

# Womens VOICE

Womens magazine of the Socialist Workers Party

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**Valentine's  
day –  
The celebration  
of double  
standards**



GRAHAM

PASSPORT



GREAT BRITAIN  
IRELAND

Shirley Graham has won her fight to stay in this country. She has been under the threat of deportation since August when she was detained at Heathrow airport after a trip abroad.

Despite the fact that Shirley's passport was stamped 'indefinite leave to enter' the Home Office detained her on the grounds that her entry was illegal.

A campaign was mounted to defend Shirley's right to stay in Britain, and after six months the Home Office has conceded 'indefinite leave to stay'.

**In this issue...**

# RAPE

has dominated the news in recent weeks. *Womens Voice* takes a look behind the news at what the cause of rape is ... pages 10 and 11.

Did the Victorian middle class practise what it preached about sexual morality? Are the ideas of a hundred years ago still relevant today? ... pages 14 and 15.



A behind the scenes attack on the 1967 Abortion Act has been made by the government. We explain what it is—plus other abortion news ... pages 8 and 9.

Who are the women who sit on the TUC General Council? Do they do anything for the low paid women members in their unions? ... page 12.

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Jane Spittle

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## Women join occupations in Scotland

WORKERS IN two factories in Bathgate, Scotland, have been hit with the devastating news that both the tractor division at Leylands and the Plesseys capacitor plant are to be closed down. The two closures would boost Bathgate's already high unemployment rate to over 30%.

The Plesseys factory, employing mainly women workers, took over their plant just days after the massive Leyland plant took their decision to occupy.

The occupations will inspire workers everywhere and no doubt win a lot of support from the local community threatened with becoming an industrial wasteland.

But both groups of workers have taken on highly organised and ruthless employers and will need to learn the lessons of recent job-fights! The need to involve the maximum number of their workforce in the occupations, in the delegations to win support and blacking, while ensuring that no plant machinery or stock is allowed to be removed.

We need to take up the words of a Plesseys steward. *'A big response from the labour movement is needed if we are to win. The most pressing need at the moment is cash.'*

Rush donations, requests for collection sheets (for Plesseys) to:

Mary Murphy 30 Main Street, Fauldhouse, West Lothian.



## Lovable must occupy too

**'THIS TOWN is a YOPS town,'** was how one of the machinists at Lovable Bras described the employment situation in Cumbernauld. It certainly looks grim.

The largest factory is closed. Lovable, the second largest with 400 jobs, is in the hands of the receiver and under threat of closure. The mainly women workforce are working in at the moment and occupying the factory at nights and weekends to make sure nothing is moved. If the factory is closed they are going to sit in.

When Lee Jeans was occupying they collected money for them every week. Now they look as though they may need the same sort of support. Their jobs were guaranteed safe in December—then that was withdrawn in January. They should occupy now to ensure that they are safe, instead of continuing to produce goods which the receiver can sell.

If their jobs go, there will be very little left in Cumbernauld. The new town was built to attract new industry to the west of Scotland. The industry stayed to collect government grants. Once they disappear, so do many of the jobs.

The real losers are the young people in Cumbernauld. *'We're doing this for the school leavers,'* said another machinist. *'They certainly need something. Unemployment is at 17.1%. 'Once these jobs go, there's nothing.'*

## Women cleaners sit in

**'THEY ALL think we're just Mrs Mops. We're not'.** Anne Davidson has cleaned the National Savings Bank in Cowglen, Glasgow for seven years. Last month she occupied the bank's computer room along with her fellow cleaners to protest at enforced redundancies. A new contract cleaner was taken on by the bank and proposed cutting the number of cleaners from 114 to 32. Naturally this not only meant the sack for most of the women, but that the ones who kept their jobs worked harder. *'We are meant to clean 2000 square feet now. He wanted us to clean 3,400.'*

The women decided to occupy the main hall and the computer room to save their jobs. They were well organised. The ones who stayed in the computer room brought in food and made sure their families were cared for. The families

could talk to them through a window until management locked the bank's gates. Occupying the computer room had an immediate effect. Management tried to harass them. *'Two electric kettles that were brought in disappeared.'* After they had been in over a weekend, they went to court and got injunctions to stop the women. After a few more days, the cleaners reluctantly left.

They are continuing to picket. A mass picket after the eviction got lots of support from other bank workers, but unfortunately some civil servants treat the women not as trade unionists, but like the media, as Mrs Mops. Some CPSA members worked overtime in other computer rooms while the occupation was on which only helped management. *'They don't think we're real civil servants,'* said Anne.

0Jennifer Young

## Linstock women win union fight



THREE HUNDRED and forty strikers, nearly all part-time women workers at Ross Foods, Hull, decided this week to start mass picketing in pursuit of their claim.

They also decided to send secondary pickets to Ross Fish in Hull and flying pickets to Grimsby.

Their first mass picket was an amazing success. 150 pickets succeeded in turning back fitters and supervisory staff and after arguments with the scabs eventually forced management to shut the factory and send home the few people who had got in.

The triumphant pickets then formed a column and marched around the corner to picket Ross Fish!

The strike is a pay fight. At present the average basic wage for a 40 hour week is £66.05. Shop steward Sue Jackson explained their claim. 'We went into negotiations with a mandate for £80 basic. They asked us what we thought was reasonable and we said £75; but they kept coming back with coppers. But we don't want coppers. We want pounds. And I think we should go back for the £80.'

*Rush donations, messages of support to Terry Jackson, Ross Shop Stewards committee c/o Bevin House Hull.*  
Jim Sullivan

## No sunshine for Thatcher at Kelloggs

WE WERE all furious when we heard that Thatcher was going to visit our factory.

The morning shift decided to stop when Thatcher arrived. Women leant out of the locker room windows to cheer the pickets gathering outside. There was a mood of indignation throughout the factory.

The afternoon shift came in to find the factory at a standstill — and I'm sure helped to inspire them for what followed.

Thatcher and her cronies were greeted by a throng of banner-waving demonstrators, all chanting slogans.

We waved the Kelloggs USDAW banner at her—the slogan on the banner is Unity is Strength. The Kelloggs workers were

certainly united in one cause that day.

Laurence Scott workers and Right to Work pickets joined in outside. And as Thatcher arrived the whole place ground to a halt again. Angry women workers flanked her on both sides chanting 'Maggie Out'.

One woman whose husband has been out of work for 11 years aimed a kick at her—and missed, sadly enough.

Women in the past have been criticised by male colleagues for being passive and not giving enough support. There was certainly nothing passive about the women at Kelloggs that day.

*Glynis Moore  
USDAW shop steward,  
Kelloggs.*

A STRIKE by 50 women workers at a frozen food factory in Atherton, Lancashire, has won union recognition.

The women work 40 hours in a six-day week, which includes Sundays. For the Sunday work they get no extra money. They earn just 85p an hour.

The women are forced to wear wellington boots at work because of the pools of water on the floor. Overtime is compulsory and without notice.

The company is JR Axon, and the factory is called Linstock Foods. The wages and conditions they impose on the workforce is like something out of the nineteenth century.

But on 15 December 1981, the women struck after their boss refused to recognise the union they had joined — the General And Municipal Workers Union (GMWU).

They were still out on New Years Eve. Then the factory's boss signed a union recognition agreement with the local GMWU official. He was told by

the official that recognising the union wasn't enough — there had to be drastic improvements in pay and conditions too.

The workers went back in after the New Year. But their boss approached some of the women, and said that if they pulled out of the union he would make them 'quality controllers' and pay them an extra £2 a week. The boss refused to talk to the union reps.

After a few days the women's new shop steward, Sally Cornall, threatened to bring the women out on strike again. The boss conceded, recognised the union, and agreed to negotiate improvements in pay and conditions.

As *Womens Voice* went to press the negotiations were due to take place. But Sally, the shop steward, has made it clear to the boss that if things don't get a lot better, the women will be straight back outside the factory — because, as she said, that's the only way to win.

*Cynthia Handcroft*

Make sure you get your copy of *Socialist Worker* every week

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**OUR FIGHT FOR JOBS**



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## The sharp edge of redundancy

THIRTY-EIGHT workers are on strike against victimisation at Jewel Razors in Sheffield.

On 1 December, two workers—one of them the AUEW shop steward John Cunningham—were called into their management office. Five minutes later they were sacked.

As there is no redundancy problem at Jewel Razors it was a clear case of anti-union victimisation. The union-organised workers (two-thirds of the workforce) decided to strike in support of their steward.

Since then the strikers have toured the Sheffield factories and beyond to raise money and support and calling for the blacking of the razors being produced inside.

For many of the strikers, more than half of them women, this is their first such action. But, as so many have said, the conditions inside the place were so awful that action was inevitable.

Christine, one of the young strikers, explained:

'I work in the inspection—quality control—and if it rains

during the night you have to wade into work and clear up before you start. There are always roof slates missing, and once two lads narrowly avoided injury when one slate fell while they were working.'

The average wage for the women producing the blades is less than £40 a week for as many hours.

'Something had to be done', said Christine. 'It's so cold inside that place, the conditions are so bad, that when John and a couple of others came round talking about joining the union, the majority of us thought it was the right idea.'

'It was the men that decided on a strike after John was sacked, but we supported it straight away. As far as I'm concerned we're all equal and this is just as much our strike. I'm on the picket line every day, as are most of the women, and we're prepared to stick out on strike for as long as it takes.'

**Andy Smith**

*Donations and messages of support to: Doug Brameld, 10 Parson Cross Road, Wadsley Bridge, Sheffield 6.*

## Backdoor attack o

A NEW form to be filled out by claimants, aimed at reducing the official unemployment figures, has been introduced at some benefit offices.

Unemployed workers no longer have to register at job centres when they sign on the dole. The testing of availability for work has been transferred from job centre to benefit offices — with the loss of at least 2000 jobs.

A questionnaire is being given to claimants at some dole offices, which has to be filled in. The first question asks the claimant if they are

prepared to accept *any* job they can do.

The Tories want unemployed workers to accept any type of work, with no regard to previous training or experience. That means people could be forced to accept a night cleaning job at the hourly rate of 60p.

Another of the questions asks single mothers if they have already made adequate child care facilities should they be offered a job. Of course most women will not have done this on the off-chance that one of the precious few jobs around may be offered to them. But if



LILY LUCZAC, a secretary who lives in North London with her six-year-old daughter Jessica, is faced with imminent deportation.

Lily has lived in Britain for eight years. But as she no longer lives with her common-law husband, she no longer has the right to live here and remain with her daughter.

A letter from Timothy Raison, the Immigration Minister, in August states that the Home Office will 'only consider her right to stay in this country if there are compassionate reasons why she should not return to Canada with her child.' Lily's compassionate reasons are that her common-law husband had been violent and Lily was forced to get a non-molestation order, and in Canada her father is a violent and brutal man.

Lily says: 'I have done nothing wrong. They are wrenching me away from my home, my friends and a good secretarial job. Everything I

have worked so hard for. They have shown no concern for Jessica, all her friends and her school are here. All the Home Office says is that she is entitled to stay here, but I must go simply because I have no legal grounds to be here.

'My little girl's life will be damaged by this, I don't know how to bear it. I have come from a very hard and cruel background and I have wished for and struggled hard for her happiness. I fear for Jessica very much and am living on a knife-edge waiting for a decision from the Minister. I am afraid that when all the publicity dies down they will quietly hand me the removal order.'

A support committee has been formed which so far has collected a petition of more than 8000 signatures against her deportation back to Canada. If you are prepared to help, please contact the 'Friends of Lily Luczac', c/o 3 Tramere House, Morgan Road, London, N7.

**Judy Shapter**

## unemployed

they haven't, their benefit may be suspended or cut off.

This form has not been introduced to all benefit offices — yet. But the results would be disastrous: Half a million people would be chopped from the official unemployment register and masses of jobs would be lost from the dole offices.

The Tories want to get the unemployment figures down to a 'respectable' number. The question about child-care just reinforces Thatcher's ideas about a woman's place being at home looking after the kids.

The union of dole office

staff, the CPSA, has begun consultation exercises in the benefit offices where the form has already been introduced to see if there is support for blacking the form. But that is a cop-out — the CPSA leadership should have promised support from the start to any member who refused to have anything to do with the forms. It's not just a question of refusing to cover up the real number of unemployed — it's a question of defending our jobs too.

Sally Bild  
CPSA, Central London.



