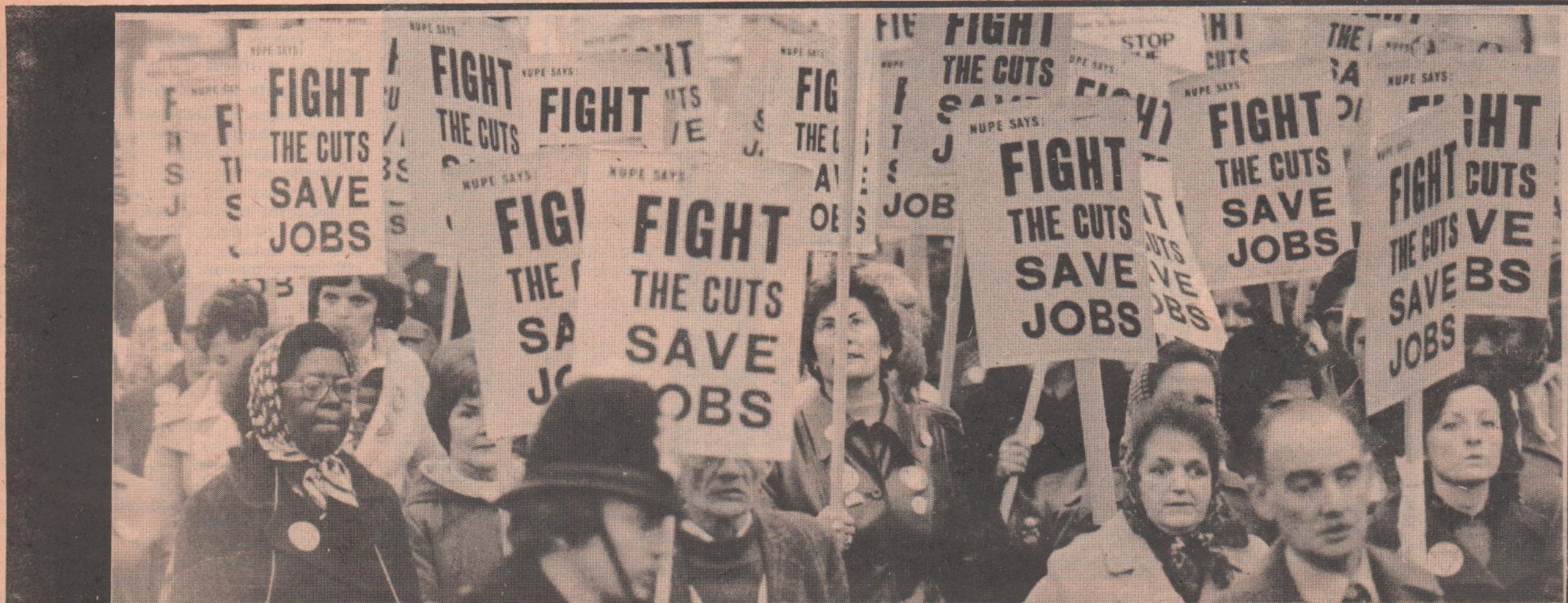


woman worker

a paper of the workers socialist league number 4 December 1979 6p



NOV. 28: THOUSANDS MARCH WHILE TUC LEADERS CRAWL

We can bring the Tories down!

The bosses' government is in full swing.

Nurseries, schools, old age people's homes, hospitals are closing as the health and social services are cut to ribbons.

Democratic rights are under attack as the Tories prepare a new Nationalities Bill.

Unemployment is rising as 'lame duck' industries shed jobs: 25,000 in BL, 13,000 in steel, 8,000 in shipbuilding.

All this is being done in the name of profit—the jobs, living standards and services of workers, women and youth are being sacrificed for the benefit of big business. And, to coin a male chauvinist phrase, it's women and children first!

But women, trade unionists and youth are not taking this passively.

There have already been massive mobilisations against the Tories' attacks. On October 28th, tens of thousands were in the streets demonstrating against the Corrie anti-abortion bill.

November 7th, saw 20,000 marching in support of Lambeth Council's refusal to implement the cuts. The following day, 50,000 students all round the country took

part in token occupations and other protest action against the huge fee increases imposed on overseas students.

