

# SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST

# Black miners revolt

200,000 black mineworkers are set to strike this Sunday in what could well turn out to be the biggest all-out confrontation between black workers and the employers in South African history.

The strike is part of the Congress of South African Trade Unions' (COSATU) campaign for a living wage.

The miners' union, the NUM, is demanding:

- \*A 30% wage increase across the board.
- \*Five years' pay as death benefit.
- \*Danger pay.
- \*Thirty days' paid leave a year.
- \*June 16, Soweto Day, as a paid holiday.

The strike is likely to be strongest in the gold and coal mines belonging to Anglo-American, Consolidated and Gencor (the state-sponsored mining house). However, it can be expected to spread from those areas where the NUM is strongest to the rest of the industry.

## Confrontation

Until now, neither the NUM nor the Chamber of Mines (the employers' club) have squared up for an all-out confrontation. Anglo-American, for instance, was keen to maintain its "liberal" and "anti-apartheid" image, while the NUM has built itself through sectional, limited, guerrilla action, utilising at times the already existing tribal communal structures in the mine compounds.

Now, it seems, the mine bosses want an all-out war. They hope to call the union's bluff.

Management are taking a tough line. They have:

- \*Refused the unions facilities for meetings about the strike.
- \*Banned the distribution of leaflets.
- \*Threatened to close mines, and starve workers.

## Two hundred thousand to strike in South Africa

Gavin Relly of the Anglo-American Corporation, which owns 60% of the shares on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange gave an indication that the bosses may well be itching for a fight.

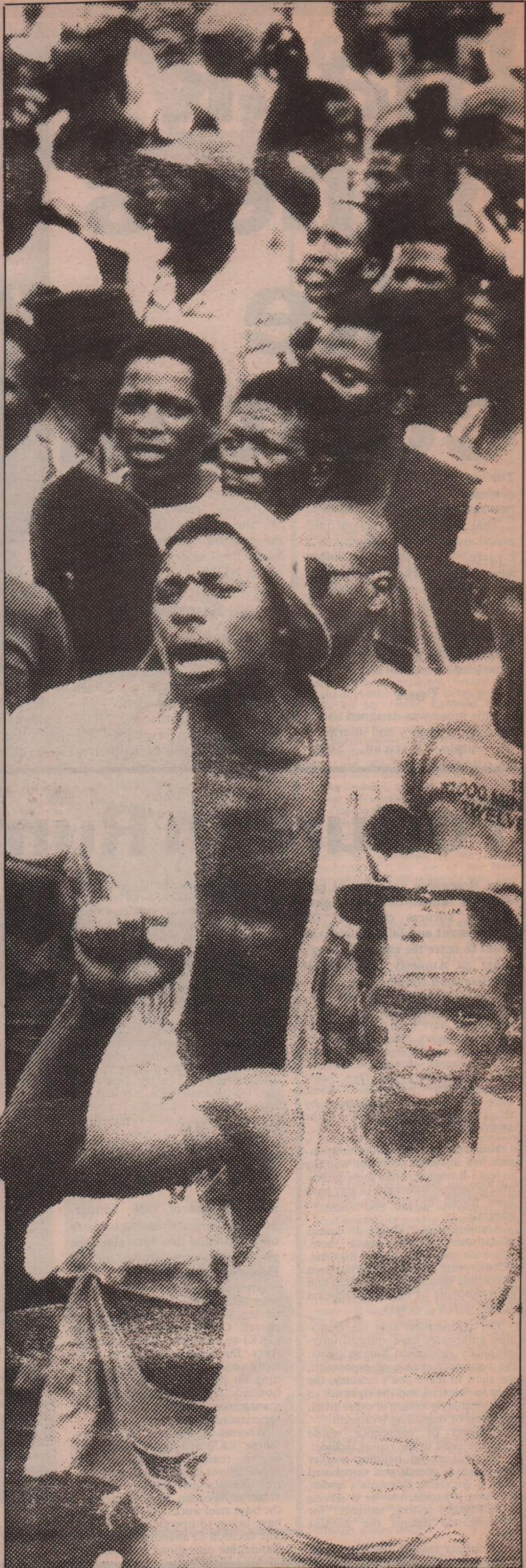
Relly, who spoke to the exiled leaders of the African National Congress in Lusaka in 1985, said after the recent spate of bombings and attacks on union offices and the murders of black trade unionists:

**"We cannot be expected to treat sympathetically the appeals for support of trade unions who promote sanctions and disinvestment, the more so when such advocacy is part of a wider political programme inimical to the very survival of the free enterprise system of which we are a part".**

With the "liberal" bosses taking such a hard line an all-out and extremely bloody battle in the mines seems likely.

The outcome of this battle could well shape the future of the black workers' movement for some time to come.

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# Black miners take control

The slogan of this year's NUM conference was "1987 — the year that mineworkers take control".

That slogan has been put into practice at Anglo-American's Eastern Transvaal coal mines where mineworkers have confronted the migrant labour system head on.

In early April, wives and girlfriends moved into the infamous single-sex hostels at the mining compounds.

## Test

This move was designed to test the 'liberal' policy and utterances of Anglo-American, South

Africa's largest corporation.

The miners' defiance of the "no wives" ruling was the start of "the fight to bring an end to the migrant labour system and hostel life" said Marcel Golding of the NUM.

## Success

According to the union, new rules governing living arrangements in the hostels have been established, the disciplined occupation was a success.

Cyril Ramaphosa, NUM general secretary, explained why the union is fighting to destroy



James Motlatsi, president of the South African NUM, with Arthur Scargill and Norman Willis at a memorial service for miners killed at Kinross in South Africa. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni, Report.

the migrant labour system:

"Firstly, it has come up after we observed the resurgence of so-

called faction fighting in the mines, and having found that these conflicts are essentially caused by the migrant labour system.

"The blame for all the deaths and injuries we have had can convincingly be put at the door of the migrant labour system, and having realised that, we have to find a way of dealing with it.

"Hence the need to discuss it at congress and to come up with a resolution which address this and to eliminate the kind of conflicts and destruction we have had by eliminating the migrant labour system and start having workers accommodated on a family basis.

## Support

"There is overwhelming support amongst miners for this, in spite of management-initiated surveys which suggest that many workers do not prefer to have their families with them.

"In fact, the contrary is the case, and after congress most of our members, particularly in the coal fields started discussing this and they wanted to prove to management that they wanted to live with their families and they decided that they would bring their families to the hostels, an indication to management that they are very impatient with the waiting for schemes to be designed and approved.

After the congress we sent out a letter to the mining houses as well as to the Chamber calling upon them to come up with a clear statement. All of them so far, except for two, have indicated that they are willing to negotiate with us over hostel control and the whole question of the migrant labour system.

"In fact some of them have already approached our shaft stewards and said we want you to

put your congress resolution into practice. This has happened with our president who has a special project of putting our resolution into practice in Western Deep Levels.

## Planning

"He has already started with this, planning on how the hostels should be run by hostel representatives; the indunas (tribal "representatives") have been given notice that they are on their way out and in some cases they have already been moved; hostel representatives have been elected; constitutions are being drafted. So moves are already underway to deal with this whole issue. It might still come to a head, particularly where the mining companies might resist meeting our demands."

## Miners' revolt

Continued from page 1

Already this year has seen the most massive strike wave in South African history. Now the centre of the battle has shifted to the heart of the South African economy — the mines.

And an all-out battle in the mines — the foundation of the wealth of South Africa's rulers — poses, at least implicitly, the question: Who rules South Africa?

The NUM has already said it will defend itself physically against attacks from the mine management, the state and black vigilantes. It is the duty of the international workers' movement to come to the aid of South Africa's black miners.

Workers in Britain could start by taking action to support the South African NUM's call to boycott all South African coal coming into Britain.

The TUC should give a lead in this. Send messages of support to the NUM, c/o COSATU, PO Box 1019, Johannesburg 2000, South Africa.

# Torture in Rumania

The Romanian government persistently abuses human rights, harshly silences critics of the government and jails people who want to leave the country. That's what an Amnesty International investigation found.

The worldwide human rights organisation says some prisoners of conscience have been beaten up and jailed for years after unfair trials, while other critics have faced forms of harassment, including house arrest, losing jobs and then being charged with "parasitism". Some have been attacked in the street by thugs believed to be acting for the authorities.

Hundreds of people have been imprisoned in recent years for wanting to leave Romania, while some prominent dissenters who want to stay have been forced by the authorities to emigrate.

Amnesty says it knows of dozens of prisoners of conscience there. These are only a fraction of the total. "Discovering the true figure has been impossible because of censorship and an atmosphere of fear and suspicion in the country," it says.

The organisation says the Romanian authorities have violated internationally recognised human rights: the right to freedom of expression, the right to leave one's country, the right to fair trial and the right not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

Prisoners of conscience whose cases are cited in the report include:

\*A 56 year-old building worker who made a speech and distributed leaflets criticising Romania's leader, President Ceausescu — he is serving a nine-year prison sentence for "propaganda against the socialist state".

\*A former teacher who complain-

ed to a foreign radio station about losing his job unfairly — he later died in prison serving an eight-year sentence for "disparaging the central organs of the party and state".

\*A 50 year-old electrician arrested after driving through the centre of Bucharest displaying a picture of President Ceausescu and the words "We don't want you, hangman". He got 10 years.

Amnesty has received many allegations that prisoners of conscience and other political prisoners are ill-treated to coerce them into making confessions. Some political prisoners are reported to have been tortured, by being beaten on the soles of the feet, kicked and beaten with rubber trun-

cheons. Two prisoners are reported to have died after torture.

Emigration is severely restricted and the many would-be emigrants face job-loss, harassment and in some cases imprisonment for applying to go. People caught trying to leave illegally face up to three years in jail.

For example, a father was denied permission to take his seven year-old epileptic son abroad for medical treatment and tried to go illegally. In December 1985 he was given an eight-month jail sentence.

Amnesty International says it has also received reports of people being killed by border guards as they tried to leave illegally.

## Solidarnosc lives on

Since the end of 1986, Solidarnosc has been attempting to work openly for the first time since the government crackdown of 13 December 1981.

After over 11,000 union activists were detained, Solidarnosc had been relying on its underground Temporary Co-ordinating Commission (TKK) to maintain independent activity. But Solidarnosc's level of activity varies between regions, depending on its strength, the degree of hostility from local authority and management, and the availability of experienced leadership.

Whereas the Regional Strike Committee (RKS) of Lower Silesia decided to remain underground, the organisations in major industrial centres like Warsaw, Lublin, Szczecin, Wroclaw, Poznan and Nowa Huta, the huge steel works outside Cracow, have begun to operate more openly. The decision to abandon reliance on clandestine operations met with op-

position, particularly from the underground activists, who feared that coming out into the open would expose the best militants to victimisation and jeopardise the union's gains.

The workplace branches of Solidarnosc are still headed by semi-clandestine factory commissions (TKZ). Despite government repression, these units have kept the union alive at its strongest level — the grassroots. According to an article in Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, government efforts to boost productivity have centred on increasing work loads and intensifying 'labour discipline'.

New labour laws have made dismissals easier and introduced penalties for workers changing their jobs. The withdrawal of the five-day week won by Solidarnosc in 1981 has been legally extended until 1990.

This article originally appeared in *International Labour Reports*.

# STOP THE WAR!

## P R E S S G A N G

By Jim Denham

### EDITORIAL

The sabres are rattling over the Gulf. Since the US decided to move Kuwaiti oil tankers under an American flag, battle-cries from all sides have got louder.

As we go to press, the tankers are still moving through the Gulf. The Iranian government, blaming the US for the massacre in Mecca, is still threatening to blow the tankers out of the sea. British ships are heading for the Gulf via Suez to strengthen the US mission.

Will there be a big escalation of the Gulf war — with full-scale US involvement? It is too early to say. But we must firmly oppose any and every escalation in this bloody conflict. The war has brought untold misery for the Iraqi and Iranian people. And there is no doubt that both the US and the Iranian governments are upping the stakes, even if they may not intend all-out war as a result.

#### Reagan

The Reagan administration needs to show it can be tough with the Iranians. The Irangate scandal has left Reagan and Co. with very red faces: after publicly insisting it would never deal with terrorists, the regime was found to have swapped guns for hostages. So now Reagan wants to prove he is just as firmly committed to gun-boat diplomacy as he always was.

The US may not intend to provoke a massive escalation in the Gulf conflict. To do so would carry too many risks. Ideally it would like to get rid of Khomeini. But it could not afford to get embroiled in a bloody war to impose a new government on Iran.

Even so, its current posture may lead to an intensification of the conflict beyond the administration's plans.

The Iranian government also needs to make big public noises in opposition to the 'Great Satan'. Whipping up anti-American feeling is a good way to beat down opposition to itself. And after seven bloody years of the war with Iraq, Khomeini's regime needs a new gimmick.

#### Escalation

An Iranian socialist told Socialist Organiser: "Any escalation in the war will help both the Iraqi and Iranian regimes to mobilise forces within their countries to suppress opposition. Socialists in Europe often focus on the question of imperialism's opposition to Iran. But we also have to remember the regime is not just opposed to imperialism — it's opposed to the Iranian workers and masses too."