**MORE THAN 5000** nurses from all over their country demonstrated angrily over the pay in London last month. They are demanding a 12 percent increase—and are likely to be offered a miserable four percent.

At the rally in Trafalgar Square, the nurses shouted down a Tory MP when he defended the government's public sector pay policy.

One group of nurses at the demonstration had marched all the way from Land's End to London as part of their protest.

Papers described them as 'angry angels' but the nurses are fed up with that image. Sally, a London State Enrolled Nurse told us: 'We work worse shifts than car workers or miners but they think we can live on £50 a week. Of course we care for people but it doesn't pay the rent. Thatcher has paid out enough to the police and army—we know the money's there and we want our share of it.'

## Right to Work campaign

# JOBS NOT YOPs



## MARCH ON PARLIAMENT

Assemble Harlesden Hilltop club  
5pm Sunday February 21  
Lobby Parliament Thursday 25

IF YOU'RE about to leave school you can be pretty sure that you won't find a job. The number of unemployed school leavers is going up and up — but the Tories are trying to cover up the real figures by placing kids on Youth Opportunity schemes.

YOPs are a waste of time. For the kids they rarely provide real training — and when they do, there are no proper jobs to go to at the end. And then there's the money — £23.50 for a full working week.

And for people already in work, YOPs are a threat. Lots of employers have cottoned on to a 'good thing', and are making workers redundant so that they can take on YOPs kids to do the same jobs for much less money — and with government help. But now the Tories are going to make it even worse for school leavers. They want to force kids to take part in new schemes which mean working a full week for a scandalous £15. They want it to be compulsory for all school leavers to do this for a year, and if they refuse they won't get their dole.

School leavers, and all unemployed workers, need proper jobs with proper wages. There's plenty of work that needs doing, such as building new homes and hospitals, and plenty of money to pay for it — but the Tories prefer to spend it on nuclear weapons.

THE Right to Work Campaign has organised a four day march of unemployed school leavers around London at the end of February to protest at the existing YOPs schemes and the new proposals. It will end with a national lobby of parliament organised by the Labour Party Young Socialists.

It sets off from West London on 21 February and finishes in Westminster on 25 February. Food, accommodation and discos in the evenings will all be laid on.

But to do all this the Right to Work Campaign needs money. If you're working, take a collection amongst your workmates. If you're not, then you can help collect money outside other workplaces or on local estates. And if you're young and unemployed you can come on the march to let the Tories know what you think of them and their rotten 'jobs schemes'.

■ If you want to come on the march, or help raise money and organise it, write to the

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

## OUR POINT OF VIEW

# They don't protect us

ANYONE WHO watched the television programme where the police grilled a woman who had been raped must be wondering what makes the police behave in that way.

Would it be better if all rape cases were handled by women police officers? It's horrible and humiliating to be raped without then having to talk about it in front of unsympathetic strangers who make it clear they don't believe a word you're saying.

In fact one of the many thoroughly unpleasant members of the police force who appeared on television was the policewoman who declared that she thought the story was a pack of lies.

None of what we saw is unusual. Many readers of *Womens Voice* will have had similar experiences with the police — and not just about rape either.

And that's the starting point for trying to get to grips with what happened on the television programme. The number of people—men and women—with equally bad stories to tell about their treatment at the hands of the police is countless.

At the same time as the rape programme appeared, it was revealed that two Brixton policemen had beaten up a black youth who was walking home. He had a testicle removed as a result. No action was taken against either policeman. One has been promoted.

Doctors who have been recommending abortions on the fringe of the guidelines of the 1967 Act have been visited and questioned by police in some areas.

The intimidation of women who have been raped by the police is part and parcel of how the police behave anyway. The horrible nature of the crime makes it particularly shocking. But it's still typical of how the police behave in most situations.

The same group of policemen who believe that any woman who was raped was probably asking for it, also believes all strikers are 'red scum', that social security claimants are scroungers who should be imprisoned, that black people are inferior to white, that kids need to be put in their place, that 'vandals' should be whipped and murderers hanged.

It's nothing to do with recruitment policies. It won't make any difference if there are more black police or more women police.

The police exist to protect and safeguard this society—in all its rottenness. They are the front line and final defence for the Government and society which has decided to double London bus fares, smash the health and education system to pieces, cut every social service to ribbons, push unemployment up to three million and cause untold misery throughout the country.

Any resistance to the cuts, any factory occupation, any picket line, any protest in defence of a local nursery, any march in defence of abortion rights, has the police to contend with. And no tinkering around with the composition of the police force is going to make any difference to how they act. They are as much a part of this society as the Bank of England, the Stock Exchange and Holloway Prison.

## Tories threaten

THE GROUNDS for abortion have been tightened up by the change of wording on a form used by doctors to notify the Department of Health and Social Security of all abortions performed.

The government has managed to change the words by using a backdoor method. 'Statutory instrument' is a means of getting uncontroversial changes in regulations through Parliament 'on the nod'. Statutory instruments come into effect automatically unless they are opposed by an early day motion. In this case a motion was laid before the Standing Committee dealing with the change, but the committee did not meet until three days after the regulation had become law.

The 1967 Abortion Act lays down a number of grounds on which abortion may be performed. Most of the one and a half million abortions since the Act were authorised under the section which says:

'the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk of injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman greater than if the pregnancy were terminated ... in determining this ... account may be taken of the pregnant woman's actual or foreseeable circumstances'.

This section has become known as the 'social clause' by

which it is possible for doctors to authorise abortions when the woman has no actual medical condition but does not want to have the baby.

Up until March this year the form that doctors were required to fill in included space for either medical or non-medical reasons under the above section. Now that has been changed and space has only been allocated for medical reasons.

In July, Sir Henry Yellowlees, the Chief Medical Officer, sent a letter to gynaecologists, part of which said:

'Lest there be any misunderstandings, I should point out that non-medical factors alone do not provide legal justification for termination ... There has to be a current medical condition which puts at risk the life, or physical or mental health of the patient, or the doctor must believe such a condition is a foreseeable consequence of the pregnancy.'

Since the 1967 Abortion Act was passed there have been three attempts to change the law and tighten up on grounds for abortion. All have been accompanied by pro-abortion



The latest figures for the availability of abortion on the NHS are for 1979. Availability varies enormously—depending on the personal views of local doctors and gynaecologists. The best areas of the country are North Devon (94%), South West Durham (93%), Gateshead (93%) and Southern Tyneside (93%). The worst areas are Dudley (6%), Sandwell (7%), and Huddersfield, North Birmingham and South Birmingham (all 9%). A full list covering England and Wales is available from the Abortion Law Reform Association (ALRA), 88a Islington High Street, London N1 (01 359 5200).



# Abortion

campaigns, and all have failed. The last anti-abortion bill to be put before Parliament, proposed by Tory MP John Corrie, ran out of time, and was only voted on in the preliminary stages. Then the Tory health minister, Gerard Vaughan, voted in favour of the Bill.

Many doctors have always interpreted the 1967 Act in the same way as the government is doing now. For that reason it's often difficult for women to get abortions—because women have to depend on the personal views of their doctors. But many doctors support the right of a woman to have an abortion, as one GP told the National Abortion Campaign (NAC):

'In my opinion the risk to a woman's health from an unwanted pregnancy is immense. She does not have to be depressed, mad, suicidal or any other such thing at the time of seeking an abortion for there to be a risk to her future health and well-being. She simply has to be pregnant and not want to be.'

NAC will campaign for the removal of the Statutory Instrument by which the change was allowed. They said:

'The DHSS, whose anti-abortion sympathies are becoming obvious under the present Government, are using the notification form to attempt to restrict the legal grounds for abortion in much the same way as the Corrie Bill attempted to do in 1979—by removing the social grounds for abortion from the 1967 Act. The Corrie Bill fell because it was overwhelmingly opposed publicly and we believe that the DHSS are trying to put that part of the Corrie Bill into effect by the back door, to please anti-abortion MPs.'

The 1967 Act did not give women the right to decide whether or not to have an abortion. But it did legalise abortion and allow doctors to authorise abortions on social grounds, and for those reasons it must be defended from any underhand attacks by anti-abortion MPs and government ministers.

*For more information about NAC's proposed campaign, write to NAC, 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1.*

## If you need an abortion in Wanstead—tough!

**ABORTION FACILITIES** at Wanstead Hospital in East London are under attack by the anti-abortion group, SPUC, and local MP Vivian Bendall.

Waltham Forest Community Health Council have called for an extension of the hospitals abortion facilities. According to 1979 figures only 24 per cent of all abortions performed in Redbridge and Waltham Forest health areas are on the NHS, compared to 70 per cent in nearby Chelmsford.

Women who want abortions in Waltham Forest are being turned away, and the Community Health Council says the unit should be doubled to meet the need.

The local SPUC group has written to the Health Secretary, Norman Fowler, objecting to abortions being carried out in Wanstead. SPUC continually preaches about the 'right to life' but takes no account of the pregnant woman's wishes or circumstances.

Women must have the right to choose whether to have a child. Without that control over our lives, women will never be able to take an equal place in society.

●Write to Norman Fowler, Secretary of State for Social Services, Alexander Fleming House, Elephant and Castle, London SE1, to demand more NHS abortion facilities.

## 2½ million live in poverty

More than two and a half million children are now living below the official poverty line.

A study called *Children and Poverty* says that the provision for children in supplementary benefit rates is well below the minimum needed. The author of the study, David Piachaud, found that the SB allowance for an eight year old was less than two thirds of the actual cost of food, clothes etc for a child of that age. For teenagers the SB scale rate was half the minimum amount needed for a normal life without hardship.

## Health Service Union—We need to counter SPUC

The anti-abortion campaign inside the health service union, COHSE, was discussed by pro-abortion hospital workers at a meeting in January.

SPUC have succeeded in persuading COHSE's national executive not to affiliate to the National Abortion Campaign despite a resolution calling for affiliation passed at last year's hardship.ice.

SPUC are mainly active in Liverpool COHSE and some of the Scottish branches.

NAC are to produce a leaflet explaining why abortion is a trade union issue which should be used to leaflet hospitals when workers are entering or leaving.

COHSE branches are being urged to send resolutions of protest at the executive's action to COHSE headquarters. Members of other health service unions should raise it in their branches.

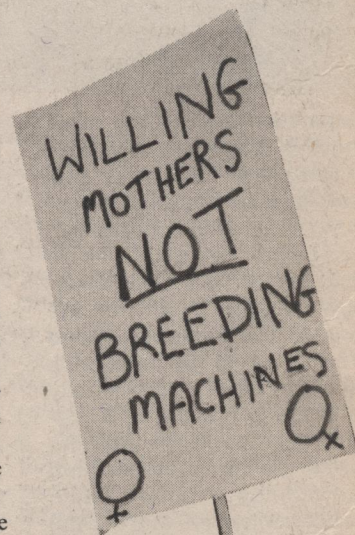
SPUC say that NAC supports the sacking of doctors and nurses who refuse to perform or help perform abortions under the 'conscience clause'. SPUC argue that by COHSE supporting NAC, the union is also supporting the sacking of its own members.

But NAC do not call for such sackings. They say doctors and nurses should not be forced to perform abortions—but that they should not prevent abortions being performed in hospitals.

The next meeting of the NAC Trade Union Committee is at 7pm on 25 February at 375 Grays Inn Road, London WC1.

**Abortion and NHS Workers conference, organised by NAC. 13 March, at Starcross School, Risinghill Street,**

**London N1. More details from NAC, 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1 (278 0153).**



# R A

Rape has been in the news more than virtually any other single item over the past weeks. First because a business man who raped a girl escaped prison, then because three men in Glasgow escaped trial when the woman they allegedly raped was too ill to give evidence against them, and finally after the screening of a horrific TV documentary on the police which showed them questioning a raped woman about her sex life and mental history.

Each incident caused a flurry of protests, editorials and questions from MPs. Everyone from Len Murray to Margaret Thatcher condemned the incidents. Yet anyone who has been raped, or had any contact with someone who has, knows what these cases highlight in such a dramatic way. Women who are raped get a rough deal from the law.

It starts when you report the rape, and are subject to lengthy and often unsympathetic questioning. Even if the police believe you, there is still the repeat perfor-

mance at least once in court, where unless the accused pleads guilty you have to go through cross examination.

