

womens voice

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IRELAND
10 YEARS
LIVING WITH
THE TROOPS



Unemployment - instant solution - 'women return to the home!'



photo: Carlos Augusto (FEL)

LORD Spens got to his feet one day recently in the House of Lords, and, tossing aside his ermine cloak, came out with an original and profound solution to the country's unemployment problems.

'My Lords,' he began, 'if the married women were to give up work and return to their homes our problems would be solved in an instant.'

Now, you may think we're having a joke with you, but Lord Spens does exist, and he did say it.

More than that, Margaret Thatcher's government's policies, are designed to throw thousands more women out of their jobs. It's already happening. How will they do it?

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Ideas, news, letters for the September issue must reach us by 15 August. If you would like to help on Women's Voice you're welcome at the editorial meetings. The next meeting will be on 29 August. Telephone 986 6222 for details.

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They are drastically cutting public spending. There's a freeze on new appointments; as jobs become vacant they won't be filled. In the Civil Service, local government, amongst teachers and in the hospitals, the women who do the unskilled jobs, the women who work part-time, the women who take maternity leave, the women who have just gone back to work will all be the most vulnerable to the Tory axe.

The Government's budget measures were designed to deflate the economy. Just like a balloon gong down the economy will shrink, there will be less money and fewer jobs. The increase in VAT has put prices up, so our money buys less. The increase in interest rates has put up bank loans and mortgages. We pay more, and so do the employers, for borrowing money. Employers will invest less, and there will be fewer jobs. Cutting Regional Aid means less money to the places where unemployment is already highest. All these measures will put women in particular out of jobs, because when employers have to lay people off they lay off the unskilled first.

Changing the Employment Protection Act so that you are protected only if you have been working for one year rather than six months will make it easier for employers to sack people. Women switch their jobs most often, and will be most vulnerable.

You will often hear nowadays, especially amongst Tory Party spokesmen, that 'makret forces' must have full play in the economy. We must return to the notion of the 'survival of the fittest.' Whenever you hear these things, just remember, that's your job they're talking about.

Photo: Union Place Collective



'GOD, what's this.' You can almost hear the words as the posh lady lifts her skirts and tries to avoid Ellen Gallagher outside the Grosvenor House Hotel. 40 pickets, sacked chambermaids and their supporters, gave leaflets to all the arrivals for a big dinner. Even Princess Margaret got one.

The picket was a real embarrassment to the Trust House Forte management of Grosvenor House. But the following day the chambermaids union bailed out the management and persuaded the women to accept compensation for the loss of their jobs.

'Only three of us voted against,' Ellen Gallagher told Womens Voice. 'We wanted to keep the picket going. The management couldn't have kept up the embarrassment of those pickets on all the big banquets. They're good for

nowt those union officials. They're no action and all mouth.

'None of us had any idea at the start how to form a picket line, what the law says. The Union said we couldn't have our own support committee, we couldn't handle money from donations ourselves. They said they were our support committee! Some support. If we'd done it all ourselves we'd have been much better off.

'I know about union solidarity now, and I've learnt a lot about people.'

The deal the union persuaded the women to accept cost Trust House Forte all of £6000. Most women got £109. The highest amount, £1000, going to a women who had worked there for 19 years. That's just £50 a year. Some deal!

TREATED LIKE ANIMALS

'THEY are treating us like animals' said Mrs Rajdutta, shop steward at Meadon Plastics Ltd on Slough Trading Estate. She and 150 other Asian women have been on strike there since July 5 for increased wages and better facilities. They have all been sacked as a result of their strike action.

Five months ago the women asked for a pay rise. They earn a meagre 82 pence an hour, and were offered an extra 8p. This was not forthcoming and the women, in an attempt to improve their position, all joined the AUEW, the engineering union. In fact the AUEW did nothing for them until they walked out, and are now trying to negotiate with management on their benefit.

The women want a basic £1.50 an hour, and are prepared to remain on strike until this demand and their demands for improved facilities are

met. The working conditions at the factory are appalling. There are only five toilets of which only two ever actually work for a total workforce of over 150. There is no provision of toilet paper and water constantly covers the floor. The drains outside are blocked and foul smelling.

The canteen facilities consist of one tiny room with two small tables and a few chairs. The factory makes plastic baby pants, and five women work at each machine. It is quite common for a woman worker to be struck by the factory owner's wife, who is white, for tearing the cloth, or just not working because there is a temporary fault with the machine.

The women are maintaining a constant picket in front of the factory for over 12 years, and have ported by other workers from local factories. In particular, men from the Runnymede rubber plant who are also on strike for a wage increase and who are in fact in a different union, the GMWU, have been helping to turn away deliveries to the factory. The majority of the women have been working at the

factory for over 12 years, and have never been involved in a strike before, but feelings amongst the women when I visited them was strong and militant. They had had enough, and with their husbands also supporting their action, they felt confident of victory.

Flaine Rigg

BINGO! YOUR JOBS GONE

70 WOMEN at Coventry Club One Bingo went on strike for ten weeks two years ago to gain trade union recognition. Now Granada have taken over and sacked all the TGWU members. Anne Coffey, once the shop steward, spoke to Womens Voice.

'We knew the club was up for sale, we were all expecting it to close. Then we heard that Granada were buying it out. They even came along and measured us for uniforms, and I was worried about the colours. Now I've lost my job!

'We got sixty days notice, then they reduced it to 40 and then it was none.

'If we agree to join NATKE the employers union, we will get our jobs back. But we fought like hell to join the TGWU, we've built our own womens branch, and we're not giving it up.'

When the women met the employers and Granada their decision to fight the closure broke down.

'The meeting went on and on; eventually I went home around midnight. When I turned up for work the next day, the place was closed. That was it. A vote had been taken to accept the closure by the 12 women who were left. There's about 30 of us now who plan to take action when the Club tries to re-open. We've got the support of the other TGWU district committee and trades unionists in the town.'

Because the work is part time half the women found they were not entitled to any redundancy pay. And those that were only entitled to small amounts. Granada does not employ any TGWU members, not even their lorry drivers.

Messages of support to Ann Coffey, 42 Road, Stoke, Coventry.

•Did you know that the number of babies born 'out of wedlock' has risen every year since the end of the war. It is now 9.7%, or almost one in ten of all births.

•Did you know that while one in 25 school pupils are black, only one in 700 teachers is black?

TOY MONEY WON'T PAY THE RENT

SELECTED Toys Limited is a company in Didcot that makes dartboards. The women working there joined the Transport and General Workers Union in the hope that they could do something about their incredibly low pay: an average 35 to 40p an hour.

We talked to Mary Aitkin who became the shop steward.

'I took a part time job at STL, but every week I found myself complaining because the wages didn't meet the £18 I'd been promised. I talked to one girl who was in the Union, but she left, so I got my husband to phone up the District Officer of the TGWU. I got a list of 28 names and addresses and we held a meeting.

Everything went very slowly, so we had another meeting and wrote to our boss asking him to meet with us and an official and to reply by 3.30pm, on 12 June.

At 12.20 that day the boss held a meeting and said that 'due to the world recession in trade' we had to lay-off some people: he picked on three women over retiring age, another woman and myself.

All the women came out on strike, and within a week the Union had made it official. The women wrote again to the boss stating their demands: Reinstatement of the five workers made redundant for trade union activities, better pay, and trade union recognition.

STL now say they are going into voluntary liquidation, but no official liquidator has been appointed. They are obviously hoping the women will give up and walk away. They won't!

All contributions and messages of support to STL Strike Fund, 97 Wessex Road, Didcot.

Colleen Ridgeway

WITH OUR HANDS TIED

IN ALL the strikes reported on these pages success depends upon the women's right to picket and to call on help from other trades unionists.

The Tory Government is determined that these rights should be smashed. They want to make it impossible for trade unionists to win against their employers.

Judith Hamilton takes a look at the new Tory proposals to tie the unions hands behind their backs.

First, the Government intends to ban 'secondary picketing'. Only the people on strike will be allowed to picket, and only at their own place of work. The flying pickets which helped to win the lorry drivers strike last winter and the community pickets which helped to keep the EGA open, will be illegal. Mass picketing, like that at Grunwicks, and the blacking of firms' products and supplies in support of workers on strike will also be illegal.

Next, anyone who does take solidarity action will be financially liable if they cause 'breach of contract'—in other words, if they're effective. Trade unions would be liable to financially crippling sanctions for almost all forms of industrial action—for instance, arguing in one union that members should not cross another union's picket line. This was the way that the executive of the teachers' union, the NUT, undermined the low pay strikes by school caretakers in February and March.

Third, they propose to limit the 'closed shop', so that the job of any scab will be protected and union negotiating strength will be undermined.

Finally, for the moment, public funds are to be provided for secret ballots, so that elections, rule changes and strikes will be decided more and more by people who have not been to union meetings or heard

the arguments for or against

Their trade union proposals are nothing to do with 'industrial democracy'

On 23 June more than one thousand delegates attended the 'Defend Our Unions' Rank and File Conference in Manchester. It was the largest conference of its kind since 1970, when the last Tory government began its attempt to destroy the trade union movement with the Industrial Relations Act. That Act was defeated by the actions of rank and file trade unionists. It was finally repealed when mass picketing of Pentonville prison forced the Home Secretary to release five dockers who had been imprisoned under the Act.

Delegates flocked to this year's conference, knowing that, despite the cuts, unemployment and falling wages under Labour, the Tories will be much more determined to wipe out trade union organisation, and will be ruthless in cutting any job, closing any school or hospital, and stamping out any wage demand.

The Tories don't even dress up their policies as a 'sacrifice for Britain'; they're just out to punish the working class for daring to exist.

For our own self-defence it's vital that we campaign for the Conference's 'Code of Practice' to be adopted and adhered to in as many trade unions and workplaces as possible.

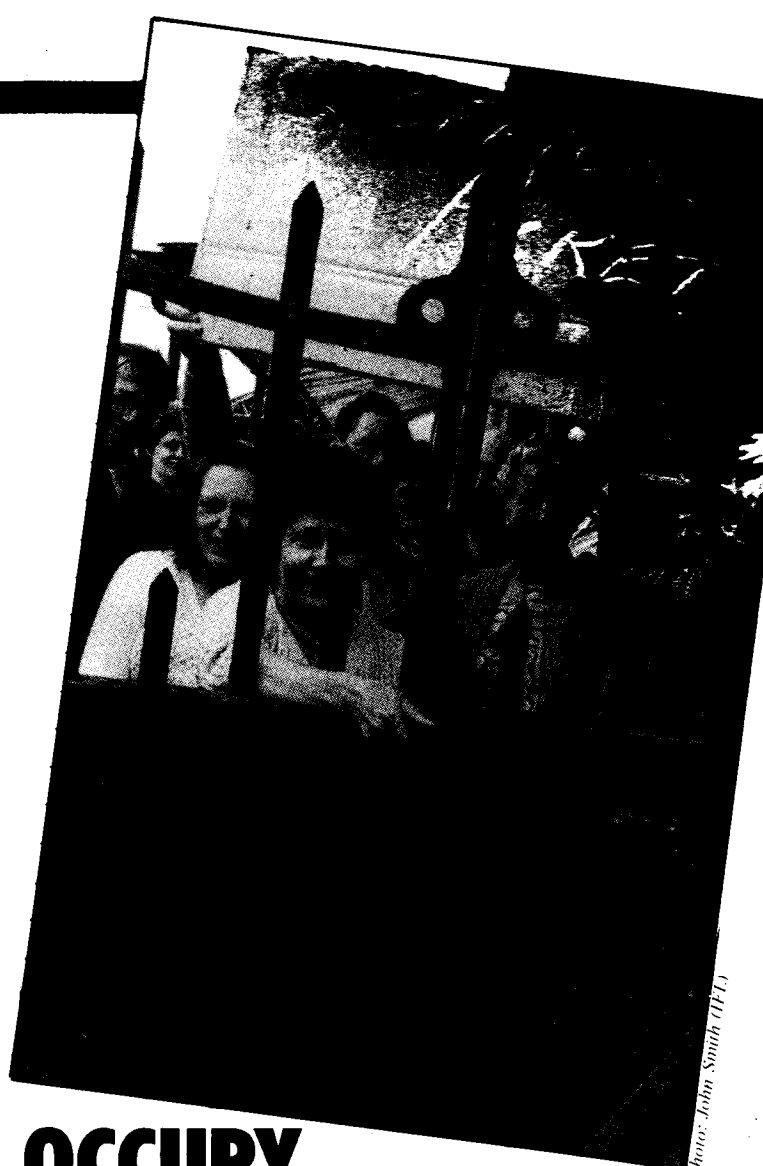


Photo: John Smith (TFL)

OCCUPY FOR VICTORY

WHAT's more frightening than 250 angry men? 250 angry women, of course! That's what the manager of Renolds Chains in Manchester found out when he refused to pay their wages.

The women, along with their male colleagues were working to rule in support of their annual pay claim. The wages were lousy compared to other engineering factories in the area, with the take home pay as low as £37. Management thought the women would be a walkover, but they were very much mistaken.

Following a mass meeting in the factory the women stormed down to the cash office demanding their money.

'The manager, Harrison, who'd previously said 'no-one tells me what to do and what not to do' went grey when we said that we were telling him what to do—he was going to bloody well pay us' said Mary Hulme, the GMWU shop steward. 'We told him we'd bring our children in for him to feed if need be' explained Kathy Gallagher, the AUEW shop steward.

The workers were all threatened with a lock out from the

factory, so they occupied instead.

'So often decisions are made and the members are not informed of what's going on,' said Mary Hulme, 'so in this dispute I've tried to keep the women informed all the time, and have discussed the issues with them. I think this is why the women have been so strong and determined.

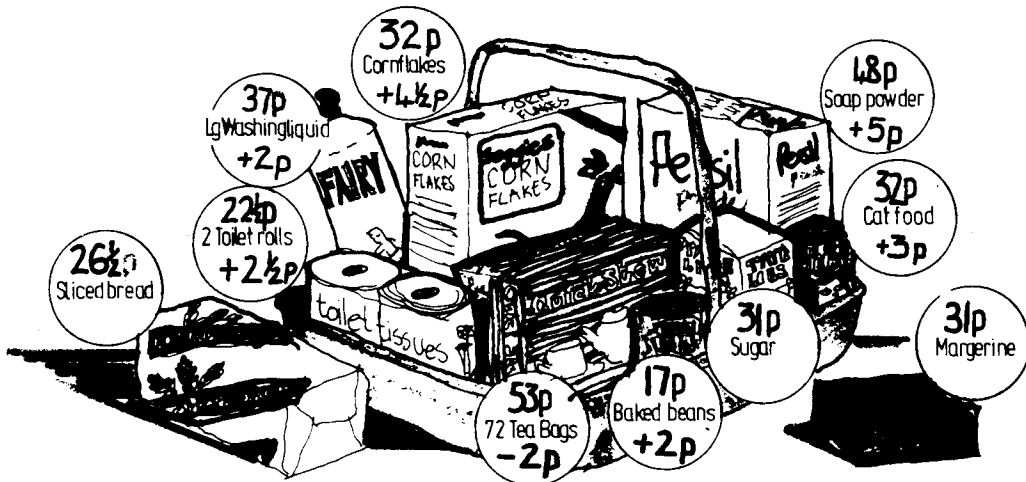
'Their husbands have supported us by minding the children when they've been occupying evenings and weekends. There's been no question about it. When you name comes up on the rota you do it!

