

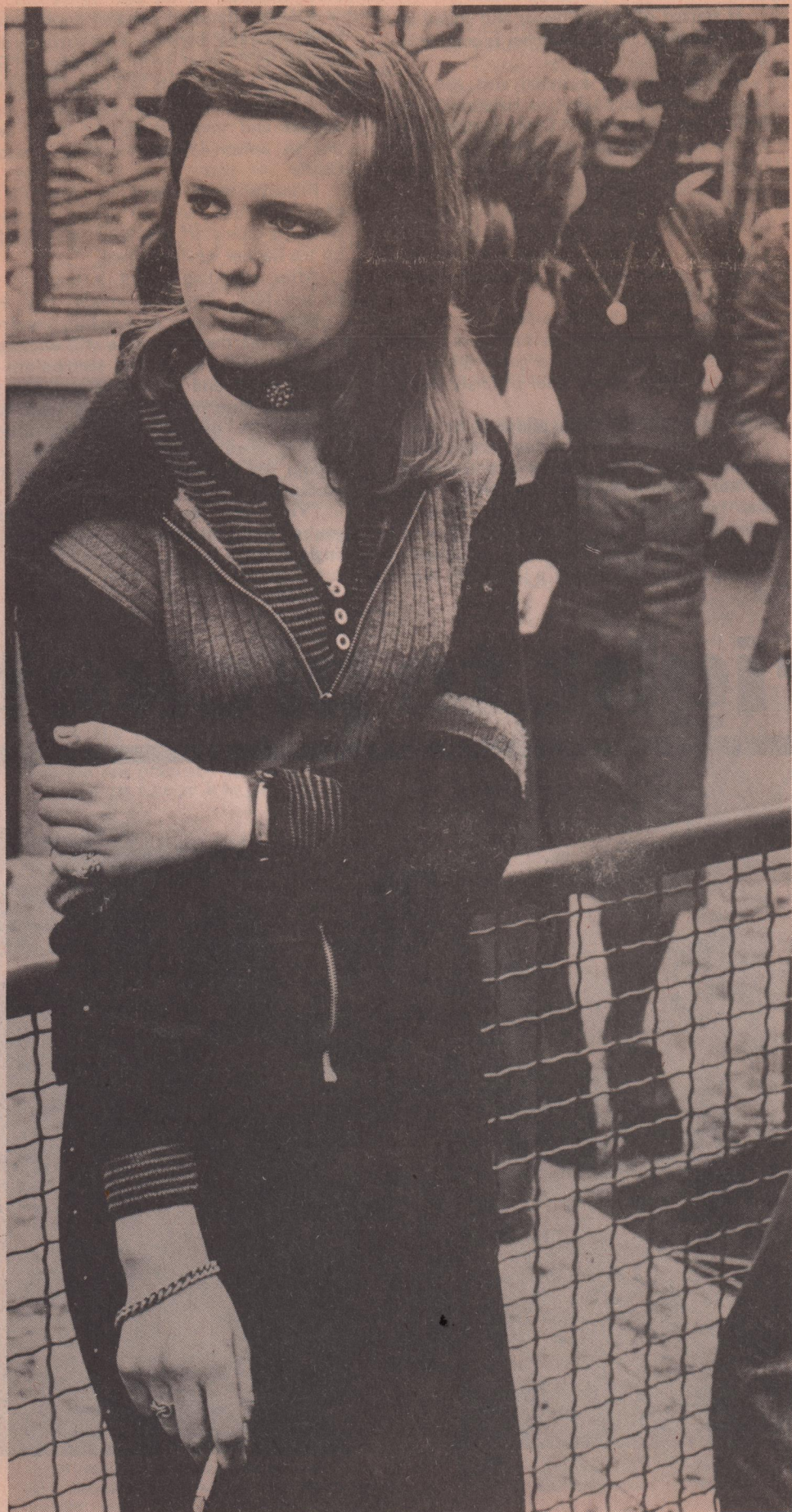
woman worker

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WOMEN BEAR THE BRUNT OF UNEMPLOYMENT!



In July, the Equal Opportunities Commission published its annual report which stated that during the whole year of 1979 men's unemployment actually fell, while women's unemployment rose by 5%!

Unemployment amongst women continues to soar as companies and factories go into bankruptcy and liquidation at a rate of over 120 a week making thousands of women in textiles, shoemaking, car components, toys, and other firms redundant.

Thousands of other women have agreed to have their hours slashed as an 'alternative' to redundancy.

This cut in pay is also in line with the Tories' strategy of increasing mass unemployment to force down wages.

Sir Keith Joseph showed this clearly in his statements saying workers had "priced themselves out of a job" and should accept a cut in wages below established union rates.

Thousands of unemployed married women are not eligible for unemployment or social security benefit and have for years been forced to work for low wages to supplement the family income.

In fact the E.O.C. report clearly shows that women's wages, despite the totally inadequate Equal Pay Act, have been steadily falling behind. In 1970 they equalled 75.5% of men's earnings, and by 1977 had fallen to 73.92%.

With wages falling, inflation soaring, and the pressures to give up the job to a man, many women are encouraged to think it is not worth their while working.

One of the biggest areas of job loss amongst women is the public sector.

80% of those working in the public sector are women and with the cuts so far massive staff wastage has occurred.

James Prior's suggestion that the unemployed should now be compelled to work for charity in hospitals, and schools, helping the elderly and disabled etc. is obviously key to the Tories' strategy.

The picture emerges of a completely dismantled public sector.

Hospitals, old people's homes, nurseries, school meals are to be taken over by private profit-making enterprises—while those who can't afford the costs of these private facilities, will have to go without and hope that 'mum' can cope with care of the sick, elderly, handicapped preparing lunchboxes and keeping bored frustrated children out of trouble.

Those who are really desperate can turn to charity—and hope that for example the 8000 nurses currently unemployed will return to the health service and work for nothing, along with the 10,000 non-teaching staff in schools who according to a Department of Education and Science report have lost their jobs last year.

Of course, we could always force the children themselves to clean the schools, as several county councils have suggested!

What are the union leaders doing? They find it difficult to understand that any job loss has taken place!

Leaders of NUPE, GMWU and the TGWU gaily boast of "no forced redundancies" or sackings.

