

# Womens **VOICE**

**No8 AUGUST PRICE 10p**

**WOMEN AND FASCISM**

**HELP FOR BATTERED**

**WOMEN**

**ITALY AND WOMENS**

**LIBERATION**

WOMENS VOICE

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# THEIR MORALS AND OURS

'Sorry for using your last razor blade. I could not cut myself. It hurt too much. So I drank oxalic acid. PS With a cup of tea to take the taste away.' Those were Maxine Harrison's last words, scribbled out before she killed herself. She added: 'Please don't blame Mick for this as I care for him. Luv Max.'

Mick was the boy she slept with. But she was only 14. When she asked her mother about going on the pill—she was old enough and sensible enough in her own mind not to want to become pregnant—her mother wanted to know why. Maxine told her.

Her father beat up the man, and then gave his name to the police. The police questioned Maxine four times within eight days. We don't know what they said but it drove Maxine to her death. 'I was not telling lies, but I cannot go through with any more questioning from the police.'

Maxine Harrison isn't just a sad case of suicide. She was driven to her death. The law says Maxine was under age to have a sexual relationship with anyone. Girls have to be 16. The law doesn't say anything about boys. Sex with women is alright for them at any age—they're not the ones to have babies. They're no one's property.

Her father went to the police because he did think of his daughter as his property. What she thought didn't matter. What she was doing was morally wrong by his standards, and it was for him to say what she should and should not do. That is the sense of moral righteousness he had been brought up with, and which compelled him to bring in the police. The public defenders of moral good.

The police questioned her again and again, because they believe their job is to protect the young and innocent—but the result of their 'protection' was Maxine's death. There's nothing some police like better than a case of public morals to defend. And they shall be defended whatever the cost.

The police aren't so quick to interfere between men and women when a man batters his wife. That's a domestic problem, it's private and goes on behind the closed doors of a man's own house. A wife is part of a man's property and no self-respecting policeman would want someone else interfering if he was giving his wife a bash round the head one night.

It's the sort of hypocrisy we have learnt to live with. It's what makes Mary Whitehouse and her ilk so respectable.

Their morality is a fraud. It kills and maims for life. It corrupts and distorts the minds of young children far worse than an honest and open attitude to sex would ever do.



# Womens VOICE

## Womens Magazine of the Socialist Workers Party

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**Cover:** Some unexpected support from a ladies hairdressers for the abortion demonstration organised by Womens Voice in the East End of London. **Photo: Phil McCowen**

**Next issue:** Please make sure you get your letters, articles, news, ads to us by 18 August. If you have ideas for articles phone us as soon as you have them. We also need good photographs and illustrations. Womens Voice, 6 Cottons Gardens, London, E2. Tel- 01-739 1878

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# WOMEN AND FASCISM

The fascist National Front are marching in London on 13 August. It will be another show of strength. As usual they have picked an area with a large black population. They want to intimidate and frighten immigrants, and ourselves as well.

There is only one way to stop them: by force. You can argue with a solitary National Front voter who lives next door, or works in your shop. But you can't argue with organised thugs.

It's a lesson we have learnt the hard way, from the experience of the 1930s right up to today. The force that will stop them is one of numbers—and for us that means organising women to be there too. Women often leave fighting the fascists to others. It is frightening. But it's far worse to stay at home knowing every successful demonstration they organise gives more credibility to their crude political slogans—stop unemployment, kick out the blacks.

The National Front may not yet parade in brown shirts but its ideas are none the less rooted deep in the fascist ideas of Nazi Germany.

Written by Jane Hardy

'Liberalism has a large number of points for women's equality. The Nazi programme for women has but one: this is the child. While man makes his supreme sacrifice on the field of battle, woman fights her supreme battle for her nation when she gives life to a child.'

That was Hitler speaking in September 1934, the year after he came to power in Germany. By then almost all the liberal ideas of women's equality that had been fought for by German women after the first world war had disappeared. He had already set in motion laws and propaganda that were to firmly re-establish woman's place in the home, producing cannon fodder for Hitler's armies.

After the First World War German women outnumbered German men by almost three million. They worked in industry, in the newly expanding clerical and commercial jobs, in agriculture. Widows and single women had to work, but the idea that women should work, and not just in domestic service, was growing.

At the same time advances in contraceptive knowledge and practice, and less restrictive abortion laws after 1926, gave women a control over their lives which they had never had before. A much more free attitude to sex was expounded by Wilhelm Reich, by the strong gay liberation movement and the women's movement. An atmosphere existed not so very different from the 'permissive' 70s.

But the 1920s were difficult years. Unemployment grew, not just in Germany, but all over the world. Economic problems unsettle every ruling class, so they tighten their political belts, stemming liberal ideas, checking personal freedoms, enforcing authoritarian attitudes, in an attempt to keep a firm hold. Above all else they have to keep control over the working class.

Hitler came to power to help the employing class do just that, with devastating political consequences.

For women there began an onslaught on all the political rights they had won, a campaign to get them out of their jobs—to solve the unemployment problem, and a barrage of political propaganda that would keep them firmly in their place, in the home.

It was hoped to push women out of industry to help the unemployment problem. They were drummed out of the civil service and most professional jobs. And the theories were found to justify these moves.

The National Socialist Movement is in its nature a masculine movement . . . When we eliminate women from public life, it is not



because we want to dispense with them but because we want to give them back their essential honour.' (Goebbels).

The policy didn't work because women were so essential as cheap labour to keep industry going, especially when the war began.

A falling birth rate had already forced the previous conservative government to begin a policy of protection and aid for pregnant women. Now the Nazi's took up the campaign with a vengeance. 'Woman has the task of looking beautiful and bringing children into the world' spouted Goebbels as they found ways of positively encouraging women to breed.

Family allowances increased when you had more than four children. The sale of contraceptive information and aids was prohibited; strict penalties were imposed for abortion again—except for Jewish women. Baby farms existed for young girls to mate with SS soldiers, of pure Aryan blood. Children's clinics were set up to bring down the infant mortality rate.

In 1933 interest free loans were introduced to couples marrying if the woman stopped work. The rate of repayment was low, and went down for every child born.

Homosexuality could not be tolerated, and was punishable, with long stretches in concentration camps, and consequently death.

To persuade women to give up their newly won freedoms the propaganda machine was turned on, full blast.

Hundreds of bogus scientific theories about genetics and heredity were suddenly discovered to prove women's biological and intellectual inferiority. The desire for feminine emancipation was the result of frustration caused by malfunctioning sex glands was one theory!

A woman's child-bearing period became the highlight of her life cycle. Between marriage and menopause she occupied an honoured position in society. Make up was discouraged; instead, there is the image of broad-hipped figures, with blond hair braided into a coronet of plaits.

Not everything went to plan of course, with a run on peroxide Goebbels had to issue a statement saying this was no substitute! Double standards still existed: the wives of German officers would dress immaculately in the latest fashions, and gallons of perfume were brought back amongst the treasures from France.

The ideas of family and mother became central to their view of the fascist state. 'Nowhere does this importance devolve upon the wife and mother as it does in Germany. She is the protectress of the family life from which will sprout the forces which will again lead our nation forward. She—the German Mother—is the sole bearer of the idea of the German nation.'

Here, in the family, the German child would learn from birth the new values of society. Here the Nazi ethic would be stamped on his brain forever. And women were told no other task could be so fulfilling. The tie between the family and the new state is spelt out:

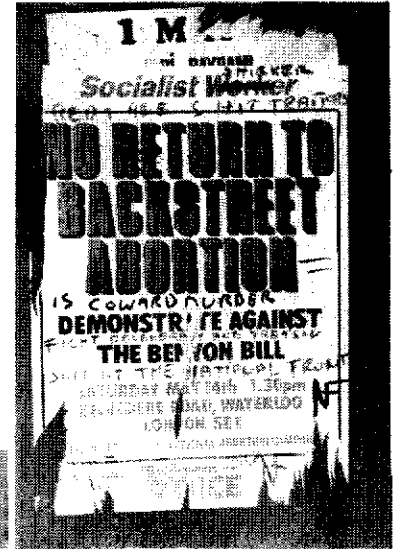
'If we say the world of the man is the state, the world of the man is his commitment, his struggle on behalf of the community, we could then perhaps say that the world of the woman is a smaller world. For her world is her husband, her family, her children, and her home. But where would the big world be if no-one wanted to look after the smaller world? How could the big world continue to exist, if there was no-one to make the task of

looking after the small world the centre of their lives? No, the big world rests upon this small world! The big world cannot survive if this small world is not secure.' (Hitler)

What is so sickening is that it is not so very different from what we hear every day: women should give up their jobs, the 1967 Abortion Act should be tightened or restricted or abolished; Gay News is threatening our moral fibre. These are not attacks by fascists, but it is a thin line that divides conservative ideas from those of the extreme right.

'We will put an end to attempts to undermine the family and morality' says Martin Webster, national organiser for the National Front. Intelligence is genetically determined. Parents' permissiveness is to blame for the behaviour of disruptive children.

These are the ideas we are fighting against. That's why you should be on the demonstration on 13 August.



Women in the British fascist party learnt unarmed combat. Unlike their counterparts in Germany the women in Britain were active members.

'Fight degeneration and treason, support the NF.' National Front graffiti over our pro-abortion posters.

Opposite page: listening attentively to Oswald Moseley.

**FEAR OF FLYING**

Erica Jong  
(75p Granada)

I've just finished reading *Fear of Flying* by Erica Jong (75p from most booksellers). It's not what you'd call a political masterpiece, but it's worth reading because she writes about sexual relationships and encounters from a woman's point of view. The sorts of fears and anxieties we have and the weird situations we get ourselves into—the guilt of masturbation, of infidelity-in-the-mind, of actual infidelity.

She also deals with them in a very humorous way. One of the best ways to shake off anxieties and silly notions about sex. What she writes strikes a chord: it made me remember that when I was a teenager I poured over a book called (I think) *The Psychology of Sex* by (I think) Oswald Schwarz. Anyway, this book represented a great leap forward in that it actually mentioned female masturbation: in

the chapter on masturbation there was a footnote on women's masturbation. It was, said Oswald, infrequent and abnormal and quoted as examples, some poor woman who had done it so much (how much is so much?) that she ended up with a deformed pelvis. My God, visions of having to take my O levels with my pelvis in traction. The humiliation of being wheeled into morning assembly, bound from the waist down, an example for all to see. Having to hand back the Athletics Cup, never to run again. Needless to say, many years later my pelvis is fine. So much for Oswald Schwarz!

Of similar experiences, and all women must have them, Erica Jong writes well. But also her book is about the continual fight her heroine, Isadora, has with Romantic Love. In order to get satisfaction from her sexual relationships she feels she ought to be in love.

And yet being in love and following it through to marriage reduces her to half her former self and increases her dependency on her man. But, like many women, she can't get away from the feeling

that to be in love with someone is the ultimate in life and, once achieved, solves all.

This is the Romantic Ideal continually thrown at us by films, telly, womens magazines, adverts. So when Isadora's marriage no longer carries that romantic spark, the only way out is to fall in love with another man. The irony is, of course, when she does, the condition causes her to lose her reasoning to assess her lover's character in any rational manner, forgives him all his sins ('Love is blind'), loses her own identity and ability to decide for herself and the relationship declines.

The Romantic Ideal carries the seeds of its own destruction. The book doesn't say that exactly, but I do. Understanding and control over your own thoughts and actions is vital for relationships, sexual or otherwise. Being Mr Right's complimentary half is fatal, much more so for the woman than Mr Right. Many gay women justifiably feel superior about their relationships because often they are able to dispense with the roman-

tic hang-up and the clutter of stereotypes that come scuttling along behind.

