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YOUTH FOR SOCIALISM

Lobby the Trades Union Congress

7 September 9a.m.
Winter Gardens, Blackpool

No trade union collaboration with the MSC!
Smash YTS and all other cheap labour schemes!

- For a massive public works programme with union rights and union rates of pay!
- For a 30-hour week with no loss of pay!
- For workers' control of skill training: a return to the apprenticeship system with full rates of pay!
- Trade unions must recruit unemployed and all scheme workers!
- For the unity of unemployed and employed workers!

'No blackmail' says Scargill

'I WANT Margam, but not blackmail tactics . . . I say no extended week or day. Our forefathers fought too hard, they fought all their lives for a five-day-week agreement.'

'The only changes I will consider are for a four-day week.'

'The fight back begins now. When balloting, if the board refuse to withdraw, say yes to the union and no to the board,' declared Arthur Scargill in a powerful speech to a packed meeting of Wearmouth miners in Washington last week.

'I got the feeling at Conference from the rank and file that the five-day-week agreement was not for sale and I hope the NEC have the same view,' Scargill continued to stormy applause.

Scargill, who was vilified by the union leaders in Durham when he first warned about the pit closure programme before being elected president, had earlier spoken about the issues now at stake, a challenge which affects everyone.

Using the steel unions as an example, he explained that since their capitulation to British Steel, 125,000 jobs had gone. There had been a loss of bargaining rights, and at local level there was instant dismissal and the

BY GEOFF HARTNELL

worst industrial relations in the country.

On the issue of six-day working which is supported by the area leaderships in Scotland and Wales, Scargill said British Coal want miners to work six days a week and a pit to work 52 weeks a year.

'This,' he said 'would only be the first step to seven-day working, 52 weeks a year — giving a production increase of 30 per cent whilst the market for coal is static at 90,000,000 tonnes.'

'Where would the extra coal go?' Scargill asked. He explained that every single pit which produces coal at a cost of £42 per ton would close.

Those which produced coal at a cost of more than £38 per ton would follow them in closing.

'Without struggle, without resistance, this would mean 120,000 mining jobs reduced

● TURN TO PAGE 16

LONDON STREET SCENE



SEE PAGE 2

MINERS' ANGER

BY THE EDITOR

'THIS is more than the 1984-1985 strike to us. It's our life, our standard of living. At the end of the day we don't want a ball and chain round our ankles.'

That is how John Picken, President of the NUM at Frickley Colliery, expressed his views to Workers Press last week. He was speaking in the course of one of the most significant movements of workers since the end of the miners' strike.

The Frickley stoppage began when five men were suspended for refusing to attend a disciplinary hearing. They had been charged with leaving the pit before the end of the shift on the eve of a holiday.

In the ordinary course of events, this might not have caused more than a ripple. But anger quickly erupted at the imposition of British Coal's new disciplinary code and other bullying tactics by man-

agement. Nobody can forget that miners sacked during the 1985 strike are still out of the industry.

Over the signature of the Frickley manager, 14,000 letters were sent out to miners throughout the South Yorkshire coalfield, threatening them with dismissal if they came out on strike.

A nation-wide ballot of NUM members is being held next week over the new disciplinary code, on 'industrial action short of strikes'. The Frickley men were not satisfied that this proposal was strong enough.

Branch secretary Steve Tulley

described it as 'a complete waste of time.' The built-up frustration boiled over into anger.

On Monday British Coal chiefs even threw out the suggestion of negotiations on the code. The new rules allow the Board to sack miners for offences committed off British Coal premises, and even if they are found not guilty by a court.

Last Monday Frickley men picketed seven other Yorkshire collieries, which stopped work as a result. Three further pits which were not picketed also stopped.

Under pressure, from both the area executive and the management, pickets were called off by the Frickley branch committee on Monday afternoon. A branch meeting on Tuesday morning voted to return to work the following day.

The importance of this movement must not be underestimated. It extends far beyond Yorkshire, and the mining industry. The rights and conditions of every section of the working class are now under siege. The problem of how to repel these attacks confronts the whole class.

Sections of the working class — within the unions, the unemployed and in local councils — have tried every avenue to solve the problems they face.

The miners' strike, Wapping and

many other smaller but equally stubborn disputes show clearly that reforms of the system are no longer possible. Thatcher, representing capitalism in decay, is hell-bent on unloading the crisis on the backs of the working class. Workers are fighting back.

The Workers Revolutionary Party and its paper Workers Press have argued, against many sections of the left, that to call the ending of the miners' strike of 1984-1985 a defeat is absolutely wrong.

What is now clear is that Thatcher and the employers have made the same miscalculation. They too think that the working class in Britain is prostrate, and that the re-election of Thatcher opens the way for an onslaught against the working class, its organisations and its conditions of life.

The Frickley eruption demonstrates how wrong they are. Frickley, by the way, was one of the pits where the return to work in 1985, with banners flying, was halted by a few pickets from Kent, where the return had not yet been agreed.

All these struggles, which are in line with movements internationally, have several features in common. There is a determination unlike any of the movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

Workers are not deflected in

the slightest by the economic problems of capitalism. New sections, young people and women especially, are drawn into struggle.

They collide violently with every wing of the bureaucracy. These are people fighting for control over their own lives.

The problem they face is the central one of leadership: how can these movements be unified and directed against the enemy class as a whole? In Britain this means: how can the working class be mobilised to get rid of the Thatcher regime?

The miners' return to work, like the Frickley return this week, did not reflect their weakness but the fact that they were left to fight alone. The lessons of the 1985 strike have still to be fully probed and understood.

The content of the NUM decision to have a national ballot over the new disciplinary code was revealed at Frickley. The result of the ballot will no doubt show the miners' determination to resist.

This Saturday's National Support Conference in Manchester Town Hall, and other such meetings, must discuss the question of how a leadership against Thatcher can be built.

Workers Press

Thatcher backs Gulf war threat

A UNITED STATES war fleet of nine warships, the aircraft carrier Constellation and several other vessels, is threatening Iran.

This must be what Thatcher had in mind on 17 July, when, flying to Washington to encourage Reagan, she claimed: 'America is the flagship of freedom, and she must sail into the sunrise.'

The Tory government is backing Reagan with deeds as well as words: Royal Navy ships are in the Gulf.

Thatcher's Washington trip followed talks with Iraq's ally, King Hussein of Jordan, and Morocco's King Hassan. Thatcher was said to be carrying a message on Middle East peace talks.

'When the statesmen (or stateswomen) talk of peace, the common people know they can expect war.' Thatcher sees Reagan, and the battleships move.

The US build-up came as the UN Security Council was voting for a resolution 'ordering' Iraq and Iran to agree a ceasefire. In a similar way, Britain and France called for an Israel-Egypt ceasefire in 1956, before launching the Suez invasion.

During the eight-year-long Gulf war, all five Security Council members, the United States, Britain, France, China and the Soviet Union, have been shipping in weapons to one or other side, and usually both. Last week's ceasefire call was the first time such a motion had been considered.

The Reagan administration is widely suspected at home of having stoked-up the Persian Gulf crisis, with its war threats, to overcome the scandal over secret US arms deals with Iran.

The US government raised a big fuss over reports that Iran was installing Chinese-made Silkworm missile batteries near the Straits of Hormuz.

This was given as a reason for placing half Kuwait's tanker fleet under the US flag, then offering US navy escorts. But a Kuwaiti official revealed the missiles story was nothing new. 'The Americans have known about the Silkworm missiles since last Summer'. (Herald-Tribune, 17 June).

Then Reagan pulled out that old chestnut, the 'Soviet threat'. At the Venice capitalist summit, Reagan spoke of working with the Soviet government for an end to the Gulf war. At home the posture was to 'warn off' the Soviet Union.

At the same time Reagan officials argued that if the US did not 'protect' Gulf shipping, the Soviets would step in.

The agreement to transfer 11 Kuwaiti tankers to a US holding company so they could become American-flag vessels, entitled to 'protection', came after the Kuwaitis had already got a deal with the Soviet Union.

Talk of 'freedom of navigation' in the Gulf is bull. There is a war on. Kuwaiti and other ships are carrying cargoes for one side.

US and British governments have never allowed 'freedom of navigation' for countries they oppose — remember the US blockade on Cuba? Or more recent mine-laying in Nicaraguan waters?

Ironically, it was an Iraqi plane firing a French-made Exocet, that sank the USS Stark in May, killing 28 crewmen. Assuming Reagan knows Iran from Iraq, this was just more grist to the mill of US war hysteria.

Reagan wants a war — just as Thatcher did over the Malvinas.

Incidentally, the clamour for protection of 'British' shipping in the Gulf afforded yet another glimpse of Tory patriotism. Rich shipowners whose vessels normally fly whatever flag is cheapest, in taxes or wages, suddenly turned nostalgic for the old 'Red Duster' so the Navy could be sent in.

Whatever the cost, in money or lives, it's the working class who pay.

We are for the defence of Iran and its people against US and British imperialism, neither of whom have any right to be in the Gulf.

The Iran-Iraq war and the bourgeois regimes of Saddam Hussein and Ayatollah Khomeini which have squandered their peoples' blood and opened the way for imperialist intervention, will be ended by the working masses of Iran and Iraq.

The much more dangerous mad nuclear warmongers of Washington and London must be brought down by the US and British working class. Get the Navy out of the Gulf. Labour must say no to Reagan and Thatcher's war, smash imperialist conspiracies, down with the NATO alliance!

An everyday occurrence?

BY CLARE COWEN

A FAMILY in a quiet street in south-east London were woken at 7a.m. last Thursday by the sound of a low-flying helicopter.

We shall call the parents Joe and Margaret. (Those are not their names.)

'That helicopter must be in trouble,' thought Joe as he turned over in bed.

'Joe, there's a man pointing a gun at the house,' exclaimed Margaret when she went to the window.

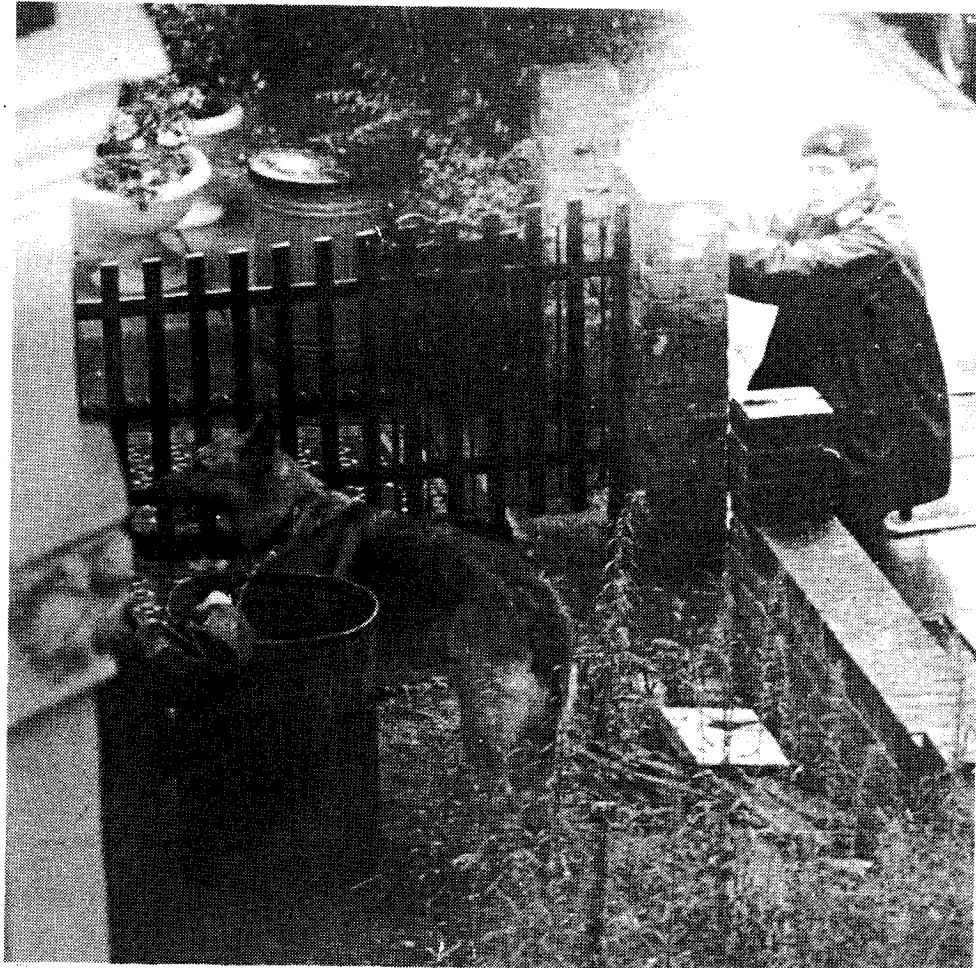
About 15 Blue Beret marksmen, stationed at strategic positions around the house, pointed their guns at No.77, while a police-woman, police with Alsatian dogs and senior officers sheltered from the pouring rain in nearby doorways.

At the back, marksmen were in the neighbouring gardens and houses under construction.

All the while the police helicopter hovered alarmingly low with a deafening roar.

What was going on? Was a criminal gunman holding the family at No.77 hostage? Had the house been broken into?

After shouted instructions — barely audible — from one of the Blue Berets, Margaret, her teenage daughter, son and small dog came out of the house to be escorted into a waiting police van.



A marksman (right) and dog-handler (left) wait outside No.77. Page 1 picture: Two of the Blue Beret marksmen hold Joe, who is concealed by the wall

As Joe's old mother came down the stairs, the Blue Beret told her to hurry. The old lady protested she could go no faster and refused to be lifted into the van because of her bad leg.

'I'm not getting in the van,' she told the police. 'I've done nothing wrong.'

Then Joe was told to come out. With difficulty he fol-

lowed the contradictory instructions from different officers.

A Blue Beret guided him, hands above his head, at point-blank gunpoint to another officer who frisked him while the Alsatians snarled and barked.

Margaret and her two children were taken to the local police station — and brought

home within the hour.

The unit came from Windsor, so Joe had to help direct his police driver to Marylebone police station.

Within a few hours he was home, with no charges laid. After questioning, he was given an apology.

So what was this extraordinary operation all about?

The police would only say it was something to do with the white car parked opposite Joe and Margaret's house.

A friend had asked him to keep an eye on his car, which had been parked outside for three weeks. During this time it excited no police interest.

The car was removed after the armed raid with no further explanation. Police at Marylebone did, however, tell Joe that one of the local police officers, who knew the family, had wanted to just knock on their door to make inquiries.

But by then the machinery for the raid had rolled on too far to stop.

Now Joe is back at work as usual. Margaret continues her normal life. Joe's mother is asking how the whole thing could happen and the teenagers are telling friends all about it.

'What frightens me,' said Margaret, 'is if this sort of thing becomes everyday life.'

It has.



Above: The 'hot' car that was supposed to be the reason for the armed raid is investigated by the whole collection of police officers involved

WORKERS at the Salford Plastics factory in Eccles have been on strike since 17 February after six men were laid off indefinitely. Dissatisfaction had been on the increase ever since the firm was bought by Barry Chapman from Ward and Goldstone in 1984. Since then workers have only had one wage rise.

Pickets say that Chapman continually pleaded poverty and at first the workforce cooperated in the interests of the firm. However, in 1985 Salford Plastics made £121,000 profit after tax and Chapman paid himself £75,000. Since 1984 the factory manager's job has changed hands seven times.

The strikers say Chapman treats his workers like dirt. They say he knows nothing about plastics manufacture and won't listen to their advice. As a result of this and Chapman's greed in putting up prices, the

Boss's greed

BY STUART CARTER

firm has lost numerous contracts.

The strike began with a secret ballot with 33 to three in favour. Chapman then sacked all the strikers. Since then scabs have been recruited but without a health and safety representative.

There have been several serious accidents: one worker was hospitalised for 10 weeks after his arm was mangled in an unguarded rolling machine. Another was temporarily blinded when a machine blew up in his face.