Eventually management agreed to reopen negotiations, and the workers accepted a much improved offer.

Although the workers at Renolds have won an overdue victory the struggles are nowhere near over. During pay negotiations management threw in the threat of redundancies next September. Knowing now they do have strength in unity the workers are prepared to fight to keep these jobs.

Pat Jones

KEEPING AN EYE ON RISING PRICES



Total £3.30p

Price in June 1979 £3.13
increase + 17p.

Sadie Blood reports: 'Every week something goes up. The total this month would have been even higher had the tea bags not been on offer. The worst increases have been on chocolate items. Chocolate is a luxury, so it's now rated at 15 per cent VAT. Chocolate biscuits have gone up from 37p to 42p. A Mars bar is up from 11p to 13p. All the things for the kiddies have gone up.'

OUT OF WORK & NOWHERE TO GO

I LEFT school a couple of months ago. It was a big comprehensive school in North London, Finchley Manorhill. We sold Socialist Worker and Rebel in school, and I always wore a womens lib badge. They classed me as a bit of a weirdo for it.

I think the headmaster was frightened of us introducing politics into the school. He kept picking on me, until I left.

I can't explain how I came to believe in womens liberation, but I've never understood why women had to stay at home. I didn't realise those ideas were political until recently.

Now I know that women will be the first hit by Tory policies, especially the cuts, because they are in the lowest paid jobs, the jobs that will go first.

Our MP is a woman Mrs Thatcher! We're going to talk to her about the Right to Work. She usually says 'no comment'. At least that's what she said when she came up during the election campaign!

The whole of the Finchley Right to Work Campaign is going to the Right to Work march in September. There's about 20 of us. Half girls, and half boys. We've just organised an occupation of our job centre: it's the sort of thing we do to try and meet more of the unemployed and get them fighting too.

We went in on a Monday morning and just asked to see the union rep. He was on holiday. But they let us occupy so long as the manager stayed in there with us.

We hung banners out of the windows and some stayed in outside

to collect signatures and money. We were a bit shy so I don't think we talked enough to the people who worked there. Still, we found another five people who said they would help with the campaign.

That's the sort of thing we have to do to get publicity for the campaign. We have to be militant, take a militant stand against the employers. Employed and unemployed together.

Sue Moss

If you want to go on the Right to Work March, or want to know more about the campaign, write to the Right to Work Campaign, 265a Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

WILLIE HAW HAW

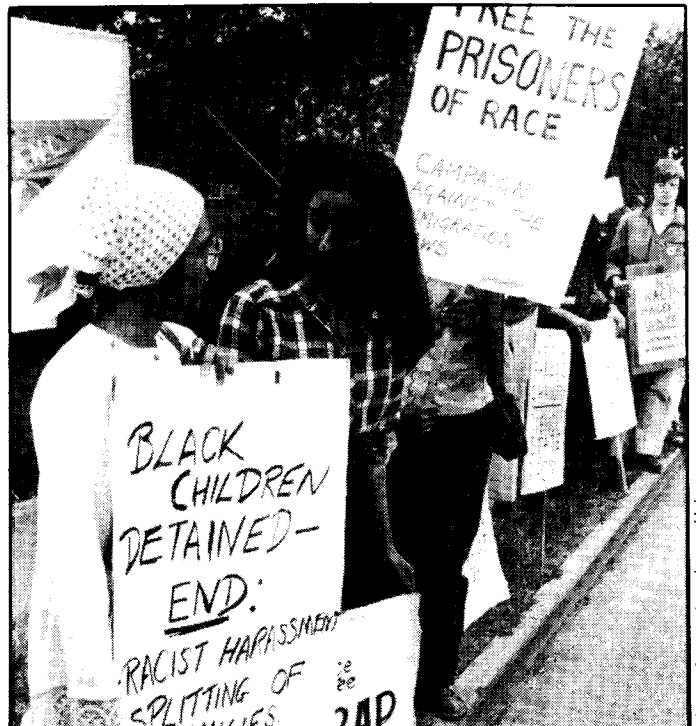
THE BBC is probably the most prestigious, and most insidious, opinion maker in this country, and to mark the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of BBC Television News, it gathered together some of the most prestigious opinion makers it could find. People from the press, films, media, a judge or two, a couple of MPs.

It was a smart affair, with gilt edged invitations, and black ties all round. Well, almost all round. Amongst the list of the top 111 in the business they did manage to rustle up 9 women. I was one, by mistake rather than design, my editor couldn't go.

When I rang to ask if I was expected to bring someone with me they explained 'we've decided not to ask wives this time'. I didn't know I could have one.

This was the creme de la creme as far as the BBC was concerned, and the man invited to honour the occasion was Willie Whitelaw.

His speech for such an auspicious occasion centred on a long and dreadful joke about St. Peter and the pearly gates. Not exactly original. You know the sort of



Babies and children kept in prisons. Is that really possible in Britain? It is if you happen to be an immigrant, no matter how old you and however legal your papers may be. Everyday immigrants are stopped at the airports into Britain and then kept in the detention centres. Three children who arrived recently, all between the ages of 20 months and 4 years, were held in the detention centre. Their mother had died in Pakistan, and although she

had held a British passport, the immigration authorities wouldn't allow in these young children to live with a relative. Pickets of the Centre were organised, with the support of the Anti Nazi League, the local Womens Voice group and several other organisations. The children were eventually released. If promised Tory changes in the immigration law take place, there will be more hardship, and more children kept in these prisons.

thing. St Peter welcomes Enoch Powell on condition he has no unworthy thoughts on his way to heaven. Someone shouts 'wogs', and out falls Enoch Powell. Ian Paisley suffers the same fate, as someone shouts out 'The Pope!'

The punch line? Out falls St. Peter, as Marilyn Monroe (Willie

Whitelaw was showing his age a bit) steps on the precarious path.

William Whitelaw, MP, is the new Home Secretary in the new Tory Cabinet. His speech, the whole evening, shows just how far we've travelled in 25 years of opinion making by BBC television news.

Anna Coote

NO RETURN TO BACKSTREET

ABORTION- DEFEAT THE CORRIE BILL

John Corrie's bill to change the 1967 Abortion Act went through its first debate in Parliament with 264 MPs voting for it, and only 98 voting against.

Even with the furore that has been raised against the bill so far, particularly by the medical profession, with MPs alone taking the final decision it looks as if the bill could become law.

We have to do everything in our power to make sure that does not happen.

'grave risk'. The injury to her, or her families' physical or mental health will become a 'substantial risk' of 'severe injury' if the pregnancy is continued.

Words like 'grave', 'substantial' and 'serious' are emotive words—what is serious to a pregnant woman may not be serious to a doctor afraid of breaking the law.

Ultimately, the courts will decide what is 'grave' and 'serious', thus taking the right of a woman to decide how to live her own life even further out of her control. A judge has no qualifications to decide these matters.

This rewriting hides the real sting of Corrie's Bill. Under existing law any abortion is legal because, statically, abortion is safer than a nine-month pregnancy and birth.

Abortion, in the words of the 1967 Act, is permissible if the risks to the woman are 'greater than if the pregnancy were terminated.'

It's this clause the anti-abortionists hate so much. This clause will be dropped.

3. Every agency which carries out abortion, advises women about abortion, or even carries out pregnancy testing will have to obtain a licence. And a licence will not be issued if there is any connection, whether financial or in personnel, between the agency and the abortion clinic, or if the agency is not managed by a qualified doctor or nurse.

Corrie is out to smash the charities.

The British Pregnancy Advisory Service and the Pregnancy Advisory Service, the two biggest charities, not only fill in the gaps in the NHS 'vital in those areas where it's almost impossible to get an NHS abortion, they also provide sympathetic service at a reasonable price.

The work done by the charities will be impossible under this new clause.

They will either have to refer women to clinics over whose pricing they have no control, or give up

their consulting work.

Either way, the 25 per cent of women who get abortion through the charities will be subjected to the unscrupulous money makers of the private medicine market.

The voluntary organisations and womens groups which advise women, especially schoolgirls, about abortion will simply have to give up—or continue illegally and face prosecution.

4. The rights of conscientious objectors to abortion who work in the health service are to be written into the bill, and the proviso that in legal proceedings the burden of proof should rest with the objector will be dropped.

Anyone in the health service who just doesn't want to have anything to do with abortion can claim a moral objection—doctors will be able to put their own moral views first, and the quality of the health service they are expected to provide second.

The law will recognise that in this particular area of health work but in no other some people's moral attitudes will come before their commitment to the health service.

Margaret Renn

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO STOP IT...

In your Womens Voice Group: Organise the maximum amount of publicity for our case against the bill. Distribute leaflets, display posters, organise street meetings and street theatre, pickets of MPs surgeries! Go round to every place that women live and work collecting the signatures for the petitions and asking them to display posters, in the nurseries, play centres, doctors waiting rooms. By any means possible get yourselves onto local radio, into the local paper.

Contact the National Abortion Campaign and organise local

meetings of everyone who is prepared to do anything to defeat this bill. Start campaigning now for the biggest turn out possible in the demonstration being organised for October.

In your workplace:

Make sure that everyone who works with you knows the facts about this bill. Put a resolution to your next union branch meeting to support NAC, especially with money: to order copies of NAC's trade union leaflets.

Get your union to officially support the NAC demonstration in the autumn, which may get support from the TUC (watch this magazine for details). Get your branch to campaign amongst its own members to support the demonstration—fine words are not good enough.

Does your union send a delegate to the local Trades Council? Will the Trades Council support local activities, the national demonstration?

Does your union sponsor MPs? What are their views on the Corrie Bill? Make sure they know you are against them and commit them to opposing it.

In your school:

Young women will be the real victims of Corrie's bill. Schools are one of the prime targets for the anti-abortion organisations like SPUC and Life. They tour schools with their lurid photographs of tiny aborted babies. Keep them out of your school! If you can't stop them speaking make sure a speaker is also invited from NAC to put the case for abortion.

Even if there is no one but yourself to organise:

You can write to your MP and the local newspapers. You can talk to the people you know, and persuade them to come on the demonstration. Collect signatures for the petition.

Womens Voice is producing leaflets, posters and stickers and a fact sheet. We can arrange speakers and give advice if you don't know how to organise local activities. Stickers 25p a sheet. Factsheets £3 per 100, from Womens Voice, Box 82, London E2. 01 986 6222.

National Abortion Campaign can provide petitions, speakers, information and will put you in touch with their local groups. Contact NAC at 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1. 01 278 0153.

•At the inquest into the live abortion case at Barnsley Hospital it was revealed that the mother had first had a blood test, as a preliminary to having an abortion, when she was 16 weeks pregnant. It took nine weeks for the blood test result to come through. Then the abortion took place—at 25 weeks.



WHAT THE CORRIE BILL SAYS

1. The time limit for abortion to be reduced from 28 to 20 weeks.

Only about one per cent of all abortions are done after 20 weeks. But these are the most desperate and serious cases—making them illegal will only increase hardship for the women concerned.

It's very difficult to give a precise date of conception. So to stay within the law most doctors allow from one to four weeks for error. That means the effective time limit for abortions could become 16 weeks.

Most pregnancies are confirmed around the eighth week—this new restriction could leave a woman with as little as eight weeks to get an abortion, and that at a time when the NHS services are being cut.

This 20-week restriction will make the choice of abortion for all women a desperate race against time.

2. The grounds for abortion are to be changed. The risk to the life of a pregnant woman will become a

HERE COMES THE TORY AXE

LAMBETH

LAMBETH Council claims it supports equal rights for women, but can't afford them!

The majority of low paid council workers, typists, nursery nurses, telephonists, street sweepers, are women earning well below the national average wage. Under the existing maternity leave arrangements, we get only 18 weeks paid maternity leave, eleven of which have to be taken before the birth. That means most women are forced back to work only 7 weeks after having a baby because we can't afford the luxury of unpaid leave.

In Lambeth we all but won a new agreement that would have given us 16 weeks on full pay, 24 weeks on half and pay and extra unpaid leave, for those who wanted it, until the baby's first birthday. The qualification period for being entitled to the leave was to be 18 months. Fathers could go to ante-natal clinics if necessary, parents could have paid time off to look after sick children, and time off to take them to clinic or hospital appointments.

The agreement was for adoptive parents too and the leave could be shared if both parents worked for the Council. It wasn't perfect, but a lot better than anywhere else in the country.

In our rank and file trade union organisation, the Nalگو Action Group, we'd been demanding better maternity leave and a workplace nursery for years, but got nowhere till the women organised. We set up an Equal Rights Committee, open to all members, and quite a lot of women got involved.

Copies of the Womens Voice pamphlet 'Blackmailed Back to Work' went like a bomb.

A mass meeting of our union branch passed a resolution on the claim and in May 1978, when a new, more left wing, Labour Council was elected, we started negotiating for our improved maternity leave.

The cost to the Council we estimated, would be £42,000 per year; not much to pay to polish up Lambeth's image as the most left wing, progressive Council in London.

We were ready to celebrate after a Council meeting to rubber stamp the agreement, but found, instead, they passed it onto another committee. A roomful of grey-suited men and two women threw it out with less than 5 minutes discussion.

'All Thatcher's fault!' they said—'we have to make cuts.' So suddenly they can't afford equal rights! They're not just hypocrites, but liars too. The new scheme would have

cost them peanuts. What crafty Ted Knight and his cronies have worked out is that it's a quick and simple way of making redundancies—let women bear the cost of the crisis.

One thousand members of our union branch met early in July and voted overwhelmingly against cuts and redundancies. The Labour Council had hoped we'd 'cooperate with them'. But, hopes dashed, they're desperately looking round for easy ways of creating 'natural wastage'. They know there are 600 children on the day nursery waiting list and only 200 places with childminders for babies under a year old. Any woman worker who is or becomes pregnant is left with three choices: lose her job; have an abortion; leave the baby alone while out at work.

What sort of 'socialist' can face women with 'choices' like these? The answer—a Council that's just created three new top jobs for men at £14,000 per annum, that's £42,000 altogether. Exactly the same cost as the maternity leave agreement.

Vanessa Stilwell
Lambeth Nalگو.

hospital workers, most of whom are women, will be made redundant with no hope of finding another job locally.

The workers at St Leonards have been quick to respond to the proposals. The Joint Shop Stewards committee has produced leaflets for staff explaining what the cuts will mean for them. Petitions are getting a good response from local residents. The Community Health Council has set up an action committee to co-ordinate opposition to the proposed changes.

For more information about the St Leonards campaign, stickers and leaflets, contact Lindsay Roth, NUPE shop steward, St Leonards Hospital, Nuttall St, London N1.

Pauline Alden
Hackney Womens Voice

CLWYD

THE Tories' cuts in Clwyd are following the same pattern as the

nursery closures, and have found widespread support for the idea of a campaign against all cuts and redundancies. Such a campaign, comprising of rank and file trade unionists, the unemployed and other working class people is our next step.

Krys Lotoczko
Clwyd County NALGO

STOP THE CUTS...

THIS was the message given to the Labour Party Women's Rally in June by MP Oonagh Macdonald. There was no mention of the Tory cuts in our living standards, our schools, our hospitals, our



John Smith (IFL)

KIDS in Manchester demonstrating against the closure of adventure

playgrounds. The Council claim the playground is unsafe, but don't believe a word

of it, this is just another excuse for a cut. These kids want the final word!