There are many women writers who are able, whilst not necessarily intending to be 'political', to describe clearly and honestly the contradictions and conflicts which people face through their relationships with others.

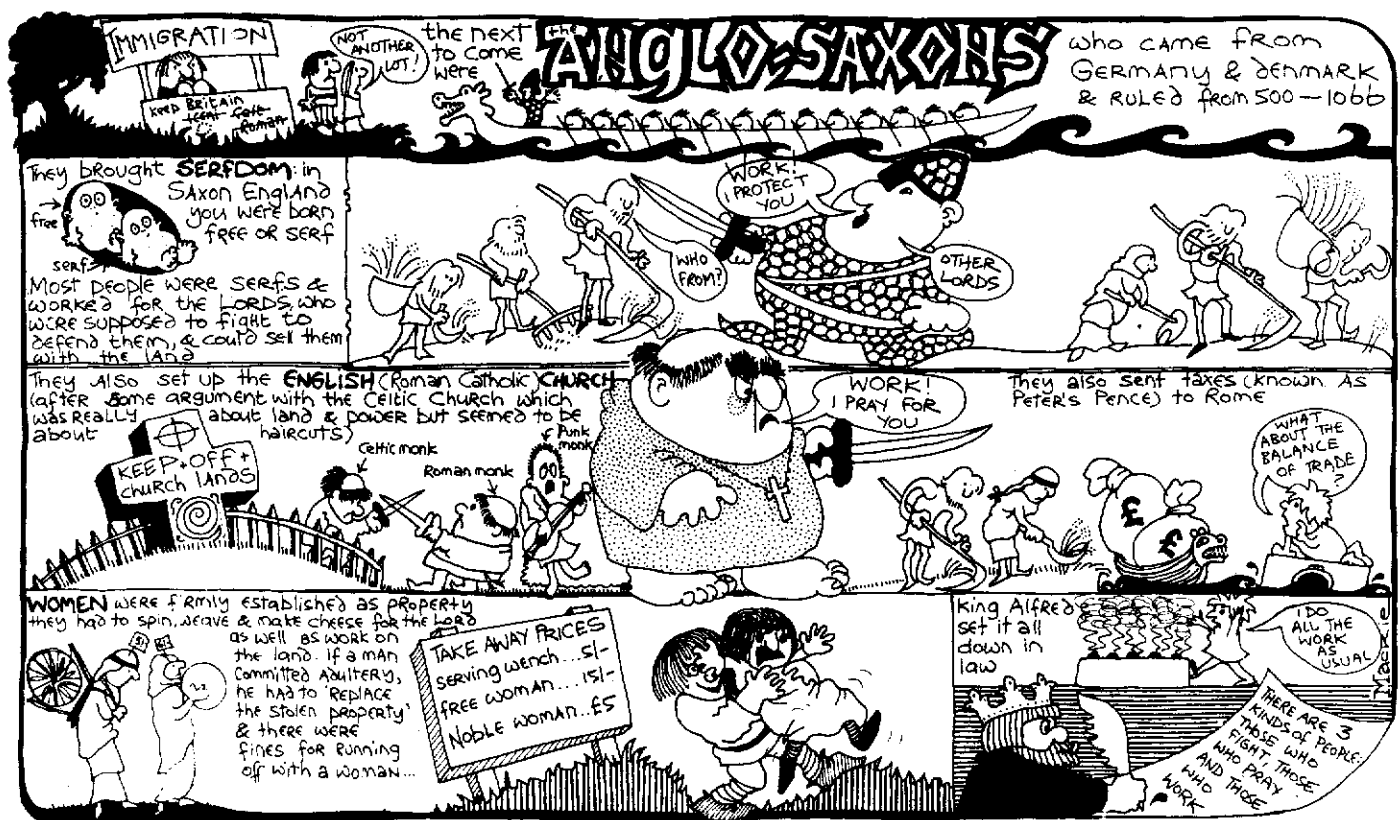
Women like Doris Lessing, Simone de Beauvoir, Sylvia Plath, and Erica Jong. They have a specific awareness of personal problems and situations simply by being women. This consciousness is a spin-off from the conditioning women undergo. A conditioning which leads men and women to view themselves and their sexuality differently—men aggressive and initiating, women passive and introvert. Physical satisfaction for men, emotional for women. Whilst this combination leads to women's subordination and repression, it also has created in women a much greater awareness of the intricacies of relationships and their oppression within them.

This consciousness has led to demands within the

womens movement for control over our bodies and lives—contraception, abortion, childbirth and for a greater understanding of sexuality.

Freedom for women and men to understand and explore their sexuality must go hand in hand with other freedoms. Freedom from the conception of unwanted babies, from economic restraints, overcrowding, overwork, shift-work, being able to share domestic work and child-rearing, freedom to choose your sexual partner and freedom from imposed monogamy. We have to understand how this society can and does undermine the characters and qualities of those closest to us. How it sets up ideals and stereotypes which are neither appropriate nor achievable. To understand this is half-way to knowing how they can be solved. Women hold the key to imagination of what relationships could and should be like, what the problems are and how they are solved. It's important this imagination is exercised, now.

Fiona Williams



# WOMEN'S HEALTH

## THE TRUTH ABOUT DRUGS

Research into health and especially mental health has shown that women are twice as likely as men to seek medical advice. We are twice as likely to be diagnosed as 'mentally ill'. We take twice the amount of mood-changing drugs as men do, not only in the UK, but throughout Europe, and North America, the pattern is the same.

Does this sort of research confirm us as the weaker sex, does it prove that our burden of stress is double that of men, or does it point to a deeply ingrained attitude in capitalist society?

A group of women health workers from the London Hospital have put together an exhibition entitled 'Women and drugs'. They have used drug advertisements from medical magazines that only doctors normally see.

The housewife is usually seen as a compulsive pill taker. But in a recent study in south London, a psychiatrist found that 60 per cent of a sample of young housewives he interviewed going from door to door were showing medical symptoms of severe depression. Most of these young women were neither receiving nor seeking any treatment at all, they did not realise they were ill, they just accepted their feelings of misery, perhaps feeling that this is a woman's lot in life.

If they did go for treatment, they too would be given the little tranquillizing pills. There are a very limited number of psychotherapists and other people who will listen to those who have problems.

So what do tranquillisers and antidepressants do? Well, for most people, not a lot. They make them feel a bit less so they can cope better—or can they? If you care less, you are less likely to fight back. If you feel less, you don't get so angry about not having a job or a nursery, or that you have to wait hours to see a doctor with a sick child. You end up a tame, obedient zombie, becoming dependent on your pills.

The people who really benefit from our misery are the drug companies, who sell over 270 million pounds worth of drugs to the NHS every year. They make huge profits but the amount secret. They spend very little of their profits on research, and a lot of the research done is unnecessary, as it is just a means of finding a drug that will have the same effect as someone else's drug, without violating the patent laws. 10 per cent of their budget goes on advertising and promotion, and only 10 per cent on research. The government pays for 70 per cent of research into new drugs.

Promotion takes the form of free lunches, with booze thrown in, for family doctors in all areas of the country. Free gifts of all shapes and sizes are handed out like confetti. These include 2m pounds worth of free drugs handed out to family and hospital doctors every year.

It is very hard to get into medical school to learn to be a doctor. Every year thousands of young people queue up for places to do this hard, and often unpleasant training. Yet the huge majority of them are denied the chance, even though the crying need for more doctors is obvious to anyone. It is in the interests of the top doctors who make thousands every year from private practice, to keep medicine scarce and therefore valuable.

Add to this the fact that the same top consultants make sure that most of the students who get into their colleges are men from the middle classes, who have no idea what it is like to live in a damp flat, have no fridge or hot water, live on sausages and mince, and you can see the appeal of the little pills, hoping the women will not bother them again. If she does then the receptionist can dole out a repeat prescription. Research shows that GPs give repeat prescriptions for drugs that work on the central nervous system more often than for any other type of drugs. **Denise Fenn London Hospital**

In 1974 doctors wrote the equivalent of 6 prescriptions for every man, woman and child in Britain. Recent surveys show that 4 out of 10 people would feel hard done by if their doctors did not write a prescription for something or other when they went to see him.

Despite their long training most doctors know little about many of the drugs they prescribe. Less than 10 per cent of the doctors who prescribe contraceptives have ever had training in contraceptives. Doctors have to rely on the drug companies for their information, as new drugs come on the market so rapidly. There is no independent agency to advise them since the McGregor committee was closed down after pressure from the drug companies in 1970.

The average doctor receives about a hundredweight of advertising material through the post from the drug companies

every month. Some chemists claim they can tell which drug company salesman have just visited an area by the prescriptions they get.

In America drugs are tested on prisoners who get a few paltry privileges in return for being used as guinea pigs. This costs only one tenth of the price it would cost to do the testing outside. Prisoners are also in a difficult position to take up their legal rights and sue the drug companies if anything goes wrong.

Two books on health for socialist women:

• **WHO NEEDS THE DRUG COMPANIES** by the Haslemere Group and War on Want price 50p

• **A SELF HELP GUIDE** from the Womens Health Group price £1 discusses how your body works, contraceptives, tranquillisers, operations and diets in a simple but thorough way. It tries to break through the mystique of doctors and the medical profession.

**Anna Paczuska**

There is only one sure way of testing whether a drug really works in the way it is supposed to. This is called a double blind trial. You select at random 2 groups of patients suffering from the condition that your drug is supposed to relieve. You must make sure that your two groups do not differ in any way, there must be the same number of men and women, the average weights, heights and ages of all members must be the same. There must be the same average income as nearly as possible in each group, and so on.

Then you give one group the medicine you are testing and the other group an identical looking pill (or identical seeming injections or whatever) which is in fact made of something that can have no possible effect, such as sugar, chalk, water etc.

But it is not only the patients who must not know whether they are taking the sugar or the real thing. The doctors who give the pills must not know which they are giving either. This is why it is known as double blind.

Why are these precautions necessary? It is strange but true that the way a person feels physically is deeply affected by their state of mind. In one experiment, people with angina, severe heart pain, were given an operation which their doctors believed would cure the pain.

By accident it was discovered that if you just gave the patient an anaesthetic and made an incision in the chest area, without doing anything at all to the heart, the patient experienced a temporary relief of pain, just as much as if the operation to the heart had been carried out completely! This is just one of many examples. If the patient does not know what he or she is being given, but the doctor believes that the medicine is effective, the doctors confidence is communicated to the patient and the effect is the same.

Many drugs in common use have never been tested by double blind. Aspirin has not. Nor has digitalis, a very commonly used drug given for chest pain due to heart disease. In many cases it would be morally wrong to do a double blind trial, although the morals of the drug companies are not very high. There are limits, where it is almost certain that a drug will save a life, to how long it can be held back and the patient given sugar pills instead. This is also a very expensive form of testing. But the drug companies and family doctors know what a useful thing this power of suggestion is. It is called the 'placebo effect', and it is one reason why many people can be fobbed off with tranquillisers, many of which have never proved to be effective in proper trials.

But the placebo effect is not just a nuisance or a con trick the body plays. It should teach us something important about the way our bodies work. The importance of the persons state of mind in getting well is given lip service often enough. But little enough is done to make sure that stress is taken out of our everyday lives, because this would mean, not fat profits for drug companies not fat private practice fees for consultants. It would mean changing the way our society is organised.