But of course, they don't mention that women are being forced out of their jobs by the hundred by so-called natural wastage.

Perhaps they are fighting for "redeployment"—or perhaps like a GMWU branch in Hull they are recommending that dinner staff take voluntary redundancy—and handing out forms at union branch meetings.

"Natural wastage"

One example of the effect of 'natural wastage' is the nurse who has to cope with extra wards on night duty now that a nurse who left has not been replaced through a staff freeze. The result is increased pressures, increased speed at which she has to work, lack of time she can give to patients. When this is combined with low wages, the prospect of more staff cuts, and more work the remaining nurse decides she can't cope and leaves. Thus another job is lost.

Cutbacks in staff and manning levels are also key steps in running down a hospital prior to closure.

It is ironic that one of the members of the Equal Opportunities Commission, Lady McCarthy, is also Labour Chairwoman of the Oxfordshire Area Health Authority, responsible for axing the jobs of hundreds of women.

But it is hard to imagine how even the union leadership are going to explain away the proposed 300,000 jobs to be lost in the school meals service.

In Dorset the local authority plans to abolish the school meals service for all children under 12.

There has been not one report of anything the unions are proposing to do about this massive attack on their members.

The fact is that the government is able to force through cuts without a single public sector union nationally organising industrial action in defence of jobs.

In the private sector too the Thatcher government has been able to force unemployment towards 2 million without a single official struggle against a factory closure.

Not in one instance have union leaders challenged the "right" of the government and of the employer to preserve or restore their profits at the expense of women's jobs and wages.

These leaders should be using the strength of the organised working class to defend jobs (and create jobs for the unemployed through a planned programme of public works to answer all our needs).

If a factory or a hospital is threatened with closure, the unions should organise an occupation with supporting strike action from all its members.

On school meals for example, NUPE and other unions involved should organise full all-out national strike action in defence of the service (not 1 or 2 days of action which demoralises the membership and only achieves a loss of a day's wages).

Such national strikes should be organised by every section of the working class hit by these policies which attack their rights, jobs and living standards.

The workers in struggle should be organised into Councils of Action in each area to prepare a general strike to bring down the Tories and any government that places the needs of big business before the needs of the working class.

DOMESTICS RESIST JOB LOSS!

Domestic workers at St. Mary's Hospital, Harrow Road, London, have come to the forefront of this struggle to save the hospital from closure.

The closure of this busy general hospital was first proposed over 2 years ago, as part of the health service cuts implemented by the Callaghan government.

Workers in the hospital, along with the district joint shop stewards committee, responded by forming a defence committee.

By organising a broad campaign amongst local union branches and in the community, the Defence Committee has foiled repeated attempts by the Kensington Westminster and Chelsea Area Health Authority to close the hospital.

Turning Point

A turning point in the campaign came on 1st September 1979, when the AHA attempted to close the accident and emergency department.

A massive lobby of the AHA meeting was organised and the local ambulance drivers' NUPE branch announced that they would continue to bring in patients to St. Mary's if the casualty was occupied.

The AHA were forced to back down, and from that date on have reverted to more underhand methods of running down the hospital.

Their main tactic since then has been the reduction of manning levels, and the brunt of this attack has been borne by the women domestic workers.

Through the introduction of bonus schemes and virtual elimination of overtime, management have gradually chipped away at the working conditions of domestics.

Low Paid

The domestics, mainly members of TGWU and GMWU, have found these tactics increasingly hard to resist, despite adopting a policy of opposition to the staff reductions.

In a job which has always been physically hard and low paid—although vital to the running of a modern hospital—the

domestics' workload has gradually been increased to an almost impossible level.

Due to the shortage of nurses, they have taken on extra tasks, often having to finish feeding disabled and geriatric patients before clearing away the dishes.

As well as this, they have been continually pressured by management to move on to other wards when they are halfway through a job and to take shorter tea and lunch breaks.

In the face of this endless harassment, the domestics at St. Mary's have recently taken an important stand, which should serve us an example to all ancillary workers threatened with manning reductions.

Disciplinary hearing

Early in July, TGWU domestic shop steward, Rita Maxim, was instructed by her supervisor to move to another ward before finishing the job she was doing.

Sister Maxim refused, arguing that it was not in her conditions of employment and against agreed union policy of opposing the rundown of the hospital.

She was ordered to attend a disciplinary hearing the following week, where management obviously hoped to make an example of her and weaken the resistance of the domestics.

A meeting of all domestic staff was called where it was decided to take a stand in defence of their steward by stopping work at the time of hearing on July 14th.

Seeing the strength of resistance, management cancelled the hearing and in its place called a meeting of domestics where they attempted to impose more stringent working conditions.

The response of the domestics was overwhelming.

In an angry meeting, they pledged to take industrial action in defence of anyone who was disciplined by management for refusing to take on extra work.

Management were forced to back down and take no further steps against Sister Maxim.

The importance of this stand cannot be over-emphasised, and the domestics are now taking a leading role in the defence of the hospital.

Earlier, on June 13th, they played a major part in preventing the removal of equipment from the hospital stores, by physically blocking the path of the lorry.



P.M SENT PACKING!

It started off as a whisper and ended up as a crescendo. "Mrs. Thatcher is coming to Winsford."

She was paying a flying visit (on her Broomstick, many said), to Hebden Green School for Handicapped Children. Only she would have the gall to come here, after the cuts she has made in Cheshire's Education and Social Services.

What else did she want? She's got everything we've got to give and more! She's taken our jobs, our children's Education, medicine when we're ill: she's even taken our self-respect!

"Winsford to Welcome Mrs. Thatcher" screamed the headlines in the local press.

Well, she was about to get a different welcome from what the officials were giving her!

We started to arrive about 8.30 a.m.

There weren't only representatives from unions such as the Tailors and Garment Workers Union, NALGO and NUPE, but also housewives from a nearby Council overspill Estate, and young people due to leave school, who haven't a snowball's chance in hell of getting a job when they do.

About a hundred people stood outside Hebden Green, banners aloft carrying such slogans as "Down with Thatcher", "Save our jobs", "Stop cuts in Public Spending"

At about 9.15 a.m. the Iron Lady arrived and immediately the chant went out in unison—"Thatcher Out, Thatcher Out".

