

womens voice

Monthly women's paper of the International Socialists

CHILD BENEFITS SCANDAL

The Labour Government have refused to implement the new Child Benefit Scheme. It would have meant *one* larger allowance for *all* children, paid directly to the mother. It would have been the one and only benefit this government have conceded to poor families. They promised it through two elections:—and now they have buried it.

But it wasn't just Labour that finished the scheme. In an unholy alliance the Government, the Tories, and the Trades Union Congress got together. The Tories wouldn't force a vote to back the scheme, because they want public spending cuts, and they don't want an election.

The Government wriggled and manoeuvred and managed to get the crucial debate adjourned.

Somewhere in the middle, the much-heralded revolt by Labour back-benchers fizzled out.

Instead of 'suffer little children', we're back to 'Let the children suffer'.

But the biggest hypocrites of all have been the leaders of the Trades Union Congress. They

struck a deal with the government. They sold us out.

The reason for this carve-up is simple. The new scheme would have worked by ending child tax allowances in the father's pay packet and adding them to the mother's family allowance book. Mothers were promised a minimum of £2.70p for every child including the first. For all poor families who don't pay tax it would have been a real increase. For all rich families who get more from tax allowances

it would have been a real loss.

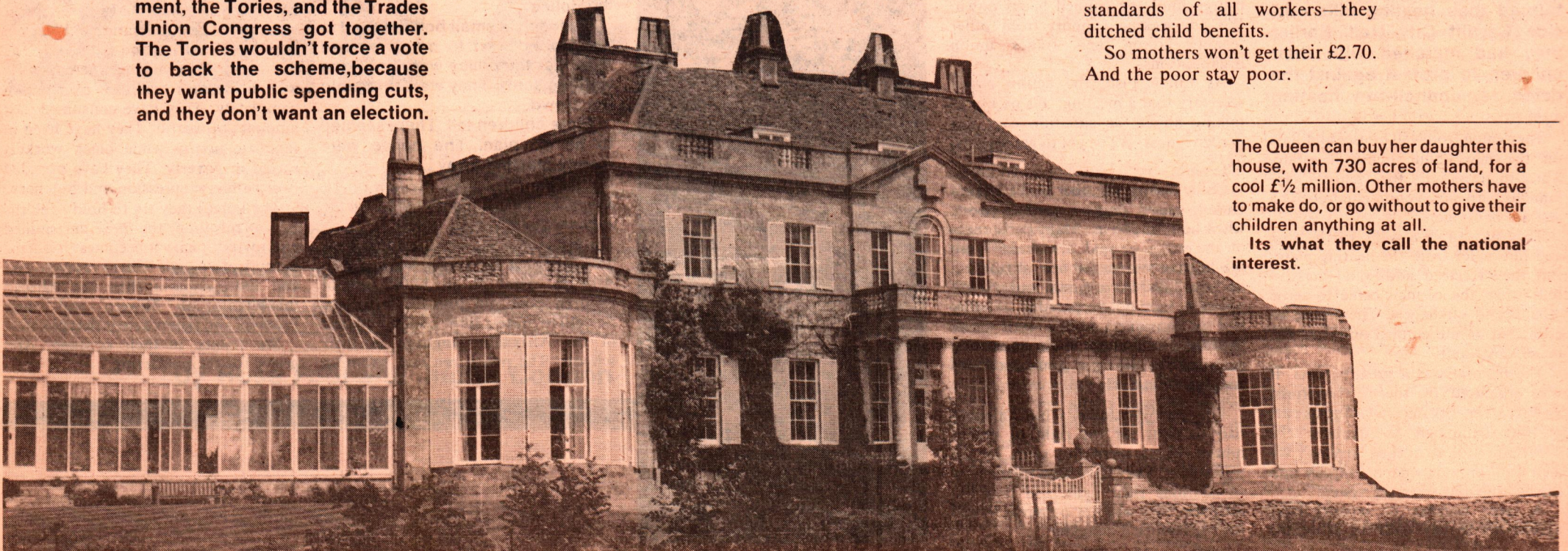
But the scheme meant less take-home pay for *all* fathers who paid tax.

Since the T.U.C. was trying to sell to its members the 4½ per cent pay deal, they wouldn't risk it. The 4½ per cent would have been wiped out by the loss of tax concessions.

They already sold out wages. So the next step was logical, to hold back opposition.

To protect their rotten wage controls—which cut the living standards of all workers—they ditched child benefits.

So mothers won't get their £2.70. And the poor stay poor.



The Queen can buy her daughter this house, with 730 acres of land, for a cool £½ million. Other mothers have to make do, or go without to give their children anything at all.

Its what they call the national interest.

You might think a company which makes baby milk would be concerned about babies! Nestles uses fake nurses to advertise dried baby milk in the underdeveloped countries. They persuade poverty-stricken women to spend a large part of their tiny income on dried milk instead of breast feeding.

Breast-feeding is cheap and hygienic. Feeding with dried milk—especially if you can't get boiling water to make it up—can cause diarrhoea and kill babies. It can also cause vitamin A deficiency, leading to blindness and mental disorders.

And there's even less money left for the rest of the family,

who are likely to be underfed as it is.

Nestles know it's on to a good thing because poor mothers care about their babies and get taken in by carefully researched advertising. Nestles only cares about profits.

In a libel case in Switzerland Nestles dropped charges in defence of their advertising methods. They must know their methods are responsible for the deaths or disablement of thousands of children.

We've got to find a way to control these companies and their cynical advertising methods. Think about it next time you're tempted to buy Nescafe or Nestles chocolate.

Women's Voice protest at the House

WOMENS VOICE supporters were ejected from the public gallery of the House of Commons on the night of 28 June. Child benefits were being debated. They threw Womens Voice leaflets and shouted out 'This Labour Government has betrayed every working class woman in this country. They are a disgrace. They are destroying all the things we have been fighting for.'

The manouevrings on the floor of the House were interrupted all too briefly. A little reality had disturbed the air-conditioned, farcical proceedings. Meanwhile the protesters were detained until the night's charade was over. They will be barred from attending the public

gallery . . . more of a relief than a punishment if this debate was anything to go by.

Womens Voice calls on all its supporters to follow this example and make their voices heard on this issue.

We intend to carry on the campaign. We shall take every opportunity to harass the Government and the TUC, until we win.

If you are in a union, get organising your resolutions. If a Labour leader is coming to speak in your area, why not mount a picket to protest?

The Act still exists, but it has no date attached. Implementation was originally promised for April 1977. We can still make it happen if we start fighting now.

CARDIFF TENANTS BURN HEATING BILLS AT CITY HALL PROTEST



Last month 100 council tenants burned their heating bills outside Cardiff City Hall. Earlier they had marched with their children to protest against the defective, council-run heating system.

