

Womens VOICE

No 12

Price 10p

December



Firemen's wives fighting
Children's book reviews
Short story

THE SILENT MAJORITY

HOW CAN the firemen win? With your help; no matter who you are or what you do. They depend on you because they can't depend on their own union. Can you imagine having your first national strike for sixty years with every single one of your union executive opposed to the strike? That's what the firemen have to contend with, and that makes the practical help they get so important.

It's not just money in their own pockets the firemen are fighting for. It's money in all our pockets. It's a better standard of living for every working class family in the country. The Labour Government insists that in the national interest, to get the country back on its feet again, we all have to make sacrifices. But the price they demand is too high. Three years of wages being held down, with prices soaring sky high is making life impossible for hundreds of thousands of working class families.

They expect us, especially women, to sit quietly and watch it happen.

Lord Watkinson, president of the Confederation of British Industry, the employers union, told their conference a few weeks ago that they should be proud of the nation's housewives: *'There is no union to speak for them, or for their children. If they are prepared to go on, rising prices and all, exercising moderation in the national interest for a little longer, should we not all follow their example.'*

It must have come as a rude shock to Lord Watkinson when he discovered that all these wonderful housewives married to firemen are doing quite the opposite: demonstrating, picketing, collecting money on street corners, marching with their husbands and children through every town in

the country.

Lord Watkinson's housewives are a figment of his imagination. Women are not all pretty, passive creatures, prepared to tolerate every hardship the employers and the Government can throw in their direction.

Stand in a Tesco's queue for five minutes and you will hear what they think of the Government and its wages policy. Talk to a fireman's wife and you will hear what she thinks of Merlyn Rees.

Housewives don't want a diet of Jimmy Young and Tony Blackburn any more. They want something much more than that, and they are prepared to fight for it.

Housewives are the backbone of campaigns to keep open hospitals up and down the country. They are the ones who have fought to keep schools and nurseries open for their children. Housewives are going out to work and joining unions faster than anyone else.

Now is the testing time. Can we direct all that energy and determination to beat the Government, and help the firemen win? Can you organise a collection on your housing estate or down your street, and then get the women to carry it down to the nearest picket line. Can you contact the wives from your local station and persuade them to speak to Womens Voice meetings where you work or live. Can you get your union to support the firemen, not just with a resolution, but with money, support on the picket line, a demonstration in sympathy in working hours.

It's your strike too. What you do does matter.

Womens VOICE

Womens Magazine of the Socialist Workers Party

Womens World: Miss World is white this year, in case you hadn't noticed. Page 4

News: Womens Voice organises with firemen's wives; abortion; equal opportunities; reclaim the night and much more. Pages 5 to 11

Childrens books: What children think you should be buying for them. Pages 12 and 13

The Story behind Christmas: the impossible woman. Page 14

Herstory: Karl Marx meets up with the Virgin feminism. Page 15

Our Story: for the first time in Womens Voice, our own short story. Pages 16 and 17

Reviews: A book to make you burn the dinner. Pages 18 and 19

Your Health: how one woman learned to help herself. Page 20

Your Voice: once again we've had more letters than we can possibly print; but please keep writing. Before 17 December for the next issue. Pages 21 and 22.

What's Happening: If you can't meet the 17 December deadline then telephone in your ads for the next issue on Tuesday 4 January. Page 23

Cover Photo: Firemen's wives marching in Liverpool Phil McCowen.

The next issue of *Womens Voice* will be published a week later than usual, on the second Wednesday in January, because of the Christmas and New Year holidays. But your articles, letters, news still need to be with us by 17 December, so that we can have a holiday too!

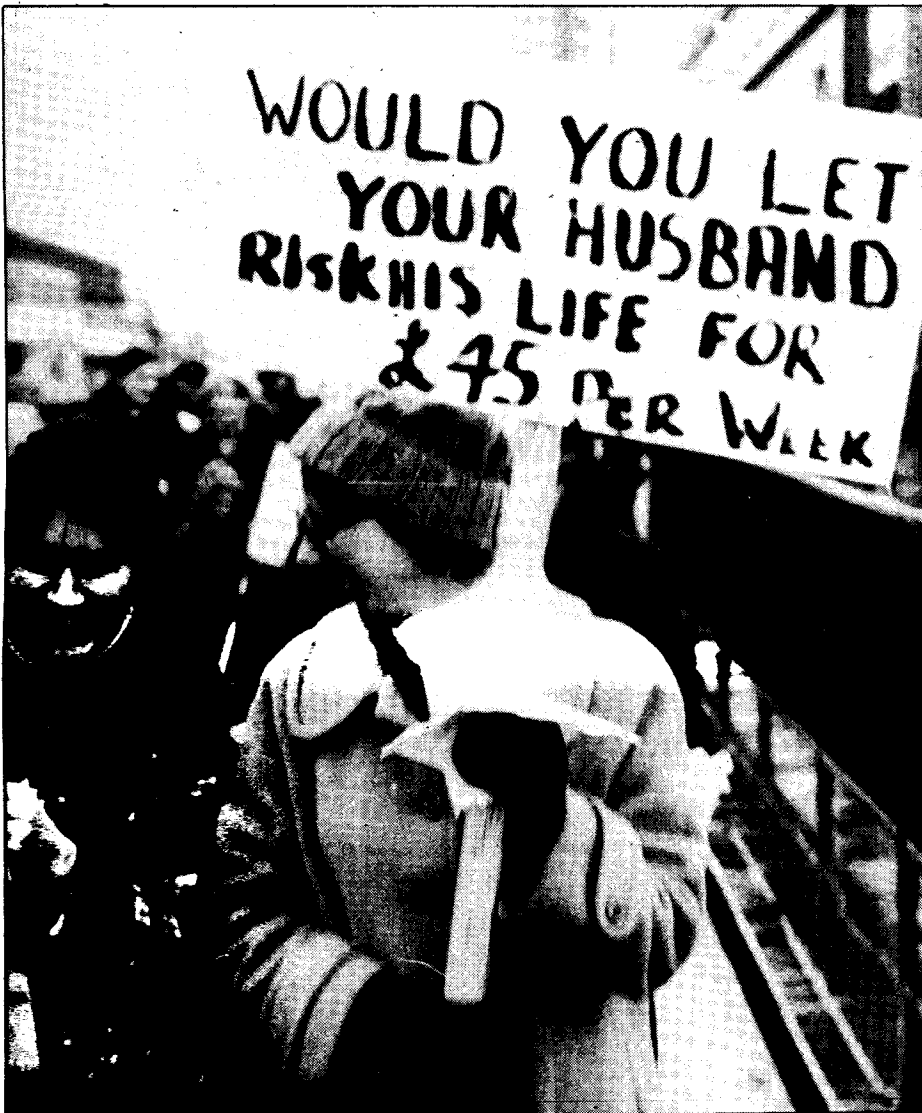
At the end of our first year of publication, happy holidays and a fighting New Year to us all.

May your Womens Voice group go on growing,

keep the news and letters flowing,
we don't care about it snowing
—we've got a revolution going

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FINDS ITS VOICE



YES! I'LL JOIN THE FIGHT

● Can you send me information about my local Womens Voice group and the Socialist Workers Party

● NAME

ADDRESS

Post to: Womens Voice,
6 Cottons Gardens, London E2

THE MISS WORLD CONTEST, for years attacked by screaming sour-faced feminists as 'degrading to women' has once again established beyond doubt its universal appeal. For at least the second time since 1898, a white woman last month won the coveted crown.

"Surely this will silence once and for all those who claim our judges are racially biased," said Joo Lia Mor-Lei speaking direct from the Miss World Headquarters in Mecca. "Beauty is international," added this dusky-skinned beauty.

Many times in the past European contestants have complained that the prizes always go to African, Asian and Arab countries. But this is just a matter of luck, says Mrs Mor-Lei. Critics also point out that the home nation's girl has reached the final seven in every single year except 1925.

"Perhaps our girls are just prettier," Mrs Mor-Lei explained.

There is just one thing basically wrong with the Miss World competition. The fact that it exists. Can there be anything more preposterous than this corny, jaded, line-up of slavishly shaved and quaintly competing women?

—Perhaps only the crumpled Andy Williams trying to look excited by it all.

But the screening of Miss World to millions of British television viewers was an even more distasteful business this year than most.

For while the cliches were rolling wet and slimy off the treacle tongue of Andy Williams, even as Miss Chile pranced her way across the boards of the Royal Albert Hall, her countrymen and women were risking imprisonment and death to speak out against the Chilean dictatorship in a documentary on the other channel.

A camera crew had filmed them secretly in Chile, and Jonathan Dimpleby narrated.

He told what life was like for working class people in Chile under Pinochet's dictatorship. Here, in what had been the oldest democracy in South America, terror now reigns supreme. Trade unionists have been relentlessly and systematically rounded up, tortured and murdered.

Miss Chile throws back her

MISS WORLD

shoulders and places her feet carefully.

The mass of the people are going hungry, while the elite within the army and the civil service become even richer and more powerful through expropriation and speculation.

Families live on monthly wages a fifth of the figure reckoned by the government to be necessary for supplying themselves with food alone. A quarter of a million peasants who benefited from land reform under Allende are now evicted and desolate as sub-standard human beings. The land farmed by their families for centuries, has been given as bribes and back-handers to the loyal servants of the military junta.

A whole new generation of Chilean children is growing up in defeat and poverty, hungry in their bellies and in their souls.

And Miss Chile turns at the end of the platform and parts her lips, but not in hunger.

This is a system where the powerful are positively encouraged to drive the weak to the wall. The great monopolies are gobbling up the rest. Fancy clubs and hotels spring up in Santiago to cater for the wealthy.

When he came to power, Pinochet caused to be erected a monument to Chile's new 'freedom', where a perpetual flame burns. It is a monumental lie, said Jonathan Dimpleby. And those who lend succour or credibility to the Pinochet regime are helping the cause of fascism, pure and simple.

Miss Chile stretches wide her eyes, moving them from side to side so they appear to sparkle.

The trade unionists who spoke in the documentary knew they were risking their lives by doing so. They said they had no choice. Not to speak out was simply to submit and be destroyed anyway.

Perhaps the saddest and most eloquent voice of all was that of the woman who had embroidered and appliqued a collage of protest, showing small female figures and before them the shadowy faces of their husbands, imprisoned and un-

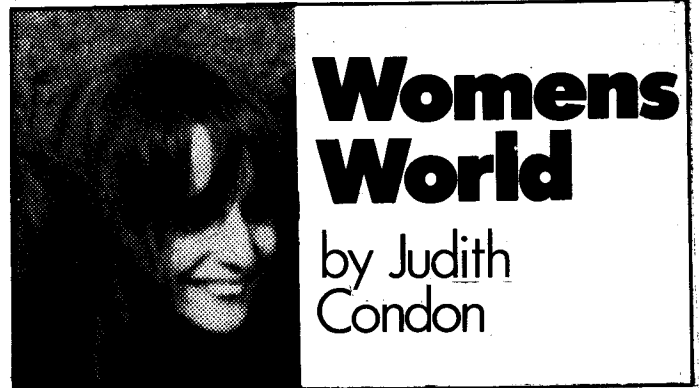
costumes; we must know nothing, ask nothing, think nothing of the women and men they left behind.

'I want to do good to other people not for my own glory but for the glory of god,' trotted out at double speed the lily-white Miss United States from the southern state of Virginia. 'Swedish rhapsody', trumpeted the headlines when the lily-white Miss Sweden eventually won.

It's all bread and circuses. A sick spectacle at the expense of women and at the expense of all oppressed people.

This is a paragraph taken from a letter written by a victim of the fascist regime in Chile, sent to British trade unionists who corresponded with him. He has been sentenced to jail, and his only hope is to obtain a visa to leave Chile for the foreseeable future.

'I say goodbye gratefully in

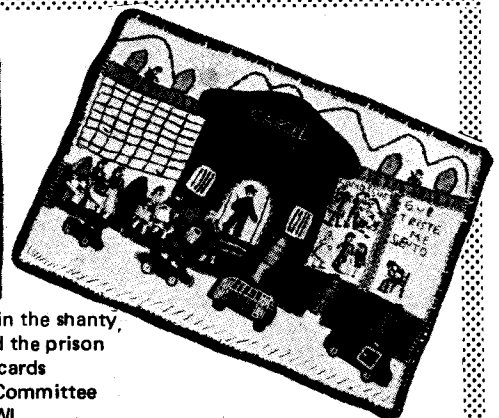
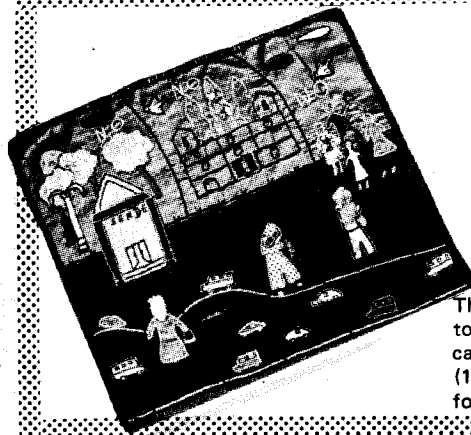


dergoing torture.

