

# workers' ACTION

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## No deals with the Orange Tories!

### Brick Lane: support is still needed

ON SUNDAY 25th March the Hackney and Tower Hamlets Defence Committee is calling on all anti-racists in London to demonstrate at Brick Lane.

Since the events of last summer, when the murders of Altab Ali, Ishaque Ali and Kenneth Singh, and numerous racist attacks, led to mass demonstrations in July, August and September, Brick Lane has been out of the news. But the problems of racist violence, police harassment and the menacing fascist presence, have not gone away.

Far from it. On December 10th, Michael Ferreira was brutally stabbed to death in a Hackney street by two racist thugs. Since his murder, his family and their supporters have been continually harassed by the police. The National Front continues to

sell its fascist propaganda in Brick Lane.

Over recent weeks the NF have once again increased their presence in Brick Lane. On two occasions in the last month young NF thugs have been seen preparing to attack the area and only swift intervention by local anti-racists has forced the police to disperse them.

The battle against racism and racist violence is not over. As the election approaches we can expect the fascists to increase their activity, since Martin Webster is standing in the Bethnal Green and Bow constituency.

The March 25th action is the first of a series of mobilisations designed to show that the fight against racist violence, police harassment and the National Front re-

mains a paramount task for the working class.

Join us: assemble at the

junction of Brick Lane and Bethnal Green Road (Bethnal Green tube) at 10.30am.



Two militants are released by the police during one of the mass demonstrations of last summer

THE SCOTTISH Nationalists are saying that they will push through a vote of confidence in the Government. Now that the Government has practically dropped any commitment to devolution, the Nationalists have much less interest in propping it up.

Prime Minister Callaghan's reply is another round of sordid Parliamentary haggling. His main hopes are focused on getting the votes of Enoch Powell and the Ulster Unionists.

Of all the right-wing parties to ally with, the Ulster Unionists are the vilest. The Labour Government has already promised them five extra Parliamentary seats. To placate the Unionists, it has shelved reforms to take the blanket legal ban off homosexual activity in Northern Ireland and bring the law into line with Britain. It has also shelved the introduction of comprehensive education for Northern Ireland.

The Unionists are still demanding more: a special gas

pipeline for Northern Ireland, and more self-government... that is, more Orange power.

This sordid game only helps the reactionaries and the hate-mongers. Two principles must govern the attitude of labour movement activists to the Government's Parliamentary policy.

One: whatever our views on devolution [and Workers' Action was for a 'no' vote in the referendum], now that the Scottish poll has shown a majority for devolution the Government should legislate devolution. We cannot accept that the Government, or Parliament, should decide when a majority is not really a majority

Two: there should be no deals with the various junior Tory parties, and least of all with the Orange Tories.

If the Government pursued those principles, it could lead to an early election. But far better an early election on the basis of those principles than months of disgusting deals with the right wing.

# HOSPITAL STRIKERS SAY: WE'LL BEAT GOVERNMENT STRIKEBREAKING

THE LABOUR Government has given the Health Authority bosses a blank cheque to bring in scabs against the hospital workers and to send home without pay any hospital workers dealing with emergencies only, working to rule, or simply refusing to cover jobs done by workers taking action.

When Health Minister David Ennals announced in Parliament last Thursday (14th) that 'volunteer' strike-breaking would be encouraged, he attacked a 'militant minority' taking all-out action, and gave the nod to Health Service bosses to organise lockouts. "What action management takes is the responsibility of management itself"... and Ennals will back whatever the bosses decide.

This is what the Concordat means. Having used the prospect of a Tory election victory to help bring the TUC leaders back into line, the Government is pursuing hard-faced class war tactics against the NHS workers which the Tories could be proud of. And the TUC is going along with it.

The fight to win the NHS workers' wage claims is a fight to break the labour

movement from this slavish pro-capitalist policy.

The same day as David Ennals spoke in Parliament, the ambulance crews in South Glamorgan were locked out. They have been operating an emergencies-only service since January 22nd, and had an agreement with the management that they would be asked to do no more. After Ennals' statement, the Area Health Authority not only told the drivers not to drive, but added that if they did take an ambulance out on the road, they would not be covered by insurance.



The management brought in 'volunteers' to pretend there was an ambulance service. Tudor Williams, a NUPE ambulance drivers' steward in Cardiff, told us: "The volunteer service provided is ridiculous. If they continue to pull people out of ambulance the way they are doing, more injuries will be sustained".

Some of the volunteers are trade union members - three TGWU bus drivers and two UPW postmen. Their scabbing activities

have been reported to their unions, though there hasn't been any action yet.

The lockout led to widespread protest action. In local hospitals, meetings are being held, and workers at the Velindre Hospital, Cardiff, have already joined the ambulance crews' pickets. Among ambulance crews nationally, the unofficial national joint shop stewards' committee has helped spread the support. Strike action in support of the South Glamorgan crews, and other locked-out crews in Gloucestershire, is taking place on Merseyside and in Manchester, where 85% of crews are on strike.

By Tuesday 20th, over 5,000 ambulancemen were on strike, in over a dozen counties.

Also on the day of Ennals' announcement, Jim Kelly, secretary of the NUPE branch at Bolton General Hospital, was sacked for 'gross indiscipline' because he insisted on representing one of his members in a complaint that he had been manhandled in a management raid to remove linen from the hospital's strike-bound laundry. 600 ancillary workers at the hospital went on

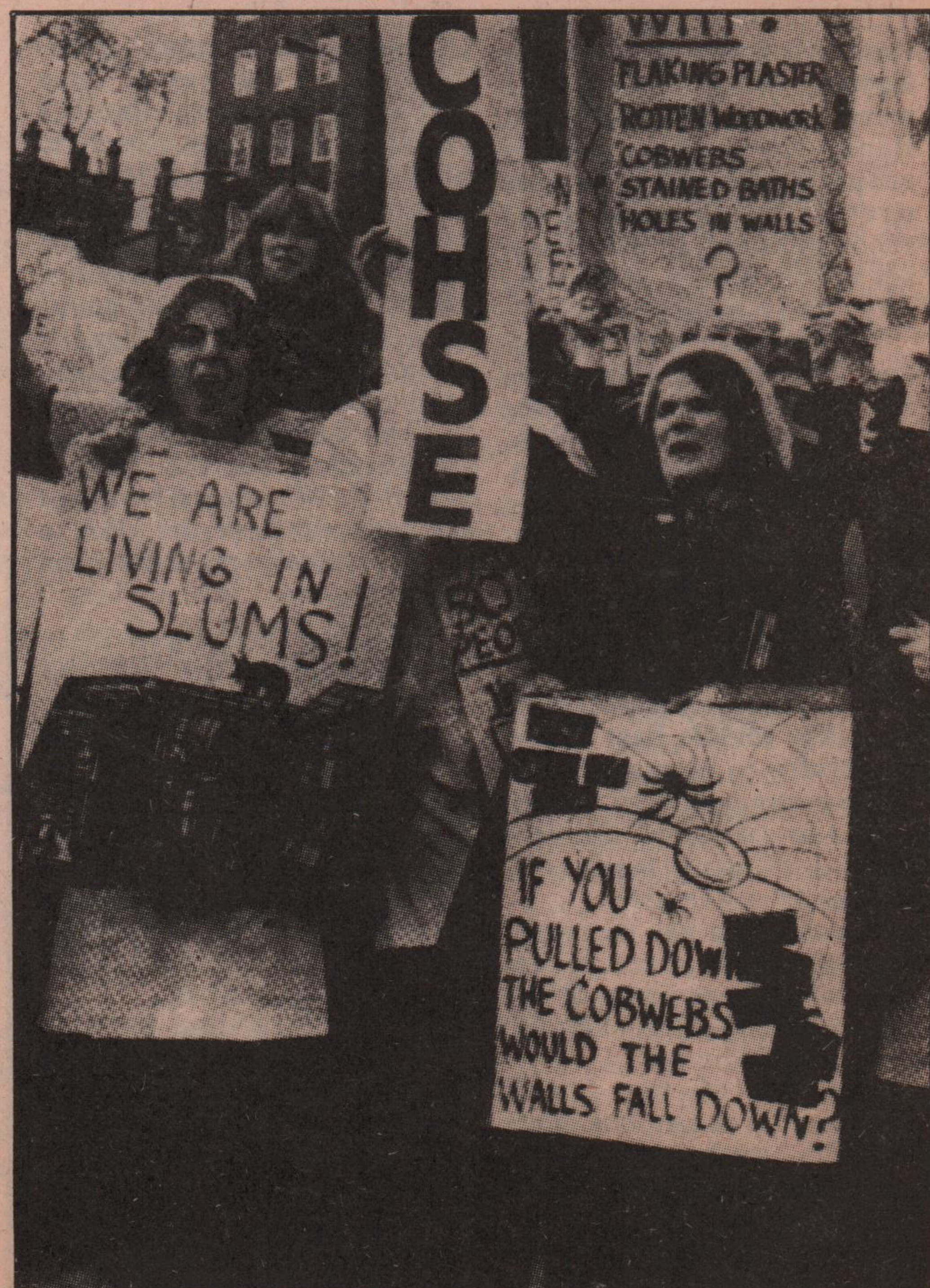
all-out strike on Monday 19th.

Surgeons at Stepping Hill Hospital, Stockport, also took their cue from Ennals. They refused to work with CoHSE members who had been on strike. This led to a new walk-out on Thursday 14th. On Monday 19th ancillaries providing emergency cover walked out again after a consultant sent one worker home.

In Edinburgh the Health Authority has tried to introduce volunteers despite the fact that union members have been providing emergency cover in the Central Sterile Supplies Unit at the Sick Children's Hospital for the three weeks they have been on strike.

The introduction of volunteers led to a walk-out by all the 100 NUPE members at the hospital on Monday 19th, joining workers at other Edinburgh hospitals already on strike.

NUPE's Scottish organiser Ron Curran had said: "If they try to fetch in volunteers we'll withdraw emergency cover and if any deaths occur it will lie



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North London nurses protest over low pay and living conditions

## IRAN: WOMEN LEAD THE FIGHT AGAINST RELIGIOUS REACTION

IRAN'S Government is maintaining its delicate balance between Khomeini's Islamic demagogues and Bazargan's business-minded administrators. They know they need each other; more to the point, probably, the US State Department — the biggest force behind the scenes — needs them both in order to halt Iran's revolution.

After strong protests from Bazargan, Khomeini agreed to freeze the operations of the Islamic 'revolutionary tribunals', which also meant halting the trial of Abbas Hoveyda, prime minister to the Shah for thirteen years. To be sure, revolutionary justice has nothing to do with summary trials on charges of 'waging war on God', even for thoroughly guilty reactionaries like Hoveyda. But

Bazargan's concern is to stop the Islamic demagogy from striking too broadly at Iran's ruling class ... and not at all to curb their action against the left.

This action goes on. Iranian troops have taken up arms against nationalists in Iranian Kurdistan in the north west of the country. One Maoist group has had all its newspapers confiscated by Islamic militias, and the Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers' Party of Iran have had meetings disrupted and paper-sellers arrested.

Women's protests against the imposition of the veil are still one of the most important focuses of the left wing opposition to the Khomeini-Bazargan regime. According to telephoned reports from Tehran reaching us, the

women's demonstrations against the veil have mainly been made up of students, teachers, hospital workers and office workers.

Some supporters of the Shah have infiltrated the demonstrations, but the organisers have tried to exclude them. The main forces supporting the women are those of the left: the revolutionary socialist groups, the Moscow line Tudeh party, the bourgeois-liberal National Democratic Front, the Fedayeen, and — significantly — the left-Muslim Mujahedeen.

