

SUBVERSIVE GRAFFITI

FREE NEWS SHEET

PRODUCED IN ABERDEEN

No 6
July/Aug
1982

However, the decisions about how to wage the dispute are not being taken by the health workers themselves - but by the TUC Health Services Committee. They have turned aside all calls for an all-out strike - in fact they are trying to push the futile course of arbitration. For effective all-out strike action to take place health workers will need to act unofficially, outside the control of their Union bosses. Spreading such action throughout the country would be vital.

N.H.S. Workers Fight Poverty Pay

Health Service workers are taking industrial action against the government's attempt to cut their wages in real terms. Already many Health Workers are on the bread-line, with basic wages such as £59 per week before tax. To win their 12% claim a lot of Health Workers believe they must go on 'all-out' strike, with emergency cover.

More solidarity strike action is vital. All workers are involved in the same struggle against a government determined to cut our living standards and crush our ability to organize, through measures like Tebbit's bill.

Health Service workers in Aberdeen are active in the fight against the government's current offer of 6% for most health workers and 7½% for nurses. The Mile-End laundry staff, drivers in the Transport Dept., workers at the Central Sterile Supply Dept., and telephonists at Grampian Health Board Area HQ have all been, or are still on strike. Workers say that Aberdeen hospitals are now down to an 'accident and emergency' service.

The national one day strike on June 23rd saw an estimated 90-95% involvement in Aberdeen. All workers at Royal Cornhill Hospital went on strike during the national 3 days of action on July 19, 20 and 21st.

Some of the management have been obstructing health workers' efforts to organize. Bosses at Woolmanhill have refused a shop steward time off to go to shop stewards' meetings and prevented him from speaking to a section of workers.

Many workers' struggles are weakened by their division into different Unions, whose leaders are often more concerned with increasing their own power than an effective united struggle.

Joint meetings of all workers in each hospital are a way in which the Union and sectional divisions can be broken down. Some such meetings have been held in Aberdeen. A shop steward told us "In Cornhill we had mass meetings of all the workers at the start of the campaign - they were very effective. We're having another such meeting on the 20th July. I think it's imperative that the campaign should involve all staff." A joint meeting for all workers at Denburn Health Clinic and Woolmanhill was reportedly "very successful."

What action should the health workers take now to win their claim? Mass rallies of Health workers in the Music Hall on June 23rd and again on July 21st voted unanimously in favour of an all-out strike. Many health workers active in the strike believe that short periodic stoppages are ineffective, and that there is a danger of workers becoming disillusioned as the dispute drags on and on. Certainly such a strategy failed in the 1979 Health workers' dispute.

Some examples of Health Workers wages and conditions -

Laundry Workers - £60 per week before tax. "The work is very hard and tedious, handling dirty, bloody, messy linen." (Mile-End laundry worker).

Nurses (trained) - £76.82 per week basic, before tax.

Technician (trained) - £60 per week take home pay. "We've got very poor cramped conditions. We're having to use tools that rip the skin off our fingers." (Technician at Woolmanhill).

Porter - about £60 per week basic before tax.

Cleaner - £59.09 per week basic before tax.

Along with an all-out strike a step-up of solidarity action could help the health workers win. Miners, water workers, steel workers, bus workers, firemen, local authority workers, civil servants have been among those taking solidarity action. In Aberdeen library workers and workers at the Lodging House have gone on strike in solidarity with the Health workers - but so far there has been less solidarity action in Aberdeen than in several areas. Experience in Yorkshire and other places shows that health workers themselves going to other workplaces to ask for solidarity can be very effective.

Further, health workers and other workers can both gain from workers who are involved in different disputes taking united action. A good example was the joint train drivers'/health workers' picket of Aberdeen station on July 13th.

The Health Workers can win - if they reject the Union leadership and rely on direct action by themselves and other workers.

AUGUST 9-13TH
NATIONAL STOPPAGE
IN HEALTH SERVICE
TAKE SOLIDARITY ACTION



Railway Sell-out

During the two-weeks of the train drivers' stoppage, we've seen all the old forces attacking the strike.

The employers have accused the footplatemen of being Luddites in rejecting the Railway Boards moves back towards Victorian working hours. Politicians of all parties have urged ASLEF to seek compromise and reason with a management as pigheaded and devious as a 19th century employer. Margaret Thatcher, while saying she wouldn't intervene in the dispute, has taken every opportunity offered her to denounce the strikers and make clear her support for the railway bosses. The press and TV have wasted no chance to try and weaken the strike by reporting with relish 'the heroic ASLEF driver defying his Union', while ignoring the much more common situation in depots like Aberdeen where there has been 100% support for the strike from members of both Unions.

