

VICTORY TO THE PALESTINIANS!

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the next step-2

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**MINERS: HOW TO
STOP SCAB
UNIONISM — see
page 3**

Revolutionary Communist Party Weekly

15 January 1988

40p

NOT A PENNY OFF ANY NURSE'S PAY

'MANY of us are one-parent families. How are we supposed to manage? They don't care about that. But we've had enough.'

Standing on a picket line outside North Manchester General Hospital, one of 39 striking night nurses voiced the common anger at the Tory government's plans to cut nurses' pay. The 24-hour nurses' strike at the hospital gave just a glimpse of the growing mood of bitterness about the Tory assault on nurses and the health service.

The Tories plan to cut the special duty payments for nurses working unsociable hours, slashing their already miserable wages by up to £40 a week. The government wants to use the savings to pay for new wage structures, which would

discriminate in favour of nurses in specialised areas of the healthcare service such as intensive care. The majority of low-paid nurses and ancillary health workers would be left to bear the brunt of the cuts. To defeat this callous and divisive Tory strategy we need a united and militant campaign of resistance to all cuts.

The problem is that, at present, the criticism of the government's health policy is largely being led by the top men in the medical profession. These consultants are only concerned with

preserving their own niche in the NHS. They are willing to see ordinary health workers and patients suffer, so long as their status and specialist departments are not affected. For example, many leading doctors share the Tories' desire to discriminate in favour of some nurses and against others. They are also involved in the ever-growing number of charity appeals, which enlist public support for high-profile sectors of the health service such as children's surgery, while allowing the rest to rot.

The medical establishment and their friends in the media depicted last week's nurses' strike as another

Continued on page 2

**Inside: 8-page
pull-out on the
fight for
women's rights**



Nurses

appeal for sympathy and charity, rather than a display of anger by a section of the health service workforce. By manipulating such episodes, alongside tear-jerking stories of young hole-in-the-heart patients waiting for operations, the top doctors hope to embarrass the government into giving more resources to their particular departments. But they have no wish or ability to take on the Tories in an all-out struggle against the cuts.

Neither health workers nor those who rely on their services can afford to entrust the fight against health cuts to the medical establishment. We need a campaign which is independent of the narrow concerns of consultants, and aimed instead against all Tory cuts in wages, working conditions or facilities in the NHS. The demand for nurses must be a decent basic wage across the board.

To win, such a campaign must begin by involving workers from every part of the health service, and reach out for active solidarity — not just passive sympathy — from the millions who need health facilities. A 24-hour strike by one group of nurses may be enough to satisfy the publicity requirements of the top medical brass. But we will need effective action on a far wider scale to save health jobs, pay and services from the Tory knife.

CHALLENGING THE BIGOTS' CHARTER



ON Saturday more than 10 000 people marched through London to protest against Clause 27 (now officially Clause 28) of the Tory Local Government Bill, which proposes to ban 'the promotion of homosexuality' by local authorities.

Once it becomes law, the clause could lead to everything from a ban on any honest discussion of homosexuality in schools to councils refusing to issue licences to gay pubs and clubs. The demonstration was a loud and lively display of defiance by mainly young, working class lesbians and gays. The police also turned out in force to give a display of the 'queer-bashing' which has now become official government policy. More than 40 marchers were arrested. Some were charged with obstruction or assaulting a police officer; others were charged under the obscenity and indecency laws — including two lesbians arrested for kissing.

The assault on homosexual people represented by Clause 27 and the police clampdown shows the need for a popular campaign of resistance. Saturday's march provided a chance to launch the counter-offensive. But the political direction proposed by the organisers and rally speakers pointed away from militant action, towards lobbying the house of lords or the European parliament. Such a passive approach can provide no protection for lesbians and gays who face the prospect of being driven underground by official and freelance bigots. Instead, we should be trying to organise the maximum active resistance to Clause 27.

It is important that we involve straight working class people. Trade unionists in local government and education will have a big say in deciding the fate of Clause 27, no matter what happens in the house of lords. These workers are well-placed to refuse to implement the bans, and to defend anybody victimised under the new rules. The task of winning them over to the cause of lesbian and gay rights ought to be a pressing priority for the left — whose absence from the streets on Saturday was the most striking shortcoming of the demonstration.

Don Milligan

Whitelaw: good riddance

'You have brought supreme ability and selfless dedication to every office you have held. We shall miss not only your wise counsel but also your warmth, humour and good fellowship.' This is how Margaret Thatcher said goodbye to 'dearest Willie' Whitelaw, who has resigned as deputy prime minister and Tory leader in the house of lords after a mild stroke last month. 'I've had a marvellous time,' said Whitelaw, looking back on his career in government. The black people, Irish nationalists, Libyans and trade unionists who felt the full blast of Whitelaw's 'warmth and good fellowship' didn't have so much fun.

1972: When the Heath government imposed direct rule, Whitelaw became the first secretary of state for Northern Ireland. He was in charge of Operation Motorman,

the British military offensive in which tanks smashed through nationalist areas in Derry and Belfast. Operation Motorman involved the largest ever deployment of British troops in Northern Ireland.

1973: Whitelaw moved to the department of employment to enforce the Tories' anti-union law, the Industrial Relations Act. He failed, as the miners brought down the government. But top Tories like him were learning important lessons about how to attack the unions, and the miners in particular, in years to come.

1979: When the Tories got back into government, Whitelaw became Thatcher's home secretary. He oversaw the Nationality Act (1981), which branded black people as second and third class citizens. Whitelaw was 'officer in charge' of the 1981 police riots against black communities in Brixton, Toxteth and Moss Side.

1983: After the 1983 election, Whitelaw was kicked upstairs to lead the Tory peers. But he kept his place in Thatcher's inner circle. In 1986, he was one of the 'group of four' who authorised the joint US/British air-strike against Libyan civilians.

When Whitelaw collapsed after reading the lesson at a Christmas carol service, he was taken to Westminster Hospital, which is under threat of closure. Admitted as a NHS patient, he was treated in a private ward. After a lifetime of attacking the working class, even the manner of his exit from office was a monument to privilege and hypocrisy.

Whitelaw's ministerial career illustrates how the Tories have

toughened up their act since the early seventies. In 1972, he held talks in London with an IRA delegation which included Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness. As home secretary 10 years later, he banned the same two Sinn Fein leaders from setting foot in Britain.

During the intervening years, the British authorities tooled up for the more direct conflicts of today. 'Loyal Willie' acted as an anchorman within the Conservative Party throughout. No wonder the establishment hates to see him go.

● FORD PAY BALLOT OUR NEEDS ARE 'PARAMOUNT'

The Ford pay talks broke down last week when management refused to improve their offer of 16 per cent over three years, tied to productivity measures, flexible working and the use of temporary workers. More than 32 500 manual workers will be balloted on strike action after mass meetings at Ford plants in Dagenham, Halewood, Southampton and Bridgend on 20 January. A 'yes' vote looks certain.

Speaking to journalists after talks broke down, Ford's industrial relations director, John Hougham, ruled out dropping any of the strings attached to the pay offer. 'The two parts of the offer are inseparable,' he said. 'Management's needs are paramount.' No wonder Hougham was cocky: the union negotiators had just spent two hours agreeing with him

that the bosses' needs were paramount. Mick Murphy, the transport union's national officer for the motor industry, suggested 'a one-year agreement allowing time to discuss all the company's requirements'. Engineers' official Jimmy Airlie welcomed Murphy's 'eminently sensible suggestion'. Their desperate efforts to meet 'the company's requirements' left management in the driving seat.

Airlie said that he would not rule out further talks, even after a 'yes' vote for action. Murphy agreed: 'It does not follow that we would engage in all-out action.' It will be amazing if Murphy and Airlie engage in any action. Their aim is to use a 'yes' vote as a bargaining counter. But, if it's left to these bureaucrats, Ford management will get the bargain.

In the three months since the start of the pay-talks, Ford

workers have taken unofficial action which has cost the company £185m in lost production. But Murphy and Airlie want to clamp down on their initiative. 'We expect our disciplined membership to concentrate on the vote,' said Murphy. 'There will be no more organised "spontaneous" action,' said Airlie.

The pre-Christmas surge of spontaneous stoppages showed the widespread bitterness among Ford workers. But the company can absorb the effects of this kind of action, as long as it remains fragmented. The way to seize the initiative from management is for militants to campaign for co-ordinated action across the company. They must start now, before their union officials sign away their conditions of living and working for the next three years.

