

Womens **VOICE**

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**HIGH RISE LIVING / ABORTION / SAVE
OUR HOSPITALS / KEEPING UP
WITH INFLATION**



THE LAWBREAKERS WHO MAKE THE LAWS

JUST suppose the Chief of Police for your area suddenly announced that people who went out at night should expect to get robbed if they go out with money in their pockets. And then he added that if they were robbed they should not expect the police to bother themselves with having to take these cases to court.

Can you imagine the hue and cry. It would be nothing short of a licence to steal. Such a policeman would be driven from his post.

Then read this: Chief Superintendent Alfred Bowley, head of Nottingham City Police has just made such a statement. Not about thieves and robbers, but about young girls who get themselves raped.

'If a girl doesn't expect to be approached for some sort of sexual intercourse then she is clearly too naive to be let out of the house.'

'It is pointless to bring an offence of this nature before the court.'

Chief Superintendent Alfred Bowley, your remarks are nothing short of a licence for those men who want to use brute strength for their own sexual satisfaction.

He doesn't attack the young men who do the raping. He doesn't complain about their mistreatment of women. He doesn't wonder that men are brought up to think sex is theirs for the taking. He would be outraged if they were stealing purses, but he isn't when they rape.

The reason Chief Superintendent Alfred Bowley is able to make such statements at all is because he is one of society's guardians. He is the upholder of our moral standards. As a policeman he is given the responsibility to catch criminals and law breakers. His ideas of moral standards and ours are not exactly the same. And who can be surprised.

The recent trial of the Porn Squad in London was all about moral standards. It wasn't just bent coppers caught with their fingers in the till. But coppers caught with their sticky fingers between the pages of hard porn, and their eyes glued to reels of blue films.

Policemen are not elected to this position of authority over the rest of us. We have no say in who appoints himself to tell us what is right and wrong.

They abuse the power they are given. They fall into the arms of criminals big and small, and become corrupt. They learn the ideas that go with corruption. If you are watching blue films, and being paid handouts from the profits on the sales, you can't but expect to be tainted by the idea that women are there for nothing more than your own sexual satisfaction. And if they are not willing, then you take them by force.

Mr Bowley, you have got it all wrong. We will get out at night. We will not tolerate rape. You're the one who should be shut up.

AMERICAN AND CONTINENTAL
MAGAZINES AND BOOKS



Womens Magazine of the Socialist Workers Party

Too old to live: women are advised to wear themselves out after their husband's death! Page 4

News: save our hospitals, fighting racialism at work, preserving our abortion rights and lots more. Pages 5 - 10



Womens Voice News: Womens Voice groups send in reports of action in their areas. Page 11

High rise flats: Diane Watts talks to women living in high rise blocks. Page 12-13

Her Story: the not so merry mediaeval peasants. Page 14

Wages: how much do we need to keep up with inflation? Page 15

Unions: there is a lot of work to be done in NUS if women are going to make their presence felt in colleges! Page 16

Debate: what sort of womens organisation do we want. Page 16.

Reviews: Good God, she's a woman! Pages 18 - 19

Your Voice: we've got masses and masses of letters yet again, if yours hasn't appeared it's only because we've not been able to squeeze it in so please keep writing to us. Pages 20 - 21

Womens Health: 'Sex education gives encouragement to those insidious forces in society such as abortion, single families and nursery schools which wish to destroy the family and bring about a communist state'. Letter in Eastern Evening News. Page 22

Whats On: please get your ads to us by 23 October. Page 23

Cover: The determination that has kept the Grunwick pickets going for over a year. Are the powerful trade unions now ready to help them? Or are they too frightened of fighting Ward and the National Association for Freedom. Photo: Syd Shelton



floor. Come out! all you women wasting spaces in psychiatric hospitals. Age Concern has got the answer. What you need is more Nervous Strain.

Roll up! Roll up! Hurry while stocks last. What the economy needs is Nervous Strain.

You too could look older, die younger.

And why let him keep all those nice industrial diseases to himself. We could be out in equal numbers falling off scaffolding, catching asbestosis, breathing in coal dust. It's time we women got up and organised. We always get the tedious jobs. Why shouldn't the men be the widows for a change?

Come, come, Age Concern. You can do better than that. In these difficult, inflationary times we need leaders with imagination.

We don't want boring old gas chambers. That's all been done before.

How about sea-side work camps for the over-sixties? The unemployed needn't worry. It

wouldn't have to be useful work. You could have the old dears breaking rocks or digging holes. Just so long as it wore them out.

Alternatively you could polish them off in style. Much cheaper than keeping them for years on a pension. Feed them oysters and fillet steak and champagne for a week with theatre visits thrown in. They'd die of shock. Death from affluence, the coroner's report would say. With civilised ideas like that Britain could lead the world. We could have a Minister for the Orderly Disposal of the Elderly.

But why stop there? We've got two million unemployed. What about all those fifty-year-old layabouts wasting their weekends enjoying themselves? If you wore them out younger, you wouldn't have any pensioners at all. Then maybe Age Concern could shut up and think again.

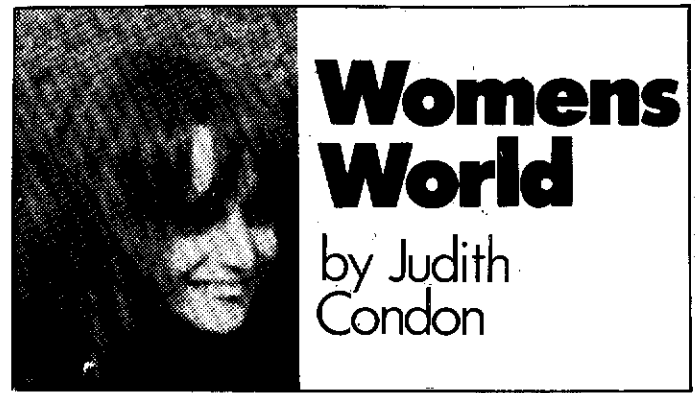
Which mightn't be such a bad idea, if bright spark Joyce Percy is anything to go by.

WOMEN live too long, says Joyce Percy, of Age Concern. That's the charity that's supposed to care for the elderly.

Men work themselves into an early grave, it seems. So poor old society has too many old women left on its hands. "It would be a good idea if women could wear themselves out through greater activity," she said at a recent conference. "They would certainly die earlier then."

Another Age Concern executive added his views. "Women are molly-coddled in the sense that they don't have nervous strain put on them."

Wait! all you women taking tranquillisers. Don't jump! All you women about to hurl yourself from the fourteenth



Womens World

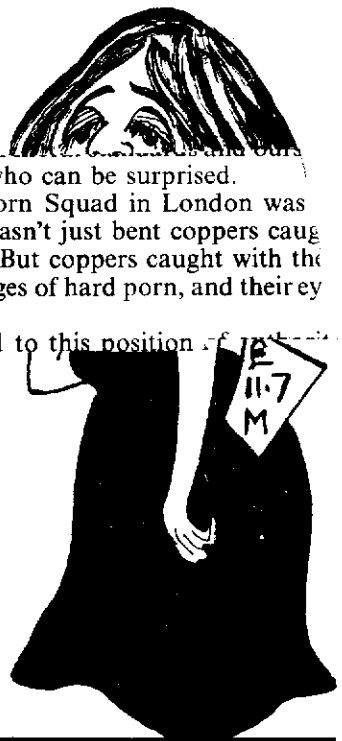
by Judith Condon

Crocodile tears

One widow who won't have to worry about pinching pennies is Jacky Kennedy Onassis. She's just done a deal with her late husband's daughter for £11.7 millions. Christine got left most of the loot, but she was afraid Jacky would come. And who can be surprised, ever making claims of the Porn Squad in London was share. So she bought a bit of piece and standards. It wasn't just bent coppers caught up with her cap of blue films. Christine only left £15,000 in the till. But coppers caught with the 000 a year, which between the pages of hard porn, and their eye up with her cap of blue films. Christine only left £15,000 a year on clothes, £40,000 on staff and she owned £3½ millions worth of jewelry.

Old Onassis got off light though. Rumour had it he was about to sue for divorce. If he'd lived long enough to see it through Jacky and her lawyers could have got seven times more than what Christine handed over.

Oh! The pain of a husband's death. We feel for you Jacky, we really do.



SAVE OUR HOSPITALS

WHAT HOSPITAL CUTS MEAN TO WOMEN

I HAVE had two babies in the Mothers' Hospital, Hackney which John Pilger exposed in the Daily Mirror last month.

During pregnancy there was the 'unavoidable' three hour wait at every clinic visit—common to

almost all maternity units. But my major problems started on admission.

With the first child I experienced 'back-ache' labour—a not uncommon form of labour where severe back pains replace more usual

contraction pains. The staff seized on the fact that I couldn't pass water—another sign of advanced labour—to diagnose 'kidney trouble' and sent me home.

My husband had planned to be at the birth, but when the hospital assured us that the baby was not due yet and as he couldn't afford to take more time off he went back to work. But within an hour I was back in hospital and my daughter had been born. My husband arrived 15 minutes later.

This couldn't happen again—but it did! Three weeks overdue with my second baby, I went to my usual clinic appointment and told them I had just started labour. They knew better and diagnosing a 'full bladder' they again sent me home. Again I believed them and sending my husband to work I concentrated on coping with our 18 month old daughter. Soon after he left, I was having contractions every three minutes. We had no phone so I went to a neighbour and tried to reach my husband, but he was out. Fortunately he had second thoughts and was already on his way back home.

On arrival at the hospital I was rushed to the labour ward but there was not even a bed for me to lie on and no cubicle to undress in so I sat in a chair doing my breathing exercises. When I knew there was no time left I yelled for a nurse—but I was 'exaggerating' again! At last they found a bed and I undressed, as the nurse went to shave me she saw the baby's head! My husband was rushed in and our second daughter was born.

After both births I was allowed to hold my babies for only a few minutes before they were taken away. While they were washed, inspected and dressed by the midwife I couldn't even see what was happening.

Babies were allowed to stay by their mothers in the wards but I always felt they were hospital property, *not* mine. Routine was all important. I was told when to feed, when to bathe, even when to cuddle them. There was no counselling for mothers with breast feeding problems but when I decided to bottle feed I was made to feel totally inadequate.

It was only after coming home that I felt my babies belonged to me and not the hospital, and I could begin to get to know and love them. Jeannie Hilton



Picture: Derek Spiers (H-U)

EGA FIGHT ON

THE fight goes on. That was the message from the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital workers and supporters who picketed outside David Ennals office last week.

As Secretary of State for Health and Social Security he can rescind the decision to close the hospital. At the meeting, with MPs, union officials and other important people, he did go so far as to say that there was a much greater demand for a women's hospital than he realised.

That's one success for the campaign! Now we have to keep the EGA open: women should continue to use the hospital. Raise support for the EGA wherever you live or work. Invite a speaker to come to your meeting. Phone 01387 2501. Help on the picket line.



Picture: Lawrence Sparham (IFL)

OCCUPATION RUNS SMOOTHLY

ELSIE Bath remembers being wheeled through the falling snow with her three-hour-old baby at Forest Gate Hospital in 1964. She works there now. The hospital is largely a collection of Nissen huts—much the same now as when Elsie had her baby there thirteen years ago.

Yet the plan of the health authority is to close Plaistow Maternity and leave Newham with only one hospital where women can have their babies—Forest Gate.

Dot Potter, Pat Varney and Elsie Bath all work at Plaistow Maternity where the staff have been occupying the hospital since 15 July.

'We started the occupation because it was the only answer. Something has to be done to save the small service we have in Newham. If this hospital goes, others will as well. Other closures are already planned. We live here, we've had kids in this hospital, we want to save the hospital for the people who live in Newham.'

'It's not as if the hospital isn't being used—it's 75 per cent full all the time. The NUPE (National Union of Public Employees) members in the hospital set up an Action Committee and CoHSE (Confederation of Health Service Employees) and NALGO (National Association of Local Government Officers) members joined the Committee as they voted to join the work-in.

Now the Action Committee has 15 members and represents all the

workers in the hospital. We've had union backing all the way, but we came to a "mutual" agreement with the officials that we were better off without them.

'We're a workers' Committee, not a union committee, that stops us being divided. Practically everyone in the hospital has joined a union, since the work-in started, particularly the nurses, and the union groups are much more active.

'When we started the work-in, we decided certain people would have to be kept out. We've excluded our immediate bosses in the hospital, the District Management Team, and members of the Area Health Authority and the Regional Health Authority.

