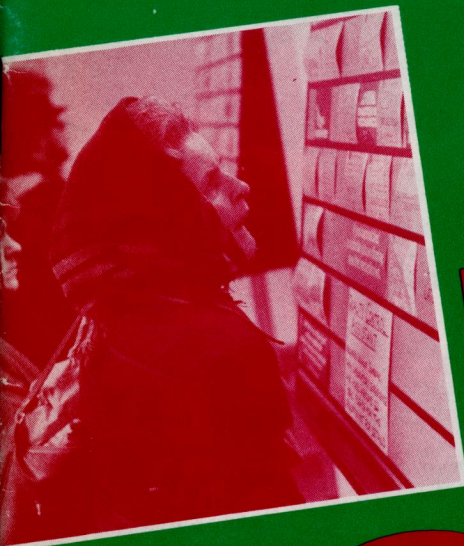


womens Voice

Womens magazine of the Socialist Workers Party

May '81
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JOBS



NOT

BOMBS



تعمیر و سازندگی



OUR POINT OF VIEW

Thatcherland gets a beating

BRITAIN's rulers must be beginning to worry. Four nights rioting in Brixton were followed by further riots at Easter by blacks and whites in other parts of London. Meanwhile street fighting in Derry in the North of Ireland has continued for over a week, as we go to press.

The papers and TV have come up with a number of reasons why this sort of fighting breaks out. They will tell you that it is because young blacks are wild and prone to law breaking and that they will never be able to fit into white society.

In Ireland, they say, the problem is one of religion which causes the riots.

Yet the root of the problem does not lie in either of these. In London and in Derry, kids are fighting the police and army — because they hate them. They hate them because the security forces have been used to harrass them and to protect the property of those who already own wealth.

For the kids of the ghettos—the black ghettos of the English cities and the catholic ghettos of the Irish ones—they have no future to look forward to. Unemployment, bad housing and discrimination are their facts of life.

No wonder they respond by fighting the people who are helping prop up that discrimination.

When kids come out onto the street to fight they are met with the same treatment, whether in Brixton or Belfast. Repression—arrests and the death of two

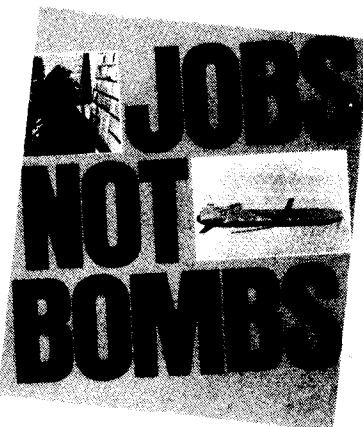
youths so far—is all they have come to expect.

We say end the repression. Police out of Brixton. Troops out of Ireland.

Strike for victory

WE interviewed Anna Walentynowicz, a Polish crane driver, last year. She spoke of the hope Polish workers held for a new future. Since then there have been repeated threats of Russian intervention. The trade union movement Solidarity is divided between those like Anna who want to advance the movement to further challenge Poland's rulers, and those, backed by the church, who want to compromise.

The strength of the Polish workers has prevented the Russians from invading. But mass movements do not stand still. They go forward or they go back. If Solidarity and the Polish workers don't press their demands further and back them with general strike action, the movement is in danger of disintegrating. It is then that the Russian and Polish ruling classes will press home their advantage. And that will be a setback for workers not just in Poland but everywhere.



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BRIXTON BURNS

BRIXTON erupted last month because the activities of the police had become intolerable.

Ironically a Lambeth Council report published in January had pointed out—what every black family in Brixton already knows—that to be a black youth in Brixton is to be a suspected criminal. And this was made even worse in the week before the riots when the police flooded the area with plain clothes policemen randomly stopping and searching over 1,000 people in just four days.

It wasn't a race riot, it was directed against the police. And it wasn't only black youths involved, there were also whites and some women, both black and white. The police quite literally took the riots into people's homes; they assaulted and nearly killed a 50 year old man with a heart condition, in his own front room; they sealed off the whole of the Stockwell Park Estate and assaulted many young black kids on the estate.

The riots broke down some of the barriers in the community, especially between black and white. In

the days after the riots, giving out leaflets and selling Socialist Worker packed with facts about Brixton was easy and exciting. One thousand copies of Socialist Worker were sold in a couple of days on the streets and on the estates.

It's surprising to see rioting and the military-style massing of the police in an area where you're used to shopping and drinking. But it really shouldn't be surprising; Thatcher already

warned us. She may say she is shocked, but we should judge her by her actions. When Thatcher adopted her 'tough' monetarist policies of cutting back on public spending and allowing unemployment to rise, there was one area of public spending and recruitment which she didn't cut back: the police and the army. Thatcher expected riots to result from her economic policies.

Janet Vaux



As the inquest into the deaths of 13 black youths in a fire at Deptford in January opens it is picketed by hundreds of angry demonstrators. They are demanding that someone be brought to justice for this racial murder.

FASCIST FIREBOMBS SOCIALIST SHOP

IT WAS Friday 27 March about four o'clock and I was idly thinking to myself it was time to go home. Then the fire-bombing happened. By four thirty there was one woman dead in the boot of a red Ford Escort used to fire bomb the Birmingham Socialist Worker bookshop, seven of us lucky to be alive and a burnt out shop.

The man who firebombed our shop was wearing military uniform at the time and had a pile of nazi literature at his home.

It's not the first time that a socialist premises has been attacked, and firebombed by fascists and it won't be the last. Fascists hate black people now just as they hated the jews in the 1920s and 30s, they have always hated socialists as their most active opponents.

So far this year there has been the Deptford firebombing, our shop, an asian house in Smethwick, racist murders in Swindon and Coventry and hundreds of other attacks. The confidence of the fascists is growing and influencing other fellow travellers 'to have a go'.

Police and press cover ups only make things worse. There is a massive job to be done by all anti racists and socialists of the militant kind; to build a mass anti nazi movement to isolate the firebombers and racist attackers and to build a socialist party capable of ridding this earth of the society that breeds them.

Our bookshop appeal is a good way to start. By asking for money for the SWP bookshop you have to explain why it was attacked and what needs to be done about it. And we need every penny to be able to pick up from where we left off on Friday 27 March.

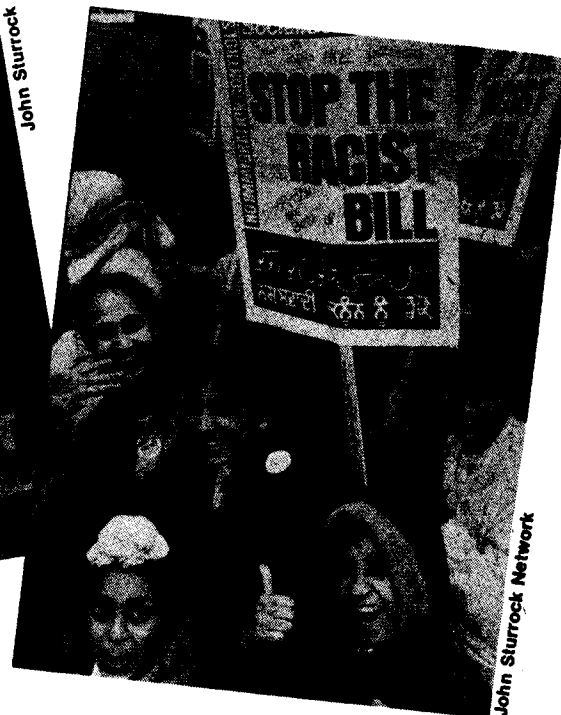
Sheila McGregor

PS Having been involved in a firebombing attack there is no way I believe the police story about Deptford that one of the party goers started the fire. Friends just don't do that kind of thing to one another.

PPS Pigs might.



John Sturrock Network



John Sturrock Network

EARLY in April thousands of people marched through London against the racist and sexist Nationality Bill. The Bill, due to become law in 1982, could mean thousands of blacks being thrown out of this country for no reason whatsoever. The demonstration, which was called by the Campaign Against Racist Laws, put its message over loud and clear to the Tories—here to stay, here to fight!

NASIRA: STILL VICTIM OF RACIST LAWS

NASIRA BEGUM is a Pakistani woman. She came to this country on a visit in May 1976. Whilst she was here, she married Mohammed Afzal who was already settled in this country.

Nasira applied for settlement in December 1976. However, Afzal constantly mistreated her and forced her to leave their home after only three months of marriage. She became dependent on friends and got a job.

In 1979, *three years* after Nasira's request to live in Britain, the Home Office told her to leave, because they claimed Afzal had been previously married. Nasira knew nothing about this and, indeed, the police had not prosecuted Afzal for bigamy because there was not enough evidence of a previous marriage. However, the Home Office wanted to deport Nasira on exactly the same "evidence". She appealed against this decision and won her case against the Home

Office in 1980. But the Home Office appealed against this decision to the Immigration Appeal Tribunal. This hearing will take place in June.

Nasira is threatened with deportation because she has been deserted. The only reason the Home Office kicked up such a fuss is because Afzal told them he had left Nasira. In other words the only "status" Nasira has is as a wife, and once she loses that she has nothing.

The new Nationality Bill will deprive black women married to British citizens of their automatic right to become citizens themselves. So even after Nasira has won her fight to stay here, she will be affected along with thousands of other black women by these changes.

For two years there has been a growing campaign in support of Nasira. She is being supported by five Trades Councils in the North East, and by the North West TUC. In addition, lots of black and women's groups have helped

build the fightback, so that she won her first hearing.

The Friends of Nasira are asking everyone to:

- *Demonstrate in Manchester on June 6 . Assemble Moss Side Centre at 12.30pm. Ring Satnam— 485 6672—for coaches from London. Bring banners.*
 - *Come to the Immigration Appeal Tribunal, June 15, 1.45pm, Thanet House, the Strand, London.*
 - *Write to Timothy Ralson, the Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, London, SW1. Demand that the Home Office drop the Appeal. Send copies to Gerald Kaufman, MP, House of Commons, London, SW1.*
 - *Organise meetings in your area, using the video which explains Nasira's case.*
 - *Pass motions supporting Nasira's case in your trade union branch.*
- Any information including petitions and leaflets you need can be obtained from Friends of Nasira 595 Stockport Road, Longsight, Manchester 12.*

We can't manage on 7%

FOR SIX weeks, civil servants have been at the forefront of the battle against the 6% cash limit imposed on the public sector. All nine civil service unions have united around a claim for 15% with an underpinning minimum of £10.

On March 9 there was tremendous response to the call for a one day strike with support from at least 85% of the members. Since then action has been mainly confined to selective strikes at the Inland Revenue computer centres at Cumbernauld and Shipley, and the DHSS and Department of Employment Computer in Newcastle. The Ministry of Defence have taken action at missile bases in Scotland. Customs and Excise have been involved too.

The main strategy has been to stop the supply of money to the government but all over the country there are hundreds of thousands of civil servants who are very angry and want to do more than just pay their weekly levy. This has been shown by their willingness to walk out over members who have been threatened with suspension, for blacking work normally done by strikers.

At the moment we have reached a stalemate. The government have not been unduly worried by our campaign and it is clear that the action must be escalated. Redder Tape, the rank and file group for civil service trade unionists, has argued for all out action to win the dispute and this is gaining wide support.

In spite of all the abuse we have received from the press who consider that we should be happy with our index linked pensions and job security, the real picture is very different. Any job security that we may have had once has been eroded by savage cuts in all departments and the proposed introduction of new technology,



Three years ago, Italian women won a famous victory. They forced through a law which legalised abortions in the first 13 weeks of pregnancy. That right is now under attack.

On May 17 there are two referendums on abortion which if passed would throw back the women's movement for years. The first, pushed by the Movement for Life (yes, it exists in Italy as well) and backed by the Catholic church and the ruling Christian Democrats, would make abortion available only to women whose life is in danger if they carry through their pregnancy. The other referendum, organised by the small Radical Party, aims at extending the right of abortion. But it is rejected by the whole of the women's movement. If it is passed, it would allow anybody to carry out abortions and its opponents argue would effectively legalise back street abortions and all the exploitation and danger that goes with it.

The existing law is really bad especially given the chaotic nature of Italian hospitals. But it has to be defended if the fight for a woman's right to choose is to go forward.

without agreement to safeguard jobs. Civil Servants are amongst the third lowest paid workers in the country with most of us earning less than the national average.

In the lower grades, mostly women, the jobs we do are boring and repetitive and for a clerical assistant taking home less than £35 a week the situation is very grim indeed.

Civil servants are also angry at the fact that the National Pay Agreement, which sought to compare civil service pay with outside industry, has been scrapped by the government. Although this agreement was nothing more than a catching-up exercise, the Tories' decision to tear it up is more proof of their intention to take on civil servants.

At Companies House, in London, about 130 members of the Civil Service Union in the Department of Trade, are taking selective strike action. Most of these are women who live locally and they can be seen on the picket line, day in day out, in all weathers. We spoke to two of them.