Miss Chile had an audience of perhaps a hundred million people or more. A single word of protest from her would have gone echoing round the world.

But course that is the last thing we would expect to happen. Miss World makes sure we're all tuned to the other side. We must only see the painted dolls in their phony national

the name of my wife and my son, who both want to write to you to thank you for the lovely gesture of solidarity from you all, and I am sure that theirs is the gratitude of a whole people, who at the moment are suffering in many ways. Thank you dear friends—the bonds that unite us are strong and one day the sun will shine for everybody.'



These tapestries were made from scraps of material in the shanty towns around Santiago. They show the hospital and the prison camp. They are available as a set of full-colour postcards (10p each or £1.10p for a set of 12) from the Chile Committee for Human Rights, 1 Cambridge Terrace, London NW1.

THERE ARE no firepersons. Women don't work in the fire service except in a few clerical jobs. But that doesn't mean this strike is a men's strike. The women who live with the firemen, their wives, and mothers, sisters and daughters are just as much affected by the outcome of the strike. It's their standard of living, their children's education, which is going down the drain. They too are low paid workers who will be one step nearer a decent wage rise if the firemen win.

The firemen's wives have shown how women can organise in a strike. Not like the wives of the Cowley car workers, to get their men back to work, but to help them win.

South East London: our *Womens Voice* group organised a street meeting in Woolwich on the Saturday before the firemen's strike, to give plenty of publicity to their case. It was a well supported meeting: some firemen's wives, children and friends came along too. They handed out our leaflets and spoke to passers by. One of the firemen's daughters, aged 12, had written some notes and spoke through the megaphone in support of her dad. We collected just over £10 for the strike fund.

Jane Ashdown.

Manchester: About 100 firemen's wives turned out in pouring rain at County Hall on Saturday 19 November. They were angry and militant, and after a five minute walk around the empty County Hall, being clapped by Fire Brigade Union officials including the National Vice President, the women were clearly not satisfied.

They wanted to hand out leaflets and put their case in the shopping centre. So, led off by Angela Smith, a fireman's wife from Irlan and her sister Judith Jones from North Manchester *Womens Voice* group, the vast majority of the women marched down Market Street leafletting and chanting 'Firemen Save Your Lives, Pay the Firemen Now' and 'If you want a decent wage, clap your hands'.

We got a lot of sympathy and money, and publicity on the BBC national News, and the front page of the Manchester Evening News, which we would never have got if we'd gone home after five minutes.

Salford: On the same day about 200 women, escorted by firemen, marched from the fire station to Salford shopping precinct in an absolute downpour. There was no

THE firemen are locked in battle with the Government over its 10 per cent wage rule. If the firemen win every other group of low paid workers can win. If they lose, who else will be prepared to fight?

PAY THE FIREMEN

chanting as the women relied on a fireman with a loud hailer, and many women who had come from the Manchester amrch with their kids were disappointed by the lack of militancy.

Many women had only heard about the marches on TV the night before, and siad there would have been a lot more there if it had been better publicised by the union.

Sandy Rose

Central London: The week before the strike we decided to have a *Womens Voice* meeting where I work, Central London Poly. I took the *Womens Voice* leaflets to the nearby firestation, and was phoned the followin day by one of the wives who lived out in Luton. Even so, she cameminto London to speak at the meeting. Thirty NALGO members and students were there, and we passed round a list for names of those who wanted to help work round the strike.

Anna Potrykus

Benfleet: two wives phoned us to ask what they could do after we visited the Hadleigh fire station with the *Womens Voice* leaflet. Within two days we organised a street meeting in Pitsea, just passing the word around the local stations. Eileen B, one of the wives wrote a poem for our leaflet to give out on the day. It was freezing cold, but there were 18 of us altogether, five from the *Womens Voice* group, and 13 wives.

Pam Drever

Wandsworth: We leafletted our local housing estate with leaflets explaining the firemen's case. At 9 o'clock the following morning I received a telephone call from a woman on one of the estates. She was disabled, hardly able to walk or breath, but she wanted to say how much she supported the firemen. She used to work at Charing Cross

Hospital and saw many injured firemen come in. Although in considerable pain they did not complain. 'They are not doing this out of greed—they deserve it', she said. 'I would like No 10 or one of those big wig firms to burn down, that'll show Callaghan. But of course they'll get big insurance payouts so they don't really care.'

Marion Upchurch

Coventry: *Womens Voice* group got together with some firemen's wives for a meeting in the shopping precinct on Saturday 19 November. About 30 firemen's wives and as many firemen turned up to support the meeting, and in an hour we collected £120 and 4,000 signatures on a petition.

Gail Armstrong

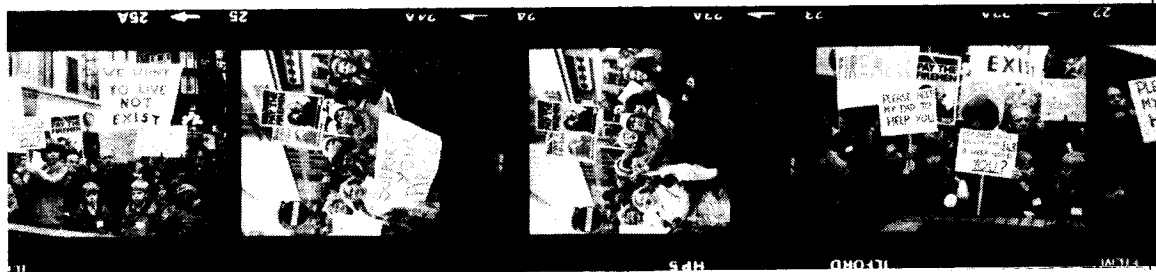
Glasgow: *Womens Voice* group collected £195 in two days. We asked a Fireman's wife to write a leaflet to explain why she supported the strike. These were given out while we collected. Several women read the leaflet first, then came back to give money.

We have been round the Fire Stations handing out the national *Womens Voice* leaflet addressed to Firemen's wives. On it was the phone number of a *Womens Voice* organiser in Glasgow. One woman rang up and the next day helped in two street collections. She is also planning to organise a meeting of Firemen's wives in her area.

Another Fireman's wife will be going round the Fire Stations with a *Womens Voice* member in order to speak to other Firemen's wives. We hope to persuade them to come out in force on the next Glasgow demonstration. We are planning a meeting of Firemen's wives to discuss how we can best organise to help the strike.

This meeting will mean extensive babysitting arrangements.

Christina Potrykus



THE FIREMENS CASE

KAREN Ellett is twelve. She lives with her younger sisters and her mum and dad in South London.

Her dad is a fireman. Her mum is a nurse.

I asked Karen how she felt about being a fireman's daughter.

'The best part of being a fireman's daughter is that I can see him when he's working, at the station, unless he's out on a call.

'The worst part is the thought that you might never see your dad again—especially if he's late home.

'Me and my mum have got quite worried a few times now. Once he didn't get home until 9pm, he was supposed to be in at 6pm. About 8pm, someone came round and told us there was a fire on. It was a twenty pumper (twenty fire engines out). His dinner got burnt. My mum was fuming.

'I don't like the idea of the strike, because of his conscience. But I like it because they won't go back until they get more money. It'll mean more pocket money and clothes, and we won't have to struggle so much at the end of the month.

'At the moment I get 5p or 10p a

day pocket money and 25p for my dinner money. I think firemen should get a bit more than everyone else, because it's a dangerous job. They should get as much as the miners.

'There was a fire at a Greenwich hairdressers on Wednesday. It burnt three houses. Firemen could have put it out in 15 minutes. That's why I hope Mr Rees pays the firemen.

'It's such a waste, the firemen standing outside the station.

'I saw the soldiers practising with their hose pipes at Woolwich barracks. They couldn't hold the hoses straight. They were missing their targets. Not once did I see them hit a target, but they use the same size hoses as the firemen.

'A few people at school said the firemen should not strike because they feel in danger. But it's the same for us. Firemen won't come to put out a fire in a fireman's house either.

'But there's been a lot of support from my mates. A lot of people have said, 'I hope your dad gets the money.' *Ann Derby*

MARION is married to a fireman in South London and she told *Womens Voice* what the strike has been like.

'I have watched with growing dismay and sorrow, the insidious growth of the 'hate' campaign against the firemen in the press and on television.

'I have seen my husband's expression of distress at the accusations of "lack of conscience" and disbelief at the suggestion that he doesn't care about public safety. These, above most men, care about the public. Otherwise they just would not do the job for the insulting salary they receive.

'Year after year, they have watched wages rise while their own standard of living has deteriorated almost beyond recognition. But still they worked. Still they did their much-maligned "duty" to humanity without complaint. And for most of the time without recognition.

'I have seen my husband come home, time after time, tired, aching and with the stink of smoke still on him. And I ache inside because I know that he cannot relax as others do after a job well done, but must go out again to his second job to keep us solvent, or at least to give the

appearance of solvency.

'I have watched him, a grown man, in tears at the thought of the sad task he has just performed. You do not see this side of the firemen unless you are married to one.

'I have seen him rage at the damage done to his fellow humans by a drunk driving his latest lethal weapon.

'My husband is the one who cuts him and his victims out of the wreckage. He picks up the pieces.

'I know of his bravery, not from him. He says it's "just his job". No, that's not true. It's his life. Trying to do a good job, protect people and their property.

'He has more conscience than all the politicians and their like.

'And he deserves to be able to hold his head high and not go cap in hand for yet another overdraft to pay off the last.

'The public do care of their plight and are horrified that these brave men have suffered in silence for so long. Well, now that silence is broken, and the true facts are public. Overwhelmingly the people about whom the firemen "don't care" are saying "Give them enough to stay in the career they love. We need them."

Are you listening, Mr Rees?



Picture: Phil McCowan



Picture: Mark Rusher (IFL)

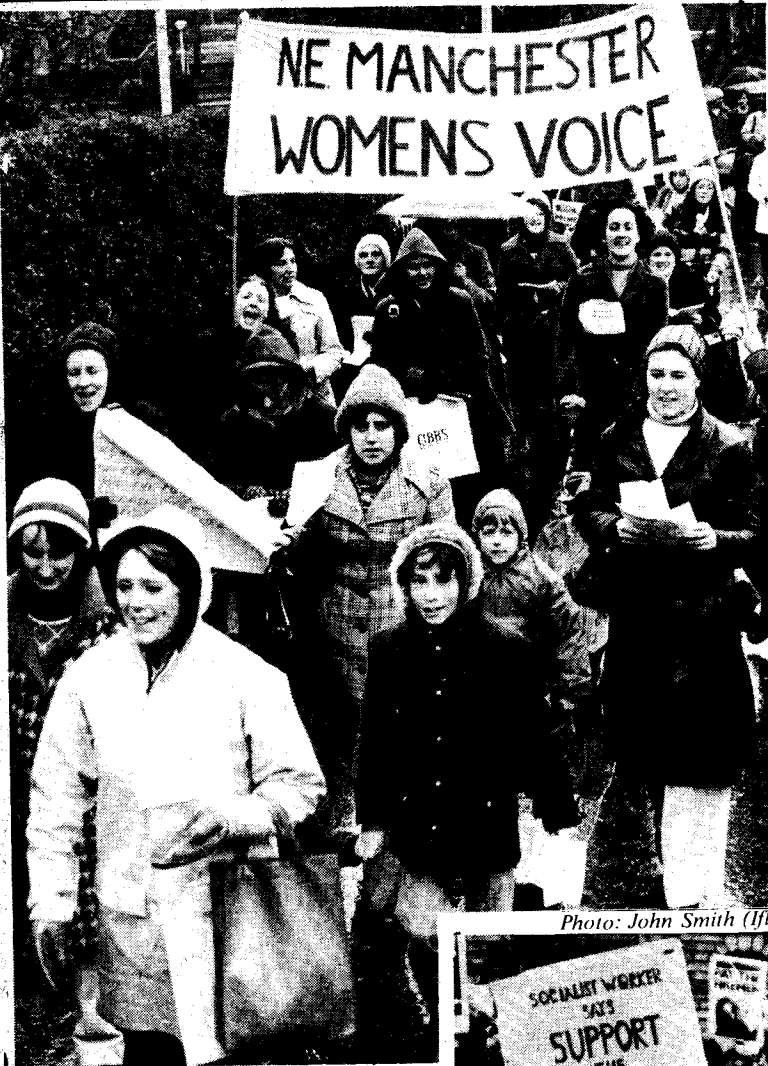
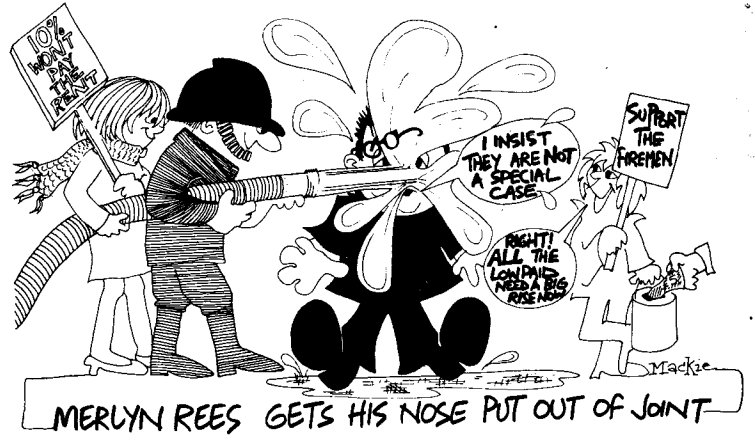


Photo: John Smith (If)



WE'RE ALL A SPECIAL CASE

MAGGIE Simpson is married to a London fireman. She works too, as a telephonist in Fleet Street. She knows the firemen are fighting for more than their own wage rise.

