

# womens voice

June 1976 No 30 Price 6p

## TEACHERS WITHOUT JOBS: KIDS WITHOUT TEACHERS

**ASTASTIC!** That's the only way to describe it. Over teacher training colleges occupied in the fight jobs. Thousands of student teachers, mostly young women, have taken the lead in the battle against education cuts.

All over the country they spread the message. They know what the cuts in government spending mean. Most of them won't have jobs in September when they've finished their courses. They are not going to give up and go quietly if it means the dole. They know it's a lie that the kids need them.

September the total number of schoolchildren will reach a peak. There will be more children in school than there are this year. Over half the classes in primary schools will have more than 30 children. A quarter of classes will have more than 36. At the same time 7,000 teachers will be unemployed. Next year 30,000 will be unemployed. If all classes were reduced to 30 all those teachers would have jobs.

All of us are affected by the cuts. Everyone must join in this fight for kids' education and teachers' jobs. Women are particularly important in this fight because they'll be worst affected if the education cuts go ahead.

The Local Education Authorities make grants to private schools, and pay for scholarships at them. The amount that they spent on this in 1975/6 would have been enough to employ ALL the unemployed teachers for FIVE YEARS.

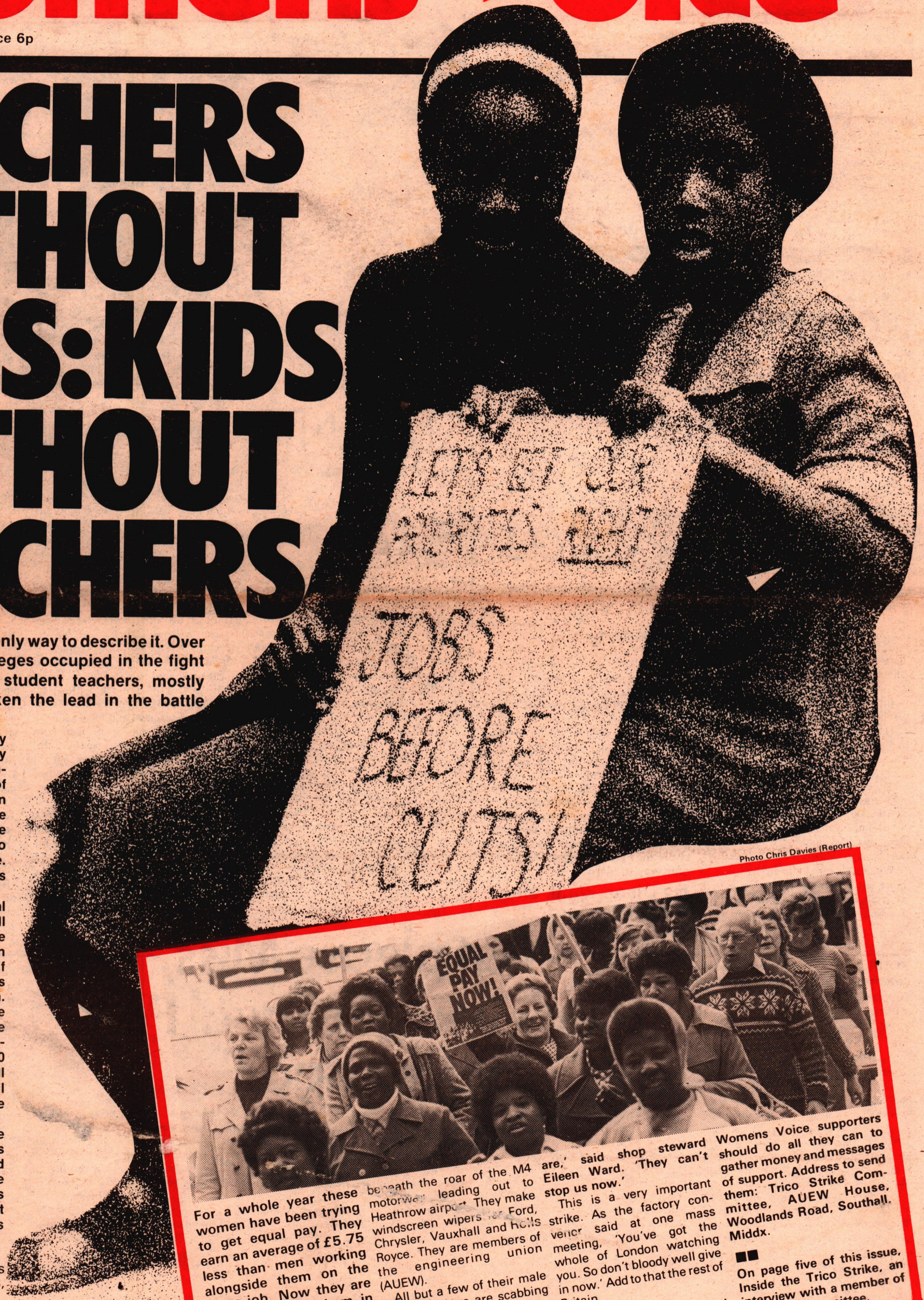


Photo Chris Davies (Report)



For a whole year these women have been trying to get equal pay. They earn an average of £5.75 less than men working alongside them on the same job. Now they are on strike, 350 of them, in one of the biggest equal pay strikes yet.

They work in Brentford for a firm called Trico, perched beneath the roar of the M4 motorway leading out to Heathrow airport. They make windscreen wipers for Ford, Chrysler, Vauxhall and Holden Royce. They are members of the engineering union (AUEW). All but a few of their male fellow workers are scabbing on them. But they are determined to win.

'We have been taken by surprise at how solid we are,' said shop steward Eileen Ward. 'They can't stop us now.' This is a very important strike. As the factory convenor said at one mass meeting, 'You've got the whole of London watching you. So don't bloody well give in now.' Add to that the rest of Britain.

Womens Voice supporters should do all they can to gather money and messages of support. Address to send them: Trico Strike Committee, AUEW House, Woodlands Road, Southall, Middx.

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The Trico strikers need all the help you can give.

On page five of this issue, inside the Trico Strike, an interview with a member of the strike committee.



# OCCUPATION SPREADS

**THERE** are 200 students in the Rachel McMillan College of Education Annexe. All of them are women. All of them are part-time mature students. Most of them are parents with family responsibilities.

On Friday 28 May, at 10am these students occupied their college, joining the fight to reverse the cuts in education which will leave 30,000 teachers unemployed next year.

One of the women occupying told Womens Voice: 'This is the first thing we have ever done here. We're totally amazed that it's happened. 96 people came to the union meeting which is incredible, because all the final year students are out on teaching practice, so that means almost everyone left here, turned up.'

'We wanted to support the other colleges taking action, and so the executive put forward all sorts of

suggestions. Then other suggestions came from the floor, like the idea of occupying. At first, we thought we'd occupy from 10 till 3, which is the time we work here. Then someone said we should occupy for 24 hours, and that was passed.

'As part time students, we're different from most of the other colleges. Most of us have kids too, which makes taking direct action like this more difficult. Most of our children and some of our husbands will be staying the night here with us.'

'If nothing is done about the cuts, we won't have jobs when we finish our courses here and our children won't have teachers either. That's why we're occupying. We're the ones who have to do something. We can't leave it to anyone else to do it for us.'

By Nina Streich

# N. LONDON WOMENS VOICE GROUP

**THE NORTH** London Women's Voice Group first grew out of the highly successful Women's Voice Rally last November. Here two of its members describe how it has been working.

'The group includes women from all sorts of situations, at home and at work. We usually manage to draw a very good number to our monthly meetings.'

'We have had a programme of varied topics. We tried to spread our work out of these meetings. Newly interested women were involved right away in our open air street-meetings, and in writing leaflets for local factories.'