But no, the medical establishment goes on trying to find cures for things like high blood pressure, heart disease, migraine and depression in a form that can be sold over the counter. Hospitals take in patients with ulcers and bronchitis, fill them with drugs, chop bits off them, and send them cheerfully back to the lousy housing and working conditions that cause these diseases in the first place.

**Mel Bartley**

# This bed is under patients control!

At 8.30am on Saturday 16 July, Rita Ward, mother of five, made history. She occupied a bed in Northampton General Hospital and told everyone she wasn't moving till she'd had an operation to remove her gallstones. She made front-page news in Britain, Europe and America. She's been accused of queue-jumping by the gutter press and the National Front.

Old age Pensioners have sent her pound notes to buy flowers and praised her courage. Rita told Jenny Jackson her story.

I was in such pain the Friday before I went into hospital, I took an overdose. That was the second time I did that.

I came to the hospital on Friday to see the doctors. The pain was worse. I know now that the gallstones had perforated the bladder. I also had a hernia, and both lungs were infected. They said that they would operate as soon as they could get a bed, which would be in about a year.

Then they said I could have the operation done immediately if I wanted it done privately. That would cost £500.

I made up my mind then and there to come back the next day and stay till I was operated on.

What made me so mad was if I had been a private patient and had £500, I wouldn't have been called a queue jumper.

How can you put money before life?

So a private patient doesn't have to wait. I waited a year and ten months. If you pay them you aren't a queue jumper. But isn't paying privately jumping the queue? You wanted to see their faces when we walked in. I said to the nurse, 'Is that bed empty?'

She said, 'Yes, why?' I said, 'I'm getting in.' They just stood there with their mouths open.

Another patient offered me her bed when she heard the nurse say I wouldn't get treatment. But I had already taken this bed.

I told them, no way am I going to leave. The only way I will leave this hospital before I have an operation is in a wooden box.

They treat me with the greatest respect now. I get the VIP treatment. I even had the administrator of the hospital pouring out a glass of orange juice for me.

Am I satisfied? By no means. When I go out of here to a convalescent home, I want to go to the Margaret Spencer clinic. They're trying to close it down. So I want to go there.

If they try to send me to another one, I'll refuse. My voice will ring through this country—not only this country—all over the world. It's the working class. They're the ones who can do things.

All the operating team came down Monday and said they would do the operation in their own time. And I have been feeling better ever since. Before, the doctors never examined me. They only gave me stronger pills—pain killer tablets. They even thought I was a hypochondriac. Gave me nerve pills.

Most people have been marvellous—the



Picture: Angela Phillips (IFL)

nurses and the doctors and the ward orderlies.

There's one woman who works in administration. She left a bunch of weeds at the end of my bed. I could have killed her. I had a drip in my arm and a bag on either side taking the waste from my kidneys. One of the nurses took the weeds off in a temper. You should have seen how she tore them up and put them in the bin.

## 'A woman can move mountains if she wants to'

The sisters here agree with me. They are so short of staff and it's because of the cuts. Some of the staff came in, using any excuse, knocking the chart off the end of the bed, just to see me. So I said, 'Come to see the hijacker? You can all come and see me, don't pretend you're coming for something else. The ward orderlies think it's great. I'll tell you what I've told all the reporters. They cut all these things out. I gave the power salute too, and they cut that out. They were only interested in queue jumping. I want to tell everyone to keep on fighting

Never give up. There's no such thing as the impossible. A woman can move mountains if she wants to. It makes you fight ever harder when you have got them fighting against you. They thought they had me in a corner, but behind these screens I cornered them.

If a woman gives up hope and ties herself to the kitchen sink she's mad.

I will lead a revolution. They said it in the Irish papers—'This woman could cause a revolution.' I thought to myself, 'Little do you know.'

Someone has offered me anything I want, a trip to California to convalesce or anything. So I am going to ask for a minibus for the Socialist Workers Party. We need it to get out to the pickets.

I'm a member of the Socialist Workers Party. Their courage is my courage, and I hope my courage is their courage. Socialism will go on forever.

Get well cards and greetings can be sent to Rita at 68 St James Park Road, Northampton.

Northampton Socialist Workers Party has been building a Stop the Cuts Campaign over the past year.

Through their union branches, they got the trades council to form a Cuts Committee. They had a hospitals demonstration on one of the NUPE (National Union of Public Employees) days of action.

They took trades council Stop the Cuts petitions to all the hospitals. They invited hospital workers to Cuts meetings. They argued and argued that they should come to trades council meetings to put their point of view and get more support for the Cuts campaign.

Through this work, they built up respect as being an organisation that was serious about fighting the hospital cuts.

As soon as Rita was in the hospital bed, a Socialist Workers Party member got to a phone and rang the NUPE organiser to ask for support for Rita. One hundred per cent, came the answer.

So when the NUPE president and other bigwigs said they wouldn't support Rita 'The Bed Hijacker', the NUPE members in the hospital—the people who count—ignored what the bigwigs said. The hospital workers announced they would stop work if Rita was moved an inch. She stayed.



At its annual conference in June the Socialist Workers Party passed a resolution (and that means we do it, not just vote for it) to push *Womens Voice* as the best way we know of bringing more women into active socialist politics. That means expanding the sales of *Womens Voice*, organising activity where ever we work or live with women and on womens issues, building *Womens Voice* groups.

Without so much as a single phone call all of these pieces about what we are doing arrived in the *Womens Voice* post. Keep sending them in and we'll make this a regular feature.

## Cardiff

The Cardiff Womens Voice group has just started; with 2 meetings so far.

Twelve people came to the first meeting, where we decided to do several things—find out about the proposed closure of a local hospital (Glan Ely), support the picket of the



Heath Hospital by the National Abortion Campaign because the out-patients abortion clinic has never been used, and finally to organise a picket of one of the Cardiff MP's surgeries, two of whom are virulently anti-abortion. We decided to sell the new issue of *Womens Voice* wherever possible, and doubled our order to 80. Three weeks later, we even had to order some more!

At our second meeting we decided we need to write regular reports for WV, and also to collect 20p from everyone at each meeting to raise some money for paper for leafletting and things.

The meetings have been really exciting. Everyone is full of enthusiasm and there are not enough hours in the day to do all we want to do.

## A good way to get Womens Voice on the map. . .

Two SWP members were arrested last month for doing a bit of decorating in Cardiff's prided City Centre.

A low wall made of nice, dark grey

slate was decorated (according to the sergeant) with 'white gloss paint' with the slogan 'Womens Voice fights rape. Unite . . .' Unfortunately, that was where the heavy arm of the law descended.

Sadly, the slogan was cleaned off a couple of days later, so the advertisement didn't stay long. Still, it was one way of announcing the start of the WV group.

## Manchester

On a blazing hot Saturday in July, a local Community Festival and Carnival was held in Cheetham, Manchester.

The North East Manchester Womens Voice Group had only been going for a month but everyone joined in getting the stall together.

We had a step ladder with prices of basic foods up one side and profits of the food companies up the other. One supporter donated her baby to sit under the ladder with an 'I'm a wanted baby' notice under it. We had posters all round the stall, lots

were in a hurry because of the weather.

Jill Brook

## Sheffield

We have just had a very successful Womens Voice/Socialist Worker street meeting outside our local market. We made a lot of posters about price increases in the last two years, and the profits food companies had made in the same period. We also had a leaflet, *Womens Voice*, and a petition opposing the increase in school meal prices. In one hour we collected 500 signatures and sold 30 *Womens Voices*. People were queuing up to sign!

In the future, we are going to carry on with these meetings and are hoping to launch a campaign around Equal Pay.

Elizabeth Stafford

## Birmingham

Birmingham Womens Voice invited members of the prostitutes group PROS (Programme for the reform of law on soliciting) to talk about their aims. Only when their prostitution is decriminalised, they feel, will prostitutes be able to organise themselves effectively

At present they are working to end prison sentences for prostitutes and the heavy fines which put girls in the position of having to go on the game again to pay them off. Even if they want to get 'normal' work, their past life as a prostitute prejudices employers against them.

Prostitutes are the victims of the double standards of a society which gives a soldier a suspended sentence for rape, a kerb crawler no sentence at all, but a prostitute can get up to 9 months in prison.

Many aspects of prostitution were gone into, and many others weren't touched on—manily as no-one from the floor seemed to be prepared to talk about them. Perhaps most people were too busy getting over the feeling of embarrassment at meeting prostitutes

on a social level for the first time. Contact PROS c/o Peace Centre, 18 Moor Street, Queensway, Birmingham. They produce a monthly bulletin available from this address.

## Essex

On Saturday July 9, about 15 members of the Southend and Benfleet SWP held a small demonstration in Southend High Street—with petitions, leaflets and loudhailer—to get support for a lobby of the nearby Conservative Club, where Sit Stephen McAdden was holding his surgery that morning. McAdden is the Tory MP for South-East Essex, a leading member of the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child, and 'unbiased' Acting Chairman for the Committee on the Benyon Anti-abortion bill.

We challenged him on his 'neutrality', and very quickly the man who once described free family planning as 'sex on the rates' left.

We got articles and a picture in two local papers, and we met a prospective WV/SWP member.

Lesley Collins

## Taunton

Many thanks for the further seven copies of last month's issue.

We had our first meeting on the 22 June and only five others turned up! I was, to say the least, disappointed! However, last Wednesday the six of us met at my house and I prepared a historical view of marriage and the family from a book called 'The problems of Womens Liberation' by Evelyn Reed and Engels 'Origins of the Family'. I am hoping to get people interested in the Fight the Cuts campaign, in particular, a local maternity home which is threatened with closure.

I sold two copies of the *Womens Voice* at our local Mother and Toddler coffee morning, but I don't know if they really realised what they were buying. If it's hard to get working women, it's even harder to approach women at home, with very limited horizons.

M Colquhoun

grown from sheer persistence. When demonstrations were called against 'violence on women' many sneered and said 'what are you going on about, rape and wife-battering only affect one or two women here and there'. So they argued, picketed, demonstrated, leafleted and flyposted like mad; they raised the issue at TU meetings and so on until gradually minds did move. Suddenly, newspapers were talking about 'violence on women' how men had been degrading women for too long. And when the case of Claudia Caputi came to court, some papers reporting began to approach the case with a sensitivity undreamt of. None of that would have happened without the confidence and determination our Italian sisters have in the possibility to *change* things by their own agitation. We would do well to copy their boldness and flair.

