

The SYNDICALIST

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20P

STAB IN THE BACK

Ninety workers at the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle have been on strike since 10th July. The main issue in the dispute concerns bonus payments for porters who work long and hard in an understaffed and exploited section of the health service. Management at the hospital refuse to pay the bonuses and won't negotiate properly, even though porters at other hospitals have long since received the payments. Seventy of the strikers are porters and the remaining twenty are TSSU (Theatre Sterile Supplies Unit) staff. All are members of the GMBATU.

REPORT IN FAVOUR

The management's refusal to grant the payment of bonuses comes despite the fact that after 3½ years of pressure from porters and TSSU staff, an official report showed conclusively that the porters were already having to work above bonus performance. The TSSU staff have still not managed to get a similar report carried out for their work. Both they and the porters have had to endure systematically increasing workloads with no additional staff being taken on.

FUNNY BUSINESS

The new-style "business" management in the Freeman Hospital seem determined to win a reputation as "cost-cutters" and clearly care nothing for the health or morale of these much-exploited workers. They claim to be unable to afford to pay the bonuses - odd, for such a prestigious and expanding hospital. Even odder, because new wards at Freeman Road are taking over some of the functions previously served at Walkergate Hospital. Porters being transferred to the Freeman will receive the bonuses.



OVERTIME BAN

After management's persistent refusal to negotiate the porters instituted an overtime ban at the beginning of June. Administrative staff at the hospital started to carry out portering duties and a threat was made to employ students as scabs.

On 10th July the TSSU department was due to be moved within the hospital. But instead of making porters available for the heavy work, management tried to insist on TSSU staff doing it. They refused, and were instantly suspended. They were immediately supported by a walk-out by the 70 porters, and the strike began.

ALL OUT

The strike is still completely solid after six weeks. Management have brought in 3 students as scabs - these have now left but will probably be replaced by more. This is straightforward provocation - 3 scabs can hardly take the place of seventy experienced porters. The work is primarily being attempted by administrators and by volunteers from other sections of higher-paid staff. Whether the "Friends" of the Freeman Hospital are friends more of the management than of the workers remains to be seen.

SUPPORT

The strikers hold regular collections for the Strike Fund at various workplaces, as well as on the daily picket line, outside the hospital. Over £700 has been received from workers at the nearby Longbenton DHSS complex, both through individual and block donations from the CPSA (Civil and Public Servants' Association). Delegations of strikers have also received support from other government offices. Donations have been made by the AUE in the shipyards of up to £250. Inside the hospital many workers have shown their support both morally and financially. COHSE members fully support the strikers and give money (although COHSE officials are too "management-minded" as one striker put it). Domestics have refused to cross picketlines, and nurses on several wards have organised collections.

MANAGERS

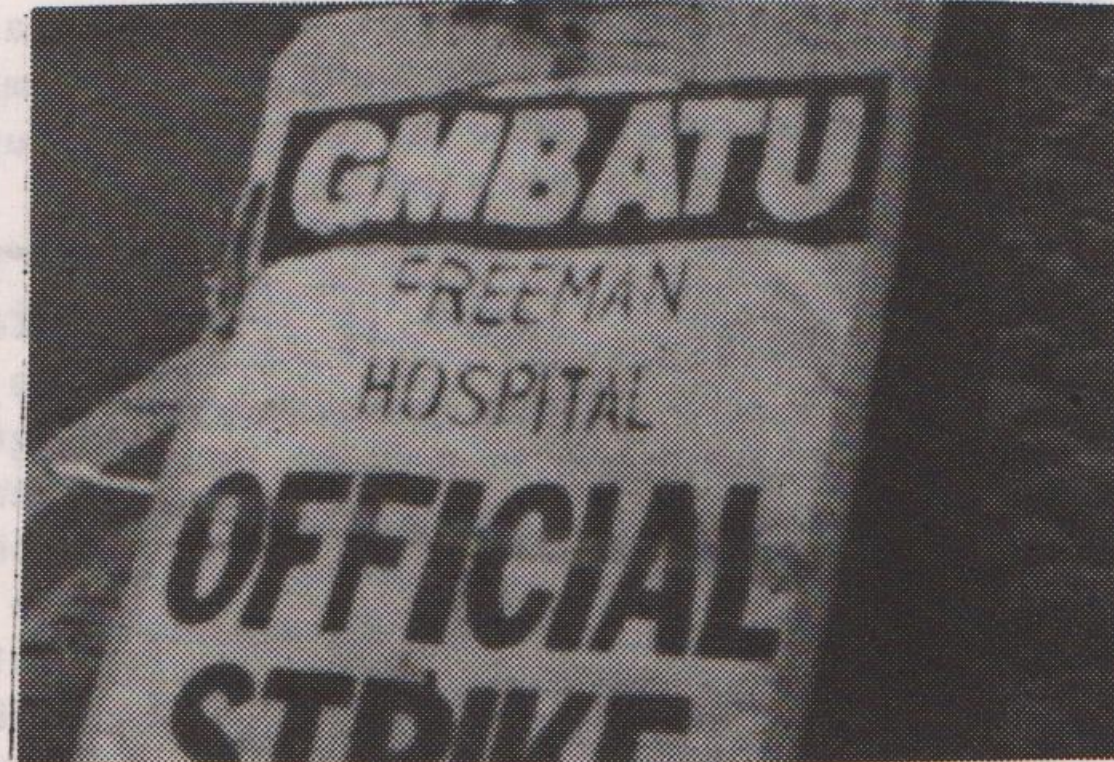
Management's tactics have been continually provocative. On Thursday 7th August they



agreed to a meeting with ACAS, but on the following Saturday sent a letter to strikers threatening them with dismissal for "breach of contract". More recent talks have been held through ACAS, but one shop steward told us that "management are prepared to talk about anything - weather, holidays, everything that is except pay". Nurses have faced considerable intimidation from management trying to get them to carry out portering jobs.

PROSPECTS

These strikers are suffering considerable financial hardship, and are not receiving the support and solidarity that they should be getting. Their union seems less than enthusiastic about publicising the dispute and seeking the support and solidarity of other groups of workers. The union even said that they had no money to produce further leaflets for the strikers.



The strike may be over by the publication date of this paper, after a meeting on 27th August between the union and the chairman of Newcastle Health Authority. We hope that prospects for the strikers have not been too adversely affected by the lack of support they have received.

ANARCHO - SYNDICALIST MONTHLY

inside : COMPUTER COMPANIES, CP SCHEMES, GUAG, WHEELIE BINS, WAPPING, HORMEL, S.AFRICA, PLAYSCHMES, HEALTH AT WORK, ROUND-UP, BENEFITS, MINERS, SOCIAL WORKERS. ROF, SILENTNIGHT.

T.R.S.

One of the most serious and pressing issues facing the working class at present is unemployment, with its effects on individuals, communities, industry and society as a whole.

Many economists and so-called socialists, especially within the ranks of the Labour Party, see the cure for mass unemployment as straightforward. They say that huge injections of government money into both private and public concerns will lead to the problem being eventually done away with completely. This naive view represents either a total lack of understanding of the capitalist system, sheer ignorance, or perhaps simply hopeless rhetoric to convince voters of a lie. Unemployment is not, as many would have us believe, down to merely economic slumps, inefficiency and overproduction. Even under a total economic recovery unemployment would still remain. As has always been the case, unemployment is used as a tool to drive down the wages of the world's workers, increase workloads, reduce working conditions and to erode every advance that the working class has ever made. The pool of unemployed, well over 4 million in this country at present, can be used at will by the bosses in their pursuit of ever-higher profit margins. Dole queues will be cut somewhat if a profit can be made, and extended when workers have lost their "economic viability".

The pool is also used as a weapon to threaten workers lucky enough to find work, who can always be told that "there are plenty of others willing to do your job." This is the clarion-call of many employers at present in their attempts to de-unionise workforces, cut down on benefits and conditions, and show that they and they alone have the "right" to manage.

The social needs of workers are never taken into account. Workforces can be slashed to the bone even when vast amounts of work need to be done. But this work is only in the interests of ordinary people - the owners and money-men find it unprofitable.