In St. Benedict's Hospital, Tooting, the workers have taken control to stop the Area Health Authority running it down to prepare for closure.

The signs are that the November 28th demonstration and lobby will be the biggest yet.

No-one could doubt that women, trade unionists and youth are quite ready to take action against this reactionary government.

No-one, that is, except those who parade as the leaders of the working class. Looking round the TUC and the Parliamentary Labour Party we see a pathetic bunch of frightened bureaucrats who *don't* want to fight the Tories—and are doing their utmost to keep back those who do.

In September the TUC voted *against* calling a one-day strike against the Tories' anti-union laws, but they *did* agree to a "Day of Action". Two months later, we're still waiting to hear when it is.

The attitude of most trade union leaders is fairly typified by Fire Brigades' Union

leader, Terry Parry, who declared at a South-East Region TUC conference in October that the TUC wanted to 'lead from behind'!

But it's not *all* inaction at TUC headquarters.

The November 28th demonstration was given official backing by an impressive array of trade unions—including industrial unions like the AUEW. Yet where were the calls for *strike action* to make the demonstration effective? They haven't come from the bureaucrats.

In the public sector unions there has been a lot of noise about the cuts. Albert Spanswick, COHSE leader has even called for *occupations* against the cuts. This had been echoed by NUPE leader Alan Fisher—who stressed that "work-ins" were the opposite to and instead of strike action.

In fact, it's *only* strike action at a national level that will stop the cuts. But NUPE members have only been instructed to carry out a policy of 'non-cooperation'.

As for the Labour Party—it's difficult for the Callaghan-Healey leadership to do much to fight the cuts, unemployment or harassment of immigrants, since in all these areas, the Tories are building on what the Labour government had already started.

Callaghan has said he'll *oppose* political strike against the Tories.

Many of the 'left' MPs have come out

with noisy rhetoric against the Tories' cuts and deliberate creation of unemployment.

Women in the Labour Party should be asking these 'lefts'—what are you doing to kick out this leadership that is *blocking* any real action? What *policies* do you fight for to bring down the Tories?

In opposition to the policies of the reformists in the Labour and trade union bureaucracy, the Workers Socialist League fights for *all-out national strikes* to defeat the Tories' attacks on women's rights and on the working class.

National strikes and other action, such as occupations, would create the conditions necessary for the calling of a *general strike* to bring down the Tories, replacing them with a government pledged to *defend* the interests of women, workers and youth.

At a local level, strikes, occupations etc. should be linked in *councils of action*, with delegates from labour movement bodies, tenants committees etc..

The Workers Socialist League consistently fights for a revolutionary leadership in the labour movement around these policies—policies that start from the needs of workers and the oppressed and *not* the bosses.

Fight the school meals massacre!

The thought of a 55p, 75p, of £1 school meal in the New Year has angered many parents throughout the country.

If the proposed Tory Law on removing subsidies from school meals goes through Parliament the school meals system as we know it will disappear.

To cut spending on school meals by £200 million it is proposed to bring in more 'convenience' food and cut staffing by 10 to 15 per cent. This means 30,000 to 40,000 jobs lost in the service in 1980/1 alone.

Most of these jobs are held by women working part-time to fit in with their children and who would in most cases find it impossible to find suitable work elsewhere.

As a prelude to forcing through this Bill an experimental snacks system has been operating in Leicestershire since October 1st. Under this scheme school pupils are no longer offered a school meal but a series of snacks at commercial rates.

Thus a typical 'meal' may be 2 sausages (16p), chips (15p) 1 veg. (8p) and pudding for 15p. Water is not provided at the table and a 1p charge has been made for a beaker of water.

The effects are that either parents are forced to

pay a minimum of 50p for an equivalent amount of food but which is substantially inferior to the old school meal or what has happened increasingly in Leicester, pupils opt out of school meals and bring sandwiches.

The new law will provide for local authorities to charge for children eating their sandwiches in the school area as well!

This is the sort of system that in January will be introduced in many areas. By offering an inferior school meal at shop prices, this will effectively cut the demand for school meals to a point where local authorities can legitimately argue that there is no demand and set the scene for them to abolish them completely!

