

# Womens **VOICE**

August 78

**Price 15p**

Issue 20



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### **CONTRIBUTORS**

**Bron Charlton**  
**Arthur Scargill**  
**Joan Lester M.P.**  
**Carol Adams**  
**David Edgar (author DESTINY)**  
**Maurice Ludmer**  
**(ed. SEARCHLIGHT)**

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Keep writing to us at Box 82, London, E2.

Articles, news, photos, letters, poems, songs, stories, jokes, cartoons, drawings, ideas, information, you name it, we need it. But by the 23 August for the next issue please.

We now have a phone number:  
01-734 7410



## OUR POINT OF VIEW

# THE POVERTY OF MARRIAGE

FINANCIALLY battered. That's the conclusion of a recent survey of married women. Working or not, most women have next to no money left once the housekeeping is paid out.

95p a week spending money is average, and probably less than their children receive in pocket money, the report by the Liberty Life Assurance Company claims.

Although most women will have saved money when they were single, once married there is nothing to put by. The average pot of gold amounts to twelve miserable pounds.

Wooing the women's vote the government has had a lot to say about women's financial independence. Women should be able to fill in their own tax forms is the grand conclusion.

But being a dependant isn't just a question of someone else filling in your tax forms, or getting your tax rebate (presuming you earn enough to get one). It's really a matter of hard cash.

Being a dependant is like being a child. Never able to decide to do anything which involves money without asking someone else's permission to do it. Then it was: 'Can I have some money please for the school outing.' Now it is: 'Can I have some money for a night out. I'll need enough for a meal and to pay my round of the drinks.'

Every penny has to be scrimped and fiddled out of the housekeeping, or asked for.

No wonder so many marriages go sour. However happy you may start out having no money to spend as you will, or having to ask, and therefore account, for every penny is enough to squeeze the life out of any friendship.

When politicians, and Margaret Thatcher in particular, go on about the freedom of the individual they conveniently forget that we need the means to be free. We are free to choose how we spend the housekeeping—will it be mince or sausages, butter or margarine. We are free to choose between raspberry or strawberry jam on our bread. We are reduced to making choices that really make no difference. That's the pitiful way we exercise our freedom.

The freedom to enjoy ourselves at the end of a hard days work—never.

That's what a decent living wage should mean. Not just enough to pay the household bills, but enough to have a fling, and not just once a year. Enough to enjoy yourself without feeling guilty about it. Enough to be able to say there's more to life than work, and an even poorer old age at the end of it.

More money, and your own money, to spend as you wish. That's what counts.

No one dependant on anyone else—that's what we want to see. No breadwinners. No head of household. No one with financial control over another. No master and no servant.

**Just in case you had any illusions left in what Jim Callaghan and the Labour Government are offering women:**

**The average woman worker earns £56 a week before tax.**

**Five per cent is to be the new limit on wage increases for the next year.**

**Five per cent of £54, after deductions, will amount of £1.89 a week.**

**Don't spend it all at once!  
Five per cent of £56, after deductions,**



## MY ROOTS ARE HERE

CLAUDINE Eccleston is 24, black and comes from Jamaica. She went to school in this country and is now a plumber for Camden Council.

Like other blacks Claudine has suffered her share of prejudice. She has been beaten up by white kids, harassed by the police and suffered the hardships of poverty and unemployment.

But on 3rd July—the day after the 50th anniversary of the womens vote—the British government payed Claudine the highest tribute of all—they invited her to dinner with Mr Callaghan;

'I was supposedly chosen for being the first woman plumber. What a joke. There was a woman working in Hackney before I started my training and I trained with another No I was tokenised—chosen because I was black and a woman.

When I complained to Mrs Callaghan that I had lost a day's pay for going she said that it had been my choice to go. No feminists were invited. And there were a lot of women there that I didn't want to meet like Margaret Thatcher!

The best person I spoke to was a ninety six year old suffragette who had once tried to blow up Durham Cathedral! Several women made fine sounding conversation about the need to improve the position of women, Anna Ford was one—but I've never heard of any of them campaigning—outside of that dinner party atmosphere.

The day after it all I went back to being an ordinary plumber. At the moment I am working on a site. It is well organised and there is a big difference between this site and my last one. Here I was given a safety helmet as soon as I walked on which showed that the union there was strong on health and safety.

The men are all in favour of women working on the site—though I don't know how they'd feel if their wives did such a job. In fact they

take so much trouble that sometimes I feel like the Queen. I have my own changing room—and on the first day one of the workers came in, decided the floor wasn't good enough and put new boards down! The only bad thing is they keep apologising for swearing so when I swear they get really shocked.

But at national level the union is not so helpful. A few weeks ago a national official of the EPTU came down and asked the convenor 'who gave you permission to let her apply for membership?'

I believe in fighting for women's rights, because I am a woman—but I don't believe in just fighting as a woman. A few weeks ago I joined Flame, the black revolutionary group. I joined it because as far as

racism and the black movement are concerned I was very disappointed and disillusioned with the various anti-racist campaigns.

Racial violence has increased and there are so few people prepared to do anything about it. I was at a concert the other night when a bloke started shouting out- 'All power to the people! National Front rules!' I said 'is no one going to shut that bloke up?' and although a load of people from a local anti-fascist group were standing around, not one of them moved. The only person prepared to act on the spur of the moment was a small girl wearing a gay badge and she had the most to lose.

I believe that the blacks have got to start organising themselves. But it's going to be hard work. I had a terrible argument with a Trinidadian boyfriend of mine. He said that it was only a tiny minority of blacks who got beaten up—and that demonstrating against racism never achieved anything. He said that it was time for us blacks to realise that we had to leave the country. But my roots aren't in Africa or Jamaica—my roots are here.

It's older blacks and blacks of my age who need to organise. The young kids are different—they've already started! It will take the defeat of the white racists at the polls this autumn to get the blacks on the streets. When they see how much can be done through the activity of the Anti-Nazi League—then they will start start organising on other issues. Now all our energies go into stopping the National Front. But we have not started attacking the roots of racism.

Blacks have got to campaign against Labour's racist Immigration Act. And we have yet to attack that racist Race Relations Act. Let's face it, if Martin Webster and his kind can get up and talk openly about 'coons' and 'niggers' then get defended by the courts for doing so—the Race Relations Act must be racist.

It's going to be hard to organise black women because they've got all the problems of being women plus the cultural pressures of the different ethnic minority groups. Up until now women have played no real part in the black revolutionary movement. Angela Davis gave black women someone to identify with. We need more women like her because when black women do start organising we'll be on our way.

### Race hatred acquittal

Two men who denied using words likely to stir up hatred against a racial group were yesterday cleared by a jury at Westminster Crown Court. But Mr George Jones (43) of Lambeth, Warwick, was found guilty by a majority vote of using words likely to stir up hatred of the Jews. Judge Lee Clark sentenced him to six months imprisonment suspended for 12 months. Michael Cole (43) of Warwick, was acquitted of the same charge. Mr Jones told the court he had spoken to a nurse who had wiped teeth from a 'clean's' mouth and died from rabies as a result. Prosecuting Mr Jones, Judge Clark told him: 'You have got to learn to curb what you say'.

## MILKING THE POOR

HAS your county councillor decided to give free school milk to all primary school children? So far 23 authorities have. Another 25—mostly controlled by the Tories—have decided against. And 50 more will decide by September.

At the moment, only 5-7 year olds get free milk. First the Labour government and then Thatcher stopped everyone else's.

But the Common Market, in an effort to use up its milk 'lake', has offered a subsidy to provide free school milk for all primary school children. And central government kindly offered to pay the remainder—until March 1979, when county councils have to take over.

So when Cardiff *Womens Voice* heard that the education committee had recommended free milk for 'needy' children only, we decided to mount a campaign to try and get the county council to provide school milk for *all* children.

So we wrote a leaflet, and gave it to parents at as many schools as we could manage, at home-time, and gave it out at a couple of shopping centres. We also organised a petition demanding that South Glamorgan County Council reintroduce free school milk.

The reaction was amazing. Parents were very willing to sign, several took forms and leaflets.

Lots of parents thought that their children were getting milk at school anyway—just as we did when we were at school. Lots more thought that the children were going to get the milk and didn't realise that there was any decision to be made.

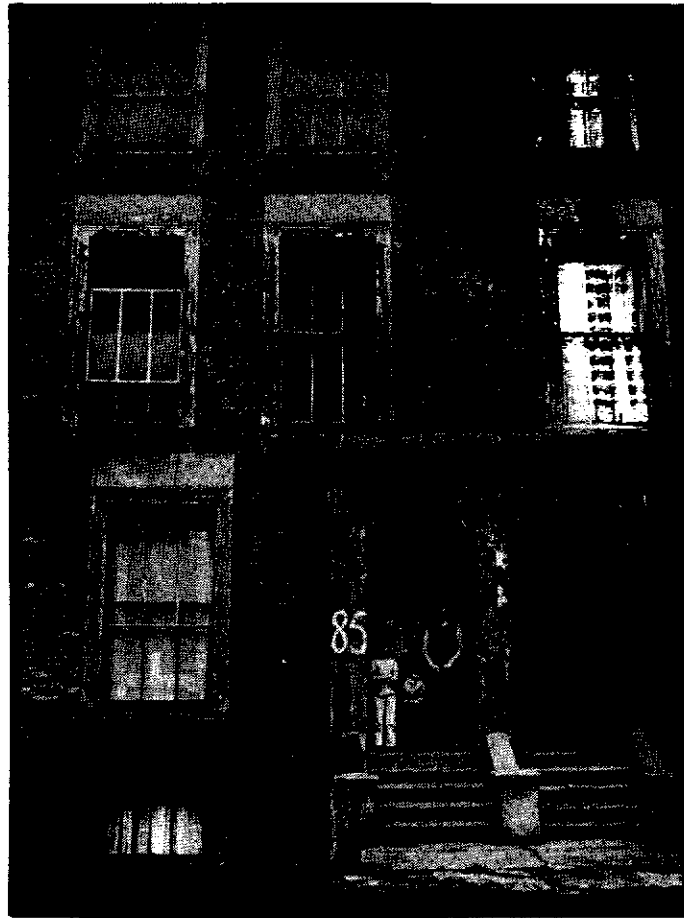
They were also very angry at the term 'needy' child. Who is a needy child? They all need milk. We also heard from a few irate councillors. We then sent a letter to all the councillors telling them what we thought. A delegation of angry and confused parents delivered the petition on Thursday July 20th.

The leader of the Labour group took in our petition. But with 72 Tory councillors and only 8 Labour councillors, the free milk was voted down—66 votes to 14. We are going to continue to fight the cuts—and the council may have a few surprises in store.

Theresa Goss  
Cardiff Womens Voice

What is the Equal Opportunities Commission doing about the age of retirement? It wants women to work three years longer—and retire at 63!

Any comments on this great breakthrough for women to: Betty Lockwood, Equal Opportunities Commission, Overseas House, Quay Street, Manchester M3 3HN.



**BRINGING up children in poor housing conditions. These and other fine photographs can be seen at Centerprise Stoke Newington High Road, where Hackney Flashers have put on a childcare photographic exhibition.**

## HACKNEYS HOMELESS

UNDER the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act passed December 1977, councils are obliged to provide housing for single pregnant homeless childless women as soon as their pregnancy is confirmed.

Last December Hackney council was prepared to hand this obligation over to Let Live, without knowing much at all about the sort of organisation it is, nor of the sort of temporary hostel accommodation or fostering service it provides as a charity in other boroughs. ('Let Live' is an anti-abortion organisation and adoption agency).

Local womens groups and council workers picketed the Council in January but they stuck to their decision.

We then collected signatures for a

petition and applied to have a deputation to the Housing Management Committee of the newly elected Council having lobbied sympathetic councillors in the meantime to support us. The vote to rescind the decision to use Let Live was lost by 1 vote—the chairman voted twice!

We picketed the next meeting of the Labour Group within the council. They voted to throw out Let Live at the next Council Meeting, which we also picketed. We used the local press as much as possible. And made the front page of the Guardian when we won.

Now, we have to make sure the council provides the necessary housing and counselling for the women.

We produced a list of suggestions and intend to keep up the pressure for housing and nurseries using the partnership scheme money.

Anyone who finds out that their council is about to commit similar crimes, can get copies of our leaflets and publicity. Write to Liz c/o Hackney Womens Voice, Box 82, London E2.

## SECOND CLASS DISABLED WOMEN

IN 1975 the non-contributory invalidity pension was introduced for disabled people unable to engage in paid employment, but not for married women. Two years later the Government gave in and included married women.

But they added a clause: 'It might be mentioned in passing that were the law to allow the housewife to receive an incapacity benefit while still capable of doing her *normal job*, it might be argued that this would constitute unfair discrimination in favour of married women.' They sent out assessors to decide whether or not a disabled woman could still perform 'normal household duties'. 9,400 women were refused the pension. Only 1,284 succeeded in getting the decision reversed. If you are bedridden or totally paralysed you can be sure of qualifying; otherwise it's simply a matter of luck.

Join the Equal Rights for Disabled Women Campaign, 5 Netherhall Gardens, London NW3. Tel 01 794 1536.

### NO MONEY

Wages have risen twice as fast as prices this year! Or so they say.

But the Daily Telegraph on 21 July 21 mentioned two facts which disprove this:

**Fact No One - The Grocer magazine in the third week of July recorded 170 price increases, bringing the total increases so far this year to 7,003. There were seven reductions, mainly on coffee.**

**Fact No 2 - The average earnings increase across the whole economy is 1½p in the pound. This is while prices are going up 7½p in the pound. It's only in the major production industries that wages rose considerably—though not enough!**

**Holding wages down has *not* stopped inflation. It has meant that we have less money to spend—so fewer goods are bought—and more go on the dole.**

### NO DINNER.

Half a million children have stopped having school dinners. This is since the price went up from 15p to 25p.

# WIPE 'EM OUT!

Acton Womens Voice has had a family outing with a difference on the South Acton housing estate in West London. A group of about 40 many of us living on the estate and nearby, went to paint out Nazi slogans from the shopping centre and the recreation ground.

