

womens voice

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Rosa Luxemburg:



**‘The mass strike is the living pulse
beat of the revolution and at the same
time its most powerful driving wheel’**



VICTORY AT KIGASS —but the fight continues

The women from Kigass in Leamington and Abex in Warwick returned to work this month after 12 weeks on strike for union recognition.

They won full union recognition with no redundancies—a considerable victory over their boss Arthur Wardman renowned for his declaration at the start of the strike that *'there would be a union in the factory over his dead body'*.

Their determination to win their strike held—despite facing not only the barrage of usual anti-strike propaganda, but also accusations of **unpatriotic behaviour**, when they succeeded in winning blacking of parts for Harrier Jump jets involved in the war in the South Atlantic.

Their action and determination won the

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Now back at work, the women face the task of translating the formal paper agreement for union organisation into effective organisation on the shop floor.

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Now, back at work, the women face the task of translating the formal paper agreement for union recognition into effective organisation on the shopfloor.

The management are wise to this and are doing everything in their power to prevent this process: they've split the most militant women away from the rest of the workforce by creating a separate section, they've staggered tea breaks to prevent the women meeting to discuss their grievances and at

present only deal with the union fulltimers, by-passing the women's own shop stewards.

The women's victory at Kigass serves as an inspiration to other unorganised workers seeking union organisation—but now the women must start the long slow job of retaining the unity shared during the strike. Building the experience of collective thinking and action on the small day to day struggles that effect them, *to make not just the workforce but also the management, aware that union recognition is not an agreement to be filed in an office, but the strength of collective organisation to defend wages, conditions and jobs.*

Their action and determination won the day; the management conceded—their union was recognised.

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Jayne Spittle

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Not the Church Not the State

The Pope's visit to Britain is over. He has left thousands of people thinking they have witnessed the greatest event of their lives. His speeches against divorce and abortion have reinforced the sentiments which deny women control of their bodies and people's choice in their relationships.

The idea that life is given by God is one of the Roman Catholic Church's fundamental teachings. If they were to concede that people can shape their own lives they would be undermining one of the pillars upon which their authority rests. This is why the Church has been in the forefront of the attacks on the 1967 Abortion Act. It is why they have joined SPUC and LIFE to produce placards and pamphlets showing the unborn foetus, why priests have spoken of God's sacred laws and why Catholic schoolchildren have been mobilised on their demonstrations.

But the Church's grip on our lives is slipping. In all three attempts to reverse the 1967 Act the church and the reactionaries have failed. For most people it

is too obvious that Roman Catholic morality belongs to a bygone age and the conditions which gave nuns, priests and bishops control of our sexuality have passed. So when women's right to abortion was threatened in 1975 by the James White Bill, in 1977 by the William Benyon Bill and in 1979 by the John Corrie Bill, hundreds and thousands of men and women organised to defend it. Through the National Abortion Campaign, Trade Unions and other political groups, petitions were signed. MPs lobbied and huge demonstrations held.

All three times the mass support for women's rights has won over the forces of reaction. Each time the ruling class has been able to concede where the Church could not. The ruling class has been able to adapt its dogma to suit the changed circumstances from the 1960s.

In the 1920s when Stella Browne was campaigning for the women's right to abortion, the family was more firmly welded to the structure of society than it is now. The family bore most of the burden of sickness, old age,

unemployment, and childhood. It would have been impossible for the ruling class to legalise abortion because it would have given women control of their bodies when women's main role was bearing responsibility for others.

By the 1960s women's burden had changed. Not only were welfare benefits available but more women were working than ever before. Although women still bore most of the burden of housework and childcare, contraception, higher standards of living and more liberal attitudes have given women choices that they have never had before.

For women to have the right to abortion, whether on demand, or through the legalisation of abortion, was a revolutionary demand in the 1920s, the idea clashed so fiercely with the structure of society. But the legalisation of abortion was granted in 1967 without a mass campaign. Although the Act was never intended for any more than a few 'undesirable women', women's right to abortion, albeit it limited rights, have been defended with mass campaigns every time it has been threatened.

Abortion is no longer a revolutionary issue. It is part and parcel of our welfare benefits and standard of living. When the Pope and the Church speak against it they are playing into the hands of Margaret Thatcher and the Tory policy to cut the living standards of the working class. Already the Abortion Act has been eaten into by the new form doctors have to complete when giving an abortion. The 'social clause' is under threat as abortion becomes restricted to medical grounds only.

It is likely that abortion will be under attack again in the next session of parliament. Thirteen years of defending legal abortions has meant we have built many of the means of protecting it.

We can defend our limited rights to legal abortion again if we prepare now. The issue must be kept alive in our workplaces, trade unions and through all our political contacts so that everyone is aware that it is not just an attack on women, but an attack on the rights of the whole working class.

Mary Williams

Organising against the snoopers

IN EAST London, civil service trade unions have been launching a campaign, together with local unemployed groups against a team of Tory snoopers.

The team are called Specialist Claims Control, and this year they have visited social security offices in Ilford and Walthamstow. They stay in offices for around six weeks and their job is to pick on certain groups of claimants and interview them to try and find out if they are defrauding the DHSS.

Their manner is so frightening that often people are talked into giving up benefit that they are entitled to because they're made to be afraid of getting into trouble.

They particularly pick on one parent families and single women. They can ask all sorts of personal questions about people's sex life to try and find out if the woman is sleeping with a man. According to the Tories if you are sleeping with a man, then he can support you instead of claiming dole! The Tories want to force women into being dependent on men because it keeps the unemployment figures down.

Every year the National Insurance Fund makes millions of pounds profit. Every year millions of pounds of benefit goes unclaimed because people are either ignorant of their rights or ashamed of the stigma of being 'on the social'. Specialist Claims Control encourages this attitude by making people afraid of the Social Security. They treat all claimants as fiddlers—guilty till proven innocent.

The 'Specialist Claims Control' team are paid £160 a week plus expenses to do their dirty work. By contrast, clerical officers whose job it is to actually pay out benefit are lucky if they take home £70. Many receive a lot less, some of the government's own workers live below the official poverty line.

The Tories are happy to spend millions of pounds on nuclear bombs and other weapons of destruction. They've spent millions wasting lives in the Falklands. But they won't spend a penny on hospitals. Army generals and judges can have nice big pay rises, but civil servants and nurses have to make do with a breadline existence.

Thousands of pounds are spent trying to stop people claiming benefit, while at the same time the Tories are responsible for increasing unemployment. 'Specialist Claims Control' is just another example of

Thatcher's uncaring attitude towards the worse off in society. As far as she's concerned we are just fodder to work for low wages when we are needed and suffer on the dole queues the rest of the time.

Some trade unionists in the local DHSS offices have refused to accept this attitude, and we totally oppose the Specialist Claims Control. We support the right of all working class people to a job and a decent standard of living. Together with the Right to Work Campaign and other unemployed groups the CPSA have been leafletting

Ilford and Walthamstow doles to warn claimants about the snoopers.

The government have been attacking civil service jobs and members of the CPSA know that unless there is a fight, they could soon be joining the people on the dole queue. Any action taken by civil servants needs the support of the unemployed. Just as the unemployed need our support to fight any attacks on their benefit. Employed and unemployed must stand together against the Tories!
Sue Caldwell
Newham and Waltham Forest CPSA

Sacked for organising a union at EDP



21 workers, two thirds of them women, have been on strike for five weeks at the Sheffield computer firm, Electronic Data Processing (EDP) for union recognition and against victimisation. JENNY WRIGHT, a member of the EDP strike committee, speaks to Womens Voice.

25 people joined ASTMS after a recruitment meeting. Management heard of this and interrogated people about the union.

Management referred to me as the *person responsible*, and days afterwards, I was called in to see my manager, ten minutes before lunch, and told that I had been 'made redundant'. My job *no longer existed*, even though the previous week I had been given a work schedule lasting to December this year!

They gave me a months

salary in lieu of notice, two weeks redundancy pay, and told me to leave immediately. If I tried to return to work ... I would be physically stopped from coming in.

Not surprisingly, the ASTMS members saw this as clear victimisation, and came out on 20 May.

After two days on strike, management sent everybody a letter threatening them that if they didn't turn up to work on Monday they would be sacked. EDP then carried out their threat and sacked everybody on strike!

We are currently picketing the two EDP offices in Sheffield and we have been visiting EDPs customers and suppliers, asking for blacking ... so far three major contracts have been frozen.

We have held two successful mass pickets, when we stopped people from going in to work,

until the police intervened.

The strike has changed many of the women's ideas. Most take home around £50 per week including bonus (some even less) but the strike has shown that their work as 'punch girls' is vitally important to EDP. A few months ago, most knew little about unions and a strike was unthinkable. Now, we are talking about linking up with the hospital and railway workers and any others in dispute. 'We have been ignored for years, but now we are making a stand for what we believe is right. There is no way we are going back in there without a union.'

That's the message from the EDP strikers.

Messages of support and donations to ASMTS, 61, Wolstenholm Road, Sheffield 7. Jenny Wright, EDP strike committee

Gay Movement



What price Labour Party respectability? Jo Richardson turned her back on Susan Sheli



June 1969 and the police make a routine raid on the Stonewall, a gay bar in Christopher St, New York. Names and addresses are taken and if this happen too often the clientèle goes elsewhere, for fear of their sexuality being made public. Good enough reason also for not resisting arrest or giving the police too much bother.

But this time it was different. A crowd gathered and started to push the cops about a bit. Confidence increased and soon the police were holed up inside Stonewall Bar. Outside the gays in the police vans were being liberated by their compatriots. And they were not the only ones to be liberated. There followed

three nights of street fighting between gays and police, giving birth to the Gay Liberation Front.

What was new about the GLF was its emphasis on 'coming out' and direct action. Clearly breaking from the established gay reform groups like CHR who hid behind closet MPs and Lords and other well known and rich benefactors.

From the initial enthusiasm GLF reached its peak in 1972 only to fragment as the divisions that had always been there came to the forefront.

What had inspired and held the GLF together was its emphasis on the personal liberation of coming out. It's when people started to go beyond that the whole thing

came apart.

There was the split between men and women, their experience often being different. With gay men having more economic freedom, while the women often had children to consider.

Then there was the split between the activists and those more pre-occupied with consciousness raising. Finally the split between the socialists and the drop-out alternative culture scene.

Ironically the main beneficiaries of the GLF explosion were the more overtly reformist organisation CHE, and more impressively the gay commercial scene.

For the same basic reason. The long post war boom had brought a new freedom for hundreds of youth. Particularly for those who had gone into further education. College meant moving away from home and the road to a relatively well paid job.

Living a gay life, previously restricted to the upper classes or the artist, was now possible for tens of thousands.

A new market was created, ready for commercial development. Stonewall had been a riot not only against the police but also the profiteers who controlled the gay clubs. Ironically the GLF, the movement that Stonewall had inspired, helped make possible the more open exploitation of that market. Now the owners who had once been part of the enemy are looked upon as respected leaders of the gay community. The wheel has come full circle in more ways than one. Many of the radical gays who were involved in GLF, calling for the revolutionary overthrow of society by wearing radical drag are to be seen today

joining the Labour Party. Why?

At a *gay socialists* conference two years ago members of the SWP were met with hostility and a good deal of the audience agreed with the person who said, 'Fuck the unions, what have they done for us.'

In reality the GLF was almost totally middle class with access to relatively well paid jobs. What was missing was the social acceptance of their sexuality. While they were prepared to attack society with revolutionary fervour over sexuality, only a minority carried it through to an attack on the basic organisation of society and embraced revolutionary socialism.

