

WOMENS VOICE

Number 9
5p

*Women supporting Jean
Jopson in her fight for
reinstatement.
See story back page.*



WOMEN AND THE CRISIS

WOMEN'S VOICE

Produced by International Socialists Women

Contents

- Women face the crisis 2/3
We're behind the miners 4/5
Rent Rebates 6
Getting Organised 7
Families on trial; Shrewsbury '73 8/9
Child at risk—Mother at risk 10
Hospital under the axe 11
Glasgow women vs ITT 12
Woman mineworker joins the fight 13
Letters 14/15

EDITOR:
Barbara Kerr
Production:
Jacquy Hayman

WOMEN FACE

A NEW YEAR, and new problems for women to face with a country deep in crisis. We're not told the full truth about the crisis—about how big the coal stocks really are at the power stations—about how much oil the country is receiving now etc. What we do know is that the Tory government have forced a three-day week on us, to make us feel that the country is being destroyed by the miners overtime ban, and to cover up their inability to control the economy.

But even if the 'energy crisis' is being *manufactured* by the Tories, that doesn't alter the fact that there *is* a crisis in the lives of ordinary people who are affected by all aspects of the crisis.

At Home, as always women feel the weight of the problem, as they have to 'prop up' the family, with less money coming in—and general worries about what the future holds for working people. Women have to cope with the problem of continually rising prices, while wages are frozen, cut, or in some cases removed altogether. A frightening prospect. Also women are being pressurised to cut down on electricity at home. Just listen to Tony Blackburn and Jimmy Young telling us to turn lights and fires off, all morning!

At Work, women face extra problems with Saturday working because of kids at home. Many women pay a married woman's stamp, and so don't get any dole money—and with the fear of redundancies women have to fight the argument that they should be laid off first.

WE'RE 'GOT AT'

Because women suffer most, and are more

isolated, either at home or at work in small offices, shops and factories, the Tories try to get women on *their* side against the miners. They know we have less experience of fighting back, so use all their skill to 'get at' us. The papers, radio and TV all search for women to interview to say things like, 'My kids are going without meat because my husband's been laid off. If me and me mates could meet the miners we'd tell them what we think—it's disgusting that they can get away with it.' (recent ITV interview).

Tony Blackburn, before Xmas, was asking us to write in about what kind of 'Xmas present' we'd like to send to Joe Gormley! As a result we get things like the girls in a Burnley mill—working for the Nation . . . they refused overtime rates for working New Year's Day—and of course the press and the tele leapt at the example.

THE TRUTH IS HARD TO FIND!

THE TROUBLE IS—where can women find out what the truth of the situation is? We're told, for example, that miners have refused an offer of £9 a week. What is the truth?

Without overtime, most miners are taking home a mere £22 a week. Normally many miners work a 6½ day week to earn a decent living wage.

The miners have only been offered £2.30 for surface workers, £2.57 for underground workers, and 17p an hour extra for night work. Only one in 10 miners stand to gain from the night shift premium.

WHY A THREE-DAY WEEK?

Two years ago the miners had an eight week overtime ban followed by an eight week strike with pickets on the power stations. YET THERE WAS NO THREE DAY WEEK! This time a three day week was introduced after only one month of overtime ban, and no pickets. There was no immediate shortage of coal. Clearly, the government have given us a three-day week only to turn other workers and housewives against the miners. And by doing so, drive the miners back to work before their claim is met. The three day week is costing the country far more in lost production, than settling the miners' claim would cost. So why doesn't the government pay the miners?

Because the Tories know that we are all sick to the teeth of frozen wages and rocketing prices. They know that if the miners win a higher increase than Phase Three, other groups of workers will try to do the same. The Tories are hoping that with the miners defeated the rest of us will be too scared to fight for decent wage increases.

SO THE CRISIS IS BEING DELIBERATELY CREATED TO HELP THE GOVERNMENT AND THE BOSSES ATTACK REAL WAGES EVEN FURTHER.

THE CRISIS

They want to lay the foundations for a really hard Phase Four, which will of course affect workers who aren't organised in strong trade unions most. And many of these workers, as we know are women.

ONE LAW FOR THE RICH

This crisis is *their* crisis, not ours. The Tories brought the freeze in, *not* to stop rising prices but to boost the bosses' profits at the expense of working class incomes. Since the freeze began profits on average have risen by 33p in the £, wages only by 11p in the £.

Now that the increase in the price of oil, and the miners' overtime ban are threatening profits, the Tories and bosses are trying to make the working class carry the cost.

Is your, or your husband's company director on a three day week? Are they taking cuts in income for the national interest? Will they, and their families be huddled round an oil heater in one room at home?

You can bet your boots they won't be!

WOMEN CAN FIGHT BACK

WE MUST DO everything possible to support the miners. A victory for the miners is a victory for all of us. This means that we must refuse to pay for the Tories' crisis.



While others are freezing Mrs Patrick Jenkins, wife of Tory Minister for Power, turns off her electric dishwasher and does the washing-up by hand to help the nation

Women workers should be demanding five days' work or five days' pay. Where the factory has been classified as a continuous process we should refuse to work outside normal hours. If we have to then it must be at overtime rates.

Employers everywhere are using the state of emergency to force workers to accept a worsening of conditions. We must fight all attempts at a speed-up—don't let them make us cram five days' work into three or four.

We must be on our guard to see that no sectional agreements are broken, whether we are in a factory or a shop we should be refusing to work in the dark or the freezing cold.

Our conditions of work were won by hard and bitter fighting of the trade union movement in the past. If we throw them away now the bosses will try to see that we don't get them all back when the state of emergency is over.

DON'T WAIT—ORGANISE!

It is very important for women who are not in a union to get organised *now*. The factories and offices with the worst deal are the non-unionised ones where the boss thinks he can make his workforce do anything he wants to keep up production.

Where there is a strong union women have been able to negotiate premium rates for overtime working and to ensure that heating and lighting are kept at the normal level, and they have been able to do this fairly easily. At the start of three day working women textile workers in Lancashire made the mistake of working

New Year's Day for ordinary wages. In the mail order warehouses in this part of the country union organisation is weak and women have been working three days with heating and two days without.

The only people who gain from us doing this kind of thing are the bosses.

SATURDAY WORKING—FIGHT IT!

The trade unions fought hard to win a five day week and Saturday was not one of them. Saturday working sets a dangerous precedent for both men and women but is particularly serious for women. Where husbands are on the other three days family life is disrupted. Where there are young children problems arise because schools and nurseries are closed on a Saturday. On top of this women who can't come into work on a Saturday will lose the guaranteed week and will only be paid for the days they work.

NO TO SATURDAY SCHOOLING!

In some parts of the country women have been asking for schools to be open on Saturday, but once again, by doing this we're helping the Tories and the bosses in their attempts to isolate the miners—and remember—many teachers are trade unionists as well. Like other women workers they too have to fight against any worsening of conditions.

Saturday and overtime working *can* be fought. In Ferrantis in Manchester women refused to work until 6 o'clock in the evening and the management had to give in. In Harlow all factories have power on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. At Blakdales, women have successfully fought to go home at 2.30pm on Saturdays, so that they can do their shopping. At Triumph Motors in Liverpool Saturday working was opposed, and the factory now only works on weekdays.

One final point—by making women work Saturdays the employers and the government are in fact breaking the law—under the factories act women are not allowed to work after one o'clock on Saturdays. After the crisis is over we must be prepared to fight to ensure that they do not use the opportunity to bring in Saturday working on a *permanent* basis.

