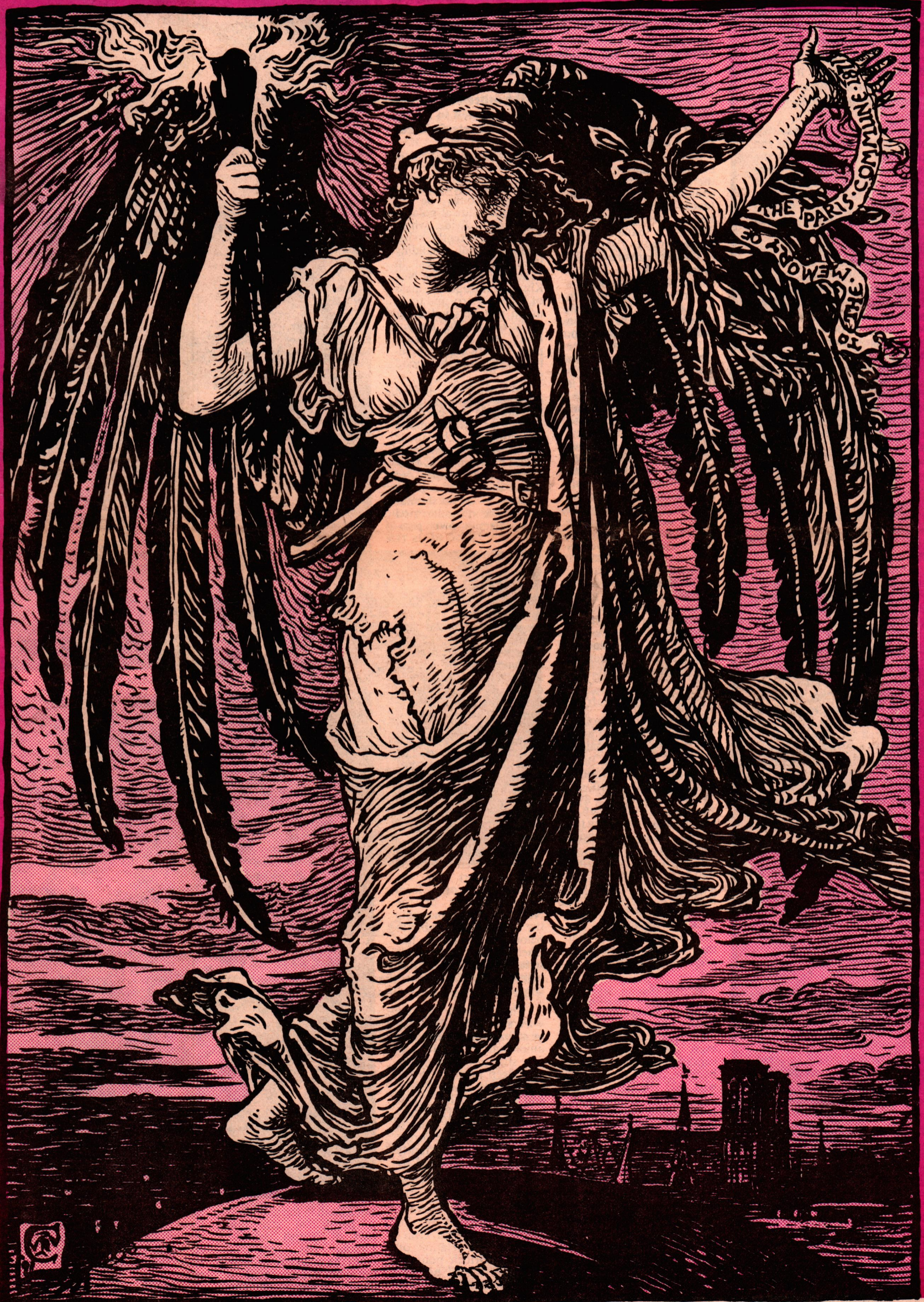


SOCIALIST ACTION

International
Women's
Day

8 March 1984



Socialist ACTION

Thatcher's banana skin

THERE are few things more humorous than capitalist political columnists trying to make a 'serious' analysis of a political situation. Last week's rush of editorials in the *Times*, the *Telegraph*, the *Sunday Times* and other papers criticising Thatcher for 'dictatorial methods', 'personal remoteness' and so on could have been predicted in advance.

The political script we are being presented with in the press today is the following. 'At the very peak of her popularity in June 1983 the seeds of Thatcher's future problems were planted. She had become proud and detached. Her run of good luck has suddenly and mysteriously been replaced by bad luck. Politics is taking its inevitable revenge for excessive pride and excessive success.'

The reality is completely different. It is Thatcher's failures, not her excessive successes, which are causing her problems. In fact, behind the appearances, Thatcher has now suffered three crucial defeats since June. The cumulative effect of these came together in the last weeks and produced a clear change in politics.

The first setback — strangely enough — was the June election itself. Thatcher had hoped to achieve not only a crushing defeat of Labour — in which she succeeded — but also a rebuilding of the mass support of the Tory Party. At the beginning of the campaign Thatcher let it be known that she wanted to be the first Prime Minister since the Second World War to secure over 50 per cent of the vote.

Instead the Conservative poll fell to 42 per cent of the vote — the lowest real percentage of the vote for any government with a safe majority in Parliament in British history. June 1983 was not merely a defeat for Labour but also the end of Thatcher's aim to rebuild mass Tory popularity.

The June election therefore also left Thatcher in a minority position on many issues. She had no popular mandate to destroy local government, to slash the NHS, to eliminate trade union membership as at GCHQ. It is precisely around those areas where Thatcher had not gained popular support that the most damaging 'banana skins' and struggles suddenly appeared.

The second goal during and following June had been to eliminate Labour as the chief alternative to the Tories. To redivide politics between two capitalist blocs — the Tories on one side and the Alliance on the other. This in turn was defeated both by the overall relation of class forces and by Neil Kinnock's victory as Labour leader and Labour's rise in the opinion polls which followed.

Thatcher and capitalism's third goal was to eliminate the Labour left as a serious force. To 'extirpate' Bennism as a political force as *The Times* put it. That hope in turn was defeated in Chesterfield last week.

It is the coming together of these three processes that resulted in the sharp turn in British politics that has taken place in the last few weeks. From June 1983 to February 1984 it was Thatcher who was on the political offensive and the Labour movement which had its back against the wall. Today it is Thatcher who finds herself thrown onto the political defensive.

This does not mean that attacks on the Labour movement are going to let up. Quite the contrary. The Labour movement is still fighting back against the organisational attacks launched on it. But politically it is now Thatcher who is on the defensive.

The explanation of Thatcher's 'banana skin' is not excessive pride. It is the underlying relation of class forces continuing to assert itself through the tangled web of British politics.

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Benn's Chesterfield victory

WHEN TONY BENN was defeated in the general election last year Margaret Thatcher expressed her 'great satisfaction'. At the British embassy in Washington a great cheer went up from British and American guests when news of Benn's defeat came through. It was a cheer which echoed through all the institutions of the establishment. They glorified in Labour's defeat and Benn's eviction from Parliament as the defeat of the Labour left.

Today Tory smirks are on the other side of their faces. Not only was Tony Benn re-elected to Parliament but the Conservative vote in Chesterfield collapsed dramatically.

Nor is this an isolated event. In Islington recently the Conservative vote also collapsed drastically in favour of the Alliance in a Labour stronghold. With Thatcher's 'banana skins' multiplying the Tory Party is slowly declining in the opinion polls as Labour support rises. Tony Benn's victory was a tribute both to Labour's increase in popularity and to his own skillful political campaign.

The 'silver lining' the Tory and Alliance pundits are attempting to find in the Chesterfield result is twofold. First the argument that this is a 'tame' Tony Benn, forced to compromise with the new leadership and appear 'moderate'. Then they claim he won by 'hiding his politics'. And second, that after all the proportion of the Labour vote went down from the general election, and thus this can hardly be given as evidence of a great Labour resurgence.

Further, it cannot be seriously suggested that Benn fought his election campaign on anything other than the party's election policies — including those such as unilateral nuclear disarmament. Nor did he hide his own political positions. Tony Benn's victory was prepared by Labour's surge up the opinion polls and by his own campaign.

The notion of a Benn move to the right is foolish through and through. When Denis Healey goes to support Tony Benn at Chesterfield, and when the whole of the Labour leadership is forced to campaign for him, they don't do it out of the goodness of their hearts or through tremendous enthusiasm to have Benn back in parliament. No one can really believe that the party leadership preferred to have Benn as the candidate in Chesterfield.

They went to support Benn because, yes, once Benn was selected they wanted a Labour victory even with Benn as candidate; but also because they knew full well that the party ranks would never forgive them if they gave anything less than wholehearted support to the Benn campaign.

To argue that Benn should not have fully involved the Labour leadership in his campaign is to say, in effect, Benn should have campaigned on the basis of challenging the existing party leadership. Or in other words, the key task of socialists here and now in the Labour Party is

to fight to remove Kinnock.

To put forward that strategy would be to assume a political polarisation and divide which does not currently exist. Labour is still rebuilding itself after its defeat in June. By voting for Neil Kinnock as leader the mass of Labour Party and trade union members voted for party unity. The Labour Party, and its mass support, has not even remotely broken out of that mood yet.

Indeed Tony Benn's campaign was so successful because he correctly judged the political mood and situation in the labour movement. He united in action with Kinnock, Hattersley and Healey to defeat the Tories and the Alliance — as he should. But no one misunderstood Tony Benn's own position.

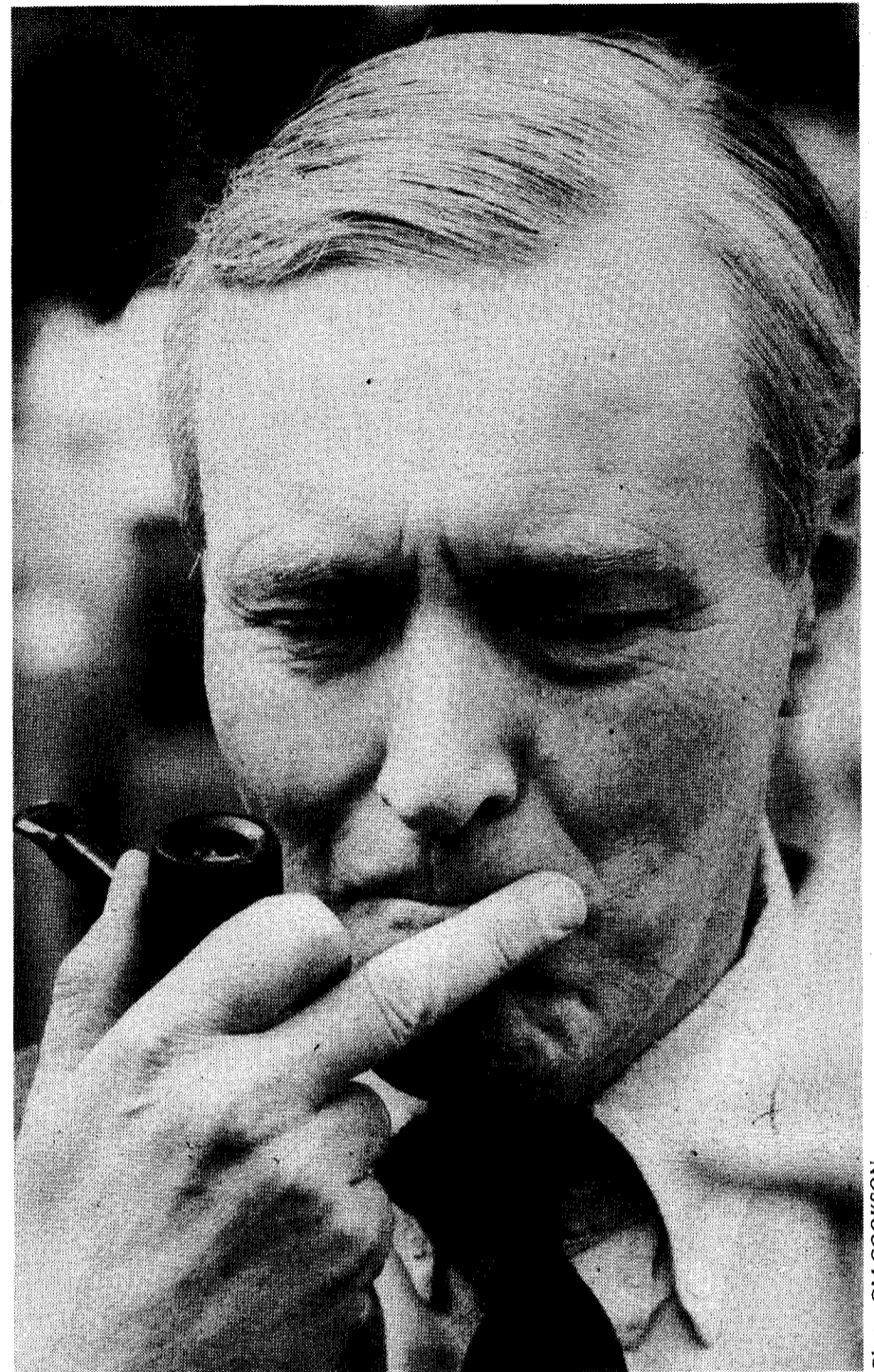
Politics

Chesterfield showed the way in which the basic realities of British politics are asserting themselves. In June 1983 the Labour Party suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of British capitalism. But — contrary to the claims of the popular press — the Conservative Party was not able to consolidate mass popular support behind it. The Conservative's 42 per cent of the vote continued a long term decline of Tory support.