The "profit before people" idea is a very real factor in the rapid introduction of new technology and automation. Jobs in almost all industries are being lost due to the misuse of the "modern" age technology. Under the right circumstances, this technology can be a very useful and effective way of ridding ourselves of dangerous, unhealthy or boring work - but only if the criterion for its use is that of social need.

The question of overtime is inseparable from the issue of unemployment. It is quite obvious that it is cheaper for employers if some of us work overtime than to employ others to do the extra work. But overtime can easily lead to lay-offs. It has been "proved in practice" to have the effect of working people out of jobs.

In many industries overtime is class-

EDITORIAL

ed as a benefit and taken for granted. This illusion must be undermined. Even militant unions like the NUM (known for its members working large amounts of overtime) have fallen into the bosses' trap. The ban on overtime is not a basic call out of class solidarity, taking the attitude that jobs are being denied to other workers. Instead it has been accepted as "realism" within the workplace and has been put aside as a tactic in industrial action rather than a principle of refusing to play the bosses' game.

Shorter working weeks used to be a paramount demand of the union movement, although no real effort has been put into achieving this by the modern trade unions. The eight-hour day was not gained by the whims of politicians or concern of employers for our health or to grant us leisure time. It was won through workers' militancy and massive industrial action, and for no other reason. The fight for a significant shortening of the working week has died, apart from the mouthings of bureaucrats at trade union and TUC conferences. A working week of say 30 hours might not eradicate unemployment, but it would be a step in the direction of cutting the number of unemployed. Of course if this is to be an objective, vigilance would need to be maintained to ensure that gains were not simply whittled away by management tactics and the ineptitude of union bureaucrats. For example shorter working would prove pointless unless speed-ups in production and overtime could be resisted. Speed-ups could push production up so that the bosses would hardly notice that fewer hours were being worked. Production levels could be set to such a point as to make it impossible to meet them, so that they would be more than happy to revert back to the old system.

When considering the possibility of a shorter working system wage levels are clearly a major concern. If wage cuts were taken in line with the hours we would be playing into employers' hands. Again, attempts to cut wages would need to be fought through effective industrial organisation. We have the power as producers to procure these advances, we have the sufficient power at grass-roots level to create the organisation to begin the fight for our rights. The struggle to reverse the modern trends imposed by capitalism needs to begin now. It must have a clear view of what it is attempting, and must not get sidetracked by the rhetoric and fudging of politicians and union bureaucrats.

Whatever we achieve in the area of wages, hours, conditions and unemployment we must not lose sight of our ultimate objectives. Short-term reforms are too susceptible to being taken away at any time. They are no replacement for the complete destruction of capitalism and the state, and the building of a libertarian society which is structured around social need and mutual aid, not power and profit.

tation). Such business links boost the ability of apartheid to survive and our solidarity can be demonstrated by bringing these facts to the attention of IBM and ICL workers and their bosses.

G.E.C. CONCEDE

The British-owned company GEC was faced with a determined response in early June from workers in Germiston and other towns south of Johannesburg. Strikes at three plants involving 1,300 workers had led to the victimisation and sacking of 49 machine operators and in turn this provoked a sit-in at the plush headquarters in near-by Parktown. The company then conceded to demands for negotiations involving all three plants, rather than playing one off against the other, the normal policy of companies extracting super-profits in South Africa.

(source: Counter Information)

Surely this must affect council jobs? Its patently obvious that if you take on huge numbers of C.P. workers then the council does not need to employ direct labour in full time positions. This saves the councils wage bills and the inherent statutory obligation that real long term jobs would necessitate.

What about the private sector and their use of these projects? Well this involves mainly Y.T.S. which I am not directly involved with but again in talks with colleagues there are disturbing developments here also. Its clear that an increasing number of employers are abusing the Y.T.S. scheme and continue to use the system as a form of cheap labour by repeatedly replacing one set of kids with another without ever offering full time jobs at the end of their stint. It also saddens me to see companies shedding jobs one minute then suddenly recruiting via Y.T.S. Why do C.P. Schemes churn out so many part time jobs? The financial constraints imposed by the government via the MSC ensures that the emphasis is on part time work creation and our hands are tied in this respect.

GUAG on south africa

The Gateshead Unemployed Action Group began a campaign on Saturday 23rd August in support of South African workers. The campaign launched at the Monument in Newcastle City Centre saw the G.U.A.G. appealing for support for the oppressed South African workers and demanding that the British Trade Union movement implement its own sanctions on Apartheid through a programme of industrial action.

GUAG are appealing to local trades unionists to support them in this campaign and raise the matter at their branches etc as well as participating actively.

All donations collected throughout the campaign will be forwarded to the South African union movement. For more information on the campaign and details of future actions contact;

Gateshead Unemployed Action Group, c/o Gateshead Law Centre, 13, Walker Terrace, Gateshead.

Tel: 4771109.

TALKING GARBAGE

A major row has blown up on Derwentside over the Labour Council's intention to cut the costs of refuse collections. Both unions and local householders are against the new plans which the Council have put forward.

TRIAL PERIOD

A six-month trial period of the use of the "Wheelie bin", which the council says will save money by allowing them to cut staffing levels, has been earmarked for the villages of Langley Park, Burnhope, Lanchester and Esh Winning.

27 refuse collectors will also be moved to other jobs in the council throughout Derwentside.

BINS REFUSED

Over the last few weeks bins have been delivered to housing estates for the start of the scheme set to begin on September 8th. But already residents are refusing to take them. The estates chosen for the bins are upon slopes which means residents, including the elderly and disabled, would have to drag the extremely large wheeled bins up and down stairs in order for their rubbish to be taken.

THE COUNCIL.....

The council are adamant that the new scheme will go ahead and they have told all residents that if their new bins are not by the roadside due for collection, then their refuse will not be removed. Like-

Every project requires funding to cover running and capital costs and each project receives £380 per employee on that scheme whether they are part time or full time. So you can see that in order to cover these costs we have no option in the vast majority of cases but to employ as many part time workers as possible in order to acquire the necessary finance. Even then we usually find that the projects are being run on a 'shoestring' basis and we are 'encouraged' to tout around private industry seeking sponsors to provide money or material goods to make a scheme viable.

Why are wage rates so low on these schemes?

Basically wage rates are supposed to be comparable to rates paid in proper jobs but this is not really happening in practice. For clerical and office jobs in general the job titles are manipulated and the lowest scale applicable is paid regardless of your ability or past experience. In fact my position carries responsibilities which in private industry would increase my salary by quite a bit. Even in the case of tradesmen the basic minimum union rate is paid and I know from my experience in industry no-one gets paid that, in fact in practice you can usually add on a further £30-£40 on average.

Are new starters on C.P. Schemes given any form of guidance about these jobs? They have in our establishment what is called an 'induction course' in the first week which usually lasts for a day. Unfortunately a lot of this time is given up to praising the virtues of CP and its 'beneficial role in society'. A person from a local organisation was allowed to talk to the new starters on the benefits of joining a trade union but this was stopped by senior management. Their excuse was the talks were 'political' but in reality this was utter nonsense. We objected to this move and were informed

If you would like to make any comment on the Syndicalist, contact the Tyneside Revolutionary Syndicalists for more information or would like to contribute to the paper both financially and with information please contact;

THE SYNDICALIST,
c/o Tyneside Free Press,
5, Charlotte Square,
Newcastle Upon Tyne,
NE1 4XF.

If you would like to see the continuation of the Syndicalist we urge you to make a financial donation immediately. The paper is produced on a shoestring and your support is needed. Please make all cheques and Postal Orders out to;

THE SYNDICALIST

The 'Syndicalist' publishes news, reports and information on industrial disputes, rank and file workers organisation and trade union activity and community and social issues on Tyneside and elsewhere.

If there is something happening in your workplace, community or trade union that you feel people should know about please write to us with details. If possible an address or telephone number where we can contact you shall be of help. All communications will be treated with complete confidentiality.

wise, on the union front, members of the G&M have been told that if they refuse to work the new scheme they will be suspended or sacked.