POWER TO THE HOUSEWIFE!

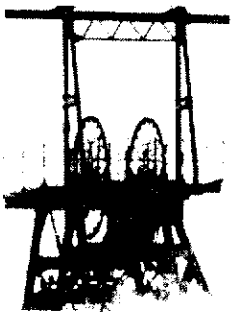
Don't let the government trick you into cutting down on washing, cooking and heating. Try to talk to your neighbours and the women in the shops about what the Tories are really up to. If you can—sell them copies of Womens Voice.

If your husband's factory or office takes some action over the three day week or overtime working, try to bring the wives together and form a wives' action group to help their struggle.

5 days work or 5 days pay for men and women

**No redundancies—no 'women out first'.
Against Saturday working, especially without overtime rates.**

**No work without heat or light.
No cutting down on necessary electricity at home.**



WE'RE BEHIND

MARGRET MILLER

Margaret Miller lives on a National Coal Board estate just outside Coventry. Her husband Roy is a supply man at Dawmill Pit. They have two children, Sahron aged two, and Glen aged nine months. Margaret talked to Women's Voice about the miners' overtime ban.

6 We moved down here from Northumberland six months ago. Since then Roy has been bringing home £21 a week. The overtime ban hasn't really affected us because Roy has never been able to get overtime in this pit anyway.

I am all for the miners, but at times things are so bad I feel like packing up and going home—if the miners don't win their claim for the £10 increase, Roy will have to leave Dawmill even though he would rather work in a pit than a factory. Coal and the mining villages are what we've both known all our lives.

We hardly see any meat these days. Six months ago we used to be able to afford a joint on Sundays, but recently we've been so hard up we had to make do with shepards pie for our Christmas dinner. All we could manage was a few toys for the kids. The bills for furniture and electricity are mounting up. We have to stay in every night of the week, because we just can't afford to go out anywhere.

People are blaming the three day week on the miners, but there's no shortage of coal. The government is trying to turn workers and housewives against the miners, hoping to get the miners back to work, but they're wasting their time—if the government doesn't give the miners their increases they'll be out on strike. The government are still wanting to talk with miners, so I think they'll probably agree to the claim in two or so weeks time.

Very few families in Dawmill are local people—the Coventry factories are much better paid. As the pits have been closing in other parts of the country, families have moved in from Scotland, Durham, Yorkshire, Northumberland and Wales. If there's a strike I'll be going up to Northumberland with the children, and most of the other women will be going back home as well. It's the only way we'll be able to carry on living.

CHERRY PITMAN

Cherry Pittam's husband Dennis is one of Coventry's £50 a week car workers. She has two children aged six and four. Last week she talked to Woman's Voice about the effect of the three day working on herself and her family:

6 Although Dennis has been on a three day week since before Christmas things are only just beginning to hit us. The first three day wage packet came this week—£26—and no dole has come through yet.

Out of this we have to pay £12 mortgage every week (for a fairly ordinary 3-bedroomed house), £1.20 rates, 75p insurance, 54p compulsory life insurance (with the mortgage) and 60p on school dinners.

We're having to cut right down on food bills. We haven't been able to afford beef for ages anyway, and for a long time we have been buying mainly liver, mince and off-cuts of bacon. This Sunday we had chops for dinner.

NO TIME WITH THE FAMILY

Before Christmas I got myself an evening job to help buy presents. It was only meant to be temporary. But now with the three day working I have had to carry on with it. This means we don't get a chance to spend much time together these days.

I know that we are really well off compared to other young couples. But most of our neighbours on the same

wages as us are finding it impossible to make ends meet. Several of my friends have been looking for evening jobs. Ten years ago, when we were first married we had to live on £10 a week with a baby. But we seemed better able to manage then than we do now. For one thing we have never been in debt until recently.

Last Friday we went into town to the shops. The Precinct which is usually packed was half empty. People are cutting out buying clothes and shoes and are beginning to count every penny. A bus fare into town is becoming an extravagance.

NO NEED FOR THREE-DAY WEEK

To my mind the three day week is completely unnecessary. The Government is trying to turn workers and housewives against the miners. Unfortunately the majority of housewives are being taken in by the Government. No wonder when they never hear the true facts but only the lies and biased propaganda you get on tele and papers like the Mirror.

The men should have put up a bigger fight over the three day working. Coventry is a town where strikes are going on all the time. But now when the Government and the bosses are really hitting out at working class families no-one seems to be fighting back at all. Women workers shouldn't be standing for this Saturday working either.



Cherry: having to cut down

THE MINERS!

Shop worker and the freeze

ELSIE MOLES

In the last issue of Women's Voice we reported the struggle of a group of women at GEC's Spon Street plant in Coventry. Here the women convenor, Elsie Moles, talks about her reaction to the crisis.

ELSIE MOLES:-



6 In Spon Street GEC we started working a three day week—Thursday, Friday and Saturday. But since then, management have got their own generator going on Tuesday and Wednesday so we're back on five days again.

We have made them pay us overtime rates for Saturday but the women are furious at having to work Saturday at all. If GEC can use their generator on Tuesday and Wednesday then they can use it on Monday as well and give us Saturday off. If they try to put us on a six day week—and they have been adding an extra day every week so far—there is going to be real trouble. Even now the women are talking about refusing to work Saturday afternoon.

Problems of Saturday working

What do they expect us to do with young children when the nurseries and schools are closed and the women with older children are really angry about Saturday working as well. By the time you have rushed around all week doing the shopping and the housework in the evening you need a rest at the weekend.

Having Monday off just doesn't make up for it with everyone home at the weekend, you never catch up on things when you are working Saturday. Although we're only working Saturdays most of us are more tired than we've ever been and weekends are the only time we get a chance to spend time with our families and grandchildren.

What worries me most of all about the Saturday working is that after the Crisis is over the bosses will try to get women working Saturdays as part of the normal week.

The other GEC factories in the town are all on different rotas to us. Women in Raglan Street and Helen Street are still on a three day week including Saturday and Stoke GEC has been classed as a continuous process. Here women are working four and five days a week on different days every week. Management are doing what they like with the power and they're getting away with murder.

In the different factories we all do

similar work—wiring, soldering and so on—and we depend on getting a steady flow of parts from each other. With us all working different hours this is going to cause a real bottle-neck situation.

Where only three days have been worked management are going to be able to stock pile and use this to put workers on short-time and to provoke strikes after the Crisis is over. GEC are notorious for doing this kind of thing.

We have had some problems with the guaranteed week. Management gave each of us an individual choice as to whether to go on the dole or accept a guaranteed week. But its so complicated that the women have found it difficult to work out whether or not they were better off on three days wages with piece-work bonus and two days dole.

INSURANCE STAMPS

Luckily most of us pay the full stamp so we're entitled to some dole money. But working women who don't pay it are really getting a bad deal. No dole has come through yet but they told us it would be in our wage packets—except for women who are divorced, separated or mothers on their own with children. 'We're going to have to go through all the hassle with the DEP. And, of course, the very people hardest hit are women bringing up families on their own. Many women in GEC are in this position.

WE SUPPORT THE MINERS

The women here are all behind the miners. We realise the Government are using the three day week to turn us against them. The way GEC here are carrying on you can see there's no immediate shortage of coal. Why should we have to pay all the cost? Weinstock and the other managing directors won't be on a three day week taking cuts in salary in the national interest.

If the miners come out on strike they will get our support. But at the moment the women here don't really see what we can do on our own. Maybe it other factories in the district were to put up a fight something would happen.

