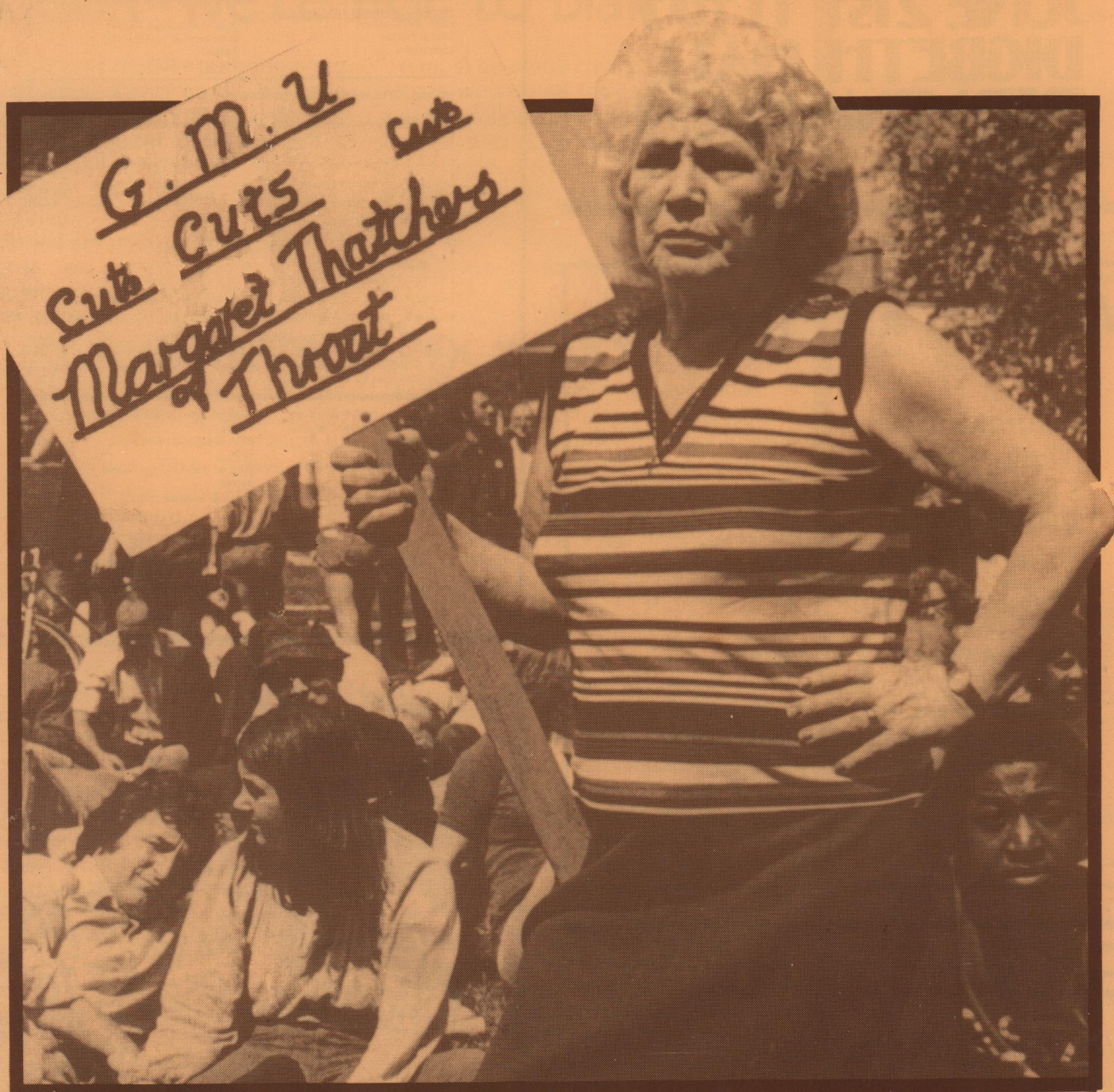


womens VOICE

June '80 Issue 42

20p



**WOMEN AGAINST
THE TORIES**

FIGHTBACK FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS CONFERENCE 2

- ★ Future aims and policy
- ★ Reports and plans for action
- ★ Publishing a newspaper
- ★ How the campaign will be run

JUNE 21ST 11 TO 5 DIGBETH HALL BIRMINGHAM

DETAILS FROM 41 Ellington Street, London N7

WEA Conference

Women and the Cuts

Saturday 14 June,
10 am - 5pm
STANHOPE INSTITUTE,
QUEENS SQUARE (off Russell
Square) W.C.1
£1.20. Claimants free. Creche

Main Speakers: Tess Woodcroft
(NALGO), on Women and Work Now;
Unemployment, New Technology and
trends in the South East. Jill Turner on
Government Social Policy and its effect
on women and the family (Health and
Social Services correspondent, *New
Society*).

Get stocked up!

AVAILABLE FROM WOMENS VOICE

Badges:

Womens Voice 20p

She's no Sister 20p

Abortion - our right to choose 20p + 10p postage

Chix leaflets £1 per 100

Employment Bill stickers - save our maternity leave 20p
including p & p

Plain Womens Voice posters 2p each

Employment Bill fact sheet 3p each + 10p p & p (orders over
10 free)

Pamphlet - Job Massacre at the Office 40p including p & p
4 copies £1 post free

Liberation Game (stiff card) 50p each + 20p p & p

Doodle poster 50p each + 20p p & p

Marxism into the 80's

Seven days of Revolutionary
ideas and discussions.

Marxism: old and new
The crisis of Economics
The Fight against Imperialism
Reform or Revolution
British Labour History
Women, Oppression and Capitalism
Great Revolutions
Sexual Politics
Literature

Problems of contemporary working
class politics
The Rise and Fall of the Communist
The Mass media and culture today
The Crisis of the European Revolution
Left
American Labour History
Introduction to Marxism
Ireland
The Middle East

WOMEN, OPPRESSION & CAPITALISM

A series of lectures followed, where appropriate by workshops on issues raised in
the debate:

- Lecture 1 - Were women ever liberated? The origins of the family.
 - Lecture 2 - The origins of oppression - current theories of patriarchy.
 - Lecture 3 - The origins of capitalist oppression - women in early capitalist society.
 - Lecture 4 - The changing capitalist family.
 - Lecture 5 - Early theories of women's liberation.
 - Lecture 6 - Women's trade unions.
 - Lecture 7 - Different strands of the women's suffrage movement.
 - Lecture 8 - Women and the crisis - the position of working women today.
 - Lecture 9 - Women's consciousness at work.
 - Lecture 10 - Ten years of women's liberation - a debate
 - Lecture 11 - Women's liberation magazines and socialist organisation - symposium.
- We hope to get speakers and contributors from Women's Voice, Spare Rib and
other magazines for this discussion.

Marxism in to the 80s organised
by the Socialist Worker Student
Organisation.
At the Polytechnic of North
London, Prince of Wales Road,
London N7S.

4th-11th July (Friday to
Friday)
£9 in advance, £10 on the
door.
Ring 01 986 8355 for further
details

Send to: Marxism into the 80s PO Box 82 London E2

**Socialist
Worker**

**A WOMAN'S
RIGHT TO
CHOOSE!**



Abortion
on Demand

No Return
to the
Bockstreet

**Socialist
Worker**

**FAMILIES TO
LOSE £12 A
WEEK**

For up to date information about the antics of this
vicious Tory government read Socialist Worker.

Send just £1 for eight issues to Socialist
Worker, Box 82, London, E2

OUR POINT OF VIEW

Inflation - we're not to blame

MAGGIE THATCHER launched an attack at the Tory party womens conference last month. She said that wages in the public sector would have to rise more slowly if inflation was to be brought down and further unemployment avoided.

The Tories are trying to pretend once again that we are the cause of high unemployment and rocketing inflation. The facts are rather different. Far from it. Wages haven't kept pace with inflation. Unemployment has hit whole regions like Merseyside, South Wales and the North East, regardless of wage rates. The figures are in the main a result of government policy. The Tories have deliberately set out to put up prices and increase unemployment.

They put up VAT to 15%. They increased gas and electricity prices by 30%. Those prices weren't to give workers in gas, electricity or anywhere else 30% wage increases. Their new rent laws force councils to put up rents. The mortgage rates have shot up because of their policies. They have forced up the cost of school meals.

That is why the inflation rate in Britain is double what it was a year ago and is much higher than anywhere else in Europe—over four times that of Germany. Most working class families are now pounds a week worse off because of these policies. No wonder wage claims are going in which try to keep up with inflation.

The Tories are saying that in the public sector these claims have to be held back. But they are extremely selective. Doctors and dentists have just been awarded over 30% while nurses are being offered 14%. What they are trying to do is to hit the weaker sections, often women, while letting more powerful or influential sections of workers slip through.

It must be pretty clear to most working people who voted for Thatcher by now that her policies are doing us no good at all. She is trying to take the public sector on through holding down wages and through the cuts which mean more and more job losses.

We have to start a build a movement against the Tories to show them it isn't on.

Chix victory?

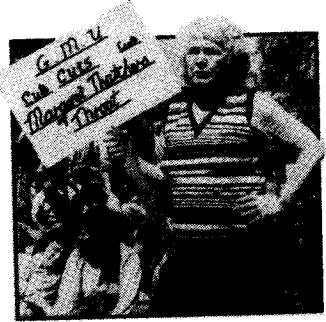
The Chix strike appears to have ended. As we go to press the strikers themselves have not taken their final decision, but it seems likely that they will accept the deal made for them by the union, the GMWU.

Chix Management will recognise the union, but will not take back any of the strikers who previously worked on the night shift, which they say they no longer need. So only 19 out of the 45 remaining strikers will get their jobs back.

For Asian women to win recognition of their union after seven long months on the picket line is a victory and will give heart to many other workers who are fighting against similar managements. It makes a welcome change from the defeats like Grunwicks and Garners, and shows that even the newest and least experienced groups of workers can win, given blacking and solidarity pickets from other workers.

But the price of winning recognition is very high. The union should have forced management to have accepted all the stikers back. The fact that recognition has been won at all shows the actions of the strikers and their supporters were having a real effect. The union should have stuck out for total victory, rather than accepting a deal which falls a long way short of it. Yet again, it shows that the officials are willing to compromise and that we can only rely on ourselves and the support of other rank and file workers to win.

**womens
Voice**
Womens magazine of the
Socialist Workers Party



Cover photo: John Sturrock, (Report).

FEATURES

The New Cold War pages 14 and 15

What sort of childcare are we getting? pages 12 and 13

Letter from Nicaragua page 17

The Matchgirls strike page 18

Whats behind the Employment Bill page 11

NEWS pages 4-10

REGULARS

Sport interview with Olympic rower page 16

Health on Acupuncture page 19

Reviews on comedy pages 20 and 21

Your letters pages 22 and 23

Jane on faithfulness and Open Door on Marxism 80 page 24

Tales we tell our sisters page 25

Whats going on page 26

Our next editorial meeting will be on Wednesday 25 June. If you would like to come give us a ring on 01 986 6222. If you would like a speaker from the editorial board for your WV group, just give us a date.

Published by Elophatin Limited, PO Box 82, London, E2

Printed by East End Offset Ltd, (TU), London, E2.

WOMENS VOICE · PO BOX 82 LONDON E2 · 01 986 6222



Fighting health cuts

IN APRIL 400 people demonstrated outside West London Hospital, Hammersmith against the proposed closure of its 60 bed maternity unit. It offers 'modified Leboyer method' deliveries—birth without trauma, dim lights, quiet and relaxed atmosphere with allows women to enjoy giving birth. Yes, women told us that they enjoyed the experience despite the pain! It's a unit which listens to women and provides excellent medical care.

If it closes, there won't be any maternity beds between Queen Charlotte's—which is near capacity now—and the Westminster—which is also threatened with cuts.

The Area Health Authority's proposal is to use the maternity beds for geriatric patients from the Charing Cross Hospital. More geriatric beds are needed everywhere but this building is not suitable. Also, from past experience we know it's possible that the changeover may not happen, and the scheme could be used as a prelude to total closure.

On May 7, 300 people attended a meeting in the Nurses' Hall. There were speakers from NUPE, the nursing staff, the Community Health Council, and the Trades Council, plus Professor Morris who is in charge of the unit, and Anna Raeburn. They're all determined to fight closure from every angle, and the support is there to do it.

The Hammersmith WV

group has been involved, doing what we can for the campaign. By June we'll know what the AHA has decided. They may change their minds or postpone closure. Then we'll have to look out for what they decide to chop instead. We'll fight that too.

Diane Rodrigues
Kate Rutter

100 people demonstrated outside the Royal Northern Hospital, Islington last month against the closure of the Casualty Department, which will inevitably lead to the rundown of the whole hospital. Workers and users of the hospital sat down across the road for 5 minutes, blocking all the traffic coming into London on one of the city's busiest thoroughfares. Unfortunately we were moved on by the police before we could cause a major hold up and bring the closure

to the attention of the public.

The demonstrators then marched up Holloway Road to the Whittington Hospital, which will soon be the only fully operative hospital in Islington, carrying banners and placards. Doctors and nurses pushed a trolley with a dummy patient on it. Residents in the south of the Borough will have to travel about 4 miles to the Whittington for emergency treatment. Those 4 miles could mean the difference between life and death!

A so-called independent arbitrator has been appointed to decide the fate of the Casualty Department, who has already publicly stated that his intention is 'to cut £6 million off the Royal Northern's budget'. The Camden and Islington Campaign against Health Cuts are determined to carry on fighting the closure, and the sellout which the Arbitrator will almost inevitably pronounce.

DEFEND OUR UNIONS

WORKERS AT the Selly Oak Hospital in South Birmingham came out on strike last week as the management attempted to smash the union in the hospital. Jock Cummings, the NUPE branch secretary was sacked last week for alleged misconduct at work, for spending too much time on union activities. Despite an agreement that there be a 6 week 'cooling off' period in disputes before an appeal is heard, management have barred Jock from working his notice or entering hospital premises to carry on union work.

300 ancillary workers immediately came out on strike in support of Jock Cummings. These workers: telephonists, porters, canteen workers and domestics are mainly women. One of the women domestics told Women's Voice that they see the dismissal as a direct attack on the union. If management think that they can get away with sacking the branch secretary then everyone will be vulnerable.

