



womens voice

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Out of the
'70s & into the '80s
we're fighting for
our rights



LEEDS 1970

The decade began with a bang as clothing workers marched round the factories in Leeds bringing everyone out on strike. Most of them were women. After weeks on strike they returned to work defeated.

TRICO 1976

In the hot summer of 1976 the women at Trico in West London struck for equal pay. They stayed out from May to October and won.



SLOUGH 1980

Asian women making sweets at the Chix factory in Slough are out on strike for a decent wage and the right to join a trade union. Ten years of fighting are over. And the next ten years begin . . .

OUR POINT OF VIEW

Look to the future

Close your eyes and imagine what women's lives were like in 1969.

There were no Equal Pay or Sex Discrimination Acts. The womens liberation movement hadn't yet raised its voice. Rape and abortion were taboo subjects. Wife battering was unheard of, unless you could hear the screams from next door.

Maternity leave was non-existent. Britain wasn't in the Common Market, money was still counted in pounds, shillings and pence. American soldiers were napalming their way through Vietnam.

Ten years is a long time and our lives have changed radically. Some changes we can measure as we do in this issue of Womens Voice. Others we can only guess at from our own experience.

There are two dangers in looking into our past. One is that we become cynical about the value of the changes. The Equal Pay Act hasn't, in real money terms, made a lot of difference to women's wage. The number of women who have benefited from the Employment Protection Act maternity provisions is tiny. If you live in a depressed area of London or Liverpool ideas of women's equality will mean little or nothing as you struggle to make ends meet. In other words, the progress we have made is illusory. Slipping into comfortable middle age is almost worse than such cynicism. Well, I've done my round of battling, the laws have been changed, see how far we've come, remember how dreadful things were ten

years ago.

It's the sort of thinking that says if you wait patiently things will inevitably change for the better. There may be hiccups, like the anti-abortion bill; there may be temporary reverses, like a Tory government; but progress is made and eventually we will get the things we want.

Both views are death to our movement. We have made progress, even if it is not enough. Change does raise people's expectations and it does give you an idea of how good our lives could be.

At a young womens conference in London recently one 18 year old said: 'I think that young women have special problems that older women don't have—at school, living at home with your family and not being allowed out when you want, or to express your sexuality. The picture I've got of the women's movement is of older women who've already expressed their ideas and don't want to go through those discussions again.'

We do have to go through the discussion, over and over again. We have to give new women, young women, a chance to argue out the same ideas that we argued out years ago, because they hold the key to the future. They are the ones who will refresh us with their ideas and their demands.

They will come with the strength to fight on for the next ten years or however long it will take us to win not just a few more improvements but a real change in our society, for good.

CONTENTS



SPECIAL FEATURE

Out of the '70s
Women on strike 4 to 8
Mothers and babies first! 9
How the law changed too 10
The womens movement grows 10 to 12
Sport: we score some firsts 13
Abortion rights 14 and 15
Our sisters in struggle 16 and 17
Reviews of the best books of the decade 18 and 19
Health: 10 years of the pill 20
The Womens Voice game of the decade 21
Into the eighties 22 and 23

Regulars

News: Netherly Estate, Liverpool; abortion campaign; Meccano occupation; the new Trade Union legislation 23 and 24
Letters 25
What's on 26

Thanks to all those people who helped us rush out this edition of Womens Voice (before Christmas) and sorry to all those who couldn't get their articles or ads in because of our early print date.

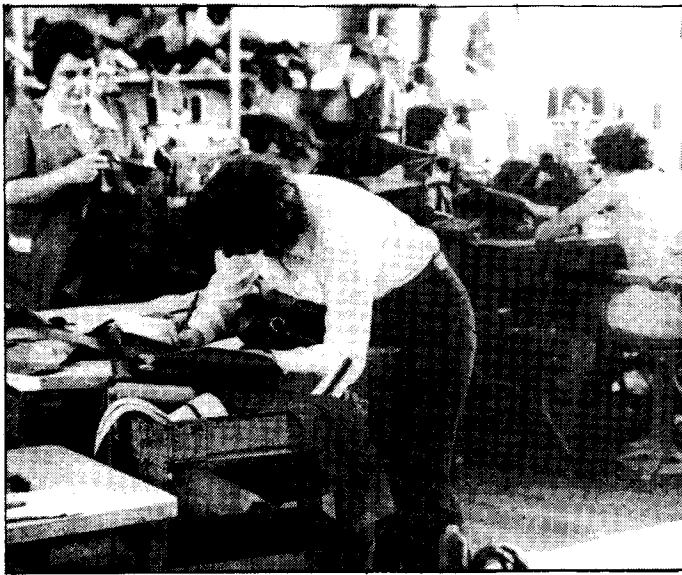
The February edition will be distributed on Wednesday 30 January, our next editorial meeting will be the same night if you want to come along, and all your ads, letters and news must reach us by Monday 14 January.

Cover photo Mark Rusher IFL
Page 2 photos John Sturrock (Report) and Virginia Turbett

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OUT OF THE '70s

Pete Jeffries (IFL)



NAILING MYTHS

IN 1968 the women machinists at Fords, Dagenham, started the ball rolling. What began as a dispute over sex discrimination in grading turned into a struggle for equal pay. Not only did they win but as their steward, Rose Boland, told *Socialist Worker* at the time, they provided inspiration to other women workers fighting for their rights.

The example of the Fords women was followed by many others over the next ten years. Women struck and occupied their workplaces not only for equal pay (both

before and after equal pay officially became the law of the land in 1975) but also for the right to work, and the right to work with dignity.

Women took on the multinational companies, like Fords and GEC for equal pay; they took on the sweatshops, like Grunwicks. Not all the strikers won: the bitterness of the defeat snatched from the jaws of victory at Grunwicks is a recent memory, but all were successful in as much as they helped to nail the myth that women work only for pin money, are passive and let themselves be pushed around.



John Starrock (Report)

Above, women on the picket line at Progressive Metals, Port Glasgow, on the banks of the Clyde. It was the middle of winter. Below, the nurses won the support of the miners in

Nottingham, 1974. Right, on the picket line at SEI, Manchester. Far right, women fight for equal pay at Tetley Tea Bags, Bletchley.

FIRST FLYING PICKETS

WHILE 500 women went to Ruskin College for the first Womens Liberation Conference in February 1970, 7,000 workers were on strike from the clothing factories in Leeds, where the workforce was 85 percent female. A week later the number had risen to 20,000 as flying pickets closed down all the clothing factories in the North East and South Yorkshire.

The women wanted one shilling per hour on the basic rate: the employers' association had offered six old pennies for men and five for women...and the union didn't know what had hit them!

The National Union of Tailors

and Garment Workers had traditionally justified its moderate pay claims by pointing out that the bulk of its members were 'housewives who only work for pin money and don't care about wages'. One astonished shop steward commented 'I've worked in this factory for nearly 15 years and the women have never bothered about a thing. Last week they were the ones who told me that if I didn't come out of the manager's office with a definite offer there would be trouble.'

And trouble there was, as the flying pickets went out. Demonstrators, mostly women, surrounded a small factory and swarmed

round it shouting "Out! Out!" They banged on the windows and pushed open the doors. Middle aged ladies rushed in screaming "Support us!" And the factory came out... 'The demonstrators strode on, chanting in jubilation, blocking over whole streets while nervous policemen looked on.'

'We older ladies have put up with it too long...' And had become militant too late, enthusiasm wasn't lacking but experience was. Male shop stewards, most of whom hadn't actually struck themselves, but who'd been laid off as a result of the women's actions, were able to lead the women back to work while the union negotiated a compromise.



THE UNION MAKES US STRONG

IN 1970 the young Womens Liberation movement embarked on its first big campaign. There were no bonfires of underwear, and correspondingly few headlines about the campaign. It was a long hard slog, handing out leaflets night after night about union organisation to the women who clean London's office blocks.

The women worked long hours, from 10 pm to 6 am, for very low rates of pay, around £12 a week. Many were immigrants,

many were supporting small children.

The campaign to unionise the women, and for £18.75 per week wages, sick pay, holiday pay, adequate staffing and adequate cover money, was started by women in the International Socialists in 1970. It snowballed, drawing into activity women from outside the socialist movement and sparking off similar campaigns in Birmingham, Norwich, Lancaster and Manchester.

The women found that joining the union was no magic cure for all their ills. May Hobbs, one of the leading militants in the campaign was asked 'why don't you join another union?' by one Transport and General Workers Union official.

Often the gains that were won were proved to be only temporary. The tasks of holding together union organisation in the face of the irregular working conditions of contract workers and bureau-

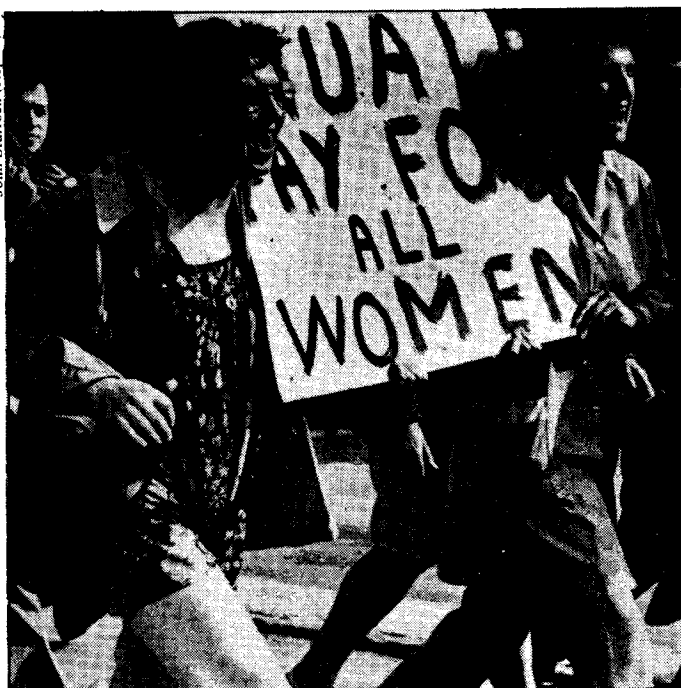
cratic indifference, were simply too difficult.

But the achievements shouldn't be underestimated because of that. As *Shrew*, the Womens Liberation magazine summed it up: 'small changes can have much bigger effects than we expect. Remember the Fords machinists - they encouraged women who had never worked inside a car factory. As the saying goes, we may not have much, but there are a lot of us!'

John Sturrock (Report)



John Sturrock (Report)



John Sturrock (Report)



Eileen Wholly Clay Cross

EILEEN WHOLLY was a local councillor in Clay Cross, Derbyshire, when the last Tory Government put up council house rents by a massive one pound a week in 1971.

'We are a mining village, with no pits and a lot of travelling to and from work,' Eileen told *Womens Voice*, 'so we agreed not to put the rents up. That was our mandate and we

stuck to it.

'Of course other Councils said they would do the same, but one by one the numbers dwindled until we were left on our own.

'The Government appointed someone to collect the rents. A few paid, but most didn't.

'Then the Labour Government took us to court and made each of us bankrupt. They said we owed £82,000 between the eleven of us.

'When you're bankrupt you can't get anything on hire, you can't get credit, and you can't be a local councillor.

'But we did what we thought was best. People will never forget it here and I'll never forget it. I'm still the same person though, I'll still fight for my rights. And that's what others should do now that the Tories are putting up the rents again.

'Don't pay it. Organise another Clay Cross.'



Andrew Wiard (Report)

Mrs Desai Grunwicks

THE GOOD THING thing I remember about our strike at Grunwicks was the tremendous power the trade union movement has. The bad thing I learnt was that the leaders of the trade union movement and the Labour Government wouldn't support us. It was the rank and file that came to help us.

We were on strike from

August 1976 until February 1978. It was a long time, but how could we return to work there? The women had been so badly abused and were always threatened with the loss of their jobs. Management were always pushing us to work harder, yet our pay was only £25 a week. There were so many things that were unlawful – the pregnant women weren't allowed to go to the clinic, they couldn't take maternity leave.

But the strike proved how strong the women were. When

the Union threatened to stop our strike pay unless we called off the mass pickets they said they were prepared to lose the money but they wouldn't stop the pickets. They were militant, and they were prepared to fight to the end.

The Tories are cutting off our hands with their new law. Four or five people on a picket line have no chance. You can't stop a scab bus like we tried to do at Grunwicks with that number of people. They are taking away our rights.

EQUAL PAY VICTORY

IN 1976 women members of the engineering union at the Trico windscreen wiper factory won equal pay, after one year of negotiations and 21 weeks of official strike.

There were mass pickets of supporters from the womens liberation movement and sympathetic trade unionists which prevented lorries with supplies from entering the plant. But every day men from the women's own section, including the husbands of some of the strikers, crossed the women's picket line.

Most of the shop stewards supported them, but they were unable to pull out their members. Not surprising, since the chairman of the shop stewards committee continued to work throughout the strike.

He quickly became the ex-chairman of the committee, but the scabbing continued.

After 13 weeks of the strike, the Trico case came up before the Equal Pay Tribunal, which found against them. The women boycotted the hearing and sat outside the gates for another eight weeks before winning their claim.

But it was a bitter sweet victory: the strike would never have taken 21 weeks to win if the women had enjoyed the real support of their workmates. It showed up the need for a strong, and united rank and file movement.