The idea came from a 'Women against the Nazis' meeting we held. We read about how other people had done it on their estates and contacted the Acton Anti-Nazi League who helped us organise it. It was a success and we thought it should pass on some hints to others.

The shopping centre was absolutely covered in fascist slogans and everyone had a chance to do some painting. We sold 'Women against the Nazis' pamphlets and badges, Womens Voice and made a collection to pay for the paint and mostly it was fun to do.

About 20 National Front turned up and heckled us with obscene racist remarks but it didn't stop us continuing. However there was one scuffle in which the police arrested one painter. Otherwise it was peaceful.

Women  
Against  
Nazis  
News

Guess which was the most exciting session at the first Anti Nazi League conference? The women!

Our Women Against the Nazis session came after several hours of long, boring accounts from trade union delegates. Yvonne Walker introduced it and said how the work was going, and then she was followed by Peggy Eagle who explained how to set up a WAN group on your estate. After Peggy was Gail Cartmail telling how the women in Kentish Town are fighting back against the racist attacks in that area.

Mary Phillips talked about the everyday problems and difficulties you find when you are trying to encourage women to take a stand against racism. Nikki Mellor spelled out to the men at the conference what we all feel. What about your wife? 'Do you talk to her about why she should be an anti-racist?'

So now we have to follow up the success of our session at the conference. You've only got three months until the general election, which means you really need to set up your local WAN group soon.

If you find difficulties in drawing women to a meeting, then what about organising a WAN daytrip to the seaside. Or a WAN picnic? There's so many women on every estate who can't get out because of the kids, and who would just love a chance to get away for a day. And you have an easier atmosphere in which to talk about the nazis and how we are trying to organise against them. The other way to get talking to women is by having a WAN stall at all the local fetes and festivals this summer. It doesn't require much work!

Finally, we're organising a national day of painting out NF slogans—Sunday 10 September. Start thinking about it now; is there any racist/fascist graffiti in your street, on your estate? Then get rid of it! You can make it a picnic for the kids at the same time.

We're printing a leaflet for the next paint out, order from the ANL, Box 151 London, WC2 price £3, per thousand £1.50 over 500. Cash with orders please.

Anna Keene

# Women Against Racism How to answer back.....

They're flooding the country!

How often have you wished you had such a good reply it would shut them up completely?

Linda shows us how she argues against this sort of emotional racism, which we all hear every day.

"I don't want my kids to be treated differently. They're as English as everyone else. So am I. That's the case for a lot of the people of mixed race.

But the fact is that I look Asian. Up the top of my street the local kids have just painted a fresh lot of slogans.

What do you think of: 'gas all asians'? That means me—the only other black person in this area is West Indian.

When people say to me, there's too many of you here, there's not room, I reply: 'What about all the white immigrants? More white people come to this country every year—White South Africans, Rhodesians, Australians. They belong here less than we do—but since they've got white skins, no one bothers them.

In any case, more people leave Britain over years than come in.

'Why don't you think about the way the white British flooded out and took over just about every country in the world', I say to them. 'Take the United States for example. The Red Indians were quite happy until the greedy whites came along. They massacred over half the Red Indian population, and put the rest in Reservations, which are just big cages. And, if you remember, President Carter is the one who is always making a fuss about human rights.'

Here are some of the facts you can use to argue against prejudice:

Every year since 1961 more people have left Britain than came in! Between 1970 and 1975 1,215,600 people came into the country, but 1,509,400 left.

★ For every 100 white people in Britain there are only 3 black people. Most of the country has NO black people at all.

★ For every 88 children born to white parents, 2 are born to Asian, and one to West Indian parents.

★ For every 70 immigrants entering the country in 1977, only 29 were black.

'You can't push  
us around....'

• At the first meeting to set up a Streatham ANL Mary Phillips from Southwark spoke about W.A.N. and got a fantastic response from the women there who want to set up groups on their estates.

• We can supply speakers for your meetings—but let us know in time.

★ At the Northern Carnival in Manchester on 15 July Manchester Womens Voice sold lots and lots of WAN pamphlets and badges, and Womens Voice. Don't miss your local carnival, or summer fair; in one weekend at the end of July WAN pamphlets and badges were sold at carnivals in Southall, Brixton, Walthamstow and Kilburn in London.



## A TRUE STORY

A VERY funny thing happened down at the factory the other day. Most women have heard of it—Lux Lux/Ritz. You know, knickers, blouses, lingerie—that sort of thing.

Well, anyway, there we were, working away, wondering why we hadn't had a Union meeting since January, but happy enough in the expectation of a wage rise in July. God knows, £2 (6%) isn't a lot of money, but it helps.

Then, out of the blue, the Union (ASTMS, for the staff) called a meeting to inform us that the Directors were threatening not to give us our rise. We were pretty angry. After all, hadn't they promised? Hadn't the Union negotiated a contract for us which plainly stated that we were to get our money? So we voted to strike.

But, before we could get out the door, what do you know? The Big Boss (the owner!) called a meeting. He just wanted to present his side of the story. Poor thing. He said his profits weren't high enough to cover our £2. The agreement that our Union had signed specified the rise only if profits were high enough. And, besides, what did we want a Union for, anyway? Hadn't he always treated us nicely? Why didn't we come around to him personally to negotiate wages, instead of doing it all together, collectively. After all, we didn't want him to raise our wages instead of buying new machines for the factory, did we?

And here we'd always thought that the Union had been responsible for the nice raises we'd had. But then, we didn't want to ruin our good relations with the Big Boss.

Well, we all looked to the union reps to lead us. They must understand what is going on. But the next day, we received a piece of paper that confirmed what the Big Boss had said. We'd got a 5 per cent rise in January all right. But the July rise (unspecified) was to happen only if profits were satisfactory (to whom?). At the meeting itself, one of our reps resigned, mumbling something about being made out a liar. And the other one said that he thought that the Big Boss was right to council individual bargaining.

Some of us were just shocked. Others resigned from the union in disgust. Most of us voted not to strike after all. What was the point? Where were our leaders?

Most of the girls are really down in the dumps with it all. You know that feeling of total helplessness. But there are some of us. Just a few. And we aim to replace that rep with someone who will call meetings and tell us what's going on. Not only that, we aim to go to those meetings, discuss the things that are happening to us and make that Union really ours.

Glossop Women's Voice

# THIS COUNCIL DEGRADES WOMEN

THIS was the scene on the steps of Camden Town Hall last Wednesday as striking typists picketed the council meeting.

81 typists at Camden Council have been on unofficial strike since 12 July. Modest demands for regrading and training opportunities were rejected outright by the council. Instead they offered a 'self-financing productivity agreement' with the introduction of word processing, but with no firm undertaking on increased salaries and

## MORE PAY FOR HUSBANDS

ON Saturday 8th July a group of women marched through a busy shopping area in Portsmouth. They were carrying a petition about the pay and conditions in the Portsmouth Dockyard.

The men build and repair ships for the Navy. The dockyard workers are currently working to rule and have had 4 separate walkouts in support of their pay claim. The equivalent trade outside the dockyard pays almost twice as much and the men are demanding parity with outside industry; a minimum of £80.00 per week.

As a result of the overtime ban, the already low wages of the dockyard workers have been considerably reduced. Pat Stechman's husband takes home a meagre £33.65 per week.

Pat Stechman and several other

likely lower staffing levels.

The pay is low compared to other central London employers where any jobs pay up to £85 a week while temps can earn £105. A typist with Camden can earn a maximum of £71.90 after 8 years!

Low pay coupled with the Council's policy of freezing vacancies has resulted in a staff turnover rate of 60 per cent per year. Only 71 per cent of posts are filled.

Despite the council's reputation as the 'Equal Opportunities

women have had enough. They have taken up their husband's fight and decided to take action now.

While collecting signatures for the petition they heard stories of the hardships suffered by other families. One woman had to sell her child's pram to buy food, another family are living in a house with no downstairs furniture, it has all been sold.

The biggest problem faced by Pat Stechman and the other women is contacting the thousands of dockyard wives in Portsmouth. Although their campaign has been reported by the local radio and newspaper, both media omitted to give the time of the demonstration!

The women are now planning to send coaches to Westminster to lobby MPs.

Sue Hudson  
Portsmouth Women's Voice

Borough', this is the second time in two months that a group of women workers here have been forced to take strike action. The telephonists won their strike.

One typist due to go on maternity leave the day the strike began has been refused her maternity pay! So much for Camden's generous maternity leave!

'Equal Opportunities is a sham' and 'this Council degrades women' proclaim the placards. 'How many male typists do you know?' they asked embarrassed councillors who were bombarded with stickers and leaflets and confronted with t-shirts saying 'support Camden's typists'. Two postmen were willing not to cross the picket line.

The typists have the overwhelming support of the Nalگو branch. At a meeting of 490 only seven men voted against supporting the typists. A collection of £240 was made.

The council advertised for temps. And the Borough Plan was sent out to be typed, corrected and photocopied by the anti-union IBM for a mere £1,768. Another £504 added to this would have employed an audio typist for a year!

Sue Milnthorpe  
Camden Council Women's Voice

If you are interested in joining the Camden Council Women's Voice group or want to know about their next meeting, contact Jackie Price, 278 444, ext 2444 or Katy Gold, 278 444, ext 3065.



## WITHOUT THE DOCKS...

JOAN Harris lives in the docklands area, North Woolwich. She is a nursery nurse and her husband works at the flour mill next to the docks. They are both active in Newham Docklands Forum.

'We have got to succeed in keeping the docks open. And we haven't got that much time.

People don't think anything can be done by the ordinary person to keep the docks open. They say, 'Dockers have only got themselves to blame' and stupid things like that.

My husband works for Spillers flour mill and they rely on the docks to bring the wheat in. If the docks close, they will close.

There have been some big closures already—Standard Telephone and Cable, BOCM Silcox, Knights and WS Flour Mills as well.

In this neighbourhood two shops are shutting now—the barbers and our local cleaners. The businesses just can't survive without the docks.

Look at the amount of youth unemployment. Where are the young people going to get jobs? It's no use going outside London, there's no work in Liverpool or Glasgow. There's nowhere they can go.

It's not just in factories that jobs are going. I went to college as a mature student to train as a nursery nurse. We were paid to be trained and it was on the understanding that more nurseries would be built.

This year they are not paying for trainees. So obviously, fewer women will be trained. That's hitting our children as well.'

## ANOTHER GENERATION

JANET May was one of the many wives who went on the march to keep London's docks open. She told *Womens Voice* why.

'Johnny has worked down the docks 14 years. He realises that they really want to close his docks down.

I went on the march with Johnny, our two kids and some of my family. It had a very good atmosphere. Everyone was enjoying themselves. A lot of retired dockers were there too. People joined the march as it went along.

I live in Canning Town in dockland. Most people around here work in the docks.

We have just started to buy this house, so if Johnny lost his job we would really be in trouble. I am working part-time.

We have got no chance of other work in this area. My boy starts secondary school next year. When he leaves what would he do? Even now the docks aren't hiring any young people. Jobs are not handed on any more.

## OUR DOCKS STAY



Andrew Ward (Report)

## FIGHT FOR YOUR JOBS

**WOMEN in Newham, East London, are starting to fight to save the Royal Group of Docks, where 4000 of their husbands, brothers and sons work. Few women actually work in the docks, but hundreds work in the local factories, the local hospitals. They share their fate with that of the docks. If the docks close, another 20,000 jobs will go.**

GINNY Drain was born in Bethnal Green just outside London's docklands.

Her brother was a docker, her husband was a docker, her brother-in-laws were dockers. Her son now works in the Royal Docks, which is under the threat of the axe.

GINNY's husband started in the docks after the war. He was 'on the call' as a casual worker, which meant that to see if there was work he had to go in every day, twice a day, with Saturday morning on top.

Men had to report to the 'pen' and stand around hoping they'd be picked.

GINNY Drain remembers that when a boat was coming in the men went down extra early to the docks. But being first was no guarantee. There was no rhyme or reason

It's good that women are not just sitting back. They are out there. That's important. It's to do with all of us.

A shop steward from Liverpool came down here and he said 'Don't let it happen here. In Liverpool the unemployment is so bad. 14-year-old girls are turning to prostitution. A man can't go in a pub for fear of getting mugged. For goodness sake, don't let it happen here. Fight for your jobs.'

That's why we went on the march.

'My brother Stan started work in the docks before the war. He often didn't get work—and was evidently taken for someone who was a rebel or 'saucy'. My mum used to say they'd tear a ticket up in front of him rather than give him a job.'

The whole system of casual labour meant uncertainty and hardship for dockers and their families. Men were set against each other in the competition for jobs. They could be victimised if they fought against the often atrocious working conditions.

Sometimes men were taken on as permanent workers, but in fact the system of casual labour only ended in 1967.

Her husband disliked certain jobs down the dock 'he hated meat, beef. He had to carry great big carcasses, and go into the cold pots.'

Life in the docks was hazardous—the weather was often bad and the cargo dangerous. Discomfort was general, accidents were common.

'In the tea they used to wear gloves, but no other protective clothing. Jim tore his arm on a tea chest. It was stitched up very about who got work—it depended on the whim or prejudice of the 'caller-on' and on whether your face fitted.

quickly, and it began, arthritis and

trouble with his wrists. He's had three major operations, but the trouble's never cleared. He got a National Health disability pension—but he had to fight for it. He got nothing from the docks.'

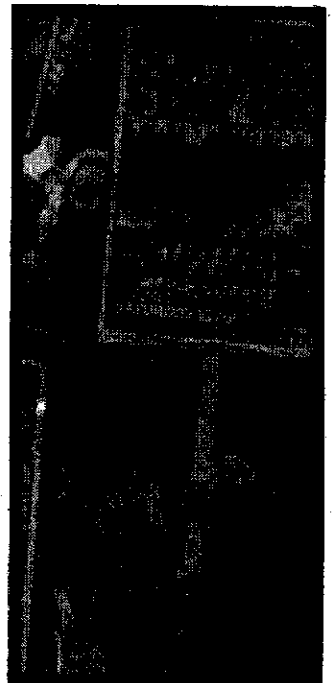
As Ginny says it was really trade union activists who changed the conditions. It was they who argued about rates of pay, and whether they'd work in wet or icy conditions: 'They made it better for the men as time went on.'