Andrew Calcutt



Pandora Anderson

the next step

Revolutionary Communist Party weekly No 2 Editor: Mick Hume

VOTE SCARGILL AGAINST SCAB UNIONISM

NEXT week members of the National Union of Mineworkers elect their president. Our advice to them is to vote for Arthur Scargill. Re-electing Scargill will do nothing to solve the serious problems confronting miners. But the moderate candidate, John Walsh, represents an attempt to convert the NUM into a company union, which would lie down and allow British Coal to trample all over its members. Miners should vote for Scargill for the sole reason that the alternative is scab unionism.

Media coverage has predictably reduced the election contest to a personality clash. But the big issues have nothing to do with the personal qualities (or deficiencies) of Scargill and Walsh. The important thing is the context in which the election is taking place — against a background of the most systematic management offensive for 60 years.

Since the defeat of the historic 1984-85 strike, the miners have been under the lash. British Coal has closed around 70 pits and shaken out more than 80 000 jobs. The employers have also tried to break the NUM. The coal bosses encouraged Nottinghamshire miners to form the breakaway Union of Democratic Mineworkers. They have introduced a draconian code of conduct, specifically designed to victimise NUM activists. They have by-passed the old negotiating procedures involving union representatives and they are planning a return to six-day working in proposed new pits. Even in the NUM heartland of Yorkshire, British Coal can now get awkward jobs done by making private arrangements with some men in return for secret payments.

Many miners have proved willing to stand up to the employers' provocations. Only last week, when management at Bentley colliery in South Yorkshire tried to move three men who they said weren't working hard enough, the workforce walked out in protest. The Bentley men sent out pickets to win support elsewhere, and 16 000 miners from 20 pits joined the strike. Every time the miners match management's aggression, however, British Coal raises the stakes. Thus it responded to the Bentley action by announcing the closure of another Yorkshire pit, Manvers, and cancelling plans to re-open Thorne colliery.

The Walsh approach is to seek reconciliation with the coal bosses. Given the balance of forces in the coalfields since the end of the strike, this is a serious danger to miners' interests. Walsh says he wants to end confrontation and to 'return to the days of give and take' between management and union: 'We have to understand their problems, just as they have to understand ours.' But the employers have long since lost interest in pursuing any such understanding. They understand that in the harsh economic and political climate of the late eighties they have to go for the kill. Any agreement Walsh might sign with British Coal in these circumstances could only be a suicide note for the miners. Management knows this full well, as one top coal manager explained to the *Financial Times* last month:

'Mr Scargill's opponents are decent men whom we could talk to, even if they have a naive belief that if they offer concessions we will be able to do the same. We can't.'

In other words, there can be no return to the old days of give and take which Walsh remembers so fondly. Now any negotiations will be about the miners giving and the bosses taking. When management has announced in advance that there are no concessions available, it should be clear that a union official whose entire strategy centres on conciliation is proposing a form of company unionism. Walsh has already suggested that the NUM will have to 'bite the bullet' and make overtures to the scab UDM.

We have always had important criticisms of Arthur Scargill. But we have also made a distinction between his brand of bureaucratic union leadership, and outright scab unionism. In 1985-86 we organised a 'Stop the UDM' campaign, against the spread of the bosses' union into Yorkshire. In the same spirit, we say that miners should vote to stop John Walsh next Friday.

Voting for Scargill does not imply any support for his record or his policies. Scargill's approach to trade unionism has proved incapable of defending miners. During the strike, for example, he substituted head office diktat for political leadership. The way in which he sought to deal with the Notts miners through disciplinary measures, rather than through a rank and file campaign to win

their support, helped to harden divisions within the NUM and to pave the way to defeat. Scargill has always agreed with British Coal about the need to make the industry profitable. This crucial concession to the bosses' view of the world has constantly undermined his ability to resist closures and redundancies. Scargill's own commitment to the outdated traditions of British trade unionism has rendered him incapable of organising effective action against the aggressive new methods adopted by the British Coal bosses since he was elected NUM president.

Rejecting the defeatist approach represented by Walsh is an important step for miners. Yet the presidential election does not even address the most pressing issue of all — the need to turn the union into an effective fighting organisation. That task falls to the rank and file. Activists need to build on the remarkable militancy which still exists among miners, as shown in last week's Yorkshire strike. They need to go beyond such sporadic action and organise a coordinated response to the management offensive. To do that, they will have to break from the tired triumphalist rhetoric of Scargillism and face the real problem of rebuilding the union from the bottom up.

Scargill's bureaucratic methods have failed to deliver the goods since he was elected NUM president in 1981. If miners have to wait another seven years for some effective leadership, there will be few left to lead. Re-electing Scargill next week can provide nothing more than a short breathing space. If active miners don't take advantage of a Scargill victory to seize the initiative from their officials and launch their own political campaign against British Coal, Walsh and his friends in management may well have the last laugh.

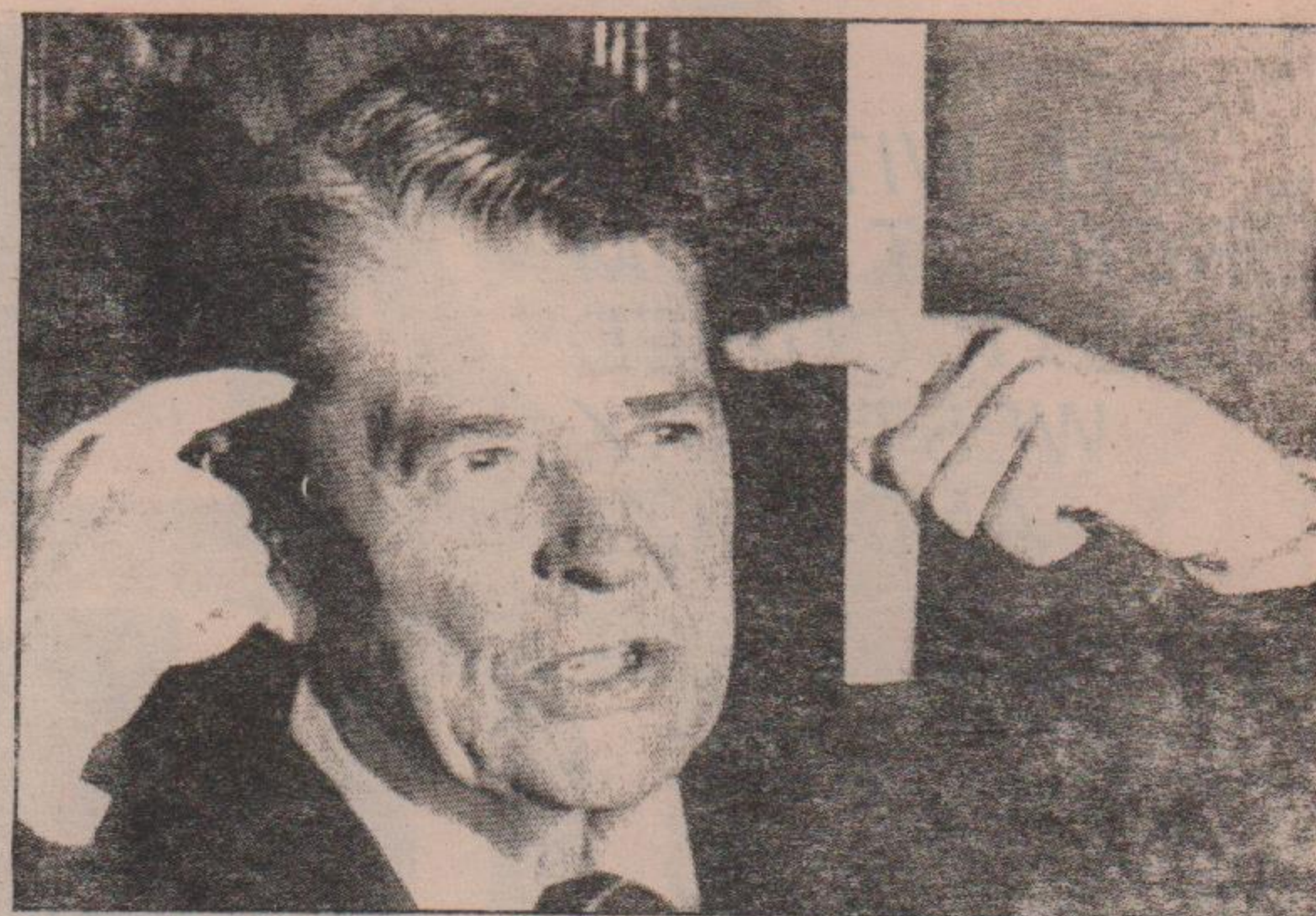
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IS THERE A SCOTTISH SOLUTION?

