

Women Workers in Britain

A Handbook

Leonora Lloyd



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Introduction

The Women's Liberation movement in this country is generally considered to have started as a result of an industrial dispute—the Ford sewing-machinists' strike in May/June, 1968. This was not an equal pay strike, but eventually led to equal pay being implemented throughout Fords (in 1971).

It was through the organisation that was formed as a result of this dispute—the National Joint Action Campaign Committee for Women's Equal Rights—that many of the women who shortly afterwards started the first women's liberation groups came together. And it was dissatisfaction with NJACCWER, as much as the example of the American groups, that contributed to the groups taking the form so many of them did: no 'leaders' or bureaucracy, etc. However, the groups supported the only major action NJACCWER ever organised, the Equal Pay demonstration on May 18th, 1969, which culminated in a meeting in Trafalgar Square, held in the pouring rain, with 1000 supporters from all over Britain.



Equal Pay Demonstration organised by NJACCWER May 18, 1969.

Of course, in a predominantly middle-class movement, it was perhaps only natural that many of the women could not see the connection with their own problems and those of working-class women. Although coming into the movement had for many of them meant a raising of their political consciousness, this had been a rather selective raising, and the fact that the trade union movement—like the world itself—is predominantly masculine, also contributed to the apathy on this question. There were several criticisms raised against the idea of organising campaigns on equal pay and related questions. First, many women felt that they should get their own problems, which they saw as distinct, sorted out first. Second, they felt that being middle-class, without any experience of working-class life and conditions of work, they had no credentials for getting involved—they would be accused of being patronising. Third, they felt that any involvement in any

industrial campaign raised more question than it answered: such as whether we should encourage women to go out to work in a capitalist system, as this ensured that they were doubly exploited; whether we should enrol women in bureaucratic, male-dominated unions, which could only disillusion them, etc. Fourth, was the purely practical question of how women not involved in industry could get in touch and help women who were.

However, the reluctance to get involved in an industrial campaign did not arise as a result of not understanding the importance of it, or from the belief that the passing of the Equal Pay Act meant that the particular struggle was at an end. Far from it, the women in the movement were all aware that the Act amounted to a betrayal.

In the event, an Industrial Campaign was proposed and accepted by the movement,* although it was the last of the four campaigns to be taken up—after the child-care campaign, education and Contraception and Abortion, all of which were adopted at about the same time, three or four months earlier. Ironically, in view of the initial reluctance, it is around the Industrial campaign that most real activity, discussion and education has taken place. One of the most important campaigns has been in connection with the Cleaners' Action Group.

Equal Pay Act

Little has been done in direct connection with Equal Pay. The reason for this is clear—there has been a definite down-turn in trade-union and shop-floor activity on this question. It would be difficult enough for militants in industry to artificially stimulate a campaign for equal pay—almost impossible for 'outsiders'. But in 1973, the Act requires that 90% of the male rate be reached in those cases affected by the Act. In order to avoid the implementation of the Act, the employers will, over the next two years, be making changes in organisation of working procedures, etc., and in order to be able to fight these, workers must understand the working of the Act and the significance of these avoiding actions.

In a period of increasing unemployment, we must be sensitive to the fears of both male and female workers that moves towards equal pay will increase joblessness. But it is essential that an industrial campaign takes as one of its main tasks, the fighting of unemployment, putting the blame for it squarely where it belongs: not on any group of workers, whether classified by sex or colour, not on wage demands or strikes; but on the capitalist system, that has never been able to provide full employment, which, in fact, depends on the existence of unemployed workers to dampen the militancy of the employed. The presence of a large number of women, potentially available to fill jobs held by men or employed women, has always been a threat to organised labour. It is entirely in the interest of the working-class that more women enter the working-force—so

* i.e., by the Women's National Coordinating Committee, set up in April 1970 and voted out in October 1971 by the participating groups at the Skegness National Women's Conference. A regional structure has been set up.

long as they do so under entirely equal conditions of pay, opportunity and other conditions; otherwise they will continue to be potential black-legs, they will continue to undercut male labour, etc. Of course, it is necessary to recruit women into the unions, to educate them politically, but the men also need educating on these questions.

Importance of Work

Women's liberation has a part to play, in this educative process, as in the practical aspects. We must recognise that entering the work-force does three things in particular: it gives the woman some degree of economic independence, it paves the way for her to become part of the labour movement, something that would have been unlikely to have happened if she had stayed within the four walls of her home, and as long as she remains at home, dependent on her husband to provide the necessities of life, the psychological dependence on men which women's liberation is seeking to attack, will continue and be reinforced. As long as the majority of the working-class depend on wage labour for their existence, as long as capitalism exists, we shall always have to make the choice: to be exploited by the capitalist class (something which the vast majority of men have no choice about) or to be to some extent parasitic, and to a large extent, wholly dependent, on a man. In any case, for a significant number of women, both with and without men to 'support' them, there is no choice about work either: they must work or go without.

The choice before women's liberation is not wholly an either/or one; it is not entirely between campaigning for, say, allowances for stay-at-home mothers or jobs-and-nurseries-for-all. We must campaign for a combination of these—for a real alternative for mothers of young children, in particular. It would be wrong, in the context of a capitalist society, to say that all women should work, no matter what the circumstances; but it would be equally wrong to call for wages for housewives, thus continuing the prevailing feminine myths.

Above all, we must recognise the situation as it is now, with millions of women going out to work, in unsatisfactory conditions, for unsatisfactory pay; underrepresented and disregarded. It is to these women in the first place that we must turn our attention. Various factors combine to show that, given enough jobs and satisfactory conditions (hours, shopping, child-care, etc) the majority of married women, including mothers, would work. Without discounting campaigns and activities directed towards housewives, those concerning working women raise so many more issues, and are so much more likely to raise the consciousness of the women concerned, male workers and ourselves, that we must regard the industrial campaign as a priority. In order to put this campaign on a proper footing, we in the movement should arm ourselves with the facts and figures, as well as with the theory. It is to prove this ground work of facts that this pamphlet has been compiled.

Leonora Lloyd

Note:

DEP = Department of Employment.

NES = New Earnings Survey.

The Women who Work

Out of some 17½ million women, some 51% are workers (full and part-time). That is, out of the 23½ million workers (in June 1970), nearly 9 million were women—over 37%. Nearly a third of all women workers worked in industry. About 18.5% of all women workers are part-timers (30 hours or under a week) and 62% are married.

TABLE 1. Number of female employees in Great Britain, classified by age group and marital status. (Totals at June 1970)

Age	Total at June 1970 (in thousands)	Percent of total
15-19		
Married	70	0.8
Other	1,088	12.6
20-29		
Married	1,010	11.7
Other	955	11.1
30-39		
Married	1,145	13.2
Other	238	2.7
40-49		
Married	1,581	18.3
Other	317	3.7
50-59		
Married	1,207	14.0
Other	426	4.9
60 & over		
Married	377	4.4
Other	235	2.7
All ages (15 & over)		
Married	5,388	62.3
Other	3,257	37.7

* Department of Employment.

TABLE 2. Analysis by age, of employees (employed and unemployed) 1966-1970 Great Britain: Percentage in each age group at December 1970.

	Age group								
	Under 18	18-20	21-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-64	65 and over
Total									
Males and females									
1966	6.0	9.0	9.1	8.9	18.1	20.3	19.2	6.5	2.8
1967	5.6	9.3	9.3	8.8	17.9	20.6	19.0	6.7	2.9
1968	5.2	8.6	10.0	8.9	17.9	21.1	18.8	6.7	2.8
1969	5.0	7.9	10.3	9.2	17.9	21.6	18.4	6.8	2.9
1970	5.0	7.5	10.4	9.6	17.8	21.2	18.7	6.9	2.9
Males									
1966	4.7	7.5	8.6	9.7	19.4	20.0	19.2	7.7	3.1
1967	4.4	7.8	8.8	9.7	19.2	20.2	19.0	7.9	3.1
1968	4.1	7.2	9.4	9.9	19.2	20.8	18.6	8.0	3.0
1969	3.9	6.5	9.6	10.1	19.0	21.1	18.4	8.2	3.1
1970	3.9	6.2	9.7	10.5	18.9	20.8	18.6	8.2	3.1
Females									
1966	8.4	11.7	9.9	7.4	15.8	20.9	19.1	4.5	2.3
1967	7.8	12.0	10.3	7.2	15.7	21.2	19.0	4.5	2.3
1968	7.3	11.0	11.1	7.4	15.6	21.8	19.0	4.5	2.4
1969	6.9	10.3	11.5	7.7	15.9	22.3	18.4	4.6	2.5
1970	6.9	9.7	11.5	8.0	16.0	21.9	18.9	4.6	2.4

TABLE 3. Women's Occupations, June 1970, U.K. DEP

Occupation	Numbers in thousands	Women as % of total in occupation	As percent of all employed women	Changes in employment (in thousands) between June 1970 & Sept. 71	Number of female employees (in thousands)	Percent of married female employees
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	73.6	19.3	0.8	—	48	66
Mining & Quarrying	18.3	4.1	0.2	-0.3	11	61
Food, drink, tobacco	379.0	41.7	4.3	-29.0	243	66
Coal, petroleum products	8.8	13.6	0.1	-0.4	5	51
Chemicals, allied industries	141.1	29.2	1.6	-7.9	86	61
Metal manufacture	72.7	12.0	1.6	-5.6	45	62
Mechanical engineering	209.1	16.9	2.4	-24.4	135	65
Instrument engineering	57.6	36.6	4.1	-34.8	246	69
Shipbuilding & marine engineering	13.6	6.6	0.2	-1.1	8	69
Vehicles	112.1	13.1	1.3	-12.6	71	64
Other metal goods	199.1	30.6	2.5	-18.5	135	68
Textiles	345.1	42.2	3.9	-62.1	202	63
Leather, leather goods & fur	23.4	41.2	0.3	-2.1	14	62
Clothing & footwear	337.9	75.4	4.3	+1.8	206	58
Bricks, pottery, etc.	75.7	21.7	0.9	-5.0	50	66
Timber, furniture, etc.	57.6	18.7	0.6	-1.8	37	65
Paper, printing, publishing	223.7	33.7	2.8	-13.9	120	54
Other manu. industries	140.5	38.4	1.6	-11.5	94	68

