

womens **VOICE**

Joe
D. Price top
No 13



**Women
in America
Slimming
How liberated
are you?**



The rat infested situation
that was the feudal system
finally rotted away...

SEATTLE
SERIES

Womens Magazine of the Socialist Workers Party

Womens World: ignorance is bliss the saying goes. Page 4.

News: we discover there are firepersons; Rosemarie Delia is freed; She's Lady Lockwood at last. pages 5 - 8.

New Year's Quiz. Page 9.



Report from America. Pages 10 and 11.

The World: the news you can no longer read from South Africa. Pages 12 & 13.

My Crumbly job takes the biscuit. Page 14.

Do It Yourself. Page 15.

Your Health. To slim or not to slim, that is the question. Pages 16 & 17.

Reviews: Quentin Crisp, a very brave man. Pages 18 and 19.

Your Voice. is getting longer. Please try to keep your letters short or we have to massacre them. Letters to reach us by January 25th for the next issue please. Pages 20 - 22.

Wah't's Happening and the answers to our quiz. Page 23.

Herstory finds a new home. Page 24.

We're sorry if this issue of *Womens Voice* has reached you late. It's inevitable if we're to have a holiday too. The February issue will appear on the second Wednesday of the month, and in March we go back to normal, distributing on the first Wednesday of the month.

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

A NEW YEAR, and our first birthday!

With few resources and plenty of high hopes this time last year we introduced the new *Womens Voice* magazine. A magazine that would fight for socialism and women's liberation, not just with fine words, but with action.

Over the year we've had some small success. Our circulation has risen, month by month, to the 12,000 we print this January. There are *Womens Voice* groups in several towns and cities, and some colleges and universities.

Early in the year there were street meetings to raise money for equal pay strikes like those at Laird Porsche and Yardleys; as the year ended we were holding street meetings together with firemen's wives to raise money for the firemen's strike.

Women workers in several factories have read their first *Womens Voice* bulletins. Everywhere we have given out leaflets and organised meetings. We have turned out to demonstrate against hospital closures, against rape; for nurseries and abortion on demand. Not bad for a start.

But think for a moment of what has happened to us women in the year that's passed, and what might lie in store for the year ahead.

What about equal pay? The gap between the average pay for women and men has widened; the unions have abandoned the fight; and there is little or no justice to be had at Industrial Tribunals. So what can we do?

The Equal Opportunities Commission has turned into a giant white elephant. A total of one and a half enquiries since they first set up shop. Plenty of press conferences but no backbone and no fight. Again, what can we do?

Maternity leave, nurseries, clinics... what can we do to organise the fight for all those things that specially affect women, no matter where we live or work?

Time and time again we've learned that you only go forward when you have a strong, militant movement. And that reforms like equal pay and equal opportunities aren't worth the paper they're written on unless we ourselves fight to turn them into reality.

We are more and more aware that the things which affect our lives most crucially — the availability of decent jobs, the housing we are forced to live in, the services we depend on must be under our own control. As long as they are under the control of a capitalist system bent on speculation and exploitation and profits, our needs will always come bottom of the list.

All that adds up to the need for revolutionary changes. A major shift of wealth and power out of the hands of the few, into the hands of the many. And you won't achieve that by taking your individual case to tribunal!

Fighting for fundamental changes is what we're all about. And that means a lot of organisation and effort. One of the things we want to do in the coming months is to expand and improve *Womens Voice* itself. It has always been produced on a shoestring. But sometimes that's held us back.

We would like to have better photographs and feature stories; more history and interviews and up to date news; more information specially researched so that you can be prepared with all the arguments you need to organise and win the battles you face.

Most of all our aim is to take *Womens Voice* to a much bigger audience. For this we need your help, the help of everyone of our readers. We have the chance this spring to take *Womens Voice* forward in many new ways. Already we have had several offers of help with research and design and photographs.

But we have many bills to pay, not least to the print shop, where *Womens Voice* is produced, and to British Rail and the Post Office, who rush it out to you.

Can you help us raise some money? We are opening an appeal to raise £1,000 by March 1st. Will you help us to take our new chance to make *Womens Voice* grow? Could you organise a disco or a jumble sale or some other fund-raising event? Could you collect donations from regular readers? Could you send us a donation of your own?

If you like reading *Womens Voice*, if you are concerned about the fight for women's liberation and socialism, please send us whatever you can spare. We promise to put your money to good use in making *Womens Voice* really go places in 1978!

Womens VOICE

Womens Magazine of
the Socialist Workers
Party

COOL! SMASHING! LOOK AT THAT! GREAT!

WE'RE GOING

GLOSSY

FROM MARCH '78 WOMENS VOICE WILL BE BIGGER BY 4 EXTRA PAGES * BRIGHTER
WITH COLOUR * & BETTER * WITH YOUR HELP *

* because, if we're to expand in March, we have to raise
at least £1000 quickly. So, if you'd like to
see a bright new WOMENS VOICE in '78, here's
a few ideas for fund-raising.....

- * organise workplace collections
- * organise a jumble sale
- * try a raffle
- * sell more WOMENS VOICE subscriptions

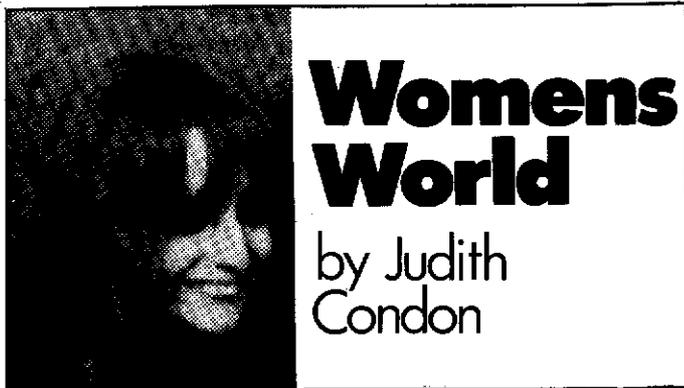
The new Womens Voice will have more
articles, news & features - but don't
forget, keep your ideas rolling in!
Can you write, type, take pics,
design or paste-up? We need
your talents!

here's my/our donation/collection for the NEW WOMENS VOICE.....

NAME:

ADDRESS/ORGANISATION:

TO: WOMENS VOICE COLLECTION, 6 COTTONS GARDENS, LONDON E2 8DN



Womens World

by Judith Condon

SOMETIMES it may be hard to remember that contraception was once taboo—that the early pioneers had to risk jail to bring women the most basic and necessary information about their own bodies.

Marie Stopes was one such pioneer. She made a film—a silent film—about the benefits of birth control when it was still an extremely daring subject.

But the censors went to work. They placed so many limitations and restrictions on the film that it finished up being incomprehensible.

This is what happens.

A poor girl, Maisie, is courting. Her young man wants her to marry him. But she looks at her mother, and sees all the poverty and misery that go with marrying young and having a baby every year. So she turns him down, and he goes off broken-hearted.

Maisie gets a job as a maid in a big house in town. She wears the black and white uniform maids were always decked out in, to make them look brisk and efficient, and unattractive to the young men of the family. But far from looking brisk, Maisie is downcast.

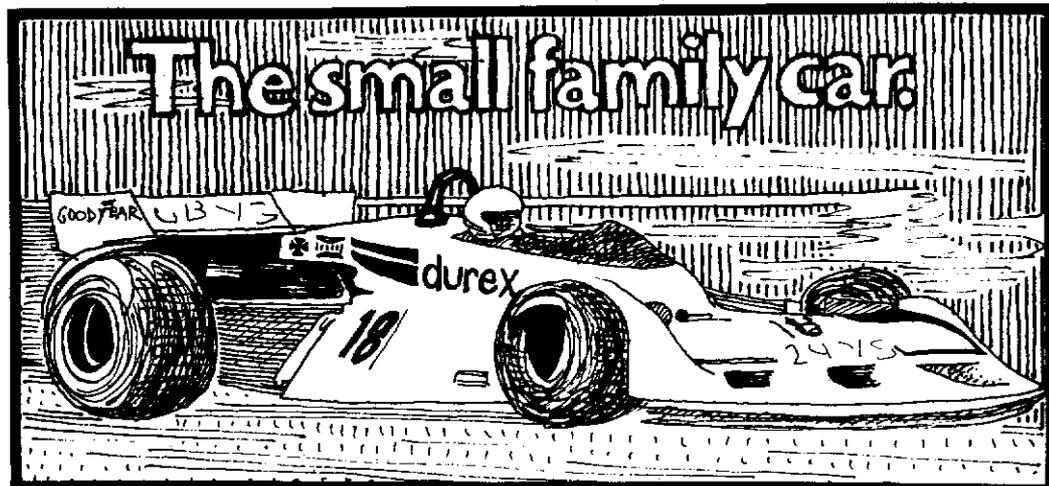
One day the lady of the house asks her why she's so sad, and Maisie's story comes spilling out. She couldn't marry because she feared to have a multitude of children.

Ah, says the lady. But it needn't always be so.

Right. This is the bit where

you're to get the message. The good news about contraception.

But what happens? The picture goes misty. There's a rose bush, and beautiful roses with dew on them. It's like a garden, says the lady. The gardener doesn't let the roses grow wild. He prunes them. *That's it.*



The ad they want banned.

That's the message. So now you know all about contraception. Or are you still in the dark, still as baffled as before? And maybe even more so. Pruning! God forbid!

But that's all Marie Stopes was allowed to say. The censors made sure of it. Any woman who saw the film was still no better off.

Immediately after the roses bit, there's a fire in the house. Maisie is being carried down a

ladder by a good-looking fireman. Yes, you've guessed it, it's her old flame, so they marry and live happily ever after.

Last July we reported on the fact that adverts relating to contraceptives were banned on London Transport, as well as on ITV. It wasn't long after Thames Television had refused to screen their documentary on changing sexual attitudes in Britain because it might offend some people.

Since then, London transport has relented. Adverts for Durex have appeared on the London underground, as elsewhere throughout the country. They comprise a picture of a racing car with DUREX written on its side, and the slogan 'The small family car'.

