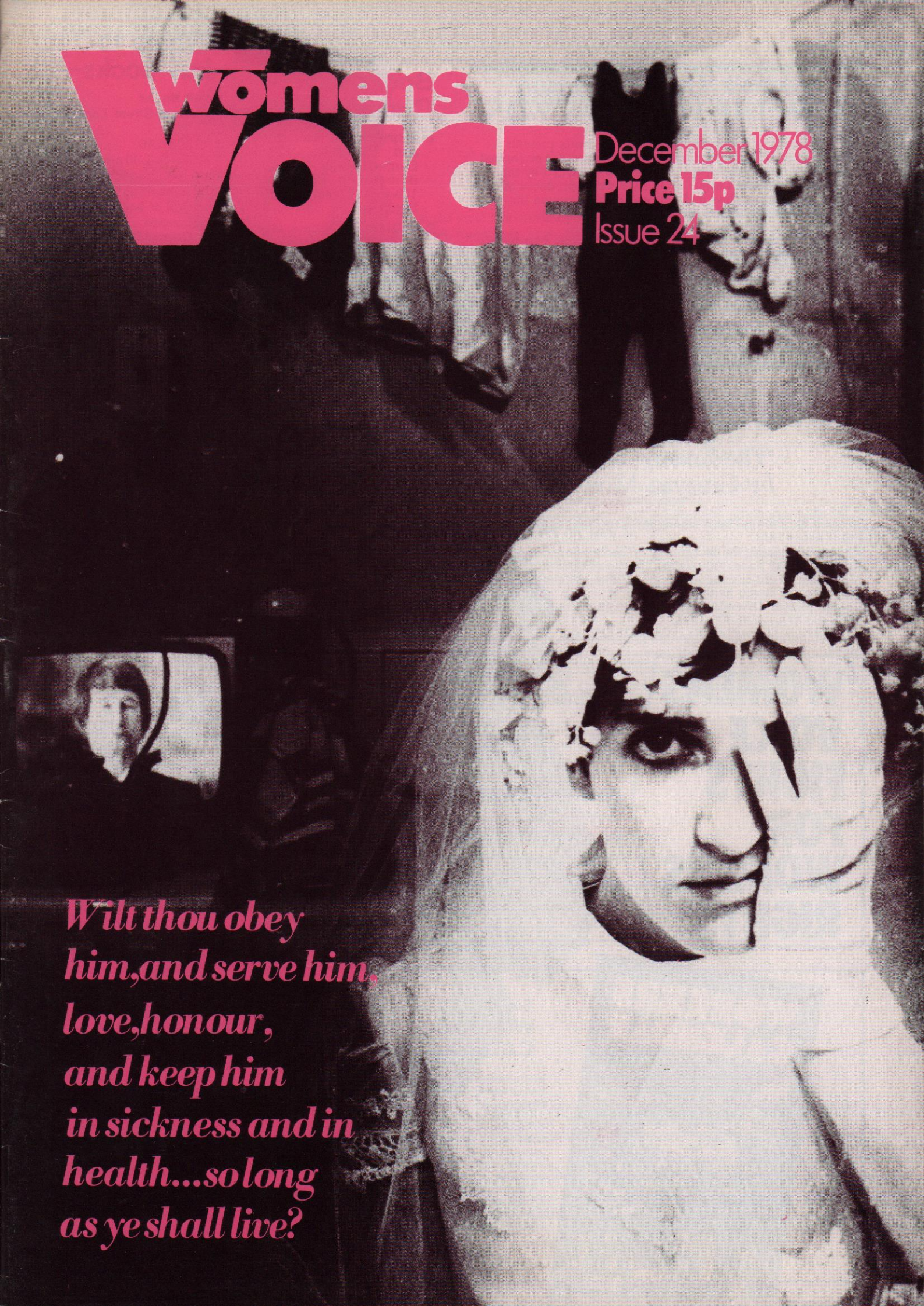


Womens VOICE

December 1978

Price 15p

Issue 24



*Wilt thou obey
him, and serve him,
love, honour,
and keep him
in sickness and in
health...so long
as ye shall live?*

Sidewalk Theatre Company HOW THE VOTE WAS WON

In celebration of the fight for suffrage, Sidewalk presents a collection of original suffragette songs and plays not performed since 1914. The material was written and presented by the Actresses Franchise League. In five years they produced over a hundred agitation plays and performed them around the country at fundraising events and political meetings.

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Monday 18 December The Warehouse, Croydon
Tuesday 19 December The Chepstow pub, Chepstow Place, London W2
Wednesday 20 December 510 Centre, Harrow
Friday 22 December Womens Arts Alliance, London NW1

To book the play write or phone Sidewalk Theatre Company, 291 Finchley Road, London NW3, 01 794 0957

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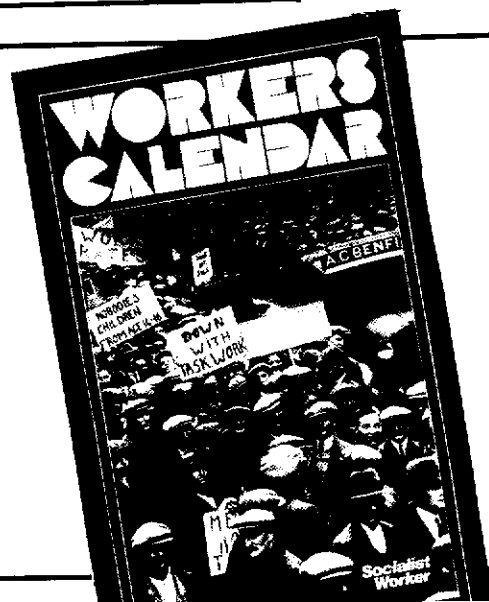
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Socialist Worker's new WORKERS' CALENDAR 1979

Each month commemorates, in photos and drawings, events from Socialist History, The Russian Revolution, the 1916 Easter Rising, Grunwicks, the Shrewsbury pickets' trial, the Tolpuddle Martyrs... An 'appointments' calendar with plenty of space for your meetings, pickets, conferences. An ideal Xmas present!

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Sisterwrite
190 Upper Street, London N1/01 359 2573. Monday to Friday 11am to 7pm, Saturday 10am to 6pm. British and American feminist books. Mail order service.

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9.30am to 5pm, Monday to Saturday. Wide range of socialist books.

The Public House Bookshop
21 Little Preston Street, Brighton. Tel: 28357.
10.15am to 5.30 every day except Sunday. Small tea bar and room for use as reading room, or performing area.

Grass Roots Books
1 Newton Street, Piccadilly, and 109 Oxford Road, All Saints, Manchester. 061 236 3112/3 for both shops.
10am to 6pm Monday to Friday, 5.30pm Saturdays. Photographic gallery (Newton Street). Trade union mail order lists available. US imports and reduced price books.

Blackthorn Books,
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Corner House Bookshop
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Have a good Christmas, and we'll see you again in the New Year. As we want to have a Christmas holiday too we would like all the ads, letters, news for the January issue to reach us by 15 December.

You can write to Womens Voice at Box 82, London E2, or phone us on 01 734 7410.

Cover photo: Syd Shelton

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OUR POINT OF VIEW

Sexism and superstition in the pulpit

WOMEN are not to be allowed to become priests in the Church of England.

What a victory for male chauvinism! Don't think that there must have been some special reason for the decision: it was just straight-down-the-line anti women feeling. Listen to the Bishop of Truto speaking before the vote was taken.

'I believe the Scripture speaks of God as Father, that Christ was made incarnate as a male, that he chose men to be his apostles . . . because in the order of creation headship and authority is symbolically and fundamentally associated with maleness.'

There you have it. Men are born to lead. And women must meekly remember their place and follow.

It's the sort of barbaric, male chauvinist thinking that women have been battling against for more than two

hundred years. Even if you can't imagine yourself ever becoming a priest, even if you're not religious, just like every other barrier that has been put up against women it has to be kicked down.

How many of us aspire to be MPs, or work in the stock exchange? You may hate football. You may not be able to imagine yourself as an engineer. But that women should be allowed to do these things is important to us all. Every traditional area of male exclusiveness has to go.

But in the case of the women priests there is another side to the argument. The Church of England is the not just any old male chauvinist hierarchy. This is *the* Established Church in this country. It is a part of the structure of Government. It helps makes the rules and the laws by which we are expected to live.

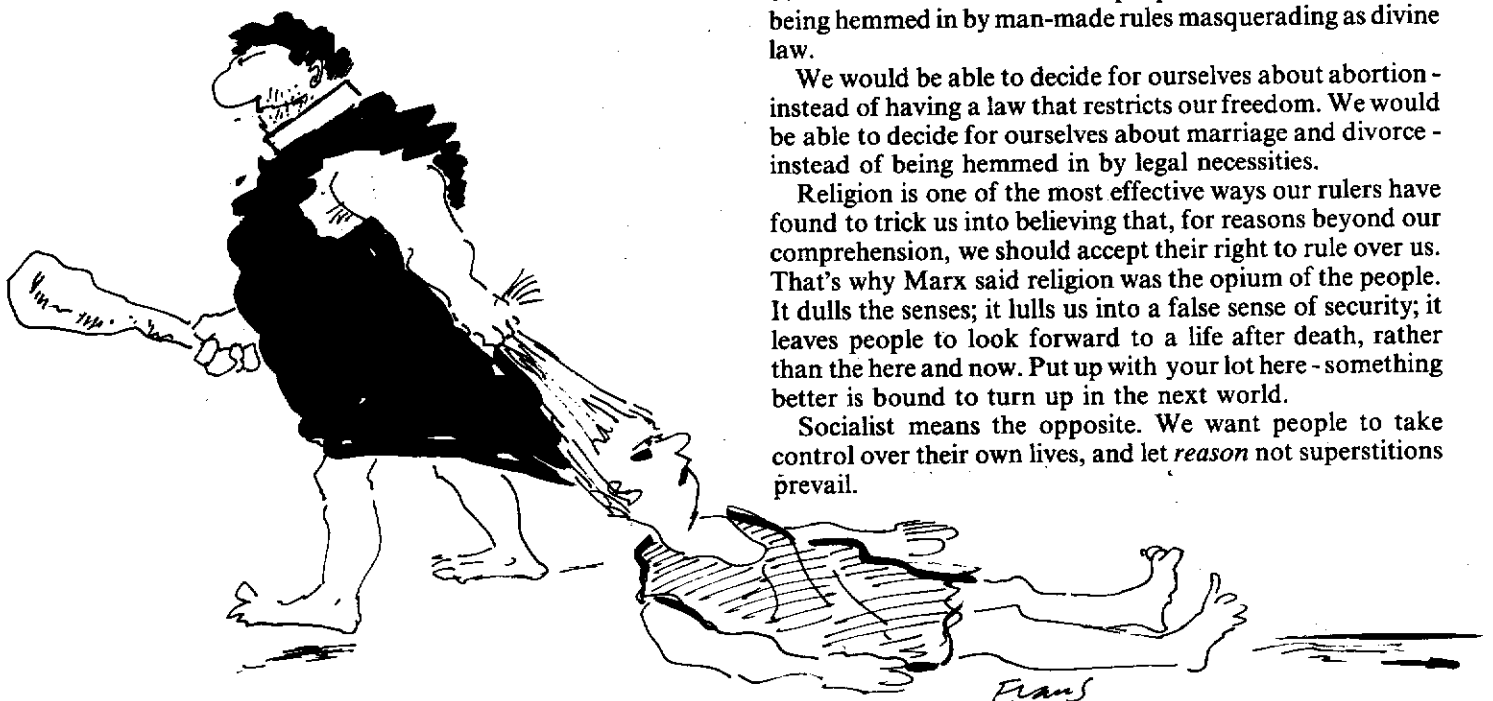
What a shock it is to discover that these laws aren't based on rational arguments but on superstitious mumbo-jumbo about God being a man. Who knows - no one has ever met him/her - or those that have, have never lived to tell the tale!

How much better it would be if we were encouraged to think for ourselves, forced to consider how our actions affect our own lives and those of the people around us - instead of being hemmed in by man-made rules masquerading as divine law.

We would be able to decide for ourselves about abortion - instead of having a law that restricts our freedom. We would be able to decide for ourselves about marriage and divorce - instead of being hemmed in by legal necessities.

Religion is one of the most effective ways our rulers have found to trick us into believing that, for reasons beyond our comprehension, we should accept their right to rule over us. That's why Marx said religion was the opium of the people. It dulls the senses; it lulls us into a false sense of security; it leaves people to look forward to a life after death, rather than the here and now. Put up with your lot here - something better is bound to turn up in the next world.

Socialist means the opposite. We want people to take control over their own lives, and let *reason* not superstitions prevail.



NEWS

THE Times and Sunday Times management are threatening to lock out all their workers at the end of November. Hundreds of women clerical workers will lose their jobs along with those of the printers. The management are hoping that



photo: John Shurrock (Report)

by threatening all their 4000 thousand employees with the sack the Unions will instead agree to accept redundancy for only half of them. This is the price of the Union is expected to pay for the new machinery that is being introduced in the printing industry. That's why the Unions must stick to: **NO LOSS OF JOBS!**

We're striking for the patients

BRENTWOOD: 200 hospital workers at Warley Hospital stopped work for three hours and marched against the cut-backs and staff shortages.

Maggie Blake, a nurse at the hospital, told Womens Voice, 'The police said only six of us could march. I was so angry. I told everyone there was nothing to stop us from taking a walk. And that's just what we did!'

'The full-time union officials had to follow me as well though they had told everyone not to march.

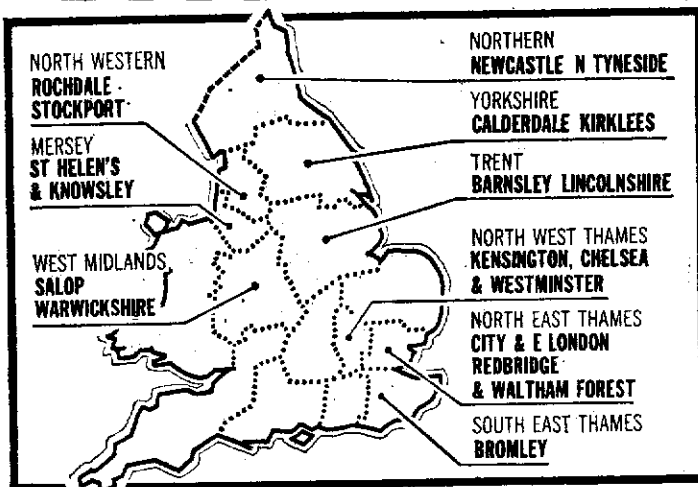
'Everyone is fed up with the poor nursing.