Despite the conditions, Ginny doesn't remember dockwork being worse than other jobs. 'Before Jim worked down the dock, he worked at Rothman's. It was a good little job. But after Christmas you always wondered whether you were coming home with the sack. Those were the conditions that prevailed in our time. I can never say that I've been down to my last penny, though I've seen plenty of poverty. Probably my worst period was when the children were little. I couldn't afford to have my hair done. I only had one decent frock to go out in. I can remember going to Marks and Spencers looking at the frocks, but I couldn't afford one. That was my worst period. But when the children were at school I started a little job and that made a difference.'

GINNY Drain supports the fight to keep the docks open. There are plenty of ex-docker-workers around who were thrown on the scrap-heap after a life time of work in the docks... many of them, like Ginny's husband, still bear the scars. Now the employers intend to cripple another generation of dockers... along with the whole of the East End.

As Ginny says, 'It shouldn't just be left to the same few who always do the fighting.'

The fight to save the docks is a fight for every man and every woman who lives in the East End. By Beth Stone



**WOMENS VOICE** hit the front page on the Derby Evening Telegraph! We protested at one of the two doctor's posts being phased out at Thornhill Psychiatric Day Hospital,

Kingsway. Women's Voice supporters stopped ex-patients and staff who were on their way to a tramps ball to get them to sign the petition.

## LIFE AT SELLY OAK

**BIRMINGHAM** *Womens Voice* Group and Selly Oak Women's Action Group had a stall at the Selly Oak Festival on Saturday, July 1st.

The anti-abortion organisation, Life, also had a stall, complete with horror pictures of aborted foetuses and leaflets containing lies and distortions about the dangers of abortion. They even had a competition with photographs of adults and children, the object being to guess which child 'belonged' to which adult!

They also had requests for baby clothes, etc, to try and fool people that they are really interested in women.

Unhappily for them, they did not reckon on us, and the local National Abortion Campaign We turned up in front of their stall, and gave out leaflets pointing out that all Life is really interested in is forcing women into unwilling childbirth, by making abortion illegal.

Very few people showed any interest at all in their revolting, hypocritical propaganda. Most people seemed to be pleased that we were doing something to show them up.

**Cathy France**  
Birmingham Womens Voice



■ The copy date for the September Women's Voice is *Friday 25 August*. Send your news and views to: Women's Voice, Box 82, London E2.

## PART PERSON

**IN EARLY** July the government announced some reforms in the way married women are taxed. Married women will now get tax refunds on their own income, instead of the money going to their husbands. Wives who are the family breadwinner can take over some or all of their husband's unused allowances. Tax offices will write direct to a wife about *her* income, not to her husband. Costs of male housekeepers can now be offset against tax—previously this only applied to females.

But the government won't face up to the fundamental issue that for tax purposes, a married woman's income is still treated as part of her husband's income (if they are living together). Women should be treated as individuals and not appendages of their husbands.

But this would involve repealing section 53 (7) of the Income Tax Act 1970. Repeal could create problems. It would certainly raise the administrative costs of the Inland Revenue. Rich people would find it easier to practice tax avoidance. But the government shouldn't fudge the issue with this sort of argument. They should treat women equally, and repeal section 53.

## COST OF CARING

A REPORT by the National Council for the Single Woman and Her Dependants reveals that many women who look after elderly relatives at home live below the poverty line, suffer enormous physical and mental strain, and are so lonely and isolated that they themselves eventually become ill. At £10.50 a week the Invalid Care Allowance does not even equal unemployment benefit. The 300,000 women in this position are further exploited by often being unable to get home help, meals on wheels, or other home-based services.

The report recommends that employers be encouraged to keep jobs open for people who leave for a period to attend to elderly relatives, and that the allowances be increased, and continued for a period after the death of the dependant. It would seem that there is also a real need for some sort of relief system to allow women in this position to get free time and holidays. Many have not had a holiday for 15 years.



Jane Henriques

## GIRLS FOR SALE

**THE** Cypriot community is one of the largest immigrant communities in Britain with 120,000 people concentrated in the big cities.

A Cypriot woman is brought up to be a submissive daughter and wife.

One of her most degrading experiences is the arranged marriage where because of her dowry she becomes an object for sale.

We have set up a Cypriot Womens Voice group to discuss the problems that we face and how to improve our position.

The topics include the role of the Cypriot woman in the family, women at work and bringing up children.

If you are interested please phone

Doula 01-607 2138 (evenings or weekends)

Androula 01-359 4545 (evenings or weekends).

# NEWS

# HANDS ACROSS THE SEA



by YANA MINTOFF (above)

**YOU** may have wondered why anyone should throw manure at our wonderful MPs in the House of Commons.

We made our protest because it is the Labour government which is directly responsible for the torture and degradation of Irish Republican prisoners, who refuse to wear prison uniform because they are political prisoners of war, not the 'criminals' Roy Mason and the government says they are.

These courageous men and women are beaten up regularly by the prison officers. They refuse to be treated as criminals and are not stopping out their cells which are infested with fleas and maggots.

The prisoners can't eat the food because of the stench. Some of them weigh as little as five stone.

We threw the shit to break the silence...a deafening silence about the campaign for political status for Irish Republican prisoners which is being carried out on BOTH sides of the Irish Sea.

**JOAN KELLY** talks to members of the Relatives Action Committee

EVERY Wednesday evening in Belfast some 30 women and a few men gather to plan marches, meetings, tours and other activities. They are working to force the government to admit that jailed republicans and socialists are political prisoners not criminals.

The Relatives Action Committee (RAC) was formed more than two years ago, when the British government took away prisoners' political status. 300 men and women in Long Kesh and Armagh are refusing to wear prison clothes. Instead, they wear no more than a blanket. 600 more prisoners on remand are waiting to join them. Mary Enright, secretary of the RAC central committee, explained to WV why she joined the RAC:



'The men and women in jail are not criminals. They are there because there is a war going on. Before March '76 they had political status, now Mason calls them criminals.

British justice in Ireland is the Diplock Courts (No juries), seven-day detention and torture. The



WOMEN and children without men, but the troops keep an eye on them too.

Photos by Camerawork

Irish people have a right to self determination and a right to fight their war of national liberation.'

Kathleen Green, an RAC member from Turf Lodge, talked about her two sons on blanket protest:

'My Billy was twelve years old when the troubles started. Now he is a man ... and a prisoner in H Block. My sons are prisoners of war and want to be treated as such. That's why they won't wear prison clothes-it's the only protest they can make.

'My son John was shot in the back when he was on the ground by the British Army. The sergeant said: 'Shoot that green bastard'. He's entitled to political status.'

The RAC is composed mainly of women: 'We are afraid to let men take an active part because of the Army; women stand a better chance.'

Kathleen went on: 'Through the years of struggle many women have become politicised. At the start some mothers would come along because of the humanitarian aspect, but when their children were affected, they became actively committed and involved.

'They have developed political confidence. They are active in expanding the RAC beyond Belfast and in helping women in other areas to build new 'Committees'.

While we were talking, Turf Lodge was being terrorised by the Royal Marines, as they carried out house raids and lifted young boys.

They come between 2 and 5 o'clock every morning, and beat down the doors. Twelve to fourteen soldiers, policemen and women, and the special branch burst in.

'In the past few days they've come to nine families in the streets around this house. I saw soldiers and special branch taking a lad just turned sixteen. He was crying: 'Mum, Mum, don't let them take me'. She couldn't do anything.

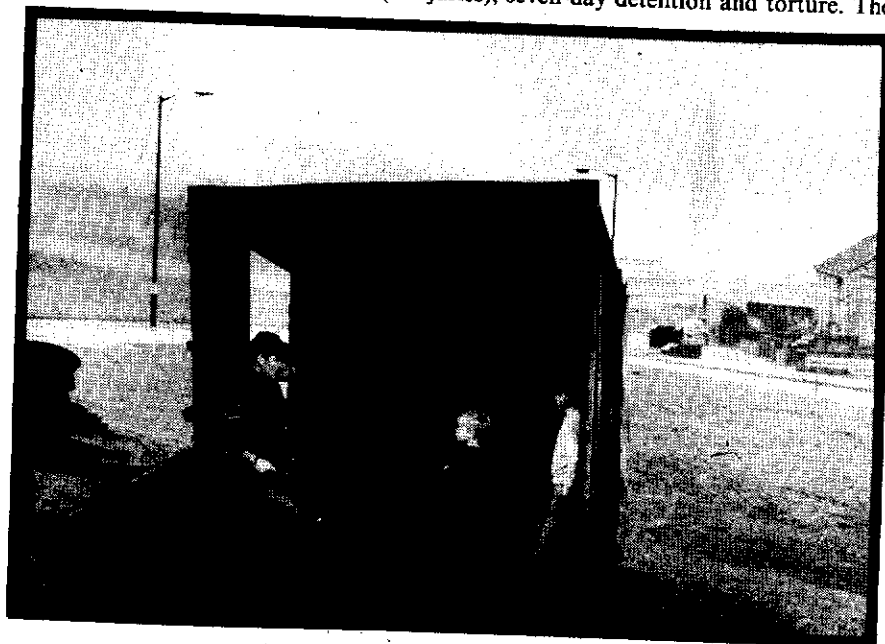
'The soldiers act as if they own us. One day they chased three boys as they were walking down the road. They caught one and were about to beat him up, but the women came out banging their dustbin lids and scared them off.

'Most people are afraid to come out and fight now. They call me a troublemaker, but I've got boys in my house and they could come for them any day.'

'In the media the prisoners are called 'terrorists'. They appear on TV and in the papers like men on the moon—not like the ordinary people they are. The media tries to show that they have no support, but without support they would never survive so long. No guerilla army can.

'It's up to the Irish people to decide what happens in their country.

'What would you British feel like if you had an army occupying Birmingham, Glasgow or Manchester?'



# +SAVE OUR HOSPITALS+SAVE OUR HOSPITALS+SAVE

KNEES knocking and fortified by half a lager, we boldly walked in the main entrance of our local hospital, the Prince of Wales. 'We've come to see the NUPE shop steward please' we said confidently to the receptionist. 'Down the corridor, second door on the left' he said.

We were in. It was that easy! 'Come in,' said a harassed, terse voice. We groaned inwardly as we opened the door and shuffled in.

'We've come to see you about these cuts they're going to inflict on our hospital' we told the man eyeing us suspiciously behind his desk. 'We're from the Lea Valley Womens Voice Group . . . that's a small group of socialist women who live in this area who fight on all sorts of things that affect women. We're really concerned about these massive cuts proposed for our hospital, because we've got kids and we often have to use the Casualty Department. And we're not going to stand for it', we told him.

'The way we see it' we went on before the poor man had a chance to open his mouth, 'is the campaign should be fought on three



fronts—the people who work in the hospital who stand to lose their jobs, the men and women who work in local factories (and accidents are always happening at work) and the local community, people like us. The hospital is a vital part of the community and we're prepared to start work on the housing estates and in the shopping centres. What do you think?

Dreadful silence for a minute. 'It's a good idea!' he said, beaming at us. 'But I think you'll find people in the community won't put up a fight. They've not supported us much in the past; we've had little response to the coverage about the cuts in the local paper. Still, you can try. How do you propose to start?'

We told him about the planning meeting at the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital for Women, where we'd met some great people from Fightback, and from threatened or occupied hospitals like EGA, Hounslow, Bethnal Green, St Nicks and the Western, and how they had decided to hold Torchlight Vigils outside threatened hospitals in London on the eve of the 30th anniversary of the National Health Service—which David Ennals and Co were going to celebrate with a day of fine speeches and a banquet.

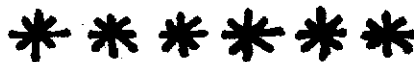
# HANDS OFF OUR HEALTH SERVICE!

**ANTHONY** Begley spent nearly his whole life in pain. But finally at the age of 13 the promise of a new life was to come true. His name finally reached the top of the waiting list for heart surgery. Anthony died of a heart attack just before the operation.

Now the hospital he attended—the only specialised children's hospital in Manchester, is threatened with closure.

That means more tragedy for children like Anthony.

The battle against the cuts is growing—and as the stories on these pages show—Womens Voice groups can help build that fight.



We told him it would make a good start to our own campaign, and would the hospital staff support it?

'Why don't you come to our next NUPE branch meeting here and at our sister hospital, St Anne's, and put it to the members?' he said. *Gulp!* 'Er . . . Yes, we'd love to!'

A friend once said to us: 'Necessity is the mother of invention', How right he was! Who would have thought we'd find the courage to address two union branch meetings! Well, there was no one else—we had to do it. They both went well. At the first one, we were so nervous that we left out vital points. But the second one went much better. We were learning. The NUPE members at



the meeting said they would support the vigil. We were on our way!

We had less than two weeks to organise. We wrote a leaflet with facts about cuts and how they affect everyone in the area on one side and details of the Torchlight Vigil on the other.

A member of our Womens Voice group made an enormous black birthday card to present to David Ennals from the people of Tottenham; someone else made a wreath; lovely it was—and across the red ribbon were the words: 'NHS — RIP'

We sent out leaflets to local people, womens groups, and gave the hospital staff a pile to give out in both hospitals. We wrote to the local paper telling them about the campaign and asking them to come and cover the Vigil.

At a small street meeting in our local shopping centre on Saturday, we gave out leaflets, displayed the birthday card and got people to sign the petitions to go with the card.

The response was tremendous. People were queuing up to sign, taking leaflets and petitions to give out where they lived and worked. Some people promised to come to the vigil.

We put our telephone number on the leaflet for anyone interested in building the campaign and a few calls started coming in.

We did the same outside the hospital at a couple of visiting times and also leafleted the mums at a couple of primary schools.

The Great Night arrived! We were terrified! We'd phoned the press to remind them, confidently predicting a big turnout! What we thought was: six women, two kids and a dog—if we're lucky!