When I was there the scabs were drifting into work at all hours. Salford Plastics is now

having to import hosepiping — their main product — to keep up with customers' orders.

Another firm, Eagley Plastics of Bolton, is also helping to supply customers, the main ones being Woolworth, B&Q and Texas Homecare.

Chapman is typical of the 'get rich quick capitalists' that the Tories are encouraging. Jim Billington, who has worked there for 34 years says: 'We've watched our life's work being poured down the drain by this man.' The strikers are members of the Transport and General Workers Union.

● Money and messages of support should be sent to: Jim Billington, 43 Abingdon Road, Urmston, Manchester, M31 1GW.

● For further information telephone 061-789 1691.

LONDON BUSES

One rate of pay and a 35-hour week!

BUS drivers at Norbiton garage in Surrey gave a swift answer to the London Buses court victory on wage cuts and longer hours. Wage cuts and longer hours are not unlawful, the court decided.

A mass meeting of Norbiton drivers on Thursday last week voted to take the next day off to allow everyone to vote in a strike ballot.

An all-out strike vote was lost by only two votes, but the garage committee was given full authority to call whatever form of industrial action they think fit by 137 votes to seven.

After the vote at Norbiton, six of the 26, who had decided to leave following the court decision, withdrew their resignation saying: 'If there is going to be a fight for our wages and hours we will stay.'

Another 30 were expected to leave within the next few weeks. London Buses will then be unable to run the bus services they have just won, because the wages offered are too low and the hours behind the wheel too long.

London Buses has now announced that it has won by tender all the routes at their own Harrow garage. The employers are to inform the union this week of their plans to increase the hours of work at Harrow so that drivers earn the same money.

The transport union's London Bus Committee meeting last Monday called for a fleet ballot on Friday 24 July for limited industrial action in defence of fleet wage and hours agreements.

The danger facing London Bus crews and engineers is garage-by-garage wage bargaining, leaving each garage — even each route — with a

BY ROY THOMAS

different rate of pay or different hours of work.

The demand must be for one rate of pay and a 35-hour working week for all London Bus crews.

A special meeting of the London Transport trade union committee was called for Tuesday afternoon to receive reports of the bus crews' action, and from London Transport builders who

No choice

TERRY ALLEN, London district secretary for the busmen: 'In a society where everybody is supposed to have a choice, we have been left with none.'

have been on strike for three weeks over redundancies.

With the clearly stated intention of London Regional Transport to privatise parts of the London Underground network, the selling of the bus engineering works at Chiswick, and the new attacks on bus crews' conditions, a common front and a common fight of all London's transport workers is now a matter of extreme urgency.

Whatever the past rivalries, whatever the past inter-union or inter-grade disputes, unity of all London Transport workers is vital.

'We cannot abandon Norbiton'

IN A message to London busworkers, the Bus Committee have said:

'Following the decision of the High Court, the London Bus Section recognises that an acceptable solution to our differences with our employer is not attainable at law.

'We note that the action of London Buses Ltd to give dismissal notices to the workforce at Norbiton Garage and offer, as the only alternative, the same job at lower wages with longer hours, is lawful.

'We also note that London busworkers have no recourse to severance pay or redundancy arising from the tendering of services at Norbiton or other garages. We believe this is a denial of good industrial relations and totally unacceptable.

'We may have lost our case before the court but we have not lost the lawful right to fight. We remain of the view that jobs, wages and working conditions, and a right to severance have to be protected. We believe we cannot abandon Norbiton.'

London Tobacco dispute continues

BY LOUISE CEROVECKI

TASS shop-steward Carol and two of the six women packers sacked from the London Tobacco Company on 25 June have been picketing the company's Brimsdown depot (right).

The factory in Edmonton, north London, has been picketed continuously during the last month.

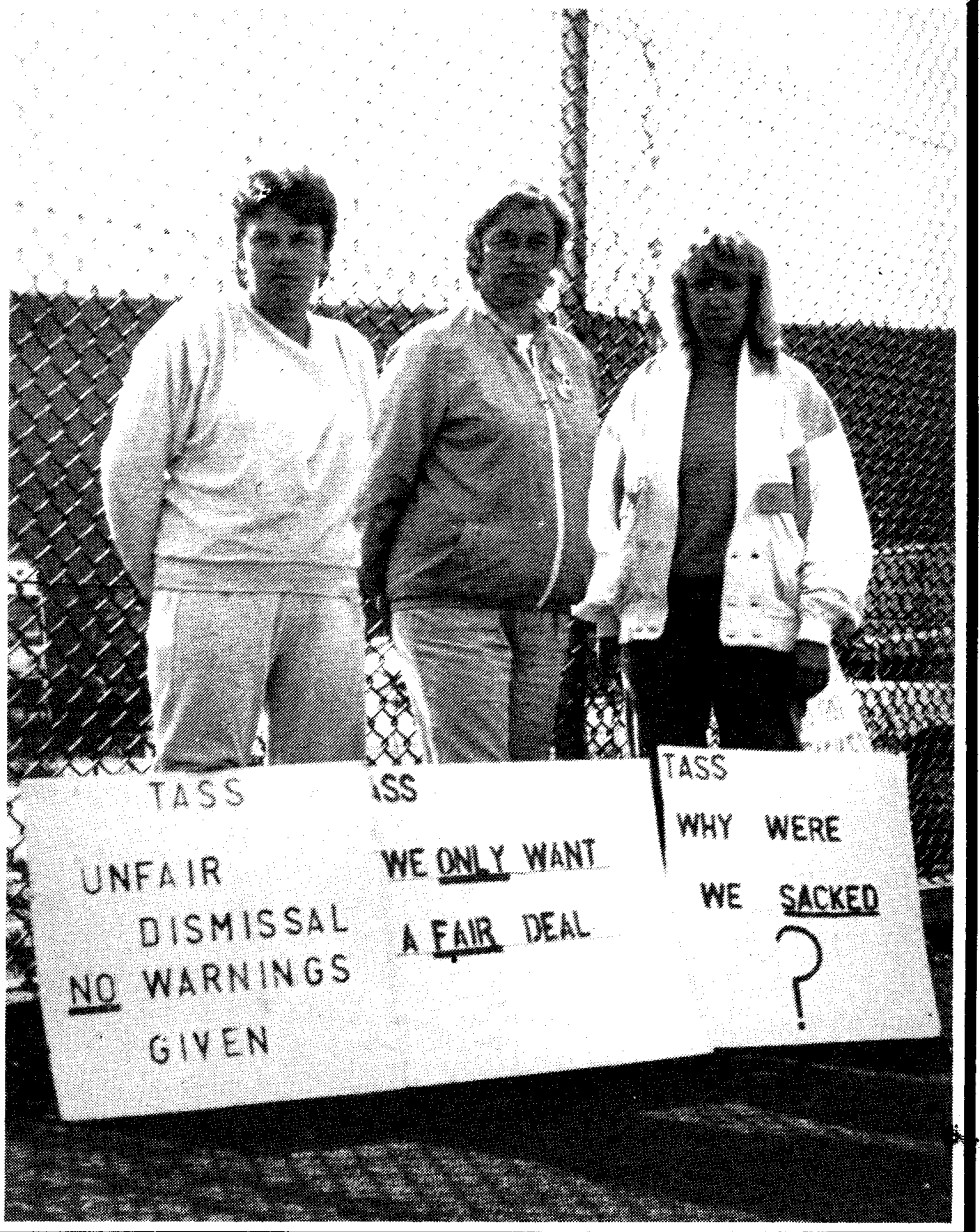
The Brimsdown depot is on a major access road in the centre of a large industrial estate. Workers from nearby factories are clearly sympathetic and the picket line has had some success in frustrating tobacco deliveries to the depot.

As well as the official backing of the union the sacked women packers have received messages of solidarity from the French tobacco workers and the French trade union federation, the CGT.

They also have the active support of the Enfield Strike Support Group, formerly the Miners' Support Group.

In spite of being found in breach of the national agreement, the company has so far refused to reinstate these workers. The women are determined to widen their support and are prepared for a long struggle if necessary.

● Messages and donations to TASS, Tobacco Section, 9 Station Parade, High Street, Wanstead, E11 1QS.



NO COUNCIL MUST FIGHT ON ITS OWN!

Lambeth's future

BY BRONWEN HANDYSIDE

UNION leaders in Lambeth are in a state of shock after being called into council leader Linda Bellos's office last Tuesday.

In a meeting lasting an hour and a half the leader and the deputy leader of the council broke the news to the Joint Trade Unions that while the budget shortfall this year was about £7 million, (which incidentally they could be surcharged on), like Camden, next year's gap was an unbridgeable £65-75 million.

They explained that they were ruling out the option of deficit budgetting, which would mean that they themselves would impose no cuts in jobs and services.

Such a deficit budget would mean that they would be liable to challenge in the courts by any ratepayer. An injunction would be imposed on the budget, they would be surcharged and disqualified, and commissioners would be moved in who would carry out the cuts anyway.

Their plan is to avoid an illegal deficit budget by starting to phase in cuts now and they proposed to the unions that this be done with their co-operation.

In deputy leader Dave Morgan's words, the council is 'totally f****d' in terms of next year's budget. They have, along with other Labour authorities, completely exhausted all the possibilities of creative accounting, lease and lease-back of assets, GLC money, London Residuary Body money etc etc.

All the rabbits have been pulled out of the hat, and the hat itself has been sold.

A cold wind is blowing on Labour councillors throughout Britain as, over the last eight years, the Tory government has closed every loophole through which they could avoid the inevitable face-to-face confrontation with Thatcher.

Councils with 'manageable' debts in 1986/87 are finding that these deficits

have translated themselves, like Lambeth's, Camden's and Manchester's, into a third of their entire budgets. Lambeth's debt repayments exceed the shortfall in next year's budget.

Linda Bellos and Dave Morgan also made it clear to the unions that they felt that the council 'would be crushed' if it tried to defy Tory legislation on privatisation of services.

The Local Government Bill which was shelved by the Tories to clear the decks for the election is now rocketing through the parliamentary process, and selects out seven local government services for compulsory privatisation: collection of refuse, cleaning of buildings, other cleaning, school and welfare catering, other catering, ground maintenance and vehicle maintenance.

In four of these services the majority of workers are women. Privatisation in anybody's book means cuts in wages conditions and staff.

Local councils will no longer be able to reject contractors because the conditions of their workforce are worse than those of the council's direct labour, nor because of South African connections, nor indeed because of any 'non-commercial considerations'. The only criterion for employing a contractor will be financial — whether they can do the job cheaper.

Bellos and Morgan went on to say that they had no intentions of privatising any services beyond those laid down in the Act. But it is also expressly spelled out in the Act that the Secretary of State can at any time in the future add to the list of services to be privatised — he does not have to go through any further legislative process.

All that need happen is that some of the Tory buddies in the private sector invite him or Dennis, or Maggie out for a couple of drinks and says: 'Look here old man (or woman?), I think I'm ready to tackle Home Helps in Southwark and make a good profit.'

So that promise doesn't hold out a lot of job security for Lambeth workers. The position spelled out to the unions is the Margaret Hodge position of compliance with Tory demands for cuts.

The specific details of the cuts envisaged by the leader and her deputy are:

- redeployment of staff into essential areas (presumably housing and Social Services);

- early severance and early retirements (and the loss of those jobs concerned), and

- the cutting out of all growth items.

These proposals are contingent on more detailed studies and suggestions by the officers of the council.

Bellos and Morgan warned that there could be additional proposals which were a lot worse.

Lambeth returned a Labour council with an increased majority following the massive turn to the community to support the council's decision defy rate-capping.

The general election and the end of 'creative accounting' possibilities have left Lambeth, along with dozens of Labour councils, in an impossible situation.

Either they make cuts and privatise, or they are done in the courts or by the District Auditor and removed from office and the commissioners do the job for them.

Councillors in Lambeth were elected on a no-cuts manifesto. No doubt some may be there from motives of personal ambition, but others are also seriously — and increasingly desperately — trying to mitigate the effects of the cuts.

Capitalism, in the form of this Tory government, has left them absolutely no way out that they can see — except to impose cuts. They feel that all that is left to do is try to make those cuts as gradual and painless as possible.

Council workers and those who depend on council services have no choice but to fight all cuts — and neither have the councillors!

The Workers Revolutionary Party says to Labour councillors and to local government trade unions:

- Call a national conference of all those concerned — unions, users, and councillors — to develop a joint strategy of defiance and to mobilise the communities!

- Repudiate the debts to the banks!

- The Labour Party and TUC must mobilise to stop the cuts!

- No council must be left to fight on its own!

The break up of the education system

'OPTING OUT,' if it is not stopped, will take the process of breaking-up the education system much further and much faster,' NUT general secretary Fred Jarvis said recently.

What, teachers are entitled to ask, does the NUT executive intend to do about that, the loss of negotiating rights, the imposition of the Baker Act and every other important matter facing teachers?

We will mount a campaign, he says, omitting to say what are the lessons of the last three years' campaigns.

Opting out means privatisation. It means education for the privileged with working-class youth receiving third-rate or no education.

Teachers and parents in those local authorities or schools who advocate this should oppose them.

The NUT leadership was wrong when it said teachers should boycott governor/parent meetings. Teachers must seek to win the support of parents and the communities.

They should be in the forefront of mobilising against the Tories.

Whether teachers embark on strike action or occupations, they should seek support amongst all those layers now coming into the battle and in turn support all these emerging fights.

Rights

What Jarvis means when he talks about restoring negotiating rights is the right of a bureaucrat to discuss with the boss how far to sell out a dispute, how they can work together.

We mean the right of teachers to negotiate on ev-

BY JIM STEAD

ery level, controlling their leaders on what they say and what they sign.

The NUT leadership was wrong not to issue exact details, authority by authority, on what teachers should accept under Baker and where they should draw the line.

Biggest

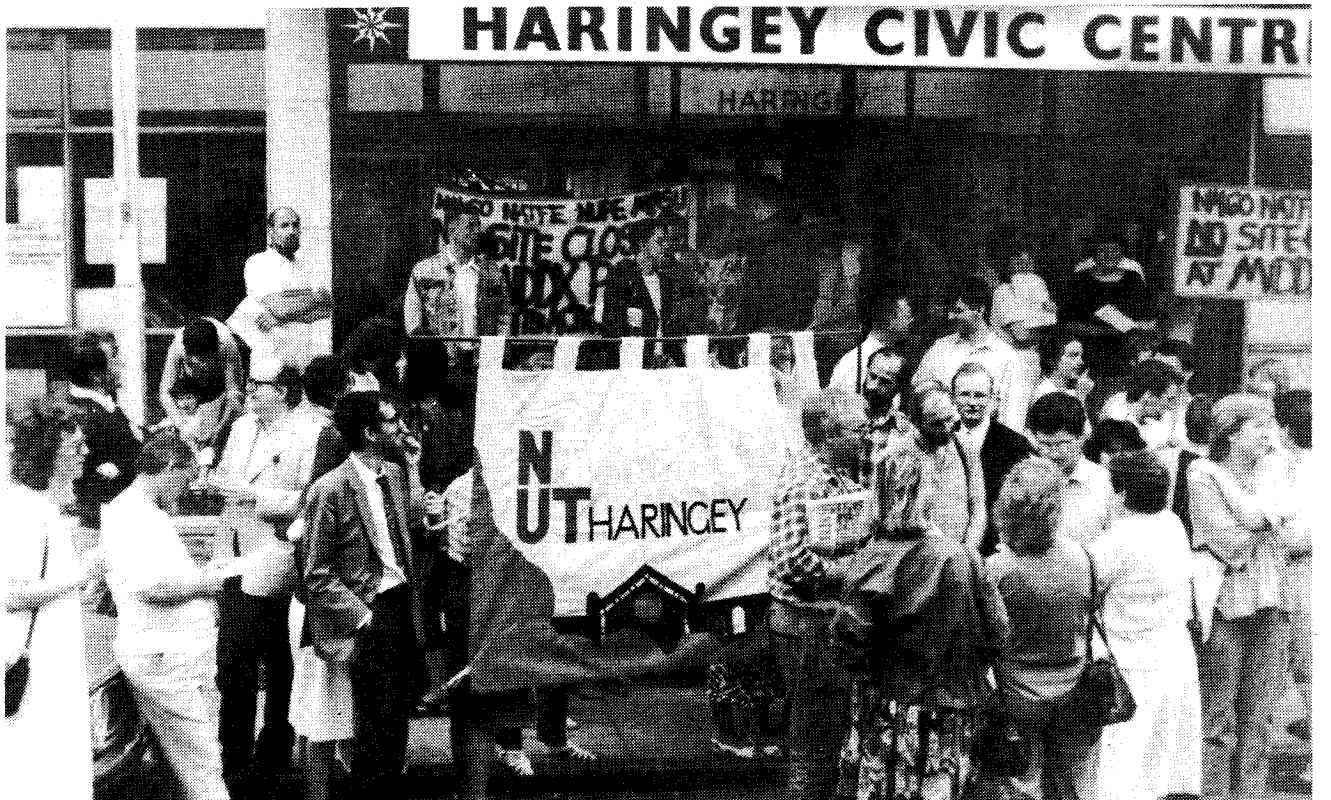
The biggest union meetings in the country have been where the union has presented a concrete guide to teachers over the working day etc. This has been the best possible way to maintain the confidence of teachers in the union.

