

womens voice

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Police attack women strikers

The police know how to threaten women on strike. They smash their picket lines, co-operate with scab lorry drivers, turn a blind eye to lorries with no registration plates, and then arrest pickets. That's what is happening at Trico, West London. The 400 women engineers have been on strike for nearly three months. They need your help if they are not to be beaten by the management and the police.



Organise a collection where you work, on your estate.
 Go down to the picket line—take other women from your workplace. The women at Trico must win their strike. If they lose it is a defeat for every woman fighting for equal pay, for a job, for union recognition. Give them all the support you can. For a full report on the strike so far, see page 2.

They say there's nobody below the poverty line...they might as well give me a beggars tin...

BUT... NOW I AM FIGHTING



Lynda Deighton Sheffield

'THEY say there's nobody beneath the poverty line. But they might as well give me a beggar's tin.'

That's what Lynda Deighton of Sheffield said. She gets £14 a week to look after herself and 15-month-old Christopher.

Things got so bad for her that she asked for Christopher to be taken into care. It was the Social Security who suggested that she 'put him into care and get herself a job' when she asked for money for shoes for him.

She manages to give Christopher breakfast and tea. But she can't afford to feed herself—her friend Mary from

This is where Lynda's £14 goes:

Milk for Christopher £1.20; Electricity £3.00; Insurance £1.00; Television £1.00; Fridge 50p
Washer 50p; Carpet 50p
Club (for pram and toys) £1.50
Bread 54p; Bus fares 36p; Stamps 34p

Total £10.44

On top of that she has to buy food, clothes and everything else they need. The social security said the television was a luxury—so they cut her money by £1.00

up the road sends down a meal at teatime.

Christopher's twin brother Ian died some months ago. Lynda had to beg for the funeral money from the Social Security.

She can't work and keep Christopher—the nurseries have long waiting lists, plans for new ones have been cut, and there are no child-minders.

If she did work, she could only earn £4 before they start cutting her money.

She said, 'There are lots of people round here who are worse off than me. The more you complain the more they try to walk over you. You feel trapped. I'm sick and fed up. But now we've set up an action committee to fight them. I felt overwhelmed but now we are going on.'

Women on the march: For the right to work, for equal pay, for trade union rights, against cuts in our services...see pages 2 & 3

Women fight for Right to work



Do you have a job? Will you still have one next year? Has your sister, just leaving school, got a job? How many married women do you know who now keep the family fed on one wage that isn't enough? Is there anything we can do about it? Lots of women think—well, it hasn't hit me yet. But sooner or later the Government is going to cut something which will Glasses, dental treatment up. Local services cut. School meals up next year—until the Government changes its mind and decide to bring the increase forward. It's got to stop somewhere. That's why we want you to join the Right to Work march, for a day, or all the way to Brighton. We want every woman who can get there to be in Brighton on Tuesday 7 September, to tell the trade union leaders like Jack Jones, Hugh Scanlon, David Basnett—that it's about time they started fighting for our right to work. March for the Right to Work. London to Brighton, 4 to 7 September. Join the march for a day: Saturday 4 September, 11am, Charing Cross Embankment, to Brighton. Join the lobby of the TUC: Tuesday 7 September, Brighton. If you're out of a job and want to go on the march, or if you would like more information about the march send this slip off now.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Send to the Right to Work Campaign, 265a Seven Sisters Road, London, N4

TRICO WOMEN STILL OUT FOR EQUAL PAY

It's great to see so many fighting together. That's what is so good about the Trico strike.

The women there—400 engineers—have been out on strike for eleven weeks now, for equal pay with the men who work on the same production lines. They want an extra £6.50 a week.

Two hundred of the men joined them on their struggle, but there are still 1000 workers crossing the picket line each day.

They should be shamed into supporting the women. They're scabs and nothing better. And I can tell you, they don't like to be called 'scab'. I'm talking from experience of being treated by one of them just for shouting scab.

A lot of good things have been done by the strikers now. There is now organised night picketing throughout the night. For instance, but why aren't the men helping more than they are? There is a handful of men who are supporting the women tremendously, but where are the rest of them? Why, too, are there many women who are not actively involved in the strike? They turn up to mass meetings, but most of the night and day picketing is being done by a small core of women. It is great to see these women who are prepared to do so much picketing, but more strikers must be involved in collecting money from factories.

Sidney Atkins, the managing director of Trico, made an offer to the women two weeks ago. They turned it down. It was for a miserable £2.40 more a week.

Now he's called off all further negotiations and will take the dispute back to the Industrial Tribunal. But he will find it hard to argue. When he first approached the Tribunal he said the women had no case for equal pay. But now he's offered them £2.40—so they must be entitled to equal pay after all.



Two weeks ago, some of the strikers picketed the local Brentford police station because of the role that the police had played in helping scab lorries crash through the picket lines in the middle of the night and load up. The police had been escorting the unmarked lorries to Northampton.

On the night of 26 July, there was a large picket on the gate when the police and lorries turned up at Trico's works and load up. This time, they were turned away.



AUEW steward Betty Humphreys

The strikers at Trico are living on £9 a week strike pay, and they desperately need money. We call on all Womens Voice readers to support this strike. NOW. Take a collection where you work, or where you live and send it immediately to: Trico Strike Committee, Southall AUEW District, Woodlands Road, Southall. Or take it down to the picket line at Trico, Great West Road, Brentford.

TANNOY OCCUPY TO SAVE JOBS

The workers at Tannoy, an engineering factory in West Norwood, South London, are facing 300 redundancies come September. Why?

Because the management have decided it would be more productive (which means more profitable) if they moved their business to Scotland and High Wycombe.

What does this mean for the 400 workers on the shop floor? It means unemployment. But they weren't asked if they wanted to join the done queue.

The majority of the workforce are women. Many of them black and asian. It was the women who first got the AUEW union going. The shop stewards are women, and as the women who feel they should fight back.

The first thing they've done is to ban overtime. As one of the women said, 'the more overtime we do the quicker we work ourselves out of a job'.

At the moment the trade union officials are negotiating over the redundancies with management. But the workers in the factory must remember that when it comes to the crunch it is they who will have to fight. They will have to rely on themselves as it is their jobs that are at stake and not their paid officials.

But time is running out and in order to keep all their jobs they will have to do something more drastic. They must occupy that is, to have a sit-in in their factories, keep hold of their machinery and refuse to leave until their jobs are guaranteed and their factory remains open.

To ensure that the occupation is successful they will need support from the rest of the trade union movement in the area.

The women at Tannoy need their jobs just as much as everyone else. But they will have to fight for them. We say that everyone has the right to work, including every woman.



Picture by Andrew Ward (reporter)

Trico wipers are now being blacked at Fords. But it has taken the AUEW District Committee eight weeks to get this agreement. Now, they are going to put pressure on British Leyland.

More visits, collections and blacking must immediately be organised. The District Committee is all too willing to use 'wait and see' procedures, but the women haven't got the time to do this. They are on 24 hour, seven day a week picket duty, and after eleven weeks, their militancy and fight is being exhausted.

If the District Committee won't organise the delegations, and visits, collections and blacking, then the women should do it now.

The women should go round the car factories and see the STCC and stop the windscreen wipers, which Trico supplies, being used. They could also go to the airport and the docks to make sure the wipers are being blacked.

Shopworkers paid poverty wages

Out of every 20 full-time adult women shopworkers, 19 earn less than £40 a week—that's about £28 net. Eight out of every twenty earn less than £25 gross.