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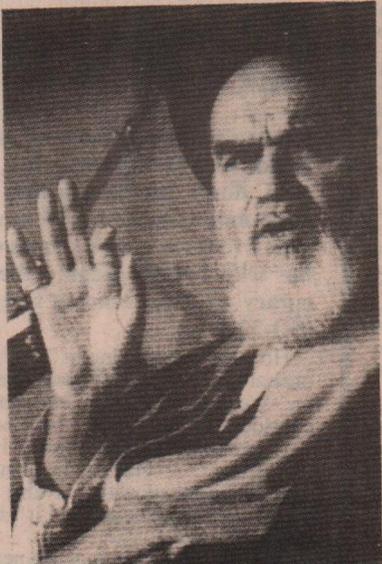


Photo: Reflex

What is desperately needed is an end to the war. It has been kept dragging on by the self-interest of the Iraqi and Iranian regimes, and any intervention by the US or Britain can only make the situation worse.

#### Conflict

Reagan and Khomeini, from opposing sides, may be dragging their countries into an even more bitter conflict that will serve nobody but themselves. At the very least there may be direct military clashes, or a repeat performance of last year's bombing of Libya aimed at Tehran. We need to prevent further US or British involvement — to help the workers and peasants of Iran and Iraq settle accounts with both of these bloodthirsty dictatorships.



### First among equals

The reptiles of the tabloid press hauled into court and made to answer for their unsavoury methods and dubious standards of honesty; the subject of a sordid sex "exclusive" exonerated and awarded huge damages: it ought to have been cause for celebration among all decent folk.

So why does the outcome of the Archer case leave such a bad taste in the mouth?

Not out of any sympathy for the likes of Lloyd Turner of the 'Star' or David Montgomery, formerly of the News of the World — that's for sure. Not even because Jeffrey Archer is a particularly smarmy Tory millionaire: if he was wronged he deserves redress as much as the next person.

The trouble is that you cannot help thinking the 'next person' would not have received that kind of redress — even assuming that s/he could stump up the large quantity of cash necessary to even begin thinking about a libel action.

The real crime of the Star and the News of the World seemed to be having had the affrontery to embarrass a rich, successful, high-class man, with their seedy low-class journalists — and for the detection of their even lower-class readers.

The facts of the case hardly came into it. Why Archer paid Monica Coghlan £2,000 has never been satisfactorily explained. Adam Raphael's evidence (which pretty flatly contradicted Archer's account of events) was more or less brushed aside by Mr Justice Caulfield in his remarkable 'summing up'.

And then there was His Honour's apparent infatuation with Mrs Archer ('Has she elegance? Has she fragrance?' etc., etc.) and the strange inference that because this wonderful woman had stood by her husband, he must, perforce, be innocent. His accuser, Monica Coghlan, on the other hand, was a 'street-trader' with poor taste in clothes and therefore not to be believed.

Papers like the Star and the News of the World are specialists in the art of 'doorstepping', the use of the hidden microphone and the telephoto lens. They have helped destroy many reputations and brought untold suffering to the families of their victims.

But usually those victims are not particularly wealthy or powerful: they are people like Derek Robinson, Peter Tatchell and Deidre Wood — 'little people' in comparison with Archer. The day that the Robinsons, Tatchells and Woods can take their grievances to the courts and receive the kind of sympathetic treatment that Jeffrey Archer had will be a good day for democracy.

Until then, nothing will convince me that this was anything other than the ruling class looking after its own.

#### Some mistake, surely?

The Spycatcher affair gave Sunday Telegraph editor Peregrine Worsthorne another opportunity to pontificate on his favourite theme: the moral and ethical decline of modern society.

"Secret agents should not need to be deterred by law from betraying confidences; nor should newspapers need legal injunctions to stop them publicising those betrayals of confidence. Yet they do," observes Perry in this Sunday's editorial.

He has little time for those who winge about the government's use of the courts to suppress coverage of the Peter Wright revelations: "That is going to happen more and more often as the law gets sucked into the vacuum left by the collapse of all traditional notions of decent conduct, and it does not become those who have connived at and encouraged this collapse to wax indignant at its inevitable consequences."

Meanwhile, a small insertion on the front page of the same newspaper informs us that "The Attorney General last Thursday informed the editor of the Sunday Telegraph that proceedings were being instituted for criminal contempt of court in respect of three articles published in this newspaper relating to the Spycatcher book."

"It is alleged that this newspaper 'intended to impede or prejudice the administration of justice'. The editor strongly denies this."

# GRAFFITI

## Hospitals crumble

While waiting lists for urgent operations are growing, hospitals are crumbling, and nurses are leaving the country in their hundreds, the Institute of Economic Affairs (the Tory monetarist think-tank) is to spend £55,000 over the next three years on a unit to draw up proposals to privatise health care.

They want to fix up a system in which everyone would be a private patient.

This could involve tax relief to encourage people to take out private insurance, a higher rate of tax relief for those who agreed to formally opt out of NHS acute services, and some form of 'voucher' arrangement provided by the

state to allow those on the dole (if we are lucky enough to still have it by then) to opt for private or NHS care.

Obviously the people that would benefit from these schemes would not be the working class but the big rich shareholders and bosses of the private companies involved.

## No smoking

80% of workers support the introduction of no-smoking zones at work, according to a poll commissioned by the anti-smoking group ASH. Some employers, including Cambridge University Press and Gwent County Council,

have already agreed no-smoking rules at work.

Each year about 200 to 300 non-smokers die from lung cancer caused by breathing in other people's smoke.

## Rape

A survey by a women's magazine has produced new evidence that rape is much more common than official figures show.

One woman in 50 had been raped in the last year, and a further 45% had suffered some form of threatening behaviour.



# SO and the election

**"Gut felings of contempt and hatred" for reformist leaders? Yes, we have them just like David Finch has (letters, SO 321). Only we don't produce a paper just to express our gut feelings. We try to use our brains too.**

We have to make our aims and ideals, and our notion of socialism,

clear. But we cannot progress very far just by denouncing others for not having those ideas.

It's no good telling workers that they should reject the Labour leaders because those leaders are...reformists, just like most workers are themselves! We can convince workers to reject reformism only by patient argument and a willingness to try to work together and draw lessons from

experience.

A monotone denunciation of reformist leaders whatever they do — whether they lead strikes or block them, whether they campaign vigorously against the Tories or reserve all their vigour for attacking the left — can serve no purpose except to convince ourselves of our own 'intransigence'. If we denounce reformist leaders in the same tone whether they move left or right, who will listen to our denunciations?

In the election campaign Neil Kinnock and the Labour leaders did not stop being reformists. They proposed nothing more than different "techniques for running the Tories' own system" — and, as David Finch acknowledges by quoting us, we said so.

Nevertheless, by comparison with what Kinnock and the Labour leaders had been doing for the previous four years, and by comparison with what the general run of Labour leaders' behaviour over recent decades, the election campaign was fairly vigorous. In relation to the depressed state of working class political confidence, it was relatively radical on issues like nuclear disarmament, secondary picketing, welfare and so on.

To be horrified at the thought of recognising such facts is rather like standing aghast at the idea that capitalism might ever not be in catastrophic crisis. Trotsky called it the sectarianism of the 'opportunist frightened of their own opportunism'.

GERRY BATES, Camden.

## Defend Vanunu!

Mordechai Vanunu is 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, extradition 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 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.

Thirty-six 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.

Yours sincerely,  
KEN COATES,  
Bertrand Russell  
Peace Foundation



TOP PEOPLE'S FASHIONS

## Anti-imperialist dictator

Agitation against the Yankees is loud and strong in Panama. The US embassy has been attacked, and political rallies chant 'They shall not pass'.

Only this 'anti-imperialism' is a gambit by Panama's military dictator, General Manuel Noriega. The Independent reports: "The US, so the government line goes, has cultivated an

unholy alliance with the Panamanian wealthy, European-descended families whose eagerness for political power is fuelled by resentment at being led by a man of humble origins whose skin is darker than theirs".

It is true that the US, considering Noriega too unstable, has endorsed Christian Democrat opposition leaders. But

most Panamanian workers are not fooled by Noriega's demagoguery, and are backing the fight for democratic rights.

## Sun

In 1979, a baffling full one-third of Sun readers told a survey that they thought their paper had backed Labour in the General Election.

In the 1987 election Sun readers were more politically aware, and only 12% of them defied the daily screaming headlines to believe that their paper backed Labour.

The Sun's heavy-handed Thatcher-boasting was still, however, not a great success. Only 63% of Sun readers positively registered that the paper backed the Tories. 7% thought it was pro-Alliance, and 18% didn't know.

Gratifyingly, Labour tabloid-readers seem to be more perceptive. The Mirror's score for readers who knew its political alignment was 84% — about the same as the Telegraph's and higher than the Mail's.

Maybe capitalist propaganda is not as all-powerful as we sometimes think.

## Class support

Only 13% of the people who worked for the Tories in the General Election were trade unionists, and 65% of them were in the better-off 'ABC1' social groups

according to a MORI survey.

By contrast, 43% of Labour campaign workers were trade unionists, and 63% were in the worse-off 'C2DE' categories. Labour activists were also, on average, much younger than Tories: 49% of Labour's election workers were under 34, while 60% of the Tories' were over 55.

The capitalist nature of the Alliance is confirmed by the fact that the profile of their election workers resembled the Tories. Only 6% of them were trade unionists, even though the Alliance had a lower percentage of pensioners helping than either Tory or Labour.

## Rulers

They used to say that the idea of a ruling class was a Marxist prejudice. But the Tory magazine The Spectator makes no bones about it. In an advertising circular it boasts of its reports of "the opinion of those who shape and decide public policy — senior industrialists, churchmen, peers, judges, academics, MPs, civil servants..."

# Chivalry is sexist

**I haven't yet seen the new James Bond film, Living Daylights, and as I don't intend shelling out good money to do so I'll have to wait five years until it comes onto the telly before judging the accuracy of Tom Macara's review (SO 320).**

However, something in Tom's appraisal of the 'new soft Bond' worries me. We are told that the new Bond is considerably less sexist than before — indeed he's "positively chivalrous". It may be less unpleasant to be faced with chivalry than with direct sexist abuse, but it's hardly progressive!

Chivalry, the idea that women are naive little innocents who need to be protected from the cruel world, is merely the flip side of the idea that women who aren't naive little in-

nocents deserve everything the cruel world can throw at them, from insults and scorn to battery and rape. Both attitudes militate against the fight for women's equality.

The new Bond movie may well be less dull and mindblowingly banal

than its predecessors. However, I very much doubt it is any more politically sound — especially in its attitude towards women.

Yours comradeship,  
ROSEY SIBLEY  
Nottingham

## Socialist Action and cuts

Dear comrades,

On 22 July the Manchester City Labour Party decided to back proposals for cuts by a 2-1 majority. The main anti-cuts position from Stretford Constituency Labour Party was defeated by 3-1.

Supporters of Socialist Action refused to back this no-cuts position. Their opposition to this resolution

resulted partly from pure sectarianism, the Stretford position being proposed by supporters of Socialist Organiser.

But more than that was involved. They want to stay friendly with the council leadership.

Yours comradeship,  
TONY DALE  
Manchester

# The Southwark contract

**1917**  
YEAR OF REVOLUTION

Sunday 25 June

A 5,000-strong meeting in Petrograd organised by the editorial board of the Bolshevik paper *Woman Worker*, condemns the offensive and the withdrawal of revolutionary troops from Petrograd. In the Moscow local elections for the city council, the Social Revolutionaries win 58% of the votes, the Cadets 17%, the Mensheviks 12%, and the Bolsheviks 11%.

In Voronezh workers and soldiers take part in a Bolshevik demonstration protesting at local lockouts and the closure of the Trubochny factory, under the slogans, "Down with the 10-Minister Capitalists", "Down with Anarchy", and "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth".

Supreme commander-in-chief General Brusilov telegrams the War Minister from Stavka, informing him of postponements of the offensives on the Northern and Western fronts until July, due to opposition amongst the troops to an offensive. On the Northern front orders are issued banning meetings and for the arrest of anyone agitating against an offensive and the carrying out of orders; 6,000 soldiers are arrested in the 36th division of the Tenth Army for refusing to obey orders. On the Western and South-western fronts soldiers disobey orders and are disarmed by detachments still loyal to the government.

Monday 26 June

On the Western front soldiers in the 51st Infantry division refuse to obey orders to take action against soldiers of the 703rd and 704th Infantry regiments who have themselves refused to obey orders. On the South-western front General Kornilov orders the arrest of soldiers in the 161st Infantry regiment who have refused to obey orders and orders weapons to be used to force the regiment to obey orders. 100 soldiers of the 164th Reserve regiment are sent to Cheboksar to put down working class unrest in the town.

A mass meeting of workers of the Russky Rend factory in Petrograd condemns the offensive and declares it to be "not strategic but political". The Blagush-Lefortovskiy regional soviet in Moscow condemns the offensive and calls for all power to the Soviets. The factory committee of the Singer factory in Podolsk resolves to sack the factory manager.

Tuesday 27 June

Crews on the ships *Petrovavlovsk* and *Glory*, stationed at Helsingfors, pass resolutions against the offensive and call for an immediate end to the war. On the Northern front a meeting of the 479th Kadnikovskiy Infantry regiment condemns the Provisional Government's decree that military units refusing to obey orders to go on the offensive are to be dissolved and re-formed, on the grounds that it is "directed against the revolution".