'We felt we needed control over what happens in the hospital, and it would make us weaker if we let them in. Not many of them come in anyway, but there may come a time when they will want to, and we want to be in a position where they have to be invited in. The hospital is running as smoothly as ever, perhaps more so. We've proved we can do without the people at the top. They expect us to fall on our faces, but we've surprised them. We're expecting a closure date before the end of the year, but the more threats the administration makes, the more determined the staff are to fight back.

'We are trying to spread the campaign. We want everyone in the borough to join the fight. We need two maternity hospital in Newham. The government and their hatchet-

WHO are the people closing our hospitals?

In Wandsworth the Area Health Authority is honoured to have amongst its members Edward Ernest Field, JP. He is a director of no less than eight funeral companies. Touting for business perhaps?

men have got their priorities wrong. They give us facts and figures and they overlook people's needs.

Forest Gate is tucked away in one corner of the borough. How can a mum seven months pregnant be expected to get to ante-natal clinics? Are they likely to travel three miles across the borough, changing buses on the way? They just won't be able to do it.

'There are no buses to Forest Gate on Sundays and public holidays. But the Minister for Health doesn't travel on buses, so he doesn't know that. They say there's no money, but you can't weigh up lives in terms of money. We're

running a service, not a business. We're just a pawn in the economist's devious game. They've chosen hospitals to cut back on, rather than other things, because they think we are less likely to go on strike.

'They expect hospital workers to keep quiet—we've never fought back before. But this time we've given them a shock. We've learnt from the failure of the Poplar Hospital Campaign, and we've had help and advice from the EGA and the Hounslow campaigns. Now we need to get together and draw up a blue print to fight all hospital closures. We are determined that all of them are going to stay open!'

HOSPITAL WARDS—and even whole hospitals—are being closed all round the country.

And when they close a unit, where do those patients go? Back home to their sisters or their daughters or daughters-in-law, or to their mums.

All this 'return the patients to the community' may sound nice, but it really means that health authorities are trying to close units, sack qualified nurses—and get us to do their jobs—unpaid of course.

At the slightest hint of a closure of a hospital ward, *Womens Voice* groups should go down to the hospital, talk to the shop stewards, offer any help possible to leaflet the local area, visit other workplaces to get support, organise petitions and marches.

Closing a ward also means that those hospital workers—and most of them will be women—will be out of a job.

You can get 'Save Our Hospitals' badges from the Save Our Hospital Campaign, or get your own made. In Plaistow, almost all the busmen are wearing 'Save Plaistow Maternity Hospital' badges—seen by thousands every day.

When you start your campaign, be sure to let *Womens Voice* know your progress and any good ideas.

RACIALISM

POLICE SIEZE FOSTER FAMILY

LAST month Faith Foster was over the moon about Lewisham. 'We win, we win' she said. But Inspector Bolton at Deptford Police Station did not experience the same emotions. I'd go even further and say he was bloody mad about Faith being so pleased about it.

On Saturday 17 September, at 6.40 in the morning, just 10 minutes after husband David had left for work, the police came calling at her door. They wanted to know where Chris her son was. She told them that he was in bed. The message was radioed to Inspector Bolton, who replied 'Hold on, I'm coming down myself to turn them over.'

When he arrived he walked past Faith and went upstairs. 'Where are you going?' she asked - no reply. 'You just can't barge your way into my home' - still no reply. 'She went upstairs and saw him coming out of her bedroom. She asked him what he was doing in there. Bolton hit her hard across the face.'

Faith's 15 year old daughter Dawn came out of her room and saw what had happened. 'Leave my

mum alone' she screamed at him. He went up to her, and hit her hard across the face. Not content with that he pushed her onto the banister, squeezing her neck and bending her backwards over them. The other police said he was going too far, so he just twisted her arm up her back and pushed her down the stairs.

He walked past Faith - she says she smelt of drink - and dragged Dawn out of the house shouting 'Nick them'. One of the sons rushed out with a dressing gown for Dawn as she only had on her pyjama bottoms and a bra.

They were kept at the police station for three hours before being charged with assaulting a police officer and obstruction!

While they were there Bolton returned to Childeric Road. Archey the youngest son, and only eleven years old, opened the door to him. Bolton rammed the door into his face. He hit another daughter cutting her lip, then arrested the two eldest boys, Carl for assault and obstruction, and Chris for breaking

his bail conditions (he's not allowed out of the house between 7pm and 7am). He never never gave them the same rough treatment.

Four of the family needed medical treatment. Faith, Carl and Dawn appeared in court later that week. They were reluctantly given leave to press charges of assault and actual bodily harm against Inspector Bolton. The three of them were then remanded on bail to answer their 'charges' of assault and obstruction. They will be at Camberwell Court, SE5, at 10am, on 18 October.

If you can make it - be there.

If not - send messages of support to Faith and her family at 33 Childeric Road, London, SE14.

And the next time you hear the police and racists going on about black muggers, remember the Fosters and hundreds of other black and immigrant families like theirs, that go through the same treatment at the hands of 'our wonderful boys in blue' and ask yourselves, who are the real muggers?

Peggy Eagle

FIGHTING RACISM AT WORK

I WORK fulltime in a factory in Cardiff, where the workers are mainly women and young boys. We have a number of black workers, and everyone has always mixed well.

One morning the foreman put a young boy on our line to help out. He was fine until he came out with some racist remark that upset one of the girls who was about to marry a Jamaican boy.

We all stuck together and at first tried to use the logical arguments. But as time went on, we realised that racism just isn't logical, so we'd have to get tough. We use soldering irons on the line, and he had many threats as to where those soldering irons would be if he didn't stop

mouthed his filth.

By the end of that day, with us sounding hoarse from keeping up a constant argument, and the foreman in a frenzy because hardly any work had been done, the boy looked very pale and sorry for himself. One of the girls suggested we pile boxes around him so we wouldn't have to look at him while we worked!

That week we had our local Rock against Racism dance. We had already sold 50 tickets in the factory. I had arranged to meet some of the workers in a pub.

While we were talking to and behold, up comes this same boy and asks if I could sell him a ticket for the dance. In front of the men and women black and white, he apologised and said he hadn't understood the difference between socialism and fascism and he was very sorry if his remarks had offended anyone.

THE National Front have been beaten again. The ban on their march in Hyde is a victory for everyone of us that hates the Nazis and their racist poison.

They must be smarting from such a defeat. They know that had they marched thousands upon thousands of men and women, socialist, trade unionists and students would have turned up to stop them.

They know the Socialist Workers Party is prepared to do everything it can to stop them now, while they are still small. That's why they burned out our offices.

We now need your help. We need money to rebuild our offices. We need money to build our campaign to defeat these Nazis once and for all.

• What you can do: send a donation of your own. Take copies of our collection sheets round your estate, round your office or workplace, round your friends.

If you want collection sheets, write or telephone the Socialist Workers Party, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 01 739 9772

That took a lot of courage. He was only 19, and he didn't know what our response would be.

When all this first happened I felt guilty about being so brutal. But when you're up against racism you have to go on the attack right away. **Babs James, Cardiff.**

A black auxiliary nurse, Sharon, was physically attacked by one of our NUPE shopstewards. He's a real racist and has been calling her names, like 'Domino', for weeks. Eventually she told him to get off her back. He hit her in the face. She hit back and then he really belted her.

Several nurses said they would leave NUPE if nothing was done, so I called a mass meeting which was well attended. It was very heated—there were people, mainly Ward's own members, having a go at Sharon, but she spoke really well and her Mum, who's a NUPE steward in another hospital, came along and really socked it to them. I was waiting for the branch secretary to come up with something concrete, but as usual he just cocked it up.

Management's response to the affair has been typical. They've penalised us all by a new set of rules: no more than one person in the kitchen (where the incident happened), instant dismissal for swearing or smoking, they've taken all the chairs out and—wait for it—sawn off the doors to the kitchen!

Leaving NUPE won't solve anything—it's up to us to change it.

Carolyn Beane, NUPE shop steward St Georges Hospital, Leeds.



Picture: Phil McCowan



Picture: Phil McCowan

CONTRACEPTION

FORCED TO TAKE RISKS

WE have been touring a theatre piece to womens groups in the South West of England. Who are the Guinea Pigs?' was originally inspired by an account of a Glaswegian girl's experiences with a contraceptive injection called Depo-Povera (DP) in the April issue of *Womens Voice*.

Our researches began with a phone call to a Family Planning Clinic who told us that DP was only given to sub-normal women. Sub-normal women, we discovered, are those who can't remember to take their pills every day!

We also discovered: DP is manufactured by an American company, Upjohn. It is banned in America and does not have a license for general use in Britain. But in 1976 alone 18,000 prescriptions for DP were issued in Britain. Between 1968 and 1975 Upjohn sold close on 11 million doses of DP worldwide, at £2.50 a shot. DP has painful side effects, particularly excessive bleeding.

Our play lasted 45 minutes, and we always followed it up with discussion. The programme we printed was packed out with all the factual information so we kept the production a bit light hearted. We hope the play has done something in that part of the country to make women aware of the contraception business, and the risks they may be forced to take. Michele Frankel, Melanie Thompson.



picture: Mark Rusher (IFL)

ABORTION NEWS

ABORTION DEMAND THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

ABORTION is murder. That is the simple argument of the anti-abortionists. They're not interested in the ruined lives of women unable to cope with another child. Nor are they interested in women who want to plan out their lives taking the decision to have a child, and when to have a child, as seriously as such a decision should be taken. If you don't want to suffer the consequences, then you shouldn't be having sex is their pious preaching.

Unable to change the law through Parliament, the anti-abortionists are turning to more sinister methods. Professor Scarisbrick, the man behind the Life organisation, has written to every gynaecologist in the country threatening them with a murder trial. If he can find one case of an abortion carried out under 28 weeks where he thinks the foetus could have been kept alive he's going to turn it into a case of murder. However dubious Scarisbrick's reading of the law the intention is simple - intimidate and isolate doctors so they won't carry out abortions.

That's the sort of opposition we're up against. It's not just the MPs in Parliament, although they will no doubt try and change the law again this session. There is the constant propaganda poured into

schools, particularly Catholic girls schools, specially designed to make abortion look like a gory crime. Every Catholic Church bulletin carries news about the activities of anti-abortion organisations. The priests pump out the Church's view that sex is dirty and certainly not for enjoyment.

Their constant barrage of misinformation, articles, leaflets, posters is intended to intimidate, to make women feel guilty about sex and especially about abortion.

If there is a new bill in Parliament to change the 1967 Abortion Act or if there is a charge of murder brought against a doctor our campaign will have to raise hell in opposition to them. But don't wait. What we need now is a campaign that will stop them in their tracks.

• TAKE our leaflets round the schools in your area. Offer yourselves as speakers; write to the head, contact a teacher in the school. Challenge the opposition to a debate in the school. Show we're not afraid of the argument.

• GO and talk to the women who live and work in your area, around the estates, down the bingo queues, outside the Catholic Churches. Give out leaflets, put up posters, take a megaphone, organise a street

meeting. Get SPUC to debate on the local radio, provoke them in local papers.

• GO down to the factories where women work. Ask what they think. Organise a lunch-time meeting, a petition for the local newspaper and the local MP.

• WHERE you work persuade everyone you know, men as well as women to come on the demonstration in Birmingham. Get your union branch banner there.

ORDER YOUR POSTERS NOW!

Do it now, otherwise we'll find SPUC creeping into the NUPE and NUT branches voting against performing abortions and teaching about abortion. Whatever you do, go on the offensive. Speakers, speakers' notes, abortion badges, WV posters, all available from Womens Voice, 6 Cottons Gardens, London, E2.

THE National Abortion Campaign is sending a caravan around the country in the weeks before the demonstration. It has information about how to get an abortion, the history of abortion, the law, how abortion is affected by the cuts and doctors opinions, and much more.

At the same time Pirate Jenny are touring with their short abortion play. Both are ideal for taking around estates, on pickets, to meetings.

If you want to know when they are in your area, phone Caravan: Dorothy 01 485 7920 Pirate Jenny: Judith 01 960 5875

I saw the Bouncing Back with Benyon Play by Pirate Jenny— It was hilarious! Well worth seeing (Paste up person.)

DON'T LET THEM SHELVE THE RIGHTS WE DO HAVE

EVEN when the law says you are entitled to an abortion there is no guarantee that you will be able to get one. That's the evidence that comes clear in Scotland, where abortions were available quite legally before the 1967 Act ever came into existence. The Act transformed the situation in England and Wales, but it made little difference in Scotland.

