

# Womens **VOICE**

August '78

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Issue 19



**Health service on the danger list**



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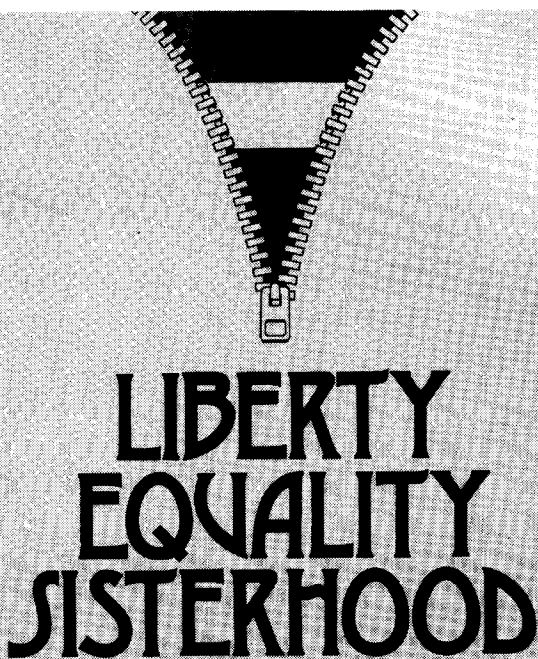
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Organised by the Fawcett Library, City of London Polytechnic under the sponsorship of the Inner London Educational Authority



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**July 6**  
North London Poly,  
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**July 7**  
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**OMORO**

Theatre Company

**Whores  
D'Oeuvres  
by  
Michelene  
Wandor**

**Women's  
Army  
by  
Roger Howard**

at the Young Vic  
10 and 11 July  
7.30pm start

If you want to advertise on these pages write to Womens Voice Box 82, London, E2 for a rate card. Small ads and classified 5p a word, prepaid.

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1899

# GENERAL HOSPITAL

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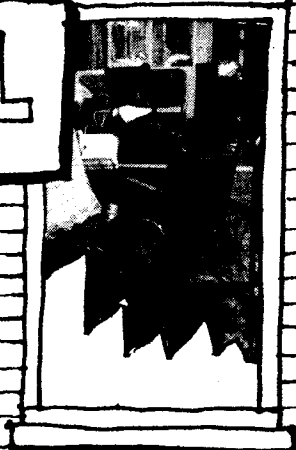
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Cover Photo: Beeban Kidron



# OUR POINT OF VIEW

ON JULY 5th, David Ennals, the Minister of Health and his friends are celebrating thirty years of the National Health Service.

What have we got to celebrate? . . . the closure of another 115 hospitals . . . the loss of one in eight hospital beds in the last ten years . . . the destruction of thousands of jobs . . . the death and suffering caused by long waiting lists and overstuffed hospital wards.

And there's another anniversary this year that's being ignored. It's now ten years since an earlier Labour government reintroduced prescription charges. For ordinary women and men the health service has long since ceased to fulfil its proud promise of the best care for all, free of charge. Today, well over half a million people are on waiting lists for an operation.

Not that there was ever a golden past for the National Health Service. From its beginning, it has been bled by drug companies with their overpricing, and profiteering doctors with their private patients. But in the past few years, the Labour government has really been hacking the service to bits. Using the 'economic crisis' as its excuse, confident that the unions and the suffering communities would not get together to resist, these so-called socialists have been hard at it wrecking our National Health Service. It's *our* service—we more than pay for it out of our taxes.

They say there's not enough money for what we want, but they don't mention the money that the giant drug companies are taking from us in profits. One company, Roche, made £4 million in just one year by selling the tranquillisers Valium and Librium to the health service at inflated prices. That's enough to keep the EGA, the womens hospital, open for four years.

They go on about the economic crisis. Whose economic crisis? The Rolls Royces are still rolling down Bond Street—meanwhile, our long wait at the bus stop pushes us ever nearer that bottle of Valium.

For decades, the Labour Party has had the loyalty and votes of working class women and men because it was Labour that set up the welfare state. Labour that promised better conditions for ordinary people. How has that loyalty been repaid? Not by trying to turn those promises into reality. Not by improving and building welfare services. Just the opposite. Each and every Labour government has used that loyalty to sabotage and help destroy our welfare services. We have seen Labour politicians come out with Tory policies, and this government has used the concessions of the trade union leaders to do a more vicious demolition job on our health service than the Tories themselves could hope to get away with.

Neither Labour politicians nor trade union leaders will stop the cuts. Only if we all fight together, especially the hospital workers themselves, can this destruction be stopped. It can be stopped—The EGA, still open eighteen months after it was supposed to be closed down, shows that. There the hospital workers themselves occupied the premises, and organised as much support as possible from other people—women who use the hospital as well as workers from other hospitals.

Our successful rally in Sheffield proved that small as we are, *Womens Voice* can organise to get a thousand women together.

All of us who were there gained courage from those who stood up and said: 'I've had enough . . . and this is what I'm doing about it.' We all gained strength from realising that every fight has to start somewhere, with somebody digging her heels in. Above all we realised that *all* our contributions help.

As Mel Bartley, from the EGA campaign said at the Rally: 'Anyone who cares about saving our health service can come and help. Don't be shy—get involved with your local health service. Whatever *you* can do to help is valuable, it all adds up.'

## A FULL TIME MOUSEWIFE WITH TWO CHILDREN

Dear *Womens Voice*,

The WV Rally held in Sheffield really opened my eyes to the need for women to unite in the fight for Liberation. Its the first time Ive ever been involved in anything on such a large scale as I experienced at the rally, although Im a regular reader of WV magazine. Personally speaking it took something like that for me to realise that ordinary women like myself are standing up to fight for their rights as the under dogs of this society.

Yours  
Joan Hartnell  
Ferryhill.

*J. Hartnell*



## WHO WEARS THE TROUSERS?

**THE SILLY** headmaster who had banned trousers for women teachers since 1976, has lost.

When the fourteen women teachers at Maiden Earleigh School, Reading, turned up in trousers the other week, headmaster James Dunkley made them stay in a room on their own. But the women held out, and the NUT planned to strike. The head and the governors caved in. 'We will carry on as normal—and wear trousers', said teacher Mrs Norma Bird.

## DEATH OF A THOUSAND CUTS

DEPTFORD Lodge is a small, friendly maternity hospital in Hamilton, Lanarkshire. It is small enough for the nurses to give the mothers the encouragement and attention they often don't get in large hospitals.

But the Area Health Authority want to close Deptford Lodge, and the staff have been fighting for eighteen months to keep their hospital open.

The saga began in 1976 when a baby was born with an infection. The hospital was closed for fumigation for five weeks instead of the two hours necessary. The staff were told that they would be informed beforehand of any closure.

But last December the hospital was again closed for two weeks when two babies developed a rash. The staff realised that Deptford Lodge was being run down deliberately when two sisters and two midwives left in December and were never replaced. Even more ridiculous was the time when one nurse fell ill and the entire hospital was closed for nine weeks.

The Health Board then gave hospital staff the choice of redeployment to another hospital or leave of absence—some choice!

The Health Authorities still claim staff shortage as the reason for closure, but in July 1977 Harry Ewing, Under Secretary of State for Scotland, wrote saying: 'I have urged all Health Boards to consider the possibility of rationalising their services to avoid under-use of resources.'

So the cuts strike again. The only way to keep Deptford Lodge open is for the community to fight for it.

## VICTORY FOR LENA AND SHEILA



photo: Bob Golden

REMEMBER Lena Sheehan and Sheila Murphy? They were the two women on last month's front cover.

They work in the catering department of the Institution of Civil Engineers in London's Westminster. They were earning the princely sum of £23 a week for forty hours work. Their take home pay was an incredible £18.

We're happy to report that since last month's issue of *Womens Voice* was published, the collective pressure of the union members at the Institution has led to Lena and Sheila's pay being doubled!

A Royal Visit to the Institution came at the height of the battle. For that, management spared no expense. As last month's *Womens Voice* reported they put in new carpets, spent thousands on a new oil painting of Her Majesty and did out the lavatory in case the Royal backside should receive the call of nature.

Now frightened of union determination and of more publicity following on the *Womens Voice* article, the civil engineers top brass have given in.

Lena and Sheila are over the moon. They've won implementation of civil service grades and salaries for all staff back-dated to April 1st, and their miserable wages have risen—at a stroke—to £46.88 a week, with a further rise of 9½ per cent in the offing.

They also won the right to an increase in staff, no redundancies, the provision of overalls and working clothes and laundry facilities and they're now eligible to join the institution's pension scheme.

They're having a party to celebrate their victory this month. After that, who knows what they'll be asking for!



## FA CUP—SHE'S ON HER WAY

**TERESA Bennett, banned from playing soccer on a boys' team, has been awarded £250 in a Sex Discrimination Act case.**

**This decision means that girls and boys can now play together in the under-12 teams.**

**There will be repercussions at national and international levels,' said Football Association Chairman Sir Harold Thompson.**

## NO SIR!

TWO girls from a school in North London have been as good as expelled after making a stand against sexist books—which they found in the school library.

Purna Sen and Fiona Marks from Woodhouse School, North Finchley, were outraged to find that their school had recently purchased a book 'Good Grooming for Girls'.

The general theme was 'a woman needs a man to make the world a less frightening place'. Within a matter of minutes Purna and Fiona found three more similar books. All their complaints were ignored.

Purna and Fiona decided to protest by other means. The next Wednesday they turned up at the school in boy's uniform. The shock of seeing girls dressed like boys' brought their case to the attention of the school authority and to the local and national press.

As a result Purna and Fiona were 'suspended' from the school. They were only allowed to sit their A level after signing a document drawn up by the headmaster, Dennis Whitaker, in which they had to agree to 'attend the school in regulation uniform and conduct themselves in a manner that was acceptable to the headmaster'.

They are only allowed into the school for exams, and are escorted from the front door to the examination room and out again.

The response of the school kids in the area is fantastic. On Monday 5 June over 30 local school kids and Women's Voice members picketed the school in support of the girls.

Glynys Howarth



## OPEN OUR NURSERY

IT'S thirty-four years since St John's Primary School, Reading, was condemned. Only this year, is the new school built and ready to move into. It includes a much-needed nursery class with 30 full-day and 60 half-day places.

But Berkshire County Council has decided that although it has built, furnished and equipped the nursery class, it can't afford £7000 to pay the three staff. (That is, unless the council takes up the suggestion of a Tory councillor and

## CHILD MINDERS UNITE

CHILDMINDERS have now formed a National Association. 250 childminders from all corners of the UK met just before Christmas last year to set up the association.

Three brave souls even travelled by overnight boat from Northern Ireland and back again the next night!

We aim to promote the provision of happy, secure and stimulating day-care facilities for young children. The Manchester group of child minders have joined NUPE and are trying to negotiate a similar contract with the local authority to the one the Lambeth childminders have.

If you are a childminder and want more information, contact Mary Lowndes, 4 Linden Park, Levenshulme, Manchester M10 2PN.

uses unpaid volunteer staff or retired teachers—when there are over 30,000 teachers unemployed!)

When we heard about this miserly decision, Reading WV group along with other organisations started the St John's Nursery Campaign to fight back and get the nursery staffed and opened.

First we set up a petition and called a public meeting. On 6 May the campaign supporters, including mothers and kids, picketed a Council meeting. We wanted publicity and to let the Council know there was going to be a lot of noisy opposition. Afterwards we marched through the town centre singing and chanting. The kids banged drums and blew whistles.

We realised we could learn a lot from the Nursery Campaign in South Oxford (May *Womens Voice*) where the nursery was occupied after the council decided to close it down. Our WV group called a public meeting where the nursery workers from Oxford told us about their experiences. As a result an action committee was set up.

Activities planned for the near future include taking the children to the Director of Education's offices and occupying the place. On 11 July we've got an 'access' programme on local radio about the campaign. Then on 22 July we'll be picketing the full Council meeting and handing in our petition.

It promises to be a long campaign. We intend to show Berkshire County Council that women will not accept these cuts. We will fight until St John's Nursery is opened.

Kate Gordon, Reading Women's Voice

## WOMEN AGAINST THE NAZIS

LAST month we had our first meeting to form a Women Against the Nazis group on my estate. It didn't require much work—we leafleted every house on the estate, about 200 in all. Then we went from door to door asking if the women were coming to the meeting, and if so, did they need a babysitter. (We would have sold the WAN pamphlet, but it wasn't finished.) Several women told us that they wanted to get involved, but were unable to come to the meeting. We had the meeting in the community hall, and we asked Miriam Karlin to speak.

Seven women came, which we were really pleased with—they were all ordinary housewives—the women who we have to involve in WAN, because if we don't they'll be supporting Webster's brave young lads.

The WAN group on my estate is planning its work for the next few months; one of the things we want to do is to set up a group on the estate over the road. The NF thugs won't stand a chance if we're organised on every estate in the area!

Peggy Eagle

Now you can see how easy it is! Why don't you organise a meeting to form a group in your street, on your estate? If you need help or advice contact me at the Anti Nazi League, Box 151, London, WC2.

Anna Keene

Women Against the Nazis pamphlet: price 1 for 5p plus 10p p&p; 20 for £1.00 plus 25p p&p; 100 for £5.00 post free on orders of £5 and above. Women Against the Nazis leaflet: £4.50 per 1000 cash with orders to: Anti Nazi League, Box 151, London, WC2.

## SCRAPING BY WITH MRS OPPENHEIMER

DO YOU have difficulty making your money last till the end of the week? Can you afford to buy the kids new shoes? Can you treat yourself to some new clothes?

If these are your problems, read further. Mrs Sally Oppenheimer, Shadow Prices Minister, has the answer. In a recent issue of Women's Own magazine she described how she "swindles" her husband (millionaire Henry who owns a desirable farm in Gloucestershire and was formally chairman of Mappin and Webb) over the housekeeping.

"Every now and again, I draw the money out of the bank a day earlier—so it works out I get two or three extra weeks money a year," she explains. The money she "legally" gets from her husband is

WHEN the leader of the Greater London Council Housing Committee, Mrs Jean Tattam announced that Bengalis would be given their own ghetto in slum estates in the Brick Lane area of Spitalfields the response was fury.

