

EMPLOYMENT

BRITAIN'S BLACK POPULATION

EMPLOYMENT

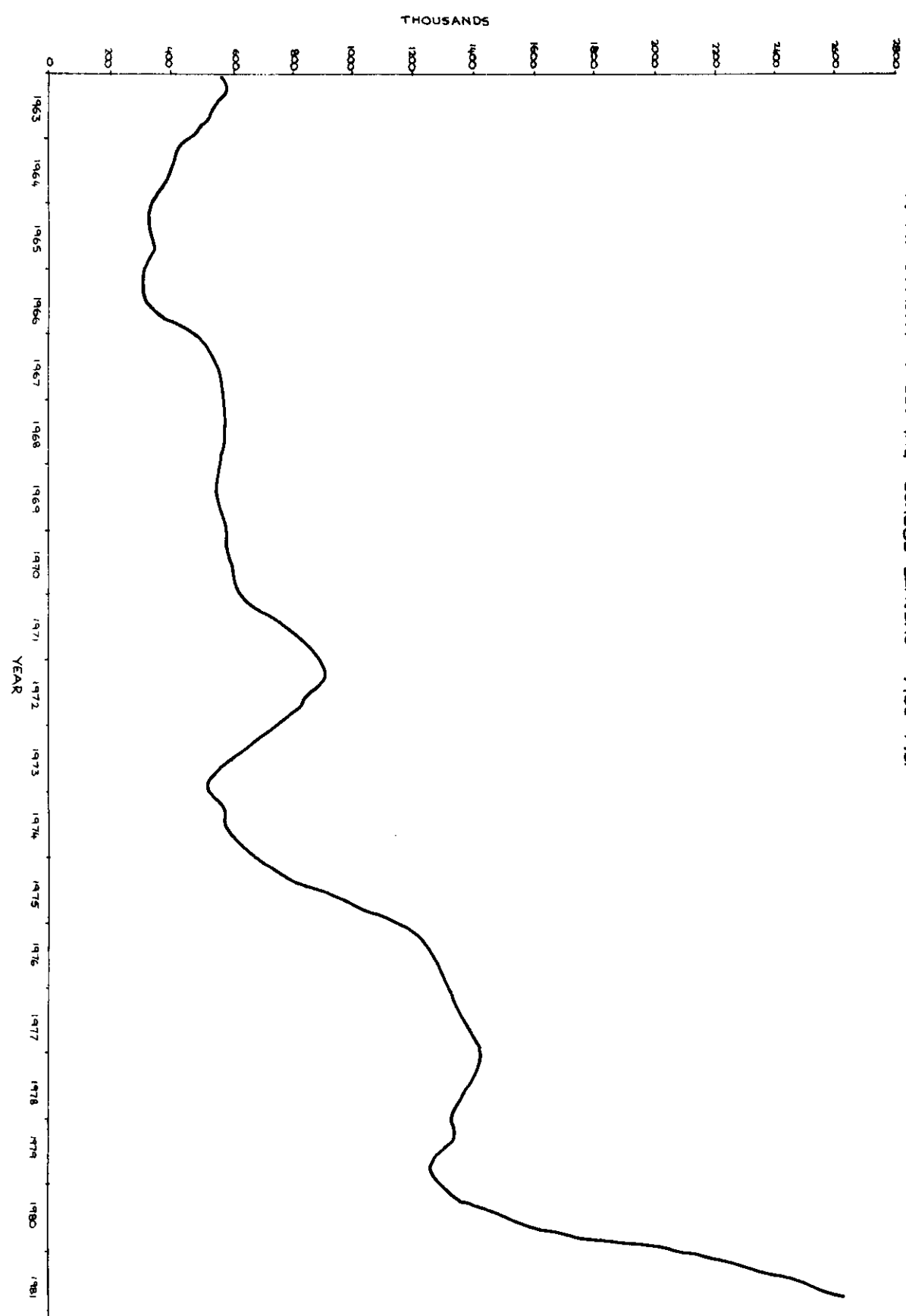
SEAN PHILLIPS

5.11.1981

Since the publication of the book, Britain's Black Population, there has been, without doubt, a worsening of the race relations situation in Britain. The summer of 1981 saw race riots in Brixton, Southall and Toxteth amongst other inner-city areas. Some saw this as a response to the decline in employment opportunities, for young people as a whole, and the black population in particular. Figure 1 shows the level of unemployment excluding school leavers from 1963 to the present. The recent upsurge, from 1979 through to 1981, is undoubtedly of concern to members of ethnic minorities who have usually been the first to suffer in times of rising unemployment rates. It is important to see how this trend in employment and unemployment is reflected in the role of ethnic minorities in the labour force, and how they have been affected by those trends.

