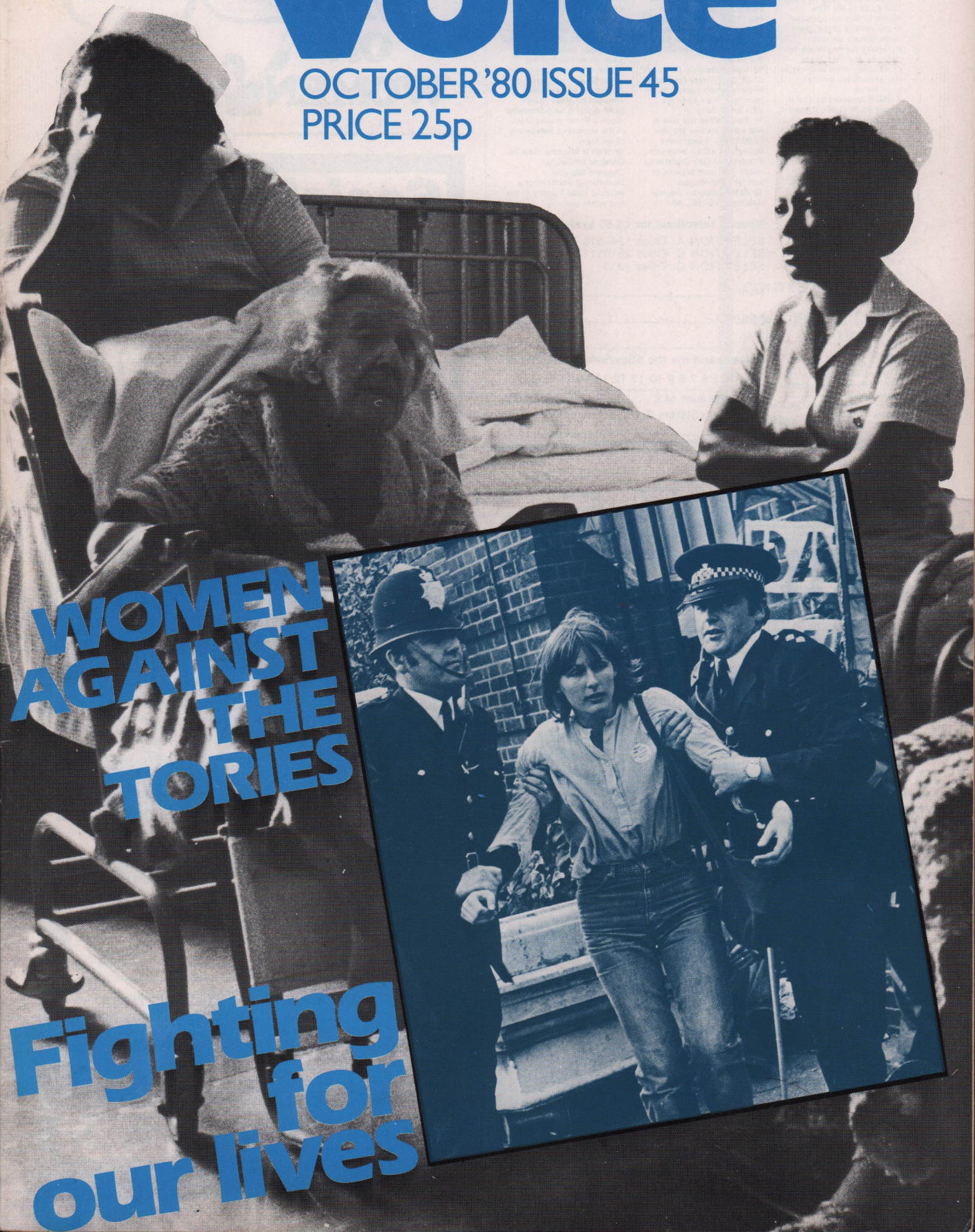


womens voice

OCTOBER '80 ISSUE 45

PRICE 25p



**WOMEN
AGAINST
THE
TORIES**



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for
our lives**

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fightback action sheet 5

THE CUTS A WAR ON WOMEN

"Quite frankly, I don't think mothers have the same right to go out to work as fathers. If the Lord had intended us to have equal rights to go out to work, he wouldn't have created man and woman."
PATRICK JENKIN, Social Services Secretary

When you've got male unemployment, how much better that women, who more naturally are like a community-based life, do this sort of thing looking after household old people for £15 per week!
SUSHANNA SKELLY, Director of Kent Social Services

COPIES OF THIS ACTION SHEET at £1.00 for 20 (plus 26p postage) or 5p for 10 plus 10p postage.
FIGHTBACK, 30 Cannon Rd, London NW1 045 8610.

Socialist Worker

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WOMEN AGAINST TORIES

THESE PIES ARE BLACKED!

THE strike for union recognition at King Henry's in Manchester has continued since 7 July and many of those on the picket line are women. Some of them spoke to Socialist Worker.

by PAT JONES

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK
OCTOBER 10 DEMONSTRATE!
OCTOBER 10 FIGHT THE TORIES!

WE don't work for pie money... Women—the invisible unemployed and a woman's place in her own home—the slogan which met 110 delegates on their first day of their Conference at Brighton last Monday.

Many delegates expressed a desire to see a women's party set up to fight the Tories. But it was the 110 delegates who were elected to the Women's Fightback Committee who will be the ones to do this. The Women's Fightback Committee will be the ones to do this. The Women's Fightback Committee will be the ones to do this.

AWING PLACE IN HER WINDOW

WOMEN'S ATTACK

OUR RIGHT TO SELF DEFENCE

OVER the last five years the torches Ripper's has bludgeoned women and tried to kill at least three others. He is one of the most brutal mass murderers in history, and he has given the press a field day.

By FRIS CALVERT and PAT JONES

THE first woman to be killed by the Ripper was Elizabeth Stride. She was a 47-year-old woman who was found dead in a ditch near St. Mark's Church in Whitechapel, London, on September 31, 1888.

Violence

As an employer in the process of being taken over by the Tories, the Women's Fightback Committee is being attacked by the Tories. The Women's Fightback Committee is being attacked by the Tories.

OUR RIGHT TO SELF DEFENCE

DEFEND OUR UNIONS Support King Henry's strikers' battle now available with collection sheets from 255 Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

SUPPORT KING HENRY'S STRIKERS

DEFEND OUR UNIONS Support King Henry's strikers' battle now available with collection sheets from 255 Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

NORTH WEST WOMENS VOICE ACTION AGAINST THE TORIES RALLY

Saturday 20 September 10am-5pm
The AUEW, The Crescent, Salford, Manchester
Buses from Victoria Bus Station—28 or 30; Piccadilly—64, 65, 66, 67, 68
All women welcome Entrance 50 pence

WOMENS VOICE September 80 Issue 41

12 Million Pounds for Fighting the Tories

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For up to date information about the antics of this vicious Tory government read **SOCIALIST WORKER!**

Send just £1 for eight issues to **Socialist Worker, Box 82, London E2**

OUR POINT OF VIEW

Is it our heritage?

IT'S A hard life for a woman at the top. Barbara Castle's diaries have revealed all the strains and tensions. The constant worry about your hair—imagine how Shirley Williams must have felt when she was warned that hers was letting the party down. Do you think Mrs Thatcher has sleepless nights worry-ing about her hair before she has to announce the latest leap in the unemployment figures?

Maybe this trivia is just sexist bilge. But it's true that the people at the top have strange priorities. Very important people were apparently speechless (almost) with shock when they learnt that a priceless manuscript was to be sold, possibly leaving some aristocratic mansion, to go overseas.

Shock and horror. "We'll raise the money to save the Leonardo for the nation. Even if it takes six million pounds.

"Because after all, its priceless. And its 'ours'."

But what is this 'national heritage' which belongs to the British nation and cannot be

allowed to go to America. Wasn't Leonardo an Italian? And what sort of heritage is kept locked up in stately homes?

The 'national heritage' is like the 'national interest'—a confidence trick designed to help us keep our heads high while our living standards are smashed.

The same voices are completely silent when a price is put on our health, our education and our jobs and hospitals, schools and factories are closed 'because we can't afford it'. Yet we can afford apparently, to bail out an earl who wants some ready cash, so that the Leonardo manuscript can go from his attic to the manuscript department of a museum where it will be accessible only to research scholars.

And remember, the Tories last time round wanted to make us pay to go into museums.

The people at the top have their priorities—their hair, the 'national heritage' or the interests of the bosses in making a profit. And those interests are pretty remote from ours.

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The next WV editorial meeting will be on Wednesday 29 October at 7.30pm. If you would like to come or if you would like a speaker at your WV group, please give us a ring. If you want to come to the WV Steering Committee contact us for the time and place of the next meeting.

Cover pictures Tessa Howland IFL

Back cover from a poster by See Red Collective.

St Bens bust open

FINALLY, AFTER 10 months in occupation, the Tories have closed St Benedicts, a geriatric hospital in South London.

The local Area Health Authority was faced with the determination of the workers in occupation and the non-cooperation of the South London Ambulance Service. It started using a scab ambulance firm and police protection to move out the patients.

As the first patients were moved on Tuesday September 9 the pickets were in tears. The following days saw the first fierce confrontation between pickets and police. Barricades which the pickets erected had to be pulled down, and the scab ambulances were met by bricks and stones. Pickets slashed their tyres. Three arrests were made.

Pickets were dragged out of the path of a fleet of ambulances — they were moving 12 patients every day. The police arrived the next Wednesday to find that someone had dumped a car in front of the gates. They also had the problem of a solid and determined picket line.

When the picket line was asked by Thames News why they were there one woman shouted 'because the Tories are dismantling the NHS in front of our noses'. The Chief Inspector asked the pickets to move. They didn't. The police then waded in and arrested 18 pickets.

Bertha, a pensioner, cried 'I never thought I'd live to see this'. When the scab ambulances arrived they were greeted by a barrage of eggs. Unfortunately the Chief Inspector was between an egg and an ambulance! A woman picket was arrested.

On the day when the last of the patients were moved, there were yet more scenes of police brutality. 400 Ancillary workers walked out at St Georges Hospital, also in South London, the same day. They picketed the van and lorry depot to ensure that no equipment was moved from St Benedicts until NUPE and COHSE got an assurance that no disciplinary action would be taken against employees who were arrested on the picket line. They won the agreement.
Julie Waterson.



Tessa Howland IFL

Not so Capital Radio

TECHNICIANS at Capital Radio in London have been on strike for three weeks over a pay claim. Journalists and DJs have refused to cross the picket line.

Management are finding it harder and harder to keep the station running.

The friendly image Capital like to put across to their listeners doesn't extend to their own staff. With £12 million profit last year they can easily afford to pay the strikers' claim.

The strikers have quickly learned that the left-wing opinions which the celebrities on the board on Capital Radio hold, don't go so far as respecting their picket lines.

Capital has built a reputation as a caring station with things like

'Capital Helpline', but it has done so at the expense of its employees wages. As one woman said 'those T-shirts are subsidised by our wages.'

The Capital building is on the corner of Warren St and Euston road, go and join the picket there if you can. If you can't support the strike by not using any of Capital's services-they're being run by scabs.

Ann Rogers

LONDON journalists marched through Fleet Street recently to demand a higher London weighting allowance to cover the extra cost of living in the capital.

They picketed the headquarters of the newspaper society which has offered them a measly £5. They are demanding £20.

It's a singing picket!

HAVE YOU ever walked down the street singing? Be warned, you could be arrested for it.

That's what Val Dunn of the Bakers Union executive found out at the last mass picket of King Henry's pie factory when she started singing union songs.

The workers there have been on strike since July for union recognition. They need a union to fight for improvement in the Victorian conditions.

The manager, Hollins, has consistently refused to implement an ACAS recommendation of three years ago to recognise the union. His sacking of 16 union members sparked off the strike. He had no trouble replacing the strikers as school leavers were sent to the factory on the £23.50 a week work experience scheme.

The Job Centre has since agreed not to send anyone to King Henry's—a little late in the day! The scabs are driven in by Hollins and his friends who zoom straight through the gates. The police don't allow the pickets anywhere near the vehicles going in or out, whether they stop or not.

They may not be enforcing the six picket rule but they are certainly trying to make the picket ineffective.

Many of the strikers are women and the police have particularly aggressive towards them. On the first mass picket six out of 11 arrests were women, including several young girls. Last Friday two more women pickets were arrested. One was accused of damage to the car which was done at least six weeks ago.

'The way we were treated by the police was disgusting' said Joan, accused of obstruction. 'We were thrown in the police van and whistled and jeered at by the police in it. They wouldn't tell us which police station they'd taken us to and refused us a phone call. When I was eventually allowed to go to the toilet I was taken by a man. Lyn wasn't allowed to go at all.'



Fishing Women Organise

WHILE THE headlines concentrated on stranded British tourists in August, the wives, mothers and daughters of fishermen in the Channel ports were organising to support the fishermen's action.

At the small port of Port-en-Bessin, 150 women and children marched on the Bureau of Maritime Affairs, held an official hostage in his office, and sent a telegram to the President of France.

They also marched on the town hall and persuaded the mayor (a woman doctor) to overlook rent arrears on their houses during the strike. They organised one small boat to fish at night and sold the fish on the quay to aid fishermen's families, and even took on hostile lorry-drivers in argument.