The working class
and the assembly debate

Mick Hume and Derek Owen

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TOUCHING WOOD FOR LUCK WON'T SAVE REAGAN'S ECONOMY

DOLLAR AND SHARE CRISES HERALD...

WORLD RECESSION '88

The continuing international panic over shifting share prices and the fall of the US dollar confirm that a world economic recession is on the way. The volatility in the currency and stock markets reflects the unstable state of an international economic order built around an American economy which is no longer fit to lead the capitalist world.

After initial signs of panic, most economic pundits have adopted a cavalier attitude to the great City crash last October and the slide of the past week. They claim that such swings in share prices have a relatively minor impact on the 'real' economy, and instead blame computer programme trading and irresponsible speculators. These excuses turn reality on its head. Neither speculators nor computers were suddenly invented in October.

The issue is not how share price movements affect the real economy, but how the developing crisis in the real economy is reflected in sharp swings in share prices.

The October collapse was precipitated by doubts about the strength of the US economy. The West German Bundesbank's decision to raise interest rates reflected growing international fears about continuing to lend billions of dollars to keep the declining US economy afloat. The fact that a small hike in German interest rates was sufficient to wipe \$1 trillion off shares on Wall Street only shows that such fears are well-founded.

DECLINE

The world status of American capitalism remains the key economic issue in 1988. Stock markets will move up and down as they always do. But the added volatility of these movements is assured by the economic tensions rooted in America's decline. The fall in the exchange rate of the dollar provides a focus for the debate about the future of the US and world economies.

The US establishment has been saying for over two years that the dollar is 'overvalued' against other currencies. The sustained inflow of foreign capital needed to finance the Reagan administration's budget deficit forced up the value of the dollar. As a result, US exports became more expensive and producers lost out to their foreign rivals. By 1985 US leaders wanted to reduce the burgeoning trade deficit by bringing down the

'overvalued' dollar. But even when the dollar's exchange rate started to come down, the trade deficit continued to grow. This confirms the weak and uncompetitive state of US industry.

The dollar's latest slide has little to do with solving trade imbalances.

Instead, the US administration has been printing billions of dollars to 'protect' its economy against losses in financial markets. This provided a short-term reprieve, but further undermined the credibility of the dollar in currency markets. At the end of 1987 the 'Group of Seven' capitalist powers announced they would defend the dollar. Yet an \$8.5 billion support operation failed to stop the dollar's slide; its exchange rate is now less than half that of three years ago. Market commentators were quick to point out that, despite a rally in the New Year, the dollar would resume its decline.

LIMITS

There are limits to how long Western governments can go on supporting the US economy. Last week West German finance minister Gerhard Stoltenberg revealed that his government had exceeded its planned spending deficit by over DM20 billion, partly through propping up the dollar. West Germany will now enforce tighter control over the domestic money supply and cut its budget deficit. These deflationary measures will restrict West Germany's ability to protect the dollar. And what the Bundesbank does in the currency markets dictates the actions of the rest of Europe.

Western governments are going out of their way to avoid facing up to the approach of the crisis. British chancellor Nigel Lawson even imagines that Britain can ride through a world recession. His more sycophantic supporters are still referring to a British 'economic miracle'.

If the weak British economy is not shattered in the coming recession it would indeed be a miracle.

The volatility in the financial markets symbolises the failure of the measures the West has taken to mitigate growing tensions in the world capitalist order. The continued decline of the US economy, despite all the international rescue operations and bailing-out exercises, means that world recession is certain.

Tony Kennedy

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EYE-WITNESS
REPORT FROM
THE OCCUPIED
WEST BANK
AND GAZA

'PEOPLE ARE TO DIE FOR FREEDOM'

I feel very proud. I've been waiting all my life for us to do something about this occupation. Now we have.'

Saida does not fit the Western media image of a Palestinian militant. The curly-haired 17-year old in a thick blue cotton dress could pass unnoticed in a crowd of British schoolgirls. But she lives in Jubalya, home for more than 60 000 refugees, the largest camp in the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip. And the experience of life under the Israeli heel is enough to turn anybody into a freedom fighter.

SWORN

Saida is not surprised by the last few weeks of fierce resistance to Israeli rule. She has known nothing but the brutality of military occupation throughout her life. She was born three years after the Israeli army rolled into the densely populated Gaza Strip in 1967, during the Six Day War. Together with her five younger sisters and three brothers, Saida feels she has nothing more to lose by fighting for Palestinian freedom. 'We don't like dying,' she explains, 'but this isn't living.'

According to the British media, Tory foreign minister David Mellor became the most important defender of Palestinian rights after his televised confrontation with an Israeli colonel in Jubalya. But Mellor describes himself as a 'candid friend' of the oppressor state of Israel. By contrast Saida and ordinary Palestinians like her are Israel's sworn enemies. They do not stage Mellor-style public relations exercises to enhance their reputations. They take on the might of the Israeli armed forces with sticks and stones.

And when the Palestinians fight for their freedom, Tories like Mellor are the first to condemn them as 'terrorists'.

Jubalya has been at the centre of the recent upsurge of resistance to the Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip. The first demonstrator to be killed by the Israelis, 17-year old

Hatan Alsisi, died in a protest at the death of three Jubalya residents and one other Palestinian in a road accident. Even according to the toned-down official figures, Israeli troops have killed more than 30 Palestinians in pitched battles since Hatan's death five weeks ago.

Like all the camp residents, Hatan's family are desperate to let outsiders know what has happened to them. When we spoke to them they were not seeking pity, but the opportunity to explain their plight. After speaking to two Dutch journalists before the curfew was imposed, the family were savagely beaten by Israeli soldiers who keep a permanent watch on their house. But the martyr's family still welcomed us into their home.

We had entered the camp one hour after the Israelis lifted a six-day curfew. The squad of 10 Givati Brigade soldiers manning the checkpoint, recognisable by their bright purple berets, were too busy harassing Palestinians to bother us. Since most families had run out of food during the curfew there were streams of cars travelling in and out of the camp.

DEFIANCE

In Jubalya we were confronted by the occupation at every turn. Foot patrols of 20 men, armed with rifles and gas grenades, patrolled the streets. They used heavy wooden clubs to beat anyone in their path. Jeeps and half-tracks complemented the men on foot.

A picture of the previous six days soon emerged. Even by the standards of Jubalya, which holds the dubious distinction of having an Israeli army base in the centre of the camp, the last week had been brutal. Every family had either been beaten, tear-gassed or shot at. Yet the dominant mood among the Palestinians remained one of defiance.

During the curfew nobody was permitted to leave the camp. The Israelis only allowed people out of their homes for an hour a day. There were countless stories of

children standing in doorways being attacked by Israeli soldiers, who then burst into their homes and beat the whole family.

But the Palestinians are not the helpless victims they are often portrayed as by Western sympathisers.

The people of Jubalya offered stiff resistance to the army's brutality. Everybody stressed that the whole of the population was involved in the uprising — a theme we were to hear repeated throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The soldiers had faced a barrage of stones, steel bars and Molotov cocktails. Demonstrators defied the curfew to do battle with the hated Israeli army.

INJURIES

One Palestinian explained from his sick bed how he took on four soldiers who were hitting an old man: 'People are ready to die rather than stand by and watch the army beat people.' After the curfew was lifted the military had twice stopped him from going to hospital outside the camp. A middle-aged woman was beaten by a squad of soldiers who came to arrest her son. She had chest pains and had probably suffered internal injuries. But she had succeeded in fighting off the soldiers.

We sat down for a meal with a family who hadn't eaten in two days. Jubalya residents normally store food reserves. But they are poor and have large families. A teacher's family we spoke to, relatively affluent by the camp's standards, had lived on lentils for a week. The poorer families had starved.

BULLDOZED

After eating we continued our journey round the camp. Our driver and guide, a camp resident, skilfully avoided army patrols. Outsiders caught in the camp were likely to face awkward questions and have their film confiscated.

The consequences for camp residents found fraternising with journalists would be far worse.