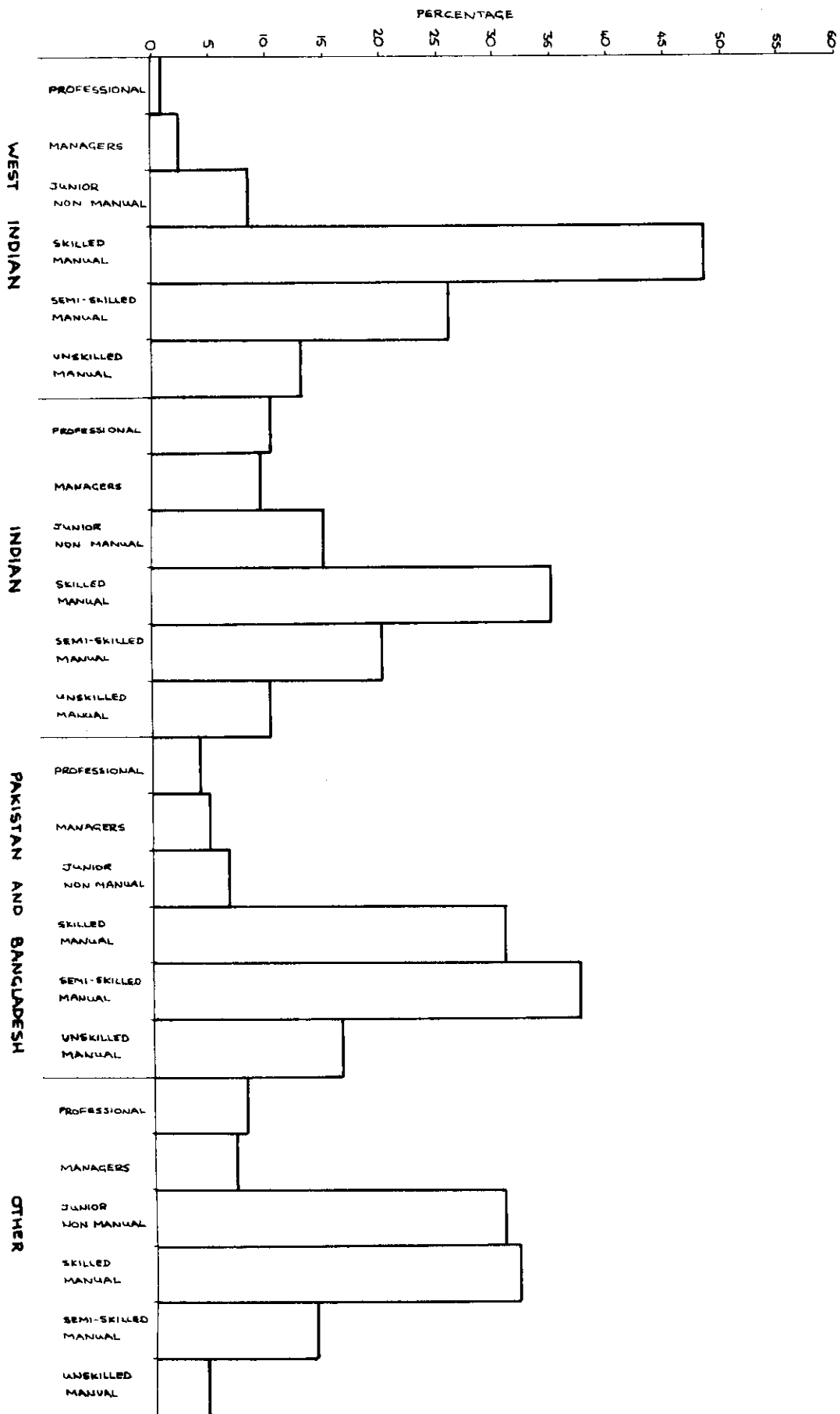
What sort of jobs do black people hold in the British society? Figure 2 shows the distribution, by socio-economic group, of ethnic minorities who have worked in 1977-78, using information obtained from the National Dwelling and Household Survey of the same years. It is readily apparent that black workers fall largely into the categories of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers. They can thus be expected to do more shift work and earn lower wages than white employees who fill far more of the tertiary posts. Black workers remain grossly under-represented at supervisory and at managerial levels. Figure 3 illustrates the geographical distribution of economically active members of ethnic minorities, the greatest concentrations being evident in the South East, particularly Greater London, and the West Midlands. This corresponds to the large number of transport and labouring jobs in the South East, and labouring in heavy industries in the West Midlands. Activity rates for the various minorities are illustrated in Figure 4. It can be seen how there is a high degree of activity amongst men from all ethnic minorities, the significant variation being the activity rates of women. A very high percentage of West Indian women are economically active, possibly due to the absence of a language barrier, something that is not true of Asian women. It is also likely that religious barriers to working are of significance to women of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin.

