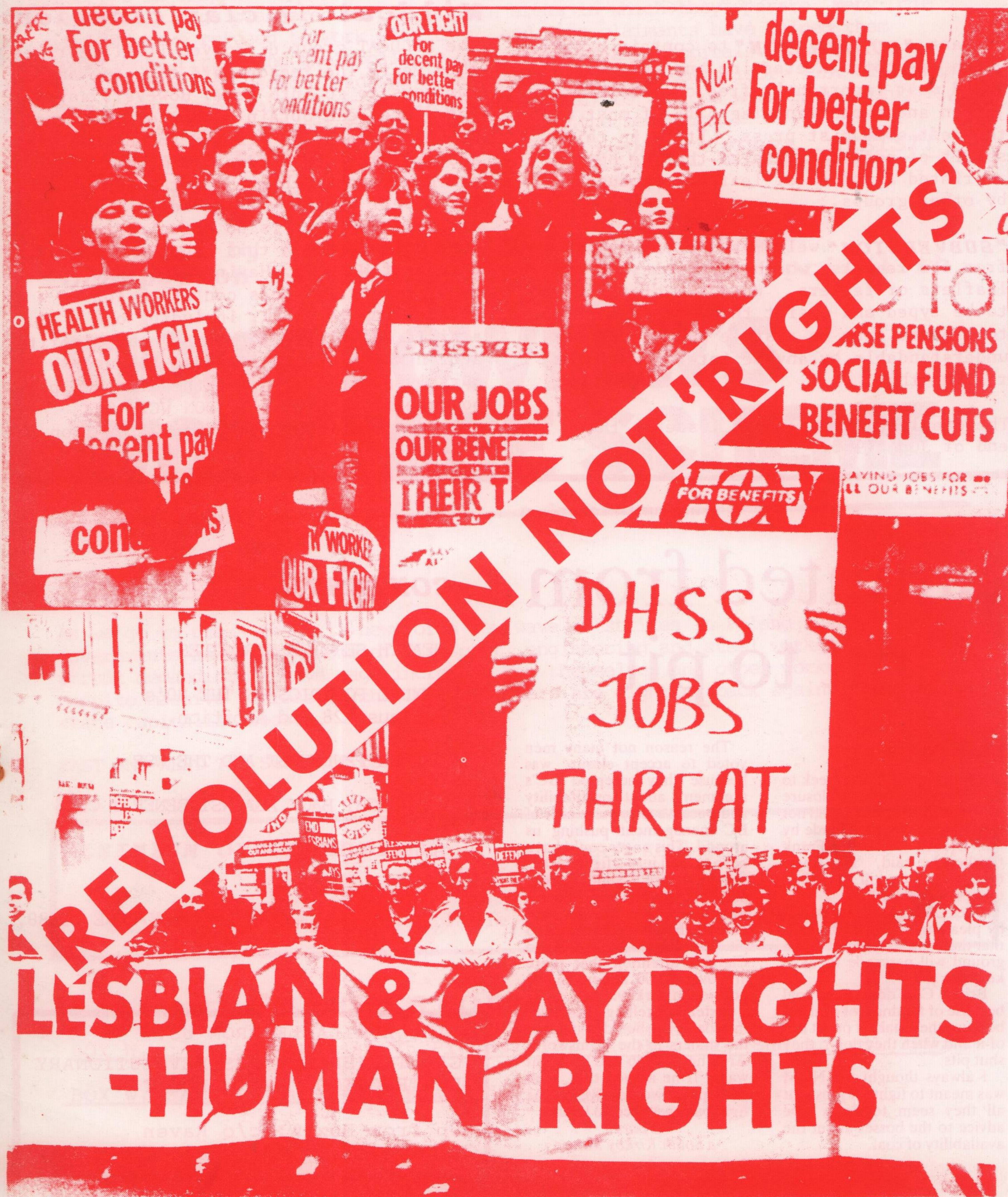


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INTRODUCING SUBVERSION

This journal is being produced by ex-members and sympathisers of the WILDCAT group, which dissolved itself earlier this year.

We got together in February this year because we wanted to see the continuation of a voice for revolutionary communist politics.

We want **"SUBVERSION"** to contain articles which are both interesting and informative - and most importantly free of the idiotic jargon and sectarian slag-offs of most of the left communist press. It is in this spirit of non-sectarianism that we have reprinted a number of leaflets produced by other groups.

"SUBVERSION" welcomes contributions from its readers, whether articles, leaflets or letters. We would prefer them to be typed and insist that writers attempt to produce them in a style that is easily understandable by anyone interested in reading them.

The deadline for the next issue is the end of June 1988.

"SUBVERSION" is not just a publishing project. We look forward to meeting people who are genuinely interested in the communist ideas expressed in this journal. If you like what you have read and want to meet us, either for discussion or to work together in our activities, please contact us.

Wildcat A clarification

The WILDCAT group dissolved itself earlier this year. The reasons are too long and tortuous to go into here. However, anyone interested can obtain a copy of the dissolution statement by writing to our Manchester address. One individual ex-member of Wildcat has recently brought out a journal calling itself WILDCAT 11. We would like to stress that there is no organisational continuity between this and the previous 10 issues of WILDCAT. Having said that, however, issue "11" does contain a lot of interesting material, including one article on workers' democracy and minority action which we had intended to publish ourselves. It can be obtained for 50p plus postage from BM CAT, LONDON WC1N 3XX (without mentioning the name WILDCAT on the envelope).

1st April 1988 Leeds Other Paper.11

Shunted from pit to pit

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HEALTH SERVICE STRUGGLES

SEXUAL POLITICS IN THE 80's
- Clause 28 and Abortion.

SYLVIA PANKHURST AND THE WSF

THE FIGHT BACK AGAINST BENEFIT CUTS

ANIMAL LIBERATION

/MAY/JUNE 1988.

Dear LOP,

I bought a LOP last week to read the article on the closure of South Kirkby pit. I could not believe the statement made by our Branch Secretary Frank Clarke, he said, "the tragic thing is there is still 50 million tonnes of coal left".

Does Clarke really think that by pleading with British Coal, that there is still coal left in the ground will persuade them to keep our jobs?

British Coal don't mine coal because of fondness of coal but because they make a profit out of it and when they don't, they shut pits.

I always thought the NUM was meant to fight for jobs, but all they seem to do is give advice to the bosses about the availability of coal.

The reason not many men voted to accept closure was because they accepted BC's argument about profitability and because they were sick of BC management pushing us around. This anger could have been turned into a fight back.

I don't care if South Kirkby made a profit or a loss, I need a living wage and I'm not prepared to be shunted from pit to pit. It seems to have escaped Clarke's attention that there are over 1,000 miners in my position in Kirkby.

Instead of telling BC where the coal is he should argue that the miners in the Hemsworth Area need a job and a decent wage. If he argued that, then perhaps we would have got the fight back we need so badly.

Yours
a South Kirkby Miner

STILL AVAILABLE FROM US:

'CAPITALISM AND ITS REVOLUTIONARY
DESTRUCTION' BY 'WILDCAT'

20p from Box W, c/o Raven
75 Piccadilly, Manchester, M1 2BU.

HEALTH WORKERS' STRIKES



John Harris/IFL

The Unions (and the Labour Party) have had some success in derailing the recent struggle in the National Health Service. They have done this by keeping apart different groups of workers in struggle at the same time (NHS, Local Authorities, car plants, ferries etc), promoting divisive tactics within the health service itself (different days of action in different regions, and between different unions etc) and diverting the struggle towards the sham of the budget debate and campaigns aimed at gaining public sympathy with purely symbolic actions and useless petitions.

But under the impact of the continuing government attack on public services, drives for higher productivity in industry, cuts in benefits, the poll tax etc, there is a real prospect of simultaneous struggles breaking out amongst many sections of the working class with a potential for militant, united action on a firm anti-capitalist class basis to emerge.

We are publishing here, a small selection of the many leaflets produced by revolutionary communists and distributed during various strikes and demonstrations by NHS workers and their supporters over the period January to March 1988.

Each of the leaflets has its own strengths and weaknesses. What we wish to draw attention to are the most important common themes. These are:

1. The provision of 'free' collective health care, despite all its limitations, is an important element of the SOCIAL WAGE. Attacks on it need to be resisted just as hard as any attacks on individual wages.

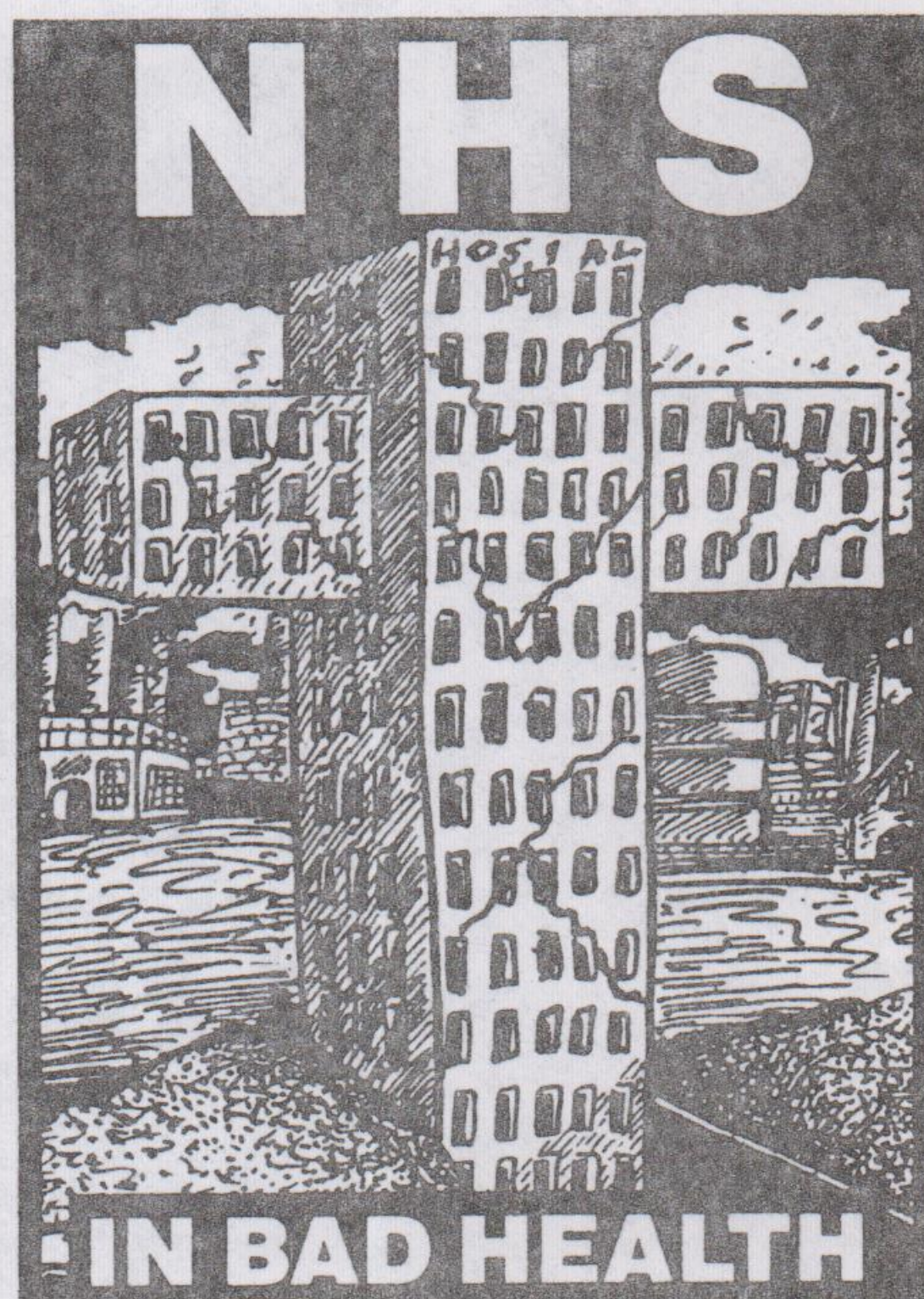
2. The NHS workers cannot succeed on their own any more than the miners could. There is an urgent need to link together different groups of workers in struggle with a common purpose and common demands in a genuine 'community of struggle'. This cannot be done effectively through the Unions. It means NHS workers uniting accross the divisions of the workplace and the Unions and appealing DIRECTLY to other workers particularly those already in struggle.
3. Whatever 'benefits' accrue to the working class within the framework of the NHS the 'sercice' is NOT 'ours' but an institution or the capitalist state. It emmerged in a situation of high demand for labour and as part of an attempt to dampen potential social unrest following World War Two. The present attacks are a response to the deepening world economic crisis and a lessening of demand for labour. The form of this attack might vary between Tory and Labour but any government would be forced to attack NHS funding, wages and conditions in the present circumstances.
4. No health service within the framework of capitalism can have a major influence on the ill-health of the working class as a whole, which is the result of the material deprivation, exploitation and alianation of our class under capitalism. This can only change through the reoriantation of productive life towards human needs in communist society.

the british disease is back

By launching a spate of strikes, healthworkers have helped develop what is already a season of active discontent. This is especially important in view of the relative lull in collective workplace struggle since the end of the year-long miners' strike in 1985. In recent weeks a growing number of workers have used the strike weapon against British bosses, in both the 'private' and 'State' sectors. As well as the much publicised strikes on the ferries and at Ford and Land Rover, there have been strikes by pit deputies, bus drivers, dole office workers, council workers and others.

