

# Womens VOICE

January 1979

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Issue 25

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God  
I've  
got  
my  
bed*

**HOMELESS WOMEN  
IN LONDON: PAGE 13**

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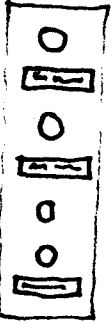
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the popular image of the part time worker is of some one who is of only a marginal significance reinforced by the myth that women work only for pin money... but a considerable proportion of part time workers feature in official statistics nearly 80% of part time workers are over 35. there is every indication that the numbers of married women entering the labour force will continue to increase... the major reason why women seek work is financial... the major reason why women seek work is financial... their earnings are far from being pin money... crucial in keeping many families out of poverty... the number of families with income below the Supplementary Benefit level would have trebled if the women had been in paid employment... not single mothers are forced to work the problem of low pay among part time workers is a massive one... 60% of the female labour force is receiving poverty-level wages... or worse made worse by institutionalised discrimination... inadequate enforcement of wage laws and effects of the National Insurance threshold... those in the lowest paid occupations were least likely to be eligible for private sick pay schemes

IT OFTEN feels as if the world is unchanging and unchangeable. Socialism may sound fine—a society where we will all be free and equal—but as the days grind on it can seem little more than a romantic dream. Our expectations become trapped in the repetitiveness of our everyday lives.

But we *can* change the world we live in—and that change can be so rapid and so dramatic that it exceeds our wildest imaginings.

A year ago, the Shah of Iran seemed invincible. His vast army was equipped with millions of pounds worth of deadly weapons, his secret police force had eyes and ears everywhere. Prison, torture and death awaited any brave enough to breathe opposition.

Today his rule is tottering. The oil money, the tanks, the informers—they cannot save him now. The people of Iran have taken to the streets with a series of strikes, rallies and demonstrations that have shaken the very foundations of the Shah's power. And in the process of the rising, in its profusion of experiences, they are changing both their world and their selves.

In Rhodesia, liberation armies battle on against the whites who have stolen their country. In Nicaragua and Turkey, in South Africa and Chile, we see people with the courage and determination to fight on, to change conditions that have become intolerable, and shape their own futures.

## OUR POINT OF VIEW

# We have a world to win...

Many of these struggles started as battles for the barest minimum needs of existence or freedom—but within that process the women and men in struggle

have begun to realise their own power, and to map out their own demands for the way their lives must change.

The two thousand black miners on strike in Namibia, the workers crippling the Iranian oil fields, even the low paid in Britain campaigning for a strike on January 22 for a decent pay rise after years of falling living standards: they are all asserting the right to use their power for themselves, instead of constantly having it used against them.

Whenever we take some control of our jobs, we open up our own horizons to ask what we do, and why, to discover the potential for conducting our own lives.

In Iran, women from a traditionally repressive culture are now in the forefront of the bloody battles. Being swept into the struggle, becoming fully part of it, Iranian women have leapt through centuries of thought in a few months.

Of course people's ideas change patchily, with politics and religion mixing unevenly. The focus of opposition to the Shah has been provided by religious leaders, and Islam is particularly barbaric to women.

But the women and men of Iran are not fighting and dying just to replace one repressive ruler with another. The transformation in how Iranian women see themselves, as active human beings not chattels, is irreversible. The potential is enormous. Their courage is an inspiration and stimulus to us all.



Top left: Women demonstrating in Iran.  
Bottom left: Iranian women in France.  
Above: Children on London demonstration.

Photo: Laurence Sparham (IFT)

Photo: Peter Court



## KIDS IN CARE FIGHT FOR THEIR HOMES

HOW would you feel if you opened the papers one evening and read that your home was for sale?

That's what happened to boys and girls in 'the care' of Birmingham Council. These kids are victims of a two year plan to close nurseries, homes and working girls' hostels all over Birmingham.

How do social services plan to rehouse these boys and girls? No one wants to foster 'bad' boys and girls of 16, especially, it seems, if they're black.

Yet it's the hostels in the black areas of Birmingham that are going first.

Birmingham Womens Voice went along to speak to the residents and found out just what a tough position the kids would be in if the hostels do close:

'The councillor that came to see us reeked of prejudice. He said the homes were too good for us and why should rate payers' money pay for this?'

Some of the girls are afraid they'll be moved to secure units if accommodation isn't available elsewhere. But most of all they don't want to move because they think they have a right to stay where their homes are.

The hostels are the only home some of them have known. Because they have a 'record' it would be

incredibly difficult for them to get jobs or flats in the city.

After years of being pushed around and treated like luggage, they're determined to stick up for themselves now. One girl who'd been forcibly removed from a home where she'd been quite happy, said: 'We ought to have a say - they ruin our lives! We don't want to change. If the council are as respectable as they make out, why couldn't they warn us they were going to kick us out instead of letting us read it in the paper?' She went on to explain just what it can be like living in care today.

'They just move us around; they don't let us settle anywhere and if we do the slightest thing wrong they move us to somewhere else. We can't go to decent schools so we can't get good jobs.'

'We were brought up in the ghetto', Telma told us, 'and really and truly, we don't have anywhere else to go.'

For years the council have been telling these girls that they're immature and irresponsible and untrustworthy, and now they plan to chuck them out, or go to strange foster parents, or to try to find a flat. As one girl said:

'If I moved into a flat, and they've closed down all the nurseries, and

they've kicked me out of my working girls' hostel, and I've had a baby, and I'm still in care, are they going to come and take my baby away?'

One of the lads said, 'The council say they're going to save money, but for whom? Who's going to benefit, them or me?'

These kids have been kicked around long enough. They can see through the hypocrisy of a council that says it 'cares' but is only concerned with saving money. They know that they'll always be the ones to get a raw deal in this society because they're young, rebellious and because a lot of them are black.

The council say they need more homes for the mentally handicapped which is why they're closing the hostels. But where is the sense in taking from one deprived group to help another?

Many of the hostels are to be sold; the one in Handsworth for over £90,000!

'Let's get together and fight' is the message. So far there have been two demonstrations and delegates sent to see the social services chief. Needless to say they were fobbed off each time.

They've been threatened with juvenile court because of their actions, but they'd already made sure of their rights through local law centres.

They now plan to set up a defence committee to protect the rights of children in care in the future. It's called 'Rights for Kids in Care.'

Keeping the hostels open is only the beginning. 'We'll sit in the hostels if we have to,' said one girl.

Last word to them:

'When we went to see the social services they told us to get off home. Will they still say that when they're closing down the hostel?'

## TROUSERS RULE OK!

THE recent cold weather has caused a few problems for two fifteen year old schoolgirls at Oakhill High School, Stoke. They were so cold they decided to wear their trousers at school. The first time, they were sent home to change.

Karen and Kath had some leaflets printed and had them distributed at school the next morning. That day they were split up.

Kath was given work to do in the library and Karen was put in the medical room with work to do. But both girls were allowed to stay in school.

On Monday Kath and Karen went to school in trousers expecting the worst. Ten girls were wearing trousers that day but backed down when asked to change into skirts. All except for Karen and Kath whose parents were backing them all the way! Both girls were allowed in classes wearing their trousers.

Jan Blackmore  
Stoke Womens Voice Group

# TRADE UNIONISTS SUPPORT ABORTION

Photo: Laurence Sparham (FL)



450 DELEGATES turned up to the National Abortion Campaign Conference in London on 25 November from all over the country. This was the first real attempt by the National Abortion Campaign to take the issue of abortion into the Labour Movement. How to fight restrictive legislation against the 1967 Act and how to campaign for much better health service facilities, especially out-patient abortion clinics, were the two main themes.

The mood of the conference was optimistic and constructive. The delegates came mainly from the white collar Unions like NUJ NALGO ASTMS, NUT and NATFE but NUPE, AUEW, TGWU and COHSE were also quite well represented.

Mel Read, the only female member of the ASTMS executive,

made an excellent speech in which she brought out the difficulties of arguing for abortion rights with male trade unionists, who seem to think paper resolutions are enough and often get embarrassed or assume that abortion is to do with "fallen women" or get sentimental about children and the family. She pointed out their hypocrisy by saying that a lot of active trade unionists are only active because they have a wife at home to look after them. She emphasised the need to keep up the arguments about abortion rights and not to become complacent once a resolution is passed.

Judith Gray, a doctor, outlined the case for out-patient abortion facilities. At present only 50% of abortions are performed on the National Health Service and private

abortions are often performed by consultants who refuse to do them on the NHS. Out patient abortion facilities are much cheaper. £25 instead of £100 they are much safer, quicker and avoid a lot of stress. They also release hospital beds for other cases.

At present there are only 15 centres but these facilities should be available all over the country, and trade union branches, Community Health Councils and womens groups should be involved in the fight for them.

The conference allowed plenty of time for contributions from the floor. What came out clearly from these and the workshops is that while a lot of trade unions have paper policies on abortion and support the TUC Charter for Women at Work, this means very little. Frustration was expressed about the male domination, the lack of communication, the infrequency of meetings and the lack of democracy in the unions. This came out very clearly from the teachers' union delegates. Many of them had gone along in spite of the fact that resolutions delegating them had been ruled out of order in their branches. The need for more rank and file involvement was felt and this showed itself in the support for the Action proposal calling on NAC to use Rank and File groups.

socialist groups and womens caucuses in Unions much more.

The conference will only be successful if the ideas discussed are used in our trade union branches now. So start building for the International Day of Action on Abortion 31st March.

Find out if your trade union sponsors MPs and if so how they are likely to vote on Restrictive Legislation so you can put the pressure. Find out the position about out-patient facilities in your area and start a joint Womens Voice Campaign with trade union support and get your trade union to sponsor the National Abortion Campaign.

Alison Kirton

## PREGNANT? YOU HAVE A CHOICE



**THE Camden National Abortion Campaign have produced their own leaflet to explain to women how they can get an abortion locally.**

**If you would like a copy send a self addressed envelope to Camden NAC, 20 Kylemore Road, London, NW6.**

**Then you can do your own!**

## SOCIAL WORKERS STRIKE BLAZES

A COUPLE of us went down over Christmas to talk to some of the social worker pickets in Islington who had joined the five month old strike at the beginning of December. The pickets, mainly women were lively and full of the Christmas spirit (donated in bottles by the architects department and the local firemen who remembered the social workers support for their strike last Christmas).

As we were talking to them, a dustcart stopped. 'Something to live up your picket' shouted one of the dustmen and handed on of the men a porno magazine.

'There's only one place for that' declared one woman 'on the fire!' She promptly threw it on the brazier. It made a lovely blaze!

The social workers are on strike demanding a higher grade for all the

extra duties and responsibilities they have been given over the last few years. But the most important part of the demand is for the right to negotiate wages and conditions locally instead of nationally.

Some of the pickets told us what they had been doing since they'd been on strike:

'When we first came out on strike we put a picket on Islington Town Hall which was very effective - even the Securicor drivers refused to cross our picket line. But we withdrew that after management agreed to negotiate. If negotiations break down that picket will be resumed.

'At the moment we're stopping a lot of the supplies going into the Head Office and the postmen are not delivering any mail. But the biggest violators of the strike are NALGO members themselves.



Photo: Jayne Henriques

There is no concept of solidarity with so many of our members isolated in small offices.

We've had a lot of bad coverage from the press accusing us of causing kids to be battered but we're always in a position of having to defend what we *didn't* do, not all the things that we do week in week out.

So what we've been doing is having an emergency service running and referring clients to their local councillors so perhaps they will get some idea of what our job actually means and all the extra responsibilities that have been given to us over the last few years.'

**Marianne Stuart.**

Photo: Virginia Turbett



## THE TYPISTS CHARTER STARTS HERE

'PEOPLE don't realise the exams you have to take to be a typist.

You start learning at 15 and take separate exams on accuracy, typing schedules, manuscripts and more.

It's no good being a typist if you haven't got a good command of English, so you take that at college too. Yet we're on a lower grade than filing clerks. I suppose it's because we're women—you don't see many male typists.' *Jean.*

'We like typing—so why should we have to apply for another job just to get more money? What skill is there in filing or answering a phone—anyone can answer a phone?' *Iris.*

'There's no job dissatisfaction here. It's just that our job should be upgraded. But the union (NALGO) hasn't done much for us up 'till now. They never consult us about the claim. We just get what they negotiate.' *Joan.*

'Our union rep says that its our fault because we don't go to the meetings. But the meetings are usually after work and married women just can't get to them.' *Doris.*

Even if you do go, what you want to know about doesn't come up.' *Sadie.*

'Of course to get regraded we'll have to get involved in NALGO. We'll have to get other local government typists to support us nationally.

But first of all we'll have to start here in Wandsworth. We'll find out at the typists' meeting whether there's any real support for a regrading claim . . . *Iris*

When the talking was over - the



typists moved into action. With the help of the union rep in each department a list was drawn up of every typist in the building. Then they sent a personal invitation to a meeting to every one of them, signing their names on the letter . . .

Eighty out of a possible hundred came to the lunchtime meeting. It was chaired by Gerry Gleeson of *Women in Nalgo* and the discussion

was lively and positive.

First the typists spent some useful time finding out and comparing each other's grades.

An explanation of the national union scales showed that if typists were put on the same scales as clerical and administrative workers that would mean a better job structure, a better career.