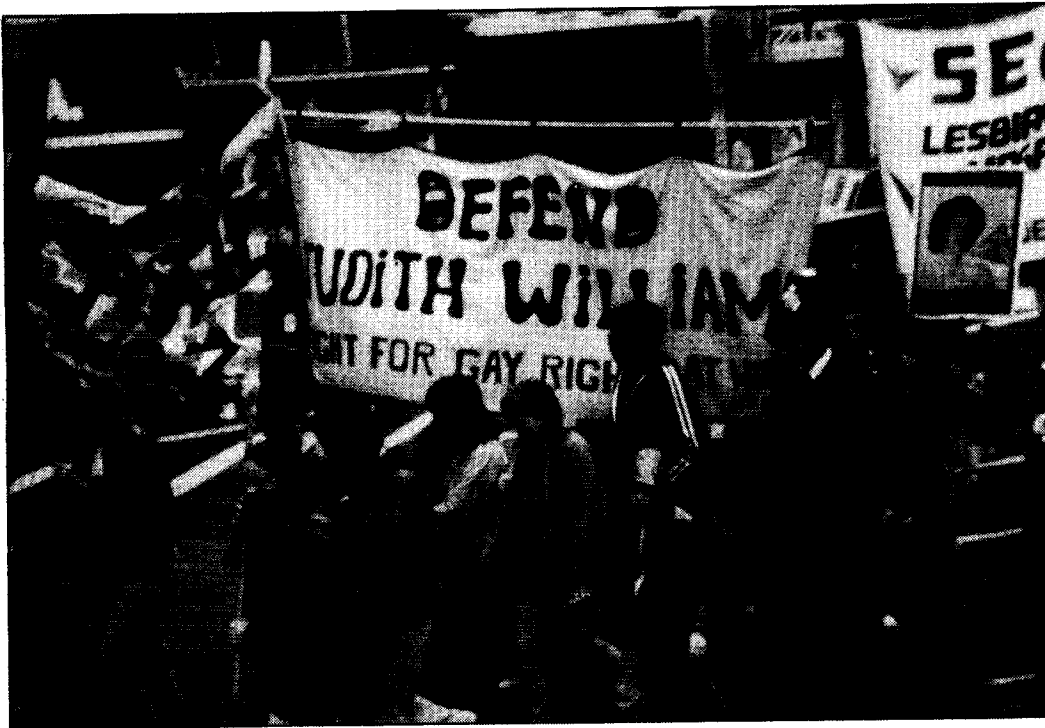
As the recession deepens the majority will increasingly run for cover. Some already have in joining the Labour Party. From the days of direct action now their ambition is to get a resolution passed at Labour Party conference. Many more will retreat back into the closet, rather than risk their well heeled job. The better paid the job the more reactionary they will become.

The GLF ideas of coming out and need for direct action now survive mainly in the SWP. Except now the direct union is the self-emancipation of the working class to establish a classless society. Where the social production and control of wealth makes possible the free development of each individual. Where labels homosexual and heterosexual cease to have any social significance.

The task of gay liberation has now fallen to revolutionary socialists, but in their struggles ahead they will be opposed by those who once marched the streets to declare their sexuality.

From Radicalism

ten years on



Turning their back on class struggle—both the women's and the gay movements turn their back on the real way to sexual liberation

When homosexuality was legislated against in 1886 there was no mention made of lady homosexuals because, it was reputed, Queen Victoria said that it couldn't happen. In general the fear of homosexuality which swept the western world this century left lesbians alone. Partly because women's sexuality was of little interest to legislators, seen as being passive. Partly because men were the ones that had to be protected.

But recently there have been two instances of lesbians being sacked who were working with children. No one suggested that they had in either case misbehaved. Just simply that they were proud, good, lesbians. And that wouldn't set the right example for children to grow up by. Children in care, in homes, are particularly vulnerable,

so the argument goes, because they have seen an unhappy marriage and family. Heaven preserve them from seeing a happy homosexual because it might give them ideas.

Susan Shell was sacked by Labour controlled Barking Council, and despite a long and hard campaign, supported by national policy from her union NUPE, she didn't get her job back. Judith Williams has been sacked by North Wales Care Concern and her job has now been blacked by NALGO national conference.

With thousands going on the dole every month through factory closures it seems incredible that we have been able to build campaigns around discrimination of a single worker. It does mean that among trade unionists a certain consciousness has

been built for the defence of gay rights and that through the gay movement enough confidence has been won that gay people are coming out at work, standing up and fighting when victimised. But within the gay and women's movement there have been no lessons learnt. Actually building for the defence of gay people at work, building campaigns around victimisations or sackings, has been left to a tiny number of people.

The women's movement has been completely unable to build any sort of activity around the sackings of lesbians or even around winning trade union rights. In part this is because increasingly the fight for women's liberation and gay liberation has come to be seen as a personal activity. At least in the early days of the gay movement, coming out was seen as a collective

action requiring solidarity. Coming out at work had a logic, and from that organising at work and in the trade unions for defence.

But as it has become more difficult at work to organise around anything and as the threat of the dole has loomed larger, militants have shrunk from taking up any fights at all. The trouble is that there are gay people who don't know that things are getting harder at work, who are now picking up the ideas about coming out at work, and doing it.

This makes it doubly more important that there is a public defence campaign when victimisations happen.

Otherwise unemployment will do what Thatcher, Mary Whitehouse, Paisley and the Pope have failed to do—drive gay people back into the closet. If you can't come out at work then you have to live two lives, one completely hidden from the other, with all the tensions and fears involved. And that serves management's purposes doubly.

We have to tirelessly take up the argument in the women's movement that we need to be organised at work, that we need strong trade unions, that the fight against Tebbit is not just the fight for engineering workers but it is a fight for gay liberation, and abortion rights, and against race-testing. Men and women have to take up this argument. Judith Williams' sacking is a good way to start.

For help on how to get gay rights support through your union, raise the question in your workplace, coming out at work and collection sheets to defend Judith, write to PO Box 82, London E2.

to Reformism

After seven weeks the 'political trial of the year'—the case of the Bradford 12—is over. The jury have upheld for the first time in an English court the right of the black community to defend itself from attack or the threat of attack by racists.

They also found petrol bombs to be a reasonable means of defence against such attack.

The seriousness of the charges and the bail conditions show that the police saw this as a major political case.

The Bradford 12 brought into court the experience of the Asian community — the collective experience of Asian youth, growing up in a society riddled with racism.

And more. Saeed Hussein made a simple speech from the dock. 'Real politics, he said, 'is not about politicians. Real politics is not being able to pay the winter fuel bills, or feed your family, or afford to send your children to school or living in a slum. And on top of this if you are black you have to deal with racism, a word that isn't in the dictionary of the West Yorkshire police force.'

The Bradford 12 stood up on behalf of their community and faced life imprisonment with remarkable courage. That won them support from community leaders like Southall IWA president Mr Kabra who said simply that 'we expect our youth to defend us'.

The jury accepted this and in doing so accepted that self defence is not only lawful — it is necessary because the police afford no protection at all to Asian citizens.

That is one of the most significant political comments on the case of the Bradford 12. It was an astonishing verdict and although it passed unnoticed along with the trial in a British press too busy with jingoistic wallowing in the Falklands, it will not have escaped the attention of police policy makers, law makers and

cabinet chiefs. No doubt they will be out to further tamper with the

jury system to ensure that such cases are only heard by safe juries — those

which are middle class and white.
Joanna Rollo



Picture: JOHN SMITH (JFL)

VICTORY FOR THE BRADFORD 12!

Rosa Luxemburg's ideas...

THOSE who murdered Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht hoped that they had not only robbed the German workers of practical leadership and inspiration, but also that they had destroyed their revolutionary hopes and ideas.

It is because Rosa made an outstanding contribution to Marxism as a *guide to action*, as an *instrument of the working class*, that we remember her today. It is also fitting to remember Rosa at a time when Britain has been plunged into a senseless war by a Tory government, seeking not only to re-establish its power and prestige abroad; but also to tear apart workers' organisation at home.

Rosa Luxemburg's writings bring a clarity sadly lacking at present, with confusion on the left, about the state of the movement and whether or not socialism can be achieved through the labour party.

Born in Zamosc of Polish Jewish parents, she became politically active at the age of 16. Under the pressure of the Tsarist witchhunt, she fled to Zurich where she became involved with many like minded revolutionaries. In Zurich she met Leo Jogiches, her life long companion with whom she built the Polish revolutionary party. However Rosa spent most of her time in the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) analysing and combatting reformist ideas as they arose. The SPD was considered to be the leading Marxist party in the world and the bastion of the Second International with its leader Kautsky rated, even by Lenin, as the leading Marxist of the time.

Rosa Luxemburg was the first of the great Marxist theoreticians to break with Kautsky in 1911 over the question of war and the attitude of socialists to it. It wasn't until 1914, when Kautsky led the SPD into supporting the First World War, did Lenin make the same break.

With the outbreak of war, Rosa devoted herself to rallying the forces in Germany against the imperialist war and set up, with Klara Zetkin, Liebknecht and others the Spartakusbund as an anti war faction inside the



March 1871—the year of Rosa Luxemburg's birth—was the year of the Paris Commune, when the workers of Paris seized power and held onto it for two months, for the first time in our history.

Rosa's life was to be totally bound up with the revolutionary struggle, spanning the collapse of the socialist movement in 1914, the successful revolution led by the Bolshevik party in Russia in 1917 and ending in the midst of the German revolution in January 1919.

In the following article SHEILA MCGREGOR concentrates on two aspects of Rosa's life and writings; the nature of workers' struggle and the question of the revolutionary party.

SPD. In prison Rosa wrote an anti war pamphlet called the *Junius pamphlet*, widely used to train comrades in arguments against the war. Try reading it today; for 60p you can discover how similar the ruling class arguments of Thatcher are to those of the German government and those of Michael Foot with the grovellers in the SPD.

In 1917, the Spartakusbund

left the SPD but affiliated to a major split from the SPD known as the USPD—independent Socialist Party of Germany. Not until December 1918 did the Spartakusbund join forces with others to form the German Communist Party. This party was barely one month old when Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were arrested and butchered.

In the last 3 months of her

life, when Rosa was released from jail at the beginning of the German Revolution in November 1918, she devoted her energies to producing Rote Fahne as a guide to action in the confusion of revolutionary upheaval.

The majority of Rosa's life was spent as a member of the largest Marxist party in the world, which organised the most powerful industrial working class. In giving practical leadership to revolutionaries in Germany, in analysing events at home and abroad Rosa constantly tries to lay bare the revolutionary path and fight reformist influences. It is in the process of doing this, that *the Mass Strike* was written, inspired by the 1905 Russian Revolution, and which today helps strip away the fog surrounding the debate on the left of the labour party.

At the time of the Russian Revolution in 1905, Rosa was engaged in a debate inside the SPD about the nature of the mass strike. Was it a method of struggle to be used by the higher echelons of the party and the trade union movement in pursuit of some limited aim—eg elections—a tap to be turned on and off at will by the leadership? Or is it a weapon of the working class, intrinsic to the very nature of workers' struggle? Further; should mass strikes be about political or economic ends? Is the mass strike a necessary stage in the struggle for socialism or can socialism come without it?

At the turn of the century, Rosa and Lenin both had to deal with the arguments put forward by some, that socialism would come as the result of a coup or putsch organised *on behalf* of the working class by a dedicated band of revolutionaries.

In addition, Rosa had to take on the developing tendency to subordinate real live workers' struggle to the idea that socialism could come by reform in parliament anyway—if enough socialist deputies were elected. Some even argued that the wages struggle alone could abolish profits and therefore exploitation!

It was as part of this debate

...ammunition for socialists today

that Rosa wrote this little pamphlet in order to lay bare the very nature of working class struggle as opposed to the struggle of any other class in society and therefore the nature of the workers' revolution. She used description of 1905 to illustrate her analysis:

'The mass strike, as the Russian Revolution shows it to us, is such a changeable phenomenon that it reflects all phases of the political struggle, all stages and factors of the revolution,.... Political and economic strikes, mass strikes and partial strike, demonstrative strikes and fighting strikes, general strikes of "individual branches of industry and general strikes in individual towns, peaceful wage struggles and street massacres, barricade fighting—all these run through one another, run side by side, cross one another, flow in and over one another—it is a ceaselessly, moving, changing sea of phenomena.'

