

womens **VOICE**

Womens magazine of the Socialist Workers Party

July '81
Issue 54
Price 25p

Special Souvenir
Wedding Issue



*...for richer
and richer*

*on the backs of the
poorer, in idleness
and in wealth,
till death us
do part.*



Marxism 81 10-17 July

Last year when the first feminist underground writing appeared in *Russia Womens Voice* wrote 'It was the first feminist writing, but it was also disappointing it its anti-working class, anti-male, and pro-religious stance.' Tatyana Mamonova is a member of the collective which produced those writings. She wrote to *Womens Voice* to tell us 'I take a different stance'. Tatyana will be speaking at Marxism 81 on Sunday evening at 7pm on the topic '*Can Socialism Bring Women's Liberation?*'.

Her meeting is only one of many featured in Marxism 81, the week of marxist ideas and discussion taking place at Queen Mary College, London, from 10-17 July. There are two specific courses on women—Women's Politics and Literature—Women and Writing. Other courses cover a range of topics from Missile Madness to a Century of War and Revolution to the Labour Party.

For all the debates among socialists including sport and sexual politics, plus films, theatre, bands, food, drink, a creche and crash accommodation if you need it, send £11.50 registration in advance for the whole week (£13 on the door) of £6 for the weekend to SWSO, PO Box 82, London E2 straight away.



Marxism 81 Courses

A Century of War and Revolution
The Labour Party
Mapping the Missile Madness
Introduction to Marxism
The Mass Media
Sexual Politics
Advanced Economics
The Fight for Socialism in Eastern Europe
Ireland
Women's Politics
Debates within Marxism
Modern Writers
Working for the State
Classical Marxism
The Politics of Black Liberation
The Anatomy of the Revolutionary Left
Literature—Women and Writing
Imperialism and Revolution today

**Starts 7pm Friday 10 July
at Queen Mary College,
Mile End Road,
London E1.**

Thrown out -for what

NASIRA BEGUM may be thrown out of Britain because she married a man who was already married to someone else. Cynthia Gordon may be put on a plane to Jamaica because she went there for a few years to care for her dying mother. Nasreen Akhtar and Jaswinder Kaur, both separated from their husbands, no longer have the right to remain in the country they have made their home.

These four cases of threatened deportation have been well publicised in the left and liberal press. There are campaigns around each of these women which are helping to publicise their cases and mobilise against them.

But on their own these campaigns will probably not stop the deportations. And even if the campaigns for these four women are successful, their cases are only the tip of a huge iceberg. Hundreds of women, men and children are under direct threat of deportation. Many thousands more live in fear that they or their relatives will suffer in some way under the immigration laws.

Immigration laws have got more complicated over the years, and women in particular are caught in an intimidating web. The regulations governing immigration have become increasingly tight under successive Labour and Tory governments. The present Act defines immigrants in terms of race (patrials and non-patrials).

The new Nationality Bill—soon to become an Act—promises to make things even worse. People who have believed themselves to be British citizens may find out that they have no secure status in this country. Fear and suspicion will become

the rule throughout immigrant communities.

All immigration controls are racist. They are designed to keep out 'undesirable' people—people whose skins are a shade too dark. Immigration controls have never stopped white South Africans or Australians or New Zealanders from entering the country.

Immigration laws are used to control black people through fear. Every time a 'non-resident' is arrested, on whatever charge, enquiries are made about that person's legal status, and often deportation orders are signed. The rules which govern immigration create the idea that somehow people born in other countries have no *right* to be in Britain, despite the fact that employers were crying out for more labour not so long ago. Now that profits are down, governments and bosses are keen to 'send them back'.

All this serves to make the racism of the nazi British Movement and National Front respectable, and endorsed by the state. The absurd propaganda put out by these nazi organisations about blacks taking 'our' jobs and 'our' homes—propaganda, because it is factually wrong—is made more credible by immigration regulations. The laws open the door to the sorts of vicious attacks and murders on black people that have taken place in Coventry and other areas of the country.

We are opposed to racism, and therefore we are opposed to *all* immigration controls. It is not just a question of supporting the campaigns for the four women cited above; it means fighting for the rights of black people everywhere.



