REGIONAL MEETINGS

Regional meetings have been organised specifically to enable as many supporters as possible to come together. They are not delegate meetings and, since they are intended to increase solidarity, as well as to plan an expansion of local Case Con rank and file activities, it is especially important that the meetings are attended not just by groups but also by individuals, whether or not they are already involved with Case Con.

All the meetings will include discussions of future organisation, with a representative of the E.C. present, reports from different areas, and probably a focus on one particular topic of importance - for instance, the meeting in Bri[illegible] will focus on selectivity an[illegible] rights. Other meetings wi[illegible] probably spend some time on homelessness and housing. The regional organisers [illegible] to hear more from groups and supporters, particularly in the Midl[illegible], [illegible] South and London. Meetin[illegible] mandated to elect permanent organisers, ideally for a one-year term. Nominations are needed especially [illegible] of the temporary organi[illegible] on the job at very short [illegible] not be able to continue. [illegible] get in touch with your [illegible] organiser [illegible] soon as possible.

for Regional boundaries & names & addresses of Regional Organisers see previous page

CASE-CON in LONDON

London presents special problems, since there is a very great diversity of Case Con activity. Some groups are only embryonic while others have already joined in setting up trade union based "Departmental or shop stewards' committees. Co-ordination is needed to exchange experience and expertise; also to avoid duplication by groups working on similar issues. Co-ordination should also increase solidarity among all boroughs for local political action or resistance to victimisation. Details of the London regional meeting will be circulated shortly.

CASE-CON in the SOUTH WEST & S.WALES

Saturday 10th February
from 2pm
87 Howard Road
Westbury Park, Bristol 6

CASE-CON in the SOUTH

Saturday 24th February
11 am i) Case Con and Regionalisation
ii) Local Report
2pm i) Selectivity & Welfare Rights
ii) Regional Planning & Election of Regional Organiser
in Brighton - probably near Railway Station - further details from R.O.

CASE-CON in the NORTH WEST & N.WALES

Date and venue of meeting to be arranged. Contact R.O.

CASE-CON in the NORTH EAST

Saturday 10th February
10:30am to 5:30pm
i) Organisation & Agitation
ii) Local [illegible] and Regional [illegible]
[illegible]

CASE-CON in the MIDLANDS

[illegible] and venue of meeting to be arranged. [illegible]

CASE-CON in SCOTLAND

Saturday and Sunday
3rd and 4th of February
in Edinburgh
(further details from R.O.)

CASE-CON in EAST ANGLIA

Thursday 22nd February
from [illegible]
Station Hotel, Ipswich
(directly opposite Railway Station)

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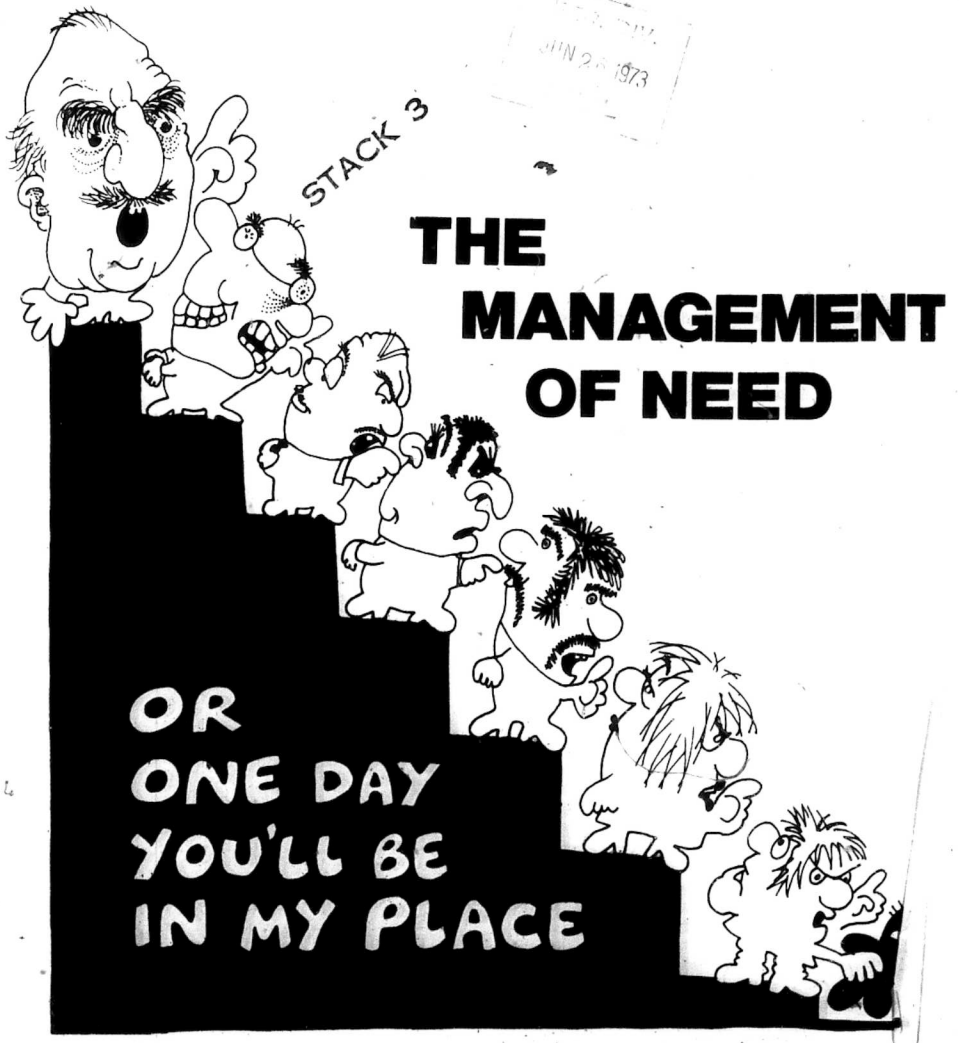
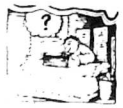


Editorial



The [illegible] policy, [illegible] conference, [illegible] acted on. [illegible] conferences, [illegible] organisation to [illegible] their areas and the [illegible] have held the first [illegible] series of [illegible] elsewhere. It [illegible] the decision to organise [illegible] correct one. In [illegible] be noted, very [illegible] interest [illegible] [illegible] agreed to [illegible] have [illegible].

The next conference [illegible] elsewhere in this issue for details) which may be the last on the present basis, provides an opportunity for much hard thinking and hard work, which must be made full use of if the progress of the last six months is to be consolidated and built on. Whatever happens to the Sub Committee, it is the way we can be [illegible] the trade movement with [illegible] a regular basis. The Council for Training and Education in Social Work is now in the process of [illegible] a series of [illegible] in the training of both [illegible] social workers. It is hoped to get these to the [illegible] they demand without the [illegible] participation of organised [illegible] concerned with social work [illegible] social workers. Still [illegible] we [illegible] problems, can we [illegible] action in these [illegible].

We [illegible] have been able to comment fully on the Fisher Report, and the Government's response to it, if the welfare rights group had shown any signs of life. It is particularly important here to challenge the growing 'welfare rights industry' as an essentially political development, rather than one which whatever the views of its supporters sustains rather than challenges the inequities of the 'welfare state'.

Local Government reorganisation and the implementation of Butterworth also raise issues which demand the intervention of nationally based interest groups as well as regional and local activity.

Our strength among medical social workers is minimal, but an effective fight against Butterworth cannot be conducted without their support, as well as collaboration between local authority workers and members of the Nalgo Members Action Group.

This issue of Case Con should be used as a background to some of the conference discussions and demonstrates, we hope, our commitment to the unity of theory and practice as more than just a slogan. The articles prompted by the Myra Garrett affair and that on organisation in Tower Hamlets bring to light many of our achievements as well as shortcomings. The successful prevention of victimisation in Islington was only achieved because a level of organisation and [illegible]ness was present which would not have been thought possible among social workers a couple of years ago. The mistakes made in the way to victory show how far we still have to go. Above all they show how, even among supposedly most radical and committed social workers, managerial ideas about staff participation still hold some sway. Attempts to get involved in policy making except on the basis of strong union organisation make no sense, do not challenge managerial prerogatives and provide no protection for those individuals whose ideas and practice do appear to threaten management policies. It seems necessary to reiterate that Case Con does not and never has argued that trade unions are or ever can be revolutionary organisations, or that they are the only places where radicals can work effectively.

The wider issues facing unions are noted in the report on the formation of a public sector alliance, which emphasises the need for a common, militant strategy at rank and file level if the unions are not to suffer a further series of defeats. Movement is taking place but on a fragmented, unco-ordinated basis. It is not enough just to shift a few bureaucrats. We join in the general rejoicing over the departure of Bro. Anderson from the General Secretaryship of NALGO, but one departing swallow does not make an October revolution.

By Whose Authority ?

Myra Garrett

My recent difficulties with my employer came about because I was doing things which were considered undesirable, bad social work practice. I have not been criticised for my commitment to the trade union movement, for my Case Con or other political activity, but for the way I do the job. Is that really what the conflict was all about? Yes, for the way I do the social work job is more and more reflective of my political beliefs. Therefore, what I do on the job, my attitudes, my relationships, my behaviour generally, is political. As my political perspective becomes more clearly worked out, my ability to analyse the job situation improves, and my social work practice becomes more coherent politically.

It is important to me personally that my politics, my work, and for that matter my life, be congruent in as many ways as possible. We are all aware of the constraints. We do not call ourselves revolutionary social workers. Can we be committed to a change of the social order and at the same time earn a living enforcing the present order? This is the question each of us must answer. It is not sufficient to avoid the answer by involving ourselves off the job in revolutionary political activities.

How then, do I do my job? How is it really different from the way my Tory or 'a-political' coworker does the job?

It is, I think, helpful to look at the criticisms made of my work by senior staff. Here are the clues to the differences. They are criticisms you have heard before and ones that may have been leveled at many of you. It is imperative that in examining these criticisms they be taken out of the context of personality conflict and be seen for what they are - ideological conflict. Underlying assumptions are reflected in behaviour and attitude, and these ultimately are ideological in nature. The criticisms are of course based on an ideology which puts worker and client in the same position, that of being individually responsible for failure or incompetence. Both case records (assessment of clients) and performance evaluations (assessment of workers) can suffer from the same perspective, which confuses individual inadequacy with institutional inadequacy. I was assessed as social work has traditionally assessed its clientele, without any perspective on the institutional context or critical appraisal of the assessor.

