

Socialist Organiser

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All out Feb

11

WHAT is an "honourable settlement"? After all this time, it is the winning of the demands we came out on strike for last March. And we should not return to work without all the men being reinstated, without break in

By Stan Crawford
(Bevercotes NUM, Notts)

their service. Arthur Scargill has said that there won't be a sell-out. Mick McGahey has said the same. They've led magnificently so far, so don't think there's reason to doubt what they're saying now.

The strike is still solid, although of course there has been fraying at the edges. We'll still end up with a majority out on strike.

We can still win by getting more support, some form of second front — by other workers going out on strike for their own grievances, but linking the action to the fact that the miners are still on strike.

February 11 has got to be worked for — hard. A lot of people will put money into buckets, but what we need is physical support. We need to get round to trade unionists everywhere. We can get them out.

Then we need to find ways to give the best public demonstration of support. One idea is to have a rally at the beginning — all rank and file speakers, from different workplaces on strike. Then go to the nearest power station to picket.

The Notts scabs are still very much an issue. Expulsion is still on the cards. They have still got to be expelled because, on December 20, the Notts Area decided to delete Rule 30 and therefore refused to abide by the national rules. Whether we are still on strike or back at work it will make no difference — because the Notts Area is trying to break away.

Don't let Thatcher grind us down

STAND FIRM!

A striking miner's reply to Reg Moss, the Kiveton Park miner who broke the strike and gave his story to the Daily Express.

THE miners' strike is in its 11th month.

Eleven months of great hardship for striking miners and their families. Eleven months during which striking miners have stood up to everything Thatcher and MacGregor have thrown at us. Eleven months of police violence, press lies organised scab-herding.

Eleven months during which the striking miners and their families have shown what they are made of and refused to let the Tories and their imported pit butcher MacGregor ride rough shod over us.

It's been a hard fight and it is harder now than ever. But the only alternative is surrender so we were right to fight and right to continue to fight.

I believe, Reg, that striking miners and our families have a right to be proud of what we have done over the eleven long and bitter months we have been fighting for our jobs, for our children and for our communities.

That fight is not over yet. We are still fighting to win. But you have changed sides.

This letter would not have been necessary if you had just deserted the strike, for whatever reason, but you have used a newspaper, whose vitriolic attacks on the striking miners and the working class movement is well known.

When I first read this article I wondered if you had realised the consequences. Did you think of your colleagues on strike? Did you think of your friends in

By Albert Bowns Branch delegate Kiveton Park NUM

London, especially in Stepney and Tower Hamlets? Friends who fed you and sheltered you on your four visits there.

I find it hard to believe that you didn't realise how it would hurt all these people.

Community

The article implies that you went on strike just for your union. I thought that you went on strike, as we all did, for your job, your pit and your community.

It is possible that this is what you also really believe but the Express puts its own distorted opinions first

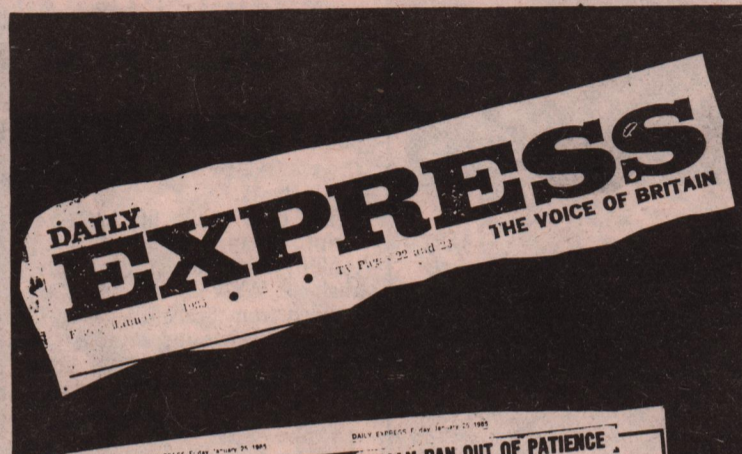
I find it incredible that you should choose to air your views on this turn-around of principles in a Tory government mouthpiece. You are not ignorant of the support given by the Express to the Tory government and MacGregor's plan to decimate the coal industry.

The article itself, and the context in which it is written,

is probably not the way in which you wanted your opinions put across. Even now, you might be saying that it is not what you really wanted to say.

Unfortunately, that is the price you pay for thinking that the national press and the Express in particular, will give a former union supporter an unbiased review.

The leading headline in the article justifies me in my opinion that you apparently don't know what you've been



'I went to jail for Scargill, but now enough is enough'

Swallowing his pride and dodging the pickets, Reg Moss slips back to the pit



Putting family first: Reg Moss with wife Gail, Andrew, Nicole, Carolis.

Report: JENNY REES Pictures: DAVID PARRY

on strike for in the first place. "I went to jail for Scargill but enough is enough". Having been arrested with you on the three occasions you speak about, and having spent two weeks in Lincoln Prison with you, and having been to London on fund-raising missions, speaking to various support groups with you, I have lost count of the number of times I have heard you state that our fight is for pits and communities and jobs.

If you did believe this at the time, although this article implies otherwise, then that is the reason you went to jail, not for Scargill!

Political strike

You say, "enough is enough" — but you went to jail for Scargill!

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LPYS meet

By Jane Ashworth

IN January and February the Labour Party Young Socialists Regional Conferences take place. So far, Yorkshire, the East Midlands and Southern Region have met.

While it was very much business as usual, with Militant dominant, Class Fighter showed once again that we are the focus of Left Opposition and can force Militant to change the policies of the LPYS.

In Yorkshire, Pete Crawshaw from Scarborough YS argued that the LPYS must do more than just say it is in favour of equality for lesbians and gay men. He said that we should be supporting Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners and that the YS should campaign for lesbian and gay liberation.

After seven years of campaigning our position was finally passed. It will be interesting to see if the same motion is passed at annual conference.

Class Fighter and Socialist Organiser supporter Mark Osborn was re-elected to the Yorkshire YS Regional Committee.

In the East Midlands the delegates from Broxtowe YS argued that the miners' strike has shown that the police are not neutral — but work in the interests of the government and the ruling class. Militant supporters said it was true but we should still demand that the police join a union and the TUC!

While the Regional Conferences continue, Class Fighter's preparations for national conference are well underway. We have brilliant accommodation booked at £12 a head and transport arranged from London

and the North West. If you want to stay with Class Fighter and have a political weekend working with us, then write to us at 214 Sickert court, London N1 2SY. The conference is in Blackpool from April 5-8.

TRUE AND RIGHT

When Scargill said the pits would close,
He said it true and right.
That's when true men like my dad and friends
Stood up to win this fight.

MacGregor came and said that all Scargill told was lies.
But all MacGregor ever does is
Listen to Maggie's cries.

The working miners of today
Don't seem to understand
That they mustn't what so ever
Join Maggie's merry band.

So strikers where ever you are
Stay out till victory day.
And to you MacGregor and Maggie
You've got a lot of debts to pay.

Jacqueline Cooper (15)

Two books on the NUM

Blind to rank and file

John Douglas reviews
'Scargill and the Miners'
by Michael Crick and
'The Politics of the
Yorkshire Miners' by
Andrew Taylor

'Scargill and the Miners' is a bit of a yarn with just enough of a plot to stop it becoming a yawn. Crick works for IIN/Channel 4, and it shows.

The book reads like a tele-script. Facts are quoted like confetti but there isn't much analysis. What little there is, is derived from Scargill — interviews, speeches and writings — and from academic books like *The Politics of the Yorkshire Miners* by Andrew Taylor which read like a Ph D thesis.

Taylor made a detailed analysis culled from the official records of the Yorkshire NUM and Crick follows him closely, reproducing even some of Taylor's own words.

Although it starts with the Labour government of 1945, neither Taylor nor Crick analyses the famous Grime-thorpe strike of 1940. It was then that the flying picket was first used.

They don't tell us about the strikes of 1955 and the early '60s either. Perhaps they were deemed to be not political?

A more important limitation in Taylor's book is his failure to analyse the Barnsley Miners' Forum or what Crick calls the Yorkshire Left. Indeed he only mentions it once.

Forum

Centring on Arthur Scargill's role in the Barnsley Miners' Forum, Crick's exposure journalism does in a sensational way what Andrew Taylor failed to do in recording this important aspect of recent working class history.

Crick deals with the role of Scargill in the manner of a drama-documentary. For example:

"Inside the hall, the miners of Woolley Colliery were gathering for their monthly meeting... Outside an eighteen year old apprentice was arguing with the men on the door who seemed determined not to let him in. At last that night, the young man gave up arguing and went home in anger, determined he would get his way — eventually".

The above was gleaned by Crick from an interview in *New Left Review* given by Arthur Scargill in 1975. Crick dramatises it to give his yarn a plot.

Taylor gives a similar example of the machinations of the right wing in Yorkshire. An Area Compensation Agent had to face an inquiry because he attended a Daily Worker sponsored conference — so it is understandable that the Left had to keep its head down.

But the Left in Yorkshire won the leadership at least ten years ago, and only now has "all been revealed" to Crick, by participants who range from the current Mayor of Barnsley to the Yorkshire Communist Party organiser of the '50s and '60s.

Crick makes the ritual comparison between AJ Cook and



Arthur Scargill

Arthur Scargill, but he does not refer to the Minority Movement of the '20s in which AJ Cook as general secretary of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain was involved.

The Minority Movement was a united front of Labour Lefts and the young Communist Party which had a revolutionary programme that included the nationalisation of the coal industry under workers' control.

Workers' control

Scargill is, as Crick notes, very hostile to the demand for workers' control, seeing it as a form of participation, akin to worker directors on the board of British Steel. The question of workers' control as an anti-capitalist demand is therefore not discussed.

In fact, the involvement of Trotskyists in the Yorkshire NUM and the NUM nationally is ignored by both books.

Crick does mention the efforts of one-time Socialist Organiser supporter and Dinnington miner John Cunningham, to raise within the NUM the fate of the Ukrainian miner Klebanov who attempted to set up an Independent Miners' Union in the Soviet Union. He shows that Scargill has been a bit ambiguous on

such questions.

Both books show too that the Yorkshire NUM under his leadership has a sterling record in supporting strikes (Grunwicks, British Steel and the Health Service) and single issue campaigns (CND, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy).

Yet even under Scargill's leadership pits closed in Yorkshire. Deals were made, of course — Selby is an example of that. But neither Crick nor Taylor consider the implications of the new technology. This question — dealt with consistently by *Socialist Organiser* — has been dropped during the strike and the most recent negotiations by Scargill. Therefore NUM militants should argue for an open, democratic Broad Left in the NUM, particularly in Yorks.

Crick concentrates on the undoubted qualities of leadership in Arthur Scargill but nowhere considers the qualities of the rank and file miners themselves, nor the women organising against pit closures. They are mentioned only in passing as a stage army, holding spears, while 'the King' plans his campaigns.

Crick thereby presents a typical capitalist view of trade

unions and their leaders. Both writers admit to the paradox of the Yorks NUM in the '50s and '60s — a militant rank and file and a right wing leadership — not all that unusual.

Then came the strikes of 1972 and 1974, but as Taylor notes, "On average, over the last ten years, 58% of recruits were new to the industry. This percentage is all the more important when we remember that in the last ten years the total workforce has fallen by 50,000 (18%)..."

They weren't expected to strike, especially after three ballots in which they voted against action over wages.

Failing

But the rank and file rallied to defend their union and the NCB were building up towards a major attack on the NUM, a fact the two authors are unable to appreciate.

Here is the basic failing of both these books.

However, as part of the fight against the Tories, make sure your library orders copies of them — though the Taylor book alone might put a penny on the rates...

