

# Womens VOICE

No.3  
10p



**Inside:**  
**Interview with**  
**Carol Grimes**

**Equal pay**

**The problem**  
**of rape**

**Soweto**

**Every time  
something  
goes up  
someone  
has to do without**



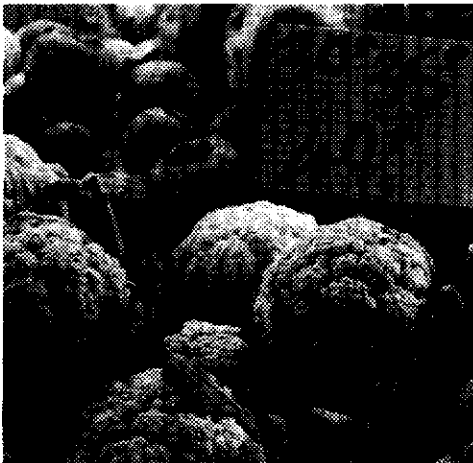
*'They'll be charging us to look at the meat presently, never mind buying it.'*



*Queueing in Sainsburys. 'If you think this is bad' one woman said, you should see it later in the week. What with the prices and the queues I don't want to face another bit of shopping for a week.'*



Queuing in the market. Mrs Molster said: 'We've been stood here a good half hour. It's ridiculous. We come straight from work at MK Electrics up the road.'



This cauliflower has three prices on it. Maybe it's because prices are rising so fast the stall holders have to think ahead!

Just how high the price of a cauliflower will go is anyone's guess. Do you remember when you once bought them as a vegetable to go with roast meat? Do you now buy the same cauliflower as a main course?

Rising prices aren't just Government statistics. Everytime something goes up someone has to go without. In the last three years the cost of gas has gone up 78 per cent. The cost of electricity 123 per cent. Coal 85 per cent. Rail fares have gone up by 84 per cent. Food prices by 54 per cent in just two years.

We were told that to stop the inflationary spiral we would have to hold down our wages, tolerate higher unemployment, and see massive cuts in public spending. They called it the social contract.

The cuts in public spending would mean more money for industry more production and in the end more jobs and steady prices.

Well, the cuts have hit - in hospitals, in the railways, in the schools. Education expenditure for secondary school children has

gone DOWN in the last year from £404 per child to £398, when costs have gone UP by 25 per cent.

The cuts mean more women are out of jobs, more women queuing endlessly, in hospital waiting rooms, baby clinics, at bus stops.

The answer isn't to hope that something better will turn up. It probably won't. The Labour Government, only too ready to squeeze the workers first, and the bosses, who are still making enormous profits, are the root of the problem.

What we have to do is strike a few blows against the people who make our lives so hard. Just as the British Leyland workers are doing right now.

If your children go to nursery school it means organising the other parents to keep the standards up and the classes open. If you work as a school cleaner, or school dinner lady, it means organising the other cleaners and dinner ladies to keep all your jobs. If you're at home with children it means organising some of the women around to protest against the prices increases.

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This is the first part in a series. We'll be explaining all women's entitlements so that you know what you can get - and what you will have to defend.

News for the next issue of Womens Voice must reach us by Friday 25 March. Letters must reach us by 25 March.

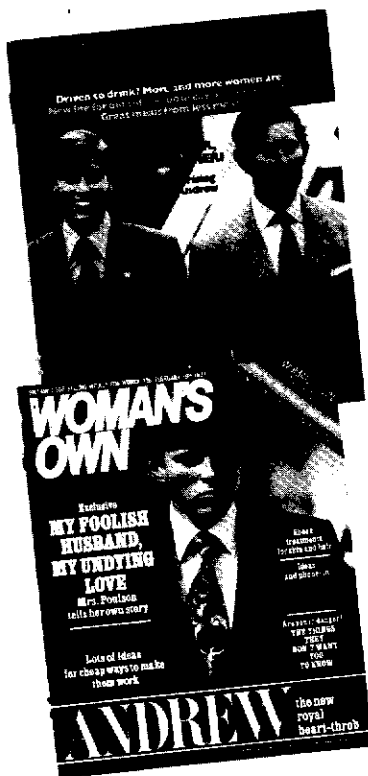
Please - the What's On must reach us by 25 March. A lot of articles and letters reached us too late to go in. For the next issue everything must reach us by 25 March. Or phone us in advance to let us know what is coming. Womens Voice, 6 Cottons Gardens, London, E2. 01-739 1878.

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Have a look at these two front pages. They come from 'Woman', the 'world's greatest weekly for women', and 'Women's Own', 'Britain's top selling weekly for women.' Tweedledum and Tweedledee. They call it free choice.

You can have 'heart-throb Andrew' served up 'Woman'-style on January 22nd. Or 'Woman's Own'-style just three weeks later.

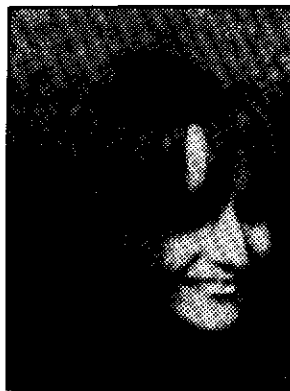
Still the old formula. Recipes, knitting patterns, romance stories about people called Annabel Trewella and Linden Hayward, 'slim beautiful and confident'. And there's make-up, and special cut-out offers, family doctor, and most important of all the Problem Page. (Oh yes, and the ads, don't forget the ads, they're what pay for all the rest).



They've tried very hard on 'Woman' and 'Women's Own' to cope with change. It's painful to watch how they've wrenched themselves into the nineteen-seventies old prejudices peeling, a glimmer of light poking through.

Woman has a page called Actionwoman, 'the page that shows you how to get things done, put things right'. But Actionwoman still comes down to a flutter of the old eyelashes in the end.

Recently it dealt with that pressing problem, should a woman tell her age when asked by a policeman? Answer—you can offer to accept his estimate. . . we're assured that most PCs are trained to be pretty gallant these days!' Shut your eyes and picture it now, that benign



# Womens World

by Judith Condon

world populated by womens magazine writers, where in sleepy villages, every dawn, policemen line up to learn etiquette.

Fantasy. That's the biggest ingredient of these women's magazines. The world is a rosy one. There is a (new!) product to wipe out every blemish. You can knit a jumper and change your life in a few hours and never drop a stitch. Every kitchen is a dream, every meal comes ready garnished in full colour. It all comes down to YOU. You're not trying hard enough. Why can't you make artistic Christmas gifts, delectable many-coursed meals, shining floors, shining-eyed children and happy husbands alike, with your own individual woman's skills. And then fit in some 'O' levels on top. And if you don't pull through, your problems are personal, turn to the back.

How they leap on corrupt politicians and businessmen like Stonehouse and Poulson with glee! Behind them too is romance. 'Why I told John I was pregnant' by Sheila Buckley. 'My Father' by Jane Stonehouse. Exclusive, 'My Foolish Husband, My Undying Love, Mrs Poulson tells her own story'.

The crimes of the wealthy and famous are all forgiveable in the world where policemen are trained to be gallant. It was the pressure of fame, say the good wives. I couldn't have loved him enough, say the super-wives.

But there have been some adjustments. Anna Raeburn and co have injected some realism into the ignorant middle class pap that used to be served up on the problem pages. Journalists seem to agree that going to work on problems pages is a real eye-opener. They see the non-glossy side of women's lives. . . and men's too,

come to that. For in this crazy set-up where personal feelings and worries are supposed to be the prerogative of women, the only place men can write for help is to women's magazines.

And just occasionally comes an article that looks at injustice, or our lack of control over our lives. Like the story of Mrs Joan King, whose husband took eleven years to die of diseases contracted when he worked at Windscale Nuclear Plant, a story told this month in Women's Own. How different from the home life our own dear Queen—tirelessly depicted on a separate page!

## Pub snub

The fight over El Vinos, the Fleet Street wine bar that won't serve women, has been set back again. Journalists tried to prevent El Vinos licence being renewed on the grounds it was a

*My Dear Readers....*

*What darlings those people on the Guardian are! They've been coming up with ever so many useful tips for surviving this beastly inflation!*

*I can't tell you how relieved I was to read that it's now acceptable (yes really) to entertain at home without hiring help to wait on table! Doing it yourself, they say, is definitely the modern thing to do! I knew you'd want to know this, so just pass it on!*

*A simply devastating jolly tip was that you might like to tame advantage of your married woman's tax allowance by getting a job! Yes isn't it exciting! And you don't have to fret about sweeping out the patio or anything 'cos you can get a daily to do it for you!*

male club masquerading as a public house, and snubbed the Sex Discrimination Act. But the chairman of the Brewsters Sessions, who determine such matters, decided what's 'discrimination to one is 'old world common courtesy and decency' to another. Or to put it a different way, a case of one man's meat is every woman's poison.

## Sex con

Writer Carol Sarler tried out £42 worth of gadgets from the Ann Summers sex-aid shop. Her conclusion—it's a con. Yet for obvious reasons not many people are going to complain. So Carole plans to start a court case under the Trades Description Act. Pity we can't also sue the standard text books, and school biology books, for appalling mis-information and sheer ignorance of women's bodies, and all the pain and frustration and distress they've caused.

## Deep

Not so long ago Ian (deep) Sproatt made a lot of 'revelations' about welfare scroungers. Over night he became the 'brain' of the Tory back benches.

Consequently the Department of Health and Social Security investigated 200 cases that were offered as examples of welfare abuse. It's just been announced that the investigation cost £8,000, and they found just 8 cases of fiddling. With a revelation rate like that, St John better watch out.

*Awfully good isn't it? Only in London you may have to pay £1 an hour, but you lucky ones in the provinces can get one for 70p!*

*And if you want to show some real female initiative. Well! How about plonking some of the old Chanel on when he comes home tonight and broaching the subject of doing an extra job! The Guardian's got some super ideas for evenings and weekends!*

*What's that? Your husband just lost his, and your seventy pence an hour cannot even pay the rent? But darling. Should you really be reading the Guardian? They have some super little tabloids now for people like you, you know!*

Tilly Bupa.

# MOVE TO 'BATTERY HEN' MATERNITY UNIT

by Debra Thom

The British Hospital for Mothers and Babies may be closed down. But no one knows for certain. That's the way the authorities can run down a hospital until it almost closes itself.

'It's a disgrace, people who have worked here for years don't know what's going on. Some of the ancillary workers have been here for all their working lives,' Mrs Baker,

the TGWU steward told Womens Voice.

Greenwich and Bexley Area Health Authority are slowly killing the hospital. First they said it would close, then they said it would stay open. Doctors are telling patients that it might not be wise to go to the BHMB because it might not still be open when their babies are due.

The Authority has said that the hospital might be moved into the

big Greenwich District Hospital. But that will mean certain redundancy for some workers who can't just move jobs to a hospital five miles away. And it's not a maternity hospital. A local councillor has described it as a 'battery hen unit'.

How can the BHMB be kept open? The TGWU told Mrs Baker when the formal redundancy notices were issued that they would 'pull out all the stops, the laundry workers at the Brook Hospital, the council workers, right up to the docks.'

That's great but it's needed *now*. Hospitals in East London have been closed at a week's notice. A campaign can't be built at a week's notice.

The EGA has shown how women who use the hospital can help build a fighting campaign. We're already planning petitions and badges so that when the campaign committee really gets going there'll be lots of people to support us in our fight.

The TGWU workers here have already shown how they can do it. Five years ago they had to strike to get a decent wage—after a week out they won their demands. Together we're going to build a campaign to stop these cuts that ruin workers lives and mothers rights to have their babies in the sort of hospital they want.

## CORNWALL

# HAVE BABY WILL TRAVEL

Janet Shanks, COHSE

IT would be interesting to know where else in the country women have so far to go to have a baby. In North Cornwall there is up to a 50 mile journey to Plymouth because the local maternity home at Launceston is closed for deliveries and threatened with complete closure.

Some women don't make the long journey and give birth in the ambulance at the roadside, or are rushed to the local maternity home as an emergency. What will happen to these these emergencies when there is no maternity home? The authorities have promised Launceston a new maternity unit since the beginning of the welfare state but nothing has ever materialised.

Then there is the journey during pregnancy to be seen by a consultant at the Plymouth Hospital. This means another long delay travelling across countryside where no public transport exists, and usually waiting for hours to see the consultant.