WOMEN OCCUPY

1975 WAS the year of equal pay. It also saw huge numbers of redundancies, with many firms selling up and moving out in search of higher profits. The workers at Imperial Typewriters, Hull, faced with closure, waited for weeks to hear from Tony Benn in hopes of a miraculous salvation from above.

None came. Instead there was a last minute occupation by 300 workers, most of them women, in an attempt to save 1000 jobs.

OUT OF THE '70s

The women had been told to pick up their cards not from the factory but from the Young People's Institute. Helen Charlesworth, the senior T and G steward said later, 'I sat in my house fuming and swearing, then I went down to the Bingo and talked to some of the women there. We decided to go down to the factory anyway in the morning... there were a few of us milling around not knowing what to do. I said "knackers to this! We're going in!" and we all rushed at the gates. Claire Tate, the convenor, climbed over and got the keys out of the gate house. Then we were in, occupying.'

Sadly, this 'biggest and bravest battle for jobs since the mass sackings started' was isolated by union leaders. Solidarity delegations from other workplaces weren't allowed through the factory gates. It was left to the IS (forerunners of the SWP) in Hull and York to try to organise a proper creche which would, it was estimated, double the number of workers in the occupation forces.

Helen Charlesworth thought that this isolation had fatally weakened the occupation: it could have been successful and have grown if all the workers had been fully involved in the running of it, and if it had been used as a centre to 'spread resistance to redundancies.

DEFEAT

LEICESTER was the scene of some of the earliest attempts by Asian women workers to fight back against the double degradation imposed on them at work, a struggle taken up by Grunwicks and Desoutters, and continued today by Chix in Slough.

At Kenilworth Components the strikers who came out against the sacking of seven women found that they had to fight their union, the Transport workers, as well as their boss.

The six week dispute was official, but they never saw any strike pay. A district levy was promised, but never carried out. No appeals were sent out from the district office for financial support. Instead, the district organiser urged them to go back to work, accept the proposed sacking of ten more women in addition to the original seven, 'sweetened with a 3p per hour 'token good will rise' for the men!

The strikers rejected this unanimously, but were eventually starved back to work. The women were not allowed to develop their

own leadership as the strike went on. Instead all initiative was taken from them. The shop stewards were chosen on the basis of their ability to speak English. The real leaders and militants were ignored. Stewards should be elected on the basis of how well they

reflect the views of their membership, not on how well they can be understood by management!

Meetings were held away from the picket line, and as one of the women strikers, Champa Behen, pointed out 'It's difficult enough for us to argue with our families

about having to be on the picket line, but it is quite impossible to come to a meeting at a pub, late in the evening.'

The final decision to call off the strike was taken at such a meeting, with seven men and only one woman present.



FACTS OF WORKING LIFE

Number of women at work

1971	8,224,000
1979	9,175,000

Number of women working part-time

1971	2,757,000
1976	3,585,000

Percentage of married women working

1971	42.3%
1978	50.8%

Hourly rates of pay (excluding overtime)

	male	female
1970	67.4p	42.5
1978	£2.00	£1.48

Women's hourly rate as percentage of men's

1970	63%
1977	75.5%
1978	74%

Women's weekly wages as percentage of men's

1970	54.5%
1978	65%

Trade Union membership

	male	female
1970	8,444,000	2,743,000
1977	8,953,000	3,753,000

Women's occupations - manual

1977	53%	catering, cleaning, hairdressing and other personal services
	19%	painting, repetitive assembly, product inspection, packaging, etc.

Women's occupations - non-manual

1977	55%	clerical and related
	25%	professional and related (education, welfare, health)



Eileen Ward, shop steward at Trico, announced their victory to a mass meeting.

OUT OF THE '70s



Above, Asian women on strike for a decent wage at Futers, North London. Far left, the EGA workers sat down on one of London's busiest roads. Left, Women Against the Nazis on the Anti Nazi League carnival. Two massive carnivals in 1978 turned the tables on the growing National Front and everyone learnt to call them Nazis.

Pippa Pearson EGA Action Committee

FOR THE PAST 15 years this hospital has been run down. Five years ago they closed the ear, nose and throat unit, and four years ago they closed the eye department and pediatrics. Now babies are delivered at the Whittington Hospital because we have no obstetric facilities here.

Yet the EGA was started for women, to be seen by women,

for any problem they had.

We half wanted the Tories to get in, not that any of us voted for them, because they said they would save the hospital. In saying it should be a gynaecological hospital for women they've missed the whole point. If you have a wart on your bottom you won't be seen here, because that's not gynaecological, is it?

The Tories haven't saved the EGA at all. They have made one promise, to have a day care abortion service, but we'll believe that when we see it.

MOTHERS AND BABIES FIRST TO SUFFER

Andrew Ward (Report)



Helen Hayman

WOMEN NOW are much more aware of how they are being treated than women were ten years ago, and they are much more prepared to stand up for what is theirs.

But 1979 has brought a backlash on womens rights. We have a token woman at the top but the weight of the administrative decisions and legislation are against women.

The creation of a framework of legal equality was one of the most positive aspects of the seventies, but those legal changes didn't alter the basics that still determine how many women live their lives. Society will have to change its attitudes to child rearing first.

I took my baby to the House of Commons after it was born because the whips refused to give me time off. I was still breast feeding at the time. Then all the publicity followed. I got a lot of very vitriolic, hate mail, either claiming I was unfit to be a mother, or that I was unfit to be an MP!

People would accept a successful woman if she pretended to be a man, but once you tried to combine the roles that was, and still is, too much to accept.

AT THE TORY PARTY conference in 1970 Margaret Thatcher, the Minister for Education in the newly elected Tory Government, argued for the under-fives. She proposed a new crash programme of nursery school building.

Not to be outdone the Labour Party argued for even more. 'Education expenditure will increase, with a major priority in this sector being nursery schools,' said Labour's programme.

An extensive programme of nursery building was started and students were recruited into the colleges to train as teachers.

It was seen as an investment in

Launie Spatham (IFL)



our future. More and better education would give the country the technicians, the engineers, the teachers it needed.

Now nursery education is seen as a luxury we can no longer afford, as though it were something that women had been getting for free on the rates.

The cuts started under the Labour Government and the rampage is continuing under the Tories. But is it true we can't afford nursery education?

In 1948 the country's national income was a third of what it is today. Sweets and sugar were rationed. No one had television. But the war had forced women out to work and nurseries had been opened.

In 1948 there were as many under fives as there are today. 71,045 went to nursery schools. By this year the figure had slumped to 14,300.

That's thirty years of progress. Back to the old ideas of the mother tied to the home. Women will have to leave their jobs; baby minders, friends and relatives will have to do.

IN 1911 when the maternity grant for expectant mothers was first introduced it was fixed at one pound and ten shillings (£1.50p). It has been increased four times since then and its present level of £25 was fixed in 1969. Inflation demands that the amount should be increased to £85.

But inflation over the last ten years has taken its toll and a

campaign was started up in the summer of this year to increase the rate to £85. (A spokesman for the campaign pointed out in December that the amount now needs to go up to £90).

Kevin McNamara won a place in the ballot for private members bills in Parliament and introduced the Social Security Maternity Grant Amendment Bill. It needed 100 votes on its second reading to continue on its way through Parliament. On Friday afternoon, on the

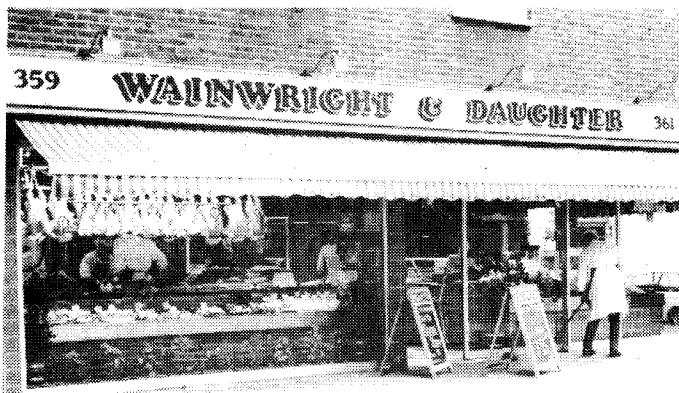
December, it got 95 votes, with no votes against, and was chucked out.

All debates in Parliament on a Friday take place in the afternoon so that MPs can get home, or return to their constituencies, for the weekend. But on that Friday afternoon there were some notable absences. Tony Benn for instance, and Renee Short, Jack Straw, Jo Ashton, Frank Allaun, Norman Atkinson, Alf Dubbs, Albert Booth, Norman Buchan, Eric Heffer, Stuart Holland. And so the list goes on. Do all these left-wing MPs really care so little that they can't even stay at work for five days a week? It only needed five of them to be there: where were you all?



Chris Davies (Report)

LEGAL CHANGES



The Equal Pay Act, 1970

gave equal pay to women doing 'like work' or work graded as being similar to a man's. This was a narrow definition of equal pay (unlike the EEC ruling which is for 'work of equal value'). It was never designed to help women in predominantly female workplaces. But even so, many women did get some benefit. In the mid-seventies the differential between men's and women's wages narrowed slightly, but the signs are that this trend has stopped and probably reversed.

The Sex Discrimination Act, 1975

tried to outlaw discrimination against women in jobs, services, housing and education. The Equal Opportunities Commission was set up to monitor the laws and promote equality. It's a body without teeth – the only government body which under-spends its annual budget. There are huge gaps in the Sex Discrimination Act. It doesn't apply to jobs in private households, to firms with five or fewer employees or to single sex schools. Its main function has been to iron out anomalies. For example, it is much easier now for women to get mortgages. It has opened up new job opportunities in traditional male areas for a very small number of women.

Employment Protection Act, 1975

introduced maternity leave for women who have worked for the same employer for more than two years. It entitles them to six weeks maternity pay which is 90 percent of full pay from the employer and the right to come back to the same or another suitable job up to 29 weeks after the baby is born.

Social Security Pensions Act, 1975

gives women very limited 'equal access' to pension schemes on the same terms as men, but only if they are doing the same work as men under the Equal Pay Act. Women will also now be entitled to a full pension if they have had at least 20 years in employment, even if they spent some years at home looking after children.

Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act, 1976

was a response to the humiliating ordeal which many women had to go through if they accused a man of raping them and found themselves virtually on trial. The Act allowed that the sexual history of the woman should not be brought up unless the judge thought it relevant, and that the woman's name should not be published except where withholding it would harm the accused. But it doesn't stop the press publishing details which can identify the woman – like the street she lives in. And many judges still show their prejudices about women's sex lives.

Domestic Violence Act, 1976

gives women a degree of protection from violence in the home. It allows the courts to issue injunctions preventing the man from molesting the woman or living in the home. A judge can also order arrest if the woman or child is the victim of actual bodily harm which shows signs of continuing. The Act gives women rights in law but does nothing until after the woman has been beaten up – a situation backed up by the police who won't intervene in domestic disputes.

MODERN FEMINISM was born in America in the '60s. It was radical, exciting and revolutionary. Its image was determined by the extreme groupings like SCUM, the Society for Cutting Up Men who stated their aims quite plainly in their manifesto: 'There remains for civic minded, responsible true seeking women only to overthrow the Government, institute complete automation, eliminate the money system and destroy the male sex'.

Not all women in the movement shared these ideas. But they all shared a single minded determination to change the way women were treated. Their ideas and activities were to have a profound effect on the lives of both women and men over the next decade.

By 1970 the movement had crossed the Atlantic. Over 500 women gathered in Oxford for the first British womens liberation conference in March of that year. Described by the Observer as 'young, violent, radical and extremely attractive with their long hair and their maxi coats' those women launched the movement in this country.

The following year the movement marked its first anniversary with a march of several thousand through London. The Observer (again) sniggered 'there was no violence. Nor were any bras burned. Maybe because it was too cold.' But sneers aside this was the first wave of change in womens lives.

The movement itself was mostly young, middle class and well educated. But it appeared at the same time as working class women were also moving into action.

The Government was already drawing up plans for legislation which would give women equal pay, and would end discrimination against women in some areas.



'**LIBERATION**, the lady said. Rubbish we thought. Then we thought some more. Then we talked some more. Then we came together. That was it. Spare Rib is the result. We are waiting with bated breath for your reactions.'

So began the first edition of *Spare Rib* in July 1972.

It was to be, and still is today, the magazine for the Womens Liberation Movement.

It was no accident that all these things happened at the same time. Womens liberation, women workers militancy, and government plans for women were all part of the response to the massive changes that were underway.

Capitalism had boomed since the second world war. Industry had expanded. The white heat of the technological revolution had made its mark.

Improved technology cut down the amount of time women had to spend in housework. Detergents, washing machines, vacuum cleaners and foodmixers all became available on the mass market.

Contraceptives were readily available to women of all classes for the first time ever. At the same time the boom in the economy was whisking women out of their



THE NEW WOMENS' MOVEMENT

homes, out of their traditional roles as reproducers of the workforce and into the factories.

Recruiting vans from Plessey and Ultra toured the working class estates. Day shift, evening shift, leisure shift, morning shift, part time, full time—whole patterns of working were devised which would enable women to combine their traditional family roles with their new ones as workers.

Women were in the labour force to stay. Whole industries were now based on cheap female labour. So Government and employers made plans to enable women to cope as easily as possible.