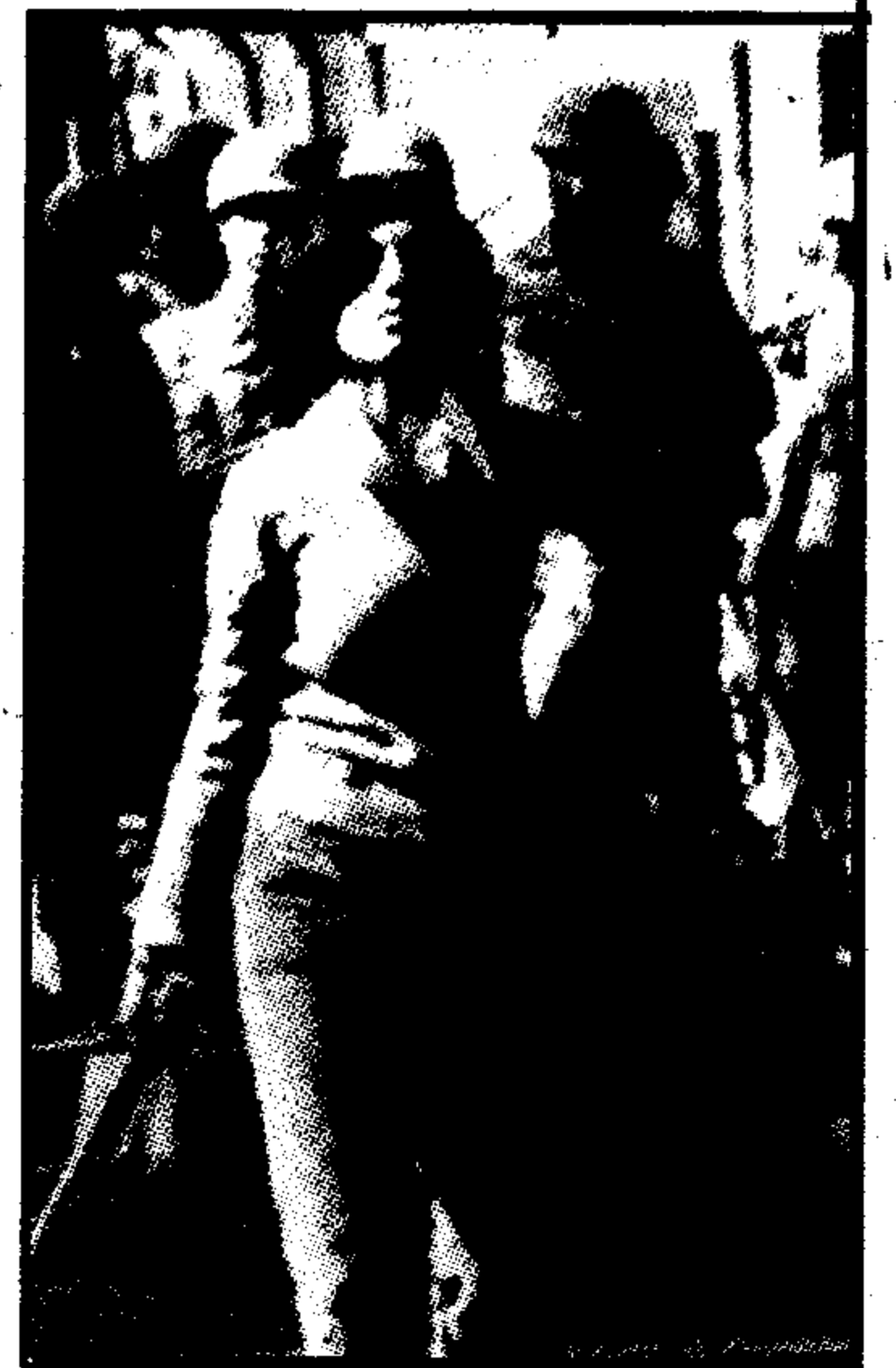
The best-known leaders of the women's rights movement are Homar Natedh (a university lecturer and writer who was kidnapped and tortured by SAVAK under the Shah's regime) and Mehin Jazani (widow of a founder-

leader of the Fedayeen). Demonstrations have taken place outside Tehran, too. So far the movement has no precise demands other than the right not to wear the veil and the general principle of equality for women.

Although women from the industrial working class have not taken part in the demonstrations against the veil in significant numbers so far, there is reportedly more sympathy than hostility in working class areas to the demonstrations.

In France, 2000 people demonstrated last week in support of women's rights in Iran. And in West Germany the Iranian embassy was occupied in a similar protest.

MARY CORBISHLEY  
COLIN FOSTER



Women fought against the Shah. Now they fight against Islamic bigotry.

THE SPIRIT OF Camp David is on its feet again. Once more, US dollars have done the diplomatic trick, while the press gushes on about the charm and imagination of President Carter.

The essential 'breakthrough' in the latest Israel-Egypt agreement lies in this: an agreement has been made on some autonomy for the Gaza strip — one of the two main areas with a Palestinian population occupied by Israel — separate from the much bigger and richer West Bank.

All that has been said about the West Bank is that in April 1985 the issue of self government should be discussed. Meanwhile, Israel still refers to it as Judaea-Samaria, claiming that it is not occupied but 'liberated' territory.

Sadat seems to be hoping that a peaceful record in Gaza over the next six years will be a powerful lever in negotiating a separate autonomy for the West Bank in 1985.

In a second 'breakthrough' Egypt and Israel agreed to say nothing about Jerusalem. They put off the big issues.

In signing the treaty, Egypt will become the first Arab state to give official recognition to Israel's 1949 boundaries. In the same breath as he claims to be working for the Palestinians' national rights, Sadat has accepted the legitimacy of Zionism's theft of the majority of the Palestinians' land.

The Palestinians know they are being sold out by Egypt. While negotiations were going on, one West Bank town after another erupted in protest. Demonstrators, mainly students and schoolchildren, threw stones, set up barricades of burning tyres and marched in protest.

In Ramallah and Jerusalem, Israeli troops put down the demonstrations by force and shut all the schools. Businesses in Ramallah replied with a shut-down, and all the teachers there resigned.

What are the forces behind the deal?

The United States wants, above all, to guarantee its access to Middle East oil and the profits to be made out of US investments in oil. And it wants to safeguard the area as a developing market for US goods and services.

Washington has no particular interest in peace, except to further these aims. If war would serve better, then the policy would be war.

The fall of the Shah's dictatorship in Iran has made the US push even more urgently for a US-Israel-Egypt alliance to stabilise the Middle East. The deal with Egypt is meant in time to draw in the other Arab regimes, consolidating US

# Robbers' peace in the Middle East



Nothing for the Palestinians to smile about

dominance in the Middle East and pushing the Soviet Union out of the area.

Egypt was shattered militarily after the war of June 1967. For a short time the defeat tied it more closely to the Soviet Union. Moscow was prepared to re-equip the entire Egyptian army and airforce. In 1972, however, Sadat expelled Soviet advisors and re-oriented Egypt's policies towards imperialism, in particular towards the US.

The first result of this re-orientation was the October War of 1973, waged by Egypt in order to force the USA to put more pressure on Israel.

The war had three main consequences: the US did put pressure on Israel; the casualties suffered by the Israelis had the long-term effect of creating a pro-peace mood within the Zionist camp; and Sadat opened up Egypt to western investment, tying it economically as well as diplomatically to US imperialism.

In the meantime the Palestinian liberation movement achieved its own diplomatic victories. The PLO was voted the sole representative of the Palestinian people by the Arab League at Rabat in October 1974. A month later its leader, Yassir Arafat, addressed the United Nations.

A year later came the first open moves toward a 'comprehensive peace treaty', but these really only concerned Egypt and Israel. Syria, feeling left out, could only assert its power — and its right to bargain with Israel — by invading Lebanon and attacking the Palestinians there.

In 'Black September' 1970, under the pressure of the

first US peace plan after the Six Day War (the Rogers Plan), the Jordanian government attacked the Palestinians there, slaughtering tens of thousands. Now, again under the pressure of the prospect of a US-sponsored peace (the Geneva negotiations) the Palestinians were being massacred.

Again, those who posed as the resolute friends of the Palestinians actually slaughtered them to secure a better bargain from the imperialists and Zionists.

The continued deadlock — and the failure to involve other Arab states on terms acceptable to Israel — was finally broken by Sadat's visit to Israel. For Sadat it was a life-saver. His policies had led Egypt into bankruptcy, and without a dramatic move that seemed to promise prosperity, his regime could not last.

Since that visit, the pressure has been on Israel to make concessions. But Israel will not make the concession that really matters — allow-

ing the Palestinians a state of their own on the West Bank and in the Gaza strip. Still less can Israel concede the just demands of the Palestinians for a secular state in Palestine: that would mean the destruction of the Zionist state itself. Measured against these demands, autonomy of the Gaza strip under Israel's guns is a mockery.

Israel, of the three signatory states, doesn't need the deal. The Zionists are being forced into these negotiations by the USA — and being paid handsomely to knuckle under. But while the Israeli leaders might be prepared to follow where Carter leads, a large section of the population will not. And that section is politically quite powerful.

The extreme religious factions, for instance, still regard Sinai and the West Bank (and indeed all the territory between there and the Euphrates River in Iraq in many cases) as their Biblical inheritance. These factions have considerable support right up to cabinet level, and are determined to carry on their policy of creating settlements on territory occupied since 1967.

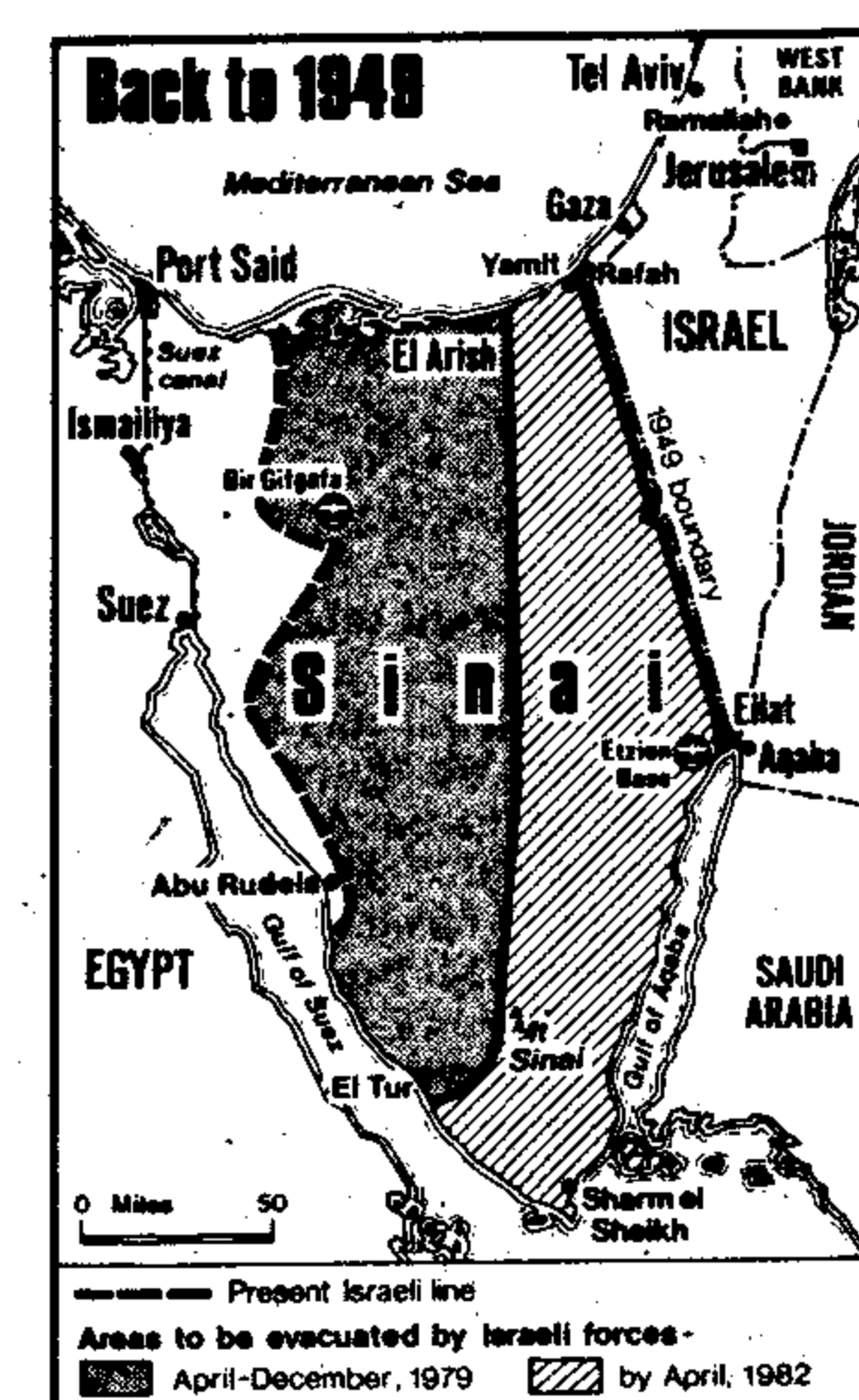
The Arab states so far have refused to support the new deal. So long as they keep their distance, the USA will not achieve its aim of dominating the area and bringing it tightly under its control. Their rejection is couched in terms of the Palestinians' national rights, but in reality it rests on their own national interests. They would be perfectly happy to sell out the Palestinians if there was something in it for them.