EAST LONDON

CITY and Hackney Area Health Authority (AHA) are trying to save £2 million by cutting back on vital health services in one of the most deprived areas of London. Their latest plans include proposals to axe 112 surgical beds at St Leonards Hospital, Hoxton and close the accident and emergency unit. They want to turn the hospital into a geriatric hospital, taking patients from an existing geriatric hospital that has just been improved and will now be closed.

The AHA has said that because the closures and cutbacks are so extensive jobs will be lost. So the

rest of the Country, by attacking the weakest sections of society the hardest.

Almost £1/2m is to be slashed from the Area Health bill and £2/2m from the Country Councils budget. £1/2m of this is to come from education. They plan to close 48 of our 52 nursery units.

But a fightback has begun. Tory Secretary of State for Wales, Nicholas Edwards was visibly shaken by an angry demonstration of over 300 parents and children when he arrived for a meeting in the Civic Centre in Mold recently. An even bigger demonstration with trade union support is planned for 17 July when the Education Subcommittee meets.

Women are at the forefront of the fight—and not surprisingly. Our right to work is threatened by the proposed nursery closures.

We are campaigning now in our unions and in the community for a massive demonstration against the

nurseries, our abortion rights—the attack on working class women. Nothing was said about women organising to defend their rights. Instead they talked about the mistakes that the last government had made, the lessons to be learnt and what had to be done in the next government. Apparently we should not do anything to resist the cuts now, we should just sit back and let the Labour Party make plans for the next five years.

The Chairwoman ended the rally by demanding real socialist policies and said that if only Labour could hold three consecutive terms of office we would have socialism. We all know that actions speak louder than words. The Ipswich Women's Voice Group produced leaflets which were distributed to women outside the rally. These called for action against the Tories; not fine words and thoughts.

Ipswich Womens
Voice Group



MACHINES SNEAKED IN

COMPUTERS and VDUs are nothing new in the gas industry.

There are machines now on test in the Electricity Board which can issue bills right after the meter is read, and even the possibility of meters which read themselves!

It's not difficult to imagine what this would do to jobs in the industry, so it's easy to see why many of us are so jumpy about changes in the system.

My department, gas income, is threatened by a new system called direct input, which will decimate clerical jobs. Most of these jobs are low paid, low grade jobs at present done by women.

Our department's shop stewards committee, about ten shop stewards, has an official policy of telling the bosses to stuff direct input, but

rumour has it that the equipment has already been bought.

So it's not surprising that when one of our branch officials discovered by accident that Scottish Gas had sneaked three word processors into the typing pool we were less than delighted, especially since they found them the day before we all trooped to Blackpool for NALGO's annual conference.

An instruction was issued to black the machines. Three senior typists (NALGO) members had been conned into operating them and were initially extremely angry about the blacking instruction. They came round to the rest of the branch's point of view eventually, although members of another union MATSA, carried on operating them. Talks are going on with management.

The Tories want £190 million to be handed back to the government by the gas industry. The only way this can be done is if prices go up and the number of workers comes down. You will be paying as customers, and we'll be paying as workers.

Lyn Turner

NO LOSS OF JOBS

THE Inland Revenue wants to automate income tax offices; a pilot

scheme has already been set up in six tax offices around the country to run PAYE.

Visual Display Units linked to computers via telephone lines would replace the record cards presently kept on each tax payer—and at least 8000 workers as well. Most of us believe many more jobs will be threatened, up to 20,000, and when you think that there are only 60,000 of us in our union you can see what a devastating blow this scheme is.

Despite initial opposition from the leadership, rank and file pressure has resulted in an official union policy for no job losses but shorter hours and more leave.

On the health and safety aspects, things are not good. A member of the union's national executive sat on a committee which reported on the impact of the scheme on the staff in the pilot offices. The only definite conclusion it reached was that there should be initial eyesight tests—not because eyesight might be harmed but in order to advise on the right glasses! If new glasses were needed the employer should pay.

Later this year there will be a special Union conference on automation. The cuts are bound to increase the pressure to sell jobs, and we will have to fight hard to keep the 'no jobs lost' policy, and make progress on health safeguards.

Linda Morgan

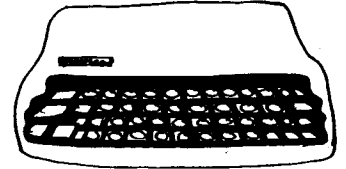
These are just two of the stories we heard at the Fleet Street Womens Voice school on new technology, which was informal, friendly and highly informative.

It became abundantly clear that women's jobs are threatened in large numbers and that strong trade unions are essential if we are to defend ourselves.

A good way to start spreading the arguments about new technology and women's right to work is with the new Womens Voice pamphlet *Job Massacre at the Office*. What are the large offices near your group? Town hall, big factory, insurance company, social security office?

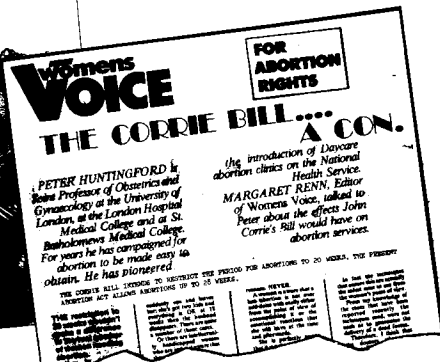
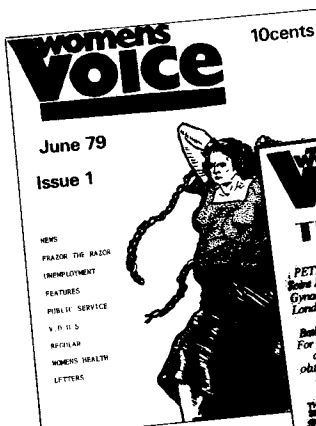
It's not difficult to do a bulletin to hand out one week, (just read the pamphlet and it won't be hard to write), and then sell the pamphlet the next week.

You'd be surprised how many people are worried about new technology and want more information and ideas.



Around the groups

Around the groups is a regular spot for reports of your Womens Voice meetings and activities.



A new magazine called Womens Voice has started in Sydney, Australis!

Its first issue was produced in June by women members of the International Socialists in Sydney, a fraternal organisation of the Socialist Workers Party here.

Leeds Womens Voice produced a local bulletin about the new anti-abortion bill within days of hearing about the bill.

REMEMBER the women of Preston's Road Estate?

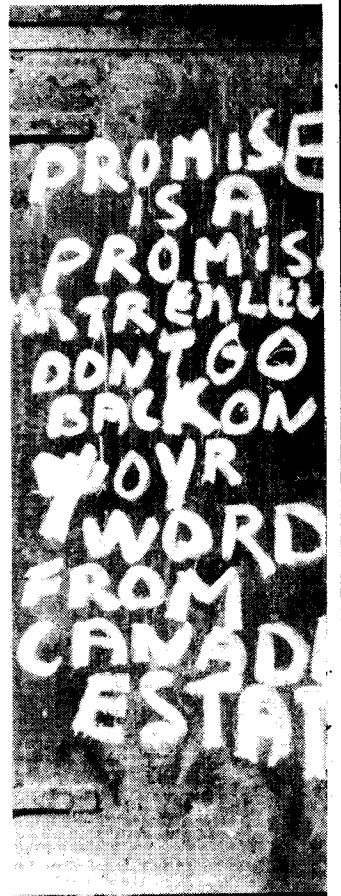
After their campaign about the state of their flats, reported in last month's Womens Voice, George Tremlett from the GLC visited them and was 'appalled' at the conditions they were living in. He promised they would *all* be rehoused. BUT ... Two weeks later, the tenants of one block, Alberta House, suddenly found they weren't included in the deal. Alberta House is slightly newer than the rest of the estate. BUT ... Sharon's carpet is infested with silver fish and there are rats in the empty flat next door.

Tina's bath gets the dirty water every time upstairs have a bath. All the flats are damp. There is sewage in the yard and its infested with flies. When the other flats are cleared the rats will get worse and the empty estate will be dangerous for kids playing on it.

Tremlett said he would come down again but never appeared.

So the tenants covered the estate with slogans like 'slums', 'not fit for pigs', 'a promise is a promise Mr Tremlett'. They are determined not to be left on the estate and are refusing to have repairs done—they want rehousing or nothing.

Meanwhile repairs are being done on the blocks due to be cleared in a few months. Does this mean that moving out will be delayed? Or other tenants are going to be moved in? What are the Tory GLC doing? Tower Hamlets Womens Voice





Answering back

Jammed together on a stinking leaky boat for weeks. No food, little water, fear and death all around.

The Boat People. Desperate enough to take to these dangerous hulks when they know full well that half those who went before them died.

Over a quarter of a million Vietnamese boat people have drowned. And Margaret Thatcher is condemning tens of thousands more to death by denying them entry to Britain. She makes pious calls for international conferences, talking shops, while flatly, callously refusing requests that Britain should accept more refugees.

The Tories are the people who claim to stand for morality and decency in the face of 'declining standards', but their cruelty knows no bounds.

The boat people's suffering is just one more chapter in a tragic history for which Britain must take a share of the blame. During the Vietnam war, America dropped tens of thousands of tons of defoliant chemicals designed to destroy the crops and to starve the Vietnamese into submission. This has led to the desperate food shortage that is now a major reason why the Vietnamese government is expelling the Chinese population.

While this wanton destruction was being perpetrated, did Thatcher and her ilk protest? Not for a moment.

In 1938, overcrowding and unemployment were the excuses given for refusing entry to Britain for thousands of Jewish refugees from Germany. The same hypocritical whimperings are being heard again.

Is it immigrants who cause unemployment and housing shortages? The Greater London Council has just announced the cancellation of *all* of its new house building. British Steel has revealed its plans to make 11,000 workers redundant. It's not immigrants who cause these problems—they don't have the power to throw people out of their jobs or their homes.

It's the small minority of businessmen and politicians who own and control the wealth of this country who use that power. During the 1950s, when employers were desperate for labour, immigration was encouraged by every means possible. During the 1970s, when they are ruthlessly cutting their workforces, the line has changed. Now immigrants are to blame for all the ills of the system.

One of the major reasons that the people in power blame immigrants is to divert attention away from themselves. A divided working class will spend its energies fighting against itself. The creation of division is one of the most effective weapons of control.

The boat people who have managed to get into Britain have all been issued with identity cards. People who lived through the last war know what identity cards are all about. They are about control. About the government, the army, the police, controlling what ordinary people do, where they're allowed to go.

Just like passports. Just like immigration controls. In a socialist world we won't be divided by rulers into artificial states. There won't be restrictions on our movement from town to town or country to country. And people won't drown for need of some where to land, for the want of a piece of paper.

A TEMPORARY HOME CALLED HELL



For some years Coventry Council have had a policy of punishing 'problem families' or those with rent arrears by placing them in Temporary Accommodation called Part Three Housing. Having to live in houses with damp, rats, holes in the windows and rooves is meant to 'teach them a lesson'.

The majority of the Temporary Tenants are women and many have been living like this for over three years. One family has lived in Temporary Accommodation for 12 years.

Mrs Dalton is married with nine kids. She was given Part Three housing when she asked for a house big enough to take

herself and her family. They had been living in over-crowded conditions for four years and eventually her children were placed in care against her will. 'When they moved us into this house, we didn't owe any rent. But the Council was fed up with paying for my kids' care. They said this was the only house suitable or big enough for us.'

This 'suitable' house is two converted shops with a subsiding floor and front walls, holes in the windows, two kitchens—one with no gas, the other with no hot water—and rotting floor boards.

'They never told us this was Part Three. We didn't find out until the Tenants Association explained it to us. We were so desperate to get a place where we could be with our kids we just took anything. We were cracking up because we thought we would never see them again.'

For this they pay £12.50 per week rent.

Mrs Quinn lives on her own with three children aged 7, 5, and 4. They were placed in Part Three three years ago when they were homeless. The house is damp throughout. The plaster is crumbling in all the rooms and four ceilings are collapsing in. The sash cords on the windows are broken and there are rotten doors and broken floor boards.

There is one coal fire to heat the whole house. One child had bronchial pneumonia when they moved in and there is no chance of it clearing up while they are there. For this she pays £9 a week, £50 per quarter for gas and £63 per quarter for coal.

Mrs Patricia Doyle is the Secretary of the Tenants Association and has spent much of her time helping individual cases of Part Three tenants as well as waging a political campaign against the Council. She has lived in Part Three accommodation for three years.

'Being involved in a campaign like this has changed my whole outlook. I used to internalise all my problems and think they were my fault. Fighting the council has made me realise that I don't have to be ashamed of myself. I have registered as unemployed because I am an independent person. I insist that my husband looks after the kids for a change so I can go out to meetings or socially.'

Fighting Back with the Tenants Association.

The Tenants Association was set up in November 1978 at a

public meeting organised by the Trades Council, which had done a survey of Temporary Tenants.

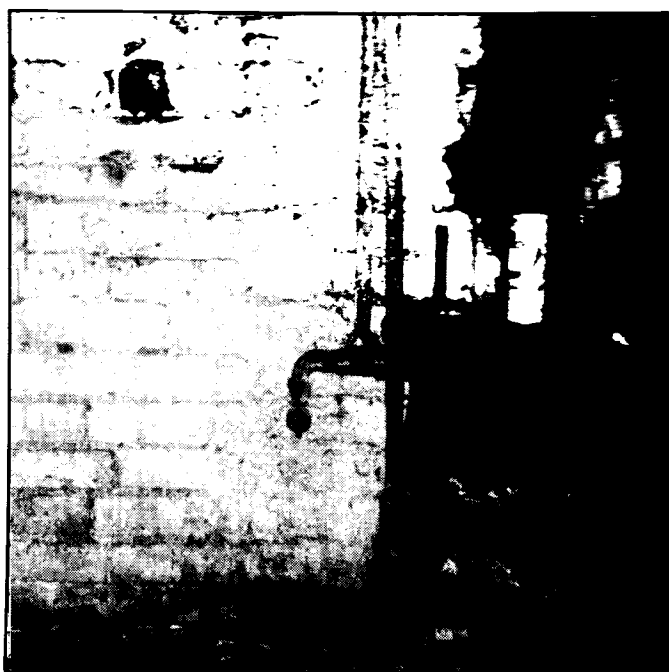
Since then there have been pickets of the Council, sit-ins in the housing offices, meetings with the Labour group on the Council. Three tenants have brought summons against the Council under the 1938 Public

Health Act.

Patricia Doyle won her case in the courts, but the newly elected Labour controlled Council still intends to proceed to the High Court to appeal against her victory.

When the tenants organised their first lobby of the new Labour Council they were shocked to find the meeting closed to the public. After all, the Labour councillors had always said, when the Tories were in, that the issue should be discussed publicly. But it's different now!

The tenants sang, threw streamers, and made such a mockery of the Councillors that they were forced to retreat to a side room to discuss the issue privately.



The Association is demanding:

- * Abolish the category 'Temporary Tenant' and any other policy that treats families as second class citizens.
- * Carry out the full modernisa-

tion of all basically sound property used as temporary accommodation so that it is brought up to the full council standards in Coventry.

* Allow Temporary Tenants if they so wish, to be given the opportunity to return to their present home when it is modernised.

