

woman worker

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Never before have the most basic social services in Britain come under such savage attack as in the latest Tory plans for public spending cuts of at least £4000 million.

Whereas in the past the cuts have meant a major reduction in services, the Tories' proposals actually amount to a sustained attempt to dismantle completely the National Health Service, the state education system, council housing and welfare rights.

The ground has been prepared by the last Labour government with the collaboration of the trade union leaders and now Thatcher and Howe are moving in to smash the gains that the working class has made.

Even as Labour's last cuts programme is working its way through, the Tory Cabinet has announced plans that will devastate the whole public sector and create new armies of unemployed workers. It is women who will be forced to bear the brunt of this attack since the vast majority of public sector workers are women.

The immediate freeze on recruitment by local councils and by the civil service has already meant a massive cut in job opportunities.

What is also at stake now, however, is the *kind* of service provided.

Many working class men and women will actually die because of the scale of health cuts being nodded through, and many more will become chronically sick. Children will be hit by deteriorating education standards as teachers are sacked, schools are closed and educational supplies are slashed. Fewer and fewer council houses will be available. And the soaring numbers of unemployed and other benefit claimants will have to be dealt with by a civil service that is itself the target of a serious cuts programme.

Already the Association of County Councils is asking for their statutory responsibilities to be lifted, so that they can abolish the school meals system, bar five year olds from attending school and charge for school transport. And this is only the beginning. Thatcher has promised £200 million more cuts to offset the meagre pay increases given to public sector workers by the Clegg Commission on pay comparability.

PRESSURE

Under the pressure of an increasingly organised working class, successive governments this century have been forced to set up services which represent positive gains—state education, the national health service, council housing and social security being the most important ones.

It is vital to understand, however, that these gains are only partial.

Many of them were given by the ruling class simply to take the edge off poverty and to ensure a fairly healthy, moderately educated population to serve capitalism more efficiently.

In addition, whenever capitalism is in an international crisis (like now!) these modest gains immediately come under attack.

For the last six years this attack has taken the form of huge cuts in public spending, cuts that have been implemented by Tories and Labour alike.

The Table shows how the Tories introduced the cuts under Heath and Barber. When Labour came to power in 1974, after the miners' strike had spear-headed mass resistance to the Conservatives, not only did the Wilson government refuse to restore the cuts but they embarked on their own cuts programme.

The cuts introduced by Healey in 1976, for example, were a direct result of conditions imposed by the architects of international capital, the International Monetary Fund.

Britain of course is not the only country where capitalism is in crisis and is forced to cut back on the public services. Similar cuts are being forced on the working class internationally, particularly in the US, when the enormous cuts carried out last year in California following the decision to reduce local taxes, is now being repeated throughout the states, with sackings of teachers and hospital closures.

These cuts in public expenditure are designed both to make workers pay for the bosses' crisis and to push women back into the isolated world of the family, to reduce them to breeders of children, servicing the workforces of today and tomorrow.