The number of trainee nurses in Britain has dropped by 8000 this year

'We were not on strike for more money, but better conditions for the patients. We need 150 more nurses.

'We had a very good response to the strike. We had a meeting of 250 people—only seven were against the strike. And they were the office people, not the ones who work on the wards, They just sit on their arses all day.

'Management have now offered us some concessions. But there is no promise to increase the staff. That is the main demand. We need 150 more nurses.'



The 15 areas where babies are most at risk

Babies at risk

SOME babies are born at risk, simply because of poor facilities in the town they are born in, recent statistics reveal.

The following 15 places are the worst in the country for both perinatal mortality (stillbirths and death in the first week of life) and infant mortality—babies that die in the first year of life.

Rochdale, Stockport, St Helen's and Knowsley, Salop, Warwickshire, Newcastle, N Tyneside; Calderdale, Kirklees, Barnsley, Lincolnshire; Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster; City and East London, Redbridge and Waltham Forest, Bromley.

Three quarters of the babies to die on the first day of life weigh under 5½ lb.

One reason why these mothers have small babies is poor diet. An adequate diet in pregnancy as recommended by London teaching hospitals costs £10.25 a week.

A teenage mother living at home on supplementary benefit, as many are, gets only £11.60 a week plus £1.45 rent addition.

+SAVE OUR HOSPITALS

+SAVE OUR HOSPITALS+SAVE OUR HOSPITALS+SAVE

Photo: Jane Henriques



Nazi on the run

OVER the past few months there has been an alarming increase in Kentish Town of violent racist attacks. There was usually a pattern to the attacks. Imagine our surprise when we identified a local shop worker as the man responsible.

A number of women in our Womens Voice group have been physically set upon. In some cases it has been our boyfriends or children who have been terrorised.

At first we felt helpless. Some of us even stopped wearing our badges. We couldn't walk about freely at night. When we realised that rather than curbing his ac-

tivities this man was becoming more and more confident we decided that we would have to take some action.

We knew where the nazi thug worked. We also knew that the customers were local people who would be alarmed and disgusted to hear of these attacks. Our action had to involve the community.

So together with the local Anti Nazi League we decided to picket the shop where he works. We produced a leaflet with his photograph explaining what had happened. Getting the photograph was difficult. Our photographer was attacked with a meat cleaver. He took the photo all the same!

The response was terrific—over 70 people turned up on the picket. Needless to say the manager of the shop was furious. He was amazed to see a lot of his regular customers, mostly women, standing outside the shop turning people away. We badly affected business. One older woman wandered into the butchers still reading the leaflet. Suddenly she turned around came storming out looking very angry. Turning to a policeman she poked him in the ribs and said at the top of her voice: 'I didn't want to buy their stinking meat anyway.' With that she left, satisfied.

The courage of people on the picket was marvellous. People who are bound to bump into this nazi were openly handing out leaflets and persuading people to shop elsewhere. One woman who lives nearby the nazi has seen him threaten and intimidate people. Her husband is black—that makes her a prime target. She joined the picket and later signed both herself and her husband up to the Anti Nazi League!

We left the shop around mid-day having handed out 2,000 leaflets.

While the picket was on there was also a meeting of the local councillors. They had seen a copy of the leaflet and unanimously agreed to demand that the police take some action. Backed up by our local MP they approached the police who were not very helpful.

The local paper gave our picket magnificent coverage. They echoed our questions and those of the councillors about the inactivity of the police.

We have since heard that the police are prosecuting this nazi.

It's one thing for nazis and racists to have a go at people who are defenceless. It's quite another matter when they arouse the anger of the community. Kentish Town is a multi-racial community which has stood up to nazi abuse. The true spirit showed its power in the only way it knows how - in unity.

Gail Cartmail.

Hospital round-up

★ THE Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, London, was closed to all emergency admissions for a weekend because of nursing shortages. 50 beds have been taken out of use, but there are still not enough nurses. Very sick children on ventilators, intravenous feeding and kidney dialysis need one nurse each.

★ THE Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children, Hackney, closed for several days because of nursing shortages.

★ ONE OF the world's best cancer hospitals—the Royal Marsden Hospital—may be forced to close some of its wards temporarily.

The hospital has already closed its children's ward in London and transferred its child patients to the other site in Sutton, Surrey.

The hospital has 27 pay beds which drain it of much-needed money. The private patients do not pay for the expensive drugs they use. Their payment in no way covers costs of all the ancillary staff and medical equipment used.

The hospital has cut back on the amount of cancer-killing drugs. Only 'designated' patients now get the drugs.

The others are put on radiotherapy or given surgery—though the drug treatment is preferred.

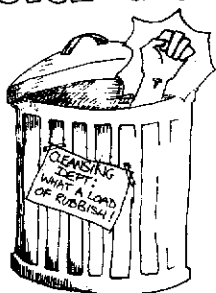
+SAVE OUR HOSPITALS +SAVE

Don't blame the dustmen

THE first we knew about the binmen's strike in Edinburgh was when we tripped over our rubbish in the morning. After a week with no collection it was really disgusting. Dogs and cats had been at it, spreading it everywhere.

The local press claimed a corporation driver had been caught drinking, and you can't sack anyone nowadays! (They added, of course). But our Womens Voice group thought we would visit the picket lines to find out what really happened.

Womens VOICE SAYS:



DON'T BLAME THE BINMEN!

For most of us it was the first time we'd done anything like this, but they were really friendly, grateful for a group of women who actually cared about the reason for the strike.

We put the facts in a leaflet and then checked with the strike committee. They thought our idea for dumping the rubbish excellent.

We printed hundreds of leaflets

We're prepared to give up Christmas

'WE are prepared to give up Christmas so the blokes can get their claim,' Chris Kelly, wife of a Ford worker, told Womens Voice.

'It's mince every day. As soon as they go back to work we'll have some chicken. But I don't want John to crawl back. The strike is good. It will show low-paid workers that it's possible to break the five per cent limit.'

Chris spoke to 90 people at a Labour Party meeting in Southampton about the strike. She was nervous, but spoke right through the heckling of five men who want to go back to work. Everybody clapped and cheered her when she carried on.

She had described the 'Back to Work' wives that got so much publicity in the press and television as 'two women and a dog—and the

and distributed them round the estates, our workplaces, bus queues.

On the day planned we took our rubbish and dumped it outside the cleansing department. We had one suitcase labelled 'the management case is full of shit', and stuffed it with one of our cat's deposits!

The press and TV didn't turn up, they obviously didn't want to let on that the binmen had any public support.

But the men voted to stay out till John was reinstated. The strike committee was over the moon, when they saw our leaflet, and they've promised to argue for some of their left over strike fund to go to Womens Voice!

They had every chance of getting the driver's job back, but he put his faith in a solicitor instead of his mates. He had medical evidence to prove he hadn't had a drink, plus a statement from his crew. He thought justice would be done. As the tribunal got delayed with legal wranglings he appealed to the men to go back to work.

They agreed. But three days later the Tribunal found against him and he lost his job.

It was a bitter lesson for everyone. Jimmy Buchanan from the strike committee told us: 'I was really disappointed. We'd have won if we had stayed out. Some of the blokes were saying it was all to wear us down before our wage negotiations. I'm just hoping something stirs up again over the 5 per cent.'

I only wish our Womens Voice group had been bigger so that we could have influenced events, not just got the arguments across.

Penny Packham

dog is Bill Dobbs' (one of the hecklers).

The local paper, the Evening Echo, gave the strikers very good coverage after the meeting.

Julie Alexander, the wife of a Ford worker at Langley, also belongs to the Ford Wives Support Committee. The committee was set up to show that the 'Back to Work' Wives were a small minority.

Unfortunately, the television was only interested in the 'Back to Work' wives and refused to put the Support Committee on the news.

The Support Committee is growing to include Ford workers girlfriends and women who work at Fords too.

The women are helping with bulletins, and on the picket line. They have also helped collect funds for the Strike Committee.

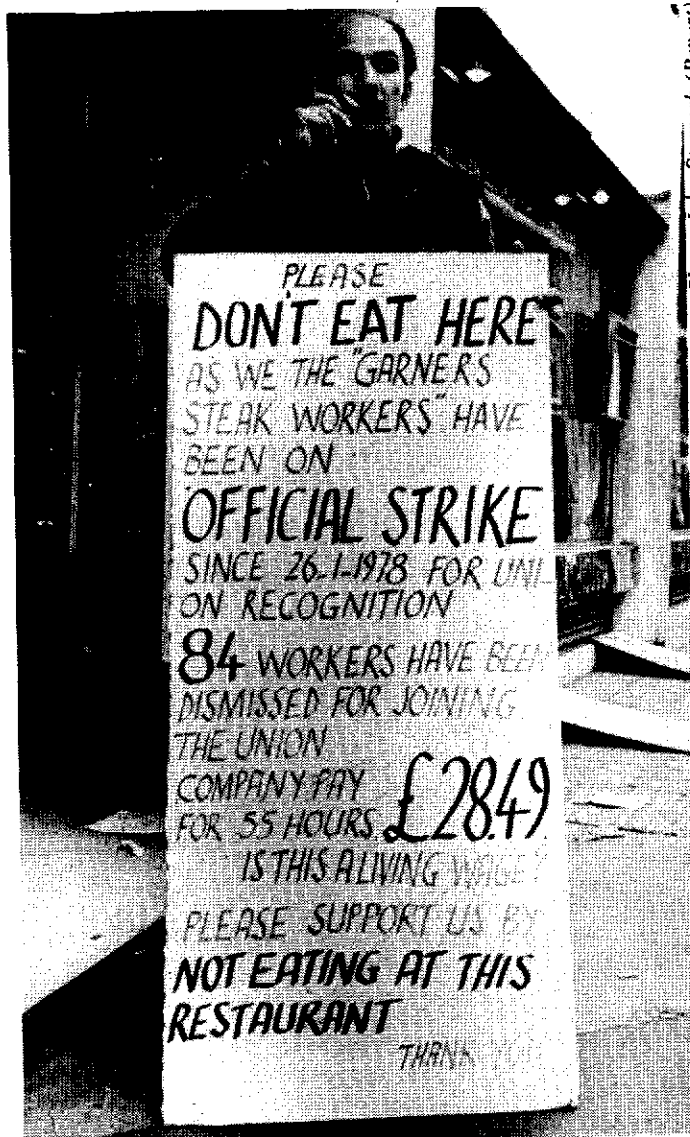


Photo: John Sturrock (Report)

Garners: the lowest paid of all

AS WOMEN, we often do the worst-paid jobs. Many of us who work are not unionised. We often have to accept part-time work at unsocial hours. We suffer conditions of work that no one else is prepared to accept.

The same applies to the immigrant workers at the Garners Steak Houses. They find themselves taking home meagre wages and working long hours not because they are women, but because they are immigrants.

A waiter at Garners takes home £28 for a fifty-five hour week. They tried to improve these appalling conditions by joining the Union. The management's reply was to give them the sack—all 88 of them. No doubt Garners were counting on getting away with it, because the waiters were immigrants and in a weaker position to organise a strike. They were wrong.

Despite their isolation (not many restaurants are unionised), the waiters have been holding a picket line outside the various Garners in Central London for over eight months now.

We women can learn from their determination to win. We are accustomed to this kind of treatment from management when we are given the sack or made redundant. 'If you don't like the money we're offering you,' management tells us, 'go back home and live off your husband.' Turkish, Italian, Spanish and Asian workers are told the same thing—only 'home' is thousands of miles away and often a place that they have not seen in years.

That is why Garners workers winning this strike will help future women's fights for better conditions, both in the catering trade and elsewhere. If Garners get union recognition, it will act as a precedent for other low-paid jobs and strengthen our fight as women for the right to our jobs and a decent living wage.

Womens Voice supports the picket outside the Garners restaurants every Friday evening. We meet at the Haymarket Garners after work from 5.15 onwards. **Mass picket: Friday 8 December 5pm.**

Danish solidarity

WHEN the management of Grundfos in Washington locked out the workers 6 weeks ago, they didn't know what they'd taken on, for now it's the AUEW members who have come out victorious. Grundfos, a Danish firm, set a plant up in Washington 5 years ago after getting a government grant, and managed a 64% return on capital this year.

The management sound like something out of Dickens and obviously think that by employing mainly women they won't have to deal with a strong union. Sue Starkey, the AUEW shop steward said,

'It's amazing to think that in 1978 workers can still do an 8 hour day with just a half hour break, that a woman can be sacked for having to go to hospital for a hysterectomy,

women have to ask a male supervisor to go to the toilet. There was one incident when one of the women lost the end of her finger in a machine and before the ambulance arrived they'd dismantled the machine and thrown the finger in the bin so there was nothing left for the factory inspector to see. They won't even let us talk in groups of more than two on the shop floor.'

The final straw came when management tried to increase the productivity level. The women even tried to do it for so long but found it impossible and when they came to work the next day the doors were locked.

A picket line was set up immediately and workers in the north-east gave their full support realising that it was a fight for basic trade union rights. The greatest blow

against Grundfos came when a worker in the Danish plant read about the dispute in Socialist Worker and contacted Sue. The Danish stewards were then ready to call industrial action in Denmark and paid for Sue to go over to speak to the Danish workers.

Management obviously didn't expect this kind of organisation. They were forced to accept the union's demand of a return to the old level with an extra £20 on the first month.

Management are now going to have to think twice again before laying down the law. As Sue said: 'We're going back to work with the confidence to get ourselves better working conditions. This was a fight not just for us but for all women in light industry.'

Julie Turnbull

groups as they get going, and covered several issues that groups are, or could be, involved in. The cuts in hospitals and the health service affect almost every area of the country, and every group can sell Womens Voice to hospital workers.

Sales of Womens Voice were emphasised again and again, as the best way for us to get to know more women. Selling at work or outside other women's workplaces, on housing estates, followed up with bulletins or Women Against the Nazis leaflets, are ways to build up our network.

The meeting had its bad moments. Some of the organisation we know we could have done better, and the election of the Womens Voice committee left a lot of delegates very confused.