This lack of support furthermore expressed a political reality. Thatcher did not succeed in winning mass support for the destruction of local government, or of the NHS, or for eliminating the democratic right to belong to a union like Cheltenham. On the whole series of issues clear majorities opposed to Thatcher exist.

The response to last week's TUC call for a day of action against the trade union ban at GCHQ was very strong. It showed the very deep hostility to the government which exists, and the real will to fight back against it. The struggle to defend the cities is drawing very wide forces behind it. The opportunity is there to be grasped by the labour movement.

Tony Benn's victory, and the outcome of the vote in Chesterfield, clearly shows the relation of forces in British politics. Thatcher, for all her apparent strength, is slowly weakening. The Alliance is



Benn thinks of the future as Tories agonise over Thatcher's failures



not a flash in the pan but is a permanent structural part of British politics. Labour has recovered from the massacre of June but is not strong enough to form a government. The Labour left, and Tony

Benn, is still a minority force in British politics but one too strong to be pushed aside by the Labour leadership or the popular press.

Labour and the Labour left is on an up-

ward curve despite all the attacks Thatcher will carry out and the individual victories she will achieve. It is up to socialists to turn that upward curve into a real victory in the months to come.

Murray — it's time to go

AFTER CHELTENHAM the word has gone down the corridors of Whitehall to step up the anti-union bashing. According to reports in the *Guardian* on Tuesday the Ministry of Defence is now investigating ways of dealing with civil servants known to disagree personally with government plans. Members of the CND, the Labour Party and even the Alliance could be removed from their jobs.

Civil service unions which are officially opposed to cruise and Trident could expect to be banned. The price of TUC 'realism' is coming home to roost. The Tsarina of Downing Street hates the trade unions and all their attempts at compromise and conciliation have simply increased her contempt for them.

By Bob Pennington

Murray's sell out of the NGA only made her more confident that they would do nothing at Cheltenham. Her gamble paid off. The TUC and the civil service union leaders unfortunately treated GCHQ with the solicitude normally reserved for an intensive care unit and never even threatened to shut the place down, never mind call a strike. But that was the only way to stop Thatcher and it was the only way to show the workforce at GCHQ that

being in a union gave you protection.

Of course the response on the Day of Action from the rest of the trade union movement was wonderful, particularly in view of the pathetically short notice given by the timid gentlemen at Congress House. However, this response could only have grown beyond protest if it had been backing a strike at GCHQ and on its own could not be more than a magnificent display of solidarity. The Cheltenham fiasco must be laid fairly and squarely at the door of Len Murray whose policies of 'pragmatic' collaboration with the government now lie in tatters.

After the NHS dispute, the ASLEF strike, the NGA, and now Cheltenham, how much longer can the trade union movement permit this apparently unaccountable man to stay at the helm?

The response of hundreds of thousands of workers last week showed that there is a wide-spread grass roots opposition to the Tories. The rank and file are cautious about going into battles after the setbacks of the recent years but when they get a national call from the TUC it shows they are ready to respond.

If Thatcher's union-busting exercise is to be beaten back and destroyed the left in the TUC has got to organise against Murray and company.

Accountable

This means that Murray must be removed and replaced by a general secretary elected and accountable to the whole trade union movement. Here the trade unions could well take a leaf out of Labour's re-selection and electoral college systems.

With the Opinion Polls (*Sunday Times* 6 March) showing that 55 per cent of the voters say Thatcher is 'doing a bad job' with the trade unions, now is the time for the left inside the unions and the TUC to organise their forces for a fight back.

with this one', he said, 'and what's more, by supporting the fight for union rights elsewhere we strengthen our own union organisation at Massey Ferguson.'

Another Trafford Park factory to walk out was Colman Fasteners — itself the site of a battle for union rights only nine months ago, when union organisation was established as a result of a week-long strike.

Voting at mass meetings on day and night shifts produced a 2 to 1 majority in favour of strike action. 'We have found out what union rights mean in the last nine months', said one of the stewards, 'and we're not going to sit by and watch while the government's ruling takes those rights away from others.'

The scope of the action gives the lie both to the press's 'greedy trade unionists' image, and to those who feel that unemployment and Margaret Thatcher have completely knocked the stuffing out of the AUEW. What became clear was that given even the half-hearted lead from the TUC tops and union president Terry Duffy, workers seized the opportunity to have a go at the government.

One striking AUEW member — neither a steward nor a union activist summed it up: 'I've never thought much to Len Murray. In fact I've always thought him spineless. But when he says something I agree with like striking in defence of the unions, I'm going to jump at the opportunity.'

Mass response to defend the unions

LEN MURRAY'S call for strikes and demonstrations on 28 February gave trade unionists only one working day to organise. But countrywide tens of thousands of workers went on strike and packed meeting halls to overflowing.

Dockers, seafarers, gas, electricity and hospital workers united to defend the unions.

For civil servants, the day's strike action to defend the GCHQ unions was their biggest ever with more civil servants taking action than during the 1981 national pay campaign.

The TUC call was a green light to thousands of workers who want national industrial action to defeat the Tories. By their action on 28 February they demonstrate that there is a will to take on the Tories.

Action in Manchester

THERE WAS standing room only in Manchester's Free Trade Hall as 3000 strikers packed in for a rally to defend the GCHQ unions. Hundreds more were shut out.

All train services from Piccadilly came to a halt and firefighters joined hospital workers in providing only emergency cover.

Engineering workers walked out in their thousands. All the major firms took action on 28 February — GEC Openshaw where a joint mass meeting of shop floor workers and staff voted for action; British Aerospace at Woodford and Cadderton; Seddon Atkinson; Ward and Goldstone and Gardeners are only part of a long list.

Graft workers and non-engineering plants like Shell at Carrington were also out.

In Trafford Park — once the largest industrial

estate in Europe and now pretty much an industrial wasteland — support was also strong. For the first time in many years, the GEC complex which employs 6000 workers was at a standstill.

The 1000-strong Massey Ferguson plant at Barton Dock Road was out, while its 500-strong sister factory, Central Parts Operation voted 5 to one for a 24-hour stoppage. CPO Convenor, Steve Taylor, explained that the issue was a basic one — union rights. 'We can't let them get away

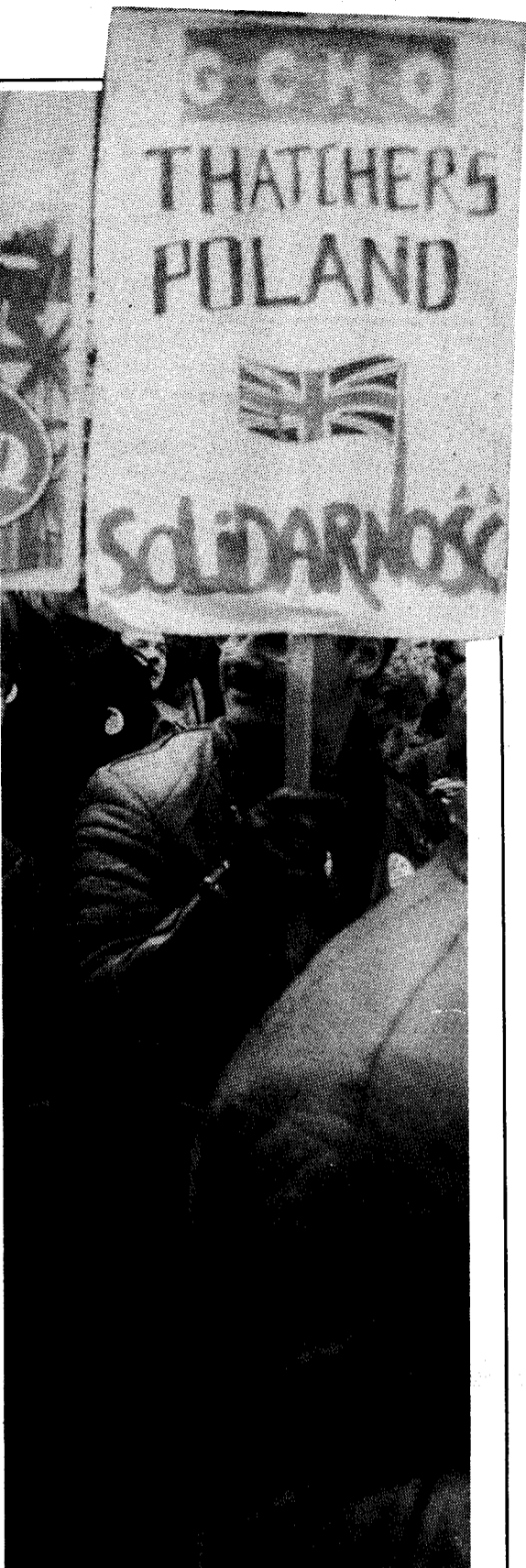


Photo: GM COOKSON

● **In Sheffield.** An overspill meeting had to be held outside the City hall as over 1500 trade unionists converged for a lunchtime rally.

● **In Bristol.** Three thousand trade unionists united in one of the biggest demonstrations the city has seen for years. Members of the UCW, NUPE, TGWU, USDAW, NALGO, EETPU and the Fire Brigades union took part in the action.

● **In Leeds.** Over five thousand local government workers took strike action for two hours and 1000 trade unionists marched from the Civic Hall.

● **In Middlesbrough.** Five hundred trade unionists couldn't get into a packed rally of over 600 workers. At another lunchtime rally, 600 ICI employees met.

● **In Cheltenham.** Members of the transport and general workers unions, engineers, firefighters and post office workers gave their support.

● **In London.** Engineers brought Fleet Street to a standstill. No national newspapers arrived in the South West for two days because of strike action at Waterloo and Paddington railway stations.

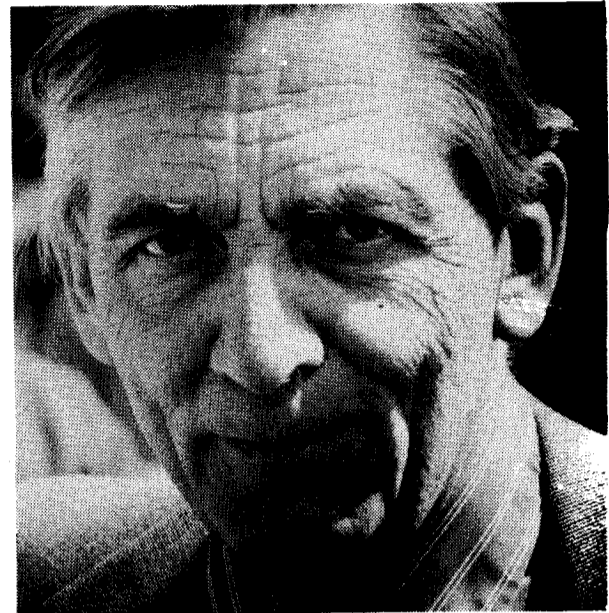
At Waterloo station, 80 per cent of workers came out on strike for the whole day. Forty thousand trade unionists rallied in Central London for a demonstration, one of the biggest weekday demonstrations London has seen.

● **In Scotland.** Factories and shipyards came to a standstill. Two thousand oil rig construction workers walked out for the day at McDermott's yard in Ardesier.

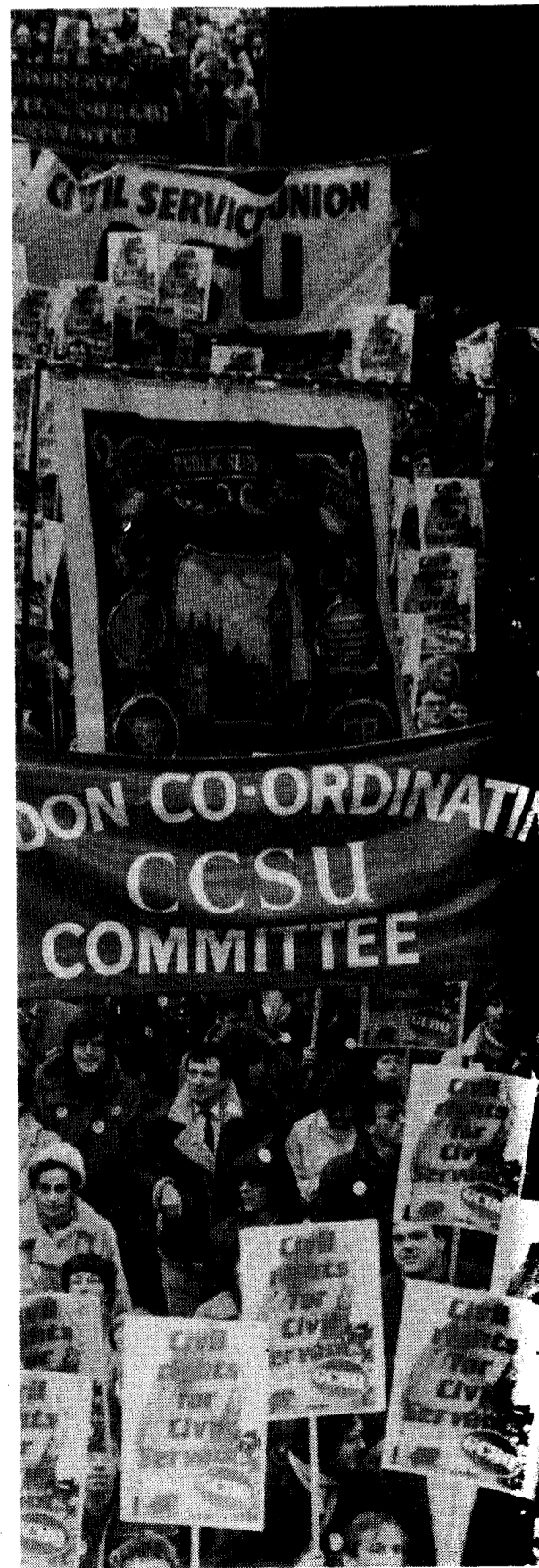
Workers from factories threatened with redundancy joined the action with strikes at Rolls Royce, Albion Motors (BL), BL Trucks at Bathgate, Scott Lithgow and Yarrow shipyards.

