

womens voice

20p June '79 Issue 30

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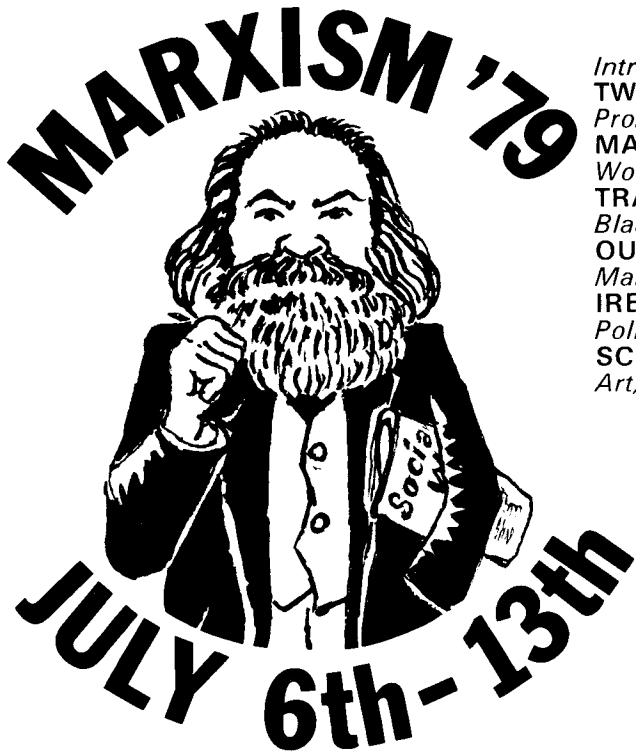
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fightback

CONFERENCE

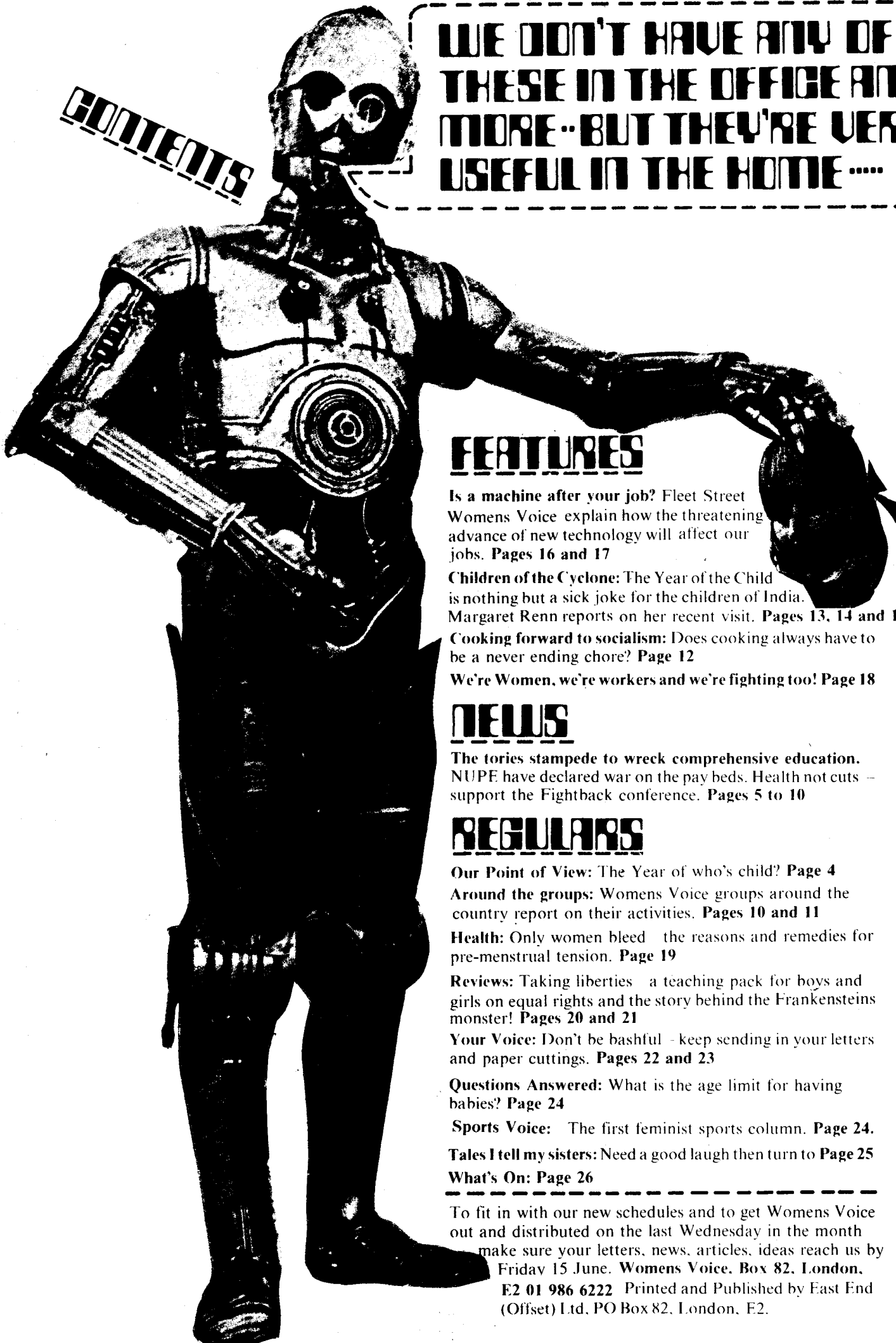
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To fit in with our new schedules and to get Womens Voice out and distributed on the last Wednesday in the month make sure your letters, news, articles, ideas reach us by Friday 15 June. **Womens Voice, Box 82, London, E2 01 986 6222** Printed and Published by East End (Offset) Ltd, PO Box 82, London, E2.

No future in Thatcherland

160,000 children will sit down to tea with the Queen this month. This enormous tea party in Hyde Park has been organised to celebrate the Year of the Child. Of course, tea with the Queen won't cure any child's handicap or illness, but the organisers do expect the publicity for the occasion to stir people's conscience to donate to the charities that can help.

We pay the Queen £2 million a year to keep her in the manner to which she is accustomed. Her sons and daughter, sister and the rest of the family all get their additional share. Yet there is never enough money to give children the deal they deserve.

There are 3 million under 5's in Britain and only 27,000 nursery places to share between them. That's less than one place per 100 children.

There are 338,000 nursery school places for under 5's. One place for every ten children.

There are 100,000 children living in care. And 35,000 children under the age of 16 who are mentally or physically handicapped.

What future have they got in Tory Britain? When schools and hospitals are cut, when local councils have less money to spend, we are all hit. But children suffer the most.

How many one parent families living on social security are going to be better off because of cuts in income tax?

How many more handicapped children will be born because cuts in hospital spending and public transport make

getting to the ante-natal clinic just too difficult.

Children in inner cities are already cooped up all day, imprisoned with their mothers in the high rise blocks of the sixties, or they are reduced to playing on wasteland littered with rubble.

Even the council houses with gardens they may have been moved into are now being sold privately.

Tory policies will make things worse but its not just because of these things that children, all of us, have a hard life. Our society has got its priorities all wrong.

Peoples lives are emptied of meaning. Work is boring, repetative, done in order to survive from one wage packet to the next. Pleasure is limited to a few hours of an evening and two weeks holiday a year.

Our relationships with one another are constrained by rules and institutions: a decision to marry made at 17 must last for life. Our friendships are confined to the people next door, the people next to us at work.

No wonder parents expect so much of their children. Little wonder the children can't live up to the pressures to do better. So even this relationship becomes soured.

Socialism is not just about allocating resources. It is as much to do with the quality of life for us all, and especially our children. The real International Year of the Child will be the year our Socialist ideas win.





Photo: Virginia Turbett

Not the biggest march in the world—but certainly one of the liveliest. On May 19th three hundred women marched to the Iranian embassy in solidarity with their sisters in Iran. Our chat was—'Not the mosque, not the state, WOMEN must decide their fate'.

Islamic women (above picture)—Islamic woman arguing with Iranian feminists) and men harassed the march, yelling that it was none of our business what happened in Iran. We did not agree and will continue to support the rights of Iranian women to live, work and dress as they want.

NOT THE MOSQUE NOT THE STATE WOMEN MUST DECIDE THEIR FATE

IRAN has lowered the age limits for marriage to 15 years for boys, and 13 for girls, a traditional Koranic custom.

This is one more serious stepback for Iranian women. Divorce and separation are already very difficult. How many thirteen year olds who have to enter arranged marriages will want to stay with their husbands for the rest of their lives?

If a woman insists on divorce, she often has to give up her children and all her personal possessions.

One Iranian woman told me a

heartbreaking story. She had been trying to get a divorce from her husband for 17 years. Eventually she and her two teenage children came to London in the hope that divorce might be easier here. All the time she lived in Iran this woman (who does not want to be named) handed over every penny of her wages to her husband.

When she came here she received money from him to support the children. She bought a house, and wrote to him asking for a divorce.

He said that if she sent back the children, gave him the house she owned in Iran (he had already sold all her furniture and possessions)

and sold the London house—then he would *think* about giving her a divorce. In desperation she did all those things. He then cut off her money and refused her a divorce.

She is now without children, money and without a work permit, has no chance of a job. She sits in her house which is up for sale, and lives on bread and butter.

She started off wealthier and better educated than most Iranian women, for whom escape to a foreign country would be an impossible dream. And yet her life is now a nightmare.

That's why marriage at thirteen is so wrong. And that's why women in Britain must continue to give every kind of support to our Iranian sisters.

Christina Potrykus.

•A GROUP of tenants in a run-down estate in Hackney waited eagerly for a group of new GLC houses by the Lea River to be completed. The council had promised them rehousing in these brand new homes. Their hopes rose as the walls rose and now they are finished. Ready to be moved into.

But not by the tenants on the Hackney estate. The GLC announced that the houses are to be sold. For £30,000 each.

•HEALTH visitors and social workers are being encouraged to snoop on unmarried mothers in Birmingham. If they are found to be living with men their chances of nursery places will be put in jeopardy.

To add insult to injury Birmingham Council are also planning to double their fees from £7 to £14 the maximum fee that a single parent will have to pay if earning £55.10 or more.

COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION? NO MORE DISCRIMINATION

MARGARET Thatcher, former education minister, hates the idea of equal educational opportunity for all. So it came as no surprise that the first act of the Tory government was to tell those local authorities who'd been clinging to their old selective schools that they needn't now go comprehensive.

The Tories always say they want to save the Grammar schools, but why don't they say they want to save the secondary modern schools, since that's the reverse side of the coin, and involves many more children? Answer: they don't care about the secondary moderns nor the children in them.

Under the old selective system, not only were children unfairly divided at the age of eleven on the basis of an exam which heavily favoured middle-class children, but also there were fewer grammar school places for girls than for boys. This fact was highlighted in 1977 when the Thameside Tory Council resisted the then Labour Government's instruction to go comprehensive.

Fewer grammar school places existed on Thameside for girls than for boys. But when the Equal Opportunities Commission investigated, it found that there was no case of *unlawful* discrimination to answer, because the law says there must be no discrimination in any educational establishment. Since in Thameside there were single-sex schools, there wasn't any discrimination within the schools. The fact that there were fewer places at the girls' grammar than at the boys' didn't come into it!

Here Jean Lewis writes from Pontefract with another important example of how the spirit of equal opportunity is skirted round.

I live in Pontefract which has had a Labour controlled council for years and years, but it has only just gone comprehensive!

I also have twin daughters who three years ago sat an 11-plus exam - one passed and one failed. Imagine the anguish when the one who failed at 11 years announced that she was rubbish.

For the last three years she has been at a single-sex secondary modern school in run down surroundings and deprived of much of the equipment and facilities taken for granted in other schools. The only ray of hope seemed to be the promise of full comprehensive education this year.

Next September she is due to start at the comprehensive which was the old, long-established, Boys' Grammar school. One 4th-year group of girls from the old secondary modern was supposedly 'integrated' this year.

In the past few weeks however I have begun to realise that in-

time table seems to have been drawn up to make this virtually impossible, and boys and girls this year were given different syllabuses.

It was so biased that girls were forced to choose out of six options no less than three non-academic subjects such as craft, needlework, housecraft, art, childcare, -- whether they wanted to or not. I was told that this is what 'this type of girl' wants. There was a complete lack of equal opportunity.

The policy of segregation or 'apartheid' even extends to registration where boys and girls are kept separate! In fact a school is being run within a school.

Recently my daughter came home upset as a result of a talk given to the girls by a senior teacher from the new comprehensive, who will be in charge of their 'pastoral care' next year. By making repeated claims that the girls would be mocked by the boys he attempted to emotionally scare them out of the

while at the end of the talk only about four were still keen.

A group of parents, about 17 of us, got together and decided that we were not having this! We made statements to the local press, we picketed the governors, and issued information to other parents.

Three weeks ago the headmistress, the chairman of the governors, the chief education officer and his deputy, and the chairman of the education committee agreed to meet us... very surprising since they'd said we were creating a fuss about nothing!

What we heard when we met them made us even more concerned because we were told that a group of male teachers from the old grammar school were being very difficult, they didn't want comprehensive education or girls at the school! Also a large group of parents of the boys didn't want their academic sons mixing with 'that type of girl'.

After the education authority became involved in the matter, a new time-table was circulated among parents. Now, on the face of it, there was just one time-table for boys and girls, but subtly, the old divisions were still there. You were forced to make a choice between taking the higher level academic courses, or else the old practical choices, needlework and the rest. There was no chance to mix subjects, no intermediate level.

Parents of the girls a year below my daughter went ahead and accepted, opting for the academic time-table, hoping their daughters would get O-levels that way. Two of us still stuck out, saying that this was really nothing like comprehensive education. Now our daughters have been offered places at a different school.

But our fears for the first school remain. The headmistress of the old secondary modern has been made head of the new 'comprehensive', the head of the old boys' grammar left. We fear she has neither the standing nor the desire to tackle the reactionary staff members of the old boys' school, who did not want to go comprehensive in the first place. All this business of keeping the girls separate has been a sop to them.

And although it is promised that new first year pupils coming to the school will be fully integrated, we fear that the pattern of discrimination has already been set with the older years. This cannot fail to affect the attitude of staff towards girls in the future. Already first year girls are being denied the opportunity to take metal work.

We should have had a strong head, and a strong lead from the local authority, telling the old-guard teachers this is a comprehensive school now - take it or leave it.

We still intend to take our case before the Equal Opportunities Commission, in the hope that it will expose some of the myths of 'equal opportunity' in education. It's not enough just to give a school a new title. What we're after is real comprehensives.



tergrated comprehensive education at this school is a total myth.

I was assured that 'girls were being integrated with boys according to their academic ability and if the time table allows'. But from what I have been able to learn the

idea of intergration. One of the gems was 'I know best and I've decided that you are better off separate'. The whole thing was a piece of intimidation, brainwashing these children since at the beginning everyone wanted to be integrated

HOMES FOR ALL

ON MAY 14th 25 women picketed and at one point invaded a meeting of Chester-le-Street District Council Housing Committee. We organised the picket to draw attention to the fact that this Labour Council is trying to evade its responsibilities under the '77 Housing (Homeless Families) Act, which was introduced by a Labour Government.