She gave the go-ahead to the National Front to rampage round the area smashing up shops and beating up Bengali residents. The National Front were chased off by young Bengalis. When the police finally arrived they only arrested three NF youths.

The people of Spitalfields were furious. 500 black and white residents called a meeting to tell the GLC, and the local MP Ian Mikardo what they thought of their racist plans.

Mrs Jean Tattam, apologised for having been 'misunderstood'. A middle-aged white woman yelled 'Being sorry won't put the windows back in Brick Lane. We've got to live with the damage you've created.'

One of the Bengalis said 'The GLC has allowed Spitalfields to become a ghetto for the last seven years—it's caused the attacks on Asian people and allowed the NF to get bigger and bigger. Now it's saying that we can't beat the NF, so we'll join them—instead of doing our repairs.' And so it went on.... 'We've been living on our estate for 50 years without a bath. We've got

Bengalis on both sides. And we want to stay with them.'

When Ian Mikardo, who claims to be socialist, said he'd asked the Home Secretary to increase the police force in Spitalfields the meeting erupted.

Alocke Biswas said, "We know that more police would not protect us. More police would mean more victimisation of blacks. Since last Sunday's rampage the Special Patrol Group has been patrolling the area harassing blacks and anyone involved in anti-racist activities. The solution is for the inhabitants to stand and fight together.' Another woman then said, 'I live in a block with every race—Bengalis, Turks, Irish, British, Jews. Ghettoisation would cause aggravation—and the NF would love that.'

And that was the message of the meeting. The people of Spitalfields, one of the worst slum areas in London, were not having racism thrust on them—especially by the very people who are responsible for the abysmal conditions in which they live.

The people of Spitalfields are demanding decent housing, and an end to police harassment—and it was the white women, often middle-aged, who turned up to the meeting to make their voices heard alongside the Bengalis.

Judith Hamilton

## ANTI NAZI APPEAL

**IN THE early hours of Saturday June 24th the London offices of the Anti-Nazi League were firebombed. The racists are beginning to understand how important we are. They did £25,000 of damage, destroying all the literature.**

**It is vital to replace the literature and get the office functioning fully again. We need money Now. Collect it at work, from your mates—any way and anywhere you can. Rush it to us as quickly as possible.**

£50 per week. (This amount hasn't gone up for years.)

So there you are. Your problems are solved. Just follow Mrs Oppenheimer's advice and swindle your husband out of £50 now and again, and you'll be £150 a year better off. OK?

Of course it's not bloody OK. How many men actually take home £50 a week let alone spend it on food? A few more of Mrs Oppenheimer's gems. "The poor family will go to the chip shop a lot," and, "The poor family will always buy their apple pies rather than make them".

Mrs Oppenheimer wouldn't know what it's like to get on shift for 7.30am, do the shopping at lunch time, rush home, cook the dinner, look after the kids etc. So we can't

really expect her to understand why we don't spend time making apple pies.

How can we expect a woman like her to understand working class problems and make things better for us? The answer of course is that she can't—nor can any of her Tory Party colleagues. So who can change things for the better?

It has to be ourselves who say enough! We will change society. We



photo: Colin Knowles

## CLEAN AWAY RACIST FILTH

SOUTH Hackney and Shoreditch is one of the breeding-grounds for the National Front—and the walls and hoardings show it—or did until the Anti-Nazi League moved into action.

On a lovely sunny Saturday we gathered about 50 people at one of the markets. We set out with the Mayor of Hackney leading, to paint out the slogans.

It was a mini-carnival. We had a float with reggae music, we leafleted, sold badges, used a megaphone to address all the people around, collected signatures on a petition in support of our action, and our numbers just grew and grew.

It was magic—a fantastic way to launch the South Hackney and Shoreditch Anti-Nazi League.

will fight for jobs, for decent wages, for nursery schools, for an end to discrimination. In short we will fight for true socialism and the end of the privileged classes who sit like Sally Oppenheimer in their luxury Regent's Park flats and tell us not to be greedy or ask for too much.

Too much is not enough. We want it all!

Ann Acaster

Batchelors food factory, Sheffield

Once millionaires' wives handed out their bounty to the poor. Nowadays Mrs. Sally Oppenheimer, the Shadow Prices Minister who lives in plush Regent's Park, hands out advice instead. Michael Freedland finds out just how seriously we should take her...

## Supermarket Sal, the shoppers' pal

# PICKET TO SAVE BRIXTON SCHOOL

AS PART of the Labour government's general cuts in education, there is a compulsory movement of 4 teachers from Santley school in Brixton.

Santley Infants and Juniors have about 400 pupils, there is also a nursery school attached to the Infants. The school was a problem school 10 years ago when it had a turn over of 100 teachers in 2 years. For the last 5 years the school has had a stable staff and has been improving.

South London is a poverty stricken area with high unemploy-

ment, scandalous housing situation with a high ratio of single parents, working mothers and large families. Because of all these factors children in these schools need special care, a higher percentage of teachers, and other special facilities like a language lab and language teachers.

As parents we are against the ILEA's compulsory transfer of these 4 teachers because we know how damaging it will be to our children's standard of education. If these teachers go, the shortage of staff cramps the classes, the extra special help the kids get now, would

be cut, there would be no more small school outings which are considered an important part of the curriculum. The special care children with English language problems get now would be cut and altogether the school would be pushed back into the 'problem school' bracket, the same mess it was 10 years ago.

We are organising to fight the government, the ILEA and all the bureaucrats in government offices who are not just ignorant but indignant at the improvement of our schools. There is an important

meeting between the County Hall authorities and the school representatives to stop the movement of these 4 teachers on Monday July 10. We are organising a march to County Hall on Friday July 14 if this meeting fails and further sit-ins if necessary.

Watch out for more news and support us anyway you can. We desperately need to keep our teachers.

**Manny**

A member of Santley Schools Parents Action Committee, Santley Street off Ferndale Rd, Brixton.

## MATERNITY LEAVE NOBBLED

'WE don't think you are important.' That was the answer the NALGO Conference gave the 300,000 women members of NALGO. On the agenda was a motion which would have committed the union to winning the best maternity leave agreement in the country. Demands included one year's maternity leave on full pay and the right to time off when your child is sick.

But the motion was set for Friday afternoon, so far down the agenda that it had no chance of being heard. A petition signed by over 100 branches was presented to the Agenda Committee but these elderly, highly paid men refused to give the motion a chance.

A motion giving priority to the debate was narrowly lost—but the Chairman rigged the vote. Mr Edward Alderton, President of NALGO, took his glasses off to count the votes in favour and only put them back on to count the votes against!

Why? Because the motion was

supported by the National Committee, five branches and two District Councils (London and Scotland). That was far more support than for motions that were heard.

And because women throughout the country are organising for better maternity leave and nurseries. The National Executive Committee knew that they couldn't get away with just passing a pious resolution in favour of women's rights and then forgetting about it. *We were on their tail.*

But all is not lost. A Women's Voice meeting at Conference was attended by sixty delegates. They voted to organise a Conference on Maternity Rights sponsored by NALGO branches to co-ordinate the fight for local improvements.

For more details of the campaign and copies of the pamphlet 'Blackmailed Back to Work', write to *Womens Voice*.

**Chris Treblett  
Lewisham NALGO**

## BULLETIN OF THE MONTH

THE *Womens Voice* bulletin of the months is the South East London *Womens Voice* Hospital Bulletin No 4.

Peggy Eagle explains, 'I went to the hospital and asked if we could start a Women's Voice bulletin. They said yes. Just be a bit brave. Ask to see the shop steward and if they say no, go back again and maybe the person who said no won't be there.'

Our bulletin now goes into six hospitals and is distributed inside the hospitals by the staff themselves. They give us all sorts of ideas of what we can put in the bulletins.

*Why a Joint Shop Stewards Committee?* We hate to quote this back, but the motto of the GMWU is 'Unity is Strength', and others are similar. Why then when NUPE makes approaches to form a Joint

Shop Stewards Committee to help fight hospital closures do GMWU, COHSE, TGWU and RCN say no? There is only one reason, inter-union squabbling and poaching.

Who benefits? Management! Who suffers? All trade unionists! For what? The big ideas of some petty minded union big shot!

Can we get round it? Yes!

- See your shop stewards. Tell them you want a shop stewards committee. If they say NO, they have no right being a shop steward. Have an election!

- Raise it at your branch meetings. Go along and ask for an explanation.

- Start one by calling a meeting of those interested in your hospital. Then approach other hospitals.

Remember the EGA. They started a Joint Shop Stewards Committee.

United we stand, and divided is how they would be able to close us.

## ONLY ONCE A YEAR DEMOCRACY

OUR union branch—NALGO Manchester Corporation—only ever meets once a year. To get the membership to discuss things (which the officials don't like) we had to get 100 signatures and call a special meeting.

We called the meeting for two reasons. One, to instruct our officials to negotiate a maternity agreement like Camden Nalgo has—16 weeks on full pay and 24 weeks on half pay. We added on six weeks paternity leave.

The second reason was to instruct our delegates to annual conference to vote for the motion on maternity leave which some *Women's Voice* members in Nalgo had put forward.

We got our special meeting and at 5.15pm we still needed six people to make up the quorum (the number of people required to start the meeting). The officials immediately started the meeting on time, quickly declared it inquorate, then left with big smirks all over their faces.

As they rushed out, two more women came in and there were six

more on the stairs.

The officials had called it on Bank Holiday Tuesday—the worst possible time to get people to the meeting.

The branch secretary, Mike Harkin, told me before the meeting, 'I don't like branch meetings, they are subject to the whim of the majority'. So we put out a *Women's Voice* leaflet slamming him.

Then the Tory Independent Nalgo Group put out a newsletter attacking our version of what happened and also attacking the Socialist Workers Party.

There's now a round robin supporting our version. We had a *Women's Voice* meeting attended by 20 women.

We are calling another special branch meeting for September, not only to make demands about maternity leave, but also to set up an Equal Rights Committee. We want the committee open to all the women in the branch who want to come and take up issues.

**Penny Kay**

## EQUITY FOR WOMEN

AT THE Annual General Meeting of Equity (Actors and Variety Artistes Union) on 11 June two motions affecting women were passed overwhelmingly. One called for a countrywide Equity campaign to set up childcare facilities in our workplaces.

The other motion called for the appointment of a Women's Organiser and said that in all future negotiations Equity should raise questions on the treatment of women in, and by, the media—on equal pay and opportunities, stereotyping and sexist casting, for instance.

Unfortunately in the recent elections an extreme right wing Council was elected with very few policies for the improvement of artistes' conditions. The Council was elected

on a platform known as Act for Equity, spearheaded by the notorious Marius Goring.

However following a long struggle with various councils of Equity, the Women's Sub-Committee has at last been reconvened after pressure from Rank and File, and Feminist Theatre Study Group. It had its first meeting on 26 June.

Women working in the media can attend the Feminist Theatre Study Group meetings which are held monthly to discuss problems that affect us. To find out more, contact Jules Holledge, 01 607 6070. Equity Rank and File also meets regularly. More details from Carrie, 01 993 0356 (Equity members only).

**Carrie Lee-Baker  
Equity (Acton Branch)**



## KIPLINGS COOK UP RAW DEAL

'WE'VE got a great feeling of solidarity. The girls are right behind me. And since our dispute, they have become active in the union'.

That's what Val Dunn, shop steward at Manor Bakeries (Mr Kipling's Cakes) in Wythenshawe, South Manchester, told *Womens Voice*.

There are 300 women and 150 men employed on six grades—and no prizes for guessing who's on the bottom three. Boys below 20 and girls under 19 are paid a junior rate, but in fact they do the same work as everyone else. Lots of overtime is worked. With a basic wage of £20 on grade F, those with families to support have little choice.

During a recent strike over speed-up (which is still not resolved), there were angry scenes on the picket line.

Management persuaded a handful of women new to the factory to continue working and to do 'Men's jobs' like lifting heavy containers.

So, surprise, surprise, when work resumed, management rewarded them for services rendered by putting them on C grade wages (previously reserved for men) and giving them priority for overtime.

But life hasn't been too pleasant for the scabs. There are few places in the factory where other workers will accept them. Wherever they are sent in the factory, the other workers sit down and refuse to work with them. It usually doesn't take long before they are removed.

During the firemen's strike, the women organised collections and parties for the children, giving them cakes.

So naturally when Kiplings came out, the firemen supported them. The pickets were cooking potatoes over a brazier. Management took one look, declared it dangerous and called the fire brigade.

'Oh, that's OK, we gave them that', came the firemen's answer.

Liz Hall

Her doctor advised her to become pregnant again fairly quickly. At the beginning of this year, pregnant with her second child, Jan developed asthma—which she'd never had before. She went to the doctor who stated that the asthma was a direct result of her bad housing conditions. Jan's caravan home was very damp. The seals around the windows were perished and water poured in.

The health authorities advised Jan against bringing a new baby back to such a home. As well as the damp, there was no hot running water, no bath and an outside toilet. The toilet was shared with many other families.

Jan and her husband were victimised: they were refused a flat at the park because he had joined the union. They have now been forced to leave the park. Kim Cartlidge and her husband Doug are still living at the park. They have slightly better accommodation—a two-room flat and shared bathroom. But they have been harassed throughout the strike.

Last December the park's Managing Director Mr Vass told Doug he might not be able to get at him directly for his union activities—but he could get at him through his family. Two days before Christmas Eve this threat was followed up by someone pouring a lot of water underneath one of the doors in their flat—the door nearest their ten month old baby's cot. There also came a note stating that the water could have been petrol, so they should be very careful.

The harassment of the suspended workers at Windsor Safari Park continues. The dispute is official, but T&GWU coach-drivers are breaking the picket lines and the

## SAFARI WORKERS VICTIMISED

'YOU are dealing with human animals now, not wild animals, so let's see some compassion'.