.....THE UNIONS-

Meanwhile the union has voted with a 100% majority not to implement the new scheme. If any workers are suspended or sacked, all-out strike action will be taken immediately. Meanwhile, the G&M officials, even in the face of such solidarity, are presently trying to negotiate with the council. Union officials believe that a programme of voluntary redundancies of an entire crew of refuse collectors would meet the cost-cutting targets put aside by the council. This attitude helps no-one but the council who now have the union officials bending over backwards to stop a dispute from arising. The council have also warned that if strike action is taken they will have no hesitation in bringing in private contractors - this gives a realistic chill to Labour council's "Keep it Public" image.

RESIDENTS DECIDE

The residents in the designated areas have been told that they will have the final decision on whether or not the "Wheelie Bin" system will be operated permanently after the trial period has been worked. Residents have already made it quite clear that they don't want the scheme - this democratic decision is that of the four areas on behalf of the whole of Derwentside.

that only delegates from the relevant trade unions would be allowed to address new starters. This was no great achievement on our part as the only reason this 'barred' person was invited in the first place was the fact that local trade union officials couldn't be bothered to turn up at these meetings in the past.

What is the general attitude of senior management within your establishment? In my opinion they are completely out of touch with ordinary people and they still seem to think that its only the 'low achievers' in society who end up on these schemes. They all have a management background and their right wing political attitudes are plain to see. In fact a lot of our union literature has a habit of going missing from the notice board and we all know which manager is responsible. We are patiently waiting to catch him in the act

Finally in your experience what conclusions would you draw from viewing these schemes from the inside? There's absolutely no doubt in my mind that these schemes will in the long term inflict severe damage on working class interests by their nature of part time, poorly paid jobs which help to drag down wages in private and local government sectors. Central government via the MSC has total control over these positions and that fact alone must be bad for the future. What saddens me even more is the big part Labour councils play in the set up and eagerness with which our trade union bureaucrats do such a great disservice to the people they purport to represent by their contribution to the system. Finally my twelve month spell is nearly up and overall I can only conclude from everything I've seen and heard the real intention is and always has been to get bodies off the dole register. If anyone doesn't believe me then apply for my position, it will be in the job centre shortly, in fact so will I!

Making a killing

Western computer companies have been making a killing out of sales to the South African state. IBM supplied the computer software for "The Book of Life", which classifies the population on racial grounds, and consequent resident and employment patterns. ICL computers are used to track the movements of the 25 million black population, each of whom is fingerprinted at the age of 16, with 20 million prints in current storage. Other companies such as Control Data Corporation have provided systems used in the present repression whereby townships can be simulated in great detail to assist the security forces in their brutal policies of detention and harassment. Another company, Ontel, set up the surveillance network on workers' productivity (ie rate of exploi-

FROM THE INSIDE

Everyone is well aware of the massive campaign regarding Community Programme Projects and the like, so recently we managed to interview a Development Officer who is employed in a local agency which initiates these schemes. He is an active trade unionist in NALGO and has become increasingly concerned at the effect of these schemes in the area.

What type of work is supposed to be done by these C.P. Schemes?

The official line is that the jobs must be for the Community benefit and must not affect or replace jobs or services already provided by private or local government sectors.

Does this happen in practice?

In many cases and this is becoming more frequent I have found that the M.S.C. does not stick to its own guidelines and that local Labour Councils are flaunting the so called 'rules' of the game.

What involvement has the local Labour Councils with C.P. Schemes? They act as sponsors for these projects and employ and ever increasing number of C.P. workers in this area.

WAPPING NEWS

Discipline?

The Northern area Transport and General Workers Union has taken steps in severely disciplining drivers that refuse to stop scabbing in the News International dispute. August 6th saw the first ever move throughout the long running dispute to take action against those who continually cross printers picket lines.



Six drivers, split equally, from T.N.T. Roadfreight depots in Houghton-le-Spring and Carlisle have been issued with notices of their expulsion from the transport union for their refusal to give assurances that they would no longer cross picket lines at Murdoch's Kinning Park printing plant in Glasgow. It also looks likely that a further 22 expulsion notices will be served in the near future to drivers at the Carlisle depot. The timing of this move seems rather odd, mass meetings of drivers have never been held and points in the dispute outlined and even if it had to come to the expulsion of these scab drivers wouldn't it have been more appropriate months ago?

Print-aid

Rank and file strikers on the Wapping picket line are extremely concerned that donations made to the dispute fund are not getting through to ordinary print workers. Instead the money is being channelled through to the National executives of the NGA and SOGAT and the only financial help that printers are presently receiving are that of weekly donations made from Fleet Street supporters. If you are sending financial aid to the sacked print workers send it direct to;

FOC London Machine Branch,
Casual Chapel,
c/o SOGAT House,
84, Blackfriars Road,
London, E1.

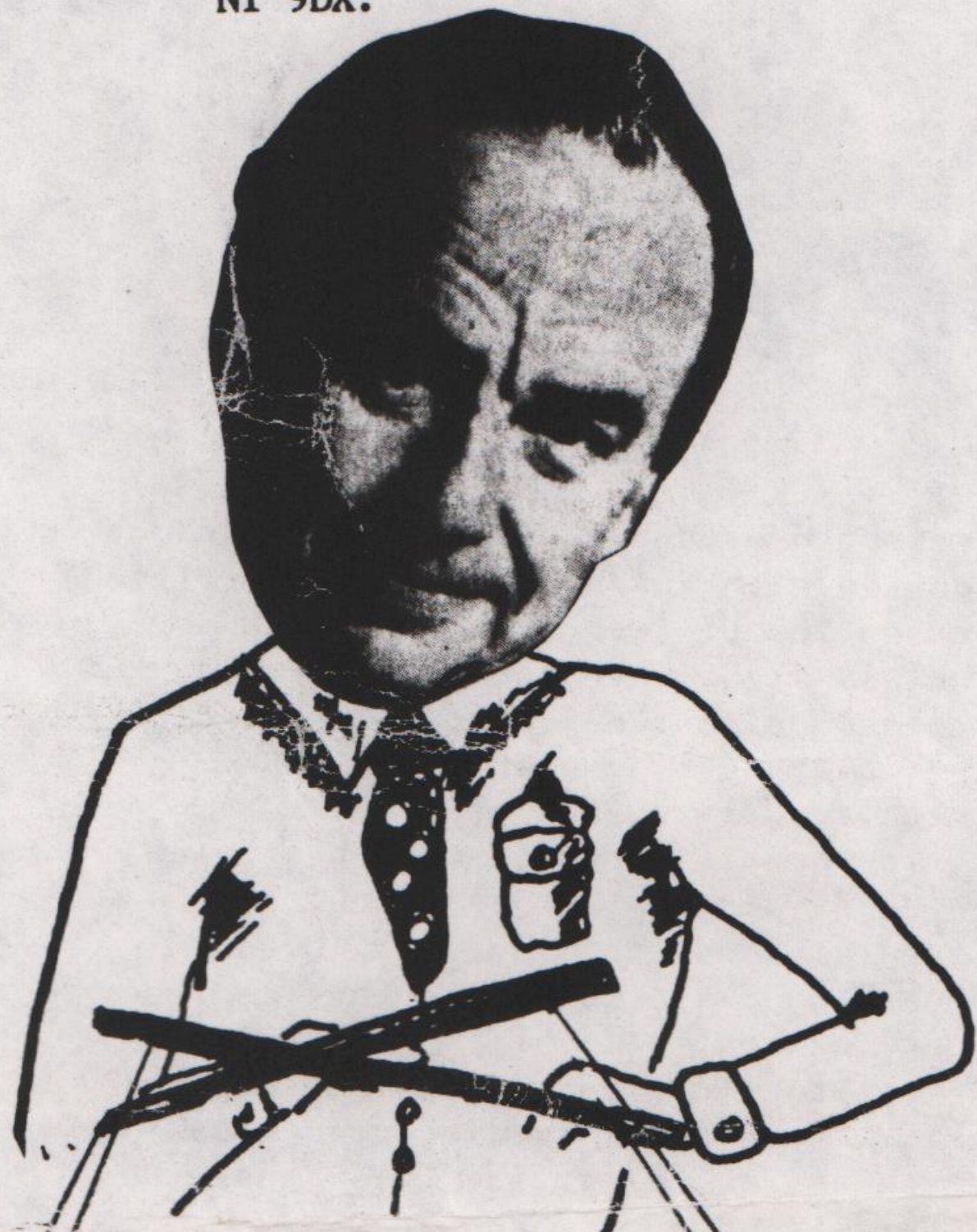
The rank and file

Rank and file printers on the Wapping picket line produce a regular news sheet containing news and views within the present dispute. The 18th July issue of PICKET states,

"If there is any leadership in this strike it is certainly from the pickets, all others have shown themselves unwilling or unable to force the strike ahead. Not only is it necessary to force the flying pickets ahead but also the campaign to black all of Murdoch's scabby products and those who work for him. The organisation of these activities has fallen to groups of people without leaders or constitutions and if these are strengthened then the strike is in so much more of a position to resist the next sell out. If the pickets do what they think is right then this dispute can be won but if the leaders are listened to it is clear what will happen".

