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METROPOLITAN POLICE

SPECIAL BRANCH

No. 1 (Filmsy)

Special Report

21 day of November 1975

SUBJECT

International

Socialists

Reference to Papers

75/196

1. The following information has been received from a reliable source:-

2. " Privacy, Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Council Anti-Fascist Committee, has joined the International Socialists and is a member of W.A.L.G.O. Action Group (NAC)."

3. Submitted herewith is a leaflet designed by Privacy and other left-wing members of IAC for distribution to local W.A.L.G.O. branches."

4. Privacy has previously come to our notice in connection with the Battersea and Wandsworth Trades Council Anti-Fascist Committee.

Chief Inspector

1

CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT

X 500

3-89378/20M (2)

# What is the - NALGO ACTION GROUP ?

## Why the Investigation?

At this year's NALGO Annual General Meeting the issue of the Nalگو Action Group will be discussed. This is because since the NALGO National Executive Committee decided in July to carry out an investigation into NAG all NALGO branches are being asked to give evidence to the EC investigating sub-committee. The Wandsworth NALGO Executive Committee decided in September to tell the NEC that in view of the current economic crisis and the urgent need for a fighting lead to oppose unemployment and public service cuts the inquiry was a waste of time and effort and this branch wouldn't cooperate with it.

Since then letters in Mercury have raised some of the issues but so that our position won't be lost in a flood of innuendo and half-truths we feel it important to try to answer some of the basic questions about the issue so that members will be better informed.

## HAT ARE NAG'S MAIN IDEAS?

NAG advocates:-  
that all Nalگو policy should be decided by the membership as a whole and not by minority groups, elected or otherwise.  
100% trade union membership.  
elected representatives accountable to those who elect them.  
militant trade unionism in the interests of union members and for the defence of trade union rights.  
open debate on all issues, and opposes secret negotiations.  
opposition to sex and racial discrimination.  
free collective bargaining, and opposes Government pay restraint.  
encourages political debate on all issues related to the trade union movement (eg abortion, cuts in public expenditure, etc).

## WHO DECIDES NAG POLICY?

Wandsworth NAG is part of a national organisation which pursues the policies formulated by supporters at the annual NAG conference. All supporters can attend this conference, which also elects the editors of the paper and officers to carry out the communication necessary to keep the group going.

Policies at the Conference are formulated through NAG groups and individuals. Local NAG supporters do not receive direction about how they should vote but discuss various policy options for Conference to decide.

Local groups accept agreed policy but act as autonomous groups within their own workplaces, receiving support and assistance from NAG nationally.

## IS NAG TRYING TO TAKE OVER THE UNION?

Yes and no! If you mean do NAG supporters try to get elected to important positions so that they can dictate policy then the answer is definitely no. We hope that our ideas and our policies will become accepted by the bulk of the membership and in that way 'take over the union'. NAG has always had, as one of its central policies, the view that the union has to be controlled by the membership as a whole. When we get to that happy state then who cares who holds what positions? Positions in themselves are only important in an undemocratic body where decisions and information are held by an elite. We oppose this and that is why we say people should clearly state their policies (as NAG does) when they run for election and also that all elected and full-time positions in the union should be really accountable to the membership - who should be able to dismiss representatives if they don't carry out agreed policy.

OK - you may well ask - why do so many NAG supporters hold office in branches, in districts, and on the NEC? Firstly because in our undemocratic union it is the only way to find out what is going on, and secondly because NAG supporters are keen and active trade unionists who take positions in some cases to stop NALGO collapsing from apathy. This is of course part of a general desire to improve the union in the members' interests. In other words we neither aim to take you over nor to sit on the sidelines criticising.

## IS NAG POLITICAL?

Yes - of course! The relationship between the government, the state, and the union leadership makes everything we do in NALGO political in its widest sense. Does that mean we all belong to a Party? No - that is left to each individual, as it is in NALGO itself. We are politically on 'the left'. NAG supporters belong to the Liberal and Labour Parties, the Communist Party, the International Socialists, International Marxist Group, Workers Fight etc - and to no party. People who are not in any party constitute the largest section of NAG.

We do not think of us as a group - that the issue is very important - we are more concerned with the ideas that people can bring to the task of making NALGO a strong, democratic union. Any NALGO member who broadly agrees with NAG's published program can become a supporter - we don't examine their political pedigree. We leave that sort of nit-picking to those with more time than sense.

### HOW IS NAG FINANCED?

Supporters of NAG agree to pay an annual sum (currently £1.50) towards NAG's organisation. That is, to assist in implementing its policies, subsidising the sales of the paper (Nalgo Action News) and other publications. Other than that, members are usually willing to dip into their pockets to finance specific projects (eg the production of this leaflet).

### IS NAG A SECRET BODY?

NAG has always been prepared to state its policies out in the open, sees the importance of debating amongst the membership, and aims to gain support through such a debate. A secret organisation cannot possibly do this. NAG has no 'secret' committees - all supporters contribute to NAG policy. In general all NAG supporters openly identify themselves often at the expense of promotion. Occasionally NAG supporters have been afraid to do this for fear of losing their jobs or punitive discrimination on the part of their seniors. The kind of inquiry being held at the moment is an example of the way some members of NALGO attempt to intimidate those they disagree with.

### WHAT HAS WANDSWORTH NAG DONE?

- Wandsworth NAG holds regular meetings open to all those NALGO members who broadly accept NAG's aims.
- It debates issues relevant to NALGO members and attempts to raise these issues within the branch, through Mercury, the EC and general meetings.
- It argued for a more militant stance during the London Weighting Campaign and the recent pay award against the leadership sellout - producing its own leaflets and speaking in general debates.
- It has campaigned for moves to re-organise the branch and increase democratic participation through the setting up of the new departmental sub-committees and the Joint Consultative Committees.
- All Wandsworth NAG supporters are active trade unionists. Some are or have been branch officers, but all see their role as being involved in the attempt to activate the membership to participate in the union's affairs. Following the recent resignation of the Branch Secretary and Chairperson it was left to NAG supporters to keep the Branch organisation running when no one else volunteered to fill these positions.
- Wandsworth NAG has always called for the support of other trade unionists (eg Shrewsbury Pickets, anti-lump labour) and has actively supported the Working Women's Charter, the National Abortion Campaign, and the fights against fascism and racism.

SHOULD WE COOPERATE WITH THE INQUIRY?

No. We have already said it is a criminal waste of time. Criminal because of all the other things that need doing and aren't being done.

The economy and the public services are in a crisis unequalled for 40 years. We desperately need policies and a lead on the questions of unemployment and public service cuts. The NALGO leadership is failing dismally to give this lead - and yet it has the time to waste on 'investigating' a small group of NALGO members who have always publicly stated their policies and never hid their intentions.

Why? While we don't believe that it is an organised 'plot' to discredit NAG, it is no accident that the two events should occur now.

Under the spectre of unemployment many NALGO members will want to pull in their horns and opt for a quiet life, hoping that their job isn't up for the axe. In these circumstances NAG will make quite a few people feel uncomfortable. Without the pressure of NAG many branches will be tempted to ditch their members' interests for the sake of appeasement - accepting worse conditions and a lower standard of living in exchange for jobs. (Look what's happened already on pay and London lighting!!)

TO COOPERATE WITH THE INQUIRY WILL GIVE IT A DIGNITY IT DOESN'T DESERVE. TO COOPERATE IS TO IMPLY THAT NAG HAS SOMETHING TO HIDE - WE REJECT THAT - OUR PROGRAM AND OUR MEETINGS HAVE BEEN AND ARE OPEN.

We wish we could say the same of the NALGO leadership!!