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This is the July/August issue of *Womens Voice*. The magazine is not published in August.

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Published by Elophatin Ltd, PO Box 82, London E2

Printed by East End Offset, London E2.

OUR JOBS STAY...



John Smith: IFL

'If you want a fight Arthur, get out of your Rolls Royce'

LAWRENCE SCOTT ENGINEERING (LSE) is one of Manchester's oldest engineering firms, employing 650 people. It is due to close in mid-July but the workforce, about a third of whom are women, have occupied the factory to save their jobs. It is the biggest fight against redundancies in the country at the moment.

Rita Maguire and Linda McTaggart are two of the workers in occupation. They told *Womens Voice*, 'We're not giving up without a fight. People have worked here for years. If this place closes, part of your life has finished. Where else would we go for jobs?'

The managing director and chairman of LSE is Arthur Snipe, who took over in October. 'First he put us on short time, then he decided to close the factory. He took seven months even to talk to us. We decided to fight him.'

Joan Drabble is an audio typist at LSE and financial secretary of the occupation. She told us that the women at LSE have taken a very active part in the occupation and delegations.

'Even the ones who weren't for the sit-in at first are very active. They realised they couldn't just get fixed up with another job if the factory

closed. It's not that easy now.'

The canteen has huge lists of donations and support on the walls; there is an office for social security enquiries and the rota; and the workers check on and off for the three daily shifts in a committee room by the main gate. On the gates themselves there is a placard with the challenge: 'If you want a fight, Arthur, get out of your Rolls-Royce.'

'Arthur Snipe reckoned without the workers when he announced the closure', said Joan. 'This man has never come up against militancy. He's just being a bully boy. Well, we're not having it.'

'I never thought it would be so well organised', said Linda. 'The strike committee keeps us informed, we've been on delegations to local factories, and people have been as far away as Glasgow, Wales and Yorkshire—all over. We've had tremendous support; over £1,000 was collected on the Peoples' March in London and now the Yorkshire and Lancashire miners are backing us. We went on a march with the Royal Pride women in Manchester, which was great.'

The factory has a good record of trade union organisation. There are three unions,

APEX, TASS and AUEW. Joan was an APEX shop steward for 18 years and when she started union meetings were held in the evenings and outside the factory. She changed them to on site and in the dinner hour, and more women started to come along.

In 1975 the women in APEX struck over a wage claim. 'we were out for six weeks and it rained nearly every day. The strike made lots of women realise that there is a point being in a union', said Joan. That strong trade union organisation is now paying off.

'Arthur Snipe's offered us our jobs back twice', Rita and Linda told us. 'But both times only until July when he wants the factory to close. He sent us our P45s this week and we're sending them back.'

The workers at LSE are determined to win. We asked them what was the best support we could give. Rita and Linda said, 'We need money—without it we'll collapse.'

Send donations and messages of support to The Treasurer, Lawrence Scott Strike Fund, c/o George Fryer, 20 Round Croft, Ronily, Cheshire.

**Debbie Gold
Hilary Troop**

AT LAST the call for an all-out strike is official in Birmingham and Coventry. The votes coming in from consultative meetings in this area are strongly in favour of an indefinite strike to win our claim.

Members of civil service unions are getting more and more angry at the vindictive manner of this government. Now they are beginning to recognise that the only way we can make headway is through united action.

One woman who works in a job centre in Coventry, and who voted for an all-out strike, said:

'I cannot afford to pay my bills at the moment, so how can I manage next year if we accept seven per cent? If we lose this year, we might as well forget about the future, because we'll have none.'

OVER 800 civil servants have been suspended in Scotland for refusing to write giro cheques which are usually produced by computer. Local union officials are now calling for all out action to win the pay claim.

But as Margaret Garrity, a worker in the Department of Health and Social Security, told a rally in Glasgow: 'After 14 weeks it is criminal that our union leaders are putting us in the firing line for suspension rather than calling for an all out strike.' Many of the 2000 civil servants at the lunchtime rally agreed.