Womens Voice spoke to a woman filling shelves in Sainsbury's in Harlow:-
'The way prices are shooting up in this shop every day is diabolical. Those Ryvita and TUC biscuits in front of you are going up a penny tomorrow. The manager tells us he can put up prices any time he feels like it—it's all perfectly legal. It's disgusting. Prices should be the same in all the shops and they should be fixed at a certain level.

'I'm much worse off now than I was last year on the same money. At the moment I'm working part-time here. But things are getting so bad I'm going to have to go full time soon.

'You only have to work here a while and watch the biscuits going up to see that businessmen have been making big profits out of the freeze and the crisis.

'Other workers should be taking a leaf out of the miners book and really getting down to doing something about all this.' On the same day women working in newsagents in Harlow were complaining bitterly about having to work in the freezing cold:-

'We've had no heating since Christmas. We've been told that working in these temperatures is against the law.

'I don't know how we're going to stand it much longer. We'll have to find out where we stand on the law and see if there's something we can do about it.'



Rent Rebates divide tenants

Mary Philips London

Some of us unfortunate tenants of the Corporation of London have known for many years exactly what a rent rebate scheme is. Me and my family have lived in Corporation flats in London since 1962 when our second child was born. We paid a really low rent then— I was not earning and my husband was earning £12 a week.

After a year or two his earnings went up—his tax went up—our rent went up. When the wage rise had been eaten away by all this, our part of the Borough of Finsbury was reassessed as an industrial area and our rates went up by over 100 per cent. Another job, another rise in wages, more tax, more rent and so it goes on.

We move to another estate in South London and the same rebate scheme followed us. In April 1970 the so-called maximum rents for our 3-bedroomed maisonette was £6.4s.6d. In April 1971 it went up to £6.68p, in 1972 to £7.30, then a few weeks later it went up again under the Housing Finance Act to £7.90. This is not really the maximum rent as they claim because the rates of £1.92 have to be added on. As far as I'm concerned the maximum rent is now £9.82 a week.

COMPLICATED FORMS

As for rebates, many people can't understand the complicated forms they have to fill in, and many are afraid of making mistakes and so putting down false information for which they may later be prosecuted—or which may be checked by their employer (we often leave out things without even meaning to—savings, premium bonds etc). Many tenants simply pay the maximum to avoid having to reveal any details of their personal life—and why the hell should they have to anyway?

Tenants on our estate on a low wage or grant do not let it get out that they have to go on social security—this means their rent goes up even if the benefit is less than their earnings. The Housing authorities and the Department of Health and Social Security have a running battle over who pays how much, and the loser is the tenant.

TWO GROUPS OF TENANTS

Worst of all, rebate schemes divide tenants, who learn, sometimes from bitter personal experience, to keep their mouths shut and to 'keep themselves to themselves'. There are too many people ready to shop others in order as they hope, to protect themselves and prevent anyone else 'getting away' with anything they themselves aren't getting away with. In the past this has worked very well for the Corporation. When people are frightened of talking to each other about their own affairs, they do not band together to fight for their rights but instead gossip about other tenants and complain about other people's behaviour.

There is also a tendency for a few better off tenants not getting rebates to demand better services than their poor neighbours, 'After all we're not being subsidised', they say.

'How much rent do you pay?' I don't mind answering that one, but I have friends who do and who dread going to pay their rent at the office in case the man shouts out loud enough for everyone to hear.

'You're still two weeks in arrears Mrs'

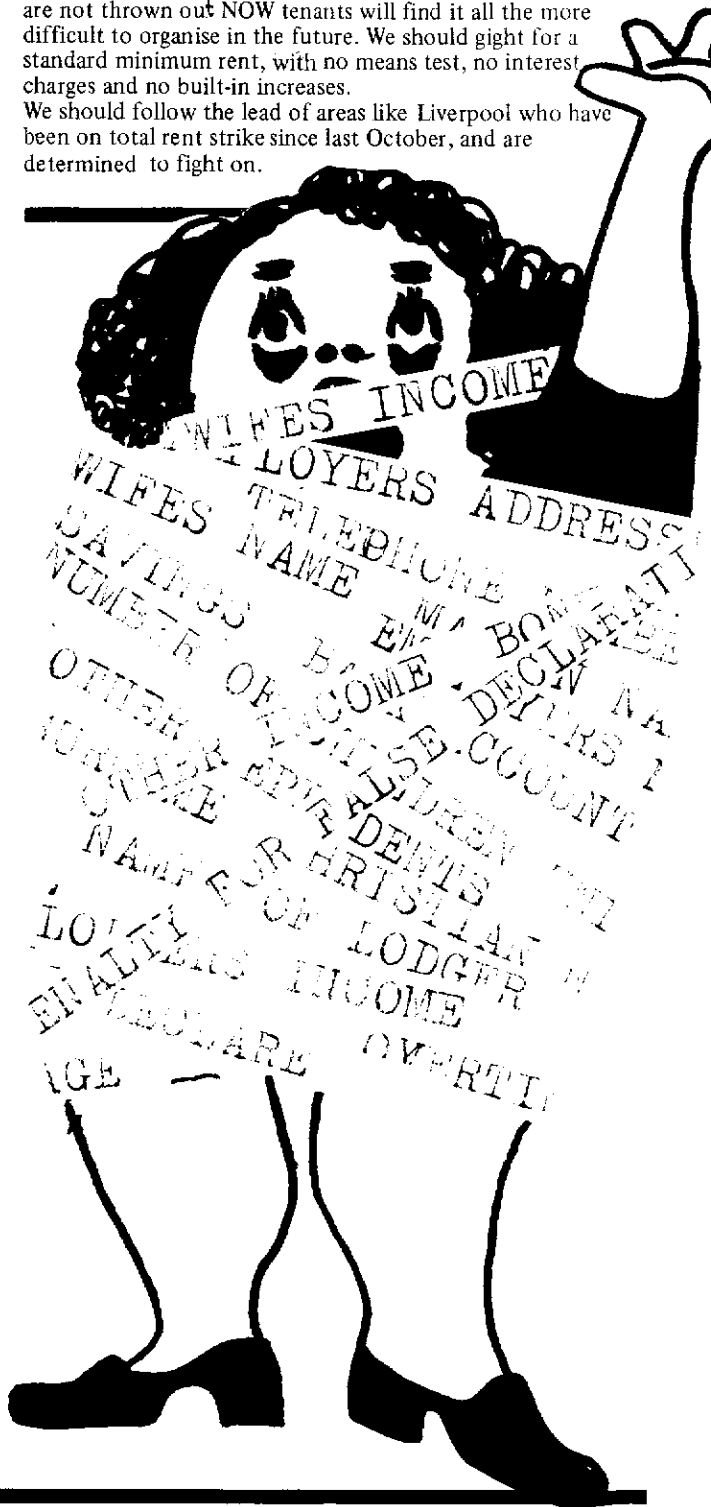
FIGHT AGAINST THE HOUSING FINANCE ACT

The most important fight for all tenants is the fight against the Tory 'Fair' Rents Act which will double all our rents by 1975. The only way to do this is for all tenants to get together and fight for a reasonable rent for everyone. At the moment the rebate scheme means that the very poor tenants are subsidised by slightly better off tenants on the same estate, perhaps the next door neighbours. Yet the number of housing millionaires increases every year. They live in luxury—and not on council estates—their millions are made because we need houses.

