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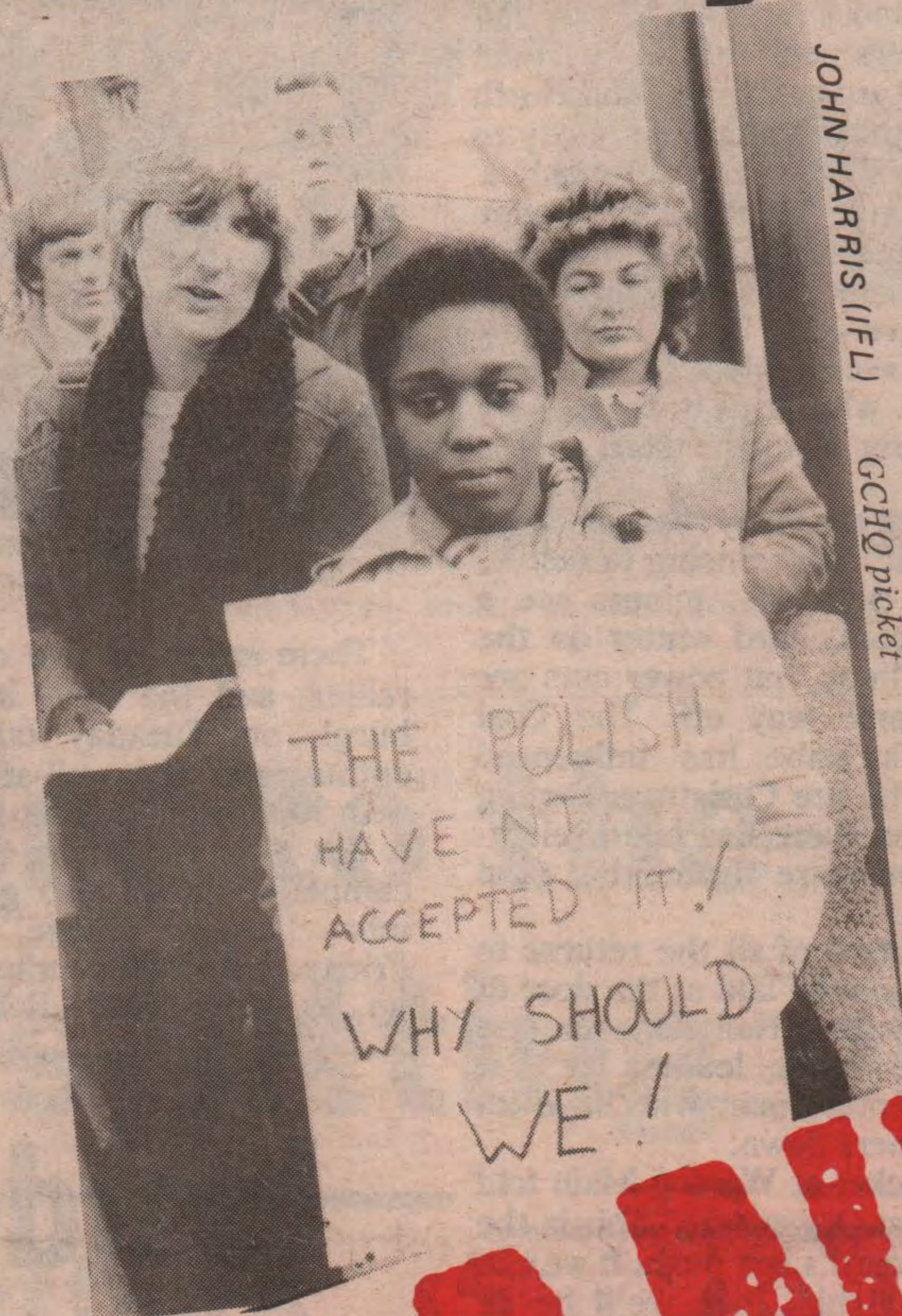
Inside

Centre pages: world poverty and
a socialist energy policy.
Pages 4-5: report from a York-
shire pit village.
Page 10: US threats against
Nicaragua; the reasons for the
slaughter in India.

After NGA, GCHQ, Lairds, courts move against NUM and carworkers



Mass picket at Warrington



JOHN HARRIS (IFL)

GCHQ picket



Scargill being arrested at Orgreave

JOHN HARRIS (IFL)

JOHN HARRIS (IFL)

STOP THE TORY



Picket at BL Longbridge

UNION-BUSTERS!

NO trade union is safe. The Tories are out to break the back of effective trade unionism.

The TUC's failure to deliver on its promises of support for the miners has given them the go-ahead. Now six unions in the car industry have had writs telling them that their strike at Austin Rover is against the law because the strike vote was not in Tory-approved form.

If they refuse to return to work and accept that workers can strike only by permission of the Tory-dominated courts, then these unions could have their funds seized.

The NUM's national funds are already being seized. Court

cases are now underway which could lead to NUM area funds being seized, too, and individual NUM executive members being fined.

It is the latest stage in a developing offensive from the Tories, encouraged at each stage by the weakness of the official leaders of the labour movement.

Last December it was the print union NGA, beaten down by the courts after it tried to stop Eddie Shah's scab print-works in Warrington.

In March it was civil servants at GCHQ, told that they could no longer be union members.

In August the South Wales miners' area funds were seized.

In October 37 shipyard workers from Cammell Lairds, Birkenhead, were jailed for occupying to defend their jobs.

Dockers in Cardiff now face legal action because they are boycotting the haulage firms that took the South Wales NUM to court.

Neil Kinnock has chosen this moment to distance himself from the miners, saying that he "hasn't got time" to attend support rallies. He is only giving a further boost to the Tories.

Despite Kinnock or against Kinnock, the labour movement must defend its rights. Start organising now for solidarity action with the car workers and the miners!

Miners suffer 'internal exile'

SIX striking miners have been put in 'internal exile' by North Notts magistrates.

They have been convicted of nothing, but they had to accept the exile or go to prison on remand.

Two Whitwell, North Derbyshire, miners, Paul Machin and Robin Bullock have had to spend ten ways in Wick, Caithness — exiled 550 miles away from home with Paul's aunt.

The police charged them with affray. The bail conditions were 60 days of 20-hours-a-day house arrest. The miners were allowed out only between 9 am and 1 pm.

Following their rearrest on charges of unlawful assembly, they were thrown into Leicester-shire prisons for 45 days. After many different attempts, accepting 'internal exile' was the only way they could get released.

Four Manton, South York-shire, miners have suffered a similar fate. Their cases arose, in different ways, from incidents with the arch-sab Robert Taylor.

On the day that Taylor, Ken Foulstone and three other 'Manton working miners' started scabbing at Manton, the police set about the pickets and arrested over 20. Two strikers — John Wesley and Karl Barker — were refused bail and thrown into Lincoln prison.

After help from the Manton NUM branch and the Newark Labour Party, they have now been released because "suitable accommodation...acceptable to the magistrates court and the police" has been found — a vicarage in London! They still have to report to a London police station regularly. They are due to reappear at Worksop Magis-

trates Court on November 28.

The third case involves Manton NUM Branch Secretary Dave Potts and fellow Manton striker Chris Cheetham. Together with John Potts, they were remanded to Lincoln prison over a month ago charged with threatening to kill Taylor.

Taylor's version of the incident was, predictably, widely publicised from a press conference and splashed across the national newspapers as fact. The strikers' defence, however, got very different treatment — kept under a blanket of silence by court reporting restrictions.

It is very different from the picture screamed by the media of strikers driving Taylor, his wife and kids off the road.

As a Manton striker explained to Socialist Organiser, Taylor had knocked down a cyclist, Chris Cheetham's brother, and had then been pursued and stopped by a car driven by Dave Potts. After stopping the hit-and-run driver, Dave Potts had said to Taylor that he would be dead if he hadn't got his wife and kids with him.

After four weeks in terrible conditions in Lincoln, Dave Potts and Chris Cheetham have only now been released because the Manton NUM branch found them accommodation with GLC councillors in London. This 'satisfies' bail conditions, which include exclusion from Notts (other than to see lawyers or attend court) — although they both live, with wives and children, in the county.

They are due to reappear at Mansfield Magistrates Court on November 22.

The South African state would have been proud of the arrangements.

Profits and poverty

IN 1983 the 20 highest paid company directors in Britain were paid as much as 722 workers on the average male manual wage.

Figures just published by Labour Research also reveal that there has been an increase in inequality since 1979. In that year the 20 top directors got as much as 454 'average' male manual workers.

Top company directors usually get much more than their salary — share options, company cars, private health insurance, and other perks. But in salary alone Richard Giordano of British Oxygen received £521,500 last year, and another six directors got more than £250,000 per year each.

'Labour Research' also looks at the latest official survey of earnings.

The ten worst-paid jobs in Britain are all jobs dominated by women — from hairdressers through sewing machinists to cleaners. Gross pay in those jobs is one-quarter or one-fifth of the salary of top-paid groups like doctors, 'finance, insurance and tax specialists', and police inspectors.

Paul Foot in the Daily Mirror last Thursday, 1st, gave some details on the Tories' links with Libya.

"In October 1981, for the first time since Colonel Gaddafi came to power in Libya, a senior minister, Omar Muntassir, visited Britain on a trade mission". He met Ian MacGregor, then at British Steel, and Douglas Hurd, then a Trade Minister.

Contacts have continued ever since. "60 per cent of the consultancies in Libya are still held by British firms... British Airways are still training Libyan

engineers... Something like £300 million will come out of Libya this year into the coffers of (British) companies (trading there)".

Ronald Reagan, like Margaret Thatcher, wants to cut public spending. But Democratic Party campaigners have turned up some startling examples of waste in the US military budget, reported in the Observer last Sunday.

The Pentagon paid \$670 each for armrests available for \$5; \$110 for 5-cent plugs; \$7,622 for a coffee machine that could be bought in the shops for less than \$100; \$170 for torches normally priced at \$24; \$74,000 for a ladder which they could have got for \$3000.

The US government's military budget — over \$180 bn a year — is comparable to the entire national income of Australia, the Netherlands, Mexico, or India. It provides a lush 'welfare state' for the big military contractors, and retired military commanders often take top jobs with these firms.

The Financial Times on November 6 reported that Eric Hammond of the EETPU had become "the first union leader to address a meeting at the CBI conference."

The CBI — Confederation of British Industry — is Britain's major employers' organisation.

Hammond got a big audience for his talk on "strike-free deals — why we back them". According to the FT, he also explained: "Personally — I am not speaking for the union — I would like to see the closed shop wither away".

One bemused boss asked super-sab Hammond: "Why does your union remain in the TUC and Labour Party?"

The NCB's offensive

By John Bloxam

THE Coal Board is claiming a major breakthrough with their back-to-work drive, especially in North Derbyshire.

North Derbyshire area NUM leader Gordon Butler pointed out that the Coal Board figures are grossly inflated. They include BACM and NACODS members, and also Bolsover colliery, which is geographically in Derbyshire but comes under the Notts NUM.

Around 1000 NUM members out of more than 10,000 are scabbing. And North Derbyshire was always likely to be a weaker area: getting only a 49.9% vote for action in a ballot at the beginning of the strike.

However, a significant number have gone back to work — and, worryingly, it includes people who had been actively picketing from the start of the strike.

There are many reasons. With the TUC still refusing to deliver on its promises, miners see a long, cold, hard winter on the picket lines, but power cuts are still some way off. The Coal Board's bribe has influenced men who see Christmas coming up. And there has been relentless pressure from the Coal Board.

But most of all the returns to work must be laid at the door of Jack Eccles, Neil Kinnock and all the other leaders of the labour movement who have let the miners down.

A picket at Warsop Main told Socialist Organiser: "This is the Coal Board's last push. If we can weather this, then we'll be all right".

The NUM recall conference in Sheffield on Monday 5th reaffirmed the strike and decided to wage "a campaign in every coal-mining village and community to counteract the propaganda of the media".



Police confront miners outside the NUM delegate conference in Sheffield. Photo: John Harris, (IFL)

There are to be five regional rallies, and the first, in Edinburgh on Tuesday 6th, was enthusiastic and well-attended, with 3000 there.

But it is important that the campaign should also go down into "every village". Last Friday, 3rd, 1400 people turned up to hear Tony Benn and

Gordon Butler speak at a joint Shirebrook/Warsop Main NUM meeting in North Derbyshire, and it seems that it did persuade a number to stand firm.