It was a similar car, racing at Brand's Hatch which recently caused the BBC to threaten to cancel one of its outside broadcasts. But the BBC regularly screens other sponsored advertising including cigarette adverts which appear around football fields and the like.

No sooner were the Durex ads pasted than people like those who tried to thwart Marie Stopes went into action.

Dr Rhodes Boyson, education spokesman for the Tory shadow cabinet, led the field. People, he says, determined to advertise contraceptives in areas exposed to children are members of the semi-perverted groups of our society.

This is the kind of argument

paings about birth control.

And the Advertising Standards Authority has found no evidence that the Durex adverts caused widespread offence, and has not upheld the handful of complaints it received.

Yet one such complainer in a position of power can do untold damage. One such person can event information reaching women who need it ... Just one such person is a certain Miss Butler, who works in the Post Office's telephone directory division. Recently the Family Planning Association, a thoroughly respectable body with government support, asked whether a section called 'contraception' could be listed in the yellow pages. Back came Miss Butler's reply.

"We consider there is still a substantial sector of the population which is opposed to contraception"

Over Christmas I've been reading a new book called 'Dutiful Daughters' by Jean McCrindle and Sheila Rowbotham. It's a collection of the recorded memories of a group of middle-aged and elderly women, most of them working class. Although their memories are recorded individually, there are themes which recur again and again. One of the most harrowing is the almost universally suffered ignorance; ignorance of menstruation and horror at their first period; ignorance of sex and a lifelong inability to overcome their fear

and revulsion of it; ignorance of birth, even when they are already in labour.

Ignorance for these women meant suffering, and they ended up hating the mothers who had left them in ignorance. But ignorance is bliss for Rhodes Boyson, and those others like Mary Whitehouse who oppose sex-education in schools—so long as it is other people's ignorance. It's the premium that keeps their power insured.



QUESTION

WHAT IS A FIRE CONTROL OPERATOR?

ANSWER

SHE IS . . . the person who is the first contact with the public when they require the attendance of the fire brigade. She receives 999 calls and calls from the police and mobilises the appliances to attend at any types of incidents, and summons up the services or equipment required.

SHE IS . . . the link between the men at an incident and the services or equipment required.

SHE IS . . . the person who has the full responsibility of ensuring that her brigade area has sufficient fire cover at all times.

SHE IS . . . the person who has come out on strike to support the firemen in their pay claim when she knows only full well that she stands to gain nothing as her pay rise is not directly linked with this fight. Her negotiations commence in July.

SHE IS . . . the person who works shifts similar to the firemen, including weekends, public holidays and so on.

SHE IS . . . the person who has marched on demonstrations in support of her colleagues in all parts of the country, and plays an active part by assisting in strike committee rooms.

SHE IS . . . the person who sees first hand the condition that the firemen are in when they return from a fire or road accident.

SHE IS . . . also the one who, because we do not get social security being in the main single strikers, has lost most financially through the present fight but who still insists that the strike continues until the men get the wage they deserve.

Carry on the fight boys, we are with you all the way.

Morag McCaig, on behalf of the Strathclyde Fire Brigade Control Operators.

YOU SAY, in the last issue of *Womens Voice* that there are no firepersons, correctly so, as men and women employed in the Fire Service are referred to as firemen and firewomen. You also say that women don't work in the fire service except in a few clerical jobs. I protest.

There are women in the Fire Service and there are opportunities for promotion in several fields. The fact that few women enter the service with a career in mind is simply because, just as you are,

they too are wrongly informed.

Many controls throughout the country are closed or working short staffed because the men and women there are supporting their fire-fighting colleagues in their strike for better and more realistic wages. There are girls on the picket line supporting the firemen but too many people dismiss them because our hats are similar to those of the police women. There is one difference—we have a red chequered band.

The job I do isn't the only opening for women. There is work in Fire Prevention and Graphics. There is also the possibility that providing you are the right build and have the stamina you could be a firefighter.

I know of one female firefighter. She may be retained and work full time but she's proved that the opportunity is there and a woman can fill it providing she's got the strength and staying power. In fact the same qualities as any prospective fireman.

As a striking fire control operator I found your article very encouraging and I'm sure the firemen on my picket line will agree with me. **Jill Skinner**, *Lewis fire station East Sussex*.



Picture: John Starrock (Report)



picture: Angela Phillips

ROSE Marie Della at home after her release.

BATTERED WOMAN CAN STAY

ROSE MARIE Della and her small son came to England four years ago. She had run away from her brutal husband and wanted to live with her family already here.

Rose Marie lived a lonely life in Malta—no family of her own, no friends, no outlet for her unhappy marriage. Her husband, Angelo, allowed her no social life. The only time she was allowed out of the

house was for essential food shopping.

He was jealous even of the baby. When Rose Marie's brother and mother came to England to Malta to visit her and the new baby, they were not allowed into her home, but had to meet in her mother-in-law's home.

In Angelo's language, it was simple—to love, honour and obey

meant Rose Marie's position was one of slave to master. He owned her and by the laws of the Catholic Church, Rose Marie couldn't obtain her freedom by divorce. In a small island like Malta, a woman with a child cannot set up home without being tracked down and taken home by her lawful husband.

All this loneliness, stress and strain took its toll on Rose Marie.

She looked 10 years older than her years.

She longed for her family now in Britain and to see her son grow up in a healthy atmosphere. In desperation, she took the drastic and courageous step to forge her husband's signature on her passport papers as obviously he would not agree.

Once in England she declared all she had done to the Home Office, how she had left the country, illegally forging papers. But happily she was given British citizenship and allowed to stay.

The nightmare started 14 months ago when the Maltese government started pressing for her extradition. Rose Marie fought them through legal channels. But after many court appearances and solicitors letters, she lost and was flung into Holloway Prison to await return to Malta for criminal charges, where she faced a sentence of between 6 months and 2 years hard labour.

Rose Marie's workmates in the factory and her family started fighting a campaign for her release. Thorn workers picketed Holloway Prison. The Transport Union sent telegrams of protest to the Home Office. Petitions signed by all the workers were sent to the Home Office.

Local and national newspapers, TV and radio took up her story. Three local MPs took up her case, in the House of Commons.

And after 19 days they won! So much for the solicitors and judges. Di Watts

SUCCESS

LAST MONTH we doubled the sales of *Womens Voice* from 60 to 120. We recruited quite a number of supporters and are getting *Womens Voice* supporters' cards printed.

We are organising educational meetings because part of the reason they come is to see what we stand for. We've had one so far—called *Why Womens Voice?* rather than any other kind of women's organisation.

We got in touch with the firemen's wives at the beginning of the strike. One of them wrote a letter to the local paper. We rang her up, and she invited us to the first meeting they had. They always invite us now.

We have helped them raise money by jumble sales, a sponsored knitting, and we had a children's party. They organised those. We have done pub collections and got names for their petition.

We held a public meeting together with the *Socialist Workers Party*. Two firemen's wives spoke, and about 40 wives attended.

Next month we intend to do a bulletin about the firemen's strike for the factories that employ women here. Most of them are non-union. Dorothy Pape, Aberdeen Womens Voice

ASBESTOS dust is blowing down our street. It's coming from an industrial site being built—by Lambeth Council—just across the road from my house. The site is right next to a junior school.

It's corrugated asbestos, called Asbestolux, that's being used for the roofs and part of the sides. The men are cutting it with an electric saw, which creates a lot of dust.

I was really worried because we have a 5-month-old baby. They eat everything, and the dust was so thick that you could see it in the air.

I rang up the council and a Mr Cunningham said it wasn't dangerous because it was white asbestos, not blue asbestos. He has changed his tack a bit since then. He finally said he would investigate it. After three days of ringing him, a man came over in his welly boots. He said he was sorry and the men would not do it any more, which was just a load of bollocks.

Then I rang the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science. I rang them to make sure I wasn't being just neurotic about it.

Alan Dalton there said there was no need for that material to be used any more, and it was very dangerous. He said we should get it analysed. He also said we should ring the trades council, because they had taken up another case of asbestos in the borough.

So two of the trades council

WOMEN FIGHT KILLER DUST



OUR picture shows, left to right, Marian Upchurch and Luke, Caroline Hartnell and Kate, Ann Webb and Christine Drain.

Asbestos petticoat protest

AM residents are and research has shown is a form of cement asbestos dust is only 1

delegates came down and climbed over the fence. They took samples of the asbestos and of the glass fibre insulation as well.

The workmen just used to leave great lumps of the glass fibre laying around. And they never used masks or any protective clothing while they were cutting the asbestos corrugated sheets. The wind just blew it up our street.

The trades council contacted the Factory Inspector and I still don't know what the result of that is. I rang two different sets of councillors. When I finally got the right one, he sounded like he was so bored he was falling asleep at the

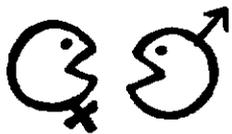
other end of the phone. But Marion, another *Womens Voice* supporter, was told that there was an official report being done by the council now.

We got the local paper to come down and take a photo of mums and kids outside the site. Most of the story was alright. But just look at the headline! Most of the people here just don't believe it's dangerous. They really pooh-poo it. They don't want to believe it.

We are going to try to build up the campaign. I'm refusing to pay my rates for a start. I'm not having that killer dust in my street.

Chris Gunter

SEX POL DEBATE



THE SEXUAL Politics Conference organised by the *Socialist Workers Party* drew 120 people at the beginning of December.

Although the term 'sexual politics' covers a very wide area, discussion centred around four main topics: the family and its future; sexism and how to fight it; the relationship between the gay movement and the revolutionary party; and the importance of sexual politics within the SWP.

The debates on sexism and male chauvinism revealed a divergence of views on how to fight it, and who should fight it. Should women and gays take the lead, or can groups like Men Against Sexism play a useful part?

Some delegates advocated consciousness-raising groups to help individuals overcome their internalised oppression and prejudices, while others insisted that individuals only change through collective action, by helping an equal pay strike for instance.

Sexism is important to fascist parties like the National Front, and to their religious hangers-on like the Festival of Light, though they don't stress this side of their programme for fear of losing women sup-

porters. The fight against fascism is also a fight against the most vicious forms of sexism.