The Act was designed to make council housing departments take new responsibilities for homeless families. In particular this affected the situation of Battered Wives. Chester-le-Street council is being really unhelpful, they have no permanent short stay accommodation

and rely totally on Women's A'd Refuges. Women can be left for months in a refuge, while the council decide if they are going to offer any permanent housing at all. In several cases the council has argued that women should actually go back to violent homes.

At the moment Women's Aid is doing the council's work for them and that is not good enough. We are demanding the right of every person to have a decent home and in particular that Battered Wives should be recognised by the council as genuinely homeless people. It is the council's responsibility to ensure that this happens and we must make sure that they do so.

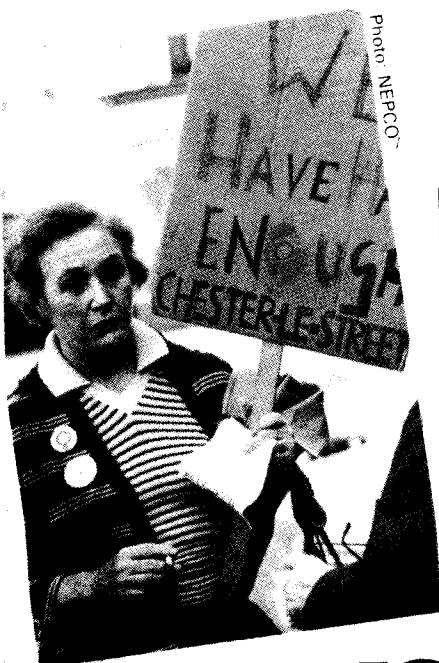


Photo: NEPCO

THE KILLER SMOKE

LAST month ten people were killed in a fire at Woolworths in the centre of Manchester. It broke out in the furniture department and spread rapidly throughout the building. All but one of the ten were killed by fumes from burning furniture.

For years the Furniture Workers Union (FTAT) have been campaigning against the use of polyurethane foam and certain other plastics, used in furniture. They are all easily inflammable and give off toxic fumes of carbon monoxide and cyanide which kill in minutes. Foam furniture does, of course, have one overriding advantage which explains why that floor in Woolworths was full of it - it is cheap. You can bet your life that a shop full of horsehair filled leather Chesterfields, would not have gone up like Woolworths did.

Since most of us need to buy cheap furniture what did Woolworths do to minimise the risk of a fatal fire? Absolutely nothing! And what does the law have to say about it? Very little! Woolworths complied with the only regulations they had to—fire escapes. But fire escapes are not a lot of use if two breaths of toxic gas can kill.

They could have installed an automatic sprinkler and hence prevented the deaths. But that was out of the question because, as the secretary of the local chamber of commerce said 'if firms know they are going to have to pay these ridiculous prices, nobody is going to put sprinklers in'. The ridiculous price he referred to was £2132 a year in water charges. Woolworths are

now instituting a 'full inquiry' and we can be sure that they will fully take into account the helpful views of the chamber of commerce.

But how can we organise against this happening again? Shops are not, after all, the most dangerous places to work in. If you look at the experience of those in industries which are immediately and obviously dangerous, like mining, engineering and chemicals, it is clear that fewer people get killed *because* health and safety are central issues of trade union organisation. Mines are not safe to work in but they would be a lot worse if it wasn't for the fact that the NUM has consistently fought over safety (at least until recently, when they allowed the notorious killer productivity scheme through).

In some well organised chemical factories the situation is even clearer, if workers are subject to toxic fumes they bargain directly on the concentration of the fumes, refusing to work if it is too high. Again in the car industry, good shop stewards always have health issues at the top of their mind and stop the line if it is too hot or too cold or there is slippery oil on the floor.

When we look at industries where women work, like shops, light engineering and offices, the difference is that they are either not unionised at all or token members of unions that do not see the issues facing women workers as crucial.

But it need not stay that way. Women workers in shops can organise themselves within the union of Shop, Distributive and



Allied Workers (USDAW) into sections with a shop steward and a safety rep. to take up and fight about workplace health issues, like fire risk, heating, lighting that may be damaging to the eyes and so on.

It is easy to win on the little issues and that is how we get the confidence to fight and win the big

ones.

Every Womens Voice group has a Woolworths near it. Put a leaflet about this into your local store and see if you can help to give Woolworths workers the information and confidence they need to fight for decent working conditions. Sybil Cock

ANTI-ABORTION LOBBY GETS THE UPPER HAND

THE anti-abortion campaign has spread into the trade union movement with a vengeance.

At this month's NALGO conference a composite resolution supported by no less than 10 branches calls for NALGO to take a neutral position on this issue, and withdraw support from the National Abortion Campaign.

Most of the resolutions come from two districts. In the North West, Wirral Metropolitan Borough, Preston, Bolton Metropolitan District, East Lancs Gas and Wirral Area Health Authority Branches all sent in resolutions with similar wordings. Stockton on Tees and Cleveland County sent in resolutions from the North East.

It requires a lot of effort and organisation to get as many as ten resolutions onto the order paper, and the number suggests that a great deal of work has been done in the past year to change NALGO's position of support for NAC and the TUC pro-abortion policy.

In the Civil Service the tactics employed at the conference forced the union to take an anti-abortion

position.

The number 15 Branch, had in good time sent in a resolution for the conference calling on the CSU to support TUC policy on abortion and to support the demand for better abortion facilities on the National Health Service.

The resolution was rejected by the Standing Orders Committee. However, when the branch wrote back asking on what grounds it had been rejected they were then told it was on the agenda paper as an emergency resolution. And so it was, as the very last item, and with a nil chance of being discussed at the conference.

An emergency resolution was then moved, before any other issue was discussed, that the resolution should not be taken. So the issue was debated after all, but the anti-abortion lobby had taken the initiative and were now arguing on their own ground. The resolution had been moved by the Foresters and Prison Officers branch. It was carried overwhelmingly.

In general the trade union movement has been in support of NAC. Now it looks as if the anti-abortion

campaigners are getting the upper hand. We must not let this happen.

If you are a member of a union you should find out what has happened at your union conference.

STOP PRESS:

The Tories have done it! John Corie, MP for Ayr, has introduced a bill into Parliament to change the abortion law. Word has it that it will restrict the time limit from 28 weeks to 16!

Womens Voice groups should try and send a representative to the National Abortion Campaign Conference in Nottingham on Saturday 9 June. It will be at the Queens Walk Community Centre, Queens Walk, the Meadows, Nottingham, starting at 10am.

The second reading of the bill will be on 13 July. Watch out for news of activities.

•ON TUESDAY, Maggie announced she was abolishing the Price Commission. Competition—that's what's going to keep prices down.

On Wednesday the two biggest bread companies announced they were putting up the price of a large loaf by 2p. They admitted this was because of the abolition of the Price Commission.

On Friday, the gas and electricity councils announced they are putting up their prices by 8p in the pound.

and start work now to make sure support for NAC, for TUC policy and for better health facilities on the National Health Service continues. Margaret Renn.

On Saturday, BP, the petrol multinational said 5p extra on a gallon. So much for competition!

•DO YOU object to the money you have to fork out every month because you're a woman? If so you'll be annoyed to know that you're a part of a huge £14 million a year monopoly.

Tampax and Southalls, who between them have bagged this 'safe' market are being taken to the Monopolies Commission.

CHARGED WITH SELF DEFENCE

A TEACHER in Bradford has been charged with carrying an offensive weapon on an Anti Nazi League demonstration.

Sarah Dixon was first arrested on a charge of breach of the peace, but then the police found the knife. It was a small ornamental dagger, the type you can buy at Blackpool or Brighton which is really too small or blunt to do anything more than frighten off an attacker.

Sarah carried the knife because Bradford is not a safe place to be at night.

The 'Ripper' murders, all 16 of them, are just the tip of the iceberg. There have been numerous other sexual attacks. And all the police are able to do is to advise women not to go out on their own at night.

Sarah faces a serious charge for trying to protect herself when the police had failed to do so. She could go to prison. She could lose her job.

As far as we know Sarah's case is the first one of its kind to be taken through the British courts, on the issue of a woman's right self defence. If anyone has any information about any similar cases or is willing to do some work around the campaign please contact Trish Calvert, Womens Voice, c/o Textile Hall, Westgate, Bradford 1.

Altogether the police arrested 13 people that day, seven of them young Asians. They will all be up in court for the first time on 22 June. A picket has been called outside the court at 10am. A defence fund has also been set up. Any donations should be sent to Eccleshill 13 Defendants Fund, c/o Lumb Lane, Bradford 8, Trish Calvert

WOMENS DEMANDS DUMPED BY NALGO

ON FRIDAY 11 May 1979, NALGO arranged a special delegate conference to decide this year's pay claim. The union executive (all men) had proposed a pay claim for a 15 per cent increase but many branches wanted to fight for a flat rate increase like £15 or £20 across the board. This would have benefitted the low paid.

As one nursery nurse pointed out at the meeting, a 15 per cent pay claim means virtually nothing to the low paid, only £2 to £3, so only the higher paid chief officers will benefit from such a claim.

Most delegates accepted that this year's pay claim is not going to be achieved without strike action.

The only victory for the low



Photo: Report

ASTRID PROLL WINS AND LOSES

ASTRID Proll's marriage to the British plumber Robin Puttick was found to be legally valid when she took her case to the family division court last week. She won; and as a woman married to a British national, she is entitled to apply for registration as a British citizen.

But this is not how the press have seen it: 'Astrid Proll fails in her fight to be British' was the headline in the *Daily Mail*. The media's presentation of her case (as though she had lost) suits the Government very well. For what the judge said is an indication of the way the courts are

being used as a political weapon. Astrid's case was a water-tight one legally and the judge was forced to find her marriage valid; what he did was to refuse to *declare* it valid. A bizarre distinction and a purely political decision, because what worries the Government is how easy it is for someone to obtain British citizenship. The law was in Astrid's favour but the Government will have to change the law not just to stop so called "terrorists" becoming British citizens, but all immigrant women.

Miranda Chaytor

paid was the passing of an amendment calling for a £60 minimum and the removal of bars in the clerical and technical officers divisions.

But the union leadership opposed two amendments which were about women. The call for maternity leave to be included in the claim was defeated on the grounds that it would make the negotiations too long drawn out and complicated! It was actually opposed by Sheila Smith chairwoman of the National Equal Opportunities Committee who said 'the pay claim this year should be as uncluttered as possible ... if this is put in with pay then both will suffer - we have to barter.'

The other defeated amendment called for abolition of national typists scales and the integration of typists into the clerical grade at C2 without bars.

Women have got to start fighting in NALGO and keep on fighting.

If strike action is called for the low paid must come out - even for a percentage. Some money is better than none and it will show the government that women in NALGO are starting to organise.

Penny Collier

'A FEW BLOODY MEN'

ASIAN women have been on strike at the Lewdens factory in Leyton, East London, to try and stop the victimisation of their shop steward, John Buniak. John was sacked for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. He'd gone to help a fellow worker who had got molten metal in his clothing.

This sweatshop factory where average wages are £35 for a 40 hour week, was determined to stop any union organisation. They thought they could just kick John out and that would be the end of it. But seventy workers came out in support of John and the union.

The majority of the strikers were Asian women who had both to fight the management and their menfolk to stay on the picket lines. But they wanted a union and they wanted John back.

To the women's disgust a few of the men who had been on the picket with them, crossed the lines and went into work. They had allowed

themselves to be got at by the management with feeble promises and a puny wage increase.

Once they had some men working again the management were able to put the pressure on the women, and split their ranks.

The last woman to go back was Ruth, a disabled worker who wanted to stay out at all costs. She knew their chances of getting recognition had been greatly reduced by 'a few bloody men' who couldn't see that unionisation was the only way that they could win long term improvements in the factory and that in a few months it could easily be one of them who was thrown out and there would be no organisation to help them.

Jeannie Hilton

TEACHERS LOSE OUT

Well, it's happened. After putting in a claim for 36.5% and starting thousands of teachers off on a course of industrial action, the executives of the teachers unions are trying to make us settle for what amounts to 11%.

What will that mean to the majority of women stuck on the low teaching grades? The answer is very little.

We should reject this lousy offer and ask for more now: instead of hoping for jam tomorrow.

*9% increase on the scales and on the special schools allowance
* reference of the claim to the standing commission on comparability

* £6 per month on account for all teachers backdated to 1st April 1979

The award to be implemented in two equal parts in January 1980 and September 1980.

The teachers unions think that an investigation into comparability will somehow mean that without having to take any action at all, teachers will get huge pay rises.

We are unlikely to get much money through comparability studies - so why should we have to find out the hard way?

Teachers in their thousands have showed that they are prepared to take action to win a decent wage.

WHAT WE SHOULD DO

Get local associations to submit resolutions to the special salaries conference calling for a rejection of the current offer and for a campaign, including extended strike action, for a substantial flat rate increase.

* Get your school to implement one day no cover.

* Get people to go to the mass lobby of the Special Salaries Conference Central Hall, Westminster, on 16th June Saturday 10am.

* Ensure that your local association calls a meeting to consider its attitudes towards the settlement and that new delegates are elected for the salaries conference.

Chanie Rosenberg

THE RICH ALONE

PRIVATE medicine has done very well out of our crippled National Health Service. Not only do a great many ordinary hard up people scrape up the money to 'go private' rather than face long waiting lists, but staff too leave NHS hospitals for the better pay and conditions of private medicine.

The Wellington hospital, St Johns Wood, however, is the preserve of the rich alone. At a price of £130 a day for a single room, *excluding* treatment, few building workers are likely to cut the queues for piles or rheumatism and go there for treatment.

However, if it doesn't poach patients from the national health, it certainly does take staff. The owners of The Wellington want to build a 100 bed extension. This means more staff, most of whom will be nurses fed up with the baddy pay and worse working conditions of NHS hospitals.

Islington Community Health Council protested at a public inquiry that trained nurses should not be poached by the private sector.

But surely the only real way to stop this 'poaching' is to give nurses such good money and conditions that they won't want to go and work for the profiteers in the private sector.

HEALTH NOT CUTS

Fightback, the anti-cuts organisation, is calling a national conference, **Health — Not Cuts**, in London, on Saturday 30 June.

'It is with a sense of urgency that we issue this call to a conference. We shall be meeting in the aftermath of a general election and in the wake of several public sector union conferences. We meet when many who did battle during the 'winter of discontent' are still recovering from the wounds inflicted by the last Labour Government.

'The Conference is designed to provide a forum open to all organisations and individuals concerned with health in its widest sense. The Conference will discuss how and why the cuts are happening; how ill-health is caused in our society; and how we can develop a strategy of action to defeat the cuts, and fight for better health and democratic control of a health service based on *need*.'

'We ask you to: • Send a delegation to the Conference • Help organise a local meeting (Invite a speaker from Fightback) • Help sponsor the Conference with a donation • Order Fightback publications and affiliate to Fightback.'

For details see inside cover or write to: Fightback, 30 Camden Road, London NW1.

Every Womens Voice group who works round hospitals and any Womens Voice members who are hospital workers should try and attend this conference. This is a chance to discuss fighting the cuts which should not be missed.

DID YOU KNOW...