The British Rail network was brought to a complete standstill with strike action by railworkers, and the docks stopped work. Seven thousand trade unionists demonstrated in Glasgow, with overflow venues having to be laid out for rallies.

● **In Merseyside.** One hundred thousand workers took some form of action during the day. Despite a total stoppage of transport, 5000 rallied at Liverpool's Pier Head — city employees, public transport workers, Fords and Vauxhall car workers, dockers, members of the NGA, USDAW, NALGO and UCATT.



Len Murray



Trade unionists march in solidarity

Scottish Labour - fightback!



Ravenscraig steelworks

THE SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY'S annual meeting, in Perth on the 9-11 March, provides the first opportunity to assess the situation, after a general election which left Scotland with one-fifth of all Labour MPs. Labour holds 41 out of 72 parliamentary seats in Scotland.

But this disguises a drop in the Labour votes, from 42 to 35 per cent. The Tories can only muster 26 per cent of the vote — which adds fuel to the argument of the multi-party Campaign for a Scottish Assembly, that the government has no mandate north of the border.

The problem for Scottish Labour is that our leadership has been reluctant to grasp this issue. Correctly, it saw a united front with the Nationalists and the Alliance would mean foregoing the specifically socialist explanations for and solutions to Scotland's problems.

Yet, by sitting on its hands for the past nine months, the leadership has allowed others to make the running. That's why the best of the 10 resolutions to regional conference supporting a Scottish Assembly are those which chart a vigorous campaign led by the labour movement.

The NUM's resolution starts with the need to organise 'a mass movement of resistance to Tory policies' on housing, health, industry and armaments, led by the 'Scottish trade union and

labour movement'. It sees 'the question of a Scottish Assembly (as) an essential part of this struggle'.

Stirling constituency calls on the Labour Party and Scottish TUC to 'give a lead to the people of Scotland in their fight for a Scottish Assembly'. If the party acts in this way it can lead a movement certain to grow as Scotland continues to bear the brunt of Tory rule.

The biggest number of resolutions — 27 out of 176 — call for defence and development of the health service and the elimination of private medicine.

Scotland has always had a better-financed health service than elsewhere. The recent arrival of Glasgow's first private general

hospital brought resentment on a scale inconceivable further south.

By contrast, questions of local democracy are less prominent, because Labour councils — with the brief exception of Lothian before they lost the majority — are not in direct conflict with the government. That's likely to change in the near future. Rate capping already exists, and forced Glasgow to make a rate rebate of three pence in the pound last year.

By Tony Southall (Hillhead Labour Party)

Scotland urgently needs a coordinated fightback by Labour authorities. The Pollock resolution — calling for no rent or rate rises, job losses, privatisation, service cuts or economies — would be an important step towards this. Public sector housing is traditionally of greater concern in Scotland.

Lothian Regional party calls for rents to be frozen and progressively eliminated and housing paid for through taxation.

It demands a programme of new house building and rehabilitation, with no council house sales, evictions or warrant sales, and an end to mortgage tax relief.

Economic and industrial affairs are the weakest part of the Scottish agenda. Most resolutions evoke the Alternative Economic Strategy as a catch-all solution, reflecting the Scottish labour movement's lack of a strategy, as industry collapses around us.

Influenced by Tam Dalyell's work, seven resolutions call for an end to 'Fortress Falklands' and a negotiated settlement with Argentina. None call simply for withdrawal, but four want United States' hands off Grenada and Nicaragua, and solidarity with El Salvador.

Although the Scottish Labour Party has been in the forefront of nuclear disarmament, none of this year's 10 resolutions offer a rounded affirmation of national policy. Neither do they commit the party to building CND and its activities.

Amendments from the NUM and others beef-up policy by reaffirming the commitment to unilateralism within the lifetime of the next Labour government. But Hillhead charts a retreat course: demanding 'a defence policy around which the party can unite' to reconcile 'differences within the party.'

This year's agenda is disappointing. Supporting some of the better resolutions will ensure that the main planks of Scottish policy are reaffirmed. But little new ground is broken and some important issues — like withdrawing British troops from Northern Ireland, and free abortion on demand — aren't even raised.

If the Perth conference and its incoming executive back action around our central policies, Scottish Labour Party can take a lead in the fightback against the Tories in 1984. A Scottish fightback must figure prominently as part of a mass movement to bring down the Tories in the coming year.



Scottish WAC

FOR LABOUR Party women, this year's Scottish conference strikes a positive note with the NEC's decision to allow the regions to determine how women will be represented. Four resolutions in support of last year's decision to reserve five women's seats on the Scottish executive will now be withdrawn.

women view the five women's seats as a fairly modest concession, compared to the changes needed to give women a real choice.

Some of the changes needed were contained in resolutions to this year's Scottish LPYS conference: demanding women elect their own NEC representatives, five resolutions from women's conference to go to regional annual conference, and one woman on every parliamentary short list. Unfortunately such moves for greater democracy were rejected by the LPYS.

Women's Action Committee is so far non-existent in Scotland. The possibility of real change is held back by the lack of such a campaigning group. The move to organise a Scottish WAC from this year's regional conference marks an attempt to build on this year's limited gains

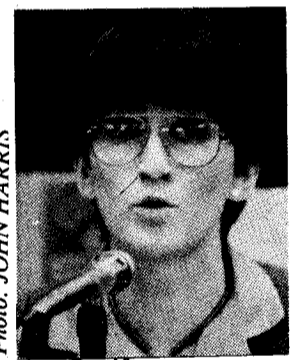


Photo: JOHN HARRIS

and to ensure that women's voices are heard next year. It marks the beginning of a positive step forward for the Scottish Labour Party as a whole.

● There will be a WAC fringe meeting at regional conference: City Mills Hotel, 12.45-2pm, Saturday 10 March, chaired by Rosina McCrae of the Scottish Labour Party women's committee, with Ann Pettifor and Frances Morrell.

THE LONDON Region Labour Party conference got off to a slow start with an LCC-type resolution on campaigning whose lack of political clarity divided both the trade unions and constituencies. This seemed to set the tone for the first day of uninspired debates on women and on defence of the GLC.

By Greg Tucker (NUR Southern District Council)

The AGM pledged its support for the stand of Liverpool council but its strategy for defence of local democracy was wide enough to gain the support of major cutting councils such as Tower Hamlets. What this meant is hard to say.

Sunday started with a brief debate on Northern Ireland. Though many delegates pointed out the need to make a stand, a lack-lustre report from the

executive saw the troop withdrawal resolution fall by a two to one majority.

An NGA emergency resolution in support of the trade unions at GCHQ — with a call to go beyond the TUC's half-hearted defence 'within the law' — enlivened the meeting.

Action

The debate of the weekend, introduced by Dianne Abbott of Westminster North party, demanded the NEC support setting up black sections and positive action for black party member. She forcefully called for action to stop the party structures being used as a vehicle for returning white men to positions of power. As she put it: 'the party needs to be retaken into the hands of the people on whose backs this movement has been built.'

During the debate, Richard Sandells of Vauxhall party moved a composite on gay rights. With no one daring to leave their seats, black men and

women spoke of the problems they faced and how the party had to be made to change to respond to their needs.

Only a small bloc of right wingers opposed the resolution. But supporters of the *Militant* gave ideological cover to these backward elements, by wheeling out a few black supporters to argue that these resolutions were tokenism.

As Russell Proffitt put it: 'we must not do what some comrades want us to do — give in to the prejudice of others. Hypocrisy and cant must

Scottish YS: a CND victory

THIS YEAR'S SCOTTISH Young Socialists conference, held in Glasgow on 25-26 February, was definitely the best for years. It can be the start of a fight to turn the Scottish LPYS into a mass campaigning body.

More delegates representing branches independent of the YS leadership attended than previous years — a fact borne out by the weekend's debates. Voting on the main resolutions was very close.

By Cameron Taylor (Dumbarton LPYS)

The first day was run-of-the-mill stuff. Motions on positive discrimination and autonomy for women were defeated on the regional committee's recommendations — significantly though, by smaller majorities than usual.

The mood was different on the second day. Most speakers in the first debate on Ireland opposed the executive view. Regional committee was forced to withdraw a recommendation that the lesbian and gay rights

come to an end.' Both resolutions were passed with large card-vote majorities.

The rest of the day was bound to feel like an anticlimax. Nevertheless the education debate provoked anger as delegates argued unsuccessfully against the ILEA policy of compulsory transfer of teachers. Finally, squeezed in at the end, resolutions were passed on defending London's public transport system.

debate was dropped, and the final vote was lost only narrowly.

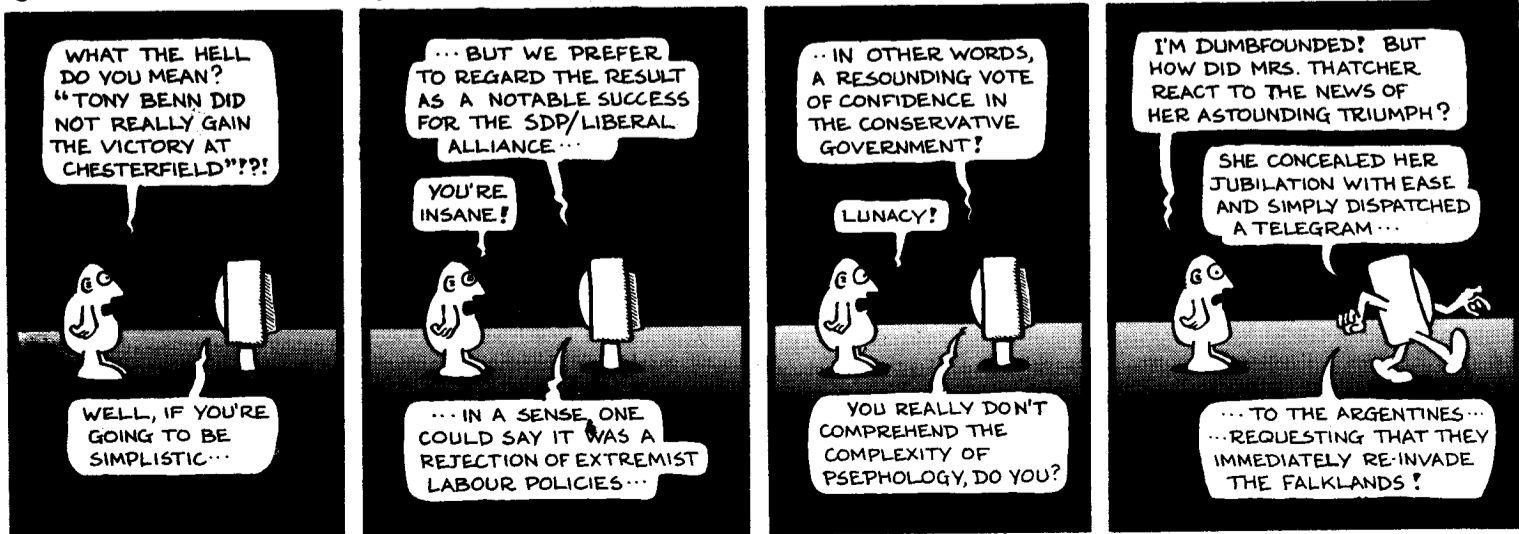
Policy was reversed on Youth CND, when a resolution from Aberdeen South, urging the LPYS to participate in and build YCND, was passed despite regional committee opposition.

At the Dumbarton fringe meeting attended by 80 people, YCND and Labour Campaign for Gay Rights speakers stressed the importance of the YS taking an active part in these movements. And Dumbarton used the opportunity of conference to launch the first issue of a newsletter for Scottish LPYS members — successfully judging by the 120-plus copies sold.

All in all, conference was a big success. Our new YCND policy can be used to draw more young activists into the Labour Party Young Socialists in Scotland.

A PIECE OF THE ACTION

BY #47 3/84 CORMAC



International Women's Day

8 March 1984



Women's liberation and socialism

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY, celebrated since the beginning of this century, has recently re-emerged as a symbol of international solidarity among women.

Although it is often claimed that women's position in society has greatly improved, today's feminist demands aren't that different from those at the turn of the century. Women are still fighting for basic rights.

The idea of a special day for women originated among women socialists. In 1910, at the Second International Conference of Socialist Working Women, Clara Zetkin from the German Social Democratic Party, proposed an annual celebration. Thus 8 March was proclaimed International Women's Day.

The date commemorated a garment workers strike in New York, led by socialist women. In 1917, a strike by women textile workers in St Petersburg (now Leningrad) on that day was the spark which fired the Russian Revolution. This Revolution, started by women, struck the most powerful blow against women's oppression that had ever been struck.

The Russian Revolution wasn't centred around the demands of women, but the need to eradicate the special oppression of women to achieve a just, socialist society was clearly understood. The Bolshevik government introduced full civil and legal rights for women.