There is a strong feeling among the rank and file, not only in North Derbyshire, that it is time for the national NUM leaders to get round the villages.

Back the miners



Inside the Coal Board

By Gerry Bates

THE Financial Times last Thursday, 1st, carried an interesting account, by John Lloyd, of the internal politics of the Coal Board's top management.

The background to Ian MacGregor's moves against long-

established Coal Board managers — Ned Smith, Michael Eaton, and now Geoffrey Kirk

— is a drastic reduction in the influence of mining engineers within the NCB, and the rise of Tory whizzkids.

According to Lloyd, MacGregor's two main advisers are men from completely outside the industry, David Hart and Tim Bell.

"Senior board executives believe that these two men now have very large leverage over Mr MacGregor's decisions on the public presentation of their case, and over the strategy of the dispute itself. Mr Bell is a director of Saatchi and Saatchi, the agency which has so successfully promoted the Conservative Party: he is currently on holiday in Antigua.

"Mr Hart is a freelance journalist with his own company..."

"Hobart House executives...believe that Mr Hart and Mr Bell have been instrumental in underpinning the hard line. Mr MacGregor has taken against the NUM leadership, and particularly in boosting the importance of the working miners and the "drift back" to work.

"Mr Hart was "exposed" in the Daily Mirror in October where it was alleged he had substantial contacts with the working miners and acted as their adviser.

"Both Mr Hart and Mr Bell are politically active in Conservative politics: both have been written up as Prime Ministerial advisers."

John Lloyd also argues that MacGregor's approach to the dispute has been a sharp break from previous NCB tactics.

"Further, he naturally tended to see the trade union leaders with whom he had to deal through glasses tinted with his US experience: unlike the board's industrial relations department, he did not care to distinguish between the various strands of leftism they espoused, and thus confused the essentially centrist NACODS leaders with far leftists."



Picket outside the Duke of Edinburgh pub — a well-known meeting place of racists — in Newham last Saturday

Newham 7 picket

AS part of the campaign in defence of the Newham 7 and against racist attacks, the Newham 7 Defence Campaign organised a picket of a pub in Newham from which racist attacks have been organised. The Newham 7's case will be heard in the High Court in May and a national demonstration is being planned for early next year.



Black communities all across Britain have rallied to the support of the miners. Above: Glasgow branch of the Indian Workers' Association present Ayrshire miners with £1200 worth of food. Photo: Rick Matthews, IFL

Back the miners



STEFANO CAGNONI (IFL)

A letter to Norman Willis



To Norman Willis, general secretary of the TUC.

Dear Comrade,

I have been instructed by the Notts Miners' Rank and File Strike Committee to write and urge stronger support for those miners who are carrying out the official policy of the National Union of Mineworkers.

That policy of opposing pit closures, the fight to save jobs and preserve mining communities is the one and only central issue at stake, and for the last eight months the striking miners of Notts have refused to be detracted from that one issue.

There are, however, those like the government, the Coal Board, the media and even some so-called friends who have throughout this dispute tried to sidetrack the arguments away from that central issue.

By concentrating on personalities, violence, intimidation of working miners, and all kinds of trivia, they hope to break our morale and drive us back to work.

They will not succeed.

We are out and will stay out, until complete and utter victory is ours.

As you are no doubt aware, the majority of Notts miners are scabbing and it is the minority — i.e. the strikers — who are suffering not only the intimidation of the massive police presence, the intimidation of the most reactionary Tory government in history, the vile intimidation of the sweepings of the gutters of Fleet Street, but also personal intimidation of themselves and their families at the hands of those self-same scabs.

We, the striking miners of Nottingham, call upon the TUC to turn its very fine rhetoric into positive actions and give their full and unqualified support in bringing about the most momentous victory ever achieved by the working class in this country.

We do not expect the TUC General Council to be the agents of appeasement and compromise and if that General Council does not feel it is able to live up to our expectations, then we would respectfully suggest they leave the arena and allow the NUM leadership, in whom we have the fullest confidence, to take the fight forward in the full knowledge that whatever the cost and however bitter the suffering, we will fight on until that victory is achieved.

No surrender, no retreat and no compromise.

After eight months of this bitter conflict we will not settle for anything less than complete and utter victory. Fully support us now and you will earn our fullest gratitude. Desert us, or sell us short, and you will stand condemned for all eternity.

Victory to the miners. The fight goes on.

Yours fraternally,

PAUL WHETTON

For and on behalf of the Notts Miners' Rank and File Strike Committee

'We've set fire to the fence Kinnock's sitting on'

THIS last week has been one of speaking engagements for me. On Tuesday I spoke in Barnsley. We were talking primarily not about the strike but about the dangers of the police state.

The fact that a Notts striking miner was there was obviously well received.

Jack Taylor spoke in his usual very blunt, very straight manner.

We concentrated on the way in which the police have been taking on extra powers. The police state is here to stay. It's the miners today, and the rest tomorrow.

I noticed, for example, that there was quite a large police presence on the car workers' picket lines.

Police

The police will be used to help smash the unions, after which the bosses and the government will be able to do exactly as they please.

I drew out the similarities between what is happening in this country now and what happened in Germany in the 1930s. It's no good sitting back and saying: 'I didn't know and I couldn't do anything because I'm only an individual'.

On Thursday I spoke at a packed meeting of 200-300 in Basingstoke. Other speakers included a woman from the Notts Women's Support Group, a member of the local ASLEF branch who've been doing some good work, and a South Wales miner.

Meetings in general are still well attended. We tend to be appealing to the converted, but the support is still there.

What we've got to do now is turn to the TUC and the Labour Party and tell them that we want them to come up with the promises.

We've had the rhetoric, now we want them to come up with the goods.

Now the talks between the NUM and the Coal Board have broken down again, we

Paul Whetton's strike diary

have to once more go out to convince the TUC and the Labour Party that the intransigence is on the part of the Coal Board. The Coal Board is in the invidious position of being told to settle but not to let it be seen as a victory for the miners. Now they can't do that.



The internal wranglings among the senior management of the Coal Board have come out into the open. It has been said previously that it was an insult to the British miner to foist MacGregor on us. But it was a bigger insult to British management.

Now that insult is bearing fruit and although MacGregor is still there in name, that is all.

They've effectively dumped him, but they've made such a mess of the job that they can't actually get rid of him.

I think the offensive

launched by the Coal Board over the last few days is an indication of desperation. When you've got to start bribing men to return to work and you've got to use their own money, that is, money they are already owed, in order to bribe them, that shows desperation on the part of the Coal Board.

Some lads have been attracted by it, and have gone back, but what do the Coal Board offer next? It seems to me to be a real last throw of the dice.

I suppose the only other thing they can do is offer an out-and-out bribe.

Yes, there has been a response, with a few dozen returning here and a few dozen returning there, but why don't the press go to those thousands who have refused the bribe, to the single lads who haven't received a penny since day one.

Kinnock

We've set fire to the fence Kinnock was sitting on and he's got off. And we know which side he's got off.

I think Kinnock is going to be very sorry that he hasn't come out on the miners' side.

He's now on the other side of the fence. He's offered the sop of saying that the Labour Party will organise a demonstration, but that's not good enough.

The vast majority of miners are going to take another look at Kinnock, and I think workers from quite a few other industries will do the same.

Their attitude will be, that if Kinnock treats the miners

like that, what's he going to do to us?

I'm not entirely happy with the five big rallies the NUM are organising. Rallies are okay, but you are preaching to the converted. I suppose they thought they had to get round the lads and give them a boost.

We're in need of another Saltley Gate. I'd be looking to car workers, dockers, people who recognise just what the hell is going on from a rank and file level as opposed to trade union and Labour Party leaders.

We're still getting good support from the rank and file in the Labour Party and the unions, and those are the people we really have to appeal to.

Test

I personally don't think this week is a make-or-break week for the strike. Everyone of these milestones is a test. The vast majority of mine workers who have been on strike for eight months are now not prepared to settle for anything less than complete victory.

Those striking miners who have returned to work are a blow to our morale, but it's not a major problem so long as we can hold the vast bulk. Then I think we've got it cracked. The Coal Board has tried everything.

If there'd been a mass return to work in Yorkshire then we'd have had problems but there's not even been a mass return to work in Nottinghamshire, where it is the easiest thing in the world to go back to work.

The winter is going to give us problems as well as the Coal Board — heating our houses, standing on picket lines in the cold.

But we went through all that in 1972. It's going to provide a bigger headache for the Coal Board and the government

Solidarity conference London

Sunday December 2

Called by the Mineworkers' Defence Committee
Speakers include Arthur Scargill and Tony Benn
At Camden Town Hall, London NW1 (opposite St Pancras Station). 11.30 to 4.30.

Delegates and observers invited from all labour movement organisations. Conference fee: £2 for first delegate, £1 for additional delegates and for observers.

Write to Jane Stockton, 31 Cranwich Rd, London N16, or phone 01-981 3289.

JOHN HARRIS (JFL)



Police trying to get rid of photographer as they arrest a picket at Kiveton Park.

'It's time the TUC fulfilled the promises'

What is your reaction to the collapse of the talks?

The talks, in my honest opinion, have never started, because I believe MacGregor's orders are that there will be no settlement whatsoever.

Sole

It's my belief that the sole purpose of the talks is to build us up, then completely break the talks off, to make it look like Scargill's done it, and hope for a drift back to work — which still isn't working.

It's an exercise in American-style union bashing.

Joe Wills, North Staffs district president of the NUM, spoke to Arthur Bough

What's going to happen now?

On Monday the Special Delegate Conference will be held. Scargill will give all the relevant information on the so-called talks so far.

He will ask the delegates to endorse the line he's taken from their mandate and ask for a continuation of the strike. In my opinion that will be endorsed 100%.

I can understand the feeling of some of the right-wingers on the NEC who tried yesterday to move to put the result of the talks to the members in a ballot to see if we should continue.

The fear is obviously that we've got many men who have suffered for eight months, and these men, unfortunately, could hold the balance of victory or defeat for the strike.

If the Special Delegate Conference endorses the continuation of the strike it is my belief that this strike could go on well into the New Year, knowing the dictatorial attitude of MacGregor and Thatcher.

Troops

Last night, *Newsnight* on BBC2 disclosed secret plans held by the government on how to beat the miners, including the use of troops. What is your reaction?

Thatcher has planned the strategy months ahead of the strike with the sole intention of defeating what she believes is the most powerful union.

She knows full well with the economic policy she is committed to that by keeping five million people on the dole, she

can use that as a lever against all the other unions. She would then have isolated us. It's time that the TUC fulfilled their promise at the conference and brought everyone out in support.

What do you think about the statement by Jack Eccles, the Chair of the TUC?

The answer to Jack Eccles is this. If he believes in his wisdom that the NACODS deal was a negotiated settlement then he should read through it again, and see that the whole document is a nonentity.

If our members, after being on strike for eight months, are expected to depend on this, then this man lives in cloud-cuckoo land.

We have not suffered hardship to go back to work, and see all the jobs and pits that we have fought so long and hard for be sold by a team of men like Eccles in negotiating a settlement similar to NACODS, because there is no doubt in my mind that NACODS sold us down the river.

Will the strikes by Jaguar and BL workers help the miners?

I believe that any group of workers who now come out on strike will highlight the problem we have got in this country. The Iron Lady is more than willing to bankrupt the country, decimate industry and communities in a one-tracked attitude, to be the one Western-world Prime Minister that destroyed trade unionism.

Women against pit closures

In a

"We

By Jenny Dennis

On August 22 our village woke up to a shock. Scabs reported for work.

To our shame, three men returned, two from our own village. We were sickened, but soon prepared and ready to picket.

We needed to be ready because on that same day our village was invaded. Up to 4000 police came into our village. There were seven arrests that day.

These aren't your "community cops". They're riot police, PSU's, dog handlers, and mounted "animals".