Josphine Coyle takes home just over £60 a week, after five years service. She has recently been allocated a new council flat. 'I don't know how I'm going to pay my rent or rates, or who is going to feed me, but I know that I have no choice but to argue for an all-out strike. If we accept seven per cent now we are finished—not only for future pay deals, but on cuts and new technology. If the union leaders do not take action then we will have to take it ourselves. After all its our jobs and our wages.'

The support for an all-out strike exists in Glasgow, but the national civil service leadership is still dragging its heels. Selective action hasn't worked and the civil service rank and file is getting impatient.

Jennifer Young
Scottish Office

At 12 o'clock on Tuesday 9 June thousands of civil servants in Bristol walked out in protest at Thatcher's policies. After a rally

7%-Stuff it!



Tessa Howland: IFL

CIVIL SERVANTS all over the country have been taking industrial action for more than three months in pursuit of their pay claim. The Government's offer stands at seven per cent—a paltry figure for some of the lowest paid workers in the country. Since making the offer, the Government has refused to negotiate.

The action civil servants have taken has been selective—a few people here, a few people there. *Redder Tape*, the civil service rank and file group, and SWP members in the civil service have been arguing since the beginning of the action that only an indefinite, all-out strike will win a decent pay settlement. After weeks of frustration, many civil servants now agree—as the reports below show.

But at a meeting of the Council of Civil Service Unions (CCSU) last month the general secretaries of the eight unions decided to continue with selective action. They say they will probably intensify the action, but now it should be clear that only united all-out action will win.

The CPSA, one of the eight unions, had a majority in their ballot for all-out strike action. But 'in the interest of unity' the union executive decided to step into line with the other unions and continue with selective action.

If this pay claim is lost, the implications for the civil service unions are far wider than this year's wages. The unions will be demoralised and ineffective to fight redundancies. The people who will be hit by cuts in the civil service will not be the few highly-paid, bowler-hatted gentlemen of Whitehall; the redundancies will be amongst the clerical workers, mostly women. These are the people who already suffer from wages far below the national average.

In these reports civil servants from around the country explain why they say 'stuff it' to seven per cent.

about 1,500 demonstrators marched around the centre of Bristol, chanting and waving banners.

Christine Coffery, an assistant collector of taxes, and her husband are both civil servants. At first Christine's husband would not support the local walkout. He said that he couldn't afford to lose the pay.

'I sat up until the early hours of the morning arguing with him,' Chris told *Womens Voice*. 'I told him we wouldn't be able to afford to live next year unless we got a decent pay rise to cover the increase in bills. Eventually he agreed that it was important to support the strike and come on the delegation.

With us both being civil servants an all-out strike would obviously mean hardship—we haven't got any savings to fall back on. But unless we stand firm over pay Thatcher will know that she can fling her axe wherever she likes in the civil service because the unions aren't prepared to fight back. If she thinks that we are weak she's in for a surprise.'

'I've been reading *Womens Voice* and *Socialist Worker* since the dispute started. I also read the *Redder Tape* (rank and file) bulletin, and I agree with them. They argued that all-out strike was the only way to win right from the start of the pay

campaign—and they have been proved right.'

Katrina Tulley
Inland Revenue Staff
Federation, Bristol.

MANY rank and file civil servants in Manchester have been arguing for several weeks that we need an all-out strike to win our pay claim.

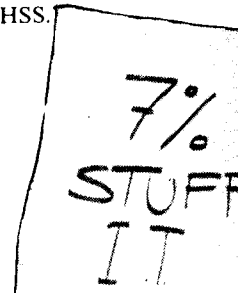
Our pay is abysmal—don't think of the Whitehall mandarins, think of two-thirds of civil servants earning below the national average. A Clerical Assistant straight from school earns less than £42 before deductions.

Avril Scott, a CPSA member in the DHSS in Manchester, said, 'I am a single parent. My sole income is my wages plus £7.75 child benefit. I have to pay for my daughter to go to a day nursery full-time so that I can earn a living to support us and my father, who is a pensioner.'

'I can ill afford to lose any pay at all, but I'm prepared to go on all-out strike indefinitely if it means that we will have a better pay deal. I feel that the words "pay increase" have become two dirty words in the government's vocabulary.'