The first legislation after October 1917 introduced abortion on demand and freer divorce, and removed the category of illegitimacy. A women's department was set up, headed by Alexandra Kollantai, to deal with women's special problems. Attempts were made to establish collective child care facilities and communal kitchens and laundries.

Progress towards the emancipation of women crumbled as the Revolu-

tion degenerated. The rise of Stalin and the seizure of control by the bureaucracy he led, resulted in reaction on all fronts, including the progress women had achieved. By the 1930s anti-abortion policies had been introduced and the basic institution of the family was reasserted. The Russian experience shows how socialist revolution can open the road towards women's liberation. It also shows that seizing power from the capitalist class does not, in itself, guarantee the emancipation of women.

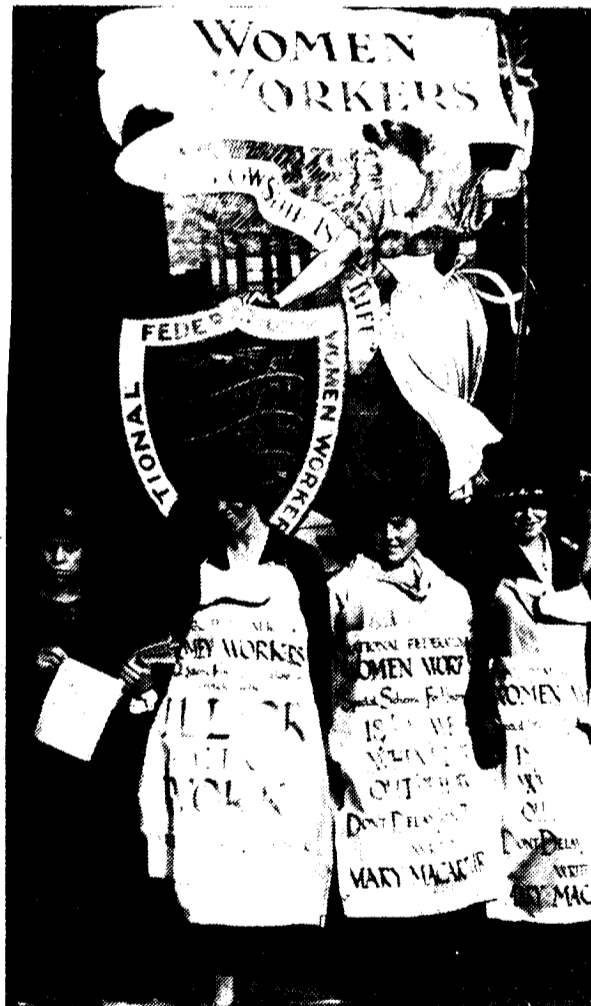
By Carol Turner

Women suffer double oppression: from their dependent status within the family, and their super-exploitation as wage earners. The material basis for women's oppression is located in the family, which is the cheapest way of reproducing and maintaining the labour force, and which soaks up a large sector of the reserve army of labour. It plays a further, ideological role by providing a justification for the low-paid, menial jobs women workers are consigned to.

The institution of the family divides men from women. It is used to undermine the struggles of both men and women workers. The sexual division of labour within society act as a barrier to working class unity.

The understanding of women's oppression pioneered by socialists like Zetkin and Kollantai has been enriched by the new-wave women's liberation movement of the last 20 years. Today's feminists have developed a stronger understanding of the depth of the ideological-cultural anti-woman bias in society.

After the quiescence of



the 1950s, the 60s brought world-wide radicalisation which expressed itself in revolutionary struggles in the colonial world, uprisings in the Soviet bloc, and student and worker struggles in the West. Women began again to openly challenge the structures of an oppressive society. The women's liberation movement in America and Western Europe today was born at the end of the 1960s, with this radicalisation.

The women's movement has not always linked up with the organised labour movement. The main reason for this has been the refusal of the labour bureaucracy to defend the rights of women. This feeds into two con-

tradictory trends: radical feminism on the one hand, and the grotesque refusal of some left currents to understand the progressive role of women's movement in the struggle for socialism.

Radical feminism has developed on a wide scale. This is the political ideology of women's revolution, rather than socialist revolution as the main vehicle for social change.

Its fundamental tenet is that all men are the enemy, regardless of class. Despite nuances, this view leads women away from demands that challenge the capitalist state and towards collaboration with the institutions of the state, in order to achieve reforms.

Thanks Greenham!

By Sue MacDonald

When asked about fighting the missiles and how best to do it, who do I think of first? Is it Monsignor Kent sitting in an office in Goodwin Street? No! It is the courageous and dedicated women who brave wind, rain and snow and constant physical and legal harassment outside the gates of USAF Greenham Common.

What has Greenham meant for women in the peace movement? For most of us, it has been a blast of fresh air, providing some alternative to the leadership (or often lack of it) from CND.

At long last we have a focus for some action that gives the Tories more sleepless nights than trudging from door to door asking people what they think of a nuclear 'freeze' ever will!

Greenham has inspired many more women to get involved with CND. It has meant a real challenge to male-dominated actions, meetings and conferences. This is especially true in Youth CND. Our local groups often have a majority of women in them — women who are nearly always the most dynamic and active campaigners.

The question of sexism and women's oppression has been forced on the peace movement by the Greenham women. It is no longer so easy for men to get away with domineering and sexist attitudes in meetings. YCND's National Conference gave a big thumbs down to a male delegate who was 'worried' about how the Greenham women were bringing other issues into the disarmament movement. Issues like ... shock, horror ... feminism! Our conference then reasserted our policy of positive discrimination, agreed to support and build women-only actions, and elected four women out of the six places onto the National Committee.... Committee.

The Greenham Common women have also transformed the image of CND. It's been a bit harder for the CND leadership to continue its drive to respectability with thousands of women surrounding Greenham and pulling down the fence! This has made the disarmament movement much more attractive — particularly for youth, who really don't want to sit in Habitat houses and chat with the SDP!

The women at Greenham Common have made the job of those of us in CND fighting the leadership's course that much easier. The May 24th International Women's Day of Action showed that a labour movement orientation can work. Women like Helen John have consistently back the youth in our fight against the CND leadership's attempt to 'calm us down'!

For showing the movement — and the whole country — that a real fight can be waged against the Tories and their policies, and showing women can lead that fight — Thanks Greenham!

Radical feminism is exacerbated by the crude, sectarian response of large sections of the (male-dominated) left. Even today, *Militant* continue to put forward the view that nothing can be done about women's oppression until the revolution, when women's emancipation will be (spontaneously?) achieved. They argue that support for women's liberation struggles — beyond the purely economic — divides the working class.

The Socialist Workers Party has disbanded its *Women's Voice* groups, and argues against the 'petty bourgeois feminism' of the Greenham peace camp, ignoring the mass movement of working class women inspired by the example of Greenham.

Trend

Such arguments from the left turn reality on its head. They feed directly into radical feminism — the same trend that *Militant* and SWP condemn.

More than a century's experience of women's struggles has laid the ground-work for a more coherent programme of women's liberation. A programme which asserts the needs of women, as women (such as abortion facilities and easier divorce laws) and the needs of women, as workers (such as equal pay and job opportunities).

All socialists — men as well as women — must everywhere support the demands of the women's liberation movement, and seize the opportunity to explain: no socialism without women's liberation and no women's liberation with socialist revolution.



The forward march of Labour women

ALL THE OPINION polls now reveal a sharp swing to Labour — and this increase is particularly marked among women. This trend merely deepens the pattern revealed at the general election — a swing away from the traditional female majority for the Conservatives. Labour has to build on this tendency, to secure a lasting majority among women. How can this be done?

In our view the answer is three-fold. The Labour Party has to analyse and understand the real social and economic factors that structure women's lives today. Second, it has to champion every battle that women wage against the viciously anti-woman Tory government. And third it has to challenge all the prejudices of male domination throughout the labour movement.

Today the 'average' woman leads a very different life than that of the previous generation of women. The dramatic rise in women's employment is accounted for by the vast number of married women who have decided to work. In 1961 30 per cent of married women worked. By 1979 it was 50 per cent.

Until very recently it was a common assumption that married women would be normally maintained by their husbands. This is one of the major reasons why many in the labour movement still believe that a man's pay should be higher than a woman's — because he has a family to look after. But today this standard 'model' no

longer applies in most cases.

The proportion of single-parent families has doubled since 1961. Women head three-quarters of those single parent families and some are taking the decision to have children while living alone.

By Valerie Coultas

Other women find themselves heading households due to divorce, widowhood or because their male lovers decide to shelve their responsibilities as fathers. 400,000 women are the sole wage earners in families with companions on the dole. Family dependence on men can no longer be assumed.

While women's employment has not increased since 1977, women have not been thrown out of the workforce by the economic recession. Rather the effect of the recession has been to further force women into low paid jobs.

The potential woman Labour voter therefore is less and less likely to be the 'little housewife' that Jim Callaghan used to patronise. She is quite likely to be a trade unionist; less than one in five trade unionists were women in 1951, today the number is one in three.

It is from this overall picture of the position of women voters that the Labour Party must begin to appeal to women. The growth of feminist ideas within the labour and peace movements has a real material basis in the growing independence of women — an independence which clashes sharply with



Women workers — 1942

the dictatorial regime of the Tories.

From here on the Labour Party has to make the Tories pay for their attacks on women. Pay for the attacks on women over equal pay and maternity leaves, pay for the attacks through hospital closures, school dinner clawbacks and a host of other cuts.

Labour can win massive support among women if it campaigns on all these issues, if it defends the Greenham peace women and all those women trade unionists fighting back against the government.

This brings us to a crunch issue — representing women. Neil and Roy can never be a 'dream ticket' for women. Ten women Labour MPs to represent women in the labour movement is a scandal. The TUC General Council has never had a woman member, except through the Women's Advisory and

reserved seats.

As Anne Pettifor of the Womens Action Committee said in Socialist Action — 'positive discrimination has been operating in the labour movement for a long time now, but it is positive discrimination for women who are controlled by men. Now we want positive discrimination controlled by women.'

This is the audacious meaning of the demand that the Labour Party women's conference should elect the women's section of the Labour National Executive. It's saying that women in the labour movement should be accountable to women — not the male dominated trade union bureaucracy. It means putting an end to 'token' women like Gwynneth Dunwoody who have won their status from the support of 'top men' — not from the labour movement ranks and cer-

tainly not from the female ranks.

This battle is symbolic of the position of women in the whole labour movement. There are hundreds of similar battles to be won, so that not only does Labour take up demands in the interests of women, but that it also ensures that women play their full role at every level of the labour movement so that they themselves can lead the fight for womens rights.

Only pressure from the base of the movement can force the bastions of patriarchy to move on this issue. Behind the 'top men' of the labour movement lies the power of the labour bureaucracy. Polite words will not budge them — only if Labour women confront them head on will the battle be won.

Germaine Greer's lost faith

THE FEMALE EUNUCH, Germaine Greer's first book was hailed as 'a wild book which will enrage many men' and a 'brilliant attack on marriage'. She's done a lot of re-thinking in the last 14 years and shares those thoughts in her recently-published *Sex and Destiny*. Nowadays, the one-time prophetess of women's liberation thinks Mary Whitehouse might have been right after all.

The book deals with the problems of the sexual revolution and its connection with the issues of third world population. This time, Ms Greer uses her iconoclastic dare-devilry to tear down the pillars of feminist thought rather than challenge the establishment.

Her first target is the sexual revolution. Despite all our efforts, it's still 'squeezing jam into a doughnut'. Women have simply made themselves more available to play the doughnut game.

In pursuing this theme, she denies the positive impact of the contraceptive pill and increased abortion facilities on the lives of thousands of women. But Ms Greer is uninterested in choice, preferring to advocate that today's young women should consider practicing chastity.

She looks with favour on societies like South India where the sexes are

segregated and marriages arranged. Women are not objectified — even fat, ugly women find husbands under this system. She misses the fact that such systems keep women in chains by denying them any choice of sexual partner.

By Judith Arkwright

In the course of this book, Germaine Greer reveals her main concern: not the liberation of women, but the importance of the family as an institution for child raising.

Her arguments reach absurd heights when she advocates *coitus interruptus* as the most effective method of birth control (despite the volumes of evidence to the contrary). She cites her experience of Italy. It is widely used and she believes works well

both as birth control and as a way of enhancing the sexual pleasure of both partners. She leaves out the facts that the pill is difficult to obtain and that thousands of Italian women die each year from backstreet abortions.

Perhaps she has forgotten the experiences of her youth when young men begged to be allowed 'to do it', promising they'd withdraw in time. (How many do you know who did?) Withdrawal as birth control increases the power of men over women.

It is in the chapter 'Fate of the Family' that Ms Greer's thoroughly reactionary and anti-feminist ideas are most coherently put. The claustrophobic nuclear family is the scourge of the Western world, she believes. And most feminists would agree. Ms Greer extolls the virtues of the extended family, with its greater spirit of cooperation and its stronger family ties.

