

womens **VOICE**

20p February '80 Issue 38



**SIR
THIEF
JOSEPH**

**STEEL SISTERS:
Our front line
against Thatcher**

The Liberation Game

Each Player throws one turn of the dice

START HERE

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1971

1972

1974

1975

1976 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR

1977 MORE CUTS

1978 NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS FOR 1980

1979

1980

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OUR POINT OF VIEW

STOP THESE WAR GAMES

The audience on Radio 4's Any Questions programme cheered as a panellist said we should be prepared to engage in nuclear war with Russia. The walls of New York are scrawled with the chilling slogan: Nuke Iran! Quite ordinary people seem to lose their sense of reason in the face of 'the enemy'.

The Cold War is back. The world is ever more unstable, ever more dangerous as East and West increase their arms spending and their aggressive gestures. Nobody wants a nuclear war, the outcome is too horrible to imagine, but the chances of a political accident or miscalculation that will destroy us all are every day more likely.

The Russians in Afghanistan are doing exactly what the Americans were doing in Vietnam: propping up an unpopular regime with troops, fighting the local people, pushing further the boundaries of their 'empire'.

For the rulers of the Superpowers involved in these war games these events provide the perfect diversion from the unpleasant realities of life at home. What better way of distracting attention from inflation and unemployment than pointing to the enemy at the door.

Hypocrisy runs rife.

Just as we called for American troops out of Vietnam we call for Russian troops out of Afghanistan. And American troops out of the Persian Gulf, British troops out of Northern Ireland.

It's a crazy world. Children die of starvation while the butter mountain grows and the milk lake spreads. A nuclear holocaust would be the ultimate craziness of a crazy system, the destruction of the many by the few.

We are socialists because we want to stop this madness. We want to banish the threat of instant death hanging over humanity. We want wealth to be distributed so that everyone has enough to eat, a home, work to do and there is no need to fight over it.

But our voice is so small, you may say, what can we possibly achieve as the television, the press and the powers that be bellow out their message of hate and destruction.

The worst possible thing we can do is keep quiet. If you join us we will be that much stronger.

womens
Voice

Womens magazine of the
Socialist Workers Party

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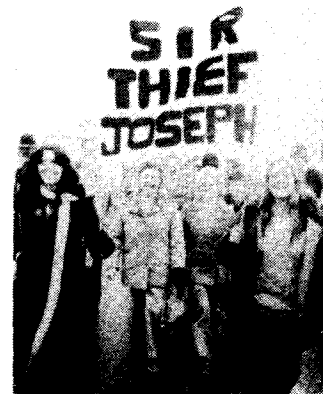
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We hope that this month's feature on love will provoke some debate, please let us have your letters (keep them short), by 15 February.

Our next editorial meeting will be on Wednesday 27 February, get in touch if you want to come.

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STRIKING WHILE THE IRON IS HOT

Not all the militant steelworkers freezing in determination on picket lines are men.

WOMENS VOICE spoke to Karen Locker, who works in a canteen in the steelworks in Corby about the strike and its implications:

'The employers decided on the timing of this strike. That 2 per cent offer was an insult. They singled us out because our union, the Iron and Steel Confederation, is known to be a moderate union. Maggie Thatcher (even her name makes me sick) said she was going to sort out the unions and make industrial reforms, so she picked on us.

'She may have said she'd never back down to any union, but she's going to have to.

'I don't get a good wage. I

take home £34 a week for a 35 hour week. I'm a general assistant in a canteen. We get the equivalent to the labourer's rate in the heavy steel but we don't do overtime. The men do 12 hour shifts and they work at weekends. No-one should have to do overtime

'Now I'm living on £7.96 for me and two sons. My daughter's on strike too. The Social Security give us nothing because we're strikers. I get up at 4 am almost every day to get the coach at 5 am to go on a picket line in Grantham or King's Lynn of Leicester or Kent. I stay up to 12 hours on the picket line.

'As for there being no demand for steel, that's just a

big lie. Steel is supposed to have been nationalised. It's still 42 per cent privately owned.

'If you want to buy stamps you go to the post office. If you want gas, you go to the gas board and it's the same with electricity or coal. But steel can be bought at private firms so it's not nationalised, is it? They're running it like a private industry.

'If there's no demand for steel why is it being imported? It's being proved by the ships coming into the docks that steel is being imported therefore there must be a demand.

'Engineering plants are being laid off now because of our strike, thousands of other workers are laid off, they need steel. Nobody can say there's no demand.

'Margaret Thatcher's not prepared to subsidise steel and she's playing on the public's sympathy by saying the tax payers are suffering as a result of the strike.

'This strike isn't about jobs, it's about wages but I hope it's going to be proved that the steel plants must not be closed down. Then I hope we can win on jobs. If people are prepared to fight then we can win.

'On the TV and in the papers they only show the bad parts about the picket lines. They don't show the good things. For example, when the apprentices are going in we ask them if they're on a government training scheme and if they are we don't hassle them at all. There's an office worker who's in a wheelchair, we never hassle him, you don't see that on TV.

'But when a woman office worker was punched on the picket line there was a lot of coverage. She was a picket in fact and wasn't trying to cross the lines, they never bothered to find out the truth about that.

'Women fought for equal rights and must be seen fighting now. We have to be involved in all aspects of the struggle. I believe in what we're fighting for.'

Melanie Macfadyean

Police intimidate women pickets

NINETEEN WOMEN workers at the John Lee's BSC steel stockholders in Grantham joined the strike for a week and were then forced back to work. They were helped on their picket line by workers from Corby, Rotherham and Sheffield but they were so intimidated by the police, harassed by the management and betrayed by their fellow workers in the General and Municipal Workers Union, that the women, all office workers, couldn't hold the picket line any longer.

ISTC members are not embittered towards the women for going back to work, only towards the G and M blacklegs and the police. One picket at Grantham said that the police on duty at John Lees were some of the most hostile in the steel strike so far. They intimidated the women at every turn, escorting the lorries through the picket line.

Given that there was so much against the women being successful in their action, Roy Bishop, the ISTC divisional organiser for the Midlands, feels that the women were brave to come out in the first place.

'We feel sympathetic towards those women. They have been forced into submission. How can 19 women hold a picket line when 35 ton wagons are driving straight at them? The police were making up

their own laws saying they could only have 4 pickets to a lorry. The management put so much pressure on them, and their fellow workers blacklegged.

'The John Lee's management are making a short term gain by getting them back to work but a long term loss—after the strike they're going to be wondering where their business has gone. Our members know where materials go and will be blacking these stockholders after the strike.'



4 year old Nicola, the youngest picket at John Lee's shows her solidarity with her dad, a Transport and General Workers Union lorry driver.



Picture: John Sturrock (Report)

Answering back

Steel—never enough but always too much

ARE THE steelworkers daft? They've not been on national strike since 1926, yet they choose to come out for higher wages at a time when the steel industry is losing millions of pounds, and when over 50,000 of their jobs are to be cut, and many more threatened.

Bill Sirs, leader of the main steel union is no mindless militant, that's for sure—he's no militant at all. He's done everything in his power to keep his members in check and limit the effects of the strike.

The steel unions were pushed into this strike—they were given no alternative. With prices going up at 20 per cent a year, an offer of 2 per cent is deliberate provocation.

The Tories and their puppets on the board of British Steel wanted this strike. They wanted it precisely because of the enormous closures and redundancies they intend to force through later in the year. If they can defeat the strikers now, demoralise the steelworkers and wear their spirit and militancy down, who will fight the redundancies?

The steelworkers must win. They are the ones in the front

line of the wages battle and of the fight against the Tories' anti-worker policies. If they lose, we are all that much weaker.

If the Tories defeat the steelworkers, tens of thousands of jobs will be lost, and whole communities around the country will be devastated. Already the job of making us believe that cuts are necessary and inevitable has begun.

Demand for steel throughout the world is too low—the steel industry in this country is just too large they tell us. At the same time, British steelworkers are not sufficiently productive—they're not producing steel quickly enough.

There's a poem that puts it very well:
'... all sorts of experts by the score,
Plead with those producing goods to turn out more and more,
And the way the turn-out turns out is somehow always such,
That though there never is enough, there's always far too much.'

They tell us there's too much steel being produced—but think about what steel goes into. It goes into houses. Are there too many houses? It goes into tractors. Are there too many tractors around the world? It goes into washing machines and water pumps, bicycles and bridges.

Every ounce of steel that can be produced is needed, desperately needed, by someone. 'Demand is too low' means that profits are too low, not that steel isn't wanted. As long as decisions are determined by the few with their profits, not by the many with their needs, we will see steel mills close, steelworkers waste their lives on the dole queue, while people starve for want of a steel plough.

Clegg sells out nurses wages

BOB JONES, the national officer for NUPE (the Public Employee's union) said about the Clegg Commission on nurses pay: 'This report has shown that this type of study is not the way to deal with wage problems'. Tell us something we don't know Mr Jones!

We knew last April that the Clegg Commission was a sell-out, a conspiracy between the Labour Government and the union top-brass to get us back to work. Last winter's demand was for £60 minimum for a 35 hour week. One year later, and all we've had is £2.50 on account for trained staff and £2 for untrained. And now the Clegg report which recommends an average rise of 19.6%.

This will mean that as a second year student nurse I should now earn £2862 per annum. As a second year student if I work nights (which is compulsory) I can be left in charge of a ward for 10 hours, excluding meal breaks, with only a fleeting visit by the night sister for back-up. Students and pupils get no guaranteed week-ends off, have no control over their holidays, work rotated shifts, unsocial hours and split shifts, and often have their shifts changed at the last minute if there are staff shortages, which there invariably are.

Add to that the fact that the new pay scales are calculated for a 37½ hour week, which is not being implemented until April 1981 at the earliest! This means that by the time the shorter working week comes into being—and there are even

doubts that it will do so—we will have donated between us a total of one million hours a week to the NHS.

Just being low paid makes strike action difficult—we can't afford to take industrial action, but we can't afford *not* to! If a student nurse has more than 3 weeks in 3 years, or a pupil nurse 2 weeks in 2 years, time off as sickness, compassionate leave, industrial action, or for trade union duties, then the date of her or his State final exams is postponed, or that person may even be dropped from training altogether.

Marx said 'the tradition of the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the minds of the living'. I think he must have had nurses in mind. The hierarchical, authoritarian structure and atmosphere is still very prevalent today and it takes a lot of guts to stick your neck out and say no. Nurses aren't supposed to think, least of all about their own pay and conditions, and the idea of workers control is about as alien as little green men.

But there are signs of change. The low pay campaign last year involved more health workers than ever before, and many of the campaigns to stop hospital closures have been solidly supported, if not initiated, by nurses. The media may still see fit to proclaim that nurses still



Laurie Sparham (FL)

PEOPLE KEPT alive by kidney machines picketed the Department of Health and Social Security in January after the Government had announced cuts in cash to kidney units. Hospitals are being forced to look for other sources of income, from charities or individuals otherwise patients like these will be left to die.

refuse to take action, despite a disappointing pay deal, but I haven't spoken to one person yet who holds with that sentiment.

At the hospital where I work, demands for industrial action are getting stronger each day—because it's not just our living standards and training facilities that face complete deterioration, our trade union rights are fast being eroded. The General Nursing Council of England and Wales have issued a statement that nurses taking industrial action might have to 'face the consequences'. Get the sack, that means, as several people in Northern Ireland have already discovered to their cost.

We cannot rely on others to fight our battles for us. But as a weak and isolated section we need the support of industrial workers. Our action alone won't affect big business at all,

but look how they had to take notice in 1974 when rank and file miners in South Wales gave us support!

We have to find new ways of organising ourselves. All out strike action is not possible, you cannot leave people to die. But emergency cover only is feasible. We must control our own disputes. We decide what is an emergency, we decide what the staff cover on each ward will be, and we decide if and when to end our action. If we say we oppose all cuts in the NHS then we decide what action to take, take.

As for Bob Jones' comment that we must 'seek the same again for the 1980 award'—inflation is running at 20 per cent Mr Jones or hadn't you noticed?

Jane Spragg
COHSE Steward
Luton and Dunstable Hospital

LOW PAY-NO CHANGE

£60 now! That was what the low paid workers in the public sector demanded back in November 1978. Thousands of them sent out on strike that cold winter in order to get it.

Many of the low paid workers in the health service and local authorities are women: school cleaners and dinner ladies, ancillary nurses and domestics. Their strike ended when the Labour government persuaded their union leaders to go to the Clegg commission. This group of men would compare the jobs being done by workers in the public sector with the same jobs in private industry, and award money to bring public wages up to the level of private wages.

At the time Womens Voice said

'what's the use of comparing lousy wages with lousy wages? Women everywhere get rotten pay, what's the point of comparing them? We were right.

Today, after the Clegg commission has awarded its money to these workers, after they've agreed on 14 per cent more for this year, the bottom three grades are *still* not earning £60. Almost all the women workers are on the bottom three grades. And since 1978 when the claim was made, prices have risen by 18 per cent. They need £72 now, just to stay in the same place.

Last month Clegg announced pay increases for nurses. While ward sisters get 25 per cent, auxiliary nurses at the bottom of

the scale get almost nothing. Most qualified nurses will get around 18 per cent. But the one thing the nurses really wanted—safeguards against inflation—has been refused.

With prices rising the way they are now, wage rises get eaten away in no time at all. But Clegg refuses to protect their future earnings.

It's a disgrace that anyone should work a full week for less than £60. It's a disgrace that auxiliary nurses have been given next to nothing by Clegg. Most of all it's a disgrace that the public sector unions have been sold a deal that ensures that women will never break out of the low pay trap. Not until they fight their way out of it.



CHIX PICKETS ADAMANT

AFTER SIXTEEN weeks on the bitterly cold picket line at Chix sweet factory, the women are still adamant. 'We are staying here until we win' they told Womens Voice. 'We have been here for four months. If we go now, what's the use of having fought at all?'