Negotiating rights have been destroyed. Without negotiating rights a trade union does not effectively exist. But any fight by teachers where local authorities are forced to back down means these rights exist — even if it is over a question of a five-minute longer break.

That is why Thatcher now announces her determination to remove the right to strike. This means disciplining and sacking teachers, as is going on with miners in Yorkshire now.

Yet teachers remain determined to fight Baker. Even many AMMA members (a large non-TUC affiliate organisation) are disgusted by the thought of 1 October when the Baker Act will be implemented.

He has brought into schools what measured day work brought into factories in the 1960s. Teachers will



now work under the iron rod of capitalism.

The Tories may pick their targets and not all local authorities may initially deal as harshly with teachers as some. But with their law they can turn the screw at any time.

All the issues facing teachers: the destruction of comprehensive education, jobs, conditions of service, curriculum control and pay can only be fought for as part of restoring the basic trade union rights.

It is not teachers alone that can defend and extend education for the masses. The Education Act of 1944

developed out of the class struggle.

That is why the working class cannot leave the fight to teachers alone. The min-

Discussion and conferences should be organised, not just for talking, but as a way of developing a programme of action and unity to

'Baker has brought into schools what measured day work brought into the factories in the 1960s'

ers' fight for pits and jobs has a number of similarities.

In certain areas it is the pit and the school that are major parts of the communities. School will face closure as mines have done.

mobilise the working class to fight and bring down the Thatcher government.

A startling fact is that the problem facing the teachers is not a British problem. Similar problems face

teachers on the Continent, America and Latin America.

The Italian teachers organised a national demonstration on 25 May in Rome attended by over 30,000.

Their fight is against wage rises linked to productivity, increased differentiation of pay and the right of teachers to meet without the permission of union bureaucrats.

Since December an unofficial movement has spread. Many schools have set up action committees: 2,300 are now in existence. Teachers have refused to do marking, taken strike action and maintained this during the national elections.

Toxic gas explosion on Croydon housing estate

RESIDENTS of New Addington, a Croydon housing estate with a population of over 30,000 fear a disaster after a toxic gas explosion at the 'Centronics' engineering and chemical factory on the Vulcan Way Industrial Estate.

The explosion, the third in five years took place at 10.22am on Tuesday July 16, 1987, although three hundred people employed by Centronics were evacuated, a blanket of secrecy went up and children in the Rowdown infants and primary school opposite were not evacuated until lunchtime.

The explosion happened in the boron process room and it was feared that three cylinders of Diborane, a poisonous gas formed during the boron manufacturing process which has to be stored at temperatures below 190 degrees centigrade, might explode. Boron is used in nuclear reactors as a safety device.

BY JOHN HOLMES

The level of danger following the explosion only became clear in the afternoon when workers at the factory estate returning from lunch, found the area cordoned off by police who prevented them from returning to work. Firemen warned that another explosion was imminent, and it was feared that a poisonous gas cloud could pollute the atmosphere. The all-clear was not given until 8pm.

Prepared

Despite the immense danger of the situation there was obviously no prepared emergency plan. The decision to evacuate surrounding factories was left to the fac-

tory managers, who refused on the grounds that they had received no direct instructions from the emergency services and, not wishing to lose production and pay workers for absence they refused pleas from their workers to evacuate.

Neither were local residents given any warning. Mr. Ken Webb who lives in Calleydown Crescent, opposite Centronics spoke to Workers Press. He said: 'Nobody warned us of any danger. My kids go to Rowdown school and I had no idea they had been evacuated. Since the explosion my skin has been irritating and I'm quite worried; that place is like a bomb, and accident waiting to happen.'

Despite assurances from Mr. Brian Kelly, Centronics Managing Director, that the process is safe and that the emergency services were 'over-cautious' there remained great fear from people living and working on the estate and calls for a public

inquiry have been made. Mr. Tom Stratton, a shop steward at the nearby Louis Newmark Factory, and Vice President of Croydon Trades Council said: 'The trades council attempted to investigate the dangers after two people were badly burned in a similar explosion two years ago, but security was so tight that we received

very little information.'

Few details of what actually goes on in Centronics are available. Even the police and fire brigade were kept in the dark after the explosion. That such a dangerous operation could be carried out in a largely populated area is a political question. Workers safety in Thatcher's Britain takes second place when it

comes to the success of capitalist interests.

A public meeting is planned for later this week. Trade unions and residents organisations should organise together to demand full information of what goes on in Centronics and the removal of any dangerous materials.

Airline mergers

THE TORY myth that competition and private enterprise are the way to efficiency looks a bit feeble this week, in the light of the British Airways bid to swallow British Caledonian.

The deal will produce a near-monopoly, with BA controlling 92 per cent of airline traffic based in this country. Only a few months ago, BA was one of Thatcher's biggest privatisations — in the interests of competition, of course.

Remember BCal's slogan,

'We never forget you have a choice? In May, BCal chief Sir David Thompson declared: 'BA display the worst aspect of monopoly, with their anti-competitive strategies.' And in June: 'Where we and BA compete, the British customer gets a better deal.'

Now, he is eager to accept BA's offer of £237 million for BCal, losing money at the rate of £25 million a year.

The formation of monopolies of ever-vaster proportions is an

inevitable tendency in modern capitalism. It is accelerated by pressure from the banks, themselves gigantic monopolies. This is the section of the ruling class represented by Thatcher.

The Labour Party has abandoned the last shreds of its one-time policy of state ownership of industries like air transport.

But even this is inadequate. Air transport is quite obviously an international industry.

The answer to the financial machinations of the airline monopolists lies in planning the industry by the working class or a world scale.

FERRIER ESTATE

Tenants determined to fight



Ferrier housing estate — One of Britain's biggest housing estates

TENANTS on one of the biggest estates in Britain, if not Europe, the Ferrier in South East London, are up in arms about the condition of their flats.

In addition to high rise living and all the problems that this brings, especially if you have young children, the tenants of Ferrier now face the problem of ant infestation, cockroaches and the danger of asbestos.

BY ALAN CLARK
AND BOB TOWERS

The Ferrier estate recently received much attention during the baby Kimberley murder in which the councils social workers came in for much criticism.

Following a three week occupation of the rent office to highlight their case, the Ferrier Action Group (FAG) now intend to widen their campaign.

Carol Dunnett, chair of FAG told Workers Press that the occupation was important from the point of view of media coverage, and for the fact that it provided a focal point for the tenants to come along and discuss their problems.

She went on to say that the time has now come to move on and initiate other ways of presenting the campaign.

Carol Monkhouse told us that she has to change her bed at least twice a day since the council sprayed the place and put pellets down to try and stop the ants spreading. Packed lunch boxes for her son to take to school are often alive with ants when they are opened. She said that one day she took the lunch box down to the housing office and threw it at them.

Tara Keating, who is

seventeen, told us that she is on tranquilisers because of anxiety and is on a special diet.

One point that they all agreed on was that the place had now got much worse since the GLC had gone.

At a recent public meeting on the estate to discuss proposals put forward by Greenwich council, the Ferrier tenants asked that the council consider:

1. Using the £45,000 capital available and any residue money left over from the GLC (estimated at £150,000) to start a block-by-block total asbestos removal.
2. Asking the government for additional capital solely for use on Ferrier estate to complete the asbestos removal programme.
3. Commencing pest eradication measures forthwith, but if necessary carrying out this work at a later stage with the asbestos removal programme.
4. Commencing the asbestos removal programme in the blocks worst affected by the pharoah ant infestation.

Greenwich council have told the tenants that the cockroach problem is being dealt with and that it is possible to eradicate these insects.

However, this is not so in the case of the ants. The council state that they 'will continue to take steps to minimise the infestations of pharoah ants and continue to investigate possible methods of eradication. We must repeat, stress, that this is a problem facing councils up and down the country and across Europe. We have never claimed that we know how to eliminate them and we know of no case where they have been eliminated.'

At present the ants are confined to a small area of the estate, but they have progressed over a five year period from Crozier House to Gallus Square and Goldmark House.

It has to be asked: Why did it take the council so long to admit that the problem existed? The council should now take every possible step to rid Ferrier of the ants before the problem spreads to other parts of the estate.

Another problem facing the tenants is that of where they go whilst work is carried out to their flats. The tenants have requested the council to give special consideration to rehousing tenants whose flats are infested by ants.

The council have replied by setting up a 'stress panel'. Anyone living in a block

ANGRY tenants from the Ferrier estate lobbied the council's housing sub-committee last week. But as the chairman Pete Challis was about to wind up the meeting they realised their problem was not on the agenda at all.

John Edwards of FAG proceeded to explain the case for Ferrier, but because of the time everyone wanted to leave.

Tenant Daisy Vandervart jumped to her feet and told the meeting: 'When people know you come from the Ferrier estate they refuse to sit near you, like they do to my son on the train on his way to work. We are not dirty — we have never been dirty.'

where there is known infestation can apply to the panel. The council, though, will only be willing to consider moves within the estate on a 'like for like' basis, and only one offer will be made. The panel will consist of a principal rehousing officer, a social worker and a manager from the Ferrier estate office. The council have also called on the Ferrier Action Group to assist in this.

It would be true to say that the way in which the FAG have taken on the task of improving their estate and ridding it of ants and cockroaches, together with the dangers of asbestos, is an example of the sort of working class action that is needed today. They deserve the full support of the whole community as well as that of the labour and trade union movement.

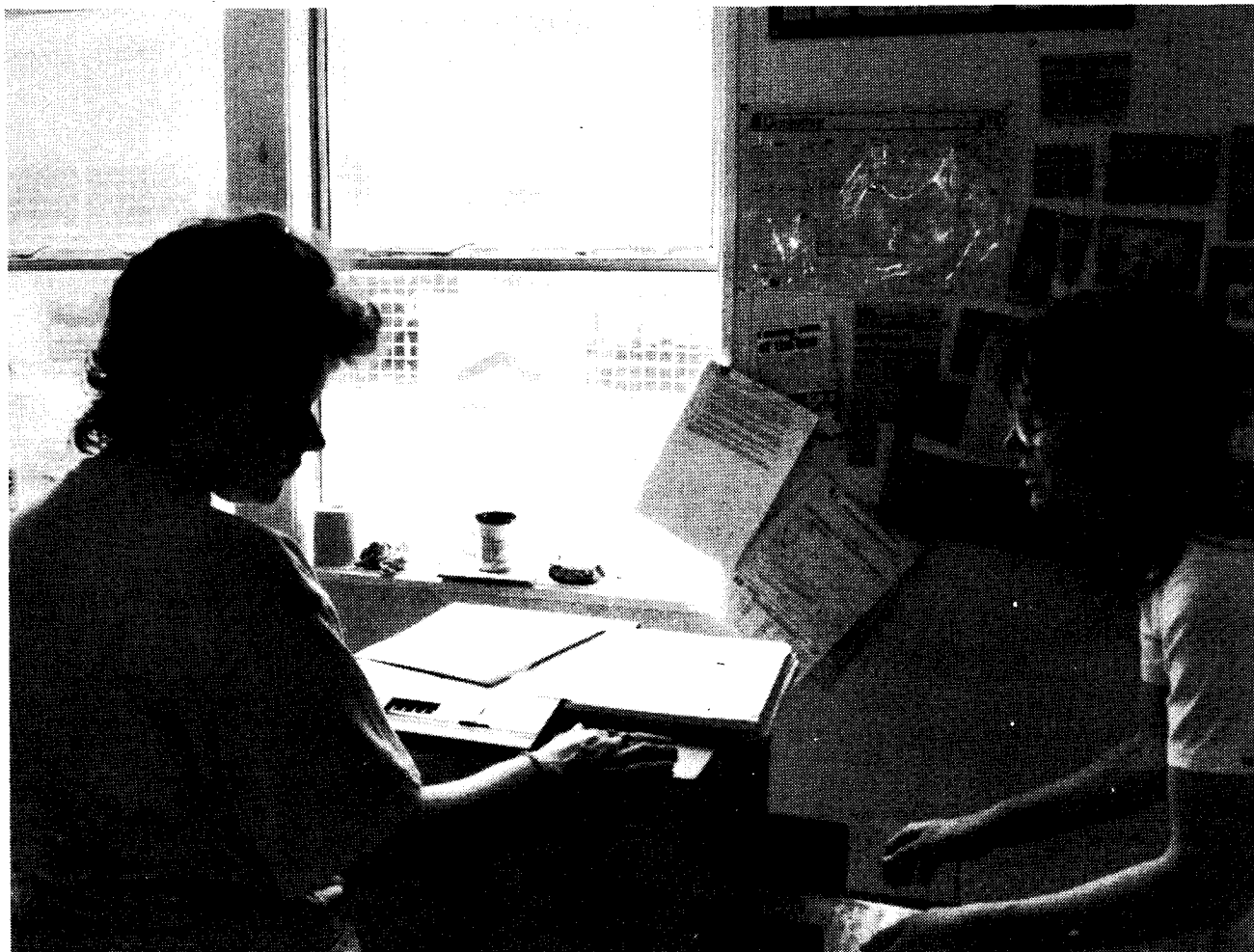
Attention, however, must be directed towards the heart of the problem, and that is the Tory government. Thatcher, by cutting back the money available for improvements and house building, has set out to restrict and destroy the power of local government. Unfortunately, a Labour government might have done just the same.

Greenwich council must be held to their statement that they will ask the Minister of Housing to visit the estate. In addition, the newly elected M.P. for the area, Rosie (I'm not for merger) Barnes, will need to take responsibility for this crisis. Action and not words is what FAG and the tenants are looking for.

Until this happens, in the words of Carol Dunnett, 'The Ferrier estate remains cut off from the rest of the world like a big experiment.'



Outside FAG office: Left to Right. Carol Monkhouse, Carol Dunnett, Jill Garnet and children



Printing leaflets for the tenants meeting

Coal Conflict

AUSTRALIAN coal miners could be out on strike this week in a battle against closures.

As union representatives held talks with the government and employers, Miners' Federation secretary John Maitland predicted a national strike unless jobs were protected.

Seven mines have been closed this year, and the Joint Coal Board warned last month that 21 more in New South Wales were in danger of closing.

Miners recently collared the prime minister in his office to demand the government stop closures.

Australia sold 92 million tons of coal overseas last year, accounting for 16 per cent of the country's exports. The Australian Coal Consultative Council predicted last month that exports would rise to 105 million tons by 1990.

But a spokesman for Broken Hill Proprietary, which exports 30 per cent of its coal output to Japan, and the rest to Europe and South America, said last week that with 'a large over-supply' of coal on world markets, customers could turn elsewhere if there was a strike.