Your credibility usually hinges on how many men you have slept with, or how late at night you were walking alone. This description of police reaction to rape is fairly common:

'VICTIM: I rang the police and they showed up very casually about ten minutes later. They sauntered in and one of them produced a flick knife when I asked him to untie me. They started saying things like: 'Well, I don't think you have been raped. This was obviously someone you met last night. It got too heavy and you decided to call the police this morning'. They kept suggesting it was a casual affair gone wrong. They said, 'If everything you say happened had happened you would be completely hysterical by now You would have thrown yourself out of the window to get away.' 'They obviously didn't believe me.' (*The Facts of Rape* by Barbara Toner, Arrow).

Many women prefer not to

report rapes because of this sort of attitude, believing they can cope better without this ordeal on top of the actual rape. They see the law as something which doesn't offer them much protection.

This fact now seems to be seeping through to people who have never been concerned with the issue. The head of Thames Valley Police has promised that their interview procedure will be reviewed. Margaret Thatcher wants stiffer sentences for rapists. William Whitelaw is backing a bill to guarantee jail sentences for rapists.

But will any of it really help? Of course it is better for women to be decently treated by the police, but tightening up the law presupposes that men will stop raping women if they will get long prison sentences. That seems unlikely.

Rape is the product of the way women are seen in society. In some societies rape has been a sign of possession. In periods where society is in upheaval, such as in war, rape can be used to subju-

gate the defeated population. In capitalist society, rape is the product of women being seen as objects, as things which can be bought and sold. When nude women fill the pages of newspapers and magazines, with the express purpose of selling more copies, it is hardly surprising that some men see them as something they can steal.

Long sentences won't change those attitudes. If they are a product of society, it is only by changing society that rape can become a memory of the past, instead of the grim reality of the present.

That doesn't mean that even within capitalism things always stay as they are. In the boom years of the fifties and sixties women's role changed. They went out to work, many entered higher education, ideas of women's equality were on the agenda. New laws on equal pay and sex discrimination were introduced, even if they were very feeble. People expected to see women outside the home, often challenging the

# R P

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idea that their only role was as wives and mothers.

The crisis and, especially in Britain, the Thatcher government, has changed a lot of that. Margaret Thatcher, the first woman prime minister, who worked throughout her life, even when her children were small, now tells us that may be fine for a few women, but isn't running a home and family the most fulfilling thing a woman can do? Women are encouraged to cope with cuts in services—no school dinners, looking after sick relatives, living on unemployment pay.

As education and job opportunities disappear, women no longer have the chance to challenge their roles. They are forced back into the family and into the image of themselves as either page three pin ups or good wives and mothers. It is not unexpected therefore that along with a breakdown in the fabric of society in other areas—increases in prostitution, in street theft, the crimes of poverty and unemployment—so too we

should see an increase in the crime of rape.

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Lindsey German

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The cries of Thatcher and Whitelaw are cosmetic. They are precisely the people who create these conditions, yet are the first to cry for law and order. Just as they are the people who caused riots by making life in the cities so intolerable for young people, especially for blacks, then called for short sharp shock treatment to stop them.

Of course there are a few rapists who decide to go out and rape as many women as they can. Some like the Boston Strangler even have films made about them. But most of the statistics show—as do these recent cases—that rape by someone known to the woman, and often as a once only thing is much more common.

It is more likely to be the

men who think that because a woman hitch hikes, or wears a low cut dress, or is out alone late at night, she is offering sex, who are the most common rapists. That is to do with the particular ideas in those men's heads, of course. But it isn't simply badness on their part. It is interesting how those ideas really coincide with the image of women as passive willing sex objects. And that image isn't one which individual men dream up. It is the product of the people who package sex and use it to sell everything from fast cars to Turkish Delight—which is what the world we live in is all about.

There isn't any halfway house when we talk about getting rid of rape, because it is so obviously a product of society. That is why legal reforms solve very little—we have to fight for a transformation of the world of commodity production which produces such attitudes and acts towards women. Which is why the fight for women's liberation is at the centre of the fight for socialism.

WOMEN IN Scotland have begun campaigning around the Glasgow rape case. Strathclyde Rape Crisis Centre told *Womens Voice*: 'rape cases are frequently dropped because the woman is unable to give evidence in court. This provides no protection for women. It must be recognised that women face a special ordeal because they have to rely on their experience in a court, and are frequently made to feel that they are on trial by being questioned about their lifestyle and sexual experience.'

'We are asking women to mobilise support to change the legal procedures surrounding rape cases by raising the issue in trade union branches, by writing to their MP, and by writing to the Lord Advocate of Scotland. **No woman deserves to be raped, but they are frequently made to feel as if they have committed a crime.**' Contact the Strathclyde Rape Crisis Centre at PO Box 53, Glasgow G21YR. Tel: 041 221 8448.

# Sell-out sisters?

**THE TUC General Council was formed in 1921. Two seats on it were allocated specifically to women. When the TUC met at the beginning of September last year they increased the allocation to five seats. Is it a step forward for women's liberation, or will the five women be as remote from their members as the men on the TUC? Womens Voice investigates.**

THE TUC General Council has been elected from Congress since 1921. There are 39 seats on the General Council plus the five for women. The TUC General Council is, generally speaking, a collection of mostly right-wing, mostly male, trade union bureaucrats. They have no real purpose in existence apart from putting the *right* pressure on at what they conceive to be the right time.

Affiliated unions are placed into 'trade groups' or constituencies, then they each have a specific number of places on the General Council. The result is meant to be that all major industrial unions have representation, although in the past large unions have had no representation at all.

The seats for women are elected specifically on that basis — that they are women. The five women who sit on what is known as 'the Women's Section' come from the four largest unions, TGWU, AUEW (engineering section), GMWU, NALGO and the sixth largest, ASTMS.

With over 11 and a half million trade unionists represented in the TUC it means that every seat on the General Council represent 300,000 trade unionists.

It is a well-known fact that these trade unionists have never benefitted from having representatives on the General Council. But will the five women be any different, will they really care about women trade unionists?

**PAT TURNER, General and Municipal Workers Union (GMWU). 967,153 member, 328,234 women.**

Pat Turner started her career in the

union as a low grade clerical officer. She has been their Woman Officer since 1970 and has served on the TUC Women's Advisory Committee for over ten years. She is now the National Industrial Officer of the GWMU. She could hardly claim to be for women fighting for their rights on the picket line. She had this to say about equal pay: 'We're taking the line that we should change the law ... certainly we have been involved in equal pay strikes. But it seems to me to be an expensive way because our women members are losing money.'

**GINA MORGAN, Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (AUEW) Engineering Section. 1,217,760 members, 165,000 women.**

She is the only woman on the General Council who is not a full-time union official, although she has spent the last 12 years as a full-time convenor for 1,000 engineering workers at the Central Ordnance Department at Donnington in Shropshire.

Gina Morgan is a member of the district and divisional committees of her union and is a delegate to the AUEW National Committee. So she should be familiar with the union bureaucracy if nothing else. 'Not noted for her left wing views' — *Morning Star*.

**MURIEL TURNER, Association of Scientific Technical and Managerial Staff (ASTMS), 491,000 members, 85,925 women.**

Like Pat Turner, she started off as a low grade clerical worker for her union and has risen to the dizzy heights of being Clive Jenkins *right* hand (wo)man.

She started working for the union in 1947 and has occupied the number three position in ASTMS, that of assistant general secretary, for the past 12 years.

She speaks with a left wing voice on the question of women, and she helped instigate a Womens Committee within ASTMS. She is in favour of positive discrimination, equal pay and has spoken at

conferences about the need to have creches at union meetings to allow women to attend.

*Sounds very nice — until you hear that she has been consistently against the ASTMS National Executive's decision to pay strike money to the 12 ASTMS members in the year-long Laurence Scotts fight for jobs.*

Speak with left voice? More like forked tongue.

**ADA MADDOCKS, National and Local Government Officers' Association (NALGO), 753,225 members, 355,757 women.**

Ada Maddocks is another one who started off life as a low grade clerical worker for her union. She has worked for NALGO for over 20 years.

She has been on the General Council for four years and serves on several TUC Committees like the Women's Advisory and the Employment Policy Committee. She is said to be 'delighted' about the extra three women's places — as it'll spread the workload more evenly.

**MARIE PATTERSON, Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), 2,086,281 members, 342,768 women.**

She is currently the longest serving member of the General Council — 18 years. Marie Patterson is the chair of the TUC Women's Advisory Committee and is a member of the Equal Opportunities Commission. She is also the National Woman Officer of the TGWU.

Must be a busy woman, but who knows what she advises them all about. She said of the Trico equal pay strike: 'I'm not convinced I know what the Trico strike was about ... I've got enough to do without finding out about other people's strikes'. Too many committee meetings, I suppose. But she is a great lover of the family: 'The more I listen to women talking, the more I think, and this was very clear in Russia, they find a great satisfaction in family life.'

She was one of the three TGWU representatives on the General Council at the time of the Firemen's strike of 1977/78. She voted against giving the strikers aid from the TUC — the vote was lost by one vote. She can't have given much thought to the families of the strikers then.

THE FIVE women who sit on the TUC General Council don't differ much from their male counterparts. They are nothing more than right-wing trade union bureaucrats. Their individual records show that. They are remote and they are unaccountable. For the majority of the five women their election onto the General Council was probably the biggest whiff of democracy they'll ever get. The positions they have held in unions have been *appointed* not elected.

They are no more than token women, and we should have nothing to do with them. Unless it is to expose the hypocrisy of women who pay lip service to 'women's rights' yet deny the very essence of how they'll be achieved — solidarity between rank and file trade unionists.



The new members of the TUC general council. (Left to right) Ada Maddocks, Gina Morgan, Marie Patterson, Pat Turner and Muriel Turner.



The imposition of martial law in Poland before Christmas was the culmination of over a year of struggle between the free trade union, Solidarity, supported by the mass of Polish workers, and the Polish regime. The severe repression which is now taking place makes a mockery of the idea that Poland is in any way a socialist country.

The earliest development of Solidarity took place in the northern port of Gdansk, especially in the shipyards. Ewa Barker visited Poland soon after those initial strikes and talked to Anna Walentynowicz, whose victimisation had helped spark them off.

Here we reprint some of the interview with Anna, describing the action at the Lenin shipyard, and the role women played in it.

'The whole point was to keep me out of the shipyard, as far away from the crews as possible. But of course all these events we described in our paper 'Robotnik'. We wanted the news of it all to reach as many people as possible, while they wanted to persecute us, but quietly, so no one knew about it. Well, our work grew and more and more people joined us and worked with us.'

Poland had been simmering with sporadic strikes throughout the early summer when the management at the Lenin shipyard refused to honour a court decision that Anna must have her job back. Three young workers from the 'Robotnik' team decided to start a strike and successfully led the men out. Anna continues.

'...They demanded that I should be present at any negotiations with the management and refused to say anything without me. By the time they made the director send his car for me the whole shipyard was at a standstill. There was a moment, when I reached the yard and was greeted with flowers when, like a woman, I burst into tears. I had to get up onto their hastily constructed platform so that everyone could see that I was really there, because otherwise they would not have agreed to talk to the director.'

Anna was reinstated, so was Lech Walesa, and a rise was agreed.

'...it seemed we had won our case. But



by then other workplaces had come out in solidarity with us and in spite of our victory we could not sign this agreement. What were we to do? The smaller factories were relying on us and it would seem as if we were betraying them. Quickly we conferred and announced a solidarity strike, but already there were misunderstandings, people were going home, there was terrible confusion. Alina Pinkowska took up the rescue of our good name. We ran from gate to gate shouting at people not to go home. We had no Tannoy because the director had switched it off, using it himself now to issue announcements that the strike was finished, that the agreement had been signed while we were yelling at people to stay. It was a dramatic moment, but we made it, we stayed.'

Another striker told me later that many of those workers who had gone home in the confusion were driven back to the shipyard by their wives who often worked in the smaller factories and were still out on strike. Anna continues ...

'What did I do during the strike? We did everything. We maintained contact with the crews, we received delegations from other factories. We waited a long, long time for the talks... we often didn't know what was to happen next, we were very tense and anxious. But the solidarity which we felt in those moments, the experience of being in touch with people, the Mass said in the shipyard premises, the priest came, the Sunday communion and the daily prayers which broke out spontaneously among people even without the priest, the symbol of the cross inside the yard gave us faith, gave us hope to hold out.'