'We also sell Women's Voice regularly at a couple of factories where a lot of women work.'

Like men workers, perhaps even more so, women are suspicious of left wing groups. All they knew about us is what they read in the morning papers or see on the television. Somehow we have to find a way to get our ideas over in a way that is easily understood.

The barriers are huge. To break them down we really have to prove that we too are ordinary women. We have to do the washing, do the cooking, we can't make ends meet, we have the same problems. To put it another way, we're not freaks.

The only difference with us is that we're socialists, and we think that we can change things if we stick together.

We find we can get through to women more easily with Women's Voice than with Socialist Worker. This is why our meetings are so well attended. The

atmosphere is friendly, and we stress what we have in common.

'We don't want people to join our Women's Voice group and go no further. But we start from the issues and problems that most concern us, and we thrash them out.'

One of the most valuable results of our efforts has been the effect on the housewives involved. Before we started the group, the housewives were isolated. They had no workmates to talk about their ideas, and they had no trade union meeting to go to. We have shown that there is a lot more for them to do than being outsiders. Several of the women have developed talents as organisers and public speakers that they never dreamed they were capable of.

## Constructive

Perhaps this is where the Women's Voice group can be most constructive. From our experience we'd like to see all districts of IS taking Women's Voice seriously.

It can be used in your campaign against public spending cuts, and in your campaign against fare increases and unemployment.

**Women are told so often: 'You can't do it—you almost get to believe it. We want to have demands made on us. We want to be drawn into activity and given a chance to show that we can do it. That's the only way to learn.'**

By Diane Watts and Mandy Hurford

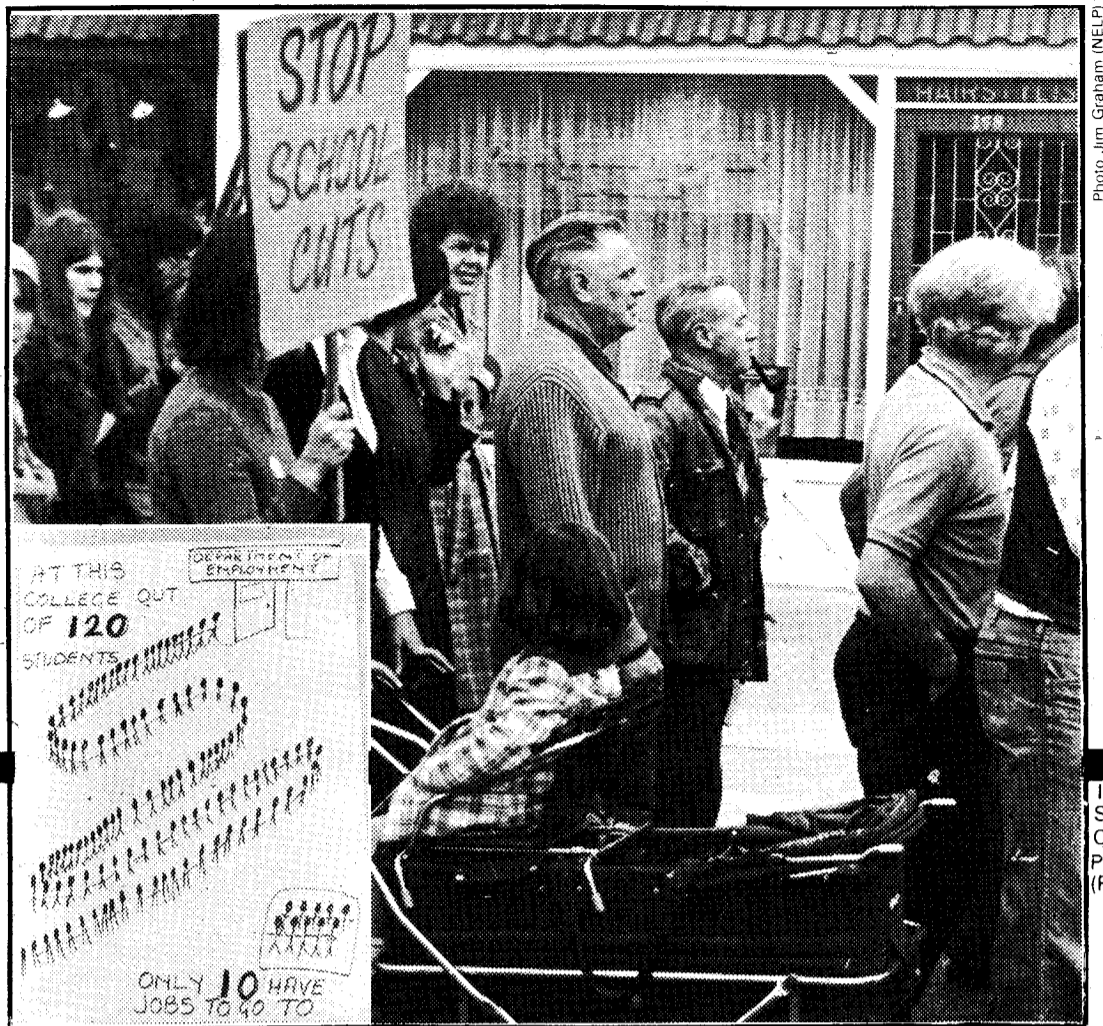


Photo Jim Graham (NELP)

Inset Poster  
Sidney Weir  
College,  
Phot Chris  
(Report)

# STUDENTS ORGANISE TEACHERS

By Judith Hamilton

**The students at North East London Polytechnic took control of their college for over two weeks. They decided at a meeting of 400 students to occupy. They did it in solidarity with over 100 other colleges and they did it for two reasons. They demanded an end to teacher unemployment and an end to discrimination against overseas students. These are both aspects of the education cuts.**

140 teachers will qualify from NELP this June and only 30 have got jobs, despite the fact that ALL classes in the local area are over the sizes recommended by the Department of Education.

The cuts also seriously affect the foreign students at the college. Already their fees are twice those of British students and next year they are being increased by another £100. Also limits are being imposed on the number of foreign students allowed to study at the college. This will not mean more British students will be allowed to study there—instead courses will be closed and staff sacked.

The students are fighting for their

own jobs and education. But the teaching staff at the college also know that their jobs will vanish if these cuts are imposed. And they gave full support to the students in their fight against the cuts and against racism.

For many months the students and lecturers have been fighting on these issues. For a demonstration in Ilford on 22nd May they got the support of over 70 schools, trade union bodies, tenants' associations, parent-teacher associations and other local bodies. When the national wave of occupations started NELP students were ready to join the national campaign.

They're still spreading the action—by visiting and picketing other colleges, by speaking to teachers and local schools, by winning the support of Dagenham Trades Council and as many local Trade Union bodies as they can contact.

Brentwood College in Essex joined the campaign, after hearing a speaker from NELP.

Out of 212 teachers who will leave Brentwood in July, only 27 have got jobs. One who hasn't is a man in his fifties who left his job three years ago when the Government was begging people to train for teaching. He wants to teach mentally handicapped children. The cuts mean that jobs like that are

given priority treatment. They're first. He'll probably be on the dole for the rest of his life. What right have we to say he's not needed?

Cumberland Comprehensive School in Newham responded magnificently to the NELP occupation. A majority of NUT members voted to support the teachers' charter and implement the 'no cover' policy despite the threat of disciplinary action by their own union executive. They also voted for strike action if a member is victimised. And 50 teachers joined the union.

The college authorities tried to undermine the other college workers' library, cleaning and canteen staff. They wanted them to strike against the students. But the staff were so determined to maintain their support of the students. The students also refused to give in to threats of legal action and management backed down. The students are sticking to their demands. Their starting point is a program of action built on a wide base together with local teachers and other Trade Union organisations in the area.