Only religion, medical practice and the withholding of information have frustrated and denied women their rights. In some parts of Scotland gynaecologists have for many years been terminating pregnancies in good faith and without fear of prosecution. In other areas the legal right to terminate pregnancies was not used by the gynaecologists, nor were the legal differences between English and Scottish law made clear to medical students. As a result graduates, with few exceptions, believed that procuring an abortion was always a crime, unless the woman's life was in danger. In this way the right to abortion was proscribed and rationed.

A study in Scotland (Experience with Abortion. Gordon Horobin) sheds even more light on the situation. The low abortion rate for Scotland is because a great section of the population lives in the urban west, which includes the largest city Glasgow, where the catholic population is high and medical practice in regard to abortion is conservative. That's where James White comes from. The women who live in this area have been deprived of their legal rights by the powerful clerical and political militants who rule them.

It's also true that your class origin

plays an important part. If you work in the fish trade in Aberdeen or in a semi-skilled or unskilled job then you're much less likely to get an abortion than a clerical worker. Professional women do best.

As one of the writers in the book says 'It seems that in a city like Aberdeen legal abortion can be performed quietly for many years without a demand for abortion being created and indeed without the general population knowing

A BRUM WOMANS NIGHTMARE

FACT No. 1: The number of NHS abortions has declined over the past two years. Only two NHS abortions were performed at Selly Oak Hospital in 1974, and none in 1975.

FACT No. 2: Only 6 per cent of abortions carried out on women resident in South Birmingham in 1975 were on the NHS—the lowest percentage for any district in the whole country.

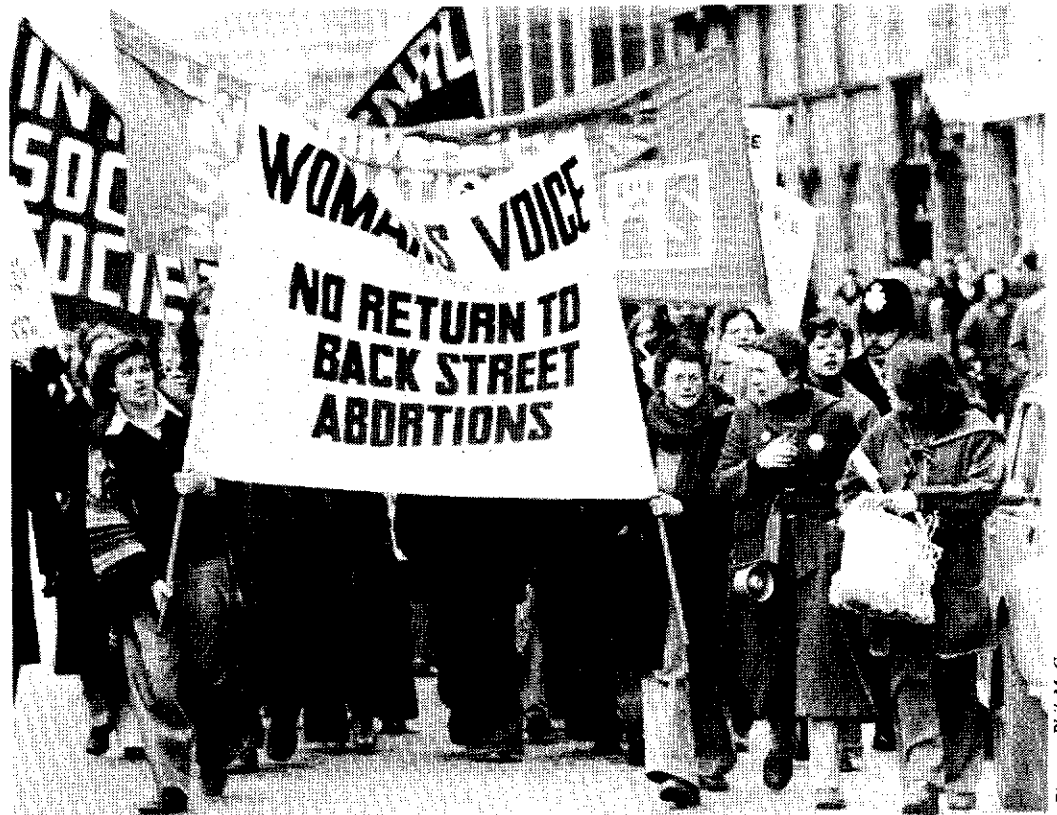
FACT No. 3: Two consultants at Selly Oak, Neville and Parker, refused to do any abortions—even under the 1967 Act. Professor McLaren of Birmingham Central District is violently opposed to abortion 'on demand.

FACT No 4: In 1975 nine out of ten women in Birmingham were forced to get abortions in the private sector.

very much about it! Has the writer ever thought that it's because the general population don't know very much about it that the demand hasn't been created? One wonders.

This silence has a function. It puts the service on ration. It humiliates the National Health Service applicant. The National Health Service gave to the mass of women in Britain for the first time in their long-suffering history the secured service of a doctor and hospitalisation. Yet in abortion provisions the service fails women in one of her most critical and essential needs. We need to set new standards. The place which once housed the back street abortionist is now occupied by the birth control centres. It is time we brought the centres into our city, town and country squares.

It is ludicrous that at a time when the techniques of contraception and abortion are so swiftly changing and being simplified that our battles should be fought against a backlog of ignorance. Whatever reason a termination is sought for, be it misfortune, lack of knowledge, failure to use contraceptives, women must have the right to decide what is in their own best interests. We must ensure that rights won are not left enshrined in Westminster, but are brought into our homes, for our use. We have to organise and agitate so that our rights are common knowledge at street level. Here is a task all of us in the *Socialist Workers Party* must rise to. In so doing we will widen and stir the social aspirations of us all. Anne Flynn



Picture: Phil McCowan



Picture: Derek Spiers (IFL)

Of all children Gypsy children must get the worst deal out of our education system. They get no education at all. So, not to

be forgotten, they came and picketed the Department of Education in September.

WOMEN WAGE EARNERS DENIED FIS BENIFIT

ONE of the best speeches at the TUC this year was made by Tom Parker, of the National League for the Blind and Disabled (an affiliated TUC union). Tom usually talks (very well, too) on problems related to his members, but this time he took up the cudgels for women workers who can't get Family Income Supplement.

The position, said Tom, was 'shocking'. Family Income Supplement is paid to help poor families with children. The average payment is £4.82 a week, but it can be as high as £8.50 for one child, and 50p for each extra child.

Only people who are in work can claim. Single-parent families, where the parents are men or women, can claim. But in a two-parent family, *only the man* can claim, even if the woman is working, and even if she is the only person in the family who

is working! This is, as Tom Parker put it, 'blatant discrimination'. A working man can claim FIS for his family; but a working woman (where the man is unemployed) cannot claim.

There are 9000 women in the country who are denied money for their children by this discrimination. The total cost to the government of paying FIS to them would be a mere £2.5m.

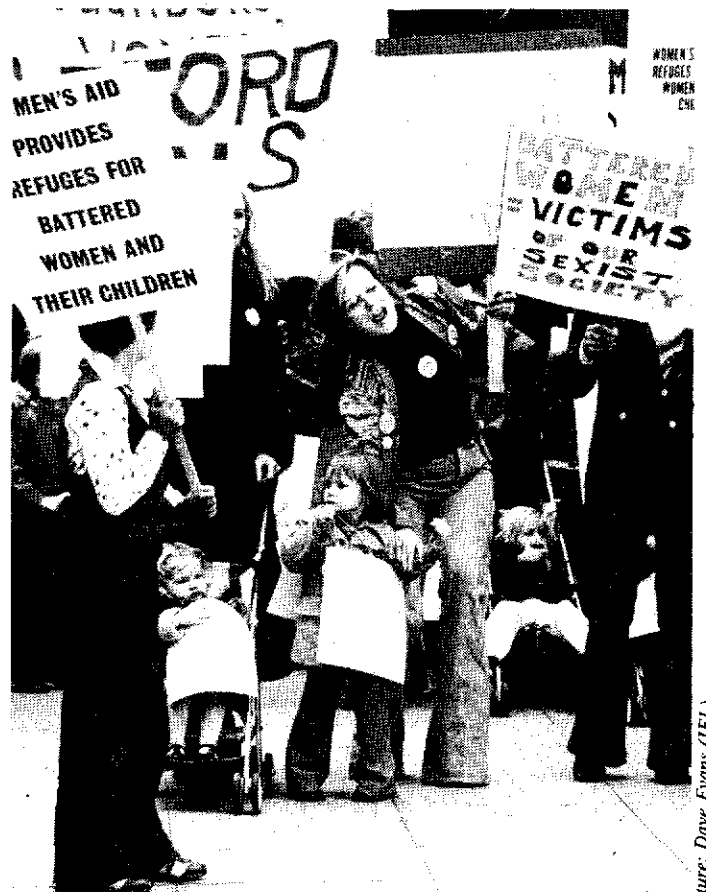
The government adamantly refuses to budge. When Audrey Wise asked Stan Orme, Secretary of State for Social Security, when the government was going to stop breaking its own Sex Discrimination Act, he replied that he had 'no plans' for any change.

Women's Voice readers who know people who are hit in this way should contact us. We must get a fight going to change Mr Orme's mind.

EARLIER this year a man who works at Automotive Products in Leamington lodged a complaint under the Sex Discrimination Act. He was being discriminated against, he argued, because his employers allowed the women in the factory to go home five minutes earlier than the men.

Agreed, said the tribunal. The management were instructed to sort the matter out. No, said the Employment Appeals Tribunal, the arrangement should be left as it is.

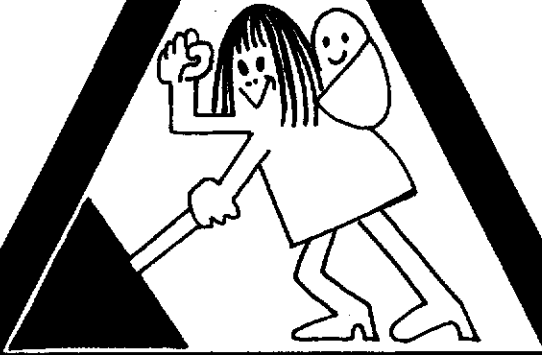
Guess who is backing the man's appeal to the House of Lords—the Equal Opportunities Commission!



Picture: Dave Evans (IFL)

An enormous demonstration of 1500 women, and their children, marched through Birmingham recently to demand more shelters for battered women. 'We are marching to control our lives,' read their slogans.

WATCH OUT!



WOMEN AT WORK

Manchester

Two *Women's Voice* groups in the Manchester area have been picketing supermarkets urging people not to buy Batchelors' foods.

Judith Wall writes: 'For the Bury group, this was our first venture. We gave out leaflets explaining the dispute, we sold *Women's Voice* and we collected £2 for the strike fund.

'We were met with a mixed response, the strangest being from a manager who wanted to know why we had 'picked on' him. He even asked us if he could have us moved on! Most women said they couldn't afford to buy Batchelors anyway, which led to a good discussion on price rises.'

The *Women's Voice* group in South East Manchester has also been busy. Jan Brown writes: 'Bank holiday Monday some of us went to the local festival with *Women's Voice*, a book stall, and a petition on school-meal prices. We set up a display made up of a prices/profits and wages/cuts see-saw to catch peoples attention.

'A few days later we picketed the local supermarket over the Batchelors strike. We didn't exactly inflame the whole of Longsight, but talking to shoppers, selling *Women's Voice*,—and having to sort out our arguments and summon up the confidence—made it well worthwhile.'

Birmingham

THE newspapers always love a picket line dispute between men and women; what better way to break a strike! So when the papers got a whiff of a 'go back to work' demo by some women

laid off by the Lucas toolmakers' strike they were down there quick as lightning.

Other women from the factory were there too—arguing for support for the toolroom men, and for compensation for the women laid off. As soon as the strike was over the argument for compensation really got going.

A woman from Lucas takes up the story:

'When we went back to work on the Monday nobody felt like doing anything. Women stood around in groups, angry because they had been laid off and had no money. Some blamed the toolroom men, because they'd got £100. So we argued that we should get the £100 too.

'The Womens Voice Group gave out a leaflet saying we should make the stewards do what we wanted, and demand compensation. It explained just how much profit the company was making.

'We told our stewards to see management about the compensation and internal lay off pay, and made it quite clear that some of us were prepared to take action if we didn't get it. This has never been known in the history of production workers in Lucas.

'We also asked the stewards to get the pension contributions to be paid for the full time workers for the six weeks they had been laid off.

'Management were desperate to get production going. After 10 weeks of strike stocks were low. We know we had a good chance of getting the compensation.