The workshop on Sexism in the Media discussed the way in which the media and advertisers degrade women by using their bodies to boost profits. We also discussed the way women in the news were trivialised. That morning the BBC had a news item about 'The Grandmother Who Sailed Round The World'.

Women could do something to counter this kind of sexism by writing letters to offending newspapers, taking part in local radio phone-in programmes (it would make a change from all the rightwingers on them!), and guerilla actions such as putting 'This degrades women' stickers to good use and organising more 'reclaiming the night' marches in male chauvinist heartlands.

At the end of the conference the delegates agreed that we should defend gay organisations like CHE and papers like Gay News from the present right-wing backlash, despite their bourgeois base and lack of Marxist politics.

The debate should be continued in every city and in the pages of *Womens Voice*, *Socialist Worker*, and *IS Journal*. The conference should become an annual event.

- Look out for a Socialist Worker pamphlet on Sexual Politics, out early in 1978

- Contact the Socialist Workers Party Gay Group on the following numbers: 01-405 2705 Penny Old, 01-790 2454 Richard Tarry Sara Morgan

HOMELESS

UNDER A new law which came into force at the beginning of December local councils have to treat homeless single women who are pregnant with the same priority as they treat homeless single women with children.

Hackney Council, in London, is opting out of this responsibility by handing over this provision of housing to an anti-abortion organisation Let Live.

Let Live is also an adoption agency and counselling service for pregnant women. They provide hostels and selected families for women to stay with. There is no guarantee that the woman and her child should she decide to keep it, will have any long term or permanent housing.

This move by the Council means that this organisation will have a near monopoly on counselling

single pregnant women and girls, and those who want abortions will find it even harder to get them than they do now.

Hackney *Womens Voice*, the local Nalgo Action Group and other womens and socialist organisations are demonstrating local opposition to this move by the council. We are picketing the council meeting on 25 January at 6.30pm. We will be leafletting council workplaces, schools, health clinics, youth clubs and collecting signatures on a petition at work and in local markets.

All *Womens Voice* groups and readers should try to find out what your council is doing about this housing provision. We have found that Let Live have applied to Wandsworth and Ealing Councils, and we think that Life (another anti-abortion organisation) are doing the same in Brent and Haringey. If they are doing this on a national scale then our opposition should be organised nationally too.

LAST JULY six Womens Voice supporters and another woman were arrested outside the House of Parliament. We were demonstrating against William Benyon's anti-abortion bill.

We were all charged with obstruction and one woman was later charged with police assault.

Two women so far have been tried and found guilty. One was fined £20 with £20 costs, and on 28 December Charlotte Cantra was fined £10.

When the remaining five of us go to court on January 24 we will all be pleading not guilty. We need your support. Fill the public gallery at Bow Street Magistrates Court on January 24, 10am onwards. Mary Robson



Picture: An Dekker

AS WE went to press: Forty demonstrators invaded the Evening News building off London's Fleet Street on the afternoon of 6 January.

They came to protest at the previous day's inflammatory article about artificial insemination for gay women who want children. The article, they said, was an invitation to harassment.

Evening News reporter Joanna Patyna had posed for two months as a gay woman desperate to have a baby.

Her article, headlined 'Doctor Strange Love', had already sparked off a backlash of anti-lesbian outcry. Even as the women demonstrated a bunch of men gathered outside and

shouted 'Vermin!' at them.

After an hour sitting in and singing and generally getting under the feet of bemused Evening News journalists in their large open-plan office, the women met the editor, Louis Kirby. A spokeswoman from Gay Sweatshop accused him of having broken with the NUJ code of practice in using an 'undercover' reporter to investigate something that is not illegal, and in flagrantly discriminating against lesbian women.

As a result of their direct action, the demonstrators were offered the right to reply in next week's Evening News. **Womens Voice reporter.**



HER Ladyship, Betty Lockwood, in action.

TOO MANY LADIES— NOT ENOUGH FIGHTERS

WHEN BETTY Lockwood was promoted in the New Year Honours List to the House of Lords there were a few surprised faces around the place.

What was she being promoted for?

As chairman (yes, *chairman*) of the Equal Opportunities Commission the job she has done for the last two years has hardly been marked by any measurable success.

The Commission has spent a fortune: £1½ million a year. They

employ 120 people. They have 15 commissioners. But who are they and what on earth do they do?

All the commissioners are appointed by the Home Office. Betty Lockwood and Lady Howe, the one labour and the other tory, work full time. The rest are all part timers and are just about to be reappointed at the end of their two year term of office.

Both the TUC and the CBI, the employers organisation, have three places each amongst the commissioners. The rest come out of a Home Office 'pool' of respectable people suitable to this sort of public position. Not one single one of them represents any womens organisation, and I don't just mean radical womens organisations. Not even the Womens Institute, the Housewives register, the Towns Womens Guild, however dyed-in-the-wool they may be, are there.

In his preamble to the Sex Discrimination Act Roy Jenkins said that the Commission would have 'the responsibility and the power to enforce the law in the public interest.'

Enforce the law is the one thing they have singularly failed to do.

At Electrolux in Luton women working in the production line earn £10 a week less than the men. Everyone knows it is discrimination. The women have won their case at an Industrial Tribunal; they have been on strike. In an attempt to break the deadlock with the management the EOC was called in. That was in March 1977.

The EOC now expect their findings to be published in March or April 1978.

This is one of two investigations that the EOC has started in two years.

The EOC was also given the power to issue non-discriminatory notices. These would have made the discrimination, whatever it was, illegal. Whoever was doing the discrimination would then be open to prosecution in the law courts. It was the teeth the law needed.

Not one single notice has been issued.

A code of practice for employers, which would have spelt out the areas and ways in which they could not discriminate against women was expected two years ago. Nothing has yet emerged and the draft has now been watered down to 'guidelines'.

Mr Philip Jones, representing the CBI on the Commission, writing to other members of the CBI says: 'you will note that it is to be published in the form of guidance rather than a code of practice. I am glad to be able to tell you that this is to a great extent due to CBI influence on the EOC'.

And so you have it: the legal path to womens rights strewn with respectable people, with no guts and no fight, and I suspect most of them with little interest in womens rights. Margaret Renn.

THEY'RE ROBBING PETER TO PAY PAUL

THE MANCHESTER Area Health Authority wants to close the Duchess of York Hospital for Sick Children. The authority has plans for the hospital to become a home for mentally and physically disabled children. The staff, who have specialised training in the care of sick children and the local community served by the hospital have never been consulted by the AHA.

None of the people involved in the campaign to save the hospital are against the building of homes for the disabled. Facilities for handicapped children in Manchester are appalling — like most other places — but these children need purpose-built homes, not converted hospitals.

The services provided by the hospital are already being run down. Until recently emergencies were dealt with and extensive plastic surgery performed.

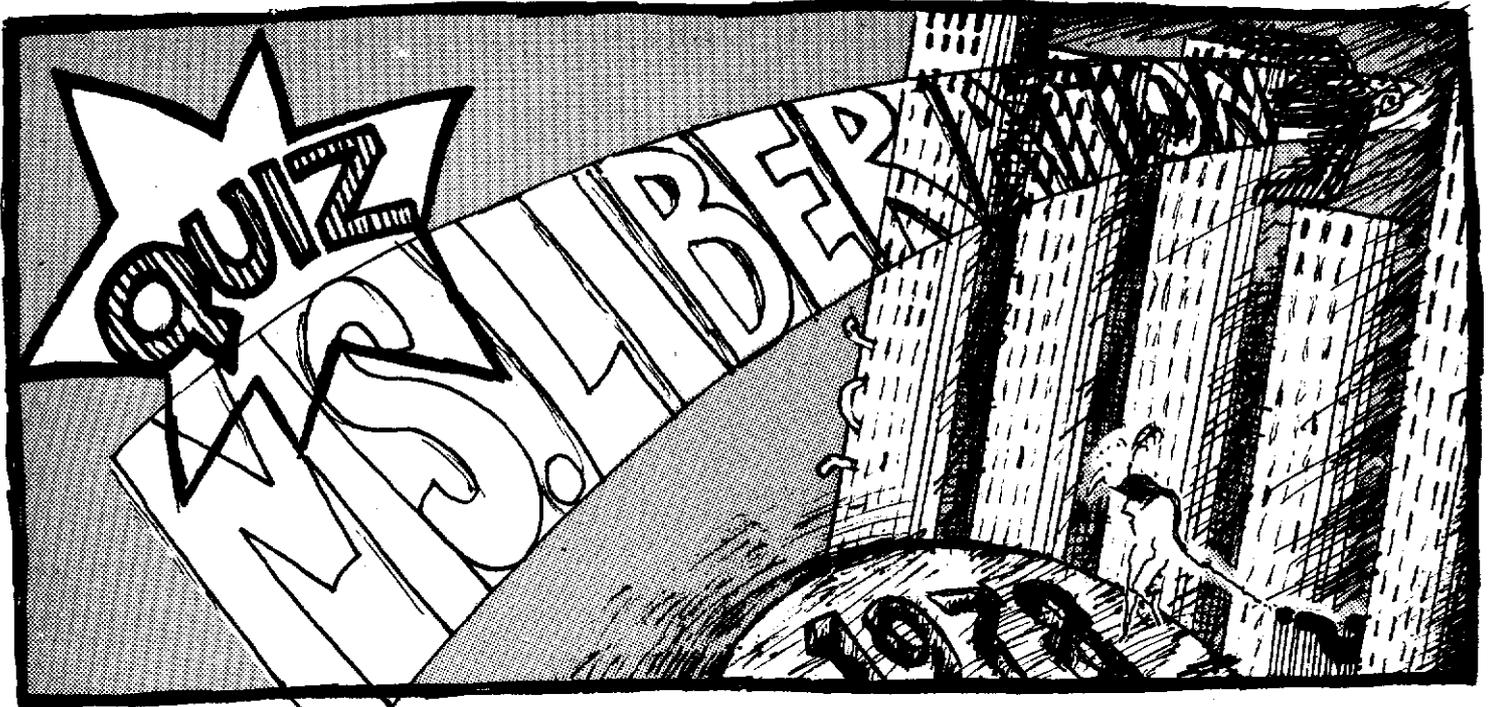
A new ward is half-empty because doctors who would normally refer children are not being informed of its existence.