* Allow all council tenants including Temporary Tenants, to have access to the type of accommodation which best suits their need in the area of their choice.

TENANTS AND BUILDING WORKERS UNITE

'If the council want your rent they know where to find you, if you want a repair they can't!'

Rena Jerrom, a delegate to the London Tenants Organisation conference July 7, reeled off tenants complaints about the bad service offered by the council. It sounded like a litany. Minor problems like blocked sinks often take months to get repaired. She explained the horror of living in high rise flats that have broken windows—the danger to boisterous toddlers goes without saying.

The thing that made this conference different from any other was that the LTO invited and welcomed delegates from the Council Direct Works Departments. UCATT and TGWU members made it clear that their hands were tied by bureaucracy and red tape.

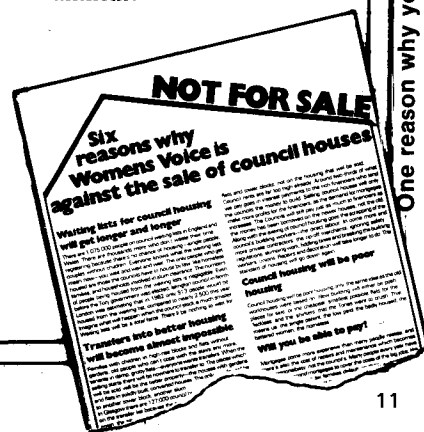
In many Londn Boroughs the Direct Works

Departments are being deliberately run down so that the Tory controlled council can use labour from the Private sector—that usually means lump labour. If the direct works departments were to be closed down council tenants would face shoddy work and probably even longer waits for repairs since it costs twice as much to have the work done privately. Camden council paid £20 million above what it would have cost to convert properties if the Direct Labour workforce had been used.

Mike Hopkins, the UCATT Convenor for Sandwell Direct Labour Organisation summed up the solutions to tenants problems.

Desperate to get repairs done and to save the Direct Works Department, Sandwell tenants have joined together with building workers and formed a Tenant Worker Liason Com-

mittee. Together they have organised public meetings, pickets and lobbies of the councils' housing committee. The lobbies were particularly successful—so successful in fact that the council stopped advertising where the meetings were to be held! They also occupied the council chambers and held an alternative housing committee meeting. When the councillors turned up to find their seats occupied and their spread of food eaten they promptly called the police and sang a few choruses of the national anthem!



One reason why you should order these leaflets now we need to organise. Order leaflets from Womens Voice, Box 82 London E2 5xx per 1000 Minney with outside postage

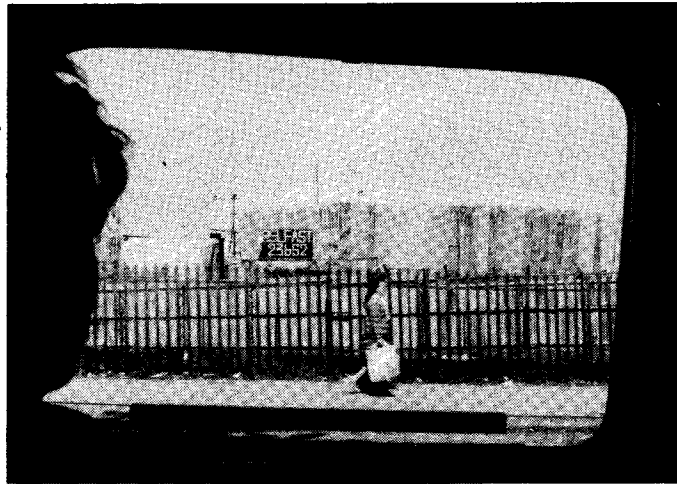
'There is still a large commitment in Northern Ireland where our troops are performing a thankless but important task.' Rt. Hon. Francis Pym. Defence Secretary 28 June 1979.

THERE are no thanks for the troops in Northern Ireland from the Catholic population. For them the British army is an army of occupation, a repressive force that day and night harasses, menaces, interrogates, tortures and kills them. On 12 August the troops will have been there for ten years. Who does thank them for their 'important' task? The British Government, the business men who squeeze profits out of a war torn workforce.

There are no simple solutions for the people of Northern Ireland. Their lives are deformed by the war but this is worth only a silent whisper in the British press who report in grim detail the deaths of soldiers, every bombing, and every act of so-called 'terrorism'.

To condemn the military resistance to the troops and the RUC (the Royal Ulster Constabulary) is to fail to see who instigates the violence. This is state violence. It isn't even possible to say that the soldiers in Northern Ireland are the only criminals. They are just the ones that could get killed. We can condemn them for joining up, but many of them are young unemployed working class boys, seduced by the lies of the advert that suggest the army can make their lives exciting and fulfilling. It is the politicians in Westminster and the big business men who are the real criminals: the blood they never shed is the blood on their hands.

Is there a life before death...



Turf Lodge Estate, like all the catholic ghettos, is desolate, derelict and run down. The startling contrast to this treeless place, where children have nowhere to play, is the green hill behind the estate beyond a dual carriageway. The majority of families are living on Social Security. If you listen to what they say you'll know how the British Government's policies maim and distort the lives of catholic people. Here are some of their comments and stories.

'I hate it here. I hate it. It's degrading, depressing. I hate it. I put in for a house and they put me

on the list and it goes by points so I have to wait. They go by how many children you've got. I have four. One woman has 14 and she still can't get out. She's in T Block. It's full of burned out shells. She has a 4 bed-roomed flat, but 2 of the rooms are too damp to sleep in. I hate the sight of the Brits. One of them got my girl the other day and beat her on the back with his rifle. He just did it for no reason, that's just the way they are. They were down there raiding, running along the bottom and taking bin lids and dumping them, turning out the rubbish. They stop the teenagers four and five times a week. They ask them where

Writing on a Belfast Wall

Interviews and research by Melanie Macfadyean

All our pictures were taken in Belfast

they live, they know bloody well where they live. They only do it to harass them.

'Two years ago they rushed into my flat. We said 'What are you doing?'. They told us to mind our own effing business. They came round once, just kicking doors in. They come every day, the foot patrols, several times a day. Last summer it was hot and we were all lying in bed with the windows open and we heard this chain going, it was really dreadful. They were dragging a chain along on a saracen up and down the street. It was deafening.

'They're even starting to lift the wee girls of 13 and 14 now. They got a girl on Castle Street, they tied her hands with handcuffs. They were taking her away and the women went over and pulled her out of the saracen. But the women don't do things like that so much now. They're frightened, I think. If they've sons they think the Brits will come and take the sons away and torture them. They had some lads in once and they were given forms to sign after they'd been beaten stupid. They said they were release forms. They were signing confessions.'

'They tell the English it's a religious war. But it's all divide and conquer... The English, it's their favourite thing, whether it's Jews and Arabs, Black and White, or Greeks and Turks.'

'They're going to have to build another asylum here for we're all going to go stark, raving mad. The kids they're lifting now, they don't know anything. The Brits know more, they know what we have for breakfast. They're up there on the mountain watching us, taking pictures. They know what colour our furniture is without even getting into our flats.

'The soldiers are rude to us. They lie on the stairs so that we're forced to step over them. They call the girls tramps, they search and harass them. I would love to see an end to the troubles. We want a 32 county socialist republic and the Brits back where they belong. Then we can sort out our problems and have good houses and rear our children in peace. They torture our people—they're put in cells, interrogated, lights are flashed on and off, they're left in the cells for hours...'

FACTS OF LIFE IN ULSTER

THERE is not one state run nursery in Ulster. There are 25,700 nursery places in England. Too few but more than none. The 1967 Abortion Act doesn't apply. **Abortion is illegal and unavailable.**

Male homosexuality is still illegal.

Contraception is difficult to get, and the repressive moralism of the church ensure that contraception is still regarded as an evil.

The Domestic Violence Act hasn't been passed.

In 1975, 75,000 raids on homes took place. One woman, Mrs Brady

of Derry has had her house searched 400 times.

Women are subjected to particular types of harassment and intimidation by the security forces. Many cases have been documented by the women's committee of the International Tribunal of women and girls who have suffered sexual abuse at the hands of British soldiers. An indication of the severe strain on women in Ulster is given by the fact that their consumption of tranquillisers is the highest in Europe.

Fifty per cent of all those who are

arrested are totally innocent. Eighty per cent of all cases that go to court are based on signed confessions extracted through torture. Young people are singled out for arrest as they are easy to catch and often more vulnerable under torture. Charges are trumped up against them, they sign confessions and this improves the security forces' statistics. They can say they've got plenty of 'terrorists' behind bars.

Most of the details of the lives of forty per cent of the population are stored on an army computer.

A 4 year old child was playing in the street while a foot patrol was there. He went home and showed his mother his hand on which he claimed a soldier had written his name. On his hand was written:

'Micks are cunts'. His mother had no doubt that a soldier wrote this. If they can write that on a child's hand, what will they say to his face? (story from Republican News, June 9th 1979.)

Children are often arrested by the army and in Anderstonstown alone, in one week, 80 children were arrested for 'screening'. The army use schools as observation points and operate near childrens' crossings so as to use the children as shields. At Fort Monagh in Turf Lodge, there is one entrance that opens directly into the playground of an adjoining school.

'FOR WOMEN IT'S HELL'

THE DAILY occurrences in Northern Ireland are unimaginable in England. People in Northern Ireland refer to Ulster as Britain's Vietnam. Apart from the physical oppression of the army and the Royal Ulster Constabulary, there is the special legislation, laws designed to bleed the spirit of the catholic working class. The Payment of Debts Act is one of the most effective, harsh and common. If you are in arrears with rent and rates your money is stopped at source. Your Social Security or Supplementary Benefits or wages are docked. If you are behind on electric payments you are forced to make a 'voluntary agreement' with the Electricity Board to have your meter rigged so that you pay extortionate rates for electricity. All the flats in Turf Lodge are run on electricity; there's no gas and water is heated by coal fires. Coal costs £3.60 a bag. A bag lasts two days.

'For women it's hell, you haven't got a life. Most of the women's men are inside so they're left on their own to take care of the children. And you're trying to rear a family and you're living below the poverty line. I would love to know what the poverty line is. The Catholic chapel collects money for underdeveloped countries. What about the people here? And they've carpets and heating in the church.

'Catholic women have big families, they don't believe in the pill. I take it, not that I believe in it but I can't afford to have any more kids, to feed and clothe them. You're constantly in deep depression, never away from the doctors. You take yourself out, kids crying around so. You feel like taking yourself out to the frigging mountains and never coming back.

I'm a one parent family. I'm on SS. I have 3 kids. You're just in constant worry about how you're going to get through from one Monday to the next. I get £31.17.



I'm on the Payment of Debts Act. At first they wanted to dock £14 a week off me. It's been reduced to 67p a week. They take £11 off my friend and she has to put in a pound

a day on the meter. I get Family Allowance on a Tuesday. I make a big dinner one night, that's meat and veg. on a Monday when you have the money. The next night it's

beans on toast or spaghetti on toast, then chips and bread and butter, or boiled potatoes. I get one bag of coal on Saturday and we have a bath once a week. I can't afford more coal.

'If you're in the ghetto nobody cares.

'If they cut the assistance I'm just going to give up for I don't see any point in trying to live.'

The blocks in Turf Lodge are leaning because of ground subsidence.

The estate was built about ten years ago. It would be hard to find a more neglected and deprived estate. The Housing Executive is the Northern Ireland equivalent to our local councils housing. The women in Turf Lodge started a Housing Action Group to campaign for improvements. They were met with empty promises. Dysentery broke out on the estate. Several children were rushed to hospital. More than 100 serious cases were reported. One woman reported that sewage was coming up through her kitchen sink. According to one woman on Turf Lodge, they are going to spend £100,000 on sewage improvements. The improvements won't last, because of the ground subsidence. It's a face lift; dysentery outbreaks aren't good publicity.

On 4 May, 1979, Rosaleen Nolan committed suicide on Turf Lodge Estate. She hanged herself. Rosaleen was 41, married but separated and had two daughters one of whom is mentally handicapped.

Rosaleen was an epileptic. It is no exaggeration to claim that she killed herself because the Payment of Debts Act made her life impossible. Her flat in Turf Lodge was derelict and she asked for a transfer, but the Housing Executive wouldn't give her one until she'd cleared her debts. The flats in Turf Lodge are falling apart, they were hastily and cheaply constructed. How many more women will be driven to suicide?



Go to the market and be searched

SOME SOLDIERS SPEAK OUT

These are statements by men who have left the British Army:

'I saw plenty of deaths but none struck me more than the body of a young girl shot dead in a gun battle and knowing that if the army wasn't there this girl would be alive today. . . The large majority of soldiers do not realise they are there to keep the peace. They think that the Catholic community is the enemy, and should be treated as such.'

'They do smash innocent people. They do smash up homes at 4am. They do terrorise the catholic

community because they are brainwashed with propaganda'

'There wasn't a day went by when you didn't witness brutality . . . a woman was smashed in the gob by the biggest guy in our unit once, just for screaming.

A prisoner wrote a poem in H Block. In it he describes a patrol on a raid.

*Most will be just boys
Scared but feigning unconcern,
Knowing the people hate them
But for reasons they never learn...*

Is there a life before death...

DIVIDED WE FALL, UNITED WE STAND.

A FAVOURITE slogan for socialists. In Northern Ireland this is just as true, but the situation is a very complicated one. People are not only divided by class and sex, but by religion. Religion, however, that has little to do with God and everything to do with politics. The Catholic women are an oppressed minority, but they are fighting back.

'The Relatives Action Committees were started by people whose relatives were in prison. They are organising around the campaign for political status. The laws were changed on 1 March 1976. All crimes were to be classified as criminal so that nobody was to have political status. It was part of the policy to 'normalise' Ulster, to make out that we are criminals and not prisoners of war. There are 3,500 political prisoners now, out of a population of 1½ million. The equivalent number in Britain would be 150,000 political prisoners. 80 per cent of these are from the Catholic minority, although they make up only 33 per cent of the population.

'The men in H Block in Long



Picture: Eamonn O'Dwyer (IFL)

Kesh started the protest. They refuse to wear prison uniforms or do prison work or speak to the screws. They refuse to slop out. It was the result of increased harassment by the screws. The women in Armagh don't have to wear the prison uniforms but they are on protest too.

'There are about 25 local RAC's and they have delegates who go to the central RAC. The police here are getting worried. They're starting to take notice of our protests. It's noticeable that the protest is escalating, and that there's potentially

a mass movement again. It's spreading to the South as well. For some reason the RAC's have become associated with mothers in particular the sisters. There's a large majority of women in the RAC's.'

WOMEN RESIST

There are 38 women on protest for political status in Armagh. The

protest has been going on since March 1977. The physical and mental strain is enormous but the women, like the men on the blanket, show that their resistance is determined. A woman in Armagh wrote a letter that was printed in *Free Woman*.

'We are locked up for 21 hours a day with nothing to occupy us as we are denied education, handicraft work of any sort. We are sure you will appreciate the boredom and loneliness . . . one would be reminded of a zoo with the attendants continually checking up on their captives. We are only permitted one 30 minute visit with our families per month. (Six hours a year.)

