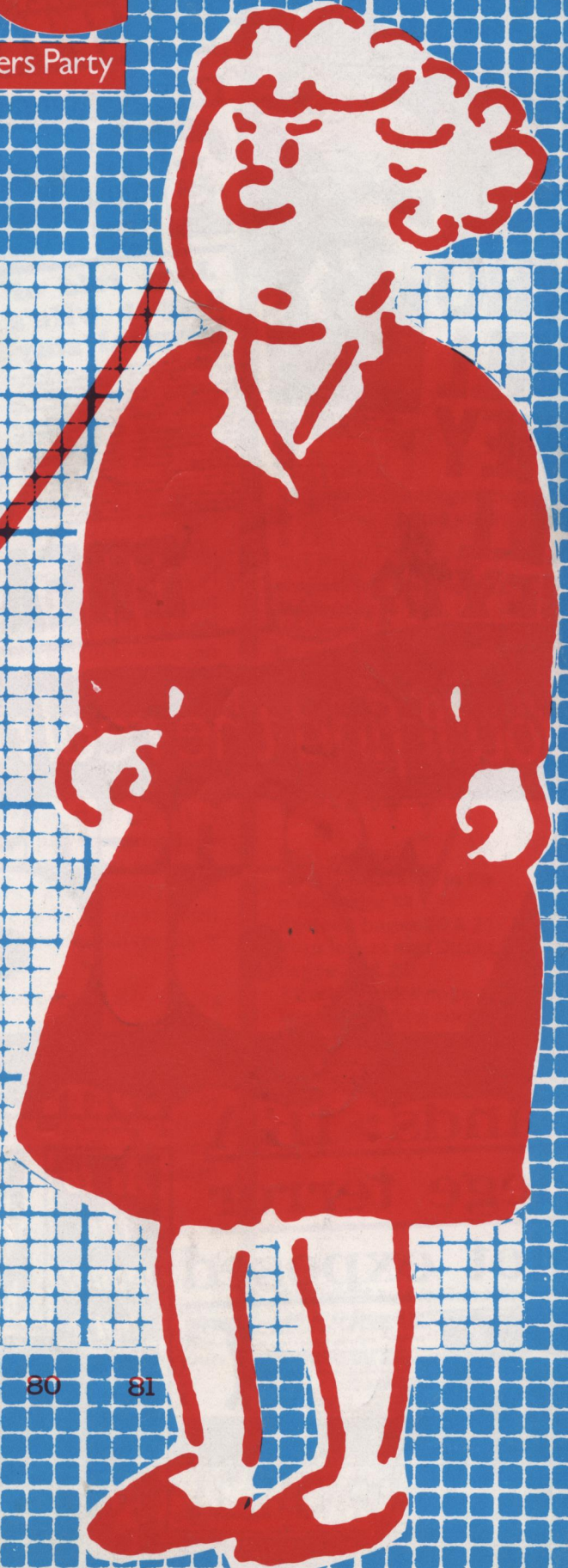
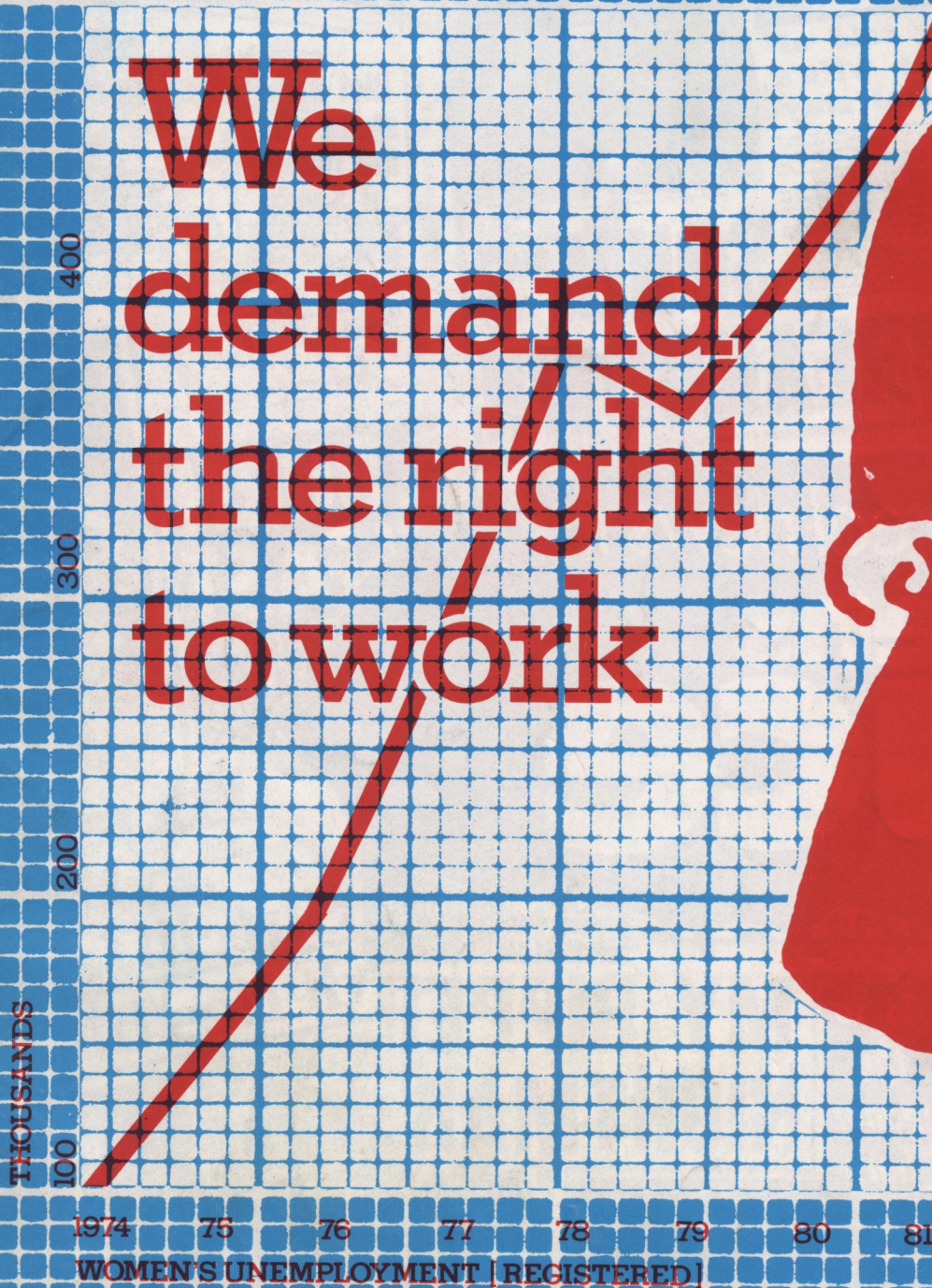


# womens voice

Womens magazine of the Socialist Workers Party

June '81  
Issue 53  
Price 25p

We  
demand  
the right  
to work







**'Let them die' poll verdict**  
IRA hunger strikers should be left to die. That's the verdict.

**of fury**  
...and in London  
**Funfair mobs stone police**

**LANDSLIDE**  
**Labour to gear up in the**

**DAILY STAR**  
THURSDAY, MAY 10, 1981 10p (10p inc. tax) Printed in London

**DAILY Mirror**  
Thursday, May 7, 1981 12p

**THE RIPPER CASE**

**VOLUNTEER**



**CHARLES AND DI**  
**They gag THOSE tapes**  
See Page 5



**who died in a blaze of publicity**

**VICTIM**  
**The copper murdered as he quietly did his duty**

**WHO WILL THEY KILL NEXT?**

**Jury told of Ripper wife's hospital stay**

**SONIA'S BREAKDOWN**

**Riot mobs strike after the funeral of Sands**

**DAILY STAR**  
10p (10p inc. tax) Printed in London



**You'll find the real news in**  
**womens VOICE**

**Sands: IRA siege terror plot exposed**

**on Sutcliffe house**  
SEE PAGE 4

**MY RIPPER NIGHTMARE**

**Sutcliffe: Wife defies his pl**

**THE Ulster Secretary, Mr. Humphrey Atkins, accused the IRA last night of cynically "exploiting people's tears to cover its plans for violence. His message was: "Keep calm."**

**As to the manor born**

**Police pruned life—c**

**SONIA SUTCLIFFE will today defy the wishes of her husband and watch him face trial at the Old Bailey.**

**POPE'S ENVOY PRAYS FOR A PROTESTANT**



**Police pruned life—c**

**'He didn't want her to go through the court ordeal'**

**UNION IN VOTE**

# OUR POINT OF VIEW



# 1984...here we come?

In spite of the Tory smear campaign against 'Marxist extremists' and the press threatening that London would turn into an 'East Berlin', Labour won more than 900 seats in the County Council elections in May.

This is encouraging news. It means that people don't believe Thatcher's lies that her road is the road to economic recovery. It means that people are looking for some sort of change.

But it was not the sweeping victory we might expect in the middle of a vicious Tory government. Only 43 per cent of the electorate turned out to vote. One working woman said, 'The only reason I know there's an election is because my child's school is closed for the poll, and I have to find extra money for a childminder.'

Most of us do not hear a peep from our County Councils from one election to the next, and in any case few of us know what they do. It's difficult to believe that these County Councils will turn the tide of high unemployment and cuts in public spending. But in many areas, Labour was promising this kind of change.

In London, voters were promised a 25 per cent cut in public transport prices, more housing, jobs, and democracy. In Humberside, Labour promised houses for the elderly; in Cheshire a return to decent school meals; Birmingham Labour candidates offered free travel for the unemployed.

During election times Labour has always

been full of promises and assurances that they will govern in the interests of the bulk of the population—the working class. But it was only just over two years ago that we were fighting the Labour government to save our nurseries, our hospitals, our schools and colleges, and our right to strike.

Labour now controls a large number of county and municipal councils in England and Wales. They made their election promises in the full knowledge that the Tory government is cutting public spending daily and punishing *local* councils who refuse to implement these cuts. The county and municipal councils are unlikely to succeed where other Labour representatives have failed.

The only way they can succeed is by taking on the government — and time and time again Labour has refused to do this. Their way round the problem of maintaining services at a minimum is to put up the rates — by making working people pay twice for their services and at the same time lining the pockets of the bankers who profit from high interest rates.

We won't get more houses, more jobs or more democracy by voting Labour. These things will only come through a long hard struggle to change the whole basis of society. Women have always been hit hardest by public spending cuts, so we must play our part in that fight.

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## Uncivil and not servile

For the first time in the history of civil service trade unionism the Council of Civil Service Unions (CCSU) are preparing for an all-out five day strike in pursuit of their pay claim for 15 per cent and a £10 minimum increase.

The annual conferences of the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) and the Society of Civil and Public Services (SCPS) decided to extend action at the ports and airports and in the Department of Employment and DHSS. The motion passed at the CPSA conference for a five day strike in June or July will probably be supported by other unions in the CCSU.

The recent announcement of a 10.3 per cent rise for the armed forces and 18 per cent for MPs has increased feelings of anger and militancy amongst civil servants. Yet again, Thatcher's favourite causes have been singled out for special treatment. When it comes to *their* rises, the money can always be found at the expense of civil servants and public sector workers—mostly women and amongst the lowest paid in the country.

If the Government defeats us over pay they will have the confidence to make the massive cuts in staff they are already planning. We will see the wholesale introduction of new technology without an agreement that benefits the membership. The civil service will be decimated and our trade unions crushed.

The present policy of selective action has been totally ineffective. Up and down the country members are calling for an all-out indefinite strike. In Dundee and Aberdeen about 150 members in the DHSS have defied the leaders and taken unofficial industrial action. In Manchester rallies have called for all-out industrial action and the feeling is spreading rapidly.

But the CCSU leadership are

afraid of the action getting out of their control and have closed their ears. Even a five day strike will be too much for many of them, and it is possible that a shoddy deal will be cobbled together in the next few weeks. Already there has been talk of moving our settlement dates from April to January, giving us a measly 9½ per cent.

Even the left are proceeding with stubborn caution. It was the Broad Left in the CPSA who put up the motion for a five day strike, preventing a motion for indefinite action being heard. Far from supporting the Scottish unofficial strikers they have been trying to persuade them to return to work.

Members of Redder Tape, the rank and file group in the Civil Service unions, had been the only activists to support the Scottish strikers. We have also been at the spearhead of the fight for an all-out strike. We recognise that a five day strike cannot possibly win the dispute, because if the Government knows how long it lasts they can prepare measures to counteract it.

Once we are out we will have to stay out until the claim is won. The Scottish strikers have shown the way. If the 'leaders' won't give a lead, then we will do it without them.

Sally Bild  
CPSA





Photo: Neil Martinson

## THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

**MONEY AND SUPPORT** has been pouring in to the workers occupying the Lee Jeans factory in Greenock, West Scotland. Govan shipyard workers send £1000 a week. Greenock shipyard workers send £500 a week. Workers at Talbot's Linwood plant were sending £500 a week, but that stopped with the closure of Linwood at the end of May.

Women from the occupation have been travelling up and down the country to factories, pits, offices and union branches explaining their case and asking for support. Celia and Elaine went to Wales at the end of April. They came back with £400 and messages of support, with more collections to fol-

low. They visited pits, Labour Party branches and trades councils.

Like most of the women at Lee Jeans neither of them are used to speaking at mass meetings. They've had to get used to it. One of the factories they visited was British Aluminium in South Glamorgan. The workers there are to be made redundant in mid-July.

'We went in to ask for their support, and they asked us for advice. Celia ended up telling them: sit in and fight for your jobs', said Elaine.

VF Corporation, which owns Lee Jeans, has 17 factories in the USA and 10 elsewhere. Its subsidiaries in this country include Berkshire Nylons, Vanity Fair and the

Paige chain of shops.

At official level the NUTGW (the Lee Jeans workers' union) is opposed to blacking Lee Jeans or VF products, and are not encouraging consumer boycotts.

## A Royal occupation

The 12 strikers at Royal Pride organised a demonstration through the streets of Manchester on Saturday 16 May. The demonstration was to build support for the women in Royal Pride and the 650 workers at Lawrence Scott who are in occupation against closure.

Several hundred people marched through the centre of the city, behind their various trade union banners, chanting 'We're fighting for the right to work'. They were joined along the way by many bystanders.

The women had worked hard to build the demonstration, visiting workplaces, trades councils and local Labour Party branches. They've managed a task that even the TUC shies away from, and were proud of the response they received.

In their own dispute they show the same strength, courage and conviction. They are now travelling outside of Manchester to gain wider support for their fight. They're offering their help and experience to others in the same position in their

They are worried about the 'market'. But many of the women think it has to be done. One said, 'I think we should have blacked right from the start. We have to hurt VF and force them to do something. It's been 16 weeks now.'

Another worker, Kathleen, said: 'We need to show them what it's like. They say they can't afford to keep the factory open—but look at those ads on the telly. You can win a free holiday with Lee Jeans. How much does all that cost?'

The solidarity is there. Glasgow firemen were due to move an emergency motion at their union conference as *Womens Voice* went to press saying that firemen should not cover Paige shops owned by VF.

The motions of support and money won't win the occupation, although they are extremely important. Blacking is vital if the Lee Jeans workers are to keep their jobs, as they mean to. Jennifer Ross

locality.

One of the strikers, Elsie, has joined the Peoples March.

Recently their boss asked some of the workers to return to work—but without conceding the trade union recognition they have asked for. Marie, a shop steward, said 'I don't know why he thinks we've been out here for 12 weeks, he thinks we're going back without the union. He wants to take back three or four of us but what will happen to the rest? He didn't expect us to be this strong and now he's trying to split us up—we're having none of it.'

