

SOCIALIST WORKER

FOR WORKERS' CONTROL & INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

One month to go to weekly paper

In September Socialist Worker will appear every week full details on back page

BUS PAY FIGHT GOES ON AS SACKINGS LOOM

BY THE EDITOR

THE DECISION TO CALL OFF the strike of municipal busmen is a major victory for the Labour Government's incomes policy—a policy aimed at holding back the wages of the working class in order to boost the profits of the bosses.

If the strike had gone ahead as planned, then the busmen could have punched a hole in the incomes policy and dared Wilson to attempt to fine or imprison the leaders of the Transport Workers' Union.

The original £1 increase offered to £12-a-week municipal busmen was only won as the result of an 11-week strike in Liverpool, backed by similar action in Newcastle. That increase was frozen by Mrs. Castle.

Now, as a result of local agreements between the union and employers, the busmen are going to get an increase of 10s. backdated to last December, with another 10s. at the end of the year. But overshadowing this offer is the whole question of "increased productivity," which is the latest war-whoop of Mrs. Castle and her "left-wing" Cabinet friends.

What Castle, Wilson and company mean by increased productivity is a growing army of unemployed throughout industry, with those workers left in jobs slaving even harder.

On the buses, the government and employers want to sweep away thousands of jobs by having more one-man-operated buses.

A militant, united strike by the busmen, backed to the hilt by their union leaders, could have won a straight £1 increase, without any ifs, buts or "10 bob now, more later." And it could have knocked on the head all this reactionary nonsense about productivity, which simply means squeezing more work out of fewer busmen.

Although the busmen have won something, the incomes policy remains intact. Victory for the busmen would have breached a hole in the dyke. It would have been a victory for every section of the working class fighting to improve its wages and conditions.

Not that it is surprising that the busmen's delegates voted to call off the strike. They were given no lead at all by their union chiefs. Frank Cousins, secretary of the TGWU, said all along that he was against the strike.

The busmen are right to be wary of the union leaders. They are too compromised by their support for the whole idea of increased productivity. And although on paper they are against the incomes policy they have yet to lead an effective challenge to it.

Even the much maligned railwayworkers' union has won more from the government by going ahead with their work-to-rule campaign in June.

The busmen must be on their guard. They must first ensure that every municipal authority signs a suitable agreement about increased pay. The strike weapon should be brought into action at the first sign of any backsliding on this point.

And they must oppose all along the line, their

British arms behind Biafran horror

by Dave Peers

IN JANUARY the British Government licensed the sale of £1,956,181 worth of arms to Nigeria. Probably over £10 million worth of British arms have been sold there this year.

These are the weapons that have created the horror of Biafra. The horror of two million starving children. The horror of the refugee camps where vultures pick the rotting corpses and the survivors live on a diet of rats. Who cares?

Lord Shepherd has refused all appeals to stop the arms sales. Even the Pope and the Bishops of the Church of England have appealed to the government, but Harold Wilson ignores them.

The guilty men

Among the starved and mutilated corpses of Nigeria stand the guilty men—Wilson, Heath, Lyndon Johnson and de Gaulle. The only difference between their empires and that of the Kray brothers is that theirs are so much bigger, and they make all the rules themselves.

The Lord Mayor of Newcastle has opened a fund to raise £10,000 for the starving children of Biafra. Money given to this fund will help relieve suffering to some extent. It might even save a few lives. But it will not stop the war.

Stop arms sales

The British government has the gall to promise £250,000 for Biafra. There is no sense or humanity in keeping people alive with British aid so they can be killed by British bombs and bullets. If Wilson wants to relieve suffering then let the government stop the arms sales and the war.

The Biafran war is yet another bloody chapter in the world wide scramble for profits, in which peoples lives are just another "cost" to make the



PICKETS at the Kingsbury term of Injection Moulders

Militant immigrants stage lockout battle

by Stan Bishop

EIGHTY-FIVE machine operators were ejected by police from the North London factory of Injection Moulders last month. The workers—mainly Indian and Pakistani—had refused to accept a new shift system.

Low wages, bad conditions and pressure for more work without an increase in pay forced the workers to veto new conditions that would make worse an already tough and badly paid job.

Every inch

Injection Moulders, a subsidiary of GKN with a pre-tax profit of £26-million last year, locked out the workers. The management says it will only take them back if they accept new conditions of work: the new shift system plus extra work without more pay.

With only a few exceptions, the men have remained militant and solid in their determination to fight the management every inch of the way. Their union, the Amalgamated Engineering and Foundryworkers, has declared the lockout official but has not yet declared work from the factory "black."

The lockout is the culmination of a year's struggle for better wages and conditions in the factory. The hourly rate of 5s. 5½d. is more than 4s. an hour less than the AEF district average.

The workers, who staged a 300-strong spirited march through the Kingsbury area, have shown a keen political awareness of the need to build a strong rank and file movement in the locality. They

have had some success in persuading lorry drivers not to deliver to the factory.