One of the women, Doris Farley, expressed her anger in no uncertain terms.

'Mrs Thatcher is coming up here next week. I'll be there to

tell her what I think of her in no uncertain terms! Two weeks ago my rates and rent went up by £6, now National Insurance is going up as well. We can't manage on 7%. It's not just the money, it's the pay agreement as well.'

Denise Tucker is saving up to get married. She said: 'We've had enough of them telling us what our pay should be. Recently they've given us a skilled job but they haven't put the wages up. We haven't had a rise here in two years.' She went on to say that most of the women had worked in factories before they joined the Civil Service, and that their pay would be higher if they were still there.

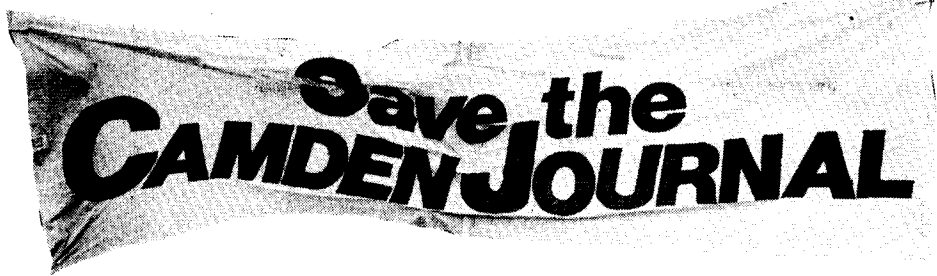
'A lot of the women here aren't in the union, they wanted to come out on strike with us without even strike pay, but they would get the sack if they did. I think they'll join the union now.'

The women at Companies House are determined to stay out as long as it takes to win. 'We've had a lot of support from other Civil Service unions. They have been down on the picket line every morning to help. It's that which has given us heart and kept us going.'

Sally Bild
CPSA



COUNCIL OF
CIVIL SERVICE UNIONS
**OFFICIAL
PICKET LINE**



'If we lose this battle, newspaper managements won't bother to talk, they will just sack'.

Jean Gray is one of the nine journalists from the Camden Journal who found a redundancy notice on her typewriter days before Christmas. Seventeen weeks later, with hundreds of miles travelled throughout the country and weekly trips to windy picket lines in Nuneaton, the journalists are beginning to make headway.

'The management has agreed to talk at last, but only because other journalists are taking action' said Jean. She was referring to the support given by provincial papers in London, who have held a number of mass meetings, disrupting their own editions.

Three weeks ago 500 journalists in London, together with those working on titles owned by Camden management Courier Press Holdings, began a programme of strikes. National Union of Journalists members at papers in Leamington, Nuneaton, Rugby, Ammanford and Haverfordwest are on indefinite strike. And London journalists on weekly papers are on one-day maximum disruption strikes.

'We are trying to get our boss Stanley Clarke to talk by hitting the Newspaper Society—the national owners' organisation of which he is the treasurer'. 'Hundreds of jobs have been lost on local newspapers, it has to stop somewhere'.

The annual NUJ conference recently gave unanimous support to the Camden journalists, and voted for a national meeting of Mother/Father of Chapels (branches) to work out a strategy to fight redundancies.

It's no coincidence the Camden Journal was singled out for closure by a management that was constantly riled by the paper's editorial content.

'We built up the circulation from 1,500 to over 7,000 by going out to tenants associations, trade unions, community groups and minorities, who talked to us because they knew they would get a fair hearing.

'Even Tory councillors oppose the closure because like them we campaigned against rent rises and they read the paper to find what really affects people'.

The list of sponsorships reflects the paper's support, from Derek Spencer, Camden Council Deputy Tory leader to Tybalds Close tenants associa-

tion, from the Afro-Caribbean Organisation to Chalk Farm Bus TGWU.

Together with journalists from the sister papers the Hornsey Journal and Islington Gazette, who have been sacked for coming out on sympathy strike, the nine have produced a weekly strike paper.

Jean explained that 'Save the

Camden Journal' was produced for three reasons. 'We had to let everybody know how the strike was going, and also maintain our fight in the community against the closure. We also wanted to carry on helping other workers up against their managements.

'There's not a chapel in the country escaping from redundancies or national wastage. We've got to win.'

Jean's feelings about the Camden dispute were echoed by the Mother of the Surrey and South London Chapel, Barbara Hyneman:

'If this one is lost, the floodgates will open'.

Vanessa Bridge



TORIES TURN THEIR BACK ON IRELAND

BOBBY SANDS MP, the Republican prisoner has been on hunger strike for political status since the beginning of March. He was elected to parliament as a statement of support for the prisoners' struggle by the catholic minority in the North.

Mrs Thatcher, fresh from her

social success with the murderous rulers of Saudi Arabia, believes she can 'control' Northern Ireland with the help of the Army and the Royal Ulster Constabulary. The trouble is, the young men and women who rioted in Derry in 1969 are now veterans of 12 years of occupation by the British Army.

'If one of the hunger strikers dies...anything you have seen so far will look like a Buckingham palace tea party,' said the General Secretary of the Sinn Fein (political wing of the IRA) last week.

In other words, the struggles for political status, for troops out, and for a united Ireland will go on until they are won.

And in Brixton or Derry, young people will carry on rioting against the 'forces of law and order'

Wage cut didn't help

'WE took a 25 per cent cut in wages before Christmas to help the company out. Our last increase was 10 per cent in 1979! This is the treatment that has angered the workforce at Richard Roberts

Knitwear factory, Nuneaton, into staging one day stoppages for a five per cent wage rise.

There are 185 women and 12 men at the Nuneaton factory, all members of the National Union of

Tailor and Garment Workers. The men knit the yarn up and the women turn it into jumpers and dresses.

As one of the Lee Jeans strikers told them when they met, 'Your first mistake was to start giving—now the company want to walk all over you.' It was the women at Lee Jeans who gave the workforce at Richard Roberts the confidence to take the militant action that they have done.

Penny Hicks

Answering back

The Golden shot?

IF THE assassination attempt on President Reagan last month had been successful, few of us would have shed tears.

Reagan is a nasty, anti-working class, imperialist ruler. But, despite the thrill of watching him being shot, the world would not necessarily be a better place without him.

The spectacle of General Haig and Vice-President Bush vying for power after Reagan was admitted to hospital confirmed the fact that if someone like Reagan is gunned down there is another person equally as bad—or worse—to take his place.

There are thousands of working people in Britain who say daily that they would like to kill Thatcher. It's an understandable sentiment but not a very constructive or effective way of alleviating the misery inflicted by the Tory government.

The assassination of Airey Neave a couple of years ago by Irish Republicans brought them no nearer to throwing off the chains of British imperialism in Northern Ireland.

Individual acts of terrorism against individual oppressors have never changed society. Not only do they *not* change things for the better—often they make things worse. They can result in people's liberties being curtailed, tighter security and stronger anti-working class measures.

Our politics are about something different. We believe that real change will only come from below. That means replacing the class which now rules for the benefit of the few with our class, the working class, not picking off individual rulers one by one.

As revolutionaries, we have never advocated assassination for these reasons. We do not want to replace one ruler with another—even a 'left-winger'; we want to change the very foundations of society.

There's only one way of doing that—by all of *us* organising against all of *them*, and forcibly taking from them the basis of their power: property. That's bound to involve bloodshed—all revolutions do—but it *will* mean permanently getting rid of the Reagans and Thatchers' of this world.



NICE TRY, SON!
BUT YOU DIDN'T
USE A SILVER
BULLET!



WOMEN STRIKE FOR ABORTION RIGHTS

MONDAY March 31 saw the first national womens' strike in the Netherlands. It arose for several reasons. A restrictive abortion law was passed by the Tweede Kamer (lower house). Women striking hoped to influence a coming decision in the upper house. Other reasons for the strike were to protest against unemployment and at sexual harrasment.

Many women hung sheets out with 'I strike' written on them. There were demonstrations in many cities, discussion and musical groups in the streets, bicycle tours, and many girls didn't go to school (the strike was backed by the teachers union).

Employers put a lot of pressure on working women, but among housewives the strike was more successful. Men had to cook their own meals. But they also showed solidarity. In many places men volunteered to look after children and cook for the striking women.

'WOMEN' BUT NOT 'WORKERS' GET PAY VICTORY

THOUSANDS of women part time workers are paid less, hour for hour, than someone doing the same job on a full-time basis. For many of those women that discrimination may now end, following a ruling from the European Court of Justice last month.

Jeanette Jenkins, a part time worker for Kingsgate (Clothing Production), complained that she was paid 9½ pence less an hour than a man doing the same job but as a full time worker. The Equal Opportunities Commission took up her case, but it lost in the British courts.

Jeanette then appealed to the European Court of Justice in Brussels, and the decision was

that she was unfairly discriminated against.

The judge based his decision on the fact that most part time workers are women because of their family responsibilities, and that unless an employer could prove that the reason why he paid a lower rate to part-time workers was 'economic' (whatever that means) rather than an excuse to pay women less, the lower payments would be discriminatory and unlawful.

He said that paying less proportionately to part time workers in itself was not a form of discrimination—only where the part-time workers were all or mostly women.

SOCIAL NIGHTMARE

IF WE WERE to believe the press hysteria about social security fraud, we could be forgiven for thinking that life on social security can't be too bad. The truth is very different and for some women who are forced to depend on social security for an income the truth is becoming a nightmare.

LORRAINE had left her husband after he systematically beat her. After two years of moving around she finally got a council home and settled down with her three kids to piece her life back together again. One morning a knock at the door revealed a special investigations officer who told her to make a cup of tea as he wanted to talk to her. He told her that she couldn't carry on living off the state like this and that her husband would have to support her. After visiting her for several days he tracked down her husband who stated that he would maintain her only if he could live in the same house.

He came back to see her one more time with her husband in tow, took her benefit book off her and told her to sort it out with her husband. Her husband moved back in until she was able to get to see her solicitor to take proceedings to get him out. The Special Investigator knew that a divorce was going through but had been held up by the husband's obstruction. What is worse he also knew that she had an injunction (which was in force) to prevent her husband from coming near her or the children. They also knew that he had been taken to court for breaking that injunction, and that he was still being violent towards her.

One way the DHSS (Department of Health and Social Security) can reduce the social security bill is to saddle someone else with the bill. If a



woman claims supplementary benefit and she is claiming for her children, they insist on knowing who the father is so they can get him for maintenance. In law they have no right to put pressure on anyone to bring maintenance proceedings but it takes a lot of courage to withstand the pressure.

Social security law is reluctant to acknowledge women at all. If a couple are claiming the assumption is that if a woman lives with a man then he is supporting her and so the state won't. If a woman does not live with a man then they watch her because secretly she probably is and anyway it is good grounds for stopping her benefit.

Nowhere do these kind of issues get taken up in the press although every day they run stories about social security fraud. Very few papers have given prominence to the fact that the DHSS had a surplus of £500 million last year as a result of unclaimed benefits.

But all the papers have headlined the government's claim that one in twelve claimants is defrauding social security and that this amounts to £50 million each year. Both these 'facts' are interesting examples of down-

right lies. There is no evidence put forward to substantiate either the 'one in twelve on the fiddle' theory or the figure of £50 million.

MARY had refused to bring maintenance proceedings against the father of her child. She did not want to see him again and she did not want to allow him any way in which he might gain access to her or her child as she was scared of what he might do to her. He had already made her life a misery. She claimed and received benefit but was then summoned for an interview. At the interview she was subjected to a rigorous cross examination and pressurised to bring proceedings against the father whom she refused to name. Two weeks later she was summoned for another interview. She phoned up to ask what this was about and was told that it was about the same thing. She refused to go. Next week her benefit book was taken off her in the post office and she was refused benefit.

There is good reason to think that next year's DHSS surplus is going to be a lot bigger. For example, one of the changes last November was to stop clothing grants almost completely.

In April of this year 1,000 new fraud inspectors started work. Apart from the issue of binoculars (a fact) they have been given a directive that they have two priority targets—skilled men (they might be working on the side) and single parents. The Inland Revenue Staff Federation have stated that if they, too, could have had

an extra 1,000 tax inspectors start work they could have recovered at least £500 million in extra tax that is being avoided.

JANE had a severely handicapped child. She was a single parent and after having difficulties with her landlord she moved out to live as the tenant of a household where the landlord lived upstairs and she lived downstairs. The landlord was gay. Jane's benefit was stopped on the grounds that she was co-habiting. It was only after a protest and getting her case taken up by the local law centre that Jane's benefit was restored.

While the Vestey's continue to get even richer on their tax fiddles and Thatcher continues to give the wealthy more tax handouts to get even richer on, the poor are going to get poorer. Supplementary Benefit is supposed to be the safety net which prevents people starving to death.

The safety net is made out of barbed wire. Your kids can easily be taken into care if you can't see it through so shut up and stop complaining. That is clearly the real line that our rulers are operating whatever they may say.