On the Western front, General Denikin suggests that the War Minister refrain from visiting the front, given the current mood of sections of the army. In Bobrov, 40-year old soldiers, recalled from agricultural work, arrest their commanding officer in protest. The regimental committee of the 143rd Infantry regiment, stationed in Samara, arrests the regimental commander and his adjutant for ill-treating soldiers.

Wednesday 28 June

In an appeal "To All Party Members and Sympathisers", the Bolshevik Central Committee appeals for financial support for eventual election-campaigning for the Constituent Assembly; it appeals for the donation of a day's pay from all supporters. In elections for the Kostroma City Duma, the Bolsheviks win 46 of the 80 seats.

On the Northern front, General Svechin reports that nearly 4,000 soldiers have hitherto been arrested for refusing to obey orders, and expresses concern about the problem of keeping such large numbers under control. The Executive Committee of the Soviet of Moscow railway workers resolves to introduce the 8-hour working day in all freight stations. A meeting of 500 soldiers in Rostov-on-Don condemns the prolongation of the war and calls for all power to the soviets. The Executive Committee of the Saratov Soviet approves the detach to the front of the 90th and 91st Reserve Infantry regiments, and to inform the Provisional Government should they refuse to go.

Many rank and file council trade unionists in Southwark, in both the manual and white-collar unions, have been disgusted by the disclosure that council leaders and trade union officials prevented an inquiry into extremely serious abuses of old people at the Nye Bevan Lodge old people's home.

Penny Newell, former chair of Peckham Labour Party, looks at the issues

Nye Bevan Lodge is on everyone's lips and it has been hard as an active trade unionist who works for Southwark Council, not to get befuddled by the complexity of the issues.

So it was only when a member of Peckham Labour Party said to me that "NUPE had been given the 'contract' and hadn't been able to deliver the service" that I suddenly saw the problem clearly.

But was this 'contract' workers' control? The workers' control in Fleet Street was very strong and a bit distorted, yet basically sound and in the workers' interests. How did the practices in Southwark compare to that? Not very well. 'The contract' led to totally unacceptable practices in the name of trade unionism that we should all condemn.

There is a long history of right wing and reactionary activities in parts of the manual workforce in Southwark. This dates back to the petrol bombing of the Union Place print shop in the 1970s, organised from a council depot by the National Front.

The conclusion of the Inquiry Panel into Nye Bevan Lodge very clearly spells out what the NUPE 'contract' meant for elderly and frail people: they suffered, and some died, because of it.

The Panel dates 'the contract' from 1977 and it seems that further corrupt clauses were written into it in the Labour Club belonging to Peckham Labour Party.

Strangely enough the Inquiry Panel manages to lay part of the blame at NALGO's door. They state that it was industrial action by NALGO in support of the residential social workers and the six-week long strike over the sacking of a NALGO member three years ago, that apparently caused senior management "to become stressed, overworked and ill".

There is no mention of the fact that NALGO members went on strike because of senior management's inability to see that unreasonable demands were being made of a residential social worker, Siobhan Stokes, that would have led to her suffering stress and illness.

A whole chapter of the Inquiry is



Chris Thompson

'old pals' network.

It is very painful to see working class black people used in this way. It has two effects. It stifles criticism for fear of cries of racism and reinforces racist attitudes. The contradiction of her position was that the very same union leadership that supported her abuse of power was at the same time guilty of blatant racism.

For instance, when the race unit in Southwark proposed an ethnic monitoring questionnaire, an alternative questionnaire that would have pleased the National Front appeared. It was only after lobbying by the NALGO black workers group and the intervention of manual union officials above the local leadership that they finally agreed to the official questionnaire and disowned the racist one.

Attempting to sort out who's in which union under the 'contract', is very difficult. The manual workers in Southwark are generally in one of three main unions — UCATT (building workers) who have never been party to the 'contract', NUPE and GMBU. It seems that some officials are in both NUPE and the GMBU.

As the inquiry said, "NUPE had earned the name of the 'caring' union within the borough. It was ironic that a union official who had never been a member of NUPE (manuals) and at the time was a member of GMBU, should have brought discredit to the union because of the way he had behaved."

I think this union official is Chris Thompson. He is now seriously ill and many people feel his name should not be mentioned because of his illness. However, his corrupt influence on the trade union movement in Southwark is far too serious for him to be let off that lightly. His style of trade unionism bears no resemblance to legitimate trade unionism — even at its most stifling and bureaucratic.

## Mafia

This mafia-style leadership effectively prevented any action against care staff at Nye Bevan Lodge being taken by senior management for fear of a borough-wide strike. The Inquiry Panel says that a strike and withdrawal of labour from the home would have been more beneficial than continuing the kind of care the

## Former council leader Tony Ritchie

devoted to the influence of the unions. It says:

"After the difficulties with NALGO during the residential social workers dispute, NUPE was seen as the 'caring' union which told their members to cross picket lines in order to maintain essential services."

NUPE (Officers) secretary, George Taylor, went further. He wrote to councillors and said NALGO members should all be sacked for breaking their contract of employment by going on strike.

So this warped version of trade unionism led to a few shop stewards becoming very powerful because they had the backing of the special 'contract'.

There could be no comeback at them. One of these stewards was a care assistant at Nye Bevan Lodge. She became "untouchable" according to the Inquiry Panel. The fact that she was a black woman and most of the care assistants were black is also significant.

Instead of this black worker becoming involved in changing the practices of the union to benefit all members, black and white, she appears to have been drawn into the

## Militant and violence

By Tom Rigby

ONE of the most disturbing chapters of violence took place in the winter of 1983-4 when the self-styled "Marxists" who support Militant enlisted thugs to help them seize control of the Young Socialists.

The Militant supporters were prepared to sit back and laugh as young women Party members, who weren't in Militant, were told that they could expect to be raped and that they had better not walk home alone...

One fourteen year-old young woman was unfortunate enough to encounter one of these squalid bullies as she walked along the street alone.

The Militant supporters did not succeed in their attempt to capture the YS through violence and intimidation, though they did succeed in driving many young people out of politics.

It is therefore ironic to read the muted criticism of the "mafia" which appears in the latest issue of the Militant three years too late.

In early 1983 Socialist Organiser supporters defended a Militant supporter who was attacked by a notoriously violent councillor. Within months Militant were lining up with the same councillor to drive everyone else out of the YS; and now they have discovered abuses again. There's nothing like 'Marxist' consistency.

Turn to page 7

# The birth of

# Solidarność

## GDANSK sierpień '80

Seven years ago, something never known before was created by the workers of Poland — a mass independent trade union movement in a Stalinist state. Led by the workers at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk, a wave of working class revolt swept across Poland. With the Russian Army on the borders threatening to invade Poland, the Polish workers forced the Polish government to concede their right to organise a free and independent labour movement. But the story didn't begin in 1980. It begins with the first revolt of the Gdansk shipyard workers.

**Seven years ago the most inspiring workers' movement of recent years was born out of a strike wave in the Baltic ports. Geoff Ward tells the story of how the Polish workers created Solidarnosc.**

In December 1970, workers in the cities of Gdansk and Gdynia rebelled in protest at price rises. The demonstrators were met with severe

repression. Hundreds were shot by the police and army. But the scale of the resistance led to the downfall of the Stalinist dictator Gomulka, who was replaced by Gierek, a one-time coalminer.

In January 1971, shipyard workers in Szczecin occupied the shipyard. Their action became known as the "strike for truth" — about the events of December 1970 — and Gierek himself was forced to come to negotiate with the strikers.

### 'Lost contact'

In talks with the workers Gierek admitted that the ruling "Communist" Party had lost contact with the working class. He made promises that free elections to leading positions in the police state "unions" would be held. The workers won the right to maintain their strike committee and supervise new elections to the workers' council.

But the regime was fairly successful in staving off these early revolts. Gierek formulated the slogan "If you help us, we will help you". Many workers gave him the benefit of the doubt.

### Reforms

In the early 1970s, the Gierek regime initiated a number of economic changes. They opened up to Western investment and the state borrowed massively from Western banks. Poland went through a major economic expansion, achieving one of the highest growth rates in the world. Real wages increased by 40% in the period between 1970-73.

Prices were more or less stable until 1976 when the international recession began to bite and the government announced increases of 60% in food prices.

Strikes erupted almost immediately in Warsaw and other places. In Radom workers ransacked the local "Communist" Party offices.

The authorities were forced to withdraw the price rises. But they counter-attacked with sackings, beatings and killings. One of those sacked about this time was Lech Walesa.

Now a new opposition began to emerge, KOR (Committee for the Defence of the Workers), arranging money to defend workers victimised after the strike of 1976.

The leaders of KOR were socialists, among them Jacek Kuron. Kuron was joint author of an important book criticising Polish society.

KOR began to make contacts with other workers where they discussed factory conditions.

### Deteriorate

By the late 1970s the government had largely been unsuccessful in whittling away the gains made by the workers. The economic situation deteriorated.

In the spring of 1978 committees were founded for the right to form free trade unions in the Gdansk shipyards and elsewhere. The heroes of this movement for basic working rights were forced to work underground, their militants victimised when caught.

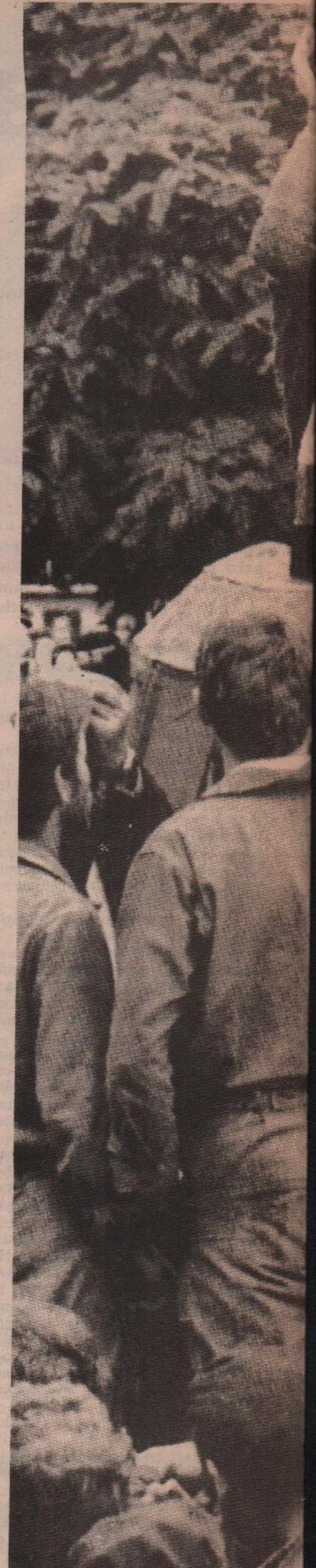
Two years later the crisis came.

In July 1980 the state declared itself bankrupt and once again tried to cut costs and raise money by pushing through food price rises. Immediately there were strikes against these price rises. On 14 August workers at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk occupied the plant over the sacking of an activist for free trade unions — a member of the underground committee — Anna Walentynowicz. Eventually, a great working class parliament was created when an Inter-Factory Committee (MKZ) was formed for the whole of Gdansk. The workers of Revolutionary Russia in 1917 had called organisations like these "Soviets".

The MKZ demanded free trade unions. To demand that was to demand in effect that the Stalinist rulers abandon the basic pillar of their rule — a full monopoly for the so-called "Communist" Party.

By 23 August, the vice-premier was forced to negotiate with the MKZ in the full blaze of Western cameras, and with the negotiating room wired for sound so that the workers occupying the shipyard could hear every word.

The MKZ insisted on its demands for the right to form free trade unions and access to the media. The workers brought in intellectuals like Kuron to help them negotiate. Their real strength though was outside the



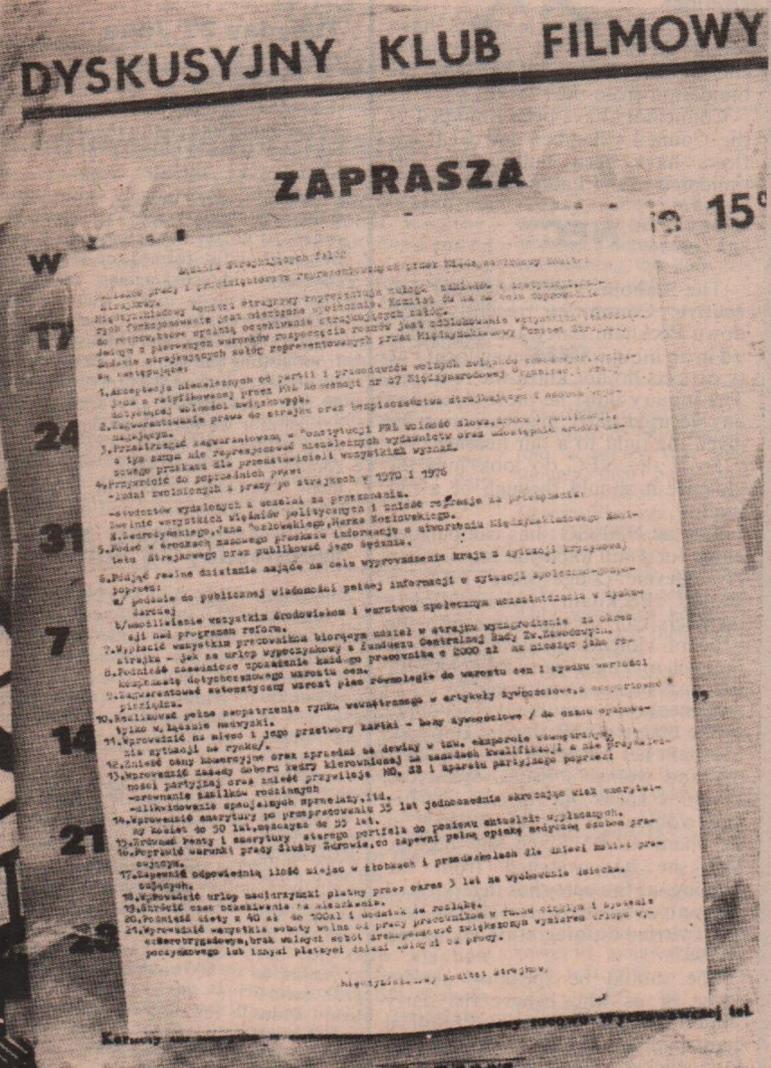
Sacked Solidarnosc activist Anna

negotiating room, where the militant workers also held control of the factories and shipyards on which they had put their own worker guards, armed with pick-axe handles and iron bars.