That quote came from the judge at the court case on 10 May dealing with the eviction notices served on the animals' keepers and their families at Windsor Safari Park.

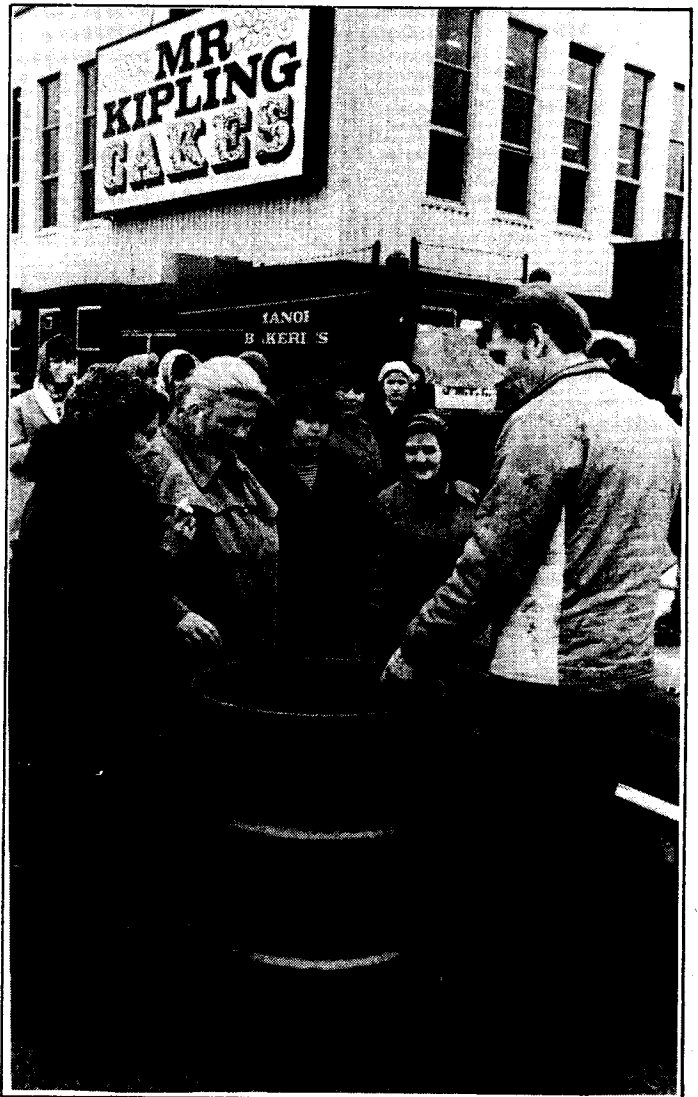
The notices to quit had been served ten days before. The owners of the park, Trident Television, wanted the workers and their families out within *one hour* of the court case.

The evictions have now been temporarily suspended, following the intervention of other Trident workers, mainly women, from Yorkshire TV and Tyne-Tees TV.

They threatened to strike indefinitely unless the eviction orders were withdrawn.

Trouble started at the park in October last year when nearly all the Keepers joined the Transport and General Workers Union. Four of the organisers were immediately sacked. The rest of the trained keepers suffered the same fate early in 1978. They came out on strike in protest at the horrific cruelty to the animals, and the appalling living conditions of the workers and their families.

Take the case of Jan Deeble. Jan is married to one of the sacked Keepers. She had her first baby in Spring 1977. It was born with severe spina bifida and only lived for three weeks.



union official are making no real effort to win the struggle.

Please send donations and messages of support to: Safari Park Strike Committee, c/o TGWU

office, 36 Kings Road, Reading, Berks.

Elaine Rigg,  
Slough Womens Voice Group

## DIAL A STRIKE

TWELVE women telephonists at the GLC (Greater London Council) have been on strike since 5th June. They are claiming a £75 a year bonus that *all* other GLC staff on the same grades receive.

The women say they're getting good support from NALGO—a minority union in the GLC where most people belong to the GLC Staff Association. NALGO members inside County Hall are boycotting their telephones in support. And male members of NALGO have joined the women on the picket lines. The women have talked and argued with delivery drivers and managed to prevent vanloads of food and other supplies getting through. They are prepared for a long fight.

The GLC have tried to break the strike by putting ads in the Evening Standard giving direct line telephone numbers so that calls aren't routed through the enquiry operators.



But the strikers have their publicity too: a daily strike bulletin and an adaptation of the Post Office's Buzby cartoon.

Please support the women's picket: 12.30 every Wednesday at the goods entrance, County Hall.

# WOMENS VOICE HOSPITAL CAMPAIGN SPECIAL

ON 5 July the Prime Minister will raise his glass of wine to toast the 30th anniversary of the National Health Service. He and selected guests will consume a £2000 lunch in celebration. But it's not an anniversary they are celebrating. It's a funeral. We list 115 hospitals the National Health Service wants to close down.

We can—and will—keep them open. Still on the list is the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital which they would have closed 18 months ago if they'd had their way.

All Womens Voice groups should campaign with hospital workers to stop the destruction of *our* National Health Service.

photo: Beban Kidron



IF YOU were to look at some old copies of the Daily Mirror or the Mail from before the War, one of the first things that would strike you would be the adverts.

Dr Collis Browne's Compound, Fynnon's Salts, cough mixtures, bile pills, magic medicines claiming to deal with everything from bronchitis to diarrhoea with a single teaspoon-full.

The reason is straightforward. Before the war most sickness, however serious, was dealt with in the home, with a combination of common sense, prayer, and a little something from the chemists.

In 1911 Lloyd George's National Insurance Act insured full time workers against some of the cost of being off sick. This brought no benefit at all to most women, who did not work or who only worked part time.

It was introduced after lengthy consideration of the health of British workers. Of the working men who enlisted to fight in the Boer War of 1899, half were found to be completely unfit. The British State was made aware, in the

course of that war, of the need to reverse the alarming situation of a declining birth-rate, and a deteriorating male labour and fighting force. Otherwise the empire would never survive.

But it was to take a much greater war, the Second World War, to provide the impetus for the creation of a health service to cover everyone in the country.

Until then, women went on suffering and making do, nursing the sick members of their families, pushing their own ailments to the back of their minds.

It cost something around three shillings and sixpence to have the doctor visit you. Then you had to buy the medicines he prescribed. To consult a specialist cost at least 3 guineas. So women went on relying on their own skills and knowledge passed on haphazardly from one generation to the next.

One reason why 'women's complaints' have been ignored in the past is that so few women ever had the opportunity to seek professional help. Varicose veins,

prolapsed wombs, cystitis, TB, piles, anaemia—you just struggled along and tried to put up with it, until you absolutely had to consult a doctor, by which time it was probably too late. Add to these complaints all the symptoms of poverty, bad housing, poor nutrition and chronic exhaustion, and you will be describing the plight of thousands of working class women between the wars.

On July 5 1948 the National Health Service was formed. For the first time ever, working class women could seek treatment without worrying about doctors' fees! There was no longer any need to spend their whole lives suffering from diseases and ailments for which the medical profession had solutions.

Before the creation of the National Health Service most of us had no service at all—just as most of us have no chance to join the private health schemes and private patients lists that are mushrooming as the wealthy trample over our bodies and push to the front of the queue.

# NURSES NIGHTMARE

WHEN people think of cuts in the Health Service, they normally think of hospital closures and the lack of kidney machines. But hospital workers see how the cuts affect every aspect of hospital life. You can't miss them—cuts hit you in the face the moment you start work. There is the long waiting list for beds, the lack of proper equipment, the lousy but expensive food and most of all—staff shortages.

Patients watch in amazement as nurses rush around like mad things trying to do the work of at least twice their number. You reach the end of your shift mentally and physically exhausted—frustrated because patients have not received a high standard of treatment.

Every day and night nurses manage the near miraculous, but we do have our limitations—like two eyes in front of our heads and only two hands and legs.

Overworked, tired nurses can and do make mistakes—although these are surprisingly few. Some mistakes are hilarious, some are downright dangerous.

It is not so bad during the day when nurses can rely on each other to keep



photo: Beeban Kidron

going. Night-time is the real killer.

Picture my medical ward at night. Most patients are seriously ill. One or two might go at any time. Enter staff: one student nurse (me) and two auxiliaries, one of whom has to work on two wards at once. I pray that nothing will go wrong as we have to receive emergency admissions.

A woman with pleurisy is brought in. She is dying and all three staff and the doctor are tied up trying to save her life. The other patients start yelling for bedpans. We have not time or staff to spare so the patients dirty themselves. After a night spent fighting for her life, the woman dies. We then have to clean the patients and replace the bedclothes.

This really happened to me but it is a commonplace incident. It tells you what the cuts are all about. Every day hundreds of nurses leave the Health Service. More would go if unemployment wasn't so high. We know who is to blame—the government and the cowards in the area health authorities.

Nurses must start to fight back. We can begin with the small daily issues that affect us. Then we can tackle wages and staffing levels.

The fight will be hard, but we have gained confidence from the magnificent struggles of our brothers and sister in the EGA, Hounslow and other hospitals.

It is time to translate that confidence into action. We *can* do it.

**Margaret Carlin**

## NHS DEATH LIST

WHAT is the health service doing to celebrate its 30th anniversary? Closing Hospitals!

An official document lists 73 hospitals due to be completely closed, 14 more hospitals to be partly closed and 28 more hospitals due for 'change of use'—which is usually the first step to closure.

To celebrate 30 years of our national health service, they are planning to close 10,750 beds! This is only the tip of the iceberg. It does *not* include wards in hospitals which may be closed.

And after the closures what will happen to the patients of the 13 convalescent hospitals, the 18 geriatric hospitals, and the 6 long-stay hospitals? Those patients will be sent home—for their mothers, sisters, daughters to look after as best they can—without the proper equipment and facilities.

This list was published on 31 March 1978. Is your local hospital here? What are you going to do about it?

*Northern Regional Health Authority*

Ulverston Hospital, Cumbria; Watling Road Child Health Clinic, Ninefields Child Health Clinic, Lee Hill Hospital, Durham; Haltwhistle War Memorial Hospital, Northumberland; Walker Park Hospital, Newcastle; Cleadon Park Hospital; Balgownie Street Clinic, Walter Street Clinic, Danesfield Maternity Hospital, FPA Clinic, South Tyneside; Seaham Hall Hospital, Grindon Hall, Sunderland.

*Yorkshire Regional Health Authority*

Gateforth Hospital, Leeds; Birley Health Clinic, Bradford; Hull Hospital for Women, Tow-

nend Maternity Hospital, Humberside.

*Trent Regional Health Authority*

Gainsborough Maternity Hospital, Bransdon Hall Hospital, Lincolnshire; Royal Hospital, Wharnclyffe Hospital, Thundercliffe Grange, Royal Infirmary, Sheffield; Children's Hospital, Cedars Hospital, Biddington Hall Hospital, Nottingham General Hospital, Nottingham Eye Hospital, Highbury Hospital, Nottinghamshire.

*East Anglian Regional Health Authority*

Gladstone Clinic Peterborough, Cambridgeshire; Bowthorpe Hospital, Queen Elizabeth Maternity Dept, Stow Hall Hospital, Hardwick Hospital, Hunanston Recovery Hospital, St James Hospital, West Norfolk and Kings Lynn General Hospital, North Cambridgeshire Hospital Wisbech, Clarkson Hospital, Wisbech, Norfolk.

*North West Thames Regional Health Authority*

Springbrook House, Stanmore, Barnet; Middlesex Hospital Convalescent Home, Joyce Grove Hospital, Athlone House, St Charles Hospital, Kensington and Chelsea; Western Hospital, St Helena's Recovery Home, King Edward Memorial Hospital; King Edward Memorial Hospital, Claypolds Wing, Ealing Day Treatment Centre, Ealing, Hammersmith and Hounslow. Tolmers Park Hospital, Hertford County Hospital, Maternity Unit, Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital, Hertfordshire.

*North East Thames RHA*

Victoria Hospital Westcliffe on Sea, Essex, Highbury Home, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital, Camden and Islington; London Jewish

Hospital, Bethnal Green Hospital, City and East London; Chestnuts Health Clinic, Cornwall Road Health Clinic, Bearsted Memorial Hospital, Enfield and Haringey. Brentwood Chest Clinic, Barking.

*South East Thames RHA*  
Mason's Hill Maternity Unit, Bromley; St Nicholas Hospital Inpatient Services, Memorial Hospital Woolwich, British Hospital for Mothers and Babies, Greenwich and Bexley; Livingstone Hospital, St Helier Maternity Home, Tunbridge Wells and District Maternity Home, Kent.

*South West Thames RHA*  
Wimbleton Hospital, Merton, Sutton and Wansworth; St Leonards House and Hospital, Bognor Regis War Memorial Hospital, West Sussex.

*Wessex RHA*  
First Maternity Home, Everett Maternity Home, Dorset; Royal Portsmouth Hospital, Hampshire.

*Oxford RHA*

Westbury Maternity Home, Tindal Hospital, Stoke Mandeville GP Maternity Unit, Stoke Mandeville NSIC, Buckinghamshire; Warren Hospital Abingdon, Oxfordshire; Rockingham Road Hospital, Creaton Hospital, Northants.

*South Western RHA*

North Devon Infirmary Barnstaple, Alexandra Hospital, Barnstaple, Bideford and District Hospital, Ilfracombe and District Hospital, Torrington Hospital, Bideford, Devon; Camborne-Redruth Hospital, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly.

*Midlands RHA*

Romsley Hill, Birmingham; Ludlow and District, Salop; Midland Hospital, Hampton in Arden, Solihull; Rugby Dis-

trict Hospital, Chase Hospital, Stafford; White Lodge Cannon, Stafford; Croft Maternity Home Kidderminster, Lucy Baldwin Hospital, Stourport, Hereford and Worcester.

*Mersey RHA*

Moston Hospital, Warrington Infirmary and Thelwall Grange Annexe Hospital, Davenham Hospital, Oakmere Rehabilitation Centre, Cheshire; Harkshead Hospital, Sefton; Birkenhead Maternity Hospital, Caldby Manor Hospital, Thingwall Hospital, Wirral; Liverpool Clinic, Sefton General Hospital, Mossley Hill Hospital, Broadgreen Hospital, Rathbone Hospital, Newsham Hospital, Liverpool.