They came from 450 houses and flats on the newly-built Pentwyn estate. Three-quarters of the tenants are families with very young children. The rest are pensioners.

They pay £4.95 a week for heating and hot water from the heating plant. But they received additional massive bills when the council came to settle rebates and surcharges. These were all estimated as the council admitted the meters are 'faulty'.

The burn-in was a great success. It was organised by the newly-formed Pentwyn Tenants Action Group as part of our campaign to demand the cancellation of all alleged 'arrears'. We also want an independent enquiry into the heating and metering system.

A large number of tenants have agreed not to pay both the estimated

surcharge, and the weekly heating charge until the council backs down. We are seeking support from other tenants groups and trades union organisations.

As Linda Fish, the action group secretary told a meeting: 'It's no use us talking about the situation over our garden fences. We've got to get-organised.'

Colin Bishop, member of the Bakers Union, raised another serious point, when he spoke to us. Many pensioners on the estate, he said, are afraid to use the heating system for fear of running up huge bills. 'As a tenant and a trade unionist, I am not prepared to stand by and see pensioners on this estate die of hypothermia. Neither is our committee prepared to let gas and electricity supplies be cut off.'

The Pentwyn tenants have already had to fight for the right to decent homes. Many spent five years on the waiting list. They have been forced now to continue their fight, and they are adamant they will not be made to pay for the council's bungling.

VICTORY FOR HOSPITAL WORKERS

'It's the kitchens today—it might be the wards tomorrow. We've got to stick together.'

Ancillary workers at St. Mathews Hospital, East London, were outside the gates at 7 o'clock on Friday morning, the third day of the strike. Female domestics and canteen assistants are backing kitchen staff, who came out when the hospital kitchen was threatened with closure. All cooks and kitchen assistants are male; there are three unions involved in the dispute, NUPE, T&G, CoHSE; the workers at St. Mathews are of all nationalities—Spanish, Italian, West Indian. None of these potential divisions of the work force has been open to exploitation by hospital management. The strikers here are sticking together.

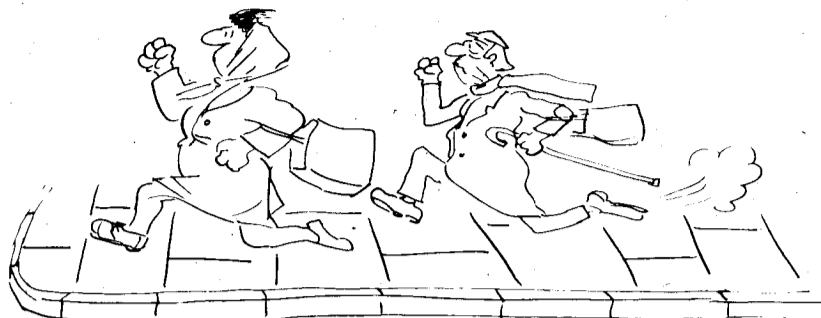
The kitchens at the hospital, originally built as a workhouse nearly 100 years ago, are like something out of Charles Dickens. Lighting and ventilation are totally inadequate; general repair and decoration in terrible condition; equipment obsolete and insanitary. Hospital management has ignored the facts for over a year. Meanwhile entrance halls and corridors have been upgraded and a brand-new day centre built.

On 22nd June management sent a letter to all staff. The kitchens were to be closed and food brought from Bethnal Green Hospital. Poplar hospital was shut down soon after the casualty department was closed for similar reasons. At the Invalid and Crippled Childrens Hospital, the excuse was a broken-down lift. Grace Fowler, the T&G shop steward said:

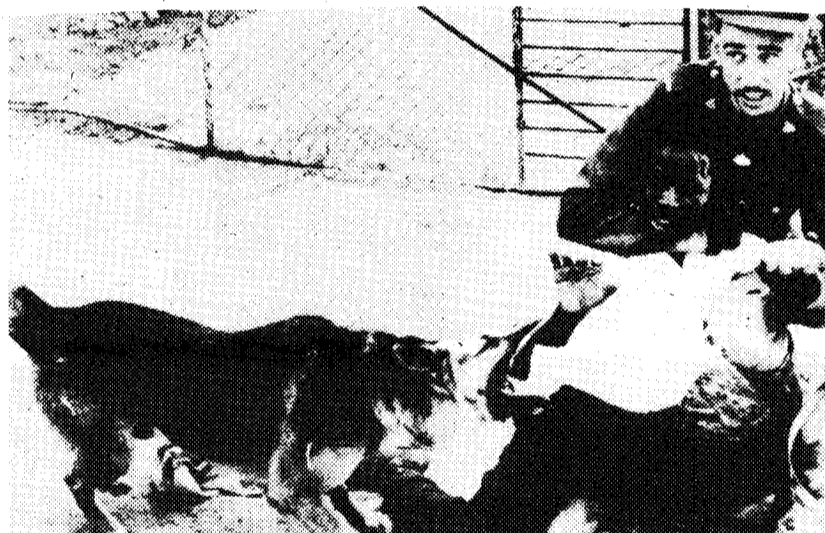
'If we let them get away with closing the kitchens, it'll be the hospital next. This is the only geriatric hospital for miles. You read in the papers every day about old people being found dead in their flats because there aren't any beds for them to come into hospital. There's a ward here that's been closed for 10 years—it's ludicrous—there's thousands unemployed who could be staffing it. The cry is always the same, 'No money, no money!'. When the Queen Mother came you should have seen it! Flowers everywhere, gallons of paint, overtime all round. We're fighting for the people of this community now.'

The fight was worthwhile. On Friday afternoon, 25th June, the strikers heard they'd won all their demands. The kitchens would be upgraded with no loss of jobs and everyone would get full pay for the three days out on strike.

ECONOMY GUIDE



NUMBER 1 HOW TO AVOID THE FARE INCREASES: RUN TO THE SHOPS!



BLACK CHILDREN DECLARE WAR

Imagine if this was your children, that it was happening where you live.

'Violence. Small bodies writhing in the dust. Police bullets tearing holes in the mob and the screams of anger and pain. These are my most vivid memories of a day I will never forget . . .'

'The police began shooting. I remember looking at the children in their school uniforms and wondering how long they would stand up to the police.'

'Suddenly a small boy dropped to the ground next to me. I realised then that the police were not firing warning shots. They were firing into the crowd.'

'More children fell. There seemed to be no plan. The police were merely blasting away . . .'

—from the eye-witness account of Alf Khumalo, a black photographer on the Johannesburg Sunday Times.

The last month has witnessed a tremendous uprising by young black South Africans. First of all 12,000 school children came out into the streets of Soweto to protest at the compulsory use of the Afrikaans language in their schools. The police ran riot, shooting

down and killing the protesters, just as they did in 1960 at Sharpeville.

The protest spread to other areas and went on several days. Soon over 170 black workers, students and children lay dead.