Placards were waved in front of the car, and one solitary Tory supporter waving a blue scarf, was soon swallowed up by the banner waving crowd.

After spending about a hour in the school Mrs. Thatcher made her exit.

With a fixed grin on her face she drove through the demonstrators still waiting at the gate, shouting as they had before—all of one mind and knowing that when she arrived in Runcorn, she would again have to run the gauntlet of demonstrators.

They were waiting for her there, and hoping she had got the message we had set out to convey:

"You may be Prime Minister, but you're not welcome in the North of England."

ADWEST-the right to picket!

The dispute at the car components firm of Adwest south of Reading is fast becoming the first victim of Prior's strike-breaking "Employment Bill"—before it has become law.

11 weeks ago the management sacked and AUEW member, Martin Kaufmann, and the TGWU convenor, Danny Broderick and 56 workers walked out in his defence.

Since then they have campaigned for his reinstatement by pressing the TGWU for official support and by daily picketing backed up by regular mass pickets.

The lack of official support—withdrawn according to the official Eynon (instrumental in the sell-out of a unionisation struggle at Didcot Selected Toys) because the branch's finances were not up to date—is undoubtedly part of the reason why the rest of the 750 workforce, including most of the women workers have not joined the strike, but are daily crossing the picket lines.

The women in the factory are mainly in the semi-skilled inspector's section and receive lower pay than the men because of their grading. Their claim for regrading has now been before management for a year but the conscious right-wing domination of the section by Anne Smith, AUEW Convenor has prevented them struggling for their rights and is probably responsible for keeping the women in the factory now.

Since the beginning of the strike the AUEW has negotiated sole union recognition with the management.

On July 2nd, the police completely cordoned off the main gate of Adwest preventing any picket from standing at the gate to persuade the scabs not to cross.

Union convenor Danny Broderick defied the cordon and walked to the gate, demanding the right to picket. He was immediately arrested.

26 Arrests

This arrest was followed on the next mass picket on July 14th by arrests of 26 others, including TGWU member Jean Dhoot, Treasurer of the strike committee.

These arrests followed a similar police tactic of completely denying the right to picket and arresting any pickets who attempted to bar the entrance or who shouted at the scabs as they went in.

Also arrested was a young black man charged with causing £17.29 worth of damage to police trousers and jackets by throwing a flour bomb!

Support the Adwest strikers by:

*Demanding TGWU official support.

*Join the next mass picket August 11th.

*Organise collections and donations in support of the strikers and the 27 arrested (one has already been fined £150)

Send letters of support and donations to Danny Broderick, 46 Berkley Avenue, Reading.





FIGHTING WOMEN'S OPPRESSION UNDER THE JUNTA

Statement issued by the Chilean
Bolshevik Workers League
(LOB) on International Women's
Day 1980

"Anyone who knows anything about history knows that great social changes are impossible without feminine ferment"

Marx 1868

"There can be no socialist revolution if the huge majority of working women don't play a considerable part in it... the experience of all liberation movements confirms that the success of the revolution depends on the degree to which women participate."

Lenin 1918

The 8th of March 1980 will be, once again a day of struggle for women and women workers the world over and in Chile. On this day women renew their determination to fight for full emancipation, which will only be made possible by socialist revolution.

International Women's Day, along with the true movement towards women's emancipation in general, is closely linked to workers' struggles. On this date we remember how on the 8th of March 1900, women textile workers occupying a factory in Chicago were cruel victims of a deliberate fire in which 129 of them perished.

The 1907 Congress of the Socialist International, which included the revolutionary currents at that time decided to make March 8th International Women's Day.

Women constitute the most exploited and humiliated sector of the working class and the people. When she is not marginalised from social life and relegated to the role of domestic slave, she enters the world of work only to suffer a dual exploitation and oppression: at the hands of the capitalist and the continuation of her role as household slave after a day's work.

In factories and workplaces women are usually the last to be employed and the first to be fired. They are victims of various humiliations practised by the bosses and to crown it all receive less pay for the same job.

In the home, where bourgeois ideology and propaganda attempts to paint women as queens, they must fulfil countless tasks which multiply in relation to the level of misery. Here too they are often faced with the low level of consciousness of their husbands or companions who tend to find an outlet for their own oppression by their male "superiority".

Although this is generally true of capitalist society (and of all class society) and has historically been the case in Chile, the problem has recently been exacerbated. Military dictatorships as the concrete expression of the putrefaction of capitalism take to extremes all the reactionary tendencies of bourgeois society.

On the one hand reactionary propaganda about women has been reinforced. There is a current advertisement on TV by the Ministry of Culture which attempts to "dignify" the position of women, extolling "motherhood" and explaining that mothers deserve the "respect" and "deference" of males. This image of women and their role in society which calls for "deference" (giving them your seat on buses and so on) hides an enormous contempt: this is the "weak sex" which must therefore be protected.

At the level of ideology the bourgeoisie continues to bombard women with banal magazines, tearjerking soap operas and novelettes in which the "poor girl" always finds her release by marrying "the bosses' son".

But the attacks of the dictatorship clearly cannot be reduced to its ideological features. In the first place the misery into which the dictatorship has plunged proletarian families hits women directly. Workers' wages cannot last out the month so women must go out to work or rather to look for work.

Classic Marxists have always affirmed that a condition for the emancipation of women is their integration in the social world, the world of work outside the strict confines of the home. In this sense Marx, while condemning the cruel exploitation of female and child labour, considered that capitalism in its ascendancy laid the material bases for women's (and children's) emancipation.

However, in Chile, capitalism has evolved in a dependant way, dominated by the needs of the imperialist metropolises and with a number of backward characteristics. This is why women's participation in the labour force has always been far less than in the imperialist countries.

FEMALE UNEMPLOYMENT

Nevertheless, it is worth measuring the constant decadence of capitalism through the figures for female employment, that is through the capacity (or rather incapacity) of the dependant capitalism of Chile to absorb and integrate the female half of the population into the social sphere. In 1957 the percentage of women workers in the working class was 25.5%, by 1972 it had gone down to 22% and by 1977 it was a mere 20%.