A petition collected by local residents and trades unionists has all but been ignored by Devon Area Health Authority. Some suggestions as to what to do next please?



## CHARTER AT ALLY PALLY

Above, Mrs Desai one of the Grunwicks strikers speaking at the Working Womens Charter Rally.

About 1500 women found their way to the Alexandra Palace in North London for a day of speeches, discussion, meetings and stalls about womens rights.

# NEWS

Angela Phillips (LFL)

# BABIES NOT JUST NUMBERS

I, like thousands of other people, am the product of an unwanted pregnancy. It was 'in the month of April' 1947 in Middlesborough that my mother had the double burden of giving birth to twins, my sister and myself. Had there been only one baby the story might have been different. I do not know if my mother could not keep us or didn't want to—that is irrelevant anyway. I know she had other children.

At five weeks old, and weighing less than five pounds, we were left in a back street. We were found and soon placed in new homes. Sandra was fostered in Hamilton, Lanarkshire, and I was adopted by a family in Hartlepool. During the next seven years, Sandra and I had occasional holidays together without either of us knowing we were related in any way. The link was severed when she was adopted by another family. We have never met since then, but I do know that she lives in East Kilbride and is ignorant of the fact that she was fostered or that she has a sister.

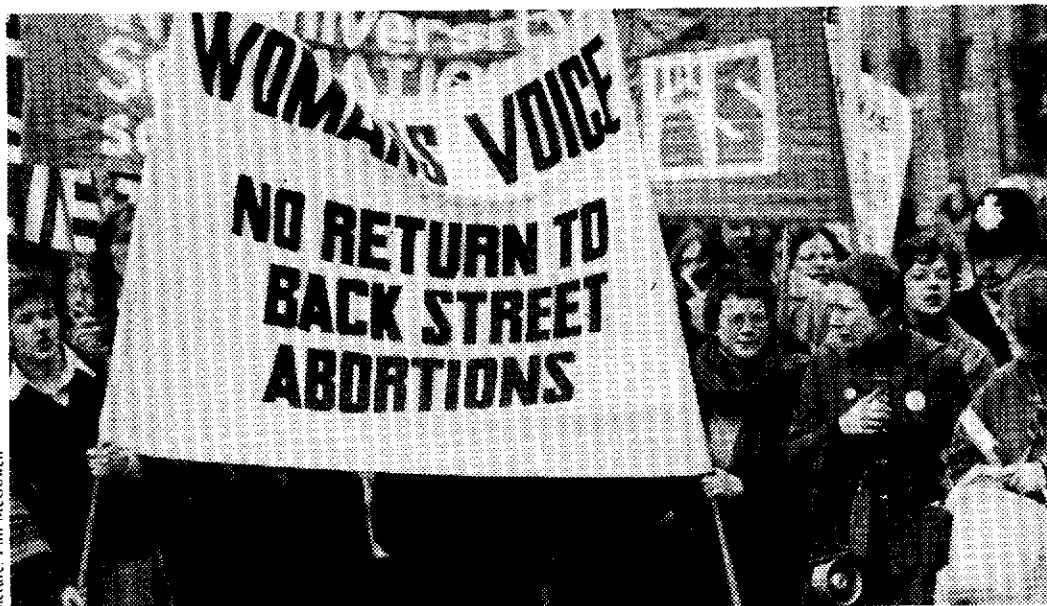
Such cases were perhaps commonplace before 1967. But even in this enlightened age desperate women are still driven to leaving their babies. The anti-abortion groups are constantly yelling adoption as an answer to the problem of unwanted pregnancies.

Unwanted babies can grow into very insecure people, no matter how well cared for they are later on. The situation when a mother has no alternative but to dump her baby should not exist.

The situation will get more acute if getting an abortion is made more difficult. Even more regulations surrounding abortions will make it more difficult and a much longer process for getting the necessary bits of paper in order to qualify.

People like me are not just vague statistics, as the politicians would have us believe. It makes me angry that they are capable of causing an amazing amount of hardship and stress simply by a vote in the Commons. Surely no-one wants increased numbers of children in care, desperate mothers, abandoned babies and perhaps many more Mary Smiths.

Sheila Telfair



picture: Phil McGowan

## ABORTION NEWS

# LABOUR MPs VOTE TO RESTRICT ABORTION

FORTY-SIX Labour MPs voted for the Benyon Bill. Many are sponsored by trade unions whose committed policy is against the Bill.

Those who voted in favour of the Bill are listed below. So are the unions that have declared policies on abortion.

If an MP from your union is listed, get a resolution through your branch to commit him or her to vote according to union policy. If your union so far has no policy, get a resolution to commit national conference and executive to outright opposition to changes in the law, better still for abortion on demand.

**ASTMS:** Fred Willey (Sunderland North). **ASTMS** was committed against the James White anti-abortion Bill.

**NUR:** Richard Buchanan (Glasgow Springburn), Tom McMillan (Glasgow Central), Leslie Spriggs (St Helens).

**TGWU:** Lewis Carter-Jones (Eccles), James Dunn (Liverpool Kirkdale), Kevin McNamara (Kingston-upon-Hull Central), Gordon Oakes (Widnes), Michael O'Halloran (Islington North), Jerry Walker (Kingswood), Ian

Campbell (Dunbartonshire West). **NGA:** Ivor Clemitson (Luton East). **TSSA:** Stanley Cohen (Leeds South East)

**EFTPU:** Thomas Cox (Tooting) **GMWU:** Patrick Duffy (Sheffield Attercliffe), Michael English (Nottingham West), John Smith (North Lanarkshire). **GMWU Women's Conference** voted 'to preserve the spirit of the 1967 Act.'

**NUM:** Alex Eadie (Midlothian), Adam Hunter (Dunfermline), Michael McGuire (Ince), Alexander Wilson (Hamilton), Robert Woof (Blaydon).

**UPW:** Harry Ewing (Stirling). **AUEW:** James Hamilton (Bothwell), Dan Jones (Burnley), James Lamond (Oldham East), William Small (Glasgow Garscadden). **Both the AUEW and TASS** were committed to oppose the James White Bill.

**USDAW:** Frank McElhone (Glasgow Queen's Park), Walter Padley (Ogmore).

**FIS:** William Ross (Kilmarnock) **Blastfurnacemen:** James Tinn (Teesside Redcar).

**Other MPs:** Leo Abse (Pontypool), Edward Bishop (Newark), Peter Bottomley (Teesside Middlesborough), Jeremy Bray (Motherwell), Dennis Canavan (Stirlingshire West), Jim Craigen (Glasgow Maryhill), Tam Dalvell

(West Lothian), James Dempsey (Coatbridge and Airdrie), Dickson Mabon (Greenock and Port Glasgow), Gregor McKenzie (Rutherglen), Michael Noble (Rossendale), Robert Parry (Liverpool Scotland Exchange), James White (Glasgow Pollock), Alan Lee Williams (Hornchurch), Harold Wilson (Huyton).

The **NUJ**, **CPSA** and **NUPE** are also committed to a policy of abortion on demand. **NALGO** was opposed to the James White Bill.



picture: Phil McGowan

**David James, MP Dorset North**

'It has been cogently argued by honourable Ladies that women should be master of their own fates and captains of their own bodies. But I put it to the House that if that had always been accepted as legal doctrine it is doubtful whether any of us would be sitting here today.'

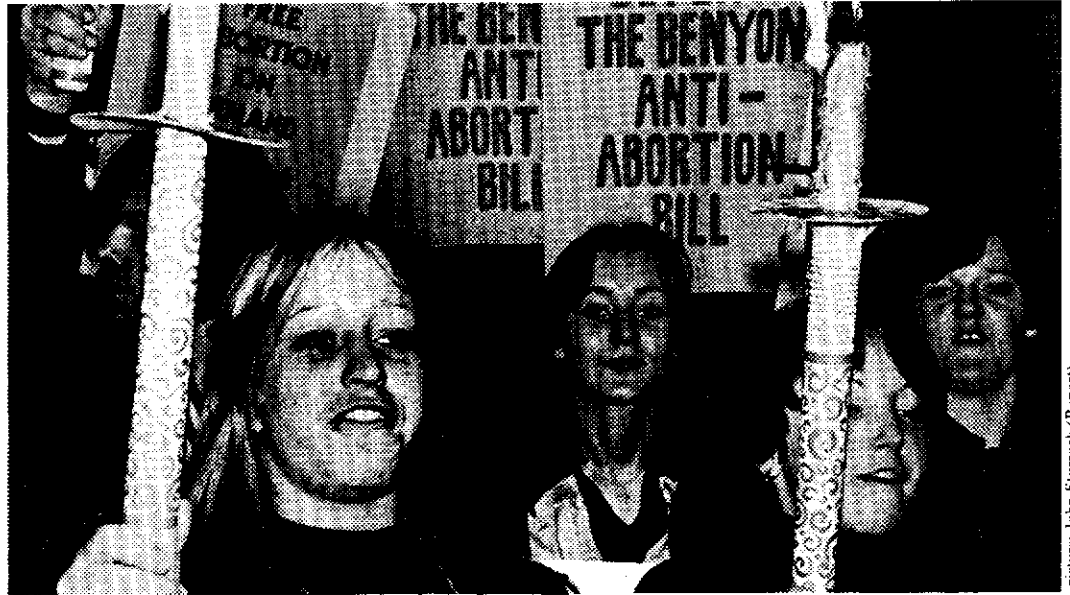
## WOLVERHAMPTON

On March 19th the Wolverhampton Women in Action Group collected names for a petition to be handed to our local MP, Renee Short, we wanted her to oppose the Benyon Bill and ask her support for a campaign to improve the existing appalling conditions for abortion locally.

We got a great deal of support. Three members of the group are in the Wolverhampton branch of the Socialist Workers Party, a comrade from the Dudley branch was there and male comrades from Wolverhampton.

We sold out completely of *Womens Voice*. In fact the district were practically sold out, and we found just enough for our estate sale the next day.

We intend to organise regular street meetings around different issues such as prices, hospital closures, equal pay and nurseries.



picture: John Sturrock (Report)

On the eve of the debate on the bill—1 000 people came on the National Abortion Campaign demonstration.

## ITALY

# NEW ABORTION LAW REFORM

After years of pressure and protest, a new abortion law has been introduced in Italy.

It says that if a woman wants an abortion, she simply asks her doctor for a letter of authorisation to present to her local clinic. She does not have to fake hysterics or grovel. She just states her case. If the doctor doesn't approve, she is obliged to hang around for about a week to think it over. (after all, women don't really know their own minds, so why should they control their bodies!) but the doctor can't force a woman not to terminate.

This all looks quite good. But there's a big catch. First, there is an absolute time limit of three months—that cuts out women,

especially in the south, who have poor medical facilities and little education about their own conditions who won't get to the doctor in time.

But the biggest snag is that doctors who have to perform the abortion may refuse on 'conscientious objection grounds'. And in a country where the medical profession is wrapped up in conservative, catholic politics, conscientious objectors are predicted to be all too plentiful.

One of the first women to really understand her position under the new law is 15 year old Vincenzia Condello of Prato. She was raped by her brother-cum-pimp. Despite her parents and local authority's consent, the doctor ruled the day. He refuses to operate.

This abortion law was passed as a grudging concession to quieten the massive campaigns of Italian women over the years. Although it is not what the women demanded, its provisions seem less restricting than Britain's. So now, transforming this concession into a workable facility for all Italian women is the next hard battle for our Italian sisters.

# ACTIVITY & TRADE UNION SUPPORT WILL BEAT BENYON

In the next three months we need to mobilise thousands of rank and file union members to support the campaign against the Benyon bill and for improving the availability of abortions.

We have to raise the issue at branch, trades council and conference level.

Here is the body of a resolution that *Womens Voice* supporters have been raising in branches since the days of the James White bill. *'This branch deplores the second reading of the William Benyon Bill which would effectively decrease the availability of abortion; and agree to campaign for free abortion on the National Health Service on request.'*

You may find that your union supported the TUC composite motion on abortion or the Working Womens Charter. In that case you can say: 'Noting our union support for... this branch...'

Now the demands. The following list is comprehensive and you will have to be selective depending on your union circumstances.