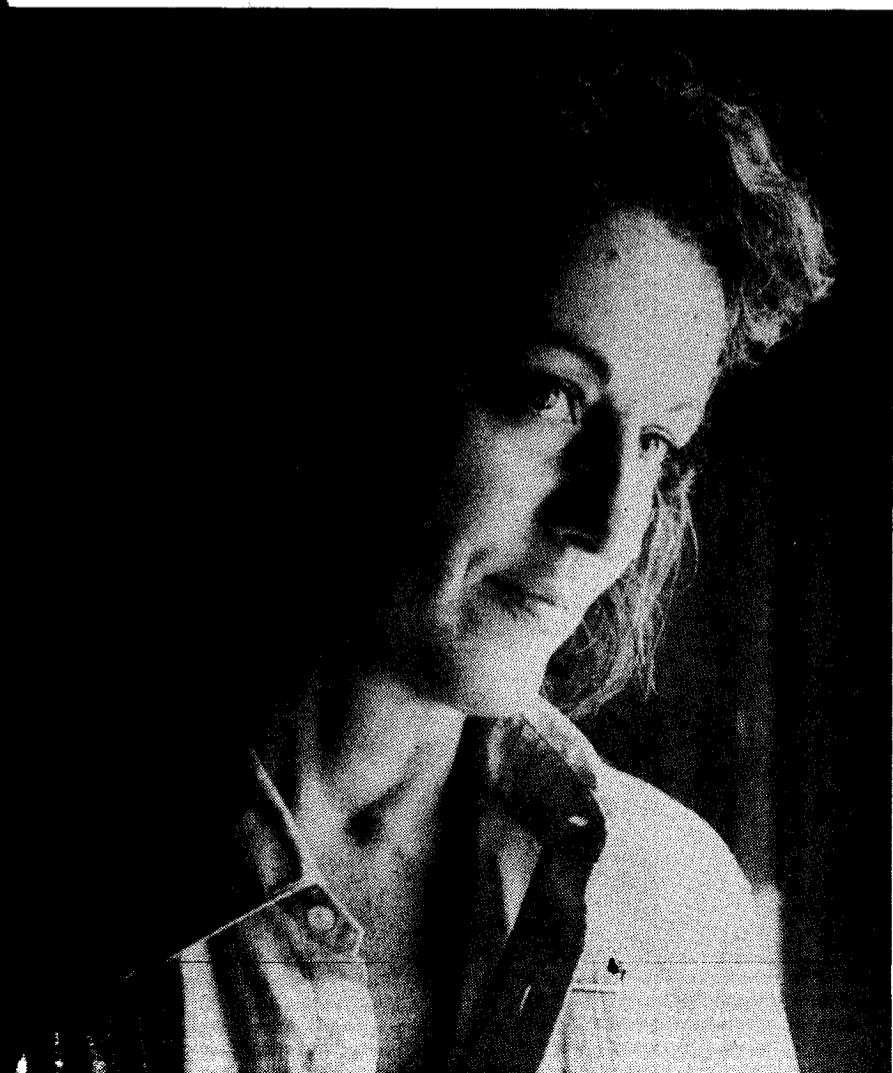
She ignores the abject poverty of the third world families which is the material background binding them together. She correctly attacks the ar-

rogance of the West in assuming that the nuclear family is superior and the incursions of the state into family functions.

Unfortunately, her confused anti-imperialism leads her to apologise for the reactionary political regimes in the countries she cites — regimes which perpetuate these inequalities in collaboration with imperialism. She quotes approvingly president Gaffer al-Nemeiry in the Sudan, where clitoridectomy is widespread and women are forced to wear the veil.

Perhaps the reader is wondering by now if Ms Greer is Margaret Thatcher's secret weapon on the family? She could have been. Throughout history, bourgeois feminists have sold out women's struggles seeing feminism in terms of individualistic solutions to the collective problems women face.

Ms Greer has achieved fame and fortune without sticking around to see the battle through. In her ivory-tower Italian villa she has lost faith in the women's liberation movement. She has capitulated in the face of the Tory government's reactionary offensive against women.



Germaine Greer

Photo: Imperial War Museum



Mother Jones: 'She is the best socialist agitator working among labour unions' said J.A. Wayland in Appeal to Reason.

A woman's place is on the barricades

THE HISTORIANS invariably ignore or underplay the role of women in history. Even marxist historians have not done too well in this field. Many of them have sadly failed to understand the revolutionary dynamic of feminism and do not understand how it can play a role in the liberation of both men and women.

Flora Tristan, an early feminist wrote shortly before her death in 1854 'I have nearly the whole world against me. Men because I demand the emancipation of women, the owners because I demand the emancipation of the wage earners'.

Seven years later a black slave replied at a women's rights conference in Akron, Ohio, to a preacher who claimed women 'were too weak and helpless to have the vote'. Sojourner Truth said: 'The man over there says women need to be helped in carriages and lifted over ditches ... Nobody helps me into carriages or over puddles and ain't I a woman? I have ploughed and planted ... and no man can head me ... and ain't I a woman? I could work as much as a man — when I could get it — and ain't I a woman?'

admitted her membership of the Labour Commission, her republicanism and her membership of the Women's Rights Group. When she was allowed back to France after being in a penal colony she returned with her beliefs intact.



Louise Michel told her accusers: 'I don't wish to be defended. I am devoted to the social revolution.'

By Janet Maguire

She was one of the growing army of women who were beginning to come forward as educators and organisers. Whilst the oppression of women did not just start with capitalism, it was the capitalist system that so radically changed the conditions of millions of women's lives so that women's emancipation and socialist revolution, for the first time became achievable objectives. Twenty years after Sojourner Truth spoke up for her sex, class and race, the first worker's revolution took place.

In 1871 the masses of Paris 'stormed the heavens'. And in the forefront of that heroic struggle were women like Louise Michel and countless of her unnamed sisters. Louise Michel, a school teacher, atheist, republican and feminist took up arms for the Montmartre 61st battalion. A young man under fire in the Commune panicked and wanted to surrender. She took a candle, placed it next to the munitions dump and told him: 'Go ahead if you want to ... if you try to surrender the station I will blow it up.'

Like the other women in the Communard battalions she was a nurse and an active combatant. She said our 'duty is to treat the wounded where they fall and to take up a gun where required.' As the troops of Versailles descended on Paris to destroy the revolution she insisted it must not be defeated 'even in death'. Along with her sisters she knew they had everything to lose if 'law and order' triumphed over 'red anarchy'.

At her trial she proudly

pression of women and class society. This is why she broke from the conservative Women's Social and Political Union led by her mother and sister and formed the more radical and more democratic East London Federation of Suffragettes. This split was fully vindicated when her mother and sister joined the imperialist bandwagon in the 1914-18 war. Sylvia refused to subordinate either the interests of women or other workers to the needs of the capitalist war effort.

After suffrage was won she wrote: 'Great is the work which remains to be accomplished!' At first she rallied to the standard of the Communist International and was a founding member of the British Communist Party but left after disagreements. Thus the infant British Communist Party lost the most articulate revolutionary feminist in Britain and was all the poorer for that loss.

Time

Perhaps no woman of her time more symbolised the inseparability of the fight for socialism and the fight for women's liberation than the Russian revolutionary Alexander Kollantai. She left a comfortable middle-class marriage to take up the struggle for socialism. This made her an exception among women in her social circle. Inside the Russian Social Democratic party she was no less an exception, being the only feminist from 1906 onwards in the small women's rights groups that argued for women's sections in the party.

Her feminism never detracted from her revolutionary determination. In 1917 she was the only leading Bolshevik to immediately support Lenin's April Thesis which committed the party to the taking of power through the dictatorship of the working class. As the only woman minister in Lenin's government she pushed for legislation like communal child care and supported or originated all the Acts which would alleviate the lot of women.

Kollantai like her predecessors and contemporaries such as Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg belonged to the line of women who stood in the tradition of feminism and the class struggle. But we must not forget that for every well-known woman who is written about and remembered there are millions of unsung heroines of the class struggle.

One day history must give them their due. When we do that we will help to fulfil everything that Kollantai and the class-struggle feminists fought for.



Emma Goldman: She told the courts 'there had never been an ideal, however humane and peaceful which in its time had been considered "within the law"'



Alexander Kollantai: Revolutionary marxist and feminist



Sojourner Truth: 'Nobody helps me — and ain't I a woman.'



Sylvia Pankhurst she urged workers of Britain to resist British intervention against Bolshevik Revolution.



Clara Zetkin — leader of International Women's Movement

Letter from Clara Zetkin

THE FOLLOWING article by the great German socialist and women's leader appeared in the June 1913 issue of *Labour Woman* — a journal for women run at that time by the Labour Party. The article appeared in the second issue of the journal.

In many other countries experience has shown that a socialist women's paper is a more fertile and powerful means to serve the socialist cause. It is a beacon throwing floods of light on the stormy waters and the rocks on the coast, and showing thus the dangers to avoid and the right ways to follow.

Therefore we are quite sure that the *Labour Woman* will influence most favourably the development of the socialist women's movement in England. It will continue the good work of the *League Leaflet** but on a broader and with greater means and forces.

The *Labour Woman* will give a loud and un-

falsified voice to all the miseries and injustices that capitalist exploitation and political thoughtlessness bestow on the working class woman; to all the claims of bread, culture and rights women have to fight for because they are members of the great family of mankind and without their drudgery, without the many duties accomplished by them the social order could not exist a single day ...

Thus the *Labour Woman* will help to concentrate the capacities and forces of socialist woman for the manifold work they have to do in order to group working class women round the socialist banner and to render them capable by making less heavy their burden and by strengthening their intellectual and moral powers, to share in the high tasks of their class: the emancipation of the workers by the workers themselves.

* The League Leaflet was the newsletter of the Women's Labour League founded in 1906.

The right to choose is a demand for ALL women

JUST BEFORE the second National Conference of the Women's National Abortion Coalition (WONAAC) in February 1972 *Off Our Backs*, an American feminist newspaper made a red-baiting attack on the American Socialist Workers party about their activity in the abortion movement.

Their political disagreements were the following. WONAAC is 'controlled by the SWP'. WONAAC, by focusing on a single-issue — abortion rights — ignored other questions related to women's liberation. It said abortion 'cannot stand alone' by itself and it is not 'a political issue'.

Off Our Backs said 'free abortion' should be the main focus rather than the repeal of the Abortion laws because 'poor women would not be able to afford abortions' even if the laws were repealed.

By Valerie Coultas

Activists in the National Abortion Campaign here in Britain will recognise these attacks. The criticisms made by the women who decided to leave NAC and form the Women's Reproductive Rights Campaign are very similar. These accusations are put forward by Alice Henry (an *Off Our Backs* journalist) in the February issue of *Trouble and Strife*, a new Radical Feminist discussion journal which even accuses NAC of racism. This is not a new debate. It went on in the US in the early seventies. American socialists and black women, like Maxine Williams, took up the defence of a woman's right to choose. They showed that it is now, and will continue to be, a vital issue. This is why we are re-printing the arguments of socialist feminists like Cindy Jaquith who was then editor of the American socialist paper *Militant* and Maxine Williams a founder

member of the Third World Women's Alliance.

Cindy Jaquith

'Repeal of the abortion laws would be far from meaningless for poor women. These women are the most affected by the illegality of abortions, which forces them to turn to butcher abortionists or to bear unwanted children.

For Black, Chicana, Puerto Rican, Native American and Asian-American women, abortion laws are used to justify the practice of forced sterilisation. If abortions were legal, it would be much harder for racist doctors and welfare boards to exact the punishment of forced sterilisation from these women when they seek abortions.

According to the June 20 1971 *New York Times* during the first six months of New York's liberalized abortion law, 50 per cent of the abortions performed on New York City residents were for Black and Puerto Rican women.'

Maxine Williams

'I don't feel, however, that white women sitting around a room, browbeating one another for their 'racism', saying, 'I'm a racist, I'm a racist', as some women have done, is doing a damn thing for the Black woman. What is needed is action.

What is hampering it now is not the fact that it is still composed of white, 'middle class' women. Rather it is the failure to engage in enough actions that would draw in and link up with the masses of women not yet in the movement, including working and Black women.

Issues such as day care, abortion, support for the striking telephone workers, support for laws that improve working conditions are steps in the right direction.

Women's Liberation must not isolate itself from the masses of women or the Black, Chicano, or Puerto Rican communities. At the same time, white women cannot speak for Black women. Black women must speak for themselves.'