Occupation	Number in thousands	Women as % of total in occupation	As percent of all employed women	Changes in employment (in thousands) between June 1970 & Sept. 71	Number of female employees (in Thousands)	Percent of married female employees
Construction	88.9	6.5	1.0	-2.6	55	63
Gas, electricity, water	61.9	15.5	0.7	+1.6	37	60
Transport, communication	284.3	17.6	3.2	-	162	58
Distributive trades	1540.5	55.8	17.4	-	902	60
Insurance, banking, etc.	507.7	52.0	5.7	-	256	51
Professional Scientific services	1951.6	66.6	22.1	-	1284	67
Misc. services	1035.1	54.6	11.7	-	643	64
Public administration & defence	463.1	31.9	5.2	-	284	62
Unclassified	12.3	24.6	0.1	-	-	-
Total	8842.0	37.7	00.1		5388	62

Women comprised 28.3% of the industrial working force and 43.3% of all service workers.

Where Women Work

Over half the female working force is employed in semi-skilled and unskilled manual jobs. Semi-skilled is usually defined as needing between one and six months training and/or experience. Large numbers of women work in the distributive trades, in the food, drink and tobacco industries and in clothing and footwear and textile industries. But the largest single group of women (see Table 3) are found outside industry, in the group classified as 'Professional & Scientific services'. Table 4 gives a breakdown of this large group.

TABLE 4. Professional and Scientific Services, June 1970. DEP

Professional Service	Number of women (in thousands)
Accountancy & Services	39.0
Educational Services	977.5
Legal Services	71.0
Medical & Dental Services	789.0
Religious Organisations	11.2
Research & Development Services	19.2
Other Professional & Scientific Services	44.7
Total	2,903.4

What this amounts to is that there are a lot of women in teaching and nursing. Thus, women make up only 25% of qualified doctors and 15% of staff in higher education; they are 4% women barristers and 0.06 graduate engineers. However, 90% of nurses are women.

Tables 5 and 6 give breakdowns of manual and non-manual industrial occupations, for three industrial groups: A) Electrical goods; B) Textiles; C) Timber & Furniture.



Don Valentine: Meccano Triang

TABLE 5. Occupation of Female Employees in Manual Occupations, as % of total in that occupation. (DEP, May 1968).

Occupation	Electrical goods	Textiles	Timber and furniture
Skilled production workers (entry by apprenticeship, etc.)	2.8	16.8	4.2
Skilled maintenance workers	0.9	1.4	3.8
Production workers (with 6 months training or considerable experience)	6.4	14.9	42.5
Production workers (1-6 months do)		93.3	43.7
Foreman & charge-hands	11.7	18.8	4.7
Warehouse packers & dispatch	19.0	9.3	16.1
Transport drivers	0.4	0.9	—
Canteen staff	84.3	95.6	89.0
Labourers	45.9	46.6	32.0
Other employees	45.9	46.6	32.0

TABLE 6. Occupations of female employees in non-manual occupations, as % of total in that occupation. (DEP, May 1968).

Occupation	Electrical goods	Textiles	Timber & furniture
Managers, works, supers., dept. managers	2.6	5.4	3.4
Scientists & technologists	2.5	4.7	—
Draughtsmen	2.1	4.3	1.3
Other technicians	3.9	24.4	3.2
Clerical & Office staff	63.2	68.1	64.5
Other admin. tech. & commercial staff	17.7	29.5	9.1
Total	29.4	39.5	34.4

The geographical breakdown is shown in Table 7.

A certain number of women are classified as 'family workers'. In the 1966 partial census, these included: 17% in agriculture, 40% in distributive trades and 12% in catering, hotels, etc. (out of total classified).

The Training They Get

About 1½ million women and girls are undertaking some sort of further education: they make up just over 50% of those receiving further education, but this is because they outnumber men two to one in evening-classes, which are mainly non-vocational. Other figures are shown in Table 8.

The National Youth Employment Council in its report of the work of the Youth Employment Council for the period 1968-1971 notes that "although there were more women in employment in the period under review, the proportion engaged in professional and technical operations requiring intensive training had declined. 'This', it comments, 'suggests that women have not had their fair share of the expansion which has taken place in these sectors.'

"Experiments in some areas to see what obstacles there were to better employment opportunities for girls tended to show that prejudice was strong against girls in the main manufacturing industries, or that employers were only interested in giving engineering opportunities to girls if boys were not available.



TABLE 7. Civilian Labour Force, June 1970, by Standard Region. DEP.

Workers	S.E.	E. Ang.	S.W.	W. Mid.	E. Mid.	Hum. & Yorks.	N.W.	N.	Wales	Scot	G.B.
Males	4,775	414	847	1,458	898	1,285	1,788	850	635	1,325	14,282
Females	3,037	235	494	842	524	744	1,126	476	332	834	8,646
Percent of females	38.9	36.2	36.8	36.8	36.8	36.7	39.5	35.9	34.3	38.6	37.7

TABLE 8. Women in Vocational Education Courses. (From ATTI Report on Education Training and Employment of Women & Girls, 1970).

Course	Men	Women	Percent of women
Full-time courses	105,344	81,370	43.6
Sandwich courses	23,707	1,086	3.1
Day-release courses	550,194	89,768	14.0

TABLE 9. Analysis by Type of Employment Entered by Age of Entry. DEP 1970.

Class of employment entered	Age at entry into employment									
	Boys					Girls				
	15	16	17	Total	%	15	16	17	Total	%
Apprenticeship or learnership to skilled occupation	56.6	41.0	7.3	104.9	42.3	12.1	2.8	1.0	15.8	7.1
Employment leading to recognised professional qualifications	0.4	1.3	1.6	3.3	1.3	0.3	2.2	1.7	4.1	1.8
Clerical employment	4.2	9.5	6.1	19.8	18.0	37.7	36.4	15.4	89.5	40.0
Other employment with planned training	23.1	9.0	3.2	35.2	14.2	26.0	5.8	2.2	34.0	15.2
Other employment	64.7	16.1	4.2	85.0	34.2	66.0	10.9	3.5	80.4	35.9
Totals	148.9	76.9	22.3	248.2	100	41.9	58.1	23.8	223.8	100

"It was found, too, that girls themselves, and their parents, still showed a marked preference for clerical work and the traditional female occupations, and were unwilling to consider the possibilities of engineering. Careers programmes at school were now designed to make girls more aware of work which a few years ago would have been thought unsuitable, and more employers are being encouraged to consider employing girls to do these jobs." (from DEP Gazette, Nov.1971).

TABLE 10. Girls Entering Apprenticeships to Skilled Occupations DEP 1970.

Occupation	Number	Percent of Total
All manufacturing industries	1,115	2.5
Distributive trades	908	17.1
Insurance, banking, finance & business services	65	15.0
Professional & Scientific services	1,128	40.9
Misc. services	11,987	43.8
(Hairdressing & manicure)*	11,336	97.7
Other industries	598	1.6
Total	15,801	13.1

* Included in Misc. services

There was a 14.6% increase (711 to 815) between 1969 and 1970 in apprenticeships for girls in manufacturing industries.

Promotion Prospects

In industry, few shop-floor women workers get promotion to foremen, etc. (see Table 5). Chances of promotion above other women are slim enough, over men almost nil. A recent 'Guardian' report (15th Dec.1971) of a training manager's efforts to utilise fully the talents of women secretaries, with a scheme called 'Female Career Development', was news precisely because of its uniqueness. A Financial Times report (18th Dec.1971) shows that those women who 'drop out' of the promotional race to have a family accelerate to catch-up with the men when they return to work some years later. Moreover, they also "hold their capacities rather better than male executives. Of course, very few women reach the ranks of the executives, so perhaps they are so exceptional that one should not draw general conclusions from them.

Part-Time Workers

Employment statistics include part-time workers. Table 11 gives a separate breakdown showing where women part-time workers are found. The idea of professional women working part-time is spreading. Until recently, when many got the sack, due to

a tightening of educational budgets, there was quite a number of part-time teachers, and many women doctors work part-time, often for the Family Planning Association. With the expansion of the social services it is becoming evident that the expensive training and experience of women in these fields must not be wasted and many authorities are trying to utilise them. However, figures are difficult to obtain.

TABLE 11. Part Time Women Workers: G.B. Mid-March, 1971. Manufacturing Industries. DEP

Industry	Est. No. (000's)	Percent of all women in that industry
Food, drink, tobacco	107.2	31.1
Chemical & allied industries	24.5	18.2
Metal manufacture	10.8	15.2
Mechanical engineering	29.8	15.0
Instrument engineering	9.3	16.6
Electrical engineering	68.6	19.5
Shipbuilding & marine engineering	2.3	18.1
Vehicles	12.9	12.1
Other metal goods	41.0	21.7
Textiles	48.2	16.1
Leather, leather goods, fur	4.0	18.0
Clothing & footwear	37.9	11.0
Bricks, pottery, glass, cement, etc.	9.6	13.2
Timber, furniture, etc.	8.2	14.7
Paper, printing & publishing	35.0	16.3
Other manufacturing industries	32.9	24.6
Total	483.0	18.5

For a discussion of the position of part-time women workers, see "Socialist Woman" July-August 1971.