'The firemen do have a special case. During one of the inquiries into their pay they tried to do a job evaluation - but they couldn't find anyone to evaluate them with. No one else does a job that requires their skills, training, hours, and then takes risks that they do.'

'But there are other workers who are also a special case: nurses, the police, ambulancemen. They're all underpaid, and they all have the same problem; they don't want to strike because they are vital services to the public. The Government relies on this loyalty not to strike. It must have been quite a shock to them when the firemen did come out.'

'We've all had wage restraint for too long. People will put up with it for a year, or even two, but three years is too much. NATSOPA, my union, has rejected the 10 per cent and there's a bigger claim going in. You can see why. We used to get two substantial rises a year; the national agreement negotiated by our union, and then a house agreement, negotiated with our

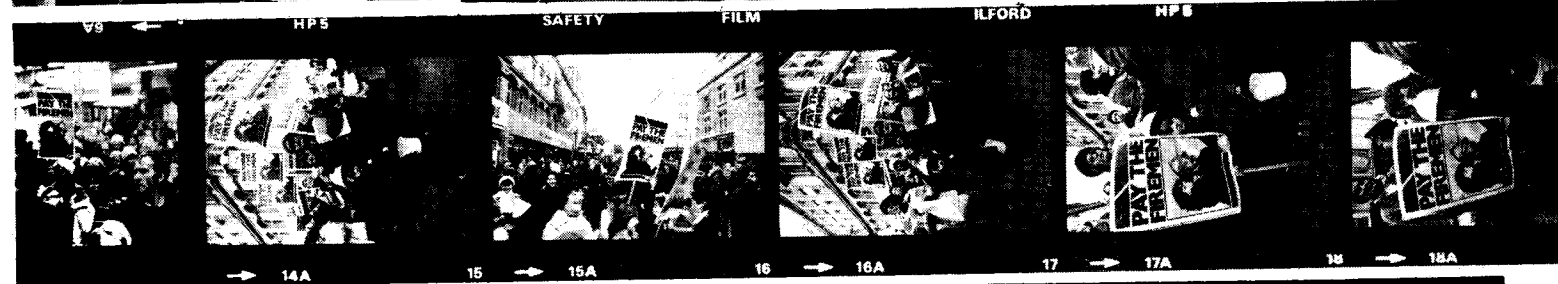
individual employers. In the last two years all we've had is the £6 and the 4 per cent. That came to so little I don't think I noticed when I got it.

'Any working person who's earning profits for a company should be paid a percentage of them. Even if you've got a fairly good standard of living there are lots of people with a much better standard who do nothing for it. They've inherited their wealth, from wealthy ancestors, who for their part stole it from workers in the first place. Some of us are claiming free school meals whilst others are jetting it off to the Bahamas.'

'Maybe we won't make up that difference outright. But we can at least start with the special cases. Some workers are getting over the 10 per cent. You can't say yes to some and no to others. If the company can afford it, and they all can, then the workers should get their share.'

'I don't see why we should struggle to buy a house, get a mortgage. It's my right to have a house, a holiday, good meals, good clothes. These are my rights but I don't have them because some people don't work and the rest of us have to struggle for it.'

Picture: Phil McCowan



ABORTION NEWS

THERE HAVE been two secret meetings in recent weeks between David Ennals, the Minister for Health, and anti-abortion MPs who are ready to come to some compromise on a new bill to restrict our abortion rights.

For the last two years anti-abortion MPs have had the luck to get time to introduce their own private members bill in Parliament. This year the MPs at the top of the list for private bills are all pro-abortion MPs; so it seems almost certain that it will be up to the Government to do their own dirty work.

And do it they will. The Catholic Church in Scotland has threatened to tell its hundreds of thousands of Labour-voting members not to vote Labour unless the Government does something to appease them on the abortion question.

For fear of losing so many votes, and possibly the whole election, this Labour Government will do just that. Any new bill which has Government backing will certainly get all the time it needs to work through parliament and become law.

We've been fighting for nearly three years now to make sure our rights to abortion are held intact. Any suggestion of a bit of a compromise on this clause of the Act or on that clause of the Act is just not on. The Catholic Church isn't going to be appeased until the very heart of the Act is cut out.

That's why we have to keep on fighting.

- This is what you can do:
- Order copies of our new pamphlet: *Women and children first: The socialist case against abortion controls.*
- Organise leaflets and bulletins into local factories and on to housing estates. WV has produced artwork, for an electro-stencil, for you to produce local leaflets and bulletins.

Copies of these can be ordered from Womens Voice, 01 739 1878.

Wolverhampton: We have been busy recently continuing our campaign to draw attention to the appalling NHS abortion facilities in this area. As a first step towards free abortion on demand our petition has been asking that a day clinic for abortion be set up. We have a bulletin ready for a local factory where many women are employed and one side will use the WV artwork on abortion.

We use the petitions weekly in the town centre, on the estates where we sell *Womens Voice* and outside the factories.

We have made a lot of contact with people through our street petitions and always put an address and phone number on the back of the WV we sell, and on our leaflets. We get a couple of calls a week from people supporting us, often giving details of their own attempts to get an abortion.

Ann Moran.

NAC Demo Day in Bingham, it was also the day SPUC chose to have a rally in the main shopping centre in Cardiff. We couldn't let that go, so *Womens Voice* and Cardiff Abortion Campaign combined to picket the rally with leaflets, placards and petitions. We must have made some impression on them, because later a policeman came up to us, saying that SPUC thought we were creating a nuisance, or something like that, because we hadn't applied for a licence to hold a rally, and they had. The policeman found that we weren't contravening any local by-laws, and drifted away...

We gave out 4,000 leaflets and we found a lot of women, sickened and angered by the emotional angle of the SPUC propaganda, were coming up to us and demanding petitions to sign, anything to express their disgust of the SPUC.

Teresa Goss

Cardiff: October 29th was not only

Reading: William Benyon came to a

THE GOVERNMENT GIVES IN



Picture: An Dekker

SIX *Womens Voice* supporters came up for trial on the 1st November on obstruction charges. We were all arrested outside Parliament demonstrating against the Benyon anti-abortion bill.

One woman from NAC was tried and found guilty for obstructing the police. She was fined £20 with £20 costs. Her defence was that she was

a respectable middle-class wife with two kids from Epsom, who had nothing to do with the militant, left-wing, noisy *Womens Voice* demonstration!

But there were a few interesting things arising out of the case. The Inspector said that he would not consider to be an obstruction a single line of people standing

against some railings—unless they were attracting tourists or the press, in which case it would be obstruction!

The Inspector 'couldn't recall' if he had been at Grunwicks the morning of the demonstration, and the policewoman giving evidence almost fainted under cross-examination, after she admitted that the inspector had constructed his notes from her notes. She couldn't remember which way the demonstrators had been going and instead of describing the arrest of the NAC woman described the arrest of one of the *Womens Voice* supporters.

The *Womens Voice* supporters will be coming up again on 28 December and 24 January. If the Public Gallery had been full, the magistrate would have had much more difficulty finding the women guilty. *Make sure* the Public Gallery is packed on these dates!
Ann Derby, SE London.

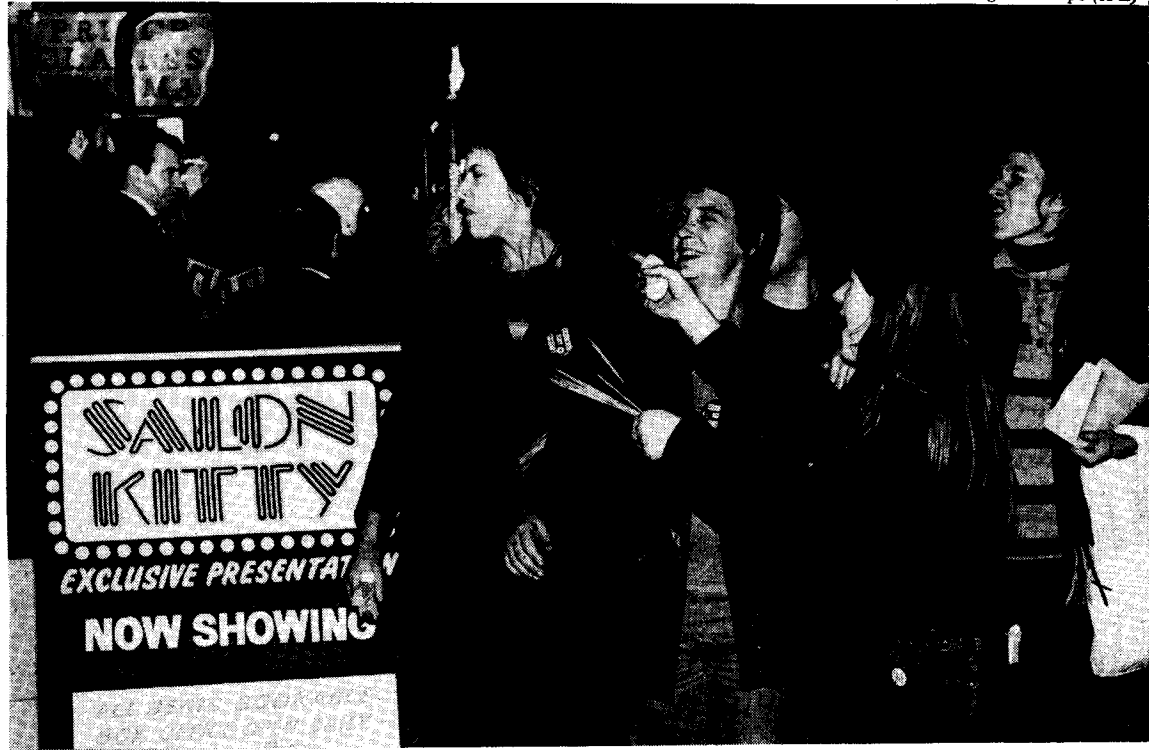
The Director of Public Prosecutions has had to apologise publicly for the disgusting prosecution of a 13-year-old girl in Leamington. She had tried to bring on her own abortion, by taking laxative pills, and was prosecuted under an ancient and hardly used law, the Offences Against the Person Act. The DPP spokesman said the advice given to the local police was 'wrong and is greatly regretted'.

We should all be relieved that we aren't going to find ourselves in court for taking hot baths to bring on late periods. For the girl herself the damage of the prosecution and court case is already done. The boy who was prosecuted for helping her, under the same law, is still held in detention. And this law is still on the statute book.

picture: Angela Phillips (IFL)

ABOUT 200 women from the local Womens liberation groups, Women and Socialism, and Womens Voice supporters, held torchlight processions in Manchester on Saturday 12 November, to show Chief Superintendent Bowley that women will *not* be stopped from going out at night. Groups of women marched through gales and freezing cold at Levenshulme, Strangeways and Longsight with torches and placards chanting 'Reclaim the Night' and singing songs, escorted by groups of policewomen. When we got to Piccadilly Gardens, in the centre of Manchester, the police heavies and News of the World reporters suddenly appeared because a woman had had an argument with her husband when she wanted to join in! The march succeeded in getting a lot of local and national publicity.

Sandy Rose



RECLAIM THE NIGHT

WALKING through Soho on your own on a rainy Saturday night is usually a horrible experience—turned in on yourself with your eyes to the pavement, trying to avoid getting hustled.

Saturday 12 November was a different story: several hundred women some with exaggerated face-paint, flaming torches and cans of paint—spilled through the streets, plastering strip-joints, porn-shops, 'saunas' and sleazy film-clubs with posters and stickers explaining what the pleasure-palaces are really about: 'This degrades women' and 'This violates women'.

Seeing the horror on the faces of the nasty, leery jerks hastily locking the strip-club doors as their windows were redecorated was very enjoyable.