As the meeting went on, the

feeling grew about the importance of a typist's job and the strength of the typists to win a fairer deal.

They decided to draw up a claim to submit to management. Each typing pool elected two reps to a committee which was given the responsibility of drawing up the claim and reporting back to another meeting.

The reps decided there was no point in hanging about . . . they would meet the following day to get down to business.

The story of the Wandsworth typists has only just begun . . . When the idea for improving conditions are taken back to the next meeting of all the typists, changes can and probably will be made.

Then the union negotiators will move in, since NALGO will insist on branch representatives handling the talks with management.

And the bosses themselves will be no pushover.

But the hardest part is over. The typists in Wandsworth know that they are on their way. They know too, that their claim will be their own responsibility and that whatever management or union reps say, it is their voice that will decide the fate of the claim.

## RECLAIM THE NIGHT

'If you wear a short skirt, people say you've asked for it. If you walk down the street, you've asked for it. If you are a woman, you've asked for it.' Rape Victim.

As women, we demand the right to be able to walk alone at night, unhassled, unmolested, and free from the threat of rape.

Areas like Soho promote pornography, which degrades women, distorts sexuality, feeds off sexual repression and contributes to violence against women.

As socialist women, we do not call for more police on the streets. The last Reclaim the Night demonstration showed clearly whose side the police are on! We do not call for more repression, censorship and longer prison sentences for rapists. To do this would be to join the Law and Order Brigade.

We know that our fight for freedom on the streets can only be won as part of the fight for freedom for all for socialism. We know that like blacks in Brixton, like workers on picket lines, women have to defend themselves, fight for their rights, and cannot depend on the state or the police to do it for us.

Join the Reclaim the Night Demonstration!

Assemble 6.30 Leicester Square, Saturday January 20th

Womens Voice has produced a leaflet in support of the demonstration. Copies are available from PO Box 82, London E2 8DN, price 25p for 100 (including postage).

## JOIN THE CHARTER!

- ★ 1979 pay claim: regrading of all typists to C2
- ★ An end to qualification bars
- ★ AP5 for typing supervisors
- ★ Better training opportunities
- ★ No to word processing

For further information, donations and copies of this Charter 5p each plus 10p postage and packing please write to Typists Charter co Womens Voice Box 82, London, E2. Make cheques out to Typists Charter.



# EQUALITY? WHAT EQUALITY

## BUT IT'S THE LAW NOW...

AN ANALYSIS of applications under the Equal Pay Act (EPA) during 1977 shows that only 8 per cent of them were successful at tribunal hearings, and for the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) the percentage is also 8 per cent.

In the whole of the past three years, industrial tribunals in Britain have awarded a total of £16,341 to women under the EPA and SDA.

Things appear rosier in America, where in one single action in 1973, the giant corporation American Telegraph & Telephones (ATT) paid out £17.5 million to its women employees in back pay alone. And on top of the financial penalties came orders for quotas of blacks, women, and ethnic minorities to be taken onto the pay roll—or else.

In the light of such spectacular enforcement of the American legislation British feminists have recently expressed admiration of the American system. But is the situation in America that different from our own?

A quick look at the American figures reveals that, as in Britain, the gap between male and female average earnings is widening.

An analysis of the ATT employees shows that five years of meeting the legislated quotas has made only the minutest dent in the overwhelmingly "female" low-paid jobs.

The effect of the American legislation, like that of Britain, is only cosmetic.

Eleanor Norton, the black woman lawyer and new head of the American counterpart to our EOC unwittingly gave a clue to the reason legislation doesn't produce the goods for women on both sides of the Atlantic when she recently said "Women's rights would not be anywhere in this country (USA) had it not been for race and civil rights, a long, long struggle waged almost totally by blacks and their allies".

That was back in the early 1960s, and the achievements of that mass movement have been whittled away and substituted by the hollow victory of legislation.

This point is confirmed in Britain by a London School of Economics project which monitored the equal pay and sex discrimination acts over three years and whose reports have been published by the Department of Employment.

The project found that in 84.6% of the organisations studied, anti-woman attitudes existed amongst management, trade union officials, and male trade unionists—all



Betty Lockwood-deputy chairwoman (EOC)

secure in the knowledge that the legislation wouldn't be enforced.

The lack of women's participation in unions allows employers and male trade unionists to neglect or actively over-ride women's interests on both pay and access to jobs.

The project's report concludes that "unless there is pressure from women workers and trade unions, and unless there is pressure from government agencies (i.e. the EOC), large numbers of women will

continue to be underpaid in relation to the men they work with and most women workers will continue to be found in a narrow range of jobs and career opportunities".

In other words, we women must rely on ourselves and not on others—even if they are paid to represent our interests. The legislation will never work unless we actively make it work.

Nina Gosling

## PART-TIME WOMEN LOSE OUT

ANOTHER blow against women's equality came from the new chairman of the Employment Appeals Tribunal, Justice Slynn, last month.

The case concerned a part-time garment worker, Mrs Kathleen Handley, who was seeking equal pay with a full-time male worker in her firm.

Although Lord Denning had

ruled that the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts should be viewed as a harmonious whole (and since women are the majority of part-time workers because they have the main responsibility for children, it is indirectly discriminatory for part timers to get a lower rate of pay than full-timers), Justice Slynn decided that because

Mrs Handley "was really contributing less to the production of the company" she couldn't have equal pay.

Mrs Handley thinks differently. "You work harder when you are part time, you get that bit extra in. Hour for hour I do more than that man. Without part-timers they'd be lost".

"This goes beyond Mrs Handley" said Harry Kay of the Tailor and Garment Workers Union. "It's a principle that affects a very large number of our members—a very large number of women". And despite being refused leave to appeal, the union may go to the Court of Appeal.

Nina Gosling.

## LESS EQUAL NOW

LADY HOWE, deputy chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) was "very disappointed that progress towards equal pay is not just at a standstill, but is actually regressing". This was her comment last month when she announced that "Women's earnings in relation to men's have dropped back to pre-1976 level: women's gross hourly earnings rose from 63.1% of men's in 1970 to 75.1% in 1976. They have now dropped to 73.9% in 1978."

Does Lady Howe intend to do the job she's paid for and use the powers given by the government to the EOC to enforce the provisions of the Equal Pay Act?

No, she does not. In fact, as far as she and the EOC are concerned, "the effect of the Equal Pay Act has worked itself through, and any further progress will only come through the implementation of the Sex Discrimination Act" (SDA).

Well then, does the EOC intend to enforce the provisions of the SDA? Alas, again, no they don't.

They did promise to fund the first case under the education section of the Act on behalf of a schoolgirl in Croydon who was prevented by her school from doing "boys' subjects" like woodwork in favour of "girls' subjects" like domestic science. But the EOC is now not going ahead, for reasons they are not disclosing, and are being taken to court by the schoolgirl for leaving her, like the rest of us, in the lurch.

All this is not very surprising, since Lady Howe is a member of the Conservative Party and is married to that other champion of the employing class, Sir Geoffrey Howe (shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer). Hardly likely really that Tory politics are going to interfere with bosses' interests.

Nina Gosling



Photo: Chris Davies (Report)



## XMAS TREAT FOR PATIENTS YOU MUST BE JOKING

Glad to read your article on Save Our Hospitals—it's good to see the truth in print instead of a whole bunch of excuses. I've been working at Darenth Park Hospital in Kent, a hospital for the mentally handicapped, only since September this year, but even in this short time the effects of cuts are obvious to anyone with a questioning mind.

While we were all sitting comfortably at home over Christmas having a good time, the patients at Darenth Park Hospital in Kent had a very different sort of time altogether.

There were no parties in the wards except when patients money had been used to buy the food and decorations. If the kitchen had been given advance notice they sent up nasty meat sandwiches and packets of crisps.

Patients' christmas presents, which are bought out of their own money anyway, consisted of basic necessities, like clothing, because worn-out clothing is no longer replaced by the hospital.

You would have thought that one thing that happens in hospitals without fail is that sheets get changed at least once a week . . . but even when the

laundry is working normally there are rarely enough sheets to change all the beds completely. We change one sheet and one pillowcase. Incontinent patients? God help them—it's a case of turning round the sheets and covering them up with incontinent pads. We don't even get enough laundry bags to put the dirty laundry in.

All sorts of substitute foods are being used. Dried milk and potato, soya patties instead of meat.

'You have to hunt to find the "spots" in spotted duck.'

There are some foods and drinks that we keep on the wards for which there is a pre-printed order form. These orders seem to be cut automatically by half if not ignored completely.

For 33 patients to last seven days, we get 2 large bottles of

camp coffee, 2 medium tins of Ovaltine and 1 medium jar of malted milk. Fruit juices? We don't even get orange squash. Bovril? A request for marmite was met with a tiny 4oz jar—you can imagine how long that lasts.

On top of these kind of cuts the administration will take every opportunity they have not to replace things. The hospital chiropodist has been absent since last spring and the only replacement that is provided is a private chiropodist who comes in one day a week to deal with the 99 patients in the hospital. The only alternative open to the staff is to suggest a private chiropodist which the patients must pay for out of their own money.

Then there are the kind of things you hear about all the time, like paint falling off the walls in the kitchen—very hygienic indeed—and window frames that have warped and won't close properly, although the administration offices are in perfect condition, they even

have double glazing and carpeted floors. The hospital have now said that no major works will be carried out and in fact you are lucky if you even get any minor repairs done.

And then of course there are staff shortages, at Darenth Park there is a ratio of 14 patients to 1 nurse on some wards—the recommended ratio is 3 - 1. No amount of congratulations on coping with extreme staff shortages helps you to do four people's work.

You certainly don't get the satisfaction of knowing that you are doing a good job, as, in most cases you really don't get the chance to nurse properly at all. Perhaps the most vicious thing about cuts in psychiatric hospitals of any description is that the patients are just not in a position to fight back.

How can I explain to these people that the government has forgotten them, doesn't care?

How can they fight back? It is left to us nurses and a few friends and relatives who care to speak up. **Christina Howarth.**

## CUTTING BACK

IN 1964 there were 141,068 patients discharged from mental hospitals, in 1975 - 162,225. The increase in this figure is a result of the government's intention to run down the larger mental hospitals and of cutbacks which have closed beds. This means that patients are sometimes being discharged earlier than they might usually be.

This could be greeted as a positive move, if adequate aftercare facilities were provided. MIND (The National Association for Mental Health) say that if adequate aftercare were provided, over 10,000 patients could be discharged immediately.

At present for over 150,000 patients discharged every year, only 4,500 places are available in homes and hostels. This means that only one patient out of every 35 can be given somewhere to go from the hospital gates.

Part of the problem is that while the hospitals are run by the Department of Health, aftercare is provided by local authorities. This means that facilities vary widely from area to area.

Some local authorities seem to think that patients in mental hospitals are second class citizens, coming last on their list of priorities.

So if a choice is to be made about where to put money, it will go anywhere but to the mentally ill and handicapped.

*Anna Brady*



AT St Mary's Hospital, West London, a surgical ward has been modernised. The ward *should* provide 21 beds but because of the shortage of nursing staff, only 15 beds have been opened.

In order to use the existing beds to full capacity patients are sometimes called, in the hope of there being a bed available. Often patients who have been called in have to be sent home, or, on telephoning to confirm their bed, are told that there is not one available.

At first, the nursing staff just offered abject apologies. Now we tell patients that the hospital cannot afford to employ more nurses. And even if they could, nurses are taking better paid jobs rather than accept an NHS pittance.

We tell them to write to the hospital secretary, the Minister of Health or their M.P.'s. We refuse to carry the can any longer!

**Staff Nurse  
St Marys**



Photo: Angela Phillips (FL)

# NURSERIES NOW!

## MANCHESTER

WE'VE WON a partial victory in our nursery campaign at Manchester Polytechnic.

The Poly have agreed to put the money for a pilot scheme for a 15 place nursery on the priority estimates. That means that it will almost certainly get started. It isn't as much as we were asking for, but we will go on fighting to get more provision in the future.

A spokesman from the poly went on the radio and said that they had planned to do this all along. But it's only because of our campaign that they have changed their minds.

We had two occupations. The first was a lightening occupation which only lasted three days. It got a lot of publicity.

Then we had a three week occupation which really disrupted things. The students occupied the switchboard and the mail room in the main administration building. There was a lot of inconvenience. *Everybody* knew there was a campaign for a nursery going on.

We haven't got a definite site arranged yet for the nursery. And there are still problems about whether staff can use it. So we'll carry on the campaign. But this is a victory!

Penny Kay

## GLOUCESTER

GLOUCESTERSHIRE has no local authority nurseries. Next door in Avon there are sixteen fully

equipped and staffed nurseries.

Only a quarter of the nursery nurses who qualify at North Gloucestershire Tech. find jobs when they leave. There are 388 registered child minders in the country.

Up until now children have not been able to start school until they are five.

Despite these deplorable figures the County Council have refused to ask for a share in the £3.7 million allocated nationally for nursery building.

What arrangements do working mothers make for looking after their under fives and how can single parents cope with working and caring for their children?

Fed up with the complete lack of nursery facilities Gloucester Womens Voice set up a petition. After a very short time we had over a thousand signatures. A delegation complete with toddlers, handed it to the County Council last month. We are continuing the petition and will do the same next month.