The boom did not just affect working class women. The increased demand for skilled labour and for technologists put more women onto the university production line, as the Robbins Report recommending expansion in higher education was impelented.

That too led to new aspirations for women. Those who had spent years getting educated were no longer content simply to end up with their arms in the sink. They wanted something more.

The changes in womens lives were reflected in the early womens movement. Though the boom is now over, our lives will never be the same again.

Anna Paczuska

Anna Raeburn

1980 IS GOING to be one of the worst years for women for a long time. The changes in the immigration rules. The Corrie anti-abortion bill. The cuts in money to the Area Health Authorities, which will cut the provision of the coil and the pill. Everything the Family Planning Association has worked for for 40 years will have been for nothing.

It's a grim prospect.

The women's movement was middle class but a new kind of women are percolating up now. Women who are much more sure about what they should have, the decisions they can make. The changes are there for those who can take advantage of them.

You don't have to stick in a marriage you can't stand. You may still be your husband's chattel but more fool you if you accept that. Look at the divorce rate amongst working class families, it's up. Those women have always had to work, now more of them are saying well, if I have to work, I'm not working for him!

Sheila Rowbotham

TO UNDERSTAND why the women's movement emerged and the extent of its impact, we have to think about the kinds of changes which had taken place in our society.

There were shifts in class structure which occurred with the expansion in education and the growth of new forms of service work and welfare, in which women's work was obviously comparable to that of the men they worked with. There was a tendency towards small families, the existence of more reliable contraception.

A more permissible attitude towards sexuality accompanied the erosion of the early capitalist work ethic of thrift and postponement of pleasure. The advertising media pushed the values of instant consumption.

The emphasis in the early days of the Women's Liberation Movement was very much upon relationships in the family and upon the false and insulting image of women in the media. For many young women who were educated, drawn into skilled kinds of service work with the assumption they were equal to men, then to return to isolated child care in the family, was a contradictory process.

Not surprisingly these conflicts and pressures were first expressed in America where the changes in capitalist society were most advanced.

Although in the seventies the movement in Britain has

campaigned for child benefits, free contraception, abortion, the particular form of the small group has enabled the movement to grow in a very flexible way. These groups can be formed in any aspect of life where people feel uncomfortable or unhappy rather than simply focusing on big issues in which large campaigns can form.

The emphasis has not been so much on women's rights or on issues as on our changing relationships between women and between men and women.

We have been saying that to concentrate on the exploitation of the working class, the class through which the system of

Women invade one of the bastions of male separatism in London, El Vinos Bar in Fleet Street, below.



1971 women picketed and invaded the Miss World contest



Angela Phillips (FL)

OUT OF THE '70s



Below, women demonstrate in Birmingham for rights for battered wives; above, womens Liberation Conference in 1978.



Rape Crisis Centre

THE RAPE CRISIS CENTRE started in England in 1974. Some women came back from America having worked in Rape Crisis there, and there were women in the Women's Liberation Movement who had been raped and badly treated by the police. They wanted to express their anger.

A Rape and Violence discussion group started at the women's liberation centre in Earlam Street. Fifty women came to the first meeting. In the following weeks the group drifted two ways. One into consciousness raising. The other equally wanted to talk but also felt a great need to do something.

We started meeting, reading and training ourselves with two

women who had worked in Rape Crisis in the States. We raised money from Cadbury's. We started a 24 hour telephone line.

At first we met with hostility from the press and we felt despondent, but gradually over the years Rape Crisis has built up. We go round schools and talk to mixed classes, and girls in groups on their own. We speak at conferences. We train other groups of women to run Rape Crisis Centres. There are eight centres in the country now.

I feel the flux of 1968 produced an incredible incentive. The impetus for a lot that's happened in the seventies comes from then, but there are people now involved in Rape Crisis who aren't from that tradition. A new impetus has begun.

Lesbian Line

THE 1960s was the decade of the establishment of sexual permissiveness. They called it liberation – but it was only a start. As the sexual politics movements developed new analyses, we saw that sexual permissiveness could increase vulnerability. And it was all very heterosexual.

Lesbians didn't really get a look in 'till the 70s were well under way. Then, the women's liberation and gay movements meant that the old individual approach to sexuality got put into a wider political context. Lesbians began to see their experience as not just a personal problem to be solved by finding the right lover. We started working together.

Lesbian Line began in late 1977. There were gay switchboards around for five years before that but both the women working on them and the

Reclaim the night demo in Soho



women calling in found that they didn't have the same needs and ideas as gay men. The Line was set up by women from mixed switchboards, and by women who wanted to work exclusively with and for other women.

The numbers of calls from women to the mixed switchboard had made us think we wouldn't be very busy. But we were amazed and overwhelmed by the response – 35 calls on that first afternoon. There was obviously a huge need for women to be sure of speaking to other women. The number of calls grew rapidly to its present level – around 150 per week in the 25 hours we're open.

Lesbian switchboards are spreading. They are now operating in Cambridge, Leeds, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Oxford, Swansea and there are several others in the pipeline. Most of the other gay switchboards also have special women's nights. Lesbian Line is a collective of feminist lesbians. We run the phone service, plus Sunday socials and benefits (our only source of funding apart from donations). Give us a ring if you want to find out more. Lesbian Line, 01-837 8602, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 7-10 pm, Monday and Friday 2-10 pm, BM Box 1514, London WC1V 6XX.

Running into the future

I WAS beginning to think that maybe I'd been wrong. Maybe women aren't interested in sport. Maybe women don't do anything so undignified as to actually play — except of course for the occasional odd-ball.

Going through the papers over the last ten years, looking for what women have been up to in the sports field, I came across one big obstacle. There wasn't very much there.

And much of what there is, is written by such learned men that how could I dispute their views?

For example, on the fight for equal pay in tennis: 'It is probable that they (women) should be paid less because they look less handsome than men (and so do not attract lady spectators), and because they play much worse (as they do in most sports where they do not have a horse to help them) . . .' (Economist, July 1976).

Or on the prospect of a woman riding in the Grand National: 'to let a woman ride is to invite another disaster such as the great pile up of 1967 . . .' (Times 1977).

Well, what can I say . . .

Then I began to remember one or two little things, like the fact that the record holder of the two-way Channel swim in 19 hours 55 minutes, is . . . a woman.

So I did a little more digging and underneath all the male chauvanist rantings, it comes to light that sportswomen have been by no means idle.

In 1970, having won the battle for open tennis, some of the women on the circuits, led by Billie Jean King, started campaigning for equal pay. The first Virginia Slims circuit was set up with a small sponsorship from that cigarette company. Now it is one of the richest circuits in the world.

But its not just the sports that women have traditionally played — if not always equally — that they have been making headway.

For example, in May 1972, the Jockey Club bastion of the male ego, granted a license for the first ever womens flatrace, though it took another five years for

Women break new ground



Chris Davies (Report)



TOP: Women start off on the first women-only marathon run which took place in 1976 at Feltham. Bottom left: Charlotte Brew, first woman to ride in the Grand National in 1977. Bottom right: Theresa Bennett — she lost her right to play football with the boys in 1978.

Charlott Brew to become the first woman to race in the Grand National at Aintree — and without the dire consequences forecast by the reverend gentleman of the Times.

It is now generally acknowledged that before puberty there is absolutely no physiological difference between boys and girls, due to their sex, that renders

them unequal in sport. But in practice old prejudices die hard.

As late as 1978, Theresa Bennett, aged 12, was awarded £250 damages in the county court after the Football Association and the Nottinghamshire FA banned her from playing with Muskham United under 12 team — yet in the Court of Appeal, she lost her case.

But there have been successes. In 1972, Maria Pepe, also aged 12, won a civil rights case in America granting her the right to keep her local Little League baseball team. And back in England, Elizabeth Beal became the first girl to play in a rugby team in December 1978. 'She's a killer' was the verdict of one of her team mates!

Other very male dominated preserves have been penetrated too. In 1978 an all woman expedition to the Himalayas climbed a new and 'technically more dangerous' route up the Anapurna, the tenth highest mountain in the world. Arlene Blum, the expedition's leader said that the reason they decided to take an all women team was because the chances of a woman being invited on a major expedition were virtually nil.

Most of these examples I did eventually glean from the press but one thing that is even more interesting than the little they *do* report, is what they leave out.

For example, I came across a report in May 1973 which positively gloated over Margaret Court's defeat in her tennis match against the almost professional male chauvanist, Bobby Riggs. Perhaps that will teach women once and for all, it crowed, that they will never be equal in sport, that they will never come up to the standards of men.

But when Billie Jean King defeated him in humiliating straight sets only six months later in November 1973, I could find not one reference to it in the British press.

Women obviously have a long way to go in sport. They have a lot to catch up on but it will be longer still, I think, before they are treated as anything like equal in the eyes of the press. **Womens Voice** can do something to help redress the balance into the '80's but sportswomen will never be truly equal until they are equal in every other aspect of their lives too, until we have a society based on equality, not one that thrives on dividing us, by class, by race and by sex.

• Mary Ann Stuart

SPORT

'Since 1968 the annual death toll of women from the after-effects of abortion has all but disappeared, not to mention the mental and physical distress which statistics could not wholly reveal.'

David Steel, leader of the Liberal Party, 1978

IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES menstrual extraction and outpatient abortion were unknown to women like me. I remember a friend of mine telling me then that it was possible to get a day care abortion at University College Hospital and I looked at her with disbelief. Looking back over the seventies what have we gained?

By 1979 the fight for outpatient facilities has become part of the National Abortion Campaign, together with the fight against restrictive legislation. NAC has flourished in the seventies, has held a trade union conference and helped start an international campaign by setting up ICAR.

There are now twelve day care centres throughout the country which provide a quick, easy abortion service. Only the one at Mile End, in the East End of London, provides abortion on demand. We have seen the growth of the BPAS and PAS, the two largest charity clinics, which provide a low cost efficient and compassionate service for women who can't get NHS abortions.

The actual number of abortions has risen during the seventies but the abortion

rate has fallen as the number of women of child bearing age increases.

The number of backstreet abortions has fallen to almost nothing, as they now only happen in areas where it is impossible to get safe abortions. Only one death from illegal abortion was recorded in 1976, compared to 22 in 1968.

There has been a noticeable change in attitudes to abortion and much more information is available about how to get them. Women are more open about having had abortions and lots of women talk about their illegal ones from before '67. The veil of secrecy is being lifted.

But now for the bad news . . . even the limited gains made in the seventies are under attack. We are still a million miles from free abortion on demand. In the seventies we have seen three private members bills introduced into Parliament, from James White, William Benyon, and John Corrie, as well as three ten minute bills, from Norman St. John Stevas, Godman Irvine and Bernard Braine, all of which attempted to change the '67 Act and make it more difficult for women to get abortions. The Corrie Bill stands a good chance of becoming law.

The seventies has also seen the growth of organisations like LIFE and SPUC, set up with the backing of the Catholic Church to campaign to do away with the '67 Act altogether. They claim to have 200 branches in Britain,



Mark Ruser (IFL)

and they are highly organised.

Labour and Tory cuts in the health service will mean that the numbers of NHS abortions will fall. Only a half are performed on the NHS now, and in some areas abortions are seen as a low priority.

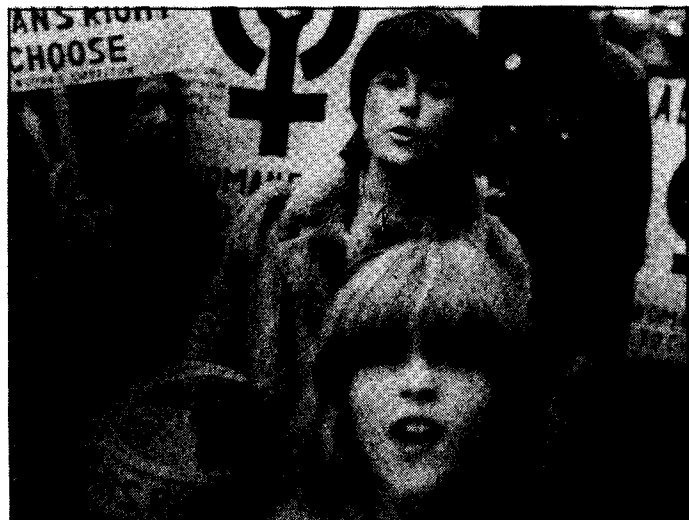
Many women who have had NHS abortions are very critical of the service they received. Bureaucratic delays, long waiting times and unsympathetic doctors made their abortions much more miserable than they need be. That's why the fight for outpatient clinics is so important.

More money and research is needed even now to develop a method of abortion which is reliable and medically safe.

And into the 1980's . . . 'The British Act has regularly been used as a model elsewhere in the world. Indeed, over the last ten years we have been overtaken in the liberality of the law on abortion, so that our much heralded and hard fought for reform of 1967 now seems remarkably unadventurous,' David Steel.

This is the law the anti-abortionists want to change. The 1980's means a real fight for free abortion on demand and the abolition of compulsory pregnancy. Child bearing has to be a real choice.

Alison Kirton



Angela Phillips (IFL)



Angela Phillips (IFL)



Mark Rusher (IFL)



Europe

BRITAIN IS not the only country that has seen a change for better or worse in the availability of abortion.

In the catholic countries of Europe, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Luxembourg and Belgium, abortion is still totally illegal.