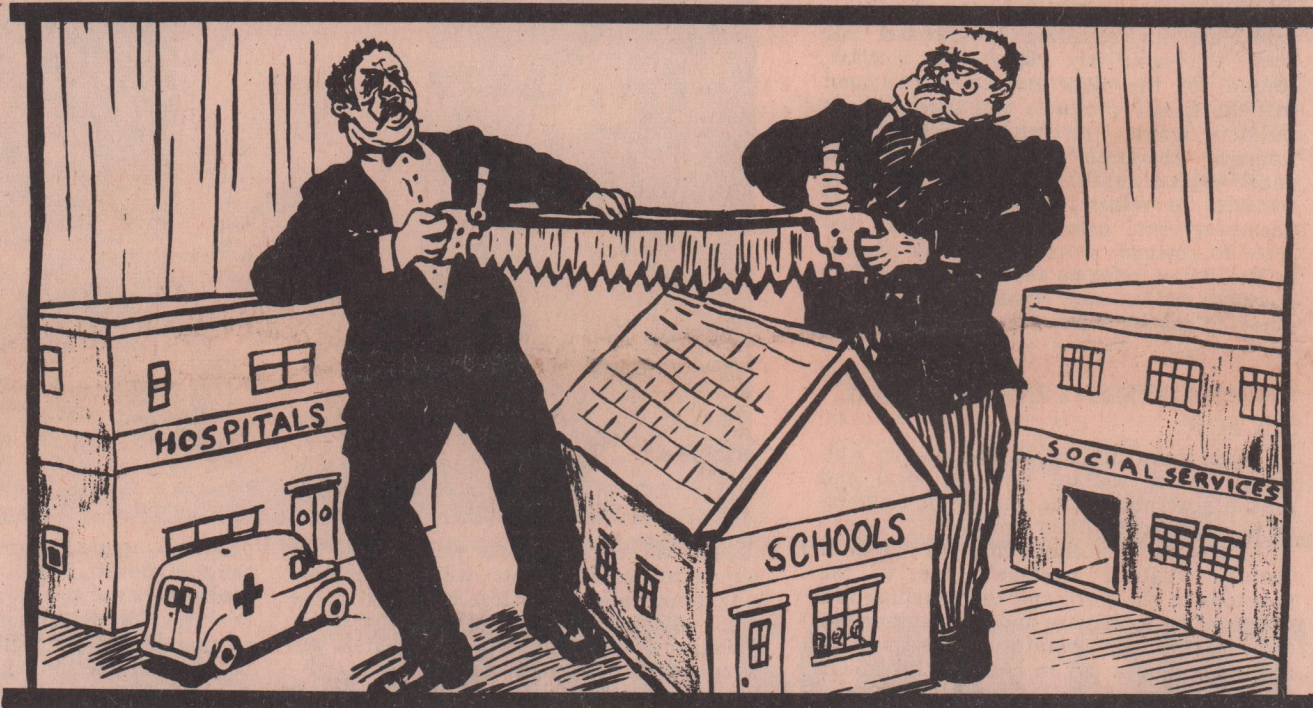
LEADERSHIP CRISIS

But how can the Tories hope to get away with this in 1979?

The answer lies in the crisis of working class leadership that has largely succeeded in stifling the tremendous willingness to fight shown by workers ever since the cuts began. The Labour 'lefts' for example have consistently backed away from any real fight against Callaghan and Healey. Only a few abstained on the vote on Labour's own public spending cuts, and not one of them has shown any signs of making a real break with the programme and methods that have characterised the Labour Party since its foundation.

The TUC and the leaders of the big unions are very good at making speeches, but when it comes to strike action, the

Tories plan to demolish our social services



CUTS TABLE

YEAR	TOTAL CUTS	EDUCATION CUTS	HEALTH CUTS	HOUSING CUTS
Amount off 1973-4 programme	£1,300 million	£600 million	£45 million	£70 million
Amount off 1976-7 programme	£901 million	£86 million	£75 million	£115 million
Amount off 1977 programme	£952 million	£30 million	£70 million	£6 million
Amount off 1978 programme	£1,016 million	£42 million	£15 million	£20 million
Amount off 1979 programme	£1,513 million	£41 million	£25 million	£300 million

*Note that Labour's cuts are still working through—this table does not show the stepping up of the attack by the Tories.

most they are prepared to organise is the odd day or half-day (like the demonstration in November 1976 when 80,000 workers marched against the cuts).

The sharpest fights against specific cuts have all seen workers (with women often most centrally involved) having to take on both the Labour government and the trade union leadership.

That's exactly what happened with occupations at the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital (EGA), Hounslow Hospital, Bethnal Green General and the South Oxford Nursery and in the campaigns around St. Nick's, the Royal Free, Plaistow Maternity, Woodford Hospital, St. Mary's, Paddington, the Weir and St. Columba's (and these are only a few of the best known campaigns).

By refusing to mobilise the strength of the membership to win these struggles the union leaders have actually connived in pushing through the cuts.

We in the Workers Socialist League have always approached cuts struggles armed with policies designed to win specific campaigns and to take the fight on to a higher level and work for the overthrow of all labour movement leaders who are not prepared to oppose the orders of the bosses.

Our whole approach is based on a programme and method that is essential if existing public services are to be defended (and then extended). We call for *occupation* of any threatened facility, whether it's a nursery, an unemployment office, a single ward or a whole hospital.

Any such occupation must be linked to supporting *strike action* by other public sector workers and to support from the local community.

At the same time we argue for the *opening of the books* of all local authorities (such as health and education).

Only then can people see the extent to which private firms leech huge profits out of the public sector. This leads on to the big question—who actually runs our social services? Only complete *workers' and consumers' control* can safeguard hospitals and schools from cuts, and this must be linked to the *nationalisation* of all suppliers (under the control of workers in those industries).

Defence of public sector jobs and threatened facilities involves a confrontation with both the Tories and all Labour Party and union leaders who think that capitalism can be somehow 'changed' to benefit the working class.

Only a revolutionary programme can completely smash capitalism—and that means defending what workers have gained so far and resisting the cuts through direct political action!

It has never been more vital to draw out the betrayals of the social democratic and Communist parties on an *international* scale. Thatcher's offensive here is only part of the attack on the working class all over the world. Therefore we are fighting to build a revolutionary party that will be part of a rebuilt Fourth International, a worldwide organisation that will lead the counter-attack on all those who are trying to make us pay for their crisis.

STRIKE AND OCCUPY TO STOP THE CUTS!

woman worker

POSSIBLY THE BEST UNION IN THE WORLD?



Jette on a picket line

Woman Worker speaks to Inge and Jette, two members of the Danish Trotskyist Workers League about their work in the women's trade union at the Carlsberg brewery in Copenhagen.