**- Support the students' occupation. - Reduce class sizes. - No cover, discriminatory fees or quotas. - No cuts.**

**FOUR OUT** of five unemployed teachers are women. Yet teaching is always seen as one of the few jobs where women can expect equal treatment. How far is this true?

Women teachers only earn four-fifths as much as men teachers. Yes, they have equal pay and equal opportunities—they've had them for well over 15 years. But the fact that in this society women have to do two jobs means they can't get equality. Teaching shows quite clearly the sort of disadvantages women workers face, even in an industry which supposedly treats women equally.

There are twice as many women in the bottom grade as men. Over a half of all women teachers are on the lowest scale, and only a quarter of the men. At the other extreme, while 11.4 per cent of men get to be headmasters, under 5 per cent of women get to be headmistresses. That is why women teachers' earnings were only 82 per cent of men's last year. (This figure would be even worse if pay lost for absence was taken into account—when a kid is sick who takes time off work to look after it?)

There are many factors involved. Girls at school are encouraged into teacher training colleges rather than university—so while 35 per cent of male teachers have degrees only 17 per cent of women teachers do. Once at training college, women are pushed towards the lower paid primary school teaching jobs.

In the absence of adequate nurseries, child-care has to be done by individuals isolated in their own homes. It is the women who take on this task. The interruption in their working lives, although totally necessary for society, means women are denied increments, promotion, and the money that goes with it.

It is women who move to where the

husband's job is, and so have to change their own jobs. It is women who have to take time off work to look after sick children, sick relatives or domestic problems.

More subtle and more pernicious still is the conditioning process all women are subjected to from the age of nothing. We are taught to regard ourselves primarily as wives and mothers—our 'real' role is in the home. We are taught to be submissive, non-aggressive, and frightened of sticking up for ourselves.

Our qualities are in the private world of the family—not the public world of work. Of course fewer women than men climb the career ladder!

Over and above all these factors pushing women into the lower paid teaching jobs and denying them promotion is straightforward discrimination. The ruling class needs to keep alive the idea that women are fundamentally inferior to men. By doing so they reinforce divisions within the working class, divisions they can and do exploit.

# 'But please Miss, didn't you get Equal Pay years ago?'

**The education cuts don't just involve teachers' jobs. Cleaning, catering, and secretarial jobs are also being hit. Again it's mainly women. And there's worse to come. As speculators force the pound to fall, Healey is secretly preparing even more drastic cuts.**

and ensure that the next generation of workers is produced as cheap as possible. The mythology extends to teaching. If a man and a woman have identical qualifications, the man will be promoted rather than the woman. Among teachers will good honours degrees, 47.8 per cent of women are in the bottom grade, compared with 10 per cent of men.

Militant teachers in the National Union of Teachers raise the demand for a single salary scale for all teachers. This is not only the way to get democracy within schools, but also the way to win a greater degree of equality for women teachers.

*If you are a member of the National Union of Teachers and wish to contact other classroom teacher militant Rank and File Teacher is the organisation for you. Womens Voice will forward any enquiries.*

**HAVE YOU HEARD THE ONE ABOUT THE COUNTRY BEING OVERCROWDED? The chances are you have.**

Virtually every newspaper in the country has been hammering away at the theme for the past three weeks, pretending that immigrants, or rather black immigrants are responsible for the housing shortage, the lack of jobs and countless other social problems.

And the simple truth is that if you believe what they're saying, you're being conned.

You should see how overcrowded it is on the Duke of Devonshire's 100,000 acre estate in Dorset or his other little holdings in Devon. Or on Lord Vestey's little 30,000 acre set-up in Gloucestershire or his 50,000 acre back garden in the Highlands.

Sure, the areas that working people, black and white, Irish and Scots, Jewish and English have to

live in are crowded. And the houses on offer for us are hopelessly expensive as well as in short supply.

Expensive because a mere seven per cent of the population own 84 per cent of the wealth, while we sweat for a lifetime to get a roof over our heads. Overcrowded because a mere two per cent, *repeat, two per cent*, own 72 per cent of all land values in the British Isles.

It's those same people who keep trying to tell us that this is our country, although we own not a scrap of it. They tell us these things when they want us to go off and fight their wars for them, and do the dying they require so that they can hang on to their profits.

They tell us that when they want to set one group of working people against another. And that, of course, is exactly what they're busy doing today through the newspapers, the TV and the revolting racist political organisations like the National Party and the National Front.

These people deal in the most poisonous ideas. And they must not be allowed to go unchallenged. So the next time you hear something about black people causing unemployment, ask the person who hold's this ignorant opinion, how many black workers are there on the board of GEC who've sacked 50,000 workers in three years and doubled their profits.

Or how many Ugandan Asians are there on the board of McAlpine's or the other big construction firms that hold on to huge land banks so that they can drive the cost of land and the cost of housing higher still. No self respecting woman should

have any truck with racist ideas. These ideas come from the same poisonous well that for years has pumped out the message that women are inferior, that when there's unemployment about women should be sacked and kept at home.

We've had to fight such divisive and reactionary ideas for a very long time. And if we are to advance any further in our fight for equal rights, for jobs and a decent life for all, we're going to have to fight against all racist ideas.

Fight *and* organise against these ideas. Fight *and* organise against the terrible incidents which result from them and from the cynical attempts of rich bastards like Enoch Powell to set us at one another's throats.

Incidents like the murder in East London of Dinesh Choudhri and Rishi Alhadidi in West London of Gurdip Chaggar.

**INCIDENTS THAT MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE REPEATED.**



what we think



# SWEET SIXTEEN AND NOWHERE TO GO

**THE FIGHT against unemployment, demonstrations and resolution after resolution for the 'right to work' may have become a little stale with you. You may have started thinking:**

'What's it got to do with me?—I'm still in work. Where does all this demonstrating get us anyway?'

Look at this:

1,231,218 unemployed on 8 April 1976.

21,257 of these were school-leavers.

I work in a careers office and these numbers mean disappointed, angry kids to me. Kids with good qualifications and school reports plus a year's full-time training in carpentry behind them who write 50 letters and can't even get an interview. Kids who have started apprenticeships and have been made redundant—at 17 *redundant!* Kids who are prepared to work 5½ days a week for £10 a week (minus fares) just to get something rather than dole. I saw a girl who wanted to be a motor mechanic. She had written to every garage in the town, every single one, and got nowhere. She's now 38th on our list of 'claimants wanting motor mechanics'. All the others are boys. What chance does she stand?

These kids look at you disbelievingly when you show them the vacancies you have. Usually a small box, divided into empty or half-empty sections: building, sales, unskilled—there are no jobs.

Of course, we must be very careful with these young people. They are 'at risk'. Push them back into school, college or job creation schemes. If not, bored and angry, with no money or prospects of a job, they may become 'prey to bitter and even revolutionary ideas'. And that would never do.



Photo Ray Smith (IFL)



Liverpool women march for jobs

# WHAT TO DO ABOUT AN EQUAL PAY STRIKE IN YOUR AREA

As soon as you hear the news, go down there with copies of Womens Voice.

You will probably find a picket line—if not, ask someone when the next meeting or picket is.

Say you're from Womens Voice, show them the paper and tell them what it is. Say you want to do a story for the paper. Most strikers welcome publicity.

**Ask them:**

- What the strike is about.
- Which union are they in.
- What are the officials doing.
- What union organisation inside the factory/hospital etc is like.

- The background to the dispute.
- What does the factory make.
- How many men/women, full-time/part-time workers there are.

- Who owns the factory and who buys the product.
- What rumours management is spreading eg threatened redundancies.

- What support or delegations they've had from other factories, trade union branches or trades councils.
- Who have they approached for support.

- Have they been in touch with other factories in the combine.
- Who is on the strike committee.

**TALK TO AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE.**

Get photos if you possibly can.