The women at Royal Pride should be a lesson to us all. Although small in numbers in the face of the great Tory offensive, they've taken on the bosses and refused to stand down for what they believe in.

They need, and deserve, your support.

Messages of support, and donations, to: Royal Pride Strikers; 37 Anson Road, Victoria Park, Manchester.

**Kathleen Sykes**

## Marisa isn't going

A BATTLE over the victimisation of a union convenor is being fought at Heathrow Hotel in Hounslow, Middlesex.

Marisa Casares-Roach (interviewed in April's *Womens Voice*) has been told by management that, as part of a package of redundancies, her official job as a part-time waitress is to go. But Marisa has not worked in the hotel's restaurant for two and a half years.

Her employers then came up with an offer of a full-time union convenor, with just one condition — that the union convenor would not be Marisa.

The TGWU national officer for hotel and catering workers was called in, and negotiations are still taking place. In the course of talks Marisa was offered a full-time job as a waitress—a job that was declared redundant just two weeks before. She refused to change jobs. She told *Womens Voice*:

'One of my members is now on the dole because that job went. I don't want a job that someone else has lost.'

'I'm very angry about the whole thing. It's a blatant case of discrimination against someone who is active in the union, someone that management now wants to get rid of.'

# Don't picket— that's legal!

FRIDAY 8 MAY will go down in history. It was the day that workers were served the first ever injunction under the Tories' 1980 Employment Act. The recipients were seven Chlorides workers, three of whom are women, from Dagenham, Essex, who have been locked out over a wage claim. They want £1 a week extra for doing overtime which they don't get paid for! The injunction was served in an attempt to prevent them picketing their main depot where they successfully stopped the movement of batteries and got the oil, acid and oxygen blacked.

The workers have stopped picketing the main depot—instead it's being picketed by

local trade unionists, who are showing their solidarity with the seven strikers and their opposition to the Tories' anti-union laws.

It is small groups of workers that will be hit hardest by the Employment Act—but as the lorry drivers who refused to cross their picket line, and the local trade unionists who are picketing their main depot have shown, with the support and solidarity of other workers, they can win.

We can show our solidarity by raising the dispute in our workplaces and by taking collections.

**Donations and messages of support to: Nova Young, 14 Cotsleigh Road, Romford, Essex.**

## Porter, what porter?

11 KITCHEN STAFF from the new canteen in the Lambeth Council offices in Brixton Hill have taken a stand against the cuts. On Thursday 7 May they went on strike after discovering a porter, who had left a month of the porter. The management replaced. They had been covering his duties. That day's dinner had already been cooked but they refused to do the washing up, which is normally done by the porter. The management instructed the staff to leave the building and they served the dinners themselves! Only £54 was taken for meals that day instead of the usual £200-250 as news of what had happened spread quickly throughout the rest of the council workers. The NALGO branch responded quickly by ordering their members not to use the canteen.

The following Monday a meeting was held between the management and the strikers. But the management's only response so far is to suggest ways of making the porters' work easier for the women, such things as installing smaller pedal bins and telling the women how to wash up the big pots. But the women are determined. Jean—one of the strikers said 'I just won't wash up. This is the first time I've ever gone on strike, but I've never

had to before'. Irene, another striker, said, 'No way were we employed to do the kitchen porter's washing up. The worker's too hard—we are too busy doing the essential jobs'.

Management's refusal to budge has spread the strike to kitchen staff in other canteens. After the meeting with management, staff from the Courtney House canteen joined the picket outside the Brixton Hill offices. One of these women, Mary, told me 'We have come out in sympathy with our colleagues, the women don't get any extra money to do the extra work'. They have got a kitchen porter in their canteen, but they recognise that they could be the next to go.

Support is growing for the women, another two canteens in the borough have walked out in solidarity. Collection sheets are being circulated amongst other trade unionists. As Irene says, 'Everyone is adamant that they will not wash-up, as long as we stick together we'll stay out until we win'.

Sally Laver

### STOP PRESS

The union have refused to make their strike official. The women have returned to work, although they are not getting a porter and it's unclear who will do the work.



Photo: Neil Martinson

Nova Young, the shop steward at Chlorides, said 'whatever happens we'll fight on — we can't go back with nothing. Fine words are great, but it's money we need to keep going.'

## Victimised, then victory

FIFTEEN PEOPLE have been sacked over the last 18 months from the British Rail London depot in Stewarts Lane, South London. Cathy Martens is the latest in the line of workers to go before completing the three month probationary period.

All the dismissals have been for reasons like being unsuitable for the job—there have been no cases of legitimate dismissal offences.

During the 18 months there has been no union activity in the depot, and the shop steward has been keeping his head down for fear of victimisation.

Conditions at the depot were bad. There were no tea-breaks; management would not allow a union health and safety representative; there was no display of the Factories Act; there was racism in the canteen during lunch; and workers were not allowed time off during the day—for example, to take a sick child to hospital.

Cathy knew very soon that she was unpopular with management. She refused to work on unsafe trolleys, she argued for sanitary towel machines in the toilets (and won) and she bullied management into providing her with a TUC booklet on health and safety at work. She fought for the right to have a health and safety rep at the depot. She mixed with black workers.

Cathy was told after three

weeks that she would be sacked, and after nine weeks management found their excuse. Her references were not workplace references. Cathy had previously been a housewife, and she also worked for years as a playleader. As she ran the play-schemes herself she did not have a boss she could ask for references.

Six weeks before Cathy was sacked the union (NUR) had circulated a document which said that someone could not be dismissed on references alone. This was ignored, and Cathy was sacked along with another worker. He could not provide references for two weeks when he had been unemployed.

Six other workers from the 35-strong workforce walked out on a one-day strike when Cathy was sacked. The NUR branch is now investigating the dismissal.

Things are beginning to change at the depot. Management have conceded that the union has a right to a health and safety rep. The workers are now regularly attending union branch meetings as Cathy's actions have convinced them that it is worth organising in the union.

### Kingston & Wandsworth WV

#### STOP PRESS

A victory. Cathy was reinstated on Wednesday 20 May, and the other 15 workers who were sacked are to receive letters offering them their jobs back.

# PANEC in the Gorbals!

THE GORBALS in Glasgow is famous throughout Britain for its devastation by town planners and dampness in many of its new housing. It is also famous for its very successful anti-dampness campaign and the high level of community spirit. But the Labour controlled Strathclyde Regional Council is once again on the attack. They have announced the closure of two nurseries back in December 1980 and a proposal to close Adelphi Secondary School. The Labour group in Strathclyde Regional Council have voted to support the closure of the two nursery schools, despite their anti-cuts stance.

Two of the mothers immediately got together when they heard the proposals and attended several meetings held by the Education Department and the Schools Council in the area. They argued at every meeting against the closure and got a very unsympathetic hearing from local education officials.

The women realised that feeling angry and frustrated was not enough. They called their first public meeting. More than 50 people attended the meeting, including mothers who were faced with the closure and also many local people who were determined to fight to maintain their services.

Parents Against Nursery Education Cuts was formed from this meeting and a committee was elected. PANEC began to organise for lobbies of the Education Committee. They approached Glasgow Trades Council and the unions involved in the dispute as well as local factories and workplaces. PANEC commissioned a survey about nursery provision, which showed that **80 per cent** of those interviewed stated they would use nursery facilities if given full-time or flexi-time provision. This confirmed their argument that offering part-time provision prevented many from using nurseries. They also discovered that a full day care nursery close by had a waiting list of 70.

If the plans go ahead the nursery will be closed in June. But the women are still organising and won't give up.

The final decision to close Adelphi secondary school has not yet been taken by the SRC. However the local community are very angry about it and they immediately set up the Adelphi Action Committee. People from PANEC were quick to see that by offering each other moral support they could streng-

then both the campaigns. They are working together against the cuts.

Falling rolls is yet again the main reason put forward for the closure of the school. The other reason is that the council would quite like to put a motorway through the school dining room.

The people in the Gorbals know

that the school and the nurseries are not surplus to requirements and are prepared to let the council know. The AAC has learnt much from other campaigns and has already held two well attended and angry public meetings. Thousands of leaflets have been given out. Hundreds of signatures have been collected



## Make it legal

IN THE IRISH Republic, where abortion is illegal, a referendum will be held in the next few months in order to include an anti-abortion clause in the constitution.

If it is approved, the change will mean that a foetus is 'constitutionally protected' and the law against abortion will be strengthened. Any future move to liberalise the abortion laws will need another referendum in order to change back the constitution, and will therefore be more difficult.

The demand for the referendum came from the pro-life group and it is supported by Parliament.

Thousands of Irish women come to Britain every year for abortions. One abortion agency in Dublin refers about 50 women a week to abortion clinics in London and Birmingham.

More than 500 people attended a meeting in March organised by the Irish Women's

Right to Choose group in Dublin to campaign for legal abortion in Ireland.

LAST MONTH'S referendum on abortion in Italy was a defeat for the Movement for Life, an anti-abortion group backed by the Catholic church and the ruling Christian Democrats.

The abortion law at the moment allows legal abortions up to 13 weeks of pregnancy. Movement for Life were calling for abortion, under any circumstances, to be outlawed. It was defeated by a huge majority.

The second referendum on abortion, sponsored by the Radical Party, was also defeated. It called for an extension of abortion rights, but it was opposed by the Italian women's movement who said the proposal would effectively legalise backstreet abortions as it allowed anyone to perform them.

and support has come from the Scottish TUC, Glasgow Trades Council, the local Education Institutes of Scotland Association (teachers union) MP's and Councillors.

The school is important to both the children of the Gorbals and the community itself. However if they manage to close Adelphi secondary it will open the floodgates to many more closures in Scotland. The people in the Gorbals do not intend to let this happen.

Anyone involved in similar campaigns who could offer advice or help, and for messages of support and donations—contact May Boyd, 6 Montague Street, Glasgow.

**Claire Murray and May Boyd**

## Still going strong

FOR OVER three months nine members of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) have been on strike at Pergamon Press in Oxford. They are fighting for better pay and conditions.

For 20 months previously their NUJ Chapel (union branch) had tried to negotiate with Robert Maxwell, the owner of Pergamon Press. They were unsuccessful so they went on strike. Maxwell responded by sacking them. Now they are fighting for reinstatement plus negotiations on their claim.

There are 500 workers at Pergamon Press, mostly women, mostly part-time and mostly non-unionised.

*Womens Voice* spoke to *Carol Russell*, one of the nine strikers.

'We want talks but not talks to be used as delaying tactics. Part of our claim is about new technology, we've already got machines that make the paste-up department redundant. Jobs will go. We're fighting for improvements in the maternity pay which will benefit other workers and we're also asking for more flexible working hours.

'If we win it will give the other workers the confidence to join a union and fight for their rights.'

**Julie Waterson**

**Messages and donations of support to: Pergamon Press Dispute, 15 Union Street, Oxford.**

**If you live in or near the Oxford area and are prepared to help with the dispute ring (0865) 60762.**

# Answering back

## Bans are no answer

IN the last three months demonstrations have been illegal in many areas of the country. Blanket bans on marches on every issue have been imposed by the police under the Public Order Act of 1936. In London, Wolverhampton, Leicester, Leeds, and South Yorkshire marching has been forbidden for up to a month. In Glasgow a *three month* ban began on 1 April, and London has been under two successive month-long bans, with only ten days between them.

The pretext for these bans has been to prevent 'public disorder' arising out of marches organised by fascists and counter-demonstrations by anti-fascists. But the effect is to paralyse the activity of the Left. The fascists now have only to announce that they will march to be almost sure of preventing the left from mobilising on the streets for several weeks after. In the past month we have seen the CND stopped in Leeds, the El Salvador Solidarity Campaign and the Troops Out Movement banned in London.

Some people will argue that bans are a good thing because they keep the Nazis off the streets but all the evidence shows that they are more harmful to us than to the fascists. Not only do they prevent us from marching on any issue but they also prevent us from mobilising support on the ground against the Nazis, and they can pretend they are much stronger than they are.

The police are lying when they say that they have no choice but to impose a ban on all marches in order to ban the Nazis. The Public Order Act of 1936 allows for the banning of a 'class or classes of procession.' But the only time this clause has ever been used was to ban the left-wing of the CND—the Committee of 100. Even so we should not call for this clause to be used against the fascists, because we know the only way they can be beaten is through mass mobilisation and opposition.

The courts will support the police bans—already they have refused to allow the CND march from Faslane to Glasgow to go ahead. So to challenge these bans we must defy the law and march regardless. Demonstrations are an essential part of the political activity of the left. Without them we are less effective at drawing people towards our politics, and at giving them a way to publicly voice their anger.

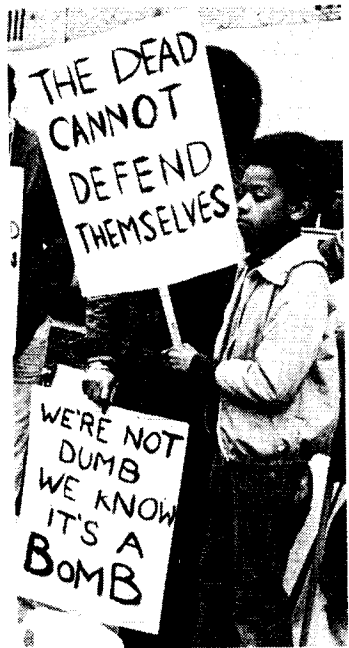
The way to break the bans was shown by the few hundred H-Block demonstrators who managed to march a few hundred yards through Kilburn, before they were stopped by the police. If we can do this with several hundred demonstrators with several thousand we can march.

## Deptford verdict: not satisfied

The jury at the inquest of the Deptford fire, in which 13 black people died, returned an open verdict last month. Throughout the three weeks of evidence and cross-examination the jury heard the police repeatedly insist that the fire was caused either by an accident or deliberately started by people at the party.

Yet the inconsistencies of the police 'evidence' pointed to the fact that the fire was started by an outsider. Several witnesses described a man they had seen making a throwing action outside the house, then get into a white car and drive off. The description of Paul Daniels, who police say was the man the witnesses saw, does not fit with the description given by the people in the road at the time.

Much of the police evidence rested on statements given by young blacks at the party about a fight. Yet these people had been forced into false statements by threats and abuse from the police. One eleven year old girl was shouted at for five hours in a police station. At the end of this ordeal she signed the piece of paper presented to her because, 'My head hurt and I



was very upset. I was in no state to read it.'

The coroner's summing up was a classic piece of bias. He took no account of the witnesses' statements given under oath in court, only those given under intense pressure to the police and subsequently retracted.

Mrs Ruddock, in whose house the party was held and who lost two children, Yvonne and Paul, in the fire, is not satisfied with the jury's verdict. She knows that the fire was started deliberately by an outsider whose only motive could be a hatred of black people. Three weeks of evidence points to a racist massacre, and it points to a coverup operation by the police.

Margaret Simpson

## Sorry, not this week

**FOR MANY of us, the only way to make ends meet between Monday and Thursday is by cashing the family allowance, sorry Child Benefit. And sorry, you won't be able to collect it on Monday...**

**Patrick Jenkins, Tory minister of Health and Social Services, has thought up another penny-pinching scheme that will make our lives that much harder. From now on, Child Benefit will be paid monthly, not weekly. Among new mothers, only single parents and those on social security will be excluded.**

**Over 600 organisations protested at the hardship**

**this measure will cause, from the Child Poverty Action Group to ... The Conservative Women's Association!**

**This miserable move will save £7 million, according to the Labour party. Jenkins himself only claims a £1.32 million economy. If this sounds like a lot of money to you, consider the fact that the cost of the Trident nuclear submarine system has risen £1,000 million in the last eight months. So, when Monday comes and your purse is empty and you can't go to the post office and collect that vital cash, you know who to blame.**



## Fight now before it's too late

**'I'm not used to fighting, I didn't expect to have to fight. But now I have to, to keep my family together.'** Cynthia Gordon is a 52 year old Jamaican, settled in Moss Side, Manchester with her two British born children. She now faces deportation just because she left Britain for a few years to care for her dying mother. She spoke to *Debbie Gold*.