Most of those who took part were from the families of small fishermen who own their own boats and cannot afford the high price of diesel imposed by the French government. The wives normally help in the family business by unloading the fish and packing them in salt.

Until the recent strike, they said, demonstrations and protests just 'weren't done' in their small town. Now the women of Port-en-Bessin have shown that it can and should be done.

From 'F' Magazine Translated by Norah Carlin.

Joan and Lyn are pleading not guilty at Manchester Magistrates Court on October 13. There will be a picket in support of them outside in Crown Square. The 11 arrested earlier are coming up at the end of September and will be supported by a march and a picket. Meanwhile the strike goes on. Hollins has offered to take back half the strikers and until he agrees to take them all back they'll stay out.

As Sandra Burgher said at the Womens Voice Rally in Manchester. 'We're 100% solid. This strike won't be over until Hollins gives in completely.'

Next Mass Picket: October 3rd, 6am-6pm.

Ravenoak Road, Levenshume, Manchester.

Join the regular mass pickets every Tuesday and Friday - 6am onwards.

Send donations and messages of support to: BF&AWU, Room 4, 4 George House, 30 Dudley Road, Manchester 16.

Pat Jones.



Pensioners took to the streets on the eve of the TUC Conference in Brighton to protest against price rises.

THE 1980 Socialist-feminist Conference is about women's oppression and imperialism. Write c/o Shanti, 178 Oxford Rd, Manchester 13 for more

details, an excellent resource list of books & slides, and for printing/distribution of conference papers.

Was this the answer?

I WENT to the Beyond the Fragments conference at the end of August. I'm not sure what I expected. Deep inside I think I anticipated something really exciting and stimulating. After all, the book had made it very clear that confirmed Leninists, like myself are dull, boring, narrow-minded and totally male oriented.

By dinnertime, I was feeling so depressed I just wanted to go home. Perhaps because there was no party line, suggested one of the conference organisers. No, my deep sense of despondency cannot be dismissed so lightly or so neatly.

I felt the way I did, because I had just spent an hour and a half in a workshop discussing unemployment and alternative economic plans, with people who were not even sure we should be fighting for the Right to Work under capitalism. In the discussion there was no sense of how closures, redundancies and short time working are sapping the life blood of the working class movement.

I stayed to the end of the afternoon, somewhat cheered up by the sense of solidarity with the Polish workers and the collection for the Right to Work Campaign £39. But it was with a huge sigh of relief I climbed into my friend's car to drive back to Birmingham, back to the like of the Birmetals workers who had decided to fight for their dull, boring jobs.

People like us in the Socialist Workers Party may well be dull selling Socialist Worker and Womens Voice and we may be mindless writing and distributing leaflets urging workers to fight Thatcher, the Employment Bill and for the Right to Work, but at least we are alive and living in 1980.

Sheila McGregor.

UNION FIGHT AT TANDY

WORKERS AT Tandy's electrical warehouse in the Midlands have now been on strike for 17 weeks for union recognition.

The company is notorious locally for its poor wages (they pay school leavers as little as 63p an hour) and bad working conditions. The majority of workers are women.

Management have been determined to break the strike from the start. They are resorting to tactics such as spreading horse-manure over the place where the pickets stand. At a mass picket last week they drove through the picket lines at speed, with no worry about knocking anyone over. Some of the young kids employed by Tandy's are still working. Some have been sacked for just talking to the

pickets!

Birmingham Womens Voice have been picketing the Tandy shop in the city centre, every Saturday with great success. Half the potential customers have refused to enter the shop. These pickets are continuing every Saturday, so if you live in Birmingham get down there if you can. If you have a Tandy's shop in your area organise a picket outside it, preferably on Saturday when it's busiest.

The Transport and General Workers Union (which the strikers wish to join) is now supporting the lobby of the Tory party conference on October 10. So its hoped that there will be a big delegation of strikers on the coaches leaving from Birmingham.

Jenny Austin

UP AGAINST THE RULES

GLASWEGIAN KENNY is 25 and unemployed. His brother Gavin is 15. Their father is dead, and when their mother finally deserted Gavin last year, they took on the prejudices of

the local community, the DHSS, and the Housing Department to stay together.

Kenny: Mum abandoned Gavin five times last year. We tried to help her sort out her problems

but then she would disappear again. I was living away and you can't leave a 14 year old on his own with no money. The last time she left, in November last year, she took all the money, the Child Benefit book, and the documents for our Council house.

Gavin: We gave her name to the police as a missing person, but the social security wouldn't recognise me as being in need. We only had Kenny's unemployment benefit to live on, and the police used to come at all hours to check that we weren't hiding Mum.

They got a Temporary Supervision Order from the Children's Panel so that Kenny would be legally responsible for Gavin.

Gavin: This meant I didn't have to go into a Home. But the Panel kept asking who would do the cooking and cleaning.

The next problem was £300 rent arrears. So Kenny and Gavin took on the Housing Department and got the house in their names, even though Gavin was a minor!

Kenny and Gavin: We found that if we persevered, and refused to take 'no' for an answer, we could get the Council people to listen and find ways to do things within the rules. The neighbours still think it's funny to see us hoovering or hanging out the washing, but we've won our fight to stay together and we're very happy.

Sheila Arthur



A workshop at the conference

Laurie Sparham IFL

Don't cross your heart cross your fingers

THE LATEST venture in tampons, the deodorised variety made by Playtex, should include in its packaging the words 'Warning: this tampon can seriously damage your health'. In an article in the New Statesman (19 September), Elaine Davenport explains the dangers of the tampon.

Playtex's tampon is made entirely from synthetic materials, excluding the cotton drawstring. Doctors believe that synthetic fibre in tampons is responsible for weakening a woman's resistance to toxic shock syndrome (TSS). TSS is caused by a poison getting into the blood stream. It produces symptoms like vomiting, fever, diarrhoea and body rash. The victim quickly goes into shock, and the disease can be fatal.

The New Statesman article quotes the story of fifteen-year-old Diane Silva of Livermore, California, who was using Playtex's deodorant tampons when she became ill in August this year. Three days later she was dead as a result of TSS. The family's lawyer is filing a wrongful death case against Playtex; he is convinced that the tampon caused Diane Silva's death.

The bacteria which produces the poison can only cause TSS if it reaches the blood stream. The Playtex applicator, a plastic tube with six rounded teeth at the end, is capable of scraping the wall of the vagina and allowing bacteria to pass into the blood stream. Britain's market leader in tampons, Tampax, is made from a cotton and rayon mix with a cardboard applicator. Lil-lets are entirely cotton and have no applicator.

The biggest selling point of the Playtex tampon, the 'plus deodorant', is unnecessary and probably harmful. Playtex do include a warning on the package: 'Caution: Discontinue use if sensitivity or irritation occurs. Persistent or unusual odour of discharge may indicate the presence of a condition for which a doctor should be consulted.'

Playtex have already cornered six per cent of the British market. In France deodorant tampons are outselling trad-

itional ones. Playtex can market their tampons freely because of a loophole in the Cosmetic Products Regulations 1978, which describes cosmetics as being for 'external use'. A deodorant applied externally is a cosmetic, but a deodorised tampon is not. Similarly the IUD is not covered by law; like a tampon is is a 'mechanical appliance' not a cosmetic and not a drug.

The DHSS told the New Statesman that tampons have nothing to do with them as they do not fall in the bounds of the Medicines Act. Later they added 'we have, however, looked at this and see no cause for concern.'

BETTER NO LAW THAN A BAD ONE

IN PRACTICE abortions in Holland have been quite easily available. But the old law gives only doctors the decision and make it a criminal offence. Anti abortionists are organising to keep this old law and generally restrict abortion rights.

'We women demand' have been campaigning for years for abortion to be legalised as a normal medical operation. They want women to have the choice of free health service abortions. On September 27, Amsterdam will see a massive demonstration against the old law, with the slogan: 'Better no law than a bad one'.

LAST MONTH there were two pages missing from WV. We had to cut them out after we had printed on advice from our lawyers.

Unfortunately, although you got two pages less, it cost us a lot more. Every copy had to be cut by hand.

Any money you can send to help us pay off our bill please rush it in to WV, PO Box 82, London, E2.



Picket outside the Chilean embassy on 11 September, the anniversary of the military coup which overthrew the Popular Unity government in 1973. Since then thousands of workers have been killed, exiled or are missing.

'This marriage certificate is a death certificate'

WOMEN IN the Brazilian state of Mina Gerias, have set up a women's defence centre following the murder of two women by their husbands.

The first woman to be murdered was seen by her husband talking to her ex-fiancé in a shopping centre. He shot her at point blank range.

A couple of weeks later a second woman was shot dead by her husband because 'she wanted to have her freedom'. Rocha's murder motive is that Maria, his wife, wanted to wear clothes and watch television programmes he disapproved

of. She wanted to return to her studies and work.

The women of the defence centre expect the courts to accept the murdered women's husbands motive of jealousy. They predict an acquittal for the two men.

The placards the Brazilian women carried on their protest read 'the marriage certificate has become a death certificate'. A fear shared by countless women throughout the world who are caught up in the hell of 'domestic' violence.

Gail Cartmail

Answering back

Import controls won't protect jobs

AS THE recession deepens and every day brings more factory closures and longer dole queues, many people are arguing for import controls. They say that limiting imports will protect the jobs of British workers.

It is an argument that is very popular on the left, and stands at the centre of the Alternative Economic Strategy put forward by Tony Benn and many Labour and Communist Party members. It also appeals to growing numbers of businessmen, asking for selective controls to protect their own particular profits.

Womens Voice is opposed to the call for import controls. We don't believe that the way to solve the problems working people face in this country is by collaborating with our bosses. It's the employers who are closing factories — not foreign workers. Factories are being closed because employers can make bigger profits by closing them than by keeping them open — and as long as production is organised for profit not need, then unemployment, idle factories, and poverty will continue.

It is not workers in other countries we should be fighting — exporting unemployment to them. Working people in all countries have to support each other in the real battle: against the employers and the crazy system they operate.

In any event import controls won't protect jobs. History shows that if one Government imposes import controls, others, whose exports have been hit, quickly retaliate with controls of their own. World trade as a whole declines, and the economic crisis gets worse. This is what happened in the 1930s.

Production today is highly integrated internationally. No industrialised country can survive without a high level of both imports and exports. For example, Britain exports four times as many manufactured goods to the Third World as it imports.

Cutting imports would not only mean loss of jobs in exporting industries, it would also mean great hardship for working class families. If you can't buy cheap foreign goods you *have* to buy expensive British produced goods. In other words, the cost of living would rise sharply. And without competition from abroad, British manufacturers could overcharge even more. With prices going up and people able to afford to buy less, there would be a further twist to the rising spiral of unemployment.

Import controls will not stop employers cutting jobs through rationalisation and new technology. If anything it will encourage them. Import controls might protect profits — they won't protect jobs.

In such a severe crisis, people are desperately looking for solutions. Foreign imports are an easy scapegoat — nationalism is an easy emotion to arouse. But the world crisis cannot be solved by tinkering with regulations. Only a total upheaval, and the active involvement of all working class people can bring a solution and a new way. Import controls are a red herring.

COLLECT HEINZ LABELS
AND HELP YOUR
SCHOOL GET
THE THINGS
IT NEEDS.

Kevin Keegan

SEE THE HEINZ LABELS FOR FULL DETAILS



Cutz meanz

HEINZ Food Products have just launched something called the Heinz Schools Foundation. The object, they say, is to help cuts-hit schools to get the facilities they need for their kids.

Such schemes are not new to Heinz. They have already run two similar promotions which raised enough money to build two childrens' homes. Now they are going to 'give away' £1 million worth of recreation equipment (see pictures).

Peter Watts, of Heinz press department, was anxious to give us information about the scheme. 'In-depth market research' he says, 'has shown that the idea is very acceptable to teachers and children. We have only had a dozen calls against the idea, and over seven thousand schools have already registered to take part.'

Mr Watts admitted that £1m of Heinz advertising budget had been spent on the promotion, but felt it would be misleading to say what proportion of their total budget this was. We asked if he thought that the scheme filled the gap in facilities left by the Government's cuts in education?

'Well, yes' he said, 'but I must stress that this is not *in any sense* educational equipment we are providing. That is the responsibility of the Government. What we are giving is recreational equipment which the schools would not otherwise have the opportunity to get.'

So what of Kevin Keegan, footballer, hero of thousands of schoolkids? Says Peter Watts:

'He is a friendly and open young man who is very particular about what he puts his name to. Of course he has a commercial interest no, I can't tell you how much his fee is for this.'

Nothing comes for nothing, so who is paying for all this 'free' equipment?

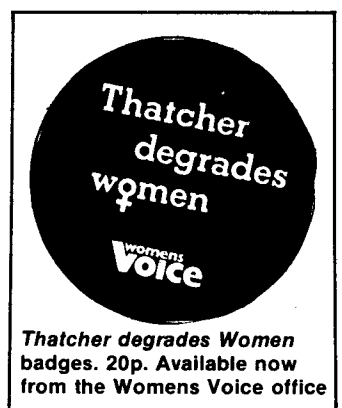
From the catalogue Heinz have mailed to 22,000 schools, you will see that to get a cricket ball for your school, all you do is send in 400 product labels. That's £100 worth of baked beans. A 15-seater Ford minibus (retail price £6,000) will cost you 1,300,000 labels—or £260,000 worth of beans. Parents and teachers will do all the work of collecting the labels and sending them in—for free.