The demonstration was exhilarating and chaotic. We screamed and hollered and wolf-whistled and sang—and inevitably brought a reaction from all the small packs of would-be studs on the streets. 'Who'd rape you,' 'Call

yourself women? Ho, ho'. I wished I'd brought a few spray-bottles of Devon Violets...

If there is a single image screaming at us from every hoarding, magazine and television screen that indicates possession, status, domination and cheap thrills it is the image of a luscious, passive, mindless woman — for women to aspire to be and men to aspire to have. Rape is one logical consequence of the image of woman as an object for men's use. Yet many people, even some male socialists who don't try hard enough, don't yet understand why it is *not trivial* to attack the purveyors of this view—the adverts and the strip-joints.

Repetitions can knock a message through the thickest of skulls—so let's make sure every advert and porn club gets regularly plastered with stickers (what else is a handbag for?). And let's reclaim some more nights in some more towns.

Cathy Bearfield

WHAT DO the National Front think about women? John Tyndall, the chairman, explained to the Sunday Telegraph, how he found women valuable within the Party for their intuitive abilities, but how they were not, as a sex, really equipped to lead in politics. 'You might say that is a reflection upon the abilities of the men in the Conservative Party that their present leader is a woman. I don't see that happening in the National Front for a considerable period of time. 'My private view, and I would hasten to add that this is — the party line, is that women are of supreme value in the home. As a supportive factor.'

THE EOC report published last month reveals what we've all known for a very long time: that despite the Equal Pay Act, in actual money terms the gap between men's and women's wages has actually increased, and that unemployment has hit women more viciously than it has men.

Amongst the highest paid manual workers, men average £80.08 per week and women £54 (1976 figures). And among the same group of non-manual workers men earn an average £74.06 compared with women's £59.01.

As for the lower paid section of the workforce, this mainly comprises women (43 per cent of women earned less than £40 a week compared with only 5 per cent of men in 1976). The Equal Pay Act won't influence these women as they work in traditional 'women's areas' of industry like textiles and food manufacture where few men exist to be 'equal' to.

On unemployment, from December '73 to March this year, male unemployment multiplied 2.4 times, women's unemployment increased 4.4 times, so that now 'at least 600,000 women are unemployed... excluding school leavers'. About 87,000 unemployed women are forced to depend on supplementary benefit and receive much less under the SS legislation than men because of the assumption that men are the heads of households.

To overcome these hideous disparities, the EOC recommends that dispersal of women throughout the economy be urgently encouraged, that they should be guaranteed access to training and that con-

SURPRISE, SURPRISE, WE'RE STILL UNEQUAL

ditions and pay for part-time work should be put on a par with those of full-time work.

Fine, but how do we reach that situation? By yet more complicated legislation riddled with loopholes by which the Labour Government raises women's hopes whilst it does its utmost to continue to lower our standard of living?

The other alternative, very uncomfortable for the EOC of course, is for women to get up off their knees and fight tooth and nail to make what is ours by right a reality.

Nina Gosling

THE TEN women who worked for Gorman in Wolverhampton making pork scratchings have lost their fight for union recognition in the TGWU and lost their jobs as well... Thanks to their union official.

He persuaded them to a meeting with Gorman, and once there persuaded them to accept £200 compensation each. The women had gone to the meeting to try and upset Gorman and demand their reinstatement, but the huge sums of money offered persuaded a few of the women to give up the fight, and the others had to give in.



STEVE Biko was murdered by the white racist Government of South Africa. Everyday, as the inquest into his death hears the evidence, that fact becomes clearer. But even the threat of death will not stop the black people of Soweto and the whole of South Africa fighting for their freedom. A woman demonstrates outside the court.

UNMARRIED WOMEN LOSE RIGHTS

JENNIFER Davies is the latest victim in the round of attacks on the rights of working-class women to the home they shared with the man who battered them. The father of her child had threatened to kill her with a chopper, a screw-driver and a knife and had attacked her.

Under the few-months old Domestic Violence Act she got an injunction from the County Court banning him from the council flat on which they have joint tenancy.

But later another judge at the same court overruled the injunction and the man returned to the flat, changed the locks on the doors and Ms Davies and her toddler were forced to retreat to Erin Pizzey's battered wives' refuge in Chiswick.

Ms Davies has appealed against the second judge's ruling and for several days before we went to press

five more judges have been deliberating. They have to decide whether (in spite of what the Act actually stipulates) an unmarried woman has the right to evict her lover from a home in which they have a joint tenancy; or indeed whether unmarried people should have any of the protection afforded to those who are married.

If these five judges find in favour of Ms Davies there will be no guarantee that other County Courts will follow their decision; they might choose to follow the precedent set by the other two appeal cases.

This may well mean that the case will have to go to the House of Lords which means that Ms Davies and her child will continue to be locked out of their home throughout the winter.

Nina Gosling

TOO OLD FOR A PENSION

MS HELENE Conway is one of many disabled housewives who pay (in her case £10 a week) to have the housework done because they are too handicapped to do it. These women are the latest for attack by the Labour Government. They delayed the scheduled April introduction of a new disability pension of £10.50 a week to last month, November.

Those disabled wives who like Ms Conway reached their 60th birthday in the intervening months have been permanently disqualified from the benefit because they are now too old, and will not receive one penny. The Government will be £13 million of it!

Two years ago a similar benefit was introduced for men and single women of working age. Housewives, however, can continue beyond retiring age if they are not entitled to any other pension. If the Government doesn't trick them out of it all together, that is . . .

DARTS WOMEN FIGHT FOR THE UNION

13 WOMEN employed by Tunnicliffe in Bloxwich, West Midlands, have been on strike for seven weeks, for union recognition of the General and Municipal Workers Union. The women make flights for darts.

'It all began when the girls realised that our wages were disgustingly low. We earned £21 a week, top rate for 40 hours. Our holidays were insufficient, three weeks a year, and of these one week was for Christmas, bank holidays, etc!

'Discussions with the management have always been very difficult. Since 1973 we have been waiting for a canteen and proper facilities. We are still waiting for cost of living rises promised years ago. Wage increases are given 'once a year', but only when management think fit. Jubilee day was given to us only when we asked for it. 'Earlier this year we were put on three days

with only four hours notice.

'At the beginning of this fight there were 18 of us girls out. The start of the second week management came out and offered more money, £11.60 a week they said, and better working conditions. The condition was we went back and forget about joining a union. Five girls did go back—they received £2 more a week, and the improved conditions amounted to transport to and from work.

'The girl that started union proceedings is now back inside as well. The office staff have been asked to ignore us—they've even drawn down all the blinds on the windows which overlook the pickets!

'Unfortunately deliveries are still being made late at night and company vehicles are making deliveries when and where possible.'
A Tunnicliffe picket.

A WOMANS PLACE

'IT IS normal for a married woman in this country to be primarily supported by her husband, and she looks to him for support when not actually working. . . The number of instances of the wife having chosen to be the breadwinner as opposed to having taken on that role is still very small. Indeed it continues to be a widespread view that a husband who is capable of work has a duty to society as well as to his wife to provide the primary support for his family.'

In other words, a woman's place is in the home. That's official, from the Department of Health and Social Security.

When York *Womens Voice* began a campaign against the discrimination of this particular Government department they discovered this interesting view, and numerous examples of such discrimination.

The 1971 sample census revealed that in the case of more than a quarter of a million couples, the wife was the main economic supporter. This represented 2 per cent of all married couples, and since then tens of thousands more women have become the breadwinners as Labour's disastrous policies have left husbands standing in the dole queues.

Millions of working women are trapped in boring, low paid jobs and Family Income Supplement is supposed to help just such families

living below the breadline, but if the wife is the breadwinner, forget it, you'll get no help from the DHSS, nor will you get the free prescriptions because in the case of a couple, only the man can apply. The State won't help women who are fighting to keep their families' heads above water.

It is the same with Invalid Care Allowance. This new allowance is aimed at people who stay at home to care for severely disabled relatives. It will save the Health Service millions of pounds but **MARRIED WOMEN CANNOT APPLY.** So if your husband is dying from a crippling industrial disease the DHSS says **TOUGH LUCK!**

From 1978 married women paying full contributions will at least be entitled to Full National benefits in their own right, but where the married woman is the only breadwinner, she will not be able to claim for dependants, even though her contribution will be the same as a man's.

No wonder the Government insisted that the Department of Health and Social Security be immune from the Equal Opportunities Act.

We think there should be a national campaign to bring everybody's attention to this discrimination. If you want a copy of our leaflet write to York Womens Voice, 3 Blakeney Place, York.
Hazel Gallogly

BOC WIN £15

BOC WORKERS have won their £15 pay rise. Yes, £15 for everyone—drivers, canteen ladies and all. Edie Dye, a canteen lady at the Hackney depot, told Womens Voice, 'It was a victory, wasn't it? We are all quite pleased with it.'

'It works out at about 25 per cent. There again, if we hadn't stuck it out, we wouldn't have got it.'

'At BOC the members are strong. I didn't realise it at the time, but when you see all the vans and lorries waiting to be served with the gas containers, you realise how strong you are. BOC have had it their way quite long enough. They had to give us the money.

If others did the same, they would get the £15 too.'

QUEEN SMASHES LIMIT

THE TEN per cent 'pay limit' has been smashed! By none other than HRH Elizabeth and the rest of the royal hangers-on.

Liz just got a whacking 18 per cent increase—which should keep the wolves from the door.

Others to benefit over the past two years are the Queen Mother (£95,000 tax free in 1975 up to £155,000 in 1977), The Duke of Edinburgh—who is always giving expert advice about scroungers (£65,000 in 1975 to £85,000 now—tax free of course), Princess Anne (£35,000 tax free in 1975 up to £50,000 now).

If it's good enough for them, it should be good enough for us.

SOUTH WEST London Womens Voice Group are planning a street meeting on price rises on the last Saturday before Christmas, 17 December. We are collecting material now for leaflets and placards. We have found out the profits of the major food companies for 1976 and 1977, and facts comparing the price of a Christmas dinner and individual items last year and this.

By using the Consumer Advice Bureau Shoppers Guide we are keeping an eye on any price rises in the few weeks running up to Christmas. All this information will be used to make a display.

We are also hoping to do a short piece of street theatre (if we have the courage) with the help of a sister from Counteract who is in the Womens Voice group.

So that this street meeting goes really well we are holding a workshop on 3 December to prepare it all: placards, leaflets, loudhailer-speeches etc. If there is anyone else who wants to get involved please ring us: Marion on 673 1329

XMAS PRICES

THIS MUST be the headline of the month, Not only are we forced to buy less food, because we can't afford it, but they then have the cheek to complain that we don't take any notice of the advertising—the cost of which pushes food prices up all the time!

Less spent
on food
despite much
advertising

By Hugh Clayton

The amount of food



picture: Andy Ward (Report)

THE TUC is now doing all it can to stifle the efforts of the Grunwicks strikers to win union recognition. Who would have believed that Mrs Desai and other strike committee members would have been driven to hunger strike on the steps of Congress House. They had to give up their strike

when they heard that the TUC had decided 'to do nothing.' APEX is the union the strikers are fighting for. It's a union that knows how to look after its members - they suspended the strikers from membership the day they began their hunger strike.



Laura

Dinner at Alberta's by Russell Hoban (Cape £2.50) I like Dinner at Alberta's because it is about crocodiles because they like water, and the thing I like most is water. It is the wettest thing you can find. I like wet things, so I wish I could swim but I can not, but I like to play with water. It makes me very happy to see it. Emma (6)

Bread and Jam for Frances by Russell Hoban (Picture Puffin 50p)

Best book. The spaghetti and meat balls was the best bit. . . mummy can I have spaghetti and meat balls for dinner?

Laura 4½

Lester and the Unusual Pet by Quentin Blake This is too babyish for me and I didn't like the names of the characters. Sarah (8)

Danny, the Champion of the World by Roald Dahl

This is an exciting and interesting book about a boy

and his father. Both boys and girls will enjoy it. The age for reading this is about 7 years old to 13. I recommend this book as it is good for reading, and really enjoyable reading.

Rebecca (13½)

Little Tim and the Brave Sea Captain by E. Ardizzone (Picture Puffin 60p)

A bit good. Laura 4½

The Church Mouse by Graham Oakley (Mac-Millan £1.00)

I liked the pictures—one of them was very funny. The vegetables fell on the people's heads and split open. It was easy to read but there was quite a lot of writing. Wesley (5½)



Sarah

Tinker Tailor Soldier Sailor by Maureen Rothey (Bodley Head £2.25)

I liked this best. It's good. I like the people in it because they all look like real people, the poor man looks like a poor man and the rich man looks like a rich man. I haven't seen a rich man with a big cigar sticking out of his mouth, but I've never seen the Queen and I know what she looks like.