Copies of PICKET can be obtained for the price of a Stamped Addressed Envelope from;

PICKET,
c/o HOUSMANS BOOKS,
5, Caledonian Road,
London,
N1 9DX.



Leaders will be leaders

Union authoritarianism, fear of court action and greater concern for union funds than union members are rapidly becoming part and parcel of the News International dispute due to the anti working class stand presently being taken by the SOGAT leadership.

We have always realised that the work of people such as Brenda Dean would never benefit striking print workers but since the High Court move to curtail picketting and rights of strikers and supporters the SOGAT National Executive have made major attempts to sabotage the present action being taken by sacked workers at Wapping and Kinning Park.

TOWEL THROWN IN

A recent letter (dated 6th August) sent to all sacked printers from Murdoch's scab papers makes it quite clear that the SOGAT leadership have completely crumbled and have thrown in the towel. The letter outlines many do's and don'ts which if implemented would mean that the pickets might as well go home and kiss goodbye to any hope of victory. This is obviously what the leadership want, they have even made members who break the code laid down in the letter open to personal union disciplining.

DON'T PICKET!

While picketting at Wapping and Kinning Park the letter explains that pickets must not, "in any way obstruct the highway" and not partake in acts that could be deemed as intimidatory, "for example, shouted insults, abuse or threats or threatening behaviour". Basically saying that scabs can't be called scabs and all mass pickets must be stopped.

FEARFUL BUREAUCRATS

Class solidarity is a no no for the Society bosses. They have always been afraid of industrial and physical support. The letter explains that now no supporters should be permitted to attend pickets, demonstrations and rallies. Rank and File printers have been told that it is they that must keep away "other groups and individuals not connected with the dispute". This reactionary attitude goes further when the letter explains that if print workers "act in a manner inconsistent with the undertakings (that of the court...) they may be personally in contempt of court and liable accordingly". The union bureaucrats have obviously decided which side their bread is buttered and want to completely desert and isolate the dispute with Murdoch and his anti-

working class attitudes.

LIMITED PICKETS

Pickets away from the Wapping and Kinning Park plants have not fared any better in the SOGAT hatchet job. Supporters as well as flying pickets have been told that they must not picket T.N.T. depots or other distribution points without the complete say so of the SOGAT National Executive. As in the case of Murdoch's two printing plants, pickets must be limited to six.

THE ICING ON THE CAKE

The epitaph of the letter comes when the leadership directs that printers must not under any circumstances attempt "to persuade those working in the plant to cease working". Not only this but the leadership say that no attempt must be made to even talk to scabs if the scabs do not want to listen.

Picketing, solidarity action and support have all come under the hammer to enable SOGAT to block any move by the court to seize union funds.



LEADERS IGNORED

Fortunately a large number of rank and file militants has been built up during the dispute and SOGAT and their silly letters and union policing of picket lines (to make sure directives are carried out to the letter) will not be allowed to sabotage the fight against Murdoch. Stronger links than ever need to be forged and action extended. The SOGAT official line is not only an outright attack on printworkers but also on the whole of the trade union movement, if the fight against Murdoch is allowed to slip it is us, the working class, that will suffer in the long run.

HORMEL: British Link

As reported in the last issue of the Syndicalist the Austin Hormel Meatpackers strike continues even though the union the U.F.C.W. have put the Local P-9 branch into receivership and officially called off all action.

The last week in June saw an event entitled 'Solidarity City' take place in Austin with trades unionists as far and wide as California and North Carolina attending. The culmination of the week long event was a mass demonstration and rally on June 28th.

SUPPORT STILL GROWS

Support for the strikers, who still have plans to set up a new union, (see last issue) is still growing steadily and the production of Hormel products is now being hit severely due to the picketting and consumer boycott. Earnings of the company have been slashed by 25.7%. Trades unionists from all over the country are organising support for the strikers. This action not only includes consumer boycotts, picketting outlets and publicising the strike but also moves to block payments of union dues from their local union branches and the picketting of their union and union federation. One such picket was mounted by Boston unionists at a meeting of the AFL-CIO attended by the UFCW International President William Wynn.

BRITISH CONNECTION

Closer to home we again urge the blacking of all Hormel goods. These include 'SPAM' which is produced by a Liverpool based firm under licence from the Hormel Company. The firm is NEW FORGE FOODS and we urge a blacking of all its products until no Hormel goods are left on shelves in this country.

All letters of support and donations to be sent to;

United Support Group,
P.O. BOX 396,
Austin,
MN 55912,
U.S.A.

NEW FORGE FOODS, Liverpool, L25 2PF.

PAMPHLETS AVAILABLE

The following publications are available from T.R.S..

The Spanish Revolution 1936 - 1939. History of workers organisation.....TRS.....15p.
Libertarian Labor Review. New technology, working week, Bolivia etc.....IWW.....80p.
Strike Strategy. Early National Rank and file publication.....NRFM.....10p.
I.W.A. Aims and Principles. Aims of International Workers Association....IWA.....40p.
Strike action. Tactics and ways of organising during dispute.....DAM.....20p.
Miguel Garcia Story. Militant involved in Spanish Civil War and after...MGMC.....£1.
Anarchism and Feminism. Women workers and trade unions.....DAM.....35p.
Tell us lies about the miners. Media coverage during miners strike.....DAM.....60p.

Please add 24p for orders under £2 and add 10% for total over. This is to cover post.

We wish to point out that not all views held in literature above are necessarily the views of the T.R.S..

correction:

The article on Michelin in the last issue stated that Officials in the Spanish Syndicalist union, CNT, were paid. This should have read UNPAID!

A bureaucratic end

T.U.C. leader Norman 'Terry Waite' Willis has revealed to print unions that due to his discussions with News International bosses future talks are on the way between unions and management. It is quite obvious that TUC leaders want a quick and quiet end to the dispute no matter what the outcome.

More leftie scabs

Contained in the last issue of the Syndicalist was an article on Laurie Taylor, so called 'leftie' lecturer and his articles for Murdoch's scab Times Educational Supplements. The two latest so called 'Labour Men' to write for the scab paper, Sunday Times, are Neil Kinnock and Ken Livingston.

SOUTH AFRICA - why Botha clamped down

The two articles on this page are taken from the Johannesburg "Weekly Mail", and were written in May of this year.

We felt it important to reprint them, as they show the extent to which the black communities have been able to take

into their own hands the power previously exercised by the white authorities. This includes the administration of justice and essentials such as garbage collection. We may not like some of the punishment methods used by the peoples' courts, but thought that we should give a 'warts and

all" coverage.

Politicisation was continuing to progress, and clearly many were consciously building for a revolutionary situation. To do this meant devolving control to the lowest possible level and involving the

whole community in decision-making.

Given the content of these articles, it becomes clearer why Botha's government chose this year to introduce a clamp-down. Whether or not the South African State was too late, only time will tell.