*North Western RHA*

Children's Orthopedic Hospital, Marple, Aspland Maternity Home, Urmston Cottage Hospital, Duchess of York Hospital, Orthopedic Hospital, Marple, Stockport; Aspland Maternity Home, Tameside; Urmston Cottage Hospital, Trafford, Duchess of York Hospital, Manchester, Ribchester Hospital, Grove House Continuation Hospital, Barrowford, Lancashire.

Department of Health and Social Security Quarterly return on Health Building Closures, 31, 3178

If your local hospital is not on the list, that doesn't mean it is safe. This list is only those hospitals where notice has been given. New names are added every three months.

To check on your own hospitals, go down to your library and ask to see the 'Strategic Plans' for your local health authority (the programme for the next 10 years).

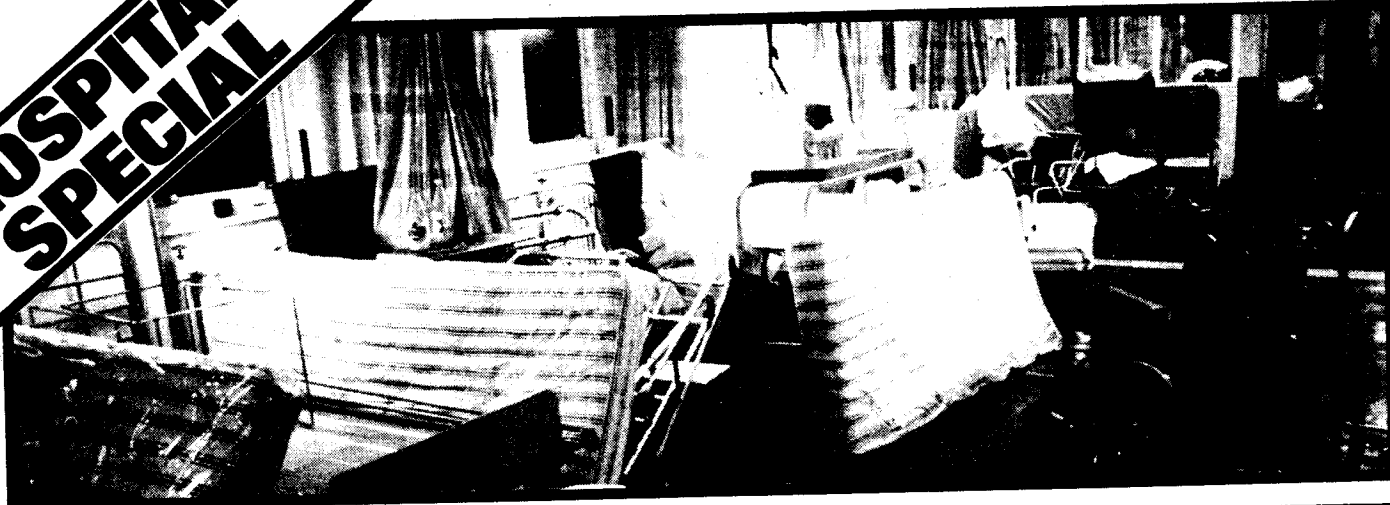


Photo: Andrew Wland (Report)

**KATE Truscott** was a member of the Hounslow Hospital Occupation Committee when it was raided last October. She now helps Fightback, the national organisation to fight NHS cuts. Here Kate talks to Mel Bartley, *Women's Voice* health editor.

'WHEN they raided the Houslow Hospital on 6 October 1977 it was a shock to everyone.

They had put a huge padlock on the door after dragging the patients out. I had to climb in through a window. When I saw how they had smashed things up I burst into tears. Then we all felt a kind of blind anger.

Some people had the presence of mind to realise that we had to let the outside world know. So we left everything as it was, smashed beds, spilled urine bottles, we took the padlocks off the doors and invited the local people and the press and TV into see it, just as management had left it.

When the news got round people started phoning us from all over the country.

We got so many letters, and money poured in to help the campaign. People here had never spoken at meetings, but all we had to do was tell what had happened, that was enough.

Letters were answered personally, we spent hours writing letters. Then a group of us went round the country to speak at meetings. Everywhere we went we made a list of the people we had met. We decided to organise a conference in London, on 5 November. In the same month we did a broadsheet for the trade unions' Week of Action, including stories about other similar struggles. We got together with people in other work-ins and wrote the pamphlet 'Keeping Hospitals Open'. We had started to form links with other occupations before the raid on Hounslow but now we saw it as even more important.

The important message is not to give up. I am convinced that the number of work-ins is having an effect, that is why this last budget did not cut the health service quite so much. Ordinary people *can* take on the government. 'If they are angry enough'. 'Anyone can get involved in a local hospital struggle. Don't think you have to know it all. Listen to what the workers inside the place say. They will know what is needed, but they have a lot on their hands with the hours health workers put in, and just keeping the union together. They need your help.'

'In Fightback, we aim to spread a feeling of confidence in the idea that people can organise and fight. We try to spread the word about effective methods of struggle — it is not always what you expect either! People think up new tactics all the time, you have to have an open mind!' 'People should not think 'the cuts' just mean closures. Holding down wages of public sector workers is part of it too. It's all part of squeezing more out of the working class in a period of economic crisis. We have to make the connections clear. In a lot of hospitals people are ready to fight management but they think 'Well, it's just the management in *this* place that is so awful' But is it? In fightback we are saying that the cuts are part of something bigger. And in fact, when they think about it, people in the local communities know they are getting a worse deal than they were four or five years ago.

The government are trying to shove the disabled, the old, all those who will never make any more profits for the bosses, out into the community. These women will have to care for them.

To contact tightback, get copies of their bulletin or the pamphlet 'keeping hospitals open' call 01-570 4448. Ask for Kate or Candy, or write to Fightback, C/o Hounslow Hospital, Staines Road, Harrow, Mddx.

## JOIN HOSPITAL WORKER

HOSPITAL cuts and closures have to be fought from the inside as well as outside in the community.

So far the public sector trade union leaders have failed to initiate any sort of campaign around the threatened hospitals. That means that the lead has to come from rank and file workers who see the need to fight—just like at the EGA and Hounslow.



Photo: Mark Rusher (FZ)

Hospital Worker is a national rank and file organisation, consisting of groups of people in the workplaces organised around the paper *Hospital Worker*.

We are all from different unions and do different jobs—nurses, porters, technicians, doctors. But we understand how important it is to bridge the gap that exists in the health service if we are going to win the fight against cuts and for better wages and working conditions.

If you are involved in a hospital campaign or you are a hospital worker, and you want to make contact with your local group for help in building the organisation in your hospital, contact Anne Robertson, 69a Mountside Crescent, Prestwich, Manchester.

If there isn't a group in your area already, perhaps we can help you build one. We will print articles in the paper which comes out every couple of months so that other people know what's going on.

The cuts affect all of us. It's a national fight and we will need to be linked together so we can support and learn from one another.

How do we fight for more staff, on health and safety issues, for better maternity leave, for higher wages? These are the things that Hospital Worker fights for. Join us.

# A LOT OF COURAGE AT THE GREEN

BETHNAL Green hospital is fighting closure in three ways. First, there's the continuing saga of negotiations with various official bodies (the borough council, the DHSS, the Community Health Council). Many of us feel that little more can come of this as we've talked till we're blue in the face. Second, the unions have woken up and formed a group to fight the cuts in East London. They are calling a half-day strike and demonstration on 30 June (the last day of our three-month reprieve). This will be followed by more industrial action.

Members are refusing to co-operate with management in any attempt to run down the Green or convert it into a geriatric-only unit.

Third, and this is crucial to the survival of the hospital, the staff are considering locking out the administrators and working on as before—perhaps forming a workers' council. This will take a lot of courage, but we are persuading the faint-hearted we cannot be harmed if we are united.

Jane Salvage

## NURSES OCCUPY

Nurses from the South Shields General Hospital occupied the administration office of the area health authority to protest the rundown of the hospital.

Two wards are closed, new facilities are being kept closed and there is a shortage of nursing staff.

Earlier this year the health authority admitted it was unable to maintain health facilities and asked NUPE (the National Union of Public Employees) if it would accept working in worse conditions.

The union policy is not to co-operate with the authority in any cuts, so they said no.

The nurses have the support of the doctors and are now trying to get support from unions outside the health service. They are planning a demonstration for the end of August. Womens Voice will help with leaflets.

Pat Barlow

## WHIPPING UP SUPPORT

CAESARIAN births are being performed when they might not be strictly necessary. This is the horrifying state of affairs at Whipps Cross Hospital, Walthamstow. It is happening because 'midwife levels may not permit complete labour monitoring'. Or in plain words, they are understaffed.



At present there are 120 full time staff. But the DHSS *themselves* recommend 178.

The tragedy of this is heightened by the fact that this maternity unit is only five years old. It's one of the best equipped and designed units in the country!

Whipps Cross is the only maternity unit in the area. Last year alone 550 women were turned away because there were not enough beds to meet the demand. (They closed the Wanstead unit four years ago, and the Connaught unit before that.)

Walthamstow Womens Voice have started a petition for improved maternity facilities. One of the newsagents who sells Womens Voice has a copy of the petition. Before he takes a customer's money, he gets them to sign our petition.

Pauline Webber

## GREENWICH NURSES STRIKE

32 theatre nurses at Greenwich District Hospital came out on strike on 15 June following the dismissal of their supervisor, Miss Mills.

This is the climax of a three-year dispute during which time management have consistently ignored the views of the majority working in the theatres.

The dispute arose when management tried to introduce a new grade of theatre workers (ODAs—operating department assistants) to supplement theatre staff.

The nurses argue that some of the 40,000 qualified nurses presently on the dole should be employed because of their previous medical training.

The issue is complicated by a large number of factors:

- theatre discipline and demarcation has to be strict during operations
- the theatre supervisor is legally responsible for the safety of the patients
- a trainee ODA receives pay of £53 per week and a newly qualified SRN receives £47 a week.

The nurses are all in Nalgo but emphasised several times that this is *not* an inter-union dispute.

They put the blame squarely on management who have used tactics ranging from threats and blackmail to coercion.

The doctors support the nurses in their action and have refused to operate with scab labour. The other unions involved have said that they will close the hospital if outside labour is brought in to break the nurses' strike.

The nurses are covering emergencies but are holding up about 40 routine operations.

Ann Derby

## SAVE THE DUCHESS

Manchester: There's only one specialised children's hospital in South Manchester—the 115 bed Duchess of York in Burnage.

Everything is scaled down to suit children, especially the modern theatre unit.

So you and I know its loss would be great—but try telling that to the area health authority. They want to close it as a hospital and use it for 23 of Manchester's mentally and physically handicapped children.

Last December there were 657 children on South Manchester's hospital waiting lists.

The action group are determined to fight any cut (like closing the surgery and phasing out medical beds) and also intend to get a fairer deal for the handicapped.

So with parents, doctors, trade unionists, South Manchester Womens Voice group and community groups, we've campaigned, lobbied, held street meetings, written endlessly, talked anywhere we've been asked—including Manchester Trades Council this month.

We sold 4000 badges and have over 30,000 signatures on petitions. We've pointed out the risks to children's health. Last year operations on cleft palates weren't done in time.

But worse than that, in April a 13-year-old boy died of a heart attack just as his name came to the top of the waiting list for surgery.

Jan Brown

**HOSPITAL SPECIAL**

Jean is 25. Her children are aged six and four. She was married for seven years before she left her husband recently and she works for a Community Centre, courtesy of the Job Creation Scheme. She told Women's Voice why she got married in the first place...

'I was nineteen and naive. We had a big wedding and moved into a nice wee house. The marriage was wrong from the start, but I was too proud to go home and say I'd made a mistake.

My husband did not work for six years, but I did. I brought up the two children and kept the house spotless too. Yet Jack constantly threw his own family in my face. He said that I would never be a patch on them. No matter what I did, I was bound to fail in his eyes.

**'For years Jack used me as a punchbag. I hated and despised him. If he had fallen dead at my feet I would have hung out the flags and hoovered round him.'**

His family felt I had no business having a job and earning money! They resented the fact I was tidy, able to work and bring up the children as well. They wanted to see me fail.

For years Jack used me as a punchbag. I hated and despised him. If he had fallen dead at my feet I would have hung out the flags and hoovered round him.

In a society where violence is accepted, a child who watches his father beat up his mother will beat up his own wife. Too many women accept the knocks as part of life.

When I left, I gave my children the chance of a future. But that was seen as wrong... by his family, by our friends, by everybody. A man is not judged, a woman is. But it's obvious to me that I have done the right thing and I thank God that I didn't leave it too late.

I had planned to leave him for years. I always wanted two kids, so I made sure I had a second before I went. I made sure I had a job too. My husband sensed what was happening. The stronger and

more determined I got, the harder he tried to break me. He would cut up my clothes, destroy anything that I liked.

One day he finally went berserk. He kept me and the children on a couch and sat opposite us with a knife. Every time one of us fell asleep, he punched us. After three days and nights he fell asleep himself. I picked up the children and ran out of the house in my nightdress. We never went back.

Jack paid part of the rent arrears and was given tenancy of the house. Through the help of friends, I went to stay with a single-parent family. Rena has been really great. She helped me to accept that I have said goodbye to my home and my possessions forever. That was the hardest part for me, turning my back on my home.

My husband could not have shown his face in public if it became known why I really left. So he pretended that I had gone off with another man. Ours was a close community and rumour spreads. At one time I was supposed to be living in three different areas with three different men!

When I lived with Jack I never had a penny. Now I have a home again and my children are better fed, better dressed and cared for properly.

Society trains women to be weak. Young girls are given dolls to 'mother'. Women grow up looking for security and they look for it in the family unit.

Women should have better support systems. There should be adequate child benefits, nurseries and places for mothers to meet and talk.