Other local groups have also started campaigning—social workers have written to the councils and the Liberal Party used nurseries as a local by-election issue. Teachers have been pushing their union branches and Trades Councils have helped with the petition. We have sent an open letter to all the councillors but so far have heard nothing. But the County Council have not heard the last from us!—We want nurseries in Gloucestershire now!  
Maggie Jones.

Fighting against low pay is not easy. We have to work very hard and we have to start now.

We have to persuade our unions to take up the fight forcefully by showing that we care what we earn, and are prepared to take action to get it. The

union organiser yourselves. If s/he isn't very helpful the best thing to do is just to walk into your local hospital and ask to speak to the NUPE steward.

Womens Voice is producing a national leaflet on what low pay means to women.

Authority if one has not been planned. If it has, see how you can help. The Area Health Authority is the body that NUPE and the other unions negotiate with.

Street meetings the weekend before the Day of Action will spread the news and



National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) has called a National Day of Action on January 22. They are pushing for one day strikes and local action in support of their claim for a £60 wage and a 35 hour week.

NUPE represents nurses, hospital cleaners, cooks, porters and auxiliaries. School cleaners, dinner ladies and caretakers are also members. Most of these workers are women.

Since women aren't usually encouraged to take an active part in their union many women won't know what local action has been planned. That's where your Womens Voice group comes in. If you have women in NUPE get them to ask their union organiser what action has been planned and how s/he intends letting the membership know about it. If you haven't got any NUPE members then visit the

We've left one side of the leaflet blank. Womens Voice groups can put details of local activities and link it to the problems in your area.

Hospital workers are going to be interested in cuts and closures in the Health Service, while school dinner ladies will be affected by the fact that school dinners are going up by 5p a day next autumn. The extra money won't go to increase their wages just the opposite. It will mean a wage cut since dearer meals means fewer kids taking them which means shorter hours for school dinner ladies. So you could cut two stencils - one for hospitals and one for schools.

If any NUPE members in your area are planning strike action put that in too. It may be the encouragement that other NUPE members need. Organise a picket of the Area Health

let people know what's happening. Many women are angry about low pay—but because union meetings are often organised in the evenings, the worst possible time for women with kids, few women to go meetings.

Lots of women will need all the support and encouragement that we can offer. Try and organise a Womens Voice meeting soon after the Day of Action. As you hand women the leaflet ask them if they would like to come. Be sure and explain that you can organise babysitters—and sell Womens Voice.

— All low paid workers in the public sector should be involved.

— The nurses claim for instance goes in in April.

— Workers affected now include local council manual workers and manual and ancillary staff in universities.



Manchester nursery children play on.

# NEWS

# LOW PAY... OUR FIGHT STARTS HERE



Photo: John Smith (FL)

HOW ARE we going to take action and involve the huge number of low-paid women workers in the country? The Low Pay Campaign is one way. In Edinburgh we decided to start our Womens Voice Action around low pay of hospital and public sector workers like cleaners and school dinner staff.

We organised a meeting and handed out a leaflet on Low Pay. The same leaflet was given to people to give out where they work and outside schools and hospitals.

This is what happened to one of us, in the college where she works.

'When you ask men to give these leaflets out, they often say 'Oh, I don't work with many women.' Then you ask them if their canteen is run by men and if they have an all-male cleaning staff, and they say 'Oh, of course I never thought.'

'It's bloody amazing. When we go down the street we're ogled at like walking sperm receptacles but as soon as we get into work we become invisible.

'When I gave these leaflets out to the canteen staff and cleaners it was a lot easier for me because I wasn't approaching it cold. I'd had an impromptu meeting with them during the firemen's strike last year, appealing for money and talking about why lower-paid workers should support the higher-paid in the fight against the Social Contract. That was during their work-time, with the janitor hopping mad (he's their shop steward).

'First thing the cleaners said was 'Here she comes, You aren't getting any money out of us'—'Too right I'm not, this one's for you.'

'They repeated the joke in the leaflet to each other and said 'Aye—£60—that'd see us right. But then we women only work for pin-money, don't we love?'

'Bitter laughter as they went down the corridors.'

## At the Meeting

'Everybody here knows how many beans make five. And I'm talking about M-O-N-E-Y.'

OAP Anne Flynn was right. Money was what we were talking about at a Low Pay Campaign Meeting where some of the women present were getting £22.50 for a 40-hour week.

We just listed the types of work we automatically think of when we hear the words 'low pay.' Shop assistants, nurses, cleaners, textile workers, clerical staff and they are nearly all women workers.

The government itself says that 8 out of 10 women who work outside their homes are classed as low paid.

Low pay means a grinding, never-ending fight to get by. 'Everybody knows that on a low wage you're just got no chance of getting out of debt—it goes on for years and years and years.'

The official definition of 'low paid' is less than £53 a week. What does a 5 per cent pay-rise mean when you live on those wages?

As someone in the audience said, 'I get so annoyed when I see five per cent, five per cent on the T.V. and in the papers. But what is 5 per cent? It's £2 in every £40 you earn after tax—that's £1.30—and after your benefits go down you're back in the same boat while prices have gone up again.'

Five per cent of nothing is nothing. Sheila Johnstone pointed out to us very clearly the danger of treating the low-paid as a 'special case.' Low-paid working people are not a charitable category who need the higher paid to hold back for them.

If the Ford workers had got only 5 per cent, would the company have donated the extra money to the National Health Service? You bet your boots they wouldn't. The money would have gone straight into the pockets of the shareholders.

No group of workers ever got anywhere by fighting each other for the crumbs—or by accepting one less crumb in the hope that someone else who needs it more might find it. We all agreed—we don't want the crumbs, we want the cake.

The real reason for the low-paid staying low-paid is that we are as women concentrated in industries that are badly organised, where union activity is weak.

Why? Trade unionists (usually men) say

'Women are holding back the wage levels because of their apathy—they just don't bother to participate in the Union.'

We say—we'd like to see these men trying to be active in a Union when they're got a full-time job plus another full-time job at home which is usually the most demanding one.



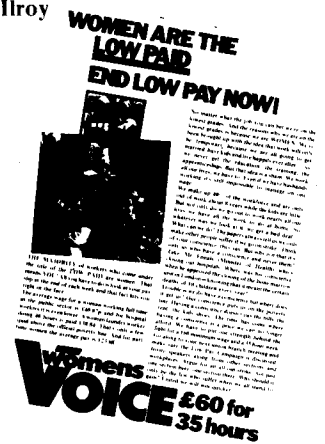
As well as plain tiredness, many women who work outside the home are put off quite understandably by the way the machinery of the Union seems to keep them down.

As one woman put it, 'You go to a meeting and you're met with a barrage from slick Trade Union officials who know all the answers.'

Yet events have shown that we as women are very militant when we become active. The problem is finding a way or organising which suits us.

That's why we thought it was important to have small meetings in our workplaces within working hours where we can discuss our activity in our workplace. When we work out our demands we can then go to the union meetings confidently and as a block.

Ruth McLroy



The leaflets and stickers will cost us money to produce. The Low Pay Campaign isn't going to grind to a halt at the end of January. It's only the start. We'll need funds to keep our side of things running smoothly.

Womens Voice groups can hold jumble sales and socials to raise funds for the campaign. Send your contribution in soon—unfortunately the money trees in this part of the world are thin on the ground!

'HAVE YOU ever had an empty cupboard, no money, no lighting or heating, and had a child ask for a piece of bread that you can't give him? If you found yourself in that state what would you do?' Have you stopped to realise it's not all luxury flats? It's bare necessities, and walking the streets in hail, wind, rain and snow to provide that bread? You might be able to sell a car, sell anything! A pro can only sell *herself* and does.'

Brenda was a prostitute and gave up the game, got married and was chucked out again after seven years.

'I was thrown out of my home that I had helped work legitimately for—left with suitcases of what clothes I had. *That* is faith in a man.' The man told her he had picked her up by her shoelaces from the gutter.

Brenda worked through contact magazines that can be bought anywhere. As she says, 'Fines, imprisonment, this is the punishment—but why? Because we can't survive on the pittance of the state, and turn to the game as a financial supplement.'

That's it, of course. Women, often young girls, need to earn enough to live on. Sometimes they just need to be able to buy the same clothes their friends buy, so they go up the West End to make a bit of money. Sometimes it's a question of feeding and clothing their children. If you can earn £15 an hour instead of slaving away stacking beans at Tesco's or trying to live on social security, why not do it?

Kim worked as an apprentice hairdresser at £3 a week about ten years ago. Then a friend introduced her to a man who wanted to feel her breasts for ten minutes for £3. She thought 'If other women can do it I might as well.'

As long as there is a demand for paid sex, there will be prostitutes. And our society, with its emphasis on buying and selling on the one hand, and the myth of the marvellous satisfying marriage of two people glued together for ever in a hideous family situation which they are supposed to enjoy permanently, with the wife acting as a sort of prostitute, paid in an underhand way for her services, but with constant emotional overtones, encourages the need.

Often this is because people get married young and ignorant, and haven't got the faintest idea of anything other than lying on their backs, bang, bang, bang, that's it for today, hope he doesn't want the same again tomorrow, it's so boring. And the woman and the man get more and more bored with the whole thing.

Men often feel the need for undemanding paid relationships which will put no further strain on them, and where they can expect and indulge in behaviour that they would never expect at home. As one woman, Rita, said, 'many the time men have come to her and asked her to dress up as a schoolgirl'. What would they do if she wasn't there? Go out and rape a real schoolgirl? How many more wives would be deserted if it wasn't for their husbands being able to go to prostitutes? It's like a social service.

And there are some people, prostitutes and others, who think prostitution should be nationalised, with state brothels. The state as pimp? That really is the last word in hypocrisy.

Prostitution is here, whether we like it or not, so let's support the prostitutes in organisations like PROS (Programme for

# PROSTITUTION 'A particular kind of job'



Reform of the Law on Soliciting) in their campaign to decriminalise it. Let the women who do the job control it.

At present, the women get all the aggro, and the men, their clients, are left untouched. If anyone is to be subject to the law, surely it should be the men who use prostitutes.

Our society pretends to be against prostitution, but it does nothing to attack its causes, or the conditions which drive women to go on the street. When unemployment goes up, so does prostitution, for instance.

The clients may be respected members of the community, but the pros can be picked up and fined at the drop of a hat for walking along the street or talking to people. They can be raped and assaulted and have no protection. They see their job as just another job like any other and want to improve their conditions. Their demands are: Abolition of the term 'Common prostitute'; Abolition of the offences of soliciting and loitering and:

meanwhile...an end to imprisonment for these offences.

PROS have a film, 'A Particular Kind of Job', made as a project at the London College of Printing by Jacky Garstin and Delyse Hawkins, where five pros are interviewed and shown as part of general view of prostitution.

They have some support among MPs and have discussed their case on TV. They have stickers (2p each) which can be obtained from PROS, c/o Peace Centre, Moor Street, Birmingham 4. Telephone 021-643 0996.

There are two other organisation: PLAN (Prostitution Laws Are Nonsense) and the English Collective of Prostitutes.

The film, 'A Particular Kind of Job', is being shown on Saturday 20 January, 12.30, at The Arts Lab, Holt Street, Birmingham 7. Admission 50p.

Mary Gibson  
Jackie Garstin

**THANK GOD  
I'VE GOT  
MY BED:**

**HOMELESS  
WOMEN  
IN LONDON**



WHEN you become homeless your illusions become reality. Your illusions are the roof over your head.

I met a homeless woman in a Wimpey bar; Esmeralda Murphy, strange, wide-eyed. I asked her where she lived. She laughed:

'I live down the road in a community of eleven thousand people. I live with the phizzies from the far away sands. The far away sands are everywhere my dear.'

As long as we live in this ludicrous political system there will be people who are the living carcasses of the welfare state: destitute, alcoholics, junkies, isolated, crazed and lonely.

Fear makes me drink . . . I couldn't tell you what makes me frightened...unnameable fear . . . I want to be with someone . . . to feel safe.' Gloria.

Gloria lives in Theatre Girls, a hostel for single women in London, which the women can treat as their own home. Betty is in her 50's. She said:

'Greek Street's the best I've ever known. If

you're trying to do something for women in London you're OK'.

There are rules: no men, except relatives for example. But the women can drink there if they want. There's no unrealistic moralism. The Department of Health and Social Security pay rent and board. The women get approximately £4.70 per week pocket money. Betty's been in lots of hostels. She knows the score. She lived rough.

'I was skipping at Waterloo. You don't know what skipping is? Sleeping rough, love. You get your bottle of scotch and sit on a bench, a copper comes along. "Move along" he says, they never leave you alone. I wake up in a cell, dying for a fag. "Say, be a love, give us a fag," I say to the copper. "Want a fag do you?" he says, all friendly. Then he opens the cell door and slams it on my arm. I had 50 stitches in my arm, broke a window when I was unhappy about leaving home. He slammed the door so hard it cut through the sleeve of my suede coat.'

Homeless single women are treated like



lepers. Sister Marie in the Providence Row night shelter, a church organised hostel, says: 'People are scared of the homeless, they don't want them next door. These women are strange to the 'general public'.

If a woman is homeless, jobless, moneyless, of course she's likely to be poorly clothed, haggard, embittered. She may well look strange. She becomes a sensation, fodder for the money spinning media.

