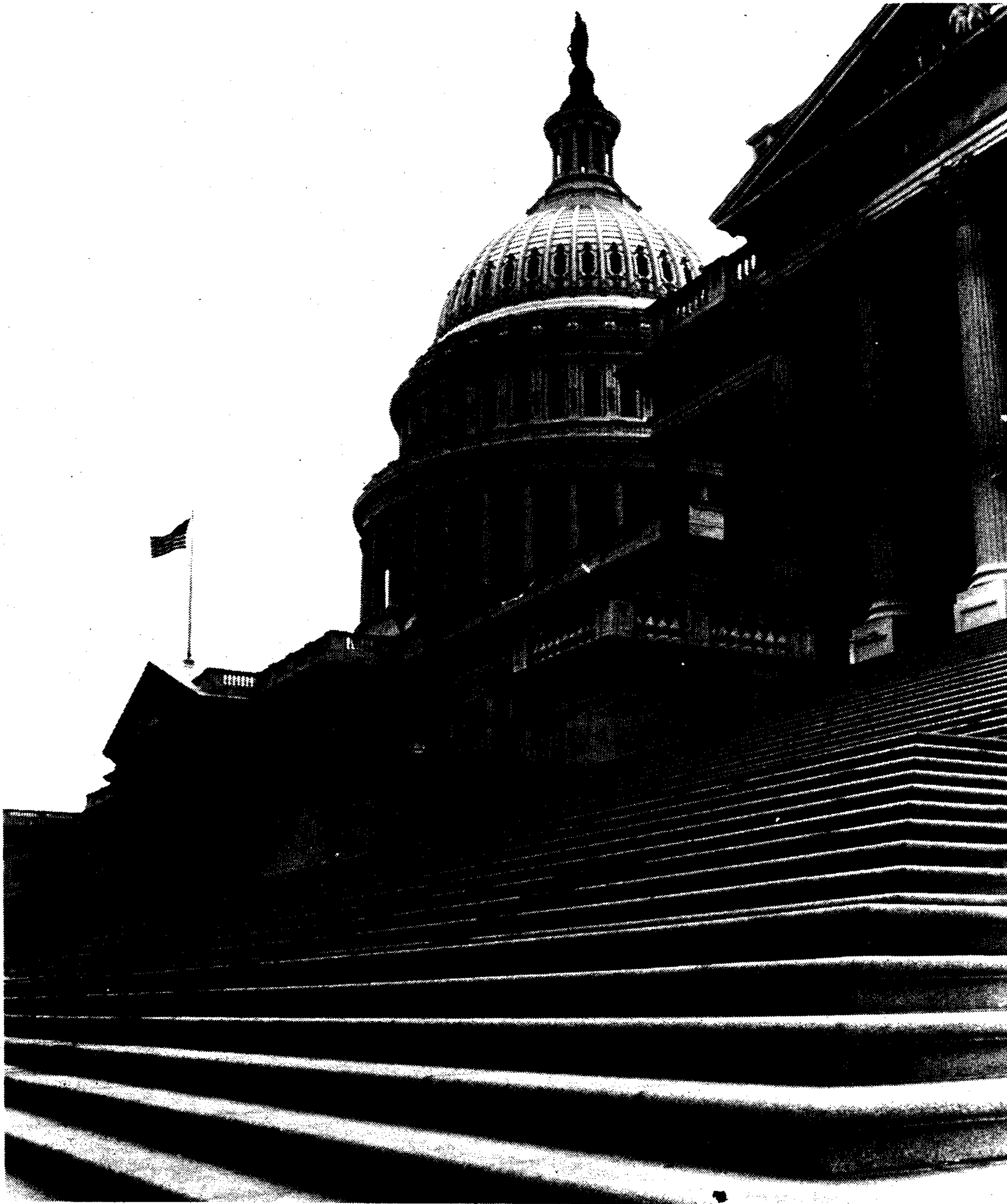
On Saturday 19th March 1988
GUESTS:
Demoqrat Taha Behzat
Muslum Erdogan
and
Kurdish Dance Group
Kurdish Music
KCC Music Band

£5

Buses: 149, 243, 67, 48, 55, 6, 22, 35.

GEORGE LORMIN IN THE USA

Reagan's twilight years



Capitol Hill, Washington DC

AS THE Reagan era draws to its close there is a pervasive fear that the United States has entered a period of inevitable decline. At the same time there is fascination with the apparently irresistible rise of Japan.

Not only does Washington no longer call the shots as it did during the early Cold War years, but there is a crisis of leadership which produces an impression of drift and failure.

Even in his waking hours Reagan gives no inkling that he recognises the problem. Whatever the short-term gains made by the wealthy during his administration, it has been disastrous for the long-term health of American capitalism.

Perhaps the least important indication of decline is the fact that despite Reagan's promise to balance the budget, the national debt has increased more under his administration than during the previous 39 presidencies. Paradoxically, an increasing proportion of that debt is held by foreigners.

More serious is the

foreign trade deficit, which results in cumulative increase in the external debt. The capital piling up in foreign hands undermines the sovereignty of the American ruling class. A country which is increasing its indebtedness to the rest of the world, notably to its major competitors, is clearly in a position of decline.

In an effort to counteract a situation brought about by an over-valued dollar in the early 1980s, the administration encouraged its depreciation.

But since the dollar is not only a key currency in international trade but still remains basic to the world monetary and financial system, the fall in the dollar puts a question mark over its continuation in this role. The financial power of Wall Street, undermined by the falling dollar, has been further battered by the crash of 19 October, 1987 and its aftermath.

The once powerful dollar is now under pressure. Major banks have had to write off part of the billions of bad debts with the Latin American countries which form part of America's informal empire.

Although the weaker dollar has given some encouragement to export industries, so many manufacturing facilities have been transferred to low-wage countries that there is no way in which an export drive can miracu-

lously transform the balance of trade deficit into a credit.

Any further fall in the dollar will mean higher interest rates, a credit crunch and a depression. A weak dollar means a loss of autonomy.