Glynis Cousins

The cartoon is taken from a book drawn by the Italian feminist Giuliana Maldini. The revolutionary man depicted in the cartoon is saying 'Comrades we have to fight together!' etc., etc.

with women, they watched with confused dismay the mass exodus of women from their parties. It wasn't that they didn't want to take up the question of women, or that Italian male socialists are more chauvinistic. There was too much head-on confrontation without any decent discussion or analysis of the problem. When the women vented their anger and frustration, the men, intimidated by something they barely understood, rarely came to grips with the *politics* of the issues. The whole question became posed in very emotional terms. The Socialist Workers Party certainly doesn't have the last word on the problem, but we do begin from the basic conviction that society can only be radically changed through the collective power of the working class as a whole. That includes women. But we can learn from the Italian feminist movement. Some of our agitational activities look like soggy dishcloths compared with our Italian sisters' efforts. If you want to make a point which cuts right across people's prejudices and conditioning, you have to be very forceful. And that's exactly what Italian feminists are—they are never wishy-washy. Their demonstrations are big with lots of colour, humour and anger. They poke fun at men's prejudices and they never, never let up. Every small success has

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Communist

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all, lively, civil  
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and threw a lot  
enthusiasm  
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book. At first  
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But they soon  
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uestions. In

the women  
members were gradually  
coming out of their shells  
and sticking up for  
themselves. In fact some  
of them left political  
parties altogether out of  
exasperation with their  
male comrades' lack of  
sensitivity. Most parties, bewildered  
by this rising discontent,  
set up womens  
committees and separate  
internal organisations but  
for many women it wasn't  
good enough. The  
revolutionary left  
organisations didn't, on  
their own admittance,  
respond at all well to the  
'feminist explosion'.  
Instead of thoughtfully  
expanding their own work

are not going to be able to  
use their collective  
strength easily. Weighted against these  
disadvantages is a very  
large socialist movement  
in Italy. Although the mass  
Communist Party (3  
million members) spends a  
lot of time telling workers  
to tighten their belts they  
do raise women's issues  
that cut across Christian  
Democrat, (the ruling right  
wing party), ideology.  
However, the Communist  
party is better at talking  
than doing anything for  
women and its record is  
pretty bad. In fact its  
position on abortion meant  
all sorts of restrictions. It  
only half-heartedly

socialist put it 'one has the  
sense that a momentous  
consciousness is  
gathering steam. The very  
newness is explosive, as if,  
over the past six years,  
long festering grievances  
had suddenly burst out all  
at once.' No political party  
dare not mention women.  
Most of the energy for the  
Italian women's  
movement comes from the  
abortion campaign. The  
fight for decent abortion  
facilities in Italy has been a  
long and bitter one—and  
the present situation is  
still bleak. No other issue reveals so  
starkly the problems  
Italian women face.  
Hundreds of women are  
killed through backstreet  
abortions every year.  
Although contraceptives  
are available, there are no  
state run family planning  
clinics or educational  
facilities. There is a lot of  
moral pressure from pious  
churchmen and politicians  
against their use. But it would distort the  
picture to say *only*  
backward repressive  
catholic ideology prevails.  
Many young Italian  
women lead lives not very  
dissimilar to ours.  
However, the one big  
difference is the extent to  
which they can be  
economically  
independent. The number  
of women going out to  
work in Italy is much  
lower. Although female  
industrial workers in Italy  
tend to get better wages  
than their British  
counterparts many Italian  
women who don't work  
and live in the big  
industrial centres have to  
put up with wretched



# BATTERED WOMEN THE NEW LAW

Police have always refused to give help in 'domestic' disputes. Assaults which would normally carry charges of Actual Bodily Harm (ABH) and prison sentences, are ignored if they are 'domestic'. Frequent broken limbs and even knifings have only forced the police to call an ambulance!

This has meant that the 'poor little woman' has received *less* help from the forces of 'law and order' than anyone involved in the least serious 'mugging', a purse snatch. The state we live in—designed to protect property and enforce property relations—will only barely intervene between a man and 'his' wife, parents and 'their' children.

But the growth of a hundred refuges for battered wives, and the organisation of the National Women's Aid Federation has forced the Government to act. Embarrassed by the attitude of the police and the law courts towards battered wives, the

Government has brought in the Domestic Violence Act, 1977. Under the Act the police can be instructed to help in the *worst* cases of battering, and to enable the woman to get back into her home. Therefore this new Act merely enforces *minimal* legal rights for battered women.

The woman has to prove that she has been assaulted again before she can get an arrest order against the man. It is as if your neighbour had the right to break your skull two or three times before the police would stop him!

The Act would not have been necessary if the police and courts had treated 'domestic' assaults like any other assault. The Act also creates a 'second-class' assault—domestic.

Despite this the Act is an advance. Now married women can get some form of protection although for the unmarried woman the situation is still very poor (see poster overleaf.)

Because it is an advance for

women the Judges are thinking about passing a 'Judge's Rule'—an unusual legal device—to overrule some sections of the Act altogether! It is the attitude of the Judges and the police that have led the National Womens Aid Federation to doubt how much the Act will be put into practice.

But even if it operated, legal reforms cannot solve the problem of battered women. Society will have to change profoundly before men stop battering the women they live with.

In the meantime the establishment of women's aid centres in every neighbourhood—as called for by the National Women's Aid Federation—would provide a refuge and a source of moral support and practical assistance. The necessary funds *should* come from the State and the House of Commons Select Committee on Violence in Marriage recommended that

there should be financial assistance for such centres. But the Government has done nothing.

In the Government document 'Observations on the report from the Select Committee on Violence in Marriage' it is obvious that they are using the new Act, a legal remedy, to avoid providing refuges, the real remedy. They state 'The accessibility and effectiveness of legal remedies against violence can be expected to affect the number of refuges required. For example, the Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act *could reduce both the number of women seeking shelter in refuges and the length of time they need to spend there.*'

It is obvious that the Government is prepared to trade the most minimal Act for real protection for women and that the National Women's Aid Centres will soon need all the help we can give them.



picture: Laurance Spaham (IFL)

# BATTERED WOMEN YOUR RIGHTS



**Your husband beats you. How to stop him.**

You can apply now to the county court for an injunction to stop your husband beating you, or your children, or from coming near you. It can also let you into your home. You do not have to start divorce or separation proceedings.

## MARRIED

**You are not married, but the man you are living with beats you. How to stop him.**

**How the injunction works.**

It is now possible for a judge (if sympathetic) to attach the power of arrest to an injunction. In order that the judge treats your case seriously, you must have been beaten already—and have a bruise or wound that can be seen—and you must provide evidence that there is a likelihood that you will be beaten again. Then, if your injunction is backed with the power of arrest, the police will have a duty to come to your aid.

**What is an injunction precisely?**

An injunction is an order made by the court forbidding the man to come near you or the children and forbidding him from molesting you.

**but**

**Before an injunction is backed by power of arrest**

There must be proof of actual bodily harm. Mental battering which is just as harmful will not impress the court. It wants to see a visible injury—a bruise, a broken limb and will even exclude the woman who is hit around the head so there is no visible injury.

The judge must be satisfied that the injury will be repeated. Even then it is within his discretion whether or not to attach a power of arrest and there is no guarantee that judges do this.

In practice it looks as though you will have to be hit again before the police are likely to arrest.

There may be administrative difficulties even if the police do arrest for a breach. The man must be released at the end of a 24 hour period and if they arrest at a weekend it may be difficult to find a judge. They could, of course, charge him with a criminal offence but this would be dependent on their discretion.

**What to do if the injunction is not backed by power of arrest and your husband beats you.**

You will have to return to the court and persuade the Judge once again that your case is serious and should be backed by power of arrest. Again you must provide evidence of an assault—bruises, etc.



A co-habitee can ~~not~~ apply for an

A battered woman can apply for an injunction from the court without having to start criminal proceedings against the man.

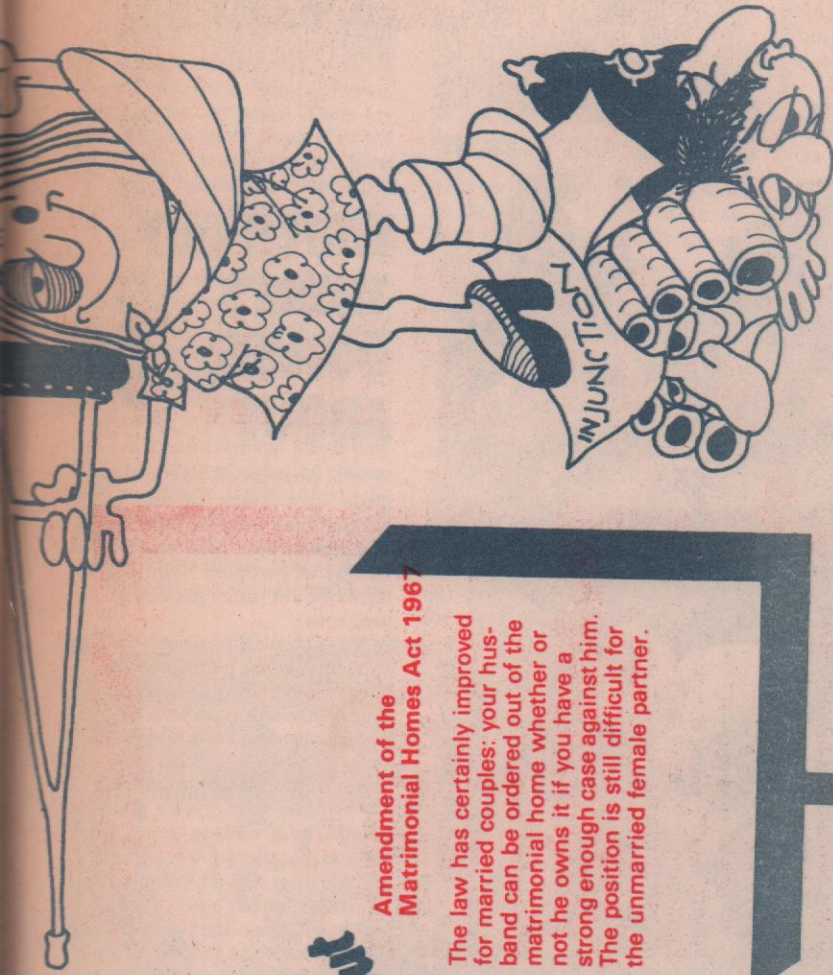
## UNMARRIED

### Injunctions and the unmarried woman

Where you have been living in the same household as man and wife, and you take out an injunction against him, there will no doubt be some men who will argue forcibly that this is just a casual relationship. If this argument is accepted by the court, you will be back to taking county court proceedings against the man.

### Amendment of the Matrimonial Homes Act 1967

The law has certainly improved for married couples: your husband can be ordered out of the matrimonial home whether or not he owns it if you have a strong enough case against him. The position is still difficult for the unmarried female partner.



The house is in your husband's name but you are afraid of him and want him out of the house.

The Court has the power to order the man out of the matrimonial home whether or not he owns it. This only applies to a tenancy which is in his name only. The Act provides no protection here for an unmarried woman.

# GETTING HELP

The battered woman needs help. Although you can go it alone in the courts it is not advisable to. You need someone who understands the mumbo-jumbo of the law. Judges have been known to throw cases out of court in such circumstances. A sympathetic solicitor or someone from a women's aid centre will help. You can find a solicitor from the following sources:

- Your nearest Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Your Neighbourhood Law Centre.
- Your public library displays a Referral List of solicitors which says which firms do 'matrimonial' work and gives their names and addresses.

#### Who will pay?

Legal aid is money from the state to help with the solicitor's cost of

a court action. The amount you get depends on your financial resources. If you don't work or earn a low wage, you will get the full amount. If your case is urgent, apply for emergency legal aid.

You can get advice free or partly free from a solicitor under the legal advice and assistance scheme—'The green form procedure.' Your solicitors will know about it.

#### If you need refuge, help or advice

Contact your nearest Womens Aid Centre.

You can contact them through:

England and Wales:  
National Women's Aid Federation,  
51 Chalcott Road,  
London NW1  
(01 586 0104)

Northern Ireland  
Telephone Belfast 662082  
or Londonderry 69279  
or Coleraine 4141 ext 621

Scotland  
Scottish Women's Aid  
Ainslie House  
11 St Colme St.,  
Edinburgh EH3 6AA  
031 225 8011 or 556 0671 or  
443 9832

You can also contact the Social Services Department of your local council or your local Citizens' Advice Bureau.

Written and researched by  
Heather Dyer.

Our thanks to the National Womens Aid Federation for information used in this poster.

## HOW TO WAKE UP PARLIAMENT

It was with trepid anticipation that we three members of Womens Voice smuggled leaflets opposing restrictive abortion legislation into Parliament on Thursday 14 July.