A couple of months ago Thatcher claimed to have 'cured the British disease'(striking). Now thw British rulers have caught a touch of the same disease which has recently been troubling their counterparts abroad, including in South Africa, Rumania, Belgium, France, Armenia, Bangladesh and Spain.

The Healthworkers' action so far has not been without victories. In January a week of action by blood transfusion workers forced the DHSS to drop the planned cuts in meal allowances. Nurses in Manchester struck and made the government scrap its plans to dock their bonuses, at least for the time being. But the deterioration of health provision and hospital working



conditions continues apace, as the demand for 'healthy' labour falls. This attack on living standards doesn't just effect healthworkers, and not surprisingly, healthworkers on their own would be unable to force the government to back down. Even the miners in 1984-85 couldn't do that.

... LETS MAKE IT CONTAGEOUS

Major concessions could only be forced on the State and company bosses if a number of seperate struggles were to link up and develop together. This would mean a 'Hot

Spring' of struggle which would have to be autonomous enough to make the Winter of Discontent look like a vicar's tea party or a TV debate. But this is not at all inevitable, and healthworkers have a major role to play in making it happen.

There are probably millions of workers who could be picketed out by hospital workers. During the 1982 dispute a Healthworkers' Action Group in Leeds (composed of about 30 ancillaries and nurses) picketed a large number of local workplaces and at one stage succeeded in bringing the South Yorkshire coalfield to a standstill for a day. On February 3rd this year, four nurses managed to picket out Frickley miners, and Vauxhall car workers, Hackney council workers and fire-fighters have also come out for short periods in support. All workers have their own grievances against the bosses. Now is the time to press them, as well as the grievance our whole class has in common -- against the government's attack on our healthcare.

AGAINST FAKE SOLIDARITY

One of the main forces healthworkers are up against is their own image in the consciousness of other working class people. The current image of a 'typical' healthworker is a female nurse in uniform, with a kind heart but no brain, posing with policemen for the newspapers and sticking brightly-coloured badges on Joe Public's lapels. The acceptance of this insulting image makes it harder to break down the barriers between different groups of hospital workers. And it encourages other working class people to see healthworkers - especially female nurses - as the front line troops fighting to defend the 'national treasure', just like the 'boys' who killed and died in the Falklands for their British and Argentinian rulers.

AGAINST THE NATIONAL ECONOMY

Working class people who believe this generally also identify with one side in the 'public debate' among politicians, union leaders, journalists, consultants and government and shadow ministers. Basically these bastards are debating the relative effects on the national economy of tax cuts or increased government spending. In itself this should be of no interest to working class people fighting to defend or increase their benefits, pay-packets, housing conditions or access to health treatment.

It is indisputable that a system where some sort of health treatment is available

to working class people irrespective of income or savings is preferable to one where we are pushed back onto individual self-reliance. But this depends on how much power we have in the conflict with our enemies. It has nothing to do with which enemy policy is 'right' or 'sensible' for the economy. From the rulers' point of view, our wages and well-being are a mere cost.

The economy is not ours, it is the rulers'. We have no country, nation or economy to defend. Let the economy go to rack and ruin. Let inflation rip. Let stockbrokers and directors of private and State companies throw themselves out of windows. It will save us the trouble of pushing them. What matters is the power of our class.

What we're up against is a ruling class which is trying to make us pay for their crisis, by means of job cuts, low wages and cuts in benefits and services. A breakthrough in struggle must confront the illusion that there is any common ground. We don't have any shared interests with the men and women who live off our dispossession, whether that means the bankers in the City of the bureaucrats in the Kremlin. Our liberation means their annihilation.

The fight to radicalise the struggle is not just a matter of ideas. There are concrete organisations which specialise in fake solidarity and the defence of the national economy. They are called unions. **"Even the Union was stamping on anger"**

- Nurse at Guy's Hospital

The last thing the unions want is a united wave of strikes. It was the Winter of Discontent in 1979 which ended their cosy relationship with the Labour government, the same government which had already been cutting health provision for three years, and for which wage growth was the number one problem. A strike wave now would threaten not only the 'new realist' unions which plan to introduce 'no-strike deals' and similar schemes, but also the left-led unions who won't be of very much help to the bosses if they let the workers get out of control. Hector Mackenzie, the COHSE General Secretary, was acting as a scout for the state when he warned that any reduction of nurses' bonuses would be 'like dropping a match into a petrol tank'. That's the last thing COHSE and the other unions want.

It is hardly surprising that the unions are doing their best to sabotage workers' resistance. The NUS ordered strikers on the ferries back to work (an order ignored by many), the unions at Ford tried unsuccessful

fully to get workers to accept a 3-year pay and productivity deal, and the NUM called off its overtime ban just as the pit deputies were beginning their action.

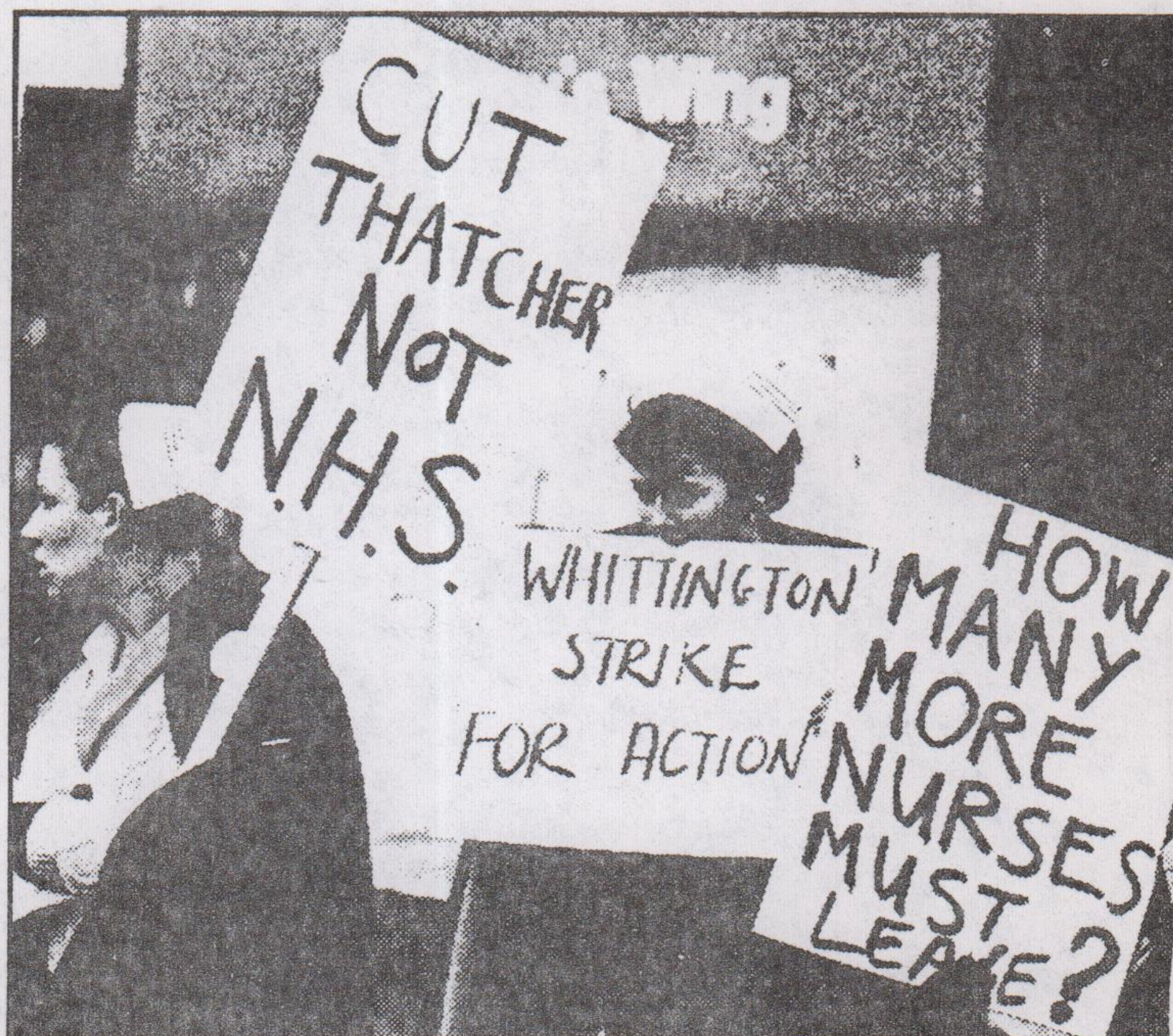
NOT ANOTHER BLOODY REPEAT!

Going through the officials leads to defeat. If the health service unions and the TUC succeed in getting hospital workers to stage a repeat of the 1982 fiasco it will be a disaster. The campaign of one-day, two-day and then (wow) three-day strikes wore down the enthusiasm both of militant health-workers and of the other health-workers who might have been willing to strike if they thought it could have achieved something. At the end of the day, healthworkers not only failed to win anything like the 12% pay rise they were after, but separate pay deals for nurses were imposed, reinforcing the existing divisions in the health workers ranks. Hopefully this time around the question of London allowances won't serve the same purpose.

FOR A MASS MOVEMENT OF STRIKES AND RIOTS

Many hospital militants are aiming at an all out strike in the health service. Whilst it is true that health workers would need to strike for longer periods if they are to successfully picket out other workplaces, an all-out strike would be a distraction from the necessary business of spreading the struggle to other workers.

And not only the workers..... Just think of the strength the working class would have gained if the 1985/86 urban riots had exploded during the year long miners strike, or if the miners had begun their strike during the riots. It should be obvious that unity of working class rebels is not just a matter for workers, who are not the only ones up against government



attacks on our healthcare. Similarly, the unemployed are not alone in suffering attacks on urban housing provision, which is another part of the social wage.

SELF ORGANISATION

The health workers must not remain isolated. However promises of solidarity from the TUC are as absurd as whines of the leftists who want us to beg the TUC, RCN or any union to act in our interests. At St. Thomas's Hospital there was even a petition to get 1000 signatures to force an EGM where a strike vote could be held. This would be funny if it was not so sickening. The idea that we can rely on unions or democracy is as ridiculous as the idea that what we need is more "committed" leaders. In the real world, health workers and their supporters will only be successful if they take things into their own hands and spread the struggle themselves.