Our car zig-zagged its way through the dual system of roads that criss-crosses the camp. The side roads used by the residents are little more than mud-tracks with open sewage channels running down them. The wide concrete roads, bulldozed through Palestinian houses in the early seventies,

were only built to give the mobile Israeli military patrols quick access to trouble-spots. As well as avoiding the army, we had to dodge our way around long concrete pipes which the Israeli forces use to block the road, and pools of stagnant water caused by inadequate drainage.

Wherever we went we were quickly greeted by a crowd of children. Then the adults would come out and start explaining what had happened to them. But the Shabab, young men between about 15 and 25, were nowhere to be seen. They had either been arrested or gone into hiding. One local leader explained what happened to some of the Shabab. At 1am the Israeli military drove around his block, one of 12 the camp is divided into, and used loudspeakers to order men to the military centre.

After two hours of standing around on a cold and rain-soaked night, the Palestinian men were addressed by the military governor of the camp. 'You'll gain nothing by demonstrating', he said. 'There will only be more killing and bloodshed. You'll see what we'll do.'

TEAR GAS

The younger men were separated off and the older ones were told they could go. The Palestinians had other ideas. 'You've called us together,' was their united response, 'and we'll leave together. But the Israelis forced the younger men inside the military outpost.'

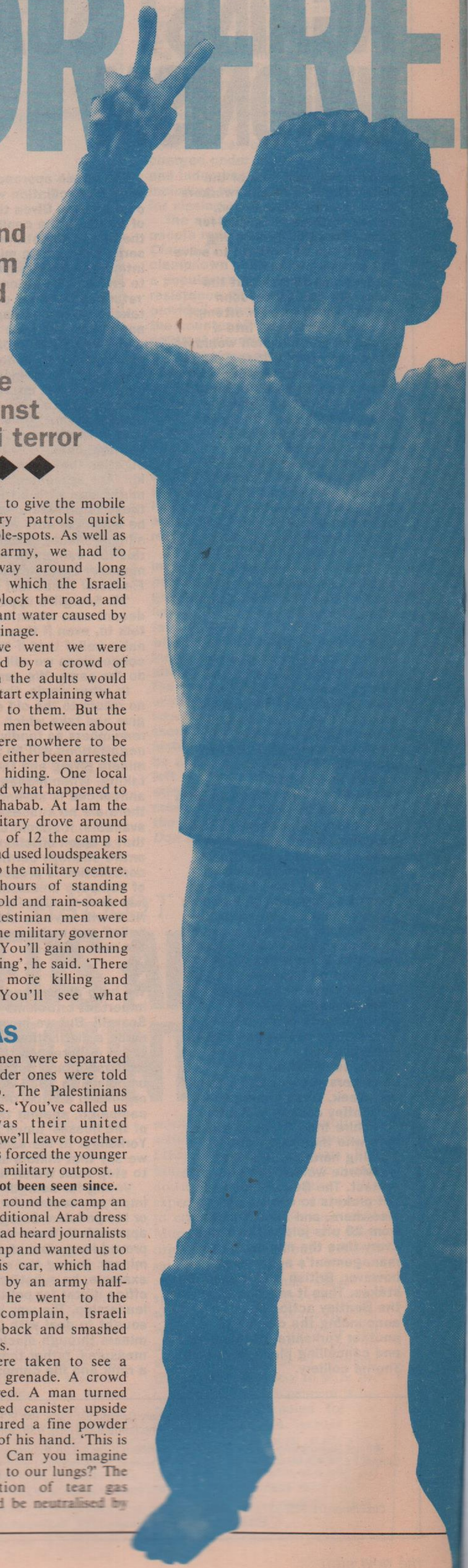
Some have not been seen since. As we drove round the camp an old man in traditional Arab dress appeared. He had heard journalists were in the camp and wanted us to photograph his car, which had been battered by an army half-track. When he went to the military to complain, Israeli soldiers came back and smashed all the windows.

Next we were taken to see a spent tear gas grenade. A crowd quickly gathered. A man turned the bulb-shaped canister upside down and poured a fine powder into the palm of his hand. 'This is only the ash. Can you imagine what this does to our lungs?' The older generation of tear gas grenades could be neutralised by



ISRAELI HANDIWORK IN JUBALYA CAMP

Carol Meghji



READY FREEDOM'



PALESTINIAN WOMEN DEMONSTRATE IN GAZA CITY

Carol Meghill

Amal described how a handicapped Palestinian youth had gone on a demonstration on his knees. His disability meant he could not walk but he was determined to protest against the occupation. When he went to help a friend who was wounded he was shot dead.

PUNISHED

She explained that the demonstrations were not generally organised by political groups. 'It was totally from within. There was no organisation who said get out on the streets and revolt.' Organisations only put out leaflets after the demonstrations.

Amal was well-informed about the struggle for the occupied Strip. Throughout Gaza, she told us, people are being arrested and heavily punished. Ansar II, the main prison camp and notorious torture centre in Gaza, is full. The Israelis are erecting tents as another makeshift concentration camp in the Strip.

Penalties for demonstrating are harsh. First-time offenders can expect eight months to a year in prison and a fine equivalent to about £2000 — an astronomic sum for people living in desperate poverty. Subsequent offences carry a penalty of 18 months to two years.

In contrast an Israeli settler who shot a Gaza schoolgirl was out on bail after six weeks.

DISCREDIT

The Israeli authorities have also found other ways to harass Palestinian protesters and their families. Two demonstrators wounded in pitched battles at Gaza's Shifa Hospital, later declared a closed military area, were flown by helicopter to a hospital inside the Green Line (pre-1967 Israel). Now the military governor of Gaza was demanding money to cover the cost of the flight.

Amal described how the military had tried to discredit her. Israeli officers had ordered her over in the street then started smiling and talking to her like old friends. In Gaza traditional values dictate that women should not talk to men in the street. In addition the Israelis were trying to imply that Amal was a collaborator.

In the afternoon we went to see two Gaza high school students, Ahmed and Niama. We quickly collected a trail of Palestinian children, none older than 12, as we walked through the backstreets. At the sight of outsiders some picked up stones and one had a steel bar. But once they realised we were friendly their reaction changed to curiosity.

Ahmed and Niama were acutely conscious of the image of Palestinians as crazed gunmen. 'The Palestinian people are not terrorists. We don't like blood or killing. We just want independence and an end to occupation,' said 18-year old Ahmed.

His sister explained that Israel cannot crush the uprising with bullets.

Military repression only breeds more resistance. 'Violence only leads to more violence. If they kill people it only makes them more determined to fight the occupation.'

The students' father came into the room to join us. We asked how he felt about his children's involvement in demonstrations. He replied indignantly that he had also been demonstrating.

As we left the house we noticed a group of young men being locked in a garage for the night. The youths were hiding from the Israeli military. Someone whispered to us that they were the Shabab.

STUDENTS

Gaza has recently been thrust to prominence. But the renewed resistance to the occupation has been just as fierce in the West Bank. There have been demonstrations in all the main population centres, refugee camps and many villages. We arrived at Bir Zeit University, near the West Bank town of Ramallah, on the first day of term.

The New Year discussion there was very different from in any British college.

In the cafeteria students were discussing who had been killed, who was wounded and who was in prison. They swapped tales of resistance and made plans for future demonstrations.

We were introduced to a student from nearby Jelazoun camp. In his camp 6000 people, 70 per cent of them under 20, are crammed into an area of one square kilometre. He proudly described their battles with Israeli troops.

In one demonstration the army had to use helicopters to leapfrog a march by all of the camp residents. But the people threw steel bars and stones to force the soldiers to retreat. Soon the warning came 'withdraw or we'll shoot'. As the people retreated through the narrow alleys of the camp, the Israeli soldiers opened up with automatic weapons.

SACKED

Before the recent unrest many Palestinians from camps like Jelazoun travelled to work as cheap labour inside the Israeli Green Line. Now these Jelazoun migrant workers have all been sacked from their jobs in Israeli factories and building sites. Unemployment and poverty in the camp will rise steeply. But people do not regret demonstrating.

We left Bir Zeit to meet Iyad, a man who was released from prison two days earlier. The Israelis had arrested all the youth of his village after a bus was burnt. Since Iyad had been arrested before, the first time when he was 15, he was picked up automatically. A platoon of 30 soldiers came to arrest him at 3am. They blindfolded him, handcuffed him and, knowing Iyad was

asthmatic, they put a sack over his head to make it more difficult for him to breathe. Then they beat him with rifle butts and clubs in front of his family.

Iyad's treatment exposes the lie of Israel's boast to be 'the only democracy in the Middle East'.