FIGURE 1
UNEMPLOYMENT EXCLUDING SCHOOL LEAVERS 1963-1981



SOURCE - EMPLOYMENT GAZETTE
OCT '81

FIGURE 2
DISTRIBUTION, BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP, OF PERSONS OF ETHNIC ORIGINS WHO HAVE
WORKED 1977-1978



SOURCE - EMPLOYMENT
GAZETTE

AUG '80

NDHS '77-8

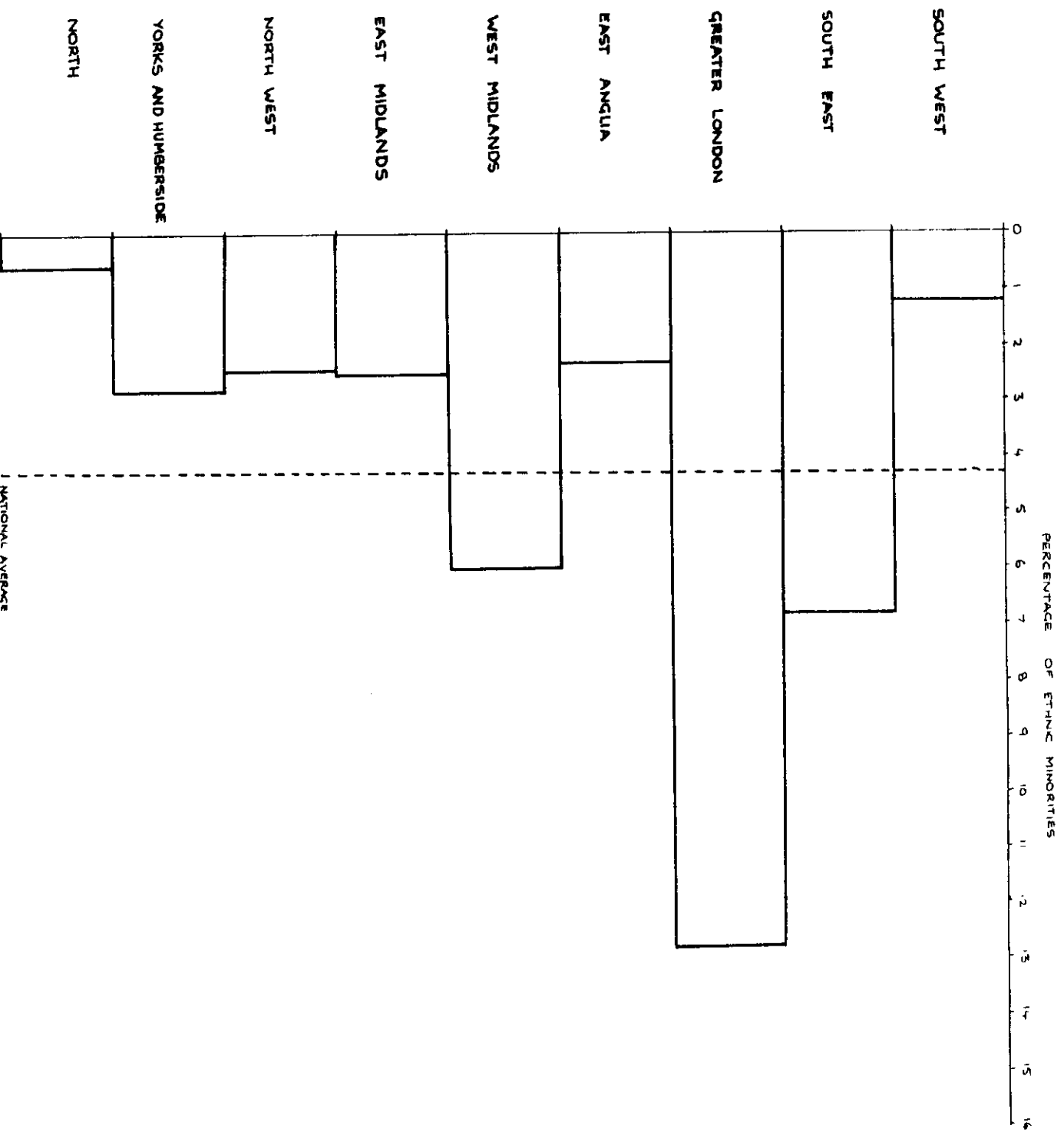
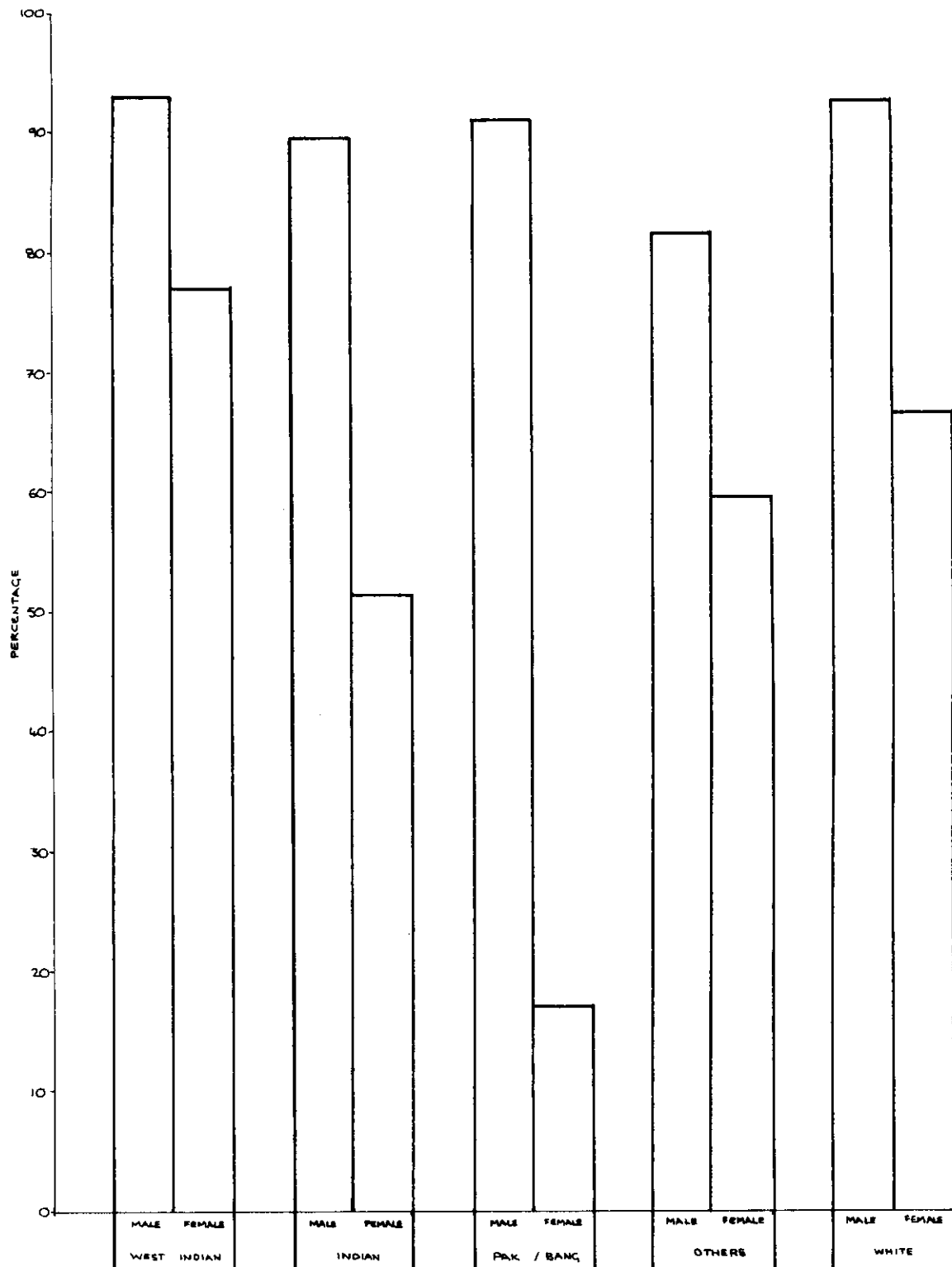