'We get journalists coming in here, they look at us and then they go away again, that's the last we hear. You're not making money out of your article? You care about us? Then you're alright.' Betty.

Peggy Fraser of the *Scottish Sunday Post* did a series on homeless women. She approached a woman on the street, and then reported in her paper:

'She said I could have her life story for £50. Eventually we agreed on half a bottle of sherry and her fare back to the hostel.'

Violet says: 'I've always been unlucky,

*I want  
to be  
with  
someone*

GLORIA

always wanted a little room, been on council lists, but never had any luck.'

But once a TV team made a programme about women living rough. It was three days work. 'I got £40. I was lucky then.'

Helen Austerberry and Sophie Watson of Homeless Action, the organisation which runs Theatre Girls, told me:

'The problems of homelessness are created by an almost total absence of government or local authority concern with the plight of the homeless; particularly with that of single women. The problem is ultimately political.'

Women are at a greater disadvantage than men because women are assumed to be dependant financially on men; housing is usually controlled by fathers or husbands. A woman who leaves home is destitute. She will earn less, have less for rent. Local authority housing for single women is almost non-existent. Many women stay at home and put up with it for this reason. Others are in hostels or on the road. Numbers are growing. Homeless Action comments that with the growth of refuges for battered wives comes a change in consciousness. Women are not prepared to accept the drudgery of their domestic nightmares, the boredom, the violence, and loneliness.

'My husband had two jobs. I never saw him, he was a good man but I couldn't stand it, I wanted a family but how can you have one with the father never there? It's as bad for men as women, being homeless . . . they've got more hostels for men but they're just as lonely and down. Nice to think of people not wandering the streets. I think marriage causes loneliness. You might have nice clothes or a husband, but you get bored. It grows on every woman, boredom. It'll come to you love, it's the way of life that causes it.' Theresa.

Sister Marie points out that women club up with men for lack of alternative.

'I've got a son but I've lost him . . . my old man ran off . . . the father of the baby was a soldier in the war, never saw him again. I used to be a lovely girl, but I can never dress up. To get a boy you have to be dressed up don't you? Got a crippled leg too. Look at it, all withered, polio.' Violet.

The Government survey on homelessness in 1972 found that 50 per cent of women liked the idea of hostels because they could make friends. In Greek Street relationships are good, very supportive, between residents and the staff who work as a collective. Are people homeless because they are lonely and alienated or vice versa? It's a complicated issue. But our political system spawns loneliness. We are divided by competition, sexism, race, class. Urban life is lonely.

'Women are homeless because men are so rotten. A woman spends her life in domesticity, getting bashed around by a man, he breaks her ribs, she's worn out, he runs off with some young girl. That's the biggest cause of loneliness.

'So deep is the yearning for a man that they spend all their money on the men they

*Women are  
homeless  
because  
men are  
so rotten*

MATRON, CECIL HOUSE

meet in pubs and bars, and then they're broke.' Matron, Cecil House, Holborn.

The Government do next to nothing for homeless single women. Their attitude to the problem is indicative of their ineffectiveness. David Ennals, Minister of Health and Social Security, commenting on alcoholism in 1977: 'In men it is crude and embarrassing. In women it is plain sickening.' His hangovers are no doubt classy ones, no cider or meths for him.

'They spend all that money on the Golddamn, bloody bombs and the first thing they cut down on is the public things, Health Service, housing. I'm a socialist . . . cut 'em all down I say, but once you've got rid of them, who do you put in their place? You need leaders . . . I often think about what should be done for the homeless people. Those buggers, the government people who can't even write their own speeches, I typed Ted Heath's once, they should come and live in a hostel, see what it's like, get the



experience.' Gloria.

The Homeless Single People and Housing Act of 1977 was initially seen as a breakthrough by CHAR, the Campaign for Homeless and Rootless. But like the Equal Opportunities Act it's riddled with loopholes. It accepts that homelessness is a problem of 'accommodation rather than personal inadequacy' and lays responsibility on local authorities to provide housing, but CHAR say 'it more or less excludes homeless single women. The Tories have called it the Scroungers Charter. We want a redefinition. 'People have the right to choose where they live.'

As a single homeless woman, to qualify for housing, unless you are pregnant, you may have to prove you are under threat from fire or flood, mentally unstable, 'vulnerable' or a one parent family. If you come under the 'intentionally homeless' clause you need a battery of lawyers to help you out.

'I really care about women. It's terrible the way they have to live. Makes you go crackers. Thank god I've got my bed.' Betty.

Betty has her bed. But according to the 1977 survey in Britain there are 2,273 beds for women, 25,561 for men. The Government supplies 65 in London for women. Three quarters of all places for women are provided by voluntary bodies. Over three thousand beds are to be lost, 94 hostels are closing down. 85 per cent of hostels were built before 1914. The Birkenhead Street Reception Centre, a temporary lodging, and its permanent annexe Cedar Lodge, are the Government's provision for London. Temporary is a non-definition. There's nowhere else, women stay there for years. 78 per cent of beds were in places which don't even reach the minimum standards for housing.

Between 1976 and 1979 the third biggest cut in public spending was in Housing (Education and Transport being top of the list.) Despite cuts, Britain still spends more on defence than any other industrial state except America.



And Betty thanks God she has her bed.

Nearly all the workers in hostels thought that the Government should supply small supportive units for single homeless people. The Government evidently don't agree.

'I've been very unlucky, always wanted a little room. I'm all shocked up with tramping the streets and being in hostels. When I was on the streets. I didn't have enough clothes, wrapped newspaper around me, slept like an iceberg down by the embankment. I've lived out in London on and off for years. Ooh it's terrible. For two winter months watching the icebergs coming in London . . . terrible.' Violet.

Many homeless single women have psychiatric records. Joan in Theatre Girls said: 'The Government should see that everyone has their own place. This sharing of space is killing us . . . it's costing them millions in sleeping tablets, all crammed in, alcoholics, mental people, you can't sleep. I'm going to write to Margaret Thatcher.'

Government estimates say 12,000 places are needed in homes and hostels, for those ready to leave mental institutions. 4,000 are available. 90,000 people have spent two or more years in mental hospitals. Half shouldn't be there at all.

'There's a whole subculture awash around London of psychiatric cases. The mental hospitals turn them out. It's one of our biggest problems. We just can't cope with more than one or two of these cases at a time. Most psychiatric cases don't get taken in, it's not policy, it just happens. Human nature can only bear so much. You need a big trained staff for psychiatric cases.' Matron. Cecil House.

'The mental hospitals prefer people to be in "the community". People are literally turned out of the hospitals.' Sister Marie.

Where is the 'community'? It's a thing that is created by the media, a population of men in the street. It excludes the lonely, disturbed people, driven to their limits, who get forced out and live rough.

'I used to write poems, I wrote one called *Human Understanding*. But I'm getting so that I hate people...It's great here in Greek Street, it's for homeless women, but some of them need to be in mental homes, they terrify me, I can't concentrate anymore. I do nothing, I can't stand it.' Gloria.

It's almost impossible for the homeless single women nearly always in late middle age, to get a job. There is a stigma attached to homelessness. These women are feared, suspected, rejected.

'My mother died. I slept in some huts. I was in a hospital, it was my mind. I made baskets. I stayed there for 7 years. Then I had to leave. I'd like to have a job. They say I'm too slow. That's all.' Lila.

Depression is as common as alcoholism among homeless single women.

'I'm very depressed. I'd die without the pills. I can't face the outside.' Theresa.

They become institutionalised. A Salvation Army captain to whom I spoke said: 'Women come back here again and again



because they can't cope. I think we make it too easy for them . . . a lot of them use the place as a cheap lodging house. They should be told to go elsewhere after three months if they can cope'.

The Salvation Army workers live in, pay their own bed and board and only marry within the Army. They supply 636 beds for women in Britain. Their rules are strict, life is severe for both workers and residents. The Captain I spoke to had endured this life for 18 years. Why? 'It's the calling. I suppose' she said.

Marie Therese Wallis Clifford runs the North London Simon Community. Like nearly all the people I spoke to she is selfless and dedicated. Simon is funded by Roman Catholic concerns. Workers get £4.70 from the DHSS like residents, and sleep on the office floor, or chairs or sofas if necessary. Marie Therese sees the root cause of homelessness in 'social inadequacy', which causes 'an inability to sustain relationships.' Simon is 'the dustbin at the bottom of the Welfare State' and wants to provide a 'realistic community where people learn to make relationships'. Simon does not offer a political struggle, but 'is always on the outside, with people who are on the outside.'

The loneliness, alienation and despair of the homeless cannot be changed through selfless idealism. Homelessness, like a million other poisons in our society is not the result of personal inadequacy, it's the result of the inhumanity of capitalism, of greed and competition.

'It's not human to keep people in the cold'. Violet.

*Written and researched by Melanie MacFadyean Photos Angela Phillips.*

A film called *Theatre Girls* is available for hire from Carol Cullick, National Film School, Station Road, Beaconsfield. It's 16mm. and lasts 70 minutes.

# Are we Downhearted?

## No!

**The Summer of 1911 was a record-breaker. Record high temperatures, day after day; record infant mortality in the crowded slums; and a record number of strikes after years of falling real wages. Miners, dockers, transport workers struck, inspired by a belief in the power of industrial unionism and the strike weapon; and one, almost forgotten group of women took to the streets to demonstrate the power of the mass strike.**

In Bermondsey, the wives, widows and daughters of underpaid dockers provided cheap labour for various trades, such as confectionary, pickle-making and glue-making, all of them anti-social and underpaid. The work was usually unpleasant since the fruit that went into cheap jam was always sub-standard, frequently putrid, and boiling sugar made the factories hot as well as dangerous. But the Summer of 1911 made conditions unbearable.

One morning in August the women in a big confectionary factory suddenly left work, came out in a body and marched down the street. From factory and from workshop as they passed the workers came out and joined them as though the Pied Piper was calling. The doors of great jam, biscuit and

food preparation factories, of workshops where the girls were making sweetstuffs, glue or tin boxes, of tea packing houses and perambulator works opened and gave forth their contingents to swell the singing, laughing procession.

They were out for more money. Weekly wages were as low as seven shillings. It was a completely spontaneous eruption: no-one knew who suggested the 'flying picket' which went round from factory to factory, though there was talk of a mysterious fat woman everyone had heard of, though no-one had seen.

The women didn't belong to a union, there was no prospect of strike pay so there was a real possibility that the exhilaration would fizzle out into a demoralised return to work. The organiser of the Women's Trade Union League, Mary MacArthur, rushed to Bermondsey and established an HQ at the Labour Institute, Ford Road. She appealed through the press for help.

'Many thousands of women are on strike, many more are locked out, the pawn-shops are locked and outdoor relief\* refused.

'As wages for women range from 7 shillings to 9 shillings per week when at work, there is no margin for a crisis of this kind.

'We want at least one thousand loaves of bread at the Labour Institute if possible by noon on Monday. Who will send them?'

£500 was subscribed within the week. The organisational problems were still massive. There were twenty separate disputes going on at least 1500 women were out on strike. The women, used to starting work at 6.00 am, assembled at that hour around the Labour Institute jamming Ford Road itself

and spilling over into the surrounding streets. Bread and milk were distributed to the strikers; daily processions were formed to march through the City with collecting boxes. The *Daily Chronicle* reported on a great meeting of 15,000 strikers, men and women, in Southwark Park, addressed by Ben Tillet, the dockers' leader.

'The women appear to be in the highest spirits. They went laughing and shouting through Bermondsey shouting 'Are we downhearted? No!' It was noticeable that many of them had put on their Sunday best. In spite of the great heat, hundreds of them wore fur boas and tippets, the sign of self-respect.'

Within three weeks four thousand women joined a union for the first time and eighteen out of the twenty strikes had ended in victory. The increases ranging from 1 shilling to 4 shillings per week were small in some cases but the women had started to organise themselves joining the National Union of Women Workers, which was soon to merge with the National Union of General Workers, and after the war, with other unions to form the TGWU.

The women were, of course, returning to their old, dead-end jobs—it would take more than a strike to end that! Mary MacArthur estimated that the greatest gain had been 'the new sense of self-reliance, solidarity and comradeship..... making it certain that whatever the difficulties and dangers of the future, they will never again be without hope.'

\*Out-door relief—a form of social security operated by the local authority.



**WHY** should anyone support those who have been locked out by The Times and the Sunday Times?

Isn't it true that all these Fleet Street workers earn fantastic wages for doing very little work?

Isn't it equally true that the bosses had to turf them out because they refused to accept even more money for co-operating with the New Technology?

And what's wrong with the New Technology anyway, won't it make life better for everyone?

Womens Voice talked to Maggie Rutter, a clerical worker at the Daily Mirror and one of 5,700 women who work in Fleet Street. They earn an average of £60 a week before tax and other deductions.

So what are the REAL facts about Fleet Street conditions and what is the TRUTH about the New Technology?

Maggie Rutter explains what the computer changes have meant to her and how the new danger—word processing—is threatening women's jobs:

### Bad Times Ahead

'The term New Technology is not really new in Fleet Street—it has been talked about for years.

'But the hard facts about what its introduction meant to me as an office worker didn't hit home until our New Technology Agreement with The Mirror was signed a year ago.

'Most people in our NATSOPA clerical chapel (workplace branch) got a reasonable pay increase, but to get it, we had to lose *one-third* of our workforce.