'After a week's negotiations the stewards still hadn't got a settlement. So we went on an

official work to rule.

'After three days we had a settlement: £50 plus all our arrears on the pension scheme. We could have got the £100 if our trade union leaders had been stronger.

'It was a great breakthrough for the women to win something like that. From small beginnings come big things. Now we're making lay-off pay one of our demands in the annual negotiation.

Canterbury

Canterbury *Womens Voice* Group has recently begun a campaign for local authority nurseries in the Canterbury area. We are appalled by the fact that there are over 3,000 under-fives in the town but only one state-run nursery with just 40 places.

The situation regarding nursery schools is no better. Voluntary play groups cost too much, and don't begin to meet the needs of working mothers. Registered childminders, always a second-best to well-run nurseries, are few and far between. So many working women are forced to use unregistered childminders, or take unsocial part-time evening jobs, or become home-workers for a pittance.

We are organising a petition locally on the housing estates and in Canterbury longmarket. We are also hoping for support from local trade unions, as many of them are committed to our aims.

We are prepared to send speakers to union branches and women's organisations, and welcome any women interested in attending our meetings. Further information from Lynne Davies Tel. Whitstable 26305.

Walthamstow

OUR local bakery, Nevilles, was one of the first to come out in protest over Bank Holiday working. As soon as they heard, two *Women's Voice* readers contacted the pickets to see what they could do to help. The workers, mainly Asians, were concerned that the national press were not telling the full facts about their case. They were delighted at the idea of a leaflet for local housewives, telling the true story.

Within a few hours we had printed 500 *Women's Voice* leaflets and distributed them in Walthamstow. A few days later we printed and gave out a further thousand leaflets, up-

dated to include the latest information.

Support amongst local people in queues outside shops and at bus-stops was almost unanimous. 'We've heard that the bakery workers haven't had a real wage increase for four years', said one stall-holder down the market. 'So what happens to the profits when the price of bread keeps on going up and up?' Other people were in no doubt that the bakers had as much right as anyone else to their bank-holiday.

Workers trying to maintain a successful picket line often do not have the time to go out and talk to local people about their cause. Visiting the picket line and giving out leaflets in town centres is just one positive way that we can help those fighting against poor pay.

Penny Hammond

WV school

A school was held in London in Mid-September to help and encourage *Womens Voice* readers to write for the magazine. It was with some trepidation that I went along, knowing my shortcomings as a writer, but I was relieved to find a very relaxed atmosphere.

Margaret Renn led a lively discussion about what kind of articles we would like to see in *Womens Voice*. Jean Gray, from *Socialist Worker* talked about how to approach writing, and how to do an interview. Then we split into small groups where we had to put it all into practice.

We conducted mock-interviews with women in situations we might encounter, women out on strike, women in high-rise flats. We each wrote up our interview within a given time, and then read it out for comments and discussion.

After lunch we found out what happens after an article arrives at the *Womens Voice* office, how to set it out, and what a page looks like at the different stages up to printing.

I found the school very helpful. I recommend anyone who fancies writing for *Womens Voice* to go along to any schools that are organised in the future. There's nothing like sitting down together and having to put pen to paper to break the ice if you've never been a writer before.

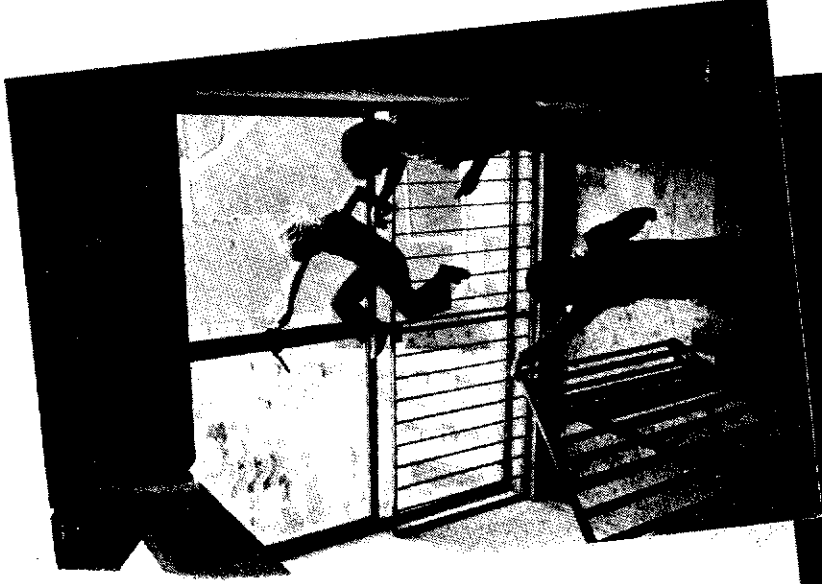
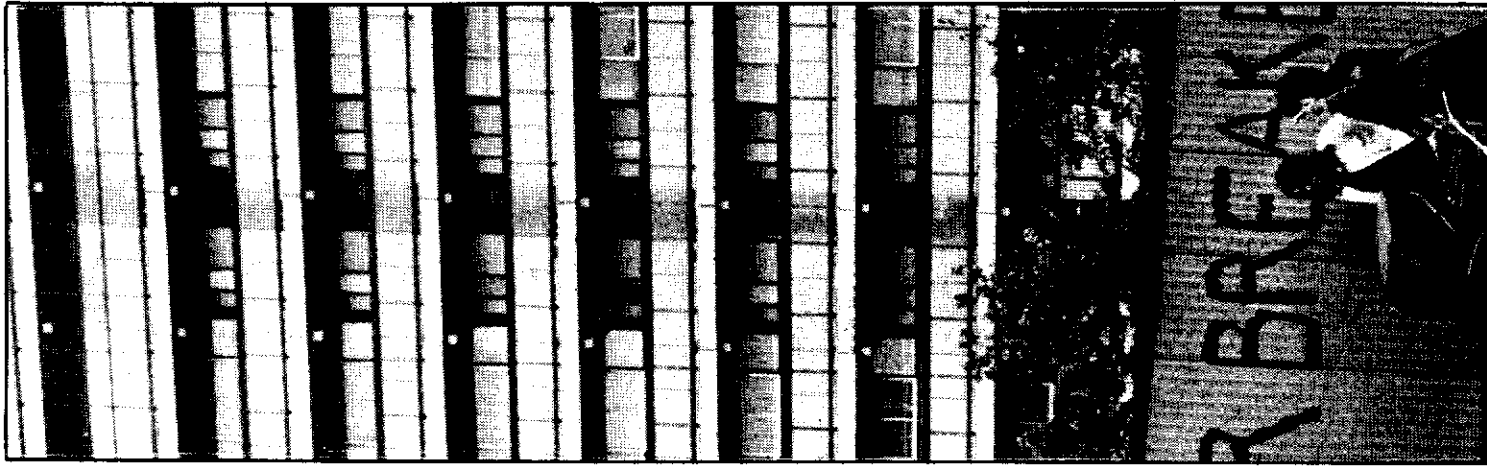
Mary Robson

THERE are 500 high rise blocks in Birmingham alone, with 40,000 people living in them. In the last twenty years they have been built all over the country. They were built on the cheap to a standard that has always been too low. Now we are paying the price.

The Greater London Council has spent £8 million repairing its high rise blocks, with a bill for £38 million to come. On one estate they saved £20,000 two years ago on cheap window frames - the cost to repair them now they have all warped is £130,000.

When Ronan Point collapsed in 1968 the tenants were just beginning to organise themselves; now 10 years later they have a Tenants Association and have managed to move out and rehouse all the families with children under the age of five who live on the top seven floors.

Some tower blocks are so badly built - with straw walls, blue asbestos, cement beams that shrink and crack - that they must be pulled down. Whilst others may be sound, that room with a view has become a prison for the thousands of young women and young children who live in them. Living in a high rise block



is not like living in a penthouse. They're cramped, with lifts that don't work, and long waits for repairs.

A LIFE WITH A VIEW that will drive you to despair

WHEN Le Corbusier designed the first tower-blocks in France after the last war, as part of a mass re-housing campaign, little did he realise what unhappiness he would cause the inhabitants of these flats. When you walk round these vast, faceless estates, the feelings voiced are the same over and over again: 'It's like a prison'. There's no contact with neighbours. 'There's nowhere for the children to play.' 'Nowhere to dry your washing.' Old people tussle with young children. The two age groups don't mix that well and especially not in these concrete jungles.

Teenagers have nowhere to go and hang around the estates. Vandalism becomes their past-time. Estate tenants are frightened to go out alone for fear of having their bags snatched or being accosted in some way. The only group of people tower blocks seem to suit are people out at work all day.

In a recent survey, the so-called experts have agreed high rising living is not suitable for most people. But what can the tenants of these estates do about their lot? Join the transfer list? Leave London? Or do what Pam Hibberd, a young mother of two children, did recently, and commit suicide by throwing herself and her two year old child from their eleventh floor prison in West Bromwich, Birmingham?

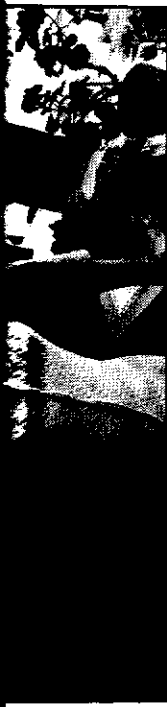
The isolation of bringing up young children on your own is stressful enough without living eleven floors into the sky. All the people we spoke to on the estates felt for Pam Hibberd's family and understood how she had been driven in desperation to kill herself.

been simple enough to build a small balcony, where we would have had a few potted plants and a small washing line. I was once stuck for one and a half hours in the lift. It has no proper alarm system. It's virtually impossible for Mr and Mrs Rudrum to meet with other tenants because all the families are enclosed in their individual boxes.

Mrs. Burbridge has two children, a girl of 15 and a boy, Lee, of 9. She has lived on the 21st floor for 12 years. Since 1968 she has applied for a council transfer every 2 weeks without success. 'The flats are like a prison, you feel lonely, isolated, because there is no safe place for the children to play, they stay in the flats when they are not at school, become withdrawn, anti-social, telly addicts. If you let the kids play on the landings outside your door, do you watch them all the time, or run the risk of them hurting themselves, as well as subjecting the neighbours to their noise. At one time there was no safety mesh on the landing windows and the kids would play balancing games on the window ledges. The playgrounds are totally inadequate. Toddlers can't be left there unattended, and you can hardly keep an eye on them from the 21st floor!'

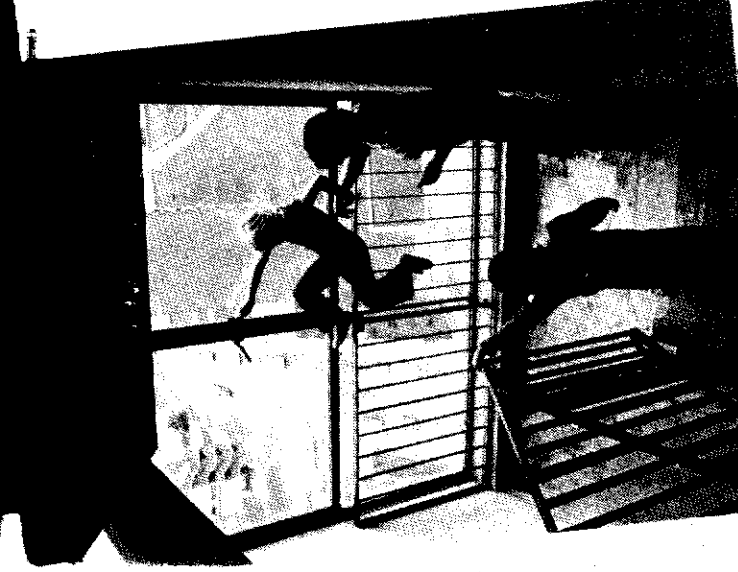
Local councils can be made to rehouse families; tower blocks can be improved. But nothing will happen unless we make it - that means petitions and pickets, pressure where it hurts, until the Councils provide families with the sort of housing that they need.

Written by Diane Watts. Photos by Angela Phillips



Mrs Rudrum is 72. She has lived with her husband on the eleventh floor for the past three years. They moved in when the flats were new. Mr and Mrs Rudrum were rehoused from an ordinary flat they had lived in for 22 years because there was no bathroom. They both miss their old home, not being able to have a chat over the garden fence with a neighbour. They feel disillusioned. After high hopes of a new life in their new flat, they feel let down, unable to carry on their daily lives in the way they want.