The management have been trying to get at women individually to persuade them to go back to work. Despite this the strike is solid and has been made official by NUPE. Support for the dispute has been promised by other hospitals in South Birmingham if management continue to refuse to reinstate Jock Cummings.

Message of support to Birmingham Women's Voice, c/o 224 High St., Deritend, B'ham 12.

Daycare workers chained to railings

ON MAY 20 parents and teachers marched into Camden Town Hall, London at ten in the morning. Some chained themselves to the staircase and stayed there till five that afternoon. They were demonstrating in support of the councils daycare workers, who are now on strike.

The action involves five groups of workers—mostly women nursery workers, adult daycare, daycare centre management, playleaders and peripatetics—taking joint action in support of regrading claims.

Only a small majority backed the strike call but action started the day following the TUC Day of Action, when all council workers were out anyway.

By Monday the whole social services department was out. Other workers took disruptive action in their support—no-one is using the phones.

The strikers have the active support of the parents and children affected by the dispute—and they need all the financial support they can get.

Donations and messages to: Daycare Strike Fund, NALGO Office, Camden Town Hall Extension, Euston Rd, London NW1
Sandra Wilson

School dinners we've had our chips

'FOR DINNER I got eight chips and no beans and we were meant to have a choice of sausages or spam fritters. I chose spam but all I got was a piece of spam, no batter on it and I was starving so I went home and I got lots of chips and a fried egg and three sausages and beans. So that shows you the difference. (Tracey Carrol, aged 12, St Matthews School, Dundee.)

Tracey, like many other kids, is talking about the difference between a meal and not a meal. Many kids are not getting a proper dinner in school. The Tory cuts in education mean that Tracey has to wait till she gets home to get a decent meal.

Many other kids are not even getting a meal at all. School meals in some areas have gone up to 55p which means that many people cannot afford them. There have been drops of up to half on last terms numbers.

In Dundee, mothers and kids are fighting back.

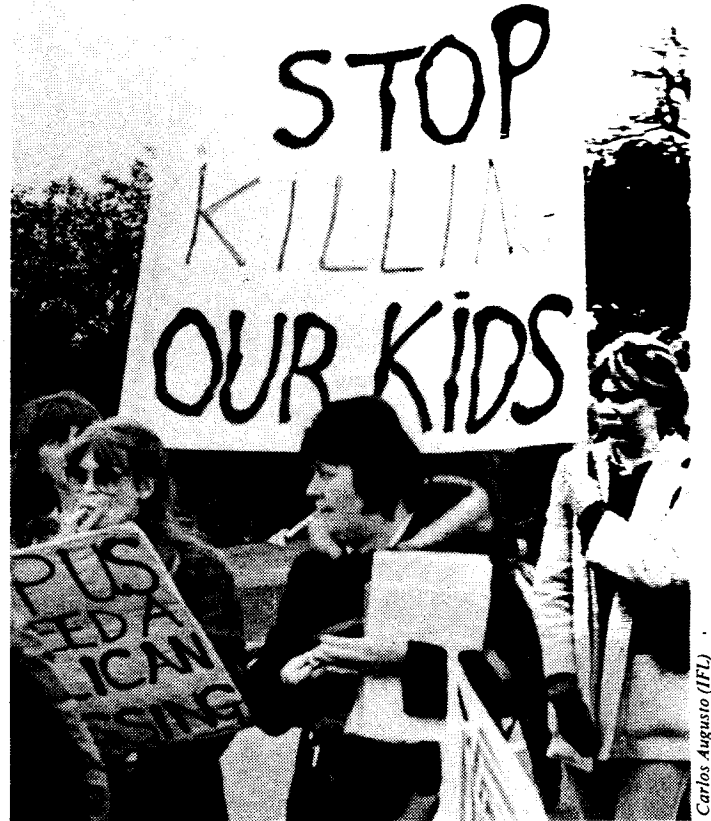
In the Whitfield Housing Scheme in Dundee, they started a campaign against totally inadequate school meals. Mothers picketed a school and lobbied the Dundee Council building. They are determined to win.

But its not only the kids who are suffering. By stepping up the prices of the meals, the

government will turn round and say there's no demand for meals and try to cut further jobs in schools. Most of the dinner ladies are in NUPE who fear that of the 50,000 women employed, more than half may find themselves unemployed. Doris Lucas explains how their jobs in Northampton are under threat from the vicious Tory policies:

'I work for Northampton County Council as a school dinner lady in a small village school. When I first started there three years ago seven of us made 240 dinners a day. When we started back after Easter when dinners went up from 35 pence a day to 55 pence a day as part of the Tory cuts, we found ourselves required to make only 70 dinners a day, now most of the kids are bringing sandwiches. The staff was immediately cut by one with another on the way. Our hours of work have been cut as well.

The way things are going there won't be a school meals service soon, and this at a time of growing unemployment when more and more families are too poor to provide meals at home. This also shows the nature of this vicious and petty anti-working-class government. They hit the weakest first, in this case, children, and at the same time a weak and scattered section of the workforce.



Women in Cricklewood demand more zebra crossings after a little girl was killed.

Sikh Temple support for Chix

ALMOST 40 Asian women and Womens Voice supporters packed into a tiny room at a Leicester Sikh temple for a meeting with some of the Chix strikers. Many of the Asian women talked excitedly about their own situations at work after hearing the main speaker, Jaswinder Brar, relate her experiences.

The meeting, on Sunday 11 May, had been called by Leicester WV in conjunction with the Association of Indian Women (women's section of the Indian Workers' Association) to gather support from the local community for the strikers. The meeting heard AIW Committee member Jaswinder Kaw describe experience of Asian women who, on coming to this country, often expected to discover a new, "blissful" home life, caring for family and household and looking after their husbands. However, most of them quickly found that they were not respected unless they also took up to a job, to augment the family income, yet they still had to carry out all the usual household tasks. Not only this, they were often subjected

to low wages for hard work and appalling conditions, such as experienced by the Chix strikers. Even before a formal appeal for funds was made, money was offered in a spontaneous gesture of goodwill.

Yolanda Bystrom from Womens Voice spoke of how fighting back had raised the consciousness of the Chix strikers and of Asian women at the factory where she was recently shop steward. Translations from Punjabi to English and vice versa were provided by Salinder Kaw, the chairwoman of Leicester AIW.

The main speakers gave interviews for broadcasting on a regular Asian programme on local radio. £107 was collected for the strikers on the day and members of the AIW are to visit other local Sikh temples for support.

Members and supporters of Leicester WV group were very excited and impressed by the welcome and the hospitality of the Sikh community. We've made important contacts and we'll continue to work with them.

Enid Kahn

Carlos Augusto (JFL)

MAY 14: Fighting back

THE TUC's day of action against the Tories Employment Bill was hailed as a flop by the press. But despite the feeble lead given by the union leaders, many workers did take action. Over 200,000 marched in over a hundred demonstrations round the country. Womens Voice groups supported these demonstrations and sent in reports of what the day was like.

GLASGOW

ON THE Glasgow demonstration, there was a big contingent of women from the Tailor and Garment Workers Union, 2000 from NALGO, about 10,000 from the teachers union and USDAW shopworkers. The womens' contingent was about the most noisy on the demonstration, keeping up continuous shouting.

The organisers had completely underestimated the size of the turnout. Customhouse Quay, where we were meant to be assembling afterwards, was much too small for us all.

The Scottish CBI 'the bosses organisation' had the nerve to say that May 14 was a flop. If 20,000 on a march, is a flop... Fourteen out of nineteen mines weren't working, there were no trains, only one shipyard working. At Greenock, down the Clyde from Glasgow there was another big demonstration, again with many women garment workers, from the Lee Jeans factory.
Glasgow WV

MANCHESTER

THE WOMEN at Kleins clothing factory have been on strike for 12 weeks fighting for recognition of the garment workers union NUTGW and in Salford May 14 was very much their day. It was clear that many of the 500 people on the Salford demonstration for the Day of Action wanted to show their support for the strike and over £200 was collected.

On May 8th a scab attacked one of the women on picket duty and the pickets retaliated with songs and chants. 'The workers united will never be defeated.'

By the time May 14th arrived Kleins was so worried that its scabs would be upset by the day's events that it took them to Blackpool for the day. We must

have had more fun in Salford because they looked very pale as they approached the pickets the next day. They must have heard the news that Kleins management had agreed to meet ACAS.

Talks are in progress at the moment but Klein may not



Laurie Sparham IFL

abide by a decision that goes against them. Whatever happens the strikers are determined to win and they need your support on the picket lines each morning.

Messages of support and donations should be sent to Kleins Brothers Strikers, c/o John Cotterall, Boscop, 39 Fir Street, Cadishead, Manchester.
Anne Barber

FLEET STREET

JEERS WENT up all along the line as the 5,000 strong printworkers demonstration passed the Express building in Fleet Street.

Despite the attempts of Sir Jocelyn Stevens and the Daily Express to intimidate its workers through the courts, despite the way the press in general have abused, maligned and slandered the Trade Union movement over the Day of

Parliament was sitting, we were forced to down banners and make our own way to one of the most successful meetings of the day, in the Central Hall, Westminster. There the messages of defiance and determination to fight the Tories rang out loud and clear. May 14 was just the beginning.

Mary Ann Stuart

BIRMINGHAM

THE TURN OUT for the demonstration in Birmingham on May 14th was much better than expected, as the local press had underestimated support for the day. About 4000 people turned out on the march and many were women. Women workers from NUPE both in Social Services and the Health Service were there, as were office workers from APEX and CPSA. NUPE social service workers had picketed their workplaces before going on the march. Although the day of action was not specifically against the cuts, most of the women there were very conscious of them, and many were from the public sector.

We sold a large number of Womens Voice, and had a special WV leaflet. We got a sympathetic response from women office workers that we leafleted even though they were not on strike.
Jenny Austin

LIVERPOOL

OVER 15000 marched in Merseyside—an area already decimated by unemployment. Most of Fords, the docks, Cammell Lairds shipyards, trains, printers and teachers struck, but it was very patchy. Some buses ran but they were kicked and hammered by demonstrators. People felt very encouraged by the day.

COVENTRY

OVER 2000 marched through the city on the Day of Action. Around one-third of the marchers were women, mainly from the public service unions, including NALGO and a mili-

Answering back

On the Game just another job

The latest prize for hypocrisy goes to the judge who put Cynthia Payne away for two years for running a brothel. A brothel used by the very men who make the laws on prostitution and run this country — the politicians, the lawyers and the vicars. While none of the clients were charged Cynthia was punished for what they were only too willing to pay for.

Prostitution is said to be the oldest profession in the world; it certainly has a very long history. Indeed it began when man organised himself into what we now term a class society, when one small group owns property and the rest do not. In this situation what happened to women in a male orientated world?

Women were driven to selling their sexual services when the only other means of survival was dependency upon a man. Today you can say that women have plenty of opportunity to earn money, but where do these opportunities lie? At the bottom of the ladder; the lousiest jobs with the lousiest pay.

Money is the main reason why women still go on the game. Why do a 40 hour week and all the housework when you can do a 15 hour week and earn five times as much and be free from the restrictions of marriage? One group of prostitutes said that if they were going to provide sexual services for men then they might as well get paid for it.

Most prostitutes are part timers and six out of seven of these have children, are divorced or had no husband in the first place. Full time jobs are out of the question. Many of them have lovers or form lasting relationships with their clients. The hard, tainted whore image is nothing but a myth which divides women and places us in stereotyped roles.

Prostitutes are working women just like typists, barmaids or nurses and are up against struggle just like the rest of us. The English Collective of Prostitutes and Prostitutes Laws are Nonsense are campaigning to get the laws changed on soliciting and demanding the right to share flats without being done for running a brothel. We should be supporting these fights.

Prostitution is by no means a step forward for women's liberation. But until we live in a world where we can choose the kind of relationships that we want it is important to fight against the laws that are prohibitive to prostitution as part of the overall campaign for women's rights.

Tessa Weir
Jane Munro

NAC Conference

The National Abortion Campaign Conference last month voted to emphasise the feminism of the campaign as well as the need for trade union support. The conference rejected a proposal to make the campaign women only, but also felt that women should be encouraged to lead the campaign at every level. Women delegates to groups should be encouraged. This argument was contentious but it was agreed that since women were most affected by the issue, they should lead the fight.

The need to put feminism

back into the campaign came across at every debate. The aims were amended to include the demand of control of our own sexuality and fertility, although some people argued that would narrow support.

The Conference also voted for a campaign to introduce positive legislation on abortion. All in all it was felt that the campaign is far from dead and with day schools on contraception, a trade union conference in the spring, and a tribunal in the autumn there's plenty to keep us busy.

Prentice scrounging again

WHEN he announced the appointment of 1000 new scrounger searchers, the Disabled Minister, Reg Prentice, made it quite clear what they would be searching out. All those wicked people who have been fiddling up to £200 million a year from the social services.

Amid the fuss and furore that surrounded his announcement one little bit of news seems to have escaped attention.

One enterprising Labour MP asked Reggie how he knew £200 million was being scrounged.

Well, explained Prentice, everyone in business knows that large trading companies, like Marks and Spencer, for instance, allow for 2 per cent per year of their turnover to disappear through theft, mismanagement and so on. A simple calculation, 2 per cent of the total budget payable in social security benefits, gives you the magic figure—£200 million.

That is the sum total of the evidence that Prentice has that anything like this amount is being fiddled at all.

The intention of all the extra inspectors checking out on people's quite valid claims is simply to make sure that less people claim. Anyone who is a little unsure of their rights and is terrified of getting it wrong will simply not put in a claim. It's estimated that in any one year no less than £400 million is *not* taken up by people who are entitled to the money.

But of course, not a penny is to be spent on additional publicity to tell people their rights.

WHAT EQUALITY?

THE PRINCIPLE of equal pay for equal work has been upheld in the first British equal pay case to be referred to the European Court of Justice.

Wendy Smith claimed that she should be paid the same as the man who was doing the job before her—£60 compared to her £50. She won her case but her employers appealed on the basis that the Equal Pay Act did not cover 'non-contemporaneous employment': where a man and a woman have done the same job, but not at the same time.