• Did you know that between the beginning of 1976 and the end of 1978, while men's unemployment rose 2 per cent, the number of unemployed women rose by 67 per cent?

• Did you know that until the fifteenth century, it was illegal in England for women to read the New Testament?

• Did you know that two fifths of all people over 60 live alone in flats? Women over the age of 65 are three times as likely to live alone as men of that age.

• Did you know that less than half the families in Britain have a car? (But one in every hundred has three or more cars!) Between 7 and 10 in the morning, 133,000 people travel on 2,700 buses in Central London. That's 49 people per bus. At the same time 176,000 people travel in 129,000 cars—that's 1.4 people per car.

• Did you know that 80% of all NHS abortions take place before 12 weeks, and less than 1 per cent of all abortions are later than 20 weeks?

• Did you know that there are flats in London being sold for over one million pounds!

EOC

• LADY Howe has resigned as deputy chairman of the Equal Opportunities Commission. She is, apparently, embarrassed taking Government money (£8,275 a year) when her husband is himself in the Government. He is the new Chancellor of the Exchequer.

She obviously forgot she was supposed to be working to promote women's equality. Women shouldn't have to give up their jobs in order to fit in with what their husbands are up to.

Perhaps the truth is that she isn't really interested in women's equality at all. If she was she could have continued, along with most of the other commissioners, in an unpaid capacity.

Or perhaps she thought she had better get out before her husband and the rest of the Tory cabinet took a knife to the Equal Opportunities Commission. That could have put her in an even more embarrassing position.



Photo: Ian McIntosh (IFL)

EGA STAYS NHS OK

MAGGIE Thatcher has fulfilled her pre-election promise to 'keep the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Womens Hospital open' as 'a special case'. But the conditions of her decision have terrifying new consequences for our already crippled National Health Service. The Tory Government allegedly propose to 'give' £2 million to the hospital, but say that money must be found FROM PUBLIC CHARITY FUNDING to help the cost of keeping the hospital!

The prettily-packaged time bomb also means: 1. Reduction by half in the hospital's facilities. It will no longer be a general women's hospital, but will be reduced to a 40 bed gynaecological unit, with related outpatient services, and an 18 bed day-care unit. 2. A big reduction in staffing as a consequence.

Swift on the heels of the Government announcement, the Camden and Islington Area Health Authority (who have ALWAYS wanted to close the hospital) voted to immediately close all the beds at the EGA Euston Road site, because they are not gynaecological wards and therefore not included in the Government's 'facelift' plans. They also proposed an immediate relocation of some staff.

At a mass meeting, the EGA staff voted not to co-operate with the movement of patients, or any discussion on alternative employment.

The 'Save the EGA Campaign', set up over three years ago when the hospital was first threatened with closure, immediately relaunched their emergency 24-hour picket duty rota to prevent the AHA from carrying out their threat to move patients.

They need support on the picket from anyone in London, and have produced leaflets which can be picked up from the hospital in Euston Road, NW1. There is also an emergency telephone tree so that in the event of the authorities attempting to close the hospital, the Campaign can organise a mass picket.

Womens Voice groups should support the proposed action of the EGA Campaign, by sending motions to the staff supporting their action and their stand against charity funding. London based groups should organise a picket duty rota. For details of the rota and further information, call in at the hospital, or phone the EGA Campaign on 485 4432, or Arthur Churchley, NUPE shop steward, EGA, 387 2501.

The dire consequences to the National Health Service is clear. As one Committee member of the EGA Campaign put it: 'The Government's message to the women who want to preserve these special services, and to all other hospitals fighting closure is that if you want them, you are going to have to pay for them—TWICE!' Gerry Norris

IRELAND: WHERE DEMOCRACY IS NO MORE

THE meeting our Womens Voice group had organised on Women in Ireland was very interesting. So interesting, that our local police turned up wanting to know all about it. When we asked why they had come they told us that they were following 'orders from above', and that we should have notified them of the meeting. They wanted to know the names and addresses of the Chairwoman and speakers.

The other things that they wanted to know were listed on a form they produced, headed 'Public Meetings'. Things like: how many attended, what the speakers said, what was discussed afterwards, any future meetings, etc. The information that was given them was nothing like what we really discussed. We were told that we had to let them know about our future

meetings.

On investigation into the incident, we found that the police had no right, in law, to come along and ask us the things they did. Although it is now quite normal for the police to do so.

The information that they gather is sent to Scotland Yard's A8 department, (that deal with public order and race relations). This sort of information will probably also be sent to the police national computer were it will be fed into the machines were they gather political information on individuals.

I got in touch with the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCl) and have now put in a formal complaint against the police. The NCCl intends to raise the matter with the new Home Secretary; not that this will stop the bleeders from doing it to others.

Peggy Eagle.



IF YOU don't know what is happening in Northern Ireland, you must have been watching British TV, listening to British radio and reading the British press.

This is the view of the newly formed Campaign for Free Speech on Ireland.

The British State is at war with Ireland and in war the first casualty is truth' as an American senator said. It was an American reporter who said on a BBC television programme on Ireland three years ago 'I am a great believer in the BBC. I think it is the best broadcasting system in the world. But I do have to say that when David Dimbleby has to point to a broadcast of how many years ago, two, three, or four? and you cannot point to another broadcast of that scope and meaning done about a problem that is tearing your society apart, I do think that something has happened in this country in the last five years. The politicisation, perhaps, of the BBC.'

That was said three years ago. The war still goes on. The British army of occupation is still in Ireland fighting one section of the Irish people with increasingly

sophisticated weapons. Torture is used against the people despite international condemnation and a terrifyingly complete computer documentation system exists, spying on almost a whole population.

The methods used in Northern Ireland are beginning to rear their heads in England, and point ominously in the direction of 1984. A police state where the 'enemy' is the whole people.

And still there is no adequate understanding of what is going on across the water. The campaign's new pamphlet lists a huge number of programmes suppressed and censored. News coverage on the box and in the papers amounts to little more than official army handouts and we seem to be less concerned about what 'our' army is doing a few miles across the water than the Americans were about what 'their' army was doing in Vietnam.

The pamphlet 'The British Media and Ireland', is well produced and well documented.

Get the pamphlet from: Information on Ireland, 1 North End Road, London W14. Single copies 50p (plus 15p p&p), 10 copies £3.40 plus 60p.

Liz Mackie

Stop the rot!

AT THE Womens Voice Steering Committee on 12 May the following resolution was passed.

'At the present time it is not clear if there is going to be an all-out political attack on women led by the Tory Government. What is clear is that the political shift to the right with the Tories in power will strengthen right wing groups such as Catholic Action in their ideas and campaigns. We can also expect a series of measures affecting education, hospitals, social security benefits and prices, ultimately abortion and restrictions in trade union organisation.

While there is no single issue round which we can focus Womens Voice organisation, the main task of Womens Voice should be to become active groups campaigning in the localities round any issue which affects working class women in the area.

Our main task is to build a national network of active geographical Womens Voice groups which can act as a pole of attraction, for fighting women in the areas.

Womens Voice members should be the most active in combating the effects of Tory policy on women and pushing the ideas of Womens Voice and socialism. Womens Voice should not be simply an anti-Tory organisation.

The Womens Voice magazine must give a lead in active campaigning in the areas and in developing the ideas of socialism and the socialist organisation of women.'

Now that the Tories are back in power, we will find out what it means to be 'ruled' by the party which represents the upper class. Their idea of the world is very different from ours. We know that if we are out of work, it is not because we are lazy—it's either because we can't get a job or because we can't get nursery places for our children.

Few women can actually afford the luxury of staying at home during their children's early life. We need work and nurseries and better pay for the work we do. The Tories will attack all of this. They will do it two ways—by closing down firms and throwing people on the dole, and by limiting the power of the unions.

But they will also run a campaign in the press against women -- women who see themselves as workers equal to men. Suddenly we will find creeping into newspapers and magazines ideas on the family which say that children and husbands suffer when women work.

We will see articles on education which say that girls are much more suited to doing needlework and cookery. There will be a push for more 'special' schools for the rich and 'gifted'. (Have you noticed how few 'gifted' children live on council estates?)

There will even be articles and television programmes which will 'prove scientifically' that women are different from men and more suited to different things, like cleaning the floors! And along with that our limited rights to contraception and abortion will be attacked.

Because the Tory Party is run by reactionaries and racists, black people will suffer especially black women. The Tories will tighten up immigration controls and change the Nationality Act. Thatcher has said that she will take away the right of Asian women to bring in their fiances and husbands. It means that unlike white women, Asian women will not have the right to decide who they want to live with.

Tightening immigration controls, coupled with the Thatcher plan to step up the power of the police and the courts will mean increasing police harassment* of the black community by the police, and will encourage violent racists to step up their attacks on black people.

Under the Tories as under Labour, we will have to fight against National Health cuts and closures.

We will have to fight harder to keep the little we have got. It is up to Womens Voice as a fighting socialist organisation to be there every time the Tories attack.

But we have to fight their ideas too. And they own the whole of the press we just have Womens Voice magazine and the bulletins which you give out in workplaces and on estates. It is up to each Womens Voice group to keep their eyes peeled so that wherever the Tory axe falls, we make sure we are there. Labour was bad, the Tories will be far, far worse.

But we need a much greater change than just a simple change in government. We need the kind of change which gets rid of the rich and powerful so that working people, women and men can build a society which cares for us all. Only we can do that.

•West Middlesex Womens Voice held what turned out to be a very successful meeting in Southall on Women and Racism. We wanted to bring together some of the black and white women who have been involved in the fight against the fascists, and discuss the best ways of fighting racism.

Mrs Desai from Grunwicks, and Margaret Renn from Womens Voice, were invited to speak, and then a very full and lively discussion took place, much of which came from the Asian women in the audience.

They recounted things that had happened to them at work, and problems like not being able to speak the language, the incorrect idea that Asian women are passive, the differing attitudes of young and older generations.

Mrs Desai's advice throughout was adamant: the need for courage in standing up for yourself and your sisters, the courage to fight for what you believe in, and the courage to fight for your rights.

•At the time of the NUPE strike, our Womens Voice group, Nottingham, held a meeting to discuss women and low pay. Several of the women who came were shop stewards and members of the NUPE social services branch. They asked us to come and speak as Womens Voice to their union branch.

We split our talk into two parts. First we explained what Womens Voice is, why you cannot have womens liberation without socialism and gave examples of issues and fights that we've supported. Then we discussed in detail why women are low paid; what the Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Pay Act have really meant, and why it is often difficult for women to participate in trade unions.

We ended by giving a list of possible discussion topics and kinds of action on womens issues.

The response and level of discussion was really high and it was great to be at a union meeting dominated by women.

Because so many women said during the discussion that they did not like going to meetings in pubs, proposals were put forward for changing the meeting place. Other suggestions included, providing a creche, and for shop stewards to hold brief discussions at their places of work, for women who can't come along in the evening.

We have decided to write to other trade union branches in the area, particularly those with a high female membership inviting ourselves to speak. And of course those of us who are in unions will try and get Womens Voice on the agenda of our own branch meetings.

•Beating sex discrimination can sometimes be long and hard work, but not if you work at Manchester GEC. Then it takes just a few hours to smash through a ten year ban on women being members of the works social club.

On May 2nd some women decided to publicise the fact that a resolution was yet again on the agenda of that night's Annual General Meeting which demanded that women workers from GEC be allowed entry to the works club on the same terms as ANY man. Granada TV showed an interview with us; the firm was leafleted—and Womens Voice supporters picketed the men going into the meeting. It was a rotten cold night. But in spite of invitations to go inside (on

male members signing) the women said they'd stick outside until they could cross the door in their own right. Then at 11.15 we were told they'd decided that women could be full members of the club, so in we walked, and although the bar was shut the women said 'We'll be back, that's a promise'.

•It's most depressing, sitting in your flat with a large pile of unsold Womens Voice, feeling too ill to do anything about them. I don't know if it's the Edinburgh climate—but we're thinking of producing a new badge—ravaged lungs against oppression!

But at least the enforced inaction gave us a chance to think about the organisation of the group. Once a group has begun to grow, it is impossible for one woman to cope with the collection and distribution of all the magazines, plus finance, meetings etc.

If it's left to two or three women to take the decisions, you miss out on everyone else's ideas, your group becomes stale and you end up having regular public meetings, just for the sake of it.

Last month, feeling decidedly knackered, I stood down as organiser. We had a meeting where we formed a committee of 11 members, each responsible for their own Womens Voice order (fifteen to fifty copies) for our workplaces and colleges, bookshops, pubs and street sales. A couple of Womens Voice members are also in charge of distributing copies to Socialist Workers Party members to sell—a minimum of three per member.

Smaller groups mean that people have to start their own special activities. For instance our work around the Low Pay Campaign attracted several more hospital workers. Under our new organisation, the eleven hospital workers now form a separate group linked to the town branch, to deal with issues that affect them in particular. Now they *have* to meet—if only to give out their separate Womens Voice order.

With each of us dealing with smaller orders, it'll be much easier to keep track of where the magazines go and to get the money in on time.

But its essential that the committee meets regularly to report and keep tabs on what's happening.

At our first committee meeting we went through our list of supporters and 'adopted' those who lived nearest. That way when

Around the groups

Around the groups is a regular spot for reports of your Womens Voice meetings and activities.

Please try and keep your reports brief and please try to send us photos, black and white print. If you haven't got anybody in your group who is a dab hand with a camera let us know about your activity and we'll try and send someone along.

women can't make every meeting we can make sure they get a magazine and keep in touch.

We also discussed who we could approach to take out £1 a month bankers order to Womens Voice—men included here. We have changed the format of the meetings—they are now part business, part discussion with an invited speaker twice a month. Plus special events.

For instance, we will flypost Edinburgh with our own poster about the play we are putting on—its the Glasgow Women Voice Housing play. We plan to leaflet housing estates, and council building workers.

The play will kick off an evening where we will discuss Tory policy on corporation housing.

I don't know if its these changes or the warmer weather—but we're back on our feet and feeling enthusiastic again! Penny Packham.



and tasting, a touch of this, a sprinkle of that. So why don't I indulge in this arousing of the senses more often? I cook like this once a month—if that. Cooking, like a lot of things in this society, has been channelled to suit the system, not to suit us.

For one thing, cooking is considered a woman's job. OK, we all know how once in a blue moon men put on their Habitat pinnies and with a great fuss and commotion produce, usually a curry or some other off dish, their speciality, leaving the kitchen covered in a layer of onion skins and carrot peel. We all know how apparently the best cooks in the world are male chefs, but of course this is like any sphere of life, men are allowed to pursue careers much more determinedly than women.

If you're in a rush morning, noon and night, of course you're going to cook convenience foods. If you've only got ten minutes in your dinner break to do the shopping, or you've got a couple of kids in tow, then it's a quick whizz round the nearest supermarket to get the food. No strolling round the market, or special trips to different shops.

There's no way you can spend an hour or two cooking a meal. And however much you enjoy cooking, no-one would want to devote that amount of time, two or three times a day, just to feed the family.