I want to get married again, but every woman is different. We must be given the chance to live our lives to the full and not be indoctrinated to accept violence or isolation for the sake of the family unit.

**No one knows how  
battered. Too many  
their pain and their shame  
have no one to turn to  
All too often, they accept  
part of life. Two Glasgow  
took the knocks then  
enough explain why  
changed their lives for**

# ESCAPED VIOLENCE



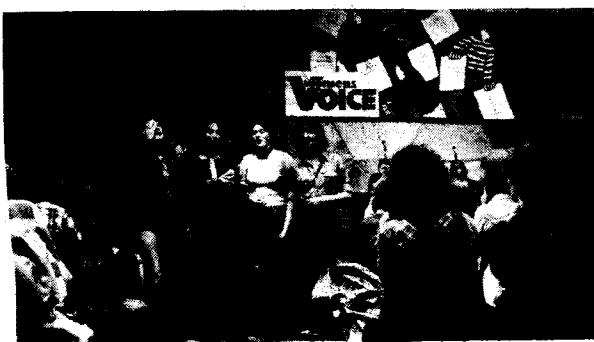
**NATIONAL WOMEN'S AID FEDERATION**  
51 Chalcot Road London N1  
National Women's Aid Federation for groups which provide refuge for women who have been mentally or physically abused. Ring 01 586 0104/5192 and we will put you in touch with your local refuge. You can also get in touch with our support service department and/or the local Battered Women's Aid group.



CAN MAN BE A SLAVE IF WOMAN BE A SLAVE?



# FIGHTING FOR OUR FUTURE



EVERYONE in Sheffield was delighted at the success of the rally. Sheffield *Women's Voice* put in a lot of work, like street meetings every week and leafletting factories.

The work was worth it since lots of the people who turned up had simply seen a leaflet or poster.

The rally was attended by a thousand women from all over the country. It was great to see so many women who had never spoken before get up and tell us what they had been organising and how they went about it.

One SOGAT member told us about the Bank of England strike and how the women who print the banknotes were involved in a dispute about something that never gets into our pockets anyway!

Women from hospitals, hotels and all the other kinds of low-paid jobs were standing up and talking about how they were fighting back. We heard what a joke the Equal Pay Act is and how women are moving towards equal pay at the rate of 1/4 percent a year.

In the afternoon we all went into different workshops—there were twenty-two to choose from. Everyone we spoke to found the workshops really useful, but wished there had been more time for each one.

Here is what two Sheffield women said about the rally; 'The workshop on organisation at work taught me a lot and gave me enough confidence to start organising the women at my workplace.

It's about time we women got together and started fighting for our rights and the things we want. We like our right to work which

means nurseries, and a decent wage too'.

**Mary Wilson  
Steelworker Sheffield.**

'When it comes to the cuts in the Health Service it's women who get the worst deal both as mothers and workers.

'The only way we can fight these cuts is by forgetting the difference between cleaners, nurses, post office workers and steel workers. Everyone uses hospitals so we should all defend them. 'The save our hospitals' session left me optimistic—especially when I heard how hard women fought to save the EGA'.

**Pat Jenkins hospital cleaner  
NUPE**

AS SOON as the rally was over we fixed up a *Womens Voice* meeting for the following week. About twenty five people came and we decided to organise a public meeting on Women against the Nazis.

We also arranged to hold our next meeting at someone's house and to combine a meal with a discussion on Why You Should be A Socialist. This will give people a chance to get to know each other better and find out more about *Womens Voice*.

The other thing we are planning is a leaflet to give out at factories where we sell *Womens Voice*. It will explain what *Womens Voice* has got to do with you and your factory. So it seems that in Sheffield we have at last got a good *Womens Voice* group—thanks to the success of the rally.

**Sheffield Womens Voice**  
IF you're pregnant and were at the Womens Voice Rally you should visit your doctor as we have been told that someone at the Rally has since become ill with german measles.



# OUT OF SCHOOL... OUT OF WORK!!!

**THIS month thousands and thousands of school leavers chuck away their exercise books and go out into the world to earn their living. Or do they? In summer up to 450,000 sixteen to eighteen years olds will be on the dole.**

JANE is a careers officer in the North West. She spends half an hour each with 450 school leavers. This plus a weekly careers lesson from usually untrained careers teachers is meant to equip school leavers for the outside world:

'What I see when I visit the schools are a lot of kids totally unprepared for unemployment. When I talk to them what strikes me is their eagerness to start work. Only a few think unemployment will happen to them.'

'In the first few weeks after they leave school I see a change. Kids who start off hopeful and full of enthusiasm, end up

taking anything. They often cannot handle the job and leave after a few weeks, thus building up a bad work record.

'It's difficult to convince kids they have a future when their experience outside the classroom is the bitter one of signing on.'

**ELAINE, 16, left school in May and was lucky enough to find a job straight away.**

But she had to leave for personal reasons and is now unemployed.

The last three days I've spent going to dole offices and the SS. I'm really annoyed about it. They keep sending me to the wrong places and giving me the wrong forms.

She says she wants a job with prospects and all the careers adviser offers her is shop work. She has been offered jobs—as a clerk for £18 a week, and a trainee hairdresser for £15. She can't see how

people can expect her to live on that amount. The dole give her £10.

It annoys her that nowadays employers are not allowed to state male or female. 'So now they just put male-orientated instead, which just means the same thing.' She thinks something should be done about that.

Whenever she goes for interviews, she asks about job prospects. 'They always ask me if I'm getting married soon. I'm not, but I wouldn't tell them if I was.' She thinks it's wrong for school kids to be persuaded to stay on at school for another year. Because it doesn't do them any good in the long run.

'It just keeps the figures of unemployment down for a while.'

When asked what she thinks about could be done about unemployment among school leavers, she said, 'You can't do anything. You've got to change the whole system.'

SUE left school seven months ago and has been unemployed ever since. She is beginning to give up looking for work.

'I looked for three months and I just couldn't find a job at all. So I just gave up. I went down the West End, Wood Green, Tottenham, Petticoat Market. I just couldn't get a job.'

Her careers officer is not much help.

'She says what sort of jobs do you want? And I tell her. And she says you can't do this and you can't do that. I've been offered one, that's working in Woolly's in the canteen. Since then I haven't heard nothing from my careers officer or anyone.'

'When I was younger, I wanted to be a motor mechanic. Well, nowadays while I'm not working, I hang about

down the garage, helping out, and everyone thinks I'm quite good at it.

'I've applied for one job, but they said no cause I'm a girl. So I just walked out.'

'I really feel bored and fed up. With nothing to do all day but stay in bed. A lot of kids go out and get in trouble with the police. They start nicking people's purses, cause they ain't got no money.'

'My dad's really worried about me not working cause he thinks I'm going to get in trouble with the police.'

So what does Sue see for her future? 'Well at the moment I don't see nothing. I'm going to go down to Aylesbury soon and see if I can get a job down there. If I can, I'll stay there for good. I'll just take anything.'



## UNEMPLOYED SCHOOL LEAVERS

300,000  
240,000  
180,000  
120,000  
60,000

1974 '75 '76 '77 '78

DIAN is sixteen and lives in Kirkby.

I leave school in July and like nearly every other school leaver in Kirkby, have no chance of a job. I could leave home and try for work in Liverpool, but there's not much chance there

either. I decided to join the young school leavers Right To Work March because I don't want those who have work to forget us.

My father let me go on the march because he's out of work himself and know what its like.'



# out of work

THE 50 Merseyside marchers who had walked 250 miles from Liverpool to London to protest against unemployment arrived back in Liverpool on June 13th tired but confident.

The march took two weeks and we received terrific support from everyone along the way—especially factory workers.

The same could not be said about our so-called trade union and labour leaders. Len Murray refused to come out and see us when we lobbied the TUC.

Callaghan who had the cheek to blame the

unemployment in Liverpool on 'strike happy Merseysiders' had not the guts to come out and face us, even though we held an all-night vigil outside number 10!

When we got back to Liverpool we were welcomed by 250 trade unionists. That was a great boost to our morale.

If everyone of them and every one of you would go back to your workplaces and argue and fight for more jobs not less—then some of us might end up as workers.

**Theresa Beigin**

# RIGHT TO WORK!

**JOIN THE RIGHT TO WORK CAMPAIGN**

The Right To Work Campaign has announced a protest march on the TUC this September. The march will go from London to Brighton, leaving on Saturday 2 September.

This is the third year that the campaign has organised a march of unemployed young

people to lobby the TUC's annual conference. If you are fed up with the hypocrisy of trade union and Labour leaders and want to find out more about the march write to The Right To Work Campaign, 265a Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

## My life

Jose Harriot  
47, youth worker  
Wapping.



I'm a half-caste—my mum is Irish and my father is black; he's in Africa. I was brought up in a children's home in Wanstead, South London until I was evacuated to Cornwall during the war when I was fourteen.

When I came back to London I worked as a cleaner in University College Hospital for seven years living in. Then I got a job at Chelsea Hospital for Women and also got a flat. I went to my first 'black party' there. I was really frightened—I never knew other blacks existed. My idea of black people came from books I'd seen during the war with pictures of black men stewing a white man in a pot. At the party I met this bloke whom I eventually married but when he first asked me to go out with him I thought 'oh no, I couldn't go out with a black man'. You see, having led a very sheltered life in the children's home and always associated with whites, I thought I was white too!

We lived in Paddington and weren't very well-off—always in 'halfway houses' or rooms. My husband went to Jamaica for six months. He was always going off. He went to Africa looking around for jobs.

He sent for us one time so we lived in Nigeria for nine months which was really nice. We came back here but he didn't like it; he still kept moving off. I was really fed up. Eventually we split. By this time, I was here in Wapping. I'd got five kids.

I got a job doing the washing in a children's home just down the road. I'd come home, feed the kids and everything and then I worked in the evenings washing-up in a pub, the 'Prospect of Whitby'. The social workers were very good and tried to help. They told me to stop working and go on Social Security. I didn't want to—you know all the things people say about that. But in the end I did, as I was working so hard I'd fallen ill.

They were very hard times; we never had enough money and it got so bad that I eventually asked for the kids to be taken away from me. But the social worker said that she'd help us. And she did. At Christmas she came round with presents for the kiddies. It was really lovely.

I'd made some contacts in Wapping Youth Club and when someone suggested I started a kids club, I did. It suited me down to the ground as I'd got five bored kids and they could come with me. It was very successful and the youth worker wanted me to do some training. I said 'Oh no, I couldn't do anything like that—all those O-levels and stuff'. But I went and it really brought me out of my shell; I'd always been so shy and introverted before. We got a phone in so I could make sure the kids were ok. We felt really posh—everything we had was second hand. Looking back on it we were really in a bad state—I hardly had any clothes and the kids were in a right mess. I hate my past now.

After all this I started getting paid. I went mad; started buying new beds, curtains, the lot. I had a full-time job in Brent but I didn't enjoy it much. Mind you, I met these young socialist people up there and really enjoyed being around them.

I came back to Wapping and got involved in the Wapping Parents' Action Group which started when one of our local kids was knocked down and killed. I became chairman and we did 'Open Door' programmes, radio shows and spoke at Cambridge and Surrey universities. It grew very quickly and as it grew, I grew with it.

I now work at the Kippers project in Aldgate which is the homeless kids. And I'm doing a three-year course on youth work. For me it only started when I was thirty-five. People ask me how I've done it—single-parent family and all—and they don't know how hard I had it too.

Some women will just sit back, don't want to know. I met a woman last week who was in a right state; she'd five kids, no money and her husband had left her. I says to her: 'listen, you'll survive and you'll survive because you want to. And because you're on your own, you'll work harder at it.'

# WOMENS HEALTH

## "I hate the whole world"

'MENOPAUSE' simply means that the periods stop happening. But for most women it is not as simple as that.

Women have described their feelings about the menopause to me like this: 'I feel tired all the time but I can't sleep at night. I can't be bothered with anything, including my family' and 'I have these terrible rages and I'm completely uncontrollable. I hit out at my husband and kids and blame them for the way I feel, I hate them and the whole world. Afterwards I feel really guilty about it.'

This combination of fatigue, depression and of course 'hot flushes' can go on for years. So what is the cause of all this misery and can it be prevented?

Changes take place in the body at this time of life. The woman's ovaries have not only been producing eggs every month during her fertile years, they have also been producing oestrogens. Oestrogens are hormones, a sort of chemical that is released into the blood. The presence or absence of these hormones (there are many different kinds,) affects our whole physical state, and also our state of mind.

As a woman gets older her ovaries produce less and less of this hormone. The lower level of oestrogen in the blood changes your state of mind, your 'moods'. Like other hormones, it has a physical affect as well. The skin in and around your vagina becomes drier and thinner. This, on top of the mood changes, can make sex difficult for a woman. Your periods become less and less frequent and eventually stop. The glands in your breasts (for making milk) gradually disappear and the breasts appear to 'sag'.

A lot of the changes in the way a woman feels during her menopause may be put down to



Pic 1: Can you hear me?

Pic 2: Better support all round?

TWO Stills from 'Take it like a man, Ma'am' (distributed by The Other Cinema) a witty and sensitive film about a menopausal office-worker who leaps from depression into a new life when she gets fired for supporting her factory's strike.

the chemical and biological changes in her body. But the 45-55 year old woman also has to cope with the fact that our society still doesn't value women as people in their own right.

We are either expected to be young and attractive with nice firm tits, small waists and smooth skins, or mothers in the process of bringing up children. And if you're neither of those you've got problems.

Doctors tend to be middle class men who, are neither trained nor personally inclined to take the time and effort

needed to treat the complex combination of physical and mental problems that a woman may face during the menopause. As men, they share those same attitudes to women that are part of the problem in the first place.

What we need are special menopause clinics that are easy to get to. They could be run as a part of Well Woman Clinics. Then the different aspects of each individual woman's problem could be sorted out.