'Now many people do the work of two, and, in some cases, three people... and so far we have only lost HALF the number we agreed to lose!

'In areas where each manager had his 'very own' secretary, a woman now has to work for three or four different managers. That's *without* the introduction of any new machinery.

'At The Times, the employers want the workforce to crawl back on their knees. The bosses' terms would mean that each group of workers would have to agree to any management proposal, no matter how degrading.

For instance, the New Technology Agreement at The Times would mean that secretaries would have new contracts making them obliged to make the tea and coffee for their bosses... yes, that's written in the agreement!

'There are no less than 25 secretarial duties listed and just in case anything else might pop up, there is a clause that reads:

### Union death warrant

*'Management reserves the right to add any other reasonable secretarial task to the above list.*

'Signing that kind of agreement would be signing the death warrant for trade union organisation and protection of job conditions.

'The next field for massive investment in New Technology is clerical work. An automatic typewriter or word processing machine is an electronic typewriter with a video screen instead of the usual cylinder and paper.



'It contains a small computer with a memory for previous correspondence, and can perform a wide variety of editing, layout and text manipulation functions. An unskilled person can learn to use it very quickly. It takes all the skill out of typing and secretarial work and could cut in half the typing and secretarial jobs in this country.

The manufacturers claim that one typist on a word processor can do the work of between one and five typists on conventional typewriters.

'There are already 9000 word processors in operation. That's 45,000 of our jobs already being done by machines, but if that doesn't mean much to you, apply this list to your office. The result is devastating... and this is only a small example of what is happening.

'New technology is a blanket term used to refer to techniques that reduce the number of workers, or reduce the level of skill needed.

'The whole purpose of new technology is to make more money by cutting staff. It has nothing to do with making the newspaper a better product.

'When The Times management suspended publication, they threatened to sack everyone unless the unions all signed contracts giving management the right to cut the workforce when and where they saw fit.

'They are using new technology as an excuse to cut jobs and to smash the strong trade union organisation in Fleet Street.

'If these agreements go through at the Times, other newspapers like the Observer and the Guardian will push similar agreements on their own workforce.

'Employers all over the country will be inspired to smash much more weakly organised sections than Fleet Street. It won't just be newspapers that will be hit.

'But apart from using new technology to smash union organisation among women as well as men, the new processes will destroy thousands of jobs if workers don't have a say in their use.

### Is your job here?

#### Bradford Metropolitan Council

Staff cut from 44 to 22  
Workload increased by 19 per cent  
Annual Saving £58-59,000

British Standards Institute  
Secretaries and typists cut by

Providential Finance Group Bradford  
Secretaries and typists cut from 27 to 17  
Part time staff cut from 13 to 3

Halifax Building Society  
have had auto typewriters for 10 years  
The workforce was not reduced but the workload was trebled.

National Coal Board  
(Mining and Research Establishment Bradford)  
Typists cut from 35 to 26  
(secretary and shorthand typists against introduction, typing pool in favour)

'If the trade unions do not start drawing up guidelines and policy about new technology then millions of us will be put out of work.

'And it is not just word processing which threatens us. Clive Jenkins, General Secretary of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staff has said that out of three million jobs in banking and insurance in London one and a half million will be lost through new technology.

'So what are the unions doing? The answer is very little. After all, no matter how many redundancies there are, trade union officials will still have a job. It is up to us, those of us whose jobs are threatened, to do something.

'We can follow the example of other ordinary trade union members. In the National Union of Journalists, for instance, active members concerned about the threat of new technology researched and wrote a booklet on New Technology and Journalism.

### How you can fight

This pamphlet came up with guidelines which suggested that because of the threat to jobs and to health that new technology be opposed.

It also suggested that a national committee of ordinary journalists be set up to research new technology and suggest policy in time for the next union conference.

This booklet had a lot of influence and conference did agree to the setting up of a national committee of lay members. A very good booklet was produced with policy recommendations which the next conference accepted.

'We could follow that example. Our union and others affected should call a special conference to discuss word processing and the effect on our jobs.

'We should fight for national rank and file committees, but to get all this we have to have workplace meetings. We have to do our own research so that we know what we are talking about.

'If you want to find out more about word processing get in touch with us at Womens Voice and we will put you in touch with women already researching new technology who can give hints on how to run such a campaign.

'Don't wait till the boss makes you and half your office redundant—start organising now!

# The hidden worker



## Part-time work

'After I've done the ironing, I peel the potatoes ready for the dinner which really is left over from Sunday, and after that I go to work at half past ten. I wash the coffee cups the girls have had (I work at the Howdon Road Nursery) and then the dinner comes from Ralph Gardner School and I have to divide it into two lots, one for the children and one for the staff and then I put all this into the hot plate and then I set the tables in the staff room for the girls like, and the nursery room for the children and for the staff which consists of now 21 children and the four of the staff which look after them. After I've served the dinner I come back into the kitchen and I've already served a little out for myself like, and I just sit down and eat that and then I start washing up straight away, because there's that many dishes. There's the containers to wash and that, and the tablecloths to do, so it's after one, about ten past one, when I get finished, and after that I just come home, go to my mothers I should say, who lives in Banbury Way, I say hello and bye-bye to her, and I'm away back home again.'

North Shields, Womens Work.

THERE is a funny idea about that women aren't really workers. Women are 'housewives' who sometimes go out to work to bring in a little bit more money.

Women do have two jobs. But we believe because everyone says so—that only one is our *real* job. In order to be able to do our real job—bringing up kids—we also go to work. Work is just something we have to do.

For most working class women being a mother also means being a part-time worker. Of the one in five workers in Britain who work part time, four out of every five are women. There are three and a half million part time women workers in this country and four-fifths of them are married women, over thirty five, with children.

Of course what an employer calls part time isn't that part time, it's anything under a 30 hour week, a six hour day. And as part time workers will tell you, 'most employers expect a full day's work to be done in a short day, or 'employer's expect a full day's work and usually get it' and 'you are expected to put a 9-5 job into 9-3 hours'.

This means that although employers go on about the unreliability of women workers, those women workers are extremely productive and the bosses know it. Although they say that they only employ part timers because full timers aren't available, it simply isn't true.

Part time women workers are cheaper, work harder, and can be got rid of. Because the National Insurance stamp is so expensive many women choose to work underneath the

hours limit for paying it. That means the boss doesn't have to pay it either. Few women get holiday pay or sick pay or pensions. Part time workers work unsocial hours—evenings—without unsocial hours payment.

Part time women workers are a real bargain—working without long meal breaks: in clothing factories usually working on an individual bonus system which means working extra hard to make up the money. Women in the public service prop it up as cheaply as possible.

**You are expected to put a 9 to 5 job into 9 to 3 hours. Most employers expect a full day's work and usually get it.**

The vast increase in part time workers in the 1970s has been in the public services and in shop work, insurance, banking and finance. Employers in these sectors are learning what other employers have long known: **two part-time women workers give you nearly two full days work at the price of one full time worker.**

In exchange for being 'flexible' when the kids are ill, during school holidays, 'finding' jobs for 'good workers' when they need the money, the bosses (both private and public) extract maximum work for minimum pay. Part time workers are overwhelmingly low paid.

In 1977 three quarters of all part time women workers were paid less than £1.20p an hour compared with half of full time women workers, and only one eighth of full time male workers. For the very low paid it is even worse. Only one man in a hundred earned less than 85p an hour but one in five part time women did.

## **Part-time women workers are cheaper, work harder and can be got rid of.**

Of course, the figures are phoney. The *real* situation is even worse. The government doesn't even collect information on the earnings of those who don't pay tax. That cuts out one in five workers. Probably the vast bulk of those are women—so who cares! Their low pay is just 'pin-money'.

When we are talking about fighting against low pay, we are talking about fighting and organising amongst ourselves—amongst women workers. And of course it is difficult.

Women with two jobs—at home and at work—barely have time to breathe let alone organise. As one woman said: 'If the money was not necessary to me, I would not work part time as the strain on one's health is too great'.

Employers use the fact that part time women workers are desperate for the money and for the hours that fit in with their children. Bosses see themselves as being 'good' to 'their girls' when they let them take time off to take the kids to the dentist. But when the women start getting organised—like in Smith Wallis in Birmingham—the 'goodness' stops.

It isn't only the employers who treat 'the girls' like this. Union leaders are the same.

## **Bosses see themselves as being 'good' to 'their girls' when they let them take time off to take the kids to the dentist.**

It isn't true that part time women workers won't join the union. The National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) has the largest women's membership of any single trade union. The majority of NUPE's female members are part time. Now NALGO (local government workers) and COHSE (health workers) are recruiting part timers.

On January 22 NUPE is organising a one day demonstration against low pay. They are calling on all other public sector unions to support. The part time women workers who keep the public sector going must not be forgotten.

Joan Smith.

Two excellent books about women workers are:

**The Part Time Trap** by Jennifer Hursfield 90p Low Pay Unit (9 Poland Street, London, W1V 3DG)

**North Shields Womens Work** £1.20, from The Home Office, Horseferry House (room 137, Deen Ryle Street, London, SW1P 2AW).

## **Changing your lot**

I'D NEVER regard myself as anything other than a mother to my kids. It wasn't until they were three and five that I got myself a little part-time job.

I eventually got a job as an auxiliary nurse in this private nursing home. I 'chose' to do night work—8pm to 8am. Management were very sympathetic when I told them that my husband did shift work and that I couldn't work the same nights every week. I did on average three nights a week.

The nursing home was made up of five separate houses. My god did we work! We had a house each. All the patients were old, we had to lift them, wash them, toilet them, feed them and be at their beck and call all night long and cook the breakfast in the morning.

## **My god did we work! All the patients were old, we had to lift them, wash them, toilet them, feed them and be at their beck and call all night.**

There was quite a quick turnover of both night and day staff. Mainly strained backs, if you couldn't lift—you got the push. None of us night staff paid any tax or insurance so we couldn't claim any sick pay or accident benefits, not that anyone wanted to pay as our wages were so lousy it wouldn't have been worth our while working. My wages were £8 a night and I was one of the highest paid mainly due to being white.

It was quite funny how I woke up to the fact that I was being shat on. I'd gone to collect my wages one morning and looked at a letter that was lying on the bosses desk. It was to some patient's relative saying that the fee was £80 a week for his mother in a shared room . . . It takes no brains to see that they were making a bomb. And it wasn't only at our expense. Not all the patients in the home were the rich people that you'd imagine. Quite a few of them were just ordinary people and their sons and daughters clubbed together the money so that their parents could die in respectable surroundings.

I started talking to the women about unions and how we should get ourselves together and do something. But the trouble was that we all needed our jobs, some had already been told by management that they wanted no trouble makers and they were quite free to leave as there were plenty more women where we came from.

Well to cut a long story short . . . I left!

I had to get another job as my marriage broke up. I eventually got a job as a playleader, and was elected shop steward (NUPE). I'd been a member of the Socialist Workers Party then for about 18 months and had recently with some other women members started a local Womens Voice group. Through our group I came into contact with other working women like myself.

I met Joyce Phillpot a NUPE shop steward at one of our local hospitals through the Right to Work Campaign and sold her Womens Voice. When I saw her again she told me how much she liked the magazine and that it was about time us women stopped just going to work and did something to change our lot.

We got together and started a Womens Voice hospital bulletin which went down a treat.

Through my union branch meeting I've met some bloody strong women, who now take Womens Voice and I know that I can rely on them for support when I move resolutions in my union branch.

## **At our first negotiating meeting management called us the petticoat brigade—they're not so flash now!**

Then there's my friend Evie, we got elected as shop stewards together. Our union organiser wasn't too keen about this as the former stewards were men. In our section half of us were employed on a temporary basis with lousy money, no holiday or sick money, or job protection.

I came across the minutes of one meeting where one of our managers stated that we were only housewives anyway. Bloody cheek!

We threatened them with a Schedule 11 claim and they coughed up. We've won about an 85% wage rise. At our first negotiations meeting management called us 'The petticoat brigade'—they're not so flash now!

Mind you it's difficult for a woman trade unionist, even more so if you're a part time worker, as you can be more easily victimised by management because of the shorter hours worked, so always remember to get your workmates to back you up on everything.

If your workplace is well organised argue with the members that branch meetings should be in work time. If they are held in the evening, like most union meetings, contact your local Womens Voice group and ask them to arrange a baby sitter. But really the thing that stops most women getting involved in the union is their husbands. They like their dinner ready, the house tidy and warm and company in front of the tele.

But remember it's always the men who say 'It's these women who hold us back, you never see them at branch meetings, they're just not interested'. And it's no wonder because they're all at home doing their other job.

Argue it out with them even if you have to get a sitter in and meet your husband round the pub after the meeting—you never know he might actually start encouraging you!

Peggy Eagle

## **The thing that stops most women getting involved in the union is their husbands. But it's always these men who say 'It's these women who hold us back—they're just not interested.'**



**(AA IRVIN KIRSCHNER 1978 USA)**  
 'Eyes of Laura Mars' is a very contrived, middle of the road thriller. Laura Mars (A sophisticated and glamorous Faye Danaway) sees clips of the actual murders of her female friends through the eyes of the killer.