Psst. Anyone want to buy a secondhand book?

Socialist Organiser

ISLINGTON Socialist Organiser seller Nik Barstow has sent in a total of £12 for paper sales this week — that's 48 copies of no. 213 sold at 25p each, or in fact a greater number since some were sold at 10p.

Money for extra sales is also beginning to come in from a wider range of other local groups. The Wallasey group has topped their paper order from 60 to 90, and Glasgow's order has also gone up, to 200.

A positive, outgoing attitude to selling the paper — rather than diffidently clutching a bundle and waiting for readers to demand a copy — makes a big difference.

Editorial

Back the miners



Gear up for the 11th

THE media has been so busy publishing obituaries on the miners' strike over the last few days that it has ignored — as always — what rank and file miners are saying and thinking about the situation. The erosion of the strike has generated a fierce determination to carry on in the remaining hard-core. Whatever the Coal Board's doctored figures, over 60% of miners are still out. The strike is very much alive. One might say, after Mark Twain, that reports of its death have been much exaggerated.

Heroes

Thatcher herself has explained the reasons for this most clearly. On TV Eye last Thursday night she spoke as an unashamed militant for her class. Her heroes were the scabs. Her goal, which she thought she saw within her grasp, to break the NUM and its leadership. The 'most uneconomic' 12% of pits had to close. She didn't disagree that the prospect was for the closure of the Kent coalfield and most of the South Wales, Durham and Scottish coalfields. There was to be "no fudging" on this.

MacGregor rounded out the picture at the weekend. The 620 strikers so far sacked by the NCB would be reinstated "over my dead body" he informed leading scabs.

Whatever the tactical differences within the NCB and the government, "Naturally the Prime Minister and the Chairman of the Board have won out" (John Lloyd, Financial Times). But their common objective remains the same

Pressure

But despite the government's and the NCB's air of impregnable confidence, the pressure is by no means one way. The government is faced with the prospects of substantial power cuts. The gigantic cost of the dispute continues to grow. Their economic strategy is being disrupted. There is always the danger of a second front being opened up by other workers in alliance with the miners. The government wants the strike to end as soon as possible.

On Friday night (25th) the latest pay round for 900,000 council manual workers broke down and industrial action was threatened. At the beginning of March, wide-scale industrial action is threatened over the government's rate-capping attack on local government and local council jobs.

Can win

The miners can still win, if the pressure on the government can be stepped up. In this critical situation, there must be an emergency mobilisation of all militants and socialists to rally to the NUM, and to throw all our energies into shifting the balance in the strike's favour.



Kent miners join lobby of the TUC demanding action, January 23. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni, IFL.

The February 11 'day of action', supported by the Yorks and Humberside and South East Regional TUCs, could be a turning point provided that widescale industrial action takes place. It will give a major boost to those who have fought so hard for the last 11 months. It will be a shot across the bows to the NCB and government. It will provide a much needed platform and confidence boost for extended industrial action.

The South East Regional TUC has responded much

more positively than its Yorks and Humberside counterpart. Although they originally called the action, they have criminally done next to nothing to prepare for it.

The key

In London, on the other hand, commitments to take action have begun to come in. But in both cases the key is militants and socialists using the official call and campaigning on a rank and file level for action.

Such action, of course,

would be immeasurably strengthened if the NUM itself was to back up the call and urge industrial action.

In the next 12 days we must:

Target

*Target key factories and workplaces that are not yet committed to action. Plan an immediate campaign with striking miners and women's support groups to get such a commitment.

*Where action is agreed, use this information and

workers from the workplace to approach other factories and workplaces. Organise pickets of power stations on the 11th. Organise pickets of workplaces where there is a possibility of action and make sure you involve NUM members and other strikers.

*Organise emergency local shop stewards' conferences, to agree the call for industrial action on the 11th, and plan their own campaign to deliver it.

*Labour Parties, working

with local trade union organisations and miners' support groups, should put themselves on a war-footing. Immediately organise a campaign leading up to the 11th.

*Use mobilisation for the Mineworkers' Defence Committee Solidarity Conference on February 9 to also get commitments for action on the 11th. Support the wider calls at the conference for organising for general strike action. Support the campaign for a recall TUC conference.

TUC shuns Notts breakaway

By John Bloxam

LAST week striking Notts miners distributed thousands of copies of the national NUM leaflet entitled 'No Return to Spencerism; Stay with the NUM' to rank and file scabs at pit gates throughout the county.

"Stand with your union. The NUM is and will remain the negotiating body for mineworkers employed in the British coal industry. Neither the NUM, the TUC nor the Labour Party will recognise any breakaway organisation in Nottinghamshire. Act now to protect the unity of British miners, forged and tested over the past 40 years. Act now to stop the Coal Board and government from smashing us with their pit closure programmes

and then privatising what's left afterwards. Act now to stop this new Spencerism from dividing us. Act now to protect your union."

Last Wednesday's TUC General Council meeting confirmed that it would not recognise a breakaway miners' union. Last week, too, the divisions amongst the scabs were publicly aired when local newspapers carried advertisements from the 'Working Miners' Campaign to Stay in the National Union of Mineworkers'.

The expulsion of the Notts

Area has been frozen by the new round of negotiations. The Special Delegate Conference has been postponed. However the national leadership have dropped proposals to reorganise the NEC so that it more accurately reflects the number of members in each of the coalfields. This was in an attempt to stop South Derbyshire and Leicestershire joining the scab breakaway in Notts.

Lynk

However, Lynk and the other scab organisers show every sign of intending to continue their breakaway. On Saturday in the Times, David Hart, one of the organisers of the 'working miners commit-

tees' and personal adviser to both Thatcher and MacGregor, spelt out their manifesto in an article entitled 'Nothing short of victory'.

"The schism in the union will not be repaired by delaying the delegate conference called to rubber-stamp the decision to expel Nottingham, nor by negotiation to settle the strike. The split is geographically wide... Whatever happens to the strike, the NUM will continue to break up.

"... (the working miners) want to destroy Scargill. Their dream is to so organise themselves and other areas that the breakaway union will eventually

reunite, embracing the entire NUM membership."

On Monday, the Financial Times carried a report that 'working miners' were putting pressure on the NCB to string the negotiations out, so they could more numbers on their side.

It is certain Thatcher and MacGregor will do everything they can to deepen and perpetuate the divisions in the NUM. When the Special Delegate Conference is reconvened the only proper course of action will remain the expulsion recommendation from the NEC. The labour movement must deal a decisive blow to the scab leaders and to their scab company union.

Back the miners



Call for Scots action on Feb 11

3,500 marched through Glasgow city centre last Friday (January 25) in support of the miners. The miners' contingent on the demonstration was as big as, if not bigger than, on previous such demonstrations.

Apart from the NUM banners, there were only 33 trade union/shop stewards committee banners on the march, plus three Labour Party banners. And there was often only a token contingent behind the banners.

This reflected the half-hearted and chaotic manner in which the Scottish TUC had organised the march: late notice, no posters, changing the starting-time for the march, and a low level of publicity in general.

Although a Mineworkers' Defence Committee leaflet distributed on the march — condemning the talks between

the STUC and Secretary of State George Younger being held that day, and calling for the STUC to call a 24-hour general strike on February 11 along with Yorkshire and South East Region TUCs — was generally well received, the speakers at the closing rally were not given a rough ride.

At the rally Mick McGahey said: "Don't mention the word 'sell-out' to me, the word is alien to my vocabulary," adding with great polemical gusto, "Stand firm, heads high. Shoulders back — go on to a principled solution to this problem".

McGahey's speech was well-received, despite the fact that the NUM Scottish Executive has consistently refused to call for mass picketing, solidarity strike action, or even pickets of miners' trials.

The first million?

by Carla Jamison

OVER the last 11 months we've raised about £22,600 for striking Notts miners. A further £12,000 has been raised in Basingstoke by the campaign working for Welsh miners' families. Not bad for a Tory town.

Fundraising is important but we take the view that just as vital is mobilising people around the issues of the miners' strike.

The support group produces a regular bulletin which goes out to trade union branches; to those who pay the Labour Party levy for the miners and for general distribution on our street collections.

We argue for people to join the picket at Didcot and build for major events.

For the day of action on February 11 we will be leafleting factories and depots to come out on that day and join a local rally and from there to picket Didcot.

A worthwhile investment?

THE total cost of the miners strike to British capitalism has now risen to £5.2 billion — £100 for every woman, man and child in the country, or enough money to build over 200 new district hospitals.

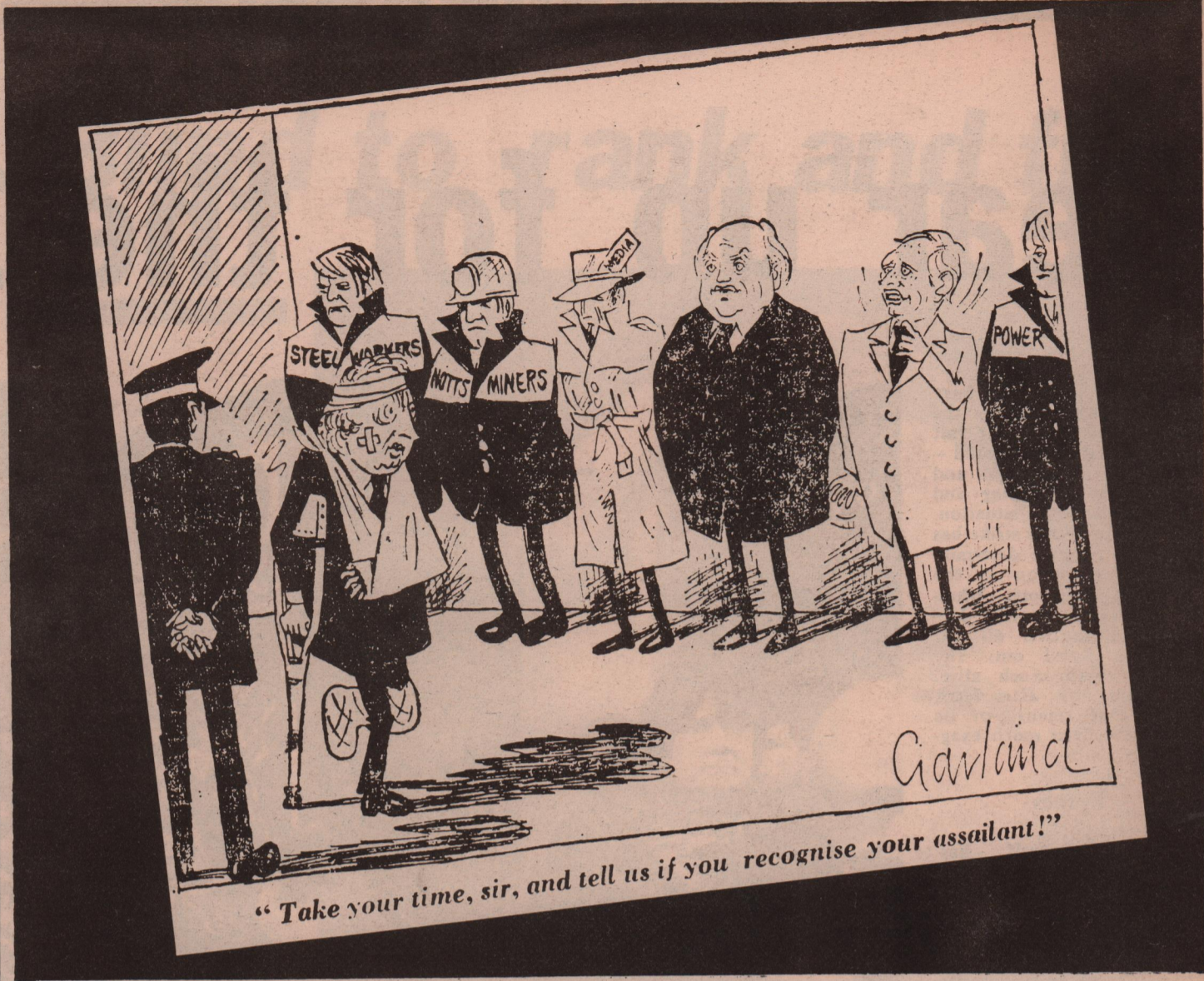
"A worthwhile investment," say the Tories. But there's nothing "worthwhile" about it for the working class which produced the wealth they are wasting.