Currently, the economic model which the dictatorship seeks to impose is based fundamentally on the constant increase of the rate of exploitation. Women have been one of the direct targets. Decree 2,200 stripped women of previous gains in maternity rights, leaving pregnant women at the mercy of their bosses who can sack them at their pleasure. Even the supposed "guarantees" included in the decree are daily run over roughshod by the bosses. For example, although all workplaces employing more than 30 women are supposed to have a 'cradle room', workers have to fight—not always successfully—for this to be implemented.

LOWERING WAGES

On the other hand, the economic model which forces more women to seek employment creates conditions for the further lowering of wages.

Another aspect of the attacks against women by the dictatorship are in relation to contraception and abortion. For some time the dictatorship—acclaimed by the Church—has run a tremendous propaganda campaign to encourage women to have more and more children to provide more and more cannon fodder for these blood-suckers. The birthrate has fallen lately as a natural consequence of the misery which abounds so the offensive has not simply been at the level of propaganda. The Ministry of Health has imposed fees on inter-uterine devices and other forms of

contraception which were previously free which has increased the number of unwanted pregnancies.

DEATHS

This has resulted both in forced births and in the terrible number of deaths and mutilations of women who have attempted to perform their own abortions or who have had them done by unskilled practitioners. It is calculated that in Chile there are 300,000 births every year and 100,000 abortions. The dictatorship wants women to be machines producing children for the "nation" even though they haven't the means to feed and educate them and are further enslaved in the process. Revolutionaries must raise clear slogans in this respect "A woman's body is her own! For free abortion on demand".

Household tasks multiply, not only because of the extreme poverty but also because children stop going to school. The school-going rate—in primary as well as secondary school—is continually falling and this contributes further to women's domestic enslavement.

To a large extent, women are a sleeping giant. The bourgeoisie which feeds their passivity with ideological rubbish and home confinement, uses this sleeping giant while it can. Nevertheless, when the giant awakes, and begins to cast off her old chains, the bourgeoisie trembles. The history of all revolutions from the French Revolution itself through to the glorious Bolshevik Revolution has been animated by tremendous mobilisations of women.



Protest lobby of Chilean embassy in London



The two greatest modern revolutions, the French and the Bolshevik, bourgeois and proletarian, were fired by huge radical mobilisations of women. Between 1970-1973, the Chilean people also witnessed the waking of the giant throughout the trade unions and other popular organisations transforming many which had previously been controlled by bureaucrats. On many occasions the women proved to be more militant than the men.

The working class must take stock of this giant, try and wake her up and contribute to her organisation. However, the most advanced layers of women are not asleep today by a long shot. On the contrary, it is surprising to see the proportion—often constituting a majority—of women to be found in all kinds of working class and popular organisations. This process must be encouraged to win more and more layers of women for the fight against the dictatorship!

Women have a series of problems and demands which—at first sight are specific and relate only to them. Nevertheless, these problems are integral to class society, to decaying capitalism. Women's oppression does not come from "man" in the abstract: it comes from man as determined in this society, unconscious labourer or boss. Equally, as revolutionaries we are not interested in the fate of rich women. For them the problem is "existential". Above all, they are part of the oppressing class. The working class woman is infinitely closer to men of her class than to the bosses' wife. The interests, the struggle for emancipation of working women and men can only be won through a struggle with the bourgeoisie, for socialism. In 1885 Engels wrote:

"I believe that a true equality between women and men will only be reached after the exploitation of one by another under capitalism has been exploited."

And whereas women need socialist revolution for their liberation, the revolution also needs women in order to come to victory.

Therefore, the woman question can only be understood correctly in a revolutionary way through a class perspective of class struggle. This is why we must be alert in fighting bourgeois organisations and the Church when they seek to add grist to their own reactionary mill in the name of the problem of women. Bourgeois democrats have only brought women deeper and more subtle forms of oppres-

sion through their "liberal" verbiage. As Lenin said in 1919:

"Verbally, bourgeois democracy promises equality and freedom. In fact, bourgeois republics—however advanced—have not given women, who constitute half of humanity, full equality with men before the law, nor have they freed them from the yoke and oppression of men. Bourgeois democracy is the democracy of pompous phrases, of solemn words, of bombastic promises, grandiose slogans about liberty and equality, but in practice, all of this hides the lack of freedom and inequality of women, the lack of freedom and inequality of workers and the exploited."

At this time, only the Bolshevik Revolution managed to lay the real basis for the emancipation of women, repealing all repressive legislation, granting freedoms, facilitating divorce, socialising a series of enslaving domestic tasks from the washing of clothes, to the education and care of children.

Nevertheless, women suffered the same fate as the rest of the proletariat under the Stalinist counter-revolution. In the 1935 Constitution, a series of laws favourable to women disappeared, and in general Stalinism sought to reaffirm the family in the knowledge that it plays a profoundly conservative role in all oppressive societies.

The Stalinists ran a massive propaganda campaign on this theme. Stalin himself appeared in photographs at his paternal home eating his granny's marmalade, demonstrating the fact that the "People's Father" loved his home and all good workers should do likewise.

Whereas Marx called the abolition of the family a communist objective in the Communist Manifesto, a contemporary Stalinist hack, A.F. Shishlein writes: "Only in a society where there is no exploitation of man by man can the monogamous family find its true and complete fulfillment."

This communist perspective envisaged by A. Kollontai shortly after the October Revolution is very different to this tract which abounds in sanctimoniousness and pays its respects to the bureaucratic state.

"The family will cease to be necessary for the state as it has been in the past. On the contrary, today the family removes women uselessly from much greater and more serious work. The family is no longer necessary for its own members now that the task of educating children which fell



Demonstration of left wing groups in Santiago shortly before the coup

to it previously is in the process of becoming collective.

However, the ruins of the old family will be soon replaced by a new form which will be comprised of new relations between men and women, a union of affection, of companionship, a union of two equal members within communist society both free, both independent and both workers.

There will be no more domestic slavery for women, no inequality in the family. Women need not be afraid of being left alone, without support and holding the children if their husband leaves them.