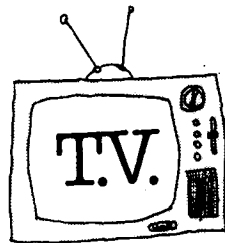
All the murders are brutal, of the knife-slashing-eye-and naked-flesh type. Mars is a professional photographer whose photographs are as violent and pornographic as the murders. The whole of three minutes is spent on a hypocritical justification of her work: 'All I'm trying to do is give an account of all the viciousness-physical, psychological, spiritual-in the world. I can't stop it, but I can make people look at it.' She just carries on snapping 'artistic' dirty pictures and making a packet out of them. And her slinky clothes are full of slits. Direct opposition to these sex-without-violence pictures comes from a feminist who asks Mars if she realises her work is offensive to women. She is rebuffed by Mars' manager and told she is 'out of touch with the real world'.

Eventually we find out the reason for Mars' psychic visions: she is seeing through the eyes of her true love, the police lieutenant. He is investigating the murders. The lieutenant is schizophrenic. On one hand he is the dream lover, father figure, gentle and protective. On the other he is a woman-hater and stabs them viciously. Why this hatred? As a child, he was left alone while his (hysterical!) mother hustled on the streets. Conclusion: prostitution produces male psychopathic murderers who savage and kill women. Such subtle

social analysis! Nothing about men's so-called 'need' for sex, nothing about why women are forced into prostitution. No, women are responsible for the raising of children and when they can't do this adequately through no fault of their own, they are blamed for the brutality of their grown sons!

This film is dishonest. It sells itself with sex and violence but pretends to oppose viciousness. It is anti-women. The three types of women portrayed are the sexy model, the career woman who makes money out of her and the passive victim of male violence. Don't bother to see this film... it's just another con at our expense it exploits and degrades women.

**Celia Shalom.**



**CITIZEN SMITH** is a new series. It poses as yet another second rate TV comedy full of cheap laughs about homosexuals, silly women and the unemployed. In fact it's even nastier than that. Cheap cracks yes, but it is also skillfully written to reinforce all your worst fears about the loony left.

Citizen Smith is an everyday story of a London Leftie (male of course). Smith himself is a weak crackpot. He has a girlfriend, a doormat, written into the script as a convenient receptacle for

Smith's thoughts. Smith spends his time loafing about, sponging off his girlfriend's parents, visiting Karl Marx's grave, and contriving to remain completely out of touch with the real world.

In the last programme the girlfriend's Dad was being made redundant. Smith was delighted because he was 'looking for a cause, something new—something Tariq Ali and Peter Hain haven't had their fingers in'. So Smith launched a militant campaign to get Dad his job back. The girlfriend chained Smith and friend to a railing and toddled off home for the while (women don't take an active part in politics you see). Amazingly this campaign succeeded and the Dad was offered another job.

Smith was happy. The Dad and the Mum weren't. You see they wanted the £6,000 redundancy money to go to Spain with. The Dad had another job lined up anyway.

**Moral:** The unemployed like unemployment. They like the redundancy money.

**Conclusion:** Daft militants and the loony left should leave workers and employers to get on with sorting out the problem of factory closures on their own. Redundancy money is great. There are plenty of other jobs to go to. We don't need sit-ins, marches, and lobbies of parliament.

It's a completely false picture. Nobody looks forward to redundancy because hardly anybody gets £6000. Women certainly don't. Redundancy money is based on length of service. It also depends on how strong your union is and how good an agreement

they managed to get for you. Young people in badly organised workplaces don't get much. The girls in Coronation Street only got £100 when their shop was closed.

The other reason unemployment is nasty is that there are no other jobs just around the corner. Half a million women know that, a million men know that, through bitter experience.

Citizen Smith was advised to 'grab the money and run' when faced with redundancy. There's nothing funny about that. It's a deadly serious attempt to convince us that the commonsense 'I'm alright Jack' approach is the only sensible one. The only thing comic about it is that someone (presumably the scriptwriter) thinks we're daft enough to believe it. After all we all know that the left is not just a bunch of loony egotistical blokes. We all know campaigns against unemployment aren't loony. Far from it!

**Anna Paczuska**

## Germ-free adolescent

Every month we're going to try and write something about a song in the top twenty.

If you have any strong reactions to songs you hear on the radio, please write in and let us know.

I watch Top of the Pops in lurid fascination and or horror, often boredom.

Polystyrene came on like a real treat.

We've all met these deodorised people, men and women, who having disinfected their bodies with soap, under arm deodorant, vaginal deodorant, toilet water, perfume, become daunting—it's like being face to face

with an advertisement.

If you clean your teeth they'll gleam and he'll love you and that's what sells the toothpaste.

Poly's s song mocks all that. She's saying implicitly that we don't need to smell like perfume factories, we don't need to have white gleaming teeth—it makes us unreal and unapproachable.

Fear is behind the sterilisation procedure she describes. Her phobia is infection but her phobia is all she's got.

It's true fear keeps us down. It's a relevant song. It says a lot and it's really great to hear a song that's not the usual drooling about love.

**Melanie McFadyean**

**Germ Free Adolescents** by Polystyrene  
I know you're antiseptic

Your deodorant smells nice

I'd like to get to you know you But you're deep frozen like ice.

He's a germ free adolescent Cleanliness is her obsession

cleans her teeth ten times a day

Scrub away

The SR way

You may get to touch her

If your gloves are sterilised

Rinse your mouth with Listerine

Blow disinfectant in her eyes

Her phobia is infection

She needs me too

It's her built in protection

Without fear she'd give up and die

words © polystyrene.

## Advice to women on the missionary position

*Misogynists*

*Male, female, religious and secular*

*insist*

*That Ma is 'naturally' under*

*Par:*

*Don't believe it.*

*If handicapped*

*Adapt,*

*Argue; leave it.*

*Sussex Kit Moutat*



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# YOUR VOICE

## Ideas for raising funds

*Dear Womens Voice*

Just a few lines to tell you about our fund raising venture here in Preston. We decided to hold a Party Auction at the house of one of our members, so we all delved into our kitchens and attics for things to be sold, and we each contributed 50p for some food. We made curry and salad and sold it at 10p per plate. Invitations were printed with requests for booze to be brought.

Almost 40 people came, and we charged an entrance fee of 30p. The highlight of the evening was the Auction, which was a huge success. Everyone enjoyed themselves immensely, and we raised £30 for our funds.

We are still only a relatively small group, so larger ones may raise even more. Wishing everyone a successful New Year.

*Kay Tracey*

*Preston Womens Voice*

## Soho violence—public enquiry

*Dear Womens Voice*

We are calling for a public enquiry into the attack on women by the police. This happened on October 31 when women marched through Soho to reclaim the night. The women were marching in protest against rape and the images of women displayed in shop windows as objects for men's use—which they saw as an incitement to rape. They were demanding

the right to walk where and when they wanted, without men to 'protect' them from other men.

The official police answer to male violence to women on the streets is for women to stay off the streets. This we reject... but they sure made their point. Following an incident at the New Swedish Cinema Club, police baton-charged the women, injuring many and arresting 16—none of the badly injured women were arrested.

Did the police panic at the threat of 150 women, or were they under instruction?

Is baton-charging of protests to be the norm under McNee?

We want some answers.

We are asking all women to write to their MPs to get questions asked in the House of Commons, and to add their voice to the call for a Public Enquiry now.

We are also appealing for contributions to a defence fund for the 16 to be sent to:

PS Defence Committee,  
c/o Box 1,  
190 Upper Street,  
Islington,  
London, N1

*Reclaim the Night Group*

★ Support the demonstration, Saturday 20 January, Assemble 6.30pm Leicester Square.

## Have shoes will travel

*Dear Womens Voice*

After six months of searching, speculating and surveying I have at last completed the purchase of a pair of shoes.

I was getting fed up with arriving at my office with blistered bleeding feet and I was discovering the joy of walking as advertised by the Government 'take care of yourself' campaign.

All the shoes displayed in the shop windows were at a price I could not afford unless I saved up for a long time.

For several months I studied the displays of shoes but there was nothing that could tempt me, the prices were too high. I even took the trouble to question other women who seemed to be comfortably shod.

Once I was able to summon the courage to raid the housekeeping money (I receive a widowed mother's allowance) I would be able to walk longer distances and save on fares. One day I limped to the underground station, noticed that both my shoes had their uppers separated from the sole and that my feet were touching concrete—I had to act.

I was the first customer in the shoe-shop on Monday morning where feet are measured for the 'correct fitting'. Style was unimportant. Occasionally the right shoe from one pair would fit well and the left shoe of a

different pair would be comfortable, but the sales person was unimpressed with my sincere suggestion that I buy odd shoes. Eventually after a few saunters up and down the thick carpet I closed the deal and left the shop clutching my new shoes.

Now, I wish that the assistant had taken my suggestion seriously about buying odd shoes because whilst my left foot sits comfortably inside its new home it is a different story for my right foot which feels twisted and contorted and extremely painful each time I walk and once again I am barely able to limp home after a brief shopping expedition. Now I must give up the form of pleasure and relaxation I can most easily afford—walking.

*Mrs D. Balsam  
London*

## Thalidomide child

*Dear Womens Voice,*

The *Sunday Times* recently featured in their 'A day in the life of series Mrs. Agnes Donnellon, the mother of a thalidomide son aged 16, who was born with tiny arms and legs, and feet that stick out from his body.

She alone is her son's nurse, valet and companion. The older children all left the home because they were unable to tolerate her giving all her love to Kevin. She also has a 13 year old daughter who is an epileptic, and two years ago her husband died of cancer. She has to face alone not only the tremendous physical fatigue of looking after Kevin, but the great mental strain and drain that is placed upon her. But why is her life so hard?

She is a woman whose life was turned upside-down when she took 'Thalidomide' during her pregnancy. We all know that the horror that followed need not have happened. Distillers the company who made the drug paid some compensation in the end. But how can money repair the terrible damage?

Any woman who has had a child, or is pregnant, knows the anguish involved during those nine months of waiting. Only for it to be born malformed—not by nature but by capitalism!

In this case the hand of Capitalism was gloved in the guise of 'Distillers & Co', who not only came up with another 'wonder' drug but created a new kind of handicap—'The Thalidomide Child'.

*Christine Fellowes Hackney*

## Your letters please

Send your letters and reactions to articles (good and bad) in to us by January 25.

Also welcome are hints for Womens Voice groups, like Preston's Fund raising ideas.

Keep letters as short as possible, otherwise we have to cut. Write to Your Voice, Womens Voice Box 82, London E2.

# No patients killed

Dear Womens Voice

Thank you for printing my article about a night in the life of a night nurse on a busy surgical ward. I would, however, like to clarify one or two points.

I felt that the headline you chose was unfortunate and unnecessary. On the night I wrote of, no patients were 'killed'. Two very old ladies died, peacefully; one with her family by her, and one, sadly, alone. Therefore I feel that to write 'NHS kills patients and nurses' was over-sensational, and would only bias readers against the NHS, and frighten anyone who has to be admitted to hospital.

I feel that it is also unfortunate that you cut the passage in which I explained I was working there for one night as an agency nurse, and why I needed to work temporarily, and choose my own hours. I have since refused to work privately in NHS hospitals, because, I discovered it is not possible to give the high standard of care nursing demands, in this position. Clearly, the NHS should not need to employ agency nurses when there are trained nurses in the dole queues. I spoke to a nursing officer on this subject, and was told there are 'plenty of vacancies' but they are not being filled. We can only speculate on the reasons for this, and ask if it is not time for nurses pay and working conditions to be improved.  
*Bristol Women's Voice Member*

# War toys and blackmail

Dear Womens Voice

In Decembers Womens Voice the article about the pressure of advertising on parents around Xmas was very interesting.

At home (Australia) we had a campaign--against war toys.

As we know, many people make money from war, and the same goes for the manufacture of war toys. War toys for boys introduces them to a world where violence is glorified. We should think about the effects these toys can have on kids and protest about their display in shop windows.

In the sixties a very intensive campaign against war toys was mounted in Melbourne Australia, by the Union of Australian Women (U.A.W.).

We considerably reduced the distribution of war toys by giving out leaflets, picketing shops where war toys were displayed, and by personal complaints to shopkeepers.

During the campaign the most blatant display was a soldier set, complete with camouflage tent and a placard saying 'endowment day' special.

The campaign was times to coincide with the payment of the Child Endowment to the mother and it was hoped that mothers would invest it in war toys for their little boys.

UAW members went to see the Manager of the store and although he strongly argued in defence of the right of a child to guns etc., as such play was harmless, it was interesting and very satisfying to observe that after a few days during which time a letter was published in the daily paper about the incident, the offending toys and placard were removed. Small victories do add up and if women campaign against sexist advertising, they should also think about the effect which toys like war toys have on children.

*Dorothy Dalton Kentish Town Womens Voice Group*

# Sumptuous trivia?

Dear Womens Voice, I'm not a regular reader of Womens Voice but a friend gave me a copy of the December issue and I found it most interesting and informative. Keep up the good work.

However, I was disappointed to read the review of *Julia*, which Jenny Jackson describes as 'the most terrific film of 1978'.

It is true that women are the main characters and furthermore both Vanessa Redgrave and Jane Fonda are admirable actresses. However, *Julia* shows how the German fascists affected the lives of two women in much the same way as 'Doctor Zhivago' shows how the Russian Revolution affected the lives of a man and a woman. The film trivialised and romanticised these massive struggles. 'Julia' seemed devoid of political strength, the relationship of the two women was all important.