In other words, a mass strike is made up of all kinds of different struggle taking place in different ways in different places

over different issues. The struggles will be both economic and political. And it is this mass movement of workers in active struggle, which Rosa insists is the very nature of revolution. she continues:

'It (strike action) is the living pulse beat of the revolution and at the same time its most powerful driving wheel. In a word, the mass strike as shown in the Russian Revolution, is not a crafty method discovered by subtle reasoning for the purpose of making the proletarian struggle more effective, but the method of motion of the proletarian mass, the phenomenal form of the proletarian struggle in the revolution.'

Mass Strike Chap. 4

But that is not all. Rosa then goes on to illustrate that the reason the mass strike is the motor of the revolution, is that the revolution for the working class is about the transformation of workers' conditions of existence. And that therefore central to the strike movement are the struggles over 'economic' questions such as the length of

the working day, wage rates, safety etc. Far from such questions either being a lowering of the tone of the struggle as some purists might argue or a diversion from the real struggle—as other purists would say, Rosa argues there is no separation and can be no separation between political and economic factors.

Both feed one another quite simply because socialism is the transformation of society by workers, a transformation of the material world—and to do that workers need political power.

'We see still more clearly that it is impossible to separate the economic and the political factors from one another. Here also the reality deviates from the theoretical scheme, and the pedantic representation in which the pure political mass strike is logically derived from the trade union general strike as the ripest and highest stage, but at the same time is kept distinct from it, is shown to be absolutely false...'

Every great political mass action, after it has attained its highest political point breaks

up into a mass of economic strikes. And that applies not merely to each of the great mass strikes, but also to the revolution as a whole.'

Rosa argues that such economic struggles are the school of revolution for workers and a source of enormous strength in the battle against the ruling class:

'After every foaming wave of political action a fructifying deposit remains behind from which a thousand stalks of economic struggle shoot forth. And conversely. The workers' condition of ceaseless economic struggle with the capitalists keeps their fighting energy alive in every political interval. It forms, so to speak, the permanent fresh reservoir of strength of the proletarian classes, from which the political fight ever renews its strength...'

Struggle as the teacher came through sharply:

'A year of revolution has therefore given the Russian Revolution that "training" which thirty years of parliamentary and trade union struggle cannot artificially give to the German proletariat.'

Rosa also makes it clear that because the nature of the revolution is the mass struggle, violence is only the culmination in the transformation of social and class relations. Violence is not the revolution, it is only a minor part of it.

Rosa Luxemburg's pamphlet *'The Mass strike'* lays bare the very fundamentals of the revolutionary process and so enables all of us to judge the present day world. It flows from her arguments that if the economic struggle is at a very low ebb, as at present, then there can be no great left movement developing. A leftward developing movement requires developing class struggle and that means economic battles which may well tip into political struggle. Those who argue that there is a serious leftward movement have forgotten the basics of Marxism.

Equally, those who think the answer to all our problems whether Tebbit or the hospital dispute is to agitate for the TUC to call a general strike would do



Rosa Luxemburg in a staff portrait at the German Socialist Democratic Party's school in 1910



Revolutionary scenes in Berlin 1918. Members of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council handing out arms and ammunition

well to remember that class struggle develops out of the class itself and cannot be a fool of labour or trade union leaders. *Workers must struggle for their own emancipation not become the stage army of other forces in society.* It is no accident that Rosa goes on to describe the bureaucratisation of the trade union movement and how trade union 'specialists' split the trade union struggle from the political, and thus the trade unions from the political party. Trade union leaders simply want a party in parliament which will represent their interests. By no stretch of the imagination do they want a party based on the struggles of workers themselves.

It is to her everlasting credit, that Rosa analysed the process going on inside the SPD which led to its collapse as a 'Marxist' party. She saw the split between 'trade union' and political work develop and strove to counter it. She understood that this would lead to a right wing drift in the political ideas and practice of the leadership of the SPD. This she sought to resist.

In 1914, however when the SPD deputies (MPs) voted for war credits in support of German imperialism. Quickly the SPD adopted the arguments of 'defending democracy' against Russian barbarism and the heel of Tsarism. They agreed to a 'truce' in the class struggle and undertook to stop

workers from fighting over wages, conditions etc. They swung the full weight of the party press behind the war. Every argument used in the Falklands war was used then, and as now the labour leaders adopted them. In Germany, such leaders went so far as to argue a particularly disgusting labourite nationalism:

'The war will show how vastly human material has been improved by the educational work of the labour unions, how well their activity will serve the nation in these times of stress.. The Russian and the French soldier may be capable of marvellous deeds of bravery. But in cool, collected consideration none will surpass German labour unionists.'

Frankfurter Volkstimme
18.8.18—quoted in the *Junius pamphlet*

In other words the depths to which the SPD apparatus were prepared to sink knew no bounds.

The question therefore arises, why did Rosa insist on staying inside the SPD? Her reasons were simple. The masses were the basis of revolutionary action, the SPD was the party of the masses, therefore you had to work within it to win people to a revolutionary perspective. She was aware of the very real dangers of becoming a sect, peripheral and therefore irrelevant to the masses and their struggle.

With the hindsight of Lenin and the Bolshevik party and Trotsky's writings on the united front, we can perhaps say, Rosa and her comrades should have set about splitting the party and building a clearly revolutionary organisation earlier. When someone of the stature of Lenin still supported Kautsky right up until 1914, the difficulties of such a course of action should not be underestimated. However, it becomes only too clear that with the unfolding of the German revolution in 1918-1919 that the clarity with which Rosa analysed the course of events could not be translated into decisive action because she was not part of an organisation with deep roots inside the class which was tested and trusted in

struggle.

United Front work, pushing reformists into struggle alongside revolutionaries over common class aims presupposes an independent organisation of revolutionaries. Without it, there is no perspective realistically, for winning workers away from reformist leadership—a an essential goal if the revolution is to succeed. As Rosa so clearly pointed out that while the Russian workers knew they were fighting the capitalist class and absolutism, in Germany, the ruling class took on the cloak of the SPD. It was the SPD leaders who organised the counter revolution. The enemy was in the very heart and organisation of the working class. Only if that enemy is rooted out and destroyed can the revolution triumph. But that means exposing daily in practice the way in which reformism holds the struggle back and thus betrays it.

We are lucky to have the benefit of the experience of the German revolution and Russian revolution: the writings of Lenin, Trotsky and Rosa Luxemburg form which to draw our inspiration as well as those of Marx and Engels. But if it was wrong of Rosa to stay for so long inside the SPD then why are there revolutionaries inside the labour party today?

If the reader is stimulated to go and dig out the writings of Rosa Luxemburg and her biography by Paul Frolich. Then this article has done its job.



Spartacists being arrested in 1919 Berlin

HEALTH WORKERS

Up against the government...



deal for herself and her colleagues who are all on poverty wages. She told us that her take home pay is such a pittance that when payslips were shown to the miners from the Leicestershire coalfield who joined them on the picket line they were amazed. They could hardly believe that anyone working full time could be paid so little.

Jean told us about a couple who work with her, the woman is also a Domestic and her husband is a porter. They are less than £7 a week better off than a couple on supplementary benefit but this extra is all in the expensive fares to and from work, so they are in fact worse off than if they were both out of work. They only go because they enjoy their work and like to feel they are helping others. Anyway alternative employment is not easy to find these days.

Some young people who work in the health service can't afford a proper social life and many young men have never had girlfriends because society still expects men to pay for nights out and so they just never invite women out with them to save themselves embarrassment. Jean was disgusted by the attitude of the police towards the picket, she said they get a decent wage but begrudge anyone else the right to try and improve their own. 'They should try living on what we get!' she said.

The women who serve meals to patients in the Royal's maternity wing all walked out when they saw their supervisors outside sitting near the picket line and being paid for being there. They were incensed by this and as they had wanted to join the strike but were persuaded to provide cover as meals are an essential part of the hospital service. One of the women who walked out

HOSPITAL STAFF have been rapidly learning the importance of solidarity between different sections of workers in pursuit of their 12 percent pay rise. For the first time all the health service unions have been involved in joint activity, refusing to let the government divide them by offering certain groups of

nurses a higher rise than the rest of the hospital workers. Women and men have been side by side on picket lines together with workers from other industries who recognise the plight of health workers. They are exploited and low paid and do work of vital importance to all working class people, those who can't

afford private treatment.

In Leicester, one of the more militant areas, anger with the government and the Health Authority was expressed by workers from all the varied jobs in the hospitals. Jean has worked for eight years as a domestic at Leicester Royal Infirmary. She is determined to win a better

said of their management: 'They can get the dinners themselves if that's their attitude.'

Ambulance staff in the Leicestershire region have decided to hold a series of one day lightning strikes without giving management any warning after they all received letters threatening them with the sack and docks in pay if they refused to cross picket lines providing emergency cover only.

A miner on the picket line said that the Tories spent enough on the Task Force to the Falklands while many of those who went with it to the South Atlantic were going to be dependent on the Health Service for the rest of their lives but the government were not prepared to spend money on that.

The pay claim is not just about higher wages for nurses and other hospital workers whose jobs are just as important but about the whole future of the NHS. Their low pay discourages people from working in the health service and so it is directly helping the Tories to make cuts in our hospitals while many trained nurses are being recruited into the private sector, building up better facilities for the rich who can afford to pay. If we want to keep a health service that is freely available to all and cut down on waiting lists then it is a priority that the staff needed to run it are paid a living wage, otherwise they are going to be forced by economic necessity to work in the private clinics that are expanding as a result of Tory cuts, thereby draining the NHS of valuable skills and depriving ordinary working class people of a high standard of care.

At a rally in support of the hospital workers, Enid Khan, NALGO shop steward at Leicester Royal Infirmary, told the crowd that the only way to win was to campaign for an all out strike and to unite with other workers, whose support they need to win, by sending out delegations to factories and other workplaces. During the demonstration through the city leading up to the rally the chant was heard: ALL OUT — STAY OUT, FIGHT FOR THE 12 PERCENT.

Su Weston



Geoffrey Drain and other Nalگو officials blocked conference delegates' attempts to organise solidarity for health workers. The delegates fought for the principle of honouring picket lines—as was successfully achieved at this Rotherham steel works



...and Union leaders

This year's Nalگو conference must rank as one of the most tepid occasions ever for trade union activists... and that's saying quite a lot!

Set against a backdrop of massive unemployment, Tebbit's anti-union laws and the continuing weakness of the TUC, Nalگو's Brighton bash hardly set the world on fire.

The high spot of the week, was the Southampton Health branch emergency motion calling for an instruction to Nalگو members to honour health workers' picket lines. Conference delegates were extremely receptive to this. The debate on the motion sparked off a discussion on what the union actually *does* to support health workers.

The analogy was used of the first world war general who called on his troops to charge from the trenches... But one at a time... and when they felt like it. When no-one charged the general accuses them of cowardice.

The platform was clearly terrified of issuing such an

instruction. Despite the fiery speeches against the Tory anti-union laws, when it comes to the elementary test of honouring and defending picket lines... our leaders are nowhere to be seen.

Motivated by calls for action and not empty rhetoric, a previously missing chord was struck, and delegated responded by giving heartfelt support for the emergency motion. Once again, however, the gap between the NEC and any form of action was exposed. The platform showed their total disregard for basic trade union principles, by completely fudging the issue.

Delegates argued that there was a world of difference between *authorising* and *instructing* action—and that an instruction was needed to give a clear lead.

This contradiction between empty rhetoric and concrete action was seen again and again throughout the week. At a time when the trade union movement is on the defensive it's easy for the leadership to

hide behind fine speeches.

The task for socialists now is to organise where it counts, in the workplace at office level. Starting to rebuild the type of organisation which can take action and win—independently of our union leaders if necessary.