Principles Before People

The first criticism has to do with my 'clearly worked out political position' which sees individuals victimised by an alienating, grossly unequal social order. Because of this, said my team leader, I fail to listen properly to people talking about their problems or to give them the individual attention they require in time of stress. I consequently lack sensitivity to the 'real' problems experienced by the client. What good is a wider perspective to an individual in crisis? From where does this perspective come, I would answer, but from a deep concern for the suffering of individuals? I was described as an 'unfeeling person', which is, it seems to me, a nice confusion of strength with lack of feeling. My coldness (strength) again was attributed to my political views.

Potential Before Pathology

Because I insisted on viewing each client as a competent partner in a joint venture or working alliance with me, my team leader complained that I overlooked the needs and problems of the individual. My theme, 'every client is a potential social worker/volunteer', whilst obviously not a revolutionary principle, was said to place unrealistic demands on people in need of support and assistance. My expectations were seen by senior staff as a naivete about the potential destructiveness of people in general and clients in particular. I frequently commented on

the way in which we seriously underestimated the ability, potential and strength of those we call our clients. I openly resisted being drawn into behind-closed-doors interpretations of client (or colleague) behaviour, my assumption being that it is less accurate to guess than to ask those actually concerned.

People Before Social Workers

I was criticised for lacking the ability to sustain meaningful relationships with clients. My view that neighbours, friends, family members were likely to be more important than social workers was seen as an attempt to avoid involvement and responsibility for clients. Former relationships with clients has never been difficult for me. In retrospect, though, it does seem that these relationships had at least as much to do with my needs as the needs of the client. My somewhat irreverent attitude toward the inability of social workers to offer meaningful alternatives to people oppressed by the system for which we are agents was seen as a denial of my moral obligations to help those in need, and, of course, as denigrating the social workers' professional skills. I maintain that my skill at attaining treatment plans far outweighs my ability to put such into action. I may be able to accurately predict what will happen under certain circumstances, but have no way of bringing about those circumstances deemed most favourable. Do we not delude ourselves into thinking that the relationship can be meaningful because we have nothing else to offer?

Workers Ref. to Structures

Of course, I have authority problems. I was criticised for resistance or denying the authority inherent in the social worker's role, and for being unwilling to accept the responsibility of senior staff in their role and ability for my work. My contention that my authority and the authority of senior staff were about the same thing - social control - were viewed as the result of unresolved [illegible] conflict. Local authority social workers must first recognise and accept the limits placed on them by the structure in which they work. I will not. My personal [illegible] my translatable into 'There are some of them [the clients] are stupid', which is a stuff clearly differentiated analysis of the situation. The [illegible] with me is I am not willing to wait [illegible] for beneficence from above. I don't think people who have power are likely to give it away with a flourish, and I am not willing to [illegible] for my own liberation [illegible] in the hope that [illegible] will [illegible].

There are a number of interesting points to be made about [illegible] my work. But I think it is [illegible] that they were [illegible] made known to me through [illegible] the time for 'poor quality work' was being made. My own [illegible] I found myself [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] with my work. After [illegible] [illegible] with the [illegible] management panel set up [illegible] my work, [illegible] began to be [illegible] specific. There are [illegible] to comment on this:

1. Do not assume the absence of criticism indicates approval, and
2. Seek definite statements from senior staff about your 'progress' and 'suitability', so you may know how the land lies.

You may be able in this way to avoid the experience I had of returning from a three-weeks leave to find my team leader had recommended my removal from the team.

The document prepared by the team leader for management listed some 'facts' about the way I handled (mishandled) three cases. Obviously, the evidence presented was totally insufficient to ask for my removal. What was the other evidence, the other reasons for her action? Several people told me that there was 'secret evidence' which would prove my incompetence. Generally though, people within the Department (other than my team mates) accepted the team leader's action as justified without any evidence, because of her radical, democratic reputation. It was in this atmosphere of the respected, well known team leader and the unknown trouble-making probationer, that the issues were clouded and individualised. For most people in the Department the conflict remains a clash of personalities, although, slowly, as I have direct contact with more of them, this perspective becomes more difficult to maintain.

This is a concrete example of the extreme danger of the individualist ideology. My team mates were united in their support of me, immediately and unwaveringly. But, the popularity of the team leader blurred their stand and, in fact, made it possible for their conviction to be explained away as 'adolescent acting out' by a 'young, immature, easily influenced team'. I would suggest that this explanation (interpretation) exemplifies the condescending, superior attitude management takes toward workers, and workers take toward clients.

The overall ideology of social work has to do with individual inadequacies, stresses, needs, conflicts, etc., both for the social worker and the client. To counteract this, there must be a commitment to a collective perspective which helps us rise above the morass of personal pathologies and gratifications. Individual radicals, whether clients or social workers, are eventually trapped by their own individuality, based as it is on ego fulfilment. Had I been without this sort of perspective, I could easily have been drawn into feeling personally attacked, responsible, inadequate, or - worse perhaps - personally powerful. While not denying my own authority as an individual, I would argue that it is my ideology which is powerful and sustaining, providing as it does an analysis of the situation in which we as individuals may find ourselves.

Putting this perspective to work, I questioned publicly. What is the task of the area social services team? How is our activity related to that task? What precisely are our statutory obligations? How and by whom are decisions made about priorities, resources, etc.? How can we justify intervention which we are without the tools to provide what is needed? Why should we feel guilty when we fail to accomplish what we are not equipped to do? Are we responsible for each other's work? What does the concept of accountability mean? Are some of us more responsible than others? If so, for what reason? Why are our opinions and requests disregarded by management? How do we get the resources we need? How do we share what we have with our clients? Do we need our clients more than they need us? These are familiar questions we have all asked ourselves, no doubt. We must ask them openly and often.

It was precisely this questioning which started my 'trouble' and raised doubts about my 'suitability'. Once these doubts began in the minds of senior staff, my work was scrutinised for proof of my incompetence. My co-workers, who were most likely to suffer from my 'incompetence' steadfastly maintained that my behaviour, work and attitudes are constructive, stimulating and productive. (They in fact had expected me to be much more 'militant'). Myths, long doubted by team members, began to be publicly exposed. Double messages, which tended to immobilise us as individuals began to be seen for what they were. Perhaps most important, the effect of these myths and confusions on the client and our dealings with the community, began to be understood.

Authority is the central theme in all of this, and rightly so. I believe that as social workers our experiences with authority are reflected in our dealings with clients. Each instance of deference without principle to higher authority, or

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avoidance of conflict for personal gain, corruption in all increases the likelihood of our learning the score from our clients. If we are alienated in our work situation, oppressed by a powerful bureaucracy, can we do other than pass this along? Being controlled, we in turn control our clients on behalf of our bosses. We have then fallen into the cultural pattern which supports the present social order.

Most of the mystification of social work is given to us for our being agents of the ruling class. The myth of democracy in the area team where I worked was a cover up for being controlled by a bureaucratic power structure of which the team leader is a part. I don't think we have any choice as socialists on the job. We expose authority for the oppressive, alienating force it is in our own experience, and then we work toward the authority of respect for the potential, power and worth of all individuals. Our experience and even our training as social workers gives us an option. We have only to put it into practice.

For cartoons thanks to:

Liz Mackie
Humpty Dumpty
Community Action
Workforce
Photo from Time Out

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- has moved: Now at 132 Great Western Road, London, W.11.
- still open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- visit or send 25p. for BITMAN newsletter - jammed-packed with useful information and visions - a regular bible and survival manual for active deviants.

ISLINGTON

The Shop Stewards state their case

Marie McNay

Colin Stroud

I suppose it was bound to happen. After all the rave reviews in the last few issues of Case Con, the super Social Services Department of Islington was due for a knocking. Too bad, perhaps, that most of the venom was directed at the small group of NALGO stalwarts left in the shop stewards' committee. It is true that mistakes were made and the stewards can quite fairly be blamed for many of the tactical errors, but Myra Garrett is still working in our Department. This result, we feel, is largely due to the efforts of NALGO and the Shop Stewards' Committee.

Briefly, to give a picture, the main events are as follows:

1. The Assistant Director recommended that Myra's appointment should not be confirmed.

2. The Union objected with a demand for a working party to be set up to look at probation and produce criteria for assessment.

3. The Director ignored this and stated that he was setting up an independent assessment panel.

4. The Union accepted the panel but stipulated that the working party criteria were to be used as terms of reference for the panel; the panel was also to include a trade union representative.

5. The demands were agreed to by the Director, when backed by a threatened one-day strike.

6. Myra was assessed and transferred to another team for an extended three months' probation.

The dispute was certainly one of the most difficult problems that the Shop Stewards' Committee has been called upon to deal with and, on reflection, we feel that it is worth going over some of the tactics so that other groups may benefit from our experience. But first we would like to dispel a myth that has received much exposure in Case Con in the past. NALGO is not a revolutionary organisation, it is reformist, and thus its strength is as strong as the solidarity and political awareness of its membership. The Islington branch is no exception. The struggles that have been won in the past have not been fought easily, but fortunately the superior efforts, more effectively organised and directed by the more radical social workers, have overcome the conservatism and apathy of probably the majority of our colleagues.

But let us not assume that the solidarity of the Department is always behind the Shop Stewards' Committee, nor that the Stewards manage the Department. We have gained a lot in Islington. The Shop Stewards' Committee is still the only truly representative voice of the Department and in this sense it has taken the initiative away from management. A 'staff meeting' has not been called by management since the committee came into being. But the Union still has to fight for its gains and canvass for its support.

During the struggle for Myra's job, we were faced with a membership split between its loyalty towards a popular Area Team Leader, well respected for her democratic ideas, and its duty towards a fellow union member whose employment was quite obviously being unfairly threatened. The dilemma was completed by the absurd fact that NALGO extends its membership and therefore its protection to both the staff and their managers.

Although early in the dispute the Shop Stewards decided, quite rightly, that in this instance the Area Team Leader was clearly adopting the role of management, we were nevertheless always aware that essentially this was a dispute between one member and another. Eventually, this extraordinary situation resulted in an almost complete polarisation of loyalties within the membership.

Thus, at all times, the Stewards, who surely have a duty to represent the feelings of their section of the membership, had to weigh up the support they felt there was for the actions that they recommended. Needless to say this often meant that more militant action was deferred in favour of a compromise that was acceptable to the membership. Moreover, it was very difficult to see what a satisfactory solution would be. Either way, it seemed that a useful member of the Department and the Union would resign. Consequently, although our goal was obviously to secure Myra's employment, the costs of this were potentially very high indeed.

One of the crucial factors in the issue was the right of management to sack workers and, in particular, to sack a probationer without any right of appeal, or indeed to allow her to know why her employment was not satisfactory. Since this was the existing practice and 'right' of management, the struggle was not about the Shop Stewards' Committee losing ground gained, but about management losing existing rights. The Director had previously been shown in a bad light by the Market Road issue and was very anxious to be seen to be able to handle his Department. He therefore took a very rigid line, which he may not have done otherwise, in order to try to preserve his power.