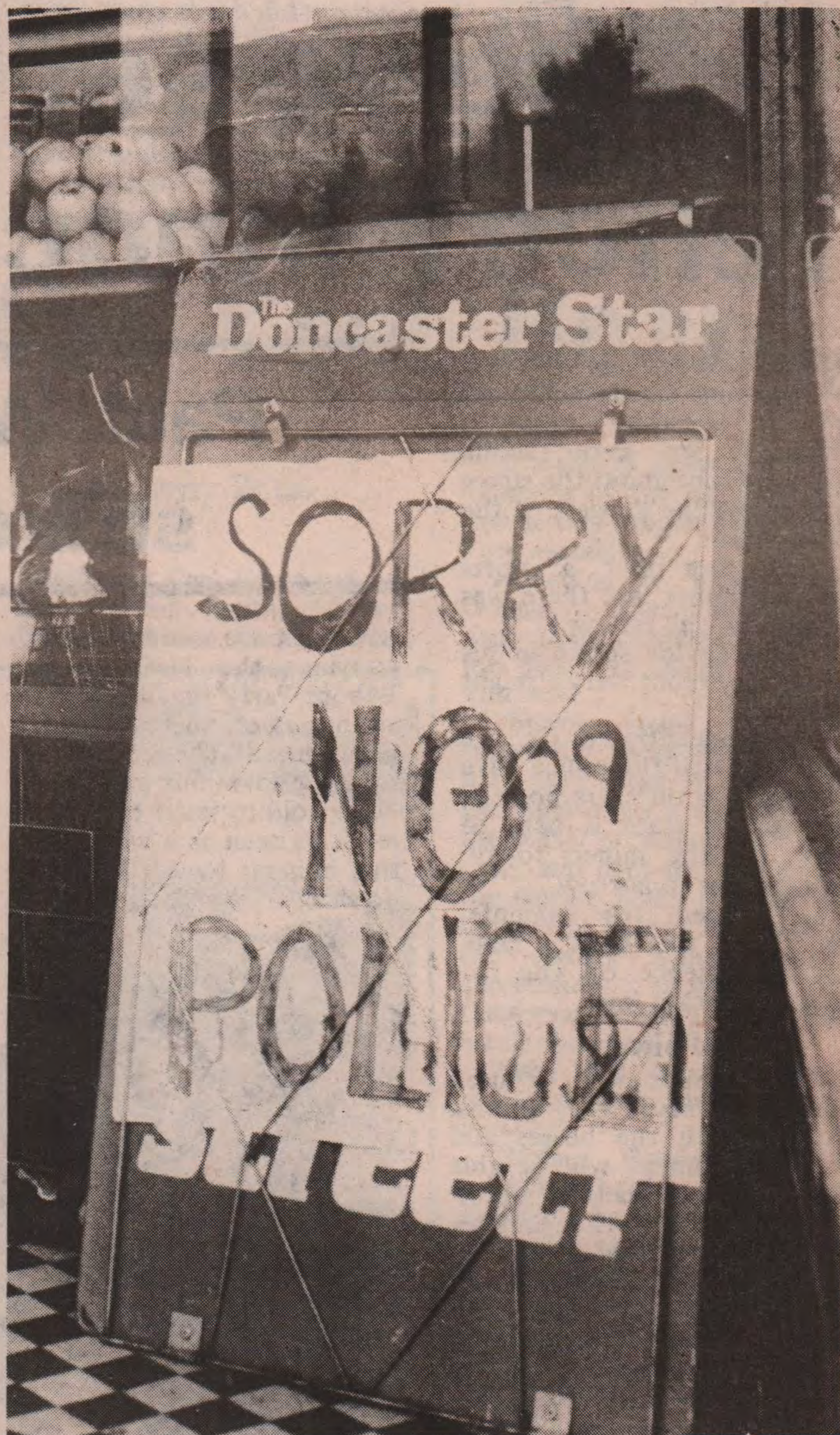
Our community was exposed directly to police provocation, harassment and unmitigated violence.

Since Orgreave, women have been on the picket line. Since our men and young lads returned bloodied, bruised and hospitalised by these thugs we have stood beside our men on picket lines. We reacted to police violence, "Take them and you take us."

What our community goes through at the hands of the police is hell.

At their lowest, the police urinate in front of us. On September 6, 34 lined up and urinated in full view of pensioners and shoppers. I've put in a complaint. It's a contemptuous offence against our community.

They really enjoy abusing women...



Sign outside Armthorpe village shop doorway

Gathering facts on the police

WE are currently gathering material for a prospective document concerning the impact of the mining dispute on our community of Kiveton Park in particular and South Yorkshire in general.

We would be grateful to receive details from any pickets either involved or witness to arrest/assault by the police in

the vicinity of Kiveton Park. We would be especially grateful to anyone who could provide us with photographs, etc., of any such incident.

Yours sincerely,
Jenny Dennis
14 Ivanhoe Avenue,
Kiveton Park
Nr. Sheffield
S31 8NH

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Name

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Send to: Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.

Yorkshire pit village are making history"

"Come on then," as one waves a £20 note. "Been whoring?" as you pass them... "Filthy lesbians" as we stand in twos or threes.

"This hasn't tasted blood for 24 hours, who's to be the first?", as they stroke their batons. "What are your children getting for Christmas?"

I've stood on many picket lines and can swear the truth that not once have I witnessed violence provoke by pickets. The police provoke it.

They wave £1000 pay cheques at us, degrade us women, interrogate our children and beat our men.

"It was as though we'd been sleeping for hundreds of years. We realised a new political awareness."

It's not just the picket line where they are violent. One of the scabs lives on the edge of a housing estate in the village.

You have to pass his house to get in the estate. At any one time between six and 36 cops "guard" his house.

The police get bored, sitting in vans. Their entertainment is us.

A woman in the village had her elderly mother staying. The mother is 69 and suffers an arthritic hip.

During a lapse in entertainment the cops picked on some local lads. The mother walked out the house on hearing the commotion.

As she witnessed them beating up one lad, she called out "Why do that? He's done nowt. Leave him. Bullies."

The police ran up to her, put her in a van, drove round and left her three-quarters of a mile away. She was found in tears,

outside a public house with her slippers on. She didn't know how to get back to her daughter's.

There have been over 80 arrests in the village involving seven prison sentences of up to three weeks. Bail conditions vary from "Do not picket your own colliery" to "You must only picket your own colliery" to "Do not enter the neighbouring county of Nottinghamshire".

There is a curfew of 9 pm on some men. Albert Bowns, our union official, has been ordered to "have no involvement in the current dispute".

Children

Our children fear the police. They see what they do to their mums and dads. Generations will pass before our children will trust the police. Perhaps never.

They use our children. One officer goes to the ice-cream van with £5 and buys all the kids on the street an ice-cream.

Then he interrogates them. "And what does daddy do? Where does he go at night?" This is kids aged three and up.

On August 31 the police organised an ambush. They cut off 40 pickets, away from the main picket.

They were hemmed in on a garage forecourt by riot police on foot. Suddenly mounted police charged.

Something cicked in their heads. "Kill the bastards" one shouted.

For the first time some police actually helped the pickets, by dragging men out of their way. They were mad, really brutal.

Pickets ran into a housing estate, the only exit available, where there is a pensioners' complex. Old women and men were opening doors to find mounted riot cops beating our men.

One man was dragged in by a woman to her flat. He was so scared he just vomited on her carpet.

Unknown to us, three hours earlier they had placed 2000 riot cops in that estate. Men injured on that day are still in hospital.

They introduced a new tactic on October 9. We'd had a picket and we're waiting for the police to go before we dispersed. But they didn't.



STEFANO CAGNONI (IFL)

Miners' wives national demonstration in London last August

To our left were dog handlers. To our rear were the PSUs.

To our right was a dyke, knee-deep with sludge and a bog behind that. There were no television cameras, no papers, no Policewatch, no NCCL observers.

Tunnel

They formed a tunnel 20 men deep, 12 wide on each side and wide enough to pass one person through. They drew batons. Over a megaphone the inspector ordered us to disperse. Those at the rear couldn't hear the orders. The only route possible was the tunnel.

We stood still in absolute silence. Would you have gone through that tunnel?

As we stood silent we heard the hooves. Eight mounted police charged. I stood paralysed. I had to move. I couldn't.

I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

Men were being caught with batons across heads. As pickets fell to the ground they were quickly picked up by other pickets. You don't hit the ground, it's fatal. That's where you get the boot. We stood knee deep in that ditch till they'd finished.

They had their feet out of the stirrups so they could kick at faces. Charging without stirrups meant they could not control their horses.

The chair of our police committee was asked to resign. He said when the police came out of the academies they came out like "Nazi stormtroopers".

He told the truth.

We are not down. We won't be beaten.

For the first time in our village, women are seen shedding their former roles.

Mining communities are traditionally male-dominated. It's the men that work and the women that do: having babies, washing and making snap is our lot. Then it changed.

It was as though we'd been sleeping for hundreds of years. We awoke, we realised a new political awareness.

Organising food, raising money, speaking. Men have acknowledged that we, as women, are vital to that victory. We're an active part of that struggle, side by side with our men in the battle's frontline.

Part-time women workers are the breadwinners in some families. There goes the myth of pin-money.

We are witnessing something amongst the women which I can only compare with the suffragettes. We are living and making history. We won't return to the status quo. We can't.

Personally it has made me realise that not only must we fight our injustices but others

too.

Because we have lived through media lies we ask ourselves "What other lies have they made?"

Ireland

Look at injustice in Ireland. What really happened in Toxteth? In Brixton? I realise the black community is struggling against injustice.

After we win we must turn and right other injustices.

Because we will win. We can't afford not to.

This fight is a fight for trade unionism. It's a fight for the working class. Our fight is you fight. We need your support. You can't afford for us to lose.

Victory will be ours. If we have to stand alone and fight, we will. And when we win, our men will walk up the pit lane, their heads held high.

They will return with dignity, and we women will share that dignity.

HERE WE GO

A BENEFIT FOR WOMEN IN MINING COMMUNITIES

INCLUDING

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JOHN HARRIS (IFL)

Striking miner "riddling" for scrap coal in Kirkby, S. Yorks

Socialist energy policy

Too much coal?

-while millions are cold and hungry

By Les Hearn

THIS week's article continues the discussion of a socialist energy policy that I began several weeks ago, and looks at the international aspects.

In Britain we have old people dying from cold each winter while the Coal Board protests that it has "too much" coal. But the irrationalities of capitalism are even more glaring on an international scale.

The poor of the Third World frequently experience energy drought or famine. This lack has several causes:

1. The removal of energy (as oil or wood) to the "advanced" countries.

2. The high cost of fuel to countries without their own resources.

3. The loss of energy production through erosion and land being turned into desert, as the Third World poor are forced onto unsuitable land.

4. Increased dependence on fuel-hungry machines or energy-rich fertilisers resulting from capitalist development.

Let's see how these causes interact in practice.

Food is the most basic form of energy in the Third World. And as capitalism spreads more and more into Third World agriculture, energy supplies for food production are also crucial — fertiliser and fuel for tractors.

The basis for the Green Revolution (GR) was laid some 40 years ago with the development of high yielding varieties of maize in Mexico by Rockefeller Foundation plant scientists.

Later, the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations developed high yield rice (or "miracle" rice) in the Philippines.

"Miraculous"

These new varieties became widely used in many countries from the late 1960s and they did increase yields. Unfortunately, as Susan George says*, the new varieties are "miraculous only in so far as it was protected against disease and received appropriate fertilisers, irrigation and drainage," and GR varieties often needed five times as much fertiliser as well as weed-killers.

The GR greatly sharpened class differentiation in the countryside. Rich peasants who could afford fertilisers and irrigation became richer. Poor peasants became poorer or had to become wage labourers.

Lester Brown of the Rockefeller-funded Worldwatch Institute predicted that increased output would make it profitable to mechanise agriculture, and he thought that the machinery and chemicals could only be supplied by multinational agri-businesses who thus had a vested interest in

The Tories say that Britain's collieries are producing too much coal, and pits must close. But millions worldwide suffer from 'fuel famine'.

the GR.

But the rise in oil prices and consequent quadrupling of prices of chemical fertiliser (mostly made from oil and gas) put the boot into the GR as a way of easily raising Third World food production.

The picture is always complicated by local historical and political factors as we can see by looking at the case of Zambia analysed by Rene Dumont and Marie-France Mottin**.

British colonialism

Here, British colonialism caused rural underdevelopment by taking labour from the land for the copper mines and the big capitalist farms in the south (now Zimbabwe).

After independence, the ruling elite tried to "modernise" agriculture by subsidising fertilisers and encouraging better-off peasants to hire tractors.