Amos (11)

Come away from the water Shirley by John Burningham Cape £2.50

I liked this book but I got muddled up first and did not know where Shirley was. I read it twice. Wesley (5½)

Father Christmas by Raymond Briggs

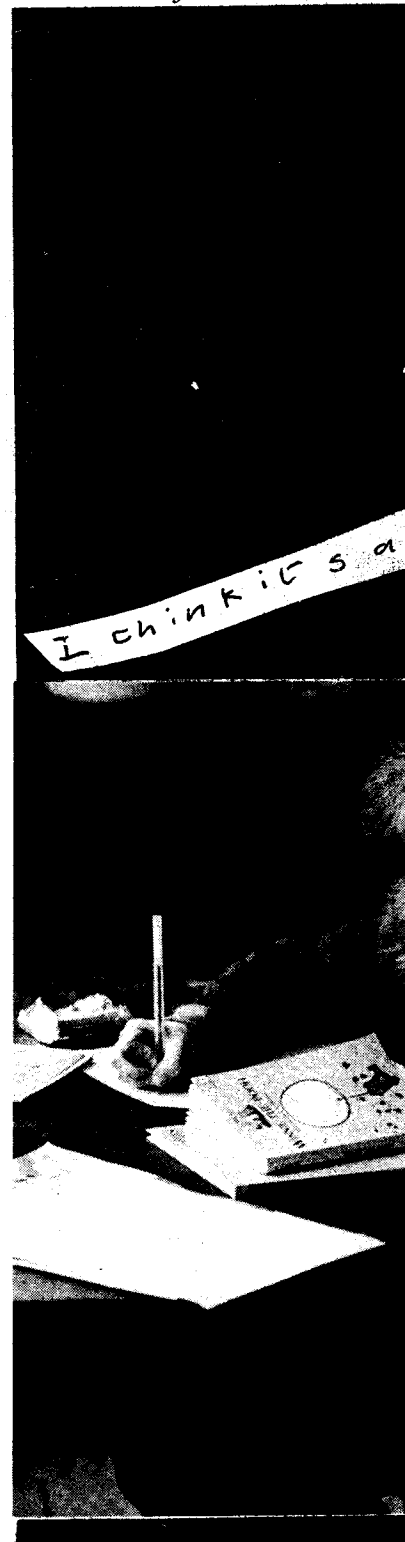
This is a cartoon book. I likes what Father Christmas said, and the way he is dressed. I like the little pictures better than the bigger ones, and I liked the reindeer. There weren't many words and it was easy to read. Sarah (8)

Watership Down by Richard Adams (Puffin 50p)

Watership Down is my favourite book. It is pretty complicated but I enjoyed it very much. It took me three times to read it, but once you get into it you can't put it down. It is about some rabbits who decide to leave the warren because one rabbit sensed that something terrible was going to happen. It is very adventurous, and the story is told through the rabbit's eyes. But if you don't like long books don't buy this. Anna (13)

Of the books we were sent, 14 had boys on the cover, 9 had animals on the cover, 3 had both boys and girls, and only 3 had just girls!

It is 2.30 pm on 24 December for three nieces, two nephews own three. They all already had local toyshop, and you bought The answer is a book. But Previous experience from masses has taught me that boys at kids are not always those Not wanting to be caught Womens Voice readers go together to review some of 'being pushed', and so are w From this adults' initial see the kids themselves chose who asked them for their comm



You still have to buy presents
 s, five kids next door and your
 ave everything on display in the
 ight them Mars bars last year.
 t which book?
 countless birthdays and Christ-
 oaks that the adult world pushes
 that kids themselves like best.
 at short this year, a group of
 ot themselves and their kids
 of the children's books that are
 idely available at the moment.
 ction of about thirty books,
 at they wanted to read. We then
 eds.....

When W.
 went hunting he nearly
 met Woozle but they
 found out it was
 lots of tracks they
 had made themselves.
 So they were very
 silly, it was a very
 silly thing to do.
 I think it is a very
 nice book.

When Winnie the Pooh went hunting he nearly met Woozle but they found out it was lots of tracks they had made themselves. So they were very silly, it was a very silly thing to do. I think it is a very nice book. Emma (6)



Photos by Angela Phillips

The Peppermint Pig by Nina Bawden (Puffin 50p)

This is so boring I felt like going to sleep. A family goes bankrupt and a pig is bought for a girl. The father is sent to prison. The life of the family is dramatically changed. I know about 50 books like this, the Railway Children is almost the same. Any children could read this, it wouldn't matter what age, they'd all be asleep in fifteen minutes time. Rebecca (13½)

Professor Branestawm's Revolution by Norman Hunter (Puffin 45p)

This is a very funny book. It's about a scatterbrained professor and his housemaid who keeps the household running. Anyone over 8 would enjoy it. It hasn't got long descriptions, it has mainly conversations. The professor invents all sorts of machines like ones to look for his five pairs of glasses. I like it because it is so unusual and funny and it has short stories and not long ones. It is also very imaginative and exciting. Anna 13

Anna 13

The Three Little Pigs Jack and the Beanstalk Peepshow books, Chatto and Windus £1.50 each

These are cut-out books. Book-cum-mobiles! I like them because you can tie them round, not just look at the pictures. Laura 4½

Young Winter Tales volume 7 edited by M. R. Hodgkin (MacMillan £3.25)

It's an interesting book—all the stories are suitable for boys though. Any person between 12 and 16 would enjoy some of these moving stories. The first story is about a girl whose great aunt dies. She has no feelings for her but then her granny introduces her into her aunt's private world of extraordinary hats. I enjoyed this story as it was looking into someone's life who lived in a dreamworld. Not like yours or my aunty who makes fairy cakes and knits baby's booties. Rebecca (13½)

Emma

Hurricane by Andrew Salkey (Puffin 60p)

I like this—it was very good. It seems to be more real than other books. It was exciting—the hurricane broke all the houses down.

Sarah (8)

Amos



Wesley

Hullo Aurora by Anne-Cath Vestly (Penguin 50p)

This is really for 6 to 10 year olds. It is about Aurora and her father who have to look after Socrates their baby while mum goes out to work. I'm sure parents would like their children to read this book. Anna (13)

Anna (13)

The Ivory Anvil by Sylvia Fair (Puffin 50p)

I don't think nobody would like it at school—they like all the princesses ones and where they turn into wolves. This isn't a fairy tale—it's more true. I hate fairy tales, I like stories that are real. This is about a girl called Janet in Welsh who goes with her friend Anna to Anna's farm. Sarah (8)

Anna



IN THE beginning, God was a woman. She was the Great Goddess, the source of all knowledge, wisdom, heroism, invention and law. She was worshipped from 7000 BC until 500 A.D when her temples were forcibly closed.

Now all we've got is the Virgin Mary, who gave birth after a mysterious visit from the Holy Ghost.

She's an impossible woman who couldn't enjoy sex because sex was sin. But even she was a concession by the Christian religion which has always been a male religion, an anti-feminist, anti-woman religion.

The Christian religion gradually destroyed Goddess worship. The image of Eve, created for her husband, from her husband, in contradiction to all the laws of nature replaced the once powerful position of the Goddess. She is now the one responsible for the downfall of men, and with her all women.

**"Blessed art thou amongst all women
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb
Jesus."**

Every Catholic's daily prayer to the Virgin Mary.

More than a thousand years ago, St Clement, the early Christian divine, delicately outlined the new Christian philosophy to an astonished people. 'Every woman' he decreed 'should be overwhelmed with shame at the thought that she is a woman'.

Civilised people didn't pay any attention but gradually the Christians took control. The Emperor Constantine was the first

Mary Mother of God... the impossible woman



Christian potentate. He set the tone for the next fourteen centuries by scalding his young wife to death in a cauldron of water brought slowly to the boil over a wood fire. She was

suspected of adultery, and adultery, as all good Christians know, is strictly for men only.

In the century following Constantine, Augustine denied that women even had

souls; 'St.' Thomas Aquinas placed women lower than slaves. Christian divines laid the blame on women for all the ills that afflicted men, and instigated witch-hunts in which millions of women were to die an agonising public death, burned alive for an impossible and invented crime.

The Church branded all the finer sentiments 'womanlike'; it glorified many aggressive virtues and surpassed even the Nazis in contrived cruelty and organised terror. Wherever Christianity went, it carried with it the deadly germ of anti-feminism, forcing civil government to adopt the woman-hating laws of the Church.

Then the people discovered Mary. Against the stern decrees of the Church, Mary was dug out of the oblivion to which Constantine had assigned her and became identified with the Great Goddess, Christianity became more popular and more tolerable.

So the Church which had set out to annihilate Goddess-worship found itself forced, in order to assure its own survival, to recognise Mary. She was not quite a Goddess, they could not go to the extreme of including her in the Trinity where, by religious tradition she belonged, but they did, finally and reluctantly, admit her to a seat in heaven with her son, and endow her, like him, with a sinless and superhuman purity.

So its worth remembering this Christmas amid all the worship of Mary that she is a sort of victory for the people against the masculine barbarism of the old Christianity. But what a rotten victory! And what a nerveless, passionless replica of the red-blooded Great Goddess of ten thousand years ago!

Lyn Hopkins

HERNATIVITY STORY

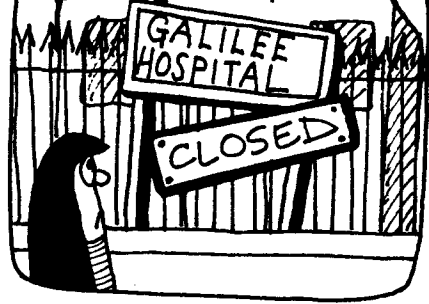
Once upon a time faraway lived feminist Mary. Her ideas had been around so long without producing any real change for women that some people called her the VIRGIN MARY.



ONE DAY SHE RECEIVED A STRANGE VISIT FROM THE ARCHANGEL KARL



but when she tried her local hospital...



9 months later they travelled to Bethlehem but...



in the street they met 3 night cleaners



Joe was very bewildered by all this. He began to wonder about the Archangel Karl's visitation...



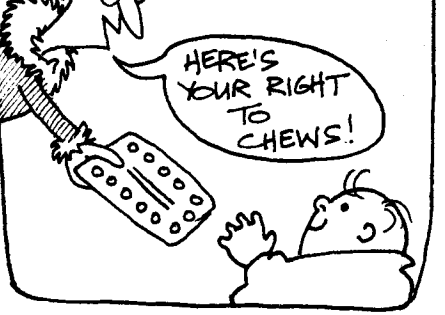
JERUSALEM WOMEN SAID WILL TAKE YOU IN



THERE 3 WISE QUEENS BROUGHT HER GIFTS - SYLVIA PANKHURST BROUGHT HER A BOAT



MARIE STOPES GAVE HER THE PILL



JAYABEN DESAI BROUGHT HER SOME RED NAPPIES



Now when the Queen heard that the newborn Sister was not Princess Anne's baby she was exceeding wrath,



BUT Mabel & the Sisters Solidarity had nothing to lose but their chains...



By Cathy Bearfield & Liz Mackie

THE PARTY



There were cold nights and wet nights and nights when the kids played up and they each felt too tired to turn out. But without a doubt, for the cleaners the worst night of the year was Christmas Eve.

So Joan, Rosie and Pauline weren't exactly raring to go as they stepped out of the lift into the main corridor of Rockfast Securities.

'I'm dreading it,' said Pauline, going to unlock the cleaners' cupboard.

'Just you wait and see, there'll be bottles and fags and sandwiches tramped into the carpet and heaven only knows what else.'

'Remember what happened last year?' asked Joan.

'Do I!'

'You weren't here then, Rosie. You should have seen it. Just us two to do the whole lot, and we didn't get finished til nearly midnight.'

Pauline handed them out the tools of their trade.

'It's a good old booze-up for them, all right. But it's a blooming mess for us.'

'Only one thing for it, though.'

'Yes, let's be getting it over with.'

'Tell you what, we'll find where they had the party first. Then if the worst comes to the worst we can nip through the rest double quick. They'll never notice the difference.'

It wasn't too hard to find the party.

Not that there was any sound of music, or laughing voices. No chink of glasses, no singing. There was just a smell when you opened the door, of ash and smoke and whatever was left in the bottom of all those cups and glasses. It took a second or two for the strip light to flicker on, but they knew this was the place before they could see it.

'God help us!' said Pauline when the light took hold. 'Just get a look at this lot!'

Rosie had never seen *such* a mess.

The desks had all been pushed to one side. There were bottles and paper plates and glasses and cups, mixed in with torn paper decorations and burst balloons and wrapping paper of all kinds. Someone had thoughtfully emptied the ashtrays into a wicker basket which sifted the ash onto the floor as she picked it up.

Their first job was to clear all the debris into giant paper sacks. Then the large industrial vacuum cleaner ploughed a furrow through the carpet tiles as Pauline drove it up and down, while Joan carted the empties to the service lift.