Longsight *Women's Voice* held a successful public meeting where a hospital support committee was set up.

The following Monday there was a picket outside the meeting of the Area Health Authority and people went into the meeting in a fairly aggressive mood.



WOMEN demonstrating for free, legal abortions outside the Chamber of Deputies in Mexico City. It's estimated that one million illegal abortion are performed in Mexico each year. Death, sterility, pain and misery are the result of botched operations. Mexico is an overwhelmingly Catholic country.



1 A bloke puts up a girlie calendar in the office. Do you
 a draw graffiti on it
 b put up your David Soul (in his swimming trunks) poster next to it
 c tear down the girlie calendar and replace it with your 1978 Women's Voice calendar

2 How many school children are not claiming free school dinners that they are entitled to?
 a 50,000
 b 100,000
 c 300,000

3 Your boss announces that your twilight shift is no longer needed. Do you
 a scream hysterically—'You're just like all the rest. You use us till it suits you to get rid of us.'
 b call a mass meeting
 c put your coat on

4 What percentage of British women are on the Pill?
 a 27 per cent
 b 60 per cent
 c 75 per cent

5 What did Judge Sutcliffe advise the jury in a rape case in April 1976?
 a 'It is well known that women in particular, and small boys, are liable to be untruthful and invent stories.'
 b 'It is dangerous to convict on the uncorroborated evidence of a woman.'
 c 'You're 5'8" ... you're too tall to be raped.'

6 You are selling Women's Voice in the market. The National Front turn up with their filth. Do you
 a leave quietly, hoping they won't attack you
 b call the police
 c shout twice as loud, while one of you telephones for reinforcements

7 What percentage of women, according to the Hite Report, seldom or never reach orgasm during intercourse?
 a 51 per cent
 b 23 per cent
 c 8 per cent

8 You start a new job and the first morning there you are told to make the tea. Do you
 a ask them how many sugars, and serve arsenic on the side.
 b drop the tea pot on the floor, spill the box of tea, break all the cups and nearly all the saucers, and block the sink
 c make a cup for yourself and carry on with your work.

9 The council announces it is closing your nursery. Do you
 a decide they're right about the deprivation of latch key kids and become a full-time mum
 b get all the mums to take their kids to the next council meeting
 c dash to find a childminder locally

10 How many of the housewives interviewed by a psychiatrist in South London showed medical signs of severe depression?
 a 20 per cent
 b 40 per cent
 c 60 per cent

11 Your boyfriend/husband threatens to leave you if you don't lose 2 stone. Do you
 a start your grapefruit and egg diet immediately and put pictures of Twiggy on the fridge
 b ignore him and call his bluff
 c eat another piece of chocolate gateau and ask him if he wants help packing

12 A man goes up to your husband/boyfriend and asks 'May I dance with your missus?' Do you
 a flutter your eyelashes and cuddle close
 b dance with him and tread on his feet and kick his ankles
 c suggest he dances with your husband

13 How much less are women paid than men (full-time workers)?
 a £24
 b £9
 c the same. 1976 was Equal Pay Year, you remember.

14 Which area of the country is worst for providing abortions on the National Health Service?
 a Cheltenham
 b South Birmingham
 c Lincoln

15 Your friend is being battered by her husband. Do you
 a beat up her husband
 b let her cry on your shoulder and get out the ice packs
 c call the police, knowing you will be told they can't interfere in 'family matters'

16 Who said, 'We don't need an Equal Opportunities Commission. 80 per cent of women consider they are equal already.'
 a Marie Paterson
 b Mary Whitehouse
 c Rhodes Boyson MP

17 You have varicose veins and are told you will be put on the waiting list for 'minor operations'—waiting time approximately 7 years. Do you
 a chain yourself to the nearest hospital bed
 b buy yourself a pair of Pretty Polly support stockings
 c scream hysterically

18 Your little girl wants a football for her birthday. Do you
 a try to distract her with tap dancing lessons
 b get her the football and go out to practise with her
 c buy her a Cindy doll instead

Now turn to the bottom of page 23 for the answers and your liberation rating!

USA Equal rights. Conference report by Barbara Winslow

IN AMERICA, as in Britain, womens rights have both advanced and been under attack in recent years.

This fact was highlighted dramatically in Houston, Texas, over the weekend of November 18th and 19th.

The United States government had organised and paid for a vast National Women's Convention. Over 15,000 women came from all over the country to the Sam Houston Coliseum. There they debated a National Plan of Action on women's rights, to be presented to President Jimmy Carter and the Congress.

But meanwhile, down the road at the Houston Astrodome, another 11,000 women had gathered. Their counter conference was backed by right wing and various church organisations. They came to protest against the impact of the women's movement—against 'communists' and 'lesbians', against 'abortion and the destruction of the family'.

The Women's Rights Convention followed the 1975 International Women's Year celebration. The resolutions covered such subjects as women in the arts and in the media, battered women, women in employment and education. The most controversial resolutions, which were passed with a great deal of enthusiasm, were in favour of the Equal Rights Amendment, increased federal funds for abortion, and an end to discrimination against homosexuals.

Many of the famous women who attended are active Democratic Party supporters, women like Bella Abzug, Gloria Steinem and Betty Frieden. Roslyn Carter and Betty Ford were there too. For them the conference was a great success, 'the most important event for women in the twentieth century.' They believe that Jimmy Carter will see their resolutions safely through congress. They have faith that the courts will uphold women's rights. It's like asking the fox to guard the chicken coop. It is the courts and the congress that have led the attacks on women's rights over the past two years.

There have also been plenty of attacks from the right wing interest including the Ku Klux Klan represented at the counter conference. These people are growing in strength and organisation. Right now their chief target is homosexuals, and helping the attack has come neanderthal ex beauty-queen



FEMINISTS confront men carrying racialist placards outside the conference hall.

Anita Bryant, Florida's answer to Mary Whitehouse.

However, it is the Supreme Court that has paved the way. In 1975 it ruled that homosexual acts between consenting adults in private were illegal. In 1976 the California State Supreme Court ruled that teachers sacked for being gay were not entitled to job protection.

In the late sixties and early seventies many gains were made. For instance, some employers introduced positive discrimination for women. In other words, to help make up for the fact that they had discriminated against women in the past, they would employ a larger quota of women, or they would employ women in preference to men. They would also give special consideration to women when it came to 'seniority', so that women would not suffer from always being the last ones to have been employed.

But recently these practices have been under attack in the courts. In 1976 the Supreme Court ruled against 'compensatory seniority'. And now positive discrimination is under attack in the Bakke case.

The Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, which is charged with enforcing civil rights legislation, is of no use either. It has a backlog of 150,000 cases, most of which are over 7 years old. Recently the

EEOC threw out 50,000 discrimination cases as unresolvable, and another 25,000 were resolved all in favour of the employers.

Even abortion rights, one of the greatest legal advances for women, have been under attack. Mainly as a result of the mass radical women's movement of the late sixties and early seventies, the Supreme Court ruled in 1973 that abortion was legal. But in the last few years the Congress has proceeded to make it impossible for thousands of poor women to obtain abortions. The recent Hyde Amendment has cut off federal welfare funds for abortions for poor women. The Planned Parenthood Organisation has estimated that 1,000 women a year will die from illegal abortions as a result.

Other cutbacks made by Congress include social services, child-care centres and education. At the time of writing Cleveland Ohio schools are closed because the city has no money to pay the teachers.

All these economic factors have made life harder for women and no amount of well-worded resolutions will alter the fact.

Women's wages in relation to men's are going down. In 1966 women who worked earned on average 63 per cent of what men earned. By 1970 the average had fallen to 59 per cent. In 1976 it was only 57 per cent. Black

women have it even harder. Their average is less than half that of a white male worker.

Although in the early seventies many women were able to get previously all-male jobs, such as in the car factories, in mining and the building industry, when the recession came, these women were the first to be laid-off. You may have seen the American television programmes that reflect the advance of women, especially the series that show tough and lively women cops. But in the public sector too women have quickly lost the jobs they gained.

Unemployment among women in America is twice as high as among men. Unemployment for black women is twice that for white women. A staggering 43 per cent of black teenage women are unemployed. That's what the TV shows don't tell you.

These are the cold, hard facts of life for women in the United States. And those women leaders who urge us to put our faith in the Democratic Party have little to say about them. They don't have any answers to the social malaise that has wrecked the inner cities and led to ever-increasing rape, and wife and child battering.

The advances made by women in the late sixties and early seventies were made as a result of an independent, militant women's movement out on the streets. It wasn't particularly ladylike and it wasn't respect-

table. But it made its voice heard.

The establishment has tried to shackle that militancy through lengthy test cases and all kinds of commissions and procedures. The Democratic Party came late in the day, spotting a chance to channel our energies and revitalise itself. The union leaders who have failed miserably to fight for women's jobs, and who have failed to organise 32 million women workers out of a total female workforce of 36 millions—even they have muscled in via the Coalition of Labour Union Women.

The authorities have done their best to make women's protest respectable. And now they have organised a National Women's Convention. It was chaired by women, policed by women, run and organised by women. Yet this was all done within the structure of a legal and party political system dominated by men.

Women in America had yet another lesson in why you can't trust other people, you have to fight for yourself.

Not that all the rhetoric and mudslinging has ceased in the conference halls of Houston; the hard fight for Women's Rights is back on—in the workplaces, the unions, the schools and the communities.

Barbara Winslow is a member of the International Socialist Organisation (ISO) our fraternal organisation in the United States.



ALL the President's Women on the platform.

“This whole conference lacks passion. It's tacky. It's completely respectable.”

Kate Millett

THE WORLD



EDITOR DETAINED

THE WORLD was South Africa's largest selling black newspaper, a 'black consciousness' newspaper. Its motto was 'Our own, our only paper'.

It was banned on 19 October 1977. Its editor, Mr Percy Qoboza, was detained without trial. He is still in prison.