'Letters, our only form of communication, seldom reach us and if they do they are virtually unreadable due to the censor doing her job. We are not allowed food parcels . . . prison food is totally inadequate . . . girls are losing weight they can ill afford to lose. Since we are locked up 21 hours and because we refuse to clean any part of the wing except our cells, the bathrooms, toilets, kitchen sinks are filthy. The smell is sickening, flies buzz around the mass of dirt. The stench from the toilets is overpowering. Girls have caught infections because of this. Occasionally they use Jeyes Fluid; the smell catches the chest and some girls have been sick from it.

'On numerous occasions girls have received beatings at the hands of screws whose obvious delight can only be termed sadistic. It is not those who can inflict the most, but those who can endure the most that will win not only the struggle for political status but the fight for a 32 county Democratic Socialist Republic.'

Dominic with sisters Patricia and Karen



FAMILY LIFE

THIS peculiar and complex war bites hard at family life. Mostly it's the women who are left to cope on their own as their men are inside, or on the run, or dead. One unusual story is that of Dominic Malocco, whose mother, Rose McAllister, is on the protest in Armagh. He is just 20, and for the last year and a half has looked after his two little sisters and his baby brother.

MY mother did six months in 1971 for Riotous Behaviour. It was at the time that they'd outlaw anybody carrying a hurling stick. They said it was an offensive weapon. So they all went down to the courthouse carrying hurling sticks. About six were arrested and they all got six months. (The equivalent would be if hockey sticks or tennis rackets were banned in England. Hurling is an Irish national sport).

In March '77 I went away for a long weekend, it was St Patrick's Day. I came back and found she'd been taken away, they'd found 5 incendiaries in the house. She spent 6 weeks inside before she got bail. She was out on bail for just over a year. Then she got two years. If you do as they tell you, you only do half your sentence. My ma is what they call a non-conformist and has to do her full sentence.

She's not allowed anything except clothes, no books or cigarettes, she's locked up 22 hours a day on her own.

She keeps her spirits up pretty well but she misses the kids, especially the little one, he hardly knows her, he was 4 months old when she went in. He's a good baby, he goes to bed at 9 and wakes up at 9 in the morning. He's pretty good in the day except when he goes into his wee bad moods.

The women in Armagh used to have mass on Sundays in private, but since a screw got shot outside Armagh the screws started to go to Mass with them. They're all refusing to go to Mass now because Mass is private and they shouldn't be watching you. They were locked up 23½ hours a day when the screw got shot. They were allowed out for half an hour to wash and go to the toilet. They have wee pots in the cells and they weren't allowed to empty them

when they were full.

They have little holes in the doors where the screws push meals through, so when the pots were full they made funnels and poured it out onto the landings. The screws raided their cells and took everything off them they shouldn't have had.

If they're not on the protest they're allowed 200 cigarettes a week. My ma used to smoke 60 a day, now she's got none. She says the food is pretty awful and very little. No fruit, unwashed vegetables, cabbage full of grit. Potatoes always have eyes in them, she was always fussy about eyes in potatoes. The food's usually cold.

She used to take a size 16, now she takes a 12. Patricia (aged 7) has lost weight since my mother's been inside. It's easier for Karen because she's a bit older.

I had a full year to resign myself to the idea that once my ma went down I'd have to take responsibility for the kids or the welfare would lift them. They used to pester me four times a week at first. A woman came one day when I was up at the shops and said it was illegal to leave kids under 14 unattended. How can I expect to buy anything?

We get social security, £23.65 a week. Then there's £12 Family Allowance. Rent's £3.85 a week. Things for the baby cost £2.50 a week, gas is about £3.50. I've £20 left for me and the three kids after bills. I went down to the assistance to claim the guardian's allowance, because you get more on that, but they said that because the kid's aren't orphans I wasn't entitled to it.

It's really tough to manage on that kind of money . . . to survive you need to cut out all the wee luxuries that you would like. I don't

get out much, my girlfriend comes round and we go out about once a month. We can't afford to go more often. I don't have the time anyway, this is a full time job looking after the kids and the house.

I used to joke with my ma and say she sat here all day on her arse doing nothing, and when it comes to actually doing it you realise . . . it's no joke!

It was a big jump to make at first, it made me feel different, my friends had more freedom. I used to be able to come in and have my dinner and be away. I can't do that now, that's what I miss most. I'm looking forward to having a holiday when my ma comes out and I'm dying to get a job!

My ma was married for the second time in February 1971, to Patrick Macadory. Three weeks after they were married she was in jail. She came out in the middle of July and he was shot on the 9 August, on the first day of interment, by the Brits. During the time she was in jail she was pregnant with Patricia. He never saw Patricia. The Brits shot him.

DIVIDE AND RULE

ONE THIRD of the population of Northern Ireland, the catholic minority, has suffered second class citizenship and discrimination in every walk of life for hundreds of years. This divide and rule policy of the British ruling class was cemented in the partition of the six counties from the rest of Ireland in 1920 and by the creation of a

separate state - the orange state. No catholic ever entered the Stormont Government. The Government and government party were entirely protestant for 50 years. All but one minister until 1966 were members of the fiercely anti-catholic Orange Order.

Council wards were re-divided to ensure that catholics did not get represented on local councils. It has always been protestants who are employed by local government. And protestants who got the housing and the housing repairs. Sectarianism was further institutionalised by a person's religion being stated on unemployment cards so that catholics were discriminated against in every job application. Catholics have always suffered a very high unemployment rate. A survey of Turf Lodge in 1972 found that 38 per cent of those available for work were unemployed.

I arrived in Belfast on a Sunday night. I had expected to be scared of soldiers and bombs.

What I hadn't imagined was that in a city at war you may not see a soldier or hear an explosion. It's what you don't see that frightens you. There were no people on the streets. There were no trees, there were few cars they were all going very fast, as if escaping. There were only two cinemas. One was bombed out, the other closed, but showing The Boys from Brazil. I really felt there was murder in the air.

People seemed desperate to talk, to have their feelings expressed so that people in England will know what really goes on. I've deliberately left their names off this article. A name at the end of a comment in a magazine is enough to result in a raid, or an arrest.



Picture: Chris Steele-Perkins

Mothersnare



OPEN DOOR

MONEY FOR MATERNITY

If you've had a baby recently you will know how pathetically low the maternity grant is; or you might be one of the 50,000 to 60,000 mothers who do not qualify for the grant each year because they do not meet the contribution test. *Money for Maternity: The National Maternity Grant Campaign* has been launched by the Child Poverty Action Group and One Parent Families to fight for a better deal for all mothers-to-be.

The main aims of the campaign are to abolish the contribution test for the grant, so that all mothers-to-be qualify, and to raise the grant to an adequate level. At present it is the most vulnerable mothers, in particular young, unmarried mothers who don't get the grant. It would only cost about £1½ million to pay it to all mothers-to-be.

One of the most scandalous things about the maternity grant is that it has not been increased for ten years. Yet we have been living through a time when inflation has rocketed. The £25 grant is now worth less than £9 in real terms. What can you buy for a newborn baby with £25? To restore it to its 1969 value in November 1979 would mean a grant of about £85. Even this would cost only about £43 million. But it is not

enough just to increase the grant. We must make sure that it is not ignored for another ten years. We are also pressing for the grant to be index-linked, ie the Government would have to increase it each year in line with inflation.

The main focus of the campaign at present is to win support for a Private Member's Bill that will be introduced in the Autumn, probably November. Kevin McNamara has come fifth in the Private Members Ballot and has agreed to put forward a Bill which covers the changes for which we are pressing. What can you do to help the campaign? Three very important things: (i) we would like to hear from any of you who have had problems with the maternity grant either because you could not get it or it wasn't enough, so that we can get together a pamphlet; (ii) write to your local MP asking them to support Kevin McNamara's Bill on the maternity grant. This is the only way that the Bill has any chance of getting through, (iii) as always, the campaign needs funds and any donations would be very much appreciated. The campaign address is 255, Kentish Town Road, London NW5 2LX. Tel: 267 1361 or 242 3225.

Ruth Lister

MY GUY...

Mary Ann Stuart takes a look at the teenage romance magazines that have one single message for every young girl.



Every week hundreds of thousands of teenage girls read the love and romance magazines like *Photo-Love*, *My Guy*, *Love Affair*, *Romance* and *Jackie*. There are many others. With stories of apparently ordinary girls like you or me, they do much to mould the expectations and desires of teenage girls.



They may seem harmless enough, but they are moralistic, mindless and very conservative. According to the sagas of the love magazines, all a girl has to do in life is find the right man. They all stop at marriage. They distort what real relationships are about. They promise life-long happiness and fulfilment from becoming slave to man and marriage.



Buy one week's selection off the news stands and it's all there.

Almost all the stories are moralistic about sex, but the point is brought brutally home in 'I Know It All' from *Romance*.





Jilly is a self-proclaimed flirt. She sleeps around as she pleases—until, that is, she meets the Right Man—only to discover to her eternal shame, that she is pregnant from the days of her now past promiscuity.

The self denunciation is vicious. She has ruined her chances with her Mr. Right, destroyed his illusions in her purity. In other words, she has ruined her only chance of success in life. And that, obviously, is where sexual freedom gets you.

But whereas it is not all right to exercise this kind of independence, it is perfectly in order to *dream* of the Right Man, to wait for him to come into your life and claim you as his own.



'A Night To Remember' from Love Affair, is a case in point. Janey spends all her time reading romantic novels, watching old movies on the telly and dreaming of true love.

When she gets picked up by a charming young man one night and he makes wild and passionate love to her, she thinks she has found him—only to discover that he is already (happily) married.

However, once over the initial shock, she realises that he has shown her the potential that exists and goes away with

all her convictions confirmed that somewhere, sometime, the Right Man will come into her life and she will live happily-ever-after.

And there it all stops. Marriage is the ultimate goal. But it has to be done properly and there are pitfalls to avoid.

Don't rush into it too early, before you've had your fun. Andrea always dreamed of an diamond engagement ring. But when she gets it, reality dawns and she sees that at sixteen she has not yet lived. So, breaking off the engagement, she sets out on a determined course of enjoyment at discos and in the arms of a few other men for a couple of years until she is eighteen or nineteen, which is a fine time to end her life with marriage.

The other side of the coin is designed to instil into the reader what a serious business marriage is—or at least, what a serious business cooking for your husband and looking after your baby is.

Daphne gets married when she finds herself pregnant and they all live with her parents. Her Mum cooks and cleans and looks after baby and Daphne refuses to leave and set up a home of her own. Hubby has to do it by force and in the end she has the choice of going with him and keeping house, husband and baby together, or end her marriage and succumb to

failure. She goes. And quite right too!

And then comes a final warning. Beware the enticements of a career.

Even if you don't end up bitter, twisted and unloved, like the lady doctor in Photo-Love's serial, 'Heartbreak Hospital', there are other traps.



Be careful not to put your career before your man, like 'A Girl from Nowhere', in My Guy, who deserts her man in favour of the bright lights of a London modelling career, only to fall from the glamorous life to live in poverty and degradation until she finds her original young man again, who, undeserving though she is, still loves her. Thus, realising all her mistakes, she is raised from squalor to decency once more, humble and gratefully dependent on her Man.

There is one theme, however, that recurs throughout in almost exactly the same form, and it is perhaps the most insidious, the most dangerous of all. It is the one that reinforces all the others, placing women firmly in the category of dependence on men.

When a girl is thrown over by the man she thinks she loves, her life is devastated and can only be regenerated by the appearance of another man to love and protect her in his stead.

Like 'Learning To Smile Again' from Love Affair. The only way she can learn to smile again—and live again—is when another boyfriend comes into her life.

And like 'Hold Me Forever' from Photo-Love, which is a little more complicated in that she loses her man, finds another, thinks she loses him too but doesn't really, and goes through untold agonies until she eventually realises that this true love-of-her-life hasn't deserted her after all. But they are essentially the same. A woman or girl simply cannot live, simply isn't whole without a man.

Many people would argue that all this is harmless nonsense. But is it really so harmless to fill a young girl's head, when she is at her most impressionable, with ambitions and self images of nothing more than finding the right man to complete and fulfil her life? The letters provide a rather pathetic pointer: 'Will I ever find a boyfriend? Desperate, 13'.

OK, so perhaps she'll grow out of it, but how many women, young women often, or those sad with undeservedly empty middle age, turn with almost desperate eagerness to the latest romantic novel where the lost dreams of their girlhood still linger?

Too many I think.

...now and forever

REVIEWS

Marge Piercy is an American novelist and poet some of whose books have been published here recently by the *Women's Press*.



photo: Amanda Cook

‘Anyone can have a printshop in their garage, that’s the point of print, I think novels can be powerful political weapons.’

I started writing when I was fifteen when my parents moved into a house where I had a room of my own with a door that shut. I started writing fiction and poetry. Fiction and poetry are the same species but poetry is shapes, it’s saying, utterance. Novels are historical, they come from the impulse to discover the meaning of events that return and events that don’t return.

Discipline isn’t my problem any more. It’s the problem of apprentice writers, young writers who are saying ‘I’m a writer and no one is listening!’ I live off my writing and if

you don’t write you don’t live, bills don’t get paid, the money runs out real fast and there are penalties written into the contract if you don’t get the work in on time.

I like my poems being used. They have been used by The Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union. The rape poem is used by Rape Crisis Centres all over the States. ‘Right to Fight’, the abortion poem, is being used around attempts to preserve abortion rights.

How do we change the world? I think everything has to be done. We have to find new ways of socialising children, we have to change the whole medical apparatus. We have to change birth, making it joyful and humane. Women must be able to choose to have or not have babies. We must be able to choose to live with women, or men or dogs, cats and horses or to live a solitary life. There must be room for all these choices. People fighting against nuclear plants and weapons are right . . . everybody involved in trying to achieve social change is doing what has to be done.

The revolution is a slow one, and it’s not

bloodless, people die all the time. I don’t think revolutionary parties work very well, you always seem to get twelve of them at once and they spend their time attacking each other.

For *Woman on the Edge of Time*, I originally chose a prison as the setting but then I became aware that women are far more frequently punished for what society calls deviant behaviour by being put in mental institutions. There’s been a certain amount of psycho-surgery done in men’s prisons but not yet in women’s. The mental institutions are a cost-effective means of social control.

The ideas in *Woman on the Edge of Time* aren’t original, nor did I set out to create a marvellously original society. I was trying to embody the ideas that have evolved out of feminism and other movements for social change. The three main ‘rivers’ of revolutionary thought are all about 140 years old. One is feminism, one is Marxism and one is anarchism. I don’t understand people being wilfully stupid by identifying with only one of those, if you seriously want to change the world you have to learn from all three. I’m a feminist but I’m strongly influenced by Marxism and Anarchism.

What do you mean—do I know if Connie really time travels or not? I wrote the book, I want people to make up their own minds. I took endless trouble to make sure the book was ambiguous. I’ve written the book—you make up your own mind. Of course you don’t know if she goes there or not, and it’s no good asking me because I intended it to be ambiguous, so tough!!

Melanie McFadyean

Woman On The Edge Of Time

Marge Piercy

Woman’s Press £1.95

Connie is a Mexican American woman ground down by a society that treats her as a second class citizen because of her colour and her sex. Her lover died as a result of medical experiments carried out on prisoners. Her daughter was taken away from her as she was deemed unfit to look after her. Finally the State takes away her last freedom, her own, and puts her in a mental ‘hospital’, labelling her insane.