### Cave in

After 18 days of negotiation the government caved in. The strike had begun to spread. If the government hadn't caved in the whole of Poland would have gone the way of Gdansk.

Thus Solidarnosc — taking its name from a factory strike bulletin, "Solidarity" — was born. In the following months it grew spectacularly until it encompassed ten million workers. Whole factories would desert the official police-state "trade unions" and apply for Solidarity



The 21 points of the Gdansk agreement.



Walenty Nowicz addressing Gdansk workers, 1980.

union cards. The government tried to take back much of what it had conceded when it came to legally registering Solidarnosc. They insisted that acceptance of "the leading role of the party" should be written into the statutes. It took further strikes to force the regime to retreat and accept the great new fact that Solidarnosc was a free and independent working class organisation which did not accept the "leading role" of the totalitarian party.

During the great events in Poland the question on everybody's mind was this: "What would the Russians do?" They had invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968 because they thought the regime of Alexander Dubcek too "liberal". They had bloodily crushed the Hungarian

Revolution of 1956. Would they invade Poland? In fact they didn't. But the fear of a Russian invasion made Solidarnosc's leaders compromise. They wanted to tear the head off the Stalinist dictatorship and replace it with a democratic government. Instead they compromised and opted for reform.

### Self-limit

Lech Walesa and other leaders held to the theory of the "self-limiting revolution", whereby Solidarnosc would rein itself in and the state could be gradually reformed.

It should be emphasised that the threat of a Russian invasion played the decisive role in preventing Solidarity from going further than just bargaining within the system.

The breathing space enabled the regime to hold on until, in December 1981, a state of emergency was declared and Solidarnosc was outlawed. Thousands of Solidarnosc organisers were seized and jailed as the new Stalinist regime, under the soldier Jaruzelski, set out to smash Poland's labour movement.

They failed. Solidarnosc has had severe blows and been driven underground, but it still exists. It is a beacon of hope and an inspiration to the workers of all the Stalinist states where, so far, savage repression has stopped the working class from organising itself.

Solidarnosc still exists. The wonderful Polish working class still has not said its last word to the Russian overlords of Poland or to their Polish Stalinist satraps.

From page 5

### Thursday 29 June

Pravda prints an appeal to all factory committees from the Central Soviet of Factory Committees of Petrograd, calling for opposition to economic sabotage by factory-owners and for workers' control over production.

On the Northern front a general meeting of soldiers of the 70th Siberian Rifles regiment passes a resolution of no confidence in the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies for its support for the offensive.

A joint meeting of the Moscow Soviets of Workers' Deputies and of Soldiers' Deputies votes by 391 to 232 with 15 abstentions to support a Menshevik-Social Revolutionary resolution on the offensive. On the Western front, soldiers refuse to carry out preparations for an offensive and call for all bourgeois elements and capitalists to be sent to the front.

A regional peasant congress in Verny declares support for the Provisional Government and all decisions of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

### Friday 30 June

Bolshevik delegates walk out of a meeting of the soldiers' section of the Petrograd Soviet after it approves the government's decision to recall soldiers from agricultural work to full military service.

Further mass arrests of soldiers are carried out on the Northern front: in the 462nd Infantry regiment alone 600 are arrested. On the Western front six companies of the 534th Infantry regiment and ten companies of the 536th Infantry regiment refuse orders to take up new positions. On the South-Western front General Erdely orders the use of punitive measures, including the use of artillery and armoured cars if need be, against soldiers disobeying orders. The official figure for desertions from the army in the month of June is 30,507.

Women demonstrate in Revel under the slogans "Down with speculators and other users!" and "Bread, sugar, flour!". Workers in the Tarbagataisky mines in the Zabaikalsky region introduce the 8-hour working day of their own accord.

### Saturday 1 July

The first delegate conference of unskilled workers in Petrograd is attended by representation from 29 major plants; it calls for price controls over foodstuffs and opposes individual actions by workers of different factories. A meeting of the factory committees of the Butyrsky region of Moscow calls for the establishment of workers' control. A mass meeting of workers of the Kaslinsky factory in Orenburg province passes a resolution against continuation of the war and for all power to the Soviets. A number of factories in Ekaterinoslav come out on strike for pay-increases.

Bolsheviks in Tsaritsyn appeal for votes in the municipal elections of 9 July, on a platform including: immediate transference of all land to the state; replacement of a standing army by a people's militia; requisition of empty buildings to solve the accommodation crisis; right of the city authorities to keep open factories shut by capitalists; introduction of ration-vouchers.

### Sunday 2 July

A meeting of soldiers of the 1st Machine-gun regiment in Petrograd hears reports from soldiers serving on the front and passes a resolution condemning the Provisional Government and War Minister Kerensky; soldiers call for the overthrow of the government; Bolsheviks present at the meeting appeal for calm.

The Executive Committee of the Ivanovo-Voznesensk Soviet, after hearing of plans for the closure of a number of local factories, resolves that no factory may be shut nor any worker sacked without the permission of the Soviet. The Tuapse Soviet shuts down the pro-government paper "Black Sea Region" and confiscates its printing press. A meeting of soldiers in Yaroslavl resolves not to obey orders to go to the front.

Anti-government demonstrations are held in Ekaterinoslav, Rostov-on-Don, Tsaritsyn, and Ufa.

### Monday 3 July

Members of the 1st Machine-gun regiment inform the All-Petrograd Bolshevik Conference of their intention of holding a demonstration later in the day; the conference opposes the demonstration as inopportune at that moment in time and resolves to issue an appeal to workers and soldiers not to support the demonstration. Meeting in the Tauride Palace, the Bolshevik Central Committee adopts the same position.

# 1917

## YEAR OF REVOLUTION

A joint meeting of the Central Executive Committee elected by the All-Russian Soviet Congress and of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Peasant Deputies resolves not to permit demonstrations and declares "traitors and enemies of the revolution" those who breach the decision.

Members of the 1st Machine-gun regiment visit troops and factories to appeal for support for their demonstration. In the evening tens of thousands of workers and armed soldiers demonstrate under the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!", and converge on the Tauride Palace. The Bolsheviks change their line after failing to prevent participation in the demonstration and now join it, appealing for a calm and orderly demonstration.

The Blagush-Lefortovsky regional soviet (Moscow) calls for workers' control over production. An all-Moscow metalworkers' delegate meeting calls a strike as of 6 July unless a minimum wage is introduced.

### Tuesday 4 July

The Bolsheviks seek to give the spontaneous upsurge of protest an organised and conscious direction, calling for a further demonstration in Petrograd that day. Some 500,000 workers, soldiers and sailors demonstrate. In his speech to the rally Lenin calls for "all power to the Soviets" and for "self-control, firmness and vigilance". In spite of the peaceful character of the demonstration it is attacked by Junkers, Cossacks and officers, resulting in 400 dead and injured.

The Central Executive Committee elected by the Soviet Congress calls in troops to defend the Tauride Palace; a joint meeting between it and the Executive Committee of the Peasant Soviet condemns the demonstrations and opposes transference of power to the soviets. The Provisional Government bans all armed demonstrations, and instructs the commander of the Petrograd garrisons to cleanse the city of armed opponents of the government. The commander of the Baltic fleet is ordered to send four destroyers to Petrograd to prevent the landing of any sailors from Kronstadt and to prevent any ships leaving Helsingfors for Kronstadt. A joint meeting of the Moscow Soviets of Workers' Deputies, Soldiers' Deputies and Peasants' Deputies votes 442 to 242 to ban demonstrations in Moscow.

### Wednesday 5 July

The Bolsheviks call for an end to demonstrations and strikes after the events of the previous days. The Pravda offices are wrecked, as too are the offices and printing presses of Trud, by order of the commander of the Petrograd region, General Polovtsev. Prime Minister Lvov suggests to Polovtsev that he disarms and arrests members of the 1st Machine-gun regiment, who led the demonstration of 3 July.

A meeting of the Revel Soviet votes down a Bolshevik resolution advocating all power to the soviets. The Ivanovo-Voznesensk Soviet votes 102 to 10 in support of the demonstrations staged in Petrograd; the Soviet's Executive Committee calls an armed demonstration for 6 July. Meetings of the Soviets in Kostroma, Orel and Tiflis pass resolutions in support of the Central Executive Committee (CEC) elected by the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, which opposed the demonstrations of 3-4 July. The Executive Committee of the Tula Soviet bans demonstrations and street meetings. Soviets in Kovrov and Aleksandrov pass resolutions calling for all power to the soviets.

### Thursday 6 July

Listok (leaflet) Pravdi appears in place of the Pravda newspaper. The Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies calls for the Provisional Government to take "the most decisive measures" against "anarchic manifestations" in Petrograd. The Provisional Government resolves to arrest the leaders and participants of the recent demonstrations in Petrograd; it also orders the arrest of Lenin.

A general meeting of soldiers of the 1st Machine-gun regiment, who initiated the 3 July demonstration, resolves not to surrender its weapons as ordered, but also accepts the authority of the CEC.

The Butyrsky Regional Soviet (Moscow) passes a resolution advocating soviet power. 10,000 demonstrate in

Continued page 8.

# 1917

YEAR OF REVOLUTION

Ivanovo-Voznesensk under Bolshevik slogans. The Smolensk Soviet condemns the demonstrations of 3-4 July and supports the CEC. The Kharkov Soviet votes down a Bolshevik resolution in support of the Petrograd demonstrations.

Counter-revolutionaries demonstrate in Kishinev under the slogan "Soldiers to the trenches, workers to the lathes!". A meeting in Baku of the Proletarian Union of Women calls a demonstration under the slogans "All Power to the Soviets!" and "Workers to the lathes, peasants to the ploughs and the bourgeoisie to the trenches!"

## Friday 7 July

The Chief Procurator signs the warrant to arrest Lenin. Members of the CEC and of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasant Deputies greet soldiers returning to Petrograd from the front to maintain "order". War Minister Kerensky issues a decree threatening with arrest any soldier agitating against the offensive and for orders to be disobeyed; a further decree declares the Tsentrobalt dissolved (a delegate committee elected by crews of ships in the Baltic fleet) and orders fresh elections.

A meeting of the Central Bureau of Trade Unions and of the Central Council of Factory Committees in Petrograd calls for a strengthening of working class organisation in the face of the government's offensive and condemns the attacks on Lenin and other leading Bolsheviks.

The workers' section of the Kourou Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies condemns the withdrawal of troops from the town for the front. The Tula Soviet condemns the recent demonstrations in Petrograd. The Executive Committee of the Minsk Soviet condemns the repression of revolutionary organisations. By 81 votes to 2 a joint meeting of the Caucasian Soviets condemns the Petrograd demonstrations.

## Saturday 8 July

The CEC and the Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasant Deputies supports the dissolution and re-organisation of regiments who participated in the Petrograd demonstrations. The Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet endorses the government's action in opposition to the Petrograd demonstrations. The Provisional Government appeals to soldiers to continue the offensive, and empowers the War Minister to ban the distribution amongst soldiers of Pravda, Trenches and Soldiers' Pravda. General Kornilov, commander on the South-western front, calls for the re-introduction of the death penalty for soldiers disobeying orders.

The barracks of the 1st Machine-gun regiment are surrounded, the soldiers are disarmed, and escorted by Junkers to the front. Meetings of the Soviets in Archangelsk, Orel and Vladivostok condemn the Petrograd demonstrations. Officers in Vladimir threaten to use force against soldiers of the 82nd Reserve Infantry regiment who refuse orders to go to the front. The Minsk Soviet calls for soviet power and condemns the government's attacks on the revolutionary press.

## Sunday 9 July

A joint meeting of the CEC and the Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasant Deputies declares the Provisional Government to be the "government of the salvation of the revolution" and recognises it as fully empowered to restore discipline in the army. The Provisional Government sets up a special commission to establish which military units were involved in the Petrograd demonstrations.