Women still die in great numbers from backstreet abortions in those countries. The official figures for Spain and Portugal are 50 and 40 a year respectively.

In Ireland contraception is still hard to get. A new Act passed in August 1979 restricts even condoms and caps to a doctor's prescription. And of the 30,000 women who come to Britain every year for abortions most are from Ireland or Spain.

Other countries have fared better. In Holland there are no restrictions at all on abortions. Scandinavian countries provide free abortion on demand during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. In Italy the liberalisation of the

Bottom left, women were demonstrating for abortion rights in 1971. *To left*, Joan Paton was taken to court by her husband who claimed that he had the right to say no to her abortion. *To right*, an anti-SPUC demo. *Left*, Adele Faccio was taken from this meeting to an Italian prison for carrying out abortions in defiance of Italian law. *Right*, the parliamentary bills soon became known by their names.

law in 1977 makes abortion technically legal, though many doctors refuse to implement the law. In France the liberalised law has just become permanent after a five year trial period.

Eastern Europe

Countries in Eastern Europe and Russia were the first to provide abortion on demand, as abortion became the most common form of contraception. But a decline in the population has led to all sorts of restrictions.

North America

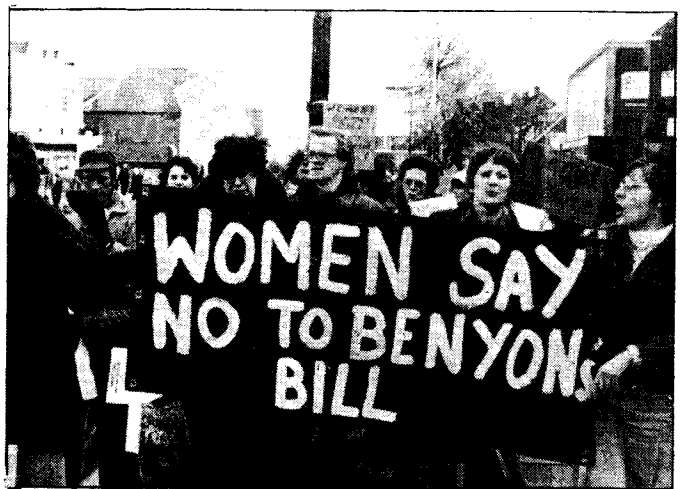
Pressure from the pro-choice movement led the Supreme Court to rule in 1973 that abortion was a private matter between a woman and her doctor. The anti-abortion lobby took such exception to this that they campaigned for, and won in 1976, the Hyde Amendment which said that each state could decide whether or not state

funds would be used to help women pay for abortions, thus restricting it to those who could pay.

The campaigning has now switched to the individual states where the anti-abortion movement has gone so far as to harass patients and doctors and fire-bomb clinics. The pro-choice movement is back on the attack again.

Latin America

Sterilisation rather than abortion has been the main weapon of the population control programmes, funded primarily by the United States. Women are also used as guinea pigs for new contraceptives or new methods of sterilisation. But any element of control women may wish to have over their own lives is denied them—abortion is illegal. In fact in Puerto Rico sterilisation is free, contraception is very expensive and abortion is illegal.



Angela Phillips (IFL)

The International Abortion and Sterilisation Campaign

You can affiliate to ICASC. Affiliation fees, including the newsletter are: individual £3, local organisation £10, national organisation £25. A subscription to the newsletter costs £1.80 for three issues a year. Write to ICASC, 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1.

Campaign Against Corrie, week of action, London School of Economics
Monday, 21 January, Sadista

Sisters, Linda Brimstone, 7.30pm, Old Theatre.

Tuesday, Public meeting for and against abortion, 1pm, Old Theatre
Wednesday, video of anti-Corrie march and theatre group Rowdy Women, 1pm.

Thursday, film, 7pm, Old Theatre
Friday RAS/CAS benefit with The Raincoats, The Passions, Maggie and disco, 7.30pm, Haldane Room.

Phone Paddy 205 2665, or Nina 405 4872.

DAY OF ACTION AGAINST THE CORRIE BILL. LOBBY PARLIAMENT, TUESDAY 5 FEBRUARY. IS YOUR UNION DELEGATED?

ASSEMBLY OF WOMEN, CENTRAL HALL WESTMINSTER, FRIDAY 8 FEBRUARY.

WE SALUTE OUR SISTERS

'We salute our sisters in prison, our sisters in struggle throughout the world'

Bernadette Devlin expresses perfectly the feelings of *Womens Voice* as we move into the eighties.

In Northern Ireland the struggle of the Catholic people for national independence and liberation is 800 years old. There are 45 women on political protest in Armagh jail. That struggle is on our doorstep.

Further away from home the people of Chile enter their seventh year under one of the cruellest dictatorships in Latin American history.

In Portugal the casualties of the revolution, which inspired revolutionary socialists everywhere, lie in jail. In Mozambique the story is different. Here, the people have won their war of independence and have at least a chance of developing their political freedom. The people of Mozambique can look forward to the eighties with more optimism than the people of Chile, Portugal or Northern Ireland.

Portugal

THE REVOLUTION of April 1974 in Portugal was cut short in November 1975. After that the new Government rounded up many of its adversaries including members of the Proletarian Revolutionary Party, the PRP. One of those imprisoned was Isobel de Carmo, a leader of the PRP and a woman with a long history of fighting against Portugal's old fascist rulers.

In spite of a general amnesty for political prisoners from the fascist era, and the acquittal of some detainees, members of the PRP are still in jail. Isobel was imprisoned with her six year old daughter and her three month old son Sergio.

Sergio is two now, and still in prison. On the three occasions that they have been moved in prison vans Isobel has tried to lift Sergio up so that he can see a world he's never seen above the wire meshing around the prison. She put up a photo of a cat in their cell and tried to explain to her little son that this was a domestic animal. He had never seen one before.

Isobel and the four other women political prisoners have been working in the prison. When they were allowed to mix with other women prisoners, a privilege now denied them, they organised lectures in family planning, gave gymnastics classes and held discussions about politics and the economy.

To end their incarceration in prison all the political prisoners are hoping that Amnesty International will take up their case.



Left, Angela Davies, black American revolutionary who was put on trial for possessing a gun used in a court shoot out in which Jonathen Jackson died. His brother, George Jackson, was killed in prison. *Above right,* the wife and children of Steve Biko, who also died while in custody, in South Africa. *Right below,* women freedom fighters train in Mozambique

INTERNATIONAL STRUGGLES



Bernadette Devlin McAliskey

This must be the decade of the rising of the women.

In Ireland in the '60's we were a politically stagnant backwater, but ten years of struggle in the North have changed that. The womens movement developed in two ways. In the South women were mobilising around women's issues, raising particularly the questions of contraception and the constitutional position of women in the state. In the North women were active in the anti-imperialist movement.

In 1971, with the introduction of internment women took on leadership positions in the resistance movement and led the fight against internment. In the worst days of the downturn in the

Northern struggle it was the militant women of West Belfast who challenged the Peace Women and on their own took up the task of remobilising the mass movement through the Relatives Action Committee.

Again in 1979 it was women in Northern Ireland who successfully asserted within the struggle the right of mass action and independent organisation.

It was then that the unity of the groups in the North and the South took place, through the Women Against Imperialism movement. It is the socialist women who have forged that unity and we know we can strengthen it.

We look forward to the eighties in the confidence and strength of sisterhood, knowing we play a major role as women in the struggle for socialism.

We salute our sisters in prison, our sisters in struggle throughout the world. In the '70's we have demonstrated our determination to end the oppression of women. In the '80's we must defend the gains made and continue our fight for the rights of women, for all the oppressed and for the recreation of a society in which all women and men are free. Only in socialism does liberation have any true meaning.

Chile

IT HAS BEEN a decade of turmoil in Latin America. But perhaps the most devastating events surround the coup in Chile in 1973 when General Pinochet brutally overthrew the democratically elected President Allende in the bloodiest take over Latin America has ever seen.

Allende's Popular Unity government had set in motion a change in women's lives. Day care centres, workers dining rooms, and laundry services were all established to free women to go to work. Pinochet's coup put women right back in the home.

Life under the Junta is characterised by massive unemployment, hunger, housing shortages, juvenile delinquency and high child mortality. Repression takes

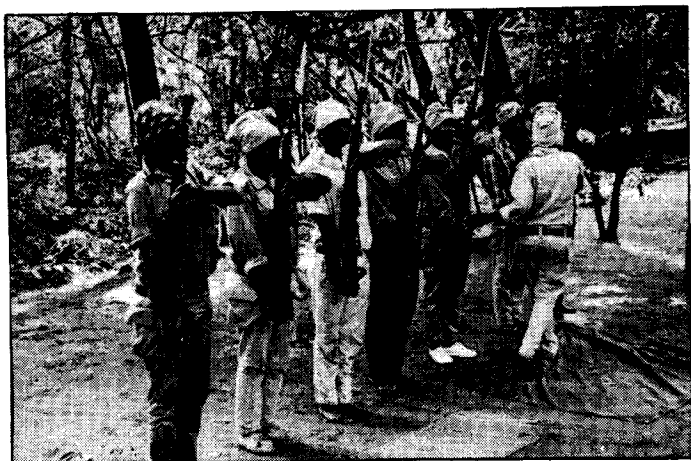
the form of torture, imprisonment, disappearance, exile and ultimately death.

But the women are not beaten yet. They are active in the resistance movement. With their meagre resources women cook communally to distribute equally what food is available; a traditional women's task, making patchwork tapestries, has been turned into a means of subsistence, of telling the world of their plight. A newspaper, also called *Womens Voice*, is published to organise the women.

Women make up the Relatives of Disappeared Prisoners group. They have held, despite the dangers involved, numerous public demonstrations and hunger strikes demanding to know the whereabouts of family and friends who have disappeared. The Government refuses to do or say anything.

In October this year the Tory Government here in Britain put a stop to the special programme for Latin American refugees wanting to come to Britain. They claimed the numbers had declined. In fact, Chilean applications for asylum in Britain have been at their highest level in the past 18 months. And last month, in Chile, the discovery of the graves of four disappeared prisoners was announced. They were found in a mass grave which contained 300 bodies.

PAT SIMMONS



Mozambique

WOMEN IN Mozambique were valued less than animals in the pre-colonial days, and under colonial rule fared little better as they became prostitutes for the white Rhodesian and South African holiday makers.

But in the war of independence women proved that this had to change and women's rights are now carefully laid down in the new constitution. The Organisation of

Mozambican women translates the constitutions equal rights programme into practical life.

First the OMW has to take these new ideas out to the people in the towns and the villages. The old ideas die hard. There is no formal sexual discrimination in schools but there are still large numbers of girls who have not been to school or who only received junior education, especially in the country areas where there are few schools.

There are women in the Government, and as the numbers of

educated women increase the numbers will surely grow.

Frelimo, the country's political party, believes that it is impossible to achieve socialism without the emancipation of women, and while it would be naive to think that every Mozambican woman is emancipated, the womens movement should continue to flourish. As Frelimo says, 'A luta continua': the struggle continues.

CAROL GATES who lived and worked as a teacher for 18 months in Mozambique

REVIEWS

WOMEN'S BOOKS OF THE '70s

The sixties saw the first new wave of books about women, many of them written and published in America. More followed in the seventies and from these we've chosen some of those that we think will stand the test of time, and will be remembered as having affected many of our lives and a lot of our ideas.

**OUR BODIES,
OURSELVES**
ANGELA PHILLIPS,
GILL RAKUSEN
PENGUIN £3.50

A group of women in Boston (USA) formed a group to look at women's health. The result of this was a book called *Our Bodies Ourselves*, which shared their information, research and thoughts with other women. The book first appeared here in the mid-70s and since then a revised British version has been published, edited by Rakusen and Phillips.

Our Bodies Ourselves considers the whole spectrum of women's health, from sexual anatomy and sexuality through contraception, pregnancy, childbirth, lesbianism, sexual infections and rape. It provides a clear and comprehensive range of information about our bodies that is readable and interesting for everyone.

Health is covered not simply from a curative point of view, but also a preventative one. Medicine and gynaecology in particular are demystified and unfrocked! *Our Bodies Ourselves* dispels once and for all the myth that women's health, sexual medicine and childbirth are the sole domain of highly specialised, predominantly male 'experts'. It deals with the female folklore of health as well as the scientific.

The result is a guide to her body that no woman should be without to refer to when needed. It is also a tool for women to use to understand how and why their bodies act and react and to gain the confidence to demand of doctors that they explain what they are doing and why they are doing it. It will show you you had parts you never knew existed before.

Jane Foster.

OUR BODIES OURSELVES

a health book by and for women

Boston Women's Health Book Collective
British edition by Angela Phillips and Jill Rakusen



WOMAN'S EVOLUTION
EVELYN REED
PATHFINDER PRESS
£3.30

Evelyn Reed's book was written to challenge those who think that women can never be equal because of their biological function. To question those who say that women can only be equal when

technology eradicates their biological role and to slam the male dominated world of anthropology which, despite evidence to the contrary, has persisted in declaring that men have always dominated women. She uses her anthropological expertise to build a new picture of our past.