£25 for a single person, after deductions, is less than supplementary benefit level. That means that at least half of all women shopworkers are living below the poverty line. There are 1 1/4 million women shopworkers—

so over three quarters of a million are living in real poverty and the rest are not exactly wealthy.*

There are two main reasons for this. The first is that many shopworkers are being paid at BELOW the minimum legal rate, 21 per cent of employees in food shops are having their wages stolen in this way. The second reason is that the legal minimum wages are only £25 on average. Some, in tobacconists,

are as low as £21.

Yet British American Tobacco is boasting of having made a profit of £200 million in six months of this year. It's easy to see where those profits come from! It would take a shop assistant in a tobacconists 200,000 years to earn this much.

Employers don't have to tell shopworkers what they should be paid. Only 10 per

cent of shopworkers belong to a union which could help them to fight for this basic right. But employers are afraid of unions. Quite often they try to sack shopworkers who join a union. That is now illegal, because of the Employment Protection Act. All shopworkers can, and should join a union. It's only by getting together with others and demanding decent pay that the problems of poverty will be solved.

Other workers should make their unions put pressure on the

government to stop this illegal underpayment.

The Wages Inspectorate can recover wages that have been stolen from you. But in 1974 they only recovered £192,400 out of an estimated £1,570,000. So you might have to bully them.

The union to contact is USDAW (Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers—address in libraries or phone books). *The information in this article is from a report by Sieve Winward, The Low Pay Unit, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG.

...THE FIGHT GOES ON

Organising against cuts



WHAT WE THINK

IF health workers or teachers go on strike the news is suddenly flooded with stories of the suffering they're causing. Employers can afford to wait until 'public opinion' breaks the strike. And if library workers take action their bosses can just wait.

But a cuts committee can change all that. If busworkers can get together with passengers—housewives, teachers, hospital workers, factory

Judith Hamilton

workers—and if library workers can get together with other council workers there is much more chance of success. Cuts affect all of us—threatening the jobs of public service workers and reducing our standards of living by cutting the services we need and we pay for. By forming a cuts committee small, disjointed,

fighters which seem only to hurt the public can become large-scale, well publicised expressions of the anger we all feel. We can do our own publicity, without needing to rely on a press which is usually more of a liability than a help. And we can win.

The East London Action Committee Against The Cuts was formed out of a fight to save Poplar Hospital from closure. It is composed of delegates from 54

bodies—trade union branches, trade councils, shop stewards' committees, tenants' associations, women's groups, any body which can involve itself in active opposition to the cuts. It's on a delegate basis because that means that the delegating bodies have discussed the cuts and have expressed some determination to fight. So we all have a chance to report on our activities and get action going from both directions.

As we've grown so have our activities. We've produced two issues of our paper 'Fightback', doing all the work except the actual printing ourselves. We didn't know where to start at first—but it's really easy with a bit of help. The sales were enormous—3 000 copies—which shows how much interest there is. A lot of the information came from local papers. They're a godsend if you gather all the snippets of news together. And it gives you a real picture of the extent of the cuts.

Many of our delegates have joined the committee because of their experience of fighting the cuts. NALGO, NUS and NATFHE (the teachers' union) at North East London Poly have all joined because their experience of successful small fights have made them realise the massive scale of the cuts. They all know that unity with the health workers is the only way to save the health service. Of course the main fight will come from the people most involved. But the committee should make itself into the body which can spread and co-ordinate activity—spreading confidence and building the fight with every tiny success. Councils will retreat on their miserable cheese-paring, and people who may feel helpless when a whole hospital is threatened will be furious when old people's 'wages' in a day centre are halved to £1 a week. But now they've been forced to back down on that. And if they try to close the centre, we'll be ready!

The committee is still growing, other committees are springing up. More and more people are fed up with the cuts and are ready to fight. Building a cuts committee at a local level means that we'll be able to co-ordinate and unite all the resentment and all the small fights and successes, until we have whole areas united in countrywide resistance to the cuts.

So we're going to be picketing the Trade Union Congress in Brighton on the 7 September, with workers from all over the country. We're going to show that we are ready to fight. And we're going to make the trade union leaders fight with us.

With unemployment at the record post-war level of nearly 1.5 million (6.3 per cent) the government has just announced that it is cutting 170,000 more jobs—by cutting nearly £2000 million out of the economy.

Public expenditure is being cut by over £1000 million and employers are to pay £900 million more for National Insurance contributions. Employers will be able to pass this on in prices—adding to inflation and cutting our standards of living—but because it will increase the cost of using labour, it will lead to a loss of 90,000 jobs. Changes in regional policy will mean another 12,000 jobs lost in the poorest areas, like Scotland, the north-east, the north-west and Northern Ireland. The cuts in public spending by themselves will mean 70,000 jobs lost in the public sector.

The cuts mean that since 1974 over £1000 million has been cut off education alone! Every time the cuts are announced we hear the same old excuses—it's to help unemployment, to save the pound, to stop inflation, to increase investment, to get the economy growing again. And every time we're told that it's the last time. It's the same story for wage cuts. And every time we get more unemployment, because people haven't got enough money to buy the goods which are produced. We get higher prices as firms and services like transport put up prices to maintain their revenue. The pound sinks even more as speculators rush to make a quick profit and firms send their profits, bloated by reduced taxation, abroad. And the profiteering wolves start howling for even more cuts. Cuts and unemployment do not solve the crisis, they worsen it. They mean poverty and the dole and more cuts.

The crisis is one of profits. 15 per cent more goods could be produced tomorrow in Britain if all the spare capacity of machines and all the unemployed labour was used. But firms refuse to produce goods because in order to sell them they would have to pay people enough to buy them—and they cannot do this if they want to make profits. But they still hope that by reducing wage costs they will be able to undercut competitors in the world market. By competing against each other in this way the capitalists all over the world are reducing total buying power and cutting their own throats.

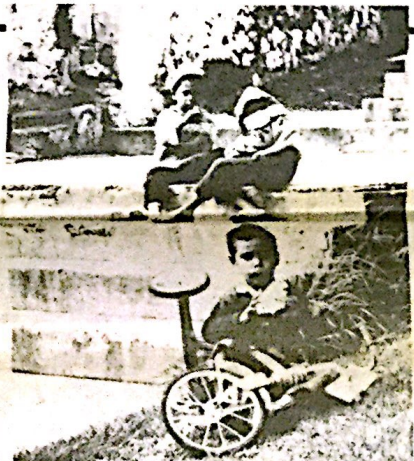
But they will not go down without a fight—so they are insisting that out of a reduced national income, they keep their share by cutting our wages and by huge cuts in the welfare services which we pay for out of taxes and rates. These services are essential to their survival—transport, housing, roads, health, education, fuel—but company accounts show that they will not be paying any taxes for the next few years.

So we pay for the services, but the firms are blackmailing the government and unions into hacking the services to pieces. They'll keep the parts they need: defence, police, aid to industry, 'vocational' education. They'll make massive profits out of public expenditure. 20 per cent already goes in interest charges' ie profits to banks and other money lenders. Contracts to industry are another useful source. We'll lose on health, housing, education, jobs, food—and the less 'economically useful' we are to them, the more we'll lose. That means women, old and handicapped people, children, the unemployed and immigrants suffer the most. The stories already show that.

But the stories also show that we've got to fight, and that we can win. We must join with other workers in the fight to save jobs—our jobs and theirs, and to save services—our services and theirs. It's their crisis, make them pay!