It is now more important than ever that we organise to stop the harassment of the DHSS fraud squad, to campaign against every abuse in the system and demand the right to a decent standard of living.

**Report compiled by
Coventry Womens
Voice**

Over fifty women, mostly on supplementary benefit, attended a day school on women and social security organised by Coventry Womens Voice last month.

It was decided to organise a campaign that would both publicise the issues and give support to women faced with DHSS harassment. A start could be made by advising anyone going to make a claim or who was to be visited by the DHSS.

More meetings are planned to organise the campaign and to learn about the laws and regulations and ways of ensuring that claimants get what they are entitled to.

FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS AGAINST THE TORY ATTACKS



**MAY
9**
FESTIVAL

The Festival is on May 9 at Starcross School, Penton Street, London, N1, 10am till 7.30pm. For people outside London needing accommodation ring either Mary (N. London) on 01 808 5920 (work) or 01 802 9563 (home) or Pauline (E. London) 01 806 8197 (home). If possible please ring Anne on 01 359 3088 (home) to book provisional places for the Creche. The cost of the Festival is £3, £1.50 unemployed,

May 9 is the second anniversary of the Tories in power and women nationally are taking Mrs Thatcher to task. Women's organisations, including Women's Voice, NAC, women in trade unions and Spare Rib have joined together nationally to summon Mrs Thatcher to a Festival for Women's Rights where she will be tried. Her alleged crime will be 'betraying her sex on behalf of her class'—the ruling class.

Since the Tories came to power,

- **Unemployment** has increased at a rate where twice as many women have been made unemployed as men, in the last two years.

- **Cuts** have affected women most directly—Social Service cuts have meant a return to the home for many women who care for sick and elderly relatives. Nursery cuts have pushed women back into the home when their wages are needed more than ever to keep their families off the breadline.

- **Abortion and contraception** facilities have been drastically cut, with the closure of many family planning clinics, and restrictions on abortion rights through the NHS.

- **The Nationality Bill** not only restricts women's rights to work, but also to live here.

BUT WE'RE FIGHTING BACK!

The National Festival for Women's Rights against Tory attacks is a day of celebration and action, with women from all over the country coming together to share experiences of struggle against these policies. They will be coming to Starcross School, Islington, London, to take part in workshops, hear speakers, watch films and theatre groups, and listen to music.

The main themes of the Festival are Work, Jobs and Unions, Racism and Imperialism, The Welfare State, The Nuclear threat, Violence against Women, Childcare, and Fertility Control. The speakers at the rally in the evening and in the workshops will be women who themselves are involved

in struggles against the Tories—women from Lee Jeans, the Royal Pride occupation in Manchester. Marisa Casares-Roach and Jo Richardson, speaking on her new abortion Bill. The rally's main theme is a 'Woman's right to work' and a woman marcher from the People's March will be talking on the fight against unemployment.

Events during the day include music from the Au Pairs and Jam Today; theatre from the Women's Theatre Group and Bloomers; Babies and Banners and Take it like a Man Ma'am are only two of the films showing all day on women's issues. For the kids there will be inflatables, cartoons, clowns and kids theatre. A creche will be available during the whole day.

Women's Voice are organising a national stall and bookstall at the Festival. We are planning our own stall on Women and Housing. Women's Voice members will be speaking at, and participating in, the workshops throughout the day.

Finsbury Park Women's Voice Group.



A GROUP of women in Blackpool have grown heartily sick of two local businessmen resorting to sexist gimmicks to sell their products. In a boutique which they own a topless model serves beer to customers. Recently they promoted a beer festival which featured a 'Miss Wet T-Shirt Contest.' Girls who volunteered were to have a soda siphon squirted at their chests.

We organised a picket outside the hall and sold *Womens Voice* to a group of people who had left in disgust. The press also did a feature on the protest.

The organisers got the response they deserved: on the opening night there were only two entries.

Dianne Kelly
Blackpool Womens Voice

NEWHAM Womens Voice has a chequered history. Despite regularly organised meetings, there has been little interest, low attendance and a lack of inspiration since summer last year. In February things picked up after a lot of publicity for a meeting on 'Violence Against Women' followed by another large and lively discussion on Pornography. We produced a leaflet which we gave out at the NUS 'Reclaim the Night' March.

Many of the women in the group are involved in the fight to keep Three Mills School open and we all leafleted local schools to get support for a lobby of the council education committee. It was great on the night. Tired old grey men slumped on their seats all ready to nod through the vote for closure were suddenly confronted by more than 200 angry parents and forced out of the council chamber too scared to vote. Though of course that's not the last of it.

More meetings and activities are planned and there are plenty of women around prepared to do some work in Womens Voice. Because of this we respond to campaigns, 'Reclaim the Night' NAC and Tampon Campaign and we get fund raising to support strikes like Lee Jeans.

'We will not see it all come to nothing'



The women presenters on Iranian TV have to wear the Islamic scarf—or else face the sack. Hundreds of women in TV and other industries have lost their jobs for refusing to wear the scarf.



Iranian women demonstrate on the streets of Tehran against Khomeini's orders to cover their hair.

Just over two years ago the repressive regime of the Shah was overthrown in Iran. The mass movement which led to his overthrow inspired hopes of far-reaching revolution. But the 'Islamic Revolution' led by Ayatollah Khomeini has not led to these hopes being realised.

To find out what is happening in Iran today, and how the last few years have affected the lives of workers and peasants in Iran, we talked to *Shirlin Rani*, an Iranian revolutionary socialist who visited Britain recently.

'WOMEN HAVE always played a part in the mass movement; they went on strike and won equal pay. Since the revolution, they have been involved in all the political movements. It was women who argued that they should be on the Workers Council which developed from the strike committees of the revolution.

'But these councils gradually came under the control of Khomeini's organisation, the IRP (Iranian Republican Party). Workers are now realising that the IRP's interests are with the bosses. Women are now calling for the councils to be disbanded and for new elections.

'During the revolution the strike committees demanded an eight hour day (instead of the previous 12), equal pay and higher wages. They won all these demands, and there is no way they will give them up just because the IRP demands it. Working conditions in Iran have always been very bad. In the thread-making factories, where most of the workers are young women, blindness, tuberculosis and physical injury are frequent hazards. One man lost his hand in a machine. The hand, with a watch still on it, remained in the machine for three days.

'The illusions people had in Khomeini soon changed. There were mass demonstrations against his order that all women had to wear the Islamic veil, which made him realise he couldn't make the order law. But women at work have to wear the veil or else they lose their jobs.

'They protest at this by wearing very small and often see through scarves, which makes a mockery of the Islamic law that a woman's hair should be covered so as not to excite men.

'The Islamisation programme, which is intended to make people conform to strict Islamic law, has affected women in other ways too. Iran was very westernised. Khomeini has introduced the Islamic punishment of *ghessas*, where a man who murders a woman can pay a price to her relatives and go free.

'The brothel quarter was demolished on Khomeini's orders after the revolution. They were on the streets, destitute. He then set up 'temporary

marriage institutions'. Now men who use the prostitutes 'marry' them for an hour or a few days, then drop them again. In Islamic law, men can have any number of temporary wives. It is very strictly controlled by the government, and women are much worse off than they were before.

'The legal age of marriage has been reduced to thirteen. Young girls will lose their education, will be illiterate, so will get lower wages and make poor marriages.

'After the revolution the question of womens' oppression was brought into everything. There were a lot of different womens organisations and papers. The United Womens Council organised a fight against the laws, but has been weakened by political differences over the war with Iraq. But there are still groups who are organising, arguing, producing pamphlets and papers, even though all this is illegal.

'The regime is not working for us: for example during the recent bus drivers strike in Tehran, Khomeini brought five thousand drivers from the war front to scab on the strike. Revolutionaries have to fight the regime, even though there is a threat of foreign intervention.

'The regime we have today is not what people hoped for when they overthrew the Shah. People have fought for their rights in the last few years. It means they have some political awareness. Now they say, 'we didn't go through all that struggle just for this.' So the government isn't stable, and can't enforce its savage laws. The main alternative to Khomeini is Bani Sadr, the social democrat. He attracts people with promises of democracy, freedom, solutions to economic problems and an end to the war. But the economic situation is so grave that none of these people can solve it. Workers tightening their belts won't solve it.

'Workers councils are being re-elected now. There will be a united factory-based organisation. We have gained so much in the past two and a half years, struggled so hard. In spite of the laws, the difficulties of organising, the prohibitions on left-wing paper selling, we will not see it all come to nothing.'

"I will never, ever leave the Labour Party"

Shirl, the girl for the right

FROM the turn of the century when the Labour Party took over from the Liberals as being one of the two major parties in British politics, the pendulum has swung between Labour and Tory at election time. The Liberal Party still exists, but it's a long time since it held any sway.

But now there is a new party. The Social Democratic Party, launched in March and already, according to newspaper polls, appearing to threaten the balance between the two major parties.

Of those who make up its leadership, the Gang of Four, by far and away the most popular is Shirley Williams. The press love her, there are full page articles in the Sundays, and the colour supplements have dug out all the pictures of her

'Is she too nice?' 'What makes Shirley so lovable?' 'Bully for you, Shirl girl.' 'Say it and be damned, Shirley, that's the stuff.'

All newspaper headlines, but not all from recent months. For years the press has extolled the virtues of Shirley Williams. Back in the early seventies there was story after story speculating on her possible future as the first woman prime minister—but Margaret Thatcher stole the show. Now it's started all over again.

The press like her, and so probably do a lot of ordinary folk, because she has an appeal which is ordinary and nice. She

could live in your street, go to your pub, take her kids to your school. She's probably the strongest thing going for the new Social Democratic Party.

But what counts at the end of the day are the politics of the new party, and in particular the politics of Shirley Williams.

In March of this year the *Observer* ran a full page interview with Shirley Williams. There was a lot about her mother, her childhood, her hair, about being a woman in politics, and then, three paragraphs from the end, we are introduced to the policies of the social democrats. Will they be able to cure the ills of Britain?

childhood, there are interviews everywhere by top journalists' many of whom agree with what she says.

Some women have suggested that women in particular should join this new party because it will not be hidebound by the male traditions of Labour and Tory (and this in spite of Shirley Williams' own record of voting against the 1967 Abortion Act and divorce law reform).

Unlike the national press *Womens Voice* believes its readers should take a serious look at the politics of the SDP, and in particular Shirley Williams. Once you draw aside the curtain of niceness, what you see behind may not please you quite so much.

Shirley makes two points: the SDP can stop the polarisations of politics between Tory and Labour, and the SDP can bring end to parties based on class. *'We are going to have a party which is not affiliated to huge interest groups, whether it's middle class and business, or so-called blue collar and union.'*

In other words the SDP is going to straddle the different interests of the middle ground—hopefully taking votes from the Labour Party in the same way that the Liberals take votes from the Tories.

'A party which is not affiliated to huge interests groups'

And, if they succeed, and win even a handful of seats in a general election, in a pact with the Liberals it's conceivable that the SDP could hold the balance of power in the House of Commons.

But on what issues will they fight? What are the things that the middle ground has in common?

When Labour lost the election in 1979 Shirley Williams wrote a long piece, also for the *Observer*: 'Why we lost'. The importance of the people in the middle was made then: *'The evidence is very strong indeed that the British electorate cleaves to the centre ground,'* and she then spells out how the Labour Party should trim its sails to the expectations of the folk in the middle:

- people should have the right not to belong to unions
- small businesses should be encouraged
- nationalisation should be discouraged.

In the words she uses to describe her solution to the economy's problems, and the particular problem of high unemployment, she appeals directly to the 'Good Life' mentality—a good honest, back to nature sort of socialism. We should *'revert to a recycling, repair and maintenance economy, which will husband scarce raw materials and energy and make greater demands on under-used human capacities and skills.'*

This economy will be one of small businesses and co-operatives, an economy in which the two great powers of industrial owners on the one hand and the trade unions on the other will no longer hold power.

It's as though somehow through sheer goodwill the nastiness of the capitalist class war will disintegrate and disappear.

Is that feasible? Is it true that workers would be happy, better off, healthier working with five others or 50, rather than 500 or 5000. The answer is simply no because it is not size that is the problem. It's the alienating nature of work that has to be solved. When you work for someone else to make a profit out of you, when you do a job which stifles every ounce of your imagination and self-





respect, when you do a valuable job but do it badly because you are understaffed or the machines are old, these are the problems that have to be solved about work. And they can't satisfactorily be solved outside of a socialist society. Capitalism is a society of classes, and small businesses and co-ops aren't going to bridge the gap between us.

'A recycling, repair and maintenance economy'

It's true that the whole of the Labour Party programme is devoted to reforming capitalism bit by bit but coming as she does from the right-wing tradition within the Labour Party, even the reforming element in her ideas wears very thin. And in practice its gets even thinner.

In the last Labour government Shirley Williams had two important jobs—first as prices supremo and then as Minister for Education.