**Write this up, briefly and send it to Womens Voice:**

c/o Margaret Renn,  
IS Womens Organiser,  
6 Cottons Gardens,  
London, E2

**Ask them what sort of support they need.**

Offer to take their collection sheets and arrange for sympathetic delegations from local trades union branches and factories. If the dispute is in a large combine, it is important to get the information to other factories.

Raise the issue with the rank and file group of the unions involved and get resolutions of support through local trade union branches etc.

If the dispute is a long one, encourage the strikers to organise a public meeting or a demonstration to the bosses house, or a fund raising party or a jumble sale. Activity is the key to holding a strike together.

And publicity comes from action.

Keep in touch as much as possible. Don't just be a fine-weather sympathiser. Involve Womens Voice supporters in going regularly to the picket line. Remember pickets get lonely and friendly people are always welcome. If your news article appears in Womens Voice or Socialist Worker you should be able to sell plenty.

And you may find you've discovered some new socialist militants to join the rank and file movement and spread the word.

## In Glasgow

IN Glasgow the only fight against the £6 limit was the equal pay fight. It was the only fight that anyone wanted to make.

There were four disputes in the TASS section of the Engineers Union in Glasgow. None of the women got less than £6 on top of the £6 limit.

At Wheway Watson women got an equal pay increase of £12 and up. One woman got a £24 increase and nearly doubled her wages. Cockburn women won the least after the longest strike.

They got an extra £6 after three months. The company established a new minimum grade for nearly all the women and some of the men. Only two women went onto a higher grade than the minimum.

The difference between the strikes was the support that Wheway Watson women got from other trade unionists. Wheway Watsons makes chains for the coal face and the NUM threatened to black all their machinery unless they settled. The Company settled!



Photo: John Sturrock (Report)

# WE'RE WOMEN WORKERS, WE'RE AND WE'LL WIN

IN THE last six months, women workers up and down the country have demanded Equal Pay—and been ready to go all the way to get it.

Only a small proportion of these disputes led to strikes. In workplaces with a history of strong organisation, employers knew they wouldn't get away with not paying up.

1976 has been a year of fighting women—and many of them have won importance increases. £17 a week for the women of General Motors in Scotland; £10 a week for many women TASS members.

### List

Women's Voice has collected a list of all the strikes over equal pay that we've come across. If you know of any others, please let us know.

Several things emerge from looking at the record of the last six months. The most important is that women are no longer a 'backward' or 'weak' section. They have been prepared to fight, and have fought, over equal pay, over

unionisation, over redundancies. And where they've fought they've fought hard. That's why so many of the strikes have ended in victory. Determination and guts—those are the two outstanding characteristics of the women involved.

But there are some large gaps. There are 50,000 women members of the EETPU—the electrical trade union. That's one eighth of the total membership. Why are there no equal pay strikes involving EETPU members? This is one of the many unions with a lousy record on women's rights and pay.

### Worse

Women in the textile industry are notoriously badly paid—even worse than the men. It would cost Courtaulds £40m a year to grant real equal pay to all its workers. But there are no textile union strikes.

If the union is not doing the job it's supposed to—if it's not fighting for every penny you're entitled to—then it has to be forced. You ARE the union. You can win.

By Elana Dallas

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# INSIDE AN EQUAL PAY STRIKE

Groves is one of the shop-members on the Trico Committee.

He told Women's Voice how the strike started and how it has progressed.

The strike began when Roger Butler, district secretary, came to a meeting with the green to report back on the stage of negotiations. He said it was a waste of time. The company wouldn't give an inch on equal pay. They were even threatening to bring in the male operatives to the same rate.

It was how it happened. The district secretary left the meeting, and most of us went back inside. But then we heard a lot of women were so angry they refused to come back in.

There were mostly the number four women, who work right alongside those doing the same work, yet get paid between five and six pounds less.

A convenor was called out for all-out action. We just never went back and that same night the AUEW district meeting voted unanimously to start a strike official.

Now hardly any of these women has been involved in a strike before. We've never had such a long dispute before.

## Confidence

At first we suffered from a lack of confidence, a lack of experience, not knowing exactly what to do. It was even more than that.

At first there was a kind of disbelief about it all—that we'd need to collect money, to organise. We had to take it into our own hands. And, like most women, we weren't used to taking the lead before.

After picketing got going did we realise we'd need a strike committee. It's a group of half shop stewards and half floor members. At first there was much enthusiasm it was mass

picketing all the time. Now we have a rota, where people put their names down, and each picket duty lasts one and a half hours. We want to make sure we don't get in to the situation where it all falls to the same few, and they get exhausted.

Now we've voted another committee of five to deal with the hardship fund. They will keep charge of the money that comes in, and anyone who's hard-up can go to them. Of course we are getting strike pay. But hardship problems can be serious, especially for the unmarried women, but for the married women too. We need to build the fund.

## Meetings

Our mass meetings are important for keeping everyone in touch with what's going on.

We don't have a printed strike hand-out yet. But it's hard to hear at the back of mass meetings and if the strike lasts we will need to get publishing a news-sheet.

One of the most serious aspects of this strike is that the men union members are scabbing. All except the few good trade unionists who have stood by us.

## Activity

Meanwhile we are keeping up our level of activity. Contacting trade unionists in the area. Planning our visit to the other Trico plant in Northampton and to the car factories to get support and backing. The members are urging we have another march through the town, as we did last week, because they really enjoyed it. And this Friday we have a theatre group coming to perform a women's rights play out here in the open air. We're determined not to give in. Those men will be out before we're inside, and we won't go back till we win.

## Interview by Judith Condon

### HAPPY NEW YEAR!

It was Christmas Day in the Trust House. At the Post Hotel at Heathrow Airport, 7 waitresses were working for 85p an hour. The one waiter, doing the same work, was getting 97½p an hour.

Trust House Fortes management woke up on December 29th. (Equal Pay Day) and panicked. They decided to send the waiter a telegram. On 3 January he received it—it offered him a new job: not waiter grade one, head waiter or even waiter in charge but BANQUETING SUPERVISOR! He accepted and took up his new position on 6 January.

The seven waitresses put in a claim for equal pay for the eight days when they were doing the same or broadly similar work as the waiter. Then won. 12½p each for 8 days. Then after 6 January, it was back to 85p for the waitresses. There was now no waiter to demand parity with.

**Men toilet attendants used to get £9 a week more than women toilet attendants. This of course would now be against the law. So today, men toilet attendants and cleaners get £9 a week more than women toilet attendants.**

**LAST MONTH Womens Voice and Socialist Worker exposed the truth behind Healey's Pay Deal with the unions—they'd agreed to forget about Equal Pay. Healey himself said in Parliament and on TV 'we won't have to pay more for equal pay over and above the 4½ per cent limit'.**

**Now they've had to take it all back. Pay rises for equal pay can exceed the 4½ per cent. They knew they couldn't get away with it once the truth was out.**

**One way to beat the 4½ per cent limit is by getting equal pay. You're entitled to it. You may well have to fight for it. Hundreds of women have fought for equal pay—and hundreds of them have won.**

# SHIFTWORK: YES OR NO?

**WITH THE Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts coming into force from December 1975, a great many women are coming under pressure at work to accept shift work as a condition of getting equal pay and equal job opportunity. The argument runs on the old familiar lines: you say you're equal—well prove it. Work the same conditions as the blokes, work the same hours, and so on.**

**It's an argument not only used by management, but also by workers, male and female.**

It's an absurd argument, and socialists have to take it on fair and square if we are going to lead a fight against the attack on our working lives.

This is particularly true where women themselves argue for night work, on the grounds it gives them a chance to do their housework and shopping in the daytime. Or they may argue that conditions are better on nights than on days—the money is better and there is less supervision. Women in the diecasting department in Singers, Clydebank, for example, are putting in to work the night-shift because it means an extra £14 a week for them.