Trade Union Membership

There has been a steady growth in trade union membership amongst women.

TABLE 12. Women in the Trade Unions

Date	1938	1946	1965	1970
Unions with women members (TUC only)	76	110	120	109
Number of women (000's)	553	1,215	1,759	1,877
As % of total members	11.8	16.1	19.8	21.0

In 1967 about 2 out of 9 working women belonged to trade unions, now the figure is over 1 in 4 (this is for all unions, not just those affiliated to the TUC). They now make up about 21% of all TUC membership, compared to nearly 38% of the labour force.

In 1939, the unions with the largest women's membership were: USDAW (79,600), Amalgamated Weavers' Association (70,000) and NUTGW (66,800). In 1965, the three equivalent unions were: TGWU (14%), NUGMW (25%), and USDAW (49%). By 1970 the position was as follows: NUMGW (219,799), TGWU (213,524) and NUT (212,208).

For comparison, Table 13 shows women T.U. membership in 1892:

TABLE 13

Trade Union	Number
Engineering & metal trades	2,850
Building & furniture	300
Textile manufacture	80,900
Clothing & leather trades	8,650
Printing trades	400
Misc. crafts	3,450
Labourers & transport workers	3,100
Total	99,650

At the end of 1970 the total membership of all unions—including those not affiliated to the TUC—was as follows:

TABLE 14. Thousands.

Members	Number	Percent increase since 1969
Male	8,296	5.8
Female	2,704	9.7
Total	11,000	6.7

Pay, Earnings + Hours

Table 1b shows average gross weekly and hourly earnings for all industries and services in April, 1971, of workers in NES whose pay was not affected by absence, and increase (monetary and percentage) over April 1970, based on a matched sample, DEP, Nov. 1971.

Table 15 shows that percentage increases are very misleading. Thus, in every case, women were better off in percentage terms and worse off in money terms. Across the board increases, say 10% for all grades, obviously benefit those already earning most, which explains why they are popular with craftsmen, who have the most powerful voice in the unions. The employer also welcomes this type of pay award in most cases, because skilled men make up the smaller proportion of the labour force.

TABLE 15.

Workers	Weekly earnings £	Hourly earnings n.p.	Monetary increase		Percent increase	
			weekly, £	hrly, n.p.	weekly	hourly
Full-time men (21 +)						
Manual	29.4	62.2	2.8	6.5	10.3	11.6
Non-manual	39.1	99.5	4.7	12.0	12.9	13.0
All	32.9	74.1	3.5	8.2	11.6	12.2
Full-time women (18 +)						
Manual	15.3	38.1	2.1	5.2	15.8	15.5
Non-manual	19.8	52.9	2.6	6.9	14.2	14.2
All	18.3	47.2	2.5	6.3	14.6	14.5

* NES - New Earnings Survey.



TGWU Shop Steward

TABLE 16. Hours, Weekly Earnings and Hourly Earnings for Manual Workers, March 1971. DEP

Workers	Men over 21	Women over 18	Difference
Average weekly earnings (In £)			
Oct. 69	24.83	12.11	12.72
Oct. 70	28.05	14.00	14.05
Average hours worked			
Oct. 69	46.5	38.1	- 8.4
Oct. 70	45.7	37.9	- 7.8
Average hourly earnings (In n.p.)			
Oct. 69	53.40	31.78	12.62
Oct. 70	61.38	36.91	24.47

Women's hourly earnings as percent of men's were 59.5% in 1969 and 60.1% in 1970. Thus, we see that percent increases are no guide to the improving position or otherwise of women: a larger percent increase may—as it has here—result in a smaller monetary increase, leaving the women worse off than before.

TABLE 17. Average Weekly Earnings of Administrative, Technical and Clerical Employees

Workers	1969	1970	Increase
Men	32.07	36.12	4.05
Women	17.05	19.59	2.54

Table 18 below shows that 87% of all women manual workers earned below £20 weekly, whilst 87% of all male manual workers earned £20 or more weekly. 61% of all women non-manual workers earned below £20 per week, and 93% of male non-manual workers earned £20 or more per week

TABLE 18. Percentage with Earnings under Specified Amounts. April 1971. From NES, Nov.1971 (Excluding those whose Pay was Affected by Absence).

Weekly earnings, under (£)	Full-time manual workers		Full-time non-manual workers	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
5	—	0.1	—	—
6	—	0.3	—	0.1
7	—	0.8	—	0.2
8	0.1	2.0	—	0.7
9	0.1	4.2	—	1.7
10	0.2	8.4	0.1	3.8
11	0.3	15.2	0.1	7.0
12	0.4	23.1	0.3	11.1
13	0.6	32.9	0.5	17.3
14	0.8	43.9	0.7	23.5
15	1.4	54.3	1.0	30.4
16	2.4	63.1	1.7	36.8
17	4.0	71.3	2.6	43.7
18	6.2	77.9	3.7	49.8
19	9.5	83.2	5.3	55.2
20	12.0	87.3	7.2	61.4
22	20.8	92.6	11.7	71.2
24	29.7	95.4	17.3	77.7
26	39.7	97.1	23.9	83.0
28	49.5	98.2	30.1	86.8
30	58.7	98.9	36.4	89.3
35	77.0	99.6	51.7	94.3
40	88.2	99.8	65.3	97.2
45	94.1	99.9	74.8	98.5
50	97.0	100.0	81.8	99.1
60	99.1	100.0	90.0	99.7
70	99.7	100.0	94.0	99.8
80	99.9	100.0	96.3	99.9
100	100.0	100.0	98.2	100.0

TABLE 19. Average Weekly Earnings of Admin. Tech. and Clerical Staff in the Public Sector

Date	National & local government, including teachers & NHS				Nationalised industries			
	Males £	Females £	Difference £	Males £	Females £	Difference £		
1959	18.08	11.69	6.39	16.03	8.93	7.10		
1966	26.69	17.01	9.68	26.25	13.70	12.55		
1968	29.65	18.51	11.14	28.95	15.26	13.60		
1970	36.00	22.78	13.22	35.83	18.45	17.38		

1000.0

Occupations in Manufacturing Industry, May 1968 Showing Females as a percentage of total employed in the occupation (Part-time workers counted as halves).

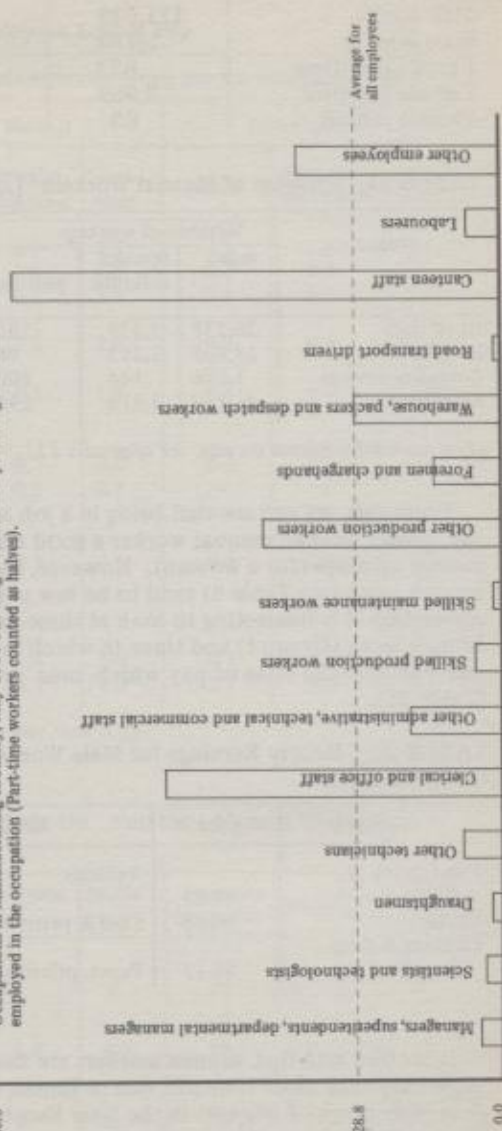


TABLE 20. Earnings and Hours for Railway Workers, Oct. 1970. DEP

Workers	Numbers	Average weekly earnings	Average hours worked
Male adults	171,529	29.31	48.3
Male juniors	5,183	13.03	42.4
Female part-time	823	7.06	25.6
Female full-time	3,959	17.76	41.6
Female juniors	63	10.44	37.4

TABLE 21. Earnings of Manual Workers—London Transport Executive

Workers	Number of workers			Average earnings		
	males	females full-time	part-time	males	females full-time	part-time
				£	£	£
Road staff	26,238	3,379	101	29.24	25.63	9.70
Rail Staff	13,805	1,295	98	29.86	20.90	7.09
Common services	1,696	144	100	27.58	11.93	7.52
All classes	41,739	4,818	299	29.38	23.95	8.12

(For more information on pay, see appendix 11).

From this, we can see that being in a job nominally entitled to equal pay, gives a women manual worker a good chance of earning above-average earnings (for a woman). However, the industries in which many women work (see Table 4) tend to be low paid for men too and in this connection it is interesting to look at three industries in which many women work (Group I) and three in which few women work (Group II) and compare the rates of pay which men get in these industries. (Table 21).