As Minister for Prices it was she who sweetened the pill of Labour's notorious prices and incomes policy. The theory was not new: if workers held down their wages and the government agreed to control prices, inflation must fall. But it didn't. The most spectacular part of Shirley Williams's strategy was to introduce food subsidies—money paid direct by the government to the owners, either importers or manufacturers who agreed to hold off price increases on certain items. (It was acknowledged that they

would put up prices on other items.) And of course, any subsidy on bread, meat, cheese, sugar, milk was of equal benefit to everyone who bought them—whether you lived on a £15 a week pension, or £500 a week income from your shareholdings.

Her deals with the retailers were ineffectual, and after two years she just gave up—the price code was relaxed. 'Bosses get new prices deal' ran the *Mirror* headline, in July 1976, as £1,000 million worth of concessions were made to industry—more than had ever been paid out in subsidies.

One month later in a cabinet reshuffle Shirley got a new job—responsibility for education. Immediately she got her teeth into the public spending cuts the Labour government was undertaking. In November 1976 cuts in teacher training were announced—30 colleges were to close. There was uproar. Universities were to face new cash limits, and in the spring of 1977 increases in fees for overseas students were announced.

Coming from someone who did then, and still does, profess her internationalism, it was a callous thing to do, particularly as it had to be backed up by a Department of Education circular stating that higher fees for overseas students were *not* discriminatory under the terms of the Race Relations Act. Quite clearly they were. The act specifically states that indirect discrimination is still discrimination. Inevitably the

numbers of overseas students fell, and in particular fell among students from the poorest countries.

Her record as minister was so poor she came in for some direct attacks from such auspicious bodies as the Association of Metropolitan Councils and the Association of County Councils. They listed her failings in providing for the under 5s: failed to reduce class size, failed to find jobs for at least 20,000 unemployed teachers, failed to improve nursery education at all.

The Child Poverty Action Group asked her to campaign for parents to take up free school meals for their children (an estimated 500,000 children were missing out). She refused. The number of schools being closed gathered momentum—87 primary schools in 1977, 58 primary schools in 1978, and in 1979 Labour was defeated in the election.

It's true we can't blame Shirley Williams for all the anti-working class policies of the last Labour Government, but she does bear collective responsibility for them. And probably, if she'd had her way, they would have been more vicious than they were.

Because 'Our Shirl' as the papers love to call her, has always been on the right wing of the party. She and Roy Jenkins have been political buddies for a long time—only in the early 70s they were a gang of three, Shirley, Roy and Reg Prentice. He finally showed his true colours and crossed the floor of the House of Commons to join the Tories. And Roy Jenkins went off to greater things in Europe. Shirley was temporar-

ily left holding the fort for the right.

She then ran against Michael Foot for the deputy leadership of the Labour Party, in October 1976 (so much for all the fuss about Benn running against Denis Healey this year) and she lost. The Liberal Party publicly wooed her then, as they do now.

'After the fiasco of the Labour Party Conference it is time to admit that social democracy as a force within the Labour Party is finished,' wrote David Steel, in a public appeal to Shirley Williams to join with him. She refused. And it wasn't the first time.

'I will never, ever leave the Labour Party'

Reading back through the papers for the last ten years there have been plenty of dress rehearsals for the present exodus. In 1974 when the issue was the Common Market, Shirley was for Britain staying in, the majority of the Labour Party for Britain coming out. Would she resign if her position was lost, asked the press?

'I will never, ever leave the Labour Party. My father pushed me to socialist meetings in my pram, and any talk of my joining the Liberals, for instance, is downright rubbish.'

Shirley's niceness is not what matters. *The Sun* once wrote of her: 'Through it all shines the strong impression of a reasonable man's socialist. Someone honest and sincere, who can be trusted.' Don't be conned—niceness, like beauty, is only skin deep.

Margaret Renn



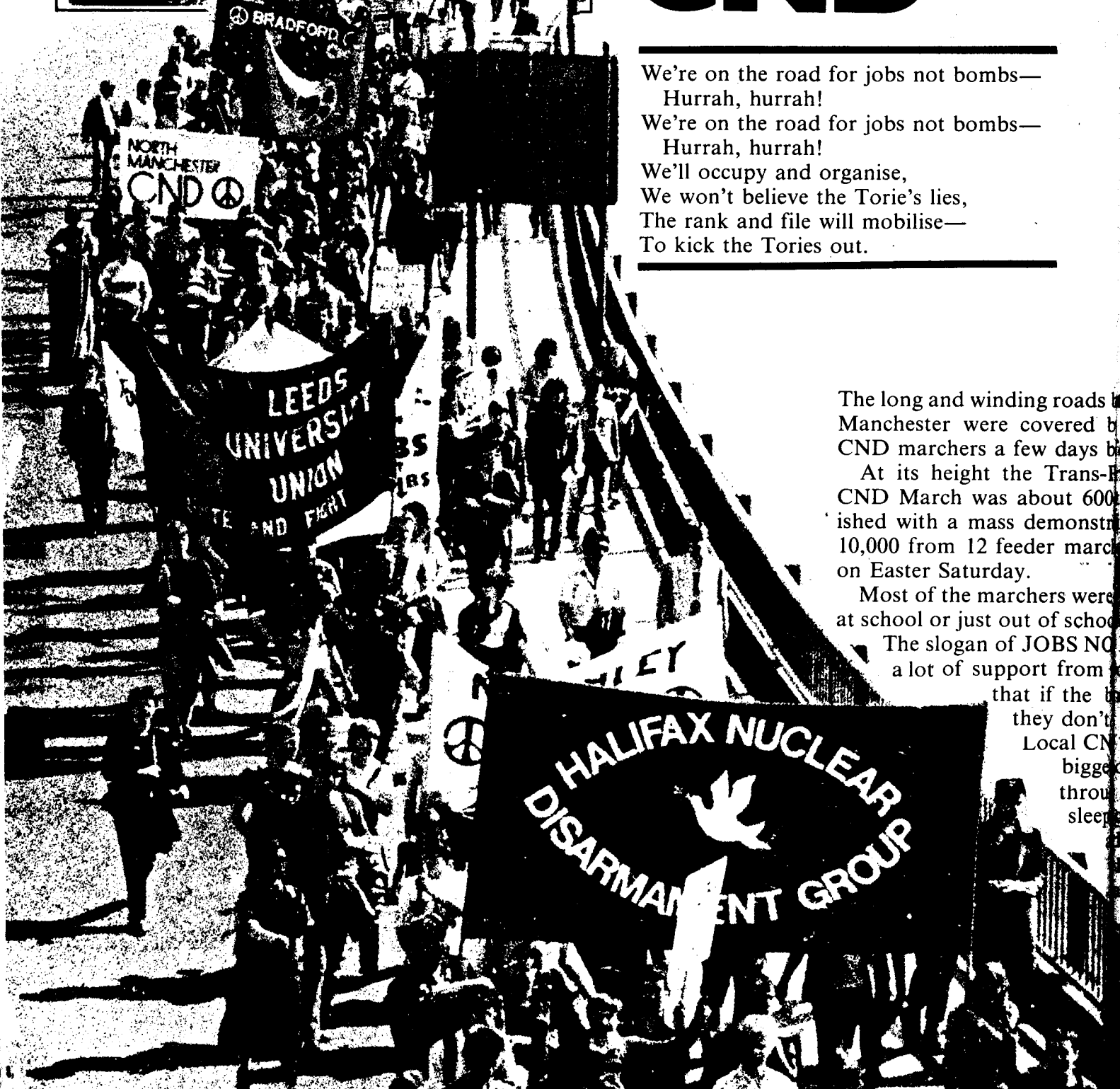
On the road with CND

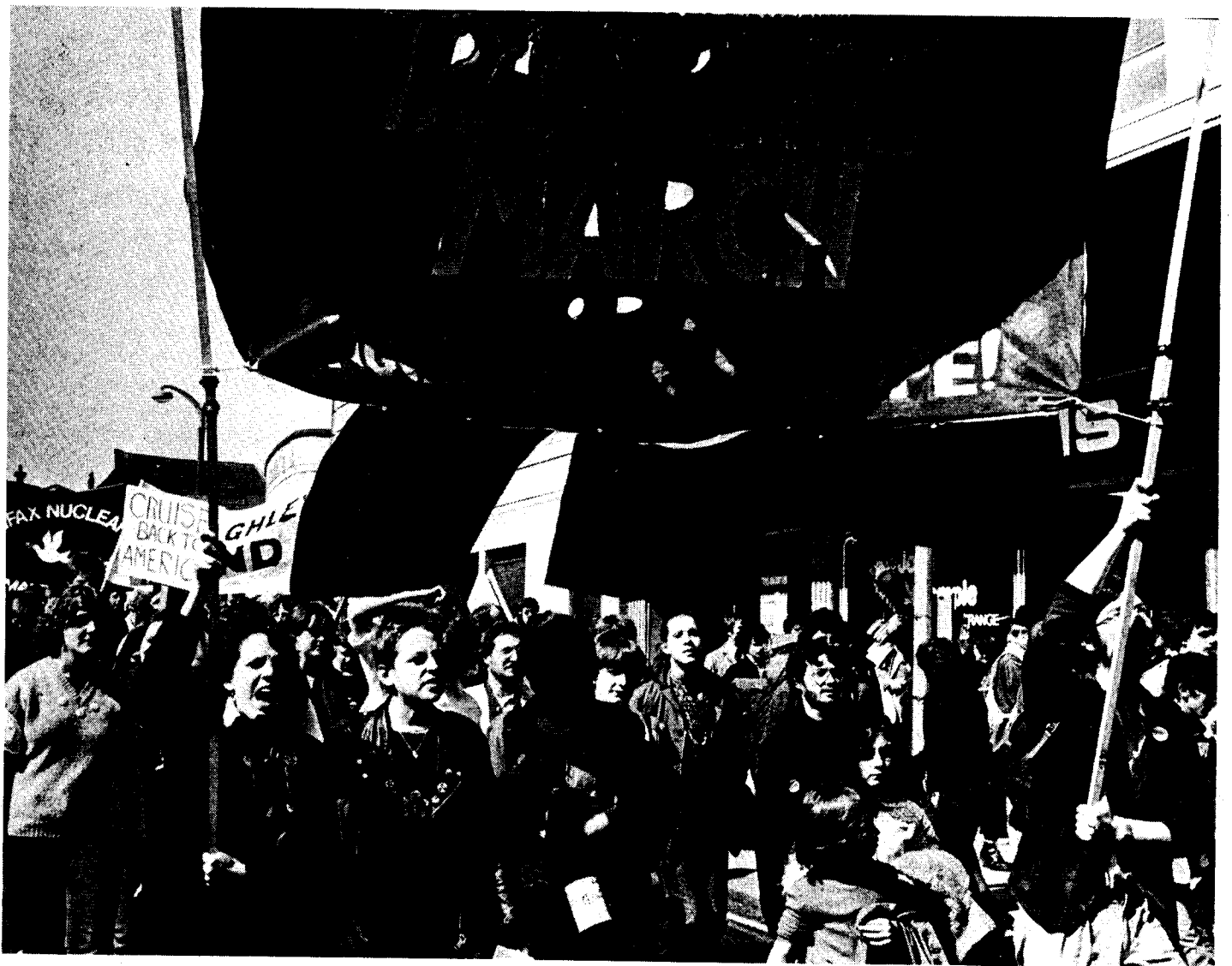
We're on the road for jobs not bombs—
Hurrah, hurrah!
We're on the road for jobs not bombs—
Hurrah, hurrah!
We'll occupy and organise,
We won't believe the Torie's lies,
The rank and file will mobilise—
To kick the Tories out.

The long and winding roads to Manchester were covered by CND marchers a few days before. At its height the Trans-Imperial CND March was about 6000, finished with a mass demonstration of 10,000 from 12 feeder marches on Easter Saturday.

Most of the marchers were out at school or just out of school. The slogan of JOBS NOT BOMBS had a lot of support from young people that if the tanks were sent they don't.

Local CND branches were the biggest through the night sleeping at a school. The local CND branches were the biggest through the night sleeping at a school. The local CND branches were the biggest through the night sleeping at a school.





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before Easter 81
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towns and villages and the reception there was as heart warming as in places like Bradford. Most of the locals had never before witnessed 300 dirty, tired, blistered—but cheerful—demonstrators. All along the route we gave out leaflets, sold papers and sang to the people standing on their doorsteps.

We carried placards and banners for the whole of the 55 mile march; we talked and argued with the kids, for many of whom the march was their first involvement in politics; we won people over to our ideas; 12 joined the SWP; and we all got healthy tans in the sunshine.

At the end of each day we nursed our tender feet, prepared the daily Socialist Worker march bulletin, made new friends over pints in the local pubs, and slept like logs on hard floors.

Lots of us thought we'd never make it. The last few miles of each day were the worst, but we did make it in the end. Not one person thought it hadn't been worthwhile.