Here are just a few articles which appeared last summer before it was banned. They speak for themselves of the lives that black women in South Africa suffer.

Easing those pay day blues

PAYDAY can be exhausting and depressing if you are a pensioner. But a group of women in Tembisa are doing something about it.

From as early as 5 am pensioners start trickling into the yard of the municipality office in Tembisa where they have to stand in long queues until 4pm. On summer days they have to stand in the scorching sun or pouring rain because there is no shelter for them.

Winter

Come winter and they have to huddle together and try to keep their arthritic and rheumatic limbs as warm as possible. By the time they get home

TERROR TRIAL WOMAN SPEAKS OUT

'My children are used to this'

MRS RITA Ndzanga, who who was acquitted a few days ago on charges under the Terrorism Act spoke of her bitterness over losing her husband, Mr Lawrence Ndzanga who died while being in detention under Section Six of the Terrorism Act.

'How can I be happy when I lost my husband ... when I see around me orphans and widows weeping for their loved ones who died under the same circumstances,' said the woman whose life is marked with misery and



were left alone.

'I have never had any good times with my children. I have never taken them on holiday. That is the type of

'I only managed to pay bail after he was buried.'

She wondered what would have happened if charitable organisations and

WOMEN HIT OUT AT ROSETTE

HELL HATH no fury like black women insulted. This The World deduced from people's reactions to Rosette Motsepe's comment made at the multiracial Miss South Africa contest at the weekend.

The Colosseum Theatre was packed with whites and a sprinkling of blacks. Out of the 18 finalists for the Miss South Africa title only two were black.

The master of ceremonies asked Miss Rosette Motsepe, last year's black Miss Africa

by the time they get home they are so tired, hungry and depressed, the meagre sum they have received means little to them.

ACQUITTED

The Committee for Care of the Aged was born in February last year when a few women in Tembisa decided to do something to brighten the pensioners' payday. They give food to the pensioners and try to keep them occupied with sewing and handicrafts. The food may be soup and bread or cakes and cold drinks, depending on what the organisation has. 2 June 1977

She was banned in 1964, a year after her husband was banned. 'Before the five-year ban had expired, I was detained. This was in 1969, I was in detention for 17 months. I was later charged under the Terrorism Act in 1970. I was later acquitted,' she said. 'I was banned again in 1970. The ban expired in 1977.

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life they have grown used to. 'What adds to my misery is that when I returned, my elder son John was missing. I don't know what could have happened to him. He could be dead, who knows?' she asked. She is bitter with the Government. 'My husband died on January 9. He was detained on November 16. But because of the powers that be, I could not even attend his funeral.

ALONE

At one stage the couple spent 17 months in detention while their children

THE DUSTBIN BABIES

WHAT MAKES a mother flee a hospital ward leaving her baby behind her, or after being discharged walk away empty handed leaving her baby swaddled in a meagre blanket in the hospital grounds?

Is she being heartless, or is it because she herself has no home, no money to feed and clothe the child and no prospect of employment?

More and more Durban women are abandoning their babies in dustbins, hospitals, gutters and parks because they are unable to care for them.

Some months as many as 20 destitute infants are handled by the Bantu Child Welfare Society.

The society offers homes to unwanted children and has a long list of prospective adoptive parents and also the names of foster parents who would care for the child at a small fee until his natural mother is able to bring him up herself. But the desperate mothers who abandon their offspring don't know this.

There are a large number of women who as domestics are living a lonely existence in the backyards of their employers'

friends had not taken care of her three children. **HOPE** 'They provided everything for them,' she said. Her children are Maria (18), Ezekiel (16) and Cecil (13). They are all at school. A demonstration of the hopelessness in which she finds herself, came out when she said, 'I hope other families can have their loved ones back alive.' 31 May, 1977

FAMILIES WHO WAIT

MR TITUS 'Bushy' Moloto has been referred to six police stations since his eldest son was detained in July last year—but he still does not know where he is.

His second son, Albert has also been detained and this week 'celebrates' 120 days behind bars. This is the agony of this Moletane father of six. He is one of many parents who are waiting. 8 June 1977



homes. Because of the migratory labour system, they usually have babies by men who have left their own families in the rural areas. As soon as the man hears that his urban girlfriend has fallen pregnant he abandons her.

JOBS

A pregnant woman in domestic service is in turn forced to abandon her baby as she needs to keep her job to keep herself.

Mothers who do go to Bantu Child Welfare begging to give their children up for adoption invariably have no homes, and no prospect of employment. And the prospects of employment are getting worse and worse. 8 June 1977

South to give a reason for the contest.

Miss Motsepe fluttered her eyelashes and demurely told the audience that black girls were too busy making babies to groom themselves for such contests.

CHILDREN

Nikki, a student from Soweto is disappointed in Rosette. 'I expected her to be quite intelligent since she was at university. For her to say such a thing is an insult to the people. In fact she is an embarrassment to the whole black nation.'

Margaret Molefe who works in a bookshop in town said, 'If black women are busy making children, this is the right time to do that. The black nation has lost many children in the recent struggles and it is only right to replace them,' she said.

Mrs M Tshabalala, a hairdresser in town, said black girls had better thing to worry about than trivialities like the Miss World contest. Better things like what? I asked.

'More pressing matters like where the next meal come from and will everybody come home safely today?' she said soberly. 28 September 1977

Mother evicted from her home

A 36-YEAR OLD Mamelodi mother who lived with her family in the township for the past fifteen years, was kicked out of her home by officials of the Bantu Affairs Administration Board for Central Transvaal. 'Because it had been sold without her knowledge' by her husband.

Mrs Koti Kate Makhubela, who lived at 1677, Section E Mamelodi, was evicted from her home by Mr Jordan, a superintendent in the township. The house is now being occupied by Mr Paulos Ntsane, a brother-in-law of Mrs Makhubela's husband.

Mrs Makhubela said she had lived in the house from 1962 with her husband and two children, Stanley, 13 and Thandie, 9. Her husband left her in 1975.

Mrs Makhubela, who is still legally married to her husband, said she was told by Mr Jordan that she will have to leave the house 'like it or not' because her husband had sold it to Mr Ntsane. 20 July 1977

THIS CRUMBY TWILIGHT SHIFT TAKES THE BISCUIT

I work the twilight shift, 5.15 to 9.45 at night in Gray Dunn's biscuit factory. Twilight shifts are supposed to be of great benefit to women with children who want to go out to work, but who would think that 24 hours could revolve around 4½ hours on the conveyor belt?

My family life is practically nil. All my time is taken up with organising my life to suit my job. The only time I see my husband is for one hour at night when

we are both tired. He often has to work overtime at the weekends too.

I get up at 7.45 and get Sean, my oldest boy, ready for school. Monday, Wednesday and Friday are more hectic than usual as these are playgroup days for Julie, my other child. You would have thought this would give me a bit of a break, but it only lasts from 9.30 to 11.30 and there is hardly time to get back home in between. So I just stay

there.

I get home with Julie after 12, make the lunch, rush through the day's housework in time for Sean to come home from school at 3pm. I give him a quick snack and then get both of them ready to take to my mother-in-law's for 3.50, in time for me to start my shift.

There are about 400 women working on the twilight shift. It's the time when they can get out and leave their husbands to look after the kids. But there's no peace either on the conveyor belt. This factory works 24 hours, non-stop production. You need to be able to lip read to survive, the machinery is so noisy. The building is antiquated, safety standards are at a minimum, and there's little protective clothing.

Because the union is very weak in the factory there is little consultation between the shop stewards and the workers, no union meetings and there are no shop stewards at all for some sections. There is no provision for union meetings during working hours so for us it is impossible to ever go to a meeting anyway. No wonder women workers are uninterested in the union. All of this makes it very difficult for those of us who would like to see a change.

One way I see of solving this is by informing women of what is really going on in the factory, and what their rights are. This can be done by producing Womens Voice leaflets encouraging women to take part in union activities and so feel less isolated.

We have already done this in some womens factories in Glasgow and we're going to do it in mine after this article has started the ball rolling!

A biscuit worker

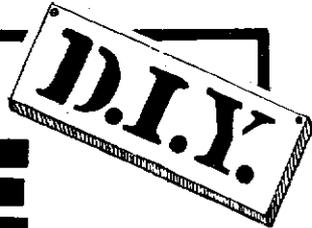
Glasgow Womens Voice.

Photo: Hackney Flashers



We often talk in Womens Voice of bulletins, leaflets, petitions that Womens Voice groups are putting out around factories and estates. It's one way of involving more women in the things we are fighting for.. But how can you produce your own if you have never done it before? Where do you start?

Womens VOICE



When you've got all your material together, check it through to make sure it's written in a way that is easy to understand. Simplicity is the key.

Try and use examples to prove your point and some statistics if necessary - don't put in graphs and figures just to show you know more than the people you're trying to convince. Try to keep your arguments short, don't ramble or repeat yourself.

To do the next step you need to know what printing method you are going to use. An ink duplicator is the most common and simplest method; your local Womens Voice group, SWP branch or college should have access to one.

ELECTROSTENCILS

Choose the size of paper you want to use. Womens Voice is the most common size, A4, or you can go down to half this size, A5. Paste down on one sheet your headline, typed columns of writing, cartoons, just as you want them to appear on the finished thing. Then you make a stencil from this artwork.

If you don't know anyone who has an electrostencil machine, try local colleges, community centres and finally (because they'll be expensive) professional printers. The electrostencil goes on the duplicator just like an ordinary stencil.

LAYOUT, POINTS TO REMEMBER

- * Neat typing is important
- * Don't cram too much onto one sheet
- * Leave a single space between lines and a double space between paragraphs
- * Keep to short paragraphs and leave a gap at the top and bottom of the page. Too much close print is unreadable and boring
- * Start by making a rough copy on a sheet of paper to see what it will look like. Look at the way Womens Voice is laid out for ideas
- * For electrostencils use Letraset for headlines

The way a printed sheet looks is nearly as important as the content, more important even if it is so badly produced that no one will want to read it!

DUPLICATING

When the stencil is ready it is fitted face down onto the cylinder of the duplicator and the backing sheet is torn off. Use proper duplicating paper as it is more absorbant.