"In communist society a woman will depend not on her husband but on her labour. She will be supported not by her husband but by her own working hands. She need not fear for the future of her children because the proletarian state will care for them. Marriage will be cleansed of its material side, of all calculations relating to money, that odious affliction of family life in the present.

"Marriage will be thus transformed into a sublime association between 2 souls who love each other, who have faith in each other, in an association which promises to every male and female workers the most complete fulfillment which is possible for a conscious being to experience. A union, which is free but strong in the spirit of companionship which inspires it, instead of the conjugal slavery of the past: This is what tomorrow's society will bring for men and women."

Revolutionaries should fight for this complete emancipation, for the abolition of all class and sexual oppression and there is no doubt that working and oppressed women have an important part to play in

this struggle. The Fourth International has written large on its banners slogans calling for working women to join the struggle. In its programme the Fourth International declares:

"The epoch of the decline of capitalism delivers the hardest blows to women both as workers and housewives. Each section of the Fourth International must seek support amongst the most oppressed sections of the working class and therefore amongst working women. They will find there an unlimited source of devotion, self-denial and self-sacrifice."

Conscious of this, of the fact that only socialist revolution can follow the path towards the true emancipation of oppressed women, that there can be no revolution without the mass mobilisation of oppressed women and that they have a vital role to play in the overthrow of the dictatorship which oppresses us, in this spirit we must celebrate International Women's Day as a day of struggle, as a day which will inspire further organisation and fighting spirit.

We salute International Women's Day!

For the mass organisation of oppressed women!

For real maternity rights for working women!

For the repeal of Decree 2,200!

Equal pay for equal work!

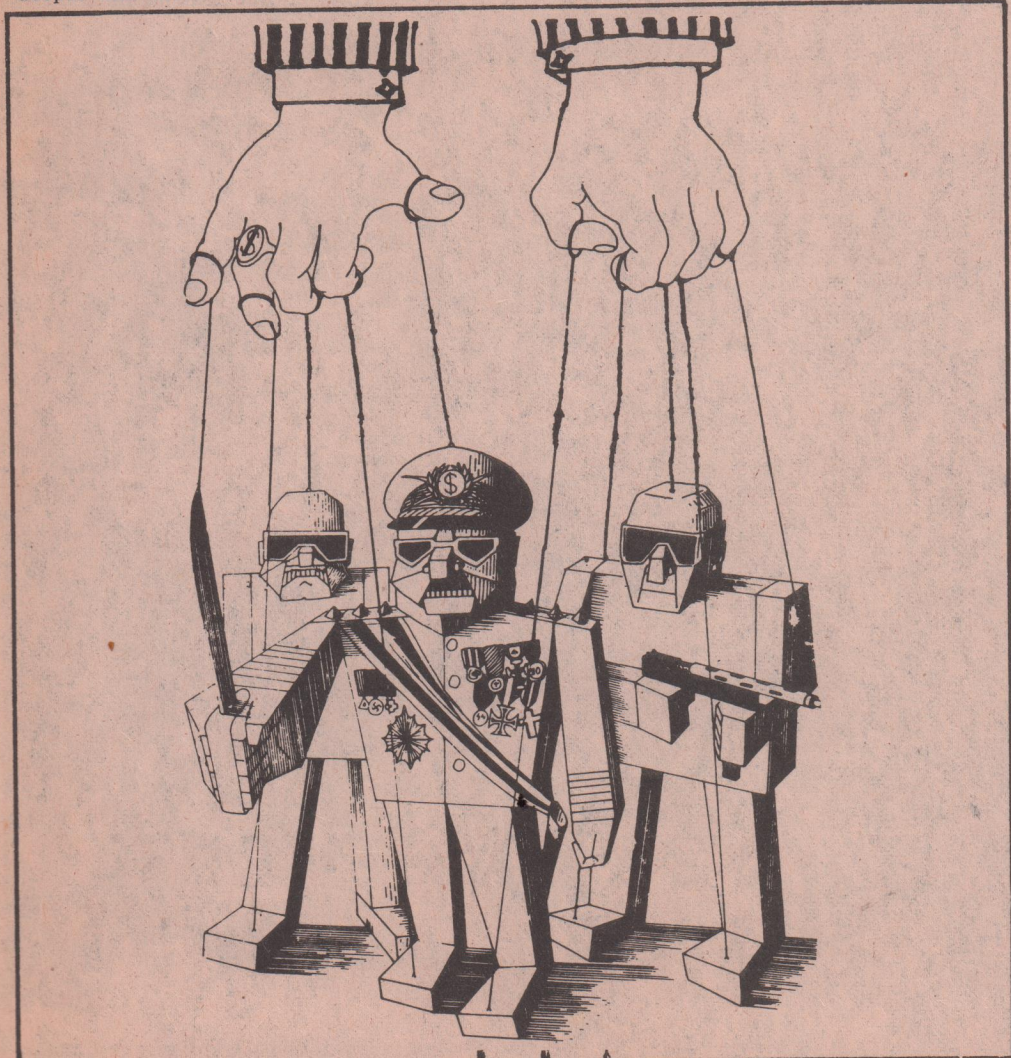
Free abortion on demand!

Free nurseries in every workplace!

Free primary and secondary education for all Chilean children!

For the full integration of women in the struggle against the dictatorship!

Only socialist revolution can open the way for women's emancipation!



Thatcher arms Junta

The Thatcher government stands foursquare behind the most barbaric dictatorships in Latin America. That is clear from the decision last week to lift the six-year ban on sales of British-made arms to Chile.

There is no doubt that this move will be followed up by sales of arms and other trade with Bolivia, Argentina, and other equally bloodstained regimes.

The British labour movement — many of whose leaders declare a verbal commitment to solidarity with the Chilean working class and to the Bolivian miners now fighting the new military junta there — must take active steps to force a halt to this trade.

Bolivia in particular is a landlocked

country especially vulnerable to blacking action by the international labour movement. The Bolivian COB (TUC) has appealed for such support.