They made sweets in the badly-ventilated, dirty factory for between £19 and £38 a week. The floor was always covered in a heavy slime from leaking starch and water pipes. 'There were accidents every day' say the women. 'One lady had a miscarriage because the boss would not allow her to stop lifting heavy boxes and do a lighter job.'

Joining a union was the first step in the struggle against these conditions. Going on strike was the second. Picketing and blacking have reduced the scab workforce to 20. The boss is having trouble getting lorries to come to the factory. So, with help from the businessmen's anti-union club, the National Association for Freedom, he has raised the pay to £1.75 per hour and offered to take some of the women back.

They have declined his offer. 'Because we are Asian, he thought we would go quietly away after a few weeks' they explained. 'But we are here to win.'

So much the women have achieved alone. But with only one 'hardship' payment from the union since the strike began, and no strike pay, they cannot afford to sit it out for ever. 'We have husbands, children, retired parents to support,' they explain.

Even so, they see their struggle as part of the general attack on trade union and immigrant workers. They say that, like the workers at British Steel, they are fighting for good pay, good conditions, protection from bullying management, and the right to organise.

They mean it when they say, 'We will all go back together when the union is recognised. Without that, it is useless to return.'

What the women need in order to carry on their fight is genuine support from their union officials—by planning for flying pickets from nearby factories, by providing transport to visit shop stewards



Mrs Desai, who inspired thousands of workers during the Grunwick strike, addresses pickets at Chix.

committees, and by giving them proper strike pay.

What they need to win is the support of organised trade unionists—expressed not just as pious resolutions but as cash and physical presence. Their courage and tenacity deserve this support, and their victory is as necessary to all of us as it is to them. Winning their struggle means another step forward for women, for immigrant workers, and for everyone fighting for basic trade union rights.

The Chix strike can be won, and we must see that it is won

quickly.

You can help by:

- Sending donations to Mr. M. Anwar, 271 Goodman Park, Slough.
- Visiting the picket line—mass picket every Wednesday.
- Inviting a speaker from Chix to your union meeting, workplace, or Trades Council.
- Blacking supplies to or from Chix if your firm deals with them.

Phone 01 986 6222 for more information and collection sheets.

Susan Pearce

NOT BEATEN

'IT'S NOT easy working in a male dominated industry when you're trying to get the support of the union.' That's what Val Dunn of the bakers' union found out when she was sacked from Almonds, (Rank Hovis MacDougall) in Manchester after only one week, allegedly for bad references.

The National Executive Committee of her union agreed to ballot members in the Northwest for strike action in support of Val. Val herself was very active in the bakers strike in 1978 (could this be the real reason for her sacking?)

Meanwhile workers at Val's bakery had begun to work to rule. Not surprisingly the management at Almonds decided to test the strength of the unions and posted up new shift schedules, stopped holiday pay and so on.

To Val's disgust instead of stepping up their action to show their refusal to be intimidated, the Almonds bakers union branch committee backed down. They even went so far as to persuade the district officer of the union to call off the ballot.

But Val won't give up quite so easily. The union's answer to calling off action was to take the case to the National Conciliation Committee.

Val's under no illusion as to what this may result in.

If she loses, she won't stop there. 'I'm going to win in the end this time, even if it means taking the employers to court for slander. After all, that would make them produce references, and as I have no record of poor work or attendance. I'd like to see what they do say about me.'

Val feels she's being sold out by her own union branch committee. 'A shining example of how a union should support its members is Adamsons. There they came out and supported a victimised person, knowing that it could have been any of them.'

However, Val's quite clear that she at least is going to keep on fighting. Pat Jones



HOW DO 180 workers at a container plant like Adamsons beat a multi-national firm like Acrow when it tries to smash their union organisation?

Do they put their faith in union officials and leave it to them to sort it out? Or do they fight it themselves?

After six months of strike action Adamsons workers have shown that the only way to beat the bosses is by people directly involved taking action and making decisions.

Victimised convenor John Taylor has now been reinstated unconditionally along with the other shop stewards.

Of course, it's not only the workers themselves who are affected by a strike. Their wives and children have also had to go through six months without wages. And the lads admit their support was essential.

Pauline Antcliffe opened up her home for use as strike headquarters as well as supporting her husband on the picket line. The wives therefore share the elation of the victory. 'I feel marvellous, delighted. I knew we'd win all along,' said Joan Taylor.

Pat Jones

FIGHTING ON

EIGHT WEEKS ago the 940 workers (700 of whom are women) of the Meccanno factory in Liverpool were given just 40 minutes notice of the closure of the factory.

They immediately occupied the factory and locked management out.

Even during Christmas and New Year the factory was occupied, and the women brought their children with them into the factory.

Rosa Hanley, one of the shop stewards, told Womens Voice, 'We're staying here till we get our jobs back. I've worked here for 30 years, and I've seen other workers on the picket line and occupying factories on the tele. But I never thought I would be doing it.'

I never thought we could organise rotas and finance, but we've done it—and better than any management could do.'

Since the company was taken over by Airfix, there has been a history of mismanagement. Over a short period of time they had four different managers. Three weeks before the management announced the closure, they were taking on new workers.

STOP PRESS: On Friday 18 January it was announced that management and unions have agreed to set up a working party in an attempt to save the 940 jobs.

Jane Mudd,

Smear tests

MONEY IS being saved in Tower Hamlets by cutting expenditure on cervical smear tests. Routine tests on women under 30 are out altogether, for older women they are reduced to every 5 years. Until now tests were done automatically for women on the pill and for women attending family planning or ante-natal clinics.

Cervical smear tests can detect cancer of the cervix (the neck of the womb) long before it is fully developed and while it can be easily treated. Cancer takes on average 15-20 years to develop, so women in their 40s, with developed cervical cancer, may well have had signs of it in their 20s. These signs could very

easily be detected by a smear test.

2,200 women die every year from cancer of the cervix, working class women are hardest hit and the death rate is on the increase among younger women.

So far the testing programme in this country has reached only 30 per cent of women. In the few years it has been going the death rate from cervical cancer has not gone down. But cancer takes a long time to develop. In British Columbia 85 per cent of women were regularly tested. After 15 years the death rate began to fall.

Very few people know about this cut back and it has been implemented very quickly.

A representative of the Community Health Council confirmed that testing has been withdrawn for women under 30, except in 'urgent' cases, in order to save money. So far we only know about Tower Hamlets, but with Health Authorities everywhere under pressure, it seems likely that other areas may follow the example. After all, it is only women's lives and health that will suffer.

Alison Cartmail

WARMTH FOR ALL!

THE TORY GOVERNMENT has announced yet another of its public expenditure cuts. They intend to kill off the Electricity Discount Scheme.

Under this scheme low income groups—people getting Supplementary Benefit, Rent and Rate Rebates or Family Income Supplement were given some help with their winter electricity bill.

This scheme was not wonderful, it didn't compensate for the fact that the cost of electricity rose by 18 per cent this year. And it didn't help gas consumers. But the answer was not to do away with it as the Tories have done.

At a rally of the Right To Fuel Campaign, Linda Chalker, Under Secretary of State for Social Services, outlined the 'help' this government is prepared to offer those in need this winter. It is paltry.

Pensioners, over 75, and families receiving supplementary benefit, with children under five in the family will get an extra 95p per week, as long

as they don't already receive a heating allowance, which many already do. Families receiving Family Income Supplement will get an extra £1. With inflation running at 17½ per cent this amount will barely be noticed. What is noticed is that these new measures will save the government £22 million.

Linda Chalker's words were met with anger, pensioners were particularly annoyed.

Right to Fuel Campaign Organiser, Liz Reason, said 'everyone has a right to a warm well-lit home'. Everyone, not just those who can afford it!

Joe Ashton, Labour MP, explained why even though the gas and electricity boards were making massive profits the price of gas and electricity would carry on rising. 'It is a form of rationing', he said.

Well, it is going to be a cold winter for some and unfortunately they can't hibernate. But we can, and we must, organise now to fight these and all the other Tory cuts.

Frances Clarke

BENEFIT FROZEN

IN ANOTHER of its tight fist attempts to save money the Government has announced that child benefits will not go up this April despite the fact that this increase has already been held over from last November when it was also cancelled.

According to Ruth Lister of the Child Poverty Action Group, there have been leaks to the Sunday Times and the Economist magazine, which suggest that the increase won't happen in November this year either.

The benefits were increased to £4 in April 1979. If they aren't increased again by November of this year they will be worth £3 because of inflation. The value of the benefit is eroded all the time. This is a particularly evil and vicious attack on the 14 million families who depend on child benefits. The Government has made no commitment to raising benefits in November and Ruth Lister of the Child Poverty Action Group feels that it would be a disaster if there is no increase, especially at a time when school meals are more expensive and the cost of living is going up by the minute.

If you want a copy of the CPAG's leaflet send an SAE asking for 'Families Need Child Benefit' to the following address. (Bulk orders are negotiable).

CPAG
1 Macklin Street,
London WC2

Womens Voice Shopping Bag

Since our last shopping basket appeared in November the following price rises have been announced or taken place:

25 November. TV licences to go up £9 to £34 for colour, and £2, to £12 for black and white.

7 December. The price of a standard loaf to go up 2½p.

12 December: The Building Societies announce increases in mortgage interest rates to 15 percent as from 1 January. The Daily Mirror commented 'It's never been tougher for young

couples to buy their first home. Mortgage repayments swallow £24 of every £100 in the new homebuyers' wage packet. In 1978 the average new buyer had to fork out only £13 per 100 he or she earned.'

15 December. Inflation is now running at 17.4 per cent. This is the thirteenth consecutive monthly rise.

19 December. Letter post is to go up 2p in February, and public phone boxes up to 5p from January.

20 December. School meals are

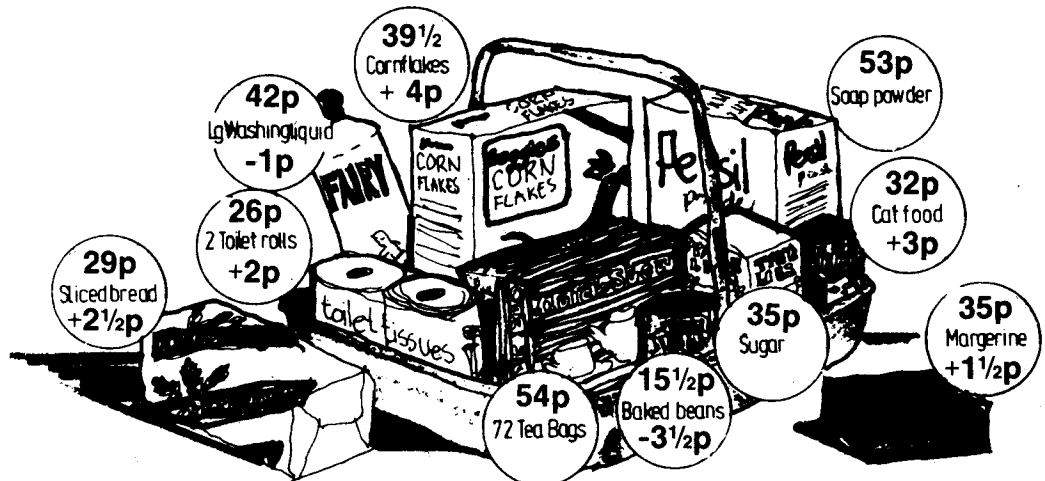
to go up to 40p from 35p. 21 December. A bottle of milk is to go up by 1½ to 16½p 6 January. Mainline rail fares to increase an average 20.5 percent.

14 January. Beer to go up 5p a pint.

15 January. Petrol reaches £1.24 a gallon.

16 January. The price of gas is to go up by 29 percent in two installments, the first in April.

18 January. Electricity up by 17 percent.



Total in June 1979 £3.13 Total in January 1980 £3.60 Increase 57p

Southall-women against the law

AFTER THE Southall demonstration against the National Front on 23 April last year 188 Asians, 34 West Indians and 21 white people were arrested and charged. Of all those so far brought to court the conviction rate has been incredibly high—87 per cent compared to the national average for similar offences of 52 per cent.

So far 11 women have been charged. Four of these have been bound over to keep the peace on charges of threatening behaviour, offensive language, and obstruction. Three cases have been dismissed, one woman got a conditional discharge and one was sent to jail for a month for threatening behaviour. That woman is Julianna Henry, a 23 year old West Indian. A police officer claimed she had been throwing 'missiles' from the People's Unite Centre in Southall. Julianna threw no missiles. The police officer identified her as a woman he saw at a window in the front of the house wearing a black scarf and a brown jacket. A lot of

West Indian women wear black scarves, and brown jackets aren't exactly unusual. Julianna said in her statement that she was at the back of the house.

A defence lawyer in the Southall trials, commenting on Julianna's case, said: 'Threatening behaviour rarely justifies a prison sentence. It's such a vague charge, it's so easy for the police to prove, it's a catch-all. It's very unusual for anyone to be sentenced for it especially as a first offence. But then Julianna got the worst magistrate, McDermott.' Understandably Julianna is angry. She spoke to Women's Voice about her experience:

'I feel bitter about what happened, about having a criminal record. I have a two year old son, Wesley. Since I was in jail he won't let me out of his sight, he clings to me. 'I didn't realise before just how corrupt England is, now I do.

Geraldine Regeste, a 19 year old West Indian, was bound over for a year for her alleged 'crime'; she was said to have used 'threatening



Picture: John Sturrock (Report)

Police wade into women on the Anti-National Front demonstration, in Southall.

words'.

'They just picked on me because I was there in the park, they were picking on black people. I think they thought it was a good opportunity to fingerprint as many black people as possible.

'You grow up with the idea that the British Bobby is OK, that you get a fair deal from British justice. You get to court and you are amazed at the lies. The Magistrate doesn't believe the policemen's lies but he sticks up for the uniform. They tell you about civilisation, well, I've never seen such a bunch of

savages as in Thatcher's cabinet.' The case of Nathalie Xavier has been adjourned until 20 May. What kind of 'justice' can she expect after the brutal treatment of Julianna and Geraldine? It's surprising that only one woman has been sent to jail, but that was one woman too many.