Heinz products cost, on average, about 3p to 7p more than 'own brands'.

Sorry, Mr Watts—we know how many beanz make five.

SUSAN PEARCE



Lobby Thatcher for right to work

MORE than 200 unemployed left Port Talbot last week to march to Brighton to show the Tory Conference what they think of their job-cutting antics.

They have been sponsored by trade union branches all over the country and will be a clear sign to this government that we're going to fight to keep our jobs, and fight for jobs for the unemployed.

The march will be met by local delegations from workplaces, and local trade unionists along the route. If the march passes through your town, and you are unemployed you can join it, for a day or all the way to Brighton.

Contact Right to Work Centre, 265a Seven Sisters Road, London, N4. Ring 01-986 5491

If you are working raise support in your union branch. Ask them to give an official donation and raise a workplace collection.

ON OCTOBER 10 the Right to Work marchers will be joined by thousands of trade unionists from all

over the country to lobby the Tory Party conference. The lobby is gaining support very quickly. The executive of the Transport and General Workers Union are now backing it. It will be even larger than we thought, and give the Tories an even bigger shock than we had already planned.

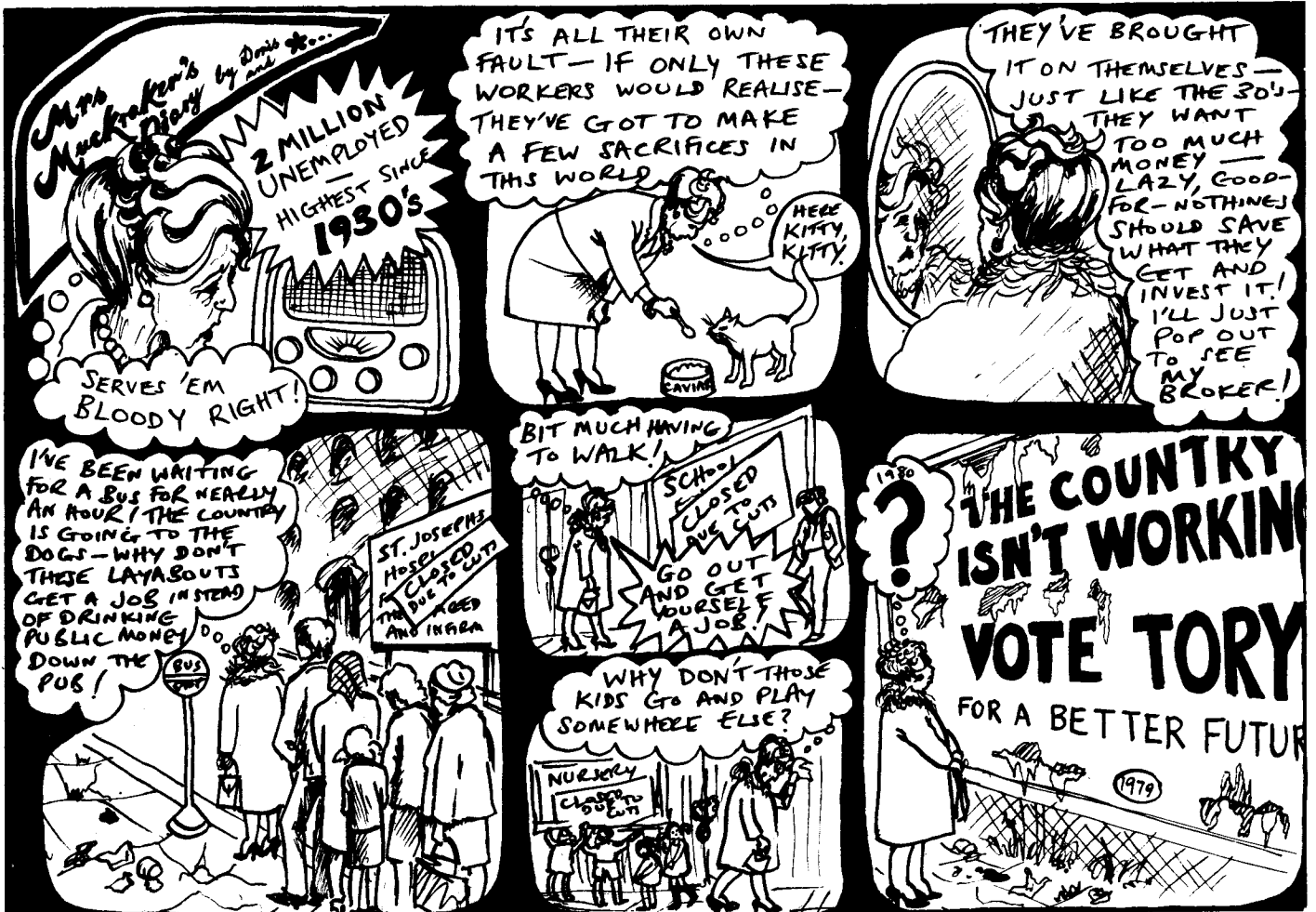
Transport is leaving from most areas, so make sure you have argued for a delegation from your workplace, and let all your regular Womens Voice readers know. We've got to show the Tories that we won't give up our jobs and our welfare services without a fight.

Book your tickets now to travel to Brighton on October 10th on the special train booked by the Right to Work Campaign. Leaves London Victoria Station 10am: £3 return. Tickets from RTWC, 265a Seven Sisters Road, London, N4.



Laure Sparham iFL

- Liverpool:** 11.30pm Pierhead (9 October)
- Hemel Hempstead:** 9am Hemel Hempstead Bus Station
- Reading:** 9am Railway Station.
- Norwich:** 7am Theatre Royal
- Paisley:** 10pm (9 October) Orchard Street
- Greenock:** 9pm (9 October) Kirk Street
- Oxford:** 8.45am Broad Street, 9am Transport House Cowley Road.
- Cardiff:** 6.30am Central Station
- Birmingham:** 8am Hall of Memory
- Sheffield:** 11pm (9 October) Harmour Lane
- Glasgow:** Ring 041 423 3596
- Edinburgh:** 11pm (9 October) Edinburgh Trades Club
- Manchester:** Ring 061 273 1162 for details
- Newcastle:** 10.30pm (9 October) Newcastle Central Station.
- Leeds:** 12 midnight (9 October) Leeds University
- Derby:** 7am Council Hall
- Nottingham:** 7am Market Place
- Wolverhampton:** 7.30am Faulkland Coach Park
- Dudley:** 7.45 Midland Red Bus Station
- Portsmouth:** 9.15 St Paul's Road, Southsea.
- Northampton:** 8am Bottom of Guildhall Road
- Lowestoft:** 6am, Royal Plain, Lowestoft Seafront
- Southampton:** 9.45am Cenotaph
- York:** For details ring York 760688
- East London:** 9.45am West Ham Manor Road Flats; 10am Stratford Theatre Royal



Full Marx

THE SERIES of meetings 'Women in History', being held by Highbury and Central London Womens Voice jointly, got off to a very successful start last week. Lindsey German spoke on the life and political work of Eleanor Marx.

The women featured in the series were chosen because they have all been political activists and organisers. We hoped that learning something of these women's struggles would be of practical help to women organising today.

Future meetings will include well

known figures such as Inessa Armand—the director of Zhenodetl, the Bolshevik women's department, set up in 1919, and Clara Zetkin, the leader of the German women's fight for emancipation at the time of the German Revolution. Lesser-known figures, such as Sarah Dickenson, who fought for union rights for women workers in London at the end of last century, are also included.

Groups outside of London who want to hold a similar series should contact the Womens Voice office to arrange for speakers.



No Jobs in Glossop

FIFTEEN WOMEN in Glossop attended a public meeting on the effects of the contraceptive Depo Provera. Over half had had some personal experience of the drug, either by having it themselves, or knowing someone who had.

The meeting showed how many women suffered similar effects from the drug. One woman who had been talked into having Depo Provera just after she had a baby told of constant health problems—headaches, lethargy, and irregular periods, that she had suffered ever since.

Another woman has developed facial hair and stronger muscles, not bad for feminists, but not good coupled with bad temper and lethargy.

None of the women had been warned of its possible side effects. Some were not even told its name.

Glossop Womens Voice has now started writing letters to local papers. We will be meeting again soon to decide on further action. Carol Beckett
Glossop WV



Tessa Howland (FFL)

FILIPINO women picket the Home Office. They are threatened with deportation for not declaring their children, even though they were never asked if they had any!

Manchester Rally Raring to go

'A LOT of women looked to Thatcher thinking she would understand our problems. How the hell can she? She's a Tory and represents the capitalist class. In my town, Newton le Willows in Lancashire, you can feel the demoralisation. You can see it in kids faces. Everyone's afraid of redundancies. I hope we go off fighting from this rally. Its time we started saying as a class 'enough is enough'.'

Sadie Blood, one of the opening speakers at the North West Womens Voice Rally in Manchester, summed up the feelings of the 130 women there. The mood was one of wanting to fight against Thatcher and for more than that, for socialism as well.

Women came from all over the North West to discuss what the attacks were and how to organise against them. The morning was a general discussion, led by Sadie, Yolanda Bystram from the SWP industrial department and Anna Paczuska who talked about Poland.

Women from the floor spoke

about their experiences. Chris Spriggs from Manchester said: 'Now we've got Heinz beans and Kevin Keegan against the cuts. They're advertising for mums to buy beans then Heinz will sponsor school equipment. That's how sick our society has got.'

Sandy Rose added 'I've been totting up what I spend for what the school can't provide because of the cuts like the bus to go swimming. I reckon it costs me £2 a week.'

Unemployment was constantly in people's minds. Cath Potter, a local schools careers officer, described how there were 300 unemployed school leavers in Eccles alone and only three vacancies. 'There are more and more kids without a prospect'.

She organised a delegation down to the demonstration against redundancies at a local engineering factory, Gardens.

In the afternoon we had action groups on topics ranging from nuclear power to the cuts, from the Employment Act to Ireland.

The accent in all groups was on activity. After report backs from the groups Sandra Burgher from the King Henry's strike spoke about their fight and the need for solidarity. Then Lindsey German from Womens Voice asked people to join and get involved in fighting against Thatcher and for socialist society. Sadie Blood ended the rally by calling on everyone to support the Right to Work March, get down to Brighton on October 10 to lobby Thatcher and build a campaign of Women against the Tories.

Sandra from King Henrys told us why she had come to the rally. 'We've got a womans fight on at King Henrys and the sooner we get together and get organised the better. Like you say we have to show our voice. I've never been to a womens' meeting before. It's really good.'

Everything went well, even the creche, which was run by men. Irene Easeman, an unemployed woman from Kirkby, near Liverpool with two young kids said it was great. 'To be truthfull a lot of woman are lumbered

North & East London Womens Voice Day School
WOMEN AGAINST THE TORIES
Saturday 25 October,
10.30am-6pm
Trade Union Centre,
2a Brabant Rd, Wood Green,
London N22
(nr Wood Green Tbe St)

A day of practical action and discussion on how WV groups can fight the Tory onslaught on women

ALL WV READERS WELCOME WORKSHOPS ON: Employment Bill/Womens Unemployment, Fighting Education Cuts, Women in Ireland, Defending the Health Service, Organising Women at Work, Womens Health.

ALSO: Film: Babies and Banners; refreshments, creche.

EVENING DISCO Open to everyone.

Registration 75p. Disco £1 (50p for those attending Day School): Send registration fee plus sae to: Pam Williams, PO Box 82, London, E2 9DS.

with kids. How many men take their kids down the picket line? A good creche makes all the difference.'

Everyone went away feeling confident to mobilise for October 10 and fight the Tories. As Sadie Blood said at the end 'I want to see you all in Brighton having a go at Thatcher on the 10th.'

Make sure you're there well.



The Polish Explosion

THE RECENT strikes in Poland have shown that workers' rights no more exist there than they do in the west. The demand for free trade unions is one which we can echo in our campaigns against Prior's anti-union law and for democracy in the unions. But it is commonly believed that the position of women in Poland is better than that of women in most Western countries. Women go out to work, their equality is written into the constitution and collective childcare is an accepted part of life.

At least that is the accepted myth. Experienced observers of Eastern Europe have even claimed that women cannot be unemployed because their right to work is guaranteed by the constitution. Unfortunately the reality is miles away and touches much more closely on our own experiences.

As in the west, in periods of economic stagnation women carry the burden of the crisis. After the 'spring in October' of 1956, there followed a period of female unemployment. Women were sacked on the pretext of curbing the bureaucracy. The government even discussed giving allowances to men whose wives didn't work.

At the same time, the benefits of the family as a stabilising factor were stressed and women were encouraged to see themselves mothers.

'Women's jobs' where women are ghettoised into

low paid and badly organised work are as common as in the west. Poland has seen a 'feminisation' of certain sectors - 80% of health workers and 67% of teachers are women. Traditional masculine preserves like technical and skilled manual work remain precisely that. Seventy per cent of married women work, but an unrecorded number are working on small-scale farms owned by peasant families.