When he asked for a warrant the soldiers said there was one but they wouldn't produce it. He spent 16 days in prison, and had contact with nobody but his brutal jailers. As is usual with Palestinian prisoners, the Israeli authorities used torture to try to extract a false confession. First they tied Iyad's hands to a window ledge and left him to hang for 12 hours. Then they beat and interrogated him. Then they gave him a cold shower, still wearing his clothes, and left him to stand in the open for hours.

After 16 days Iyad's case came up before a military judge. The prosecutor asked for him to be given another 16 days in prison. The judge replied that there was no more space so he would have to be released. Iyad has come to regard prison as part of his education in resisting the occupation. 'Whenever anyone is sent to prison they leave even more determined to fight. In Palestine prisons are like schools.'

WOMEN

We had arranged to see somebody who, we heard, had just been released from Neve Tirza women's prison. Around 20 per cent of Palestinian prisoners are women and Neve Tirza is now full. But the woman could not see us. She, like many others, was still inside.

The recent uprising in Palestine has gone beyond the traditional areas of high tension such as the West Bank and Gaza. In Arab East

Jerusalem troops and border guards lost control of the streets for several hours to Palestinians. The border guards, notorious for their brutality, are heavily concentrated in strategic positions both in East Jerusalem and the Old City. Tourists have been startled by the appearance of police half-tracks patrolling the centre of town.

FREEDOM

Even inside the Green Line, the first area robbed from the Palestinians when the Israeli state was created, in 1948, there have been major disturbances. Before Christmas there was an unprecedented one-day general strike in solidarity with the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza. The protests are not confined to traditionally more militant towns such as Nazareth and Umm-al-Fahm. Villages which have been quiet for 40 years have been rocked by demonstrations for the first time.

Israel's oppression of Palestine has been the burning issue in the Middle East for the last 40 years.

As long as the Zionist state of Israel stands on any part of Palestinian soil, the conflict will continue. British and American politicians may bicker about the tactics the Israelis use in the occupied territories. But they all join Israel in condemning the 'terrorism' of Palestinians who fight back against their oppressors.

The true starting point for any solution to the conflict, however, is well-understood by the mass of Palestinians. It was clear to a small boy in Jubalya camp who put an arm round his brother and pointed to him with his free hand. 'This is a Palestinian. He needs his freedom.'

lemon juice or onions. More modern types — fired from rifles or dropped by Israeli helicopters into the courtyards of the houses — burn the skin, induce hysteria and can knock people out. We heard of a baby who had choked to death after her home was tear-gassed. Her death was not recorded in the army's official casualty figures.

ABLAZE

As the sun set we left Jubalya camp. Our driver weaved his way through mud-tracks and across country to avoid military checkpoints. We had been in the most militant camp in the territories occupied in 1967. But we had not left the trouble behind when we departed. This time, the whole of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank was ablaze.

Late at night we watched the news on Israeli television. A Zionist settler described how he had been attacked by a Palestinian in Jerusalem who had grazed his scalp with a knife. The settler had drawn his pistol and fired.

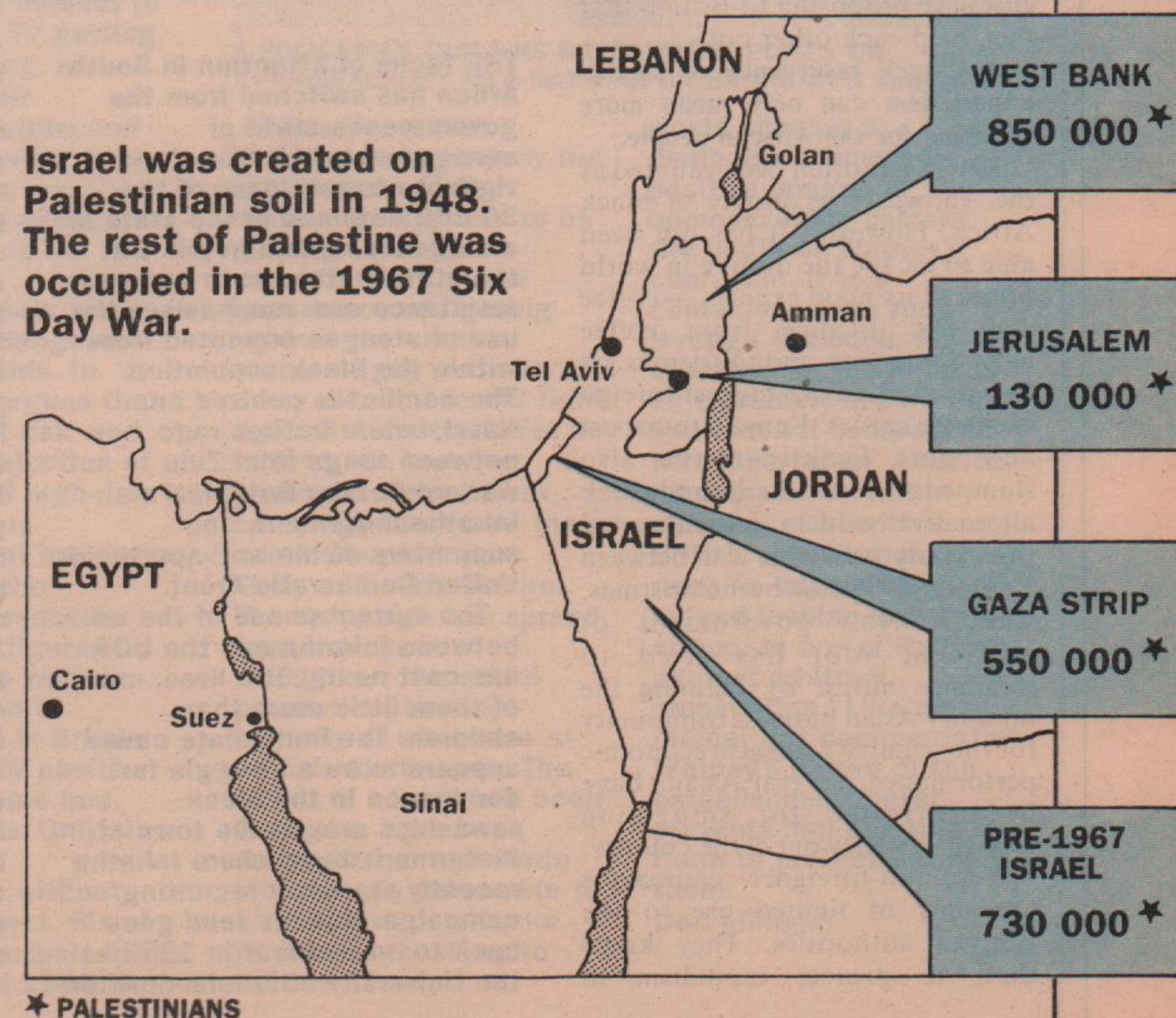
There was no coverage on the plight of the people of Jubalya.

When we arrived in Gaza city, the centre was swamped by groups of 20 young, heavily armed Israeli conscripts. Ten troops patrolled each side of the road. In quieter times the town is policed by groups of six or seven older reservists.

'SHIT'

We went to see a Palestinian woman activist. Amal was lying in bed, pregnant and in danger of repeating a previous miscarriage. But once she began to talk about politics, she became impassioned and animated. 'There is no similarity between what's happened recently and what's happened before,' said Amal, expressing a view we were to hear many times. 'In the past the demonstrations were confined to schools and universities. This time all of the people were involved. No one was excluded.'

'The revolt is an expression of what life has become. There's just nothing for us here. Everyone's life is shit.'



Thatcher was not the only British dignitary on a winter safari last week. While she was in Kenya and Nigeria, home secretary Douglas Hurd was visiting Morocco and Tunisia and overseas development minister Chris Patten followed Bob Geldof's trail to Ethiopia. The Tories are using public concern over the African famine to justify reviving Britain's traditional ties with the continent.

But their real aim is to solve Britain's economic problems at the expense of the hard-pressed African people.

Thatcher was warmly welcomed by the authorities in both Kenya and Nigeria. The fact that one of her aides got pushed over during a scuffle between rival Nigerian security men can hardly be seen as revenge for Britain's bloody record in its former African colonies. Britain carved out its African empire at the turn of the century with the Maxim machine gun and heavy artillery. Only 30 years ago Britain was torturing and slaughtering thousands of Kenyans in its efforts to end the Mau Mau insurgency. Against this background, Thatcher's visit was remarkably trouble free, reflecting the fact that both the British establishment and the African elite think they have something to gain from closer relations.