However, the committee that was elected has already had its first meeting and is determined to do all it can to help Womens Voice groups.

mittee were:
Penny Parkes from Manchester Nalگو Womens Voice, *Maggie Rutter*, Fleet Street, *Marion Upchurch*, South West London, *Peggy Eagle*, South East London, *Anne Doyle*, Sheffield, *Penny Packham*, Edinburgh, *Didi Ross*, Glasgow, *Mary Robson*, Lea Valley London, *Gail Cartmail*, Kentish Town London, *Jan Brown*, South Manchester, *Gaya Kowszum*, Lancaster University, *Ann Moran*, Wolverhampton, *Linda Quinn*, South London, *Jenny Austin*, Birmingham, and *Sheila McGregor*, Birmingham.

Everyone on the committee is prepared to visit other groups in their areas, or places where perhaps one or two women are trying to set up a new group. They can be contacted through the office.

The Committee will meet every two months, and will then send out a news letter to all the groups. This seemed to be the best way of keeping groups informed about decisions, ideas and about activities.

Finance is always a problem as Womens Voice has no income other than sales of the magazine itself, and this goes to pay all our printing costs. So we agreed that the subscription for taking out Womens Voice membership should go up to 50p, and each Womens Voice group should try and raise a regular bankers' order to help our funds. Two pounds seemed a reasonable amount to ask—more is always welcome!

New cards and bankers order forms will be available from the Womens Voice Treasurer, Cabby.

It would help her if your Womens Voice group could write to her now, at Box 82, London, E2, with the name and address of your treasurer, and an order for next year's cards, ready for the New Year.

If you want to contact the Womens Voice committee or anyone on it, write to the same address.



Backing the bakers

THE workers at Kiplings Cakes in Wythenshawe, Manchester, are on strike again - this time with bakery workers all over the country.

This strike has united the men and women, the day shift and the night shift. The Kiplings workers who have just finished their own strike, are now leading this one.

Val Dunn, shop steward and vice chairwoman at Kiplings, is on the Manchester District Strike Committee. She said, 'Last week we heard there were thirteen women scabbing at a firm in Rochdale and that the place was surrounded by police.'

We got one of the lads to phone the police, saying he was a driver and was scared to go to a firm because he'd heard there would be 2000 pickets.

The police went to that firm. Meanwhile about a hundred of us went to Rochdale. There were only three policemen there.

I met ten of the thirteen women on the bridge on the way to work and told them they'd be expelled from the union. That day was very successful.'

Our first conference

WOMENS VOICE held its first national meeting at the end of October. There were women from as far away as Pontypridd in South Wales, and Edinburgh in Scotland, from nearly 40 different places.

The discussion ranged over the problems facing Womens Voice

- They are paid rotten wages - less than £40 for a 40 hour week.
- They work long hours - at least 15 hours overtime is 'compulsory'.
- The noise and heat are dangerous. They have to crawl in 300 degree ovens if a tin gets stuck.
- They are twice as likely to get bronchitis as other workers - from the flour dust.
- Slipping - 70 per cent of all accidents in bakeries are caused by paraffin on the floor. (Paraffin is used to keep the bread from sticking to the tin.)

Miss World

PAGE 3, the sex shops, Men Only, Mayfair, the movies, the adverts, the continual pornographic assault on women by the grotesque and leering face of male chauvinism. We have had ENOUGH.

If I could do karate the street would be jammed with casualties.

We are never simply on our way somewhere. We're women and so men must whistle, gesture, suggest, waylay, obstruct. The kerb crawlers, men on trains and buses, in the streets by day and by night demanding our bodies. We're just a set of organs to be grabbed and penetrated.

John McKrirk writes in 'Sporting Life' of Miss India: 'Her legs are divine and if hair alone won any contest... that raven-black, waist-length flow must surely be one of the wonders of the age.'

Legs, hair, never mind the brain. Oh, but she has a flaw. She seems unable to maintain a smile for more than a few fleeting seconds and gives the impression the whole circus is a bore.'

'Smile love, cheer up it'll never happen.'

It's not enough merely to slurp

and suggest, they instruct us to smile.

In the centre pages of 'Sporting Life' we have the 'Miss World 78 Formguide' with the 'Maiden's' country, statistics, betting odds and description.

'Tallest entrant, biggest bust and waist, imperfect thighs, beauty spot right cheek'... 'cracking legs, high cheekbones, rarely smiles, introverted'... 'Suspicion of double chin, wide-hipped'... 'Happy, thin legs'... 'Gap-toothed, small'... 'Large thighs, poor hair, gloomy expression but statistics ideal'...

As if disgusting John McKrirk hasn't done enough verbal and visual rape, he ends his obscene (un)coverage of the year's most pornographic event by saying: 'Afterwards I'll ask the winner if she can cook, sew - and wash the dishes.'

It all incites my tender feminine mind to contemplate acts of devastating violence, too obscene to mention.

Melanie McFadyean, (Hackney, 33-25-37. Furious expression, refusal to smile, has knife between teeth. Feminist.)



Photo: Diane Bailey

The policeman and the nude

THE British police are wonderful. This is how they protected the trade of Soho pornographers and blue film pedlars from the protests of

women on a 'Reclaim the Night' demonstration in November. Where are all these 'strong men' when women do need protection?

Typist Charter demands

- ★ 1979 pay claim: regrading of all typists to C2
- ★ An end to qualification bars
- ★ AP5 for typing supervisors
- ★ Better training opportunities
- ★ No to word processing

Charter c/o Women's Voice Box 82 London E2. Cheques should be made payable to The Typists Charter.

For the sake of clarity, this charter refers to typists' grades in Local Government, but typists in other services are as badly off. All typists in NALGO and NUPE are invited to join the CHARTER.

For further information, donations and copies of this charter 5p each plus 10p postage and packing please write to Typists

Lux-Lux bulletin-it's worth it

WE SOMETIMES wonder whether it is worth it—standing outside the factory gates for hours every month. Sometimes we sell two Womens Voice. Sometimes three. But we have been selling outside Lux-Lux/Ritz for almost a year now and, it seems, we have become an integral part of the factory's life.

Last summer, the directors pulled a fast one on the ASTMS workers. They avoided giving the promised five per cent wage rise for July by alleging insufficient profits and producing a contract, signed by the union representatives, which made a 'considerable improvement in profits' a condition of the rise.

The directors asked workers to preserve "amicable relations" within the firm by negotiating wages individually rather than through the union. The union backed down.

Glossop Womens Voice group wrote a short bulletin. We pointed out that wage rises lower than price rises are wage cuts. We also emphasized the importance of union activity, of resisting attempts to divide the workforce and of the workers' labour to the building of the firm. Although the threatened strike had directly affected only ASTMS members, we distributed the bulletin at the factory gates to all Lux-Lux/Ritz workers.

Initial reactions to the bulletin were bad. Our member inside the factory was immediately

identified and called a communist by some of her colleagues. She was called before the ASTMS shop stewards and made to justify the bulletin. They wanted an apology from us for hanging out their dirty washing in public. The next time we sold Womens Voice outside the factory, we had a policeman standing next to us. And the same one appeared at the next Saturday sale of Womens Voice. The shop stewards promised a bulletin of their own. But, when this came out, it was only a negative reaction to our bulletin.

With the victory over ASTMS under their belts, the directors decided to push for more. In September, they announced an absolute cut in the piece rates of the highest-paid section of production workers at the Ritz factory.

To everyone's surprise, not only all of Ritz walked out but all of Lux-Lux came out in sympathy. By the end of the same afternoon, the directors were saying that it was all a mistake and actually begged the women to come back to work.

Such is the magic of solidarity. We hope this strike and its success had something to do with our bulletin of three months before although we do not know for sure.

We also hope that this experience can serve to encourage more factory work by Womens Voice members. We were shy and scared but, in the long run, it was worth it. Glossop Womens Voice

clerk
Sensuous lips, ordinary.
Rated 67.
Odds: 100-1 (opening price 66-1)

00000000 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, 20, raven-haired 26-37, interior decorator. Big face, wide mouth. Rated 44.
Odds: 50-1 (opening price 66-1)

000-0-00 EQUADOR, 19, brunette (34-24-36), model. Elegant, good eyes and tall, poor hairstyle—if that improves may progress into act 15. Rated 14.
Odds: 40-1 (opening price 66-1)

000 EL SALVADOR, 19, brunette (36-24-36), student. Big, solemn face. Rated 41.
Odds: 20-1 (opening price 66-1)

21 00000000 FINLAND—course, distance winner 1957—22, blonde (36-24-35), student. Wide eyes, homely. Rated 22.
Odds: 25-1 (opening price 66-1)

22 00000000 FRANCE—course, distance winner 1954—18, raven-haired (36-24-36), nurse. Solemn, poor skin. Rated 17.
Odds: 25-1 (opening price 20-1)

1 00000203 GERMANY—course, distance winner 1958—23, blonde (36-25-36), student. Happy, thin legs. Rated 16.
Odds: 25-1 (opening price 20-1)

1 00000000 GIBRALTAR, 17, raven-haired (34-24-36), clerk. Slightly unexceptional. Rated 45.
Odds: 50-1 (opening price 66-1)

00000000 GREECE, 23, brunette (36-25-36), student. Big face.

edge her
looking girls, rated 1.
Odds: 14-1 (opening price 25-1)

22 00000000 IRELAND, 24, brunette (35-23-35), secretary. Oldest entrant, bony legs, unattractive hair-do on Sunday. Rated 46.
Odds: 25-1 (opening price 25-1)

33 00000000 ISLE OF MAN, 26, brunette (36-23-35), bank clerk. Girl-next-door type. Rated 66.
Odds: 40-1 (opening price 25-1)

34 30300000 ISRAEL, 19, brunette (35-24-34), soldier. Broad-shouldered, good legs, heavy eyebrows, military appearance. Rated 23.
Odds: 33-1 (opening price 33-1)

35 00000000 ITALY, 17, raven-haired (35-22-35), student. Wispy hair, thin arm, largish rear, blotchy legs. Rated 39.
Odds: 50-1 (opening price 50-1)

36 00000000 JAMAICA—course, distance winner 1963 and 1976—23, raven-haired (36-24-27), dance tutor. Sophisticated, elegant, good legs, long neck, touch of class, but on big side. Rated 7.
Odds: 66-1 (opening price 66-1)

37 00000000 JAPAN, 21, raven-haired (33-23-35), student. Gap-toothed, small, pleasant. Rated 26.
Odds: 51-1 (opening price 66-1)

28 00000000 JERSEY, 22, blonde (34-24-34), dance student. Slim, average. Rated 59.
Odds: 50-1 (opening price 66-1)

COMING SOON—THE GREAT CHRISTMAS RIP-OFF!

growing up girl. *Girl's World* is specially for girls: to learn about make-up; and hair styling; and here's *Kitchen Centre*: no batteries or electricity, just everything needed to play cooks. It can even blend drinks. *Kitchen Centre* and *Girl's World*, two great growing up ideas. For girls. From *Pallitoy*.

Amazing isn't it. The boys get the exciting stuff, the games they can learn from, that they can think about. But the girls have to play with all those boring things they'll do when they grow up.

Like cooking the dinner for their husband. Of course they have to catch a man first. The ad-makers obviously think that's a terribly difficult job, since they want them to start it now. At four years old. *Girlsworld*. The toy that plays at make-up and hairdressing. With my kid.

Thanks a million, millionaire toymakers. What a nice Christmas I'm in for. Explaining just why Santa didn't bring that £15 Action Man kit for Johnny and why Mary didn't get that £16 doll that pisses the same time it sings God Save The Queen.

Here's another ad with a roomful of bright, happy well-scrubbed children. My kids don't look much like that.

These children are perfect! None of them are getting bored with the Christmas toy. None of them are dropping it out of the window to see if it bounces. From an eighth-storey window.

These kids are definitely *not mine*. And neither are their new toys. Theirs are never shown getting stood on by careless feet. These fast action men act different on TV. They don't rush under the chair with the battery running out.

The TV kids don't cry. Their Johnny doesn't ask for the Riviton toy that James got for HIS Christmas.

These toymakers *know* the problems they cause. Kids talk about the new range of toys in the playground. Of course they pester their parents. Didn't you? And the heartache will be over a gift that can cost more than the money for a whole week's food.

But that's what the ads are for. The ad-makers know how much most families have to live on. Of course their toys are ridiculously over-priced in working people's language. But they're not over priced in the boss's language... how can something be over-priced if millions of people can be made to pay the price? Through their kids.

It's not just the money. What about the little boy who plays with a doll and gets called a cissy. And the girl who loves Lego and cars? Is *she* a freak too?

My boy can have a doll if he wants one. I hope he cuddles his kids when he grows up too.

And if my girl wants to dismantle cars, that's fine too. She'll make more as a mechanic than she ever will as a hairdresser.



Man's voice: Here it is: Riviton. Building set like you've never seen before, that makes toys like you've never made before. The amazing Riviton Tool. It's safe and so simple to rivet—a bi-plane. Or you can turn it into a truck. Anything you can imagine you can build with Riviton.

Four-thirty in the afternoon. Watching television. Peak viewing time for children throughout the country. And for my kids.

The ads are aimed at the kids. The ads show what the millionaire toymakers have in

mind for the kids this Christmas. My kids.

Dolls at £12. Games at £8. How's your pocket? How much can you spend on children this year?

You were thinking about a fiver. At the most. A failed mother again!

The ads are at fever pitch, getting harder, louder, every day. Only 20 TV squawking days till Xmas. Still, here's one with something a bit cheaper. And it's for girls too!

Woman's voice: It's a different world for a



A RUBY FRUIT XMAS



- AN EXTRACT FROM "RUBY FRUIT JUNGLE" BY RITA MAE BROWN -

THE Christmas pageant was an enormous production. All the mothers came, and it was so important that they even took off work. Cheryl's father was sitting right in the front row in the seat of honour. Carrie and Florence showed up to marvel at me being Virgin Mary and at Leroy in robes. Leroy and I were so excited we could barely stand it and we got to wear makeup, rouge and red lipstick. Getting painted was so much fun that Leroy confessed he liked it too, although boys aren't supposed to, of course. I told him not to worry about it, because he had a beard and if you had a beard, it must be all right to wear lipstick if you wanted to because everyone will know you're a man. He thought that sounded reasonable and we made a pact to run away just as soon as we were old enough and go to be famous actors. Then we could wear pretty clothes all the time, never pick potato bugs, and wear lipstick whenever we felt like it. We vowed to be so wonderful in this show that our fame would spread to the people who run theatres.

Cheryl overheard our plans and sneered, 'You can do all you please, but everyone is going to look at me because I have the most beautiful blue cloak in the whole show.'

'Nobody's gonna know it's you because you're playing Joseph and that'll throw them off. Ha,' Leroy gloated.