FIGURE 3
ETHNIC MINORITIES AS A
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
REGIONAL WORKFORCE

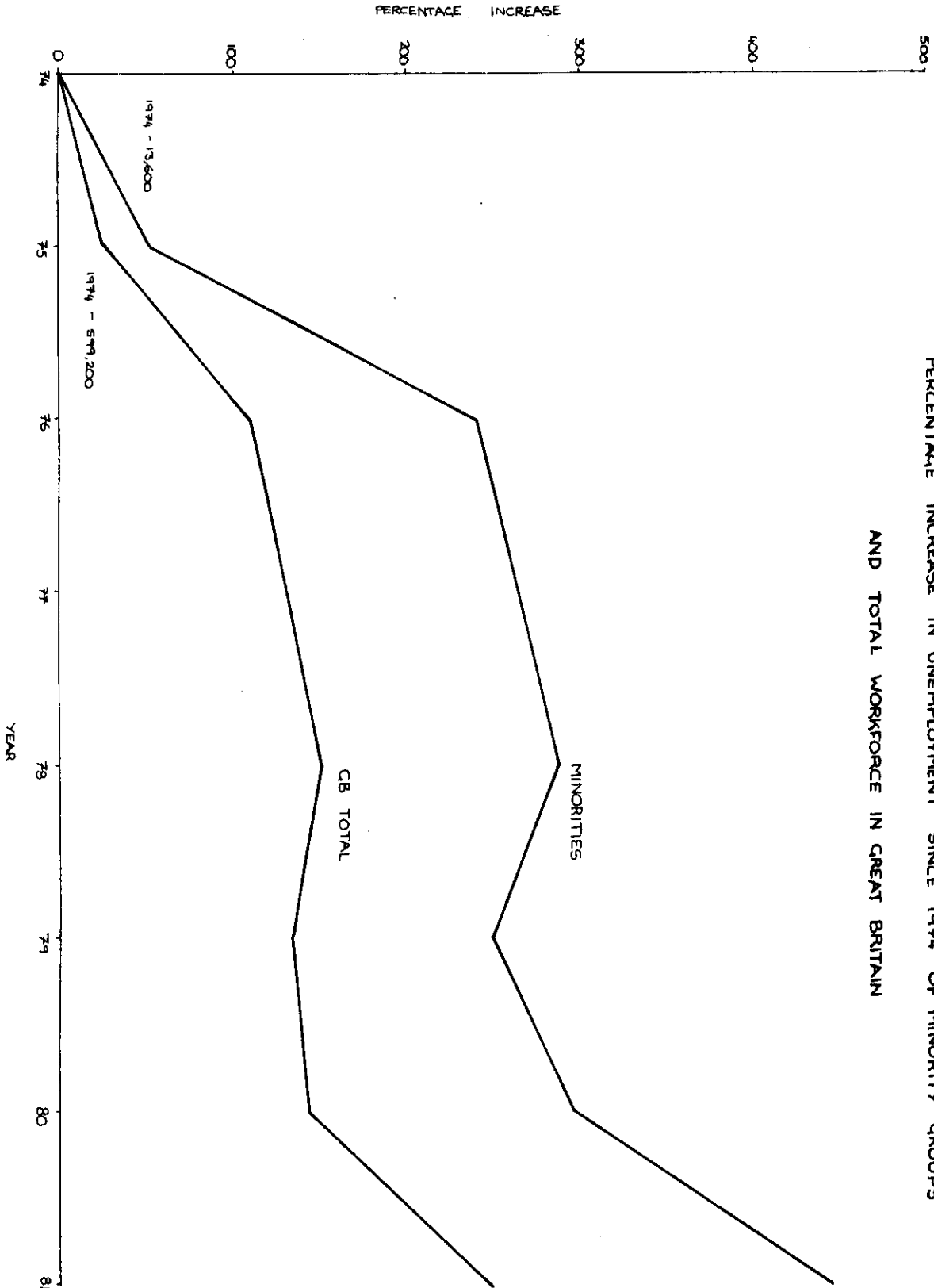
SOURCE - EMPLOYMENT GAZETTE
AUG '80
NDHS '77-8

FIGURE 4
ACTIVITY RATES 16-65 BY SEX AND ETHNIC ORIGIN



SOURCE - EMPLOYMENT GAZETTE
AUG '80
NDHS '77-8

FIGURE 5
 PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN UNEMPLOYMENT SINCE 1974 OF MINORITY GROUPS
 AND TOTAL WORKFORCE IN GREAT BRITAIN