The size of the cuts

- EDUCATION**... School meals up 10p. But part of the pay deal was a promise not to raise them. ... and meals in the House of Commons are still subsidised.
- TEETH AND SPECS**... Nearly full price instead of about £4.5 at present.
- DISABLED HOUSEWIVES**... The plan to give them a small, non-contributory pension is to be dropped.
- COUNCIL HOUSES**... Building to be cut by a huge 50 per cent—and it's already at its lowest since the war.
- FOOD SUBSIDIES**... £80 million cut. That's price rises for cheese, butter, milk, tea, bread and flour. But as the papers say IT'S A WIN FOR DEFENCE...



we've got the power. It's up to us to turn their brave words into real action—they don't empty the bins, provide the electricity, build the houses or man the buses. We do. And the government and private industry can't survive without our work.

FARE FIGHT... **FANTASTIC!** Millions of Londoners can fight tube fare increases if they join the 'Fare Fight' campaign. Last month bus fares rose by 25 per cent, then tube fares went up by 23 per cent—with drastic cuts in both services. So the 'Fare Fight' campaigners (many of whom were involved in the Eric George Davis' fight) poster and leafletted and encouraged travellers to 'dicker' payment by filling in duplicated slips with name, address and details of the journey so that London Transport can collect the money. If it can cope with the number of slips, it's completely legal. You just buy a ticket for the amount you think is fair and wait for London Transport to write to you for the rest after you've handed your ticket and slip to the ticket collector.

It's based on a struggle in Italy, where unions printed similar tickets. Bus workers refused to collect the new fares and passengers refused to pay. The companies were forced to give in.

SURREY Council is cutting £22 million of its education budget—including £69,000 off school buses. The Parents' Action Committee says that this puts hundreds of children's lives at risk. Has the County Council made a deal with the undertakers?

MORE than 3,800 NALGO members are taking action to force Surrey County Council to rescind nine redundancy notices. Members will refuse to cover for unfilled or cancelled vacancies and will refuse to take on extra work. Over the last 18 months, 1,500 jobs have been 'wasted' by Surrey council, and the NALGO members had had enough.

TEACHERS up and down the country are already taking action against the cuts by refusing to cover for absent or non-appointed teachers. There are 30,000 unemployed teachers who need these jobs—and teachers in Devon,

Cumbria, Surrey, Knowsley, Leicestershire, Bromley and Lancashire and many London boroughs are determined that their own conditions should not be worsened while other teachers are deprived of jobs. The teachers' union (NUT) is in danger of wrecking the fightback in many areas—it's threatening expulsion of members who are involved in unofficial action. And it is refusing to back action in areas with a 'friendly' Labour council. No council which cuts jobs and education deserves to be called friendly. The NUT officials are just feeding the dog that bites us. Parents must give their full backing to teachers who fight the cuts—especially those who are

prepared to stand up to their union officials as well as their bosses.

AMAZING! Many councils including Devon, Cheshire and over 20 London boroughs have said that they will not accept the cuts. In most cases all that this means is that their financial estimates will not be printed by them—they will leave the job to the government which has to examine the estimates. In some cases they may be prepared to put up a real fight like the Clay Cross Councilors did. If this is so they will have no chance of success unless the whole of the local labour movement is behind them, fighting where

Labour attacks invalids

The invalid tricycle is a scandalously dangerous vehicle, which should have been outlawed years ago. Now the government has decided to phase it out—but only as part of an economy measure which will reduce the mobility allowance to £5 for every handicapped person. The government has refused to replace the tricycle with a safe adapted four-wheel car, and will not make an allowance which is high enough to buy and run a car. For those handicapped people who can drive, any vehicle is better

than nothing. And it is well established that the government could provide a safe car at very little more cost than the tricycle. They use the excuse that some handicapped people can not drive. But that is no excuse for condemning the rest to immobility. Invalid mothers and workers who have previously relied on their mobility to lead relatively full lives will be effectively thrown on the scrap heap and their children will probably end up in care.

Anyone involved in any way with handicapped people should raise this issue with trade unions, MPs and in the local press.

PAY CUT STOPPED

ELDERLY and handicapped workers at a council-run workshop in London (Tower Hamlets) were stunned when

they heard proposals to cut their 'pay' from £2 to £1 for a 20-hour week.

Social Service shop stewards took the matter up and discovered that bad contracts had put the centre in debt. So the council was making the old people pay for bad management and profits for local firms. The NALGO stewards campaigned vigorously in the area and by giving this case the publicity it deserved, forced the council to give in. So the old people are back to their 10p an hour.



RED SCARE

The argument about whether the Right to Work should be involved in the campaign round Rea Street was partly an argument about 'reds' and communists being involved and partly an argument about how to fight to save Rea Street. The authorities used the red scare argument to try and kill the march and the campaign. They wanted to frighten the mothers into giving up the fight so that they can peacefully close down the nursery. Fortunately that tactic did not work. As one woman put it, if you don't have the communists on your side, you'll not have any one supporting you.

The red scare argument clouds the fundamental question of how to win. The phrase which kept coming up throughout the argument is 'this is a mothers' fight, it does not concern anyone else, only the mothers should be involved'. This argument assumes firstly that only the mothers at Rea Street at the present are affected by the closure and secondly that the mothers are strong enough on their own to win the battle.



Rea Street nursery is due for closure in the spring of January 1977. The mothers were informed of this decision on Friday 25 June three weeks before the end of term. Immediately the mothers started to organise to save the nursery. A notice went up in the school calling a meeting of all parents involved and a petition was started. Plans were discussed for a march to the education department in the city.

The following Monday, councillor Scrimshale came down to see the mothers. 'I'm really all with you he said 'but there's nothing you can do'. On Thursday, a group of mothers went up to the education department and spoke to Mr Lee, deputy education officer. He held out no hope of keeping Rea Street open. And he insisted that in fact under the new arrangements there were going to be more nurseries places not fewer. First there would be no new nurseries opened at Hope Street which would take 60 kids and another 60 would go to Chandos nursery. That sounds great, it sounds as if the area would gain twenty places because Rea Street only takes 100.

In fact it wouldn't work that way. Chandos is already full and has its own waiting list. The head master there hadn't been officially informed he was supposed to take the spill-over from Rea Street and as far as he is concerned his own waiting list takes priority. So there are no places there. But even if the kids could be fitted in at Chandos, the accommodation at Hope Street bears no comparison with the facilities at Rea Street.

The mothers are arguing that there is a crying need for nursery facilities in the city centre. Why not

LABOUR DITCHES THE POOR

The government has backed out of its plan to give weekly benefits to every mother for every child. They want to get away with giving us just a pound family allowance for the first child. They promised at least £2.70 for each child, from next April.

But then they sold us out.

Now a campaign has been launched to make them keep their promise. Ruth Lister, of Child

Poverty Action, described its launching like this:

'First there is a petition on which we hope to gather one million signatures, by Christians.

Then we want maximum publicity with posters, badges and stickers. Leaflets explaining the issue will be sent with each petition form, to

organisations and individuals involved. We want you to use the petition as an organiser. Lobby your MPs. Write to your local papers. Call public meetings. It's up to all of us to publicise this issue so it's a public issue... not just discussed in the precincts of parliament'.

Ruth Lister added: 'It's just the way it was in the

late sixties, with Labour ditching the poor. Child Poverty Action was 'very unpopular then because we coined the slogan "The poor got poorer under Labour".'