She uses reams of anthropological evidence and historical materialism to show that there was a time in our past when women played a major role, if not

Evelyn Reed
**WOMAN'S
EVOLUTION**

from matriarchal clan to
patriarchal family



a dominating one. But most important, she shows, not that women, should, could or will have the upper hand again, but how women were once, despite their biology, in fact almost because of

it, the leading force in society. The conclusion must be that women can play an equal role in society without completely denying their role as childbearers.

This book is a bit specialised and difficult to understand, but it is worth reading to glean what you can. Very few people can claim to understand it properly, let alone treat it critically, but it is very important because it tried to rewrite our history.

Anna Bradley

THE HITE REPORT
SHERE HITE
DELL

I know men who have been shattered by reading the Hite Report. For the women who read it it is one more book which makes each of us feel less alone. That was true for myself. I didn't realise it was easier to reach an orgasm through masturbation or that orgasm in intercourse was something that had to be really worked for. And I don't think that most of us realised that most of us masturbate.

Orgasm and masturbation have now become topics that we can discuss, at least where we know each other. I would never have discussed what went on under my blankets before that.

But the full political implications of the book have yet to be realised. How are we ever to act on its implications when we're still financially dependent on men? How many women who are dependent upon men for their food, the roof over their heads, and their socially 'respectable' position, are going to turn round and admit that they are not satisfied by the way that their husbands make love?

How many women will ever get their men to recognise the realities of the Hite Report?
Mel Bartley

THE WOMEN'S ROOM
MARILYN FRENCH
SPHERE £1.50

The *Women's Room* is one of the most important 'feminist' novels of the decade. The central char-

acter, Mira, is followed by the author through her teenage life, into the hell of suburban marriage and finally through to her discovery of herself as a person capable of independence. She becomes a student. She experiences 'liberation' in all its pain and wonder.

Marilyn French's portrayal of her characters is sensitive and loving. Her intrusion as the author is unusually effective, you feel it's all real and happening somewhere, if not to the reader, certainly to women all over the world.

This is one of the few 'feminist' novels which through its humour and tenderness is approachable to millions of readers. It's as important for men to read it as it is for women as they will see the unwitting crimes they commit against women.

At the end of the book the author emerges. Her appearance and revelation of identity gives veracity to the book. You feel that the woman who wrote the book lived what she wrote.

Melanie McFadyean

HIDDEN FROM HISTORY SHEILA ROWBOTHAM PLUTO PRESS £2.50

Hidden from History does three things. It traces the family and the changing position of women over 300 years, from the civil war to the 1930s. It follows the development of feminist ideas and struggles from the radical, but elitist, ideas of Mary Wollstonecraft to the suffragettes and the pioneers of the contraception and abortion movement. And it charts the struggles and organisation of women in trade unions and socialist organisations.

In 1973 we'd all heard of Annie Besant and the Match Girls strike. We knew about Mrs Pankhurst and her suffragettes, but the strike of the Kilmarnock Mill girls in 1889; the London Laundresses struggle along with railway workers for a union in 1891. The Match Girls hadn't been alone. Women did fight to be organised, often alongside men, sometimes in opposition.

Today the right to choose and abortion on demand are accepted by most working class organisations, but in the 1920s and '30s the women who campaigned for this were fighting against the stream.

Any faults in the book are almost inevitable from an attempt to deal with 300 years of struggle in 180 pages. The chapter on the unionisation of women in the late nineteenth century is too short to deal with the complex problems of the conflicts between skilled and unskilled workers, or to look at the early trade union defence of the wife at home.

Sheila said that in Hidden From History she was 'turning up the topsoil in the hope that others will

dig deeper.' But with its broad sweep and class perspective she has helped re-establish our history.
Jennifer Ross

AGAINST OUR WILL SUSAN BROWNMILLER PENGUIN £0.95p

Susan Brownmiller's book is an extremely objective and intense document on rape. The book is not just a set of case histories of rape but a close examination of every historical, social and racial situation in which rape has occurred: the way in which rape is used in times of war to oppress the defeated nation or group, the way the prison system gives rise to rape and the way in which rape is used to impose racial oppression.

These reasons aside why do seemingly ordinary individuals rape? This question cannot be answered simply but Brownmiller does go a long way to explaining. However, she spoils the book by coming to some very strange conclusions. The strength of all is that a revolutionary step forward in the liberation of women would be to have 50 per cent women in the police force!

In spite of this it is a compelling book to read and should leave us with the conclusion that however liberated women become

in capitalist society the threat of violence will always be there and used unless we achieve socialism. Without books like these the question of rape would have stayed locked in the cupboard and women everywhere would have continued to accept violence as their lot.

Anna Sullivan

THE FEMALE EUNUCH GERMAINE GREER PALADIN £1.50

Germaine Greer was Britain's answer to America's women's liberationists. Her book *The Female Eunuch*, marked the birth of British feminism. It was not simply a shrewd observation about women's place. It was a witty and outrageous attack on male dominated society. It frightened and women.

It captured the exhilaration of the women's liberation movement—offensive, powerful and heady. She wrote of sisterhood and how "woman power means that . . . all the baggage of paternalistic society must be thrown away."

She wrote of how a woman could "It is easy to imagine love survives in a cottage with roses round the door, or in a house in Cheshire with a cook/housekeeper, a nanny, two gardeners, and two cleaners where the lady of the house is always scented and beautiful . . .

"But it isn't true, it never was,

and now for sure it never will be."

And she shattered our complicity with "if you think you are emancipated, you might consider the idea of tasting your menstrual blood—if it makes you sick you've got a long way to go baby."

I used to watch her on telly—envious of her wild behaviour. A journalist asked her what went wrong with her three-week marriage. "Nothing. It was a howling success. It just ended, that's all."

There was always a whiff of the debutante about her behaviour.

She was a radical feminist all the way, regarding women as the 'true proletariat'. Mad and flamboyant. She marked a revolution in women's thoughts.

'70's MUSIC

Things have changed for the better in the 70s as far as music is concerned. You could say that the late 60s opened a door musically for women. Janis Joplin and Grace Slick were a real revelation and attitudes to women changed. Women didn't have to be coy anymore.

Of the women singers who emerged in the 70s I particularly liked Chaka Khan, an American singer. I also liked Poly Styrene's lyrics, they are so honest and she's got an amazing sense of humour.

Each generation gleans things from previous ones—you talk about the 70s and you are also talking about roots going back hundreds of years.

In the 60s things were much cheaper, things are much harder now. In relation to living being tougher, the music now is much more aggressive. It's very tough for young kids leaving school, their innermost feelings will be much more aggressive. The poor are getting poorer and it's reflected in the music of the last three or four years.

It's never been easy for men or women in the music business. It is a real cut-throat rat-race. But with what's gone down in the last ten years people will be freer to be themselves than they were 15 years ago in terms of their image. For me the image comes second, the music comes first.

Fifteen years ago women had to modify themselves to a hell of a degree. Now that's not so much the case. You can be ruder, more open, there aren't so many rules. Audiences have been educated over the last ten years about what women look like. I used to get a load of abuse from men if I went on stage without a bra and my hair in a mess.

I'm convinced that there's a place for a woman singer to come along now and be really raunchy, be herself.

Carol Grimes

WOMENS HEALTH

Was The Pill the answer to our needs?

AT THE end of the sixties it was mini skirts and 'free love' and, although many of us didn't know what to do with it, there was this idea of a 'liberated woman'. That meant liberated enough to let our boyfriends make love to us and not to wait until marriage.

With all this came the pill. Between 1967 and 1976 the number of women using the pill rose from 1.5 million to 3.6 million. When you are talking about 8 million women who are, statistically 'sexually active', that is a very large percentage. The pill became the most popular form of birth control.

In the early seventies the pill seemed to be the answer to women's problems. It meant sex could be spontaneous and women could actually enjoy it. The FPA at that time presented its birth control with the words 'enjoy life with family planning'. For the first time women could remember, sex was presented as something women had a right to enjoy.

This was not all due to the pill, of course. But before we had the women's movement as we know it today, we did have tampons, the 1967 abortion act, and the pill. And these I am sure, have added to a woman's sense of having control over her life.

Women were not the only people enthusiastic about the pill. It suited big business very well. The pill can be produced on a massive scale and big companies can exert a lot of control over its marketing.

Family planners too were enthusiastic. Although the taking of the pill relied on the woman, everything else was in the hands of the doctors, and some kind of check could be kept because the woman needed to continue getting her pills.

Massive population schemes took place in the underdeveloped countries. A study in Bangladesh showed that the majority of health workers who gave out the pill could not say what kind of side effects a woman could expect and 82 percent did not know what advice to give a woman who missed taking the pill on five consecutive days!

Back in Britain, the Royal College of General Practitioners published a glowing report about the pill in 1974. There were even suggestions that the pill could be used to improve a woman's fertile life.

change. A report published in the *Lancet* (an important medical journal) entitled *Mortality among Oral Contraceptive Users* came out with the following:

1. the death rate from circulatory diseases and heart attacks was five times greater amongst women who had at some time used the pill.
2. this risk increased with age, cigarette smoking and duration of pill use.
3. the pill taken continuously for over five years increased the death rate by ten times that of non-pill users.

The RCGP then published a second not-so glowing report advising that women who were overweight, smoked and were over thirty-five should consider other forms of contraceptive.

In early 1978 the *Sunday Times* published a survey sponsored by the World Health Organisation and the US National Institute of Health which looked at the effects of the pill on the children of pill takers.

The survey found a 27 percent increase in major malformations amongst babies born to women who conceived immediately after coming off the pill. Women over thirty-five who took the pill were found to be twice as likely to have babies with Downs syndrome and other major abnormalities.

Neither of these surveys was conclusive. But it began to become clear that there were dangers connected with the pill, particularly high dosage pills. Many women who had complained of side effects began to be taken seriously by at least some sections of the medical profession.

Many women have experienced at least some or all of the following: nausea, lethargy, lack of sexual interest, head-

aches, weight gain.

In 1978 half a million women came off the pill in Britain. Though still the most popular form of contraceptive, the reports obviously made some women feel the risk or discomfort was just not worth it. Others, like one of the respondents to our *Womens Voice* pill questionnaire, who experienced sickness, nausea, loss of sexual interest and headaches, still thought that it was the 'best thing that ever happened to women'. (More results of the questionnaire in a later issue.)

Many women are quite happy on the pill. They experience little or no side effects. It is still statistically safer to be on the pill than to go through with a pregnancy. And this takes no account of the mental anguish that unwanted pregnancies can bring.

Given contraceptives that are available, it seems the pill is here to stay and is a good thing. At least the option of taking the pill is something that is good. But it is important that we don't regard it now with the same blind enthusiasm we did when it first arrived.

But it is important too that the dangers be properly advertised. For example the pill reduces the amount of breast milk we produce. In an underdeveloped country this can mean the difference between life and death for a baby. It is also affected by other drugs we take. Certain antibiotics, for example, can stop it working.

Then there are the long term effects, which are unknown. We are only beginning to see what happened to women on the old high dosage pills, and it will take much longer to see if the lower dosage pills are really safer, or if these effects merely take longer to reveal themselves.

Tessa Weare

In some countries, such as the Irish Republic, the pill and other contraceptives are still very difficult to obtain, if not illegal altogether.

In May 1971, almost ten years ago, 45 women took large supplies of contraceptives from Belfast to Dublin in defiance of the anti-contraceptive laws.

Although they declared them and refused to hand them over, they were eventually allowed through the customs amid much embarrassment on the part of customs

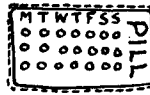


The Liberation Game

Each Player throws one turn of the dice



START HERE



1970
SCHOOL SKOOT OUT A EYE

Leave school. Sex no longer illegal. CSEs passed. What next?

1970. First job in supermarket. Earning £9 per week as cashier. Boys stacking shelves earn £11. Ten Benson and Hedges to flash at local youth club cost 2/-.

6d = 2 1/2p 3d = 1 1/2p
2/11 = ? = 1 1/2p

1971

1971 Leave supermarket at decimalisation. Can't stand the aggro from customers about being diddled by the decimals.

Go back to start and try for another job.

TO BRA OR NOT TO BRA?

1971. Read about first Women's Liberation demo in London consider burning bra but worried no one will notice.

Miss a turn while you think it over.

1972

1974. February, during power cut in the three day week you lose your birth pills and fall pregnant. Go back three squares and blame it on the Tories.

1974

Miners

1973. Military coup in Chile. At the Heinz factory where you work you organise a boycott of Chilean beans. Venceremos! Go forward one square.

You

Get off with Fred (student, trendy, left). He practices this thing called the horizontal road to socialism. Spend two weeks wages paying off his fine after he is arrested at Saltley gates during Miners' strike.

Sucker! Go back one square.

1974 October. Vote for Vanessa Redgrave in election.

1974 December. Baby born, decide to call him Arthur.

1975

1975. Sex Discrimination ACT. Boss tells you that he won't have to open doors for you in future. You tell him that you take your coffee black with one sugar.

Right on Sister. Go forward two squares.

His £1 Hers £1

1975 Equal Pay Act... according to the law wages are equal. How come you only take home half what your brother does?

Miss a turn. This calls for some deep thought.

1976. Even prescription charges for Valium have gone up. You and Arthur decide to go on massive cuts demo in autumn.

Forward one.

RENT RATES FOOD FARES SOCIAL CONTRACT?