Small amounts of moulding (used for car trim and household durable goods) have trickled from the factory, made by drafted office and supervisory staff, but the locked-out militants have contacted shop stewards at factories receiving the mouldings and have been told that efforts will be made to "black" such material.

Support needed

The workers are living off their fast-dwindling holiday money and savings. Support has come from local factories and union branches, but more is urgently required if the men are to win their fight.

●Rush donations to: S. Zaman, Treasurer, 6 Wood Lane, London, NW9.

Police swoop on Left

A PUBLIC HOUSE in Hornsey, North London, which is often used by members of International Socialism and the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign has been under constant watch by the police in recent weeks.

On the Friday evening before the Vietnam demonstration at the end of July, six people were arrested at the pub. A report in the Sunday Telegraph on July 28 suggests that the police have been warning militants about their conduct on demonstrations but this has not been verified by anyone on the Left.

At Hornsey, a small group of people had broken away from a large gathering outside the Queen's in Tottenham Lane. About 30 police with dogs

by the police to discourage political activity and reduce the size of demonstrations.

The need for money to de-

fend the people arrested in Hornsey is urgent. Donations should be sent to Valerie Clark, 18 Dickinson Road, London, N8.

Christie on forgery charge

LATE IN THE AFTERNOON of July 30, Stuart Christie who was released from a Spanish jail last year, was informed that he was to appear at the Old Bailey the following day at 10.30 a.m. to defend himself against a charge brought under Section 9(b) of the Forgery Act.

The charge is a simple one of possessing 4,000 forged dollar bills which all bear the overprints of a variety of political

vice agent stationed in Paris, who works for the American Treasury. He stated that slogans such as "Vietnam" and "Una Vida" were "not usually found on American dollar bills."

Sadly, this successor to W. C. Fields was unable to appear in person at the Old Bailey to present his case against Christie. The defence therefore success-

Russian bosses fear Czech lead will sweep east Europe

by Chris Harman

TWELVE YEARS after 15 armoured divisions of Russian troops put down the popular uprising in Hungary, the rulers of Russia have proved that their power still rests on the same resort to force.

They have shown that they still fear popular discussion and debate. In order to subdue the Czech population they have massed huge concentrations of troops along the Czech borders.

Their armed forces have been engaged in the largest "exercises" in their history. With scarcely veiled threats they have offered Prague the same treatment as Budapest in 1956.

PROFESS

Once again the bosses of the Kremlin have shown how little they have in common with the socialism they profess.

The immediate pretext for the actions of the last month was a manifesto signed by 70 Czech intellectuals called 2000 Words that appeared at the end of June. This was denounced by the Russians and their supporters as a "counter-revolutionary pamphlet," as outlining "the tactics to be used in the next stage of counter-revolution..." (Neue Deutschland, 30.7.68).

In fact the passage which provoked this outcry dalled on people at all levels of Czech society to "establish committees for the defence of freedom of expression" and to hold meetings to "demand the resignation of people who have misused their power, who have harmed the public property or who have behaved dishonestly or brutally." It called for "public criticism, resolutions, demonstrations... strikes and boycotts..." where necessary.

This tentative and hesitant call to the people to begin to take control of society into their own hands was immediately disowned in moderate terms by the Czech government and Communist Party leaders.

SHUDDER

But the mere suggestion of this sent a shudder of fear through the rulers of Russia, East Germany and Poland. Meeting in Warsaw they demanded that the Czech leaders clamp down on such activities and reimpose censorship. Brutal repression is the only answer they know to any questioning of their rule.

But it is not enough just to condemn Russian intimidation. We need to be clear about what exactly is happening in Czechoslovakia, and why it worries the Russians.

For nearly 20 years—from February 1948 until recently—Czechoslovakia was a monolithic and bureaucratically organised society, run according to orders issued from the top. All power over the state and industry lay with the Communist Party, which in turn was completely subordinate to those

Socialist Worker

Editor

Roger Protz

Paxton Works

Paxton Road

London N17

01-808 4847

I. S.

For details of your nearest branch of International Socialism contact:

Aberdeen: Janet Kennedy, 94 Bankhead Road, Bucksburn, Aberdeen.

Birmingham: Sue Harvey, 96A Church Lane, Handsworth, Birmingham 20. 021-554 6346.

Bradford: Bob Kornreich, 7 Oak Avenue (Flat 1), Bradford 8.
Bromley: Tony Scott, 78 Lennard Road, SE20.

Cambridge: Mike Cowen, 11 Brookside, Cambridge.

Camden: Chris Barker, 36 Gilden Road, NWS.

Coventry: D. Edwards, 53 Palmerston Road, Earlsdon, Coventry.

Croydon: Dave Percival, 24 Courtney Road, Waddon, Croydon, Surrey.

Durham: Brian Whitton, 9 Dale Street, Ushaw Moor, Co Durham.