It is important to be aware of the pressures on all the parties involved to be able to measure potential strength. It is just as important to know how the Union operates in negotiations because, as a non-revolutionary organisation, its usual procedures for resolving conflict swing into operation. Whilst the Shop Stewards were talking strike tactics, the Branch Secretary was carrying out his usual role. This led to serious differences in what was thought to be agreed. The mistakes were on both sides but could have been avoided if a member of the Shop Stewards' Committee had accompanied the Branch Secretary on his visits to the Director. The difference in perspectives would certainly have been clearer. On the one hand, the Director was operating, appropriately in his terms, the very autocratic local government procedures, of which the Branch Secretary is a part. On the other hand, the Department and the Union were considering strike action - unique action in the history of the Department. The perspective is that when Union machinery is used in an issue of this kind, strike is a last resort, not a first. The Union machine seeks to resolve, often by compromise.

It would thus seem that, given the Shop Stewards' first resolution to recommend a one-day token strike to protest against the Assistant Director's decision, the Department was beginning to embark in activity that was new for most people. But feeling was high against the case statement made about Myra and it may have been possible to unite people to action on an unfair dismissal. It was a mistake of the Shop Stewards that they did not elect somebody to put their recommendation early in the first General Meeting that was held. The consequence was that there was no understanding of the basic principle and the meeting soon lost focus and attitudes became polarised. A call for strike later in the meeting was thrown out as were similar calls in subsequent meetings. It is probable that awareness of trade unionism is not yet at a level where action can be taken immediately in defence of a member. But not to spell out principles and test solidarity is to waste potential strength. From that point on, strength was diluted by the need to work out solutions, not principles.

One of the solutions was to set up a working party to "investigate probationary procedures and to establish satisfactory criteria." Since nobody denied the need for an assessment of Myra, then it made sense to find means of assessing that they were fair. The idea was to protect Myra from the whims of the assessor and was thus a seductive argument. It was the result, formulated by a group which included members from management, that was disastrous. It would seem that they were more concerned with improving standards (and thus widened the scope of the assessment) than with limiting the subjective element of the assessment. The point at issue is that probationers have no rights of appeal and to consider standards in relation to probation is to strengthen management's hand at arbitrary dismissal. Whilst standards may be a concern of management, it is not for trade unionists to confuse their roles and when performing a trade union function, forget their task of protection.

In relation to trade union consciousness, an ideal would be to have an organisation where Shop Stewards can easily communicate with the members they represent. In Islington, Shop Stewards still represent too many members and in this issue could not hold small meetings to get feed-back. The feed-back was somewhat haphazard and yet was a decisive factor in planning tactics. The system of communication is something we shall have to look at in the near future.

In this issue, the whole question of probation came into focus and was shown to need clarification. Subsequently the Branch has rejected the notion of assessment criteria on a motion formulated by the Shop Stewards' Committee. In fact, the concept of the probationary period itself was also thrown out and will be taken up at National level.

As far as Myra is concerned, it is a tribute to her that the situation was resolved at all. Her awareness in bringing the matter to the Union set off a very necessary process of investigation. There was much conflict about tactics and, having made the first mistake of not testing militancy, the potential for strike waned considerably. The most that seemed achievable was a threat of militancy to back demands. Outsiders to the struggle did not understand the split within the department and the slogans about political victimisation had no credibility whatsoever. It is a pity, but inevitable, that the polarisation became more extreme as the credibility gap widened.

It would be untrue to credit any particular incident with bringing about a resolution of this situation. Militant tactics were useful at some points but blatantly useless at others, only serving to alienate people. In the final analysis, given that all the events had facilitated an opportunity for a real result, Myra, as a competent social worker won the day herself. And don't let anyone kid himself, had she not been competent, she would not be here. We are a long way from protecting people who are unable to do the job!

The EC Comments

The struggle to keep Myra's job spotlighted the problems of organising at rank and file level within a Social Services Department, and showed in particular, how nebulous is the idea of militant strength without constant political groundwork.

The machinery of the Shop Stewards' Committee was there but it reflected to an alarming degree the confusion of social workers about the nature of their jobs and how to defend themselves. To any trade unionist, whether revolutionary, social democrat or conservative, the issue should have been clear throughout: Myra's job must be protected and the dismissal threat withdrawn.

From the lack of this perspective everything else followed. Without doubting the best subjective intentions of the Stewards, they easily became prey to the casework rationalisations, widespread fear of destruction of the Islington democratic mythology, and individualist role definitions. The central issue was clouded, despite militant appeals that it be recognised as a sacking which would test the real strength of the union.

The revolutionary minority insisted that if the majority was not conscious of what was happening over its collective head, then the Shop Stewards Committee should provide a militant lead which would clarify the situation and defend Myra Garrett.

The tactical strike call need not have been given over to negotiation. Where solidarity within the Department was tenuous at least, and where the Shop Stewards, through no direct fault of their own, had no rank and file grouping to relate any action to, can they seriously believe that without militant intervention, Myra would have been safe in her job?

The intervention of Case Con, the London Co-ordinating Committee of social workers in NALGO and the rallying call put across London, which culminated in the march to the Director's office, was vital to demonstrate how other local government workers felt, and to show the meaning of solidarity - the only way to prevent attacks on all of us.

To answer, very briefly, some specific statements made by Colin Stroud and Marie McNay, Case Con has never said that it considered NALGO to be in any way revolutionary; it is, like all unions, a defensive organisation. It is steeped in reactionary professionalism and is deferential to bosses, who are often part of its own hierarchy. Nevertheless, we work, organise and agitate in it.

Was it simply an inter-personal dispute? Surely the article by Myra Garrett herself, elsewhere in this issue, is the best answer to that. The polarisation all along was produced by the way in which management and the team leader, in her management position, acted. It was a political victimisation precisely to the extent that Myra approached her job with a politically conscious method. And this did threaten the team leader, whose own radical reputation and the veneer of democratic participation in the team were at stake. The people are the agents (whatever the ends) of the politics, and Myra's approach brought into stark relief at area level and above, the powerlessness of the social worker in the field to deliver the goods. The resources are everywhere controlled and the hierarchy everywhere repeats itself. The client remains just that - client. To ask for reform of this status quo is to demand a revolutionary alternative.

"Either way a useful member would resign." This negates the straight point of principle, that a member whose work is attacked for the team leader's or anyone else's sake, must be defended to the full.

The assessment. This maelstrom would have been avoided had Myra's competence been assumed openly from the outset, by her protectors. The militant line (that these charges were a frame-up) did not get the backing sought.

However, lest the Islington Shop Stewards feel Case Con is only criticising them for vacillation, we must say that they felt isolated for the same reason as the militants. I.e. the lack of grass roots consciousness, within a departmental structure busily consolidating itself at the top, and the absence of an ongoing forum for education and mobilisation. The lesson of Islington is not only that we must support the rank and file organisation within the union, but we must involve ourselves in its creation. It is also that the tasks of bringing people together in a political, educational network which can continually combat the deference and apathy induced by the hierarchies for which we labour, must be consolidated.

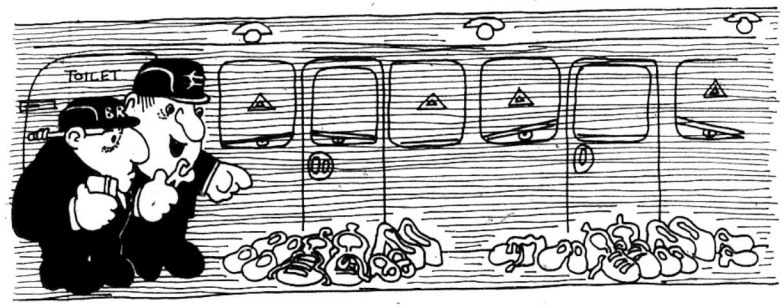
For the record, let us state that Myra Garrett still has her job as a social worker in Islington, transferred to another team with her case-load and given 3 months more probation in a face-saving exercise by management. Despite the terrible unevenness of events and abilities to defend her job and the subjection of Myra to an assessment tribunal (notwithstanding consistent opposition from a minority of militants), it is undoubtedly the best attainable partial victory. The Shop Stewards, to their credit, rejected the whole notion of union involvement in criteria of assessment at the subsequent emergency branch meeting, and it is now NALGO policy in Islington to work towards the abolition of probationary periods.

This is obviously only the beginning. Probation remains with us. We must not allow a situation where someone who has already been with another local authority for 6 months or longer (as Myra had) be subjected to another probation. Myra is still on probation - a technicality that can no longer be enforced, but we nevertheless condemn it out of hand. Trade unionists must always defend fellow workers, and say no to all sackings.

OUR MAN ON THE FOOTPLATE

The latest venture into 'far-reaching community-based social intervention' comes from the North-East. Perhaps because Leeds and Bradford Corporations are afraid that Beeching style cuts may affect transport between the two cities, they seem to have come up with a novel scheme to subsidise the railway line, particularly late at night.

The lack of suitable temporary accommodation in the area is notorious and sources close to the authorities suggest that they have taken to issuing travel warrants to homeless families to cross the boundary lines from Leeds to Bradford or vice versa. British Rail were unable to comment as to whether their rolling stock was now being officially classified as welfare accommodation under the 1948 National Assistance Act, but it may be that we are now to witness a national shuttle service (based on work permits if Nicholas Stacey has his way) on the lines so familiar from the example of the East African Asians. Who said Yorkshire was behind the times?



— IT'S THE MIDNIGHT WELFARE SPECIAL

News has reached us that a largish mental hospital near the cider country now appears to have a new policy of refusing any voluntary admissions outside normal working hours. The innocent rabbits of the site, after whom the hospital is named, would of course deny any suspicion that such an edict, if proved to exist, was in any way connected with the regular payment for domiciliary visits by consultants. Alcoholics are, of course, a group significantly affected, especially as the Government perversely refuses to alter the licensing laws so that they can become blotto by 5.00 and the end of office hours. Angered by the fact that two of their number now have form (i.e. have been sectioned) - victims, it appears, of a purely bureaucratic decision, they are now rumoured to be petitioning local police to issue a section 136 next time the senior consultant, known locally as Dr. Johnny Walker, is stopped for driving with the alcohol content of his blood above the legal level.

ORGANISE!

YOU'RE STRONGER than you think

Carole Dale

At the last Case Con Conference, in November, 1972, a resolution was passed urging all Case Con supporters employed by local authorities to work towards the establishment of Union-based Departmental Committees, as a first step towards building a national rank and file movement in the public service sector.