Why are you in a union for women only?

I. There are only two unions in the breweries, one for men and the other for women. The women's union was started 75 years ago, when the company was recruiting women largely as part-time workers at appallingly low rates of pay.

Since they were being used to undercut

the men's pay and conditions, the men were afraid to let them in the union, so they organised themselves. They were among the first groups of women workers to be unionised—and they are one of the strongest.

What does this strength mean to the workers?

I. It means that all grievances are taken up through the union and similarly if the management wants to implement anything they have to take it to the union, which calls a meeting of all members. Management cannot just persuade or force the workers to accept their wishes by getting hold of them individually. The members elect a committee of shop stewards for every subsection (comprising about 170 members). The woman

receiving the highest number of votes is a full-time convenor.

The unions have negotiated good working conditions: for example, 25% extra contingency manning; half-hour breaks after an hour's work; a limited inflation-proofing of wages.

The company is now trying to set up a new brewery with a raw workforce, with speed-up, lower manning and phasing out of inflation-proof pay.

How did you fight this?

J. The full-time bureaucrats of both unions accepted these conditions. We forced them to hold work-time meetings and ballot the membership. In our factory, the largest, the proposals were thrown out—we had prepared the workers for a strike on the issue. But the deal was accepted overall because there was no local leadership in the other factories to challenge the bureaucrats.

How do the men's and women's unions work together?

I. They are federated at national level, but the leaders act bureaucratically and won't fight for workers' independent interests against the employers. For example, in 1973 there was a campaign for equal pay in the breweries, supported by both unions. But it was led not on the basis of equal rights for workers, but on a feminist basis against male workers.

How do you as Trotskyists work against this division?

I. We think that to be unionised along sex lines is totally wrong. In my subsection we got a paper going to take up matters concerning the membership. Then we succeeded in producing it jointly with our fellow men's subsection. We forced agreement that members' letters to this paper must be printed and answered by the committee straight away.

In our 'brother' subsection a man got drunk and clocked off early. The company sacked him. We held a joint meeting with the men and struck together, whereupon the whole brewery came out on strike. Then the Tuborg brewery struck in sympathy, for this worker's reinstatement.

We fought to maintain this all-out strike, but the convenors changed it to a selective strike by arguing that if the women workers clocked on, they would continue being paid, which would strengthen the strike.

It did nothing of the sort; it only divided

us and caused bitterness. In the end, the convenors got a return to work saying they had negotiated the man's reinstatement. What they did not tell the workers was that he was first to be suspended for 3 months!

We fought against these sell-outs so strongly that they tried to shut down our subsection's paper—unsuccessfully because they feared the publicity we made in this very paper.

They even tried to close our shop stewards' committee—again we fought them successfully, though they stopped us getting a common committee with the men—we only achieved a joint sub-committee to take up members' problems. We continue to fight to get joint meetings.

How do workers with children manage in the brewery?

I. There is a nursery run by the company and paid for by the state, though it only has about 40 places and we have won a small number of job reservations on permanent day shift for women with children, though we need more of these reserved jobs and more nursery places.

We have also won the right for couples who live together to work on the same shift.

What are maternity rights in Denmark?

J. All women workers have the right to 14 weeks' paid maternity leave and to return to their job. The 14 weeks can be divided before and after the birth as the woman wishes. Naturally the woman wants to have as long as possible with the baby after the birth, so she continues to work until too advanced a stage of pregnancy, having to heave around crates to a total of 8 tonnes a day. So we are trying to get the total maternity leave extended.

For women who are unemployed because they have children conditions are worsening: a few months ago, a law was passed disqualifying women who were unable to work because of lack of nursery places from receiving any dole and nationally there is a waiting list of 100,000 for nursery places.

Do you have any unemployed women in your union?

J. Yes, like several other unions we have unemployed members, but the bureaucrats leave them to organise themselves.

They said they did not have figures for the numbers of unemployed workers, of workers blacklisted or those unemployed through lack of nursery facilities. So a magazine was started by the unemployed union members to fight for their interests. We forced the bureaucrats, embarrassed by this publicity, to publish these figures and to get jobs for blacklisted women workers. We also fought for them to unite employed and unemployed workers by calling strike action when women workers forced to leave work because of lack of nursery places were refused dole. This was our only unsuccessful fight.

It is very demoralising to be unemployed, but we succeeded in pulling large numbers of unemployed members to section meetings—the only union to achieve this. This is because of the fight for the members that we took into the union.

'WOMEN IN ACTION' = NO ACTION

The Working Women's Charter organisation is planning a conference in September to launch its "paper for the unions"—*Women in Action*. In order to build support for the conference, they have produced a pilot issue of the paper with articles on equal pay, part time workers, abortion, nurseries and the low pay struggle.