- Support for all activity—demonstrations, pickets, lobbies and petitions to further this policy. Remember the date of the NAC demonstration, 14 May. we need thousands of trade unionists there.
- Notify the union executive.

- Branch delegates to other union bodies and trades council to raise the issue.

- Lobbying and petitioning of union sponsored MPs, or MPs with union membership, (see list)

- Get a speaker to a branch meeting. If the issue is brand new in your branch and you are not sure who will support you then try circulating a petition first. This will reveal the opposition.

Get together with supporters and sort out the seconder of your resolution, and other speakers in your favour. Use the speakers notes, available from *Womens Voice* (SAE to 6 Cottons Gardens London E2).

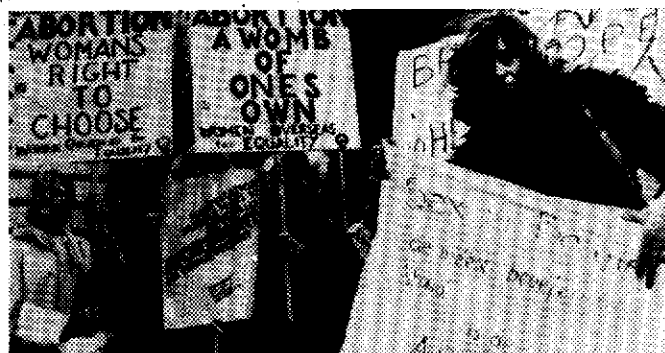
If you lose, don't give up. Supporters in the branch can still be active and the issue can be raised again. Go ahead with a meeting, petitions, as individuals.

We are just beginning the season of trade union conferences and many still have no policy on abortion. Try and get a motion on the order paper. If the union has a policy already then commit the NEC to campaign for the NAC demo on May 14. We need specific support against the Benyon bill.

Let *Womens Voice* and NAC, 30 Camden Road, London NW1, know if your branch or conference support the campaign.

The number of abortions in this country fell for the third year running. The overall figures fell by 9 per cent from 140,521 in 1975 to 127,904 in 1976.

The biggest drop was in operations carried out on foreign women—falling by 21 per cent.



# THE BUTTER YOU CAN'T AVOID!

The world price for butter is 28p a lb, but we pay about 52p. The price in other EEC countries is 66p—and our price will soon reach that level.

The butter mountain in the EEC is now 230,000 tonnes (863m lbs) and is expected to double by the summer. That could provide the UK's butter for a whole year. There's also 3750m lbs of skimmed milk—a by-product of butter and cheese.

Farmers are going crazy—they can't make enough better and cheese. Anyone would think it was money.

For them it is. EEC farmers are guaranteed £2167 for every tonne of butter they sell. UK farmers get £1700, which will go up to £2167 soon. They don't want to be left behind in the gold rush.

Import quotas and minimum prices (called 'support prices' to make it seem as though it's helping the poor farmers) ensure that there's no competition from producers outside the EEC, who could provide us with 28p butter. The minimum prices provide such massive profits that farmers produce more and more, extra to be able to sell just a little extra: the rest goes on the mountain.

Even falling consumption doesn't worry them—they'll lobby for more import restrictions and higher 'support' prices—or create a shortage by destroying the mountain and slaughtering cows. Then they'll have a leather handbag mountain for profiteering, and they'll destroy the Spanish economy instead of New Zealand's.

Another nifty idea for making profits is for the butter producers to carve bits out of the mountain and sell them at the lower world prices to non-EEC countries, like Russia. Then they claim a subsidy from the government on that.

Support prices mean that we pay £2m a day extra for our food. Subsidies of the sales of surpluses cost another £1.75m. It isn't the Russians we're supporting and subsidising. They could buy better at the same price anywhere else in the world. We're supporting and subsidising the massive profiteering of farmers who recklessly produce millions of tons of butter and use their political power to prevent us from buying from anyone but them at their scandalous prices. And then they come screaming to us for extra money for surplus butter.

Judith Hamilton



picture: Angela Phillips (FL)

For its 'frequent or usual indecency or obscenity' Spare Rib has been barred from Southern Ireland for six months by the Censorship of Publications Board. The Board is a part of the Department of Justice. That's why a picket of the Irish Embassy is in progress (above).

Any individual can complain to the Board and having been banned once a second ban could be for ever.

The Family Planning Association has also had one of its leaflets banned, on the same grounds. The law also says that material which promotes 'the unnatural prevention of conception' can be banned. But to have used that clause against either the FPA or Spare Rib would have got too much publicity.

Spare Rib are still sending copies to Ireland.

If you are interested in the campaign in Ireland contact: Irish Women United, 32 Clarinva Park East, Dunclaire, Dublin.



picture: Hackney flashers

## THE INFLATION GAME...

1. Say you can't produce butter for less than 66p a lb
2. Force workers to buy your butter—increasing the price they

pay by 38p AT A STROKE

3. Sell your surpluses off at 28p a lb, and demand a subsidy of 38p
4. Make the government increase public expenditure to pay the subsidy
5. Scream 'too much public spending' and make the government cut hospitals, schools, welfare services.
6. Use the money to buy more cows, produce more butter—and
7. Say you need 77p a lb or you can't carry on . . .

# NEWS

## ONE WOMAN VIGIL

Regina Fischer, mother of chess player, Bobby, spent ten days and nights fasting outside the Home Office to protest against the threatened deportations of journalists Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball, and the arrests of three of their supporters.

On the last day of her protest, she talked to Womens Voice.

'I thought of the fast the night before I started. The situation of the deportations was beginning to look like the beginning of the McCarthy era in the United States.

'We had to do something to renew the hope that the campaign

wasn't over. If enough people knew the issue we'd be sure to win.

'I'm very fortunate that I have a son who many people know. And at the age of 63 I'm not really worried about what's to come. I could afford to do something like this more than anyone else. So I said I was willing to go on hunger strike.

'If these guys can be kicked around, who'll be next? The CIA is too big for its boots and should be kicked out. That's why my sign says:

"Today Agee  
Tomorrow me  
Then who  
Maybe you"

'I feel it was worth the effort going on hunger strike. Anything that helps bring the issue before the public is worthwhile. We got a lot of publicity and I didn't realise there'd be so many supporters.'





Picture: John Sturrock (Report)

## SHEFFIELD

# HOTEL WORKERS STRIKE ON

Hotel workers at the Grosvenor House Trust House Hotel in Sheffield have been on strike for union recognition since last December. Womens Voice spoke to four of the strikers—Maggie, Val, Lynne and Janet (who's holding the placard in our picture)—about their fight for union recognition.

'We had to do something about working here. One girl, Sandra, had a breakdown because she couldn't cope with the work. The management were always picking faults.'

'Maggie had been in a union before and had some ideas about how to organise so she just went round and asked everyone. She didn't make anyone join, but 97 came in very quickly.'

'We used to go up to Transport House for the meetings. The manager wouldn't let the union officials anywhere near the hotel. We had several meetings—with thirty or forty at each of them.'

'In the end we had to come out on strike because Trust House Forte weren't interested. We set a date for a ballot for strike action on 7 December. The Tuesday before we had a lunchtime meeting that Tallis, the manager, came to. He said we didn't have the guts to go on strike.' The Ballot was 55 to 27 in favour.

'When we had the Christmas party we decided to strike the following morning. But we made one mistake. The managers heard us talking about it so they were prepared with 22 scab managers from other hotels to keep the hotel open. The union should have told us how to come out on strike, then it might have started a bit better.'

'Fifty five came out altogether. We have weekly meetings, and everyone does picket duty. It was so cold when we started the strike that we couldn't keep up the night pickets. We do two hour shifts from 7am to 11pm now.'

The strike is still going strong after three months. Send messages and donations to: Trevor Jones, Transport House, Hartshead, Sheffield.

The hotel workers in Sheffield and Oxford are on strike for union recognition. At the same time they haven't got a great deal of help from their union, the Transport and General Workers.

The union needs to be changed. It needs to be more democratic. That's why Tommy Riley, a supporter of the Right to Work Campaign is standing in the election for the new general secretary of the union.

He says in his election address, 'unequal pay, phoney grading schemes and discrimination against women linger on. Yet still only a handful of the 600 TGWU officials are women! We should fight for *Full Womens Rights Now*'.

He's for the election of all TGWU officials, for smashing the social contract and for the right to work for every union member.

If you are a member of the TGWU you should vote for Tommy Riley. You don't have much time left—voting closes on 19 March. After that you should also go to the rally the campaign is holding in Manchester on 26 March. All TGWU members are welcome. The Rally starts at 11.30 am, Lesser Free Trade Hall, Peter Street, Manchester.

An Industrial Tribunal has just ruled that women who lose their jobs after they have reached the age of 60 have no right to appeal even if their contracts specify a later retiring age.

The Tribunal in this case refused to hear an application from a teacher because of her age. Both men and women teachers have contracts that entitle them to work until they reach 65.

The chairman of the Tribunal said that 'people' could not be unfairly dismissed if they had reached normal retiring age. The people who normally retire at 60 just happen to be women.

Fred Peake is a nasty little man who works for Automotive Products in Leamington Spa. Because the women who work in his factory go home five minutes early he decided to take the Company to Court under the Sex Discrimination Act. The Act was of course designed to stop the worst sorts of discrimination against women. It doesn't, but it was a start in the right direction.

It was to be expected that someone would decide to make a mockery of it one day, and that is just what Mr Peake has done.

It is either custom or practice or written into agreements all over the country that women workers leave the factory five minutes early in the afternoon, or a bit early on a Friday afternoon.

Now the Courts have decided that this has to stop. The employers in this case were given 12 months to discontinue the practice.

If other employers decide to do the same womens conditions inside the factories will get worse, not better.

If there are factories in your area where the women leave early give out a leaflet explaining what happened in Leamington, and tell the women to make sure they get guarantees from the management that the practice will continue.

No strippers at North East London polytechnic. That's the policy once gain. The attacks of the Rugby Club have been fought off at another Students Union meeting.

Always ready with something new the Americans have discovered a way of choosing the sex of your baby. According to the *Sunday World*, Dr. Ericsson, who developed the method, said: 'This sex pre-selection technique will give many couples the son they always wanted. It involves separating the strong, healthy male Y chromosomes from the female X chromosomes...' And so he goes on.

If you work in a hospital you should be at the Save Our Hospitals Conference on Saturday 19 March.

Thousands of women who work in hospitals are likely to lose their jobs in the next few months. Hundreds of thousands of part time workers are already being quietly deprived of work.

Make sure your trade union branch of shop stewards committee sends delegates. Or go yourself as an observer. One way or another get yourself there. Saturday 19 March, Portland Hall, 16-22 Riding House Street, London W1.



Picture: Phil McDowen

## GATESHEAD EQUAL PAY AND THE SACK

Twelve women pressers at Jackson Tailors in Gateshead were jubilant the last week in February when they finally won a fantastic 14 month battle for equal pay.

Jacksons, who were recently taken over by Burtons, were ordered to give the women equal pay, backdated to January 1976. But Jacksons still had the trump card. In each pay packet the following Friday was the equal pay—and a notice to say that the Gateshead factory was being closed down in August, with 600 jobs lost.

This was the final vicious move by Jacksons in their attempts to avoid a clear cut case for equal pay. For doing the same job, men got £2.74 extra. First of all, they found a way to cheat all the workers by averaging the pay of men and women, and paying everyone £1.74 less than the mens wage. At this point all the men left, and the women continued the fight alone.

Mrs Hixon, a shop steward, told

Womens Voice: 'Over a six month period we sent two test cases to the Tribunal. Both Margaret Ellison and Angela Brown won their cases. Jacksons refused to pay the rest of the women and claimed they were lodging an appeal. Two months later we phoned the Employment Appeals Office to be told that no appeal had ever been made.'

'We went on strike. After 1½ days Jacksons gave in, and all our demands were met.'

Now the factory is to be closed down. Because, say Jacksons, of the amount of the equal pay settlement, a paltry £900, and stoppages, 1½ days last year!

In the last few months Colliers clothing factory has closed down. Now Jacksons in Gateshead. Two Jacksons factories in Sunderland are threatened. Having put up such a fight for equal pay the Jacksons women are now going to have to lead the fight for womens right to work

Nina Gray is a teacher at Scott Lidgett School, in Bermondsey London. She's at home now, on maternity leave, waiting to have her baby. Not only has she got that to worry about, but the Inner London Education Authority have made sure she is also worried about her job.