SOURCE - EMPLOYMENT GAZETTE

SEP '81

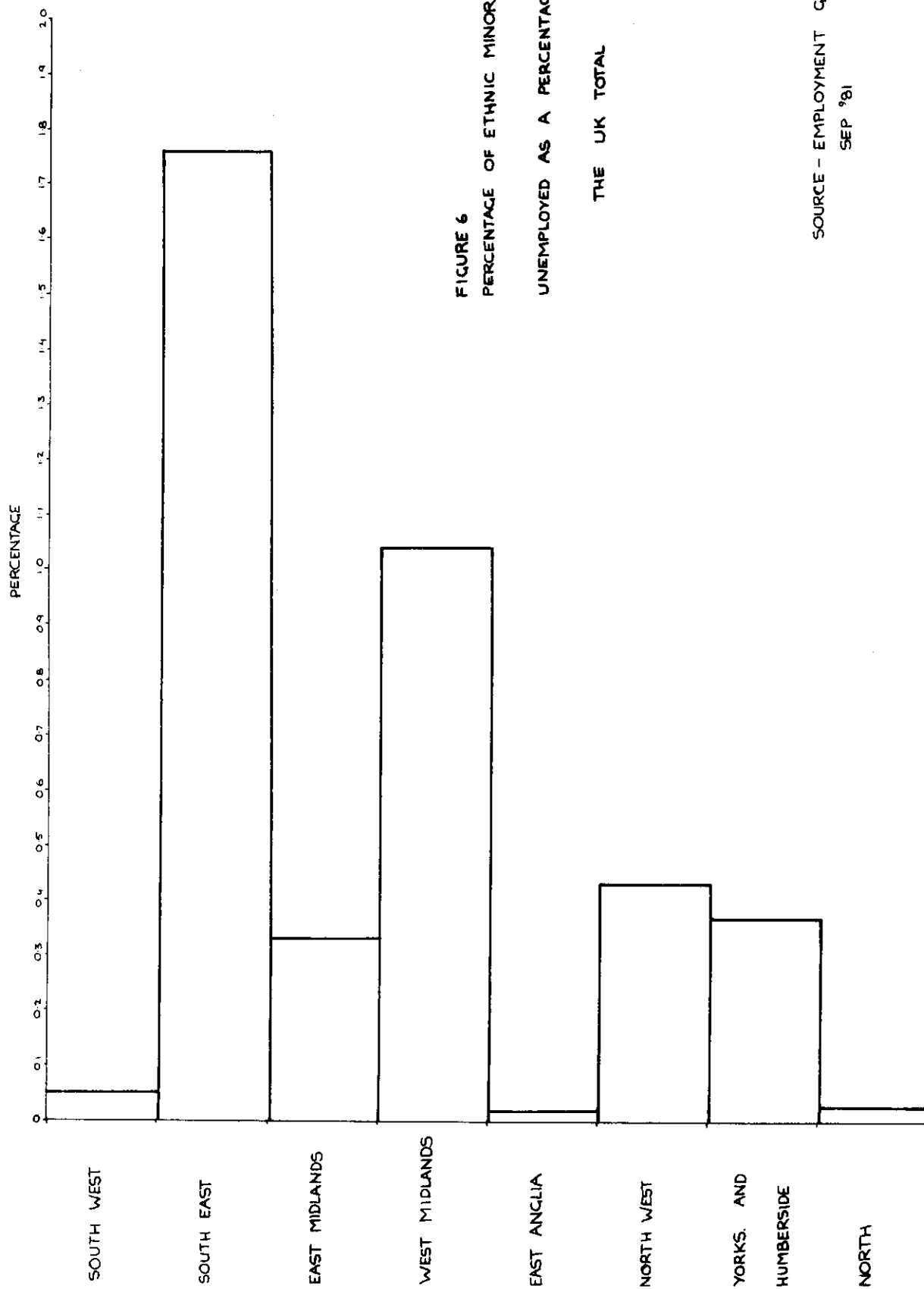


FIGURE 6
PERCENTAGE OF ETHNIC MINORITIES
UNEMPLOYED AS A PERCENTAGE OF
THE UK TOTAL

SOURCE - EMPLOYMENT GAZETTE
SEP '81