1976 Rents up, rates up, union official at work says the social contract is a case of what you lose on the swings you gain on the roundabouts, you don't seem to be able to find a roundabout. So you'd better miss a go

NURSERY

1976 Arthur's nursery is closed by vults, you have to find £10 a week for childminder. Get rehoused by council to thirteenth floor. Can't decide whether this is a good year or a bad one.

It was a bad one. Go back two

1976 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR

A year to forget as it achieved so little Miss a turn.

W.V SATS FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND - A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE!!

SPUC OFF!!

NO RETURN TO THE BACK STREETS

1975 James White Bill. You and Arthur go on demo against the bill, it is defeated.

1977

SAVE OUR SCHOOLS SAVE OUR HOSPITALS SAVE OUR NURSERIES! SAVE US!

MORE CUTS

2GA OCCUPIED

Your friend lends you a copy of Our Bodies Ourselves. You find parts you never knew existed before. Well, you live and learn, move forward two

GRUNWICKS

1977 You join Grunwicks picket line with other women from the Heinz factory. You are arrested and charged with assaulting a police horse. Well done, but you have to miss a turn while you wait for your court appearance.

ANL

1978. You and Arthur go to ANL Carnival with 150,000 others. You meet Joe, single father of Anne. Decide you are kindred spirits, form SPAN, Single Parents Against the Nazis.

Rock on one square

1978 Read Fat is a Feminist Issue. Destroy calorie chart and throw away pantie girle.

At last! Move on one square.

NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS FOR 1980

- 1 Change the WORLD
- 2 Join WOMENS VOICE
- 3 Have more FUN

AND WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO IN 1980???

1979 Margaret Thatcher becomes first woman PM. You and friends drink a bottle to commiserate while you can still afford to.

Don't just sit there, move on and do something about it.

1979 Joe and Anne move, he becomes common law house husband, complains that you are out at meetings all the time. But he does knit beautifully.

Miss a go while you work out how to handle this new situation.

SCHOOL STILL OPEN

1979 Arthur goes to school! You start work at local GEC factory. Your father is on strike during engineering dispute, you are elected shop steward.

It will create more problems than you envisage - move on one

Miss a turn - too dazed to move.

IF THE BRITISH ECONOMY were a sick person, and you were a doctor who diagnosed pneumonia, what would you do? There's poor old Britain, racked with pain, high fever, cough, shivers, at death's door.

There's one doctor, by the name of Thatcher, who claims to have a cure-all remedy. Apply ice packs and keep the patient naked in a draught. Guaranteed to get the temperature down.

That's what the Tories' economic policy is like. Their theory for what's wrong with Britain is that there's too much money about. If only they can restrict the money supply, they believe, inflation will go down. And when that happens, they claim, the other problems—low investment, unemployment, poverty, will melt away. Never mind that the patient might have died in the meantime.

The more she shivers, the more ice they shovel on. Meanwhile, they apply a tourniquet or two, cutting off the blood to the patients' limbs. If the arms and legs can't look after themselves, well they'll just have to be ditched. That's what cutting essential services is like.

The cure-all won't work. To try and cut the amount of money in the economy the Tories have put interest rates up higher than they've ever been before. Any one with a mortgage knows what that means. But it doesn't just put up the cost of living. It also means firms won't be able to afford to borrow money, so they won't have money to invest. Many companies will go bankrupt under the weight of their overdraft charges.

It all adds up to fewer jobs. At the same time, government public spending cuts are throwing more people onto the dole. It's a vicious circle. Fewer jobs means people have less to spend. Fewer goods are bought. More firms close down. And so it goes on.

There are many ways in which women are especially affected by such a policy. Unemployment is rising faster among women than among men. Many women work in the public sector, in hospitals, schools, old people's homes,

so the cuts hit them extra hard, in the form of fewer jobs and held-down wages. And those same services are what make life tolerable. Without them, the very young, the sick, the elderly have to be cared for at home—by women, for no pay.

The Tories won the election only eight months ago with the promise of tax cuts. They conned lots of people. Now it's been shown that the only people who are better off are those who get more than £20,000 a year. That's just one per cent of the population.

But the picture is even gloomier than that. To get away with their brutal policies they know they have to squash our ability to oppose them. They're terrified of any group of workers who can call their bluff, especially the miners, who did it last time. They'd rather expand the nuclear power industry, with all its horrifying dangers, because then they wouldn't be so dependent upon coal.

Then they are trying to bring, step by step, controls upon trades unions and upon picketing. They would desperately like to increase the power of the Official Secrets Act, to make sure the public and the press can't find out what's going on.

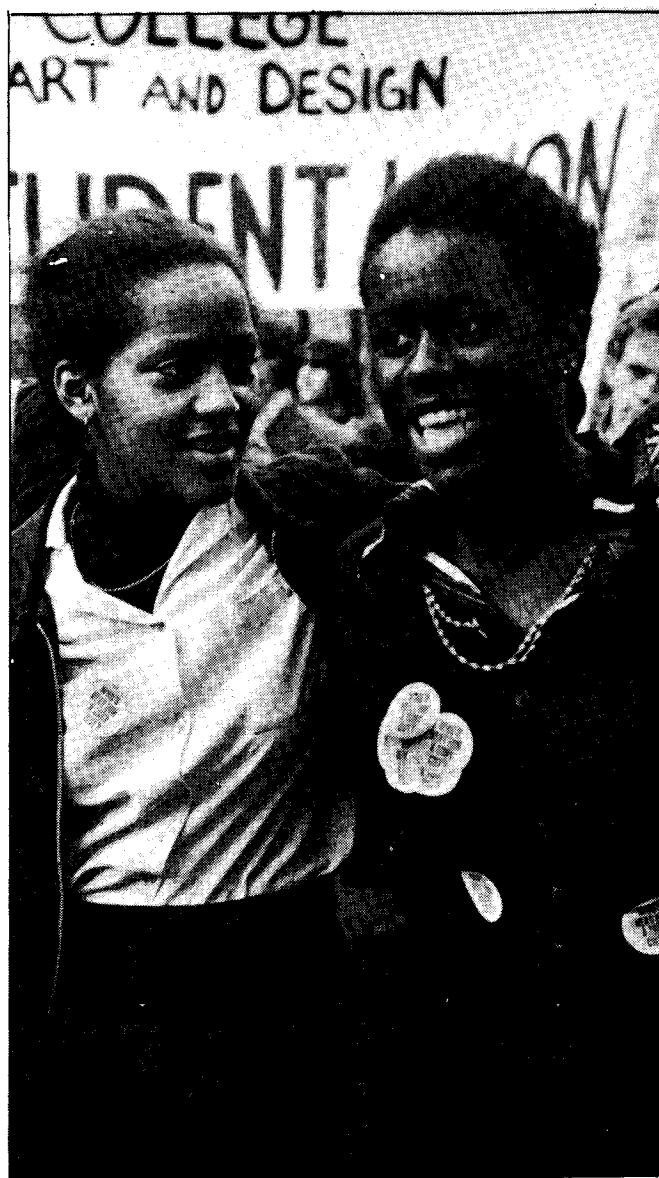
None of this is make-believe. It is all their serious intention. They want to give employers a free hand. They themselves want a free hand to do as they will. Never mind civil liberties. Never mind sex or race discrimination. Never mind that a whole class in our society today own nothing but the clothes they stand in or that whole industries, whole cities are being written of into dereliction.

Their philosophy can be summed up in the famous words "short, sharp, shock." It's your fault if you're poor. *You've got to learn to starve on your own two feet.*

The unions are too powerful. Women's liberation has gone too far. Immigration has got to be stopped. The welfare state is molly-coddling people. So down comes the Tory axe.

That is why the nineteen eighties look like being a

Virginia Turbet



WE'LL KEEP THE FLAME ALIGHT

dangerous time for us all. The short sharp shock won't work. It will only punish those who are not to blame in the first place. And it won't be short. Its effects will go on and on.

Even if they decide to try alternative strategies, they'll not succeed, not even in their own terms. In the Common Market, their hands are tied, they'd never dare try to pull out. They might go for a wage-freeze, but it's unlikely they'd get away with it. They could print more money and create

a phoney boom like Edward Heath did, but sooner or later the bottom would drop out. And meantime the world slump will be prodding them in the back.

It's in such an atmosphere as this that reaction sets in. Mass unemployment, exacerbated as the micro-chip revolution gathers speed, provides a nurturing ground for extreme right-wing repression. Already we've seen some of the old ideas pulled from the hat.

Agitators are to blame for

NEWS

Victory to hunger strike tenants

THE NETHERLEY ESTATE in Liverpool was completed only nine years ago. From the beginning the flat dwellers have organised to win improved conditions and more recently for demolition of the 1500 flats. On 7 November the Council agreed to empty the first three blocks. Maria O'Reilly of the Flatdwellers Action Group described their fight to Caroline Williams.

'For nine years we have organised ourselves to fight for decent housing. We have been on hunger strike for 112 hours, blocked roads, organised demos, kidnapped a rent office and its staff, occupied the Town Hall, disrupted housing committee and council meetings, picketed the Municipal Annexe for a fortnight, collected 15,000 signatures on a petition, had our case raised in Parliament, barricaded a mother and four children into the house they were squatting for four days, circulated 1500 questionnaires to tenants and written a report outlining the case for demolition.

In the end we won.

The flats we live in are damp, draughty, full of beetles, fungus and thoroughly depressing. Tenants are frequently flooded, roofs leak, landings are greasy and dangerous, lights on stairs seldom work. Electric wiring inside the flats is so often

flooded that it is dangerous and, worst perhaps of all, rents are £13.48 for the pleasure of these little extras.

We organised because a child fell from a balcony and was seriously hurt. It was only a matter of time before this would happen again. We have had elderly and youngsters fall from windows, sometimes fatally, mysterious baby cot deaths that we believe the dampness helped to kill. When the flats go on fire they collapse like haystacks.

The demands of our action group were simple at first: move families with children out of the flats. But now we realise that piecemeal methods of solving the problems were useless. We want demolition of the flats, and houses for rent built in their place.

We have the support of the local Labour party and trade unionists. And we know now that housing is a political question as well as a social one. People should have decent houses to live in. It is no use sitting around complaining—we must organise and fight for better places to bring our families up in.

Here is my advice to other people fighting for better housing: never give up arguing, organising and demonstrating. Decent housing is our right. A right we have proved can be won.'

stirring up discontent in British Leyland. Working mothers are to blame for the increase in crime. Sometimes it's the individual measures—the sacking of Derek Robinson, the attempt to remove maternity rights from women working in small firms—that give the real smell of what we're up to.

It's not all inevitable. Political events are not like the weather, they don't just happen. People make decisions. They can choose to decide differently, and they can be forced to decide differently. It is crucial for us, however dark the horizon seems at present, to realise that we too can decide.

Equal pay for equal work.

Equal educational and job opportunities.

Free contraception and abortion on demand.

Free 24 hour community childcare.

Legal and financial independence for women.

An end to discrimination against lesbians, a woman's right to decide her own sexuality.

Freedom for all women from intimidation by the threat or use of violence and sexual coercion regardless of marital status.

The demands of the Womens Liberation Movement. How many have we got?

Certainly in this, the first month of nineteen-eighty, it is not easy to see how we can advance the cause of women's rights, or improve the condition of working women.

Look at the list of aims set forward by our movement and see how thwarted they have become. Nevertheless, people with radical and revolutionary purpose have had to face such difficult times before now.

No doubt many women

active in the movement will be drawn into long hours of work, in their unions, defending basic rights, or into local campaigns, fighting the cuts. Some may be drawn towards Benn, in an attempt to stir the long-abandoned Labour Party into motion. Many of our struggles will be defensive ones, as attacks are made not only on abortion but other essential rights.

We start the decade defensively because the mass of workers, though not yet entirely beaten, are not yet able to fight back concertedly. The struggle for women's rights is, as always, linked to theirs.

When the suffragette years gave way to the hungry thirties, the cause of women became lost. Those middle class women who had gained entry into the professions went their own way, and all the rest were forgotten. Can we sit back and let it be said of our movement that it fizzled out?

What a travesty, what a judgement it would be, if the history books recorded that having 'gained' a woman prime-minister we all packed up and went home!

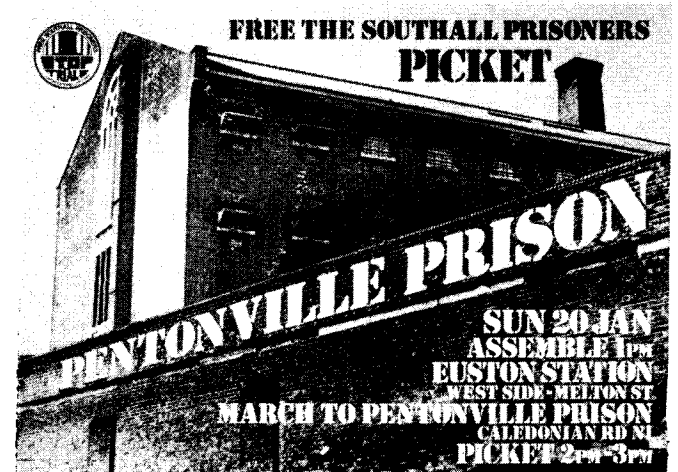
No, no matter how much on the defence, we must keep the flame alive. Our aims are as right and just as ever they were. In the coming months, *Womens Voice* will carry on putting forward those aims, trying to develop strategies through which we might continue to fight for them. We welcome articles and ideas from other socialist feminists. We certainly do not claim to have all the answers. Now, in nineteen-eighty is the time to put all our best ideas and activity together, and if *Womens Voice* can help provide a forum and a focus for those women who are determined to go on fighting, then that's what we're here for.