'It was quite a different strike from the one in 1970. Even though we still didn't have an organisation the experience of that year helped us greatly. No one went out into the streets. The gates were locked and there was no possibility of a provocation. Mind you we did find out, because the boys rigged up a bugging device to spy on the police, (they spy on us, so why shouldn't we bug their premises) we did find out that they wanted to put us to sleep by spraying a drug using an aeroplane and then break in and overpower us...'

Anna talks of her job on the Gdansk Presidium. She wants to travel to other workplaces which are organising.

'...In the present situation it seems that people need to be given encouragement, they need to meet those who have stood firm in the face of repression, they need an example of someone who does not bend in the fight for our rights. We still haven't learned to stand up for our rights, because we were too frightened, indeed to this day we are still being frightened...'

**SOLIDARNOŚĆ**



AS Valentines Day approaches, *Caroline Tomson* takes a look at Victorian romance and attitudes to sexuality, and concludes that, in some quarters, things haven't changed that much.

THE FOURTEENTH of February was an important date in Victorian Britain. By the middle of the century so many Valentine cards were being sent that the Post Office urged the public to post early to ensure delivery on time. And more than 10,000 women were employed exclusively in the manufacture of beautiful and intricate Valentine cards.

Often the cards were sold without a pre-printed message inside so that men and women could compose personal verse. The cards were made with lace and dried flowers, hand-painted and stitched with satin ribbons.

The nineteenth century was supposedly a very romantic time. It was a time when men were virile, chivalrous *gentlemen* and women were demure, gentle *ladies*.

Perhaps it was like that for the wealthy. Those who could afford beautiful lacy gowns and expensive Valentine cards also had the time to swoon in the arms of their uniformed loved ones.

But for thousands of working class people, life meant working long hours for a pittance in appalling conditions with only the workhouse to look forward to in their old age.

But even amongst the middle and upper classes the romantic image of Victorian Britain didn't quite cover up what was for many a very different reality.

Sexual morality was the message from the pulpits of the nineteenth century churches. The sermons said that sex was mostly bad, unless practised with moderation within marriage. Medical opinion backed up the clergymen, and so did the middle and upper classes.

Yet, in the middle of the last century, one house in six was a brothel. And the customers were respectable middle and upper class gentlemen, including the clergy. These were the same men who, in outrage, wrote letters to *The Times* calling for the imprisonment of prostitutes to rid the streets of vice so that ladies could venture out.

The image of the middle class family was all-important. The Victorian picture of the family hearthside, with Papa reading aloud or the eldest daughter playing the piano, the children listening quietly, is a familiar one.

Yet the picture does not correspond with reality, for it was the fathers of those families who frequented the Haymarket in the evenings. Prostitutes gathered there in their hundreds — women driven to prostitution by poverty. It was the very people who wanted to 'rescue fallen women' that both accepted their propositions and did nothing to alleviate the poverty which forced them to turn to prostitution in the first place.

The prevailing ideas about sex in the nineteenth century are often laughed at today. A few years ago I came across a book entitled: 'The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs in Childhood, Youth, Adult Age, and Advanced Life considered in their Physiological, Social and Moral Relations. It was written by Dr William Acton, the accepted authority on sex in mid-Victorian England, and published in 1875.

The book contains a mine of fascinating information about the moral attitudes and medical diagnoses of the day.

Acton concentrates on men — simply because he thought, along with prevailing opinion, that women didn't play any part in sexual activity. But he makes clear to his readers his thoughts on 'a woman's place':



'During the last few years, and since the rights of women have been so much insisted upon, and practically carried out by the 'strongest-minded of the sex', numerous husbands have complained to me of the hardships under which they suffer by being married to women who regard themselves as martyrs when called upon to fulfil the duties of wives. This spirit of insubordination has become more intolerable — as the husbands assert — since it has been backed by the opinions of John Stuart Mill, who in his work on the 'Subjection of Women' would induce the sex to believe that they are "but personal bodyservants of a despot".'

'As opposed to these doctrines, I would rather urge the sex to follow the example

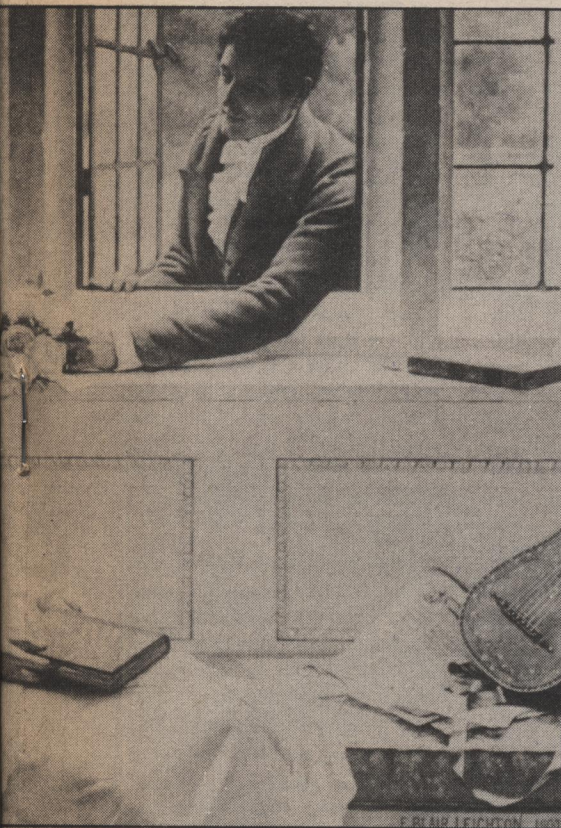
# Valenti



## the cele double s

**DAILY STAR**  
 52p (10 Cls, 5p Sat), Sold in London  
**ks Princess's wishes**  
**ANA'S AT HOME BABY**  
 ...and Whitaker and the Queen want to be born "at home."  
 ...should be born in a rinky-dinky English Palace, of a good life, see yourself ... that the book will be to ...  
**Your Star gets the BIG scoops**  
**TWICKERS KNICKER**  
 ...the BIG time girl: Centre

# me's day



# poration of standards



of those bright, cheerful and happily constituted women, who, instead of exaggerating their supposed grievances, instinctively, as it were, become the soothers of man's woes, their greatest gratification apparently being to minister to his pleasures, seeing as woman was created for the purpose of being a help-mate to her husband. Doubtless many a medical man can, like myself, recall the self-condemnation of more than one married woman, who in her repentant moments, has acknowledged that want of sympathy and affection on her part has led first to estrangement and subsequently to a permanent separation from a husband whose merits she has learnt too late to appreciate.'

The dangers of sexual immorality were spelt out to men, for it was them who were likely to fall prey to the temptations of 'low women'. Most women did not experience sexual pleasure, it was widely believed, and therefore weren't likely to submit to 'animal urges'. Dr Alan said bluntly that women who *did* enjoy sex were bound to become prostitutes.

'I should say that the majority of women (happily for society) are not very much troubled with sexual feeling of any kind. I admit, of course, the existence of sexual excitement terminating even in nymphomania, a form of insanity that those accustomed to visit lunatic asylums must be fully conversant with, but, with these sad exceptions, there can be no doubt that sexual feeling in the female is, in the majority of cases, in abeyance; and even if roused (which in many cases it never can be) it is very moderate compared to that of the male. As a general rule, a modest woman seldom desires any sexual gratification for herself. She submits to her husband's embraces, but principally to gratify him.'



Incidentally, many doctors — according to Acton — suggested as a cure for nymphomania the removal of the clitoris; but Acton maintained that this wouldn't work as a remedy because he was 'fully convinced that in many women there is no special sexual sensation in the clitoris.'

And that's all Acton had to say about women. He was much more pre-occupied with what he sees as the sexual problems of men. Much of his book is taken up with the dangers of 'masturbation, including many cases histories to suitably warn his readers (a large proportion of the case histories concern clergymen.)

Acton says, 'that insanity is a consequence of this habit (masturbation) is beyond doubt', and he recounts numerous cases where men have voluntarily committed themselves to an asylum on Acton's advice. He also quotes a contemporary of his, Dr Ritchie: 'The pale complexion, the emaciated form, the slouching gait, the clammy palm, the glassy or leaden eye, and the averted gaze, indicate the lunatic victim to this vice.' Look round the room to see if you can spot any.

Although these ideas were very much the ideas of the bourgeoisie, they certainly found their way into the attitudes of working people — and well into the twentieth century. The notion that women don't enjoy sex, or that masturbation is somehow wrong, or that men's needs are more important, or that sex outside marriage is immoral — they still exist today.

And so does the hypocrisy of the people who preach longest and loudest about morality. The Mary Whitehouse followers and the Tory ministers and MPs when demand that the streets be cleaned up, that censorship be used, that prostitutes be sent to prison, are the same people who want to ban sex education in schools, who support the sacking of gay men and women and condemn women to have unwanted babies, and who want men and women to stay married even though it makes them unhappy.

The same hypocrisy exists in the national newspapers which print editorials saying that rape is a horrific crime alongside news stories about sexual violence and pictures of naked women which are designed to titillate their readership.

On the one hand the intention is to excite readers by lurid tales, and yet these papers are the hardest advocates about the sanctity of family life.

The truth is that most people do not have the freedom to enjoy their relationships with men or women, and they will not have that freedom until the pressures of low incomes, bad housing, shift work, and unemployment are removed from their lives. And another truth is that the present-day preachers of morality *don't* suffer from those pressures.

And that sort of hypocrisy we can well do without.

# Flora Tristan-



## the colourful campaigner

FLORA TRISTAN lived in France during the first half of the nineteenth century, yet even today she is remembered as one of the leading campaigners for womens rights. Her individualistic and unconventional approach to life, as well as her ideas, created a following for her in France which bordered on the religious and which continued for some years after her death.

Her life was extremely colourful. The illegitimate daughter of a south American aristocrat and a French woman, she lived in poverty in Paris after his death. To escape this poverty, she married her employer and had three children. The marriage was unhappy and she left him—but her unhappiness didn't end there. She and her husband fought over the children for years. Divorce was illegal and their disputes only finally ended when her husband was jailed for attempting to murder her.

Such a life not only attracted the interest and gossip of Paris society—more importantly it also shaped many of Flora Tristan's ideas about the trap which marriage was for most women. She developed an interest in many of the ideas of people like Robert Owen and Saint-Simon. She became what is known as a utopian socialist—someone who accepted the existence of the evils of capitalism and the need for a socialist transformation, but who didn't have the scientific approach of Marx and Engels, in seeing that it was the working class which could bring about that change.

The utopian socialist doctrines of the time set great store in the role of women as the regenerator of humanity, and in particular the role of a female messiah. Flora Tristan accepted such ideas, and her socialism was always heavily tinged with mystical and religious ideas. She believed in portents, and that she was a prophet sent to free women from men's domination.

In 1843 she wrote her major work '*L'Union ouvrière*' (the workers union) where she spelt out her political philosophy—that women as both workers and mothers would play a leading role in bringing about socialism. Women had a leading role to play as educators of the new generation, and education was, to Flora, all important as the main means of changing society.

But many of Tristan's ideas were muddled. She felt sorry for working people because of the

terrible conditions in which they lived, but never understood that it was the working class *as a class* which had the power to change society and achieve socialism. So, for example, she wanted to create cultural palaces where workers could learn to appreciate art and beauty, but she appealed to wealthy patrons to help finance them—including the king of France, Louis Phillippe. Although she believed in democracy, she also believed in a form of god who would help to emancipate humanity.

Around the time of writing '*L'Union ouvrière*', Tristan travelled round France trying to win support for her ideas. She had the most success in Lyons, and in other areas of southern France, where union branches were formed. Yet it was during this political activity that she fell ill of typhoid, and died in Bordeaux in 1844.

Her ideas didn't endure very long. She was treated as a cult figure in some areas for several years following her death, but that too died after the failure of the revolution of 1848.

Today Flora Tristan is remembered for several things. She is seen as an early French feminist—especially following the posthumous publication of '*L'Emancipation de la Femme*' in 1845. She is perhaps best known as the grandmother of the painter Paul Guagain. But it is her observations of life—rather than her theoretical works which don't really stand the test of time—for which she is often remembered.

Her writings show an interest in how people lived and how they organised politically. But, unlike Marx and Engels, nothing comes out of the descriptive passages, other than a faith in humanity to improve itself. Like the people who advocate lifestyle politics today, she thought that people could change the world by changing their own personal circumstances, instead of seeing that it is in the process of changing the world that our own ideas and lives change.