Conflict



A million people have become unemployed in the last year. By the time we have the pleasure of witnessing the 'Royal Wedding' unemployment figures are likely to be over the three million mark.

Last month Womens Voice described how the women at Lee Jeans are occupying their factory in the fight to save their jobs and against Thatcher's policies. This month we have spoken to different groups of women workers in the west of Scotland: civil servants on strike in Cumbernauld, workers from the Wills cigarette factory, now on short time working following the budget, and we bring you up to date with what's happening at Lee Jeans.

ONE OF THE MAIN areas of action in the civil servants' dispute is the big income tax accounts office at Cumbernauld where over three-quarters of the workers are women. *Womens Voice* spoke to Sandra McCartney, branch organiser of the biggest union, the Inland Revenue Staff Federation.

'This is the first time most of the workers here have ever been on strike. We weren't sure how successful it would be. But the response has been marvellous and we are getting about 97 per cent support.

'Before the strike most people saw the main issue as a return to Pay Research (the method by which civil servants' pay is compared to workers in the private sector, which Thatcher scrapped last year). But now lots of people recognise that Pay Research is worthless anyway and we should negotiate our own claim. This time it's for 15 per cent and after four weeks picketing 24 hours a day, we're not going back for less.

'We see the need to fight against Tory policies, especially the six per cent. We're also determined to fight against more cuts in jobs. Every day you hear of more people on the dole. One of the biggest factories in the area, Burroughs, have announced big redundancies. That is why there's a lot of support for the women at Lee Jeans.

'One of the problems we have had to deal with here is an indication of what this government intends for all women workers. One striker is pregnant and had applied for her maternity pay. She worked more than the necessary weeks into her pregnancy and yet she was told that she didn't qualify for any maternity pay because she was on strike. We have sent her back into work because she is single and really needs the money which, after all, she is legally due. She is still 100 per cent behind the strike, but is very bitter about the whole thing.

'Sometimes it's difficult to get enough pickets for the weekend shifts and yet the

JOIN THE MARCH

THE People's March against unemployment from Liverpool to London starts on May 1st. There is also an eastern leg starting from Sheffield, and a Welsh march starting on 16th May.

The march is being organised by the North West Region of the TUC, and will end in Brockwell Park, Brixton, with a carnival on 30th May and a march from Hyde Park the following day.

Although church services (to be held on the way!) won't get jobs for anyone, the march is a chance for unemployed people to organise together and feel the strength of their numbers.

• To join the march, contact Colin Barnett, Secretary NW Region TUC, 222 Stamford St., Ashton Under Lyne, Lancs. (Workplace donations towards the cost of the march should be sent to the same address.)

on the Clyde

full-time officials don't want other workers to help. It's important that the members here don't feel isolated, which is always a problem in selective action like ours, so we need more rank and file support from other unions.

'Most of the strikers feel that this particular selective action is pretty effective as it's hitting the government financially. At the moment they don't mind taking action on behalf of thousands of the civil servants in the area. But I can see problems if we are sold down the river by the full-timers. I know how bitter some of the selective strikes were in 1979 when the staged offer was recommended. That's why I personally feel that all-out action, involving all of the members of the unions, would be far more effective and less likely to cause splits among unions and among members.'



WILLS, the tobacco factory is, with about 1,500 women workers, probably the biggest employer of women in Glasgow. *Womens Voice* spoke to Rose, Margaret and Peggy who work in the Wills factory.

'The situation in Glasgow is grim', said Peggy. 'I've a young brother who is unemployed, he can't get a job, but because it doesn't affect you just now, you don't think about it. You get a wee bit selfish.'

'I know of two folk who've committed suicide because of being unemployed,' said Rose. 'I think that things like leisure centres should be open free to the unemployed. You see the unemployed just standing about on street corners. Because you're at home most of the day you spend more on things like electricity. You need more money. The other thing is that the government has cut back on things like TOPS courses and it's harder to learn other skills. Very few of us in the factory have other skills.'

'The warcry is out that women don't have the right to work. We're equal with men, why shouldn't we work? There are a lot of single parents in Wills. Women need to work.'

'That's right', said Margaret, 'a lot of husbands work but earn low wages so the wife needs to work'. Peggy added, 'If your man is out of work and can't get a job, and you have kids, the woman has got to work'.

In Wills there are no creche facilities. 'The union has been trying to get one for years,' said Rose, 'but management won't

give us one. Let's face it—if they won't guarantee your job, they're not going to give you a creche.'

Peggy said: 'For a single woman tax is too high. I pay tax every week, I pay the National Insurance stamp—but look at what I pay out if I go to the dentist or the

optician. When Thatcher cut the taxes, I didn't even notice.' 'Thatcher is too scared to budge', said Margaret. 'If they're cutting back they should cut back on the Royal Family.' 'Yes,' said Rose, 'people are scared for their jobs and that's stopping something like a general strike to get rid of the Tories'.

Lee JEANS OUR JOBS ALONE

THE WOMEN at the Lee Jeans factory in Greenock have been in occupation since the beginning of February. Publicity from the national media has been sparse, but support from workers all over the country has been enormous.

Money raised by collections and levies from both workplaces and individuals pours in each week with messages of support. The money doesn't go very far, because there are 240 workers who need to buy food and pay their rent.

Linda, who has worked at Lee Jeans since leaving school five years ago said 'Occupying the factory was the only positive action we could take. Where else would I or anyone else here get another job in Greenock? I hope that other workers will follow our example.'

'Every man and woman should have the right to a decent job with a decent wage', said Bridie, a shop steward. 'Many of the hard won gains of the trade union movement are now being lost, and our fight is against those losses as well as to save our jobs.'

The Vanity Fair Corporation, who own the factory, have met the workforce twice since the occupation began, but the best

offer they could come up with was a small increase in redundancy payments. The women are not interested in selling their jobs; they want to go back to work.

The women know that their fight is not only with the multi-national company who are trying to throw them on the dole—it is also a fight against the Tories.

Liz, one of the shop stewards, said: 'If we don't win it will be a blow to the workers at Lee Jeans, to the Greenock community and to the fight against unemployment.'

The Lee Jeans workers need our help and solidarity to win their fight. Collect money, send messages of support, visit other workplaces for money and support, order the Right to Work leaflets and posters, and organise pickets of shops which stock Lee Jeans.

Messages and donations should be sent to The Treasurer, Lee Jeans Shop Stewards Committee, 4 Brougham Street, Greenock, Scotland. Order posters and leaflets from RTWC, 267a Seven Sisters Road, London N4 or from Womens Voice, PO Box 82, London E2.

Compiled from reports by Jennifer Young, Julie Waterson, Janet Collins and Chris Bambery.

MASSIVE SUPPORT for the 240 workers occupying the Lee Jeans factory was shown at last month's Scottish TUC.

Isabel Coxon of Greenock Trades Council told the conference the story of the occupation. Delegates stood to applaud the action of the women.

Six of the Lee Jeans women were at the conference all week. An official collection was made on the conference floor, as well as collections from receptions for union delegates.



TWO of the Lee Jeans girls, Margaret and Teresa came to visit Coventry. As they said, after two and a half days we had certainly made them work! They attended a total of 15 engagements, which included local factories (Talbot, Massey Ferguson's, Alvis) and union meetings. Their meeting with the Mayor not only resulted in very large vodkas all round, but promises of support. Margaret and Teresa left Coventry with £122 in cash, on top of £160 already collected, and further promises of money from various factories where donations were still to be voted on.

An emotional farewell took place in a pub in the city centre where the girls were convinced that, if only through moral support alone, they would win their fight.

Anne Dudgeon
Coventry

Where are you going, sisters?

WHERE TO Next? asks an article in the April issue of the feminist magazine *Spare Rib*. In it the writer, Michelene Wandor, outlines the prospects for feminism in the eighties.

And it's a pretty dismal picture. Gone are the excitement and the exhilaration of the early women's liberation movement. Gone is the emphasis on activity, organisation and spreading ideas. Instead we are treated to a description of the failure of the socialist feminists to organise (themselves let alone anyone else), and we are told of the lack of unity within the women's movement. So great is this disunity, we're told, that it is no longer possible to talk of the women's liberation movement, only of feminism.

There is an obvious conclusion to all this: namely that it is easy to talk about feminism but that it is much harder, especially now, to do anything about it. That's why there isn't a women's movement any more—just feminists writing and talking. It's not disunity alone that killed the movement, it's lack of organisation and lack of activity.

Michelene Wandor hasn't really faced up to that yet. But her jaded view of the present and of the past as well tells the tale. She explains that the various feminisms of the past decade 'have some achievements to their credit. Feminism has established some important professional niches ... feminist journalists have achieved respect ... there are feminist theatre groups, feminist artists and film makers' ... but not a mention of the thousands of women who have fought for trade unionism, equal pay, the right to work, maternity rights, nurseries and abortion. Feminist journalism may have helped them, but all the feminist journalists in the world mean nothing on their own. It is an upside down sort of feminist who looks only to the media when trying to assess the achievements of the past ten years.

It depends too, on what you mean by feminism. To me feminism means women fighting for their rights as women—it means women daring and winning against the odds. It means women developing ideas about the kind of people they could be and organising to make the revolution that will make those changes possible. Feminism is active.

The early women's movement generated a dynamic and radical image of the new woman. She

was a woman for whom everything was possible. Michelene Wandor seems to have forgotten her. Instead she describes an alternative—the professional woman who has made it in a man's world. This new woman is not yet a conscious feminist but Michelene Wandor sees her as a hope. The attacks on women at work may force her to fight back although to Michelene Wandor's evident regret 'initially moving towards a trade union consciousness perhaps in the defence of their jobs'. What one wonders, does the fully fledged feminist fight for at work—feminist theatre in the tea breaks perhaps?

It is a silly and unreal view of the world which totally sells out women's liberation because it fails to face up to reality. Those women who are fighting for their jobs at present are precisely what keeps me going as a feminist. The women journalists at BPC, the women at Lee Jeans are fighting for the right to work with a lot more guts and determination than traditionally militant male sections of the work force. Their actions do much more for women's rights than women news readers or women's theatre. They inspire people who think that women's liberation is about obscure books and potty plays. They establish women's place with dignity in the workplaces and the trade unions. And they're showing the rest of us how it's got to be done.

You can't wish women's liberation into existence. You can't create it by having a good idea and telling people about it. You have to win people, organise for it.

It's that active element of feminism that is missing in Michelene Wandor's writing and with it the perspective for doing it. Women's liberation cannot be won in isolation. It can only be won in the process of emancipating all working class people, of changing ourselves. We fight for women's liberation in the context of all the problems that face workers at present, not by trying to change attitudes in isolation.

You can't stir up an ocean with a stick—which is what the feminists are trying to do. We know you have to find a way of creating a bloody great tidal wave. We're women, we're socialist revolutionaries, and we're fighting. And that's why we are a lot more optimistic than Michelene Wandor and the women who write in *Spare Rib*.

Anna Paczuska

WOMENS HEALTH

The art of starvation

ANOREXIA Nervosa is a startling disease. It is the determination to eat far less than the body requires. It is not the anorexic's intention to starve herself to death but some women do die. Many more can expect serious anorexic relapses for most of their lives. It is not an uncommon disease either as it effects one in 200 adolescents in this country. It used to effect mainly middle class women but this is changing as there are now working class women anorexics and it is now being diagnosed in men.

It is suggested that anorexics were among the thousands of women called 'hysterics' and persecuted in the Middle Ages. It was first seen as a disease in the 17th century. The physical symptoms described then still hold today—extreme emaciation, hyperactivity, amenorrhoea (failure to menstruate), constipation and lack of interest in being cured.

But there is more to anorexia than the physical symptoms. It is a woman's desperate struggle to gain control of her life. She feels that she plays no part in deciding what kind of person she is. This may not mean that her life lacks stimulation or opportunities. It is more likely that each aspect of her life has been defined by other people who do not understand or want to understand how she feels about her life. It is a protest at being dominated and a result of isolation from any means of finding an identity.

By exercising rigid control over the amount she eats she can assert her control over her body which becomes a symbol for her life. When she is successful at resisting food she will feel superior to those who cannot exercise the same degree of control. When she succumbs to temptation and eats, she will make herself sick to regain the control she has lost. Without food she has a sense of self but as the condition progresses her victories are coupled with depression. She becomes more isolated as the severity of her decision to protect her identity is confirmed by the responses of those around her—particularly those in authority—her family, school or doctor.

Lack of nourishment makes it hard for her to sleep as she is painfully hungry. It also means that her body temperature drops. In spite of the fact that she is shivering and drops off to sleep she will deny the fact that she is hungry, cold or tired. Anorexics tend to be very active. In her attempt to prove that nothing is wrong with her she will take more

physical exercise than the average woman. She is also under the delusion that she is fat. Her striving to keep her body weight down is not necessarily because she considers this sexually attractive. Her desire is to be accepted for the person she is of which sexuality is only a part.

Anorexia is an extension of the confusions all women suffer when they reject an identity which defines them only in relation to men.