Nina has worked as a french teacher at our school for two years and four months. Under the Employment Protection Act she should be entitled to full maternity benefits and rights, including the right to return to work. Her employers say, however, that her first six months employed on a supply contract do not count as full time employment.

Nina's case is made more urgent because her husband is an overseas student facing rocketing tuition fees. And Nina herself is here on a work permit and will be harrassed by the immigration officials if she loses her job.

The women teachers at Scott Lidgett school are particularly angry. How many other teachers

## ILEA SACK PREGNANT TEACHER

are going to be sacked through this loophole in the law.

70 members of the NUT in the school have signed a petition to the Governors, the ILEA and the headmaster. Other schools in the area are sending messages of support. We are angry that the NUT legal department have more or less dropped the case, but this will not stop us from fighting on.

Messages of support should be sent to Nina Gray Action Committee, Scott Lidgett School, Drummond Road, London SE16. And letters of protest to the Inner London Education Authority.

by Europe Singh



Picture: John Sturrock (Report)

Women from the Belfast Relatives Action Committee chained themselves to railings in Downing Street on 1 March to protest at the withdrawal of political status from prisoners in Northern Ireland. Political status prisoners were given limited privileges. The police took a dim view of their demonstration and arrived with their chain cutting gear.

## Skeleton in the Royal cupboard

Aristocratic women have never exactly been burdened with looking after their own children. But Robert Lacey's book 'Majesty', currently being serialised in the Sunday Times, gives an insight into what happens when a disabled child is born in the Royal Family . . . the child in question being the Queen's uncle, Prince John. You have probably never heard of him, and here's why.

John was something of a mystery outside the family, the final child born on 12th July 1905. It soon became obvious that he was medically abnormal . . . From the age of 12 he lived with his own little household on an outlying farm on the Sandringham Estate under the

care of a nurse 'Lalla'. When the family went up to Scotland little Prince John would follow them though at a distance. Guests at Balmoral remember him during the First World War, a distant figure . . . who would be glimpsed from afar in the woods, escorted by his own retainers.'

If we can do it so can you!  
Send us your articles, news, letters, poems, by 25 of this month. If you have nothing but ideas we'll have those too please - by phone as soon as possible. Ring Womens Voice on 01-739 1878.

Look at the membership figures for any union and you will find that in spite of large numbers of women members, the number of women officials, women delegates to the TUC, women on the executives is almost nil. The figures for shop stewards are almost as bad. It is not that women are not

interested in trade unions. They are. But they have been brought up to think they are not, to see trade unions as a man's business, and to put their homes and children first. Women are now joining unions at a faster rate than ever before. Inside the unions more women are becoming shop stewards, demanding that

the union fight for them. Womens Voice will be running a regular feature on unions, starting with NUPE in this issue—how the union is organised, how you can organise within it. If you have experiences and information which will be of help to us please write to us now.

# UNION VOICE

# NUPE

## National Union Of Public Employees

Civic House, 8 Aberdeen Terrace, London SE3 0OY  
Telephone: 01 852 2842

NUPE has the largest number of women members of any trade union.		
	men	women
Membership	201,847	382,638
Executive members	20	6
Officials	120	2
TUC delegates	29	4

Nupe organises: school cleaners school meals ladies home helps hospital ancillary workers nurses nursery nurses play group leader, particularly in London Child minders social services, eg. wardens of old peoples homes some clerical workers

The members are organised in work place branches. The branch secretary used to be the key organiser, A Shop stewards organisation has started recently.

All shop stewards in one area meet at a District Committee. Eg. Manchester has 8000 members and about 150 shop stewards.

There is no restriction on the number of people a shop steward can represent. Some women members work in very small groups, eg. school cleaners in one school, or on their own, eg. home helps. Each group could have their own shop steward but full time officials don't encourage this as much as they could.

Above the branch and district committees are area committees representing the four services covered by NUPE: local authorities, hospitals, universities, water authorities. These send representatives to divisional council and national committees.

The Executive is elected by the branches, each branch casting all the votes for its members for one person. The way the branch votes are cast depends on a vote of the members present at a branch meeting. The General Secretary, at present Alan Fisher, is elected for life. There is a National Conference every two years. This year there will be creche provision for under 5's.

Maternity leave: after 12 months you get 18 weeks leave, with 4 weeks on full pay, the rest on half pay.

Union policy is for abortion on request and against the James White bill. It supports the Working Womens Charter.

The Union is strong on positive discrimination for women, even if it appears in strange ways sometimes—the branch with the best level of womens activity, ie. recruitment of women, receives the silver rose bowl! **Shirley Gwinever**

teen SRNs have just qualified here, and there were only 10 jobs available. So they told the ones who didn't get the jobs to hand in their notice. We told them not to—they kept all sixteen on for 6 months at least.

All the time the hospital benefits from the idea that nurses have of themselves that they should make sacrifices. We sacrifice every weekend as it is, and we work split shifts as well. We discovered one day the General Nursing Council rules say you don't have to work split shifts—but no one told us.

That's one reason why we need to have separate meetings and separate

stewards from the ancillary workers. They are mostly older, married women who would never put up with split shifts. We're all young, live in, and split shifts is a drag but not impossible.

I feel it's an enormous job sometimes. I want all the nurses to be interested in the union, and to be able to depend on them. The last steward had been there for five years and the women didn't feel they should get involved. But now I'm a shop steward and because I'm a first year student, they listen to what I say. Even the sister comes to talk to me about the cuts!

**Maggie Dunne**

### It's not the same as attending church.

The Secretary of our District branch asked if I would write about how the branch was started. Not being fond of writing I wasn't keen and with ours being a really new branch I thought it wouldn't be very interesting. Anyway she talked me into it. I set to.

Just remembering the months of trying, the feeling of frustration, talking to the other girls, deciding to try and do something, the letter writing, phone calls, meetings at the Town Hall

And then I started to think clearly and slowly—I tore the paper up. Was I angry with myself! Why hadn't I realised at the time! The little incidents I had forgotten or hadn't had the sense to realise their significance. I must have been green, a real babe in arms. The appointments made with the divisional organiser and their cancellation due to 'urgent business' or some such excuse.

The meetings: Oh, yes, they were well attended. But Manchester is a very big city, divided into six areas and each area divided again.

At the meetings we had been asked who would be willing to take on a stewards job. There wasn't exactly a rush but seeing as I had been shouting my mouth off, I volunteered, along with a few others.

These meetings were held every few months over quite a long time and still the branch hadn't been formed and no stewards elected. Then out of the blue a letter came to say a branch meeting would be held at the Town Hall. This was it, we had arrived.

I was nominated and elected as a steward for my area. Four other areas had stewards elected that night. It wasn't until I started to write the account that I realised the secretary, chairperson and stewards for the other areas had already been elected!

It must be a relief to full-time officers to have an amenable branch secretary and chairperson and one or two stewards who attend branches and divisional committees in the same manner that some attend church. It helps as well if they also think the full-timer is omnipotent.

The branch has only been growing for 14 months and the full-timer has nearly always been in attendance. Perhaps its my twisted mind, but all those months and those meetings must have given someone time to sort out the left from the right.

**Margaret Ainsworth**

### Nursing the union.

When I first started at my hospital the NUPE shop steward, one of the male nurses, talked to us about joining the union. He had no idea what was going on.

That was a bad start. Then I found I was the only nurse going to the union meetings, all the rest were ancillary workers. So I began to talk to the nurses about the union, trying to get around that idea of their being 'professionals'.

As we had only one shop steward, the male nurse, for all the nurses in two hospitals I said I would stand as the shop steward for the nurses in my one. The nurses came to the meeting, and elected me in. It wasn't so difficult after all.

Since then another 15 nurses have joined NUPE. They had never been encouraged to join the union before. Most had joined the Royal College of Nursing instead, but it's changing.

Nurses who are about to qualify are worried about their jobs. Six-

# SOWETO

Remember all our  
women in the jails  
Remember all our  
women in campaigns  
Remember all our  
women over many  
fighting years  
Remember all our  
women for their  
triumphs, and for their  
tears  
(from 'Women's Day  
Song')

International Womens  
Day, March 8, is  
Working Womens  
Day. The day when we  
should remember all  
our sisters fighting the  
world over to rid  
themselves of the  
people who live on  
their backs.  
The South Africa  
Solidarity Campaign  
is trying to organise  
just that kind of  
solidarity. Contact  
them at: 101-103  
Gower Street, London  
W1.

by  
**Jenny  
Jackson**



A city of four roomed boxes. Seventeen people live in one box, on average.

A city of one million black Africans (who are not permitted to live in white Johannesburg, twelve miles away.)

A city with streets of mud, or dust.

A city of one million people with one cinema, 39 public telephones. Beer halls in every bus station, train station, rent office.

A city where four out of every five children don't have enough food to eat.

A city of ten medical clinics, one hospital.

A city where food costs half as much again as it would in white Johannesburg.

A city where it is very rare for any worker to board a bus or a train without having stumbled across a corpse lying in a street. (Killed perhaps by the 'Blackjacks'-police dressed from head to toe in black who specialise in raids at night) or perhaps the 'Tsotsi' (hooligan gangs who rob to survive).

Soweto, where you may be stopped three or four times

in a day by police, checking your 'pass'.

Police jail 2000 people a day because of some 'fault' in their pass, or because they left it at home.

Soweto, where nine out of ten houses don't have hot running water or electricity.

Soweto, where the day begins at 4am so the workers can get to white Johannesburg on time. Where the roar of the trains doesn't stop till midnight with the last of the workers returning home.

Yet women who live in Soweto are *envied* by those who cannot get a pass to live there. Envied because they can live with their husbands and children.

Only women who were born in Soweto, or have worked in the Johannesburg area for ten years continuously with one employer, or who have special permission can stay in Soweto. Otherwise they are forced out to the barren reserves in the countryside. A woman who marries a man who is permitted to live in Soweto does not get a pass to join him (unless it is a visitor's permit for a short period). There is no way they can live legally as man and wife permanently.

Children over 16 who cannot prove they were born in Soweto have to leave their families and go to the 'Homelands' in the country, where they may know no one at all.

What do these laws mean? Here is one case, told by Joyce Sikakane, a black journalist who grew up in Soweto.

'My parents had decided to get a divorce. This decision was the most agonising for the family in terms of section 10 of the Bantu Urban Areas Act which forbade 'single' persons to be registered tenants of a house. My parents had been on judicial separation for a long time so as to avoid turning each member of the family into single sex hostel dwellers.

'My father had moved out "illegally" and was an "illegal" sub tenant in various houses in Soweto. He was tired of being caught up in the blackjack raids and also met a woman he wanted to marry.

This was the most excruciating time for all of us. My mother was not thinking of remarrying, she wanted to continue to live with her children.

'In 1968 my parents took the risk and got divorced. My mother and us children remained in the house under constant threat of eviction. Even today they still live under that same threat. Once we were raided, but I bribed the superintendent with 50 rand (about two weeks' wages).'

Last summer Soweto exploded.

Schoolchildren walked out in protest against being taught in Afrikaans, a language used only by the white madam or boss in South Africa. The children marched with signs:

'Blacks are not dustbins' and 'Afrikaans is oppressors' language'.

The protest soon grew to be against the whole system of Apartheid—separation of black from white.

On 16 June, the police came. They shot dead a 13 year old schoolboy who was running away from them.

That day 'officially' 25 people were killed, 200 injured. The real figures will never be known.

The news and the protests spread across all of South Africa. Government offices and the hated beer halls were burned down.

On 4 August students in school uniform tried to stop workers going into Johannesburg. They tore up the railway lines.

50,000 pupils and workers went on strike. They demanded the release of all those still held in prison, including 8-year-old children.

The marches and burning government buildings went on. In Hammanskraal 197 pupils, 97 of them women, were arrested by police after the burning of a school building.

Each demonstration was met by police batons and bullets. Yet more demonstrations followed.

Official figures report 386 killed and 1500 injured by police.

If you want to read more about South Africa, I recommend For Their Triumphs and for Their Tears: Women In Apartheid South Africa, by Hilda Bernstein, International Defence and Aid Fund, 50p. Black South Africa Explodes, Counter Information Services, 90p.