Instead of the Arab world being divided into pro-imperialist right wing regimes favouring 'peace' with Israel and leftist nationalist regimes of the Rejection Front backing the Palestinians, it is now united against Egypt's moves. Saudi Arabia, however, the most conservative of these regimes and by far the richest, could soon break up this unity.

But as long as these Arab regimes refuse to endorse the deal, the Palestinian factions will be putting more reliance on them. The unity moves between Syria and Iraq have worked to the same effect. The larger 'Rejectionist' bloc, however, will have a weakening effect on the PLO.

We should condemn the deal and back the Palestinians' struggle against Zionism, while explaining that the struggle will reach victory only through the revolutionary overthrow both of the Zionist and the Arab ruling classes.

- Egypt recognises Israel's 1949 boundaries.
- Egypt will regain the Sinai peninsula in two stages. It will have the peninsula's oil, which it will sell to Israel at the normal prices. Israel will abandon all its settlements in Sinai.
- Limited autonomy will be granted to the Gaza strip, but this question will be separated from the question of the West Bank. The Egyptian government will have a liaison office in the Gaza strip.
- Some Palestinian prisoners will be released and 'freedom of political expression' will be allowed in the West Bank and in Gaza.
- The USA will give Israel \$4 billion to finance its withdrawal from Sinai and its military redeployment in the Negev desert. This will cover the cost of building three new air bases.
- The US will also give Israel \$2 billion a year in military aid and \$1 billion a year in economic aid, adding up to \$13 billion over three years.
- Another \$12 billion or so will go to Egypt.
- The US will get docking facilities in Israel and its airforce units will be based on the Sinai peninsula at Etzion near the Israeli border (in an area to be evacuated by Israel by April 1982).



# Opening up the Muldergates

by Bob Fine

INTERNAL wrangles among South Africa's apartheid rulers are likely after the exposure of the secret dealings of South Africa's own Dr. Goebbels, the now disgraced ex-Minister of Information Connie Mulder.

Since intermittent massacres of blacks are not counted as scandalous, the 'Muldergate' affair is anticipated to be the biggest scandal in the white rulers' political history.

Apart from shaking the apartheid establishment at a time of economic crisis, the full disclosure of the Muldergate affair and its international connections promises to expose the racist's undercover friends and agents in a dozen or more other countries, including Britain and the USA.

The affair first came to light when Dr. Eschel Rhoodie, former head of the Department of Information, revealed that the Department had spent £20 million (12 million Rand) on setting up an English language pro-

Government newspaper, called *The Citizen*.

This paper in fact proved a momentous financial flop, as English speaking whites stuck with Oppenheimer's more 'liberal' press, and blacks simply boycotted *The Citizen*. Advertisers were understandably wary about wasting their money on such an unpopular publication.



Then the plot began to widen. It appears that local companies have been fiddling large sums of money out of the state in bogus defence contracts, with the support and knowledge of P.W. Botha when he was Defence Minister — he has now taken over the premiership from Vorster.

Information Department personnel were also apparently involved in massive violations of the country's Foreign Exchange controls as they lined their pockets and dreamt up wild schemes

for international propaganda.

South African newspapers have carried reports of attempts by the Information Department, aided by British businessmen (they name several) to buy into the British publishing industry. There were bids to take over *Investors' Chronicle* and *Investors' Review*, both of which failed. In 1976 they bought a 20% share in Morgan Gramplan, which publishes 40 magazines in Britain. Later they sold these shares and set up their own publishing company.

Reports of trying to buy up the *Washington Star* and convince its black readers of the wonders of apartheid; of direct attempts to bribe western politicians and businessmen; and of bids to take over the Oppenheimer newspaper empire in South Africa, have all come to the surface as the story unravels.

As with Watergate, political high-handedness, slush-funds and bribery and pocket-lining are joined by

suspicious of murder. Two years ago a Johannesburg businessman (a delegate to the IMF) happened to tell a South African cabinet minister that he would publicise his knowledge if Information Department corruption. Not long after, he and his wife were gunned down by hit-

The political upheavals in the ruling National Party have so far resulted in the resignation of Connie Mulder and of General Van den Bergh, the former head of the State Security organisation BOSS, who has just been raided by his former underlings. Now Dr. Eschel Rhoodie is threatening to reveal all, including (echoes, once more, of Watergate) 41 incriminating tapes.

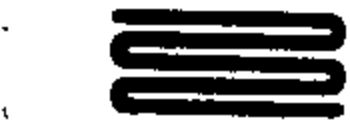
It now looks like other heads will roll. Finance Minister Owen Horewood has been directly implicated, and prime minister P.W. Botha promises to resign if his own involvement can be proved. Even President Vorster has come under suspicion, al-



Mulder and [left] van den Bergh

though he seemed to be in the clear at first. So much for the holier-than-thou incorruptible Calvinists of the Afrikaaner National Party.

For the moment, the government seems most fearful of the white opposition, whose press has been attacked with court injunctions and threats of legislation to try to keep them silent. Justice Minister Kruger (who put down the Soweto rebellion by shooting thousands of kids) has been particularly active in censoring the press, and making sure that the Erasmus Commission, supposedly investigating the corruption stories, puts a stop to any publicity connected with the affair.



New censorship laws currently before South Africa's parliament would virtually outlaw unfavourable comment on the police.

Along with this, the Gov-

ernment and the mine bosses have cracked down hard — and, it seems, successfully — on the white miners' union, which struck this month against attempts to ease racial job restrictions in the mines.

South Africa's ruling class was already in disarray before Muldergate. They are torn between combining repression of the black workers with some liberalisation or simply intensifying the repression on a blanket basis. They are torn between allowing democratic rights in the white community (the press and unions in particular) or stepping up their attacks on white civil rights. They are torn between trying to restore good relations with the big imperialist powers, especially the USA, by more cosmetic adjustments to apartheid, or maintaining their more recent high-handedness.

Behind this disarray, the real threat to apartheid is growing: the power of the black working class.

"OUR OWN examination of medical evidence reveals cases in which injuries, whatever their precise cause, were not self-inflicted and were sustained in police custody". Despite all Roy Mason's bluster, and despite the strong support he has got from the Tories, the Government has had to give its approval to the Bennett Report's implicit admission of torture by the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

The Bennett Committee was set up after Amnesty International published a report last June, examining 78 cases in detail.

Amnesty concluded that 'maltreatment of suspected terrorists by the RUC has taken place with sufficient frequency to warrant the establishment of a public enquiry to investigate it'. They continued '... legal provisions which have eroded the rights of suspects held in connection with terrorist offences have helped create the circumstances in which maltreatment of suspects takes place.'

## N Ireland Trying to tidy up the truth about torture

by Bruce Robinson



Early this month, a Belfast court found a British soldier not guilty of unlawfully killing 20 year old Danny McCooey in Belfast, saying "It is clearly possible that Mr McCooey himself provided part of the force which led to his injuries". He died of stomach injuries so severe that his ribs lacerated his pancreas, leading to slow poisoning.

paigns to discredit the RUC'. The British war propaganda machine is still working, trying to blur over and explain away the evidence of brutality.

Sir Kenneth Newman, the Chief Constable of the RUC, claimed that Irwin had only ever examined 65 people who made complaints — but Irwin replied that medical records in his possession showed that 150-160 people had been ill-treated, though not all of them had complained. He challenged Newman to a debate, and called for all relevant medical records to be released to a proper enquiry.

Then, on the day that the Bennett Report came out, an article in the *Daily Telegraph* based on 'government sources' claimed that Irwin had a grudge against the RUC because his wife had been raped by a soldier from the British Army's SAS

squad; the RUC had known who the rapist was and had not arrested him.

Since then there have been all sorts of denials, and reports by other papers that they were also approached to carry stories smearing Irwin. The revealing fact is that some RUC or Government propagandist thinks that the story about the SAS rapist — true or not — discredits the SAS and the RUC.

In any case, Irwin thinks the RUC is 'the finest police force in the world', and he worked with them for a considerable time after his wife was raped.

### Drive

What goes on in the cells at Castlereagh is not a side-issue. High-pressure 'interrogation' forms a vital part

of the army/RUC drive to crush resistance to British rule in the north of Ireland, now that there is no longer formal internment.

The Bennett Report states that for 'scheduled offences' (ie those with political implications) in the first half of 1978,

★ 75-80% of prosecution cases 'depended wholly or mainly on the confession of the accused'.

★ The prisoners can be held for up to seven days without being charged or given access to a solicitor.

★ For such cases the courts operate without juries and 94% of the cases brought before the Belfast City Commission over an unidentified period resulted in conviction.

According to a story in the *Guardian*, Judge Hugh Bennett's first reaction, when told about some of the complaints made by people

interrogated at Castlereagh, was to ask: 'What did the jury think about all this?' The Judge was quietly informed that there were no juries. But his report does not — and could not, under its terms of reference — question this system.

Bennett's terms of reference were framed so as to exclude any consideration of specific cases. He could only look at how ill-treatment could have taken place, not the extent to which it did. Even the milk-and-water middle class Social Democratic and Labour Party denounced the enquiry as a whitewash from the start.

But even Bennett has to admit there is overwhelming evidence of police brutality. From the start of 1977 there was a large increase in the number of injuries discovered when police doctors examined prisoners after interrogation. They included bruising, injuries caused by pulling or twisting joints (particularly wrists), injuries associated with pulling the hair, or persistent jabbing, and rupture of eardrums.

In April 1977 the police doctors' association (of which Irwin was secretary) protested to the Police Authority and some changes were made in the procedure. But the outcry only went on building up.

### Official

The official line has been that all the injuries are self-inflicted. Bennett finds that many of them could not have been. Amnesty found some cases of self-inflicted injury, but the prisoners said that they had injured themselves to stop the interrogation rather than to discredit the RUC.

In one case where a prisoner tried to injure himself, Bennett quotes the RUC interrogator. "He admitted", Bennett says "that if obtaining an admission involved interviewing for hours on end with no sleep, they would go

on with it. 'I've done it on numerous occasions. It has come before the court and has been accepted. I continue to do it', he said."

Bennett makes two proposals which give prisoners marginally more protection. One is that no interview should go on longer than the period between normal mealtimes or start after midnight. The other is that a prisoner should be given access to a solicitor after 48 hours and then after every 48 hours.

But the report accepts that the RUC and the Army are the "guardians and defenders of society" and only a few bad apples are sulling the reputation of the RUC. The problem is how to undercut 'Republican propaganda' about the RUC.

### Pious

Bennett makes use of the Amnesty finding that there were no complaints about the uniformed RUC officers (who are not responsible for questioning prisoners), and sets the senior uniformed officers to supervise the detectives, using closed circuit TV and suchlike.

It must have been a pious hope, for Bennett himself notes that it is very rare for officers to give evidence against each other in criminal or disciplinary proceedings. Since 1974 there has been no conviction of a police officer for offences committed during interrogation, and no disciplinary proceedings have even been started against members of the RUC.

Bennett essentially makes a few mild adjustments to the system of repression of which the RUC forms a vital part. The answer must be to build a movement against that whole system, which is propped up by one British government after another with troops and money.

★ Troops out now!  
★ Self-determination for the Irish people as a whole!

### Leaked

The *Weekend World* TV programme two weeks ago featured Dr. Robert Irwin, a police surgeon who worked at Castlereagh interrogation centre in Belfast. He stated that he had records of 150 suspects injured by the RUC.

After that, the *Guardian* leaked the report of the official Bennett Committee, which confirmed that ill-treatment had occurred.

This forced Northern Ireland Secretary Roy Mason to publish the Bennett Report earlier than he had intended. He could no longer pretend that all the complaints about Castlereagh were just an IRA plot.

Even now, though, the Government's line is that a few people getting tortured is a small problem, whose worst aspect is to fuel left-wing and Republican 'cam-

PAY LOW PAY LOW PAY LOW PAY

# Nurses: we can strike, too

Cardiff nurse Mary Harrison told WA:

**ACTION ON** pay by nurses in Cardiff has up to now been limited to some psychiatric and geriatric sections where there are not many RCN [Royal College of Nursing] members. The RCN's vain attempt to promote the struggle has been limited to setting up a vigil outside the Welsh Office. No attempt has been made by the RCN to publicise or organise activities which could promote a struggle among nurses.