Both women were very rich the scenes and shots were

colourful and the costumes sumptuous. Lillian (Jane Fonda) had her little cottage by the sea, and was eking out her life as a writer. I do not feel that this is a reflection of most womens' experiences in the Second World War, or even of most friendships between women.

'Julia' did try to be different. It showed woman not as passive wives, girlfriends or mothers, but as active friends. However, it was feminism without the bite. You could leave the cinema feeling comfortable, bathed in the delicious sentimentality of it all.

We need films that force us to question our roles and our society. This film, I maintain, did not.

*Joan Rand*

# Womens Voice silly too?

Dear Womens Voice

A picture of a male worker sticking a beer bottle into his eye, with a grimace of pain on his face, proves nothing at all for women, and certainly not, as Womens Voice claims, that 'men are silly.'

When I first saw this picture in the news section of Womens Voice, I thought at least that there would be an accompanying article explaining the political invalidity of such an extreme case of 'feminism.' But nothing. From which one must conclude that Womens Voice upholds, or at least finds funny, such a facile dig at men.

When Womens Voice members are arguing all the time, where they work and when they sell, that Womens Voice upholds a socialist perspective to Feminism, and then when you open Womens Voice you see something like this, you feel like hiding it from the person you tried to sell it to.

Let's stop wasting our space with such misleading, and politically wrong, 'easy laughs' and get down to contributions that are more relevant to us.

*Marnie Holborow  
Stoke Newington*

# Natural sponges

Dear Womens Voice

I enclose an article from Merseyside Womens Paper. I'm sure all Womens Voice readers

will find this article interesting and of practical help during menstruation.

*Jane Mudd*

# No belts—No pins—no blood money for the sanitary protection market.

After reading an article in Spare Rib 65 (December issue) about the sanitary protection racket, I decided to carry out a suggestion put forward by the article to avoid the companies such as *Tampax* and *Southalls* who are making millions of pounds profit per year out of women.

The article suggested the use of natural sponges as tampons. These sponges are softer than commercial tampons and don't irritate the vagina. A piece of dental floss (from any chemist) is sewn onto one end of the sponge. The sponge is then dampened and inserted. A sponge is just as absorbent as a commercial tampon or towel, so when necessary you pull the cord to remove it, wash it out thoroughly with lukewarm water and soap (use pure soap, e.g. Simple Soap), rinse thoroughly and re-insert. Used this way, one sponge will last throughout four of five periods. I've been doing this now since December, and apart from the satisfaction of knowing that I'm not contributing to the profits of companies like *Southalls* and *Tampax*, I also couldn't bear the thought of using commercial tampons again, from the point of view of personal comfort.

It has also helped me to overcome all the 'ugh' feelings associated with menstruation. Having to wash out a sponge several times a day, has made me come to terms with the whole process.

The only thing that I have to admit not yet coming to terms with is the idea of rinsing out a sponge in a public loo. Of course, if you carry a handbag with you all the time you could carry a spare clean sponge with you in a plastic bag.

However, I would still encourage any woman to use natural sponges as the advantages far outweigh the one disadvantage. Sponges can be bought at chemists and health shops, and some department stores.

The sponge doesn't need to be sterilised - towels and tampons aren't sterile either. Just wash and rinse it thoroughly and keep it until the next month. A sponge can also be used to insert yoghurt as a thrush treatment.  
*Liz Filson*

# YOUR QUESTIONS...

## How can I get an apprenticeship?

Last month I answered a question from a woman who had gone off sex after the birth of her child. I have received a lot of critical comments about the way I answered it. As a result we have decided to devote a womens health page to the problem in a future issue.  
Alison Kirton.

*Dear Womens Voice*  
In my school we have to choose our options soon for the fourth year. We are allowed to do craft subjects and I am very keen to do metal work and technical drawing. I am a bit worried though because no one seems to know how I can get an apprenticeship or further training when I leave school. I would also like to know if there is any organisation which tries to help girls get apprenticeships or organises women who are doing craft jobs.  
Claudette

*Dear Claudette*  
I am really pleased that you have started to think about this early on at school. So many girls find themselves with completely the wrong subjects for getting an apprenticeship or technical training. What you need to do is contact local firms to find out whether they offer apprenticeships.  
You can also approach nationalised industries like your local electricity board, gas board and British Rail. Find out exactly what subjects they require to train you. The job

centre may also be able to give you information and there should also be T.O.P.S. courses in your area although these are for people over eighteen. When it actually comes to finding a job you will undoubtedly meet a lot of prejudice and you will really have to persevere.  
You could contact the local branch of the trade union representing the line of work you have chosen and put pressure on them to help you. Quote the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act at them if you get no joy.  
There is an organisation of women called 'Women in Manual Trades', which you can contact at 23, Bridge Avenue Mansions, London W.6.



## Women and the war in Northern Ireland: the International Tribunal

IT IS now ten years since the Catholics in the North of Ireland began their campaign against discrimination in employment, housing, and voting rights. Their peaceful marches were however, bludgeoned into the ground. And so the present 'troubles' began.  
10 years on, little has changed. The minority Catholic population is still living in slum ghettos, and unemployment is still often as high as 40 per cent. What has changed is that there are now 15000 British soldiers patrolling their streets supposedly to 'keep the peace'.  
The North is officially part of the United Kingdom. But how

many of us actually know what is going on in our name? Very few—because we are not supposed to. The Press talks about *Ireland's* troubles or those 'thick mad micks'. In Ireland however—Britain's first and last colony—they have another name for those troubles: **England's Vietnam.**

It is up to us to break the wall of silence created by the government around Ireland. The International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland has been set to do this up.

Catholic women in the north suffer a triple burden: as part of an oppressed minority population; as working class people, and of course as women.

Catholic women in the North—if they have a job at all—earn the lowest rates in Europe. Their housing is appalling, and on their estates there are very few play facilities or nurseries.

In Britain these are the kind of issues we campaign over. But in the North they don't. Because, given the conditions that they presently live under, for them to even begin to fight the oppression they share with all working class women is next to impossible.

Instead, they live in a state of constant fear as to the safety of their children, their men—themselves. Armed soldiers patrol their streets day and night. Soldiers in their gardens shout abuse: 'Catholic whore, Fenian slag', and generally try to provoke them.

Go shopping and you are liable to be stopped and subjected to degrading 'body searches.' Adolescent girls, in particular, are a favourite target.

Give any 'cheek' and you are liable to be hauled in for



Illustration: Women in Jail in Northern Ireland broadsheet

interrogation and strip searching—often with men nearby.

Your home can be burst into and raided any time of the night: furniture wrecked, money stolen, floor boards plaster and water pipes ripped apart.

Many women face extra problems because members of their family are 'inside'. There are now over 2000 Republican Socialist prisoners; and conditions for those in 'H-Block' are barbaric. In Armagh jail there are 100 women prisoners. 93 per cent of these convictions result from 'confessions' obtained by physical and psychological torture. For women, interrogation involves sexual abuse and the threat of rape.

The Tribunal is already sponsored by many members of the

labour movement. We need your help to build it further.

- What you can do:**
1. Raise the Tribunal in your Women's Voice group, and trade or student union. Get your organisation to sponsor and affiliate to the Tribunal.
  2. Publicise the Tribunal: we can provide leaflets and speakers on request. A women's pamphlet is available, why not order some? We are planning a speaking tour (with Women's Voice) so contact us if interested.
  3. Donations will be gratefully received. Please make cheques/POs payable to the International Tribunal.  
**Contact us at:** The Women's Sub-committee, The International Tribunal, 182, Upper Street, London N.1.  
Eileen Fairweather





# WOMENS WORLD

by Judith Condon

'BUT I don't know what I'll do when I visit my brother's', a woman friend of mine was worrying. 'He says he can't stand the sight of breast feeding. They've got five children and he never let his wife feed one of them herself. Says it makes him feel sick.'

'I suppose he shuts his eyes and turns over fast when he reaches page three of the Sun,' I couldn't help but reply.

I fell to musing on the subject of the female breast, object of a million fantasies. Peaks of crudded cream, sang the poets of old, nipples like cherries.

Heaving and sighing, undefiled mountain tops beneath the sheets as the rapacious Tarquin draws near. Forever moulded outwards and upwards as fashion dictates. Kneaded into a mass for bounce and cleavage; straight-jacketed mercilessly apart for nubile peaks. Central icon of our culture. Platform of desire. The original consumer durable.

An artist acquaintance of mine used to have on his mantleshelf a model of a female breast. It was made of plaster-of-paris in ghastly shades of pink, set on a plate like a blancmange. Only never for the eating, strictly object d'art.

Who can say at what precise moment in history the female breast became colonised for the exclusive use of male fantasy? No longer for the actual enjoyment of its owner, her lovers and her offspring. No longer part of a human person at all. But alienated, colonised territory, stolen from woman and infant alike in the name of gentility, marketed and sold as commodity in celluloid form to the unfortunate male.

For all the real function and appeal of the female breast have been reduced to a matter of mere inches—in that ever so coy phrase coined by god knows what slavish mentality, to a matter of 'vital statistics'—to be ogled and wondered at.

But what was this? Here suddenly were young women shortening their skirts beyond imagination, doing away with bras and girdles and suspenders. And an oh so readily exploitable commodity, the packaged celluloid breast, in its pre-arranged cups and lace-trimmed undergarments, a white lace blouse was

old hat, boring, passe.

In desperation the colonisers invented page three. For the best part of a decade now they have been exposing the female breast to the light of day. Well not exactly to the light of day of course. Still young and sweetly posed. Still a little coy and blushing. And certainly not functional. Good heavens we can't have

our male readers throwing up at the sight of women actually feeding their babies. That would be positively obscene.

All of which brings me to the thought that I'd very much like to see Peter Grimsditch, editor of the Daily Star (the paper that gives the gutter press a bad name) without his clothes on. I'd love to see what he's really made of; under his suavely cut suits and his smirking certainly about the 'backwardness' of the north-country working-class male. For Mr. Grimsditch has set out to beat the Sun at its own game. And the hairy-chested victims he's chosen aren't responding too well. And the rising Star is rapidly shooting down the proverbial pan. What's the world coming to? Next thing you know that brother of my friend will be siring his sixth, and the infant will be allowed to be fed with his own mother's milk, perish the unnatural thought.



# WHAT IS GOING ON?

## Public meetings

- **South West London Future meetings** January 9—first New Year get-together. January 23—'Behind the Veil—Women in Iran' speaker Eli Povey—an Iranian woman now living in England. Phone Marion for more details 673 1329.

- **Hackney Womens Voice Public Meeting.** January 15 'Out of Your Mind with Tranquillisers', Dalston Library, Dalston Lane, 8pm. Ring Yvonne for info and babysitters - 802 4386.

- **Edinburgh Public Meeting,** Sunday 21 January, 'Sexism'. 7.30pm, Trades Council, 14 Picardy Place. Speaker Ruth Lillroy (this meeting for women only).

## Womens Voice meetings

- **Aberdeen Womens Voice.** for more information telephone Liz 51059.

- **Acton & Harlesden Ring** Carrie 993 0356 or Pete 969 9812

- **Birmingham** at Greyhound Cider Bar, Holloway Head. For dates and babysitters phone Jenny (440 5794) or Janet (472 7216). All women welcome.

- **Black Country Sundays** fortnightly, 2.30, 27 Glen Court, Compton Road, Wolverhampton 23233 for information. Children welcome.

- **Bristol Womens Voice** meets alternate Wednesdays at 8.00pm at the Crown Tavern, Lawfords Gate (off Old Market St.) Phone Bristol (0272) 553740.

- **Canterbury** every other Tuesday at Jolly Sailor Northgate. Phone Barbara (Lyminge 862742).

- **Cardiff** every other Tuesday, 7.30 at Union Books, 58 Bridge Street. For babysitters phone Bronwen (Cardiff 43470)

- **Chelmsford Womens Voice.** For details of local activities, see Womens Voice Sellers.

- **Croydon Womens Voice** meets alternate Tuesdays. Phone Maureen 660 0989 or Yvonne 664 3768.

- **Coventry** meets every other Wednesday, 8.00pm at The Hertford Tavern, off Queens Road (near the Butts). Phone 450-570

- **Ealing Womens Voice** meets regularly. Phone Maureen 567 7083 or Jane 930 0986 for details.

- **Edinburgh Womens Voice** meets fortnightly on Sunday evenings. Phone Penny 557 0731 for details.

- **Edinburgh Street sale** every Saturday 2-3pm. Meet from 1pm onwards at the Cafe Royal (behind Woolworths, Princes Street). Womens Voice readers welcome to turn up and give us a hand. For more info phone Penny 557 0731.

- **Exeter Womens Voice** for info ring 0392 38022

- **Finchley and Barnet Womens Voice,** fortnightly meetings, for information contact Anita 883-4968 or Glennis 346-7627.

- **Fleet Street** meets every other Wednesday at the Hoop and Grapes Farringdon St lunchtimes from 1-2. Ring Maggie 822 3780 (work).

- **Glasgow Womens Voice** for information phone Clare (959 8924) or Sheila (424 1048).