The European Court ruled that Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome maintaining the principle of equal pay for equal work should override the British law, and that Wendy Smith's claim was justified.

MS. CATHERINE MACDONALD, an active trade unionist, got the sack from her job as an inspector with Rolls Royce at Hillington, East Kilbride. A recorded delivery note from the company informed her that her use of her maiden name on her application form was 'deliberate misrepresentation' and she separated from her husband last May and has informed both the Inland Revenue and the DHSS that she intended to use her own name again. She believes that the sacking has more to do with her trade union activity than with any 'confusion' caused to RR management about her marital status.

Col. Sanderson's chickens come home to roost

GLORIA JORDEN has been on strike now for thirteen months. She is a mother of three daughters and a local International Chemical Workers Union official. She has worked at Sanderson Farms for seven years, which she calls seven years of slavery. The factory in Laurel, Mississippi, USA, processes chickens. The owner whom the workers call 'ole massa' rents the land from Jones County for \$70 (£35) per month. Workers in the factory pay \$125 (£63) per month rent for a house.

208 workers, nearly all black women, walked out on strike after the 'ole massa' refused to negotiate a new contract.

Gloria starts work at 4 am and officially works an eight hour day. But the workers have to stay until the production line stops. One week Gloria worked 53 hours and her take home wage was \$63 (£32).

68 chickens an hour pass down the production line. Gloria and another woman

are expected to gut every chicken.

She told Womens Voice. 'We're fighting a just struggle for a contract. The boss, 'ole massa', has us chained like slaves through low money and long hours. What we are fighting for is simply humane working conditions.

'A white woman complained to the foreman that the blood from the chickens was making her feel dizzy. The foreman ignored her. She fell right down on the concrete floor and sufferend concussion. All they give us to work in is a plastic apron once a month. They get torn in two days through scrubbing the blood off.

'Before we went on strike our lunch break was cut from half an hour to twenty minutes and our coffee break from ten minutes to six. It takes six minutes to wash the blood off you. Sanderson just wants to be a mass hero by union busting. That's been an issue for 99 years. So we decided that Sanderson Farms weren't going to operate in

Jones County like that any longer. This is 1980 not the fifteenth century and I thought there was no such thing as slavery!'

One rule in the factory is that you are only allowed to use the toilet three times a week during working hours. One pregnant women who had already used the toilet three times, asked the foreman if she could leave the line and go again. She was refused. After waiting sometime she left the line without permission, and was found later to have miscarried.

Sanderson runs a multi-million dollar business — or sweatship. Last year his 'Miss Goldy' and 'Southern Beauty' chickens turned over \$58 million (£29 million) in sales.

But it's not only the anti-union owners the black workers have to put up with but also the Ku Klux Klan. Since the day of the strike Sanderson has kept his factory running by bussing in scabs from mainly outside Jones County. Most of the scab workers are black. They keep on working



because of fear — of the Ku Klux Klan.

'Emarine McGill', said Gloria, 'wanted to quit working at the plant. She had the job of training the scabs. Every Friday she said she would quit, then one Friday she did. The following Tuesday her house was burnt down. She couldn't get the fire service to come out to the fire. She phoned her mother, who was still working in the plant. James White, a KKK foreman took the call, but he didn't tell Nana May McGill for a half of an hour. When she asked to go home he told her she could not leave as he had no replacement for her and that would mean the line would stop. The whole family is still working there.'

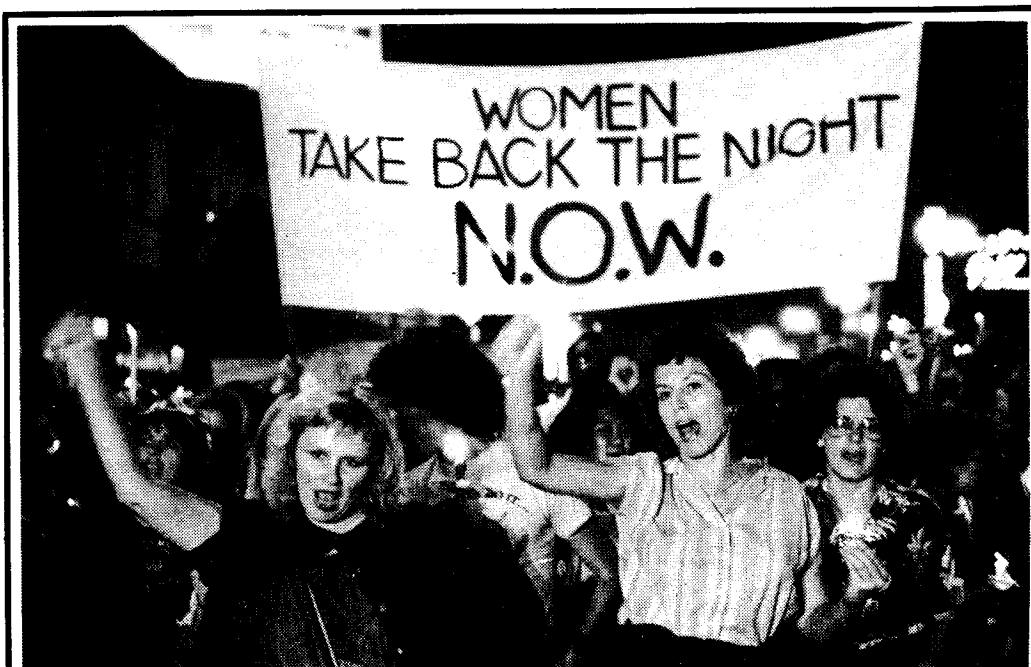
The strikers picket for 24 hours a day, six days a week. They desperately need cash. The fight of the Laurel women is a fight that affects all of us. It is a fight against racism. It is a fight against intimidation. It is a fight against union busting. And it is a fight to control our everyday working conditions.

When I was speaking to Gloria I could not help thinking of Grunwicks and the struggle there by Asian women to win the right to join a union. That strike too went on for many months. Why not discuss this strike in your Womens Voice Groups — and if you can't afford a telegram why not write a note? These women need all the support they can get.

Maggie Rutter

*Send messages c/o Womens Voice, PO Box 82, London E2

*Send messages c/o Womens Voice, PO Box 82, London E2



Thousands of women on a recent 'Reclaim the Night' demonstration. They marched through Hollywood, California, home of the casting couch and the 'sexy starlet'.



WOMENS VOICE AND LOCAL STRIKES

SALFORD AND ECCLES WOMENS VOICE took off last autumn around the anti-Corrie campaign. A few of us had tried to get a Womens Voice group going before but it had never really got off the ground.

As part of the abortion campaign we organised a public meeting on the Corrie Bill. A local woman doctor and Sadie Blood, NUPE shop steward, spoke and about 50 people attended. From this we got the group of women to come on the national demo and organised lobbies of local MP's, petitioning and leafletting in shopping precincts and support for a local NAC demo in Manchester.

We also started to hold regular Womens Voice meetings. These are now held fortnightly and we divide the meetings between business (ie what we need to be organising around) and a discussion on any topics we're interested in—Women and advertising, The Employment Bill.

Recently we have been involved in a local dispute at Klein Brothers Clothing Factory. We first heard about this at a Salford Trades Council meeting where one of our members is a delegate. The next day one of us went down to the picket line to ask if we could report the dispute in Womens Voice and if there was anything we could do to help.

When the union produced collection sheets we distributed them in the group and made collections among workmates and friends. We also take collections at meetings. At first the strike held mass pickets on



One of the largest demonstrations ever of homeless people, which was held in London last month.

Fridays, so we organised women to go to these. Then the firm started bussing the scabs in extra early so the women asked for support every morning on a rota basis.

Womens Voice has made Wednesday their day, so if you would like to support the picket come down at 8am on Wednesday.

We also helped the strikers to hold a social which turned out quite successful, and raised over £200. If the strike continues we are going to suggest other ways of raising money, eg by making badges and perhaps offer to organise a kids party.

It's important for Womens Voice to get involved in disputes like this. Women workers often work in the worst conditions and generally are less well unionised. They need every help when they do decide they have taken enough and will stand up to the bosses.

Recently we've also organised support for the local Salford Trades Council march on May 14th. Those of the group in work argued for support for the Day of Action in their workplaces and we leafletted several factories with the national Womens Voice leaflet. We put details of local Womens Voice groups activity on the back of the leaflet.

The march on the 14th turned out to be quite large considering the appalling lack of encouragement by the union leadership. Womens Voice managed to get quite a lot of people on it with our Womens Voice banner.

If you would like to know more about Salford Womens Voice contact us at the Hare and Hounds, Church Street, Eccles every other Tuesday, 8pm.

USING PETITIONS

ILKESTONE WOMENS VOICE have been selling in the market monthly. We have been quite successful, selling half a dozen or so, and getting contacts from this. We have always coupled this sale with a leaflet and a petition. The last leaflet/petition was on the closure of Etwell Hospital. This month we did a petition about local school closures and produced a leaflet on why women should come out on May 14.

We find that if we hand women a leaflet we can then ask them to sign the petition. Then we can chat to them while they

sign. We tell them we're from Womens Voice and ask if they want to buy one. Not only do we sell more Womens Voice, we also get their address on the petition sheet.

We distributed 500 WV leaflets about May 14th, advertising a joint WV/SWP meeting. We sell regularly outside a factory and have plans for house to house sales using old back copies of WV as sample copies. Some of our members went to the anti-NF demo at Corby, which was an eye-opener. So we are having a meeting on the police with one woman from Sheffield Womens Voice who was on some rough steel womens pickets.

WOMENS VOICE AGAINST SEXISM

DURING A Socialist Worker paper sale at Ferens, a male hall of residence in Hull, the women members of SWSO were disgusted by the large and blatantly pornographic posters of women in each kitchen area. The heated argument which ensued was the stimulus for the formation of a Womens Voice group in our University. We were encouraged when the posters were removed as a direct result of our action.

The Womens Action Group (WAG) was the only other existing womens organisation in the students' Union, committed to feminism but not necessarily socialism, and therefore our establishment was seen to an extent by them as a threat to a united womens movement. However, we have drawn together over a sexist case involving a WAG member who has been hauled before a Union Judicial Committee for swearing at the Union Bar Manager. The issue was due to sexist posters on full view in the bar which the Union Executive had repeatedly asked to be removed, without success. The woman argued with the bar manager who was very insulting and naturally she lost her temper. Both WV and WAG see this as sexist victimisation, the weekly abusive rampages of the Rugby Club never result in Judicial hearings. Therefore, we are totally justified in disrupting this ridiculous judicial hearing which we did successfully and will continue to do at any subsequent hearings.

The campaign for fighting sexism in the Union is continuing. We organised a public meeting for the following week with Marnie Holbrow who spoke on the fight against sexism. Because this particular issue arose so soon after our establishment we learnt rapidly how to organise ourselves into an efficient fighting force.

For example we now have a weekly stall in the Union, we regularly leaflet and canvass all the halls of residence and are petitioning towards the dropping of Judicial charges. We are also in the process of pushing for a policy against sexism at the next Union General Meeting which will considerably strengthen the backbone of our campaign. We have shown our male comrades that we can stand on our own and organise efficiently.

Hull University Womens Voice

IN THE early hours of May 1 the Tories took their new Employment Bill through the House of Commons. Now it only needs to go through the Lords before receiving the "Royal Assent" and becoming law—and its union bashing clauses will ensure that it passes through their Lordships like a dose of salts. There is a remote possibility that they might amend it so that it is "too reactionary"—that is too open in its purpose to be passed off as a soft approach to the unions. But no-one should rely on this possibility preventing the Bill becoming law by the end of the summer.

Those who were relying on the Labour party to fight the battle for them must have been shocked by their performance on the eve of Mayday. The Labour benches were almost empty and there was no attempt to fight the Bill clause by clause as they did in 1972 with the Industrial Relations Act. No-one is going to fight for us. We have to fight for ourselves, using the weapons they are trying to take away.

Did you know that if you have a baby you might not get your job back?

Did you know that if you try to help other women workers on strike you could go to prison?

Did you know that if you are working in a small workplace you can lose your job for no reason at all?

The last thirty years have seen big changes in the workforce and in women's lives. In 1951 one out of every three women worked outside the home, but only one out of five married women had jobs. In 1980 one out of every two women, married or not, works. One million women went out to work over the last ten years, bringing the total of working women up to 9.86 million. 41% of them are part-time. For married women with children the figures are even higher. 55% of all women between 30 and 39 work part-time on twilight shifts or during school hours. This is much higher than anywhere else in Europe as British employers like part-timers. They are usually more likely to put up with bad conditions, no unions and low wages. And they are much less likely to believe that they have the right to a job which is very convenient as the figures creep up to 2 million. They also work out cheaper for the employers who have to pay less for things like holidays and insurance.

Part-time work suits the employers—but what about the workers? A Department of Employment Manpower Report in 1976 summed up part-time work as "undemanding, ill-paid and of low status with no prospects of advancement." Part-timers don't have many rights at law now under the Employment Protection Act. They depend on what their union can win for them.

The Bill will limit the ability to fight back. It will take away women's maternity rights and make the job of

Tory anti-union law: a blow to working women



Strikers at Kleins, Salford. Under the Tory Bill outside support for them will be illegal.

unionising factories impossible.

*Employers with less than twenty workers will be exempt from any duty to re-employ women who take off to have babies.

*Women will have to notify their employers three times in writing if they want to return to work after maternity leave.

*Employers will have to offer returning mothers only "suitable" alternative work, not their old jobs back.

*It will be virtually impossible to sign new 100% closed shop agreements.

*Workers will not be allowed to picket other workplaces or receive support from other workers.

*Workers will need a year's conditions employment before they can take a case of unfair dismissal to an Industrial Tribunal.

Why do the attacks on picketing matter? Won't that only affect the Yorkshire miners? Just sitting on a

picket line can't win a strike, no matter how dedicated the strikers. But solidarity helps to win disputes that women workers couldn't hope to win on their own. Carruthers of East Kilbride offered their typists an increase of £1 in April 1974. Six typists in TASS walked out demanding £4-£6. A picket line of six and a few empty seats in the typing pool didn't worry management—but they caved in when shopfloor workers in the AUEW blacked orders and joined the picketline. "The longer the picket line, the shorter the strike."