**NURSES - AMBULANCEMEN - COUNCIL WORKERS - CAR WORKERS
- ALL WORKERS!**

ONLY UNITED STRIKE ACTION CAN WIN!

No group of workers on their own can force the government to back down. The miners couldn't, and neither can the health workers. One-day strikes are obviously not going to achieve anything. To have any effect on the government, workers need to fight together.

Several groups of workers are involved in various forms of industrial action at present. Each group has something to offer the others. For example, Fords workers can use their industrial muscle to support nurses. This would greatly increase the chance of support from other workers, who are all affected by the attack on the NHS. On their own, health strikes will have no effect on the bosses, who don't depend on the NHS. But a few nurses could easily picket out pits, car plants, local councils - just about any workplace. This has to be organised outside union divisions, like the nurses who picketed pits in the 1982 dispute. All sections of the working class have one interest in common - frightening the ruling class into holding back from their attacks on us.

AGAINST UNION DIVISIONS

Before Christmas, the postal workers' union sabotaged the possibility of a strike by negotiating a deal with management. Before that, SOGAT stitched up the print workers' strike. Unions in the councils have divided workers and tried to prevent solidarity by saying 'this is a picket for NALGO members only' etc.. At Lambeth, NALGO shop stewards tried to turn a picket of the town hall into an ineffective demo and get rid of non-NALGO members who'd turned up in solidarity. We told them to get lost. The RCN is an openly scab union, but health workers have to watch out for other unions like NUPE and COHSE. Who stitched up the strikes of '82? COHSE called workers who struck during the Falklands war 'unpatriotic'. We can only win by completely ignoring union divisions, and organising mass meetings of all militant workers to decide what needs to be done, regardless of whether they are nurses, miners, car workers or whatever. A mass strike is just about the only way to stop the Tory offensive. Even this would only be a temporary victory - they'd bring in Labour to attack the working class, like they did after the massive struggles of '74. All governments are our enemy. Only the destruction of all states by a revolutionary working class uprising on a world scale can ultimately solve our problems, which are caused by the capitalist system.

The world economy is heading for recession, forcing bosses from Moscow to Mexico to attack workers to raise the amount of profit they can squeeze from our labour. The next wave of Tory attacks are going to make the last nine years look like a tea party - layoffs, work discipline (the new nursing council, the new code in the mines), part time work, massive cuts in services, and the Poll Tax. **THESE AFFECT US ALL!**

The scum of the Labour Party have been willing accomplices of the government's attacks. In local councils, the loony left have been carrying out the same attacks as their Tory colleagues. Layoffs, cuts, redeployment of workers to different jobs, and in Camden, repatriation of black and Irish homeless people. Recently the Labour leadership denounced nurses who voted for strike action, saying this would harm their efforts to persuade the government to put more money into the health service.

WHO NEEDS DEMOCRACY?

Strike ballots are a way of delaying action and making strikes dependent on majorities in particular sectors. We can't afford to wait for a majority - minorities need to spread struggles directly to other workers by picketting. Where mass meetings vote for the wrong thing, these should be ignored by militants, who should go ahead and do what they know is needed, calling on the rest to follow their lead.

ALL WORKERS SHOULD PUT FORWARD DEMANDS FROM OTHER SECTORS.

Large flat rate pay rise for all NHS workers - nurses, ambulancemen, theatre staff, cleaners, porters, etc..

Enough funds for immediate free medical treatment for all who need it.

No to the UK Central Council for Nursing! Immediate strike action in solidarity with any nurse disciplined or struck off. Immediate strikes against any dismissals, suspensions, or redeployment. No to moderation and compromise!

Spread the strikes as far as possible! For a winter of discontent, followed by a summer of discontent! (29.1.88.)

By Wildcat c/o BM CAT, London, WC1N 3XX

capitalism makes you sick

The health-care available to working class people living under the British rulers is indisputably better than it used to be before the war. Not only are there far fewer deaths nowadays from TB, pneumonia and bronchitis, but for more than 40 years some sort of medical consultation has been available to working class people irrespective of income or savings.

This welcome increase in the social wage can be compared with the simultaneous growth of most employed workers' wage-rates. But this doesn't mean that the working class has the same interests as the rulers. In fact the rulers have often granted wage-increases

so long as there has been an increase in the amount of value exploited from each worker in a given period of time, and so long as the international economic crisis hasn't threatened their markets and profits too drastically.

The social wage is not essentially different from wages in general. It is part of the price paid to the dispossessed class in return for the expropriation of our creative power. This would be true even if the ruling class themselves used the NHS, which they don't. The social wage is subject to the usual limits. They won't let us be paid too much. For example, it was the Attlee

government itself which, after using troops against a dock strike on its sixth day in office, introduced charges for both prescriptions and for optical and dental services.

DYING FOR PROGRESS

There is a very widespread myth that the Labour government of 1945-51 created the NHS out of the kindness of their hearts, their sorrow for the war-dead and their commitment to "socialism". Nothing could be further from the truth. Just consider the facts.

The NHS was founded in the aftermath of WW2, the biggest bosses' war in history. Rival national rulers had dragooned working class people into fighting and making sacrifices for them against their competitors, and naturally the overwhelming majority of the 50 million dead came from the working class, which promptly became the dying class.

The Labour Party and the trade unions showed how much they were committed to the "health" of the working class by actively participating in the slaughter. In 1948, Bevan, the "father" of the NHS, even tried to start another major bosses' war when he suggested that Britain use military force to break the 'Soviet' bosses' blockade of West Berlin.

The myth of the paternal Attlee government doling out health-care to the masses as a free gift with no strings attached is simply bullshit. Fifty million of us lay dead. And after the war productivity soared.

* * * * *

Health-care improved in the post-war period for one reason alone: there was a growing demand for labour. This wasn't surprising in view of the devastation of the war years. Since the mid-'70s, though, the rise of unemployment (which tripled under Labour and doubled under the Tories) has ensured that employed workers have been deprived of the power to swap jobs as easily as they did in the '50s and '60s. As jobs become more of a "privilege", "wage drift" is relatively much slower, and millions work part-time for low wages. Redundancy today usually means the dole. So workers don't have to be paid extra to stay in their jobs.

The heyday of the NHS (1948-76) corresponded to a period where workers had to be fit and strong, and had to exist in large numbers. This happened, and life expectancy rose while infant mortality fell. In the '50s if a million working class people died of AIDS it would have been a disaster for the rulers, whereas today it would mean a million less mouths for the DHSS to feed. Infant mortality is rising again.

* * * * *

But, you may say, the NHS corresponded to a higher level of available health-care, and thus should be defended, whatever the reasons for its creation. It certainly did, and the provision of "free" health-care must be defended, but this is not the same as defending the NHS.



STRIKING HEALTH workers lobbying Lothian Health Board drowned out officials with chants of "All out, all out!"

The NHS is not really a health service, but an organisation to control disease within the framework of the present forms of social life, i.e. capitalism and wage-labour. In 1982 it was said that even the most conservative doctors admitted that 70% of illnesses were socially caused. The real figure is much higher. The main cause of lung cancer is the psychological addiction to tobacco, which itself is only a compensation for the general malaise and fear. In the USSR many working class alcoholics have frozen to death on the streets. In a world where roads are built according to what is profitable, and where most cars have only one person in them at any time, road accidents are kept to an "acceptable" level. Ferries sink after being turned round as quickly as possible. Tube stations burn to the sound of cash tills ringing up savings on labour costs. Finger and toes get chopped in the YTS machine. Working class people kill themselves and get mugged. They get addicted to drugs such as heroin and valium while the G.P.s and other drug pushers see their profits rolling in. The forcible and voluntary use of tranquilisers means that millions of people are partially murdered or carry out partial suicide while the scum who own the drug companies cream off a percentage from the NHS. Drugs are tested in prisons and geriatric homes on working class people outside the labour force, as well as on animals in vivisection labs.

Thousands are slaughtered in chemical accidents, to the delight of the lawyers who move in to make a fast buck. Among some U.S. lawyers, "disasters" are known as "sexy" cases; Bhopal became "Marilyn". Chemical companies reap profits from the adulteration of our food with harmful additives, causing untold numbers of illnesses.

THE SIN OF WAGES IS DEATH

Miners are murdered by coal-dust poisoning, or receive chronic back-injuries from a lifetime's work in three-foot seams. In South Africa the rate at which striking miners were killed by cops during last year's strike was less than the average death-rate due to "accidents" when they're at work. All over the world, from Doncaster to the Donets Basin, industrial workers suffer a range of diseases and injuries according to what is profitable for the boss, whether that means a private company or a department of State. Office workers contract eye-diseases and migraine. Workers, as objects which are bought and sold, are reduced to a number of hours of labour-power. As Marx put it, the more the worker works, the less they live. Wage-labour is the sale of life in return for survival. Shorter waiting-lists are what we need in the short term, but they won't get rid of the Old World of disease, because none of the activity lost in labour can be regained in submission to its result.(1)

The world wide capitalist organisation of disease drives home the lesson that our lives must be reduced to a means for survival, even when we are permanently or voluntarily unemployed. The left portray us as innocents who would beg for work, in fact there are many ways in which our availability is itself shaped and restricted by the intensification of poverty. This is the function of the deterioration of "health" and housing provision. As a commodity we are often available only subject to demand, and in regions where our weakness is combined with a total lack of demand for our labour-power, we are already

being slaughtered according to the needs of the economy, under cover of "natural" disasters or so-called "scarcity". This hasn't happened yet in most of the "developed" regions only because urban traditions of collective resilience have given us solid ground to fight from. The present State campaign in favour of individual self-reliance is part of the enemy's attack on us.

CURING THE DISEASE

This is not to say that there isn't a day-to-day struggle to defend and increase the meagre benefits allowed to us, such as dole-rates, wage-levels, jobs, sanity, access to health resources made available by the State. Bitter struggles abound, and we support every strike against hospital closure, every action to force the enemy to improve "health" provision, every fight for an increase in the social wage. But history shows that even as the dispossessed we cannot win permanent "security". We look towards an insurrectionary dawn when quantitative struggles such as these we have mentioned lose their significance, when by means of class war and world-wide social revolution we can permanently change life by destroying wage-labour, commodity economy and the entire capitalist organisation of disease, drug-addiction and death.

Contact BM Wild, London WC1N 3XX



SEXUAL POLITICS

IN THE 80's

The last year has seen the first serious legislative attempt to roll back the gains made by women and gays in the 60s and 70s. The Local Government Bill and the Alton Bill both look like going through without significant alteration in the near future. We are reprinting below a number of leaflets distributed by communists on recent demonstrations in Manchester and London. There are aspects of all these leaflets that we would question, but we prefer to reprint them without comment and instead invite our readers to send in their own contributions.

Sexual liberation and clause 28

EQUAL RIGHTS UNDER THE LAW? NO THANKS!

We're faced with a whole series of attacks on our sexuality, wages, benefits, the control we have over our bodies, and the quality of our lives. The level and quality of our response to these attacks has been no match for them.

AIDS has proved even more of a 'godsend' to the mongers of morals than it has to the peddlers of condoms. Marriage, the family and 'sex for procreation' are being pushed hard as the last bastions of civilisation. In line with this, Clause 28, the Alton Bill and the Benefit cuts aimed at the young, all serve to reinforce the family.

NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST

"It's (the family's) final destruction would mean the end of every form of higher humanity... It is the smallest but most valuable unit in the complete structure of the state."

Adolf Hitler: Mein Program

In the 'cosy' confines of the nuclear family, even if you're lucky enough to escape without being raped or battered, you are unlikely to escape without feelings of guilt and fear towards all forms of sexual activity and in particular, any which stray from the heterosexual 'norm'.