Showering those peculiar set of elite people, known as MPs, was an interesting experience—they actually woke up!

After our protest we were dragged out of the Strangers Gallery and locked up until the House rose at

1.00am.

It was great to hear that some more enterprising *Womens Voice* supporters had successfully chained themselves to the railings of Parliament shortly after our protest.

We would just like to let any other MP who may care to introduce any similar restrictive legislation know—we have only just begun!

Gail Cartmail, North London WV



picture: Phil McCowen

**On Thursday 14 July, as part of a week of activity against the Benyon Bill becoming law, four Womens Voice supporters chained themselves, suffragette style, to the Houses of Parliament.**

**'A large number of WV supporters staged a picket at the same time as we chained ourselves to the railings. I can't express strongly enough what support and strength we got from the sisters around us.**

**'But no sooner were we chained up, than the strong arm of the chain clipper came along. Several police officers, asked us to move along, not realising at first that we were incapable of doing so. Once they did though, a huge pair of three foot long chain clippers was produced. All four of us were taken into the Houses of Parliament, and then whisked away quickly, in case we attracted the attention of the tourists.**

**'It was a small protest, as part of the general campaign to maintain and improve abortion rights for working class**

Womens rights to abortions is being attacked in the United States as well as here.

In June, the US Congress banned the use of Federal Medicaid Funds (which enables poor women to have free medical care) to pay for abortions—even when the life of the woman is in danger or in cases of rape or incest.

Only days later, the Supreme Court ruled that public hospitals are not required to give or permit abortions.

The American anti-abortionists consider these measures as a victory—but in a country where almost all medical care is private, poor women will be forced in growing numbers to resort to seeking dangerous backstreet abortions. This is only one of the many attacks on women—poor women—in the United States.

## WATCH OUT THERE'S BULLIES ABOUT

Several physical attacks have been made on women in the South London area over the past month. The attacks have been made in the vicinity of two pubs both used by feminists for discotheques at the weekends.

A particularly vicious attack happened in the public bar when a woman was kicked unconscious by four men. She was taken to hospital by ambulance and discharged early the next day.

The second incident occurred at the end of a disco when a group of women were walking home. They noticed that they were being followed by a group of about 15-20 youths. A broken bottle was hurled by a youth at the women one woman received a serious eye injury and has been in hospital for three weeks. Immediately after this attack the group of women called into a local pub to call for an ambulance. The landlord refused to help them and turned them out of the pub.

The last known incident occurred last week when a woman walking to the disco was abused and stoned were hurled at her in the street.

During this period the police gave the organisers of the disco an assurance that they would be in the vicinity on the night the women received the eye injury there were no police in attendance their explanation being that 10.30 was shift change-over. The following week when asked for assistance the organisers were told that there was only one police car on patrol in the whole of South London!

## SAVE OUR HOSPITALS— SAVE OUR COMMUNITY

'I don't care how far I have to go and I am speaking for all the parents—we are determined to go the full way. If we don't think that we've got a chance of that nursery opening at the beginning of next year, then we are going to go all out', says Kathy Banford.

The brand new nursery at James Watt Infant school in Handsworth, Birmingham, has been ready for use since April. It is fully equipped, down to the last pencil. There are over 200 kids on the waiting list and the Council say they are not going to open it because they won't pay the £150,000 a year to employ staff. Kathy Banford is one of the parents elected representatives on the school governing body.

'This is my very first campaign. But I was so disheartened to think that there are children around here half of whom haven't even got gardens. They've got nowhere whatsoever to play. They are all on main roads like this and unless they go to school they've got no chance at all round here. If they go up to the park they get beaten up by older children. You see 2 and 3 year olds playing on the streets, they could be in that building and that breaks my heart.'

Kathy and a group of mothers have made badges, put up placards and collected over 450 signatures on a petition demanding that the nursery be opened and not as a job creation centre, which is the council's latest plan.

'They didn't realise what parents they'd got at James Watt. As soon as we heard about this nursery that was it and we haven't given up since, we all get together and discuss what we are going to do next. The co-operation between the English and Asian families has grown up just since they gave us our parents room in the school. There's Jamaican, West Indian, Pakistani, Indian and English, we all mix together.'

This fighting spirit is starting to extend to other things. Other families in the area have started up an action committee to stop British rail from building oil storage tanks a couple of hundreds of yards from Kathy's home. Inflammable vapour will be released from the tanks on any warm sunny day and collect on the ground. An explosion would wipe out the houses in a one mile radius. The tanks would be only fifty yards from the nearest houses and there are five schools nearby. If the plan goes ahead 180 32 ton



Picture: John Sturrock (Report)

tankers will come roaring past James Watt school every week.

'They think we are stupid, they think we will stand for anything. There were six accidents last year outside my window with children. Something will get done when someone gets killed.'

This problem of play space for the kids is the main reason the parents are campaigning for the nursery, then there's the fantastic high number of mothers who need to work. The other reason is one of language: 'It's essential to have some sort of nursery so that the Asian children can be a bit further on in education by the time they get to Infants school.'

The kids are involved in the campaign too: 'They are wearing 'Save our Nursery' badges, we've put our posters up, outside the school, each time they blew down, different children were putting them all up. They want it as a nursery and that's what we intend to get it as.'

A delegation of mothers with posters and placards went to present their petition to the education committee and they are giving the council till October to make a decision. 'You've got to put up a fight these days to get somewhere, if we let it lie after this meeting, they are going to think we've forgotten about it.'

Wendy Plimly



Picture: Mona Racher (UPI)

## TO THE POPE: A MESSAGE

The Catholic Church is adamant in its opposition to all abortion. So Feminists Against Benyon stormed the pulpit of Westminster Cathedral to show the Church that women think differently. 100 women walked in on the morning of 15 July, causing confusion among the priesthood and the law, who strictly speaking can't invade sacred ground. They sang songs and made speeches. That's how to fight the anti-abortionists—on their own ground!

# SAVE THE WEIR!



picture: Phil McCowan

Twenty five angry women and their children from Wandsworth Womens Voice Group and the Balham Union of Parents occupied the administrative offices of the Area Health Authority last month in protest against the closure of the Weir Maternity Home. They propose to go ahead with their decision in spite of massive public opposition and trade union activity against the closure.

We were angry that the real reason for the closure, the public expenditure cuts, was covered up. They would rather save money than lives.

We took over the foyer of the building and the switchboard con-

tacting the local press and we rang the local press and got a lot of publicity for our action. We turned away a supply van and the GPO who promised to take the message back to their workplaces.

The chairperson of the AHA came to try and talk to us but was greeted by angry jeers and arguments. She tried to be very patronising towards our 'beautiful children' and asked us to be reasonable. Our response was to be most unreasonable!

We held the building for two hours, and then left having made sure that we had the last word.

Marion Upchurch

## LEAVE OUR SCHOOL BE

Thirty teachers in Haringey, North London, are being asked to transfer to other schools in the borough. They are being moved into job vacancies that exist where teachers have retired or left to get other jobs. But the posts they themselves are leaving will not be filled. This will mean larger classes, and loss of remedial help for language and reading.

Although the NUT have known about the proposed transfers since March, the union has dragged its feet, tried to find ways round the 'problem' with Mr Groves, the Chief of Education, and has left parents and teachers in a situation of having only a few weeks before the end of term to fight the cuts in schools.

The Chief of Education has managed very easily to create an atmosphere of complete dependency amongst the teachers. As the end of term approaches they are in a constant state of anxiety, which one of us is to be asked to be transferred, will it be me or him or her, a completely divisive atmosphere. And finally when the big day comes, you are interviewed separately by the COE and pressurised to 'help' the head out by agreeing to leave quietly

We have the beginnings of a campaign in the area. There have been many public meetings across the borough, and parents anxious to support the teachers are organising ways in which they can help to save the teachers jobs and protect their children's educational standards.

A demonstration took place on July 11 through the streets of Wood Green, representing schools from all parts of the area. 200 mothers, fathers, children and teachers took to the streets with placards and banners showing the London Borough of Haringey they weren't prepared to take these cuts quietly or kindly. A committee representing most schools in Haringey of parents and teachers are putting out a bulletin to keep everyone informed during the school holidays that school cuts and closures won't be forgotten while the schools are shut for the summer holiday. Some schools are calling for rent and rate strikes, and there is another demo in September.

It is important to fight for every single job in the teaching profession to safeguard teachers jobs and our children's future.

Diane Watts Haringey Parents and Teachers against the Cuts.



# NEWS



# NEWS

## A SMELL OF GAS...



picture: Phil McCowen

## GRUNWICKS: THIS IS YOUR BATTLE!

It irritates me that someone can treat people the way that man Ward treats the Grunwick strikers, and gets away with it. He's employing people completely ignorant of their rights. Then these Conservatives have the cheek to defend him, when they're probably doing exactly the same thing elsewhere.

I really feel for those people. Slogging their guts out for £30 a week, when other people are reaping all the profits. It really needs someone to go down and sort them out. And APEX and the other unions are the only people that can help.

The strike has to be seen to be won now that the press have blown it up they way they have and since the Post Office have taken the action they have in moving the mail. It will weaken the whole sense of trade union solidarity if the strikers lose.

On 8 August my children will be at my mum's, and myself and my

husband will be able to go. They've got to win. There's no question of them losing.

Sue Lloyd—Evelyn, NALGO, Polytechnic of Central London.

Gwen Brown from Walthamstow was in the front line of the Grunwick's mass picket on 11 July. She told Women's Voice what happened.

'We got there at 7.15am. We tried to find which was the weakest gate so we could stand there. And the glorious thing was there was no weak gate.

'I heard no London accents—Yorkshire, Wales, Lancashire were all there.

'Before when I have been on any marches and the police horses came, it was terrifying. We ran. It was complete chaos—like Grosvenor Square in the demonstration against the Vietnam war.

'This time we were behind three

In *Womens Voice No 5*, we reported on the gas explosion on Hendham Vale Estate, North Manchester. It is now 7 months since the explosion, two houses still stand empty and vandalized, and repeated readings in the ground near the houses show gas readings above danger level. The gas, probably methane, has no smell so that it could be anywhere. Readings in houses on Calthorpe Avenue have also been high. Womens Voice supporters helped Nessi Pronk and Mary McEwan write and print a leaflet which was put through every letter box on the estate.

It called for a protest meeting in a nearby pub to plan action. It was headed 'Methane Gas Can Kill'. At the meeting on 11 July 40 people attended, an Action Committee of 3 women and 3 men including one of the Womens Voice supporters, was elected and now petitions are being completed to be taken to the local councillors by as many tenants as

possible. Not one of these 'local councillors' lives in North Manchester and despite repeated visitations by tenants, they have done nothing.

The gas board (there are old mine workings nearby) and Corporation are being contacted and press publicity is being organized.

There are loads of other things wrong on the estate—an Asbestos factory 100 yards away; no shops for three quarters of a mile and those there are up steep hills, so the pensioners cannot shop for themselves, inadequate lighting, a river with a broken fence—3 children have fallen in—the list is endless. 'When we've won on this issue, we'll start campaigning on all the others,' say the Action Committee. Regular bulletins are being produced to keep tenants informed and another public meeting is planned soon.

Sandy Rose, Manchester

**Women at Ward and Goldstones Frederick Road factory in Salford are on strike for higher bonus payments.**

**The existing bonus payment is 5p an hour.**

**The women mainly AUEW and GMWU members work a 35-hour week.**

**Some sections of the same factory can earn £20 a week bonus on piece work.**

**They are picketing the factory and woman canteen workers have come out in sympathy. Messages of support and donations to: Mr V Clough, 27 Hermitage Road, Crupsall, Manchester 8.**

dockers' banners and one miners' banner. There was nowhere to run. We just had to link arms and hold our ground.