'That's just why they'll all notice me, because I'll have to be specially skilled to be a good Joseph. Anyway, who's going to notice the Virgin Mary, all she does is sit by the crib and rock Baby Jesus. She doesn't say much. Any dumb person can be Virgin Mary, all you have to do is put a halo over her head. It takes real talent to be Joseph, especially when you're a girl.'

The conversation didn't get finished because Miss Potter bustled backstage. 'Hush, children, curtain's almost ready to go up. Molly, Cheryl, get in your places.'

When the curtain was raised there was a rustle of anticipation in the maternal audience. Megaphone Mouth said above all the whispers, 'Isn't she dear up there?'

And dear I was. I looked at Baby Jesus with the tenderest looks I could manufacture and all the while my antagonist, Cheryl, had her hand on my shoulder digging me with her fingernails and a staff in her right hand. A record went on the phonograph and 'Noel' began to play. The Wise Men came in most solemnly. Leroy carried a big gold box and presented it to me. I said, 'Thank you, I King, for you have travelled far.' And Cheryl, that rat, says, 'And travelled far,' as loud as she could. She wasn't supposed to say that. She started saying whatever came into her head that sounded religious. Leroy was choking in his beard and I was rocking the cradle so hard that the Jesus doll fell on the floor. So I decided two can play this game. I

leaned over the doll and said in my most gentle voice, 'O, dearest babe, I hope you have not hurt yourself. Come let Mother put you back to bed.' Well, Leroy was near to dying of perplexity and he started to say something too but Cheryl cut him off with, 'Don't worry, Mary, babies fall out of the cradle all the time.' That wasn't enough for greedy-guts, she then goes on about how she was a carpenter in a foreign land and how we had to travel many miles just so I could have my baby. She rattled on and on. All that time she spent in Sunday School was paying off because she had one story after another. I couldn't stand it any longer so I blurted out in the middle of her tale about the tax collectors, 'Joseph, you shut up or you'll wake the baby.' Miss Potter was aghast in the wings, and the shepherds didn't know what to do because they were back there waiting to come on. As soon as I told Joseph to shut up, Miss Potter pushed the shepherds on the stage. 'We saw a star from afar,' Robert Prather warbled, 'and we came to worship the newborn Prince.' Just then Barry Aldridge another shepherd, peed right there on the stage he was so scared. Joseph saw her chance and said in an imperious voice, 'You can't pee in front of Little Lord Jesus, go back to the hills.' That made me mad. 'He can pee where he wants to, this is a stable ain't it?' Joseph stretched to her full height and began to push Barry off the stage with her staff. I jumped out of my chair and wrenched the staff out of her hand. She grabbed it back. 'Go sit down, you're supposed to watch out for the baby. What kind of mother are you?'

'I ain't sitting nowhere until you button your fat lip and do this right.'

We struggled and pushed each other, until I caught her off balance and she tripped on her long cloak. As she started to fall, I gave her a shove and she flew off the stage into the audience. Miss Potter zoomed out on the stage, took my hand and said in a calm voice, 'Now, ladies and gentlemen, let's sing songs appropriate to the season.' Miss Martin at the piano struck up 'O Come All Ye Faithful'.

Cheryl was down there among the folding chairs bawling her eyes out. Miss Potter pulled me off stage, where I had started to sing. I knew I was in for it.

'Now, Molly, Cheryl did wrong to talk out of turn, but you shouldn't have shoved her off the stage.' Then she let me go, not even a little slap. Leroy was surprised as I was. 'It's a good thing she ain't mad but wait until Aunt Carrie and Florence get hold of you.'

True enough, Carrie nearly lost her liver with rage and I had to stay in the house for a solid week and all that time I had to do the chores: dishes, ironing, wash, even cooking.

WHEN you first start recruiting people into the union, most bosses think 'if we ignore them, they'll go away.' However, if lots of people join, or regular bulletins show them you're alive and well, they will try some or all of these tricks:

Victimisation of militants: you can be given unpleasant jobs, accused of dishonesty and bad work, downgraded or just insulted (I was called a dried up old spinster by one boss!)

These things may be small in themselves, but they can build up so that you just want to get out—which is what management wants—so be strong.

What to do: tell the other members—even if it makes you feel silly and inadequate. Write down and date everything that happens. Get witnesses if you can. (If you do get forced out, you will need hard facts and can take the firm to an industrial tribunal for 'constructive dismissal'.

Accurate details of victimisation help show other members what the bosses are really like.

The Big Buy Off: union militants can be promoted or given a pay rise in the hope that they will start feeling grateful and give up all this nasty union business.

What to do: if you are offered a rise or something other workers can get, take it. Then the union can argue for the same deal for all. Any promotion which puts you in a management or semi-management position will stop you being effective in the union. Only accept if you want to drop out. (Why don't you turn it into a fight for a big rise for the lower grades?) *Never be grateful. Management only offer you things when it suits them.*

Staff Associations: management may suddenly decide it's a good idea to start one. (Of course this will have *nothing* to do with the union's recruitment campaign).



There may even be a half-dead staff association which occasionally meets to discuss the toilet paper. Management may try to bring it alive, and people could see it as an alternative to the union.

Management could also encourage the staff association to register as an 'independent trade union'.

What to do: expose the staff association as a talking shop. Staff associations don't negotiate, they only consult. Ask people what it has ever really got them, and why it is springing to life now.

Don't take it too seriously, and don't attend its meetings unless it's to argue for a proper trade union.

Other Unions: sometimes management will try and bring in another union over your

heads. Management might already have dealings with it in another part of the firm and might consider it less militant than yours.

What to do: get in touch with your union full time official, s/he may be able to sort out the problem with the other union. If there are members of the other union at work, organise a joint meeting. You may be able to work out demarcation lines and have joint negotiations.

Don't be provoked into attacking the other union.

Fragmentation: if there are a lot of members in one department, management might re-organise the work, putting them on different shifts or in different buildings.

This is an attempt to destroy unity. It also makes it harder to maintain a bargaining unit where the majority are union members. **What to do:** keep in touch and start building again in your new place.

Propaganda: can vary from smear campaigns to attacks on unions in general. Methods used include staff meetings, management newsletters, notices and of course the mass media.

What to do: use counter propaganda. Anything they can do, you can do better, even if it's not so slick. Answer their points at your meetings. Produce bulletins and posters, argue with individuals putting anti-union views.

Solve-a-problem: if the union has pinpointed any glaring grievances, you may find that solutions are suddenly found. Mention a grievance in the bulletin and suddenly ventilators are installed, new chairs bought, pay anomalies looked into.

Management want us to think that they have our best interests at heart—it was just that no-one told them about the problem.

What to do: point out that these things never happen until *after* the union has made a fuss. Explain that these are solutions to fairly minor problems, while on the bigger problem of low wages, management is strangely inactive.

Delay: this is the oldest and most common tactic. The excuses never end, the personnel manager is off sick, the directors haven't met, the managing director is abroad.

While they stall you lose members.

What to do: always set a deadline when you want a meeting or an answer. Agree on some form of action if this deadline is broken—like a walkout, a meeting in working hours, or a work to rule.

Members may not be prepared to act at first, but a few serious delays should change their minds.

Sackings: this happens when managements won't recognise the union at any cost as at Grunwicks.

What to do: get in touch with your full time official, Womens Voice and anyone who can help. You have a tough fight on your hands.

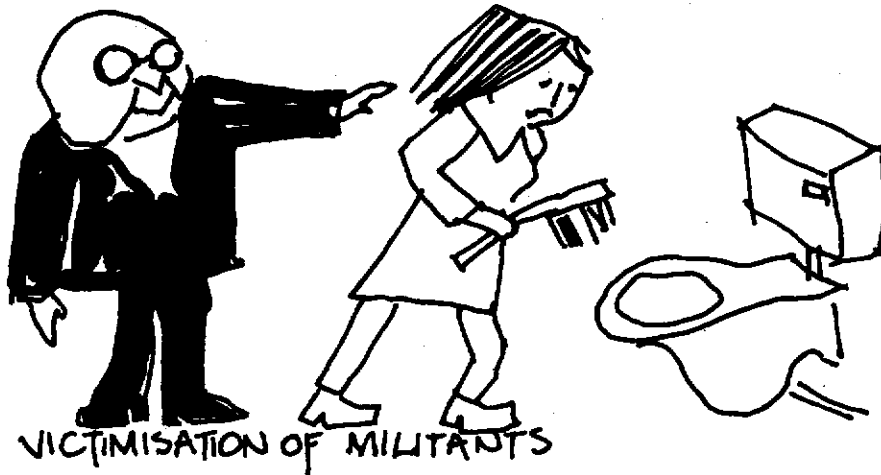
(We will tackle the problem of fighting unfair dismissals and redundancy later.)

ELLEN MORGAN

Next month: drawing up a first claim.

Ellen Morgan is helping collect material for the Working Womens Handbook to be published next year. She would like to hear your experiences. Have you had experience of going to ACAS, how did you get recognised? Write to TUCRIC, 29 Blenheim Terr, Leeds 2. Ring Leeds 39633 ask for Ellen, Joe or Ursula.

Illustrations: Vicki Colbeck



Life behind the veil

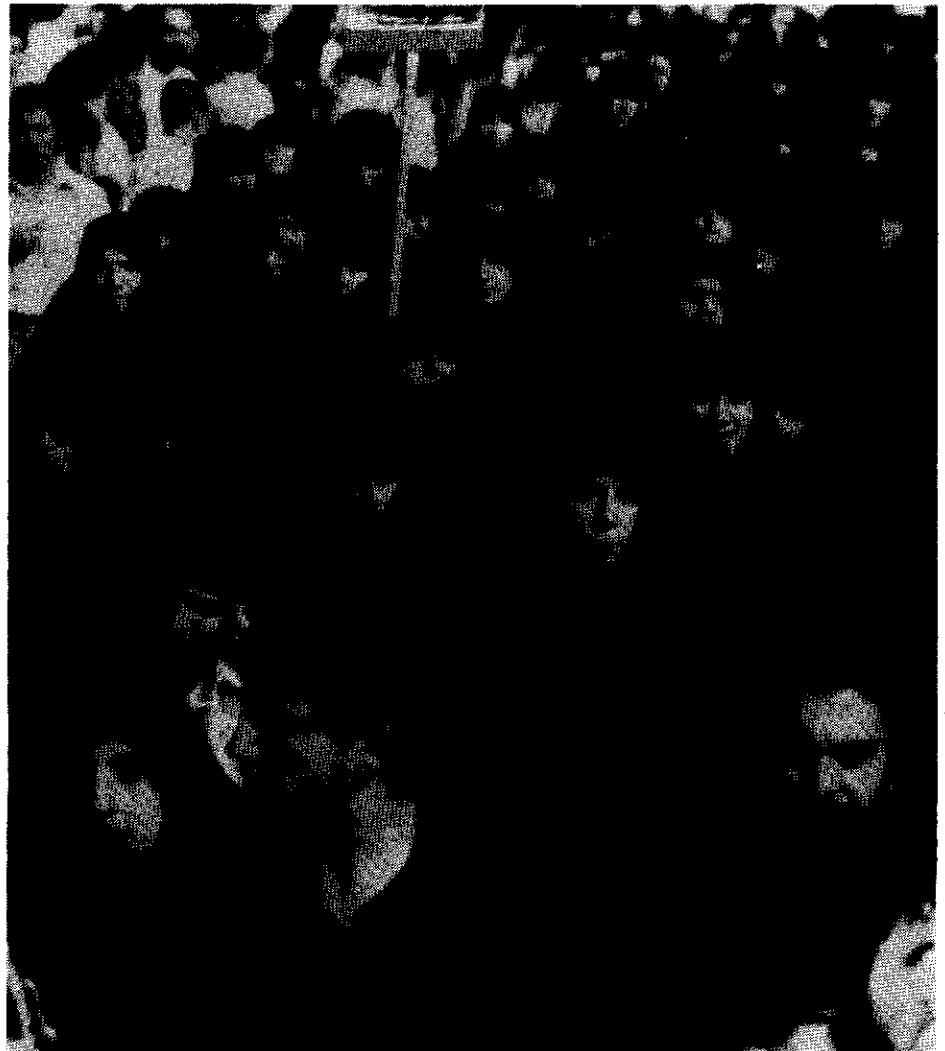
ALL over Iran workers have been striking and demonstrating against the Shah, and his government.

Iran is rich, because of its oil, but the money goes into the pockets of the very few.

To maintain his wealth and power the Shah of Iran uses terror—secret police, spies, imprisonment and torture. No one was free to speak his, or her, mind. You could never be sure SAVAK, the secret police, weren't listening.

Now a change is taking place. Strikes and rallies are threatening the Shah's corrupt regime. Women, still wearing the veil, have joined the demonstrations and rallies.

An Iranian woman explained to Womens Voice what it is like to be a woman in Iran.



Above: Veiled women on a demonstration against the Shah.
Below: A woman, imprisoned for four years, speaks at a rally.



'IN Iran women are property. Until they are 18 they are told what they can do by their fathers. When they are married, their husbands run their lives. Most marriages are arranged by the family.

A woman cannot live alone in Iran. If she does she is called a prostitute and harassed.

When we walk down the street, we have to change direction and weave in and out—to avoid being touched and fondled by strangers.

If we wear bright colours it is worse. One day I wore a red short-sleeved blouse. A man took hold of my arm and pulled me down the street. I hit him and swore at him to get free. He called me every name under the sun. But even women in 'chador' (the black veils) suffer this harassment.

No one will marry you if you are not a virgin. Sex in the eyes of many Iranian women is a 'debt' they have to pay to their husbands in return for security and welfare they get.

In many cases the domestic problems are so bad for the working woman that exploitation in the factory does not even count.

Many women workers don't join strikes for fear of having to stay at a hell called home. Also they cannot afford to create more problems for themselves in the family.

The men rule the family.

At social events often the men and women go to separate rooms. The women in one cook the food, look after the children. The men in the other talk, smoke opium, enjoy themselves.

Even in Westernised homes, women are constantly beaten, sworn at, humiliated. And when life gets harder—like now—there is more misery and agony for us.

On Black Friday, 28 September this year, the women came to the main square in Tehran to protest. The women went to the front because they thought the soldiers would not shoot women. But they did. Of the 4,000 killed, most were women.

Recently a 15-year-old girl was arrested at a demonstration. She was raped by a police officer.

And the people demanded that the officer be punished. That was very good. A little progress. But there are no demands for rights for women.