But it is difficult to organise action among nurses for a number of reasons. Many nurses are women. Often they have families to look after, and union meetings are not held in working hours, so there's no chance to get to them. Historically the RCN has opposed industrial action, claiming that it is 'unprofessional' for nurses to strike.

For student nurses, it is worse: we are moved around, and change wards and hospitals every twelve weeks, and so it is difficult to keep in contact.

However, nurses are now realising that you cannot put dedication in the bank, and certain sections are getting more militant.

There is plenty of public support, but it isn't being used. The paltry offer of 9% plus an increase of £2 before a comparability study (which is £1 more than ancillaries) is a blatant attempt to buy us off and make divisions in the public sector.

In 1974 the miners promised to take action on our behalf. This type of solidarity is good, but we must realise that more commitment to the labour movement is needed on our part, rather than the elitist attitudes we still have dominating nursing.

We should organise alongside other workers to ensure that emergency cover is maintained under our con-

trol. There would be problems with the hierarchy, especially doctors who are put up as figures of authority and who make all the decisions about who is admitted, but committees of nurses (who already have to run things when action is taken by other workers in the hospitals) can organise to ensure that just essential aid is maintained.

Anthony Carr, an area nursing officer, has said that "nurses who take industrial action will be open to disciplinary action by the General Nursing Council". But if we're solid, any attempts at this sort of victimisation can be fought.

At the University Hospital of Wales, where I work, a meeting of nurses in NUPE (with CoHSE and RCN nurses also invited) is to be held on Thursday 22nd to discuss the claim. If action is decided on, the meeting should be used to set up an elected committee to co-ordinate the action.



Manchester ambulancemen show who really cares

# Gov't calls for scabs

from p. 1

at the doors of the Health Board and the Government". But the officials' reaction to the Sick Children's Hospital strike was to try to get the members back to work.

Despite the attitude of the officials, militancy among many rank and file Health Service workers is still growing. It is growing despite the isolation created by the sell-out deal for council manual workers, and the call by CoHSE leaders for the ambulance-men to accept the 9% offer which they have already rejected.

The Government is out to break these workers. As well as 'volunteer' scabs, troops are being widely

used. In South Glamorgan and Gloucestershire troops are working side by side with the volunteers on the ambulances. They are also being used in Manchester, Merseyside, Northumberland and West Yorkshire.

Neither troops nor any other scabs can provide the ambulance service we need, and even though ambulance workers in many areas are willing to provide emergency cover under their own control, they cannot work side by side with scabs. The policy of lock-outs means that the Government is willing to endanger lives in order to break this struggle.

The demoralising and ineffective selective strike tactics proposed by the NUPE leaders are being widely rejected by NHS

workers. The spreading all-out strike wave must be organised by rank and file committees, and any attempts to bring in scabs must be met by withdrawal of emergency cover.

The union leaders' main concern has been to 'put the case against low pay' and then cave in when action looks likely to shake the Government, and spoil Jim Callaghan's record as a manager of the capitalist system. For the rank and file the priority is different: winning the full claim now, ending low pay, scrapping the Concordat. And solidarity strikes by workers in industry are the way to make sure those demands are won now, as quickly as possible, and with as little danger as possible to the sick.

# LONDON N GO FOR AL

LAST THURSDAY, 15th, about 200 NUPE stewards from all services in London decided to call for an all-out strike in the hospitals.

The meeting was a delegate conference called by the London district council under pressure from the rank and file. Two resolutions were passed. The first dealt with the council workers who are still on strike, trying to get a local deal on top of the national offer.

The resolution began by stating that: 'This London district council reluctantly advises delegates to comply with the executive council recommendation for

a return to work for local authority workers'. On seeing it, a number of delegates from boroughs that are still out on strike left the meeting in disgust, returning only when they were told that it had been overwhelmingly rejected.

The second part of the resolution was overwhelmingly passed. It pledged total support to all groups still taking action to win local settlements, and expressed dissatisfaction with the conduct of some of the union officers at national level. It called for an 'in-depth investigation' to prevent such failures in

future.

On the hospitals, too, the district council put forward a somewhat ambiguous resolution. It recognised the willingness and determination of the hospital workers to continue the fight, and the shortcomings of selective action. If action was kept on a selective basis, there would be little hope of winning the claim.

The resolution went on to say: 'We call on all NUPE members in the National Health Service to strike from the 21st March (or a date decided by the conference) on an indefinite

THIRTY YEARS AGO, the USA lost the central prize it hoped to gain from World War 2 — China. Recapturing that vast market and source of raw materials has been part of US global strategy ever since. And now, since the establishment of full diplomatic relations, China's doors are at last opening up to US imperialism.

China now takes a thoroughly right-wing line in international affairs. Its invasion of Vietnam, last month, won open approval from General William Westmoreland (the former US commander in Vietnam) and the British big-business magazine *The Economist*. Although the US government officially condemned the invasion, the condemnations were formal and perfunctory. Behind the scenes the US almost certainly backed up the invasion.

China's new role is the continuation of a trend begun in the late '60s. And its roots go back even further. Right from 1949, Mao and the Chinese Communist Party aimed for the same objectives as Stalinist Russia — peaceful coexistence with imperialism, in order to build "socialism in one country".

However, the USA, counting the cost of its losses, maintained an aggressive attitude. A National Security Council resolution dated December 23rd 1949 stated:

"The extension of communist authority in China represents a grievous political defeat for us; if SE Asia also is swept by Communism we shall have suffered a

major political rout the repercussions of which will be felt throughout the rest of the world...

"Asia is the source of important raw and semi-processed materials, many of them of strategic value. Moreover, Asia has been a market for the processed goods of industrialised states and has also been for the Western colonial powers a rich source of revenue from investments and other invisible earnings." (Pentagon Papers)

The US intervention in Korea was also aimed at China. China was forced into an apparently radical anti-imperialist political stance.



But the Chinese Government was still willing to make deals with imperialism at the expense of revolutionary struggles in other countries. This was clear at the 1954 Geneva talks on Indochina. The Vietminh had won the war in Vietnam. But they were pressurised into concessions at Geneva by Russia and China.

The US Defense Department saw that:

"Vietminh ambitions were thwarted, not so much by Western resistance or treachery, as by Sino-Soviet pressures on them to cooperate... Chou En-Lai and Molotov played major roles in breaking deadlocks with conciliatory initiatives... 'Peaceful co-existence' was

# The end of Mao

CHEUNG SIU MING looks at the historical background to China's link-up with the US and its

the hallmark of their diplomacy.

The Chinese, in particular, were interested in border security, buffers, preventing the formation of a US alliance system with bases in the region... the two big communist powers did not hesitate in asserting the paramountcy of their interests over those of the Vietminh."

The USSR's efforts to assert political control over China led to increasing friction in the late 1950s.

Eventually, in the midst of the failure of the Great Leap Forward and a run of bad harvests, Moscow abruptly withdrew all aid, personnel and blueprints and refused to provide Peking with a nuclear umbrella.

The Kennedy administration in the US welcomed the Sino-Soviet split and took its chance to step up operations in Laos and Vietnam.

Peking attacked Khrushchev for backing down over the Cuban missile crisis and not supporting China in its war with India. Responding to isolation and imperialist encirclement, China stepped up its militant rhetoric and aid to some liberation movements, earning a world following for Maoism

and "People's War."

"The problem rests in Peking. It rests in a militant approach to the spread of world revolution... SE Asia is at present the point at which this issue of militant aggression against one's neighbours for ideological reasons is posed." (Dean Rusk, US secretary of state, December 23 1964)

"In the final analysis, the whole cause of world revolutionary struggles of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples... the socialist countries should regard it as their international duty to support the people's struggles in Asia, Africa and Latin America." (Lin Piao, then Chinese Defense minister, September 2nd 1965).



This period of radicalism was limited by the Maoist theory of the "bloc of 4 classes", according to which the working class and peasantry are to unite with the petty bourgeois and national bourgeois classes in a national-democratic revolution against imperialism. And it resulted in a

bloody debacle just four weeks after Lin Piao made his speech quoted above.

In late 1965, a military coup in Indonesia wiped out the pro-Peking Communist Party (PKI), the biggest CP in the world not holding state power. 500,000 people were massacred and many others are still in prison.

For years, the PKI had slavishly followed the policy of a bloc with the native bourgeoisie. It led its massive following — 3 million members, with large youth, women, trade union and peasant organisations — into a blind alley of supporting the bourgeois nationalist leader Sukarno.

As the PKI chairman D. Aidit put it:

"The character of the Indonesian revolution at the present time is bourgeois democratic and not proletarian socialist... The Indonesian revolution is bourgeois in nature, because it does not abolish the private ownership of the means of production."

After leading the PKI into a death-trap, China's first reaction to the coup (after three weeks) was:

"the relations between China and Indonesia remain firm although there are

elements trying to alienate China and Indonesia."

Also in 1965, the Algerian military under Boumediene overthrew the left-wing Ben Bella government. In an attempt to hold together an Afro-Asian conference scheduled to take place in Algeria, Peking immediately recognised the new government.

Maoism was still influential in the Third World, and was gaining reflected glory from the 'people's war' in Vietnam. Yet the USA could step up attacks on Vietnam, correctly calculating that the Pentagon could do anything short of invading North Vietnam — and China, like Russia, would do no more than pledge unspecified support.

It was the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people, with only limited supplies of arms from Russia and even less from China, and the growth of the anti-war movement at home, that thwarted the Pentagon. Eventually, the NLF's Tet offensive in 1968 convinced US imperialism that it could not win the war.

The new 'Nixon doctrine' involved trying to get the best possible settlement for the US by deals with China

and the USSR found China partner, and it were held in February 1969.

In July 1969 it was announced that Nixon visited Peking. This was a sign that Washington's intention of jointin in an anti-China

In June 1971 it was announced that the year old trade China. The next were secret to Kissinger and in Peking. In United Nations mit China ar Taiwan, with or opposition.



These signals understood by responded with ly counter-revolutions.

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# Edinburgh workers reverse back to work vote

AS THE ambulance crews' action spreads to national strike proportions, with over 5,000 NUPE members now out, the struggle in the hospitals is escalating too.

A sign of this was Edinburgh South Hospitals NUPE's decision, on Wednesday 14th, to overturn their back-to-work decision made the day before. It was a strike by 500 ancillaries at the Western General Hospital, beginning on the Wednesday, which swung the balance.

At a stormy meeting, the union full-timer, Andy Wilson (a Communist Party member) was roundly condemned for holding back militancy. The workers saw the alternative to a return to work as all-action, rather than the official line of selective strikes which Wilson was pushing.

On Thursday 15th, strikes at five hospitals covered by the South branch joined those that had already begun at four other Edinburgh hospitals. On the 15th, too, catering workers at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary finally got the official go-ahead for strike action. They were forced back to work three weeks ago after an unofficial strike because of lack of union backing. A steward at the Royal told *Workers' Action*: "The full-timers have to do some damage now, or they'll lose all credibility".

At the Western General hospital, the NUPE officials are saying that the ancillaries' strike is only for a short period. But among the workers determination is harden-

ing now that management have brought in 'volunteers' despite the unions' willingness to provide emergency cover.

Throughout Scotland, the action is reducing many hospitals to 'emergencies only'. 19 hospitals in Ayrshire and Arran have restricted admissions because of a shortage of clean linen caused by NUPE members' action. In Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee and Fire laundry workers are on strike.

In Glasgow, 70 workers at the Kingston hospital laundry struck on Tuesday 20th, affecting linen supplies to three of the city's main hospitals. Stobe Hill hospital has already halved its number of available beds.

Action is being stepped up in England and Wales too. On Monday 19th Leicester Hospitals NUPE decided on a four-day porters' and domestics' strike at the City General and the Royal Infirmary. Workers at the Central Sterilising Service department also came out.

The same day, 800 NUPE members in Derby and Mansfield, 400 NUPE members at the North Wales Hospital in Denbeigh, and other workers in Bolton, Barking and Portsmouth also struck. 500 workers at Selly Oak hospital in Birmingham went out on Wednesday 21st.

This spreading of the strikes shows that it is still possible for the hospital workers to win.

Elected rank and file strike committees are the key to victory now.