Yet the political redundancy of this organisation shrieks out from every page—from the minor reforms called for by the Ten Aims of the Charter itself, which have already been strengthened and adopted by the TUC in its own Charter for Women at Work, to the adaptation to the policies of the Women's Liberation Movement by the members of groups such as the International Marxist Group.

The editorial group is made up of "women active in women's campaigns in unions like the NUS, NUT, CPSA and ASTMS". The group correctly points out that the adoption of the TUC Charter for Women at Work is "useless if nothing is done about it" but then sidesteps completely the central issue of how to force the leadership of the trade union movement to implement the policies.

CAUCUSES

Instead the Working Women's Charter wants to build a multitude of Women's Campaigns and Women's Caucuses in the unions. The paper, they claim, will help to exchange information and experience between these caucuses because women "get a good feeling when they know other women have scored a victory". The paper will provide an excellent forum for debate, they claim, on questions such as "should women have the right to work in periods of unemployment".

The politics of broadest possible unity seep through every paragraph of the paper. "We want the paper to be as broad as possible... as long as they support the general struggle for women's equality and independence then we want their support—whatever their particular political standpoint". This is a very dangerous approach to



London NUPE members demanding action from the leadership during the low pay struggle

the question of fighting for the ending of women's oppression and its logical conclusion emerges in almost the next paragraph in the paper—entitled "Would you see men writing for the paper?" where the editorial board refers to Alan Fisher speaking at the NAC Trade Union Conference and go on to say, "It would be useful to have him contribute to the paper as well, and open up a discussion about what he says".

Any woman who belongs to Alan Fisher's union—National Union of Public Employees—can open up her copy of NUPE news and read Fisher's brand of left talk and contrast it with his actions in practice—last winter's low pay sell out, the cuts acquiesced to over the past three years, and his deafening silence at the present time when the whole school meals system is up for the chop and hospitals threatened with wholesale closure.

Not that *Women in Action* is against criticising the bureaucracy. In a full page spread Tessa van Gelderen, reviewing Jack Dromey's book 'Grunwick—the Workers' Story', criticises Dromey and the rest of the (male) leadership of the Brent

Trades Council for "insisting that delegations should comprise equal numbers of men and women" without explaining why this was necessary, and for failing to take any steps to discuss with the Asian women on strike at Grunwick the reasons for their 'lack of confidence'. No doubt there were many examples of sexism displayed throughout the strike, but to highlight that without going on to link Dromey's sexism with his bureaucratic manipulation of the whole strike committee and his role in the TUC's refusal to carry out total blacking and to support the postal workers who were suspended for blacking post deliveries and therefore his historic responsibility in the defeat of the Grunwick strike is to totally mislead and divert men and women workers seeking to grasp the lessons from Grunwick.

Unity—either with left-talking bureaucrats or with the confused feminists of the Women's Liberation movement, most of whom see all leadership as oppression, and all men as inhibiting women's confidence in themselves—is a false con-

ception. Women of course must seek unity to throw off the shackles of their oppression. But this unity must be unity with all other oppressed layers and classes under capitalism—predominantly the class which is in the economically strategic position to overthrow the social system which is the root of the oppression of women, gays, blacks, nationalities and workers internationally. That system is of course international capitalism.

Nowhere does *Women in Action* attempt to root women's oppression in the capitalist system and therefore there is no attempt to pose a revolutionary programme which will equip women workers with policies which will begin to take them on the road towards the socialist revolution. *Women in Action* is a purely reformist paper—just like the papers of the Labour Party and trade unions.

CONTRAST

In startling contrast to the main, reformist, line of the paper, an article by a WSL member, Gill Blackwell, on the history of the South Oxford Nursery Occupation centres on the key questions learnt in that campaign. She describes the actions of the local leaders of the public sector trade unions in shifting and diverting the groundswell of support for the nursery occupation from their rank and file members, and says, "we are convinced that these Trade Union leaders are responsible for the fact that so many of the cuts and closures have gone ahead. We and other campaigns have begun to challenge these leaders to take up real fighting policies to stop the cuts. These policies must include occupations and supporting strike action, and trade union investigation into real need and the actual spending of the health, education and social service authorities."

We urge Working Women's Charter supporters to contrast *Women in Action* with the policies and perspective offered by *Woman Worker* and to join our struggle to build the international party of revolutionary Marxism which will lead the working class and all oppressed layers, including women, to the overthrow of capitalism.

THATCHER BOOSTS THE FAMILY



The family as we know it is a unit which is of fundamental importance to capitalism. It is also the root cause of the oppression of women. When there is a crisis of capitalism the ruling classes see as a priority the need to force women out of employment and back into the single role of housewife.

This is happening internationally but we focus here on how and why the Tories make this a central plank of their policies attacking the working class in Britain.

WHY THE FAMILY IS VITAL FOR CAPITALISM.