Although women are involved and even get killed, the leadership and the waves of the movement consist of men. Women are either their followers or not there at all. Thus there is the danger that the sisters of today become 'zaifeh' (meaning hopeless and pathetic, when referring to women) again when things have cooled down.

If Iranian men have many reasons to want socialism, we have even more.



I WAS 19 WHEN I got married to Peter. I had to, I was 4 months pregnant. When Michael was 11 months old I had Sally. When Sally was 4 months I was pregnant again. My doctor sent me to the hospital. I wanted an abortion. The hospital doctor asked me why I wanted one! I just didn't know what to say so I said the first thing I thought of, 'I haven't got the room'. We were living at my mum's. The doctor said that if he could arrange accommodation would I have the child. I said Yes and we were moved to Thames Street, SE10 as 'temporary accommodation'. We've been here ever since.



When Sally was 13 months old I had Paula. A year later I got a job doing night work in a canteen. My husband would get in a babysitter after I'd gone out to work and then go out.

Then I got pregnant again. This time I had a termination. My GP was fine but the hospital doctor was very nasty, it was not so much what he said, just his general attitude. I asked to be sterilised but he refused.

Not long after that I was pregnant again! By this time I knew that things were going wrong with my marriage although I didn't know what. I thought another baby would pull us together. But when I was 6 months I came home from my mum's one evening with the kids and he'd left. He never told me, never left a note—just went. He'd taken all his stuff from the flat.

The first thing I wanted to do was find him and find out why he'd left. It was 11 pm. I got a cab (with the kids) and went down to his brothers. He said he'd been going out with a 16 year old girl for the last couple of months and had also been with other girls for the last couple of years.

I went to his mums. Peter was there. He came home with me. He denied being with another girl. I did all the begging bit you go through.... He was there a week, then one night he came home smothered in love bites. I left and went down my mums. Then he left the flat and I moved back in with the kids.

He'd visit once a week and ask to come back—I always said Yes. They next day he said he didn't mean it. He was drunk. At that stage I wanted him back and would have done anything to get him.

I couldn't compete with the other girl. He'd say 'I like skinny birds'—I had a big lump, or 'I like birds with long hair'—mine was short. He kept telling me about her. I



just kept losing confidence in myself. Everytime I saw a girl who was attractive I'd go rushing home and look in the mirror for wrinkles. I was only 24 at the time.

I couldn't go out, I couldn't bear it. I stayed in till I had the baby.

Peter came to see me in hospital, told me he'd moved back in, promised me a house, promised me he'd be good, promised me this and that. He just brushed it all off saying 'All men do it, why worry about it?' But to me it was important.

But we got back together again. My feeling for Peter went in stages. At one stage I desperately wanted him, the next stage the bitterness set in, I just hated him but the worse stage was indifference. At least when I either wanted him or hated him there were feelings but to feel nothing



Marriage: Getting the kids grow up

wrinkles because now I know it doesn't matter, it's not really important what you look like.

I never got the house I was promised! We've been on the waiting list for 8 years, ever since they moved us in here. The flat we live in is really overcrowded. Peter and I have to sleep in the front room on the settee. One of the kids from the playground lives with us too. That's 7 in a two bedroomed flat.

The neighbours on my balcony are terrific, but I don't really talk to anyone else. The flats are very run down, they're old. Not properly maintained. It's become a 'problem family' dumping ground. How on earth do they class a 'problem family'?

There are some people here who have not paid rent through no fault of their own. A lot of one-parent families live here. People accept these flats not through choice but because they are desperate for

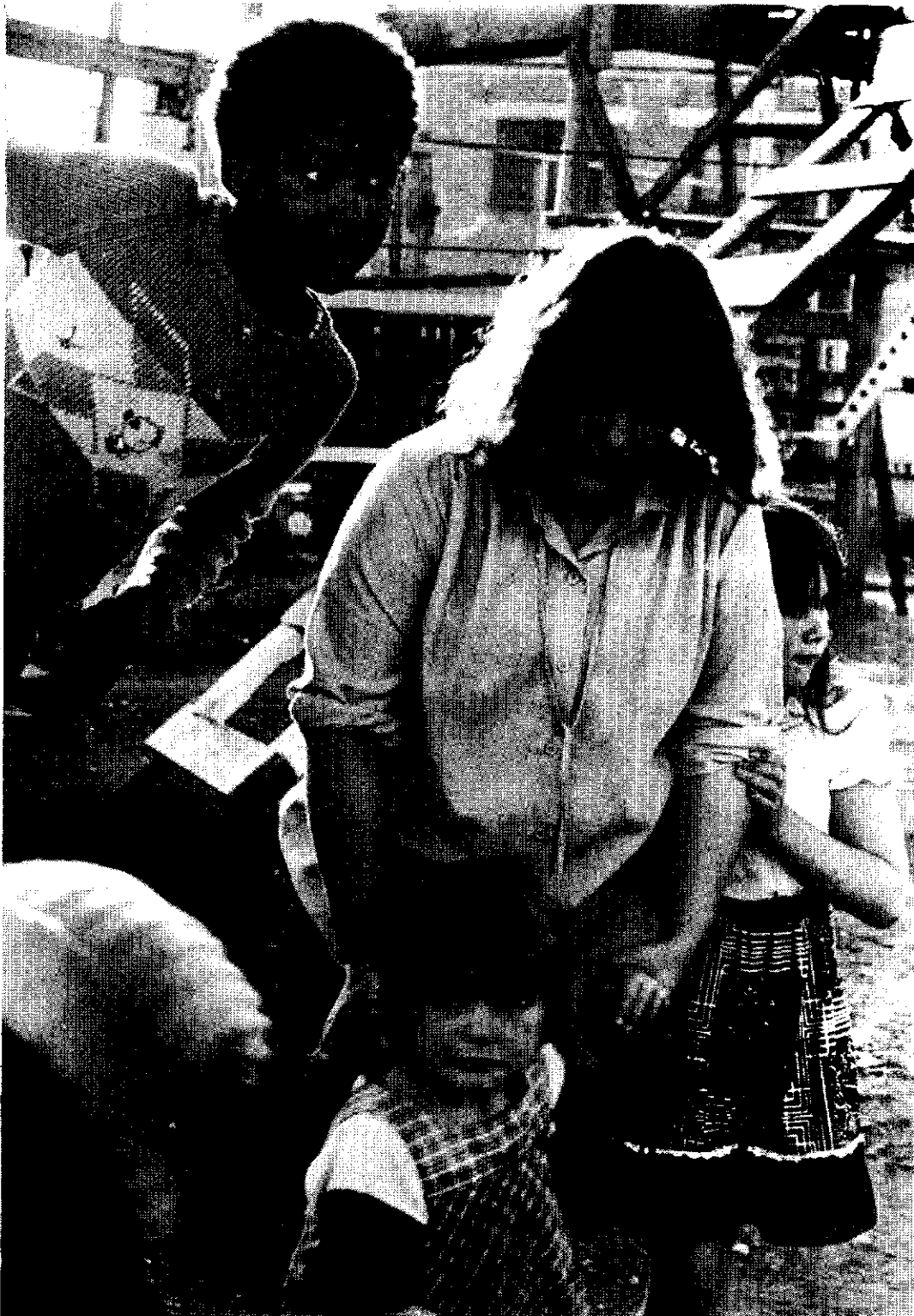
somewhere to live. They are the victims of these type of flats not the cause of them.

So what do I want out of life. I don't know. I want a house, for the kids. I want them to grow up without a sort of 'hangup' about what they look like, feeling like I did, that it was the 'normal' thing to do to get married and have kids. I want them to be what they want to be.

And now what have I got. I live a fairly independent life. I got to work, I go to union meetings. I went to a Womens Voice meeting on Palestine. It was good. If the group met locally I'd go more often but it's too far to travel. I go out about 3 nights a week. Really I'm just waiting for the time when the kids are grown up.

What do you think of marriage? Here's one woman's story - now you write in.

Evie Woods interviewed by Peggy Eagle. Photos by Beeban Kidron



was horrible. I just felt nothing for him at all. Then I started working at the adventure Playground opposite the flats. 6 months later we broke up again.

For the first 2 months I felt so relieved. I felt free. I started to go out, make more of a social life. It's hard to explain really. I got more involved in my job, started to go to meetings, got involved with the union.

The Peter moved back in again. He noticed at once that I'd changed. Instead of relying on him and needing someone to run my life I had become totally independent.

We've been back together 2 years now. I'm now in charge of the Playground. I'm also a National Union of Public Employees (N.U.P.E.) shop steward. Socially my life is pretty good.

I can laugh now about looking for

THE CAUSES of 'nervous' and mental illnesses have been the subject of a lot of argument, particularly in the last 20 to 30 years. One reason for this was the discovery in the 1950s that there were various types of drugs which seemed to solve the problems of mental illness by preventing the strange feelings and troublesome behaviour.

The most powerful of the new drugs were the 'major tranquillisers' or chlorpromazines (e.g. Largactyl). This drug was developed in 1951 after some scientists accidentally noticed that animals which had been given a closely related type of drug became sleepy, forgot their training, such as how to get food out of trick containers, but did not get as dopey as animals and humans did on barbiturates. The animals kept all their instinctive responses, and would still run away from danger. So it was thought that these drugs would be less dangerous to give to human beings. Chlorpromazine made wild animals easier to tame, because it suppressed their desire to fight, without suppressing fear.

In 1960 another groups of drugs, known as the benzodiazepines, began to be developed for human use. They too were good for taming wild animals, but they also reduced the ability to remember training, so they are dangerous to take when doing something complicated like driving a car or operating machinery. The most well-known of these is Diazepam or Valium. Others that are used frequently include chlordiazepoxide (Librium) and medazepam (Nobrium). The names in brackets are the names under which the drug companies market these preparations (it's like saying 'Daz' instead of detergent soap). The doctor may write either word on a prescription form, as they mean the same thing.

Because scientists are beginning to be able to point to certain chemical changes in the brain which go along with feelings of mental disturbance, anxiety, and weird behaviour, some sections of the medical profession are keen to see mental illness as just the same sort of thing as measles or mumps.

Measles is not usually seen as having anything to do with your living conditions, or your emotional problems. So it is convenient for doctors and scientists to say the layperson should not be concerned with the problem of depression, just leave it to the

WOMENS HEALTH

Tranquillisers: drugs that don't cure

experts to produce some wonder drug.

There are two answers to this. One is that 'real' diseases involving germs and fevers and coming out in spots were *not* wiped out by wonder drugs either. The reason they are no longer the mass killers they used to be is because of the rising wages and improving living and working conditions of the period leading up to World War II. Typhus, cholera, diphtheria and TB had disappeared as major epidemic diseases *before* penicillin was widely available and *before* a lot of the other antibiotics had even been invented. The importance of social conditions in causing all forms of disease was first pointed out by Rudolf Virchow, who fought alongside German revolutionary workers in the uprising of 1848 and was one of the founders of social medicine.

Secondly, we are now beginning to understand a bit more about how the chemical changes that produce feelings of anxiety and of 'everything getting on top of me' really happen.

There are people studying how Valium, the drug your doctor is most likely to prescribe if you go and say life is getting too much for you, interferes with the anxiety-process in the brain.

It seems that when you are in a situation of calm, say with your feet up in front of the fire, your work finished for the day, little blobs of stuff attach themselves to the end of certain nerves leading into your brain, and cause these nerves to send nice calming messages all round your body and relax you. This stuff is called (wait for it) gamma-

aminobutyric acid or GABA.

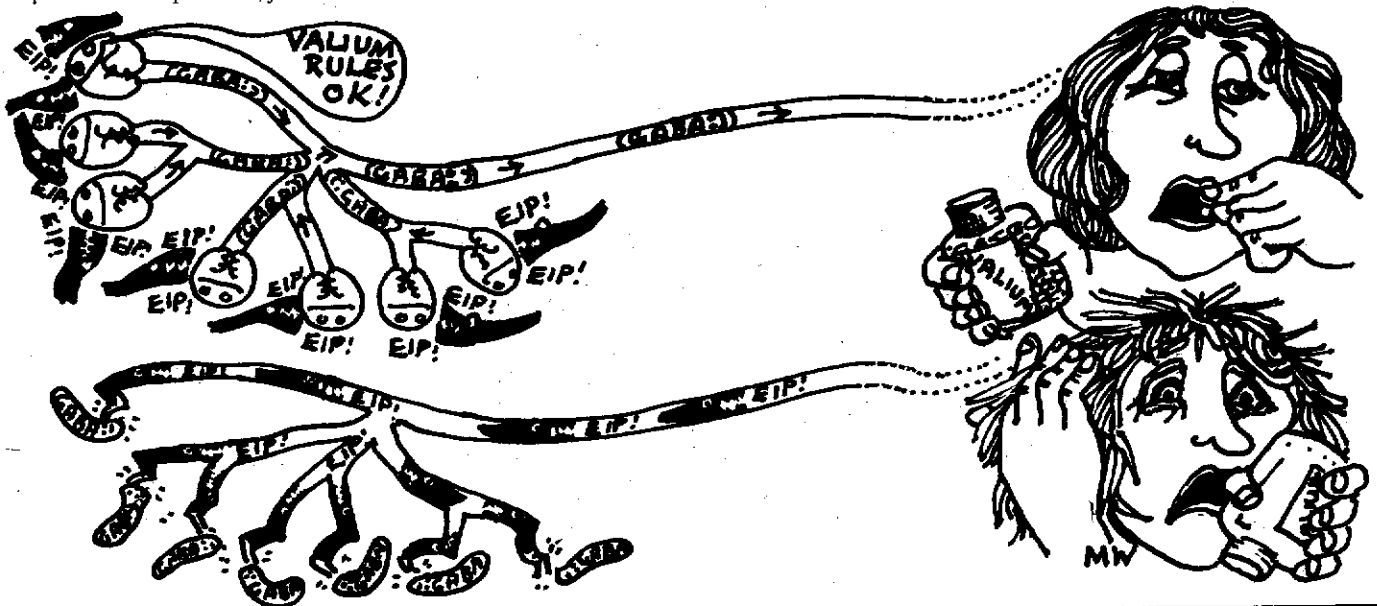
But if something happens to make you anxious, along comes another substance, the 'endogenous inhibitor protein' or EIP. It seems to pinch or distort the ends of the nerves so that the GABA cannot fit into them anymore. Goodbye feeling of calm and relaxation. So in an anxious person, yes, you *do* find a different chemical picture than you would in the brain of a calm person, just as an embarrassed person would look red in the face. But nobody suggests that the blush causes the feeling of embarrassment.