CYNTHIA GORDON came to settle permanently in Britain in 1960. Twelve years later she was faced with an agonising decision. Her mother, whom she had been supporting as the only child, was very ill in Jamaica. Upset by press reports about black people being a burden on the state, Cynthia decided to go to Jamaica to look after her mother rather than fetch her here. As a single parent she took her children with her.

When she left she had no idea how long she would be away. 'My only concern was for my mother, sick and on her own.'

Cynthia's mother died in 1977 and in 1978 Cynthia applied to the British High Commission in Kingston to return to Britain as a former resident. She was refused on the grounds that she had been away for more than two years.

'I was forced to come on a visitor's visa and I applied for indefinite leave to stay after that. When this was refused I appealed but in April this year my appeal was turned down.'

'Nobody told us anything about having to come back

to Britain once every two years', said her daughter, Shirley. 'They can't really expect her to have travelled when she had other commitments. These immigration laws are really chauvinistic as well as racist. Black women get it both ways—firstly being black with these laws, and also because it's women who take responsibility for supporting older relatives.'

'The immigration laws are breaking families up', said Cynthia. 'A lot of people have just been sent home without fighting. I think they should burn up all these papers because they're racist.'

Cynthia and her two daughters, Shirley and Sandra, were a bit dispirited when I spoke to them because the Home Office had just refused to reconsider their case. The Government has come up with some very flimsy excuses for turning their case down.

'We are disappointed but even more determined to fight back', said Cynthia. 'They interpret all the facts the way they want to, to make the case look ugly.'

The Government says she



has a house and land to return to. It consists of a tiny wooden building with no facilities and a square of barren, water-logged land where Cynthia's mother lived. The land is rented and the landlord wants the house removed.

The authorities claim that the clearance officer in Kingston knew nothing about Cynthia's two children being born in Britain. Cynthia was subjected to intensive questioning when she came to Britain on a short visit before her mother died and all the information about her and her children's circumstances are on record. The children were given British passports in 1976 while in Jamaica.

'Even if they didn't have the information, which they did, it was their duty to find it', said Cynthia. The Government also stressed the fact that Cynthia stayed away from Britain for six years apart from one short visit, and did not apply for re-entry for 18 months after her mother died.

'They know why she was away', said Sandra. 'You can't predict how long someone will be ill. As to delaying the application—any sensible person knows you can't just get up and leave at a moment's notice. You need

to save money and she had to think about our schooling.'

'They know all the facts—but they only say what they have against me. We still have to fight it', said Cynthia. 'What we're saying is look over it again and make a proper decision. We're staying here.'

'We're here now, and we're settled', said Shirley. 'And we want our mother to stay with us.'

### What you can do:

- pass resolutions through trade union branches condemning the immigration laws

- write to local MPs, local councillors and the Home Office

- send donations and requests for petitions to Cynthia Gordon Action Group, c/o 14 Gradwell Walk, Moss Side, Manchester 15. Speakers can be contacted at this address.

**DEMONSTRATE** to support Cynthia Gordon and other women facing deportation on 6 June. Assemble 12.30 at the corner of Moss Lane East and Princess Road (near Moss Side precinct), Manchester.

NASIRA BEGUM is threatened with deportation because the Home Office claim that her husband, from whom she is separated, was previously married—despite the fact that police did not prosecute him for bigamy because of lack of evidence.

Nasira appealed against deportation and won last year. But the Home Office is to appeal against this decision at a hearing of the Immigration Appeal Tribunal on 15 June.

A picket of the appeal has been organised by Friends of Nasira—assemble 1.45pm, Thanet House, Strand, London.

NASREEN AKHTAR and JASWINDER KAUR are being threatened with deportation because their right to live in Britain depends on their husbands. Both have now separated from their husbands, and both now have to fight to stay in this country. Last month Jaswinder lost her appeal to the immigration tribunal. Nasreen is still waiting to hear the results of her appeal.

# Seven days of socialism



**SEVEN DAYS** of socialist ideas, discussion and entertainment is being organised by the Socialist Worker Student Organisation for 10 to 17 July.

Marxism 81 will include courses on Women's politics, Sexual Politics, the Labour Party, Missile Madness, Introduction to Marxism, Ireland and lots more.

Socialists face arguments—we need to know our history and our politics. Marxism 81 aims to provide us with the weapons

that are needed in the battle of ideas.

But the seven days of Marxism 81 also includes socialist entertainment—films, theatre groups, music and discos.

Marxism 81 is a gathering of people who want to discuss political issues in a friendly, non-sectarian atmosphere. Last year, at Marxism 80, the courses were full to bursting point. That's why this year it will be held at a new venue—Queen Mary college in East London.

A free professionally-run creche is available all week and for people coming from outside London accommodation can be arranged with SWP members.

The cost is £11.50 in advance for the whole week (£13 on the door) or £6 for the weekend. Cheques, made out to SWSO, should be sent to SWSO, PO Box 82, London, E2; more details are available from the same address.



## Self defence

Last term the London School of Economics Students' Union passed a Women and Safety motion, part of which resolved to organise women's self-defence classes, via the school authorities. The motion also set up the Open Committee against Sexism which took up this issue.

Our relationship with the school over the classes was very smooth since they readily accepted their responsibility for the welfare of female students and staff, and consequently agreed to provide the organisation and finance. We have had three classes so far and the women seem to be learning to be able to hurt, to hurt and cope, develop (very slowly and painfully) their physical fitness and all-round sense of personal security.

By the end of the course we will know if we want to run the same course next year and if we need a more advanced follow-

## Where to now?

BETWEEN 2-3,000 women came together at the 'Festival for Womens Rights Against the Tory Attacks' on Saturday 9 May in London.

It was a good day, we were entertained by women bands, women theatre groups and lots of films, bookstalls and exhibitions. There was a good atmosphere ... it was a festival, but as a *political* event, that is against the Tories, it was a bit of a disappointment.

There were many, and varied, political meetings on the bomb, violence against women, women in unions and many more. But they were, on the whole, badly attended. The most important meeting, the forum on fighting for women's jobs attracted

only 40 women.

This is not to say that politics never entered into the festival. A workshop on Ireland was packed and full of lively discussion, and the rally at the end of the festival, with speakers from the Lee Jeans occupation, called for a national 'Womens Right to Work' demonstration.

The problem we have is how do we organise and mobilise for the demo, due to take place early next year. Do we, as the organisers suggest, leave it to the Labour Party? I would think not, to seriously build for the demo we have to take it into our trade union branches now.

Julie Waterson

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Julie Waterson

## DHSS occupied

Thirty women from the Womens Right to an Income campaign and their children met in Coventry town centre recently and marched into the Social Security office. The aims of our campaign are to bring back clothing allowance, for women to be able to claim in their own right, and an end to the cohabitation rule.

We stood in front of the counters where people were being served. The claimants joined in our chanting.

After some time police were called and we found ourselves negotiating with eight burly policemen. We then marched outside, having made our presence felt. We carried on chanting, and were then threatened with arrest for causing an affray on the Queens Highway. This was met by great amusement.

The occupation was supported in the local papers and broadcast on local radio.

Pearl Chick

## Crisis in Medway

Medway Womens Voice held a day school in May on 'Women in the Crisis'. We showed the film 'Union Maids' about women organising in the trade union movement in America. We also had two speakers and the topics covered were the women's movement, women at work, women at home and women and the cuts.

We had a long discussion and some interesting ideas came out of this. About 15 women came and everyone seemed to find it enjoyable and useful.

Marjorie Hawkins,  
Medway WV.

## Fighting the axe

CALLENDAR Park and Hamilton College are two of the ten Scottish teacher training colleges that are about to fall under the Tory axe.

Since last October the students, mainly women, have been co-ordinating fightbacks in all the ten colleges. Hamilton organised a sit-in and a ten day occupation which was enthusiastically supported by the community, local MPs and the teaching staff.

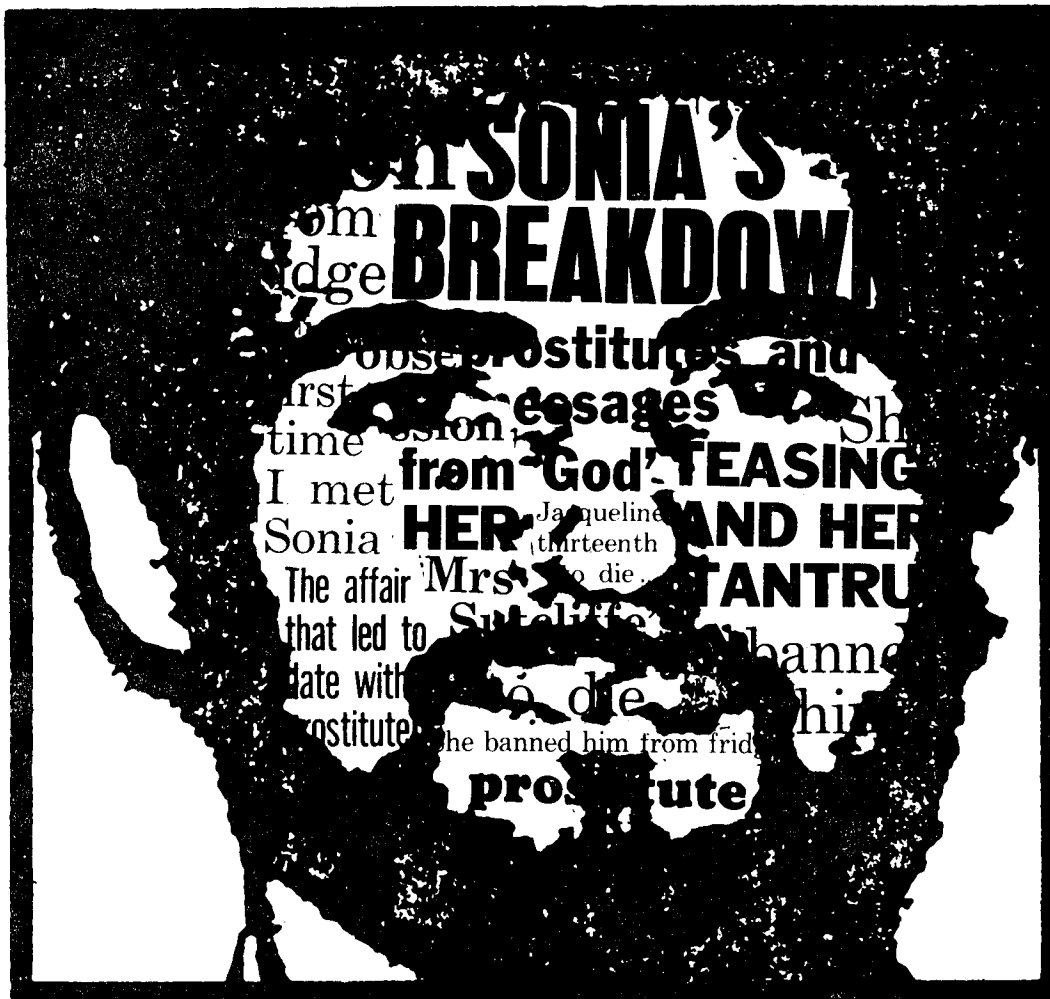
In April, twenty three of Callendar Park's students marched from Scotland to London to a rally in Hyde Park. Although the event received scanty publicity, the women on the march felt that it boosted morale and brought the issue to the attention of backbenchers.

Despite the anger and energy of the fightback, Callender Park and Hamilton have been sold out by their Board of Governors. Predictably the bureaucracy has accepted the inevitability of closures in a year's time.

The students and NUS Scotland will continue to fight the closures with twenty-four hour occupations in the coming weeks.

The unemployment rate for trainee teachers is 70 per cent. As one of the women on the march said, 'It isn't just a question of education cuts; it has to be linked to jobs as well. We want to save all ten colleges and fight for schools because just one cut is a cut for everyone.'

Marta Wohrle



## WITH GOD ON HIS SIDE

READING the papers over the last few weeks, a stranger from another planet could be forgiven for asking who this Sonia is. How could such a creature be allowed to roam free? Shouldn't something be done?

The trial of the 'Yorkshire Ripper' was due to end as *Women's Voice* went to press. But the jury's verdict is irrelevant, to the public, to justice and to us.

Peter Sutcliffe may or may not be guilty of murder. It is his wife Sonia who has been on trial together with 13 murdered women, seven who were lucky to escape, and every single one of us still alive.

If you can bring yourself to read the press coverage of the trial, you will find that you are being carefully led along a single train of thought: that Sonia Sutcliffe is guilty even though it was the Ripper who committed the crimes.

When Sonia was a teenager, she had two boyfriends—Sutcliffe and Antonio, an ice cream salesman. *Naturally*, Sutcliffe was jealous when his brother told him about the

other man. 'I suspected the relationship was more than platonic', he told the court. So he left his job at the waterworks early one day to 'catch' her meeting Antonio.

No one in court or in the press has questioned his right to spy on his girlfriend or his right to insist that she see no one but him. 'The problem was resolved... when she promised she wouldn't see the man any more', said the papers.

BUT: 'I was so depressed during that time that this led to my first encounter with a prostitute.'

Here we have the second rank of guilty women. If they hadn't been prostitutes they wouldn't have been killed. It's *their* fault. As the judge said, 'Some were prostitutes, but perhaps the saddest part of this case is that some were not.'

This attitude perhaps explains why it took the police more than five years to catch up with Sutcliffe. They probably agree with him that prostitutes are 'the scum of the earth'.

But back to Sonia. The jury heard how Milne, a

psychiatrist, found her 'temperamental and difficult', how she had had a nervous breakdown, how she nagged her husband, was obsessively houseproud, how she has 'a cold personality'. Milne described her as 'somewhat self-centred... insensitive to behaviour around her'. In other words, if Sonia had been a 'better wife', Peter might not have committed his crimes.

The couple's sex life did not escape examination. A psychiatrist again: 'There was no suggestion that he or his wife were sexually deviant.' In cross questioning, this line developed, if Sutcliffe had gained sexual satisfaction from the killings, they were murder. If he hadn't, they were manslaughter. If he knew the women were prostitutes, it's manslaughter, if he didn't it's murder.

The judge said Sutcliffe's hatred of prostitutes 'was a reaction, not altogether surprising when he had been fleeced and humiliated by one.'

A 'reaction?' 'Not surprising?' To kill Jean Jordan, he hit her 11 times on

the head, 37 times on the body, six times on the thighs. Is murder like this an acceptable reaction to making fun of a man?

The court hears questions and answers like, 'How did you know she was a prostitute?' 'She was walking along looking at cars.'

The issue for us here is not really whether Peter Sutcliffe is the Yorkshire Ripper or whether he is 'mad or bad'. If he is found guilty, he will be sent to prison (or a mental hospital) for a few years. All that means is that we can breathe a sigh of relief that one killer is out of the way for a while.

We should be asking what produces men like the Ripper? How many more will there be? How do we go about the business of making the world a safe place for women?

For, as Ivan Rowan put it in the *Daily Telegraph*, 'Every time he struck, he struck at the whole feminine psyche. The terror he instilled didn't end at the frontiers of West Yorkshire. Women have asserted and enjoyed growing independence and freedom; he forced them indoors. His crimes implied a monstrously incomprehensible rejection of women's emotional and sexual worth'.

Peter Sutcliffe's motorbike accident may have damaged his brain. His parents' unhappy marriage and his mother's death may have damaged his psyche. His own marriage may have had its problems.

These factors don't explain or justify his horrible killings. But they do shed some light on how society's values—the values accepted by the court and the press—distort and injure people.