Story of Soweto: South Africa's Largest Ghetto by Joce Sikakane, to be published by International Defence and Aid Fund, 104 Newgate Street, London, ECI.



Carol Grimes sings with The London Boogie Band  
and can usually be heard at  
pubs and clubs around London. She has managed to survive  
for 15 years as a working woman musician  
in a male dominated industry.

She made the first Rock Against Racism gig back in  
November a night to remember.

Interview by Gail Cartmail: Pictures by Red Saunders.

*How did you first get interested in music and singing?*

Well, I suppose the first thing that involved me was definitely a ego thing. I left school at an early age. I didn't have any qualifications or anything like that you know. I wasn't particularly gifted in any way.

It was when I was in my early teens, it was all beatnik then, I used to go on Aldermaston marches but I didn't really have any identity then. I was really knocked out by the music. Two GF's introduced me to black music. I used to hang out a lot on the south coast seaside towns,

we'd get together in the pub and people would sing, it was quite loose really. If I had enough pints I would sing and people would say 'Hey you know you can really sing alright.' I remember being offered a gig at a Folk Club in Hastings, it wasn't a paid gig just a couple of drinks. I didn't go. When faced with somebody looking at me, you know an audience, I was too nervous. I still used to go to this particular pub and get up and sing. I wasn't a very confident teenager - let's put it that way. So for a while I put the whole thing out of my head. Then I moved back up to London. I still had the

feeling that I could do it, sing I mean, but I didn't really dare to go up and ask bands if I could have a blow.

**'Living in an area like I do I can see racism. I can see who is getting the best houses and who is getting the best deal.'**

It's very hard to place how I got started but I think what happened was a couple of people I know wanted to start a folk group and they asked me to sing with them. It wasn't really my cup of tea but the fact that someone had asked *me* to sing with them. I thought well this is great you know. So we got together a couple of gigs, one at a place in Chelsea called 'The Crypt' and it sort of snowballed really.

I got enough confidence to know that, although I had an awful lot to learn, I had the basic vehicle. I had the voice. And I felt I'd found something I could do. After all the boring factory jobs I'd had when I'd felt the need to express myself. I think definitely it was an ego thing. I wanted someone to respect me and not to be another anonymous person.

*You've done factory and shop work?*

Yes I have and I really found it boring. I was brought up in Dr Barnardo's childrens home and one of the first jobs I did only lasted six months. I really hated being servile. I always have.

I didn't even think about unions, I was too involved in myself, my own problems. I wasn't a very good mixer, always on the fringes.

I got involved with a bunch of people who would talk politics, books and poetry. I would sit there and absorb, but a lot of it I didn't really understand. I'd left secondary school, done a lot of jobs, got fired from all of them through lack of punctuality. I wanted to spread my

**'After all the boring factory jobs I felt the need to express myself'**

wings. My vision was very narrow. But I always had a feeling of not wanting to be servile and inferior, and from that came a feeling of identity with oppressed peoples. I could identify with people with less privileged backgrounds. I could

## Carol Grimes



identify with immigrants who were in a strange country with British passports. I was aware enough to go on marches, but it wasn't an intellectual thing at all.

*How do you feel you are treated by the music business?*

Well you see as far as the agencies are concerned I'm a failure. I've made no money. I've been involved in a lot of ventures and none of them have been successful in their terms. In my own terms I'm still amazed by the fact that I can work with some of the finest musicians around and in my own country. It's an incredible musical experience but I've made no money.

I'm in a funny position because I've been around a long time and I'm not well known. When I started out, at about 18 or 19 I could probably cause quite a stir just because I got up there and did it you know, but because I've been around a long time and I haven't made it, I'm the wrong lady to tackle. I have no management, no agency. I do all the organising myself. I arrange my own gigs. I don't even own a PA system, which is something that most people of my age would have managed to accumulate.

*When you started out do you think things would have been different if you had changed your image, belted it out but in a sexy way, as a product?*

I don't really know about that, I don't give a shit actually. The only thing is if you don't have the industry behind you, you can't work.

**'I'm the wrong lady to tackle. I have no management, no agency, I do all the organising myself.'**

I've had to cancel six gigs this month because they're all outside London and I couldn't afford to do them. Most people who go out on the road, do it to promote a record and they're subsidised by the industry. The big money only comes when you've sold enough records. On my level I'm not getting enough money to cover me. There's no-one to take the expenses.

The music industry is controlled by the recording companies, so you're really in the position where you can't work unless you get their backing. Most of the clubs consider they're doing you a favour by letting you play there. For every group that gets to play at somewhere like Dingwalls or The Rock Garden there's another 50 groups begging to play, begging! So they've really got you and it's very hard to make a living.

On and off for 15 years I've tried to make a living out of it. When I was pregnant with Sam I had to stop because he was sitting on my bladder and I wanted to piss every two minutes. Then after he was born I was totally involved in him

for two years.

*What made you get involved in Rock Against Racism?*

Living in an area like I do I can see racism does go on. I can see who is getting the best houses and who is getting the best deal. It's something that's quite close to me. I'll do anything I can to further the cause against racism. But it's not people like me RAR should be after, it's people like your Mick Jagers and your Robert Plants who've been conning black musicians for years.

**'As far as the agencies are concerned I'm a failure, I've made no money.'**

We all have. If you really want to get across to people in a big way you've got to get the big names, they are the people who have got the power. I should imagine that the reason why the big names don't seem interested is because as soon as money is involved they are surrounded and closetted by a cloak of secrecy. I should imagine that they lead a very unreal life and I shouldn't think they see 'the street' very much. Possibly some of these people aren't even aware of what's going on any more because they are out of touch. They just aren't on the street any more.

What is the essence of socialism? It's equal rights for everyone. I see it as every human being should have the right to have a home and a roof, you know. And that's not happening. I don't want to own anything. I'm quite happy to have a roof and somewhere to have a meal. Somewhere to have friends round and somewhere to put my toes in front of the fire. That's a basic human right. I don't agree with enormous amounts of money being collected in one small area. I've been poor too long and seen too much to ever be impressed by money but I won't deny I could do with a few bob.

*How much do you earn on average?* Less than I'd get on social security. I was getting about £32 per week for me and Sam two years ago. If I added up my earnings now they would be considerably less than that.

*What do you think about all this stuff in the papers about scroungers?*

There is a great shortage of jobs so how can anybody be accused of scrounging.

When you want to work, you can't. If I was to decide that I can't take the music business what would I do? I could get a job as a waitress but what would I do with Sam and what would I earn? I could get a job in a shop although I doubt it, there just aren't enough jobs to go round.

I haven't got many options. I'm not qualified, I don't have GCE's. I have to be realistic. If I don't sing there aren't many alternatives for a woman like me. I'm not young and

from what I gather it's much harder for a woman with a child to get a job.

*What in the music, business, would you like to see changed?*

We arrive at gigs and have driven 300 miles and are shown into a freezing dressing room, well honestly. It would be so easy to spend a few more pounds to make the place reasonable.

This isn't the sort of thing that the rich musicians have to contend with. The dressing rooms we have to cope with are always cold and damp. Always uncomfortable.

Why? Musicians just haven't become united enough to change these things. They won't boycott these places because they daren't blow themselves out of a gig. I think they are frightened to stand up and shout about things. It's such a competitive business, there are so many musicians. If I was to say to Mr Bloggs who run the, let's say, Doobly Club: 'look I'm not doing your club until you promise to provide a decent dressing room and treat us like human beings' he would tell us to fuck off. If you kick up a stink there are always bands to take your place.

*What do you think of the musicians union?*

It's probably OK for people making their money out of doing sessions.

What we need is a definite rate, rather in the same way they do in sessions. So if you go out and do a gig you know you are going to get at least the minimum.

One of my biggest expenditures and where I go broke on most gigs, is when I have to hire the PA and the truck to get us there. It just seems that everything is against you all the time when you are working on my level.

When I did a gig at a poly lately we were promised cash. When it came to it the union officials said that it was against their rules to pay out cash. They refused to help us. When I said that we would have to sit in the bus station all night one of these guys said 'Well, you can have a good time can't you, dear' meaning me and the other ten blokes. What sort of an attitude is that? That sort of thing happens enough to make it

**'It really upset me the way they packaged the album. They think that women have to have that edge of glamour.'**

uncomfortable. It happens enough for me to know that if I was rich and famous it wouldn't happen.

*How do you feel about yourself as a woman in the music business?*

The more women that get into it the less of a joke 'freak show' it will be.

I've got a friend, a black lady from Los Angeles, she's got a fine voice. She got involved with the same people as me and got really badly treated. Now that hasn't stopped her singing. I went to see

her the other night. She was singing, just her and a piano. There was all these people sitting down in the restaurant eating their dinners. I really admired her. That's a really difficult thing to do. Nothing will stop her.

I've known just as many men who have been brave. And just as many men who have been hurt and destroyed by the business. Probably more men because there are more men doing it. It's more difficult for women to make a living.

The record companies don't take on many women. Whenever I hear or see a woman getting up there and doing it I get really excited because the more women that do it the easier it will be to get the record companies to accept us.

*You've got an album out at the moment.*

My latest album was done about two years ago in Memphis. I did it on a lease tape deal. I came back to England about two years later. Really it's nothing to do with me anymore. I don't stand to make anything out of it. No money.

It really upset me the way they packaged the album. They took a photograph of me and Sam and retouched it to make me look as if I had inches of makeup on. That is really sickening. It's as if I'm not good enough to stand up in my bare face with my child, they just had to make me up. They think that women have to have that edge of glamour. I suppose that's how they see women. Maybe that's why I haven't got anywhere. They glamourised me—they just painted it on. I'll make nothing out of that. It's not all bad though. I've had some fantastic experiences. I'll carry on singing.

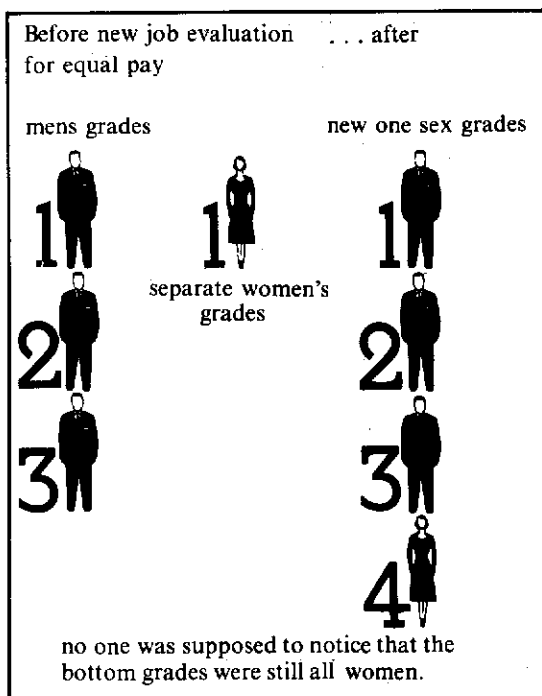


## Equal Pay Act 1970

There are 9 million working women in this country. How many of them get equal pay is anyone's guess. But as strikes continue, as hundreds of women battle their way through the Industrial Tribunals, we suspect that there are huge numbers who are not getting anything like equal pay. Government figures show that the gap between women's and men's wages has widened in the last year, with women now earning £48 on average compared with £74.70 for men. There is only one answer—a single rate, the same rate for everyone.

If you don't get equal pay there is something you can do about it. There were a number of key ways in which the employers arranged things to get round paying equal pay.

- Moving men or women off certain jobs and creating men only or women only jobs. That way the women would have no one to compare themselves to, and would only be able to claim they were doing 'broadly similar' work.
- Introducing new job evaluation schemes, which worked roughly as follows:



Giving the mens jobs and the womens jobs new job descriptions, with perhaps only minor variations.

## EQUAL PAY— Unfair job evaluation

Women workers at Yardleys in Basildon were promised regrading in 1973. They wanted all the women to be brought up to at least the bottom men's grade, grade 6.

Nothing happened for two years and then the Company introduced a new job evaluation scheme. The women all on grade 7 were still not satisfied. So they went to the Industrial Tribunal, arguing that they did broadly similar work with the men. No man starts on anything lower than grade 6, and the only men on that grade are the lift operator, the van driver's mate and the outdoor shutter operator. All the women work on production.