The US can no longer impose its will on the rest of the world; its economy is at the mercy of foreign investors. Their decision to unload greenbacks could bring about a major financial upheaval.

Obviously America's Japanese, German or Swiss creditors have no intention of bringing about a financial crash in which they would suffer.

But in pursuing their own interests they might bring it about, just as those who shouted sell, sell, on 19 October had no intention of provoking an historic stock exchange collapse.

Nevertheless, the very size of the American economy makes it an invaluable market not only for Japan and the European countries but also for the newly industrialising countries, most of which are hosts to American

branch plants and capital investment.

Thus the depreciated dollar has encouraged exporters to reduce costs and accept lower profit margins to maintain their position in the US market.

The compulsion to realise surplus value even if that means accumulating depreciating dollars is the alternative to overproduction crisis and slump for these countries.

While the laws of capitalist development are working themselves out uncontrollably, the Reagan administration, and its supporters, enamoured of the free market, practice a policy of drift and do-nothing.

It looks increasingly like the march of the somnambulist to the edge of the precipice.

While the evidence of economic decline is plain enough, the other side of this is the strategic role of American imperialism, bearing the brunt of the military 'defence' of world capitalism.

This military strength, based on spending which amounts to over six per cent of the largest national product in the world, has become a colossal negative for the economy.

Its role in warding off an overproduction crisis through the employment of 18 million civilian workers and over 2 million servicemen and women has been overtaken by the adverse effects it has upon federal finances and the competitiveness of industry.

No wonder that for years the administration has been calling (in vain) for its 'allies' to bear more of the burden.

The increase in the budget deficit since 1980 has been almost entirely a consequence of increased military spending. Much of this has gone to support a huge military-bureaucratic apparatus linked with the corporate giants which receive the prime contracts for military hardware. Overcharging and cost overruns swallowed up tax dollars and churn out expensive and largely outmoded and ineffective weapons systems.

High tech weaponry becomes more and more expensive both in research and development and in manufacture.

Increased costs of even the more conventional armaments means that it is necessary to spend more to stay in the race.

High quality research and the best scientists are employed in developing new ways of killing people, while industry falls behind its foreign rivals and watches while they penetrate the home market with impunity.

As 'defence' is a sacred cow, even opponents of the Reagan administration seldom criticise it, preferring, instead, like some Democratic presidential candidates, to call for protectionist measures against foreign imports.

Defenders of American capitalism, or many of them, now see that the attempt to maintain America's former world role may lead to economic disaster and are calling for a change of policy before it is too late.

Thus 'Newsweek' devoted most of its 22 February issue to the question: is America in Decline? All sorts of historical analogies are being mulled over and old cyclical theories of history are being resurrected.

All this takes place in an atmosphere of *fin de siècle* decadence appropriate for the times.

Not surprisingly the usual end to such speculation is that decline is not inevitable — if... and there then follows the particular course of action which the writer sees as the alternative to decline.

Even a brief scrutiny shows that as far as possible they want things to go on as before plus some desperate clutching at straws.

Thus, Evan Thomas, 'Newsweek's' Washington bureau chief, comes up with a veritable hog's wash of recommendations, if it is to avoid the fate of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (which he omits to point out, ended in revolution at the end of the First World War).

'To wring out the excesses of consumerism and debt', he writes, Americans will have to stop buying more than they produce, and that may hurt the standard of living. But America's ability to re-create itself is the real secret of the nation's stability'.

It is the same old mumbo-jumbo, with the usual appeal for belt-tightening. And, as he supports military spending, though he wants US allies to contribute more (another familiar ploy), he, and others like him, are calling for guns before butter.

He wants more foreign investment and more immigration: 'It is not too far-fetched to say that the nation's best defence against Asian economic competition may be to open the door wide to Asian immigrants'.

Clutching at straws has become a typical reflex action of those supporters of capitalism who have considered the problem of American decline in the gathering twilight of the Reagan era.

Palestine women in the front line

ISRAELI troops moved in with clubs and tear gas to brutally smash up women's marches in Ramallah, Nablus, Hebron, Tulkarm and Jerusalem on 8 March, International Women's Day.

Soldiers sprayed gas into women's faces at close range, as well as beating them during the Ramallah attack.

Later two people were killed when the troops opened fire on protesting Palestinians.

The military's savagery against Women's Day marchers highlights the increasingly important part Palestinian women are playing in their people's struggle for national liberation.

Since 1979, some 3,000 women have been through Israeli prisons and detention, even before the uprising. These were, or were suspected of being, the political activists. But now with the people as a whole rising to confront the occupiers' brutality, any Palestinian woman who can find herself in the front-line.

'Women have been shot, or are being exposed to brutality, like everyone else,' says Dima Milhem, an exiled Palestinian woman who has been closely monitoring recent events.

Dima notes that while people are often being beaten at

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

random, women included, the troops frequently seem to aim their blows and kicks at the reproductive organs. Women have been beaten on the breasts, and pregnant women kicked in the stomach.

Israeli soldiers have gone into homes and pulled off the clothes of older women to humiliate them. Sexual attacks and harassment have been used as a way of deterring women from activity, and hitting the people as a whole.

The documented big increase in miscarriages in the Gaza camps and elsewhere can be attributed to the brutal repression. As well as beatings of pregnant women, there is the fear and terror, Dima says. 'In one case, a heavily pregnant woman was made to stand with her arms spread facing a wall,

and they shot bullets all round her, till she miscarried on the spot.'

Women are defying this terror. Besides trying to stop their young sons being arrested and beaten, and getting beaten themselves for this, Palestinian women have been increasingly engaged in organised activity, defying the curfews.

Often this is an extension of previous community, health and welfare activity. Women have gone into curfew areas to tend the sick and wounded, or smuggle in food. 'Women health workers have travelled to remote places to teach people first aid, what to do when injured by tear gas, etc.'

'Women are taking more part in public life, they are represented in the committees, women are giving out leaflets, they are going out during curfews, and risking dangers,' Dima told a Jewish Socialists' Group International Women's Day meeting in London. 'The organisation of women's committees has worked, so the women's work is respected by the men.'

