

WOMENS VOICE

November/December 1976 No 35 Price 7p

DON'T LET THEM CUT OUR LIVES TO SHREDS!



SIMON, SARA AND LISA LUNN WERE ALL BORN IN THE BLOXWICH MATERNITY HOME. Their eldest brother Jason was born in another home, but one run along similar lines—homes, not hospitals. Homes where nurses and midwives have the time to look after and care for the women who come in to have their babies. Homes that are now threatened because there isn't the money, or so someone says, to run a decent health service any longer.

'They want their heads looking at if they close the Bloxwich down' Chris Lunn told Womens Voice.

'Women will have to go to the Manor Hospital instead, but they've got too many patients and no patience there. The nurses are quick tempered and always want you to hurry up. It's not their fault—they have too much running around to do.

At Bloxwich the staff are smashing. There were three with me when I was having Simon, and they never left me alone. The black nurses are lovely too—they're patient and gentle. I wouldn't like to see it close down, even if I don't have to go there again!

The fact is they will close it down because there isn't more money; there is less and less, for the things that matter to women like Chris Lunn.

The papers, television, the Labour Government and the Tories all blame us for the economic troubles we're in—but we're not responsible. Chris Lunn has never overspent in her life. She's never had anything to overspend.

Geoff takes home £28 a week. £8.51 goes on rent. That leaves £20 a week for two adults and four young children. It is just about enough to keep body and soul together. When the rent goes up again it won't even do that.

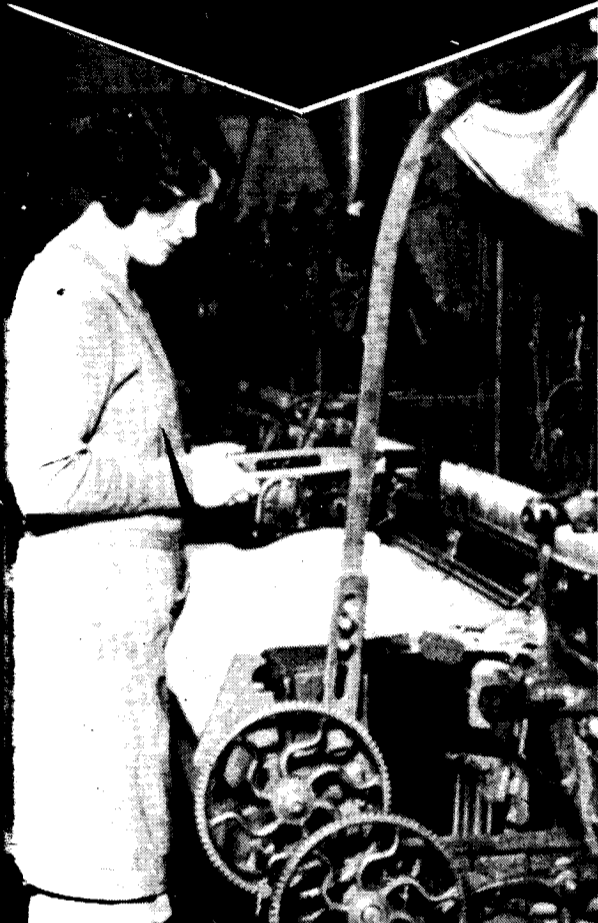
'I'd like to go out to work, to get some things for the kids, and something for myself. I might, if there was a nursery for the little ones to go to. My mum would take the two older ones before and after school.

As it is, I've been going to and from the school eight times a day some weeks. They only go half days, and some weeks Lisa goes mornings while Jason goes afternoons.

With that, and the rows about money—they're just wearing us down.'

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★ Police strike! p4 & 5 ★ Nursery campaigns p3

HOW WE BUILT OUR WOMENS VOICE GROUP



BY Linda Quinn
Five or six of us used to get together in the pub. That was how we started our Womens Voice group in South West London.

That was five months ago. And we now have over 30 members and contacts.

From the beginning we felt that if we were to have any success in attracting women to socialist ideas, then we must be activists.

We would campaign on the issues that affect women—as well as having meetings where we could sort our own ideas out. But we had to avoid being little more than a discussion group, relating to nobody but ourselves.

We started off by selling Womens Voice regularly outside supermarkets on late opening nights and at the tube stations. We then sold about 10 to 13 papers in an hour. We also attempted to draw in women who we already had some contact with.

At our first public meeting, we showed the film *Blow for Blow*—about women involved in a factory dispute, how they struggled and won. The meeting was a great success, and from there we had a group of women who wanted to be involved with our activities.

Since the group started, we have had street meetings on equal pay—where we raised money for the Trico strikers—and women and the right to work. We have supported the abortion campaign and the anti-racist campaign.

Many of the women have kids, so we decided to organise a picnic that they would enjoy, and so that we would all get to know each other better. This was a huge success—nothing to do with the fact that we met in the garden of a public house!

In the near future we plan to hold further public meetings, a fundraising social, and a campaign on a local estate against the cuts.

The message we want to put across is that Womens Voice groups do have a role to play. We are offering women a solution to their present exploitation and oppression, by fighting against the system which has created that exploitation and oppression. The solution we offer is the fight for socialism.



We are organising a socialist alternative

Socialist Worker had a candidate in the Walsall North by-election because we think that voting Labour is no longer of any benefit to ordinary people.

In fact it's the Labour government which is kicking us in the teeth—cutting pay and jobs, allowing food prices to run riot, and closing hospitals and schools. Meanwhile the parasites—the fiddlers and tax scroungers like Stonehouse, Slater Walker and the Poulson gang—can laugh all the way to the Cayman Islands or their secret bank accounts.

The Tories would be worse—but we don't think that's a reason to vote Labour when there is a real alternative.

We know that politicians in Parliament can't solve the crisis. Most of them don't even promise to any more. We have an alternative to the Labour and Tory politicians. We are ordinary working men and women can win the fight by our own activities. The fight against the cuts, against unemployment and racism, and for higher wages, better health provision and better housing.

We can do this by organising with other workers in the places where we have the power—at work, in shopping centres and on estates.

Socialist Worker did not make empty, electoral,

promises about what our candidate would do for us in Parliament—because we know MPs can't deliver the goods.

A vote for Socialist Worker is a vote for rank and file activity. Socialist Worker voters are people who know that they've got the power to fight, and win, together.

Canvassing

When we were canvassing in Walsall—on the estates, outside the factories, in the markets and in meetings—that was our message. We weren't looking for votes to send our candidate to a £8,000-a-year job in Parliament. We were asking people to join us to build the socialist alternative.

The response was enormous. On the estates one in five households bought Socialist Worker. The buyers were mainly young women with kids who are feeling the cuts and will suffer when the local maternity hospital is closed. Yet they're hopeful and confident enough to find out about our alternative—their alternative.

Many of the people who joined Socialist Worker are from the black community—people like Avtar Singh, a busworker, and Jit Singh, a senior shop steward in a foundry.

Socialist Worker and Womens Voice are totally opposed to racism. We will not tolerate black workers being made the scapegoats

for the lousy housing and unemployment that the bosses and the government force on us. Only united rank and file action will defeat racism and the conditions in which it flourishes.

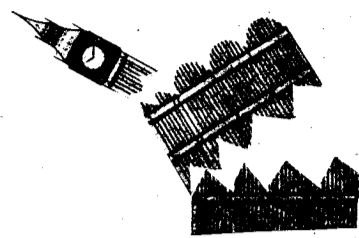
School leavers

We've also aimed our campaign at school-leavers. They find themselves on the scrapheap before they're old enough to vote—no hope that MP's will fight for them!

One sign of the need for a real workers' alternative is that sales of SW are rising each week, and that many more people than expected have joined Socialist Worker.

Many people responded immediately, but many were suspicious when they opened their doors (and a huge number of people in Walsall bolt their doors when they're inside). But we soon became confident enough to realise that a very justified suspicion of 'politicians' can quickly become interest in militant self-activity.