"'Normal' people feel guilty because underneath it all they know they are a little queer themselves." (Mario Mieli)

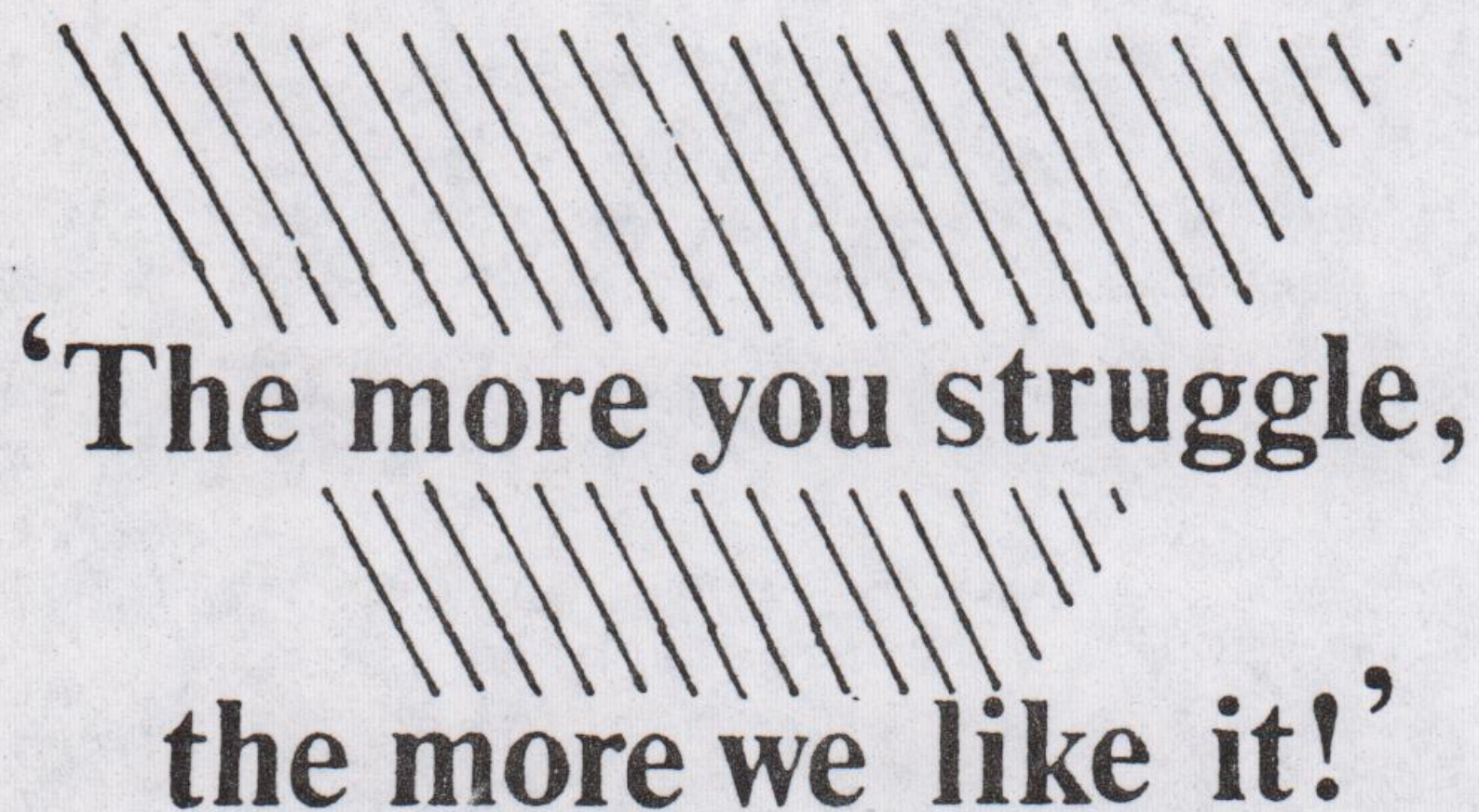
To us, sex is a basic form of communication, and like all forms of community and communication, it has been mangled to suit the needs of capital. The family is the first mangle we have to go through.

STRAIGHTER THAN STRAIGHT

The most vocal sections of the Lesbian and Gay 'movements' have been opposing these attacks by going along with them. We are told that Lesbians and Gays can be straighter than straights, promoting family values, bringing up kids to be good citizens, and running businesses. We have nothing in common with the gay or lesbian business owners who line their pockets with all those pink pounds they rip us off for. We want nothing to do with respectable gay culture which reproduces all the worst aspects of straight society.

Our patronising patrons, the labour councils, expect us to defend them in return for meagre grants. These 'ever so radical' bastards who have been deporting immigrants, evicting squatters and sacking workers, are using Lesbians and Gays as a bargain basement constituency of active supporters for 'Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition'. A Labour councillor backed councillor 'Brownshirts' call for 90% of gays to be gassed last year and most of the party wants to drop us as a vote-losing 'issue'. But what's all this compared to the bare-faces hypocrisy of Manchester City Council, who show their support for the gay struggle by asking us to listen to speeches by ruling class politicians - including veterans of the class war like Heath and Kinnock. No doubt whatever speakers decide to show up will call for equal rights. We too can have the right to be alienated, oppressed and exploited. Wow! No doubt our friends in the police force will see we receive 'proper treatment'.

The only role for most of the organisers and invited speakers at any real 'festival of the oppressed' (like Stonewall or the gay riots after Milk's assassination) is that of TARGETS!



**'The more you struggle,
the more we like it!'**

PERVERSE TIMES

We are labelled 'perverts' by a totally perverse society and yet still we are being asked to fight for integration into a society which measures our worth in pound signs.

We don't want 'rights'. The very existence of rights implies state oppression. The state grants us (carefully defined and strictly limited) rights so that we'll accept the rest of state oppression.

WE DON'T WANT INTEGRATION, WE WANT DESTRUCTION. Its our reality against theirs. We want to destroy class society, the family and the state.... our struggle for sexual liberation is part of the class struggle for communism.

TOWARDS A GAY COMMUNISM

Communism has nothing to do with the antics of the C.P.'s, the Trots or the so-called communist states, who's record of sexual repression is matched only by their ferocious exploitation of the working class.

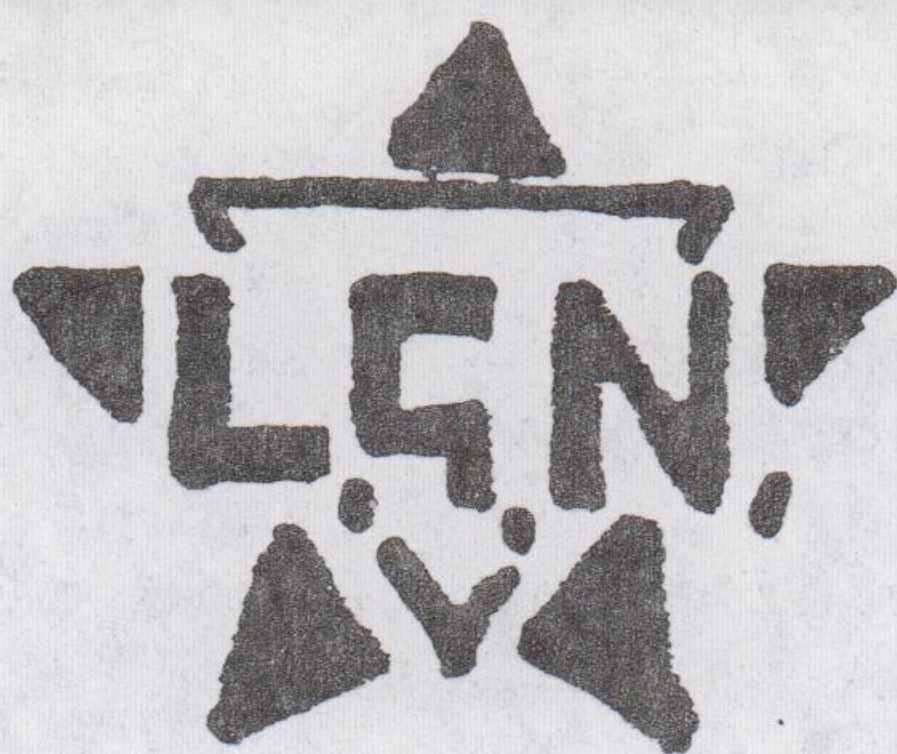
It has nothing to do with labour councils and their budgets.

Nor is it some future utopia to be established the day after the revolution. It is a real social movement which already exists and subverts all aspects of capitalist domination - sexual as well as political and economic.

The essence of communism is the passionate transformation of ourselves and the world in the creation of a world human community.

FOR A WORLD WIDE SOCIAL REVOLUTION

**WITH
UNRESTRAINED PLEASURE
AS ITS ONLY GOAL!**



Lesbian and Gay Noise

According to our 'friends' in parliament, in the media and in the various, ever spawning reform groups we are fighting for equal rights, human rights and even gay rights. Well we are aren't we?

EQUAL RIGHTS? WHAT RIGHTS?

But what are the gay rights we are defending? Gay men are free behind a locked door, if we are over 21, otherwise we are illegal! Lesbians don't even have this legal nicety. They are not recognised by legislation. The powers that be however, will of course interpret this as - lesbians are not subject to a particular law, the law in general can be used against them.

The 1967 act merely redefined our oppression. In reality we still have no right to a decent living, to housing, to free expression, no right to bring up our children, no right to walk the streets in safety.

What do equal rights mean? The right to an equal share in the miserable state of exploitation and degradation the majority enjoys? Our liberation cannot lie in fighting for the scraps off the table of our oppressors' magnanimity. Such a sparse table becomes rapidly more empty as economic crisis deepens and they increasingly feel the pinch. Out goes that sweet-nothing liberalism and in comes the jointed truncheon.

SO, WHAT ARE WE FIGHTING FOR

If we are fighting for the liberation of our sexuality and from oppression on the basis of gender, race and sexuality it is important to first identify our enemy. In whose interest is the division of society? Of the working class? It is the interest of capitalism!

It is only since the rise of capitalism and its accompanying patriarchal ideology that the nuclear family has developed, hand in hand with the concept of exclusive sexuality: the categorisations of the heterosexual and homosexual rather than as previously was the case that only the actions of a person were defined.