- **Glossop, Derbyshire.** First and third Tuesdays of every month at 110 Victoria St., Glossop. Phone Glossop 61873 or Claire Glossop 64735 All welcome.

- **Hackney** phone Pauline (800 3586) for information and babysitter.

- **Halifax** details from WV and SW sellers every Sat 12.30-2.30 Co-op Arcade on the Precinct.

- **Hornsey Womens Voice** meets fortnightly for info ring Jane 348 6712 or Maggie 341 1182.

- **Kentish Town Women Voice** meets weekly. Phone Gail (485 0954) or Vera/Di (267 5059) evenings. Babysitters provided.

- **Harlow Womens Voice** meets fortnightly on a Wednesday night in Harlow town hall, 8pm. Ring Bron (Harlow) 415953

- **Highbury Group.** For details/babysitting, ring Elana 439-3764 (days). All women welcome.

## NALGO Conference on Maternity Leave and Workplace Nurseries

Saturday 10 February  
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1.  
10am to 4.30pm  
Creche provided

Programme includes: *How to get your rights. How to win a better maternity leave agreement. How to win a workplace nursery. Organising women in NALGO: Equal Rights Committees? Do they work?*

Application forms for conference from: Mike Waller, Branch Secretary, Lambeth NALGO, Blue Star House, 234-244 Stockwell Road, London, SW9 9SR.

- **Hornsey** for information see local WV sellers or phone Alison (263 3477) or Janet (444 8922).

- **Islington Womens Voice** meets regularly phone Sandy at 802 6145 for details.

- **Lampeter** Tuesday evenings in college. Details from WV sellers or write c/o SDUC Lampeter, Dyfed, Wales.

- **Lea Valley** meets regularly. Phone Mary. (802 9563) for information and babysitters.

- **SE Manchester** meets at the 'Albert', Rusholme, 8pm, every other Wednesday.

- **Medway** meets alternate Mondays. Ring Helen, (Medway) 270 689 for information and babysitter.

- **Newham** meets Tuesdays and Thursdays fortnightly. Phone Wendy 790 2373. Babysitters available.

- **Newcastle meetings** are the second Tuesdays of every month, Bridge Hotel, Newcastle, at 8.00p.m. (Nr. High Levelbridge), Telephone Number: 813877 Newcastle.

- **Norwich** every other Tuesday at 8.30 at Black Boys Pub, Colegate.

- **Preston** We meet every other Tuesday at the Windsor Castle, Egan Street, (near Meadow Street) at 8 p.m. Telephone Mary—Preston 55739 for more information or if you need a babysitter.

- **Reading Womens Voice** for info and babysitters ring Kathy 666800. Public Meeting

Tuesday 9 January  
'Abortion - is the present law enough?'

- **Sheffield Womens Voice** meetings, fortnightly, The Prince of Wales pub, Division Street, Sheffield. 7.30pm.

- **Shrewsbury** the first Wednesday of every month. Other meetings too so phone 58830 for details.

- **Slough Womens Voice group.** Meets on the first Tuesday of every month at Slough Library, Ring Mary—Slough 24093.

South London meets fortnightly on Tuesdays. Tate Library, Brixton Oval. All welcome.

- **S. West London Womens Voice Group** meet alternate Tuesdays 91 Bedford Hill, Balham All welcome. More info, babysitters contact Marion 673 1329 babysitters ring Marion 673 1329.

- **Stoke on Trent** would anyone interested in organising with Womens Voice in the Stoke on Trent area contact Sandra 814094.

- **Tower Hamlets** meets on alternate Mondays. Babysitters available phone Heather 739 6668 (home) or 534 7825 ext. 13.

- **Walthamstow** meets every Sunday 3pm. For details ring Jeannie 531 8340, or Pauline 521 4768.

- **York** Meets every 3rd Saturday in the month at the Royal Oak Goodramgate. Full creche facilities. Food on sale—do drop in!

- **Just out!** New Socialist Workers Party pamphlet on Iran. The background to the crisis. How Britain supports the Shah. The future. 15p (plus 10p postage). Orders of 5 or more 12p each.

Send money to SWP (Iran), PO Box 82, London, E2.

- **Womens Voice badges.** 15p each. (12p for orders over 10) available from Days of Hope, 115 Westgate Road, Newcastle.

- **Reclaim the night demo:** January 24 Write to Womens Centre 76 Brighton Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham. Phone Jenny 440 5794

## small ads

**Birmingham Womens Liberation group** can be contacted at 76 Brighton Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham. Newsletter available with list of different groups

**Abortion**  
New group forming to collect information about abortion facilities and set up abortion counselling and referral service. Deptford Womens Centre, 74 Deptford High Street, 7.30pm, Tuesday 23 January. Ring Jennifer 732 9218 or Wendy 737 4849

**Rape Crisis Centre**  
If you have been raped or sexually assaulted and want someone to talk to or need legal or medical advice the Rape Crisis Centre runs a 24 hour telephone line. Contact us anytime day or night on 01 340 6145 or PO Box 42, London, EN6 5BU

**The Other Cinema**  
Films by women and about women to show at your meetings. Complete list available of the films we have for distribution. Send SAE to The Other Cinema, 12-13 Little Newport Street, London WC2H 7JJ. Telephone 01-734 8508.

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

## Bookmarx Chain

**BIRMINGHAM:** Socialist and TU Books, 224 Deritend High Street, Birmingham 12 (open 10am-6pm, Monday-Saturday)

**CARDIFF:** SWP Books, 58 Bridge Street (open afternoons on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and all day Saturday)

**EDINBURGH:** Bookmarx, 130 Morrison Street (two minutes walk from Haymarket Station).

**GLASGOW:** SW Books, top floor, 64 Queen Street, C1.

**HULL:** Socialist Books, 238 Springbank (open 10am-5.30pm, Monday-Saturday)

**SOUTHAMPTON:** October Books, 4 Onslow Road.

**LONDON:** Bookmarks, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 (01 802 6145) 10am to 6pm, Monday to Saturday.

## National Union Teachers Womens Conference

Saturday 20 January 1979  
10.30 to 5pm  
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1

Speakers from National Abortion Campaign, trades unions. Workshops and discussions on maternity leave, sexism, nursery provision and organisation of the NUT Womens Groups.

Creche. Theatre Group. Conference Fee £1.

## Join Womens Voice...

WOMENS VOICE fights for womens rights. We want equal pay with the highest paid; maternity leave without restriction; the right to a job; nursery places for all children so that mothers can chose to work; and an end to discrimination in education, training, jobs and benefits; the right to abortion on demand.

To fight for these changes is only a beginning. Womens Liberation means we have to free ourselves from the grip of the rich and powerful whose oppressive rules and ideas are fostered on us from our earliest years. This means we have to fight for socialism too, to free us from a society divided between those who have and those who have not.

To fight we have to be organised: Womens Voice is a sister organisation of the Socialist Workers Party.

**Fight with Womens Voice for Womens Liberation and Socialism.**

# join the fight!

### Womens Voice Groups

Scotland  
Dundee  
Edinburgh  
Central Glasgow  
Aberdeen

### Wales

Aberystwyth  
Cardiff

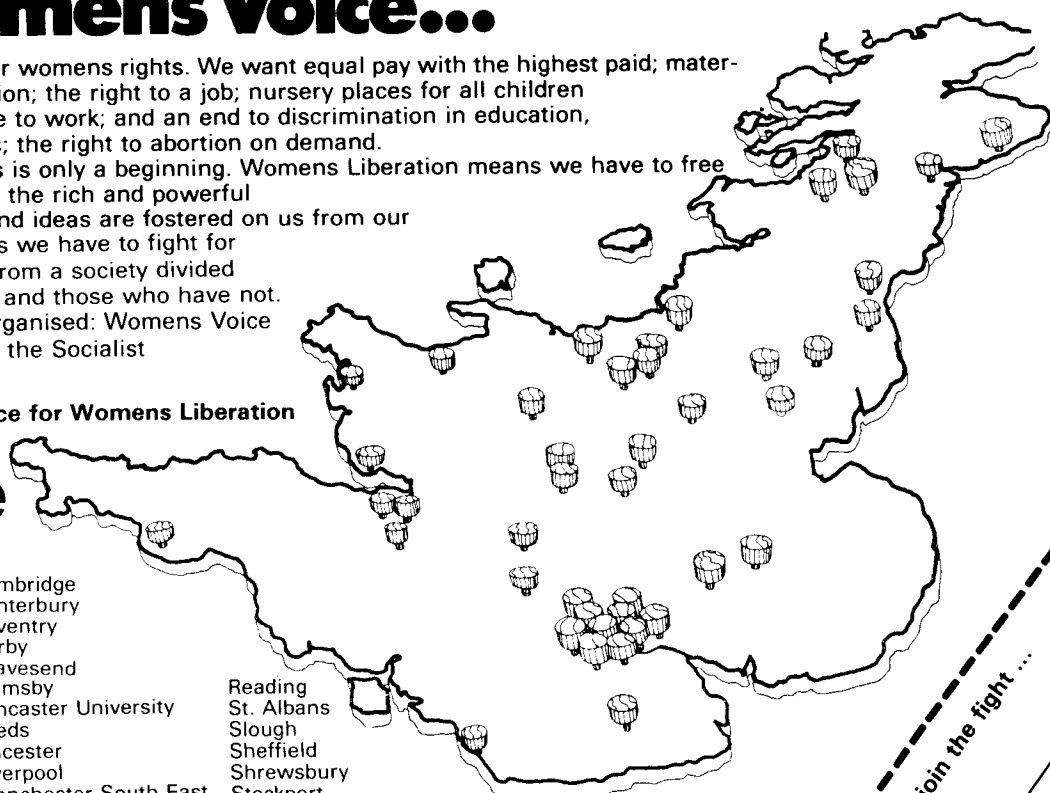
### England

Bath  
Birmingham  
Bristol  
Bristol University

Cambridge  
Canterbury  
Coventry  
Derby  
Gravesend  
Grimsby  
Lancaster University  
Leeds  
Leicester  
Liverpool  
Manchester South East  
Medway  
Newcastle  
Norwich  
Nottingham  
Oxford  
Preston  
Plymouth  
Pontriffract  
Poole and Bournemouth

Reading  
St. Albans  
Slough  
Sheffield  
Shrewsbury  
Stockport  
Sunderland  
Wolverhampton  
York  
**London**  
North East London Poly  
Central  
Fleet Street  
Finchley/Barnet  
South

South West  
South East  
Hammersmith  
Bedford College  
Lea Valley  
Kentish Town  
Islington  
Walthamstow  
Tower Hamlets



I want to join the fight ...

Name

Address

Send to Womens Voice  
PO Box 82, London, E2

JANUARY

40 women invade Evening News to protest against article on artificial insemination donor for gay women who want children.

FEBRUARY

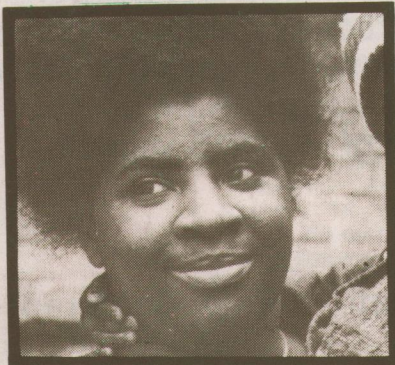
After a one day strike 47 women working for a Manchester firm of solicitors won 19% pay increase. They threatened to strike every Monday - but only had to do it once.

MARCH



Two days before it was due to close South Oxford Nursery was occupied.

APRIL



Jennifer Davies won the fight to stay as tenant in the flat she shared with her boyfriend

MAY



Joan Paton won her case against her husband, who wanted to exercise father's rights and stop her having an abortion.

JUNE



EGA stays OK - for the time being anyway.

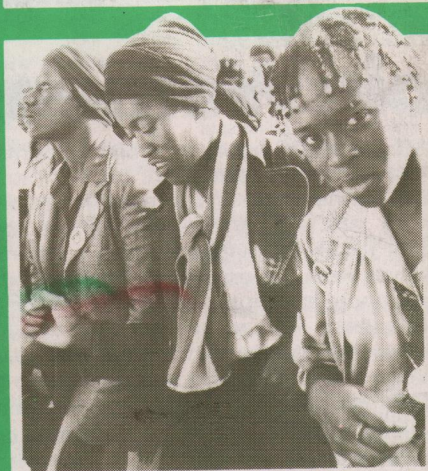
JULY



81 Camden typists go on strike: they want better pay and safeguards for their jobs with the introduction of new machines

AUGUST

Women in Shetland demonstrated against strippers being invited over from Aberdeen to entertain the oilmen



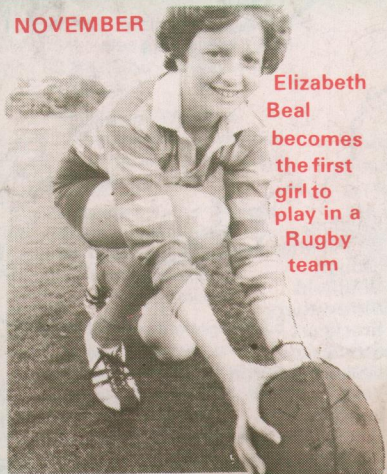
SEPTEMBER Carnival: 100,000 people.

OCTOBER



5000 women march through Dublin to protest against violence against women

NOVEMBER



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