East London: Fred Lindop, 8 Malvern Road, E8, CLI 9336

Fulham: Frank Campbell, 26 Holmead Road, SW6.

Folkestone: Dave Cowell, c/o 18 Station Rd., Folkestone, Kent.

Glasgow: Ian Mooney, 4 Dalcross Passage, Glasgow W1.

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Hornsey: Valerie Clark, 18 Dickinson Road, N8.

Hull: Norman O'Neill, 104 Park Grove, Hull.

Ilford: Lionel Sims, 99 Belgrave Rd., Ilford, 01-SEV 6991.

Isington: Roger Cox, Flat 1, 37 Queen's Drive, N4.

Kenton: Kevin Simms, 56 Salisbury Road, Harrow.

Kilburn: Sean Dunne, 18 Lithos Rd., NW3.

Kingston: Roger Crossley, Flat 2, 6 The Avenue, Surbiton.

Lambeth: Andy Smith, Flat 6, 126 Streatham Hill, SW2.

Leeds: Alan Bailey, 26 Bagby Road, Leeds 2.

Manchester: Colin Barker, 44 Sewerby Street, Moss Side, Manchester 16.

Merseyside: Ross Hill, 11 Broad Sq., Liverpool 11. 051-226 7074.

Middlesbrough: Barry Slater, 14 Briardene Avenue, Acklam, Middlesbrough.

Morden: Malcolm Roe, 22 Elmhurst Avenue, Mitcham.

Newcastle: Dave Peers, 106 Holly Avenue, Newcastle on Tyne 2.

Northampton: Bob Dean, 4 Alderley Close, Duston, Northampton.

Norwich: Gerald Crompton, 220 College Road, Norwich NOR54F.

Oxford: Harry Goode, 24 Stockmore Street, Oxford.

Potteries: John Whitfield, 5 Grosvenor Road, Newcastle under Lyme, Staffs.

Richmond: John Watson, 20 Sydney Road, Richmond, Surrey.

Ripley & Ilkeston: Clive Burnett, 75 Heage Rd., Ripley, Derbyshire.

Selby: John Charlton, 12 Thatch Close, Selby.

Sheffield: Nick Howard, 15 Raven Road, Sheffield 7.

Southampton: Mel Doyle, 87 Empress Road, Itchin.

Stenage: Michael Downing, 57 Trumper Road, Trots Hill, Stenage, Herts.

Stoke Newington: Mike McGrath, 28 Manor Road, N.16.

Swansea: Pete Branston, 33a Uplands Crescent.

Tottenham: Fergus Nicol, 65 Palace Gates Road, N22.

Watford: Paul Russell, 61 Carpenters Avenue, Carpenters Park, Watford.

Wigan: Ray Challinor, 34 Whiteside Avenue, Hindley, Wigan, Lancs.

York: Bob Looker, 22, Hobgate.

KENT: HIGH WAGES WHILE THE SEAMS LAST

by Fred Milson

LITTLE KNOWN, but down there and working, are the four Kentish coal mines near Dover. The coal they produce goes exclusively to consumers in the county, and as it is produced more cheaply than northern coal with easy transport, their future is as secure as any mine can be at the moment.

Tilmanstone colliery was near to closure several years ago, but pressure secured a reprieve. No closure notices are out at the moment. By the end of the century, the mines will be worked out but for the moment, Medway industry and power stations roar with local coal.

The shafts were sunk in the early part of this century, and attracted miners from the north and Wales by offering higher wage rates. Peace rates are gone but the past is reflected in the Kent weekly wage of £27 per week, well above the normal for the industry as a whole.

At Betteshanger, 1220 men work at 1900 feet, and with 300 men on the surface they produce around 12,000 tons per week. Before mechanisation, 3100 men produced 16,000 tons per week.

Mechanisation costs £100,000 per coal-face; it cuts the number of men per face from 16 to 4. At £27 a week and leaving out the increases in production, the saving of wages per face is about £19,000 per year. Wage savings alone pay for the equipment within six years.

No longer wielding pick and shovel, the miners job now consists of looking after the roof supports along 11 yards of the coal face. Some of the machines take-off two feet of the face at a pass. The roof supports and props are moved forward to keep up with this progress and behind the men the roof slowly subsides.

PUMPED

The problem is that the seam is variable and may peter out altogether. Output therefore varies considerably from week to week. On the other hand subsidence is no problem, as 1900 feet of rock easily take up the 10 foot cavity left by the mining. 75,000 gallons of water per minute are pumped out of the mine.

COAL

a special inquiry



and the competence of the management.

At one point in their history, the miners led the working class with a most explicit demand for workers' control of production. Between 1912, when the Miner's Next Step was published, and the nationalisation in 1947, this concept was lost.