Lin James

The new Womens Voice factsheet on the Employment Bill explains exactly what the Tories are trying to do. It's indispensable ammunition for the fightback. It costs 2p per copy, £1 for fifty. Orders to Womens Voice, PO Box 82, London E2 9DS.



WHO IS MINDING YOUR CHILD TODAY?

'IN THE interests of the health and development of the child, no less than for the benefit of the mother, the proper place for a child under two is at home with his mother... under normal peacetime conditions the right policy to pursue would be to positively discourage mothers from going out to work.'

Day nurseries are to meet the needs of children whose 'mothers are constrained by individual circumstances to go out to work, or whose home conditions are in themselves unsatisfactory from the health point of view, or whose mothers are incapable of understanding the full care of their children.'

That quote from a 1945 Ministry of Health circular is still official policy today and it sounded the death knell of the only nursery boom in this country has ever seen. In 1944 there were 1,500 nurseries, in 1974 just 517.

So what went wrong? Fewer babies? Far from it. The late 1940s were the years of the post war baby boom. Did mothers stop going out to work? Just the opposite. More go out to work today than ever before. No, the real reason had nothing to do with the

needs of children or the rights of women but was determined by the needs of industry and those who owned it. With men away during the war, women had to work. To free every available pair of hands for work a massive nursery building programme was begun with sites chosen (appropriately) by the Ministry of Labour. Many of the new nurseries were pre-fabs meant to last a few years only, but 40 years later many still stand and thousands of our kids are cooped up in these cramped, tatty huts.

At the end of the war with men returning to their old jobs women became expandable.

Patrick Jenkin, Social Services Minister, and therefore ultimately responsible for day nurseries, actually believes that the reason why modern society is bedeviled by violence, strikes and crime is because children were separated from their mothers in World War II.

This sort of rubbish is based on the theory of 'maternal deprivation' developed by John Bowlby, who studied children abandoned in children's homes for several years. But his report, published in the years after the war, was used by Government bodies to claim all separation was harmful; they ignored all the later research showing that good day-care can only benefit small children.

Bowlby's ideas are still shoved at us, making thousands

of mothers feel guilty about going out to work and stopping thousands more from even trying. Then and now they give governments a respectable excuse for closing nurseries.

Not only were nursery places slashed, but standards were also attacked after the war. In 1948, another circular state 'unnecessarily high standards would inevitably discourage factory owners from providing nurseries and minds from continuing to look after children and so hamper production in vital industries.' So much for the government's concern about our children and the nation's future. Profits can be used to justify anything. TODAY there is another crisis in day-care for the under fives. Day-care, already hopelessly inadequate, is getting worse.

There are many parts of the country where there are no nurseries at all and in deprived inner city areas you have to wait at least two years to get your child into a state day nursery, and then it will only get a place if you are considered a priority under the 1945 circular.

Only the very well off can choose the kind of day-care they want for their children. Margaret Thatcher had a nanny for hers, Sally Oppenheim sent hers to boarding school. The rest of us have to take whatever is available and there is no chance to choose what suits the child best.

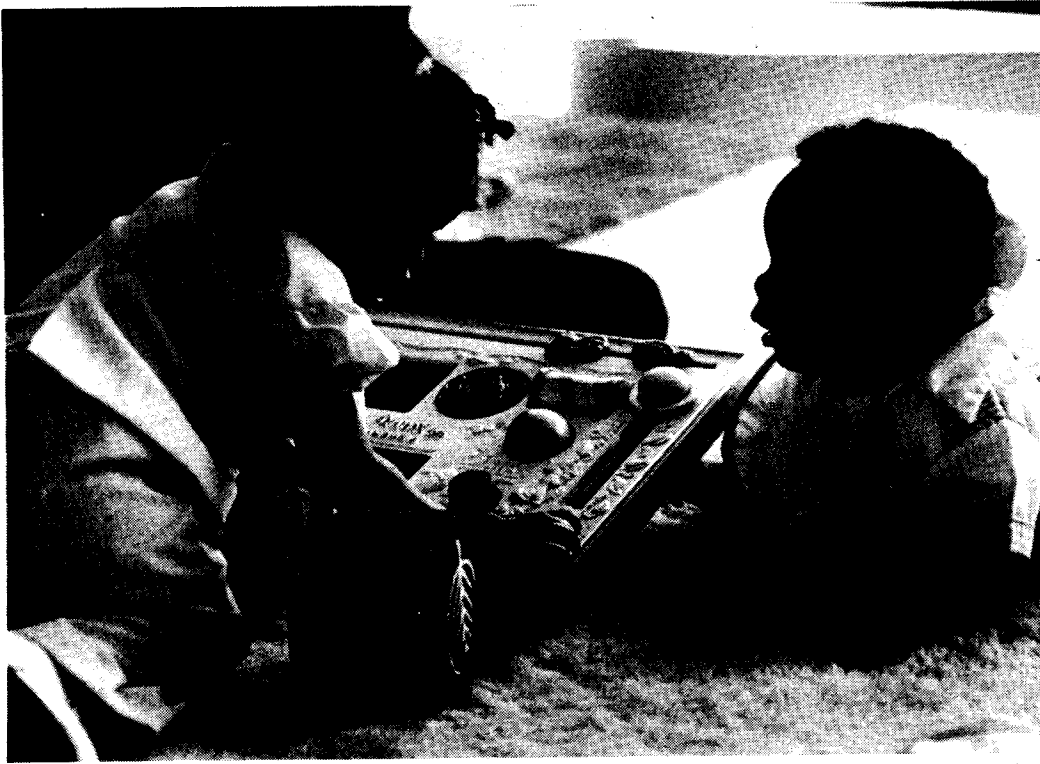
Many socialists argue for more state day nurseries and criticise childminders. Yet nurseries have become ghettos, described by the TUC as 'a segregated service for underprivileged children'.

Nursery workers themselves earn abysmally low wages. They are among the lowest paid women workers in local government and receive no status or recognition for the incredibly important work they do.

Most start very young, when they are 16 or 17 years old, and their training, run by the Nursery Nurses Examination Board (NNEB), concentrates mainly on the physical care of the children. In fact there's such a shortage of cooks, cleaners and laundry workers in day nurseries that most nursery workers are rushed off their feet cooking, cleaning and washing so that they hardly have time to care for the children.

Nurseries are open ten hours a day and the workers care for seven or eight children at one time - there can't be many jobs as tough as that! The idea behind the training is that the best place for under fives is at home with mum. So most parents are seen as inadequate because they're not doing just that. Nursery nurses end up seeing themselves as second best mother substitutes.

In fact the NNEB was set up soon after the war to 'train girls of good character but low intelligence! How insulting can you get



Most nurseries are run on strict hierarchial lines, with powerful matrons who make all the decisions themselves. Nursery workers are not expected to have ideas of their own, but must do as they are told. Many are too frightened to get involved in the union because a matron can make their life hell if they do.

CHILDMINDERS provide most day-care. There are only two councils in the whole country, Lambeth and Wandsworth, in which childminders are actually employed directly by the council. Even then, although the working conditions are better in terms of paid holidays and sickness, the wages themselves are still very low as they are linked to the nursery workers' pay.

Some local authorities will pay a few childminders on behalf of the parents, but again, to receive such subsidies, your child has to fulfil the criteria for a priority place.

The vast majority of minders have to battle it out on the open market and usually receive only between £10 or £15 per week for each child they look after. For this they look after children five days a week from very early in the morning till 6 pm in the evening, or even later. Out of their money they have to feed the children, pay for sweets, bus fares, outings, keep their premises well heated, cope with additional wear and tear

on their furniture and suffer breakages around the home.

Usually working class and forced to work from home as they have children of their own they are among the most exploited of all women workers.

Childminders are caught both ways with the government pushing for day-care on the cheap (why build day nurseries if you can get people to do it in their own homes?) and the press only interested in running scandal stories, picturing childminders as money grabbing Mrs Gamps.

The bad publicity given to minders makes many parents worry about using them, but, with the shortages of day nursery places, most have no choice but to try and find a good minder.

Paying once you have found one can be expensive. Although £15 per week is peanuts for caring for a child an average 50 hours, if you're a single parent on low wages yourself it is a big hole in your pocket.

There is no cure for the problem of exploited parents using exploited childminders whils childminding remains in the twilight zone of private sector day-care.

Local authority support for the childminders they do register is patchy and the area you live in can make a big difference to the standard of childminding your child receives. Provision can range from authorities like Lambeth which provides minders with

equipment, fireguards, double buggies, first aid kits, a mobile toy and book library and a specialist team of social workers to run groups and training courses, to boroughs like Tory controlled Merton which hardly manages to get round and register the childminders.

It is difficult to organise childminders into a union. They are self-employed and obviously do not have a common employer. However, many have joined the National Childminders Association. Local groups have been formed and in some areas have been active in pressuring their councils to provide better support for the childminders they register, and publicising the first class job that many of them do.

But many minders would prefer to work with children in a nursery, if only they could find decent day-care for their own kids and if they could get onto training courses (further education colleges will only accept 16 and 17 year old who have just left school).

Apart from day nurseries and childminders the only other full-time day-care is provided by hundreds of little private nurseries run for a profit. They only get children if their fees are low which means employing untrained workers who are paid even less than state nursery workers. Nursery schools and classes are useless as they are only part-time.

THE SERVICES we have don't begin to meet the needs of working parents of our children. Not only is there too little of it (and getting less all the time) but a lot of it isn't much good. We shouldn't have to worry about whether our children are being properly looked after while we are at work. We have the right to be certain.

Our kids need neither day nurseries nor nursery schools but something better than both. Recently, a few centres have been set up which do both care for and teach children. Most have nursery workers and teachers working together in them and at least two are available on demand to anyone living close by. Some are run much more democratically than either nurseries or schools by a committee of parents and workers. Most of these centres are also a base for playgroups, clinic sessions, parents and childminders' meetings, and after school groups for older children.

They are a start, but above all, we need to campaign inside and out of our workplaces for the TUC's demands for:

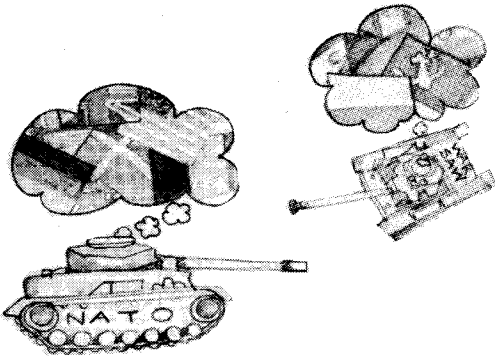
- a free service
- with flexible hours to suit full and part-time workers
- available on demand to all
- which combine education and good care

Chris Gunter
Vanessa Stilwell

THE WAR



1945: Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt carve up the world



1949: The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is formed, a military alliance between the Western powers

1955: The Eastern bloc replies with the Warsaw Pact



1950: The outcome of the Korean War was stalemate between the great powers. The Korean people lost



1962: Cuba: Kennedy and Khrushchev bring the world to the brink of nuclear war

A WOMAN stood on the steps of the White House in Washington and screamed 'Nuke the Iranians'. Suddenly, quite ordinary women and men, who simply fear for their own and their children's future, believe the answer is found in a nuclear war. But if nuclear war did break out between America and Russia we are all dead. Will our Governments really take us to the brink of human destruction?

WE ALL take the division between East and West for granted. Politicians in particular talk about the 'free' world and the 'communist' world. Newspapers and television reinforce it: 'East/West conflict hotting up' they say. But rarely is there any explanation about what the division means.

Speeches by Maggie Thatcher drum home the point about how free the West is and how unfree is the East. Yet we know, as inflation and unemployment soar, and cutbacks bite, that her freedom is not our freedom. So how does she get away with championing the so-called freedom of the West?

Over the past few years talk about East/West has seemed to recede. Detente was the word. These Russians weren't so nasty and perhaps we could all coexist peacefully. Now, suddenly, the Iron Lady has drawn the Iron Curtain again. When the Russians moved into Afghanistan lots of people leapt on the Olympics boycott in the name of freedom. Trade agreements with Russia, or the fact that America too has been stepping up its defence spending for some time, are quietly brushed under the carpet. Russia is the aggressor and Britain falls in behind America to be the champions of freedom. Why?

To find the answer we have to look back to the days of the Cold War. The 1950s seem a long time ago and many of us can only just remember something of the Cuban crisis, or the ban the bomb marches organised by CND.

But the Cold War was much more than that. It stemmed from a conscious policy devised by American and Russian leaders at the end of the Second World War.

When the war was over the leaders of the Allied powers, Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill, divided the world between themselves. They had won the war and now they wanted to secure the spoils. They carved out their own spheres of influence. East Germany went to the Russians, West Germany to America. North Korea to the Russians, the South to America.

It was logical that Western Europe fell in behind the States. Not only did the Americans have heavy investments in Europe, they were also promising considerable more. A huge AID programme was devised to boost European industry. Of course, there were strings - the Americans were to have access to the European markets, and communists were to be excluded from the Western European governments. In Italy, in 1948, when communists and socialist were set to win in the elections, America threatened battleships off the coast, and declared a

ban on the emigration to America of any Italians who had voted communist.

Russia did the same, establishing its domination within its declared sphere of influence.

As part of the deal Stalin had also agreed with Roosevelt that in return for Russia's free hand in Eastern Europe he would instruct the communist parties in Western Europe to fall in behind their governments. The communists in Italy, France, Greece, obeyed. The communist movement was strangled - all the ideas of radical change in society fostered in the resistance movements during the war, were stamped out.

The post war carve-up seemed to be working very well; Russia had the East, America the West, and the threat of any opposition at the same time was crushed.

This division of spoils between the two super powers had other devastating results. Each power bloc had to maintain its grip over its share - so the battle for markets became also a battle of ideas. We, in the West, had to stand together, the argument went, because another war could be just round the corner - but this time it would be a war against communism, not fascism. Communism was against freedom and liberty (and Stalin's methods did nothing to dispel the anti-communist propaganda).

So arms, and then nuclear arms, were needed to keep the balance of power. In fact, this ever increasing build up of arms proved very useful - not to us, who

IF YOU had been living in America in the 1950s you would have had the impression that half the American population were spies. These 'spies' were trades unionists and socialists, anyone who dared to criticise the American Government. They were harassed, blacklisted, witch-hunted out of their jobs, and many of them out of their country.