And the Tories are beginning to feel international pressure. The miners' strike has thrown the balance of payments into deficit, and forced the government to raise interest rates to previously unheard-of levels.

South London

SOUTHWARK activities on the February 11 SERTUC Day of Action in support of the miners. 5.45 a.m. Coach to Tilbury Power Station, from TUSU, 42 Braganza St., SE17. 7.30 - 10.00 a.m. Mass demonstration and picket of Price Waterhouse, London Bridge St., London SE1. 11 a.m. Coach to Tilbury Power Station. From London Bridge

Station, SE1. 8 - 10.00 am and 12 - 2 pm. Women's demonstration and picket of DHSS Headquarters, Elephant and Castle, SE1. Creche all day from 5.45 am. For leaflets or further information contact Southwark Trade Union Support Unit, 42 Braganza Street, London SE17 3RJ or phone 582 0987.



This Sunday Telegraph cartoon gloats (prematurely!) over the damage inflicted on the miners — represented by the figure of Arthur Scargill — during the coal strike. In the figure of the half-crippled 'Scargill' they exaggerate the damage. But they get one thing exactly right — the line-up of those who have made it possible for the Tories to strike hefty blows at the miners. This is the rogue's gallery of the labour movement!

Breaking the silence on February 11

THE story is that something called the Yorkshire and Humberside Regional TUC has called for a day of action on February 11 in support of the miners.

The problem is that it is very difficult to find very much evidence of this, though there are those who insist it is true.

I have been able to acquire, after much pleading, six copies of a leaflet which does claim to speak on behalf of this shadowy organisation — the Yorkshire and Humberside Regional TUC.

This leaflet does indeed mention February 11 and calls it a day of solidarity with striking miners and their families. To show your support it asks for a day's pay.

Or half a day's pay. If you can afford it.

If not that, it then suggests you stop work for a day. Or half a day. Or just an hour if you think it's best.

It also asks that you spend an hour or so on a miners' picket line. Show your solidarity in a positive way, it says.

But more. The Sheffield Trades Council — home of many a worn-out Stalinist hack — claim in a letter to all delegates that: "The Regional TUC has made a clear call for a 'week of solidarity' with the miners, 11-15 February.

"This is to include a 'special day of action' —

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

Monday February 11.

"The call is to 'lift' the level of support for that week.

The action should include "industrial action" where achievable."

The letter then goes on to suggest meetings with NUM speakers, taking time off on the day and fund-raising

socials.

So clearly something is going on.

At the moment, an awful lot of trade unionists have not even heard of this and therefore are unable to begin organising for it.

The call is unclear and not being loudly put, — despite the best efforts of a few individuals.

The Yorkshire NUM asked for this day to be set in the first place. In the time that is left, it would be better if they

were to nail their banners more clearly to the mast and ask for 24-hour strike action. That would give the activists a far better lever to make the day a reality than the fudged, half-hearted call we have at present.

The danger is otherwise that the day could pass with little action taking place, which the right wing would then use to argue that there is no support and that the NUM might as well call it a day.

Power pickets planned in Staffs

THE last meeting of the North Staffs Miners Support Committee decided to organise regular mass pickets of Meaford power station. There is a regular token picket at the power station 24 hours a day, but in the last few weeks there have been three mass pickets.

300 pickets from Bold colliery in Lancs came to two of these and about 60 miners and supporters turned up to the last one organised by North Staffs NUM.

We are asking all trade unionists and Labour Party members to take part in regular mass

pickets.

We are also organising support for action on February 11. Joe Wills, District President of the NUM, reported that a motion will be put to the union's area council, calling for a campaign to reinstate strikers sacked during the dispute.

If the NUM area council gives the go-ahead for the reinstatement campaign, we will then approach the Regional TUC to organise for February 11, too. According to Joe Wills there is a possibility of winning support from some of the scab miners on



the issue of reinstatement because of the obvious double standards of the NCB over the way they have sacked people. Everything possible now must be done to build the maximum support for a show of solidarity on February 11.

Whetton's diary

It's not lost!

THE media are saying that the strike is lost but that's just media talk. There is no way that the strike is lost. 75% of our members are still out on strike and the strike goes on.

It's another attempt to intimidate anyone who might be wavering into going back.

As I understand it, the only decision taken by the union executive is to go in without preconditions. There is no way the NEC would dare to back down on the question of pit closures. That's what we've been out on strike for.

I can't see them backing down one inch on that.

We've made it clear from the start that the idea of pit closures on economic grounds cannot be entertained. The strike is about pit closures and nothing else.

The strike may be fraying around the edges, but the vast majority are still out on strike and are backing the strike to the hilt.

As for MacGregor saying that the sacked strikers will only be reinstated over his dead body, I hope he has a nice funeral.

500 blokes

There is absolutely no way that we can return to work and leave those 500 blokes behind.

In Bevercotes, the first two men going down the pit lane after the strike is settled will be the two striking miners sacked from our pit. And if they are not allowed back on, then nobody will go back.

I personally question the claim that there is a significant return to work. I am completely unconvinced that



the figures given out by the Coal Board last Friday are anywhere near accurate. Nobody starts back to work on a Friday, with talks in the air. If anybody was wavering, they'd say, well I'll give it another week or so and see if an honourable settlement is reached.

I think the figures are pure Coal Board manipulation. It may well be that groups have asked to return to work and been told no, not unless you come in on a Friday. That's the only way they could get those figures.

But of course the solid areas are going to be affected as well. Even the solid areas have got their scabs.

The media have been saying all through the strike that the pressure is on Scargill, the union is in a mess and all that. Thatcher has got to do is sit back and wait for the strike to collapse.

But people have to remember that Thatcher and her cabinet are under strain themselves. They can't just sit back. They've got the falling pound, there is an oil price war, businesses are going bust all over the place. I think there is a lot of pressure within the Conservative Parliamentary Party and in the

cabinet and from the CBI and so on as they realise that while it may have sounded very nice when the government said we'll beat the miners and pay any price to do it, but now they must be wondering if this price is really worth it.

It may well be that the government have to take a step back before economic ruin brings them crashing down.

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

Fear and hatred in New York

ON DECEMBER 22 Bernhard Goetz gunned down four black youths in the New York underground.

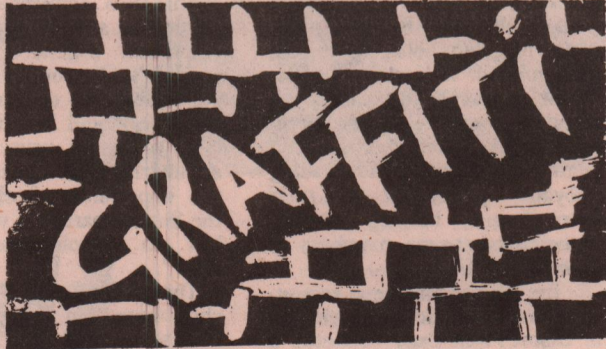
Since then he has become a sort of folk hero. He will appear in court, but the charges against him have been reduced from attempted murder to illegal possession of a firearm.

The New York underground is notorious for crime and violence — many people are too scared ever to use it — and the four youths had demanded money from Goetz. Goetz, it seems, is a fanatical racist and law-and-order man. He kept on shooting until his gun was empty, and one of the youths will be paralysed for life.

Racists

Racists, of course, have applauded Goetz. By all accounts so have many New York blacks. The 'Guardian Angels', a right-wing vigilante group which patrols the underground and which has applauded Goetz, has recruited many blacks and Puerto Ricans.

US blacks do not have to look very far back into history to have horrific memories of the time when people like Goetz ruled in the Southern States,



and black people supposed to have committed crimes would be lynched by racist mobs. Yet revulsion and fear at the state of US city streets is more powerful than such memories.

In Detroit more people die violently in a single year than have been killed in the whole 15 years of simmering war in Northern Ireland. New York is little better. The police, more interested in guarding the property of the rich few than the lives of the poor many, give no protection. Especially not to working class people, and most especially not to working class blacks.

So when Goetz fired his gun, many black and working class people in New York applauded the act of self-defence — even if

it was done by a racist. Britain's cities are not quite at the same stage of decay yet. But you can see it coming.

Police forces are a modern invention — only about 150 years old in Britain. Instrument of class rule though they are, in one way they were a progressive development — replacing naked violence and personal power by more-or-less impersonal, objective rules and mechanisms for social regulation.

What happens when the decay of capitalism corrupts those mechanisms? We can argue for reforms in police methods, accountability and so on, but isn't that erecting walls of paper against chaos? What else? More police powers? Vigilante law?

In France the issue has been taken up by a right-wing group called 'Legitimate Defence' — and shootings of North African youths are becoming more and more frequent. In Brazil it is an everyday event for petty thieves to be beaten to death in the streets.

Self-defence

The answer is in a new society based on solidarity and cooperation rather than the rat-race and the rip-off. Labour movement/community patrols — organised forces, but based among the local people rather than standing above them like the capitalist police — would ensure 'law and order' in such a society, and can be developed in particular areas even now.

Right now, everyone should be taught to defend themselves — and to defend themselves where possible without killing or maiming.

People need defence — against petty criminals, against trigger-happy Goetzes, and often (as mining communities have found out during 1984) against the police too.

And no-one is going to provide defence for working-class communities except themselves.

Death of a hero

Back the miners



Reg Moss developed links with the labour movement in East London when he went there with other miners to drum up support for the strike. Though never a committed political activist, he was accepted there for his trade union militancy. Councillor Susan Carlyle sent him this letter when she read last Friday's Daily Express.

Reg,

I never thought I would have to write such a letter to someone like yourself who appeared so proud of fighting for the miners' cause and was willing to defy Tory laws and go to jail rather than bow your knee to MacGregor and Thatcher.

I am not on strike. But like many thousands of labour movement activists, I've done everything I could over the last eleven months to help those on strike and their families — though, of course, it wasn't nearly enough. Nevertheless I hope the strikers of Kiveton Park and their families will excuse me for speaking my mind.

The shock of finding out that you are scabbing on your work mates has been hard enough for us in East London to swallow. We knew you as a fighter and a militant. But we cannot forgive your running to the Daily Express to sell your story.

The Daily Express is one of the worst Tory-owned scab-supporting newspapers in the land and you know that, Reg.

Handsomely

No doubt they paid you handsomely for your story, while Kiveton Park miners and their families continue to fight on against Thatcher and MacGregor.

You are quoted by the Daily Express as "putting your family first" before "the union".

You say you are going back with your "head down", and so you should, Reg.

How cheaply you sold your soul to reap a few bob for a mortgage that was delayed anyway, and to keep a car on the road that you haven't been forced to sell as others have had to sell theirs.

Many long-term unemployed now permanently claiming social security have less bare essentials, have experienced homelessness and hardship for years, with no family support — you met these people when you came to London.

You talked to black people suffering constant abuse and danger from racist attacks and racist police. You identified the miners' treatment at the hands of the police with all trade unionists and black people. You even said at the time "how difficult it was to take money from such people who were obviously so much more oppressed, poor and with less hope for the future than yourself."