This slowed down the spread of ox-drawn transport, discouraged the use of organic manure and crop rotation to revitalise the soil, all self-sufficient practises. Zambia became more dependent on fossil fuels and their by-products (nitrate fertilisers).

GR varieties of maize were encouraged, and other prestige crops requiring high energy inputs.

The main local energy resource, wood, is being squandered. Tractor cultivation is easier without trees in the way, but the felled trees are burnt where they are in the absence of the means to take them where they might be used.

Where the poor need wood for fuel, they take it from hillsides, resulting in erosion and loss of soil fertility.

Industry in Zambia is frequently most profligate of energy. One sugar refinery uses imported machines and technicians to make white sugar at \$2000 a tonne, instead of better-tasting unrefined sugar at a few dollars a tonne.

The energy for such industry is imported together with the fuel for the 100,000 plus cars belonging to the city-dwelling elite. More economic public transport is neglected.

firewood, since kerosene, coal and gas are too expensive.

This exacerbates loss of forests already caused by logging for profit and encourages erosion and flooding.

Lack of energy for cooking results in less digestible food and the spread of parasites and disease.

The solution is a political change so that existing resources, technology and knowledge are used to benefit the majority.

A socialist energy policy in a single country, area or continent would take very different forms depending on whether it was Zambia or Algeria, Britain or Japan. But energy issues are perhaps one of the clearest proofs that modern national borders are economically irrational and that socialism cannot be properly developed in the framework of a single country.

Modern industry and agriculture depends on huge international flows of energy. Not only the profit priorities of capitalism, but also the different national interests of states with vastly differing energy endowments, make rational planning of those flows impossible.

An international socialist economy could make rational plans about combining different

Such dependence on imported energy is punished with oil-price increases at the same time as the price of the major currency earner, copper, drops.

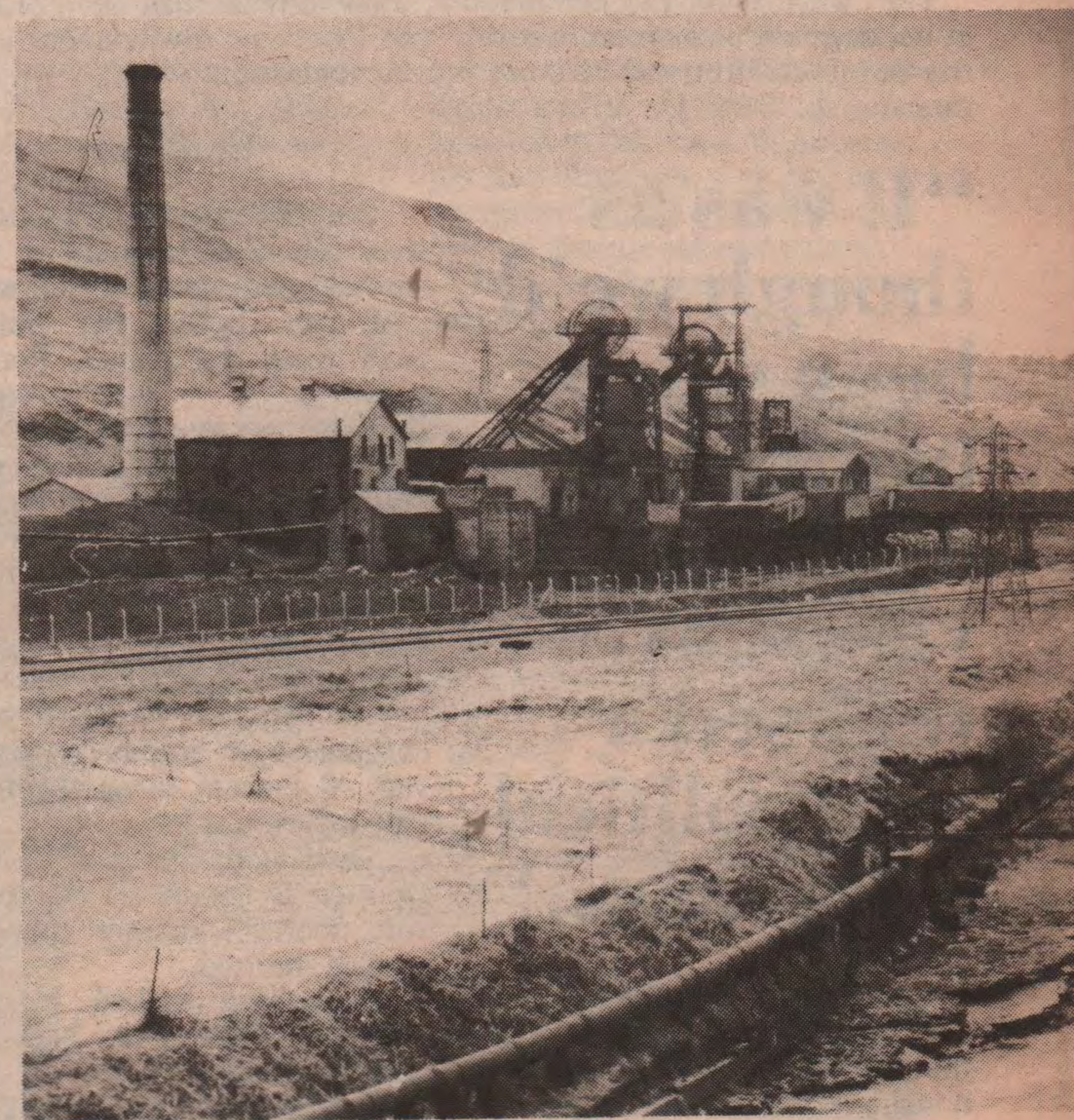
Even if they escape dependence on energy for agriculture, Third World people still need energy for cooking. Anil Agarwal***, showed that in India, the world's tenth industrial power, half the energy consumed is for cooking.

Nearly nine-tenths of this was "renewable" wood, crop wastes and cow dung, but because of erosion, deforestation and the neglect of "non-commercial" energy by planners, there is an energy crisis.

Country women and children walk for miles daily collecting



Nigerian oil wells



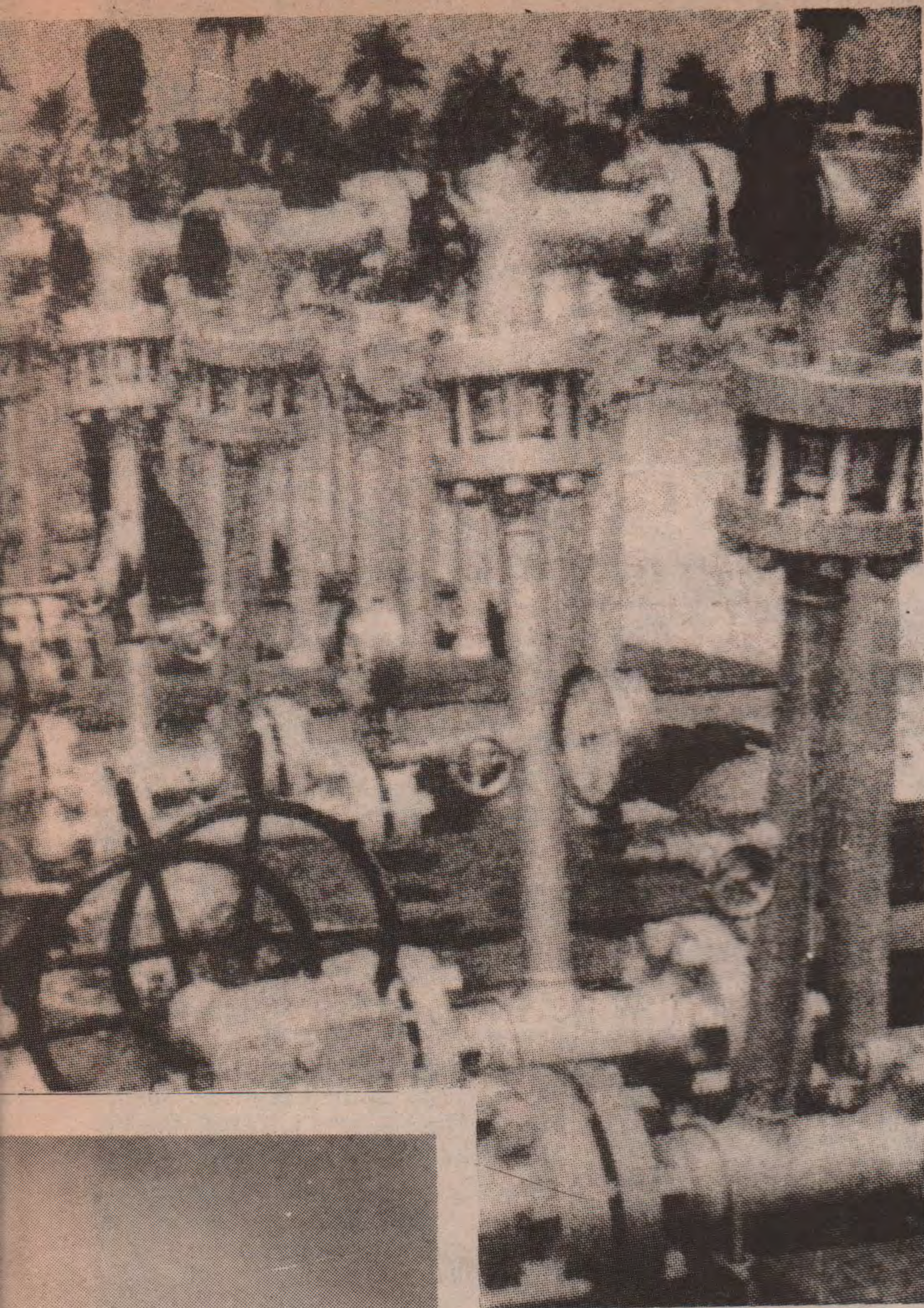
Lewis Myrthyr colliery. Photo, John Harris

sources — oil, gas, coal, nuclear, solar, wave, wind, wood. It could provide energy free or at low cost right across the world — particularly to the Third World peasants at present driven into poverty or starvation for lack of very small supplies of energy.

Arthur Scargill has suggested that if there is a surplus of coal in Britain, it should be supplied free to old age pensioners. It is no less reasonable to supply



Britain's "uneconomic" pits should be used to provide energy to help feed the millions starving throughout the world



if there were no tomorrow. It would increase use of *renewable* sources, and, as necessary, cut down on present-day waste of energy.

Vast amounts of energy are wasted, for example, by private cars being used instead of public transport in the richer countries.

The socialist answer to energy famine in the Third World is not to try to find some way of living with tiny supplies of energy, but to give the peoples of the Third World a more just share of the world's resources.

But there is also a place for small-scale energy projects to give Third World villages more autonomy and control over their own development. If the research resources of the West were devoted to the task, surely it would not take them long to devise small, robust solar energy units usable by Third World communities with lots of sun but few other energy sources.

*How The Other Half Dies.
**Stranglehold on Africa.
***New Scientist, Feb. 1983.



When Africa was not 'backward'

Martin Thomas begins our new series 'Why Poverty?' with a look at the origins of world poverty.

IN the Middle Ages Ethiopia was not underdeveloped.

Walter Rodney — a black Marxist historian assassinated in 1980 as he tried to build a working-class party in his native Guyana — writes: "The kings distinguished themselves by building several churches cut out of solid rock. The architectural achievements attest to the level of skill reached by Ethiopians as well as the capacity of the state to mobilise labour on a huge scale..."

"Fine illuminated books and manuscripts became a prominent element of Amharic culture. Equally fine garments and jewellery were produced for the ruling class and for the church... Craft skills were developed in a number of spheres..."

Other countries today stricken by poverty — Egypt, for example — were once the world's greatest centres of civilisation.

When Portugal first established itself as a colonial power in what is now famine-stricken Mozambique, the local Arab-African city states there, with their "fine stone houses and the air of elegance in the local courts and markets", were "a world comparable, if not superior, in material culture to Portugal" (James Duffy, 'Portugal in Africa').

The European powers had certain advantages over the peoples of Africa and Asia — a more dynamic economic system, more centralised state power, and better military technology — that enabled them to make their conquests. But overall there was no great superiority.

Francois Quesnay, a Frenchman, wrote of China in 1767: "No one can deny that this state is the most beautiful in the world, the most densely populated, and the most flourishing kingdom known". Scientific discoveries in China reached a remarkable level.