After half an hour, the difference in their stamina began to show. Rosie had recently had her first baby, and she wasn't a very strong woman at the best of times. Joan was older and from experience had learned to pace herself,

to avoid getting out of breath. Pauline was stronger altogether. She could attack this kind of work and still keep singing while she did so.

It was Pauline who usually took the initiative in their little squad. She was a plump, blond-haired woman, inclined to look older than her 34 years. While she'd been plugging in the vacuum cleaner she'd found a large unopened bottle of red wine down the side of one of the desks. She didn't tell the others at first, but kept it as a surprise til she switched off. They looked round as the sound of the cleaner subsided.

Pauline stood up with her hands pressed into the small of her back. Then she picked up the bottle.

'All right, now it's our turn. Come on Rosie, come on Joan. They've left this behind for us, look.'

The obvious place to go was the old man's room. George Humphries, Mr Rockfast himself.

They went down the corridor towards his end. This was the main thoroughfare of Rockfast Securities. All day long it was filled with movement and noise. If you walked from end to end you would hear the sounds of business coming in bursts through the half-open doors - telephones ringing, typewriters, clattering, the bang of a filing cabinet drawer.

Important clients arriving to see Mr Humphries would spill out of the lift at the superior end of the corridor, from where they could see down its length,

reflected through all the glass swing-doors, the reassuring flurry of enterprise - of money being not made exactly, but made to keep moving.

It all looked much less glamorous at night. The harsh strip lights burned through your eyes into your brain. The swing doors caught the light and fired it at you as you passed through.

You reached the old man's room through two outer offices, occupied during the day by his personal secretary and her assistant. It was like getting near the body in an Egyptian pyramid. The closer you came, the thicker the carpet, the fancier the furniture.

Through they went, Joan behind Pauline, Rosie behind Joan, switching on the lights along their way.

Humphries' room was really a small apartment. Across one corner was his large leather-topped desk with two gold-plated pen-holders, an enormous mahogany cigar box, and a heavy cut-glass ashtray. He was a man who liked to impress, but he was a man who never quite made up his mind about the style in which to do it.

This room reflected his taste. There were thick velvet curtains which operated electrically. There was the inevitable executive shag-pile carpet, a killer to keep clean. And a heavy circular coffee table, more like a board room table around which clients would sit in the deep semi-circular leather settee.

Along one wall was an array of cabinets, the central one being Mr Humphries' bar. As you opened the door, the internal light threw its glint on the arrayed bottles of fine malt whisky and cognac, liquers and gin.

'This is the life!' exclaimed Joan, kicking off her shoes and throwing herself down onto the settee.

Pauline was already opening the cabinets, looking for a bottle opener. She found it at last. It was a straight forward manual bottle opener, only with one big difference. The handle was shaped like the top part of a woman's body. Your fingers went round the breasts as you pulled the cork out. 'What a moron,' she said to herself, then showed it to the others.

They each took a heavy tumbler, and got that excited feeling as the red wine gugged into the cut glass. All three stretched out on the leather cushions, stockinged-feet up on the table.

Directly opposite them was a huge portrait of the great man himself, steel grey hair, suntanned face, trying hard to look young and forceful and dynamic, against a background of old-looking

books, perhaps law books. Very respectable. Very Rockfast.

'Wonder how many bums he's pinched this afternoon,' said Joan, raising her glass to him in mock salute.

'Oh, I bet he made the most of it,' said Pauline.

This portrait was all they'd ever seen of George Humphries. Not for them the morning hello, the friendly leer, the quick groping hand.

'But you get to know a lot about a person from the mess he leaves behind him.' Rosie was thinking.

'Here we are with our feet up on his table, and he doesn't even know we exist.'

'That's what life's all about for the likes of him,' agreed Joan. 'He doesn't have to think about us.'

'It's a bit like my old man, really. Sometimes he doesn't seem to know I exist either. He thrown his dirty clothes in the basket and then they just appear again, clean in the drawer. The socks are paired. The shirts are ironed. Must be like magic to him.'

'You say that about your old man. But my kids are no better.'

'Yes, but Humphries gets it all day long, not just at home look,' joined in Pauline. 'There's a woman to keep his diary and a woman to dial his telephone calls and a woman to take out his coffee cup. Then at night along come us three, cleaning up behind him.'

'He just comes in here every morning and it's all clean and tidy and he doesn't even know we exist.'

They sat and thought about Rosie's remark. Joan refilled their glasses.

'Tell you what,' she said after a moment. 'Let's write him Happy Christmas just to let him know.'

She felt unusually bold. She strode through to the old man's private bathroom, took up his aerosol shaving-cream and wrote across the mirror, 'Hello'. The white foam slid like wet snow from out of the bottom of the letters. She added underneath 'Merry Xmas,' and did a big splodge for a full-stop. Then she decided to make the full-stop into a comma, and she added 'You Slob!'

The five-word message slipped and dripped down the mirror into the sink.

Rosie came up behind her, giggling. She wasn't used to drinking wine and she was beginning to feel very warm and happy inside.

Pauline meanwhile had provided them with music from some up-to-date equipment in the other room. The voice of *Sinatra* wafted its way towards them, singing one of those songs people make love to. Pauline was dancing with an

imaginary partner in the middle of the room.

'Come on,' she called to them. And on the table she'd stood a huge bottle of Southern Comfort, bigger than any bottle they'd ever seen before.

'He'll never miss a little of this—and we only need a little.' This time it was gold-coloured liquid that gugged into their glasses, and they yum-yummed and giggled some more at its delicious taste. Pauline stared at the portrait.

'Just look at him,' she said. 'You'd never guess he reads porny magazines in the toilet.'

She took up the cigar box and a reel of sticky tape from the drawer, advanced on the portrait and began sticking cigars all the way round Humphries' head so he looked as if he was wearing curlers.

'You *shall* go to the ball, Cinderella!' she said seductively.

'He looks so funny!' Joan wailed, curling up with laughter on the settee. She had a sudden idea. She went into the bathroom again and emerged with a pile of clothes from the closet.

She fixed a velvet bow tie close up under the trying-hard-to-look-square chin.

Rosie meanwhile had found a ball of string.

'Let's take a trip to Niagara,' Sinatra was singing. . . . 'This time we'll look at the fall . . .' and Rosie gathered up a half a dozen Y-fronts and a couple of frilly shirts and strung them up like Christmas decorations from the imitation chandelier to the window. She pressed the switch that sent the curtains swishing back, revealing a wide view across the lights of the town down below.

'We want you to meet the real Mr Rockfast,' she called, waving her arms wide like a circus master.

And the three women joined in the chorus of the song, singing loud, 'Let's get away from it all.'

They got pretty drunk that night, but merrily so. They talked about Humphries and what they'd always felt about him. They talked about their husbands and they talked about their kids. They gave the Southern Comfort a bit of a hammering, and the world a bit of a hammering too. They laughed at themselves. They even loosened up enough to talk about sex, about their embarrassments and their experiences.

If George Humphries' dictaphone had been turning through their party, he would have suffered a severe blow to his understanding of the world when he next switched it on. But of course he never knew about it. Well, his secretary always arrived at least an hour before him. And wasn't it her job to clear away all obstacles and make the day go with a smile . . .



Second-Class Citizen

Buchi Emecheta

WHAT PRICE A WOMAN?

Jenny Jackson

I burnt the dinner. I went past my stop on the tube. I stayed up till the early hours. All because I was reading a book called 'Second Class Citizen' and I couldn't put it down.

It's the life story, up to the age of about 25, of a Nigerian woman called Adah. The story is based on the real story of the author, Buchi Emecheta.

Adah is a fighter right from the start. Her mother and father die, and she goes to live with cousins who treat her like a drudge.

One day she is given two shillings to buy some meat. She decides to keep it, so she can register for a school examination. She says she has lost the money.

Her cousin sent her out with a threepenny piece to buy the type of cane called the Koboko. It was the one the Hausas used for their horses. There was nothing Adah could do but buy it.

Her cousin warned her that he would not stop administering the cane until she'd told him the truth. That was bad, thought Adah.

'She had to go to the Methodist girls' high school or die. She concentrated her mind on something else.

'After the burning of the first few strokes, her skin became hardened, and so did her heart. She started to count. When cousin Vincent had counted to fifty, he appealed to Adah to cry a little. If only she would cry and beg for mercy, he would let her go.

But Adah would not

take the bait. She began to see herself as another martyr: she was being punished for what she believed in.

Meanwhile cousin

Vincent's anger increased; he caned her wildly, all over her body. After a hundred and three strokes, he told Adah that he would

never talk to her again: not in this world nor in the world to come. Adah did not mind that. She was, in fact, very happy. She had earned

the two shillings.'

With determination like that, you shouldn't be surprised that she passes the examination and gets a scholarship to the high school. And on to college.

But there are more problems.

Adah could not find a home with a good, quiet atmosphere where she could study in peace. In Lagos, at that time, teenagers were not allowed to live by themselves, and if the teenager happened to be a girl as well, living alone would be asking for trouble. In short, Adah had to marry.

She refuses to marry any of the 'old baldies' that come to court her. Instead she marries a student, Francis, who can't afford to pay her bride price!

What a mistake.

Adah does, eventually, achieve her dream of going to live in England. 'Living' in a half room with Francis and their two children—cooking on the stairs, carrying water up from the backyard.

Francis carries on in the traditional Nigerian way. He decides how the money is spent—though Adah is the only one working. His parents will help make decisions, not Adah.

I kept shouting at Adah as I read on, 'Leave the bastard. You don't need him.'

Adah describes him:

'To him, a woman was a second class human, to be slept with at any time, even during the day, and if she refused, to have sense beaten into her until she gave in; to be ordered out of bed after he had done with her: to make sure she washed his clothes and got his meals ready at the right time.

'There was no need to have an intelligent conversation with his wife because, you see, she might start getting ideas.'

The culture is so strong that she really does believe deep down that she is inferior—because she is a woman. Although she has broken away in

ROMANCE

I offered them silk . . .
But they gave me chains.
My skin was soft . . .
They rubbed it raw.
I cried out for honey . . .
It turned to salt,
And soured my milk.
The bitter taste remains;
Distrust lingers like a festering sore.

by Ginny Hill

some ways—she has a skilled job as a librarian and earns good money, her culture comes creeping back—fear of the river goddess Oboshi mixed in with the Christian Jehovah.

It is difficult to understand. But that is one of the most important things about this book.

After the birth of their third child, Adah has a furious row with Francis in hospital.

If you don't go out of this ward, or stop talking, I shall throw this milk jug at you. I hate

you now, Francis, and one day I shall leave you.

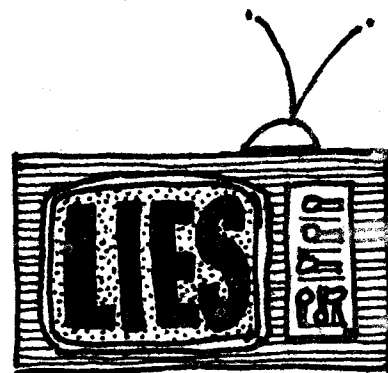
If you really want to know, I brought my children here to save them from the clutches of your family, and God help me, they are going back as different people: never, never, are they going to be the type of person you are. My sons will learn to treat their wives as people, individuals, not like goats that have been taught to talk. My daughters . . . God help me, nobody is going to pay any bleeding price

for them. They will marry because they love and respect their men, not because they are looking for the highest bidder or because they are looking for a home . . .

This woman's incredible strength sees her through in the end.

I have only mentioned a few of the points that come out in the book. I'm sure if you read it you will find it well worth the 75p.

Second Class Citizen,
Buchi Emecheta,
Fontana, 75p



COME BACK STARSKY AND HUTCH - ALL IS FORGIVEN!

What's happening to good old British television? Its not the same any more. Our friendly neighbourhood cops no longer appear to be with us. Of course, I knew Dixon had gone. Fatherly, but firm, he was the traditional cop, but a bit out of date. Didn't quite fit the new image somehow. But as I look through my Radio and T.V. Times, I am struck by the absence of the old regulars. I'd not noticed their disappearance before—Z Cars, Softly Softly. Is it true that at last the public have become disillusioned with our brave policemen and no longer tune in? Well, not quite. We still have sundry American cops, and all those detectives, fat or otherwise, were cops once upon a time. But it gets a bit boring watching all those men having all the action. Hang on though, Womens Lib keeps its end up and ardent feminist that I am, how can I ignore Police Woman Pepper! Glamorous, brave and oh, so very equal! The opening shots always show her levelling a gun at some big bad criminal. She gets up to such exciting adventures. Kidnapped by a gang of murderous pornographic film makers. Oh, so cool! Warms the heart, makes you realise that women are equal after all. We've got it all wrong, us socialists, women can

have exciting lives and still be feminine! We too can be police women super-stars! Well, quite frankly, Pepper Anderson makes me sick. They throw us these tokens of equality to keep us quiet. But even in their terms, Pepper Anderson isn't all she's cracked up to be. She's not really breaking any ice in the otherwise extremely male world of cops and robbers. The opening theme may show her gun in hand, but never once have I seen her shoot her way out of even a paper bag. She's there, quite simply, to be rescued every week by her super-cool male colleagues. She can't even guard a prisoner on her own—the other week when the lecherous informer made advances, she calmly told him—'no tricks, buddy—I've got a hidden microphone here and sergeant whats-his-name is waiting outside the door to come bursting in at the slightest hint of heavy breathing.' Women's self-defence loses another round! So sadly I have to admit that Pepper is no good. Oh well, I didn't want to be a police woman anyway. I'd only end up arresting trade unionists and reds on demonstrations and pickets. Hardly glamorous! So I'll settle down and watch some real male action with good old Starsky and Hutch—they don't let you down. Hey! Wait a minute though, they're not on either! What is this! Come back, Starsky and Hutch, all is forgiven!