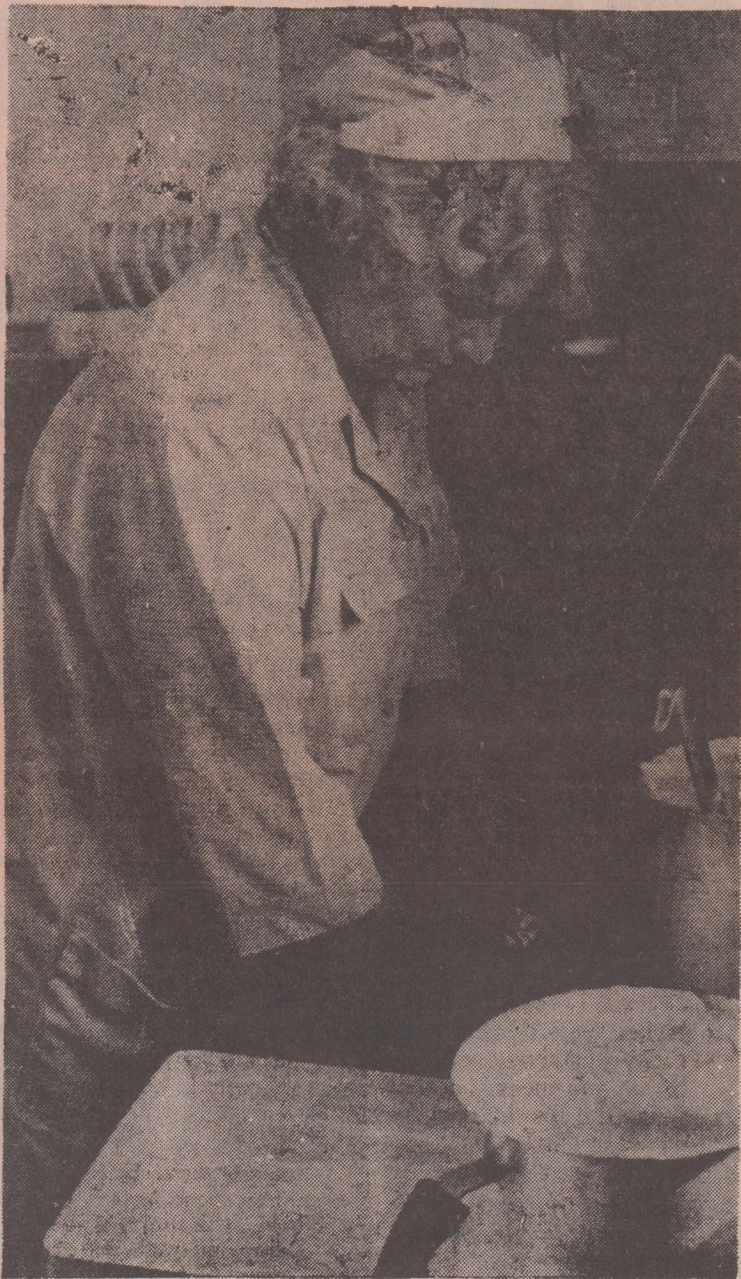
Moss Evans, who headed last year's Chile Solidarity march, must be called upon to instruct TGWU dockers and transport workers to black all trade, especially arms and military equipment, to Chile, Bolivia and Argentina.

Miners' leaders Daley and Gormley must be forced to mount an urgent fight for an all-out TUC programme of action in solidarity with the embattled Bolivian miners.

Pressure must be placed on union leaders in Peru also, to ensure that Bolivia's main trading route is cut by blacking and strike action.

SCHOOL MEAL SELL-OUT

Officials hand out redundancy forms



The complete bankruptcy and cowardice of the public sector union leaders in the struggle against the cuts was confirmed at a mass meeting of the kitchen staff employed by the Humberside Education Department in Hull called by the GMWU.

The meeting, held last Wednesday, was called to discuss the redundancy situation. The trend of the meeting had been set a week before it actually took place, in the form of a scandalous leaflet drawn up by the GMWU and circulated to the membership, which declared that:

"It is expected that volunteers for redundancy will be called for—this will apply to people under 59 years of age. If this should happen forms will be issued at the meeting."

The meeting opened with over 550 kitchen staff present and the role of the local leadership was made clear when the Area Organiser Bill Allan addressed the meeting giving details of when the redundancies would take place and how many jobs were to go.

Giving no lead whatsoever on how to fight the planned redundancies, Allan went on to tell his members that the union was initially calling for voluntary redundancies and that if this failed then the union would proceed on a "last in, first out" basis.

When the meeting was thrown open a local Labour Councillor asked Allan why he was not calling for opposition to the redundancies and giving a lead to the members present on how to fight these attacks.

She also reminded him that at a public meeting on the cuts in the public sector held in Hull in October of last year he had stated that he was prepared to fight the cuts in every way possible.

This contribution was warmly received by the members present, but was answered by a personal attack on the Labour councillor by Bill Allan saying that as she was not a kitchen staff worker, she had no right to question the platform.

The Councillor pointed out that she had been an active member of the union and also a member of the Education Branch 5 for longer than he had.

The platform had no answer to this. Then a member of the kitchen staff raised the point that at a previous meeting held in April over redeployment the same leadership had instructed the kitchen staff to refuse to take any cuts in hours.

Yet now they were asking workers to take a cut in jobs! The platform got round this by referring to the drop in demand for school meals since the increase in charge to 50p.

Socialist Press supporter Margaret Nix (who is the only woman shop steward in the Hull division) then attacked the platform, pointing out that the union leadership was doing the Tory County Council's work for them and were therefore carrying out Tory policies.

Indiscriminate

This was answered sharply by the Convenor of the school meal services members who asked "what do you want us to do? Do you want us to let the county Councillors to go to the schools and make redundancies indiscriminately?"

This was "not a political issue" he claimed.

Margaret Nix drew warm applause when she replied:

"What kind of a union is it that does the Tories work for them? What we should be doing is fighting these redundancies and you should be leading that fight!"

When the leadership was questioned as to their reference to redundancy forms, the convenor picked up a bundle of slips and held them up shouting that they were available.

At this, chaos broke out, with many of the women present asking for redundancy forms.

When order was restored the chairman made the ludicrous statement that the leadership were "only looking after the interests of the members".

When the question of opposition to the redundancies was again raised, the chairman played the oldest and most despicable trick in the book—immediately putting to a vote the proposal for all-out strike action the following day.