In Zimbabwe, when the 19th century white colonialists found the ruined buildings after which the country is now named, they assumed that they must have been built by previous white invaders. They could not believe that black Africans were capable of such achievements.

When Britain first took control of India, in the 18th century, the country was thought of not as a sea of poverty, but as a fabulous treasure-house in the Orient. The ordinary people were somewhat poorer than in Britain, but by a factor of perhaps 2:3 rather than 1:20 today. The luxury of the ruling class was probably

greater than that of Europe's ruling classes.

The economics of colonialism were responsible for today's economic gap between the average living standard in Britain and in India. At independence in 1947, the conditions of the Indian peasantry were roughly the same as they had been 200 years earlier — maybe a little bit better, maybe a little bit worse.

The colonial era which had enriched thousands of British investors and administrators left the Indian peasants stuck in absolute poverty.

Underdevelopment is nothing to do with a lack of talent or energy by the people of a country. Like modern industrial development, it is the product of an economic system: capitalism.

Before the 18th century or thereabouts economic differences between parts of the world were much smaller than today. Or, to be more accurate, they were differences of a different sort.

Some societies — ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, ancient China — reached a much higher level of culture than others. But this was a difference that mostly concerned the ruling class.

Whatever happened in the wealthier spheres of society, the mass of the people did little or nothing more than scratch a bare living from the land.

The technical level varied, and the social relations through which the ruling class extracted the surplus product from the working population were different from society to society. But the living standards of the mass of the people never rose much above the bare minimum of filling their bellies and keeping out the cold and the rain.

Inverse

Today we have the inverse situation. In the capital of Ethiopia, according to the press reports, the wealthy classes live not very differently from the wealthy in Europe or America. A luxury hotel in Addis Ababa provides the same service as a luxury hotel in New York. Even in Ethiopia — one of the half-dozen most underdeveloped countries in the world — such industry as there is can use recognisably similar technologies to those in the advanced countries.

Yet for millions of Ethiopian peasants life is as primitive and brutal and precarious as it was 500 or 1000 years ago, if not more so.

There were great world



Egypt — now 'underdeveloped', once a centre of civilisation

empires before capitalism. But capitalism was the first social system to create an integrated world economy.

Also, capitalism has a drive towards expansion which far exceeds that of any previous economy.

In Imperial China, in Moghul India, in ancient Egypt or in medieval Europe, economic advance meant only an increase in the luxury and religious or military display of the ruling class. It was thus inherently limited.

Luxury

Capitalism, too, features ruling class luxury and military display. But those are not fundamental.

As against "the old view, in which the human being appears as the aim of production", in "the modern world", as Karl Marx put it, "production appears as the aim of mankind and wealth as the aim of production".

By making everything measurable against money, capitalism creates a form of wealth — capital, constantly turning from money into other forms and back again — which by its very nature seeks *unlimited* expansion.

Thus capitalism makes possible both unprecedented material advance and terrible inhumanity and inequality under the cloak of the impersonal laws of the market economy.

The story of development and underdevelopment is the story of how capitalism's drive to expand production has worked its way through unevenly, creating huge material advances in Western Europe and the US and also in some areas in the

Third World, while simultaneously it creates ruin elsewhere.

It is a complicated story. In later articles I will look at how underdevelopment was generated in different areas — Africa, India, Latin America. Each history is different in detail. There are, however, some common factors.

1. Capitalism developed in Western Europe out of feudalism. Feudalism, like other pre-capitalist forms of society, was fundamentally a system whereby a class owning or controlling the land won power and privilege by extracting tribute from the peasantry.

Unlike other pre-capitalist forms of society, however, it also allowed for the growth in the towns of a merchant and craft-worker class which was relatively independent from the ruling class — and which became the bearer of a new form of society.

When the European powers established economic and political domination over Africa, Asia and Latin America, they destroyed the local craft industries. They implanted some new capitalist enterprise — but in the midst of ruin.

2. Centralised state power plays a crucial role in promoting capitalist development. But the colonies had no state power of their own. They were ruled by the state powers of Europe.

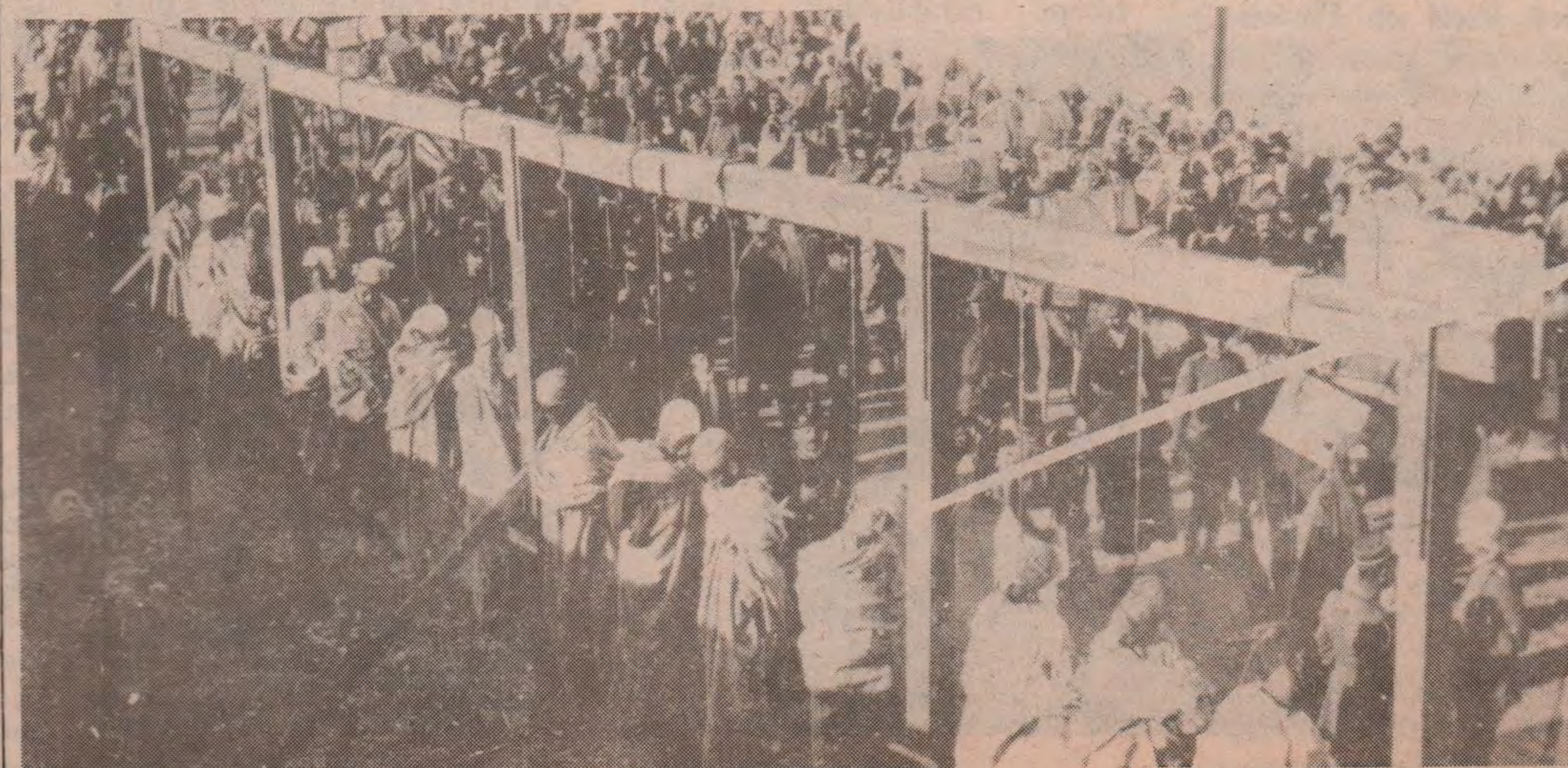
Tariffs, taxes and communications were designed to suit the needs of *European* capitalism.

The early years of capitalist development in Europe were boosted by vast plunder from the Americas and Asia. The peoples of the Third World, far from being able to plunder others, were themselves plundered.

3. To maintain their colonial rule, the European powers "had to find their allies more and more among Indian princes, Egyptian pashas, or African paramount chiefs" (Robinson and Gallagher, 'Africa and the Victorians').

Pre-capitalist forms of exploitation of the peasantry, forms which inherently limited economic development, were modified but also solidified by the backing of colonial power.

The colonialists created, to justify themselves, an ideology which said that the peoples of Africa and Asia were naturally "backward". They then set up a system calculated to *make* them "backward".



Tunisians hanged by Italian colonialists, 1912

Bolivia: the price of not winning socialism

Clive Bradley reviews 'Rebellion in the Veins', a book on Bolivia by James Dunkerley (New Left Books)

BOLIVIA is one of the poorest countries in the world, best known to outsiders for a bewildering series of military coups, or as one of the world's largest producers of cocaine.

In this detailed study of the political history of Bolivia since the revolution of 1952, James Dunkerley shows that behind the apparent political chaos is a rich history of popular struggle, an extraordinarily class conscious, militant and well-organised working class, and something of a serious, mass Trotskyist tradition.

Prospects

Dunkerley argues that the prospects for socialist revolution are particularly good in Bolivia. He puts it like this:

"...of all the post-World War Two political revolutions which failed to achieve the abolition of capitalism, that in Bolivia [in 1952] exhibited the highest degree of proletarian politicisation within a broad Leninist idiom and most consistent resurgence of mass mobilisation...[The potential for] a mass political movement for socialism...has acquired exceptionally strong roots and remains a vital possibility."

"Nowhere else in Latin America, perhaps the world, can one so readily perceive such an outcome flowing from the process of national liberation." (p.348).

In 1946, at an extraordinary congress in Pulacayo mine, a resolution was passed by the Bolivian tin miners' union, the FSTMB, which, as Dunkerley notes, "was, in essence, an application of Trotsky's 1938 Transitional Programme to Bolivian conditions and with special reference to trade union objectives." (p.17).

Lora

One of its authors was a miners' leader from Siglo XX mine named Guillermo Lora. Lora and his party, the POR (Workers' Revolutionary Party), along with its various schisms, have remained one of the few Trotskyist parties in the world with some mass influence.

The miners' union, the FSTMB, has not remained so clearly dominated by the Trotskyists as it was in 1946. It has always been a battleground for various left-wing organisations, including Lora's POR and various parties that have split from it, as well as the Communist Party and the nationalist parties.

The most important single figure in it for over 30 years has been the wily trade union militant Juan Lechin, who has kept his distance from all of these

groups.

But the FSTMB has always been a powerful radical force in the COB (Central Obrera Boliviana), the Bolivian equivalent of the TUC. Both the COB and the tin miners' union played a big role in the 'national revolution' of 1952, which overthrew the old landowning elite.

That revolution brought to power not the working class, but the MNR (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionaria) of Victor Paz Estenssoro, representing the nationalist middle class. It could have been otherwise. The old state apparatus was disintegrating, and workers' militias had developed — including militias based on workplace organisation and relatively independent of the MNR.

The COB produced a programme which was a 'slightly diluted version' of the 1946 FSTMB resolution and stated:

"The COB plans the occupationalisation without compensation under workers' control..."

"The national congress of workers is a step towards obtaining a workers' parliament which will transcend the democratic bourgeois juridical framework and open the road to a government of workers and peasants." (quoted, p.47).

This, note, was produced by the Bolivian equivalent of the TUC. The MNR condemned the COB's statement and insisted that "it [the MNR] is in essence a national party and thus against international communism."

In the event, the MNR won out, and co-opted the workers' movement into its strategy for a revolution within capitalist limits. The mines were nationalised, and held under workers' control for many years; the landowners' estates were handed over to the peasants; but Bolivia remained capitalist.

Syndicalism

Dunkerley explains the failure of the workers' movement in 1952 by the strength of its traditions of syndicalism (i.e. militant trade unionism rejecting party-political action). Unfortunately he does not say much about the mistakes and problems of the Trotskyist party.

After 1952 Bolivia entered into a long period of political instability. Every so often the ruling class shored up its position — usually by more or less severe repression — but each time the working class would soon open up a new period of intense conflict.