When the experimental scheme was proposed in Leicester there was no direction from the NUPE or NUT leadership to oppose it. In fact, initially NUPE leaders were welcoming the system arguing that it would require more staff!

NUT promised only support for individual teachers who wished to boycott the system, by refusing to take part in lunchtime supervision. Despite the fact that 2 out of 7 schools in the scheme refused to co-operate with it and the demands that have consistently been made by NUT members for the local Executive Committee to

lead a fight on this question, they have refused to take any action, insisting that we must concentrate our fight on the question of teacher's jobs.

The officers argue that the cut in school meals and transport are not really cuts in education and that perhaps we ought to accept these cuts so that educational standards don't suffer.

Apart from the well documented evidence of the failure of hungry children at school, cuts in school meals and transport are happening alongside teachers being sacked, class sizes rising, schools closing down and a heavy attack being made on nursery education with no fight being organised by the NUT leadership.

The officers of NUPE have a disgraceful record on the defence of the school meals service which has been systematically run down under both Labour and Tory governments.

They boast of 'no redundancy' agreements with local authorities as staffing is slashed through no replacement and drastic redeployment. Kitchens have been reduced to skeleton staff.

Whenever there is a fall in the number of pupils having school dinners, there is a corresponding drop in wages and staff. NUPE nationally has made no effort to change this basis for wages which results in many women working for hours they're

not paid for, as it takes the same amount of time to cook food for 40 as it does for 60 or 70.

The NUPE leadership at national and local level scandalously blames the membership for its own inactivity.

The membership *will* fight, but they have been kept in isolation and uninformed. They need encouragement and direction from a NUPE leadership that is prepared to really fight using effective weapons. They should encourage widespread strike action throughout the public sector, calling for supporting strike action throughout industry. This is the only way to defend our children's school meals and the women's jobs that provide them.

There is no doubt that if we leave it until the next general election THERE WILL BE NO SCHOOL MEALS LEFT. We have to bring the Tories down, as the miners did in 1974, through strike action.

Canteen staff and teachers must mount a joint campaign to defend school meals linked to opposition to all cuts, rejecting outright any question of priorities. But they will have to fight the leadership all the way to do so.



Photo: Mark Rusher (I.F.L.)

Grunwicks strike—militancy and unity were not enough.

CLASS- WOMEN

A piece of progressive legislation banned women from face-work in the Bolivian tin mines in 1945.

Conditions were—and still are—terrible, but nevertheless, working women did have the opportunity of winning economic independence.

The possibility of women working down mines prior to 1945 reflected the fact that Bolivian peasants, generally Quechua or Aymara Indians, allow women to buy and sell in the market place, unlike other Latin American Indian cultures, which keep these areas as male preserves.

Bolivian tin miners are amongst the most advanced and class conscious workers in the world, but they still cling to the superstitious belief that women bring the devil ('El Tio') down the mines with them. Women miners therefore had to remove their voluminous peasant skirts at the mine head and put on men's trousers, which was supposed to fool 'El Tio'.

One former woman miner interviewed recently felt that the changing of clothes symbolised the removal of all the chains of her specific oppression as a woman for the period she spent underground.

Since 1945 conditions have changed. Peasants still come to the mining towns with

NON-POLITICAL VOICE

Women's Voice is the women's magazine of the Socialist Workers Party.

Other offsprings of the SWP include the Right to Work Campaign, Rank and File, Hospital Worker and, of course, the Anti-Nazi League.

All these organisations pursue the masses with an array of glossy publications, similar badges, posters and handouts.

In terms of propaganda these are all produced with a level of graphic design any ad-man would envy—snappy slogans, simple to understand, bright colours, lively photos.

Woman Worker would not criticise the publications of the SWP for using good design to convey their politics. This we would recognise as a strength—but not when it appears to be the top priority, above the political content.

Women's Voice attempts to appear left of *Spare Rib* and with an orientation towards the working class by usually putting strong working class women on the front cover.

The whole aim of *Women's Voice*, like that of the SWP, is to attract around them mass groupings. For them, it is size that counts, and in order to get it you must have a good sell. But what is *Women's Voice* selling?

What are the politics of the SWP and *Women's Voice*?