They lost their case. The Company said the women did only

between 2 and 15 per cent of the same work as the men.

So the women went back to work and did just that. One woman on strike told Women's Voice: 'The management told the Tribunal that the cases came off a line at the rate of 22 an hour. We know that on our line they come off at 56 an hour. So we did what they said we did—took off 22 an hour. The rest just fell off. It made an awful mess!'

The management switched off the belts and the women sat at work for 10 days with nothing to do. Then they came out on strike.

The men in the factory are in the same union, the Transport and General Workers Union, but except for seven all of them are working.



Picture: John Sturrock (Report)

## Tribunal procedure fails

Six hundred women production workers at Electrolux in Luton do exactly the same work as the male production workers. They work alongside each other assembling fridges and vacuum cleaners, and in some cases interchange their jobs to avoid the boredom.

In 1975 with the last date for equal pay looming ahead, and a history of battles inside the factory to get equal pay for the women, their union, the AUEW, and the management signed a new deal. It gave most of the women a big increase in pay but left the grades much as they were. To comply with the law they were changed from the simple discrimination of mens and womens grade, to 10 and 01 grades.

All the men started went straight into 10, on a higher rate of pay, and all the women were put into 01. Technically the women can transfer into 10 but the obstacles are so enormous they never do.

The women took their case to the Tribunal and won. The management appealed. The women still won. The Appeal Tribunal said the women should get the same piece work rate for the job as the men because they did broadly similar work, and the fact that some men worked nights was irrelevant.

The management retaliated by paying the money *only* to the women who had gone to the Tribunal and not the women they were representing. And then put the boot in by moving those women off

their jobs.

Electrolux is becoming famous amongst women fighting for equal pay. The management have used every trick and pretext in the book. When the Industrial Tribunal visited the factory they moved the men off the track and put all women on. When the Equal Opportunities Commission visited the factory the management handpicked who went to see them, selecting the women who would speak up against equal pay. The Union has not helped. The women have been divided against each other.

In spite of all that the majority of women are still prepared to fight it out.



Picture: Angela Phillips (IFL)



## Night work dispute

At the Kraft food factory in Kirkby the women and men who work on quality control are all graded. The women are in three grades -- 1, 2 and 3, the men are all 'inspectors' earning £8 a week more on their basic rate.

There is one difference between their jobs, according to the management and that is that the men work nights. For working nights the men also get an additional night shift allowance.

It is an argument which is used by managements all over the country—if you want equal pay or equal job opportunity, then you must be prepared to work nights.

It is not true. Women are protected from working nights by the Factories Act, one of the most progressive reforms that the trade union movement has won, because it recognised that women did two jobs. (We'll be covering the factories act in a later issue of Women's Voice).

And at the Appeal Tribunal for the Kraft women the position was confirmed—the judge ruled that availability for night work did not constitute a major difference between the men and women workers. They did essentially the

same work, and the men were compensated for the different time at which they did it by an additional allowance. The exact time at which a job was done was not to be used by management.

The management at Kraft then went hunting for new differences between the men's and women's jobs. The women have now appeared four times before Tribunals. They still don't have equal pay.



Picture: Hackney flatters

## Union organisation broken

Two years ago the workers, men and women, at a small electronics factory in Ilfracombe, Devon, were regraded. The women thought they would get equal pay but they didn't. So they started agitating.

Their union, the Transport and General Workers Union, took up their claim last November. They eventually agreed with the management that as the Company could not afford to upgrade all the women, some would be upgraded in the new scheme and some of them would be downgraded.

The Company used the excuse that overall more money was out of the question because of phase two.

The agreement was rushed through at a meeting with the majority of the workers voting for it because 'no one had any better ideas' according to the shop steward.

Since then all the men who were downgraded have left the union. The women still don't get equal pay with each other. Wages are low. The union organisation has effectively been broken up.

## How women were swindled

On the Granada Television World in Action Programme about Electrolux, shown at the end of February, Hugh Scanlon, the President of the Engineering Union (AEUW) said: 'We believe that trade unionists should only use the courts as a last resort.'

It was said to suggest that the women at Electrolux were wrong to go to the Industrial Tribunal. It was said to defend the AEUW officials at the factory who had done nothing to help the women fight their case.

The Tribunals were set up by the Labour Government for special industrial matters, and AEUW members sit on the Tribunals. They are not like other courts of law. The reason why the women at Electrolux went to the Tribunal was because they could see no other way of settling their claim, because the union would not campaign on their behalf. At the time of filling their claims with the Tribunal the women were promised Union support at the hearing.

They didn't get it. At the Appeal Tribunal hearing Mr Justice

Phillips said: 'The position of the Union is ambiguous. Up to now they have offered no assistance to the applicants... no doubt there are cross-currents and cross interests which makes it difficult for them to espouse a particular cause; especially when many of their members are men, not all of whose interests may be served by a successful outcome of the applicants' complaints.'

The Kraft women, the women at Yardleys, the women in Ilfracombe, all came up against the difficulty of making the union fight on their behalf.

At the same time as fighting for equal pay women trade union members will have to organise to get their unions fighting on their behalf. That means getting together with the other women members, and the men, on the shop floor who are prepared to organise to get things done. Whether its equal pay, maternity leave, fighting redundancy, or fighting for higher wages there is no one better to rely on than yourself, and the fighters like you.



## Equal Pay Act 1970

The Equal Pay Act 1970 says women are entitled to:

### EQUAL PAY FOR THE SAME WORK.

'For men and women employed on like work the terms and conditions of one sex are not in any respect less favourable than those on the other' (clause (1) a).

### OR BROADLY SIMILAR WORK

'A woman is to be regarded as employed on like work, of, but only if, her work and theirs is of the same or a broadly similar nature, and the differences, (if any) between the things she does and the things they do are not of practical importance.' (clause 1(4) )

### RATED AS EQUIVALENT

'A woman is to be regarded as employed on work rated as equivalent with that of any men if, but only if, her job and their job have been given an equal value, in terms of the demand made on a worker under various headings on a study undertaken with a view to evaluating in those terms the jobs to be done.' (clause 1(5) )

### UNLESS THE EMPLOYER CAN PROVE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MEN'S AND WOMEN'S JOBS

'Where a woman ought to be given equal treatment with a man and he enjoys any greater remuneration it shall be for the employer to show that it is genuinely due to a material difference (other than

the difference of sex) between her case and his. (clause 2(6) )

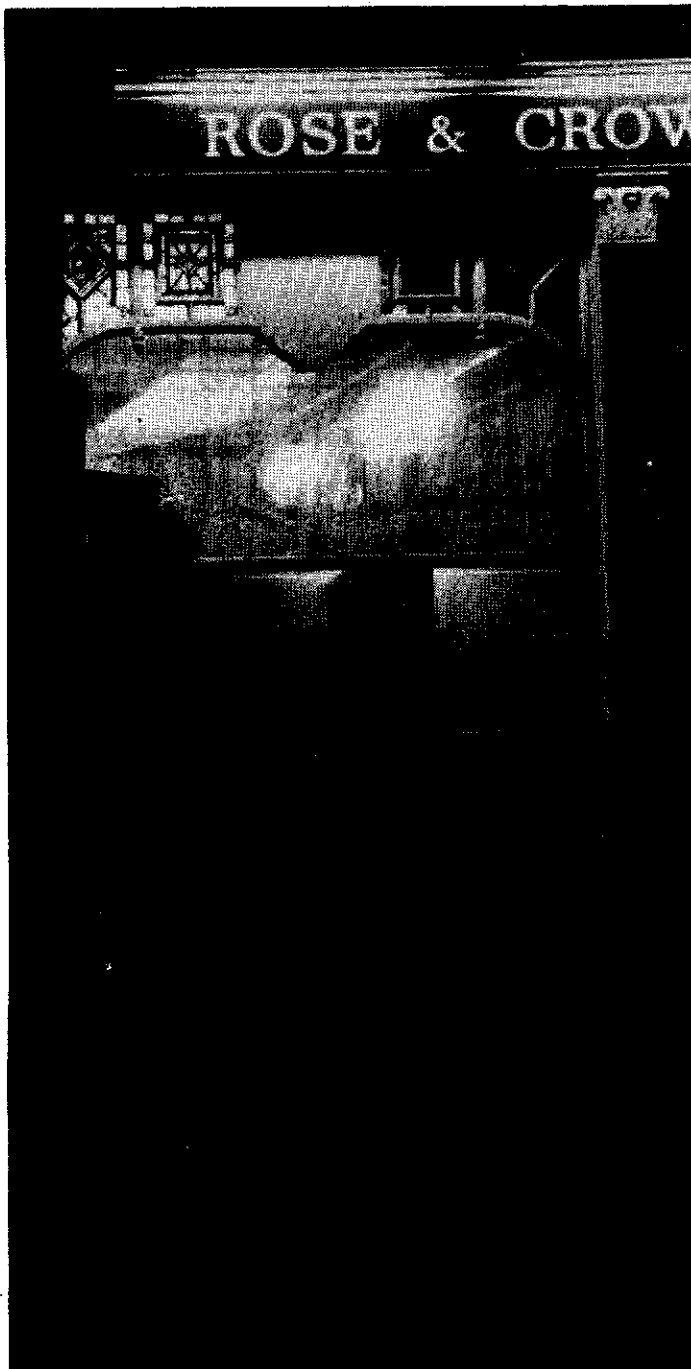
Do you get equal pay?  
If you want to know more about your rights and how to fight for them, if you want to be put in touch with other women in your union or industry who are fighting for a better deal, write to us now.

Name .....

Address .....

Union .....

Send to Womens Department, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.



picture: Syd Shelton

# RAPPE

The confused and hypocritical attitude of our society to rape has been highlighted recently by the appearance of a new book on the subject *The Facts of Rape*.

Several newspapers have reviewed it or run articles on rape. They have usually been serious and sympathetic. But when they are followed on the fashion pages by 'The After Rape Look' from Paris showing a model with her jumper pulled off her shoulder. Or one on 'Skirts for Flirts', with skirts hitched up round the thighs, my anger mounts at the hypocrisy of the press. Lip service is paid to more liberated sexual attitudes on one page, and followed by the same old sexist attitudes on the next! Barbara Toner, the author of the book, puts society's attitudes to rape in a nutshell when she says 'neither the law nor the community know how to treat rape.'

Her book gives a wealth of facts and evidence on rape. She shows how rape victims and offenders are treated by the police in court and by the press. She traces the history of the law relating to rape and the recent changes, and shows the mythology and cultural background to rape. However, at the end of the book I'm not sure I

was a lot clearer on the main issues involved.

The common attitudes of people shown throughout the book is that if a woman is raped she has asked for it in some way. This perhaps explains why so few rapes are ever reported to the police. A total of 1,040 cases of rape were recorded as known to the police in 1975. Only 544 men appeared in magistrates courts, and of these 30 were discharged, and four were withdrawn. 409 cases were tried at Crown Courts.

If a woman is being physically threatened by a rapist and she submits to rape rather than further violence she will find her case difficult to prove.

Why is protecting your virtue more important than protecting your body? So women have difficulty in making a rape charge stick, unless they are half dead and covered in bruises so that they can prove that they fought for their honour.

The chapter devoted to rape victims accounts, brings out the horror, fright and humiliation of rape very clearly. My immediate reaction was to loathe the men and to think they should be castrated or hung. Of course I realised that my reaction was wrong and that it is our whole society that should be examined and questioned and not the individual rapist.

For Barbara Toner solutions to the problem of rape lie partially in changes in the law. After the famous Morgan case (the RAF airman who invited 3 airmen to rape his wife) and the ruling of the House of Lords on their appeal, there was a great deal of public rage and indignation on the ambiguities of the law relating to rape.

It was clear that the law had to be clarified. This has been done to an extent by Robin Corbett's Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act which was passed in November. This gives a clear definition of rape, avoids references to the complainants' past sex life, and provides anonymity for victims. But as Barbara Toner points out, the new legislation misses an opportunity. She says: 'as the law stands there are degrees of rape. There are rapes accompanied by appalling violence and rapes in which the victim submits when threatened.'

Because of this she suggests that the assault and violence should be judged separately from the rape, with a maximum sentence of three years for rape, with further imprisonment for the assault. This could well lead to more objective and less emotional judgement in rape cases.