Andrew Ward (Report)

# +SAVE OUR HOSPITALS+SAVE OUR HOSPITALS+SAVE

# OUR HOSPITALS+SAVE OUR HOSPITALS+SAVE OUR HO

# HOSPITAL BULLETINS

To say it was a chaotic start is an understatement. The press turned up at ten to nine and there were six of us and a dog! We blubbered through, and while we were talking, people started arriving, drifting along, young people, old people, workers from local factories, mums and dads and their kids, women from local groups, doctors, nurses and ancillary workers from both hospitals—black and white! Well over 60 people turned out. We were thrilled!

We lit our torches. A couple of people started shouting things like 'No cuts! We need the Casualty Department! Save the Prince of Wales'. Everyone joined in. The rain started. But it didn't dampen the enthusiasm or put out the torches!

The police arrived. 'Hello, Hello, what's all this then? Who's the organiser?' We hid.

'We all are!' 'Yes, they're trying to shut our casualty and lots of the wards. It's disgraceful!' said three or four different women. 'Come on, sign the petition.'

'Why don't we march up the high street, so everyone can see us, torches and all?' said one little old woman. 'Yes, that's it' and they started to form up as if they'd been on marches and demos all their lives. The police stopped us, of course.

'Next time, we'll march through the High Road on a busy Saturday, thousands of us' said an elderly man 'Old people at the front, and then we'll sit down in the road. That'll show 'em!'

The 'Flying Picket Van' from Fightback turned up and told us the news from the other hospitals. Thirteen hospitals took part in the vigil! We went home at 12.15 am, wet and tired but really happy.

We got really good coverage in our two local papers, by the way.

The next day a few of us joined a small but vocal group from other hospitals outside the place where 'They' were 'celebrating' with a big banquet. Here we presented our wreaths and cards.

They celebrate—while the NHS that working people fought for and pay for, is slashed to ribbons!

But this is only the start of our campaign. It was two weeks hard, persistent slog but it paid off. People DO care about their health service and will fight.

There are problems. We're worrying now, of course, about how we take it from here. One of the things we don't want to lose sight of is building Womens Voice as well as keeping the hospital open.

For the campaign, there are great fighters around to show us how it's done. The EGA, the Bethnal Green, the Hounslow, St Nicks, in London alone—we must draw on their experience. We got tremendous moral and practical support from Fightback.

One thing we learned. Don't be put off trying because you are very small. At the beginning of the two weeks, because of holidays, there were only two of us—and for the first week only one!

Spread the action, sisters! If WE can do it, so can YOU!

Gerry Norris and Mary Robson

WHAT is a bulletin? A bulletin is a large leaflet that goes into a workplace—either your own or someone else's. The contents vary, but are usually things like rotten canteen food, bad lighting, equal pay, maternity leave, hospital closures—in fact anything at all that affects the lives of the workers in that workplace.

The aim is to give information and to get people to think about their situation, and if they're not happy with it to do something about it.

In the Greenwich area of South East London, our Womens Voice group puts a bulletin into our local hospitals. The fifth one is due soon. It covers mainly hospital closures: why we have them, who suffers from them; who benefits by them; and what we can do about them. Other topics are also discussed—often quite controversial ones.

Once we've produced them, we have to get the bulletins seen by the workers in the

hospitals. Some are given out at the hospital gates, but this isn't a very satisfactory way of doing it as there are so many different shifts.

Some go in via the hospital workers themselves, and are then distributed in various different ways. They're put in the boxes that take drugs to the wards, . . . and some are put in the toilets so that if you're having a fag (or something else!) you can have a peaceful read!

Another way to get them out is to do it yourself. The best time is during visiting hours. You can walk round quite freely and if anyone stops you—you have an alibi, some sick aunt! When walking round you can leave them on trolleys, window sills, slip them through windows, put them in the bedpan room, in kitchens, in canteens. Everywhere people look put them.

All it needs is a little bit of time and for some people who haven't done it before, a little bit of courage. **Peggy Eagle**

# VISITING FACTORIES

THERE I was armed with a long list of workplaces and factories around Bethnal Green. It included supermarkets like Sainsbury's, ambulance stations, fire stations, council depots, social services—the works in fact. I'd been told to go and ask for the shop stewards, and make him or her (usually him) see how important it is to keep the Bethnal Green Hospital open.

As well as building the campaign amongst the people who work in the area, it would mean getting to know shop stewards and militants in the district. This could be the beginnings of an organisation that could take up other local and national issues.

Yes, visiting factories with my bundle of leaflets was definitely the right thing to do—

but scary.

Once I was face to face with the shop steward, I talked to him about hospital closures, and then about the campaign to keep the Bethnal Green Hospital open. Depending on how interested he'd been, I'd ask him to distribute some leaflets among the workers, or organise a collection, or get a resolution passed promising support for the campaign, or allow a speaker from the campaign to speak to their union meeting.

Some of them don't want to know—but at least you've made contact, and next time you might get more joy. It takes time. You're helping build solidarity between workers who work in one area, but different jobs and places. **Zena Lee**

# Your orders please!

WOMENS VOICE badges and posters for you to use. Order yours now:

Badges 15p each and 10p postage. 20 for £3 post free. Posters 25 for £1.

Send me . . . . . badges  
. . . . . posters

I enclose £ . . . . .  
Name . . . . .

Address . . . . .

. . . . .

Send to Womens Voice Box 82 London E2



# OUR HOSPITALS+

# ALL FALL DOWN

NATALIE is a four-year-old child who lives on my estate. Three weeks ago she was on the slide in the playground when her dress got caught onto something sharp. She pulled her dress to free herself and went over the top. She landed fifteen feet down onto concrete and fractured her skull. She was rushed to hospital and for a while it was doubtful if she would survive. Luckily Natalie is alive.

And luck it is: for 150,000 to 200,000 of our kids are injured or killed on playgrounds every year. And only a few of these accidents were unavoidable. Injuries are also made more serious because there is a lack of prompt first-aid attention but most are caused by bad site design or unsafe, poorly installed and badly maintained equipment.

This was the information that I got through Fair Play for Children. They sent me a pamphlet called 'Danger on the Playground' and after reading through it I wondered how I ever got through my childhood in one piece.

Contact Fair Play for Children at 248 Kentish Town Road, London, NW5 or phone 01-485 0469. They'll send you all the information you need.

Can you remember being on the umbrella (or witches hat) and going round standing up on the bars making it bump into the middle post and seeing if you could touch the kid standing in the middle?

Next time you go to a playground have a look at the lethal piece of equipment. Notice the weight of it, imagine what damage it would do (and does) to kids that are crushed onto the middle pole. Notice the corners of the seats where the iron bolts are. These bolts are just about eye level to kids between the ages of 3 and 6. The sort of injuries they can cause don't leave much to the imagination. These umbrellas have been banned by the Greater London Council but are still widely used.

As for swings, a moving swing can attain a speed of 25mph. A child hit at that speed by the corner of the seat is struck with the impact of a five ton truck. The rocking horse was a favourite of mine as it is with my kids, but reading about this weapon makes you want to wrap your kids up in cotton wool.

These are heavy massive beasts that pick up great speed. Because they take such a long time to stop the kids jump off early so the still moving horse crashes into their little legs causing nasty fractures and in some cases, permanent bone deformities. The horse can also send the kid flying head first onto the ground.

The list of dangerous equipment goes on. Think about slides... with no safety rails or metal bits of the actual slide which have lifted up and become razor sharp. Then there are climbing

frames, roundabouts and seesaws...

But the biggest single killer on the playground is the concrete surface. The impact force that can cause concussion in a child is 50 times the force of gravity (50g). This is how existing surfaces compare:

Materials	height of fall needed to achieve 50g impact
Concrete	less than one foot
asphalt, tarmacadam	less than one foot
packed earth	about two foot
standard rubber tile	about four foot
double rubber tile	about eight foot
wood chips (6" depth)	about 10 foot
pea gravel (4" depth)	about 12 foot
sand (12" depth)	about 12 foot

On my estate, immediately after Natalie's accident a petition went round demanding that the council remove the slide. What they did was to nail a plank of wood up the steps and put a ladder down the slide and a chain at the top. This simply made it even more dangerous! So the Womens Voice group wrote a leaflet saying that we should demand that the council remove the slide and put something else in its place.

That something else is a safe playground that is built to the needs of our kids.

We then booked a room in the local community centre and advertised the meeting. We got a speaker from Fair Play for Children and have now just started to get a campaign off the ground.

I have got a picture of this playground in my head. It's as safe as possible. The slide is built into a mound so the kid's can't fall over the top or off the sides. The swings are made from this new type of safety seat that is made of a special type of rubber. There are wooden structures, a sand pit that is enclosed so that dogs and cats can't get in and mess in it, and there are playleaders in attendance and a first aid hut.

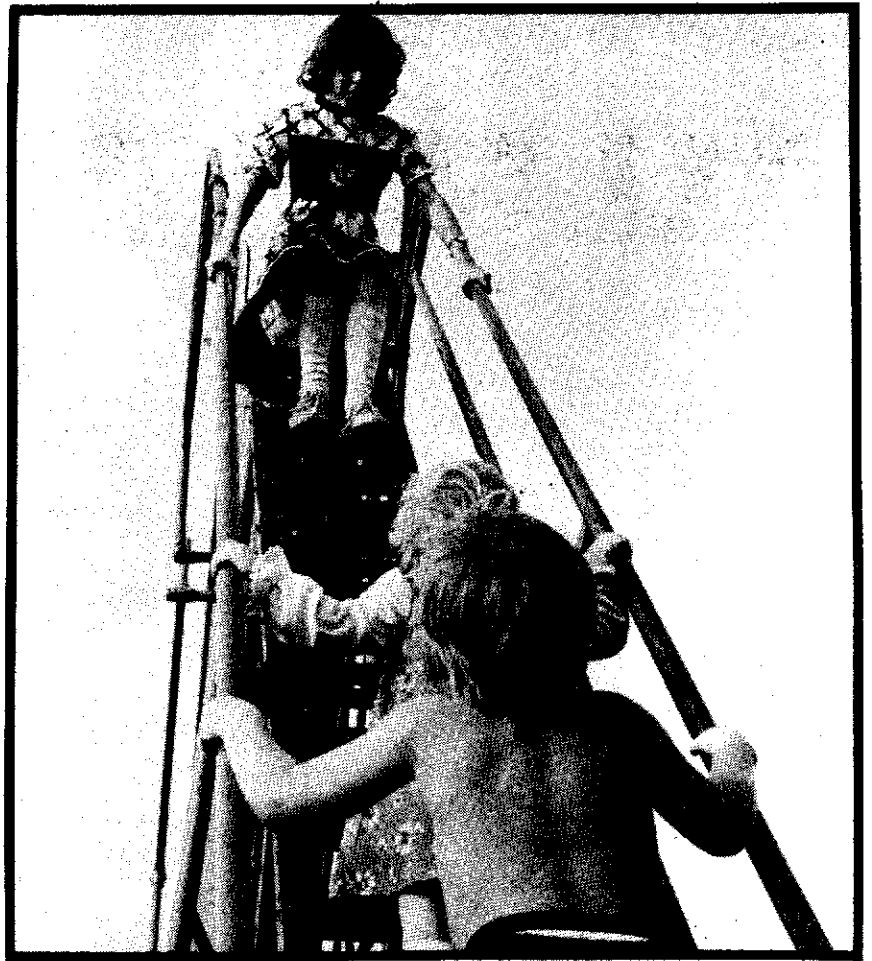
I know now that these things are available and I also know that unless we fight for them we'll never have them.

The councils and governments just give us the cheapest of everything. It's the same with old, unsafe machinery in factories. It's machinery like this that is the cause of so many industrial accidents and deaths. And its the same sort of equipment that is the cause of so many accidents and deaths on our playgrounds.

Nothing is given to us, the only way in which we can win protection for our children is to organise ourselves on our estates, or communities and put so much pressure onto those who couldn't give a damn that they have to do something. I know that there is something better for my kids and I'm going to make sure I do as much as I can to get it for them. I don't want my kids or the ones who live above me to be a statistic like Natalie.

Written by  
Peggy Eagle  
Photos by  
Jane Henriques





# BUILDING A WOMENS VOICE GROUP

IF YOU want to build a womens voice group in your area the first move is to find another woman who will help. A friend perhaps, or someone you work with? You can ring the *Womens Voice* office and see if we know anyone in the area. Once you are two, you are on your way.

If there are already two of you start here. You have nothing to lose, so plunge straight in to some activity. Supplies of *Womens Voice* can be ordered from the office - be reasonable, you're not going to sell 100 straight away!

Draw up a list of all the women you know who might be interested: friends, relatives, women at work, neighbours. Have a chat with those you think are most likely to want to do something, and then organise a meeting to get them all together.

**Keep it informal:** pubs are not friendly places if you have never been out to a meeting before, so arrange it for someone's house, easy for transport, and preferably where small children are welcome. Or arrange babysitters if you can.



**Keep it local:** if you live ten miles apart it's going to be very difficult to organise anything. A sale of *Womens Voice* in your shopping centre may put you in touch with women like yourself who have been longing to do something, but have never bumped into our organisation before.

**Ask for help:** other *Womens Voice* groups in your area may be able to help with experience and ideas, but don't depend on them for legwork. That's up to you!

**The first meeting:** make sure someone is ready to get the ball rolling. Don't bore people with organisational things, like who should be secretary. Start by finding out what everyone is interested in. Have someone there who can talk a bit about *Womens Voice*, how the magazine was started and our connection with the Socialist Workers Party. Mention the sort of things *Womens Voice* does nationally. Ask everyone if they will join *Womens Voice* - membership cards will be sent to you. And take it from there.

**Hold regular meetings:** that way everyone knows where and when they are, and babysitters can be organised well in advance.

Remember, *Womens Voice* is about action, so never finish a meeting without deciding what you are going to do over the coming weeks. Don't pile the work on—if this is the first meeting for some women, especially those with young children, they can't drop everything at a minute's notice to organise two jumble sales, four street meetings and half a dozen sales of *Womens Voice*. But do share out the work and try to get everyone doing something otherwise one person ends up doing it all by themselves.