Cuts in Japanese steel production have hit demand for coking-coal, and a strengthened Australian dollar recently made it harder to compete as world coal prices fell.

South Africa, with its highly-exploited black workforce, and Colombia, with child labour in the mines, are undercutting Australian coal prices to get a bigger share of the market. China is taking lower prices so as to compete, too.

The Miners' Federation says closures and redundancies threaten up to 6,000 jobs in New South Wales, which has 20,000 miners, and 2,000 out of Queensland's 10,000 workforce.

Employers have been resorting to lay-offs and shut-downs to try and break union strength and force down wages.

Reagan's terrorists

EIGHT civilians, including a woman and a child, were killed by US-backed Contras in a raid on a farm co-operative in Nicaragua on 19 July.

It was the second attack in a week in which children were Contra vic-

tims, and Nicaragua's President Daniel Ortega summed up feeling when he told a rally at Matagalpa, near where the raid took place: 'President Reagan continues to murder children, he continues to murder women.'

Attacking 'the hypoc-

ris and decomposition of so-called American democracy', Ortega urged friendly states to help Nicaragua with more aid, to counter the millions Reagan was pouring to the Contras, and the destruction they brought.



THIS CRECHE is one of the gains for Nicaraguan women since the overthrow of the Somoza regime eight years ago.

Nicaraguans celebrated eight years of the Sandinista revolution this week.

But the lives and future of these children continue to be menaced by right-wing Contras, armed and financed by the Reagan administration, and assisted by British mercenaries.

Stopping Le Pen

THE French labour movement and anti-racists must identify Jean-Marie Le Pen's Front National as a fascist party, and campaign against it as such, a Socialist Party member said last week.

Comparing Le Pen's movement to the early rise of Hitler, Barry Smerin from Paris warned that the Front National, with its anti-immigrant, law-and-order demagoguery was getting increasing support from the middle class and backward workers, and was accepted as an ally by more 'respectable' conservative politicians.

Addressing a Jewish Socialist's Group meeting in London on 'France After the Barbie Trial', Smerin said that while the trial might have served to educate young people about fascism, few commentators had cared to link it with what was happening in France now.

'No attempt was made by any major political organisation to make this connection,' he criticised.

During a television chat show the week before the Barbie trial, Le Pen had remarked that it was 'a bad thing to dwell on a sad period in French history when the French people was at war with itself.'

None of the journalists interviewing him had dared question this apologia for the Vichy regime, Smerin said. Le Pen had been treated with deference.

BY CHARLIE POTTINS

Displaying a copy of the Front National's paper 'National Hebdo' which claimed too much fuss was made over racial attacks, while Arabs and blacks attacked French people, Smerin said this was available on every news-stand.

Another FN paper, 'Present' (available on subscription only), carried classic Nazi-style conspiracy themes, such as: 'Four super-powers are colonising France — the Marxist, the Protestant, the Jew and Freemason'.

Front National supporters had attacked other parties and murdered opponents. Black people and Arabs had been attacked by members of the police or army who also happened to be members of Front National.

In Grasse, near Nice, the Gaullist RPR and conserva-



tive UDF recently allied with the Front National candidate in municipal elections, who had emerged top right-winger in the first round.

Asked what they advised their supporters to do in the second round, a spokesman said 'The voters of Grasse will know what to do in the face of the Socialist-Communist menace'. The fascist was elected.

While the Barbie case was on, Michelin-Renoir of the RPR had told interviews his party would 'rather lose the election than win with Le Pen's help'. He had explained that he was against all 'extremist' parties. 'And he was slapped down by Prime Minister Chirac', Smerin said.

Asked about the role of the Communist Party in the fight against racism, Smerin said it had been badly compromised by its own racist actions, such as the bulldozing of an immigrant hostel in Vitry in 1980.

Many of the voters it had tried to appeal to with such methods were now switching to Le Pen.

Smerin criticised Socialist Party secretary Jospin for appearing in a radio debate with Le Pen recently.

He also said the Socialist Party-linked 'SOS Racisme' movement, although using imaginative campaigns to appeal to youth, stopped short of attacking Le Pen as a fascist, and had even tried to avoid mentioning him for some time.

Having announced he will stand in the next presidential election — 'the only candidate to declare himself yet' — Le Pen was trying to appear 'moderate' in the media, and 'respectable' enough for the middle class, while behind this front hard-line fascist thugs were organised.

'He should have been stopped much earlier', Smerin said. If socialists were to act now, they 'should identify the Front National as fascist, and campaign against it as such.' Some had done so, but not enough yet.

US Congress helps Botha

THE US House of Representatives has taken steps to gag campaigners against Botha's racist regime in South Africa. If adopted by Senate, these would virtually bring South African law to America.

Georgia Republican Patrick Swindell wants to ban representatives of the African National Congress (ANC) and South-West Africa Peoples Organisation (SWAPO), as well as the PLO, from travelling outside the cities where they have their offices.

Swindell's 'Pass Law', in the form of an amendment to the State Department Authorisation Bill, claims the restrictions are to 'keep Soviet and Soviet-bloc intelligence operatives out of the United States.'

Under this Reaganite anti-communist crusading banner, anti-Apartheid speakers could be barred from travelling to address union branches, churches or college societies.

Agents of the South African racist regime will continue to have free range.

Another amendment, from Indiana Republican representative Dan Burton, demands a study of alleged 'ANC forced detention camps' in Africa, and would reduce funding of any UN project whose 'primary purpose is to benefit the ANC'.

The target here is the same as that of South African bombers — the refugee camps in African 'frontline' states.

In May, the Senate adopted a resolution calling

on the White House to halt all US aid to any country in the region whose government practices 'state terrorism'.

In imperialist parlance 'terrorism' always means bombs thrown from the ground, not dropped from planes. It never extends to right-wing killers like the US-backed Contras, the South African-backed gangs terrorising Mozambique, or the Unita forces in Angola which have both South African and CIA support.

There was no danger of the Reaganites interfering with bankers supporting the South African regime, but Senate adopted a resolution urging full-scale economic sanctions against Angola.

Right-wing politicians and lobby groups have been mobilised by the South African regime itself, with big business interests ensuring there is no shortage of funds, to reinforce the alliance between US imperialism and apartheid.

Congressman Burton admits his information about the ANC was provided by 'South African intelligence and other sources.'

Unions condemn police 'Red' list

PUERTO RICAN unions have demanded an explanation from the US island colony's police chief over the keeping of a secret 'subversives list' with the names of 60,000 people on it.

'We energetically condemn this anti-democratic and fascist practice of opening and maintaining files on citizens who do not share and who question the ideas of the rulers of the day', the COS trade union federation says.

List

Exposed by the Puerto Rican Socialist Party's weekly 'Claridad', the police 'red' list includes the names of 38 union leaders, 20 labour lawyers, and at least four entire unions classed as 'subversive'.

'Claridad' reported that the island's police Intelligence Division employs some 200 agents. The police spies regularly photograph and videotape union meetings and political gatherings, such as those of groups supporting Puerto Rican independence.

The first time someone is identified, 'Claridad' says, their name is placed on an index card. The second time the person appears, a note is made. The third time, a police investigation is begun on them.

The files are made available to the FBI and other US intelligence agencies, 'Claridad' says.

Governor Hernandez Colon has had to apologise personally to the head of the Puerto Rican Evangelical Council, Jose Lebron Velazquez, after he and his organisation were found to be on the list.

The governor and the church leader were on the platform together at a public event. Hernandez Colon claimed he was opposed to such lists, and said he would punish anyone he found responsible.

But senior police officers have defended the practice, and the head of the Police Association, Jose Taboa, says the lists are of 'great importance'.

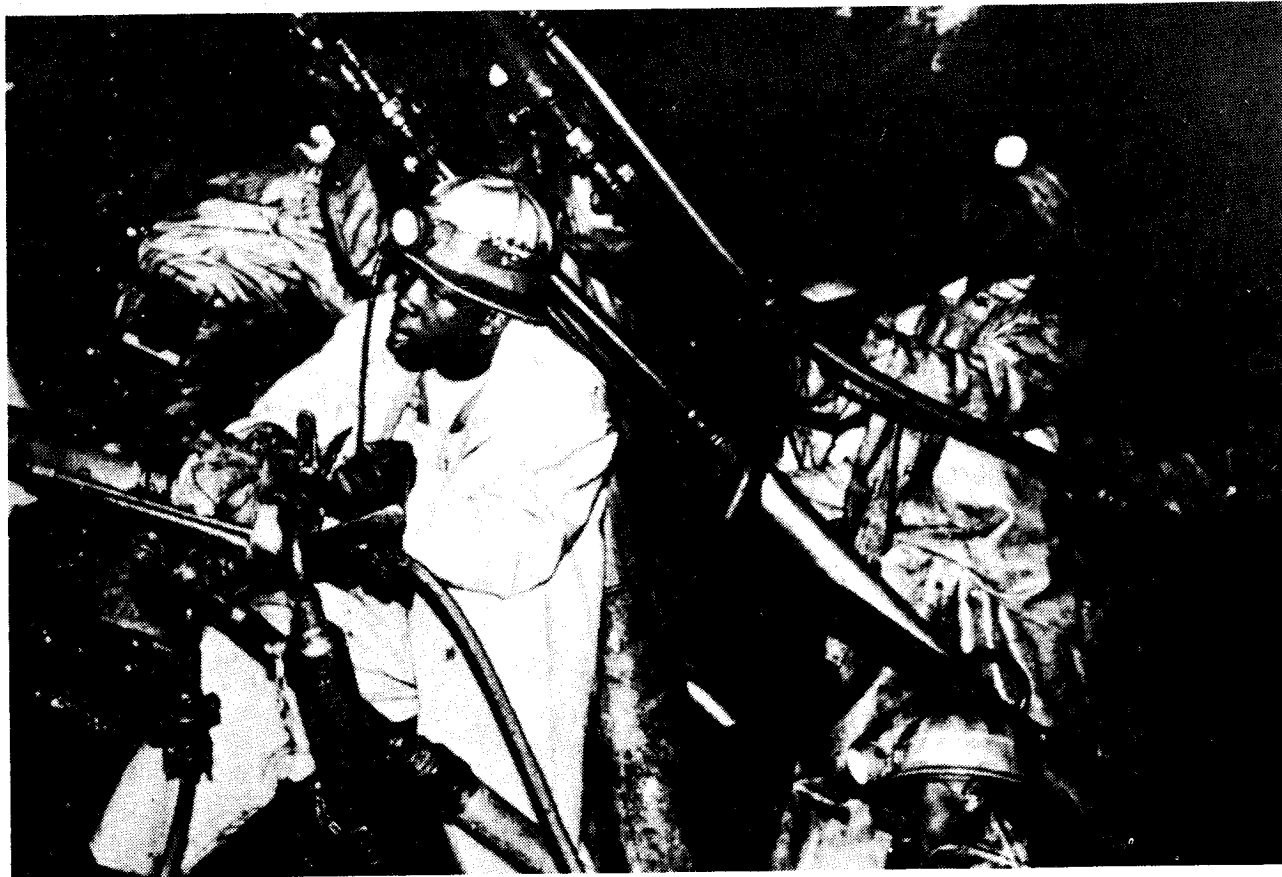
The COS unions have demanded the government, and in particular, the Superintendent of Police of Puerto Rico, 'explain what criminal activity, if any, the unions and unionists who are on this list are accused or are being investigated for.'

'Otherwise, they must publicly admit that this practice is one more attack on trade union freedoms guaranteed under the law and which the union movement in this country supposedly enjoys.'

Repressive

COS says the lists are 'part of the repressive pattern of the agencies of public order both Puerto Rican and federal, against those who stand up for and fight for the rights of workers in this country.'

SOUTH AFRICAN UNIONS



Politics a bread-and-butter issue

'WE ARE accused of being more of a political front than a trade union federation', Elijah Barayi, president of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) told its conference last week.

'We make no apologies about connecting shopfloor issues with the issues facing workers in society as a whole.

'Politics, and especially the lack of even the most basic democratic rights for the majority, is a bread-and-butter issue for the working class.'

Barayi was responding to threats from the racist regime against those who 'politicise issues in the labour field'.

COSATU's biggest affiliated union, the 200,000-strong National Union of Mineworkers, is preparing strike action following a members' ballot. And 6,500 steelworkers walked out from the Iscor plant, at Vanderbijl, south of Johannesburg, on Monday.

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) is demanding wage increases and improved conditions throughout the metal and engineering industries.

On 16 July, after results of a ballot among NUMSA members showed support for industrial action, about 60,000 workers came out at over 50 plants, defying a government ban.

The COSATU congress last week adopted the Freedom Charter of the African National Congress as a 'guiding document'. The Metalworkers union recently adopted both the ANC charter and a call for a workers' charter to end capitalism.

'We produce the wealth of South Africa and we are the victims of a brutal and exploitative system of apartheid and capitalism,' former goldminer Barayi told the COSATU congress.

'Some say that the intransigent government will never hand power over to the black majority. Well, the black majority will have to seize power from this intransigent government.'

South African Miners want some of that wealth

'WE produce the wealth of South Africa, yet we are the victims of a brutal and exploitative system of apartheid and capitalism,' said former goldminer Elijah Barayi, president of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, speaking at the union's delegate congress which ended last weekend.

South Africa's black miners, in the gold and coal mines, have decided overwhelmingly to take action in their fight for decent pay and conditions.

And steelworkers — many employed by the same giant companies — have already begun actions for their own claims.

TURKISH RAIL

RAILWAY workers in Turkey have begun a go-slow campaign in preparation for the first nationwide rail strike in the country's history.

Their union, Demiryol-IS, decided on strike action after almost two months of negotiation over pay and conditions got nowhere.

The union's general secretary has described the present situation as 'the worst for 25 years', and says rail workers want 'to get back our bread stolen by inflation.'

Since the 1980 military coup brought a right-wing regime to power, workers' real wages and conditions have suffered, and railway workers are no exception.

Average pay on the railways is now between 60,000 and 70,000 Turkish lira a month — about £60-£70.

The regime called police in last year to force train drivers in Ankara to work a 23-hour shift. Strikes were outlawed on urban rail services.

The go-slow, begun in response to a management lock-out threat when the strike was announced, has affected the urban services however.

What's more, drivers — who have been officially classified as civil servants so as to ban them from forming a union — are reported to be taking part in actions in solidarity with their fellow-workers.

Some 40,000 rail workers and rail workshop workers will be called out in the official strike

● Messages of support can be sent to DEMIRYOL-IS, Genel Baskan Mehmet Acidereli, Neccatibey Cad, Sezenler Sokak 5, Siihiye, ANKARA, Turkey.

Sackings in Austria

MORE than 1,000 angry workers laid siege to the office of Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky on 16 July, as state-owned industries announced big losses, board-room resignations, and mass redundancies.

The workers face layoffs from Austria Metall AG's electrolysis plant in Branau.

In Styria province, the Kapfenberg high-grade steelworks is threatened. The company, VEW has disclosed £105 million losses in 1986.

'Kapfenberg will become a ghost region if the plant goes for good,' a protester outside VEW's offices said. (Misha Glenny, Guardian, 17 July). 'Over half the workforce in the area is dependent on it.

VEW's general director Friedrich Schmollgruber offered his resignation before going off on a long holiday. Not wanting to appear to be retreating before union criticism, the board would not accept it. But Schmollgruber is not expected to return.

A large section of Austrian industry was taken into state ownership after the end of World War II and expanded. It came to employ 100,000 workers — about a fifth of the industrial workforce — and provide the same proportion of exports.

With hydro-electric power and modernising public investment, the state-held metal, chemical and engineering industries were a big part of Austria's economic success-story in the 1970s.

Economic growth was the fastest in Europe, inflation

the lowest, and unemployment among the lowest in any capitalist country.

In 1984, the government was able to boast productivity increases faster than in Japan, West Germany, or the United States; praise Austrian workers for pay restraint; and announce measures to maintain full employment policies.