We meet in a safe house in Mamelodi, one of several where activists can talk privately or, if things are "hot", spend the night dodging the police: perhaps even the ubiquitous Molotov cocktails and hand grenades.

The young people gather quietly. Across the street a saxophone haunts the night.

There are five of them, all committee members of Mayo, the Mamelodi Youth Organisation, which its supporters say is the embodiment of "people's power".

For two hours they talk of their work - of people's courts, street and section committees, education and re-education programmes.

Later, in a different house, activist members from the Mamelodi Civic Assoc., (MCA) - the older generation - complete the picture.

They sketch a vision of what amounts to a new reality, of which most whites in nearby Pretoria know little.

"We are not speaking of revolution. We call it democratic change," says Mike Selokane, 26, Mayo's general secretary.

"Revolution implies armed struggle. That would be suicide for us at this stage - the police and army are too strong. But the time will come when the balance of power is on our side, and then the people will say 'enough is enough'."

Mayo is a child of the students' revolt, as are most township youth groups. It was launched in August 1983 after the national student association, Cosas, realised that young "talent" was being lost as schoolgoing activists graduated out of the classrooms.

The banning of Cosas last year thrust the youth organisations into a pivotal role. Being more diffuse and community oriented than a national body, they are also more difficult to suppress.

Mayo and related political organisations succeeded to a large degree in challenging and discrediting the government-backed town councils. Councillors were forced to resign. Militant activity and violence against individuals working within the system became legion.

In June '85, Mayo moved to fill the leadership vacuum it had created. It launched "operation clean-up", a campaign to root out crime as well as hooliganism being committed in the name of "the struggle".

Activists say it also exposed agents provocateurs, who were being used to spread dissension within anti-government groups.

Mayo organised the community's own garbage collection and encouraged community service, such as the building

of the small grassy parks and rockeries which feature in virtually every open space in the township.

You could call it recreation in the name of the struggle. Here is "Mandela Park", "Tambo Place", "Unity is Strength" and "Comrades Centre", even the more facile "Lovers' Lane".

They are decorated with old tyres, rocks and wood - even old motor car parts, brightly painted. A feature of Mamelodi is the "cannon", an old vehicle axle with prop shaft pointing to the horizon as if ready to fire.

One of these faces the police station; if there is innocence, it is deadly serious.

Many of these young people have been detained after voicing their views.

The police know all about them, but that does not mean they can stop them.

"We have actually rendered the police ineffective," says one member.

Most residents, he explains, are discouraged, even prevented from reporting township crime to the police. The activists have created "disciplinary committees" and "people's courts" to handle such matters.

Their functions include controlling crime, politicising residents against the local authorities and educating people in the struggle.

The courts, or "forums" as they are called, can be held at any time,

whenever there is a plaintiff and an accused.

"The main aim is rehabilitation, to re-educate the wrongdoer and make him a better person," he says.

Petty thieves could expect to be sentenced to community tasks, such as painting and watering the parks.

But corporal punishment is meted out. A rapist, for example, can expect 25 or 30 lashes with a sjambok.

"The punishment is carried out on the spot," says a young woman who does not want to be identified.

"You have to see this from our point of view. The community must be the judge and must see that justice is done. It has reaped tremendous rewards. Many people who opposed us have been converted and now work with us - even policemen."

"Here we do not concern ourselves with legal technicalities," says 32-year-old Strike, Mayo's oldest member, "like in the Magistrates Courts where, if you have a good lawyer, you can get off."

But he rejects any suggestion that these are simply kangaroo courts, designed to eliminate dissenters.

People who have never been to a



Rushing for freedom: schoolchildren's resistance

township often associate people's courts with "necklacing", the terrible execution of informers.

"This might have happened in some townships, but no court in Mamelodi has ever sentenced anyone to the necklacing," says another member.

The court, he says, must hear each side of a story before reaching its verdict, and appeals are allowed - heard by a special court that convenes once a week.

Malpractices have occurred, admits Mike, but these are discouraged as much as the crime itself, because they could rebound on the struggle.

"We do not intend to destroy people," he says.

"They must gain confidence in what we are doing, so that they can break away totally from government structures. The government must become irrelevant to their lives."

In making it so, they wage a war of nerves against the police. Black policemen especially are made to feel outcasts.

Inevitably, there is violence. The homes of activists are bombed with Molotov cocktails, or even hand grenades. The police deny complicity, but in some cases residents claim to have recognised the attackers.

Policemen's homes are bombed in retaliation, Mamelodi, claims an MCA member, has

had more of these attacks than any other centre in the country.

"We know who is doing it, but we cannot prove it in court," he says.

The activists deny complicity in attack attacks on police. They attribute them to "circumstances", and admit they are unable to control people who take the law into their own hands.

"But I will say this: in Mamelodi there is not a single policeman who has given trouble who is not dead."

"The conditions force people to be violent. Sometimes they use every instrument they can to fight the system, which is in itself violent," says Mike.

"But our organisations cannot now resort to violence. The stage has not yet come."

For the moment, at least, the fight is centered mainly on the black townships.

But the time has come, says an MCA member, for blacks to begin meeting more regularly with whites, to get them to start questioning what the government tells them.

"The government needs white unity more than anything else, and we need to divide that unity," he says.

"It is essential for the government itself to be isolated. They must be forced to say: 'we cannot govern'."

The black struggle, he says, has moved away from a "paper struggle" into a grassroots movement, "and these roots must spread into every corner of the land".

FILLING THE VOID LEFT BY THE COUNCIL'S COLLAPSE

The formation of street committees in several townships throughout the country is seen as the first step towards replacing official administrative structures.

Apart from having left a void in the running of the townships, the collapse of the much hated community councils and local authorities has paved the way for a new trend whereby people govern themselves.

"More and more people are shying away from reporting their cases at local police stations or at the homes of councillors. This has resulted in residents setting up their own courts," says Mike Selokane, general secretary of Mayo.

Although there was no official State of Emergency in Pretoria, residents still found it impossible to hold meetings, making communication impossible.

"There was an undeclared State of Emergency in Mamelodi with authorities banning meetings or Security Forces disrupting gatherings."

It was at this time that some unruly element "hijacked the struggle for their own ends", demanding money from businessmen in the name Cosas.

"We decided to launch an operation clean up in June last year to weed out criminals and hooligans using the political struggle for their own ends."

After the November 21st shootings outside the Mamelodi administration offices, residents went on a widespread rent boycott. This prompted the authorities to suspend all garbage collection in the township.

"It was then that we included garbage collection in the clean-up operation and

soon we engaged in a house to house campaign to get people to isolate the police and the administration. We tried to persuade people not to pay rent or lay any charge at the police station."

This resulted in the formation of "people's courts to deal with petty crime. But then this also led to other elements using the courts to settle personal feuds.

"People would come to us claiming that their neighbours, or whoever, had insulted them or assaulted their child. In some cases the disciplinary courts would try the person in absentia without caring to listen to the other side of the story."

"Some people took advantage of this type of undemocratic procedure and would fabricate charges against people they had a dislike for," Selokane said.

In some cases a person would go to a committee in a different street to report an incident that allegedly happened in the street in which he lived.

The offending party would then be fetched and punished. This led to people reporting incidents that had occurred several months, or even years ago.

"It was then that we hit on the idea of setting up street committees to deal with problems affecting a particular street."

Street committees, which meet about once a week, deal with domestic problems such as a husband deserting his family and moving in with a girlfriend.

Usually the man is fetched and brought to the court to say what led to his walk out. Several marriages have been saved in this way.

At times a young man spends all his

money at the shebeen (the pub) without supporting his parents. He appears before court and after being shown the folly of his ways, he is usually given 5 lashes with a cane.

Despite police claims that some people have been sentenced to death by "necklacing" or given more than 40 lashes, no evidence of this could be obtained.

There are also instances of the courts having punished rebellious children, students who play truant and generally behave anti-socially.

Street committees also made it easier to communicate decisions across a broad spectrum of the community.

The executives of street committees come together to form a section committee and the section committees and five delegates of all other progressive organisations operating in the township together form an area committee.