Anorexics are notoriously difficult to treat as they are often uncooperative, uncommunicative and arrogant. The type of treatment depends mostly on how the disease is defined by the medical authority responsible for treatment. Most anorexics are treated in hospital for their physical condition. There are a variety of hormone, tonic and vitamin treatments, but there is no evidence that these change the eating habits of anorexics. There are also 'reward and punishment' treatments which deny any of the things which give her pleasure—a newspaper or a phone call, until she has consumed a certain quantity of food. As anorexics are already sensitive to pressure this type of treatment rarely has long term effects for the chronic anorexic.

There is therapy which could be individual therapy or with her family. Both of these types of therapy concentrate on the origins of the disease in the childhood experiences of the anorexic. They can offer some understanding of the causes of the disease and can relieve the anorexic of some of the deep-seated anxieties she has borne for a long time. The approach is criticised though because the anorexic is again in a situation where someone else is interpreting her life for her. However correct the interpretation may be, it cannot ultimately root out her fundamental grievance.

Feminists have explained anorexia in terms of women's inferior position in society. The fact that anorexia is primarily a woman's disease is taken as evidence that women do not have the right to assert their individuality.

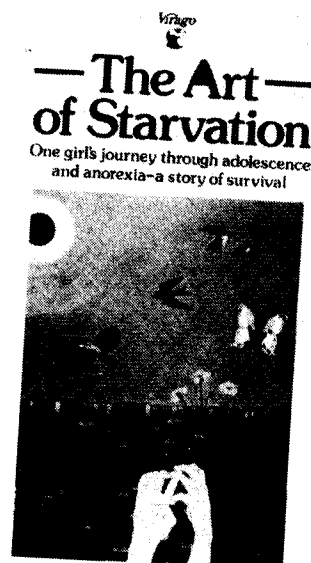
Anorexia Nervosa has been with us for a long time. Only recently has the extent of the disease been realised and the trouble taken to understand why anorexics take the decision to starve themselves, possibly to death.

Anorexia is an extension of the confusions all women suffer when they reject an identity which defines them only in relation to men. By bringing women together in self-help groups they can understand the common factors in their illness and overcome their isolation. By defining the problem as a political one, rooted in the ideology of society, this approach can only offer partial solutions to the individual.

Finally there are the therapies in which the anorexic is actively involved in defining the problem and the solution. In doing this she is defining herself. The combination of therapeutic skills and an emphasis on the day to day problems are intended to create a situation where she can experiment with her identity and find one which suits her best.

None of these approaches can claim to contain the solutions to the problems anorexics suffer. At best they contain some partial truths and achieve limited successes. The anorexic does tell us however that identity is a problem and that people do strive to find meaning in their lives. Unfortunately, when someone questions the basis of their identity to the point where they will stake their lives on it, society's means of rescue are sadly lacking.

Mary Williams



Sheila MacLeod

Most of the information for this article is from Sheila MacLeod's excellent book 'The Art of Starvation', Virago £2.95

REVIEWS



HEAR THIS BROTHER: WOMEN WORKERS AND UNION POWER
ANNA COOTE AND PETER KELLNER
NEW STATESMAN
£1.50

THIS BOOKLET brings out all the arguments that I myself seem forever to be putting in my union branch and district committee. They are about the problems women have in combining union activity with their family commitments. It is particularly difficult for part time workers whom I represent as a steward.

We suffer from a lack of education at meetings which fit in with our situation. We get

no extra payments to cover hours spent outside our working hours to attend courses. Women have either to be childfree, single or wait till their children have grown up before they can take up union positions or even attend national conferences.

This book also describes the way that a women's confidence is severely damaged when she returns to work after devoting years to rearing her family. It tells how women are paid less wages than men doing the same job, despite the Equal Pay and Sex-Discrimination Acts. Male attitudes to women at work and in the unions are also outlined. There are surveys and tables of statistics in the book which are interesting, although sometimes confusing.

A MATTER OF LIFE
RICHARD EDWARDS
AND PATRICK
STEPTOE
SPHERE BOOKS
£1.50

'A MATTER of life' written by Robert Edwards the scientist, and Patrick Steptoe, the doctor, is an account of the world's first 'test tube baby'. Louise Brown, who was conceived on a microscope slide and then introduced back into her mother and born in the normal way.

It is readable, it explains the science involved in the ten years that led up to Louise's birth in a simple way.

Steptoe and Edwards also take us through the controversy and sensation which raged around their work. The religious freaks who thought a fertilised egg was the same as a person, the newspaper men who hounded patients and hospital workers, their bribes ranging from £300 for a telephone number to more than a million for the doctors' story, the speculation about armies of cloned zombies

produced under state control, the criticism of other doctors about safety and the dangers of abnormality, the women who, knowing of the dangers and with little chance of becoming pregnant themselves nevertheless volunteered in droves to help in the research.

It is this side of the book which I found a bit disappointing. It never got to grips with some of the social issues raised by the work in anything but a superficial way.

It is a book about the best and worst in modern medicine. The scientific achievement is truly wonderful, the dedication and hard work of the medical teams admirable, yet 'test tube babies' like heart transplants present us with a problem about priorities. Should we place our resources into spectacular advances for a few people or should we force doctors to work on more mundane problems like sickle-cell anaemia or backache, which affect millions. Steptoe and Edwards do not raise this question. I wonder how they feel about patient control of medical research funding?

Eva Barker

The main concern of the book is to tell us what the unions should be doing to give women more equality and more power. The trouble is it's all about what the unions should be doing *from the top*. This gave me the impression that fighting for equality on the shop floor and in my union branch is a waste of time. Yet, I am convinced that this is where the fight for women's equality must begin. The rank and file have the power to change things, both on the shop floor and within the trade unions, and we should be trying to get united rank and file activity to win equality for women. It is a fight *from below* that's needed. The book doesn't agree, and looks to the union chiefs for change rather than to the rank and file.

By the time I had finished reading I felt the chains of oppression getting tighter. So, the book and I went for a pint. I met a male shop steward in the same union as me. He held the opinion that women who work part-time for pin money or because they are bored at home, shouldn't be allowed to vote on any pay offer. I gave him the book to read and informed him that unlike the book I wasn't waiting for the hierarchy of the union to grant women equality. I'm fighting for my equality at the bottom—starting with him.

If you want to know the reasons for women's continuing powerlessness in the unions then read this book, but if you want to know how women can fight back read 'Sisters and Workers.'

Sadie Blood.



**A GREAT LOVE
ALEXANDRA
KOLLONTAI
TRANSL.
CATHY PORTER
VIRAGO £2.50**

IN 1922 Alexandra Kollontai, a leading Bolshevik and a feminist, wrote two novels: *'Love of Worker Bees'* and *'A Great Love'*. The second one has just been translated and republished.

It is a moving tale of the love affair between Natasha, a young conscientious Bolshevik revolutionary living in France in 1911, and Senya a married man and a leading member of the Bolshevik Party. The translator's introduction suggests that the material for the story comes from Lenin's relationship with Inessa Armand, who was one of the women who helped set up the Bolshevik womens paper and was later to become the first Womens Organiser for the Bolshevik Party.

Natasha and Senya begin their relationship as friends and comrades. When they become lovers Natasha strives to maintain equality and her own identity against his unthinking and insensitive view of her. It is a familiar story. Her love for him is overcome by her resentment and anger at the selflessness he expects of her. He is unable to reconcile a political and intellectual relationship with a sexual one. Natasha refuses to be put down, and ultimately manages to maintain her head above water. 'For the first time it was she who set the mood'. But it is too late.

Kollontai ends with the words 'So learn from this all you men who have made women suffer through your blindness'

This is an account of the oppression experienced by a politically active women and it tells us a great deal about the attitudes women in Russia had to fight. Kollontai obviously thought that the oppression suffered by women in their personal relationships was important to discuss. Many women today also feel they have to try and make sense of their lives and their relationships. And this is where Kollontai is extraordinary—for it is not until the women liberation movement of the 60's that women writers again tried to portray women realistically struggling and asserting themselves in their relationships.

Fiona Williams

**COAL MINER'S
DAUGHTER
DIRECTOR:
MICHAEL APTED**

BASED on the autobiography of America's leading country and western singer, Loretta Lyn, *Coal Miner's Daughter* relies heavily on the cliched simplicity of the country and western myth of rags to riches (or in this case, coal dust to star dust), tracing the path of a young girl from a poor mining community to the heady heights of stardom.

The documentary tones of the film are effective, but go no further than that. The style never quite realises the reality of the grinding poverty of the Appalachian miners. Nor does it capture

the horrors of marriage at 14 and subjection to continuous pregnancies.

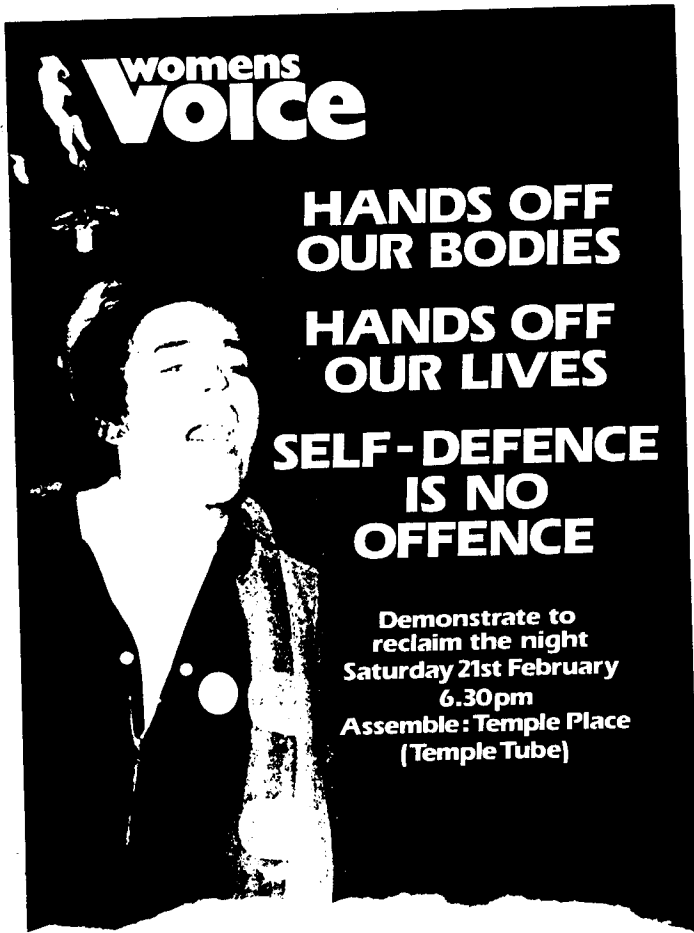
Loretta's husband is cast in the classic country and western mould—the cowboy of the Marlboro ads. It is he who persuades and sometimes bullies Loretta to embark on the road to stardom. And like the good country girl that she is meant to be, Loretta allows herself to be pushed by her ambitious, overbearing, though well-meaning husband.

It is when her father dies of black lung that Loretta remembers the political reality of her people. There is no sudden flash of revelation. Rather, it is a growing social awareness that reaches that maturity. At the same time she begins to challenge her husband, learning to make her own choices with an increasing self-confidence.

Where the film might easily have degenerated into another 'on the road' movie—following the country queen on endless tours of mid-America—Apted's direction saves the day. He hired non-professional actors and musicians, and the camera unconventionally lingers on tiny expressions and gestures, sensitively developing the characters and building on events.

The film would not have been possible without Sissy Spacek as Loretta. The role demands playing an age range of about 30 years. She is possibly one of the few actresses capable of building intelligent, forceful and exciting roles for women.

See the film for those reasons—but don't be taken in by the myths.



womens
Voice

**HANDS OFF
OUR BODIES**

**HANDS OFF
OUR LIVES**

**SELF-DEFENCE
IS NO
OFFENCE**

Demonstrate to
reclaim the night
Saturday 21st February
6.30pm
Assemble: Temple Place
(Temple Tube)

ARE WE WRONG ABOUT VIOLENCE

Dear Womens Voice,
I wish to reply to the letter entitled 'Whitewash on Violence' in March *Womens Voice*.

To an extent, I sympathise with the feelings in the letter, particularly the idea that to get rid of unemployment and to erect more lamp posts would certainly not make violence against women disappear. It is true to say, is it not, that many rapes and attacks occur in broad daylight and within the home?

However, my agreement with the letter stops at this point when they argue for a 'curfew on men'. Even if I agreed with this point of view how on earth do they expect to enforce this curfew on men? I could clearly envisage men being outraged by this idea, and the number of assaults escalating.

I have always believed that to fight against violence you cannot ignore men, but work with them and argue our positions to them both at work and in the home. I'm certainly not frightened of offending men.

On the contrary, I'm not scared to confront any man about the many issues of sexism.