TENANTS ASSOCIATIONS

It has taken six years to get tenants associations going on our estate, and the problems we have had convince me that rent rebate schemes are not only unacceptable, they are dangerous, in the way they hinder the formation of associations. If they are not thrown out NOW tenants will find it all the more difficult to organise in the future. We should fight for a standard minimum rent, with no means test, no interest charges and no built-in increases.

We should follow the lead of areas like Liverpool who have been on total rent strike since last October, and are determined to fight on.





ELSIE MOLES:

Getting Organised

Hester has taken you through two articles on getting organised in the trade unions. Now we will look at how to get things done when you have joined a union, and formed a shop stewards committee.

MEETINGS ARE IMPORTANT

If you have no experience of how to hold meetings, you will find information in your union Rule Book. Elect a chairman who doesn't mind speaking out, and a minute secretary to note down everything that is decided. A well ordered meeting is a MUST—otherwise nothing will get decided, and everyone will get fed-up with coming. For the first meeting it would be a good idea to discuss a SIMPLE problem that is shared, and understood by everyone—even the youngest member. Talk to everyone and get to know who is the most confident speaker, Make sure that she speaks at the meeting to encourage everyone else to get involed in fighting for the simple demand that you decided on. The most important thing to remember is to pledge yourselves to stick together, because there is only strength in unity.

THE BOSSES WILL ATTACK!

At first the management will try to niggle you. They will do all in their power to resist your fights for piecework, wage claims and equal pay, that's why its important to start with a simple demand till you've built up some confidence. I remember a manager saying to me. You are not the B- all the end—all you know, but we will get on all right just as long as you don't cross swords with me'. I've crossed many swords, and bridges since then

A SIMPLE DEMAND

Start coolly like I did. I found a stinking male toilet outside my workplace. Instead of cleaning it up, the management just sealed it up. I then decided to write a letter—a very good weapon! Management don't like anything in black and white—they have to reply, and do something about it, or in comes

the factory inspector on my invitation! (This is always a winner) Find out his phone number—you may never need it! If you can get the small problems solved you will gain confidence in yourself, and your members will have confidence, and look to you for greater things.

EQUAL PAY

When you have had success with small things get talks going on equal pay, but be suspicious of job evaluation (see Womens Voice no 7 -the Big Con). Discrimination against women must be fought. Women are always regarded as less important than men in trade unions, and treated as less important by the bosses. We've got to fight them both! Attend your local union branch meetings, and try to get as many women as possible along there. Let the men see that you are part of the organisation, and you intend to have your say. Show them that a female shop steward is in many cases more militant than a male. Talk to other shop stewards—it is surprising the amount you can learn in a short conversation.

TO SUM UP:-

1. Fight against discrimination and exploitation of women.
2. Hold regular meetings and enrol new members.
3. Organise discussion groups, and make them interesting.
4. Get equal pay talks going, but remember to be on the lookout for pitfalls.
5. Take yourself, and your members regularly to the local branch. This is where it all goes on, and as Hester points out, make sure you have your Rule Books, and copies of national agreements covering your industry, section.



FAMILIES

Shrewsbury '73

OVER THE SUMMER of 1972 for the first time ever building workers waged a national battle against their employers and won. The basic increase was £30 for a 35 hour week. During those summer weeks thousands of workers joined the unions who had never belonged before. And on site after site men were recruited to the struggle by pickets who came by bus and car to call them out.

Long months afterwards, following the compiling of dossiers by the top building employers, and following the decision of the Tory government's Director of Public Prosecutions 24 building workers who had picketed in Shrewsbury were arrested and charged with various offences ranging from conspiracy to causing an affray.

Verdicts against the first six men to come to trial were announced just before Christmas, when it could be calculated that trade union members throughout the country would be least able to organise protest strikes and demonstrations.

Des Warren was given a three year sentence, Ricky Tomlinson two years and John McKinsie Jones nine months. The other three, Ken O'Shea, John Llywarch and John Carpenter were given nine month suspended sentences.

In his concluding remarks the judge pointed out that the sentences were meant to serve as a deterrent—to prevent other workers mounting effective pickets. What he did not say was that the whole trial was a stagemanaged affair conducted on behalf of some of the most brutal and callous profit makers in the capitalist class and directly inspired by the government. The real summing up of the trial was left to Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson in their magnificent speeches from the dock.

Throughout the trial another kind of punishment was meted out to the families of the 24 defendants. First of all the case was deliberately ignored by the press, and then misrepresented in the filthiest manner in articles such as the one that appeared in the Daily Mirror on 20 December. And then all the men suffered blacklisting. Their families have had to survive on social security while they went to the court every day.

When their wives went to witness class justice at work they were subjected to having their handbags searched three times in one visit alone.

And now that the three men are in jail, a new kind of harassment has

Dear Women's Voice

I am Margaret Llywarch, my husband is John Llywarch, one of the Shrewsbury Six. John was one of the 'fortunate' ones—he got a nine month suspended prison sentence. What for? For working mind, body and soul to make working conditions and pay for his brothers more bearable.

Until a few months ago I did not know about or understand trade unions, workers' charters and so on. I still have a very great deal more to learn. The reason I'm writing this today is because I want to appeal to the wives, girlfriends and indeed women in general not to fly up in anger and distress when your man comes home from work and announces 'I'm on strike'.

Please do sit down and discuss why, what for, and if. Do go to meetings with him and get personally involved. There's no-one knows better than I that in such a situation hard limes are inevitable. But you always manage somehow.

The trial of the 24 building workers at Shrewsbury has grave implications for all workers who organise to fight for better conditions and pay. It will have a long term effect on all working class people. I therefore ask all readers of Women's Voice—please bear with your men folk if such a time ever comes to you personally.

I would like to close with a very great thank you not only from myself but from the other five wives. We have all been overwhelmed with good wishes and support from all over the country

Very sincerely, Margaret Llywarch.

ON TRIAL

began. The men have been moved to separate jails all over the country so that their wives have to travel for hours to make their once monthly half hour visits. And in the case of Des Warren his wife Elsa has been denied knowledge of his whereabouts while he has been moved about.

None of these things are accidental. They all are designed to wear down your spirit at a time when you need all the spirit you can muster. Often enough we hear wives being praised for standing by their husbands through thick and thin, or for holding together their families at great personal cost.

But this does not apply to wives of trade union militants. The last thing the bosses want is for those wives to stand behind their men in the struggle.

Elsa Warren for example received a phone call from Bedford Jail to tell her that she must persuade her husband to settle down and accept his punishment. She was told this was her 'duty', Elsa replied that her husband was a political prisoner and she believed her first duty was to do her best to get him released.

Elsa Warren now has the prospect of bringing up five children alone for three long years. Unless a movement is formed powerful enough to get her husband and the others out of jail. And she is only one.

On the last day of the trial of the first six men, John McKinsie Jones' wife was due to give birth to a baby.

The judge took no account of this.

On the first day of the trial Margaret Llywarch was coming round from an operation yet her husband John was ordered to go straight home so he could not go to visit her.

The employers, their Tory government and their judges like women who vote for them. And they like women who can be persuaded that their husbands are greedy workers. What they detest is women who are militant workers themselves, and women who stand beside their husbands in struggle . . . women such as Elsa Warren who only moments after seeing her man sentenced simply for fighting for a better wages and conditions, could recover herself and say bravely 'I am proud of my husband and what he fights for.'

All readers of Women's Voice should send support to all the 24 and their wives and families. If you can collect money or join in the activities organised by local defence committees then do. If you belong to a union and you can get



The Llywarch Family

a motion passed through your branch adopting one of the families then even better.