Throughout the 'fifties and 'sixties the efforts of Bolivia's capitalists to consolidate their rule became more and more drastic. This culminated in the Banzerato — the rule of the military under Hugo Banzer Suarez, beginning in 1971.

After 1974 the Banzer regime modelled itself on Pinochet's



A workers' and peasants' militia, 1952

Chile.

Along the road from 1952 to 1971 there were many coup d'état, and heroic working class struggles.

For example, the Barrientos dictatorship (November 1964-April 1969) met with fierce resistance. Faced with an attempt to take their guns away, the tin miners responded:

"Let them come to the mines and ask the workers for their arms. We will see if they hand them over. When a miner takes up a weapon he doesn't give it away for anything in the world."

Eventually, the workers' militias were overrun and the troops established control.

workers' leaders were killed and wages were cut. The US military presence was increased.

Simultaneously, a weakly-based guerrilla war led by Che Guevara was defeated, and Guevara, a hero of the Cuban revolution, was killed.

Barrientos

But before long the Barrientos dictatorship fell, and new struggles erupted, including general strikes.

In 1971 a 'Popular Assembly' was set up. This was intended as an 'independent organ of popular power, grouping together all the mass workers' and left-wing organisations in a form

of united front.

"A few have dismissed it as a transient and thoroughly ineffectual body, a talking shop for self-seeking ideologues who act for only ten days, spent five of them immersed in bureaucratic minutiae and the rest of provoking a coup against which they could provide no leadership."

"The left has, in general, defended the experience although it differs considerably as to whether [it] represented a school (PCB, the Bolivian Communist Party), possessed the characteristics of a soviet (workers' councils such as those in Russia in 1917) and the organs of dual power (MIR, a Castroite left group), or was a body with much more pronounced soviet characteristics born out of a state of dual power (POR)." (p.192).

In any case the Popular Assembly *did* fail to lead resistance to the Banzer coup in August 1971. Mass resistance was, however, tremendous.

A general strike and armed opposition were organised — although Torres, the president overthrown by Banzer, refused to give out arms to the workers.

The workers' movement was crushed, far more seriously than at any time since the 'forties, and Banzer remained in power until 1978. The savage military

regime was heavily backed by US imperialism. From August 1971 to December 1972, Bolivia received a total of \$32 million from the US, as against only \$6.7 million from 1942 to 1970.

Mass opposition nevertheless recovered in the late 1970s, and Banzer was replaced by civilian rulers, another bloody coup — in October 1979, led by Colonel Natusch Busch — was followed by another parliamentary regime.

By the end of 1980, demonstrations, strikes and occupations were widespread.

Mass resistance to attempting to reinstall military rule was organised by the COB, but on a class-collaborationist political line which proved unable, in the event, to prevent the military seizing power once again in July 1980.

Argentina

The new military regime fell in 1982, following mass opposition on a colossal scale including 48-hour general strikes and huge demonstrations. The Argentine military — the main sponsors of the 1980 coup — were in disarray following their defeat over the Falklands, and the international bankers thought that a civilian regime would be better able to implement IMF austerity in Bolivia.

The new government of Hernan Siles Zuazo, one of the original MNR leaders in 1952, simply represented a new round in the cycle of political chaos.

Siles Zuazo

Siles' government is still in power — but earlier this year (and outside the scope of Dunkerley's book) it was rocked by a massive, but inconclusive, series of general strikes. The Bolivian Communist Party, which is in Siles' government, was a serious brake on this movement.

A consistent weakness of Dunkerley's account is a reluctance to make political judgements on Bolivia's working class parties. Whilst clearly sympathetic to the POR tradition (and specifically the Lora group), he makes no overall assessment of their political record, or their actions at crucial high-points in the struggle like 1952 or 1971 — outside of a few footnotes.

In fact, Dunkerley has very little to say about the fractious Bolivian Trotskyist movement, apart from documenting its actions and general positions. He neither explains nor comments upon the splits and international alignments of the various POR groups.

Conclusions

Dunkerley's books is a tremendous source of information on the history of Bolivia and its remarkable working class; but it draws no sharp political conclusions.

It would have been useful, for example, to know more about the organisation of the unions and working class political parties at rank and file level and about the forms of working class organisation in strikes and general strikes. Dunkerley chronicles events — and he chronicles events brilliantly — but he leaves the reader desperate for more information.

That said, Dunkerley's book is of tremendous value. He has performed a great service in recounting Bolivia's tangled history and recording the history of the heroic workers' movement.



Bolivian tin miners



Petrograd: May Day 1917



Armed workers in Moscow during the Revolution

The lessons of the revolution

IN February 1917 the Russian monarchy was overthrown by a massive popular uprising which put power into the hands of a government of liberal capitalist politicians.

In similar circumstances in other revolutions, such capitalist governments have been able to hold onto power — politically and physically to disarm the working class and the mass of the dispossessed, the poor of town and countryside — and to see to it that private property remains intact and society moves on along capitalist lines.

Bolivia 1952 (see page 8 of this week's Socialist Organiser) is an example of this kind of outcome to a revolutionary struggle which could have gone much further.

Russia was different. In October 1917 an insurrection led by the Bolshevik Party overthrew the capitalist government and for the first time in history, power passed into the hands of the working class itself.

The new workers' government began to put an end to capitalism.

One major factor in the Russian Revolution made the difference — the Bolshevik Party. Trotsky's book "Lessons of October" is a study of the strategy and tactics of the Bolshevik Party — and the arguments and divisions within it — during the course of the revolution from February to October. It shows the indispensable role that the party played in making the October revolution happen.

Trotsky was one of the major

Reviving our occasional series on socialist classics 'Socialist Bookshelf', Edward Ellis looks at Leon Trotsky's "Lessons of October".

leaders of the Bolsheviks in 1917, and the main organiser of the October insurrection. His account of events is from first-hand experience.

He focuses on two aspects of the work of the party that made the seizure of power possible.

First was its *political* role: the way in which it was able to use slogans and arguments that keyed into the mood of the masses and pointed the way forward.

Second, and no less important, was its ability to recognise and seize possibilities, to act when the moment arose, to develop "the art of insurrection".

It was not easy. In fact, the

policy pursued by the party immediately after the February revolution would not have led them to the victory in October. They only moved onto a course set for working class power as a result of an internal political battle that set Lenin, and later Trotsky (who did not join the party until the summer of 1917), against many other Bolshevik leaders.

After the fall of the Tsar, the Bolshevik leaders adopted a policy of critical support for the liberal-capitalist Provisional Government. They argued that because of the backwardness of Russian society, the time was not ripe for working class, socialist revolution. Lenin (who arrived in Russia from exile in

April) and Trotsky (who arrived in May), argued for opposition to the capitalist government and for "all power to the Soviets".

The Soviets were huge councils of workers', peasants' and rank and file soldiers' delegates that represented alternative institutions of state power to the Provisional government — or to any limited Parliamentary semi-democracy that might be set up.

At a conference in April, Lenin won the Bolshevik Party to his strategy. But the right wing continued to resist it, right up to the insurrection.

Major Bolshevik leaders like Zinoviev and Kamenev — and Stalin too, although Stalin was far less important at the time — opposed the insurrection in October, for fear of provoking counter-revolution. Lenin and Trotsky had to fight them to

get the party to grasp the opportunity in October.

The fact that many Bolshevik leaders made serious mistakes in 1917, however, and that Lenin was in a minority to begin with on the vital question of strategy for the revolution, does not mean that the decisive factor in the revolution was a few clear-headed individuals. The individuals would have been helpless without the party.

The Bolsheviks' success was the result of both clear-headed policies and an organisation rooted in the working class, with the respect and confidence of the working class, and the authority to lead. The clear-headed line put forward by Lenin enabled the party to increase its size and influence, so that by October it was in a position to lead the working class the whole way, to the taking of state power itself.

As Trotsky puts it, "The fundamental instrument of proletarian revolution is the party".

Before 1917 Trotsky had had a clearer idea of the real possibilities in Russia than Lenin and the Bolsheviks, who thought that the best possibility was a worker-peasant coalition government which would carry through radical reforms but which — because of the numerical weight of the peasantry, for whom their own private patch of land would be the main aim of the revolution — could not go beyond capitalist limits. Trotsky realised that the working class, if it could lead the peasants to bring down the Tsar would have to go on to take power and over-

throw capitalism if it was not to betray itself.

In 1917 Lenin came over to Trotsky's view on this. But Trotsky's ideas would have been no more than an historical curiosity if Lenin had not been building the party that could actually carry out the seizure of power.

The party was vital in convincing the mass of the workers of the need to take power. And it was vital in preparing and organising the insurrection.

Disorganised militants, without a clear idea of what needed to be done, and without the organised discipline to do it, would have failed to seize the moment in October 1917.

In writing "Lessons of October", Trotsky had another purpose besides historical research. The hesitant, timid, right wing in the party in 1917 were the very people who in 1923, when the book was written, were leading the party and beginning a purge against Trotsky.

They and their co-thinkers had repeated their timid approach in October 1923 in Germany. As a result, an opportunity was lost. The lessons of the German October — of failure — were as important as the lessons of success.

In 1984, as in 1923, the lessons of the Russian Revolution are important ones for socialists. We have seen too many revolutions go down to defeat because those lessons have not been learned. We, too, need to build a revolutionary party like the Bolsheviks that will make sure that in future the working class can win.



Scots abortion conference

By Karen Thompson

"Why teenagers need the National Abortion Campaign" was the title of a speech by Dr. Dury to the Scottish Abortion Campaign conference on November 3.

Dr Dury was the founder of "Doctors for a Woman's Choice on Abortion", and was a fierce opponent of the "moral majority" before they

even invented their title.

She denounced the campaign which seeks to deny under-16s of access to contraception and demonstrated that any reduction in the time limit for abortions would heavily affect teenagers, who account for 30% of late abortions.

Teenagers do not seek help

to prevent unwanted pregnancies, and the delay before seeking abortion, because they fear condemnation and rejection.

Dr. Dury stated that this fear is encouraged by the present backlash, and that teenagers have difficulty organising themselves politically to fight this imposed

morality.

That is why she believes NAC must prioritise their fight.

The conference also decided to work more closely with the pro-choice groups in the Republic of Ireland and in the Six Counties of Northern Ireland.

In Scotland we experience anti-abortion activity, but this is only a shadow of what our Irish sisters suffer. The Republic has the most repressive laws on abortion in the world. Initial links have been forged and continuing solidarity work will be a priority.

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Nicaragua

US steps up threats

By Nathan Jones

THE United States has claimed to have detected a Soviet ship on its way to Nicaragua equipped with MiG fighters.

In the afternoon of Reagan's election landslide, such claims have an obvious intention: to build up the idea that Nicaragua constitutes a Russian beach-head on the American continent, and thereby to justify existing US operations in Central America — and lay the basis for a possible future invasion.

Having won a majority in 49 out of 50 states, Reagan has more of a free hand to prepare an invasion of Nicaragua. The US claim — which is almost certainly false — is therefore part of a build-up that puts the Nicaraguan revolution under threat.

Meanwhile, the US administration is decrying last week's elections in Nicaragua as a 'sham'.

Although they seem likely to recognise Daniel Ortega as President, the US have worked hard to portray the election results as fraudulent.

Victory

The ruling Sandinistas have won a convincing victory in the election — taking about 69% of the vote in an 82% turn out. Opposition parties had some success — notably the Independent Liberals and the Democratic Conservative Party whose combined vote came to about 11%. But the Sandinista land-

slide was considerably greater than Ronald Reagan's.

Other opposition parties had withdrawn from the election — probably acting on CIA advice. Their aim was to boost the argument that the elections were not representative. But these parties are themselves small and unrepresentative.

And the 82% turn out was not the result of intimidation — unlike under US-backed regimes in Central America. International observers, many not very sympathetic to the Sandinistas, agreed that the elections were free and fair. The result — admitted by the Sandinistas to be less overwhelming than they expected — was nevertheless a huge vote of confidence in the government.

US

A secret briefing paper written for a meeting of the US National Security Council proves clearly that they had prepared to condemn the elections as a 'sham' regardless of facts, as part of their propaganda war against Nicaragua.

Their aim is to rally international support for the idea that — without serious opposition — the Sandinistas were left holding a "near worthless hand".

The document also shows that the US was behind the move by right wing Central American governments to demand changes in the Contadora agreement after the Sandinistas agreed to sign it.