What Valium seems to do, is that it somehow covers the nerve endings (the 'receptors' that receive the GABA) and prevents EIP from pinching them out of shape. So GABA remains peacefully attached, and anxiety-messages do *not* get sent round the body. But EIP *is still being produced*. The anxious brain actually produces more and more EIP in an attempt to wake up the sleepy nerves by getting that GABA off their endings. Once the Valium wears off, you have a nice load of anxiety-producing substance that has built up, and it starts pinching the hell out of your poor receptors.

This way, we can see a possible explanation for why a person needs to take more and more Valium to get to the same state of calm, the longer you take Valium. Next to no research has been done on the possibly harmful effects of long-term use of Valium. There is no evidence at all that Valium has any *beneficial* effects when used over long periods of time. Yet it is the most commonly prescribed drug in Britain and more people are on long-term Valium regimes in Britain than in any other country in the world.

Overworked general practitioners, who have neither the time nor the training to deal with the problems that face women in a society undergoing deepening social and economic crisis, have tended to hand out this mild-seeming drug more or less as an act of mercy. And it *can* seem to give merciful relief from unbearable tension. We must begin to question the safety of such a policy. **And anyway, do we really want to get through life propped up by a drug that makes even animals too listless to fight back?**

Les Hearn
Mel Bartley



I Seven years of courage now we've got to help

A BITTER battle is being waged in the City of Inchon, South Korea. For seven years young women textile workers have fought their employer, the big Dong II textile company, their union, the National Textile Union, the Government, the police and the Korean CIA.

IN February this year the battle reached its most appalling and degrading stage. As women arrived for a union meeting they discovered their union room being ransacked by a gang of thugs, hired by the union. Women were beaten and kicked. Seventy of them were injured. Buckets of human excrement were thrown at them, rubbed into their clothes and into their faces.

Police called to the plant by the management stood by and watched. When the women appealed to them for help, they just shouted back. *But the women were not intimidated.*

Dong II employs nearly 20,000 in textile production, some of which is exported to Britain. Nearly three quarters of the employees are women, all working for starvation wages in unhealthy conditions.

The women's campaign for better union organisation, as a necessary step to better wages and conditions, began back in 1972, when the first woman was elected as chairperson of the local union. Women have chaired the union ever since, agitating for better wages, maternity leave, safety measures and overtime pay.

It wasn't easy. The Company wanted to keep its hold on the union, and put up its own candidate, a man, in the election in 1976. On the evening of the election most of the women found themselves locked in the factory whilst the election took place. The man got in.

The women were furious. They went on hunger strike in the plant. The weather was fantastically hot so the Company turned on the pressure by turning off the water supply. Relatives arriving with drinks and ice were kicked and the bottles smashed.

The police were brought in. In protest the women stripped naked but nothing would embarrass the police. They set to work beating, assaulting, arresting the women. Three women ended up in hospital. One woman had a nervous breakdown.

When the women eventually succeeded in holding a proper election they elected their own woman candidate as chairperson again.

Another hunger strike was organised this

year. This time the Company sacked 126 workers for their involvement in the protests, hoping they would have rid themselves of some of the most militant women, and fresh elections would restore the Company's candidate.

The day before the election 65 of the fired workers occupied part of the factory, demanding the right to participate in the election. Again the riot police were called. Everyone was arrested.

The women have spread their fight to the National Union. A group of seven girls travelled to Pusan, in the far South of Korea, to campaign against a union official, Kim Yung Tae, standing in the election for the 'electoral college—a tame assembly to support the dictator of South Korea. He won the election. The girls were all charged with violating the electoral laws!

These women are incredibly brave. Most of them are very young. Many have moved to industrial centres like Inchon to support their families living in poverty in the countryside. Tradition forces them to give up work when they marry.

Occasionally, older women manage to keep their jobs. One such is Mrs Lee So Soon. Her determination to fight comes from her son. Also a garment worker, he burnt himself to death in 1972 outside the factory where he worked, in protest at the conditions there. Mrs Lee took a job in the factory to carry on the fight. Then she moved to Dong II. She has been arrested and beaten by the police.

All the women know that arrest and imprisonment can also mean torture: electric shock, sleep deprivation, constant standing, leave few marks on the human body.

The 'economic-miracle' of a country like South Korea has been made possible by the brutal exploitation of its workers. Wages in Korea are among the lowest in the world, yet its workers work longer hours than anywhere else, an average 58 hours a week. At Dong II all the women work rotating shifts; it's reckoned that 80 per cent of them suffer from athlete's foot because of the hot and humid conditions; TB is commonplace.

SUPPORT for the women has come from the student movement in Korea, and the Korean Christian Action Organisations.

The Women Textile Workers federation in Japan has taken up their case, with official support now coming from the Japanese TUC.

Their courage demands your support. If you are a member of the textile workers union get your union branch to send a message of support to the Dong II women. Send copies to the British TUC, and to us at Womens Voice.

If you can contact textile workers through your Womens Voice group and show them this article do so as quickly as possible. Dong II Workers Campaign, C/O Urban Rural Mission, Christian Conference of Asia, Japan Christian Center, 2-3-18 Nishi Wasada, Shinjuku-ju, Tokyo 160, Japan.



Mrs. LEE SO SUN shows some of the injuries she received when she was dragged away by police after the Friday prayer meeting for Dong II Textile workers, Sept 22, 1978. She said she almost lost consciousness at the time, and thought she would die.

Information for this article has come from an interview with the reverend Cho Hwa Soon, a minister in the Urban Industrial Mission. He had just spent 17 days in gaol.

We serve the public but we're PENNYLESS!



Photo: Virginia Turbett

BOB Ross takes home £43 a week from his job as switchboard operator at Queens Hospital East London, and even then he is 'lucky' since he is three grades above the basic telephonist's grade.

If we worked in private industry he would earn at least £500 a year more for five hours less a week.

Like many other hospitals, Queens keeps down permanent staff by employing temps. Bob Ross has to train temps to use the switchboard when they earn between £10 to £15 more than him.

Their budget:	
Food and Milk	£12
Rent	£14
Gas and electricity	£5
Petrol	£5
Bob's lunch	£3
Clothing & entertainment	£4
Total	£43

Jill and Bob Ross run a home on £43 a week. Their story is no different from that of thousands of other families in this country. The budget is the same. The hardship and worry is the same.

And like so many other families they are not part of the 'official poor'. They do not qualify for free milk, free school dinners when their baby is of age or rent rebates. Jill and Bob Ross are not 'poor' they are merely 'low paid', as Jill explained to Womens Voice.

'In practice our budget is a joke. Just take last week, I had to buy nappies, cleansing cream, baby powder, cotton wool, toilet paper and shampoo. All necessary but they broke our budget.

'It meant we could not put anything away for the electricity. So when that bill comes in we'll not have the money saved to pay. Before I became pregnant I had a fairly well paid job. We were able to save money which was to go for a deposit on a house and for a rainy day.

'Well we have a rainy day every week. If we didn't have that money I don't see how we could cope.

'We'd have to cut something, but look at our budget—what could we cut—the car?

'With a three month old baby here, the car gives me a chance to go out and do the shopping. It gets me out of the house.

'I can't work at the moment. John is only three months old and I'm feeding him myself. At this young age it's right for me to be with him.

'I'll have to go out to work as soon as I can—except that this borough only provides creches for single parents, not families like ours.

'I was hoping to stay off work longer than five or six months so I could train as an adult literacy teacher and get a better paid job. But I'm in a vicious circle, I can't afford the time to retrain and get a better paid job so I'll end up doing badly paid clerical or shop work.

'Bob and I are supposed to be at the peak of our lives, we're young, we're happy together—but when's our life going to begin? Things we used to think essential—like

THE government and bosses say we can afford to accept a 5 per cent wage rise, the trouble is they must have been looking at their own pay packets when they came out with that statement.

Nearly 50 per cent of workers earn less than £53 a week, before tax. The average wage for full time women workers in the public sector is £40.07, a 5 per cent pay rise for them only means £2 and that's before tax.

One in four people live in official poverty, that's an increase of 123 per cent in the last three years. Many public sector workers make up those statistics. What workers can afford to accept the 5 per cent limit, least of all the public sector workers who come under the title of the low paid.

clothes—are now a luxury. I've always regarded holidays as essential. We'll only have a holiday next year if I can get a job.

'We never go out to the cinema, when we do go out it's just for a drink. Baby John's outgrowing his first clothes and I'm keeping an eye open for second-hand baby clothes. There's no question of him having anything new.

Losing my income was a terrific blow to us. We can't survive without it. I have several friends who have cancelled having a family because they can't afford to lose the wife's income. It's just not possible to live on Bob's wage.

Part-time twice the problems

ALL THE women who work in the school meals sector are women with children; except for the cook, everyone else works part time with hours ranging from 7½ to 30 hours a week.

The reasons are obvious. The hours fit in while the children are at school, and they are off the same time. The money helps buy the things that their husbands' wages no longer stretch to. And to single mothers, it is a blessing each week.

Making contact with other women away

Choices of the year... books...films... TV programmes

The Woman's Room

The Woman's Room by Marilyn French. (Sphere).

The *Women's Room* contains the most detailed account of woman's work in the home that I have ever read.

It thoroughly exposes the male myth that this work is not really work. Bringing up kids in this society is a relentless job. But the strength of women is hidden and belittled by our culture.

'Pregnancy is a long waiting in which you learn what it means completely to lose control over your life...the condition and you are identical...pregnancy is the greatest training, disciplining device in the human experience. Compared to it, army discipline that attempts to humble the individual, get him into the impersonal line that can function like a machine, is soft.'

Marilyn French's men are shadowy although she does not glibly lable the individual men as the 'cause' of the women's oppression. Nina 'realised that Norm was not the enemy, only the embodiment of the enemy.' Then crucially, 'she began to see that his authority over her was based on mutual agreement, that it was founded on nothing but air and that was why he had to assert it so often in such odd ways.'

I think most women have become bound up in doing things so as 'not to hurt men's feelings', have accepted patterns in their own lives for reasons that weren't even acknowledged. The onus on women is always to explain why. Men's needs are taken for granted. *The Woman's Room* made me aware of the subtle ways in which we have been trapped by justifications that when examined are 'nothing but air'. The assumption that man's needs are 'natural' and women must consider

them before their own, is very deep in our culture.

'She was to make a miracle, to create not only the experience but also the desire for it...arouse the erection that you may also have the pleasure of satisfying it. Oh God'. So it's very much the *woman's room*. She admits her men are cardboard figures.

They never become as real as the women. 'Men could not talk personally, humanely, knew nothing of others except gossip and nothing of themselves kept the external image. And each group was ignorant of the other.' The book would have been richer if it could have had the added dimensions. In a way this is a challenge for women writers not to be afraid of complexity, not to assume that sympathy with men weakens the political argument of the women's position.

Kim Longinotto

One hand tied behind us

Jill Liddington and Jill Norris. **One Hand Tied Behind Us** (Virago)

Most history books play down the power of the working class and especially the power of women in struggle. Even when the suffragette movement is discussed, the fight seems as if it revolved totally around a group of militant middle class women in the Pankhurst's 'Women's Social and Political Union', formed in 1903.

How great it was to read Liddington and Norris' book this year, which has started putting things right. This study of working class women in Lancashire and Cheshire, shows that they had been struggling for the vote, and an improvement in women's conditions, before and after 1903. Their dynamic work highlights both the problem of fighting with 'one hand tied behind' them and of

pushing to be heard within the labour movement—sounds familiar.

Helen Rose

Jill Liddington and Jill Norris

'No cause can be won between dinner and tea, and most of us who were married had to work with ONE HAND TIED BEHIND US'
The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement



Fist

Coming soon to your local Odeon... A powerfully sympathetic account of the growth of the USA's largest union, The Teamsters. It tells how the unions had to organise to defeat the employers' hired thugs and show how the Mafia got involved. It poses the question—what lengths must you go to to win? There are some stirring picket line scenes with people determinedly wielding pick-axe handles.

This is a film all socialists should see. But don't expect anything from the women—they're all typical girlfriends, wives and mothers.
Anna Paczuska.

Girlfriends

Claudia Weill.

Girlfriends, a feminist film, has provoked very opposing reactions from people. The following paragraphs are the opposing opinions of two real life girlfriends who rather than having one of their fierce and noisy disputes, decided to write down their thoughts:

In the most old fashioned sense of the word, Girlfriends is about best friends. Two women share a flat, without being aware of their mutual support which is a central part of their lives.

When one trots off into a married nightmare, the other finds out how much she needs her. So does the married woman, but it takes longer for her.

Tenderly the film takes you through their lives and although I've never experienced exactly the same problems that ensue, it brought back the reality and strength of the girlfriends of my past.

Dorothy Jones

This is what Dorothy's girlfriend wrote.

Girlfriends is a so-called feminist movie. Almost the only thing I liked about it was that Susan Weinblatt, the central character, wasn't glamorous, nor were any of the actors or actresses for that matter. But I hope that feminists aren't as wetly gentle in their relationships as the girls in Girlfriends, or as unrealistic. Powerful tenderness is one thing but spineless simpering is another. 'You betrayed me' says Susan to her friend. Her friend

appeared to have fallen in love with a man whom she decided to marry. Is this betrayal? The relationship between the two women bore all the trademarks of habit, comfort and contentment, there was nothing new or dynamic about it.

I suppose it was a nice film, but disappointingly unchallenging, it didn't tell me anything I don't already know.

Melanie McFadyean

Julia

Julia is the most terrific film of 1978. Everybody should go and see it. The women are the main characters, not just the wives or girlfriends that are usually put into movies to add glamour.

Julia shows how the German fascists affected the lives of two women. They were so brave!

Lillian Hellman, who wrote the story of the film, was Jewish, and she risked her life to smuggle money into



Germany. That money was used to buy Jewish and socialist prisoners out of the concentration camps.

The best thing about the film is that it is a true story and a real inspiration, especially needed now when the fascist National Front are growing again.

Jenny Jackson

Roots

Roots didn't change my life, but it did expand my awareness. For a long while now, black people like myself have been eagerly waiting for a historical programme to which we could relate.

Roots came our way and I was able for the first time to experience the pain of my ancestors. I had to feel their sufferings, their humiliation and their

poverty which they endured to set me free.

Judy Odewole.

One sings the other doesn't

A film by Agnes Varda.

This is a film which gives a positive 'everything's possible' approach to life. It shows women that really they can be free of all the things they think can hold them down. But the songs from Pomme express an almost embarrassingly sentimental side of feminism, and the men in the film suffer very bland treatment. Men must be a part of 'The Movement' too.