Once again Vorster's state moved into action, gunning down those whose hard labour it has exploited for far too long. Using weapons supplied by friendly Western powers.

The events in Mozambique and Angola, where Portuguese imperialism has been smashed, have given great heart to the new generation of blacks in both South Africa and Rhodesia. The day is fast approaching where Vorster and his mates will be overthrown completely. They have consumed vast amounts of wealth. They have lived in fantastic luxury while black workers slaved in poverty. They have presided over ruthless repression and butchery.

The longer they try to hold back the tide of rebellion, the more determined and revolutionary it becomes. It is hard to think of a people who have less to lose and more to win than the African inhabitants of Soweto and their brothers and sisters across that country.

We rejoice in their courage. And grieve for their suffering.

Every mother knows how much the family allowance means to her. It's cash in the hand that she collects when she needs it. Saved up for three weeks the £1.50 a week can buy a pair of shoes. But most mothers can't do that anymore. They need the money for food, or for rent. All of us need much more than £1.50p a week for a child.

When Beveridge first proposed family allowances in 1942 the rate was to be eight shillings (40p) a week, a third of the estimated cost of a child. His idea was an allowance that would rise to cover the full cost

of all children after the first. He argued that a man, woman and more than one child couldn't live on one man's wage without real poverty. And that is still true. The majority of families with two children and only one wage earner are poor today.

But family allowances were never increased with rising prices, nor did they cover the cost of a child. In 1966 the family allowance was eight shillings for a second child, the same as proposed in 1942, and for other children it was ten shillings (50p).

The family allowance has always been taxed. The tax authorities automatically add the allowance to

what we think

income assessment, so we have always lost part of it if we paid tax. But when the Labour Government increased the family allowances in 1966-8, they also introduced 'clawback'. Families not only pay tax on the allowances but the increases are

clawbacked through tax. That meant that in April 1977 when the new £1 allowance for first children comes in, 70p of it will be taken in tax. The present £1.50p is only worth 63p after tax and 'clawback'.

The present rate of family allowances is disgraceful. All the family budgets that are published in America and Europe show that to keep a teenage child costs more than an adult. A primary school child costs two-thirds of an adult, and a 1 to 5 year old costs nearly a half. Even a baby costs a third.

Such research is never done in Britain. The level of all benefits is based on poverty research in the

Thirties plus increases to keep up with price rises. Absurdly mothers getting different kinds of benefit get different allowances for their children. A first child of a widow or a disabled parent gets a £6.50p a week allowance. The first child of an unemployed parent is worth £3.50p. On social security the same child would get a benefit that differed according to its age.

It is obvious that £6.50p a week is the least that mothers need for each child, plus an additional allowance for children over 11. If even a baby costs a third of an adult to feed, clothe, care for, then this is the minimum for all children, including the first.



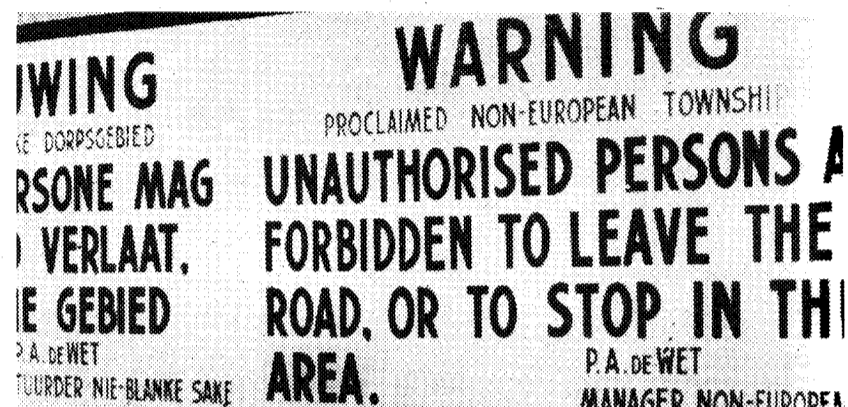
SOUTH AFRICA

For the history of resistance, and for the background of the lives of women under apartheid read:

· **'For their Triumphs and their Tears.'** Hilda Bernstein, Published by International Defence and Aids Fund: 1975, 50p
 · **'Remember all our women in the jails Remember all our women in campaigns Remember all our women over many fighting years Remember all our women for their triumphs, and for their tears.'**

Available from: Bookmarks, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London 16.

By Rose Foot and Judith Condon



Photographs courtesy of International Defence Aid Fund.

THE LIFE THAT IS NO LIFE AT ALL... SOWETO

SOWETO is the fifth largest city in Africa south of the Sahara, but you won't find it on the map.

The white South Africans call it a 'township'. In reality it's less like a town than a concentration camp for black workers.

Soweto exists to house the black labour force for Johannesburg's white-owned factories, shops and homes.

To qualify to live there, a man must have been born in Johannesburg, or have lived in the area continuously for fifteen years, or have worked for one employer for at least ten years.

It's even harder for women to qualify, and harder for women to find jobs. 54 out of every hundred workers in Soweto are unemployed.

Those women who can find work are mostly in domestic service, or dress making, food industries, nursing or teaching. They work long hours in appalling conditions for miserable wages. Equal pay for equal work is unheard of in a country where a white earns fifty times as much as a black for the same work.

Housing conditions are appalling. The houses are tiny. Most have no ceilings, no electricity, no running water.

Even so, there are 14,250 'qualified' families waiting for houses. The usual arrangement is that two families share a house, all the adults sleeping in the bedroom, and the children sleeping in the kitchen.

All divorced, deserted or widowed women are struck off the waiting list. So are unmarried mothers. These women can only be sublet rooms, provided they can find the rent, and provided they

have the 'qualifications' to stay in Soweto. Otherwise they are thrown out on the street.

Unhappily married women are forced to stick with their husbands rather than face the dreadful consequences of divorce.

All the South African authorities want is a cheap submissive labour force. Their attitude is not far off that of the old slave masters. They care nothing about the family life of black workers.

It was put very clearly once by a South African Minister of Justice, G F Van L Froneman.

'Black workers must not be burdened with superfluous appendages like women and children.'