'Madness' like this is not an inexplicable act of God—it is the end product of a society which believes that prostitutes are wicked and deserve to be killed, that wives are responsible for their husband's actions, that a woman's place is in the home, that the workers should be faceless, insignificant and exploited.

Peter Sutcliffe said that when he started killing prostitutes, 'I felt so important.'

He is a pathetic figure along with the thousands of others who rape, threaten, kerb-crawl, beat and insult women because it makes them feel important. The Ripper has been caught—but the others still walk free, and we are still frightened.

Susan Pearce



# Don't mourn- organise

A YOUNG girl lies seriously ill in hospital in Belfast. She was hit in the head by a plastic bullet fired by the British Army. A week before, 14-year-old Julie Livingstone died from the injuries she received from another plastic bullet.

One of the images of Northern Ireland is of women on the streets, shouting at soldiers, banging dustbin lids, blocking the roads. It is a sight which must seem strange to most people in Britain. But in the Catholic areas of Northern Ireland, women have been forced to take to the streets over the discrimination they suffer, and the treatment they get from the army and the police.

All this is a marked change from the attitude of those Catholic women towards the army when they arrived in 1969. Then they made them cups of tea and chatted to them in the streets.

Why did the change happen? Because the army, seen as a peacekeeping force at first, was soon used to repress the Catholics. Internment (imprisonment without trial) was introduced only two years later, and it was mostly Catholics who were rounded up.

The British would have liked to have found a political solution, with middle class Catholics and Protestants sharing power, but this wasn't possible. It wasn't possible because the only reason for the existence of the Northern Irish state was discrimination towards the large minority of Catholics.

The history of British rule in Ireland shows that. The mainly Protestant working class of Belfast was committed to union with Britain. To ensure its loyalty, it received a few privileges which the Catholics did not get. The Northern Ireland state formed in 1920 was established to protect those meagre privileges, which have become less and less as Northern Ireland heavy industry has declined. But that is why even today, Protestants have more access to jobs and housing, and make up the vast majority of the police force.

So when Catholics started their peaceful civil rights campaign in the late sixties, despite much of British public opinion behind them, the British government could grant them very little, for fear of a Protestant backlash. Instead they turned to repression of the minority who had already suffered for years.

The outrage felt by the Catholic population at internment expressed itself in a mass campaign of civil resistance. Payment of rents and rates from the Catholic housing estates virtually stopped, whole areas were 'no go' for the RUC and the army. Mass demonstrations

were held across Ireland. In response, Stormont banned all demonstrations, but they continued. It was at one such demonstration, in Derry, the British army shot 14 unarmed protesters in what has become known as 'Bloody Sunday'.

Thatcher says 'a criminal is a criminal'. But to pretend that the political prisoners in Ireland have been convicted through an ordinary court procedure is a lie. When internment became too much of an international embarrassment for the British government they tried to make their political prisoners look like criminals. They rarely had sufficient evidence to convict those they wanted to imprison, so they resorted to juryless 'Diplock' courts, and admitted forced confessions as evidence. The conviction rates in these courts is 94 per cent—much higher than in normal courts.

In order to carry out the farce of criminalisation the British government had to withdraw the 'special category' status which the prisoners had won by a hunger strike in 1972. Suddenly offences that were political became acts of common criminals.



As members of their families were being thrown into jail the women did not mourn—they organised. The Relatives Action Committee (RAC) was set up in order to gain support for the prisoners of the H Blocks and Armagh, and to break down the wall of silence and myths that surrounds them.

Kieran Nugent, the first prisoner to be denied special category status, refused to wear the prison clothes or do the prison work expected of ordinary prisoners. His

The death of Bobby Sands MP and the street riots that followed have brought Ireland to the fore in the British media. The words 'terrorist, murderers and suicide' have been used with great abundance in the media when describing events in Ireland during the past couple of months. Ann Rogers looks at events in Ireland to show how the latest hunger strike can't be seen in isolation and to examine the events that have led up to the present day.

own clothes were ripped from his back; left with nothing to cover himself except a blanket he began the 'blanket protest'. The protest grew rapidly, and the state resorted to harassment, denial of privileges, and beatings to break the protest. They failed—the prisoners refused to co-operate with the prison authorities in any way.

Beaten and humiliated every time they left their cells to wash or slop out, they decided to stay put. The warders refused to remove overflowing chamber pots, and emptied them onto the prisoners' bedding. To save their mattresses they began spreading their excreta on the walls. By March 1978 there was a full scale 'Dirty Protest' in operation.

The men were joined by the women in Armagh in February 1980. A no-work protest escalated when the women were beaten and locked in their cells by male warders, drafted in from Long Kesh. Denied access to washing and toilet facilities they had no choice but to begin a dirty protest of their own.

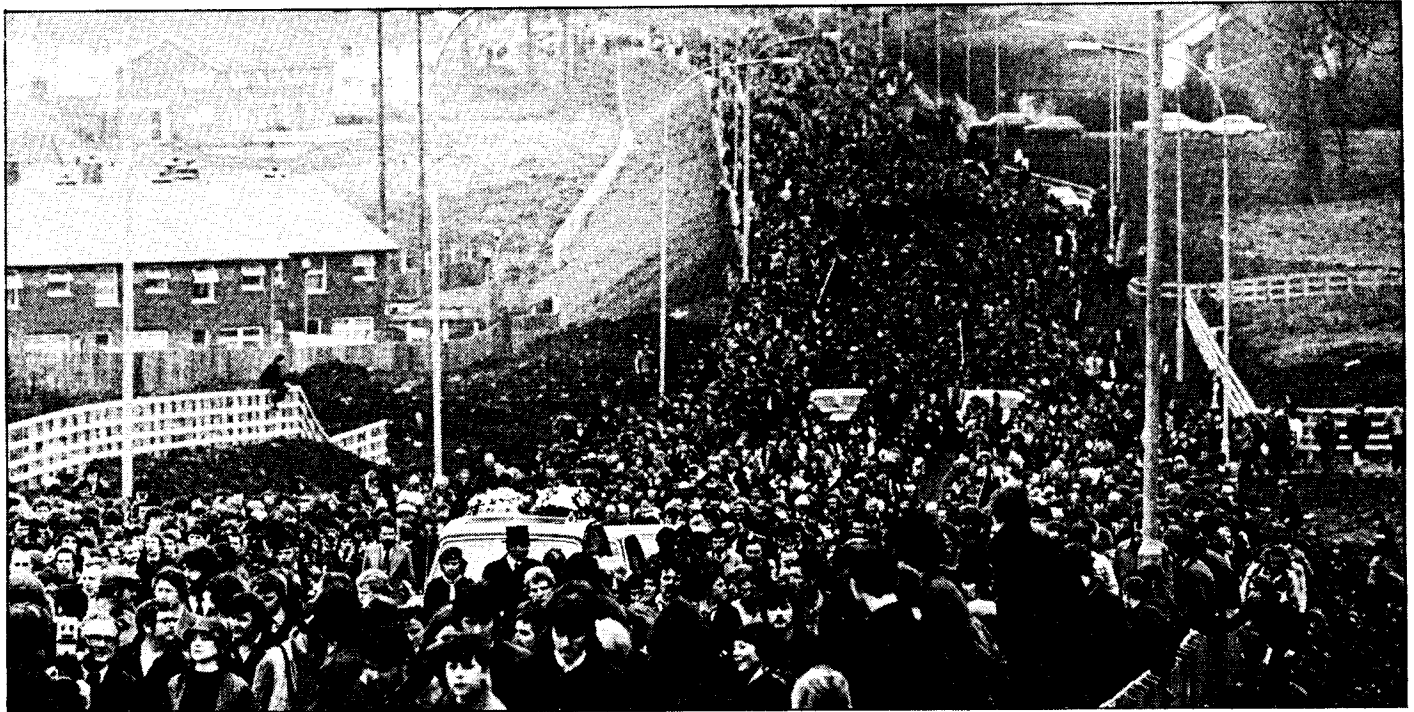
Outside the prisons the 'Smash H-Block' campaign gained wide support in Ireland and abroad. But the British government remained intransigent, even in the face of widespread international condemnation. The prisoners took the ultimate step of going on hunger strike. Late in 1980 seven men and three women began refusing food until they won political status. Even they underestimated the depth of the British government's deceit. In the North women and men took to the streets in their tens of thousands in support of the hunger strikers' demands. The women in the RAC were active, and instrumental, in building the campaign. But with promised concessions, the hunger strikers began eating again.

As soon as the prisoners came off hunger strike the government went back on the promises they had given. By the new year the prisoners were back where they had started. The truth became obvious when relatives of the prisoners brought clothes to the prison—they were not given to the prisoners.

On 1 March 1981 the hunger strike which was to lead to the deaths of Bobby Sands and Francis Hughes began.

The hunger strike received a massive boost when Bobby Sands was elected MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone. The British government could no longer pretend that the campaign for political status had no support from the nationalist population. Bobby Sands' supporters were harassed throughout the campaign, they were fired at by the British army, and picked up as 'suspected terrorists' by the RUC. Against these odds Bobby Sands won.

As Bernadette McAliskey said:



Massive support for the Republican prisoners' demands is demonstrated by the huge turn-out for Bobby Sands' funeral in May

*'The people did what we knew they would do, they knew what the issue was and they came out and voted for Bobby Sands. They have given Bobby Sands a greater mandate for political status than Margaret Thatcher has to run Britain.'*

The people of Fermanagh and South Tyrone had expressed their wishes through the ballot box, but the Tories chose to ignore them. We were subjected to the disgusting spectacle of MPs from both the Tory and Labour parties trying to find a way of expelling Sands from the hallowed doors of Westminster. The European Human Rights Commission tried to pressurise Sands into giving up his hunger strike.

Over Easter thousands of people joined the traditional celebrations of the Easter Rising to show support for the hunger strikers. It was at such a gathering in Derry that the Army drove two jeeps into a crowd, killing two people, and calling it a 'traffic accident'. This sparked off large scale rioting throughout the nationalist areas.

Bobby Sands died in the 66th day of his hunger strike. He was honoured by a massive attendance at his funeral and by widespread support both at home and abroad. The death of Sands was marked by demonstrations in every city in the South and most large towns in the South.

In Poland Lech Walesa praised Sands as 'a great man who sacrificed his life for his struggle.' Five thousand people marched through Milan, and burned the British flag. In Portugal people demonstrated outside the British embassy for several nights running. Thousands marched through the streets of Paris, and the British Airways office was occupied in support of Sands. In Athens over 1,000 people marched to the British embassy. Iran re-named a street next to the British embassy 'Bobby Sands Street' and sent a representative to his funeral.

In the United States the longshoremen's union (the dockers) blacked all British ships for 24 hours, leaving more than 50 ships stranded in American ports. There were demonstrations in every major American city.

A week after the death of Bobby Sands, the second hunger striker, Francis Hughes, died. In order to prevent another show of Republican support at his funeral, the British authorities refused to release his body until the family had guaranteed not to take it through the streets of West Belfast. Thousands of people waited to pay their last respects to Hughes but his body was driven, under an armed escort, straight to his home village of Bellaghy.

It was as Francis Hughes lay only hours from death that Tony Benn belatedly criticised the Tories over Ireland. But, as Fergus O'Hare from the National H-Block Committees said, vague statements are not enough: *'We must put out a clear call for the British government to grant the prisoners' five demands. Such a call could help rally trade union and labour support for the hunger strikers and defeat Tory policy on Ireland.'*

In Britain both the major parties, and the press, are stepping up the campaign against the hunger strikers. They are frightened by the international response in favour of the prisoners. This makes it all the more difficult to argue and mobilise.

We have to keep arguing, at work, in union branches, in the pub and launderette that the republican prisoners represent the aims of thousands in the north. The five demands have become a symbolic demand for an oppressed section of the working class. If we can't support them now, in our unions and on the streets, the British working class movement will be the weaker for it.

**The prisoners' five demands are:**

- the right to wear their own clothes
- the right not to do prison work
- the right to free association
- the right to receive parcels and letters
- the right to full remission of sentence

**National Demonstration — Support the Irish prisoners' five demands, stop the deaths. Saturday 13 June, assemble 1 o'clock Finsbury Park, next to Finsbury Park tube. March to Hyde Park Called by the H-Block, Armagh Committee.**



Sands' mother at his graveside

Maureen Moss, a catering worker from Whaley Bridge is on the People's March with her 15 year old son Charles. Charles leaves school this summer and has no prospect of a job, except on the Job Creation Scheme. 'Putting kids on the Job Creation Scheme is simply a way of making the dole queue look shorter' said Maureen. 'Kids are paid £23.50 a week—a pittance for the work they're expected to do and then there's no job for them afterwards.'

Maureen heard of the march on TV. She raised over £200 in sponsorship from political parties, trade unions, neighbours and friends. 'I hope the march will show everybody that we will not allow ourselves to go down. I don't see why ordinary working people should be pushed back to what amounts to serfdom!'

Bob Cutler comes from Telford in Shropshire and is a single parent with three daughters aged nine, eight and five. Bob has been out of work for four years. He receives £44.50 a week in benefits for himself and three kids. He says he can't remember the last time his kids had any new clothes.

'One parent families need a job to make ends meet, but they've no chance unless they can convince the employer they've got adequate child care facilities. Then it's usually cheap labour like cleaning jobs. It's a much harder job for a woman to look after kids on her own. I get loads of offers of help because I'm a man. People still think it's the woman's job to look after the kids.' Elsie Broad is a striker from Royal Pride furniture upholsterers in Manchester. She says it's very important for everyone, especially women, to fight for their jobs. She had worked in her factory for several years but had not been involved in much political activity until the strike began. Since then she's been on picket lines, addressed rallies and organised delegations from the march to the picket line at Royal Pride and to the recent demonstration in Manchester in support of the workers at Royal Pride.

'We want this march to represent a complete cross section of the community', say the organisers of the Peoples' March. Why then, out of nearly 300 marchers, are there only 30 women? The truth is that while the organisers pay lip service to women's rights they have not made a great effort to recruit women on to the march. The numbers reflect the *position* of women in society.

Many women are not in a position to leave their homes for a whole month. Nevertheless there is one woman who has left her two kids behind with her husband, and another who had her two year old kid with her on the march. Six women have been elected as stewards.



# We demand the right to work

After a fight the stewards now address the marchers collectively as 'comrades' instead of 'lads'.

We have shown them that we are strong fighters, who will not lie down and take Thatcher's policies, and that we are not fragile. We are unemployed workers fighting for jobs.

But perhaps the most promising aspect of the march is the fantastic unity that is felt between the marchers, most of whom are jobless, and the workers who are defending their jobs. Visiting strikers receive resounding applause from the marchers. The Lee Jeans women have shattered the Tory image of women—they have shown that we can, and we will, fight back. Their occupation and this march are showing that workers, men and women, have an equal right to work.

Linda and Hilary, two of the stewards on the march.





## Anna Paczuska looks at why the Right To Work is a feminist issue

'If I had to choose I wouldn't give my daddy a job before me. A woman's got a right to a job just as much as a man.' Those words from a 20 year old woman worker sum up just why the Lee Jeans occupation is so important to feminists.

That 240 women workers at a small factory in Greenock should occupy their workplace in defence of jobs is in itself remarkable. Under the Tories massive unemployment figures have proved intimidating to both male and female workers alike. As a result the fight against redundancy has been at an overall low level—sporadic and ill organised.

Those workers who still have jobs have not themselves been prepared to lead the struggle against redundancy. As the high level of donations to the People's March shows, employed workers have opted to send money to those who are fighting rather than join the struggle themselves. This is true even where unemployment threatened them directly. Thus several thousand well organised and traditionally militant workers at Linwood failed to put up a fight when their jobs were threatened.