CAPITAL

Britain is keen to invest in its former colonies to compensate for its economic problems. The collapse of the home manufacturing base means that Britain relies heavily on exporting capital overseas to make a profit. But the stock market crash and the instability of the world economy has hampered the ability of British capitalists to speculate in the West. They are now seeking other outlets for investment. Britain's old African colonies like Kenya and Nigeria are one obvious target. Britain is also extending its intervention into former French colonies like Morocco and the ex-Portuguese colony of Mozambique.

These investments represent an attempt by British capitalists to expropriate the wealth produced by African labour. British capital which would be lying idle at home can be put to productive use in Africa, employing local workers on starvation wages to sweat out a profit for the London money-men. Thatcher's trip was designed to pave the way for an increase in this most parasitic form of capitalist exploitation.

SUFFERING

Kenya and Nigeria — relatively prosperous black African states compared to the ruins of Ethiopia and Uganda — both hope their former British overlord can help solve their own economic and political crises. The black African elites are proposing to Britain that they help each other out.

Any such resurgence of British imperialism can only mean more suffering for the African people.

Kenya has often been vaunted as the 'showcase' economy of black Africa. However, it has not been able to escape the decline in world prices of its main exports — coffee and tea. Income from coffee halved last year and tourism is set to become Kenya's biggest foreign exchange earner. Kenya's transport and port facilities have also slumped as users like Uganda seek alternative outlets in Tanzania; this nearly caused a war between Kenya and Uganda over Christmas. The Kenyan government of president Moi has tried to minimise unrest by blaming the minority Asian business community for the country's sluggish economic performance. Several Asians have been arrested for smuggling foreign currency out of the country.

But anti-foreigner campaigns are only of limited use to the Kenyan authorities. They know that, to protect capitalism in

THE THATCHER TOUR BACK TO AFRICA

Behind all the bluster about Margaret Thatcher's support for apartheid, the black African leaders she visited last week were genuinely glad to see her. Andy Clarkson explains



BRITISH TROOPS TERRORISED KENYA DURING THE MAU MAU INSURGENCY OF THE FIFTIES

Kenya from the anger of the masses, they require the assistance of foreigners from the Western powers. This explains the favourable response to Thatcher's visit. Under Moi, British and American armed forces have been encouraged to use Kenya's port and training facilities, which dominate East Africa and the strategically important Indian Ocean. The Thatcher line on South Africa scarcely caused a ripple of dissent.

Britain's financial aid to Kenya is its largest in Africa and its fourth largest in the world. In addition, Thatcher obligingly wrote off £70m of Kenya's outstanding debts and granted an extra £20m in

loans during her visit, as a goodwill gesture. Britain has the largest foreign investment stake in Kenya, at over £1 billion, and there is every indication that this will expand.

Thatcher also had some largesse available for Nigeria. Nigeria's military training programme is to receive British assistance and £22m worth of export credits to build an irrigation project. But these hand-outs are far from charitable. Britain relies on Nigeria to buy more of its products than any other African country. And Nigeria's economic vulnerability — it is responsible for a tenth of black Africa's entire foreign debt — leaves the West

African state open to British arm-twisting.

After the collapse in the world price of oil in the early eighties, Nigeria's oil revenue fell from \$23 billion in 1980 to an estimated \$6 billion last year. The government's attempt to stimulate agrarian production to replace its lost oil revenues has flopped. Twelve per cent of Nigeria's budget has been poured into cash crops over the last few years, but to little effect; production of crops like cocoa has rocketed at the same time as world prices stagnate.

The government has imposed austerity measures on the Nigerian people which are even worse than

those forced on other impoverished African states by the International Monetary Fund.

Nigeria's new year decision to introduce debt-equity swaps is an indication of its plight. These deals allow Western companies to take a slice of Nigeria's economy in return for writing off up to a fifth of Nigeria's foreign debt. They are the West's latest method of thieving the resources of the third world, which represent a step back towards direct colonialism. The more British capital is taken out of the West and invested in Africa, the more interested Thatcher becomes in increasing Britain's political influence there.

COLONIAL

The African elite has become convinced of the benefits of more British intervention. Whether the masses of Kenya and Nigeria acquiesce so readily remains to be seen. Increased British interference in Africa points towards a return to the oppressive conditions of the colonial era. It will mean more intense exploitation, more repression, and a heightening of the ethnic and sectarian divisions which Britain cultivated in its African empire. The exacerbation of these backward prejudices to weaken popular resistance paves the way for Britain's successful return to Africa. And, under pressure from their British sponsors, the black governments will be forced to put down their people in a way which exposes the jostling of Thatcher's aides as the 'soft' face of African policing. When their profits are at stake, British imperialists will deal with the African masses through similar tactics to those used by the apartheid regime.

◆◆ SOUTH AFRICA

Inkatha-apartheid's stooges

THE focus of attention in South Africa has switched from the government's state of emergency to the use of vigilante terror. Many of the 30 000 detained in the state of emergency remain in jail. But the state's attempt to suppress resistance now emphasises the use of stooges promoted from within the black population. The conflict is centred on Natal, where battles rage between thugs from Zulu warlord Gatsha Buthelezi's Inkatha movement, and supporters of the anti-apartheid United Democratic Front.

The current phase of the war between Inkatha and the UDF has cost nearly 300 lives, many of them little more than children. The immediate cause appears to be a struggle for dominance in the black townships around the town of Pietermaritzburg where Inkatha recently started a recruiting campaign. But the feud goes back to an incident in 1983 at the University of Zululand. After

pro-UDF students made speeches criticising Buthelezi for his collaboration with the apartheid regime Inkatha Impis invaded the campus. Buthelezi's thugs beat and speared their opponents, killing several. One activist was hung upside down from a tree and flogged to death in front of chanting warriors.

POPULAR

Buthelezi now fears losing his younger supporters to the popular nationalist UDF. Inkatha uses a network of patronage and coercion to maintain a firm hold over older Zulus in the rural areas of Natal. People without the right connections are often refused access to medical treatment, social services, pensions or education. But since the UDF's reputation reached a highpoint in 1986, Inkatha has proved unable to control the flood of younger people away from its own youth organisation.