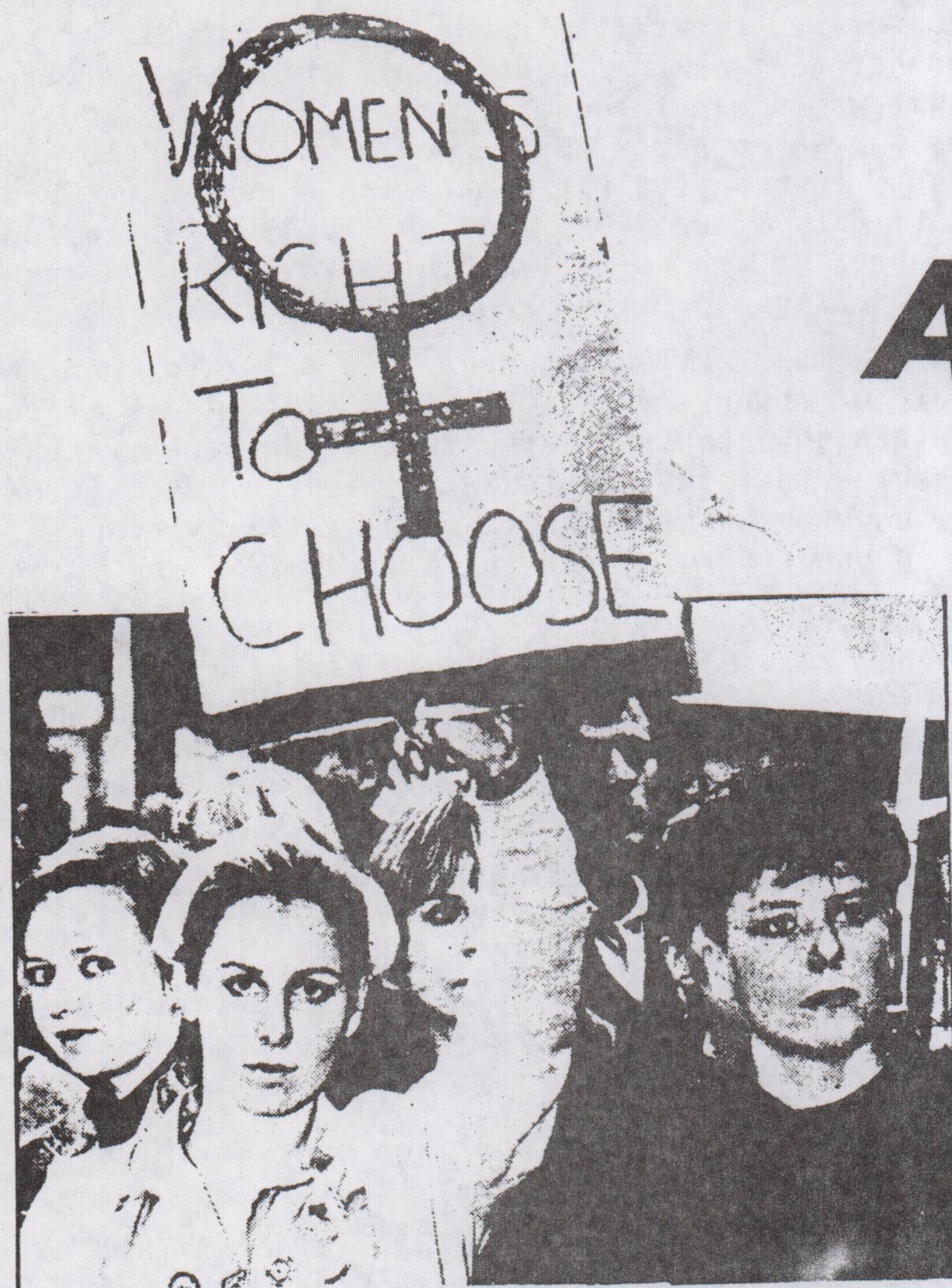
This didn't happen by accident - the family institution was designed to serve the interests of the ruling class. Simultaneously it serves to both control and indoctrinate those brought up under its wings according to a set of rigid and repressive values whilst creating an enemy within. A socially unacceptable group whose frightening existence acts as a warning to those who might deviate in the exploration of their own individuality.

From all sides it is the agencies of capital which attack us. Especially cynical are those professional liberators - our would be masters - the Labour party, RCP, and other leftists. They throng round any groups which shows signs of militancy in order to recruit for their own ends. By placing energies and hope in their keeping we have deluded ourselves. We must realise that all parties are an oppressive part of capitalism. The last resort of capitalism would be to try to disguise itself as communism.

Our only realistic objective in fighting this bill is to use what little political freedom we have, in order to fight a system in which 'unfreedom' is the rule, and to which a 'right' is a delusion.

If there is ever to be liberation for lesbians and gays, it can only come through the destruction of capitalism and its first weapon - the state. Only through the establishment of a world human community, the achievement of communism, can such freedom be found. As lesbians and gays we must organise and fight in solidarity with the autonomously organised working class.

Contact: LGN, Box LGN, 180 Mansfield Road, Nottingham.



ALTON BILL

It looks like the parliamentary windbags may have talked this bill out, at least temporarily. We don't doubt that similar attacks will follow and think the following leaflet is still relevant.

BODIES IN THE FRONTLINE

If David Alton is successful in his attempt to reduce the maximum time limit for abortions from 28, to 18 weeks it will mean misery for thousands of women. If this had been in effect as law in 1986, 5665 women would have been forced to give birth to unwanted children.

A DOCTORS RIGHT TO CHOOSE.

The medical profession is currently recommending a time limit of 24 weeks but even this would be a significant defeat. In any case the situation at the moment is hardly desirable in itself. The 1967 Abortion Act certainly doesn't provide for free abortion on demand: a woman needs to get the permission of two doctors and even if this is forthcoming she may well end up having to pay out. In most areas abortion cannot be obtained on the National Health Service after the 10th week of pregnancy while in many places it is difficult to get one before this: in Birmingham, for instance, only 5% of abortions are carried out on the NHS.

Many feminists argue that restrictions on access to abortion represent an attempt by men to control women's reproductivity. For a start this implies that all men have an interest in controlling women's bodies, which we don't accept: it is hard to see how a working class man whose wife has to give up her job because she can't get an abortion can be said to be gaining any benefit. Nor is it true that all women are equally affected by such restrictions. Whatever the situation as regards legal 'rights', rich women have always been able to obtain abortions (by paying large sums to private surgeons or going abroad) or if they have a child, to pay somebody else to look after it. For working class women on the other hand the choice is often between an operation they can ill afford (or before '67 a dangerous back street abortion) or struggling to bring up a child while holding down a job at the same time. This is why we see abortion (and reproduction generally) as a class issue.

Control over reproduction has got nothing to do with "womb envy". It is partly to do with the need of capitalism to manipulate the growth of population according to the needs of profit. In order to survive capitalism needs a steady supply of people to work in its factories, mines and offices. Making it difficult for women to obtain abortions is one way of ensuring that women are forced to continue to breed generation after generation of new workers. Of course in parts of the world where the poor are too numerous to be absorbed profitably into capitalist production - people who cost money to keep alive and might riot if this money isn't made available - population control takes a different form: in parts of the so-called 'Third World', such as India, men and women have been compulsorily sterilized in their thousands.

A more important reason for the new restrictions, however, is to strengthen the family by forcing women into the role of mother. The family is a strong form of social control as it forces people to maintain job stability etc. This is why the present government have introduced many measures to force people back into the family, including selling off council houses, housing benefit changes, the anti-gay clauses in the local government bill, changes in benefit rules for 16-18 year olds, and so on.

There are some measures which women can take now to retain an amount of control over their reproductivity. For instance some women's groups use herbal medicine (which is outside the control of doctors) to induce periods. Another practical proposal would be to compile lists of doctors who are helpful, or are unhelpful, in authorising abortions. Having this information would help women to obtain an abortion within the legal time limit.

The measures outlined above will however only be of help to a small number of women. Only a revolution will finally free all our bodies from the tentacles of capital's control and give us the chance to create a world based on our needs and desires. In a communist society free contraception, abortion and socialised childcare will ensure that having children will be a real choice not a life sentence. We won't get from here to there by wishful thinking though - we must make a start now by fighting against every attack the system launches against us.

UNDER ATTACK

Whether Alton is successful or not, it is clear that anti-abortionists aim to stop all abortions, not just those after 18 weeks: in the past 'Life' (the Catholic anti-abortion agency) has even attempted to get the so-called 'morning after pill' banned. But Alton and co. are not the only problem - there are plenty of other people carrying out attacks that will force more and more women to act as baby breeding and rearing machines.

While the national 'Fight the Alton Bill' campaign invites Tory MP Teresa Gorman to speak at a press conference, government cuts cause family planning clinics to close (leading to more unwanted pregnancies) and funding for NHS abortion facilities to be reduced. Meanwhile, at the same time as they condemn Alton, Labour Party feminists like Linda Bellos are doing their own bit to push women into their allotted role as mothers by closing down childcare facilities and cutting thousands of jobs in local government - previously a major source of full time employment for women. All of these people are equally our enemies.

FIGHTING BACK

The campaign of petitions and letters to MPs advocated by F.A.B. won't stop Alton or anything else. What is needed is mass working class action against the anti-abortionists - disruption of their meetings, occupations of their offices etc.

There have already been some encouraging actions against nursery and playgroup closures. In Camden in December, Under-Fives workers staged a one day strike while 200 parents, children and staff occupied the Social Services offices, blocked traffic near Kings Cross and took over the council chamber, refusing to let the council leader leave while they told him what they thought about cuts in childcare provision.

In the NHS, the recent strike by nurses at Manchester General Hospital is hopefully a sign of bigger struggles to come. But it is not just hospital workers who have been involved in action against the cuts. Just after Xmas, patients helped staff prevent the closure of a ward in Wolverhampton's New Cross Hospital by tying themselves to their beds. And in November council workers and Kerseley miners joined hospital workers in Coventry in a short strike against District Health Authority cuts.

MAKING THE LINKS TO BREAK OUR CHAINS

The worldwide economic crisis is forcing the bosses everywhere to attack working class living standards by reducing wages, making workers redundant and cutting spending on health and social security. To be able to fight back effectively we need to co-ordinate our efforts as a class as a whole.

Making the necessary links has got nothing to do with getting the TUC to affiliate to FAB or with any such coalition of union and campaign bureaucrats - it means militants involved in different struggles coming together to discuss ways of uniting their efforts in a single anti-capitalist offensive. The potential for developing such links was shown in the 1984/5 miners' strike when, for example, women from mining areas participated in an occupation of South London Women's Hospital.

A major barrier to unifying our struggles are the trade unions which by their very nature perpetuate the divisions between us. Even the supposedly 'radical' NUM sought to prevent the full involvement of non-members (including miners wives) in the strike by refusing to give them picketing expenses and attempting to channel their energies into a traditional supportive role as cooks and cheerleaders. In Spain dock strikes have been organised outside of the control of the unions from mass assemblies composed of all those involved - not just dockers, but other workers, the unemployed, school students etc.

By using tactics like these we can move beyond fighting (and usually losing) isolated battles - against the Alton Bill here, a hospital closure there - to forge a real community of struggle against everything that impoverishes our lives today.

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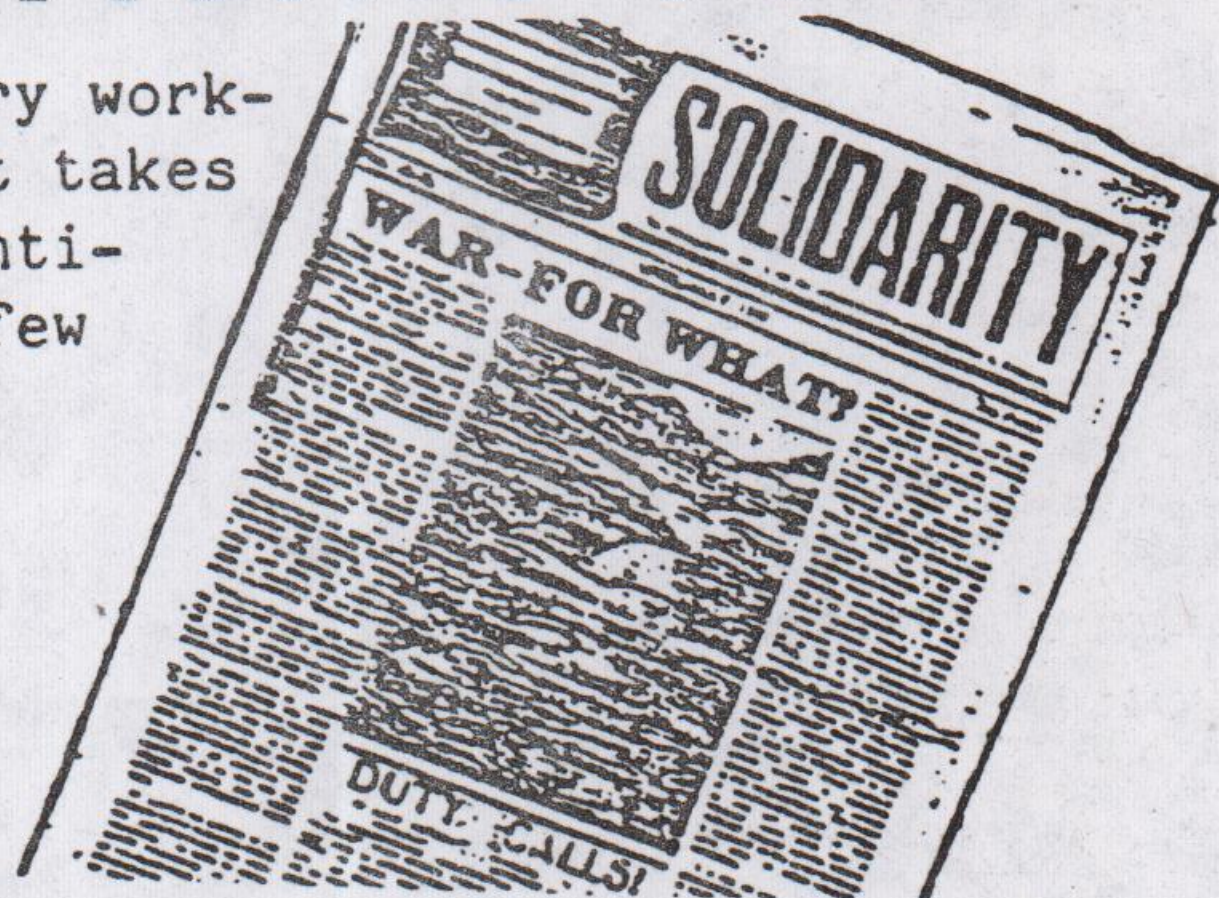
PT 1: describes the formation of the APCF through the merger of Glasgow Anarchists & Glasgow Communists and covers the goals & tactics of the organisation.