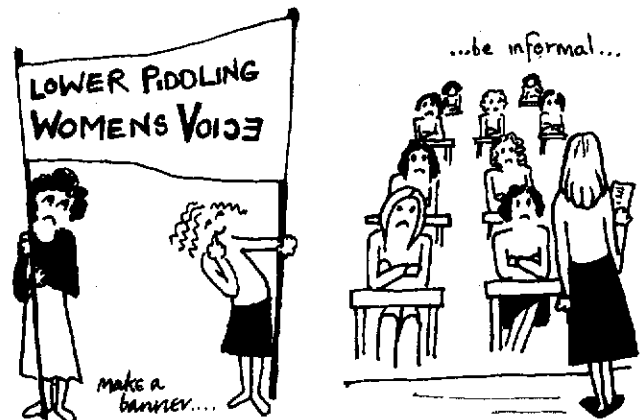
**Speakers:** if you go round the room at your very first meeting you will probably be surprised to find enough subjects women can talk on for the next few meetings. That way everyone gets a turn: a teacher on education; a nurse on the state of the health service;

People will have other interests too, like Ireland, and childrens books; a mother on child births. There are *Womens Voice* members all round the country, who are prepared to travel to groups to speak on all sorts of topics. A list is available from the office. But remember, you will have to pay her fare, and if she travels a long way that can be very costly. You can always phone up speakers and ask them for help in preparing your own speech!

Get other local groups to speak to you too: for instance someone from the battered wives refuge, or from a single parent organisation and they always have lots of information and advice.

**Regular Womens Voice sales:** are a must for every group. That way you get to know more and more women some of whom will want to be actively involved. Although *Womens Voice* is monthly you can organise weekly sales—around different shopping centres and estates. Have one person responsible for organising the sales of *Womens Voice*, making sure everyone gets their copies on time and that the money is collected for copies sold. It is this money which keeps *Womens Voice* afloat. Ask whoever takes on this job to contact the National office direct.

**Be self-supporting:** if you collect a regular monthly subscription from all the women in the group it will just about keep you in stamps and duplicating paper, but not much more. Jumble sales and parties, or picnics in the summer, are a good way of raising additional funds. (Don't forget to send some to the national office—it will help pay for posters, pamphlets...)



**Make yourself a banner:** then we will all know you exist! And you won't get lost on demos.

**Organise:** *Womens Voice* isn't a talking shop. It's an organisation for women who want to do something about the rotten world we live in. Read the local papers and react to things you see. Find out about the Hospital cuts in your area and the abortion facilities, or lack of them. Do you have any nursery schools or day nurseries left? Is there a demand for more? Do the women in the factories near you get equal pay, or even a decent wage; are they in a union? Do the girls in the secondary school get equal treatment with the boys? The list is endless. And there is always something you can do about it—not on your own, as a group. Organise your *Womens Voice* group now and you'll be ready to fight.

Any problems: ring, telephone or write to the national office. *Womens Voice*, Box 82, London E2 01 734 7410.

This page is part of a series. We have already published articles on: using a duplicator (WV13), silkscreening (WV14), writing for *Womens Voice* (WV15) reporting on a strike (WV16). We can send you copies, 10p each. We have plans for: making a banner, organising a creche, raising money and selling *Womens Voice*. If you want to know how to do something else, just write and ask.

# DIY DIY DIY DIY DIY





# WOMENS HEALTH



## THE TRIUMPH OF GOOD OVER EVIL

DIPHTHERIA, tetanus, polio, TB, whooping cough are all killers whose names you know but hopefully will never catch. These diseases have nearly disappeared because of years of systematic vaccination. Until now.

More and more parents are not sending their children to be vaccinated. This is because of the publicity about the risk of children suffering brain damage from whooping cough vaccination.

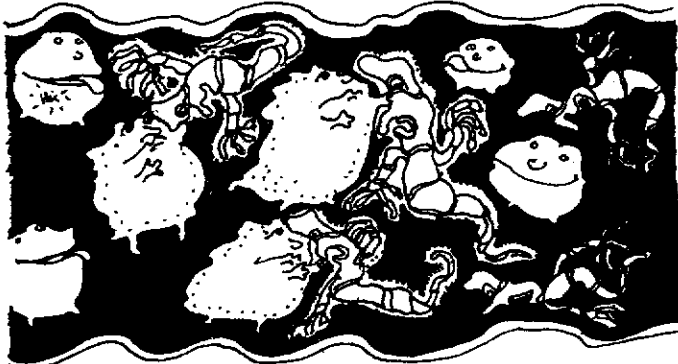
Whooping cough is a dangerous disease. In a period of six months during 1974/5 over 10,000 children in this country had whooping cough. More than 60 per cent of the babies less than six months old were so ill that they had to go into hospital. The number of deaths from whooping cough is one in 1000 cases, but if the child is less than a year old it is as high as one in every 100 cases.

It is difficult to calculate how many children have been damaged because of the vaccine. Each day an average of two out of every 100,000 children have an 'ordinary' convulsion. So it is hard to know whether a convulsion was caused by chance or by the vaccine. Brain damage as a result of whooping cough vaccine could be as low as one in a million.

The most disturbing fact is that not only are some parents not allowing their children to be vaccinated against whooping cough, but they are also avoiding all other vaccinations. That could be disastrous.

Vaccinations have become an important part of our total health care, but do you know how they work?

Our bodies have a complex and clever defence system to combat disease—our immune system. We live in an environment full of potentially harmful organisms, be they bacteria viruses, fungi or parasites. Considering how large the number it is a tribute to the efficiency of our immune



system that we don't get more infections than we do.

If one invading organism manages to get into our body past the physical barriers of our skin and the acid in our stomachs then the immune system must be switched on before any harm is done.

The heroine of our immune system is a white cell, in our blood called lymphocyte. Each lymphocyte is programmed like

a computer to recognise and react against one particular part of an invading organism. When they meet, the lymphocyte produces a chemical called an antibody which can stick to the offending organism.

Then phagocyte, the lymphocyte's partner comes into combat. Phagocytes are the scavengers of our blood stream, able to gobble up an invading organism if it is made tasty

enough. Antibodies on the surface of an organism are the way of making it tasty.

Some organisms are hidden live inside our own cells. They are safely hidden away from attack by antibodies and therefore some other way of fighting them must be found.

Here the lymphocyte shows its great versatility by being able to directly kill our own cells that have viruses living inside them. The virus is therefore deprived of its home.

The lymphocyte has won the fight. It may have taken a few days, given us a high temperature and kept us in bed, but the lymphocyte has eventually won. The second time round with the same illness the lymphocyte is already 'turned on' and is able to respond very quickly.

The invading organism doesn't stand a chance. That is why you can't get mumps twice.

Sounds like a second rate western—triumph of good over evil—but things don't always work out so well. The first time the lymphocyte meets an organism it needs a few days to get working at full strength. Those few days are vital. The organism may prove too powerful for the immune system and take over. That's where vaccinations come in.

Vaccines are organisms that have been killed or altered so that they won't do us harm. Only the lymphocyte doesn't know it. It will act as it always does. It is then 'turned on', having met the organism once, and will patrol our body waiting to pounce next time.

The human body is a complicated mechanism—but it needs help. Vaccines have cut out some of the worst diseases we've ever known. So before you stop your child being vaccinated—think.

Lorna Layward

# TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN

# SINGER



## YOU MUST BE MAD

“I decided to become a shop steward because I was sick of there being one standard for women and another for men. At my old firm Personna one or another of the men would come in drunk. The foreman would send him home and tell him to come back next day.

One night a woman came in drunk. She was sacked on the spot. We fought and got her reinstated. That showed us the importance of having women as shop stewards and convenors.

This is the first strike at David Scotts in 14 years. The workers came out because the low wages mean many can't cope any more.

The management wanted to transfer 23 workers to Prestcolds—just across the road. Prestcolds and Scotts are both subsidiaries of British Leyland.

We said that no one in the factory was moving until we got parity (equal pay). At present Prestcold's semi skilled earn £4-£6 more than us. Management threatened to name the 23 workers, saying

**Unemployment is here to stay. Already experts are talking about a permanent pool of five million on the dole.**

The figures have just shot well above the one and a half million mark—over 600,000 of them are women.

In some areas of Britain unemployment is well above the national average. Glasgow and Clydebank is one such area. A recent report on Scotland states that in 10 to 15 years four out of 10 youngsters may spend their whole lives on the dole.

In Clydebank 15000 jobs have gone in recent years. At Singers Clydebank a further 2800 jobs are under the axe. Will those jobs be fought for? For several years now, hundreds of unemployed youngsters have campaigned for jobs—using the Right to Work Marches to draw attention to their plight.

But unemployed people alone won't change the situation. It is the fighting spirit of the employed which will win jobs.

In this interview Betty Franci, AUEW shop steward at David Scotts Hillington Glasgow, where they have been on strike for over 10 weeks, talks about redundancy and explains why more women should fight for jobs and a better deal at work.

they would sack them and that if they refused to be sacked then they would have to beg for their redundancy money at an industrial tribunal! We came out and management suspended the redundancies.

Our parity claim is now

with a tribunal. I don't have high hopes of winning it that way.

Whatever happens with parity, we will face redundancies when we get back. The firm has lost several orders and the Italians are producing cheaper goods than us. So

the first thing to do is to try and ban overtime to protect the jobs. But the biggest problem in fighting redundancies is the attitude of many of our own workers.

A lot of the men here are near 60 and some are already adding up the redundancy money.

They can't understand that £3000 is nothing compared to what we pay out for just having to live! But how can you get that argument across when a worker has the chance of a big lump sum in exchange for a job that he or she didn't much like anyway?

I was nine months on the dole after Personna shut. That's why I know a bit about redundancy.

At Personna we had a twelve week occupation against redundancies. The workers voted to fight because management had already enforced two sets of redundancies that year. Then they came to us again wanting to cut 40 more jobs.... and to 'double up' on the jobs lost.

After twelve weeks on strike the workers were trick-

ed back to work by the promise of £25 and a year's guarantee of no redundancy. Exactly a year later the factory closed. The workforce did not fight. Twelve weeks on the streets had taken the heart out of them.

The redundancy money was also a big attraction. The men were the worst—some of them had been there for twenty years. You could see their eyes going like cash registers. Personna shut two years ago but I still see some of them signing on. Was it worth it for a couple of thousand? It is very hard for a hundred people in a factory to fight redundancies on their own. They can feel isolated and weak. Take Scotts and Prestcolds. We're both subsidiaries of British Leyland—yet we're out here fighting while 500 at Prestcolds work on. Sure they're giving us

money but what we really need is industrial action.

Being part of a big combine like British Leyland should be an advantage. Workers in Leyland should see that each factory can get picked off if it is left to fight alone. If the whole of British Leyland came out in support of David Scotts then surely we'd win.

I'd also like to see more unity in the districts. If one place is fighting redundancies then the whole district should be out in support. Loss of jobs damages the whole community, not just the workers in one factory.

Managements use phrases like 'only 5% redundancies'. There's no such thing. If a person is sacked, she's 100 per cent unemployed. I've never met a 5 per cent unemployed person—have you?"

## WHERE THE AXE FELL

	Jobs lost
Sun Ventilation	200
Brockhouse	100
Beatties Biscuits	600
Duncan Lowe	100
Goodyear	100
Colin Hunter	70
Weir Pumps	600
Stone Manganese	100
Exquisite Form	150
UCS Collapse	2000
John Brown Offshore	1000
Manlove Tullis	100
Singer	2800 to go?

## JOIN US...

ON Friday, 1st September a demonstration against unemployment in the Drumchapel and Clydeside area is assembling at 10 a.m. outside Clydebank buroo.

The marchers will visit local factories and shipyards and lobby the local CBI offices and many of those taking part will then go on to coaches and trains to London for the national Right To Work March from London to Brighton.

## ON THE MARCH

Join Us On The March!

Saturday 2 September to Wednesday 6 September  
London-Brighton

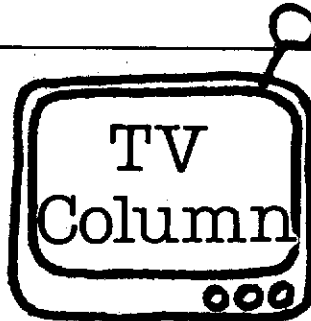
Fill in this form and we will send you full details and put you in touch with your local Right to Work Committee

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Age.....50p registration fee enclosed

Send to Right to Work Campaign 265a Seven Sisters Road  
London N4



IN CASE you hadn't heard, we've had the vote for 50 years.

ATV fed us the embarrassing spectacle of *Golden Gala* from the London Palladium, but the less said about this star-studded farce the better. An occasion graced by Princess Margaret and other dignitaries just because they are women was an insult to what the suffragettes fought for and achieved.

More modestly, BBC2 devoted *The Editors* to the same theme. There was a short interview with Dame Margaret Corbett-Ashby, former editor of *Women's Suffrage News*.

This old lady, physically frail but mentally tough as old boots, told of press hostility to the suffrage movement earlier this century.

As the suffragettes began to win their arguments and make an impact, the press became more hostile and consistently sensationalised or trivialised the struggles, ignoring such advances as women taking more part in local government and a whole range of campaigns such as one to lower the age of consent.

In reply to George Scott's question about the press now, Dame Margaret said. 'It's exactly the same today'.

The rest of this all-female programme generally bore out that judgment.

By far the most revolting person I've seen on TV for a long time was Catherine Stott, women's editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*. Her expensive hair-do and several pairs of false eyelashes went well with her snooty and self-righteous manner.

She said her readers wanted 'traditional values', which she defined as jam and bread-making, and weaving.

'I don't want to raise consciousness or inspire discontent where it isn't there,' she said smugly. She went on to assert that her readers are 'happy' and that 'women's lib' preoccupations with issues like abortion are awfully dull and tiresome.

Jane Reed, editor of *Women's Own*, is a power in the land. Her magazine sells over one and a half million copies every week. It's owned by IPC

who also own *Women's Weekly*, *Woman* and *Woman's Realm* with a total sale of 5½ million.

Jane Reed said she was in the business of 'giving confidence and reassurance' to her readers. Fair enough. But she also said: 'We can't show men feeding children, or washing-up because they don't do it'. No evidence, no proof, but that's what she believes. End of argument, OK?

More in touch with everyday realities, Mikki Doyle of the *Morning Star* rightly defended the women's movement against the charge of dullness. Pity then

*Editors Jane Reed*



Catherine Stott



Mikki Doyle



that the *Star* is such a dreary looking paper, although the women's page often has good articles.