'Life in a tower block makes the simple things like washing clothes difficult. When I do my weekly wash there is nowhere to hang it out. It would have




History 6

Walter in a Medieval Village



People lived with their animals in wood & plaster houses, mainly on a diet of bread, cheese, ale and vegetable potage.....



CHICKEN FOR LAMAS AGAIN!

After paying the lord, the priest and the miller, the peasant had £1.15.4d per year

COW 10/-
OX MORE
SHEEP 1/5
CHICKEN 1D




He had to work most of the time for the lord & for no pay

NOT LORDS DAY AGAIN!!



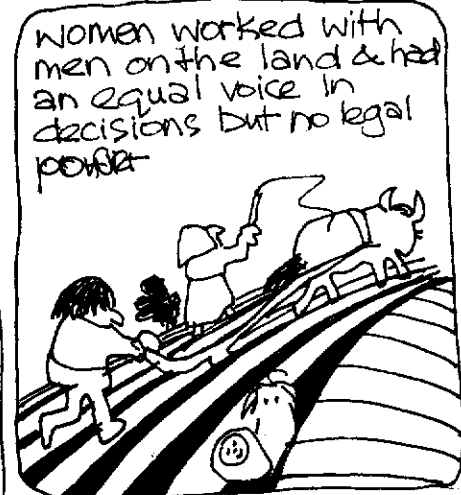
women villeins had to ask the lord's permission to marry & had to pay him a fine if they married a freeman or had an illegitimate baby



the lord in turn supported the king, who came on frequent hunting trips & stayed till he'd eaten every thing




women worked with men on the land & had an equal voice in decisions but no legal power



although Christianity taught the spiritual equality of all, that tended to be postponed till after judgement

St Paul taught the submission of women to men, sex and a pure ideal of the virgin - to make up for woman's original sin of giving Adam his



Widows were the only ones who had some of the equality because inherited their

had kind equality they inherited from husbands. Marriage wasn't a lifetime institution, & most people died in what we would consider middle age

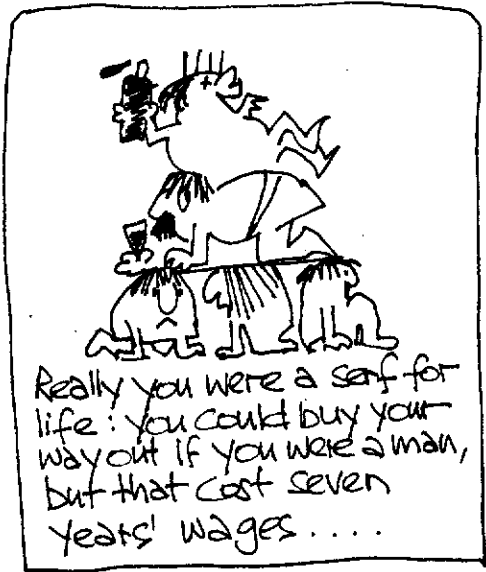


Nunneries had quite a lot of independence early in the Middle Ages

but by the later years monasteries were in control & the nuns retreated into mysticism

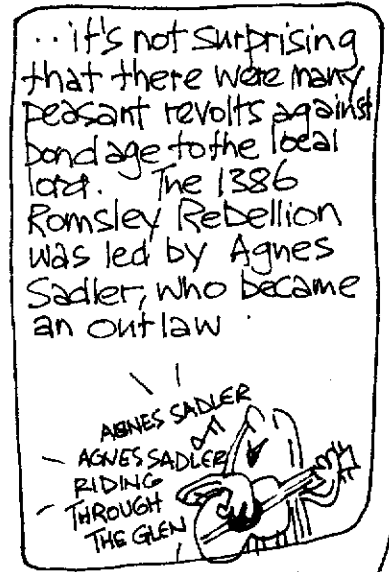


Really you were a serf for life: you could buy your way out if you were a man, but that cost seven years' wages.....



...it's not surprising that there were many peasant revolts against bondage to the local lord. The 1386 Romsley Rebellion was led by Agnes Sadler, who became an outlaw

AGNES SADLER
- RIDING THROUGH THE GLEN



How much do you need?

Two years of prices going up

Two years of wages held down

Do you need a wage increase?

A teacher needs £15 a week

A clerical officer in the Civil Service needs £15

A Fords manual worker, grade B (mostly women) needs £10

Sheila McGregor speaking to a woman at the Lucas, King Street, factory in Birmingham.

How much money do you think you need to get back on your feet?

If they give us £20 I'll take it. We could do with at least £15 a week. Or the women could. At the moment I spend £25 a week on food for three sons and one daughter. That covers cereal or toast in the morning. We don't have a cooked breakfast. And one good meal at night. Twice a week we eat meat—shepherds pie or braising steak, never chops or fried steak. I couldn't afford that. And on Sunday we have roast lamb. With vegetables that costs about £5. We just couldn't afford to buy roast beef. Then I pay £10 for a rubbishy council house and put away £5 for bills. That's £40 before buying any household goods, clothes or anything else.

We need the money because of the cost of living. Every time you go to the shops something has gone up. Take bread this week—it's gone up by ½p after the bakers strike. They put up the price to pay for the bakers bank holiday money instead of taking it out of their profits. The other reason I feel entitled to at least £15 is because other workers are already getting more. The women at Sercks are on £68 a week, and at the Rover they're on £72. If they can have it, we can.

What do you think about the Government's 10 per cent limit?

It's supposed to be free collective bargaining like it was before the social contract, so we should be entitled to get what we can.

What about the government's argument that the country cannot afford it?

To be truthful, most working women don't know the ins and outs of it. They just know they need more money. When you talk about speculators and the like most of us don't know about it. We know about going to the shops every week and paying the rent.

Do you believe the country is going broke?

Not now. The way shares are going up, the oil money and so forth. Look at the profits made on gas, electricity and the rest. Yet we still have to pay the high prices.

Most women, when they hear the country is going broke, think that they'll lose their jobs,

it puts the frighteners on. To tell the truth it sometimes frightens me. For example, where I work at Lucas we mostly do British Leyland work. Now they're talking about not putting money into Leyland. That's the end of our jobs too. If the Company come and say that could happen the women will settle for £5 right away.

The crazy thing is that Lucas is about to make £75 million profit. And another thing, they're doing up the front of the factory where the business men go in to avoid paying tax to the Government. They could give that money to us. The fact is that the social contract hasn't done us any good. It's really a form of political black mail. Jobs are still lost even if we hold our wages down. We've got to fight for our jobs as well as wages.

There is no easy way out of the crisis like holding wages down. You have to fight both for higher wages and your jobs.

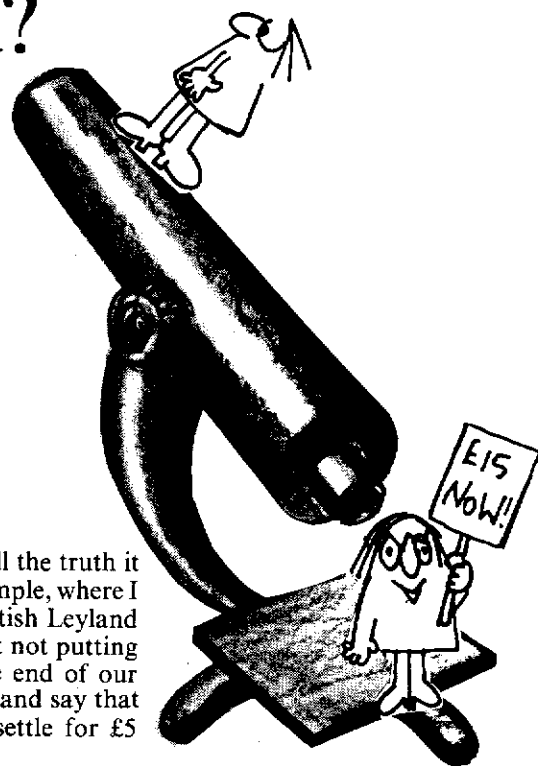
What do you think about the trade union leaders voting for the 12 month rule?

If they kept prices down nobody would mind waiting. I doubt if they will. Every week prices go up. Hugh Scanlon ought to come in and do my job on the shop floor. Then he wouldn't argue for the 12 month rule.

What do you think about the argument that you're earning enough already.

Well it might be true for some but others need more. It's partly an argument because some women think they're lucky to have a job. Personally I think I have the right to a job the same as a man or anyone else. I'm entitled to go into work. A lot of people still think that women only work for pin money. That's not true—it takes at least two wages to keep things going. Never mind the women who are the full wage earners.

I think we have to convince the women that the money is there. The profits are being made. It's not a question of getting blood out of a stone. It's a question of what happens to the money and where it goes. Some women are very loyal to Lucas but their firm isn't loyal to them. They got laid off recently, just like that. You can work 30 or 40 years for a firm and the firm goes broke. Then they just give you your cards. They don't care about you then. We have to fight for our own interests. I think we should go in and fight for as much as we can. We need it.



If you take a microscope to one industry you begin to see the scale of the problem for women workers. At the bottom of the heap, they are the lowest paid of all, and benefit least out of percentage increases like 10 per cent.

In NALGO the local government workers union, lowest grade is C1. 80 per cent of the workers on that grade are women. There are more women workers on that grade than on any other single grade in the NALGO pay structure.

You start at £32 a week, before stoppages, and if you work your way up you can earn up to £57 a week.

Over the last two years wages for the top of that grade have gone up by £8.50. But the cost of living has gone up by 32 per cent. The net amount of pay lost over the two years is £11.50.

That's if you're at the top of the grade. If you're at the bottom you fare even worse because the last 5 per cent increase gave you less. Percentage increases are no good at all for the lowest paid. A flat rate across the board increase for everyone is the only way of getting a fair increase, fair to the lowest paid, fair to the women, and the sections least able to fight.

£15 now. Who ever you are, where ever you work.



NOISS

EVERY October thousands of women start at College for the first time. Thousands of women that NOISS can involve in the fight against womens oppression, for womens liberation. NOISS is the student organisation of the Socialist Workers Party.

Very few colleges have any sort of nursery provision. The nurseries that do exist are often too expensive for students to put their children in, or are being closed down because of the cuts. Teacher training colleges, with a majority of women students, are being closed down. Abortion rights for all women are under attack. Now more than ever we need a militant womens campaign in the colleges.

That means involving as many women as we can, to organise and agitate. Motions at conferences are not suddenly going to bring thousands of women students into struggle. They're not going to win us the nurseries we need. We have never won anything by asking politely for it.

At the Unviersity of East Anglia we were lucky. We had a nursery. But we had to fight to keep it. When the administration were looking around for ways of saving money the nursery came first on the list.

They tried to stop the kids dinners. Mothers would have had to miss lectures to feed them. So instead of feeding the kids they took them all up to the vice-chancellors plush offices and told them to feed the kids! Two hours later the admin changed their minds; the lunches were continued. They decided the students union should pay £3000 a year towards the cost of running the

nursery. We refused, threatened to occupy; they backed down.

Throughout the campaign we organised mass meetings, leaflets, stickers, posters. Hundreds of students supported the campaign, even though they weren't parents. We had to argue for the women's right to higher education. Nursery education is a right not a privilege.

Later this month there is a demonstration for our abortion

National Union of Students

3 Endsleigh Street, London, WC14 0DU 01 387 1277
Membership: 800,000 including 150,000 part time students
Executive members 17 men 4 women

THE National Union of Students organises students in every university, Polytechnic, Training College, College of Further Education, Technical College in the country.

A college affiliates itself to the NUS and all its students then count as members. The Students Union for the College then receives its grant, called a capitation fee, from the College Authority, or the Local Education Authority.

Each College has an executive, elected each year. Larger colleges have full time executive members.

There are two national policy making conferences, at Christmas and Easter, they elect the Executive of the NUS. Decisions taken at the conferences are not binding on individual colleges. There are also advisory conferences for each sector: Further Education, Polys. Universities, and conferences for women and gays.

NUS policy includes: free abortion on demand, free nursery provision for all children, provided by the college or the Department of Education and Science, equal pay, against any discrimination on the grounds of sex.

rights in Birmingham. No doubt there will be another private members bill introduced in Parliament which will try and restrict our rights even further.

We can fight inside as well as outside, the colleges against those people who believe that women have no right to run their own lives.

There is usually a medical service in each college. Will they give free abortion on demand in yours? Do they even prescribe free contraceptives? If not, there's a campaign to organise. It's the best way we can undermine the opposition.