Many of us therefore felt justifiably proud when women workers at Lee Jeans took action where Linwood workers had not. 'The women are showing the men how it's got to be done,' was a typical reaction. And it was true. The Lee Jeans women have shown the rest of us how it's got to be done. But that's not all that is important about Lee Jeans.

For in the present climate any action by a rank and file group of workers—women or men—is inspiring. What is significant for feminists about Lee Jeans is the spirit with which the women are fighting. Their aggressive attitude toward their right to work as *women* shows just how far women have come in the past ten years.

Ten years ago the right to work slogan was born. It came out of the work-in-

organised by shipyard workers at the Upper Clyde Shipyard in defence of their jobs. This was not a fight for women's jobs. It was a stand to preserve the jobs of skilled male workers. Women were involved in the campaign in great numbers—but as supporters not as workers.

Joan Reid, the wife of one of the work-in's leaders explained why: 'The men hand over the wages, but the women make the money go round.' For her, as for the other women, it was her husband's right to work which was important.

In subsequent occupations for jobs women too began to fight for their right to work. This was hardly surprising. Women had joined the workforce in unprecedented numbers during the previous 20 years. Nine in ten of the 2½ million new workers between 1951 and 1971 were women. Women became accepted as workers. But their arrival in

ment from the women workers: 'We're not behind our men, we're fighting alongside them.'

Rising unemployment hit at women's jobs, and by 1975 an estimated 600,000 women workers were unemployed. Many of these were unregistered. But a generation of women had grown up expecting to work, used to the financial independence that work gave them. Women were not working simply for pin money, luxuries or holidays. In seeking to keep their jobs they were looking for their self respect, and the right to lead their own lives.

Without work women are men's slaves—isolated and dependent at home. Work outside the home gives women not only the economic freedom to be different people, it allows them to meet and organise together. This is a vital aspect of the struggle for emancipation and liberation.



John Sturrock: Network

the workplace was not enough alone to establish women's right to work.

The idea that women were not only allowed to work, but had a right to work, was essentially won in strikes for trade union rights, in occupations for jobs and in the struggles for equal pay. Disputes like the nineteen week strike for equal pay at Trico in 1975 and fights for trade union recognition like Grunwick not only developed women as worker leaders, they also established in women's and men's minds that women were an integral part of the workforce.

Thus the right to work slogan may have started as a male demand, but it grew into a general slogan for all workers, and with the Lee Jeans dispute has formed a special significance for women workers.

The process began in the early seventies. After UCS, workers at Fisher Bendix in Liverpool, and at Briant Colour Printers occupied for the right to work. The disputes were male dominated, but out of Briant Colour Printers came the senti-

Socialists have long recognised that fact and have argued that, while all workers have to organise together to fight their exploitation, women workers also have to assert themselves independently of men, who are the instruments of women's oppression.

Clara Zetkin, the leader of the German socialist women's movement, said some seventy years ago: 'Just as the male worker is subjugated by the capitalist, so the woman is by the man, and she will always remain in subjugation until she is economically independent.'

I read that in a book. The Lee Jeans women have learnt it from experience. And their actions are a sight more eloquent than quotations from dusty books. And more immediate. The Lee Jeans women are leading the struggle of all workers against unemployment. But for me as a feminist they represent what feminism is all about—the struggle to maintain independence and dignity in a society that would make domestic slaves and passive proletarians of us women.



John Sturrock: Network

# Elizabeth Gurley Flynn

## The Rebel Girl



**'The years 1906 to 1926 were full of "force and violence" used by the ruling class of America against the workers, who gave their lives, shed their blood, were beaten, jailed, blacklisted and framed as they fought for the right to organise, to strike and to picket. Struggles—for a few cents more an hour, for a few minutes less work a day—were long and bitterly fought. Nothing was handed on a silver platter to the American working class by employers. All their hard gains came through their own efforts and solidarity.'**

These were the years in which Elizabeth Gurley Flynn was active in the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW or the 'Wobblies'). They were exactly as she describes above: years of stark class warfare.

For most of these years the IWW was a large, revolutionary force in the factories and workplaces of early twentieth century America. Towards the end of this period, members of the IWW were hunted and persecuted for their political beliefs and activity; the war had destroyed much of their organisation; many of their leading members had been imprisoned or killed.

At the beginning of the century workers from Europe had been lured to the United States with promises of work, big wage packets, homes and happiness. The reality was a long way from the rosy picture painted by employers greedy for cheap labour and fat, fat profit. These workers were mostly unskilled. Few of them spoke English as they tended to live in communities with others from their home countries. The employers prospered on divisions along national lines; they told each ethnic group that they were getting either more or less money than the other in order to provoke hostility and suspicion amongst the workforce.

Added to this was the refusal of the trade union organisation, the American Federation of Labour (AFL), to organise anyone other than American skilled male workers.

In contrast, the IWW set out to organise all workers into one union, regardless of skill, nationality or sex. Its only condition for membership was paid labour. It refused, initially, to sectionalise its members by trade. It was an organisation with revolutionary instincts: it preached marxist economics and maintained that power and

property had to be seized from the ruling class by the working class, where it rightly belonged.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn was nicknamed 'the Rebel Girl' by her comrades in the IWW. She rebelled all her life. She rejected the society she lived in, based on profit and greed, and identified with those who paid the price for such a system: the working class. She rebelled against an image of women as docile, cosy, stupid creatures; she knew the reality was women working long shifts in factories for pitiful wages, women who were prepared to fight back.

Attending socialist meetings was normal practice for Flynn as a child. She was taken by her father, an Irishman, and, although her younger sisters slept throughout the speeches, Flynn listened.

At 16 she was asked by the Harlem Socialist Club to speak to a meeting. The subject she chose was 'What Socialism Will Do For Women'. Flynn recalled the speech later in her life:

**'I said then and am still convinced that the full opportunity for women to become free and equal citizens with access to all spheres to human endeavor cannot come under capitalism.'**

The same year, 1906, Flynn joined the recently established IWW.

**'The IWW was a militant, fighting, working class union. The employing class soon recognised this fact and gave battle from its birth. The IWW identified itself with all the pressing immediate needs of the poorest, the most exploited, the most oppressed workers. It "fanned the flames" of their discontent.'**

She left school to speak for the IWW in cities all over America. A year later she married another IWW

member, Jack Jones, but soon after left on another speaking tour. Jones objected to her leaving for IWW work, but Flynn was adamant.

**'A domestic life and possibly large family had no attractions for me .... I wanted to speak and write, to travel, to meet people, to see places, to organise for the IWW. I saw no reason why I as a woman should give up my work for this ... I have had many heartaches and emotional conflicts along the way but my determination to stick to my self-appointed task has triumphed.'**

For nearly twenty years Flynn did all those things she wanted to, moving from place to place, organising workers wherever there was a sign of struggle.

She was involved in many fights for free speech, witnessed brutal attacks, including cold-blooded murders, on striking workers by the employers' militia, saw fellow workers and comrades jailed for crimes they did not commit. She was committed to building a strong working class revolutionary movement.

One strike in which the IWW was heavily involved was by Lawrence textile workers in 1912.

On January 11 of that year textile workers received a pay packet for the first week after their working hours had been reduced to 54 from 56. Wages were already at starvation point, yet workers found that their pay had been cut by 30 cents—the price of five loaves of bread.

Fourteen thousand struck immediately and, within a few days, the textile mills were empty. The entire 30,000 workforce was on the streets shouting, 'Better to starve fighting than to starve working!'

The local IWW organised workers throughout the strike. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and

'Big' Bill Haywood, the acknowledged leader of the IWW, were sent for along with other Wobbly activists.

The textile workers were of 25 different nationalities which increased the problems of organising. Flynn describes how, from Haywood, she learned to speak in a 'down-to-earth' language which all workers could understand.

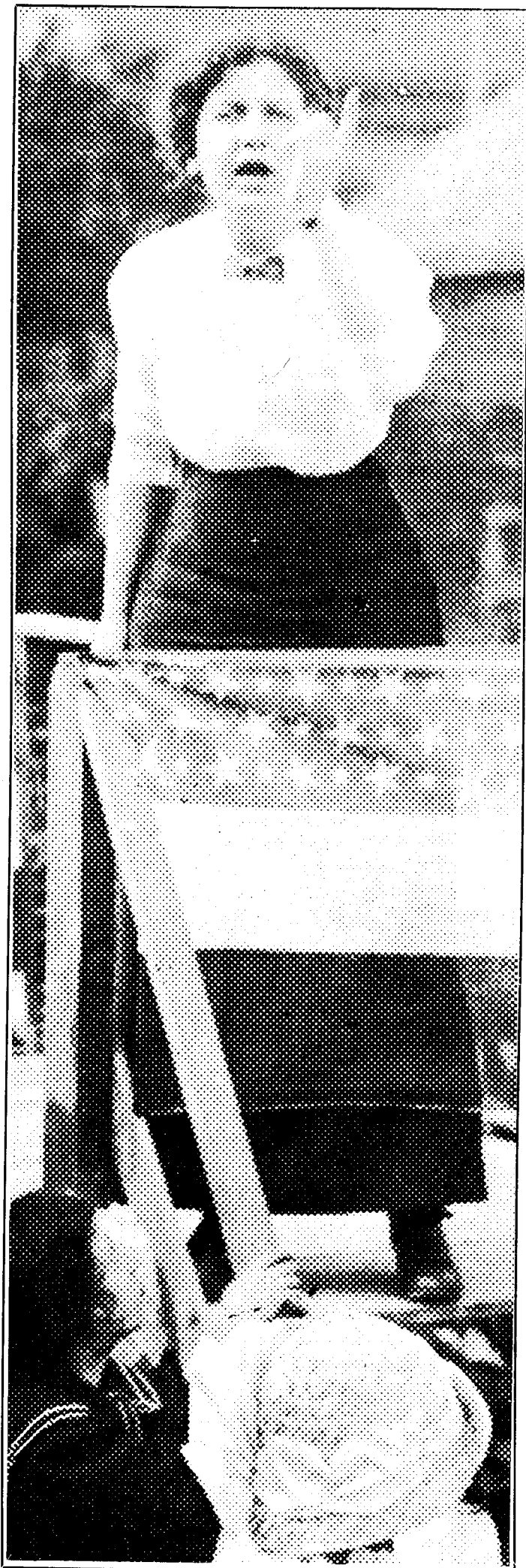
**'I learned how to ... use short words and short sentences, to repeat the same thought in different words if I saw the audience did not understand. I learned never to reach for a three-syllable word if one or two would do. This is not vulgarising. Words are tools and not everyone has access to a whole tool chest.'**

Flynn's own words best describe how the IWW organised around the strike.

**'We held special meetings for the women at which Haywood and I spoke. The women worked in the mills for lower pay and in addition had all the housework and care of the children ...'**

**There was considerable male opposition to women going to meetings and marching on the picket line. We resolutely set out to combat these notions. The women wanted to picket. They were strikers as well as wives and were valiant fighters. We knew that to leave them at home, isolated from the strike activity, a prey to worry, affected by the complaints of tradespeople, landlords, priests and ministers, was dangerous to the strike.'**

**'... We talked to the strikers about One Big Union, regardless of skill or lack of it, foreign-born or native-born, colour, religion or sex. We showed how all the differences are used by the bosses to keep workers divided and pitted against each other ... We said firmly: "You work together for the boss. You can stand together and fight for yourselves!" This**



was more than a union. It was a crusade for united people—for "Bread and Roses".

The Lawrence textile strike ended after two months, with an increase in wages ranging from five to 20 per cent and other demands were met.

An organisation with a much smaller and more compromised involvement in the strike was the Womens Trade Union League (WTUL). By this time the WTUL was led by wealthy women who wanted to organise their working class 'sisters', mainly for cultural education. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn was critical of this organisation based on alliance of women from different classes. She said:

**"The queen in the parlour has no interest in common with the maid in the kitchen ... The sisterhood of women, like the brotherhood of men, is hollow sham to labour. Behind all its smug hypocrisy and sickly sentimentality loom the sinister outlines of class war."**

The IWW maintained that class society was the root of all oppression, but Flynn argued consistently that special forms of propaganda and special types of organisational approach for women had to be developed if the IWW was to recruit women.

But she recognised that women's involvement in class struggle and revolutionary organisation was the *only* way to fight oppression. So she supported demands for women's suffrage but warned:

**"Much more than the abstract right of the ballot is needed to free women; nothing short of a social revolution can shatter her cramping and stultifying sphere of today."**

Flynn was one of a few socialists who argued about sexual politics and for birth control in a time when these subjects were generally considered distasteful. When asked if she believed in free love, her reply was: "What is the other alternative? Slave love? Then I believe in free love at all costs."

More specifically, she said of sexual oppression:

**"The only sex problem I know is how women are to control themselves, how to be free, so that love alone shall be the commandment to act, and I can see but one way, through controlling their one problem of how to live, be fed and clothed—**

**their own economic lives ... sexual enslavement follows economic enslavement, and it is but a gentle way of saying prostitution, whether it be for one night or for one whole life."**

The last years of Flynn's activity in the IWW were taken up with the defence of two Italian anarchists framed for murder and robbery.

Sacco and Vanzetti were eventually found guilty, despite evidence showing that they were miles from the murder scene. Their trial in 1921 was an insult to any notion of being 'innocent until proven guilty'.

For six years Flynn devoted her energies to the Sacco-Vanzetti Defence Committee. Organising around workplace struggles went mostly by the board in the fight to save these men from execution.

The IWW in general was demoralised after years of being the subject of a witch-hunt by the ruling class. Members had been deported; meetings were continually raided. Cases of socialists being tarred and feathered were not uncommon.

Flynn had developed political differences with the IWW leader, Bill Haywood. She questioned his organisational methods, and the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 in Russia had a huge impact on her political ideas.

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn fell seriously ill shortly before Sacco and Vanzetti were executed, and she spent several years recovering. During this time she assessed her life of activity and this led her 'logically and irrevocably' to join the Communist Party. Little detail is known of her life after 1926 as she died before writing the second volume of her autobiography.

Ten years before her death Elizabeth Gurley Flynn reaffirmed her commitment to revolutionary struggle. No matter what the consequences, she said, "I will never move from where I stand."

**Harriet Sherwood.**





THE FIRST experience of sex for many of us is groping. We are forced to seize furtive moments on the sofa while babysitting, in the park, behind the cloakroom at school, to experience often exciting but usually unsatisfactory thrills of pleasure.

Normally we don't get a chance to do much more. We aren't allowed to develop our sexual feelings. We are told it is wrong for young people to have sex, and that we should wait until marriage.

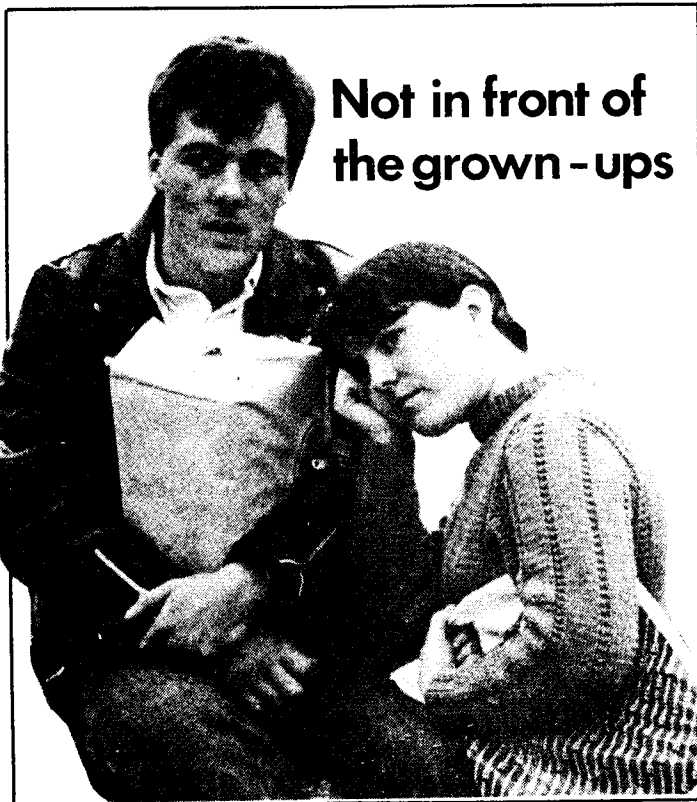
Some people go even further. A recent conference was held by the Brook Advisory Centre, which provides contraceptive advice, to discuss 'The Consequences of Teenage Sexual Activity'. Concern was expressed at the number of teenage abortions, the increase of VD among teenagers, and the extent to which young girls no longer felt free to say 'no'. These fears restarted the debate about whether the age of consent should be lowered and whether the pill should be prescribed to girls under 16. Similar questions were asked in a recently published survey by *Womans Own* magazine.