The fact is that everybody would probably enjoy cooking if we lived in a different society. If it wasn't considered women's daily work, **if we only cooked when we wanted to**, live. Routine cooking could be done on a big scale. Just like we have canteens at school and at work, we could have them on street corners, like pubs or fish and chip shops. Then cooking for its own sake could come into its own. People who wanted to cook a special meal for their friends or relatives could actually choose to do it, could plan and enjoy it.

Cooking at street canteens could provide lots more variety than we at home can, and doesn't have to be cheap as possible—the education authorities are always looking for ways to cut the quality here, the quantity there. I'm talking about staff who will be encouraged to produce food they're proud to serve to their neighbours, who will get their job satisfaction from working out varied and nutritious meals.

But we're talking about a whole different world. Not the world of today where giant food companies make millions from selling us junk food. Where women are second class citizens who are 'naturally better' at washing up, cooking and cleaning. Where 8% of the population own 90% of the wealth.

If we controlled the wealth we produce, obviously we'd spend it on things which

would benefit us: a good health service, better education, proper public transport, nurseries, leisure centres. How easily street canteens would fit into that sort of society. Only when the drudgery is removed can we as women develop ourselves, realise what our lives could hold. Socialism is treated by the press as a dirty word. They would have us believe that it's a grey world where everybody is the same. In fact, exactly the opposite is true.

At the moment we are all the same. The magazines tell us what we'll be wearing this year. We're tied by boring repetitive jobs and shortage of money with little opportunity to develop ourselves as individuals.

Mary Beaken

Quite simple—cooking would be much more pleasurable if I had the money to buy the delicious ingredients for the recipes—unfortunately I can't afford the steaks that cook in a few minutes—good quality food cooks just as quickly as convenience—if you've got the dough!—Chris typesetting

Cooking forward to socialism

Cooking for most women is a chore. And no wonder. When you've got to produce two or three meals a day, every day for the rest of your life, cooking is reduced to a necessary routine. As my son sits down to his fifth helping of fish fingers and beans this week, I ponder the alternative.

I enjoy cooking. I can sit happily reading recipe books, mulling over the ingredients, picturing and nearly tasting the end product. Cooking can be very therapeutic, a good way of relaxing, chopping and mixing, smelling



CHILDREN OF THE CYCLONE

Even in this special year of the child it seems that children in India cannot escape the fate that awaits them. Born in India, you start life at a disadvantage.

Any child born in 1979 should expect to have a decent home, enough to eat, the chance of an education, the prospect of a job, health care and happiness. Life should be something worth living.

But in India the first hurdle in every child's life is to survive. This year alone one in every ten children under the age of five will die.

Often the killers are illnesses like food poisoning, gastro enteritis, dysentery; all of them easily curable, given the right diet and fresh water.

Water is something we just turn on the tap and drink or use by the gallon. But not in India. Millions of people have no tap at all—water comes from wells and stand pipes—and that water is not always drinkable. In Bombay a million people have jaundice because the sewage pipes have cracked and leaked into the water supply.

At least there are sewage pipes there. Many towns have open drains, and hundreds of million of homes have no toilet: not so vital if you live in a village, but a devastating health hazard in the big, overcrowded cities.

When our children are ill we call in the doctor or take them to a clinic or hospital. In India there is no health service and although there are health centres and hospitals, many run by charities, for most people curing illness is a hit and miss business.

I visited a community hospital in Bangladesh. It began as a tent with a lot of willing helpers. Now it has grown, but the community principles it began with are still there. One of the doctors who run the hospital explained how the health of this rural community depends on the village women. They persuade the young girls to come to the hospital and train for a few months as health visitors. In order to work at all the first thing the girls are taught is how to ride a bicycle—boys learn this as children, but not the girls!

Once mobile they go from village to village helping women to learn simple health care. For instance, children die from gastro enteritis and dysentery because their little bodies dehydrate. By simple feeding them boiled water (boiled to purify it) with sugar (for energy) they can be kept alive. Water won't cure, but it will keep the body going until the body cures itself.

Children with physical disabilities suffer a worse fate. I watched a boy of about four, walking along, dragging his foot. He had been born with it turning inwards. It can happen to a child born in any country. In Britain, the ankle and foot would be operated on as soon as possible, set in plaster, and in no time the 'disability' would be cured.

The little boy I saw will probably have a deformed foot all his life. If dragging the soft skin causes an infection a likely 'cure' will be amputation. Everywhere in India there are

women, men and children with limbs missing—fingers, hands, arms, feet, legs.

Good health depends on getting enough to eat. I've read about war time food queues and soup kitchens, but it's a shock to wake up and see a free food queue outside your hotel window. It was in Calcutta. The queue stretched from the Salvation Army hostel to the end of the road. Three hundred women and children, everyone ragged, everyone with a tin of something to hold their portion of cooked rice.

They began to serve at eight in the morning, and went on until lunchtime. The queue never seemed to shorten. This was on a Sunday. I wondered what happened to those people for the rest of the week.

In the big towns you are much more aware of the hardship because you see it all the time. If you look up from your food in a cafe the chances are there will be two small faces peering at you through the doorway. Even if your meal did only cost 12p you feel like choking on it.

We went into a baker's shop one day, followed by four small children. They stood in the doorway, hoping. We bought doughnuts, and began to hand them across. A fight broke out over the first one—to portion it out. When they realised there was one each they just couldn't believe it. Of course, tourists are told not to give money to beggars, because it only encourages them. It's a convenient cover for the appalling meanness and racialism of most white people who visit India.

Free food is organised by Governments too. In Nepal I saw a woman walk along almost double under the weight of a sack carried on her back. The sack was printed with a message: 'A gift from the people of the United States of America. Not for sale'. Pity they couldn't carry it for her too.

From almost the day they can walk children learn to fend for themselves. For the poorest families an extra child means one more pair of hands with which to beg. For those that can find work, the meagre wages supplement the family income.

Children do all sorts of jobs. Stone breaking is something I associate with convicts from Charles Dickens day, but women and children alike work as stone breakers, along the roadside, sitting with the stone to be chipped clasped between their feet.

Everywhere there are children selling food to train or bus passengers, walking along the platforms with pots of hot sweet tea. People depend on making a living out of nothing—if you haven't got a job then you have to sell tea, or bananas, or peanuts, and you set yourself up wherever there is the faintest chance of a sale. If you have money, you need never go hungry in India. No matter where you go, someone will be selling you food there.

Nothing goes to waste either. It is the ecologist's dream. Everything is recycled, reworked, used again and again. Tin cans



'Nearly 750 people, mostly children, were rushed to hospital in Madras suffering from food poisoning after a feast in celebration of the International Year of the Child.'



come back as sieves, spoons, or meths lamps. Every scrap of paper is saved, and made up into bags or sorted for resale. Children wander round the streets in every town with a big sack collecting every scrap of rubbish they can find—from the gutters, out of dustbins and the rubbish dumps. The sack is sorted constantly, and slept on to prevent its theft.

If you have a picnic lunch at some tourist spot, a child will be waiting to rummage through your left-overs.

Even cow dung can't be wasted. There is a whole industry in cow pats: cow dung is collected, flattened in small rounds, dried on walls and then used as a fuel. It burns slowly, and somehow keeps flies away. Very useful if you are cooking food. Its an important source

of energy if you can imagine a country with an awful lot of cows!

One of the funniest sights I saw was a small boy who had found a pile of cow dung—you know what it's like, warm and rather runny. He had gathered it up and juggled it from hand to hand, until he couldn't hold it any more, and dropped it. He gathered it up again, with a little more dust, a little drier, and moved on juggling it from hand to hand again. He had nothing to carry it in. It was much too precious to waste.

Working in the fields, looking after cows or goats, looking after younger sisters or brothers, even if you are only four years old yourself, is what life is about for most Indian children. It's a question of survival.

The lucky ones go to school. But they're not allowed to forget that it was the British that introduced their education system. Even though it's hot and they are poor, the children who do get to school have to wear school uniforms. Coloured, pleated skirts and white shirts for the girls, often with a tie! Shorts and shirts for boys. The uniforms are handed down from year to year. The money would be better spent on books.

Children don't have toys to play with. There may be one toy shop in town, and the better off children, or children in nurseries, will get a chance to play with them. But that's not the majority. They make do with spinning tops, the sort you spin by pulling on a piece of string, or a stick and hoop, that they drive along the road, seeing how long they can keep it upright. Anything round does for the hoop. A small wheel is a real find. Remember those pictures of Victorian children doing just the same?

There's not a lot you or I can do about the

lives of these children. International Year of the Child may focus some attention on them. There are a lot of brave and dedicated women



and men who work for charities, running clinics, schools, nurseries. But all they can do is patch things up, with a very small patch.

In mid-May a cyclone hit the east coast of India. Hundreds of thousands of people will have been made homeless. The land on which their crops were growing will be swamped and useless. All their possessions will have been destroyed.

They will have no insurance policies to help recoup their loss, no post office saving account or money in the bank to start building.

They will have nothing.

Governments and charities will help, as they always do. But nothing will change. It could change very easily. In spite of the cyclones and monsoons, the abundance of water at certain times of the year, most of the time there is a water shortage. There aren't enough reservoirs to store the rain when it falls; water pumps to bring the water up from the wells are almost unheard of. They cost money, and need electric power. People use a cow with a pulley, or a bucket on a rope instead. It's slow.

If there was more water, better irrigation, there would be more crops, people could and would be better fed, and stronger. Rice could be harvested two or even three times a year in some areas. There would be more green vegetables. There would be enough to feed everyone.

Huge reservoirs, which could also be used to produce electric power, are needed. And doctors too. Most of the land in India is tilled by hand, seed is sown by hand, the

crops are harvested by hand.

All of these things could be supplied—if the resources were made available, and if a project for the whole country were centrally planned.

The money is not available because enormous sums of Indian Government money are used to pay back loans to foreign governments, like Britain. We are told our Government gives AID to India—in fact it is a loan, at a high rate of interest. India now pays back in interest almost the total amount that it borrows each year.

Nor is such a project centrally planned because in India, as in every other country, there are individual interests which have to be satisfied first: rich landowners who farm their land for a profit, not to feed the people who live on the land, politicians who make decisions according to political needs, not the needs of the people.

The Indian Government has just started building an underground through Calcutta. It runs from the airport to the golf course. You have to be rich to use either. It's not a priority; there are a million people living on the streets of Calcutta. It has been built for political reasons.

What India needs is socialism. Not the self-help ideas of Gandhi, whose answers to the problems that India faces was to encourage every home to have its own spinning wheel—self sufficiency on a small scale. But a planned economy, with money spent to solve the major problems the people face. Then the weather wouldn't ravage the country in the way it does. India wouldn't be just another on the list of 'underdeveloped countries' that we feel sorry about and do nothing to help.



Photo: M. J. Hardy / Crown The Children

We are told that our government gives AID to India—in fact it is a loan, at a high rate of interest. India now pays back in interest almost the total amount that it borrows each year.



by Margaret ...

is a MACHINE after your job?

41% of the workforce are women. Two out of five women do clerical work. There are three million women in typing jobs alone.

The employers plan to change this. They plan to decimate clerical jobs through the introduction of new technology.

Women are the most unorganised section of the workforce: ghettoised into badly paid jobs and rejected until recently by the trade union movement.

Employers think women are easy to get rid of. We will be—unless we start joining unions and find out how to stop machines taking over our jobs.

In a society controlled by us and geared to our interests new technology will prove to be one of the greatest liberators from the drudgery of work. In a system like ours, where the main purpose is to make profit, new technology gives the employers the

chance to exert greater control over the way we work, weaken our organisations, cut our jobs and get us to work harder.

The next few years will be crucial in the fight to keep our jobs and working conditions in the face of technological change. Already, 9,000 word processors have been installed in this country and yet there is a tremendous lack of information both about what word processors are and what their effects will be. Many women still believe that while they have their typing skills they will always be guaranteed a job. If the employers have their way that myth will be shattered.

The confusion about word processors is partly a result of the soft sell technique by management to get us to accept them without a fight. In some places it has been successful. Many women said yes to word processors in return for a pittance and with absolutely no safeguards. They believed that it would make their work more interesting, less routine and leave them more free time.

Material from the word processor manufacturers gives us a much better insight into the real reasons for their introduction: 'They give all that a good supervisor would know, but now electronically. You couldn't fail to get work on time.' Word processors don't get sick and don't need maternity leave as they don't have babies.

Facts

Bradford Council introduced nine word processors producing an annual saving of £59,000, increased productivity of 19% and the loss of 22 out of 44 jobs.

One word processor can do the work of 2½-5 typists and increase productivity by 100-400%.

Office jobs will fall by 250,000 by 1983. (A conservative estimate by the clerical union APEX).

The Halifax Building Society introduced 16 IBM Word Processors, the workload has almost trebled. Yet not a single extra person has been taken on. The typists at the Halifax are absolutely tied to their machines. Apart from the lunchbreak and two 15 minute breaks, they are not allowed to leave the machines.

(Facts from the forthcoming Womens Voice pamphlet on Word Processors and how they are going to affect us).

We need 1.2 million new jobs to reduce unemployment to one million by 1982. That's without taking new technology into account at all.



The introduction of word processors will seriously undermine the right of women to a job. Fleet Street Womens Voice believes that we have to start organising now and fighting for demands that put our interests first and not the bosses. The only way that we can guarantee that our interests are protected is if we have built up the strength to resist the employers' attacks. The building of Womens Voice groups in the workplace can play a vitally important role.

Only by strong local organisation can we commit the trade unions to a militant position on new technology. And, in the fight to safeguard our interests we hope to show in practice that ultimately the only way to make sure that we gain and not the bosses is to control not only the word processors but the whole system. To counter managements arguments we need to know the facts. There are three big lies associated with the introduction of word processors.

Lie No.1

No redundancies will result from the introduction of

word processors. The word processor threatens three out of five typists' jobs. Because of the high turnover in secretarial jobs management can often do away with jobs by natural wastage. It's cheaper and less trouble. The non-replacement of jobs is often coupled with a tremendous increase in the workload. The result: for the employers increased production and profit. For us, less jobs and more work.

Word processors will not only affect typists but also filing clerks, reprographics clerks, postal clerks. Ensure that everyone is involved in the discussion and decisions about the introduction of word processors.

FIGHT for no job loss, whether by natural wastage or voluntary redundancy. **FIGHT** for a shorter working week and for more holidays. (Six weeks holidays and 30 hour week: minimum for the signing of any new technology agreement). **FIGHT** for better maternity and sick provision.

Some people are forced to take alternative employment which is totally unsuitable in an attempt to force them out. No enforced redeployment.

Lie No.2

The health hazards from word processors

will be minimal or non-existent. Serious health hazards are connected with the use of VDU's (Visual Display Units). Severe discomfort of the eye including burning and grittiness coupled with a heavy dry sensation. Prolonged periods at a VDU produce tiredness, and dizziness. Other complaints include bad focus, double vision, headaches and muscular pains. The effects on people with visual defects is even worse, and the long term effects cannot be measured. There is also a real danger of radiation.

FIGHT for regular health and safety checks and eye examinations. **FIGHT** for no-one to sit for more than 40 minutes at a VDU without a 20 minute break. **FIGHT** that no-one should do more than four hours a day in front of a VDU.

No to VDU's unless there is the correct office design seating and lighting.