Whilst many supporters may have been enthused by reports of the Islington Shop Stewards' Committee and developments in one or two other London boroughs, some confusion and bewilderment was expressed on exactly how to bring about such developments, particularly in well-established and very reactionary branches.

The following history of events in Tower Hamlets is aimed at highlighting possible difficulties and pitfalls in the setting up of a Departmental Committee and it is to be hoped that people who see the task as impossible in their own areas may receive some encouragement.

Towards the end of 1970, before Seebohm re-organisation, the new Director of Social Services called for the setting up of a working party (consisting of members of the Children's, Welfare, Mental Health and Home Help Departments) to put forward proposals for a 'Staff Consultative Group' and a 'staff suggestions and problems scheme'. This working party held a series of meeting, both before and after re-organisation and reported in the summer of 1971. Whilst making recommendations for regular monthly meetings of a staff consultative group, to contain representatives from each section of the Department, it remained extremely vague about the projected nature and content of these meetings; made no mention of the role of trade unions in staff/management/employer relationships and ignored the question of accountability of the management team to the staff via the Committee - although it implied accountability of the Committee to management! In fact, as one might have expected of a group set up at the request of the Director, the proposed committee showed every indication of becoming a tool of management.

Unaware of the gift which was being offered to him, the Director took no action on the working party report and, in October, 1971, a second working party, this time initiated by individuals in the Department, produced a document criticising the original proposals and presenting an alternative structure for a Staff Consultative Committee. This document highlighted pitfalls in the original on the lines briefly mentioned above, emphasising the anomalies involved in separating internal departmental policy issues from trade union issues; the importance of taking a total perspective of the Department's work (i.e. not restricting it to questions of social work policy); and stressing the committee's role in controlling its relationship with management.

The alternative proposals stated that the committee should be trade union based - the NALGO Departmental Representatives and representatives of other unions in the Department to be automatic members, who would then have the right to co-opt as many members as they felt appropriate - preferably on the basis of ensuring representation from each section of the Department. Management should consult the committee on all matters of policy, organisation, etc., which specifically affected the Social Services Department and the committee would have the right to initiate such discussions as well as taking up problems affecting individual members of staff. Management would be allowed to attend Departmental meetings called by the committee, but would be excluded from committee meetings.

The Director's reaction remained one of silence and he refused to respond to requests that one or other set of proposals be implemented or at least discussed at a full Departmental meeting.

It is here that we can see how vital it is that Departmental Committees are both union-based and initiated through the union machinery.

The members of neither working party were in a position to push their proposals with management, since, apart from their membership of the working groups, they held no status other than that of individual employees - and it might have been only too easy for them to accept that (as with other working parties, so familiar in local authorities), the implementation, or otherwise, of proposals would be dependant on the whim of the Director/management team.

However, during 1971, work had been going on among NALGO members in the Department. This had been chiefly initiated by one NALGO Action Group member's efforts in firstly establishing the allowed quota of NALGO Departmental Representatives and then visiting various sections to find people (in our case seven) who would be prepared not only to stand as Reps, but also to work hard towards raising trade union consciousness in the Department and developing members' potential militancy. Having got ourselves elected, and as a result achieved a voice on the branch Executive, we began to meet regularly to discuss issues which should be raised with the branch.

The Case Con group also took its part in stressing the importance of NALGO, and, since most of the Reps were also involved with Case Con, the two groups were able to work together and discover further members of the Department who were prepared to stand as officers on the Executive. (At the time of writing, the branch Magazine Editor, Membership Secretary, Local Correspondent and Assistant Branch Secretary are all members of the Social Services Department).

As a result of this work, members of the Department who had shown no previous interest in NALGO, and many of whom could still not be described as militants, have begun to attend branch meetings and to see the union as the machine through which they can work towards improvement both of their own working conditions and the service to their clients.

The stalemate over staff consultation was therefore seen as an obvious issue to be taken up by the Departmental Reps, who raised it on the Executive. It is important to note that discussion of this issue on the Executive broadened the question to affect all Departments in the local authority and proposals were passed for a structure for consultation which could be applied in any Department. The NALGO proposals were similar in spirit to those of the second working party, and were circulated to all Tower Hamlets NALGO members.

The Reps then secured a meeting with the Director, who eventually agreed to call a full Departmental meeting to discuss the proposals of the two working parties, but said that the NALGO proposals would be 'out of order'.

The meeting was finally called in August 1972, following the Director's having circulated his own personal recommendations for a 'Staff Liaison Committee' (much stress was laid on the fact that he "had been advised" not to use the word 'Consultative!), and he asked people to complete a form saying whether or not they agreed with his suggestions.

About 130 people attended the meeting (only one-sixth of the total employees in the S.S.D. - a sign of the apathy that arises out of classic Seebohm factory organisation?), but when the Director flatly refused either to allow discussion of the NALGO proposals or to vacate the Chair, over half those present spontaneously left the hall, and the meeting was therefor unable to reach any decisions.

Having 'gone through the normal channels' the Reps decided to go ahead with setting up their Departmental Representatives Committee. The Director continued in his refusal to recognise the existence of the Committee, saying it contravened Council Standing Orders! And did all in his power to raise opinion against it.

By this time frustration and depression was at a very high level in the Department, much of it due to complete lack of communication between various sections and management. The Departmental Committee therefore circulated a document - 'Crisis of Confidence' analysing the current situation and making a number of demands on the Council, the first and most essential of which was recognition of

the Committee. A Departmental meeting decided that a resolution be put to the branch stating that industrial action would be taken unless 'satisfactory' discussion could be initiated with the Council within one month of the branch meeting.

Before the branch meeting had taken place, the Chief Executive contacted the branch Secretary requesting an 'informal' meeting between himself, the head of Establishments, the Director & Deputy Director of S.S.D. and representatives from the NALGO Executive, Staff Side and Social Services.

At this meeting the Chief Executive agreed that our Committee should be recognised by the Director and conceded our request that this be put in writing, and that we had the right of access to the Director at regular intervals and on request. He also confirmed that we had every right to consultation on internal Departmental policy, together with reps from the other unions involved.

Meanwhile, a union/management working group is being set up to produce a detailed structure for consultation throughout all departments. (It will be up to us to make sure that this is no sell out).

The threat of industrial action has been temporarily removed, but I think it is worth noting that this was by no means an empty threat and the fieldwork staff were unanimous in their agreement to strike if all else failed, although many were anxious to ensure that all other channels had been fully exploited.

We still have opposition from certain sections of the Departments, particularly those who dislike seeing NALGO being 'political' (i.e. acting as a trade union) and it is clear that much work has to be done to break down the suspicion among residential workers. It is obviously vital that the Committee shows itself to have teeth in its negotiation with management and thereby break down distrust and gain credibility.

I have deliberately avoided painting too rosy a picture of activity in our Department since the intention has been to show that we have not always been - and are still not - a Department crammed full of radicals (neither, I suspect, has Islington) and that, for a new and inexperienced trade unionist/Case Con supporter joining Tower Hamlets Social Services Department only 2 to 3 years ago, the task of forming a Departmental Committee would have appeared more than formidable.

It is also clear that we still have much to learn and our activity amongst field staff has been dangerously at the expense of other sections.

It will also become obvious to those reading this article and the contributions about Myra Garrett and the Islington Shop Stewards, that achieving such a Committee is only a first step towards gaining a strong and militant voice for the rank and file, and that is essentially important for us - possibly through the Case Con group - to keep open a continuous discussion on strategy and tactics so that we do not allow management to lead us up blind alleys, nor do we become just another power structure merely increasing the alienation of the workers from the Department's centres of power. Reps must show themselves fully accountable to all their members.

Social workers are notorious for their lack of consciousness as workers and therefore as trade unionists. We must make clear that it is the lack of accountability of management to workers which allows for the creation of ill-planned policies. It is the workers at ground level who have to bear the frustrations of carrying out those policies. And, most important of all, it is the 'clients' who suffer most as a result.

It is futile to talk about supporting or initiating 'client'/grass root organisations whilst we ourselves have no say in the policy making processes of our own organisation. Even the least radical social workers are concerned about the inadequacies of the service they offer - and I don't mean time to do casework. We must continually point out the connections between individual responsibility to 'clients' and collective responsibility for the policies which affect them.

The creation of Departmental Committees, in Social Services Departments in particular, can never be seen as the be and end all of our activity. It does not solve the myriad problems and conflicts that we face in our day to day work - our duties under the Mental Health and Children's Acts, etc., etc. - and is no substitute for a real socialist analysis of these problems. What it does offer, however, is the possibility of the type of collective strength essential if we are to make realistic attempts to challenge the social control nature of our jobs.

Mental Patients' Union

Liz Durkin

A few weeks ago a pilot committee for a Mental Patients' Union produced a pamphlet, 'The Need for a Mental Patients' Union', which stated that psychiatry is one of the most subtle methods of class repression in an advanced capitalist society. By the isolation of the oppressed victim of social and economic pressures as a patient, the psychiatrists, agents of the capitalists, enemies of change, proceed to con the patient into believing that it is he who needs changing, not the system. The pamphlet says: "We feel that patient power can be mobilised effectively against the psychiatrist and the mental hospital - agents and agency of the ruling class - through a politically organised mental patients' union".

On 21st March, over 100 mental patients and ex-patients, from hospitals ranging from Marlborough Day, to Broadmoor and Knapsbury, unanimously agreed to unite to fight against their opression. They soon agreed that only patients and ex-patients could vote at the meeting and be full members of the Union. There would, however, be an associate membership without voting rights. One patient advocated close links with social workers as the 'experts'. The reply was: "You've got an inferiority complex, love!". One member clarified the point: "Specialists get a nice big, fat screw out of the things that afflict you, which are the result of the society we live in...". About the presence of social workers at meetings, one patient said: "If a working class man came into a meeting, you wouldn't tell him to fuck off, but if a social worker came, you would."

The meeting agreed that relatives should be excluded from full membership, as it was so often the relatives who put patients 'inside'.

The meeting made a declaration of intent, which has since been expanded by the working party. Statements include -

"The Mental Patients' Union will represent mental patients wherever they desire to be represented. We fight to make what rights of representation formally exist effective and to secure rights of representation wherever they do not exist."

"We demand the abolition of compulsory treatment, and the abolition of irreversible treatments, such as E.C.T., brain surgery and specific drugs."

"We demand higher standards in the testing of 'treatments' before use on patients. We demand that patients should have the effective right to refuse to be experimented on."

"We call for the abolition of compulsory hospitalisation."

"We will fight for the abolition of censorship by hospital authorities, in particular of phone call and letter censorship, and the abolition of restriction of hospital visiting rights."