Donations to The Southall Defence fund to help pay off the fines and the legal costs should be sent to:

Southall Defence Fund
C/O PO Box 151
London WC2.

Born here but don't bring the kids

MRS ANWAR DITTA was born in Birmingham. She was brought up in Rochdale until she was 9. Then her parents separated and she was sent to Pakistan. She married her husband, Shuja Ud Din in Pakistan, and they had 3 children, Karan, Imran and Saima, now aged 9, 7 and 6.

In 1975 Anwar joined Ud Din in Rochdale, leaving their children with grandparents till they found work and a home; they sent for the children in 1976, but the children were refused entry on the grounds that 'the couple had not established that they were the parents of the three children'.

But Anwar has plenty of evidence. Birth certificates, medical records, photographs. Anwar says there are plenty of people in Britain who would prove they are their children, but no one has bothered to examine the evidence, though solicitors say the evidence is so conclusive it only has to be presented at the appeal to prove the case. Enquiring about the progress of the appeal, she was told to come back in 1980 or 1981.

They don't want to wait one or two years more for the children they've waited so long

for already. Anwar has tried everything she can think of, including offering to pay the expenses of an investigator to fly to Pakistan, and offering blood tests, but the Home Office have refused. (though they do use blood tests to try and deport people).

The Entry Certificate Officers have an enormous amount of power to arbitrarily refuse applications. Though it's said that all applicants have a right of appeal, victims of wrong initial decisions must wait years in anxiety, as this case highlights.

Anwar's case can be com-

pared to Mrs Shirley Webb's. After being deserted by her husband in South Africa, Mrs Webb appealed to the Prime Minister, and last July was allowed to enter Britain with her four children. Anwar has also written to Mrs Thatcher, and the reply—'your letter is receiving attention'. Shirley Webb is white, Anwar Ditta is black.

Meanwhile Ud Din has to work 7 days a week to support both parts of his family, and Anwar spends most of her time campaigning for the children's entry into Britain. She has taken petitions round the

shoppers in town, and door to door, and this takes a lot of guts after some of the nasty racist comments she's had. She lends herself to anything that will help her cause, such as speaking at Asian organisation and Trade Union meetings.

They want their children now.

Help build the campaign to reunite this family.

- Take petitions round and get as many signatures as possible in support of Anwar's family.
 - Invite Anwar to speak at your meetings.
 - Ask your trade union or organisation to send a resolution to the Home Secretary supporting Anwar, quoting Home Office reference number D143189.
 - Write to your MP and get him/her to raise the case with the Home Office.
 - Join the demonstration in Rochdale on March 1. Assemble at Church Stile, top of steps behind the Town Hall, 12 noon.
- Enquiries, messages of support and financial aid to:- Anwar Ditta Defence Committee, c/o Rochdale CRE, Champness Hall, Drake Street, Rochdale.

Vanessa Parkinson



Anwar Ditta takes her petition around the streets of Rochdale.



INDIRA IS BACK

I SPOKE to a man on a station platform in India. We were waiting for a train that was running hours late. It was hot. His wife and child sat on their suitcase. There was nothing to do but wait.

He wore a suit, which suggested he was a manager, or a bank worker, someone with a bit of status and money, enough to pay for a suit to go with it.

We got into conversation. 'The trains ran on time during the emergency when Mrs Gandhi was prime minister' he said.

'How was that?' I asked, wondering how it was possible for the trains in that vast country to ever run on time.

'The drivers would be sent to jail if the trains were late', he said, as if this could explain everything.

'But surely it is not the driver's fault if the train runs late,' I suggested, 'there might be a breakdown, something on the line a hold up of some sort that isn't in the driver's control. How could sending the driver to jail help.'

'Well, it did, the trains ran on

time.' There was nothing more to be said, but I remembered that the same example of the trains, had been used about Mussolini's Italy, to show that fascism worked.

poverty

The emergency that Indira Gandhi declared in June 1975 was the start of a terror hard to imagine but apparently easy to forget for some. The woman who started it all has just been re-elected prime minister of India, the second largest country in the world with a population now over 600 million.

The two years of the emergency were marked by two appalling campaigns: one to clear the slums, the other a programme of enforced sterilization and population control. Both were popular with some sections of middle class India but caused terrible hardship to the poor. They were both unrealistic and inhuman panic measures to deal with India's enormous problem of

of poverty and the instability of Indira's government.

David Selbourne describes them in his book about the emergency, *An Eye to India*.

Demolition of the housing of the poor in Delhi had been going on since the autumn of 1975. It was a process that took on a momentum of its own as the sense of power in destruction reached through to those in charge. Events reached a peak on 14 April 1976.

sterilize

On that day demolition gangs, protected by armed Central Reserve Police, began cutting a wide path of destruction through the people's homes and occupations in one area of the city. It included pulling down permanently and solidly built two-storey buildings. The newly homeless were forcibly transported by truck to dumping grounds where there was no electricity, no sanitation, no transport and no water. In India as everywhere, water is life.

Four days later, on 18 April, clearance gangs were joined by the 'sterilization squads' who set to work in the same streets. They sterilized people at a makeshift mobile centre, with sterilization made the qualification for suburban rehousing.

Everyone was taken in—youths, old men, married men and the unmarried, without the right to protest.

The following day the people fought back. The police fired to kill.

Over 100 people died, over 500 more were arrested, and 10,000 were evicted from their homes.

The excuse used for this reign of terror was the pressing need to deal with the problem of poverty. The rhetoric used was simple: national regeneration was to be achieved through controlled growth of population, welfare expenditure and adult education.

'This is the time' said the Hindu (one of India's leading national dailies) 'to instil in the minds of the poorer sections that they have a responsibility to society for the benefits received by them, and it can be brought home to them by making birth control a condition for eligibility to public largesse.'

It reads like a Daily Express tirade against so-called social

security scroungers.

The solution to the problem of poverty was not to be education or the sharing of wealth according to need, but cruelty and violence. For many of the poor sterilization meant cutting their lifeline. Children are needed to work, to look after the old, to replace the other children that die through poverty.

Brute force was one method used to meet the targets set for sterilization, but other sanctions were used too.

Women employees were prohibited maternity leave after the birth of her first two children. No food loans were given to employees whose pregnant wives were bearing their third child, unless 'recourse was taken to abortion'.

One state Government announced that one month's wages would not be paid to employees who failed to 'motivate' two people to sterilization. They had to produce the medical certificates to prove that they had taken place.

People with communicable diseases (unspecified) would be compulsorily sterilized, children or no children. Another state government made having more than two children a punishable offence.

slums

And so it went on. People who had already been sterilized were sterilized again, men and women too old to bear children any longer were not excluded. What mattered were the targets. Mobile units were set up, and taken down, so there was no after care. And these are people too poor to pay if wounds become sceptic or complications followed.

Indira Gandhi was responsible for all this. And now she's back.

The Janata alliance of different parties which came to power in the election which ousted her was itself incapable of either dealing with her, or dealing with any of India's problems.

Forced into an election in January of this year they had no way of recommending themselves to the Indian electorate but through reminding them how terrible Indira had been. She told the people she would solve the problem of rising prices they believed her, and she won.

Margaret Renn

... urgent ... urgent ... u
 ... urgent ... urgent ..

The first few days of February are vital. They may well be our last chance to stop the Corrie Bill becoming law. Up and down the country women are organising their biggest effort yet against the Bill.

Something is bound to be

happening near you. These are some of the events we have been told about. If your area doesn't appear, contact your nearest Womens Voice group or Womens Voice seller for information about what You can do to stop the Corrie Bill.

Acton 1 February: Lobby Sir George Young, MP; 6pm, 91 Shakespeare Rd, London W3.
Birmingham 2 February: Regional demonstration.

Walthamstow 4 February: NAC Meeting, Ross Wyld Hall, 8pm.

Portsmouth 4 February: Torchlight demonstration.

Nottingham 2 February: Demonstration 12 noon, Forest Recreation Ground.

Waltham Forest 6 February: Torchlight vigil, 6.30pm Whipps Cross Hospital.

Sheffield 2 February: Demonstration.

Edinburgh 7 February: Torchlight demonstration. Assemble 6pm, Waverley Bridge, followed by rally at Secretary of State for Scotland's House, Charlotte Square.

Newcastle 2 February: Regional demonstration, 11am Forth Street, behind Central Station.

Islington 2 February: Motorcade.

Leeds 7 February: All women torchlight demonstration, 5.30pm, followed by all-night vigil outside private wing of infirmary.

Brighton 2 February: Demonstration after all night vigil.

Chingford

We picketed the surgery of Norman Tebbit, MP for Chingford.

Four of us went in and asked how he would vote and what his views were on the Corrie Bill. Though not totally against abortion, he felt the present Act was being abused. Greater restrictions should be brought in against women who 'frivolously get themselves pregnant.' He knew of a woman who'd had three abortions! When asked for details, he was not able to give any. He said the time limit should be lowered, he did not agree with charity clinics, 'they touted for custom', and should be curbed. He seemed to be under the impression that women became pregnant so that the clinics can stay open!

But I can dispense with the rest of Mr Tebbit's lecture and leave you with this last comment:

Mr Tebbit feels that if you are married, children are a blessing, a joy! And if you are not married you should practice self control!

Bournemouth

'This sort of thing doesn't happen in Bournemouth.'

'It does now!'

That was the conversation overheard between a middle-aged Bournemouthian 'lady' and a demonstrator on our anti-Corrie rally on Saturday 12 January. 130 people marched and chanted round the town centre, much to the astonishment of dozy shoppers and

onlookers. We handed out 2,500 leaflets telling them about the Corrie Bill 'just in case' they hadn't heard about it--yet!

We also collected signatures for our petition to bring up the number to 2,500 collected in this area.

At one time, we were joined by a crowd of football supporters singing 'You'll never walk alone' which we all thought was rather appropriate followed by 'A Woman's Right to Choose' to the same lilting tune! You try it! Just as we were running out of slogans, a 12 year old girl came up and suggested '2-4-6-8 Corrie is the man we hate!' All together now...

Lesley Dike

Leyton

On Friday 4 January, a group of women and men picketed Bryan Magee, Labour MP for Leyton, who did not attend Parliament for the last vote on the Corrie Bill.

He was friendly and listened as we explained our views on the Corrie Bill. Although inclined to be condescending towards us, his general opinion was that he would not like to see the return of the days before the 1967 Act. He intimated that he would vote against the Bill. He did have reservations about the time limit, and obviously did not see that women who have abortions after 20 weeks, are in great danger if the pregnancy continues, and do not happily go through the ordeal. But at least he said he would vote this time--against the Bill.
 Carol Barrett.

Protest as womens' trial in Armagh adjourned

The trial of the eleven women arrested in Armagh on International Women's Day 1979, has been adjourned for the second time. The women were charged with a variety of offences arising from their picket of the jail in support of their indelicate behaviour for political status. They were picked off at random by members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (notorious for their indelicate behaviour) and the Special Patrol Group who are well known brutes. They were dragged and beaten as they dispersed and one woman with a small child was arrested.

They were summoned to court for the second time on 2 January. The court was packed. There were 38 women from England and several from Derry, Armagh and the South. A lot of women were wearing T shirts printed with the women's liberation symbol and two slogans, 'Political Status Now' and 'Smash H Block'.

But the trial was destined once again to be postponed. The judge's excuse was that the defence barrister had been taken ill during the night. In normal circumstances another barrister would be briefed and the trial would continue with a minimal delay. But then nothing in Northern Ireland is normal, least of all the legal system.

Mary Enwright of Belfast Women Against Imperialism commented: 'I think they adjourned the case for political reasons. No certificate of illness was produced for the barrister and we asked for a few hours adjournment while they replaced him. I think they didn't want the court packed

because the publicity would expose the condition of the women on protest for political status in Armagh.

We are going to boycott the next session, there's no alternative. We want to show up the adjournment for the farce it is. We would like women in England to understand the issues and to recognise the need for political status, we would like you to identify with the struggle here for political status for men and women prisoners'.

When the trial was adjourned the women in the court went to Armagh Jail and staged a silent picket. The girls inside the jail started to sing, 'What shall we do with the RUC' to the tune of the Drunken Sailer, and 'Womens Army is marching'.

The RUC and the army arrived but no arrests were made. One English woman who was there to show her active support was Angie Todd from Camden and Islington United Troops Out Movement. She said: 'It's a great feeling to do something like that and get away with it, especially to communicate with prisoners who are deprived of support from outside. I hope the experience will be used by women here to build for a large International Women's Day demo in Armagh this year and for women to build support for the jails of Northern Ireland'. The judge may have adjourned the trial to deflect publicity but his attempt has backfired.

Donations towards the fines can be sent to Belfast Women Against Imperialism, c/o Women's Voice, PO Box 82, London E2

WOMENS HEALTH

What is osteopathy?

AT THE MOMENT the National Health Service offers two types of 'cure' for pain and illness. There are drugs. Some deaden pain. Some, like inhalers, temporarily relieve symptoms. Antibiotics kill everything in our body to destroy infection. The other method is to remove whatever is causing the pain with a surgical operation.

These methods are of great benefit. But if they don't work, the NHS has little else to offer. Many people suffer symptoms throughout their life which western medicine considers too 'mild' to relieve, or which it simply cannot cure. Like headaches, backaches or depression. Even when people have operations to remove organs, sometimes the painful symptoms reappear somewhere else, perhaps years later.

Osteopathy is one of the 'alternative' medicines which has a surprising success rate with seemingly 'incurable' symptoms.

Clare Ballard has a practice in North London and she explained her treatment to me.

What is osteopathy?

The main principle of osteopathy is that the structure of the body governs the way it works. That means if the bones that make up the skeleton are out of place, things like the nervous system,

internal organs (heart, liver etc), glands and so on will be disturbed.