One thing that didn't emerge from the discussion is that Mikki is a staunch defender of the Soviet Union where women are 'free' to be roadmenders, engineers and doctors, but are still deeply oppressed at home and in the family. You won't read about that in the *Morning Star*.

This depressing programme revealed an immense amount of confusion and prejudice by a group of women about women in our society. It made me wonder what we might have to celebrate after the next fifty years.

Jan Kelly

# THE FAT END OF THE WEDGE

DIETING is a waste of time. OVER-EATING by women is a reaction to a sexist society. WOMEN must discover their individual reasons for compulsive eating. ONLY then can we tackle the constant bombardment that Slim is Beautiful.

These claims—and other important points—are made by Susie Orbach in 'Fat is a Feminist Issue.'

Susie, a full-time worker at the Women's Therapy Centre in North London, has written this book for women who want to establish a normal relationship with food.

Womens Voice writers Di Janney and Sheila Mitchell review Susie's book and take up its major arguments.



I FEEL that I am as I am not as I should be in the eyes of any man. My mother has suggested that 'wouldn't I be more attractive if I...'

That's very standard—maybe she wants me to catch the 'right man?'

ALISON PEPPER, 28  
Teacher



I THINK it's good when girls slim. I've always been top-heavy. I had a family to rear so I never bothered. My husband liked me just the same.

LIZZIE WRIGHT, 80  
Pensioner

IF you have ever thought of yourself as being overweight or the wrong shape or felt self-conscious about your size, you should read *Fat is a Feminist Issue*. Susie Orbach has written this book for women who recognise they are compulsive eaters and who want to change.

Many of us, whether too thin, or overweight, have attacked the problem of not being the 'right' size by ruthlessly starving ourselves and therefore giving food magical qualities.

Di: 'I had this idea that eating just a small amount of peanut butter would make me put on weight, yet as a vegetarian I knew nutritionally that I needed the protein. I thought that eating peanut butter would open the floodgates to all sorts of other forbidden foods, such as chocolate, muesli, ice cream, nuts and raisins etc.'

We start dieting by feeling very pleased with ourselves and by setting targets—someone's party, the next pay day so as to be able to buy a new pair of trousers, size 14 rather than 16. Then some incident happens at work or at home which triggers off the desire to eat compulsively again.

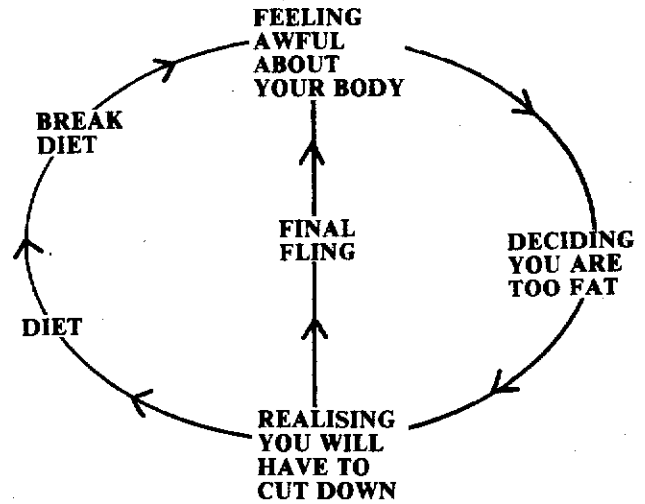
Susie brings out in the book that dieting is useless and that women must discover their individual reasons for overeating. She has compiled several personal histories of compulsive eaters who discovered through self-help groups why they started over-eating and have worked out more positive and less guilt-ridden ways of expressing themselves.

The slimming article in *Womens Voice* (Jan 78) argued that we are constantly bombarded by 'Slim is Beautiful' by glossy magazines, diet food and drug companies, and the fashion industry. The media also perpetuates the myth that being slim equals sexual attractiveness and that slim women are confident, passive and without problems. It is not hard to understand what this image does to the confidence of overweight women and how it can drive some to anorexia.

Accepting yourself AS A PERSON is the first step to breaking the chain of compulsive eating. After throwing away diet sheets and calorie counters we need to accept ourselves at whatever size we are. Dieting feeds the illusion that we can radically change if only we eat the right foods and do the right exercises. This is a con-trick.

Di: 'I heard Susie in a panel discussion on compulsive eating and anorexia. Slides were shown of women before and after losing large amounts of weight. Their basic body shape didn't change. The

## VICIOUS CIRCLE



I'M QUITE lucky, I don't have to worry about my weight. I don't think that slim women are any more attractive than fatter women but I don't think that people should eat 100 much. Some men have asked me to put weight on. I didn't mind them asking.

JANE McLENNAN, 25  
Student



I'M underweight. I don't think that there are enough facilities for people who want to get fatter. They overlook us skinny ones. Maybe because all the stereotypes are so slim they think we ALL want to be skinny. If I was very fat I would go on a diet.

MICHELE, 14  
School student

## MIND OVER MATTER

THERE are many and diverse ways that we convince ourselves that extra food should be taken at a particular time. These are some of them:

### social

'I'M never hungry at supper-time, but I like everyone to eat together, because that makes us feel like a happy family.'

### oral

'ALTHOUGH I don't feel hungry in my stomach, I really need to put some food in my mouth.'

### stocking up

'I'm not hungry just now, but I might be in a couple of hours, and I won't be able to get anything then, so I'd better have something now.'

### compensation

IT'S been a rotten day. I'll just cheer myself up with a good nosh.'

### boredom

'I'M not in the mood to do anything. I'll just fix myself a sandwich.'

### celebration

'I'VE had such a great day. I really deserve this box of chocolates.'

### nerves

'I JUST have to do something. What can I cram into my mouth to stop me getting edgy.'

### pleasure

'THESE sweets are the only way I can give myself a real treat, because they are my favourite.'



I'VE tried all the slimming gimmicks but I've given up. I hate my fat figure. I can't get any modern clothes. It's for me that I wanted to slim. I don't envy young slim women—they're beautiful—it's just not for me.

IRENE, mid 30's  
Housewife



I USED to never gain weight, but now it does worry me. I want to keep slim because I think it helps me to keep active. I do exercises. I wouldn't like to be *really* skinny—I like to have a bit of meat on my bones. It was when I had a domestic upset that I started to put on weight. I automatically ate more for comfort. I also sleep more.

KATEY, 45  
Office worker

realisation hit me that if you have a rounded tummy and large thighs (like I do) they'll still be there when you lose weight!

I felt really angry along with millions of other women I had been conned into believing that with a bit more perseverance I too could achieve close to 'the ideal shape'.

In self-help groups women talk about their decision to start dieting; why they wanted to be slim—yet never managed to remain so for very long.

Perhaps it is because there is something frightening about being slim—the expectation of becoming competitive with other women and therefore more sexually 'available'. If we are overweight, the fat makes the statement for us that we are available only to the lover who is prepared to see through the protective layer.

Repressed anger may trigger off compulsive eating. Many women brought up to be comforting and caring, find it difficult to express anger.

We worry justifiably that we won't be taken seriously. An angry woman is seen as hysterical and men have been telling us for centuries that you should ignore the rantings of an 'hysterical' woman.



I KNOW I am overweight because when I cycle I am less efficient. I don't buy slimming products. I think that the slimming industry is a scandal when you think of the Third World and the starving—then think of us in the Western world.

CLAUDE BEGUIN  
Visitor from Switzerland



SOMETIMES I worry about my weight. My extra weight doesn't fit in with the image I have of my body. Most of us have an idealised body image. My image is slimmer than my actual body. I think that women have an extremely self-critical attitude. It's because of a whole social set-up that promotes certain types of figures and body shapes.

PAMELA ZOLINE, 37  
Artist

Di: 'Whenever I've received an upsetting letter or phone call or had a bad row with my bloke rather than get angry and assert myself I tend to go very quiet and burst into tears. So I by-pass my anger. After one of these sessions I tend to mechanically stuff my face to calm down and deaden the anger.'

Sheila: 'Where I used to work they held a farewell do for me. The department head made a speech and his final remarks were: 'Sheila got the job here in the first place because of her pretty face and big bust.' I nearly fell through the floor, but instead of voicing my anger I tucked into my strawberries and cream.'

Another area of conflict for women is sexuality. Some of us over-eat so as not to be considered a sexual object for men and so that we are taken more seriously at work.

Sheila: 'After my first intense relationship with a man I went through a series of unsatisfactory relationships in which I felt I was constantly being viewed as a sexual object. I started eating a lot, hoping to be taken more seriously by men and also as a way of putting off men. Unfortunately, being fat was not enough.'

For women striving to make themselves known in their own right, fatness can make it easier to cope with sexist attitudes, by being accepted as 'one of the boys' but this is a cop-out way round the problem.

Again, a frequent worry that has been expressed by married women and documented by Susie Orbach is acceptance of the sexual monopoly role: 'If I become thin and very attractive maybe I'll be turned on to other men apart from my husband and I don't want to jeopardise our relationship.'

Susie rejects this 'easy' way out and told us: 'If fat has been a way of saying 'no' to sex, we must learn to speak up rather than hoping



I'M ON a diet at the moment—the usual sort of thing. No bread or what have you. I wanted to lose weight for years. I started going to weightwatchers and lost 2½ stones in six months, so now I weigh 13 stone.

I've got five kids and that made me put on a lot of weight over the years. When I buy clothes I like to

be a bit modern. Also, as I get a bit older, I can't rush around too much.

I lost my husband last year so I don't bother to cook as much as I used to.

It's funny, my kids don't want me to diet... they like me as I am.

WINNIE GRIBBON, 52  
Tea lady

that the world will magically understand that the food we put in our mouths is an attempt to say no.'

Mothers obviously have a strong influence. Girls learn how to sacrifice their own needs in preparation for caring for the needs of their future lovers/husbands/children. Daughters get fat as a way of rejecting their mother as a model to copy. Other women get fat because they identify with the caring role of their mothers.

In self-help groups, women try to pinpoint particular periods, such as leaving home for the first time, death in the family or other stressful situations which started them off on compulsive eating.

For some women fat is a symbolic way of completely rejecting a sexist society but that does very little to change the nature of the society itself.

When we can confront the anger we feel rather than dissolve it through eating we can begin to change our situation at work, in the family, in our personal relationships.

Through self-help groups it may be possible to come to a better understanding of why we are fat and enable us to regain control over a primary aspect of our lives—our bodies. In this way we can begin to take control over other aspects of our lives and fight the people who have a vested interest in churning out the idea of an ideal woman. If they can keep us hooked on dieting and sap our energy in feeling competitive with each other, they can deny us creches, communal laundries, decent housing and interesting and challenging jobs outside the home.

But if we fight back, we are a powerful force.

Any women interested in forming a self-help group or finding out about existing groups should get in touch with the Womens Therapy Centre.

Fat is a Feminist issue at £3.95 is very dear but can be borrowed from libraries. It should be out in paperback next year.

# YOUR VOICE

## ODA'S-UNWANTED?

Dear *Womens Voice*

Congratulations on your feature on the National Sick Service (sorry, National Health) in last month's *Womens Voice*.

However I was rather sad to see in your coverage of current disputes that *Womens Voice* dealt with the Greenwich Hospital dispute from the same reactionary standpoint as the gutter press.

Your article, like those in such papers as the *Daily Mirror* depicted Operating Department Assistants (ODA's) as

bogeypersons who steal nurses' jobs. The article states: '... the nurses argue that some of the 40,000 qualified nurses on the dole should be employed because of previous medical training ...'.

But *medical training* is not the issue: *surgical training* is what is needed.

Of the three year SRN (State Registered Nurse) training, only six weeks or so are spent in theatre, whereas the entire two years of an ODA's training is theatre-bound. To suggest that a newly qualified SRN or SEN

(State Enrolled Nurse) could do a qualified ODA's job is an irresponsible suggestion.

Secondly, the statement that a *Trainee ODA* receives more pay than a qualified SRN is total rubbish. The only way the figures quoted could have been true would be if the *Trainee ODA* had been flogging her/his guts out all night doing overtime, ODA's get paid for overtime, whereas SRN's only get time off in lieu.

Finally, I think a quote from the aggrieved supervisor should be considered before giving

total sympathy to the nurses' case. Ms Mills was quoted in the wonderfully right-wing *Nursing Mirror* as saying 'We do not want these ODA's anyway. It is only because of the unions that we are forced to take them!'

As has been said many times regarding this dispute, it's good to see nurses discovering their own power. But divisive action such as this can do nothing but weaken health workers in their fight against the cuts.

Jackie Skipper,  
*Trainee ODA and former Secretary COHSE 1334 Branch*

## Bringing up children

Dear *Womens Voice*

I would like to ask readers of *Womens Voice* about their ideas on how feminists and socialists should try and bring up children.

'Just take it as it comes, trust to your instincts and it'll be alright' is the commonest attitude I've come across. But that's not good enough. No-one would expect any other important area of life to be dealt with so dismissively—and how we care for children *is* important.

Of course we live in a rotten capitalist world that distorts all

our relationships, and forces its own oppressive values and ideas on all of us. We cannot insulate children from these ideas—nor would we want to.

The world needs to be changed, not avoided. But parents *are* responsible for a considerable part of a child's emotional environment. How we choose to behave towards children is bound to influence their development.

Dr Spock just isn't answering the questions I'm asking ... perhaps *Women's Voice* can?

Elana Dallas

## Football is our sport too

Dear *Womens Voice*

I read Sally Davidson's article 'Football is Fun' in the June issue which presented a perfect example of the general attitude towards Womens Football—It's a bit of a giggle.

I have been a member of the Watford Ladies Football Club (note the name 'Ladies' is no choice of mine) for five years and certainly we are a hardworking and enthusiastic team, having just completed another exhausting season. A full season will involve weekly sessions of strenuous training in preparation to face the hard and competitive Sunday League and Cup Matches, Five-a-Side Tournaments and eventually finishing the long season with a tour abroad.

Now in France, women's football has been established well over 20 years. Their towns and small villages promote a Women's Team by publishing programmes on match days, selling souvenirs and displaying posters and car stickers sporting the team's colours which even any professional British First Division Team would envy. The French National and local newspapers give a fair share of reports and reviews on the Sports Pages.