More than half Austria's national output was exported. But this dependence on world markets has also made the country highly vulnerable to capitalist recession and protectionism.

Now the capitalists want to grab the most profitable parts of state industry through privatisation, and have mass sackings in the rest.

Last year, after the Voest-Alpine company had been almost bankrupted, the government brought in a team of West German industrialists to run things.

On 16 July, one of these, Voest-Alpine chairman Herbert Lewinsky, had to announce in Linz that Voest had lost £435 million in 1986, and turnover was 18 per cent down for the first six months of 1987.

This performance is likely to hit Chancellor Vranitzky, who has been closely linked with Lewinsky and his management policies.

Price rises pay cuts in Hungary

HUNGARY'S State Price Board has announced price rises of more than 30 per cent on a wide range of household items including bread and flour.

The authorities say the increases are necessary to reduce the budget deficit, and that subsidies on consumer goods must be abolished.

The new attack on workers' living standards comes on top of warnings of more redundancies, wage restrictions, and tax increases. Hungary is also planning to introduce VAT.

The government has said family allowances and pensions will be raised to compensate for food price rises. But workers have been told pay will be tied to productivity.

Prime Minister Karoly Grosz came under fire from miners, angry over pit closures and lack of job prospects, as well as pay freezing, when he spoke to meetings the other week, in the Norgrad area, north-east of Budapest.

In recent years several mines have closed in the area, and workers said the government was not doing enough about jobs and re-training.

On pay, Grosz told them they could not expect big increases owing to an

'almost negligible rise' in productivity.

Falling oil prices caused a decline in Hungary's valuable Middle East export market. Falling world farm prices and protectionist trends have hit food exports, and last year there was a ban on Hungarian produce after the Chernobyl disaster.

The trade problems have made it difficult to cope with huge and mounting debts to the international banks. The bureaucracy is blaming former Prime Minister Gyorgy Lazar, saying he borrowed not to expand and modernise industry but to raise living standards.

In reality, it is Hungary's 'liberal' Stalinist economic policies, depending on Western capitalist trade and investment, which have led to this situation. The big bankers are demanding austerity measures and job cuts, just as they have in the capitalist countries, to recoup their profits.

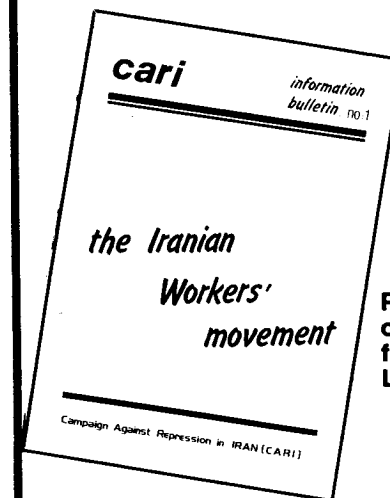
In 'liberal' Hungary as in Jaruzelski's Poland, the bureaucracy has to carry out the bankers' wishes against the working class. In Poland this led to the clash with trade unions, and military rule.

In Hungary, this is being felt with unemployment, already said to be in five figures, the highest admitted in any Comecon country, and officially predicted to get worse.

SRI LANKA police used tear-gas and batons to attack nurses demonstrating in Colombo on 20 July. Several nurses were injured, and others had to take refuge in the hospital.

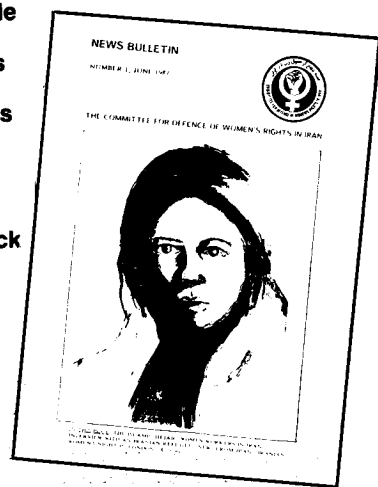
The nurses had been protesting against the Jayawardene government's new state examinations policy.

Two important pamphlets on Iran



Price: £1, obtainable from B.M. CARI, LONDON WC1N 3XX or through Paperback Centres.

Price: 50p, obtainable from Committee for Defence of Women's Rights in Iran, c/o London Women's Centre, 70 Great Queen St. London WC2b 5AX, or through Paperback Centres



DEPORTATION FIGHT

Let Farida stay!

A VICTORY is being proclaimed by the supporters of the Let Farida Bibi Stay Campaign Committee.

The result of a revolutionary genetic test, the DNA Fingerprint Analysis, has established 'beyond any reasonable doubt' that Farida is the natural daughter of her father, Nazar Hussain.

While the threat of deportation still hangs over her, however, Farida remains in hiding.

Nazar Hussain has lived and worked in Derby for 30 years. He, his wife and two sons are British citizens. For the past ten years Nazar has been campaigning to bring his daughter to Britain to join the rest of the family.

During that period, no fewer than seven applications for her to formally visit them have been turned down by the immigration authorities.

Farida's deportation was ordered in May. The fingerprint test, which has only been available since June, was the last resort of the family and its supporters to prove the validity of her claim.

Immediately the results of the genetic test were known a letter was sent to the Home Office and MP Margaret Beckett demanded that a decision be made before the parliamentary summer recess.

The first major event in the struggle against the Home Office was when Farida went into hiding in the Asian community. A campaign committee was organised with the help of the Derby Campaign for Racial Equality.

The Home Office has consistently maintained that Farida is not the natural daughter of her father Nazar Hussain.

The committee resolved to fight the racist immigration laws by the use of the revolutionary test developed at Leicester university called DNA Fingerprint Test.

The campaign committee organised a picket of Home Secretary Douglas Hurd when he visited Derby on 15 May. A petition of nearly 5,000 signatures was presented to him.



FARIDA BIBI

As he toured the three centres run by the Pakistani, Indian and West Indian communities, Hurd was heckled and persistently questioned by hostile and angry Asians on the subject of Farida's deportation.

At one point, clearly expressing the callous and hard-hearted attitude of the racist immigration laws of the Home Office, Hurd walked past 200 lobbyists.

His attitude quickly changed from one of surprise to that of anger when faced up to the racist policies of the Tory government.

Insisting that 'rules must

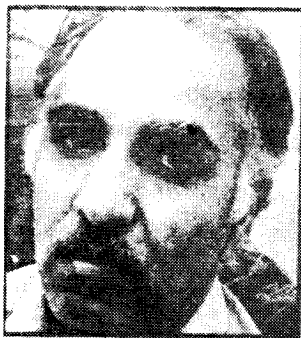
BY ZBIGNIEW WOJCIK

be followed' and 'procedures must be abided by'. Hurd remained obscure about Farida Bibi's right to stay here.

He further incensed his audience by accusing them of 'failing to understand' what he was saying, categorising them as 'stupid' and asserting that white people who supported Farida's fight 'should know better'.

Hurd attempted to justify his position by counterposing the wishes of black and Asian members in the community with those expressed by white Tory voters fearful of being flooded by inhabitants from the Indian sub-continent.

He gave examples from letters he had received alleging he was 'too soft' on immigration. He found it difficult to believe that white members of the audience



NAZAR HUSSAIN

should be opposed to his views.

At a private meeting with members of the campaign committee, Hurd agreed to review the case. The subsequent letter written by him makes clear his position remained unchanged.

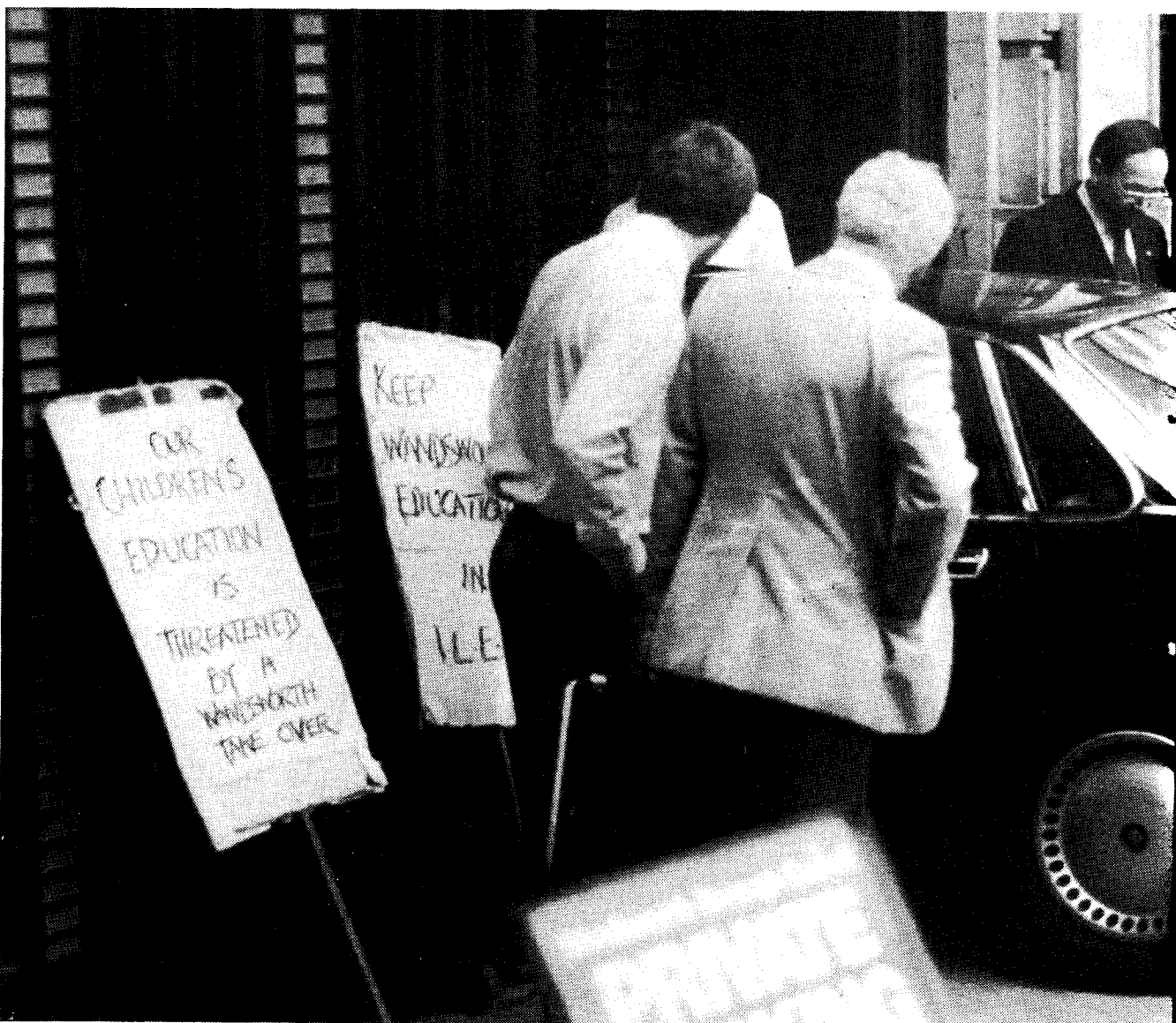
The organisers of the campaign staged a march through Derby and a public meeting attended by more than 200 people. Speakers from Som Raj and Viraj Mendis campaigns, Margaret Beckett and leaders from the city and county council also spoke.

The cost of the DNA test was covered by holding a series of local benefits, from the Trades Council and another public meeting.

The coordinating committee of the Let Farida Bibi Stay Campaign has drawn up a Draft Resolution which it has resolved to argue for in the community. It is making every effort to extend the links with the community, labour and trade union movements and anyone who shows support.

The resolution notes that the details of the new immigration law, referred to in the Queen's speech 'suggest that if Farida were to come out of hiding she would be liable to prosecution, possibly together with those who have sheltered her or had knowledge of her whereabouts.

WANDSWORTH TAK



YES EDUCATION OUT OF ILEA

BY PHIL PENN

BEFORE retiring for their summer holidays last week, Tory councillors in the London Borough of Wandsworth blitzed services and education in the area.

In the space of a few hours it was decided to:

- Pull the borough's schools out of the Labour Controlled Inner London Education Authority (ILEA).

- Put up nursery school charges to £25 per child.

- Demolish three council blocks near picturesque Wimbledon Common, handing the land over to property developers.

- Close down Vauxhall's City Farm.

Services blitzed by Tory 'animals'



Demonstrators lobbied councillors going into the meeting and later packed the public gallery to hear the heated debate.

They showed great restraint, while the Tories, giggling and smirking, treated them with contempt throughout the debate and threw insults at them.

A particularly malevolent double-act was performed by councillors Beresford and Bingle. They sneered at the lack of education of those in the public gallery, calling them 'braying mules', and then asked the Tory Mayor to have them thrown out.

Although the Tories have made much of the slogan 'parental choice', they brushed aside pages of parents' signatures petitioning the Council to consult them before withdrawing from ILEA.

Councillor Bingle, who works for the pressure group for private schools ISIS,

caused uproar when he refused to declare his 'interest' and insisted on voting in the debate.

Later another Tory councillor who runs a private nursery did the same when the vote was called to increase nursery charges.

After the vote to pull out, Bingle, looking for all the world like the Beadle in Dickens's 'Oliver Twist', urged his fellow Tories to take the initiative and 'close the poorer schools'.

A delegation of parents from one of the nurseries told the council that the new charges would mean most of them no longer being able to afford it.

One councillor pointed out that the continued existence of the nursery would not prove the correctness of the new charges. It would simply mean that places vacated by the poorer children would be taken by those whose parents had money.

Residents of three council blocks, known for years to be unsafe, asked to be allowed to return to their homes after repairs had been carried out.

They had been assured during the election that this would happen. Bingle then refused to attend a tenants' meeting to explain the change of plan.

He was told to stop snivelling when he said that he did not go for fear of his skin.

Children who use Vauxhall's Elm (City) Farm, came to ask for it to remain open. They were bleary-eyed by the time its closure was finally discussed — the Tories refused to move it higher up the agenda, despite pleas from parents.

The farm is to be moved to another area but it is doubtful that it will in fact reopen because of the lack of finance being made available for it.

After the closure vote, one councillor complained that

the Tories should not have voted. They should have declared an 'interest' before the debate on the farm, he said, because they were a 'lot of animals'.

Parents forced on dole

PARENTS whose children attend four nurseries in Wandsworth, South London, may be forced to quit their jobs because they are unable to afford the new charges.

The nurseries, specially set up for low-income families, will increase fees from £8 to £25 per child and will face grant cuts up to nearly £3,000.

Two Tory councillors who participated in the vote for the increase, run private nurseries, which will now look much more of a bargain.

No way out for Gorbachev-ists, says Ho Chi Minh City report. . .

VIETNAM: the 'hideous reality'

VIETNAM'S Gorbachev-style 'reformers' face a new obstruction: the election of 'conservative' Pham Hung as Prime Minister.

The appointment last month of Pham Hung, 75, represents a challenge to Gorbachev-ist Communist Party general secretary Nguyen Van Linh, who is proposing an ambitious reform programme.

Newly-appointed president Vo Chi Cong, 74, will probably try to balance between the 'reformist' and 'conservative' factions.

But holding together the deeply-divided bureaucracy may prove too much for Cong.

Gorbachev-ists like Van Linh are raising questions which cannot be answered by any of the bureaucrats: the seemingly endless poverty on one hand and gross corruption by CP officials on the other; the CP's failure to tackle the economic problems left by the US, Chinese and Kampuchean wars; the need for 'democratisation', etc.

Vietnamese Gorbachevism first became apparent last July, when the official Communist Party newspapers began printing letters denouncing bureaucratic privilege, inefficiency and corruption.

Then came searing 'self-criticism' at the sixth party congress last December: delegates sat open-mouthed as CP general secretary Truong Chinh's main report blamed Vietnam's problems not (as is usual) on Chinese expansionism, the war, and climactic conditions — but on 'the shortcomings and mistakes' of 'the Central Committee, the Politbureau, the Secretariat and the Council of Ministers'.