I advise the women who wrote the letter to vent their aggression in a more positive way, as a curfew on men could not succeed forever. We all have the right to walk the streets safely and not impose a 'police state' upon ourselves.
Carole Oxford

I'm not grateful

Dear Womens Voice,
How I agree with Vicky, Frances and Cathy (*Womens Voice* March) about not offending pro-feminist men. When are pro-feminist men going to own up that just because they personally are not oppressing us, it doesn't mean that all other men aren't either?

Just because comrade John isn't going to attack me or any other woman as we walk home tonight, doesn't mean that any other man won't, or that I'm not going to be frightened away.

And why are we so grateful to men for being pro-feminist anyway? As socialists we don't expect anything less, surely?

**Christina Howarth
Sidcup
Kent**

LETTERS



Deportation threat for Jaswinder

Dear Womens Voice,
We are writing to tell you about the case of Jaswinder Kaur, a 23 year old Leeds woman who is threatened with deportation. She came to Britain in 1976 and was married to a man who claimed to have been here for eight years. When she applied to stay here permanently the Home Office in the course of their investigations discovered that her husband was here illegally and was already married to somebody else. The marriage was subsequently legalised.

Jaswinder's husband was violent to her and to their small son. Finally, in 1979, Jaswinder left him after he had assaulted the child, resulting in the one-year-old being put into hospital. The police arrested the husband, convicted him for assault and he was deported.

Jaswinder is now left with no legal right to stay here. If she is forced to go back to India her safety and the safety of her child cannot be assured. Her husband has written threatening violence if she returns.

A mixed support group 'The Friends of Jaswinder Kaur' was formed a few months back to help Jaswinder fight her deportation order. Her case rests on persuading the Home Office to show compassion and let her stay.

We are asking sisters to write to the Home Office urging them to show compassion in this case. Write to Under Secretary of State, Immigration and Nationality Division, Lunar House, Croydon.

Jaswinder's case is not unique. Nasira Begum and Nasreen Akhtar are just two other Asian women faced with deportation. We must show that we won't let the state get on with its racist and sexist laws without a fight. Please support our national demonstration on May 16 and show your solidarity with Jaswinder and the many other women like her who we never hear of.

**Friends of Jaswinder Kaur,
LAP, Box JK, 29 Blenheim Terrace Leeds LS2 9HD.**

DO THEY REALLY CARE?

Dear Womens Voice,
A further point to last month's article on glue sniffing. I'm sick of the sanctimonious concern of the media and social services for kids getting off on glue. Do these same people give a damn for these same kids a few years later, when they're staggering home from some crummy factory, zonked out of their

brain from working over a degreasing tank all day?

Also you missed a very important point in the article on producing leaflets. If you're going to use commercial printers please make sure they are fully unionised.

**Sue Spicer
Brighton**

HOW MEAN CAN YOU GET?

Dear Womens Voice,
 Recently while in hospital having my baby, the meanness of the cuts was in evidence. The list of items one had to take in to hospital had two dozen maternity pads added to it. Some days after having the baby I needed more maternity pads. As the ward sister went to get them another patient asked for them too. The sister replied each patient was only allowed one pad on the National Health and anyway what would Margaret Thatcher say. The woman replied 'I didn't vote for her anyway' and took the pads.
 Other cuts included not providing salt for baths and not being able to provide all the food for special diets. Two packets of biscuits were provided per day for 30 women—a biscuit each perhaps.
 Mary Richardson
 Hackney

DISABLED WANT JOBS

Dear Womens Voice,
 Siobhan Scanlon has a letter printed in your March issue, the gist of which I agree with. But it is outrageous to suggest that people who are disabled don't want jobs. I am disabled and many of my friends who are disabled are desperate for a job. Part of being disabled is being barred from getting jobs.
 This is the kind of issue the Liberation network of People with Disabilities and the Union of the Physically Impaired against Segregation deal with, and we need your support at least in terms of questioning your assumptions and what you learn from the media.
 Merry Cross
 East London

DIRTY LINEN



Did you know that if you are one of the millions of people who live in council flats you pay *more* rates proportionat-

ely than houseowners? This is because the authorities who fix rateable values consider living in a flat a luxury!

Thorns in North London eventually persuaded 60 women to volunteer for redundancy. This was due to take effect on Friday 27 March. On the Thursday the 60 women were ordered off the premises at dinner time. They would be paid for the whole of Thursday and Friday, they were told, but they were on no account to turn up for work. The reason? The girls had planned a party on the Friday, to say goodbye to their friends. But management decided there would be no party, to avoid loss of production.

Don't do it, Di!

Spare Rib has produced this badge to commemorate the royal wedding. But do we really care if she does it or not?



These postcards are among seven designs produced by See Red Womens Workshop. 12p each or 70p for a set. Orders, including postage please, to 16a Iliffe Yard, off Crampton St, London SE17.

Royal bride not on our payroll

Sir — It was inevitable! One day after the Royal engagement was announced, DO2 Staffing Section received an enquiry concerning Lady Diana's recently vacated job in the Pimlico Kindergarten. It was with regret that we informed the caller that the kindergarten was not connected with the Inner London Education Authority and that Lady Diana has never been in the employment of the Authority.

Celia Green
 (Staffing Section)

DO2,
 388-396 Oxford Street, W1

We print this piece from ILEA Contact without comment.

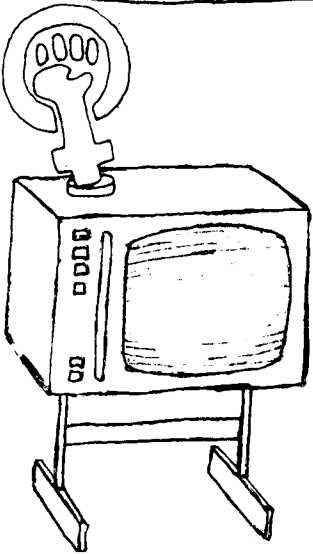
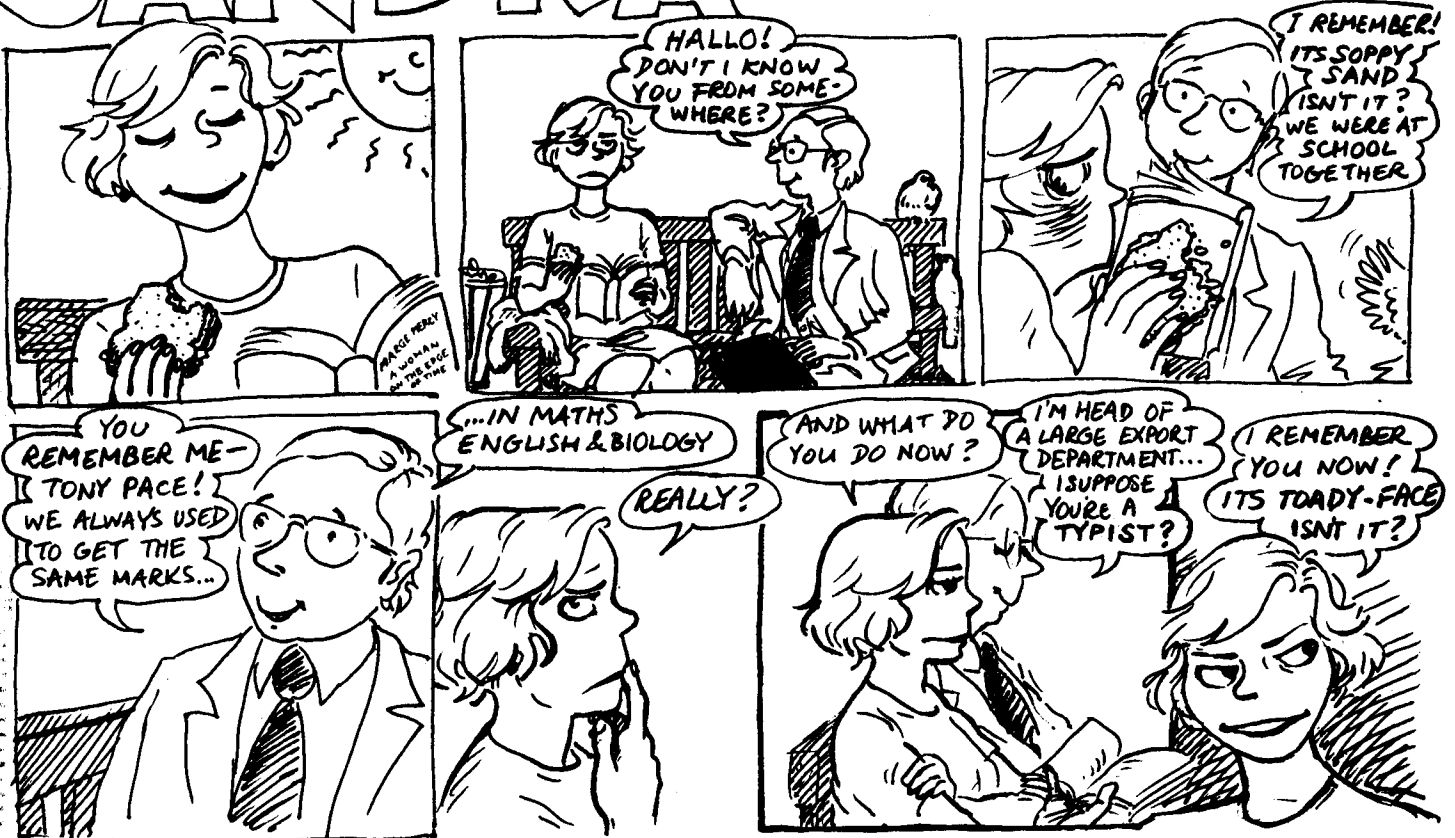


PHOTO: ANGELA PHILLIPS

A woman in Teesside has been stripped of her title as local gala queen because she is pregnant. The organisers of the gala claim they have done so for 'practical

reasons'. But isn't it really because the ideal of a beauty queen is the hourglass figure, not the pregnant tummy?

SANDRA Lunch Break



And finally Cyril...

DON'T ask me why, because I'm sure I don't know, (that even sounds poetic), but every Sunday evening I find myself tuning into *That's Life!* (BBC 1 9.15). I think it's just to exercise my Tuts! Gods! and Pathetics!

Every week the show has *exactly* the same format, starting off with a little titillation, via the street interviewer, asking 'nice, but rather suggestive' questions. This always encourages the bigots, racists, sexists, know alls, and dummies on the streets!

Then straight on to the

musical interlude—where the replies to queries and complaints (usually at large corporations or nationalised industries), are sung in humorous verse by the staffs of the departments involved. Of course the BBC has played no part in this, it was all done by the general public themselves! And if you believe that you'll believe anything!

Now, we move on to a more serious vein, 'Underdog of the Week' spot. This week one Liverpool council tenant's plight in fighting condensation and leaks in their flat, was singled out, and reported on by the BBC's own experts.

Yet there are 36,000 tenants awaiting repairs on the council's list. Well, never mind the other 35,999 because the investigative team and experts have done their job, they have reported the facts, they're not supposed to *do* anything.

At this point, the viewing public is at a low, so time to slip in a good sob story, whether it be the old couple without electricity, or the housebound invalid. This is the part that pricks people's consciences and makes us all realise just how lucky we are (We are?).

Then, a short but sensitive

speech, a second's pause ... and Esther moves over to Cyril for the odd ads—or rather spot the typesetting mistakes—to lighten our hearts again.

Nearly the end now, so let's have performing animals time! Remember the dog that said 'sausages? Well, it's not only animals now, people have joined the menagerie, making odd noises, playing kettles, bits of old tubing, and banging their heads. And all for free, you know! No fees are paid. All done to entertain us, the public, in our armchairs, giggling and chuckling at the antics of these simple folks ...

'And finally Cyril.....' 'And finally Esther'... it's smut time, or rather a rude bit to finish off with.

There, in forty five minutes, we've run down council building, incited a bit of racism, had a cheap thrill, proved Britain is best.

And all this is done by a woman campaigning against world injustice, leading her male team to the fore etc etc etc and this is women in the media?

Christine Fellowes



Rita Millican is a cashier in a canteen in Newcastle. She talked to *Womens Voice* about the experience which made her a socialist and persuaded her to become active in the Socialist Workers Party.

why I became a socialist

I was brought up in a socialist background. My father was in the Communist Party in the thirties before I was born—around the time of the Jarrow March. I always heard a lot of talk about socialism but never took any notice. Then when I was about eleven I picked up a book about Marx. It was a sort of condensed bits of his work, and that got me interested.

When I was about 20 I joined the Communist Party. It didn't do much. There were meetings but they didn't do anything. The only thing we did was go on the Aldermaston march at Easter—1960 that was—but soon after that I dropped out, only a few months after joining the CP.

By that time I was married and having my kids. Of course then I couldn't do anything. Once my youngest was at school I began to take a series of part time jobs. My old man was a painter. Life hasn't changed much for them since when Robert Tressell was writing. They get paid off for three months in the winter. So you have all the problems of living on the dole and bringing up kids. Also I realised what we were up against when my eldest, Johnny, left school. He got a job for a few months and then was paid off. They tried to push him into these work experience things. At the time I wrote a poem about what a rip off it was. Anyway he hasn't worked since.