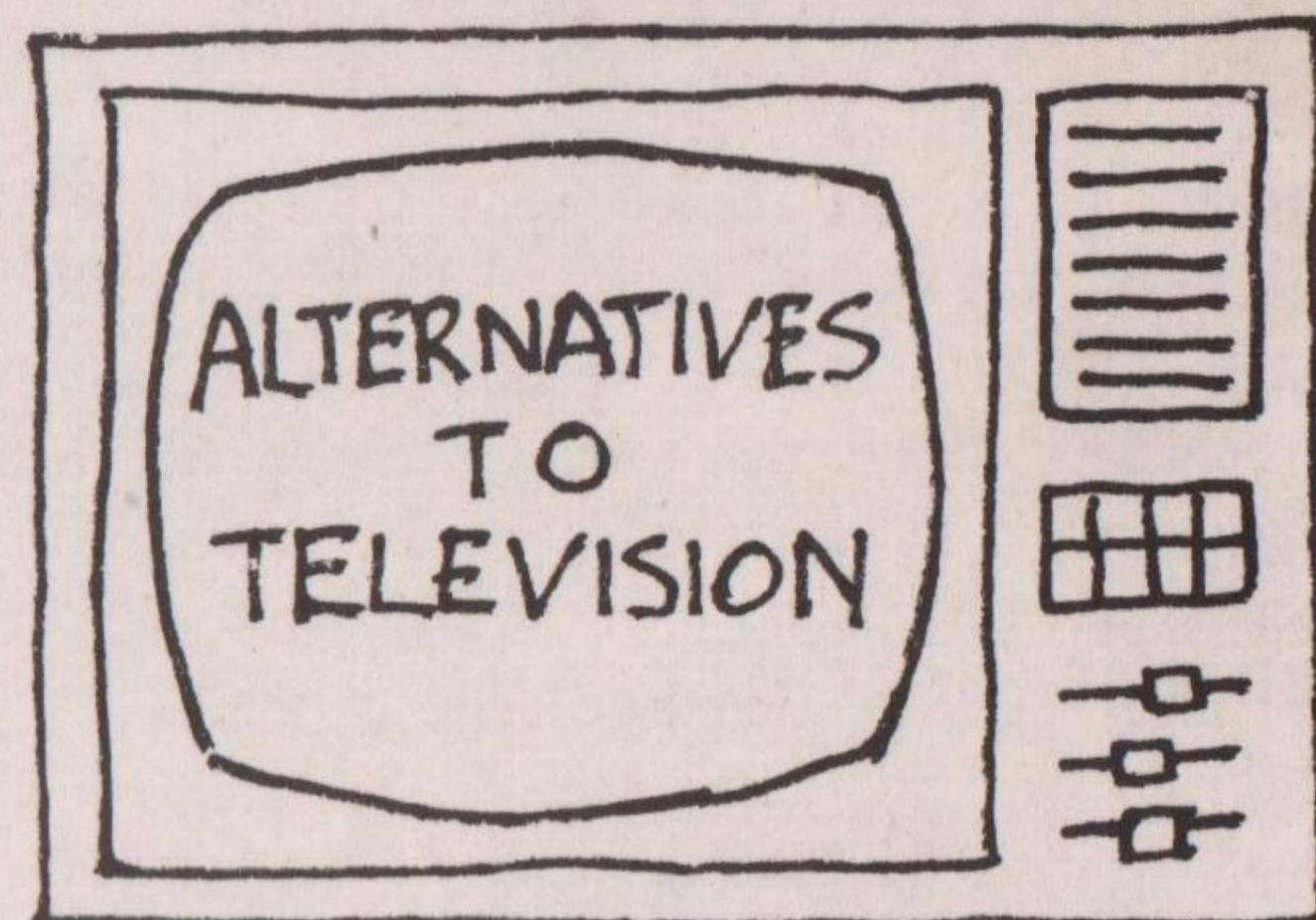
HOMOSEXUAL WOMEN AND MEN FOR HELP
AND INFORMATION - PHONE
ABERDEEN GAY SWITCHBOARD 572726
WEDNESDAYS 7 pm to 10 pm

But in the end, it was the union bureaucrats, the old false friend of the workers, who finally managed to break the strike.

These characters are always worried when struggles go beyond the usual set pieces that they make a nice living out of. When a confrontation threatens to end in the destruction of a Union, they will draw back to protect their cosy nests. If workers on strike want support from other workers, they must seek it themselves, picketing to extend their struggles. It's pointless to expect the Union leaders of other groups of workers to spread strikes - all they're interested in is keeping the membership fees coming in, an easy life, and a peerage when they retire.

ANTI-FALKLANDS-WAR ARRESTS

At least 40 people have been arrested in the last few months for activities in opposition to the Falklands war. Donations to fines, and further info from Anti-Falklands-War Support Fund c/o London Greenpeace, 6 Endsleigh St, London WC1



SUBVERSIVE GRAFFITI DISCO

To provide our readers with a night of unbridled pleasure (and also to pay off our massive debts from the printing and other bills) we proudly present: - The Subversive Graffiti Benefit Disco at the Carlton, Castle St, from 8.30 am - 12 midnight on Friday 6th August. Late licence and food. £1.20, 80p if unemployed or otherwise destitute.

SUBVERSIVE GRAFFITI READERS MEETING

8 pm Monday 9th August, in the W.E.A., 163 King St. (above Boomtown Books). All are welcome to discuss the current issue of Subversive Graffiti, to give your views on the news-sheet, to find out more about Subversive Graffiti

CRASS, DIRT, ANNIE ANXIETY, ALTERNATIVE . . . in Aberdeen on Monday September 6th . . . watch for details . . . contact us if interested in helping to organise this gig.

This news-sheet is published by Subversive Graffiti Collective. Our aims are: 1) To support, seek solidarity for, and be involved in struggles for the needs of the vast majority of people against the ruling class of businessmen, politicians and bureaucrats. This includes activities at the work-place, by the unemployed, by tenants, against oppression on the grounds of sex or sexual orientation. 2) To urge that all involved control these actions, not leaders such as Union officials or political parties. 3) To aim at the overthrow of all governments, bosses and leaders by the conscious action of the majority of people. We want a world without any relationships of domination and submission, where all have an equal say in how things are run, and where production is for human need not profit. We welcome information and articles for the news-sheet and help with distribution. Anyone who shares our ideas and would like to join the collective please get in touch. Published and printed by Subversive Graffiti Collective, c/o 163 King St., Aberdeen. (19.7.82).