Nonetheless, her writings should be read, both because they are interesting in their own right, and because they show some of the development of socialist thought before the marxists. Flora Tristan gives us a view of the years of radical hope which flourished in Europe before the defeat of the 1848 revolutions, and with them, the loss of many of the socialist ideas of her generation.





Nowhere but in England is wealth so unequally divided; this is why there is so much prostitution. English law places no restrictions on a man's right to make a will, but the precedents set by the aristocracy and followed by everybody from the lord of the manor to the humble cottager except that in every family there is one male heir; consequently a daughter's dowry is pitifully small, unless she has no brothers.

Yet there are very few occupations open to the woman of some education; furthermore, the fanatical prejudices of the various religious sects ensure that the girl who has been seduced and betrayed is banished from every house, even from her own home.

There are so many prostitutes in London that one sees them everywhere at any time of day; all the streets are full of them, but at certain times they flock in from the outlying districts where most of them live, and mingle with the crowds in theatres and public places. It is rare for them to take men home; their landlords would object, and besides, their lodgings are unfit. They take their 'captures' to the houses reserved for their trade; these are scattered throughout the city, and according to Dr Ryan they are as numerous as gin-shops.



Although Chartism derives considerable power from its efficient organisation, its greatest strength lies in its unity of purpose. Every member without exception wants to see an end to aristocratic, religious and commercial privileges; all want equal taxation, equal civil and political rights; all know that to achieve their goal they must drive out the tyrannical aristocracy which uses the power it has usurped solely to further its own interests. They must seize power in order to restore it to the victims of oppression; what is more, they have the strength and intelligence to do so.

The Chartists are not to be fobbed off with half-measures; they will never trust a party whose object is to transfer the privileges of the aristocracy to the middle class, for this would only lead to more oppression. The workers, who have raised the fortunes of England to such heights, and to whom shopkeepers, bankers, businessmen and landowners all owe their wealth, are the pariahs of society; their name is never mentioned in parliament, unless it be to propose laws to restrict their freedom; it is therefore their unshakeable conviction that any measure which is not based on the equality of political rights can be only an illusory gain.



Workers, in 1791 your fathers proclaimed the immortal Declaration of the Rights of Man, and it is thanks to that solemn Declaration that you are today free and equal men before the law. All honour to your fathers for this great achievement, but there remains for you men of 1843, a task no less great to accomplish. In your turn, free the last slaves remaining in France; proclaim the Rights of Woman, and, using the same terms as your fathers did, say: 'We, the proletariat of France, after fifty-three years' experience, acknowledge having been duly convinced that the ways in which the natural rights of women have been disregarded are the sole cause of the world's misfortunes, and we have resolved to include in our Charter woman's sacred and inalienable rights. We desire that men should give to their wives and mothers liberty and absolute equality which they enjoy themselves.



It has long been the fashion to extol English liberties, but England is the seat of the most abominable despotism, where laws and prejudices submit women to the most revolting inequality! A woman may inherit only if she has no brothers; she has no civil or political rights, and the law subjects her to her husband in every respect. She is inured to hypocrisy; she alone has to bear the brunt of public censure. Everything that develops her faculties, everything that she has to endure, has the inevitable result of coarsening her tastes, hardening her heart and numbing her soul.

Revolted by the scenes of family life they knew from experience, English novelists invited others which their imagination persuaded them were true; so the closer they are to reality when they portray the ridiculous habits of the typical English gentleman, or the bigotry and pretensions of the bourgeois, the tyranny of the husband and father, the offensive pride of superiors and the servility of inferiors, then the further they are from reality when they portray a picture of domestic happiness. Happiness without freedom! How can there ever be happiness in a society of masters and slaves?

The extracts from Flora Tristan's writings are from 'The London Journal of Flora Tristan' newly published by Virago at £3.95

# You should have seen the state of me tights

by Chris Fellowes

'I had a right laugh the other day when our Louise was whispering to her friend about some boys in their class. They'd been hanging round our house for days. It reminded me of us two, many moons ago. Mind you the roles were reversed then, we didn't so much as hang round the lads' houses, but sort of *patrol* their street about every ten minutes.'

'Yeah, waiting for that one moment when *he* might come out of the house and walk down the street and we'd casually bump into him.'

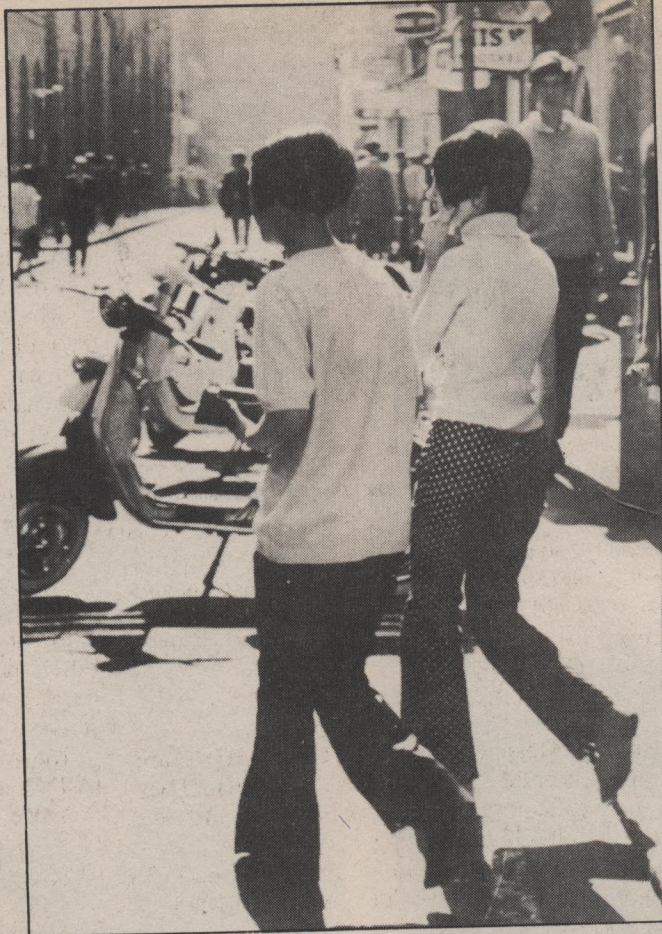
'Oh god.... and remember our star rating on their sexual ability. You know Pauline, our whole life revolved round lads, didn't it?'

I remember being in love ...'

'About every six weeks with you ...'

... being so touched when my boyfriend whispered those four magical words—"You're not are you?" I couldn't believe it had actually happened to ME. I mean, I was the lucky one, it wouldn't, couldn't happen to me! D'you know Pauline, I was so convincing with my parents that I nearly had them believing that I was the Virgin Mary, come again, and this was the second immaculate conception.

'Course I didn't think it would be too bad getting married, his mum made a fuss about getting married in church and all that.... said she wouldn't come if I got married in white .... so guess what I did, I got married in mauve, because I thought it'd be more suiting ... and, as everyone thought it was a morbid affair it seemed



quite logical to me to take it the whole hog and treat the whole affair more like a bloody funeral than a wedding.'

'It was a good do your wedding Chris, talk about Carnaby Street. It was like trendies anonymous, big felt hat, midi dress ... mind you looking back I think you looked a right pillock now ...'

'Size 12 that dress you know, well if you were anything over a size 12 there was no hope—you were on the shelf before it had even been put up!'

'Come on though Chris, we were just as fussy about the lads, if they didn't have a GT or SX (scooters for the uninitiated) well ...'

'And when they asked you out ... you didn't ask them—that was too common ... you hummed and ahed ... because that was cool ... and aloof. Even if you was dying to jump them, you didn't let them know it ... you had an image to keep up.'

'You know once, I was walking down Gorton Street, where Gardners is, in my mini skirt and white tights ... so chic ... putting on a real good show ... and I

walked straight into a lamp post. God the pain, but I couldn't ruin my image, so I carried on walking, cracking on that nothing had happened!'

'It's all part of growing up though isn't it .. but what a waste of those precious years ...'

'Oh shut up Chris, you're beginning to sound like my parents.'

'I saw Gordon the other day ... reminded me of when we had that accident. Well or should I say when his scooter had an argument with a roundabout—and the roundabout won! All I said ... as I went hurtling through the air ... and somehow landed on the grass verge uninjured ... was ... "Just look at the state of my tights."

'Those were the days though .. when at the local disco we all danced in a circle ... all the bags chucked in the middle. Rather reminiscent of a cattle market really. Waiting for one of those smooth, cool, customers to wander over and ask who was taking you home that night.'

'Yeah .. the lads didn't dance much then did they ..

obviously they weren't fitted with Duracel batteries ... (think!)

'Then we started to get chic didn't we ... and stopped wearing 4711 and moved onto Estée Lauder Youth Dew, from Miners Make up to Max Factor and bought real leather handbags not plastic, and started wearing Gossard Wonderbras (specially built by Wimpey's), and burnt our Woollies cotton floral ones.'

'It was all soul music in the North wasn't it? (A note to the reader ... north ie Manchester, Birmingham etc ... a little further north than Watford for our London readers).

'Aye, and we soon kicked the youth club in the head, for the clubs up town. Drinking Bacardi and coke, even though we hated it .. rum and blacks ... I suppose they drink Pina Colada's now.'

'Yeah, but that was the way up wasn't it. The route to making it. These were the things that classy people did. We'd had enough of being working class. We had to prove that the north wasn't full of hair nets, stout, Hollands pies and pints, as Coronation Street would have you believe.'

'Do you remember how you had to pay to be a member of the Family Planning Clinic?'

'God, yeah. And it was a little bit harder for the lads too, wasn't it. They didn't display Durex on the counter in Boots then—dear me no—it was hidden in the back. So to save embarrassment it was buy a comb and nip round to the barbers.'

'What a great believer you used to be in the age of consent ... you used to say that at 16 a girl was mature, and more responsible .. and no longer jail bait! But there again you did lie about your age—an awful lot!'

'Difficult to believe isn't it? But that was over 13 years ago ...'

'Oh shut up ... you sound like that Dennis Norden ...'

'I hate his programme ...'

'Hey our kid, perhaps we're starting a new trend, a new sect, all our yesterdays ...'

'Drink up .. and shut up, you're making me feel old!'

# WOMENS HEALTH

## Giving birth...so what are the alternatives?

In recent years a lot of publicity has been given to 'alternative' methods of child birth—the Leyboyer method, acupuncture, squatting positions, home delivery. Almost all alternative practices have been praised by mothers and often by doctors.

Yet in spite of this, from the Cranbrook Report in 1959 to the Peel Report of 1970, 'official' opinion has recommended 100% hospital confinement. This is ironic; 40 years ago women who didn't want to were forced to have their babies at home: now they're lucky if they can get the care or attention they need for a home birth.

Statistics show that home births produce very low infant mortality rates. For example, in the Netherlands, where home births are 40% of the total, perinatal mortality is amongst the lowest in the Western World.

But the big area of controversy is not really whether to have your baby at home or in hospital. It is about the kind of treatment you *do* get, and the kind you *should* get.

The tendency in hospitals is to deliver babies to fit in with the hospital routine, and to make all treatment as mechanical and routine as possible. This means that *all* pregnancies and deliveries are treated as 'high risk' whether they are or not. So shaving, enemas, episiotomy, foetal monitoring, induction, acceleration of labour, rupture of the foetal sac, and drugs like syntometrine (supposed to lessen the chance of haemorrhage when the placenta is born) become standard.

And it follows of course that foetal distress, post-natal depression, unnecessary pain and trauma for the mother also become standardly associated with hospital birth.

But just because the baby is your first does not mean you are automatically 'high risk'. If the first was difficult, the second won't necessarily be so. *You* are the best person to decide whether or not you are healthy, and who you need with

you during the birth. You do not have to submit to endless screenings, scans and fluid tests in search of the 'perfect baby'. And all these procedures carry a risk of their own.

So what are the choices?

**Hospital Consultant Units (HCUs)** are intended for high-risk patients. They exist in large teaching hospitals and care is likely to be shared between the hospital, the ante-natal clinic and the GP. You may never have met the staff you deal with in the labour ward.

**GP/Midwife units** are smaller and more friendly. You will meet the midwife during your pregnancy, and if you need a doctor it will be your own GP. The units are for 'low risk' patients.

**Domino schemes** are being posed as the alternative to home births. Ante-natal care is with your community midwife, who will come to hospital with you, deliver the baby, then leave you to about 6 hours 'hotel service' before you go home.