'First we tried to wave things at the horses to frighten them, but they are so well trained that that didn't work.

'It was just like a waiting game. We stood and kept singing songs like Solidarity Forever and The Workers United Will Never Be Defeated.

'The horses were still there—five or six lines with six horses in each line. All of a sudden the back lines did a U-turn and reversed. The front lines panicked and started turning and hurrying away. The last line to go were terrified. They thought they might be surrounded. Some nearly fell off trying to get away.

'The jubilation when those horses backed off was incredible. It was fantastic. I've never seen anything like it. And then the announcement went out about the bus drivers who had been taking the scabs in. The drivers joined the Transport Union and came out on strike. The news was carried by human telegraph

about a quarter of a mile to all the pickets. Cheers went up as each group heard the news.

'Earlier before the horses came, there was little organisation. Peaceful picketing means picketing *at the gate*, not down at the end of the road. We broke through the police cordon and ran down to the gate. We expected 200 or 300 people to follow us, but they didn't. Then the police came after us. It was quite hairy at the time. I got a knee in the stomach. The police weren't using truncheons—just their boots and fists. They got one picket and kept kicking him against a wall.

'I think the Grunwick pickets got a feeling of solidarity that day. Women workers (who are supposed to be backward and not interested in trade unions). Asian workers (everyone knows that they are supposed to undercut British workers wages). It's brilliant. It gives the National Front one right where they need it. We can get thousands of trade unionists from all over the country to support Grunwicks. And we will carry on till we win.'

## A TASTE OF SOLIDARITY!

'If I have to beg on the streets, I won't go back to that factory before we win. If I had to starve, I wouldn't' Pat Leonard, machine operator, Desoutters.

Pat Leonard is one of a hundred engineering workers at Desoutters in North West London going into the third month of their strike for trade union recognition the AUEW.

'It's down to the hard core now. Last week we introduced this new system on the picket line. We decided to pay the pickets £2.50 a day. Then at the end of the week, we found we didn't have enough money. So we had to send out cars to all the building sites and factories around to collect more money. We just managed to scrape through.

'We get £9 a week from the union. But who can live on that? I pay £15 a week for a double room, no kitchen, use of bath. And it's not in Chelsea, I can tell you.

'I went out on Friday to collect

money on a building site. They were mostly Irish, so I did the talking. The men were kind of pissed off with so many people coming round asking for money, but we did get some. The meetings are the best. You plead starvation—anything.

'There are five girls on strike now—four Irish and one Indian. An awful lot are still going in to work—about 80.

The dispute started when this girl was on a job and an older woman came over and told her to get off the machine. The older woman had finished her own job, and just took over the other job. This happened again. So the girl went down to the union and demanded they sort it out. Then the company refused to recognise the bloke we elected as convenor, so we came out.

'I refused to join the union at first. I had belonged to the union when I worked at Smith's. We were laid off at Smiths, and the union did

nothing. So I thought if they didn't support me then, why should I join another union? But I joined after about the third time they asked me. Then we came out on strike two or three weeks later. I didn't think it would be so soon.

'We had about three people come back out on strike this week. The feeling on the picket line is absolutely wonderful. Everyone is friendly. They forget their own problems, don't talk about them on the picket line.

'Since I have come out on strike, I have made so many friends. Fellows and girls that you would never even think of speaking to. You are like one.

'We pool all our money to get a roll or a cup of tea. And it tastes better. We are broke. But it's better than going into that factory to work like it is now.

'Supporters are welcome on the picket line. We don't care if you're a lunatic or an alcoholic. We need the help.

Desoutters, Edgware Road, Colindale. Donations and messages of support to Barry Moroney, 16 Yew Grove, London, NW2.

## ROUND 2 A VICTORY

A defeat doesn't mean you are beaten for ever, that's the news from the Yardleys factory in Basildon, Essex. In April the women in the factory lost their strike for equal pay, returning to work with a promise of an inquiry by ACAS. In June ACAS found against the women.

The men in the factory did not support the strike, with the convenor crossing the picket line each day, even though they were all in the same union, the TGWU. Feeling ran so high between the men and women that the first union meeting after the strike broke up in complete disarray.

Then to add insult to injury the union decided to pay the women who returned to work during the strike the same money in lieu of strike pay that they agreed to pay the strikers.

But now the convenor has been voted out of his job, and Joan Penfold, one of the women's shop stewards who led the strike has been voted in as convenor. She stood against a right wing male candidate and won by 316 to 236. It's the first time a woman has been convenor in the factory and the size of the vote means she must have won a good number of the men in the factory to her view.

Meanwhile at the TGWU conference, away off in the Isle of Man, the delegates were told about their scab union's policies in a Socialist Worker bulletin written by Joan.

## A USELESS LIFE ON THE DOLE

Marina is 17. She left school nine months ago, and has been on the dole for every one of them.

'I was a student in a London college. When my parents went back to Cyprus I moved to Durham with my brothers. If there was a chance of getting a job in London there is no such thing in Durham. There seem to be no jobs available unless you have qualifications. Without these you are useless.

'Being on the dole, that's how you feel, useless. In Durham girls are getting married very young because they have nothing else to do.

'I get £13 a week from the dole, but most of the school leavers get only £9. So I get up in the afternoon. You see, when you know you have nothing to do you don't bother getting up. Very soon you become unemployable.

'When I was at school I used to think to myself that I would really make it big. But you feel so protected in school you don't really know what it's like outside, until you have to face it alone.

'At school they teach you a lot of rubbish—like how to open a bank account. As far as I know most of the kids of my age can't afford a bus ride let alone a bank account. Instead of teaching us that why not what to do when you cannot pay the rent?

'I'm going on the right to work

march because I think it's going to be fantastic. I will be with people with the same ideas and problems. I'm sure it's going to be great.'

If you want to go on the march write to: The Right to Work Campaign, 265a Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

If you are a member of the AUEW, or know anyone who is a member, or know of any AUEW factories in the area then you should know who to vote for in the election for the new president of the AUEW.

If you read the Sunday Mirror Woodrow Wyatt, that well known hater of everything socialist, feminist, or half decent, will soon be extolling the virtues of men like Terry Duffy, backed by the right wing in the union. He's all in favour of the social contract.

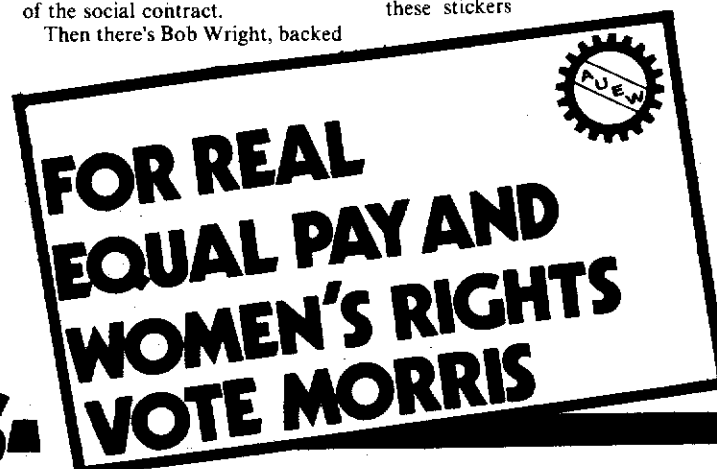
Then there's Bob Wright, backed



by the broad left, who hasn't as yet disassociated himself from the new 12 months rule on wages. Which means he's supporting the social contract, and that means even lower wages for the women members.

Ian Morris, a member of the SWP, is standing against the social contract, for unity in the union to fight for better wages for everyone, and for control of the union by the rank and file members.

We will forward requests for these stickers



## OCCUPY FOR EQUAL PAY

130 women and 20 men are occupying their factory in Kilwinning, Ayrshire, in their fight for equal pay and against redundancy.

The strikers are all members of the AUEW and although the strike is official, they haven't received any strike pay as yet from the union. They have a round-the clock rota to run the occupation, and all the women are determined to stand firm.

The company, Essex International, also has a plant in Derry, Northern Ireland. When the strikers approached them to black their goods they discovered that the men in Derry were doing the same work as the women in Kilwinning, and getting £7.60 a week more for it.

Donations and messages of support to Bill Murgatroyd, Essex International Strike Committee, AUEW Halls, King Street, Kilmarnock Ayrshire.

## THIS UNJUST SOCIETY

Kay is a stripper. She is 38 years old, living in a council flat in North London with three children: Kim 17, Anthony 9, Dion 8. Sheila Mitchell talked to Kay to find out why she did stripping for a living.

'My father was a member of the Royal Household. We lived in Grosvenor Road, Victoria,—very posh it was. But my parents split up and I was brought up by my mother who struggled to bring me up and my cousin who lived with us. She worked on the buses as a conductor, but no way did she get as much as a man gets for the same job. We didn't live in poverty, but it was a hard life. We couldn't have holidays or anything like that.' Kay did a few odd jobs, then she got married and had Kim.

'I suddenly found myself on my own with Kim when she was two years old. I got a job as a stripper because the money was better than anything else. I didn't want to go on social security because I'd tried it before and it was all so degrading. I had to do stripping to be able to

support Kim in a reasonable manner. I had no family I could rely on. A nursery was an impossibility—they had a list that gave preference to women with husbands! I did stripping because there was nothing else I could do. I was just so deperate to provide a home and furniture. I pretended that I had done it before. The first time I did it, I fell off the stage because I was so sloshed! I had to put my mind on to something else. I thought how I could support Kim.'

Kay married three times—the two boys' father was the owner of a club in the West End.

'I thought I'd got security at last, but he was a gambler. He'd give you money with one hand and then take it away with the other. I split with him because he was only interested in himself. I went to Bristol to get back into the stripping scene. I met a very rich guy. It was amazing—the way I saw how he got money from people put me against capitalists and capitalist society—the whole system. The police, everybody was

nice to him because he had money. If he lost a deal he would throw us out of the house'.

Kay left him and came back to London and squatted. She eventually got a flat on a council estate.

'Children should be looked after communally. Everyone should get according to their needs. Ideally, I'd prefer not to strip because it's degrading for a woman. Men go because they have unsatisfactory sex lives, to fantasise, some for a

laugh, and others still for sexual release. A vicar used to come regularly in his raincoat and bowler hat! The majority of strippers are single mums, who have to strip to make money and because of the lack of nursery facilities.'

Kay feels stripping can be artistic, unlike posing for soft porn magazines which she would never do.

'I think we're living in an unjust society—a man's world. Men dictate to us what we do with our bodies in things like abortion. Women on their own are victimised. Women get esteem and respect through being with a man which is wrong. Society has to change its attitude towards women'.

Sheila Mitchell

• Happy shoppers spent £2½ million in Harrods—and that was just on the *first day* of the summer sale! Funny, I didn't see you there . . .

• Marks and Spencer made a profit of £102 million this year—which is a mere £20 million more than last year. Under the Social Contract they said 'If you hold down your wages, we'll hold down profits.' We were allowed an increase of about 4p in the pound. Marks and Sparks have got an increase of about 20p in the pound. That's the Social Conctrick for you.



picture: Andy Wiard (Report)

The blasphemy trial of Gay News was an out and out victory for the morality and order brigade. Mary Whitehouse claims that it wouldn't matter which newspaper had printed the 'offensive' poem. Really!