Also in America 'Soccer' is capturing larger and larger audiences by extending the same opportunities and facilities to women as well as to men who wish to play the game. Undoubtedly this is an en-



WHEN THE HEATS ON . . . . .  
... don't get burnt

We don't need a famous personality to sell you our Zirpro® flame-proof suit. We let it speak for itself. . . . . Its hot news everywhere that Zirpro suits are the ones that BREATHE so you stay cool and let the others sweat it out. Speaking of figures, which we always are, take a look at the ones on our magnetic pit-signal board, then, feast your eyes on the item you're all really interested in . . . our robot-timer. You too can stop three watches with a flick of your wrist. The girl? We had to hang our latest jacket on something.

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FIRE-2  
G.S. 3120

"The girl? We had to hang our new jacket on something."

Dear *Womens Voice*

I enclose an advert from a motor racing magazine.

Motor racing has a chauvinistic, play-boy image, and I think this advert shows how some people connected with motor racing think of women.

Jo Plimley  
Halesowen

couraging step forward towards Womens football gradually being adopted and recognised worldwide.

Referring back to our own country, Little Ms Theresa Bennett hit the headlines by defeating the Football Association enabling her the right to play football with the *opposite sex*.

Theresa's constant deter-

mination and sheer willpower proved to be the most effective weapon in eliminating a strictly male dominated sport which now enables women to indulge in a totally different ball game and still remain on top.

Football result:-

Theresa Bennett - 1: Football Association - 0.

Cathy Gibb

# YOUR VOICE

## Women in refuge speak out

*Dear Womens Voice*

In response to the article in last month's *Womens Voice*, women in Southwark Women's Aid would like to make a few comments:

'Marriage shouldn't be regarded as one the boss and one the slave. It's like black people. They were treated as slaves and rose up. Now the wives are uprising because they are treated like slaves.'

'I wanted to leave my husband a long time ago, but I didn't know where to go. I went to the welfare but they told me about the refuge.'

'People think the only refuge is Chiswick. But there are over 20 refuges in London and 70 others all over the country.'

'In this refuge you are able to have a room for you and your children and possessions. Most people try and treat it like their own home. You get the impression when you walk in the refuge, it is like a boarding house. There are workers who help with legal advice and we also have play workers. They are all very helpful. We are always open to listen to problems and to give advice but you decide on what to do yourself.'

'Anyone who is frightened will be welcomed at any refuge and a space will always be found. You do not have to show bruises or prove you are battered.'

'The government has done nothing for women who are battered. Anything which has been done for battered women is because they have organised themselves. Women working for women. Battering is not

something that has only started recently. It's just that women had no help before until they organised themselves. Most people think it is only "the drunken working classes" who beat their wives. But this is not so. Middle class women are battered too. Except that they have families and friends who can support and help them.'

Eileen is learning to read and write since she went to the Southwark Women's Aid refuge. This is what she wrote for the newspaper for the reading scheme:

'A refuge is a place where women come to get away from their husbands who have been violent or make our lives unbearable. Also the children who are involved.'

'It is only temporary, until we can sort out our problems regarding housing. Up to now I've lived in two refuges. This is the third time.'

'I feel more relaxed and content than when I was with my husband. The children seem to be more happy, being away from their dad, who was always abusive towards them and me.'

'I get on well with the rest of the people here. Even all the children play happily together. They get taken out on trips to the seaside, parks, swimming etc in the warmer months.'

'We are all very lucky to have our own rooms, each family I mean. I share bathroom and toilet.'

'We have a playroom for under-5s in the refuge. Also we get a lot of help from the workers.'

**Women from Southwark Refuge**

## Social insecurity

*Dear Sisters*

I hear from the NCCL that the British Government intends to obstruct a proposed EEC directive on sex equality in social security. A recent deputation to the DHSS unsuccessfully urged it to change its mind. Eric Deakins even suggested

'We could always cut down on the benefits payable to men'. This sort of clever-Dick wisecrack is not at all original. It was used for decades in reply to women demanding equal pay: 'Men's pay would have to be reduced. Is that what you want?'

Men, for their part, have complained that when the wife is earning and the husband is unemployed, they cannot get social security. A wife can't claim it, and the husband can't either, because he's a dependant. So sex discrimination can act against both sexes.

Britain actually wants dependents' allowances removed from the Directive, and has even proposed that new employers' pension schemes should be allowed to discriminate.

NCCL has produced an attractive campaigning leaflet on social security and sex discrimination (free up to 50 copies and 1p per copy for orders over 50, available now) and recommends their distribution everywhere 'from TU branches to local launderettes and doctors' waiting rooms'. Will *Womens Voice* do all it can in this direction and urge readers to do the same?

*Kathleen Jones, Shrewsbury*

## Alone in the family

*Dear Womens Voice,*

While the open air meeting to celebrate 50 years of women having the vote was taking place outside the Houses of Parliament, the BBC presented a phone-in programme on the theme 'women in politics', which I listened to while caring, as usual, for my three kids at home, where sometimes—well most of the time, I feel very isolated psychologically.

To present a 'balanced approach', Rene Short and Mrs Jill Knight (Labour and Tory MPs) took part to answer callers' questions and discuss issues arising. Mrs Knight kept stressing the value of 'family life'. How a woman's place was really in the home where she should instill discipline and correct behaviour in her children. Only when this was done should she dare to 'escape' and become a politician or perhaps even a factory worker (she omitted to tell us that the most murders are committed in the 'family unit'). Rene Short did at least try to make the most of a bad job, pointing out the difficulties for women in getting to work without decent nursery provisions.

Callers, particularly the Trade Union official, said that women essentially 'wouldn't help themselves anyway' and that now the Sex Discrimination Act is in force there is no longer a need for special women's places on Trade Union bodies. Well obviously no one likes these token positions, but take those away and we'll have nothing left.

*Paula Leech  
Chesterfield*

## Good care not just mother care

*Dear Womens Voice*

Nobody has ever proved that babies need their mothers 24 hours a day. What they need is good care. To say that you can't love and care for children unless you accept the dependent position of a housewife or the humiliations of being an unmarried parent on social security, is to say women's liberation is impossible for all time.

We need to make women's liberation and loving parenthood compatible. That means good maternity and paternity leave, good quality nursery care, and an encouragement to men to take a full part. It also means a break with the

tradition that we do the best for our children by restricting them to the narrow confines of the mother-child bond in their early years. After all this has hardly produced a world of cooperative, outward-going and well-adjusted people.

The cuts are badly affecting nursery provision. Pond Street nursery, for instance, is often down to four nurses for 50 children. At Caversham, mothers who were given a nursery place because they can't cope at home have often had to take their children home with them because of staff-shortages: Twelve more children could be using that

nursery if the council coughed up the money for staff.

An under-fives campaign has just been started which will take up the issues with the local Womens Voice Group. (For further information call Gill: 586 2950)

*Irene Bruegel  
Kentish Town*

## Don't mix with racists

*Dear Womens Voice*

While petitioning in support of

a paint-out of NF slogans in Hackney I met two girls Lorraine and Josie. They were with a boyfriend who said 'No way' when asked to sign. 'Why? Do you support the NF?' I asked. 'Yes'. 'Well, you're not walking with us then.' said Lorraine marching off with Josie. Boyfriend follows and puts his arm round Josie. Lorraine argues—and she and Josie walk away. Right on sisters.

*Judith Hamilton  
East London*

# YOUR QUESTIONS...

## HOLIDAYS FOR THE HARD-UP

*Dear Womens Voice,*  
I read *Womens Voice* a lot and I really think it is a good magazine.

I wonder if you can help me. I have two children aged six and nine. I am on my own and very hard up. I've been trying to think of ways to take my kids on holiday. Have you any suggestions?

*Dear Mrs Bennett,*  
Thanks for your letter and I'm glad you like *Womens Voice*. It is very difficult to find

cheap holidays. Also as a single parent you will probably find that most holidays for families are designed with two parents in mind.

I've got two suggestions to make but I would like to hear from other single parents about their experiences and suggestions.

First, the National Council for One Parent Families has produced a really good booklet 'Holidays for One Parent Families 1978 Guide'.

I think you should send off for this to 255 Kentish Town Road, London, NW5 2LX. The booklet gives details of discounts and specially arranged holidays for single parents.

There are holidays in caravans, chalets and holidays villages.

Unfortunately a lot of the holidays are offered at off peak times. This might mean delaying your holiday until September/October which would mean having to keep your kids off school.

The booklet also gives details of holidays for children alone and holidays that can be arranged through a social worker or the educational welfare officer at your kids school.

You may find out that you qualify for a free holiday.

The second main suggestion is that you join the Youth Hostelling Association. The membership fee is £2.50 for you and 85p for each of your kids. Write to YHA National Office, St Albans Herts AL 12DY.

After you have joined, the YHA will send a handbook which gives full details. There are youth hostels all over the country and as you live in Manchester, the Lake District would be a nice area. The overnight fee is £1.10 for you and 75p for the kids. You can either cook for yourself or buy meals at the hostel. Some hostels also have special facilities for families.

There are one or two drawbacks about Youth Hostels for instance you have to be out of the hostel during the day, which can be awkward when the weather is bad. I also think you would be better taking a friend with you.

I hope this has given you some ideas—have a happy holiday.  
Alison Kirton

# ANSWERED



If you want to write a piece about your campaign send 500 words to Womens Voice Box 82 London E2

## WOMEN'S AID

IN the mid-1970s feminists became aware that many women were mentally and/or physically battered by the man they were living with. The women needed a safe

place to go so that they and their children could escape this violence and work out a new life for themselves.

Refuges were set up where women could find safety and support from each other.

By being with others who shared common experiences we could break down the feelings of guilt and shame that were heaped on us by making us feel that we had only ourselves to blame for all the violence and abuse. The refuges broke down the isolation of living in the family. There we were only mothers, wives, cooks and cleaners. Our needs were supposed to be met just by caring for our families.

We work together and support each other. In that way we develop confidence in our abilities to take control of our lives. It is important that women in refuges are involved in decisions about the day to day running of refuges—such as sharing housework, collective childcare, money and other things.

Each Women's Aid group (or support group) is made up of women living in the house, any paid workers there might be and other voluntary women workers. We try to involve everyone in the group so that we are all able to take part in the discussions and decisions.

Our local groups are always fighting the ways that society keeps women down, through Social Security, housing, legal system and the attitude that the battering of women is an individual problem.

Because many women have to leave their homes and then try to find somewhere else to live, Women's Aid campaigned to improve the housing rights of battered women. The

Housing (Homeless Persons) Act but many have ignored this Act and women are still living in emergency refuges.

The Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings Act gave battered women the power to seek injunctions to put the man out of the house and/or to stop him from molesting her. Many women don't get the orders that they want and when they do it still doesn't give them adequate protection from a persistent violent man.

Although these Acts have worked for some women, many found them useless. The laws aren't as good as they should be and authorities haven't interpreted them in the ways that were intended.

We know that only so much can be done by law, that we must change the attitudes of society and work around our demands until we get what we want. We know that it is only through practical work that we do that we get a chance to do this.

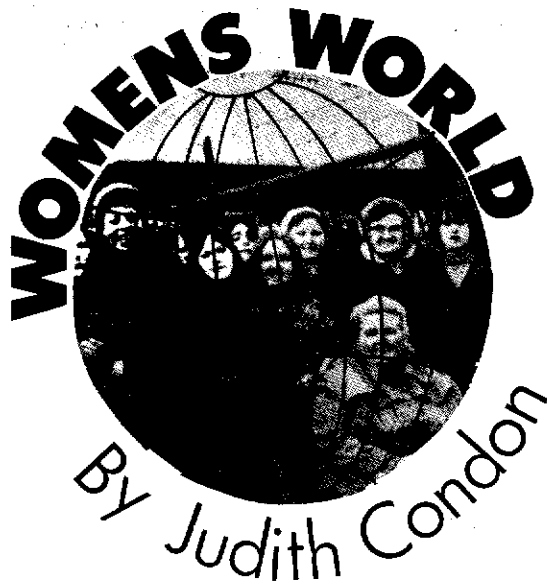
We work in Women's Aid to change the attitudes of a society that exploits women by using their energy and labour for men and capitalism.

There are now 150 refuges run by 100 groups in the National Women's Aid Federation;

The aims and the ideas of the National Women's Aid Federation are part of the whole discussion of feminism. This article is a contribution to this discussion and does not necessarily represent the views of all women in the organisation.

National Women's Aid Federation  
51 Chalcot Road  
London NW1  
(01 586 0104/5192 any time day or night).





## What the weather was like, the colour of the wallpaper.



THE first woman MP—in her uniform for the Irish Citizen Army

PROFESSIONAL politicians rely on our short memories. That's how they get by.

Take me for instance—I've got a bad memory for all kinds of things. But then for events that seemed important at the time I get this miraculous power of recall. Exactly what was said, what the weather was like, the colour of the wall paper . . .

Add to that all the nonsense our minds are stuffed with from an early age—the Latin for elephant, which film-star dated which, when—and little wonder some of the events

that affect us most get squeezed right out of our minds.

Short memories are at a premium just now—this being, in all likelihood, an election year. The Tory P.R. men have suddenly gone overboard about women.

We celebrate 50 years of female suffrage, trumpeted their recent ad in the national press. After all, Emmeline Pankhurst was a Conservative, the first woman MP was a Conservative, and the first woman prime-minister?

First of all, throughout her campaigning life Emmeline Pankhurst was no Tory. Fantastically brave she undoubtedly was. Autocratic in style she may well have been. A Tory? Not on your life!

The First World War did for Emmeline. It turned her into a raving patriot. But nearly as much as she hated the 'Hun', she hated the Liberal Party—the men in Government who'd procrastinated over and double-crossed and done-down the cause of women's suffrage. The ones who'd flung her in jail and caused her and her comrades to be force-fed.