## Bad

The first point is that shift working is bad for all workers. All shift work upsets the normal rhythm of the body. This has disastrous consequences. Shift workers are much more likely to suffer from nervous disorders and ulcers than day workers for instance.

If shift working meant that you went on permanent nights, and stayed on throughout the weekend, then your body *might* adapt. You would still suffer some physical strain from turning yourself into a nocturnal animal.

## Change

But as it is, you are forced to chop and change all the time. If you are on nights, you try and keep normal hours at weekends. If you are on a rotating shift,

then your whole life goes haywire.

The only way to deal with questions about higher wages and less supervision, is to take up the whole question of shop-floor organisation, and how workers win improvements. The way to get higher wages is not by selling working conditions, but by striking for higher wages. The same is true about supervision.

## Counter

The only way to counter the activities of the foreman is by strong organisation and active shop-stewards, on all shifts.

The reason most shift working exists is the employers' pursuit of profit. They do not care about the lives of workers. They just don't want their machines to be idle even at night.

When it comes to nurses, or ambulance drivers, there is good reason why they must work at night. But there is absolutely no reason why cornflakes, biscuits, cosmetics should be made all through the night.

In fact, shiftwork, measured-day work, job evaluation, productivity deals are all means by which the employers increase profits at the expense of workers' conditions. We have to fight against them all. Where one section of workers has won improvements, then we have to fight for the improvements to be extended to all workers. Where one section of workers such as women, has not been defeated on these issues, then all workers must defend them.

## Unions

Unions should be leading the fight to save concessions won by women. Not selling them in return for a few pounds in the name of equal pay.

**When we talk about equality with men, we are not talking about the right to be equally badly paid, and pushed around. We are talking about the right to control our own lives.**

**You can't buy a new stomach or nervous system down at Woolworths.**

By Sheila McGregor

# WE'RE FIGHTING

# N



Photo Chris Davies (Report)

## Equal Pay Strikes

Union	Firm	Date	Place	Result
TASS	Magnetic Electrical Alloy	Jan	Glasgow	Won
TASS	Cockburns Valves	Jan-May	Glasgow	Won
TASS	Clarkson's M/Ts	Feb-Mar	Sheffield	Won
TASS	Wheway Watson	Jan-Feb	Glasgow	Won
TASS	GEC Birlec	Mar-Apr	B'ham	in negotiation
TASS	Reid, Lilwood	April	Glasgow	won
AUEW	Abbota Bros	Feb	Biggleswade	won
AUEW	Olivetti	Mar	Glasgow	in negotiation
AUEW	GEC Treforest	Feb-Mar	S Wales	lost
AUEW	James Beresford	April	B'ham	?
AUEW	Trico	May	Brentford	still out
APEX	Newton Derby	Jan	Derby	in Neg
APEX	Qualcast landmowers	Jan	Derby	in Neg
ASTMS	Heatrae-Sadia	May	Norwich	in Neg
ASTMS	Armitage Shanks	May	Lichfield	in Neg
GMWU	H J Barlow	March	Wednesbury	in Neg
USDAW	East Coast plastics	May-?	North Walsham	still out

Trico workers proclaim their strike



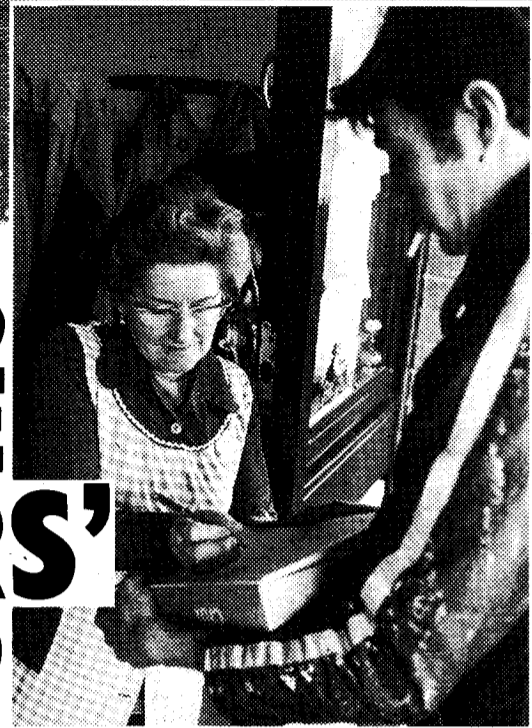


Photo John Sturrock (Report)

**We, the tenants on Hindrey Estate, Hackney, are fighting back!**

We reckon the GLC must have been spoiling for a fight when they built these places so badly. Anybody would be up in arms at the way things are here.

They cost a bomb! They're brand new but we've had the kind of rotten stinking damp that you'd only expect to see in 100 year old sewers! People have had to throw out £100 carpets that have rotted and grown fungi because of it.

Windows let in rain, the central heating systems are completely cockeyed and they're unsafe — one caught fire recently after repeated warnings from us that there was a danger (They're encased in wooden cupboards with no fireproofing!).

Some flats are all electric and they've brought in bills of £160 just for one quarter!

The rents are high enough as it is and the rates have gone up twice in the last two months! Our maintenance and general services are bad and getting worse. We pay for a refuse disposal service, amongst other things, in our rates yet we don't have any dustmen!

# TENANTS DUMP GARBAGE ON COUNCILLORS' DOORSTEP

By  
Yvonne Walker

Because access roads were wrongly designed; in fact the GLC admitted they'd made a boob and that it was the last thing they'd thought of, the dustmen can't get to collect our rubbish.

We have to put our rubbish into big black plastic bags and carry it up to 28 yards to a big skip 9' 6" high and throw it over! Those bags are bloody heavy and not particularly strong. So even if you are heavyweight champion you've still got to hope and pray that the bag doesn't burst or fall back showering the rotten garbage all over you! The point is we are paying for a service which we are

not getting.

We were so cheesed off with this; the councillors were obviously forgetting all about it at the end of each meeting that we decided to jog their memory a little!

We stored up everyone's rubbish for three weeks in an empty garage, painted some huge posters, hired a van dumping our 150 or so bags off to Hackney Town Hall. We leapt out, about ten of us, stuck the posters up on the windows, doors and walls and left our beautifully scented 'calling card' strewn all over the Town Hall steps and half way up the

front door!

A few days later we were congratulating ourselves when the GLC and Hackney Borough Council asked to meet us.

Now, they say they're going to do something about it but nevertheless we're still on our guard and quite prepared to do it all over again if need be — only this time we're thinking of County Hall!

The important thing is that it gave us all great confidence and it proves that if you show your teeth to these people, you can win. So do it, You can win!!

Left: dumping rubbish in Central bin. Centre: the estate. Right: Roy White, chairman of the Tenants Association petitioning for a £4 rent reduction.

## PLAYTEX WOMEN WIN FIGHT FOR JOBS

**This year women are not just fighting for equal pay. At Playtex factory at Johnstone, Glasgow, the women fought redundancy and for their rights as trade unionists. And they won.**

Last year the Playtex factory was on a 3 day week and there was no fight back. When five day working resumed, the management paid off thirty women and ended the twilight shift. Again it was accepted but the management agreed that these women would be the first to get restarted in the factory.

But when the Company started taking on again they took on non-unionists and when redundancies came up they sacked union members. The firm had only been unionised for three and a half years and the management was determined to attack the union. The women demanded that the non-unionists should go first and they switched unions from the Garment Workers union to the General and Municipal Workers Union, thinking that they would get more help from the GMWU.

**But what won the strike was their own organisation on the picket line. Out of 500 workers there was a picket of over 100 women every day.**

The shop stewards put out a directive for all women to join the picket line except those with pressing family commitments. Every woman signed on at the picket and a picket rota was drawn up. By the end of the dispute 400 out of the 500 women had done picket duty.