All of these different campaigns are ways of fighting for our rights as women, and Womens Voice can help us in that. It brings together the experiences of women. We can use them to build our confidence, to find out how others fight, to show we are not fighting alone. A Womens Voice group in every college, will bring more women into the struggle. Not just for the years they are at college, but until we really do win our liberation.

Gill Brown



Copies of this poster are available direct from NOISS, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2. 10p each for single copies. Bulk orders free. Coming soon: Join the Fight for Womens Liberation. A NOISS/Womens Voice pamphlet. Price 15p. Order yours now—single copies 25p including postage and packing, bulk orders post free.



TWO PARTS OF A WHOLE

ON 1 October women members of the *Socialist Workers Party* held a conference in Birmingham. Margaret Renn, the women's organiser for the Party, opened the conference. The following is a summary of her speech.

Socialism without women's liberation is a contradiction in words. Socialism would simply not be socialism if women were still oppressed.

It is also true that women cannot be liberated outside of a socialist society. It is not possible to achieve any liberation in a society like ours which depends on the oppression and exploitation of men and women.

Socialism and women's liberation are two parts of a whole. We can't separate them in the way we work.

Work amongst women is essential to our work as socialists, it's not an optional extra, something we do we have time left over from all the other important things we do. On the contrary, it's the most important work we can undertake, because we understand the issues and events that affect women in a way that our male comrades cannot.

Where do we begin. Women at work are the ones with power to change society. Look around at all the disputes that women have been involved in the last few weeks; Beechams, Batchelors, Kilwinning, the school cleaners and dinner ladies, women in hospitals. They are the ones who are fighting to change society. They are the women we are talking to.

But whilst most women work and organise at work, it is also true that most

women have families, and are interested in the things that affect them most as mothers. When the woman jumped out of her high rise block there must have been thousands of women living at the top of thousands of high rise tower blocks who thought—that's me, that could happen here.

Neither group of women are exclusive, but in our party you can count the number of industrial women members we have on the fingers of two hands. That's the problem we have to face.

Our magazine *Womens Voice* brings together all the issues that interest women. Sales are going very well, and this month we expect to be printing 10,000 copies. But it's not enough on its own. How we use it to organise is what matters.

Womens Committees within our branches and districts are a good idea, but we can't involve the women who read the magazine in them. We need *Womens Voice* groups. Groups that will meet regularly and be ready to respond when things need organising. We should produce *Womens Voice* supporters cards for all those women who want to get involved in our activities.

Then we will have the numbers so that the next time a woman jumps out of her high rise block we can be putting a local bulletin into all the tower blocks in the area.

We have to be quick off the mark. On abortion, rape, lack of nurseries, we have to be able to stir women's imagination. That's why our *Womens Voice* organisation is so important. Without it, we won't do anything.

We need to have the

same sort of imaginative approach to women who work in factories. Selling *Womens Voice* outside factories that employ large numbers of women, producing special *Womens Voice* bulletins can be deadly—if we see it as a ritual.

But if we go down to the factories knowing that there will be women there interested in what we have to say, whether its about abortion or £15; if we go prepared to talk, prepared to involve women as quickly as possible in the production of the bulletins then it won't become a routine.

It's really very exciting. Think of all the womens factories that have been on strike this year. Then imagine the numbers that weren't able to strike because they simply didn't know what to do and no one, certainly not the union officials, was prepared to help them. They're the women we want to be organising with.

The majority of women at this conference work. How many of you sell *Womens Voice* in your



Margaret Renn, SWP Womens Organiser.

workplace? Do you know how good your maternity leave agreement is? What about the other things that the women you work with are always complaining about.

We are preparing a pamphlet on maternity leave for women in NALGO. We are also writing a pamphlet about women in the TGWU. Using these, and *Womens Voice*, will help us build the rank and file movement amongst

women workers. They need it most. Womens strikes are always being sold down the river by trade union officials. Unions take least interest in the issues that affect their women members most.

There is a lot for us to do, because we are trying to build something new: a socialist womens organisation that fights at once for womens liberation and socialism.



Photo: John Vinnick (Report)

From Woman to Woman

A Gynaecologist answers questions about you and your body. By Lucienne Lanson Pelican books, price 95pence.

Women's Health Handbook

16 Methley Terrace, Leeds 7 Price £1.00

Our Bodies Ourselves

by the Boston Womens Health Collective. Price £3.95 from BookMarks 265 Seven Sisters Road London N4. All these books are available from Book Marks

IN the spring of 1973, the Boston Womens Health Collective published a book called *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. In their own words: "*Our Bodies, Ourselves* is written by and for women in response to an imperative need for

women everywhere to learn about our bodies in order to have control over them and over our lives. We seek to communicate our excitement about the power of shared information; to assert that, in an age of professionals, we are the best experts on ourselves and our feelings; to continue the collective struggle for adequate health care."

That book sold over a million copies, has been republished dozens of times, and has inspired the growth of women's health groups around the world. Besides covering the anatomy and physiology of sexuality and reproduction, common medical and health problems, birth control, abortion, child-birth and menopause, the book has chapters on sexual relationships, rape, self-defence, lesbianism and much much more. The technical explanations are interspersed with first person descriptions of the emotional aspects, so that for example, the piece on miscarriage has three women telling how they felt and how it affected their lives, as well as the medical

facts.

Self-help health groups have grown up in many parts of the UK, based on the idea that through understanding the workings of our bodies we can challenge the mystique of the medical profession, be more able to get the kind of health care we need, be more in touch with our bodies, and extend this new confidence to other areas of our lives.

Last year the Leeds womens health groups brought out the *Womens Health Handbook*. This is a much shorter, and less detailed book, but it does have the advantage of being set in a British context—National Health Services and all. It places a lot of stress on self examination and self help: "The politics of self-help are a challenge to the medical profession's attitude to our bodies; and they are also a challenge to the taboos which surround our reproductive organs ... we learn to relate to ourselves through self-examination."

The book ends with the words: "with our speculums we are strong!", but sets itself firmly on the side of

demanding better state health care. In some of the literature there is a strong "back to the golden age of home brewed remedies" flavour. Recognising and challenging the *misuse* of drugs and techniques under the present system is different to believing that women would be better off without modern medicine altogether. (See *Womens Voice* No. 8) A second edition of this book, *The New Womens Health Handbook* is coming out early in 1978.

Now Penguin has published a woman's health book that is going to reach a far wider number of women in this country—it has already appeared on the bookstalls in railway stations. *From Woman to Woman* is largely what it claims to be: "clear, accurate, and sympathetic information from a gynaecologist ... in a book that will enable every woman to understand the workings of her own body and to discuss any treatment of it intelligently with her own doctor."

The book covers: what we've got and

why; periods; vaginal infections; becoming and avoiding pregnancy; abortion; sterilisation; menopause; breast problems; cancer and common disorders. It's certainly thorough, clear, and easy to understand, and concentrates on the functioning of ordinary bodies, rather than worrying and weird possible diseases.

But unlike the two other books this is not a feminist book. The chapter on sexuality assumes, without actually saying so, that all women are heterosexual. The section on abortion stresses the possible physical risks involved, rather than explaining that wanting an abortion is a perfectly valid reaction to pregnancy, or detailing how to get one. It assumes that the doctor patient relationship is unchanged and unchangeable—doctor as expert, woman as passive (but hopefully intelligent) patient. Most startling, for a book about women's health published in 1977, it doesn't mention the cuts—surely the gravest threat to our health and physical well-being right now. Elana Dallas

The Dismantling of the Health Service

(ATV September 12th) Reviewed by Mary Ann Stuart—*Womens Voice's* new TV watcher. When John Pilger said at the end of his programme *The Dismantling of the Health Service* that the authorities of both television and the Health Service had tried to stop it going out, he revealed something that goes on all the time.

EARLIER this year, the BBC went to court to prevent a programme

which they themselves had commissioned from being shown. It was a film about Northern Ireland and we did not see it. The courts decided that it was an incitement to public disorder. The film showed an IRA man speaking to a crowd in a Belfast street, attacking British repression in Northern Ireland. It was this scene that was said to be illegal. But the film showed what conditions are really like in Northern Ireland, and the way the British Army behaves, and that was what the BBC and the courts were so anxious to keep from us.

It was the same with Pilger and the Health Service. As he started out saying, what his programme showed was not the exception, it was the rule. What

his short and bitter film showed us was the real state of the Health Service.

It was shocking film to many, but to us it only made public what we have been saying for a long time. Its impact was enormous—which was exactly why the authorities tried to stop it and to intimidate the participants. It reached millions of people that we do not yet, and it convinced people of the effects of the cuts in human terms, like cost-effective Charlie, like the women whose lives and babies are threatened because the only anaesthetist is a cab-journey away across London.

Recently it was revealed that one of our town's gynaecological wards was to be closed. A blatant cut and a serious threat to the health of the women of

Stockport. When we started to take round *Womens Voice* petitions and leaflets, the response was a hundred per cent. "I'll sign that" we were told time and time again, "I saw that programme last night, I'll sign your petition."

People are rightly angry, and films like John Pilger's inflame that anger. We should take advantage of it while we have the chance—the authorities don't like us to know the truth, and next time they might succeed in stopping it.

I shall be looking out for programmes like that in the future. I'll also be commenting on the programmes they *don't* want stopped—the programmes that put forward their ideas, because that's what it's all about isn't it?

WOMENS VOICE

The Paradise Papers

by Merlin Stone
Published by Virago
Price £2.50.

MERLIN Stone has unearthed a vast amount of information about civilisations that worshipped goddesses, *not* gods, and where women's status was high. This information has been ignored or completely misinterpreted by archaeologists who could not conceive that women played roles that they consider essentially 'masculine'.

She gives convincing evidence for goddess worship throughout the bible lands and as far as North Africa—civilisations where women had a high status, or were even dominant, conducting business, wielding power, while in many cases the men filled the traditional 'female' role.

She goes on to describe how these civilisations were destroyed and taken over by god-worshipping, patriarchal, male-dominated tribes from the North.

One of the most fascinating and enlightening parts of the book, for me, was her interpretation of the Old Testament. The bible, it seems was not just a historical account of how the Hebrews came to be 'the chosen people', nor just a means of explaining the world and how it began. *Paradise Papers* explains that the priestly Levites came from a conquering Northern tribe, while the other Hebrew tribes belonged to the native goddess-worshipping civilisation.

The bible, then, is a propaganda weapon, used by the Levites to impose their god-worshipping patriarchal beliefs on the other Hebrew tribes. The goddess



Cast of Venus of Willendorf,
From Gravettian-Aurignacian
site of Upper Paleolithic Age

religion did not fade away, it was destroyed by centuries of suppression and punishment. As the bible describes, the Hebrews kept on reverting to their 'old ways' and were severely punished for doing so.

It appears that the story of Adam and Eve was carefully constructed, quite late in comparison with other parts of the bible, as a direct attack on the goddess worshippers. The serpent and the sycamore fig tree were symbols of wisdom closely associated with the goddess. The story was a warning to the Hebrews not to take part in the sexual customs of the temples.

The knowledge given by the fruit of the tree was the knowledge of sexuality. Woman was to be punished for tempting man to partake of this

knowledge—as the male god decreed "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing. In pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

Many women of the goddess worshipping civilisations used to live within the temple complex, which owned much of the land and acted as the central controlling offices of the community. These women took lovers from among the men of the community. To these people the act of sex was sacred, and the women were seen, not as temple prostitutes—as many archaeologists have implied—but as holy and pure.

We begin to see how deeply our minds have been poisoned when today virginity is almost synonymous with purity—with the in-

NERVOUS PROSTRATION

I married a man of the Croydon class
When I was twenty-two.
And I vex him, and he bores me
Till we don't know what to do!
It isn't good form in the Croydon class
To say you love your wife,
So I spend my time with the tradesmen's books
And pray for the end of life.

In green fields are blossoming trees
And a golden wealth of gorse,
And young birds sing for joy of worms:
It's perfectly clear of course,
That it wouldn't be taste in the Croydon class
To sing over dinner or tea:
But I sometimes wish the gentlemen
Would turn and talk to me.

But every man of the Croydon class
Lives in terror of joy and speech.
"Words are betrayers", "Joys are brief"
The maxims their wise ones teach.
And for all my labour of love and life
I shall be clothed and fed,
And they'll give me an orderly funeral
When I'm still enough to be dead.

I married a man of the Croydon class
When I was twenty-two.
And I vex him, and he bores me
Till we don't know what to do!
And as I sit in his ordered house,
I feel I must sob or shriek,
To force a man of the Croydon class
To live, or love, or to speak!

This poem was written by Anna Wickam who lived from 1884 to 1947, and was sent to us by Paul Furness, Leeds

evitable inference that the sex is impure.