PT 2: covers their involvement & attitude to the Spanish civil war which in many way was a forerunner to;

PT 3: which details the Second Imperialist War, and the resistance to it.

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By Jean Barrot

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SYLVIA PANKHURST — ANTI-PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNIST

During six decades of active political involvement stretching from her teenage years in the late 1890s to her death in 1960, SYLVIA PANKHURST supported a wide variety of causes. In the early years of this century she was one of the leading figures in the militant wing of the women's suffrage movement. During the 1914-18 war she took a pacifist stance, and pressed for social reforms to improve the position of the working class during the war. In the 1920s she was an early opponent of Italian fascism. This later led her to champion the cause of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) when Italy invaded and occupied that country in 1935-36. After the 1939-45 war (during which she supported the Allies) she eventually went to live in Ethiopia, and it was there that she spent the last remaining years of her life.

Nowadays, it seems that nearly everyone can pick and choose some part of Sylvia Pankhurst's activities to idolise - feminists, pacifists, anti-fascists, and all sorts of leftists from Barbara Castle through the Communist Party to the SWP. But there is another aspect to Sylvia Pankhurst - one which is usually distorted, trivialised or simply ignored: the years from the end of the First World War to the mid-1920s when she was one of the clearest advocates of anti-parliamentary communism.

THE FIRST WORLD WAR

It was during the First World War that Sylvia Pankhurst's politics evolved from the militant suffragette reformism for which she is still best known to the anti-parliamentary communism which she advocated during the years 1917-24. By the outbreak of the war she had already split from her mother Emmeline and sister Christabel to set up her own independent East London Federation of the Suffragettes, which later became known as the Workers' Suffrage Federation, or WSF. As this change of title suggests, one of the issues which had divided the Pankhursts was Sylvia's recognition that working class women and men had to fight together for certain common needs and interests - something which Emmeline and Christabel regarded as a diversion from the main task of winning the vote.



During the war the gulf between the Pankhursts widened, as Emmeline and Christabel campaigned patriotically in support of a British victory, and against industrial action which would hinder the war effort. Sylvia and her comrades in the WSF, meanwhile, opposed the war on pacifist grounds, and became immersed in trying to do something about the horrific conditions of working class existence.

In the East End of London, as in every other working class area, the war did nothing but worsen conditions which had already been bad enough beforehand. The real value of wages was cut as wage increases lagged behind the rising price of other commodities. Moreover, many staple goods were either rationed or simply unobtainable (at least not at any price working class people could afford). The migration of workers to areas where the war industries were located, the destruction of houses through bombing, and the halt

in housebuilding, all led to an increase in overcrowding and homelessness. This in turn contributed to a rise in ill-health and disease, not helped by the poor diet which was all most people could afford, and the cost of effective medicines.

The enrolment of men into the armed forces deprived many families of their wage-earners, while the system of Separation Allowances which was supposed to compensate for this was a chaotic shambles administered by petty-minded officials whose main aim was to pay out as little as possible. Increasing numbers of women were forced into wage labour for the first time, and found themselves having to work long hours in terrible conditions for a pittance of a wage. Men invalided out of the armed forces because of war injuries faced poverty through unemployment and the same bureaucratic reluctance to pay Invalid Pensions as characterised the Separation Allowance system.

EAST ENDERS

Mainly through the notoriety of their militant suffragism, Sylvia Pankhurst and her comrades in the WSF had become well-known figures in London's East End. As the war progressed, they soon began to attract a steady stream of working class people asking them to help do something about their distress. As Sylvia Pankhurst recalled later, the WSF saw itself in the role of "the workers' mate, through which women submerged in poverty, and overburdened with toil...could force their needs and aspirations upon the attention of those in power."

Besides organising demonstrations against the war and calling for peace, the WSF also initiated several schemes to try to relieve some of the problems described above. Using funds donated by wealthier well-wishers, they distributed free milk and bread for babies, and set up a 'restaurant' serving food at 'cost-price', with free tickets for anyone who couldn't even afford that. A day nursery was established for the children of working mothers, and a co-operative toy factory was set up to provide creative employment. The WSF's weekly newspaper, the Woman's Dreadnought, which Sylvia Pankhurst edited, was used to publicise endless horrific instances of poverty and deprivation, while Sylvia Pankhurst took up numerous individual cases in letters to state and military authorities, and led deputations to harrass state officials, civil servants, MPs and government Ministers.

THE FUTILITY OF REFORMISM

Despite all the unflagging energy which the WSF expended on these efforts, however, it was never going to be enough to achieve anything more than temporarily soothing a minute fraction of the intense systematic poverty suffered by the people they were trying to help. As the war progressed, Sylvia Pankhurst experienced a growing tension between her humanitarian desire to do something to alleviate suffering now, and the dawning realisation that such suffering could only be alleviated for ever through a complete change in the way society was organised. It was this tension which Sylvia Pankhurst expressed in the rather flowery language of the following quote:

"The belief flared up insistent that only from a society re-created from the root, replacing the universal conflict of today by universal co-operation, could permanent peace arise. Yearning for the golden age of the coming equalitarian society, I passed, in thought, to the extremist pole, whereat all save a world-embracing social rebirth and reconstruction seemed mere trumpery. Then the daily fight with misery and hardship recalled me to do what I could for each of these poor ones."

In the end, it was the revolutionary aspect of this tension which overcame the reformist aspect in Sylvia Pankhurst's political outlook. She expressed this conclusion in 1919: "All my experience showed that it was useless trying to palliate an impossible system. This is a wrong system and has got to be smashed."

WORKERS COUNCILS

The main issue which then confronted the WSF, therefore, was no longer one of how working class people could 'force their needs and aspirations upon the attention of those in power', but of how the working class could realise those needs and desires by seizing power by and for itself, in order to carry out the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a communist society.

The answer to this question of what means the working class would use in this task was provided for the WSF by the Russian revolution in 1917, in which the soviets or workers' councils - committees of recallable delegates elected by and answerable to mass assemblies of working class people - were seen as the instruments of revolutionary overthrow and transformation. What particularly attracted the WSF to soviets as instruments of revolution was the scope they allowed for the mass of

the working class to play an active and conscious part in its own self-liberation, creating its own organisational forms under its own direct control rather than trying to win power through capitalist institutions such as Parliament. The same spirit of grassroots revolt against authority was also evident (to a lesser extent) in the shop stewards', workers' committee and rank-and-file movements which had emerged in Britain during the war, and it was in organisations such as these that Sylvia Pankhurst and her comrades saw a potential for the development of workers' councils in Britain.

THE END OF SUFFRAGISM

During and immediately after the Russian revolution, therefore, rapid changes took place in the WSF's political outlook. The WSF's reaction to the overthrow of the Tsar in the February 1917 revolution in Russia had been one of enthusiastic welcome, because they believed it heralded the establishment of a parliament elected by universal suffrage. In January 1918, however, the WSF greeted with equal approval the Bolsheviks' forcible dissolution of this selfsame Constituent Assembly. At the same time, the short statement of principles which declared that the WSF's aim was 'To Secure a Vote for every Woman and Man of full age' was removed from the Workers' Dreadnought (the title of the paper had been changed from the Woman's Dreadnought in July 1917).

The WSF's rapid rejection of its suffragette heritage, and its progression along the path of anti-parliamentarism, was again evident in May 1918 when the group changed its name to the Workers' Socialist Federation. Two months later the last trappings of suffragism were cast aside for good when the Dreadnought's masthead slogan of 'Socialism, Internationalism, Votes for All' was replaced by a straightforward appeal:-

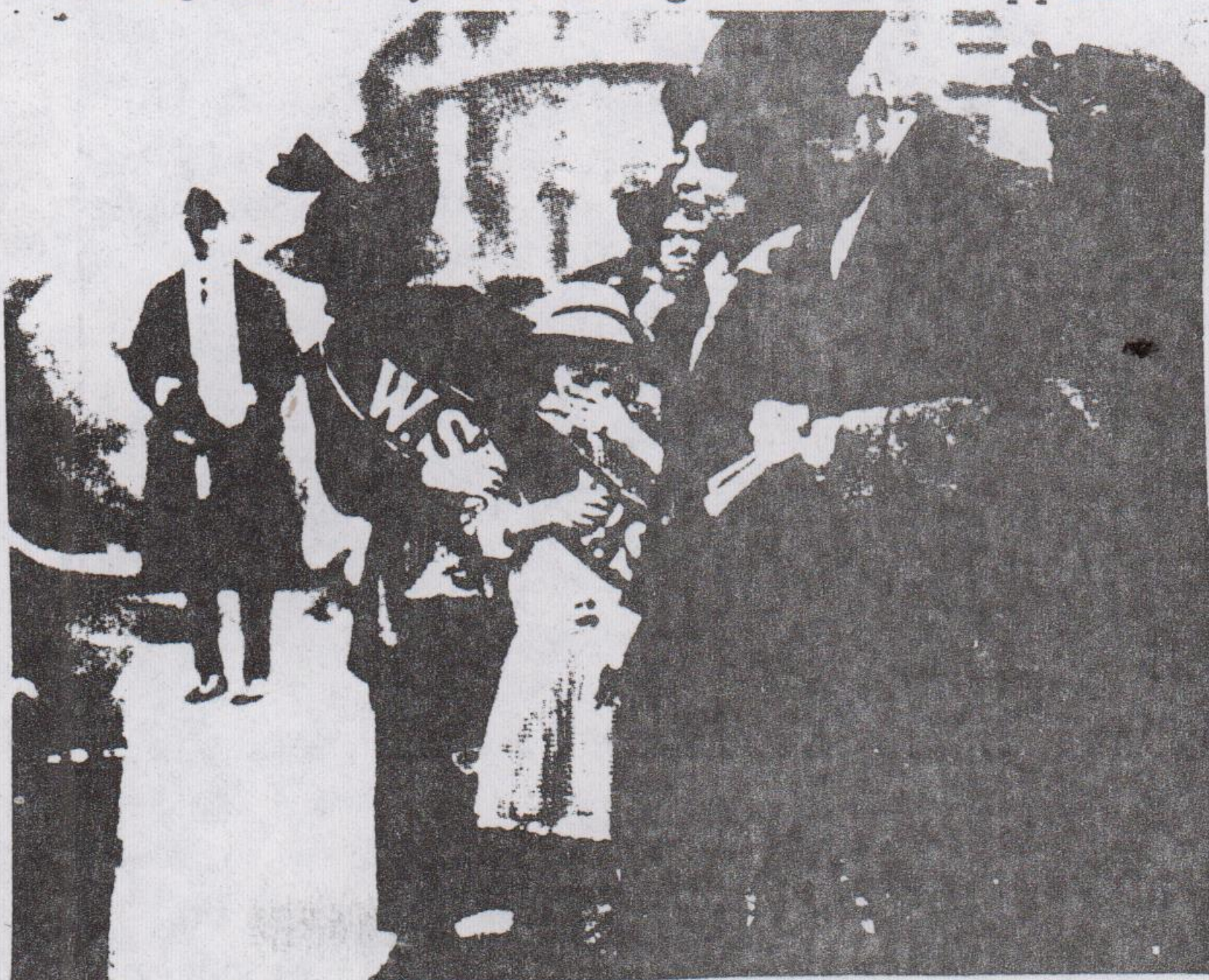
'For International Socialism'.