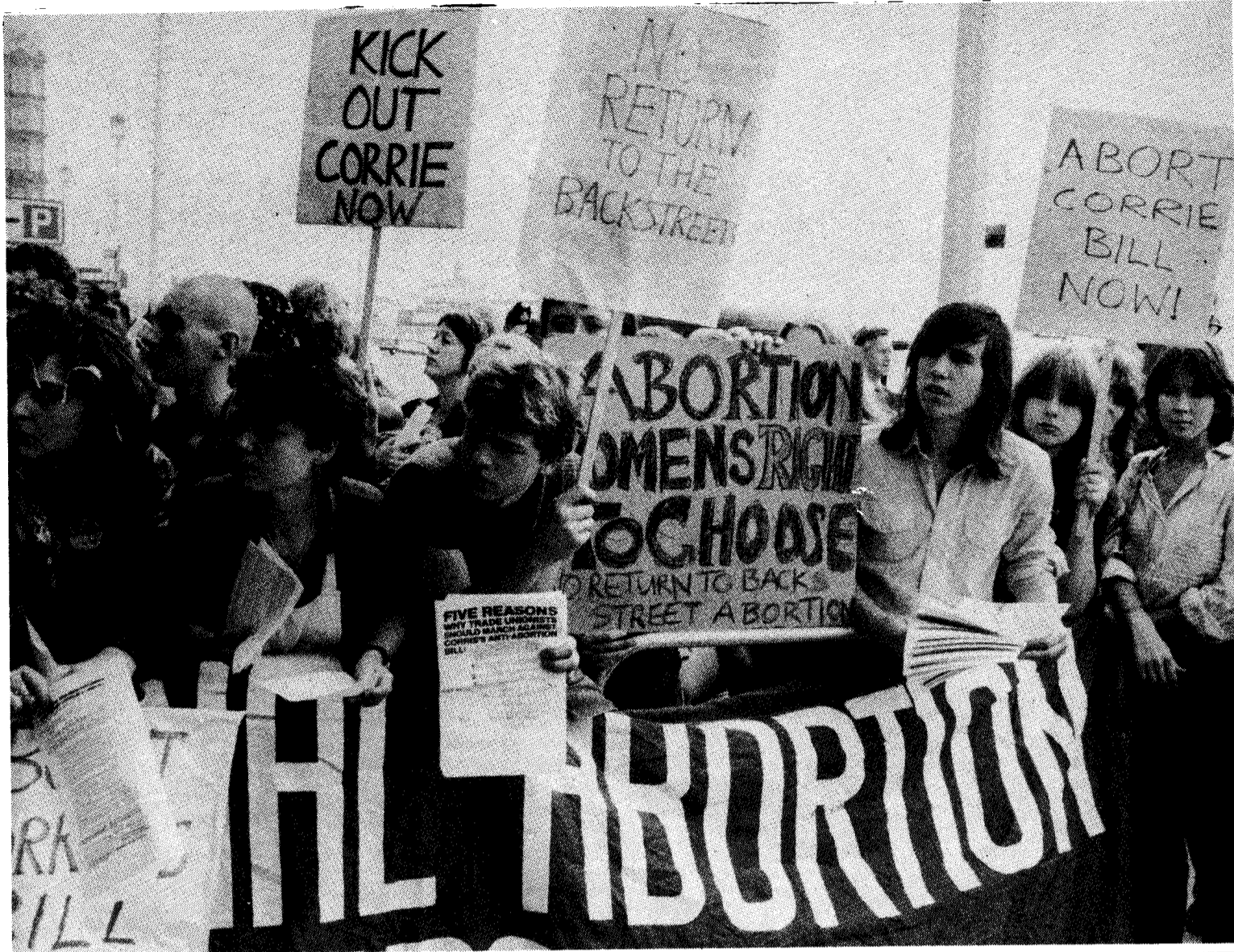


Photo: GM COOKSON

IN 1974 Scottish Labour MP James White introduced a private member's bill in parliament, which aimed to severely restrict abortions. He was supported by SPUC and LIFE, the two main anti-abortion organisations. They lobbied MPs, held silent demonstrations mourning 'murdered babies', and stage-managed the publication of abortion horror stories. All these tactics were to become familiar to in the years ahead.

White's bill galvanised the women's movement into action. A new campaign was born — the National Abortion Campaign. By June, it had mobilised 10,000 women and men for its first major demonstration.

Abortion on demand is one of the four original demands of the women's movement. There has been a Women's Abortion and Contraception Campaign since 1971

Before 1975 there had been a sporadic response

to anti-abortion initiatives, but it took James White's Bill to turn these into a mass campaign. Until that time feminists had not talked much about abortion. NAC began as a defensive campaign, to save the 1967 Abortion Act.

By NAC's first conference at the end of 1975, it was apparent that the Act was inadequate. The conference established two principles: NAC was fighting for free NHS abortion on demand for

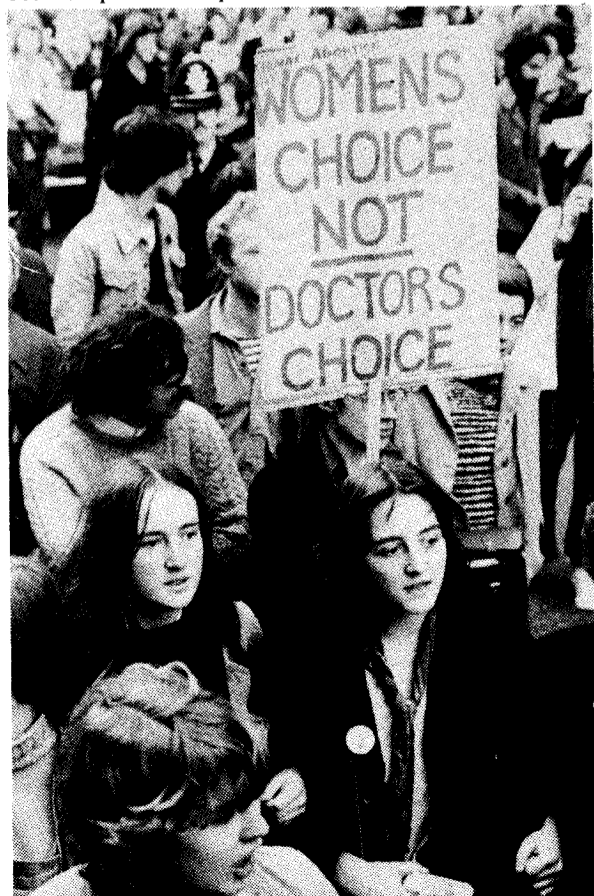


Photo: ANGELA PHILLIPS

NAC: its history and its future

all women, and it would campaign as a mass movement within the women's, students' and labour movements. Hence, NAC was a single-issue campaign, which set that issue within a wider context by its methods of campaigning.

By Leonora Lloyd

From the beginning, NAC has stressed that defending and extending the law was not enough. Women must have the right to determine their own lives, and that cannot be done without them controlling their own fertility. Ultimately this means a complete change in society. But many people can be won to supporting abortion on demand and in turn learn from their own experience the limitations of this demand.

Abortion on demand is not a real choice, unless there are adequate nursery facilities, maternity allowances, housing provisions, and so on. But not all people prepared to campaign around abortion set this within a socialist context. This reflects both the strength and weakness of single-issue campaigns: they can draw in many people who would not be attracted to broader-based campaigns, but — at the same time — they set up strains inside the campaigns, as the activists begin to feel impatient

with the limitations.

The fact remains that, had NAC not been a single-issue campaign it would not have had the success it did within the labour movement. And, without that success, it would not have defeated the anti-abortion bills which followed White's Bill.

Issues

As the first 'social' issue affecting only women to find support within the labour movement in recent years, it led the way for other women's issues to be taken up. More than any other issue it has helped show the inter-relationship between oppression and capitalism — the impossibility of separating out any single aspect.

Between the major attacks on abortion — James White in 1975, William Benyon in 1977, and John Corrie in 1979 — there has been downturns in NAC's activity. But each time the downturn was less, as more women became committed to the campaign. So, when the last attack came — the 'buff form' which brought the threat of doctors being prosecuted for illegal abortions — NAC was able to swing into action, leading the pro-choice organisations into attack. The prosecutions didn't take place.

The evidence of continued attacks, together with the growing organisational strength of the anti-abortion organisations, did not prevent divisions within NAC — between those who wanted to take up all the issues around women's fertility and to be a women-only organisation, and those who saw the continued danger of anti-abortion attacks in and out of parliament and the necessity of concentrating on abortion.

Split

The two conflicting trends in NAC have finally led to a split, and the Women's Reproductive Rights Campaign was set up at the end of last year. However, NAC has never ignored abortion-related issues. The difference between the two organisations is likely to be between their methods of campaigning. The split in NAC is to be regretted. But it did end over two years of internal dissent, and has led to a new burst of enthusiasm. It is important now that the two groups learn to work together on common issues. To do otherwise would lend comfort to the forces ranged against us. If the anti-abortionists succeed because of divisions in the pro-choice camp, the women's movement will not easily forgive those who cause such divisions.

"All that is brave and good ... is in prison"

BELOW WE are printing excerpts from a speech given by **BERNADETTE McALISKEY** in London when she visited Britain along with Kathy Tohill and other members of the Relatives for Justice delegation. The delegation was visiting this country, to expose the present show trials in Northern Ireland.

FOR 15 YEARS I have been trying to explain what is happening in Northern Ireland to people in Britain. Politicians have a standard comment about the level of violence. They have a problem understanding why the violence exists, and how we have worked with it for 15 years.

I have a problem of understanding how we have kept it to the minimal level that it has been for 15 years! It is difficult for me to relate to these people

because words take on entirely different meanings — violence, justice, law and order, all mean entirely different things to us who live in Northern

Ireland than they mean to the people who govern us.

When we started out demanding civil rights, an equal opportunity to vote, for equal employment and for an equal right to have a roof over our heads, we had no idea that we were going to end up in the position that we are today. But, we got there by a very logical political process. The 'supergrass' trials and what passes for courts and law and order in Northern Ireland is part of, and a development of, that political process.

In the beginning people said that we ought to do things within the law. We didn't have a natural aversion to the law, but every time we looked like winning anything they changed it. What was legal

yesterday, became illegal today. We started exercising the freedoms we had within the law — like the freedom of speech, organisation and information.

We found that if we used them effectively they were translated into 'behaviour likely to lead to a breach of the peace'. You are allowed freedom of organisation if you don't use it. You are allowed freedom of speech if you use it to back up the existing order and administration. But if you use freedom of speech to say 'I don't think the system works' then that is no longer freedom of speech — that is incitement.

Difficult

It is behaviour likely to cause a 'breach of the peace' and is likely to get your head smashed in by a police officer. Now this may be difficult for white people in Britain to understand but when we come over from Northern Ireland we are at home in the black community. They suffer, and they know what we are suffering. They know some basic rules about democracy that we know.

In a demonstration you always know who is making the demand for justice by the direction that the police are taking. Whether that is in Brixton, Ireland, New York or whatever. If you are standing in a demonstration and you can see the back of a policeman's head, then you are probably in the wrong demonstration.



Bernadette McAliskey canvasses during the general election, Dublin 1982

When battle commences policemen do not walk backwards when they charge.

They told us to use the democratic process. We used it way back in 1918 and we used it when Bobby Sands was dying. Sinn Fein have used it since. There is a problem with the democratic process. If you elect people which the government think are not suitable they will scurry like rats into the House of Commons and pass a law saying you are allowed to elect people of your choice as long as you do not elect people of the wrong type.

Entitled

If you elect those people then they will pretend that you didn't. Lovers of British democracy believe we are entitled to want freedom. But they say we must abide within the law and operate in the 'democratic' channels. If

only that was possible.

They have taken away all our rights so that we stand on the wrong side of the law. Six thousand people have been processed through the Diplock courts in ten years. We have a problem acting within the law because they change it all the time and they have taken their politics into the courts.

Legality

We were born guilty. We are part of an Irish community forced to live in a state whose legality and right to exist we have never conceded. We are the Palestinians of Britain. Now the supergrass system is the last link in the chain. We beat internment without trial so they invented the Diplock courts. We won political status so they criminalised republican struggle. Ten men died for the right to

get clothes on their back. Terrorism in the eyes of the British government is political organisation against the state.

Women

Kathy Tohill and I are referred to by the loyalists as the 'seed beds of terrorism'. This is because we breed them. It is because we are women. We live in a country where all that is brave and good, idealistic and hopeful, is in prison. All that is underhand, petty, mean and dishonest is in power.

Someday we will be free. Some people are going to come across to our country and say 'Help us. We are strangling in our oppressive legislation we stood and watched them use against you'.

They won't beat us, brothers and sisters. But some day it is going to choke you to death.



International Women's Day protest outside Armagh in 1980

International Women's Day. What's on?

anti-militarism and violence against women. There will be demonstrations in Barcelona and Madrid and the Commissions Obreres are promoting a Charter for women's rights.

Italy Women Against the Crisis coordination in Turin have produced a leaflet for use in local towns. Women from a printing firm will launch a petition against raising

the retirement age of women to 60.

Belgium Women Against the Crisis demonstration in Brussels, supported by the FGTB and CSC trade union federations and the Socialist Party and Catholic trade unions.

France Women's rights minister, Yvette Roudy will meet other European ministers. There is a League for Women's Rights seminar to relate the concerns of women to the debate about 'Europe and the Future'. The CFDT trade union federation will organise forums on job equality.

Demonstration in Paris on 8 March against reduction of working hours, for rights of immigrant women and against the Mitterand government policy encouraging women to have more children.

Switzerland Demonstration in Berne on 10 March on the shorter working week, part-time work and abortion rights.

Australia Celebrations in each state and demonstrations in Melbourne and Sydney on 8 March.



Britain

● **Delegation to Armagh Women's Prison.** Picket 8 March, bus from Glasgow Women and Ireland Group, contact Alexis Scott 041 248 3813. 9 March, London delegation travel to Armagh prison return Monday 12 March, details from London Armagh Coordinating Group, 374 Gray's Inn Rd, WCI. Tel 01 289 3878.

● **GLC open day** 8 March, noon to 8pm, County Hall, London SE1. Stalls, literature, films exhibitions, discussions. Creche facilities.

● **Afia Begum campaign** opening of new centre for women under threat of deportation and international women's day lunch, 8 March, 12.30-2.30, 114a Brick Lane, London E1, Aldgate East tube.

● **National Assembly of Women** event on Friday 9 March, 7-10pm, and Sat 10 March. Themes include women and racism, guests include a Cuban sister, Helen John of Greenham

Common and a woman trade unionist who has been released from a Turkish prison. NAW, 108 Twyford House, Elwood St, London N5.

● **London School of Economics** women's group workshops and entertainment, 7 March, 2-4pm workshops, evening disco, 8 March 11-4 workshops, evening anti-sexist cabaret. LSE Houghton St, London WC2. All events mixed except disco.