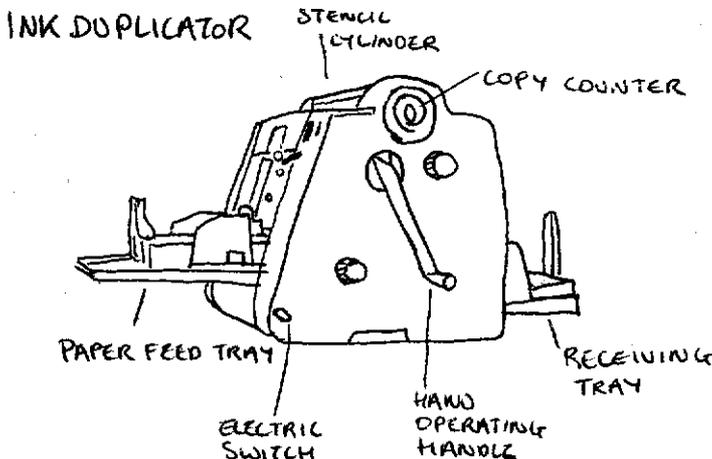
The machine is then operated by hand or electricity to produce the finished copies. The paper passes through rollers which bring it into contact with the revolving cylinder on which the stencil is stretched. The ink passes through the impression on the stencil, reproducing the image that was cut into the stencil.

Get someone to show you if you have not used a duplicator before. It's simple but messy if you don't know how.

Most of the points made here are purely technical. While that side of it is essential, the thing that will bring a bulletin alive or kill it stone dead is the style of writing, the humour, the variety of the content and most important, how well it relates to the women you are talking to. Don't give up after the first attempt even if it doesn't go down as well as you had hoped.

Keep trying. Whatever you do it is bound to be better than the Sun, Mirror or Woman's Realm!

LESLEY KLINE



DUPLICATORS

Ink duplicators are normally suitable for making up to about 4000 copies from a master copy called a stencil. This is a thin sheet with a special wax-like coating available from stationers' shops. Typing, writing or drawing on it in the correct way cuts the surface coating to allow the ink to pass through the shapes formed. The top is perforated so that it can be attached to a duplicator.

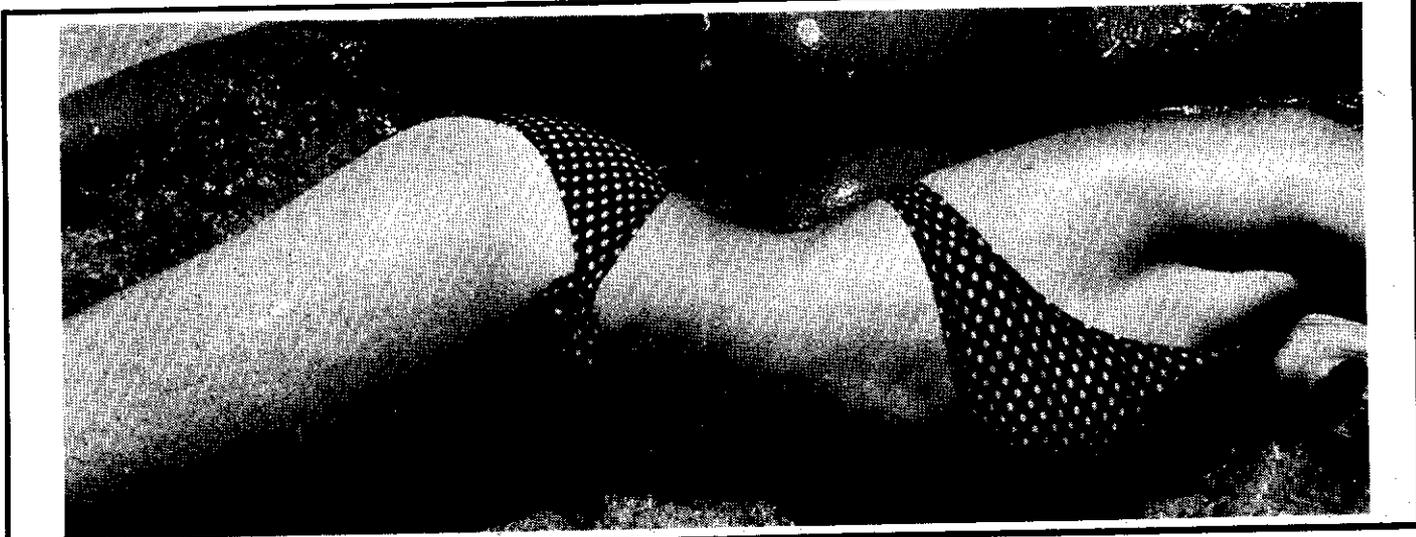
If you are going to type the stencil (or part of it) switch the typewriter ribbon off and clean the keys (with an old toothbrush) so they cut properly.

Stylus pens with steel tips can be bought quite cheaply and used for writing or drawing. Or use a finely pointed biro.

Typing mistakes can easily be corrected on stencils by using correcting fluid or nail varnish. It simply restores the wax surface when you paint it on. Don't try and correct large areas like a paragraph. Start again.

As these stencils are delicate, you are fairly limited in what you can draw. So, if you want to use cartoons or proper headings or want a more professional looking finished product you should have an electrostencil made.

Not everyone wants a nice plump bird for Christmas.



Love of Worker Bees by Alexandra Kollontai Virago £2.50

Alexandra Kollontai was born in Russia in 1872. In 1898 she went to Zurich to study, and it was here that she made her commitment to revolutionary politics, and in 1915 she joined the Bolshevik party.

AS FAR back as 1906, she had taken a particular interest in the role of women and had noticed 'how little our party concerned itself with the fate of women of the working class and how meagre was its interest in their liberation.' Unlike the bourgeois feminists who isolated the feminist struggle from the fight to change the rest of society, Kollontai realised that women would only be liberated by the process that would liberate the whole of society—the workers' revolution. But she realised that legal changes in themselves would not be enough—a change inside the heads of women and men had to occur that would make equality a reality.

She worked hard, within the party and within the working class movement, to try and pinpoint the processes which would change women's ideas of themselves. She early realised the importance of work. Women isolated within the home spent their whole lives in hope of romantic fulfilment, of finding true love. Men absorbed themselves in loving when it was there, at work outside the home in other things.

For women, even work under capitalism

could be partially liberating. 'As she proves herself an active tiny wheel in the mechanism of the economy so her horizon, the walls of her home, collapse... love ceases to be the only substance of her life', Kollontai wrote in her autobiography.

The family too, would have to be changed if women were to be truly equal. But the change in material conditions had to be accompanied by a change of attitude.

In 1917 the revolutionary Russian government brought

bearing the whole burden of maternity even material cares, because many women now found life alone as a result of war and other circumstances".

It is the inside search for the new woman which she writes about in her novel and two short stories republished under the title *Love of Worker Bees*.

First published in 1923, the book was later dismissed by Kollontai herself as being unimportant as it was not of a 'high literary standard. But while it may not be fine

book shows how morality was affected by economics.

The New Economic Policy (NEP) saw the rise of the small business man, the entrepreneur, the black marketeer. With them came a revival of the old morality—managers who had servants and silk sheets, men who could buy the starving women on the streets, women who were 'kept' instead of working.

What's what surrounded Vasilisa in 'Love of Worker Bees'. Still in love with a husband she no longer liked, she tried desperately to be the pretty female he wanted. Finally she gave up and left him to the mistress she was sure he really loved.

Was all the pain necessary? Kollontai's sympathies are clear when she describes Vasilisa's thoughts on the subject. 'To be alive was not a question of whether you were happy or unhappy, whether you worked or whether you struggled. To be alive was to be like that bee there, circling over the lilac, like the birds carolling to each other in the boughs of the trees, like the grasshoppers chirping in the grass'.

'Sisters' is the story of a woman who gets to talk with the prostitute her husband has brought home. Both are poverty struck and miserable. Accused of romanticising by her critics, the reality was that the revolution was dying, and could not solve such situations.

'Three Generations' tells the story of how three succeeding generations of women view their marriages and their sexual relationships. Love means something quite different to each of them, depending on the world they find themselves in. Each looks for fulfilment in different ways—shocking the other with her views.

This book is well worth reading. It's ex-

pensive though, so get your library to buy it. And read Kollontai herself first rather than the introduction and afterword.

Kollontai was a revolutionary socialist, and like the rest of the Bolsheviks she fought for the socialist revolution on all fronts. But the Russian revolution failed, and with it the attempts to revolutionise sexual and emotional relationships. This is the context in which *Love of Worker Bees* must be read.

Kollontai's book gives us an insight into how the general situation affected the struggle to change morality and sexual relations. It's sad and unromantic. How many of us could write as honestly about our failures?

Anna Paczuska.

Read any good books lately?

I WANTED to do a 'Book of the Year' section for this month's *Womens Voice* until I started to ask the women I met what books they most enjoyed reading during 1977. The plan collapsed.

Almost everyone I spoke to had read and enjoyed the same books—novels from the Bookmarx Club. So after seven different people had told me how wonderful *Daughter of Earth* was, I gave up the attempt to do any kind of wide-ranging survey, and present instead the results of a highly unrepresentative straw poll.

Best Loved book of 1977 must be *Daughter of Earth* by Agnes Smedley. (Virago £1.95) It's an autobiographical novel, and vividly describes the fierce struggles of a working class woman in America in the early years of the century who not only became a revolutionary socialist but was always,



Alexandra Kollontai

about many legal changes in the status of women. Kollontai herself occupied a leading position as Minister for Social Welfare. But that wasn't enough.

Two years after the revolution Kollontai wrote: 'Women had received all the rights, but in practice they still lived under the old yoke; without authority in family life, enslaved by a thousand menial household chores,

literature, it does give a vivid and thought provoking picture of the changes that went on in post-revolutionary Russia.

Set in the period of the New Economic Policy, which Kollontai fiercely opposed, the party was trying desperately to revive industry and keep the revolution intact until workers in the rest of Europe would join them. It was an impossible task, and this

passionately, a gut feminist. "Powerful, passionate and inspiring".