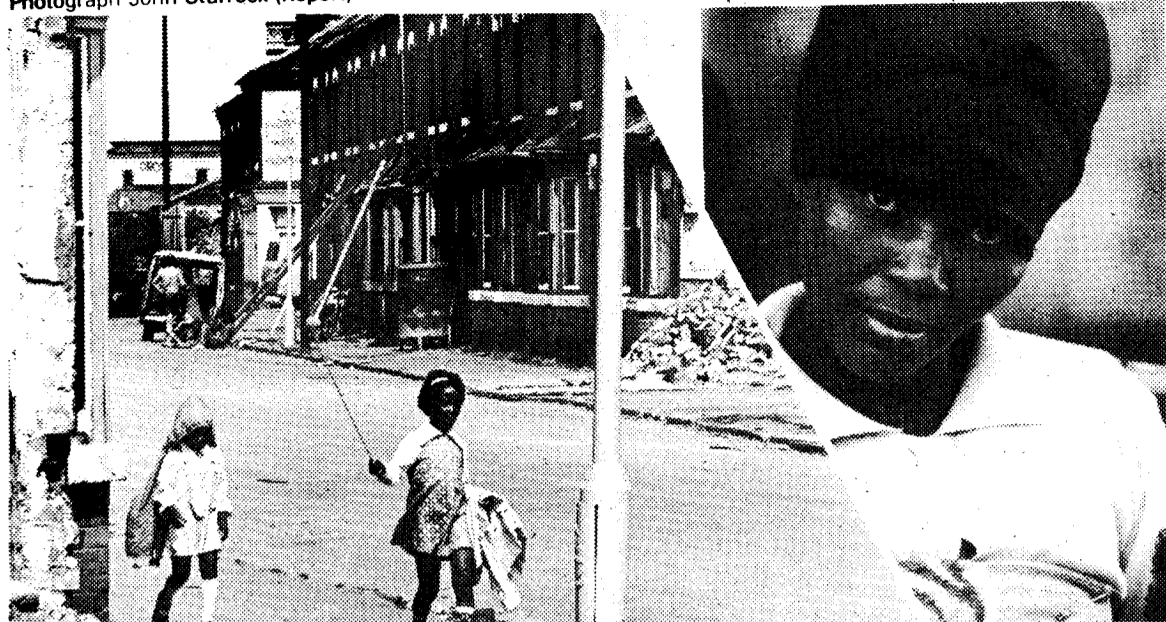
So these 'superfluous appendages', married women and their children, are supposed to stay in the rural reserves, away from urban areas. Here they are reunited with their husbands only once a year, there is not enough land to live off, starvation and disease are rife.

This is why many of them come illegally to live in the townships. They struggle to come because however bad things are in Soweto, they are even worse left alone and starving on the rural reserves.

The presence of women in Soweto is seen as a threat to apartheid. The white South African government prefers to see black workers living in single-sex hostels. These are concrete prison-like buildings with automatic steel doors and cell-like windows. Here any signs of revolt can quickly be isolated and crushed. Here men and women are separated, demoralised, and more easily exploited.

But the events of the last month prove that Soweto is a powder keg.

Photograph John Sturrock (Report)



Photograph Chris Davies (Report)

BOOT THE FACISTS OUT

By Yvonne Walker

Tenants work can be an excellent field where we can counter the lies and nonsense put about by the government and right-wing, fascist groups about different immigrant groups.

Some estates are very bad and black tenants suffer horribly at the hands of racists whilst, on others, and even on 'good estates' there is certainly passive racialism. Although this will often stay in the 'wood-work' and will let people get on with fighting the every-day housing problems, at times such as this, when the foul rats are stirring up their filth from the bottom of the cess pool, we desperately need to be here, there and everywhere countering every quip and comment, stating the facts and getting people back on the right road, that

is, fighting the bosses and not the blacks!

Where fascist groups and overt racism exist on estates, the lives of black people and the whites who sympathise with them are constantly harassed and there's often sheer terrorisation.

A white woman on Coville estate in East London, who is on her own with two kids, has had lit petrol rags through her letter-box. She's continuously threatened, had her teeth knocked out, her kids thrown out of the play-ground and this is a WHITE woman. Imagine what the black people on that estate go through. If ever anyone there has attempted to organise or speak out even on the smallest scale there are serious recriminations.

This is why it must be nipped in the bud, every comment taken to task and why strong, confident Tenants' Associations are vital to

keep racism the lie it always was. It's one of the prime diversionary tactics to keep working people's attention away from fighting the real issues, of decent housing for all for instance, and on scrapping amongst themselves for measly crumbs. Black and white unite and fight for our fair share of the cake which we all make together!

Discussions like this don't fly over people's heads, but are very concrete and real and practical because people experience racism or racist talk almost every day. The goal aims of socialism, encouraging independent, working-class action never seem so close, so easy as when we are confident and winning. So get into Tenants Associations or start them up where you live. Talk to people and AGITATE. Smash the racist arguments and boot the fascists out!



TO BE IN BR

IN THE last month the number of attacks on blacks in the East End and the rest of London has shot up alarmingly. This is no accident, because in the last month the racists of Fleet Street, Enoch Powell, the National Front and even Labour MP Bob Mellish have been whipping up a growing racial hysteria.

This is why we have seen the beatings-up, the stabbings and murders of Asians.

In Tower Hamlets the National Front are trying to

terrorise the Bengali community. Gangs of white youths are attacking Bengalis on the streets of Mercers Estate, coordinated by a minicab firm owned by an National Front member. Bengalis have responded by forming vigilant squads to defend themselves. The police don't want to get involved.

There's nothing new about this. When things are going badly, when council estates are run down, when there aren't enough hospitals, when there's mass unemployment and chronic inflation, there's always

the easy scapegoat, (pr can't fightback have to face up fact. A small wealthy people They are refus the industry w jobs and a de living until guarantees th policy of wage in public exper That's why b and the whole bad state—not immigrants.

By Colin

Photograph John Sturrock (Report)



LIES ABOUT IMMIGRATION

LIE ONE: Immigrants are flooding the country
Between 1970 and 1975 nearly 300,000 more people left the country than came in.

LIE TWO: The country is already overcrowded
There are 800,000 fully furnished homes empty at any one time. They are the second homes of the very rich people. 57,000 hotel rooms lie empty. Lord Vestey keeps 50,000 acres in Scotland completely empty so he can shoot defenceless animals for fun.

LIE THREE: It's our country, not theirs.
This country is in the hands of a tiny number of people. 72 per cent of all land values in this country are owned by only 2 per cent (Yes 2 per cent) of the people. The rest of us have crippling mortgages, or run down council flats. How much of this country do you own?

LIE FOUR: Once they're in, they live off our welfare state.

Immigrants only come here to earn and save, not just to subsist. It is jobs that attract them, not living on the dole. The average immigrant family gets *less* benefit, and pays more into social security than the average non-immigrant family.

LIE FIVE: Immigrant take our jobs away.
In the 1950's, when immigration was at its highest, unemployment was very low. In the 1930's there was no immigration. Three million were unemployed.

LIE SIX: Immigrant cause bad housing.
Slums existed long before there was immigration from the commonwealth. There are very few houses being built now, and thousands of builders unemployed. The design of many new houses makes them instant slums.

LIE SEVEN: Saying 'Stop immigration' isn't racist.
Three times as many white immigrants came to this country last year from Australia, New Zealand and Canada, than came from India, Pakistan or Sri Lanka. Ask them if they want to stop the 'flood' of white immigrants into this country.