The Union is receiving, daily, letters from patients in hospital complaining about conditons. They give evidence of solitary confinement used as punishment, and the enforced signing of consent forms for treatment while heavily drugged. Others express anger at the exploitation of their labour in hospital, carefully disguised as 'therapy', and they ask for the support of the Trade Union Movement in their fight for wage rates applicable to the job.

Patients complain about the myth of voluntary treatment and hospitalisation and mention how they are detained on so called 'open wards' by heavy drug use, locked doors, loss of clothing, withdrawal of money and the threat of imposition of a 'section'. Patients have also complained about the censorship of patients' magazines by hospital staff.

The Union welcomes support and help from Case Con supporters, especially those in mental institutions.

For donations and the pamphlet (1op.) write: Mental Patients' Union, c/o Flat 1, 13 Christchurch Road, London, N.8.

BASW DISCOVERS CAPITALISM

"In the last 100 years social work has developed dramatically in response to the needs arising from the interaction of demographic change, industrialisation, mechanisation and technology." (Social Work Today IV.1. April 1973).

Now 3 years old, BASW is beginning to take a cautious look at the world around it, but members will have been amazed to find the centre spread of their new-look organ devoted to the discovery of an inalienable element of social work, namely "to protect and promote the interests of the individual as a person in his own right."

Hardly a revolutionary statement perhaps, but quite sufficient to undermine most social work as it is practised today. Can we now expect Brillites openly to challenge all the industrial and bureaucratic structures, from factories to courts, which conspire to keep both ourselves and our clients in our allotted places? Hardly likely.

The signs of denial and other infantile defences (sic) are all too prevalent and the rest of the paper (largely meaningless platitudes about helping the individual as society adjusts itself) bears so little relation to its conclusion that one can only suppose such a subversive sentiment to have been included by accident. Nevertheless, we are pleased to grant BASW the opportunity to advertise its discovery in Case Con.

The debacle over call-out pay has been rapidly followed by no more than a "sharply worded" letter to the Government in reply to the infamous circular 2/73, directing implementation of Butterworth's salary recommendations. The letter certainly reflects some of BASW's hurt pride that professionals should accept lower salary and status and that persons "of the necessary calibre" may not be attracted into social work (and BASW). It completely ignores the explicit message of the circular that the purpose of the cuts is to control inflation.

BASW, however, did enjoy the influential backing of the Daily Mail on the grounds that "social workers take the burden of the nation's conscience", and proudly reproduced this.

Whilst calling for the withdrawal of the circular, BASW threatens no action: why? Because it is impotent to take any. The only effective way to fight Butterworth is to link with NAPO Action in our different areas and fight through NALGO, particularly as the circular refers specifically to the implementation of national agreements.

BASW's poverty group has lobbied Parliament, as yet with little noticeable effect, and the Association's credibility has taken yet a further battering with the failure of their "courteous, considerate and thoughtful" discussion with Cumberland Council, aimed at achieving the secondment of Anne Canham, an experienced senior social worker, for professional training. If BASW cannot even achieve success in this field it must disband now and stop attempting to replace the organisation of social workers with elite professional negotiations.

If BASW had defended Myra Garrett (itself unlikely!), she would now be out of a job.

Nigel Baswit

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THE IDEAL HOMES MYTH

Mike Downing

"When the demolitions are so extensive that the people have to depart, then the consequence is that new slums are created elsewhere.

"There are demolitions for clearance purposes undertaken by owners for the improvement of their property, or by the local authority under certain Acts, viz. for the purpose of erecting artisans' dwellings in the place of the buildings removed. There are demolitions for the widening and improvement of public streets; there are those which take place in consequence of the erection of public buildings such as board schools; and there are those carried out by railway companies in the construction and enlargement of their lines and stations.

"Demolitions ... have been accompanied with the severest hardship to the very poor, increasing overcrowding and the difficulty of obtaining accommodation, and sending up rents accordingly."

(Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes, 1884-85)

The paragraph above, like much of the report from which it comes, could almost have been written yesterday. Indeed, the 1965 Milner Holland Report on Housing in Greater London contained similar phrases, e.g. "the progress of slum clearance intensifies the competition for living space, since it must cater for numbers of households substantially larger than the numbers of dwellings to be demolished, and it may also encourage a further subdivision of existing households into smaller and more numerous units."

The absence of any full scale Government enquiry into housing since 1885 does not mean that we lack reliable information about the extent and nature of the housing crisis in London and other major population centres. Since Milner Holland, a number of studies (e.g. Greve et al. 'Homelessness in London' (1971); Glastonbury, 'Homeless near a Thousand Homes' (1971); a series of 'Shelter' reports, and, most recently, the 1971 Census report for London) have provided a mass of statistical analysis and individual case histories on homelessness and housing squalor, as well as the failure of Government legislation and local authority services to provide any remedy.

Social workers find that housing problems take up an ever growing proportion of their work, not only in the 'stress areas' like Inner London but also in 'affluent' authorities like Hertfordshire. Increasingly the housing issue is forcing many of them to examine and reject the traditional way in which social workers helped to disguise the real problem by diagnosing the problems of their homeless clients in terms of personal inadequacy. The Greve report quoted comments described as "not so rare that they could be ignored", from social workers' reports on families in temporary accommodation, e.g. "Both are debauched and degraded; far from being a good family". "Well spoken woman; better type than usually met with". "Standards are in every way noticeably low; a typical Irish family". "Husband not to be admitted; needs a short, sharp lesson".

The style and the sentiments will be familiar to most readers. What alternatives are there for those who reject this, see housing and homelessness as political issues and are looking for means by which they as social workers can take political action? In the past two years action has ranged from petitions of support for squatters (Southwark) to open identification with squatters (Islington) and a declared policy of refusing admissions to care because of homelessness (Hackney). Others have sought, through NALGO branches, to give support to those councils who a few months ago were declaring that they would not implement that Housing Finance Act, or (since these attempts failed) to organise non implementation of the Act by Social Services Departments. Recently a number of social workers have given their support to the Homeless Action Campaign (HAC); indeed its chairman is a local authority social worker.

HAC was formed last month as an "umbrella under which all organisations and individuals can unite for both local and national action." (press statement, 28.3.73). It has organised its first demonstration - against the Ideal Homes Exhibition on March 31st. It promises to organise "large scale action for homes." Apart from the march on Olympia, this has so far taken the form of a letter to the Polish Ambassador expressing "surprise and disappointment" that Poland "which is progressive regarding basic human needs such as housing" should have a stand at the Ideal Homes Exhibition. If this kind of futile exercise is to be typical of its general level of activity, HAC will not get far. The trouble with 'umbrella' organisations is that they have to be vague about their aims and methods. C.N.D. is the classic example of this. It mobilised more support than any similar campaign since the war, but never came remotely near to achieving its objectives, very largely because it was never able to connect the simple issue of 'the bomb' with the whole military, economic and social system which the bomb sustained.

Similarly HAC will not achieve more than very minor reforms so long as it is focussed solely on homelessness, and there does seem to be some confusion in the literature it has published so far as to whether it is a campaign for the homeless (where its aims are specific and limited) or on the wider issue of housing (where the aims are vague, e.g. 'land for people not for profit').

The same problem is posed by the publication recently of two works by one of HAC's leading members, Ron Bailey, viz. 'The Squatters' (Penguin) and 'The Grief Report' (Shelter). A lot can be learned from both of these on the possibilities and limitations of militant action, on the housing issue, though Bailey does not, except in the most general way, discuss these points. The strength of both is in narrative detail and description. 'The Squatters' is essentially a factual account of the squatting movement of the late 1960's. The best chapters are the early ones, especially those describing the Redbridge affair, but the book suffers from long delayed publication, which means that most recent developments cannot be included. More fundamentally, it suffers from a failure to consider in any detail the wider implications of squatting and its use as a tactic for winning more than very limited aims.

Bailey argues, rightly, that "Probably the most important development of the squatting movement is that working people have taken control of their own lives, to a small extent at least." (p. 189) and in doing so have won valuable concessions from Government and local authorities on the use of empty properties. Two paragraphs later, however, he writes: "While land values increase because of property speculation, councils are hamstrung in any attempt to acquire land for housing, and while interest rates continue to rise, councils continue to have to pay out enormous sums to borrow money to finance house building. Even the most willing council in the world is therefore at the mercy of this system of private speculation, private money lending and property development."

The only lesson he draws from this is that, "Private developers who build luxury flats and office blocks while people go homeless" and "Councils which build houses at unsubsidised rents which result, in some areas in new council houses standing empty for years because the rents are too high" should be targets for squatters. There is nothing to suggest how the squatters, the badly housed and the homeless, who are to be "the basis for a new radical housing movement" can become a political force which will not just publicise injustice and win small concessions, but confront and defeat the system which sustains the property developers, money lenders, etc.

Political groups, inside and outside the squatting movement, who have raised these questions are dismissed. The

London Street Commune, which staged the Piccadilly and Endell Street squats is seen as having "changed the public image of squatting and hindered the development of a mass squatting campaign among the working class." That particular episode may not have achieved much, but the point is that Bailey's treatment of it demonstrates a manervis obsession with cultivating a 'public image', and this has never created a mass movement. Elsewhere in the book he attacks "the worst kind of anarchists" whose militant tactics apparently prevented the "official squatting movement from reaching agreements with local authorities". Anyone or organisation who opposed the principles or tactics of the squatting movement, whether councillors and local officials or left wing groups, is attacked, but all seem to have acted out of mindless mendacity for all the insight we are given as to what their opposition was based on.

'The Grief Report' has the same strengths and weaknesses. A mass of evidence has been accumulated to show how central and local government agencies, especially Social Services Departments, are evading their legal obligations, mainly the 1948 National Assistance Act, and how the homeless are degraded and humiliated by these supposedly caring agencies. As such it is a valuable piece of research, but it fails (even more than 'The Squatters') to face the real issue.

In the chapter 'Who or What is to Blame' the first paragraph does identify "the basic cause of homelessness" as "the national housing situation" but this "situation" is just stated as a series of "factors" which "lead to families becoming homeless", rather than a result of housing (public as well as private) being at the mercy of the money and property markets, which is referred to (however briefly) in 'The Squatters'. Having admitted that homelessness is, to some extent, a product of forces beyong the control of local authorities, the 'Grief Report' states:

"But the causes of homelessness are irrelevant as a justification for default of a legal duty to provide decent accommodation for the homeless."