Lie No.3

The work will be more interesting and will be finished

faster. The opposite is the case. The de-skilling of the typists job means that she will no longer be able to control her pace of work, the machine will. The screen will prompt the typist what to do next and the little rest gaps will be gone. Inbuilt spying devices will monitor her workload. As Monotype states 'Costly and energy-wasting procedures are abolished: the walking, waiting, filing, correcting, updating and supervision, are replaced by a system that does what you want it to do... From a secretarial station all work is productive, and is done on the spot. No waiting, walking and wondering.'

In other words we shall be slaves to the machine. No more time for a cup of tea and a chat. The management will know exactly how much a typist can produce in a day and the pressure will be there to make sure we achieve it. Jobs will be restructured. The repetitive routine will be done on word processors by the mass of women at the bottom of the pay scales. The more varied, administrative jobs will go to the top executive secretaries.

NO to any word processor which include spying devices.



WOMENS VOICE DAY SCHOOL ON NEW TECHNOLOGY

organised by Fleet Street Womens Voice
June 30 Central London Poly, New Cavendish Street, W1 (Nearest tube Oxford Circus)

AGENDA

Introduction
How New Technology Affects All Women
Trade Unions and Why We Must Join Them
Health and Safety
What is Womens Voice
Where We Go From Here
Admission £1.50 unwaged 75p
Creche organised
All Women welcome
Send Registration Fee to Womens Voice, Box 82, London E2

OUT NOW!

Word Processors - The Job Killers
Facts and Figures on word processors and how to deal with them.
An informative, easy to read pamphlet that no office worker can do without.
Send 35p & 10p p&p to Word Processor Pamphlet, Womens Voice, Box 82, London, E2.





We're women, we're workers and we're fighters too!

NEARLY all the disputes that have taken place in the last few months have involved women: the social workers, the low paid, civil servants and the teachers.

There would have been no action at all in many areas without the fighting spirit of thousands of women.

During the Low Pay strike, women proved themselves much more militant than men because they would not use codes of practice dreamed up by male union officials to limit effective picketing.

The women cleaners in Hackney Town Hall actually went to picket a depot in Greenwich right on the other side of London because the men were crossing the picket line. (And the language they used would not have been recommended by any code of practice).

In Manchester hospitals, men, the 'traditional leaders', were far more cautious than the women when it came to spreading tactics like occupations or withdrawing emergency cover.

However much they may deny it, many men still feel that women 'only work for pin money', have 'less to lose' and are therefore difficult to organise.

Yet the recent wave of strikes turned hundreds of women into leaders - noted for their anger and determination to win by whatever means possible.

The biggest lesson of our strike was the need for communication and involvement. Without information apathy grows and rumour spreads, then people start fighting among themselves.

Because women at work are often ignored and therefore ignorant, we found that a small group of women producing regular bulletins and leaflets makes all the difference. And regular bulletins can be used long after a strike has finished.

There are other things that can be done to keep organisation strong amongst women. We have to make ourselves heard in the

with other women - and explain to male militants the problems faced by women.

But all that knowledge and experience must be shared - its no good leaving it up to one or two women. That's as bad as leaving it up to the men.

Now that Thatcher is in office, our problems will get worse. We're facing cuts, rising unemployment, rising prices.

There's no point thinking men will fight these things for us. We took on the responsibility of fighting for ourselves in the winter of '79. We need never look back!!

Anne Robertson.

**COME TO THIS CONFERENCE
DEFEND OUR UNIONS
RANK AND FILE TRADE UNION
CONFERENCE**

June 23rd, New Century Hall, Manchester. THIS conference will be attended by people from all different kinds of work; from the civil service, hospitals, schools and from private industry like engineering and other manufacturing industries.

Now the Tories are in, unemployment will rise even faster than it did under Labour.

New technology, word processors and VDU's, threaten to cut out thousands of clerical jobs—a direct threat to women.

In the public sector too, women are suffering the effects of the cuts. And as hospitals and nurseries are closed or run down—it is the woman who has to be the unpaid nurse and baby minder.

This conference gives women and men the chance to discuss how we are going to protect our jobs and our trade unions against the tories.

Write off for details to Defend Our Unions Conference, 265a Seven Sisters Road, London N4. If you want help and advice about how to raise it in your trade union branch or on your shop stewards committee, ring Womens Voice 01 986 6222.



Photo: Virginia Turbett

unions. We have to know when and where meetings are and have to make sure that there are regular report backs.

We have to have our own shop stewards. Those stewards can learn about trade union rights through going on courses and talking to other stewards.

That's where something like the Rank and File Conference on June 23rd is so important. Its a chance to share experiences

Most women experience some menstrual discomfort some time in their lives. More than half of us have painful periods. Despite this large proportion, few doctors offer a solution other than the standard 'grin and bear it', or 'take aspirin'. Period pains can vary from the painful to the excruciating, but in a world where women's problems are seen to be 'all in our heads', we are often unwilling to admit the extent of our suffering.

In many areas of the world periods are taboo. They are something to be ashamed of, or worse, something that makes us unclean and unfit to take part in religion or society.

While attitudes here seem more tolerant, in actual fact, most, if not all of us, feel uncomfortable about having periods.

We feel torn about our role as mothers because getting pregnant doesn't just mean having a lovely baby, it means being even more dependent on our husbands. It means quite a few months if not years when we leave work. And it means our bodies change from being 'attractive' to being fat and bulging. So for lots of reasons we feel anxiety and tension about our role as mothers and our ability to reproduce. We are certainly not taught to feel happy or proud of the physical functions of our body. Motherhood may sometimes be talked about in glowing terms but periods and pregnancy never are.

We have lots of feelings about the blood that leaves our bodies every month. We may be glad of it, because it means we're not

WOMENS HEALTH

Only women bleed

pregnant, but then we worry about the smell, the blood on our clothes, the sanitary towels showing. We have a real battle with our periods, resenting them for making us different from men, for the pain, for meaning we can get pregnant.

Instead of recognising that periods make us extra sensitive and aware just before they arrive, we see them as making us over sensitive. (After all, who wants to be extra sensitive to dirty dishes and factory machines?)

Instead of accepting that periods often actually heighten our sexuality, most of us are too embarrassed to ask our

lovers/husbands to make love with us at that time.

Nearly all doctors will admit that PMT is increased by tension. Dr. Dalton tells of cases of it disappearing a few months after a woman had won a lottery ticket. Other women have ceased suffering after some experience that cheered them up and stopped them worrying.

So if we know that PMT is worse with tension, we can also see that the more tense and worried we are about our bodies, the worse it will be. Of course we can't suddenly stop worrying, but if the world was a different one, we would find that PMT was not such a problem.

Imagine a society where girls are encouraged to feel proud when they get their period.

Imagine a world where you could get 100% safe contraception and you could have a baby whenever you wanted without worrying about it. What would you do? Can't you just feel that's the best of all worlds?

Useful books

Once a Month by Katherine Dalton (Fontana)

Female Cycles by Pauer Werdeger (The Women's Press)

Our Bodies Ourselves by Angela Phillips and Jill Rakusen (Penguin)

Of Woman Born by Adrienne Rich (Virago)

The facts and cures for premenstrual tension

Premenstrual tension (PMT) comes in two sorts: spasmodic dysmenorrhoea and congestive dysmenorrhoea. The first is most common between the ages of 15 and 25 and usually stops with pregnancy.

The second can occur any time from puberty onwards and usually increases with each pregnancy, lasting until the menopause. (See diagram). It is possible to have both at the same time.

Cures

First accept that premenstrual tension is making you tired, weepy and irritable. If in doubt chart your periods for three months including all those headaches and depressions.

Once you know when you get PMT start making allowances. If muddle headed, avoid taking decisions. If irritable warn the people close to you. Try and get lots of sleep and if possible an afternoon nap. Explain to husbands and children why you need rest during those times.

Blood Sugar Levels

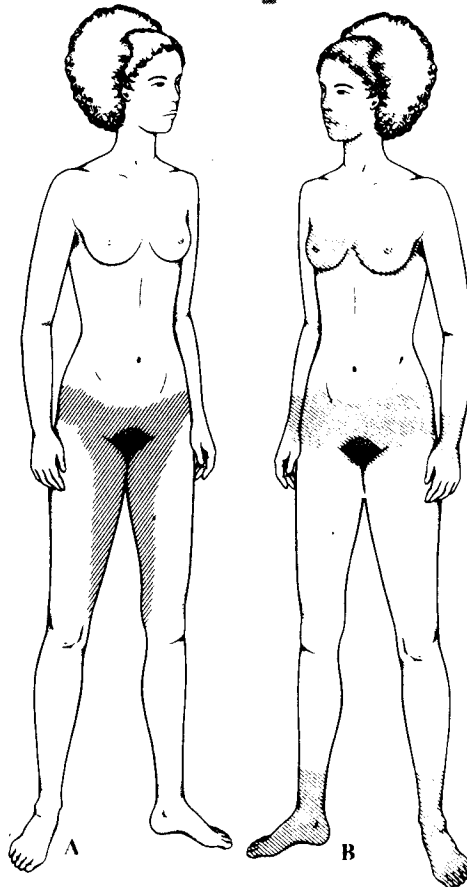
When these are low, we feel weak, tired and irritable. Never go without breakfast or lunch during PMT. Have a small snack with a cup of tea. Protein like fish, cheese or eggs is better but dearer. Tiredness and lethargy can be caused by loss of potassium. Bananas and tomatoes are rich in potassium and can help.

Water Retention

This causes breast pain and even headaches. Reduce salt intake (which absorbs water) during the ten days before a period. Take calcium tablets and limit fluid intake to four cups a day.

Vitamin B6

B6 can be prescribed by a doctor or self administered. Trials have given it a very



A Spasmodic Dysmenorrhoea: acute pain and cramps. Occasionally shakiness and nausea at start of period.

B Congestive Dysmenorrhoea: weariness and dull aching in abdomen, water retention, painful breasts, constipation, headaches, backaches, irritability, tension, depression and lethargy.

high success rate. In mild cases take 20 milligrammes (mg), in severe cases take 40mg. The course should start three days before the expected symptoms (use a period chart).

Herbal remedies

Herbs are the oldest known form of medicine. For pain use banana leaf and tamari (soy sauce). Lay's Mantle, catnip and mint teas (all anti-spasmodic). For water retention and pain use raspberry leaf, marjoram and thyme teas.

Body Work

Increased circulation and body fitness relieves pain for many women. For specific exercises see Erna Wright 'Periods without Pain' Alexander technique is helpful, also massage (Spare Rib 56).

Acupuncture and Homeopathy

These can be very effective indeed but cost money as you can't get them on the NHS unless your doctor is *extra* sympathetic.

Hormone Treatment

Dr. Dalton thinks that spasmodic dysmenorrhoea is caused by excessive progesterone, and congestive dysmenorrhoea by too much oestrogen. Many doctors prescribe the pill for PMT which often makes things worse, suppressing the body's natural production of progesterone.

Those who do get relief from the pill may well realise later that it has merely evened out the rise and fall of their cycles so that the low feeling is spread throughout the month. Insist on natural progesterone. Remember to go to the doctor if the pill does not work. Heavy bleeding and painful periods, are real ailments and should be treated seriously.

Tessa Wear

WOMEN OF WONDER



VICTORY IS OURS! STRIP THE SCALIN OF THEIR WEAPONS, AND--

NO, MYRIAD-- THERE ISN'T TIME! WE'VE GOT TO MOVE ON! THRAXIAN REINFORCEMENTS ARE PROBABLY ON THEIR WAY HERE RIGHT NOW!

of the population into strong and weak halves. No division into dominant and weak, passive and domineering. Everyone was respected and judged only as a human being. Such exploration of sex roles was truly revolutionary.

But it seemed that there were very few writers prepared to develop such ideas. They were there, but nobody had ever brought them to our attention. Until now that is.

Pamela Sargent, herself a sci-fi writer, has collected together three anthologies of sci-fi stories by women in which women play interesting or important roles. The first 'Women of Wonder' is available in Penguin paperback, the other two 'More Women of

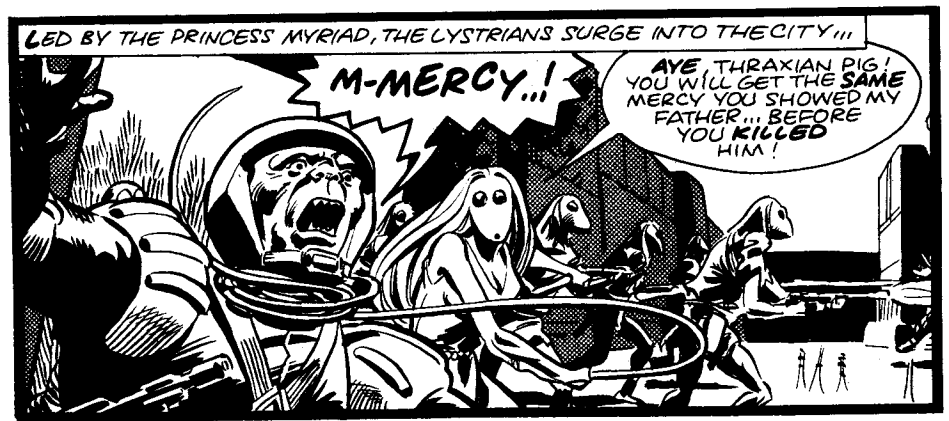
Wonder' and 'New Women of Wonder' are still only available in their American publication from Vintage books. You can buy these American editions at Bookmarks and at Sisterwrite bookshops. But if you are a sci-fi fan, or if you just like a good read, this is for you. It's a whole new world to think about. If you read the first, you're bound to buy the next.

Anna Paczuska

'Frankenstein' by Mary Shelley is available in Penguin in an anthology called 'Three Gothic Novels' and costs £1

'The Left Hand of Darkness' Ursula LeGuin 75p Granada

'Women of Wonder' is in Penguin at 90p



LED BY THE PRINCESS MYRIAD, THE LYSTRIANS SURGE INTO THE CITY!!!

M-MERCY...!

AYE THRAXIAN PIG! YOU WILL GET THE SAME MERCY YOU SHOWED MY FATHER... BEFORE YOU KILLED HIM!

If you ask anyone to tell you what they think the future will be like, few will give you a lecture on economics or politics. Most people will treat you to the story of their fantasies and their fears.

The first ever book to deal with fantasies and fears about the future was perhaps Mary Shelly's 'Frankenstein'. It was a story about the unknown and horrific possibilities that medicine and technology could bring to men. And it was men. Although it was a story written by a woman and one which presumably reflected the imagination of a woman, it was a story all about men. It was the first science fiction story and it set a trend in male oriented fantasy.

We perhaps expect in our society that men take all the dominant roles. But what is more worrying is that fantasy, which is one of the architects of future society, should also be male.

It was with great relief that I once discovered an essay written by Isaac Azimov in which he welcomed womens' liberation and looked to true equality between human beings. It was time sci-fi writers discovered that women could be more than elegant extensions of the control panels, diverting the space captains between inter galactic wars.