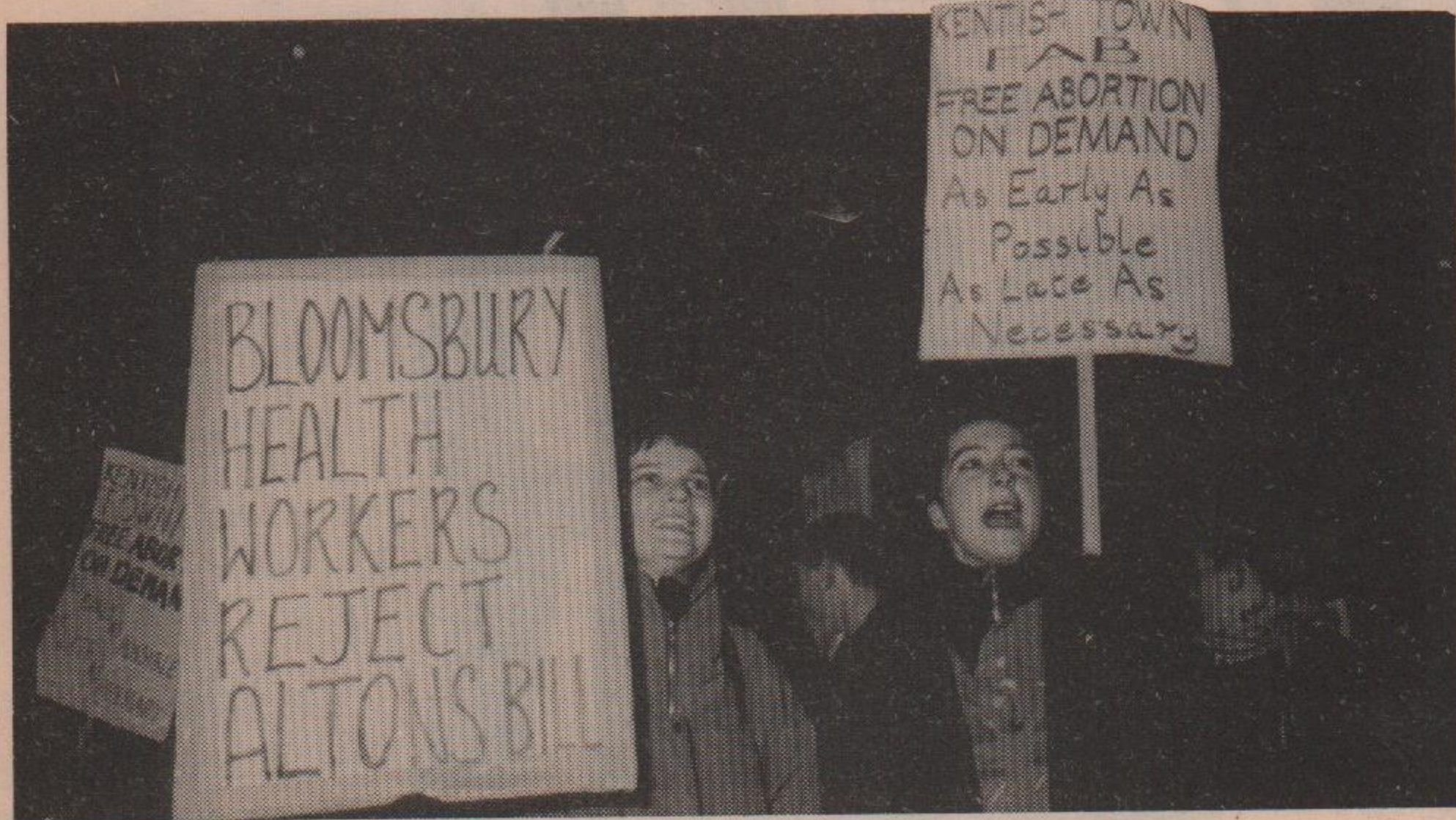
The Zulu movement often

resorts to violence and collaborates with the police to control its opponents. In 1986 Inkatha launched a scab union, Uwusa, as an attempt to break the growing influence of independent unions in Natal. Uwusa claims 100 000 members but has not participated in a single strike or union recognition agreement. Its thugs are however at the forefront of attempts to smash union organisation, including the murder of two shop stewards involved in the long-running strike against the British-owned BTR-Sarmcol company in Howick, Natal. UDF and union activists report that the police openly side with Inkatha and Uwusa thugs, often disarming UDF supporters to give the armed vigilantes easier targets. Inkatha attacks on UDF areas have involved young people being burned to death and decapitated.

The picture in Natal is a more extreme version of what

is going on elsewhere in the country. Almost everywhere detentions and repression have reduced open resistance and allowed the state to replace the police and the army with municipal police and vigilante squads. While few of the sham town councils were able to function at the start of 1986, after stooge black councillors quit their posts in fear of being attacked by anti-apartheid activists, most of these collaborators are now back at their posts and the councils are functioning again.

The UDF and the mass resistance to apartheid have suffered some important setbacks. Last week the UDF leadership signed a peace pact with Inkatha. But resistance has not been extinguished. The fact that poorly armed black youth, many barely out of their teens, have proved able to resist Buthelezi's hardened state-backed Impis in Natal, is a hopeful sign for the future. Russell Osborne



Pandora Anderson

WORKING WOMEN NEED FAMILY PLANNING

BLOOMSBURY health authority managers have noticed that family planning clinics in the area are being used by 'the daytime working population', besides patients from among the 37 000 local women residents of fertile age. They have worked out a policy to 'reduce overall funding' by making it difficult for working women to get to clinics in Bloomsbury. 'Relocation of service and re-timing', ie, moving clinics to somewhere nobody's ever heard of, and starting them in the evening when working women have already gone home, is being posed

as a means of putting local residents first. It is due to be applied to community clinics this year. Catchment provisions may also be applied to the Brook Advisory Centre.

The health authority is using its 'commitment' to the local community as a cover for cuts in essential family planning facilities. It just goes to show that women are the second class citizens of any community you care to mention.

**Nurse
Bloomsbury FAB group**

FIGHTING EDUCATION CUTS

THE Inner London Education Authority's new year resolution is to shed 9000 jobs by April 1989. On our return from the holidays, members of my 'non-essential' department received a memo informing us that we may face 100 per cent cuts! After telling us the news, management advised us not to panic because they would do their best, and we would be redeployed if necessary. In the meantime, they advised us to write letters against the cuts.

If our jobs are not cut, others will be. Our union, the Greater London Staff Association, has come up with a novel response to this dilemma. Our rep says that, since the cuts are inevitable, the union cannot defend all jobs and it would be wrong to defend some jobs against others; so it cannot defend any jobs.

I have suggested that we try to organise a campaign against all cuts. There is some sympathy for the idea. But most of my colleagues think that 'the party's over', and that 'we have to come down to Earth.' There's no mechanism for fighting. The union is not up to it, and Ilea councillors — most of them Labour — have already voted for cuts. Most of my colleagues have depended

on a 'caring' Labour authority to be the dam between us and the rising Tory flood. Now the dam has burst, and we will drown unless we can organise an Ilea-wide campaign against all cuts.

**Ilea worker
South London**

SMASH THE POLL TAX

THE Labour Party in Scotland is considering the legal implications of a campaign of non-payment against the poll tax. The Scottish Labour executive will meet on 24 January to discuss the poll tax. One fifth of the motions sent in for the Scottish Labour conference in March are on the poll tax, and a number of them, mostly from Edinburgh, are calling for strikes and declarations of intent not to pay.

Yet Labour's Scottish general secretary Helen Liddle says 'If we say to people "don't pay", the consequences will be warrant sales. They will chase us. Ordinary people don't want to go down that road. At the end of the day, our job is to stop legislation, and for that, we depend on our English colleagues.'

If Labour is so concerned about 'ordinary people' and the poll tax, why are Scottish Labour councils creating the machinery to implement the Tory tax? Liddle's argument is just a cynical

excuse for Labour to refuse to support a real campaign against the poll tax, and to rely on its 'colleagues' among English Tory wets to vote against the tax in parliament. But if people ally themselves with a campaign based on working class action to stop the poll tax being implemented, we can 'chase' the poll tax out of Scotland.

**Gordon O'Brien
Smash the Poll Tax
campaign
Glasgow**

ASLEF FAT CATS

I AM one of 23 000 Aslef (train drivers' union) members who did not receive an invitation to the recent farewell party held in honour of retiring general secretary Ray Buckton. I did not sit down with 150 other guests to a six-course dinner in the banqueting suite of the London Hilton Hotel, and I did not get a chance to make free with Aslef's 'open tab' at the bar. But, together with rest of the membership, I did pay for the whole shebang out of my union dues.

We keep hearing that trade unions are in decline. Judging by Buckton's blow-out, there has been no decline in our officials' appetite for living it up at the expense of rank and file members.

**Aslef member
London**

GAYS AND AIDS



THE GOVERNMENT'S EROTIC MISSION

Simon Watney, *Policing Desire: Pornography, Aids and the Media*, Comedia, Methuen, £6.95

Policing Desire is a book 'about representation', about how Aids has been represented and discussed throughout society. More a collection of essays than a unified work, the eight chapters include a consideration of gay identity, an attack on the ignorant and vicious outpourings of the press and television and an assessment of the government's safe sex campaign. Simon Watney writes at times in a thoughtful and challenging way, particularly on pornography and homophobia, and for these sections, if for nothing else, the book deserves to be read.

For the most part, however, *Policing Desire* is marred by pedantic tirades about the popular use of phrases such as 'Aids victim', 'the Aids virus', 'Aids expert', etc, by a mawkish attitude to the suffering caused by Aids (which reinforces the victim mentality) and by a naive indignation at both the 'wicked' media for its 'total and absolute irresponsibility' and 'a supposedly democratic society where governments are supposed to protect the rights of all subjects'.

Much of this undoubtedly derives from the usual overestimation of the power of the demon mass media; or as he puts it, 'How a particular group is represented determines in a very real sense what it can do in society.' Of course no one objects to the press and TV getting a good drubbing, and subjecting their prejudices to close and angry examination does no harm. There are, however, more serious shortcomings in the book.

Watney repeats some common and dangerous myths about Aids. In particular he argues that 'everyone is at risk' and advocates a rejection of the concept of high-risk categories. It is interesting that he provides only the scantiest reference to the facts and figures on this issue. The truth is that by the end of October 1987 in Britain 8 000 were HIV positive and 1123 people had developed Aids. Only nine of these were heterosexuals without high-risk contact. Six of these heterosexuals have died. Between 1986 and

1987 the proportion of entirely heterosexual cases of the disease being contracted in America fell from 6.8 per cent to 4.3 per cent. In other words, 95.7 per cent of Aids victims in America belong to high-risk groups.