'If we go on strike in the DHSS we hope the public will support us: We are fighting to give claimants a decent service. In our office we haven't enough people to answer telephone enquiries and get payments out. Thatcher does not care about people on either side of the counter in the DHSS.'

Diane Ridout
CPSA Branch Secretary,
Longsight DHSS.



Tessa Howland: IFL

Victory for parents in Beal St battle

AFTER 11 weeks' continuous occupation Beal Street Nursery Play Centre in Leicester is to stay open.

The play centre for pre-school-aged children was officially closed by the Council on 27 March, but a group of parents and supporters decided to fight the decision and occupied, keeping the facilities open to the children as usual.

The reason the Council gave for the closure was that the play centre was under used. But it was apparent that it had been deliberately run down. There has been little publicity given to the centre over the last year or so.

The Council said that the centre was running at a loss of £8,000 a year, and the Tories on the Council argued that the building could be put to better use as a kind of 'drop-in' centre for juvenile offenders. It's typical of Tories to put 'law and order' before children's and

mothers' wellbeing.

The occupying parents resisted the Council's proposal that they run the play centre themselves on a self-help basis and insisted on full restoration of facilities with trained professional staff. Council meetings were picketed and at one stage a group of parents and children occupied a council office as part of the protest.

The persistence of the Beal Street parents and supporters has paid off and the play centre is to remain open on a six month trial period.

The Council needn't expect to use the six months as a breathing space to allow them to shut down the play centre, hoping that the parents will have lost their militancy and their will to fight. If they do hope that, they're mistaken—because as far as we're concerned Beal Street Play Centre stays open.
Su Weston



John Smith: IFL

Here to stay

'Beautiful friends, you know me very well by now. I've come to ask for your support again.' Nasira Begum was addressing the rally after more than 1,000 people had marched in Manchester to support her fight to stay in Britain. The demonstration was for Cynthia Gordon, Nasreen Akhtar, Jaswinder Kaur and Nasira Begum who are all publicly campaigning against deportation.

Nasira told *Womens Voice*: 'Women need to come forward. I want to tell women this personally. We are in the dark about others who are still facing difficulties like me. I had strong support and we won last summer, now the Home Office are appealing against our victory. I think its a race point, they said my husband wasn't really free to marry me so they claim it was a marriage of convenience. I knew nothing of this. I was innocent and I am still innocent.' Nasira refuses to talk about going back to Pakistan. 'We will win, I am not going back.'

Like Nasira, Jaswinder and Nasreen also face deportation because of the sexist application of Britain's racist immigration laws. They are being denied status here after the breakdown of their marriages. Jaswinder's husband was deported after his brutal treatment of her and her small child, and the government say that now she must go too. Officials told Nasreen that she could not really have been married because her husband mistreated her.

Cynthia Gordon left Britain to care for her sick mother and her stay is threatened because she stayed in Jamaica too long for the government's convenience.

All these women need your support. Their fight will encourage others to come forward to challenge this country's vicious restrictions. Put resolutions to your Trade Union branches demanding no deportations, and send donations and messages of support to: Friends of Nasira Begum, c/o 595 Stockport Road, Longsight, Manchester 12.

Friends of Jaswinder Kaur, L.A.P., Box JK, 29 Blenheim Terrace, Leeds LS2 9ND;

Friends of Nasreen Akhtar, 59 Ashworth Street, Rochdale, Lancs; Cynthia Gordon Action Group, 14 Bradwell Walk, Manchester 15. Debbie Gold

The appeal against Nasira Begum being allowed to stay in Britain was due to be heard in London on 15 June. The court was picketed by suppor-

ters of Nasira and the other women under threat of deportation, but the case was adjourned. As *Womens Voice* went to press, the outcome was still unknown.

NEWS

Anti Nazi League / Rock Against Racism

The SPECIALS
MISTY ASWAD
KAU PAIRS 

NORTHERN CARNIVAL

Leeds

Saturday 4 July
11am

AGAINST RACISM

Assemble Woodhouse Moor,
march to Potternewton Park

ANL / RAR
PO Box 51 London SW10 Sponsored by Yorkshire & Humber TUC

Lee Jeans: back the blacking

THE OCCUPATION by the workers at the Lee Jeans factory in Greenock is now in its fifth month. Over the weeks, as reported in *Womens Voice*, the women have been going to workplaces and union conferences to get support for their fight to keep their jobs.