And then I read Ursula Le Guin whose fiction was a true change away from all that. Perhaps the most startling of her many excellent novels was 'The Left Hand of Darkness' in which she portrayed a society whose inhabitants were all of the same sex, except during 'kemmer' when they became one of two sexes. Their partner then became the opposite sex and they mate. It had amazing implications. There was no division

PRAXIS

by Fay Weldon

(Hodder & Stoughton, 1978, £4.95)

Praxis Duveen's life is full of pain: Praxis, her mother, sister, girlfriends, all suffer through their dealings with men. The story starts in the forties, when financial dependence on men and little control over reproduction were the order of the day for all but rich women.

Weldon's female characters are exploited as sexual objects. They rarely enjoy sex, but submit to it. The myth of love rules their lives. The women compromise and distort themselves to keep their relationships. They lose their identity; they become their partner's image of them; they are male-defined. And they are cheated on, degraded, abandoned, and driven mad.

Part of this process goes on 'down among the women' where 'we betray each other... we fight each other for possession of the male... we prefer the company of men to women... all in the pursuit of our self-esteem, and so as not to end up old and alone'.

Finally, Praxis gets involved in the emerging Women's Liberation Movement. She begins to understand her feelings and situation in political terms. But Praxis cannot shake off her belief—or superstition—in fate; that human beings can't fundamentally change their lives. It reminds me of the question, : Is Biology

Women's Destiny? Fay Weldon doesn't seem convinced that the answer is: ABSOLUTELY NOT!!!

Celia Shalom.

Out Now—

The New Technology

Counter Information Services reports on the economic and social implications of new technology, including a section on office work. Available from CIS, 9 Poland Street, London W1 Price 75p and 20p p&p

Beyond the Fragments

Feminism and the making of socialism by Sheila Rowbotham, Lynne Segal and Hilary Wainwright. A critique of the socialist movement, and the need for an autonomous feminist movement. £1 plus 25p p&p Available from 2a St Paul's Road, London N1.

Police Against Black People

Evidence submitted to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure by the Institute of Race Relations. 95p Available from Institute of Race Relations, 247 Pentonville Road, London N1.

PROS

In the last issue of Womens Voice we reviewed a film called Pros. Its real title is 'A Particular Kind of Job'. And it was made by Delyse Hawkins as well as Jackie Garstin.

WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY?

IF YOU WANT TO SAVE A RAPE, DON'T RESIST.

IF YOU DON'T RESIST, YOU MUST HAVE WANTED IT.

QUESTIONS

1. Is there any evidence to show that only certain kinds of women get raped?
2. What happens if you think a woman might be but not wanting to report the rape to the police?
3. How has the law on rape been changed recently, and why?
4. Do you think it's right to exclude rape victims 14 and under from the law on rape?
5. If you are made to have sex, would you feel a man's guilted for you?

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Are men and women all equally strong and healthy? How does this affect the law on rape?
2. What is the law on rape? How is it different from the law on sexual assault?
3. What is the law on rape? How is it different from the law on sexual assault?

PROJECTS

1. Find out how rape is dealt with in other countries. How does the law differ from that in the UK? Do you think men should be held responsible for rape if a woman's resistance is not enough?
2. Make a catalogue of all the different ways in which women are raped. How many are reported to the police? How many are not? How many are not reported to the police? How many are not reported to the police?

16 POLITICS

WINNING THE VOTE

THE CAT - MOUSE ACT

Imagine this scene: Police are violently breaking up a demonstration, tearing down banners and dragging people away to be arrested. Many end up in prison, where they continue their protest by going on hunger strike. The Government's answer to this is to allow the prison warders to feed the prisoners forcibly. That means holding them down by the arms and legs while tubes carrying liquid food are forced up their noses and down their throats, causing bleeding and vomiting.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the purpose of the Cat and Mouse Act?
2. How does the law on the Cat and Mouse Act differ from the law on the Cat and Mouse Act?

PROJECTS

1. Find out how the law on the Cat and Mouse Act is dealt with in other countries. How does the law differ from that in the UK? Do you think men should be held responsible for rape if a woman's resistance is not enough?
2. Make a catalogue of all the different ways in which women are raped. How many are reported to the police? How many are not? How many are not reported to the police? How many are not reported to the police?

11 VIOLENCE

BATTERED WOMEN

QUESTIONS

1. How often does it happen?
2. What is the purpose of the Battered Women Act?
3. How does the law on the Battered Women Act differ from the law on the Battered Women Act?

PROJECTS

1. Find out how the law on the Battered Women Act is dealt with in other countries. How does the law differ from that in the UK? Do you think men should be held responsible for rape if a woman's resistance is not enough?
2. Make a catalogue of all the different ways in which women are raped. How many are reported to the police? How many are not? How many are not reported to the police? How many are not reported to the police?

* Taking Liberties

A Teaching Pack for Boys and Girls on Equal Rights

Virago £2.95

From the teacher's point of view this pack is excellent. Teachers have to get to lessons on time, prepare lessons, calm down rioting kids and interest bored students. Teachers are often burdened with responsibilities which force them to be mental and physical acrobats. I can't go on carrying thirty books, fifteen folders, nine pens, my bag, the cup of tea I didn't have time to drink at break. So the pack is a really useful teaching material. The kids can select which card they want to use and the teacher can photocopy it. If your school doesn't have a photocopier you can do a class project in which each kid can choose a card and the class can do a project in pairs or each taking one topic.

There are eighteen cards covering all the important aspects of the subject. They are pitched so that they aren't heavily theoretical but unlike a lot of similar material they aren't patronisingly simple. They are provocative and tough.

My only criticism is that there isn't a list of addresses for the pupils or the students. There is one in the Teacher's Handbook, but teachers then have the power to conceal information from their classes. For example, the card headed 'Politics' quite clearly states the aims of the Women's Liberation Movement but doesn't tell the reader how to be in touch with any part of the movement. However, the pack is very welcome, very useful and based on a clear and sound political principle: As the writers say in the Teacher's Handbook:

'Equality between the sexes isn't as people sometimes think it is, about toppling men from their pedestal and replacing them with women—or about making women as much like men as possible. It's about individuals being able to live and work as they choose,

Women can't do heavy work — but men are built for it.

Oh no? Nurses lift heavy equipment! And haven't you ever seen a woman carrying a baby and two bags of shopping? You can't do that without strong muscles!

As for men, some are strong, some aren't.

Women don't mind boring work. Men need more interesting work.

What an insult! It's true that women do boring jobs, but it's more through lack of choice than anything else. Boring jobs are also often low-paid jobs, so if you kid yourself that women don't mind, you feel less guilty about paying them peanuts! Anyway, many jobs men do are boring too — they probably didn't have much of a choice either.

free from rigid definitions about what one sex can do and the other can't..... There is nothing about 'women's rights' that is irrelevant to, or will not affect, men too.'

Maybe if Virago do a reprint they could give students and pupils a list of places and organisations to contact.

Marilyn Maclean.

* Taking Liberties

I am seventeen and black. I am studying O levels at college. In our English lessons we did a Humanities Project on the relationships between the sexes. My teacher surprised us and gave us this new teaching pack. I found this much more interesting than books. The most important things were written on the cards. With books I'd have to look through the whole book to find one line of information. These cards don't ramble. I found them useful and understandable. They're funny too and that livens up the project. They are a bit biased against the male species.

The only fault with the pack is that although all the cards carry important information, the one on abortion has just two comic strips. I don't think this is enough. I wanted more information about where and how abortions are carried out, why and how some people get them on the NHS and others don't.

But given the choice of what to use in my project, this pack won hands down.

Cheyvonne Thomas

* Taking Liberties

I'm a student at FE college doing Business Studies. I've never really known about Women's Liberation. It's good to know what's going on in the world, and it's good to know about yourself being a woman. I was really interested in the pack and I read it right through, about marriage, women working, low pay, rape. I learned that a woman can fight for her rights. I learned about things I never learned in school, about contraception for example, and sex.

I was especially interested in the card on Rape. I never knew that the law says 'A man cannot be accused of raping his wife as long as they are still living together.' After reading this I wanted to know more. The pack raised my desire to know more about what it means to me to be a woman.

Sharon Robertson

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YOUR VOICE

Hounds off our wildlife

Dear Womens Voice

We note with interest that the Socialist Worker has urged brothers and sisters to support the Hunt Saboteurs Association. We hope that Womens Voice will also speak out against the sadistic practices of the capitalist classes and encourage our readers to do everything within their power to bring about an end to bloodsports.

We in the Hunt Saboteurs Association are often subjected to violent attacks by hunt supporters and indeed from the 'Masters' themselves.

Recently the master of the New Forest Foxhounds was fined £50 for a vicious attack on a young girl whom he lashed across the face with his whip. This is by no means an isolated case.

How long before someone's child gets ripped to pieces by a

pack of hounds running amok in their garden? Several domestic animals have already fallen victims and it is only a matter of time before a human will suffer a similar fate.

Don't take our word for it. Go and see for yourself the revolting cruelties that take place in the name of 'sport'. We should fight oppression and cruelty in all its forms, and the fact that this has been going on for centuries is all the more reason why it should be brought to an end.

Actions speak louder than words. Please write, enclosing SAE, to The Hunt Saboteurs Association, PO Box 19, Tunbridge, Kent, for more information.

Womens Voice, Bournemouth says Hounds off our Wildlife.

Lomond Handley
April Field

become a singer. Because of the system, he gets no state help and has to have lessons privately, and we have only my salary - I am a teacher - to live on, and pay the mortgage, which doesn't leave much change!

The point of all this is not to have thousands of your readers sending in donations or rude letters about how lucky we are to have a roof over our heads. Nor is it to get sisterly support for the still comparatively unacceptable idea in our society of the woman only going out to work - people still find it odd to see Stephen with an apron on, cooking the meal while I sit recuperating after the classroom.

It's about the children part. In my situation it would be irresponsible to have a child. I don't look on it as a big sacrifice, but from the facts and figures, if I gave up work for any reason at all we would be right up the spout. So we make sure that conception is unlikely if not impossible. Were we to be unlucky, I would look on it as *our* responsibility, not that of the foetus, the abortion clinics, or the NHS.

What it seems to me we need in our society is first, better education *everywhere* about contraception. Having an abortion when 100% contraception is available is about as medieval as not cleaning one's teeth and then marvelling at tooth decay.

Secondly, we need better adoption facilities. How many women are longing for children - any child - and are bogged down by the system again because of the bureaucracy of adoption. It seems that the more stigma there is about having children neither the parents nor the state wants - the quicker they must be aborted. Once this stigma is removed - and only pressure from womens groups can do this - then the degradation and danger of abortion will be lessened. If we could take the lead in making our society one in which people

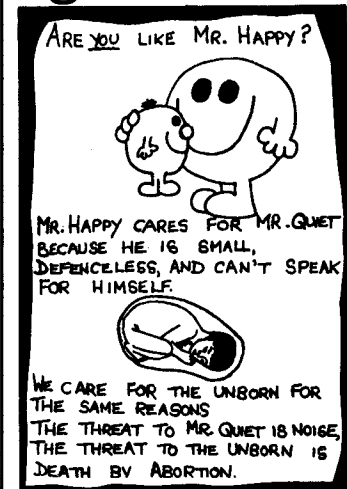
need not conceive, or if by accident (not carelessness or through ignorance) it happened, the unwanted children would find someone to want them.

In the times when peasants were most oppressed by the wealthy in this country there was less stigma of legitimacy, more freedom for the bastard whether high or low born. Nobody took the oppression of hunger out on the children they had to feed. Now it is the affluence of capitalism that makes an inconvenience of children instead of supporting those to whom children are a burden. Twenty five years ago my mother conceived me, and had to marry my father. That's how it was then and she suffered for it and so did I. But she felt at least she owed me the right to birth, and I know she hasn't regretted it.

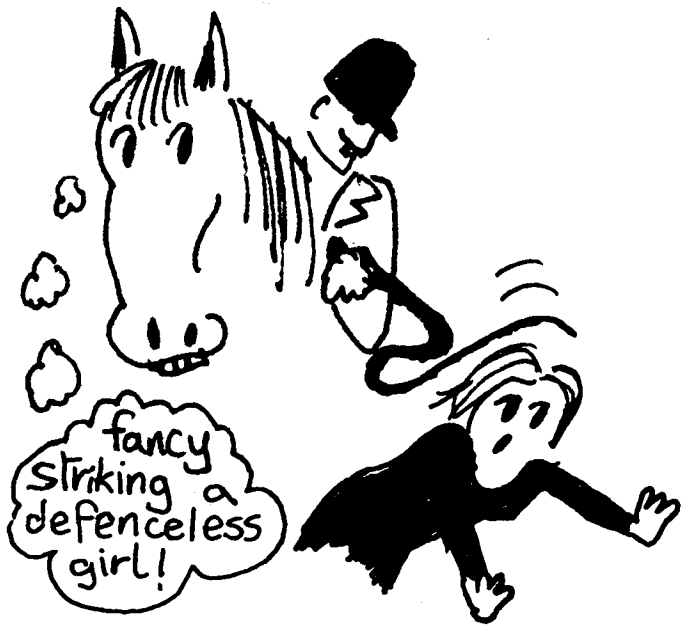
Surely in a truly socialist society *everyone* has a place and that is what we should be fighting for - not saying who has a right to be born and who hasn't.

C. J. Brice
East London.

Spuc's at it again



Dear Womens Voice I thought you might be interested to see this SPUC leaflet that came through the



Abortion

Dear Womens Voice

I've wanted to write to you for some time about abortion and the views of your contributors towards the subject.

Before you chuck this in the bin, I am not a member of SPUC, LIFE, or anything like that. I am, fortunately, happily married but don't let that put you off either. My husband gave up his job 3½ years ago to

door today. They seem to have some amazing arguments and a very emotive approach. It seems to be delivered through most of the Cardiff North and South East constituencies.

Teresa Goss

Ed: We've been thinking for a long time there ought to be some female alternative to the Mr. Men toys. This convinces us!

Correction please

Dear Womens Voice

Glancing through the April issue of *Womens Voice*, we were horrified to see that in the report of the Socialist Feminist Conference on page 22, the National Women's Liberation Conference in Birmingham was described as the last Socialist Feminist conference. We need hardly stress that this kind of error is extremely misleading and open to the worst kind of interpretation. We do hope you will print a correction. Socialist Feminism may be considered a part of the womens liberation movement but it is not the womens liberation movement and this misappropriation of our name and history in the service of socialism causes a great deal of rightful anger.

*Lynn Alderson
Mary Coghlin*

Black mail

Dear Womens Voice

I was talking to a friend about what I could do to fight for improved maternity benefits and leave for all women, and he gave me your pamphlet 'Blackmailed Back to Work'. Great!

In my work I come across many pregnant women who haven't enough national insurance contributions so cannot get maternity grant or allowances. I would like to fight for all pregnant women and mothers to get a better deal so please can you give me any details of campaigning on this?

I thought of writing to my MP with as many signatures as possible but this is a Conservative constituency and I haven't much faith in that. A friend is taking a resolution to the Labour Party Womens Conference in Felixtowe in June. What else can we do as we are rather new at this?

It's nice to meet you. Keep up the good work.

*Maureen Woodhill
Worcester*

ED. The most effective way to campaign is probably through

HELP!