The burden of housework and childcare rests almost entirely on women. Only 15 per cent of children find a place in state run creches. The majority are looked after by relatives or informal child-minders. Polish women spend an incredible two hours a day in queues for food and other essentials. Shortages are a way of life and things which help women's work in the home, such as washing machines and detergents are often impossible to obtain.

Housing conditions in a country where a family will have to wait several years for a single bedroom flat, and where little single housing is available, place a further strain on women's lives.

Neither do women have control over their bodies. Abortions are only available by law if the woman is pregnant as the result of a criminal act or there are 'difficult living conditions' and many older women still rely on the rhythm and withdrawal methods of contraception. This is hardly sur-

prising when the pill is not freely available and the influence of the church is still widespread. An estimated 40 per cent of Polish women still use abortion as their major form of contraception.

Polish society has women's oppression built into it. Some people believe that is because socialism can't bring women's liberation. But workers self-government is a myth. The regime is no more socialist than nationalised industry here. There is nationalisation and goods are supposed to be produced according to a plan. But the system has nothing to do with socialism.

The Polish government has to produce in competition with the west in order to survive. Therefore it exports as much as possible to pay its debts to the west. That explains why in a major agricultural country like Poland meat is so scarce and why there is more Polish sausage in your local Sainsburys than in most shops in Warsaw.

Not everyone in Poland suffers. If you are in possession of western 'hard' currency many goods in short supply become magically available. Special shops sell western fashions, cosmetics, American cigarettes and plentiful quantities of meat and fruit.

They are for the benefit of the small group of bureaucrats who control society. But for workers, life is as grim as it is for most workers in Britain. Food shortages, long working hours and the oppres-

sion of the family are all features of Polish life. Control of the factories does not lie with the workers but with that selfsame group of bureaucrats.

No wonder that the demands of the Gdansk workers went much further than the call for free trade unions. Demands included the equalisation of family allowances with the military police and the army, an end to special shops, improvements in nurseries, more housing and better maternity leave. They show that the issues concerning women are at the heart of the Polish working class, just as women themselves are.

The strikes have shown yet again that workers are willing to take action to change their lives. Women have one reason to be grateful to the existing Polish government. Their entry into the workforce has meant they are totally involved in the strike action. Now they have to begin to liberate themselves. The struggle for that liberation will mean having to overthrow the existing society in Poland and creating a new one, just as it will in the west.

When that happens, Polish women will find they can change the course of history and their own destinies as well.

Lindsey German
Anna Paczuska

**If you would like to hold a Womens Voice meeting on Poland we can provide speakers. Contact the WV office at 01 986 6222.*

Typists: Action speaks louder

TYPISTS are one of the lowest paid groups of workers in local government. Trapped on the bottom pay scales, they have little or no opportunity for training and promotion.

Now typists all over the country have realised that the only way they will get improvements is to take matters into their own hands. NALGO and NUPE, the main unions involved, have shown very little interest at national or local level.

Across the country typists are now organising for themselves, drawing up their own claims for better pay, conditions of service, prospects for advancement and taking positive action in support of these claims.

Typists Charter is an organisation which aims to bring together these women and promote their struggle. It hopes to give other groups of women workers the confidence to act for themselves.

Womens Voice has been finding out what is happening throughout the country and talking to some of the typists involved.



Chris Davies Report

HACKNEY

Julie is a shorthand typist in Hackney, she is a member of the Typists Committee. Here she describes how the typing grade staff in Hackney found that they had to fight for themselves.

'Eighteen months ago our management highlighted the lack of staff and problems of keeping typing staff, and nothing was forthcoming from them. We formed a typists committee with a representative from each department nominated by their typing pools.

'We gathered information about what typists were earning outside local government and in other Boroughs. There was a considerable gap in what we were earning compared to them.

'If you apply for an internal job on the admin. side, they cordially give you the benefit of an interview but it is extremely unlikely that you will get the post. They just can't replace you because they can't keep typists.

'The committee drew up a pay claim that they submitted to management. Management talked about the possibility of 10% if we accepted word processors, which we completely disagreed with. Our pay claim should be settled first. Word processors are a separate issue.

'We asked for an urgent meeting to discuss the pay claim, there was no reply and the typists decided to take action to highlight the necessity for a speedy response from management.

'The industrial action included typing 'as is' - it highlighted the fact that we are all taken for granted. We typed at 35 words per minute. We didn't do photocopying, duplicating, correction of errors and grammatical corrections.

'Some of the typists were threatened with suspension - being sent home without pay. At a mass meeting of typists we

voted that if one typist was suspended we would all walk out in support and go down to the Town Hall to picket.

'We have now resumed working as normal as a goodwill gesture. This unfortunately has brought little response from management so far.

'A mass meeting of typists voted to set a deadline of 20 working days for a response from management. If there is nothing forthcoming after that there is going to be another meeting for a vote to resume industrial action and consider stepping it up.'

SOUTHWARK

Southwark typists are now working to rule because their claim hasn't yet produced any meaningful response from management. They have waited since April and only received offers connected with new machinery and proficiency payments.

The typists are not undertaking any filing, photocopying, correction of errors, overtime, working at more than 35 words per minute, covering for secretaries or supervisors. Already this is having an effect and will be even more disruptive when the cycle of council committee meetings starts in earnest.

Petitions supporting the claim and calling upon management to settle as soon as possible are being circulated to both NALGO and NUPE members.

GREENWICH

The Greenwich typists, suspended for refusing to do blacked work, has now been reinstated by management. When the 400 other typists walked out in support and a branch meeting voted for a ballot for all-out action, their strike was made official and they set up a picket line.

The typists have been working to rule

since February and were offered a productivity deal which was later withdrawn. In July their action was extended to include blacking of committee agendas and councillors correspondence. The typists were offered £50 if they accepted the introduction of new technology and a productivity deal.

Now the original claim is going to the Greater London Whitley Council for arbitration. Other groups of typists from all over the country made donations to the Greenwich typists during their action.

LEWISHAM

In Lewisham a written claim for clerical Grade 3 for all typists was submitted to the Council in May. In return they were prepared to discuss word processors.

The typists started taking action by refusing to prioritise work, with certain exemptions. Following a management decision not to make an offer, they have now withdrawn these exemptions. They are doing all work in the order it comes to them, without corrections and they are typing at 35 words per minute.

A NALGO Branch meeting gave the typists unanimous support. Now they are applying to the National Emergency Committee of NALGO for backing to stop dealing with Council members correspondence. Clerk-typists in Lewisham have asked to be associated with the claim and the action in support of it.

NORTH TYNESIDE

In North Tyneside, typists have been meeting to form an Action Group to formulate their claim for improved pay and conditions.

than words

GREATER MANCHESTER COUNTY

Typists from Greater Manchester County Branch put forward a motion on typists pay to the Local Government Group meeting at NALGO conference. Despite strong opposition from the NALGO leadership, the motion was debated and eventually passed, with promises of action on the matter later in the year.

The motion calls for typists to be removed from their prescribed pay scales, for a national regrading claim for typists to be formulated at a delegate meeting, and it supports the pursuit of local claims at the same time.

The typists in the GMC Branch thought it was 'just typical' of the male dominated, relatively well paid National Local Government Committee to oppose their motion instead of proposing positive action. They also know that it was only through their own initiative and activity that their local claim was drawn up. It will also be their self-activity that can make the delegates meeting a real organising meeting that will build the confidence of typists to take up these issues for themselves.

MANCHESTER CITY

Manchester City Branch typists have now had their claim in for three months. They refused to discuss new technology at the same time and have insisted on completely separate negotiations on word processors. To back this up they have been blacking the use of word processors.

Now they are drawing up a shopping list of the types of action they can take in a work to rule.

It has been proposed that the Manchester City typists should have joint meetings with the GMC typists to keep up links between their two committees as well as to give mutual support.

LIVERPOOL

Liverpool NALGO finally agreed to call a typists meeting. But it was to be a representative meeting, not the mass meeting the typists had wanted.

A Typists Charter group was set up and the first meeting was attended by 84 typists from eight different departments of the City Council, including some from Merseyside NALGO. A speaker from Manchester described their experiences and offered encouragement. It was agreed to set up a small committee to meet and draw up a claim, produce newsletters and liaise with the Branch Working Party.

There has also been a suggestion of

setting up a Merseyside Charter Group and possibly a regional committee from the North West as more typists become involved.

The women in NALGO group are also interested and have invited a typist to speak at one of their meetings.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

The South Yorkshire Typists Action Group attracted 53 typists and secretaries to their first meeting. They formed a Typists Action Committee and their aims include:

1. Supporting a national claim for a realistic wage for typists formulated by a delegate meeting;
2. Supporting the union's policy of seeking a written agreement on new technology.

They are formulating their own local claim for improved pay, conditions and career prospects, and will present this to be endorsed by the Branch.

The Typists Action Committee is preparing a newsletter to be circulated to all

typists, telephonists, machine operators etc and asking them to join forces with them in their fight to secure improved grades and conditions of service.

HAMMERSMITH

Typists at Hammersmith drew up their own claim earlier this year after some excellent meetings which involved many of them in the union and in debate for the first time. Unfortunately the claim then got caught up in the extremely bureaucratic negotiating procedures we have to suffer in local government.

Now after two meetings with the Council, they have still not even bothered to reply to the claim.

But our typists have seen the possibility of better wages and of being recognised as the skilled workers they are. They have seen that other groups of typists have fought and won. They are not prepared to be ignored any longer. So this month they will be deciding what action to take to let the Council know they mean business.

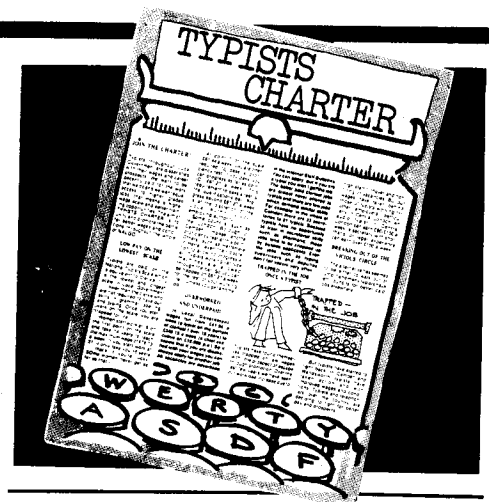
BUILD THE TYPISTS CHARTER

FOR more information about Typists Charter, speakers or further details of any claims and typists groups, please write to the address below.

Copies of Typists Charter are available at 10p each. Although this is mainly concerned with typists in local government, typists in other services are just as badly off and have been invited to join the Charter.

Write to: **TYPISTS CHARTER**
48 Forburg Road, London N16.

NALGO ACTION NEWS carries articles on all the latest typists campaigns as well as information from all over the country about struggles of rank and file members in NALGO. Copies at 15p each are available from Mark Adams, 81 Downs Park Road, London E5 8NP.



Compiled by *PAULINE ALDEN* of Nalگو Action Group and Typists Charter.

COUNCILS throughout the country have been introducing Word Processors. A word processor is an electronic typewriter with a video screen. It contains a small computer with a memory for previous correspondence and can perform a wide range of editing, layout and text manipulating functions.

The use of word processors can cut a typing service by about half. Where there is understaffing, they can be used to introduce cuts by the back door. This applies to all clerical staff as well as typists.

Although they may appear to benefit typists who are trained to use them, the use of word processors can lead to cutbacks in staffing levels, greater health hazards and more supervision in return for meagre bonuses.

Typing staff need better basic wages and conditions of work, not a machine to do the job more cheaply.

We have to fight for safeguards of jobs, better pay and conditions for word processor operators and proper health and safety precautions.

MARCH '80

DORSET STOPS

LOCAL AUTHORITIES
RELIEVED OF OBLIGATION
TO PROVIDE SCHOOL MEALS

*(In Dorsetshire school meal numbers
dropped 50% when price rose from 30p
to 50p)*

MARCH '80

POLICE RECEIVE
RISE IN EXCESS
OF 200%

*(The council is employing a
Public Relations firm to
promote school
meals)*

MARCH '80

RECEIVE
RISE IN EXCESS
OF 200%

*(Now the council is employing a
Public Relations firm to
promote school
meals)*

CHILD BENEFIT UP BY 75,

*(In the last 2 years Police
pay has risen 76.6%)*

Q.C. '80

*(Should be at least £1.25
to keep pace with inflation)*

MARCH '80

*(It's harder to
obtain)*

ARMS

£10,785,000,000
will be spent
THIS YEAR!