The week at Brighton often had socialists holding their heads in anguish. It often gave the impression on being an utter waste of time. But if delegates returned to their workplaces with an honest appraisal of the problems we face and the task ahead, then the experience was worthwhile.

PS The June 23rd hospital workers strike was supported by Nalگو members in many areas. Where individuals had shown the commitment and determination to organise and win solidarity action, there were some modest successes.

Imagine what it would have been like if the full resources of the union had been used to mobilise support.
Lin Turner
Edinburgh Nalگو



GEN IN T MID

In recent weeks, a short punitive war has been fought. Now, isolated before Israeli forces, with its massive armoury of US supplied weapons, the Palestinians and the Lebanese left face total annihilation.

Over 10,000 civilians have been put to death as part of a calculated policy of genocide, and a national liberation movement has been smashed militarily, if not organisationally. These are the factual consequences of the Zionist ideology of the Israeli state. They are the results of Israeli policy, and they join a long list of similar barbarity which stretches back to the formation of Israel in 1948.

In the popular press, this 34 year old conflict is presented as the Israelis versus 'the Arabs'—the Arabs usually represented by the Palestinians—3 million Israelis v 100 million Arabs. *The extent to which Arab unity is a complete myth has never been more cruelly exposed than by the failure of any Arab nation to come to the assistance of the Palestinians in Lebanon.* To understand what is happening in the Lebanon it is necessary to know in what way, and for what reasons the Israeli state came about.

In 1895 less than 10%—(47,000 out of 500,000) of the population of Palestine was Jewish. By 1982 Palestinian Arabs represented only 16% of the population. How did this come about? Zionism.

Zionism was founded as a theory by Theodor Herzl. It is a political theory which primarily argues that it is impossible for Jews—'the chosen people'—to live with non-Jews. As a consequence anti-semitism is not to be confronted (it is supposedly an inevitable characteristic of any non-Jew but withdrawn from, or collaborated with, if it brings about the aims of Zionism).

The original aim of Zionism, therefore, was to gain a homeland. Early considerations were Uganda and Argentina, but the powerful Zionist lobby finally settled 'vaguely' for

Palestine. 'Vaguely' because to this day the 'homeland' has never had its border specified.

In 1898, Theodor Herzl when asked which part of Palestine he wanted, replied, 'What we need—The more immigrants, the more land'. In 1917 the Balfour Declaration, a typical piece of British government duplicity, promised Palestine simultaneously to the Palestinians (to gain their assistance in fighting the Turks) and to the Zionists as a 'national home for the Jewish people'.

This assurance was made despite the fact that Britain had no authority whatsoever over the territory. Zionists took the assurance at face value, and encouraged mass emigration to Palestine, which has seen two million Jews arrive since the turn of the century.

Zionist attention swivelled to America, following America's emergence from the Second World War as *the* superpower. In fact, it was America, through its agency the UN, which created the Israeli state in 1947—on 57% of the total area of Palestine, *the most fertile part.*

In 1948, Zionist terrorists, who now populate the Israeli government, seized 75% of Palestine; in 1967 all of Palestine and parts of Syria and Egypt. Now in 1982, Israel has formally annexed the Golan Heights and

captured most of Lebanon.

But perhaps the clearest statement of Zionist intent came from David Ben Gurion, founder of Israel, who was recorded in an Israeli daily paper in the 1952 as saying 'I shall not be ashamed to confess that if I had the power, as I have the will, I would select a score of efficient young men, intelligent, diligent, devoted to our ideal and burning with the desire to help redeem the Jews and I would send them to the countries where Jews are absorbed in sinful self-satisfaction. The task of these young men would be to disguise themselves as non-Jews, and plague Jews with anti-semitic slogans, such as 'bloody Jews', 'Jews go to Palestine' and similar intimacies. I can vouch that the results in terms of immigration to Israel from these



NOCID THE DDLE EAST

countries would be 10,000 times larger than the results brought by thousands of emissaries who have been preaching for decades to deaf ears.'

In this statement is the heart of the ideology which has caused the ceaseless persecution of four million people, murdered, brutalised, driven from their homes in 1948, from the camps in 1967, further away in 1973, and now systematically slaughtered in 1982. Because of it, unknown numbers of Jews have lived in misery or died at the hands of anti-semitism, encouraged or endorsed by Zionism and its agents.

The destruction of the Palestinian bases in Lebanon is part of the evolutionary process of the Israeli state. Despite being totally dependent on

America for arms and cash, and acting as a weapon of US foreign policy by participating in Camp David, Israel is no mere puppet. The groundwork for the invasion of Lebanon was to isolate Egypt and render it impotent, so that Israel would not have to fear an attack from the west.

The invasion creates, in Israel, a resurgence of Zionist nationalism, which at a time when disillusion with Begin had been spreading, once again distorts the class nature of Israeli society. The Israeli labour party, members of the socialist international in the name of 'national consensus' supports the invasion. Sounds familiar. Once their position in Lebanon is consolidated, the Zionists can contemplate the final solution to the

Palestinian question. By evicting the Palestinians—driving them from the West Bank and Gaza.

Ironically, it is in the West Bank and Gaza, where, potentially, the Palestinians have real strength. In the last decade, a 140,000 strong working class has emerged, which earlier this year gave the Israeli state a big fright, by flexing its muscles for the first time with a wave of strikes and rioting.

Palestinians have had numerous bloody opportunities to learn that Arab unity is a myth. In September 1970 the Jordanian state slaughtered 20,000 Palestinians, causing the flight to Lebanon. In 1976, Syria intervened in Lebanon to stop the PLO and Lebanese left winning the civil war. Jordan and Egypt have both done deals with Israel. The Israeli state has preferred to send its troops against Kurds and Iran, while the oil-rich Arab states have supplied limited amounts of cash and too many words.

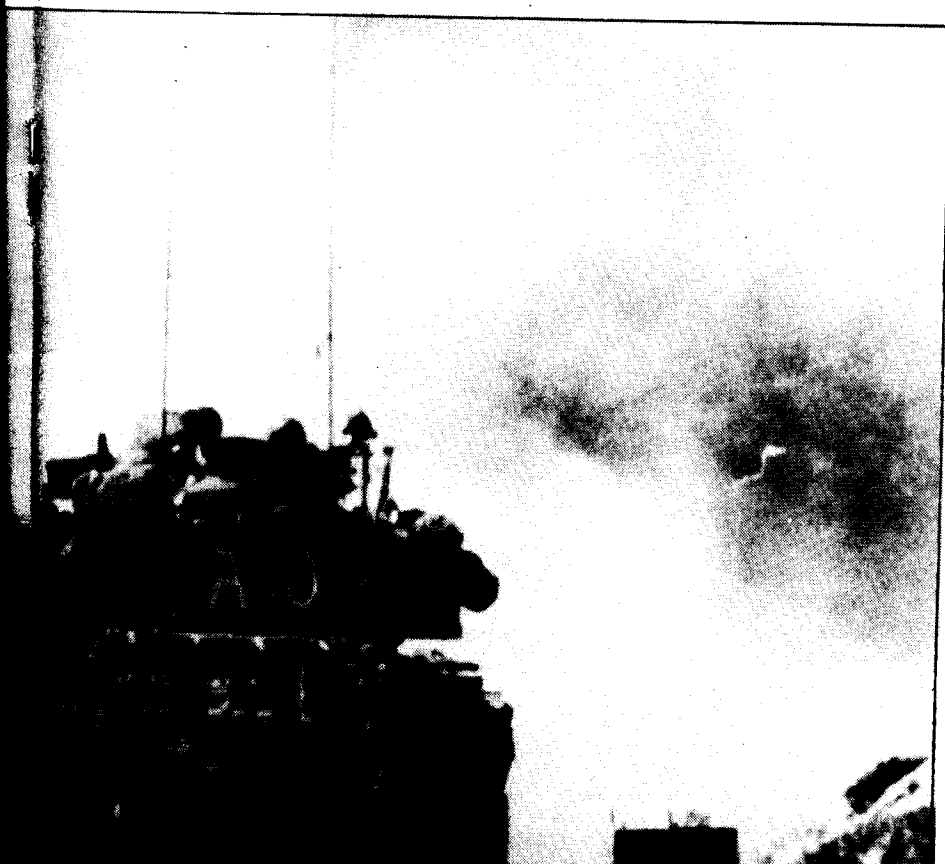
The Palestinians have never received what they need: weaponry, trained fighters and an oil boycott against those who arm Israel. The attempt by the PLO to break out of its isolation by seeking support from the ruling classes of Arab states has contributed to the present tragedy. Reactionary and unstable regimes of the Arab nations can only be relied upon to put their own interests first.

So, as 6,000 trapped Palestinian guerillas prepare their last stand in Beirut against the Zionists' massive army, and their natural ally in the Lebanon the fascist Christian phalangists, harsh lessons must be drawn from the tragedy.

The way forward must lie with the emerging or existing working class of the middle east. Part of which is made up by Palestinian workers. In Egypt, Syria and Iraq there are growing industrial working classes. In all of the gulf states, immigrant workers, many Palestinian, are up to half the population. The Palestinian Trade Union Federation, although its headquarters in Beirut has been destroyed, has branches in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Gaza, Kuwait, Libya and Abu Dhabi.

Although the task of building working class organisations will not be easy in countries which do not have even a few of the bourgeois freedoms we take for granted in Britain, workers in the Middle East have already shown that the effort is worthwhile and that workers' power cannot be stopped. Iraq 1958, Iran 1979, which ruling class will be next?

Pete Redman





THE 2nd WORLD WAR MONGERS

Many Labour Party supporters have been dismayed at Michael Foot's antics over the Falklands. Suddenly, all Thatcher's attacks on our living standards, trade unions and livelihoods over the years were forgotten.

It was as if they'd never happened. Foot backed the Iron Lady in her hour of need. In the 'national interest' he helped whip up the most ugly display of nationalism since the last war.

When the crunch came Foot behaved as all Labour darlings of the left always have. He worked flat out to convince us that our interests were the same as Thatcher's. She could never have done it without him.

The difference between Foot's activities over the Falklands and Ernest Bevin's over Germany is one of degree: Bevin had the blood of millions on his hands.

In the build up to the Second World War, Britain with firms like Vickers and ICI were busy arming Hitler. Once war was on the agenda it was discovered that Hitler wasn't a very nice person. He became public enemy number one.

The same people who had been happy to trade with Germany before, took us into the war. Britons were going to fight a heroic battle against fascism to preserve democracy and freedom.

Labour MPs and trade union leaders joined in the battle cry. *The Labour leaders joined the Tory government. In fact, they were given the most important positions in the war cabinet.*

Ernest Bevin became Minister of Labour and Morrison was in charge of home security.

Churchill could never have done it without them. Their role was to reassure us of the importance of the war effort. And when the going got tough they resorted to promises of a better world to come.

When all else failed they used force to maintain law and order.

It was under Morrison's orders that East Enders in London were baton-charged by the police. Why? Because they tried to use the underground stations as air raid shelters.

In 1941 Morrison ordered that the Daily Worker the Communist Party newspaper, which was against the war at the time,

by JOAN RUDDER

should be banned. The offices of the revolutionary organisations that were against the war were raided.

Leaflets and pamphlets were seized, leading members were arrested. *All these things were justified, because the war effort demanded that those who opposed the war should be silenced.*

Bevin was frequently used to provide soothing reassurances that all would be well. In a radio broadcast on 26 October 1940 he promised us the earth. *'Britain and our allies are determined to produce a just order in Europe and recreate it on the basis of freedom and free association and equality. We will never again tolerate the masses of unemployed or poverty. We will not recognise privilege or place, but a juster scheme of things is our aim.'*

Promises cost nothing. While the arms traders made their fortunes, the rich guzzled and we went short. Rationing meant high food prices. The blitz meant destitution.

And these Labour ministers made us foot the bill for the mass slaughter.