The area committee then form a civic association.

It is still too early to gauge the effectiveness of the street committees but recently when the police disrupted the launch of the civic association in the township, a highly successful 3 day away day was called.

"It was remarkable how quickly and efficiently information filtered through to individuals."

Street committees decentralise civic associations making them more approachable.

This has resulted in decisions emanating from the people themselves rather than from the executives of an organisation.

Recently a street committee in Mamelodi decided that shebeens had to operate

until 10.00pm.

This was a decision affecting a particular street and other streets wishing to impose similar restrictions had to discuss the matter with the inhabitants of that street together with the shebeen owner.

Every resident living in a particular street becomes a member of a particular street committee. The only people

excluded from membership are councillors, police and others who are openly collaborating with the system.

It usually happens that a member of a street committee affected by a certain decision feels unhappy about a proposal. If after a lengthy debate he still feels dissatisfied, the matter is referred to the block committee.

The matter can be taken to the highest level, the civic association, and if no accord is then reached, the matter is put to a vote.

"If a decision likely to affect the

whole of Mamelodi is taken at street committee level, then it will have to be taken to the section committee which will pass it on to the area committee and the civic association before a final decision is taken."

In Mamelodi there are separate committees for adults and the youth because of the peculiarity of their experiences and their needs.

But they come together at the civic level and this eliminates possibilities of friction and conflict of interest.

FOUL PLAY

A number of Neighbourhood Playscheme Playworkers (N.P.P.s) employed by Gateshead Council on Playschemes in the area have been given an extremely hard deal by the not so socialist Labour council.

On starting the job they find that they have no contract, job description or job outline, which obviously makes it easier to impose any job that crops up on them. On the other hand it leaves them wide open to the threat of redundancy.

N.P.P.s also have a bad deal where pay is concerned. They have the responsibility of setting up junior youth clubs for five to fourteen year olds, and aiding the voluntary sector, giving them more responsibility in fact than Unqualified Education Staff (such as youth club workers). Yet N.P.P.s are paid only £2.75 an hour, compared with £4.60 for Unqualified Education Staff. On top of this, they are not entitled to paid holidays, sickness benefit or travelling expenses. To make matters worse they are threatened with a ten week contract and no further employment if they join a union. This would mean being effectively blacklisted.

You would have thought that being a N.P.P. would mean that you need to do a fair amount of training in order to acquire more varied skills as a valuable contribution to your job. However, N.P.P.s are not encouraged to do any training and have been discouraged from residential training courses. They have been told that they would have to pay their own travel expenses and do the course as private individuals rather than from the department of Sports and Recreation.

Creche facilities for N.P.P.s children are non-existent, ironical considering the nature of their job, and in fact they are forbidden to bring children into work, even under 5's. This makes life extremely difficult for single parents and working mothers, especially during school holidays. Creche facilities are not widely available for any workers, but for playscheme workers you would have thought this facility would have been automatic.

The only way these workers could begin to change their circumstances would be to join a union, but obviously the council have realised this and made it impossible to do.

It seems amazing that a Labour council can treat its workers like this and deny them the right to join a union, but readers of the Syndicalist will know that this is not the first case of anti-union activity by Gateshead Council. In June '86 we reported how a delegation of

sacked N.I. print workers were denied the right to meet workers at Gateshead Council Incinerator by management.

TERMINAL ILLNESS

Last month we reported on the use of video films and computer analysis to intimidate workers at Contracts Ltd, South Shields. Modern technology is also used to exploit and oppress office workers, especially those working with computers and Visual Display Units (V.D.U.). For example, staff of Pacific South West Airlines in America spend most of their working day sitting at V.D.U.'s. But these have a built in monitoring system and if work slows down (eg rate of pressing keys falls below a certain level) a red light flashes in the terminal and quality control supervisors pounce. Aside from stress caused and a high degree of nervous breakdowns, sitting hunched

The unemployed are continuously under attack from Government. Over the last few months we have seen the new board and lodging regulations implemented and single payments for household items drastically cut. The Fowler Reviews still hang over our heads and the drastic cut backs that they threaten to make. Specialist Claims Control and Regional and Benefit Investigation Teams continue to harass and spy on us.

Added to these past and future attacks are two new schemes and rule changes. The first was reported in the last issue of the Syndicalist and the second is the new RESTART scheme. The leaked questionnaire reported in the last issue is made up of a 21 page report heavily stacked with references and cross references making it extremely difficult to grasp. The questionnaire itself only takes up two pages of the document the rest goes on to explain steps to take if a claimant answers a question incorrectly. A 100% result is the only sure way of getting benefit as normally.

The questionnaire is form UB 671A and will be headed 'Are you available for work?' A 'Job Hunting' booklet prepared by the Manpower Services Commission will also be given to claimants when they receive a copy of the questionnaire. Claimants ARE allowed to take the questionnaire away from the Benefit Office with them though a date will be written on the form for when it must be returned.

The document states that the answers to questions on the form should be as follows unless the procedure of reference and cross reference should be entered into. We have reproduced both questions and answers that the D.O.E.S will be looking for:-

1. WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO FIND WORK?

ANSWER: Some effort (eg use of Job centre services, applications to employers) is being made to find work.

2. CAN YOU START WORK TODAY?

ANSWER: Yes.

3. IF NOT WHY NOT? WHEN CAN YOU START?

ANSWER: UNANSWERED.

4. WHAT WORK DO YOU NORMALLY DO?

ANSWER: State your normal occupation.

5. ARE YOU WILLING TO TAKE ANY FULL TIME JOB? IF NOT PLEASE GIVE REASON.

ANSWER: Yes.

6. ARE YOU WILLING TO WORK BEYOND YOUR

HOME TOWN?

ANSWER: YES.

7. ARE YOU WILLING TO WORK BEYOND DAILY TRAVELLING DISTANCE?

ANSWER: YES.

8. DO YOU HAVE ANY ADULTS OR CHILDREN TO CARE FOR DURING WORKING HOUR? IF YES CAN YOU MAKE IMMEDIATE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THEIR CARE IF YOU GET A JOB?

ANSWER: No to first part or Yes to first and second parts.

9. *WHAT WAS YOUR WEEKLY WAGE OR SALARY (BEFORE DEDUCTIONS) IN YOUR LAST JOB?

10. *WHAT IS THE MINIMUM WEEKLY WAGE OR SALARY (BEFORE DEDUCTIONS) YOU ARE WILLING TO TAKE?

*Make sure that the amount in question 10. IS NOT more than amount in question 9.

The formula is quite simple. Choose the more extreme answers to questions.

RESTART is another of the government's attacks on the unemployed. This began in July 1986, and concerns everyone who has been unemployed for more than one year.

MINERS JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

On Thursday the 18th of August, a meeting was held in Gateshead by the National Justice for Miners Campaign. Ostensibly the aim of the meeting was to organise the campaign in the north east and whip up enthusiasm among supporters, although the vacuous rhetoric of Peter Heathfield might have been designed to have the opposite effect.

STILL VICTIMISED

Nationally there are still 468 sacked miners - men who have been victimised and convicted on hearsay, outside of law courts. As one of the speakers, Durham NUMs David Guy pointed out, the only men in Durham who have been re-employed are those who sacked for theft and other offences not directly related to the strike. He also spoke of the way in which the colliery management worked together with the police and law courts - men were arrested, charges were trumped up, the men were sacked, the charges dropped but the men remained sacked.

TRIBUNALS

The effect industrial tribunals has been less than minimal - in Durham ten men were found to have been unfairly sacked, but have not been re-employed.

As the last speaker, Dennis Murphy from Northumberland NUM put it - "Anyone who believes in Industrial Tribunals must believe in fairies"

The role of the Labour Party leadership in the campaign was made very ambiguous by the speakers and chair. They were all agreed that waiting for the next election was a crazy idea; but the chair, Billy Etherington, spoke of a move by Kinnock towards the Justice Campaigns position. Less faith was shown by David Guy who said - "I wish I had as much faith in Neil Kinnock".