RESPONSE

It was displaced by the usual Labour notion that state ownership somehow equalled the "socialisation" of the means of production although the workers had no say in the running of state-owned industries. The confusion of nationalisation with social advance must be one of the contributory factors in the very weak response of the miners across the country to the vast changes in their industry.

There may be reasonable prosperity in Kent, but it is no mirror of the state of the industry in other parts of the country. No industry better illustrates the pressing need for reconstruction of the British working class as a fighting movement.

Why did the giant jigsaw break up?

CAN ANYTHING BE IMAGINED that is more stable than a whole continent? The idea that such great masses of land could move seems absurd at first, but it is almost certainly true that the continents were at one time grouped together and have since drifted apart.

If you look at a map you can see that North and South America fit into Europe and Africa almost like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. The fit is very good indeed if you try the fit, not at the shore line, but at the edge of the continental shelf, where the shallow sea floor suddenly plunges to the full depth of the ocean floor. The fit is so good that it could not be just a coincidence.

And various ancient mountain chains and folds in the rocks correspond in every respect in parts of Africa and South America. The rocks are very similar in the older parts of the two continents and also similar to rocks in India, Australia, and the Antarctic. Study of the strata and fossils in the rocks shows that they had a closely similar geological history.

Tropical Antarctic?

Some fossils have a distribution that can only be explained on the basis of continental drift. A small reptile called Mesosaurus is found only in parts of Africa and South America. The separate parts of its range may be brought together by regrouping the continents in their best-fit position. Coal deposits found in the Antarctic suggest that the climate was once tropical or subtropical, which could be explained by that continent having once occupied a position near the equator.

When an iron-bearing rock is formed, either by solidification of molten volcanic lava, or by precipitation from solution, it becomes slightly magnetised in the direction of the earth's magnetic field. Such rocks act as a sort of frozen compass

needle, pointing towards where the North Pole was at the time they were formed.

The North Pole seems to move relative to any one continent over long periods of time. But the Pole seems to be moving differently for different continents, and since there is only one North Pole which can only be in one place at a time, we are forced to conclude that it is the continents that are moving.

Unity: don't forget the principles...

SOCIALIST WORKER supporters in Leeds have been pleased to hear of the progress made in the discussions of unity with other left tendencies. We recognise, however, the need for absolute clarity on key issues, and taking into consideration the traditions of libertarian Marxism within which framework IS has worked, we are disturbed at the nonchalance of certain comrades as far as the dangerous and contradictory ideas of student power and black power are concerned especially in the British context.

The idea of black power that is at present being peddled (by comrades within the International Marxist Group in particular) can only lead to further divisions and confusions within the working class movement. We cannot accept that a mechanical application of American negro experience to Britain is in any way valid.

The black power movement in America is the result of a 300 year struggle for the liberation of the most oppressed section of American society.

movements in the earth produce areas where rock from the interior is being pushed up to the surface—the ridge in the middle of the Atlantic is an example—and areas where rocks are being drawn into the centre—such as the deep trench near Japan.

It is thought that upflows could push the continents apart. In this way the Atlantic ocean could have been formed by a split in an originally much larger continent.

At the moment the socialist content of this struggle has been very limited. In Britain, however, where the situation is historically very different, such a tendency towards separatism can only result in a harmful splitting of the potentially revolutionary working-class movement. International Socialism has maintained in the past that a major aspect of our work is towards linking the existing fragments of the worker's movement, not the construction of separate organisations based on race and not on class.

A majority of student members of IS have rejected in the past the concept of student power on the grounds firstly of its inherent elitism as a demand and secondly that the demand for power, isolated in the educational context only is ridiculous.

On this question we must repeat and support the first demand past at the founding meeting of the Revolutionary Socialist Students Federation—that is, for the democratisation of the institutions of education. On such a demand we can appeal to the mass of workers without the accusation of elitism being levelled at us.

Realising the urgency of the need for the unification of socialist tendencies, we nevertheless feel that this should not be done at the expense of the consistent theoretical analysis which has been advanced over the two decades by the theoreticians of Socialist Review and later International Socialism.

Our analysis of the class nature of the Eastern European state capitalist regimes is incompatible with political support for similar regimes in China, Cuba etc. And defence of the Cuban or Vietnamese people against imperialism does not imply unconditional support for their respective ruling bureaucracies.

We hope that issues such as these will be thoroughly discussed and clarified in Socialist Worker in the coming months.

Jim Scott, Alan Bailey, Phillip Evans, David Rabkin.

WHERE WE STAND

SOCIALIST WORKER is the paper of International Socialism, a movement of revolutionary socialists who believe that the present form of society, with its blatant inequalities, its periodic crises, wars and racist hysteria must be replaced by one based on a planned economy under full workers' control; those who produce the wealth should own and control the means of production.