They introduced purchase tax and income tax. They lowered the exemption level and allowances for taxation. This meant that in 1942 seven million workers were paying tax, *nearly double* the number at the outbreak of war.

For example, a married man with one child would pay tax on earnings over £342 a year in 1929. In 1942 this was brought down to £211.

For many workers this meant extreme poverty. Women workers in munitions earned around £2.50 a week. They paid 22½p in tax on that amount, yet the minimum subsistence level was £2.52½p per week.

All this was justified as being in the 'national interest.'

Bevin introduced conscription for women. If you were single you could be sent to work anywhere in the country. You were not allowed to change your job, or take a job of your choice.

The employers, of course, had a field day. Factory conditions got worse and trade unionists were victimised. Strikes were made illegal.

This is how a Lancashire woman described work in a munitions factory: *'We didn't have no training, except somebody said, "You do this". You were left to it. I was on some detonators that was all yellow. You could tell where these people worked because they just looked Chinese. Yellow faces. There were a few explosions. It was when they were filling these shells.'*

'If you were off sick, you had to get a doctor's note. He would grant you a set time off work. If you didn't return to work when your time ran out, the police were knocking on the door.'

But conscripting single women wasn't enough. The war effort demanded more workers. So they had to open nurseries. They started 1096 fulltime nurseries during the war. These were open from seven in the morning till seven at night.

Kids at school were provided with breakfast early in the morning and tea at night. Women got time off to do the shopping.

They found the money to provide these things because it was essential to the war effort. You couldn't make bullets at home with the kids.

The TUC backed the war effort as well. The 1940 congress opened to strains of 'Rule Britannia'. They didn't even discuss wages, victimisation of shop stewards, workshop conditions or price rises — even though purchase tax was to begin in two weeks' time.

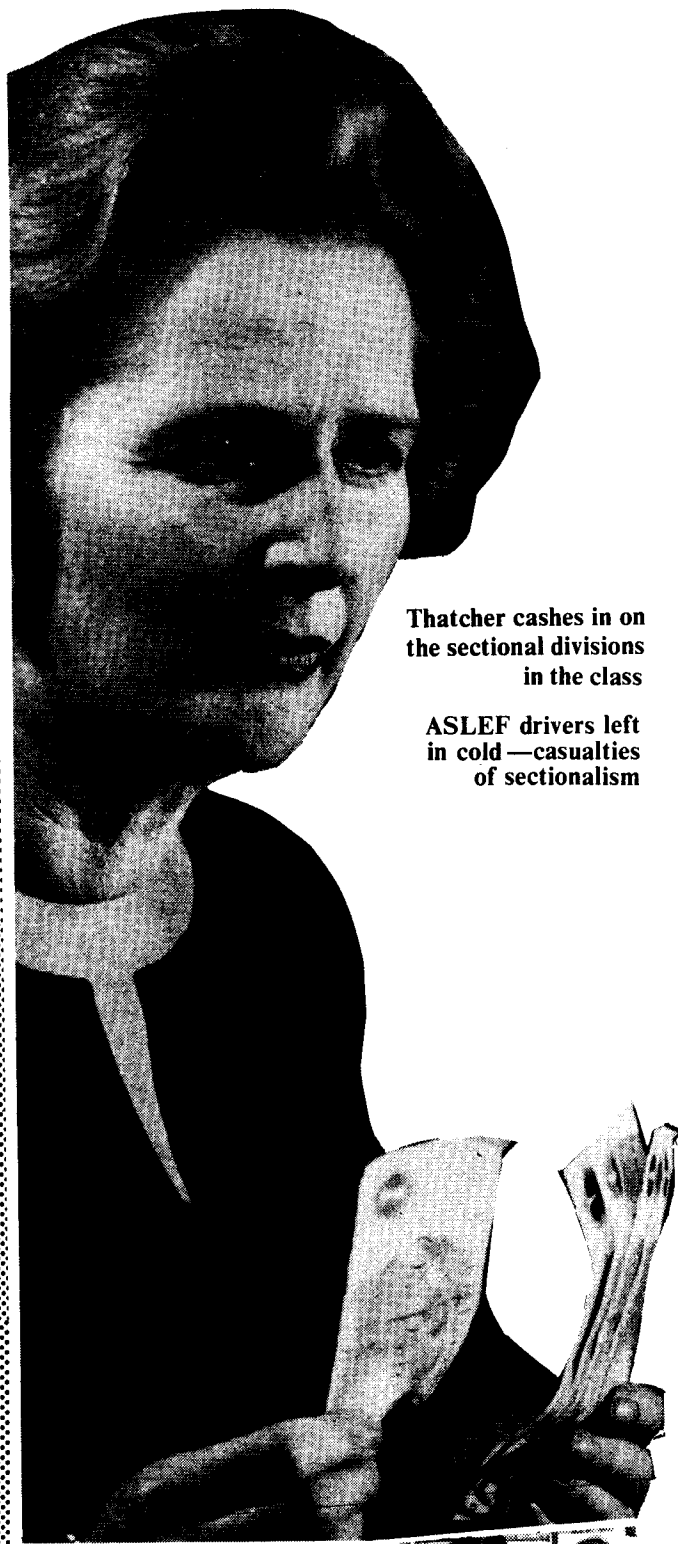
They helped Bevin to smash the unofficial strikes which took place. The whole force of the official trade union movement was behind the government. Why? Because we had to make sacrifices for the Tories' war. It was all in the 'national interest'.

That's what the war was all about. We had to sacrifice our husbands', sons' and brothers' lives. To sacrifice our homes. To work in dangerous jobs for wages which didn't cover the cost of food. And for what? So that the rich got richer and gained control over more of the world's markets.

We had no quarrel with the workers of Germany or Argentina. But so long as the Tories could convince us we had, by talk of fighting against fascism and for democracy, our real quarrel — with Thatcher — could be forgotten.

And just as during the last war, the Labour and trade union leaders helped them to do it.

Our Divide is Thatcher's Rule



Thatcher cashes in on the sectional divisions in the class

ASLEF drivers left in cold—casualties of sectionalism



THE Tory Government is now discussing whether they can win an Autumn election and establish themselves for another five years in power. The programme for five more Tory years includes another trade union bill chipping away at long established rights; the health, education and welfare services are to be decimated; wages will be held down; no Tory economist sees any decline in unemployment, most think it will rise.

But the truly horrifying fact is not the catalogue of horrors already inflicted by the Tories, but the fact that the Tories are all too likely to win an election if they call one.

It's not certain of course. But after three years of Thatcher the Tories should be planning to hang on until the last moment in the hope that something will turn up.

But they're not. Instead they think they can win. The opinion polls say they can win. And most commentators say it's a reasonable probability.

The Falklands War is not the main explanation for this. All the signs of a Tory recovery were there beforehand. The effect of the war, the effect of the nauseating coverage in most newspapers, was to push the Tory recovery faster.

But all the problems working people now face can be seen in the response of Labour and Trade Union leaders to the war. A serious and consistent anti war campaign right across the whole trade union and labour movement would have ensured that at the very least the argument against the war was heard.

Instead the collapse was almost total. The left leaders of the TUC like Moss Evans supported the Task Force. All but a handful of Labour MPs rallied behind Thatcher.

The collapse over the Falklands continues three years of retreat and capitulation to the Tory Government on virtually every issue.

The effect on the working class has been devastating. Living standards are falling, the conditions of life are deteriorating.

This is affecting all working class people, men as well as women, with equal savagery. The attack by the Tories and the class they represent is generalised against all working people.

And that is why the fight back will have to be generalised across the whole working class — men and women, black and white, employed and unemployed, skilled and unskilled, private sector and public sector.

The terrible divisions in our class have been shown up in the worst possible way by the rail strike. Within 24 hours the NUR called off their strike and ASLEF called a strike.

Every sectional division in the working class in a period of retreat is a source of major weakness. The only victors are the Tories.

There is now a long hard job ahead of all of us rebuilding the strength and confidence of shop floor workers so that we can take on the Tories.

WOMENS HEALTH

We've got co-ordination!

Something nearly all men take for granted, and which many women have always accepted, is women's inferiority to men in the field of sport.

It seems obvious; people point to their own clubs or to the world champions — and their case is proved. But is it? And is it at all important?

It's importance lies in the fact that if we accept this idea, then it's not that we are merely accepting that the highest jumper in the world will always be a man — but that we are regarding women as less able generally in terms of co-ordination, strength and judgement. And that men run, throw, hit, jump, move etc better than women.

We know of individual women who run/swim etc faster than men — but nevertheless it is commonly accepted that women as a sex are inferior in a huge number of skills — in ways which fit nicely with the traditional female image of being passive, weak, in need of protection and

lacking in concentration.

From its importance, to its inevitability. Remember Mark Spitz: 3 times gold medalist in the 1972 Olympics? Well, the current woman world record holder for 400 metres free-style swimming would have beaten Mark Spitz if she had swum against him, then. Today's top women can swim faster, run faster, jump higher and longer than the great male champions of 20 years ago.

So maybe women's apparent inferiority is more to do with numbers and degree of involvement and encouragement than with innate biological differences? What about women's physique? Women *are* smaller, (five inches on average) and weaker (30 percent) than men, *but* inch for inch their limb strength is the same. For most sports, there is no reason here why women should not be equal to men.

Let's look at where the real inequality lies — the difference in participation of men and women in sport. *New Society*

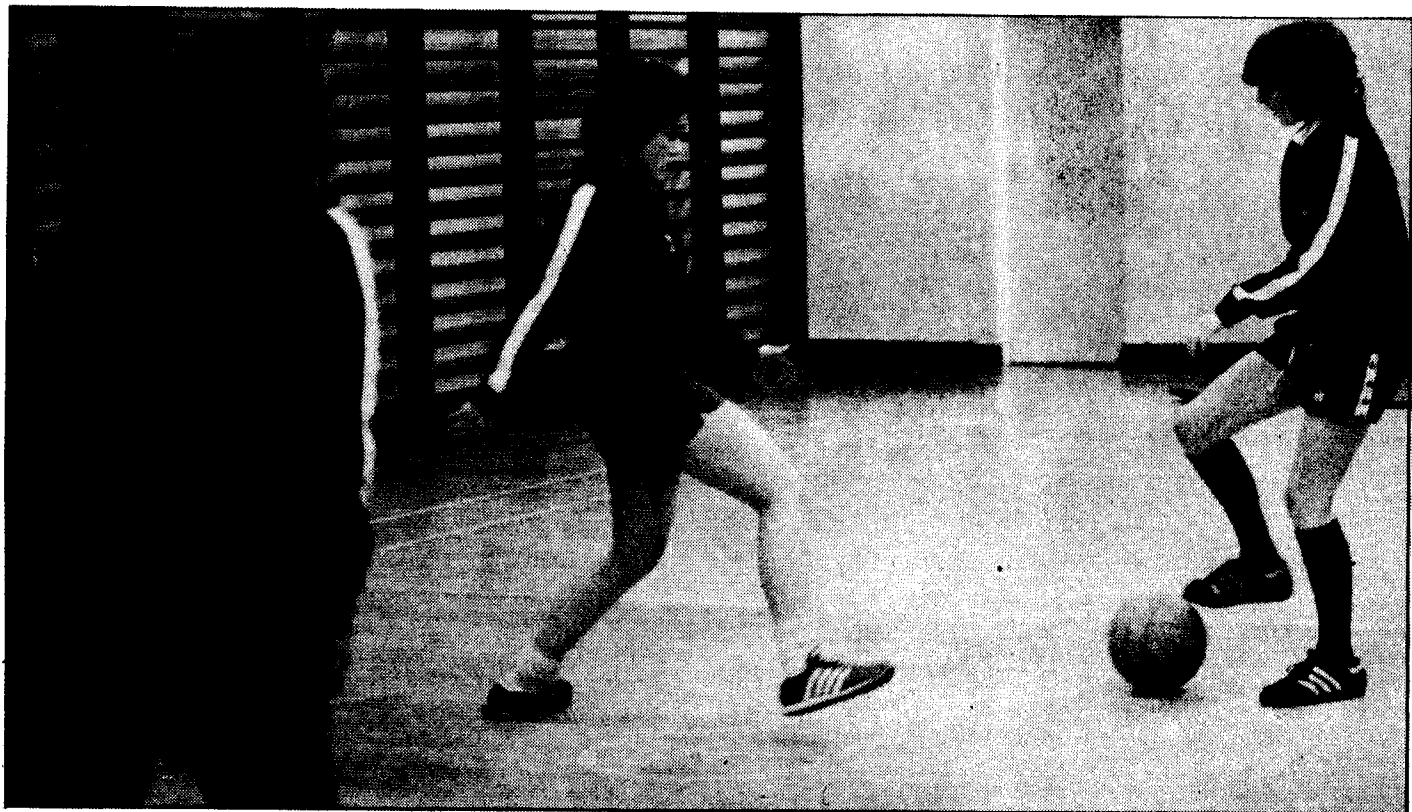
April 82 quotes a Sports Council Survey which showed that 45.1 per cent of men interviewed had taken part in some outdoor sport the previous month, as compared to 31.3 per cent of women. In indoor sport the gap was even larger: only 16 percent of the women interviewed had taken part.