As far as it goes, this is true. Local authorities should be hammered as hard as possible for the way they treat the homeless, but the causes of homelessness are far from irrelevant to any understanding of how homelessness can be eliminated, rather than just a better deal given to those who are homeless. The Directors of Social Services had a point (however disreputable their motives) in criticising the 'The Grief Report' for not tackling the real problem of shortage of local authority housing. The message that the Report appears to convey is that the solution lies in local authorities being forced to apply the law. This emphasis on legal solutions mystifies rather than enlightens. If the National Assistance Act was universally applied, in spirit and letter, homeless people might get more humane treatment, but the root causes of homelessness would not be changed one iota.

Organisations like Shelter cannot help much here either. As Ron Bailey himself pointed out in 'The Squatters':

"Most authorities insist on the right to nominate families to be helped, with the result that they give the housing associations those families they would have to rehouse anyway ...

... In this way the charities, by doing the job that the authorities have a statutory obligation to carry out, are assisting them in their failure to provide houses."

What Bailey does not face up to is whether the squatting associations themselves must inevitably fall into the same trap, by becoming dependent for their success on agreements with local authorities are they not also tied to a system they may dislike?

'The Grief Report' concludes by giving details of cases where Shelter pressure succeeded in getting accommodation for two homeless families;

"You may ask what would have happened to these families if Berkshire, Southwark, and Hertfordshire had not been pressurised into carrying out their legal duties towards them.

"We did.

"Shelter had to take sides."

A recent eviction of a homeless family squatting in almost derelict property acquired by the Family Housing Association shows how charities are as much a part of the system (and its victims) as local authorities. The F.H.A., whose fifth successful eviction this was, received a £10,000 grant from Shelter last year. Miss E. Webb, Housing Director of the F.H.A. explained the action saying: "I have no sympathy at all with the kind of people who just want to run a commune and do not believe in private property. There is a difference between the deserving poor and the undeserving." (Guardian 21.3.73). Octavia Hill could not have expressed it better.

Shelter officially endorsed the eviction, a spokesman pointing out:

"There is a difference between the eviction policies of reputable housing associations like ours and a commercial company's use of eviction as a regular tool of management." The evicted family were no doubt grateful for this clarification of policy.

The point of reporting all this is not just to make a cheap point at Shelter's expense but to demonstrate that, operating as they do, they have no alternative but to apply the same criteria of 'deserving' and 'undeserving', etc., as the local authorities they attack. This is another way that "Shelter had to take sides."

The housing shortage is not just a residue of the industrial revolution, nor is it caused by mean and incompetent local authorities. It is there because money lenders, landowners and builders make huge profits from housing. Local authorities borrow money for housing on the open market, mainly from banks and insurance companies. This means that a council house costing £5000 to build eventually costs £25,000, because of the high rate of interest on borrowing.* About 85% of local authorities' expenditure on housing goes on interest charges (65%) and loan repayments (20%) and the proportion is rising. With subsidies removed by the Housing Finance Act, it is small wonder that local authorities are building progressively fewer houses.

Landowners too are doing well. Over 100 new property millionaires have been created since the war - people like Harry Hyams who built Centrepoint in 1966 at a cost of £5 million. Having stood empty since, its value is now estimated at over £20 million.

The three biggest building firms (Costain, Wimpey and Laing) increased their net trading profits from over £10 million in 1969 to nearly £17 million in 1972, when they were allegedly being ruined by the building strike.

In the last few months the Government has pushed up the cost of housing for tenants by abolishing subsidies and forcing them to pay 'fair', i.e. market rent. Now it has given a free handout of £15 million to building societies, whose total assets increased from £3,166 million in 1960 to £15,332 million in 1972, when the total value of mortgages they gave was £3,649 million.

Squatters, tenants' associations and the Homeless Action Campaign can do little to change this situation. The temptation for them is to avoid the big issues (where they are powerless) and concentrate on minor points. As the Wandsworth Community Workshop argued in their housing pamphlet, part of which was published in Case Con 6 (Jan. 1972):

"Let's not kid ourselves that a few militant tenants are going to kill the Rents Bill, stem the middle class invasion and generally solve the housing problem. Only a genuinely socialist government would be able to do that..."

"This leaves two important targets where tenants can realistically expect this to have an effect: the local council and the rent assessment machinery."

The mistake here is to make a complete separation between achieving the final solution, socialism, about which we can apparently do nothing, and the small gains which can be won from local authorities. Community groups who adopt this strategy become no more radical (and usually achieve less) than the orthodox labour politicians they so despise. Homelessness and the housing problem will not be solved so long as groups fighting for radical change in this field do not widen their horizons beyond local action, which must be linked to the wider struggle to create a political movement capable of mobilising the whole working class, to end the system which creates the housing problem.

'POST - AGITPROP'

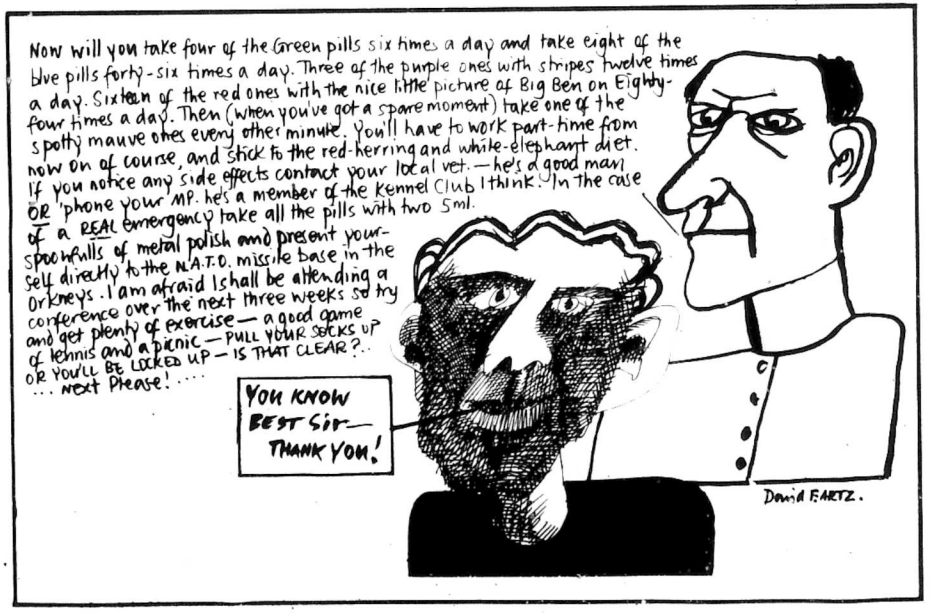
Agitprop has closed but all of its work is being continued.

RISING FREE (117 Kings Cross Road, London, W.C.1. (01-837-9182) will continue pamphlet distribution. List available. Also sorting out Agitprop's enormous library of pamphlets and papers.

BETHNAL ROUGE, run by a gay collective have taken over 248 Bethnal Green Road, E.2., and will maintain bookshop - send for list.

WOMEN'S BOOKS (11 Waverley Road, Bristol 6) have taken over Agitprop's 'Women's List'. Comprehensive list of books, pamphlets and journals.

All of these need your support. So visit or send for lists.



Letter from the Dole Queue

Colin Fletcher

Last summer two men came to work at my house. One used a compressor and the other shovelled away the debris. The man on the jack-hammer was middle aged with five children. The other was slightly younger with four children. After an hour of fast work we stopped for tea. The older man was obviously impressed with his labourer. He asked if the younger man wanted a job. And then he said: "No, I suppose you are better off on the dole?". The younger man agreed, with a smile, and we went back to work.

I thought that the older man was a little saddened by the truth he had spoken. He could appreciate that the younger man had 'good money' on the dole and supplemented this with a few untaxed pounds a day. Being in work myself, I, too, accepted the younger man's opinion.

Some months later I finished work. For a while I tried to get by on savings. But after three months I wanted some sort of peace of mind. I went to the 'Security' and told them my circumstances. Already mental changes were taking place. My will to concentrate slackened. And then things started 'getting on top of me'. I let them pile up. I could feel that all the pressures on me were justified. You might say that I am becoming bitter - for the first time in my life.

Yesterday I determined to make some sense of my feelings. I wrote a composite letter. By composite I mean that I amalgamated the experiences of those who are on the dole with that of my own. I felt, at the time of writing, a general person; a representative dole dweller. Obviously the sentiments do not apply equally to everybody or even especially to myself. They are, rather, all that I could muster on dole day. Many tones are evident in this letter and the style may be incoherent in parts. Yet I now include most of what I wrote as an attempt to depict a particular mental-set.

Above all I mean to convey the confusion of being on the dole. Above all I would like more people to grasp what can happen when a human spirit crashes and something snaps inside. That which crashes is resilience, the buoyancy of being. That which snaps is resistance - which is almost the beingness of being. It is a mystery to me as to the way a moment in one's life brings forth a muttering of truth. And yet, as I have said, I can only claim that the letter which follows was true yesterday.

Dear Sir,

I am going to sign on this afternoon.
I am waiting to sign on this afternoon.
I am obsessed with signing on.

I know I hate it really. But it's good collecting my money and milk token.
I can't get it straight at all. What I know will not flatten and make a sandwich.

I am out of work
There is no work for me
I do not have to look for work
I do not want to go to interviews and explain myself
I am acting daft but I'm not
Nobody likes dole dwellers
When you are on the dole it's permanent
You get paid for doing no work
You have to do work on the side to stay sane and get pin money
If you drink or smoke that's all you can do well.

I am a failure
I was not always a failure
I am hiding from telling the same story
I don't want a job
I get up slowly and enjoy my breakfast
My minileisness is actual brain damage
I am becoming smaller and smaller
If it wasn't for the dole my wife and children would die of hunger and cold
I can't make money any more

I am not a regular yet. There's still supposed to be hope. When I go to sign on this afternoon I might be given a slip to go round the other side. I might not get my money before I've been. They might have got a job as a £23 van driver or an £18 labourer. I'll have to take it. Well, I'll go for an interview and try to be 'unsuitable'. Being stupid and keen to do it.

But perhaps I couldn't do the job anyway. I'm not as strong as I was. I could get into it alright, especially if I was on my own.

I don't want noise: a bloody factory would drive me spare. They won't give me a factory job though, they're only for women now unless you know a manager.

When I sign on the young girl won't bother to look at my hands. You have to clean yourself up a bit. All the time my looks are slipping. I've come to enjoy my own smell. Degenerate, dissolute. There you are! My thoughts keep running away. Even I do not want to listen to myself.

I've been thinking about going away for work but it seems to be the same everywhere. I'm better off here. At least I've got somewhere to live. I'm better off than the blokes on the sick too. They've got eyes and knee caps missing, twisted legs and arms. They're not employed anymore. They are permanent sick. They are 'pegging' for life. They get their 'subsidy' without having to try for work. Some of them live in caravans. They are worse than gypsies. At least gypsies have silver buckets and horses.