The actual basis for women's oppression stems from capitalism's inability to socialise domestic labour or guarantee full employment.

It cannot provide the necessary child-care, good housing, communal laundries and kitchens which alone can free women from the exhaustion, boredom, isolation and despair of housework.

It also demands that the family is responsible for restoring the worker for work the next day clean, fed, clothed, housed for the night and comforted; and that the family produces and takes care of children, rearing the future workers. Full women's 'liberation' can never be achieved under capitalism, either through changing attitudes or reforms. Under conditions of unemployment, cuts, and campaigns designed to persuade women that their place is in the home, reforms such as the Sex Discrimination Act and Equal Pay Act are rendered meaningless.

UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR.

Over one third of all the women who work are in welfare services, local and central government and the public corporations—over three million women.

There is a massive turnover of staff (termed 'natural wastage') due to the pressures of the work and the appalling low wages. The job freeze and no employment of new staff will therefore mean jobs disappearing, and a cut in manning levels. On top of this whole hospitals, children's homes, schools, nurseries and offices are to be closed, and there is the possibility of an end to school meals.

One job in ten is to be cut in the civil service, and it is clear that unemployment amongst women who were in the public sector will easily run into tens of thousands. And the Tories have declared that the cost of implementing the 'comparability' wage awards in the public sector will have to be raised through a further £200 million in cuts.

EFFECTS OF EDUCATION CUTS.

The cuts will undoubtedly put pressure on all women to give up their jobs as they are forced to take on the welfare duties.

Featuring centrally in this will be the nearly wholesale destruction of state pre-school facilities, where it is proposed that all nursery education be paid for and that for example a staggering 52 nurseries are to be closed in one county alone in Clwyd. It is also proposed that the school entrance age is raised to six! The proposed ending of school meals means children coming home for dinner and this will have a shattering impact on full-time work or on those part-time shifts that do not correspond.

This work will prove virtually impossible for those with children if the proposal that the schoolday ends at 2.30 is accepted, with after school activities, play-leaders and recreation facilities already slashed. School holidays, already a nightmare for working mothers, will be extended especially in winter to save fuel bills.

HEALTH CUTS.

These will mean massively longer waiting lists, admissions to hospital for only the most acute conditions. Hospitals for the elderly, the mentally ill, for children and terminal patients will close. The entire burden of care for these patients thus falls back



nursing those on endless waiting lists for admission, convalescents will also require long term care as the few beds left in the NHS will be immediately demanded for emergency cases and stays in hospitals will be cut to the bare minimum.

Local small hospitals are closing and it is women who will have to travel well over forty miles as in Norfolk to visit sick relatives and bring children in for check-ups.

On top of the restrictions of the Corrie Bill, abortion, contraception and sterilisation facilities are being starved of funds—it is women who are forced to have families and to suffer the consequences of unwanted pregnancies.

ATTACKS ON THE ELDERLY.

The cuts on facilities on the elderly means countless daughters driven through guilt, love and moral obligation to give up work to look after geriatric relatives as old



School meals worker

peoples' homes, geriatric hospitals, day centres, home helps, and special housing projects are not funded.

This will mean incalculable misery. The cutting of holiday admissions will oppress both the old person who feels a constant unwanted burden, and women in the home who face the task of caring, in many cases, for incontinent, senile and despairing invalid relatives.

EFFECTS ON SINGLE PARENTS.

Cuts in the civil service will mean social security offices closing, the cutting of staff distributing benefits, (while increasing those investigating fraud) and this will directly affect single parent families as payments are delayed.

As the attacks on single parents deepen,

so more women will be trapped in unhappy marriages knowing the insecurities outside the family; of not finding a job, getting social security, of not getting childcare as nursery facilities for single parents disappear, and also knowing that they will be unable to find anywhere to live — as council housing grinds to a halt and Tory landlords cash in with soaring rents.

HOUSING CUTS.

Council housing cuts mean not only an end to building programmes as in the Greater London Council while demand soars, it also means an end to house repairs.

It is women who have to increase their work in deteriorating conditions and it is women again who have to expend their energies trying to make damp and condemned houses habitable.

UNEMPLOYMENT.

The Tories are also intent on a programme of massive unemployment in order to rationalise British industry and drive wages down.

It is of course women's jobs that are lost first, as they are often in part-time, non-unionised jobs. There is also massive pressure on women not to take the jobs of men. Many trade union leaders who, instead of fighting unemployment, help management to decide on who to make redundant, pick on women first as in their eyes they work only for pin money.

On leaving school, girls find jobs, apprenticeships and training schemes going to boys who are considered the future family wage-earners, while their career is seen as wife and mother.

If they are lucky, they'll get job experience in a playgroup or as a nursery nurse which will train them for this and through no other options many girls are getting pregnant and married earlier.