And if you can join in the days of action or bring your workmates out on

strike in support of the right to picket and to get these men released then that is best of all. Women's Voice will be glad to forward your letters and messages of support.

Child at Risk - Mother at Risk

Anna Kerr is part of a team doing research on battered babies for the NSPCC.

Father tortured girl, four, by fire . . . Lincoln geared to meet baby-beating challenge . . . Baby batterers going unpunished through lack of evidence . . . baby at the mercy of its mother . . . bring back capital punishment for battering parents . . . Victim's view of cruel parents . . .

IN THE LAST few months headlines like these have been appearing frequently in the newspapers all over the country. Publicity about battered babies is having another boom, due to the public enquiry in Brighton into the death of seven year old Maria Colwell, whose stepfather was recently jailed for 8 years for manslaughter. It would be easy to get the impression that cases of battering and killing are on the increase: every day another case is reported in the papers.

The Battered Baby Syndrome

Ever since the American child specialist, Henry Kempe, first publicised the problem and called it 'the battered baby syndrome' in the early '60s, public interest in the subject has risen and fallen regularly in waves of increasing sensationalism. The last publicity boom was about two and a half years ago, following a TV programme by Eamonn Andrews. Kempe deliberately chose a phrase to stir up feelings because he was trying to shock people into attention, particularly doctors and social workers who were failing to spot cases of non-accidental injury because they were reluctant to believe that parents could injure their own children.

Although some cases are certainly still being missed, in many ways the pendulum has swung right the other way, and, from MPs asking questions in parliament to the local Brighton people booing the social workers in the Maria Colwell enquiry, the emphasis now seems to be almost entirely on conviction and punishment rather than on understanding and treatment of the parents concerned.

Research

Since Henry Kempe drew attention to the situation over 10 years ago, there has been a good deal of study and research both in Britain and America, and for the last five years we at the Battered Child Research Department of the NSPCC have been working with a group of families, whose children have received injuries, in an attempt to understand how battering can happen and to find ways of helping the children and their parents.

More serious than any childhood illness

Although there are no reliable figures for the whole country, we know that this is a serious problem. For every 1000 children under the age of 4, three or four are injured by their parents. One in ten of these children die of their injuries, and a further 2 in 10 receive permanent damage, usually through brain injury. *This means that non-accidental injury of young children is a more serious condition than any childhood illness in this country.* Children under the age of one are at the greatest risk, and the peak age is somewhere around 6 or 7 months. These children are usually injured more than once; when a hospital sees an injured child, they often also find evidence of a previous injury, and when a seriously injured child is returned to his family, there is a very high risk of his being injured again.



Maria Colwell

How and why can this happen?

What causes parents to injure their own children? Anybody who has spent much time looking after a small child, particularly their own, if he or she is really honest, can remember strong feelings of impatience and even momentary hatred. Most don't throw their babies across the room when it won't stop crying, or hit its face with the bottle when it won't feed, but many may have felt like doing it once or twice at least. Caring for a baby or a small child is a demanding and exhausting business, and society doesn't do much to help: by bringing women up to believe that being a mother is their main job in life and then giving very little help or support in carrying out that job.

Poverty is partly to blame

Our study and the study of others have shown that the parents are usually in their early 20s, usually married or living with a

Hospital under the axe

partner and usually with several children born in quick succession. They are often pregnant or with a new baby at the time they injure their children. Although bad housing, and poverty do feature in some cases, people from all walks of life and ranges of intelligence and education injure their children. The two most common reasons seem to be the isolation and loneliness in which the families exist and the kind of childhoods the parents themselves had. Our families are all very lonely and isolated in one way or another: they have moved away from their own home area and family and friends, they live in lonely tower blocks or bed sitters, or they are near their families but get on badly with them. They are the kind of people who find it very difficult to make friends and trust others, and they have no one to turn to when life gets them down. Every parent needs a real life line, someone to turn to for help, and these parents don't have life lines.

Nowhere to turn

And sometimes when they do ask for help, their plea goes unheard. One of our mothers, a young Irish Catholic girl asked both her doctor and her priest for help, saying specifically that she was afraid she might hurt her child. Her GP told her not to worry, but to go home and look after her child, and her priest heard her confession and said that now she could be a better mother.

She went home, took an overdose of aspirins, burned her 13 month little girl very badly by holding her hand against the bars of an electric fire, and then went with her child to hospital and told them what she'd done. She was desperate enough to force people to help her, but most parents in that situation are not able to tell people how they feel before it is too late.

Unhappy childhoods

The other very common feature of these parents is their own unhappy and disturbed childhoods. Some were themselves injured as children and some were separated from their parents, and moved from relative to relative or children's home to children's home. Those who remained with their parents remember very harsh, unloving treatment; a great deal was asked of them and they always felt that they could not live in lonely tower blocks or bed sitters, or they are near their

They grew up feeling unloved and unloveable and married early in an attempt to find affection, and then became the kind of parents who in turn expect a lot from their children. One mother said, 'I never really felt loved all my life. When my baby was born I thought he would love me. When he cried I knew he didn't love me. So I hit him.' This mother gave her three week old baby a very serious head injury because she felt, when he cried, that like everything else in her life, he was rejecting her.

Punish her!

So, whilst the scaremongering and witch-hunting increase in the mass media, the public seems to have forgotten that parents who injure their children are real people with real problems and that the problems are caused by the society that then wants to punish them. Nine times out of 10 it's the woman who has the job of staying at home *on her own* to look after babies and small children. She is tucked away in a cramped house on a big estate, or in a block of high rise flats—moved not to the place of her choice, but to where the local authority decides or where she is lucky enough to find a house to rent or buy. How often are women asked about what kind of housing schemes they want to live in, or how they want their homes designed? Who is interested in the idea that women may want to share the responsibility of their children with other adults during the day? Who asks if people want houses big enough to share with other families, or with relations? Ordinary people *don't have the choice*. We are condemned to live where we're told, and if we don't get on with our neighbours it's too bad! If we can't bear not seeing a single friendly adult face all day long, no one cares at all, because we're women and are supposed to love being with babies all the time.

The powers that be only start to care when, in despair, a woman injures her baby. They cry crocodile tears for the baby but when it grows to be a woman who suffers the same problems as her mother did they want to PUNISH her because, 'She must be inhuman to injure a baby'. Is the woman inhuman, or is it the society in the way it forces people to live, and the way it punishes them for cracking under the strain?

GWEN EVANS lives and works in Poplar, East London. She is NUPE steward at Poplar hospital which is currently under the axe along with many other London hospitals.

Gwen talked to Womens Voice about how she and others are fighting the closure—and why. 'We heard about it first two years ago—not from the hospital but through rumours. Patients said their doctors had been told not to send patients to Poplar.'

The casualty department was closed in December 'due to shortage of staff and consequent fall in standards'. But Gwen says the hospital had been running down the department deliberately: 'Yet the hospitals are really top-heavy with management all with new names and most of them wouldn't know one end of a patient from the other.' The management tried to ignore the protests from the union. 'It got right up to TUC level and Sir Keith Joseph himself was forced to listen, though of course he denied knowing anything about a closure. We've had fantastic backing from the union and from everyone round here. I live here and know a lot of people so I did a lot of talking, I went to school and talked to teachers and went to councillors. We all did our bit. Patients took round petitions, schoolkids took them, Poplar (Tower Hamlets) and Newham councils have taken up the matter. Shop stewards at Fords and in the Docks and from other hospitals have taken petitions and sent resolutions to the TUC. Over 20,000 signatures are reported to have been collected. 'We just knew what we had to do and all got on with it. There are still 1000 petitions to come in and they are all to be sent to Sir Keith Joseph.