What have you done for them, Reg? Kicked them in the teeth!

What is worse is that in going to the Daily Express you have added further propaganda for the bosses' side.

Next year you'll be going for a deputy's job, perhaps a job in management? Scabs like you can go far. They're like gold dust for controlling and persuading other men and demoralising trade union organisation.

You used to talk about the heroism of the Polish workers in *solidarnosc*, especially the Polish miners. Three years ago in Poland the Solidarity miners in Katowice were shot down when they occupied their pit in the struggle for a free democratic trade union. So much for

your hardship, Reg, and you know Poland from your family. Was it as bad as that?

I'm told you packed your work clothes ready to go back before Christmas.

Did your family starve and have no shoes, or did the union you now publicly attack work its utmost to provide food parcels, clothing, Christmas presents and parties, while all the time you contemplated going back to work?

Did we in London put our weight behind you because we were just sympathetic social workers or something? No way! We respected the miners' demands, your picket lines as fellow trade unionists; we saw the magnificent challenge to the vicious Tory government that the miners were making and knew you had to be supported physically — with money and goods, but more importantly with solidarity strike action, workplace organisation.

In all these activities you willingly participated and you came to our workplaces, our school staff rooms, and school student meetings. For many people in the East End, their first impression of the trade union movement was through you and Albert and Ernie: most of the kids in particular would be disillusioned by your action now. They thought you were a hero. And the sad part of it, Reg, is that you were a hero, as all those on strike are.



Susan Carlyle

Back in June, when thousands marched for the miners you were amazed by the support — especially from white-collar workers. You were part of building that solidarity.

But don't worry. One scab running to a newspaper won't destroy the support there is in London for the miners. The entire labour movement and the whole working class owes the miners a debt we can never repay.

But no-one round here who used to know you and respected you as a militant and fighter will want to know you now — Reg Moss, a scab, a defeated man who pulls tricks with national newspapers. Your integrity and reputation as a union activist is shattered.

Individuals come and go in the struggle, but the fight goes on, because working people have no alternative — the working class which has little to lose, but a world to gain. We are sorry, Reg, that you are no longer fighting alongside us, that you have crept off, leaving the striking miners of Kiveton Park in the lurch.

We in East London will continue to do our best not to leave the striking miners in the lurch.

Fake leftism

SINCE 1980 there has been a far-reaching organisational and political realignment of fascist movements in this country.

In 1979 the main forces in British fascist politics were the British Movement (BM) and the National Front (NF). The BM effectively collapsed in September 1983. The NF performed disastrously in the general election of 1979 and then split four ways.

Two of the products of that split, the British Democratic Party and the NF Constitutional Movement, have long ceased to carry any weight on the far right. The main forces in British fascism today are the two other NF splinters: the British National Party, and the organisation which still carries the name NF.

On the whole, the NF remains the stronger of the two, though the numbers it can muster for demonstrations fall far short of its heyday. But politically it has changed.

The currently dominant politics in the NF are an amalgam of "Strasserism" and the terrorist "Third Position" of Italian fascism.

Strasserism (taking its name from the Strasser brothers, who were members of Hitler's Nazi Party) shared the nationalism, racism and anti-semitism of "mainstream" Nazism, but differed from it on economic questions.

Gregor Strasser, murdered on Hitler's orders in 1934, referred, for example, to the "deplorable legacy of the capitalist economic system". He took 'National Socialism' seriously. The Nazis, he said, should take from the Right "nationalism which has so disastrously allied itself with capitalism". From the Left they should take "socialism which has made such an unhappy union with internationalism".

A Strasserite leadership took over in the NF from Martin Webster at the close of 1983. The NF magazine "Nationalism Today" has numbered the Strassers amongst "the people who laid the foundations of Nationalist ideology" and argued that their "radical nationalist views live on, and are as relevant today as they were in the 1930s".

The influence of the "Third Position" has found its way into the NF as a result of close work between members of the NF's new leadership and the Italian terrorists (former members of NAR — Armed Revolutionary Nuclei) currently resident in London after British courts

Ten years ago the National Front was a powerful and growing fascist party, the biggest seen in Britain since the 1930s. Then it split and shattered: and parts of it began to change. Today the remnant of the NF combines the vilest racism and chauvinism with fake-left appeals to workers. Their street violence is also on the rise. Paul Amik reports.

rejected a request for their extradition back to Italy.

The main mouthpiece for the "Third Position" in this country is the magazine "Rising-Booklet for a Political Soldier", edited under a pseudonym by leading NF member Derek Holland. Other leading NF members known to be in close co-operation with Italian terrorists include Joe Pearce, Nick Griffin and Ian Anderson.



An internal NF document, jointly written by Pearce and Griffin argued that "we would do well to heed their (i.e. NAR's) warnings and learn from their experiences." And Webster pointed out that, "on their own admission, Mr Anderson and Joe Pearce regularly meet Fiore and the other Italians".

Even before the putsch which ousted Webster as NF leader, "Rising" had been sold semi-clandestinely in the NF, and NF members had participated in ideological training courses run by the NAR fugitives. Since the putsch, "Rising" has been openly on sale and further ideological seminars with the Italian terrorists have been organised by the new NF leadership.

In short, the NF old guard, like Webster, is being ditched by a new generation of fascists. As the anti-fascist magazine "Searchlight" puts it: "Contentious of old-fashioned nazism and out-dated tactics, these new militants aim to

revive the fascist scene with a mixture of 'radicalism' and terrorist tactics."

The NF's new-found 'radicalism' is apparent on a number of levels. As a "solution" to the current economic crisis, for example, NF News has called for: "Ban foreign imports. Smash the Stock Exchange. Nationalise the banks. Fight for real jobs and wages. No Tory slave labour. Fight capitalism and communism. Fight for white workers' power."

Similarly, an issue of the NF's Nationalism Today, used the POEU anti-privatisation slogan "Public Service — Not Private Profit!" as a headline, whilst an issue of the NF's youth paper Bulldog, has used the TUC slogan "Give us a Future" as a front-page headline.

The turn to Strasserism has been accompanied by a renewed attempt to build a base for the NF in the unions. Nationalism Today has stressed the need for the NF to "build an industrial base, via the trade unions, or risk being politically and strategically outmanoeuvred by our political enemies. We have to demonstrate to British workers that British nationalism and not Marxism, is the real radical alternative to the present decaying, corrupt liberal capitalist system".

The most up-to-date list available of NF members working politically in their unions is contained in Searchlight no. 108, June 1984.

The NF has now also come out in opposition to Cruise missiles and US military bases in this country, claiming that "American troops get first choice when it comes to housing and other vital services" and attacking the Tories for reducing Britain to a "helpless American puppet".

As always, this verbal opposition to capitalism goes together with practical hostility to the "CND Reds", the "squalid peace camps at places like Greenham Common", and the "lunatic policies" of the "dirty feminist hags" whose camps are "a danger to public health".

Not even the monarchy is safe from the NF's turn to "popul-



ist" fascism. To quote Nationalism Today, "It seems that far from being a unifying symbol of the White Race, the Monarchy has degenerated into another factor in the forces opposing our National Freedom and separate racial existence...In view of the friendship of the Prince of Wales with Armand Hammer, the Jewish capitalist, pro-Soviet millionaire, perhaps the time has come for Nationalists to reassess their attitude to the Monarchy".

The NF's adoption of "Third Position" fascism has found expression in paramilitary training for NF members in guerrilla warfare, including exercises in laying ambushes and night ambushes.

The first group of the NF membership to receive this training is the "Colour Party", the flag-bearers at NF demonstrations, intended to be an elite squad of 100 members selected by the individual NF branches. The "Colour Party", in turn, is to run training camps for ordinary members.

An "Instant Response Unit" has also been set up by the NF in the East End of London, for the purpose of disrupting "opposition" events, especially those connected with Ireland. The IRG is run by Ian Stewart, lead singer with the "Screwdriver" band, whose records are recommended entertainment for NF members.

And the NF has recently been making renewed efforts to build links with Loyalist paramilitaries in Ireland: staging demonstrations in Belfast and Coleraine, trying to impress Loyalists by breaking up pro-withdrawal events in this country, carrying interviews with leading Loyalist politicians in their press, and holding regular meetings between members of the NF and UDA.

The NF has also been recruiting in the Six Counties with an "Ulster Front Page" bulletin, a taste of which can be gained from the following quote: "NF supporters in Carryduff have successfully stopped an invasion of the town by nigger students. The gang of coons and the white slag who dated them apparently thought the 'Royal Ascot' pub was safe but the local youths soon let them know that Carryduff was white...These youths have also clashed with a gang of Republicans who started to sllobber along the village's main street, but the Loyalists kicked their bollocks in before they could say much".

But some things never change in the NF. One is anti-semitism, still a constant theme in NF literature, though sometimes dressed up as "anti-Zionism" and support for the Palestinians' struggle, with NF members even going so far as to attend a

demonstration in London called by PLO supporters in commemoration of the Beirut massacres.

What is new about the NF's more recent anti-semitism is its successful efforts to get anti-semitic literature financed by Arab governments. According to Searchlight, for example, the Libyan government funded an anti-semitic supplement in Nationalism Today, headlined "Victory to the Palestinians".

Clearly Col. Gaddafi's generosity extends beyond organisations nominally on the Left.

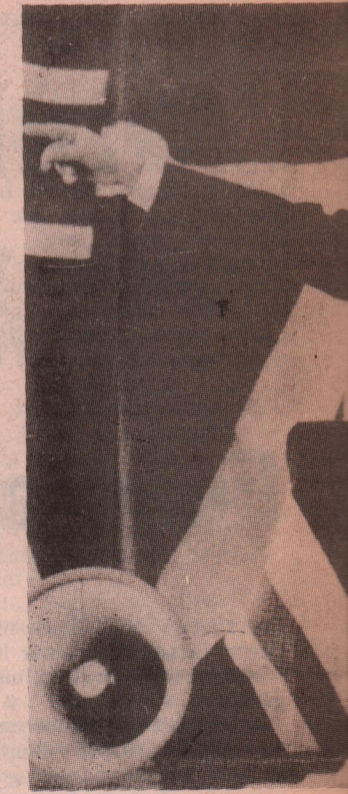
With the closure of the Libyan People's Bureau, the NF began to look for financial backing for the Iranian regime to help produce further anti-semitic literature. The NF is already distributing through its ranks a variety of English-language Iranian anti-semitic literature.

This also explains the NF's supportive attitude towards the Khomeini regime. The NF praises it for outlawing "the subversive sect of Iranian freemasonry" and for "the abolition by law of usury and the expulsion of all Zionist-Jews... the importance of eliminating the finance parasites will not be lost on Revolutionary Parasites".

Though the new NF leadership, based on the politics of Strasserism and the Third Position, has been in power for a year now, its position is far from secure. It has committed major blunders, for example letting the entire NF membership list fall into the hands of Searchlight. Its demonstrations and counter-demonstrations have flopped. Ousted ex-leader Martin Webster is still fighting to regain control and enjoys support from a substantial section of the NF membership which is horrified by the new leadership's policies.

Webster has already been to court over his dismissal as Activities Organiser and further court actions are pending.

For the time being, though, the NF, under its youthful leadership of Pearce, Griffin and Anderson, remains wedded to a Strasserite-Third Position form of fascism.



Lead

WHEREAS the National Front has undergone a change of leadership and adopted a new strategy for building a fascist organisation in recent years, the British National Party (BNP), the only other fascist organisation of a size remotely comparable to that of the NF, has continued to stagnate around the unlikely cult-figure of its leader John Tyndall.