TABLE 22. Hourly Earnings for Male Workers in Selected Industries. Oct. 1970 DEP.

Group I	p/hr	Group II	p/hr
Food, drink & tobacco	59.83	Vehicles	76.49
Textiles	56.58	Coal & petroleum products	70.05
Clothing & footwear	58.12	Paper, printing & publishing	74.35

It is often said that women workers are more expensive to employ, because they take more time off, due to illness, etc. The following table gives percentage of workers in the New Earnings Survey losing pay for a variety of reasons. The worst offenders were full-time manual women workers, and the reasons can be readily deduced. Part-time women workers need to take less time off for other reasons besides their own illnesses. (The three reasons which account for the full-timers' worse record are: uncertificated illness, voluntary absence, late arrival, early finish).

The manual workers' record—male and female—is worse than the non-manual workers, because the former are doing duller jobs, which are probably also more unpleasant and less healthy. Women workers often do the duller jobs of all, the most repetitive, requiring the least training etc. (See section on training).

TABLE 23. Reasons for Employees Losing Pay

Reason	Percent of employees losing pay for the reasons stated					
	Manual			Non-manual		
	males	females full-time	part-time	males	females full-time	Part-time
Certified sickness	4.5	4.2	2.2	1.2	1.9	1.3
Uncertified sickness	1.3	3.0	1.5	0.2	0.5	0.7
Voluntary absence	3.9	6.2	3.9	0.4	0.8	1.7
Late arrival or early finish	4.2	7.8	2.5	0.2	0.4	0.6
Holidays or other approved absence	1.7	2.1	1.9	0.5	0.7	1.4
Started or terminated employment during pay period	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.5
Interruption of work	0.1	0.2	0.1	—	—	—
Industrial dispute, worker directly involved	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	—
Industrial dispute, worker indirectly involved	0.3	0.2	—	—	—	—
All reasons	0.6	1.4	2.0	0.1	0.3	1.1
Other reasons	16.4	24.2	14.0	2.7	4.7	6.7

Women aged 18 or over — means less than 0.05.

TABLE 24. How Wages are Made Up. Full-time Manual Workers, NES, 1970.

	Basic pay	Overtime pay	Shifts etc.	Payment by results	Bonus	Commission	Other payments
Men							
Percent of total pay	66	16	4	10	4	—	1
Average payment (£)	19.5	6.8	4.2	10.7	2.9	4.7	1.8
Women							
Percent of total pay	77	3	1	14	3	—	—
Average payment (£)	11.8	2.0	1.9	7.1	1.4	2.3	1.2

TABLE 25. Payments in Kind. NES 1970 DEP.

	All employees		Full-time manual adults	
	males	females	men	women
	%		%	
Free fullboard & lodging	0.8	0.6	0.7	1.5
Free housing or accommodation, but not board	1.5	0.3	1.2	0.4
Free full board, but not lodging	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.9
Other income in kind of estimated value more than £3 per week	1.4	0.2	0.9	0.3
One or more of these benefits	3.9	1.5	3.0	3.0

Workers' earnings are not the same thing as pay rates, especially in the case of manual workers. Table 24 shows how earnings are made up in manufacturing industries, and it shows clearly that women's wages depend more on basic pay than do men's, i.e., women have less chance to make their wages up. Table 25 shows workers receiving payment in kind.

TABLE 26. Main Groups Getting Equal Pay

Civil service, non-industrial grades (industrial grades under negotiation);
 Law, medicine & accountancy; teaching, journalism, pharmacy, nursing & social services;
 Entertainment industry (lab. workers, etc.); scientific work generally & draughtsmen;
 Female hairdressers in male hairdressing establishments; G.P.O. (except cleaners);
 Transport (bus conductors); delivery drivers; laundry workers replacing men;
 Cotton spinners, shoe-repairers; men's bespoke tailoring (Saville Row);
 Civil air transport & time clerks; band workers;
 Nationalised industries, non-industrial grades (others being negotiated);
 Some workers in distributive grades; some industrial workers, e.g. Fords.

Exemption Orders

Restrictions on the employment of women and young persons are regulated by the following main provisions:

Part VI of the Factories Act, 1961; Employment of Women, Young persons and Children Act, 1920; Hours of Employment (Conventions) Act, 1936; Mines and Quarries Act 1954; Children and Young Persons Act 1933, amended by the Children and Young Persons Act, 1963; Young Persons (Employment) Acts 1938 and 1964; Shops Act 1950.

For details of how these acts effect the employment of women workers, see 'A Report: Hours of Employment of Women and Young Persons Employed in Factories', HMSO (DEP 1969). Exemption from the acts relating to factory work enables the Secretary of State for Employment to grant, under certain conditions, exemptions to the Act. The Secretary must be satisfied that "it is desirable in the public interest to do so for the purposes of maintaining or increasing the efficiency of industry or transport". General exemptions are made by regulations and are not limited in duration, but a special exemption order may only be issued for a maximum period of one year. The UK has not ratified the ILO Conventions which prohibit the employment of women and young persons at night because of the policy of allowing such employment in certain circumstances.

TABLE 27. Employment of Women and Young Persons: Special Exemption Orders. DEP.

Type of employment permitted by the order	Women, * 18 yrs & over	Boys 16-18	Girls 16-18	Total
Extended hours	29,015	1,311	2,243	32,569
Double day shifts	37,601	2,841	2,956	43,398
Long spells	8,953	452	972	10,377
Night shifts	21,471	1,526	-	22,997
Part-time work	18,052	146	11	18,209
Sat. afternoon work	6,588	275	290	7,153
Sunday work	26,589	1,159	1,055	28,803
Misc.	3,321	34	132	3,787
Total	151,590	8,044	7,659	167,203

The statistics show the number of special orders made, i.e., those that have to be renewed after one year.

Reasons for Women Working

The Survey of Women's Employment, 1968, gave the following reasons for women working (Several women obviously gave more than one reason)

TABLE 28. Reasons for Women Working

Reason	%
Financial	80.8
For company	39.5
To dispel boredom	28.4
To give independence	11.5

The principal drawbacks seen by working women were:

TABLE 29. Drawbacks for Women Workers

Drawbacks	%
Care of children more difficult	55.3
Care of house more difficult	42.8
Care of husband more difficult (causes friction)	12.8
Interferes with leisure, social life & private life	12.7
Get irritable, suffer from fatigue, health suffers	7.9

Industrial Injuries, Illnesses, and Accidents

Most of the statistics on this matter are not analysed by sex. One of the exceptions is in the case of tenosynovitis (a form of rheumatism, found in a variety of occupations) which was found in the age-groups 25-44 in the ratio of 3 males to 1 female, and in the younger and older age-groups 1:1. Women accounted for 10.8% (32,782) of all reported accidents in 1970, and girls under 18 1.0% (3,059). Women tend to have a smaller percentage of serious accidents, but girls under 18 had nearly 22% severe accidents (including fatalities) which was the highest percentage for this type of accident, greater than for men, boys or women.

Unemployment

The problem of unemployment is one which affects all workers and it is difficult to estimate how it will especially affect women. The efforts of unions may mean that the rule of 'married women out first' will apply. On the other hand, employers may seek to retain women rather than men, not just because women get less pay, but because they are traditionally less militant, etc. From Table 30 we see that women and girls suffer from longer periods of unemployment.

TABLE 30. Wholly Unemployed: Great Britain: Duration Analysis

Duration in weeks	Men 18 yrs and over	Boys under 18	Women 18 & over	Girls under 18	Total
One or less	47,149	5,637	12,601	3,936	69,323
Over 1, up to 2	44,426	4,504	10,935	3,125	62,990
Up to 2	91,575	10,141	25,536	7,061	132,313
Over 2, up to 4	63,261	6,375	14,911	4,100	88,647
Over 4, up to 8	87,443	7,776	18,912	4,817	118,948
Over 8	118,088	368	11,239	214	129,909
Over 8	399,669	15,034	53,076	8,354	476,133
Total	641,948	39,326	110,435	24,332	816,041
Up to 8 - percent	37.7	61.8	51.9	65.7	41.7



Pickets from Brannans' Cleator Moor Strike, 1971.

TABLE 31. Showing Wholly Unemployed (Excluding School-Leavers)

April of year	Actual number (in 000's)		As % of total employees		Vacancies notified for women, actual No. (in 000's)
	men	women	men	women	
1968	468.3	90.0	3.1	1.0	95.3
1969	463.5	78.1	3.1	0.9	102.5
1970	503.1	82.9	3.4	0.9	88.7
1971	613.1	109.6	4.2	1.2	60.5
Oct.11,1971	672.0	128.0	5.0	1.5	58.8*

* At September 8th, 1971.

TABLE 32. Unemployed Register: Entitlement to Benefit, 8 Feb. 1971.

Benefit	Men 000's	Single* women 000's	Married women 000's	Boys & girls 000's	Total 000's
Receiving unemployment benefit only	255	28	19	10	312
Receiving unemployment benefit & suppl. allowance	80	5	1	4	90
Receiving supp. allowance only	145	16	3	7	171
Others registered for work	101	13	16	18	149
Total	581	62	39	39	721

* Includes widowed and divorced women.

TABLE 33. Labour Turnover, Manufacturing Industries: Four Weeks ended 15th May, 1971.