Politbureau member Vo Van Kiet's report on the economy was equally blunt: targets had not been achieved, and the majority of state investment and foreign aid over the last decade went on heavy industrial projects which were never completed.

The congress turned the entire CP leadership upside-down, with the most important Politbureau figures 'retiring' through 'ill health and old age'.

Those put off the Politbureau included:

- Defence minister and head of the armed forces Van Tien Dung, 71, architect of the military defeat of US imperialism in 1975, latterly

BY SIMON PIRANI

a leading 'conservative' and corrupt careerist;

- Pham Van Dong, 79, Prime Minister of North Vietnam from 1950 and of the whole country from 1975, one of Ho Chi Minh's closest collaborators;

- Former president and CP general secretary Truong Chinh, 80, now discredited;

- Le Duc Tho, 75, another veteran who negotiated the ceasefire with the US in 1973; worked with the late CP leader Le Duan, and had spoken vaguely in favour of 'reforms' but back-pedalled at the congress and supported the 'conservatives'.

The congress produced an uneasy stand-off between the factions — but in May this year Van Linh intensified his campaign against corruption in a weekly column in the CP paper which frequently accuses corrupt officials by name.

What is the effect of Vietnam's economic, social and political crisis on the ordinary people?

Why, despite all their talk of 'reform', are the Gorbachev-ists, like the other bureaucrats, unable to solve the country's problems?

No better light has been shed on these questions than in a report, direct from Ho Chi Minh City, in the latest issue of 'Chroniques Vietnamiennes', published in Paris by Vietnamese comrades who belong to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

'The economy faces an impenetrable impasse,' it says. 'There is no hope of a respite, without radical change in every field: taxation; wages and prices; economic and administrative management methods; the conceptions and criteria for the training of cadres, scientists and technicians; the opening of the Vietnamese market and re-establishment of relations with the capitalist world after the example of the Chinese People's Republic.'

But even these measures, says the report, would create new problems, not least a



Soviet representative Ligatchev, flanked by the ageing Pham Van Dong (left) and Truong Chinh at the Sixth Vietnamese Communist Party Congress

heightening of conflict between the 'reformist' and 'conservative' bureaucrats.

'North and south alike are ravaged by every kind of social disease,' the report goes on. 'Unemployment, inequality, exploitation of labour, corruption and abuse of power, robbery from public funds, violation of human rights, card-playing, opium addiction, alcoholism, prostitution, robbery and banditry.'

'It is a hideous social reality, with which none of the worst moments in our history, either under French colonisation, or American occupation, can compare . . .

'Without the democratisation of the regime and the aid of the international workers' movement, there is no hope of industrialisation, or of an improvement in the standard of living, given the restrictions imposed by Vietnam's under-development and its geographical borders.'

'Here, too, we see the payoff for the theory of socialism in a single country.'

The warring Stalinist factions are indicted in scathing tones by the report. CP secretary Van Linh 'does not have the necessary prestige to take the party along his road. A section of the Central Committee has no confidence in him and won't obey him, despite the pressure from Moscow'.

The report, written in February, says the internal divisions — which are raging in the government, army and police — are threatening the regime's stability.

Southern-based 'liberals' have opened up the press and speak of 'democracy'; the conservatives, based in the north, aim to sabotage the diplomatic overtures to China and halt Vietnam's phased troop withdrawals from Cambodia.

One conservative group around Le Duc Tho launched a 'counter-offensive' after the congress, attempting to

secure control of key state posts.

'According to one incredible hypothesis, the recent battle between Chinese and Vietnamese troops at Ha Bac on the northern frontier was provoked by the conservative clique of General Van Tien Dung, to test the reaction of the new Politbureau, which is confronted with the delicate task of trying to re-establish diplomatic relations with China.'

Moscow is unlikely to stand by idly as the conservatives gain ground, the report estimates: they have their Pacific bases at Danang and Cam Ranh to think about.

Scandals are rocking the bureaucracy: rumours abound that the deaths of Le Duan and of Generals Hoang Van Thai and Le Trong Tan, were not accidental; Van Tien Dung has been discredited by his wife's black-market dealings, with which

the wives of veteran Politbureau member Xuan Thuy, former planning chief Le Thanh Nghi and former interior minister Tran Quoc Han were also linked.

'In a word, many of the main leaders and their wives are corrupt, and think of nothing but enriching themselves, living the lives of bourgeois, without bothering for a second about the people's poverty. Here is the real face of "new man", of so-called socialism.'

Can the bureaucracy itself combat bureaucratism? asks 'Chroniques Vietnamiennes'. The situation in Vietnam following the sixth party congress provides an eloquent answer, the comrades point out.

They draw special attention to the section of the congress resolution which, after all the rhetoric about 'democracy', insists on the need for a security force 'of a more and more professional type', 'to prevent and punish

acts of economic, political, ideological, and cultural sabotage'.

The hand of the political police is being strengthened, against the force that the bureaucracy fear above all: the Vietnamese workers and peasants.

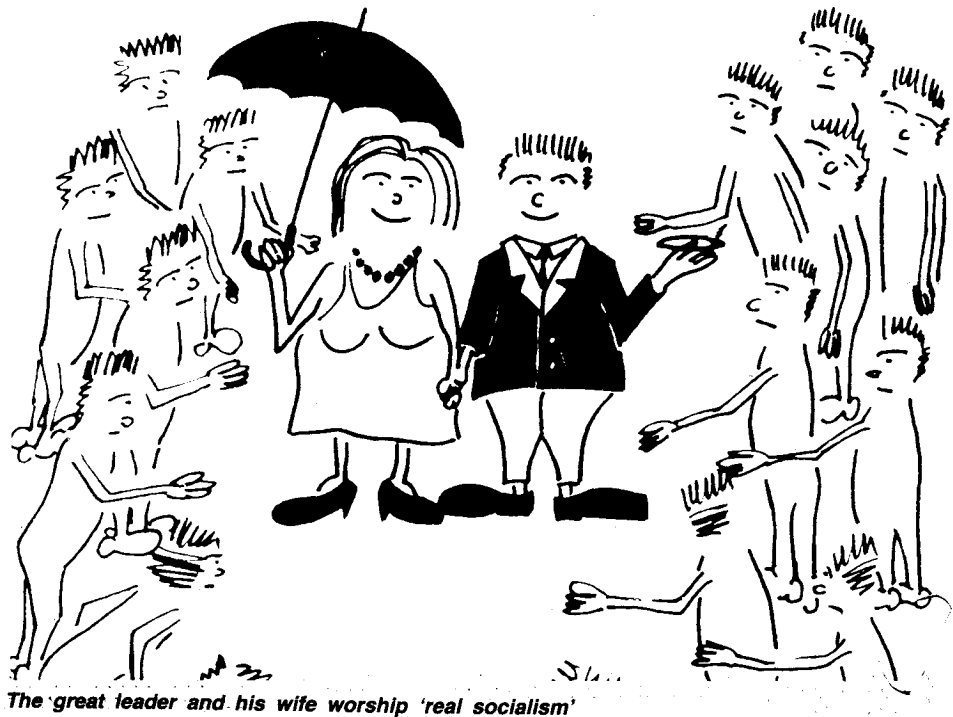
That force — which fought fearlessly against French and US imperialism — will eventually settle accounts with the bureaucracy which has climbed on its back.

In that struggle the programme of Trotskyism, of world revolution as opposed to 'socialism in a single country', will take shape once again in the struggles of the Vietnamese masses.

Trotskyists in the imperialist countries such as Britain have a responsibility both to fight tooth-and-nail to defend the bureaucratized workers' states and also to assist in every way the building of Trotskyist parties in all countries.



Vietnamese have to struggle to buy back food products. At least these weren't exported!



'We must find answers'

PHIL PENN interviews
Durham Mechanics (NUM) president
BILLY ETHERINGTON

I HAVE never been one who said the miners had a victory, but I do believe that if the miners' strike had not taken place the Tory attack would have accelerated.

At that time Labour were in the lead in the opinion polls, but the achievements of our strike were thrown away.

The Tories became unpopular over the strike. People who perhaps were not behind the miners in their struggle saw the way they were being treated and found it very distasteful.

They saw women and children used as political pawns and they were alienated from the Tory government.

Had there been more resolution shown by the Parliamentary Labour Party and TUC following the miners' defeat, instead of backing away, if there had been some positive action — it may be that Labour would be in power now.

I do not accept this argument that people don't look for leadership. One of the reasons that Thatcher has been so successful is that, whether or not we agree with her, she does offer leadership.

Had the same type of leadership been offered by the Labour Party and TUC people would have followed that lead.

There has been a crisis of leadership within both the trade unions and the Labour government over the last 25 years.

But I don't think that it is only leadership. Great changes have taken place sociologically. There has been a change in the middle

of the old polarisation between the haves and have-nots.

A lot of people are politically disorientated and when that happens they tend to follow what appears to them to be good leadership, and we are not providing it.

On fighting the cuts I have my own idea which very few people seem to agree with.

If you are fighting an opponent you make them impose everything on you if you cannot obstruct them. What you don't do is look for the easy way out.

If I was the leader of a Labour Council elected on a specific manifesto, but because of Tory legislation could not carry it out, I would go back to the people and say we are not prepared to carry this out.

We will continue to try to run things as your elected representatives but we are not prepared to run this particular council.

Those who wish to do so, the Tories, they can be seen to be making the cuts and we will try to oppose them.

This is not an abdication of responsibility. Politics is about power: if you are elected to a position thinking there was power but find that power has been removed, you have got to examine your



BILLY ETHERINGTON

position very closely.

Otherwise you end up doing the work for the Tories and also suffering the odium.

People ask: why are these things being done by a Labour council?

A lot of people do not understand about rate-capping, the way central government have put the screws on local government.

What I say is that you go back to the people and say look, we are not prepared to run the council. We will leave that to the opposition,

we will obstruct them at every turn and we will try to carry out what you have voted us in for.

That is an honorable way out and I only wish that Labour had done this five years ago.

The confusion and mayhem it would have caused would have given the Tories a lot more problems than they have had with people saying: 'We must be responsible', 'We must do the job', when in fact they are not being allowed to do the job.

* * *
CONFERENCES like the one in Manchester are necessary to enable people to share their experiences.

Not everyone has had the same experiences, and the Tories are very adept at changing their tactics when a thing has not worked too well.

It is no good waiting another five years in the hope that we will get another Labour government in. The Tories must be resisted in any way we can.

At the moment there may not be an awful lot we can do, I appreciate that.

The economy is organised to create so many unemployed, to weaken the resolve of those who are in work. The law has been changed in relation to the trade union movement and we have just about got corporate trade unionism now.

We have got to look carefully at that, and I would not pretend that I know the answers. But an attempt has to be made to find answers.

Throughout history men and women have come forward with ideas to counteract oppression and that is what we are talking about, counteracting the oppression of the working class and the trade unions.

That is the only way ahead, it is difficult to imagine any group of people who will be able to embarrass the government with strike action, of any length of time. For one thing those unions that do have the power don't seem to have a leadership that wants to exercise it.

People are apprehensive about taking strike action because it is now commonplace for them to be sacked when they do.

You have got to be very careful how you proceed, but what I do not accept is this 'New Realism' which in essence says that you can't do anything.

People have got to keep on meeting, keep on exchanging experiences and ideas and see if we can find ways around a very difficult problem.

We have only got one duty and that is to try find ways and means of obstructing those who are oppressing us

Tolpuddle martyrs anniversary march

BY GEOFF BARR

EVERY year the labour and trade union movement descends on a Tolpuddle village to commemorate the Dorset farm workers who wrote their own chapter in the history of trade unionism.

Despite this year's general election result the march

through the village was large and lively.

Banners came from the west country, the south coast, London and many places a long way from Tolpuddle.

Of great importance was the civil service unions' banner

ner from GCHQ Cheltenham.

As soon as the march through the village was over, the rally began. The key speaker from the Parliamentary Labour Party was Gerald Kaufman.

Kaufman said nothing new but at least avoided the fate of right-wingers at previous rallies — getting booed off.

His uninspiring words and the rain poured down on the rally, dispersing all but the most dedicated listeners.

Peaceful

The other speaker was Norman Willis. He spent a lot of time stressing the need for the working class movement to keep to peaceful and parliamentary methods.

Willis's call for unions to end their 'bickering' seemed to be aimed at critics of the scab leaders of the electricians' union EETPU and their allies in the engineering union.

This call fitted in with the TUC general secretary's demand for unions to be prepared for change, to be prepared for change and to restructure etc.

These phrases seem to have become code words for selling members out rather than preparing to step up the fight against the ruling class.

Cold water kept hitting the marchers. Fortunately for the movement its rank and file are made of strong enough material to withstand it.



Exeter Workers Revolutionary Party banner was in the ranks of the march



Banners on the Tolpuddle march reflected the wide-ranging variety of trade unions who participated

A newly-translated document from the Vietnamese Trotskyists

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Domination of finance capital

LIKE Cyril Smith, I welcome the letter from Keith Gibbard, criticising my article 'Wall Street Roulette'. But I think Smith lets Gibbard off much too lightly.

Lenin in 'Imperialism' argues against Kautsky that 'the characteristic feature of imperialism is not industrial but finance capital.' (Lenin's emphasis.) He adds:

'The 20th century marks the turning point from the old capitalism to the new, from the domination of capital in general to the domination of finance capital.'

'The development of capitalism has arrived at a stage when, although commodity production still "reigns" and continues to be regarded as the basis of economic life, it has in reality been undermined and the bulk of the profits go to the "geniuses" of financial manipulation.'

'At the basis of these manipulations and swindles lies socialised production; but the immense progress of mankind which achieved this socialisation goes to the benefit of the speculators.'

It is quite wrong to stress 'the profound weakness of finance capital'. On the contrary, its dominion is ever greater over the whole of society.

Today, 72 years after Lenin wrote his 'popular outline', we can see even more clearly how finance capital, in dominating other forms of capital, accentuates and deepens all the basic contradictions of capitalism.

For Lenin, 'it is characteristic of capitalism in general that the ownership of capital is separated from the application of capital to production, that money capital is separated from industrial and productive capital...'

'Imperialism, or the domination of finance capital, is that highest stage of capitalism at which this separation reaches vast proportions. The supremacy of finance capital over all other forms of capital means the predominance of the rentier and of the financial oligarchies.'

Yes, in the crisis of what Lenin calls 'moribund capitalism', it is precisely financial parasitism which is 'driving the world economy'. Like cancer, this parasitism destroys the internal control mechanisms of the system.

So when comrade Gibbard talks about 'the complete inability of Reagan, Thatcher and Co. to resolve the crisis', he is dangerously wide of the mark. Nor are these representatives of the most parasitic sectors of the ruling class united merely by 'hatred and fear of the working class'.

This is to take exactly the view that Lenin attacks Kautsky for. It sees imperialism as a set of bad policies on the part of governments, instead of a necessary historical stage of capitalism.

It is the same financial oligarchy which today gets super-rich from the misery of millions of people in every country.

Starvation in the underdeveloped countries, bankruptcy of US farmers and mass unemployment everywhere, are all consequences of the same causes, as imperialism draws the economies of the whole world into one decaying system.

Finance capital is a social relation, a form of the basic

social relation, capital. Its conflict with the development of the productive forces is the driving force for revolutionary class struggle in this epoch.

The vital issue is to grasp what is new about this particular form. That was Lenin's fight against Kautsky.

'Identifying the source of capitalist crisis with one form of capital — finance capital — is completely alien to Marx's method,' says comrade Gibbard.

No, no, no. It was not the 'orthodox Marxist' Kautsky who was true to Marx's method, but Lenin, who took Marx forward into the 20th century.

Let's hope we can take this argument further. That will help us with what I believe must be our aim: to move beyond Lenin's work into the 1980s.

John Crawford

Stalinism in South Africa

I WAS pleased to read the comment by a South African revolutionary in last week's Workers Press (18 July) on the Dakar talks between the African National Congress and liberal bourgeois whites.