The writer Lillian Hellman was one who had the courage to speak out against what was happening. As she wrote in a letter to the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1952: 'To hunt innocent people, whom I knew many years ago, to save myself is, to me, inhuman and indecent and dishonourable. I cannot and will not cut my conscience to fit this year's fashion.'

That year's fashion was McCarthyism. Joseph McCarthy was the senator leading the inquiry into these so-called un-American activities. Whipping up the

TO END ALL WAR

might become its victims – but to the industrialists producing them. The arms industry boomed, and the economy here, in Europe and America boomed too, through the fifties and sixties.

At some point, however, the gap between the ideas and the reality was bound to explode. It did, in 1965. President Kennedy threatened military action against Russia if it did not withdraw its nuclear missiles from Cuba, just off the American coast. We seemed on the brink of nuclear war. Everyone was terrified of the consequences. Nobody, not even the builders of the arms industry could entertain an all out war. Krushchev backed down and withdrew the missiles. The Cold War had reached its peak, and receded.

Too much arms production was a strain on all the economies. Both Russia and America wanted to wind it down. The scare of Cuba gave them an excuse to do it. The aggression between East and West was played down. The language of Cold War no longer served any purpose.

This is what has to be remembered now. Iron Ladies and Iron Curtains are used when it is convenient. What is so frightening is that we seem to have no control over it. If Carter or Thatcher decide that now is the time to wage a Cold War again they drag the media and the press in behind them and suddenly everyone is talking about World War Three. There are television programmes telling us to stuff eiderdowns around our doors, fill up our sandbags and prepare to send our husbands and children into the army.

The problem for us is the same as that for working people the world over – we have no control over the politicians who claim to do things in our name.

hysteria of the cold war and the threat of communism, McCarthy, the American Government and big business set out to terrify anyone who interfered with their plans for the great American dream. Only it was their dream, and no-one else's. A dream of a big boom and booming profits. Anyone who organised in the labour movement, anyone who thought differently was to be driven out as a friend of Stalin.

Lillian Hellman's book *Scoundrel Time* recounts just what a nightmare McCarthyism was. It tells how she set about to fight it; of the cruelly persecuted victims of it, like her friend Dashiell Hammett; of how it exploded her illusions about American liberalism. Her voice, as a Hollywood writer, was perhaps a privileged one, but her fight, like her fight against fascism (shown in the film *Julia*) is a model to us all.

It is even more important to read

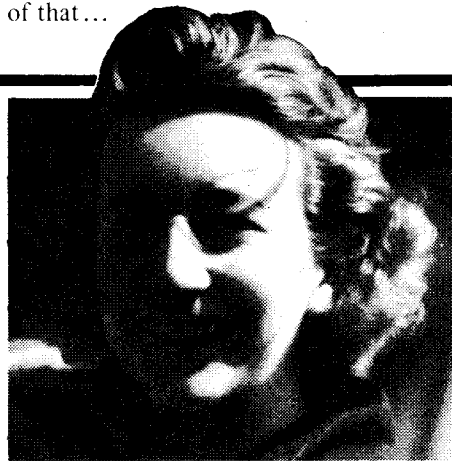


Did Afghanistan trigger it all off?

No. The West had hardened its attitude to Russia well before Russia invaded Afghanistan. For example America increased its defence budget in January of last year. The new anti-Russian feeling is not simply a response to Russian tanks in Afghanistan. Afghanistan was already within Russia's political and economic net. Afghanistan is only the excuse for a cold war policy that had already been developed by the super powers.

Why is everyone talking about boycotting the Moscow Olympics?

The thing is it is all TALK. While Maggie Thatcher is proclaiming the scandal of athletes going to Moscow while Russian tanks are in Afghanistan, she is signing treaties with Moscow to increase Anglo-Russian trade! Principles seem to stop short when it comes to boosting profits. Afghanistan bothers her; South Africa and its apartheid regime, it seems, doesn't. There's talk that new South Africa will be allowed to compete in international sporting events. Nobody has heard Maggie Thatcher denouncing the scandal of that...



Scoundrel Time now as the new McCarthys emerge. Zee Ept, chairman of the Rehabilitation of Joseph McCarthy Committee, said recently 'we're going to make sure that McCarthyism isn't a dirty word any more. When we get to that point – and 1980 is an encouraging year for us – the media are going to get frightened, and stay frightened, and this country is going to stop losing.'

What has Iran got to do with it?

The revolution in Iran upset the balance of power in the Middle East. The Shah had been the great friend of America. Now their oil investments were under threat. Iran's capture of the American hostages is only another indication of America's displaced influence in the area. Carter may be worried about his Iran embassy staff, but he's much more worried about maintaining American investment in the Middle East.

Why is Maggie Thatcher supporting Carter?

Right from the beginning, Maggie Thatcher pushed her Iron Lady anti-Russian image. How else would she be able to justify increased defence spending? Her tagging behind Carter suits her policies at home – defence becomes more important than our schools, our hospitals and our welfare. That's what she means by a 'Great' Britain. Great perhaps for our business men. They push her to protect their interests in the Middle East and the benefit of Arab capital in London, the finance capital. So Maggie backs Carter. She presents herself as the champion of the so-called free world. The freedom she is talking about is the freedom of big business to rake in profits unchecked.

Is there a risk of nuclear war?

Yes and no. In a climate of cold war the great powers could come to real confrontation and hover over the button. But the importance to us now is the hysteria that goes with this fear. Exaggerated praise for the SAS squadron that released the hostages, talk about the importance of defence, the introduction of the draft, putting the Great back in Britain are ideas that we have to answer now. We have to remember that the SAS are also the most hated and feared army unit in Northern Ireland, used in secrecy against innocent people. War talk is two pronged; it's used against us as well as against Russia.

Written by Marnie Holborow
and Margaret Renn, drawing by
Maureen Williams

'FULL TIME ROWING PART TIME LIVING'

Gill Webb is a member of Britain's Women's Rowing Squad, competing in the Moscow Olympics next month. She was interviewed by Jill Brownbill.

Jill: How did you first start rowing?

Gillian: When I was 16 I went along to a local rowing club near home, for a laugh really. I enjoyed it, and found I was quite successful at it.

Jill: Quite successful?

Gillian: I suppose a little more than that. I was Junior National Champion in 1973, when I was 17.

Then I was asked to join the National Squad in 1974. I rowed in the World Championships the following year and in the Montreal Olympics in 1976.

Jill: How did you get on in the Olympics?

Gillian: We came eighth (out of eight) which was quite good because the distance and cost of getting to Canada forced many teams out. Lots of European crews didn't compete, because we'd eliminated them! The English team was used as the selection criteria for other countries. We beat the West Germans, who usually send a four. We also beat the Czechs, French and Poles. The European Regatta circuit was used for the qualifying heats, and the other teams weren't sent if they couldn't beat us. We were really fast that year, the fastest British four ever, 3.27 minutes over 1,000 metres. It hasn't been beaten or equalled yet. We were pretty nippy.

Jill: What sort of training do you have to do?

Gillian: At the moment we train twice a day, Hammersmith in the morning, and Thorpe Park near Staines in the afternoon. I've got a motorbike, but I sometimes think I'll kill myself dashing across London to make the training sessions on time. I have to be at Hammersmith at 8.45 am and Thorpe Park at 5 pm but I don't usually get there till 5.15 what with work (as a

PE teacher in a London comprehensive) and everything. Then the coach goes mad. I usually get home around 9 pm, so I'm out, dashing, from 8 am till 9 pm every day. If it wasn't for my flat-mate I'd probably starve to death. She does all the shopping, cooking and generally looks after me. She's a rower too, but because of a back injury she's been unable to row this year. She's a little bit upset about it, but philosophical, because without her help I wouldn't be able to manage. I keep her in touch with all the gossip.

Jill: What about social life?

Gillian: Not much. I'm lucky because I've got a loyal boyfriend who also looks after me. He rows too, but at club level, so he supports me and is very sympathetic, although he sometimes doesn't understand the pressures we're under. I usually see him when he drives me to the airport or picks me up again. It's a bit like a part-time love affair; everything I do is part-time; full-time rowing, part-time living. Saturday night is my high-spot - falling asleep in the pictures. I've missed loads of films like that. Once he bought tickets to see 'The Rocky Horror Show'. It was a really big treat, and I only just stayed awake through that! Somehow he doesn't seem to mind. I can't drink except the occasional wine, so we can't spend evenings drinking in the pub, but if I'm really depressed I'll have a Harvey Wallbanger! I can eat whatever I like, in fact. I have to watch that I don't lose weight; if you lose too much weight you lose muscle. You have to be quite heavy to row, but it has to be working weight. I do weight train-

ing and circuit training twice a week. I've got a permanent bruise on the back of my neck where I rest the bar to do squats. Not very feminine, but Racquel Welch does it. I can lift 60 kilos quite easily now.

Jill: What's your coach like?

Gillian: Our trainer is awful. He has no sympathy towards domestic problems. He lives with his Mum and has everything done for him. He just doesn't realise that we have to shop (very time consuming), cook, do the washing. I've trained in Spain in February, Italy at Easter, Mannheim a couple of weeks ago, and Essen this weekend.

Jill: How can you afford it?



Gillian: At present I'm working and being paid part-time. I get a Sports Aid grant, and the ILEA are paying me for time off for the Olympics, but not for training. At school the kids are really interested, but the staff show very little interest. Strange, I'd have thought it could have been good publicity for the school. British Home Stores sponsor the team and pay for all the boats, equipment, and help towards the travelling expenses, and the Winston Churchill fund also helps.

Jill: Are you looking forward to Moscow?

Gillian: Well, I've been training a long time for this. Once you're selected the worst part seems to be over, then you

can plan to compete. I'm a bit worried about it though because there'll be more armed guards than ever. In Montreal I was really shocked by all the guns and guards, typical British attitude I suppose. Not used to seeing guns on people. Actually, I've got a feeling that Moscow won't happen, which will be sad. I really feel that Thatcher is wrong to use athletes as the front line of foreign policy. If she were serious trade sanctions would be better, but all the time she's still trading with them, why should we be martyrs? She hired Russian ships to bring in steel to break the steel strike. It's hypocrisy to do that and then expect athletes not to go.

Jill: What about Prince Philip and the equestrian sports? They're not going.

Gillian: No, the snobby sports aren't going. Rowing is traditionally middle class, but most of us aren't any more. I have to work, and most athletes have to work, and we give up a hell of a lot for sport. 'Jolly yachting and jolly show jumping', sports like that are for the rich, the idle rich. Show jumpers can afford to live their sport all the time. Their life is horses.

Jill: Is it tough for a woman in your sport?

Gillian: Women in sport have it tougher than men. From the attitude of the public who always seem to expect us to do it all wrong to the attitude of trainers, even to my mum, who seems to regard it as a hobby, wanting me to settle down and get married. We're told by our coaches that we're too emotional, giggle too much and don't take it seriously. Male coaches can't cope, they expect us to behave like men, but we are different. They try hard not to notice. Funnily enough, the male squad is coached by a woman, Penny Chuter. That works quite well, better than the reverse. We have to work harder, prove more all round. Still, we'll do alright in Moscow.

Good luck, Gill.

Womens Voice wishes you well.

SPORT

LETTER FROM NICARAGUA

UNTIL LAST year, Nicaragua — a small country in central America — was ruled for over 40 years by a family of dictators, the Samozas. After years of opposition and finally a bitter civil war, the Sandinista guerilla forces overthrew the Samoja regime which had been backed by the US. Sheila Robin recently spent some time in Nicaragua and sends this report of the role women are taking in building a new Nicaragua.

ALL OVER the country there is a feeling of change. Black and red flags and signs are proudly displayed in many towns and homemade banners are slung high across roads. Even the churches are covered with portraits of Sandino, the guerilla leader of the 1920s after whom the Sandinistas named themselves.

Before the triumph (Samozas's downfall), there was a women's association which worked on getting information on arrests, tortures, and also helped to organise the civil defense committees which prepared for the insurrection by clandestine work in the towns. On the guerilla front, as well as participating in combat, women worked at providing food and safe homes for the fighters.

Today the women's centres see their role as fighting for their rights, encouraging women to be fully involved in the revolution taking place. The meeting places are bright, posters and literature abound, all the workers are volunteers, many of the women had problems with husbands who objected to them going to meetings in the evenings, this was solved by holding meetings at the same time as the Sandinista trade union federation which the men attended.

The main problem facing women is the lack of financial support from men who leave them with children. The centres are campaigning for the implementation of the law that men should pay maintenance for the children.

The week leading up to International Women's Day, was designated women's week and activities took place to lead to a national mobilisation of women. The demands were, equal pay, maintenance

payments, and the equal division of property when a couple split up.

The largest campaign going on in Nicaragua is the Alfabetisation Crusade — the literacy campaign. Thousands of people from the ages of twelve upwards have been organised to teach the fifty per cent of the population who are illiterate. It is hoped to achieve this massive task in five months, and to improve the general political education of the people.

Those chosen to teach work in the fields during the day, and do the teaching at night. Lessons take place in the home or workplace. Many of the teachers are women and the women's centres are involved in encouraging parents to let their children go and teach in the country. Women are also active in the Sandinista Defense Committees (CDS). These are local committees set up in each block of a neighbourhood. Each has six elected members, all of whom have different tasks: coordination; checking on food prices; setting up outlets for basic foods; developing cooperatives. There is a member who sorts out tenants' problems, one who helps families and children in trouble, one to act as health inspector. The CDS groups work with the women's association, and the ministry of the social

welfare on these problems. Play groups have been set up as have discussion groups.

However, there is one subject that when discussed was met by embarrassment. I asked about the availability of contraception and was told that the country was underpopulated, and needed more people. When I asked 'what for' I never got a satisfactory answer. Contraception is available, but just never discussed. I did not dare ask about abortion.

Nicaragua is a country in the process of change. Demonstrations occur frequently and women are in the forefront of many campaigns, having to fight particularly hard against machismo — that virulent Latin American breed of male chauvinism. But Nicaraguan women will have to tackle the problems of controlling their own fertility. Otherwise they will continue to be burdened with the problems of dangerous illegal abortion, and constant child-bearing. Despite the call for increasing the population women will resort to dangerous and damaging alternatives. Until this happens, women in Nicaragua will not be able to fight machismo effectively, neither will they be able to enjoy the fruits of a new society if they do not have this basic control over their own lives.