There are a number of preconceptions which both the conference and the survey share. They assume that the problem of early sex is one for girls rather than boys.

They assume that the girl is coerced into sex with the boy. They assume that teenage girls and boys know a lot about sex. And they assume that sex is wrong.

But when we talked to three girls aged 12 and 13 at school in Sheffield—Angela, Lisa and Rachel—they contradicted all of these ideas. Far from being treated as developing adults who need and deserve to be fully informed about their physical and sexual needs, young people are treated as children.

They have had sex education lessons, starting in primary school. But they weren't easy to understand. 'I got the impression that if you did *that* you'd get pregnant. And your parents don't tell you a lot.' They expect you to learn about sex by telling you about animals. 'Teachers'



## Not in front of the grown-ups

attitudes are very bad. One science teacher gave the impression that women are just machines for making babies. We haven't even learnt about contraception yet.'

At the same time as providing inadequate sex education, schools and parents reinforce certain attitudes in other ways. They enforce petty rules to stop girls dressing as they want. 'We can wear trousers in winter, not jeans and nothing too narrow. We can't wear make up, but we do, or nail varnish, or jewellery. They say it affects our schoolwork. There are loads of stupid rules: you can't wear rings in case you crush your fingers. Or dye your hair.'

Parents try to stop them going with boys. 'They don't like me mixing with boys.' 'You're quizzed if you're out late with a boy.'

To these girls, advice about sex isn't freely available. They are not coerced into having sex. The opposite is true. What they know about sex, they have found out independently of the official advice.

Sex education is abysmal, contraception is hard to obtain, and there is still a moral climate in which it is thought proper for a girl to hang on to her virginity until she finds the right man, ideally in marriage. Small

wonder, then, that there were 33,000 abortions amongst teenage girls in 1979.

Young men and women could do with more advice about sex, contraception and what they do with their lives, not less.

This of course won't happen. At the Brook conference, George Young, a minister in the DHSS, announced that the government is launching a campaign to discourage unwanted pregnancies. Will this mean contraceptive advice in every school? Far from it. The main thrust of the campaign will be to give encouragement to the girls who prefer to say no. There is no mention of the responsibility of boys in the whole thing.

The whole implication is that the girl is under constant pressure to say yes. Now of course this might occur—not only from boyfriends but from other girls as well. But the aura of rebellion and daring in teenage sex is only there because it is frowned upon by adults and because girls are still frightened of what sex really entails. The psychological effect of early uncomplicated sex is probably less than the shock experienced by many women on losing their virginity after years of wondering what it's like.

The age of consent

increases this aura. Seen as a method of protecting young girls from sexual abuse by older men, it is more often used against boys and girls who are both under 16, rather than against older men. It makes sex for the under 16s seem more 'dangerous' and makes the use of contraception much less likely.

Angela from Sheffield summed up the attitude of many young people: 'There shouldn't be an age limit. But I'd wait until there was someone I really cared for. A girl is still considered a slut if she sleeps with a boy.'

And of those questioned in the *Womans Own* survey, 29 per cent overall thought the age of consent should be scrapped, since real cases of abuse were already protected by other laws.

The Tory campaign to help girls say no can't possibly succeed. It flies in the face of reality, and it doesn't help young people deal with the many problems they suffer.

Ninety-six per cent of women under 25 found premarital sex acceptable, according to the survey.

But what the 'say no' campaign does is try to put moral pressure on young people, which can only increase their guilt feelings.

Many teenage girls are ready for sex, and they should be able to make up their own minds whether or not they want to sleep with a boy (or a girl). Far from being encouraged to say no, which can only increase the mystification surrounding sex, they should be encouraged to experiment openly with every help and support from adults, and determine their sexuality at an early age. Young people have a right to do that for themselves.

As Rachel said: 'What made me change my ideas was that I couldn't bring myself to respect people just because they're older, just because they say so.'

Perhaps it is, as one newspaper commented, not so much that teenagers are not ready for sex, but that adults are not ready to accept that they are capable of getting involved in sexual relationships.

Lindsey German  
Claire Harris

# WOMENS HEALTH

## Office hazards

HEALTH AND SAFETY at work is usually talked about in terms of the factory floor—fast, dangerous machinery, poisonous fumes and serious accidents. An office seems safe in comparison, a less risky place to work—but health hazards nonetheless exist.

'Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely an absence of disease and infirmity.'

This is the World Health Organisation's definition of health. It is a description that would fit few of us. A recently published book, *Office Workers' Survival Handbook*, sets out to examine the causes of ill-health at work and how to fight for improvements.

Every year in Britain an estimated 10 million people need first aid treatment at work. Health and safety is not seen as a priority by employers especially in the current economic recession, as the author of the book, Marianne Craig, points out:

'People are fired, services cut back, and workers' health is put to the bottom of the list so that, we are told, 'the economy' can be made well again. We have a system where profit is put before health ... There is a *conflict of interest* between you and your employer over health and safety, just as there is over wages. That is why workers always have to fight for better conditions ... The more organised you are, the more you'll win.'



*Office Workers' Survival Handbook*, published by the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science (BSSRS), is available from Trade Union Bookservice, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 2DF, price £2.35.

According to an American survey of 13 occupations, only the job of labourer is more stressful than that of a secretary. Women in clerical jobs are twice as likely to suffer from heart disease as women in other jobs. The list of health hazards in the office includes noise, lighting, dangerous substances, temperature, fire risks and microchip technology.



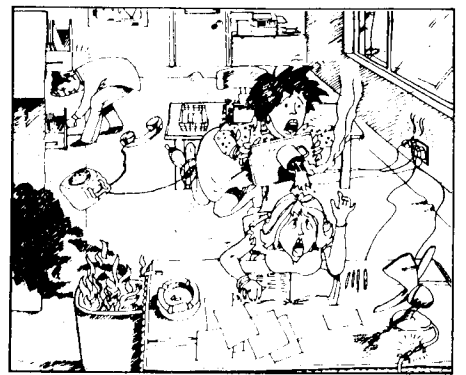
Office noise does not come from the thunder of heavy machinery; instead it accumulates from electric typewriters, ringing telephones, photocopiers, air-conditioning systems and other office hardware. A survey done by the Alfred Marks Bureau found that 24 per cent of office workers felt their working conditions were excessively noisy.

Noise is measured on a decibel scale and a government code of practice suggests that noise at work should be limited to 90 decibels. The recommended acceptable level of noise for executives' offices is much lower: 20 to 54 decibels.

The Alfred Marks Bureau survey mentioned above revealed that 29 per cent of office workers questioned found lighting inadequate for their needs. The opposite of dimly lit offices is, of course, the unshielded fluorescent strip lighting so often found in modern, open plan office blocks.

Working in artificial light all day can cause headaches, eyestrain and fatigue due to glare, vibration and flicker. An office without windows, according to the International Labour Office, causes an increase in disease and weakens the body's resistance to illness.

Everyday office standbys, such as typewriter correcting fluids, can be the cause of serious long-term illness. Yet most fluids



have a solvent base, such as I.L.I. trichloroethane, which constitutes half of every bottle of Tipp-Ex fluid. This chemical can have the following effects: headaches, dizziness, slowness, sleepiness, weakness, ringing sound in ears, prickling sensation in hands and feet, liver damage, sickness, vomiting, diarrhoea, drop in blood pressure, slower heart rate, dry and cracked or inflamed skin, and eye irritation. It may also cause cancer.

Temperature is a major cause of discomfort for workers. The law states that, after the first hour of work, the temperature must be at least 60.8 degrees Fahrenheit, but there is no legal upper limit. The most agreeable temperature in which to work is considered to be 68 to 73 degrees, but workers should set their own standards of temperature in which they are prepared to work. Walking out because of too much or too little heat should soon make management act.

One cause of excessive heat and lack of ventilation may be overcrowding. By law each person should have a minimum of 40 square feet of office space, excluding furniture and fittings. Marianne Craig suggests in her book:

'You'll never see an overcrowded manager's office... Have a look at your boss's facilities—this will be a good guideline for the kind of standard to aim for.'

Cuts in public spending mean that public service employers will find it increasingly difficult to maintain equipment and take necessary health and safety precautions. Cheshire County Council's Warrington offices were a potential fire trap, according to a local fire officer. The proposed alterations to the building were scrapped as part of general cutbacks. One NALGO safety representative said:

'The reality of the cutbacks is that, every day, people's lives are put at risk.'

The Health and Safety at Work Act states that employers have a legal duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of their employees at work. The loop-hole in the law is the words 'as far as is reasonably practicable': employers have argued in court that to make improvements would be financially detrimental to the company—it would hit the profits—and is therefore not 'practicable.'

Offices are not havens from dangers and risks. But all the health hazards described here are avoidable if union members are prepared to fight for better conditions. As always, prevention is better than cure: and, as always, the way to win is to act.

**Harriet Sherwood**

This is an edited version of an article in this month's *Public Service*, NALGO's journal.

# REVIEWS

**CLONED LIVES**  
**BY PAMELA**  
**SARGENT**  
**FONTANA**  
**SCIENCE FICTION**  
**£1.50**

THE great feminist novel still remains to be written. It's an awesome task for someone—portraying not only the passions of the modern woman, but also the moral and political problems which cause them.

To span that culture gap between the old and the 'new' woman, between reality and the possibilities, is difficult enough to do in a factual way. To write about it in a lyrical way seems impossible and I wonder if any woman will ever manage it.

But I have long thought that if such a book is ever written, it will come not from among those books normally labelled 'novels', but from the much undervalued field of writing called science fiction. Only in this area are women writers attempting to tackle the exciting implications for feminism raised by technological advance. And

if the 'new' woman is ever to come alive she must be unafraid of those possibilities and ready to harness them for herself and her sisters.

I first got turned on to women sci-fi writers by reading the short stories collected in 'Women of Wonder' and 'More Women of Wonder'. Pamela Sargent collected and edited those and also wrote excellent introductions about the span and significance of women sci-fi writers. Her own book 'Cloned Lives' is just as interesting. In it five clones try to cope with the prejudices of those who are afraid of technology. The book touches on the moral, sexual and political problems of cloning. Yet for all that it is not really profound. Perhaps jokes like 'What goes vanilla, vanilla, vanilla? Answer-Ice cream clones' ensures that. But it's absorbing and fun.

If you're not hooked on female sci-fi yet now's the time to start reading. It's a lot more interesting than some of the attempts to write the great feminist novel that I can think of.

*Anna Paczuska*



**WOMEN WORKERS**  
**AND THE**  
**INDUSTRIAL**  
**REVOLUTION 1750**  
**- 1850**

**IVY PINCHBECK**  
**VIRAGO, 1981, £3.50**

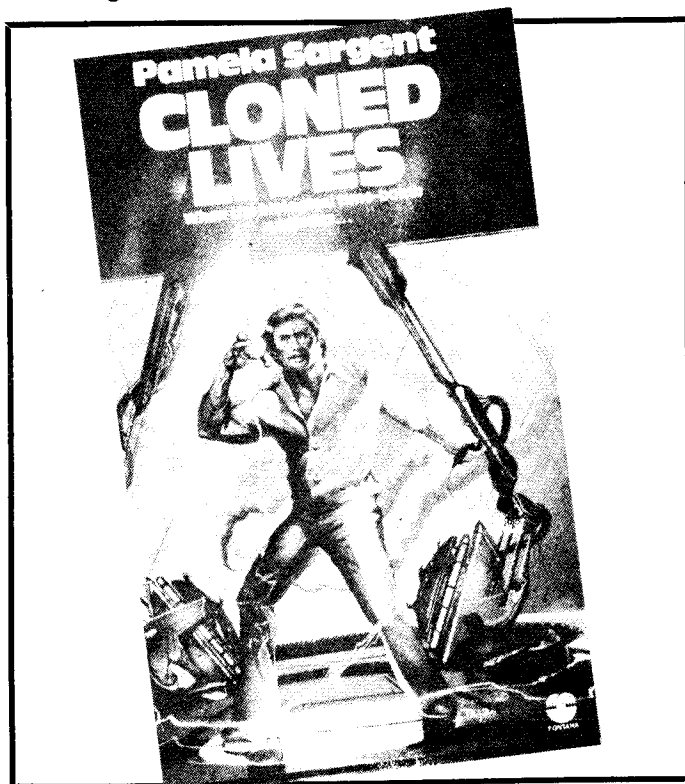
FIRST published in 1930, this book was until recently one of the very few histories of women, let alone working women during the phase of British industrialisation. On these grounds alone it is a must for anyone interested in the background to the current changes in women's work and political involvement.

But it goes far beyond the superficialities all too prominent in much 'women's history' today. Ivy Pinchbeck does not simply describe the position of women before and during the industrial revolution but enlarges our knowledge of the industrial

revolution itself. Women workers are not for her a marginal extra in the history of capitalism in agriculture and industry but a central part of it.

Pinchbeck analyses women's employment in the contemporary economic and political context. For example, the pauperisation of women labourers in the depression of 1815 to 1850 is not only shown from the woman's point of view, but as the direct consequence of the land grabbing of the large landowners (the Enclosures) to mechanise agriculture. The harsh Poor Law of 1832 is treated as the political outcome of this process.

The industrial revolution cannot be understood without a thorough study of women's labour. This is crystal clear when Pinchbeck traces the growth and decline of domestic industry and the eventual dominance of factory work in textiles.



In the transfer of productive industry from the more or less self-contained household to capitalist outwork and the factory, the employers control over a large starving female workforce was crucial not only in setting women's wages far lower than men's, but also in breaking down the family income and thus establishing the woman's dependence on the male breadwinner. Pinchbeck's emphasis on productive labour does not blind her to the consequences for the woman or the family. In this she throws very valuable light on how the position of women in the family has changed. Thus she describes women who only 180 years ago could not earn in the winter: 'The wife is no longer able to contribute her share towards the weekly expenses... In a kind of despondency she sits down, ... conscious of rendering no other service to her husband, *except that of the mere care of his family*'

The major weakness of Pinchbeck's approach is her failure to even look at the workers' movements of the time. Women and men are treated as subjects of eco-

nomical and political changes in which they played no part. We read nothing of the textile unions, despite the high level of women's involvement, (amongst other things, they created a well organised Luddite movement) or of the widespread agricultural workers' movement going under the name of Captain Swing; nor even of the Chartists who in the 1840s created a mass political movement. Yet the disaffected agricultural, textile factory and mine workers she describes were at the centre of these organisations. In short she completely ignores the development of the working class in and for itself, and most unfortunately, given her pioneering research, the position of women within them.

Nevertheless this book remains a classic for anyone wanting to understand the history of women's work. In her comprehensive analysis of the development of women's work under capitalist industrialisation and the critical role women played within it, Pinchbeck has not yet been surpassed.