Judith Condon
Elana Dallas

SOUTHALL TRIALS

Last April 374 people were arrested in Southall, and Blair Peach died. They were demonstrating against the National Front daring to come into their community. The police went mad that day, and the courts have carried on where they left off. The conviction rate of cases arising from the events in Southall is unbelievably high. So far 10 people have been sent to prison. Join the picket of Pentonville on Sunday 20 January.

Organised by the Southall Defence Campaign, the Anti Nazi League and Friends of Blair Peach.



Defend women's maternity rights

THE NEW TORY Employment Bill is yet another attack on working women

Not satisfied with trying to take away our abortion rights, our health service, our jobs, our nurseries and our social services, they now want to take away our maternity rights.

If this bill becomes law women will lose their right to return to their job after maternity leave. In small shops, offices and workplaces, with less than six employees, there will be no right to return to work at all.

In bigger establishments we will keep the right to return to work but not necessarily the same job.

Your employer will be able to place you in any similar job. If you refuse the new job, on whatever grounds, you lose your right to work at all.

The paperwork necessary to return to your job is also to be increased, and with it the chances of making a mistake which will give your employer the excuse he needs not to take you back.

In future three requests to return to work will have to be made.

This new bill puts even more pressure on working women. What woman wants to return to work not knowing the job she will be expected to do?

Over the past few years there has been a big increase in the number of women belonging to trade unions. But this bill will make it harder than ever to fight for union recognition.

It will be illegal to stand on a picket line unless you are directly involved in a dispute. You cannot picket anywhere but your own immediate workplace.

Solidarity picketing will be stopped. There are hundreds of small workplaces where women, especially Asian women, have fought for and won union recognition because other, better organised workers have been prepared to stand with them.

This bill is about taking away shop floor union organisation. It will hit women hard. We have to start organising wherever we work to prevent the Tories from taking away another of our rights.

Maggie Rutter

Save St. Benedicts

IN WANDSWORTH we have had a Tory council who have pledged themselves to a very severe cuts programme and with the government cuts as well things are getting very tough indeed.

The list of cuts reads like a horror story—six hospitals to close, closures of nurseries, cutbacks in social services and recreational facilities, and the sale of hundreds of council houses (despite a critical shortage). Now they are talking about withdrawing from the Inner London Education Authority.

We're beginning to fight back. There have been the usual run of lobbies, meetings and petitions, which have drawn hundreds of people into the battle. Now there are the beginnings of direct action.

The staff of St Benedicts occupied their hospital in November. Management are doing their best to break their spirit by intimidating the workers. They have threatened to sack those who refuse to complete the transfer forms which will mean they can move the patients out. So long as they refuse to sign the patients stay put and the workers all have a job to do looking after them. So the answer to management was simply 'we're in control. We've got jobs already.'

Dee Davies

ABORTION DEMO

THE DAY-CARE abortion clinic at Mile End Hospital, East London, will be shut if the Corrie Bill becomes law. The clinic operates a policy of abortion on demand and 80 per cent of its operations would be illegal under the new Act.

The clinic provides a unique service for women in Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Newham. A friend of mine said that it took only 8 days from her first positive pregnancy test to obtain an abortion there. She saw a counsellor who was very sympathetic to her reasons for wanting an abortion, who explained the procedure fully and held her hand throughout the 15 minute operation (she had a local anaesthetic).

There is an urgent need to save this clinic, the Tower Hamlets Campaign against Corrie intend to appeal to local trade unions for support.

They have called a demonstration on **Saturday, 26 January, starting at London Hospital, Whitechapel, at 1pm, and marching through Tower Hamlets to Mile End Hospital for a rally.**

We want every Womens Voice group, Campaign against Corrie, NAC and everyone interested in London to support this demonstration.

Healthier Dowell

• Read Campaign Against Corrie News published by Tower Hamlets CAC. Price 5p, from 95 Jubilee Street, London E1.



Women occupying the Meccano factory in Liverpool. Management naturally blamed their sudden closure of the factory on the workers' union.

Chix women keep up the fight

'WE CAN'T RELY on our husbands wages. One wage isn't enough'. That was the reaction of some of the Asian women workers from Chix chewing gum factory in Slough. They have now been on strike since October for union recognition inside the factory.

Another of the strikers was bitter about the increase in mortgage rates. Hers has gone up by £50 a month. No joke at the best of times, but when you are earning the sort of money Chix pays, finding that extra becomes a nightmare. 'Margaret Thatcher doesn't care about us working people, only about businessmen', she said.

The strike is still strong, although scabs are being recruited from an agency. The women are hopeful that they can win. But they face problems. They need to visit local factories to get support for the picket and money. And they need to visit Chix suppliers to get the firm completely blocked. But it is difficult to do so on their own. Many of the strikers do not speak English. They have families and often find it

difficult to go anywhere. Other trade unionists can help by being on the picket, taking them to other workplaces, and arguing for support in their own place of work.

Their union could help by starting to pay the strike pay, promised for weeks, which still hasn't been forthcoming.

Asian women have shown they are prepared to strike time and again for the right to join a union. It's about time the trade union movement put some muscle into supporting them.

- Collect money for the strikers in your workplace or WV group. WV has produced a collection sheet.
- Visit the picket line, after 7am each morning.
- Invite a speaker from Chix to your union meeting or trades council.
- If your firm supplies Chix, try to get the supplies blocked.

Donations and messages to Mr M Anwar, 271 Goodman Park Slough Berks. For more information and collection sheets telephone 01 986 6222

Lindsey German.

LETTERS



Why can't I have my useless womb removed?

Dear Womens Voice,
I attended an infertility clinic in 1977 because I had been trying for a baby for eighteen months. I was 23. I was examined by a doctor, given a temperature chart, and told to return three months later.

I was told then that I did not ovulate, but as my husband had not been to the clinic, the doctor would do nothing more for me. Surely I have the right to receive treatment on my own account?

After further tests and x-rays, the doctor felt there was something odd about my case, and I went into hospital in March 1978. I had endometriosis and had to have one ovary and three quarters of the other one removed.

I came round thinking I'd had a cyst removed, feeling now I would be able to have children. Next morning the doctor told me my chance of becoming pregnant were virtually nil.

For a year I was on a drug called DANOL. Then I was told to keep a record of what happened when I came off it. My periods, which were bad before, became progressively worse. I went back to the hospital, and to my amazement was given another temperature chart, and told that if I became pregnant the disease would

disappear. Totally confused and upset, I went home. I had spent a year trying to come to terms with my infertility, and now they were implying that I could have a baby!

After two more months of agony, I returned to the hospital and said that I could not stand the pain any longer. I saw another doctor who said if I wanted a baby I would just have to put up with the pain!

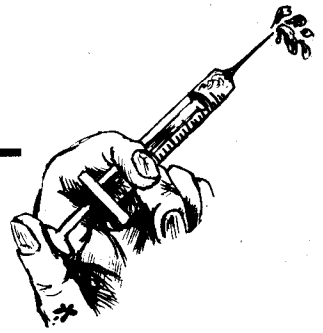
After a nasty row with my husband, the doctor admitted that my chances of becoming pregnant were almost nil and if I did it would probably be in the fallopian tube

My husband demanded that we see the original doctor. He told me the answer to my problem was to have a hysterectomy, but as I'm only 25, I've got plenty of time.

The worst of it is the emotional drain on me. At each hospital visit I go through agonies, and feel depressed for weeks. We are trying to adopt a child now. I want to be fit and well when the child comes. Not unable to cope for one week in every month.

My womb is useless. My age should not be a barrier preventing me from having a diseased and painful organ removed.
Marion Rook.

DEPO PROVERA—NO THANKS!



Dear Womens Voice

I was very concerned to read the article on Depo Provera (Womens Voice No. 35).

Two years ago I had an NHS abortion at the Victoria Hospital, Swindon. I wasn't told beforehand—but after the termination it was casually mentioned to me by the Doctor that I'd had a contraceptive injection, in theatre, to tide me over until I could have an IUD fitted.

Looking back, I remember several miserable months with at least three months continual bleeding, which I put down to the termination. My own GP was fairly unsympathetic during this time, and at on time were the risks of this drug ever mentioned. Indeed, it wasn't until I read your article that I knew any risks were involved at all. I am particularly upset by the cancer links, and this article is disturbing to say the least to those like me who have already had the DP jab.

I write in support of the fight against DP.
S.R., Swindon.

HELP

Dear Womens Voice

I would like to ask for help on behalf of Graciela Bolanos de Tatay. Graciela was a social worker in Colombia until her arrest on 14 February 1979. She was involved in a programme for the improvement of peasants' homes at the time of her arrest, and she was also co-ordinator of the Incora, the land reform institute programme of home improvement and rural education in the Popayan area of Colombia.

I am asking people to write to either, or both, of the addresses below, courteously enquiring about Graciela's present legal situation and requesting that she receive proper medical attention.

Although she has been charged with 'rebellion and theft of arms' there appears at this time no evidence to support this as the organisations she worked for were non-violent.

Write to:
His Excellency, Sr. Gustavo Balcazar-Monzon,
The Colombian Embassy,
76 Chester Sq.,
London SW1.
Presidente Julio Cesar Turbay Ayala,
Presidencia de la Republica,
Calle 10, Carrera 5-6,

Bogota, Colombia.

I am asking for your support in my capacity as an Amnesty International member. Any further information can be obtained from me through Womens Voice or from AI British Section, Tower House, 10 Southampton St., London WC2.
Janet Toseland, London.

Research please

Dear Womens Voice,

I have just read your pamphlet dealing with word processors. I am slightly disturbed by the attitude which pervades the literature — that being of militancy and opposition.

I think that a more reasonable attitude would be one of research and investigation

The aim of such a group as yours surely should not be oppose and attack (doesn't do anybody any good) but to research and investigate and produce a working document that would in the long run give your group a more feasible basis. Oppose and attack only throws the ball back into the government's and bosses' court and in an equal, caring society this is the last thing we want.
Susan Halesworth,
London.

WHAT IS GOING ON?

WV groups

● **ABERDEEN** Womens Voice for more information telephone Liz 51059

● **ACTON AND HARLESDEN** ring Carrie 993 0356

● **NORTH BIRMINGHAM** Women's Voice meets fortnightly. Phone Maggie 021 449 4793

● **SOUTH BIRMINGHAM** Women's Voice meets fortnightly. Phone Jill 021 459 1718

● **BLACKBURN** Womens Voice meets every Tuesday 8pm-10pm Jubilee Hotel (opposite King George's Hall) 673894 for details.

● **BLACK COUNTRY** Sundays fortnightly. 2.30, 27 Glen Court, Compton Road. For Information 23233. Children welcome.

● **BRISTOL** Womens Voice meets fortnightly at the Inkworks, 22 Hepburn Road (off Basingstoke Road), St. Pauls, Bristol 2. Ring Bristol 46875

● **BURY** Womens Voice. Ring Lynn 061 764 6659 for details

● **CANTERBURY** Womens Voice meets every other Tuesday at Jolly Sailor Northgate. Phone Barbara (Lyminge 862742).

● **COVENTRY** Womens Voice meets every other Wednesday, 8.00pm, at the Hertford Tavern, off Queens Road (near the Butts). Coventry 618956

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

● **EALING** Womens Voice meets regularly. Phone Jenny 991 0443.

● **ECCLES AND SALFORD** Womens Voice. For information ring Jennie 707 2557 or Ann 737 3800

DUNDEE. For information on local meetings, contact Audrey, 0382 452687.

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

● **GLASGOW** Womens Voice. For information ring Clare 959 8041 or Dorte 423 1185.

● **GLOSSOP**, Derbyshire Women's Voice meets second and fourth Tuesday of every month at 110 Victoria Street, Glossop. Phone Glossop 64287 for Carol.

● **HACKNEY** Womens Voice phone Pauline 985 3086 or Chris 806 8535 for information and babysitters.

● **HALIFAX** Womens Voice details from WV and SW sellers every Saturday 12.30-2.30, Cop arcade on the Precinct.

● **HARLOW** Womens Voice meets fortnightly on Wednesday at 8pm. Ring Pat, Harlow 28022.

● **HIGHBURY** Womens Voice. Details ring Elana 359 0842 (days).

● **HORNSEY** Womens Voice meets fortnightly. Ring Jane 348 6712 or Maggie 341 1182 for information and babysitters.

● **ISLINGTON** Womens Voice meets regularly. Phone Sandy at 802 6145 for details.

● **KENTISH TOWN** Womens Voice meets weekly. Ring Gail 485 0954 or Vera/Di 267 5059 for information and details.

● **LAMPETER** Womens Voice meets Tuesday evenings. Details from WV sellers or write c/o SDUC Lampeter. Dyfed, Wales.

LEICESTER Womens Voice meets alternative tuesdays. Contact Fiona 0533 62855.

● **LEYSTONE** Women's Voice has now been formed, telephone Pam 558 1509 or Annie 556 5595 for details.

● **LIVERPOOL** Womens Voice meets on alternate Tuesdays at 8pm in the County Hotel. For further information phone Alison at 727 4057 or 709 1844.