A recent Sports Council survey done in Teesside in a working class and a middle class area concluded 'the most disturbing fact was the small carry over (continuing sport after school) shown by female respondents.'

They researched into the effect of different educational experience, different pressures in adolescence and different opportunities for post-school recreation — and found that one in nine girls had not enjoyed sports at school. Therefore they conclude it's largely the school's responsibility that girls don't continue sport after school!

What about the family? Women going out to work outside the home and earning their own wages must be the basis for equality with men. But for how many women is their wage-earning power completely accepted as necessary to the household, without any acceptance that they have equal rights to free time and activity outside the home outside working hours?

What stops women participating in sport is the same thing as what makes it more difficult for us to participate in politics and everything outside the home. It is the home itself, our unequal burden within it and the ideas and socialisation which wrap the whole package up neatly to oppress and restrict us. I don't care who the next world record holder for high jump is. I do care that many men, but far more women, don't have the time and facilities to develop their potential and add to the quality of their lives by an active involvement in sport.



REVIEWS



Bankrupt approach

Poverty and Politics
by Frank Field,
Heinemann £4.50

The book describes in detail the Child Poverty Action Group's attempts to reform elements of welfare provision for families with children.

Field charts the CBAG's development from Quaker inspired study group to Quaker inspired skilled lobbyists. He includes several essays on social policy, parliamentary lobbying and some interesting information on Special Branch responses to cabinet leaks. Much of the book is of interest only to the academic, but it does reveal the absurdity of welfarist approaches to poverty.

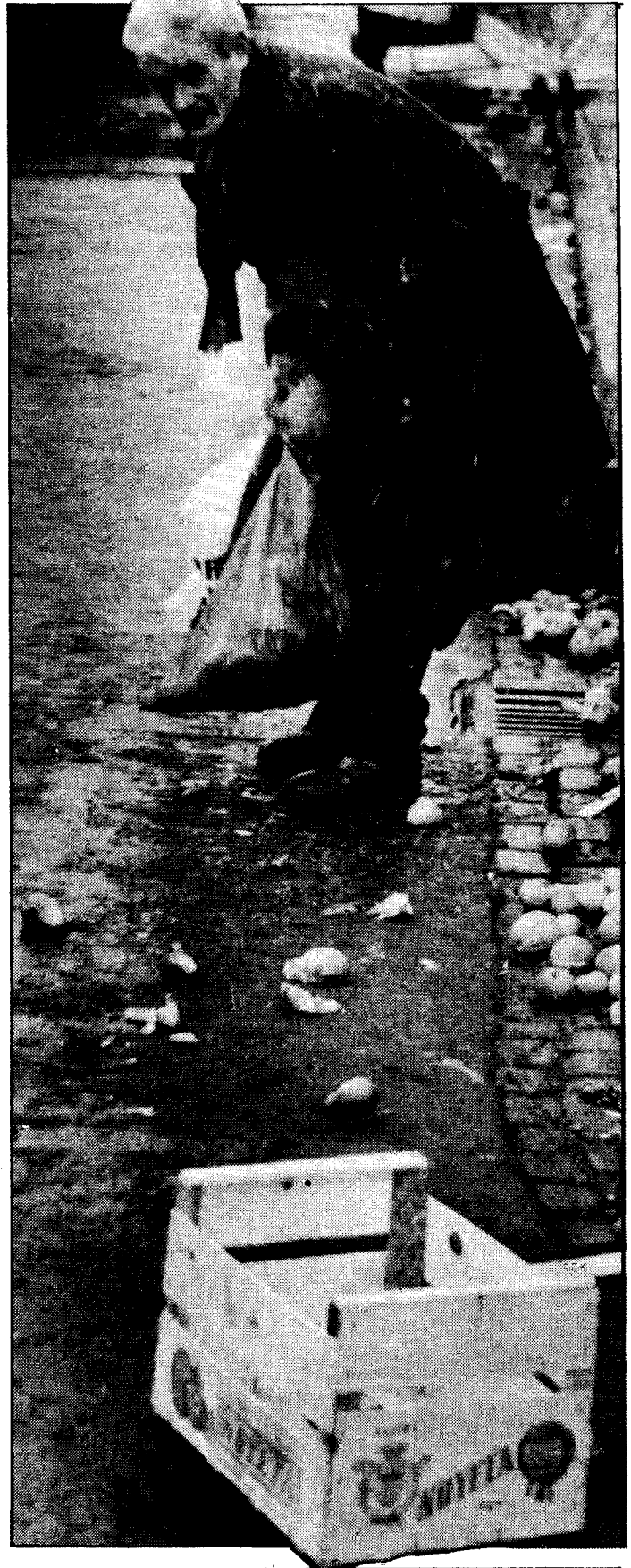
Field and company fought long and hard throughout the seventies to establish non-means tested child benefit. At the time the battle was hotting up in the late seventies, a certain Tony Benn was at the Department of Energy presiding over the 'restructuring' of pricing policy for the fuel industries. The resulting increase in

domestic tariffs produced a massive increase in disconnections and many old people died of hyperthermia.

The poverty lobby, shooting from behind as usual, set up the Fuel Poverty Action Group. Field's approach is classically reformist. His technical solutions to poverty, calculated by social scientists on behalf of 'the poor', ignore class conflict and focus on 'groups' — the old, the young, etc. As the crisis deepens, attempts to tinker with aspects of the social security system, or redistribute '...from younger to older sections ... from those in work to the workless ...' will prove even more marginal and useless than in a period of growth.

Field concedes through bitter experience that Labour Governments 'behave more like managers than reformers'. Nevertheless while the Tories cut housing and social services to the bone, Frank Field is fighting the Militant Tendency in his Birkenhead constituency.

Mark Perry





'Missing - AA Costa Gavras 1982 US.

In 1973 a bloody military coup ended the three year old popular Unity Government of Salvador Allende.

For many, but not enough, the illusion in the 'peaceful road to socialism' was shattered as the tanks rolled through the streets, guns fired mercilessly and the Santiago stadium filled with thousands of trade unionists and socialists.

'Missing' tells the story of Charlie and Joyce Horman — the two new Yorkers, who, a little previous to the coup, had moved to Chile when Charlie was a journalist and part-time documentary maker.

The film opens with Charlie and a friend, Terry, coming across some American military men, who give the game away by talking about the American Government's involvement in the coup. This knowledge, and the fact that Charlie had been researching the assassination of Allende,

when the coup happened, make his chances of getting much older very slim.

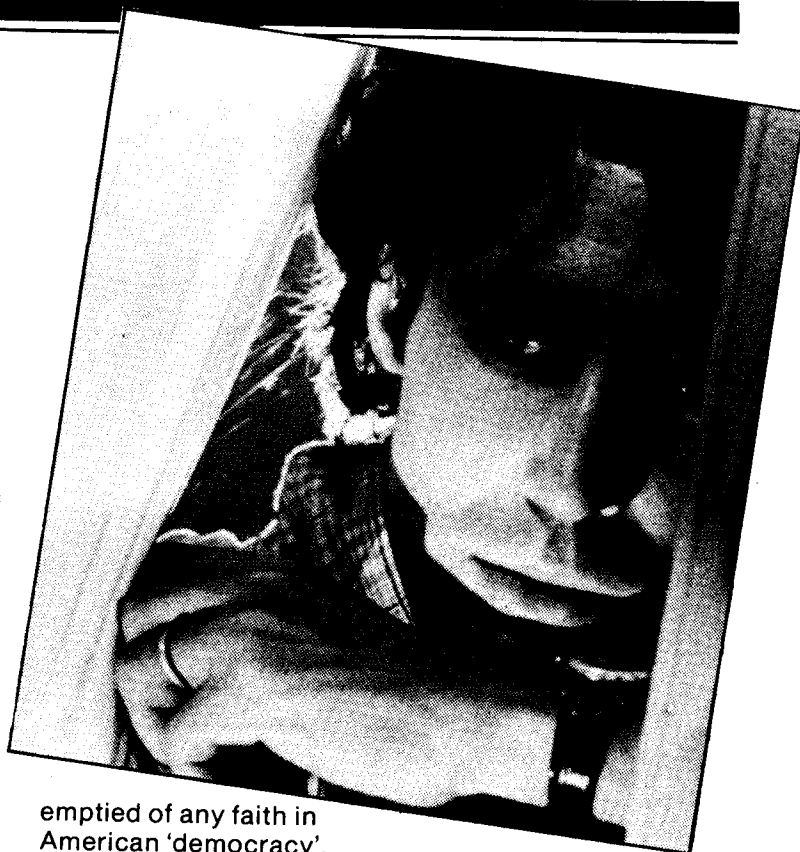
Joyce (Beth in the film) comes home one day to find that Charlie had disappeared in the night.

What follows is a nightmare of trying to break through a brick wall of American officialdom, deceit and cover ups to discover whether Charlie is dead or alive.

Charlie's father, Ed, arrived to help with the search, convinced that the American officials armed with 'truth and democracy' will come up with the goods, and bring his boy back.

The two of them banging their heads against the same brick wall and coming away with the same headache, are pushed closer together, but win no clues as to Charlie's fate.

Eventually, after conducting gruesome tours through hospitals and morgues, the officials are forced to admit to Charlie's death. Joyce and Ed go home,



emptied of any faith in American 'democracy'.

Ed tried in 1977 to sue the American Government, but a clamp-down on 'classified documents' killed that effort. The Government, just in case you weren't totally convinced of its guilt in this situation, has even issued a 'white paper'

refuting the implications of the film.

If you see the film, just remember it's real. As real as the torture and murder which took place in the Santiago stadium. And as true as the futility of parliamentary socialism.

Sandra Shepherd

'Socialism is a new society of freedom - or it is nothing.'



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LETTERS

Rent strikes need industrial muscle



Alcoholism and women's raw deal

Dear WV

For the past eight years I have tried to help alcoholics and their families and found that women have a raw deal whether they are married to an alcoholic or are themselves alcoholics.

One point is that married women who are alcoholics whose husband is working full time must pay to have treatment in a residential centre for alcoholics. Fees are around £70-£100 weekly which is more than most of us earn a week. Men on the other hand have fees paid by the DHSS whether married or single and their families are supported while they get help.

Women alcoholics are beaten by their husbands as often as a wife of an alcoholic. The reason being, the man feels that he should be in control of his wife's drinking habits and try to make the woman 'snap out of it'.

There are also the men who are on the lookout for an intoxicated woman so they can have sex for the price of a cheap bottle of plonk. It is one of the most disgusting things that can happen to a woman. The women are called prostitutes, but I call them victims of rape.

It is only right to offer women alcoholics help, the rest must be done fighting sexism.

Isobel Turner
Buchan Alcoholism Service and Information Centre.