All of our body is normally in constant rhythmic movement – breathing, the heart pumping blood rhythmically round the body and even the brain and central nervous system are surrounded by fluid that has its own rhythmic movement. If for any reason movement of the body is limited, this will cause disturbances in the way it works.

When we treat pain we don't just treat the place that is painful. We see the body as a whole system, and we may find that the root of the pain is not at the place where the patient feels the pain worst. You can see this simply with headaches: we may feel pain at the front of our head when it is the tension at the back of our neck, or maybe even in our shoulders and back that is responsible for our headache. *Why does the structure of our body alter?*

All through life our bodies are subjected to lots of stresses and strains. The baby in the womb and during birth has forces on it that may distort its head and body and infants have many bangs and knocks on vulnerable tissue. Adults can be involved in car crashes, falls, knocks. Often we find we can trace pain back to an accident at some time during a person's life.

Also there is the added factor – so important to us all – psychological stress.

Other important factors are occupational problems such as working for many

hours of the day in bad conditions – where the body is twisted or cramped, forced to lift awkward weights, or forced to repeat an action over and over. Problems may arise from tight girdles, high heeled shoes, carrying heavy shopping baskets, lifting babies and many other aspects of the housewife's life. (The first two in particular cause pelvic and gynaecological disturbances!)

What type of problems do you treat?

We're well known for our treatment of back, neck and shoulder pain – problems to do with the bones and muscles, but we also treat all the problems connected to this – headaches and migraine, hormone imbalances, depression, chronic digestive problems, feelings of weakness and tiredness, gynaecological problems such as prolapses, retroversions, and period pains.

The type of osteopathy I practise – cranial osteopathy – also has success in treating problems particularly affecting children such as hyperactivity, learning disabilities, autism.

What does the treatment consist of?

Different osteopaths treat in different ways but among the different techniques used are:

Manipulation – where bones of the spine are moved one on another and usually make a clicking sound. This restores movement and in some cases restores the normal working of the vertebrae.

Soft tissue work – This is work, a type of massage – to the ligament muscles and the fibrous membrane that covers and supports the muscle, to restore movement improve blood supply and to stop the bones 'freezing up' again.

Cranial osteopathy – This is very gentle and doesn't usually involve manipulation. Our skull is not a solid object but lots of separate bones joined together. Falls or stress can 'jam' these bones and we work to free them again. We also balance the internal membranes of the brain and spinal cord down to the pelvis. Most people find it very pleasant and relaxing and nearly everyone feels some immediate benefit after a treatment. But it can take a few treatments before a serious pain shows signs of improvement.

Is treatment painful?

Usually no, not at all. But you may feel a slight degree of discomfort at the moment of adjustment. Osteopaths are usually very gentle causing as little extra trauma to an already traumatized body as is possible.

How would I find a good osteopath?

Unfortunately treatment is not available free on the NHS. There are three recognised associations and members of these will have had a proper training. MRO (Member of the Registrar of Osteopaths), MSO (Member of the Society of Osteopaths), MBNOA (Member British Naturopathic and Osteopathic Association). If you look in the yellow pages the initials are usually by the names.

It is important to make sure you go to one of these because there is no law to prevent anyone setting up as an osteopath with little or no training.

Tessa Weare

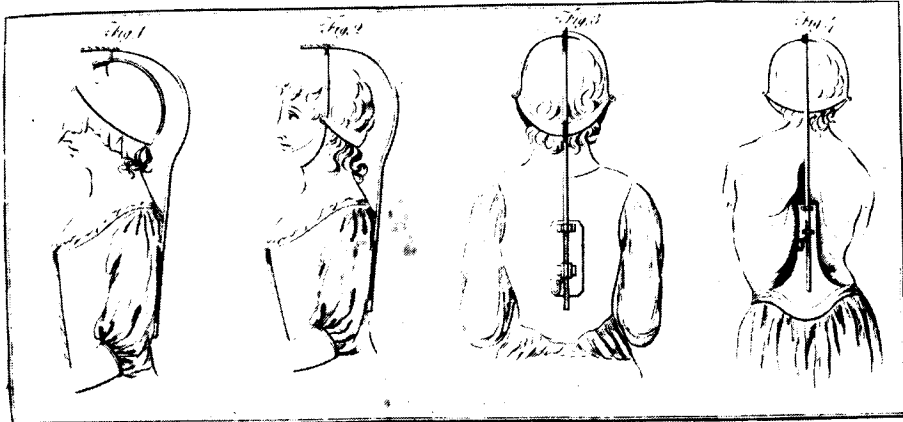


Fig. 17. Side view of Mena's machine, as described in the Mémoires de l'Académie Royale de Chirurgie à Paris.

An early and painful looking way of dealing with back problems.

Battered women: who cares?

'YOU'RE PUNISHED for being homeless. They try to make you feel inadequate. You get no support, just hassle. From the minute you walk through the door it's subtle pressure to get you back to your husband.'

This is one woman's account of the attitude she met in a council hostel for battered women. Womens Voice spoke to three women in the hostel about conditions there, and how they had been fighting to get themselves and their children decently rehoused.

The most striking thing was the lack of any emotional or practical support for women entering the hostel. This isn't due to individual members of staff but rather the general attitude that if you've been battered and find yourself on the streets with the kids, it's your fault. You're just seen as a housing problem.

Helen told us about the reception she had when she arrived at the hostel with her ten month old baby.

'I'd been walking around the streets all night. The first thing I asked for was a cup of tea and they wouldn't give me one.'

'I was upset, and the biggest mistake you can make is to cry in front of them.'

'When I arrived I had no money. They sent me to the Social Security but I couldn't get a giro. When I got back to the hostel they asked me if I had my giro. (The women are charged about £9 a week for a room). *We* can't help you they said. *We* can't give you anything. I started to cry.'

'I've grown up a bit since; you have to in a place like this. I'm still learning, but you learn fast.'

There are no communal facilities at all—a deliberate attempt to discourage women



Annie Bearfield

from getting together. Some women have been asked to spy on others—a clear case of divide and rule!

But the women we spoke to *had* managed to get together and were in a much stronger position as a result. They had spread the word that you don't have to accept the first offer of accommodation that the council make you. One woman had been told by a housing official: 'You've got to take what we offer you even if it's a slum.'

Staff make weekly reports to the housing officer on whether the women make their beds, leave washing in the bath, have a drink in the flat etc.

There's the underlying attitude all the time that battered women should really go back to their husbands. Perhaps these women are seeking the 'excitement of life as a single parent'—(councillor Edwina Currie talking about single parent families in Birmingham).

Some of the women do go back in desperation when suitable accommodation isn't offered soon enough. Accommodation isn't offered at all until they've 'proved' they're battered, and don't intend to return to their husbands, by starting legal proceedings.

As Barbara said, 'What do they suspect us of? Coming here just for a holiday?'

'They want to know not only if *you've* got any savings bonds, gratuities, etc, but if your *children* have. Well, if they have, it's in their names and you can't touch it. I couldn't tell them about that million pounds in bonds I've saved out of the housekeeping, could I?'

The women often don't know their rights, and because it's hard to get together they are unable to stick up for themselves.

Anne described the experience of one woman: 'A woman downstairs went back to her husband. As she walked through that door I felt like crying. She didn't want to go back but she'd been offered a slum.'

'I felt like smashing someone that night. We had to help take her things down. Three times she's been here. She told me they don't offer her decent places because they know she'll go back to her husband. I said stick it out, but she went. She was made weak—beaten by the system.'

So what's the answer? It's not individual staff who are to blame—they're working under pressure, expected to go by 'the rules', perhaps afraid of losing their jobs if they don't.

A lot of problems could be solved by more money. The cuts in spending mean nowhere near enough council houses available for rehousing—but this won't get better with the Tories in charge.

Battered women just aren't seen as a priority. The attitude is that they got themselves into this mess in the first place, and if only they'd go back to their husbands then of course the problem would go away.

Helen, Barbara and Anne provide part of the answer—through sticking together you can make some headway, even against near impossible odds.

Jenny Austin



Annie Bearfield



LOVE

Valentine's Day is here again. The shops are full of cards decorated with pink hearts and fluffy doggies. Inside there are syrupy lyrics, sweet nothings.

Imagine a different kind of card being sent to you by your secret admirer. It has a photograph of a great feminist on it. Alexandra Kollontai for example. Inside, your admirer has written a very serious message, a quotation from Kollontai. "We should try to find in the problems of and the attitude to sexual relationships, and in the psychology of love, the embryo of a new developing and inevitably victorious 'proletarian' culture."

You'd maybe think he'd gone off his head, trying to be a better feminist than you who had sent him a pink heart and a sugared rhyme.

Whatever happened you'd almost certainly be amazed because we're used to the symbols of romance, the love songs, the hearts, the poems, the flowers, and why not?

Arguments rage about love, it's a source of endless conflict. That's why we've chosen to print some thoughts about love this month.

A MANY SPLENDoured THING?

'Show some emotion'

Pop songs burst 'love' into our lives every minute. But if you tell someone that you love them, they are more likely to be frightened than flattered. Our whole language bends away from such heady concepts as love.

You have to be 'cool', 'groovy', 'together', - be anything, but not spontaneous, passionate, wild or impulsive. Convention suffocates our most dynamic feelings.

'Show some emotion' pleads Joan Armatrading urging us to be big enough to laugh and show the world when our souls are dancing with happiness.

And she's right. Those who shy away from emotions like love and call for self control assume that passion is something that is weak enough to be controlled.

But love's not like that. Love is not merely a poem, or a song or a photograph.

Love is living, present and vital, changing and motivating human beings. Love is energy and laughter and joy. It is emotions spinning like catherine wheels. It is selfish and it is generous.

Love is emotional.

Emotions are creative. Love is creative. Robots calculate, animals lust. The human ability to love distinguishes us from both. Love is a driving emotion.

Yet the language we use to describe emotion is somehow condemnatory. People who show anger, pleasure, or pain are called 'heavy' and are pressurised to suppress their emotions and to protect other people from them.

There is nothing wrong with putting your heart where your hormones are—and enjoying it. And there is nothing wrong with yielding to your wildest fantasies.

Any fantasy you didn't yield to was probably not worth having anyway.

Love doesn't last forever. And it never lasts as long as you want it to. That is maybe as well because it is exhausting as well as exhilarating. But the outrageous joy of love should never be denied or suppressed.

Love is greater than just the synthesis of emotions that give rise to it. It is our fire.

Love is subversive. Love is powerful.

With it we can change ourselves, change the world and build socialism for each other. Without it we are just lumps of mobile protoplasm fighting for the biggest slice

of the cake.
Anna Pacuska

Let there be love

'Modern man has no time to "love". In a society based on competition where the battle for existence is fierce and everyone is involved in a race for profit, for a career, or just for a crust of bread, there is no room left for the cult of demanding and fragile Eros.'

Alexandra Kollontai wrote this in 1919. She saw the problems of erotic and romantic love as being rooted in the social and economic relations of men and woman. It was through socialism that she envisaged the possibility of love becoming not a matter of pain but 'a great creative force... which develops and enriches the psyche...'

It simply isn't wise to say that love doesn't exist. It clearly does, is alive but not very well. It is bankrupt. We question it and rage at it and say it doesn't exist because hideous crimes are committed in the name of love, crimes of possession, of jealousy, the man spirited imprisonment of one 'lover' by another. Simone de Beauvoir wrote that 'One can never possess the spring in which one's thirst is quenched.' Maybe if we can

internalise that idea, then we can begin to relinquish our self destructive urge to possess and begin to reclaim love not as swoon, possession or mania but a conscious act, 'indeed the only way to grasp the innermost core of personality.' (Germaine Greer)

To say that love doesn't exist, is to turn our backs on the struggle to create 'a world we can bear out of the desert we inhabit' (Kate Millet). To accept that it exists and has the potential to be beautiful and not lethal, is to be a militant in the struggle for a love that allows lovers to give each other freedom within love, not captivity.

'Assuredly there are certain forms of the sexual adventure which will be lost in the world of tomorrow. But this does not mean that love, happiness, poetry, dreams, will be banished from it.'

Simone de Beauvoir is one of love's most acute critics, she recognises its power to mutilate women, but she at no point undercuts its potential.

Socialists, feminists, all radical thinkers are in danger of killing anything which is old and traditional in crude anger. They are the losers.

'Christianity gave



eroticism its savour of sin when it endowed the human female with a soul: if society restores her sovereign individuality to woman, it will not thereby destroy the power of love's embrace to move the heart . . . In sexuality will always be materialised the tension the joy, the frustration and the triumph of existence. To emancipate woman is to refuse to confine her to the relations she bears to man, not to deny them to her.' (Simone de Beauvoir)

'It is time to teach woman to treat love as a step, as a way of finding her true 'I', her true self and not as her whole existence. Let her learn to come through an emotional conflict as a man does, with a stronger spirit and not broken wings . . . here is already hope, the new woman is emerging for whom love is not the only thing in her life.' (Alexandra Kollontai)

Whatever havoc love may have wreaked the point is not to kill it, not to see it as a lethal weapon, but to give it a future by understanding it and celebrating it. (Melanie McFadyean)

Romantic love

I believe in romantic love, why? I have experienced it, and enjoyed every moment of it. I once looked into blue eyes and fell madly in love. Fortunately the feeling was mutual. HOW was it romantic? How different from say, just fancying each

other? Maybe it wasn't. Only it transformed us, we were beautiful, never tired, everything was easy, we were alive, funny, strong. We used to walk around the city all night, talking, or close and quiet.

Fried egg sandwiches at the all night coffee stall, listening to the same LP for hours, going out at dawn. Making love on a convertible couch that tipped up and rolled us onto the floor. Taking days off, loving, eating, his vain attempts to show me how to fence. Meeting at lunchtime, not going back to work. At parties, cheating at postmans knock. Sitting in the car in winter, until we got so cold we would have to leave each other. Rushing through each day, towards each other. The weekend on the Isle of Wight, the weather was foul, we hired a rowboat and it sank.