A joint meeting of the Vladimir Soviet and the executive committee of the District Soviet condemns the dispatch of locally stationed troops to the front; soldiers in the 82nd Reserve Infantry regiment, however, resolve to obey orders to leave for the front to prevent bloodshed. Despite opposition from the local Soviet, Bolsheviks in Ekaterinodar hold a demonstration in protest at the attacks on the Petrograd demonstrations. 10,000 demonstrate in Krasnoyarsk on the same issue. The Baku Bolshevik paper, Baku Worker, condemns the conciliatory policies of the local soviet, but appeals to workers to refrain temporarily from all demonstrations.

Turn to page 10

# The July Days

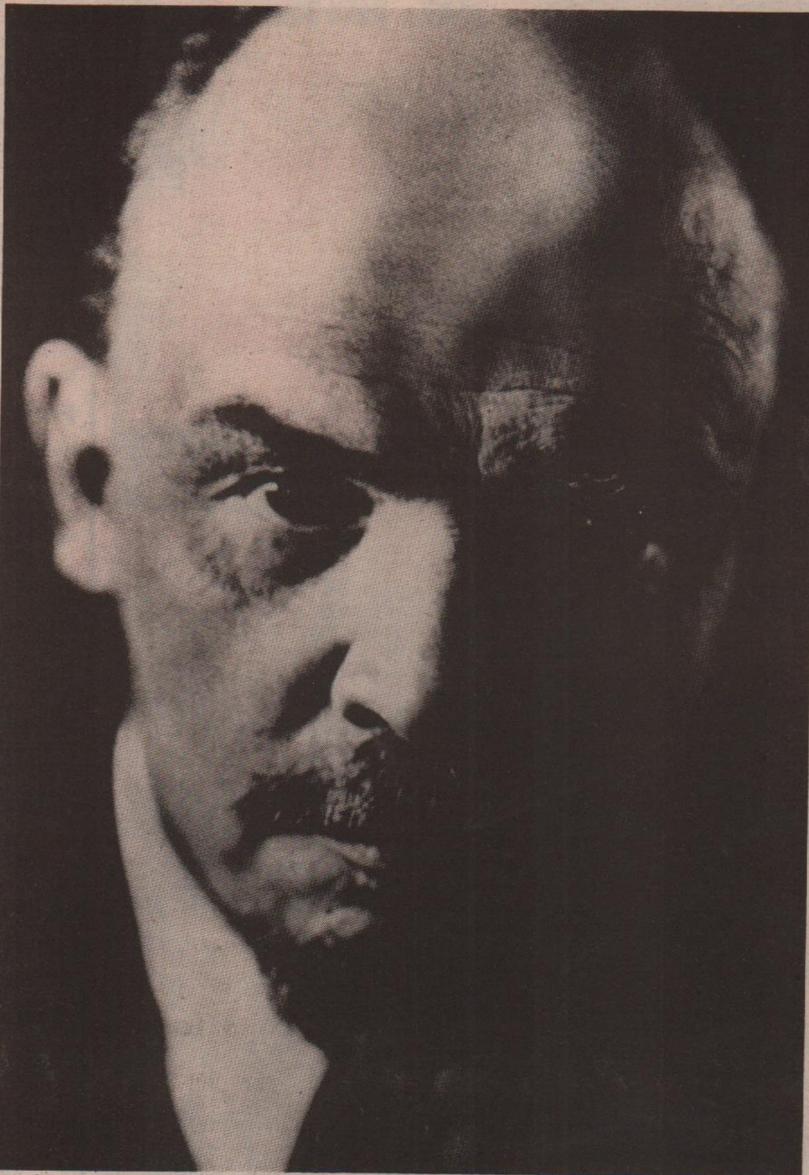
**How should socialists respond when a militant minority of workers wants to run ahead of the population as a whole? This was the problem faced by the Russian Bolsheviks in July 1917. Many others facing similar problems have just denounced the minority. That's not what the Bolsheviks did. This extract from Trotsky's "History of the Russian Revolution" explains their approach.**

Although the underlying mass of Russian Bolsheviks felt in July, 1917, that beyond certain limits it was still impossible to go, still there was no complete homogeneity of mood. Many workers and soldiers were at times inclined to estimate the developing movement as a decisive action.

Metev, in his memoirs written five years later, expresses himself about the meaning of the events in the following words: "In that insurrection our chief mistake was that we proposed to the compromiser Executive Committee to seize the power... We ought not to have proposed, but to have seized the power ourselves. Our second mistake may be considered to be this, that we spent almost two days marching in the streets, instead of immediately occupying all the institutions, palaces, banks, railroad stations, telegraph offices, arresting the whole Provisional Government," etc., etc.

As applied to an insurrection those words would be unanswerable, but to convert the July movement into an insurrection would have meant almost certainly to bury the revolution.

The anarchists in summoning the masses to battle referred to the fact that "the February revolution also took place without the leadership of a party." But the February revolution had its prepared tasks laid down by the struggle of whole generations, and above the February revolution stood an oppositional liberal society and a patriotic democracy ready to receive the power.



Lenin

The July movement, on the contrary, would have had to lay down a wholly new historic road-bed. The whole of bourgeois society, the Soviet democracy included, were implacably hostile to it. This basic difference between the conditions of a bourgeois and a workers' revolution, the anarchists did not see, or did not understand.

Had the Bolshevik Party, stubbornly clinging to a doctrinaire appraisal of the July movement as "untimely", turned its back on the masses, the semi-insurrection would inevitably have fallen under the scattered and unco-ordinated leadership of anarchists, of adventurers, of accidental expressers of the indignation

of the masses, and would have expired in bloody and bootless convulsions.

On the other hand, if the party, after taking its place at the head of the machine-gunners and Putilov men, had renounced its own appraisal of the situation as a whole, and glided down the road to a decisive fight, the insurrection would indubitably have taken a bold scope.

The workers and soldiers under the leadership of the Bolsheviks would have conquered the power — but only to prepare the subsequent shipwreck of the revolution. The question of power on a national scale would not have been decided, as it was in

February, by a victory in Petrograd. The provinces would not have caught up to the capital. The front would not have understood or accepted the revolution.

The railroads and the telegraphs would have served the Compromisers against the Bolsheviks. Kerensky and headquarters would have created a government for the front and the provinces. Petrograd would have been blockaded. Disintegration would have begun within its walls. The government would have been able to send considerable masses of soldiers against Petrograd. The insurrection would have ended, in those circumstances, with the tragedy of a Petrograd Commune.

At the July forking of historical roads, the interference of the Bolshevik Party eliminated both fatally dangerous variants — both that in the likeness of the June Days of 1848, and that of the Paris Commune of 1871. Thanks to the party's taking its place boldly at the head of the movement, it was able to stop the masses at the moment when the demonstration began to turn into an armed test of strength.

## Victims

The blow struck at the masses and the party in July was very considerable, but it was not a decisive blow. The victims were counted by tens and not by tens of thousands. The working class issued from the trial, not headless and not bled to death. It fully preserved its fighting cadres, and these cadres had learned much.

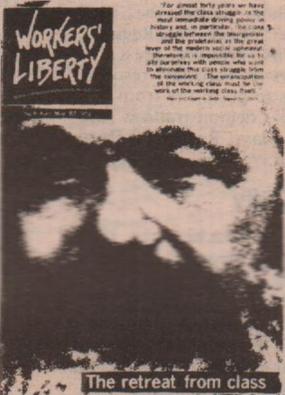
During the February overturn all the many preceding years' work of the Bolsheviks came to fruition, and progressive workers educated by the party found their place in the struggle, but there was still no direct leadership from the party.

In the April events the slogans of the party manifested their dynamic force, but the movement itself developed independently. In June the enormous influence of the party revealed itself, but the masses were still functioning within the limits of a demonstration officially summoned by the enemy.

Only in July did the Bolshevik Party, feeling the pressure of the masses, come out into the street against all the other parties, and not only with its slogans, but with its organised leadership, determine the fundamental character of the movement. The value of a close-knit vanguard was first fully manifested in the July Days, when the party — at great cost — defended the proletariat from defeat, and safeguarded its own future revolution.

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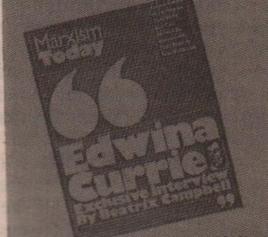
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# Hark back to nowhere!

**Belinda Weaver reviews Woody Allen's new film 'Radio Days'.**

"Radio Days", the latest Woody Allen picture, would probably gladden the heart of Ronald Reagan. It's a heavily sentimental look at the forties when radio played a big part in people's lives. Allen sets the picture in a family that is loosely based on his own, and there is a younger Woody called Joe as one of the main characters.

It depicts an America that Reagan keeps trying to hark back to — a supposedly simpler, more innocent time. Allen presents it all polished up and pretty, but it's false from start to finish.

Lots of people have daydreams that look fondly back to childhood as if it were a magical time full of fun and romance. Even when we know it wasn't, it's sometimes nice to think so. But Allen gives these daydreams the status of recorded history. He doesn't seem aware that he's having himself on.

## Kooks

His family are presented as a bunch of lovable kooks. They have their tiffs and troubles, but they are presented as if they were really all sweetness and light. It's a condescending look back by a successful man at his humble origins. He's touched that his folks were just 'little people'. It probably makes him feel better about how far he's travelled since.

In fact, everybody is treated the same way. Snotty sophisticates on radio, mafia hit men, school teachers — they're either brimming over with sugar or just mildly quaint. And the radio stars are even supposed to be a little tragic, because nobody remembers them any more. (Except Woody Allen, who is presumably rich enough to have time to sit around with his memories).

Allen troops out all his old radio favourites, and his family's too. What he forgets to bring out is their magic. What we hear coming out of the radio in the movie are programmes that seem as silly and trivial as much of what is on TV today. The radio stuff is just different; it's not better.



Woody Allen invents the ideal family

And a lot of the music is the big band/Glenn Miller sound we've already been saturated with in other 'nostalgic' films, so it sounds too familiar to evoke any longing.

Allen presents radio as if it were magical though. He seems to say that we lost our innocence when we turned from radio to TV. He may be partly right. TV brought graphic images into living rooms and brought many Americans face to face with bombings, killings, wars and other tragedies in a way that wasn't possible before.

If they lost their innocence because of that, is that a bad thing? It was seeing the Vietnam war on TV that got Americans out of living rooms and on to the streets to stop it.

## Radio

Allen seems to say that radio brought people together in a way that we've lost. But is a family more united around radio than around a telly? Since each character in the film has a different favourite show, it seems rather to have caused squabbles over whose turn it was to tune in.

When we see Allen's Aunt Bea going on a radio quiz game, why is it more cute and quaint than going on a TV prize game today, something

Allen would abhor? Why doesn't he feel rooked that Bea only wins fifty dollars instead of the dishwasher/trip abroad blockbuster prizes of today?

It's the kind of idealising the past that American movies throw up when the present is uncertain. A whole crop of American films now are looking back to the fifties, the forties, in search of simpler times.

## Gloss

But these times weren't simple. Allen glosses over that by making everything smooth and bland, but he's faking it.

His Jewish family in the film aren't specially bothered by Hitler's treatment of Jews — they just don't think Hitler is very nice. (This is 1944, too). When Allen's uncle tells his wife they couldn't get into the ritzy Stork Club (where all the radio celebrities go) because they're Jewish, it's stated as a simple fact. It's as if he had said they couldn't go because the bus doesn't stop there, or because the club is closed for repairs. Allen is saying, 'Yes, we were Jewish, but it was no problem, just another way of being quaint, no big deal.'

Allen's early films were at least funny and lively, in a wacky, anar-

chic way. But this movie is so weighed down with 'heart' that what humour there is gets squeezed out. And he even tries to bring a lump to our throats in a shameful way in the sequence where audiences all over America are tuned in to the live coverage of rescue attempts to save a little girl who's fallen down a well.

This sequence is meant to show Americans united in concern. But why is listening to that really different from the ghoulishness of people who flock to disasters and mess up rescue attempts? If he were honest, he might have presented someone calling out "Oh, turn that crap off!" That would be more realistic. But it might spoil his pretty picture.

## Picture

"Radio Days" isn't a truthful picture of anything, not of America, not of radio. It's just a sickly daydream. But the danger is that conservatives like Reagan hijack these daydreams and images and use them in the here and now to back up their plans and policies to turn the clocks back. There are many things to be learned from the past, but they can't be learned from lying images like "Radio Days".

## Chemical warfare on humans

The USA is well-known for its commitment to humane methods in warfare, I don't think. This commitment is well-illustrated in the field of chemical and biological warfare where, as revealed under the Freedom of Information Act, the government tested drugs, poisons and diseases on its own people, civilian and military "volunteers". But even the USA banned testing nerve gases on "volunteers" some ten years ago.

In Britain, nerve gases continue to be tested on "volunteers" at Porton Down, the victims receiving the princely sum of £105 for two weeks work. These tests involve the gases sarin and soman, banned from use, like all chemical and biological agents, under a Geneva convention.

The Director of the Chemical Defence Establishment at Porton Down described the tests as being to find out if soldiers could still function at low levels of exposure to nerve gas. He also claimed that such tests are also carried out in other NATO countries, including the USA.