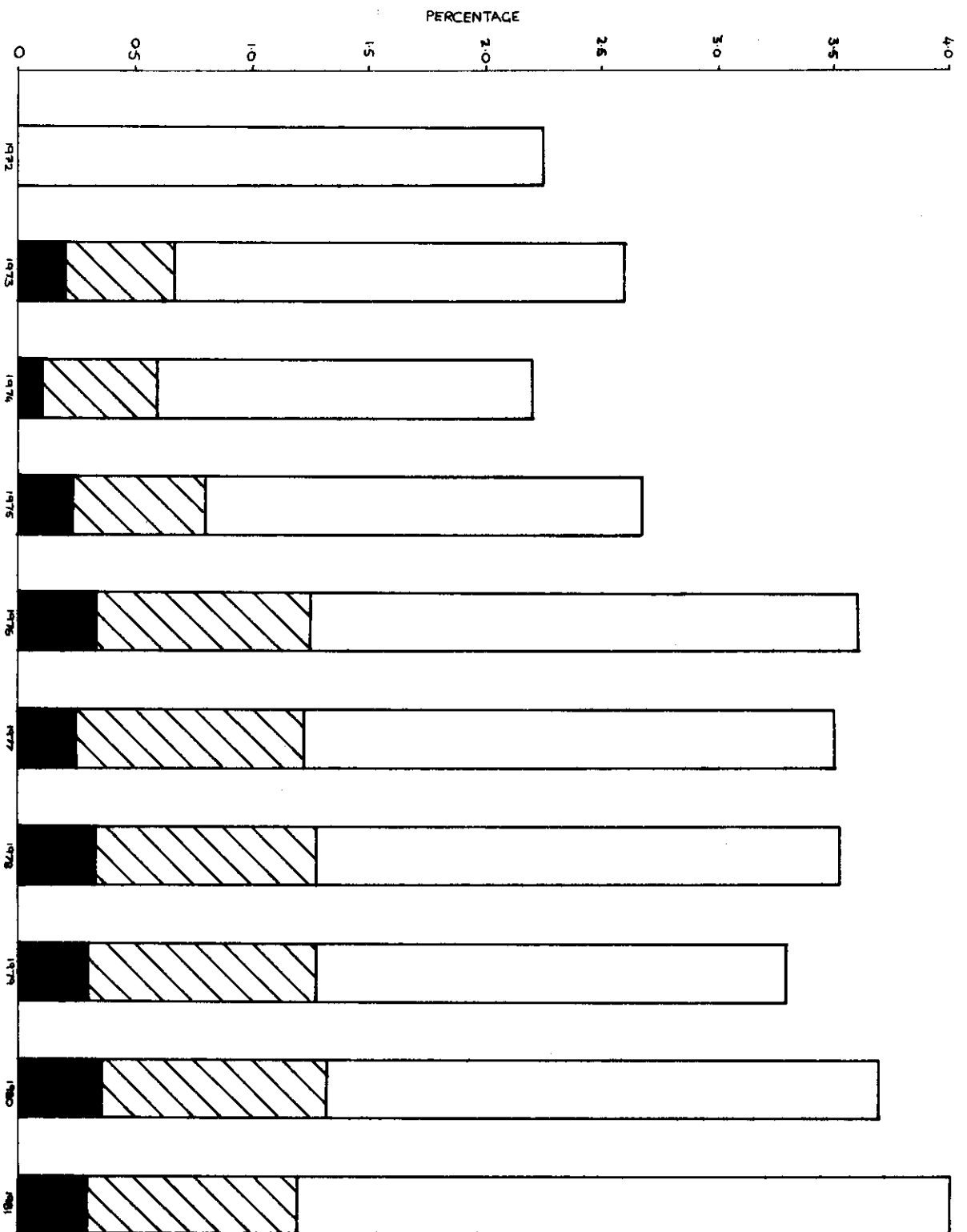


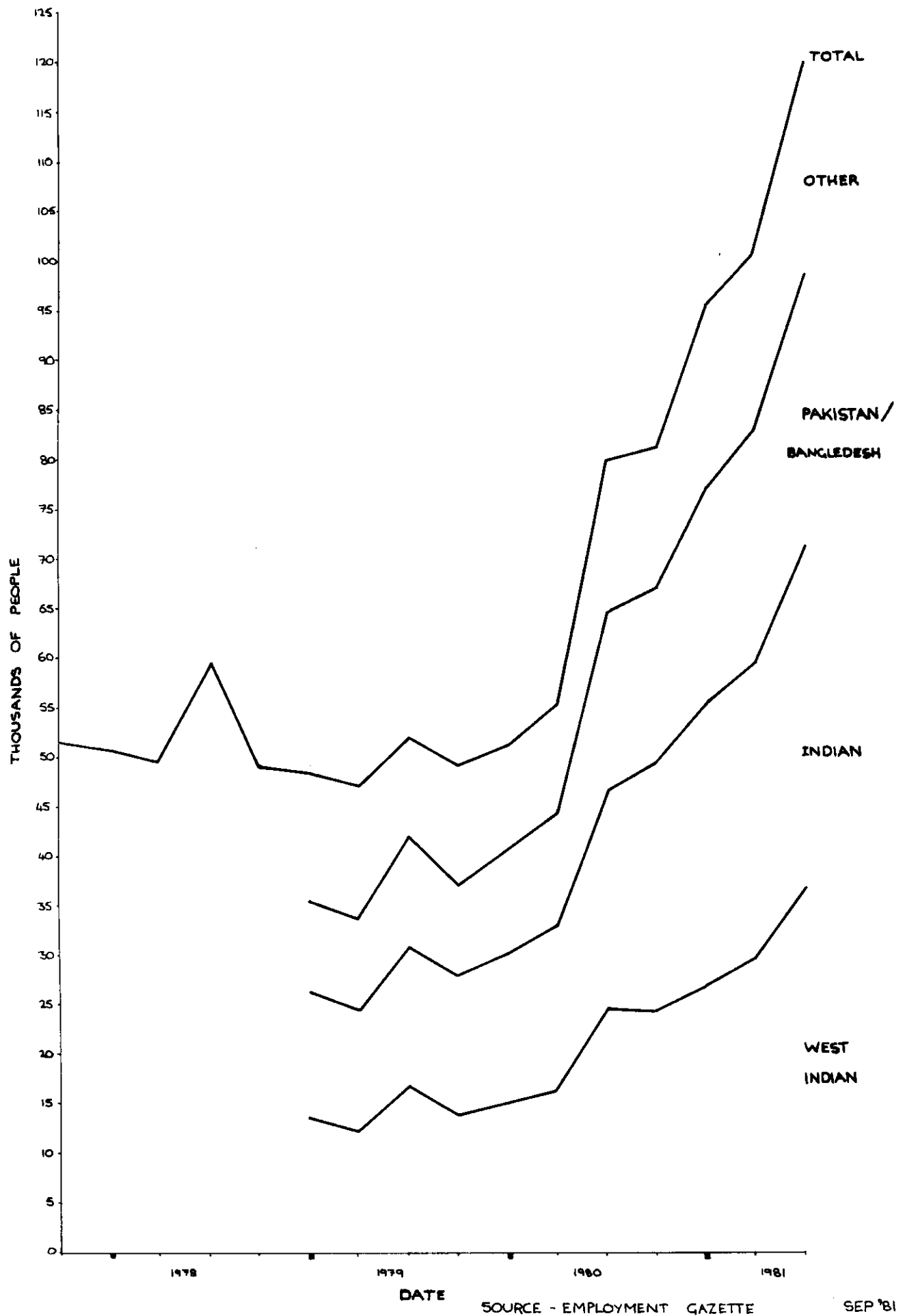
FIGURE 7
UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG
MINORITY GROUPS AS A
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL
UNEMPLOYMENT