The Playtex factory at Johnstone was the largest in the West of Scotland and once they struck the other factories at Port Glasgow and Falkirk came out.

The company agreed to start back 5 women who were union members and that they would only sack non-unionists in future. Both sides agreed a time limit for non-unionists to join the union.

But this isn't the end. In Glasgow the only workers left on piece-work are women. They can set the rate low because of bad unionisation. As Marie McEwen, the Branch Secretary said, 'We have other scores to settle with the company and this dispute will help us win them.'

## letters

### dirty linen

Womens Voice is pleased to announce details of our June honours list.

Published to commemorate the historic day when sterling fell through the psychological barrier of ten green shield stamps to the pound.

**Not so dummy Award to Lambeth Council**

Like many other local authorities Lambeth is trying to get round cuts in public spending, and resultant nursery closures, by promoting child-care on the cheap. They now have salaried childminders working at home. Evidence is beginning to come in that they are also putting pressure on single unsupported mothers to become childminders instead of claiming social security benefit. Nice one Lambeth. The women look after many more kids than their own, and you save a double lot of money.

**Dummy Award Two**

To Mr Alfred W Turner of Southfields, London, who made a complaint to the Press Council against Woman magazine.

Woman recently published a series by Anna Raeburn called 'The most worrying problems in marriage'. The articles represented a decisive and welcome break from traditional women's magazine writing on sex, not renowned in the past for its accuracy or frankness.

Mr Lawrence objected in particular to the article aimed at men, entitled 'I can't satisfy her'. Anna Raeburn replied that she dealt honestly with the matters most women wrote to her about. The Arts Council dismissed the complaint.

**Individual Runner-up**

Hard luck, Phil Povey, Coventry AUEW steward. Just pipped at the post. But your intervention at union conference in Scarborough to support the Daily Mirror's 'Bring Back the Mini' campaign deserves a special mention. Keep trying.

**'Feeling fed up, angry? Feeling happy, feeling militant?' Write to Womens Voice — we want to hear from you.**

Send letters to Womens Voice. Our new address is 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 8DN.

### What's Up Womens Voice

I got May's issue of Womens Voice on 2 June. What's going on? Shall I expect June's in July? Yours fraternally,  
Angela Dines, Thetford.  
Editor

We're sorry that the May issue reached you so late. Unfortunately we've had a lot of difficulties with production for reasons outside our control. We're doing our best to prevent it happening again.

### 'It can't be so bad for women'

I'd like to tell you about a General Studies lesson we had in our sixth form recently. The teacher (male) started a discussion on why women work. Most of the class (three-quarters male) waived it away saying they worked for pin money. I took this up but the teacher had moved on to the next part which under a lot of polite words was really: there is so much unemployment in the country today, why don't all the thousands of women workers give up work and let men take those jobs? 'After all,' the teacher continued, 'it can't be so bad for women at home, what about all those nice programmes on the

telly especially for housewives?' Cries of 'here, here' from the boys.

Someone said 'How would the males like to stay at home all day and look after the house? How would you like to be dependent on a woman for housekeeping?' A horrified no from one male.

This lesson really brought home to me the fact that when there's a crisis it's the woman that gets pushed out first. All these male chauvinists have had their ego deflated because they are on the dole and so aren't the big boss breadwinner anymore. Big Deal! Why should we give up our jobs in return for the drudgery of the kitchen sink just to patch up their ego? I'll fight unemployment of both sexes but I won't let women get sold down the line to cut down male unemployment.

Fraternally yours,  
Maggie Simpson  
(Sheffield)

### Part-time Mums

Recent radio and newspaper items contained news about the thousands of cases of child cruelty brought to the notice of the NSPCC, and gave examples such as a baby who had been immersed in boiling water as a punishment and a child who had had bones broken in several places. The NSPCC emphasised the 'strains of modern society'.

Isn't it time that we women stopped to look more closely at our home and family and what they mean to us? Over the past decade or so we seem to have become so involved with emancipation and the rush for greater financial stability that we have forgotten the real essence of life — emotional stability.

Let me say that I strongly believe in individual freedom

which is what 'Women's Lib' is about. However, such liberation and opportunity for self-identification is really only complete when it makes us more aware of others as similar individuals. Therefore we must take others into account if we are to benefit in any real sense.

To this end I feel that women should make more effort to gain part-time, rather than full-time, employment. Perhaps it will mean a lowering of living standards. But who is better for having electric toasters and blankets, double garages, continental holidays, expensive convenience foods and quickly cooked (which often means expensive) meat, anyway? In the end our financial gain is small, but emotional strain is great.

Certainly a move to expand part-time employment would mean a radical rethink in industrial organisation, for example. However it is not an impossible task. The introduction of more part-time work would also encourage women with young school children to seek jobs. Often these women see the need for family commitment and yet wish for the opportunity to flex their mental and social muscles for a small part of the week.

As a result we would gain all round. Our desires for mental activity would be catered for; our family would benefit from more varied and healthier diets; we would have more time to relax and enjoy ourselves with the family and by ourselves.

If more women badgered employers into providing more part-time work then we might be going some way towards decreasing the sorrow and anguish reported by the NSPCC.  
JANET COLLINS, LINCOLN

BY SYBIL COCK

PART TWO

notices  
and  
meetings

# REPORT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

Dolly Patent is a company nurse at Parent Diecastings in West London. 90 per cent of the workers there are black.

Dolly used to work on the production line. She has been a shop steward for nine years, and she is the workers' representative on the factory safety committee.

I talked to her about health and safety on the shop-floor and how it has changed since the workers got organised.

In the old days, the factory was in a terrible state. People losing eyes, legs, getting knocked unconscious. But the workers were so afraid of losing their jobs that they accepted it. The difference came when we got organised.

We now have a safety committee elected from the shop floor. Every department elects a safety steward. Whereas workbins used to be overflowing with jagged bits of metal. Now they have to be level with the benches. Before the gangways were full of rubbish. Now a bloke is paid to sweep the floor constantly and keep it clean.

And if your machines hasn't been cleaned, you don't start work! Safety stewards have the right to stop any machine they think is unsafe.

**Nurse**

As a nurse, I'm glad to say I don't see so many cut eyes, damaged limbs now. But there are still too many accidents.

Recently one woman had her hand damaged in the press. She was off work for eight weeks. When redundancies came up her name was on the list. The management said there were no suitable jobs for her with the state her hands were in! But we told them she came into the factory with two good hands and they bore the blame. So she kept her job. And she got her compensation as

**Risks**

What the management try to get away with is safety on the cheap. Instead of making the machines safe, which costs a lot of money, they make you wear goggles and masks.