'In this case the Labour back-benchers were played off against the TUC. The leaked official documents showed that the chief whip told Callaghan there was no strong

feeling on the issue among back-benchers. This is what was told to the TUC. But no one knows a single back-bencher who was even asked at that stage. The chief whip seems to have made it up.'

'The TUC leaders who met Healey didn't know much about it anyway. They were told men's take home pay would go down enormously they were given a figure which only applies in very big families getting lots of tax allowance—and they got the wind up.'

'When we wrote to the union leaders, we got very unsatisfactory replies. They're misinformed, or they just try to dodge it.'

Why benefits are important...

1. The plan for child benefits came about as part of the legislation on womens rights, equal Pay, Anti-Discrimination Act, and Child Benefits, all heralded by Barbara Castle as part of International Womens Year.
2. Child Benefits meant a payment to women, for the purpose of bringing up children. It would give many women their only (tiny) bit of independence from their husbands' wage packets.
3. A survey conducted by 'womens Own' magazine, published in September last year showed that one in five wives were handed not one penny more housekeeping money by their husbands, in a year when prices rose by 26 per cent. It was shown that the lower the husband's take home pay, the less likely it was that the women had



received any increase in the preceding year. The average housekeeping given was £18.75, as opposed to £16.35 a year before. To keep pace with inflation the new average ought to have been £19.88. The men averaged a £5.59 increase.

The evidence shows that many men used whatever increase they had had in their wages to meet higher costs on

their own outgoings, such as fares, cigarettes and beer.

4. Women separated from their husbands would have the child benefit in their hand every week, as they have now with the family allowance. At the moment, the child tax allowance goes to the husband, and the wife is dependent on him to allow her it in maintenance.

5. Women on social security often have to wait for giro cheques delayed in the post, or not sent. They would at least have the child benefit every week, at the post office. At the moment they are sometimes left with only £1.50 per child family allowance to get by on if anything happens to their giro cheque. They would also have child benefit in their hand if their money was stopped when it was claimed they were co-habiting.
6. The phasing out of child subsidies and the coming 10p increase in school dinners, as well as taxation and claw-back have already more than eaten away the small increase in family allowance payments. The government last year justified phasing out food subsidies on the grounds there would be child benefits. Now we're left with neither.

Try to get this through your union

This branch is disgusted at the government's abandonment of the Child Benefit Scheme and the way in which this was traded off for the TUC's acceptance of the 4% per cent wage limit. We call for the full implementation of the scheme with benefits to be paid to the mother and call on the union executive to do all in its power to bring this about, including raising the question with union sponsored members of parliament, and fighting for this policy at the TUC in Brighton in September.

Report by Sheila McGregor

Birmingham
RIGHT TO WORK Campaign
STOP THE CUTS

STOP THE CUTS

SAVE
REA ST.
NURSERY

THE CUTS

Birmingham women fight to keep their nursery

keep open Rea Street and open Hope Street as an additional place for the three high rise blocks towering round it. What is needed is more nursery places, not fewer.

When the mothers asked why Rea Street had to be closed, each time they were given a different set of reasons. Either it was too big to heat, or it was going to be converted into a junior school. Or the land was going to be sold for alternative development, or the buildings were too old. The only thing that came across loud and clear was, that no matter what the reasons, Rea Street was going to be closed.

After the visit to Lee the mothers decided to organise a march with the children to the education department, supported by the local Right to Work Campaign, which produced posters and leaflets. These were taken and distributed right round the local

estates. Petitions were taken into factories, including Cadbury Schweppes where a whole number of women work. People started working enthusiastically for the demonstration on 8 July.

Then the pressure started. The headmistress instructed the teachers to have nothing to do with the march. The mothers were told they couldn't take either their kids or the animals on the march.

On Thursday, everyone turned up at the nursery as planned, ready for the march.

When the march arrived at the education department, a deputation went into see the education officer.

Whilst the deputation was inside, the reporter from the Birmingham Mail was sniffing around talking to the mothers who opposed the Right to Work. Predictably, that evening, the Mail carried a story about 'left wing

militants who had 'joined the march'. Without mentioning the fight to keep open the school, or the mothers who welcomed the support, the Mail used story as yet another means of slanging the left.

Some of the mothers are convinced that the education authorities and the teachers are pulling a fast one.

In the last week of term, some of the kids started crying over the pets. One of the teachers told the kids that Rebel, the donkey, had gone to live in a big field on his own. And when one of the teachers was challenged by the mothers, she just went bright red. (The mothers are also convinced that some of the big climbing frames have disappeared). The teachers aren't reassuring the kids that the animals haven't gone forever, either, which they would normally do, if the animals had just gone for the summer holidays.

After the march, the argument about how to continue the campaign, with or without the Right to Work campaign. A meeting was organised with the mothers and a spokeswoman from the Right to Work. After several hours argument, the meeting voted to keep the support of the Right to Work and build up the campaign for the beginning of the next term. This means getting the maximum support from families in the area and taking the fight into the factories. We know that if Rea Street closes it is only the tip of the iceberg. Other schools, old people's homes and hospitals will follow. Rea Street nursery affects us all. If we can build a city wide campaign in Birmingham to save Rea Street we can then be confident about facing the round of cuts just announced by the local council.

Picture: Patti Mazelan (IFL)

I've been a nurse working in the NHS for 15 years. As a student nurse I worked in a hospital in Birmingham which has a large private wing. As students we were given no choice about working on these wards. I spent three months on my junior night duty here.

The rest of the hospital had poky little sterilizing rooms. In fact they were supposed to be broom cupboards because they had forgotten to build proper rooms when they designed the place. But the private wards had specially converted rooms, you had plenty of room to sterilise equipment there.

CONSULTANTS

The patients' kitchen was also specially large and every morning I had to fill thirty silver teapots and hot water jugs and thirty toast racks (ordinary patients just got bread and butter). I never got near a patient to do any surgical or nursing procedures. Neither did junior doctors. Only consultants, thank you. They were treated like gods; we had to open doors for the, never question them.

I only found out recently that the professor on the maternity wing is a leader in the SPUC organisation (anti-abortion). We were never

PRIVATE LUXURY PUBLIC SQUALOR

taught to criticise their attitudes. They just went on making money. And using us as cheap labour to service their private patients.

We were taught that being friendly with the porters and ancillary staff was not done! I got £9 per month pay after living-in expenses were

deducted. This was 1961 not 1861, by the way. There was a demo in London about nurses pay, but we were threatened with dismissal if we attended. We didn't get the pay rise Enoch Powell (then Minister of Health) gave us. And we worked at least a 46 hour week.

CASUALTY

A few years later I worked as a staff nurse in a hospital in the East End of London on casualty night duty. We had hardly any equipment and what we had was out of date and often didn't work. We had no X-ray service all night even though we often had had road accidents in from the Barking by-pass.

I worked alone in casualty with a porter who often had to help me do stomach washouts and deal with violent patients. Often there were only two qualified State Registered Nurses (SRNs) on duty in the hospital, me and a sister. Most of the other staff were auxiliaries who often had to look after very ill patients.

Most of us were women with children whose husbands looked after the kids at night when we worked. Sometimes I only had 3 or 4 hours sleep during the day when my boy was at the nursery or asleep with me.



Surprise, surprise, report goes against us!

So, the Parliamentary Select Committee set up to look into the James White Bill, has finally come out with a shocking report. They propose to destroy our already limited rights to abortion, granted under the 1967 act.