Many of the women have been saying for months that what was needed to strengthen their sit-in was an all-out blacking campaign on VF Corporation goods at the docks and in shops. It took the women's union, the NUTGW, over four months to get this off the ground, but already the blacking is going ahead.

Dockers in Scandinavia are reported as saying that they too will black VF goods. It is vital that the blacking campaign is total, and we should be out visiting dockers to ensure that this action is effective.

All along the NUTGW has been slow to take initiatives and it has been left to the women to organise and maintain the occupation. There has been talk in the factory that setting up a workers' co-operative will, in the end, be the only way to save the jobs. But a workers' co-operative would mean that a large number of jobs would still be lost, and it also lets VF off

the hook. We must ensure that every job is saved, and the women can win with the solidarity and support of all trade unionists.

A march by the women in occupation from Greenock to Edinburgh is setting off on 27 June and it will reach Glasgow on 29 June. Here two major rallies are being organised by the Scottish TUC. The march will finish in Edinburgh two days later.

Messages of support are still necessary to keep up the morale of the Lee Jeans workers and give them encouragement to continue their fight.

Pickets outside shops which sell Lee jeans are being organised up and down the country to publicise the occupation and call for a consumer blacking of Lee jeans. This in itself will not win the occupation but it will go some way to show VF Corporation and others that women are prepared to fight to save jobs.

Clare Murray

What you can do:

- send money and messages of support for the occupation and the march to: c/o 4 Broughton Street, Greenock
- organise pickets of shops selling Lee jeans. Leaflets from: *Womens Voice*, PO Box 82, London E2

NALGO backs Lee Jeans

NALGO ACTION group members who were delegates to NALGO's annual conference last month succeeded in getting standing orders suspended to hear Wilma Swan from the Lee Jeans occupation tell the story of their fight for jobs. She said: 'We've had mass support, both financial and moral, from other trade unions. The dockers have refused to touch Vanity Fair merchandise and the railwaymen have refused to move it...

'I am 18 years of age and if I lose my job I'll never get another one doing the same thing again. There's two things you can do to help—black every shop that sells Lee jeans and donate money to us.'

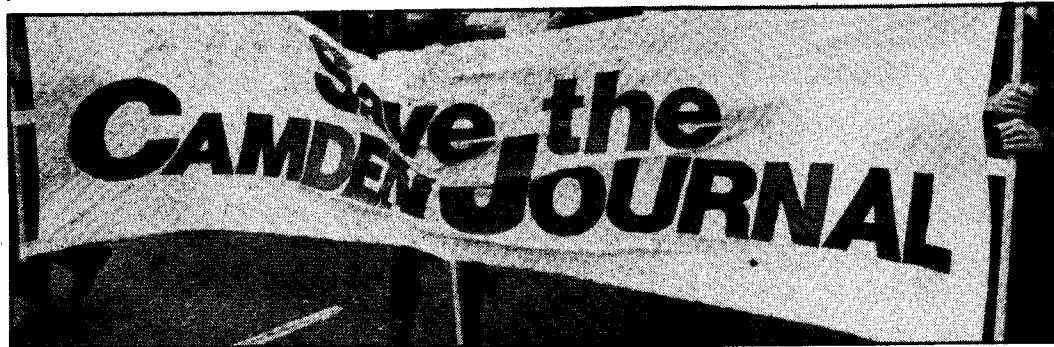
The entire conference stood to applaud the Lee Jeans occupation. More than £1,500 was donated by delegates and from social evenings.



Neil Martinson

THREE THOUSAND people marched through north London last month in solidarity with the hunger-strikers in Northern Ireland. The demonstration ended near the home of Michael Foot, leader of the Labour Party, in protest at his support for the Tories over H-Block.

There are still five H-Block prisoners on hunger-strike, and four men have already died. The Government is refusing to concede to the demands of the prisoners despite support for political status around the world. Last month two of the hunger-strikers were elected to Southern Ireland's parliament.



John Sturrock: Network

The six month fight to save nine jobs at the Camden Journal in North London is to be settled by arbitration.