The political significance of ensuring that women are made unemployed and forced back into the family, is not only that they will cushion the effects of cuts, but they will also not sign on and be registered as unemployed. Two million women have lost their jobs in the past three years—in fact unemployment is well over three million—but this is not recognised as these unemployed women become statistically invisible. As 'housewives' dependent on their husbands, they are also not eligible for most social security benefits.

PRICES.

The Tory policy of allowing prices to rip, and themselves stoking up inflation through VAT increases and price rises on every basic item — milk, gas, electricity, petrol, bread, prescription charges, postage, etc — will lift inflation to at least 20%.

If the school meal system is continued the Tories' plan to withdraw subsidies will add 60p per child per day to the weekly budget.

WHY WOMAN

Woman Worker is the women's paper of the Workers Socialist League, a Trotskyist organisation which is seeking to build a Marxist leadership in this country and internationally which, starting from today's problems and today's consciousness within the working class, will lead workers in struggle to grasp the need for socialist revolution.

Women play a major role in the struggle of the working class to overthrow the shackles of international capitalism. Women—in workplaces and in the home—are doubly oppressed by capitalism and the present crisis affecting the whole working class attacks women disproportionately.

Woman Worker seeks to give policies and programme—a way forward—to women who are oppressed by this capitalist system. We believe that the leaderships of the traditional organisations of the working class—the Labour Party and the trade unions—are not at this time—and never will be—acting in the interests of the members they were elected to serve.

The Labour Party leadership for example has just presided over a five year period in government—a period when the working class experienced the biggest cuts in its wages, and the worse unemployment, since the 1930s.

A period when women were given the paper rights of Equal Pay and the Sex Discrimination Act with one hand—and their jobs, hospitals, nurseries and abortion facilities threatened with the other. Women are now 28% of the trade union movement—3 million trade unionists and the numbers are growing.

But what have Len Murray and the TUC done for women? In conference after conference, trade union bureaucrats like the

Labour Party leadership manoeuvre the real questions of workers' lives—the specific questions affecting appalling with sexist attacks on questions of abortion facilities.

Yet *Woman Worker* insists the trade unions and the Labour Housewives isolated in the home.

the day-to-day questions of the ideal targets for reactionary forces potential strength of the organisation.

Woman Worker calls upon that lie ahead. We believe that to prepared to fight to improve or defend their jobs and social services.

The block that stands in bureaucratic leadership in every *Woman Worker* calls upon places and union branches, to policies such as demanding a 'state increases, whereby wages inflation every month. This in turn establishing a cost-of-living increases.

Other policies will include strike action to defend factory closure.

Woman Worker would like women—and men—workers in shop stewards, branch officers extending this fight for progress against their union leadership.

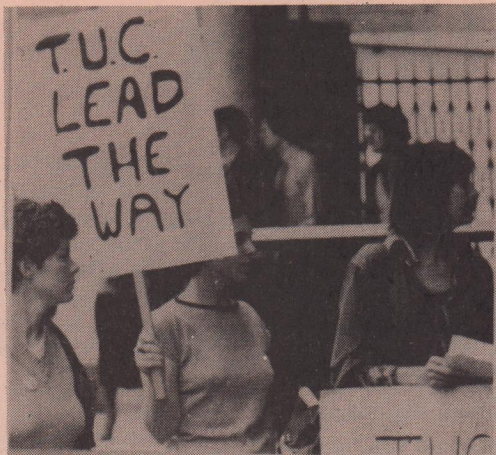
Defeat anti-abortion bill!

On 13th July, 68 Labour MPs voted for John Corrie's anti-abortion bill in Parliament, 84 voted against, while 100 didn't bother to turn up at all.

Prior to this vote on the 2nd Reading of the Bill, Callaghan had vetoed a plan by a group of 'left' women MPs to talk the bill off the agenda and thus prevent it eventually becoming law.

Callaghan was concerned, apparently, that Labour would be seen to be taking a 'pro-abortion' line—despite the fact that Labour Party conference already has a clear policy of 'free abortion on request on the NHS'.

If this bill passes its 3rd Reading (probably coming up in October) the availability of abortion to women will be drastically reduced. According to the anti-abortion group 'Life', who helped Corrie draft his bill, the number of legal abortions performed would be cut by two-thirds. In 1978, there were 140,000 legal abor-



NAC lobby of the TUC

tions performed in England and Wales. So, if Life's predictions are correct, and the numbers of women wanting abortions

remains approximately the same, then next year, more than 90,000 more women would have to bear children they do not want, or be forced to backstreet, often dangerous, abortions.

The scene was set for Corrie's bill during the election campaign, when the capitalist press was full of sensational and largely untrue stories about crying foetuses left on draining boards to die. Corrie latched onto this by trying to focus attention on one part of his bill—the proposal to reduce the time limit from 28 to 20 weeks of pregnancy.

Reports in the capitalist press have tried to show how 'moderate' his bill is, because only 1% of abortions are performed after 20 weeks anyway.