Union caucus

Dear Womens Voice,

I am doing some research, using a questionnaire, into the existence of women's groups committees caucuses officers in trade unions: their formal or informal existence, effectiveness, problems encountered and so on, and need women, particularly at grass roots level in trade unions, to fill out the questionnaire. I am really anxious to hear from women in unions in the private sector, but would welcome hearing from any women trade unionists who could spare the time to fill it out.

I have had some classic responses from the General Secretaries or National Level Officers of many trade unions and am keen to compare their official 'line' from the top with the reality of women's experience and endeavours at the bottom or centre of union hierarchies!

But I have received absolutely nothing from the majority of trade unions since I had to send the questionnaires to the General Secretaries for them to distribute to lower levels of their union's hierarchy for completion. I imagine most of them went into the waste paper bin!

*Yours in sisterhood
Jayne Nelson
Polytechnic of Central London,
309 Regent Street, London
W1R 8AL*

your own workplace and union, but from your letter, we don't know what these are. Some such local campaigns have won good agreements from individual employers, for example the NALGO agreement with Camden Council, which not only covers maternity pay and rights, but also nursery provision after the baby is born.

As you say, a wider political campaign is needed to improve statutory rights for all women. Would any readers in the Worcester area be willing to get together with Maureen? Meanwhile, Maureen if you'd like to write in with more details, we might be able to put you in contact with women in the same job or union as you.



Gay facts please

Dear Womens Voice

We are two of the authors of the 'Law and Sexuality' recently published by Grass Roots Books, and we have been approached by a major publishing company to write a book about lesbians and gay men. We feel that a general, positively written book about being gay is sorely needed on the mass market so we have agreed to write it. We aim to cover: Realising that we are lesbian or gay. Coming out. Lesbian gay lifestyles, as well as looking into societies attitudes to all women and men, particularly lesbians and gay men with a view to how we can and are changing things.

To do this we want to draw

on as wide a variety of people's experience as possible and we are asking people interested in helping us, to answer a fairly comprehensive list of questions about themselves and their sexuality, their experiences and their views. Some of the replies along with some interviews will be used directly as quotes in the book, and all will be used to create a wider picture than our own experience could offer.

If you would like to help us in this way please write to us at: 109 Oxford Road, Manchester, M1 7DU. All answers will be treated as confidential but we will credit you if you want us to.

*Best wishes,
Janet Slade
Stephanie Green*



YOUR QUESTIONS

Is 30 really the deadline for having children?

I hear many women in their late twenties beginning to voice anxieties about whether or not they are going to have to make a decision apart from the pressures that may be exerted on us to have children by parents, friends, lovers, and husbands, there also seems to be pressure from the medical profession to have kids at the 'ideal' age, from 18-30. Let's examine what they say.

To begin with a woman pregnant for the first time at age thirty or over may well be referred to by the medical profession as being an 'elderly primavarda', not very flattering and inferring mystery and disapproval.

Then there are supposed disadvantages, that having a

child at 30 or 40 means that a woman will still have teenage children in her 40's or even 50's and she will not have the energy to keep pace with kids then. Or that the gap in ages could mean a lack of communication. But that is all very relative. I know some smashing 60 year olds and some extremely staid 25 year olds.

It is also said that at 30 plus a woman is more likely to experience a more difficult pregnancy, be more easily tired, have a greater chance of toxemia and high blood pressure and a longer labour. This is partly true: many people are nothing like as fit at 35 as they were at 20, but it need not be so. If women are more aware of their health and their bodies, have a good diet and are fit when they become pregnant then this can affect how good or bad pregnancy and labour are going to be.

Turning from the disadvantages to the more serious area of 'risks' that older mothers run, probably highest

on the list is the fear of having a child that is handicapped. There is an increased risk of Downs syndrome (Mongolism) but mainly for women over 40. Under 30 the chance is one in several thousand; over 40 it is one in 600. It is possible to test for this at about 16 weeks of pregnancy; and some hospitals offer this as a routine test to women over 40. A small amount of fluid is extracted from the womb (aminocentesis) and then grown in a culture. If chromosome abnormalities that indicate Downs syndrome are present the woman could be offered a termination rather than have a handicapped child.

Blood tests for spina bifida can be made quite early on, and any abnormalities can again be checked with aminocentesis. In many ways this pressure to have children at the ideal time is part of the same kind of

thinking that leads to induced births and the production line labour ward, which operate from 9-5, not for the women's convenience or wishes. The younger and healthier we are when we decide to have kids the easier the physical side of pregnancy and birth are likely to be. Whether this is the ideal time for our lives, our jobs and our relationships is another matter. Women now have a fertile period from early teens to mid-forties. Think of the well-known women who have had their children in their late thirties and early 40's, the Queen and Marie Stopes to name but two.

We have to fight for the right of real choice. Don't be pushed into having a child unless you want one, your reproductive organs have got life in 'em yet.

Jane Foster

ANSWERED



TAKE a look at any women's magazine, or any woman's page in any paper, and you'll find there's something missing. It may not strike you at first, and it didn't hit me until I started thinking about this column. But there's a definitely something missing. Sport.

Perhaps it's true that women aren't interested in sport. But somehow, I doubt it.

On TV the sporting year is dominated by football and women aren't supposed to like football. I doubt that too.

Women's sport isn't taken very seriously because they just aren't as good or as entertaining as men. I certainly doubt that!

Women and Match of the Day is an old joke but many women I know watch Match of the Day as eagerly as men, and many men I know can't stand it. But perhaps even more

women would watch it if it covered matches like the Womens Football Association Cup Final on May 6. It wasn't at Wembley. It wasn't watched by hundreds of thousands half crazed fans. But it was bloody good football and despite the fact that it got little or no national publicity, five hundred people turned up to watch it.

And they watched it seriously, it wasn't a big joke, come and see the little women make fools of themselves. Some of the comments from the men around me showed surprise at the standard of the play.

It seems a pity when two Cup Finals are played in two weeks that all the attention should go to one. The one that makes money.

Sport is more than just football. It is more than balls. There are of course some

women's sports that are taken seriously. Tennis for one. Athletics for another. And the focus in gymnastics is on the women rather than the men. But isn't that because it's dainty, delicate and dancelike? Those rigorous exercises on the asymmetric bars are much more than a question of wondrous balance and soaring beauty. They take real strength, incredible fitness.

It's time the balance was redressed. Sadly however, I think it's true that women who play sport are the exception. Those who make it do so against all the odds. I remember a girl at school who at the age of 13 was the best shot putter in the school. Two years later she had given it up. She refused to lift a shot, even though the best athletics club in the town had asked her to join, because she was afraid.

She was afraid that her femininity was threatened. She was afraid of the jibes and the jokes about turning into a man, taking up a man's game. She was afraid that if she put the shot she wouldn't get boyfriends, she wouldn't get married, she would be a freak. Women are discouraged

from sport. Kids are discouraged. A few schools now play women's football. Most don't. And until we see women participating, in the papers, on TV, it will always appear to be an unfeminine thing to do.

Someone once said that women are suited to child-rearing and housework because their posteriors (bums) are the right shape for sitting on.

Well women have got off their bums. They do play sport. They play football, rugby, cricket, tennis, athletics, hockey. Women are jockeys, swimmers, divers and they're not freaks or would-be-men.

So Womens Voice is going to be the first women's magazine to carry a sports column.

It's not all balls whichever way you look at it, so if you're interested in sport, if you have something to write, send it to: Sportsvoice, Womens Voice, PO Box 82, London, E2. Mary Ann Stuart



TALES I TELL MY SISTER

We want to print a story every month about our experiences as women. Please write your stories and send them in. If you don't like writing, get a friend to write it down for you. It can be about anything: your experiences as a wife, a trade unionist, a teenager—your political or sexual experiences, your pain, joy, jokes or anger. Send a photograph if you want to. Make your story not more than 700 words long, and send it to Tales We Tell Our Sisters, Melanie MacFadyean, Womens Voice, PO Box 82, London E2 9DS.

As a fat and spotty teenager, trying to create the right impression in a mini-skirt, I thought that a whistle meant I'd made it. Oh please whistle, please acknowledge my sexuality, my identity depends on you! I am the 'germ free adolescent', I have shaved my legs and my armpits and eaten only grapefruits and hard boiled eggs. You can see my legs, that means I'm available for a whistle, and I'm untouchable as I glide past, wafts of Odor-O-No exciting your fantasies... Oh the relief when I heard it, that primitive call, the wolf whistle.

Ten years later. It's raining, it's March, it's cold. It's ten to nine, I'm late for work, I'm in a hurry, I'm a woman. This means I'm not on my way to work, I'm walking along just for the hell of it, waiting for an appreciation committee. A man steps across my path. 'Cheer up love, it'll never happen, give us a smile!'

I grit my teeth. It's Monday morning, I'm in a bad mood, on my way to sell my labour when I have dreams of better days, a finer world. 'Piss off' I reply. 'Oh, it's like that is it? You bitch.' I am at this stage only annoyed, it's not an unusual experience. It's street custom after all. I hear this funny noise, sort of 'Whoough' followed by 'Get 'em off'. Two of them have joined number one. A momentary mock of pity flashes across his face. 'Come on love, I only asked you to smile'. I suggest that they ask one of the men in the street to smile at them. It seems I've offended their manhood. 'You dirty lesbian' says number one. 'You miserable cow'.

I'm almost in tears, rage you understand, not fear or sadness. I deliver a speech which goes something like this. 'I am on my way to work. I am going to be late. I am not in a good mood. I do not want to smile. If I had wanted to smile nothing would have stopped me. I do not, however, smile to order. Do you?' Significant pause. They are beginning to giggle. This fuels my fury. 'I suppose you think women need this kind of response, that it's what they want. Well, I've got news for you, they don't!'

I push past, swearing. Words fly after me. 'virgin, whore, lesbian, prude...' and then, the wolfwhistle. And for afters, laughter.

I like men. Feminism doesn't mean hating men. I like being appreciated, who doesn't? If a man in the street smiles, then maybe I'll smile. If I smile at a man in the street, will he

think I'm making a suggestion? If I want to smile I can't, if I don't want to I'm supposed to. What a waste.

I went out with a gang of teenagers and we wolfwhistled and the men in gear, all the dogmen, well, we needed them to smile and climb a wall, but they didn't. We made these weird noises starting and grinding. It was amazing, in the garden. A dog had fled in a state of confusion. I think the novelty had worn off. And that whistling makes your cheeks ache.

The whistle is a symptom of something, one of the ancient hunting cries of the male. Animals use such noises, stags howling in the rutting season. I don't want men to see me

and tell me to smile or take off my knickers. I'll smile and take off my knickers when I want to.

How do we challenge the whistle? History is against wolfwhistlers understanding what's wrong with it. They are truly incredible when you start to theorise about it.

And when I'm old and according to tradition no longer sexy, will I attempt to thank the love by saying 'I have been worth the whistle'. Maybe when I'm old we'll have had a sexual revolution and I won't be called a prude for refusing to smile.

Melanie MacFadyean



What is going on?

Events WV groups

Hackney Womens Voice public meeting

'Life with Mrs. T' Monday June 11th, 8.00pm Dalston Library, Dalston Lane, E8.
For details ring Chris on 806 8535 after six.

Harlow Womens Voice public meetings

Rape: talk and discussion with Alison Kirton Wednesday 13 June.

Play with Counteract Theatre Group, Wednesday 20 June. Meetings start at 8pm, at The Harlow Advice Centre, Town Centre, Harlow.

South West London Womens Voice Day School

Sunday 8 July, 10.30am to 5pm. The Balham Family Centre, 91 Bedford Hill, Balham, London SW12

Programme includes: The German Womens Movement. Film: Union Maids, Workshops on women in trade unions, violence and women, new technology, women and pornography. Final session: Womens Voice and the way forward for womens liberation. Registration fee: £1 including lunch. Registration forms and more information from Debbie Carrington, 9a Dalebury Road, London SW17, 01 767 2400. Creche facilities on request.

Womens Festival 79

June 8-17
Womens Arts Alliance
10 Cambridge Terrace Mews
London NW1
Still room for women groups wanting to take part or exhibit their work. 01-935 1841 after 2pm.

A Womens Poetry and Musical Evening

Poetry and songs which are feminist, female, truthful, witty, and imaginative
Wednesday 13 June, 8pm, at 21 Fairs Court Square, SW5 Tickets 75p, available at the door.

Women Against Racism and Fascism

National meeting for all women active in the struggle against racism and fascism. Saturday 9 June, 10am to 5pm. Notting Hill Methodist Church Hall, Lancaster Road, London, W11. Tea and coffee. For creche facilities write to N. London WARF c/o 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1.

Beryl The Peril will perform at Bath Place Community Centre Feamington Spa at 8pm
Entrance by ticket only from 'Other Branch'

Leeds: Women in Manual Trades National Conference.

Details from Tess McMahon, 16 Sholebrooke Avenue, Leeds 7.

Yorkshire-Humberside Regional Socialist Feminist Conference

Saturday 2.30 June 9.30am to 6pm. Swarthmore Centre, Leeds
More information from Leeds 629427 Creche arrangements from Leeds 789240

East London Gay Liberation Front welcomes women members.
Ring Richard 01 534 6263 or write c/o QMC Gaysoc, Mile End Road, E1 4NS.

Bread n' Roses, the typesetters, are urgently looking for another worker. We type half of Spare Rib and many left and feminist publications, and are at present in North London. Applicants should be touch typists and willing to work collectively. Flexible hours. Tel 485 4432.

Finchley and Barnet Womens Voice meets fortnightly, for information contact Anita 883 4968 or Glens 346 7627.

Fleet Street Womens Voice meets every other Wednesday at the Hoop and Grapes, Farringdon St, lunchtime from 1 to 2. Ring Maggie 822 37780 (work).

Glasgow Womens Voice. For information ring Claire 959 8041 or Dorte 423 1185.

Glossop, Derbyshire Womens Voice meets first and third Tuesdays of every month at 110 Victoria St, Glossop. Phone Glossop 61873 or Claire. Glossop 64735.

Hackney Womens Voice, phone Pauline (985 13086) or Chris (806 6198) for information and babysitters.

Halifax Womens Voice details from WV and SW sellers every Saturday 12.30 - 2.30, Co-op arcade on the Precinct.

Harlow Womens Voice meets fortnightly on Wednesday at 8pm. Ring Pat, Harlow 28022.

Highbury Womens Voice. For details ring Elana 439 3764 (days).

Hornsey Womens Voice meets fortnightly. Ring Jane 348 6712 or Maggie 341 1182 for information and babysitters.

Islington Womens Voice meets regularly. Phone Sandy at 802 6145 for details.

Kentish Town Womens Voice meets weekly. Ring Gail 485 0954 or Vera Di 267 5059 for information and details.

Lampeter Womens Voice meets Tuesday evenings. Details from WV sellers or write c/o SDUC Lampeter, Dyfed, Wales.

Lea Valley Womens Voice meets regularly. Phone Mary (802 9563) for information and babysitters.

Liverpool Womens Voice meets on alternate Tuesdays at 8pm in the County Hotel. For further information phone Alison at 727 4057 or 709 1844.

Manchester University Womens Voice meets each week at 5pm in the students union.

South Manchester Womens Voice Group meets every other week. For details phone Kate, 434 2343

SE Manchester meets at the Albert, Rusholme, 8pm, every other Wednesday.