International Socialism is opposed to any incomes policy that seeks to restrict the wages of the workers in order to boost the profits of the employers. We unconditionally support all shop stewards and rank and file trade union members in their struggles for better wages and conditions and oppose all reactionary laws that threaten the liberties of the labour movement. We support all strikes in defence of workers' interests with the demand of no victimisation of trade unionists. Redundancy should be opposed with the demand: five days work or five days pay. Shop stewards' organisations should strengthen and extend their influence by linking up on an industrial and ultimately a national basis.

We are opposed to racial discrimination, a weapon used by the ruling class to divide the labour movement. Immigration control must be ended, ensuring the free movement of peoples regardless of race and colour. Black and white workers must unite and form their own defence organisations to fight fascism and racialism. The labour movement must demand the immediate recall of British troops from abroad as the first step towards ending colonial exploitation.

The task of revolutionary socialists is to join workers in their struggles, to enrich those struggles with socialist ideas that will link up the various sections of the labour movement and help create a force that will lead on to workers' power.

If you would like to join IS or would like further details of our activities, fill in the form below:

Please send further details of the meetings and activities of International Socialism to:

Name

Address

Send to Socialist Worker, Paxton Works Paxton Road, London N17



Swing to the Left shakes Italian reformists

by NORAH CARLIN

EVENTS IN ITALY emphasise the bankruptcy of moderate Labour Party type politics and place both the Socialist and Communist Parties in an interesting position.

After the general election in May, Nenni's Socialist Party (re-united only 18 months ago with Saragat's Social Democrats) withdrew from the centre-left government to "reconsider" its position. The apparent stability of Italian parliamentary politics since 1962, based on a coalition of Christian Democrats, Socialists, Social Democrats (who were a separate party until late 1966) and the small Republican Party, suddenly seemed to evaporate, and after weeks of negotiation a makeshift government of Christian Democrats, "for the bathing season" has been established.

The decision to leave the coalition by the Socialist Party executive (opposed by the right-wing minority) was prompted by the election results. United Socialist losses amounted to about 25 per cent of the former Socialist-Social Democratic vote in 1963, and there was a substantial "swing to the left," particularly among the younger voters.

The Socialist Party for Proletarian Unity, which split from the Socialist Party in 1964, took a third of the SP's votes with it, and the Communist Party received over 30 per cent of the total votes, an impressive score on the home ground of the Roman Catholic Church.

With less electoral support, it is not surprising that the Socialist Party leaders found their position in the coalition impossible. The main role of the coalition, originally presented as the great agency for reform in Italian society, had been to carry through the wage-curbing measures necessary to Italian capitalism following the collapse of the economic "miracle" in 1963-4.

MASSIVE

The restructuring of Italian society meant in fact the introduction of economic planning in the interests of big business and not, as promised, in the interests of the underdeveloped areas and backward sectors. There was massive state participation in capitalist enterprises managed according to "strictly economic criteria," and proposals for an incomes policy in order to achieve economic recovery at the expense of the working class.

But the working class refuses to be fooled and continues to fight. The Italian strike rate is still the highest in the world, surpassing even the United States' level.

The promised reforms of the administration, social security and education, remain unfulfilled. The centre-left government's history was noted more for scandals and sensational revelations of corruption and inefficiency in the public service than for its remedies.

The crisis in higher education is acute. Student riots and clashes with the police of the type which sparked off the recent French upheavals have been frequent events in Italy over the last two years, while the promised university reforms stayed bogged down in parliamentary procedure.

The "protest vote" at the failures of the centre-left shows the electoral appeal of a mass Communist Party such as Italy's, although its active membership and industrial effectiveness are in decline. The Party's election tactics were mainly to appear as broad-minded and respectable as possible—some of their leaflets even bore the portrait of the late Pope John.

Whether the Communist Party could or would provide anything different from the centre-left coalition is another matter. Opinion in the Party is divided. The right wing seem to believe that Communist entry into a coalition government could achieve the reforms promised by the Socialists.

SNUBBED

The prospect of a coalition in which both Communists and Christian Democrats might play a part went to the head of one party leader, Amendola, in last month's governmental crisis. His claim of "friendly contacts" between the leaderships of the two parties, and speculation on a possible coalition was heavily snubbed by the Christian Democratic press, and cannot have pleased Catholic workers who chose to vote Communist.

The Left wing of the Communist Party prefers the idea of a united opposition of the left with an alternative programme of structural reforms. This view, though more radical than the manoeuvring of Amendola and his sort, shows commitment to parliamentary politics and conviction that Italy's problems can be solved within the context of Italian and European capitalism.

It also plays upon the concept of perpetual strength in opposition, a position which insulates the Party from actually having to carry out its "alternative" in the foreseeable future. But the illusion seems likely to be continued—the breakaway PSIUP and the left wing of the Socialist Party are attracted to the idea.

Since the elections, the Communist Party has condemned student "extremists" and their ideas of confrontation with the capitalist system, advising

Anti-fascist law used in crack-down on French revolutionaries

THE REPRESSION of revolutionary militants in France began on June 12, when the government dissolved all the Trotskyist and Maoist organisations and the Movement of March 22.