However, leaving aside the fact that this 'only' 1% contains many women who are in most need of abortions, it is the other clauses in Corrie's bill that will put free, legal abortion out of reach of the vast majority of women. The most important clause in this respect restricts the recognised grounds for abortion to situations where there is 'grave risk' of 'serious injury' to the mother or baby. In other words, a woman would have to be almost dying before most doctors would be willing to authorise an abortion.

The bill would also tighten up restrictions on the charitable sector to the point of strangling them.

Organisations like the British Pregnancy Advice Service have provided cheap abortions for many women, including foreign women coming from countries where abortion is completely illegal, who cannot get one on the NHS, usually because reactionary doctors stand in their way.

Without them, the only alternative for these women would be dangerous backstreet abortions.

FLAGRANT ATTACK

There can be no doubt that this bill represents a flagrant attack on the rights of women.

It can be seen as part of the intensifying attack on democratic rights that the Tory government has launched—an attack which has also included a massive increase in the harassment of immigrants and the black population.

Its defeat will only be guaranteed through a mass mobilisation of the trade union and labour movement alongside the working-class women whom this bill will affect most.

Woman Worker urges its supporters to fight in their Labour Party or Trade Union branches for delegations to the TUC demonstration against the Corrie Bill on October 28th.

The TUC were forced to call this demonstration through pressure from the women membership, expressed through the Women's TUC conference—a huge turnout on this day can force the trade union leaders into further action.

Equally, or perhaps more important, is a campaign in the Labour Party to force the Labour MPs (all of whom, including Callaghan, mouth platitudes about women's rights) to obey Labour Party policy and vote against the Corrie Bill.

WITHDRAW SPONSORSHIP

The campaign on a 3-line whip on this question must also be taken up in the trade unions, since it was the trade union votes that defeated the proposal previously at Labour Party conference.

Trade unionists should campaign for the withdrawal of sponsorship from MPs who betray women's rights—MPs such as Sir Harold Wilson (who is sponsored by ASTMS) who voted for the Corrie Bill.

The National Abortion Campaign (NAC) which poses as the great defender of abortion rights, specifically opposes such a campaign, on the grounds that the Tories outnumber Labour in parliament anyway. Blinded by parliamentary arithmetic, NAC is refusing to put demands on the leaders of the Labour movement for the necessary mass mobilisation of their membership.

A noteworthy example of such tactics was the lobby of the TUC General Council called by NAC to demand that the TUC set a date for a demonstration against the Corrie Bill. NAC supporters attacked members of the Workers Socialist League for 'harassing' the TUC bureaucrats, and declared that the lobby was supposed to be 'sympathetic'.

To prove their sympathy with these bureaucrats who have never lifted a finger in defence of women's rights, NAC handed out a grovelling leaflet headed 'TUC lead the way'.

The TUC and the Labour bureaucrats have yet to lead the way in any fight around women's rights—but Woman Worker supporters will be making sure they cannot get away with this by campaigning vigorously for a maximum turnout on October 28th.



This puts a massive extra burden on women. As housewives they will be forced to spend their time shopping around for bargains, cooking laborious cheap meals, making clothes for their families, and even washing by hand as laundrette costs soar.

DISARMING THE WORKING CLASS.

The increasing attacks on the working class will mean they will either have to fight back or be defeated. The Tories realise this and therefore are preparing for confrontation. They seek to disarm the working class by their trade union 'reforms', attacking strikes and picketing and also by developing the family as an instrument of labour discipline.

In the isolation of the home, cut off from the solidarity action and militancy of other workers and not confronting the capitalism directly in the form of the employer, women feel unable to be part of the class struggle themselves; and then hold back their husbands. Alone and subject constantly to a barrage of reaction from the media, some women can take up very conservative positions. That is the significance of the secret ballot—where the decision to strike is left for the male worker to make in the 'privacy' of his own home under the influence of his wife and the media.

Tory values of 'law and order' can be embraced by some women who seek only an end to the instability and strain in their own oppressed families.

Denied any other perspective, they can believe that immigrants, trade union 'wreckers' and social security 'scroungers' are the cause of their problems rather than the capitalist class. This opens up the danger of racialism and can make certain women fundamentally opposed to the only real solution to their oppression, revolutionary socialism and internationalism.

WE SAY:

*UNIONISE ALL WOMEN WORKERS!

For effective official blacking and mass picketing to support unionisation struggles: for full strike pay!

*RECRUIT UNEMPLOYED WOMEN TO THE UNIONS!

Organise women to fight alongside employed workers in defence of jobs and conditions and for full nursery and abortion facilities.

*COMBAT INFLATION: FOR A SLIDING SCALE OF WAGES AND BENEFITS!

Fight for cost of living clauses to provide increases in line with a price index worked out by local committees of trade unionists and housewives.

*DEFEND ALL JOBS!