Hurrying back to our lodgings, drying each other, going to bed. Our romantic love stayed for two years, there is no time limit on love, so for me those two years of romantic love were enough. (Carole Barrett)



'What is this thing called love?'

You might as well say 'what is this thing called god' and the answer to both questions is—nothing, neither exist but most people believe they do.

We are encouraged in this belief by an intricate web of ideology, literature and music which mention love all the time (just start thinking of pop songs . . .) but keep them removed from our normal lives, perpetuate a mystique and encourage us to believe in the inexplicable.

As Marxists, we should be keen to provide explanations; we believe there is an explanation for everything (even if it is not obvious) and this includes relationships between people, which under capitalism are pretty limited.

People cannot explain what they mean by love when asked—which is just as well for them, as it seems to mean all things to all women, in which case it's a pretty useless expression if you never know what the other person means, you know they don't know what they mean and you don't know what you mean yourself.

To me, all concepts of love are romanticised—applied to humans and inanimate objects alike. Is love of one's country the same as love of one's children the same as

love of one's sexual partner ('lover'—you'd think it had nothing to do with sex!). They are also possessive, whether applied to food, clothes, books, music or other possessions, including people.

In order to begin to relate to people properly (which is basically why we're in business as socialists) we have to *unlearn* set responses with which we are imbued, and the concept of love serves only to cloud how people do relate to each other by perpetuating the idea of an irresistible force which takes over our feelings.

Love between human beings, whether between consenting adults or in families (where you can't even choose—you're presented with people supposed to love) is exclusive and anti-social—if others are included, it's not so intense, not so real.

Fortunately human beings are still very much social animals, and although society is organised to restrict our caring to a claustrophobically small number of people we are still capable of identifying with and caring for people who have little to do with us.

In socialism, we will be able to express these wider feelings of concern, with other people in a practical way. We will have far more honest, open relationships, we will relate in ways we cannot imagine now, but most important we will know what we are doing.

Love has nothing to do with it—it is a mystifying buffer against the nasty world of now—we won't need it when we're changed for the better the way we relate to each other in society as a whole.

Liz Balfour

Train without rails

Della and her girlfriend Kim, talked for hours about what love means in a lesbian relationship. They had spent eight hours trying to write down what they felt and ended up in tears in a kebab house in the middle of the night.

'We talked about it so much and went in so many circles, that in the end we decided we didn't even love each other after all.'

Della looked as if she was

LOVE

going to start crying again.

'But I think we couldn't talk about it because we are in love. We couldn't define it and we thought we had to.' rejoined Kim, putting her arm around Della. They laughed ruefully. Kim said,

'I wrote down a list of differences between heterosexual and homosexual love and came to the conclusion that there aren't that many differences.'

'I came to the conclusion that there are differences,' said Della.

'When I first met Kim and fell in love with her, I wasn't in any doubt about it being love, that wasn't the problem. But I felt like I was on a train without any rails, there were no rules, no precedents. I felt that I wasn't allowed to kiss her in public, you know, no necking in corners at parties and I couldn't tell my mum at first. My Dad thinks lesbians are filthy and he's out of the picture anyway so I never told him. My mum doesn't like it but she likes Kim very much now. She confronts the conflict and works through it. At first I felt I needed men to fancy me, but now I don't.' Della looked at Kim who continued:



'This is my first serious relationship, and what I like about it is that there isn't any competition, and like Della says, there are no rules. No one is the breadwinner, no one is the wife, no-one is the husband there's no family. So we can be more economically equal. That's a big difference.'

'The thing about having a family is perhaps the most

difficult, the most painful. We can't have babies, I don't want us to have any body else's babies, and yet we are powerless because we can't make babies.' Kim looked at Della and smiled. 'Think of the good things, Della.

We don't feel we are in any kind of ghetto, we have lots of heterosexual friends and what's nice is that we don't pose a threat to them, people seem to like being with us.'

The more they talked, the more they began to laugh and they ended up with their arms around each other right there in the kebab house breaking all the rules. *Marilyn Maclean*

The cross we bear

'I am not the wife you need. I am a person before I am a woman' *Alexander Kollontai, 1922.*

All too often, being in love, far from making the sun shine warmer and more brightly in our lives, is a painful, restrictive process. There are rules for loving which we learn as we grow up.

They are not explicitly taught, we just pick them up as we go along. And just as we learn the rules in a very personal way, the punishments for breaking the rules are of a very personal kind. Jealousy, possessiveness, feeling hurt and betrayed are all very individual punishments.

There is a pattern for loving to which we fail to conform at our peril. It is a pattern bounded by legal rules, unlike friendship. The pattern of loving in our society, is best summed up in the image of a cross. The cross bar is made up of a man and a woman (very important). This man and woman are allowed, indeed expected, to have a sexual relationship. At the top are the parents who are supposed to be loved and respected and down below are the children who are also supposed to be loved, cared for and brought up in the image of the parents. We are not to love anyone else. The cross, (otherwise known as the nuclear family) is a static, unbending structure.

Why do we build these crosses? The reason is not that we all need personal and sexual companionship. If it were simply a question

of fulfilling those important needs, there is no reason why the cross would have to have a heterosexual cross bar, nor why it should be a permanent fixture.

No, the reason for the particular formation of the cross is the social and economic function of the nuclear family, which is to assume the responsibility of reproduction under capitalism. The man and woman are expected not only to conceive children, but to look after them and take responsibility for them until the children are old enough to make their own crosses. This economic function of the family is the basis for many of the problems we encounter in the process of 'loving' in our lives.

Most people go through the process known as 'falling in love', shivers and tingles, sexual attraction and all sorts of emotions which make you feel as if you can't be without someone. It can be delightful and thoroughly enjoyable. But there are problems and pitfalls—all connected with the cross you are really supposed to be building. That is what 'falling in love' is for— to entice each of us into building that damn cross.

As Suzanne Broger pointed out, love is the only equation where $1+1=1$ because the woman equals naught. Women's lives are totally dominated by the process of reproduction, that's why love is a woman's life whereas it is only an episode in a man's, his role is to function in the outside world of production.

The historic development of sexuality itself has been unequal for men and women. With the rise of private property and inheritance it was necessary for a man to know which children were his, and the only way to do that is to

restrict the woman to sex with one man. As a result women are seen as either virgins or prostitutes and female sexual needs are traditionally much less developed than those of men.

We all learn how to satisfy a man, but few of us learn either how to satisfy ourselves or how to teach men how to. It took the Womens Liberation Movement to bring the whole question of women's sexual satisfaction to the fore as a practical requirement of satisfactory sexual relationships.

The inequality of women in relation to men not only affects sexuality, but the whole nature of relationships. Marriage is founded on the woman as a slave to her husband's and children's needs. A woman belongs to a man, body and soul.

Your thoughts are not your own even if you get as far as thinking for yourself.

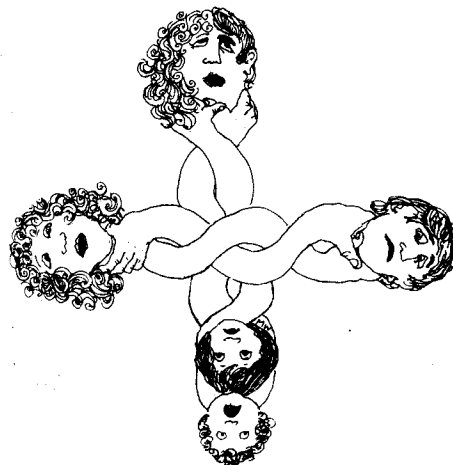
And if a woman's mind is not her own, still less is her body.

'Over and over again, the man always tried to impose his ego upon us and adapt us fully to his purposes'. (Kollontai).

Divorce is the way out of an unbearable relationship if you can afford to live apart, but all too often it simply leads to a repetition of the same kind of thing with a man with a different name. To be a single parent or stay single is a tough and lonely road in a society built on the cross.

The right to choose who we love and how we love and the freedom to develop loving relationships is fundamental to our humanity. But to be able to do that, we have to destroy the cross and the society which requires it. After all, who really needs a cross to bear?

Sheila McGregor



In Catholic Spain abortion is still illegal. Since the death of Franco, the fascist who ruled Spain for more than forty years, the womens movement has begun to grow and to demand more liberal laws. *Lindsey*

German spoke to *Paloma*, a member of the *Movimiento Comunista*, the largest revolutionary organisation in Spain, about the changes taking place.

Spanish women defy oppression

Abortion is completely forbidden in Spain. To get an abortion you have to come to England, and working women don't have the money to do that. The campaign to change the law has become very important in the last few months, since the trial in Bilbao.

Eleven women were put on trial. One for performing abortions, one for helping her and the other nine for having them. The womens assembly in Vizcaya spent all summer publicising the case and building up a campaign for their defence. They wanted support for those on trial and legislation for abortion rights.

We were amazed at the support everywhere in the country. We didn't think we would get such a response in a Catholic country like Spain. We gave out leaflets and did stunts. We occupied, chained ourselves to buildings, even occupied a bishop's palace.

The police were vicious. And the women became more militant. In Oviedo, where I come from, we occupied the courthouse. The police charged us and the women fought back. The police were well trained by Franco and they are quite used to charging into people. They carry rifles to fire tear gas and rubber bullets.

Women who had never been involved in politics hurled themselves against the police weapons. At first the police were so surprised they retreated.

Eventually the trial was postponed but the campaign is still going on. There are 300,000 illegal abortions a year and 3,000 women die from them each year. Methods of abortion are really primitive. In one case that we know of a woman used caustic soda and burnt herself badly, but she still didn't abort.

We are also campaigning for the divorce law. The Government are proposing a separation for seven years before a divorce is possible. Again the campaign has grown despite the Church.

The influence of the Catholic church has declined. Very few workers go to mass. People aren't interested or if they are they might believe in God but they don't believe in the church teachings. Some of the bishops opposed the constitution introduced after Franco's death because they really have fascist views. Some of the younger priests say they respect the right of abortion, but only for non-Catholics!

At this time working class women find the issues like abortion and divorce more relevant than issues like higher pay. Partly that is because divorce and abortion aren't freely available, but also because fewer women work in Spain than in this country. Only 17 per cent of workers are women. That doesn't mean they aren't interested in politics. If you go to a meeting in a working class district women will want to talk about their problems, how their husbands stop them going out to work, or how they, the husbands, spend all evening in the bar!

In the trade unions there is also more awareness of the problems women workers have. Two years ago the Workers Commissions (the most important union in Spain) set up womens' secretariats. We use them to give talks in factories. If there is a strike involving women we work round it, and try to bring out the issues that affect the women directly. We try to get better conditions for women at work through bargaining between management and unions. We always have to make sure the womens demands aren't forgotten.

Under Franco everyone was so involved in the anti-fascist fight that the womens movement didn't really exist. It's only in the last two years that feminist ideas have begun to appear in Spanish society. Womens organisations have sprung



up all over the country. They have accidental lives — sometimes they grow, sometimes they almost disappear, but when there is a particular struggle, like the abortion campaign, they grow and gather a lot of women around them.

All this has affected our party as well. We now have a womens structure which decides how we work in campaigns and how we fight for womens equality inside the party. Over three quarters of our women members are involved in it after two years of work. It has helped women develop confidence and has made the party take up the fight for womens rights and against womens oppression.

We really have no experience to compare it with because we did so little before, but we think it's working. At first there was a certain mistrust. The men would ask: 'What are the women doing together? Are they plotting against us?' But we had a lot of support from the leadership of the party. They encouraged us and said to let us alone, that we knew what we were doing and we weren't doing anything against the party. That helped to deal with the mistrust.

We try very hard to take feminist ideas into the factories because we believe that it is the women workers who have to lead the fight to liberate themselves.

Women being attacked by police on a pro-abortion demonstration.



IF THE CORRIE BILL is carried by a vote in the House of Commons it will only take a few weeks for it to pass through the House of Lords and be given the royal assent.

Once that happens it is estimated that two thirds of abortions will become illegal.

Remember these two words.

You may

have to break the law.

ILLEGAL ABORTION

I was nineteen and I was pregnant. It was 1966, abortion laws were strict and there was no provision for someone like me; my alternatives were either to have the baby or a backstreet abortion. Both prospects terrified me. I didn't want to have a baby but only two years earlier my friend's mother had died after a backstreet abortion, and anyway, I had no idea how to get such a thing.

I let things drift, hoping I could bring on a miscarriage by violent exercise, gin, enemas, but nothing worked.

My boyfriend was at college and thought there might be a chance through the university doctor. I thought then it would be easy, this doctor would get it done, and soon. But no, I had to go and see him and he spelt out what was involved. He knew a Harley Street doctor who 'might be able to help' but it would cost a lot of money. My boyfriend and I sold everything we could and both got two jobs to cover what we thought the price would be.

A week later we arrived at a swish surgery off Piccadilly, full of leather settees and sad women, all waiting for the same service as me. We sat and stared at each other for over four hours as one by one we were called to go in. No-one spoke, no-one acknowledged why we were there.

My turn came; I went into the room and felt sick at the sight of the fat, elderly man who was about to manhandle me for money. It was the only time in my life I have felt upset about internal examinations, I was totally in his power — if I could pay enough he would 'help'. I was already too far gone for safety, he kept emphasising, so if I wanted him to take the risk the price would have to go up from £100 to £150. That was if he could do it, he didn't know yet. I said yes in desperation, not knowing where the extra money was to come from, but at least it was going to be done.

When could he do it I asked; no idea, he said, he would have to let me know where and when later. Then came the worst news; he could of course only do it if I was certified unstable by two psychiatrists. Fortunately, he just

No one spoke, no one acknowledged why we were there.

happened to know two men who were willing to provide this service — for a small fee — and he would arrange the appointments.

I was terrified. I thought there was no way I could convince a psychiatrist I was unstable. How naive I was! They took the fee first, another £10 each, and asked a few leading questions. Had I ever tried to commit suicide because of this pregnancy? At first I said I hadn't. So the first man asked again, and I realised I was supposed to answer 'yes'. That was it! I was certified.