Dima Milhem sees a change taking place parallel with the rise of a new, younger leadership in the Palestinian struggle. 'The role of women has changed, women have gained legitimacy for their autonomous participation. That's a point of no

return.

'So long as the occupation continues, the main contradiction will be with the occupation. Not the struggle within the family, and traditional relations. The attainment of Palestinian rights, and our own state, will be the foundation for women to start to question their own place, the family system, their own oppression.'

Stressing that the uprising was not just over economic conditions, or civil rights, but 'for a state, and a state under the PLO', Dima concluded: 'As the woman has a double oppression, she has a special reason to fight for a Palestinian state.'

KIBBUTZ CLUBBING

ISRAELI soldiers in the occupied West Bank and Gaza have been equipped with new, solid plastic truncheons, which officers praise as unbreakable in normal use (battering people).

The truncheons are made at Kibbutz Neveh Eytan, a settlement belonging to the Labour Party-linked United Kibbutz movement.

The movement's secretary has condemned those Israelis who are refusing to serve in the occupation forces.

WORLD BRIEF

Women invade consulate

ABOUT 30 women demanding that Britain sever diplomatic and trade links with South Africa invaded the British consulate in Johannesburg on International Women's Day.

Earlier, South African riot police had moved to break up a demonstration by 300 women defying the government's state of emergency. With posters reading 'Urban Democracy' and 'Your si-

lence is consent', the demonstrators had picketed the Chamber of Mines, demanding an end to restrictions on the COSATU unions and other anti-Apartheid organisations.

Turkish Arrests

TURKISH police arrested 73 people outside Izmir prison on Tuesday 8 March. They had been demonstrating in support of 25 political prisoners who were in the second week of a hunger strike.

Angola call

ANGOLA has called on other African states to rally to its side in confronting South African aggression.

Chile, Britain, against Kurds

UNEXPLODED chemical bombs with Chilean markings have been found by Kurdish fighters in Iraqi Kurdistan, according to Horsash Zibari of the Kurdish Democratic Party.

Zibari says Iraqi forces operating against his people are using British communication equipment such as the Racal Transceiver. He says the British £175 million loan to the Iraqi regime for purchase of pharmaceutical and computer equipment is helping the regime wage war on the Kurds.

Panama agent

AS the Reagan administration stepped up its economic sanctions against Panama's military strongman General Noriega last week, blocking banknotes and canal dues, US politicians rowed over responsibility for Noriega.

Senator Bob Dole demanded to know how long 'the biggest drug dealer in the hemisphere', as Noriega has been called, had been on the CIA's payroll. Aides said the public 'has a right to know whether (ex-CIA boss and presidential rival) George Bush signed off on the payments.'

'No doubt' about MI6 conspiracy

AUSTRALIA'S ex-Prime Minister Gough Whitlam has said he did not doubt for one minute that British intelligence worked with the CIA against his government.

Whitlam, whose Labour government was dismissed by the Queen's governor-general Sir John Kerr in the notorious 1975 'Canberra Coup', told an interviewer on Sydney's Radio 2UE that he knew MI6 was monitoring Australian government communications at the time.

'And of course we knew the CIA was interested in us, although it was only later that we had precise information on that.'

British intelligence's part in the 'Canberra Coup' came as news to most Australians, even those who had long suspected the CIA's involvement because of US interests in maintaining the Pine Gap electronic spying base near Alice Springs.

The role of MI5 and MI6 was exposed in John Pilger's TV documentary series *The Last Dream* shown on Australian TV last month. He says that in 1974, the CIA's London station chief Dr. John Proctor asked MI6 for help with 'the Whitlam problem'.

The programme has created a fresh stir in Australia over the dramatic events of 1975, although the present Labour leadership would seemingly prefer they were forgotten.

Thousands of trade unionists marched in angry demonstrations against Governor-General Kerr's 'constitutional coup', but the



BOB HAWKE

Labour leaders did not mobilise this potential strength fully, one reason being that, as was later revealed, they feared the army might intervene.

Malcolm Fraser's Liberals — the Australian Tory party — were able to take over.

Australia's present Labour prime minister, former union leader Bob Hawke, has tried to pooh-pooh Pilger's programme, claiming the internationally-known Australian journalist was a 'notorious inaccurate reporter'.

Capitalist press hacks — anxious for their careers in an industry that has become tightly concentrated in monopoly hands — weighed in with sneers at 'conspiracy theory'.

However, former Whitlam aide William Pinwill, who was a consultant to the Pilger documentaries, has reminded Hawke of statements he made in 1977, reported then by the 3 May 1977 Sydney Sun: 'Hawke suspects CIA of sacking'.

He also points out that unmasked spy Christopher Boyce alleged the CIA had interfered in Australian unions, deceived the Australians about Pine Gap's operations, and destabilised the Whitlam government in a campaign 'worse than Chile'.

A State Department official who investigated the allegations told Pinwill in 1978: 'I cannot vouch for the fact that nothing improper was done by the CIA during the Whitlam government. I can't be sure.'

President Jimmy Carter sent a special envoy to see Whitlam after the Boyce allegations with the message 'that he respected the democratic rights of America's allies, and that the US administration would never again interfere in the domestic political processes of Australia.'

Until the 'Canberra Coup', most Australians assumed the Governor-General was just a figurehead, for ceremonial duties such as opening parliament. Sir John Kerr always denied any intelligence connections, but there is evidence now that he had ties with the CIA going back to the 1940's.

British intelligence has longstanding links with the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), which may have given it a special role.

3 According to diaries kept by former Labour minister Clyde Cameron, made available to Pilger, Gough Whitlam told Labour MPs in 1975: 'The Brits were actually decoding secret messages

coming into the Foreign Affairs office... the reason they make such an assault on me is that they hope I will crack.'

On 4 May 1977, Whitlam told parliament 'There is increasing and profoundly increasing evidence that foreign espionage and intelligence activities are being practised in Australia on a wide scale... I believe the evidence is so grave in its detail and so alarming in its implications that it demands the fullest explanation.'