'We've had the story in the papers and the TV came down. And the International Socialists have given lots of help.'

On Monday 7 January ancillary workers and others staged a demonstration—the traffic outside the hospital was stopped for 2½ hours while mothers with prams and NUPE members with placards held it up. 'Most people were sympathetic especially the lorry drivers.' The demo was intended for the Regional Hospital Board who were due to have a meeting at the hospital—but they heard about the demo and held their meeting at St Andrews hospital instead 'we sent the TV cameras down after them'.

GLASGOW Women v ITT

AS YOU WALK along West Street, Glasgow, you come to a new building with red block letters, 'MACLAREN CONTROLS'. Yet in their Xmas card to employees produced in May 1973, an embossed drawing of the building shows the new ownership of the building—ITT Controls (MacLaren Division) with the flags of Britain, Holland, Denmark and the new multi-national country, ITT, waving proudly in the breeze. The alterations as shown in the Xmas card have not yet been made, and after nine months under ITT management, there have been four managers, three increasingly stoppages, and finally a sit-in by the 340 workers. ITT are known world wide for their union busting methods but they have come up against a brick wall of defiance at their Glasgow plant. Now the 340 employees have been threatened with a closure, despite the fact that the planners drawing shows that ITT have no intention of shutting down the MacLaren division.

Sit-In for Equal Pay

The wage claim that led to the present dispute and sit-in included a £2.25—£2.50 rise for men and £5.27 for women which includes the 50 per cent progress towards Equal Pay allowed under Phase Three. The company's offer was £2 across the board plus £2.06 for the women. The total workforce has rejected this offer and have backed their shop stewards' commitment to the 50 per cent Equal Pay settlement.

The workers also wanted the grading system changed so that the women would be brought up to the highest semi-skilled rate (grade 3). This would be an advance on most equal pay settlements within the AUEW which have accepted progress only towards the lowest male rate. The management accepted that women should be classified as semi-skilled, but at a lower rate (Grade 2). This was where negotiations stood before they broke down in December.

Workers' Control

The workers are now sitting in the canteen and the organisation is 'more or less' canteen workers daily serve tea. A Xmas card has been donated by fellow workers. To date they have not been asked if they will be joining the union shop. The clerical work is done by shop floor workers. (The staff, unorganised, went off earlier this week.) There are no televisions and music is played on a tanoid. The steward in charge of the sit-in organised a creche in the hall over the holiday period and there were up to 30 groups going at a time. An Xmas party for the kids was held and a dinner for employees and staff on Hogmanay. Attempts to turn off electricity and water have been resisted and despite three day sit-ins lights and heating continue to be on.

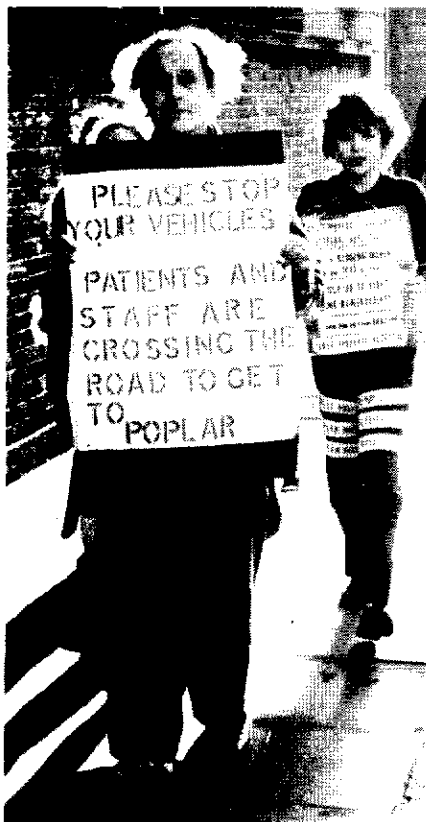
Men and Women Fight Together

It would be wrong to separate the struggle of men and women at MacLaren's for their wage demands. The company offer of £2 only falls 25p short of the original claim for semi-skilled males yet these men have stood by their shop floor committees' recommendation to hold out for the full claim (equal pay).

Engineers Pay Claim

The engineering wage claim, now postponed until after the three day week, includes the demand for Equal Pay. Other AUEW members, as well as all trade unionists should take a lesson from the MacLaren sit-in. The Equal Pay claim is not even outside the Phase Three restrictions yet the claim has led to a factory occupation. Any real fight for equal pay will require the total involvement of the Rank and File. The workers of MacLaren's have shown what that means. It is essential that the rest of the trade union movement supports them in their fight for victory.

Picture: Morning Star



Attempts to run down the ancillary staff were fiercely resisted by NUPE which has in fact succeeded in forcing the hospital to take on more ancillary staff to keep up to the full requirements. In July last year NUPE demanded a meeting with management on the question of the rumoured closure. They were assured that nothing would be done before April 1974.

But staff were still being transferred. Gwen says: 'The poor little nurses, a lot of them are foreign, don't know what their rights are and any time they open their mouths they get clobbered. But the nurses backed us up when they realised how things were going, and the junior doctors too. Although nurses and doctors aren't in the union we told them they had nothing to fear and had a right to ask to stay at the hospital where they were.'

'None of the people round here want the hospital to close, especially the mothers because then the nearest casualty might be three miles away. The hospital serves Newham and Tower Hamlets and people coming off the Island (Isle of Dogs) would have to change buses two or three times. Mothers come in here with three or four children and it's no joke getting to hospital with a few children. We've been promised a new hospital which we need but so far it's only promises and we need to keep the one we've got.'

The demo was a tremendous success and Sir Keith Joseph announced after it that he would appoint two more doctors immediately: 'we've only got them 'coz we made a fuss'.

But the fight to save the hospital goes on. As Gwen says: 'We want community hospitals and we'll keep on demanding them till there is no breath left in our bodies.'



WOMAN MINEWORKER JOINS THE FIGHT

Interviewer: Ann Bridgewood

'Mary' is a canteen worker at a colliery in North Staffordshire. She works on the counter of the canteen, selling sandwiches, beverages, soap and towels (sold cheaply by the NCB because of the need for daily showers). She works on a two shift system; from 6am to 2pm one week, and from 2pm to 10pm the next. Some members of the Womens' Action Group in Stoke-on-Trent talked to her about her experiences at work, in the union and during the miners strike.

Interviewer: How do you get on with the miners at work?

Mary: I get on very well with them; they are very nice to me personally. Sometimes there is a problem where a lot of men work, because they are always wolfwhistling. Here, they never fail to notice if I get dressed up or have had my hair done, and I've never had so many compliments in my life. But they are not offensive about it.

I: Can you tell us about your experience in the union?

Mary: On the first day I worked here, the union rep came round and asked if I was going to join the union. (The NUM). His tone of voice made me think there was no choice about it. Everyone is expected to join. I must say that I haven't regretted joining.

I: What was it like when you first went to a union meeting?

Mary: Well, I was scared to death. I had never belonged to a union before, so I had no idea of what to expect. I arranged with two of the other women at work to go together, to give each other moral support, but when I got to the welfare club where the meetings were held, they weren't there. I was just about to go home, when one of the men came out of the meeting and said: 'Are you bloody coming in, or aren't you?', which didn't exactly make me feel welcome. None of the other women came. During the first meeting, I had no idea of procedure or what to expect. The other members, though, were very helpful. They explained when I could ask questions, and said that many men felt as nervous as I did at their first meeting. Now I go regularly and feel more confident.