We had managed to get all the money; the doctor wanted it all in £1 notes and he counted every one in front of us. My boyfriend nearly hit him but I couldn't take that risk, it had to be alright. Now surely he would tell me where and when. No, his secretary would phone with the information as soon as possible. That was Christmas eve. I was in a state of both relief and anxiety. What if he couldn't do it, what if it was too late and I died.

I didn't realise what part this waiting played in the game. The more anxious I was and the more difficult it seemed, the more compliant I would be and the more I would pay.

The news came at 6.30 am on New Year's Day. They could take me now at 9 am, that morning. The place was a very posh private clinic. I had to sign a form saying I absolved the doctor of all responsibility and whatever happened was nothing to do with him. There was no



wash, or pre-med or even a gown. I just had to remove enough clothing to make my bottom half accessible. There was an injection and I went to sleep.

I woke up at 7 pm in a room with nine other women. I was covered in blood, my boyfriend had come in and was protesting about the state of my bed but the staff would not change the sheets. It always takes me a long time to come round from anaesthetics, I can be sleepy for a couple of days, but the nurses forced me to stand and walk up and down in an attempt to wake me up enough to discharge me. Blood ran down my legs and I fainted; they eventually let me go back to another room and a clean bed. I was woken the next morning and told I had to be gone by 9 am.

They had paid more than me so they were entitled to better treatment.

Still in a stupor with lots of pain I was ushered out to the discharge point. Despite my poor condition I was merely told to go to my own doctor if there were any problems and discharged. As I went out I saw some of the other women from the surgery. They were still in dressing gowns, still in the clinic. The nurse said they had paid more than me so they were entitled to better treatment!

I bled continuously for three months and had an infection that took a long while to clear up.

Looking back it was the money that held the key to the problem: the richer

you were, the more you could pay, the more sympathetic the doctors. The more you paid the quicker and better the treatment.

The rich are always protected from Acts of Parliament, money always provides an escape route for them. It was always the poor women who had the backstreet abortions and it will only be the poor women who will resort to it again if the Corrie Bill is passed.

Jeannie Hilton

Illegal means dangerous

In the days before the abortion law was liberalised women used a variety of techniques to procure abortion. In the early part of the century many used pills made of lead compounds and it did sometimes work. But many women died or were blinded from the side effects. Another method used regularly in the 1930s, and which caused the death of a woman as late as the 1950s, was slippery elm bark. Women inserted the bark of this Canadian tree in their uterus where it would swell up and sometimes cause an abortion. On other occasions it could cause severe damage to the woman.

The method which had become the most widely used by post-war years was the Higginson's syringe and these could be found in many working class homes in the period after the war.

The rich of course had no such problems in obtaining abortions. As early as the 1920s gynaecologists were openly stating they were practising abortion on demand for rich women and there was never any fear that they would be prosecuted. In fact, through the fifties and early sixties their trade continued to grow so that by the time the 1967 Act came into operation there were around 20,000 abortions a year carried out in Harley Street or in National Health Service hospitals for people who had a sympathetic doctor. However, these abortions

The smug self-satisfaction with which the Royal Family Defend the Faith is part and parcel of their nauseating image. It was surprising, therefore, to hear before Christmas that Princess Anne was crossing the floor, so to speak, to attend a carol concert at Westminster Cathedral. A concert in aid of the Year of the Child, in a Catholic Church, seemed a fitting occasion for a picket in favour of free abortion on demand.

About 40 women and a large handful of men turned out. We had lots of placards: Every child a wanted child! Not the Church, Not the State, etc. The chanting and singing was vigorous. And it didn't go unheard. Large numbers of people were going home from work along Victoria Street.

Presumably even Princess Anne heard our slogans, when she finally turned up . . . late.

As early as the 1920s gynaecologists were openly stating they were practising abortion on demand for rich women and there was never any fear they would be prosecuted.

accounted for only a fifth of all those carried out. The majority of the rest were carried out by local backstreet operators who would perform the operation very cheaply, in some cases for nothing. Many of these women became very skilful and were highly thought of in their community. But problems could always arise and in the sixties there were more than forty deaths each year from abortion.

Once the 1967 Act came into operation the number of illegal abortions fell rapidly. For example, the number of deaths fell from 47 in 1966 to 5 by 1974. But illegal abortions did not totally disappear. The inadequacies of the National Health Service in some areas meant that many poor women have still not been able to have access to adequate care.

This property owning, ex-public school elite, don't care about the consequences.

This is particularly true of black women who have been caught in a double blind. In some circumstances they have been refused abortion unless they would agree to sterilisation and in other cases have been refused abortion altogether or been unable to negotiate the torturous system. The most striking finding from the Official statistics *Confidential Enquiries into Maternal Deaths* is that between 1970-75 more black women died of illegal abortion than white women and the deathrate from illegal abortion for black women was thirty times the rate for white women.

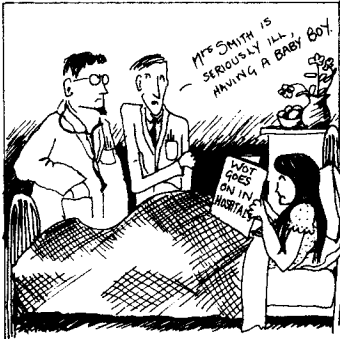
If Corrie's Bill passes there is no doubt that the problems are going to grow again. Many women's groups are already teaching each other how to perform abortions successfully and it seems likely that illegal abortions for some will be less risky than they were in the sixties. Many will be outside this network and it is they who will resort to self-abortions with devastating effects.

The future looks grim but one thing is certain, Mr Corrie and his friends will not lose any sleep about the problems they are causing. In advising the MPs opposing the Bill I have observed the anti-abortionists at close quarters. They have absolutely no idea what problems working class women, or anyone who is not a member of the property owning, ex-public school elite, will face.

Colin Francome



REVIEWS



THE CHILDBIRTH BOOK CHRISTINE BEELS TURNSTONE B £2.65

This book helped me with the most difficult part of having my baby — the battle with the male medical profession not to be treated as a person who is sick in mind or body. From their point of view you must be physically ill because you are attending hospital, and because you are a (pregnant) woman are automatically superstitious, ill-informed, over-anxious and neurotic about your body's workings.

As soon as a woman steps into a hospital she places herself in the world of male medical domination and patronage. Unfortunately for most of us, there is no alternative to a hospital delivery, as the home delivery service has been cut back so severely that fewer than 6% of births take place at home now.

But, 'forewarned is forearmed'. Christine Beels provides information we need, if we want to decide for ourselves what is best for us and our babies. She describes the procedures, machines and drugs which may be used in pregnancy and labour, how they work, what they are supposed to do, how effective they are and when they are necessary. You won't find this information in the booklets given out at ante-natal clinics or on WH Smith's shelves — they just tell you that 'doctor knows best'.

Ms Beels is a member of the Association of Radical Midwives and her book is written from a feminist perspective. She is in favour of extending the use and authority of midwives, more homebirths, less unnecessary medical intervention and the demystification of the male medical world.

The text is illustrated with sketches and diagrams, statistical evidence and comparisons back up the evaluations of various

obstetric attitudes and techniques, and best of all in my opinion, there are plenty of first-hand accounts of giving birth. There are even chapters on depression and one section titled 'If your baby dies' — topics that are totally taboo at ante-natal clinics or the books which conclude, 'You will soon be home with your dear little son, with nothing to worry about'.

The book is easy to read, with useful margin headings, but I found

the lack of an index a nuisance.

It is expensive for 256 pages but, it would be a good communal book for a *Womens Voice* group. I found that women who had had kids wanted to read it, to measure their experience against it and even friends who have sworn to remain childless, found it a worthwhile read. I certainly thought it was a great investment and so did my pregnant friends, to whom I handed it on.

Kirsten Ross

Now pay attention children!
You really must stop this fuss,
Just because there's no swimming;
Mrs Thatcher cut the bus.

What do you mean young Johnny?
You don't know where to look!
Look at your worn out desk top;
Mrs Thatcher cut the books.

No you can't have anything to write with!
And its hardly important when
You will probably never need the skill;
Mrs Thatcher cut the pen.

Since your mum lost her job, Joanna,
You've had nothing but colds and sore throats;
No wages, warm clothes, *no school dinners!*
Mrs Thatcher cut your coat!

Now we will have to open a window,
Yes, yes, I know there's a draught.
I try to be fair — we must have some air
With so many of you in one class;
Mrs Thatcher cut the teachers.

Question time with Mrs Thatcher:
Are your eyes all filmed over with hair spray?
Are your ears full of cold creme or shit?
Don't you see, don't you hear, don't you *know*
That we, Us, the people *won't let you do it!*
Because this is the next generation.
They will one day be all that remains
Of your greedy and blind devastation,
All knowing, all uncaring, all untrained.

Mrs Thatcher, Prime Minister of the obsolescent brain.

SCHOOL DAYS CAROLE BARRETT

REMEMBER ME FAY WELDON CORONET 95p

I thought this book was going to be another bitter, complaining, women's lib book, but after ploughing through the acid introduction of characters, I was surprised to become really involved

with the plot.

The original depression evoked by the book is soon dispelled by the death of Madeline which allows her retribution. As she lies in the morgue, in the period between her death and burial, her busy spirit emerges to cause havoc with her ex-husband's second marriage.

The underlying theme of the

MY SONG IS MY OWN — 100 SELECTED WOMEN'S SONGS SANDRA KERR KATHY HENDERSON AND FRANKIE ARMSTRONG PLUTO £3.95

This is one of the best books of women's songs that I have read and sung. The selection is very good, varying from 'love, courtship and desire' to 'the waged and the unwaged'.

One song I thought was very good was *Don't get married girls* written by Leon Rosselson. It's really a list of why you shouldn't get married and what other daring things you could be:

**Be a callgirl, be a stripper,
Be a hostess, be a whore,
But don't get married girls,
For Marriage is a bore!**

I'm gonna be an engineer, constructed by Peggy Seeger, was another song that I thought was really good. It's about a little girl who wanted to be an engineer from her primary school days to when she finally gets a low paid job as an engineer.

I managed to play these songs on my guitar as the music is provided with the songs.

What I found annoying about this book was that to find the other verses of a song you had to turn over the page. Why couldn't the publishers have made it bigger so that all the verses fitted on one page?

The songs in this book are in the traditional style. They haven't put any new songs in e.g. *Oh bondage up yours* by Poly Styrene and *Typical girls* by The Slits. If more of these songs were included it would give a truer picture of what women's songs are like at the moment — more direct and forceful.

Overall I think it's a good book, but expensive.

Hattie Clements (age 13)

book is one of 'well isn't it a small world'. The characters are surprisingly linked to each other and the past in a very neat fashion, emphasising our innate human bonding.

Fay Weldon deals with the realities of our lives in a tough, practical, factual fashion. Certainly a book worth reading.

Krysia Donnelly

**HEX
POISON GIRLS
XNTRIX RECORDS**

AVAILABLE FROM SMALL
WONDER, 162 HOE STREET,
WALTHAMSTOW E17

Tired, run down, finding it hard to cope? Take a dose of Poison Girls. A horrid, blatant, 8-track EP, all about oppression and degradation and brutality.

At 43, Vi Subversa, the lead singer, is older than most punks. Other new wave bands aren't really in a position to write songs about being a harassed housewife and mother like *Jump Mama Jump*:

Don't stop mama, clean them floors

**And the baby's bum is wet ma
All spick and span by half past four**

**You'd better not forget ma
But there's love to make and hearts to mend**

**Hey jump just one more time ma
Your candle's burning at both ends
But just you stay in line ma...**

Their tunes have a nursery rhyme simplicity, jarred by frequent changes of tempo and constant interruptions from the bland male voice of authority — the doctor, the sociologist, the nagging husband — and the noise of kids arguing, the TV blaring, the sounds of the supermarket.

All the lyrics are overwhelmingly emotional — not sentimental, but filled with a searing rage against our oppressors and a burning desire to expose as intolerable the everyday problems we take for granted. *Crisis*:

**Is it time to have a crisis?
Is it safe to go out shopping?
Crisis, crisis, panic buying
Water dripping on the carpet —
Is it normal? Is it normal?
Is it JUST ANOTHER DAY?**

Bremen Song identifies patriarchal authoritarianism as the ultimate cause of both the Jewish holocaust of World War II and the witch hunts of the middle ages. The song celebrates the brave passion of the heretic, she who resists the lies and defies the cruelty of those who try to control us:

**We burn, sisters, we burn, we will
set the world on fire
With our burning
With our yearning
With our burning.**

This song provoked the British Movement to storm the stage and beat up the band at a recent benefit. Lets hope Poison Girls will now review their policy of trying to win over known fascists by welcoming them into their gigs. It doesn't seem to work.

This record will not relax you, or take away your pain. If it's tranquilizers you want, you better go *Under the Doctor*:

**Thousands of us women have
been cut down by lobotomy
Terrorized by ECT**

**Bullied into passivity,
Seduced into servility,
I'm talking about you and me
What I'm trying to say is you
gotta be strong
Cos nothing takes the pain away
for long.**

Lucy Toothpaste

**HEALTH IN DANGER
DAVID WIDGERY
PAPERMAC £2.95**

You know that feeling of being really aware of enjoying something you're eating, or watching on TV, when you can't wait for the next bit, but at the same time you don't want it to end? Well, that's how I felt about reading this book.

Every section of this book, from the history of the NHS to the present attacks on it, is full of insight and arguments that are useful in the daily struggle to defend and improve our health service.

Factual and politically committed books are sometimes dry and difficult to absorb and take more than a bit of determination to get through. Not this one. Dave's experience as a GP in a working class area of London, fully involved in the fight against the cuts, coupled with the way he writes and illustrates the facts, make this an immensely useful and enjoyable book.