What can we expect from a committee made up entirely of anti-abortionists? And, is it a surprise to find not a single mention of the way in which their proposals will affect women, and how much suffering they will inflict? Of course not.

There are fifteen recommendations in the report. And, although they might sound fairly mild, although the committee may say they want to curb abuses to make the Act work better—these recommendations mean only one thing. They mean massive restrictions, and they mean that—if they are introduced—it will be much more difficult for women to get legal abortions.

The most startling recommendations of the Select Committee are:

☐ Banning all abortions after 20 weeks, instead of 28.

☐ Police officers to be given unrestricted access to all records in abortion clinics, pregnancy testing or advice offices and referral agencies.

☐ Licencing and further limiting of all abortion agencies and pregnancy testing services.

☐ Complete secrecy to anyone who makes a complaint so that doctors may not know what they are accused of.

☐ An open conscience clause—anyone may refuse to do anything connected with an abortion even clerical work without giving a reason.

☐ Fines to be increased to £1000.

The effects of such proposals would be to totally intimidate doctors, who would never know whether they were walking into a trap laid by anti-abortionists. All the confidentiality which genuinely pregnant women have a right to would disappear. Instead the SPUC tricksters, whose sole aim is to sabotage our rights over our bodies, would receive this privilege.

And the many women who are delayed in the present system until they're forced to go through the ordeal of a late

abortion would have no hope at all.

These are the main points of their proposals. Their aim is to cut down the number of legal abortions. But measures like this will not bring down the number of women seeking abortions. And women will have no option but to return to the dangers of the back-street abortionist.

The safest, easiest kind of abortion is an early abortion. These proposals say nothing about making it easier to get earlier abortions, and it is this that we have to fight for.

BACKSTREET ABORTION KILLS

JUST two weeks before the Parliamentary Select Committee on Abortion is preparing to give its report, suggesting changes to restrict our abortion rights still further, the newspapers reported the case of Pamela Slater, a 23 year old woman, who died from an illegal backstreet abortion.

Pamela Slater went to see her doctor, who told her that she was a 'borderline case' for a National Health abortion. So she took the only way should find to have an abortion. She got a back-street abortion, carried out with the stem of a plastic flower. It cost her £40.

This operation cost her her life. She was forced to go to a backstreet— a abortionist because of the inadequate NHS provision for abortion services.

The woman who gave Pamela Slater the abortion was jailed for seven years. It was her second offence related to abortion. But the real

criminal is the system which drives women to her.

There is only one way to avoid tragedies like this. By having free abortion being available on demand. Laws making abortion illegal will never make it go away. We know that there is a much higher abortion rate in countries where abortion is illegal.

We must continue the fight for free abortion on demand. It's a woman's right to choose.

Abortion in Demand by Victoria Greenwood and Jock Young £1.65. This book will be published by Pluto Press in September, and Pluto are giving a pre-publication offer of 10 copies for £12. An excellent book to use in your NAC group.

letters

Black ghettos

A REPORT just published by the Community Relations Commission proves that immigrants are much worse housed than non-immigrants. They are usually not eligible for council housing and are forced to buy dilapidated houses in slum areas—houses which no-one would live in if they had any other choice.

To call these houses slums is not an insult to the people living in them. The real insult is to make anyone, black or white, live there, especially when we know that good housing could easily be provided for everyone in this country.

Mr John Buckley, director of housing at the London Borough of Brent, thinks that 'black communities should be dispersed' to promote integration and to avoid racial violence caused by non-immigrants. 'Fear of the ghetto'. Does he also think that white communities should be dispersed? All socialists should be totally opposed to such a policy in housing or in

education. It is right-wing hypocrisy to accuse the black communities of provoking racism. The people who cause racism are the racists. They attack blacks whether they are isolated in so-called 'white' areas, or whether they are concentrated in a 'black' area.

To force people to live in any area, to 'disperse' them or to 'concentrate' them like the Nazis did to the Jews and the South African Government does to the blacks is discrimination. And it means pushing people around as if they are cattle.

Blacks should be given the same housing rights as whites. We must fight for slums to be cleared and everyone to be allowed to choose where they live. And we must be totally opposed to any policy which discriminates between people on the grounds of colour.

Sylvia Gibbs, (Stepney, East London).

Ed: We would like to hear readers' views on this and on the question of passive discrimination. We will be printing articles on housing in the next issue of *Womens Voice*.

• Housing in a multi-racial community. C.R.C., 15-16, Bedford Street, London, W2E 9JN



Picture: John Sturrock (Report)

But the union leaders sell out at the first sign of action.

The main issues are the same for French and UK workers: welfare, pay, race, health and safety. So I am going to take out a regular subscription to *Womens Voice* to keep myself informed. I'll also send you an article about French conditions when I get back—if I get the time to write it, because I had three kids before I became militant.

Christina Di Rosa (Rouen) Ed: Great! We look forward to hearing about women and workers in France. But Christina's letter shows the need for nurseries for all women.

Boycott Scarborough

THE Liberal Party have decided to boycott Scarborough after the Council refused to let the Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE) meet there. The

All this is of course idealistic under the present society. Nevertheless, we should attempt to alleviate the situation by demands for day-nurseries, nursery schools, better maternity care, paternity leave, paid time off for children's sickness for both parents, etc. NSPCC cases are tragic but will continue to occur until our attitudes on childcare are changed, until society is changed. Iris Dore, (London).

reason they gave for the refusal was that the National Front or other fascists might attack the girls.

I'm glad to see that *Womens Voice* published a letter showing the connection between the National Front and fascism. I'd like to remind *Womens Voice* that the fascists are not just racist and anti-gay. Historically they are also totally opposed to women's freedom. The Nazis had a policy of glorifying 'children, kitchen and church' for women. We should oppose women being forced into this role.

We should also campaign for our trade unions to boycott Scarborough and not go for holiday ourselves to a town which gives in to the National Front bullies. Barbara Knott, Kettering Ed: What do other readers think about the policy of boycotts?

Letter from the Queen

THE trials of the mercenaries in Angola caused a great deal of concern among our ruling class. In an attempt to save the lives of paid killers, both the Prime Minister and the Queen sent telegrams to the Angolan Government pleading for their release.

It's a pity that these eminent people don't share the same concern for old age pensioners who die every year from cold and hunger. Perhaps they would consider sending a telegram to the electricity board asking them not to kill quite so many people this year. Sarah Wood, Infield.

Sexist letter

I COLLECTED money for the Irco strikers. I was amazed to see that the official AFEW strike appeal was addressed at the top to 'Dear Sir and Brother', but it about time something was done about this. On an equal pay strike... it's just too much.

Patricia Radford, Oxford. Ed: This point was raised at a Right to Work meeting in North London where Emma Roberts of the Engineering Union was speaking. He said that the union was revising its rule book and all its material to take account of women members. The winner the better!

Bingo!

EQUIPPED with a bundle of *Womens Voice* we sold outside our local bingo hall and sold four copies the first time. On our second attempt, we sold none and made a good contact.

It is easy to push reading matter as there is usually a boring wait inside until the game starts. It is also important that we make ourselves and *Womens Voice* known to the women of the area, not only on estates sales, but at all their haunts. Jill Moorman, (Grays, Essex).

PART-TIME MUMS

I LIKE to reply to Janet Collins' letter on part-time mums. I agree with the sentiments expressed in her letter that emotional stability is more important than acquiring such things as double garages and electric tools—but I would like to point out that nowadays the vast majority of parents have to work to provide the basics of life and not the extras.