'The deception over the CIA and the activities of foreign installations on our soil all affect Australia's independence and sovereignty. There is a need for parliamentary scrutiny of foreign intelligence activities in my country. The need is urgent.'

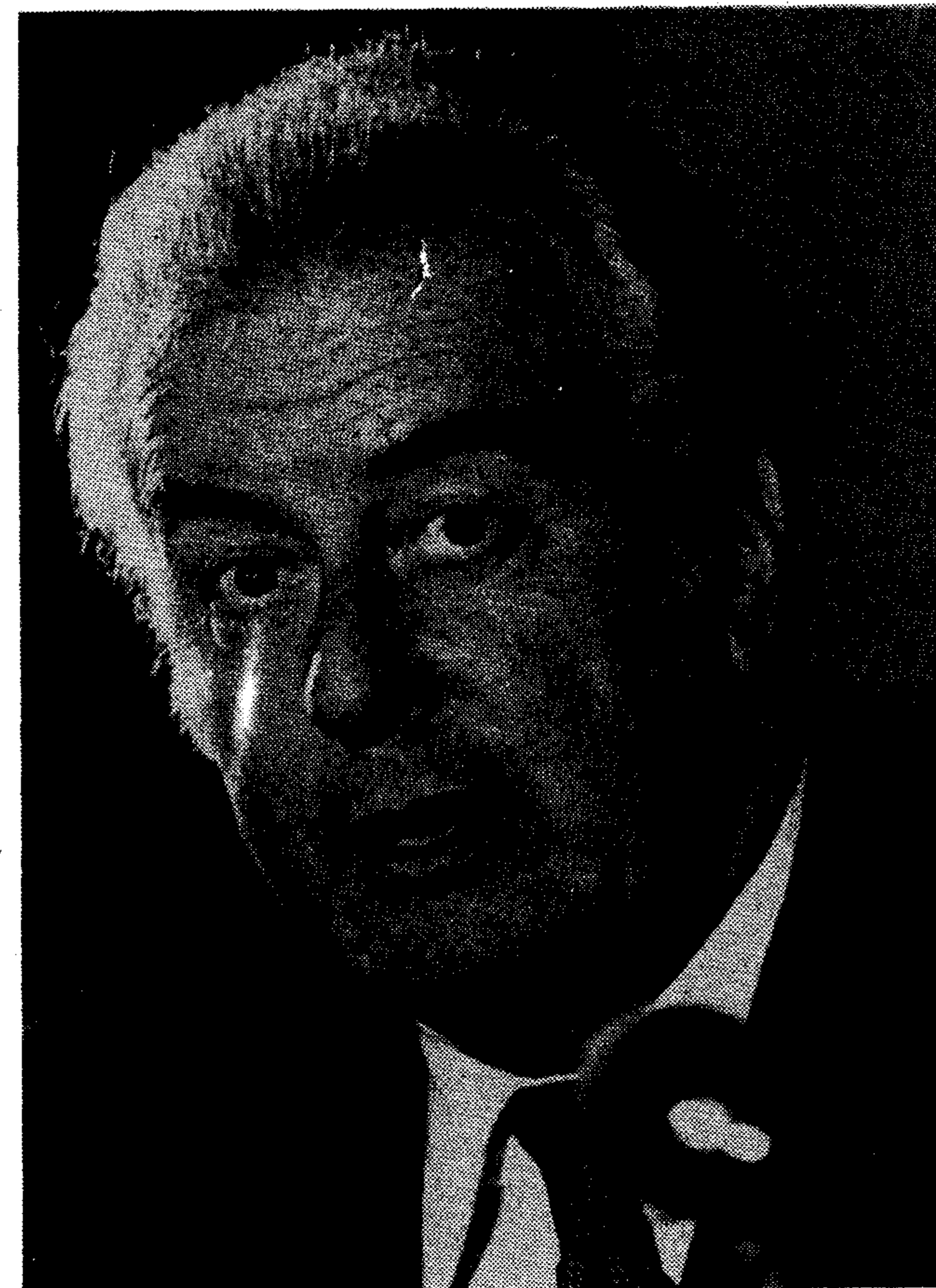
Whitlam had told Labour MPs how the US government misled him about Richard Stallings, who set up Pine Gap as a supposed joint communications facility, not revealing that he was a CIA operative. He also urged them to ask questions about intelligence and military aspects of his dismissal.

According to Clyde Cameron's diary, Whitlam particularly wanted them to ask whether 'particular units of the armed forces were supplied with live ammunition at the time of the constitutional crisis.'

The ex-minister took this as a 'clear indication' that they were. He says when he tabled a question to Fraser's Defence Minister James Killen, 'He fudged it. I didn't get a yes or a no.'

On 22 May 1977, the Labour Party's National Executive passed a resolution attacking foreign intelligence 'manipulation of political events in 1975', which they delivered to the US embassy. They never got a reply.

The resolution was drafted by Whitlam. The National Executive, John Pilger points out, 'was presided over by the then leader of the ACTU, (Australian Congress of Trade Unions) Bob Hawke, who gave it his full support



GOUGH WHITLAM

'The question is whether any duly elected reformist government will be allowed to govern in future. What is at stake is whether the people who seek change and reform are ever again to have confidence that it can be achieved through the normal parliamentary processes.'

Gough Whitlam, sacked Labour prime minister of Australia, at Australian National University, 29 October 1975.

and called for an inquiry into CIA interference in Australian domestic politics.'

Now, however, Hawke has tried to dismiss the issue. 'He gave no indication of what had made him change his mind,' Pilger observes. (*Times on Sunday*, 21 February). The journalist comments that if the full story ever comes out, it 'will provide not only answers about the past but also an insight into the nature of present-day Federal Labour politics.'

Whatever the reasons for

Hawke's personal change of mind, it is clear the Labour leaders do not welcome revival of interest in the 1975 events, any more than their British counterparts were willing to press the issue of MI5's conspiracies under the Wilson government.

Australian Trotskyists also point to a 'deafening silence' from Stalinists in the labour movement. For 'peaceful roaders' as for reformists, there are questions about the capitalist state they would prefer were not answered.