It is hardly surprising that women who were used to such freedom and esteem fought hard to retain it. The god of Israel constantly likened the Hebrew tribes to an unfaithful wife—the comparison was not accidental.

What remains in my memory from this book is the thought of the women who witnessed the slaughter of large numbers of their people by the Northern tribes, and were forced to live in a completely alien society. A society where men could have as many wives as they wanted, while women were stoned to death not merely for taking a lover, but even for being raped. A society where what they had revered as sacred was despised and punished as evil.

One thing that Merlin Stone doesn't go into is

how and why the Northern peoples were ruled by the men, and why they came to be the dominant force. Would the Hebrews have become male-dominated, even without the Northern invasions? I don't think anyone has given a really satisfactory explanation of how men gained power over women.

There is much more that women need to find out about themselves and their own history. Merlin Stone has made an excellent contribution with this book. What it brings out very clearly is that the morality and sexual roles that seem so 'natural' were only imposed on us through great suffering, fear, and persecution. Women were once free, strong and proud—we can and will be again. Catty France

YOUR VOICE

Dear Womens Voice
HOT on the heels of that other nasty story about how women at work are growing beards is the startling revelation from a 'top geneticist' published in the *Evening News* on September 19th. Headed with the dire warning 'Danger to Young Girls on the Pill' the article suggests that taking the Pill may affect the brain and corrupt its normal sexual patterns, turning girls of 12 or 13 into lesbians'.

Isn't it rather a coincidence that women who decide for themselves who and how to love have to be discounted as biological freaks or presented as a 'danger'? The prospect of 51 per cent of the population learning to think a bit more for themselves is such a threat that muddy little smear campaigns have to be concocted out of useless pieces of research. Yours in sisterhood, Penny Hammond, Walthamstow WV group.

EVENING NEWS

Danger to young girls on the Pill

GIRLS of 12 or 13 who take the Pill could be turned into Lesbians, a top geneticist has warned.

French Professor Jerome Lejeune, who discovered the extra chromosome responsible for mongolism, has linked the effects of extra hormones like those in the Pill with the development of the brain.

He told a conference at Manchester University that the extra hormones could affect the brain as it de-

Police state

Dear Womens Voice
I AM a nurse of twenty eight years standing and over the years because of lack of equipment and the re-formation of staff making the system top heavy with administration I have become demoralised with the whole system.

Besides working I have three young children and an invalid husband. My husband has been unfit to work for the past three years. Several months ago he was reported by some 'kind' person to have supposedly been working while on sickness benefit. For six weeks he was followed around like a criminal without his knowledge. An inspector called to our house to inform us of this and to tell us that the accusation was completely unfounded. When my

husband asked to be given the name of his accuser he was told that this could not be done. This makes me feel as though we are on the verge of becoming a police state.

As I stated earlier I have three young children, the eldest being only twelve, and when I look to their future I can see that with the unemployment situation whatever academic qualifications they achieve their is little hope of them ever getting a job.

This became more evident to my husband and I when we met all the youngsters on the right to work march at Blackpool.

So all in all I think the whole system needs shaking out of it's lethargic state by all the means available to the SWP.
WV reader Pontypridd

No comment

Paedophilia: not all dirty old men

Dear Womens Voice,
After the National Front attacked the PIE (Paedophile Information Exchange) meeting in London recently, I thought the issue ought to be taken up in Womens Voice. After all if the Front attack them, they can't be all bad.

To most people paedophilia means dirty old men in macs offering little girls a lolly to take

their knickers down; and quite understandable that a lot of mothers want to see such people put away.

But the issues are not as simple as that. Our society treats children as property and wants to keep them from all sexual experience for as long as possible, so we have the age of consent and lock boys up for having sex with girls under 16 and men for having sex with boys under 21 (why the difference?).

My daughter's reaction is that there shouldn't be an age of consent. Children should be allowed to have sex as soon as they are old enough to ask for it, but with other children or whoever they choose, not with adults who are too hung up to make love to other adults.

These adults need to recognise their problems and try to come to terms with them, and we should stop all the National Front attempts to prevent them doing this.

It is an advance that paedophiliacs are actually trying to sort themselves out, and we have to help politicise their struggle to do so. We should draw the lessons that capitalist

women without men

Dear Womens Voice
Whilst I agree with SM/of Hendon in WV 8 that physical contact and sensuality must exist alongside sexuality I think it might be nice if she refrained from insulting lesbians by denying their existence: "When a woman hasn't got a man or vice versa what they miss is pure physical contact." *I don't*. Has no one heard that "a woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle"?

How dare you assume we are all heterosexual.

Alison Buckley, St. Andrews Lesbian Feminists.

DISCRIMINATION AT WORK: How new laws affect your firm

MEET AND LISTEN TO THE EXPERTS

Dr Shirley Summerskill, MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Home Affairs
Lady Howe, Dep. Chairman, Equal Opportunities Commission
John Grant, MP, Under Sec. of State, Dept. of Employment
David Hobman, Director, Age Concern
David Lane, Chairman, Commission for Racial Equality

ONE DAY CONFERENCE, Wed 19th Oct 10.30-5pm
Piccadilly Hotel, Piccadilly Circus, London, W.1.
Cost, inclusive of wines, lunch, coffee etc £50
Details: Federation of Personnel Services,
120 Baker Street, London, W.1. Phone: 01-487 5250

society allows children to be hit at school, but not to be caressed, and rouses reactionary appetites by allowing newspapers to print pictures of half-naked women got up in gymslips.

Let's make sure our children know what sex and love are about, so they won't suffer unnecessary traumatic experiences, but can make up their own minds about what they want. And let's treat anything forced upon them as an attack on their liberty.

Mary Phillips

PS I think we all enjoyed Alice in Wonderland as an important and formative part of our childhood. Perhaps it would never have been written if Lewis Carroll hadn't been fixated on young girls.

campaign

Dear Womens Voice
We are organising a nursery campaign in the Gloucester area and would like to hear from any comrades who have experience of running a campaign. We would also appreciate any facts of figures that have been compiled for your own area so that we can compare our lack of facilities with yours.
Anne Phillips, Stroud, Glos.

• We have had several requests like this. If you are involved in a nursery campaign, at work, or in your locality, send us all the information you can so that we can collect it together and pass it on. Send to Womens Voice, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

YOUR VOICE



Dear Womens Voice

I enclose an advert from 'Sounds' music paper. As you can see it is a photo of the actress, Jayne Mansfield, who was decapitated in a car accident ten years ago.

Although not sexist in the strictest sense, is in very bad taste, since it is using one persons very tragic and horrific death to sell a record.

Surely Jayne Mansfield was exploited enough during her life by husbands, lovers and the film industry. The bizarre nature of Jayne Mansfield's death should not be used by another set of people merely out to make money.

April Field, Poole, Dorset.

catch 2 2

Dear Womens Voice,

I have recently read several articles in WV regarding the fairness of the system towards women, and these have inspired me to report my own experiences.

My ex-husband and I (couldn't resist that), were divorced a few months ago, and I have been living with my boyfriend for about a year, he too is married and has to pay maintenance etc. Up until a couple of months ago I was working full time, but due to baby-sitting expenses, I was forced to hand in my notice. So, like all good unemployed people I arrived at the dole.

'Sorry', they said. 'You can't have dole, you gave up your job, I have two small children' was my wretched cry. 'Oh well try the Social Security.'

Tattered clothes on, begging bowl in hand, I set off to the Social Security where, after an hours wait and that was with an appointment, I was attended by a competent young girl of about 19.

After listening to my sob story, she remarked 'I'm sorry we can't help, as you are living with your boyfriend under the same roof, you are regarded as his responsibility.'

Now, to some this might seem a fair assumption, but let me carry the story back to a courtroom a few months previous,

when my boyfriend was claiming a reduction in maintenance, as he had responsibilities (quite right, you have heard THAT word before). 'Sorry' replies the magistrate, 'As she is only your girlfriend and your responsibility is to your wife, we cannot consider your girlfriend as an added responsibility.'

See what I mean? I feel rather like a tennis ball being tossed from player to player, neither wishing to serve, as it seems I am the true responsibility of myself and nobody else. I am still unemployed. But! It's great being my own (that's right you guessed it) responsibility.

Christine Fellomes, Salford SWP

daft

Dear Womens Voice

'THE first and only day I failed to make the beds before going to work, we were burgled—and suffered acute embarrassment as I showed the young detective around the house! But our policemen are wonderful; he allowed me to make the beds before the fingerprint man came upstairs.'

This was one of the readers letters which Womens Own paid £5.00 for How daft can you get?

Anon WV reader

Dear Womens Voice
Sara Smith-Petersen's letter in the September issue of *Women's Voice* prompted me to share my own experience of the British Safety Council.

The Goddess Kali poster is only the latest in a long line of sexist propaganda that the Council uses to put its 'safety message' across.

Four years ago, I was attracted by a job advertisement that invited girls to 'help save lives' in a Hammersmith-based charity. So I joined a team of about fifteen other girls selling 'safety' over the telephone to top management.

It wasn't long before I realised that this 'charity' was run for the benefit of the bosses, not the workers. The British Safety Council provides nice 'jobs for the boys' in what has become a big business.

Industrial accidents cause damage to valuable machinery, plant and equipment, thus reducing profits. This is the message we were taught to sell to management.

The BSC sells expensive training courses in such things as 'Total Loss Control', which is supposed to scientifically control the cost of accidents in money terms.

If we sold well, we would get taken to expense account dinners and lunches on the Council's Yacht and present a sexy front to prospective clients—often from South Africa's mines or the Arab Oil Companies.

Our manageress came back late from the pub one lunchtime with her fellow supervisor. Both were more than a little tipsy. Now here was a strange thing—these two women had drilled us well into submission by divisory tactics, threats and cautions if any of us spent too long in the loo. But today, they invited us to stop work and share some wine with them—in the boardroom! Here, with tears in her eyes, our manageress told us she was getting the sack and being replaced by a more efficient sales manager.

Sentiments aroused by the free booze, we all pledged our support for her and said we would go on strike in order to have her reinstated. So none of us turned up for work the next

day. And James Tye acted faster than lightning. He placed advertisements for an entire new sales staff in the Evening paper. When we did trail back forlornly to work, he had us intercepted, separated from one another and individually presented with an ultimatum—either we accept the new job terms or leave.

I worked on for several months. None of us saw our ex-manageress again, though I heard through the grapevine that she had gone to work as a barmaid.

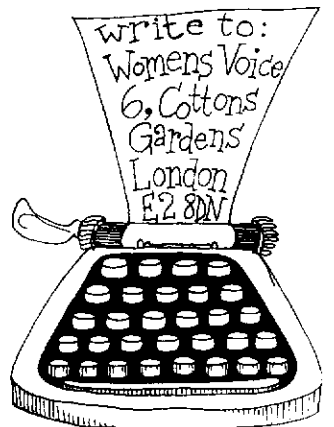
Conditions were worse than ever after the 'strike'. More pressured. We were divided from one another to prevent us from talking and the number of calls we had to make per day was doubled.

After nine months of this I had a nervous breakdown and developed nervous asthma for the first time. I began oversleeping and turning up late, for which they eventually sacked me. In a way it was a relief, though it wasn't much fun going on the dole two weeks before Christmas.

Ginny Hill

Dear Women's Voice,

I THINK readers of *Women's Voice* who read the article on Battered Wives and the new Domestic Violence Act, the centre page of which I wrote and researched, would like to know that the NCCL booklet by Anna Coote & Tess Gill entitled 'Battered Women and the New Law' explains the workings of the new law at length and in clear terms. It's available from NCCL for 60p.
Heather Dyer, Hackney.



Dear Womens Voice

On a recent trip to Denmark I noticed *Womens Voice* on display in a library at a Further Education College. I asked around and found several people who were keen readers. One woman said 'It's the only way to find out what's really happening amongst women in Britain'.
International fame at last!

Phil McCowen

Judge tells 12-year-old: You behaved with terrible brutality

Sex lesson killer boy gets 'life'



HEARTBREAK OF A BOY KILLER'S MUM

THE mother of a schoolboy who killed his classmate during the sex lesson...

BY MURDER REPORTER

his mother I had to... about her and after... added: "I would... as a mother... I feel... what..."