Once inside she is told that virtually her only chance of ever getting out again is if she submits to being a guinea-pig, along with other inmates, to a new form of treatment. They want to insert electrodes into their brains to control their ‘violent’ tendencies.

Faced with no alternative Connie finally accepts.

But she is a 'catcher'—the people of the future can make contact with her and take her into their world. While the real Connie lies in a hospital bed, bandages swathing her head and pain knocking her brain, she travels into another, better time and sees how things could be.

The world of the future is a utopia, a mixture of stainless steel and green fields, technology has been used for the good of the people. There are no classes, no discrimination between the sexes and the family as we know it has been abolished. But the people of the future are fighting, they must ensure that of all the possible future theirs is the one that becomes a reality and the only way that will happen is if the people of the present fight.

Marge Piercy's future is not just a beautiful vision, it serves as a comparison with the horrors of Connie's world and helps her find her will again—despite the restrictions of her situation she stages her own rebellion, small though it may be it is her contribution to the future.

If you need a shot in the arm to keep you going then this book will do it, but anyway it is a fantastic read.

Anna Bradley

Small Changes

Marge Piercy

Fawcett Crest Books £1.45

This was the first book by Marge Piercy I ever read. It left me impatient to find the others. Published in 1973 in America it gives a clear picture of some of the conflicts and changes that women were beginning to face.

The book is divided between two women. They each tell their own story of how they arrive at the point where they meet. Their stories diverge and overlap for the rest of the book.

Clever Miriam, sensual and academic, gets an important job developing new language systems for scientific computers. None of her friends holds down a job for long, never mind such a responsible job as hers. She finds herself in love with two men. The relations between the three of them are searched by her until she almost disappears into marriage, with her boss at work, and motherhood.

Beth's story is different. She is a small town girl, who works as a shop assistant and gets married as expected to a small town boy who works in a garage. Her marriage turns out as every one expected except for her. Her marriage is not what she was led to believe. She leaves after her husband flushed her pills down the toilet, so that she will be forced to have the child that he and her family feel 'will settle her down'.

She runs away. Shy, timid and brave, her path in the book is the more easily understandable one. She discovers she loves women. She is drawn together with other women who do unskilled, badly paid work, to construct for themselves a way of living and surviving without depending on men.

Even when she is forced into the isolation of living on the run with her lover, whose

Her poetry . . .

Marge Piercy is a poet of great popularity in the US. Her poetry moves in these uncomfortable gaps between political practice and say to day experience—and, at best, ties them together tautly, and strengthens us in doing so. From 'In the Men's Room(s)':

*' . . . Now I get coarse when the abstract nouns start flashing.
I go out to the kitchen to talk cabbages and habits.
I try hard to remember what people do.
Yes, keep your eyes on the hands, let the voice go buzzing.
Economy is the bone, politics is the flesh,
watch who they beat and who they eat,
Watch who they relieve themselves on, watch who they own.
The rest is decoration.'*

Poet and militant over some 15 years of new left struggles, through her rich images and the keen music of her language she gives us our past, and often our future aspirations. Utopianism and the visionary are given their full value, particularly in a series of political poems based on Tarot readings. From 'The Magician':

*' . . . Every new age is unbelievable beforehand and after, inevitable.
History is a game played backwards only.
I fling my eyes into the maw of the sun.
With all our strength, we thrust into fierce light.
We are yearning like frogs bulging our throats in the spring marsh.*

*and croaking harsh and ridiculous spasms of hope.
I tell you, roses want to bloom out of the wood,
the goodness in people wants to break free
of the blind ego ...'*

For me, occasionally her poems lean too far out into the thin air of rhetoric, but usually they are well-earthed in objects, landscape and strong feelings between people—and they are always accessible. The poems are collected in *Hard Loving, Breaking Camp, 4-Telling, To Be of Use* and *Living in the Open* obtainable from Sisterwrite Bookshop, 190 Upper Street London N1.

Allison Fell

children would otherwise be taken away from her, you get the sense that Beth's future is a collective one, there is a sense of opening out.

The book touches some of the things we have all been concerned with in the last few years and it shows how fragile and new these small changes are.

Noreen Macdowell

The High Cost of Living

Marge Piercy

The Women's Press £2.25

The High Cost of Living revolves around the lives of three people. Marge Piercy is mainly concerned with Lesley, a lesbian, feminist and Karate black belt. She gets involved with Honor, a precocious prenetious teenager. Honor has a friend, Bernie, who is gay, a one-time hustler. Bernie and Lesley vie for Honor's attention and take care of her.

Much of the book concentrates on Lesley which leaves Bernie and Honor with less of the readers sympathy. Bernie gets a raw deal. Marge Piercy said of him: 'He is likeable but he is also destructive and self-destructive. Whether people respond to characters in a novel or not is not the kind of chemistry any writer can control. Bernie's an egoist and a deceiver but he's also very likeable. I think Bernie pushes sexuality because it is the only way he can accept intimacy and this is a form of sexuality which I think is more frequently true, it's true of that particular character, it's true of men in general—he's purchased



intimacy, without sex he doesn't believe in it.'

The novel's title suggests that it is painful and costly to one's sense of self to try to be yourself and not to compromise. In this the book succeeds partially but as a whole it doesn't succeed. Honor is a fiction, one can't identify with her.

But it's an easy book to read and it's sensitive to lesbian love. For women who have no experience of lesbianism it gives insight into lesbian emotion and the sexual descriptions are sensual and explicit in the best sense of the word, something all too rare in the media.

Marilyn Maclean

PATIENTS often say to me —why do you think that health is such a political question? It puts me in mind of the posters many doctors put up in their surgeries a couple of years back which said 'Patients before Politics'. Of course that is a very naive view, because politics is the fundamental crux which determines how you are going to be treated as a patient.

For me, there are two highly political points which are of key importance in health: one is private medicine and the other is the question of the drug companies and their profits.

Self help is important, but it must in no way side-track us from that main fight which is for a better National Health Service. A self help group at its best may provide a first rate service, but in the end it can only paper over the cracks, like a first class charity, and when we finally have our coronary we will find that unless our cheque books are ready, we will have no hospital beds to go to.

As a socialist doctor I try to think carefully about what drugs I prescribe, but I know that because of shortage of time, pressure of work and tiredness, I do sometimes allow myself to be influenced by the advertising pressures of the multinational drug companies. There have been tremendous changes in drugs and treatments since I left medical school in 1961. To keep up to date, I have to rely on various sources for information about what drugs are available, and all too often these sources are directly or indirectly the drug companies themselves.

Medical journals are often high powered and don't cater for advice to ordinary GPs, while the free medical newspapers are filled with advertising paid for by the drug companies. Then there are the dinner-film shows laid on by the drug companies. Four courses, drinks and a ten minute film—totally unbiased of course!—and the companies pay the bill.

Finally, there are the drug company representatives who come round to the surgery. This is my main, often only source of information. I get an average three or four visits a week from different reps.

There are about 66 varieties of painkiller, mostly very similar. They are mixtures of codeine, aspirin and paracetamol. When a patient comes and says that the painkiller I gave last month didn't work, what flashes across my mind but the wonder painkiller that the drug rep talked about yesterday. The same thought goes through the minds of thousands of GPs all over Britain. They write out the prescriptions, and the high pressure salesmanship has paid off!

The reps always talk in brand names, they're the easiest to remember. And more often than not the brand name masks nothing but a cheap con. They've taken a standard drug, added to it a half per cent of some new ingredient, and now it can be patented—and patented drugs are not subject to price control. Brand name drugs are priced many times higher than the standard medicine, though the ingredients may be almost exactly the same.

The cost of drugs is one of the main items of NHS spending and it is rocketing. The drugs are bought from the multinational drug companies. In 1974 the NHS spent £255 million on drugs; in 1975 it had risen to £329

WOMENS HEALTH

Politics & patients

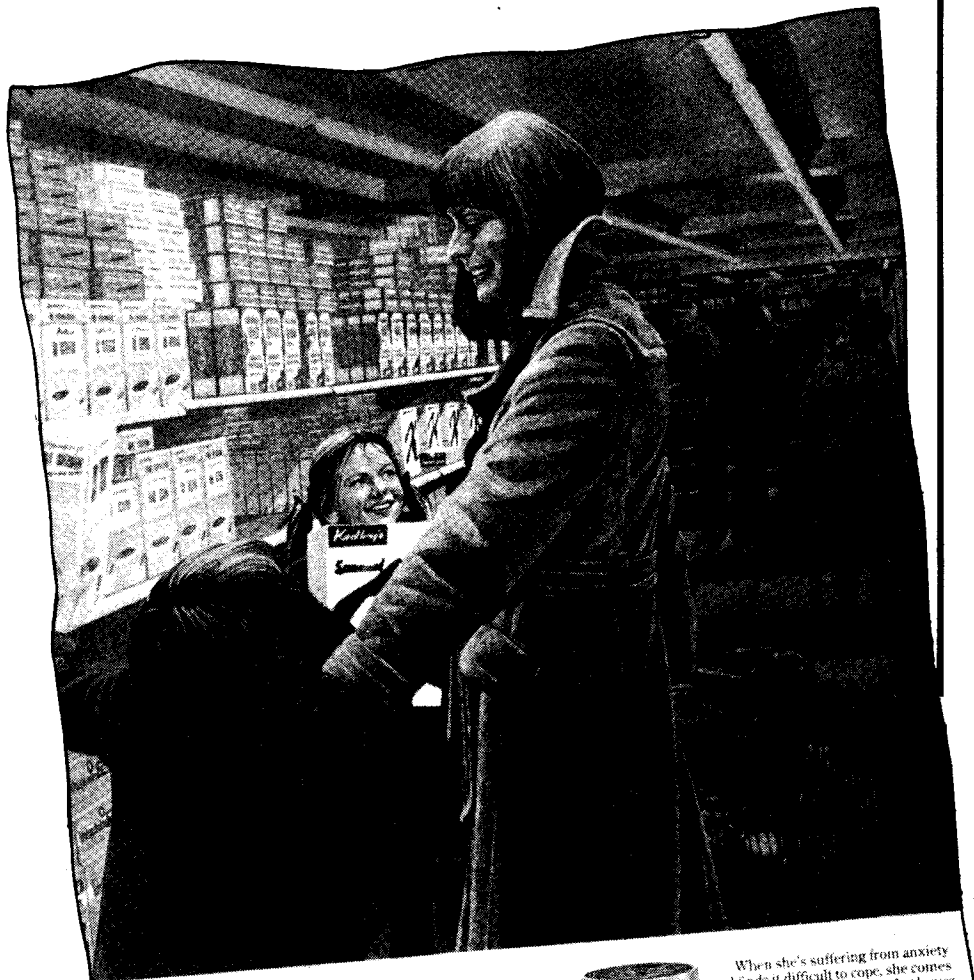
million, and in 1976 to £427 million. The Department of Health will not disclose how much of this money was spent on brand name drugs, and refuses to even estimate how much could be saved by prescribing non-branded drugs.

Drug companies are always quick to argue that the profits from their medicines are offset by what they spend on research. This is nonsense. The average research costs of a drug company are only 10% of their total income—while advertising and promotion takes 20%.

The profits are truly fantastic. In 1972 Pfizer made 103 million dollars in profit out of 1000 million dollars sales. Lilly made 126 million on 820 million dollar sales. No wonder the NHS is in a state of collapse.

I sometimes feel that I am a minute part of a gigantic machine, since the focus of the drug companies is always on the GP. For in our prescriptions are the profits for them.

No wonder our prescription charges are now 45p, and we must fight tooth and nail or they will soar higher and higher to feed the drug companies' appetite for more and more profits. So how can you say health isn't political? **Jean Lewis.**



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She was born Harriet Ross in 1820, in Dorchester County, Maryland. She was the property of plantation owner Edward Brodas.

At the time of her birth, the underground railroad, the vast network of routes leading slaves to the 'North Star and freedom', was one hundred years old. There had been over 50 slave revolts.

Harriet first started working at the age of five. By the age of 12, she was working in the fields alongside the men. It was here that she picked up the folklore of escape. One brutal incident transformed her life. Her overseer threw a 2 pound iron weight on her head. Harriet was unconscious for several days; she clung to life for months afterwards.

She never fully recovered from the attack. But this incident gave her a new kind of strength as she prayed. 'Oh Lord, if you aren't ever going to change that man's heart, kill him, Lord, and take him out of the way.'

It was not just the blow to the head which made Harriet fight for the abolition of slavery. Slave revolts left their mark on the South—and on Harriet.

In 1800, Gabriel Prosser planned an uprising in Virginia. In 1822, Denmark Vesey organised an insurrection involving thousands of slaves. In 1831, Nat Turner delivered a stunning blow to slave holders in Virginia where he and seventy others killed 60 whites. For weeks, Turner eluded the whites until he was finally captured and hanged.

The stories of these insurrections made their way even down to Dorchester County, and they gave Harriet and others greater hopes for freedom.

In 1849 she finally escaped. 'There's two things I got a right to and these are death and liberty. One or the other I mean to have. No one will take me back alive. I shall fight for my liberty and when the time has come for me to go, the Lord will let them kill me,' she vowed.

In 1850, she returned South to free her family. This was the first of 19 trips into enemy territory. A trip inside the slave South was a military campaign—a raid upon an entrenched and armed enemy. The era of the underground railroad was one of prolonged small-scale guerilla warfare between the abolitionists and the slave owners.

The fleeing slaves were relentlessly hunted down the with dogs and armed posses. If

'The General' HARRIET TUBMAN

'There's two things I got a right to and these are death and liberty. One or the other I mean to have.'



Harriet Tubman escaped from her life of slavery in the Southern United States when she was 29.

She returned to the South 19 times to lead her own family and 400 others to freedom, in the slave free northern states.

She led an army of 100 men and women into armed conflict to free a slave from prison.

Womens Voice reprints Harriet's story from the American paper Socialist Worker, written by Barbara Winslow.

captured they would be mutilated or killed. Other escaping slaves would be sold off or worked to death.

The job of conductor was particularly perilous. It is not surprising that while there were thousands of abolitionists, white and black, who gave money and shelter to the slaves, there were very few white conductors.

Harriet proudly said, 'I was the conductor of the Underground Railway for eight years, and I can say what most conductors can't say—I never ran my train off the rails, and never lost a passenger.'

By the late 1850's Tubman was a market woman. A price of \$40,000 was placed on her head. Two slaveholders conventions were organised in 1858 and 1859 for the sole purpose of planning her capture.

In April 1860, the Battle of Troy took place. A fugitive slave by the name of Charles Nalle was incarcerated in a federal jail in Troy, New York. He was going to be sent back to his former master.

Tubman organised an army of 1,000 people, 'many of them were black and a good share were of the female sex' wrote the Tory Whig newspaper. Nalle was rescued by the abolitionist army, but only after an armed conflict.

After the battle of Troy, Tubman had to flee to Canada for her safety. She returned after the Civil War broke out in 1861, where she served as a nurse, scout and spy.

Again, she was involved in armed conflict against the slave owners. On 2 June, 1863, she and Colonel James Montgomery, along with 300 black soldiers sailed up the Combahee River in South Carolina, set fire to plantations and rescued over 800 slaves. The loss to the South was in the millions.

To this day, the battle of Combahee remains the only military campaign in American history planned and led by a woman.