Walsall shows the enormous need for a revolutionary socialist alternative—the Socialist Worker Party. But it's also much harder than a three-week election campaign—because we don't want just a vote: we want those voters to become confident enough to join us in militant activity to destroy the whole lousy system



FIGHTING THE CUTS

Not just a slogan!

You were lucky if you got a seat at the Right to Work Conference—but nobody minded standing.

730 trade union delegates crammed into the Manchester hall. Our feeling of confidence rose as we realised the real strength we represented.

Every strike or other dispute going on sent delegates. Why? Because those workers realised that we're the only people fighting for jobs and a decent living.

Several Courtaulds factories were there. As you probably know, Courtaulds, the textile giant, is planning to sack 6000 workers. The speaker from

Skelmersdale gave us heartening news. The workers at this factory are not just going down the road—and the rest of Skelmersdale's workers are right behind them.

When the closure was announced, the whole of Skelmersdale stopped

work to demonstrate and show their anger. Unemployment is already 20 per cent—despite management threats of sackings, the workers of Skem came out.

'I couldn't believe my eyes. The whole of Skem was there' said the delegate. He asked us to send telegrams of support—that's something we can all do.

Redundancies weren't the only thing we talked

about. Doctors and hospital porters, teachers and school cleaners told of the struggles against the cuts. Workers in other industries promised their support. A woman engineering worker from Glasgow spoke of how

There are people ready the right to work. Cuts affect all working people.

There are people ready to fight. This conference proved that. We're going in the right direction—the right direction to win.



Larleen Lewis argues against racism

NUT Members suspended by union...

... for fighting the cuts

IT'S the teachers' union, the NUT, which is attacking the teachers at Little Ilford school in Newham, East London. They're helping the Government to cut education and to attack women workers especially.

The NUT is taking disciplinary action against 30 teachers—half the school staff. They haven't acted as scabs or harmed their fellow workers. Just the opposite. They held a token strike in sympathy with a teacher who was being victimised by the Local Authority, Newham. He had implemented local NUT policy of refusing to

cover for a teacher, who was going to be away for up to 29 weeks on maternity leave.

There are 20,000 unemployed teachers who could cover for her—but the cuts mean that the LEA are trying to pile the work onto the other teachers. The kids suffer, the teachers suffer, and one of

No cover

that 20,000 still goes without a job.

Anyone can see that if the union doesn't insist on cover in this case, women are threatened. They will



London teacher Sean Doherty, urges support for Little Ilford teachers at Right to Work Conference.

be pressurised into not having kids, or leaving work if they're pregnant—instead of taking the maternity leave they're legally entitled to. And if they leave, they won't be replaced—so heads and teachers will be reluctant to appoint women at all!

The local teachers tried to fight this threat. But instead of backing them and spreading this lead, the National Union of Teachers' Executive is trying to suspend the teachers from the union for 'unofficial action'. By withdrawing all support it is deliberately sabotaging the fight against the cuts.

Womens Voice Diary

WE NEED WOMEN SPEAKERS: Women members of the International Socialists who are prepared to speak at IS meetings, NOISS meetings, Women's Voice meetings. This time round we want women speakers on women's subjects. So if you are an able speaker, or are willing to learn, please contact us now.

Can you speak on: abortion, equal pay, women's right to work, equal rights, women's liberation, health and mental illness, women in history (any famous women), prostitution, the church, the family...?

Send your name, address, phone number, the times you can do meetings—lunchtime, early evening, evening, weekends—and the subjects you can speak on, to Women Speakers, 6 Cottons Gardens, London, E2, or phone Margaret Renn or Lindsey German on 01-739 1878.

CHILD POVERTY ACTION GROUP Public Meeting 7.30pm, Wednesday November 24th, Grand Committee Room, House of Commons, Child Benefits

Speakers: Stan Orme, Minister for Social Security Kenneth Clarke, Opposition Spokesman Jo Richardson MP Alan Fisher NUPE Frank Field CPAG Chair: Tess Woodcraft, Gingerbread

THE NORTHERN IRELAND WOMEN'S PEACE MOVEMENT is holding a rally in Trafalgar Square on November 27th. Women's Voice supporters will be joining the Troops Out movement in a picket, calling for

peace with justice, troops out now. Watch Socialist Worker for further details.

NORTH LONDON Womens Voice Group meeting: Monday 6 December: Women and the Trade Unions—Speaker: Anna Paczuska. Tottenham Beehive pub, Stoneleigh Road, Tottenham, N17. (just off Tottenham High Road, N17). 8pm.

NATIONAL ABORTION CAMPAIGN Fund-raising disco Saturday 4th December, 8pm to 1.30am The Basement, 29 Shelton St, London WC2 50p entrance—all welcome

WOMENS VOICE ABORTION BADGES available now 15p including postage, £2 for 20, £10 for 100 post free. Money with orders to: Womens Voice, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2

TRICO: Spread the good news



By Margaret Renn
IS Women's organiser.

THE Trico strike has been won. What a great victory! But now the news of that victory needs to be spread to other women who have equal pay claims in the pipeline;—or who should have claims in the pipeline. Because there is one simple message from Trico—You have to fight.

Fight for equal pay, fight to win the support of the other women and men in the factory; fight to win support from other workers in your industry or union. But whatever you do, don't rely on tribunals and don't put all your faith in trade union officials.

The Trico women could have won their strike months ago if the National Executive of their union the AUEW had pulled its weight.

TASS, the white collar section of the AUEW has a half page ad in the magazine Spare Rib this month. It says 'the equal pay legislation is helpful, but there is no substitute for trade union organisation. All women workers should be trade unionists.'

Yet TASS members worked in Trico throughout the six months strike!

There must be hundreds of other factories like Trico. We know how strikes can be won. And we know that women will have to fight, to strike, for equal pay. So now it's our job to go out and tell them.

That's why Womens Voice is organising, here and now, an equal pay campaign.

We're asking you to visit every factory in your town to find out if the women have equal pay. Knock on the door, phone up the shop stewards. Leaflets about equal pay and the women at Trico are available from Womens Voice. We'll be producing badges and posters.

Organise sales of Womens Voice and street meetings, until you find the women who are prepared to fight.

Phone Margaret Renn, 01 739 1878, with information about your campaign, for help, with ideas.

But don't wait. People have short memories. Be there to tell them about the victory at Trico next Monday morning.

The Trico women marched back to work the same way as they came out—united and strong

The Price of Peace

When the Peace Movement started it had a very simple message—PEACE. It attracted both Catholics and Protestant. The prayers and appeals for peace caught the imagination of thousands desperate for an end to sectarian fighting.

Most national papers have given it a large and sympathetic coverage. The two leaders, Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan, are portrayed as typical working women. The truth is very different. Betty Williams has a nice house in a middle class district, well away from the slums of the Catholic ghetto. Mairead Corrigan isn't doing badly either. She is the personal secretary of the Managing Director of Guinness and is on fully-paid leave until the end of the year!

Despite the enormous aid from the Press, the peace movement has run into serious difficulties. The major problem being that Northern Ireland is a divided community.

In a population of 1½ million, there are 60,000 out of work and, according to recent reports, 450,000 living in 'unsatisfactory' housing. The bulk of these are Catholics.

Peace means different things to different people. To the Protestants it means simply: smash the IRA and maintain a statelet biased in their favour. Catholics want peace but they also want jobs and decent houses. This directly challenges the existence of the sectarian statelet.

This same problem has wrecked all previous attempts at peace. The truth is that while the Orange Statelet continues to exist, propped up by 15,000 British troops, there can be no peace in Ireland.

Since 1972, meetings on Ireland have been banned from Trafalgar Square. The peace movement, backed by Lord Longford, (the well-known arch-reactionary and anti-abortionist) has now been granted permission to hold a peace rally in Trafalgar Square.

Only the immediate withdrawal of British troops and an end to British involvement



will make peace a possibility.