What surprised me, however, is that the article characterises the ANC leadership as 'petty bourgeois', and therefore constantly vacillating 'between collaboration with the bourgeoisie and support for the struggle of the working class'.

All the writer says in this respect is true, but I am at a loss to know why he makes no mention of the role of Stalinism in the ANC.

This is a vital question. The main field of work of the South African Communist Party is in the ANC and the hand of Stalinism is frequently evident in both the external and internal work of the ANC.

I would very much welcome an evaluation of this in a future article by our South African comrade.

Another connected question is the role of the ANC/Stalinism in the trade union federation COSATU.

Equally welcome would be a clarification of this and also a discussion of COSATU's differences with the 'black consciousness'-oriented trade union federation AZACTU which I believe is characterised as racist by COSATU members.

Lucy Brent

Peace campaigner Mordechai Vanunu

THE GATHERING of Europe's peace movements in Coventry will undoubtedly be preoccupied with very big issues, concerning the development of disarmament negotiations between the great powers, the difficulties which have arisen in negotiations about the withdrawal of intermediate nuclear forces, the changes in the political leadership in the Soviet Union and the growing threat of economic dislocation in the world debt crisis.

But it is necessary at the same time to remember some other campaigners in

more restricted areas.

Foremost among the forgotten people is Mordechai Vanunu, currently sitting in a prison cell in Jerusalem, where he is held in solitary confinement.

When Vanunu revealed the secrets of the Israeli bomb factory, he brought an end to decades of speculation about

the nuclearisation of the conflict in the Middle East.

No single act of proliferation poses a greater peril than does the development of nuclear weapons in Israel.

It is both an incitement to further proliferation, and a confirmation of the view of Alva Myrdal, that the main danger of nuclear conflict in Europe was that it might 'spill back' from confrontation in another zone of the world.

After Vanunu told his story, he was kidnapped in Rome and spirited back to Israel to face trial.

Had the Israeli government held the slightest confidence in the justice of their complaints against him, ex-

tradition proceedings would have been brought, and his transfer would have been sought through legal channels.

His kidnap is simply one more evidence of the disregard for international conventions which is becoming fashionable in these days.

It must be admitted that Israel has set more than one example of this kind of lawlessness, and that these examples have been sedulously imitated by its mentors in the United States. None of this makes our world any safer.

On the eve of the Coventry Convention, 36 Members of the British parliament have joined with the Russell Foundation in nominating Mordechai Vanunu for the Nobel Peace Prize.

We very much hope that supporters of nuclear disarmament will join us in speaking up in defence of this most courageous of peace activists.

Ken Coates

The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation Ltd.

Assent/dissent

I REFER to Cyril Smith's and Dot Gibson's condemnation of Neil Kinnock's proposed use of membership ballots by constituency Labour Parties for selecting parliamentary candidates (Workers Press, 18 July).

The compulsory membership ballots 'being imposed by the Trade Union Act 1984 ensure that every trade union member is given the right and the opportunity to vote in the key elections of his or her trade union.'

There is absolutely nothing wrong with this in principle, and the sooner political parties are compelled by law to elect their leaders and parliamentary candidates by the same method the better.

One of the problems with the spurious democracy of capitalism that Neil Kinnock is trying to bring into the Labour Party is not that every individual gets a vote: it is that every individual who gets a vote can only use that vote to register assent and

not dissent — the reason why not one single vote of dissent against capitalism has ever been registered in a general election.

The present Conservative government was elected to office by a minority of assenting voters.

Thus, had the electorate been allowed to vote in dissent against the election of a Conservative government the number of votes given in dissent would have undoubtedly overwhelmed the number of votes given in assent.

Therefore, a condemnation of universal suffrage in the form of general elections and membership ballots is not what is needed; what is needed is a prolonged and widespread campaign that will make every individual aware of the truth that a democratic vote is a vote that can be used to register assent or dissent, both with regard to the election of representatives and leaders, and to the election of policies.

Alan Wales
South Shields

Keep death off The Highway



WHEN 100 East-Enders demonstrated against the proposed Docklands Highway (above), traffic was blocked all the way back to Tower Bridge.

The demonstrators confounded police, who were looking for

a reason to make arrests, when they exercised their right to use a pelican crossing.

Many people have already died or suffered terrible injuries on the Highway, and the fear is that if a proposed six lane highway goes ahead it will mean even more deaths.

London WRP public meeting

THE WORKERS Revolutionary Party held a successful public meeting in London's Conway Hall last week.

WRP speakers, Central Committee members John Simmance and Bob Archer, explained that the election victory for the Tories was not a defeat for the working class. The elections ushered in a government in deep crisis.

Those who had organised support for miners and printworkers in their epic strikes were now coming together with groups of workers who have put up stubborn struggles against sackings and attacks on union rights.

A series of conferences and discussions has been organised up and down the country.

The WRP speakers pledged to support this development and fight for maximum solidarity with workers in struggle everywhere.

They also explained that the party is fighting in these struggles for a Marxist world outlook.



The major issue for the working class is the development of revolutionary leadership.

That is why the meeting called for support for all those leaders in the working class who took up a fight against the Tories and their attacks.

In the discussion, a member of the Workers' Power group stated that the election had been a defeat for the working class.

There was also a discussion with supporters of the Lutte Ouvrière group about the nature of the support groups which have sprung up around recent struggles and what they mean.

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PERSONAL COLUMN

Peter Fryer

Out of control

ONE evening in August 1983 five schoolboys, aged 13 to 16, were walking home from a fair when they were stopped by a police patrol van off London's Holloway Road.

Without provocation, and without warning, a group of policemen jumped out and started punching and kicking the youngsters and belabouring them with truncheons.

Baltimore Ranger, then 16 years old, was kned in the face and struck in the face several times. His nose was fractured and had to be straightened under an anaesthetic.

His brother Eric, then 14 years old, was struck in the stomach and kicked in the face, and needed stitches to a cut above his right eye.

Another 14-year-old was grabbed round the neck and punched in the face. As he bent over to protect himself he was kicked on the chin.

The other two boys were kicked and truncheoned, leaving them with bruises and abrasions.

The officers got back into their van and drove away, congratulating each other with such comments as: 'I gave him a good smack', 'He got a good kicking', and 'I feel better for punching that lad.'

According to one of those who took part in this sickening incident: 'When we got back into the van everyone treated it as a vast joke. There was talk of doing it again. It was treated as fun.'

There were eight policemen in that van. None of them reported the matter. Instead, all took part in what even the independent 'Police Review' called a 'conspiracy of bastards'. All eight denied that their van had been in the area.

From August 1983 until April 1985 Scotland Yard's own complaints bureau mounted two separate investigations, without success.

Meanwhile the culprits brazened it out. They lied to officers investigating the incident. They were deaf to appeals from their superiors to come forward. They let suspicion fall on fellow officers.

Meanwhile, too, the Police Federation accused those who wanted to see justice done in this case of a 'burning hatred of the British police'. ('What kind of union is it', asked the 'Guardian' on 8 February 1986, 'that at least appears to be conniving in a cover up?')

Only after the Police Complaints Authority stated that prosecutions were unlikely did the press outcry rise to a level that forced Scotland Yard to launch a third inquiry.

And only when three colleagues were given immunity from prosecution — because it was accepted that they had not personally taken part in the assaults — did these three 'bastards' finally agree to testify against the five 'bastards' they had shielded from justice for four years.

Sentencing the five 'bastards', Mr Justice Kenneth Jones called their conduct 'a disgraceful episode'. They had behaved like vicious hooligans and lied like common criminals. They had made a 'brutal, bullying and unprovoked attack' on innocent schoolboys.

Needless to say, neither Scotland Yard nor the Police Com-

plaints Authority will accept that there is any need for changes in the way complaints against the police are investigated; nor are disciplinary charges to be brought against two police officers who took part in the cover-up.

Virtually everybody in this country knows full well that the Holloway Road case wasn't a freak. It wasn't a shocking exception. Nor was the subsequent cover-up an exception.

The only exceptional thing about the Holloway Road case is that it at long last came to court and that the police officers involved were jailed. Both brutality and cover-up are the norm. Listen to the 'Guardian' again: -

'The sad, usually unspoken reality . . . is that if any police officer commits an act of violence against a member of the public (particularly if they are black or left-wing) they will get away with it.

'Their own colleagues won't split on them. Their superior officers won't dare discipline them. Their union, the Police Federation, will support them. . . . And, to cap it all, the Prime Minister will denounce anyone who even suggests that there is anything wrong with the police.'

In the past eight years at least, the attested cases of unpunished police brutality — unpunished largely because of the cover-up system that is an essential and central part of police occupational culture — have been legion.

On 23 April 1979, during an anti-fascist demonstration in Southall, Blair Peach was beaten to death with unauthorised weapons by a Special Patrol Group posse, and his murderers have, so far, got away with their crime because no one in that bunch of thugs would identify them. ('If you keep off the streets in London and behave yourselves, you won't have the SPG to worry about', said an arrogant ass of a Metropolitan Police Commissioner afterwards.)

In recent years juries sitting in civil courts have established that London policemen have assaulted a black Sunday-school teacher; attacked a black man in a wheelchair and forced his girlfriend to endure a humiliating search; and beaten up a black youth at a bus stop.

In recent years police have broken into the homes of black people, shooting and brutalising; the notorious case of David and Lucille White, awarded £51,000 for

what the judge described as 'a catalogue of violence and inhuman treatment', is only one of many such shameful crimes. (And in the White case too, true to form, there was an attempted cover-up, described by the judge as 'monstrous, wicked and shameful conduct in the name of justice'.)

There is a long and chilling list of young black people who in recent years have inexplicably died while in police custody or, like Trevor Monerville, have been so abominably treated that they are lucky to be alive.

This selective catalogue of police crimes leaves much out of account. It leaves out of account, for instance, numberless acts of furtive brutality committed against pickets and protestors: the invariable punches and other instances of petty sadism that go on in the darkness of police vans and the seclusion of police cells.

These police thugs really believe they are above the law. And so they are, most of the time.

That another part of the state machine, the judicature, is prepared to send five police thugs to jail is no triumph for our much vaunted 'British justice'. It merely shows that one judge, at least is beginning to worry about a possible anti-police backlash.

Indeed, he has cause for worry. For working people have had a bellyful of 'hard', paramilitary, brutal policing. (Ask the miners whose villages were invaded by riot police. Ask any black person.)

The labour movement should put the police on notice — I think that is the time-honoured phrase — that they will no longer tolerate police brutality and police arrogance.

The labour movement inquiry into the nefarious activities of MI5, so cogently demanded by Workers Press last week, could well be extended, or supplemented, to cover the criminal activities of the police.

In 1829, when Sir Robert Peel founded the Metropolitan Police as a 'peace preservation' force, a storm of rage and indignation swept Britain at this break with our ancient traditions of liberty.

We badly need another such storm of rage and indignation. For the police are plainly out of hand.

It's high time to put a stop to their brutality and their blatant cover-ups. It's high time, indeed, to dissolve this wholly corrupt institution.



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BOOK REVIEWS

The killing of Ann Chapman



This Thames-side snap of Ann Chapman was taken by a photographer friend shortly before she found a way into journalism through Radio London

ON 10 October 1971, the day before her trip to Greece, Anne Chapman, a keen young reporter with Radio London, called at her parents' home in Putney, South London.

'I have just been given a big story — they tell me it will make my name in journalism all over the world,' she told her mother excitedly. 'I'll tell you all about it when I get back.'

Anne never lived to tell her big story. On 18 October, her body was found lying face down in a field on the outskirts of Athens.

Her wrists and ankles were tied with wire, and her face badly battered. She had been beaten, then strangled.

On 20 October, the Greek embassy in London told the Chapmans: 'Ever since Sunday, all of us here have followed the news of this reprehensible crime with great concern and anxiety.'

Later, it was to occur to father Edward Chapman that there was something odd about this message. Ann's body had been found on Monday. On the Sunday, nobody except Anne's killer(s) would have known there had been any reprehensible crime.

On the other hand, if the embassy had been anxious, why hadn't it contacted the Chapmans then?

Ann's body was flown back to Britain and, without the parents getting to see it or any inquest (Tory Home

Secretary Maudling said it was not necessary), quickly cremated.

Ten months later, former prison officer Nicholas Moundis, a known sex offender, was picked up by Athens police, and persuaded by a mixture of blows and promises to confess to the killing of Ann Chapman.

He was found guilty on a reduced charge of manslaughter.

Edward and Dorothy Chapman did not accept the official version of their daughter's death. Against all the odds — a brutal right-wing colonels' regime in Greece, lack of interest (indeed positive discouragement) from the British government — they set out to uncover the truth.

Euro-MP Richard Cottrell, given the task of looking into the case by the European Parliament in 1983, has uncovered plenty of evidence which shows how the colonels' regime tried to cover up, and suggests the real reasons Ann might have been killed.

The prosecution had said Moundis covered the body with large boulders. Why this suggestion?

Blood On Their Hands — The Killing of Ann Chapman. By Richard Cottrell. Grafton. £12.95.

Because the marks on the body would otherwise indicate not only how badly Ann had been knocked about, but that the body had been moved to the place where it was found.

There was other evidence, both from the state of the body and from a report of the body being seen in a car, that would have blown up the Moundis case if it had come up in court.

Again, if Anne had been killed accidentally during a brutal rape, why the wire bonds on wrists and ankles? Corpses don't struggle.

The indications are that Ann was held captive somewhere, badly beaten by more than one person, — a rib was fractured, and her face was described as a mess — and killed, the body being taken to the field near her hotel later.

But why? What was the 'big story' Ann had been so excited about before she left London?

Richard Cottrell reveals that besides being ambitious to get some serious stories and make her name as a journalist, Ann had mixed with opponents of the regime in London, and also met a Greek embassy official who, unbeknown to her, had the job of inquiring into intending visitors, especially journalists.

Although her trip with Olympic was a freebie laid on to boost the tourist trade, Ann told friends she hoped to get something more interesting — an interview with Lady Amelia Fleming, widow of the penicillin dis-

Murder — the real thing

Soft Drink, Hard Labour: Guatemalan Workers Take On Coca-Cola. Latin America Bureau, 95p.

The Real Coke, The Real Story. By Thomas Oliver. Pan, £2.95

'IN GUATEMALA, Coca-Cola is a name for murder', one of the exiled Guatemalan trade union leaders told the 1979 AGM of the Coca-Cola company in the United States.

It was part of the international campaign the workers at the Guatemala Bottling Company fought to establish the right to organise, a campaign which served as an inspiration to other workers in this 'country of widows and orphans' resulting from years of repression.

You won't find much about the battles between workers and multinational in 'The Real Coke, The Real Story', the history of the company

which hires out the formula for its soft-drink syrup, and especially its decision to reinstate 'classic coke' after introducing a new formula in

its battle with Pepsi.

This book certainly supplies some basic facts about the corporation which is number 93 in the world, and seventh largest food and drink company.

Coca-Cola's annual profit approximately equals the total budget of the Guatemalan government. It found a licensed franchisee to bottle its globally-drunk product in Guatemala in 1976. The workers immediately began to organise.

The Latin America Bureau pamphlet describes what

happened. Two of their leaders were shot and wounded, and their lawyers injured in a road 'accident'; death threats were sent to workers at their home addresses, presumably supplied by the company.

The union continued to operate, and to support other workers, especially the sacked miners who marched into Guatemala City in 1977.

Between April 1979 and July 1980, four leaders were shot and wounded, four disappeared and seven were killed. In exile, their leaders

planned an international campaign that involved the IUF, the International Union of Food and Allied Workers Associations, and international boycotts.

In 1980, the Coca-Cola workers won improved rights and conditions, but union-busting repression grew and in February 1984 the plant was suddenly closed and the entire workforce sacked.

A year's occupation began at once, with 200 of the 450 workforce in the plant at any time. They organised foot-

ball and literacy classes; workers from other parts of Guatemala supplied them with food, while donations came from all over the world.