The current issue says:

"*Women's Voice* is an organisation that fight for women's liberation and socialism. We fight for equal pay, free abortion and contraception, maternity leave and child-care provision, the right to work, against any form of discrimination on grounds of sex, sexual orientation or race"

This is its official position after a conference clarifying its political links with the SWP.

Over the past years the magazine has become a hotchpotch of various feminist articles with a vaguely socialist flavour. *Women's Voice* June 1978 wrote:

"Women who never dreamed they could put pen to paper have written to us about their everyday lives, their marriages, their housing problems, their children's education, their orgasms, their rights to maternity leave or lack of it."

This report makes seeing a difference with Marjorie Proops, let alone *Spare Rib* difficult.

The predominant political line of the SWP is whatever the basis, whatever the differences we must get together and fight. "Unity is strength", "the workers united will never be defeated"

But they are united—the strongest example of rank and file action in the past few years must be the mass pickets at Grunwicks.

Unionisation

Thousands gathered to fight in that struggle for unionisation but mass solidarity was clearly shown to be not enough.

It is a question of who leads the working class. That struggle like hundreds of others was betrayed and sold out by the trade union leaders.

It could have been won in days had the leadership of the TUC instructed its members to cut off water and electricity to the firm.

The fourteen month-long Garners strike could have been won if the Transport and General Workers Union (which has ½ million members in London alone) had organised strike action and effective blacking. They didn't and it was lost.

Similarly with the firemen's strike. It was the refusal of the TUC to support that strike which led to its failure—not the lack of popular backing or *Women's Voice* street meetings.

The leadership of the trade unions control 12½million and can mobilise enormous numbers for demonstrations, for

example the 1976 cuts demonstration of 80,000, but did those numbers save a single nursery place?

The SWP locate the failure to overthrow capitalism not in the corrupt reformist leadership of the working class but in the working class itself.

They insist that you can bypass the bureaucracies and take no notice of them. Programme and policies for 'removing capitalism are unnecessary as long as mass of people get together and fight.

The SWP argue that a scientific Marxist analysis of, for example, the crisis of capitalism will alienate and put people off. They prefer to present instead pictures of fat greedy bosses.

Militancy is not enough, nor is being told how rotten the system is: As Trotsky stresses in the Transitional Programme, it is crucially a question of leadership, not of numbers, of programme and not just readiness to fight.

Of course, we must find the road to the masses, but never on just the lowest common denominator.

Many thousands of working class women are coming forward in the fight against the Tory attacks but they want and need a method of removing the system that oppresses them beyond the flashy protest propaganda and the cry for socialism that *Women's Voice* offers them.



Bolivian tin miners work

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 women with sexist attacks on questions of abortion facilities.

Yet *Woman Worker* insists that the trade unions and the Labour Party Housewives isolated in the home the day-to-day questions of the ideal targets for reactionary forces potential strength of the organised

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

The block that stands in the bureaucratic leadership in every trade

Woman Worker calls upon its places and union branches, to co policies such as demanding a 'slid rate increases, whereby wages inflation every month. This in turn establishing a cost-of-living control increases.

Other policies include the strike action to defend factories closure.

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



MORE DETAILS

Please send me more details about the Workers Socialist League.

Name.....

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Send to WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London, NW5 1HR

CONSCIOUS N IN BOLIVIA

their wares but proletarian women only have access to economic support through their husbands.

Young girls or 'Cholas' are brought in from the city by bar-owners who buy them clothes and keep them to attract custom.

Miners go to bars to drink and dance after pay day and the 'cholas' are wooed assiduously by many suitors. There is no question of sexual activity since these suitors make sure that the 'chola' is never left alone with any one of them.

If she agrees to marry her fiancé must reimburse the bar-owner for the money he has spent in finding, transporting and kitting out the girl, capital he will use to replace her with.

Life expectancy

Deaths are frequent since life expectancy for a Bolivian miner is only 35 years, since all of them get struck with silicosis and tuberculosis. Widows are evicted from the tiny homes provided for some of the work-force and paid some small compensation. They generally remarry.

Miners work 7 days a week, up to 12 hours underground for just under £1 a day.



work 7 days a week, 12 hours a day for about £1 a day

On top of this they receive an allowance of food coupons for cheap bread, meat, sugar and rice which they can exchange at the 'pulperia' or company store.