BLACK BRITAIN

PETITION

In Southwark a racist petition was circulated that got over 11,000 signatures. Now a new petition is being taken round by IS women. This petition reads 'We condemn the recent attempts by politicians, and the press and television, to blame such social evils as homelessness and unemployment on black people, thus causing racist attacks and murders such as those in Southall and East London. We

condemn the activities of the National Front and National Party and believe that black people should be able to come to this country without the special restrictions that apply on them. We stand for a united fight of all working people against attacks on their living standards'.

Womens Voice supporters might find a similar petition useful in their area. These petitions should be used to show our solidarity with the local Asian Communities. The local Asian leaders should be contacted and all such petitions should be returned to the IS Womens Organiser.

I READ THE Socialist Worker leaflet 'They're welcome here'.

God will bless you if you will help me solve my problem.

With regard to human rights. I want some of those human rights. I want them so that I can get my husband to join me here in the UK.

I have been here in this country since 1973. I hold a British passport. But my husband has been refused an entry voucher from the British ambassador in Tanzania.

Does this government want my children to forget their father? He has not seen them for three years. The little one was just three years old when she last saw her father. Is this fair?

Does this government want us to get a divorce? Please help me before my life is ruined. I am only 27 years old.

□ MRS VOHIANI
Lagos

What, that
ugly mug
again!



The overwhelming evidence is that Enoch Powell's recent racist speeches fanned the flames of hatred and led to the beatings and murders of young Asians in London.

Now the Sunday Times has revealed another grisly side of old ugly-mug. Powell was Minister of Health at the time when the first thalidomide tragedies were happening. What did he do? He supported the manufacturers. Distillers. Letters were sent to parents saying that in his opinion they had no case against the company. The company was not to blame. They did not know.

It took over ten years of struggle to establish the guilt of Distillers.

So, next time you see this grim face, remember its always smiled on the bosses.

DIVIDED FAMILIES

By Elana Dallas and Jean Wright

'The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society, and is entitled to protection by society and state.' (Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

Whatever you think of this pious statement, Britain has pledged to 'promote and observe' it.

The family is sacred and its 'break-down' is constantly threatening our entire civilisation. Strange that when thousands of families who happen to be Asian are divided by British Immigration Laws and red tape, there's not a murmur from the 'holy family' brigade.

'I've all the documents. I've proved I'm married. Why don't they give her an Entry Certificate?'

'I've served in the British Army, given them my blood, spent five years as a Japanese prisoner of war for them, and now they don't let my wife and children in. I'm fed up.'

Mr Z left Mirpur, a poor agricultural area in North West Pakistan in 1972. There was no work and he could barely feed his family. For the last four years, he's been working in a factory near Birmingham. He had no choice but to leave his wife and children in Mirpur.

'I'm lonely and I resent the fact that I can't see my children growing up. I'm also worried about people starving in Pakistan.'

In 1973, he started the official process of trying to reunite his family. If you think it's easy getting into this country, think again.

The head of the family in Britain sends his family an application form for an entry certificate.

They must then travel to the nearest British Embassy (sometimes three days' journey away) to fix a date for an interview. The journey can be so expensive that many, once in the city, have to sleep in the streets waiting to see the Entry Clearance Officer (ECO).

It takes an average of 21 months of waiting between applying for the entry certificate and the date of the first interview. Some people never get past this first hurdle. Mr A says:

'I do want to bring my wife and children. But they are afraid to wait for a visa for two years and the horrible questions they ask at the immigration office.'

Mr M I's wife was asked to produce for the interview:

1) her husband's tax code

2) evidence of his national insurance contributions

3) two photos of her husband certified by a doctor known to him for five years

4) copies of his British bank book

5) a letter from his employer and one from his union

6) a copy of the deed for his house.

'I went to the National Insurance Office and asked them for a letter. They said they would not do it, because any difficulties with my wife were not their business.'

The interview itself can last up to six hours in a closed room with two male officials. This in itself can be a terrifying ordeal for a woman who's probably never been alone with a man other than family or husband before in her life.

Questions asked in the interview vary from the unanswerable and irrelevant to the extremely embarrassing. Mr M R said, 'for example that his wife had been asked about all the names of the relatives of her neighbour, about how many windows the neighbour's house had; about which direction it faced. About how many trees there were in the village, about how they spent their first married night, etc. As Mr S put it:

'... I think that this is not an interview but just an excuse to discourage people.'

Slight inconsistencies between her answers, those of her children each interviewed separately, and those of her husband, interviewed in this country, give the Entry Clearance Officer an excuse to refuse entry.

The ECO can ask for medical investigations to check details given by applicants. Highly unreliable internal examinations are used to check virginity. One girl, trying to join her parents in this country, failed this 'test' and was rejected by her family in consequence. Bone X-rays are used to check age.

These are notoriously inaccurate. Since you have to be under 18 or over 65 to be allowed to be with your family, these tests are crucial.

Imagine your husband emigrating to Australia and all this happening to you. It's totally degrading and inhuman, more reminiscent of Gestapo techniques than the 'fine British principles of a civilised democracy'.

Womens Voice is opposed to all immigration controls. Entry Certificates must be issued without any further delay to all dependants who have applied for entry clearance.

letters

The city council in Bradford has refused the CHE (the Campaign for Homosexual Equality) to hold their national conference there. The reason given was that the National Front might attack gays at the conference. On the same day it was reported that racist Robert Relf has been let out of prison. The headline in the paper was 'National Front denied a martyr'. But the National Front celebrated his release. They know that they've won a victory in both cases—against gays and against blacks.

The councillors have refused to defend the rights of homosexuals, the courts have refused to enforce the Race Relations Act. The implication is that it's the gays and blacks that provoke the attacks. That's false. It's the people who attack them and the cowardly councillors and judges who give in who cause the attacks.

In East London there have been hundreds of racist attacks and three murders in the past few weeks. There have also been a number of attacks on the East London Gay Centre. It may not be members of the National Front or even the same group of people who are responsible for both. But it's not just coincidence that they happen at the same time. The fascists in the 30s attacked Jews and homosexuals—using both issues to divide the working class. They played on all the false fears and divisions which our ideology creates. Their intention was to prevent people from uniting around their common class interests—so that there would be no reaction against unemployment and falling living standards.

And now in similar economic conditions the new fascists—groups like the National Front and National Party—are actively spreading their filthy propaganda. They're playing on the same fears as in the 30s. They're causing the attacks and the councillors and courts are allowing the attacks to happen. It's quite convenient for the ruling class to have a divided working class.

We've got to realise that the authorities won't stop the growth of fascist ideas. So we must. And the only way to prevent fascist and racist attacks on workers is to smash the organisations that are responsible, not give into their demands or ignore them.