*(Arms Bill cuts \$531
for each household
in Britain - for the
cost of ONE guided
missile destroyer - (£85 million) the Tories
could provide 3 hospitals with 1,000 beds)*

UNEMPLOYMENT OVER 2 MILLION

*(and that doesn't include
the thousands of married
women who don't register
for benefit because they
are not entitled)*

SEPTEMBER '80
HESELTINE CUTS £200 MILLION
FROM LOCAL COUNCILS - 14
Councils to forfeit £19million in
anticipation

*(Research has shown that every time unemployment
goes up 1% the suicide rate goes up 2%)*

SEPTEMBER '80
HESELTINE CUTS £200 MILLION
FROM LOCAL COUNCILS - 14
Councils to forfeit £19million in
anticipation

(Unemployment at the present rate is equal to 8,300 sackings a DAY)

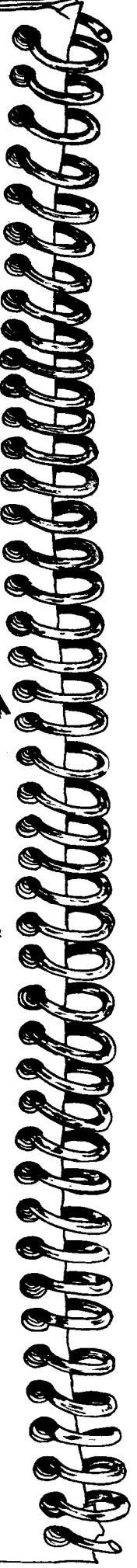
KICK OUT THE FORIES

*(£402 million
CUT IN EDUCATION SINCE APRIL
SEPTEMBER '80)*

EMPLOYMENT ACT

*(Attacks RIGHT TO STRIKE - RIGHT TO PICKET - CLOSED SHOP
REDUCES MATERNITY LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS)*

WOMENS VOICE *



WE DIDN'T VOTE FOR YOU

(Women have been involved in every major strike since the Tories came to power (May '79) - Chris, Tandy, King Henry - the engineering strike last year involved 10,000 women)

MAY '79 POLICE GET 20% RISE

JUNE '79 VAT up to 15%

TELEPHONE UP BY SEPTEMBER '79 CHARGES 39%

COMMISSION SCRAPPED

INFLATION ^{OCTOBER '79} RUNNING AT ⁷⁹ OVER 20%

NOVEMBER '79 Public spending cut by £4 BILLION this year.

STEELWORKERS OFFERED 2% NOVEMBER '79

POLICE GET 13 1/2% RISE SEPTEMBER '79

MARCH '80 10,500 TEACHING JOBS CUT

4 TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGES CLOSED IN SCOTLAND + CLASSES SWELL TO 35+

JANUARY '80 Electricity & Gas up 27%

MARCH '80 *larger than pre-war*

HOUSING BILL MARCH '80

FORCES COUNCILS TO SELL HOUSES £308 MILLION CUT FROM HOUSING BUDGET

EDUCATION CUT BY \$55 MILLION

MEALS

BUDGET PRINCESS ANNE GETS 30% RISE QUEEN ACCEPTED 19%

HOUSING BUDGET CUT FROM

MARCH '80



The Right to Work March from Port Talbot to the Tory party conference in Brighton. The start of a fightback?

IT'S UP TO US

HOW DO we get rid of Thatcher? That's a question on the lips of thousands of women around the country. The women who fought at Chix, at Brixton dole and now at King Henry's and Tandy, want to know how to get rid of the Employment Act which stops them from picketing effectively.

The women who picketed St Benedicts want to know how to stop Thatcher and her Tory friends from shutting down hospitals and putting still more burdens on women in the home.

The women who occupied Gayhurst school in Hackney want to know how to keep their schools open, when the Tories are forcing through even more cuts, aimed at the Labour councils in working class areas.

But the problem is how. Many women have been fighting.

Most of the fights have been small. They have been isolated. And they have often been outside the workplaces, where there is less chance of collective action which can last past one demonstration.

Still, they have been a start. It would be better if we could rely on the trade union leaders to start the fight against Thatcher. But they won't do it. They accept the society we live in, even though it means wealth for the few and misery for the many. Their main objection to the Tories is not that they are slashing workers' living standards, but that they won't talk to the unions. If only we could all sit round and negotiate, they say, everything would be fine.

They have never had women's interests at heart. Women have always been at the bottom in the unions. The only way we'll change that is to fight and organise ourselves, not to rely on the bureaucrats to do it for us.

Feeling against the Tories and Thatcher in particular is very strong. Many people, in the Labour Party, smaller organisations and no party at all want to fight.

We can agree that we are against unemployment, against the cuts, against cuts in benefit. The lobby on October 10 and the Right to Work march are attempts to show that united face against the Tories.

They are beginning too—the beginning of a fight. We must take every single opportunity to fight the Tories, whether it's fighting the closure of a school in East London, or fighting hundreds of job losses at Gardners in Manchester.

Just uniting against the Tories won't solve all our problems. The right to work can never be guaranteed in a society which puts profits first. We have to build a new society which can guarantee a decent life for everyone. That's why we have *Women's Voice* to fight for socialism.

We hope more and more women will come to agree with us that we need that new society. It is the alternative to poverty, to unemployment, to nuclear war.

We think we're going in the right direction. A few more people are agreeing with us, like some of the women who came to the North West WV Rally against the Tories. Many more are against Thatcher, but don't believe we need to change this society completely.

We can still work together. If we can build a movement which can get rid of Thatcher it will build the confidence of workers everywhere and help us to fight over other things.

And that will bring us a step nearer to a socialist society as well.

ROSE McAllister has just been released after two years in Armagh jail in Northern Ireland. Like other political prisoners she was on 'dirty protest' smearing her own excreta on the walls of her prison cell.

The prisoners' demand was simple: arrested for political crimes, sentenced by the political courts set up by the British government, they wanted the special privileges previously accorded to political prisoners.

*When she visited Britain this summer she told *Womens Voice* what drove her to take part in a campaign which was, in her words, dehumanising.*

I WAS involved in politics in Northern Ireland from 1968 when I went on the first Civil Rights marches, I came from a Republican area called Ardoyne, a Catholic area with very high unemployment.

Arrested

In 1971 I was arrested on a political demonstration and first went into Armagh Jail. Four men from Ardoyne had been arrested for wearing an illegal uniform and carrying an offensive weapon—anyone wearing a combat jacket or carrying a stick came under these charges. The women of Ardoyne set up an action group and decided they that they would picket the court. The Royal Ulster Constabulary heard about it as we had publicised the picket, asking women to support us at court. When we were arrested by the RUC we were very badly beaten. There were 38 of us. I was put in custody in Armagh Jail and I'd never been inside a court or jail in my life.

Pregnant

I had just got married and discovered that I was pregnant. The screws were very heavy handed—they knew they were in control. We tried to have things changed in jail. We went on hunger strike for four days.

I came out of jail in July 1971. My husband was shot dead by a few weeks later on 9 August, the morning of internment.

After the baby was born, I continued to be active in Sinn Fein (the political wing of the IRA). We organised the women in the district to do street patrols, to warn the people when the Brits were coming in to raid. We used bin lids and tin whistles. It was very effective. The British army had never faced women who were so determined.

Protest

In 1977 I was sentenced again to two years. I wanted to go on protest. Having experienced Armagh, I knew that I could never do time under those circumstances

The Dirty protest

Rose McAllister

speaks

again. The screws did all they could to make us feel that we weren't political prisoners. I was tried in a political court (the Diplock Courts). I wasn't tried by a jury, but by a judge, a man who sat there and decided what I was and how long I should go away for.

At first the protest was a no-work protest. The only way to escalate it would have meant going on a no-wash protest. That seemed a bit heavy for us, especially because of the difficulties for a woman.

Soaked

In February 1980 the screws tried to break our protest. We were locked up in our cells for 24 hours and weren't allowed to go to the toilet. They refused to give us any sanitary protection and refused to give one girl tablets for her ulcer. The male screws kicked the doors when you were going to sleep and night and flashed the light on and off. They put a hose through your cell which meant that your bed was soaked and you had to sit on a chair for most of the night. They wouldn't let us use the toilets and we were forced to go in the cells. To get rid of the waste we threw it out of the spy holes in the doors.

Disgusting

The first experience that I had of putting my own waste on the walls was so disgusting—I don't think it will ever leave me. It made me physically sick, having to sit, eat and sleep in that cell and try to pretend that that stuff wasn't really on the walls.

We were living like animals and trying to keep some semblance of dignity—and believe me in Armagh that's bloody hard. I used to sit there looking at the dirt gathering on my body and wonder how the hell I was going to get this stuff off me when I eventually got out.

You don't realise the psychological effect that being on a protest has on you until you come out of jail. The effect of being locked

up 23 hours a day with no mental stimulant weakens you personally. I always thought I was fairly strong because I'd had to bring up a family alone and take my own decisions. And I had to decide whether I would be political or sit there and pretend that there was no war in Northern Ireland, that if I closed my eyes it would go away.

I thought I could step into the role of being a mother again when I came out, but it wasn't that simple. I nursed my young son and held him and cuddled him and I was doing all the things that I normally would have done with the rest of my children but I wasn't feeling a thing. I just couldn't feel anything. It was only when I sat down and thought about it that I realised that in order to survive on that protest I had had to de-humanise myself. I had to cut off emotions that would normally be quite free in me.

Abuse

There are 31 women still in Armagh jail. They've been lying there for five months, without having had water on any part of their bodies or clean clothes. They've had to suffer the abuse from the staff in the jail. The physical beatings are still going on—only three weeks ago a girl was beaten up because she didn't get into her cell quick enough.

Truth

This is actually happening and very few people know the truth. Some people could say that the women brought it on themselves and shouldn't have got involved in a political struggle or a war. But, you *must* take sides in Northern Ireland.

Politics

And that's why the women in Armagh Jail are there, because of their politics and their decision to be political. The situation is desperate for those women, and something will have to be done *very soon* because their physical and mental condition is getting worse.



Republican woman prisoner in Armagh

CHARTER

80

CHARTER 80 is fighting against the inhuman and degrading conditions of political prisoners in H-Block and Armagh jails. Its demands are those of the prisoners themselves:

1. The right of prisoners to wear their own clothes
2. The right of prisoners to refrain from prison work
3. The right of free association among other political prisoners
4. The right to organise their own recreational and educational facilities and to receive one letter, one visit and one parcel a week.
5. The right to full remission of sentences.

Charter 80 already has the support of many leading trades unionists, feminists and some MP's.

WHY DON'T YOU RAISE CHARTER 80 IN YOUR TRADES UNION? OR WHY DON'T YOU HAVE A SPEAKER FROM CHARTER 80 TO YOUR WOMEN'S VOICE GROUP? CHARTER 80 will be doing a speaking tour around the country from October 27. Write to Charter 80, PO Box 353, London NW5 for details and leaflets.

Who invented wicked witches?

URSLEY KEMPE was known in the tiny village of St Osyth, Essex, in the 16th century as a healer and a midwife. She had begun to learn her ancient craft when she fell ill with 'lameness of the bones' and was cured with herbal remedies.

She started to experiment with her own herbal mixtures, combining them with ritual and superstition to nurse many of the local people through their illnesses.

Unknown to Ursley, traditional country cures and practices were being outlawed at the time not because they were ineffective, but because the women who practised them were the victims of changing social relations and power struggles they knew nothing about.

The Catholic Church had been in crisis since the beginning of the sixteenth century. At the same time, the alternative Protestant forms of Christianity were still not fully established. In the struggle for power over the religious beliefs of the nation, it suited all the Christian factions to magnify the innocent superstitions of women like Ursley into the work of the devil. So the Church could assert its role as spokesman for the almighty, and with the power to decide what was 'good' they could accuse whoever they liked of 'evil'.

But the Church was not alone in benefiting from the persecution of witches. The emerging medical profession was also able to steal from women the right to practise midwifery and healing, and so turn medicine into an exclusively male profession. In the name of science, they testified at witch trials that the behaviour of the accused



Devil seducing a witch

women was evidence of their partnership with the devil.

At the same time, women were being driven out of a number of productive trades. Guilds were developing to protect trades like brewing, printing and carpentry from competition. Excluded from these skilled trades, women lost the status of productive workers and were pushed entirely into the unpaid labour of the home. Many were driven into poverty and dependence on the parish relief.

Magistrates naturally sided with the power of the Church. They accepted the evidence of self-appointed witch-finders and paid them handsomely for each condemned witch.

When the witch-hunts reached St Osyth, Ursley was promised by Mr Darcy, Lord of the Manor and magistrate, that no harm would come to her if she told him about her healing powers. She confessed that she kept four pets (two cats, a toad, and a lamb). She believed that the two male pets had the power of evil, and the two females the power to undo evil. She admitted that she used the animals to assist her in her work.



Three witches being hanged

Ursley woke up the following morning in the local gaol, to be assured by Mr Darcy that she would be safe if she told him about other people she knew who had powers.

In a short time, fourteen other local people were arrested on charges of suspected witchcraft. Two of them were condemned to death with Ursley. The evidence against them was like that against most witches, of having kept a small pet, of selling an ointment to a neighbour, or of being seen with someone who died shortly afterwards. The accused were always from the most vulnerable sections of society: the poor, the old, the illiterate. Evil was particularly associated with women.

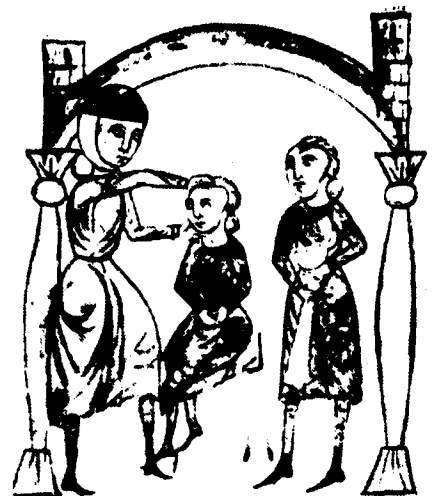
Once accused, the women were forced to confess that they had sold their souls to the devil in return for wealth and power. The male establishment delighted in tales of sexual promiscuity with the devil, eager to report that women enjoyed the sensation of the devil's icy sperm. They made sport of examining women's bodies, in court or

in the prison cell, searching for 'devils marks', pricking warts to see if they would bleed, and were overjoyed if they could identify a blemish on the lips of the vagina.