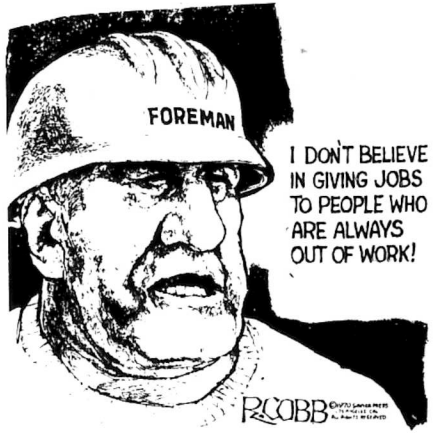
But I still don't seem to be keeping everything together. I'm fed up with the wife and child. I've got nothing to say. I just want to sit down and have a warm. There's nothing happening so why bother?

I'll have to steal today. If I am going to get in the wife's good books I must steal some food and take more home. If you steal you save double somehow. You've got the money that it cost and the money you didn't spend. If they don't send me for a job I'll nick some liver from Fine Fare.

The trouble is I look like a tramp. The assistants could guess if they were only half-awake. I'll comb my hair in the john at the Ivy Bush. I must get to look lively. My spirits are dragging on the floor and I can't liven them.

Well alright I admit it; I'm sorry for myself. So would you be. I tried at the last job but my face didn't fit. Honestly I did. That bloody gaffer was the living end. He picked on me and I was doing most of the work. I asked for my cards because I'd had enough. It's easily done. You try your best but your mates just don't stick by you. Anyway I'm fed up.

And I'm fed up having to apologise for myself. I'm sorry I'm on the dole but I don't want your bloody pity. I haven't got any rights as it is. You can't keep a wife and child on £13. You could if you had no rent and grew food and bought all your clothes at a jumble sale. Can't you see? Nobody's interested in my money problems. Everyone's got a special one of their own. I'd like an Afghan rug but it's a month's dole.



You haven't got the right to ask for a dole increase; that's for sure. I've heard there's a union for us. It wouldn't have a chance here. We all just take what we are given and get off. You can drink half of it the same day. I'd like to see their faces if I said I'd joined the dole union. But I wouldn't. I bet they'd throw me out. Anyway they give you what you are due and you just spend it.

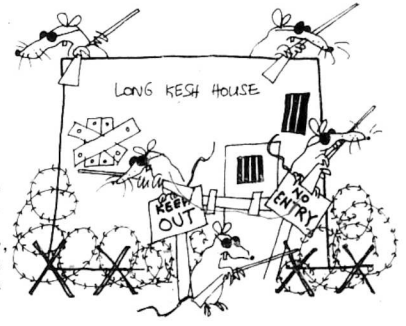
I still can't get over it. Going each week at the same time with my card. Signing here, and here and there where I didn't sign last week. Taking my form to the glass desk to get my money. I suppose it is mine? People on the sick say they've been paid for it for years. They say I've been paying stamps for it. I suppose so. I can't see it all the same. Somebody must be giving the dole office money every week.

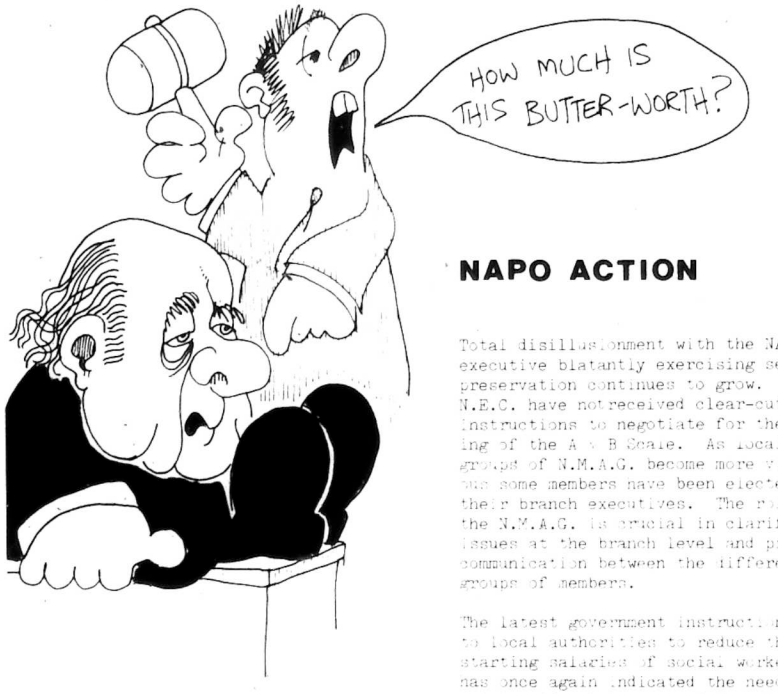
I'm getting it for nothing. I must be. That's why people treat you so differently. I'd rather the scorn than the pity but they both make it hard to want to work. How can you want to work with people who have been patting your head or them who have been heaping shit on it?

That's what I wonder every week. Why are they paying me for doing nothing? I know a boy who thinks that because his parents are on the dole then he doesn't have to go to school. It's the same thing. You are being let off what most people have to do. It is as though no one wants to see you about the place. It's been worse since the Rent Act because of the rebate. You get the same dole and the Security pays the extra. There's been hell to play. You can't do anything about it and it's the same for old age. Just take the money and have a drink.

It's better for those with children. With £20 dole and a few pounds from 'hobbles' they can be alright. It sounds more at any rate. It can't be much of a life all the same.

A further example of good natured co-operation in the interests of economy comes from York. After a claimant had missed his appeals tribunal because he could not find the office, it was suggested that Social Services should take this point up with DHSS. Social workers were somewhat taken aback to be told this would be against the interests of friendly relations between the Departments, before they discovered that the Regional Controller of DHSS had herself, when visiting the Director, been unable to find the Social Services headquarters, which those in a position to know say is as well disguised and fortified against outsiders as the camp at Long Kesh.





NAPO ACTION

Total disillusionment with the NAPO executive blatantly exercising self-preservation continues to grow. The N.E.C. have not received clear-cut instructions to negotiate for the ending of the A & B Scale. As local groups of N.M.A.G. become more vociferous some members have been elected into their branch executives. The role of the N.M.A.G. is crucial in clarifying issues at the branch level and providing communication between the different groups of members.

The latest government instruction to local authorities to reduce the starting salaries of social workers has once again indicated the need for joint action between social workers and probation officers in the fight against Butterworth. The Manchester based Case Con group has already met with the local N.M.A.G. group for this purpose and members are carrying on the fight within the office situation and local branches.

N.M.A.G. is not just concerned with the salary negotiations. As the government pursues its aggressive penal policies, which emphasise the controlling aspect of probation work, N.M.A.G. is working to influence NAPO to take a more aggressive political stand, and to speak out against the social evils that directly affect delinquents.

N.M.A.G. local groups are meeting in Manchester, Birmingham, Stoke, Liverpool, W. Riding, Middlesex and London. It is planned to hold a N.M.A.G. meeting at the NAPO A.G.M. in April.

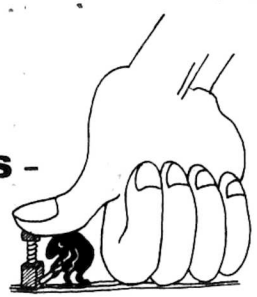
For details/membership forms, please write to: Tony Holden, 6 Bennets Hill, Birmingham B2 5ET. tel: 021 236 0486.

Contributions Wanted

Do you feel Case Con magazine is yours? If you do, then what about sending us an article, photograph or cartoon? Articles, news reports or a simple comment would be welcome on theory, working conditions or news of struggle by social workers or clients in your area. If you complain about Case Con, write it down. If your clients have a point of view on social work, ask them to take pen to paper. Many supporters expressed disagreements and offered suggestions to improve the magazine at the regional conferences. Let's hear from you!

We have held over an article on community work by Chris Miller for the next issue. Start writing your contribution now and if you need assistance, don't hesitate to contact us.

Turn of the Screw



Our Man On The Case Asks -

Who is On Probation?

We have heard of another misuse of probationary status, arising this time in Wandsworth Social Services. In Sept. 1972, a recent graduate of the Masters in Social Work Course at Sussex University was taken on as a basic grade social worker. Only after several months was it made explicit that she was in fact on probation. Having had 18 months' experience as a basic grade social worker in another local authority, from which she was seconded to the Sussex course, she might have assumed that she would not serve another probationary period.

On 14th February, 1973, following discussions with the two senior social workers concerned, she formally requested a transfer from one team to another within the same area. The area officer disagreed and turned down the request. On 22nd February, she was advised verbally by the Assistant Director that her probationary period had been extended for six months. In a letter from the Assistant Director, dated 1st March, '73 (by which time the probationary period had expired) the extension was confirmed, with the explanation that the probationary rule was applicable in her case as her previous local authority experience had been as an unqualified social worker. Following a request for the reasons for extending, a letter, dated 9th March, '73, offered these points in justification:

"1. The department's inability to assess your work fully because of lack of discussion between you and your senior.

2. You have not felt appropriately placed in your present team, so we need to give you an opportunity with another team to see if that is more successful.

3. There is concern about the difficulty you have shown about accepting departmental procedure.

4. You currently experience difficulty in working within the departmental organisation of delegated authority and accountability, and we need to examine this area further."

The matter of the extension was taken up with the NALGO branch secretary, who began conversations with the Establishment Officer. The Social Services Directorate had not consulted him about the decision to extend. As a result, the social worker was informed by the branch secretary, on 19th March, that her appointment would be confirmed, as an extension was appropriate only in cases of extreme misconduct or prolonged absence due, for example, to illness. The Secretary to the Greater London Whitley Council said he thought the NJC agreement made any probationary period inappropriate in this case, although he felt he should not intervene in internal Wandsworth affairs.

Finally, after several requests for such, a letter from the Director, dated 26th March, confirmed the appointment. However, he referred to the reasons for the extension given in his previous letter and stated that her appointment would remain 'under review'. He indicated his intention to report to the Council Staff Management Committee (a disciplinary body) to seek their guidance on the performance of her duties, should he feel this necessary.

But, prior to this, on 23rd March, she was directed to move to another area, effective on 27th March. The NALGO branch secretary was in doubt about what action could be taken, as the grievance procedures do not seem to apply to a situation where the two jobs involved in a transfer have the same job description. However, the issue of probationary periods is being taken to the Establishment Committee in an attempt to bring Wandsworth policy into line with a NALGO national agreement.

All unofficial attempts within the Social Services Department to prevent the transfer have gone unheeded by higher levels of management. A strongly worded open letter to the Department from 22 social workers and seniors expressed their concern about a number of issues raised, such as the use of probation, and grievance procedures. There have been no NALGO meetings as such and there is only an embryonic departmental sub committee as yet.