I also disagree with her point that it should be women who should try to get

part-time employment. This implies that the emotional stability of the family is the sole responsibility of mothers. Ideally both parents should be able to work such hours which will enable them to share the joys and strains of their children.

Children are also the responsibility of the community and there should be adequate day-care facilities, not only to let parents work but also to enable the children to develop socially.

WHAT'S GOING ON IN POLAND

WHY IS Poland, which is supposed to be socialist, involved in the capitalist crisis? And why are the Polish rulers using capitalist, anti-working class solutions?

Firstly because Poland is not a socialist country. In a socialist country it would be the workers who held power. The economy would be run in the interests of all the workers, with no bosses living off the backs of the workers.

Instead of which power is held by people like Gierk (and Brezhnev and Kosygin in Russia) - bureaucrats who subordinate the needs and lives of Poland's workers to the drive to build up industry. Again and again they've told workers to accept low living standards and long working hours. Why? Only so that Poland can take part in the rat race of capitalist competition. But because all these capitalists were trying to turn out more and more goods, for sale abroad, while keeping wages down as much as possible, they all got caught in the same trap of overproduction. In other words the amount they were paying out was not enough to buy all the goods they wanted to sell. So they can't make the profits they've planned for - and they're trying to make the workers pay. Like the UK government, the Polish leaders tried to avoid the effects of the crisis by borrowing from western banks to pay for their ever-increasing imports, and now they too have got massive interest charges to pay off. The straw that broke this camel's back was the Russian leaders pushing up the price of the oil they sold to Poland and demanding payment in dollars. Which means Poland has to export more goods or borrow more money. Either way workers' living standards are likely to be cut.

And the Polish bureaucrats like the British bosses, have had their own 'sacrifices': private kindergartens, 'special schools', chauffeur-driven cars, domestic servants, second houses, wholesale bribery and so on.

The workers, on the other hand, are not allowed to organise freely in trade unions and are subject to controls and oppression that could not possibly exist in a 'workers' state'. Poland is not a socialist country.

In September's issue we'll be publishing an eye-witness account of living conditions in USSR.

STEALING FROM THE POOR TO FEED THE RICH

Since 1973 over £1000 million has been cut off education spending, with the result that 30,000 teachers will be unemployed in September, schoolmeals are going to rise by 66 per cent, more and more kids are in overcrowded classes, in ancient unprepared buildings, and the Tories are still howling for more cuts.

But their kids are the least likely to suffer from the education cuts. Their kids, and the kids of Labour MPs and Trade Union officials, go to private schools. And WE PAY FOR THAT AS WELL! In 1976 the Local Education Authorities will be spending £80m on private

schools. That means our rates are paying for posh kids to go to posh schools where they've got more teachers (who're paid better). There the kids will be trained to be the bosses of the future. So that next time round our kids will be forking out the fees for their kids to become the next lot of bosses!

These are the people who are squeezing the blood out of our education system. There's isn't even scratched! The so-called 'harsh economic realities' don't hurt them. Yet that £80 million subsidy could provide 20,000 more teachers for our kids. Is your LEA stealing from your kids to feed the rich?

Price rises can be stopped

IN June a massive strike by workers in Poland forced the government to abandon its version of the 'social contract'. Thousands of workers streamed out of factories as they heard the announcement of 60-100 per cent price rises. Car workers, tractor factory workers and ship-yard workers all went out. Workers immobilised the Paris-Warsaw Express, and thousands more demonstrated in the streets.

The last time the government tried to raise prices, in 1970, strikes in Gdansk, Gdynia and Szczecin led to vicious police attacks in which scores of workers were murdered in the streets, but the strike wave spread until a general strike seemed certain.

Gomulka was forced to resign, and was replaced by the liberal-seeming Gierk. But it was only after more strikes that a two-year price freeze was announced. And now it's Gierk who's trying to raise prices, just like his predecessor.

Since 1970 prices haven't risen much—but there's been more rationing in the shops and other hidden cuts in living standards. Now the rulers of Poland, like the rulers of every other country caught up in the international capitalist crisis, are trying to make the workers pay for it. They too say the price rises and pay freeze are needed to give 'lower paid workers' and pensioners small rises—nothing like enough to pay the extra prices.

But the success of the workers' spontaneous refusal to give in has shown workers everywhere how to respond to such blackmail.

POLISH STRIKERS JAILED

32 strikers have been jailed for their part in the 26 June strikes. The sentences carry a minimum of three years.

If you want to know why the regimes of the Eastern-bloc countries are not socialist, and how the governments ruthlessly suppress the workers—then this book is essential reading. A similar insight into the suppression of left-wing opposition in Russia after the rising in Czechoslovakia (1968) is contained in Red Square at Noon by Natalia Gorbanevskaya (Penguin 50p)—who was eventually declared insane and imprisoned and tortured in an asylum in Russia for her part in the protest.

Chris Harman Bureaucracy and Revolution in Eastern Europe Available from Bookmarks, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 £2.00 plus 30p postage

French revolutionary sister speaks out

EVERY YEAR, at Whitsun, Lutte Ouvriere—one of the biggest revolutionary organisations in France—holds a fete in a rural setting outside Paris.

Over the years, it has visitors from many foreign groups, including the International Socialists. This year, we were able to obtain an interview with Arlette Laguiller, one of Lutte

Arlette Laguiller

Ouvriere's best-known militants.

Arlette has worked for the large French bank Credit Lyonnais since she was a teenager, and for many years she has been at the forefront of the struggle to better the conditions of the hundreds of typists, accountants,

cashiers, and secretaries who make up the Credit workforce.

After having worked in a number of local branches, she is today the equivalent of the convener of the massive central headquarters in Paris, where in the early seventies she led a

three week strike/occupation which won.

From this workplace base, Arlette became Lutte Ouvriere's main TV and radio spokesperson during the parliamentary elections of 1973. She was Lutte Ouvriere's candidate in the presidential elections in 1974—the first woman candidate in French history—and she won over 600,000 votes.

WV What are the questions among the women at the moment at the Credit Lyonnais?

AL The fact is, the main worries of my members at the moment, both for the men and the women, are the question of the wages and of unemployment.