Dear Womens Voice,

The extract from Phil Piratin's book 'Our Flag Stays Red' in last month's *Womens Voice* placed the emphasis on the wrong thing in its dealing with the struggles in Stepney against high rents.

Piratin only mentions the workplace briefly and even then more importance is given the struggle in the streets than in the factories. 'The menfolk left their work to come home, he says when bailiffs moved in, and later, 'Some workshops closed home'. Wasn't that, the most important part of the struggle, worth more than four words in the story?

Rent strikes alone are

ineffective without industrial action as a means to defend living standards, as many who are refusing to pay council rent increases now are discovering. They allow those participating to become isolated as they are centred on the individual home not collective action. Who knows if their neighbours have paid their rent or not? This weakness should have been pointed out in the introduction so as not to give people who believe that not paying for things will lead to a reduction in prices, like the 'Fares Fair' campaigners, false hopes.

Beth Coburn
N Wales



Women's right to work another view

Dear Womens Voice,

What a pity that many women have missed the feelings of strength, joy and solidarity on the 'Womens Right to Work March' because of your ridiculous article 'The wrong route to the right to work' (WV issue 64).

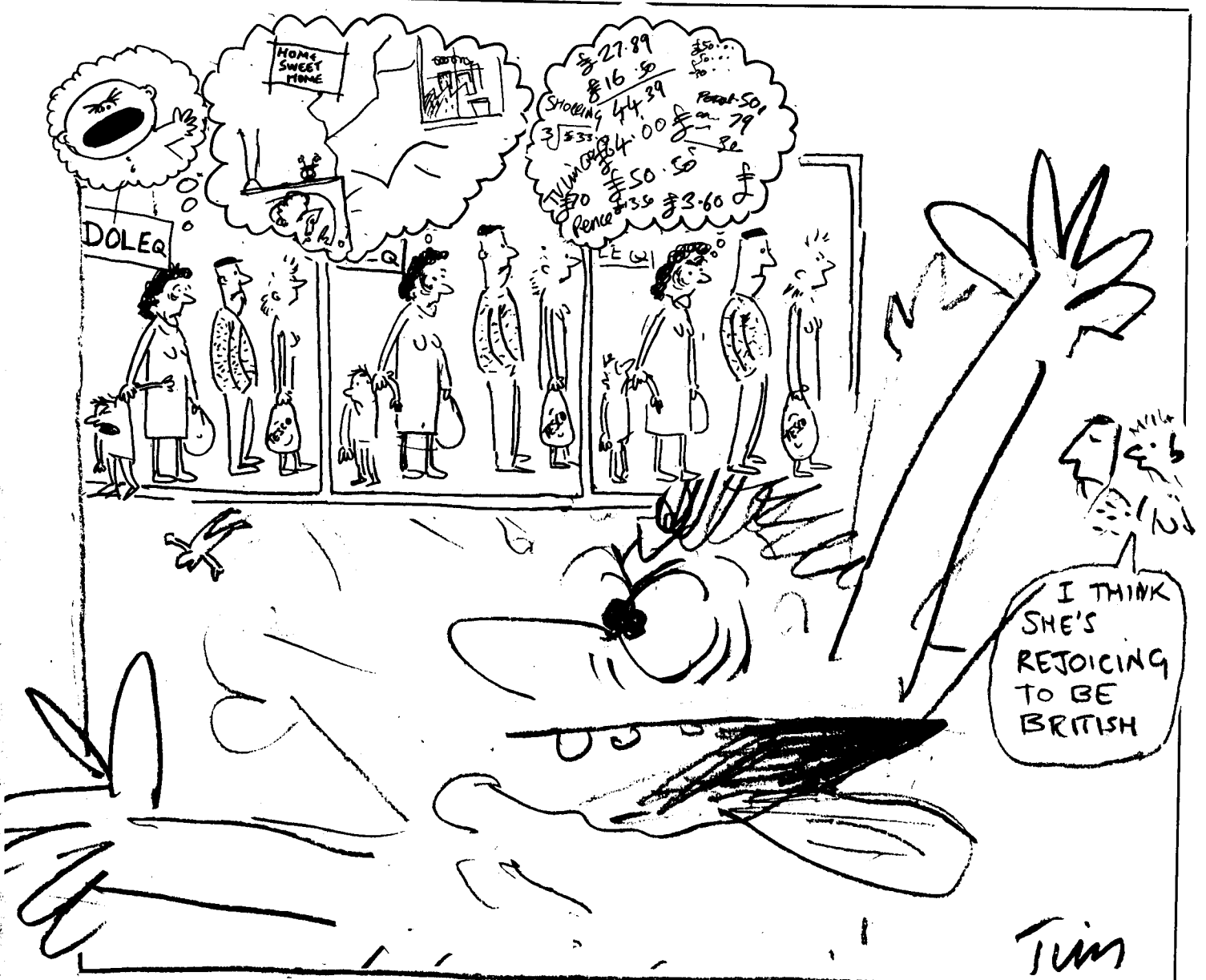
How can a march for women be wrong and a magazine be right? Before women can

contribute to any struggle we must gain confidence and strength, this is easier to achieve if there aren't any men shouting louder than we can.

I was sponsored to go on the march by my trades council (80% male) who all the intelligence to realise that a women's rally does not in any way detract from the right to work campaign for both men and women.

Being pro-female is in no way anti-male. Saying that women should not campaign for work for women because there are also men unemployed is like saying that the women at Lee Jeans should not have fought because steel workers had been laid off— absolute rubbish!

In disgust
Helen Johnson
Carlisle, Cumbria.



Rejoice! It's the year of the big lie

Dear Womens Voice

How are sane people going to survive the summer without going completely mad? As real wages fall and unemployment rises fewer and fewer of us can afford to go out much or go away on holiday so instead we will be staying at home hoping for entertainment on TV. But what's on? The news and current affairs programmes seem to be taking up more time everyday and in between there's sport. These programmes are all forcing us to listen to jingoist propaganda and after 3 months of this centred around the Falklands and the fleet it seems to be having the effect on the public desired by the Tories.

A recent MORI poll of public opinion reports a surge in patriotic fervour, it shows that the nation is more united

as a result of the war. 4/5 of adults interviewed think that the conflict has made people prouder to be British. Despite the allegations made by the government that the BBC wasn't being patriotic enough the media appears to have done its job of indoctrination well. Back in April only 1 person in 7 was prepared to see more than 100 lives lost recapturing the Falklands for Britain, and now 4 out of 5 believe it was right to send the Task Force despite the cost and carnage.

As Socialists we recognise that the working class has no country, our enemies are not workers abroad but the ruling class here at home. These statistics are alarming to us as it shows that there are an awful lot of people who are identifying with the ruling class, despite unemployment,

bad housing conditions and increased rents and rates. However the statistics still show that 20% of people don't think that it was worth the high cost in terms of human life of sending the Task Force and that doesn't sound so bad.

Last year the contradictions exposed themselves on the eve of the Royal Wedding in the form of riots around the country. I shall wait in anticipation to see whether or not the conflicts in society between the rich and poor come to a head again this summer or whether it is true that these events calling upon our patriotism really have created national unity against 'common enemies' or if that too is part of the fantasy world created and promoted by the media.

The year between July '81 and July '82 seems to be

characterised as the year of the Big Lie. We are being asked to forget the problems that working class people around the world face because of capitalism's crisis. Don't be fooled, if you have a job and home and plenty to eat, there are still nearly 4 million without a job, homeless families and people starving.

If you're one of those unfortunate enough to be out of work or low paid, living in a cold damp house you can't afford to repair or heat, or if your rent is so high you are months in arrears and facing eviction, stop complaining, remember you can be proud to be British. Forget your trivial problems and look towards the really important things. And don't forget—REJOICE.

Pamela Newton
Harwich

SANDRA



No holds barred!

Trafford Tanzi is the European Women's Champion wrestler. She fights men—and wins. In fact she's so impressive that Claire Luckham recorded the stupendous story of her struggles on the road to success, got Chris Monks to write some music, and set out to show the world that wrestlers, like housewives, are made, not born.

Now, owing to the unbounded generosity of the Arts Council, the GLC, and the Stoke Newington Womens Institute Hammer Throwing Team, you can see the final bout in the battle of the sexes as Tanzi meets the 'ever popular' Dean Rebel—the wrestler she has trained. He is also her husband, and they are fighting for their lives.

Coached by professional wrestlers, the cast give the fastest, funniest, most physical piece of entertainment to hit the Half Moon theatre since *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*.

You'll hate Eve Bland as Platinum Sue, Tanzi's old schoolfriend who's gone in for the bayooti business—and also the business of stealing Tanzi's husband; you'll boo Dean Rebel, (Patrick Field) making up in chip-shop machismo what he lacks in sex appeal; you'll collapse at the antics of David Fielder's manic referee and creepy school psychiatrist.

Tanzi's Mum, (Victoria Plum) is irresistible (and she knows it!) but the winner's purse must go to Noreen Kershaw as Tanzi. Talk about a tour de force—she has you giggling fit to bust one minute, moved almost to tears the next. By the end you'll quite likely be leaping into the ring with her.

You may remember Noreen Kershaw and Eve Bland from 'Bloomers!', my last year's fave rave in political high jinks. This is definitely this year's. I'd like to say it's the finest piece of feminist agitprop I've



seen this year, but that makes it sound boring. So I'll say instead that if you want a smashing night out, a good laugh and a chance to yell yourself silly supporting your chosen champ, don't miss it.
Susan Pearce

'Trafford Tanzi' is at the New Half Moon Theatre, 213 Mile End Road, London E1, until mid-August. Tickets are £3 in the week, £4 at weekends.

(Reductions for claimants etc). Tel:01-791 1141.

why I became a socialist

Julie Ford is 21 years old and unemployed. She talks to *Womens Voice* about how she became a socialist.

'I used to get into a lot of trouble at school. I hated it and used to play truant a lot. We didn't used to do anything special, just hang round the toilets in town with my mates or go round their houses. My dad used to go mad at me, he never really encouraged me to learn anything, he just used to hit me. I ended up failing all my CSEs and left school as soon as I could.

From the time I was 14 I was a 'rockerbilly' — I used to go to clubs in North West London. I had a lot of black friends at school, so I was well aware of racism from early on ... but when I left school I saw how tough it was for my black mates. In the clubs at night blacks really had to prove themselves before they were accepted — and then got caught between suspicion from both their own and the white community.

There used to be a lot of fights all the time, then one night a West Indian got stabbed on our estate by some rockerbillies — suddenly I felt like I was being labelled by the black community as a racist, I felt really hurt that they should judge me by the clothes I wore, not the person I was ... I understood them, but I wanted to argue with them.

'...suddenly I felt like I was being labelled by the black community as a racist, I felt really hurt that they should judge me by the clothes I wore, not the person I was... I understood them... but I wanted to argue with them'

I started my first job in 1976 as an office junior — you know — making the tea and a bit of typing for £19 a week... and I used to give my mum as much as I could. I stuck that job for a year and a half and hated most of my time there ... I decided to train

as a telephonist with the GPO.

The conditions were pretty bad there, little things like waiting ages before you got a relief, so's you could go to the toilet. We used to get bad headaches because of the lighting there, and the shop stewards were useless. I was really disappointed with the union. I went to some union meetings but gave up because I couldn't understand what they were on about.

'In time, as I spoke to other comrades I suddenly realised that my arguments were my own and I joined'

I left there after 18 months and did endless jobs down the West End, mostly as a telephonist. But I found those jobs all so boring. Finally I borrowed £200 and took five 'O' levels at technical college.

I really enjoyed it there. There were other working class girls there and we got involved in anti-cuts activities, going on demos, speaking at union meetings. I felt I gained a lot of confidence at tech and I ended up getting all my 'O' levels with really high grades!

I met my present boyfriend at a club. He was a member of the Socialist Workers Party and he showed me a *Socialist Worker*. I started buying it myself locally and used to bring it into college and show it to the others.