The strike that fired a generation on



MATCHGIRLS

IN THE JULY OF 1888 four girls who had given information on their conditions of work at Bryant & May match factory to the social reformer Annie Besant were given the sack. All the women and girls downed tools and walked out. This was the beginning of the match girls own union. The women were sick of being miserably paid, getting only 8/- per week... when Bryant & May, during its first six months of existence paid £333,000 to shareholders.

By rationalising production in specially built factories, Bryant & May systematically increased its domination in the match making industry until the depression of the 1880s. Its response was not to lay off workers but to reduce pay. When that was resisted, it achieved the same end by stepping up its system of fines. Eleven shillings a week was theoretically the maximum for a girl working at full speed in terrible conditions, but Bryant & May operated a fine system which meant the majority of its workers went home with 8/- or less in their pocket.

The work was also dangerous: 'Phossy jaw' became common, spreading pain, inflammation and abscesses from the teeth throughout the jaw and face. Bryant & May were more concerned to prevent this than the usual small factories, but they responded in the same way when the girls affected could no longer work quickly; they were sacked.

The East End of London provided capitalists with a huge pool of labour ripe for the sweating, especially that of single girls and mothers with dependants. Bryant & May's drew on this by dividing their production between matchmaking in the factories and matchbox making as 'outwork'. Paid at a lesser rate than the factory girls, they worked a sixteen hour day at a maximum of 3/6 per hour.

The strike was hard and bitter. The women workers were constantly threatened with the sack from management. A strike fund was set up, with the help of Annie Besant. The women and girls went



around to local factories in the East End of London, to collect money and to speak about their strike. This was an incredible success — thousands of pounds flooded in from all over London and the rest of the country. This money enabled the women and girls to stay out on strike until they were able to win their demands of no cutting of the wages and improved working conditions.

It was a strike initiated, co-ordinated and negotiated by women workers. They were a large group of mostly young, illiterate single women who created between themselves a network of mutual support strong enough to bring them out the gate, to co-ordinate a large strike, TO WIN IT and to go on to form one of the first unions of unskilled women workers.

Elaine Delay

WOMENS HEALTH

Acupuncture Is it all pins and needles?

ACUPUNCTURE AS a way of healing is 4000 years old and is still used today to cure people. Compare that to the puny 200 years or so that western medicine has been in existence and it makes you think there must be more to it than just a 'few needles'.

In China, of course, Acupuncture is used routinely along with other forms of medicine, but in England it is still regarded with suspicion by most people.

The reason for this is not just racism, or the belief that our kind of medicine is the high point of medical science. It is because Acupuncture approaches the body in a very different way to western medicine, its ideas originating in ancient Chinese philosophy.

Acupuncture sees the body in terms of CH'I, this is the vital force or energy which circulates round the body. When this energy - Ch'i stagnates then the

body becomes out of balance and will get ill.

Unlike western medicine, Acupuncture doesn't see an illness as something that happens to one bit of us: 'She had a bad heart', it looks at the whole body and asks why there was a strain on, for example, her heart. What had happened to her Ch'i which put extra strain on her heart? How was she living her life, holding her body, eating, sleeping and so on.

Illness is not seen either as something that just happens, and which can be treated by painkillers or other drugs. Acupuncture argues that if you only remove the symptom and not the source of the illness, then it will reappear somewhere else later.

One of the bases of Acupuncture is the idea of balance. The balance between blood and ch'i, hot and cold, full and empty and yin and yang. Yin and Yang are the terms that have often put feminists off Acupuncture as they have sometimes been interpreted as feminine and masculine. Yang being 'active', Yin being 'passive, receiving'. But Acupuncture argues that everyone must have a balance of these two energies inside them.

If the body is out of balance Acupuncture uses needles, in various points in the body to right that balance. The points used will depend on what's wrong.

Running along our body are 'meridians', which connect one part of our body with another. A needle placed anywhere in a meridian will affect anything along that meridian. For example, a needle placed in the foot can affect the pelvis, or internal organs etc. This connection between parts of our body is vital to Acupuncture. For example a headache need not be caused by tension at all, it could be caused by the overworking of the liver, or stomach, or even by constipation!

The needles themselves are incredibly

thin and are from 1/2 inch to 2 inches long, depending on how much flesh they need to go through. You can't feel them going in, though if you are in pain already you can feel some pain not from the needle itself but from the energy releasing round the needle.

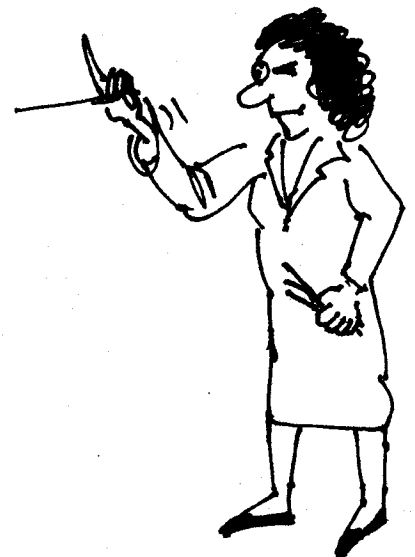
Sometimes it makes you feel tired or sleepy afterwards, but it usually makes you feel far more energetic and alive than you did before. The cure itself is not always quick, however. And those of us who have been taught to expect instant relief from pain have to get used to letting our body take its own time to get better. But when Acupuncture does cure, it will have a lasting effect, making sure the cause of the illness has been treated, not just the symptom.

A lot of aches and pains we have learnt to put up with can be treated by Acupuncture: headaches, migraines, constipation, continual colds, asthma, arthritis, and women's problems: period pains, scanty or very heavy periods can be very successfully treated. A friend of mine who had not had a period for a year after she came off the pill found they returned after the first Acupuncture treatment she received.

Unfortunately, Acupuncture is not available on the NHS and has to be found privately. Treatment can cost anything from £5 to £12 a time: some Acupuncturists will lower their prices if you are poor. It is probably best to go to someone a friend or acquaintance can recommend as good. Otherwise there is an Acupuncture Association, whose phone can be found in the yellow pages. Some Acupuncturists also have their numbers in the yellow pages.

If you do have problems that you've found no GP seems to be able to cure, why not think about going? You've got nothing to lose but your pain.

Tessa Weare



REVIEWS

'Laugh? I could have cried'
Being funny isn't just about clowning — humour reveals the way a person interprets the world. And most humour relies on sending up sex, race or class.

without being sexist is something women in the entertainment business are trying to cope with. But what is the line between sexism and jokes about sex which aren't sexist?
I was walking along on a sunny day with a friend. There

was an unusual amount of whistling and catcalling. 'What's going on?' I said, 'This doesn't usually happen to me.' She looked down ironically at her large breasts and said ruefully, 'It's me and my tits — you see there's

three of us. That's where my feminism started — at the breast.' Funny but serious.

To see how feminists are tackling this funny problem, we spoke to women comedians to find out how they use humour.

"A theatre that can't be laughed in is a theatre to be laughed at." Bertolt Brecht

Maggie Steed



WHAT ARE the two biggest lies in the world?' asks Maggie Steed, a member of Women in Entertainment and currently performing in Alternative Cabaret. "'Your giro's in the post" and "I promise not to come in your mouth".'

Maggie points out that there is a real need for women in entertainment to get together. 'You only have to look at a cast list to see there's ten names for men and only three

Alternative Cabaret is a

group of actors and actresses who make political jokes. Maggie tells stories rather than delivering gags. She explains how she found her mother's cap and wondered what it was. She recounts the charade of when she came to have her own cap, and didn't know where to put it. During the act she sticks it in her mouth and in her ear. The brazen way in which she smashes taboos and her reverence immediately appeals to the women in the audience. For

women contraception is very serious and secret, but when we laugh about it we share the problem. There's confidence in being able to laugh.

'My jokes are a bit vengeful — I want to talk to the women in the audience.'

She reverses the usual order of things. 'A man and a woman go to the zoo. They're looking at a gorilla when it leaps out of the cage onto the woman. She says "What shall I do?" and the man says "Try telling him you've got a headache".'

'A man and a woman go to the zoo. They're looking at a gorilla when it jumps out onto the man. He says "What shall I do?" and the woman says "I don't know but I'm sure you'll brag about it at the office tomorrow".'

Funny women have a hard time because of the roles they are supposed to fulfil. They can be dumb, nagging or

excessively fat — or even all three. To avoid this you either have to join the 'fringe theatre' or be very lucky.

'In the USA there is a tradition of acceptably funny women. Twenty-five years ago Lucille Ball made a TV series about a woman on her own, and, yes, she was scatty, but she was funny. There's also Mary Tyler Moore and Mae West.'

Maggie thinks women must be raunchy, and it works. She takes private fears and depressing moments onto the stage and shares them. She uses a kind of aggression denied to women for too long. She gets out her pessary applicator and sticks it in her mouth, saying it doubles up nicely as a cigarette holder at parties. She points out that although the graffitti says 'A woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle,' even a haddock sometimes needs a ride.

Cunning Stunts

Iris Walton is one of the six women in *Cunning Stunts*. Why did they choose this name which is so irresistibly reversible?

'We chose it out of hundreds. It sums up the kind of work that we do and it's a name that sticks.'

And, after all, comedy is about revealing ourselves, and about reclaiming sex from its abuse.

When *Cunning Stunts* do their 'ostrich act' they squawk

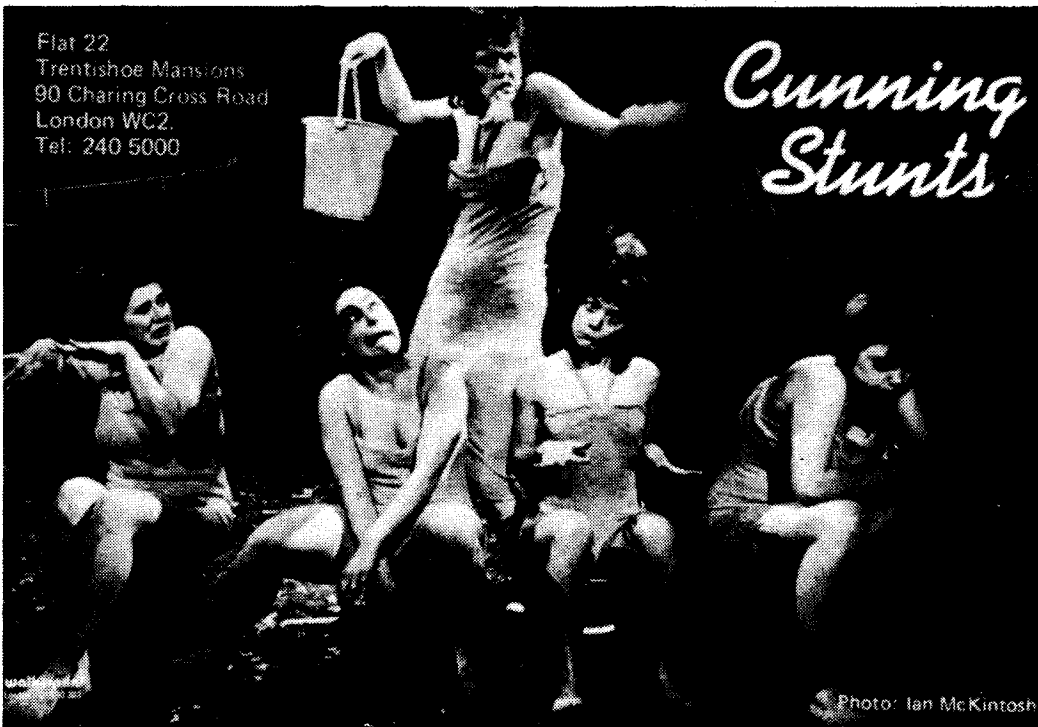
and waddle; they are unfeminine; they sit on buckets and heave and strain. Do they want us to think they're shitting?

'Yes we do! We think it's funny, and it's funny when we produce the eggs at the end.'

Women aren't supposed to be rude, but *Cunning Stunts* are. What's the point?

'We can be really gross and get away with it. We can be revolting and...'

Flat 22
Trentishoe Mansions
90 Charing Cross Road
London WC2.
Tel: 240 5000



Interviews by
Melanie
MacFadyean

Have you always been a filthy pervert?

*Are you alienated from society?
Do people spit at you?*

*Have you told your family yet?
Have you admitted your disgusting sexual problem to your family?*

*Do your friends know?
You have friends?*

*Do your colleagues at work know?
Do the girls in the office rush out of the toilet when you walk in?*

*Is your relationship with Janet totally fulfilling?
How many times a week do you do it and how?*

*Are you happy together?
How many times a week do you do it and what with?*

*Is your relationship equal?
Which of you festering aberrations of womanhood is the butch?*

*Do you think you'll always be a lesbian?
I could give you the number of a most sympathetic aversion therapist.*

*Have you ever discussed the possibility of having children?
I presume you have no qualms about indoctrinating innocents into your twilight world of perverted lust.*

like it. Women often have to be passive in acting but we work from ourselves, our fantasies — we're not writers. Our fantasies can be aggressive, funny, upfront — we work in a way that doesn't push us into being 'feminine'. Working as a group of women means we're not in competition with each other, we support each other. We can

do what we want.'

Why do the Stunts use comedy?

'We want to get to as wide an audience as possible. We don't just work in theatres — we work in prisons, homes for the mentally handicapped, all sorts of places. Comedy and humour involve the audience. It works — people laugh at us.

We're exploring comedy.

Maybe it's learning to be honest, learning to be able to laugh at yourself. We don't want to be like we "should" be. At first people used to ask us why we were so ugly. They'd never have said that to a group of men.'

The Stunts are certainly not feminine, they are definitely feminist and outrageously female.