In Ireland the peace movement is now beginning to falter. We must ensure that the peace at any price brigade are challenged here here in Britain.

Their rally will be, thanks to the Catholic Church, very large and well-publicised. It is important that there is a large counter-presence at this rally. Our slogan should be: The first step to peace, troops out now. And Ireland unfree shall never be at peace.

TRAFALGAR SQUARE RALLY SATURDAY 27 NOVEMBER ALL WV SUPPORTERS SHOULD ATTEND

WHO KILLED ZAHIRA'S BABY?



Protesters at London Airport after Zahira's baby died.

An 18-year-old woman was forced last week to have her baby in an airport waiting room. Security guards stood by and laughed as she screamed in pain. They refused to call an ambulance until the baby's head appeared. By then it was too late. The baby died two days later.

Her name is Zahira Goliara. She married Afzal Gollara this time last year when Afzal returned to his native Gujarat, India. For five years before that Afzal had been resident in Britain. He is a British citizen and works for London Transport underground.

Zahira and Afzal returned last Wednesday. Zahira was eight months pregnant with her first child. Afzal was allowed in. Zahira was

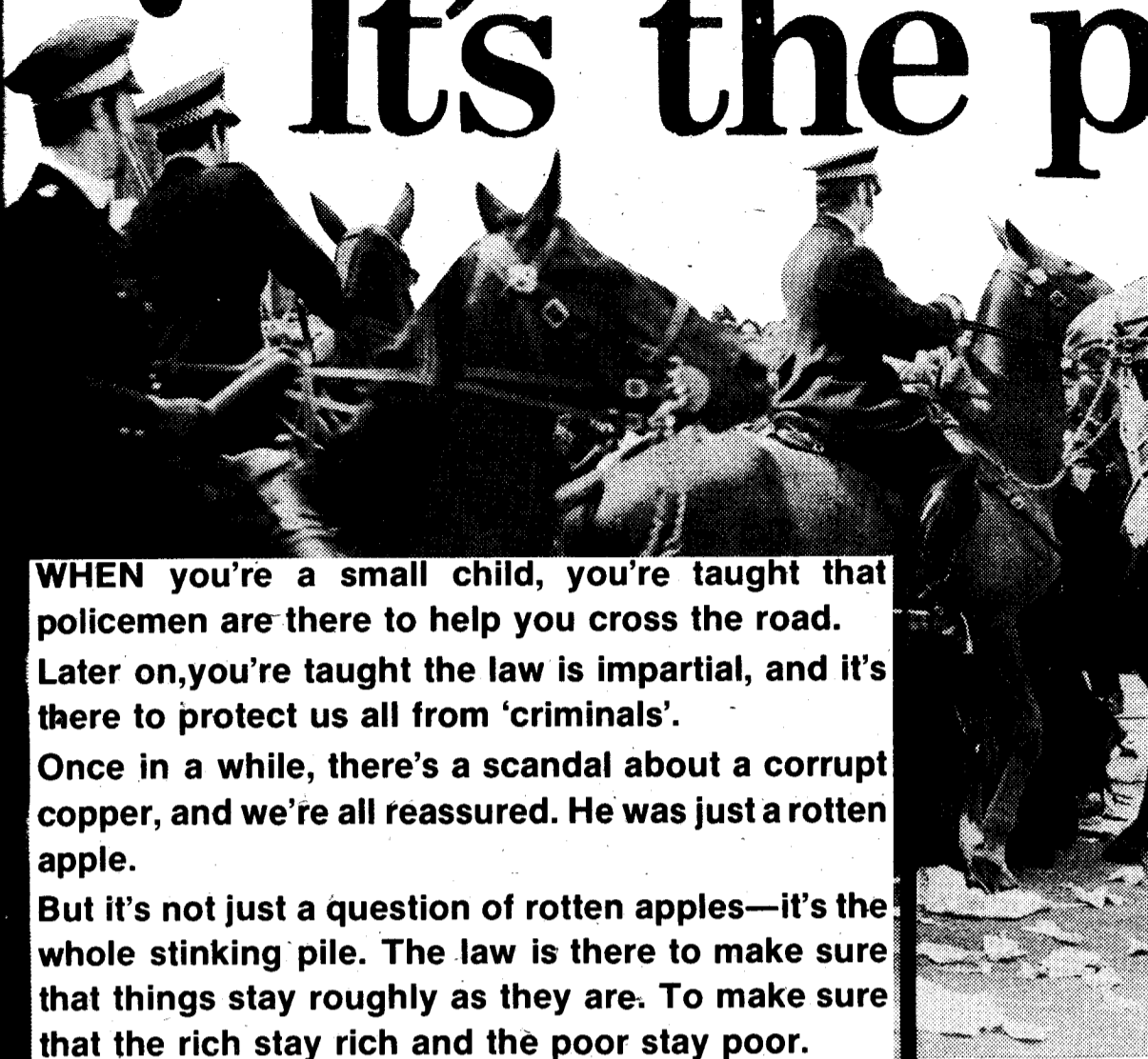
told that her papers were out of order and she would have to be deported the following day.

A demonstration picket of the Heath Immigration Centres has been called for Saturday November 20th, to protest against the disgusting racist immigration and racist immigration officials.

The demonstration has been sponsored by anti-racist community and political organisations who are demanding no Home Office white-wash of Zahira's case, and a full independent inquiry, involving anti-racist and immigration organisations.

We urge all socialist and anti-racists to be at the demonstration on Saturday November 20. Coach leave Southall at 10.15 from Dominion Car Park behind Dominion Cinema, The Green, Southall.

'It's the poor what



Police murderers get away scot free

LICENCE TO KILL. That's what the Liddle Towers verdict means for the police.

Liddle Towers died after being beaten up by the police in Gateshead earlier this year. He'd been arrested outside a County Durham nightclub for allegedly being drunk and disorderly.

Three weeks later he was dead. Before he died, he said that the injuries that were killing him had been inflicted at the police station. The Coroner at the inquest ruled that this was 'inadmissible evidence.'

Eight policemen involved in the incident refused to give evidence to the inquest. The coroner only called witnesses the police wanted. Even so, seven witnesses picked out three policemen who had assaulted Liddle outside the night club.

The jury—after only hearing police evidence, and heavily influenced by the coroner—brought in a verdict of 'justifiable homicide'. This means that they thought the police had murdered Liddle Towers. But they thought it was justified to prevent him committing some crime of an equally serious nature. But Liddle Towers was only being accused of being drunk and disorderly!

The Liddle Towers Action Committee is organising protests, and letters to

the Home Secretary, demanding a full and open inquiry. If the Home Secretary will not budge, the money must be found to bring a civil case.

Marion Woods, Liddle's sister said: 'We'd have been happy with a verdict of accidental death. Everyone knew the police were guilty. But that just gives the police a licence to kill.' Contact the Action Committee: Ray Challinor, Secretary, 132 Claremont Road, Whitley Bay.

WHEN you're a small child, you're taught that policemen are there to help you cross the road. Later on, you're taught the law is impartial, and it's there to protect us all from 'criminals'.

Once in a while, there's a scandal about a corrupt copper, and we're all reassured. He was just a rotten apple.

But it's not just a question of rotten apples—it's the whole stinking pile. The law is there to make sure that things stay roughly as they are. To make sure that the rich stay rich and the poor stay poor.

That's why 14 year old Malcolm Bryson got a life sentence for setting fire to his school, causing £20,000 worth of damage. But 18 years old Simon Rhodes, who set fire to HIS school, causing £92,000 damage was given a conditional discharge—he's second cousin to the Queen.

where Kevin Gateley was killed



Asian arrested in Blackburn



Arrest after a demonstration against the National Front

Where the cuts won't bite

THERE ARE 41,000 people in prison.

Most of them are there for petty offences against property which could have been settled in the Civil Courts. It costs £50 a week to keep each prisoner—all to protect the establishment's sacred cow of property!