Turnover	Male	Female	Total
Numbers of engagements per 100 employed at beginning of period	1.7	3.3	2.2
Numbers of discharges & other losses per 100 employed at beginning of period	2.4	3.9	2.8

See also Table 3, giving details of changes in numbers in employment in industrial occupations. For non-industrial occupations, classified figures are unavailable, but it is a characteristic of unemployment that non-industrial occupations are hit rather later, and thus initially, less severely, than industrial jobs. But undoubtedly non-manual workers, at all levels, are being affected by unemployment and there is no reason to suppose that women are less severely hit than men.



The Equal Pay Act

What the Act Says

The Equal Pay Act, 1970, comes into force on 29th December 1975. It seeks to eliminate discrimination between men and women (to what extent it is either realistic or capable of achievement we shall be examining) both in regard to pay and terms and conditions of employment, by:

- “1. establishing the right of the individual woman to equal treatment when she is employed:
 - a) on work of the same or broadly similar nature to that of men;
 - b) in a job which, though different from those of men, has been given an equal value to men's jobs under a job evaluation exercise; and
2. providing for the Industrial Court to remove discrimination in collective agreements, employers' pay structures and statutory wages orders which contain any provisions applying specifically to men only and which have been referred to the Court.”

(From 'A Guide to the Equal Pay Act 1970', DEP).



Women Strikers at the Birmingham Sound Reproducers Factory at East Kilbride just before their pickets clashed with police.

In addition, the Act allows the Secretary of State for Employment to make an order, subject to the approval of Parliament, requiring that women's rates be raised to 90% of men's rates by 31 December, 1973 (in those cases where the Act applies). However, this is a discretionary section.

The Act applies whenever a woman is doing the same or broadly similar work to a man employed in the same or an associated company. Thus, it would effect all women doing a particular job in any branch of a company, if a man in only one branch of the company was doing the same job—so long as conditions for men were uniform throughout the company. If negotiations vary from branch to branch for all workers, then the women's work—and pay—can only be compared to men in the same branch.

The Act defines what is meant by 'same or broadly similar work'. First, it means work done by both men and women; second, work which has been the subject of a job evaluation and been given an equal rating to men's work; third, where the job evaluation led to different values only because of different weighting or evaluating schemes being used for men and women's work, but which without such differences would have been equally valued; fourth, where the worker or employer has referred the case to an industrial tribunal and the tribunal judges the Act applies; fifth, the Secretary of State for Employment may also refer cases to the tribunal (in both these cases, the reference to a tribunal may be made up to six months after ceasing the particular employment). Back pay may be claimed up to two years (but not before the Act comes into force, i.e., not in respect to any earnings before December 29, 1970).

The basic test must be that, whatever system of payment is used, it must be capable of paying men and women doing the same work, the same pay.

In addition, no collective agreements may be made after December 29, 1975, which distinguish between male and female rates of pay. However, where no provision is made for a male rate in a particular category, then a specific female rate may still apply, but it must be no lower than the lowest male rate. The example given in the 'Guide' is as follows:

If a collective agreement laid down a skilled male rate of £20.00, an unskilled male rate of £15.00 (but no semi-skilled male rate) and a women's rate (for all classes of work performed) of £12.00 the Court would amend such an agreement so that, irrespective of sex, skilled work was paid at the rate of £20.00 and unskilled work at the rate of £15.00. In other words, skilled women workers would be entitled to £20.00 and unskilled workers to £15.00. The original women's rate—a rate 'applying specifically to women only'—would continue to be required for women employed on semi-skilled work, because there is no category of semi-skilled men provided for in the agreement. In those circumstances, the Court would amend the women's rate, which had to be retained, from £12.00 to £15.00, namely the lowest rate in the agreement applicable to men.

In other words, agreements specifying a rate for women lower than the lowest rate for men, are not allowed.

Also, discrimination in terms and conditions is dealt with by the Act—covering such things as holiday entitlement, payment in kind, free meals etc. It does not apply to those cases where women's employment is affected by other laws, on hours of work, for example. It still allows women to have special terms and conditions in connection with maternity leave, marriage and retirement.

These are the most important provisions of the Act. Incidentally, the Industrial Tribunals and Courts referred to under the Act, have been modified as a result of the Industrial Relations Act, which sets up entirely new machinery.

The Application of the Act

Even if the Act made provisions along the demands made by Women's Liberation (i.e., equal pay for work of equal value, with provisions dealing with equal job opportunity, training and promotion) it has certain built-in weaknesses. Thus, there are no penalties for non-observance of the Act. It only applies where agreements are drawn up, so that it will not effect those sectors which most need the provisions, those workers who have no union to negotiate for them. There is nothing to stop an employer having a lowest (non-discriminatory) rate for which no man would work, except a strong union, of course. If there is no union to represent the workers, then the Act's provisions can be called into effect by order of the Industrial Court—so long as some-one draws the Court's attention to the situation—the Employer, the Secretary of State for Employment or the Court itself! Of course, the woman can apply herself—if she knows about how the Act works, and if she has endless self-confidence and does not mind getting the sack as a militant.

There are three main ways in which wages are arrived at. First, as a result of union negotiation usually, a number of fairly broad categories are used (e.g., skilled, semi-skilled, labourers and women, as applies in engineering). The Act will be fairly easy to apply in this case. Second, also often the result of union negotiating, a whole series of job categories, often with differentials based on strong in-fighting between unions, designed to mystify and divide the workers. Third, wage rates may be arrived at as the result of individual agreements between worker and employer, as happens in many professional and managerial grades. In many small, ununionised firms, a mixture of all three methods is used, designed to create mutual mistrust and boot-lickers. In these latter cases, employers will find the Act extremely easy to circumnavigate. Thus, we see that in the case of shop-workers, an equal pay agreement coincides with the creation of a whole number, of new grades.

The main ways in which the Act will be avoided, then, are:

1. By separating the jobs done by men and women completely. It is true that if the jobs are evaluated (in the course, perhaps, of a normal job-evaluation exercise prior to pay negotiations) and found to be of

equal value, then the Act applies. But it will be a rare Work Study man who will evaluate any job done only by women to be of the same value as 'a job done only by men'.

2. Making the lowest rate (which applies to the majority of jobs done by women in this case) too low to attract men, without actually designating the job as for women only.

3. By not actually describing jobs at all in relation to particular rates of pay. There is nothing to stop employers doing this in the Act!

In addition, we must remember that there is nothing in the Act to compel an employer to take on a woman employee in any particular job, or to give her training, or promotion. In any case, those industries in which most women are found are low-paid industries (for men as well), under- or non-unionised, with women kept in 'women's work' (e.g., electronics factories may employ women only on the bench, with only male foremen). So the Act does not apply to them in any case. Then, the ways in which women are paid (payment by results, etc.) keep women's pay low and this will not be affected by the Act. Until the Act is applied by the Court, we do not know just how it will be effected in practice by those laws affecting women's employment, in regard to night-work, overtime, etc.

Does the Act have any good points at all? Where unions exist to fight for it (which will only happen under pressure from the membership) then if the provisions of the Act are put into effect without points 1-3 above allowed to be put into effect, the Act will substantially improve the pay of anything up to three million women. The most important provision is that stipulating that no grade applying only to women may be lower than the lowest male grade—at the moment most agreements result in the top women's grade being lower than the bottom male grade. If this happens, then it may result in a general rise in women's pay, but not if the present trend of unemployment continues.

Common Market - USA

Table 34. The Common Market: Increases in Average Hourly Rate

Country	%			
	April 1964 to	April 1966	April 1965 to	April 1966
	men	women	men	women
Belgium	18.4	23.0	7.8	10.5
W. Germany	18.0	19.8	7.8	10.2
France	11.0	10.4	5.2	6.6
Italy	15.9	20.7	5.1	6.2
Luxembourg	10.1	32.4	6.9	19.7
Netherlands	19.1	21.9	8.0	9.4

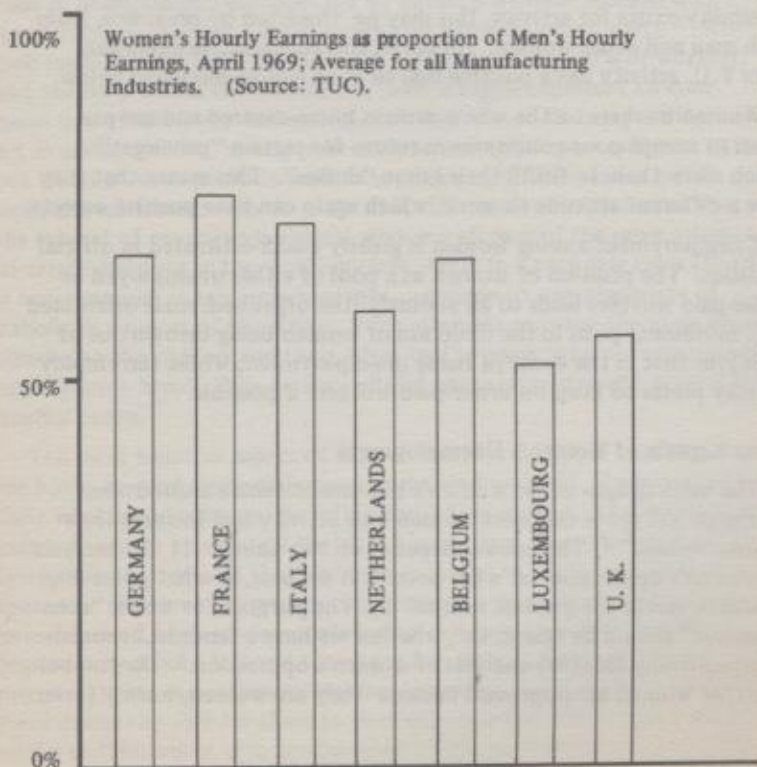
The U.S.A.