Gay Theatre Group

Political comedy takes place in fringe theatre. One gay theatre group, who as yet have no name, find themselves on the fringe of the fringe. They aren't funded by the Arts Council who said that because they're a gay group, they'd only appeal to gay audiences. This isn't true as they them-

selves point out:

'Our material isn't ghettoised, we've played to mixed audiences and they've responded well. Comedy is the best way to get across what we want to say. So many shows do agitprop and use slogans, make demands. That's so alienating, but with comedy

the audience can laugh along with us and they can think, "But they're lesbians doing that" and it breaks down the barriers. Laughter can be double edged, you're really sticking the knife in at the same time. Comedy isn't brow beating, mallet thumping stuff, saying "You've all got to be queer," it's just saying, recognise, realise that the oppression of lesbians is your oppression too.'

Most of you will have seen interviews with lesbians on the TV. For the benefit of those of you who don't understand the subtle euphemisms used, the gay theatre group provides a translation:
How long have you been aware that you are gay?



The gay performers can be contacted at Action Space, 16 Chenies Street, WC1. Phone 631 1353. They are available for meetings and socials. (Sandy Lister, Sauna Macdonald, Anne Wilkins, and Dinah Jeffrey)

Cunning Stunts can be contacted through Di Robson, Flat 22, Trentishoe Mansions, 90 Charing Cross Road, London WC2. Phone 240 500.

Whatever happened to liberation?

Dear *Womens Voice*,
I have just returned home from San Francisco – the mecca for militant feminists – or so I thought! I was sadly disappointed by what I saw left over from the struggles and action of the late 60s.

On International Womens Day I went to an outdoor rally held under a cloudless sky in downtown San Francisco. Amongst the stalls, women in tee-shirts, summer dresses and shorts were continually annoyed by large numbers of men who had obviously come to leer at our bodies, and had no interest at all in the reason for the rally. A belly dancer wiggled her hips between stalls for the Legalise Cannabis Campaign and Police Recruitment. The main speaker on the platform was the city's mayor, Mrs Weinstein, who was thunderously applauded for claiming that 'now we have a woman as a mayor of San Francisco, feminism is here to stay.' I wonder how many of us feel that about our friend Maggie!

The general mood was one of self-congratulation, although women were urged to 'agitate' around ERA – the Equal Rights Act which has not been approved by all States in the USA and which has about as much guts in it as the Sex Discrimination Act has here. Feminism in the States has been incorporated into the mainstream of white American life: they have women's banks, women's insurance companies, a few women employed in most traditional men's jobs like plumbing and carpentry, and for a lot of our American sisters, that seems to be enough.

I saw nothing of the militant mood of the late 60s that I hoped to learn about, and came away more than ever convinced that a movement for women's liberation which is not linked to an organized fight against class oppression and against capitalism is meaningless, and will only lead to wasted energy, and a slightly better deal for well-educated, middle class women.

Wendy Pettifer
Finsbury Park

LETTERS



No deportation for innocent Swadeka

Dear *Womens Voice*,
Swadeka Bibi Emambuus is a 37 year old Mauritian woman who worked in a Bournemouth restaurant for two years without pay.

Swadeka entered this country in July 1977 with permission to stay until August of that year. She was completely alone. Before she arrived in England she had been divorced and she had no surviving relatives to turn to.

Her return ticket to Mauritius expired and she had no money.

The owner of the restaurant told her not to worry, because she could work there for her board and lodging – no wages

In the home or the army?

Dear *Womens Voice*,
In your March editorial you say that right-wing Tories would like a conscript army in Britain and you suggest that this would involve women. This is highly unlikely when the Tories keep telling us that our place is in the home and when their nursery education cuts are designed to keep us there.

The American women interviewed for British television were probably picked out for screening because of their submissive attitude. I can't believe the majority of young American women think that way. Judging by Barbara Sands' letter from New York in February *Womens Voice*, American women are being treated in the same oppressive way as British women. Surely

of course!

Not being a member of the Hotel and Catering Workers Union, who would have explained to her the seriousness of her position and stopped Swadeka from being exploited, she agreed to work without pay.

She paid for her mistake when the police found out and arrested her. She was sentenced to one month in prison and a recommendation for deportation.

No action has been taken against the owners of the restaurant for so cruelly exploiting her.

Lomond Handley
Poole, Dorset

women in both countries should refuse to play men's power games and fight men's wars at least until we are granted full equality in every other aspect of our lives, and when we are fully represented in the governments of our countries.

I don't think the American women interviewed were being brave—I think it is cowardly to accept the 'equality' of fighting, and a cop out to pretend it has anything to do with feminism. These women should stand up for their rights instead of passively accepting the idea of fighting on behalf of a country which oppresses them and treats them like shit in peacetime.

Susan Read
Farnborough

COIL: PROS AND CONS

Dear *Womens Voice*,
Having had a lot of trouble to find and use suitable contraceptives for the last 13 years I am very glad that some women have written in supporting the use of IUDs.

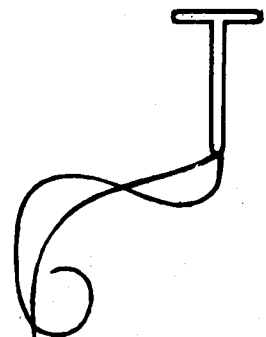
Because I developed high blood pressure I am unable to use the pill. I had a 'loop' for four years, then the copper 7 for two. Although the loop caused heavier periods I did not object to this and I found the copper 7 reasonably suitable, until I developed a minor infection from its presence.

I know that there has been a lot of anti-IUD propaganda recently but the IUD is regarded as being the next safest or most reliable method after the pill, and those women who want to use it because they can't or don't want to use the pill must be informed and supported.

Having developed this minor infection I was told at the Well Woman Clinic at the EGA that I could carry on with the infection (which apparently was doing no harm) or use the cap.

So I started using the cap and have used it successfully for three years. I think it has several advantages:

- * it doesn't hurt
 - * you are not taking chemicals and hormones, which may ruin your health
 - * you have normal periods
 - * you may be reasonably well protected from yeast infections as spermicides are acidic
 - * you may be lightly protected from venereal disease
- And a few disadvantages:
- * you have to remember to take it wherever you go
 - * it may not be 100 per cent reliable
 - * young girls may not feel like using it
 - * you may not like the smell



or taste

* women who are a little inhibited sexually may feel embarrassed that they have to either put it in before-hand or in the middle of a session. Some spermicides may irritate, but there are many different brands to try. Women who have recurring cystitis may find that the cap traumatises the urethra.

What worries me is that for ten years I was 100 per cent (or nearly) protected by the pill and IUD but I am only protected by the cap when I wear it. I do not rule out the possibility of conception by rape or by carelessness when I am unprotected. From what I have read the cap should be, theoretically, a 100 per cent reliable form of contraception, and the 5 per cent discrepancy comes from misuse, ie it's not in place or not enough spermicide.

I think because of our physiology it is very difficult for us to know when it is in correctly and whether the spermicide has gone to the right places. Only as long as the use of contraceptives is backed up with free, early and safe NHS abortions will I ever feel able to try and enjoy sex as men have done since we evolved from apes.

Lynda Woodruffe
Kilburn, North London

You've got it wrong about religion

Dear Womens Voice,
As a first time reader of *Womens Voice* I feel I must write in reply to your article 'God is not a woman, is she?' As a liberal Protestant I am far from being the sort of Christian who cannot bear criticism of the established Church, and in particular its attitude to women. However, I must take issue with the notion that religious faith keeps women in their place. Some, indeed many, branches of the established church promote the traditional roles for women. My argument is that the Christian faith in its essence should do just the opposite.

The article speaks of faith in God as a prop. When, in weak moments, I have wished my faith could be a prop, I have

found rather that it confronted me all the more uncompromisingly with myself and my responsibility to a world of suffering and injustice. The Christian faith is nothing if not radical. The life and death of Jesus of Nazareth were a profound challenge to the society of his day. His words and actions so shook the contemporary authorities that they had to get rid of him by judicial murder. He may have accepted his own sufferings without complaint, but the burning compassion with which he met the sufferings of others, and the radical alternative which his whole way of life represented were far from passive. In his relationships with women he was forthright and entirely lacking in condescension, in a manner quite remarkable for his day.

The Christian Church has, in its treatment of women, failed to meet the challenge of its founders example. But while the established churches may be seen as bolstering up the general status quo, many Christians are acutely aware of the need to challenge the assumptions of their society and to offer an alternative way of life, however inadequate their efforts. Many women in the Church are working inside it to help it throw off its old assumptions about them.

Rather than antagonising Christian women who are also feminists by caricaturing their faith, it would surely be more productive to look at where Christianity and feminism meet.

Lesley Sharpe
University of Exeter

Not so serious, please

Dear Womens Voice,
I found Carole Barrett's article 'The Fairy Queen' in your March issue extremely irritating. Of course I agree that features such as the plight of the Vietnamese should be shown and I have no doubt that children are fascinated by them. However I do not think that the more light hearted items that follow are condescending.

Why must we be continually monitoring the media for traces of condescension towards children?

Just because a feature is expressed in slightly simplified language and concerns itself with something that may not be of interest to adults does not mean that it is taking down. I am sure most children would much rather hear about how Sally from Ealing makes dolls clothes from old copies of the

WE'RE PROUD TO BE GAY

Dear Womens Voice,
In April the *International Gay Association* (IGA) held its second annual conference. The IGA was formed in 1978 by representatives of 12 gay organisations from North America, Australia and Europe. At this inaugural meeting no women were present. The men decided not to formulate aims for women but to change their aims if and when women wanted to join. At this second annual conference, the women's caucus proposed that the name of the organisation be changed to the *International Association of Gay Women and Men*.

It was thought that the name change was important for the association as a symbol of women joining the IGA. It was also thought essential that women be named explicitly in the name of the association. This proposal was accepted by the conference.

We feel that it is important to inform you of our thoughts, aims and feelings in this decision. We believe that:

* Behind the choice to call ourselves gay women or to call ourselves lesbians, can lie a difficult ideological discussion in the women's movement, including the question of whether and to what extent we want to work together with men. Many of us embrace the word 'lesbian'; to give women a solid identity separate from men and to

emphasise the existence and oppression of lesbians, which is very different from gay men. Yet, in many non-English speaking countries there is a great need for a word like gay which can be worn by both women and men with pride.

* Many of the lesbians present do use the word gay to refer to themselves and are disturbed that in some countries the word is becoming synonymous with 'gay man'. This situation is, again, the result of a male-dominated society in which the press, literature and people in general see homosexuality in male terms only; that is, lesbians don't exist.

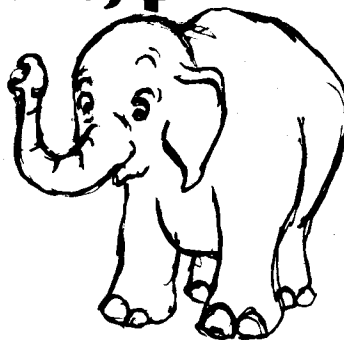
* We reaffirm our belief that the oppression of gay women is quite distinct from that of gay men; and that the oppression of black and Third World lesbians is also distinct from Anglo-Saxons. As long as this is the case, each group will and *must* fight for its own identity within the gay movement and society.

Yet, at a time when the enemies of homosexual liberation are organising in strong numbers, furthering ignorance, misunderstanding and the oppression of gay women and men, we feel that by the choosing of the new name as it reads, we have asserted our identity as gay women/lesbians and also shown with the choosing of one word to describe homosexual women and men, our desire to work together with gay men on an international level, to fight for full gay liberation.

While attending the conference in Spain, the women's caucus agreed to plan the first international lesbians conference to be held next year, prior to the next IGA annual conference. We also established a Lesbian Information Secretariat based in Amsterdam.

For further information please contact:
Lesbian Information Secretariat
International Association of Gay Women and Men
c/o COC - Women
Fredericksplein 14
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Cheryl Andrews
Aberdeen Gay Activists Alliance



Beano than about the cuts.

Carole Barrett credits children with far too much political awareness. No child is likely to make the obscure connection she makes between the Queen Mother and the cuts. An all-serious Newsround would be the equivalent, I fear, of continual party political broadcasts.—Long live Flossie the elephant!

Anna
Bristol

Dear Jane

In your last piece you discuss a second relationship within a faithful one. You say the biggest problem is how it will affect the existing relationship. Here are my thoughts on this matter...

We're all trying, as socialists, to be as liberated and 'free' as possible — to combat jealousy and the desire to possess. And that's a truly noble project — what no-one ever seems to think about is the new oppressed minority — the 'other' woman, or man. To have 'other' woman status in the new unwritten morality

of sexual politics, is to be up against 2000 years of sexual culture twice as bad as the two people who are each other's number one. (I use mathematical codes for convenience.) Number two gets all the leftovers, number two gets phoned at 5 to 8 just before the date, and told 'Look, I'm sorry, something's cropped up,' and of course, number one is upset, or has a catch in her voice...so number two is ditched. When that happens after number two has had a major trauma, it gets really hard to take and you

wish you were married with 2.3 children and a nice car, living in the depths of the countryside, growing vegetables.

Then you decide it's high time you had your own 'priority' relationship. (That word relationship — ugh — it's not any ship I'd put to sea in that's for sure.) So you meet a man, you get involved...you begin to trust him and then you find out he has a girlfriend in Rio de Janeiro. Do you: Hit him, kick yourself, get out or reach for the sleeping pills? No, you keep

going because by then being the other woman has become a way of life and besides you don't want to give up your dreams of equality, of the possibility of eradicating unbalanced power, you know it has to be possible to share, you think that's what freedom is about. You secretly long for a little old-fashioned love and romance, a gentleman who will wine and dine you and watch TV with you at weekends.

Marilyn MacLean

Yours Worried



starvation, and why the Tories want to keep women in the home. At the same time we have to be able to argue the case for a socialist society — what it is and how to get it...

Every summer hundreds of socialists spend several days debating and discussing these questions and many more. This year it's called Marxism into the 80's. It's organised by the Socialist Worker Student Organisation, at North London Polytechnic, 4th-11th July. There will be lectures, workshops, films, discussions, discos, theatre groups, and a creche! There are 17 main courses, including Introduction to Marxism, Women's Oppression, Ireland, Sexual Politics and Marxism and the Mass Media. You don't have to follow each course throughout, but they're designed so that you can concentrate on two or three without any clashes.