Some women find great relief from Hormone Replacement Therapy (or HRT, if you hear

your doctor mumble it under his breath). It seems logical, if the absence of the hormone oestrogen is making you feel weird, to replace the hormone artificially. But no one is quite sure how safe this is. So you should have careful tests before and during such treatment. Sometimes, HRT causes the inside lining of the womb to get too thick or lumpy. This is much less likely to happen if you take pure oestrogen pills for the first half of the month. During the second half of the month the pills you take will contain an additional hormone, (progestogen).

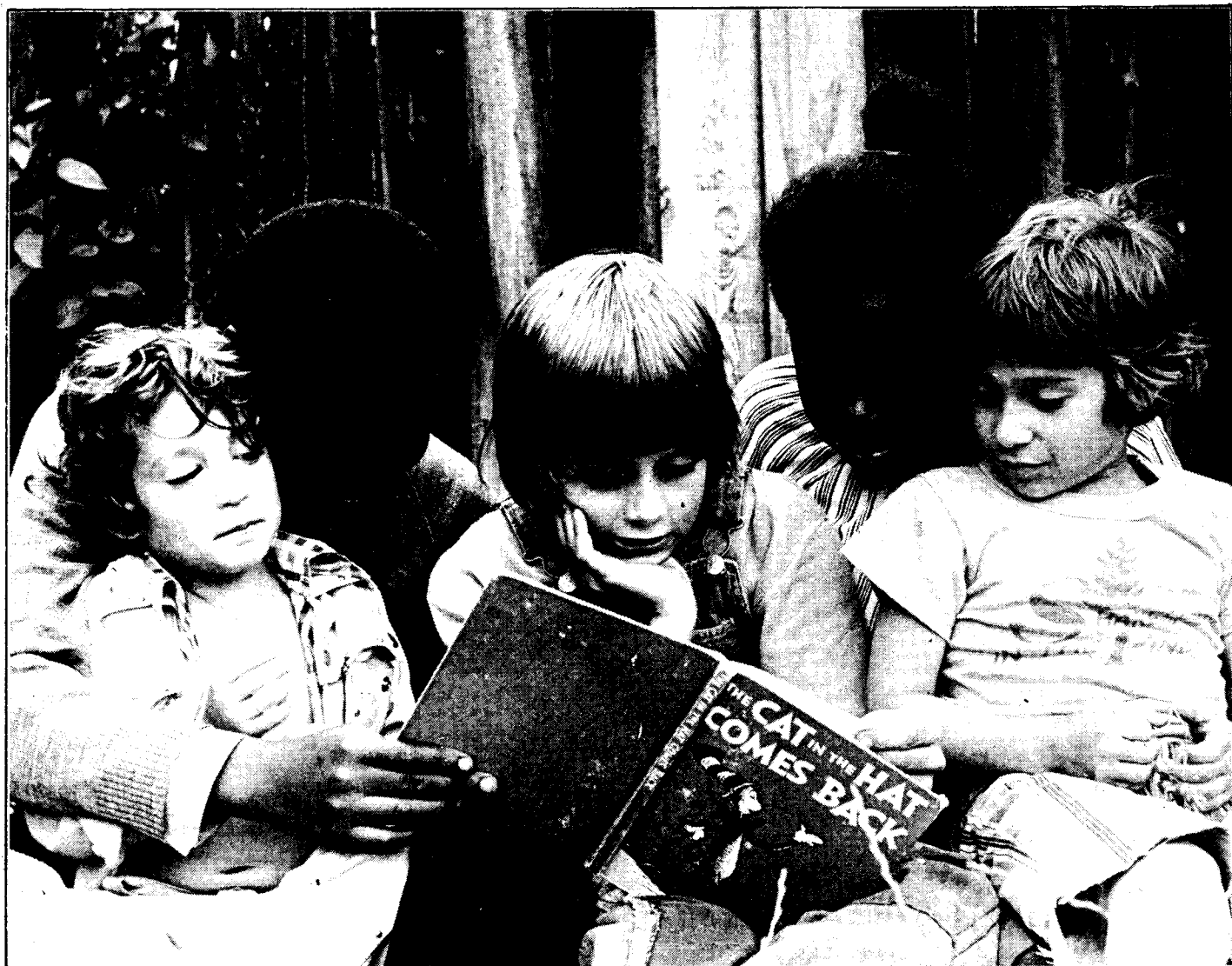
These hormones must only be given in very carefully controlled doses to avoid the dangers of side-effects. Every now and then, women on HRT should have their wombs scraped to make sure the lining is not overreacting. There are a few clinics that will give this sort of 'intensive care' to women who need it. But they have large waiting lists.

There are other clinics which also offer treatment to menopausal women—at a price. These are run by the drug companies who hope to make a profit out of the gaps in the health service, and to popularise their own brand of hormone treatment. Obviously, women must avoid such clinics. People who are concerned about money are likely to be a bit casual about your safety.

Part of the fight for a better health service is the fight for clinics to treat any woman who feels she needs help at the time of her menopause, and to give as much help as she needs. This means time to talk about the problems as well as bottles of drugs. We've all seen mothers, sisters, friends go through this: Let's fight to make sure we don't have to face it alone.

Mary Edmonson

# CHILDRENS BOOKS



photos by: Jane Henriques

## “TYKE IS ROUGH AND

WHEN we buy a book for a kid we want a ‘good book’, one they will enjoy, want to finish and read over and over again. But, what makes a good book to a kid? Excitement? adventure? a funny story? The only way to find out was to ask some kids to pick one of their favourite books of the moment and tell us about it and then we could pass that on to you.

Fortunately, almost all of the books the kids chose were cheapish and easily obtainable—both very important! But, if you don’t want to buy them, your local library should have them or be able to get them for you.

**Jeanie Hilton**

**James and the Giant Peach**  
**Roald Dahl**  
**Publisher: Puffin**  
**Price: 45p**

One of my favourite stories is James and the Giant Peach. It is an exciting story about a little boy. When his mum and dad were eaten up by a hippo James went to live with his aunts who were the meanest people in the world.

James’ aunts’ peach tree grows its first ever peach after James spills some magic potion on it.

The next morning the peach had grown to a giant size. His aunts called the press and the TV cameramen. They made a lot of money but they never gave James any of it. James walked around the back of the peach and saw a hole in it so he crawled into it.

Suddenly the peach began to roll and then he felt two bumps and that was his aunts being squashed. Then they fell off a cliff into the sea.

James and the insects living inside the peach float and fly across to America, having many adventures on the way.

I like this story because it gets more exciting as it goes

along; the more you read the more you have to read till the end. It is full of unusual happenings and the words that are used to describe these make it seem realistic, even though they couldn’t really happen.

I like the way the mean aunts get squashed, they deserved what they got. The story has some frightening bits in it like when the sharks are eating the peach, but it all turns out alright in the end for James and his crew.

**Lee Briscow**  
aged 10

Hurricane  
by Andrew Salkey

Joe and Mary lived in Jamaica they going to the country and after waiting five weeks their father says they cannot go because there is going to be a hurricane. They have to get ready for the hurricane so they get all kinds of things from their father's workroom. I like the way the boy Joe, tells the story and how he puts his feelings into the story. The book has a slow beginning and mounts up into an exciting end. I like the way it seems real. I think children from 8 or 9 upwards would enjoy this story.

Sarah Howard  
aged 8 1/4



# TOUGH.

**Pet Show**  
Ezra Jack Keats  
Picture Puffin  
35p

Pet Show is all about Archie losing his cat and when the last moment comes and he catches another pet that is the germ. To his surprise he finds his cat at the pet show by an old woman and she wins a medal when it's Archie's cat! But, on the way home, they met the little old lady but Archie and his friends thanked her but they said that she looked good on her.

The pictures are very nice and colourful and I like it very much.

Gareth Davies  
aged 6 1/2

# TYKE

**Dinosaurs and All that Rubbish**  
Michael Foreman  
Picture Puffin  
Price 50p

It's a good story. The man in the story wanted to reach the stars. He ordered the factories to build a rocket and to burn whatever will burn. The factories threw all the rubbish on the land and awakened Dinosaurs. The dinosaurs cleared up the mess and when the man came back he was surprised.

Sarah Travis  
aged 8

# IS A

**Midnight Adventure**  
Raymond Briggs  
Beaver Books  
45p

The story was about two boys who caught some burglars, they said they were going to go fishing but they caught some burglars. They were called Gerry Martin and Tim Rogers. They went out at night, one of the burglars said to Tim get out of my way but his belt come undone and his trousers fell down and he fell into the car. Then they caught the rest of the burglars. I like the adventure. / Wesley Howard

aged 6

things, and Uncle Lubin never gets hurt, I like how he makes the air ship. It starts happy and then gets sad and then gets happy again and ends very happily. The end.

Erin Briscoe  
aged 7

**The Great Pie robbery**  
Richard Scarry  
Picture Lions  
60p

The story is about Sam Cat and Dudley Pig who are detectives and when the telephone rings they have to go and find someone who's stolen some pies. They follow some clues. The funniest bit is when one of the robbers tears his pants so they soon find out who it is.

It is all so funny.

Emma  
aged 6

**Emma's First Day at Nursery School**  
By: Gunilla Wolde  
Hodder & Stoughton  
Price: 90p

This book is very nice. I like it very much. Emma finds a friend called Tilly and Tilly shows her peg to Emma. They bounced together on lots of cushions, Tilly got hot and when they stopped Emma remembered Mummy and baby brother.

Emma wanted to come back to school so she wanted tomorrow to come very quickly

Laura  
Aged 5

# GIRL"

**The Turbulent term of Tyke Tiler**  
Gene Kemp  
Faber & Faber  
£2.95

This story is about Tyke Tiler and Danny Price at school. Danny is a bit soft. Tyke is rough and tough. At the very end of the story you find out that Tyke is a girl. Tyke tells the story. This book is funny and enjoyable. PS. I like the jokes

Sarah Howard  
aged 8 3/4

# YOUR VOICE

2, Regent Park TCE  
Leeds, 6

## A superb day out

Dear Womens Voice

I didn't feel like going to the Womens Voice rally when the time came, having just come out of hospital and feeling pretty fragile and sorry for myself. There's nothing like five days in an out-dated, over-crowded, under-staffed gynaecological ward for undermining morale!

But I want to thank everyone who was there (and commiserate with those who weren't) for a superb day out!

The marvellous examples of work being done, fantastic organisation, stimulating workshops, and the wonderful feeling of shared experiences with so many other women made the day worth any effort.

So well done Sheffield women, splendid Womens Voice group members and readers who were there, and thank you Maggie Renn for speaking to women like me, isolated, under-paid, over-worked, trying very hard to do a little in such a tremendous fight for womens liberation and socialism.

Keep it up, sisters, don't let go. As one woman said, 'Keep doing it—our way.'

Janet Brown  
SE Manchester

## A weekly event

Dear Womens Voice

May I say a hearty thank you for Womens Voice. The only paper I've read in my life that consistently exposes in understandable language and detail the nitty gritty problems and pressures that beset and grind down most working class women. Until I read your paper I'd accepted that what was to be, was to be. Well, no more.

Your article in the latest issue, exposing dangerous drugs would have had more impact if you'd explained at the end where drugs withdrawn from the British and American markets end up—enjoying even

Dear Womens Voice.

I was at your conference last weekend went to one of your workshops for schoolgirls were they asked us to write to you if we had anything sexist said or done at school. Well its my first day back at school and already have had something sexist said. It was our topic lesson which is about food and a boy went up to the teacher for advice on what to do.

The reply was, "I think you would enjoy fishing as most boys do."

When a girl went the answer was.

"Why not do about sweet smelling spices" My god how boring can she get? But thats not all At the end of the lesson the boys had all gone and there were about six girls including me. A pile of text books was needed for another class and the teacher shouted "I would like two strong boys to carry the books next door." As there were no boys I shouted back, "I'll take them" she made a disagreeing grunt and another girl offered. She totally ignored her. She waited for the boys to return which was quite a time and so the books were late for the next class.

Yours Sincerely  
Beck Charlton. (age 11)

## Press attack gays

Dear Womens Voice,

'So-called gays are a deviant minority who need medical treatment'—so says the Evening Mail, our local paper.

greater profitability in the Third World. A reader might be excused for thinking their withdrawal was a victory for right and reason, whereas no such thing has occurred until they've been put out of production altogether, out of reach of our sisters everywhere.

Hopefully as time progresses Womens Voice will become a much looked forward to weekly event, whose punching grows deadlier with practice. Long may you speak!

Adeline Williams  
Cynfor Estate  
Cemaes Bay  
Gwynedd

Brum has a thriving gay community centre which was attacked by the Mail in an article and an editorial last week. What a Victorian attitude they have got!

But the local gay community was determined to fight back. They wrote letters of protest to the paper, printed leaflets, and organised a picket of the Mail buildings.

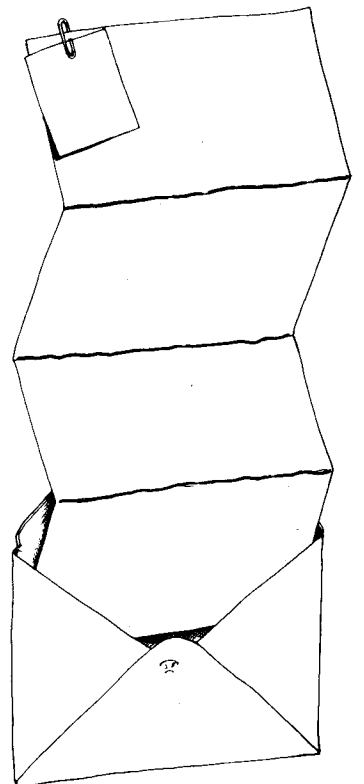
Womens Voice and the SWP supported the picket, we gave out leaflets and chanted and shouted.

Gays are yet another group who are threatened by the National Front and the right wing press. They challenge the idea that sex is for reproduction only. Far from needing medical treatment, to bring them into line with 'normal' people, as the Mail would have it, we say it's society itself that is sick, if it persecutes gays simply because they don't fit neatly into its little family units.

Birmingham Gay Centre stays OK!