This successful attack on a Gay newspaper may be the first of many attacks on gay people. The next step the battling puritans will take is to attack the already meagre reforms that

gay people have won over the years. During Gay Pride week many gay people from all over the country joined together to publicise the day to day humiliations they suffer because of the morals and prejudices of others. Let's make 1977 a Gay Pride Year and any other attack on gay peoples rights very, very difficult!

# YOUR VOICE

## Mothershare

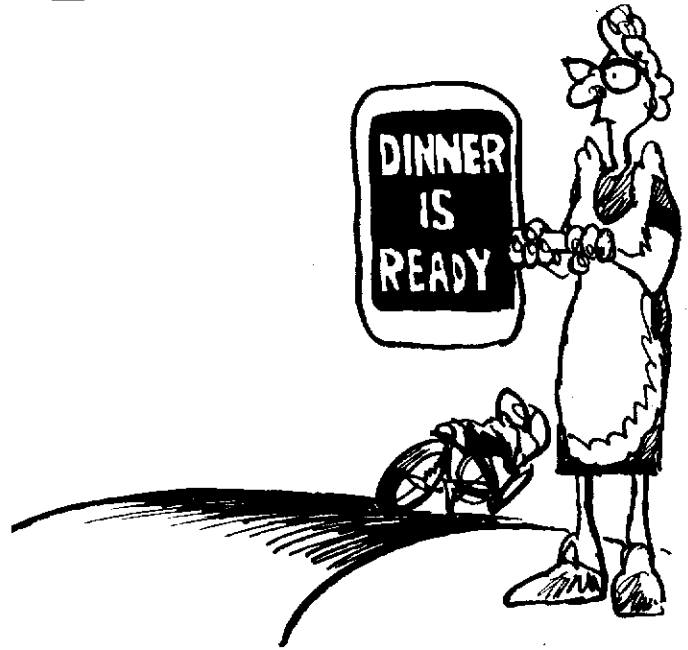
Dear WV,  
In York a community group set up a shop where all childrens and babies clothes, toys and general maternity accessories can be swapped or bought and sold at amazingly low prices. (Eg babygrows as new, Mothershare £1, Mothercare £2.25). Such a sensible, socialist enterprise when kids grow out of clothes so fast, and cost so much to buy in the first place.

This shop ironically called Mothershare, made me howl when I saw it for the first time, immediately thinking of the contrast between rip-off Mothercare. However, Mothercare Head Office didn't find it quite so funny, and after consultation with their legal department, pressured the group into changing its name. Mothercare

knowing they could do nothing about it if the group decided to refuse sent a polite letter saying the name was 'a bit near the bone' and 'could they please change it'.

Not surprisingly, offering no resistance, they backed down and complied with the request, changing their name to mum-share.

We see many groups providing a worthwhile service; they're not all 'do gooders' but their reasons for action are not always driven by a need for socialism. Maybe they didn't even realise the political nature of their name, but as I did, go in and talk to them about the issue, don't just write them off as 'reformist' do-gooders, providing a service the state should. **Kathy Gott York**



Dear WV,  
I just wanted to send you these awful sexist beer mats I found in a small village pub when I was on my field course in Devon last month. They are enough to make you spew! (see back page).

Could you tell me if there is a Womens Voice group in Leeds as I have not been able to suss them out as I study in Coventry.

Keep up the good work, I enjoy reading Womens Voice magazine very much.

All the best.  
**Kiran Kalsi, Leeds**

Dear WV,  
I thought you might like to see this cartoon which was in this week's issue of 'Motor Cycle'. There is never any shortage of sexist cartoons in the Motor Cycle press.  
**Laura Olins, North London Womens Voice Group**

*Once again we've had so many nasty ads sent in we have been unable to reproduce them. We're sure, though, that the ads in this issue will make your blood boil. Keep sending them in.*

## What a cover!

Dear WV,  
When our SWP branch first saw the latest issue of Womens Voice there were gasps of astonishment and a long discussion about what the hell was going on. Anyway off we went to sell it—generally open or upside down so as not to reveal the cover!

**Ann Moran, Wolverhampton**  
(PS please don't answer by explaining the cover—it's the need to explain we're upset about).

Dear WV,  
Was last month's front cover of the magazine going into competition with the back page? I found it extremely insulting, and at first glance thought the covers had been switched round and that the disgusting advert was on the front page.

Perhaps there was a very good reason for this, but I certainly can't think of one! The cover made me feel angry and disgusted to see working class women portrayed in this way.

Since the new format Womens Voice has been really

great to sell on the street, so why ruin it?

**Mary Robson, North London Womens Voice**

Dear WV,  
Enclosed is a copy of the cover of the last month's Womens Voice. We are submitting it for the back page of next month's issue—we consider it to be just as insulting as the ads you include.

We are disgusted with it and have had to apologise to many of our readers for it. At a time when Womens Voice sales are really going up and everyone is enthusiastic to sell the magazine, why on earth have you put many women off with this Andy Capp type of portrayal of a working class woman?

We are really impressed with the improvement in format and content of the magazine, and hope to be sending more articles and stories in from Leeds, but please don't kill our enthusiasm with any more embarrassingly bad covers.

**Leeds Womens Voice Group**

## Creche rule OK

Dear WV,  
I was interested to read in Womens Voice about the fight in Equity to get creches at union meetings and thought you might like to know what's happening in our union, NATFHE (the college teachers' union).

Womens Voice members in Yorkshire campaigned for a creche at regional meetings (they're all day Saturday) and for the last year or so we've had one. The regional treasurer was allocated £12 to run it for the

whole year, compared to over £600 for the free nosh for delegates. But apparently even that's hurting our national executive. They're now saying 'they feel that members wouldn't want their subs used in this way' and are proposing instead that if members want to attend national and regional meetings, and have problems with kids, branches and regions should call for volunteer babysitters and childminders. These volunteers should be—wait for it—inactive members of the union! What a farce!

We're determined to keep our creche in Yorkshire so that we can continue to play a part in the union. We're also going to campaign to get more money so that the students who run it get a decent wage and we can show the executive that members do want their money used in this way, rather than for putting up 'guests' of the union in four-star hotels at the national conference.

**Nancy Hall Leeds WV Group**

# YOUR VOICE

Dear WV,  
After reading Judith Condon's article in the issue before last about a woman's right to have or not to have children, I thought you would be interested to hear about my Area Health Authority's policy of requesting her husband's consent before fitting a woman with a IUD.

I was first informed of this policy by a midwife at my antenatal classes. She claimed that it was national policy (untrue) and a legal requirement (equally untrue). Apparently, it was once a national requirement but has been abandoned by most Area Health Authorities—the odd backwater like Sunderland, being the exception.

When cross-questioned about the logic of demanding a signature for this form of contraception, but for no other, she claimed, 'Well, it's different isn't it? It's something mechanical, like being sterilised' (!)

I received equally facile explanations from the Family Planning Association when I went to make an appointment to have an IUD fitted, after the birth of my child. 'Your husband can find your pills and throw them on the fire' stated the nurse, completely missing the point of my objection. The doctor gave me a half-sensible reason—the signature was required to prevent my husband from suing the 'fitting' doctor. I enquired why the doctor who prescribed the pill for me did not need legal protection from my husband (no reply) and pointed out that

no husband has any grounds on which to sue—it implies that a husband has a marital right to make his wife pregnant. 'I suppose he has' was the response. The doctor also suggested one's husband should know about one's IUD because it could pierce the womb and render a woman sterile and there is a 2 per cent risk of pregnancy, and possible complications because the IUD is present in the womb with a developing foetus. All interesting information, but nobody actually makes any attempt to relay it to one's husband.

When I indicated an unwillingness to fill in the consent form which was issued to me, the Family Planning Association doctor stated that it was up to the 'fitting' doctor if he wished to fit me when the form was not signed. However, I am effectively blocked from reaching the 'fitting' doctor (who operates from a different clinic to my own, within the borough) as the Family Planning Association request the return of the completed form prior to one's appointment.

I nevertheless returned my unsigned form with a statement of my objections and am now waiting to see if I am actually refused an IUD when I keep my appointment.

It is perhaps worth adding that I understand signatures are even required from estranged (but not divorced) husbands, which could obviously put some women in a particularly iniquitous position.

WV reader, Tyne & Wear

Dear WV,

The amount of unemployment in Sunderland is incredible. I spent a year at college before looking for a job: I found one quite quickly with the help of a friend and was one of eleven people taken on over a matter of six weeks as display juniors in a large department store. The contract stated that we could be sacked with a week's notice within the first thirteen weeks; five of us were.

Only four of the girls and both the boys were kept on. Two of the girls were sacked for laziness, one because her accent was too strong and two of us for unsuitability. Strangely enough, we were all older than the girls who weren't sacked and so had been paid more.

This invariably seems to happen—the older ones go first because they are paid more, and the firm saves money by sacking them. Another firm, a large mail order firm, use similar methods; I worked in their 'history card' department for six weeks, filing cards. The department consists almost entirely of temporary staff who work from between three to twelve weeks. When I was there, the staff consisted of about twenty girls, including five temporarily drafted in from other departments and two supervisors. In the six weeks I worked there, three of the new girls, all under 17 were moved to other departments on permanent staff and five temps were fired, and replaced by younger girls. If a girl came after a job then an older temp would be sacked; it was more economical.

The employment exchange does no good either. When I lost my last job in January 1975, I signed on, and sometimes went down three times a week, until May when my pregnancy was confirmed. I'm still waiting to hear from them.

I tried protesting to the union representatives at both firms, but was brushed off with excuses of the 13 weeks not being up. Something must be done, but the unions don't care. Mrs Leatrice Anne Huntrods, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear.

Dear WV,

I want to add something to the continuing debate on female orgasms and masturbation. I think orgasms are incredibly important and it doesn't matter how they are achieved, but surely something should be said on the issue of sensuality. When a woman hasn't got a man or

vice versa, what they miss is pure physical contact. The way society is now, people are embarrassed to touch each other, even good friends, and this is something we have got to overcome.

Sensuality must exist alongside sexuality. SM (Hendon SWP)

## Prompted to write

Dear WV,

First I must confess that *Womens Voice No 7* was the first *Womens Voice* that I had actually found time to read completely.

I must compliment *Womens Voice* on its much improved lay-out and content. But having reached the Letters Page, I was rather bewildered with the varying viewpoints expressed. But it did stimulate some thought of what sort of lifestyle socialism could bring; and it's possible impact on personal relationships.

While Gill Butler—quite rightly—defends the right for women to form and enjoy Lesbian relationships, other letters give the impression, (I hope I'm wrong) of wanting to either phase men out altogether, or alternatively, to reduce them to the role of a convenient appendage of women—to

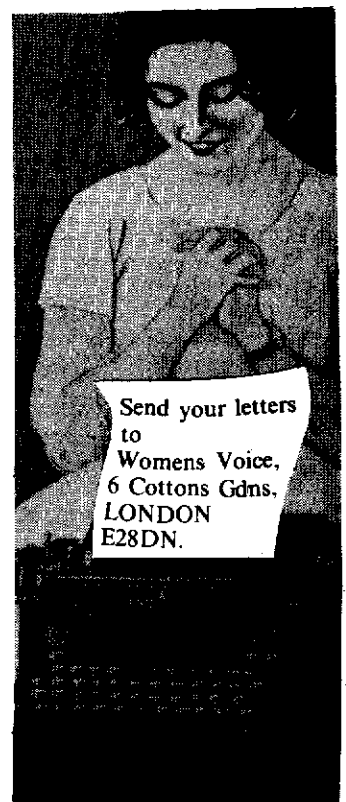
satisfy their whims and fancies at leisure.

In other words, to reverse what for centuries has been the male/female roles. (Hint of female chauvinism, perhaps?)