Sarin and soman are both organophosphorus compounds similar in structure to some insecticides (Malathion, etc) and they work by blocking nerve impulses.

Nerve impulses are transmitted to other nerves or muscles by a chemical messenger called acetyl-choline (ACL). In order for another nerve impulse to be transmitted, the ACL must be destroyed so that the target nerve or muscle can prepare itself for another message. This is done by a special protein called acetylcholinesterase (AChase). Organophosphorus compounds attach themselves to the active part of the AChase, preventing it from doing its job. The result is ghasly but effective.

Muscles remain contracted, in spasm. First, vision is impaired. Breathing, heart rate and blood pressure are affected. There is a loss of control over excretion and vomiting occurs. Finally there are asphyxiations, convulsions, coma and death. As little as a milligram of sarin can be lethal.

The Porton Down experiments also involve giving the human guinea-pigs drugs meant to interfere with the poison gases, thus increasing the survival rate in a nerve-gas attack.

It is a matter of debate as to whether these are worthwhile aims. Is it likely that such gases will be used? Is it possible to administer these "antidotes" in the correct quantities on the battlefield? Do the gains in knowledge outweigh any health risks to the participants?

It certainly seems that there are health risks. A senior American researcher, quoted in New Scientist, cited long-term health effects such as memory loss, blurred vision, muscle twitches, and neuroses. She spoke of hidden changes in body chemistry leading to poorly understood effects on organ systems. Her view was that tests on humans were hazardous, illegal and unethical. John Dawson of the British Medical Association said that doctors should not be involved in such research and doubted whether soldiers were capable of giving full and informed consent to participate in such complex experiments.

Fears of long-term damage from such experiments are starting to be borne out by research. Evidence was published in the Lancet last year of "abiotrophy", the premature decay of nerve cells. Such damage could lead to Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease (premature senility) or motor neurone disease.

Experiments on animals show damage to the visual parts of the brain even at low doses of nerve gas.

Ex-service men are also coming forward with tales of illness suffered decades after exposure to nerve gas. New Scientist described three of these. One, who had breathed nerve gas, suffers chest problems, high blood pressure and a mysterious premature ageing. Another, whose eyes were exposed, suffers attacks of blindness and eye pain. The third has attacks of "the shakes", similar to symptoms of Parkinson's disease.

# Not so simple Billie

People usually know three things about Billie Holiday. She was a drug addict, she was raped when she was 10, and she could sing the blues.

Twenty-eight years ago, on 17 July 1959, she died in hospital while the police waited outside to arrest her on a drugs charge. Before she died she recorded her life story and this became "Lady Sings the Blues".

As a young girl she used to run errands for a nearby whorehouse. For payment, she asked to be allowed to listen to their music. She says that lots of people started to get interested in jazz after first hearing it in whorehouses.

Some people conclude that because she was raped when she was 10, became a prostitute for a while and was badly treated by men, she became a drug addict and poured her experiences into her singing. End of story. I think differently.

By Penny Newell

It's strange that racism never figures in this neat conclusion. Her stories are mostly about racism and exploitation. When she went to record in a studio for the first time she was scared stiff. A friend said to her, "Don't let those white people know you're scared." She overcame her fears and recorded "Mother's Son-in-Law", which was a song about a woman asking a man to marry her! She never got properly paid for it.

Later she joined Count Basie's band — to make money and see the world and in her own words, "Never made enough to send any home and only saw the inside of old buses and back stage rooms." She also kills the myth about her promiscuity. "Never any time to go to bed with anyone and often no bed to go to."

When they toured the South, a white cracker who owned the hotel

the band had been booked into noticed Billie amongst the other 16 white musicians. "I don't have niggers in here even to clean up," he said. She says Tony, an Italian in the band, always supported her when she was racially abused. She doesn't say what the other white musicians did.

She dealt with this particular racism by saying that he could kick them out if she didn't bring the house down. She won the bet and they were allowed to stay.

She said her personal protest was the song Strange Fruit, a very moving song about lynching. It always broke her up when she sang it.

She recalls that once a white woman called out from the audience, "Why don't you sing that sexy song about naked bodies hanging from a tree." She refused to sing it. She recalls that when her mum had a restaurant in Harlem and the health inspector said it had to close unless she got a second toilet she said dryly, "Look how many hundreds of

houses in Harlem he must have passed with no toilets". The tenants in those houses were black and the landlords white.

In her own way she was a feminist. When she was being messed about by her husband she wrote a song called Don't Explain. "Women will always keep the song popular, until men stop messing women about, that is — then they'll have no need for it", she said.

In the war years she again reflected on the effects of racism. "It was different audiences she played to — black audiences in cracker country" (the South). It made her sad to see them there.

Her talent was exploited by rich white people who it seems prefer the version of her life story that rape and her inability to have a satisfactory relationship with men led her to drug addiction and death.

I think we should look deeper and see both the class and race issues that drove this brilliant black woman to an early grave.

# 1917

## YEAR OF REVOLUTION

### Monday 10 July

Commander-in-Chief Brusilov bans all meetings in military units during military activities; attempts to hold such meetings are to be forcibly prevented. A meeting of the 42nd unit of the Petrograd garrison declares full support for the government and its unconditional readiness to go to the front. In Sestroretsk, troops loyal to the government wreck the local Bolshevik offices, search the homes of Bolsheviks, and disarm the workers.

In Kiev, pro-government troops wreck newspaper kiosks selling Bolshevik soldiers' newspapers. In Vladivostok and Tashkent, the Soviets pass resolutions of support for the CEC over the Petrograd demonstrations. The Smolensk Soviet passes a resolution banning all demonstrations. Meetings of the Blagush-Lefortovsky Regional Soviet (Moscow) and the Tsaritsyn Soviet call for all power to the soviets.

### Tuesday 11 July

Chiefs-of-staff on the South-western front call for the reintroduction of the death penalty at the front. The Provisional Government informs Brusilov that it agrees in principle to the proposal that the death sentence be reintroduced at the front. A joint meeting of the Kursk city and provincial Soviet Executive Committees bans all mass meetings and demonstrations in the city and province.

On the Western front the Mingrelysk Grenadier regiment is surrounded and disarmed by other troops after it refuses to carry out orders. The Kiev Soviet votes by 307 to 52, with 22 abstentions, in condemnation of the Petrograd demonstrations, and passes a further resolution banning all street meetings in the city for three days. Meetings of the Kishinev, Ufa and Tiflis Soviets likewise pass resolutions condemning the Petrograd demonstrations and in support of the Provisional Government.

### Wednesday 12 July

The Provisional Government reintroduces the death penalty for offences committed at the front such as refusal to obey orders and desertion to the enemy. The population of Petrograd is ordered by the Provisional Government to surrender privately-held weapons and ammunition by 16 July. The War Minister and the Ministry of the Interior are empowered to close down anti-government revolutionary periodicals and take their editors to court. Commander-in-Chief Brusilov issues an order banning army and fleet committees from discussing operational instructions and military orders.

By 38 votes to 9, with 8 abstentions, the Gorodskoy regional soviet (Moscow) adopts a Bolshevik resolution advocating all power to the soviets. A joint meeting of the Danilovsky regional soviet and representatives of local factory committees adopts Bolshevik resolutions on the recent demonstrations in Petrograd and on the current economic crisis. The Orel Soviet condemns the Petrograd demonstrations and recognises the Provisional Government as "the government of the salvation of the revolution". In Kiev the local metalworkers' union decides to establish Red Guards. Over 4,000 soldiers on the Western front who have refused to obey orders are disarmed after the use of artillery and machine-gun fire.

### Thursday 13 July

A joint meeting of the Central Executive Committee (CEC) elected by the All-Russian Soviet Congress and the Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasant Deputies adopts a resolution condemning Lenin for failing to come out of hiding and allow himself to be put on trial. The commandant of Kronstadt receives orders to arrest leading Bolshevik agitators; in the event of non-compliance a blockade will be enforced.

The Peterhof regional soviet (Petrograd) condemns the reintroduction of the death penalty at the front. Soldiers of the 60th reserve infantry regiment stationed in Moscow arrest the regional commander after he attempts to arrest soldiers for disobeying orders. A meeting of soldiers of the 30th reserve infantry regiment stationed in Kharkov calls for transference of all power to the soviets. Bolsheviks pull out of the Kaluga soviet after they are refused funding for their election campaign.

### Friday 14 July

In Kronstadt the first issue of Proletarian Cause is published by the Bolsheviks, replacing the banned Voice of Truth. The Voronezh Soviet establishes a "Commission of 48", with 300 troops at its disposal, to stamp out local unrest; the soviet also bans distribution of Pravda and Soldiers' Pravda. On the Western front soldiers in the 13th and 14th Finnish Rifles divisions refuse to name the political agitators in their ranks. The Chelyabinsk Soviet votes by 134 votes to one to condemn the reintroduction of the death penalty at the front. A meeting of military deputies in Ekaterinodar condemns the tactics of the Bolsheviks, calls for the arrest of anyone agitating against the war and the Provisional Government, and advocates closure of the local Bolshevik paper. 20,000 demonstrate in Tashkent under the slogans "Down with the death penalty" and "All power to the soviets of workers', soldiers' and peasants' deputies".

### Saturday 15 July

The first issue of the new Bolshevik paper Worker appears in Revel, replacing the banned Ray. Workers demonstrate in Tomsk in protest at the government's attacks on the Petrograd demonstrations of the beginning of the month. The Kiev Soviet of workers' and military deputies condemns the recent wrecking by troops of newspaper kiosks selling Bolshevik papers, and advocates the arming of workers and formation of workers' militias to maintain order in the city. A meeting of units of the 7th and 8th Turkestan regiments on the South-Western front condemns the reintroduction of the death penalty, the banning of meetings, the closure of revolutionary newspapers, and the new offensive.

The all-Russian constituent congress of railway-workers opens in Petrograd and continues its sessions for the next 40 days; it rejects Bolshevik proposals that it be a class-struggle organisation taking up both economic and political issues, and Menshevik proposals that it be a professional union concerned with economic demands; it adopts the position of the Social-Revolutionaries that it be a "state union" with administrative functions.

### Sunday 16 July

A plenary meeting of the CEC and All-Russian Peasant Soviet Executive Committee adopts a resolution in defence of the coalition Provisional Government. The editorial offices of the Bolshevik Kubansky provincial newspaper are wrecked in Ekaterinodar and copies of the paper seized. By order of the Provisional Government, the Bolshevik paper Wave is shut down in Helsingors; a meeting of soldiers' and sailors' representatives condemns the arrest of Bolsheviks and Internationalist Social-Revolutionaries, and calls for a commission of enquiry.

On the Northern front the third battalion of the 79th Siberian Rifles regiment is disarmed and disbanded for refusing to obey orders. Soldiers in the 4th Infantry division on the South-western front refuse orders to participate in the offensive, and drive off Cossacks sent to suppress their opposition. On the Romanian front soldiers in the 7th Turkestan Rifles regiment demand immediate despatch to the front of Cossacks, cavalry, Junkers, monks, deacons and sons of capitalists, and call for the speediest possible end to the war. An appeal issued by the Ural regional Bolshevik committee, dealing with the attacks on Bolsheviks in the aftermath of the Petrograd demonstrations, declares: "The party of the working class, the Bolsheviks, cannot be destroyed, for whoever wishes to destroy revolutionary social-democracy must first destroy the working class with its implacably revolutionary ideology."

### Monday 17 July

The Narvsky regional soviet (Petrograd) opposes any handing-over of weapons by workers. Minister of the Interior Tsereteli telegrams all soviets and appeals for support for the Provisional Government. The commanding officer of the 1st Lettish Rifles brigade (Northern front) bans all meetings and threatens anyone breaking this order with arrest. Workers in the Volta, Vigand, Krull and Luther factories in Revel strike in protest at the closure of Bolshevik papers, the arrest of Bolsheviks, and the reintroduction of the death penalty. On the Western front artillery and machine-gun fire is used to disarm the 23rd and 24th regiments of the 2nd Caucasian Grenadiers division; 3,400 soldiers are arrested. The Executive Committee of the Vladivostok Soviet condemns the arrest of a member of the local militia for opposing the new offensive and criticising War Minister Kerensky, and resolves to distribute a leaflet calling for defence of freedom of speech.



CPSA strikers at an Unemployment Benefit Office in Birmingham, 3 July. Photo: John Harris, IFL.

## DHSS fights staff cuts

By Steve Battlemuch, Section Executive Committee, CPSA DHSS, (in personal capacity).

**Industrial action is continuing in the DHSS as CPSA attempts to resist the latest attacks on jobs and services by the Tories. Management are pressing ahead with implementing the notorious 1986 Social Security Act which will detrimentally affect the benefits of millions of claimants.**

Some parts of the Act have already been implemented, but the worst is yet to come. 'Income support' will replace 'supplementary benefit' in April 1988, the same time as loans from the cash-limited 'Social Fund' will replace single payments.

To bring in these changes, extra staff are needed to do the current work while staff train on the new procedures. Instead of giving extra permanent staff, management are imposing 3,000 casual staff (Limited Period Appointments — LPAs) for a year. They will then be sacked when the new system is operational.

These casual staff will serve as a scab force in the DHSS as their contracts say they can be dismissed with a month's notice. They are second class civil servants.