A vote to continue all-out action from hospital workers in the north west

# NHS WORKERS ALL OUT STRIKE

basis...'. Yet the next paragraph stated: 'As a first step, district council recommends a day of action on 21st March'.

The paragraph about the day of action was thrown out by conference after a number of delegates had pointed out the lessons they had learnt from the day of action in January. They realised that it was an all-out strike or nothing to win the claim.

An amendment calling for the formation of an all-London strike committee was carried without opposition. The stewards had seen the failure of the lead-

ership, and the need to build their own rank and file organisation.

A second amendment calling for support action for the hospitals from other NUPE members was also carried.

On the call for an all-out strike, only NHS stewards had voting rights. A big majority were in favour. But many stewards who were not right-wingers spoke in favour of a return to work in good order. They included some who had been in the forefront of the struggle since the 22nd.

The division reflected Government and press assaults on these strikers, but above all else the divisions and sense of isolation which the bureaucracies of all the unions have imposed on the membership.

Despite those militants' doubts, the groundswell of support was there. The task now is to make sure this all-out strike call is not confined to a few hospitals in London.

Militants must organise groups of strikers to visit hospitals that have not come out. The decision of the stewards' conference

must be fully explained to mass meetings of hospital workers. News of action being taken in other parts of the country must be spread through strike bulletins, showing strikers that they are not alone.

Delegations to factories must also be organised, to build support for the strikers in terms of money and of solidarity action.

The strikes must be spread. All-out strike, backed up by industrial support like the dockers' strikes for the nurses in the early '60s and in 1970, is the way to win.

MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN

# Imperialism

## Invasion of Vietnam

And Nixon a willing partner in the first talks in Warsaw in 1972. It was proposed to Rumania. Nixon had no intention of an alliance with Russia.

Nixon and the 21-embargo on month talks between Chou En-lai October, the voted to add kick out formal US

ionaries in the 'Guevarist' JVP. Over 15,000 were killed and even more were jailed.

Chou En-lai told Bandaranaike: 'We are glad to see that, thanks to the efforts of Your Excellency and the Ceylon government, the chaotic situation created by a handful of persons who style themselves Guevarists and into whose ranks foreign spies have sneaked, has been brought under control ... The Chinese government, in compliance with the request of the Ceylon Government, agrees to provide it with a long term interest free loan of 150 million rupees in convertible foreign exchange.'

In February 1972, while the B52s were pounding Hanoi, Nixon was welcomed in Peking. Hanoi was eventually 'forced to the Paris peace talks under Chinese and Russian pressure.'

Peking's foreign policy now increasingly saw the Soviet Union as the main enemy. Soviet 'social imperialism' and US imperialism were labelled the 'two superpowers', but the USSR was 'even more deceitful than old-line imperialist countries and therefore more dangerous'.

Peking began to call for the strengthening of NATO.



Smiles for NATO, grim on the Russian border

Western hawks such as Senator Henry Jackson, Germany's Franz-Josef Strauss and Britain's Tories for Chinese approval. When Henry Ford sacked Pentagon boss James Schlesinger in November 1975, the official Chinese news agency issued a statement criticising the sacking as a concession to the Soviet Union and a dangerous weakening of US imperialism's forces.

China's anti-Russian stance has also led it to give support to the Chilean military dictatorship and to the Shah of Iran. It has condemned the liberation struggles in Oman, in Kurdistan and in Eritrea. And in 1975-6 it lined up on the same side as the USA and South Africa in the Angolan war.

Within a few weeks of the Chile coup, the Chinese

booted out Allende's ambassador in Peking and welcomed the Junta's representative. In Santiago every embassy was guarded by the Junta's troops to prevent leftists seeking asylum ... except the Chinese embassy, which had closed its doors. When the Chilean Foreign Minister rose to address the UN a month after the coup, many delegates walked out ... but not the Chinese. The only governments abstaining on a UN resolution to aid Chilean refugees were the USA and China.

Later, China offered a \$58 million loan to the butchers of the Chilean working class.

From 1971, China came out in support of the Shah, and in late '73, all Chinese aid to the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman in



their fight against Iranian troops was terminated.

Nineteen seventy one was also the year that Peking discontinued aid to the Eritrean rebels and warmly received Haile Selassie in Peking, praising his contributions 'to the promotion of the cause of anti-imperialist unity in Asia and Africa'.

In Angola, China sent advisors, tanks and heavy artillery to the FNLA/UNITA forces. US officials stated (in 1975): 'Since the spring we have given minimum aid to the anti-communist movements (in Angola), because we were satisfied to let the Chinese do the work in the field'.

China refused to condemn

the South African invasion into Angola until nine weeks after the event, and even then it laid the blame on the USSR: 'It is clear to sober-minded people that South African intervention took place only after the Soviet Union had begun dividing the Angola liberation movement and stirring up the civil war there. It is nobody other than the Soviet social-imperialists who, by their flagrant intervention in Angola, provided the South African authorities with every opportunity to send their troops in and fish in troubled waters. Hence the Soviet social-imperialists, who have been clamouring against the South African invasion, are the arch criminals responsible for the intervention by the South African racist regime in

Angola.'

The Maoist groups in Britain (such as the CPBML and the CPFML) who have finally broken with Peking and now support Albania, claim that a right wing clique around Vice Premier Deng has restored (or is about to restore, it is never clear) capitalism in China. China's rapprochement with the USA and its invasion of Vietnam are, they say, a betrayal of everything that Mao and Chou stood for.

But the evidence of the past ten years shows that Hua and Deng are only following policies clearly laid down and acted on by Mao himself — policies originally pioneered by the Maoists revered hero Joseph Stalin according to the doctrine of 'socialism in one country' (and in no other) as long ago as 1924.

# EINSTEIN'S THEORY OF SPACE AND TIME Dethroning the Absolute

ALBERT EINSTEIN knocked the idea of firmly established truth out of science. His theory of relativity showed that Newtonian mechanics — the greatest achievement of science up til then, with its theories confirmed again and again by experiment and practice — was faulty. Since then, no scientist has believed that any theory can be more than a provisional approximation to the truth.

Newton, in the seventeenth century, summed up the laws governing the movement of matter in a few simple equations. The theory built upon those equations proved tremendously powerful. The spirit of the new science was summed up by the French mathematician Pierre-Simon de Laplace, when asked why his book on astronomy did not mention God: 'I had no need of that hypothesis'.

## Kant

Newtonian science formed the basis for the mechanical materialist philosophies of the eighteenth century and for Kant's critical philosophy — philosophies which laid the intellectual groundwork for the revolutionary bourgeoisie's assault on the absolute monarchies and on the remnants of feudalism. By the late nineteenth century, with the triumph of industry and the expansion of science, a complete system of scientific world-knowledge seemed within reach.

Even so critical a thinker as Friedrich Engels believed that science was reaching the point where it could 'present in an approximately systematic form a comprehensive view of the interconnections in nature by means of the facts provided by empirical science itself... a 'system of nature' sufficient for our time.' Many others omitted such qualifications as 'approximately' or 'for our time'.

There were, however, some awkward snags. Newton's laws deal with the movement of matter. But how do you decide what is moving and what is not? If I stand absolutely still in relation to the earth's surface, from the viewpoint of the sun I am whizzing round at great speed.

Newton's laws implicitly assume there is an absolute frame of reference for space and time. To be more precise: the frame of reference for space is not quite absolute, because we can prove that if Newton's laws hold in one frame of reference, they hold in exactly the same way in any frame of reference moving steadily in a fixed direction relative to that original frame of reference. Any one of those frames of reference, is equally good for Newtonian mechanics.

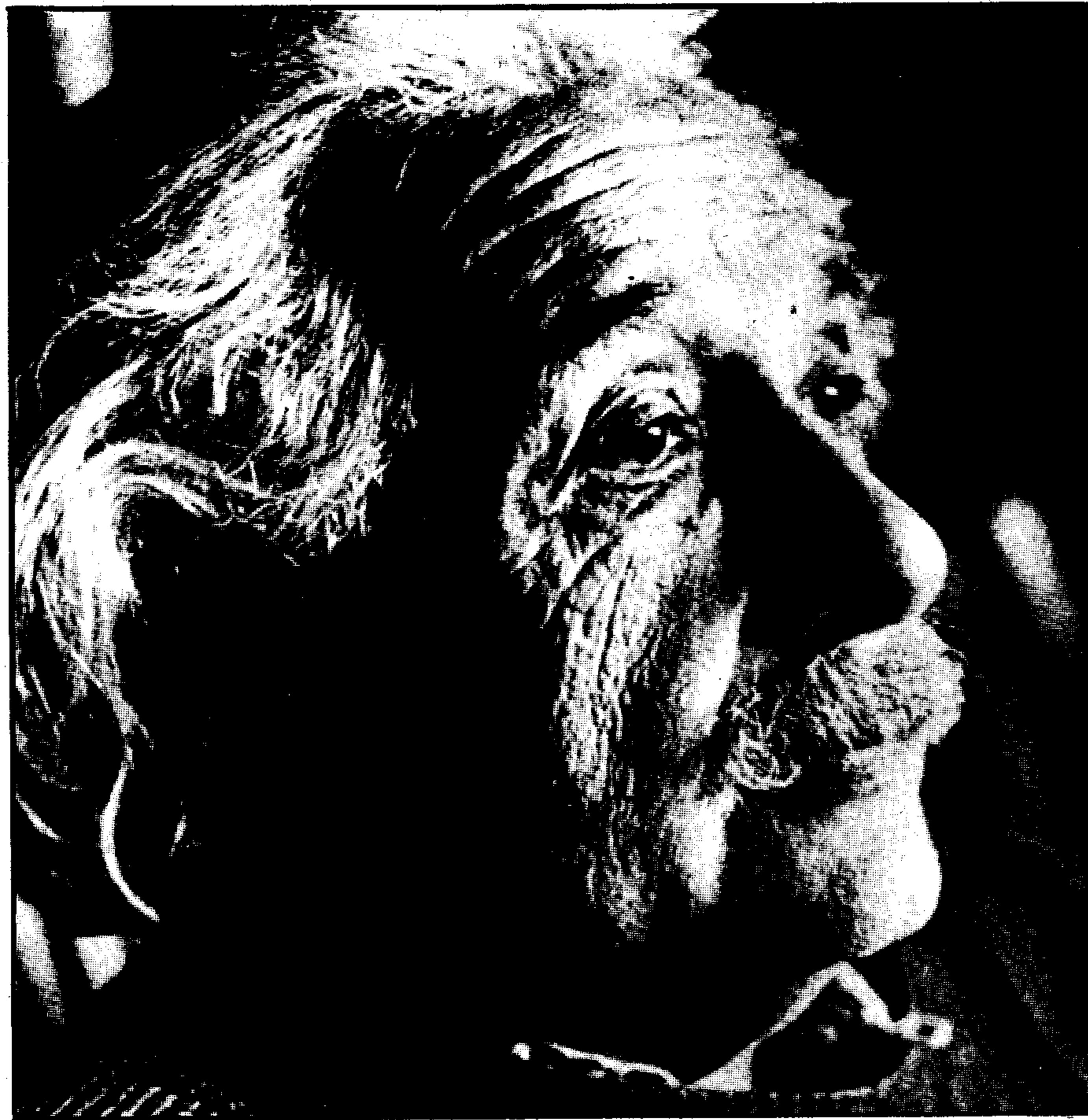
Thus 'being in the same place' is not absolute in Newtonian physics. Suppose we have a road which is fixed within a Newtonian frame of reference. (The earth is not exactly a Newtonian frame of reference, but it is near enough for a lot of purposes.) Then a lorry moving steadily along that road also defines a Newtonian frame of reference. A load on that lorry stays still relative to the lorry but relative to the earth's frame of reference it moves.

Time, however, is absolute in Newtonian physics. Two events which are simultaneous in one frame of reference are simultaneous in any frame of reference.

There is something mystical here. Before Copernicus people thought the earth stood still. Then they came to realise that the earth spins round the sun. Does the sun stand still? And if so, still in relation to what? For simultaneity to be absolute, there must be absolute time. Who sets it? God?

Kant, the greatest philosopher of Newtonian science, concluded that space and time were not features of reality, but eternal categories of human reason, existing before and independently of experience. They were spectacles you had to wear to see the world.

Apart from those philosophical difficulties, there were scientific problems. According to Newton's laws of mechanics, the speed of light (in a vacuum) should be different in different frames of reference. If light from the sun reaches the earth at 186,000 miles a second, then a rocket moving from the earth towards the sun at 100 miles a second should perceive the speed of the sun's light as 186,100 miles a second.