Mary Ann Stuart



A full three weeks of music, discussion, theatre, films and workshops, lunchtime, afternoons Tues to Sun. Workshops Saturdays 3 Dec Music; 10 Dec Craft, writers; 17 Dec visual arts.

Creche Facilities (ring 637 7664, or come on the day)
Information Centre with records, posters and books
Action Space Cafe open throughout
Accommodation for out-of-towners, and transport for the handicapped and elderly on request.

For further details and full programme ring 637 7664.

LUNCHTIMES PERFORMANCE EVENTS:	55p
FILMS (Wed & Thu):	75p
MUSIC (at 7pm):	40p
MUSIC & VOICES (Fri & Sat)	£1.00
CHILDREN'S SHOWS:	60p (30p kids)
WORKSHOPS AND DISCUSSIONS:	FREE

STARTING 30th November (to 18th December):- 'Voices', a play by Susan Griffin directed by Kate Crutchley performances every Wednesday to Sunday.

frighten them, drug them or shock them...



MY PROBLEMS had their origin in my upbringing—of course.

The initial damage was done at home, and then it was reinforced by years of being a 'charity' pupil in a convent. There every flickering of individuality and independent thought was crushed as a matter of policy.

My doctor sent me to an 'expert' because I was having crying fits after having two operations in a year, and because I suffered from lapses of awareness. I would 'come to' in the middle of the road, feeling lost and disoriented.

I wonder how many years of training it took to create this expert on mental health? I wonder how big a salary he gets for saying, as he said to me, 'You're a student, eh? Fancy teachings about sociology and psychology, eh? I suppose they're been teaching you that freedom stuff. I don't hold with that. What you are is genetically determined. There's nothing I can do for you.'

go in and out of the room.

When I left that 'psychiatric unit' I walked straight in front of a car. I can remember the screeching brakes, I remember feeling grazed and hearing shouting, but to this day I don't know where I was for the next 89 hours.

I had to leave the degree course I was on—and I'd grafted years at night-school to get on that course.

I struggled through a few years of mundane office and factory work with the help of fags and booze and occasional drugs. Then I just caved in.

I found I would just work and then go home to bed. I spent my weekends in bed. I was unwilling to go near the medical profession because from experience I knew they had three basic solutions to people's problems: frighten them, drug them, shock them.

Eventually I became unable to get out of bed at all, and my husband called in the doctor. He gave me drugs which left me in constant sleep.

When I took overdoses, the hospital doctor asked me if I didn't feel silly putting them to all that trouble. I told him that I used to be an auxiliary nurse and that I knew he might be overworked, but it was no good trying to make me feel guilty about that! I guessed from his reaction that he wasn't used to such an attitude in his patients.

I turned to private 'therapists', who didn't know an arse from an elbow, but who certainly knew a ten pound note from a fiver. Then three things happened.

I read the books of Arthur Janov, where he describes that human beings are **not** naturally destructive, aggressive, grasping and frantic. It's the way we are screwed up that causes us to suppress our true nature and needs—leading to tension and neurosis. Uninterfered with, we would be peaceful and co-operative. We survive at the price of conformity to false, imposed values, the values of those who have power over us.

The second thing that happened to me was that I met a woman psychologist who wasn't interested in lining her pockets. She related to people as feeling individuals with unmet needs, not as morally inferior deviants who threaten society's order.

The third thing was the construction of a 'shelter' of mattresses and bedding where, in cushioned, sound-proofed surroundings, I can experience all those suppressed pains of stifled individuality and needs.

The more I experienced the suppressed ME, the more I got rid of the imposed muck.

A warning though, this shouldn't be undertaken without some supervision. It's a long and painful process. But where are people to have such treatment and be psychologically liberated?

Where are the 'feeling-centres' where in-touch therapists can assist us? Where do most of the treatment ourselves, helping each other to feel and express our most deep-felt needs, so they are no longer blocked and filling us with tension?

Such an approach calls for taking away much of the almighty power and control of the doctors and 'experts'. That needs to be done. It is our lives, our sanity that are threatened. It is our needs to be whole and happy human beings. Treatment should be in our interests, with our full and willing participation.

I've spent two years slowly and painfully dismantling the phoney me that was conditioned into being for the sake of survival and acceptance. I've come a long way. During that time I've read Socialist Worker and other socialist publications, keeping in touch with the struggle against repression and for freedom, more and more convinced of the necessity for people to control their own lives.

The freedom of the capitalists stinks. It's the selling out of true individuality to the man-made symbols of profit and prestige—the 'freedom' to crush one's fellow beings.

The well-provide-it-for-you reformers have missed the point.

Freedom isn't given. Freedom is what we naturally and automatically have, individually and socially, until someone starts defining our freedom for us and imposing their own limitations on its expression.

By Marie, from Manchester

WOMEN'S HEALTH

YOUR VOICE

Cutting the handicapped

Dear WV, Good luck with your campaign for a better Health Service. Especially hit by the cuts is the 'Cinderella' of the Health Service:- the hospitals for the mentally handicapped.

Our daughter, who is now 17 years of age, suffered Measles Encephalitis at the age of five, has had to spend the last 6 weeks in the Childrens' Ward of Amersham Hospital (General) because there is simply no bed available for her in any of the 3 special care hospitals in Bucks, Berks or Oxfordshire. South Bucks is having an especially hard financial crisis because they are having to support the new city of Milton Keynes in the north of the county, and it is proving a drain on the rest of the county.

Susan has been quite heavily tranquilised to control her screaming fits, but all the same she still screams at times, which is disturbing for the other children in the ward, and very trying for the nurses, for whom I have the highest praise. All the same the Specialist is anxious to reduce our daughter's drugs now—but cannot risk doing so in this environment. She desperately NEEDS to be in a hospital for mental illness

where they can supervise her, and where her screams will not be a danger for a child coming out of anaesthetic.

We, 'the mothers in the country, must scream and shout for more not less money for the Health Service, and the safeguarding of our children's health. The money is being wasted on the wrong direction. A certain hospital in Aylesbury has a brand new unit fully equipped and ready for use, with 78 beds for the mentally handicapped, but cannot get the money to put it into use. So the beds are there, but are not available.

High Wycombe General Hospital has a brand new Intensive Care Unit, desperately needed, but lying idle because the money to run it is not available. These places, at the high cost of the ratepayer, are being wasted and people like our young daughter are not getting the special care they so badly need, to aid their recovery.

Where now, is the Government of the People, for the People, by the People?

F. GLITHERO
(Susan's Mum)
Bucks

Dear WV, I would like to say what a great feeling it was to be part of such a mass turnout for the National Abortion Campaign at Birmingham on Saturday, and my admiration for the organisers.

I cannot describe the disgust I feel for the lack of coverage by the National Press and TV; maybe if we had beaten up a few policemen we would have made the news. I heard one policeman say what a good demonstration it had been. Is it that the media had been told to play it down, so that Benyon, with help from the Labour Party, can get his Bill through?

RITA BARKER Doncaster

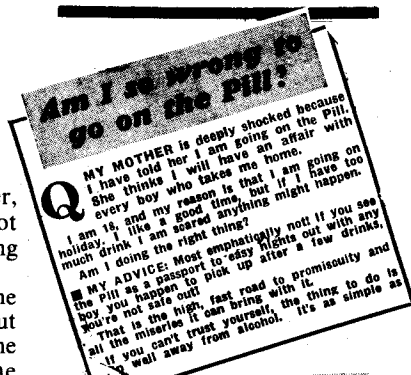
Chiswick and the National Federation

Dear WV, What have the Sunday Telegraph and Womens Voice got in common? Not a lot, one would hope, but in fact they both seem to share an interest in Erin Pizzey and her hostel at Chiswick.

I think it's about time readers and writers for Womens Voice got their politics over Womens Aid sorted out. The National Federation (Chiswick is *not* a

member) is the only national campaigning body for Womens Aid, and has its feet firmly placed in the principles of women taking control over their own lives and helping themselves.

The Federation also attempts through publicity and discussion to put a political perspective on the issue of wife-battering and how that reflects



MISS CLAIRE RAYNER EV

'True' working class women write back

Dear WV, In response to Christine Fellowes' letter, I'd like to state that I am one of those women who watch (and like) Coronation Street, and also read, enjoy and learn from WOMENS VOICE. I am also a working class woman from the North of England. Oppression of women is worldwide and through every class of the social structure. As far as I can see, aggression, i.e. saying NO—I'm not going to take this any more, is what is going to free women. Coming to some sort of agreement or compromise is a cop-out.

I'm just starting to fight back now and it is hard (but no one said it was going to be easy!), but at least it is some way up the road to liberation.
VIV WOODBURN
WV reader

Dear WV, I am a typical Northern WORKING CLASS WOMAN, and I don't find WOMENS VOICE ultra-feminist. Some of the articles in

women's role in society.

I hear no such analysis from Ms Pizzey, in fact quite the opposite. Her column in the Sunday Telegraph reflects a very traditional view of women and the family.

Until recently I helped with the Lewisham Womens Aid Refuge, which is a member of the Federation, and I feel very strongly that Womens Voice should be solidly behind the work of those refuges affiliated to the National Organisation.
In Sisterhood,
JANE ASHDOWN
S.E. London's Womens Voice

Dear WV, I enclose a cutting from last week's 'SUN' newspaper. Next time the anti-abortionists claim there is no reason for unwanted pregnancies, bear this cutting in mind, which I think demonstrates their deep concern to prevent unwanted pregnancies at all costs.

PS: Can you imagine Raynor's answer if the letter had started off: 'I am an 18 year old boy and am thinking of taking some condoms on holiday...?'

FRANK LUKE
Lea Valley
Enfield

WV are difficult for my friends to understand, but this is mainly due to the fact that working class women are not used to politics, especially politics in relation to women's issues.

We need to talk to women when we're selling WV and leafletting. This is the only way to get women politically aware. Then it's up to WV to keep them informed and aware. By the way, I find most working class women resent dashing home from work to cook the old man's dinner.

LESLEY HYMAN
South Elmsall
Yorkshire

DEAR WV, Christine Fellowes seems upset about WV making women aggressive, well:- I think it's about bloody time that women became aggressive. For years we have been pretty little passive creatures, putting up with the shittiest jobs with the worst pay. Well, now women are getting aggressive, look at Grunwicks or Batchelors. We are demanding equal pay and better conditions, and the only way we are going to win is to be aggressive, not against working class men, but against capitalism.

Capitalism certainly doesn't hesitate about being aggressive towards women. Force-feeding the Price sisters, beating up women on the Grunwicks picket line, and the cuts, which women suffer from the most: cuts in nurseries, family planning etc. I'm proud to be an aggressive, revolutionary socialist WOMAN alongside aggressive revolutionary socialist men.

YOUR VOICE

Northern giants

Dear WV,
I have just bought a copy of Women's Voice—the first I have seen, and liked it so much that I'm ordering a year's supply. (I also get Women's Report regularly).

I was interested to read Catty France's excellent review of Merlin Stone's 'Paradise Papers'. I bought this book some months ago, and treasure it. It's a most enlightening book. It shows how the Jewish and Christian moral code was developed for the sole purpose of suppressing and enslaving women, and creating perpetual male domination.

Catty France wondered why the northern invaders came to be male-dominated, and how they succeeded in conquering the more civilised people of the Mediterranean and Middle

East.

My theory is that in the north, hunting was more important than in warmer climates, because for much of the year, there is no vegetarian food to live on. Hence men, who specialised in hunting rather than gathering, gained status.

Also, these northerners discovered the smelting and working of iron, which makes better weapons than bronze. This, and their hunting prowess, made them better warriors than the peaceful settled southerners.

Finally, they seem to have been much bigger people ('there were giants in those days'), perhaps just because they were northerners. As Elaine Morgan pointed out in 'The Descent of Woman', warm-blooded animals usually grow bigger in high latitudes. The smaller southern people would have found these six-footers intimidating.