Of course it is not all loss. The 1975 Annual Report of the Prison Department reports a good year for prison industries. Sales of goods produced by prisoners rose by £4.5 million, although the trading account did show a slight overall loss. On prison farms profits rose by £607,000. What is more prison industries have moved into the export market and are soaking up some of the surplus Middle Eastern oil revenue by making beds for the Saudi Arabian Prison Department.

Closed

Soon more workers will be enjoying the happy working conditions in Her Majesty's prisons. Whilst hospitals, schools, nurseries are being closed, three new prisons are to be open by 1980. These new prisons will take an extra 5000 prisoners! A 12½ per cent increase in one 'public service' at least.

Of course the prisons are also expanding right now! In 1975 a record number of 1790 additional prison officers were taken on. When overtime was cut back this year the Hull prisoners had to be confined to their rooms and riots broke out at the most severe and brutal prison in Britain.

Sometimes we don't understand how deep the crisis of capitalism is. But the capitalists spend a great deal of time and money preparing against a future revolution—collecting the names of everyone who signs a petition, building prisons, training special squads in the police and the army, building civilian reserves!

British capitalism needs more prisons and prison officers because of its own crisis. It is imprisoning women on social security, shoplifters who pinch food, parents driven to child battering, and now Right to Work marchers!



Holloway: one facility for women they're not cutting back on

Savage sentences doled out to teenagers

'While there are social problems in London that lead boys to do this I don't want to live here.'

Mrs McGraw was attacked and robbed in the streets of Clapham and is leaving to live in the Isle of Wight.

The teenage kids who attacked her have been jailed or put in Borstal for up to seven years.

John Stonehouse who spent years carefully stealing thousands of pounds from starving Bengalis was also given seven years—and allowed to keep the money.

We do not condone mugging. But we do understand the difference between Stonehouse and a group of deprived black kids living in lousy housing conditions and probably unemployed—but

unfortunately their easiest targets are other people in similar conditions.

But Judge Gwyn Morris QC, who passed these savage sentences, after making openly racist comments in court, went on to advocate that mobs—vigilante patrols—should roam the streets.

Their job would be to attack anyone they felt like attacking—black, white, old or young, in the name of 'law and order'.

Judge Gwyn Morris is advocating a fascist state—starting in Clapham.



gets the blame...



Woman victimised

by ANGELA MAXFIELD

SHERIFF RUSSELL YOU'RE DISGUSTING! You and your whole stinking set-up. Last week you sent Kathleen Mearns to prison for three months.

How would you like to be 24 years old, with three kids under eight and no job? How would you like to have to survive on the Social Security with its questions, its forms, its queues, its spies and its overwhelming meanness?

Scapegoat

How would you like to be the scapegoat for a whole crisis, the crisis of a system you didn't create, and you don't profit from? How would you feel if you faced a whole set of vicious rules on 'cohabitation' designed to victimise single women like yourself? And how would you feel if your whole life was dragged through a court, if your kids only escaped being put in care because of support from family and neighbours, if you were told you'd committed 'a serious crime', because some spiteful old judge believed you'd been sleeping with your lodger while living on the SS?

Our Aberdeen reporter writes: 'The significance of this event is that the conservative MP for South Aberdeenshire Iain Sproat has been waging his very own campaign to 'beat the scroungers'. His ideas have been given a great deal of publicity in the local newspapers and the Gram-

pian TV and have influenced many people who are looking round for scapegoats to pin the economic crisis on. Single women with children are particularly vulnerable to this type of suspicion of abusing social security hand outs, and the cohabitation rule is so disgustingly loaded against women that it is easy for a case to be brought.

The judge himself, obviously influenced by Sproat, can be seen to be using Mrs Mearns as an 'example to other would-be criminals.'

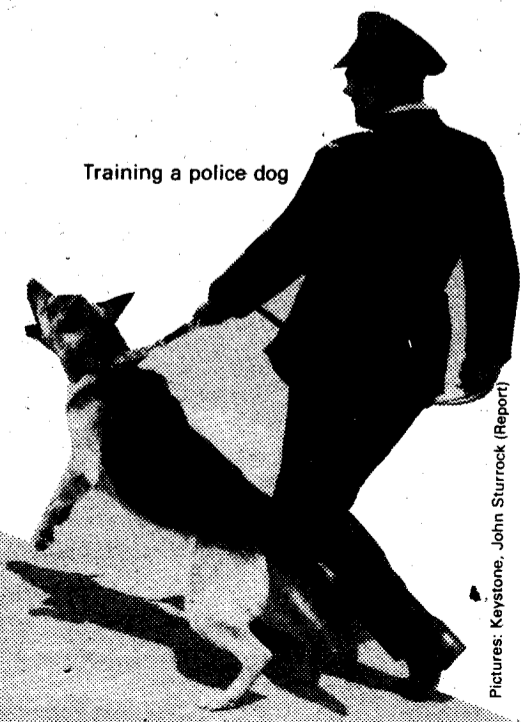
'This is a serious crime even outwith the present climate of opinion in this country... You are quite unable to repay and you are not in need of probation. But I cannot just have you walk out with an admonition or a deferred sentence.'

Sproat's poison is not confined to single women on social security struggling to bring up children—he is also a racist. He's been using the local papers to spread his filth 'Immigrants, whatever their colour could claim welfare benefits...' he whines.

Of course Sproat doesn't live in Aberdeen. But we've organised a picket of his agents' premises and letters of support for Mrs Mearns.'

For more information write to Womens Voice, 6 Cottons Gardens, London, E2 and we'll put you in touch.

Training a police dog



Pictures: Keystone, John Sturrock (Report)

Right to Work trials

OVER THE PAST six weeks, 19 men and women have found themselves in the dock of Hendon Magistrates Court, accused by batteries of police. Their crime? Protesting against unemployment.

The cases arise out of the first 1976 Right to Work March. On March 19th, as we neared the end of our three week trek from Manchester, the 80 marchers and their supporters were subjected to a brutal police attack outside West Hendon police station. In all 44 people were arrested.

The police attack was unprovoked, but we can only assume that their intention was to make a few arrests and demoralise our campaign.

Of the cases heard so far, there have been 11 convictions and 8 acquittals. Three people have been given prison sentences, and several others suspended sentences—for assaulting the police. They say we attacked them.

I was acquitted of two charges of attacking police, but no-one should think this is an example of British justice weeding out the guilty ones. In the case in which I and six other marchers appeared, the results were nothing more than a lottery. All the police

lied their heads off. The only thing which exposed the witnesses against me was some handy photographs, which happened to show me on the steps of the police station being taken in. The two police who said they arrested me were nowhere to be seen!

Others were not so lucky. Mike Lynch, an unemployed miner from Dunfermline, was given a vicious six month prison sentence by the bench—chaired by the wife of a local Tory alderman. Again the evidence was a concoction of lies. Mike was supposed to

have kicked a policeman in the mouth—but we all knew that Mike had been knocked unconscious right at the beginning of the attack.

The charges were rigged in such a way that we had to be tried by magistrates, not by a jury. And magistrates are well known, because of their upper class background, for their belief in 'law and order' and they bend over backwards to believe the police.

But we are not going to be intimidated. All of our convicted brothers are out on bail

pending appeal, and the Right to Work campaign is going from strength to strength. After the successful march to the TUC at Brighton, the next big step is the rank and file delegate conference against the cuts and unemployment on November 6.

by PETE FYSH

ADVERTISEMENT

No more Shrewsburys

If the Committee had clear evidence that on 19 March the violence had been caused or provoked by something the marchers had done it would be difficult to say that there had been any interference with the right to protest. But the evidence before the Committee is to the contrary.