With no preparation for such a policy this was obviously heavily defeated with only about ten members voting for strike action.

The platform, gloating over this success then asked if any other action was desired by the membership. A *Socialist Press* supporter then called for a no-cover policy for anyone sick or on holidays.

The chairman blandly replied that this had been tried in the past with the school cleaners but had not worked—failing to mention that cleaners who had tried to implement the no cover policy had received no support from the union leadership.

The Hull betrayal is clearly no unique example: it is just one instance of the role of public sector union bureaucrats who are daily presiding over the slaughter of jobs and services without lifting a finger of opposition.

This is why the fight against the Tory cuts is so bound up with the struggle for a new, revolutionary leadership in the labour movement.

NURSERY OCCUPIED!

The eviction of Wheatley Street Nursery School by Coventry's Labour City Council after only five days in occupation is an indication of the determination of many Labour councils to carry through the Tory government's cuts in spending.

The speed at which the council moved to break up the occupation is regarded with some bitterness by parents who have campaigned for many months without success to have the question of the closure discussed.

DECISION TO OCCUPY

Faced with the immediate closure of the building at the end of the summer term, and with little hope of it ever reopening, parents and supporters took the decision for occupation on Friday July 11 in a bid to keep it open and functioning for the people of Coventry.

Staff at the school are being redeployed—one of them to a school in Leicester which itself will close in a year's time! The children from Wheatley Street have been placed in other nurseries—but as parents point out this simply denies other children the chance of a place.

Parents have stressed that Wheatley Street's central position in the city and its 70 full-time nursery places are too valuable a facility to be lost at a time when existing provision caters for only 17% of 3-5 year-olds in the city.

The reason given for the closure was that the building was old and in need of extensive modernisation.

However an independent surveyor employed by the parents found that the building needed no modernisation, and that the maximum amount for repairs needed was a mere £2,000!

Alternative suggestions have been that the site if cleared would constitute a very valuable piece of development land.

SERVICES CUT OFF

Only a few hours after the occupation began the council took the decision to lock the occupiers in, and have both gas and electricity cut off. Appeals for even one door to be left open as a fire precaution were ignored, and the council simply returned at 8am each morning to see if anyone wanted to be let out.

Supporters—including one woman 8 months pregnant—were therefore obliged to climb in and out through a window.

An injunction was served on six occupiers on the Monday to appear in court on the Tuesday morning.

The council's application for a re-possession order was a formality. But one victory was secured for the parents.

Owen Bishop, a parent leading the campaign, insisted on making a statement about why they had occupied.

The judge was so impressed that he refused the council's application for costs, though saying he was unable to challenge the repossession order.

Occupations of course raise the whole ques-

tion of ownership and control over private and state property, and even a sympathetic judge knows which side his bread is buttered in a case of the state versus the working class.

WIDESPREAD SUPPORT

Support for the occupation has been widespread. Over 200 people visited the occupation, including a number of 'rebel' Labour councillors who recently defied a Labour whip to vote against the raising of school meals charges.

A public meeting was held during the occupation when nearly 120 people climbed through the local window to attend.

Local NUPE Branch Secretary Joe Little sent a message of support, pledging to take up the question of Wheatley Street both locally and nationally within NUPE.

The Chairman of Coventry SE Labour Party, individual NUT, CPSA and other trade union members, and parents also added their support, along with the Oxford and Leicester Nursery Campaigns.

The Coventry Nursery Campaign (Wheatley Street) has now been set up both to resist the closure of this nursery, but also—recognising that this closure is only the first of many—to carry forward the broader fight to defend and extend nursery provision.

On the day of the eviction a meeting held in the playground drew an attendance of 600 parents, supporters and children, which then marched on the council offices to present their demands.

The call is for Wheatley Street to be 'reopened' at the start of next term, fully staffed, and with no loss of pupil places.

So far the campaigners have received a letter from the Deputy Education Officer giving an undertaking that no furniture or equipment will be removed from the school in advance of a decision on the closure by Tory Education Secretary Carlisle.

TRADE UNION SUPPORT

The campaign must now follow through in the trade unions—in particular NUT and NALGO, who gave verbal support to the campaign before the occupation.

The campaign is also calling for an emergency council meeting to be held to discuss the issue and the rebel councillors in particular must be pressed to take up this fight.

At the same time an investigation into nursery needs in the city has been launched to draw in broader support and strengthen the case argued by the campaigners.

The eviction has thus not been in any way the end of the campaign: in regular Saturday sessions in the shopping precinct hundreds of people have now signed a petition supporting the demands.

Further details of the campaign are available from:

Coventry Nursery Campaign (Wheatley Street), 37, Beaconsfield Road, Coventry.

woman worker



IMPORT CONTROLS- NOT THE ANSWER!

The Trade Union and Labour Party leaders are now leading the chorus for the implementation of import controls in the Car industry, Machine tools, Clothing and Textiles.

The car industrialists are crying in despair about the sale of Japanese cars on the British market with Sir Michael Edwardes of BL making overtures to union leaders, Duffy (AUEW) and Evans (TGWU) with a view towards joint discussions with the government.

The TUC are already meeting ministers on behalf of ailing capitalist companies in order to prop them up against 'foreign' capitalists by introducing trade barriers.

This traditional nationalism of British labour leaders is mirrored by their American counterparts, who are also calling for cut backs, and in some cases,

total bans on the importation of 'foreign' British vehicles!

Both sets of officials are seemingly oblivious to the fact that an action by one side can easily be matched by the other. Meanwhile the economic crisis continues to worsen.

US car manufacturers continue to lay off thousands of car workers with thousands more losing their jobs entirely.

In Britain, one of the biggest heavy vehicle manufacturers, Fodens, has recently sacked 630 workers and called in the Official Receiver: some estimates put their losses in the first quarter of 1980 at £16million.

The Machine Tool industry continues its rapid decline. But figures show that it was lack of investment which started the 'run down'—long before the increase in machine tool imports.

British employers moved large amounts of capital to more profitable areas of the world.

Meanwhile the Clothing and Textile industry faces its severest crisis ever. 200,000 jobs have been lost in the last 20 years, and in the last 6 months the clothing industry has been closing down an average of 2 factories per week as the crisis of capitalism hits sales in the high street.