The U.S.A. passed an Equal Pay Act in 1963 which covers all workers employed in interstate commerce or the production of goods for interstate commerce. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 makes it unlawful for an employer of more than 25 employees to discriminate on the basis of race, colour, religion, sex or national origin in:

hiring or firing; wages, terms, conditions or privileges of employment; classifying, assigning or promoting employees, or extending or assigning use of facilities; training, re-training or apprenticeships; receiving applications or classifying or referring for employment.

In addition 36 states have their own equal pay legislation. However, the differential has been widening. The median earnings of women in full-time, all-the-year-round employment was 65% of the men's median in 1955. By 1968 it was 58%! Women made up 45% of workers in professional and technical work in 1960 and 38% in 1968.

So, legislation is not the answer. Only through militant united action will women achieve real and not illusionary progress.



Prospects

Background to an Industrial Campaign

The Main Characteristics of Women in Employment

1. To summarise the information in the statistical section: over half of all women are in employment¹; 62% of them are married and 18.5% work part-time. They are to be found overwhelmingly in the lower-paid, less skilled jobs²: A minority are in unions, but a rapidly increasing minority.
2. Women are playing an increasingly important role in the labour force. They cannot in any sense be called "peripheral": they are found predominantly in the expanding areas of the economy—service and consumer industries (one exception is textiles, which is rapidly contracting) rather than in the heavy, contracting industries.
3. Those factors which inhibit workers in general from playing a full part in the labour movement,³ thus causing it to be controlled by a bureaucracy, apply in special force to women. In addition, where the possibility exists for activity, this may be thwarted by prejudice, from both men and other women. However, this comparative exclusion from T.U. activity has a positive side to it, as will be discussed below.
4. Women workers on the whole remain home-centred and are prepared to accept poor conditions in return for certain "privileges" which allow them to fulfill their home "duties". This means that they have a different attitude to work, which again can have positive aspects.
5. Unemployment among women is greatly under-estimated in official statistics. The position of women as a pool of either unemployed or under-paid workers leads to an anomaly: the organised, male orientated T.U. movement pulls in the direction of women being thrown out of their jobs first in the event of rising unemployment, whilst the employers may prefer to keep on lower-paid workers if possible.

Some Aspects of Women's Unemployment

The main debate in the women's movement centre around what campaign will move the most women into activity and increase their "consciousness".⁴ The answer depends on two things. 1) An analysis of women's oppression—at what point is it deepest, at what point does an attack create the greatest results? 2) The purpose for which "consciousness" should be raised, i.e., whether we have a feminist or socialist (specifically Marxist) analysis of women's oppression.⁵ Do you believe that women are oppressed because they are women, mainly (even

only) by men? Or are women also an especially exploited section of the working-class (not withstanding that all women are oppressed as women, not all are exploited, certainly not equally), their extra oppression being a product of class society? If the former, then we are faced with the utopian task of eradicating, all differences between the sexes.⁶ The second proposition accepts that women's "biological destiny" historically made her oppression and exploitation possible, but that conditions are now over-ripe, not only for the over-throw of capitalism, but for an ending of women's oppression, her double exploitation. Women need no longer be slaves to their biology and society can now afford to accept (though it will only pay lip-service to this idea under capitalism) that women's role as child-bearers is a social role, and not the only role for women to play, and that the raising of children is also a social role, the responsibility of men and women alike.

The Marxist viewpoint is that women cannot be rid of oppression, cannot obtain social, sexual, political, legal, educational and economic equality (in more than name) in a capitalist society. They are not guaranteed equality in a capitalist society, of course,⁷ But the establishment of socialism is a pre-condition; true socialism, i.e., communism includes, of course, all the demands of women's liberation and a lot more besides. A socialist society can only be achieved by a working class in revolutionary struggle, led by advance workers imbued with a revolutionary socialist consciousness and a revolutionary party.⁸ Women make up half the working-class, including nearly 40% of workers, and not only would their exclusion from struggle represent an enormous loss of militancy and ability, but they would be in a position to act as scabs. Indeed, wrong policies followed in the past and now have put women in the position where they have very little choice but to scab, and no incentive to do otherwise. Housewives in particular are the subject of propaganda against strikers—all part of the same attempt to create divisions in the working-class. Only in a very few cases (Fords is one example) is any conscious attempt made to organise wives of strikers in support of the strike. Such attempts provoke the most bitter attacks on the strikers and their wives by the press, who always manage to find some heroic little woman pitting her meagre strength against the mighty union.

The most negative aspect of women workers is that so many of them are home-centred (including many unmarried women). This means that their working conditions, including pay, come second. The majority of married women accept that their's is a secondary wage (in terms of the family's economy) and that they can continue to work only as long as economic pressures are greater than domestic ones. Because they are home-centred, they are less trade-union minded: they feel the need to improve conditions less and they have less time and energy to devote to union matters. Nevertheless, the fact that they are part of the working force opens the way for them to become organised and to gain a realisation of their unity with the interests of the working-class.

So we do not write women off simply because they are home-centred, a fact which arises out of, and emphasises their double oppression. They need not feel this double oppression, but once they do feel it, militancy grows quickly and—if reinforced by propaganda and agitation—can result in an equally quick growth of consciousness. Women, like other especially oppressed groups, once they begin to understand their oppression, are in a position to see the nature of capitalist society more clearly than the less oppressed. Then again, capitalism does not strike at one point only and women feel the effects of attacks on social services and price rises more immediately, more directly, than men, precisely because they are home-centred. The concentration of male militants on union issues leads to a one-sidedness to their development.

Women's lack of participation in union affairs, whether the result of lack of interest, lack of time or male prejudice, leads to a lack of involvement in the bureaucracy, which means that when women do move into action, they are less easily dominated by the trade-union officials, more impatient of the dictates of a patronising male official whom they normally never see from one year's end to the next. As with other groups not integrated into the union structure (black workers, newly organised groups, etc.) women's struggles quickly escalate and rapidly become militant. And perhaps their very economic dependence on man (which still exists for most working wives) enables them to take up a fearless attitude: one of the more important functions of the family is to restrict men's militancy because of the family's economic demands.

The Present Situation

Two factors above all others are apparent in the present situation: rising unemployment (and, especially for women, hard-core unemployment, see Table 30) and the coming into operation of the EPA, which is being fought all along the way by employers and the majority of male workers (and not being helped much by most women!) The two interact with each other. In the past, when there have been periods of serious unemployment, employers have often taken advantage of women's lower rates of pay to keep them on at the expense of men. Many women are afraid that, given equal pay, they will no longer be such an attractive proposition to employers, and this is a correct analysis, because given the extra 'social' cost of employing women—resulting from their greater responsibility for the children—employers will employ men if possible.⁹ That is why the campaign for equal pay must involve many other aspects as well—child-care facilities, etc.—which will enable women to take a full part in the working force. (We must not say, compete on equal terms, as is often said by bourgeois economists, who encourage competition between workers).

The position of women underpins capitalist society and to improve that position we must utilize every possible means, but the most effective will be those attacking capitalist society where it hurts—at the point of production. Women militants and women revolutionaries must expose

the true state of affairs constantly and present a programme of demands to the working-class movement. These demands must include:

- Equal pay for work of equal value.
- All jobs to be open to women—an ending of women's work.
- The right to work for all, men and women.
- Full equality in training and promotion.
- A reduction of working hours for all; minimum shift-work, etc. (i.e., where women have better conditions, these should be extended to men too).
- Maternity leave on full pay, with a guaranteed return to work.
- Union meetings in working hours, when women can attend.
- Housewives to be allowed to retain union membership.
- Work-sharing, shorter working week, with no loss of pay, when threatened by unemployment. No productivity deals.
- A minimum wage, tied to the cost of living, to be paid also to unemployed workers.
- 'Family leave' available to both parents, with pay, for children's illness, etc.
- Enough nurseries, creches and after-school facilities for all children.

The over-riding importance of the industrial campaign does not blind us to a recognition of the other important issues in women's liberation, such as the right to free contraception and abortion on demand, but in our opinion, they do not have the potential to mobilise women (we should not forget that the greatest number of organised women are those found in the unions) or to challenge capitalism to the same extent.

The question of working with women is not merely an academic one. As the crisis of capitalism deepens, women will be drawn into the struggle. In the past, women's militancy has been rewarded too often with the crumbs left over after the craft workers have taken their share. If this situation continues, bitterness will ensue, which can only result in a continuation of divisions within the working-class, just at a time when the maximum unity in action is required. The question is one of urgent necessity, the struggle one that will test the revolutionary resolve and sincerity of many a male militant.

Notes

1. Those not in employment include: those still in full-time education, retired workers, self-employed, home-workers (i.e., out-workers) and mothers of young children. So given the present situation (few nurseries, high unemployment, etc.) the 'economic activity' of women is higher than it seems.
2. It is difficult to say just how many women are in skilled or semi-skilled jobs, because most women's jobs are defined as unskilled.
3. "Bureaucracy in workers' organisation is a product of the social division of labour, i.e., of the inability of the working masses, who are largely excluded from the cultural and theoretical process of production under capitalism, to

themselves regularly take care of all the tasks which must be dealt with within the framework of their organisation." *The Leninist Theory of Organisation*, E. Mandel, IMG Publications.