Jerry Austin  
Birmingham Womens Voice

Send your letters to  
Womens Voice Box 82  
London E2



# Modern medicine is a threat to health

Dear Sisters,  
I was interested to read Mel Bartley's article on 'health for women by women' in the June issue, so I thought I'd write to point out some of the problems that GPs face with their patients under capitalism.

Not only are British and American doctors unable to make a clear diagnosis in up to half the patients who consult them, but most of the treatment they have to offer are for the control of symptoms only, not for the eradication of the causes of the disease, which still elude them.

In spite of increasingly sophisticated methods of investigation, the practice of medicine often remains at best ineffective from the patient's point of view, and at worst positively harmful.

Huge volumes are now published on iatrogenic disease—that is, disease arising as an unwanted by-product of modern medical treatment, particularly with drugs.

Dr John Fry once said, 'There are three shocks awaiting the newly hospital-qualified doctor entering general practice.

Shock number one is to be faced with a mass of apparently unrecognised, undefinable and unfamiliar emotional disorders. Shock number two is realising that cure is almost impossible in these conditions. And shock number three, a terrible thing for the scientifically and

academically trained modern physician, comes with the realisation that emotional disorders cannot be categorised neatly like blood disorders, nor labelled nor diagnosed with any accuracy at all.

By 'emotional disorders', Dr Fry means those disorders which manifest themselves as disturbances of thought, feeling and behaviour. These are properly the province of the psychiatrist, but as there are not nearly enough psychiatrists to go round, the GPs usually have to cope on their own, an impossible task when they have no idea how the disorders have arisen.

And when you add to what Fry calls emotional illness the host of other equally mysterious diseases that affect the body rather than the behaviour, it's small wonder that doctors have the highest suicide rate of any profession or trade.

Allergies, migraine, high blood pressure, heart attacks, bowel disorders and people who come saying they are 'feeling sick all over' mystify the modern doctor every working day, and of course the drug companies keep giving the GP all sorts of rubbish to prescribe for the mitigation of symptoms.

The doctors must realise in their heart of hearts that they are pouring drugs of which they know very little into patients of whom they know even less.

John Appleyard  
Leeds

# Aspirin and the coil a reply

Dear Womens Voice

I would like to reply to Susan West's criticism of my letter about Intra-Uterine devices and the taking of aspirins.

I would dispute the claim that I am scare-mongering or that there is no evidence to support my statement. My information came from a recent article in *The Nursing Mirror* in which it stated categorically that IUDs work by the production of Prostaglandins. *Womens Voice* has already published an article pointing out that aspirin-

related drugs break down this production.

I myself have first hand experience of this since it was due to taking aspirin, after having been fitted with a coil, that I became pregnant for the second time. My doctor said at the time that this was almost certainly the reason.

I would also like to say that I think Ms West is burying her head in the sand when she says that 'IUDs are safe and effective contraceptives in the majority'. This may be true, but it is not

# YOUR VOICE Chilean prisoner

Dear Womens Voice

Following the article in the May issue on the situation of Chilean women we'd like to tell *Womens Voice* readers that there is something we can all do. Some women from Longsight (Manchester) *Womens Voice* decided to try and contact two women who had recently been arrested in Chile.

The names we were given by the Manchester Chilean group were Hade Donoso Conception and her daughter Eliana.

They had been leafletting in a street in Santiago where some other socialists had recently

been arrested.

If our information is correct, Hayde and Eliana are now awaiting trial in Santiago prison—for leafletting. We felt we could show our support by contacting them, the prison authorities, who now know that their case is being followed, and the Chilean group of Amnesty International.

That is what we can do to offer practical help. It's important for us to put an effort, small though it is, into linking up with women in struggle elsewhere.

Longsight Womens Voice  
group

# Refused again!

Dear Womens Voice,

'Take this form home to your mother so she can apply for a special grant,' the teacher said to my sixteen-year-old, fatherless, daughter. 'It will enable you to stay on at school and take A levels as you did so well in your O levels.'

Although I was entitled to apply, I was reluctant to act upon the teacher's well-meaning advice. My daughter had been refused free school meals and also a uniform grant.

It was a different matter staying on at school after sixteen. A young adult, her needs would be far more expensive.

However, teachers, like so many of us, continue to be mesmerised by the compelling posters and adverts telling you you are entitled to this or that benefit.

On paper my pay packet looks solid enough, but that is before the various government agencies have had their pickings. I am the only one who can see that what remains of my pay will not cover 'the cost' of my daughter's right to equal educational opportunity.

So I foolishly submitted my form for consideration, only to be refused yet again.

Mrs D. Balsamo  
Holloway

Your article 'Hospitals Without Wheelchairs', whilst very commendable, quoted incorrectly the name of the author of

'Children in Long Stay Hospitals'. The author is in fact Maureen Oswin.

Ann Stasyshyn

good enough.

She also mentions that it quite normal to treat pain produced by these devices with these drugs. But is it OK for women to suffer the inconvenience of dysmenorrhoea which is induced by IUDs? I certainly don't think so.

I am not against contraception. It's something we women need and depend on. However, I do believe also that where one has any evidence of such things as adverse effects or failure the knowledge should be shared by

everyone.

I conclude therefore by repeating my warning to be careful of taking pain-killing drugs if you are using an IUD. If in doubt consult your doctor or the nearest gynaecologist.

S. A. Marais  
S.R.N.

This is a perfect example of the sort of thing women should seek help over at their nearest Well Women Clinic, and why they need such clinics.

Health Ed.

# YOUR QUESTIONS...

## DO I NEED MY HUSBANDS PERMISSION?

*Dear Womens Voice*

Please could you tell me the facts about sterilization for women. Is it true that the man (husband) has to give written permission? Does a woman have to consent when a man is sterilised?

*Dear X*

If you want to be sterilised there is no legal requirement that you have the written permission of your husband. However it very much depends on the attitude of the surgeon in the hospital and very often surgeons won't do

the operation unless they have the permission of the husband. This is why a place for the husband's signature appears on so many forms that have to be signed before the operation takes place. It is also very difficult to get a sterilisation done if you are young and have no children or only one or two children. If you want a sterilisation and your husband won't agree the first person to approach is your G.P. If he is sympathetic he will refer you to a hospital where there is a

surgeon willing to do the operation without your husband's consent. If he is unsympathetic you should try to find a GP who is.

With men the situation is the same. There is no legal requirement that the wife must sign for a vasectomy operation but some surgeons require it. The main difference is that N.H.S. facilities for male vasectomies are lacking and vary a great deal from area to area. Most men have them done privately (Cost £25—£75). With private vasectomies no permission is needed. I hope this gives you the information you need.

*Alison Kirton*

*Dear Womens Voice*

When I was 15 I was raped by a friend of my brothers. I was very scared and I didn't dare tell anyone. Now I am eighteen and I have a nice boyfriend but the

idea of sex with him really frightens me. I am scared to tell him about what happened in case it puts him off me. I don't really have anyone to talk to but I know it is messing me up inside. Do you know anything I could do.

*Dear Beverly*

I'm really glad that you have written in because it sounds as if you have bottled up your problem for too long. If your bloke does think differently of you because you were raped then perhaps he isn't worth bothering about.

You may think that it is easy to say that. The best people to contact are the Rape Crisis Centre in London. The number is 01 340-6145. So ring them up and tell them how you feel. They have a lot of experience and will be able to help you. You don't even have to tell them your name if you don't want to. Good luck.

# ANSWERED



## Women's studies and the WEA

usual set-up is that the courses are organised for twelve weeks (one term) from September, or twenty-four weeks (two terms). But the WEA also arranges Saturday Schools, week-end schools, even residential summer schools.

The atmosphere in a WEA class is friendly and the idea is that the students and the tutor decide together what will be covered. Sometimes classes run their own research projects for instance into local history, and publish results.

The WEA is partially funded by the Department of Education, but it also gets money from the TUC and other organisations. It's a voluntary movement, run on the basis of local branches, which all students can join. The usual class fee is somewhere between £3 and £4 per term, with possibly an extra payment where there is a creche. Most classes meet once a week for two hours.

There are now so many courses on women's studies up and down the country that a national newsletter is published to connect them up. If you'd like a trial copy, write to: Carolyn Brown, 176, Hagley Road, Stourbridge DY8 2JN.

Alternatively, if you'd like to join a class, or if there are a group of you who want to form a class, look up your local WEA district office in the phone book, and contact the tutor/organiser. Other enquiries can be directed to: WEA National Office, Temple House, 9, Upper Berkeley St., London, W.1

THE Workers Educational Association, founded in 1903, exists to provide adult classes for individuals and organisations who want to follow a course of study through discussion and reading, without any examination or qualification at the end.

In the last few years, in different parts of the country, the WEA has pioneered 'Womens Studies'. It's provided classes in the evening or the day-time, sometimes with creches attached. There are courses on Women and the Law, Women and Trade Unions, Women Writers, Women in history, and many other topics. The



# Generation game - the rules stay the same

## WOMENS WORLD



By Judith Condon

I'VE BEEN thinking, maybe it's about time breeding became a male preserve. I mean, we females have for centuries greedily, greedily, hogged all the delights to ourselves.

Which brings me to the Kennel Club. Half a million people in Britain are involved in exhibiting, training, and breeding dogs. The huge majority of them are women.

But the Kennel Club, which flourishes on the enormous wealth so generated, is strictly all-male. It makes the rules, it runs the shows, it registers the pedigrees. All breeders and exhibitors are subject to its regulations even if they're barred from membership. The 320 men at the top have shut their doors firmly against women since time immemorial.

I've got a much more radical idea. I've just become a founder member of a new organisation. Title: (All right) Breed Independently Then you Chauvinist Hounds, (BITCH for short). Aim: total withdrawal of all female dogs from the process of breeding. If the Kennel Club are so bloody clever, let them do it themselves for a change.

FIFTEEN HUNDRED children who go to be schooled at Hedley Water Mixed Comprehensive, in Brentwood, Essex, have just had a first-class lesson in the rules of the game.

Their headmistress, Margaret Jones, is expecting a baby. At thirty-eight she decided it was now or never, although the father of her child can't marry her until he is divorced from his present wife.

Already agonising, Margaret Jones led the school governors to believe that she had become married. She informed them she was pregnant and would be applying for maternity leave. She had made the difficult decision to try and bear her baby and maintain her career as well.

But she was reckoning without the miraculous, moral ascendancy of the British press.

For her paper, armed with right-thinking

WRONG



RIGHT



and a concern for justice, was ready to swoop. What a story! And the nationals were close on it's heels. Pregnant headmistress, they trumpeted, pun on the mistress. Unmarried head to bear love-child, read bastard.

With a few catchy headlines they massacred Margaret Jones. To say nothing of what they must have done to her lover's present wife.

That's what they're good at. A few words from Sally (dial-a-quote) Oppenheimer, on preserving the moral fibre of the country, a nice big-bellied photograph, and you're away.

Margaret Jones gave in, in the end. She resigned, which is the polite professional way of saying she was elbowed out. David Rees, who intends to marry her, and who is deputy head of a school nearby, remains in his post.

There you have it, children. Now what have you learned in school today?

We've learned that all babies have to have both a father and mother, and they must be married. Those of us who were born out of wed-lock have learned this particularly well.

We've learned that women who aspire to have good careers better not make any mistakes. Far better they avoid having any personal life, especially contact with men.

We've learned that women without children of their own make far better teachers than those with.

We've learned that men and women who have strong feelings for each other are liable to engage in sexual intercourse, for which the woman will be blamed and whipped from the door, but it will be different for the man. The girls have learned this extremely well, but the boys have memorised it too.

We've learned that the role of those in authority is to judge, not to understand. We've learned an awful lot about sactimoniousness and hypocrisy.

# WHAT IS GOING ON?! meetings plays discos badges pamphlets campaigns concerts

## Public Meetings

● **Birmingham Womens Voice Summer Fair.** Saturday 8 July, 2pm at Ruddlebarn School, Selly Oak. Social in the evening. For info contact Jenny 021 440 5794, or Janet 021 472 7216

● **Finchley & Barnet:** 'Women and Unemployment', speaker; Mary Robson. Tuesday 25th, July, North Finchley Library, Ravenscourt Rd., N.12. For further information contact W.V. or Socialist Worker sellers, Finchley Central Tube, Friday evening.

● **Hackney:** 'Women and Immigration'. Monday 17th July 8 pm. Dalston Library, Dalston Lane, E.8. For babysitters phone: Pauline 800 3586.

● **Manchester South East** at The Albert, Aspinall St., Off Oxford Rd., Rusholme, 8 pm July 5th: Jan Brown, 'A Personal View of the Health Service'. July 19th: Lynsey Muir, 'Women's Sexuality'. August 2nd: Maureen Watson, 'Women and Health'.

● **Teachers Against The Nazis** Sat 23rd Sept 10.30—5pm Friends Meeting House Opp Euston Stn London NW1

Anti Nazi teaching packs available at conference. Speakers: Joan Lestor MP and Carol Adams.

● **South London Womens Voice** meets alternate Tuesdays. Tues 18 July 'Women Against the Nazis'. Speaker Anna Keene. Tues. 1 August 'Women in Chile'. Brixton Library, the Oval Brixton at 8pm. For further details or babysitters ring Jean 674 8641

## WV Meetings

● **Acton & Harlesden Ring** Carrie 993 0356 or Pete 969 9812

● **Birmingham** at Greyhound Cider Bar, Holloway Head. For dates and babysitters phone Jenny (440 5794) or Janet (472 7216). All women welcome.

● **Black Country Sundays** fortnightly, 2.30, 27 Glen Court, Compton Road, Wolverhampton. Phone Wolverhampton 23233 for information. Children welcome.

● **Brighton** every Tuesday. Phone Sue (21060) or Manuela (Henfield 3843). Baby sitters provided.

● **Bristol Womens Voice** meets fortnightly in the University Students Union, Queens Road, at 8pm on Wednesdays. Next meeting, Wednesday June 14th. For details see WV or Socialist Worker sellers in the underpass outside Lewis Stores on Saturdays.

● **Canterbury** every other Tuesday at Jolly Sailor Northgate. Phone Barbara (Lyminge 862742).