Pauline Lee

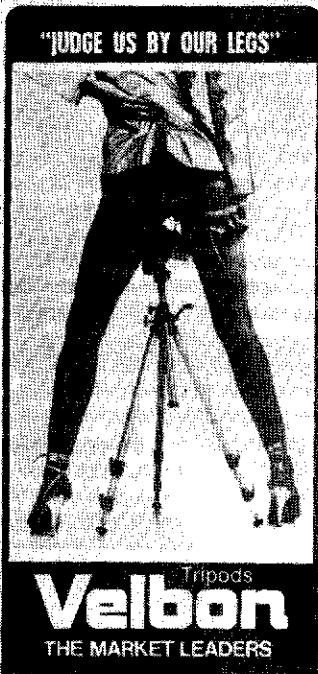


Help

the socialist groups, but it is difficult to set it all down, so much has happened over the past years. The so-called land of milk-and-honey, golden opportunity and equality has some of the most viciously oppressive laws on abortion, trade unions and democratic rights, to name but a few. Unemployment is high and getting worse, so consequently there has been a real campaign to get women back into the home.

However, although the future looks grim, and still people would rather stick their heads in the sand and hope all the bad things will go away, there is a slowly growing number of people prepared to struggle for a socialist New Zealand.

Thank you again for sending Womens Voice to me. All the best for a brighter future.
Theresa O'Connell



Dear Womens Voice
After reading that delightful advertisement from Babycham in last month's Womens Voice I couldn't resist sending in this ad. I leave you to judge it yourselves as it needs no introduction!
Christine Fellowes
Hackney Womens Voice

Women and education

Dear Womens Voice
We were very interested to read the article 'What are little girls made of' in your October issue. It seemed to provide a good introduction to the whole

subject of sexism in education. However, it was a pity that you didn't print any contacts at the end for women who want to take things further, though you do provide ideas for action.

We are enclosing a copy of 'Women and Education' which is a national publication coming out three times a year for students, teachers, parents, and anyone else interested in fighting sexism in education.

In Issue 14 we include a list of active groups, and will gladly put women in touch with others in return for a SAE. The newsletter costs 30p for one issue, 90p for three, but 60p to students and unwaged people.

In sisterhood,
Jill Norris

women and education 30p



Dark ages

Dear Womens Voice
I bought your magazine for the first time yesterday and I must say that I was very impressed by the way in which you managed to present crucial issues. I found your coverage to be extensive and most enlightening.

I have written to you because I feel very strongly about an article which appeared in the National Press this morning, i.e., the article about a certain Terry Buckle who refuses to consent to his wife's giving a kidney to save her brother's life.

Do some women really live in the Dark Ages? It appears from the article in 'The Guardian' that Mrs Buckle is as much to blame as her husband, in so far as she really does not seem to have questioned her husband's iron rule, rather she says that if it came to the crunch, 'I just don't know what I'd do'. Mr Buckle is quoted as saying 'I would not divorce my wife but...'; it makes me wonder how many more women allow themselves to be treated in this way by their 'loving' husbands.
H M Walker
London

NAC needs help URGENT!

Dear Sisters

The National Abortion Campaign, as you may have heard, is in terrible financial crisis. NAC needs help. Urgent!

The absence of restrictive legislation in Parliament at the moment means funds are not coming into NAC. But we still have our hands full fighting for the implementation of the 1967 Act, through the Trades Union Conference, Day-Care abortion campaign, and as part of the International Campaign for Abortion Rights.

To carry on we need money. In addition there may soon be new attacks on the 67 Act. Please help save the campaign. Send whatever donation you can to our new address, NAC, 274 Grays Inn Road, London WC1. Or better still, arrange with your bank to have a regular sum, however small, deposited in NAC's account. Ring 01-278-0153 for a banker's order form.

Thanks a lot.

Yours in sisterhood,
Sue Saint (NAC
TREASURER)

Mini-cab

Dear Womens Voice
Would any women in London be interested in starting a women's mini-cab service? If there seems sufficient interest we hope to hold a meeting to discuss how to go about setting it up. Ring Catherine. 01 722 2629.

Corby— anybody there?

Dear Womens Voice
I recently moved to Corby from Canterbury only to find there are no women's groups of any kind offered by Womens Voice and others.

I'd be grateful if you could put this letter in Womens Voice so that if there are any Corby women of like mind they can get in touch with me.

In Sisterhood,
Dannie Hetherington.
(Please write to Dannie via Womens Voice. We will forward your letter).



Don't wait until Christmas to write to us or you will miss our Christmas deadline. Post letters to Womens Voice, Box 82, London, E2, to arrive by 15 December.

Nowhere to go

Dear Womens Voice

I'm recently widowed with four children and have just moved to Blackburn. My eldest son is 15 and has made a lot of friends. There is nowhere for them to go so I have let them convert the garden shed into a meeting place, where they can enjoy themselves until any hour.

However, I'm getting overcrowded and I've had an idea to get them a place of their own: an old garage, a disused factory, anything and let them do it up themselves and maybe put on punk bands at the weekends. Has anyone else done anything similar? I need advice, what problems will I run into? Could I get financial aid from job creation as some of them are on the dole.

I was talking to one 16-year-old who has just come home after 5 years in 12 different homes for petty thieving and playing truant. I asked him why: He just said, well, there's nowt to do here, I get bored,

and no one gives a damn about you.

I'm determined to give a damn. Society is so bloody lethargic.

Jean Hope

Footballers against sexism

Dear Womens Voice

'This is taking this women's lib thing a bit far,' was the reaction of my headmaster on hearing about the first girl footballer in a junior class team.

Then a few days later five breathless girls arrive in my classroom. 'Will you take us for football practice?' I hesitated. Then I learnt they'd been sent by a male teacher with whom I'd had frequent arguments about football.

'Yes, definitely,' I said. The six of us descended on another male teacher for help. 'Best thing that's happened to this school' was his reaction.

Twenty three girls turn up for

the first practice amid cries from the school team: 'Don't know what offside is!' 'Don't know how to kick a ball!' 'Bet you don't know what a penalty is!'

'Of course they don't know, they've never played football before. Come and help them.'

'Me, train girls!'

'Come on, big mouth, if you're so marvellous come and help to train a girls team.'

So we set off, with help from the other teacher. Up the hill five times, across the pitch twice, ten press-ups, ten sit-ups, breathe properly.

'Can we really all help them?' came a clamour of voices. Ten seconds later there was a boy with each group teaching them how to kick a ball properly.

At the end of the session we were walking down the slope. I looked round to see what the argument behind me was all about. 'Tell her, will you. She says she's going to give up and she can't 'cos she's the best kicker in my group!' says one boy passionately.

How about that for an instant change in the way children view the world? I know novelties

wear off and sexism runs deep but we're enjoying it and next week we're starting lower junior girls football!

S. Kelly
Sheffield



Elizabeth Beal has just become the first girl to play in a Rugby team. But not without opposition from the Club Committee, that wanted to over-rule her appointment by the team manager. Fortunately the Rugby League is more enlightened than the Football Association and defended her right to play. 'She's a killer,' said one of her team mates.

OUT YOUR OWN PROBLEMS

Sex problems

Dear Womens Voice

My baby is now six months old and since his birth I haven't wanted to make love to my husband at all. I am really getting worried in case I am frigid even though I enjoyed sex very much before I had my baby. My husband is getting fed up and it is causing a lot of arguments.

Anon

Dear Sister

First of all try not to worry, worrying will only make it worse and lots of women experience exactly what you are going through either during or after pregnancy. One of the big problems is the fact that many

women with young babies don't get a decent nights sleep for months and there is nothing worse than being really tired to put you off sex. You may also be concentrating all your energy and affection on your baby, which leaves you little time for other people.

If you had a painful childbirth, perhaps fear of another pregnancy is putting you off sex. This depends of course on the reliability of the contraceptive method you use.

You could try to talk to some of your women friends with babies and you will probably find that they had similar problems. Getting something off your chest to a good friend could make you feel a lot better. If you can't talk to your friends then you could go to your local Family Planning Association and ask them to help you. They would probably refer you to someone who could help you.

One way of solving the problem with your husband is

to find other ways of satisfying him sexually. This would take some of the pressure off you and you might find that you get turned on too. I hope this helps.
Alison Kirton

His sandwiches

Dear Womens Voice

I have got a problem that is small but it's really getting me down. I work in a Mini Cab firm all week until midnight. I usually get home about one o'clock and all I can think of is getting into bed. My husband starts work at seven and he expects me to get up at six to make his sandwiches for work.

It really gets on my nerves and although I've explained to him many times that I don't like doing it, he says it's my job. Don't tell me to make them the night before because the last thing I want to think of when I get home is sandwiches. Any suggestions?

Mary Carter

Dear Mary

This is a difficult one, and if you don't do something about it, it

will build up inside you. It would be useless just to constantly go on about it. Take decisive action and stick to it. You could go on strike and tell your husband that from tomorrow you are not making his sandwiches. You would have to stick to this and take the resulting rows.

You could try less confronting tactics, either make him such awful sandwiches that he gets fed up and wants to make his own or buy five of the worst pork pies you can find and tell him to take one each day. Hopefully he will get the message.

Remember that you aren't alone with this sort of problem. Try to get some support from your women friends and your Womens Voice Group if you are in one. You might even get them to hold a Public Meeting on Womens Oppression in the Family, and drag your husband along!

Good Luck!

Alison Kirton

P.S. If any readers have found a good way of solving this sort of problem please write in and let us know.

ANSWERED

Old age means no choice

Womens World Judith Condon

ASK a group of children to pretend they're old and ten-to-one they'll bend at right-angles and make believe they're walking with a stick.

OR just ask yourself what it is to be old. Almost certainly your images will be negative.

Old is worn out. Old is crabbed, wrinkled, crotchety, poor and lonely. In fact, if there's any period in our lives when we expect to be happy, it's almost certainly not as we get old.

In Britain today people suffer a catastrophic drop in income and standard of living when they retire.

Poor old man. Little old lady. The very best we dare expect when we grow old is to be patronised by all and sundry. But why. Why should we expect no better?

Imagine, for absurdity's sake, Lord Hailsham on one of those Hughie Greene-inspired television shows. 'Isn't he wonderful friends! Just tell us how old you are! Isn't that marvellous! That's just wonderful!' And the audience would all go 'Ooh' and 'aa-ah' that one so advanced in years could stand up and breathe and even talk.

No, it isn't possible to imagine. Because for some categories of people, old age holds more opportunities than the opportunity to be sentimentalised over. And so it should for us all.

Take prime ministers, or doctors, or lawyers, or academics. More likely than not, they have professional career structures, which means their increasing experience is rewarded with increasing payment and power. They can expect to be at maximum status and earning capacity immediately before they retire, whereupon their pensions will reflect the level of their salaries.

All their life they have been granted individual acclaim and recognition, educationally, professionally, culturally. In short, they counted for something, and in retirement they maintain the titles that ensure continued respect, titles such as doctor, professor, colonel.

Contrast their expectations with those of the rest of the population. To be working class is to earn most when you're young and fit, or when you can do overtime. There's no increments, and few career ladders, so for men especially, middle age brings a decline in expectations. As for women, they've already accepted that domestic responsibilities mean no status, no wages—and when it comes to paid work you have to take what you can get. Real achievement and recognition come from raising a family, but families soon grow up. Power comes only through being in a union, which you leave when you retire. What's left is a minimum pension and worsening health. Life didn't offer much in the way of personal recognition, or education or culture. And you die much younger than the professional class anyway.

Old age is different for people in different classes. Why shouldn't it, then, be different altogether?

What is old age anyway? Why should we imagine we can compulsorily herd all those over 65 together, already by definition depriving them of individuality?

In other ages, in other cultures, to be forty or even thirty is getting on a bit. Now we have an increasing proportion of the population living beyond eighty. If you're expected to start deteriorating and cracking up at 65, that's a long while to have to keep going.



Of course there are plenty of old people who need special consideration. They do get frail, more prone to illness and accidents. Some may even need help with the most simple of tasks. But why should that mean total automatic loss of dignity and rights anyway?

We gladly do for children a thousand times over what we begrudge doing for the elderly even once, in spite of the fact that those same elderly people must have done it all for us when we were children. That's the way the system is geared. Because children represent the future, they represent future earning capacity and labour power. But old people have ceased to work, and therefore have nothing to offer the system. Their technical knowledge is out of date. Their hard-won understanding counts for nothing.

Not only capitalists, but also socialists have neglected the cause of liberation for the elderly. Old people don't tend to make revolutions. They get tired and set in their ways. Even if they were once class warriors they get disillusioned and put their hope in the young, unless they're very unusually strong. So socialist writers haven't had much to say about them except in a kindly welfare-state kind of context. And over the age of seventy five there are twice as many women as men. Has that contributed to their neglect, I wonder?

Perhaps women have a higher survival rate than men, for all their double oppression, because they have never totally absorbed the capitalist work ethic. We've never quite accepted that the sum total of our existence lies in bringing home a wage packet at the end of every week.

For working class men retirement is a grim hurdle, and many of them never reach the other side. Yet people who live to be 65 can on average hope to live another twelve years. So there's no automatic reason why 'old age' should represent stagnation and decline.

The answer is to start fighting back well before you get there, because that could be too late. We all need respect. And a decent standard of living. And a sense of purpose. And stimulation and time to develop our own identities. We need all those things at every stage in our lives. If we had them, that curve of happiness-expectation might not be continuously downward after about the mid-twenties.



But it's even more pressing than that. We're alive now on the edge of a new industrial revolution brought by silicone chips and micro technology.

Millions of us are going to be declared redundant and out of date long before we reach 'old age', if we don't watch out. The old jobs, the old skills, the old machinery, will look like something out of the ark in twenty years time. So even the youngest had better start thinking fast about alternative ways of life, about how to make the technology work for us, not against us. Otherwise, old age, and that means real old age and loss of function, could come to us a lot sooner than we think.

WHAT IS GOING ON?

Socials

● **Birmingham Womens Voice Fund Raising Party:** December 16, women only. Proceeds to WV and Smith & Wallis strike. Details and babysitting phone Jenny 440 5794 or Mary and Sue 459 6302

● **Fleet Street Womens Voice presents 'Take It Like a Man, Ma'am!'** Film and Christmas Social Wednesday 13 December. Film starts 6.45pm. Food, late licence to midnight. Metropolitan pub, Farringdon Street. Tickets £1.50 available from Maggie 822 3780

● **Kentish Town Womens Voice Xmas Party!** Saturday 16 December. For details ring Gail 485 0954 or Vera/Di 267 5059. All welcome.