He begins with life before the NHS, covers the troubles and mistakes that beset it from the start, the compromises and half measures that successive governments have been prepared to make and the stupidity of expecting a health service to function adequately in this society, riddled with poverty, bad housing and unemployment.

It's heartening to see the role of women and the deal we got from the NHS covered so consistently, and like all other aspects of the book, positively with explanations and counter suggestions as to what health care could and should be like. Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion, exploitation of women workers, the role of the family and the family doctor, every issue which affects women specifically, is raised. And last, but not least, our part in the new militancy and awareness of NHS workers.

This is a careful and caring analysis of the crisis in the NHS. Of why the NHS is worth fighting for, why there is a need to fight, how we can fight and for what. Dave says in his introduction: 'I had to write this book because I do care what happens to the NHS and I do not want to see its best idealism and inspiration squandered by treasury accountants.' I am glad he did write.

If you care this book is invaluable.

Anne Robertson

**WE WILL SMASH THIS PRISON: INDIAN WOMEN
IN STRUGGLE
GAIL OMVEDT
ZED PRESS £2.95**

Gail Omvedt explains in the first sentence of her book that 'the first time I ever gave a speech on Womens Liberation was to a group of illiterate, ex-untouchable, agricultural labourers in India'.

How on earth, I thought, could an American feminist make ideas of womens liberation relevant to some of the poorest, most exploited and oppressed women in the world. And what would they make of her?

The story that follows, the interviews and discussions with different groups of Indian women, their songs, their experiences of Indian politics, bring alive the complex political life of one of the largest countries in the world.

Most of the interviews were made during 1975 and 1976 and the political scene has changed much since then, but an Afterword, written in 1979, brings events and the author's analysis up to date.

It's one of those books which you should read even if you don't have a particular interest in Indian politics because it shows how even these most downtrodden women have a vision of the future and know they have to fight for it.

It's not that difficult for socialists to convince those around them that society has to change. What it is often impossible to do is to persuade them how it can be done. This is one of those books that does the persuading for you. It is the story of very courageous women.

**We'll take our children on our hips
And go to join the revolution
We'll face police batons and guns
We'll become dark in the sun**

**We are wives of peasants,
We are wives of workers
We are working women.**

Women's song of the national movement from the 1940s.
Margaret Renn

This book is one of those available to members of the Bookmarks Club in this coming quarter, list E. (See the inside front cover for full details). Why not join the Club and get this and other books every quarter at specially reduced rates.



US-UK the same the whole world over

Dear Womens Voice

As poor and working people around the world struggle against capitalism, your publication shows us in the US how similar problems in the UK are to ours. I live in New York where I am a member of the Coalition of Grass Roots Women. CGRW are a group of women throughout the US working at the grass roots level in various arenas of struggle such as welfare, unions, healthcare and childcare to bring about real social change. We see that the reforms of the 60s and early 70s were only temporarily granted and for the most part only to white middle-class women. Today government cutbacks are the rule and women are under attack. When cuts and poverty are on the rise, sexism and racism are also on the rise.

Two out of three people living at or below poverty level in the US are women and of these women the greatest number are Black and Hispanic. 80 per cent of the workforce are unorganised. About 46 per cent of the employed labour force are women and less than 1 per cent of these have union representation. And the US has no system of publicly supported daycare. Every 30 seconds a woman is beaten. Every 5 minutes a woman is raped. Lesbian women are tortured in the struggle against existing norms—especially couples who are trying to build a new kind of social relationship.

Poor and working women are forced to bear the heaviest burdens of the capitalist economic crisis and the deterioration of personal life. The strategies that brought about only some gains in the 60s are no longer the proper strategies for bringing about gains in this period of crisis. And it is with this understanding that CGRW are helping to build a new kind of womens movement—an international womens movement—that puts us, Poor and Working Women, first.

A toast to you and to our work in the 80s.

Barbara Sands
New York

LETTERS



RED HERRING

Dear Womens Voice

While I agree with Catherine Gilouis that disrupting a meeting is hardly the most sensible way to make a point of view, I feel that she is wrong to describe abortion as a 'moral issue'. While abortion is regulated by law it is a political issue.

The question is not one of the so-called 'moral' aspects of abortion, but of what kind of society we want ourselves and our children to live in. One in which women die in backstreets and hundreds of unwanted children are put into care, or one in which women's health and safety is secured and every child is planned, wanted, and loved?

To speak of morality is a red herring. 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world. The point is to change it' (Marx).

Diane Jeater

Another opinion

Dear Womens Voice

Having for the first time bought WV, I was leafing through it to find a short piece to ease me into the magazine (issue 37). I noticed a review of Greer's 'The Female Eunuch', and, as this book had a tremendous impact on me when I read it, I naturally wanted to compare my own reaction with someone else's.

It was perhaps unfortunate that I started here—it was in many ways not representative of the rest of the publication—but I found that the reviewer and I had read totally different books.

One of the most striking and reassuring points that had come across to me in the book was that Ms Greer did not take up the accepted extremist (and petit-bourgeois) line that 'males are to blame for, and revel in, the repression of women'. What Greer did was to show so clearly that, although women had suffered much more than men, the male sex had also been



repressed by society.

This was not even mentioned in the review, which did as much to slander and sensationalise the work of this once-fine Marxist as did her contemporary (and bourgeois) press.
Owen Tudor
Surrey

Capitalism means men have power

Dear Womens Voice

I like Womens Voice. I am a socialist woman, but I am also a feminist woman. It depresses me that a socialist woman's magazine like your own is still incapable of explaining why rape happens.

Fight with men to build socialism, you say, then 'sexual oppression and sexual violence will be eradicated.' I am opposed to this class system, but am also more and more weary of being told to blame something abstract.

Rape happens because men enjoy having power over women. And that sickness in men began long before capitalism, and will not disappear overnight, if we get socialism either. The sickness will begin to fade only through women uniting to challenge it. Capitalism is power, but to be male is also to have power, whatever your class.

Mary
North London

Any suppressed stories?

Dear Womens Voice

The National Union of Journalists is compiling a dossier of abuses of press freedom by the managements of newspapers. The Equality Working Party is concerned that evidence of the suppression and distortion of matters affecting women should be included in the dossier, which is to be published after cross-checking and legal vetting.

We would like to ask the help of your readers in submitting such evidence to our National Executive Council. Detailed and accurate information about cases of abuse is needed. It might make matters easier if women checked with NUJ officials at their local papers first to find out exactly what happened to their suppressed/distorted story before contacting us.

Any information can be sent to this address:
National Union of Journalists
Acorn House, 314/320 Gray's
Inn Road
London WC1X 8DP
Marion Bowman
London

MIXED FEELINGS IS GREAT-READ IT

Dear Womens Voice

I've just read an amazing pamphlet called 'Mixed Feelings' produced by Brent Against Corrie.

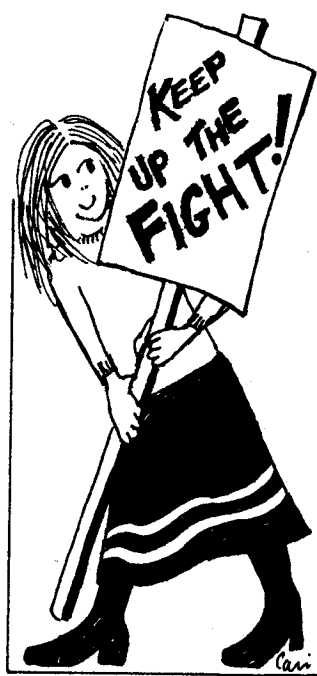
In it 10 women write of their feelings on pregnancy and having an abortion. It's a very straight forward and for anyone who has had an abortion really reaches the heart of your feelings and experience. It's a very personal thing, hard to generalise your emotions, but such a relief to share the experience of the doctor who accuses you of carelessness, the way your body plays tricks with your emotions, the total aloneness of having an abortion.

It is a very rare bloke who can or is even willing to try to understand one half of what you go through with abortion. However strong you are it is a female decision and experience that you don't easily forget.

Read this book sisters, it contains 10 very personal accounts that are more political than 1000 promises or slogans. By the time you read this we may well be under Corrie's martial law and having to organise to regain even the

restricted rights to abortion we have had from '67. This little booklet will give you warmth and the urgency to keep up the fight. You can get it for 30p plus postage from: Brent Against Corrie, Brent Womens Centre, 138 Minet Avenue, London NW10.

Read it, share it, please.
Debbie Gold.
Old Trafford, Manchester.



Voice of arrogance

Dear Womens Voice

As a feminist who buys your magazine occasionally to keep in touch with and support various fronts of the Women's Liberation Movement, I was disgusted by Marilyn Macleans



review of *Benefits*.

'It's feminist but not revolutionary', she writes. What does this mean? Simply that Zoe Fairbairns novel does not endorse the Womens Voice line on oppression.

Instead of learning from or at least examining the implication of this 'brave' book, Maclean cries that it is 'dangerous' and retreats behind the barricade popularly known as the socialist versus radical feminist split.

As it is difficult to dismiss the theory that we are involved in something more than a class struggle when it is such a widely held view, Maclean aggravates the split by belittling those who take the other ideological stance, describing it as the 'conflict between Womens Voice politics and the "fragments" of the Womens Liberation Movement'.

Come on sisters! Such divisive, arrogant and inaccurate references to the rest of the WLM is not going to get us very far.

Jo Ross
London

SISTERS IN AUSTRALIA

Dear Womens Voice

We subscribe to Womens Voice through the local group of International Socialists, and wanted to let you know that we support you in your struggles. We find it really encouraging to see the involvement and dedication that exists in Womens Voice groups.

We have written in support to June Greig, and will continue to follow up her cause and any others we read about in your magazine.

Women on Campus
Australian National University

SEND US YOUR WEDDING RINGS

You may remember that the computer workers who make up our telephone bills were on strike last year and bills were delayed. Well, Womens Voice has just received its bill—all £400 plus of it!

So, if you have been wondering what to do with your gold ring now that you don't wear it anymore . . . or perhaps you just have a little loose change in your pocket. Perhaps your Womens Voice group could have a supper, a party, a jumble sale.

If every reader dipped into her pocket and every Womens Voice group raised a few pounds we could pay off this bill in no time. Hope to be hearing from you.

Send your donations to
Womens Voice Box 82, London

Why didn't I hit him?

Dear Womens Voice

I am 37. My marriage broke up earlier this year and I decided that one of the practical things I wanted to do was make a final decision about birth control. I have two children; I do not want any more. So I went and talked to my GP about sterilisation. I explained my reasons, and he was in complete agreement. He sent a letter off to a consultant who, he assured me, would be equally understanding and helpful.

So, I was reasonably confident when I went to the hospital. After a short wait, I was called in to see the doctor. I

noticed that he was not the doctor I had expected to see, but thought little of it. He began to ask me questions: Why did I want the operation? Had I really thought about it? It might make me mentally ill, I might feel like a neutered cat! . . . Why couldn't I stay on the pill until menopause? Did my husband agree with my decision?

Then he sat back and told me he was totally opposed to women being sterilised; only in cases of extreme medical disorders would he agree to do it. Smiling broadly, he said he would write to my GP with a view to my changing my mind, then he put a question mark on my medical card and told me I

could go.

Why had I sat and listened? What had stopped me from getting up and hitting him? Why was I so mute? Why? Because I want that operation and he had me in the palm of his hand.

What, I wonder, does this sort of medical oppression do to other women, women who meekly accept that the doctor knows best? I am fighting against the decision made in my case, but women everywhere must refuse to be abused in this way. We all have a right to be recognised, we do know what we want, we must demand the right to decide.

Carole Barrett
London



Dear Jane

MY LITTLE boy was ill with tonsillitis in January. Although I know it's irrational I couldn't help feeling guilty about his illness. I know it's not my fault that he was ill, but I still feel somehow that I let him down.

What really worries me is am I going to feel guilty and anxious every time something happens in my child's life?

If any of us could be the ideal wife, mother, daughter, or woman and self righteously feel that we had

done everything possible to avert any disaster that could happen to children, partners, family and friends, then we might not feel guilty about letting anyone down.

The 'good mother' and the 'ideal woman' are myths. They are the myths that keep us in our place, that undermine our confidence and keep us running after bigger and better things.

One of the ways this happens is through advertising in the mass media. We are constantly told that unless we use the right washing powder, our kids will not make it into the school sports team. Unless we have the right cough medicine in the cupboard,

our kids will sit about with racking coughs. And, most recently, that unless we use a particular brand of sanitary towels, we won't be able to enjoy a day out with the kids!

The same goes for our partners and families. The facts of life are rather different. Most of us don't have all the advantages of every labour-saving device, we don't have au pairs, or places for our kids in nurseries. If we have jobs then childcare has to be shared out as well as possible.

The media's ideal woman has an immaculate house, home, family and a fascinating job, she also

manages to look like a full-time sex-object at the end of an exhausting day—most of us don't.

The majority of us improvise and make do. We get tired, broke and fed-up. Our kids have coughs and colds, cut knees and patched jeans.

We live real lives, our children and friends are vulnerable to upsets and illnesses like everyone else. The best we can do for our kids is to care for and love them, wipe their noses and not feel guilty. It's a question of striking the balance between care and concern and not trying to live up to impossible ideals.

JANE FOSTER

Yours Worried

PICTURE THE scene. The Oxford and Cambridge boat race, summer regattas with dandy young men in boaters and ladies in cool chiffon, watching each other perhaps more than the boats. That's the kind of scene most of us would associate with the sport of rowing, except that it's not like that at all.

Womens Voice spoke to Vicky Appleby, 17, and Lorraine Kaye, 15, winners of the gold medal in the 1000 meters Women's Junior Coxless Pairs event at the National Rowing Championships in August of last year about their sport.

Vicky and Lorraine are both members of the Stuart Ladies Club on the River Lea in East London.



I asked them how much time their sport took up in training and rowing.

Messing about on the river — boats wanted!