The government made use of a law of 1936 about "combat groups and private militia" which provides for the dissolution of any association or grouping which "provoke armed demonstrations in the street," which show "by their form and military organisation" the character of combat groups or private militia and which attempt to overthrow "the republican form of government."

The punishment for maintaining or reconstituting dissolved groups range from six months' to two years' imprisonment and fines of from 16 to 5000 new francs.

The first arrests were made on June 14 when 17 leading members of the revolutionary organisations were arrested and released 10 days later.

The first arrests were carried out immediately after the decree of dissolution. The police were trying to prove that the May days had not merely been instigated by "armed militia," but that they were acting in conjunction with foreign influences.

It was for this reason that it was the DST (Defence and Supervision of the Territory), specialising in counter-espionage, which was given the job of investigation and interrogation of prisoners. But finally all the revolutionaries were released, proving that there had never been a "foreign plot" in May and that there was no meaning to the accusation of "armed militia."

It also proved that the government had made a very peculiar interpretation of the law of 1936 which was adopted by parliament at that time to combat the extreme right-wing fascist militia which in 1934 had attempted to storm parliament. These militia, most of who wore uniform, were armed in the strict sense of the term and constituted genuine combat groups. The dissolved revolutionary groups were in no way similar.

Since 1962, for all problems concerning "state security," the police have been able to follow a procedure which seriously infringes personal rights.

When the State Security Court, with

This man Couve...

DE GAULLE'S new Prime Minister and general odd-job man, Couve de Murville, is a man whose political career has been tactfully ignored by most of the press.

He came into de Gaulle's government in 1958 as a representative of the Banque de l'Union Parisienne, to make a united front with Pompidou of the Rothschild bank. But his history goes back further than this.

In 1940, when de Gaulle was in London defending France for "democracy," Couve de Murville was a high civil servant of the pro-German Vichy Government. He was a signatory of the French 1940 capitulation, and was rewarded for this by a special Vichy decoration, the Francisque.

Only in 1943, when the Germans were clearly going to be defeated, did Couve, together with General Giraud, come over to de Gaulle. De Gaulle, of course, welcomed him with open arms, being much more at home with people of his own class than with the Communists and Jews who made up the original



opposition to Vichy. De Gaulle is even quoted as having said later "France had two strings to her bow—one was de Gaulle, the other Pétain."

But de Gaulle has no monopoly of loving up to former Hitlerites. In the recent elections Georges Bonnet, former vicious anti-Communist of the 1930s, Foreign Minister at the time of Munich, personal friend of Ribbentrop and debarred from parliament in 1944-53 as a wartime collaborator, was re-elected as a candidate of the "Left" Federation, with Communist support on the second ballot.

special jurisdiction, issues a commission requiring the investigation of a particular affair, the police act in the following way. They can keep prisoner anyone they want for 10 days, during which time the arrested person has no right to send for his lawyer.

This period of 10 days, called supervision (garde à vue), is divided into periods of two, five and three days. At the end of each period, the examining magistrate can authorise the extension of the supervision, or else set the prisoner free. At the end of 10 days the person is charged or

released.

The procedure also allows homes to be searched (with removal of goods to the police station) during day or night. Normally only daytime searches are allowed.

After the release of the first 17 militants, more revolutionary militants have been arrested, all former members or sympathisers of the Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire. The charges this time were "reconstitution of dissolved organisations."

At the present moment 13 militants

Paris back to normal — on the surface

by IAN BIRCHALL

TO A TOURIST EYE, Paris in late July was back to normal. The Folies Bergères—where the strike was one of the longest—is open again and the cobblestones of the Latin Quarter are being covered over with asphalt.

There is no obvious repression. Every bookstall is covered with books on the May events. The only shop we found that did not have a single book about May in its windows was the official Communist Party bookshop, which was concentrating on holidays in Rumania.

The satirical paper Canard Enchaîné continued its anti-Gaullist

Action and Lutte Ouvrière are sold on the streets of the Latin Quarter, despite the occasional seizure and arrest of sellers.

But behind this is a more sombre aspect. The banned groups proclaim their continued existence in slogans on the walls of the Underground. Plain-clothes policemen, carrying guns, follow suspicious elements.

The attitude of the Gaullist régime is quite clearly to act, not against freedom of ideas—which, with the word "Revolution" painted on every

tionary party a little sooner than some members of the libertarian left.

The general opinion of French comrades is that there is a long struggle ahead. There will not be a repetition of the May events in October, although it is possible that the universities will not be reopened as it will be impossible to prevent them being occupied by students.

In the factories a long struggle is developing. At the moment the crucial issue is overtime working to make up for time lost during the strike

strike, hitherto almost unknown in France, is becoming more widespread, and there may be a wave of them in the autumn.