I: Why do you think the other women don't go to meetings?

Mary: The meetings are held at 11 o'clock on Sunday morning, and they say that they have to cook dinner at that time. Yet, it's not really the real reason. It doesn't take all day to cook dinner. They can always ask the union to change the time anyway. The women say that their husbands don't like them coming out, but if their husbands don't mind them spending

40 hours a week at work, they haven't really got any right to object to one hour for a union meeting. I think the truth of the matter is that the women are hostile to the union, don't see it as related to their interests; they think unions are power grabbers. Yet the last pay rise we got was much higher than is usual for catering workers, and we would not have got it without the union. I can give you an example of how to use the union. At one time, we used to serve coffee and so on until 10.30, yet the miners' tea break started at 10.40. They used to grumble about this among themselves, and to me, but I told them there was nothing I could do, and that they should take it to the union if they wanted something done about it. They saw the union rep, who brought it up at the Consultative Committee meeting, and within a week, the time was changed to 11 o'clock.

I: Were you involved in the miners' strike?

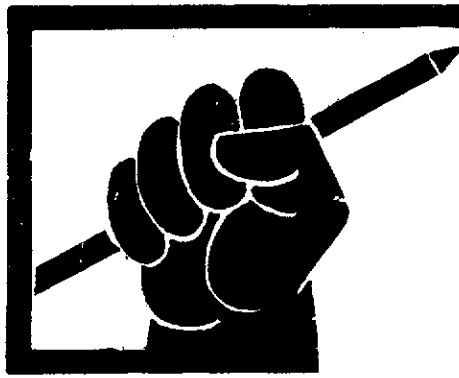
Mary: Yes, I was on strike with everyone else. I didn't get any strike pay and, being single, found it difficult to manage. During the second week of the strike, I went to the pay office to collect an income tax rebate, but they said there wasn't one for me. When I asked them why, the clerk told me I'd better take a walk to Mansfield (about 100 miles away) and find out. He was really unhelpful. They were even worse in the social security offices. I ended up having a row with the clerk and walked out in disgust. After two weeks, I got £5. They deducted my £1.83 widows' pension off that. The miners all had similar experiences, especially when they went to other areas with the flying pickets. There was a conspiracy in the SS to try and starve us back to work.

I: Did you take any part in the picketing and organisation of the strike?

Mary: No, the union didn't ask the women to help, because they thought it wasn't very pleasant for women to stand on a picket line. I pointed out that it wasn't very nice for men, either, but it didn't make any difference. Even if they didn't want me on the picket, I could have helped at the welfare club, making sandwiches, tea and so on. The union should really involve everyone in the organisation of the strike, whatever their sex. I know some of the men were worried about the press saying that they were getting women to fight their battles for them, but it was our battle as well.

I: What has been the reaction of people at work since you became interested in the Women's Movement, and in IS? Have they been sympathetic?

Mary: Some are sympathetic—they buy the Collier, Women's Voice and Socialist Worker—but they are also frightened and suspicious of any talk of revolution. The first day I went to work after going to a political meeting, they said 'Hallow, comrade' and 'Here's Olga'. The next day I didn't give them a chance, and said 'Morning, comrades. Olga's here. After that, they didn't make such fun of me. Sometimes, it's easy to feel isolated, but being in a group with other people helps you put up with it.



LETTERS

Strikes-the wives fight

One of the lessons that was learnt by the miners in their strike of 1972 was the importance of involving their wives in the strike. This doesn't seem to have seeped through to other sections of the labour movement.

The majority of women are isolated and alone at home trying to make ends meet. A strike to most of them means only one thing, no wages coming in. The employers and the press aren't too slow to take advantage of this conservative attitude.

A favourite tactic of the Chrysler management is to send a letter to the home of a worker out on strike telling them that unless they are back to work sharp, Chrysler UK investment will be cut.

They know the wife will read the letter and put pressure on her husband to go back to work. They also get time on television to tell people the strike is all the fault of greedy workers, and they will be forced to close down their factory if the men don't return to work.

The employers take women seriously. It is time the labour movement did so as well. When a factory is out on strike the shop stewards know the importance of reporting back to workers. How many men report back to their wives?

Women must be allowed to know what the strike is all about. They must be made to feel it is their fight as well as their husbands. Everytime a strike sheet is produced a leaflet must also be produced for the wives of strikers, explaining the details of the strike and why they should support their husbands.

Special strike meetings should be called to involve all the women in the strike. Women should also be encouraged to go on the picket line. Another important thing, probably one of the most important is to organise workers collectively to get what they can from the social security. Their wives should also be involved in this.

Even the most militant individuals can give up their fight with the SS if they are on their own. This is another way the employer can win a strike, by starving a worker and his family into submission.

It's on this point a woman can bring greatest pressure to bear on her husband if she thinks her kids are going to starve.

If most workers see women as a traditionally conservative mass it is up to them to change the tradition. If they don't then the employers will continue to see women as the greatest thing since the jackboot, a means to crush the militancy of men.

Nancy Bain, Glasgow.

Women's work

I was very interested in Lesley Green's letter (Women's Voice No 8) which said that married women shouldn't have to work to get a decent living standard for their families.

Of course it's quite true that men's wages should be high enough to support their families. It's very convenient and cheap for the bosses to pay men lousy wages and know their wives will carry on struggling to bring up a family without pre-school nurseries, crèches and good community facilities having to be provided.

But it doesn't follow from this that women shouldn't fight for equal pay, no job discrimination etc. After all, lots of married women care about their children and husbands but *also* want to do a job that's satisfying and takes them out of the house and what sometimes seems like isolation from the outside world. If we *don't* fight for women's rights to equal pay and decent jobs we condemn ourselves to rotten jobs or desperately trying to find a man to marry and support us.

What Lesley Green is saying is really important—that the big business society we live in forces us to work long hours for bad wages and has a disastrous effect on our personal lives. But the answer isn't to fight *just* for better wages for men, who then support *us*. We must struggle for the rights of *both* men and women.

Anyway, we shouldn't assume that only women have the right to stay at home and take the main part in bringing up children. What about husbands who work shifts or long hours of overtime? Surely they'd like to have the time to take their children to school, help them with their reading, answer their questions etc. For many men a day spent with their children would be far more enjoyable than eight hours spent standing next to an assembly line.

Lesley Green is concerned that mothers do not spend enough time with their children. But as socialists fighting for a new society shouldn't we challenge the idea that men only do 'men's work'—a hard day at the factory, odd jobs in the house, mending the Hoover etc—and women only do 'women's work'—cooking, cleaning, looking after the kids. Don't we want a society where human beings can do whatever gives them most satisfaction? **Siri Lowe, NGA.**

More on UPW

In answer to the post woman who wants to know if there are any other women who work as post women, the answer is yes, but their conditions of employment are completely different.

In Harlow post office women are employed as temporary full-time postal officers on the same basis as men. For this probationary period they receive equal rates of pay, equal rates of overtime, the same holidays, and no lay-off periods every 12 weeks as you state happens in your office. They also receive a shoe allowance which postmen do not receive.

I suggest that you take this problem of conditions of work to the local UPW representative. Falling satisfaction at this level, the next step is UPW headquarters.