The words and wisdom of Sir Thomas Browne

WHAT the words I listed here last week have in common is that they were all coined, and introduced into the English language, by the 17th-century writer and physician Sir Thomas Browne.

All nine appeared for the first time in Browne's extraordinary book 'Pseudodoxia Epidemica: or, Enquiries into very many received tenets, and commonly presumed truths', first published in 1646 and generally known as 'Vulgar Errors'. The Latin title means literally something like 'Prevalent False Opinions'.

Not all of Browne's coinages had the same meaning then that they have now. To him 'electricity' meant static electricity; 'literary' meant pertaining to the letters of the alphabet; an 'insecurity' meant, more or less, uncertainty. His 'retrogression' was an astronomical term that is, I think, still current, though 'retrogradation' is more common.

He also invented scores of sonorous words that didn't catch on, such as 'favaginous' for honeycombed and 'digladiation' for fighting with swords.

Browne is an interesting writer, not just because of his rich and inventive vocabulary, but for two other reasons as well.

In the first place, his prose style is a strange mixture of elaborate Latinisms

and Anglo-Saxon plainness.

A century later Samuel Johnson would sometimes say the same thing twice: the first time in plain English, the second time dressing up the identical thought in pompous polysyllables of Latin derivation, as if he wasn't quite satisfied with his first effort.

Browne made up similar doublets, but he did it the other way round, the plain following the pompous. The effect is generally humorous: a sly, ironic, whimsical kind of humour.

But he's far too elaborately baroque a writer — Johnson, of all people, complained of his over-fondness for recondite words — to serve as a model for those whose aim is to write lucid, direct, and precise English.

In the second place, Browne is an interesting writer because, living at a time of great social and intellectual change — he was 44 when the English people cut off the head of King Charles I — he faced both ways. He looked back to magic and forward to science.

He had a firm religious faith that often skirted the border of mysticism and sometimes crossed it. His first book, 'Religio Medici' ('A Doctor's Religion', 1642) is a personal statement of Christian belief, written 'for my private exercise and satisfaction', circulated originally in manuscript, and first published in a pirated edition.

From the mish-mash of medieval superstitions and popular delusions, Browne retained a belief in the basilisk or cockatrice, that fabulous reptile which killed with a breath or even a glance (though he couldn't bring himself to believe that it was hatched by a serpent from a cock's egg).

He also believed in unicorns and witches, and thought that disbelief in the latter was spread by Satan.

To his shame, he gave evidence in a trial at Bury St Edmunds in 1664, when Amy Duny and Rose Cullender were accused of witchcraft. Their victims had allegedly vomited up 40 crooked pins and a twopenny lath nail, and the two women

were hanged protesting their innocence.

In fairness to Browne, it should be added that he didn't commit himself to their guilt, but told the court that in Denmark, two years before, similar evidence had been given in a witch trial.

Yet, coexisting in Browne's thinking with the Christian who subscribed to this medieval claptrap, there was also a scientist — a primitive one, to be sure — who subjected the everyday dubious beliefs of his contemporaries to a severe examination in the spirit of his predecessor Francis Bacon, the precursor of English empiricism.

'The mortallest enemy unto knowledge,' wrote Browne, 'and that which hath done the greatest execution upon truth, hath been a peremptory adhesion unto authority; and more especially, the establishing of our belief upon the dictates of antiquity.'

That badgers have legs on one side shorter than the others; that crystal is ice strongly congealed; that elephants have no joints; that snails have no eyes; that salamanders live in flames; that beavers, to escape hunters, bite off their own testicles; that a weasel's left testicle wrapped in a piece of she-mule hide makes an effective contraceptive: he scrupulously weighed these and many other ancient popular beliefs in the balance and found them wanting.

To this end, Browne didn't merely argue, and cite authorities of his own. As a primitive biologist he closely observed plants and animals and became an authority on those of East Anglia; and, above all, he conducted no end of experiments.

To prove that glass wasn't poisonous he fed finely pulverised glass to dogs, with no ill effects. On scales registering one-tenth of a grain, he weighed a snipe's brain to find the relationship between size of brain and body, and he strangled a chicken on the scales to find out whether it weighed more dead than alive.

He counted more than 700 stones in a turkey's gizzard; drowned cats, mice, and other animals to discover that their bodies floated to the surface at different times;

and dissected every kind of animal from an earthworm to a horse — though when he tried to dissect a whale he soon gave up, defeated by the 'abominable scent'.

When a bee settled on his desk he put his finger on its diaphragm to feel it hum. He collected deathwatch beetles from the wainscots of his house, counted and described their ticking noises, and found out how they produced them — and nobody in his family died as a result.

He shot off various weapons to determine the strength of gunpowder, the proper ingredients of noiseless gunpowder, and what happened to bullets of different substances in flight and on impact.

He had a lively but far from obsessive interest in sex and was, so far as I know, the first English writer to list systematically every physiologically possible coital position. The story of a woman who got pregnant from taking a bath he called 'a new and unseconded way in History to fornicate at a distance'.