Part of the report of the Independent Trade Union Inquiry into the arrest of 43 Right to Work Marchers at Hendon last spring. The committee comprised:

Bryan Stanley, general secretary of the Post Office Engineering Union and a member of the National Executive of the Labour Party. Jack Collins, a Kent miner and member of the National Union of Mineworkers' national executive. Jack Morrish, Group general secretary of the Society of Civil Servants. Syd Bidwell, Labour MP for Southall. Dolly Sewell, a shop steward at Patent Die Castings. Chris Soutar, a trade union convenor at Oliver and Thomas. Mike McGrath, a member of the executive of the civil servants union. CPSSA. Ian MacDonald, a barrister, and Vincent Flynn, former general secretary of the print union SOGAT.

The full report is available from 16 Yew Grove, London NW2 3AD. Once you have read it, please act on it.

Picture: John Sturrock (Report)



Marchers 'attack' police at Hendon

Crocodile tears for Jarrow marchers

What would you call 'Nationwide'—a magazine programme or a load of rubbish? Typical of their output is the way they have been dealing with the 'history' of the Jarrow Hunger March of 1936.

Every week on Thursday nights Nationwide has been looking at the route of the Jarrow march, interviewing the unemployed marchers, and speaking to people in the towns they marched through. One interview was with a 'self-made' miner who became a mine manager and who lives in a converted Georgian stable surrounded by antiques!

The reasons that 'Nationwide' decided to report the Jarrow march and not all the other Hunger marchers in the 1930s, was made very clear early on in the series. The television presenter explained that the decision to march from Jarrow to London was a 'democratic' decision taken by a 'democratically elected Council'. That at no point did the march challenge, or even intent to challenge the 'forces of law and order.'

Of course the Jarrow March was a march run by a Labour Council and a Labour MP, Ellen Wilkinson, and the reason that everyone remembers it is that the Labour Party has kept its memory alive. But the real opposition to the terrible unemployment of the thirties didn't come from the Labour Party or the peaceful marchers of Jarrow and their petition to Parliament. It came from the Communist inspired and Communist organised National Unemployed Workers Movement (NUMW) and their Hunger Marches of 1932, 1934, and 1936.

The NUMW was not a peaceful organisation. The 1932 Hunger March to London was met by a couple of hundred thousand at Hyde Park and there were three riots in four days in London. But the cuts of the National Government weren't peaceful either—they meant starvation for millions! The NUMW was democratic—but it didn't believe in parliamentary democracy—and it was led by some of the best members of the Com-



The one you haven't heard about. Police charge marches near Marble Arch during a mass demonstration against the means test, 1932.

unist Party in the thirties.

Today some members of the Communist Party and Labour Party are opposed to the Right to Work marchers and they blame the attacks by the police at Hendon in 1976 on 'both sides'. In 1936, the Labour Party stopped the Jarrow marchers with the 1936 NUMW march. The 'wreckers' of our movement are those who expect us to peacefully, democratically, lay down and die when we become unemployed. Not to fight but to elect people who promise to fight for us—as if they ever did!

by Joan Smith

Make next year Law and Disorder Year!

The theme of the 1977 Big Red Diary is Law and Disorder—the legal repression of capitalist society

There's William Hone in all his glory taking the piss out of the high and mighty... It also contains a great

deal about the struggle for real freedom...

Treat yourself. Have one for each pocket.

—Laurie Flynn in Socialist Worker.



SEND ME A 1977 BIG RED DIARY

I enclose £1 per copy of which 25p is for the Right to Work Defence Fund

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

NUMBER OF COPIES _____

Please Press, I will 10 Spence Court
71, Babcock Road, London, W11
Cash with order only.

WRITE TO WOMENS VOICE



at
**6 Cottons Gardens
London E2 8DN**

WHOSE MORALITY?

Dear Womens Voice,
I realise that it is hard for us to imagine alternatives to such a basic institution as the family. But I was a bit puzzled by one aspect of your view on the alternatives to our present family system in your last issue (October 1976).

It is only because of religious and political ideologies convenient to our ruling classes that sex is seen as something special that drags along a whole set of social arrangements as its 'proper' and 'decent' consequences. Of course the ruling class don't live by the morality they have peddled to us any more than it suits them.

Once we have decent housing, child care and public transport, people may decide to live together in different sized groups for all sorts of different reasons. The way they relate to each other sexually will be only one reason for living together. Hopefully it will be meaningless, under Socialism, to talk about 'couples' and 'single people' as it will talk about 'friends' and 'friendless people' or 'sexual people' and 'unsexual people'.

□ Mel Bartley

I PAY TWICE FOR MY 'SINS'

Dear WV
I was forced to go for a rip-off private abortion in a clinic with a cash turnover of about £12,000 a week. My own doctor refused to refer me for a NHS abortion—because 'single, working women can afford to pay!' But I do pay—enough taxes for 2 abortions a month!

□ Sally Hutchins, Grimsby.

WRITE TO WOMENS VOICE



Dance and give a donation to the defence fund! Yes, this is THE single just out on the new KK label. £1 plus 10p postage from Bookmarks, 265a Seven Sisters Road, London, N4. All proceeds to the defence of the Right to Work Marchers.

WOMENS VOICE

"WHAT DID YOU LEARN AT SCHOOL TODAY?"

Dear Womens Voice
When I was a seven year old schoolgirl in a Catholic school, my class learned to recite the following poem by a fat, jolly English poet.

"I remember my mother the first day we met
A thing I shall never entirely forget
And I toy with the fancy that, young as I am
I shall know her again if we met in a tram.

For my mother was working . . ."

That's as far as my memory takes me. But the rest of the poem was an attack on women factory and office workers in places like Wigan, where I was.

And it was written by G. K. Chesterton—and he and his friends were never short of a few bob.

□ June Rhodes, Wigan

THE FAMILY

Dear WV
I was really surprised at the 'morality' of my GP when I recently tried to get an abortion on the NHS.

He told me that he would refer me for a private abortion, but not an NHS one (which I was entitled to under the 1967 Abortion Act), because I was really perfectly healthy and only wanted a termination for 'selfish reasons'.

The logic of this amazed me. He must have thought that I should pay for my sins—literally.

□ Jane Lodge, W. London

APOLOGY

Last month's section on 'The Family: Haven or Hell?' was compiled and written by Kathy Sims. We left Kathy's name out by mistake—sorry!

Why I joined IS

by Anna Sullivan

IT WAS MY FATHER who first gave me a political education. He was a member of the Communist party and I was raised on stories of Cable Street, when they stopped the fascists, and of Ridley Road. I often went to meetings with him and probably I would have joined the Communist Party if he himself had not left after being a member for twenty-five years.

Like most women, I went straight from my parent's home into marriage. I got married at nineteen, had three children, and ended up divorced and living alone with my children. Coming from a working class family in the East End I had no rich parents to help me, no property, and no profession.

Humiliation

I and my children lived on social security and suffered all the humiliation that the SS can inflict on single parent families. Fortunately my background meant that I could understand the reasons for my oppression under capitalism and at least I didn't suffer from feeling that it was my inadequacy and my inferiority that produced my situation. Many women are made to feel that it is their fault that they are reduced to poverty, bad housing and lousy living conditions.

Eventually I went to the Sydney Webb College and trained to be a teacher for four years. All that time I was active on the Union Executive but I never felt the need to join any particular political group. It was not until I became a teacher in the Inner London Education Authority in September 1975, and I became involved in Trade Union activities that I began to realise that the particular group of people for whom I felt the most political affinity were nearly all in IS.

At first I joined Rank and File Teacher because they were the only group of teachers who showed any militancy. I became involved in the 'no-cover' campaign which is to stop teachers covering for other teachers who are absent, and to force the local authorities to employ other teachers to cover. I managed to get a no cover policy operated at my school and then became the school representative in the local National Union of Teachers Association.

I started attending the meetings of my local Association of the NUT and met members of the Communist Party and Labour Party there. They were putting forward policies that, to my instinctive way of thinking, were anti-socialist and anti-trade union. The only people fighting on the



issues that concerned teachers and other trade unionists were largely the IS comrades in Rank and File.