However it took a Labour Party member speaking from the floor to remind us of the less than tepid support by Kinnock during the strike itself. He also pointed out how the Labour Party had ignored calls for release of the Shrewsbury five in 1972.

LEFT IN GAOL

It was ironic that no mention was made by the speakers of the eight min-

1.4 million people are to be interviewed before March 1987. If you refuse two requests to attend an interview your benefit will be stopped.

The questions asked are similar to those in the above article. At the Restart interview claimants are asked about their attitude to employment and how they are going about looking for work. The interviewer will offer jobs on Community Programme Schemes, temporary work, training courses and voluntary work (to name a few) all of which are very low-paid or unpaid jobs.

WHAT ARE THEY UP TO?

The governments attacks on the unemployed have many objectives. Wages can be driven down, union rights bypassed, and people become used to having short-term work on low wages. Not least is the question of "image" - if pressure put on the unemployed stops some people signing on, they can make it look as if the level of unemployment has dropped. They will go on cutting benefits so long as nobody fights them!

ers still in gaol. Whether it was felt that any call for their release would be unpopular, or that it would embarrass the Labour Party in the run up to the elections, is unclear.

WOMEN'S SUPPORT?

Nothing was made of the role of the women support groups in the campaign. These groups had an invaluable effect during the strike, and since have been greatly involved in any campaign for justice for sacked and gaoled miners. In fact at the meeting, the local women support groups were notable by their absence.

INDUSTRIAL ACTION?

No mention was made of industrial action, although discontent is on the increase with the South Wales overtime ban. Pressure for some form of industrial action is growing in the north-east, not only because of the unpaid wage rise dating from November 1st, but also with the closure of Seaham colliery in County Durham.

Surely if any industrial action is to take place, the demand for the reinstatement of sacked men must be an issue in the dispute.

THE FUTURE

We will be watching the campaign very closely in the future. The main task of rank and file trade unionists and unemployed militants has to be to build support for victimised miners on the streets, at work, and at union branches. The government and 'British Coal', as well as the sacked and jailed lads themselves, must be shown that we have not forgotten them.

RELEASE THE JAILED MINERS

| DURHAM | WORKSHIRE |
|--|---|
| JOHN MATTERSON: Merton - Two years and three months youth custody from December 1985. | MARTIN HODGSON: Wakefield - Three year sentence from November 1985. Armley Jail, Leeds. |
| GARY BLACKMORE: 19 - Affray, attempted not guilty, 2 years Youth Custody (not a miner, but arrested during the course of the strike) | NIGEL HODGSON: Wakefield - Three year sentence from November 1985. Armley Jail, Leeds. |
| | PAUL WRIGHT: Saville - 18 month sentence. G76424, Kirkham Jail, Freckleton road, Preston Lancs. |
| SOUTH WALES | CLIVE THOMPSON: Frickley - Three year sentence from April 1985. G79348. Ackington Jail, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 1XF. |
| DEAN HANCOCK: Oakdale - Eight year sentence. Gartree maximum security prison, nr Market Harborough, Leicesters. | |
| RUSSELL SHANKLAND: Taff Merthyr - Eight year sentence Gartree maximum security prison, nr Market Harborough, Leicesters. | |
| KENT | |
| TERRY FRENCH: Belshanger - Four year sentence from January 1985. B73383, Weald Wing, Maidstone Jail, Kent. | |
| | N. DERBYSHIRE |
| | DAVID GAUNT: Shirebrook - 2 1/2 year sentence from December 1984. E71037. A Wing, Millers Park Youth Custody Centre, Daddington Road, Welingtonborough. |

ROUND UP

LOT OF BOTTLE

On July 30th over 40 dairy workers took strike action in support of one colleague. The dispute arose at Associated Co-operative creameries' Blaydon depot when management disciplined one man for refusing to do a job which he maintained was not his to do.

After a mass picket at the dairy USDAW were called in to settle the dispute.

NUPE VETO C.P.

At last a union in the area has decided that charity groups, M.S.C. or Labour Councils will not be allowed to steamroller through Community Programme jobs at the expense of proper long term positions. The dispute revolves around the Newbiggin Hall Advice Centre which has been staffed by the C.V.S. using C.P. workers and now that they have pulled out the council want to bring in a new Community Programme team to continue the work.



NUPE spokesman Keith Robinson is quite right in saying that if the city council is running a service they should run it by employing their own workers. At the moment the centre remains closed.

END OF THE LINE

The Power Plant producers N.E.I. Clarke Chapman who quite recently employed thousands of workers have finally closed their works in Gateshead. A three month T.U.C. regional campaign to keep the factory open ended in failure, and Alan Wright the shop stewards Chairman was quoted as saying, "We can do nothing more, we have tried everything". It must be pointed out to Mr Wright that the continued series of redundancy packages were and have proved to be ominous and that no amount of rhetoric or pleading to bureaucrats will ever be a substitute for industrial action in whatever form that takes.

OVERTIME BAN AT CONTRACTS

The workers at Contracts Ltd., South Shields have implemented an overtime ban and work-to-rule, in protest at breaches of contract by management. Despite this, management are behaving in increasingly provocative and intransigent ways. They continue to break many of the agreements they made following the six-month long strike which ended at the beginning of this year. These tactics include ludicrous anomalies in, and inaccurate calculation of wages. For instance, workers who reach the age of 18 have been refused the statutory increase in pay due to them. Also workers have been disciplined in the manager's office without a union representative being present - a requisite in the agreement.

CABLES DISPUTE

On August 22nd 67 workers, including plumbers, fitters and electricians walked out of the workplace. The dispute arose at A.E.I. Cables in Birtley due to a management implemented 'Bonus Scheme' and wage dispute. Workers, involved in EETPU and AEU, are demanding an end to the bonus scheme which is based on company performance and was introduced earlier in the year. For over 16 months workers have not had a wage rise and a pay increase is now being demanded through strike action due to managements refusal to talk. Negotiations for an end to the scheme and an increase in wages are now taking place.

PROFITS BEFORE PEOPLE

Profits just don't mix with people! A Birtley based company, Victor Products, has just announced a £1.4million pre-tax profit for the year 1985/6. The company makes lighting equipment for the mining industry and only ever made a loss during the miners strike. Nevertheless they have axed over 200 jobs in the last few years. The company now maintain that they are to expand, and create even higher profits, although none of the redundant workforce will be re-employed. The plan is to increase production by the introduction of new automation and a so-called "consolidation" of the present workforce (ie even more efficient exploitation).

LESS 'SOCIAL' WORK

The 4th, 5th and 6th August saw strike action being taken by all Newcastle City Councils Social Workers. The dispute over a new rota system and cuts in staffing levels looks likely to be a long one. Over the last two years 35 jobs have lost through natural wastage though non of the open posts have ever been filled by the Council. Faced with a further loss of 25 jobs due to cuts in council expenditure the local government union NALGO implemented a strict policy of not touching work covering the unfilled posts and against the new rota system that the Social Services Committee wish to use to fill the posts by an extension in workloads.

NO U-TURN

The Labour controlled City Council are adamant that they will make further job cuts and implement the rota system though union members also have the same determination to fight the plans. The latest strike action occurred when social workers at Clifton Mount Offices were suspended for refusing work which they were taking action against. All other workers from offices in the area came out in support of the suspended workers. Future action looks likely to continue for some time.

SOME HAT TRICK

Birtley R.O.F. has recently acquired a major share of a £134million contract on top of its recent orders worth £23million and £11million respectively. Isn't it strange that these orders have been placed only after plans were mooted for the privatisation of the works - plans still in obedience - and the workforce has been decimated by a series of compulsory redundancies.

There should be no shortage of bidders for the R.O.F. in the future especially when people like the convenor Gerry Ferguson do such sterling work on behalf of management. This so called 'realist' who has never believed in opposing job losses at any stage recently quoted in the local press, "The unions have cooperated by giving way on demarcation lines to keep costs down and help make the company viable".