For many the best defence was to admit to the 'crimes' and repent. But Ursley did not know these tricks. She was too angry at being accused of being a whore, and too confused by the evidence of her eight-year-old son, whose wild statements against his mother were accepted by the court. No-one was prepared to protest her innocence to the Church, the magistrate, the medical profession, or to the greedy protective guilds.

In 1582, Ursley Kempe was hanged for crimes she did not commit. She was accused of practising witchcraft, but her real crime was that she was part of a strong and skilled sisterhood of women which had to be destroyed to make way for the rise of the early capitalist system, in which men were to dominate every facet of society.

Mary Williams



Woman healing a dislocated jaw

WOMENS HEALTH

No Wonder Smokers Cough

SMOKING CIGARETTES is bad for your health, costs a lot of money, pollutes the atmosphere, and is unpleasant for non-smokers. Everyone knows the facts, but for millions of people lighting up the first (or twenty-first) fag of the day is a habit as ingrained as winding your watch.

The habit is hard to kick, but over the last ten years the proportion of adults in Britain who smoke has been decreasing. Since 1976 smokers have been in a minority. Fewer women smoke than men, and more manual workers smoke than white collar workers.

Over 50,000 people in Britain die prematurely each year as a direct result of smoking – seven times as many as from car accidents. The main diseases resulting from smoking are lung cancer, bronchitis and heart disease. The rate of increases in deaths from lung cancer is steeper in women than men and Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) estimate that 'if deaths in women continue to increase at their present rate, lung cancer will overtake breast cancer as the chief cause of cancer deaths in women within a few years.'

If you smoke between one and 14 cigarettes a day the risk of lung cancer increases eight times. More than 25 fags a day means a 25-fold increase. But if you give up, the risk of lung cancer drops within a few years.

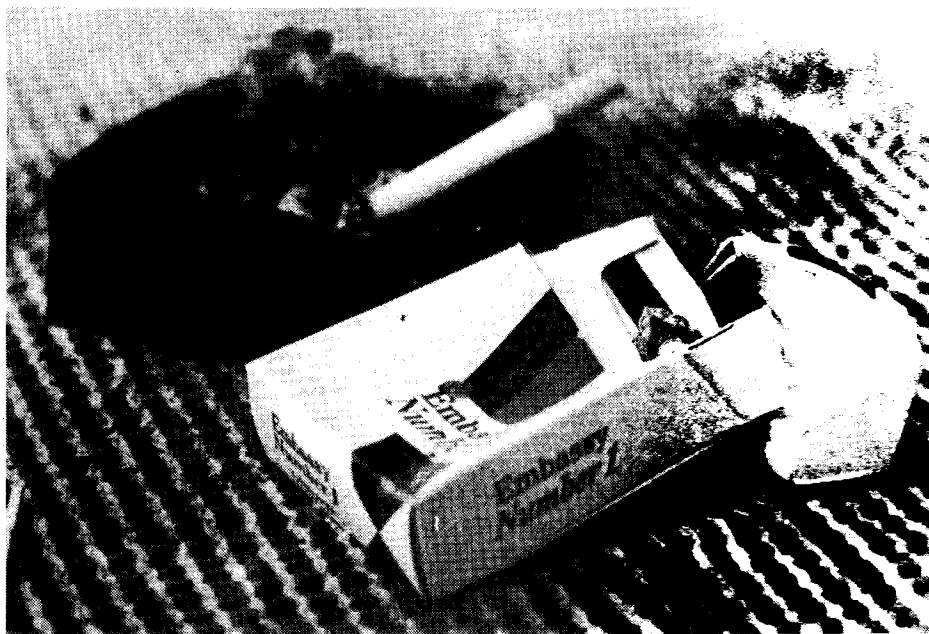
Ninety-five per cent of all sufferers of bronchitis smoke. The 'smokers cough', the tight chest and the wheezing which are all part of a heavy smoker's life are no joke – ASH estimate that 20 per cent of all cigarette smokers will become disabled by chronic bronchitis and may die from the disease.

But, say many smokers, it's my life and my choice. Unfortunately, for non-smokers there is no choice. Involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke is especially harmful for babies, young children and those who suffer from heart or chest diseases. Infants under a year old run twice the risk of serious chest illness if the parents smoke. Smoking during pregnancy increases the chances of a still

birth or death during the first week of the baby's life by nearly one third.

Research into smoking and pregnancy has uncovered disturbing facts; enough, you would think, to make any pregnant woman give cigarettes up. Babies born to women who smoke during pregnancy are, on average, seven ounces lighter than other babies. The more the mother smokes, the lower the birth weight. But if she gives up during the first four months of pregnancy the risk to the baby is eliminated.

Cigarette smoking during pregnancy



increases the risk of spontaneous abortion, complications during pregnancy (such as bleeding and premature ruptures of the membranes), perinatal mortality (by 35 per cent if the mother smokes more than 20 a day) and affects long-term growth and the mother's milk.

The dangers of having a heart attack, stroke or blood clot in the leg veins as a result of taking the contraceptive pill is multiplied by smoking. The risk increases with age, too, so a woman in her thirties who takes the pill and smokes more than 15 cigarettes a day is up to seven

times more likely to die of a heart attack than a non-smoker on the pill.

The hazards of smoking are not merely hazards to the individual. Concern for the environment aside, the cost to the National Health Service is phenomenal. In 1977 the cost of treating patients suffering from smoking-related diseases was about £2 million a week – £100 million a year.

The facts speak for themselves – giving it up is the hard bit. There are about as many different theories on how to do it as there are people trying. The health education council recommend giving up slowly; cutting out the first cigarette of the day, then the next until you've packed up. Some smug ex-smokers say the way to do it is just to stop: '...and I've never touched a cigarette since'. If you smoke, you know the type.

It's not easy, and I don't believe those people who say it is. For me it's harder than losing weight, giving up drinking harder than anything else which requires willpower. But I know it can be done, because friends who smoked far more than I do have given up. Smoking gives me a headache and a sore throat, and makes me broke; it makes me bad tempered if I run out of fags, and it's doing untold damage to my health.

I hope I've just stubbed out my last cigarette.

More information and advice on giving up can be had from:

*Action on Smoking and Health,
27-35 Mortimer Street, London W1.
The Health Education Council, 78 New
Oxford Street, London WC1.*

*The Addiction Research Unit at the
Institute of Psychiatry in South London
runs clinics for people wanting to give up
smoking. You can write to them at
101 Denmark Hill, London SE5, or
phone on 703 5411.*

Harriet Sherwood

REVIEWS



The kids rally round Kate

BREAKING GLASS

BREAKING GLASS shows the corruption of the world of rock music and implies that there are similarities in the political system.

Throughout the film, a disc jockey plays an innocuous, mindless song which we know from the story is only a hit because the charts are rigged. He follows this with news bulletins about ever-increasing unemployment, inflation and powers for the police. His light manner and bland voice make the news seem as trivial as the music, and his audience is supposed to believe that it is.

Kate calls this 'program-

ming' people. She is against 'the system' which causes the machine-like existence of people today and she is fiercely against other manifestations of de-humanisation — such as Nazis and Nukes.

Kate doesn't want to have anything to do with the record companies and promoters which are 'the system' of rock music. But without them, the band can get no gigs. They can only play in pubs, where Kate's material hardly reaches an audience. They are hassled by police and Nazis, and they don't get paid.

But, once you have the gigs, the next step is a record.

Kate tries to retain control of her work. She doesn't want her music changed and she doesn't want a producer. After a clash with the Nazis in which someone gets killed, Kate is at her weakest, physically and mentally. The record company pick their moment. Ironically, Kate, still singing against people being programmed, has become a virtual zombie, propelled on to the stage every night with a shot in her bum to give her the energy to do her act. Slight, but commercial, changes are made in her music. Fans accuse her of selling out. Friends drift away.

But despite the political anger of Kate's songs and the realism of the scenes with the

Nazis and the law, the film fails to make the 'shattering' impact its advertisements claim for it. Just as the record company changed Kate's material slightly to make it more commercial, so this film seems to have succumbed to the desire for mass appeal by using a familiar and popular formula. We know from countless movies how Kate will first lose, then find again, her ideals and her lover. Even though performances are good, the characters and events are so predictable that the film loses its punch and credibility.

*Jacqueline Mulhallen
Hammersmith and
Shepherd's Bush WV*

RECENTLY OUT...

**BATTERED WOMEN
AND THE NEW LAW**
Anna Coote and Tess Gill
85p

Recent changes in the law in England and Wales give better protection to women who are assaulted by their hus-

bands or the men they live with. This guide explains: the Domestic Violence Act; the new injunction; emergencies; the role of the police; the home and rehousing; Northern Ireland and Scotland; and more! It includes a list of related publications. Available from bookshops or direct from: Inter-Action Imprint, 15 Wilkin Street, London NW5, for 85p.

THE
WOMEN'S
PRESS
BOOKCLUB

THE WOMEN'S PRESS has now been publishing for two years. They have published 40 books, mainly paperbacks. They have launched a bookclub to help them to provide books at realistic prices. They are also open to suggestions about new publications which contribute to the development of women's writing and sexual politics. Write for more details to Women's Press, Shoreditch High Street, London E2.

TESTAMENT OF FRIENDSHIP

Vera Brittain
Virago £3.50

TESTAMENT OF FRIENDSHIP is part of Vera Brittain's trilogy of *Testaments*, although the odd one out. The testaments of *Youth* and *Experience* are autobiographical; *Testament of Friendship* is the story of Winifred Holtby, the writer.

Despite the brevity of her life, Winifred Holtby's achievements were considerable. She wrote several novels, the most famous of which — *South Riding* — was published posthumously, as well as poetry, literary criticism, plays and pamphlets. She was 'London's most brilliant journalist' and a campaigner for many causes — most notably women's rights and the blacks in South Africa.

Vera Brittain and Winifred Holtby met at Oxford just after the first war. They became close friends because of similar experiences of war service, and their relationship remained intense until Winifred Holtby's death in 1935 at the age of 37.

Testament of Friendship is as beautifully written as the other two parts of Vera Brittain's trilogy. Each chapter is preceded by a poem and the book is scattered with extracts from Winifred Holtby's letters and writings.

Some of the politics expressed in the book are disappointing: the first agricultural workers' strike at the Holtby family's farm is described only in terms of the effects on the farmer, Winifred Holtby's father; and the response to war is chauvinism, of fighting for King and country. Although Winifred Holtby became a committed pacifist after the war, there is little in her biography of why wars are fought, and for whose benefit.

If Vera Brittain's other *Testaments* are dramatised for television as successfully as *Testament of Youth*, then they will be worth staying in for. In the meantime, read the book.

Harriet Sherwood

SHOUT, LOVE AND ROMANCE — SPOILSPORTS

NEVER HEARD of the Spoil-sports? They were a good female band that came and went all too quickly. But luckily they left this one single behind them.

Shout is a boppy blues/soul track. The sound is good: piano and saxophone come at you in waves and the rhythm changes are smooth.

The full title is 'You've gotta shout for what you want', because:

'You wanna world where no one has the upper hand

A world which every-one can understand.'

The message of the record is, keep fighting sister:

'Don't let them chain you, don't let them grind you down.

Don't let them take all the love and the strength away from you.'

While *Shout* restores your militancy, side 2 is slower and more jazzy. *Love and Romance* is about being a teenager, how girls learn to live through their hearts:

'Sweet 15 in a teenage dream

And love is a fascination.

She likes pin-up stars and kissing in cars — Her idea of exploration.'

But boys will be boys — they seem to live through the genitals. So this girls learns that she is not an active person in an exciting game. She doesn't know what she herself wants, she's confused. Instead of being able to

develop as a whole person, she's being divorced from herself, from her sexuality. She's learning shame about being female. And not to make decisions in her life:

'Hidden by the night He's holding her tight In control of the situation.

She don't know what to feel

It's all so unreal She's gonna lose her reputation.'

So, before stocks run out, spend £1 and buy yourself a copy. *Shout* is great for parties; and you can add the single to your feminist music collection.

Available from alternative book or record shops or send £1 to Barbara Stretch, 43 Ellesmere Rd, London E3.

Celia Shalom

THE SHAME IS OVER — A Political Life Story

Anja Meulenbelt
The Woman's Press £2.95

THIS BOOK has been reprinted 14 times in Holland and has made a big impact there.

Anja tells her own story. She has an unplanned child at 16 and then lives in an unhappy marriage. She finds herself living only for and through her husband and child. She becomes scared of people, of herself. And then she rebels: 'I want to do more with my life than just endure it as a natural disaster.'

Then the long search for a satisfying way of life, outside the normal family situation. Anja wants to have caring relationships; she is also developing politically. But the changes in sexual behaviour in the sixties usually meant that men, not women, had more options. The double standard still operates: women can either be wife or mistress, and are caught by the stereotypes. Still, women are scared of 'making demands', of thinking about their own needs.