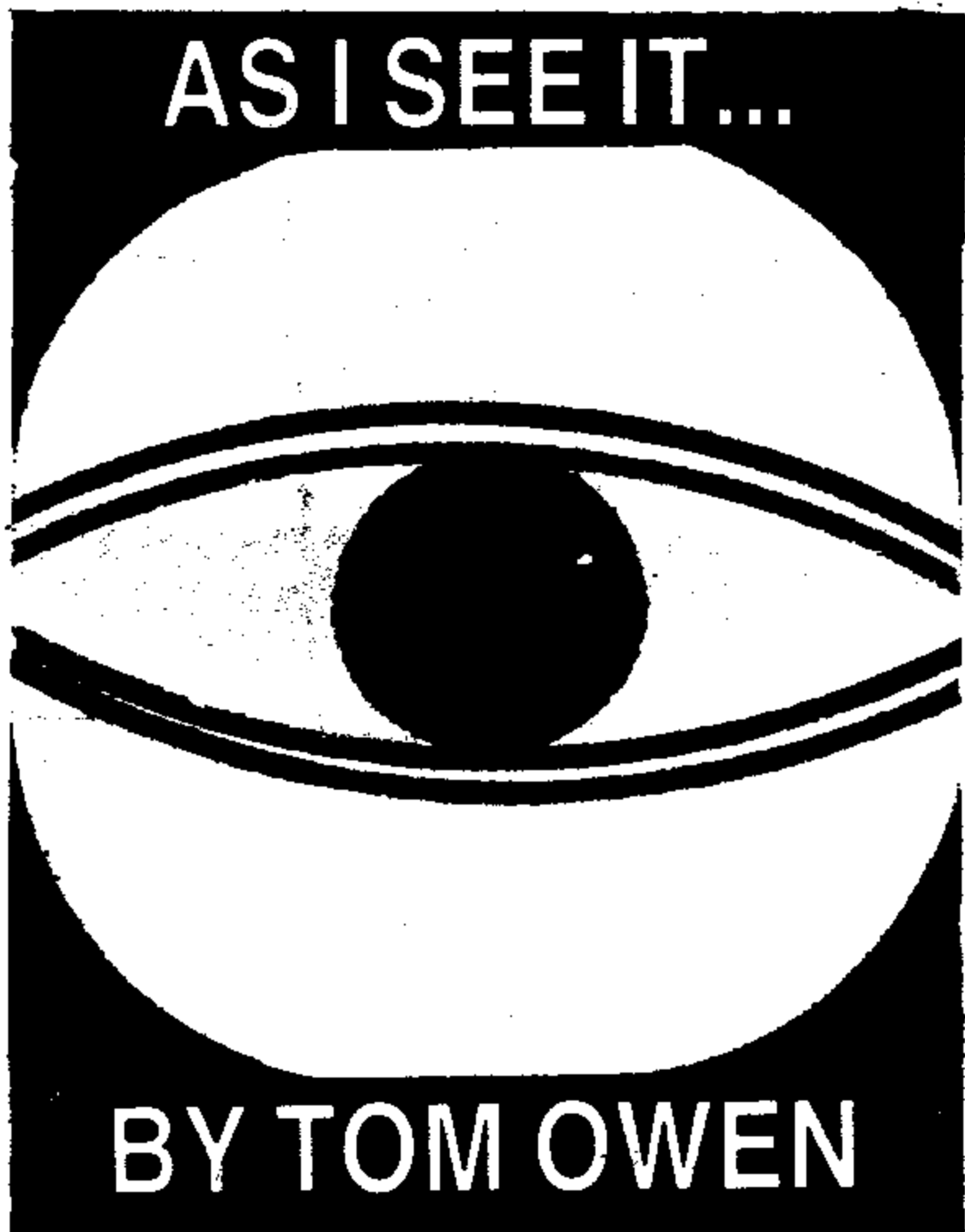
In an England into which increasing numbers of black people were being brought as domestic slaves of the rich, two explanations were current for what Browne called 'the Blackness of Negroes'.

One was that their complexion resulted from God's curse on Ham for looking on the nakedness of his father Noah as the old man lay drunk in his tent. Browne devoted a whole chapter of 'Vulgar Errors' to refuting this absurdity.

He also contemptuously dismissed the other explanation: that Africans had black skin because they had been scorched by the tropical sun.

Here, as in many other respects, Browne was far in advance of his time. His 'Vulgar Errors', though few perhaps would nowadays want to read it from cover to cover, is well worth dipping into.

For all its ambiguities and contradictions, Browne's literary legacy is a small but important part of that cultural heritage which, as my colleague Tom Owen reminded us last week, it is the responsibility of Marxists to cherish, defend, and carry forward.



Cameras in the house

lobby has opened a book on who will be the first to be kicked out in front of the cameras. Will it be the redoubtable Denis Skinner or Dafydd Wigley the Plaid MP?

Odds on favourite at the moment is that hapless wet Tory backbencher who reminded Thatcher that she had opposed the introduction of charges on eye testing some years ago and then had to physically defend himself from some of her more unbalanced zealots.

As is usually the case with 'free' votes the Labourites were split between the camera shy and the photogenic. Instead of demanding for the working class complete free access to information and an end to bourgeois secrecy these addicted parliamentarians were at pains to 'protect the dignity of the house'.

Kinnocchio insisted on the Canadian model to make sure that any protest, whether legitimate or due to 'buffoonery', would be screened out by close-angle shots. So we won't see the duty free drunks and slumberers or even see if our MPs are in attendance.

The response of the populist

backwoodsman, Joe Ashton, was to predict an invasion of 'lesbian vikings'.

The danger that these procedures might become pure 'entertainment' baffles me. Only the most perverse cynic of staggering stamina could find the tedious ritual of confirming executive decisions as 'entertainment'.

However, it is true that the composite creature, the British ruling class, has a mandarin obsession with secrecy, and constantly draws a veil over its operations. Secrecy of power, secret diplomacy, secrecy of accountancy, secrecy of wealth, secrecy of life style.

Secrecy serves a number of purposes, keeps the masses unprepared and allows the ruling class and its agencies to prepare its defences and launch its attacks on 'dangerous elements'.

Secrecy also serves another important function — it allows for mystification and the development of powerful mythologies of the 'world's finest democracy'. The cretinous and parasitic royals become a 'hardworking constitutional monarchy' and the model of family life we must all emulate.

Of course sometimes the secrecy breaks down, and we get a glimpse behind the veil. Scandals, causes celebres are difficult to hide because the system is not a 'monolithic' machine manipulated by the media as the moral right and the moralist alike believe.

Capitalism is characterised by the struggle of antagonistic social forces, and the media are not free of these antagonisms. The Thatcher administration has a long catalogue of personal and political scandals; the tattered veil of secrecy is replaced constantly with the seamless robe of respectability and probity.

The constant source of scandal is the separation of public from private life under capitalism as an expression of the division of labour.

That the ruling circles should be split over 'cameras in the house' is not surprising. It represents the debate of how to present the state to the public without too much demystification.