● **Hillingdon demonstration** 10 March to Uxbridge Town Hall, ring 0895 37361 for details.

● **Birmingham** women only event 8 March, with stalls and discussions, videos on El Salvador and Greenham.

March through city centre. Contact Birmingham Women's Centre, c/o Peace Centre, Moor St, Ringway, Birmingham B4. Tel, 021 643 0996.

● **Coventry** Thur 8 March exhibition and reclaim the night march, Coventry Women's Centre, 1d Victoria St, Hillfields, Coventry.

Manchester War on Want event 8 March with video and international culture, 3pm to late. Details from Venue Abasindi, St Mary's St, Moss Side, Manchester.

● **Bristol** women's centre social event 8 March, 44 The Grove, Bristol 1, tel. 0272 22760.

● **Durham** Student's Union event 8 March with ANC speaker and Dr Janet

Townsend on Latin American women. For information contact 0385 48404.

● **Brighton** Videos on Ireland and evening entertainment, at Hanover, 8 March, 4.30-late. Sunday 11 March, ANC speaker and slides, St Annes Hall, St Georges Rd, Kent town. 12.30pm.

● **Glasgow** Video 'Carry Greenham Home' and 'Women and El Salvador' with speakers on abortion, employment, peace and violence against women. Also speaking, Magda Enriques from the Nicaraguan women's movement. Trade Union Centre, Carlton Place, Glasgow, 7-12 midnight, 8 March.

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Assad spells out his terms

LAST WEEK the inevitable happened in Lebanon, as President Gemayal was summoned to Damascus to see Syrian President Assad. Assad laid down his terms for a settlement of the present round of Lebanese fighting, and it turned out to be a settlement which was a very long way from being one based on the needs of the Lebanese masses.

Despite the fact that the fighting over the recent weeks has been spearheaded by the Druze PSP militia and the Shi'ite group *Amal*, their offensive against the right-wing Christian Phalangist government of Gemayal could not have taken place without Assad's backing.

Syria, with its 40,000 troops in Lebanon has an effective veto over the activities of the PSP and *Amal*. Both these groups are financed and supplied by the Syrians. But the Assad regime is far from inherently anti-right wing, or 'anti-imperialist'. In essence Assad wants to be at the centre of any political negotiations over a peace settlement in the Middle East, in order to push his own demands for a return of the Golan Heights from Israel, and more generally for a leading role for Syria in the Arab world.

In order to do that he wants Lebanon to be under effective Syrian control which would in effect have meant a Lebanon friendly to, and reliant on, Israel and the US — cutting Syria out of the game. Gemayal's Phalangist

government was of course opposed by the Lebanese muslim masses from a very different angle — for the simple reason that a Phalange government means a reactionary, pro-Western government which promotes the interests of the Lebanese ruling class and imposes harsh repression on the mass of the people.

By Phil Hearse

That's why the fighting started by the Druze PSP and *Amal* against the Phalangists took on aspects of a real *insurrection* with mass involvement to bring down Gemayal, especially in south and west Beirut.

Assad has got the victory that he needs against the Phalange. But now he faces exactly the same problem which faced him before his troops intervened in Lebanon in 1976. In order to keep his influence and power in Lebanon he needs a government totally under his own thumb. A radical nationalist government dominated by the various Muslim organisa-

tions might go off at a very different tangent to the one which he requires himself — especially if continuing civil war against the Phalangist promoted new and more radical tendencies in the struggle.

Therefore Assad has come up with his new peace plan, which he presented in the form of a series of demands to Gemayal. It amounts to this: Gemayal will stay as President, but will abrogate the peace treaty with Israel, a symbolic gesture showing who Lebanon's new masters really are.

Gemayal will then form a coalition cabinet to include figures from *Amal* and the PSP, and probably pro-Syrian Christian and Sunni Muslim figures, for example Franjeh. This government of 'national unity' will then do its best to call off the fighting, thus giving the Maronite Christian minority a big stake in future government, but a much reduced one. Capitalism and the Lebanese bourgeoisie of all confessions will still be happily in place, and Lebanon will be an 'independent' state — but under the aegis of President Assad of Syria.

There is no doubt that this agreement will satisfy Nabih Berri, the leader of the Shi'ite *Amal*. Berri is a bourgeois politician, not



President Gemayal

an Islamic fundamentalist. He and *Amal* do not demand an Islamic Lebanon, but merely a bigger share for their community — the largest confessional grouping in the country. Equally, Walid Jumblatt's 'Progressive Socialist Party' belies its name: it is an organisation with a bourgeois nationalist leadership which seeks a bigger say for the Druze rulers.

When the Muslim and left wing forces were on the verge of victory in the 1975-76 civil war against the Christian Phalange, the Syrian army intervened to attack them and their Palestinian allies. It was a hard lesson. The Syrian dictatorship, despite all its Arab nationalist rhetoric,

is a reactionary dictatorship.

If the Lebanese masses are to capitalise on the very great military victory which they have won against US imperialism, Israel and the Phalange in the recent fighting they will have to go way beyond the aims and objectives set out for them by the pro-Syrian leaders of *Amal* and the PSP.

Even if some of the fascist militias in the camp of the Phalange find Assad's deal with Gemayal hard to take, this agreement is one done at the expense of the heroic men and women who have sacrificed so much in the struggle against US-backed reaction in recent weeks.

Grenada: 'They can kill our revolutionaries but they cannot kill our revolution'

OVER ONE HUNDRED supporters of the Grenadian revolution heard this message from the New Jewel Movement Support Group (UK) at a convention on 25 February in County Hall, London.

Among them were delegates from trade union, Labour Party and black liberation organisations who organised against the United States invasion last October.

The NJM Support Group statement explained, 'We urgently need your help at this moment if we are to protect the gains given to the people of Grenada in the four and a half years of the revolution....'

'In order that the conditions for the protection of such benefits succeed, there must be first and foremost the removal of all imperialist forces and their surrogates.'

Delegates heard eyewitness reports from Grenada that support for US troops on the island is rapidly evaporating as Grenadian people see the gains of the revolution being dismantled.

It was reported that one United States journalist, who supported the US invasion, has been forced to admit that the surviving members of the New Jewel Movement would get 51 per cent support in an unrigged election.

The convention statement continues, 'We of the Support Group (UK) support those comrades in Grenada who are determined to continue the revolution and who at this time are attempting to organise continued resistance to US colonialisation and will support them in whatever way we can.'

'We are determined to provide them with every assistance possible including political, financial and assistance in kind.'

Delegates were told of plans to step up propaganda on the gains of the revolution and the stage of the resistance in Grenada. NJM Support Group speakers will be available for public meetings and

labour movement engagements.

Two fund raising projects were launched. One is for desperately needed funds to re-launch the NJM, or its successor in Grenada and to aid the work of the NJM supporters in Britain.

By Celia Pugh

The other is to raise funds for the Maurice Bishop and Martyrs of 19 October Foundation, launched from Grenada in January. This money will be used for propaganda and education work in Grenada to rebuild the gains of the revolutions and keep alive the memory of Bishop and the others murdered on 19 October.

A recall conference was proposed for later this year to consider the experiences of this solidarity activity.

● For information and background material contact NJM Support Group (UK), 4 Windus Walk, London N16.

● Public meeting with a report back from the recent labour movement delegation to Grenada. Irish Centre, 52 Camden Sq., London NW1. Thursday 22 March, 7.30pm. Copies of the report from 4 Grays Inn Buildings, Roseberry Avenue, London EC1R.

● Hear Don Rojas, former editor of the national Grenadian newspaper Free West Indian and press secretary to Maurice Bishop. International Book Fair Festival, Friday 6 April, Priory Centre, Acton, London. 7.30pm, admission £1.



MALE ORDER

Racist unmasked

VIRGINIA Gillick became a centre of media attention when she tried to take her local health authority to court to prevent contraceptive advice or help being given to young women under 16 without parental consent.

You may remember all the photos in the papers featuring Ms Gillick surrounded by her children.

But the anti-fascist magazine, *Searchlight*, has revealed that Virginia Gillick wasn't the 'ordinary housewife and mother' the press portrayed her. In 1972 she was an active member of a racist anti-immigration group called 'Powellight'.

The Women's Reproductive Rights Information Centre (WRRIC) is organising a petition — to counter one being touted by Gillick's supporters — which argues for no more restrictions on young women's rights to contraceptive help and advice.

● For further information and copies of the petition send a SAE to WRRIC, 374 Grays Inn Rd, London WC1 or phone 01-278 0153.

COMPILED BY Hilary Driver. Please send contributions to reach us one week prior to publication. Send to Male Order, Socialist Action, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XP.

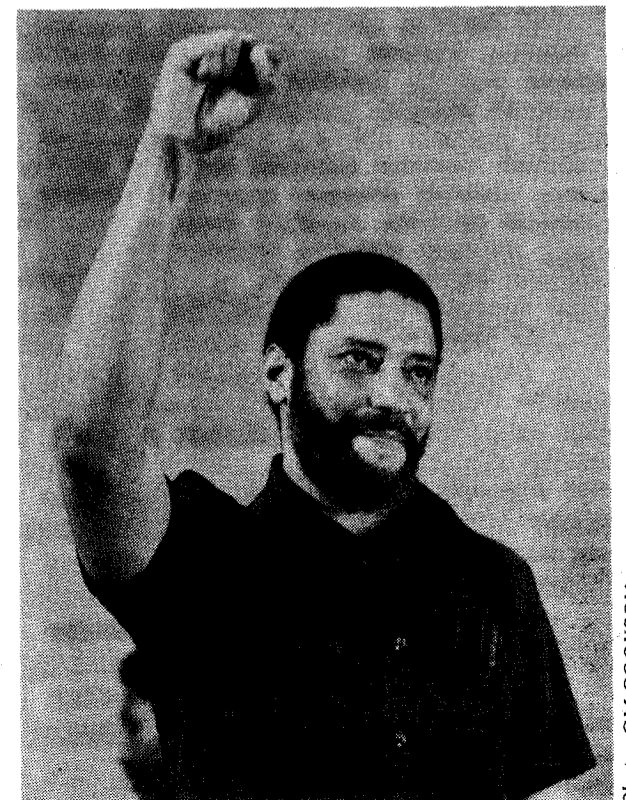
Awaiting trial

A WOMAN who is two months pregnant has been remanded in Armagh prison, in the North of Ireland, and subjected to physical and mental ill-treatment.

Jacqueline and her sister Anna were slapped, beaten and kept awake for long periods of time. The authorities refused access to their family doctor and neither of them were allowed to see a solicitor. The women made self-incriminating statements under duress and they are now awaiting trial in the no-jury courts in the North.

● Send cards and messages of support to Anna and Jacqueline McCool, remand prisoners, Armagh Prison, N Ireland. The campaign in Ireland and here needs funds urgently. Send donations to McCool Family Defence Campaign, c/o Box 27, 488 Great Western Rd, Glasgow, Scotland.

(From an article by Loretta Loach in the March issue of *Spare Rib*, on sale at all good bookshops or from 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1R 0AT.)



Maurice Bishop

Photo: GM COOKSON

Special calendar offer

WOMEN'S CITY World Calendar 1984 is on special offer at the reduced price of £2.85 from The Other Bookshop. It's worth the money just for the photographs, which are all stunning and well reproduced on high quality gloss art paper.

The picture above shows a woman and her child from Biffen Island in the North West Territory, Canada. Available from The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper Street, London N1 01-226 0571.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY GREETINGS TO ALL READERS OF 'MALE ORDER'

The budget and the economic crisis

ON 13 March, Nigel Lawson will deliver his first budget speech. We will be treated to a mish-mash of tax changes, a reassertion of the Tories' intentions to cut public spending and plenty of rhetoric about how their policies are producing a dynamic recovery. It will be boring and it will do nothing to stop the real deepening crisis of the British economy

True, output has been rising in Britain over the past 18 months, but it has been doing so very slowly and hesitatingly. Output of the whole economy is still two per cent below its level four years ago and manufacturing output is 13 per cent lower.

By Chris Guthrie

More importantly, this output rise is not enough to stop unemployment increasing, let alone to reduce it. Far more is needed to do this. If one accepts the government's crazily optimistic view that the proposed Nissan factory will create 10,000 new jobs, then to reduce unemployment to two million by 1990 will require the opening of one Nissan factory per week.

Much has also been made of Britain's healthy £2 billion balance of payments surplus last year. Closer examination of these figures reveals the real British economic crisis. While oil recorded a £6.9 billion surplus of exports over imports manufactured goods were £5 billion in deficit. This is the first time since the Industrial Revolution that Britain has imported more manufactured goods than it has exported.

This deficit is a result of Britain's long term industrial decline and Thatcher's attempts to defeat the organised labour movement by means of mass unemployment.

However, higher unemployment means more public spending on unemployment benefits at a time when the government wants to reduce the amount it borrows.

Once more North Sea oil has come to the rescue by providing huge tax revenues. In short, North Sea oil has financed the Tories' attack on the working class and prevented a major balance of payments crisis.

The obvious question is then, what happens when oil production begins to fall in the second half of the 1980's? The answer is disaster... unless manufacturing can recover sufficiently to fill the gap left by falling oil trade revenues. This is impossible unless manufactured goods become much cheaper relative to other countries' exports and unless there is a big increase in manufacturing investment.

Great

One of the ways to do the former is to let the exchange rate fall a great deal, but the Tories will not do this as inflation would shoot through the roof.