Robyn Dasey

## WOMEN IN THE 80's CIS REPORT. 95p.

'I DON'T think Margaret Thatcher knows how poor being poor really is,' says Laura, one of the women quoted in this latest report from CIS (Counter Information Services). While Margaret Thatcher may not know about poverty, millions of working class women certainly do.

Two years of Thatcherite policies have had disastrous consequences for working class women. The effects of a world recession combined with a government whose policies are based on the belief that no-one should be protected from market forces have forced massive cuts and spiralling unemployment figures.

In such a climate women inevitably go to the wall first. Job losses in the public sector hit women's employment most. And as women's right to work disappears into unemployment statistics, cuts in services hit those women who still have jobs by



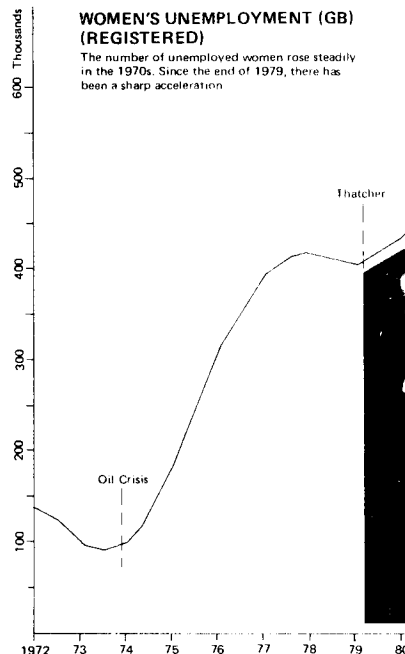
taking away the nurseries and the maternity rights that make women's right to work a reality.

Add all this to Tory ideas about women's place in the family and you ensure that as the Report says: When the Tories walk out on the sick, the old and the disabled, it is women who pick up the tab. *Women in the 80's* gives you all the facts about women's place in Tory Britain. It's a grim picture.

How then do we fight back? It's a question which faces all working class people. And, like much of the

## WOMEN'S UNEMPLOYMENT (GB) (REGISTERED)

The number of unemployed women rose steadily in the 1970s. Since the end of 1979, there has been a sharp acceleration



GRAPH 1



writings about the crisis, the Report gives little direction. On the positive side it does describe the fight against closure by women workers at Lee Jeans. It also tells of how Asian women at Chix struggled for trade union rights. It briefly describes the 'Reclaim the Night' marches against increasing violence toward women. Such actions however, although inspiring, cannot be conjured out of

thin air. How do we organise to fight the ideas of Thatcher at work and at home? How do we build leadership, how do we recruit support? How can Thatcher be defeated? 'Women in the 80's' gives you all the reasons for trying to find the answers to those questions. Unfortunately itself it gives no answers.

Jenny Russell

## THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING WOMAN DIRECTOR—JOEL SCHUMAGHER

THE idea behind *The Incredible Shrinking Woman* sounds lovely on paper—the all-American housewife shrinking (literally) under the weight of the consumer society. It's an idea that shines with promise, as do the first fifteen minutes of the film.

It begins with a beautifully tongue in cheek reflection of the 'average' American family, all bathed in pretty pastel colours, like a Fairy Liquid advert. While Lily Tomlin, as Pat the shrinking housewife, is a refreshingly skilful comedienne.

But things get steadily worse. The whole thing gradually buckles under a self-conscious charm. The special effects are unimaginative and the humour isn't snappy enough. Having diminished Pat to the size of a thumb-nail the script just doesn't know what to do with

her. The laughs rapidly diminish as well. She falls down waste disposals, is kidnapped by James Bond baddies intent on shrinking humanity, and is befriended by an ape, in silly and badly linked succession.

The result is a bad marriage of cuteness and slapstick. The film's message is about as subtle as a sledge hammer. Every consumer good is a Pandora's Box, tempting but lethal and oppressive—a point that is hammered home again and again. Consequently the humour is heavy-handed, and even Tomlin's competent delivery cannot give it the edge that is so painfully missing.

*The Incredible Shrinking Woman* ends with another unfulfilled promise as Pat grows back to normal size, merely hinting that she doesn't stop growing. My own private fantasy is that she should grow and grow until she dominates the world ... Perhaps someone will devise a less disappointing sequel.

Marta Wohrle



# LETTERS



## Don't ignore abortion

Dear *Womens Voice*,  
We have been enjoying your series *Why I Became a Socialist* and were particularly interested in Bryanne Kirk's recent contribution.

However, we think it's a pity that she didn't mention the National Abortion Campaign among the achievements of the women's movement. There is a good account of NAC's origins in the women's movement and of its successes since 1975 in Rose Knight's article *The History of the National Abortion Campaign — an analysis*, which can be read in the

pamphlet *Abortion: Our Struggle for Control*, published by NAC. We don't think that any review of the achievements of feminism can ignore the strength and importance of this movement.

We certainly don't think that *Womens Voice* has ignored it in the past, and we know that our local NAC group owes much to its members who are also in WV groups.

Gail Baucu, Julie Smith,  
Jean Seymour  
Berkhamsted

## Skegness was so bracing

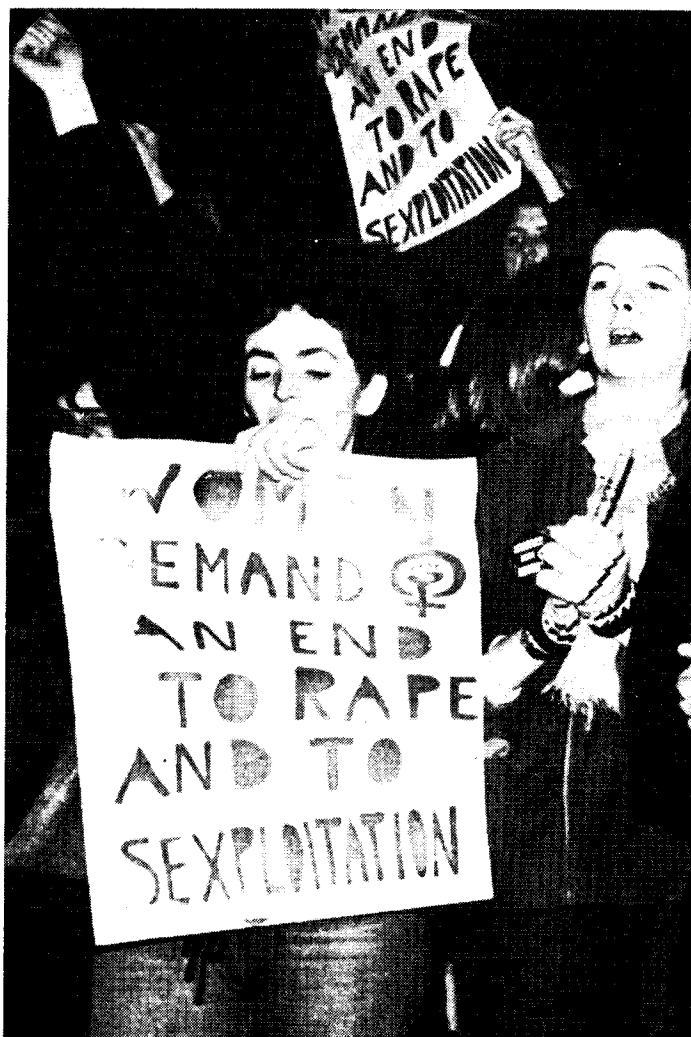
Dear *Womens Voice*,  
After a year of hassles over housing, health, child and marriage, I was feeling very depressed and exhausted. Then came the Easter weekend and the SWP Skegness rally, and I felt like a different person.

The vitality of the people there, the tremendous feeling of solidarity, the way everyone, whether they had children or not, seemed to

enjoy the company of my four year old son—all these things made me feel revitalised and gave me a different perspective.

I came home full of enthusiasm myself, ready to take a more active part in my own WV group and SWP branch, and with ideas for forming a new Community Action Group in my area.

Diane Rodriguez  
West London



## Violence: do we have the answers?

Dear *Womens Voice*,  
From the recent letters in *Womens Voice* about violence against women it would seem that people agree about not being frightened of offending 'pro-feminist' men. But it also seems, from some of the arguments I've had, that women are frightened of arguing with other feminists over the question of violence and, in particular, over the slogan 'Curfew on men'.

The writers of the first letter say that *Womens Voice* dismisses that slogan as 'being against the wrong enemy'. Does that mean they think that men are the enemy against whom we have to direct our fight?

I've always refused to take up that slogan because, although it may have

brought attention to the effective curfew on women, it doesn't provide any answers to the issue of violence against women—either in the short term or the long term. I think there is only one way of ending violent attacks on women permanently, and that's by fighting against the sort of society which encourages them through isolating and stereotyping women. To do that we have to fight *with* men, not against them.

We have to argue against the slogan, even if it does make us unpopular with some feminists. It's no good trying to accommodate everyone else's ideas if it's at the expense of our politics.

Ann Rogers  
London

# One law for blacks, another for whites

*Dear Womens Voice*

A 27 year old shipyard worker from Port Glasgow, in Scotland, has been fined £750 for having unlawful sex with a 13 year old girl.

He would normally have been sent to prison, admitted Sheriff Francis Middleton, who sentenced him, but he ruled that sex with the 13 year old was just an 'indiscretion'.

The reason? The girl in question is Asian. Which apparently makes a difference. Or as the Sheriff put it: 'Girls mature much earlier in the East. Until recently marriages were arranged at a very early age'. Not only that, but 'in the form of marriage that takes place there, intercourse occurs before the marriage. This may have predisposed her to this action' (Daily Record 22.4.1981).

The Sheriff's judgement is both ignorant and racist.

It's ignorant because he obviously knows, or cares nothing of the varied social customs concerning marriage and sex, which differ widely throughout Asia. Marriages are not all arranged, nor do they necessarily take place at an early age.

It's racist, because what his judgement implies is that there is one law for blacks and another for whites. It is wrong for a man to have sex with a white 13 year old. But if she is Asian it's acceptable.

Whatever one thinks about the age of consent there should be one principle.

Where there are laws which are meant to protect women, all women should be treated equally under it, regardless of their ethnic origin.

If Sheriff Middleton and others like him don't agree, they should be sacked

Helen Blair  
Glasgow

# DIRTY LINEN



We can never hear too little about .. Charles and Di. But it's all made worse because the Lord Chamberlain is cutting out the funny bits. For example, the magazine *What Holiday?* recently bundled its way on to the wedding bandwagon with a cover cartoon of the pair playing on the beach. This cover was then advertised on TV—except that the royal faces were blanked out in the London area.

Why London? The official 'explanation' was that 'the Queen watches London Weekend Television.' (And there's a creepy thought for you if you live in the LWT area, as you settle down before the telly.)

Meanwhile 100,000 shoe workers have just learnt that they're not even going to get the benefit of an extra day's holiday on 'the happy day'. The British Footwear Manufacturers have advised employers either to give a day off without pay, or 'allow workers to transfer an existing paid holiday'.

For any of you who have had to postpone home decorating because of a rent or rates rise, spare a thought for Tory Euro MP, Sir James Scott Hopkins. He has recently bought himself a £60,000 Georgian country house which needs a little patching up. So he invited local villagers to come and lend a (free) hand painting the place. It seems the villagers were greatly surprised.

The *Daily Mirror* is very concerned for Jill Craigie—the wife of Michael Foot—who attended the Women's Festival against Thatcher in London last month. This meant that she heard 'a pro-IRA speech from a Sinn Fein woman', though she apparently managed to leave before a one-minute silence in memory of Bobby Sands.

The *Mirror* supports Foot

who supports the Tories, who would rather see republican prisoners dead than 'give in' on the five demands (such as wearing their own clothes, associating freely with each other, and not having to do prison work). Jill Craigie told the *Mirror* 'I would say to Michael: we should hear the other side of the story.' There's still no sign that he's listening.

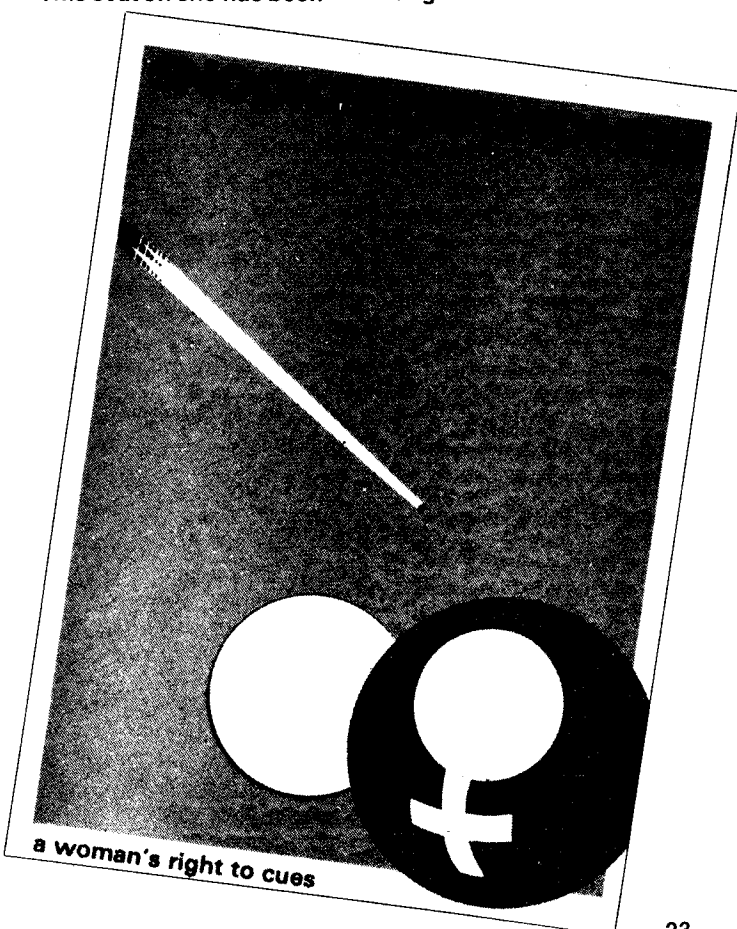
Snooker isn't really a game. It's a question of men hanging on to their balls. At least, that's the way that Vera Selby has been treated by the jealous male world of snooker.

Vera is very good at snooker. She's five times British Ladies' Snooker Champion and an ex-World Ladies' Champion—as well as being eight times British Ladies Billiard Champion. She is also the only female league player in the North East, and so the only league player in the North East to receive a list, at the beginning of each season, of the clubs which ban her.

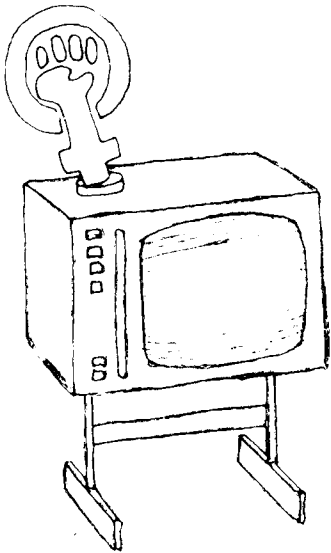
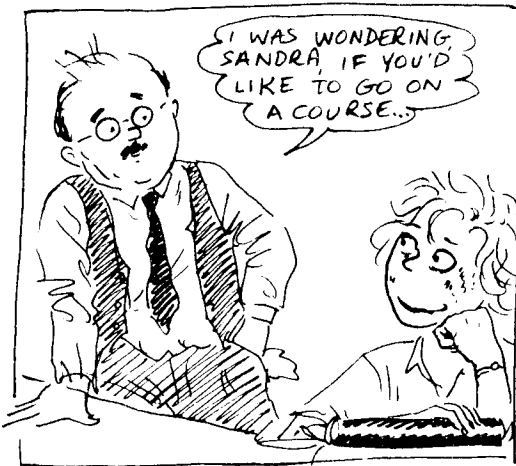
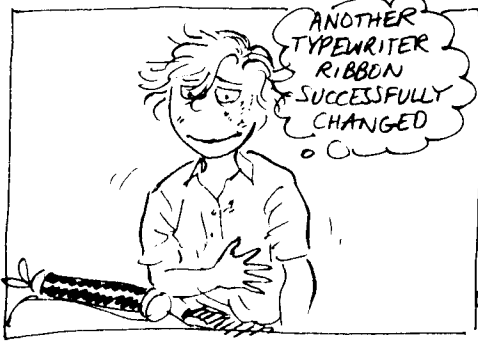
This season she has been

banned from 19 of the 60 clubs in the Newcastle and Gateshead league. The secretary of one of them—Gordon Leslie of Newcastle's Heaton Meadowfield Social Club—says that members 'are frightened it might snowball and we would get members' wives going into the room!' He adds, 'Some of them are probably afraid they could get 'beat off' by a woman.'