FROM MAUREEN HOWES
SHEFFIELD

I totally disagree with the writer last month who said that there would be less cruelty to children if women put their families first' and got part-time rather than full-time jobs. She also implied that women only work for luxuries. But a large number of women HAVE to work to make the family income cover basic necessities.

It's not the emotional strain of working which leads to cruelty. The women who are under most strain and who are most likely to end up taking tranquillisers so that they

don't batter the kids are the ones who are stuck at home in lousy conditions, looking after three screaming kids and wondering whether they can afford to pay the bills or buy food.

We'd all like to work less hours for the same money and spend more time on leisure or with the kids. But to say that *women* should work part-time 'for the sake of the family' is going back to the situation where women have less right to work than men.

From Angela McPherson
Glasgow

In your article 'Journalists challenge press' I feel that the phrasing of the paragraph of 'life' was clumsy. Surely it would have been better to say 'a two month old foetus' rather than 'a foetus of a two month old baby'. Such thoughtlessness should be left to the hysterical anti-abortionists.

P STAINSBY-TRON

Marian and Sue are leaving Oaklands in September and two women are needed to run it for the year September 1976 to September 1977.

Oaklands is a residential holiday/conference centre for women and children in rural Wales east of Brecon and can accommodate up to 15 at a time. Women come here individually or in groups for holidays and workshops on various topics—also just to live together for up to two weeks.

The work at Oaklands will involve buying in food (a car will be almost essential); booking women in by letter or phone; collecting money from women and paying the bills, which include rates and insurance but no rent. Up to now all cooking and cleaning has been done in turns and sleeping bags are used on our own mattresses. The house is spacious and nice to live in and has a large and productive vegetable and flower garden. There are hens which can be kept on if you want. The house itself is in a village on the banks of the River Wye and on the edge of the Brecon Beacons National Park. It's really very beautiful.

A playgroup for one to three year olds meets here two mornings a week. It will continue with your help and is a valuable contact with the village.

You either need to have private savings or be eligible for sole (Don't rely on getting Supplementary Benefit: we were denied it by the local office and subsequent appeals). The house itself should pay its own way with the £1 a day which women pay for staying.

This is a good chance to get used to country life if you have a year 'between things' and also provide a real service to women in a practical and satisfying way.

If you think you could commit yourself to the project for a year, please phone 049-74-275 or write to *Marian or Sue at Oaklands Women's Centre, Glasbury-on-Wye, Via Hereford, Powys.*

How to sell Women's Voice on demonstrations!

When the women Trico strikers first marched through Brentford, 90 of them bought Women's Voice. Some pinned it on themselves as they walked along—the headline that month said 'Equal Pay Now'.

On the 26 May demonstration against unemployment 150 copies of Women's Voice were sold by three or four sellers. And on the militant student march to NUT headquarters to protest about teacher unemployment, a further 90 copies were sold.

In each case the sales were achieved by really active selling. It's no good going along to a demonstration, as many people do, clutching your papers to your chest and waiting for someone to ask for one.

You expect demonstrations to be lively, noisy occasions. Number one priority in selling papers is **MAKE YOURSELF SEEN AND HEARD.**

Here are some tips:

1. Arrive early. Position yourself at the point where people moving towards the assembly place will see you. At the railway station or bus-stop, for instance. Or at the entrance to the park.
2. Hold up your papers and shout loud 'Women's Voice, six pence!'. Shout out the headline if appropriate. Keep your shouts short, loud and to the point.
3. If the paper has a feature specially relevant to the demonstrators, open the paper out to make this visible. Or shout out something like 'All about the strike—pictures and interviews' etc.
4. As the demonstration forms, go up and down the ranks on both sides, asking people if they would like to buy Women's Voice. Look each line in the eye, so they have to say yes or no.
5. Keep on doing this while the demonstration is moving off. Then stand in a prominent place, such as on a street corner facing the demonstrators as they move past.
6. Also try to sell to passers-by along the pavements. Their attention will be attracted by the demo, and they often like to buy a paper to see what it's all about.
7. Remember, many people say no when you ask them the first few times, but they think about it and change their minds. So don't be afraid to go up and down the ranks several times.
8. Arm yourself with a few quips. Male marchers often shout things like 'Womens Voice, I've got too much of that at home'. Think up some quick answers to show you've got a sense of humour. Don't let them have the last word.

MOST OF ALL, IF YOU SHOW THAT YOU BELIEVE IN THE PAPER, THEN PEOPLE WILL WANT TO BUY IT FROM YOU. If you can't imagine yourself shouting and selling in public, go along two of you together, and dare each other to have a try. The more you sell, the more confident and cheeky you'll be. And the more confident and cheeky you are, the more you'll sell.

This is a first class way of reaching new people with our paper, active people who are already concerned enough to be out marching.

NAC NOW

As we go to press, the Select Committee on Abortion of the House of Commons is preparing to give its report. This Committee is now composed entirely of anti-abortionists. They are likely to propose several changes to the existing law. One thing is certain though. They are trying to restrict a woman's right to choose if and when to have children.

Last year when the Select Committee reported—and then there were still six pro-abortionists on it—nine 'regulations' were introduced. These did not even have to be voted on. They were all restrictive.

This time they are likely to introduce more regulations, hitting hard at a woman's right to abortion. The anti-abortionists, SPUC, and their friends in Parliament now say they are in favour of the 1967 Abortion Act, which made abortion legal for the first time. But don't be fooled. They are against a woman's right to decide for herself when or whether to have children. They say they are for the 1967 Act—but they do not want to see it implemented.

Another possibility is that a new private members' bill will be introduced in the next Parliamentary session—a more sophisticated version of the James White Bill, which was the first attack on legal abortion.

One thing is clear. The anti-abortionists have so far been quite successful in their campaign against the 1967 Abortion Act. They are not going to stop here. They want to see the clock turned back to the pre-1967 days, when thousands of women had to resort to dangerous back-street abortions.

We must not let them get away with this. We must involve the Trade Union movement, and make our unions act on the resolution of last year's TUC to 'actively campaign' for free abortion on demand. We must raise the question as a political issue, and not let our MPs or Trade Union leaders get off the hook by saying it is a moral issue.

The National Abortion Campaign has called for a 'tribunal' in December to publicly produce evidence which has been collected by local NAC groups. The aim of the tribunal is to show what rights a woman really has to control her own fertility.

December is a long way away, and it is up to us to keep the campaign going, and to build it up in this time, when it may be more crucial than ever to make our voices heard.

Collecting evidence locally is an important function for a NAC group and it should be used to help local campaigns over facilities in your area. If the consultant at the local hospital has a bad record on abortion, gathering information on this can be the starting point of a campaign to get him removed. Where do the women that he turns away go? Many women have to pay to get the abortion which he refuses them.

In other areas, where hospitals are threatened with closure, gynaecological wards are often among the first to go. We need information to fight such cuts, which affect not only our jobs, but our lives.