Late in her years, in a pathetic gesture of defiance and disgust at the Liberals, Emmeline chose respectability and joined the Tories. And now those creeps, those putrid, twisting, chauvinists, are trying to shelter behind her skirts, and pretend they were feminists all along. *And they have the gall to boast about the first woman MP.*

They mean Lady Astor. Oh yes, what a lot she did for you and me! Lady Astor, against Astor. And how did Lady A manage to pursue her career in politics? She had the wealth for one thing. And she had the services of her maid Rose for another. Rose must have been the only working woman she ever brushed shoulders with.

As many as five times a day Rose would lay out a complete change of clothes for her Ladyship, from silk underwear all the way through to her furs and her picture hats.

One outfit for the morning visitors, one for her lunch-date one for Ascot, one for the House, one for dinner. That was the least of her duties! And Rose's reward? In a life-time of service just one miserly, begged-for wage rise. And oh yes! If her Ladyship bit into a chocolate and found she didn't like the filling, she always offered Rose the other half.

But even that's not the whole story. You see, the first woman elected to Parliament wasn't a Tory. It wasn't Lady Astor, as they claim. The first woman MP was actually a Sinn Fein, Citizen's Army Veteran, by name of Constance Markiewicz. A woman who dumped the world of the Anglo-Irish gentry she was born into—and later dumped the Polish Count she married—to pursue a life of revolutionary struggle for the republican cause.

She was too busy fighting ever to occupy her seat in Westminster, besides which she didn't believe in oaths of allegiance to the crown. But she did make it to London eventually—they gave her, for her pains, a strictly private room in Holloway jail.

Now the Tories have complained about the women's exhibition at the Houses of Parliament. They've got the government to give some prominence to women in the armed services, and they've had Margaret Thatcher's portrait moved to a more central position. After all, isn't she the pinnacle of women's political development so far?

Margaret Thatcher. Now let me try and remember. She must have been a campaigner for our rights, like the other great Tories. Wasn't she the one who took the milk away from the children? Wasn't she the force behind that Fair Rent bill that would have driven young wage earners away from home? Wasn't she the one who said immigrant fiances must be kept out?

Didn't she become the first woman dictator, I mean, prime-minister back in 1978?

# WHAT IS GOING ON?

## Public Meetings

● **Birmingham Womens Voice** presents a film: **Take it Like a Man Ma'am.** Digbeth Civic Hall, Tuesday 15 August, 7.30pm. Tickets available in advance from Jenny 440 5794 or from Socialist and TU Bookshop, Digbeth, Birmingham. 70p (50p non-earners). Or tickets on the door.

● **Hackney Womens Voice** public meeting. Monday August 14, 8pm, at the Dalston Library, Dalston Lane, E8. **Battered Women.** Come along and join the discussion. If you would like to come but need a babysitter please phone Pauline (800 3586)

## WV Meetings

● **Acton & Harlesden Ring** Carrie 993 0356 or Pete 969 9812

● **Birmingham** at Greyhound Cider Bar, Holloway Head. For dates and babysitters phone Jenny (440 5794) or Janet (472 7216). All women welcome.

● **Black Country Sundays** fortnightly, 2.30, 27 Glen Court, Compton Road, Wolverhampton 23233 for information. Children welcome.

● **Brighton** every Tuesday. Phone Sue (21060) or Manuela (Henfield 3843). Baby sitters provided.

● **Bristol Womens Voice** meets fortnightly in the University Students Union, Queens Road, at 8pm on Wednesdays. Next meeting. Wednesday June 14th. For details see WV or Socialist Worker sellers in the underpass outside Lewis Stores on Saturdays.

● **Canterbury** every other Tuesday at Jolly Sailor Northgate. Phone Barbara (Lyminge 862742).

● **Cardiff** every other Tuesday, 7.30 at Union Books, 58 Bridge Street. For babysitters phone Bronwen (Cardiff 43470)

● **Coventry** meets every other Wednesday, 8.00pm at The Hertford Tavern, off Queens Road (near the Butts). Phone 450-570

● **Croydon Womens Voice** meets alternate Tuesdays. Phone Maureen 660 0989 or Yvonne 664 3768.

● **Edinburgh** for information contact Susie at Book Marx, 130 Morrison St, Edinburgh. Open 10am-8pm.

● **Exeter** Wednesday 12th July at 7.30pm there is a meeting to form a new Women's Voice Group, at 15 Barnardo Rd., Phone Exeter 38023

● **Glasgow Womens Voice** for information phone Clare (959 8924 or Sheila (424 1048).

● **Glossop, Derbyshire.** First and third Tuesdays of every month at 110 Victoria St., Glossop. Phone Glossop 61873 or Claire Glossop 64735 All welcome.

● **Kentish Town** meets regularly phone Gail (485 0954) or Sheila (283 0351) evenings. Babysitters provided.

● **Hackney** phone Pauline (800 3586) for information and babysitter.

● **Halifax** details from WV and SW sellers every Sat 12.30-2.30 Co-op Arcade on the Precinct.

● **Hornsey** for information see local WV sellers or phone Alison (263 3477) or Janet (444 8922).

● **Lampeter** Tuesday evenings in college. Details from WV sellers or write c/o SDUC Lampeter, Dyfed, Wales.

● **North Manchester** fortnightly on Mondays. Phone Maureen Tottoh (205 2867) after 6 for details.

● **Norwich** every other Tuesday at 8.30 at Black Boys Pub, Colegate.

● **Reading** first Wednesday of every month. Phone 62150 for details.

● **Shrewsbury** the first Wednesday of every month. Other meetings too so phone 58830 for details.

● **South West London** on alternate Tuesdays. Phone Marion 673 1329 for more information.

● **South London Womens Voice:** Fortnightly meetings and estate sale, for information contact Jean 674 8641

● **Walthamstow** meets every Sunday 3pm. For details ring Jeannie 531 8340, or Pauline 521 4768.

● **We want to organise a toy library** so that we can hire out equipment for creches. We'll start off with London and see how it goes. We need more toys, and helpers. If you can give either ring Womens Voice 734 7410



● **Womens Voice** has moved into a new office! We could use a little help:  
 ● some help, if you have few spare hours, to catch up on our work.  
 ● some typewriters, we only have one in working order between us. Have you got an old one you don't use, or a broken one we could get mended?  
 Write to Womens Voice Box 82, London E2.



● **Are you interested in your history?** We would like to get a group of women together who would like to write about womens history for Womens Voice. You don't have to be a historian, or a super journalist, but if you are prepared to work or you have a special interest in a particular event, woman, movement, then you are what we need.  
 Write to the Womens Voice Editorial Board, Box 82 London E2

● **35p each** for orders of more than two. From Carry, 65 Fairlight, Road, London SW17.

## HELP! Nurses Needed

● **NURSES**—are you unemployed at the moment? Womens Voice would urgently like to hear from nurses about their experiences in the Health Service. Please write to Christina, c/o Box 82, London, E.2.

## Available from Womens Voice

● **Postcards**, 5p each, plus 10p postage for orders under 20.

● **This Ad Degrades Women**, stickers, 100 for 50p including postage

● **Posters** with Womens Voice and blank space for your own meetings, £1 for 40

● **Back copies** of Womens Voice, issue 2-18, any 5 for 50p including postage. Money with orders please to Womens Voice Box 82 London E2.

## WOMEN IN MANUAL TRADES

National Meeting, Saturday 16 September, 10 to 6pm. Lancaster Road Methodist Hall, Lancaster Road London, W11. (Ladbroke Grove Underground). £2. Free food, free creche. Accommodation provided Friday and Saturday if necessary. Disco Saturday night open to all women. Please register in advance. Contact: 23 Bridge Avenue Mansions, Bridge Avenue, London, W6.

## ACTON

Womens Aid require worker from September. Apply Lynne, 51 Station Road, London, W7.

If you want to advertise on these pages write to Womens Voice Box 82, London, E2 for a rate card. Small ads and classified 5p a word, prepaid.

# Blackmailed back to work!

A Womens Voice pamphlet about maternity leave in NALGO.

Everything you need to know about what we've got, what we want and how to get it. Price 10p. Send money with orders, plus 10p postage for orders under 10, or 20p postage for orders over 10. Womens Voice Maternity Leave Pamphlet, Box 82, London, E2.

# DAILY DISTORTER

No. 123.06

July 1977

The voice of a few of the people

49

## Backlash by Journalist militants over 'Lunatic Ideas'

By a disgruntled distorter  
A storm was breaking tonight when I was making my way down Fleet Street, as journalists rushed to meet the vicious attack on them by the editors of the book, *Lunatic Ideas*. "This is an outrage," one said angrily. "The report is nothing but a pack of lies!" I am delighted to state that I am not a journalist.

## Sex Scandal

New series starting next week. Sex scandal about former editor of *Womens Voice*... (text continues with a satirical account of a scandal involving a former editor and a young woman, with names like 'Margaret Thatcher' and 'John Major' used in a humorous way).

## Newspapers in shambles

A top education expert said of the report: "At last the truth is being told... (text continues with a satirical account of newspaper editors' reactions to an education report).

## SPORTS EXTRA SHOCK HORROR

TOP FOOTBALL MANAGER reveals how he made a fortune... (text continues with a satirical account of a football manager's exploits).

# SACK NEWS PAPER DUNCES!

SCOOP of the Century

inside

## A caning for Journalists

### FALLING STANDARDS IN NEWS

### Disturbing Allegations Were Made Today

among journalists. A prominent committee of security... (text continues with a satirical account of a committee investigating journalists' conduct).

45 of journalists could not remember what newspaper they worked for.

One of them, a journalist from *The Daily Distorter*, was asked to write a story without mentioning his or her name... (text continues with a satirical account of a journalist's experience).

An editor was known to the press. He said journalists should be paid to get a break... (text continues with a satirical account of an editor's views).

*Lunatic Ideas*  
How the newspapers treated education during 1977  
out September 1978  
pre-publication price £1.50  
Send for your copy now!  
Also LUNATIC IDEAS badges  
2.5p (including postage and packing)  
All from  
The Corner House Bookshop  
1, 14, Park Street  
London W. 1.

# Join Womens Voice...

WOMENS VOICE fights for womens rights. We want equal pay with the highest paid; maternity leave without restriction; the right to a job; nursery places for all children so that mothers can choose to work; and an end to discrimination in education, training, jobs and benefits; the right to abortion on demand. To fight for these changes is only a beginning. Womens Liberation means we have to free ourselves from the grip of the rich and powerful whose oppressive rules and ideas are fostered on us from our earliest years. This means we have to fight for socialism too, to free us from a society divided between those who have and those who have not. Fight with Womens Voice for Womens Liberation and Socialism.

## join the fight!

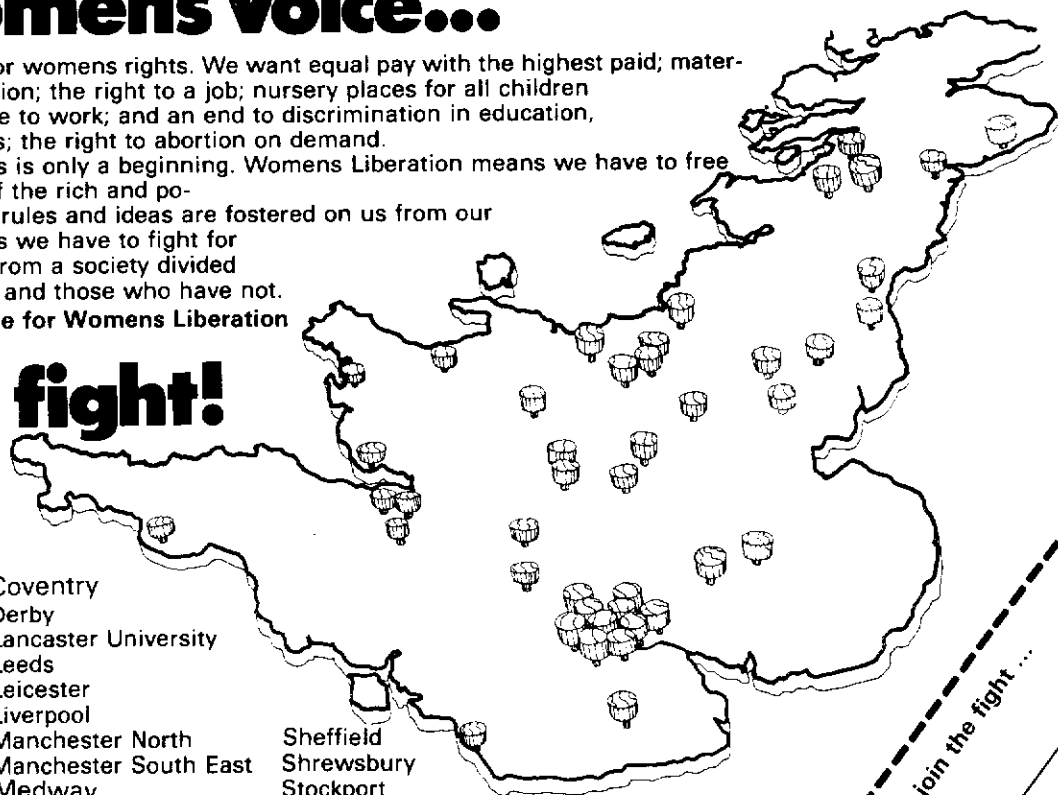
### Womens Voice Groups

- Scotland
- Dundee
- Edinburgh
- Central Glasgow
- West Glasgow
- Glasgow Drumchapel
- Wales
- Aberystwyth
- Cardiff
- Llanelli
- England
- Bath
- Birmingham
- Brighton
- Bristol
- Bristol University
- Cambridge
- Canterbury

- Coventry
- Derby
- Lancaster University
- Leeds
- Leicester
- Liverpool
- Manchester North
- Manchester South East
- Medway
- Newcastle
- Norwich
- Oxford
- Plymouth
- Pontefract
- Reading
- St. Albans

- Sheffield
- Shrewsbury
- Stockport
- Sunderland
- Wolverhampton
- York
- London
- North
- North East London Poly
- Central

- South
- South West
- South East
- Hammersmith
- Bedford College
- Lea Valley
- Kentish Town



I want to join the fight...

Name  
Address

Send to Womens Voice  
PO Box 82, London, E2

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VOICE

CLUB



£3 for a year's  
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(Air Mail £4)  
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Box 82, London, E2.

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