For work sharing on full pay. Occupy work places threatened with redundancies or closure; demand supporting strike action!

*OPEN THE BOOKS!

Elected committees must reveal the profits made by the banks and major industries; show the way the public sector is exploited for private profit; and fight for nationalisation without compensation under workers management.

*FOR A PROGRAMME OF PUBLIC WORKS!

Labour movement inquiries including housewives must draw up plans for necessary local services and housing to create new jobs for the unemployed.

*KICK OUT CALLAGHAN!

Unemployed women should join the Labour Party as part of the struggle for these socialist policies. Kick out the right wing leaders who launched the cuts and now oppose the fight to bring down the Tories. Build a revolutionary leadership!

*AGAINST THE ISOLATION OF THE HOME!

Women must organise in tenants and other associations and join the struggle to force the Thatcher government out of office.

STRIKE SOLD OUT

Women working at Selected Toys in Didcot, Oxfordshire, found themselves out on strike only three weeks after joining the Transport and General Workers Union.

On 13 June three women over 60 were given half an hour's notice. Their service at the factory ranged from ten to fifteen years and one was on holiday!

The shop steward and another young woman were given a week's notice. The sackings were due, according to management, to world recession in trade, but two men over 60 who were not in the union were not made redundant and other women employed after the shop steward and her friend—including the foreman's daughter—were not dismissed.

The women came out on strike and began picketing. The following day a strike committee was elected and demanded reinstatement of the victimised five, recognition of the union, decent wages and better working conditions, (average wages were 35p an hour).

However, 2½ days after the start of their action a meeting was called with the union official Phil Eynon. He argued strongly for those who had come out in support to return to work on the Monday while the victimised five carried on picketing!

Eynon's failure to force the strikers back to work brought out his arrogance towards women and he complained that "men would understand his tactical approach" and moaned that the female strikers had not enough union experience to see his point of view. A sell-out smells the same to all trade unionists, be they men, women or raw recruits to the union.

A week later, Eynon had a two hour meeting with Young (the Managing Director) and an ACAS representative. Demands from the strikers that one of them should be at the meeting were brushed aside by Eynon who reported that Young was planning a 50% cut in the workforce from 32 to 16! He eventually persuaded the strikers to go back to work, leaving those sacked on the picket line.

When the strikers did attempt to go back they got their answer—they were locked out!

Young informed the shop steward that the day before he had gone into voluntary liquidation. Voluntary liquidation does not necessarily mean the firm is bankrupt, in fact it was a ploy that

Ward of Grunwicks tried to use in the early days of that strike.

Two weeks after Young's statement his accountants stated in the local paper that Young had declared only "his intention of going into liquidation", and they had not been appointed as yet.

The strikers continued their picket during this period.

On 26 July management again announced their intention of liquidating the firm, and the following week carried out the charade in front of the strikers.

The strikers felt it was pointless to picket a factory that was apparently closed down, but the answer was behind them—to occupy the factory.

If, as is quite probable, Young were to reopen the factory under another name, TGWU District Official Eynon should be held responsible for future generations of Didcot youth and women being exploited by this employer once more.

Women should not, however, be discouraged by such tactics from union officials. Instead they should campaign strongly for a change in the leadership of their union—a leadership that will stand on principle and fight for the interests of their members.

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WOMAN WORKER?

red out discussions and votes on living standards, wages and jobs. On women the record was even more women delegates trying to raise

that it is vital that women do join party.

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o see its readers giving a lead to air places of work by becoming conference delegates and thereby me throughout their unions and

Similarly we would like to see our readers taking our fighting policies into the Labour Party and supporting our call for the removal of the right wing leadership of Callaghan and Healey and their replacement by a leadership prepared to fight to improve the lot of the working class.

Woman Worker will stand in the long traditions of the international Bolshevik movement's work among women. We will be publishing theoretical articles, not to promote an abstract debate but to broaden and deepen our understanding of the politics of Marxism, Leninism and Trotskyism and the sharp programmatic tasks we will need to undertake to build the Fourth International the world revolutionary party—to bring about the overthrow of capitalism on an international scale and the establishment of socialism.

These tasks will inevitably bring us into conflict with the feminists of the "women's movement" who are so blinkered by their conviction that "autonomy" for women will bring about their liberation—by building autonomous women's groupings in the unions—that they refuse to confront the key questions of leadership and programme, arguing even at times that leadership equals dictatorship and oppression.

It is these false positions which allow the feminists to co-exist with the Stalinists of the Communist Party who play a leading bureaucratic role in every country in the world in keeping down the working class.

This bureaucratic role is of course most obvious in the Soviet states themselves. Woman Worker supports Trotsky's call for the political revolution in these states to overthrow the bureaucracy and bring about true proletarian democracy, while arguing for the defence of the economic gains of the Bolshevik revolution against imperialist attack.