But Anja's life is not unique. The emerging women's movement in Holland gave women the



chance to see their experiences as shared, as political in their own right. For the first time, Anja feels solidarity; she is not alone. With the support of her sisters she sees things about herself. That she has been unable to live without a man around, was always waiting for her prince on the white horse. That she saw herself as different from other women: 'My clinging to men and looking down on women is nothing other than contempt for myself. My blindness about that is nothing other than a symptom of my own oppression.'

This is a courageous and honest book. We live with Anja through her changes, from a hesitant, scared person to an effective, stronger woman. She talks openly about her child, her sexuality, her lesbian relationships. She talks a lot about love, the area Shulamith Firestone acutely describes as 'the soft underbelly of politics, hidden away in what we call private life'. Feminists like Anja show that our personal lives are deeply political, that we can help each other in trying to improve the way we live them.

Celia Shalom

DIRTY LINEN

The government has decided not to impose a ban on the weedkiller 245T. All the evidence suggests that spraying with this chemical can have disastrous effects upon people who come into contact with it. Chloracne, miscarriages, genetic malfunctions and birth deformities to name just a few.

Our most stupid ad of the month award goes to Ms London (a giveaway glossy jobs mag) and Shiatsu...

SLIMMING BREAKTHROUGH



Lose weight without drugs, diet, or exercise. The Shiatsu ear ornament clips on the pressure point on the ear to control the appetite and speed up your metabolism by acupressure.

Attractive — effective
Send S.A.E. to: Shiatsu,
419 Silwood St., SE16.

Just think yourself lucky that you don't live in Switzerland. Seven Swiss schoolgirls were threatened with prison sentences recently, for not attending housekeeping classes!

A law passed in 1952 says that girls between 16 and 20 must have 152 hours of housekeeping instruction each year.

A large slice of a lady's life is spent, you-know-where.

Perhaps Ladies' Libbers would like to cook up an alternative, but as long as the family is the unit of society, the kitchen will be the hub of the home.

That's how the cookie crumbles.

But every husband should remember that the kitchen is a literal workshop to his wife.

So why not make it practical, functional and attractive.

Sent in by Ms P Aitken, Glasgow, from The Scotsman colour supplement. The number of Kitchenplan is 031 (Edinburgh) 557 2529.

Christabel Pankhurst the founder and leader of the militant suffragette movement was born a 100 years ago, on 22 September 1880.

What is a social security scrounger?

According to Reg Prentice, the Disabled Minister (who used to be a Labour MP and has now found his true home in the Tory party) scroungers are all those people who diddle the DHSS out of £200 million a year.

Now, £200 million is a lot of money, and that is quite an accusation to make against any group of people. So how does Reg calculate this figure? Has he carried out a great survey, computed his statistics and come up with this precise sum?

No, on the contrary, it's nothing but a great big guess, based on the assumption made by every big department store, like Marks and Spencer, that one or two per cent a year gets lost. Two per cent of the £20 billion a year the DHSS spends is £200 million. To follow this amazing example of how a high powered Government minister does his sums we give you two examples of how the DHSS saves money and stops people scrounging.

In May of this year Celia Stubbs came to live in London during the inquest on her friend Blair Peach who was murdered by the SPG last year. Because she was not available for work in Kent, where she lives, the DHSS refused to let her draw her dole money. She has two children.

At about the same time Kay Kelly travelled to Ireland to raise funds for cancer research.

The DHSS stopped her social security payments of £15 a week while she was in Ireland, on the grounds that any trip overseas was a holiday.

Please send your bits and pieces for this column to: Womens Voice, PO Box 82, London E2.

Wake up: the threat of nuclear war is real

Dear Womens Voice

It is amazing that you have given no space to the campaign against Cruise missiles. The article 'The War to End All War' in *Womens Voice* 42 was very good, but I do not agree that the answer to the question 'Is there a risk of nuclear war?' is 'Yes and no'.

It is 'Yes, and constant'.

In considering long term campaigns we must not shut our eyes to imminent danger, which is real, not imaginary.

Unfortunately socialists have not emphasised sufficiently that the nuclear horror originated in the West and not in the Soviet Union, which was excluded from this invention, even when an ally, and which has ever since tried to match threat with counter-threat, always lagging behind and denounced as a 'menace' when it looks like catching up. So the hysteria in a crisis would tend to be directed towards the USSR rather than towards those responsible for the whole thing—America and Britain.

The ever present danger is very real, not hysterical, but people are lulled, in between crises, thinking 'that was only a scare, after all'.

In 1914 and again in 1939, as I remember, war finally came as a terrible shock. No-one to whom I spoke on 2 September 1939 believed that we were really 'going to war'.

If the imperialist war, which has been raging here and there throughout this century, again arrives on our doorstep, as it has done twice already, it will probably begin conventionally, as before (bad enough) but because of the nuclear bases planted on us by the USA it would this time rapidly become nuclear. The USSR would have no object in attacking Britain if this country were not an advanced outpost for US aggression. But, with US missiles here, we are obviously the first target. This suits the USA, even though it is extremely doubtful that the USA itself, and indeed humanity in general, would survive the consequent holocaust.

The USA, frustrated in

Vietnam and its ever-declining 'credibility', is going as mad as Hitler's Germany, frustrated by the conditions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles. We must extricate ourselves from US clutches and NATO, now weakening, must be broken up. US aggression must be halted. The USSR is *not* imperialist, but the Iranian description of the USA as 'world-devouring' is correct.

The Socialist Workers Party, which *Womens Voice* follows in international politics, jumps to hasty conclusions, not based on established facts and on reason, but on their creed that the USSR is always in the wrong, on every issue, no matter how reactionary its enemies.

For 60 years the Western powers have threatened the Soviet Union with extinction. Of course it is not socialist. How could it be? The SWP itself has explained that the actions of the capitalist powers made the achievement of socialism impossible. Not even Leninists and Trotskyists could have achieved it. But even Peter Jenkins of the *Guardian* has said that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was 'partly defensive', though he was probably told that he must not say such things. The SWP would not have erred in that direction.

Mounting insanity in the USA is demonstrated by the shouts of 'Nuke em' by ordinary citizens when interviewed in the streets, and by the flocking of women volunteers into the army. If war again reaches us women, will, of course, be conscripted.

Revolution may be possible as long as we are not all dead or dying. But survivors of a nuclear war will be the unlucky ones. They will be faced with horrible, deadly disease, dreadfully deformed offspring and fascist dictatorship, amid general chaos and destruction—Karl Marx's only alternative to socialism. This will happen, unless more is done to prevent it. I hope to be dead before then, any way, but I may not be, as nuclear war may be sparked off at any time.

Kathleen Jones
Shrewsbury

LETTERS



You can win sometimes...

Dear Womens Voice,

I would like to you to print this letter to give women the incentive that they need so desperately nowadays to stand up for their rights.

I realised in August 1979, much to my amazement, that in parts of Northern Ireland women would lose their supplementary benefit for one full week unemployment unless they made their claim in the DHSS before Wednesday afternoon, while men were allowed to claim at any time between Monday and Friday, and consequently ran no risk of losing payment.

On realising this injustice I contacted the Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland and reported the DHSS for sex discrimination.

After much to-do, and nine months later, the signing on arrangements at social security offices are fully integrated between the sexes.

I would hope that this small strike for equality would help other women who are striving for equality to keep the chin up at a time when they might seem to be getting nowhere.

Dorothy Burke
Newry, County Down

Dear Miss Burke

The file concerning your supplementary benefits problems has been passed to me. The Commission has been assured by the Department of Health and Social Services that from May 5 of this year signing on arrangements at social security offices are fully integrated between the sexes.

As far as your own case is concerned, the Commission feels that it has taken it as far as it can as a sex discrimination issue. We would recommend that if you wish to challenge the appeals procedure you should contact a local community law centre.

Ms Naomi Wayne

Chief Enforcement Officer

Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland

Omissions?

Dear Womens Voice,

I have just enjoyed a brief opportunity to look through your June issue. Two omissions stood out: the names of your editorial group, and Jo Nesbitt's name on her illustration on page 21.

I hope these were mistakes and if not, I wonder why. Are we not, in the womens movement, committed to

giving women each and every credit we are due?

I look forward to any further chances I may find to see your magazine.

Jennifer Kerr,
St Andrews, Scotland

Jo Nesbitt's name was left off my mistake and we apologise. But we have decided not to print the name of the editorial group because it constantly changes. We don't want to give a list of those who do most or have helped longest.

Tory ladies might lose their heads

Dear Womens Voice,

I have heard through the grapevine that the National Union of School Students are planning, as their contribution to the demonstration at Brighton, a 'Tory Ladies Hat Race'. This involves stealing Tory women delegates' hats. I object to this on several grounds.

- It doesn't make a political point—about youth unemployment or anything else;
- Women have been chosen as the victims because they will offer little resistance;
- It will attract adverse publicity, of the young thugs steal hats sort.

I am sure that these young people can think of something else to do to support the march. If they would be prepared to change their plan to a 'Tories Hat Race' (men included), I might be prepared to believe that the attack is on Tories and not on women, although I still find it pointless.

Shirley Frost
London NW1

Let's not scoff

Dear Womens Voice,

I can understand Jeffer Clement's criticisms of 'alternative' medicine. There is a bit of ignorance about and acceptance of medicine and health as we in the West know it.

As socialists we should be able to widen our knowledge and expectations of what health and healing are all about and incorporate this into our health care.

I'm concerned about people as a 'whole', not just as sick bodies to be treated with pills at 70p a go — palliatives mostly — the prescription handed to you by a doctor who just about glances at you in you're lucky. And I remember the days they actually examined you!

If we are to do this we must open our eyes and not just be aware of the short term battles, crucial as they are. We should

not scoff at those who choose to practise outside the narrow confines of the hospital/GP establishment, or aren't allowed in.

I'm not advocating acupuncture for the privileged but the opportunity for everyone to be happy and healthy and that's some task.

Maggie Bonner
Oldham

Do women still live in caves?

Dear Womens Voice,

I would like to draw your readers' attention to an advertisement placed in the national press recently for Wates Built Homes (the address of the company is 1260 London Road, Norbury, London, SW16 4EG). It was both offensive and inaccurate.

It was offensive both to women and to men in that it was aimed at men as the only people capable of purchasing a home whilst having to 'support' a wife (or so it implied) and it treated women as animated kitchen appliances. Apparently, Wates' homes have carefully boxed-in pipes to save 'the wife' time in her chores, and this same unpaid servant receives a present when the 'couple' move in.

So far Wates have received only three letters of complaint about the advertisement - all from women. Would Women's Voice readers who have seen the offending piece please join me in my protest and write to Wates telling them that women may be worse off financially than men but they still want to be recognised for what buying-power they do have, instead of being expected to rely on men for a roof over their head.

Besides, by ignoring women as potential customers in their own right, Wates are doing themselves harm in the long run by avoiding a considerable proportion of the population — bigotry can prove to be decidedly unsound when it reduces potential sales!

Zoe Pitt

Dear Jane

I WAS asked to write about women and alcohol some months ago, but resorted to 'Well I'm not the best person to write about alcohol and restraint... ha, ha.. But it is an important subject and the number of women alcoholics are rising all the time. The news that the actress Yootha Joyce died from acute alcoholism after drinking half a bottle of brandy every day for ten years makes the point, brutally.

I'm what is called a 'regular social drinker'. It's not the amount, I consume (often I'll just have one or two drinks) but I drink alcohol every day of my life. I'm one of those to be found in the lemming-like

rush to the bar after meetings and work. I find that having a drink after I have finished working is a ritualised signal that I can relax and unwind—or try to.

I lead a busy life and find it difficult to relax and sometimes difficult to sleep. Drinking helps. It's a depressant, makes you sleepy and relaxes inhibitions. Having a few drinks and no longer being completely sober makes me feel I can say what I really think.

If I'm honest there are other reasons why I drink on a regular basis. I enjoy the taste of alcohol, I like pubs, I enjoy feeling the sensation of what is called 'mild euphoria' after a few

drinks.

Drinking alone is described by all the health education pamphlets as a warning sign for future serious drinking problems. I do that too...We always have alcohol at home—a few bottles of spirits, a gallon or two of home-made gut-rot. I started drinking alone a long time ago. I remember buying half bottles to drink while struggling with my college thesis. Now I have a drink at home if I don't go to the pub after work. I don't get drunk alone; I just have one or two.

Looking at what I've

written and at the leaflets on alcoholism, I feel concerned for myself. If I gave myself a little more time each day to unwind the need to have a drink may disappear. But I'm not sure that the solution to drinking problems and alcoholism is quite so simple. It's not just a case of individuals taking responsibility for their own health. Pressure, stress, the need to escape from problems are not always factors that individuals can control.

JANE FOSTER

Your's Worried

High class horrors

compared to mine or yours whose major concern is usually, who'll pick the kids up from the school, or where the rent money's coming from.

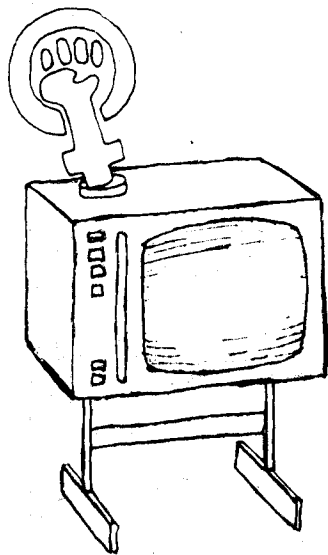
Take our Pam (somebody please) pouting lips, make up three inches thick, firm breasts (1lb of silicone in each side) She's so like the ordinary newly wed girl, striving for her freedom and liberation from dotting, dishy, dumb Bobby.