THE WSF AND THE INTERNATIONAL LEFT COMMUNISTS

The WSF was by no means the only group to be radicalised by their wartime experiences and by the post-war revolutionary wave sparked off by events in Russia. The war had marked a point of cleavage in the working class movement. In 1914 practically all of the parties of the social-democratic Second International had lined up in support of their respective national ruling classes. Before the war, left-wing minorities had criticised the social-democratic parties' increasing integration into bourgeois society, and had forewarned where this would lead. As the slaughter wore on, these same minorities were at the forefront of tentative moves towards the creation of a new, Third International.

The lessons of the war and the post-war revolutionary wave pointed to the potential political basis of this new International. It would oppose social-democracy, which through its wholehearted support for the imperialist bloodbath, and its role in crushing insurrectionary workers afterwards (e.g. in the German revolution of 1918), had now without doubt become part of the capitalist political spectrum. It would oppose the trade unions, which had also faithfully served the belligerent capitalist class by keeping the war economies going. It would oppose parliamentary action, in favour of the working class creating their own soviets or councils, as they had done in Russia and Germany.

The political tendency which stood for these ideas - the so-called 'left' communists - was a prominent faction of the revolutionary movement in most European



Trafalgar Square, 1916: A WSF anti-war demonstration addressed by Sylvia Pankhurst (left - centre) is attacked by colonial soldiers (right).

countries. The WSF was one such group in Britain. In the struggles to form united communist parties, which was taking place throughout Europe, the left communist groups naturally looked to the Bolsheviks for support in making their views prevail. However, their expectations were soon disillusioned.

"AN INFANTILE DISORDER"

In Russia the infant Bolshevik state was increasingly beleaguered, and the Bolsheviks' ambitions were becoming focussed on hanging on to what power they had, rather than pursuing their professed intention of spreading the revolution beyond Russia's boundaries. In early 1920 Lenin wrote a venomous attack on the international left communist groups, titled 'Left-Wing' Communism, An Infantile Disorder'. The hidden basis of this pamphlet was the view that the existence of mass communist parties, exerting some influence within the wider 'labour movement', might cause the governments of Western Europe to think twice about their hostility towards the Bolshevik regime. The small but principled parties advocated by the left communists would be useless in this respect. Instead, Lenin argued in favour of communist parties which would work within the trade unions, enter parliament, and forge alliances with the social-democratic parties.

THE WSF AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

In June 1920, before Lenin's views became widely known in Britain, the WSF had participated in the formation of the Communist Party (British Section of the Third International), or CP(BSTI), which had adopted an anti-parliamentary or left communist programme. However, Lenin specifically criticised the formation of the CP(BSTI) and gave his approval instead six weeks later to the formation of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). This comprised most of the British Socialist Party (BSP) and part of the Socialist Labour Party (SLP). The CPGB's founding policies included affiliation to the Labour Party and approval of parliamentary action - both advocated by Lenin, and both rejected by the CP(BSTI).

Intense debates took place within the CP(BSTI) about what to do next. The influence exerted by the Bolsheviks' prestige was enormous, and a majority of the CP(BSTI) eventually agreed to enter the CPGB in a merger which took place in January 1921. The CP(BSTI) intended to continue to argue for their anti-parliamentary communist viewpoint as an organised faction

within the merged party, and to use the Workers' Dreadnought as the mouthpiece of their views. This turned out to be a naive and ill-conceived strategy. The Dreadnought's criticisms were intolerable to the CPGB leadership, and they eventually ordered its editor, Sylvia Pankhurst, to hand over control of the paper to the party. When Pankhurst refused, arguing that "only by criticism and discussion can a knowledge and understanding of Communist tactics be hammered out by the Communist Party and communicated to the masses", she was expelled. Many of her comrades resigned in sympathy or were themselves rapidly expelled for continuing to adhere to anti-parliamentary communist positions.

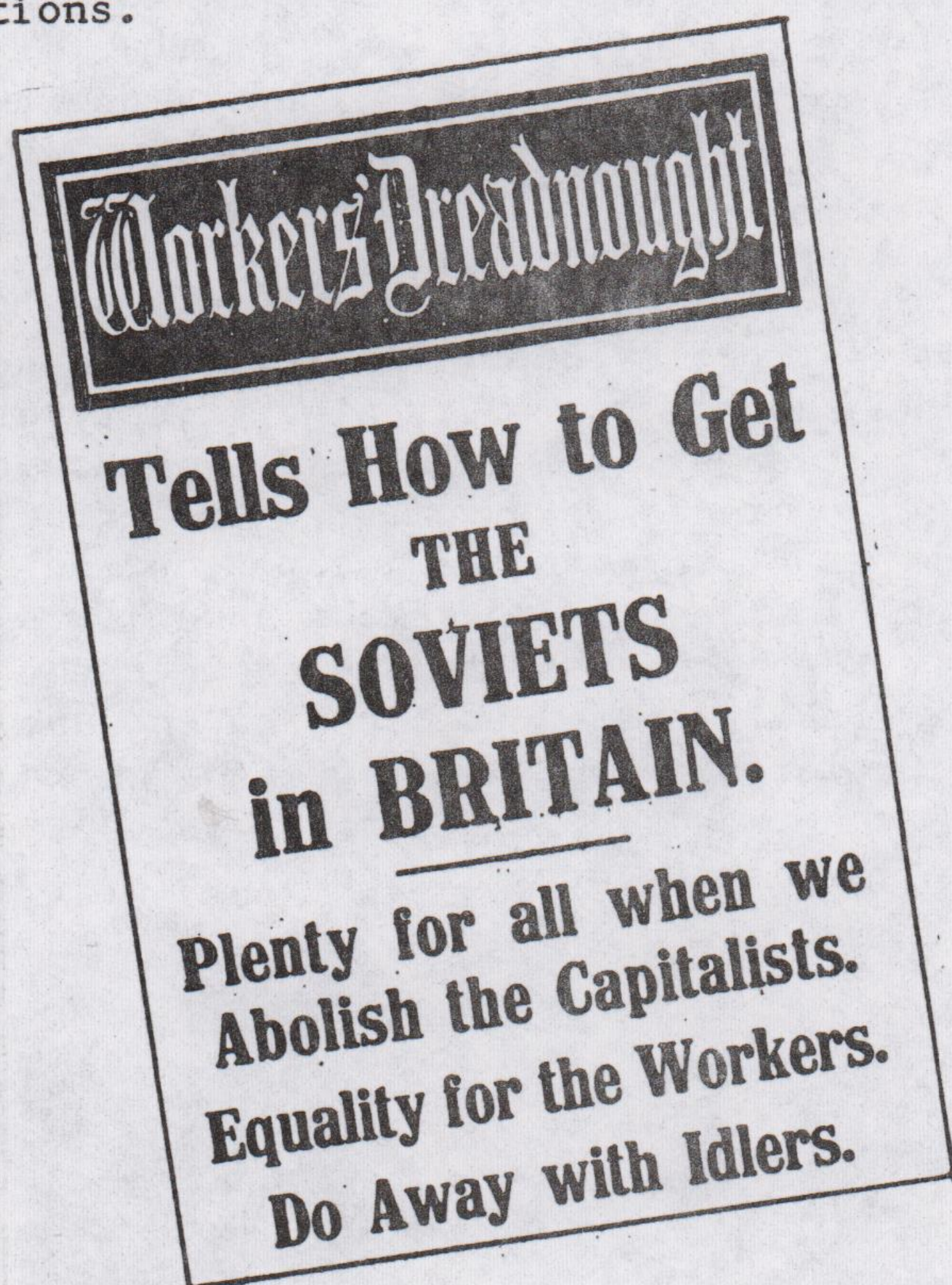
Following her expulsion from the CPGB Sylvia Pankhurst tried to rally the anti-parliamentarians in a new Communist Workers' Party. This was to be part of the Fourth International organised by a section of the anti-parliamentary Communist Workers' Party of Germany (KAPD), which had split from the Bolshevik-dominated Third International in 1921. In February 1922 the programme of the Communist Workers' Party in Britain was published in the Dreadnought, but the new party attracted little support and never became a force capable of intervening effectively in the class struggle. Instead, Pankhurst and her comrades were confined to acting mainly as a propagandist group, continuing to publish the Dreadnought on a weekly basis. Even this came to an end when the paper finally ceased publication in June 1924. Nevertheless, the propaganda work which the Dreadnought did carry out during this period was certainly invaluable.



SELLING THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT AT AN EAST END MEETING

STATE CAPITALISM IN RUSSIA

At a time when any criticism of Russia among the left wing parties was a criminal heresy, the Dreadnought group performed sterling work in attempting to dispell the myth of socialism attached to the new Bolshevik state. In 1921 the Bolsheviks introduced the New Economic Policy (NEP), which, among other things, legalised private agricultural trade and returned some small-scale nationalised industries to private individual control. The Dreadnought group denounced this as a 'reversion to capitalism'. In itself this denunciation was incorrect, since Russia was just as capitalist before the introduction of the NEP as it was afterwards. However, it did at least enable the Dreadnought group from then onwards to analyse Russian society accurately as one in which the state (i.e. the Bolsheviks) had collectively taken on the role normally fulfilled up till then by individual capitalists in the classical capitalist nations.



In 1924 Sylvia Pankhurst condemned the Bolsheviks as "prophets of centralised efficiency, trustification, State control, and the discipline of the proletariat in the interests of increased production... the Russian workers remain wage slaves, working, not from free will, but under compulsion of economic need, and kept in their subordinate position by State coercion." The state capitalism which had emerged from the corpse of the Russian revolution had nothing to do with the vision of genuine communism which Sylvia

Pankhurst stood for, in which the state, classes, wage-labour and money would all be abolished, and replaced by a worldwide human community of liberated women and men, producing wealth directly for use according to their own freely-chosen needs and desires.

ATTACKING THE LABOUR PARTY

During the years 1921-24 the Dreadnought group also kept up its incisive attacks on the Labour Party. Its description of the Labour Party as just as anti-working class as all the other capitalist parties was soon starkly vindicated by events 'on its own doorstep'. In the East London district of Poplar, where Pankhurst and her comrades still retained some residual support among the working class, Labour councillors led by George Lansbury controlled the local Board of Guardians, which was responsible for paying relief to unemployed workers. In recent years 'Poplarism' has been cast as a forerunner of the actions of so-called 'radical' local Labour councils in conflict with Tory central government. This is a valid parallel...but only insofar as that the Poplar Labour councillors' need to 'balance the books' of the local state frequently brought them into head-on conflict with the poor and starving working class of Poplar.