Isaac Newton

But experiments by Michelson and Morley in 1887 seemed to show that the speed of light was the same in different frames of reference. And the fundamental equations of electromagnetic theory, worked out by James Clerk Maxwell in the 1860s, included the speed of light as a constant. Either the speed of light was constant, or the electromagnetic theory equations would only hold in one frame of reference (more precisely: in one frame of reference plus other frames static in relation to that frame).

For most practical purposes, the problems were of minor importance: the speed of light is so great that the differences between one frame of reference and another, if they existed, would be proportionately very small. But scientists were worried. Hendrik Lorentz and Henri Poincaré proposed explanations of the Michelson-Morley experiment. They came up with some of the same mathematical formulas that Einstein was to get from the theory of relativity, but failed to mesh them in with a coherent physical theory.

TV and press features have marked the 100th anniversary of the birth of Albert Einstein, the main author of the theory of relativity. But quaint stories like what would happen to cars going at nearly the speed of light tended to dominate these accounts. Colin Foster argues that relativity theory is much too important for the curiosity-corner.

other, if they existed, would be proportionately very small. But scientists were worried. Hendrik Lorentz and Henri Poincaré proposed explanations of the Michelson-Morley experiment. They came up with some of the same mathematical formulas that Einstein was to get from the theory of relativity, but failed to mesh them in with a coherent physical theory.

Einstein challenged the basic Newtonian ideas of space and time. First, in the special theory of relativity (1905) he overthrew Newton's absolute time. Then, in the general theory (1915), he overthrew absolute space.

The special theory of relativity starts from two very simple principles. First: just as in Newtonian science, the laws of physics are the same in two frames of reference

ular frame of reference. Then the time of an event distant from that base point is defined as the time on the clock when a light-signal from the event reaches it, minus the time to travel the distance to the clock at the universally constant speed of light.

## Laws

With this definition of time, the speed of light is the same in every frame of reference. The laws of physics are the same, too. But — so it turns out — they are different from Newton's laws. Time becomes relative.

Suppose we have two frames of reference moving relative to each other at ten thousand miles a second. (We could think of it as two fantastically fast conveyor belts, moving in opposite

directions.) In frame A there are two clocks fixed some distance apart, along the belt. Suppose A is moving to the left relative to B, and clock 1 is to the left of clock 2.

## Time

An observer in frame A synchronises those clocks by sending a light signal from clock 1 to clock 2 and back again. If clock 1 shows noon when the signal is sent out, and two seconds past noon when it returns, then clock 2 is set at one second past noon.

In frame B all this is nonsense. Because in frame B the clocks are moving, the signal's return journey is longer than its outward journey. The clocks are unsynchronised.

Suppose you have a clock at the base-point of a partic-

ular frame of reference. Then the time of an event distant from that base point is defined as the time on the clock when a light-signal from the event reaches it, minus the time to travel the distance to the clock at the universally constant speed of light.

For an observer in frame

B, it will seem that frame A is setting its clocks too slow: in other words, that frame A's measurement of the time between two events which take place (according to frame B's reckoning) at the same point in space is an underestimate. In frame A terms, however, those two events will have been at different points in space.

Turning the argument round, it also appears to the observer in frame A that frame B sets its clocks too slow! And events which are simultaneous in frame A are not necessarily simultaneous in frame B.

Lengths are also different in the two frames. To measure the length of something you have to measure the positions of its ends simultaneously. But different frames disagree on what is simultaneous. So an object lying on conveyor belt A will seem longer to an observer in frame A than it is to an observer on belt B. As far as the frame A observer can see the observer in frame B is comparing the position of one end of the object at a given time with the position of the other end at a different time.

Equally, an object lying on belt B will seem longer in frame B than it does in frame A.

Space and time become partly interchangeable. In Newtonian science we are accustomed to the idea that an object may appear tall and thin from one point of view and broad and squat from another. In special relativity, two events may be close in time and far distant in space in one frame of reference, distant in time and near in space in another.

The mathematician Hermann Minkowski soon grasped this point, and formulated the special theory of relativity as a series of laws of motion in four-dimensional space. To the familiar three dimensions, he added time as a fourth dimension.

Mathematics in four dimensions is not much more difficult than in three. Indeed, the equations of relativity theory in four dimensions are often simpler than the equations of classical physics in three dimensions. But to visualise four dimensions is, of course, impossible.

To get your mind round Minkowski's notion of space-time is also difficult because the fourth dimension is not just time, but time multiplied by the speed of light multiplied by what mathematicians call an 'imaginary number' — the square root of minus one.

Thus most of the detail of relativity theory is difficult to understand without mathematics. But one famous result must be mentioned. Speeds greater than the speed of light are impossible. What happens is that the mass of any object becomes greater and greater as its speed approaches the speed of light; its response to any attempt to accelerate becomes more and more sluggish.

## Mass

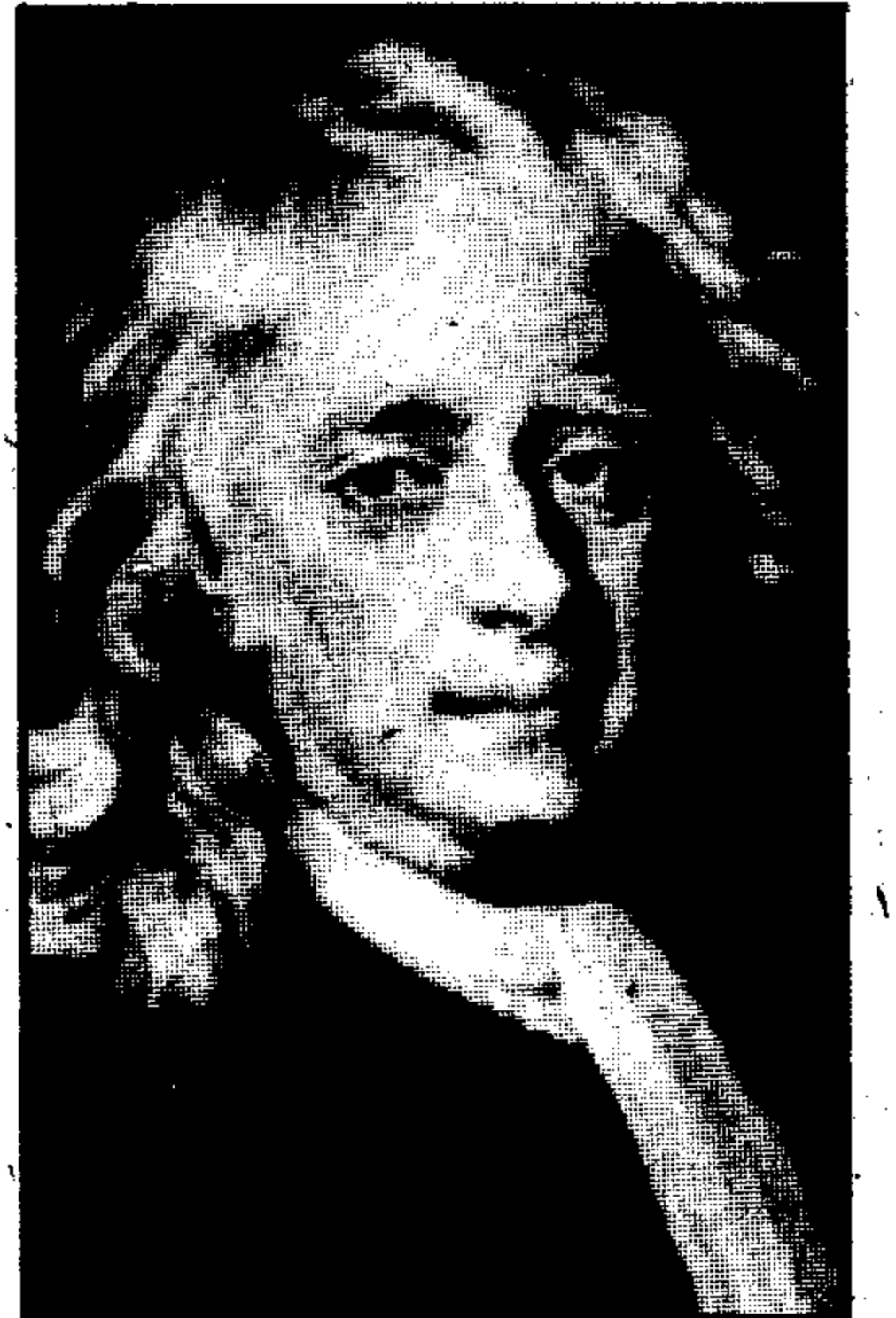
Greater speed means greater energy means greater mass. Mass and energy are interchangeable. And at zero speed an object's mass

is equivalent to an amount of energy given by the famous equation  $E=MC^2$ . If mass can be destroyed — not just changed in form, as wood is changed into smoke and ashes when burnt — then enormous amounts of energy are released.

This is what happens in nuclear bombs. It is also the source of the sun's energy: the sun is like a continuously exploding H-bomb.

That momentous result was decades ahead, however, when Einstein published his special theory of relativity in 1905. Immediately, Einstein's theory meant a complete shift in scientists' view of the world.

Einstein summed it up like this. 'I am convinced that the philosophers have had a harmful effect upon the progress of scientific thinking in removing certain fundament-



Albert Einstein

al concepts from the domain of empiricism, where they are under our control, to the intangible heights of the *a priori*... The universe of ideas is just as little independent of the nature of our experiences as clothes are of the form of the human body. This is particularly true of our concepts of time and space, which physicists have been obliged by facts to bring down from the Olympus of the *a priori* in order to adjust them and put them in a serviceable condition.'

## Warp

The general theory of relativity brought down a great deal more from the Olympus of philosophy. Here Einstein formulated laws of physics which are the same in any frame of space-time, even if it is twisting, turning and accelerating in relation to other frames. He did it by integrating the laws of gravity with the theory of space-time; gravitation appears as a warping of space-time.

Now since the ancient Greeks the basis of mathematics and science had been Euclid's geometry, the geometry we are taught in schools.

A long time before Einstein, mathematicians had come to realise that Euclid's geometry was not the only geometry possible. In two dimensions, the geometry of the surface of a sphere is not the same as the geometry of a flat surface. On a flat surface, for example, parallel lines never meet; on a spherical surface, they do. And it is possible mathematically to define — though not to visualise — 'curved' three-dimensional and four-dimensional geometries.

For Kant, Euclidian geometry was a necessary framework for rational thought and experience, like absolute space and time. Einstein's system made it a question of scientific investigation whether the universe is Euclidian or not ... and it turns out that it is not. The geometry of the universe is 'curved', though it is misleading to try to visualise this.

Einstein devoted most of the remaining forty years of his life, after 1915, to trying to generalise the general theory of relativity still further. He failed. But he never doubted that comprehending nature as a unified whole must be the central aim of science (even if any unifying theory could only be provisional).

The popular idea of Einstein as a simpleton-genius is far from the truth. He was only a 'simple' character in that he hated mystification and always tried to write straightforwardly; and in that his intelligence was broad enough to see that the office cleaners at a university deserved exactly the same respect and consideration as the professors.

Politically, he was as much at sea as any humane and intelligent man without a class understanding of society. He was a pacifist, but backed World War Two. He hated nationalism, but supported Zionism. He campaigned against the atom bomb, but had earlier informed President Roosevelt that such a bomb was possible.

## Real

But he never cut himself off from the political world — in his last years he was a brave opponent of McCarthyism. His knowledge of philosophy was considerable: according to his own account, an important stimulus in developing relativity theory was a re-reading of Kant.

He vigorously opposed the facile interpretation which some people put on his relativity theory, that things are real only to the extent that they are observed. On the



Einstein as a student

contrary, he held that his theory freed the empirical study of reality from the scaffolding of idealist philosophical fictions like an absolute space-time frame of reference.