It was also Tubman's last armed battle with the slave owners. After the Civil War ended, she became involved in the health and welfare of the freed slaves. She was active in the women's suffrage movement.

But she was ignored by the Federal Government who refused to give her the army pension she had earned. She died in 1913 in Auburn, New York, penniless.

But she is not forgotten; she was 'the General', the 'Moses' of her people, 'the greatest heroine of the age.'



LETTERS

Don't waste your money

Dear Womens Voice
The Good Birth Guide reviewed in July's Womens Voice is unlikely to be of much use to most working class women. The reality for them is whether or not there will be *any* hospital bed available. The only guarantee of a place in a hospital of your choice will be a fat cheque, for a consultant and a private bed.

The most ironic thing about the book is that the top recommendation goes to the West London hospital which is high on the list for the axe! The West London does provide an excellent service, and mainly for working class women. Until recently it was also one of the best trade union hospitals in

London.

A few months ago the management sacked the NUPE Branch secretary and chairman during a strike at the hospital. With the help of press hysteria the Area Health Authority got away with kicking out two union leaders who were determined to fight for the hospital's future, a tactic which has now been adopted by other hospital bosses as part of the strategy to decimate the NHS.

The only hope we have for decent hospital facilities is to build the cuts campaign. Anyone with £1.95 to spare would be well advised to give the money to their local campaign and borrow the Good Birth Guide from the library.
Bill Geddes
NUPE London Divisional Council

Because it's physiological, not psychological. Have you never heard of hormones?

I don't really see much difference between being told by various learned male doctors that PMT is psychosomatic in origin, connected with failure to come to terms with femininity, and being told by Womens Voice to close my eyes and think of the socialist revolution, when being a woman will be a joyous experience.

Hopefully, under socialism, medical research will be geared to our needs; and women will cease to be regarded as limp little bundles of emotion whose problems are all in the mind. Meanwhile, we could make a start by admitting that there are real causes for real problems, and then trying to find real solutions: insisting that doctors treat physical causes for PMT—for example, with Vitamin B6 supplements—would be a good start.

Yours in bleeding solidarity,
Lin James
Oxford

helpful and has no side effects.

Love and sisterhood,
Katy Gardner
Liverpool
PS I am always willing to give advice to anyone with PMT problems. I am a doctor, but that is probably irrelevant!

3

Dear Womens Voice
I have been asked to write to you about the help that is available to mothers who have had a baby and suffer from post-natal depression.

This can give symptoms of migraine, asthma, epilepsy and constant colds and sore throats. There is also help for girls and women who suffer from PMT.

In many parts of the country there is a strong desire for each group of doctors to have a woman doctor amongst their number. If you are in agreement, please write to: The Medical Womens Federation, Tavistock House North, Tavistock Square, London WC2.

If readers would like information about post-natal depression or PMT I will forward it to them. I am a member of the Child Birth Trust.

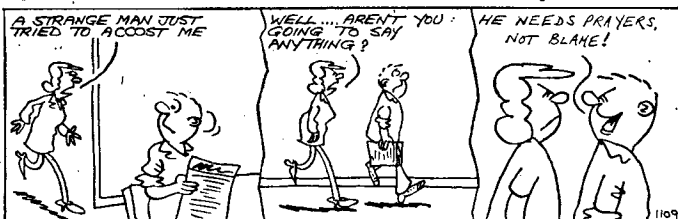
Edna Ashworth
Bude
Cornwall

Sexism in school

Dear Sisters
You may have heard of a Conference Against Sexual Oppression in Education held at Highbury Hill School in February of this year. Now a Campaign has been set up to work towards change in education. Our group is

GERT AND BERT

By Fred Railey



Dear Womens Voice
I can't stand this 'cartoon' any more so at last I'm sending you a clipping of its worst spew out. This vile offering was on the back page of the Manchester Evening News on the same day that the front page carried a serious warning to all women that all of us are at risk from the 'Ripper' murderer. I was just stunned.

The editor of the paper has used the Ripper's Manchester connection to saturate the front page with self-righteously indignant articles seeing an opportunity to boost sales. Some of the journalists have written sensitively, but the general tone has been sheer sensationalism.

Please print this and let the newspaper and the cartoonist stand condemned.
Debbie Gold
Manchester

Premenstrual tension

1

Dear Womens Voice
I don't mind the smell of menstrual blood, I don't worry about sanitary towels showing, I have never hesitated to ask a lover to make love with me at that time—and I still suffer from premenstrual tension.

2

Dear Womens Voice
I read your article on Premenstrual Tension and just thought I'd let you know that a woman called Linda Birke and I have written a book called 'Why Suffer' (to be published by Virago) about menstruation and the myths thereof, and PMT and how to get most out of it.

We agree with your writer that so much of how we experience periods is conditioned by our sexist society's attitudes—to cover it all up and hide it all away. I'm all for menstrual parties etc, but for women who do find PMT difficult vitamin B6 up to 100mg daily for 10 days premenstrually is often really

particularly concerned with primary education.

One of the first tasks we have set ourselves is to find out what is happening already in this area and which groups are involved. From this we hope to compile a register of those groups and their activities. If you have any information that could help us we would be very grateful for your help.

Yours

Liz Wynton

for Primary Workshop

Campaign against sexism and sexual oppression in education
CASOEE.

Working with VDU's

Dear Womens Voice

I read with great interest your article about visual display units. I work on a VDU for Empire Stores, Bradford, doing the clerical work for this mail order catalogue firm.

Most of the adverse points brought up in the article happen at Empire Stores! Until recently there were four pregnant women in our department. It must be worse for them than the rest of us because the chairs we use sort of push you over the machine.

The VDU's not only record

how many times you touch the Keyboard (correctly) in an hour, but also when you signed on and off. If you're *one* minute over the time you have to make it up out of your tea breaks.

We are allowed 50 minutes for lunch, three 12 minute breaks for respite, and two 20 minute breaks for tea. The respites must be spent in a grotty wee room, where there is a vending machine, which hardly ever works, and bad ventilation.

I am going to show the article to the shop steward tomorrow. I probably won't get any sort of positive response. The attitude is 'be thankful for small mercies', or 'it'll never change'.

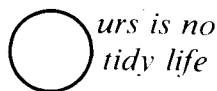
Well, I need that job, I need the money to live on, and I'm quite prepared to fight for better conditions.

Can you advise me on whom I should see if my shop steward doesn't do anything?

Help?

Janet

Bradford



Dear Womens Voice

Oh dear, I thought, reading C. J. Brice's letter about adoption/abortion, here we go

WRITE TO WOMENS Voice BOX 82 LONDON E2

again.

The authentic 'reasonable' tone of the middle-class telling us how easy and painless everything would be if us ignorant careless peasants would only listen.

Doesn't she realise that for some of us no existing form of contraception will ever be 100 per cent, and if we don't want a child why should we be turned into breeders for the childless?

I dislike this argument very much, used by those against birth-control first, and which seems to me more degrading than any abortion. There are lots of kids in care right now

that no-one seems anxious to adopt. I wonder why? The trauma of adoption for the mother and probably child, is much more distressing than abortion, I can assure you. I didn't know that socialists were saying who could be born and who couldn't. I thought it was about the right of people to make their own decisions without being called 'medieval' or 'ignorant' or all the other patronising epithets the smug attach to people whose lives don't seem to be as tidy as their own.

Susanna Jones,
South London

Looking for a job?

Dear Womens Voice

At the recent Rank and File Conference in Manchester a group of rail union delegates got together and decided to try and launch a rank and file railworkers' group and our own paper. If any Womens Voice readers who work for the railways are interested will you write to me please. c/o Rank and File Centre, 265a Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

People tend not to think of women working on railways much, and in fact the biggest rail union is still called the National Union of Railwaymen. But the various catering operations run by British Rail have always been largely staffed by women, as well as clerical and cleaning jobs, and more and more women are going in for the traditionally male jobs.

I joined BR a couple of months ago to train as a guard and out of ten trainees on my course there are two women which seems to be about

average. Right from when I first applied for the job everyone kept on about how heavy the work is, but in fact the few parts of the job which are really heavy are things you only have to do in an emergency, and may never have to do, and if you did you can bet your sweet life some male will come rushing over saying 'Let me help you, that's

much too heavy for you!'

In fact it's a job I'd recommend any woman to go for, as long as you can cope with shiftwork. I hate it when I have to get up at 5am, but by comparison a week on the late turn is almost like a week's holiday—I stay in bed till 10! The work is interesting and compared with the jobs women

usually get lumbered with it's not badly paid.

I hope I don't sound too much like a free recruiting advert for BR but after years of one rotten job after another I think I've found my niche at last so I feel like sharing the good news.

In sisterhood
Sue Spicer



Dear Jane

Although only one per cent of abortions take place after 20 weeks of pregnancy, a high proportion of them are for girls under 16. Why?

In 1976 there were over 3300 abortions, and over 1400 live births, to girls under 16 in England and Wales. A higher than average proportion of those girls sought 'late' abortions, and some of those live births were to girls who did not seek help and advice until it was too late to consider abortion as a solution to their unwanted pregnancy.

What makes girls under 16 different from any of the rest of us? The first 2 or 3 years that a girl has periods, her cycles are very likely to be irregular, some girls may only menstruate a few times a year until they are 15 or 16. The tell-tale first sign of pregnancy, missing a period, may simply not be apparent to them.

I work with young people, and have recently met two girls of 14 who were pregnant. They

didn't want to have the babies, but were so frightened and ignorant of the facts about sex and contraception that they did not seek help until there was no alternative but to continue with the pregnancy.

One of the girls I met was taken to the doctor because her mother thought she was 'putting on weight'. She was 24 weeks pregnant. The other eventually broke down at school and confided in her teacher that she had not had a period for seven months. Neither of these girls knew of anyone that they could turn to for help and advice. Even knowing where to get a pregnancy test done confidentially is difficult, and if you're still at school where are you going to get the money from for a test at the chemists?

The anti-abortion lobby and their friends in the Responsible Society paint a picture of doctors dispensing contraceptives as liberally as Smarties, and schoolgirls running about playgrounds

rattling with birth control pills. Although young people have heard about the pill, few know how it works or where to obtain it. Girls often believe that doctors or clinics will not see them if they are under 16 without their parents' permission. Some even think that it's illegal to have contraceptives under 16. (It's not but they're prescribed at the doctor's discretion).

Teenage girls and boys are not the well-informed, sexually sophisticated people that the media would have us believe. Although sex education is taught in some schools, it is often still confined to the scientific and biological aspects of sex and reproduction. There is little opportunity for young people to discuss the feelings, thoughts and fears that go with sex and relationships, let alone who can provide them with help

and information.

The decision to end an unwanted pregnancy by abortion, no matter how late or early in pregnancy is never easy. Young girls who frequently have romantic and rosy ideas about their future families will probably find it more difficult than most. A pregnancy and child at 13, 14 or 15 is devastating for a young girl. The chances of complications in pregnancy are higher (not least because they often do not have medical care until late in the pregnancy).

Until information about sex and contraception is widely available and all women, young and old, are educated about their bodies, young girls will continue to become pregnant. They will also continue to be frightened and alone, when they most need help and advice.

Jane Foster

Youngs Worried

BILLIE JEAN KING-THE CAMPAIGNER

Only when tennis became open, professional, did the discrimination against the women players, the total domination of the sport by men, and the second class status of women's tennis become clear.

The protest began at the very first open tournament in Bournemouth, 1968. A lone small voice was raised against the disparity in the women's and men's prize money. Ann Jones refused to play. From there it was a long hard fight.

The great driving force behind it, the organiser, the one who insisted that if the women didn't do it, no-one would, was Billie Jean King.

By the end of almost three years of professional tennis, not only was the prize money for men up to 25 times higher than for women, but the numbers of tournaments for women were also being cut.

In 1970, with the Pacific Southwest Championships, things came to a head. The total money for the men's

tournament was \$25,000, for the women it was just \$2,000.

There was talk of boycott but it was not until Gladys Heldman, editor of World Tennis magazine, forced the issue that the revolution in women's tennis began.

She arranged an eight-draw tournament in Houston, Texas, during the same week as the Pacific Southwest Championships with a \$5,000 stake.

Nine of the top women players quit the Pacific Southwest and launched out on their own. The nine were Julie Heldman, Rosie Casals, Val Ziegenfuss, Kristy Pigeon, Nancy Richey, Peaches Barkowicz, Kerry Melville, Judy Dalton and of course,

Billie Jean King.

Following that, Virginia Slims cigarettes were persuaded to sponsor a tour the following winter. The Virginia Slims tournament, now one of the most prestigious in women's tennis, was born. But not without pains.

They got their own sponsorships, they did their own promotion, and often sold tickets to the matches themselves.

Not only did the women prove their worth through the success of the Slims circuit, by making it pay, but they forced equal pay or to the established tournaments. Finally in 1974, after threats of a boycott, even Wimbledon paid the women the same as the men.

At 35, with 20 Wimbledon titles—six of them singles—under her belt, Billie Jean may be the Grand Old Lady of tennis, but she's not the Queen. She's a campaigner, and an organiser. She never accepted that her position as number one was a divine right. It was that attitude that she fought against throughout her career. She was number one because she was best. But she was number one also because she had the guts to fight.

Billie Jean's fight was not just about women's rights in sport, that just happened to be her battlefield. In her autobiography she says: 'Liberalised abortion laws? Yes. An end to job discrimination? Of course. Equal pay for equal work? No question. But those are details. What really counts is for us to be able to fulfil our potential in whatever way we choose. And the awareness of that possibility, that right, is only the beginning; the achievement is the end.'

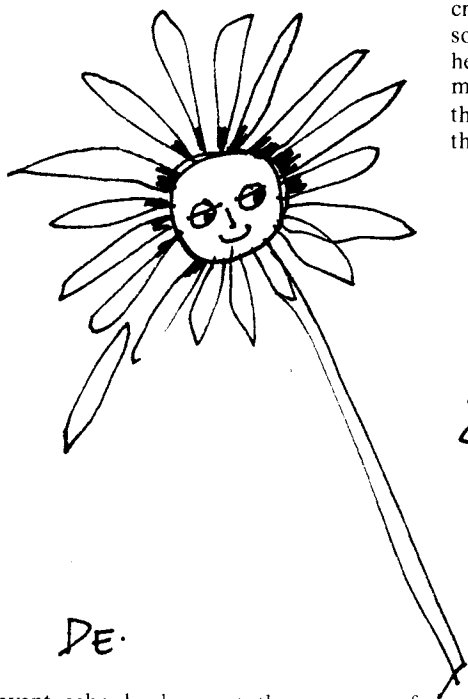
SPORT

TALES WE TELL OUR SISTERS

In my middle class, clinically clean childhood home, sex never reared its ugly head. Genitals were sensation free, purely urino-reproductive organs, never touched by human hands. As much as my brother and I taunted each other sexually as children, after I experienced my first period, all sexual and menstrual information was discontinued, and before me lay a void of sexual ignorance.

Yet the world was heavy with sexual promise, in the embarrassed silences at home, the stark prohibition at school and, in between, the films, TV programmes, the advertisements. What is this thing called sex? It always causes so much embarrassment!

This ignorance was reinforced by my



DE.

frightened me. It represented being tethered.

With this ring I thee chain.

With this body I thee enjoy.

With all my worldly goods, I thee inflict.

Till death do us part."