The deal they won from the new owner of the plant in 1985 recognised the determination of their struggle. This book shows the importance of the fight for trade unionism in Guatemala, against the multinationals, and the role of international support in the battles of trade unionists.

BRIDGET DIXON



ROBSON'S CHOICE

Invisible and underground

coverer, whose imprisonment by the junta had been big news.

She may have come upon a bigger story. Cottrell reminds us that hated as the junta was by the Greek masses, it had powerful backers.

A few years before the colonels' coup, US President Lyndon Johnson had warned the Greek ambassador in Washington:

'If your prime minister gives me talk about democracy, parliament and constitution, he, his parliament and his constitution may not last very long.'

Colonel Papadopoulos had been on the CIA payroll since the 1950s. The colonels' secret police, KYP, into whose hands Anne might have fallen, were CIA-subsidised and run.

On October 16, 1971, Greece had a better-known visitor than Ann Chapman. US vice-President Spiro T. Agnew arrived to discuss the junta's security and that of US bases. The intrigues led to the bloody coup and partition of Cyprus.

Whether or not Ann Chapman was on to something, the secret police needed to find out, and then destroy the victim of their interrogation methods. That is where the evidence points.

Some people who might have known more cannot be asked. Brian Rawson, who phoned the British embassy to report Anne missing has himself disappeared. Efforts to trace him received no help from the Home Office.

Aristotellis Kotsias, Olympic Airways courier with Ann's trip, and possibly more, died when his car plunged into the Thames near Walton, on 17 March 1980.

So far as Labour's then Foreign Secretary was concerned (replying to questions in 1974), the Chapman case was not his office's business.

His successor David Owen gave the Chapman family no help, nor did Tory Ian Gilmour. All the Chapmans got from the Foreign Office was the bill for flying Ann's body home.

As for the BBC, its main concern was apparently to distance itself from the murdered young reporter. Radio London news editors were instructed never to refer to Ann as one of their reporters.

The colonels' junta has gone. Its agents, the murderers of Ann Chapman, are still at large. More important, so are those who took part in the high-level conspiracies and cover-ups.

C.P.

THERE IS no need to go as far as West Germany to witness the super-exploitation of an immigrant work-force. You can see it right here in Britain, especially in London, but you have to dig for it.

After the self-conscious exhibitionism of the German documentary *The Lowest of the Low*, the simplicity and directness of Margaret Henry's *Invisible Workers*, shown last Sunday on Channel Four, was more than welcome.

The film was dedicated to Hebert Marin, the trade unionist and civil rights activist who spent most of his working life in London, and who died in Colombia last year 'one of thousands abducted, tortured and murdered in recent years'.

It outlined in some detail the day-to-day problems faced by 'illegal' workers in Britain, that is to say, workers who have fled their native countries to escape political persecution or the poverty trap, come to Britain as tourists and then gone underground.

The majority came from the Philippines, from Turkey and from Colombia. Home Office figures claim that there are 30,000 Colombian nationals in Britain today, 27,000 of whom they class as 'illegals'.

What struck me watching the film was that although these workers and their families are systematically harassed by the police and the immigration authorities, the majority of them remain in Britain. Why?

Because their cheap labour is a vital component of the British economy.

Can there be any doubt that if the authorities really wanted to round up and deport 'illegal' workers in Britain they could do so with ruthless efficiency in a matter of weeks. But that would not be in the ruling class's interest at this stage.

Much better to have a reserve pool of labour to do the filthiest jobs in unsocial hours: a cowed, submissive



'The Bronx: A Cry For Help' (produced/directed by Brent Owens) is on Channel Four on Monday at 10.55 p.m.

and obedient workforce which can be sacked at any time, which does not qualify for state benefits and can be threatened with expulsion from the country at any time if it doesn't jump when the master barks.

Resistance is very difficult because of the fragmented nature of the workforce and because the workers themselves have no legal status in Britain. Despite this, attempts have been made to organise collective struggles against employers, some of them successful.

Most of these immigrant workers are engaged in contract cleaning, in restaurants and in the garment trade. To survive, let alone send money home to their families, they are obliged to have at least two jobs, often as many as four.

Part time cleaners, for example, are paid £26 for 15 hours' work, six days a week. No holiday pay, no social security, no injury cover.

'Every day there are vacancies', a Colombian worker explained, 'and not because they were creating new jobs but because they sacked somebody every day.'

'Sometimes they sacked somebody to whom they owed a week's wages. When that person came to claim it they often threatened to call the police, so that he or she ran away or was really frightened. Then they pocketed the money.'

Pritchards are one of the largest contractors in the dirty business of cleaning for profit. They rely heavily on

non-union, part-time, immigrant labour to extract surplus value for their shareholders. When Wandsworth Council sacked its workforce and put street cleaning and refuse collection out to private tender, Pritchards were able to undercut all their competitors. It's obvious why.

But it would be wrong to assume that companies like Pritchards (who have contracts to clean most of the West End of London stores, from Selfridges to Dicken and Jones) are a purely British phenomenon.

Quite the contrary: Pritchards exploits globally, like the system it serves.

They 'clean' hospitals in the US, airports in France, railway stations in Spain, and they operate in a big way in South Africa 'where they have been exposed for treating cleaners almost like slaves', a worker explained.

They even resorted to airlifting Philipinos to work in South Africa in order to undercut black workers.

A contributor illustrated one of the side-effects of such de-humanising work:

'Although he had been a teacher, he'd lost his handwriting. His handwriting was like a person who had never learned to write. It took him a long time, something like six or seven years, to recover an acceptable level of handwriting.'

'I think this happens to many people. Repeating the same operation time and time again the whole day, like bending over a sink washing dishes. After a couple of years one feels incap-

able of doing a difficult task.'

'The difference between "free" workers and "tourist" workers is this', explained a Turkish garment worker, 'if he presses on average 100 garments a day, you have to press 300.'

Another worker argued forcefully for basic rights for immigrant workers by explaining that if they were prepared to sell their labour in Britain, they should have access to what the country has to offer. A woman garment worker put it this way:

'The products are not illegal; the companies are not illegal; so why should the worker be illegal?'

* * *

IN THE letters' page last week Comrade Jeff Jackson took me to task for not drawing our readers' attention to the week-long celebration which took place on the South Bank recently entitled 'Music from the Royal Courts'.

I plead guilty to the omission. By way of explanation I should perhaps explain that I tend to react subjectively and ahistorically to the word 'Court' and doubly so when it is coupled with the word 'Royal'. It just goes to show how seriously one can be misled when guided by primitive prejudice.

* * *

Radio 3 on **Saturday** offers a chance to hear the spectacular soprano Maria Callas in Verdi's *Il Trovatore* at 2 p.m. At 7.30 p.m., also on Radio 3, a delightful

mixture of Schubert, Rachmaninov, Copeland and Gershwin direct from the Albert Hall in **Prom 87**. At 9.05 p.m. (BBC2), a George Stevens musical comedy starring Rogers and Astaire called **Swing Time**.

On **Sunday**, the big splash on BBC1 at 7.15 p.m. is the four-part US production **Peter the Great**. Vanessa Redgrave plays the 'scheming half-sister' of the Tsar whose idea of glasnost resulted in forced labour and death for thousands of Russian peasants.

At 8.15 p.m. (C4), **People to People** presents the first of a two-part documentary about fascism and anti-fascism in the 30,000-strong Italian population in Britain between 1920 and 1945.

At 9.15 p.m. (BBC2), part-three of **Hemingway**, a biography of the American writer. At 10.55 p.m. (C4), Michael Curtiz' **The Sea Wolf**, based on the novel by Jack London.

On **Monday**, at 6.30 p.m. (C4), first in a new series, **So We Bought a Computer**, introduces word-processors. At 9.30 p.m. a piece of disinformation called **Survival**. Purports to be about ordinary citizens surviving in the great outdoors without pipe, rocking chair or slippers.

Given that the tutors are ex-members of the SAS, could this be a soft introduction to the US-type survival programmes currently being run by the 'Kill a Commie for Christ' brigade? We shall have to wait and see.

Maybe I'm jumping to conclusions. Maybe, just maybe, the next programme in this new series will surprise us all by showing us how to survive without housing, medical care and education. At 10.55 p.m. (C4), a documentary called **The Bronx: A Cry for Help**.

On **Tuesday**, at 9 p.m. (C4), a play called **Heart of Steel**. Also at 9 p.m. (BBC2), the sci-fi thriller **The Thing from Another World** (1951).

At 9.40 p.m. (Radio 3), the second part of Plato's **The Last Days of Socrates**. At 10.30 p.m. (ITV), Viewpoint 87 looks at police harassment in **Reasonable Force**.

At 10.50 p.m. (C4), **Saxophone Colossus**, a documentary about Sonny Rollins.

On **Wednesday**, at 8.30 p.m. (C4), **Diverse Reports** inquires whether the Zionist state of Israel intends to respect the arms embargo on South Africa or whether it will continue to give the racist state the level of support it has come to expect over the last 25 years.

At 9 p.m. (C4) part-two of **People to People**. At 10.40 p.m. (ITV), another chance to see Nicolas Roeg's **Walkabout**, set in Australia. At 11 p.m. (C4), Horace Ove's **Moving Portraits**.

On **Thursday**, at 4.25 p.m. (BBC2), Harold Lloyd in **The Freshman** (1925). At 8.20 p.m. (BBC2), David Attenborough looks at the botanical gardens in **Glass Kingdoms at Kew** (where a new conservatory is being built) and poses the question: 'How do you create a building with ten climates under one roof?'

At 10.25 p.m. (C4), the American documentarist Emile de Antonio continues his season of films with **Painters and Painting**.

On **Friday**, you can watch and listen to another promenade concert at 10.25 p.m. (BBC1) in **Omnibus at the Proms**. The programme is decidedly lightweight, but none the worse for that. It includes an old favourite of mine and millions of others: Dohnanyi's **Variations on a Nursery Song**.

Tom Scott Robson

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Workers Press

Saturday July 25 1987. Newsdesk 01-733 3058

'No blackmail' says Scargill

● FROM PAGE ONE

to 70,000 in three years. This is the programme of pit closures I warned about when I was elected president. It would mean in the North East three — possibly four — of the remaining pits would close.

Referring to the new conciliation scheme, Scargill said this was like the one in America called the majority concept — a pit or workshop must have 50 per cent NUM membership for the members to have the right of representation.

'It is a scab charter,' he added, 'and has resulted in 40 per cent non-unionists in America.'

On the issue of the new disciplinary code, in operation since 1 March, he explained that in South Wales the miners had a concessionary fuel agreement for 50 years.

When the board lowered the grade of coal for miners' homes, the miners came out on strike. They were threatened with the sack. Members of COSA who turned back at the picket lines were told: next time, you're sacked.

'Neither the board nor anyone else has the right to intimidate and harass min-

ers in this way,' exclaimed Scargill. He then pointed out a few of the changes the new code has introduced.

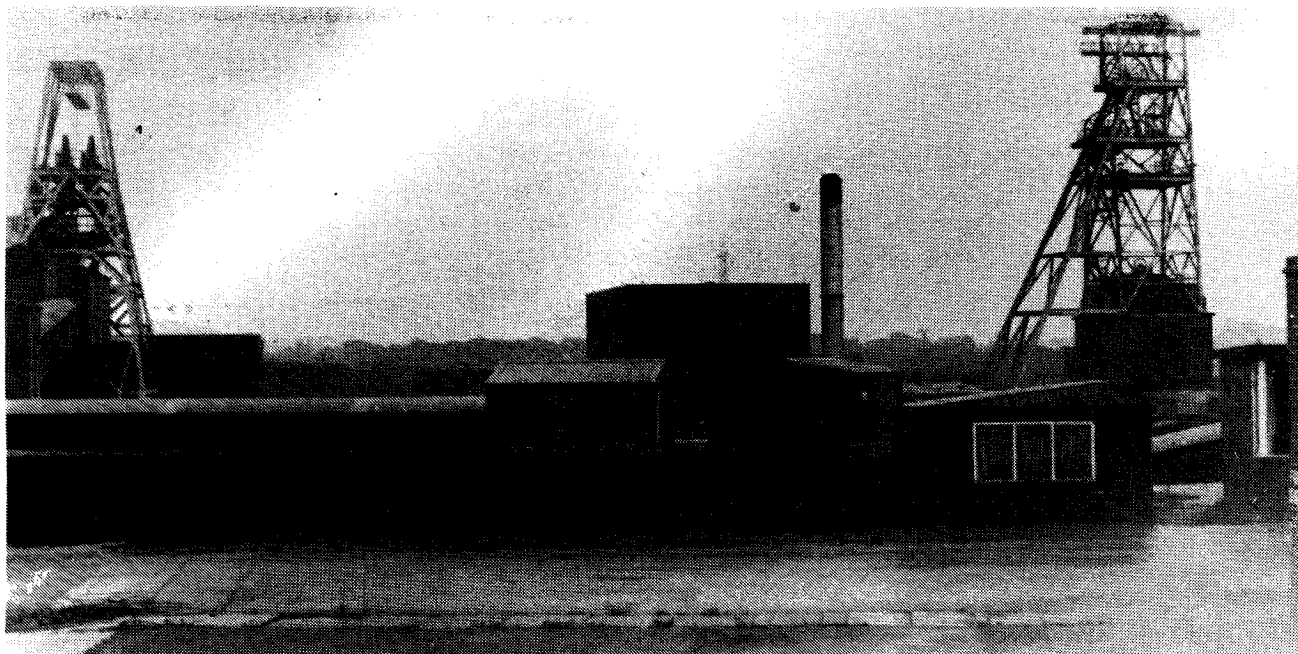
Before when an NUM member was charged with an offence, he or she could go to the manager with a branch official. Under the new disciplinary code British Coal can refuse this.

Appeal

You could appeal to an area committee; under the new disciplinary code the appeal is to the same people who sacked you. There was an independent umpire whose finding was binding. Under the new disciplinary code, if you go to an industrial tribunal you can win and still be sacked.

British Coal are intent on operating a strict disciplinary code, a six-day week, a new conciliation scheme, closure of more pits, depressed wages, worsening of conditions and the smashing of the NUM before privatisation.

As Scargill said, the fight back begins now. All miners must reject the disciplinary code and the attempt by British Coal and the Thatcher government to introduce six-day working.



Deserted! Frickley pit stands idle while its young workforce dashed round South Yorkshire, successfully closing the rest of the coalfield through the use of flying pickets. At the other end of South Elmsall, young pickets were stopping lorries entering the premises of Argyles who supply Presto supermarkets



Arthur Scargill at the Durham miners' gala

Strikers defend sacked steward

WORKERS from Argyles in the mining village of South Elmsall, South Yorkshire, are to spread their action.

The strike began at the company, which distributes goods to Presto's supermarkets, after management sacked a transport union shop steward for allegedly stealing pallets.

BY CHRIS McBRIDE

Drivers, warehouse workers and clerical workers, about 180 altogether, walked out ten days ago in support of their victimised colleague.

Negotiations broke down last Monday when management insisted that they should proceed with their 'disciplinary' action.

A meeting of the strikers followed directly afterwards where they voted in a secret ballot by 115 to six in favour of continuing their action.

Steve Hand, a Transport and General Workers Union shop steward at the plant, known to the strikers as 'Speedy', described management's attempts to get rid of the victimised steward.

'They tried a couple of weeks ago to discipline him and got nowhere. It seems to me that we have had a set-up

here by the management and security.'

Hand said they had asked management for evidence.

'The only evidence they've produced is from security people. On that basis alone they've dismissed the shop steward. It's just another ploy to get rid of the Transport and General Workers Union.'

'There is no way this strike is going to last 12 months,' Hand said. 'But we are prepared to stop out 12 months if it takes that length of time.'

Within an hour of the ballot result being announced, the strikers, many of them young, were collecting money for petrol to get them around the country in order to picket out the rest of the company's workforce.

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