The BNP has remained loyal to a more "traditional" fascism, plugging the themes of the need for a "strong leader" and "racial purity", often presented in the form of pseudo-philosophical ruminations by Tyndall in the pages of British National-



The National Front, Lewisham 1978

NF
STONE
WHITE



CISTS



der cult

ist and in Spearhead.

For Tyndall and the BNP as a whole, "for purely genetic reasons, it is necessary that we allow to operate those natural, social and economic dynamics that enable the best to rise to the top and to attain the means to procreate their own kind to the greatest possible degree; conversely, it is necessary that we apply the severest limits on the means for the procreation of the least fit amongst us: the idle, the anti-social, the criminal and the congenitally stupid." (Tyndall is definitely not a man of few words).

Stripped of its pseudo-Darwinian philosophical packaging, Tyndall's statement is an

endorsement of racism and elitism in both political parties and society as a whole. On occasion, Tyndall has managed to express these traditional fascist policies slightly more coherently and concisely.

Racism is explicit in the pages of Spearhead: "If we look at the backward races on this planet, we could find no better example than the Negroid race...This is naturally the behaviour pattern of animals, or extremely rudimentary primates, which cannot possibly be equated with 'homo sapiens'."

The Nazis' racist politics which culminated in mass murder in the concentration camps are modestly glossed over, if

not endorsed, by the BNP: "This policy adopted by the Germans was no more or less inhumane or evil than the American policy of placing all its citizens of Japanese birth into its own concentration camps, and the British policy of doing likewise with Germans and Italians".

In the eyes of the BNP the need for elitism and social division in society is beyond question: "The need for the institution of aristocracy — as indeed for the existence of a class structure which at all levels recognises the distinctions in genetic quality and natural inherited ability — is so axiomatic as to be beyond serious question".

The same principle of division and the elite is applied within the BNP itself. A fascist organisation can be built only if it is prepared to "concentrate powers in a strong leader" (by which Tyndall means himself), in the same way that society as a whole must be governed by a strong leader: "The natural struggle of the species...must at a certain

point be tempered and contained so as to give that nation the unity and internal harmony necessary to survive at the higher level of the struggle for world power".

True, the BNP did pick up only 0.6% of the vote in the 1983 General Election. But that does not prevent the self-appointed messiah Tyndall mapping out the route to world power.

And Tyndall openly espouses the need for violence to seize power: "...if Mr Jordan is saying that Nationalists should be prepared to consider some resort to force and illegality if necessitated by the requirements of national and racial survival, no-one could dispute that he is right."

Abuse

Tyndall's attitude towards the different factions in the National Front is one of unrestrained hostility. Deposed leader Webster is subject to a constant stream of abuse from Tyndall for being gay, as are other members of the National Front. The pages of the BNP's publications are now full of references to homosexuality, paedophilia and anal intercourse, meant as overt or covert attacks on the Webster faction.

As for the National Front's new Strasserite leadership, they are "a bunch of juvenile Nationalist Bolsheviks". Tyndall describes their politics as "crypto-Marxist claptrap parading as Nationalism".

Tyndall is unsure "whether the Strassers were well-intentioned, though confused, idealists or Jewish agents who had infiltrated the Nazi Party to swing it in a communist direction."

Street fights have taken place between BNP and NF papersellers in the East End of London.

The NF remains larger than the BNP, and the gap is likely to increase as the BNP's paper

increasingly becomes a mouthpiece for Tyndall's vanity, philosophical ruminations and obsession with the sex lives of members of the NF.

Outside of the NF and the BNP there exist a number of smaller fascist splinter groups, none of which have any prospect of growth, and some of which are more concerned with "physical force" politics than with party-building in any case.

The League of St. George, originally set up by disillusioned supporters of Oswald Mosley maintains its exclusive existence — as each issue of its magazine points out, "membership of the League of St. George is by invitation only" — and has sided with Tyndall in the NF-BNP feuding. In terms of size or activity, though, it is not comparable to either the NF or the BNP.

An equally marginal, though more active, organisation is the National Socialist Action Party (NSAP) headed by Tony Malski. Malski regards himself as the commander-in-chief of a nazi, paramilitary army, yet to be created. He has encouraged NSAP members to join the Territorial Army, to get military training, and has also had close links with the now banned French nazi group, FANE.

Apart from production of a semi-literate magazine called The European, the most visible aspect of the NSAP's activities has been exercising members of the paramilitary army of the future in the Burghley Road children's playground in Tufnall Park in London.

A close relation of the NSAP is Eddie Morrison's National Action Party (NAP), now some 150 strong and mostly concentrated to the south of London. The NAP has been claiming to have picked up recruits from the demise of the British Movement in 1983.

There is a strong possibility of some kind of link-up between the NAP and the National

Front: the NAP shares the new NF leadership's admiration for the politics of the Italian "Third Position", and NAP Youth Action leader Adrian Wiltshire has a long record of co-operation with members of the new NF leadership.

Gothic Ripples

A number of leading fascists of the seventies have now effectively disappeared from the political scene. Colin Jordan, founder of the British Movement in 1968, continues with the occasional production of the quaintly titled magazine, Gothic Ripples, but no longer has any organisation behind himself.

And Jordan's successor as leader of the British Movement, Michael McLaughlin, has also withdrawn from the organisation on the grounds that its members were incapable of achieving "the standards of uncompromising sacrifice that was so much admired in those who in the first place rebelled against Communist/capitalist plutocracy." He now runs a mail order firm for militaristic paraphernalia, including a considerable amount of Nazi origin.

But behind all these changes, there is a basic continuity in fascist tradition and practices: racism, street attacks on blacks and Asians, hostility to gays, ultra-reactionary attitudes to women, support for the Loyalist paramilitaries and British Army in Ireland, and hostility to the entire organisation of the labour movement in this country.

After the partial collapse of the fascist movement in 1979 and subsequent decline, the level of fascist activity, particularly attacks on blacks and Asians, has again escalated. The Left needs to take on that challenge, both politically and physically, drawing on the positive aspects of the anti-racist and anti-fascist work undertaken in the seventies.

Photos clockwise from top left: Patrick Harrington, North London Poly student in uniform on NF demo. (Photo: Andrew Wiard). NF march in Maidstone last year (Photo: Andrew Wiard); Anti-racism and fascism march in Brick Lane 1978 (Photo: Andrew Wiard); Martin Webster, former leader of NF (Photo: John Harris) and John Tyndall, an unlikely cult figure.



Science

Dealing with pests

By Les Hearn

CHEMICAL pesticides, originally seen as a cure-all, are now seen to create their own problems. This has led in the West to some halting attempts to develop "integrated" natural and artificial methods of pest control. The bureaucracies of the East have tended to follow Western methods but in China, at least, there seems to be some growing awareness of the need for integrated pest control.

The best examples of this are described in an article by Joy Larkcom in "The Garden" (magazine of the Royal Horticultural Society!). While undoubtedly a rosy view, it is worth passing on.

The first step was to develop knowledge of the migration patterns of pests such as locusts and army-worm moths. This has led to the establishment of a network of forecasting stations supplied with information from thousands of "spotters" in the agricultural communes. Insects or disease spores are collected and examined to monitor their spread. Warnings can then be issued to vulnerable areas.

Secondly, there are measures of prevention. Agricultural practices such as regular crop rotation, with periodic flooding to grow a water vegetable (such as rice or water chestnut) will keep pests down. Careful weeding and removal of crop wastes after harvest also help. Resistant varieties of crop are also identified locally and used.

Thirdly, direct methods of control are used. Chemicals are still very widely used and no doubt have been limited more by cost than by concern for the environment. But at least in some areas they are being used in a more intelligent way. Traps are an important control in China. The simplest are yellow plastic sheets coated with grease. This colour is very attractive to insects. More sophisticated are ultra-violet light traps. Insects are attracted and then fall into a tank of water to be poisoned, drowned beneath a film of paraffin or even electrocuted on a wire grid! A thrifty touch is to feed the tiny corpses to fish or pigs, or use them as fertiliser.

Traps baited with sugar, wine, or just willow twigs attract other insects. Pesticides added to these makes a more sensible way of killing insects than mass-spraying of food crops.

Fourthly, natural enemies of pests can be used. These range

from predators such as lacewings, ladybirds, spiders and ducks, via parasites of pests, like a tiny wasp that lays its eggs inside caterpillars, to bacterial and viral diseases of pests. In one experiment, peasants brought diseased caterpillars to a research station. These caterpillars were ground up and sprayed over others to infect them with the same virus.

Ladybirds may be collected and released in fields of crops, while spiders may be encouraged to live in straw bundles beside rice paddies, there to eat rice leaf hoppers.

Ants

One method using carnivorous ants dates back some 1500 years. Farmers would place a nest of ants in a tree in a citrus orchard and then make bamboo bridges between the trees. The ants would spread to all the trees, finishing off most citrus pests. This method died out with the introduction of DDT but is starting to make a comeback as resistance to DDT grows.

Flocks of ducks are also herded through rice paddies to keep down insects.

Ideally, all these methods would be combined and a programme for integrated pest control in Guangdong province suggests the following:

First, level and flood the paddy fields to control the larvae of the stem borer.

When the rice plants are some 20 cm high, flood again to force the insects to the tips of the plants and then herd ducks through the paddies to eat the pests.

Later release bacteria and parasites to attack the pests.

As a last resort, use chemicals. To put this account into perspective, it should be remembered that Chinese agriculture has also been seriously damaged by ill thought out campaigns against supposedly pestilential birds and snakes. The result of these was an increase in insect and rodent pests, previously kept in check by birds and snakes.

In any case, even if the trend now is towards integrated pest control, who knows what effect the closure of communes and the encouragement of capitalism in the countryside will have?

The choice between chemical or labour-intensive pest control will be made in future on grounds of profit alone.

Ethiopia

Slaughter and starvation

By Les Glasgow

WHILE millions still starve in Ethiopia, the country's military rulers, the Dergue, continue to wage all-out war against the peoples of Eritrea and Tigre, fighting for national independence and a more democratic society.

In doing so, the Dergue is backed by a spectrum of support in the British labour movement, stretching from fairly obscure Stalinist sects to members of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

The Dergue came to power in September, 1974, when the autocratic regime of Haile Selassie collapsed after months of popular unrest. Faced with an escalating level of struggle in Eritrea in the north and Ogaden in the south (where the Somalia-backed Western Somalis Liberation Front was active) it appealed for aid to America, but without success.

The new regime turned to the Soviet Union, seeking from it the support it needed to beat down the opposition and stabilise its rule. Given Ethiopia's strategically important position, the Soviet Union readily responded. By the close of 1974 the Dergue professed to be "socialist" and issued policy guidelines of "Ethiopian socialism".

'Socialism'

But the Dergue's "socialism" is very much akin to that of its backers in the Kremlin: an expansion of 'welfare state' services coupled with a complete denial of democratic rights throughout the country — "socialism from above", imposed by a military regime.

In the last decade, according to the regime, illiteracy has been cut from 95% to 37%; the number of secondary school students has trebled; the number of teachers has more than doubled; the number of health workers has nearly trebled; and 45% of the population now receives a health care unknown under the rule of Haile Selassie. Even allowing for propagandistic exaggeration, substantial progress has been made in such spheres.

But the flip side of the Dergue's "big brother" regime is its ruthless repression of opposition and its control over all forms of social activity.

In the months following the military's seizure of power, left-wing opposition groups were quickly crushed while differences within the ranks of the military have been settled by summary executions (1974 and 1977, the latter round of executions seeing the installation of the present ruler, Mengistu Haile-Mariam, as head of government).

And, as in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Afghanistan, etc., the various "mass movements" and "labour organisations" which have been established are merely undemocratic and bureaucratically controlled transmission belts for the Dergue's policies: the All-Ethiopian Trade Union (set up in 1977), the Revolutionary Ethiopian Youth Association (1980) and the Revolutionary Ethiopian Women's Association (1980).