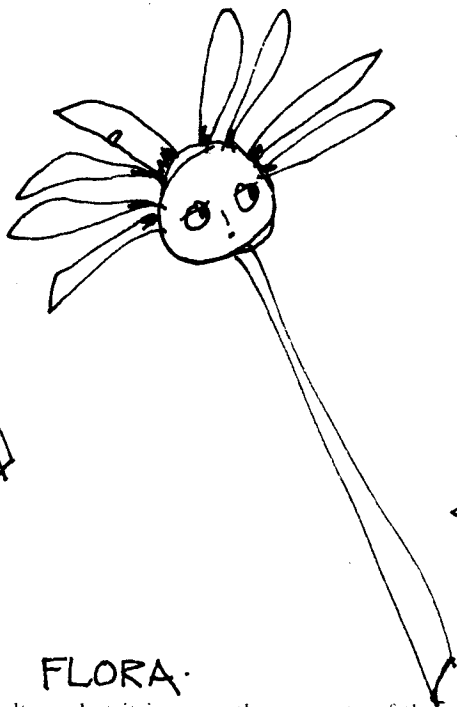
Big deal!

The idea of the sexual demands that my spouse may make upon me—didn't exactly encourage me.

When the dreaded event took place, that is, the defloration, it was because I believed that I would become closer to the man and he to me. What is this thing called love? It always causes so much trouble.

So I grinned and bore it until I could bear no more. It had to stop. I hadn't anticipated the pain. The whole procedure then turned into a Victorian melodrama. 'Stop, stop!' I cried, 'I can bear no more!' This was not the sort of closeness I had intended. Fortunately he was experienced and eventually he taught me how to have orgasms, but it was not through penetration that I learnt to have them.

Virginity was prized and still is in many



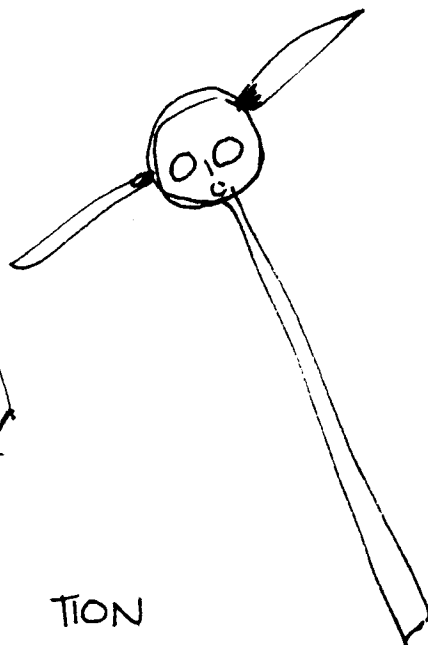
FLORA.

Then it belongs to the new husband who 'takes' his bride's virginity as a prize, a symbol of fresh goods. It can belong to a new authority figure, the immigration official, as proof of your right to come into the country.

I don't know if it is always painful the first time. I'm sure all first times are different, perhaps confidence or sexual awareness, or in the case of lesbians, freedom from guilt and contraceptive protection could make a first experience pleasurable and emotionally satisfying.

Most young girls still grow up with the idea of sex as a taboo, not to be discussed with anyone over 20, an activity enjoyed by 'slags'. Probably what is most distressing is their attitudes towards themselves, particularly their genitals, which are often regarded as shameful and unclean. Periods are often times of isolation. I believe these ideas are slowly being eradicated and yet, as a teacher I am aware that they still prevail. Girls are competitive, their sexual attitudes are reinforced by men's attitudes to women, by graffiti, by discreet articles about vaginal deodorants. Obviously for a rapid and radical change, boys must learn to be more sympathetic and understanding to the needs of girls, but clearly it is only women who can bring about the changes we want.

Lynda Woodroffe



TION

convent school where, at the expense of getting deformed hip joints, we were forced to sit with knees jammed together by steel hard thigh muscles—none of that leg crossing. We were forbidden to discuss boys or periods or Mick Jagger. Fortunately, short of gagging us the nuns were unable to silence us, but you still had to temper what intimacies you revealed for fear of being called a whore or a tart.

I was never sure whether I had a hymen. I didn't know what one looked like or felt like. However it had been jealously protected though I'll never understand what for, as I had never dreamed of a white wedding and all its trimmings. The thought of marriage

cultures but it is never the property of the woman. It belongs to the father of a girl before she is married. In Sicily, for example, a family is dishonoured if a girl 'loses' her virginity before she is married, even if the loss is the result of force, rape or blackmail. In the middle ages the father of a rape victim received monetary compensation for *his* loss

What is going on? WV groups

- **Aberdeen** Womens Voice for more information telephone Liz 51059
- **Acton and Harlesden** ring Carrie 993 0356 or Pete 969 9812
- **Birmingham** Womens Voice meets regularly at the Holloway pub, Holloway Road, City Centre. For details and babysitters phone Jenny - 440 5794.
- **Bury** Womens Voice meets every other Wednesday. Ring Lynn 061 764 6659 for details.
- **Black Country** Sundays fortnightly, 2.30, 27 Glen Court, Compton Road.. For information phone Wolverhampton 23233. Children welcome.
- **Bristol** Womens Voice meets fortnightly, at 7.30pm, Inkworths Community Centre, 22 Hepburn Road, St Pauls, off Brigstocke Road. Ring Bristol 553 740 or 669 198.
- **Canterbury** Womens Voice meets every other Tuesday at Jolly Sailor Northgate. Phone Barbara (Lyminge 862742).
- **Chelmsford** Womens Voice. For details of local activities, see Womens Voice sellers.

• **Coventry** Womens Voice meets every other Wednesday, 8.00pm, at the Hertford Tavern, off Queens Road (near the Butts) Coventry 618956

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

• **Faling** Womens Voice meets regularly. Phone Jenny or Caroline 567 7676

• **Eccles and Irlam** Womens Voice meets fortnightly at the AEU Social Club, Mather Road, Eccles. For information ring Jennie 707 2557.

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

• **Falkirk** Womens Voice. Anyone interested in building a Womens Voice Group in Falkirk area please contact: Frances, 1 Main Street, Shieldhill, Falkirk.

• **Finchley and Barnet** Womens Voice meets fortnightly, for information contact Anita 883 4968 or Glenis 346 7627.

• **Fleet Street** Womens Voice meets every other Wednesday at the Hoop and Grapes, Farringdon St, lunchtime from 1 to 2. Ring Maggie 822 37780 (work).

• **Glasgow** Womens Voice. For information ring Clare 959 8041 or Dorte 423 1185.

• **Glossop, Derbyshire** Womens Voice meets first and third Tuesdays of every month at 110 Victoria St, Glossop. Phone Glossop 61873 or Claire, Glossop 64735.

• **Hackney** Womens Voice, phone Pauline (985 3086) or Chris (806 6198) for information and babysitters.

• **Halifax** Womens Voice details from WV and SW sellers every Saturday 12.30 - 2.30, Co-op arcade on the Precinct.

• **Harlow** Womens Voice meets fortnightly on Wednesday at 8pm. Ring Pat, Harlow 28022.

• **Highbury** Womens Voice. For details ring Elana 439 3764 (days).

• **Hornsey** Womens Voice meets fortnightly. Ring Jane 348 6712 or Maggie 341 1182 for information and babysitters.

• **Islington** Womens Voice meets regularly. Phone Sandy at 802 6145 for details.

• **Kentish Town** Womens Voice meets weekly. Ring Gail 485 0954 or Vera/Di 267 5059 for information and details.

• **Lampeter** Womens Voice meets Tuesday evenings. Details from WV sellers or write c/o SDUC Lampeter, Dyfed, Wales.

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

• **Liverpool** Womens Voice meets on alternate Tuesdays at 8pm in the County Hotel. For further information phone Alison at 727 4057 or 709 1844.

• **Luton** Womens Voice is being set up. If you are interested please contact Jane, 421 266.

• **Manchester** University Womens Voice meets each week at 5pm in the students union.

• **South Manchester** Womens Voice Group meets every other week. For details phone Kate, 434 2343

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

• **Medway** Womens Voice meets regularly. Telephone Helen, Medway 270 684, or Marge 251 362 for details.

• **Newham** Womens Voice meets Tuesdays and Thursdays fortnightly. Phone Wendy 790 2373. Babysitters available.

• **Newcastle** Womens Voice meets regularly phone 29129 for details.

• **Nottingham** Womens Voice Group meets 2nd and 4th Wednesdays in every month at 8pm, 118 Mansfield Road. For further information or babysitters ring Jane 866522 ext 219 or Gill, Nottingham 625499

• **Norwich** Womens Voice meets every other Tuesday, 8.30pm, Black Boys pub, Colegate. For information phone Norwich 29963.

• **Preston** Womens Voice meets every other Tuesday at the Windsor Castle, Egan St (near Meadow St) at 8pm. For more information phone Mary: Preston 55739 and for babysitters.

• **Reading** Womens Voice meets regularly. For information phone Kathy on 660 800.

• **Stoke on Trent** Womens Voice meets at Knotty Action, Mollart Street, Hanley. Next meeting: Monday 4 June and then fortnightly. Ring Sandra 814094

• **Sheffield** Womens Voice meets fortnightly at the Prince of Wales, Division Street. For details ring Sue 613739

• **Southwark** Womens Voice meets every other Tuesday evening. Contact Jenny 697 7996 for more information.

• **Shrewsbury** Womens Voice meets the first Wednesday of every month. Other meetings too so phone 58830 for details.

• **Slough** Womens Voice meets on the first Tuesday of every month at Slough library. Ring Mary, Slough 24093.

• **South London** Womens Voice meets fortnightly on Tuesdays. Tate Library, Brixton, Oval. All welcome.

• **South West London** Womens Voice meets alternate tuesday, 91 Bedford Hill, Balham. All welcome. More information and babysitters contact Marion 947 0560.

• **Sheffield** Womens Voice meets fortnightly, at the Prince of Wales pub, Division St at 7.30pm.

• Apologies

to all our readers who haven't been getting their subscriptions on time. In some cases we seem to be having problems with the post office, but we are doing our best to sort it out. If you have missed copies let us know and we will either, send you the ones you have not had, or extend your subscription accordingly.

• **Stockport** Womens Voice. For details phone 061 431 7564.

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

• **Tower Hamlets** Womens Voice meets on alternate Mondays. Babysitters available phone Heather 739 6668.

• **Waltham Forest** Womens Voice meets fortnightly on Tuesdays or Thursdays at 8pm. For details ring Jeannie (531 8340) or Pauline (521 4768).

• **Walsall** Womens Voice meets regularly. Phone Ena at Walsall 644205 for details. Children welcome.

• **Watford** Womens Voice is being formed. Anyone interested in coming to meetings please contact Davina or Ros, Watford 28500 x 659

• **York** Womens Voice meets every third Saturday in the month at the Royal Oak, Goodramgate. Full creche facilities. Food on sale - do drop in!

• WOMENS VOICE SWEATSHIRTS AND T-SHIRTS

'Womens Voice fights for womens rights'. Sweatshirts in dark blue or red. £2.50p (reduced from £3.50p) plus 25p post. T-shirts in red, pale blue, black or white. £1.50p plus 15p post. Small or medium sizes. Cheques to Kentish Town Womens Voice group, c/o 175a Kentish Town Road, London NW1.

SCOTTISH WOMENS VOICE WEEKEND SCHOOL GLASGOW Saturday and Sunday 1/2 September

Speakers include: **Joan Smith, Sheila McGregor, Linda Quinn**
Plus sessions on abortion, housing, women in trade unions, sexism in school books, new technology, and practical sessions on how to print teeshirts and posters.

Social Saturday evening
Registration £2. Accommodation Available. Creche. Pooled fare. All women welcome from Penny 031 557 0731.

Your nearest
WV group
meets:

• **Fleet Street** Womens Voice are calling a mass petitioning for Monday 3 September. Meet 5.30pm, Ludgate Circus, (Blackfriars tube station.)

Where to buy books

Wedge Co-operative
13 High Street, Coventry, CV1 5RE
(0203) 25634
Opening hours Mon-Fri 10-5.30
Sat 10-5
Wide selection of feminist books/Mail order for all left books (add 10% min 25p)
Sale or return bookstalls/landmarks area/cafe/exhibition space
The Other Bookshop
328 Upper St London N1 Tel: 01 226 0571
Open Mon-Fri 9.30 - 7
Sat 10.30-6
Large selection of feminist and socialist publications
Mail order service
Other Branch Books
42 Bath Street, Leamington Spa Warwickshire
0926 28467
Open Mon-Sat 10am - 6pm
Full coverage of socialist and alternative books with a very wide feminist range. Five minutes from the railway station
First of May
45, Niddry Street off High Street, Edinburgh 1

Grass Roots Bookshop
1 Newton Street, Piccadilly, Manchester and 109 Oxford Road, All Saints, Manchester. 061 236 3112. 10am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 5.30 on Saturdays
Mail order, TU lists, US imports, Reminders

1985 Bookshop
Longacre Community Centre, London Road, Walcot, Bath. 0225 20263. Tuesday to Saturday, 12 noon to 6pm. Range of feminist and socialist literature, also black and third world struggles, children's books, fiction.

Two musicians, a pianist and a guitarist, wanted for Waggle Band. Must be able to rattle. Ring 01 794 4902

Full Marks Bookshop
110 Cheltenham Road, Bristol 6, 40491. Monday to Saturday 10 am to 6pm. Socialist and feminist books, magazines and local contacts.
Bookmarx chain
Birmingham: Socialist and TU Books, 224 Deritend High Street, Birmingham 12. 10am to 6pm Monday to Saturday.
Hull: Socialist Books, 238 Springbank 10am to 5.30pm. Monday to Saturday.
Southampton: October Books, 4 Onslow Road
London: Bookmarks, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London, N4 01-802 6145 10am to 6pm. Monday to Saturday.

Advertise your bookshop 50p an entry. Small ads 5p a word. Rate card for display ads available on request to: Womens Voice, Box 82, London, E2.

Dillons Cambridge Bookshop
21a Silver Street, Cambridge. 0223 55589. 9.30 to 5pm, Monday to Friday only. Left wing pamphlets, books, magazines.

Major Diversion presents **Better Late than Never!** 45 minutes of hard hitting comedy that take a look at some of the new government's policies. We give an answer to the often asked question: 'But surely you women's libbers re glad we've got a woman prime minister.' Information and booking enquiries: The Administrator 13 Swinburne Street, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear 0632 775615/6.



To: SW Recordings,
265a Seven Sisters Road,
London N4 2DE.

Please send record(s) at £1.10 each, at least. I enclose cheque/p.o. for £... payable to 'Blair Peach Memorial Fund'

Name _____
Address _____

bookmarx

THIRD QUARTER 1979

The Bookmarx Club is now an established method for socialists to get the best of new socialist books at a big discount - and delivered to your door!
HOW IT WORKS. You send us £4.50 for which you will receive the books on List A below plus those on one other list of your choice. Extra lists can be obtained for £2.50 each. Don't delay, send in the form now, with your subscription, you will save pounds on the retail value of the books (shown in brackets on the list).

LIST A
ASBESTOS, KILLER DUST by Alan Dalton (£2.25)

A new guide - not only to the dangers of asbestos but also to the action which has been taken against it by communities and workers.

ANGER ON THE ROAD by Jimmy Reilly (85p)

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