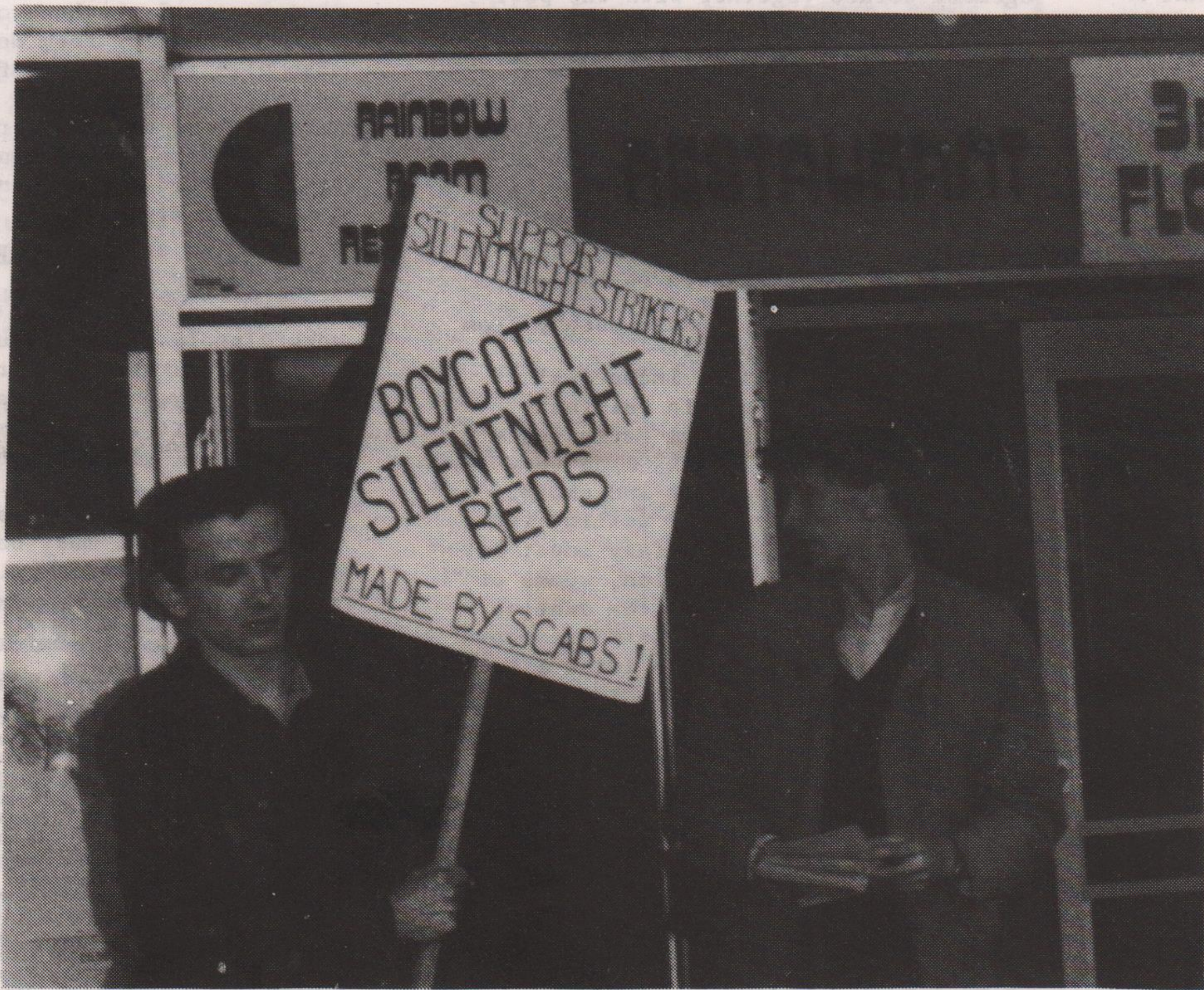
Even after the most recent redundancy package involving 400 job losses he was quite happy to see overtime being worked in the shops. With his abysmal record it's amazing when he again quotes, "The unions have been working with the other R.O.F. factories in the jobs battle and believe they have got the formula right to keep people in work throughout the country". It can only be assumed that if he has got the formula right then even more massive job losses should soon be on the way. As for his working with other R.O.F. factories in the jobs battle does he not remember pleading at the time of the most recent job losses for cut backs to take place in other areas of the country rather than Birtley. Of course it is understood that he has a heavy workload doing such a good P.R. job for management that alas he finds it difficult to find time representing his union members.

ADDING INSULT TO INJURY

Attacks on Silentnight strikers by their opponents come in many and varied forms, from misinformation to physical injury. A striker from the Barnoldswick factory who was on Tyneside at the end of July related how deception and distortion have been used by Silentnight and Co-op management.

to stay on strike" as one USDAW member put it (a Sales Assistant in the furniture

department at the Co-op in Newgate St., Newcastle). One would think that USDAW officials could have countered that rumour - since USDAW have been kept informed of developments throughout the dispute.



SILLY OFFER

In May a Silentnight executive and top Co-op managers met for negotiations concerning the strikers, who managed to insist on the presence of one of their solicitors. Both sets of bosses were obviously concerned at the publicity generated by the strikers, who want to put pressure on Silentnight via the threat of the Co-op withdrawing its large order. But the outcome of the negotiations was rather disappointing. Silentnight's "generous" offer was to "consider" strikers for any new posts arising at any of their subsidiaries throughout the world (eg Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Kenya etc). Even though this "consideration" would naturally be followed by turning down a strikers application, the Co-op seemed to think that the offer was a fair one, and the meeting ended amicably.

LIES, DAMNED LIES....

Not surprisingly, the strikers were very contemptuous of such a pathetic fraud of an offer. But at local Co-op level the story has filtered down as "the strikers were offered their jobs back but preferred

....AND STATISTICS

More traditional forms of intimidation have also continued. In Burnley shopping centre one striker, Derek Halliwell, was struck in the face with a bunch of keys when attacked by a scab and his friends. Two caravans used by the strikers and a picket-line shelter have been petrol-bombed and burned. In the latest incident the pickets' shelter outside the Barnoldswick factory was destroyed while strikers were picketting the Silentnight stand at a furniture exhibition at Salterforth. As usual police have not investigated, and drew no conclusions, whereas damage to Silentnight property is inevitably labelled "sabotage" or "arson", on the basis of no evidence. It's plain whose side they're on.

TYNESIDE CO-OP PICKETS

More pickets have been held at Newgate St. Co-op in Newcastle during busy mornings and the Thursday late shopping hours. At some points managers seem to go virtually haywire about people blocking the entrances, - but then all they have to do is to

WHERE WE STAND

1. We believe in independent, non-hierarchical working class organisation independent of all political parties and bureaucratic trade union structures, none of which represent the true interests of the majority of people, i.e. the people who create the wealth by manual or intellectual means.
2. We believe that under the present system of capitalism support should be given to the struggle for short-term gains, such as better pay and conditions, but these should always be seen for what they are - limited interim reforms which are no substitute for the total reorganisation of society necessary to ensure true freedom, equality and democracy.
3. We believe that the parliamentary system does not serve the interests of the working class. The solution to the problems that we the working class face do not lie in the election of a new leadership, but in the creation of new structures both in the workplace and the community which allows for us all to have total control over the decisions which affect our lives.
4. As revolutionary syndicalists we believe that only by a general strike accompanied by mass occupations and the implementation of workers control, can capitalism be finally removed and a free self-managed society where production and labour is geared towards need and not profit, be created.
5. We are opposed to all forms of racism, fascism, nationalism and sexism - indeed any ideology which sets out to divide the working class.

withdraw the beds from sale and the pickets would go away!

The Silentnight Strike Support Group will continue to hold pickets both in Newcastle and at the Co-op on West High St. in Gateshead town centre, where the beds are also sold. See advert for details, and come along to support the pickets in solidarity with the strikers. Raise the issue at your local union branch etc., and write to the manager of your local Co-op branch complaining about them still selling the beds.

Support the SILENTNIGHT Strikers, Picket the Co-op

West High St., Gateshead -

11 am, Fri 12th & Sat 20th Sept.

Newgate St., Newcastle -

11 am, Sat 27th September