These stores are understocked as a rule and women spend hours queueing for what little food is available. The other disadvantage to this method of payment is that, since it is not part of the nominal wage, the company pays no pension or sickness allowance on it.

Those who are lucky work under the conditions described above. Others work the exhausted miners as 'locatarios' with their own tools and equipment, getting paid for the tin they actually extract.

Those still less fortunate stand knee deep in the river for over 12 hours a day panning for tin.

The least coveted job is tearing your hands to ribbons picking out scraps of tin from the rubble dynamited out of the mines. This is not underground and women have fought for the right to do this work.

Women organise in the Housewives Committee which has observer status in the Miners Federation—the body to which the mining unions are all affiliated.

The Committee organises around the food stocks at the 'pulperia' and is extremely fierce in picketing of strikes, mobilising demonstrations and going on hunger strikes. Some of these struggles are taken up on the independent initiative of the Housewives Committee while other are in class solidarity with the miners.

The division of labour is strictly sexual. The women cook, clean and look after their children while they men go down the mines.

There is, however, a remarkable amount of independence allowed inside this framework.

Perhaps because of the long hours of work of the men, women are free to attend their meetings and organise around the activities of the committee. Conversely, they do not restrict their companions from political activity—perhaps because the class lines are so sharply drawn.

The local radio station is controlled by the miners themselves during strikes, so housewives in the mining towns are not susceptible to reactionary bourgeois propaganda as is often the case with European working class housewives who can be more easily conned into betraying their own class interests.

Although important gains have been made by the Housewives Committee which, unlike cross-class feminist groupings, is organised along class lines, it fails to challenge sexual roles. Its policies have a clearly socialist perspective, but one in which they would continue to service a healthy and unexploited labour force.

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 stands in the long traditions of the international Bolshevik movement's work among women. We publish 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 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 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.



Tory Minister Whitelaw—dreaming about the good old Empire days?

Tories whip up racist divisions

In the heyday of the British Empire the world was conveniently divided into English gentlemen and the rest.

Whilst the British ruling class played cricket, dined at their clubs and bemoaned the lack of delicacy of their servants, the colonial masses were subjected to the full benefits of capitalist civilisation—super-exploitation, vicious oppression and religious cant, all tied up in a neat Union Jack bow.

The loss of the Empire has done nothing to undermine the hatred and contempt of the bourgeoisie for blacks, women and youth.

As the Tory party conference showed, they still have a burning desire to birch every working class youth, lock women securely in the home and deal with the black communities, both here, in Africa and Asia, as inferior species.

This arrogance, bred of generations of oppression and exploitation of the 'rest' of society, comes through clearly in the proposed new legislation on Immigration and Nationality.

Harassment

Not content with the racist provision of the 1971 Immigration Act which set out to prevent the entry, wherever possible, of black immigrants, and subjected them to incessant official harassment, the Tories have now set out on a more elaborate attack on immigrants, and Asian women in particular.

That they feel sufficiently emboldened to do so is, of course, not unconnected with the zealous response of the Labourites under Callaghan to their racist 1971 law.

Under Merlyn Rees, the harassment at immigration control of new entrants reached new heights.

The abuse of the rights of black immigrants was justified in the name of "vigilance", while behind this smokescreen officials subjected women to virginity tests, pregnancy tests and in one case caused the death of a baby while they debated whether its mother was entitled to have babies in Britain!

Such cynicism, coupled with a craven acceptance of the need to limit immigration—except from the EEC—on the part of the Labour leadership, has led the Tories to conclude that they may now safely return to their real outlook on the world—subjugation of blacks, women and youth.

It is for this reason that, while Peregrine Worsthorne waxes lyrical in the *Sunday Telegraph* about a return to the 1860's and the possibility of sending gun-boats to the Persian Gulf, the government have published their latest assault on immigrants, with especial emphasis on women and youth.

Second-class

Under the new provisions, not only will current residents be deprived of the right to bring in their parents, but they will also be unable to bring in any children over 18 years of age.

Furthermore, while men will continue to be allowed to bring in wives and fiancées, women will become second class immigrants

debarred from bringing in a husband or fiancé who is not a British national.