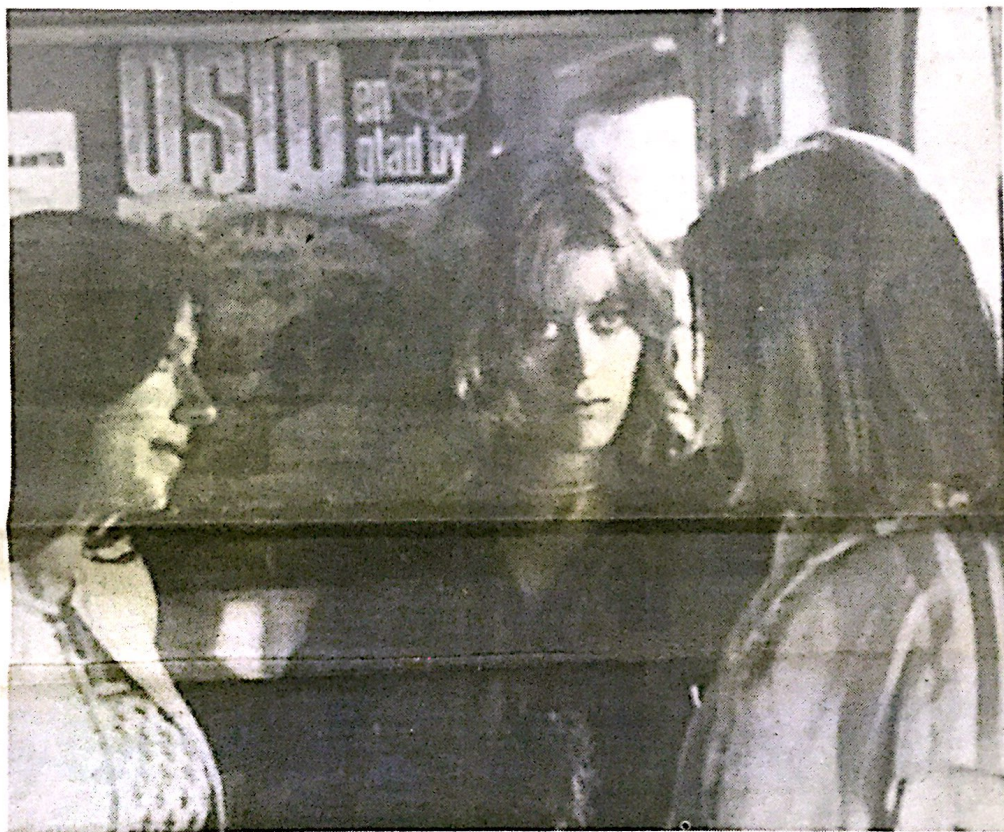
WV There has been a very active campaign around the abortion issue in France.

AL Well, there is a big debate inside MLAC (the French abortion and contraception campaign) which has been fighting very repressive laws on abortion (Last year, the law was liberalised.) Since Giscard (the French president) has announced his reforms in 1974 which made it easier to get an abortion, there are some who want to continue the fight for abortion on demand, while others say the MLAC should disband because the fight has been won. We obviously say the fight is never won until we have abortion on demand. In reality it is still very difficult to get an abortion if you want one, you have to get the permission of doctors, give reasons and so on.

Many women saw the campaign as a reformist one. Unfortunately there are many women in France who had illusions in Françoise Giroud (the Minister for the Condition of Women). This even includes some of the radical feminists. They really believed things would change just because a woman was appointed. We said it wouldn't change anything at all. I'm sure you agree. A few women at the top cannot change the system just like that! There have been a few silly little reforms, they introduced longer holidays for women workers. Only there was a problem they are not paid holidays. What's the use of that? Single women would have to get the money they lose from their holidays from somewhere else. If they are married, their husbands would have to work harder to make up.

Of course I had all sorts of letters from all sorts of women who sent a few francs and wished me luck. But I don't think it was a question of illusions. Nobody thought I was going to win in the first place. Then the most noticeable reaction was pride, pride in the fact that we'd always known that a woman could do it, but we'd never been given the chance. I'll never forget a letter I had from one woman who sent about three francs. She was in her forties, she said she'd been waiting all her life for this moment. Pride was the thing, more than anything else.

Judith Condon reviews a new film by a woman director



WIVES

Wives, a Norwegian film directed by Anja Breien. (N)

There are still all too few women making films, and all too few films like *Wives*.

Three young women meet up at a reunion. They decide to go to a sauna together. Gradually the day moves on and

they don't go home.

One is a young factory worker, who is separated from her husband. The second has a small child and lives in a block of flats. The third is very heavily pregnant.

They begin to have fun together, as if they have been released from prison. They go for a sortie through the market place, larking about like young girls. They visit the mother of one of them, who hands over a family heir-loom, an old clock, a hideous thing, which they are then forced to carry about all day.

CHEEKY

All the time they are tempted to phone their husbands. They row about it. One of them keeps thinking she sees her husband coming down the street, but it's not him.

But they resist. They grow cheeky. They start

chatting up men walking down the street, just as men usually chat up women. The men are acutely embarrassed.

They go to a bar and are picked up by two photographers, who take them to their studio. Getting drunk and dancing they suddenly feel repulsed by all the exploitative images of women around them on the walls, and in the form of a giant inflatable doll, which they proceed to deflate.

One really funny scene finds them behind three toilet doors, in a row of four. Across the cubicles they're talking to one another about what has happened to them. A

middle aged lady comes out of the fourth cubicle; she has been listening to it all and can't believe her ears.

FEMALE

They stay out all night. It turns out that the woman who has a baby also has a lover, and they stay in his flat.

Slowly all three begin to realise they are unhappy, weighed down by their role, their female role.

The worker goes in to pick up her wages, and is sacked on the spot for taking the day off.

One calls at home to

see her husband, who is deeply hurt, resentful that she has just taken off, but angrier still at having to cope, standing resentful in his rubber gloves and apron. He tries to go off to work again, but she makes her escape.

The three finish up on a boat trip. They realise all through the last one and a half days they've been buying things to take home as presents, buying little bargains they didn't really need. They have to count their money, to see how much they've got between them. It all ends up in the air. It ends when they say, 'We can't go back now.'

This is a fine film - for

all that it draws no conclusions. These women have broken if only for a few hours, with the suffocating roles forced on them. They leave their men and families behind because it's the only way they can get clear of guilt and responsibility for even one day. Even so it takes them a long time to stop feeling like wicked school children. Their first act is to go to be refreshed in a sauna. They sit naked together, one of them full-bellied in pregnancy.

CHANGE

Through the day they see each other in another kind of nakedness. In just a few hours they learn and discover and change themselves.

Some of it is really funny, a lot of it is deadly serious. It's all very moving and challenging. If you get the chance, don't fail to see it.



Recording of 'I'm Gonna Be An Engineer' by Peggy Seeger—35p plus 15p p&p. Available from *Woman's Right to Choose*, 88a Islington High Street London, N1. Also an album of Peggy Seeger singing women's songs, including *Nine Month Blues*, will be available from *Woman's Right to Choose* from mid-September, price £1.75 plus postage and packing.

Collective action is the only way

Where individual black people are isolated within the community they can become the first victims of fascists. One example of this in Leeds is a black woman living alone with her three kids on a council estate. She moved there in March and knows very few people in the area. One night in June she saw a man painting racist slogans on the walls of her house at 11.30 at night. She chased him home—he lives two doors away—but he refused to clean off what he had written. You'll have to get me first was his challenge. His handiwork, written in 3 foot letters included a swastika, the words Nigger Go Home, and the initials BNP (the British National Party a Leeds based fascist group).

The Council was informed of the daubing via the rent collector. Ah, you will be receiving a letter about it he said. That was six weeks ago, and predictably nothing has been heard. An attempt to get the local councillor to take up the issued failed. Womens Voice supporters visited his house eight times, but never found him in, and we got no reply to messages left for him. So much for representation. The police, ever vigilant at tracking down young black thugs in areas like Chapeltown in Leeds,

have passed the slogans on many occasions and done nothing to investigate a clear case of criminal damage.

Not one person from the estate spoke to, or went to see the black women about this incident. Although several people were horrified about it, nothing was done until the local IS branch got to hear about it. We decided to take up the slogan 'Black and White Unite and Fight' in a very practical way and clean off the daubing ourselves. After we had leafleted the estate and taken round a petition, several people from the estate came to help us.

This sort of action can lead to individual blacks being drawn much more into the community. This woman was a perfect target for a fascist because of her position as a black in a largely white area, a single parent family and a newcomer to the area. She was angry enough to chase the fascist away from her house but she could not rely on the council or the police to do anything about the slogans. Only collective action and support from both black and white people in the community did that. That is why fighting racialism and fascism at the grass roots level is so important.