Relations between the two main trade-union groups, the Communist-led CGT and CFDT are deteriorating. Recent factory committee elections showed that where the CGT was dominant previously, CFDT are gaining votes, but where CFDT were formerly in the majority CGT are gaining.

Action Committees continue to work in localities and factories, and the first steps towards linking up the

COAL BOARD CHOPS TOP MINE — AND BIG BUSINESS WILL PROFIT

by John Taylor

A NORTHUMBERLAND PIT which was a long-life colliery at the beginning of the year has been given its death sentence — because the Coal Board wants the coal mined opencast, and by private enterprise.

The condemned pit is Pegswood, near Morpeth, just up the London-Edinburgh railway line from Cramlington, where in 1926 striking miners derailed the Flying Scotsman. It employs 580 men.

The announcement that the pit was "in jeopardy," the final stage before closure, came in June, the day after the news that Linton colliery, four miles to the north-west and with 780 men, would shut down by October.

The management said recent borings showed there will be no "economically workable reserves" when the present seam is exhausted next February.

High quality

But last February, says Jack Davison, the lodge secretary, the men were told the Top Busty seam alone would give 6-7 years' work.

They know there are other seams just standing there (and getting thicker the further they go), seams like the yard-high Beaumont, which produces the highest quality coal in Northumberland, but has been allotted to Ashington colliery.

Pegswood has only once made a loss since nationalisation. Its output per manshift has been the highest in the country. The men had the bitter consolation of being congratulated on their performance when the management broke the news to union officials in June.

So why the change? The men have no doubt that they are being sacrificed to the NCB's plans for opencast extraction at Butterwell, a mile to the north. If it gets planning permission the site, with excavation to a depth of 500 ft, will be the biggest in Europe, producing a million tons of coal a year.

Underhand way

The National Union of Mine-workers urges that opencast mining should not replace deep mining. The NCB and the Ministry of Power take the line merely that it should not interfere with deep mining.

"Which means," says Davison, "if they close Linton, Pegswood and Longhirst (the third pit in the triangle—two miles north-east of Pegswood), there won't be any deep mining to interfere with. This is the underhand way they go about it."

"It's private enterprise versus nationalisation here. The Coal Board buy the land at fantastic prices, they buy machinery which costs a million pounds. Then they rent it to a firm like Wimpey's. They get the coal and sell it back to the NCB at a profit—coal that Pegswood should be getting."

Less chance

Davison reckons Butterwell will employ 500 men, but all imported, non-union labour. Even if Pegswood men get taken on, they will be earning much less than before.

They would not mind if the pit was kept open till they got a factory on the site next door where houses are coming down. Once open-cast employment is theoretically available, there will be even less chance of getting new industry.

"It's simply our community against private profit, because if you take the pit away from here you have nothing," says Davison.

The men are fighting the shut-down and have called for a national miners' demonstration against closures to be held in Blackpool on the Sunday before this year's Labour Party conference.

Left shakes cabinet at miners' carnival

by Ian Taylor

THE CRACKS in the labour movement finally extended to the strongest bastion of right-wing Labour this July. The ranks of the Durham Miners Association and the local Labour parties in County Durham united before the threat of a demonstration called for the Durham Miners Gala on July 20.

The demonstration was called by the Durham branches of International Socialism and the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, and support for the demonstration came from one courageous miners lodge and from several groups of industrial workers in the country.

Perhaps because of the wrong use of slogans—"For a Socialist Presence"—on the notices and leaflets distributed beforehand, it was possible for Alf Hesler, area secretary of the Miners Union, to label the demonstration as a "university-based Vietnam group" and to claim that alien groups were trying to peddle ideologies to the miners on what had traditionally been a family occasion. He was able (with the help of DMA agents sent round to threaten any lodges that might be tempted to support the demonstration) to minimise contact between miners and the organisers.

Nevertheless, the Silksworth Lodge band pointedly stopped playing as they marched past the balcony—a gesture unnoticed by the press or by a jovial Harold Wilson dancing a jig with Barbara Castle.



THE MASS TENANTS march on their way to GLC headquarters

London tenants march on junketting Tories

by Helen Lowe

ON JULY 25, in the biggest demonstration of working-class people seen in London for many years, 9000 GLC tenants marched from West Smithfield down Fleet Street to County Hall.

They came from estates all over London, where tenants' associations have been sprouting rapidly in the last few months since the GLC announced its plan to increase rents in October. The purpose of the march, which was organised by the GLC Tenants' Action Committee with the aid of International Socialism, was to return the means-test rebate forms which the GLC has sent out to its 250,000 tenants as part of its new, "fair" rents scheme. An estimated 50,000 of the forms were deposited from a coffin at

the feet of Horace Cutler, chairman of the GLC Housing Committee, by a deputation inside County Hall.