**Home birth** is still possible, although

some determination will be required to get your doctor to agree. The community midwife will give you anti-natal care and deliver the baby. Para-medical teams are available if there are difficulties.

A spell in hospital is a welcome relief for many women; a chance to escape for a few days from their other children's demands, bad housing or housework. But that is no reason to condemn them to the horrors of the hospital system.

So why is it so horrific?

Most of the problems boil down to lack of money—for staff who have time to care, and for experiments on alternatives—like acupuncture for pain relief, diversion therapy (playing your favourite records at top volume, for instance) or training in breathing routines. Even the facilities like enough room to walk about in, or information on exactly what is happening to you as it happens, and why.

Short of a revolution which redistributes public money from bombs to babies, the struggle for good care will be small and tough.

**The Association of Radical Midwives (ARM)** aims to retain the role of the midwife as someone who is trained to give specialist care, information and choice to mothers and babies as people who deserve to be treated as something better than pieces of meat on a conveyer belt. You can contact them c/o Jane Tucker, Tel: Shaw 848 217.

There is also the **Birth Centre**, 16 Simpson Rd, London SW11, and the **Society to Support Home Confinement**, 17 Laburnam Ave, Durham. Tel: Durham 61325.

They will all give you more information—but the thing to remember is that however you choose to have your baby, it is up to you to demand the choice.

**Maggie Bonner**



# REVIEWS



## Otherwise known as Sheila the Great Judy Blume Piccolo, 80p

My Mum bought my first Judy Blume book which was *Otherwise known as Sheila the Great*. It is about two girls, Sheila and Mouse, Mouse can do everything — Sheila can't. As the two girls become friends Sheila's confidence grows till she too becomes Sheila the great.

Judy Blume's other books are very similar. They are all about kids with problems like their mums and dads getting a divorce, being fat, pinching from shops and the problems of growing up.

I like them because being a kid isn't easy. We do have lots of

problems even if they do appear trivial to parents. These books are real as well, not like Enid Blyton's Famous Five books which are about kids that do wonderful things which children couldn't possibly do on their own. Her books are about fantasy worlds which are a load of rubbish.

Other titles by Judy Blume are: *It's not the end of the world*, *Blubber*, *Tales of a fourth grade nothing*, *Are you there God? It's me Margaret*. Prices are from 70p to 95p.

Louise Stimson,  
aged 10 years

# SOLIDARNOŚĆ

Events in Poland have shocked and dismayed all of us. But if you want to understand why events developed as they did then now is the time to catch up on some reading.

What options were open to the leaders of Solidarity? Should they have compromised, not gone 'so far', as many newspaper editorial writers suggest? Or did the military regime take over precisely because the leaders of Solidarity hesitated and hoped to compromise—because the alternatives seemed unattainable, or because they were afraid of the consequences.

To understand what happened and what might have been there are lots of different things to read: two recent books, by Denis Macshane and Neal Ascherson, are readable accounts of events surrounding the birth of Solidarity. Another recent publication, *Poland, Solidarity and Walesa*, is mainly a photographic record of these events.

Documentary records can be read in *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, a magazine which publishes translations of original documents. It sets out to provide a factual commentary rather than a political analysis.

For an overall explanation of the political set-up in Eastern Europe the best book is still Chris Harman's *Bureaucracy and Revolution in Eastern Europe*. Published in 1974 the cover of the book read: 'For twenty years the workers in Eastern Europe have fought, fallen back and fought again—for food and worker's power. Their victory would shatter the oppressive regimes they live under and ignite revolution in Russia itself.' That could have been written yesterday. Poland has fought

and fallen back. Although the book deals with a lot of the economics of the situation it is nevertheless very readable.

Events are changing quickly but both *International Socialism Journal* (£1.25) and *Socialist Review* (50p) have produced special editions this month, which will bring you up to date.

All of these books and magazines are available from Bookmarks, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4. For copies of *Socialist Review* and *International Socialism Journal* you can ask your *Womens Voice* seller. **Anna Paczuska**

**Solidarity—Poland**  
**Independent Trade Union**  
**Dennis Macshane**  
**Spokesman Books, £3.50**

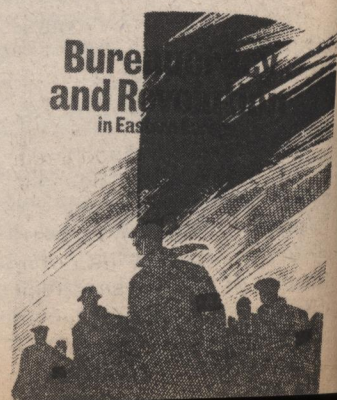
**The Polish August**  
**Neal Ascherson**  
**Penguin, £2.50**

**Poland, Solidarity,**  
**Walesa**  
**Pergamon Press, £4.95**

**Bureaucracy and**  
**Revolution in Eastern**  
**Europe**  
**Chris Harman**  
**Pluto Press, £2.95**

**State Capitalism in**  
**Russia**  
**Tony Cliff**  
**Pluto Press**

Chris Harman



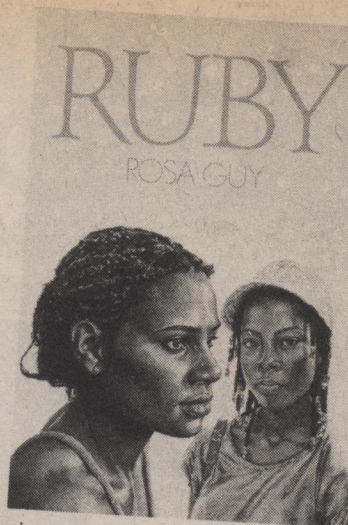
## Ruby

Rosa Guy  
Gollancz  
£5.50

This is the sort of book you can't put down once you get into it. I found it really thrilling in parts and very descriptive. It is about a 19 year old girl called Ruby Cathy and her relationships with her sister Phyllisia, her father Calvin and her lover Daphne. The story is about the lives of the Cathy family in America when they have just moved there from a small West Indian island. Ruby has no friends, and finds it very hard to make them because she helps her crippled teacher who is a white racist, and because of this her class call her an 'Uncle Tom'. Daphne is in

her class, and is very different from the rest of them. She never talks to anybody except the teachers and only when she feels like arguing with them.

One night Ruby follows Daphne home because she wants to find out where she lives. The next morning Ruby goes back without knowing why. When Daphne opens the door, she has a go at Ruby for waking her up but then lets her in because Ruby says she needs to talk to her. After they have had a talk, Daphne softens towards Ruby, and they start being lovers as well as friends. Daphne chooses a pet name for Ruby, which is 'Bronzie'. Daphne starts helping Ruby with her school work, which is the excuse Ruby gives to her father for going to her house. Daphne seems to me to be very cold towards Ruby a lot of the time, setting herself



above everyone else, whereas Ruby cannot bear to see anyone struggle or get hurt, and accepts being looked down upon because of it. Daphne gets at Ruby about these feelings, making her feel weak and stupid, and she only shows affection to

Ruby when she feels like it. This book shows the problems Ruby has of hiding her feelings for another girl from her father. Because she is so scared of him, the secret relationship weakens and Daphne starts on Ruby for being scared of her father.

There are a lot of political arguments combined with everything, which makes it sometimes funny and sometimes sad. Phyllisia has a lot of arguments with everyone, especially Daphne, which is where a lot of arguments about women and black nationalism come in. The story goes deeply into Ruby's thoughts, as Ruby does a lot of thinking, and this is one of the things which makes it descriptive. All these things combined make this a thrilling, exciting and moving book and it's well worth reading.

Nina Phillips

## Lili Marleen

This is a story about a song, a woman, a man and the second world war. It's got all the ingredients that have made plenty of gripping films: suspense, glamour, nastiness, the sense of utter darkness that pervaded Europe in the thirties and forties as the Nazis came to power. The actors and actresses are fine, everybody gives a fine performance. There are chilling ober gruppenfuhrers, passionate young men and brave young Willi, the heroine and singer of Lili Marleen.

Goebbels complains that the song is 'crap with the stench of death', but Hitler rather likes it. The ober gruppenfuhrer thinks the end is morbid and does his best to destroy Willi, because he desires her. He fails.

Willi goes from rags to riches, and for a weird moment it seems she's siding with the Nazis. But no, just in time, it's revealed to us that she isn't and, her integrity intact, she goes on to get her heart broken.

Would anyone shed a tear for her? No. Why? Because the film just misses on several counts. It doesn't inform you in any way about life under the Nazis, it doesn't elicit your sympathy for Willi—she seems to risk life and limb not

because the Nazis were what they were but because they got their nasty hands on her boyfriend.

Perhaps that's the true story, but it's not the way to the heart of a sceptical audience. This film isn't Hollywood enough to be so lush that you can excuse it on the grounds it's a real weeper. Nor is it sinister enough to leave you chilled and depressed as other good films about Nazi Germany have done.

It's a shame because the director, Fassbinder, has made good films about the complexities of political and personal life—films that are at once intelligent and popular.

Marilyn Maclean



## Quick Dips

**Tears and Joy**  
by parents of  
handicapped children  
£1.20 + 30p postage from  
Bristol BroadSides, 110  
Cheltenham Road,  
Bristol.

This booklet, written by a self-help group of parents of handicapped children, is about *their* own lives—their reactions, shock even, to knowing they had a handicapped child, how they coped, what they've learnt, and stories too of their own childhoods, many of them in war-time.

They met together through a local playscheme and then, with the help of the WEA and Bristol BroadSides, produced this record. The strength they have drawn from each other's experience has had results too: In January last year the local council agreed to finance a family support scheme.

One parent writes: 'My upbringing (in a mining area) and my trade union ability helped me cope against the system with a brain-injured child, and my own disability. I learned to shrug things off and, even against a blank wall of opposition, I still plug, plug away. That's what my socialist tendencies—to put it mildly—have always taught me, and to do it without getting aggressive.'

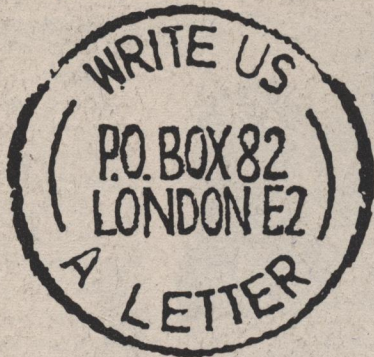


**Leaving violent men**  
A study of refuges and housing for battered women

£2 plus postage from  
Women's Aid Federation  
(England), 62 Bedminster  
Parade, Bristol.

This national survey has been produced by a research team working for the WAFE and funded by the Department of the Environment. It covers every aspect of the lives of battered women—leaving home, the type of accommodation available, their lives in the refuges. One of the most revealing sections, but perhaps a very depressing one, is that on children in refuges and the sort of life they can expect. Full of facts and statistics, it deals with things as they are, not solutions to the problems—inevitably so, as it was Government funded.

# LETTERS

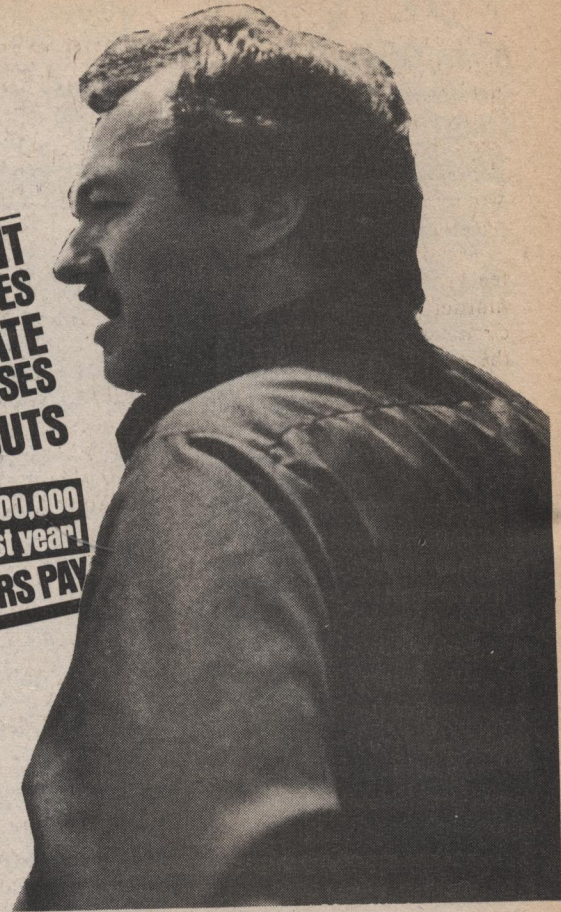


**Socialist  
Worker**

**NO RENT RISES  
RATE RISES  
CUTS**

**Councils paid £1,600,000,000  
in Interest to Banks last year!**

**MAKE THE BANKERS PAY**



## Come off the fence

*Dear Womens Voice,*

Isn't it about time you came off the fence on the real problem facing women? The statement that there is a problem facing women suggests what the answer is straight away. Of course you can dress it up in a lot of sophisticated language but the real truth is very simple, and I'm surprised you don't say it—the problem for women is caused by the attitudes of men as a group.