While this is taking place, and after the defeat of the national pay ballot, management have moved onto the offensive in other areas too.

\*Work on the new technology project, LOP, at Lytham St. Anns, has been privatised with 90 SCPS members being given 24 hours notice that their jobs were gone.

\*A new system for calculating staffing levels in DHSS offices is to be tried, with the aim of introducing a "more flexible system" — e.g. moving staff around the country to clear backlogs of work.

\*A 50% cut in time off for union reps at all levels from the Autumn.

\*A threat to end the 'check off' system of collecting union subs from source, thereby starving the union of money.

It was against this background that the DHSS CPSA Section Executive Committee met on 29 July to discuss the way forward.

Over the past three months action had begun against the introduction of

the casuals, the LPAs. Offices where LPAs had come in were balloted with two options — all out strike action, or 'tit for tat' action (bringing a limited number of members out to cause severe disruption).

Four offices chose option one and approximately 30-40 have been involved in tit-for-tat action. However, the shadow of the defeated pay campaign still hangs over the union's head — with subsequent demoralisation in many quarters.

When the Broad Left caucus met prior to the executive committee (the Broad Left has a 23-7 majority on the executive) everyone agreed that an all-out strike was needed to win the campaign against LPAs and for decent staffing levels but also everyone agreed that an immediate ballot would not be won during August and therefore more action was needed in offices before the all-out ballot could be held.

It was agreed to work flat out during August to bring more offices out and to meet again in four weeks to hopefully set the timetable for a national ballot.

However, when discussing the demands of the strike a split occurred within the Broad Left. Nobody disagreed that we needed all LPA

staff to be made permanent, that all management's overtime budget should be converted to permanent staff, and that the staff cuts planned for April 1988 and April 1989 should be reversed.

The argument centred around whether a demand of the action is a halt to the implementation of the changes. Socialist Caucus and other hard left members of the executive argued that it was a campaign against the Act itself as well as its staffing implications. We argued that it was section conference policy to fight Fowler and that the union had a duty to claimants to fight the legislation.

Militant supporters argued that without the full force of the 'labour and trade union movement', we couldn't fight Fowler and that the union would be smashed for breaking the law. Their view was shared by the right wing-BL '84 alliance on the executive. So once again a 'paper' policy of the union fails, not because we tried and failed but because the Militant leadership bottled out of a fight.

All members of the executive will now be working to extend the action against LPAs and staff cuts but the last hope of fighting Fowler itself is dead and buried.

### LONDON COUNCILS

## Cuts fightback

By Nik Barstow

**Throughout London resistance to the backsliding on Labour councils in the face of Tory attacks is growing and becoming organised.**

In Haringey Labour councillors, Party members and trade unionists opposed to the council's cut plans have launched a campaign called Haringey Fights Back! They "do not believe that Labour cuts are somehow better than Tory cuts", and they will be organising opposition to any cuts in jobs or services".

In Islington, council trade unions together with Labour Parties and tenants have launched Islington Fightback, which rejects ideas which play off the provision of services against defending jobs as divisive and unable to build a real campaign.

Throughout London, council trade unionists have begun to organise again through the London Bridge committee, which is calling a con-

ference for all shop stewards in London local authorities on Thursday 10 September at 10 am at the Camden Centre, Bidborough St. Stewards from Manchester, Sheffield, and other authorities are also being invited.

London Bridge is united in opposing trade union leaders who are trying to get their members in local authorities to accept cuts.

Camden NALGO, with the support of London Bridge, has called a broader London labour movement conference for trade unionists, tenants, community groups and Labour Party members, for late September or early October.

Contact: Haringey Fights Back!, c/o 11 Springfield Rd., N15.

Islington Fightback, c/o JTUC, 23 Compton Terrace, N1.

London Bridge, c/o Ed Hall, Courtenay House, 9-15 New Park Road, SW2.

Camden NALGO, Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, NW1.

# Scottish bus workers defiant

By Stan Crooke

By 41 votes to 9 representatives of Scottish Bus Group (SBG) drivers voted for all-out, indefinite strike action last Wednesday (29 July) — at a meeting which TGWU full-timers had hoped would call for a return to work!

The background to the dispute is the Tories' deregulation of bus services and the consequent emergence of a host of cowboy private operators, attempting to make a quick killing by running services on the most profitable routes only. Faced with this cut-price competition, the SBG sought to cut its operating costs by attacking the pay and working conditions of its drivers.

The SBG sought to force through a new wages/hours package which, if accepted would cost drivers up to £40 a week. While offering to increase basic pay, SBG management also sought to change the length of the guaranteed working day and reduce overtime payments, upon which drivers are heavily dependent.

The SBG also pressed for the introduction of local agreements (there are eleven companies in the Group), which would weaken union organisation, play workers in the different companies off against one another and pave the way for further cuts in pay.

After five months of discussions on this package, the talks broke down on 17 July. A two-day protest strike was scheduled for July 22-23, but TGWU officials called off the strike after agreeing to a management request for further negotiations. But the talks led nowhere, and on 22 July, 5,500 drivers came out on strike.

Although originally called as a two-day strike, the drivers were still out when TGWU officials met on 25 July and voted six to five to call off the strike pending the outcome of the drivers' delegate meeting on the 29th.

The call to end the strike received a cold reception at drivers' meetings held throughout Scotland the following day. Mass meetings of drivers employed by the Kelvin, Fife, Central and Clydeside companies voted to continue the strike and three of the eight Highland depots likewise voted to stay out.

Mass meetings elsewhere voted to call off the action, temporarily, but heavy picketing resulted in less than half the drivers following the union's call for a return to work.

By this time the conflict had been further sharpened by a number of local disputes. Clydeside management had sacked a shop steward, Highland management had brought in inspectors to drive buses and Eastern Scottish management was threatening to use the courts under the Tories' anti-union legislation.

When delegates met on 29 July, union officials had already failed twice to prevent strike action and over half the drivers were already out on strike. 500 turned up to lobby the meeting to press home the demand for an all-out strike and criticise the conduct of union officials. "Vacancy for full-time union official!" read

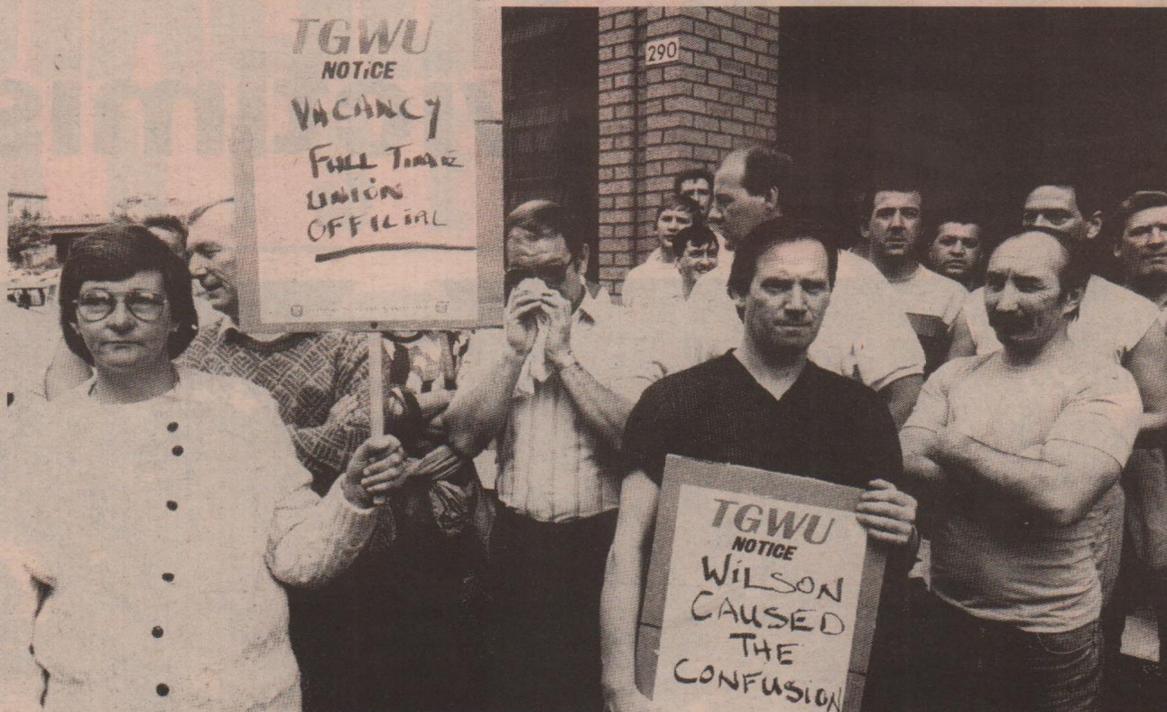


Photo: Steve McTaggart.

Striking bus drivers lobby union delegate conference in Glasgow on 29 July. Archie Wilson is a TGWU full-timer.

one of the placards.

All-out strike action began at midnight with virtually 100% support.

Following a further meeting between SBG management and union officials on 31 July, union officials again recommended a return to work

pending the outcome of a ballot to be held later this week on a new deal which has been drawn up at these talks.

The additional concessions gained were the result of the drivers' determination to continue with their strike

action. Whatever the tactical difficulties within the ranks of the striking bus drivers, their strike is proof that workers are not cowed by the prospect of another period of Tory rule and are prepared to fight back in defence of their rights.

## London buses vote to strike

London busworkers have again voted in favour of industrial action.

The ballot, held last week across the whole of London's red bus fleet, asked bus workers if they were prepared to take 24-hour or more limited strike action against the tendering out of bus routes. The result of the ballot was 5-1 in favour of action.

The ballot was held after a court decision that the cutting of wages and the lengthening of hours of workers at the Norbiton bus garage in South London is legal. The workers at Norbiton struck immediately they heard the decision.

Management approached the union, the TGWU, for negotiations and the action was temporarily called off.

The attacks on the Norbiton workers is only the start of London Regional Transport's (LRT) plan for the rest of London's red buses. The opening out of routes to tender is being used as an excuse to ruin the wages and conditions of the bus workers. There were no competitors for Norbiton's bus routes.

Plans to deregulate the bus service will further erode these conditions, destroy an already ailing service, and will bring chaos to the streets of London, as has been seen in other cities where deregulation has already occurred.

The result of last week's ballot shows the willingness of the bus workers to defend their jobs and the bus service. This is despite the union

By John Payne

leadership's apparent unwillingness to seriously take on the employers, London Buses Ltd, and their failure to inform the membership of what is going on.

If this fight is to be won the action must be stepped up. The occasional 24-hour stoppage is not enough. The action must be fleet-wide and indefinite.

There must be a campaign by the union to inform the members of why

they must fight; but also the public needs to be informed of the attacks on the service and why they must support the busworkers' fight.

Links must be built between London bus, tube and rail workers so that future action will be more effective. Together they could stop the city.

In the meantime, the Norbiton workers must be defended because what is happening to them now will happen to all London bus workers later if the employers get away with it.

### MANCHESTER CUTS

## Campaign needed

By Tony Dale

The crisis facing Manchester City Council has raised the prospect of a budget shortfall of up to £130 million. This has prompted talk by the council leadership of up to 10,000 job losses.

Instead of putting forward the idea of an anti-cuts campaign the Council leadership have drawn up a package of "socialist" cuts. Their plan to "defend jobs and improve services" is to start making cuts now — the aim is to lose only 5,000 jobs!

The City Labour Party decided on 22 July by a three-to-one majority to back these cuts.

The idea of making cuts now is to keep the "left" in control of the council. The problem is that the cost of staying in power is to do what the Labour right wing would do — make cuts.

Dick Pickering, leader of the GMWU, has been the major motivator of the "survival package" of "soft" cuts. NALGO at a mass meeting on 7 July called on the council not to fill job vacancies. NUPE stewards had a council-wide meeting on 9 July. By 3-1 they defeated a motion opposing all cuts. Instead they decided to oppose only compulsory redundancies.

Against this there are a small number of union branches sticking to a no cuts position. The main area of opposition is the Direct Works Joint Shop Stewards Committee. The last

time there were "soft" cuts through natural wastage, Direct Works bore the brunt of the thousands of job losses.

Speaking against the cuts motions, Karen Reissman of COHSE said "What (is proposed is that) the working class should bear the brunt of the cuts".

The Stretford CLP motion opposing cuts called for the three year-old policy of no cuts in services and no redundancies to remain; that there should be no rise in service charges to compensate for reduced grant income.

The motion was defeated by those delegates who only a year ago would have supported it.

It has become obvious that the campaign promises and hypocritical posturing of the past four years have been empty promises. The strategy was 'let's wait for Labour to be re-elected, then we'll be alright', while at the same time laying no base for future campaigning.

There are, however, sections of the party and the workforce who do want to fight — the recently formed Manchester Campaign Group; around one-third of the NALGO branch voted against cuts; a no-cuts motion in NUPE Housing fell by only two votes. With these, and other sections of the workforce, CLPs and community groups, here and in other local authorities, notably NALGO in Camden, there can be a campaign that will unite workers, the Labour Party and the community

# 1917

YEAR OF REVOLUTION

Tuesday 18 July

War Minister Kerensky orders the closure of the Moscow Bolshevik paper Social Democrat on the first occasion it carries an article advocating that soldiers disobey orders. General Brusilov advocates that Kronstadt should be bombarded should its garrison reject demands for complete obedience to the Provisional Government. Minister of Food Peshekhonov orders the arrest of any peasants infringing upon the rights of private landowners. The Askhabad Soviet condemns the Petrograd demonstrations of 3-4 July.