STORM OVER 'LOVELESS' SCHOOL SEX

Where it all began to go wrong

Life for boy who killed after lessons

B.B. as 4>

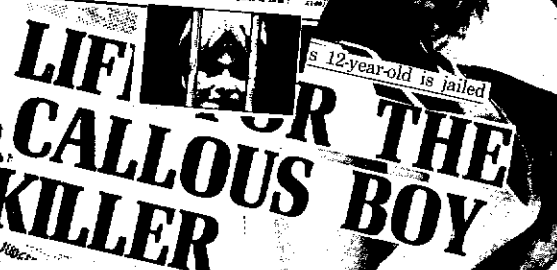
My weekend with Bianca by Rod Stewart

So what does society do with a 12-year-old killer?

By RUTH INGLIS

WHAT does the future hold for the 12-year-old boy who killed his classmate during the sex lesson...

the father shows... the father is over... the mother is over... the mother is over...



LIFE FOR THE CALLOUS BOY KILLER

YORKSHIRE TV recently screened a "Sex Education" programme for adults, entitled "Man and Woman". In the course of the series, it dealt in a simple and straight forward way with the biology of male and female reproductive systems, the basic process of male/female lovemaking, a couple's sexual difficulties and their eventual resolutions, problems of contraception and venereal diseases. On the last two items the programme provided useful factual advice. The counselling which enabled the couple to get over their difficulties in achieving sexual pleasure placed great emphasis on their finding out together what gave them pleasurable feelings, gradually building up their knowledge and skill, to their mutual satisfaction. It also pointed out difficulties in their home situation—when first married they had shared a home with one of their parents, with all the feelings of embarrassment and constraint which go with it.

The programme tried hard. There was no stated emphasis on sex solely within marriage, although both the couple analysed and the experts helping them were married!. Partners of the same sex were indicated as a possibility though neither homosexuality nor lesbianism were mentioned by name or suggested positively as alternative forms of lovemaking. Masturbation was talked about briefly as a source of pleasure and possible climax for both men and women. In all, sex was identified as something that people did, with a chosen partner, which, provided it did no harm and brought mutual pleasure, was alright.

There is one major criticism which must be made against the programme. It completely mystified the source of the female orgasm. The initial episode showed drawings and diagrams illustrating the development of the male and female reproductive organs and genitals. The male anatomy was shown in full. But the illustration of the female genitals completely failed to even indicate the existence of the clitoris, and throughout the series, this vital organ of female sexual pleasure was never once mentioned.

The process of male/female lovemaking was briefly described—the male is aroused, gets an erection, achieves penetration, and eventually orgasm and ejaculation. The

female is aroused, penetrated, impregnated, and may or may not achieve orgasm. The female pleasure/orgasm cycle was shown as being less dependable than the male's simple cycle of arousal, erection, further stimulation, climax, relaxation. The woman could be aroused and entered, but whether or not she too would have a climax was presented as a dicey business, which had some mysterious connection with whether she felt "relaxed" or "secure with her partner".

Contrast this picture presented by Yorkshire TV with these descriptions by women of their experience of sexual pleasure from clitoral stimulation: "My body feels poised, alive, glowing, high"—"Supreme sensitivity to touch"—"Heightened sensitivity all over"—"Orgasm is the greatest physical pleasure by far of any in life". These quotations are taken from the Hite Report (see WV, June) as published by The Sun on Sept 13. Here is how The Sun presents the report.

"The Hite report is different. It is by women, for women. It is not about clinical facts or statistics. It is about women explaining their most intimate secret frankly in their own words. The picture they paint of love is very different from any given previously. It may shock you. It may offend you. But it may help women to understand themselves better and some men to understand women for the first time." For once, The Sun nearly gets it right—although of course the whole article is presented with the usual sickening sensationalism, designed as a teabreak teaser for men to laugh about, and illustrated of course with a photo of a naked woman.

What is the reason for this mystified attitude to female sexual pleasure? Could it be that the answer can be located in the physical nature of its source?

The male orgasm is directly linked with ejaculation—the expulsion of sperm. This is a basic biological process necessary for the preservation of the species. When the knowledge of the link between sexuality and reproduction was tied in with the idea of inheritance of property, it led to the beginning of the "nuclear family", within which the man could be sure of the continuance of his line and the inheritance of

his goods, by the continued impregnation of one woman who would bear only his children. Thus sperm=children=property=power, and for men, orgasm, with its attendant ejaculation is a symbol of the source of their power.

Women it is true are the bearers of children. But let's look at our anatomy again. When we do, we make a remarkable discovery. The female capacity for sexual pleasure and orgasm has no direct connection with her reproductive system. The clitoris, the organ which is the source of the most intense sexual pleasure from women exists for this purpose alone. It itself plays no part in the reproductive process. So it is the woman who has the capacity to experience the orgasm outside of the reproductive function.

In our capitalist society, both men and women are prevented from exploring the individual nature of their sexuality with lovers and friends. It is in the interests of capitalism to distance us from our own potential—and the system's long hours and bad housing take their toll; leaving us too tired or with nowhere to go, hours where we can comfortably explore ourselves—as the couple in the TV series discovered. Their social circumstances were the source of their sexual misery, and left them caught in the trap of "not wanting to talk about it" and not knowing how.

We have to struggle against the sexual stereotyping which causes so much misery to men, women and children in our society. Only by trying to understand our own bodies and share our experience of them may we share and expand our ideas about "lovemaking" and its place in our lives.—Its importance summed up by another woman's description of her experience of pleasure—"Somehow it gives me the chance to climb above myself, to wake up from the fogginess of daily existence." That "Fogginess" is the product of controlled ignorance—ignorance maintained by capitalism deliberately through the Television, and The Sun prevent us knowing ourselves, which women and socialists we must continue to break down.

Lynn MacR...

WOMEN'S HEALTH

WV Meetings

● **Pontefract Womens Voice Public Meeting.** 'Family Life: Who Rules?' Thursday October 20th. 8pm, Pontefract Town Hall. Speaker: Dr Dave Widgery.

● **Lea Valley Womens Voice Group:** How to be a female chairperson. Practical meeting, 23 October, 8pm, 27 Nelson Road, N15.

● **Halifax Womens Voice /SWP public meeting:** How we can fight back, 7.30pm, Tuesday 18 October, The Plummet Line

● **Black Country Womens Voice** meets fortnightly, Sunday afternoons, 2.30 at 27 Glen Court, Compton Road, Wolverhampton. Children very welcome. Phone Wolverhampton 23233 for information about Womens Voice activities and meetings.

● **South West London Womens Voice Group** meet alternate Tuesdays at 91 Bedford Hill, Balham, October 18 'Rape' speaker Linda Woodroff. November 1 'Why prices rise' speaker Judith Hamilton. Further details contact 673 1329.

● **South West London Womens Voice group** Public Meeting with 'Bouncing Back with Pirate Jenny' Thursday October 13, 8.00pm at the Wheatsheaf Pub, Upper Tooting Road (opposite Tooting Bec tube station) Plus speakers from the National Abortion Campaign and Womens Voice. Entrance 25p.

● **Edinburgh WV.** For information about WV work, contact Susie at Book Marx, 130 Morrison Street, Edinburgh. Open 10am-6pm everyday and most evenings.

● **Aberystwyth WV discussion groups.** Every other Tuesday. Farmers Side Bar,

● **South East London Womens Voice** meets alternate Mondays at the Womens Centre (above the Task Force shop) Deptford High Street, SE10, 8.00pm. Further details from Peggy 853 2070 (day)/Anne 855 1920 (eves.)

● **York Womens Voice Group** meets alternative Mondays (5th and 19th September and 17 October) at the Falcon, Micklegate. All Welcome.

● **Cardiff WV groups** meets at 58 Bridge Street, SWP Bookshop, Cardiff.

● **South East London WV group** meets every other Monday, 8pm, Womens Centre, above Task Force, Deptford High Street, SE10. More details from Peggy on 835 2070 in the daytime or Ann 855 1920.

● **Womens Voice rally/ weekend school 5th and 6th November Deptford.**

Sessions on: women and socialism, health, unions, the family, fascism, rape, sexual politics, pornography, Eastern Europe, world struggles. Social evening on Saturday. Accommodation and creche available. £1 for the weekend. Reduced rates available for claimants and housewives. London WV groups are invited to come and bring their friends

At the Womens Centre, Deptford High Street (above the Task Force shop)

Trains to New Cross tube or Deptford mainline station. Further information and tickets available from: Ann 855 1920 or Peggy 853 2070 (3.30 - 7.30).

Conferences

● **SWP Science Group—Health and Safety Group.** Weekend meeting on Health and Safety at Work October 15/16th in Leeds. Sessions on: The politics of health and safety, The Asbestos story, The drugs industry, Women, health and work, Organising for health and safety in the rank and file movement, Health and safety committees and reps, Plus North-West Spanner Theatre Group Starts 12.20 Saturday. Cost £2.50 (£6.50 with bed and breakfast). For further details and to register, contact Derek Howl, 3 Granby Grove, Leeds 6 Tel: Leeds (0532) 789920

● **Women in Manual Trades National Meeting:** 22/23 October Women working in construction or as mechanics, gardeners, printers etc, or interested in doing so, contact: Women in Manual Trades c/o Tess McMahon 16 Sholebroke Avenue Leeds 7 Tel: Leeds 629427 (evenings)

● **Midlands Socialist Feminist Conference.** 'Feminism, Sexuality, and Abortion' Saturday 15 October, 10am, Lanchester Polytechnic, Coventry. The

aim of this conference will be to examine the question of female sexuality in terms of women's role in capitalist society. In this way we hope to develop an understanding and definition of our sexuality in order that we may formulate a coherent and effective strategy for the realisation of socialist feminist demands for control of our sexuality and our lives. Registration forms from Carolyn Pickering, 37 Gaveston Road, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire. Phone - Leamington Spa 32965

Discos 'n fun

● **Mobile disco and rock band** available at affordable prices for Womens Voice functions etc in London. SAP01-890 3255.

● **Hounslow Hospital benefit Rocknite.** Saturday 22 October. With Cadillac, SADisco, late bar at Star and Garter Hotel, Kew Bridge. Admission by advance tickets only, £1.25 each. Now available from NALGO Ealing Area, c/o 87 Waters Drive, Staines, 59277.

Self Defence

● **Womens Voice self defence lessons** every Thursday, West Greenwich House,

Greenwich High Road, SE10, 8.00pm, 50p (males welcome).

Going to College

● **Take Womens Voice to College in October:** If you are going to be a student this term, or if there is a college near where you live, why not take some extra copies of Womens Voice to sell? Everything you need is available from Womens Voice: extra copies of this edition, back copies of Womens Voice and blank Womens Voice posters so that you can write on details of your local activities (£1 for 40). No return to back-street abortion posters - 30 for £1. This advert degrades women stickers - 3 sheets for 50p. Money with orders for back copies, posters and stickers please. Send to Womens Voice, 6 Cottons Gardens, London, E2.

● **Can you read, write, type?** Can you help us to produce Womens Voice? We always need help, whatever your talents. Please phone or write to Margaret Renn at 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2 (tel., 739 1878)

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WHAT IS GOING ON?! meetings plays
discos badges pamphlets campaigns concerts

Womens VOICE

Socialist Workers Party

NO RETURN TO BACKSTREET ABORTION

Saturday 29 October

1.30pm

Victoria Square

(Town Hall)

Birmingham

FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND

NO RETURN TO BACKSTREET ABORTION

What would you do if you were a doctor in Leicester who has just been charged on four separate counts of illegal abortion. You may be shocked. But it's not the doctor's fault. Illegal, backstreet abortions were supposed to disappear when the 1967 Abortion Act became law, and so they did. Until now.

For the last two years anti-abortion MPs and doctors, the Catholic Church and SPUC, the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, have all waged a vicious and hysterical campaign to try and change the law.

The Government's cuts in public spending have made all hospital treatment hard to get. You have to wait and wait, and that's no good when you need an abortion, you can't wait.

Between them they're playing with our lives, forcing the clock back to the days when women had no choice but to find a local doctor or the local abortionist who would do us a favour, for a price.

women themselves should decide what they will do with their lives, whether or not they will have a child, without We suggestions, financial barriers, endless red tape. When women decide to have abortions, they should be freely available like all other health care on the National Health.

People who are against abortion are entitled to think and do what they like with their own lives, but they cannot dictate to us how we live our lives.

Bring your friends and workmates on the demonstration. Bring your banners. Bring your children. Let's show them how many we are.

Saturday 29 October,

Womens VOICE Socialist Workers Party

Victoria Square (Town Hall) Birmingham

GET YOUR AMMUNITION NOW!

If you want copies of these leaflets and posters order them now. £2.50 for 1,000 leaflets, £1.50 for 100 posters.

Write to *Womens Voice*, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2. (Money with orders please).