Newspaper proprietor Stanley Clarke—who closed a 'progressive' local paper and sacked the journalists just a week before Christmas—has agreed to abide by any decision taken at ACAS.

His change of heart came just four days before the printers' union, NGA, were due to start all out sympathy action at the Nuneaton printing works.

Support from other NUJ members has been magnificent. Colleagues at the *Islington Gazette* and *Hornsey Journal* joined the strike on Christmas Eve. All but three have resisted threats of sacking.

Journalists in the rest of Stanley Clarke's empire came out during March and NUJ members on London weekly papers have been holding one day strikes each week.

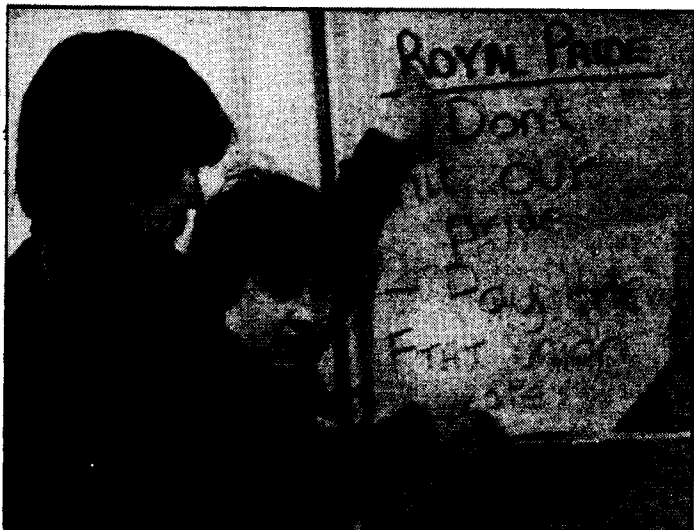
Their determination hardened after Clarke came to the negotiating table for the first

time in May and offered nothing—even turning down arbitration.

It became clear that he is out to wreck one of the strongest NUJ chapels in London—seven union officers were among the nine. Other journalists fear that he may be setting the pace for a wave of redundancies and closures in the industry.

Whatever the final outcome, everyone involved in the action can be proud of the stand they've taken to fight for jobs.

Jean Gray
NUJ Chapel, Camden Journal



Marching with Pride

ELSIE BROAD, one of the women strikers from Royal Pride in Salford, took part in the People's March from Liverpool to London. North Manchester Womens Voice went along to talk to Elsie about her experiences.

What were your first impressions of the People's March?

'I was really surprised. I didn't know what to expect. Suddenly there were 500 people together 24 hours a day, walking, talking, eating, often sleeping in the same place. I didn't know what to think. I was stopped from going into the ladies' toilet and told where the mens' were, it was like they didn't expect women to be on the People's March. The first week was the hardest, getting used to that, people coming and going, arguing and talking but being together at the end of it.

What purpose do you think the march served?

'It mobilised 500 people on the question of unemployment. People think it's a fallacy when they read in the papers about three million unemployed, we proved it wasn't a fallacy, and made people face the problem and come together to show their opposition to Thatcher's policies.

'But then, during the four weeks of the march, 50,000 more people joined the dole queue. It isn't enough to demonstrate.

'That's why we think it's important to push for an unemployed union so that the unemployed can fight back, to campaign around the right to work. It is also important that the employed and the unemployed have a way of getting together to change things so that people can see that your fight is their fight.'

What kind of reception did you get along the way?

'It was really great. The people

who came out to cheer us were women, old people, women with kids—they were the ones who gave support to the People's March. The best reception was in Birmingham, and of course London. People were on the streets crying, cheering, and clapping. They were the people who really cared. It was their struggle as well as ours, it was marvellous.

What did you think of the organisation of the People's March?

'At the start it was worse, the marshalls and stewards took control, herding people around like sheep, telling us what we could do and couldn't do. Although it got better as it went along it was like they didn't want us to make the movement grow and gain momentum. People struggling against redundancies and closures weren't relating to the march.

What role do you think the TUC and Labour Party played?