● **Cardiff** every other Tuesday, 7.30 at Union Books, 58 Bridge Street. For babysitters phone Bronwen (Cardiff 43470)

● **Coventry** meets every other Wednesday, 8.00pm at The Hertford Tavern, off Queens Road (near the Butts). Phone 450-570

● **Edinburgh** for information contact Susie at Book Marx, 130 Morrison St, Edinburgh. Open 10am-6pm.

● **Exeter** Wednesday 12th July at 7.30pm there is a meeting to form a new Women's Voice Group, at 15 Barnardo Rd., Phone Exeter 38023

● **Glasgow** for information phone Clare (959 8924) or Vera (267 5059)

● **Glossop, Derbyshire.** First and third Tuesdays of every month at 110 Victoria St., Glossop. For further information phone Kate Glossop 61873 or Claire Glossop 64735 All women welcome.

● **Kentish Town** meets regularly phone Gail (485 0954) or Sheila (263 0351) evenings. Babysitters provided.

● **Hackney** phone Pauline (800 3586) for information and babysitter.

● **Halifax** details from WV and SW sellers every Sat 12.30-2.30 Co-op Arcade on the Precinct.

● **Hornsey** for information see local WV sellers or phone Alison (263 3477) or Janet (444 8922).

● **Lampeter** Tuesday evenings in college. Details from WV sellers or write c/o SDUC Lampeter, Dyfed, Wales.

● **North Manchester** fortnightly on Mondays. Phone Maureen Tottoh (205 2867) after 6 for details.

● **Norwich** every other Tuesday at 8.30 at Black Boys Pub, Colegate.

● **Reading** first Wednesday of every month. Phone 62150 for details.

● **Shrewsbury** the first Wednesday of every month. Other meetings too so phone 58830 for details.

● **South West London** on alternate Tuesdays. Phone Marion 673 1329 for more information.

● **South London Womens Voice:** Fortnightly meetings and estate sale, for information contact Jean 674 8641

● **Walthamstow** meets every Sunday 3pm. For details ring Jeannie 531 8340, or Pauline 521 4768.

## Discos 'n fun

● **Central London Womens Voice Social.** Friday July 7th. 8.00 till late. 1st floor, PCL, Bolsover St., W.C.1. admission 50p. (claimants 20p). disco, food and bar.

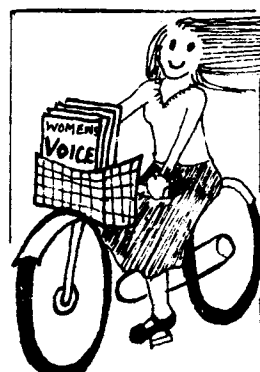
● **South West London Women's Voice Picnic:** Sunday July 9th (16th if it rains) at Happy Valley on Coulsdon Common (just South of Purley on A23—take left turn to Caterham B2030 after about 2 miles turn right into Fox Lane) Meet outside the Fox Pub (in Fox Lane) at 11.30am. Bring your own picnic. Bring the kids. Everyone very welcome. If you need transport ring 673 1329.

● **International Discussion Bulletin of the Socialist Workers Party.** Double issue 7/8. 30 pence. Articles on the women's movement in Italy, France and the USA. From SWP International Department, PO Box 82, London, E2.

● **Womens Voice** needs your help.

Can you  
type write  
drive draw  
design take photos

Do you have a few spare hours a week to help us? Please, we need you. Ring us or write.



## Womens Voice

# THIS ADVERT DEGRADES WOMEN!

Stickers 50p a hundred. Money with orders. Write to Womens Voice Stickers, Box 82 London E2.

**CLASSIFIED**

**Women Against Nuclear Power: Capenhurst**  
Support meeting for the Capenhurst anti-nuclear demonstration. Friday 23 June, Kings Head, Bridge Street, Chester. 7.30pm  
Contact Sue Halton-ohune 811066, for further information.

**Socialist Feminist**  
New women welcome at North London Socialist-Feminist meetings on 1st Thursday each month. 8.00pm at Camden Women's Centre, Rosslyn Lodge, Lyndhurst Road, Rosslyn Hill, NW3 (Belsize Park). 6th July is a discussion with Women in Ireland Group. Further details Hester (day) 485 6672; Lynn (eve) 484 8346 and for childcare.

**Haringey Women's Group**  
Celebrates its first birthday. Fund-raising and booze up at: Tottenham Community Project 628, High Road, N17 on: Saturday July 15 from 8pm onwards. Disco and possibly surprise new women's band. Bar extension. 80p entrance waged and 50p unwaged. For women only. Transport: Seven Sisters tube, buses 279, 249, 149, W3.

# The Bookmarx Chain

**BIRMINGHAM:** Socialist and TU Books, 224 Deritend High Street, Birmingham 12 (open 10am-6pm, Monday-Saturday)

**CARDIFF:** SWP Books, 58 Bridge Street (open afternoons on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and all day Saturday)

**COVENTRY:** TU Books, 65 Queen Victoria Road.

**EDINBURGH:** Bookmarx, 130 Morrison Street (two minutes walk from Haymarket Station).

**GLASGOW:** SW Books, top floor, 64 Queen Street, C1.

**HULL:** Socialist Books, 238 Springbank (open 10am-5.30pm, Monday-Saturday)

**MANCHESTER:** TU books, basement, 260 Deansgate, Manchester 3.

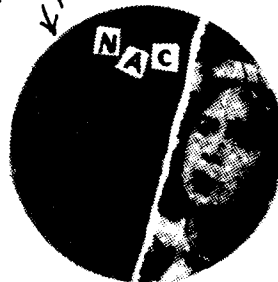
**SOUTHAMPTON:** October Books, 4 Onslow Road.

**London:** Bookmarks, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4 01 802 6145. 10am to 6pm, Monday to Saturday.

**Rape Crisis Centre** If you have been raped or sexually assaulted and want someone to talk to or need legal or medical advice the Rape Crisis Centre runs a 24 hour telephone line. Contact us anytime day or night on 01 340 6145 or PO Box 42 London EN6 5BU.

**Lesbian Line** is a new phone service for women operated entirely by women and offering help, advice and information. 2-10pm, 01 794 2942.

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# Join Womens Voice...

WOMENS VOICE fights for womens rights. We want equal pay with the highest paid; maternity leave without restriction; the right to a job; nursery places for all children so that mothers can chose to work; and an end to discrimination in education, training, jobs and benefits; the right to abortion on demand.

To fight for these changes is only a beginning. Womens Liberation means we have to free ourselves from the grip of the rich and powerful whose oppressive rules and ideas are fostered on us from our earliest years. This means we have to fight for socialism too, to free us from a society divided between those who have and those who have not.

**Fight with Womens Voice for Womens Liberation and Socialism.**

# join the fight!

## Womens Voice Groups

### Scotland

Dundee  
Edinburgh  
Central Glasgow  
West Glasgow  
Glasgow Drumchapel

### Wales

Aberystwyth  
Cardiff

### Llanelli

### England

Bath  
Birmingham  
Brighton  
Bristol  
Bristol University  
Cambridge  
Canterbury

### Coventry

Derby  
Lancaster University  
Leeds

### Liverpool

Manchester North  
Manchester South East

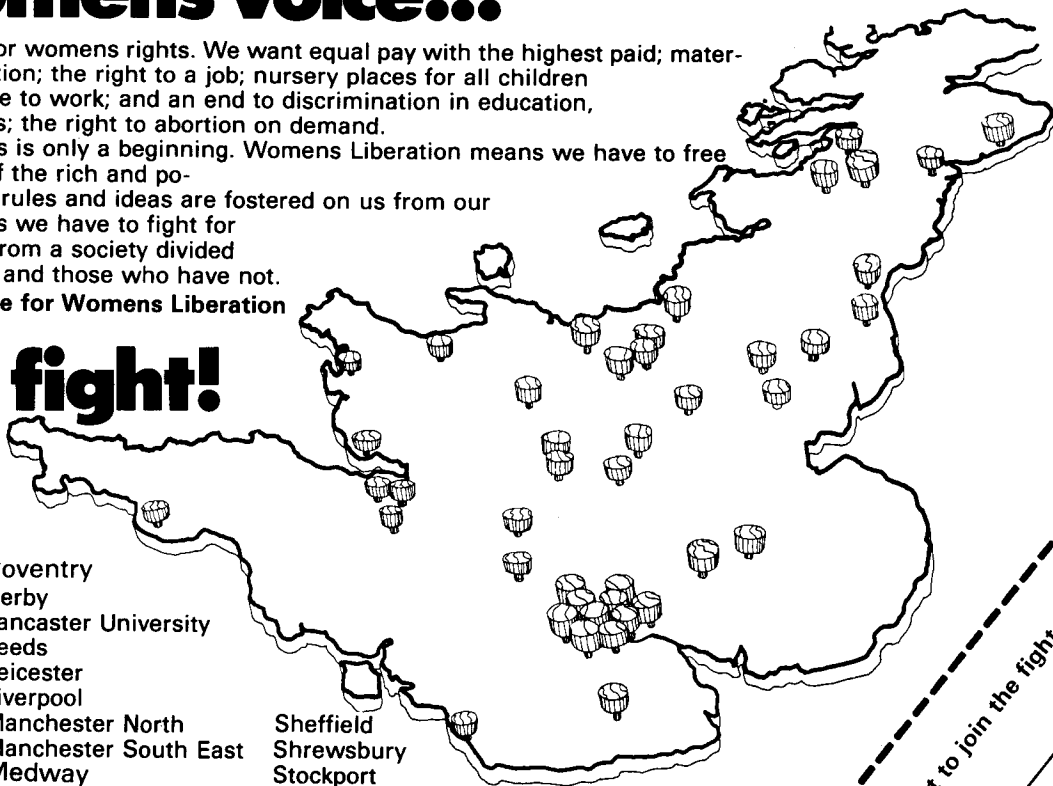
### Medway

Newcastle  
Norwich  
Oxford  
Plymouth  
Pontefract  
Reading  
St. Albans

### Sheffield

Shrewsbury  
Stockport  
Sunderland  
Wolverhampton  
York  
London  
North  
North East London Poly  
Central

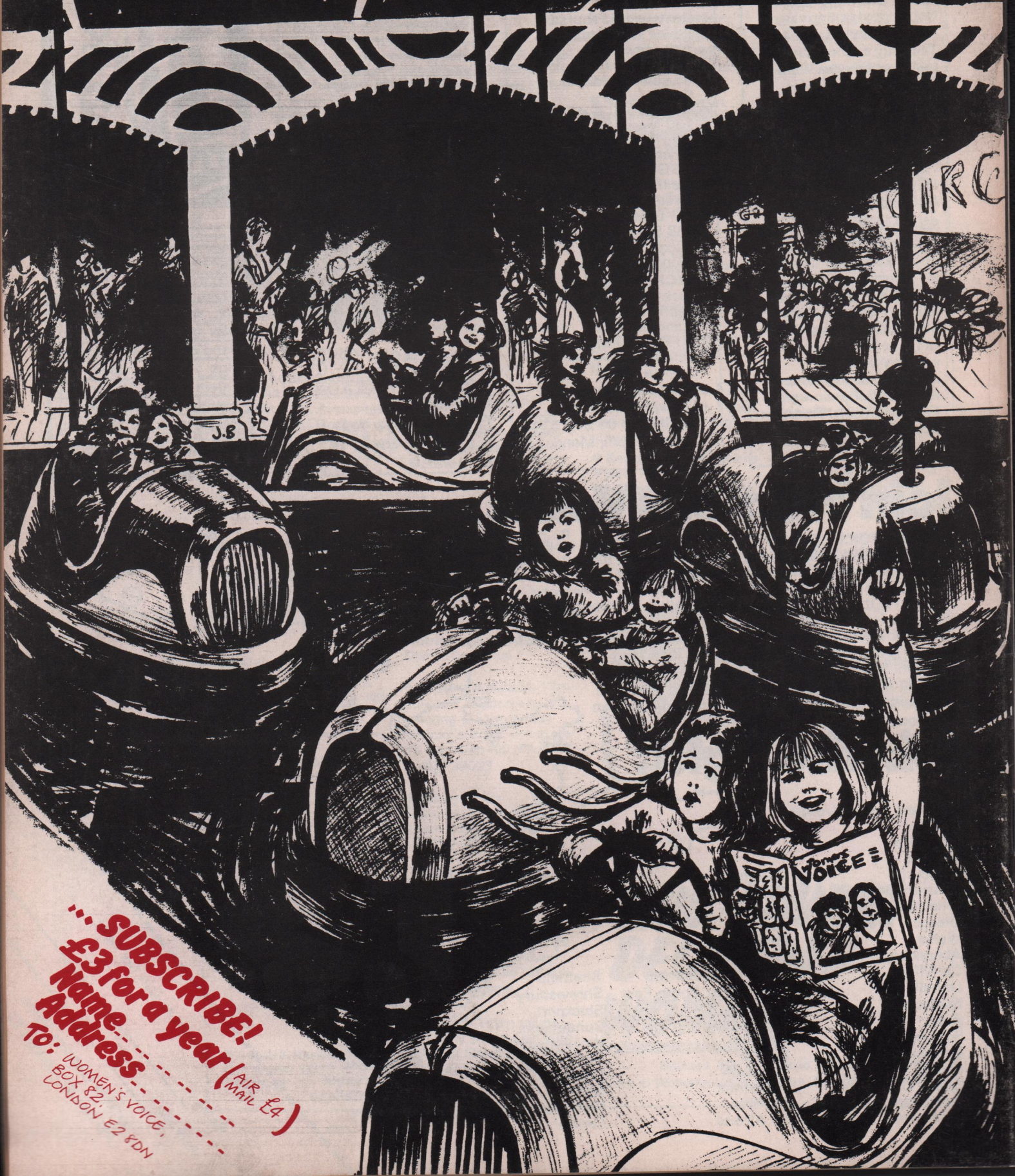
South  
South West  
South East  
Hammersmith  
Bedford College  
Lea Valley  
Kentish Town



Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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