The other way is to cut costs by increasing productivity and by lowering wages. Increasing productivity in the long-run comes back to the need for more investment. However, capitalists will only invest if they can make good profits. And

this is the crunch point for Thatcher and her friends.

For despite all her attempts to boost profits by attacking workers living standards, profitability remains extremely low. At the end of last year, the real rate of return on manufacturing investment may have been three per cent on average, compared to 16-20 per cent 20 years ago. For capitalists, it makes more sense to put their money in a bank and sit back and earn the interest than to risk putting it in a factory.

Time

At the same time, Thatcher's hopes that profits would benefit more than wages from an economic recovery are not being fulfilled. Instead of mass unemployment leading to trade unions accepting cuts in real wages, real earnings of those in work have been rising on average over the past year.

Thatcher's economic policies have reduced inflation, but they have not succeeded in raising the rate of profit by reducing wages. They have succeeded in accelerating the decline in manufacturing and in storing up huge problems when North Sea oil begins to run down.

The Tories have no choice. If they want to solve this economic crisis in the interests of the ruling class then they have to try to break up the organised workers movement. And any Labour/Alliance coalition which tries to solve the crisis by raising capitalists' profits will find itself implementing the same kind of Tory policies.



... First I was a Keynesian... Next I was a monetarist... Then a supply-sider... Now I'm a bum...

Dimbleby decision hits at union solidarity

THE DECISION of the House of Lords last week that NUJ support for the strike of its members at Dimbleby newspapers in Richmond is illegal is a massive blow against trade union solidarity in this country. Its ramifications will be felt in many industrial disputes.

The reason the House of Lords have been able to impose this decision is a direct result of the TUC's climb down over the NGA.

By Tim Porter

The dispute at Dimbleby newspapers originates from a strike by NUJ members over the company's use of TBF printers in Nottingham. TBF is a subsidiary, with the same directors and owners as T Bailey Forman — the publishers of the Nottingham Evening Post. There the NUJ fought a bitter battle when 28 members were sacked in a national pay dispute in 1979.

Since the NUJ is in

dispute against T Bailey Forman it could well be entitled, even under the Tebbit laws, to take action against a paper being printed by them — although this in itself is doubtful. But the courts have neatly sidestepped the issue by declaring TBF printers and T. Bailey Forman to be two different companies. Thus action

against TBF printers is secondary action and therefore illegal. The ramifications of the judgement are important for solidarity activity in the unions. Now, any astute employer owning a large company can set up several companies in the same factory, thus ensuring that any dispute in a particular section will be against one employer only. A factory-wide strike will be illegal. Action by workers in one part of a firm in support of sacked or victimised colleagues in another part of the same firm could easily be declared illegal.

The Dimbleby case, left over from before Christmas, is part of the courts' rolling offensive against the unions. The

original High Court decision against the NUJ was made days after the courts found in favour of Eddie Shah over the NGA Stockport dispute. If the TUC had stood firm and mobilised in defence of the NGA, the courts in turn may have been more cautious. In the event, they used the victory over the NGA to put the boot into SOGAT, and now into the NUJ.

Legal

To add insult to injury the High Court, the same day as the House of Lords delivered its judgement, imposed further legal penalties on the NGA by granting Eddie Shah £73,000 damages against the NGA for the mass picketing in December.

YOUR PAPER — ITS FUNDS

TWO LETTERS WE got last week really lifted our spirits. Des Stevens wrote in to say: 'I've just read in the fund drive column, you had some more bills coming in — I know the feeling.' He sent in £10, and said 'here is something to help you out for the time being, even if it only a little'.

H Smith from Pyle in Wales wrote in 'I cannot send a bankers orders because I am an Old Age Pensioner and not too well off. However, I will try to send you a small cheque from time to time.'

Now when you are used to opening the mail and finding bills, threatening letters, or prevaricating tales from our debtors, two letters like that brighten the whole week. But doesn't it put many other readers to shame!

Just recently we have had a big improvement in the fund drive income and all our budgeting is cutting costs. But we can't fall behind. With GCHQ workers being given £1000 to quit their union, are there any readers prepared to send in £1000 to help the fight to defend the unions against Tory attacks.

There were sixteen joke candidates in the Chesterfield byelection

who paid out £2,400 in election deposits, most of this the state held onto afterwards. Is there any reader who can send in £2,400 to help us fight with the Labour Party for policies which really fight the Tories.

Cardiff	239.00
Glasgow	101.00
East London	1027.40
South West London	600.00
Haringey	80.00
Aberdeen	70.00
Sheffield	280.60
Bristol	194.90
Camden	400.00
Hemel Hempstead	25.00
Huddersfield	108.00
Oxford	287.00
Liverpool	40.00
Leeds	50.00
Middlesbrough	50.00
Leamington	35.00
Birmingham	200.00

Southampton	81.25
Swansea	144.00
Swindon	25.00
AG	30.00
Mark Souter	25.00
Anonymous	100.00
K Moore	5.00
E Saraga	5.00
Anon	1.00
G Monks	1.00
C Arthur	5.00
Sunderland	25.00
R Rae	4.00
J Hartley	5.00
E Coleman	6.00
G Stewart	3.00
E Silver	1.00
C Potter	15.00
J B White	40.00
Bill Alder	5.00
Ian Parker	5.00
D Stevens	10.00
G David	6.00
P Holbourne	1.00
Anon supporter	7.00
A Potter	5.00
G Carey	2.50
Hounslow	160.00
Edinburgh	40.00
Islington	250.00
Ealing	150.00
Brent	500.00
Stoke	4.00
Anon	5.00
H Fuller	5.00
S Field	5.00
Manchester	323.00
Leicester	24.00
Bath	22.50
Nottingham	100.00
D Draycott	3.00
J Boyle	10.00
P Stern	40.00
B Burn	5.00
E Griffiths	5.00
Dundee	10.00
Steve Kennedy	75.00

Total £6087.15

Omangate?

MAYBE MARK Thatcher's mam didn't know what her boy was doing in Oman but his Daddy certainly did. All that nice lolly Mark copped for just happening to be around when Mammy was 'batting for Britain' went straight into the account of a company called Monteagle Marketing Ltd at Barclays Bank, 415 The Strand.

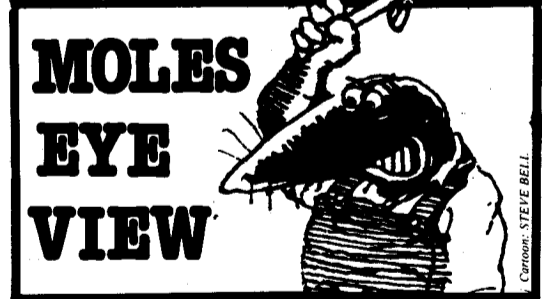
And of course the signatories on that account are Mark, a guy called Steve Tipping, and daddy Thatcher himself. Mind you there is nothing suspicious in all this. Daddy just happened to be with mammy when she was chatting up the Oman authorities for Britain whilst Mark was coincidentally wandering around the place.

When asked what he was doing there he is said to have replied, 'I was bloody lost as usual'. Daddy says he had no idea of what went on, ad-



Anyone for a G&T?

ding in fact he rarely has, and all he went for was the gin and tonics. Mr Tipping says that Monteagles is 'into catering' but he doesn't mean they sell cream cakes. Mark's personal assistant, Brenda Sauger explains cater-



ing means 'somebody who knows somebody can put somebody in touch with someone else'. She didn't add that both Mark and Denis knew somebody called Margaret Thatcher very well.

Mr Tipping the other signatory is a great believer in the adage 'if at first you don't succeed try, try again.' Two of his companies, Wizard Design Ltd and Go Gear Ltd were both compulsorily wound up after he had resigned as a director. And until Oman came along, Monteagle had not been doing too well.

Its liabilities exceeded current assets by more than £15,000 but its two directors drew combined fees of £17,000 — despite a pre-tax loss of £8,993. Mark's Mam should really have a chat with him about people living beyond their means.

By the way if you are thinking of putting some business in the direction of Monteagle Ltd I hope you are not in a hurry — their phone is ex-directory!

Moles Eye View is compiled by BOB PENNINGTON. Contributions should be sent to arrive by Thursday am.

Socialist ACTION

Hands off Iran!



One of the Iranian soldiers suffering from chemical weapons burns.

THE HORRIFYING pictures of Iranian soldiers suffering from chemical weapons burns have filled British television this week. Even the United States government was forced to publicly condemn Iraq for using mustard gas in the Gulf War. Iran has publicly accused Britain of supplying these chemical weapons to Iraq.

Whatever the truth of the specific charges of British government complicity in chemical attacks, Britain, France and the United States are rapidly stepping up their intervention in the Gulf War.

The British government has been playing a particularly dirty role. While verbally stepping up its condemnation of Khomeini's executions and repression Thatcher has been encouraging a rapid build up of British trade with Iran since 1979. British exports to Iran rose to £628 million last year — capturing around five per cent of the Iranian market. Nigel Lawson worked closely with the Iranian government around negotiations on the world price of oil during the OPEC conference held in London last year.

Simultaneously Britain, France, and the United States have been militarily supporting Iraq in the war. The French last year supplied Super

Etendard fighters and Exocet missiles to Iraq. American and British warships have reinforced their patrols off the Straits of Hormuz — the entrance to the Gulf. Reagan, backed by Thatcher, has announced that the United States will use military force to re-open the Straits if they are closed by Iran.

By Alan Jones

Imperialism's aims in the Gulf are quite clear. Britain and the United States have no objections to the barbarity of the Khomeini regime in Iran — or that of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Khomeini decided on the continuation of the war with Iraq in

order to rebuild the Iranian army and intensify repression in his own country.

But the US and Britain fear a decisive victory for Iran would destabilise the entire Gulf region — including the United States key ally, Saudi Arabia. Any imperialist intervention in the Gulf war would be aimed not at preventing Khomeini's repression but simply at shoring up US, British and French interests in the area. It would help recent Khomeini's popularity — making him an martyr of 'anti-imperialist struggle' — and would be an actual obstacle to the Iranian people taking their revenge against his monstrous regime.

Socialists in Britain have few illusions in Khomeini's regime. But they have to fight against any British or imperialist intervention against Iran and not stand aside from it. Thatcher, Reagan and Mitterrand are playing out, even by their standards, a particularly vile policy in the Gulf.



Photo: GM COOKSON

All out to save pits

YORKSHIRE MINERS AREA executive has called an all-out strike by its 56,000 members next Monday to stop pit closures. Over 14,000 from South Yorkshire struck on Tuesday, closing all 15 of the area's pits, in the latest protest against coal industry closures. This follows the National Coal Board's latest move to shut down Yorkshire Main colliery employing 1400 workers.

Miners walked out of the pit last Friday to protest against methods of recording the amount of work done. Management were later allowed back in for emergency maintenance to prevent the build-up of poisonous gas, after reversing their original closure decision.

Jack Taylor, president of the Yorkshire miners, is asking Thursday's national executive committee to spread the Yorkshire action throughout Britain in an all-out strike to put an end to Ian MacGregor's threats to accelerate pit closures.

MacGregor's latest plans, discussed at the joint management-union Coal Industry National Consultative Committee on Tuesday, would mean 20 pits closing in the next year. They would reduce coal output to 100 million tonnes, a fall in capacity of four to five million tonnes annually.

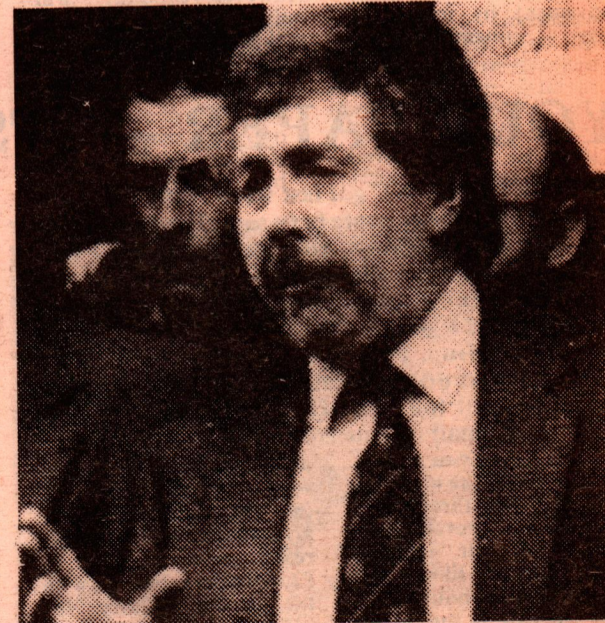
The action by Yorkshire comes when Ian MacGregor is under attack from an all-party Select Committee report which points out that financial

losses escalated during MacGregor's first period as NCB chair.

By Carol Turner

The government will need to find £290 million to fund the industry's deficit during the coming financial year. This is almost 50 per cent up on the amount originally allocated, and represents 25 per cent of all additional finance required by the government. The government is pushing hard for even more drastic pit closures.

The latest plans are further confirmation of Arthur Scargill's claim of a hit-list of pits for closure, which he made last year. Despite frequent



Yorkshire miners' president Jack Taylor calls on the national executive to take all-out action

Photo: NEWSLINE

official denials, each new move from MacGregor and the NCB points in this direction.

Speaking after the Yorkshire executive's emergency meeting, Jack Taylor said he would be asking Thursday's national executive to take all-out action, and for support from other unions.

Crushed between growing unemployment and the government pressure on MacGregor to hold the line, the miners must take action to protect their wages and save their jobs.

Yorkshire executive has led the way. The national executive must call all-out national action now, to reverse pit closure decisions.

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