● **Lea Valley Womens Voice Fund-raising Xmas Social:** Saturday 16 December, Red Lion Pub, corner Lansdowne Road/Tottenham High Road, N17) nearest tube Seven Sisters. 8pm till late. Group and disco. For further details ring Mary 802 9563. Everyone welcome.

● **Preston Womens Voice social,** December 2. For details ring Mary Beaken 0772 55789

● **Manchester Poly Students Union Womens Voice Social.** Cavendish House, 8pm, Thursday 7 December, Group and disco. 25p.

● **South Manchester Womens Voice Christmas Party,** in aid of Womens Voice funds, 15 December, at Steve and Kate's.

Public meetings

● **Edinburgh Womens Voice public meeting. The Low Pay Campaign** Sunday 10 December, 7.30pm, Trades Council, 14 Picardy Place. Speaker: Sheila Johnstone.

● **Kentish Town Womens Voice Public Meeting:** 'She asked for it' a play by Counteract, a women's theatre group. Speakers from the Rape Crisis Centre and Womens Voice. Tuesday 5 December at 7.45pm, Creche provided. All women welcome. Admission 50p (non-earners 25p). Lynhurst Hall, Warden Road, NW5.

Lea Valley Womens Voice public meeting and Film: 'Divide and Rule - Never!' a

brilliant new anti-racist film showing up the myths of racism. Speakers from the community/schools. Tuesday 12 December, 8.00pm, West Green Library, Vincent Road, Tottenham, n15. All welcome.

● **South London Womens Voice meeting: 'Women in Ireland'.** Speaker from the Relatives Action Committee. Tuesday 5 December, Brixton Library, 8.00pm.

Womens Voice meetings

● **Aberdeen Womens Voice;** for more information telephone Liz 51059.

● **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.

● **Bristol Womens Voice** meets alternate Wednesdays at 8.00pm at the Crown Tavern, Lawfords Gate (off Old Market St.) Phone Bristol (0272) 553740.

● **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)

● **Chelmsford Womens Voice.** For details of local activities, see Womens Voice Sellers.

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

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

● **Ealing Womens Voice** meets regularly. Phone Maureen 567 7083 or Jane 930 0986 for details.

● **Edinburgh Womens Voice** meets fortnightly on Sunday evenings. Phone Penny 557 0731 for details.

● **Edinburgh Street sale** every Saturday, 2-3pm, at the Mound Princes Street. Meet from 1pm onwards at the Cafe Royal (behind Woolworths). Womens Voice readers welcome to turn up and give us a hand. For more

information phone Penny 557 0731

● **Finchley and Barnet Womens Voice,** fortnightly meetings, for information contact Anita 883-4968 or Glenis 346-7627.

● **Fleet Street** meets every other Wednesday at the Hoop and Grapes, Farringdon St lunchtimes from 1-2. Ring Maggie 822 3780 (work).

● **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.

● **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.

● **Kentish Town Women** Voice meets weekly. Phone Gail (485 0954) or Vera/Di (267 5059) evenings. Babysitters provided.

● **Harlow Womens Voice** meets fortnightly on a Wednesday night in Harlow town hall, 8pm. Ring Bron (Harlow) 415953

● **Highbury Group.** For details/babysitting, ring Elana 439-3764 (days). All women welcome.

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

● **Islington Womens Voice** meets regularly phone Sandy at 802 6145 for details.

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

● **Lea Valley** meets regularly. Phone Mary. (802 9563) for information and babysitters.

● **SE Manchester** meets at the 'Albert', Rusholme, 8pm, every other Wednesday.

● **Medway** meets alternate Mondays. Ring Helen, (Medway) 270 689 for information and babysitter.

● **Newham** meets Tuesdays and Thursdays fortnightly.

● **Just out! New Socialist Workers Party** pamphlet on Iran. The background to the crisis. How Britain supports the Shah. The future. 15p (plus 10p postage). Orders of 5 or more 12p each. Send money to SWP (Iran), PO Box 82, London, E2.

● **Still available Womens Voice fun doodle poster** 50p each 35p for more than one. Ideal Christmas presents for tense feminists looking for relaxation! Contact Carrie, 65 Fairlight Rd, London SW17.

Phone Wendy 790 2373. Babysitters available.

● **Newcastle meetings** are the second Tuesdays of every month, Bridge Hotel, Newcastle, at 8.00pm. (Nr. High Levelbridge), Telephone Number: 813877 Newcastle.

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

● **Preston** We meet every other Tuesday at the Windsor Castle, Egan Street, (near Meadow Street) at 8 p.m. Telephone Mary—Preston 55739 for more information or if you need a babysitter.

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

● **Sheffield Womens Voice** meetings, fortnightly, The Prince of Wales pub, Division Street, Sheffield. 7.30pm. For information contact Sheffield 26233.

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

● **Slough Womens Voice** group. Meets on the first Tuesday of every month at Slough Library, Ring Mary—Slough 24093.

South London meets fortnightly on Tuesdays. Tate Library, Brixton Oval. All welcome.

● **S. West London Womens Voice** Group meet alternate Tuesdays 91 Bedford Hill, Balham All welcome. More info, babysitters contact Marion 673 1329 babysitters ring Marion 673 1329.

● **Stoke on Trent** would anyone interested in organising with Womens Voice in the Stoke on Trent area contact Sandra 814094.

● **Tower Hamlets** meets on alternate Mondays. Babysitters available phone Heather 739 6668 (home) or 534 7825 ext. 13.

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

● **York** Meets every 3rd Saturday in the month at the Royal Oak Goodramgate. Full creche facilities. Food on sale—do drop in!

● **Lea Valley Womens Voice Jumble Sale.** Saturday 2 December, 2.00pm, Bruce Grove School, Sperling Road, N17. Adm 5p.

● **Womens Voice badges.** 15p each. (12p for orders over 10) available from Days of Hope, 115 Westgate Road, Newcastle.

● **Reclaim the night demo:** January 24 Write to Womens Centre 76 Brighton Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham. Phone Jenny 440 5794

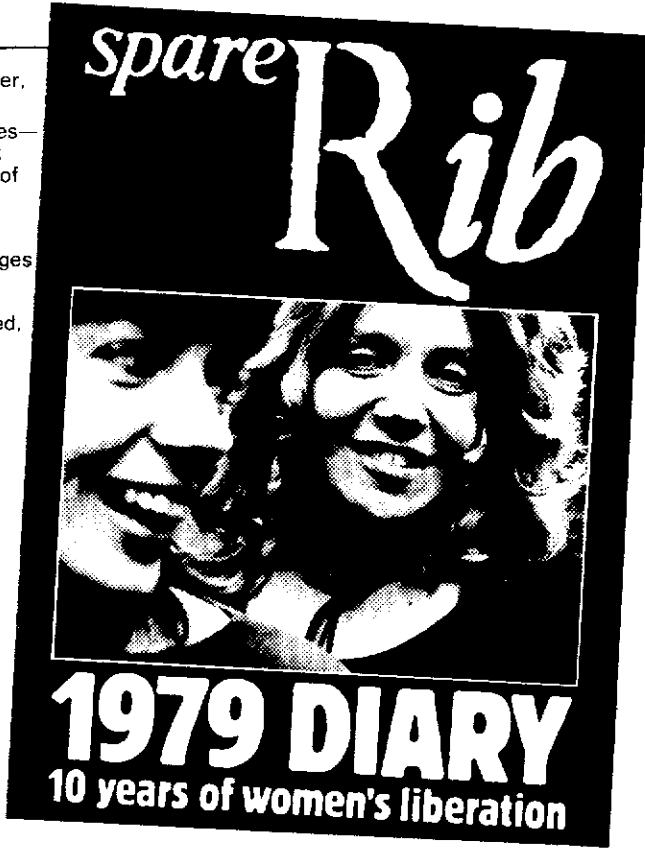


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Join Womens Voice...

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 chose 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.

To fight we have to be organised: Womens Voice is a sister organisation of the Socialist Workers Party.

Fight with Womens Voice for Womens Liberation and Socialism.

join the fight!

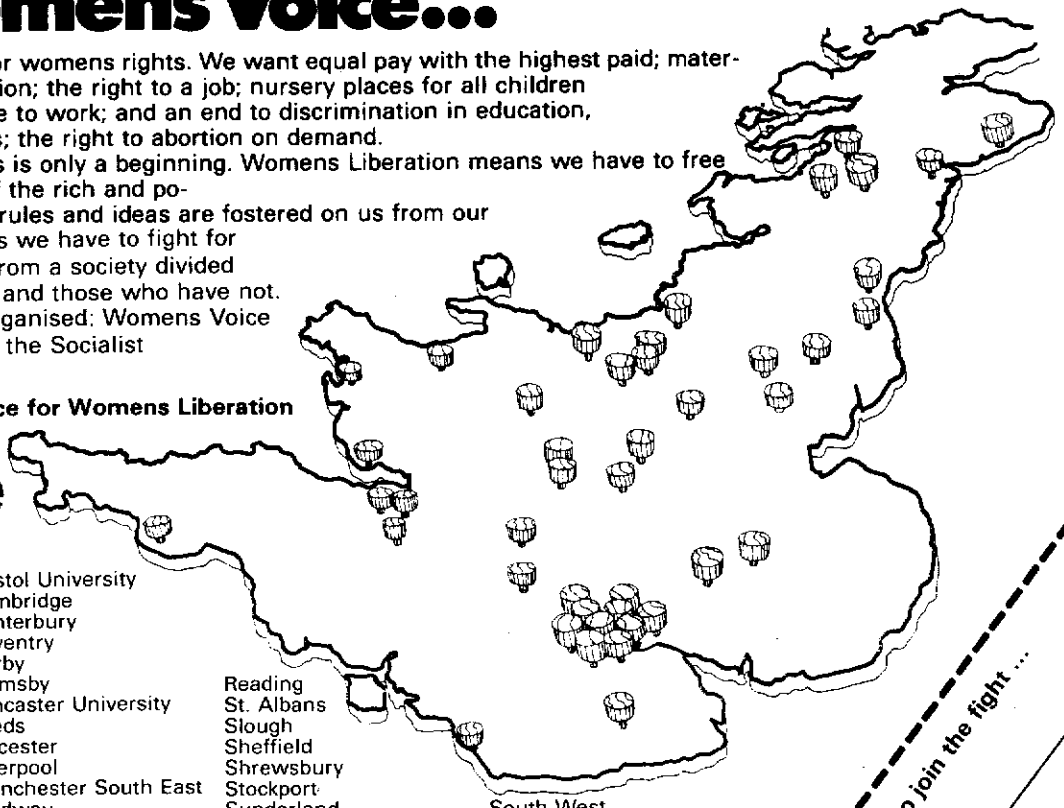
Womens Voice Groups

- Scotland
- Dundee
- Edinburgh
- Central Glasgow
- West Glasgow
- Glasgow Drumchapel
- Aberdeen
- Wales
- Aberystwyth
- Cardiff
- Llanelli
- England
- Bath
- Birmingham
- Bristol

- Bristol University
- Cambridge
- Canterbury
- Coventry
- Derby
- Grimsby
- Lancaster University
- Leeds
- Leicester
- Liverpool
- Manchester South East
- Medway
- Newcastle
- Norwich
- Nottingham
- Oxford
- Preston
- Plymouth
- Pontefract
- Poole and Bournemouth

- Reading
- St. Albans
- Slough
- Sheffield
- Shrewsbury
- Stockport
- Sunderland
- Wolverhampton
- York
- London
- North East London Poly
- Central
- Fleet Street
- Finchley/Barnet
- South

- South West
- South East
- Hammersmith
- Bedford College
- Lea Valley
- Kentish Town
- Islington
- Walthamstow
- Tower Hamlets

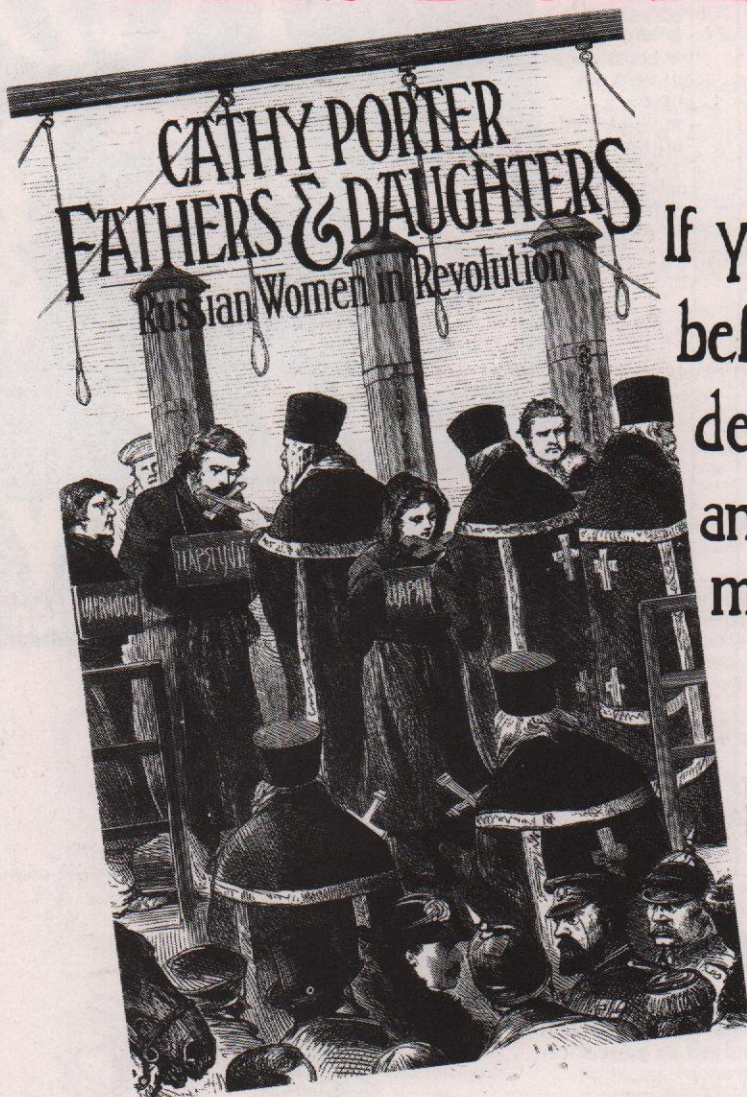


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