But the book is lacking in a real analysis of the sort of society that produces rapists. She does recognise the dual morality that exists in our society. We all know that men are expected to be dominant, aggressive seducers while women are supposed to 'play it cool' and pretend that they are not interested in sex. Men are encouraged to brag about the number of women they have laid while the same behaviour in women provokes a stunned silence.

Men are brought up to desire a 'gorgeous' woman, while we are brought up to try to conform to be that 'gorgeous' image. And sex is used in our society to sell consumer goods. All over the tube, on telly and in newspapers, half-naked women are used alluringly to sell some useless product.

A kind of society that prevents women (and men) from having straight forward honest attitudes to sex; a kind of society that is dependent on oppressing women and keeping them in their place is the kind of society that produces so many rapists.

By Alison Kirton

'The Facts of Rape' by Barbara Toner. Published by Arrow books. Price 90p.

# ICE YOUR VOICE YOUR VOICE YOU CE YOUR VOICE YOUR VOICE YOUR E YOUR VOICE YOUR VOICE YOUR

## Boys will be boys...

I thought other Womens Voice readers might like to hear about the 'equality for women' that is present in my home.

I have one brother who is one year younger than I am. When my elder brother was 17 he was allowed to stay out till the early hours of the morning. At just 17 I have to be in every night at 10.30pm. Up until a month ago I could stay out till 11.30 on 'special' occasions. But on one 'special' occasion it meant leaving a party at 11pm to catch the last bus home just when things were warming up. I rang the next-door neighbour and asked her to tell my mum that I would be late.

When I got in she was waiting for me and naturally we ended up in an almighty row. When I said my brothers were allowed to come in when they wanted to she said that was different, because 'I was a girl'. Since then I have had to be in by 10.30, unless one of my brothers is there to chaperone me.

Tonight in an argument with my mum she made it quite clear that in her opinion a womans place is in the home looking after kids, because that's what women are made for. I couldn't believe that my mother was saying this. Surely she's not encouraging me to stay at school for another one and a half years doing my A levels, and then going to University, just so that I can stay at home with kids!

I think *Womens Voice* has to make women realise what they are and make them stop believing in what they have been brain-washed to believe.

Carol, Yorkshire

## The expert decision

Should mothers be told at the first opportunity if they have a mongul baby. I think they should. But the consultant in my hospital in Manchester doesn't agree.

I'm a student midwife, and nursed a mongul baby with a heart complaint in the special care unit. I was instructed *not* to discuss the baby's condition with the mother so that should could not find out that the baby was a mongul.

When I asked I was told that the consultant didn't believe in telling the mothers in case they wouldn't take the baby home, and would

want it taken into care. What right does he have to decide?

When I heard that the consultant was to be on the platform of a 'forum' organised by a company producing disposable nappies. I went along to challenge him. I kept a tight hold of the microphone and asked whether a woman had the right to know. Most of the panel and the audience agreed. The consultants shouldn't manipulate peoples lives.

The consultants have a great deal of say in the way hospitals are run. Challenging their authoritarian attitudes is something everyone who works in a hospital should be prepared to do.

from a student nurse, Manchester.

## Circular argument

I remember when me and my parents actively supported the same Labour Party branch alongside Maureen Colquhoun. I remember the canvassing and letter folding sessions based at her house. I remember watching her at council meetings as our local councillor; she never hesitated to stick up for socialist principals, so when I heard later that she'd become an MP. I thought 'well, at least she'll tell some of those 'moderates' where to get off.'

My mother said she was a traitor because she'd joined the Tribune group, and I used to defend her because I knew she supported things like abortion and the Troops Out of Ireland movement. Then I heard that she's supporting an out-and-out racist, Enoch Powell - she thinks 'something has got to be done' about immigration.

Now I don't think that Ms Colquhoun is a malicious black-hater. Not for one minute. But she's locked in the circular argument that

if we have 1½ million unemployed and 1½ million blacks we can get rid of the former by throwing out the latter. That's what the National Front say; the more 'humane' elements within the Labour Party use the same logic and ask for a less drastic, but similar solution: immigration control.

Don't be fooled, Maureen, there's plenty to go round, it's simply misused. Don't gang up against fellow workers - gang up against the disgusting privileged sections of Britain, India, Germany, Russia. Glynis Cousins, N. London.

## Priorities

I would like to take up some points from Maureen Tottoh's letter (WV 2), about *Womens Voice* being middle class and irrelevant.

No 2 is an improvement but considering you said that you had masses of articles sent in the priorities in terms of space are still wrong. The News items need more prominence because they are about how we *can* fight for womens rights.

We need articles explaining politics simply so we can talk them over with women we sell to on the street, estates and at work - do the unions run the country? Loads of women said this to us over the bread dispute. Social security scroungers, why don't we live in Russia, what would life be like under socialism. A lot of women we know are particularly concerned about how children would be brought up.

We can really use *Womens Voice* to organise women now. They really want to know. So lets get the mix right.

Sandy Rose, Manchester

P.S. Seen in a Manchester College: a woman clerical worker photocopying every page of *Womens Voice* No 1 borrowed

from a friend to be sure she had her own copy! She now has a regular supply.

## The 3p rise

After being out of work since February last year, looking endlessly for a job and getting desperate as my husband was on the sick, I saw a job vacancy advertised for a waitress in the local Wimpy Bar.

The manageress told me that the pay was 62p an hour, working a 5½ day week, with three twenty minute breaks each day. There was a perk - 68p per day food allowance.

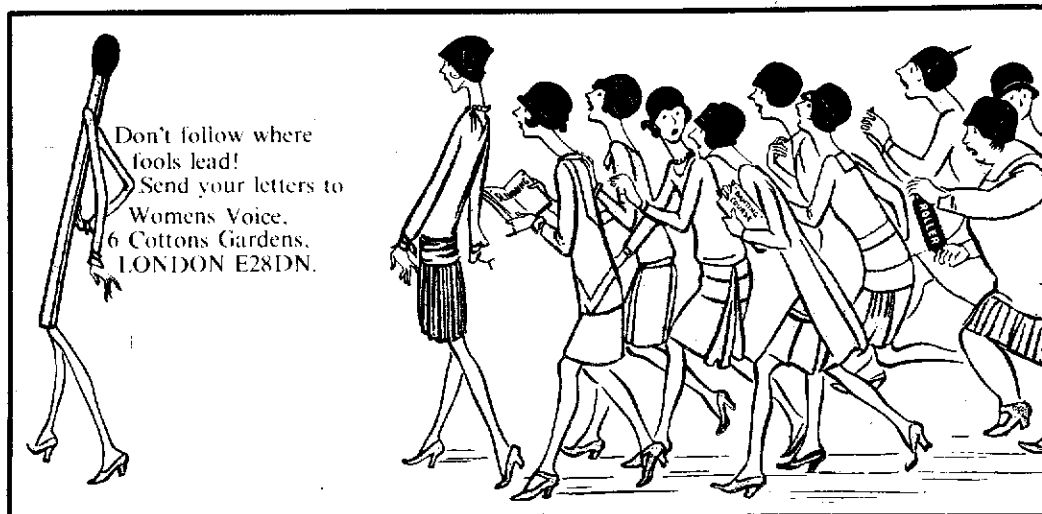
The first week one of the girls was out sick, making them short staffed. I had to work my half day, but it was only when I got my first weeks wages that I learned they do not pay for overtime. Not only that, but no sick pay either.

Then a big day arrived. The boss came back from his villa in sunny Spain. The manageress asked him for a rise for all the staff, and after ringing round to other Wimpy bars he said he would. He spoke to us all individually, and I was given the magnificent sum of 3p.

I thought about getting the union organised but I gave up the idea when I learned that the union rate in the catering industry is a 'fantastic' 60p per hour.

The crunch came after seven weeks working there when the boss told me I was working too slow. I didn't really know what to do. If I left I would be out of work again. With my husband still on the sick, my family (I have three children) would be back to facing great hardship. Or I could knuckle under to one of the most bigoted, arrogant people it has ever been my misfortune to meet. I left.

Beryl Reilly, Harlow.



# Childbirth: the way we want it

*St David's Maternity Hospital at Bangor is the only maternity hospital in the county of Gwynedd and almost every Gwynedd birth happens there. To cope with all the births the hospital has become highly 'efficient' at child delivery using methods of induction, perineal cutting (episotomy), and generally dehumanised child deliveries*

*The Bangor Women's Liberation Group decided that the Gwynedd women should speak up for the childbearing methods they wanted*

We drew up a questionnaire to find out whether a large proportion of the mothers were dissatisfied and why. We took the questionnaire to the two mothers' clinics, one at St David's Hospital and another one at Sackville Road. We were welcome at Sackville Road but at the hospital we were told we couldn't speak to the 'patients' in case we 'upset them'. Then the Area Health Authority stopped us asking questions at Sackville Road.

Because the Area Health Authority thought our questionnaire was 'biased' we drew up another asking facts about women's experiences of childbirth in that hospital. We met with four administrators to discuss this and took our two toddlers along.

Even on simple points—like starting an appointments system to prevent mothers waiting hours—they wouldn't budge. They argued that to change this would mean calling three or four committees that would cost thousands of pounds. They refused to give more information to the mothers-to-be on the grounds that this would confuse and worry them! They refused to allow mothers near the hospital, who could be brought in in case of complications, to have home deliveries because they couldn't let women who lived twenty miles away have home deliveries!

**by**  
**Gilly**  
**Westley**

When we argued with these administrators we pointed out that a hospital birth must be as warm and full an experience as possible. We argued the Leboyer method from the book *Childbirth Without Violence*, by F Leboyer. But at the end of our meeting all the administrators did was to say that there was no real need for 'all this fuss', 'as you can see that the hospital is being run

wonderfully'. The hospital is not being run wonderfully. The following two interviews show what a difference a sympathetic midwife makes.

*Judy had her second child in St David's this summer.*

'I took a list of points to my consultant on my last ante-natal appointment. He assured me that most were routine procedures and needn't be entered on my record card. The points included no shaving; no drugs unless medically necessary; lights and voices to be low at birth for the baby's sake; the cord not to be cut until it stops pulsating so that the baby has two sources of oxygen; the baby to be laid on my tummy until the cord is cut; then the baby to go to my breast for colostrum and love, for as long a time as possible, and for my husband to be there all the time even if complications arose.

'At the birth it was a different story. The nurses refused to tell me what stage I was at, saying "She's been going to classes, reading books and got herself all confused." When my baby came the nurse deliberately cut the cord while it was still pulsating although Dave pleaded with her not to. She said—you have been reading that French stuff, meaning Leboyer. The nurse refused to put the baby on my tummy, but put her in a plastic cot. Only when I threatened to yell for a doctor was I given my daughter to nurse, and to put to the breast. And I was stitched!

'When I saw the same consultant at post-natal clinic he said that he knew the birth wouldn't be the way we wanted but he didn't want to break the bad news to me while I was pregnant. That says it all!'



Margy had her first baby several months later at St Davids.

'As soon as the midwife heard that we'd like the Leboyer technique she was very willing because she knew about it, although she had not used it before. She even remembered some points that I had forgotten and explained it to the junior nurses. My baby was born 40 minutes after I had arrived at the hospital. He was put on my tummy until the cord stopped pulsating although the consultant thought this unhygienic. The midwife thought it was OK. Then she put him on my breast. The lights were dim and everything was quiet and gentle including the baby, who looked contented. Richard and I were left alone to get to know the baby. I had to have one stitch, but I was glad that I hadn't been cut; being undrugged, I was wide-awake and able to pant when the midwife asked me so that the cutting wouldn't be necessary. I felt really sorry for the women who had been cut and had both internal and external stitches; they could hardly move'.

As you can see it is all a matter of luck what type of experience mothers have at St David's. It should be a matter of choice not luck. But only by working together can we make sure of this. We have got to go and see these administrators again to get their approval for our questionnaire now that they have consulted their 'experts'. Even if they don't approve it we are going ahead.

The contact addresses for our Campaign are:  
June Marshall, The Willows, Holyhead Road, Bangor. Tel Bangor 53955.  
Judy Bateman, 33 Cae Llepa, Bangor.  
Women's Voice contact address is Gilly Westley 99, Caernarvon Road, Bangor.