The demonstration had a carnival atmosphere which was especially appropriate, for the GLC was having its own "do" that evening—the annual chairman's reception. As the chauffeur-driven gents in their evening clothes and medals, with their ladies in evening dress and diamonds went past, tenants shouted: "That's our rent you're eating in there," and, "So that's where our money goes." Thousands of people stood

along the side of County Hall, jeering up at the windows where the lords and ladies could be seen sipping their brandies and cocktails. One thing was clear to all—the enormous difference between the people who have to pay the increases out of a non-increasing pay-pocket, and the people who grow fat on the money.

Tenants are now realising that the rent increases will not be stopped by demonstrations—but only by organising on the estates so that the increases will not be paid. The campaign has now reached a stage of organisation where tens of thousands of tenants will not pay a penny more rent, and people are keeping in mind the weapon of a complete rent strike if the GLC tries any evictions.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: from page one

power not through any popular upheaval but by means of police power to destroy all other political organisations, both of workers and of old bourgeois elements, combined with threats of Russian invasion.

Within the Communist Party itself no questioning of decisions was permitted. To ensure compliance, the political police and the terror it practised was directed inside the party as well as outside.

The constant threat of terror and fear it gave rise to had its effect on those involved in the economy. The managers obeyed without question directives from above by bullying the foremen below them. They in turn used crude threats to speed up the pace of work, stop absenteeism, prevent workers demanding wage increases.

INCREASE

In this period, both the rulers of the Czechoslovak bureaucracy and the Russian leaders upon whom they depended wanted only one thing: to continually increase the level of production of Czechoslovak industry.

For the Russians this was important because it meant an ever increasing supply for them of the products of Czech industry. They could buy these on the cheap because the Czechs had no choice about whom they should trade with.

In the early 1960s all this changed. After 13 years of building up their industries the other countries of Eastern Europe no longer needed to import large quantities of machines and engineering products. They could make equipment of the same quality as the Czechs.

The breakdown of the cold war made it possible for them to buy plant from the west. Suddenly the Czech bureaucracy faced the classic problem

of any capitalist—finding a market for its goods. The impact on the economy was immediate: in 1963, instead of economic growth there was a reduction in the national income by 3.7 per cent.

The bureaucratic ruling class began to split down the middle. Some, at first a minority, saw that unless there were major changes in the organisation of industry the whole basis of their rule would be undermined.

They demanded that inefficient industries should be closed down. Like Harold Wilson, their spokesman, Professor Otta Sik, spoke of "redeployment" and like him meant unemployment, of the order of 400,000. Other industries, they argued, could not become efficient until the crude methods of making workers produce based on the "stick" were replaced by ones based on the "carrot."

The reforming group countered their physical weakness with talk about "democracy" and "freedom of speech." They demanded these in order to organise within the bureaucracy without fear of police action.

They were useful slogans for mobilising other groups in society to countermand the formal strength of their opponents.

At the key moment in the struggle against the former president, Novotny, the reformers took over newspapers, abolished censorship, and aligned themselves with a student opposition that had been developing in the universities for three years. They had no choice if they were not to allow the old guard to regroup and retain power.

This does not mean that the reformers are really committed to democracy or free speech. After all, many of them held positions of prominence without too much difficulty under the old regime. Dubcek lived quite happily in the Soviet Union during some of the worst

years of Stalin's reign.

But it does mean they could not come to power without first dismantling those structures that had kept the rest of society in chains for so long. And once such a process had begun, it was not easily kept in check.

It allowed other groups to organise. This is what worries the Russians.

SWEEP

The internal convulsions in Czechoslovakia could give rise to a rash of working class self-activity that would sweep all the regimes of eastern Europe away.

The reaction of Russia is the same as that of the US to the threat to her dominoes in South East Asia.

The economy is not yet picking up. Before it can do so

Nurses on the march for better pay

by a nurse

NURSES ARE FORMING their own "self-help" organisation to raise the standards of their profession.

The nurses are calling for better conditions and decent pay which they claim will attract more nurses and midwives, which in turn will mean better care for patients in hospitals and in their homes. At present, nurses find it impossible to give adequate care or to maintain the professional standards that they have been taught are essential.

After three or four years of training to qualify as a State Registered Nurse a large number leave the National Health Service to take up private nursing or go to America or other countries where the pay is higher and working conditions more attractive. This drain will continue, and possibly increase, until the present intolerable conditions are improved.

MINORITY

The recent rise of 14 per cent in pay effects only a small minority of nurses. The majority are promised a maximum of 9 per cent and many even less, over the next two years. And after the increases were announced, nurses living in hospital accommodation were told that the cost of their room and board was also being raised and would be deducted from their pay.

The nurses do not have any independent representation or the most basic rights of collective bargaining. Organisation is obviously essential for both the working conditions of the nurses and the health of the public at large.

Nurses and their supporters will hold a march on Thursday afternoon, August 15th from Speakers Corner to Mill Bank, via 10 Downing Street, where a petition supporting the nurses demands and listing their grievances will be presented to the Prime Minister.

WEEKLY SW

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