I began to buy 'Socialist Worker' regularly and I was particularly impressed by the strong and courageous stand that paper took in its articles against racism and against unemployment. I finally decided that I could no longer stand on the sidelines shouting support and I took out an IS membership card at the beginning of October.

I did not make my decision to join IS lightly. I had many problems including my domestic situation, to consider. After much thought I realised that my domestic com-

mitments should not imprison me and I should feel able to be involved in politics if politics meant so much to me.

Decision

Most of the teachers I know are either young, in their mid-twenties, or older teachers who have been teaching for a number of years. At the age of 38 I have been teaching for one year and until last month I had never belonged to a political party. But I am glad I have taken this decision and I hope that I won't let down the comrades who have already given me so much encouragement and support in what I have already been doing since I became a teacher.

'Women of genius are rare'

By G Platter

THIS WAS the title of a radio 4 programme about the life of Marie Curie. Marie, with her husband Pierre, discovered radioactivity and refined the first samples of radium out of uranium. It was the foundation of modern atomic science.

Pierre Curie was a brilliant scientist, who had believed not only that 'women of genius were rare' but also that they tried to stifle the 'active, creative side of men's nature' in order to concentrate attention on themselves. However, it soon became clear that Marie Curie was the driv-

ing force in their joint work.

Pierre became a relatively-considerate husband—with breathtaking lapses, like the time he took Marie for a cycling holiday when she was eight months pregnant. She must have been a bloody fool too! This ill-advised attempt at relaxation ended in hospital.

Prolonged exposure to radio-activity killed Pierre and weakened and aged Marie. But she went on with her investigations—producing an impressive theoretical work. She believed in sexual freedom. But her private life scandalised the reactionaries who were trying to exclude her from the Academie

Francaise—the most exclusive body of male intellectuals in France.

They did not want to be joined by a woman—especially a Jewish immigrant from Poland. And they stole, and published, some of her love letters as the climax of a poisonous press campaign.

Despite being awarded a second Nobel Prize—the first person to achieve this—missing the Academie by two votes caused Marie to have a nervous breakdown, and to break off her relationship with her lover.

But by the outbreak of the First World War she was organising X-Ray units for the wounded. This was against the fierce

opposition of the old-fashioned army doctors. They resented this 'interference' in their work, preferring to dig for shrapnel by instinct.

The cancer she had contracted from her life's work eventually killed her.

Marie Curie was a genius who fought against many of the restrictions which oppress all women. But if she had been born into the working class the difficulties would have been insuperable. Can you imagine her educating herself in her spare time after a 14 hour day in the mine or factory when she would be worn out with child-bearing and malnutrition by the time she was 30 years old?

WRITE TO WOMENS VOICE

VOICE FROM THE PAST How the Union was won

Five women with linked arms holding back half the Flint police force at the gates of the Chevrolet car factory. Relieved by an army of women—the red-bereted women's brigade—marching down the road singing 'Solidarity for Ever', defying the police to fire on them.

Not the usual stuff of television. But there is was, on Yesterday's Witness (BBC 2). The story of 1937, when the United Auto Workers (UAW) first won union recognition in America. Here was old news-reef of the pitched battles between car workers and the police. Battles to bring food to the workers who had occupied their factories, and defending the occupation from assault.

The organiser of the women's brigade was then just 23 years old, ill with active TB. Interviewed in the documentary she described the dreadful conditions and pay in the car plants. And she described how the women's brigade got going, breaking the factory windows after the police had tear-gassed the workers occupying it.

The authorities waded in on the side of General Motors, then the most powerful cor-

poration in the world. Doctors refused to treat strikers, even when many were injured by police firing on them. The newspapers described the women's section in an all-too-familiar way, as battling with mops and brooms, and rolling pins. But in reality, as the film showed, they armed themselves with long clubs.

And on occasions they faced the machine guns of the National Guard with only the moral argument 'you will have to mow down us women before you get into this plant.'

After 44 days of all-out warfare, the sit-down strikers won. The union was here to stay.

If only there were more television programmes telling the true story of how workers fought for their rights . . . and how women were right in the front line!



70 women at Club bingo in Coventry are on strike for Union recognition. The Rialto bingo club, also owned by Orr Enterprises, has come out in support. The women have been earning 50p an hour for the last two years. Management has offered them a ludicrous 56½p. The TGWU has made the strike official but management want the women to join NATKE. The local NATKE official crossed the picket line & helped get customers in.
Donations and messages of support to: Club One strike committee, 42 Hamilton Rd, Stoke, Coventry..

WE WANT

BEFORE THE WAR was over, nurseries were already being closed by the Ministry of Labour and National Defence on 'industrial grounds'. It took two years to set up the nurseries and two years to close them down. By the time the Labour Government had finished the job of destroying war-time child-care they had found a group of academics to justify it.

In 1951—six years after the war—Dr John Bowlby's theories about 'maternal deprivation' were pushed all over the world. He asserted that 'prolonged deprivation of a young child of maternal care endangered the development of his character' and 'attacked the whole of his future life'. The World Health

Organisation (of which he was a member) said 'the use of day nurseries and creches inevitably cause permanent damage to the emotional health of a future generation.'

'Neglect'

Others such as Baers (1954), Goldfarb (1943) and Spitz (1945) were quoted as showing that horrifying retardation would occur in children who did not have the full-time attention of their mothers from the moment of birth.

All these findings were based on evidence about war-time evacuees, and did not even try to show that the separation forced on all the members of families in war-time conditions was bound to be dis-

treasing, especially for children.

But the arguments were used to stop women from working, to close nurseries and to shackle women to the home. By 1975 only 1 in 10 children under five had any kind of nursery or nursery-class place, and only 1 in 30 had a full-time place.

Most women are prevented from working by this—or are forced to make use of day-fostering, child-minders or play-groups—much cheaper alternatives for Local Authorities, and much worse for the children.

But since Bowlby's pronouncements, more and more evidence has accumulated to show his theories are wrong. Studies by Yudkin and

Holme (1963), Douglas et al (1968), Rutter (1971), West (1969) and Moore (1963) suggest that the children of working mothers *don't* suffer—in fact they probably benefit from the care of a number of adults: as long as the relationships are good.

Kids can suffer if, for instance, they're ill and are dumped in a confusing, anonymous hospital—and that's an argument for allowing

Frustration

parents to stay or visit as much as they want. They can also suffer from quarrelling and discord at home, and from the anger and frustration of mothers who are forced into 'playing houses' instead of being themselves.

Over the last few years we haven't heard much about 'maternal deprivation'—we've been showing that women who work have good relationships with their kids, and that men are good for kids. We began to win the argument about decent child-care—the need for nurseries and contact with other kids and adults.

But now the system is in crisis—and once again women are losing their jobs. The bosses don't want women workers and the government doesn't want to spend money on nurseries. And the newspapers, the television and the book publishers are getting Bowlby and his friends down from the attic.

by Diana Laurenson



Hackney mums fighting for nurseries.

...news
in brief.
...action
...news...
action...
...in brief...
action...
...news...
action

North East London Polytechnic has 1500 full-time employees and 6000 students. The Director is trying to close the playgroup on the site because local mothers are allowed to use it.

He has issued a statement that it is illegal to finance nurseries—even though many other polytechnics have done so. His statement is a response to the demand from all the unions in the polytechnic for nurseries. Last year he spent £500,000 on an obsolete computer.

in brief.
...news...a

LAST YEAR, students at Bristol University campaigned for nursery facilities to be provided on the campus.

The militant campaign won the promise of a nursery being opened this year—following an occupation of university buildings.

The students are now waiting to hear what premises will be opened for the nursery, and will renew the campaign if there is any attempt to delay its opening.

...action...
...news...

WOMEN PRINT WORKER in London are organising to get a nursery in Fleet Street.