In 1980 the regime also set up the Commission to organise the



The face of famine

Party of the Working People of Ethiopia, entrusted with the task of establishing — from above — "a working class party, based on the principles of Marxism and Leninism".

But the aspect of the regime's repression which has gained most publicity in the media recently has been its denial of self-determination to Eritrea, which the Dergue regards as merely an administrative region devoid of any right to secession.

Eritrea was colonised by the Italians at the close of the nineteenth century, remained an Italian colony until occupied by

the British in 1941, and was incorporated into Ethiopia in 1950 as the result of a United Nations General Assembly resolution prompted by American strategic interests in the Red Sea and Horn of Africa.

The autonomous status accorded to Eritrea within Ethiopia by the UN resolution was overturned by Haile Selassie in 1962, and it was reduced to a province of Ethiopia. By that time armed opposition, led by the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) against Ethiopian repression was already underway.

Eight years later the ELF

split, leading to the establishment of the more left-wing populist Eritrean People's Liberation Forces (which became the Eritrean People's Liberation Front in 1975).

It describes its goal as to "fulfil the historical tasks of the national democratic revolution... fighting to unite the workers, peasants and other democratic and patriotic forces in a single front to achieve independence and freedom, peace and justice, prosperity and progress for the Eritrean people."

Ironically, it regards the Soviet Union — which arms the Dergue regime to fight the EPLF — as socialist. The Soviet Union's policies in the Horn of Africa are merely a "mistake".

The Dergue has launched repeated major offensives to crush the EPLF, the last one being the "Red Star" offensive of 1982.

In conjunction with the military repression, the Dergue has carried out a series of "peace initiatives", largely designed for external consumption and to try to divide the Eritrean opposition.

Large parts of EPLF-run areas of Eritrea are affected by the current famine. Given that these areas are inaccessible to the Dergue (and given the high degree of corruption in the Dergue, even where famine relief is concerned), the EPLF has appealed for famine relief to those regions to be channelled through the Eritrean Relief Association (ERA) just as the Tigre Liberation Front is appealing for relief for the liberated areas of Tigre to be channelled through the Relief Society of Tigre (RST).

Whilst relief agencies, such as War on Want, are prepared to go along with such proposals, the Dergue regime, cynically subordinating the need to prevent mass starvation to its own political goals, has rejected them.

The stand to be taken by socialists should be clear-cut: support for the struggle to liberate Eritrea and Tigre from Ethiopian rule, famine relief to be channelled through ERA and RST, and support for the overthrow of the Dergue regime and its replacement by a genuinely socialist one.

Operation Moses

The exodus that went wrong

ABOUT 2,000 Falashas — the Ethiopian black Jews — are stranded in Sudan. The ending of 'Operation Moses' has left these people as yet another group of victims of the Ethiopian tragedy.

Many Falashas — not, according to some reports, those worst hit by the drought — were encouraged to leave their lands and travel to Sudan, where they hoped to join the airlift to Israel.

Their hopes have been tragically dashed, with lethal conse-

quences. The Sunday Times (January 20) quotes a member of the Save the Children Fund: "They were unprepared for the terrible heat of the Sudanese desert. They did not understand elementary hygiene and did not take precautions against disease. They died at the rate of 15 a day".

Seven thousand Falashas have been taken to Israel (see SO 211). Complaints from both Sudan and Ethiopia once 'Operation Moses' became publicly

known led to the airlift being called off. Now Egypt has added its voice to the clamour, complaining that 'Operation Moses' involved the illegal use of Egyptian airspace in Sinai.

Israel's intentions were undoubtedly less than disinterested. But the outcry against the airlift is sick.

Two thousand or so people who could have been saved are now abandoned in the Sudanese desert without hope, as a result of the whole dirty business.

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Percy Bysshe Shelley

'Rise like lions'

"Rise like lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number —
Shake your chains to earth
like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on
you —
Ye are many — they are few."

Shelley is ours! Casting away the 'official' and harmless Shelley we are given at school ("The feeble fop on that marble slab") Foot resurrects the "restless agitator, who spent his short life challenging every received opinion and every arbitrary authority", the author of "poems which have inspired generations of workers to political action."

In his own time Shelley was *detested* by the rich and privileged. He was expelled from Oxford University after six months for atheism. He survived two assassination attempts by enraged patriots. Anyone who published Shelley's poetry ran the risk of persecution and jail.

Yet he was read and cherished by generations of radicals and revolutionaries. Marx, Engels, the Suffragettes and the Chartists especially took him to their hearts.

Shelley's poetry was produced in the cauldron of the early 19th century. It was a world of imprisonment without trial, of floggings and press gangs; of poverty wages and high unemployment, and of Castlereagh's torture and murder in Ireland. The trade union laws we face today first crawled out from behind the frightened cloaks of the rich then — the Combination Acts — to break the growing trade union organisation in the factories and mines. While it was commonplace for the rich to spend thousands of pounds on opulent banquets,

Alan Johnson reviews 'Red Shelley' by Paul Foot, just published in paperback.

two women were hanged in Manchester in 1819, after food riots, for stealing two potatoes from a cart.

Shelley tried, in his poetry, to condemn but also to explain this combination of poverty and privilege. He crushed every false and lying justification offered by the powerful.

Was it all down to 'human nature' as the priests chorused?

"Nature rejects the monarch,
not the man
The subject, not the citizen:
for Kings
And subjects, mutal foes,
forever play
A losing game into each
other's hands
Whose stakes are vice and
misery.

Nature! — no!
Kings, priests and statesmen
blast the human flower."

Human society said Shelley, could promote co-operation and equality. The obstacles weren't god given, they were human beings themselves, 'Kings, Priests and Statesmen' for a start.

So wars were not the result of a greedy violent human nature either. In words that echo down to the Falklands War, Shelley wrote.

"War is the statesmen's game,
the priests' delight,
The lawyers' jest, the hired
assassin's trade.
And, to those royal murderers,
whose mean thrones
Are bought by crimes of
treachery and gore,

The bread they eat, the staff
on which they lean."

To advocates of the subordination of women, Shelley asked the question "Can man be free if woman be a slave?" The oppression of women appears as a poison in Shelley's poems, which corrodes all human relations.

"Women as the bond slave
dwells
Of man, a slave: and life is
poisoned in its wells."

Furthermore it allows a man to overcome the worst excesses of the tyranny of exploitation by bullying those 'beneath' him, especially his wife. Shelley created the character of Rosalind who relates the experience of a battered wife.

"He was a coward to the
strong.
He was a tyrant to the weak,
On whom his vengeance he
would wreak.
For scorn, whose arrows
search the heart
From many a stranger's eyes
would dart,
And on his memory cling,
and follow
His soul to its home so cold
and hollow."

In knocking down the lies which bind the poor to poverty Shelley went on to agitate for their removal, sometimes physically as in his time in Ireland to propagate Home Rule but mainly through his poetry. Shortly after the Peterloo massacre of 1819, when the Cavalry killed 11 and wounded 400 at a

public meeting in Manchester Shelley wrote:

"The seed ye sow, another
reaps.
The wealth ye find another
keeps.
The robes ye weave, another
wears,
The arms ye forge, another
bears.

Sow seed — but let no tyrant
reap
Find wealth — let no imposter
heap
Weave robes — let not the idle
wear,
Forge arms — in your defence
to bear."

There is not space here to do justice to either Shelley or Foot, who brings Shelley's life and times to life without fawning over him. (He rightly condemns Shelley's treatment of his first wife Harriet, whom he left for Mary Shelley, as "insulting and offensive").

Foot himself possesses that scarcest of commodities on the Left today, an ability to write with a passion that can, in the words of a Shelley poem, instill in the reader "The spirit that lifts the slave before his lord". So let's leave the last word with him:

"If Shelley's great revolutionary poetry — all those glaciers and winds and volcanoes — can get to work on the imagination of the hundreds of thousands of people who have had enough of our rotten society and of the racialism and corruption off which it feeds, if that poetry can inspire them to write and talk with a new energy a new confidence and a new splendour, then there is no telling what will happen.
"Certainly the police will have to be sent for."

Review

Soaps and series

Frank Higgins looks at some of the current TV soap operas

THE squabble between the BBC and ITV over who should have the putting out of "Dallas" found me sympathising strongly with those who waxed patriotic and denounced American TV imports altogether.

The American "soaps" — of which I've sampled mercifully little — mostly just make me feel dirty, I'm afraid and it's not just prudery. (Sexy is the last thing Dynasty and Dalls etc are

Plastic people mostly looking like Cindy dolls or the puppets from Terrahawks. Flat, dull, dead-head dialogues about "Monopoly"-type powerplays. Scenes and dialogues depicting — no, showing off, boasting about, relishing and gloating over — various types of junk luxury consumption (including decaffeinated sex).

Pig and philosopher

It's all mildly obscene and embarrassing and in a strange way shame-inducing. It's like watching someone who isn't a there making a pig of himself, boasting indignantly of his opulence and swanking like mad while putting on the airs of a deep philosopher.

British soaps and series of course can be vile too. I haven't seen Dempsey and Makepiece but "The Professionals" is as nasty and synthetic as anything from America, contrived and put together with skillful cynicism and precise measurement of the market.

Coronation Street on the other hand may be a never new land, but it's got broad areas of contact with real life. The people aren't three dimensional, but they are not entirely flat plastic either.

The current British-made "Minder", "Lytton's Diary" "The Price" are staple good fare.

An excellent American series like Lou Grant (killed off because US advertisers objected to actor Edward Asner's public denunciation of US involvement in El Salvador) reassures us that American TV isn't entirely wasteland inhabited by plastic dolls, but it is very much an exception.

Or is it just that ITV and the BBC buy the worst junk available on the US market?

Gripping stuff

"The Price" is pretty gripping stuff. It is about the kidnapping in Ireland of the wife of a British millionaire and her daughter by an IRA group who ask a £3 million ransom. It seems to be loosely based on the Herrema case of ten years ago, when Eddie Gallagher and Rose Dugdale kidnapped a Dutch capitalist, only releasing him and surrendering to the police after a long siege. Like Gallagher, this IRA group are freelancing.

The working class Belfast background of the gang leader is contrasted with life in the "Millionaire's Belt" in Wicklow in the South East. The political background is a void, but he is relatively sympathetic.

Not so the Rose Dugdale figure, a rich-hating, dump school-teacher, an INLA-style left ideologue rather than a run of the mill Provo. Nery and dour, she tries to shoot an 11 year old boy who chances on their kidnap.

On one level anti-IRA — and anti-left-propaganda; on another a hybrid of the cops and robbers formula with a high-finance boardroom drama (threatened with take over how does the financially vulnerable millionaire raise the ransom without losing control of his company?).

The people and their relationships and the psychological and social setting are all plausible and convincingly three dimensional. Harriet Walter as the spoiled and wilful wife shimmers and glitters.

An Phoblacht says of The Price that it is full of "... hackneyed cliches of British racist attitudes to all things Irish". In fact it isn't, and it could hardly be with Radio Telefis Eireann involved in the production.

Dimensions away from the American soaps, at up to £50,000 an episode.



The control of the streets was also no longer the preserve of the police and other agents of bourgeois rule. Ever since the unemployment agitation of 1908, for example, meetings had been banned in George Square, the site of the municipal buildings where the red flag had been hoisted at the rally on the opening day of the strike.

But in spite of the official bans there were mass meetings in the square every Monday, Wednesday and Friday during the strike. Each area had its own local meeting place where the strikers and unemployed would assemble and then march en masse to the square and take possession of it. Confronted with thousands of marchers converging on the square from all over the city, the police were powerless to intervene. Whether or not rallies were held in George Square was decided by the strike movement, not the police.