Yes, they're all there in the story line aren't they. Good old dependable mum, miss Elly, just like mine or yours (Mum supreme) always strolling around the mansion, (sorry ranch) where food appears miraculously on the table (either that or the servants are invisible). Then there's Jock, not Jack like ordinary people, you see we have to be different in America, 'cos he's the head of the family, bossman. Close behind him, there's Sue Ellen, mother, wife, mistress the women you want to beat that bastard JR, but of course she never will. Like all men, Jock, JR, Bobby, Dusty, Rusty the Lone Ranger, they're all better than us, all winners. For our place, girls, is at home. Look how many rows Bobby and Pam

have, when if she stayed at home in her place, they wouldn't have any rows, just probably a suicide pact from the sheer boredom of it all. For, even with millions you don't escape problems. So why strive for better things, more money. The message is there, don't bother trying, the more money you have the more problems

you have. You see, we're lucky, we're just ordinary. Anyway who wants to be like them. Just think of the petrol bill each week with all those cars, to say nothing of the pollution either to your mind from watching it, or your lungs from standing in the drive. (Do they have drives on ranches?)

Christine Fellowes



Who Killed JR? Who gives a will probably be your reply. Yet this western (in the cowboy sense of the word) has gripped the heads and hearts of the viewing public. Will Miss Elly (or is it Ms) Jerk, sorry Jock, Sue Ellen, our Pam and Bobby (or is it the Man From Atlantis) pull through, along with baby John (imprisoned for ever in his cot) still smiling through.

Why do people fall for this sexist crap, why do women especially sit glued to the set, sighing, sobbing and screaming at the antics of the Ewings.

Well, it's because the majority of women have nothing else to relate to. We all feel we can escape for fifty minutes, into this fantasy world. For even though they're rich, they still have problems. But God, how outrageous are their problems,



TALES WE TELL OUR SISTERS

Whose Identity Crisis?

by
Lindsey Short

THE OUTSIDE door to the public loo was open. Having had a pee I was washing my hands. In the mirror I could see two women standing outside nudging each other. Making a good job of washing my meticulously clean hands they still stood there. Now looking quite put out they started to fidget. As I went out and passed them, they both strained their throats and started to cough pointing to the ladies sign! All I could do was laugh.

'Cheer up mate'. It is really strange to hear a man say that to another man especially when that man is you.

After having an argument with a man in the pub and telling him I was a man I got into a fight. After the first blow I shouted my confession, the drunken brawl stopped as quickly as it had started with profuse apologies.

'What do you want guv?'

'I'll have a pint of London please.'

'That will be 52p please, love.'

People change names and words in one sentence but they don't seem to notice. All they see is that in fact I am a woman

and they made a mistake.

Not that their tone changes because I am a woman.

Standing on a bus the woman in front of me was asked 'Would you like to sit in the empty seat dear.'

'No thanks, I'm getting off at the next stop.'

Turning to me the bus conductor said:

keep it tidy? Then it wouldn't happen.'

'That's funny, I never thought you looked like a boy. It must be the way you walk.'

'Well, you don't wear make-up. So what do you expect?'

'Ah well, that's because you always wear jeans, why don't you wear skirts and dresses?'



'Why don't you sit down then?'

One of the biggest problems is asking where the loo is. The quick directions, the dash only to find that it's the GENTS. After being redirected I get up to the LADIES when somebody points out that that's the ladies. 'How very observant of you', is the only thing I can think of saying.

After telling a few friends about my being mistaken for a man they offer a few words of wisdom. 'It's your hair, why don't you grow it long? Why don't you

Then one friend summed it up. 'Look, it's the way you dress, you're tall, you've short hair and you move without *restrictions*.'

Of course, some of my friends say I don't look a bit like a man. I was out with a friend for a drink. Telling him about being mistaken for a man he sneered with disbelief. As we left at closing time the barman shouted out 'Goodnight Gents'. So what can I do about it whilst policemen call me sonny and barmen call me back?

WHAT IS GOING ON?

WV groups

- **ABERDEEN** Womens Voice for more information telephone Liz 51059
- **ABERYSTWYTH** Womens Voice meets regularly. Contact c/o Students Union, UCW, Aberystwuth. Babysitting available.
- ACTON WV** Contact Ruth or Jude 740 6660 for venue details.
- **NORTH BIRMINGHAM** Womens Voice meets fortnightly. Phone Maggie 021 449 4793
- **SOUTH BIRMINGHAM** Womens Voice meets fortnightly. Phone Jill 021 459 1718
- **BLACK COUNTRY** Sundays fortnightly. 2.30, 27 Glen Court, Compton Road. Children welcome.
- **Bradford** Womens Voice group meets fortnightly. Kids welcome. Contact Janet c/o Textile Hall, Westgate Bradford or phone Trish 306447.
- BRIGHTON WV** meets fortnightly on Tuesday at 8pm at the Queen's Head. For information phone 696897.
- **BRISTOL WV** meets every Wednesday 7.30pm. For details phone Katrina 46875.
- BURTON ON TRENT WV** meets every week. Details from Kim 33929.
- **CANTERBURY** Womens Voice meets every other Tuesday at Jolly Sailor Northgate. Phone Barbara (Lyminge 862742).
- **CHORLTON WV** meets fortnightly on Tuesdays. Ring Claire 226 1048 for details and babysitters.
- **COVENTRY** WV meets every other Wednesday 8.00pm in the Hertford Tavern off Queens Road (near the Butts) Coventry 361585 (Sue Pinkham).
- **CROYDON** Womens Voice meets alternate Tuesdays. Phone Maureen 660 0989 or Yvonne 664 3768.
- **DUDLEY** WV meets fortnightly every 2nd and 4th Tuesday at the Plough, Church Street, Brierly Hill. 8.00pm contact Brigitte Brierley Hill 78308.
- **EALING/SOUTHALL** WV phone Christine or Jane 571 1838.
- **ECCLES AND SALFORD** Womens Voice. For information ring Jennie 707 2557 or Ann 737 3800
- **EDINBURGH** Womens Voice meets fortnightly on Sunday evenings. Phone Penny 5 0731 for details.

● **ENFIELD** WV meets every other Monday 8pm at Scope Community Centre 232a Ponders End, High Street. Details Nora 807 1741

● **GLASGOW** WV For details ring Clare 357 1157

● **GLOSSOP**, Derbyshire Womens Voice meets second and fourth Tuesday of every month at 110 Victoria Street, Glossop. Phone Glossop 64287 for Carol.

● **HACKNEY** WV Details and babysitters phone Liz/Carol 254 3470 or Jan/Maddie 249 8716

● **HALIFAX** Womens Voice details from WV and SW sellers every Saturday 11am -12.30pm. Co-op arcade on the Precinct.

● **HAMMERSMITH** Womens Voice meets regularly. Contact Kate 748-7336 for details and babysitter.

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

● **HIGHBURY** WV Phone Clara 226 7066

● **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** WV For details ring Pauline 586 5693

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

LANCASTER Womens Voice meets regularly—ring 36196 for details.

● **LEEDS** Womens Voice group meets every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at 8pm in the Central Station Hotel, Wellington Street. For more information contact Gilda 622 800 or Bev 457 098.

LEICESTER Womens Voice meets alternative tuesdays. Contact Fiona 0533 62855.

● **LEYTONSTONE** WV group meets fortnightly. Please ring Annie (556 5595) or Pam (558 1509) for details.

● **LIVERPOOL** Womens Voice meets on alternate Tuesdays at 8pm in the County Hotel. For further information phone Jane 727 1182

● **LUTON** WV Details write to Denise 35, Chatsworth Road, Luton.

● **MANCHESTER** University Womens Voice meets each week at 5pm in the students union.

● **MEDWAY** Womens Voice meets regularly. Telephone Lici, Medway 571628

● **NEWCASTLE** Womens Voice meets regularly. Phone Liz 854 782.

● **NEWHAM** Womens Voice. Ring Pam 534 1417

● **NORWICH** Womens Voice for more information write c/o 56 St Benedicts St. Norwich.

NOTTINGHAM WV meets every other Monday at the Womens Centre, Street. Details Chrissie Langley Mill. 62358.

● **OXFORD** Womens Voice meets fortnightly. Phone Oxford 50437 for more details.

● **PIMLICO** area Womens Voice—phone Helen 730 7983 or Leslie 834 0760 for further details.

● **READING** Womens Voice meets fortnightly. For details phone Shirley on 585554

ST HELENS WV meets alternate Mondays. Phone Carol, St Helens 28178.

● **SHEFFIELD** Womens Voice meets fortnightly at the Prince of Wales. Division Street. For details ring Sue 613739

● **SOUTHWARK** Womens Voice—anybody interested should contact Kirsten Ross on 732 4604 for further details.

SOUTH LONDON WV meets alternate Tuesdays at the Tate Library, Brixton. Ring Sally, 720 5768 for details.

● **SOUTH WEST LONDON** Womens Voice. All welcome. Information and babysitters contact Marion 947 0560.

● **STOCKPORT** Womens Voice. For details phone 061 431 7564.

● **STOKE ON TRENT** Womens Voice meets at Knotty Action, Mollart Street, Hanley. Fortnightly. Ring Sandra 814094

● **TOTTENHAM** Womens Voice meets regularly. Phone Mary for information and babysitters, 802 9563.

● **TOWER HAMLETS** WV meets fortnightly; on Tuesdays. Details from Helen 980 6036

● **WALTHAMSTOW** Womens Voice meets alternative Tuesdays at 8pm. Phone Pauline 521 4768 or Mary Ann 520 3025.

● **Wrexham** Womens Voice Group meets fortnightly from 17 March. Telephone Heather 87293 for more details.

WV public meetings

Womens Voice WOMEN IN HISTORY series. 7pm The Roebuck pub, Tottenham Court Road. (Warren Street/Goodge Street Tube). Friday nights.

Oct 3 Inessa Armand - *Anna Paczuska*.

Oct 17 Sarah Dickenson - *Lin James*.

Oct 31 Clara Zetkin - *Yolanda Bystram*

Nov 21 Rosa Luxemburg - *Marnie Holborow*.

Dec 12 Catherine Chidley - *Nora Carlin*.

North/East London WV Day School Women Against the Tories. Sat 25 October, 10.30am, TU Centre, 2a Brabant Rd, Wood Green, N22. (Nr Wood Green Tube Station). All WV readers welcome. Also evening disco. Details see page 10, or ring Pam 558 1509 or Mary 802 9563.

Hull University WV: Anyone interested in more information please contact us at our Book-stalls at the Freshers Bazaar.

COUNTERACT Theatre Company and Edinburgh Womens Voice, 'Never Mind the Ballots'. 8pm 12 October, Trades Council, 14 Picardy Place, Edinburgh.

Small ads

NATIONAL FESTIVAL FOR WOMENS RIGHTS — fortnightly planning group meetings — from Monday, September 1st, at 7pm, 374 Grays Inn Road, London WC1. All welcome.

National Planning Day: October 4th, 2pm, Intensive English School, Star St London, W2.

NOVEMBER 22nd: Conference for women in the Labour Party. Called by *Fightback for Women's Rights* to start organising a rank and file women's caucus. Three themes- 1) Democratic changes to make our voice louder in the party; 2) drawing up a package of demands to fight for the party to adopt and implement (other campaigns invited to contribute ideas); 3) getting the party to fight for women's rights now against the Tories.

11am to 4.30 at Islington Central Library, Holloway Road London N7 (Highbury & Islington tube). Creche, lunch. Fee £1. Info from Women's Fightback, 41 Ellington Street, London N7

NATIONAL Gay Teachers Conference, Sheffield Polytechnic Students Union, 15-16 November. Details from Pete Bardsley, Sheffield 681464 or PO Box 107, Sheffield S1 1EJ

MATERNITY BENEFITS AND THE EMPLOYMENT ACT.

A factsheet on how the Employment Act will affect maternity benefits, and how to negotiate for a better deal, has been produced by the Defend Our Unions Committee. Send orders to Maternity, PO Box 82 London E2 9DS. Cheques or postal orders should be made out to 'Right to Work Campaign'. Cost £1 for 50.

IRANIAN Womens Solidarity Campaign - meeting Wednesday 8 October. 7.30pm Roebuck pub (Tottenham Court Road). Two members of the Iranians Womens Solidarity Campaign, just back from Iran, will speak about the present situation of women in Iran.

SANDRA



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Your nearest Womens Voice Group meets

Join Womens Voice...

join the fight

Womens Voice is an organisation that fights for women's liberation and socialism. We fight for:

- Equal pay
- Free abortion and contraception
- Maternity leave and child care provision
- The right to work
- Against all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex, sexual orientation, or race.

Women's liberation is only possible through women organising and fighting for themselves. Women's liberation can only be achieved by linking its struggles to those of the working class and overthrowing the capitalist system. Womens Voice supports the aims of the Socialist Workers Party. It is organisationally independent but based on the politics of the SWP.

I want to join the fight...

Name

Address

Send to Womens Voice
PO Box 82,
London, E2

MY MESSAGE TO THE WOMEN OF OUR NATION..



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