It's funny though, because I felt really unsure about joining the Party for ages. I didn't want people thinking I was only joining because my fella was a member. I ended up moving down to Brighton to live with him. In time, as I spoke to other comrades I suddenly realised that *my arguments were my own* and I joined.

There have been a few main influences in my life. Firstly my upbringing taught us to be very class conscious. My dad wasn't a raving socialist, but one thing was for sure—he hated the rich, that rubbed off on

all of us. I think that has rubbed off on my outlook on women's liberation too.

My boyfriend's mum is a feminist and sees herself as part of the women's movement, but I remember her telling me about their attitude to men. How could she have 'no truck with men' when she lived with, and was married to my boyfriend's dad? I took some ideas from her and developed my own from there.

I love the *Socialist Workers Party's* approach to women. Separating women off alone; meeting and talking together as women doesn't help the fight against sexism at all. How do we expect male workers and socialists to change their ideas if women hide away in rooms on their own?

The 'brown bread and yoghurt,' spare rib feminists really annoy me; they're so middle class in the way they look at life. They don't relate to working class women at all. That magazine *Spare Rib* really disgusts me; a few issues ago they featured an article by Tony Benn in it. The next issue was full of women horrified that a man had been allowed to write in *their* magazine.

'The Spare Rib feminists really annoy me; they're so middle class in the way they look at life'

I hate the idea of separate magazines for women, because as soon as you start writing separate articles, selling a different paper, men immediately think it's not for them. Anyway, articles on abortion etc are as much for them to organise around as us.

To me the more we can involve men in fights around abortion and sexism — the better. We have to teach men the arguments about sexism and gain the confidence ourselves to lead on issues like strikes and disputes. The only way we can do this is working alongside male socialists and learning from each other.

WHERE WE STAND

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

The workers create all the wealth under capitalism. A new society can only be constructed when they collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say. It has to be overthrown.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers. The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based on councils of workers delegates and a workers' militia. At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system. Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a world-wide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries. We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racialism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the fight of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence.

We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country. Russia, China and Eastern Europe are not socialist but state capitalist. We support the struggles of workers in these countries against the bureaucratic ruling class.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women.

We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against homosexuals.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party. Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

We urge all those who agree with our policies to join with us in the struggle to build the revolutionary party.

Small ads



'MOTHERLAND' is a play about West Indian women who came to Britain in the 1950s. It uses the experiences of West Indian women in Vauxhall to describe the lives of black women.

Oval House Theatre, 54 Kennington, Oval, London SE11 at 7.45pm. 9-11 July and 13-18 July 1982.

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And another thing

by Susan Pearce

It's baby month!

I waited all day for the news, excitement rising, hardly daring to go to the loo in case IT happened.

The crowds outside St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington, grew by the hour. The American Press joined the British, the Australians were hard on their heels. Eventually even a few lunchtime shoppers joined in. London Broadcasting's intrepid girl reporter was fair to bursting with the tension.

I dozed off for an hour at 8.30pm, waking in a sweaty panic in case I'd missed THAT announcement.

But no, here it came, first item on News at Ten fifteen because of the football, IT'S A BOY!!

Just as well really. A girl would have looked really silly with all those dangly bits Sir Wotsit Pinker spotted on the scanner three months ago.

Alastair Burnett puffed up with pride, frantically trying to get the balance between A Nation's Joy and the right amount of forelock-tugging awe at the momentous event. The result was a fair imitation of the Mod's Ian MacDonald, pissed.

'The Baby Boy' beamed Alistair at least eight times, 'will be called Prince.'

Earl Spencer has a habit of repeating himself too. 'Ah historic 'ccasion,' he mumbled two or three times. 'D'ana's fahn, the bebb'y's fahn; what more c'you 'spect?'

Were I the Princess of Wales, I should make sure my stroke-stricken old gasbag of a father was well out of the way, as much as possible.

Charlie Boy came out with The Most Human Royal Remark on Record. 'When you will be trying for another one, Sir?' gasped a trampled newsman. 'Bloody Hell, give us a chance!' quipped HRH.



By pure coincidence, *World In Action* the same night talked about chances, too. Like what chance have the Illinois people of British rules Diego Garcia, dispossessed of their paradise island 10 years ago, to be thrown penniless into the squalor and disease of a Mauritian shanty town. Edward Heath's government, you see, needed to rent Diego Garcia to the U.S. for use as a military base.

So, unlike the Prince, all the Illinois' babies are sick, undernourished, covered in abscesses, futureless.



'(Peace) ... cannot conceivably be guaranteed by compromising values that have been hard-fought and won by the British people over many centuries.

'That ... merely serves to encourage those of a bullying nature to scorn the civilised patterns of behaviour.'

Prince Charles in France, June 20th

I doubt very much if Charlie Boy spent momentous Monday night watching *World In Action*.

So it was left to the health workers, marching past St Mary's hospital for 12% of a pittance, to remind him just how civilised our society is.

For details of the Socialist Workers Party, fill in this form and send to: National Secretary, SWP, PO Box 82, London E2.

NAME

ADDRESS

.....

TELEPHONE

TRADE UNION

Louise Michel was one of the best known figures of the barricades of the Paris Commune. Continuously hounded by the police, imprisoned time and again, Louise Michel defied the authorities all her life. A committed revolutionary and a feminist—her funeral was as much a political event as was her life.

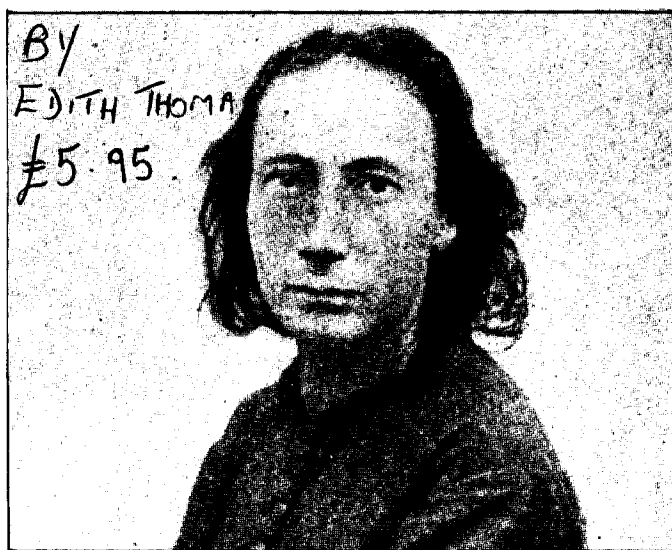
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Even in death, Louise Michel could disturb the peace. Two thousand people gathered outside the Hôtel de l'Oasis on January 11, to follow her body to the cemetery morgue. The crowd included representatives of the trade unions, the socialists, the anarchists and the anti-religious groups, all of whom set aside their differences for this moment. Siméon Flaissières, the socialist mayor of Marseille and president of the General Council was there, also citizens David and Duverger, town councillors.

Red flags and a great many flowers lay piled on the pauper's hearse. Curious people lined the streets to watch the procession, which was more than a kilometre long, wind its way past. Speeches at the cemetery: Flaissières, Girault, Santini for Italian anarchists and Lafaille for the Bourse du Travail. Outside the Seacaptains' Union, the anchor which served as their symbol toppled over, falling into the shape of a cross. A few members of the procession thought this was a deliberate provocation and whistled their disapproval. On Boulevard du Musée, another member of the procession struck an onlooker who had failed to bare his head. But these were the only incidents of the day.

Fund drives for her funeral services were immediately announced by *Action*, the International Antimilitarist Association, the Bourse du Travail, *La Petite République* and *L'Humanité*. The subscribers included Charles Malato, Pouget, Yvetot and Francis Jourdain. Even the municipal offices of Paris contributed 100 francs. One day a poster was put up by

Louise Michel



the libertarian group to announce that the campaign had raised 1000 francs. Louise had never been so rich.

The secretary of the Socialist Revolutionary Federation of the Seine warned M. Emile Combes, president of the Cabinet and minister of the Interior, that the Paris deputies and municipal councillors intended to march at the head of the funeral procession bearing aloft their red flag. The bourgeois republic, however, detested these processions of red flags through the streets of Paris.

Special security measures were taken. It was a full-scale operation, the sort of no-holds-barred exercise reserved for those occasions when society feels itself in immediate peril. There were 100 infantrymen and 50 cavalry outside the Gare de Lyon; 100 infantrymen inside the station; 25 cavalry on Rue de Lyon; and the first reserve company (125 cavalry, 100 infantrymen, etc.) deployed all along the route. On top of all that, all leave had been cancelled for city policemen of all districts, and they were all deployed as well. Frightened Catholics stationed themselves inside their churches, ready to defend them from what they believed to be imminent threat.

On January 20, Louise Michel's coffin was taken from Saint-Pierre cemetery in Marseille to the Marseille train station. Some 400 people had set out with the coffin from the cemetery, but by the time they reached the station, the crowd had swollen to about 2000. The procession itself was calm and

utterly silent, but as the crowd dispersed along La Canebière, they began singing the 'Internationale' and 'La Carmagnole'. For the last time, the special superintendents at the train stations were sending coded messages to the minister of the Interior about Louise Michel. Her body arrived at 9.40, January 21, in the Gare de Lyon station in Paris.

At 10 o'clock, a wagon bearing more than thirty wreaths set out from Gare de Lyon, followed by the hearse. They started down Boulevard Diderot. Curiosity-seekers lined the streets, clustered at windows and even stared down from the rooftops. More people joined the procession at every street-corner: the French Socialist Party, the Masonic lodges, anti-militarist groups, anarchists, trade unionists, butchers, bakers, florists, feather-dressers, the editorial staffs of *L'Humanité*, *La Petite République* and *Le Libéraire*, representatives from the The Enfranchised Woman, members of the Socialist Union of the Sorbonne, London anarchists, Polish libertarians and the Galileo Galilei Italian lodge. And more flags, and more wreaths. The Reds of Brittany unfurled their flag. Some police agents tried to take it from them, but the Chouans won out. All the revolutionary parties were there, reconciled for one brief moment around the body of Louise Michel.

And they marched. They marched through the streets of Paris, through the people of Paris. Sometimes they sang the

'Internationale', or 'La Carmagnole', or revolutionary songs from Russia, which Louise hoped would be the cradle of deliverance and liberty for all. M. Lépine, the prefect, had forbidden songs. The procession kept growing: 4500 people as they marched past Père Lachaise; 7000 as they went through Belleville; then 50,000 or 100,000; estimates became impossible. Men, women and children clustered on the balconies, the roof, against the walls: 'This will be something to remember.'

Inevitably, there were some incidents. As they passed Sacré Coeur, somebody cried out, 'Down with the priest!' The watching police snatched away any flag that didn't bear the approved inscriptions, even a green flag. They also made five arrests for breach of peace, though the charges were later dropped.

The procession finally reached Levallois-Perret at 2.20pm. The mayor of the arrondissement, a revolutionary socialist, took his place at the head of the group. The municipal orchestra played a funeral march, while the mayor praised this 'secular saint'. Séverine spoke: 'You may be dead, but you shall survive wherever the Revolution survives.' Old Camélinat talked about her role during the Commune. Malato, Sébastien Faure and Girault talked about the fight she had waged to the day she died for the Social Revolution and universal peace.

Only thirty people entered the tiny cemetery where Louise Michel's coffin was finally lowered into the vault to join that of her mother, Marianne.

The crowd slowly drifted away. There was a meeting at the Bourse du Travail of Levallois-Perret, which ended with cries of 'Long live the Russian revolution! Long live anarchy!' It was as if Louise were still alive.

By one of those strange and poetic coincidences, the day of the funeral rites for Louise Michel was also the day on which, in Petersburg, a huge crowd of workers, women and children went to present their grievances to the czar. The czar had his troops open fire in response. That day became known as Bloody Sunday, and it was the start of the first Russian Revolution.

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