Traffic control also came under the jurisdiction of the strike movement. For example, there was the issue of special permits to drivers conveying school-fuel referred to above. But the greatest challenge came in the attempts of the strikers to stop the trams from running.

On the Friday before the strike, the Joint committee, the leading body of the strike movement, had instructed the magistrates that the trams must be off the roads for the duration of the strike, but when the magistrates failed to comply, the strikers took the matter into their own hands: all over the city strikers cut the ropes connecting the trollies to the overhead lines, with the result that hundreds of trams blocked the routes and dislocated the whole tram service.

Police were physically driven off if they attempted to prevent the trams from being immobilised. McShane describes one incident in the Saltmarket when two constables tried to stop a tram from being immobilised: "The strikers pulled the clothes off the two men and they had to run for their lives naked".

The most serious incident came when police tried to prevent a tram from being disconnected during a meeting at George Square. A full-scale riot erupted, with running battles in the streets.

Such physical confrontations with the police were another aspect of the way in which the power of the strike movement challenged the power of bourgeois society. The "normal situation" under capitalism, in which a monopoly of force is exercised by defenders of the capitalist regime (police, army, etc.), had disappeared and the strike movement organised the basis of a workers' militia, as it had to in order to implement its decisions.

Law and Order

This was much more apparent in the Belfast strike than in Glasgow. A Belfast strike patrol, 2,000 strong and identified by white bands in their hats, was established to maintain law and order.

This was not the law and order of capitalism which protects private property from strikers and pickets. It was working class law and order, preventing attacks on strikers by police and scabs, and preventing "the hooligan element which seems to be helping the authorities to break the strike...from abusing the strike for disruptive forces".

In Glasgow there was nothing as well organised as this, although the activities of "the rowdy element who are hoping to break the strike by fomenting trouble" were sufficient for the Joint Committee to consider the organisation of a Belfast-type patrol for the maintenance of order, and to send out instructions to local committees to take the appropriate measures to maintain order in their areas.

In Glasgow it was, above all, the mass picket which challenged the state's monopoly of force. During a strike the workers would always go to the factory gates to get information, but this time, instead of dispersing to go home, they marched en masse to other factories in the area to bring them out.

The decision to hold mass pickets was taken at the initial mass meeting held in St Andrew's Hall. The Strike Bulletin describes how the mass pickets were used: "about 2,000 marched to Anniesland in an orderly procession. Arriving there, two cordons were drawn across the street to await the men coming out. On the assurance that they would hold a meeting after dinner, the picket allowed them to pass...The men held sectional meetings and decided to fall in line with



'Revolution'. the world in crisis, 1919

Revolt on the Clyde part 2

When workers ruled the streets

In 1919 Europe was engulfed in a huge wave of revolutions. Last week Stan Crooke began an account of the general strike in Glasgow that year. This week he continues the story.

the movement.

Similar events occurred throughout the rest of Glasgow the day after the mass picket at Barr and Strouds described in the Strike Bulletin, a mass picket of over 10,000 persuaded workers at the Singer's factory to come out, and a "mass formation" at Weir's in Cathcart, formed by strikers from Govan and Parkhead, brought the place to a standstill.

The same results were achieved again the next day by a mass picket of the motor works in Alexandria, and McShane describes how he only needed to mention the possibility of a mass picket at his workplace to get them all out.

Although the Strike Bulletin described the mass picket as an "effective offensive of a passive nature", it was in reality very far from passive. Thousands of workers marching through the streets, blockading the entrances to factories and ensuring support for the strike destroyed the authority which the police always attempt to exercise over strikers and pickets: for the duration of the strike the traditional "right" of the police to control picketing, and thereby make it ineffective, was effectively abolished by the use of the mass picket.

The bodies responsible for ensuring the implementation of the decisions of the Joint Committee were the district committees, consisting of ten members

each plus a delegate to the strike's central Information Bureau. Each district committee also had a local speakers' sub-committee of three members, an entertainments sub-committee of three, and a messengers' service of six.

The Strike Bulletin defined the functions of the district committees as: "To arrange meetings in local halls and obtain speakers for the same. To act as responsible persons for all local business and communication with headquarters...to send delegates to the Information Bureau every morning at 11 a.m. and report all progress...to hold mass meetings every day so as to furnish all strikers with particulars of the growth of the 40 hours movement".

These district committees held regular local meetings to discuss the strike, to build up support for it and to organise distribution and sale of the Strike Bulletin, which eventually achieved a circulation of 20,000 copies a day.

But the district committees also did much more. for the duration of the strike these committees were the source of power and authority in Glasgow. They decided on exemptions from the strike and special permits for transport, organised the marches, stopped the trams, etc. In essence they were soviets — the form of working class democracy which had overthrown and replaced bourgeois rule in Russia.

The general strike created a "dual power" situation in Glasgow. Dual power is when the labour movement

partially takes over the running of society but not to the extent of the total expropriation of the political, economic and military power of the bourgeoisie.

In Glasgow 1919 two power structures existed in parallel and in conflict with each other: the power of the working class, organised through the Joint Committee and the district committees, and the power of the ruling classes, which had been drastically weakened by the former but was still a very real force. The question was: who would be victorious by the end of the strike?

"Bloody Friday"

Unlike the strike leaders, the ruling classes realised the revolutionary nature of the general strike and used all the weapons at their disposal to restore capitalist "normality". They recognised that the various measures being implemented by the strike movement were an encroachment on their power which could end in the total overthrow of bourgeois rule.

The methods adopted by the ruling classes to defeat the strike demonstrate the impossibility of a peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism. The British ruling classes did not hesitate then (and they would not hesitate now) to resort to violence when they saw their power threatened.

At first the police were used to try to intimidate the strikers and drive them off the streets. On "Bloody Friday" (January 31) fighting broke out at a rally in George Square. What sparked off the fighting is unclear, although it is generally attributed to the police trying to stop a tram from being immobilised. In any case the police had orders to use their batons that day, and if the tramway incident had not provided an excuse for their attack, then another pretext would have been found.

Gallacher describes the attack: "Suddenly, without warning of any kind, a signal was given and the police made a savage and totally unexpected assault on the rear of the meeting, smashing right and left with their batons, utterly regardless of whom or what they hit...with brutal ferocity they made their onslaught on defenceless workers."

But the police got more than they bargained for. Pitched battles took place in the square and the surrounding streets. Charge after charge by the police was driven off under a hail of bricks and bottles, until the police were forced to retreat.

The government now sent in the army. Initially the government had hesitated to take this step because of fears about a possible mutiny by any troops used against the strikers. At a meeting of the war cabinet held on January 30, General Childs had pointed out that in the pre-war years "...we had a well-disciplined and ignorant army, whereas we now have an army educated and ill-disciplined."

But the defeat of the police put an end to the government's hesitation. Thousands of troops, fully equipped, poured into Glasgow late on the night of Bloody Friday and early Saturday morning. "Accompanied by heavy munitions wagons, the general appearance of long columns of khaki-clad men... suggests that at last the government is in earnest in the measures to crush the new revolutionary spirit," wrote the Glasgow Evening News.

Howitzers were positioned in the City Chambers, the cattle market was transformed into a tank depot, machine guns were posted on the top of hotels and, remembering Easter 1916, the main post office, and armed troops stood sentry outside power stations and patrolled the streets.

Violence

New regulations were also introduced by the government to legalise whatever violence the troops might need to use to break the strike. If the troops were used to suppress any fighting involving the strikers the Riot Act must first be read — but only "if circumstances permit". Similarly, the commanding officer had to consult with the magistrates before opening fire — but again only "if time permits".

Most revealing of all was regulation 965: "It is undesirable that firing should take place over the heads of rioters or that blank cartridges should be used." The readiness of the ruling class to have unarmed workers gunned down shows up the absurdity of the idea that some bold "Enabling Act" nationalising the top 200 monopolies would suffice to usher in the socialist society. A scrap of paper voted for by a few hundred MPs is no answer to the guns of the army.

Shipyard picket Feb. 4

A MASS picket will be held outside Cammell Laird gates on February 4 at 7 am as the fight to save jobs at Cammell Laird shipyard, Birkenhead, enters its eighth month.

Since June 27 we have been fighting against enforced redundancies and the closure of the yard in line with Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (Confed) national policy.

We occupied the two remaining vessels in the yard, a British Gas accommodation rig and a Navy frigate, to prevent them being removed during the summer which

By Lol Duffy

would have left the yard empty. For 14 weeks we occupied the vessels until we were imprisoned for contempt of a court order to leave the vessels.

We were sentenced to one month in Walton prison in disgusting conditions, locked up for 22 hours each day.

On release from Walton we went back to the picket line at Lairds to continue the fight. While we were in prison

the majority of workers still employed at Lairds decided to cross the official picket set up by the GMBATU.

The role of the Lairds workers on strike has been one of crawling to the Tories and direct collaboration with management and the Tory trade union association to break effective trade union organisation in the yard and see those on strike thrown on the dole.

Lairds management are now threatening to sack another 30 plus GMBATU members for striking in support of those already sacked.

If we are to win our fight to save Lairds we need your active support. If we lose this fight it will encourage more attacks on jobs and trade union organisation and also encourage scab organisations within every workplace.

Support our fight for jobs and to keep Lairds open for future generations. Send donations, messages of support and requests for speakers to: Cammell Laird Strike Committee, 3 St. James Court, Victoria Road, Wallasey, Merseyside, L45 9LD (phone 051-647 6122, 051-647 3640, 051-638-2310)

By John Riley

Mersey union fight rate-cap

ABOUT 500 shop stewards — mainly from NALGO, FBU, GMBATU and the TGWU (buses) — from the constituent unions of the Merseyside Joint Trade Union Committee attended an anti-rate-capping, anti-bus deregulation meeting at Liverpool's Philharmonia Hall on January 23.

Merseyside County Council's "standstill budget" of £242 million for 1985/6 is still £23 million more than the Tories' spending limits. Job losses must be on the agenda.

Pete Latchford, a representative from the Joint Transport Unit of Merseyside outlined to the rally the implications of Tory Minister Nicholas Ridley's plans for deregulating transport in the provinces. Deregulation, with its plans for privatising profitable bus routes and selling off the National Bus Company means destruction for all intents and purposes.

We face a future in which the bus system will be operated by cowboy bus firms only on profitable routes, at peak times and with little regard to safety or service. "Very few professional transport planners backed the Tory plans," he said.

The leader of the Merseyside County Council, Keva Coombes drew attention to the links

between rate-capping, transportation deregulation and abolition of the Metropolitan Council. Their idea is to destroy government centres of opposition to their policies. The proposals could only be political if they made no economic sense. Keva Coombes stated categorically that the Merseyside County Council, along with 18 other Labour controlled councils who have been marked for rate-capping, will not comply with the government's proposals nor would they authorise cuts in jobs services.

In the following question and answer period many stewards argued for the need to make this fight a belated second front with the miners and although Councillor Coombes promised to fight the Tories were welcome it was just as important to build the Joint Trade Union Committee's platform for strike opposition to rate-capping and deregulation.

Indeed, Neil Kinnock ordered the councils to remain "within the law" and Sheffield David Blunkett has spoken "not going over the bridge." Clearly the trade union side of this struggle should be built to cover for the contingency of Labour sell-out.

CPSA could open 2nd front

Steve Battlemuch reports on the prospects for a pay fight by civil service workers

THE decision of the CPSA Special Pay Conference to fight for all-out strike action in pursuit of a flat rate £15 per week pay rise and a £100 minimum wage is a significant step forward in the fight against low pay.