It doesn't matter what class a woman is, she can still be raped on the way home at night. It doesn't matter what class a woman is, she can still be touched up by some man in the office at work or whistled at walking down the street.

I should have thought the reason we have magazines like Spare Rib and Womens Voice is that women need to stick together as women because of the way any man—working class, socialist or whatever—is capable of acting. It's no good saying look at Mrs Thatcher, she's no feminist. Nor are the strikers and other people Womens Voice seems to concentrate on.

Surely Womens Voice should be aiming at raising the consciousness of women as women. If women stand up for themselves as women, they can take on the terrible way most men are capable of behaving most of the time. Let's have more articles in Womens Voice about women fighting as women.

**Rebecca Mailer,  
London NW3**

## Make the bankers pay

*Dear Womens Voice,*

I read your editorial suggesting that local councils should refuse to pay interest charges rather than choose between putting up rates or cutting services.

This was suggested in Womens Voice some time ago, and I wrote to Ken Livingstone a few months ago suggesting that the GLC should do that. You may be interested to read his reply.

If even he, who is supposed to be so left-wing, isn't prepared to try this, what chance have we got that anyone will? The only other possibility that I can think of is Ted Knight. So it looks as if it's a waste of time and postage writing to local authorities in the hope that they might do this.

**Margaret King  
North London**

*Ken Livingstone's reply:*

*I certainly agree with you that interest costs are an appalling burden. But, attractive as your proposition may appear, the council could not go to the lengths of not paying them. In law our officers are not allowed to obey our instructions if they involve breaking the law.*

*What we are doing is not increasing our borrowing at the same rate as in the 1950s-1970s. This takes time but already we only borrow for housing purposes and we owe no-one a penny for the rest of our services and pay no interest.*

*Yours sincerely,  
Ken Livingstone*

## Women fight apartheid

*Dear Womens Voice,*

People will have read about Steven Kitson, who was detained in South Africa after visiting his imprisoned father. But we shouldn't forget about the women who suffer under South Africa's and Namibia's regime.

For example only African males over 21 can be registered tenants in the townships. Women have no rights to remain in their homes and can be forcibly evicted. Black women earn on average less than half of the wages of black men, and only about 8 per cent of the wages of white men.

But women are playing a part in the fight against apartheid—many are leaving South Africa to join the military wings of SWAPO and the African National Congress.

Britain's links with South Africa are massive—for example, British military equipment is still exported to South Africa despite a United Nations embargo on arms sales. British banks raise loans for the apartheid system.

All blacks suffer under apartheid, but women suffer the greatest hardships.

**Sarah Williamson  
Sevenoaks**

## PMT at last people realise

*Dear Womens Voice*

Sharon Clarke's letter about the woman who was acquitted of murder because of premenstrual tension (PMT) said that women are responsible for their own actions. Whilst agreeing with that, the logical follow-through of her reasoning seems to be that the

women jailed for killing their brutal and drunken father, though beaten and provoked, were rightly convicted as they were responsible for their actions.

My feeling on the PMT case was that at last people realise the extreme pressure so many women suffer before their periods.

Although I may personally feel that this is no reason for murder, I do not know the full circumstances and am therefore not in a position to state the rights or wrongs of the judgement.

Maybe Ms Clarke does not suffer from PMT. Women who do would tell you that this is the time when children are most likely to be in line for anything from a clip round the ear to severe battering.

If you get PMT month after month with no understanding from your husband or lover it could, I feel, in some cases lead a woman to be so beside herself to result in battering or murder.

At last the reasons for child battering are being realised. I was surprised that a male judge understood the extremes which PMT can push women to.

I would be interested to hear other women's views.

Eunice Sharples  
Darlington

## Don't confuse abortion

Dear Womens Voice,

We were pleased by your coverage of abortion in the December issue. It's great that you are publicising recent attacks.

We were a bit worried to see the article on handicapped babies on the same page. We feel strongly that abortion and euthanasia are separate issues.

Whatever our personal feelings, the National Abortion Campaign as a *campaign* takes no position on whether or not seriously handicapped babies should be allowed to die. The anti-abortionists are doing their best to confuse abortion with euthanasia. They might try to introduce a Bill linking the rights of handicapped babies to the rights of deformed fetuses. Let's not play into their hands!

Philippa Jones  
NAC Steering Committee

# DIRTY LINEN

It takes a woman to really sell out women (it doesn't look so sexist). And that's what seems to be happening in America to the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), which would give women equal rights "guaranteed" by the US Constitution.

If the ERA fails to get voted into the Constitution, a lot of the blame will go to a woman called Phyllis Schlafly. In an energetic campaign against the amendment, she has made many Americans think of the ERA as a lesbian plot to destroy the family.

Nice as that might be, the ERA really has more to do with issues like equal pay (women's average pay in the US is just over half that of men).

Schlafly is an admirer of Thatcher. She particularly admires the fact that Thatcher cooks Mr Thatcher's breakfast every day.

Like Thatcher, Schlafly thinks that a housewife is a 'home executive'. (Does this mean that we can claim laundrette charges on tax?) But also like Thatcher, she doesn't seek fulfilment as a 'home executive'. She has run for Congress twice and written nine books.

Fifteen years ago she failed to become leader of the Republican party's federation. She was considered too right-wing. Nowadays, with the growth of the right, she looks a bit more mainstream and is called 'the sweetheart of the silent majority'.

Could you do with an extra room to get the kids out of your hair? Or could you just do with a room to call your own?

Well some people have a few to spare. Like Tim Rice, who made a fortune from glorifying right-wing Argentinian dictator Eva Peron. Rice has an Oxfordshire mansion—but has also recently acquired what he describes as 'a sort of large pied-a-terre' in London. Quite large. '... about ten or twelve rooms'.

But then the rich are never satisfied. The Royal Newly-Weds, for example,



claim that they don't have enough rooms at their Country Pad—Highgrove House in Gloucestershire. That, apparently, has 'three dozen or so' rooms.

Anyone who doesn't know how many rooms they have must have too many.

The *Daily Mail* has discovered the solution to sexism. (It discovered it in December, so we're a little late passing on the good news.)

The answer, according to *Mail* writer Lynda Lee-Potter, is co-educational schools—'Boys educated with girls never oppose equal opportunities, want the ladies to leave in the middle of dinner parties while they drink the port, or think a man's sippy if he cooks and weak if he cries.'

And: 'Girls educated alongside boys are not part of the ever-increasing

cranky band which is fighting to bring in legislation to combat alleged sexual harassment.'

Apparently Lynda Lee-Potter hasn't realised that in America, the cradle of the modern Women's Movement, co-education has been the norm for years. Or maybe she just doesn't care.

Who says romance is dead? Or who, for that matter, would suggest that aristocratic marriages are based in property deals? Not Debrett's—the aristocratic's guide to the aristocracy.

It even predicts that because the Royal Couple are so much in love they will have beautiful and talented children.

And if you don't believe that Harvey Smith will kill you. He's already punched someone just for saying that the Royal Family should be exterminated.

# SANDRA

~ BUS STOP ~



## FEBRUARY 1972 Gill Brown looks back

February 1972 was overshadowed by the murder of 13 people in Derry, Northern Ireland. British troops opened fire on an anti-internment demonstration. 13 were killed and 16 wounded. Nearly all those killed or wounded were young men in their twenties. Most had been hit by bullets between the shoulder and the knee. The Paratroopers involved were crack troops and had carefully picked their targets. There was nothing random about the killings. A government inquiry was later to whitewash the whole affair. Bernadette Devlin—at that time an MP—said:

*'This was our Sharpeville, we shall never forget it'*

In Dublin the British Embassy was burnt down, in Parliament Bernadette Devlin gave Reggie Maudling (Home

Secretary and part time crook) a thumping.

The miners strike which started in January was to reach a magnificent conclusion. Almost two million workers had been laid off, power cuts were widespread, and wide scale picketing organised. At a coke depot in the Midlands picket lines were being broken by the police. The miners appealed for help, and the response was magnificent. Thousands of Birmingham engineers downed tools and went to Saltley. The depot was closed—the picket line could not be broken. The strike ended—a victory for the miners, a defeat for the government. Down but not out the government decided that Saltley must not be repeated. A National Security Council was established. On this Committee were the military, intelligence agencies, police, the Home Office and the Department of Trade and Industry. The committee drew up plans to ensure coal would be stockpiled at power stations and flying pickets would be controlled.

A Bill was debated in parliament calling for vasectomies to be

available on the National Health. Leo Abse, anti-abortionist and woman-hater, said of some research:

*'In some cases they affirm that it is a means for emotionally sick women (he is referring to feminists) to castrate their husbands ... We certainly need to be on guard against those women who, masking their sadism under the guise of benevolence and concern for the future of humanity, campaign with such intemperate zeal for the present emasculation of mankind'.*

Despite such ravings the bill was passed. Abse has since written a book called, wait for it, *Private Member: a psychoanalytically orientated study of contemporary politics.*

If it's anything like his speeches it must qualify for the 'most suitable book of bog paper' award.

Meanwhile Richard Nixon was jaunting off to China. Still unable to totally annihilate the Vietnamese, he produced an eight point peace plan. Quoting the plaque dumped on the moon, he said:

*'We came in peace for all mankind'*

Mankind meant all American companies who wanted to make money out of the Chinese markets, and excluded the Vietnamese who he was still trying to annihilate. He later confirmed these suspicions by having all the North Vietnamese ports mined.



Saltley Gate picket



# why I became a socialist

Cynthia Handcroft is 31. Born in South Wales, she now lives and works in West Houghton, near Bolton. She is a shop steward in one of Littlewoods' six mills in Bolton. It is hard to say specifically what brought Cynthia to socialist politics, but it was most probably her gut hatred of the 'system'.



I was brought up in a labour family. There was one really good thing about the way we were brought up—the boys in the family had to do housework the same as the girls. There was no sexism in our family. In fact the boys probably worked harder than me.

My brothers were extremely clever—PhDs, the lot. I was always put into competition with them because I was the only one of the three girls who was 'bright'. Then a couple of days before my eleven plus I was swinging on a goalpost when I fell off and broke my arm. All my mother was bothered about was the exam—she swears I did it deliberately.

They were education mad in our house, education was the most important thing. Then I was coerced into sitting the twelve plus, which I passed and went to grammar school. I was always getting into trouble at the school. I remember always being resentful of other kids—the richer ones. Because I came from a big family, seven kids, I couldn't understand why other people had loads of money and we didn't. Then I got a job as a papergirl, I used to have to get up at 5.30 every morning—and all for 15/-a week.

I decided to leave school at 15, I wanted a job with money. My parents were angry, they wanted me to stay on, but I think the headmistress was glad to get rid of me—I was a thorn in her side. They called me the 'troublemaker'.

I got a job as a sewing machinist in a local factory, but I was sacked for fighting. I wasn't a member of the union. The shop steward was very sympathetic—she said if I had been a member of the union then we could have fought to keep my job. I was fired on the spot and it was the firm's Christmas do that night, so I still went along to it!

I met a girl from London who was going back to live with her parents and she asked me if I wanted to go with her. I packed my bags on the sly and went—I didn't even tell my parents. In London I had loads of factory jobs—most of them with no union—then I went back to south Wales.

The town I came from has a Parachute Regiment Battle School stationed there. I didn't hate the army lads—as a matter

of fact I married one—there were a few of them who were aware they were being used. They didn't like breaking strikes, they thought that was out of order. Then a friend of mine went over to Northern Ireland (this was in 1971) to live with one of the paras, so she asked me if I wanted to go, to share the expense of the flat. So I went. I got a job in a garage.