You will probably find that a number of postal workers object to women working as post women, but if you point out that if other unions which normally employ women objected to postmen's wives being employed on the grounds that sections of the UPW objected to women workers, they might see it in a different light. I would also suggest that you carry on with your plan to organise your office to present a motion to the 1974 UPW conference. You will be surprised at the amount of support that you receive.

I also suggest that the reluctance of postmen to accept women as postal workers is easier to understand if you remember the failure of a large section of women telephonists to participate in the industrial struggle, in some cases actually blacklegging. This of course was not the case in Harlow, where all postal staff, including telephonists and cleaners, participated.

Hoping this is of some use to you.
Michael Hanlon, Harlow Branch UPW.

Social Security

'DOT' used to work at Brook Tools in Birmingham, till circumstances forced her to stay at home and look after her family. She now has to rely completely on Social Security, and writes to Women's Voice to tell us about her experiences:—

THERE ARE many systems which should be changed in our society, but I am going to talk about just one at the moment and that is Social Security, as once called National Assistance. I suppose they changed the name to Social Security because it sounds so much nicer, and not so much like begging as many people interpret the word. This is all that has changed, the name. There are still the majority who feel it's still like begging, for example, Old Age Pensioners,—and why do they feel this way? The answer is very simple, they are made to feel this way by the Officials when making the claim, as I was when I had to make mine four years ago. In four years nothing has altered in the Social Security Departments, they still make you feel that they are giving you this money out of their own pockets.

As Womens Voice is mainly for women readers, then I am going to talk mainly about the woman's side of claiming Social Security, especially those women with children to support without a man behind them.

As I am one of them, I know just how all the other women must feel, especially if they have had the moments I have had with the Social Security officers.

I was once sent for by letter to visit my local Security office, which was Bradford St., at the time, for an interview with an officer. Their quibble was about paying for my two children, which they said my ex-husband should pay for. This is of course, quite right and I said I would take the necessary action on obtaining the money from him. They were not satisfied at this, or maybe I annoyed them because I also put up an argument about the way I was treated, and then to my surprise the Lady Officer simply walked out of the office, and in came two of them. It was like being in prison being interrogated, because that's exactly what they were doing to me about my private life. Now it was a case of two against one, the one being me. Then they asked me if I had ever slept with a man I had previously been living with, and I gave them a definite No! Apparently they purposely didn't hear me say No! because then they asked if I ever was paid for having sex from him, and these were their exact words. This question to me was in my opinion saying I was a prostitute, and I told them this too, but they denied this and they said I was misinterpreting what they had said. I put it to them that I

didn't think they had any right to ask this question and I know of nobody else only a prostitute who is paid for having sex from a man. I have nothing at all against prostitutes but when they have to fall to this level, then there is something drastically wrong somewhere.

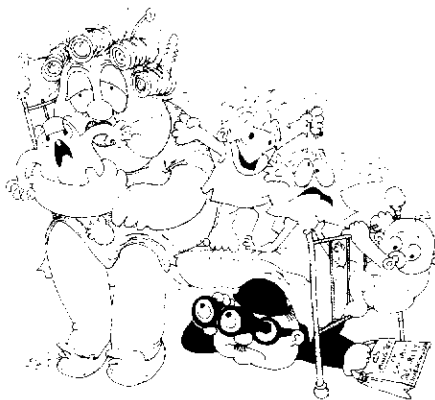
Then there was the time I had an officer call at my home one morning at 8.20am, one of their usual calls as they put it. In the interview with him, he asked if I could go out to work. Of course I can, I told him, but why the hell should I go out to work when by the time I have paid for having the children cared for, I would be left with the same amount of money I had off them in the first place. It must seem ridiculous to anyone that it is senseless to work 40 hours a week and deprive your children of individual care for exactly nothing at the end of it all. It was obvious that he was trying to write off another case of handing out money. I have been insulted nearly every time I have ever seen an officer in some form or another and one feels helpless, especially on one's own because it's like fighting a losing battle, and they know this.

Now I know they are watching the house where I am living, because they think I am living with a man, at the same time as claiming Social Security. This is the only time I have felt satisfaction that I have got one over them, because I know they are wasting their time, especially the man who sits in the car for over three hours watching the house, in the cold.

As I have said previously, on your own you don't stand a dog's chance, but if we were united in some way I am sure we would get a better deal, and that includes anyone that has to live on Social Security not just women.

This system should definitely be changed, no human being should have to go through this degradation for what should be his automatic right.

We would be interested to hear from any other readers who have had bad experiences with the Social Security.



'Mugging'

I read with interest the letter from Mrs Lesley Green, and I think she is making a mistake. A married woman needs some money for herself, apart from the house-keeping, just as her husband does, for himself. So, unless she has some income of her own, she must ask for some payment from her husband. It is not a very pleasant idea for the husband to be the wife's employer.

The housewife's dilemma, then, is how to get her own income and look after her home and children at the same time. For this reason, women's main fight should be for adequate social services to help them out, especially,

1. The payment of housewives with very young children (to be paid like a pension). The amount proposed by Keith Joseph is ridiculous, and it is to be several years' hence! But the *principle* is correct. Fight for the payment to be increased, and brought forward.
2. Much larger family allowances to be paid to the *mother*.
3. More publicly employed home-helps, to release from housework those women more suited to other work. People who like housework should be home-helps. They are in short supply, probably because the public authorities won't pay them or not enough.
4. The provision of more nurseries and nursery schools. Well-staffed and properly equipped, these are good for most children.

In the meantime, husbands should take a fair share of the work at home. I have been lucky in this respect, but many husbands won't do it.

It is very unlikely that hooliganism, 'mugging' etc, are due to small children being away from parents too much. My own daughter has been out doing a full-time job ever since her two boys were toddlers. While still in primary school, the boys had to fend for themselves, getting themselves off to school, and letting themselves in with a key after school. Now in their teens, they are self-reliant, considerate and helpful. People remark what good boys they are, and say that it knocks on the head the idea that mothers going out to work is bad for the children.

The double burden of job and family, without the necessary social services is bad for the mother though. I have seen many a woman worn out, old before her time, even seriously ill, through overwork in this way. But a working woman with two children once told me that, with a home-help (employed by the council) she did less work when she went out to a job than when she had stayed at home looking after the children.

The fight for the social services listed above is more important to women than an increase in father's pay packet. This does not, of course, mean that a woman should not back her husband in wage demands. She should, as long as he backs her in her demand for the above social services, and in *her* wage demands.

Kathleen Jones, Shrewsbury.

Sacked for fighting 3 day week



JEAN JEPSON is convenor at Armstrong Patents engineering factory in Beverley, Yorkshire. On Wednesday 16 January she was given the sack by the management for 'continuous and deliberate disruption'. What this really means according to Jean is that she has fought to have a full week's pay for working the three day week. Under the agreement in the engineering industry workers are paid a guaranteed basic wage even if they are temporarily laid off. Jean was demanding that this agreement be stuck by. This is particularly important for the women because in another Armstrongs factory in York the agreement was broken after management threatened the stewards with redundancies. The result was that workers were expected to work a 10 hour day for three days to get the basic wage—or to draw dole—which married women can't do unless they pay the full stamp. Fifty women in the factory walked out when Jean was sacked. They were threatened with the sack if they did not return to work in 10 minutes. They did not return and are still out. They are picketing, and false rumours went around that the pickets were 'outsiders'! When that did not deter the women, management tried bribing Jean with a substantial sum of money (it is rumoured as much as £5000) if she did not kick up any more fuss and left quietly! The Transport and General Workers Union demanded her reinstatement pending a full enquiry but management have refused this, so Jean and the other women are still fighting.