In Ekaterinburg a 1,500-strong meeting of soldiers of the 124th Reserve Infantry regiment condemns the slanders levelled against the Bolsheviks and resolves to boycott bourgeois newspapers, a 3,000-strong meeting of soldiers of the 149th Reserve Infantry regiment calls for support for the soviets in the struggle against counter-revolution, and a 600-strong meeting of soldiers of the 108th Reserve Infantry regiment calls for convening an all-Russian Congress of Soviets in order to establish soviet power throughout the country.

Wednesday 19 July

On the Northern front five members of the 539th Vorovsky regiment are court-martialled and shot for fraternisation with German troops.

The Provisional Government issues a statement to its allies in the war, declaring that the "mutiny" in Petrograd of 3-4 July has been put down, discipline has been restored in the army, and that the government remains determined to continue the war.

Bolsheviks win the elections of delegates to the Revel Soviet in the Luther and Krull factories and amongst the harbour-workers. The Simonovsky regional soviet (Moscow) condemns the closure of Bolshevik newspapers. The Executive Committee of the Vladivostok Soviet adopts a Bolshevik resolution opposing reintroduction of the death penalty and censorship. The Kharkov Soviet demands dismissal of Kornilov from the post of commander-in-chief for his attacks on soldiers' rights.

A meeting of the factory committees of the Vasileostrovsky region (Petrograd) adopts a statement declaring workers' control to be one of the most serious methods of working-class struggle, and demanding that the right of workers' control be anchored in law.

Thursday 20 July

The Rozhdestvensky regional soviet (Petrograd) protests against the reintroduction of the death penalty for soldiers at the front. The Vyborg regional soviet (Petrograd) demands that the Provisional Government dissolve the State Duma as a counter-revolutionary institution. The Narva Soviet adopts a Bolshevik resolution condemning the Provisional Government and its attacks on the Petrograd demonstrations of 3-4 July. The Chernogorodskoy regional committee of Soviets (Baku) calls on the Baku Soviet to establish a workers' militia, and pledges to appeal to workers to condemn the Baku Soviet should it fail to do so.

The Novorossiysk Soviet bans meetings and calls for the arrest of anyone agitating for an end to the war. A joint meeting of the Izhevsk Soviet of workers' and soldiers' deputies and the Izhevsk Soviet of peasant deputies condemns the Petrograd July demonstrations and pledges its support for the Provisional Government. On the Western front artillery is used against soldiers of the 693rd infantry regiment and 174th infantry division after they refuse to carry out orders.

Friday 21 July

The soldiers' section of the Petrograd Soviet of workers' and soldiers' deputies protests against the disbandment and reorganisation of regiments which participated in the demonstrations of 3-4 July; it also condemns the demand that soldiers hand over the "ringleaders" to the authorities. A delegate meeting of soldiers from the front, held in Petrograd's Tauride Palace, demands abolition of the death penalty, release of all imprisoned soldiers, and an end to the banning of revolutionary newspapers. The Kronstadt Soviet demands dissolution of the State Duma and the Council of State, and the putting on trial of leaders of royalist counter-revolution. A similar resolution is passed by the Kolpino Soviet.

## NALGO strike

By Margaret Brewer, (NALGO shop steward)

NALGO members in Community Service Schemes throughout Lothian Region have voted to take strike action on 6 August.

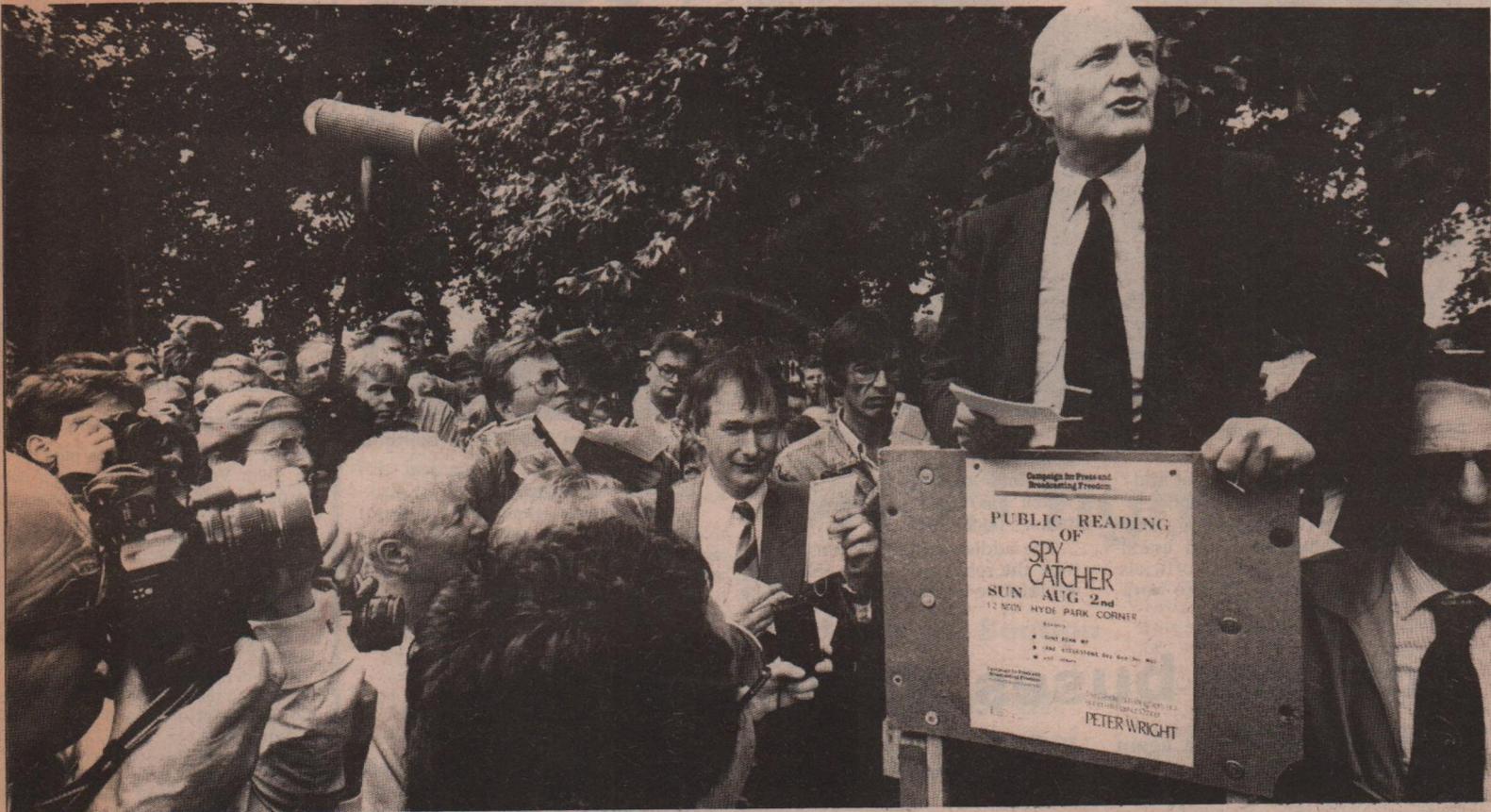
Community Service in the region has been reviewed and NALGO and Social Work Management have failed

to reach agreement on two main issues. These relate to grading claims by projects supervisors and clerical staff, two of the lowest paid and most undervalued groups of workers in the service.

NALGO members plan to lobby the Regional Council's Social Work Committee when it meets on 6 August to discuss the Review paper. It is hoped that this action will put pressure on the Labour controlled council to overcome management's intransigence and concede NALGO's demands.

# SOCIALIST ORGANISER

## NUM official victimised



Before we had newspapers, we had to rely on word of mouth for the news. With the Law Lords' ban on the publishing of extracts from Peter Wright's *Spycatcher*, we again revert to the soap box to hear news that is freely available in other parts of the world.

Last Sunday Labour MP Tony Benn freely read extracts from *Spycatcher* to 300 people in Hyde Park. The *News on Sunday* printed the same extracts and now faces serious charges of criminal contempt. It's a mad, mad world. Photo: Andrew Wiard, Report.

In a move timed to coincide with the beginning of the two-week pit holiday in North Yorkshire, British Coal bosses announced last Friday their verdict on the case of Ted Scott, branch secretary at Stillingfleet colliery in the Selby complex. They rejected his appeal and upheld his sacking from the pit.

This blatant case of sacking a branch official for doing his union job highlights what the new 'Disciplinary Code' is all about.

Ted Scott eventually received details of the charges at his appeal, three weeks after he had been sacked. Management accused him of 'gross misconduct' and 'misrepresenting management', from an incident where he simply represented an NUM policy that had long been accepted by British Coal bosses in Yorkshire — that coal should not be cut in over-time.

At the same time as upholding his sacking from Stillingfleet, British Coal, in a move to try and defuse possible action, gave Ted Scott the option of a job at Wheldale pit, also in North Yorkshire. Ted Scott explained the conditions and his reaction to Socialist Organiser:

"They say they are offering me a job at Wheldale, but they have not yet said what the job is — whether it will be a straight transfer from the job I was doing at Stillingfleet or something different. I also have not been told whether I will lose my pension rights.

"They will only let me take the job if I first sign up a declaration that I will not lead any kind of dispute.

"In fact Wheldale has only eight months life left, because it is due to close next March.

"When North Yorkshire comes back from its holiday in two weeks' time, the national ballot on the disciplinary code will then be held in the Area. I will be announcing my reaction to what British Coal has said after the ballot."

# No Labour cuts

As an ex-Chairman of the Party, I feel that I must make my views known about some recent developments in the Party.

The decision of the NEC of the Labour Party last Wednesday to sack staff and to possibly close down the Party's journals must surely be a matter of deep concern to the whole Party. For the Party to close down Labour Weekly, New Socialist and Socialist Youth, the three political journals of the Party, would be deplorable. For the Party to dismiss approximately 45 of the Headquarters staff would also be deplorable, and I believe every possible avenue for alternative ways to cut the budget or raise the money required to keep the journals and save the staff must be explored. I would urge all Party members to call upon the NEC to pursue an alternative

course.

Part of the management restructuring that is underway would be the redundancy of the International Secretary and that would be the first nail in the coffin of the Party's international work. Already the International Department as such has ceased to exist. The staff of that Department were transferred to the Research Department under Geoff Bish and with the ending of the post of the International Secretary, the international work of the Party, even if the International Committee continued for the time being, would mean that no longer would Labour have a serious international rôle.

When one considers that it was the

By Eric Heffer MP

Labour Party after the Second World War which was the foremost advocate and organiser of the rebuilding of the Socialist International, it is surely wrong for the Party not to have an International Department with an International Secretary, with researchers and advisers with defined responsibilities for different parts of the world who therefore had contacts with International Parties, Groups, Embassies, etc.

In fact not only should there be a Department, under present circumstances it should be an expanding Department. Internationalism is part of the socialist philosophy, strategy and tactics, and for Labour to suggest that it can adequately be catered

for by Front Bench spokespersons in the House of Commons, or even an International Committee of the NEC, without a Department giving proper back-up, is really relegating internationalism to an inferior position. I find it amazing and disturbing that this situation has been allowed to develop.

With regard to the Labour Weekly and Socialist Youth, I understand that Socialist Youth today breaks even financially, but that Labour Weekly requires a subsidy. I believe even if both needed a subsidy they should continue and Labour Weekly should be the journal that properly developed could eventually become the daily paper of the Party. If small socialist groups can have weekly papers, it really is ridiculous for the Labour Party to say that such a paper is not possible.

Cash can be saved in other directions, such as not placing advertisements in newspapers which cater for Conservative supporters and not spending so much on Glitz or to polling organisations. Had we not spent money in this way in the recent past the cash would be there to keep all the journals going, including New Socialist, and we would not now be faced with redundancies as at present.

I hope that Party members and trade unionists will rally to keep the journals afloat, prevent the proposed redundancies from taking place and that the journals and staff will be used to concentrate on building up the party into a mass socialist organisation which can take on and beat the Tories.

**POLICE** are hunting for two young Tamils who have escaped from the 'hell ship' floating off Harwich. On board, 58 out of 88 Tamil refugees are on hunger strike in protest at their appalling treatment at the hands of the Home Office.

The Tamils are seeking asylum (though not necessarily in Britain) from Sri Lanka, where, despite last week's Indian-sponsored autonomy plan, they fear the continuation of further atrocities committed by the Sinhala majority.

The 'Earl William' — the floating

immigration detention centre — is a symbol of Britain's racist immigration laws. On it, Hindu Tamils have been forced to go hungry after being offered only beef to eat.

Detainees are locked in, often in large numbers in small cabins, from 11pm to 8am. Women have been refused tampons.

And they face the threat of deportation.

Their treatment is a disgrace. And so is the treatment of all black people wanting to come to live in Britain. The only solution is to scrap the immigration laws — which are all racist — altogether.

## Escape from 'Hell Ship'



## Where now after the election?

Workers' Liberty no.7 available for 90p plus 20p p&p from SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.