But a tribunal is not enough. We must actively campaign locally, involving trade unions, tenants groups, womens groups, anyone who is in favour of abortion on demand: a woman's right to choose.



On 14 June, the North London Women's Voice Group held a public meeting on equal pay. 50 people came, and £16.50 was collected for the women on strike at Trico.

Everyone present very much enjoyed a performance by the 'Women's Theatre Group' of their play 'Work to Role'. The play raises many issues about women at work, in a dramatic and sometimes humorous way. Songs include 'The bosses Darlin'', and 'Be what you're told to be.'

This group is thoroughly political, professional, and talented. If you want them to perform in your area write to: **Anne Eigel, 22a, Grosvenor Ave, London N5.**

You can apply for financial help to hire them from your Regional Arts Association.

HOW DOCTORS MAKE ABORTION HARD TO GET

Up and down the country women are obstructed from getting National Health abortions. Doctors refuse, or delay, applications until women are driven to private doctors. This is the real scandal of the 1967 Abortion Act. Doctors can destroy the Act without penalty.

One area like this is Waltham Forest. In 1973, 90 per cent of women who needed abortions in that area had to go to private agencies. But the low rate of NHS abortions isn't due to a lack of facilities. In that area there is a brand new maternity unit at Whipps Cross Hospital. But the consultant gynaecologist of that hospital, Mr O'Sullivan, refuses to perform abortions, or delays to let the woman 'change her mind'.

Because of previous refusals and delays, GPs in the Waltham Forest area don't send their patients there anymore. They refer them to a private agency or to a hospital outside their area. For the woman this entails long journeys, much distress, fees of £65 to £200, and in the case of post-operative complications, much hostility from the NHS staff.

The 12 GPs at St James Health Centre became so exasperated that they began negotiating for outpatient provision. Outpatient abortions are performed during the early stages of pregnancy, under 10 weeks, when the woman doesn't have to stay overnight. They can be performed by trained GPs, thus by-passing the Consultants. Negotiations have been protracted by the opposition of the District Nursing Staff to outpatient abortion.

Like in other areas without proper abortion facilities, a Women's Action Group has begun to organise in Waltham Forest. They are seeking case histories and general support from women in the area. They are pressuring for the outpatient scheme and against the powerful obstructive few.

In Waltham Forest, only one in ten abortions are performed on the national health. If the anti-abortionists have their way, it will be that bad—and worse—everywhere. We must fight locally, and be prepared to fight nationally.

If you are interested in the Waltham Forest activities contact: The Women's Action Group at 161 Markhouse Road, Waltham Forest or David Flint 520 6224.



ASBESTOS KILLS

at home as well as work

MARY VAUGHAN has asbestosis. Four and a half years ago her husband died of the same killer disease. Mary's husband has been killed and her own health destroyed in the ruthless pursuit of profits. And now those who've made millions from the work of people like Mr and Mrs Vaughan won't even scrape together enough money to make Mary's last months a bit more bearable . . . they won't even give her any compensation.

'My husband worked in an asbestos firm in London for a short time in 1936. They had no protective clothes then and they used to come home in their work clothes.

'I handled his clothes for about six weeks at the most. I used to turn down his trouser turn-ups, brush the dust off and wash his clothes. 'He was made redundant' in 1971, from a firm he worked with since he left the asbestos work. Then he was out of work for three months.

He didn't like being unemployed and got a job as a forecourt attendant. That's when he became ill. We thought

it was the petrol making him cough.

'My husband went to hospital and after they X-rayed him, they removed four pints of fluid from his lungs. Five weeks later a doctor told me my husband had mesothelioma. I told him I didn't know what it was and he said it was an inoperable cancer. Later he asked my husband if he worked with asbestos and he said no.

'My husband died on a Friday night, and when my son went to get the death certificate on the Monday morning, the consultant told he could not have the certificate. There had to be an inquest. My husband had died of an industrial disease.

'I waited four months for his death certificate and went to the inquest in Grays. The death certificate said he died because of asbestos dust.

'About 18 months after I lost my husband, I went to a cardiac clinic for an X-ray. When I saw the doctor he asked me if I had ever worked with asbestos. I said, 'No, but I know what you are going to tell me.'

'I had never heard of asbestosis until I lost my husband. Oh, I hope I have a heart attack or something, just as long as I don't have to go through what he went through in the last few months.'

When Mary Vaughan found her husband had died from an industrial illness she also found that he had been entitled to disablement benefits of up to £21.80 a week.

Now Mary knows she has the same disease, what is she entitled to? **NOTHING.**

The only person entitled to benefits was her husband. He never even knew he had cancer, let alone that it was due to work he had done so many years ago.

Mary Vaughan, housewife, is not entitled to any benefit. The fact that she contracted the disease while working at home is not considered.

Mary told us: 'After my husband died I found out about the benefits and asked if I could have the things owing me. They said they don't make retrospective payments.

'Some widows are lucky, they go to work, but I can't. Where can you get a job when you haven't got any puff?'

□ **This year Britain's big three asbestos companies are going to spend half a million pounds on advertising, to 'counteract recent bad publicity!' They can afford half a million to make sure their profits aren't dented by the truth—they can't afford a penny for one of their victims.**

ONLY STERILIZED WOMEN NEED APPLY

General Motors has found the ideal answer to the bosses safety problem of avoiding compensation. In the GM Battery Plant at Oshawa, Canada, lead oxide fumes are emitted. These fumes cause deformed babies. So the world's biggest firm have told four women workers that they must prove they can't bear children to keep their jobs.

Norma James, 34, a mother of four children, had herself sterilised rather than lose her job. It is night work that allows her to look after her children during the day and pays well. She says: 'I know I shouldn't have done it because I know it's not right that they should tell you you're not going to have any more children or else you can't work here anymore. But I need that job more than anything else.'

It is an idea that other bosses could find it profitable to copy. Instead of adapting the machines, lets adapt the workers—and not just with ear muffs and masks and goggles. Lets get press operators with steel arms, asbestos workers with steel lungs, workers with no hearts that never wear out. The possibilities are endless.

Story from 'Workers Action'—paper of Canadian International Socialists.

notices

Women's Voice Public Meeting: EQUAL Pay, How to get it. Thursday 8th July 6.30pm. The Plough, Museum St. (near British Museum) Creche provided.

Newcastle Hospital Worker and Right to Work meeting, July 24th at 7.30pm. With the film Fight the Cuts and a speaker from Manchester Hospital Worker. At YMCA, Ellison Sq. Newcastle.

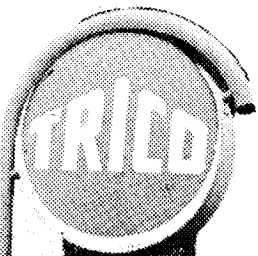
'The Baby Factory' is a ten minute play, for a cast of six people, on abortion and women's conditioning. It is written by Betty Freistadt. 30p from 62 De Vere Gdns, Ilford, Essex.