The London Clerical branch of NATSOPA, which has thousands of women members, has passed a resolution to set up a nursery funded, if possible, by the employers, the local authorities and the union.

news...
in brief
action..

NURSERIES

...Now!

by Annette Hayton and Madeline James

HACKNEY NURSERY CAMPAIGN was formed early this year. We all knew that nursery provision in Hackney was poor but we set out to find out just how poor it was. We found that there are only 379 nursery places but there are 18,000 under-fives in the Borough. Even adding in 'community' nurseries and child-minders there are only 1,250 full-time child care places in the whole borough.

The Council themselves admit that they need more places. They estimate that 820 nursery places are needed just to cover the children in Hackney who are from one-parent families, who are at risk or who come from very low income families.

This is nonsense! We estimated that there are 6,000 children in Hackney where both parents are working or where there is only one parent. By not providing nursery places for all of us who need them, the Council is making the problems of people with young children that much worse. In fact the Council make us into 'problem families' with poor housing, low incomes and then send social workers to kindly step in and save us!

MYTHS

All these issues had to be discussed in the campaign as well as our attitude to childminders, to parent participation in running nurseries, conditions of nursery nurses and nursery teachers. From these dis-

cussions we produced a policy statement, which has been very useful, and our basic demands.

In these days of cuts it is very hard to force the Council to give more nursery places. A couple of years ago it was possible to embarrass them into agreeing that nurseries are a 'good idea'. But now it is essential to link the nursery campaign with the general fight against the cuts—who wants nurseries at the expense of houses, hospitals, schools?

It was on the general issue of the cuts that we approached trade union branches. Putting a motion of support for the Nursery Campaign to a union branch raises the whole problem of the lack of nursery provision, of working women, and gives a concrete exam-

ple of how the cuts effect the lives of working people.

As well as beginning to build a base within the local trade union movement for our campaign we also took

SHACKLED?

the campaign to the streets, to the women who are forced to stay at home but who badly need the money a job would bring in. We leafleted local markets and held a demonstration on Mothers Day. Our slogan was 'Every day is Mothers Day—Nurseries on Demand.' The march was successful and enjoyable. We gained a lot of support except from one woman—a National Front member—who followed us. She was disgusted that a woman should want a job, a woman's place is in the home!



From
apron to
boilersuit

A WOMAN'S WORK IS NEVER DONE... but somebody else can do it!

During the Second World War British capitalism needed every woman worker it could get its hands on. In the first two years of the war they pulled over a million women into industry or the Women's Auxiliary Services. It wasn't enough so they raided the 'sacred' family. In the next two years two and a half million women were released from

'household duties' for full or part-time work. How? Another million were doing voluntary unpaid part-time work in canteens and nurseries. There were 70,000 places in war-time nurseries; 125,000 under-fives in primary schools; 35,000 in nursery school; 30,000 places at play centres for children of school children; and only 9,000 registered daily minders.

Before the war was over, early in 1945, those places were being closed...

Campaigners How to build the campaign

HACKNEY is a poor working class borough in East London. During the war working class women were needed in industry and there were thirteen nurseries in Hackney. Today there are seven and the Hackney Nursery Campaign is attempting to get the borough to re-open one of the old Second World War nurseries, Clifton Lodge.

Clifton Lodge was closed down soon after the war. It is still structurally sound and it still has nursery fittings. It is already on lease to the Council and it could provide fifty nursery places in an area which has no nursery at present.

The Hackney Nursery Campaign held a public meeting on the general issue of more nursery places and the specific issue of re-opening Clifton Lodge. The Public meeting was

reasonably successful but it was necessary to involve many more people from the area and we have taken a petition around Holly Street Estate, Holly Street is an enormous council-housing project near to Clifton Lodge.

The Holly Street Tenants Action Association invited speakers from the campaign and interest on the estate is very high. We have also sent letters and leaflets to all the local Trade Union branches and Tenants' Associations. Now we are working for a lobby of the Council and ultimately we will have to take the campaign further.

In 1946, after the Second World War had been won and the Labour Government set up the 'Welfare State', no-one would have believed that in 1976 we would have to fight to re-open one of the 1946 nurseries. We've come nowhere, Baby!

The fight is on

Without nurseries women cannot go to work. In Easterhouse an empty school annexe has lain useless for 3 years. The council promised to renovate it as a nursery—this was after they had scrapped plans to build a new one.

Then, the plan for the annexe was scrapped. This was why the Glasgow Right to Work Campaign occupied the annexe a couple of weeks ago.

A meeting on the second night of the occupation

drew many local women, as well as representatives from tenants groups and other community organisations.

From this meeting, a campaign for nursery facilities was launched, a committee set up, leafletting organised to inform and involve other local people.

We decided to run the nursery ourselves. We want it to be run by paid nursery workers—as we were originally promised.

We want our nursery—we want it now.

42 out of every 100 mothers in city areas suffer from psychiatric disturbances, according to a report published last month. The rate is higher still among women where children are under five years old. Meanwhile the Labour government cuts back on nursery schools...



- * Work out your policy and basic demands.
- * Get your facts and figures (They are bound to be atrocious)
- * Get your group known. Send letters to the Council. Letter to Newspapers. Petitioning. Leaflets
- * Get trade union support. Don't forget the nursery nurses and nursery teachers.
- * Somewhere in your area there will be a nursery that has been closed or Tenants Association building that could be used as a nursery. Find out about it and concentrate on that. (see the article on Clifton Lodge Nursery)
- * Decide what action you will take—picket social services, organise a march, hold a public meeting, lobby Council.
- * Publicise. Petitions are useful when you begin talking to people. It is probably impossible to knock on every door in the borough but it might be possible to cover a smaller area.



Workers at the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital for women are now preparing for the first ever hospital work-in to stop its threatened closure. Women's Voice went down to speak to some of the militants in the hospital and on the campaign committee:

After months of polite petitions and pleas from the ladies' committee, and months of delegations and lobbies by the workers, the fight is now really on.

'The trouble before', said Mrs Forrest of COHSE, 'was that everybody thought to do it the ladylike way. We should have got the unions in earlier. Now the atmosphere is very different. Now the ladies make the old trade unionists sound like liberals.'

The hospital is small and old and on a valuable site on the Euston Road, all of which makes it a ready target for the Department of Health axe; it has been run down over a long period—in the 17 years one resident domestic had worked there she had never seen any repairs done—and it is in a bad state of repair. This was however not noticed until they decided to close the hospital at which point the lift was found to be unsafe, beyond repair, justifying the sudden closure of all the wards above the first floor in February. Not that the EGA is the only hospital where lift failures resulting from long term neglect have been used to precipitate closure. The EGA follows Acton and Poplar hospitals in this.

EGA The fight goes on

Picture by Robert Golden from Hospital Worker, the latest in the Kestral services of childrens books about people at work. Available from Bookmarks, 265 Seven Sisters Rd. N.4. Price £2.10 inc. postage.

Thousands of women patients come from all over the South East (and further) because the EGA is small and friendly and assures them of treatment by a woman doctor. So long as male doctors treat women's problems as 'their hard luck being a woman', and while men continue to dominate the medical profession, the need for a woman's hospital remains clear. The patients as well as the workers intend to fight to stay. Pam Jones, NUPE shop steward, described how even the 70 year olds were preparing to block the busy Euston Road to stop the closure.



The Department of Health reckoned without the tremendous support the hospital has got from the local community, the Camden Trades Council Cuts Committee and from other hospital workers in the area. They clearly see the fight for the EGA as part of the general fight against the cuts. On July 21st 1000 hospital workers in the district came out on strike in support of the EGA and marched on Westminster. This gave the EGA workers much more confidence to push for militant action. Mel from the EGA Campaign committee described the transformation: 'It's like living proof of how revolutions can happen, the way the struggle has changed people in the EGA. People who were indifferent to or suspicious of the unions a year ago are now pushing not only their own union but others in the area to support the work-in and sympathetic strikes.'