BLACK AND WHITE UNITE AND FIGHT

Picture: Angela Phillips (RFL)



Six black girls were harassed by police and arrested in Harlesden. Local people reacted immediately by picketing the police station until the girls were released, and then calling a local demonstration. There was also a picket of the court when the girls appeared there. Only action like this will stop police harassment.

Women picket racist paper

Members of the North London Womens Voice Group joined a picket called by the North London Right to Work Campaign outside the offices of our local paper, the Tottenham Weekly Herald.

We were protesting against the racist editorial policy of the paper and the racially biased articles which appear week after week. A local councillor who, as the Evening Standard put it was elected 'on a straight racist ticket' can't make a remark without it being splashed across the front page. When Haragey Trades Council organised a picket of a local disco which was operating a colour bar, the Herald totally ignored it.

So we turned up at the Herald offices with placards demanding 'Racism Out of the Herald' and handed out leaflets to passers-by explaining why we were picketing.

What we want to see in the Herald is articles exposing job

discrimination and police harassment of black youths. Journalists and printers employed on the paper should follow the policy of their union and refuse to have anything to do with racially biased articles.

In Haragey journalists went on strike twice, successfully, refusing to work if National Front advertisements were let into the paper.

This is the only way to stop the paper being the mouthpiece of the local racists and fascists.

The fight against the racists
The National Front and how to smash it. A Socialist Worker pamphlet. 10p a copy plus 7p postage from: SW Distributors, 6 Cottons Gardens, London, E2

IN BRIEF

LIBRIUM AND VALIUM may cause hare lip in unborn babies—warning from the American Food and Drug Administration. Remember the case in which Hoffman La Roche tried to justify their massive profits on the manufacture of these drugs? They said they used the money for research if they have to pay damages, will they follow Distillers (makers of Thalidomide) example, and claim the payments against tax? Heads they win, tails we lose

FIGHTING THE SLAVE TRADE

We hear a lot about the disgusting practices of 'white slave' traders. It operates the other way as well. Two Filipino sisters are claiming £17 million in damages, alleging that they were kept in virtual slavery by UN officials. It's a class action suit in which they're suing on behalf of any employee past or present, in similar circumstances—and if they win the money will go to any validated claims.

BE A SEXPERT

1. The average male sexual organ can double in size in three seconds. That's as long as it takes you to say yes.
 2. Do make sure that you could lie down in any dress you own.
 3. Some young men can go on making love over and over again. But generally over the age of 30 this is not so. So don't nag.
- If you didn't know, that you haven't been reading the Sun. But don't trust out for the back copies. Womens Voice will be running its own articles on sexuality soon.

PAID CHILD CARE - FRENCH STYLE

The French government has just passed a law which gives both parents the right to 16 consecutive or 12 intermittent days leave on full pay to look after sick children. That makes a minimum of 24, and a maximum of 30 per family. In Britain such leave is usually discretionary and unpaid—it's something to fight for.

POLICE HARASSMENT

To arrest Mrs. Neilson on minor charges connected with stolen postal orders can only be seen as a witch-hunt by the bullies in blue. They're quite happy to let big time tax dodgers off, or wifebeaters.

Congratulations to

Nadia Comaneci for her fantastic gymnastics. SLADE at the Evening Standard for refusing to print a JAK cartoon. SLADE again for refusing to prepare 'Olympics' photographs—as a leaver in a pay dispute.

The 'lead boot' award to

Black American athlete Madeline Jackson who said: 'There is no way we will support them. We didn't get any support from the Africans in 1968 (the Black Power rebellion). Solidarity sisters!' The BBC commentator who ruined the women's gymnastics by his sexist comments such as 'they must have learned that from the men' and 'they're good sportsmen, just like the men'. The Daily Mirror for devoting a whole page for an special to a picture of Nadia Comaneci carrying a doll—entitled 'The World In Her Arms'!!

CHEAP CHOCOLATE!

If the price of chocolate falls soon, it's not a sudden epidemic of charity among the chocolate manufacturers. It's because they're trying to get rid of the dried milk mountain. Why is there a dried milk mountain? Because they won't give it to kids and they won't reduce the price. And if you think it's expensive at 9½ p a pint, Healey's new cuts will put it up to 11½ p in April.

This year's drought will mean a milk shortage next

year—but if they keep the dried milk until then they'd lose two chances of profits—because prices will rise again then.

Profits for the first half-year.

- Rank Organisation £44.03m
- Coral Leisure group 4.01m
- Arlington Motor Holdings 1.0m
- Rothschild Trust £4.7m
- Johnson-Richards £5.3m
- A. Preedy and Sons 0.85m
- M. L. Meyer £14.8m
- West Coast Tanneries 0.75m
- British American Tobacco £200m
- James Stroud £1.7m
- Greene King £2.77m

Orlakes

Orlakes, East London. Ninety women have just won union recognition of their union, the Transport and General Workers Union. But they had to fight. They were out on strike for ten weeks. But they stuck together and won in the end.

Womens Voice weekend school, Manchester 25/26 September. If you would like to come, write to Margaret Renn, 6 Cottons Gardens, London, E2.

The recent weekend school in London went very well. 28 women

came along—for discussions on the history of the family, the family today, women's oppression, women and socialism, the revolutionary party, and practical sessions on speaking at union meetings—which went down with a laugh!

Disaster—and the Catholic Church couldn't care less

THE WOMEN of Seveso in Italy have been told not to get pregnant for three years. They live in the area poisoned by the explosion at a chemical factory last week. What about the women who are already pregnant? Will they have to wait and see how badly deformed their children are?

All abortions are illegal

in Catholic Italy but the Italian Government has said that it MAY allow abortions for the women affected.

This is to be welcomed though it is hypocritical in making a special case of this tragedy, while still denying the right to choose in all other circumstances. The Catholic Church is opposed to abortion and contraception. What has it to say to the women of Seveso?

The poison that was released into the air is called TCDD. It is similar to the killer the Americans used in Vietnam. Two ounces of it in a reservoir could kill 11 million people. Yet the people of Northern Italy did not know it was being made in their midst. There was not even any safety procedure.

Only 4½ pounds of TCDD was released into the atmosphere, but already hundreds of people

are being treated for skin burns, pets are dying, livestock being slaughtered, and troops are digging over the earth. They have orders to shoot anyone who moves into the sealed off area.

Hoffman La Roche make TCDD. They use it to make Hexachlorophene. This chemical is banned in America, but is a common ingredient in deodorants, shampoos and skin cleaners in this country. 36 babies died in France because of talcum powder containing hexachlorophene. Hoffman La Roche also make high profits from overcharging the National Health Service. They make Librium and Valium—the two most common drugs doctors use to keep women quiet. The huge profits they make were so blatant that even the government, not famous for opposing

profits, took them to court. TCDD is being produced in the US, Britain and Austria. Where? Do the workers who produce it know what it is they're working with, and are there proper safety precautions? Why did it take over a week before the Italian government did anything about the explosion?

The Seveso affair throws up hundreds of unanswered questions. Dr Anne Walker, who treated victims of a similar explosion in Bolsover, Derbyshire, thinks that the only solution is to leave the area sealed off and barren for ever.

But that does not remove the fear of yet another similar tragedy, and it does not wipe out the tragedy already inflicted on thousands of workers and their families in Seveso.

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