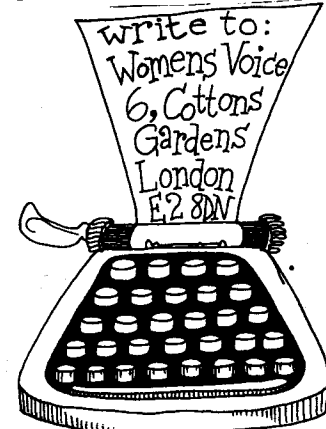
MARGARET GUY
Stockport

SPUC off

Dear WV,
UNBORN BLONDES (and brunettes) prefer doctors who don't kill them—LIFE. . . IF ABORTION WAS REALLY OK you wouldn't need the euphemism 'termination of pregnancy'—LIFE . . .

This filth appeared in the 'GUARDIAN' personal columns last week. Probably many women read these and other equally obnoxious adverts in our national press. Probably some of them have had abortions and will feel guilty about it—that's what LIFE wants to do to them—that's their aim. They do all this in the name of Christianity. But what I can't work out is who is the worst—LIFE for writing it or the GUARDIAN for printing it—just for money.

SHEILA TELFER Pontefract



Send your letters by 17
December for January

Well, excuse me, I must stop playing journalist and must go off, to picket a National Front Meeting.

MAGGIE BACKON
Portsmouth

Dear WV, Maybe Christine Fellowes' letter in the last issue was written to provoke a flood of replies to brighten up the rather serious pages of WOMENS VOICE. Well, if it was, I'm sure it will have the desired effect. Trying to reason and understand her letter is like trying to pick out the best pieces of meat in a pan of stew. It is such a jumble of half-cooked myths and prejudices as to be practically impossible, but I'll have a go.

I don't want to jump to the defence of WOMENS VOICE, with which I have many disagreements, but to say it dictates to women is absolute nonsense. It attempts to provide the socialist answer to problems and frustrations of women in society. It does not tell women they are oppressed, full-stop.

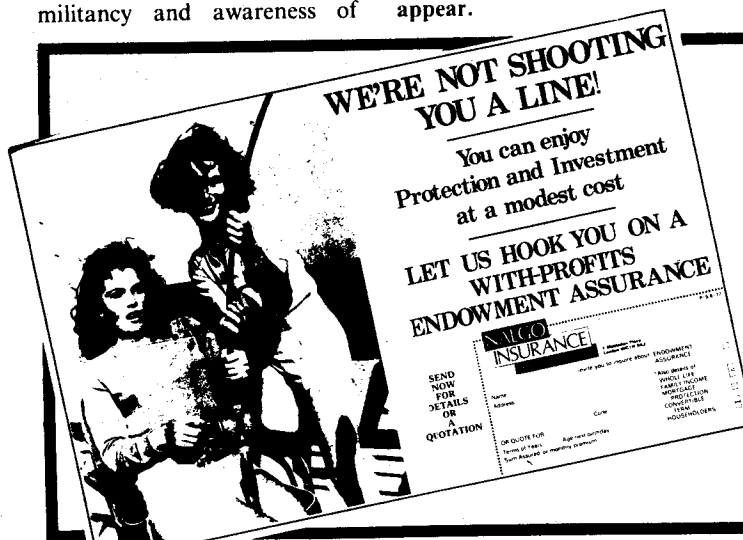
It reflects the growing militancy and awareness of

women, and in doing so, helps to break down the isolation of women in today's family, thus giving us the confidence to challenge the traditional values of the female in society.

The first step is to unite women in the fight for socialism. As for WOMENS VOICE being a "London-orientated bulletin" and other cliches like "supposedly oppressed women" and "the true working class", Ms. Fellowes should be pleased to note that I have put on my clogs and shawl as I sit here in my pre-war walk-up flat in Salford to write this letter. That's for the benefit of those southerners living in trendy middle-class areas of London like Lewisham, Southall and the East End, who don't really know what it's like to be working class.

DOLLY FARRELL
Salford

□ We have had more letters in reply than we can possibly print. Apologies to those women whose letters don't appear.

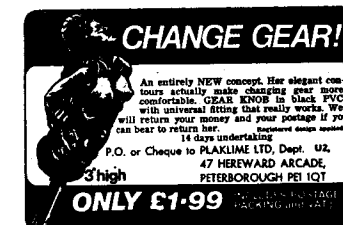


paper policies

Dear WV, I am used to seeing sexist and degrading adverts all around me, but was disgusted to find the enclosed issued by my own union, NALGO, and in our union paper, Public Service.

NALGO has a very good policy on paper for women's rights, but attitudes like this show why it doesn't work in practice.

SUSAN BEDFORD
Leeds



Dear WV,
A bloke in my office gave me this ad, to send up to you.

I suppose they reckon fondling this monstrosity driving into work gets a bloke in the mood for pinching bottoms when he arrives. Funny, we couldn't find a similar model showing male 'elegant contours'!

I understand motoring magazines are full of sexist filth like this.

Yours in sisterhood,
JILL CUMMINS
Croydon

Nationalise drugs?

Dear WV,
We constantly hear that the Government plan more and more cuts in National Health Service spending due, we are told, to lack of funds. But a lot of money—millions of pounds a year in fact—is spent on drugs alone, and from which the drug companies make huge profits. One way of cutting waste of National Health Service money would surely be to nationalise the big drug firms.

RUTH JELLINGS

Sexist brothers

Dear WV,
We realise that women's equality this side of the revolution is

going to be a struggle—BUT the following comments from some of the 'brothers' on the Grunwick Picket on November 7th made us want to resort to more than argument:

'Sorry luv', as they pushed past us with their large banner, 'don't want to smudge your make-up.' And later when we were in the middle of a set-to with the police, and shouting to some still looking on from the pavement:

'All right, darlin', calm down, you'll get us all excited in a minute.'

If we're going to picket equally and get pushed around and beaten up equally, why should we take this sort of shit—from 'brothers' or anyone else?

JEAN WRIGHT
JULIA ROBINSON
NALGO
Shop Steward

WHAT IS GOING ON

WV Meetings

● **Aberystwyth WV discussion groups.** Every other Tuesday. Farmers Side Bar.

● **Black Country Womens Voice** meets fortnightly, Sunday afternoons, 2.30 at 27 Glen Court, Compton Road, Wolverhampton. Children very welcome. Phone Wolverhampton 23233 for information about Womens Voice activities and meetings.

● **Canterbury Womens Voice** meets fortnightly, 8.00pm at The Jolly Sailor, Northgate. 29th November: Open meeting on 'Language, Sexism and Sexuality'. 13th December: Nursery Campaign. For more information or babysitters, ring Lynn Whitstable 263051.

● **Cardiff Womens Voice Group** meets Tuesdays. Next meetings: 13 December, 'Where are our nursery schools?', 3rd January, Ordinary meeting, but with a speaker if arranged. Then every fortnight after. 7.30pm at SWP Bookshop, 58 Bridge Street. Look for us in the Hope and Anchor next door if you're early. If you need a baby-sitter, phone Bronwen at Cardiff 43470 (evenings).

● **Edinburgh WV.** For information about WV work, contact Susie at Book Marx, 130 Morrison Street, Edinburgh. Open 10am-6pm everyday and most evenings.

● **Hackney Womens Voice Public Meeting,** Wednesday 30 November,

Centreprise, Kingsland Road, 8pm. The Education Cuts—What about the kids? Speaker: Jeannie Holborow, NUT.

Tuesday 10 January, Dalston Library, Dalston Lane, 8pm. Don't Lick the Boot that Grinds You Down. Gill Brown tells how fascism puts women, too, 'in their place'.

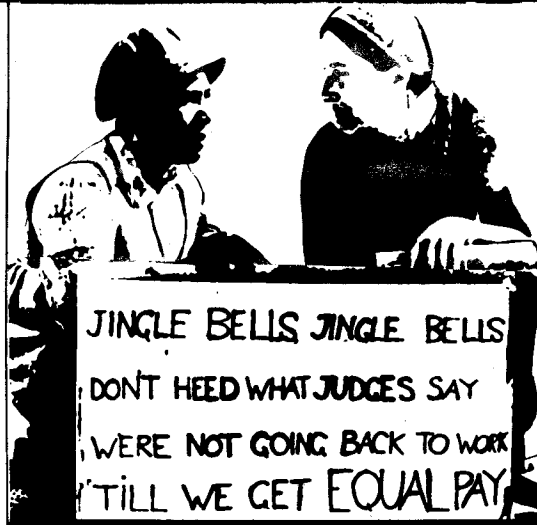
● **Hammersmith Womens Voice Group** is now meeting every second and last Monday in the month. Contact: Eileen 748 5655 Laura 602 5923.

● **Lea Valley Womens Voice** public meeting: The Firemen's Case. Monday 12 December 8.00pm, The Beehive Pub, Stoneleigh Road, Tottenham, N17.

● **Southampton Womens Voice** meeting. Wednesday 14 December, 8pm. The Anchor, East Street. If you need a babysitter, ring Southampton 31743.

● **South East London Womens Voice** meets alternate Mondays at the Womens Centre (above the Task Force shop) Deptford High Street, SE10, 8.00pm. Further details from Peggy 853 2070 (day)/Anne 855 1920 (eves.)

● **South West London Womens Voice** meets alternative Tuesdays at 7.45, details from your WV seller: Monday 5 December: The Womens Movement Across the World, speaker Joanna Rollo. Battersea Library, Lavender Hill, SW11. 13 December: Discussion - bring a bottle, something to eat, questions, problems, complaints,



● **Right to Work Christmas cards:** six designs - postcard type - two colours. 8p each or £1 for 20 plus 10p postage. Money and orders to CARDS, 265A Seven Sisters Road, London, N4.

suggestions about Womens Voice.

● **York Womens Voice Group** meetings: fortnightly on Mondays.

● **Hackney Womens Voice - Anbody Interested?** Want to protest about prices? Want to fight hospital closures? Want to fight the cuts in schools? Want to fight for abortion of demand? Want to fight racism? We want to find all the women in Hackney who are willing to help us do all or any of these, and anything else which affects the lives, at work and at home, of women. We hold regular sales of Womens Voice on topical local issues, and we are holding a series of monthly public meetings to discuss what we can do to improve our lot and to involve more women in the fight for socialism. We want to show people we are not

satisfied with what we've got, and that we're prepared to do something about it. We need all the help we can get - contact Liz on 739 9772 day or 254 3470 evenings if you are interested.

Gay Groups

● **SWP Gay Group** meets every other Monday. Ring Richard 790 2454 for details

● **Lesbian Line** is a new phone service for women operated entirely by women and offering help, advice and information. 2-10pm, 01-794 2942.

Discos 'n fun

● **Mobile disco and rock band** available at affordable prices for Womens Voice functions etc in London. SAP01-890 3255.

● **Rockparty Benefit:** Dance, 8pm Saturday 10 December, with the Milk, SADisco, at the Recreation Hall, King Edward Memorial Hospital, West Ealing, W13. Admission: advance ticket only 50p, from SAP or 75p at door. Write to SAP, 67 New Road, Bedford, TW14 8HR

Can you help us?

- CAN YOU
- type
 - drive
 - keep accounts
 - write
 - draw
 - design
 - paste-up
 - do photo research
 - handle advertising
 - answer the telephone

... Then we need you. Ring us or write and we can put your talents to good use. Write to Womens Voice, 6 Cottons Gardens, London, E2 or phone Margaret or Mary on 01-739 1878.

Yours for just 75p. Or two for £1 if you send one to a friend.

This is just some of the first ever Womens Voice calendar. Beautifully designed and printed in two colours on art paper, it comes folded so that you can either display two months at a time or see the full year at a glance. Because we want as many people as possible to be able to have copies we are offering two calendars for £1, postage & packing free. We will enclose a message for copies sent direct by us to your friends.

ORDER EARLY IN TIME FOR THE NEW YEAR.

Womens VOICE 1978

"Being working class to me is being born with a pair of hands which are practically withered away by the time you are finished - and you've got nothing to show for it".

Annie Spike - housewife/nightcleaner

I've often heard you tell me how you'll pull the bosses down

You'll never do it brother while you're bossing ME around

If you need refuge, help or advice
Contact the Womens Voice Centre
You can contact them through:
England and Wales: National Women's Aid Federation
51 Cranford Road, London NW3 2J 586 01261
Northern Ireland: Telephone Belfast 862062 or Coleraine 852799 or Coleraine 8147 621

Calendar grid showing months: FEBRUARY, MARCH, APRIL

Can you send one to me and one to a friend.

I enclose £1 for the two calendars.

Please send me your 1978 calendar. I enclose 75p.

Name

Address

Please enclose the following message

To Womens Voice calendar 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.



*From The Soldier: recruiting magazine
for the army*

*Subscribe to Womens Voice
or buy a subscription for a friend*

**Please send me/my friend a years subscription
I enclose £2 (£3 airmail rate)**

Name

Address



*Soldiers fire fighting in Stratford, in a
dangerously explosive paint store.*