The problems debated in the media are not just 'how much' information is it safe for us to

recieve, but through what kind of prism are we to perceive it, and how is the information to be framed.

Talking of sources of information, one of the traditional sources is rumour. There is a malicious calumny circulating amongst some Sheffield 'forward wits'. It is claimed that Joe Ashton, Labour MP and journalist for 'The Star' and 'The Morning Star', has bought a tailor's dummy to sit in the front room of his property in the leafy suburbs of Ranmoor to frighten away the villains who might wish to burgle him whilst he is involved in the serious business of the House and writing for 'The Star'. May I have license to fantasise on this piece of gossip?

Perhaps the dummy comes along as a perk from the world's most exclusive club? They may all possess them. May I suggest that they all stay at home to guard their property and place their dummies in front of the robot cameras. Well, we have sleeping policemen and dumb waiters don't we? The MPs can phone in their contributions and we can watch yet another talking heads show.

LISTINGS

Listings published free for labour movement organisations. Send details to arrive by mid-day Monday for publication the following Thurs.
CONFERENCE OF IMMIGRANT TURKISH WOMEN Discussion, videos and music. 13 March. 2 Newington Green Road, London N1. Telephone: 01-226 8647.

PICKET DURHAM PRISON! Stop strip searches! End British torture! On International women's day Sunday March 13, 1 pm. Organised by the Irish Republican POW Campaign Committee. Transport: £10 (unwaged £5). Tickets available from Green Ink Books (263-4748).

NON-STOP PICKET OF SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE For the release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners in South Africa. For sanctions

against the racist South African government. S Africa House, Trafalgar Sq — City AA.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST POLICE REPRESSION (CAPR) Wkly planning mtgs every Tues 7.30p.m. Stoke Newington Community Centre, Leswin Rd, N16. All welcome. Contact: Box CAPR, 83 Blackstock Road, N4 (01-991 2938.)

VMDC London Support Group Wkly Campaign Meetings. Thursday evenings

7.30p.m. Camden Town Hall. All welcome. (Further details: 01-837 1688.)

GREENHAM COMMON WOMEN'S CAMP To all women — we are still here; we still need your support! Near Newbury, Exit 13 on M4, or BR Newbury. Berkshire.

BULLETIN OF THE IRISH HUNGER STRIKE COMMITTEE (BIRMINGHAM) Now available on subscription: £2 per year (3 issues incl. pp). From:

Tiofaidh Ar La c/o IHSCC, PO Box 540, Sparkhill, Birmingham, B11

CURRENT CONTROVERSIES IN EVOLUTION A series of 10 Thursday evening lectures. (Started 14 Jan) 7pm. £1 (includes light refreshments). Lecturer: Mike Howgate. Venue Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London.WC1.

DEMONSTRATION AND RALLY. Unite to Defend Education. Organised by the East Midlands Education

Alliance. Saturday 12 March 12.30pm. Assemble Victoria Park Gates, Leicester. Rally at Town Hall Square.

DEFEND THE NHS Victory to the health workers. Public meetings to organise active support in the community for the health workers struggle called by the RCG. Tuesday 15 March 7.30pm. Southwark town hall, Peckham road, SE5. Wednesday 16 March 7.30pm. Camden black parents and teachers centre, Kentish Town road, NW5.

ON Thursday and Friday last week, seven Irish people were arrested in London under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA).

Ms Pamela Kane, an unsuccessful Sinn Fein candidate in the last Irish general election, Hugo Jude Reavy, James Joseph Keegan and Mrs Deirdre Whelan have been issued with exclusion

BY CHARLIE WALSH

orders barring them from entering Britain.

This piece of anti-Irish, racist legislation made permanent only a couple of weeks ago, is being used to harass and intimidate Irish people whether resident in Britain or merely visitors.

Pamela Kane, Hugo Jude Reavy and James Joseph Keegan were arrested on Thursday, while Pamela's brother David Kane was arrested late on Friday night.

In a separate incident on Friday evening, Patrick Shanahan, Mrs Deirdre Whelan, brother and sister of Martina Shanahan, a Category A remand prisoner at Risley Remand Centre in Cheshire, on a charge of allegedly conspiring to kill Northern Ireland Secretary Mr Tom King, were arrested along with Ms Tina Smith, a family friend.

The arrests took place at a Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant in West London. They had all been dropped off there by Sister Sara, an

Trial

Irish welfare worker after attending committal proceedings at Lambeth Magistrates' Court.

Martina, John McCann and Finbar Cullen were committed to stand trial for

allegedly conspiring to murder King, at his home in Wiltshire.

Gareth Pierce, Martina Shanahan's solicitor, said that any of the three could have been arrested as they signed into court for the committal proceedings.

Visit

'It's quite clear that the moment they were free of a friendly person they were arrested.'

Over the week end officials of the Irish embassy in London made a separate visit to each of the seven people arrested. The visits were made at the request of the Irish government.

Considering past Irish governments' indifference to the plight of other Irish people held under the PTA this is a welcome improvement.

But the fact remains that last December the Irish government ratified the extradition treaty with Britain agreeing to extradite Irish citizens to the British occupied six counties and to Britain itself.

As socialists we must be in the forefront of defending the Irish community against the attacks of the state. We must reinforce our efforts and launch a vigorous campaign throughout the labour and trade union movement to smash the PTA.

● Hands off the Irish community!

● End harassment of Irish people travelling to and from Britain!

● Smash the PTA!

LABOUR BACKS DEATH SQUADS

THE THATCHER government has decided on a policy of summary execution of Irish republicans who defy British imperialist rule — and the Labour Party leadership fully supports it.

That is the meaning of the shooting of Mairead Farrell, Sean Savage and Danny McCann in Gibraltar last week end.

Three IRA volunteers were shot in the back of their heads, at almost point blank range (four metres), by a special air services (SAS) killer squad. They were unarmed and had not planted any bombs; according to eye witnesses, no warning was given.

The executions were defended by Tory foreign secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe on the grounds that there was 'strong suspicion' the three had prepared a car bomb.