The point is that HIV (the human immunodeficiency virus) remains extremely rare and continues to be extremely difficult to catch in this country. Homosexuals who engage in unprotected anal intercourse and drug users who share needles (or have done so over the past five or six years) are the people at high risk of contracting the disease.

Watney instinctively recognises this but his understanding cannot penetrate beyond the 'discourse' and the 'rhetoric' with which he is obsessed. The problem, for him, is not the safe sex campaign itself, nor anything so obvious as its political motivation and function. His main criticism appears to be that the government failed to eroticise the campaign; it simply associated homosexuality with disease. Never once does it appear to strike him how barmy it is to call on the government to eroticise anything — let alone anal intercourse between men!

The very idea that Margaret Thatcher (or for that matter Neil Kinnock)



Joe Boatman

A POLICEMAN EXPLAINS GOVERNMENT POLICY ON HOMOSEXUALITY TO A GAY MAN ON SATURDAY'S MARCH

For some reason Watney wants to deny the significance of the figures. He appears to be groping towards an understanding of the importance of fighting against the criminal status of gay sexuality as a key element in the fight against Aids itself. Yet he fails to see how the government's safe sex campaign has made that criminalisation more likely and more secure. The campaign has spread fear and alarm throughout the entire population, the vast majority of whom are at no risk whatsoever. The effect of course has been that gays have been scapegoated and made increasingly vulnerable to a new wave of attacks — from queer-bashing to Clause 27.

would sponsor a campaign promoting positive images of homosexuality betrays the depth of Watney's confusion. It is a confusion which runs through the book. For example, on the basis of an extremely superficial and fanciful comparison with 'libertarian' America, he complains, 'In the absence of a written British constitution, it remains impossible to defend lesbian and gay culture in any of its forms against arbitrary prosecution.' Like many radical gay commentators Watney's hatred of the establishment never prevents him begging them to protect us...from them.

Don Milligan

the next step

REMEMBER BLOODY SUNDAY

On Sunday 30 January 1972, 30 000 Irish people took to the streets of Derry to protest at the denial of civil rights under British military occupation. From Derry, Finn O'Foyle remembers a day few Irish people will ever forget

The nationalist people in Derry and throughout the Six Counties of Northern Ireland had long been angry about

discrimination and repression; in the winter of 1971-72 we had a new and bitter grievance — internment. In August 1971 the Stormont regime, which then administered British rule in the Six Counties, exercised its powers to intern in prison camps, without charge or trial, anybody it suspected of active opposition to the state. Stormont prime minister Brian Faulkner also immediately imposed a 12-month ban on all demonstrations.

Internment only intensified resistance. Protests began with rent and rate strikes. They carried on with non-payment of television, car and even dog licences; then people stopped paying gas and electricity bills and even hire purchase payments. Local government in many areas came to a standstill.

By December reports of torture inside the internment camps sparked off further protests. Groups of trade unionists, civil rights activists and republicans gathered to plan defiance of the ban on public demonstrations. On Christmas Day 1971 4000 people marched through the snow from Belfast to Long Kesh concentration camp 10 miles away. There was jubilation in the nationalist ghettos throughout the Six Counties. The British Army

had been outmanoeuvred, Stormont's law had been flouted...and the marching season had begun.

The Civil Rights Association called the next demonstration in Derry for the end of January. As usual, Loyalist reactionaries did Britain's dirty work, stomping around the Six Counties stirring up sectarian animosity and military coercion. Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party demanded firm action against 'Catholic lawlessness'. Faulkner had to do something drastic about the anti-internment marches. He had solid support from the British state. The authorities at Westminster considered that a short, sharp shock for those who would not accept the terms of British rule in Ireland was long overdue.

On 26 January 1972 Faulkner held talks with the officer commanding the occupying forces, General Tuzo. On 27 January Faulkner flew to London for private discussions with Tory prime minister Edward Heath. On 28 January a high-level defence policy meeting was convened immediately after a session of the 'inner cabinet'. Something out of the ordinary was in the offing. By now Faulkner had a public commitment from the Army that they would take some, as yet unspecified, action against 'illegal marchers'. On 29 January Ian Paisley called off the DUP's

planned counter-demo after receiving assurances that the civil rights march would be stopped 'by force if necessary'.

These deliberations were concealed from the throng that set off in high spirits from Derry's Catholic Creggan estate on the afternoon of Sunday 30 January, heading for the city centre. One man, however, had his instructions — Colonel Derek Wilford, who commanded the First Battalion of the Parachute Regiment. He was later to receive the OBE for his work that day.

The British Army allowed the march to leave the Creggan, but prevented it from marching to the Guildhall Square by using barbed wire barriers and armoured vehicles. The organisers diverted the demonstration to a mass meeting at Free Derry Corner, some 500 yards from the Army position at William Street. While Bernadette Devlin and Fenner Brockway addressed the mass gathering, a small section of the marchers stayed at the Army barriers protesting at not being permitted to march on. Youths threw stones in reply to dye-spraying and CS gas, and the Army brought up water-cannon to disperse the small crowd. By Derry standards the protest was slight, and the chances of injury to the troops negligible.

By 4.15pm, people from this small crowd, fleeing from intense gas and baton attacks, were either walking or running down Rossville Street, making their way to the mass meeting. Suddenly, three companies of the Parachute Regiment swept along this main thoroughfare in armoured cars. Troops were hastily deployed into firing positions. Without warning, they began shooting at the unarmed crowd.

The hundreds of eye-witnesses told a horrifying story:

Irish Freedom Movement 01-729 0414

TROOPS OUT OF IRELAND NOW

DEMONSTRATE

Saturday 30 January
Assemble 12.30
Whittington Park,
Holloway Road
London N19

Sixteen years after Bloody Sunday, march against the British occupation of Ireland

Supported by the Irish in Britain Representation Group, the Troops Out Movement, the Labour Committee on Ireland, the Irish Freedom Movement

RALLY
Speaker invited from Derry
7.30pm Friday 29 January
Caxton House,
129 St John's Way,
N19 (Archway tube)
Followed by a benefit disco
Admission (rally and disco)
£3/£1.50 unemployed



• Kevin McElhinney was on his hands and knees crawling away from the gunfire when a soldier shot him. The bullet entered his left buttock and travelled through his body to exit at the left shoulder.

• Bernard MacGuigan was shot in the back of his head as he crawled on his stomach toward the dying Pat Doherty.

• As everybody fled for their lives, Gerald McKinney stood still, holding his hands above his head. A soldier came up and shot him in the chest at point-blank range.

Within minutes, 13 people were dead, another died later. Seventeen more were seriously wounded.

The Army version of events, in official statements in the house of commons by the defence minister, was a tangle of lies. They claimed they opened fire after coming under attack from nail-bombers and a 'fusillade of 50-80 shots from the area of Rossville and Glenfada flats'. No independent witness from among the scores of journalists and other observers present — many of whom were hostile to the republican cause — believed that IRA volunteers were active that day. The British Army could produce neither bullets nor bomb fragments.

The British Army claimed that 'in all cases, soldiers fired aimed shots at men identified as gunmen and bombers.' Forensic tests showed that those killed could have had no contact whatever with any weapons; no weapons were

found on them; no charges were brought against those wounded. The Army also claimed that some of those shot were on their wanted list; this was later disproved. They said they shot at snipers in the flats, but all the casualties were at ground level.

After Bloody Sunday the government set up a 'tribunal of inquiry' under former British Army officer Lord Widgery. Simon Winchester was a *Guardian* journalist present on Bloody Sunday who himself narrowly escaped the Paras' bullets. He writes in his book, *On Holy Terror*, that 'Widgery's conclusions were at astonishing variance with his own report; and the matter of "leaking" the document itself was an appalling travesty of honesty, for which both the British government and the British press should feel ashamed.' Widgery's whitewash was gratefully accepted; the press helped to ensure that his minor criticisms of the paratroopers were ignored.

Widgery's report astonished British liberals — especially those who saw for themselves the reality of what happened on Bloody Sunday. But it caused little surprise in Derry. The massacre was consistent with the role of the British Army since its return to Irish streets in 1969 — to terrorise and break the resistance of the nationalist community. Sixteen years later, they are still trying — and they are as far away from success as ever.