Medway Womens Voice meets regularly. Telephone Helen, Medway 270 684, or Marge 251 362 for details

Newham Womens Voice meets Tuesdays and Thursdays fortnightly. Phone Wendy 790 2373. Babysitters available.

Newcastle Womens Voice meets second Tuesday of every month. Bridge Hotel, Newcastle at 8.00pm (Nr High Levelbridge). Telephone Newcastle 813877.

Nottingham Womens Voice Group meets 2nd and 4th Wednesdays in every month at 8pm, 118 Mansfield Road. For further information or babysitters ring Jane 866522 ext 219 or Gill on 666 800.

Norwich Womens Voice meets every other Tuesday, 8.30pm, Black Boys pub, Colegate. For information phone Norwich 59963.

Preston Womens Voice meets every other Tuesday at the Windsor Castle, Fgan St (near Meadow St) at 8pm. For more information phone Mary: Preston 55739 and for babysitters.

Reading Womens Voice meets regularly. For information phone Kathy on 660 800.

Stoke on Trent Womens Voice meets at Knotty Action, Mollart Street, Hanley. Next meeting: Monday 4 June and then fortnightly. Ring Sandra 814094

Shrewsbury Womens Voice meets the first Wednesday of every month. Other meetings too so phone 58830 for details.

Slough Womens Voice meets on the first Tuesday of every month at Slough library. Ring Mary. Slough 24093.

South London Womens Voice meets fortnightly on Tuesdays. Late Library, Brixton, Oval. All welcome.

S West London Womens Voice meets alternate Tuesdays, 91 Bedford Hill, Balham. All welcome. More info, babysitters contact Marion 673 1329.

Sheffield Womens Voice meets fortnightly, at the Prince of Wales pub, Division St at 7.30pm.

Stockport Womens Voice. For details phone 061 431 7564.

Stoke on Trent Womens Voice would anyone interested in organising with us in the Stoke on Trent area contact, Sandra 814094.

Tower Hamlets Womens Voice meets on alternate Mondays. Babysitters available phone Heather 739 6668.

Waltham Forest Womens Voice meets fortnightly on Tuesdays or Thursdays at 8pm. For details ring Jeannie (531 8340) or Pauline (521 4768).

Walsall Womens Voice meets regularly. Phone Fna at Walsall 644205 for details. Children welcome.

York Womens Voice meets every third Saturday in the month at the Royal Oak, Goodramgate. Full creche facilities. Food on sale - do drop in!



Your nearest WV group meets:

Where to buy books

Wedge Co-operative
13 High St., Coventry CU1 5RE.
(0203 25634)
Opening hours Mon-Fri 10-5.30
Sat 10-5

Wide selection of feminist books. Mail order for all left books (add 10% min 25p)
Sale or return bookstalls midlands area. cafe/exhibition space

The Other Bookshop
328 Upper St London N1 Tel: 01 226 0571
Open Mon-Fri 9.30 - 7
Sat 10.30-6

Large selection of feminist and socialist publications
Mail order service.

Other Branch Books
42 Bath Street, Leamington Spa
Warwickshire
0926 28467
Open Mon-Sat, 10am - 6pm
Full coverage of socialist and alternative books, with a very wide feminist range. Five minutes from the railway station.

First of May
45, Niddry Street, off High Street,
Edinburgh 1

Advertise your bookshop: 50p an entry.
Small ads 5p a word.
Rate card for display ads available on request to: Womens Voice, Box 82, London, E2.

031 556 6963
Open Mon-Sat, 11am-6pm
Now has largest selection of feminist books in Scotland.
Exhibition space in back

Full Marks Bookshop
110 Cheltenham Road, Bristol 6,
40491. Monday to Saturday 10
am to 6pm. Socialist and feminist
books, magazines and local
contacts.

Dillons Cambridge Bookshop
21a Silver Street, Cambridge.
0223 55589. 9.30-5pm. Monday
to Friday. Pamphlets, books and
magazines.

Bookmarx chain
Birmingham: Socialist and TU
Books, 224 Deritend High Street,
Birmingham 12. 10am to 6pm,
Monday to Saturday. **Hull:**
Socialist Books, 238 Springbank,
10am to 5.30pm, Monday to
Saturday. **Southampton:** October
Books, 4 Onslow Road. **London:**
Bookmarks, 265 Seven Sisters
Road, London, N4. 01-802 6145.
10am to 6pm, Monday to
Saturday.

Women and Work Hazards Group
9 Poland Street, London, W1. 01
437 2728 We can supply speakers
and are willing to answer your
enquiries on health and safety at
work.

Lesbian Line
is a phone service for women,
operated by women, and offers
help, advice and information.
Phone between 2pm and 10pm on
Monday and Friday; 7pm and
10pm on Tuesday, Wednesday,
Thursday on 01-836 8602.

bookmarx

FIRST QUARTER 1979

The **Bookmarx Club** is now an established method for socialists to get the best of new socialist books at a big discount—and delivered to your door.

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LIST A
WORKERS AGAINST THE GULAG, by Victor Hayes and Olga Semyonovna (£1.95)
Documents by Soviet workers that spell out in clear language the grim reality of life for the working class in Eastern Europe, and contain the seeds of their fight back.

THE CHANT OF JIMMY BLACKSMITH, by Thomas Keneally (85p)
A new edition of the story, now made into a film, of an Australian aborigine who tries to come to terms with white society at the turn of the century—and fails. His story exposes the ruthless exploitation of the aborigines by the British settlers.

THE NEW TECHNOLOGY, by Counter-Information Services (65p)

LIST B
LET ME SPEAK, by Domitila Barros de Chungara (£2.95)
The wife of Bolivian tin miner tells how she became involved in the struggles of the local community—some of the most militant workers in Bolivia

LIST E
FAREWELL COMPANIONS, by James Plunket (£1.50)
A novel by the author of the acclaimed Strumpet City, this one set in Ireland four years after the Easter Rising of 1916

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A Spanish-American woman, forced into a mental hospital by pressures from her family, escapes to a utopian future—and there finds strength to fight in the present. First British edition

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Poaching was one way in which the rural worker could get back at his boss

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Workers' memories, in their own words, of the Thirties in the North of England

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LENIN Vol 4: THE BOLSHEVIKS AND WORLD REVOLUTION, by Tony Cliff (£3.60)
NOTE: The first three volumes of Cliff's biography of Lenin may each be treated as an extra list and obtained by club members for an extra £2.50 each volume

I wish to join/rejoin the Bookmarx Club and enclose £4.50 (+ £2.50 for each extra list)

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A HUNDRED YEARS OF LABOUR IN THE USA by Daniel Guerin (£3.50)
A new, somewhat idiosyncratic, but comprehensive and very readable history of America's workers

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Please send list A + List(s)
Send to **BOOKMARX CLUB**, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London, N4.

Join Womens Voice...

WOMENS VOICE fights for womens rights. We want equal pay with the highest paid; maternity leave without restriction; the right to a job; nursery places for all children so that mothers can chose to work; and an end to discrimination in education, training, jobs and benefits; the right to abortion on demand. To fight for these changes is only a beginning. Womens Liberation means we have to free ourselves from the grip of the rich and powerful whose oppressive rules and ideas are fostered on us from our earliest years. This means we have to fight for socialism too, to free us from a society divided between those who have and those who have not. To fight we have to be organised: Womens Voice is a sister organisation of the Socialist Workers Party.

Fight with Womens Voice for Womens Liberation and Socialism.

join the fight!

Womens Voice Groups
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Dundee
Edinburgh
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Wales
Aberystwyth
Cardiff

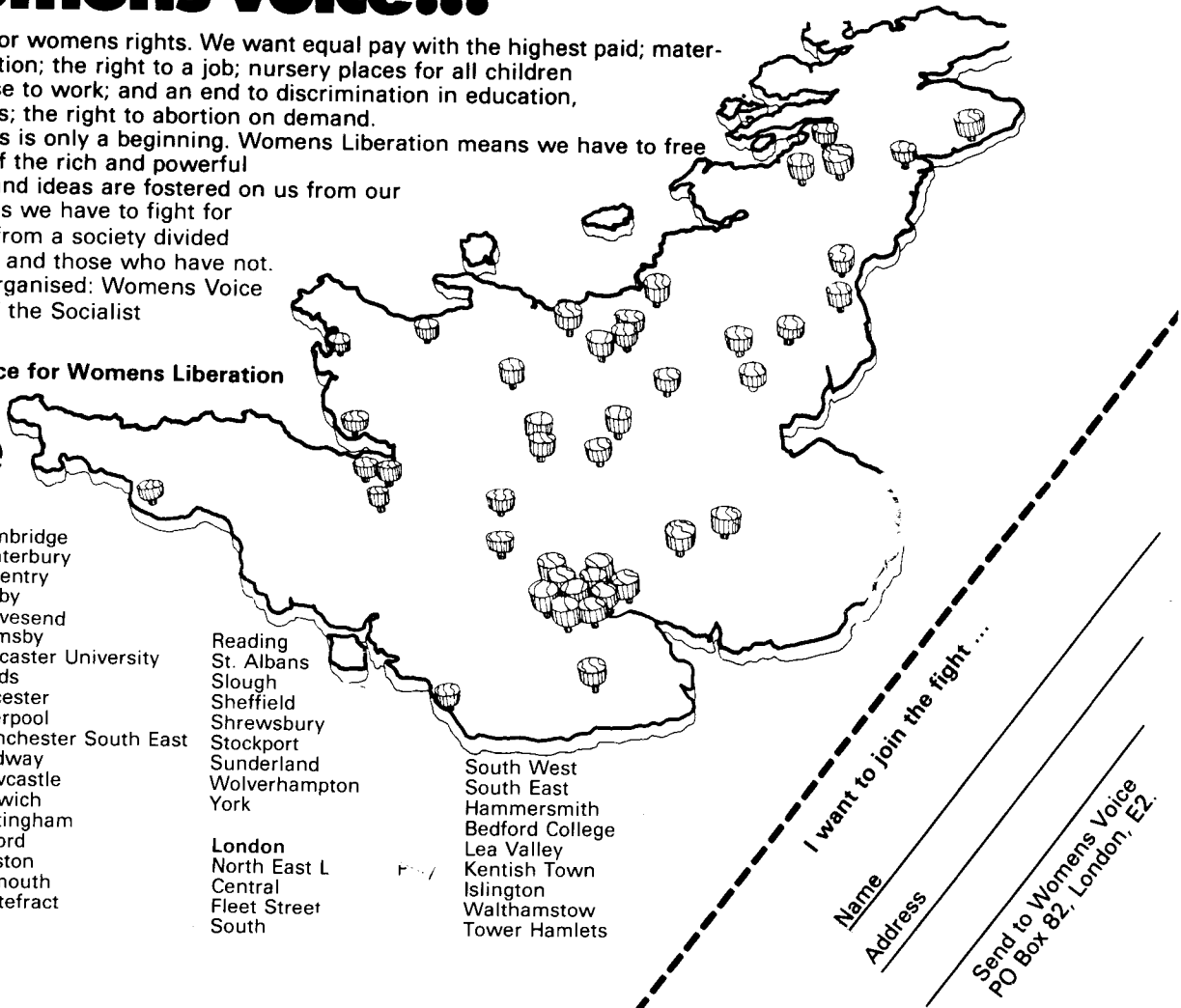
England
Bath
Birmingham
Bristol
Bristol University

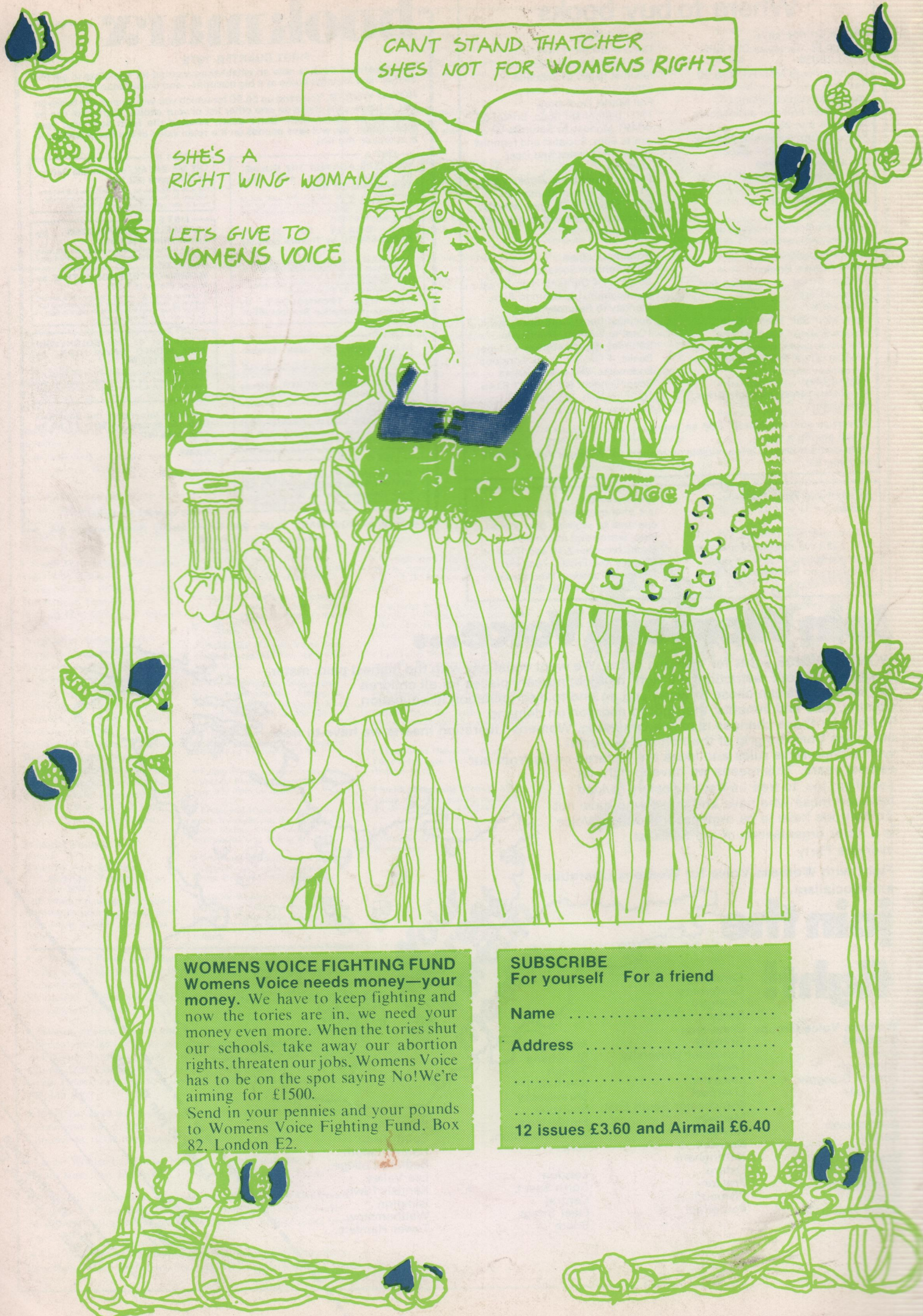
Cambridge
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Derby
Gravesend
Grimsby
Lancaster University
Leeds
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Manchester South East
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Norwich
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