● **LUTON** Women's Voice meets alternative Wednesdays. Details and babysitters. Ring Jane 421266

● **MANCHESTER** University Womens Voice meets each week at 5pm in the students union.

● **MEDWAY** Womens Voice meets regularly. Telephone Helen, Medway 270 684 or Marge 251 362 for details.

● **NEWCASTLE** Womens Voice meets regularly phone 29129 for details.

● **NEWHAM** Womens Voice. Ring Pam 534 1417

● **NOTTINGHAM** Womens Voice group meets 2nd and 4th wednesdays every month at 8pm, 118 Mansfield Road. For further information or babysitters, ring Jane 49502

● **READING** Womens Voice meets fortnightly. For details phone Shirley on 585554

● **SHEFFIELD** Womens Voice meets fortnightly at the Prince of Wales, Division Street. For details ring Sue 613739

● **SOUTHWARK** Womens Voice meets every other Tuesday evening. Contact Jenny 697 7996 for more information.

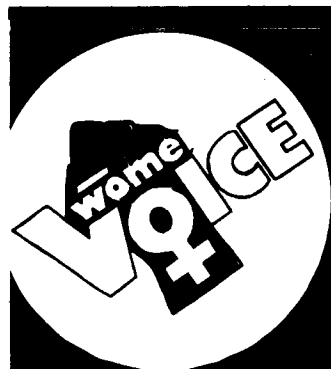
● **SOUTH LONDON** Womens Voice meets fortnightly on Tuesdays. Tate Library, Brixton. Oval. All welcome.

● **SOUTH WEST LONDON** Womens Voice. All welcome. Information and babysitters contact Marion 947 0560.

● **SOUTH WIRRAL** - Would anyone interested in forming a Womens Voice group please contact Janet, 051 339 6070.

NALGO WOMENS VOICE DAYSCHOOL. Saturday 2 February, 10.30 to 4.30pm, St. Pancras Library, 100 Euston Rd, London NW1 (between Kings Cross and Euston stations). Sessions on the family, the Tory attack on women, organising campaigns in the workplace, building Womens Voice groups at work, plus news from the current disputes. All women council workers welcome. Pooled fare, creche and accommodation if needed. Cost £1. Please send names and money to Pauline Alden, Womens Voice, Box 82, London E2. For more details contact Pauline 01-985 3086, or Penny 01-739 7600 x 405.

Bristol Womens Voice/SWP Public Meeting on Abortion, Wednesday 23 January, 7.30pm, The Swan, Stokes Croft, Bristol.



NEW WOMEN'S VOICE BADGE. 20p each plus 8p postage. Ten for £1.60 post free.

Womens Voice T-Shirts. 'Womens Voice fights for womens rights!' Only medium size left - red, blue or white. £1.50 plus 15p postage. No sweat shirts left. Cheques to Kentish Town Womens Voice, 175a Kentish Town Road, London NW1.

● **STOCKPORT** Womens Voice. For details phone 061 431 7564.

● **STOKE ON TRENT** Womens Voice meets at Knotty Action, Mollart Street, Hanley. Fortnightly. Ring Sandra 814094

● **TOTTENHAM** Womens Voice meets regularly. Phone Mary for information and babysitters, 802 9563.

● **TOWER HAMLETS** Womens Voice meets on alternate Mondays. Babysitters available. Phone Jane 515 7403.

● **WALTHAMSTOW** Women's Voice meets alternative Tuesdays at 8pm. Phone Pauline 521 4768 or Mary Ann 520 3025.

● **WALSALL** Womens Voice meets regularly. Phone Ena at Walsall 644205 for details. Children welcome.

● **WATFORD** Womens Voice is being formed. Anyone interested in coming to meetings please contact Davina or Ros. Watford 28500 ext 659

Small ads

Bournemouth anti-Corrie demonstration and rally, 12th January. For more details contact Carol on Lychett Minster 3162.

1980 Fightback Calendar - commemorates recent anti-cuts struggles. Measures 12 x 16 inches. Price £1 plus 17p postage. From: Fightback, 30 Camden Road, London NW1.

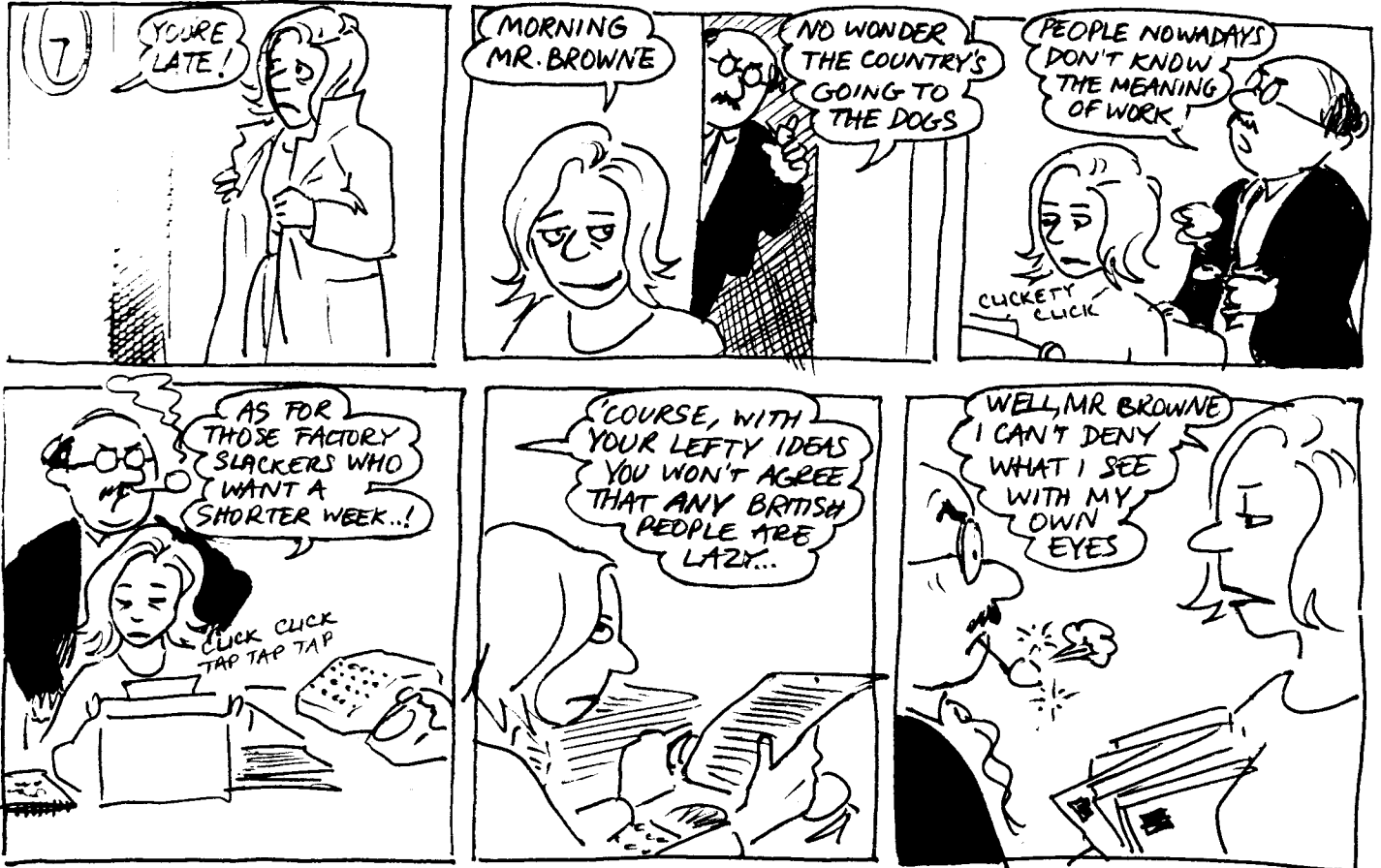
Women in Hackney: We are meeting on Friday afternoons, 1.30-3.30, to discuss our experience of living here. Speakers on housing, hospitals, schools, violence, etc. Creche provided. At Clapton Girls' School, Lower Clapton Road, E5. Contact 985 0592 or 985 9466. £3 for 12 meetings starting 11 January.

Two new badges from Womens Voice
Abortion our right to choose 15p each plus 10p postage
She's no sister (Margaret Thatcher that is) 20p each plus 10p postage
Money with orders please. Add 10p postage whatever number your order.



Southbank Polytechnic Womens Group are looking for someone to teach self-defence. Contact them at the Students Union, Rotary Street, London SE1.

SANDRA



Your nearest Womens Voice Group meets

Join Womens Voice...

**join
the
fight**

Womens Voice is an organisation that fights for women's liberation and socialism.

We fight for:

Equal pay

Free abortion and contraception

Maternity leave and child care provision

The right to work

Against all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex, sexual orientation, or race.

Women's liberation is only possible through women organising and fighting for themselves.

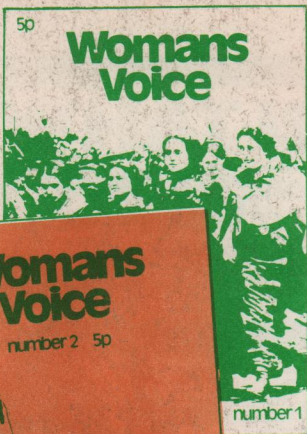
Women's liberation can only be achieved by linking its struggles to those of the working class and overthrowing the capitalist system.

Womens Voice supports the aims of the Socialist Workers Party. It is organisationally independent but based on the politics of the SWP.

I want to join the fight...
Name

Address

Send to Womens Voice
PO Box 82,
London, E2



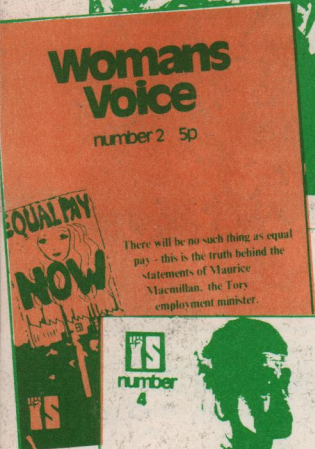
IN THE SUMMER OF 1970 a group of women members of the International Socialists produced a duplicated bulletin. We wanted to share experiences and get to know a little more about what the women in our own organisation were thinking and doing. We had been surprised by the number of IS women that had found their way to the first Womens Liberation Conference, in February of that year.

The next edition came out in December, looking a little smarter. In the next two years we produced five editions.

The newsletter gave way to Womens Voice in July 1972. It was still duplicated, but a silk screened cover gave it a much smarter appearance.

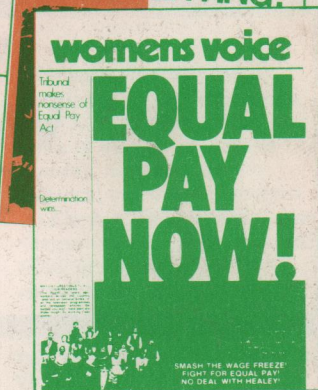
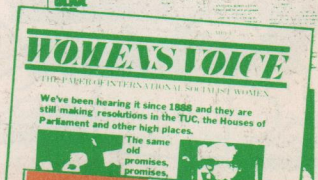
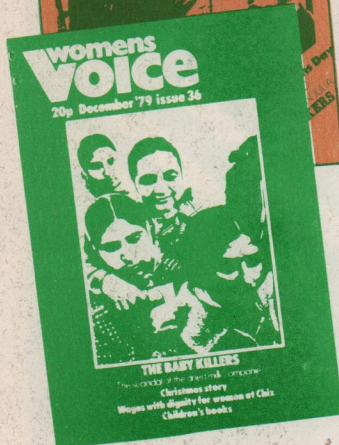
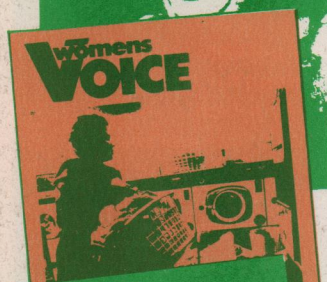
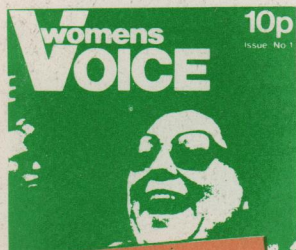
Two months later it changed again to a printed magazine. There was news on the Housing Finance Bill and equal pay, and a very cautious piece asking the question 'are women inferior to men?'

By issue number four we decided that Womens Voice really had to become Womens Voice.



In January 1974 Womens Voice became a newspaper. We're not for talking about socialism and womens liberation, we argued, we want to organise to fight for them. We continued to appear bi-monthly until January 1976. Then we went monthly.

One issue got a lot of unexpected support from women on strike for Equal Pay at Trico. In September we issued a special edition to organise support for the strike.



In January 1977 we made our biggest change. We started again from number one, became a magazine, opened our pages out to our readers. We wrote: "Can man be free if woman be a slave? The answer is simply no. There will be no socialism as long as women are considered unequal."

The new magazine was so successful we went glossy in March 1978. And we're still here, every month.

So why don't you subscribe to Womens Voice and make sure you get your copy each month.

Send me a subscription to Womens Voice for six months/a year. I enclose £1.70/£3.40.

Name _____

Address _____

Send to Womens Voice, Box 82, London E2.