**'The system needs changing, and socialism is the best way to do it because it is beneficial to all and not just for the privileged few.'**

A lot of the lads didn't like being in Northern Ireland, but there were the few who used it for their own sadistic natures—they used to love the dawn raids, to drag folk from their beds. I was in a pub one day when the one next door was blown up and I thought 'sod this for a game of soldiers, I'm off home'. Although I met loads of nice people when I was there—protestants and catholics.

Back in south Wales, again! But I didn't stay long, I went to work in a holiday camp on the south coast. Then back again, and that's when I met my husband John. As soon as we got married he bought himself out of the army. Then we came to live in Lancashire. I ended up working for Littlewoods and I've been there five years now.

Littlewoods give over the 'parental' image, pretending that they care about people who work for them—it's a load of crap, they don't care about people at all. I joined the union straight away. I work on a large section and there was no shop steward. So I thought for years I've pissed about being critical about the system but doing nothing about it, and

here was my chance to get something done. I got elected shop steward for our section. Unfortunately it's a real pro-management, right wing branch of USDAW—so it makes my job harder. Not only am I fighting management, I'm fighting the union bureaucracy as well.

I'm the Health and Safety rep so I can get around the factory to tell people to come to union meetings. I started getting people involved because there was no membership participation at all and the right-wing controlled the union branch. When people complain to me that the union does nothing and that it's rubbish—I tell them to get involved and change it. Now there are a good few who'll come regularly to union meetings and it has politicised loads of the women.

When I was first involved I was naive—but the more involved I became the more confident I was at organising. Then I was elected as a delegate to the Trades Council and that's where I met the Socialist Workers Party. I liked their politics and felt very drawn towards them. I started going to meetings and I thought 'this is the party for me'. I only wish I had met them years ago. I joined the Bolton branch and at first I didn't get things right, but I started reading a lot and I got a better understanding of our politics.

Even if people have a go at you at work about your politics you should never shut-up, just carry on. In the end people will see you are right, especially when you don't waver from your politics. Too many people compromise their politics to keep in with other folk. In the end of the day the best workers will come towards us—the best activists.

It's been doubly difficult for me to be fully involved in politics and union work because John is not involved and has no interest in politics—so we're always rowing about it. He thinks I should stop at home and have babies—he doesn't understand why I'm involved. But it doesn't deter me at all, I just keep going. You see I just thought that the system needed changing, and that socialism was the best way to do it because it would be beneficial to all and not just for the privileged few.

**WHERE  
WE  
STAND**

**INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION**

The workers create all the wealth under capitalism. A new society can only be constructed when they collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution.

**REVOLUTION NOT REFORM**

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say. It has to be overthrown.

**THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD**

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers. The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based on councils of workers delegates and a workers' militia. At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system. Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

**INTERNATIONALISM**

The struggle for socialism is part of a world-wide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries. We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racialism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls. We support the fight of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence.

We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country. Russia, China and Eastern Europe are not socialist but state capitalist. We support the struggles of workers in these countries against the bureaucratic ruling class.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women.

We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against homosexuals.

**THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY**

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party. Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

We urge all those who agree with our policies to join with us in the struggle to build the revolutionary party.

**Small ads**

**RADICAL NURSES GROUP**

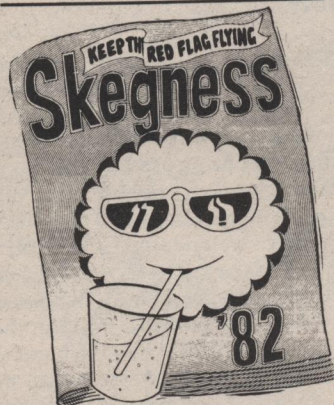
National Conference  
Theme: 'Speaking Out: the nurse as the patient's advocate'.

Date: Saturday 6 February, 10am-5pm

Venue: St Ann's Community Centre, Cowgate, Edinburgh

Lunch provided, creche and accommodation with prior notice.

Further information: 031 226 7248

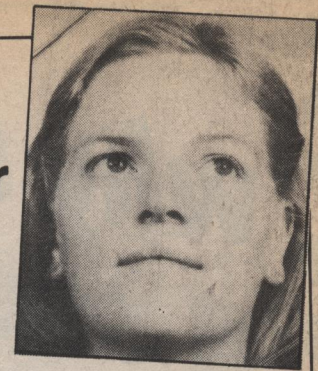


**Easter Weekend Holiday**  
Friday 9th—  
Monday 12th April

**BOOK NOW** for your holiday of a lifetime! We're packing more into this **Socialist Worker** bargain bonanza than ever before— and we're keeping the price the same as last year.

The price is £37.50 for adults and there is a limited number of free places for kids under fourteen—but make sure you book early. The scramble for places has already begun!

You can get details from your local SWP branch, or ring Cathy Sutherland on 01-986 3672.



**And another thing ....**

by Susan Pearce

Pondering over the sacks of Valentine mail I shan't be getting again this year, I wondered, as I do every year, if things would improve if I got thinner/washed my hair more often/wore more makeup/wore more dresses... etc etc. I'm sure I'm not the only one who asks herself these questions.

In search of an answer, I took a look at the *Observer's* selection of the ten best-dressed women of the year. After all, it's 1982, we're all at least half-way to liberation, surely the *Observer* would give me people I can feel at home with.

And so they did! A simple mother-to-be, a widow, a couple of office workers, and a mother of six were included in the ten. What a shame that in reality there's quite a difference between me and the Princess of Wales, Lady Avon, the owner of Blake's Hotel (never heard of it) or the company director who 'wears Jean Muir by day, Dior in the afternoon, and Givenchy in the evening'.

Need I say that the difference is that they've all got quite a lot of money and are well established in the higher branches of the scabby old tree we call civilised society. (Even the 'office workers' worked on *Vogue*.)

But anyway, why is it so important how we look? Why is it that the very first comment on a woman (usually by a man, because they do more commenting than anyone else) is always about her appearance? It's never what she does, why she's important or interesting, not even the feeblest attempt to see what she's like. Shirley Williams' hairstyle got front page coverage—her politics, none. (Since she's a founder member of the SDP, mind you, that's hardly surprising.)

Take Anna Ford, then, what do we know about her? She's 'good-looking', with a 'sexy voice' and was engaged to some bloke off *Newsnight*. Richard Baker on the other hand is a music buff, a wit, and a good all-rounder in the media field who is still enjoying a long and successful career. He happens also to be shorter than average, a bit pudgy, and a very dull dresser, but no-one ever mentions it. Quite right too—after all, keeping him up to scratch in the dress department is really his wife's job, as William Hickey pointed out in the *Daily Express*. Having been rude about the appearance of the ten best dressed's (all very distinguished) husbands, he finished, 'Next time the *Observer* ought to disqualify any woman who has failed to get her man into decent shape'.

Failed, you notice. It seems to have passed him by that some of them didn't have 'a man', but then that is the biggest failure of all.

Making such a big issue of what women look like is, whether they know it or not, one of the ways men cope with their own failures, one way to bolster their own confidence.

As in, 'Bet she goes', 'Who'd marry that?', 'What she needs is a man', 'What a slag!', 'No daughter of mine goes out of the house like that'.....

All of which are threats. The threat of failing to fit into society, of failing to 'succeed', of holding us back by blowing up the issue of what we look like till it's more important than anything else, then using it to attack us. Every fashion feature, every bit of advice on 'how to succeed', even leading political comment, tells us our appearance, and therefore our future, is in our own hands. So it's our own fault if we don't get what we want. Or if we do get what we don't want.

Like raped.

For details of the Socialist Workers Party, fill in this form and send to: National Secretary, SWP, PO Box 82, London E2.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

.....

TELEPHONE .....

TRADE UNION .....

# Charlotte Despard

Charlotte Despard was born in 1844. She was a Communist, a suffragette and a Sinn Feiner—active all through her long life. In 1928 she was in Trafalgar Square, addressing a Hunger March!

'From among the crowd on the centre plinth steps forward that wonderful and lovable Irish fighter Mrs Despard, at that time eighty five years of age. She is helped forward and begins to address the crowd.

'Her appearance is the signal for a new outburst of cheering that rolls like thunder round the vast assembly as they recognise the frail, white haired Irish veteran.

'She addresses the crowd with a fervour almost unbelievable in one of such a grand age, and concludes by unfurling a small green flag which she had brought over from Ireland, inscribed "Ireland greets the Hunger Marchers".

'The crowd cheer to the echo, and again burst into song, this time the *International*.'

The description is from Wal Hannington's book *Unemployed Struggles*.

Charlotte Despard's biography is called 'An Unhusbanded Life' by Andro Linklater. Published by Hutchinson in 1980, price £8.95.

The photo is of Charlotte Despard speaking at an anti-fascist rally in Trafalgar Square during the 1930s.

She died in 1939.



# I'M GONNA BE AN ENGINEER

Peggy Seeger

When I was a little girl I wished I was a boy,  
I lagged along behind the gang and wore my corduroys,  
Everybody said I only did it to annoy,  
But I was gonna be an engineer.  
Momma told me 'Can't you be a Lady?  
Your duty is to make me the mother of a pearl.  
Wait until you're older, dear and maybe  
You'll be glad that you're a girl.'

Dainty as a Dresden statue,  
Gentle as a Jersey cow,  
Smooth as silk,  
Gives creamy milk,  
Learn to coo,  
Learn to moo;  
That's what to do to be a lady now.

When I went to school I learned to write and how to read  
Some history and geography and home economy;  
And typing is a skill that every girl is sure to need,  
To while away the extra time until the time to breed.  
And then they had the nerve to say; 'What would you like to be?'  
I says, 'I'm gonna be an engineer!'  
'No, you only need to learn to be a lady  
The duty isn't yours, for to try and run the world.  
An engineer could never have a baby,  
Remember, dear, that you're a girl.'

So I become a typist and I study on the sly,  
Working out the day and night so I can qualify.  
And every time the boss come in, he pinched me on the thigh,  
Says; 'I've never had an engineer!'  
You owe it to the job to be a lady  
It's the duty of the staff for to give the boss a whirl  
The wages that you get are crummy, maybe  
But it's all you get, 'cause you're a girl.  
She's smart! (for a woman)  
I wonder how she got that way?  
You get no choice  
You get no voice  
Just stay mum  
Pretend you're dumb  
That's how you come to be a lady today!

Then Jimmy come along and we set up a conjugation,  
We were busy every night with loving recreation.  
I spent my days at work so he could get his education,  
And now he's an engineer!  
He says; 'I know you'll always be a lady.  
It's the duty of my darling to love me all her life.  
Could an engineer look after or obey me?  
Remember, dear, that you're my wife!

As soon as Jimmy got a job I studied hard again,  
Then, busy at me turret lathe a year or so, and then,  
The morning that the twins were born, Jimmy says to them,  
'Kids, your mother was an engineer!'  
You owe it to the kids to be a lady;  
Dainty as a dishrag, faithful as a chow,  
Stay at home you got to mind the baby,  
Remember you're a mother now.

Every time I turn around there's something else to do,  
Cook a meal or mend a sock or sweep a floor or two.  
Listen in to Jimmy Young—it makes me want to spew  
I was gonna be an engineer!  
I really wish that I could be a lady,  
I could do the lovely things that a lady's s'posed to do.  
I wouldn't even mind if only they would pay me,  
And I could be a person too.  
What price—for a woman?  
You can buy her for a ring of gold;

To love and obey,  
(Without any pay)  
You get a cook or a nurse  
For better or worse  
You don't need a purse when a lady is sold!

But now that times are harder, and my Jimmy's got the sack,  
I went down to Vickers, they were glad to have me back,  
I'm a third class citizen, my wages tell me that.  
But I'm a first class engineer!  
The boss he says; 'I pay you as a lady,  
You only got the job 'cause I can't afford a man.  
With you I keep the profits high as may be;  
You're just a cheaper pair of hands!'  
You got one fault! You're a woman.  
You're not worth the equal pay.  
A bitch or a tart,  
You're nothing but heart  
Shallow and vain,  
You got no brain;  
Go down the drain like à lady today!

I listened to my mother and I joined a typing pool,  
I listened to my lover and I sent him through his school.  
If I listen to the boss, I'm just a bloody fool;  
And an underpaid engineer!  
I've been a sucker ever since I was a baby.  
As a daughter, as a wife, as a mother, and a dear—  
But I'll fight them as a woman, not a lady,  
I'll fight them as an engineer!