1000 days on remand

WEDNESDAY October 31 marked 1000 days on remand for Thomas Power, in Belfast's Crumlin Road Jail. This is equivalent to five and a half years of a jail sentence.

Thomas Power and hundreds of other Irish men and women have been charged, and many convicted, on the uncorroborated evidence of paid 'super-grasses' in Northern Ireland's non-jury Diplock courts.

Informers have been offered bribes by the police in return for their stories:

"They said we could go to any country in the world, that we would never have to work, if we wanted a job they would get us

one...we would have a brand new house, a car, a new identity, a gun..." (Lorraine Gilmour, wife of 'supergrass', Raymond Gilmour).

Harry Kirkpatrick, the fifth informer to name Thomas Power, has confessed to five murders and sixty other offences. He has told relatives that he will serve no more than five years in an English jail and then vanish to the country of his choice.

In every case where Thomas Power has been named, the evidence has either been thrown out of court or has been withdrawn. But he has been constantly refused bail.

Socialist Organiser

BASINGSTOKE Socialist Organiser group has been exemplary in fund-raising work for the miners' strike — the support committee in which they are active has got in £28,000 so far, from a town without particularly strong trade union traditions and outside the coalfields.

But until now Basingstoke has lagged behind other groups in paper sales. Local organiser Alasdair Jamison reports that this is changing. "Everybody is carrying papers round with them all the time now, and the attitude to sales has changed.

"We've got a street sale established, with four or five comrades turning up for it, and that shifts about a dozen papers, or more, each week. The next step is to get an estate sale going".

London SO groups who have got regular estate sales under way find that the regular effort does bring returns. 13 papers were sold on the Southwark sale last week, and 14 in Islington, and those figures are now pretty stable.

Can your local group revolutionise its paper sales? Let us know about your efforts by writing in to 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

International

Riots in India



Gandhi

By Steve Hobbs

Gandhi was soundly defeated in 1977 after the end of the State of Emergency she imposed in 1975.

In 1983, Gandhi's party was heavily defeated in the election in Andhra Pradesh by a film actor, NT Rama Rao. And in Karnataka, the Congress Party suffered a defeat. Tripura and West Bengal remained in the hands of the Communist Party (Marxist).

Sikhs

The opposition force that has hit the international headlines this year, however, is the Sikhs.

Last June, there was fierce fighting between Sikhs and the Indian army in the Punjab, with thousands of Sikhs detained and killed. The conflict culminated with the army seizure of Sikh holy places in Amritsar on June 6, when 1000 people were killed.

The level of repression was typical of Gandhi's regime. But the Sikhs are not an oppressed people, and their movement is not a progressive one. Many of their demands are for special privileges rather than against oppression. And the call for a Sikh state ('Khalistan') in Punjab can only lead to sectarian conflict: the Sikhs are only just over 50% of the population and are closely intermingled with

Hindus.

Two-thirds of all Sikhs live in Punjab. They are distinguished from Punjabi Hindus only by their religion. Many Sikhs are better off than the average Indian. Punjab itself is the wealthiest of India's states; and within the Punjab, Sikhs are about 90% of the large farmers (though the city merchants are more often Hindus).

Many Sikhs occupy leading positions in Indian public life, and are over-represented in the army (between 10% and 15% as against 2% of the population as a whole).

The fact that Sikhs were in Indira Gandhi's bodyguard to be in a position to assassinate her is itself instructive.

The fires of communalism in India have been stoked both by British colonial and by post-independence politicians. The British followed a deliberate policy of encouraging a separate Sikh identity after the Indian Mutiny in 1857, when the Sikhs remained loyal, and recruited them disproportionately into the army.

Identity

The Sikhs — who are a 16th century break from Hinduism — did not historically view themselves as a distinct community. That separate identity was created.

After independence, the major political parties all used communal loyalties to win support. In particular, Hindu

sectarianism was whipped up by chauvinists (like the fascist RSS and condoned by Congress).

The weakness of working class parties helped this process by default. The Moscow-line Communist Party of India supported Indira Gandhi's Emergency decrees; the break-away (but larger) Communist Party (Marxist), and now also the CPI, tailed the capitalist opposition.

Communalism has not been fought with class politics. The Congress Party has been accused of encouraging the recent violence. Khushwant Singh — a Sikh politician allied with Gandhi prior to the storming of the Golden Temple in June — claimed that the Hindu "mobs were led by members of the Congress (I).

"In my neighbourhood [they] were led by the president of the local Congress (I) committee." (Guardian, November 6).

India has seen a large number of major strikes over recent months. And although communal loyalties are obviously extremely powerful, there have been reports of joint Hindu-Sikh 'peace committees' being set up in many areas. (Financial Times, November 5).

A struggle against communalism and for working class unity is the way out.



Praise for capitalist ruler

By Patrick Ferguson

I came away with the certainty that she would do exactly that."

The Indian people were so impressed with the whole affair that when Gandhi did call an election — in 1977 — they resolutely refused to elect her. For Foot, the whole episode merely showed how marvellous Gandhi was: "when she accepted defeat with such grace and nobility and resilience [it] was probably the most important moment in the history of Indian democracy."

Foot — who places great emphasis on his credentials as a 'democratic socialist' — thus puts forward the astonishing argument that when a self-appointed dictator is forced to accept defeat in an election, it is the dictator who wins a glorious victory for democracy by having the grace to get out.

Of course this was not the only example of Indira Gandhi's taste for overruling democratic decisions. When her party lost a state election in Andhra Pradesh last year, she promptly dismis-

sed the candidate — NT Rama Rao — who had had the audacity to beat her although he was later reinstated. She has made similar moves in many other states. Foot makes no comment.

As for her family, Foot thinks it is a wonderful institution. The late Sanjay may have committed a few excesses during the Emergency — like a mass sterilisation programme — but Foot prefers to forget it (except to say that "she suffered a mother's agony when she saw them pilloried or, as she believed, defamed").

Power

Nor does the fact that power now goes into the hands of Gandhi's son — an old-fashioned dynastic succession if ever there was one — call for any comment.

Foot even makes a virtue out of Gandhi's notorious insistence that more and more power be concentrated in her hands.

Foot can only praise the programme of a relatively powerful capitalist class for a 'united India' — an India where a super-

wealthy few rule over millions in absolute poverty, and where ethnic minorities, Muslims, and now even the relatively well-off Sikhs are harassed and persecuted.

It says a lot about Foot's democratic, never mind his socialist credentials.

The Morning Star, meanwhile comments that Mrs Gandhi was "the current chair of the Non-Aligned Movement and a powerful, progressive figure internationally on the Third World and United Nations stages."

Such a shame that she was "increasingly adopting repressive right wing policies at home".

The Morning Star does not mention that the Moscow-line Indian Communist Party supported Gandhi's Emergency decrees in 1975-77, saying that it was necessary to protect the 'national democratic' Congress regime against 'reactionaries'.

The chief recommendation for Gandhi cited by the Star is her "policy of close friendship with the Soviet Union".

Jaguar strike is solid

Jim Denham spoke to a TGWU activist at the Jaguar Brown's Lane plant.

"We deliberately kept this year's claim simple: £25 across the board and sick pay to be paid from day one if you are off for more than a week.

"The negotiating committee also asked for a 'commitment' to review the grading structure.

"The company offered a package deal, supposedly worth 22% over two years. But £3.75 of that is consolidation of bonus money that is already being earned. So in new money the offer is only worth 7% per year.

"The negotiating committee (made up of 18 senior stewards from the three plants, with TGWU national officer Grenville Hawley in the chair) rejected this and mass meetings at the plants endorsed the rejection overwhelmingly.

Amended offer

"The company then 'amended' the offer, adding a princely 50p per week. This went to a further round of mass meetings which again threw it out by a very large margin.

"Anyway, the second round of mass meetings confirmed that the strike would go ahead from Thursday November 1, but in the last few days before the action was due to start, Hawley and the officials began a frantic round of secret negotiations, hoping to stitch up some deal and call off the strike.

"Hawley's actions should be a warning to all of us: he effectively conceded that the company weren't going to offer any new money, and asked instead that the £400 worth of shares that Jaguar are committed to give each employee in 1985 (an arrangement reached when the company was hived off from BL) should be turned

into a lump-sum cash payment.

"The matter of the share allocation was always supposed to be kept entirely separate from wage negotiations — even the company said that. But Hawley eventually came away with a deal that £200 worth of shares would be paid out as a cash lump sum for workers who had started before April 1984.

"On the strength of this miserable 'concession' a third round of mass meetings was called for Wednesday October 31, the day before the strike was due to start, which obviously had a demobilising effect. At Brown's Lane, the largest factory, the convenor, Ron Newcombe, was so anxious to justify having called a further meeting, that he ended up making out that new money was on offer.

"So although he formally recommended rejection (in line with the plant joint shop stewards' committee recommendation), a lot of workers were confused.

"This wasn't helped by the fact that 400 anti-strike votes at the day shift mass meeting were counted twice. Eventually the Brown's Lane result emerged as a majority of three for rejection of the offer and for the strike on the day shift, and a 2-1 vote to accept the deal on the night shift.

"But at Radford and Castle Bromwich, the votes remained overwhelmingly for rejection, and Brown's Lane has abided by the majority, despite management attempts to whip up a shop floor movement demanding a secret ballot.

24-hour picket

"The strike is solid. At Brown's Lane we have a 24-hour picket and even workers who voted to accept the deal turn up for picket duty.



There's no scabbing whatsoever.

"Now that we've bottled up the plants, we need to turn our attention to the docks and transporter yards.

Flying pickets

The officials say that there is already organised blacking at the docks, but even if this is true we should still send out flying pickets to take the pressure off the docks and ensure that they stand firm.

"The stewards should take advantage of the fact that workers will be coming in for back pay on the next two Thursdays. This is an ideal opportunity to put out infor-

mation bulletins.

"We must ensure that Hawley and Co. aren't allowed to cook up any more dirty deals and that we stay out for our full one-year claim. (There are suggestions that the negotiating committee might be moving towards accepting a two-year deal).

£3M profits

"By the way, when the value of the pound dropped against the dollar, a few weeks ago, Jaguar immediately made £3 million profits in a single day from its American exports. £3 million is exactly what their present pay offer would cost them."

CPSA Split will help right wing

THE Broad Left in the civil service union CPSA split last weekend, November 3.

95 supporters of the 'Labour Group' and the Communist Party walked out soon after the start of the almost 400-strong conference.

The CPSA Broad Left has been the strongest such body in the British trade union movement, with a large active membership and currently a majority on the union's national executive.

This split will help the right wing. Rank and file left activists will be dismayed by a split which has been generated by factional rivalries at National Executive level; and the CPSA's first-past-the-post election system means that the right wing can walk straight through the middle of two rival left slates.

The stated reason for the split was that "Militant's current drive for hegemony and unflinching orthodoxy is incompatible with other socialists attempting to work with them in the same organisation."

Hard left

But the hard-left Socialist Caucus faction — which opposes Militant politically just as much as, and perhaps more than, the soft-left splitters do — rejected the walk-out. Speaking on behalf of the Caucus, Ian Leedham said that the arguments of the soft left were just like those used by witch-hunters in the Labour Party against Militant.

In fact the specific charges cited by the soft left were all to do with Militant allegedly being harsh or "sectarian" in criticism of the behaviour of soft-left NEC members. The truth is that — whatever exaggerated language may or may not have been used — those NEC members deserve criticism.

Behind their talk of "tolerance" and "open debate", it seems that electoral/careerist calculations motivate the soft left's split.

Militant did not have "complete control" of the Broad Left, but it was strong enough to get itself the plum places on the Broad Left's electoral slates. The soft left calculated, probably accurately, that in the general CPSA membership its candidates could get more support than Militant.

By splitting they will suffer electorally in the short term, but in the medium term they can hope to overwhelm Militant or force it into electoral pacts on terms favourable to the soft left.

Unfortunately it is not possible just to say 'good riddance' to the soft left.

In the first place, the record of Militant supporters on the NEC is only marginally better than that of the soft left. They repeatedly tried to ditch the Birmingham/Oxford DHSS dispute in 1982. Their lack of leadership over the 1984 pay campaign was such that even the Militant

supporters at last weekend's conference voted to *censure* all the Broad Left members on the NEC. (Steve Battlemuch, moving the censure motion, underlined that it was not directed only against the soft left.)