Big name stores like Marks & Spencers, Littlewoods, British Home Stores and Woolworths are reducing staff and putting others on a four day week.

Their attempts to maintain last years' prices in order to stimulate demand in the face of a diminishing market has forced them to carry out a two-pronged attack—the above measure coupled with an attack

on the shop floor at the supplier firms.

This takes the form of forcing supply manufacturers to provide garments fixed at last year's prices.

They in turn are attempting to recover these losses (coupled with increased costs) from their workforce by introducing speed-up and sackings.

Indeed many textile manufacturers are now refusing to implement the second half of last year's pay agreements in order to head off any talks whatsoever aimed at securing future increases.

Faced with this onslaught, union leaders are proving themselves entirely useless, claiming 'steps forward' if they actually manage to obtain the legal minimum amount of redundancy pay for their members!

It is not surprising therefore that those bureaucrats are the most vocal in calling for what they see as an easy option—a policy of Import Controls.

Textile workers

This call has now become their substitute for any serious action to defend the interests of textile workers.

Union leaders and employers are at one in claiming that the decline is due entirely to the importation of cheap goods from the super-exploited workers of India, Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Such horror stories are frequently told in the pages of Textile union journals.

As far as Britain is concerned, textile imports are recorded at 24% and as more and more workers turn towards these cheaper garments, in an attempt to offset the massive assault on their own living standards, this percentage must grow.

Yet retaliatory measures here would put up the price of textiles in Britain, cause unemployment abroad, and inevitably affect the £442.3 million of good exported from Britain to Hong Kong.

Nothing is resolved by the calls from the Communist Party, Labour leaders and employers alike for import controls—selective or otherwise.

There can be no solutions outside of cross union alliances committed to policies of total defence of the jobs, conditions, and wages of the workers of these industries.

Central to these policies must be opening the books to expose the financial secrets of the above manufacturers.

Occupy threatened plants: don't share the poverty—share the work, without loss of pay.

Against nationalist Import Controls. For workers ownership of these basic industries!

promotion & women teacher

"I never cease to be amazed that women are penalised for having children, but men are promoted because they have a family to support."

Women teachers in England and Wales generally are lower paid and have lower status than their male colleagues. These facts cannot simply be explained by the fact that most part-timers are women, that qualifications are different in many cases, or by the concentration of women in primary schools where the scope for promotion to scale posts is limited.

In 1976, the NUT Ad Hoc Committee on Equal Opportunities launched a Survey on "Promotion and the Woman Teacher" in order to test out whether or not there is discrimination against married and single women teachers and whether women teachers' attitudes and experiences conform to the stereotyped views often quoted about them.

One woman interviewed voiced some of these stereotypes held by her (male) headteacher:

"The Head under whom I have served for most of the time had no liking for women teachers. He did not regard them as dedicated: he looked on them as only staying for short periods at a time and liable to move on if their husbands were posted. He felt that they used school as a convenience rather than a career. He would not have chosen to have any women in senior posts except where they were forced on him. I have therefore been usually designated as a promotion prospect."

for both internal and external promotion, and a final section on motivation.

82% of the women considered themselves to be consciously pursuing a career and the 18% who answered no to this question were uniformly spread across the whole age group. If anything, married women with children were more positive in answering this question than single women.

A similar proportion of all categories of women also rejected the suggestion that breadwinners of families should be given jobs in preference to others.

77% of married women considered their jobs as important as their husbands (with 7% considering them more important) but only 20% would accept promotion which would necessitate moving house and a change of job for the husband.

When asked to rank seven reasons for seeking promotion the majority placed "opportunity for putting their own ideas/organisational ability into use" highest, with an increase in salary ranking higher for single parents and women with dependant relatives than for married women.

[The latter noted that they are taxed so heavily that scale post salaries make little difference.]

The opportunity to lead a team of other teachers was placed last in the ranking with only 3% of the women putting this first.

Several illuminating quotes emerged in the section dealing with "experiences in applying for promotion" which exposed clear discriminatory practices. Several Heads refused to promote women under 40 for "diversity reasons" (1971).

"What are your child-bearing prospects?" "I was asked for details of my family routine."

"Did I have a fiancé?" "Have you thoughts of a further family" (of a 41 year old separated woman with 2 children over 16).

Are men applicants asked about their child-bearing prospects?

More than a fifth of the women applying for promotion felt they had been discriminated against because of their sex and half of the whole group were asked questions about their personal lives. Older women also felt age discrimination was used against them.

Many women return from a break for having children to a part-time job at first. The report correctly points to the way these are used by Local Education Autho-

rities: "The main problem with this option is that part-time posts tend to be provided only in "fringe" subjects. The women who take up these posts are then the first to suffer when cuts are made".

The danger of falling outside the Employment Protection Act and being restricted to scale 1 are also mentioned.

The analysis of the returned questionnaire reveals that the number of married women teachers with children is equalised by the combined numbers of single parents and single women with elderly dependents—a little known fact, the NUT suspect, and one which knocks down the popular conception of the woman teacher working for pin money and more interested in the family—as of course does the whole report.

WHY WOMAN WORKER?

Woman Worker is published by the Workers Socialist League as part of the fight to mobilise women together with the working class in the international fight against capitalism. As Trotskyists we are fighting to reconstruct the Fourth International—the world party of socialist revolution—to lead the struggles of the working class.

Our programme, based on the Transitional Programme, is directed towards linking women's struggles for democratic rights and against economic oppression, with the need to overthrow capitalism.

"Women to take on positions of leadership within the unions in order to fight for their rights."

"Solidarity with struggles of women workers internationally against oppression by inter-national capitalism or by the Stalinist bureaucracy in the deformed workers

price increases as assessed by elected price committees.

*For strike action and occupations to defend the health, education and social services and threatened factories.

*For open-the-books committees to discover the real financial state of the social services, and private companies threatening closure.

*For nationalisation under workers' management without compensation of firms that declare themselves bankrupt.

*Against all anti-abortion legislation—for free abortion and contraception on demand and workers and consumers control of the health service.

"Solidarity with struggles of women workers internationally against oppression by inter-national capitalism or by the Stalinist bureaucracy in the deformed workers