'They were great in the support they gave. But I think it's like a meeting I did the other day. It was a women's labour conference and I was asked to speak. I was talking about the support Royal Pride has been given while we've been in dispute. Frank Allaun (Labour MP for Salford West) had pledged his support and given £25, but we'd never seen him on the picket line, so it meant nothing to us. It's not enough to pledge support, it's not enough for the Labour Party and the TUC to pay lip service to the struggle. They need to be involved.

Now that you're back on the picket line at Royal Pride, how do you feel about it all?

'It was awful leaving everyone in London. Despite differences and arguments we'd had along the way, we'd spent four hard weeks together and people were crying and saying goodbye. The first few days when I got home weren't too bad, I was run off my feet. Now it's

just a vacuum. I don't know what I'll do now. We'll carry on fighting at Royal Pride and maybe another People's March will come up.'

• **Send donations and messages of support from your union branch to: Royal Pride Strikers STST, 37 Anson Road, Victoria Park, Manchester.**

Sackability - that's the wonder of gas

THIRTY FIVE THOUSAND jobs will be lost in British Gas if the Tory government has its way. Recommendations from the Monopolies Commission, which include closing gas showrooms, are due to be decided on very soon.

The Monopolies Commission report suggests either stopping British Gas from selling any appliances or restricting their market share. It's a choice between 35,000 redundancies or 30,000.

NALGO members affected

by these proposals have already voted overwhelmingly to take industrial action should the cuts be implemented. All three unions involved—NALGO, MATSA AND GMWU—are working together to resist redundancies.

There are 900 showrooms in Britain and many of their staff are women. If they close, private industry will take over the sales of cookers, fires and other appliances together with responsibility for fitting, maintenance, customer service and emergency call-out.

But breaking the monopoly British Gas holds on the sale of appliances will not mean cheaper prices or a better service. It will mean thousands more on the dole queues.

The industrial muscle of gas workers is potentially huge. At the moment the three unions are saying they will use it in order to save jobs. The test will be in the next few weeks.

Penny Hicks
NALGO



OVER 1000 women workers, mainly Asian, downed tools for the day at Lyons Tetley tea factory in Greenford, West London, to march alongside the Peoples March into Southall for a mass rally.

They also donated £1000 to the march and chanted their way through the industrial estate, linking up with other workers from Hoovers.

Mrs Doris Hopson, a tea taster's assistant said: 'I remember the 1930s and I think we are beginning to see the same things again with unemployment. We are fighting for the youngsters really.'

Mrs Evelyn Hewitt, a packer said: 'I voted to come out on strike today to join the march because both my husband and son are unemployed and cannot get jobs'

Judy Shafter



Harlow goes to Hitchin

Members of Harlow Womens Voice travelled to Hitchin on 25 May in a coach organised by the local Trades Council to join the Peoples March on its special women's day.

It began to drizzle just as we got off the coach in Hitchin. It was great to watch the marchers from Liverpool come into sight, led by women carrying the march banner. Two of the children with us were very excited to see their father, who had marched from Liverpool, looking fit and healthy.

There was a great show of solidarity from local people who clapped and honked car horns as we marched from Hitchin to Luton. When we got to Luton we were joined by more marchers and the column looked impressive stretching through the town.

As we drew near the park where the rally was held, the green-anoraked marchers lined the route to cheer the people who had joined them for that section of their long haul, and we had a great sense of solidarity. Then some of the women climbed onto the platform and spoke to the rally.

I've read a lot in Socialist Worker and other papers about the great feeling of comradeship on the march and it was really good to share in it.

Lyn O'Brien
Harlow Womens Voice



Last month we organised a Women Against the Nazis day at our local market, East Street

in South London. The twenty or so young fascist thugs who always sell their newspaper there on Sunday mornings were surprised when they arrived to find twenty women handing out leaflets telling the shoppers we are against the National Front and the British Movement selling papers in our area. We also got people to sign a petition against the new National Front headquarters in nearby Lambeth.

In spite of harassment and a barrage of racist shouting from the fascists we felt the day had been a success, and that we had shown that we are willing to stand up to the Nazis.

Southwark and Brixton Womens Voice

An offer you can refuse

In Kingston there are lots of small chain shops that sell Lee jeans. Recently some shops have had Lee jeans on 'special offer', so we organised a joint WV/SWP picket.