Islington Abortion Campaign have produced an 'Abortion Comic' for use in schools, health groups, etc, for age 14 upwards. It contains 3 stories and information and costs 12p for one, 35p for 5 and 55p for 10. From Islington NAC c/o Essex Road Women's Centre, 108 Essex Rd., London N.1

Pamphlet: 'A Woman's Right to Work' 10p from Furzedown College Occupation Students Union Office, Welham Road, London SW 17

Important. All Womens Voice Groups should organise meetings to discuss action on **Child Benefits.** For public speakers contact Margaret Renn, I.S. Women's Organiser, 6, Cottons Gardens, London E.2.

NORTH LONDON WOMENS VOICE GROUP: We are having a picnic on Hampstead Heath (weather permitting) on Sunday 8 August. If you are interested, why not come along and bring the kids. Should be a nice afternoon out. Phone Diane (348 2041) or Mandy (607 8067) for further details.



THE FIGHT FOR EQUAL PAY GOES ON

Picture Chris Davies (Report)



RIGHT through the heatwave, the women at Trico have kept up their picket. They have been on strike since May for equal pay, and their morale is high. The women are members of the Engineering union, the AUEW. They get £6.50 less than

men who were moved onto the day production shift from nights, and who do the same work right alongside them. The factory is in Brentford, West London. More than half the windscreen wipers used by Ford, Vauxhall and Rolls Royce are made by Trico.

NEXT STOP BRIGHTON!

Official unemployment figures still show 1 1/2 million people out of work. The real figure is much higher. This summer school-leavers face worse prospects of finding a job than at any time since the war.

The Labour government's job creation scheme has failed to stop the steady growth of the dole-queue. The social contract was a complete fraud. The unemployed stayed unemployed. And the TUC leaders stood back and watched.

Following the highly successful Manchester to London 'Right to Work March' earlier this year, there has been a gathering campaign among rank and file trade unionists who believe this is the time to fight.

Now the National Right to Work Campaign is organising a September march from London to Brighton. The aim is to picket the annual congress of the TUC, to try to rouse the whole trade union movement to defend their unemployed sisters and brothers.



Photo John Sturrock (Report)

If you want your organisation to support the march, send for details to: John Deason, National Secretary, Right to Work Campaign, 265a Seven Sisters Road, London N4. To sponsor a marcher costs

£1 or more. Take collections and send your money as soon as possible.

If you are unemployed, and would like to add your name to the 100 already signed up to

take part in the march, write to the same address.

The more women who march, the more we shall be able to put over the idea that women, too, have the right to work.

inbrief

Witham, Essex. Ten women are still on strike at Pannell Products for the right to belong to a trade union. The women get a miserable £21 take-home pay, for working in rotten conditions. They are demanding their union, the General and Municipal Workers, be recognised, and they want a £5.60 wage rise too.

In Paisley, Scotland, 35 women are on strike for equal pay at Shanks

Armitage. They get an average of £45 a week, while the men get £57. They are members of the AUEW. The male machinists are scabbing.

The white collar union, ASTMS, has gained 'the best maternity leave agreement in the country' with Longman's Publishing Company.

There will be 18 weeks paid leave for expectant mothers who have worked for 21 months or more, with an option of a further 32 weeks' unpaid leave. This means the safeguarding of jobs for 52 weeks.

After returning to work, a mother will only have to work for three days a week for the first four weeks without loss of pay.

Fathers will also receive leave under the company's discretionary leave policy.

While trained nurses have no jobs to go to... thousands of old people with foot complaints have to wait up to three years to see a chiropodist. For the National Health chiropody service is 50 per cent understaffed.

A report by Age Concern England says that while 93 per cent of elderly people would benefit from treatment (for bunions, corns, ingrown toenails, etc) fewer than 15 per cent are being treated.

The report calls for more NHS chiropody schools with better salaries for staff, who are currently paid less than those in authority institutions.

London schoolgirls are threatening to report Wimbledon's tennis organisers to the Equal Opportunities Commission after being turned down for jobs as 'Ball girls'.

Major David Mills, secretary of the All England Club, claimed that there are no ball girls because there are not adequate changing facilities for both sexes. But he exposed himself by adding that he wants proof 'that they can stand up to the rigours of the job. We can't afford to have them falling by the wayside!!!'

Women in the chorus line of the Val Doonican show have won their claim for equal pay. They were being paid £16 per week less than the men in the chorus line for the duration of the show.

Student teachers are carrying on their fight for jobs over the summer and into next term.

Although the occupations have been called off by the National Union of Students leadership, some of the most militant colleges are being kept open as centres of the campaign.

The main thing now is to get the active support of trade unionists.

For more details of the campaign contact Lindsey German, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

men who were moved onto the day production shift from nights, and who do the same work right alongside them.

The parent firm, American Trico Products Limited, make enormous profits. But the management are refusing to pay up. A great boost was given to the women's stand when male production workers finally decided to strike with them. But they still have to watch tool-room workers and office workers going into work every day. The scabs are openly hostile.

During one mass meeting on a playing field next to the factory, the women saw men workers climb over the factory fence and run towards the meeting to try and break it up. So the meeting had to be cancelled.

SUPPORT

But the women are not deterred. They are doing all they can to gather support all over London. They have regular marches through Brentford. They have organised a hardship fund which is given out to those most in need.

They have gone in groups to the various local services departments to claim their rights. When they were turned away at one office, they sat in all day, until the police were called to evict them.

The strike is official. Trico goods are already blacked at Ford, London Airport and the docks. But clearly the blacking needs to be stepped up. Trico products go to the car industry, which has strong AUEW organisation. The union must be forced to pull out all the stops to win this strike.

FIGHT

The Trico bosses are pinning their hopes of defeating this strike on the equal pay tribunal. They are claiming that the men are a special case... that they are more 'versatile' than the women. The tribunal meets in mid-July. It may rule against the women, as it has done against many others. These 'impartial' tribunals already have a long record of bias against workers. The union says the women have a just case.

The women themselves know that they are right. Whatever happens at the tribunal, they need not and they must not give up the fight. Their biggest weapon is to keep that production line silenced and still, and to step up nationwide support.

On their success rest the hopes of thousands of other women currently being cheated out of equal pay.

Subscribe to Womens Voice... Name... Address...

To win they need money. Strike pay of £8 per week is starvation pay—especially for single mothers among the strikers. A public meeting of North London Womens Voice group raised £16.50 (see p6 inside). A Right to Work meeting in North London, which three strikers attended raised £51. See what you can raise and send it to TRICO Strike Committee, AUEW, Southall District, 1 Woodlands Road, Southall, Middlesex.