We comment on only two points of the many raised in this case. First, we have evidence of another Social Services Department acting in violation of a NALGO national agreement. Does your department violate this agreement? Are workers on probation who should not be? Second, this is an example of the inability of unorganised workers to defend one another or to have their voices heard. Even the rather cumbersome machinery of NALGO is more effective in such disputes. Perhaps if the departmental sub committee had been organised, this social worker would not have been subjected to humiliation and intimidation.

We deplore this blatant disregard of a worker's established rights, and will report fully on this or any other similar situation of victimisation. Management is on the move. We must organise to defend ourselves.

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CASE CON BACK NUMBERS

We have a lot of copies of Nos: 2, 3, & 4, 5p. each plus postage

And of Nos: 9 & 10, 10p. each plus postage.

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INSIDE STORY: Recent issues on prison and mental hospital conditions. 25p. from 3 Belmont Road, London, S.W.4.

UP AGAINST THE LAW: produced by a collective of militant defendants, radical lawyers and ex-prisoners, provides info., advice and analysis on how to use the law, defend yourself. Meets Weds. 2 - 5 at 1 Elgin Avenue, London, W.9. Journal 15p. from UPAL, same address (tel. 01-289-7881).

NEEDLE: Health workers in Struggle. N.H.S. Reorganisation. 50p. per year or 3p. per copy from 27 Pearman Street, London, S.W.1.

ROUGH TIMES (formerly Radical Therapist). Current issue on prison oppression and 'treatment', mental institutions, women, 9 issues a year ($10) - free to prisoners and mental patients - from Radical Therapist, P.O. Box 89, West Somerville, Ma. 02144.

WORK FORCE (Vocation for Social Change) - alternative institutions, life styles, etc. Bi-monthly from VSC (sub. according to means) Box 13, Canyon, Calif. 94516.

Issues in RADICAL THERAPY: a new political journal for those in radical therapy movement. Published quarterly $7 a year (but free to prisoners, mental patients) from I.R.T. Collective, P.O. Box 23544, Oakland, Calif. 94623.

SUBCRIPTIONS

50p. for four issues, including postage.

SUPPORTER'S FEE, for those wishing to help financially, to vote at conferences and to receive newsletters

50p. per year.

REGIONAL ORGANISATION

CASE · CON NATIONWIDE

Case Con is now well spread over the map, or most of it anyway. Wales is sparsely populated and Dorset, Devon and Cornwall are terra incognita, but Scotland now has groups or contacts in nearly all the larger centres.

When regional organisers met in Leeds on April 7th, all areas had arranged local conferences or workshops which had succeeded in attracting a good deal of new support, and new groups are beginning to spring up as a result; e.g. Norwich, Coventry, Brighton, Newcastle, Southampton, Aberdeen. Most regions are still at the stage of discussing policy - not surprising after only four months, especially considering size and unwieldy nature, but those which are strong enough are already splitting down; the Midlands have six areas now, centred round Leicester, Nottingham, Stoke, Birmingham, Coventry and Oxford. Supporters in nearly all regions are making their presence felt in NALGO and it is a pleasure to report that BASW was hardly mentioned.

The most rapidly expanding region is the North-East, based on close contact between York, Leeds and Bradford. There will be regular regional meetings (including a conference in July: see ads) and the first one, in York, was attended by over 50 people from all over the region.

Scotland have been particularly successful within NALGO and in Edinburgh, for instance, have taken up the case of training nursery nurses, who are expected to survive on near Victorian wages and conditions: Residential workers, please note.

South-West plan a workshop on homelessness in Bath on May 12th/13th, which should include squatters and others with consumer experience of temporary accommodation. They are also planning to produce an introductory broadsheet on Case Con, contributions welcome.

All regions are considering bulletins and the first Midland newsletter is already in preparation. North-West have held introductory meetings, but the committee structure has not proved really effective in co-ordinating activity in the different areas. Committees also have the danger of building up a bureaucracy rather than promoting local discussion and action. North-West organiser would very much like to hear from social workers in the county areas of Lancashire and Cheshire.

East Anglia have a strong base in Chelmsford and are successfully attracting students in the area.

The South has had the expected problems in contacting social workers in the counties, but have had a constructive conference in which the role of social workers in welfare rights movements was discussed, and another, on ideology, will take place at the end of April.

At the London regional conference, local reports were heard from Case Con groups, NAG groups and other social work groups not yet fully committed to Case Con ideology. To facilitate co-ordination of activities over such a large and concentrated area, it is proposed that London be divided into 4 areas; however, area convenors are still required for central and south west London.

Most regions are contemplating action on homelessness and there will be discussions of the political implications of such campaigns at the May conference. Regions are also asked to submit any amendments to the Statement of Aims; Regional organisers want to keep the principles intact but orientate them even more specifically to social work.

EDUCATION, ORGANISATION, SOLIDARITY, AGITATION. These are the four main focusses of Case Con activity, in social work agencies, NALGO and colleges. A group's activity may be centred around any one of them, and in doing so will increase potential for the others. The first three are usually preliminary to successful agitation, but agitation itself should feed back gains in other spheres.

The attempted victimisation of an individual (e.g. Myra Garrett) should lead to increased solidarity among colleagues, but equally essential to success are determination and continuity. Too much agitation is sporadic - an outburst of anger followed by a resigned quiescence, exhaustion and even despair. Radical change is the product not of a single confrontation but of continuous struggle, a struggle which needs the strength of every supporter if it is to succeed.

Groups need leaders, but must not depend on them. Too often the departure of a single individual means the collapse or demoralisation of the local supporters. Similarly, groups cannot expect to achieve more than a welcome but sterile therapy if their membership is continually changing, for example, because they are largely made up of students. Case Con is often criticised for being a talk shop and for not concentrating on practice. The only way to get material on practice from the social work point of view, is for practising social workers to contribute and act on it. That there is so little material available has not been particular to Case Con but also to social work knowledge in general, because even workers trained and dedicated to the prevailing social work ideology have surrendered their dedication in the face of overwhelming empirical pressures. Every such surrender of the self is a betrayal of the client. Those who are dedicated not to social work orthodoxy but to change have an even greater responsibility to maintain the struggle. Regionalisation of Case Con is intended both to support and to spur on those social workers who are determined to fight for change.

Frequently Case Con is accused of promoting a narrow ideology unrelated to social work practice. Furthermore, many supporters, particularly in the regions, feel that they are dictated to by the London-based Editorial Collective. Regionalisation is intended to counter this, but we also need a much greater amount of informed discussion at the national conference at which the E.C. is elected. If supporters do not contribute to this, they are still surrendering to the system: Case Con is the largest existing counter movement in social work. In the present chaotic state of the so-called profession, it can only grow. Case Con does not necessarily judge actions by their 'correctness'; rather it supports all challenges to the social work bureaucracy and professional hierarchy and seeks to co-ordinate them.

Nevertheless, one of the principal reasons for Case Con's survival so far, lies precisely in that aspect which attracts the bitterest opposition, our ideology. Perhaps the most stultifying feature of the orthodox social work scene, leading to all the apathy and alienation social workers are so often infected by, is the lack of any overt ideology or rationale apart from the confused advocacy of professionalism.

However this does not mean that there is no underlying ideology to social work, as sociologists familiar with the fallacies of the 'end of ideology' argument know well. The reasons for apathy are perhaps best summed up in Robin Blackburn's and Perry Anderson's 'New Left' essays reprinted in the Penguin on Student Power, which should be required reading for social workers. Blackburn analyses bourgeois ideology in Britain and concludes that "the drift of much bourgeois social theory is to undermine the idea that men can every transform society - its function is to induce a morbid paralysis of the social will." Is this not precisely what has been the case in social work? Perry Anderson argued that there was a void at the centre of English culture because disciplines like economics, politics, history, psychology, psychoanalysis, philosophy, had all become divorced from each other and there was the lack of any unifying coherence in their study and application. This lack of synthesis is particularly evident in the ragbag of knowledge we call social work theory. Yet social work, while in some way of marginal practical importance to socialism, could still attain a synthesis which could act as a catalyst in other spheres, particularly as it has an essentially practical nature.

In such circumstances our ideology is anything but narrow: it is open to influence from all fields, as long as it retains coherence. Only a co-herent ideology can sustain successful action for change, because only a coherent ideology can analyse the prevailing system and, after picking out the best areas for struggle, provide us with the appropriate strategies and tactics. This means that social work needs not just to be equipped with theories about the individual but also with a theory of society, because "it is not the consciousness of men which determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being which determines their consciousness." (Marx). We need all to work together now in using Case Con to promote a revolutionary consciousness within social work: the alternative is an apathetic surrender.

PUBLIC SECTOR ALLIANCE

Camden-Islington Public Sector Workers Action Committee

Founded at the end of February to unite and co-ordinate action of groups of workers in struggle against the Government's incomes policy, at rank and file level, the C.I.P.S.W.A.C. has effectively brought together militants from the teachers, civil servant, gas workers, hospital ancillaries and delegates from local trade union branches opposed to the Freeze.

Out of this has come mobilization for demonstrations, mass leafleting and distribution to all key work places within the public sector, a mass meeting and weekly delegate meetings, collection of urgent funds for the hospital workers, picketing support, unifying and propagandizing for the uneven struggle in the hospitals, weekly strike bulletins and stimulating the fight at T.U. branch and shop level and in the local Trades Councils.

There has undoubtedly been a downturn in organised opposition to the wage freeze latterly, largely because of the abysmal lack of leadership in the trade union movement. Nevertheless, local areas go on fighting and the importance of rank and file action committees is greater than ever. Social workers in NALGO are represented on the Camden and Islington Action Committee, and it should be noted that, with London weighting and annual salary claims coming up, such committees may be vital in gaining solidarity, developing militancy and spreading the fight to bring down this government.

CONFERENCES

CASE CON NORTH-EAST REGIONAL CONFERENCE

June 23rd in Leeds

a.m. Strategies for Radical Social Work

p.m. Homelessness and Social Work - Ron Bailey

+ discussion of issues and action in the region.

Details nearer the time from 47 Brudenell Mount, Leeds.

THE FAMILY

(Organised by Leeds Poly Women's Lib) Leeds Polytechnic Union, May 12th & 13th from 10 a.m.

Sheila Rowbotham and Linda Smith - History of the Family

Margaret Coulson, Lee Sanders-Comer: The Family Under Capitalism

Maria Loftus: The Family in Post-Capitalist Society.

Creche and accommodation available

Details: Val Jones, 69 Bagby Road, Leeds 2. (tel. Leeds 27777)