Running a close second, and also a book that makes peoples' eyes light up when it's mentioned, is *Gods Bits of Wood*, by Sembene Ousmane. (Heinemann £1.20) Set during a great strike of railway workers in Nigeria in 1947 it shows the power and imagination that ordinary individuals are capable of. "Fantastic, really interesting. Shows how the women, through different types of action, pushed ahead of the men during the strike".

Left Hand of Darkness by Ursula Le Guin (Panther) 'an exciting science fiction story that explores what life could be like in a different sort of society, and *Worker in a Workers State* by Miklos Haraszti (Penguin 85p), a fascinating and extraordinary account of how workers are treated in Eastern Europe, were two more Bookmarx books that got special mentions.

Fear of Flying by Erica Jong (Panther 75p) got "top marks for verve", and *Kinflicks* by Lisa Alther (Penguin 95p) is recommended as a really witty book about sex.

German communist artist John Heartfield pioneered the use of photo montage during the rise of the nazis and the book of his work "sparks off lots of ideas".

The Suffragette Movement by Sylvia Pankhurst (Virago £2.95) wins the prize for the book most people were planning to read over the Christmas holiday.

Finally, although they came out in 1976, I'd like to remind everyone of the books of poems by Brecht (*Eyre Methuen* £1.95) a constant source of illumination and pleasure.

Ellana Dallas

A Love Affair With The World

Quentin Crisp. One of the bravest men of our century. This play, *The Naked Civil Servant*, was one repeat that I cancelled everything else to watch.

QUENTIN CRISP, who refused to deny or hide his homosexuality in a time when the law

forbade it, even in private and between adults, led a dog's life. Beaten, abused, harassed by neighbours and police, he launched himself on a crusade of exhibitionism.

He declared to the world that he was an effeminate homosexual. He used the female symbols, not to try to become female, but because it was a language that the world would understand, could not fail to understand.

This play is a masterpiece. It does not romanticise Crisp. It does not abuse or patronise him. It is sharply satirical, extremely funny, and very brave.

Made at a time when liberal attitudes towards homosexuality (and women's rights) were on the wane, it took a long time and a long battle to win a showing. When it was finally screened late in 1975, it won awards of all sorts and led Crisp into what he called 'a

love affair with the world.' He won his recognition, so dearly sought, he won his acceptance, and he deserved it.

Of course, it doesn't really make things any better for other homosexuals, men or women. But his sheer insistence does prove that homosexuality is a human right. It is not a disease, social or otherwise. He had been exempted from the forces because he was 'suffering from sexual perversion'. As he said from the dock, he was a sexual pervert, yes, but he wasn't sure about suffering from it!

Sexuality is the choice of the individual. It is for each to define her or his own sexuality. Although heterosexuality is accepted as the norm today, this does not make it the only valid form of sexual expression.

Quentin Crisp's life was devoted to legitimising homosexuality, not through the law, but by confronting people with its reality. Laws won't change things if people's attitudes are not changed, if society is not changed.

Quentin Crisp the individual has achieved a great deal. Homosexuals in general have achieved far less. When the film was first shown in 1975, and even more so now in 1978, Crisp still has to abide by the golden rule. Do not look at anyone unless forced to do so. Do not speak to anyone unless spoken to.

We must applaud the efforts of Quentin Crisp, and of John Hurt who played him so well, but we must set about building a society where communication between individuals, speaking, smiling, be free and unfettered, regardless of sexuality.
Mary Ann Stuart



Picture: Thomas F. V.

John Hurt as Quentin Crisp

YOUR VOICE

Have baby - will travel

Dear Womens Voice, I was very interested in the article on Shirley Sliwinski whose stillborn child was induced.

During my appointment at the ante-natal clinic my blood pressure had been up (not surprising since I'd been sitting in the queue for an hour and a quarter) and I had been given the usual slip of paper with indecipherable scribble on it. On handing this slip to the receptionist I was not given another appointment but was told to go to ward D at 9am the next day.

Next day I arrived at the ward, was put to bed and spent an extremely boring day knitting. The next day I was told that I was to be induced.

There are two main methods of induction, a hormone drip

inserted into a blood vessel and a hormone tablet which is sucked. Before either of these methods are used however you have an enema, a trip to the toilet and a bath or shower. You are also provided with a hospital gown to prevent your own being soiled, this one open at the back, which is rather draughty as the route from Ward D to the labour wing takes you outside.

Once in the labour wing you have to have your waters broken. For this procedure the doctor wears a disposable glove with 'scissors' attached to the fingers, with which he cuts through the membrane of the bag of waters. When this rather uncomfortable action is over you are provided with a pad which you clutch between your

thighs and off you waddle to a pre-labour ward where you receive your hormones. Eventually labour starts, you have your baby and you go to the maternity ward.

I was lucky in that my own labour only lasted about three hours once it started; but being attached to the drip whilst my daughter was being born restricted my movements. After this experience I made up my mind 'never again'.

But in March this year I was at the ante-natal clinic again so huge and exhausted that I returned to Ward D and was induced again.

I think I would be induced again if it were necessary but the system could be improved by treating the patients like people instead of assembly line components. This will only be possible when we have enough doctors, nurses and midwives to enable them to treat patients as individuals. **Lee Huntrod, Sunderland**

Low Profile but....

Dear Womens Voice, I thought readers might like to hear about the Women's Group formed in Shetland at the beginning of 1977. It's not a socialist group; it's very diverse. Most of us are working or middle class women from the mainland of Britain—incomers to the community.

With the oil, Shetland suddenly has all the advantages and disadvantages of 20th century western technology. Our women's group, with new attitudes to women is one of the changes which sudden industrialisation has brought. We're in a tricky situation, we have to tread carefully in the face of the deeply entrenched traditional attitudes to women and the family. At the same time we as women want to fight against our oppression wherever we are. And now that Shetland is industrialising, these traditional attitudes must change.

Until recently we have kept a fairly low profile, but now that we have gained in strength and confidence we are becoming more activist. A nursery school campaign was suggested—but when we looked into the situation more closely we found that Shetland with its oil-related income is one of the few parts of the country which is actually about to open up nurseries! So now we're publicising our meetings more, and looking into the possibilities of setting up some kind of bookshop.

We'd love to hear from any other feminist or socialist groups especially in other backward or rural areas. **Jane Cook, Shetland.**

what the Sunday Times was saying. Right next to these words are a list of prices for the jewellery: bangle £1350, fine gold bracelet £513.

Need I go on? The point is that since the money is being spent on these types of adverts somebody somewhere must have the money to spend on trinkets. I couldn't imagine what it would be like to have that sort of money in my hand never mind spend it on a useless piece of decoration. Anyway it would look ridiculous with the six jerseys I have to wear because I can't afford my heating bills. **Iinda Jones, East Kilbride**

Dear Womens Voice, I could not believe my eyes! In a book written in 1971 called *Fishing*, London Angler's Association Waters - it has details of all the places you can fish and how much the charges are; and there it was, in black and white - 15p for adults, 7½p for ladies, juniors and old age pensioners! I never knew that only men became adults! **Jenny Davison, North London.**

What kind of man....

Dear Womens Voice I have always been in doubt about the back page of *Womens Voice* with the bit about 'does this advert make you sick? If so...'

I always thought it was a bit obscure. In some cases I have been a bit confused about why exactly I feel sick although the adverts are certainly sickening. They seem to be getting worse instead of better with the advert in issue 12 with the soldier and the voluptuous female in typical pose. Who are we trying to sell *Womens Voice* to? Presuming that it's not our friends and relatives who have read past issues, what are they supposed to think? Are we printing adverts for nylons as somebody said or advertising what a good life a soldier's got in the army? No explanation!

I have just been browsing through the Sunday Times colour supplement and came across an advert which undoubtedly makes me sick. A Christmas advert for jewellery with the words 'what kind of man would give his wife a vacuum cleaner for Christmas?'

If somebody asked me that question I would immediately think 'well, he's obviously broken the 10 per cent wage limit for a start. But that isn't

Demanding Pelicans

Dear Womens Voice, Earlier in the year, you carried an article on the fight for a Pelican crossing on a road here in Gillingham. I thought you might like to hear the latest disgusting tactic employed by the Department of the Environment to stop us getting our crossing.

After a long battle, the County Council had agreed to the provision of the crossing. Then it was all down to the D.O.E.

We waited several months and a report arrived from the Regional Traffic Controller. This office had sent an engineer to the proposed site, 'on a warm sunny day in the school holidays when the children were free to use the play facilities.' The report went on 'a maximum of three children' were seen to play in the play area and only one woman with a pram crossed the road. During the school holidays the council ran organised play groups in this play area and no less than 2011 children made use of them.

The engineer carried out his

traffic census between 11.30am and 12.30 pm and stated that 336 vehicles used the road. In November, an independent census was carried out and between 7.00 am and 7.00 pm 5000 vehicles used the road and 840 people crossed it.

As a local councillor said, this engineer must be blind or the shock of leaving his office proved too much for him.

Armed with these new facts the fight goes on and all the time the women involved are learning more about the 'system' and how to change it. **Anne McBride, Womens Voice Group.**

P. S. Kent County Council have cut the grant made to local councils to help pay for street lighting, and rather than put a fraction of a penny on the rates, Gillingham have cut back and large areas of the town are now in darkness. The same County Council has now launched a campaign for more safety on the roads. They have reached the conclusion that people are knocked down at night because they can't be seen!

YOUR VOICE

Support Gay Rights!

Dear *Womens Voice Gay News* is still under attack. The people who have gone out against *Gay News* are the same people who are against the campaign for free abortion on demand, the same people who withhold child custody from Lesbian mothers. The same people who condone violence against Lesbian women.

The National *Gay News* Defence Committee was formed by women and men to counter-attack the forces ranged against us. Our first effort will be the organisation of a demonstration against the un-

just prosecution of *Gay News*. After the Appeal, whatever the outcome, we will turn our attention to the other specific ways in which our civil liberties are threatened.

The demonstration will take place on the Saturday before the Appeal, some time in the new year. Let's make it a huge demo, a loud demo, a demo they can't ignore!