The course on Women's Oppression includes discussions on the theory of women's liberation, women in the trade unions, a debate on the last ten years of the women's movement and concluding with a symposium on feminist magazines and socialist organisation. Every evening there will be some form of entertainment as well as

Marxism into the 80's



debates. Films include Blood of the Condor and The Patriot Game, Picnic at Hanging Rock and Assault on Precinct 13.

The organisers will try to arrange accommodation with comrades for those who live outside London. The whole week costs £9, but if you can't get away for that length of time then you can come along for the weekend or evening sessions at a

reduced rate. As socialists we have to get away from the idea that education is all about 'A' levels and degrees. The best education of all is to be engaged in activity, and Marxism into the 80's provides a framework for us to act positively and effectively for socialism.

For more details write to SWSO, PO Box 82, London E2, or phone 01-986 8355.

MOST PEOPLE who become socialists do so through a gut feeling. They look around them and see a miserable society in which workers get a rotten deal, that power lies in the hands of a few who use it to control the majority, and that things aren't going to change unless we change it ourselves.

But just realising that isn't enough. We have to understand why profits are necessary to capitalism, why profit is destroyed in the United States while millions of people are dying of

Mothers Mental Illness

by Theresa Brown

TALES WE TELL OUR SISTERS

IT WAS DARK and stuffy under the stairs, and I was scared. We hid for hours, my mother and I, crouching, waiting, terrified. My father would find us eventually, and then he would kill us. It was as simple as that. My mother had told me, and I trusted her. After all, I was only five years old, and didn't understand that she was desperately ill.

At other times we would run away, always returning late at night, when she said we'd be safe. When daylight dawned it would all start again, dreadful screaming fights ending in violent attacks by my mother on my father, to protect us, she said.

I remember my father weeping, my mother accusing and me in the middle pleading 'Kiss and make up'. It worked in films, all the good ones ended with a kiss and happy-ever-after. So why not my parents' fights? But they never did kiss and make up, instead the bitterness deepened, the distrust increased and dominated our lives.

Eventually my mother was taken away, screaming, accusing us of betraying her. I didn't see her for three years. I lived with a succession of relatives and friends of my father, who all got fed up with me and moved me on. I was a dreadful bed-wetter and would spend most nights screaming in my sleep. It must have been difficult for them, but at that age I didn't understand. Every move would start with my father arriving, hushed conversations, and then my dad saying 'I've found a much nicer place for you to live.' And I'd go somewhere else.

I became convinced, although nobody ever said so, that I was evil, sick, the cause of it all, making my mother ill by nagging for impossible things all the time, ice-llies mostly, and sometimes sweets. I prayed incessantly for her to be well and swore I'd never ask for anything again. When she did come home, I kept my promise to myself. I never asked for anything from my mother, instead I plagued

my dad, poor soul. My mother was never to be worried, for fear that she'd be ill again. I was, I thought, the perfect child. I didn't realise then that my guilt was providing a buffer for all the family. One whisper of 'don't worry your mother' and I was finished.

Years later came the day that I left home. Within a week my mother attempted suicide and was hospitalised again. A long period of successive illnesses followed, in and out of hospital. She was never well for more than three or four months at a time. I developed headaches of unbelievable intensity. My guilt was taking physical form. During the years when my mother was well, her illness was a taboo topic. Nobody wanted to be reminded of it, it was never discussed. Consequently I'd never really known what had happened to her, or why.

I started to question her doctors and discovered that she was a schizophrenic, with paranoid tendencies. I found out a lot more besides. While in hospital she'd been kept 'stable' by massive dosages of drugs. She'd had an incredible amount of ECTS (Electro-convulsive therapy - electric shocks delivered straight to the brain). They'd even considered lobotomy, a charming procedure where they cut chunks of the brain away and leave the patient a virtual cabbage, but a quiet, peaceful cabbage.

The fact that she'd survived all this was amazing, she'd even kept her optimism and intelligence. I'll never understand how. Her doctors, as far as I could see, had tried everything except talking to her, understanding her problems, and exorcising her own particular demons in a caring manner.

The NHS undoubtedly has difficulties; about half of all hospital beds are devoted to mental patients and nursing the mentally sick is understandably not the most popular job in the world. It doesn't offer the success-rate of cure that other branches of nursing might, but the sight

of wards full of sedated, zombie-like patients shuffling around, unable to cope with even basics like movement or eating, just to enable a few nurses to cope with lots of potentially 'awkward' patients is heartbreaking, not just for the patients themselves, but for visiting families and friends too. On several occasions I've visited my mother when she's been unable to communicate except by grunts (she's quite outspoken normally) and there have been times when she hasn't even recognised me; she just thought that another patient's visitor was passing the time of day.

Another thing I found out about her illness was that my actions, or anybody else's, had no direct effect on her condition at all. Our family had existed in an emotional vacuum, devoid of any show of feelings (except happiness, or the appearance of it) for most of my life. We'd all hidden anger, disappointment, sadness in an attempt to protect her from any extremes. We'd treated her like a china doll. As an adult I had to learn what I should have learnt as a child. How to cope with my mother as a person, how to accept that she could accept me as a person, how to be honest with her and other people, how to stop trying to be what I thought other people wanted me to be (and I often got it wrong). In short, I had to live my own life.

It took a long time, but my mother and I are now friends, without criticism of one another. Her experiences have taught me some valuable lessons. Mental treatment is often cruelly used and excessive drug-taking (and prescriptions) cause distress to entire families. Mental illness should be openly discussed and understood, to remove the guilt experienced by members of families or friends of those who are ill. The person who is ill is largely unaffected by the actions of the rest of us. Our lives are our own to live, without torment and ill-founded guilt. I finally found mine.

WHAT IS GOING ON?

WV groups

- **ABERDEEN Womens Voice** for more information telephone Liz 51059
- **ABERYSTWYTH Womens Voice** meets regularly. Contact c/o Students Union, UCW, Aberystwuth. Babysitting available.
- **Acton Womens Voice.** Ring Ruth 992 9814 or Jude 740 6660
- **NORTH BIRMINGHAM Womens Voice** meets fortnightly. Phone Maggie 021 449 4793
- **SOUTH BIRMINGHAM Womens Voice** meets fortnightly. Phone Jill 021 459 1718
- **BLACK COUNTRY** Sundays fortnightly. 2.30, 27 Glen Court, Compton Road. Children welcome.
- **Bradford Womens Voice** group meets fortnightly. Kids welcome. Contact Janet c/o Textile Hall, Westgate Bradford or phone Trish 306447.
- **Bristol Womens Voice** every Wednesday, 7.30pm, at The Inkworks 22 Hepburn Road (off Brigstocke Road), St Pauls. Ring Katrina Bristol 46875.
- **CANTERBURY Womens Voice** meets every other Tuesday at Jolly Sailor Northgate. Phone Barbara (Lyninge 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
- **EDINBURGH Womens Voice** meets fortnightly on Sunday evenings. Phone Penny 557 0731 for details.
- EDINBURGH Womens Voice** street sale, 1 Saturday every month, meet in the Cafe Royal 1pm 7 June.
- **Enfield Womens Voice** meets every other Monday, 8pm, at SCOPE Community Centre, 232a Ponders End, High Street. For details ring Gill 340 7272.
- **GLASGOW Womens Voice.** For information ring Clare 959 8041 or Dorte 423 1185.

- **GLOSSOP, Derbyshire Womens 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 11am -12.30pm. Co-op arcade on the Precinct.

- **HAMMERSMITH Womens Voice** meets regularly. Contact Kate 748-7336 for details and babysitter.
- **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 regularly. Ring Morag 348 2060 or Pauline 586 5693 for information and details.
- **LAMPETER Womens Voice** meets Tuesday evenings. Details from WV sellers or write c/o SDUC Lampeter. Dyfed, Wales.
- LANCASTER Womens Voice** meets regularly—ring 36196 for details.
- **LEEDS Womens Voice** group meets every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at 8pm in the Central Station Hotel, Wellington Street. For more information contact Gilda 622 800 or Bev 457 098.

- LEICESTER Womens Voice** meets alternate tuesdays. Contact Fiona 0533 62855.
- **LEYTONSTONE WV** group meets fortnightly. Please ring Annie (556 5595) or Pam (558 1509) for details.
- **LIVERPOOL Womens Voice** meets on alternate Tuesdays at 8pm in the County Hotel. For further information phone Jane 727 1182
- **LUTON Womens Voice** meets alternate Wednesdays. Details and babysitters. Ring Jane 421 266
- **MANCHESTER University Womens Voice** meets each week at 5pm in the students union.
- **MEDWAY Womens Voice** meets regularly. Telephone Lici, Medway 571628

- **NEWCASTLE Womens Voice** meets regularly. Phone Liz 854 782.
- **NEWHAM Womens Voice.** Ring Pam 534 1417
- **NORWICH Womens Voice** for more information write c/o 56 St Benedicts St. Norwich.
- **NOTTINGHAM Womens Voice** meets every other Monday at the Women's Centre, Shakespeare Street, Details. Chrissie Langham Mill 62358

- **OXFORD Womens Voice** meets fortnightly. Phone Oxford 50437 for more details.

- **PIMLICO area Womens Voice**—phone Helen 730 7983 or Leslie 834 0760 for further details.

- **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**—anybody interested should contact Kirsten Ross on 732 4604 for further details.

- **South London Womens Voice** meets fortnightly, Tate Library Brixton 8pm on Tuesdays.

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

- **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 Womens Voice** meets alternative Tuesdays at 8pm. Phone Pauline 521 4768 or Mary Ann 520 3025.

- **Wrexham Womens Voice** Group meets fortnightly from 17 March. Telephone Heather 87293 for more details.

WV public meetings

Womens Voice Midlands Day School. Saturday 14 June, 10 to 5pm, Digbeth Civic Hall. Registration 50p, creche provided. Sessions on Contraception, Pornography, Building in the Unions, Tory Employment Bill, Writing leaflets, etc. Evening Benefit, with African Star and New Wave Band. For details contact Sue, 021-643 5717 or Jenny 021-440-5794.

BIRMINGHAM WOMEN'S VOICE Public Meeting. The Tory Employment Bill—How will it affect women? How can we fight it? Monday 2 June, 8pm, The Holloway, Holloway Head. Phone Anne 459-6302 or Jenny 440-5794 for details babysitters.

COVENTRY Womens Voice Meeting Wednesday 4 June A discussion on the 'Women's Room' and other feminist books' by Sue Pinkham. Phone Cov 611581 for venue details.

ILKESTON Womens Voice Meetings:

Monday 2 June 7.30pm, Women & the Police, Monday 16 June 7.30pm, Kids, Kids, Kids, What can you do if a teacher hits them—or tells them that the Queen is marvellous! For details of meetings, places-/babysitters/lifts tel:Shirley 327908 or Jeannie 303723

Small ads

PART-TIME WORKERS, TRADE UNIONS & THE LAW Conference to be held on Saturday 7 June, Caxton Hall, Caxton Street, London SW1. (nearest tube St James's Park) Details from Jane Edwards, NCCL, 186 Kings Cross Road, London WC1X 9DE

NATIONAL CHILDCARE CAMPAIGN? National Conference. Saturday 5 June, 10.30 to 5pm, Queen Mary College Student Union Bancroft Road, off Mile End Road, London E3, (between Mile End & Stepney Green stations on Central or District lines) Creche, low cost food-pooled fares, Fee £1.50 or 75p unwaged. Details from London Nursery Campaign, 11 Trendell House, Dod Street, London E14. Tel: 981-1221 Myra, 231-3033 Carol.

Range Left a left-orientated phototypesetting collective situated off Old Street, London, is looking for a new member (feminist/socialist). Accurate touch-typing required; photo-typesetting experience preferred but not essential. Flexible hours. Ring 01 739 0296 for interview.

Two rooms offered to one Socialist Feminist in shared house. All mod cons, Ring Sheila Mitchell 771-4078

OCTOBER BOOKS NON SEXIST CHILDREN'S BOOK SERVICE (mail order)

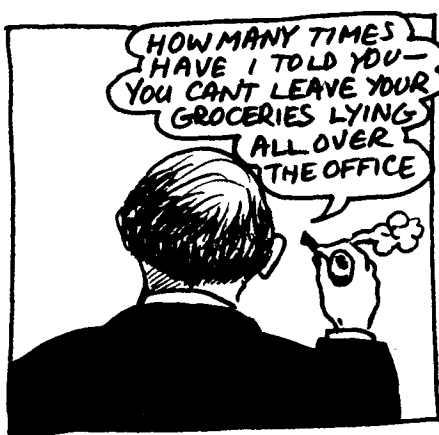
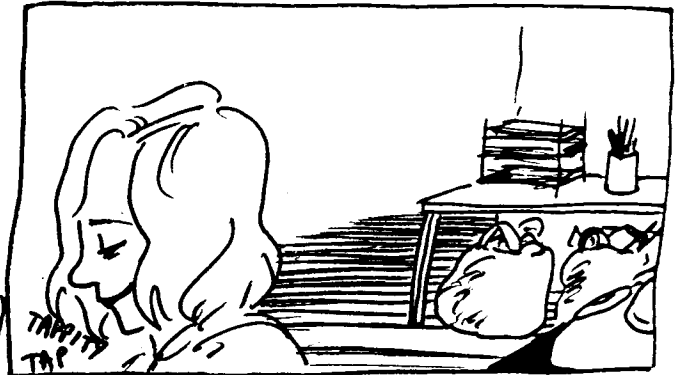
Send large SAE for our catalogue if you would like the Spare Rib list as well (it includes descriptions of many books in our catalogue) enclose an extra 60p.

New badge in Red, Green, Blue, & Black. 25p each plus 10p postage. Reductions for bulk orders (post free) 10 for £2.50, 50 for £11.00, 100 for £20.00

From **OCTOBER BOOKS, 4 ONSLOW ROAD, SOUTHAMPTON** Tel: 24489

Women, Work, and Trade Union Organisation by Judith Hunt and Shelley Adams. 60p. Available from WEA, 9 Upper Berkeley St., London W1H.

SANDRA



*WIFE

Sophie

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



SUBSCRIBE
TO
womens
voice

FOR ME
NAME
ADDRESS
.....

FOR MY FRIEND
NAME
ADDRESS
.....

RATES
Six month
subscription
£1.70
One year
£3.40