25 +
18-24
16-17

SOURCE - EMPLOYMENT GAZETTE
MARCH '81

FIGURE 8

COMPOSITE LINE GRAPH SHOWING NUMBERS OF UNEMPLOYED AMONG ETHNIC MINORITIES



As has already been noted, in times of high unemployment, ethnic minorities are more greatly affected than the white population. Figure 5 lends this theory credence. The rate of unemployment amongst black people is far greater than the population of the country as a whole. This can be attributed to redundancies on a "last in, first out" basis, the greater increases in unemployment in the South East and the West Midlands, racial discrimination, lack of skills in the English language amongst recent Asian immigrants, and also due to the increasing proportion of black school leavers. Figure 6 demonstrates the regional imbalances in unemployment amongst ethnic minorities, particularly high in the regions in which most blacks live. Figure 7 shows how the current recession is causing more blacks to stay on at school, hence the fall in registered unemployment in the 16-17 year age category, yet the 18-24 and 25+ are both experiencing increases in the levels of unemployment. It should be noted that the situation has worsened since the publication of these figures in March 1981. Figure 8 demonstrates how the unemployment level among ethnic minorities can be broken down. It is readily apparent that the recession has tripled unemployment, since February 1979, amongst West Indians, Indians and minorities from Pakistan and Bangladesh. The trend in unemployment remains upward but, as reference to figure 1 will show, the staggering rate of increase appears to be, at last, slowing.

Many practical difficulties were encountered in the search for appropriate statistics. Only census information can give any indication of the extent of the black workforce, an important consideration when determining rates of activity and unemployment. Information on activity rates, socio-economic groupings, earnings and shift work can only come from periodic surveys which may not be truly representative of the national trend. The National Dwelling and Household Survey of 1977-1978 for example covered only one half of one per cent. Hardly adequate for conclusive findings. The survey also came in the latter half, rather than the beginning of a decade, making comparisons to census data difficult in view of the different time scale. It is apparent that a wealth of information will come to light when the 1981 census is published, yet by then although the problems posed by the recession may become apparent, their solution can only come too late.

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 June 1979 June 1980 June 1981
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 unemployment December 1979 September 1980 October 1981
 statistics December 1981
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Sean Phillips is a second year student on the BA Geography course
 at Sheffield City Polytechnic.

In one of the strongest displays of
 public feeling seen in the city for several
 years, the banner-waving demonstra-
 tors called for an immediate change in

massive Day of Action policies.
 Among those taking part were worker
 Sheffield's Firth Brown steel plant where
 redundancies are planned and hundreds of

met by protesting cater-
 ing students who are pro-
 viding meals at cost price.
 Only people
 into the building

Blacks to set up own into Deptford fire ca

By Aileen Ballantyne
 Relatives and friends of the
 13 young blacks who died at
 the Deptford birthday party
 fire in south London are to
 hold their own public commis-
 sion of inquiry into the cir-
 cumstances surrounding the
 fire. The committee has sent out
 invitations to 20 academics,
 trade unionists, and scientists,
 including one British forensic

get at the truth of what hap-
 pened. It would be set up on
 the same lines as a govern-
 ment commission of inquiry,
 he said.

The committee has sent out
 invitations to 20 academics,
 trade unionists, and scientists,
 including one British forensic

MOLRIKE Y IS BUS STRIKE DAY

Plant Firth Brown are set
 to go ahead with plans to

Left-wing Labour call to fight cuts

By Michael Morris
 Manchester's Left-dominated
 City Labour Party is calling
 for an anti-cuts campaign by
 the Labour group in control of
 the city council. This was re-
 commended at a six-hour party
 meeting in the town hall yes-
 terday as a way out of a
 dilemma in which Manchester
 is faced with the worst round
 of cuts yet—£45 million on the
 eve of a city council election
 in May.

Times journalists fight wage freeze

By Michael Smith,
 Industry Correspondent

A new row is looming at the
 Times, where journalists are
 fighting attempts by the man-
 agement to impose a six-month
 wage freeze.

Members of the National
 Union of Journalists will hold
 a chapel meeting today in sup-
 port of their union officers' call
 for a total rejection of the

cuts the continuing losses. Mr
 Rupert Murdoch, whose Austral-
 ian firm, News International
 owns Times Newspapers, is not
 expected to be present.

The row with the NUJ fol-
 lows the Times management's
 decision not to discuss a new
 wage agreement with journa-
 lists from January 1.

The Times argue that
 journalists' salaries were last
 raised on July 1 1981, and

SHEFFIELD'S
 buses will be off
 the road again on
 Monday in protest
 against Govern-
 ment policies on
 transport and
 industry.

The "almost unani-
 mous" decision to join
 in the day of protest
 was taken by
 Sheffield's 2,500 bus

In particular, says Mr.
 Gleeson, he is worried
 that the new doubts
 about the legality of
 South Yorkshire's cheap

"The men are con-
 cerned about their jobs",
 said Alex Waugh, chair-
 man of South Yorkshire
 Passenger Transport