4. There are, of course, elements within the women's movement who are not interested in activity of any sort, outside of 'raising their own consciousness'.
5. See Margeret Coulson's article in *'International'*, Vol. 1, No. 4: "Women's Liberation: Context & Potentialities".
6. See Shulamith Firestone's "*Dialectic of Sex*" for an exposition of the ultimate feminist position.
7. "... the oppression of women is intrinsic to the capitalist system — as it is not to the socialist". *Women's Estate*, Juliet Mitchell, Penguin Books
"The revolution is impossible without women's liberation: women's liberation is impossible without the revolution"—Italian Socialist Women's slogan.
8. See Mandel, *Ibid.*
9. This is assuming that other things are equal too, i.e., that the women are well organised, because naturally the employers prefer unorganised workers of either sex.

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APPENDIX 1: TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP

A complete list of TUC unions with female membership. Summary: there are a total of 142 unions affiliated to the TUC, of which 37 have no women in membership. The unions pay affiliation fees and get representation on the basis of their reported membership, and some unions have the tradition of rounding off their membership; some have no real record of membership by sex, so presumably the reported membership is something of a guess. The reported membership of the TUC, including unions without any women, is 10,002,204; of which 2,394,915 are women — 21%.

Unions with the largest female membership

Union	Total Membership	% Women	Full-time officials	
			Total	Women
GMWU	853,353	28.8	162	4
TGWU	1,638,686	13.6	600	1
NUPE	372,709	59.4	90	1
USDAW	329,890	51.8	150	3
NALGO	439,887	38.3	80	3
AUEW	1,294,944	11.1	200	1
CPSA	184,935	66.0	17	0
NUTGW	117,573	85.5	48	9
CAWU	125,541	53.2	44	2
UPW	209,479	25.0	12	1

Name of Union	Number of female members	Percentage of women in the Union	As percentage of women in T.U.C.	Delegates to 1971 T.U.C.	
				Women	Total
National Union of Mineworkers	5,526	1.98	12	—	56
National Union of Railwaymen	7,933	4.00	3	—	18
Transport Salaried Staffs' Association	17,636	23.45	7	1	15
British Airline Pilots Association	6	0.01	—	—	—
Scottish Commercial Motormen's Union	500	2.44	0.02	—	3
Merchant Navy & Air Line Officers' Association	50	0.02	—	—	5
Radio & Electronic Officers' Union	2	—	—	—	1
National Union of Seamen	700	14	0.03	—	7
Transport & General Workers' Union	222,866	136	89	4	72
The United Road Transport Union	350	1.62	0.01	—	4
National Union of Domestic Appliance & General Metal Workers	978	16.3	0.04	—	2
Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers:					
Eng. Section	140,860	11.62	56	—	35
Foundry Section	3,070	4.72	0.1	—	13
National Society of Metal Mechanics	6,684	14.56	0.3	—	7
Associated Society of Metalworkers	80	1.52	—	—	1
Military & Orchestral Musical Instrument Makers' Trade Sty.	8	6.15	—	—	1
Ass. of Patternmakers & Allied Craftsmen	1	—	—	—	3
National Union of Scalemakers	149	6.34	—	—	1
Screw, Nut, Bolt & Rivet Trade Sty.	1,100	43.58	0.05	—	1
National Union of Vehicle Builders	4,768	5.71	0.2	—	15
Rosendale Union of Boot, Shoe & Slipper Operatives	3,894	66.66	0.2	—	2
National Union of Footwear, Leather & Allied Trades	38,241	48.63	1.6	—	16
National Union of Hosiery & Knitwear Workers	47,262	73.38	1.9	—	12
National Union of Tailors & Garment Workers	100,123	85.16	4.0	2	16

Waterproof Garment Workers T. U.	476	66.67	0.01	1
The Bakers' Union	17,375	35.62	0.7	10
Scottish Union of Bakers & Allied W.	3,752	32.03	0.2	3
National League of the Blind & Disabled	1,050	24.71	0.04	1
National Society of Brushmakers	1,345	53.91	0.05	1
Ceramic & Allied T. U.	18,556	54.44	0.7	7
Chemical Workers Union	6,131	40.60	0.2	4
National Ass. of Co-operative Official	155	2.3	-	2
Retail Book, Stationary & Allied Trades Employees' Ass.	2,071	57.78	0.1	1
Union of Shop, Distributive & Allied W.	170,742	51.76	6.8	3
Tobacco Workers' Union	12,527	66.63	0.5	4
National Union of Agricultural Workers	5,200	5.20	0.2	19
Fire Brigades Union	300	1.00	-	6
Greater London Council Staff Ass.	4,699	33.33	0.2	3
Confederation of Health Service Emp.	55,475	61.95	2.2	7
Health visitors' Association	5,427	99.91	0.2	2
Medical Practitioners' Union	333	6.05	-	2
National & Local Government Officers' Ass.	167,797	38.15	6.7	48
National Union of Public Employees	220,768	59.23	8.8	25
National Association of Schoolmasters	6,245	10.98	0.2	9
National Union of Teachers	228,855	73.70	9.1	28
Ass. of Teachers in Technical Institutions	3,829	12.87	0.2	8
National Union of Water Works Employees	50	1.23	-	1
Civil & Public Services Association	121,629	65.77	4.8	7
Civil Service Union	9,568	27.15	0.3	7
County Court Officers' Association	1,858	1.59	0.07	2
Ass. of Government Supervisors & Radio Officers	10	0.01	-	3
Inland Revenue Staff Association	28,003	56.30	6.1	9

Name of Union	Number of female members	Percentage of women in the union	As percentage of women in T.U.C.	Delegates tp 1971 T.U.C.	
				women	total
Ministry of Labour Staff Federation	8,656	54.44	0.03	-	4
Post Office Engineering Union	1,858	1.59	0.07	1	15
Ass. of Post Office Executives	733	5.45	0.03	-	3
Post Office Managements Staffs Ass.	4,339	25.36	0.17	-	4
Union of Post Office Workers	52,369	25.00	2.1	3	15
Prison Officers' Association	680	4.98	0.02	-	3
Society of Technical Civil Servants	2,352	21.67	0.09	-	2
British Actors Equity Association (incl. Variety Artist's Federation)	8,470	47.10	0.3	-	3
National Union of Bank Employees	42,772	47.98	1.7	-	6
Ass. of Broadcasting Staff	2,435	21.67	0.09	-	3
Ass. of Cinematograph, Television & Allied Technicians	2,209	13.35	0.09	1	4
Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union	66,834	53.24	2.7	4	12
Film Artistes Ass.	960	44.14	0.03	-	1
National Union of Insurance Workers	3,541	10.11	0.02	-	8
Musicians' Union	2,480	7.54	0.01	-	7
Nat. Ass. of Theatrical, Television & Kine Employees	6,338	40.51	0.2	-	4
Writers' Guild of Great Britain	551	33.27	-	-	1
Nat. Union of General & Municipal Workers	245,685	28.79	9.8	3	64
United Rubber Workers of Gt. Britain	547	12.97	-	-	1
National Union of Lock & Metal Workers	2,416	46.42	0.1	-	2
Spring Trampmakers' Sy.	20	22.22	-	-	1
Amalgamated Society of Wire Drawers & Kindred W.	1,125	9.8	0.06	-	3
Sheffield Wool, Shear Workers' T.U.	2	10.53	-	-	1
National Union of Funeral Service Operatives	68	6.63	-	-	1
National Union of Furniture T. Operatives	9,067	14.92	0.3	-	1

Sign & Display T. U.	648	16.53	0.03	1
Amalgamated Society of Wood-cutting Machinists	125	4.03	-	5
Association of Building Technicians	25	1.18	-	1
Draughtsmen's & Allied Technicians Association	2,715	2.58	0.1	13
Electrical power Engineers' Association	52	0.18	-	4
Ass. of Scientific, Technical & Managerial Staffs	11,200	5.08	0.4	21
Electrical Electronic Telecommunication U./Plumbing Trades Union	54,438	12.94	2.1	32
National Union of Blastfurnacemen, Ore Miners, Coke Workers & Kindred Trades	36	0.19	-	4
Chain makers & Strikers' Association	1	0.46	0.03	-
National Union of Gold, Silver & Allied Trades	717	18.69	0.03	1
Iron & Steel Trades Confederation	6,835	5.86	0.3	24
Society of Graphical & Allied Trades	71,799	37.22	2.9	21
National Society of Operative Printers & Assistants	12,163	23.36	0.5	11
National Union of Journalists	3,712	15.15	0.1	5
Society of Lithographic Artists, Designers Engravers & Process Workers	272	1.65	-	4
Scottish Typographical Association	947	13.71	0.04	2
Wall paper Workers' Union	1,000	24.94	0.04	1
Amalgamated Ass. of Beavers, Twisters & Drawers (Hand and Machine)	187	11.40	-	1
Northern Carpet Trade U.	515	27.01	0.02	1
National Union of Dyers, Bleachers & Textile Workers	23,614	41.44	0.9	11
United Society of Engravers	18	3.96	-	1
Union of Jute, Flax & Kindred Textile Operatives	2,000	59.17	0.08	1
Power Loom Carpet Weavers & Textile Workers' Ass.	1,900	38.62	0.08	1
Amalgamated Ass. of Operative Cotton Spinners & Twiners	240	17.62	-	1
National Union of Textile & Allied Workers	13,322	55.00	0.5	5
Yorkshire Society of Textile Craftsmen	61	5.71	-	1
Amalgamated Textile Warehouseman	2,000	44.42	0.08	1
Amalgamated Sty. of Textile Workers & Kindred Trades	3,820	56.01	0.1	2
Amalgamated Weavers Ass.	15,438	52.43	0.6	6
Weavers & Woollen Text. Workers' Ass. Saddleworth & District	755	51.78	0.03	1