'It is estimated that casualties could have run into three figures', said the man who helped Thatcher

BY SIMON PIRANI

decide to sink 'The Belgrano'. The shootings prevented a 'dreadful terrorist act' he said. On these grounds, any unarmed 'suspected terrorist' could be executed without trial.

The most disgusting sight in the House of Commons was not the Tory back benchers baying for blood, but the support for Howe from the Labour leaders.

Labour foreign affairs spokesman, George Robertson, congratulated the SAS,

and said of the IRA: 'These people must be dealt with.' Robertson was only concerned that the murders be followed up with more thorough repression.

Could Howe be sure that all those in 'the conspiracy' had been shot? Was 'protection' arranged for other European targets? Were there links between the IRA and Libya, or the Basque separatists? Was the special branch in on the act?

At Prime Minister's Questions last Tuesday, Kinnock chose to ask Thatcher about the sterling crisis and Ken Livingstone asked her about the Kinora Boys Home.

From Labour — both right and 'left' MPs, including supporters of the Militant Tendency — not a voice was raised in protest at the slaughter. Eric Heffer asked why three people had been killed 'when they didn't have guns and didn't plant a bomb' — and then joined in

the chorus against 'terrorism of every kind'.

The Gibraltar affair highlights again the SAS's impunity; it reminded us of the state's readiness to use barefaced lies in their propaganda: fairy tales about '500 lbs of explosive in a car', or '440 lbs' were released by the army and repeated by the press before Howe admitted there was no bomb; a roll of tape, some wire and an alarm clock in another car became 'bomb making equipment'.

In the nationalist areas of Belfast crowds of teenagers, showing their readiness to do battle hi-jacked and burned out buses after the news came through, despite appeals for calm by Sinn Fein.

The killings put the Tory 'shoot-to-kill campaign' against the IRA on a new plane, with full Labour support. The working class movement must not allow

this new step towards dictatorship to be taken unopposed.

The demand for an inquiry, sponsored by the Labour movement, into the activities of the MI5, Special Branch, and other departments of the state, against both Irish republicans and the working class movement, must be fought for. Such an inquiry must examine all the workings of the capitalist state against those who dare resist it.

At the same time, George Robertson's support for the executions cannot go unchallenged. In mild terms Robertson is not up to the bootstraps of the murdered volunteers: they were prepared to fight and die for their belief in Irish self-determination, while he egged on Thatcher's terrorism — which is ultimately directed at the working class in both Ireland and Britain.

When British workers

come into open conflict with this brutal state machine — like the Irish nationalists have already — traitors like Robertson will applaud the state terror then, too. The fight against this treacherous leadership is crucial.

So, too, is the fight to win sections of the trade union and working class movement to the principle of Irish self-determination.

● Mairead Farrell, 31, of Andersonstown, Belfast, joined the IRA after leaving school in 1975, and was 10 years in jail. (see report below)

● Danny McCann, 30, a butcher from the Lower Falls area of Belfast, was two years in jail. Last March loyalist gunmen, one armed with a sawn-off shotgun, burst into his home — he was out.

● Sean Savage, 25, also came from West Belfast, the heartland of nationalist resistance to the British occupation.

From strip-searching to shoot-to-kill

The first woman Republican prisoner to lead the campaign against strip-searching in Armagh jail from 1982 was gunned down in Gibraltar last Sunday.

Mairead Farrell had spent 10 years of her life, before she was released in 1986, as a prisoner who refused all attempts by the Northern Ireland regime to criminalise her and her fellow inmates.

It was as Officer Commanding Republican women prisoners in Armagh that she conducted continued battles, firstly for political status — she was the first woman denied the rights of a political prisoner; while still only 19 she had been sentenced to 14 years for possession of a gun.

As the protest escalated in Armagh and in the H-blocks of Long Kesh, the women prisoners were denied permission to leave their cells even to 'slop out'. So the dirty protest was joined.

It was Mairead Farrell who co-ordinated the struggle inside Armagh jail. As Margaretta D'Arcy recounted (see details of publication below):

BY SARAH HANNIGAN

'Mairead had developed into a highly sophisticated negotiator. She had been there for four years, and in that time to have built and maintained unity among this small group of women was really remarkable.'

Along with Mary Doyle and Mairead Nugent she went on hunger strike with Bobby Sands and other prisoners in Long Kesh to highlight the demands for political status. It was called off after 19 days.

Following the hunger strike of 1981 in which ten prisoners died, demands

were granted. But it was not long before the Northern Ireland Office and Westminster had decreed that criminalisation of political prisoners should be stepped up again.

In November 1982, a new Governor of Armagh ordered that from then on all women were to be strip-searched before and after every court appearance, home or hospital visit or even after inter-prison journeys. It was remand prisoners who bore the brunt of the brutal new regime.

One woman, Denise Whittala, who was charged with non-payment of a fine was returned from hospital after a miscarriage, only to be subjected to the humiliation of a strip search. Others suffered the same indignity after giving birth.

Routine

As the practice became routine, it was Mairead Farrell who acted as spokeswoman for the Armagh

Following the closure of Armagh, women have been moved to the newly-built top security prison that cost a total of £35 million.

In September 1987, it housed a total of 15 prisoners and 180 staff! Yet strip searching carried out is still carried out extensively allegedly on 'security' grounds.

Psychiatrist, Dr. Ivor Browne of University College, Dublin has described strip-searching as 'a rather violent procedure and a tremendous intrusion on a human being. It's a violent act and, I think... rapacious... is probably more traumatic than anything else... short of extreme torture.'

women.

It was she who enunciated the women's views that strip-searching was being carried out with the deliberate intention of humiliating and degrading them and as a means of demonstrating that political power lay in the hands of the British establishment in Ireland.

Today it is not only in the north of Ireland but in Britain that strip-searching is used against Republican — and other — women who pose a threat to establishment views.

Isolated

Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer, although held in top security conditions in Durham jail, isolated from other prisoners, are still regularly strip-searched and their cells ripped apart.

Women anti-nuclear protesters at Greenham Common, women from mining communities and black women at Tottenham in