# YOUR RIGHTS

## '... as usual, the Royal Commission on UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE picked on the weakest sections of the working class—married women workers'

The following report appeared in the Glasgow Herald on 14 August 1931: *'The procedure by which a married man living at home drew the dole was described as a 'disgrace' at Gateshead Police Court yesterday, when a young woman summonsed her husband, alleging persistent cruelty.*

*Mr Frank Lambert, representing the husband, said he had a wage of nearly £3 10s a week and his wife was drawing 15s a week dole. They had no children.*

*"I understand that the procedure was that this married woman left her husband and obtained work. She paid her insurance and got sufficient stamps on her card to entitle her to benefit. She then left her job and put herself on the dole, notwithstanding the fact that she was living at home with her husband."*

*The Chairman—"It is a crying abuse. It is time that the Government was beginning some action to put a stop to this abuse going on with taxpayers' money."*

*Mr Lambert—"It is a crying disgrace. With everyone suggesting economy, thousands of pounds could be saved by making such a procedure illegal."*

*The case was adjourned for six weeks.'*

This case was part of a very effective campaign against the right of any married woman to Unemployment Insurance payments—despite the fact that they had paid contributions.

During the immense financial crisis of 1929-31, unemployment doubled and then soared. The Labour Government split over the crisis with Ramsay MacDonald and the right-wing determined that the working class would bear the full cost of the crisis. As was usual then the justification was provided by a Royal Commission! And, as usual, the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance picked on one of the weakest sections of the working class—married women

workers.

At the Royal Commission the problem became not the crisis of capitalism but that people were not passing out of Insurance whilst others were passing in and the number was therefore increasing. 'In great part this decline (of passing out) appears to be due to persons, particularly married women, prolonging their stay in insurance under the inducement over benefit!'

The Royal Commission pointed out that the number of married women applying for benefit had doubled between April 1927 and October 1930.

The result of all the propaganda against married women was the passing of an 'Anomalies Act' by the new National Government. To be eligible for 'dole' new conditions were to be imposed on women. They had to have worked for fifteen weeks after marriage and for eight in the quarter of the year in which they applied for benefit!

As a sop the 'Anomalies Act' did not only apply to women. It also regulated seasonal workers and part time workers. But whereas 8,000 of seasonal and part-time claimants were not allowed—81,000 women were knocked off in the few weeks up to November 1931. 75 per cent of all married women in Glasgow were disallowed. Women who had worked twenty to thirty years in Lancashire were only allowed after going through all the appeal procedure.

These women could not claim money off the Public Assistance Committees (Social Security) because they would have to go through a means test and their husbands were supposed to be supporting them. So after working all their lives they were left completely dependent on the one man they had married.

Below: part of a mass demonstration against the means test in Hyde Park London, October, 1932.



The history of the American labour movement is full of bitter battles to establish a union, a decent living wage, and a shorter working day. The textile mills of the southern states were the scene of many fights for union rights.

The families of these textile workers were largely poor mountain folk in the hill country who were suddenly confronted with modern industrialism, for the mills were built in their lifetime. The farmers were sought out to work them, and had to adjust from the leisurely, disordered life of the communal farm to the regimented order of the mill.

When these workers began to organise, they confronted the bosses and the 'law'; sheer determination and fighting spirit against the armed company mob, scabs and police.

There was a strike at the mill in Gastonia, South Carolina in

*We leave our homes in the morning,  
We kiss our children good-bye,  
While we slave for the bosses,  
Our children scream and cry.*

*And when we draw our money,  
Our grocery bills to pay,  
Not a cent to spend for clothing,  
Not a cent to lay away.*

*And on that very evening,  
Our little son will say:  
'I need some shoes, mother,  
And so does sister May.'*

*How it grieves the heart of a mother,  
You everyone must know;  
But we can't buy for our children,  
Our wages are too low.*

*It is for our little children,  
That seem to us so dear,  
But for us, nor them, dear workers,  
The bosses do not care.*

*But understand, all workers,  
Our union they do fear,  
Let's stand together, workers,  
And have a union here.*



# The mill mothers lament

by Nina  
Streich

1929. One of the strikers, Ella May Wiggins, wrote songs for the workers. At the height of the conflict, she was murdered by an armed company mob.

'I'm the mother of nine,' she said. 'Four of them died of whooping cough, all at once. I was working nights and nobody to do for them, only Myrtle. She's eleven and a sight of help. I asked the super to put me on the say shift so's I could tend 'em, but he wouldn't. I don't know why. So I had to quit my job and then there wasn't any money for medicine, so they just died. I never could do anything for my children, not even to keep them alive, it seems. That's why I'm for the union, so's I can do better for them.'

This is her song.



# WHAT'S ON

## Women & Socialism

**ST ALBANS:** Wednesday 30 March, 8pm, Beehive pub, off London Road. Speaker: Margaret Renn

**BLACK COUNTRY:** Tuesday 8 March, 8pm, meeting place to be announced. Speakers: Jen Carter and Janet Kerr.

**NORTH LONDON:** Monday 14 March, 8pm, Florence pub, Florence Road, N1. Speaker: Margaret Renn.

**EAST KILBRIDE:** Thursday 17 March, 7.30pm, Murray Halls. Play: Out on the Costa Del Trico, and speakers.

**NORTH LONDON:** Monday 21 March, 8pm, The Beehive pub, Stoneleigh Road, Tottenham, N17. Speaker: Margaret Renn.

**PONTEFRAC:** Wednesday 23 March, 8pm, meeting place to be announced. Speaker: Margaret Renn.

**READING:** Wednesday 16 March, 8pm, Trade Union Club, Minister Street. Speaker to be arranged.

**NORTH WEST LONDON:** Wednesday 16 March, 7.30pm, Harlesden Women's Centre, Minute Avenue, NW10. Speakers: Anna Paczuska (SWP) and Ingrid Faulkner.



'You know what you can do.'

An argument over piece work and rates—a textile worker in a Blackburn factory tells a foreman she's not backing down. One of the photographs from the Down the Road exhibition, affects working class people. It shows the cuts, the misery they cause and how working class people are fighting back.

The photographs will appear in a book of the same name by Sarah Cox and Bob Golden.

Meantime 38 of them are available for hire to schools, colleges and meetings. Fee £5. To hire the photographs contact 265a Seven Sisters Road N4 (01 359 1371).

All proceeds will go to the Right to Work Campaign Defence Fund.

**LONGSIGHT and RUSHOLME:** Thursday 17 March, 8pm, place to be announced. Speaker: Margaret Renn (SWP women's organiser).

**MANCHESTER:** Thursday 17 March, 5pm, Committee Room 4, Town Hall, Albert Square (all Town Hall workers welcome). Speakers: Margaret Renn (SWP women's organiser).

**CHESTER:** Thursday 17 March, 7.30pm, Railway Inn, Brook Street.

**WALTHAMSTOW and LEYTONSTONE:** Thursday 10 March, 8pm, Harrow Green Library, Cathall Road, London, E11. Speaker: Judith Condon. All welcome.

**South East London Women and socialism meeting,** Wednesday 23 March, 8pm, at Charlton House, Hornfair Road, London SE7.

## Womens Voice rallies

**GLASGOW RALLY:** Sunday 13 March, 7.30pm, City Halls (room 4) Albion Street. Play: Out on the Costa Del Trico. Speakers: Sheila McGregor and Angela McHugh.

**LONDON:** Tuesday 8 March, International Womens' Day Rally 8pm, Portland Hall, 16-21 Ridinghouse Street, W1 (near Oxford Circus). Speakers: Maggie Dunn (NUPE shop steward), Lee Kane (NALGO staff rep), Margaret Renn (SWP women's organiser).

Songs from Sandra Kerr. Creche at hall.

## Workshops

What is a socialist feminist practice?

A series of regional workshops stemming from the Newcastle Womens Liberation Conference, to explore the relationship between socialism and feminism.

Is unemployment an area of feminist struggle?

Sunday March 13, Caxton House, St John's Way, London N19.

Sexual self determination and the right to control our own bodies.

Sunday April 24, Caxton House, St John's Way, London N19.

Feminism and Ireland.

What is a socialist feminist practice? For more information, write to Socialism and feminism workshops Planning Group, c/o 13 Malfort Road, London SE5.

**Conference on 'Minority Women in Employment',** Sunday March 20, 10am-5pm, at the Architectural Association, 54 Bedford Square, London WC1. Further details from Irene Fick, c/o National Assembly of Women, 283 Grays Inn Road, London WC1.

**National Abortion Campaign Conference,** March 19-20 at South Bank polytechnic, Elephant and Castle, London.

**Women and Science Conference,** March 26 at Sussex University, Brighton.

Ideas and papers welcome. Details from Lynda Burke, 15 Camelford St, Brighton, (0273-682475). Food, creche and accommodation provided.

**Images of Women in the Media conference,** March 19, 10am-5pm at Polytechnic of Central London, 35 Marylebone Road, London NW1. Speakers: Jane Reed (Womens

Own), Suzanne Lowry (Guardian), Alison Leigh (Westward TV). Details from Netta Swallow, PCL, 309 Regent Street, London W1 (01-580 2020 ex 221)

**National Womens Liberation Conference,** 1-3 April — Registration and social on Friday st.

City University, St Johns St, Islington, London. For more information and registration contact: Conference Planning Group, c/o Earlham Street, London WC2.

## Demos

**National Abortion Campaign Demonstration,** Saturday, 14 May. Beat the Benyon bill! Details as soon as we know them.

**International Womens Day Demonstration, 1977**

Saturday 12 March, Assemble 1.15pm Speakers Corner. Playbus for children. 3-30-6pm. Refreshment and celebration at the Architectural Association, 36 Bedford Square. Entertainment includes songs and a play from the Broadside Mobile Workers' Theatre.

## Stickers & posters

Womens Voice abortion posters available. 50p for 20 including postage from Womens Voice, 6 Cottons Gardens, London, E2.

**FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND!**

Womens Voice stickers available. 50p for 5 sheets of twelve stickers, including postage. From Womens Voice, 6 Cottons Gardens, London, E2.

## Plays

**COUNTERACT** is going on tour with their play on nursery provision and the cutbacks, 'The Double Shift'.

It lasts 80 minutes, and a shorter (40 minute version) is available for lunchtime bookings.

Their first tour will be in the following areas:

April 18-24: North East and Yorkshire

April 25-May 1: Scotland: Edinburgh and Aberdeen

May 2-8: Scotland: Dundee and Glasgow

Contact them at: Counteract Federation, 27 Clerkenwell Close, London, EC1, 01-251 4977

## Socials

**Have a feminist night out.**

Frankie Armstrong, feminist folksinger will be performing at the college folk evening at Middlesex Poly, The Boroughs, London NW4. Entrance 40p.

**WHY YOU SHOULD BE A SOCIALIST**  
PAUL FOOT  
...the case for the new Socialist Workers Party

'Why you should be a socialist' is why you should be a socialist. After all 'politics is not a man's business'. Available now price 35p, ask your Womens Voice seller to get you a copy or order it direct from SWP publications, 6 Cottons Gardens, London E2.

# DEFEND THE SOCIALIST PRINTSHOP

# DEFEND SOCIALIST WORKER



Someone is trying to close our printshop down! Socialist Worker and the Socialist Worker printshop are being threatened by the courts, and Clive Jenkins, general secretary of ASTMS, took us to court because of a joke that we printed about him in Socialist Worker. The court came down with a crippling £10,000 worth of fines and costs. And that is only the beginning: Frank Chapple and the EEPTU, another ASTMS official, the National Union of Bank Employees all have writs against us.

Without the Socialist Worker printshop we would not be able to print Womens Voice. Or any of the pamphlets and posters we want to print. We are just beginning to build a campaign for womens rights. Over the next three months we have to do everything we can to defeat the Benyon anti-abortion bill.

We are being hit hard by the courts because we dare to criticise their way of running society. We are being hit hard by the trade union leaders because we won't tolerate their attempt to patch up the social contract, pushing prices higher than ever, throwing more of us out of work.

To save our printshop, Socialist Worker, and Womens Voice, we need your help. Every penny of it.

• Send us some money today  
All money should be sent to:  
Socialist Worker Fighting Fund, 6 Cottons  
Gardens, London E2.