APPENDIX 2: WAGE RATES IN VARIOUS INDUSTRIES

INDUSTRY	NO. OF WOMEN OF INDUSTRY	% OF WOMEN & INDUSTRY	MIN. FEM. RATES FEB. 1971 £	% DIFFERENTIAL		MONETARY DIFFERENTIAL	
				1969	1971	1961 £	1971
I. INDUSTRIES GIVING EQUAL PAY							
L.T.E. conductors	4,000	17%	21.15	Equal pay	—	—	—
Municipal Bus Conductors	17,000	28%	17.00	"	—	—	—
Local Authority, manual (E. & W.)	450,000	58%	16.25	"	—	—	—
Company Bus-conductors	13,000	13%	15.41½	"	—	—	—
B.R. Conciliation Staff	7,000	4%	14.80	"	—	—	—
F.P.O. Telephonists	45,000	85%	13.75	"	—	—	—
II. INDUSTRIES MAKING MOVES TOWARDS EQUAL PAY							
Retail Pharmacy (dispensing)*			16.50	92	100	1.00	—
Retail meat (E. & W.)*			12.55	72	100	3.30	—
Retail multiple grocery (E. & W.)*	70,000	70%	12.00	72	92	3.30	1.00
ditto (Scott.)*	8,000	47%	12.00	73	92	3.30	1.00
Retail co-operatives*	135,000	55%	11.75	74	81	3.20	2.77½
Retail be-spoke tailoring*†	9,800	82%	9.87½	76	79	2.67	2.58
Heavy chemicals	5,000	8%	10.25	75	77	3.00	3.00
Biscuit manufacture*	32,000	68%	11.85	75	79	2.80	3.15
Seed crushing, etc.*	1,000	10%	11.82½	75	83	3.00	2.42½
Cocoa & chocolate*	47,000	55%	11.50	73	82	3.05	2.50
Food manufacture*	30,000	50%	11.50	73	82	3.05	2.50
Soap, candle, edible fats	6,000	35%	9.90	72	78	3.2½	2.85
Tobacco manufacture**	20,000	53%	9.90	74	74	3.14	3.40

* Last increase was greater than men's.

† Wages council. ** Last increase smaller than men's.

Electrical cable making	7,000	23%	14.92	80	89	2.05½	1.83
Rubber manufacture	15,000	25%	13.50	75	79	3.50	3.50
Government industrial workers*	28,000	13%	13.15	76	83	—	2.65
NHS ancillary workers**			12.57	77	79	3.00	3.48
III. OTHER INDUSTRIES GIVING LARGER OR THE SAME INCREASES (LAST TIME) TO WOMEN							
Milk distribution (E. & W.)†	9,000	10%	12.55	73	83	2.75	2.50
Wholesale grocery (Scot.)	20,000	5%	12.00	74	80	3.05	3.00
Milk distribution (Scot.)†	1,400	10%	11.90	78	79	2.55	3.10
Retail food (E. & W.)*†	266,000	76%	11.20	76	78	2.70	2.12
Retail multiple footwear*	26,000	78%	10.25	73	76	3.40	3.00
Retail drapery*†	312,000	78%	9.52	76	79	2.67½	2.57½
Retail bread (E. & W.)*†	58,000	87%	9.47½	77	79	2.57½	2.47½
Retail furnishing†	110,000	55%	9.35	77	78	2.55	3.10
Retail bookselling*†	20,000	77%	9.32½	76	79	2.65	2.55
Wholesale newspaper dist. (prov.)	750	20%	11.25	62	65	5.92½	6.15
Retail food (Scot.)*†	27,000	79%	9.42½	76	78	2.55	2.65
Retail bread (Scot.)*†	10,000	77%	8.95	77	80	2.35	2.25
Retail newsgencies (E. & W.)†	69,000	84%	8.87½	75	76	2.47½	2.62½
ditto (Scot.)*†	11,000	84%	8.75	74	80	2.60	2.72½
Paint, varnish & lacquer	12,000	29%	12.20	73	79	3.30	3.30
Drugs & fine chemicals	5,000	12%	10.57½	73	76	3.52½	3.42½
Best sugar manufacture	600	15%	14.85	90	90	1.22	1.50
Flour milling*	800	8%	12.75	73	81	3.35	3.00
Corn trade*	1,000	10%	11.81	67	75	4.00	3.94
Bacon curing	3,500	35%	11.25	73	77	3.25	3.25
Aerated waters (E. & W.)†	7,000	31%	8.75	74	76	2.75	2.75
Glass containers	2,800	14%	14.50	78	88	2.42	2.00
General printing (E. & W.)	30,000	20%	13.79½	78	79	3.63	3.70½

INDUSTRY	NO. OF WOMEN & % OF INDUSTRY	MIN. FEM. RATES FEB, 1971 £	% DIFFERENTIAL		MONETARY DIFFERENTIAL	
			1969	1971	1969	1971
Veneer producing	800	13.20	78	83	2.79	2.79
Footwear	45,000	12.97½	84	87	2.00	2.00
Sawmilling (E. & W.)	1,000	12.83	75	78	3.25	3.67
Refractory goods*	1,000	12.00	78	84	2.50	2.33
Fibreboard packing case	4,900	10.96	71	78	3.00	3.04
Shirt making*	31,000	10.83	74	81	2.75	2.58
Corset manufacture*†	14,000	10.83	74	80	2.75	2.67
Stamped metalware†	7,600	10.51	89	90	1.19	1.19
Surgical dressings	8,500	10.75	73	78	2.95	3.00
Narrow fabrics	12,500	10.50	75	80	2.56	2.56
Rope, twine & net*†	4,700	10.25	75	77	2.50	3.00
Wholesale mantle*†	63,000	10.33	74	80	2.75	2.58
Timber containers	-	10.17½	75	76	2.17	3.17
Paper box	8,400	10.00	73	77	2.92	3.00
Silk spinning	13,000	9.95	75	78	2.85	2.85
Textile Bleaching	11,000	9.50	71	75	3.18½	3.17
Match manufacturing	200	9.77	76	79	2.57	2.62
Gelatine & glue	150	9.62½	75	75	2.62½	3.12½
Shoe repairing†	-	9.10	72	75	3.00	3.05
Hat, cap, & millinery†	8,000	9.08	74	80	2.33	2.33
Dressmaking (E. & W.)*†	134,000	9.83	71	76	3.12½	3.05
Toy manufacture†	20,000	9.21	81	82	2.00	2.00
Handkerchiefs*†	6,900	9.67	68	74	3.14	3.00
Hairdressing†	-	10.17½	85	86	1.62½	1.62½
Laundrying*†	82,000	8.92	77	81	2.22	2.08
Industrial & Staff canteens*†	145,000	8.92	74	81	2.30	1.90

	Licensed residential establishments**†	180,000	60%	7.75	77	83	1.62½	1.57½
	Unlicensed places of refreshment**†	155,000	85%	7.24	75	78	2.15½	2.06
	Fire service	—	—	£801 p.a.	83	92	£125	£66
IV. INDUSTRIES GIVING SMALLER INCREASES (LAST TIME) TO WOMEN								
Motor retail & repair	5,500	2%	11.67	81	80	2.35	2.83½	
Multiple baking (E. & W.)	11,000	33%	12.75	73	75	3.89	4.17	
Engineering (manual)	—	—	12.25	90	89	1.25	1.60	
Fletton brick	1,000	66%	13.50	75	75	3.50	4.50	
Building brick	1,000	5%	12.50	79	83	2.42	2.50	
Furniture manufacture	23,000	22%	12.37½	75	75	2.46	4.79½	
Wire & wire rope	2,100	12%	12.20	75	87	2.94	1.80	
Hosiery finishing	8,000	66%	11.03	68	72	4.19	4.33	
Pottery	25,000	56%	10.76	66	68	4.38	5.01	
Paper making	8,000	11%	10.67	67	67	4.04	5.21	
Wool textiles (West of Eng.)	3,000	60%	10.25	66	72	3.55½	4.00	
Ready-made tailoring†	72,000	80%	10.33	76	78	2.50	2.83	
Wallpaper manufacture	1,000	17%	10.00	78	74	3.16½	3.58	
Wool textiles (York)	70,000	62%	9.25	66	71	3.46	3.75	
Leather producing	4,500	28%	9.37½	78	78	2.58½	2.71	
Made-up textiles†	6,700	91%	9.08½	76	79	2.47½	2.42	
Hosiery manufacture (Scot)	14,000	93%	8.92	62	69	3.67	4.00	
Fur trade	3,500	46%	7.70	71	70	2.92½	3.20	
Police	—	—	£921 p.a.	90	90	£80	£102 p.a.	

WHAT IS SOCIALIST WOMAN?

The paper Socialist Woman was established in early 1969 in Nottingham on the initiative of the IMG (International Marxist Group) with the aim of establishing Socialist Women Groups around it. Women members and sympathisers in Nottingham and other parts of the country distributed, wrote for, and supported the paper, and have taken the initiative in setting up Socialist Women Groups in many different areas.

The Editorial Board is now composed of members from several Socialist Women Groups.

The IMG sees the struggle for women's liberation as an integral part of its work in helping to build the revolutionary left in Britain, and expresses its politics in relation to Women's liberation through the activity of its members in Socialist Women Groups. It recognises that the non-IMG women comrades working in Socialist Women Groups may not wish to commit themselves to all aspects of the IMG's programme and activities, and welcomes into the Socialist Women Groups those socialist women who wish to work with the IMG comrades on this aspect of their politics as expressed in the paper Socialist Women.

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