## God

When he asserted the existence of God — as he often did — he meant to assert the existence of material reality, with its laws and patterns, as being prior to observation. He explicitly rejected the idea of 'some will or goal outside the human sphere', and wrote: 'I believe in Spinoza's God who reveals himself in the orderly harmony of what exists, not in a God who concerns himself with the fates

and actions of human beings'

Spinoza — a 17th century philosopher who argued that God was nothing other than the order manifest in the universe — was held by the great Russian Marxist Plekhanov to be the principal philosophical predecessor (besides Hegel) of Marxism. And in fact Einstein's relativity theory was a brilliant carrying-through of the fundamental ideas of the materialistic dialectic, as Marx, Engels and Plekhanov (basing themselves mainly on the sciences other than physics) formulated them: opposition to any attempt by philosophy to impose eternal, God-given categories on science; the insistence that material reality has an existence prior to observation, and that the laws of science must be derived from a positive study of reality, not by philosophical cogitation; the need to understand reality as an interconnected process; and opposition to rigid, static, classificatory thought.

## Truth

The idea that space and time are in a sense interchangeable is nothing if not dialectical. And the blow struck by Einstein at the idea of final truth was entirely in line with dialectical thinking.

Yet Marxist thinkers have hardly done much to assimilate relativity. For much of the time since Einstein developed relativity theory, 'official' Marxism has been dominated by the nonsensical parrot-dialectics of Stalinism. Many of the Marxist thinkers who remained independent of Stalinism were so repelled by it and by the mechanical 'scientific' Marxism of the Second International that they tried to establish that dialectics was nothing to do with — or indeed, was opposed to — natural science.

When compared with Engels and Plekhanov, who plunged exuberantly into the science of their time to discern its patterns, even thinkers who weren't 'anti-scientific', like Gramsci or Korsch, appear scholastic, formal and narrow in their philosophical concerns.

The authentic revolutionary Marxists, the Trotskyists, were too beleaguered and beset by practical problems to be able to take up this ideological issue very much.

## Science

The material conditions for this impoverishment of Marxism are largely undermined today. Yet its legacy continues, in the form of quite widespread suspicion of natural science within the revolutionary movement.

Science is a weapon of liberation — not only through its contribution to technology, but also through its ability to cut away at the remnants of theological and metaphysical thinking in our minds. Relativity theory has made the structure of space-time and of the universe matters for scientific investigation, not philosophical speculation. It has made the beginning and the end of the universe matters of empirical research. It has dethroned Absolute Space, Absolute Time, absolute laws of geometry.

The bourgeoisie uses science for mystification, for exploitation, and for destruction. But they do that by deforming and abusing it. In truth, science should belong to those who want to free humanity from superstition and ignorance — to the working class.

LORRY DRIVERS in Birmingham have voted to black all Dunlop tyres. Meeting last weekend, the TGWU 5/35 branch endorsed a call for blacking passed on from the Dunlop combine and the drivers' national container liaison committee.

The national blacking on all Dunlop tyres is the Dunlop workers' next step in their fight against the bosses' plan for 3,100 sackings on April 19th, 2,400 of them at Dunlop's Speke factory on Merseyside.

Stewards at the Vauxhall car factory in Ellesmere Port have also agreed to implement the blacking, and the north-west regional conference of the Labour Party endorsed the call for blacking.

Arthur Todd, convenor of engineering trades at Dunlop Speke, told Workers' Action:

'The most important thing at the moment is to make the blacking effective. The executive of the TGWU has set up a sub-committee to make sure that it is effective.

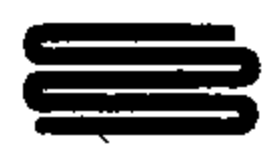
We have involved the local community in picketing the works, and have asked for support from other workplaces and unions. People on Merseyside, and nationally, must realise that this fight is not just ours at Dunlop, but an attempt to show that redundancies are not inevitable.

As part of their demands for the national stoppage on Wednesday 7th March, the trade unions asked that the 90 days' notice and all threats of redundancy be suspended, and that the Dunlop management negotiate with the unions.

Management had totally ignored the terms of the

# Dunlop jobs fight: now make the blacking bite

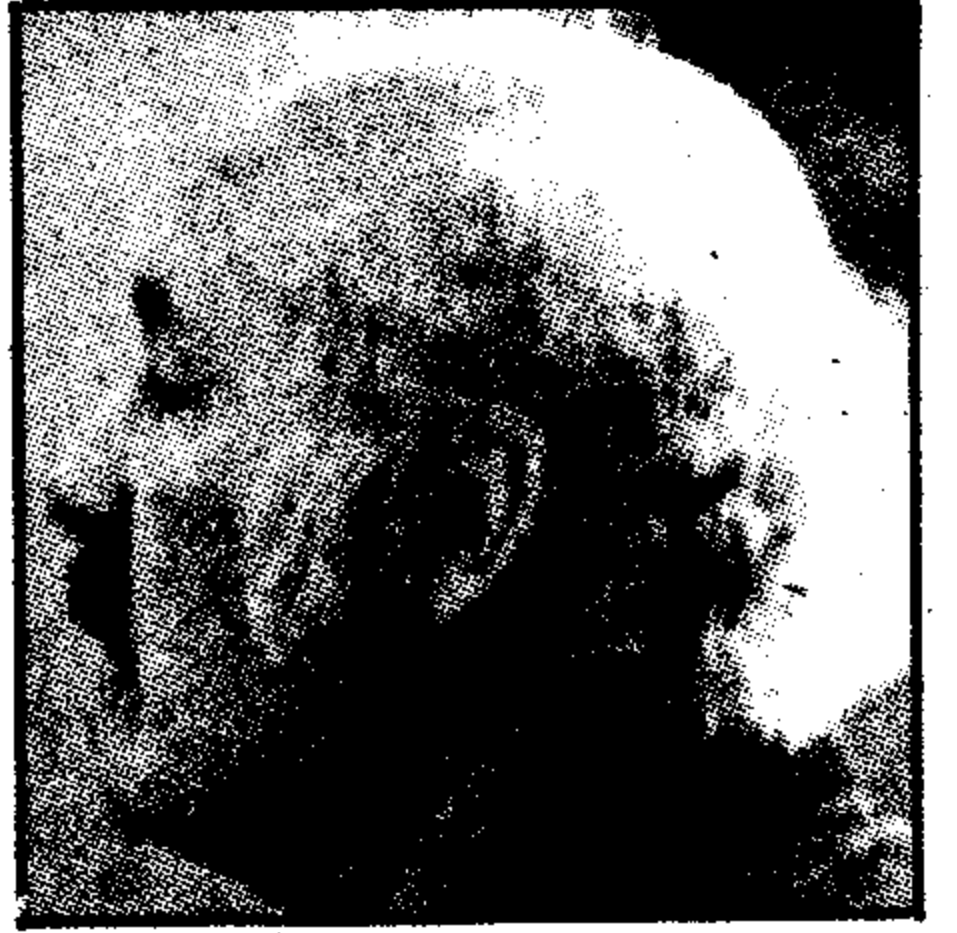
Employment Protection Act for 90 days' notice which is meant to be a negotiating period. Their decision to declare the redundancies was totally arbitrary. In fact last year some of the directors from Dunlop and Pirelli took part in an 'efficiency dialogue' which is published in pamphlet form by the NEDC 'Rubber processing sector working party'.



In it a guarantee was given by the directors that

no redundancies would take place while negotiations were in course. This must have been the same time as they were working out their rationalisation plans for the industry!

Dunlop has also been approached by local MPs with the offer of Government money to save some of the jobs, but it was rejected by Campbell Fraser and his board as it would have meant a limited accountability, and Dunlop want nothing to do with even the Government knowing how they are making profits.



Arthur Todd

We have seen the management's attitude towards our jobs and have tried all ways to negotiate.

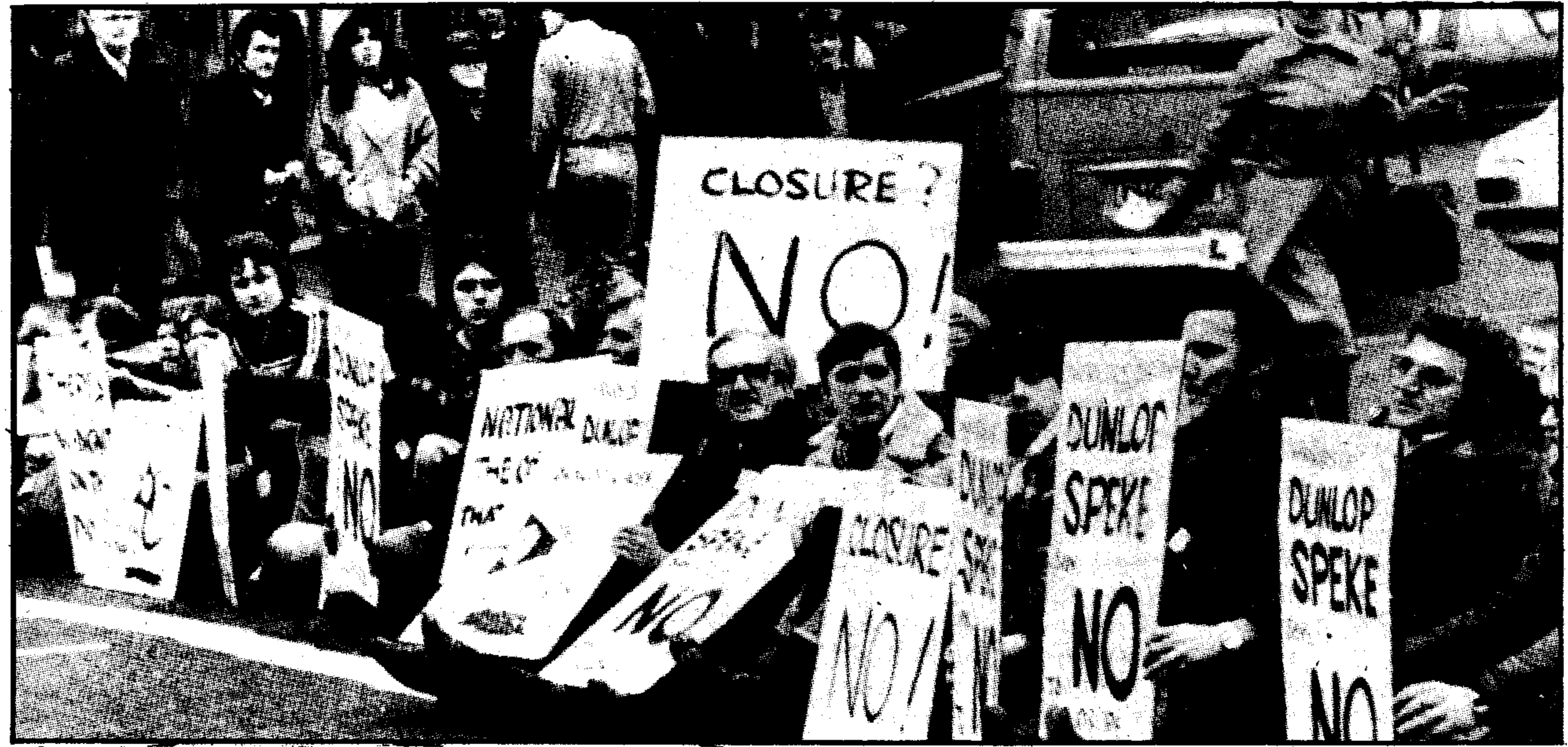
Now is the time for action. We are starting with civil disobedience. [Speke boulevard was blocked last Wednesday for about an hour by the Dunlop workers on a sit-down protest]. But this is not the only action we plan to take. I can't disclose the exact details.

If Dunlop make a fight of it, then it can be an important turning point for workers on Merseyside: so far, one batch of job cuts or factory closures has followed another with seeming inevitability. The failure of resistance at British Leyland's Speke plant (Standards) has many lessons for Dunlop. Only a factory occupation, backed up by combine-wide solidarity action and focused on the demand for work-sharing under workers' control with no loss of pay, is likely to defeat the Dunlop bosses.

LOL DUFFY

★ Messages of support: R. Rinaldi, 11 Rudley Walk, Speke, Liverpool 24.

In last week's WA we made a mistake in describing Arthur Todd as a member of the AUEW. He is the engineering workers' convenor at Dunlop, but he belongs to the Sheet Metal Workers' Union [NUSMW]



Dunlop workers stage sit-down, blocking Liverpool's Lime Street.

## Why imports aren't the problem

THE TYRE industry really started running into trouble in the world slump of 1974-5.

As a *Financial Times* survey put it: "Car production fell, which reduced demand for originally fitted tyres. Speed limits and soaring fuel prices reduced vehicle mileage and lowered demand for replacement tyres. And the cost of oil-based materials from which tyres are largely made increased enormously".