I began looking round for an organisation I could identify with. I never thought of joining the Labour Party. I never thought I could change it. You know that's what people say, but it changes people, not the other way round. One day I saw a poster in town advertising the first Anti Nazi League Carnival. My daughter Yvonne who was 14 wanted to go. I didn't know anything about it and was a bit worried so in the end we all went with a couple of friends. Then I started going to SWP meetings and eventually joined at a Paul Foot meeting nine months later. I saw what was wrong in society and which party could change it.

After being in the CPI thought it was all a waste of time. My time was taken up with bringing up kids. If you've got four like me, with not much of an age gap and you're working as well you've got no time. You feel hemmed in, and you drop out and lose touch. It was only seeing that poster made me realise the party existed. I rarely went into town, and didn't see the paper.

My husband was in the CP at the same

time as me, but he doesn't approve of the SWP. We're separated now all the kids think along the same lines as me. We had a lot of rows, a lot of antagonism. He's like a lot of workers. They look to the past and say it's been tried before and can't be done. You're far too old for all that, he used to say. In a sense it frightened him. Whether it threatened his masculinity or not I couldn't say. He said I indoctrinated the kids. When I spoke to them they got my views, but they've very definitely got minds of their own.

When I was in a factory at Ever Ready six years ago I was a shop steward. It was 75% women and we worked shifts. The pay wasn't bad compared to other places so the fight was more over conditions. We abolished the clock for our meal breaks. I spent most of my time fighting warnings people got for being late. If you start at 6am there's bound to be a lot of lateness. There was a lot of dust in the factory from black powder in the batteries which meant you needed to drink often. There were vending machines but often they didn't work. The men had a boiler in their toilets and used to make tea. One day I came back from holiday. It was hot weather but there was no boiler. Management had moved it claiming it was unhygienic. We walked out and got it back. After that they put the boiler in the canteen and paid a tea lady to come round with a trolley. It's a little thing but you must have it.

Now I'm a cashier in the canteen of the Coop in Newcastle. Catering doesn't have a shop steward of its own but we're having a meeting to get one and my name has been put forward. We need our own steward because we're working in totally different conditions—we're in heat all the time, and we get paid less even for the same job. There is a lot to fight on. Lots of the stewards are department managers as well, which means they're serving two masters. They always end up serving the Coop.

There's one other thing about why I became a socialist. It was what made me conscious of divisions between black and white. I've always been very dark. At school there were lots of middle class kids and only two black girls. They were prejudiced to me because they thought I was a half caste. That made me understand a bit about the type of prejudice about colour there is around.

The reason I'm a socialist is because of that prejudice.

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.

**Your nearest
Womens Voice
Group meets**

**join the
fight!**

I want to join the fight ...

Name _____

Address _____

Send to Womens Voice
 PO Box 82, London, E2.

**WHAT IS
GOING
ON?**

WV groups

- **ABERDEEN WV** Liz 51059
- **ABERYSTWYTH WV** c/o Students Union, UCW, Aberystwyth
- **ACTON WV** Ruth or Jude 740 6660
- **NORTH BIRMINGHAM WV** Maggie 021 449 4793
- **SOUTH BIRMINGHAM WV** Jill 021 459 1718
- **BLACK COUNTRY WV** 27 Glen Court, Compton Road
- **BRADFORD WV** Trish Bradford 585 913 for details of meetings and activities
- **BRIGHTON WV** phone 696897
- **BRISTOL WV** Katrina 46875
- **BURTON ON TRENT WV** Kim 33929
- **CANTERBURY WV** Barbara, Lyminge 862 742
- **CHELTENHAM WV** meets every Thursday. For babysitters and information, Jacqui 551 370
- **CHORLTON WV** Claire 226 1048
- **COVENTRY WV** meets Hertford Tavern fortnightly. Mondays 8pm. 361 585
- **COLCHESTER WV** 22 5650 for details
- **DUDLEY WV** Brigitte Brierley Hill 78308
- **EALING/SOUTHALL WV** Christine or Jane 571 1838
- **ECCLES AND SALFORD WV** Jannie 707 2557 or Ann 737 3800
- **EDIINBURGH WV** Penny 57 0731
- **EDGE HILL COLLEGE WV** Bev Southport 212 140
- **ENFIELD WV** Nora 807 1741
- **FINSBURY PARK WV** Wendy 01 254 9632 (days)
- **GLASGOW WV** Clare 357 1157
- **GLOSSOP WV** Derbyshire - Carol, Glossop 64287
- **GLOUCESTER WV** Maggie Gloucester 413910
- **HALIFAX WV** every Friday 12-1pm, Co-op Arcade on the Precinct
- **HAMMERSMITH AND WEST KENSINGTON WV** Ginny 749 7292 or Eileen 960 6088
- **HATFIELD AND WELWYN WV** phone Cathy Hatfield 65238
- **HEMEL HEMPSTEAD WV** Val, Berkhamstead 74468
- **HORNSEY WV** Maggie 341 1182
- **KENTISH TOWN WV** Pauline 586 5693
- **KINGSTON WV** Emma 979 9682
- **LAMPETER WV** c/o SDUC Lampeter, Dyfed, Wales
- **LANCASTER WV** ring 36196
- **LEEDS WV** Gilda 622 800 or Bev 457 098
- **LEICESTER WV** Fiona 0533 62855
- **LEYTONSTONE WV** Anne (556 5595) or Pam (558 1509)

- **LIVERPOOL WV** Jane 727 1182
- **LOWESTOFT WV** c/o 107, Montgomery Avenue, Lowestoft
- **LUTON WV** Denise 35 Chatsworth Road, Luton
- **MEDWAY WV** Lici, Medway 571628
- **NORTH MANCHESTER WV** phone Sandy 205 0384 or, Maria 205 7657
- **NEWCASTLE WV** Liz 854 782
- **NEWHAM WV** Pam 534 1417
- **NORWICH WV** c/o 56 Benedicts St, Norwich
- **NOTTINGHAM WV** Chrissie Langley Mill 62356
- **PIMLICO WV** Helen 730 7983 or Leslie 834 0760
- **READING WV** Shirlev 585556
- **ST HELENS WV** Carol, St Helens 28178
- **SHEFFIELD WV** Sue 613 739
- **SOUTH LONDON WV** Sally 720 5768
- **SOUTHWARK WV** c/o PO Box 82, London E2 9DS or Elaine 670 3774 (day)
- **SOUTH WEST LONDON WV** Marion 947 0560
- **STOKE ON TRENT WV** Sandra 814094
- **TOTTENHAM WV** Mary 802 9563
- **TOWER HAMLETS WV** Helen 980 6036
- **WALTHAMSTOW WV** phone Sue 521 5712
- **WREXHAM WV** Heather 87293
- **WHALLEY RANGE WV** Claire 061 226 1048



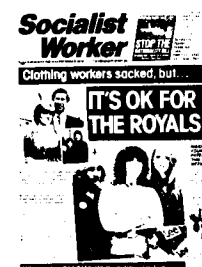
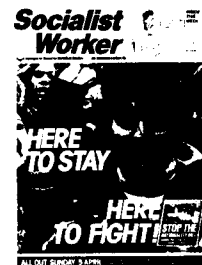
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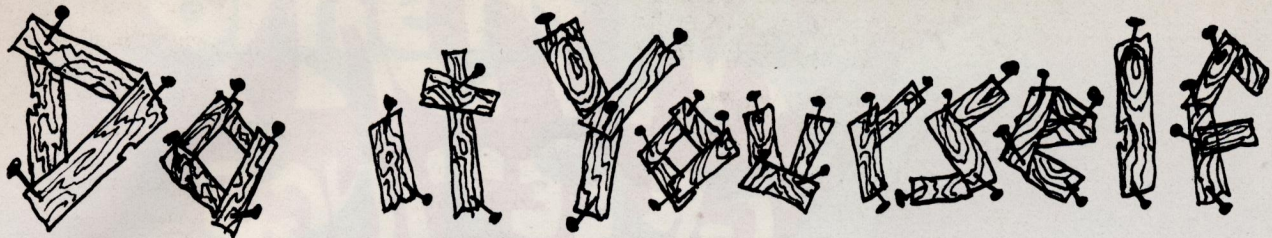
Marxism '81 is organised by the Socialist Worker Student Organisation This year it is at Queen Mary College, Mile End Road, London E1 From 10th July to 17th July (Friday to Friday). £11.50 in advance, £13 on the door. Write to SWSO, PO Box 82, London E2, or ring 01-986 8355, for further details.

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HOLDING A MEETING

WE HOLD MEETINGS for different reasons: a new group might want an exploratory meeting to publicise its existence and determine the potential support it has; a group with new members might want to consolidate the work they have been doing; or the meeting might be part of a developing campaign.

Whatever the reason (and these, of course, are only three of many) it is important to be clear at the beginning. This might sound obvious, but it is vital so you can pitch your publicity correctly. The more topical and relevant to local issues the meeting is, the better response there will be, and you will have a better chance of gaining new members.

Co-ordination

Check who you've got to do what job and make sure you give yourself enough time to get everything done. Financial resources will govern the kind of publicity you can have, but don't be dismayed if you've got very little money. You can always borrow and do some fundraising later if you really feel you need to spend more money than you've got—it's usually worth it!

Check if possible that there is nothing else on at the time you want to have your meeting which might have the same audience. Also make sure whether or not anyone else has been working around the same issue. We once held a 'cuts' meeting and produced a smashing 'spoo' leaflet, only to find out that what we thought was spoof had actually been a real issue a couple of months before. The meeting was terrible but I guess we learnt a lesson!

Booking a Room

If you have a rough idea how many might come you can book accordingly—it makes for a better atmosphere to have a small place full up than a large place nearly empty. There are lots of places ranging from rooms in pubs, church halls, co-op halls, schools, colleges depending on what you want it for. A list of halls for hire can usually be got from a local library. Check regulations about purposes halls can be used for, and times, or you might get turfed out before you have finished because you didn't know you should stipulate a finishing time when booking (this seems to happen most in colleges and schools).

Find out about keys—sometimes you have to collect keys and unlock yourself. Nothing is worse than arriving at 8pm with the speaker to find a milling crowd outside and no-one knows how to get in (we've done that too!).

Speaker

Try to have a couple of possible dates for your speaker to choose and don't leave it too late

before booking a speaker or you may find yourself in a terrible panic at the last minute phoning everybody. Tell your speaker what you hope to gain and a little bit about the audience if you can so she can make what she has to say more appropriate. This may be particularly important if you have the meeting to clarify a problem specific to your group. Make sure your members find out a bit about the topic, if they don't already know, so they are able to make contributions in the discussion—otherwise it might go very well but it could have some deadly silences.

Don't forget to give the speaker instructions for finding the meeting, and some money for expenses. A collection will help cover the cost.

Publicity

There are lots of ways of publicising meetings and what you do will depend on money, time and who you hope will come. Generally the more publicity the better because even if people don't come to the meeting they see your posters and know you're there. Again it depends on the likely audience where you give out leaflets or put up posters—it's worth listing the best places and times because it makes planning that much easier. Leaflets can be put in your *Womens Voice* and *Socialist Worker* and also a printed notice.

Ask all your contacts personally if possible—it's easy to assume they know about the meeting only to find out too late that they don't. Even if they can't come they may be able to take a few leaflets to work, or their local child clinic or to another group they belong to.

Chairing the Meeting

There will be an article about this later, so I'll not say much here. It is good if every member has an opportunity to chair meetings, though sometimes you might feel you need a more experienced and determined member—for instance if the topic of the meeting is particularly controversial or emotive. Whoever does the job must keep attention on the meeting, note whose hand goes up, and make sure everyone speaks who wishes to.

Setting out the Room

Make it as hospitable as possible. If you've got posters and a banner pin them up. Get all your *Womens Voice*, *Socialist Workers* relevant pamphlets, books and badges. At some more general meetings it might even be worth having copies of good leaflets you've done in the past so new people can see the sorts of things you've been doing.

Decide how formal or informal you wish to be. If it is informal and smallish, chairs might go in a circle, or perhaps a horseshoe round the speaker. At a bigger or more formal meeting chairs would be in rows. This is perhaps best if you feel you need to be more in control of the meeting.

The People Who Come

This is what the meeting is all about. TALK TO THEM. Each member should be responsible for introducing themselves, and welcoming new faces. Don't forget to invite people to the pub after the meeting. Have a clip board and ask people to sign so you can keep in touch. Members should sign too. New people don't know how many others are also new and may be reluctant to put their name down on an empty sheet. After the meeting, keep in touch. Most people are attracted to our politics because of what we do, so make sure your meeting is firmly focussed on activity, and not just a talking shop and you should win lots of support.

Tricia Gibbons



MAYDAY GREETINGS



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