They are also extremely uncomfor-

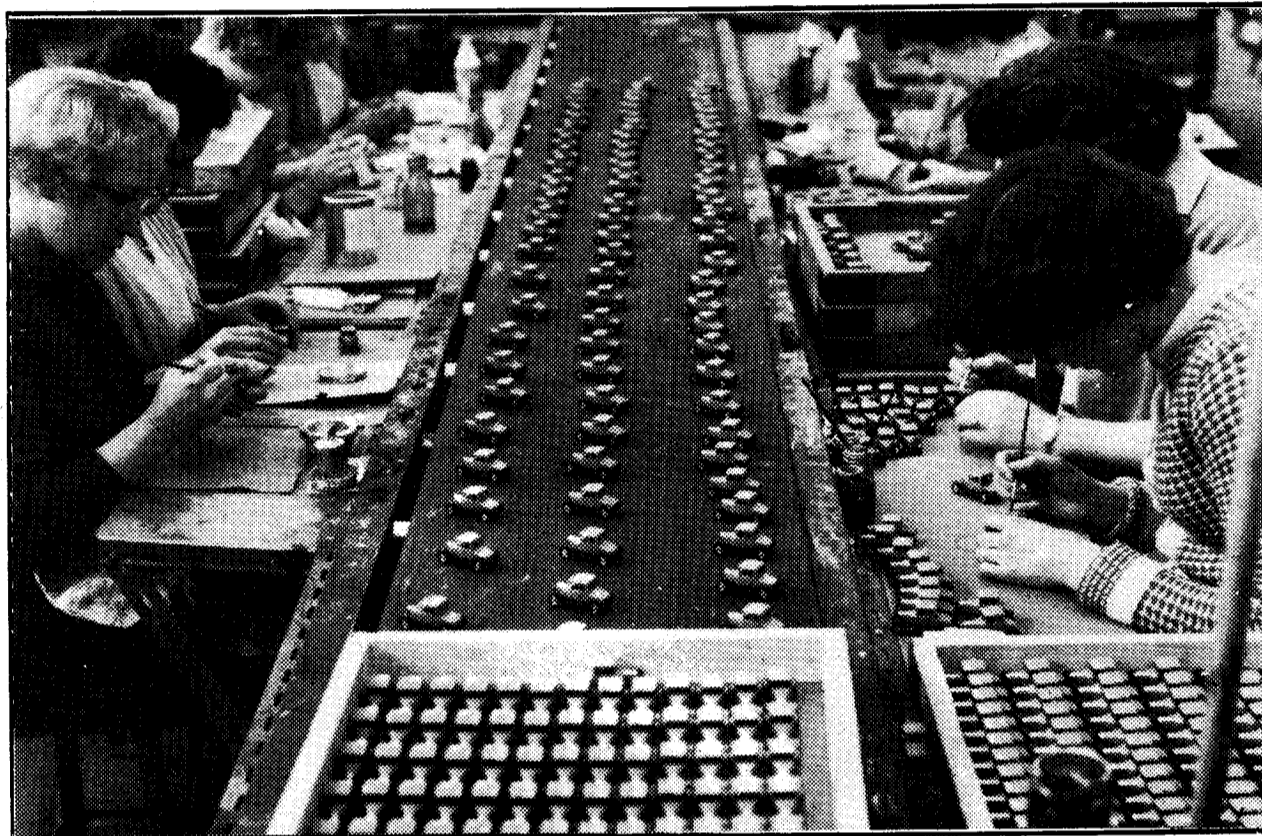


table. You get hot and you perspire, especially in the die-casting section. So then you take them off. But one splash of metal and your eye could be gone. That's how serious it is.

**Rashes**

Another thing is that people get rashes from the materials they handle. On white workers the rashes show up more, so the boss moves them to another job. He tries to claim that since black workers don't show the rash, they can stand it more than white workers. This is criminal. What's bad for one worker is bad for another. We have to unite and not let them try and find individuals who can resist things more. If any worker is affected, that's enough.

Then there are longer term dangers to health. Like the long hours, sitting in one position, lifting and twisting your body for the machine. I've noticed with some workers you can tell what kind of work they do. You become like a machine; the machine controls the

worker instead of the other way round. We work 7.30am to 4pm and that is long enough. We don't encourage overtime and now the management can only get about seven people to do it.

**Deafness**

In the same way your hearing deteriorates over time. If you go into the foundry, it's like a bell ringing in your ears for several hours afterwards. But if you work there every day you stop noticing it. You grow deaf. The boss will give you a pair of earmuffs but he won't adapt the machine.

Meanwhile that foundry is pumping out smoke and fumes into the local neighbourhood. So it's not just the people unlucky enough to be inside the factory who suffer.

The big number one lesson we have learned is to rely on ourselves. We never rely on the factory inspector for a start. When he comes he goes in to the main office first. There's a good bit of boozing before he gets to us. By the time

we see him it's a quarter to four, and we knock off at four. The whole place has been cleaned before he sees it.

No, we brought our factory into line before the Health and Safety Act came in, but we never got any help from the factory inspectorate.

And of course, it's us who watches the management. We don't expect them to take care of us much. They would send anywhere to get a machine fixed, because their money is tied up in machines. But when it comes to workers, they act on the lines there's always someone else waiting for a job.

So we've learnt to take care of ourselves. We are organising a rank and file safety school, and the Wembley engineering union (AUEW) branch is getting each factory to draft safety demands. Out of that we will draw up a safety charter and make sure the management accepts it and acts on it.

Next month, in part three of this special series on safety at work: Health and Office work. The new Health and Safety at work Act.

where we belong' into account.

There's also a long section on part-time workers—a group of women who tend to get forgotten, but who provide extra high profits for employers.

'Women Under Attack' is worth reading, it's certainly worth having around to look things up in. And now we've got all the facts, Women's Voice has no excuse for not producing an agitational hand-book for women workers.

'Women Under Attack' costs 45p, plus 15p. p&p. Orders over 10 from Women's Voice groups etc., 30p. post free. Available from:

C.I.S.  
9, Poland Street,  
London W.1

review

**WOMEN UNDER ATTACK** is the latest report from Counter Information Services. It's crammed full of useful ammunition for arguments about the position of women in this country today. In parts, it's not exactly light-reading but it's full of great pictures and photographs which keep you going.

The Report shows how the Equal Pay Act has not brought about any real equality in earnings between men and women. It describes how employers have avoided the Act, spells out the dangers of job evaluation schemes or relying on Industrial Tribunals, and shows how no Equal Pay Act can possibly legislate against a whole society based on inequality.

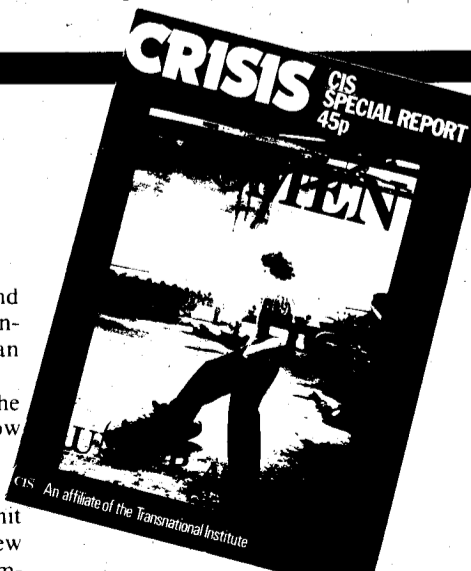
The detailed facts and figures about

the raw deal women get at school and when they leave for work are invaluable. You feel, 'Right, now I can take anybody on.'

Maybe the most important part of the report is the break-down of exactly how

the cuts in government expenditure hit women's jobs. Two-thirds of all new recruits to the Civil Service, for example, are women. The cuts already announced mean 60,000 fewer jobs than were expected a year ago. C.I.S. seems to think that the process of women's jobs being axed is a long term one and

that women are going to be pushed back into the home. Although the information they've gathered here is useful, they don't seem to take our resistance to being thrown back into the kitchen



**North London Womens Voice Group public meeting:** Equal Pay. Monday 14 June, 8pm, Stroud Green School, Ennis Road, N4 (near Bookmarks, bookshop). Speaker: Carol Douras (former Mother of Chapel SOGAT DRGs), plus Womens Theatre Group in 'Work to Role'. All welcome.

**CENTRAL LONDON SW Education Classes:** Women and Socialism. Every second Thursday, 6.30pm, at The Roebuck, Tottenham Court Road, London WC1. Creche provided.

10 June: The History of the Family. Speaker: Debbie Tom.

17 June: The Politics of Women's Oppression. Speaker: Joy Leman.

1 July: Women and Socialism. Speaker: Sheila McGregor.

**An Important Meeting.**

Calling all IS districts. The Women's Sub Committee is to meet on 19 June, starting at 11 am, at 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2. This is our first meeting with the new women's organiser, and we shall be discussing the role of **Womens Voice**. Please make sure your area is represented.