Despite the inexperience of the EGA workers in industrial action, the EGA campaign marks a real breakthrough in the fight against the cuts and for the kind of health service we want. What they have shown is that the government can't simply eradicate a hospital without a fight on their hands. Perhaps that will teach the DHSS to lay off the other 120 London hospitals they are planning to close in the near future. Get a resolution through your union pledging support and money to the EGA. Send it to Pam Jones, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital, Euston Road, NW1.

in brief.

Courtaulds, the textiles giant, plan to sack 3,000 workers, men and women. They are closing four factories, at Aintree, Merseyside; Flint, North Wales; Ballito, South Wales; and Carmoney, Northern Ireland. Among other things, Courtaulds make yarn for nylon tights. Sales of tights have slumped as the mini skirt has gone out. Its a crazy thing called fashion. Or maybe we're all getting too hard up to buy new clothes. That's how unemployment leads to unsold goods, leads to closures and more unemployment. We all do it.

in brief.

A television documentary series about changing sexual attitudes in Britain has been withdrawn by Thames TV for fear of 'offending some viewers'. The programme-makers' association are justifiably furious. 'We regret that a subject so often dealt with casually in the media is thought untransmittable when discussed seriously and directly.'

inbrief..

A long way to go. Women's earnings rose 23.4 per cent last year to an average of £46.20 a week. Men's earnings rose 18.1 per cent to £71.80.

.in brief

Profit. Tory prices spokeswoman Sally Oppenheim has sold her second home, in Hampstead, to Arab sheik Ali Sindi, for £600,000. Nice one Sally

in brief.

Five cleaners at Holbrook site of the North East London Polytechnic have been on strike since the Autumn term began, in protest at the use of asbestos in their building. Sheets of asbestos were cut up in side during renovation, and the cleaners were ordered to sweep up the dust. They refused, saying the job should be done by contract cleaners wearing proper safety overalls. One of the cleaners has been sacked, so they have stepped up the fight by occupying the premises.

WOMENS VOICE
ABORTION
OUR RIGHT TO CHOOSE

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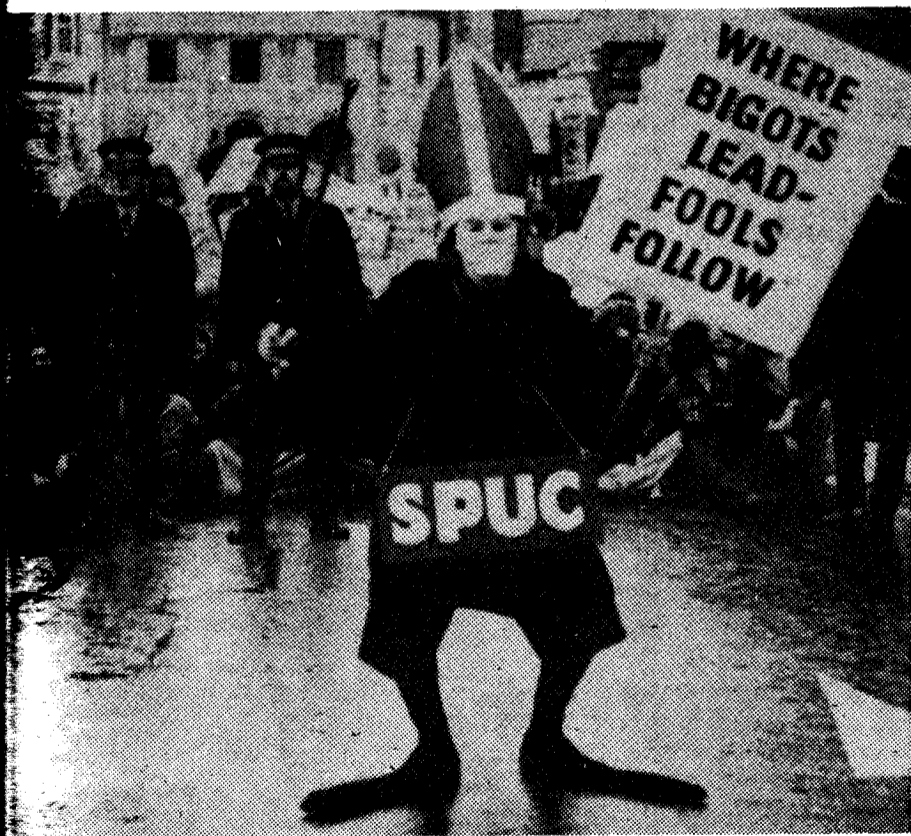
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Backstreet Abortion kills women!



Anti-SPUC demonstrator Jill Moorman being handled by SPUC stewards.

'I used to work in the casualty ward of a hospital in the East End of London. That was before 1967—when abortion was illegal.

'I was really shocked by the number of women who came into the hospital, with complications from aborting themselves. I won't go into details—but that was what illegal abortion meant, women seriously ill, women dying because they could not get a legal abortion and they couldn't have a child.

'The 1967 Act gave relief to a great number of women who could—if they were lucky—get an abortion on the NHS. Of course, most women who need abortions still have to pay, and we must fight for free abortion on demand, if women are really to have any right to chose when and if to have children.

'Right now, SPUC (The anti-abortion group) is campaigning for restrictions in the law. We have to fight them, and always oppose what they say. Every restriction in the law—no matter how small—is sending us back to the days of gin and knitting needle abortions. That's why I went to picket the SPUC meeting, and why Women's Voice supporters should be there every time SPUC tries to spread their filth.'

IT'S UP TO US

Sadie Blood
Shop Steward NUPE
Merseyside.

October 1975 was the start of a convenience kitchen in the junior school across the playground from the infant school where I work. A convenience kitchen is one using ready-prepared frozen vegetables, instant potato mix, frozen meat and stews, and frozen cream cakes, all delivered to the schools by frozen food firms in vans.

Five women in the kitchen lost an hour each. This was chair time, for setting up the tables and chairs ready for the children and clearing them away afterwards.

Less time would be needed to wash up with frozen meat etc coming in in foil trays there wouldn't be many tins to wash. So five hours were lost in that kitchen.

April 1976 we had our meals delivered across the playground in a

heated trolley to our infantschool.

Around this time I became a shop steward. Cuts followed in our kitchen. A woman who scraped dirty plates left, no replacement, five hours lost. Another woman over a period of time lost three hours.

Three more lost half an hour each. Less containers to wash was the reason again.

Frozen

As the education department found out how expensive frozen foods were, the cook was told to do more and more cooking of her own, cakes and pastry etc.

I brought this up at my branch and district committee. Eventually I attended a meeting with the secretary and area secretary, one of the directors of education,

and the school meals organiser were present.

Similar disputes began to blow up in other schools. No replacements. Jobs being classified as temporary. Cooks being asked to handle baking as well as using frozen foods.

The area secretary sent a letter to the clerk of the council saying we weren't taking any more cuts in school meals, and if they didn't reverse their policy we had no alternative but to take action as we thought necessary.

We told the school meals organiser that if she didn't stop these cuts we were taking industrial action and her reply had to be back for 1pm the same day.

At 1.40pm October 1st came a phone-call to say that our action could be cancelled. There was to be a meeting. No more

cuts would be made. The schools were to have

their hours back again. We have had lots of problems in this new authority, so it's made the union membership

Wages

My union is the National Union of Public Employees. My job now is to make a bond of solidarity between all the schools in this area, so each knows what is going on in the others.

This will have to be done in my own time as I work at dinner-time.

Remember comrades, frozen convenience kitchens mean CUTS in your WAGES. My district committee voted to fight the cuts and by the hell, we're fighting all the way.

SORRY — WE'RE LATE AGAIN!

So we have made this a November/December issue, and we'll be out again the first week in January, with a new fighting Womens Voice. If you want to send a friend a subscription to Womens Voice for Christmas write to us at 6 Cottons Gardens, London, E2, enclosing £1.80, and your friend's name and address.