As the Socialist Caucus bulletin put it, "Neither side of the fracture has any right to claim the original heritage of the Broad Left as a body which aspired to campaign and fight for socialist policies on the basis of mobilising rank and file support..."

The split therefore makes it very urgent to build the Socialist Caucus and to give it a higher profile as a principled, rank-and-file-oriented, Left in the union.

There are good possibilities for doing this — especially if the Socialist Workers Party, who have just come into the Broad Left, and other hard left activists who have stayed outside the Caucus until now, join in.

A bold effort to build up the Socialist Caucus is vital — and must include a policy for reunifying the left.

While Militant and the CP/soft Labour Left faction were the biggest groups in the pre-split Broad Left, a lot of Broad Left members are outside the main factions. It seems that most of those members outside the main factions stayed with the Broad Left last weekend.

But developments in the membership at large will not necessarily mirror those at the conference. Partly because of the press propaganda, and partly because of Militant's wooden politics and heavy-handed methods, a lot of the less-committed Broad Left supporters are likely to gravitate to the soft left bloc.

It will seem more mainstream and not much less militarist industrially.

In other words, a large proportion of the activists on whom efforts to develop militant trade unionism in CPSA must depend are likely to be pulled behind the soft left leaders. Serious socialists will have to find a way to relate to them and combat the leaders' influence.

Conferences

The Socialist Caucus needs to draw up detailed proposals for united left action both on campaigning issues and for elections.

All these questions will be debated closely among CPSA activists over the coming weeks in preparation for a series of meetings in early December.

On Thursday 6th there is a CPSA special conference to decide on the 1985 pay claim.

On the 7th the soft left (Broad Left '84, as they have now styled themselves) will call a conference. The Socialist Caucus is planning to have an open meeting on that evening and the next day, Saturday 8th, there is a reconvened conference of the Militant-majority Broad Left.

Barking

Now for reinstatement

DOMESTICS at Barking Hospital are continuing their strike against Crothalls, the firm that has the contract for cleaning.

Following last week's industrial tribunal decisions that Crothalls sacked them 'unfairly', the strikers are waiting for Crothalls to decide whether or not they will appeal against the ruling.

Industrial tribunals, while able to award compensation,

cannot instruct employers to re-employ unfairly dismissed workers. The strike will continue demanding reinstatement which has been the aim of workers from the day they were sacked.

Support on the picket line still needed every morning from 6.30 am onwards.

Further details can be obtained from the Strike Line — 592 5038.

Students join rate-cap fight

TO coincide with London council workers' day of action against rate-capping, students at the City Polytechnic have gone into occupation.

Polytechnics are partly funded by local councils and partly through a quango known as the National Advisory Body (NAB).

Jill Lewis and Sue Rossiter explained:

"Our Poly had a 5 per cent cut in its budget this year. A site was closed, the library was cut back, field trips have gone, canteen prices are up, and we might not even have a canteen after Christmas.

Next year with rate capping we are facing a cut of 10 per cent and possibly more if the NAB is

told to keep on cutting.

Our college can't cope with these cuts. That's why we are occupying.

Originally we planned a 24 hour occupation, but it has been extended because of the unions' day of action tomorrow. They are fighting rate-capping, and so are we.

We plan to come out of occupation at 8 am and stand on the picket line with the unions to support them. We want to be seen to be fighting side by side with them.

We are saying to the Poly Directorate that it's time they stood up for the Poly, for the students and for education as a whole, and started fighting like the students union is fighting.

The other unions at the college have supported us. The tea ladies have given us a tea and some sandwiches; at a different site the porters refused to open up a building because we had a picket line on it; and the lecturers left us a video and some tapes.

No one from the National Union of Students Executive has even been to see us though we are only down the road from them. But the other Polys who really know the problems have phoned us to give us their full support.

NUS is campaigning for what they call the New Deal for Students — covering grants, cuts, everything, all in one go. While our Poly supports it, the cam-

paign is really very weak. We don't think they've called for enough action.

We will write letters to MPs, lobby Parliament and so on, but we don't think it's enough and we're going to organise our own campaigns too. We're saying to NUS: you've got to organise direct action too.

We've had more news coverage from one college taking their own action than NUS has had altogether. The time to fight is now! Perhaps we can use our fightback as the start of a real campaign.

Part of the problem is the Inner London Education Authority. They haven't the money to keep us going. They should make a stand.

Bureaucrats run ILEA as much as anyone else. There are some good Labour people on ILEA, but there are some really poor ones, too.

If you had a situation like you had in Liverpool when the Council said they would fight — I know they did back down in the end — but if they said they would fight, instead of just squirming around, then it would give us all a real boost.

Through the Labour Club we'll be campaigning in the Labour Party for support for Polys occupying and for ILEA to pull out of that Tory quango, the National Advisory Body.

Dust staff fight hive-off

BASINGSTOKE'S new private dust service is experiencing its third strike in less than three months since the service was privatised.

Wastecare, part of the Grand Metropolitan group, have imposed work specifications which it has proved completely impossible for the reduced workforce to meet.

This was originally done on the basis of contracts of

By Alasdair Jamison

employment which refused union recognition.

Recognition of the TGWU was won in the second strike a few weeks ago.

Now, because of the impossible work rate, all but a handful of GIS's dust staff in Basingstoke are on strike and have been sacked by the

contractor.

The Labour Group on Basingstoke Borough Council is supporting the strike, and attempting to use the industrial action as a basis to force the service back into the hands of a DLO.

Notts striking miners on regular fund raising delegations to Basingstoke have been on the picket lines on at least two occasions.

Socialist Organiser

Headlines fade away, starvation remains

Carworkers defy courts

By Jim Denham

The rank and file have come out solidly in support of the pay strike at Austin Rover. At Cowley and Longbridge only a tiny handful of workers are crossing picket lines and their numbers are decreasing all the time.

At the smaller plants the initial response was slower, but factories in Swindon and Castle Bromwich have joined the strike and 26,000 out of a total workforce of 28,000 are now involved in the dispute.

The main danger to the action lies with the union officials. Ken Cure, the AUEW chief negotiator, spent last weekend running about telling the press that the strike should not happen; that it would not be worthwhile and that the company's offer was a good one.

On Monday the company went to the High Court to get an injunction against the strike under the Tories' 1984 anti-union legislation.

Both the AUEW and the EETPU scurried along to the court to tell Mr Justice Stewart-Smith that they were not making the action official.

The Joint Negotiating Committee, made up of delegates from all the plants plus full-time officials, meeting on Wednesday, voted to reject the cowardly position of the AUEW and to continue with the action in defiance of the court ruling.

This undoubtedly reflects the militancy and determination of the rank and file, particularly at the two big plants.

In the week prior to the strike the company were desperately trying to whip up a

shop floor movement demanding a ballot.

This involved allowing Longbridge workers off the tracks with petitions and at Cowley they even attempted to hold their own shop floor meetings. The whole thing was a pathetic failure and this supposed movement never reached more than two dozen people.

Then the company went to the High Court. All their arguments about doing this in the name of democracy are shown up by the company spokesperson:

"We now expect the trade unions to instruct any of their members who are on strike to resume normal working."

Women

Picketing on the Tuesday night after the injunction had been served was particularly militant at Longbridge and was notable for the fact that a number of women from the sewing rooms had come to the picket lines to turn away the small number of sewing room women who were scabbing.

The rank and file still need



The Cowley plant (photo: John Harris)

to watch the officials closely, even those of the TGWU, which has so far taken a firm position.

Grenville Hawley, the TGWU national officer, was initially very half-hearted in his response to the company's legal action. He will undoubtedly now be looking for any miserable compromise deal that can be cobbled together to get the strike called off and prevent sequestration of the TGWU's funds for contempt of court.

The rank and file need as a matter of urgency to establish plant-based strike com-

mittees to control the course of the action and monitor all negotiations.

There must be report-backs to the plants at every stage of the negotiations, 24-hour picket rotas need to be established and flying pickets sent to the plants still working, as well as to the car depots.

The rank and file must make it clear to the Joint Negotiating Committee that they should not contemplate accepting a two-year deal and that nothing will be acceptable short of the full £22 across the board claim for the next 12 months.

Massive turnout against rate cap

By Mick O'Sullivan,
(chair, London Bridge, in
personal capacity).

THE November 7 Day of Action against rate-capping, called by the 'London Bridge' shop stewards' committee, was an enormous success.

Well over 50,000 struck. In Islington and Lambeth 100% of council workers were out; in Haringey about 90%, and in Lewisham over

50%.

A large number of schools in the Inner London Education Authority were closed as teachers walked out for the day. All secondary schools in Haringey followed a local NUT decision to strike, despite the national NUT instructing them to work.

10,000 joined the march from Burgess Park, with over 3,000 on the feeder demonstration from Lambeth. The Festival Hall was filled to overflowing at the end of the

march. Local Labour councils were called upon to mobilise to confront and fight the government.

The Day of Action was organised by shop floor convenors and stewards on an inter-borough basis, rather than by full-time union officials.

It shows both the strength of rank-and-file organisation, and the potential for a serious campaign by the labour movement against Tory plans for rate-capping.

THE famine in Ethiopia has dropped out of the headlines.

Even the Daily Mirror, which launched an appeal that has raised around £650,000, donated by ordinary people, no longer gives it front page priority. Perhaps they feel enough shame to be embarrassed by the contrast between the appeal and their 'million 'Mirror Bingo'.

For the Daily Mirror the whole affair has just been a cheaper publicity stunt than the Bingo: "...our mercy mission gets through"; 'Mirror mercy flight' and so on.

Millions still starving

But all the food aid that has been sent to Ethiopia has only scratched the surface of the real, horrific problem. Millions of people are still starving — in other parts of Africa, in north-east Brazil, and in Bangladesh.

And ten million tons of grain are still sitting in storage in Europe.

Government action has been hopelessly inadequate. The British government has sent three RAF transport planes (which took until Monday November 5 to leave for Ethiopia because of a diplomatic row). Three miserable planes for seven million dying people.

And the money for the aid has simply been docked from the existing aid programme. So it has been taken away from someone else who needs it.

Meanwhile the learned sages of the 'Economist' — the magazine that really tells you what the bosses think — insists that all this giving away food is a very bad thing: "Free food is

dangerous stuff".

"Pictures of starving babies help [charities] raise money for emergencies. But such pictures also persuade many people that giving away food is a good thing outside emergencies too..."

"Rich governments should not add to Africans' self-inflicted misfortunes the burden of harmful handouts in normal seasons."

In the long run, starving is good for you.

In reality the poverty and misery in the Third World is the responsibility of the capitalist system, and in particular the responsibility of the big capitalist powers who could save the starving with a small fraction of their surplus stocks.

According to the UN Food and Agriculture organisation, Africa needs £91 million in aid to save the immediate victims of starvation.

Sick system

In 1982 the UK spent nearly £22 billion on military expenditure alone. The USA spent nearly £149 billion. It would take 0.5% of the world's annual military expenditure to irrigate the Sahara desert. That is the measure of the sick system we live under.

The labour movement must force action to be taken to save the starving in Africa. We must demand immediate aid to Africa, a permanent international famine relief fund, and the cancellation of debts owed by the African states to Cith Banks.

The Labour Party should organise a demonstration to fight for this.

NUM Rallies

November 8, 7.30, Sheffield City Hall.
November 11, 7.00, Newcastle City Hall.
November 13, 7.00, Afan Lido.
November 14, 7.30, Digbeth Hall, Birmingham.



Fund emergency!

We have now sent a formal letter to the landlord of the new premises we hope to get, saying that we wish to take the lease. Once references are checked and other formalities completed, it should only be a matter of days until we move.

To move we'll need lots of money — and quickly. But at present we're still struggling to complete an £800 emergency appeal, to get our regular budget back in balance.

£87.80 this week brings us up to £535.18 towards that £800.

Let's see if we can complete the £800 target this next week, so we can go back to building up the £2000 premises fund. If all SO supporters are prompt this month in sending in the regular extra £5 (£1 unwaged) which we've asked for throughout the miners strike, then we can do it.

Thanks to: Southampton SO £10; Glasgow SO £20; Geoff Ward £20; East London SO £22; Les Hearn £10, and, in extra money from his sponsored cycle ride, £3.30; and Trevor Thorne, £2.50.

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



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