This two-tier system of immigration is entirely in line with the previous policy of deliberately degrading and humiliating Asian women entering the country. Having abused and hounded these women the Tories have simply taken the logical next step of denying them any rights at all, removing totally the right of children to inherit nationality through the mother.

This move, rooted in the whole bourgeois mentality of the patriarchal family where the man rules and the women ministers to his needs, is justified by the Tories as a means of countering 'arranged' marriages and unscrupulous misuse of the immigration laws by women asking to bring in 'fiancées' from abroad.

Thus, the party of the Profumo scandal, the Lambton scandal, and the Lucan scandal, steeped in a history of exploitation of women and denial of their rights now presumes to legislate against the established practices of the Asian community with all the arrogance of the missionary slave owner.

Of course there are many arguments which can be raised against the system of arranged marriages, but that is a question for the Asian youth in particular to fight out by their own action, not through the crack of the whip of high church bigots in the Tory party.

What is important is that the clear class nature of these Tory attacks, coupled as they are with quite open racism and denial of women's rights, should be drawn out as part of the whole philosophy of decaying Toryism.

What the Tories plan for Asian women is no more than a foretaste of what faces working class women in post-Corrie Toryland, when the nurseries have closed, job security for maternity leave has gone and the welfare state has been dismantled.

Seen in this light, the building of revolutionary cadres amongst women workers, in the Asian community and in the working class as a whole becomes a crucial part of the immediate objective of defeating the racist, chauvinist attacks of the Tories to prepare for the establishment of an open workers republic which can junk in the dustbin of history the garbage of bourgeois pretensions.

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Labour movement must act :

Defeat Corrie!

If the enormous potential of the October 28th demonstration against the Corrie Bill is to be developed, a massive campaign must be taken up in the labour movement for free abortion on demand on the NHS.

Many National Abortion Campaign members have now realised the importance of an offensive campaign. Nationally NAC is re-asserting its slogan for 'free abortion on demand' and moving away from mere defence of the 1967 Act which was the basis of the 'Campaign against Corrie'.

In many areas, especially Birmingham and the West Midlands so few abortions now take place on the NHS that the 67 Act might just as well not exist. In addition many working-class women are unable to gather the money necessary to have the operation in charitable clinics.

Campaigns around day care abortion facilities are beginning in some areas. In Birmingham, two hospitals have been suggested by the Regional Health Authority as possible sites. However, these campaigns will not be won by the friendly lobbying of MPs, but only by linking the campaign against the Corrie Bill with the defence of the Health Service as a whole.

No amount of lobbies, petitions or leaflets will turn back the Tories from their attack on abortion rights and on the welfare state.

The wholesale closure of wards and hospitals means that the occupation of threatened facilities, under the control of trade unionists and users of the health service, will become a vital weapon in the struggle.

Only the organised strength of the working class taking industrial action will do

that. And that strength can only be mobilised on the basis of a class resistance to the destruction of the health service as a whole. The occupation of threatened facilities must be linked to the fight for supporting strike action by other workers both inside and outside the health service.

No woman has the right to choose within capitalism. The pressure of poverty and the lack of adequate child-care provisions by the state means that free choice can only be an illusion. The destruction of nursery facilities is another attack by the Tories which cannot be separated from "the right to choose" an abortion.

Thousands of trade union members demonstrated their opposition to Corrie. The TUC leadership must not be allowed to rest back, feeling they've done their bit for women's rights, in sponsoring October 28.

The TUC leaders must be forced to

to win abortion rights not with 'left' speeches but by strike action.

Motions must be moved in the Labour Party and trade union branches for strike action on 5th February for the Corrie Bill's third reading. Workers should be preparing for a mass lobby of parliament on that day. The TUC should be pressed to make February 5th their "Day of Action".

The campaign for abortion rights does not end with the Corrie Bill. Campaigns must be mounted for safe effective abortions in the early stages of pregnancy as part of day-care facilities in hospitals. These facilities must be taken out of the hands of reactionary consultants, and placed under the control of health service users, trade unionists and NHS workers.

The fight should also be taken up for existing private services such as charitable clinics to be integrated within improved NHS facilities.

Oct. 28 Anti-Corrie demonstration—what way forward now?