**Women Under Attack** the latest report from Counter Information Services. Invaluable facts and figures. Reviewed on page 7 of this issue of **Womens Voice**. 45p plus 15p postage. Or for orders of a dozen or over 30p each, postage free. Orders to CIS, 9 Poland Street, London W1.

**Chilean Women No 1.** A pamphlet from the Women's Campaign for Chile, costs 25p. Includes two articles by women who have been involved in working class struggle and who have been imprisoned.

Available from: Women's Campaign for Chile, 91 Alderney Street, London SW1.

**London Friend** counsels and befriends gay women and men and supports people who are coming out and feel they may be gay. They can be contacted on 01-359 7371.

**The Women's Research and Resources Centre** would like to hear from anyone on women's study courses, anyone who has done relevant research, or has specialist knowledge to contribute to their newsletter. Address: WRRS, 158 North Gower Street, London NW1.



Margaret Renn at the November Womens Voice Rally

Sheila McGregor, who left the post of IS women's organiser to become temporary area organiser in Birmingham has decided to stay in that job. Margaret Renn has been appointed as women's organiser. Sheila had great success in the job and we all wish Margaret the same.

Judith Hamilton and Joan Smith have now joined the Womens Voice editorial team.



# LABOUR LEADERS CUT OUR WAGES



Photo John Sturrock (Report)

THIS YEAR Percy Thrower and Geoffrey Smith have become Superstars. We are all tuned into 'Gardeners' World' and 'Mr Smith's Vegetable Garden'. Because now we can't afford to buy food—we have to grow it.

Reason? It is all thanks to our lovely Labour government and our wonderful Trades Union Congress. While prices rise they agree to limit our wage increases. Their idea of a 'limit' is the most savage wage cut since the war.

## RISE

Food prices have gone up a *third* this year. Already coffee has nearly doubled, potatoes have trebled, butter, cheese and milk are all about to rise. To pay for this we got a £6 increase if we were lucky. After tax and other deductions the most anybody took home was £3.60 a week. Only those women who fought and won their equal pay fights got more—and they have been owed that money for years.

### Did You Know?

Every penny the pound falls means our food costs a penny in the pound more.

### Did you know?

The food that cost £1 a year ago, now costs £1.31p.

In return for that 'year for Britain' we were promised less unemployment, but one in nine women have lost their jobs this year. We were promised a better deal for the lower paid but they had to strike for every penny of the £6 they got—if they got it! Already Healey has made it clear that the 4½ per cent is to be 'negotiated'. In other words all those women who aren't in good union shops can forget it!

If we go on accepting 'another year for Britain' we will all be on the dole. Or so low paid that we might as well be. The time has come when we can't afford food let alone their crisis. They made it and they can keep it.

Healey's offer of 4½ per cent and 'tax concessions' is an insult. The tax concessions are nearly the same as he gave last year on top of the £6. The 4½ per cent will be 2½ per cent after deductions.

All of it will pay for only *one tenth* of next year's price increases.

## FIGHTING

The TUC leaders demand we accept wage cuts to save the pound and the Labour Government. While the speculators make their profits out of the pound, our 'leaders' ask us not to rock their comfortable boat. They are afraid of us because we can sink their boats by fighting for our wages and living standards.

The miners got rid of Ted Heath's £1 plus 4 per cent and the Tory government too. We can get rid of Healey's 4½ per cent. If we get another Tory government then we can smash that too. They are going to pay for their own crisis.

On June 16 WE ARE PICKETING THE TUC TO DEMAND OUR SHARE.



# PRICES—how much more?

UNLIKE WAGES, prices have risen drastically over the last year and will continue to do so, especially now that the Union bureaucracy has accepted the 4½ per cent limit and cuts are being made on food subsidies.

When I go shopping with my kids, I always seem to have to put at least one article back on the shelves. I can't buy yogurt any more, biscuits, extra cheese, bacon—things that I used to be able to make myself afford. You find yourself turning into a walking calculator before you reach the check-out, in case

you haven't enough money on you. A joint becomes a treat.

How can we fight back? We can't not buy basic food stuffs—we'd all starve. The only answer when the price of a tin of beans rises is, not to not buy beans any more, but to take over the beans factory. Until you crush the parasite that lives on the backs of working-class people and sucks the pockets dry, you'll never achieve decent standard of living.

By Peggy Eagle

## in brief

### NORFOLK

The equal pay strike by 48 women at East Coast Plastics in North Walsham is beginning to bite. The women are members of the shop workers union USDAW. Their picket line has been supported by local trade unionists, and Transport union drivers are refusing to deliver to the factory. Donations and messages of support to: Miss Penny, USDAW shop steward, 40 Spurdens Crescent, North Walsham, Norfolk.

### MANCHESTER

Nurses at Ashton General

Hospital are operating a ban on all non-urgent admissions and on overtime in three departments in protest over low staffing levels. Management are refusing to replace staff who leave.

### TROUSERS

In Stoke-on-Trent 15-year-old twin sisters were sent home two days running by their headmaster for wearing trousers to school. A Burnham-on-Crouch in Essex 20 secondary school students walked out in protest against the school rules banning trousers for girls and forcing boys to wear ties.

## VICTORY FOR SCOTTISH CLEANERS

School cleaners in the Borders area of Scotland have won a major victory. They struck against cuts in their hours and wages, and after a six week battle forced the local Council to back down completely. The Council was trying to reduce a 22½ hour week at £13.50 to a 15 hour week at £8.50.

This was very much a test case. Everything was done by the authority to break it. They knew that if they could break union reaction in this issue, it

would be that much easier to impose the rest of their vicious cuts and sackings.

The women were isolated and spread out in many schools over a large area. But by picketing and getting the backing of other council workers they won. Mrs Frater, NUPE shop steward told us: 'There is something for other trade unionists to learn from our strike. If the Border Regional Council try anything again, people will have the guts to fight.'

# Beef Burglars

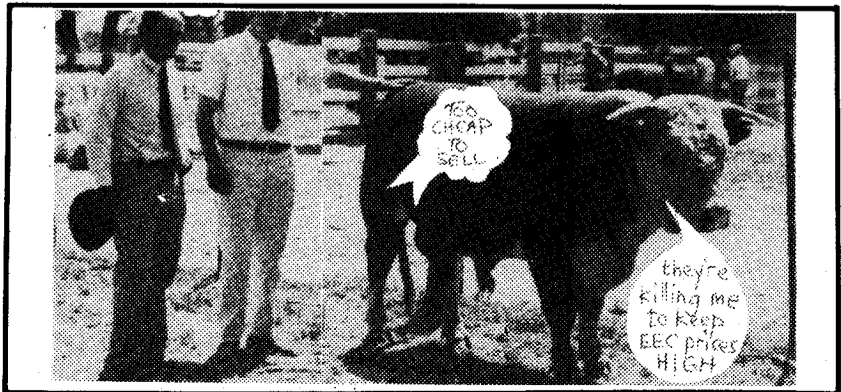
THIS week-end beef stewing steak was about 76p a pound in the butchers' shops in this country. But in Australia, beef cattle are being shot and buried in mass graves because there is no-one to buy them and farmers cannot afford to keep them.

John Wyld emigrated from the Midlands eight years ago and farms in the Melbourne area. He rears 2000 cattle and 7000 heads of sheep. He was encouraged to produce beef by the Australian government who said there

would be a world shortage.

Even after processing and freight charges, Australian beef could land in Britain at about half the current market prices. But we cannot import beef in any quantity from outside Europe because we are in the Common Market and subject to EEC Agricultural Policy. John Wyld says:

'You cannot afford to eat my product, yet I can't sell it'. We can afford his product, we just aren't bloody allowed to buy it.



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