At this time the Dreadnought group was closely associated with the Unemployed Workers' Organisation (UWO), a revolutionary rival to the CPGB-dominated National Unemployed Workers' Movement (NUWM), and between them they were often at the forefront of angry demonstrations against the Poplar Board. On one occasion, in September 1923, scores of demonstrators were injured when Labour councillors called on the police to violently disperse an unemployed workers' occupation of a Poplar Board meeting. In the Dreadnought Sylvia Pankhurst summed up the lessons of this episode:

"working class representatives who become councillors and guardians assist in the maintenance of the capitalist system, and, sooner or later, must inevitably find themselves in conflict with the workers... The batoning of the Unemployed in Poplar is the first instance of the Labour Party being brought into forcible conflict with the labouring population in defence of the capitalist system...As the capitalist system nears its end, the reformists who desire to prevent the catastrophic breakdown of the system will inevitably find themselves in a position of acute antagonism to the people who are striving to destroy the system which oppresses them."

As this last quote implies, the Dreadnought group also maintained its opposition to working class participation in capitalist parliaments and parliamentary elections. Indeed, Sylvia Pankhurst produced no clearer obituary for her years as a militant suffragette than the following comment written after the 1923 general election, in which 8 women were elected as MPs:

"Women can no more put virtue into the decaying parliamentary institution than can men: it is past reform and must disappear...The woman professional politician is neither more nor less desirable than the man professional politician: the less the world has of either the better it is for it...To the women, as to men, the hope of the future lies not through parliamentary reform, but free Communism and Soviets."

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE DREADNOUGHT GROUP

The transformation of the Dreadnought group from an organisation of militant suffragettes into a group of anti-parliamentary communists had largely been a product of the group's experience of participation in the real struggles of the working class, in the context of the international wave of radical class struggle which spread throughout Europe in the aftermath of the Russian revolution. But the crushing defeats of the insurrectionary working class in Russia and Germany, and the general decline of this wave of class struggle at the beginning of the 1920s, soon caused the Dreadnought group's bright hopes of imminent world-

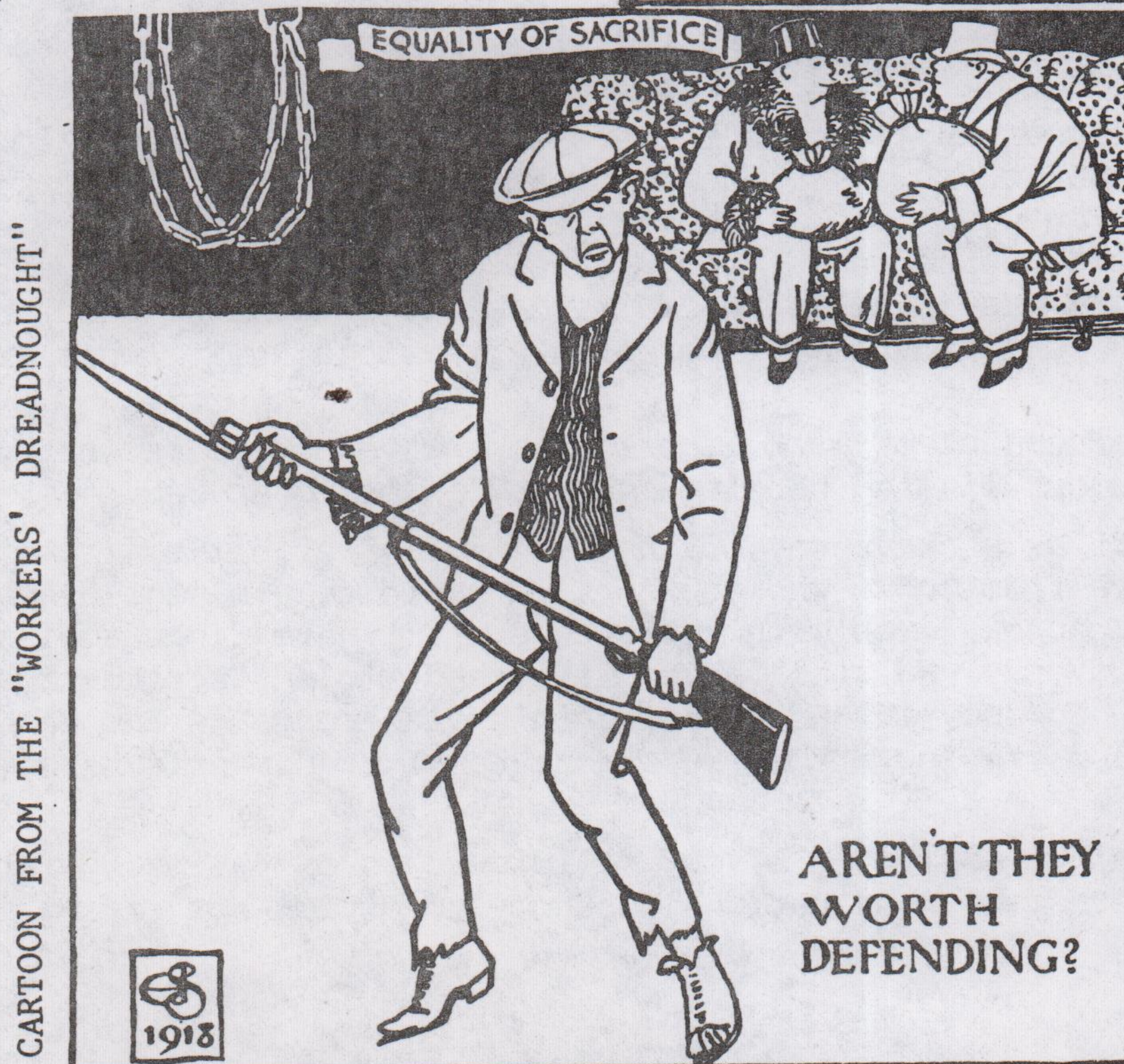
wide revolution to be replaced by the gloomy reality of the long dark night of counter-revolution.

Many comrades lost heart and dropped out of the movement; others, like Sylvia Pankhurst herself, returned to the reformist political activities for which she is now so fondly remembered. Yet anti-parliamentary communism in Britain was not extinguished by the disappearance of the Dreadnought group. The same political viewpoint continued to be defended, for another 20 years, by the Clydeside-based Anti-Parliamentary Communist Federation (APCF).***

If the transformation of the Dreadnought group is testimony to the fact that the spread of communist ideas is most likely to occur in periods of radical class struggle, the maintenance of the anti-parliamentary communist tradition by the APCF reminds us that a core of revolutionaries must always continue to put forward communist ideas, even during times when there is little tangible support or response from the vast majority of working class people.

The quotes used in this article are taken from the Woman's Dreadnought, the Workers' Dreadnought, and Sylvia Pankhurst's book The Home Front: A Mirror To Life In England During The First World War (first published in 1932, reprinted in 1987).

*** You can read about the APCF in a pamphlet called Class War on the Home Front, available for £1.50 (cash or postal order) from Box W, c/o Raven Press, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester M1 2BU.



FIGHTING BENEFIT CUTS

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Pensions: reform of State Earning Related Pensions (SERPS), no longer related to inflation, estimated to be worth 50% in 50 years

Reduced rate for 6 months if you left your job 'voluntarily' or were sacked.

DIVIDE & RULE

They hope to get away with these attacks using the old tactic of divide and rule. Whilst many will be affected at once (particularly school leavers and low paid workers), others (18-25's) will not be fully affected until they change their claim. The governments benefit advisors estimate that 40% of claimants and 48% of pensioners will be worse off. Citizens Advice Bureau's have estimated that 70% of claimants will be worse off. The attacks on young people are forcing them back into the family. Not only is economic pressure applied, but it's backed up with recent threats in legislation against lesbians and gays and tighter abortion controls. Each of us is supposed to think "I'm alright, Jack(ie)", or see a sudden increase in our poverty as an individual problem.

RESIST OR RESTART?

The Restart programme was smuggled in as a way of "helping people to find jobs" - they stressed that there was no compulsion to take anything that was offered, but threatened to cut our dole if we didn't attend. Restart is part of the framework for POLICING the unemployed - it is being used to force us into their cheap labour programmes (CPs, YTS & JTS) and will no doubt be used to force us onto the WORK FOR DOLE programme (appropriately called NUTS!) which replaces CPs etc in September.

They shovel us in and out of work like shit. We have no job security, no 'social' security and even our limited housing security is being eroded.

Welfare starts off as a cheap way of ensuring social stability, a way of avoiding crime and violence from those who couldn't be exploited in wage slavery at any given moment. Of course, even with welfare we still have riots against the brutal policing of our poverty. We still have bitter and violent strikes against enforced redundancies. How do they intend to maintain social peace in the wake of even more repression and its inevitable reaction? Easy: 26 new prisons at a cost of £870 millions.

These attacks are not motivated by any maliciousness on the part of the Tories. It is in the interests of the national economy to attack our living standards

and increase productivity. The unions and the Labour Party are just as keen as the Tories at maintaining and increasing our exploitation; whether in the governments slavery schemes or in 'proper' wage slavery. Even if you go further left than the Labour Party you only end up with calls for the "Right to Work"- the left wing equivalent of the Restart programme.

FIGHTING BACK

In response to these attacks on us, we need to take large scale action. In other towns there have already been occupations of UBO's, Town Halls and Unemployed Centres in response to cutbacks. Members of Snooper squads have had photos of their ugly mugs plastered on the wall in areas in which they operate. Many Dole workers have refused to work with them, and many claimants have helped them experience first hand the appalling conditions in the hospitals. Race checks have been halted, school kids have taken action against compulsory YTS. Claimants have offered solidarity (printing, picketing etc) to various workers in struggle, most recently to NHS workers. All this is only the beginning.

**For Direct Action against
these attacks**

REVOLT, REBEL, RESIST!

***Produced by Nottingham Claimants for an
Occupation of the Restart Offices on April 11th***

FIGHT FOWLER'S WORKFARE SCHEME

POLISH WORKERS STRIKE

As we go to press there is news of a new wave of strikes in Poland against the governments austerity package. Transport, engineering and steel workers have struck demanding massive wage increases for themselves and other workers. Despite massive repression the Polish workers are fighting back against their state capitalist bosses.

EAST AND WEST THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES.

LENINISM OR COMMUNISM (The "Renegade" Kautsky and his Disciple Lenin) by Jean Barrot.

A 'Wildcat' pamphlet available for 40p from **"SUBVERSION"**.

Contact Subversion at

BOX W, c/o Raven Press, 75 Piccadilly, Manchester, England, M1 2BU.

BOX W, c/o 180 Mansfield Road, Nottingham.

Animal Liberation

ANIMAL LIBERATION - A Case of Moral Indignation?

40p from B&B c/o The Unemployed Centre, Prior House, 6 Tilbury Place, Brighton. (or from **"SUBVERSION"**).

This is an excellent criticism of the ideology and practice of the Animal Liberationists from a revolutionary perspective.

The appeal of the ALM is that it appears to present a small, exclusive group solution to the problems created by the fragmenting of the working class in Britain since the early 80's which have made the prospects of revolutionary class conflict seem remote. The heavy sentences of ALM activists proves that the state is committed to crushing the ALM which will force the animal liberationists into further isolation.

A useful comparison is made between the ALM and CND. While the ALM arose out of disillusion with CND's over optimism and its pathetic symbolic activities and as a reaction to CND's 'middle class' domination, its world view remains, like CND's, essentially liberal, since it starts and ends with the morality of the isolated individual.

Animal liberation is based on altruism as animals unlike human beings do not have the potential to change the world. The demands of the ALM do not therefore, challenge the rule of capital which is the root cause of our problems. The writers even posit a vegan capitalism as a possibility.

Although animal liberationists ally themselves with other movements such as feminism, black and gay liberation, the basic difference between them is that these other movements are concerned with human beings, who demand that the 'oppressed' must lead their own cause. But the animal liberationists fight on behalf of helpless animals.

The writers do not underestimate the courage and commitment of those involved in the ALM but suggests that they are misguided to devote their efforts to a struggle based on a purely moral response, which threatens to isolate them from the rest of the working class, when their energies could be directed into the resurgent class struggle.

M.O'C.