At the same time, the effects of improved tyre technology — with the new steel-belted radial tyres lasting more than twice as long as the old crossply models — began to bite hard.

Replacement tyre sales in Britain dropped from 22.5 million in 1973 to 19.4 million in 1975. They have in-

creased slightly since, but the *Financial Times* estimates that the market "has settled down at around 20 million units a year for some time to come".

The tyre makers' way out is suddenly to become very concerned with safety, and press the Government for stricter laws on the use of worn tyres. But the Government is not responding.

Imports, especially from Eastern Europe, are sometimes made the scapegoat for the tyre industry's crisis. About a third of the tyres sold in Britain are imports, and about half of those are from Eastern Europe. British tyre makers complain that the East Europeans are 'dumping', because they use similar technology to the

British industry yet sell at much lower prices.

Some of the workers campaigning against the sackings have taken up the bosses' complaint against imports. But reduced markets, sharper competition, and pared-down profit margins on sizeable investments are the basic problems. Imports are a significant element only against the background of that world situation in the tyre industry. The problem is not East European tyre manufacture, but the crazy logic of capitalism, which says improved tyres should mean sackings for tyre industry workers.

A drive for import controls would not necessarily help British tyre workers even in the most short-term way. The *Financial Times* reports:

"The British problem pales into insignificance compared with that of the West German industry. It has lost more than 50% of the car tyre replacement market to importers, British companies among them". So if we want to have East German exports to Britain banned, do we also want British exports to West Germany banned? West German Dunlop/Pirelli workers are facing job cuts right now.

The tyre industry faces an international crisis, and it is an industry dominated by international firms like Dunlop/Pirelli, Michelin, Goodyear, and Firestone. International workers' unity is the way to fight back, not haggling about who can export where.

RHODRI EVANS

## CIVIL SERVANTS:

# LOCKOUT SPARKS AN EXPLOSION

**CIVIL SERVICE** workers throughout Scotland, and in many other parts of Britain, are coming out on unofficial strike on Wednesday 21st March, in protest against the threatened suspension of 40 workers at the Scottish Office in Edinburgh.

The 40 workers, members of the SCPS and CPSA, refused management instructions to cover [by manual work] teachers' superannuation affairs normally processed by computer operators who have been called out on strike in the SCPS/CPSA selective action on pay.

I'LL BE calling for an all-out strike wherever possible. The DHSS [Department of Health and Social Security] branches are ready to walk out again. It was spontaneous when they walked out on Friday [16th]. But the full-timers are trying to keep a close rein on the rank and file.

STEVE CARDOWINE  
Secretary, Scottish Office  
branch CPSA.

Nobody believes teachers' superannuation is an emergency service: obviously the Civil Service bosses had decided to pick a fight. Scottish Secretary Bruce Millan's minions even went so far as to smash open a personal cabinet of an SCPS member in order to get papers necessary for the scab operation.

Last Friday, 16th, the 40 were given until Wednesday 21st to start the strike-breaking... or else. They are standing firm.

On Friday afternoon, over 20,000 civil service workers walked out in Scotland, and hundreds more in England. The Falkirk DHSS office struck as soon as the news came through. The Under-Secretary in the Scottish Office had his phone cut off.

For Wednesday, the SCPS have called for lunch-time meetings and extended stoppages throughout Scotland. The London Broad Left unanimously passed a motion from a Workers' Action supporter calling for walk-outs, statistics bans, and a mass picket of Downing St. Strike action was also planned in Birmingham, Liverpool, and Manchester.

But CPSA headquarters have acted like chickens with their heads cut off. Full-time officials have been sent out to prevent any unofficial action going on longer than half a day. Their chief concern is to make sure the key Department of Health and Social Security and Department of Employment computer centres are not shut down.

The right-wing CPSA National Executive and the full-time officials are deeply worried that this deliberate forced showdown could undermine their careful control of the selective strike action.

The workers in the front line of the pay action must not be left isolated. Escalating action must force the withdrawal of the suspensions, and then go on to win our wage demands.

STEPHEN CORBISHLEY

THE Scottish Office have made a big mistake with the suspensions. Folk in the union weren't very interested have come right out against them.

They should be escalating the action week by week. For a start they should get Customs and Excise out all over Scotland, not just in Coatbridge. The government wants to get the NUPE dispute settled, and then they can use it to get us back to work on 9% and phasing.

Callaghan is playing it cool, giving the impression he's not worried. But he must be. Millan has made a fool of himself over the suspensions.

TWO PICKETS at the Broomhouse computer centre.

THE VERY fact that the Scottish Office had the gall to force people to strike-break put people's backs up from the first, and we've had lots of support. They'll probably try to delay the official letter [of suspension] to take the charge out of the explosion. But we'll cut it short by asking them if we've been suspended as soon as we get into work [on the 21st] — and it's too late for them to stop the action, it's snow-balled all over Britain now.

[The management are trying to set up a special office, manned by scab volunteers, to cover the strikers' work]. The thing we're most annoyed about is the scabs who are setting up this office. They'll be picketed when they try.

ONE OF THE 40 WORKERS FACING SUSPENSION.

# WORKERS' ACTION

## DENNING'S THREAT TO STRIKERS

LAST WEEK the Court of Appeal gave permission for a group of Haringey (North London) parents to go ahead and sue Haringey's Labour Council over its decision to close the borough's schools during the caretakers' strike.

The Appeal Court judges refused — by a two-to-one majority — to overturn a previous High Court ruling against the parents and declare there and then that the council had acted unlawfully. They said the matter should go to a full trial.

But Lord Denning's minority remarks — given much more prominence in the press than the majority judgement — branded the council as acting 'unlawfully' and in an 'actionable conspiracy' with the caretakers' union. In effect, Denning,

with the help of the press, was declaring the council guilty before trial.

As Jeremy Corbyn, secretary of Haringey Council's Labour Group, told *Workers' Action*, "the statement from Lord Denning represents a thinly veiled threat to Labour councils and public sector unions. The Labour Government should ensure public sector unions and Labour councils are protected from this threat."

If the final verdict goes against the council then any Labour council will be legally bound to organise strike-breaking in public service strikes, or risk being prosecuted or sued for heavy damages.

The Government is no doubt hoping the affair blows over, or that the legal proceedings drag on long enough for them to be out of

the way. Education Minister Shirley Williams made a statement that she thought the council was acting within the law. She had to say that, or face pressure to get a court injunction against the council, thus getting the Government into deep trouble.

In Haringey, a meeting of the Support Committee for the low-pay strikers has come up with plans for fighting the right-wing offensive. A letter is being drafted by the local NUPE Education branch for the local press, and another letter will go out to all public sector unions in Haringey, alerting them to the implications of the case.

United trade union action will be the only answer if the courts decide that strike-breaking is the law of the land.

MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN

## YS: democracy and redbaiting don't mix

THE NEWLY launched Campaign for YS Democracy [CYSD] is beginning to get wide support in the Labour Party Young Socialists. But it seems that some *Tribune* supporters in the Clause 4 faction see it not as a campaign for democracy, but as an opportunity to witch-hunt the present LPYS majority, the *Militant* faction.

At the recent Scottish Region LPYS conference, Clause 4 supporters from Hillhead YS backed the CYSD. But, contradicting the CYSD's call for full rights for all socialist tendencies, including *Militant*, Hillhead YS called for the exclusion of *Militant* from the Labour Party... because, in Hillhead YS's view, *Militant* are 'Leninists'.

At the Scottish Labour Party conference in Perth, Hillhead CLP followed up with a motion calling for an 'independent inquiry' into the LPYS. (It wasn't clear whether they meant an inquiry by some eminent Lord So-and-so, or a Transport House investigation). The Regional Executive got the motion remitted, pointing out that if inquiries were started into *Militant* then *Tribune* might be next, and that an 'independent' inquiry was not something in the traditions of the labour movement. But at *Tribune*'s conference fringe meeting, an Exec. member expressed smug satisfaction that *Militant* supporters had been kept away from the conference microphone.

Indeed, the regional conference was every bit as bad as LPYS conferences, if not worse. There were the same long summing-up speeches from the platform, the same system of recommendations on voting. Only here *Tribune* and Clause 4 held the reins, not *Militant*.

Hillhead YS is not affiliated to the CYSD and certainly does not express CYSD policy. *Workers' Action* strongly dissociate ourselves from their manoeuvres. Our fight is not to exclude any socialist tendency, but to win the conditions for free and democratic debate in the labour movement.

GORDON BREWER

# Scottish teachers start pay fight

ON THURSDAY 22nd, Scottish schools will be closed by a one-day strike by the EIS, the major Scottish teachers' union. The strike follows the EIS Executive's rejection of an 8% pay offer on Monday 19th.

Despite the apparently hard attitude of the EIS Executive, militants in the union are already preparing for a fight against a sell-out. Apart from an overall figure

of 42% — calculated to restore teachers to their position of four years ago — the leaders have given no details of the claim to the membership.

News that the National Union of Teachers' 36% claim in England works out at 43% for top head teachers and 26% for bottom-scale teachers leaves the EIS rank and file exactly what the Scottish leadership are

about.

And while the details of the claim were still limited to an even more hazy "40 to 45%", the EIS Executive put a motion to meetings in every school calling for support for the Executive in any action they saw fit to pursue the claim. It looked like a mandate for action — but it could also be a mandate for the Executive to foist a sell-out on us.

The Scottish Rank and File teachers' group are calling for an across-the-board rise of £20 a week.

This demand has already won the support of the Edinburgh local association of the EIS. It provoked the enactment of a wee tragi-comedy by a supporter of the executive who opposed the £20 claim as "absurdly high" — around 35%. Perhaps that's an indication of how seriously the Executive regard their 40%-plus claim, 'phased over a period of time'.

Meanwhile the management side has stated they will not meet the teachers' negotiators until April 2nd, one day after a settlement is due.

EIS and the other teachers unions are promising further action. It is up to militants to ensure that the campaign does not end in a 9% or 10% settlement, with empty promises of more jam tomorrow as the excuse for a sell-out.

CALLUM McCRAE

## Steel: Bilston must spark a fightback

AFTER A JOINT BSC/union meeting in London on Friday it was announced that the BSC plant at Bilston would definitely close in April 1980 with a loss of 1900 jobs.

It was also announced that over the next 18 months, 1700 jobs were to go at BSC's giant Scunthorpe plant. Only a rolling mill employing 400 women will remain at Bilston, and at Scunthorpe the three blast furnaces and some other units will close.

Bilston union representatives have called for national strike action but ISTC union leader Bill Sirs has so far ignored this plea. On top of all this came the news on Saturday that the private steel firm Hadfields (Sheffield) is closing down its

forging section and transferring part of it to Johnsons, and Firth Brown. This will result in between 750-1000 jobs lost. While in France steel workers who face the same devastating redundancies have taken to the streets, in Britain the response is nil. The responsibility for this must rest squarely on the shoulders of the scab Sirs, who has not lifted a finger to fight any redundancies. Prospects look very bleak indeed but the Bilston issue could possibly spark off a fightback.

The ruling class, however, are not blind. They fully realise the potentially explosive situation they are creating. As the editorial of the *Sheffield Morning*

Telegraph commented on Saturday 17th

"The old hens of world steel are coming home to roost. If anyone ever wonders why frustrated steel men are tossing petrol bombs in Loraine, they need look no further... but let us not look upon a non returnable bottle half a gallon of petrol and a piece of rag as the only answer..."

A national strike must be organised, and if Sirs will not do it then the rank and file must. Sirs and his miserable bunch of lackeys must be removed. Action committees must be organised in all plants. Let us get off our knees! Steelworkers arise!

JOHN CUNNINGHAM

# workers' ACTION

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SEND TO WA, Box 1960, 182 Upper St, London N1.

## EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word, £5 per column inch — payment in advance. Send copy to Events, Box 1960, Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

Friday 23 March. 'End Racist Attacks in East London'.

Hackney and Tower Hamlets Defence Committee public meeting. 7.30pm, Montefiore Centre, Hanbury St, off Brick Lane.

Friday 30 March. Workers' Action forum: 'The Revolutionary Left and the Labour Party'. Guest speaker: Keith Veness, Islington North Labour Party; also John O'Mahony, Workers' Action EB. 8pm, Hemingford Arms, Hemingford Rd, London N1.

Saturday 31 March. Committee against Repression in Iran conference. 11am at University College, Gower St, London

WC1. Credentials for labour movement delegates and observers from CARI, Box 4, Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1.

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