Spanish Inquisition on Abortion.

In October 1976, eleven women were arrested in Bilbao, 8 of them for having abortions, 2 for attempting their own abortions (one of them unsuccessfully but still forced to answer charges in this grisly trial) and one woman accused of carrying them out.

Abortion is illegal in Spain. Penalties range from 6 months to six years in gaol plus 11 years being stripped of the right to vote or stand for public office for having an abortion plus a minimum six years in gaol for each abortion performed on another person.

Thousands of Spanish women are forced to travel to Britain to private non-profit making clinics such as the British Pregnancy Advisory Service and Marie Stopes for their abortions—although naturally this is financially impossible for most working class women

60 years imprisonment

The Corrie Bill, if passed, will not only affect women in this country.

The eleven accused come from a working class neighbourhood in Bilbao (in the Basque country, Euskadi) and all but one were married and had two or more children already and had been refused contraceptives by their doctors.

The abortionist, who faces at least 60 years imprisonment, charged an average of £20 to those who could afford it and used

the technique of introducing a solution of soapy water and alcohol into the vagina.

Several women have been taken to hospital after this treatment, although none have died at her hands.

A massive campaign was mounted, led by the Coordinating Body of Feminist Groups in Euskadi (CGFE) with the intervention of left parties, trade union sections, workers councils and local government councils.

The CGFE has consistently sought to exclude the workers movement and parties on the grounds that it was a 'women's issue', and has run the campaign on the limited demand for 'the right to abortion' and 'amnesty for the 11'.

This means only repealing anti-abortion legislation but not calling for free abortion on demand so that safe abortion would still only be available to those who could afford it.

1,300 women, many of them well-known, signed a declaration admitting to having had abortions. Sit-ins, rallies and demonstrations—strongly supported by the left and the trade union movement—took place, despite savage harassment from the police.

The CGFE resolution calling for the 'right to abortion' and 'amnesty for the 11' was put to the vote at local government level around the country.

The Spanish Communist and Socialist Parties (PCE and PSOE) underlined their already infamous treachery by abstaining.

In one council a tied vote was reached and the PSOE mayor was forced out of his abstentionist position. He used his casting vote against the motion! In councils

where these "socialists" had the majority they refused to take the motion because it was "too political".

In Bilbao, where the resolution was sponsored by the Basque left nationalist parties Euskadiko Ezkerra and Herri Batasuna, these "socialists" again abstained.

Women burst into the city chambers, screaming "machistas, you're the terrorists!" and these fake "lefts" promptly called the police.

Despite the sectarian orientation of the feminists, widespread support mounted so that on the day there was a huge demonstration outside the courtrooms, formed by trade union sections, women's groups, residents associations and political parties.

The judge suspended the trial for an undefined period on the grounds that 2 of the defendants were not present (one had not yet received her citation) but not before hurling to the ground a 25,000 strong petition presented to him by the defence.

Only a partial reprieve has been gained for this gruesome affair and the openly fascist right wing have been whipped up to a new pitch of hysteria against 'democracy'.

Barbarism

Although the repressive apparatus set up by Franco's dictatorship has remained intact since his death and the beginning of the sham 'democratic process' in Spain, the fascist press claims that the government is being "too soft" and is "afloat on a sea of subversion".

They equate abortion with "barbarism

and murder" and declare that these women represent "a despotism which will finish democracy".

Ominous statements have been issued by right wing generals which hold "democracy" responsible for the supposed decline of "catholic sexual mores".

In practice, "catholic sexual mores" really means the cult of both virginity and motherhood, monogamy for women, 'sluts' to provide gratification for male sexuality and the repression of both homosexuality and the sexuality of 'good' women.

Throw out Suarez

Sections of the "progressive" bourgeoisie are still anxious to broaden the democratic base of their anti-worker governments but there is a real threat of a military coup d'etat from traditional business interests and sections of the armed forces and the police.

Key questions such as abortion rights cannot be isolated from the context of the vicious repression of democratic rights which forms part of the system of control and exploitation which capitalism must exercise over the working class in order to survive.

These rights can only be won through the independent mobilisation of the working class under the leadership of its revolutionary party to overthrow the anti-worker Suarez regime and bring a workers government to power.