And talking of fun and games, the mother of teenage tennis star, Tracey Austin, has hired a woman bodyguard to protect her daughter from lesbians.



# SANDRA



## To death ...or Else!

I WATCHED the first episode of *Till Death us do Part* with a certain amount of dread. Criticised as racist in the sixties and early seventies, how would it appear now, against a background of police harassment of blacks, racist murders and the growth of the British Movement? Maybe it will get worse, but I thought the first episode did manage to do what had always been claimed -- make the audience laugh at All

Garnett and his bigoted ideas.

Perhaps the secret was that the issue of race was hardly mentioned and, when it was, aimed at Scots: 'No wonder they're not allowed to Wembley'. Instead the humour was directed at the clean-up brigade, Mary Whitehouse and Lord Longford.

All is the man who thinks sex is dirty. He applauds the work done in campaigning against plays like 'Romans

in Britain' which show men 'doing it together'. He defends Lord Longford, who, he claims in a hilarious scene, has to visit 'dirty' shows to report back to Mary Whitehouse. His wife and neighbour (Dandy Nicholls and Patricia Hayes) would obviously like to see the play for themselves. They just laugh at All.

It was only about half way through that I realised what it was I liked about

this programme and some of the old series. All always sound off about everything, pretending that he knows a lot about the world, when he really knows nothing. He always defends the empire, the Tories and 'yer royals'.

But it is his wife who comes through as the person who isn't taken in by any of them. She has her own views, which is why she always has an answer for him, but she also can't be bothered to argue all the time with his ignorance and prejudice.

She still manages the last word. They go into the bar of a posh hotel in Eastbourne and order three drinks. All starts talking about the joys of Tory Eastbourne rather than Labour Wapping. When he receives only a few pennies change from a fiver for the drinks, Else says, 'Exactly. Not like Labour Wapping is it'.

It's good to hear women coming out with the answers.

# why I became a socialist

We all differ in the way we come towards socialist politics, and how we encounter socialist ideas. It can be through being involved in a strike, buying socialist literature, having a gut hatred of the Tories ... the list is endless. EMMA NEWTON who is 23 years old and lives in Kingston spoke to Womens Voice about how she became a socialist.



**M**y first memory of anything 'political' was the 1970 election. I remember getting a load of posters and covering the front window with them—but my dad took them down! My dad was in the Communist Party and although he dropped out of activity before I was born he always spoke to us about politics, and it did make me think about things a bit more.

I went to an all girls secondary modern school in Sidcup, Kent. The boys' school was just up the road and one summer they went on strike because they were being forced to wear their blazers in hot classrooms. So a few of us organised about 100 girls to come out in sympathy. It was only for a day but it was really good. When we went back all the organisers of the strike were put in separate classrooms from everyone else 'to learn the wickedness of our actions'.

I left home at 17 and went to the Isle of Wight, where my mum was staying—she and my dad split up when I was 10. That only lasted for four months and then I ran away to Southampton with a bloke. I got a job working in a betting office, the conditions there were awful. There was a manhole cover behind the counter and when it rained the shit from the sewer came into the office—the management refused to give us wellingtons!

I had started to buy and read Socialist Worker. But what really started me thinking was because the bloke I lived with kicked me out. The money I earned wasn't enough to live on so I had to have two jobs. I thought people shouldn't have to work all the time to eat and pay the rent, and I never got out anywhere or bought any clothes. I really enjoyed living in the flat on my own. In the end I moved back in with the bloke and married him. He was a real Tory. Once I bought Spare Rib and he ripped it up in the shop. He didn't like me reading Socialist Worker. He was so oppressive that I began to read more and learn about politics. Even although I wasn't in contact with other people I started to feel a bit more confident reading Socialist Worker and knowing that I wasn't alone in the way I felt about things. Everybody used to take the piss out of me—they used to call me a commie and a trouble-maker. If they could see me now!

Then I moved back to London and got a room in a house, the rent was £10 a week for an unfurnished room, with no heating or hot water. I was desperately looking for somewhere else to live, but it was impossible. I only brought home £34 a week, and what can you do with that? I had to move out because they found someone else who was prepared to pay £2 extra a week for the room. I was really angry—the way people use you and exploit you. I moved in with friends.

My confidence was growing because I had started to talk to people a bit more. I felt that I could start to challenge people's ideas and we had some good arguments at work. The betting office where I worked was non-unionised and on Saturday instead of giving

***'Everyone was talking about prams, and pink and blue baby clothes. All I could think about was, where would I live when the baby was born?'***

us a lunch break the management gave us 50p each. It wasn't enough to buy a cheeseburger. One Saturday we refused to work in the afternoon unless we got a lunchbreak, and we won. I think that showed me that what seems impossible *is* possible.

**I** changed jobs and worked in a Do-it-Yourself store as a cashier. The management were terrible; they were always having security swoops and victimising individual women. We started to talk about the need for a union, but then I had to leave because I was pregnant. At the same time the bloke I now live with, Chris, got sacked and we were thrown out of our flat. It was horrible—we were literally homeless. We wanted to have a baby, but we had thought our jobs and our home were secure.

We ended up in Bed and Breakfast, in a tiny room with no sunlight. There were ten

other families in the hotel and we shared one cooker. There was no heating or hot water during the day. It was costing the council £120 a week for every family—it was really ridiculous. I was six months pregnant and I felt lonely and depressed. I started thinking—what's it all about? I had taken enough. I knew the homeless weren't scroungers, they were ordinary people like me. Then everything connected, the paper I had been reading for all those years, what it said—how things are possible through unity. I had no job, no nothing, but I was full of fight.

I remember going to the ante-natal clinic where we all lay on the floor doing breathing exercises. Everyone was talking about prams, and pink and blue baby clothes. All I could think about was, where would I live when the baby was born?

I wanted to join the Socialist Workers Party, and Chris was feeling a bit disillusioned about the Labour Party. He'd been a member for over a year and no-one had approached him. He wanted to be active. Around that time someone told me that the SWP had sworn allegiance with Russia. That shattered me—I stormed up to the nearest paper seller and said if that was the truth I didn't want anything to do with the SWP! Of course, it was just a stupid lie. Anyway, I joined the SWP a few weeks before Daniel was born. The first time I went to sell papers I was terrified. I thought the fascists would come and beat me up. Another time I was really worried about missing a meeting because I was in labour with Daniel.

Joining the SWP gave me incredible confidence then, and it still does. Chris joined a few weeks after me—he was fed up with the Labour Party. From being homeless and isolated I became confident enough to organise. I started to talk about the cuts to other homeless people and from that sprang the Kingston and Elmbridge Homeless Action Group.

I can't really say why I became a socialist—it's because my guts churn every time I think of how workers are exploited, about families that are homeless ... I suppose it's a process of change.



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 \_\_\_\_\_

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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
- **ACTION 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
- **Cambridge WV** contact Trisha Cambridge 68226
- **CANTERBURY WV** Barbara, Lyminge 862 742
- **CHELTENHAM WV** meets every Thursday. For babysitters and information Jacqui 511370
- **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 KINGSTON 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** Shirley 585556
- **ST HELENS WV** Carol, St Helens 28178
- **SHEFFIELD WV** Sue 613 739
- **Slough WV** Sharon maidenhead 26862
- **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

## Small ads

Women working with young people: developing feminist youth work. Conference, 10-12 July, Nottingham University, Nottingham. For more information phone 0533 29514 Abortion Law Reform Association. Public meeting, 6 June at 2pm, Birkbeck College, London. With speakers from N. Ireland and the Republic who are campaigning for a Woman's Right to Choose.

Conference on 'Toxic Shock Syndrome and Tampons'. 10am - 6pm Saturday 4 July at Caxton House, St Johns Way, London N19. Creche, bring sandwiches. £1 registration fee Phone 01-258-3086 for more details.



## Seven days of Socialist ideas, discussion and entertainment

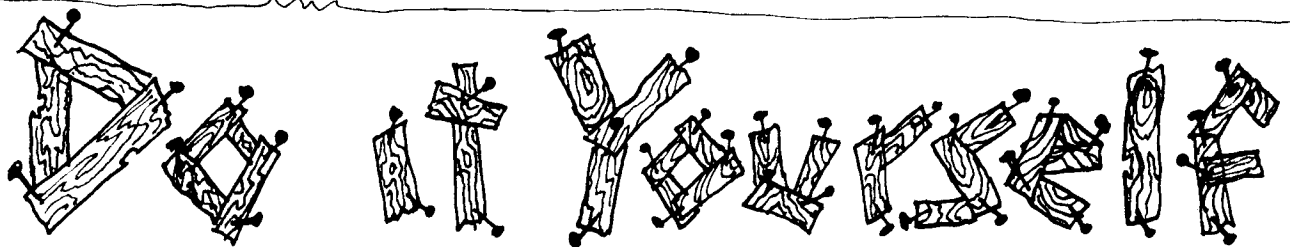
Marxism '81 is organised by the Socialist Worker Student Organisation This year it is at Queen Mary College, Mile End Road, London E1 From 10th July to 17th July (Friday to Friday). £11.50 in advance, £13 on the door. Write to SWSO, PO Box 82, London E2, or ring 01-986 8355, for further details.

## Make sure you get the Socialist Worker every week

- FOR liveliest, up to date, inside news on ALL workers struggles.
- FOR regular, weekly news on all women's issues.
- FOR black and white unity in action.
- FOR Jobs not Bombs. No to Thatcher's missile madness.
- FOR the Right to Work. Employed and unemployed unite and fight.
- FOR workers solidarity and international socialism.



## Buy it, read it and sell it!



# CHAIRING A MEETING



Having someone to chair a meeting isn't just an old trade union tradition which we follow because 'that's the way things are done'. It is possible to hold small, informal meetings without someone in the chair, but for any meeting which has a lot of different items to discuss, or a larger meeting where you want to make sure that everyone gets a fair chance to say what they want (not just those who can shout loudest), then good chairing matters.

## *A few general hints*

The bigger and more formal the meeting, the more formal should be your chairing, and for that you probably need some experience. A smaller, informal meeting just needs someone to guide it along, to get it going and to finish on time, so that's the place to get some practice.

A few musts to remember:

- **arrive on time, even if no one else does;**
- **make sure the room is ready;**
- **bring or borrow a watch;**
- **bring a pen and paper, and something to take a collection in if you're having one;**
- **be relaxed, and be prepared**

## *Getting going*

It's up to you to get the meeting going, so be in your place early, seek out your speaker, and make sure she is ready. Agree how long she will speak for and warn her now how you will let her know when she has five minutes left.

Before the meeting starts write down on a slip of paper the information you will need to give to the meeting: the speaker's name and the subject of the talk; any announcements you have been given; and, if you are a bit nervous, a few words of welcome to the audience. Decide at what point the collection will be taken.

As people arrive encourage them to sit in the front seats. Give people a few minutes to settle down, then raise your voice and tell them you want to begin.

Then welcome everyone to the meeting, welcome your speaker, who is going to speak on the following subject for so long, and then there will be time for questions and discussion ... You can elaborate—but don't go on for too long, your audience has not come to listen to you. A bit of chat is useful if late comers keep arriving as your speaker will get off to a bad start if the audience appears to be on the move.

## *A few do's and don'ts*

- **Do cut short speakers from the floor who wish they had been on the platform and intend to give a long speech.**
- **Don't interpret people's questions. 'I think the questioner means to say' is unnecessary. Your speaker will be able to interpret any unclear questions.**
- **Don't encourage a dialogue between two people in the audience—everyone else will get left out.**
- **Don't fidget, or yawn, or shuffle bits of paper, or look disinterested.**
- **Do have the courage to interrupt a speaker who is just going on and on.**

- **On the other hand, don't apply the time too rigidly if your speaker is scintillating.**

## *Filling the gap.*

You will rarely have to interrupt a speaker, but a long silence after she has sat down is very common. Be encouraging. Give people time. Don't start firing off questions yourself, and don't call the ones who always ask the questions. Perhaps because they do no else ever does.

During the talk make a note of your own questions or interesting points—you'll need these if the meeting flags in the middle.

About 15 minutes before you want to finish the meeting, say so, take a couple of last questions, and give your speaker five minutes to sum up the discussion. Then: thank your speaker, make your announcements, thank everyone for coming and wish them goodnight.

## *Have a good collection*

If you are to have a collection either weave it into the discussion and take it as part of the meeting, or take it immediately after you have thanked the speaker at the end. Don't feel awkward or embarrassed about asking for money. As you announce it start the box circulating and take a couple of minutes to explain why you need money, the activities it will help towards—list them proudly. People are generous, but if you say you just want money for the room you can expect to get very little. You will likewise get little if you leave it to a collection on the door.

And that's it. Check that your speaker has somewhere to stay, a drink and her expenses paid.

## *Getting your business in order.*

These points are most relevant to a business meeting or conference. If you are asked to chair a trade union meeting you must get hold of your standing orders and a rule book first, so that you know the particular procedure for putting resolutions (often in writing, so many days before the meeting), emergency resolutions and so on. But there are general rules which apply to all business meetings of this sort which you can follow.

Before the meeting make sure you know everything that has to be taken in that meeting. Draw up an *agenda*. Begin by reading it out loud to the meeting, so that everyone knows exactly what is happening. Read out all resolutions, and amendments.

Put the agenda to the meeting for agreement or change it, if that's what people want to do. Remember to keep a check on the time. It's worth working out a rough time table before the meeting starts so that you know you can get through all the business. People may be unhappy about moving on from item to item, but they'll be even more unhappy if you don't get through half of it. And it's your job to ensure they do.

The procedure for *resolutions* is simple. They are spoken to, usually for about five minutes, by the *mover*, and then by the *seconder*. Then take a speaker against the resolution. If there is to be a debate try to balance it between one speaker for and one against. After the discussion is exhausted, or the allotted time is up, move to the *vote*. Once you have called for the vote, no further discussion is allowed.

If there are any *amendments* to the resolution take these in the course of the discussion, repeating the formula, mover, seconder, speaker against. If the mover of the original resolution accepts the amendment, the resolution is amended accordingly, without any vote. But if, in your opinion, the amendment changes the sense of the original resolution, it should be *ruled out of order*, and a separate resolution put.

The *voting* procedure is as follows: first read out the amendments, each in turn, with votes for, against and abstentions. If anyone calls for a count, the votes must be counted, otherwise a simple show of hands will do. After all the amendments are voted on you put the *substantive* resolution, that is the resolution as now amended, to the vote. Read it out. Once you have moved on to the vote no other business, amendments or interruptions should be allowed, until the vote is finished.

But if people are confused or unsure of what they are voting on, listen to what they are saying—take those with their hands up to speak, and then stick to whatever procedure you think is correct. Don't be bullied, and don't do the bullying.

Margaret Renn



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