Lorraine: 'Through the winter, from about October to March we train on Tuesday and Thursday night. We do weight training, running, fitness training and circuit training. There's no rowing on winter evenings but we do row Saturdays and Sundays, weather permitting. And in the summer we train or row every night except Friday plus Saturday and Sunday as well.'

Although Lorraine is still at school, Vicky now works in a bank and that creates problems.

Vicky: 'When you're at work, it's hard to get time off. The championships usually start on a Thursday night which means having Friday off and there's a

lot of feeling that rowing isn't really a woman's sport.

'Generally it's much harder for a woman than for a man to be successful. In order to get selected for the national team, or even to get sponsorship, you have to become known, to make a name for yourself, and that means winning races. But there are nothing like the number of races for women that there are for men. There is a lot more interest in men's rowing than in women's particularly when it comes to sponsorships.'

It is often claimed that rowing is not an expensive sport and the example quoted is that the Thames Tradesmen is one of the most successful clubs in the

country. But it is only a cheap sport if your club has money, from sponsorships, from local authorities or from sports bodies.

For the Stuart club, things are not easy. They get no money from sponsorships, despite the fact that this year they have two members in the national squad, no money from sports bodies or from local authorities although the other clubs along the river, all men's clubs, get money from both these sources.



At the moment their club has only one boat, for four, but no pairs boat. The thirty club-members themselves are trying to raise the money to buy another.

Most men's clubs have a women's section and for them it is no doubt easier but for specifically women's clubs, like Stuarts, it is a struggle with little or no recognition, only a great deal of determination.

Mary Ann Stuart

SPORT

TALES WE TELL OUR SISTERS

'How do you expect to keep your husband happy, if you don't wash the floor properly.'

I am disabled.

**by
Carol Graham**

SOMETIMES I can't believe how lucky I am. I have nice friends, a good job, my own flat, but most of all, I have my independence. This means a lot to me, because I am disabled and it's been somewhat of a battle to prove that I CAN go it alone, not only to others, to myself as well. Through some of the 'rough spots', I have felt quite bitter, and often wondered what the women's movement had to gripe about. But I've been educated since then, not just through books and by other women, but through my own personal experiences.

I went to school in Canada, and if I had been male, my parents would have sent me to a better school. Through the advice of a doctor I was put into one of the easier courses. Most of my classmates were girls whose main ambition in life was to get married, move down the road from Mother, and produce as many children as humanly possible. Suggestions came that I too should join the mad rush to the altar. It would be the perfect solution to all my problems...a man to take care of me, then I wouldn't have to worry about coping with the outside world. But I knew there must be more in life, so I tried for a job.

Like all unemployed handicapped people, I was assigned a social worker. She wasn't exactly an inspiration. Her main ambition in life was to retire, and she thought I was nuts wanting to work. Why should I want a job, she asked. I had a nice home, parents who certainly weren't poor, and a government allowance. She suggested a few hobbies I could

pursue...at home. If I had been a man, it is doubtful her attitude would have been the same...at least, not so openly.

I insisted, and she did get me a job, through a friend of hers at the local library. I only worked two hours a day, and felt as if I was taking charity.

Then, in an all-out effort to be independent, I came to Britain, and got in touch with a social worker BEFORE I came. She wrote to me explaining that my chances for employment in Britain were optimistic, but I would have to go to a 'training centre' first. I came over to the 'training centre' and spent the next months peeling potatoes and scrubbing floors. It wasn't just the work that bothered me, it was more the condescending attitude of the staff, who made me feel MENTALLY affected. So I went to my social worker, and complained that although I didn't expect a course in brain surgery, surely there must be a better method of training the disabled.

She smiled, and explained that all my thoughts of a career (or job) were probably a waste of time because I was attractive, and in the next few years I would meet a man and get married. Hence, my ideas of getting a career would cease to exist. Then she topped this speech off with a classic 'And how do you expect to keep your husband happy, if you don't wash the floor properly.'

I left in disgust. As someone wrote to me from Canada, 'you've come a long way, baby', but if 'baby' had been a man, the way probably would have been a lot shorter!

WHAT IS GOING ON?

WV groups

● **ABERDEEN** Womens Voice for more information telephone Liz 51059

● **ACTON AND HARLESDEN** ring Carrie 993 0356

● **NORTH BIRMINGHAM** Womens Voice meets fortnightly. Phone Maggie 021 449 4793

● **SOUTH BIRMINGHAM** Womens Voice meets fortnightly. Phone Jill 021 459 1718

● **BLACKBURN** Womens Voice meets every Tuesday 8pm-10pm Jubilee Hotel (opposite King George's Hall) 673894 for details.

● **BLACK COUNTRY** Sundays fortnightly. 2.30, 27 Glen Court, Compton Road. For Information 23233. Children welcome.

● **Bradford** Womens Voice group meets fortnightly. Kids welcome. Contact Janet c/o Textile Hall, Westgate Bradford or phone Trish 306447.

● **Bristol** Womens Voice every Wednesday, 7.30pm, at The Inkworks 22 Hepburn Road (off Brigstocke Road), St Pauls. Ring Katrina Bristol 46875.

● **BURY** Womens Voice. Ring Lynn 061 764 6659 for details

● **CANTERBURY** Womens Voice meets every other Tuesday at Jolly Sailor Northgate. Phone Barbara (Lyminge 862742).

● **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.

DUNDEE. For information on local meetings, contact Audrey, 0382 452687.

● **EALING** Womens Voice meets regularly. Phone Jenny 991 0443.

● **ECCLES AND SALFORD** Womens Voice. For information ring Jennie 707 2557 or Ann 737 3800

● **EDINBURGH** Womens Voice meets fortnightly on Sunday evenings. Phone Penny 557 0731 for details.

● **Enfield** Womens Voice meets every other Monday, 8pm, at SCOPE Community Centre, 232a Ponders End, High Street. For details ring Gill 340 7272. Forthcoming meetings: 4 February, How equal are we now? 3 March, Immigration - controls?

● **GLASGOW** Womens Voice. For information ring Clare 959 8041 or Dorte 423 1185.

● **GLOSSOP**, Derbyshire Womens Voice meets second and fourth Tuesday of every month at 110 Victoria Street, Glossop. Phone Glossop 64287 for Carol.

● **HACKNEY** Womens Voice phone Pauline 985 3086 or Chris 806 8535 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. Details ring Elana 359 0842 (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.

● **Leeds** Womens Voice meets the first and third Wednesday each month in the Central Station Hotel, Wellington St. Contact Beverly 457098 or Gilda 622800 for more details.

● **LEICESTER** Womens Voice meets alternative tuesdays. Contact Fiona 0533 62855.

● **LEYTONSTONE** WV group meets fortnightly. Please ring Annie (556 5595) or Pam (558 1509) for details.

● **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 meets alternative Wednesdays. Details and babysitters. Ring Jane 421266

● **MANCHESTER** University Womens Voice meets each week at 5pm in the students union.

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

● **NEWCASTLE** Womens Voice meets regularly phone 29129 for details.

● **NEWHAM** Womens Voice. Ring Pam 534 1417

● **NOTTINGHAM** Womens Voice group meets 2nd and 4th wednesdays every month at 8pm, 118 Mansfield Road. For further information or babysitters, ring Jane 49502

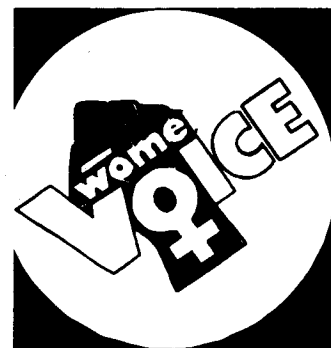
● **READING** Womens Voice meets fortnightly. For details phone Shirley on 585554

● **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.

● **South London** Womens Voice meets fortnightly, Tate Library Brixton 8pm on Tuesdays.

NALGO WOMENS VOICE DAY SCHOOL. Saturday 2 February, 10.30 to 4.30pm, St. Pancras Library, 100 Euston Rd, London NW1 (between Kings Cross and Euston stations). Sessions on the family, the Tory attack on women, organising campaigns in the workplace, building Womens Voice groups at work, plus news from the current disputes. All women council workers welcome. Pooled fare, creche and accommodation if needed. Cost £1. Please send names and money to Pauline Alden, Womens Voice, Box 82, London E2. For more details contact Pauline 01-985 3086, or Penny 01-739 7600 x 405.



NEW WOMEN'S VOICE BADGE. 20p each plus 8p postage. Ten for £1.60 post free.

February meetings:
Feb 5: Margaret Renn, Editor WV talks about Womens Voice magazine, its role, relationship to the groups, writing for it etc.
Feb 19: Jean Bernard (Black Parents Against SUS) on the problems of black women in Britain.

● **SOUTH WEST LONDON** Womens Voice. All welcome. Information and babysitters contact Marion 947 0560.

● **SOUTH WIRRAL**- Would anyone interested in forming a Womens Voice group please contact Janet, 051 339 6070.

● **STOCKPORT** Womens Voice. For details phone 061 431 7564.

● **STOKE ON TRENT** Womens Voice meets at Knotty Action, Mollart Street, Hanley. Fortnightly. Ring Sandra 814094

● **TOTTENHAM** Womens Voice meets regularly. Phone Mary for information and babysitters, 802 9563.

● **TOWER HAMLETS** Womens Voice meets on alternate Mondays. Babysitters available. Phone Jane 515 7403.

● **WALTHAMSTOW** Womens Voice meets alternative Tuesdays at 8pm. Phone Pauline 521 4768 or Mary Ann 520 3025.

● **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 ext 659

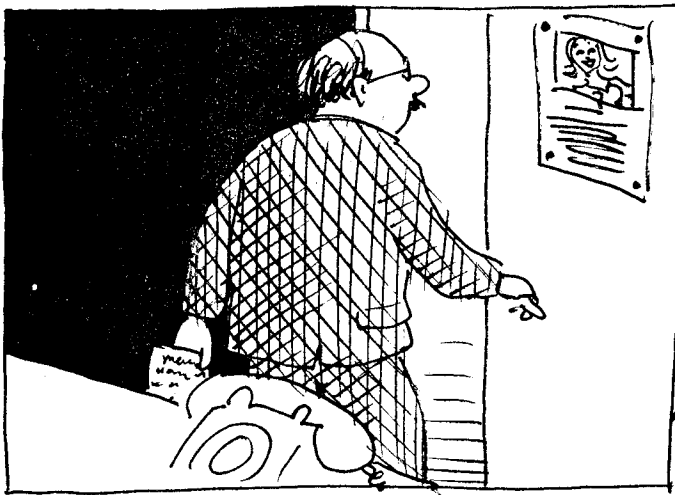
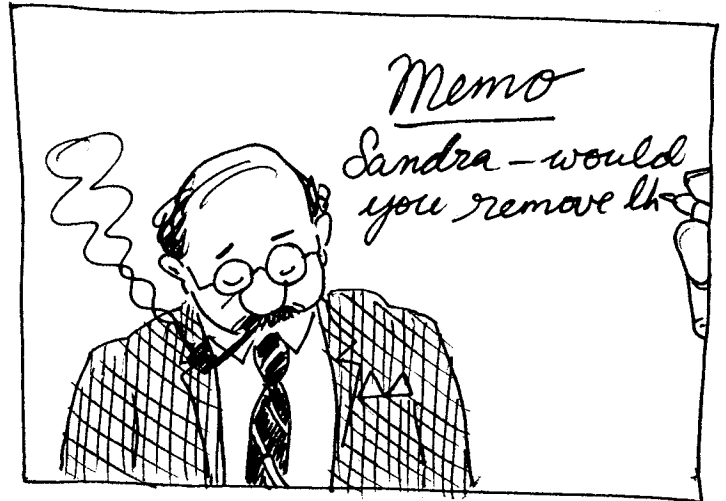
Small ads

Don't Miss It!
New Silly Bitches disco at the Womens Arts Alliance, Cambridge Terrace Mews, London. Every Saturday, 8pm till 2pm. 40p claimants and under 21, 60p waged. Sometimes live music. Women only. Bring your own booze. Cafe open all evening.

Two new badges from Womens Voice
Abortion our right to chose 15p each plus 10p postage
She's no sister (Margaret Thatcher that is) 20p each plus 10p postage
Money with orders please. Add 10p postage whatever number your order.



SANDRA



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Your nearest Womens Voice Group meets

Join Womens Voice...

join
the
fight

Womens Voice is an organisation that fights for women's liberation and socialism.

We fight for:

Equal pay

Free abortion and contraception

Maternity leave and child care provision

The right to work

Against all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex, sexual orientation, or race.

Women's liberation is only possible through women organising and fighting for themselves.

Women's liberation can only be achieved by linking its struggles to those of the working class and overthrowing the capitalist system.

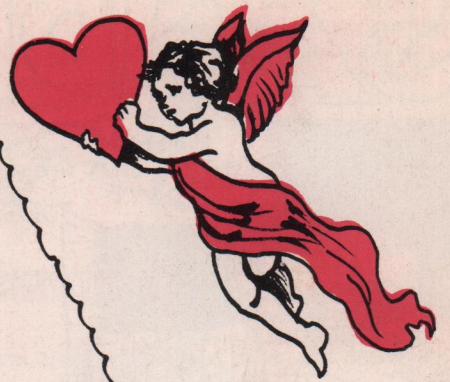
Womens Voice supports the aims of the Socialist Workers Party. It is organisationally independent but based on the politics of the SWP.

I want to join the fight . . .

Name

Address

Send to Womens Voice
PO Box 82,
London, E2



February 14th.

Dear Womens Voice,
I've always admired you from afar -
every time I see you I get a warm glow
that tingles all through me. You really do
make a difference to my life.
You probably don't even know I exist
(after all, I don't subscribe yet) but I've
decided to change all that.....

In fact, I've got a friend who feels about
you the same way that I do. I'm not
jealous; after all, there's enough of you to go
around thousands of us.....
In sisterhood,
Secret Admirers.

For me

Name

Address

For my friend

Name

Address

Subscription Rates
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