

CHALLENGE

The Revolutionary Communist Newspaper

WILLOWBROOK:

Parents Give Admin. Hell

STATEN ISLAND, FEB. 11—Parents of Building Six, a group formed last year to win better care for children at Willowbrook State School, angrily confronted Director Ristig in Building Six today. This confrontation came one week after the parents had stormed Ristig's home.

WORKERS JOINED PARENTS IN DENOUNCING Ristig's lies about "improvements" in this hell-hole and in supporting each other's demands for more jobs at higher pay and meaningful training programs for the children.

Despite administration warnings against talking to parents and threats of transfers or firings, attendants pointed out that most training programs were purely for show. For example, Unit Chief O'Hare from Bldgs. 7 and 9 ended the self-help (home-style) feeding training program to cut down on staff, forced day-shift attendants to work an extra half-hour everyday to cover force-feeding the evening meal and cut the evening shift staff, and juggled attendants and residents throughout the ward, breaking up the relationships that are indispensable to adequate training.

Building conditions are as rotten as ever. For lack of maintenance staff, over-flowing toilets wait for days to be fixed; doctors rarely see children until they're sick enough to be hospitalized; and the children still aren't properly clothed.

RISTIG STATED IT WAS LESS IMPORTANT TO fix broken windows than to carpet offices for "important" professionals. The parents jumped on this, insisting they would rather have more attendants and kitchen workers ("we trust them, and they do all the work anyway") than a few "experts." Not that an increase in concerned professional personnel would be so bad either.

Parents particularly demanded that harassment of workers be stopped, and advised the attendants to build up their union (CSEA) to be able to win a decent contract in April, especially around upgrading and more jobs. "That would be good for all of us," said one parent.

The next official meeting of Parents of Building Six on Feb. 18 plans to discuss a series of further militant demonstrations around the demands.