However despite the optimism and confidence of that conference and the willingness of other public sector unions to unite around common action, little has been done to carry out the promised campaign. The CPSA will obviously have to be the union that gives a lead. When and where will that lead be given?

The opportunities are there. Civil servants could and should open a vital "second front", joining forces with the miners to defeat the Tories' economic strategy. Yet the links have not been made. Nor, despite grandiose talk of an alliance of public sector workers, has any concrete advance been made towards building any genuine or effective fight against the Tories' cash limits.

February 11

Now is the time to begin, recognising that partial action may well be necessary to build for all-out action. The civil service unions should be calling for days of strike action to coincide with, for example, the February 11 day of action planned by Yorks and Humberside and the South East Region TUCs in support of the miners. This action should from the start be aimed at initiating all-out indefinite action in at least the CPSA from April 1 (the pay settlement date) if the government has not met our demands.

Within the civil service unions the local CoCSU committees should be starting to take over the campaign and organising the necessary rank and file links with the miners and also with NALGO and NUPE members in their struggles against pay restraint, rate-capping and job cuts.

The pay claim — despite shortcomings in not including claims for increased leave and a shorter working week — could unite the membership around a serious strategy for a pay campaign in 1985. But the leaders of the CPSA seem to regard the claim as an end in itself. We call on them to start the campaign now.



Demonstration in Cheltenham over GCHQ

Drivel from the platform

SATURDAY January 26 saw marches and rallies in Cheltenham and Edinburgh against the government ban on trade unions at GCHQ. Between two and three thousand marched in Cheltenham, a disappointingly low turn-out.

More disappointing still was the drivel from the platform speakers at the rally. Trade union leaders and MPs queued up to slam the government for... "suggesting that civil service trade unionists are disloyal or unpatriotic!"

The chair introduced the speaker from the Public Services International thus: "He may be from the PSI but don't worry, he's a good Britisher!"

The worst speech by far was from Norman Willis, general

By Steve Battlemuch

secretary of the TUC. The subject matter of his speech ranged from aeroplanes, to cornet lessons and braces, but politics was never mentioned.

The Tory MP for Cheltenham was unable to make the meeting but sent a message of support. But we had to suffer Liberal MP David Penhaligon in person and then listen to Neil Kinnock wind-bagging.

Heckling was constant throughout most of the speeches. There were calls for industrial action against sack-

ings at GCHQ, against 'no strike' deals and for support for the miners.

No miner was asked to speak to the meeting, no official collection was taken and hardly any speakers mentioned the miners by name.

At one point, Kinnock lost his rag and attacked the hecklers, accusing us of scoring own goals within the movement — what hypocrisy! What "New Realism" means for Kinnock and the trade union leaders is picking the lowest common denominator and uniting around that with Bishops and Liberals. With this "realism", an independent, political labour movement could never have come into existence. This suicidal ideology must be beaten.

PROFITS AND POVERTY

By Martin Thomas

An OECD comparison of all the advanced capitalist countries showed Britain spending only 0.7% of national income on renewing roads, sewers, power grids, etc., while other nations spend 2.3% to 7.2%. Britain's overall figure for construction was also the lowest of all countries surveyed — 6.1%, when other countries range from Portugal's 8.2% to Japan's 17.1%.

Total fixed capital formation was lower in Britain than elsewhere, too.

A report from Britain's National Economic Development Office

supplements the OECD's figures by saying that maintenance expenditure on schools and government buildings is 40 per cent below requirements.

Road maintenance is also well below what it should be, and hospital maintenance is £2 billion in arrears.

False

To cut or defer such expenditure is tempting for the government, because it reduces public spending with relatively few immediate and visible bad effects. But NEDO argues that it is a false economy: poor maintenance may mean that buildings, roads or sewers become completely unusable and have to be replaced at great expense.

Scots teachers: a flat rate rise?

IN Socialist Organiser no. 210 Ian McCalman criticises me (and Lothian Rank and File) at length for counterposing a straight cash pay claim to the official call for an 'independent pay review' which he, with the Glasgow Campaign for a Fighting Union (CAFU) supports.

I do not intend to reply to everything he says because the context of the debate has now changed somewhat.

But Ian accuses me of being "guilty of a certain naivety" in my contention that an 'independent pay review' would probably offer a trade-off of conditions for money.

"Management try to link the two issues under some sort of 'productivity deals' at any time, irrespective of pay reviews", he says.

But then in the next sentence he admits that "There are added dangers of such an approach with the pay review tactics, and that to counteract this CAFU moved a 'no trade-off' motion at the EIS AGM which was defeated (albeit by only 30 votes).

Ian defends the pay review call as a tactic around which we could mobilise at the end of last year, rather than waiting for the annual pay claim in February of this. Yet surely, if the membership accepted, as they did, that they needed a substantial rise as a catching-up exercise, that should have been our demand and our focus for

Callum Macrae continues a debate over strategy

action there and then. Why substitute instead call for a pay review?

I said in my letter in 208 that "in calling for a pay review instead of a straight claim, the E right wing leadership cleave illusions in the ability of such bodies to serve the interests of teachers, or any workers for that matter." And stick by that.

I said earlier that the situation has now changed. While still sticking by demand for a pay review, CAFU have demanded an interim claim of 15 per cent for this year, albeit with the proviso that there be a weighting towards "the upper end of" the promoted salary scale.

I welcome the decision to go for an interim claim as the call for intensified union action, but I am very disappointed, and I trust Ian too, that they have gone for a percentage rather than a rate claim.

I believe that they decided on the 'weighted' percentage formulation because it already union policy — but they are calling for a change in union policy to go for an interim claim at all, why also call for that claim to be distributed in a principled manner?

Socialist Organiser

THE first issue of a new monthly publication "Socialist Organiser Forum" comes out this weekend. Forum is meant to supplement and back up the work of Socialist Organiser by publishing larger articles and material of interest mainly to committed socialist militants and Marxists, for example, dealing with the affairs of the Left.

It will also be a forum for debate and discussion between SO supporters and between SO and other tendencies on the Left.

The first issue focuses on the imminent break up of the Communist Party and what this will mean for the Labour Left.

Socialist Organiser Forum can be obtained for 50p plus postage from SO, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

Socialist
Organiser

FORUM

STAND FIRM!

Cont'd from front page
is! You don't know the meaning of the word. You've never been a supporter of Arthur Scargill. You can't see that everything we are involved in is political — the fact that we're fighting against pit closures which are a political decision of the Tory government and so on.

Another flaw in the headline, and in your reasoning, comes later in the article. You say Arthur is just a figurehead. If you believe this then you must have a bad case of idolatry. I personally wouldn't go to jail or fight for a cause because of a figurehead.

In your statement you also declare that "my great union, which was the most important thing in my life, is in pieces."

You are obviously under the misapprehension that Kiveton Park is the whole union.

45,000 Yorkshire miners on strike don't believe their union is broken. 120,000 miners nationally don't believe their union is broken and last but not least, the Kiveton Park four branch officials and six committee men and the 300 men still on strike don't believe the union is broken, locally or nationally.

Perhaps you are arrogant enough to believe that you represent the union and by the implication that you are broken, so you believe the union is.

But the most important point to which I wish to reply, and in which I too was involved, is your criticism that the union might have provided us with the best legal aid as a publicity stunt.

This is an incredible indictment and totally illogical

Would you have preferred a hack solicitor to represent you? Would you have preferred a longer sentence? Would you have preferred the union not to have pursued our case to the highest court in the land? Because this would have been the result if the union had not insisted on us having the best legal representation.

That team of legal representatives is still involved in fighting cases for hundreds of Yorkshire miners, not knowing that they, in your estimation, are part of a publicity stunt.

Another illogical part of your argument states that you want to put your family first and get back to your normal life. Surely this is everyone's wish. But what normality can there be if the union's bargaining power is lost by local trade union leaders capitulating.

What is normal about having to accept mass redundancies? What is normal about having to accept pit closures on economic grounds (possibly Kiveton Park)? What is normal about craftsmen being de-skilled (a point you have made continually during the strike)? In effect, what is normal about running to accept every crumb which the management might, and I say might, condescend to offer us?

That is the 'normality' which you will have to return to if the rest of us follow your example.

The Kiveton Park NUM was directed to fight against this kind of 'normality' and will continue to do so until the final outcome.

It will continue to fight for working miners such as yourself as well as striking miners.



Above: Heads down, looking like the beaten and broken men they are, a group of Kiveton Park miners trudge back to work. Left: Albert Bowns (left) and Reg Moss (centre) last summer. Photos: John Harris (IFL); Susan Carlyle.

Unite Labour behind miners

By John O'Mahony

THATCHER thinks she has the miners on the run and that her 'enemy within' is defeated.

Over 100,000 striking miners and their families say she is a liar. So do millions of other labour movement activists.

But, believing that they now have the whip hand, the Tories and the Coal Board have dropped the pretence of being reasonable and the line that Arthur Scargill and 'Scargillism' are the sole cause of the miners' strike.

All the camouflage is off, and everyone can see the hand of the Tory government in strict control of the NCB's conduct of the strike. Thatcher openly exhibits a cold-blooded malice and lust for revenge against the miners.

The NCB and the Tories have now spelled out what they want in the negotiations.

They want the NUM formally to agree in advance to pit closures.

Remember all the lies and propaganda with which they responded to Arthur Scargill's

charge that there was a secret hit-list of pits marked down for the Tory hatchet?

Now they feel they don't need secrecy any longer. Brutally they confront the miners' leaders with the demand that they agree in advance to let the Tories run rampant in the mining communities, cutting and axing as they choose.

And they refuse to reinstate the more than 600 miners victimised during the strike. MacGregor, tempting fate, says they will be reinstated only over his 'dead body'.

The Tories are also doing everything they can to encourage the hard-case scabs in Notts and elsewhere to break up the NUM and set up a tame union for scab miners.

'Woe to the vanquished' is Mrs Thatcher's motto, and she believes she is in a position to inflict more woe, misery and destruction on the miners.

Thatcher wants to smash the NUM — and if she does that no part of the labour movement will be safe. She wants to smash 'Scargillism' — that is, militant, effective trade unionism — everywhere.

Lord Stockton (Harold Macmillan) and other old-fashioned Tories can talk about 'conciliation' and 'magnanimity' in the House of Lords. But that is not the game Thatcher and the ruling class are now in. They want to smash up and cripple the labour movement.

Anybody who hopes that Thatcher and MacGregor won't cut the throat of the NUM if they can, is not living in the mid-'80s.

The answer that over 60 per cent of miners and their families have given the Tories is the right one: 'We stay out, and we can win'.

But what does the rest of the labour movement say? Kinnock and other Labour Party leaders spent the first ten months of the strike openly or covertly denouncing the miners. Now

they denounce Thatcher for her 'intransigence'.

That is better than denouncing the miners. But there is an implied demand from Kinnock that the miners 'compromise' and agree to some closures. And talk such as Kinnock's will not sway Thatcher, or tilt the balance in the miners' favour.

Working class action will. If the labour movement rallies to them, the miners can still win the strike. Thatcher's exhibition of malice — and lust for revenge can rally many previously hostile or unenthusiastic people to the miners' side.

The initiative lies with the leaders of the trade unions and of the Labour Party.

Come off the fence! Campaign in the labour movement and in the country for the miners and their cause of job preservation!

Unite the Labour Party around support for the miners! Make February 11 into what it should be and can be — a 24 hour general strike and day of action such as has not been seen yet in the miners' strike.

FUND

£117.30 for the fund this week means that our month's total is more or less up to what we need to balance our regular budget — £551 as against the £570 target — but we have nothing extra for the special premises fund.

Next month, February, we do not need quite so much fund money to balance the regular budget. We need £400 for that. So there should be scope for getting a solid contribution towards the premises.

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