If, as I am led to believe, women have never been exactly ecstatic about this role (rightly so), are men expected to adjust to the role even more passively than women? Would the happiness of both women and men be secured by such a reversal? Also the suggestion that 'sex is designed for men', (Margaret Renn) implies that women in general are indifferent towards sex in a heterosexual relationship. This could be true for many people living and suffering under the worst effects of capitalism—at least for some of the time.

If indeed this implied premise is true, then the idea of a socialism, where both men and

women live their lives in total isolation, where children come not from loving relationships, but from artificial insemination banks does not look too far fetched. What it does mean, however, is that the enormous task of building socialism will be just that bit more difficult; with large numbers of both women and men more keen to join the new society. I would prefer to feel that socialism, along with the obvious material and social benefits for the working class would also bring an attitude where people can enter into whatever relationships they desire, based on an equal understanding of attaining mutual satisfaction, attainable in a society free from the corrupting factors of exploitation, degradation and general drudgery of unnecessary work for both women and men. Mr Kelly, Doncaster



# Hairy old myths

Nothing gets people going quite like hair. Couldn't you just have guessed some professor would come up with the theory that women have started getting hairy. On their chests and stomachs. Women who have jobs as well as families. The professor is Ivor Mills, of Cambridge University, writing in 'Womens Own'.

The old male chauvinist myth was that women who wanted jobs and careers were hairy anyway—which is to say, not really women. If they took up careers and declined to get married, it stood to reason. Something was wrong with them.

People who have fixed notions about the sexes go around with a table in their heads. Aggression, ambition, muscular strength, hairiness, they're all male. Submissiveness, self-sacrifice, softness, smooth skin, they're all female. You're either one or the other. Hard luck all the meek, unmuscular men. Try Charles Atlas. Hard luck all the competitive, hairy-legged women. Take a shave. The distinctions go deep in our language. Emasculated means weak and ineffectual. Effeminate means the same.

Running parallel goes the myth about sex. Men want it, all the time. Women don't really. Hard luck all the men who don't feel like it just now. Hard luck all the women who do. There must be something wrong with you.

First you create the myth—mainly for the wives and daughters of the well-bred; unhairy, never sweat, fine ankles, don't go much for sex. Never mind the lusty, muscular millions toiling hairily below stairs or in the mills or down the mines. And never mind the dark skinned races who don't seem to mind hairy women. This myth is strictly Aryan.

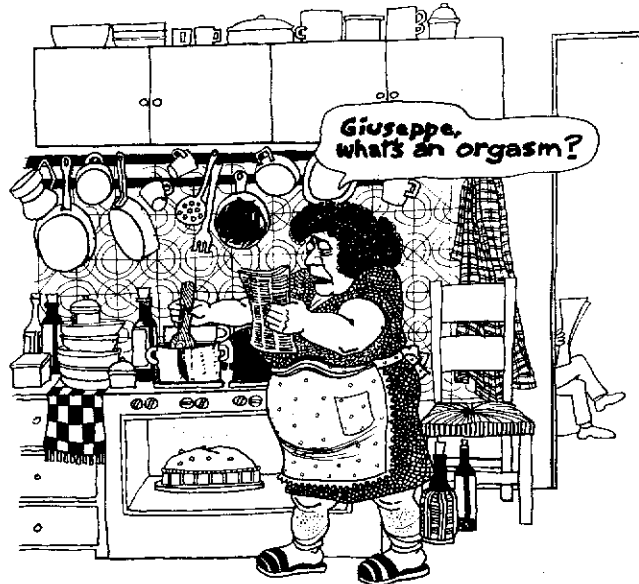
Remember the romantic poet who nearly died of

fright when he first saw a woman undressed and rested his eyes on female pubic hair? That's even how it was in Playboy till five years ago. Every picture guaranteed hairless. Such is the stuff fantasies are made of.

The professor's advice wasn't all that bad. We're getting hairy because we're under stress and the old male hormones are getting on top. We should get our husbands to help more in the home so we won't be doing two jobs all the time. (Don't you just love that word 'help'?)

Only can't you read something a bit different between the lines? Don't you just know the jokes that have been going the round of every shop-floor and office in the country since the professor opened his mouth. Something else for women to worry about.

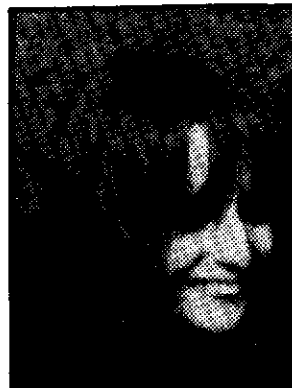
Just like when the bishop told the suffragettes the strain of voting would ruin their menstrual cycle. Or



when the Victorian doctor said that easing the pain of childbirth with chloroform would produce unloving mothers.

You see, Nature is best. Before we started making such demands on life we were alright. Now we're sprouting hair, and surprise surprise we're developing a high sex-drive. (High in relation to what, professor?)

Maybe there are a lot worse things than being hairy, like being unemployed and poor and stuck in two rooms with three kids ten floors up. And



## Womens World

by Judith Condon

### Battling grandad

Women members of the National Union of Journalists published a booklet of guidelines for avoiding male-chauvinism to help their fellow journalists. They showed the nonsense of such terms as 'Battling granny' and 'blond-haired mother of five' and similar clichés by turning them round on men. E.g. 'Battling grand-dad Hugh Scanlon said today . . .' But we still read constantly about 'trade-unionists and their wives', about 'the man in the street,' and so on.

Even the Guardian, which tries to bend over backwards to be fair to women slips up all the time. On July 14th, for example, under the headline 'Rees Names 12 for Obscenity Inquiry', they stated that among the twelve would be Polly Toynbee, 'the writer and journalist (married to the Guardian's political columnist, Mr Peter Jenkins.)' Imagine Peter Jenkins face if that had been the other way round . . .

Then a couple of days later, reporting the news that women are to be allowed to work as prison officers in male prisons the Guardian stated that they would be 'manning' trips between the prison and the courts. Old habits die hard, you see.

### Post woman wins latest round

Mrs Letitia Steel, a post woman since 1961, has won the latest round in her battle against sex-discrimination in the post office.

Mrs Steel applied to work on a particular post-round in Newport, Gwent, but she was rejected in favour of a man with fewer years service. The Employment Appeal Tribunal has ordered that Mrs Steel's complaint be looked at again by an industrial tribunal.

This case follows an appalling trail of discrimination within the post office. Before 1975, women were only employed on a 'temporary' basis, which meant they worked full hours, but had less rights than the men they worked with. In 1975, with the union's collaboration, the Post Office management stitched up an agreement that gave women equal rights in the future, but which said that years already worked would not count in estimation of seniority. This was a really crooked piece of manipulation which will extend the effects of discrimination far into the future unless it is challenged and defeated by women now.

# RACISM

and the blues  
BESSIE SMITH & BILLIE HOLIDAY



● A new cassette from Socialist Worker Recordings: David Wiggery on RACISM AND THE BLUES, talking about the roots of the blues of Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday in the slavery and racism of America's Deep South—and how the blues was part of the struggle for black freedom and women's liberation. 55 minutes. £1.40, including postage. S W Recordings, Corbridge Works, Corbridge Crescent, London E2.

## WV Meetings

● North London Womens Voice Group Sunday 14 August  
MID SUMMER PICNIC  
2pm Kenwood House  
Hampstead Heath NW1  
Ring Mary Robson 802 9563

● Canterbury Womens Voice Group  
Meetings every other Tuesday at the Jolly Sailor, The Borough. All welcome.

● Merseyside Womens Voice Group meets fortnightly on Tuesdays 8.00pm, County Hall, City Centre. Each meeting discusses a particular issue plus activity for the coming fortnight.

● South London Womens Voice Group meets alternate Tuesdays at 8pm, Brixton. For further information phone Linda 737 0914.

● "Cor, what a lovely pair of knockers!" is this sexist? Lea Valley Womens Voice meeting, Monday August 15, 8.00pm 27 Nelson Road N15. Ring 802 9563 if you need a babysitter.

● South East London Womens Voice Group meets alternate Tuesdays at 8pm, Charlton House, Charlton Road, SE7. For further information please ring Peggy 858 8400.

● Cambridge for information about Womens Voice activity phone Emma, Cambridge 56512

● Aberystwyth Womens Voice discussion meetings, Farmers Side Bar, 8pm, Tuesdays. 16 August Equal Pay 30 August Abortion 15 September Women in Ireland 27 September Women at Work.

● SWP Gay Group welcomes Womens Voice supporters Meetings in London regularly. Write to 19 Redmans Road, London, E1 3AQ or phone Penny 01 405 2705 or Richard 01 790 2454

## Courses

● Diploma in Women's Studies  
The Polytechnic of Central London  
School of Communication Cultural and Community Studies Unit  
A two year part-time course based upon evening and occasional weekend work. The programme will consist of lectures, seminars and personal tuition. Further details from: Communication Registry, 18/22 Riding House Street, London W1. Tel: 01-486 5811.

## Stickers Badges

● Equal Pay sticky badges  
3 dozen for 50p from Womens Voice, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN

● Scream for a nursery badges in green, white and black from 153 Hutingdon Road, Cambridge. £4 for 50 post free.

● Womens Voice Posters  
Blank posters with Womens Voice heading, red. £1 for 50 Abortion posters—slogans and Womens Voice heading, £1 for 40  
Money with orders to Womens Voice 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2

● SPUC OFF tee-shirts available now! White background and purple lettering. Small medium and large from ALRA 88 Islington High Street, London N1. Price. £1.99 incl. p&p.

● Not just art, more a way of life/An open exhibition of womens' art. Sending in dates: Oct 1-15. All women welcome to submit one exhibit. Please try to limit to 4sq/cubic feet. The object of the exhibition is to explore the way women's art grows out of their lives. Please include a legible description of how you came to make this piece of art. Women are also invited to submit work for our on-going programme of exhibitions. Womens Art Alliance, 10 Cambridge Terrace Mews London, NW1. Tel: 935 1841, 11am-6pm, Mon-Fri.

● Glasgow Rape Crisis Group want other women to join as councillors (face to face or visiting police, doctors, courts etc.) Get in touch with PO box no 42, London N6 5BU or phone London Crisis Group 01 340 6913

● Jam Today Benefit. 13 August at Waterloo Action Centre, Bayliss Road, London SE1.

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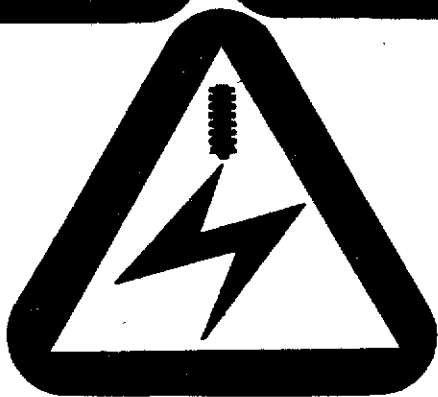
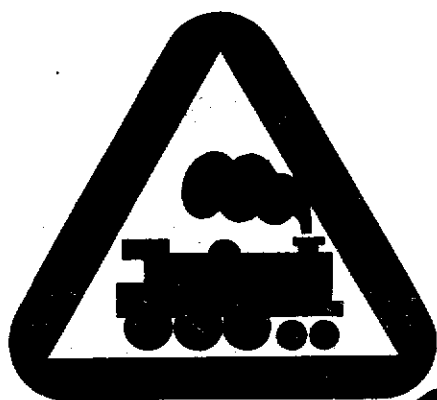
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