You can contact the National *Gay News* Defence Committee at 146 Mayall Road, London SE24. Ann Wilson Defence Committee

NAC writes about B'ham demo

Dear Sisters, We were glad to see that *Womens Voice* and *Socialist Worker* put a great deal of effort into mobilising for the abortion demonstration in Birmingham last month. However, we were concerned to notice that at no time either before or after the demonstration did either publication mention that the demonstration was organised by the National Abortion Campaign.

It appears that *Womens Voice*, rather than involving itself in the national campaign is running a parallel campaign

merely taking advantage of our mobilisations when they coincide with SWP policy. We certainly have nothing against separate organisation on this issue, indeed we encourage it, but we don't feel that *Womens Voice*, or any other group, can substitute itself for a broadly based national campaign. In ignoring the existence of NAC we feel that WV and SWP are doing a disservice to us and to their own members, many of whom have themselves helped to build up local NAC groups.

The National Abortion Cam-

paign has had considerable success in gaining support from all sections of the labour and women's movements. Many trade unions, constituency Labour Parties, trades councils and other political groups have affiliated at a national or local level. Some are prepared to publicise the campaign and give financial support but are not always able to turn out their members when necessary. *Womens Voice*, which has the capacity to turn out large numbers of people and draw in others from outside their organisation, has on the other hand failed to provide the concrete support we need in other areas. For example, before the Birmingham demo we made a plea for extra placards and loud speaker equipment. In the event we were short of both, although *Womens Voice* arrived at the demonstration with about 1000 of their own placards and a loudspeaker van.

It is possible of course that the failure to mention NAC was simply an oversight and that the lack of concrete assistance was due to insufficient liaison with the Steering Committee. We would welcome closer liaison with *Womens Voice*, particularly now, with the possibility of another Private Member's Bill, or even a Bill to repeal part of the Offences Against the Person Act, in the New Year. Yours in sisterhood, Susan Watkins, NAC Organiser, for the Steering Committee of NAC.

W.V. replies...

Dear NAC, *Womens Voice* has the capacity to turn out numbers on demonstrations, especially for the abortion campaign, for the very reason that you criticise us in your letter; we run a parallel campaign to that of NAC.

We have always done so. On every demonstration since 1975 we have produced our own leaflets and posters; we have held our own meetings, demos, street meetings local petitions; even now we are publishing our own pamphlet. Because we do have our own organisation we have always and will always work independently of NAC.

Having said that I must make this clear: without NAC there would have been no campaign against the abortion bills. That's why, from the outset, we worked with NAC, built it in many areas, and attempted to influence its direction.

Frustration on that score forced us into a position of having to decide whether we should do less activity whilst we waited on NAC for initiatives, or whether we should increasingly do what we ourselves are now doing.

The frustration with NAC is not just an organisational one. NAC had the potential in its first months to be a massive campaign involving tens of thousands of women. But that first impact was lost and a preoccupation with Parliament and conference set in. Not stirred to action by either, we argued for, we lost, but continued ourselves with activities which would bring us into contact with more working class women, those most seriously affected by any change in the law.

We do not intend to substitute ourselves for NAC: we cannot. A careless mistake on my part (not to mention NAC on our posters and leaflets for Birmingham) may be a reflection of our relations with NAC, but shouldn't be elevated to a great turn about in our policy.

We are not trying to ride in on NAC's activity for our own advantage. We were on the Birmingham demo because we care what happens on the abortion question. That's the principal that will always guide our decisions on the strategy for the campaign.

A lot of this has been said before. We are quite prepared to meet and discuss with you what the future holds for the campaign if the discussion can be a constructive, and friendly, one.

Margaret Renn, SWP womens organiser.



Picture: An Dekker

THE NAC demonstration in Birmingham last October

WV Meetings

● **Aberystwyth WV** discussion groups. Every other Tuesday. Farmers Side Bar.

● **Black Country Womens Voice** meets fortnightly, Sunday afternoons, 2.30 at 27 Glen Court, Compton Road, Wolverhampton. Children very welcome. Phone Wolverhampton 23233 for information about Womens Voice activities and meetings.

● **Cambridge Womens Voice** readers meeting: Tuesday 10 January, 8pm, 13 Bateman Street, Basement flat Cambridge. Discussion about WV magazine and work for the Womens Voice group.

● **Canterbury Womens Voice** group meets fortnightly on Tuesdays at 8pm at the Jolly Sailor, Northgate, Canterbury. January 10: Women and the National Front January 24: The Politics of Womens Voice

● **Cardiff Womens Voice** Group meets Tuesdays. Every fortnight 7.30pm at SWP Bookshop, 58 Bridge Street. Look for us in the Hope and Anchor next door if you're early. If you need a baby-sitter, phone Bronwen at Cardiff 43470 (evenings).

● **Edinburgh WV.** For information about WV work, contact Susie at Book Marx, 130 Morrison Street, Edinburgh. Open 10am - 6pm everyday and most evenings.

● **Greater Manchester Womens Voice Rally** January 21, 11am to 5pm, at Squat, Devas Street, off Oxford Road. Talks discussion, film, food, creche. Disco in the evening, 8pm, in Squat.

● **Hackney Womens Voice Public Meeting.** Tuesday 10 January, Dalston Library, Dalston Lane, 8pm. Don't Lick the Boot that Grinds You Down. Gill Brown tells how fascism puts women too, 'in their place'.

● **Hammersmith Womens Voice Group** is now meeting every second and last Monday in the month. Contact: Eileen 748 5655, Laura 602 5923.

● **Prostitutes all over the country have been organising** together to combat police harassment, prison sentences and fines. Come and hear what the representatives of the The Programme for the Reform of the Law on Soliciting (P.R.O.S.)

Islington, Lea Valley and Crouch End Womens Voice groups public meeting **Ring three times for Suzi!** Three speakers from P.R.O.S. Monday 30th January, 7.30pm Stroud Green School, Ennis Road Finsbury Park, N4. If you need a babysitter ring Alison 251 3175 or Diane 348 2041.

● **Plymouth Womens Voice** meets every other Wednesday. Next meeting 11 January, 8pm, Virginia House, Settlement Palace Street. Speaker and discussion on Womens Health.

● **South East London Womens Voice** meets alternate Mondays at the Womens Centre (above the Task Force shop) Deptford High Street, SE10, 8pm. Further details from Peggy 853 2070 (day)/Anne 855 1920 (eves.).

● **South London Womens Voice** meets alternate Tuesdays 8.00. Right to Work Centre, 21 Mayall Rd, Brixton. For further details phone Nicky 737 1791 or Linda 737 0914.

● **South West London Womens Voice** meets alternative Tuesdays at 7.45, details from your WV seller.

Gay Groups

● **SWP Gay Group** meets every other Monday. Ring Richard 790 2454 for details

fun

● **In Our Way, a new musical play** by the Womens Theatre Group is an hour long entertainment with songs and comedy about women. How, in spite of the changes in the law and the efforts of some trade unions and organisations, they still find it difficult to take up opportunities and push themselves forward. For more information about the play, bookings etc write to the Womens Theatre Group, 27 Stepney Green, London, E1.

● **She Asked For It:** From 16 January CounterAct Theatre Group will be presenting a play against rape. We want the play to be used by Womens Groups, TU branches and students all over the country as a start for discussion and action against rape, and all other forms of women's oppression. If you are interested in booking the play please

contact Debbie or Dave at CounterAct 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1R OAT Tel: 01-251 4977

Discos 'n fun

● **Stand up and pogo for your rights:** a new wave benefit for the National Abortion Campaign with X-Ray Spex, the Sadista Sisters, Dead Fingers Talk and Black Slate. Sunday 15 January at the Roundhouse (Chalk Farm Tube) 5.30pm, Tickets £1.50 from Roundhouse box office, telephone 01-267 2564.

Conference

● **Socialist Feminist National Conference** in Manchester, January 28th and 29th. Women wanting to go should register in advance, (£2.50: £1.50 for non wage-earners or for one day only,) from Womens Centre, 86 King Street, Lancaster. Late registration will cost 50p extra.

Do a friend a favour
Send her a subscription to
Womens Voice for 1978,
and we'll send her, free, a
Womens Voice calendar.

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Womens Voice

THIS ADVERT DEGRADES WOMEN!

● **Womens Voice stickers**—special peel-off variety for speedy application to suitable adverts. Three sheets for 50p (including postage) Money with orders to: Womens Voice 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1 a 1 point; b 2 points; c 3 points
- 2 a 0; b 0; c 3 points
- 3 a 0; b 3 c -2
- 4 a 0; b 3; c 0
- 5 a 3; b 0. This was Judge Rigg speaking at the Old Bailey in July 1975 at another rape case. c 0. This was a GP.

- 6 a 0; b 1; c 3
- 7 a 3. Sad but true. b 0; c 0
- 8 a 2; b 2; c 3.
- 9 a 0; b 3; c 0
- 10 a 0; b 0; c 3. Most of the women were not receiving treatment, and did not realise they were ill.
- 11 a 0; b 2; c 3.
- 12 a 0; b 2; c 3.

- 13 a 3. The averages are £45.20 and £69.20. The gap between male and female *non-manual* workers is even greater—over £30.
- b 0; c -2.
- 14 a 0; b 3 only 6 per cent could get a NHS abortion; c 0.
- 15 a 3; b 2; c 1.

- 16 a 0; b 1; c 3.
 - 17 a 3; b 1; c 0.
 - 18 a 0; b 3; c -1.
- Now count up your score and see how you register on our liberation scale.
- Less than 15:** you have a long way to go. How about giving Germaine Greer a read and then try the quiz again.

Between 15 and 35: you're on your way; still some old cobwebs to shake out of your hair (last traces of hair lacquer?) but if you carry on reading Womens Voice regularly all should be well.

Over 40: Congratulations, you are MS LIBERATION, 1978!

WHAT IS GOING ON? meetings discos badges pamphlets campaigns.

HERSTORY: THE PEASANTS' REVOLT

The ratinfested structure that was the feudal system finally rotted away...



In 1348 the BLACK DEATH struck. A third of England's population died. Crops rotted in the field for lack of labour.



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