Between us we covered nearly every shop in the area. Most people read the leaflet we handed out and were interested in the occupation. In 25 minutes we gave out more than 200 leaflets.

Kingston Womens Voice

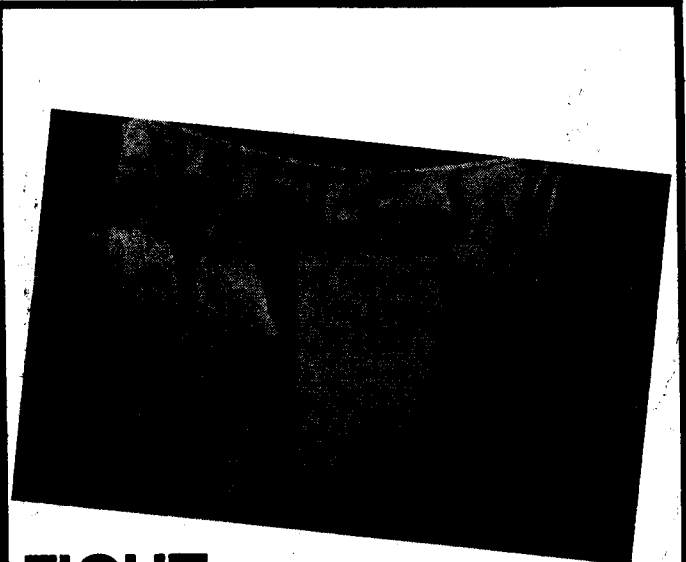
OUR RIGHT TO WORK

The Peoples' March was met by thousands of workers who saw it as the beginning of a fight back against the disastrous Tory policies that have thrown millions out of work.

The rise in unemployment has been highest among women. Part-time women workers and women with young children are very vulnerable to redundancies.

Women are losing jobs at least three times as fast as men, but the true unemployment figures are much higher, because women who are married to (or living with) employed men can't claim supplementary benefit and so often don't register as unemployed.

At the same time women are becoming more and more militant in the fight for jobs. The Lee Jeans, Royal Pride, and BPC occupations and



FIGHT FOR JOBS 4 JULY CARDIFF

A mass demonstration against unemployment has been called by the Labour Party for 4 July in Cardiff. Assemble at the National Museum, 11am.

those at many nurseries and hospitals have shown that women often lead the fight, despite poor traditions of union organisation.

It is against this background that a campaign specifically around a woman's right to work is being organised. An action committee set up out of the May 9 Festival for Women's Rights against Tory Attacks is now asking for sponsorship and support to get a demonstration called by the TUC and Labour Party early next year.

To make this a success we need to ensure that such an initiative is not left to the TUC and Labour Party bureaucrats, who will offer only their token support. We need a campaign that reflects the anger and strength of women in struggle now.

To do this every shop steward's committee, trade

union branch, and local dispute, as well as tenants' and women's groups, must be approached for support. With a real rank and file backing, based in the workplace, we can show that women are prepared to fight back and have the strength to do so.

As Elsie, a Royal Pride striker who went on the Peoples' March, said at the Festival: 'Each struggle is only a spit in the ocean, but if we all spit together we can drown the bastards!'

Vicky Charles
Brixton WV and Action Committee for Women's Right to Work

• For details of the Action Committee's meetings, leaflets etc. write to: Action Committee for a Woman's Right to Work, c/o Festival Planning Group, 374 Grays Inn Rd., London WC1.

• There is a campaign planning meeting for all supporters at 7.30 pm on 20 July in GLC County Hall, London SE1 (nearest tube Waterloo).

The people's march: The people's welcome



LONDON was the scene of a festival last month as 150,000 men, women and children—trade unionists, unemployed, school kids, old age pensioners—joined the 500 People's Marchers for their entry into the capital.

They joined the thousands more who had stopped work to greet the march at towns throughout the country. Many of the factories which struck are on short time working or under threat of redundancies themselves.

It was the greatest sign yet that ordinary working people are sick of Thatcher's policies, which mean a life of despair for kids leaving school, and the threat of unemployment for those still in work.

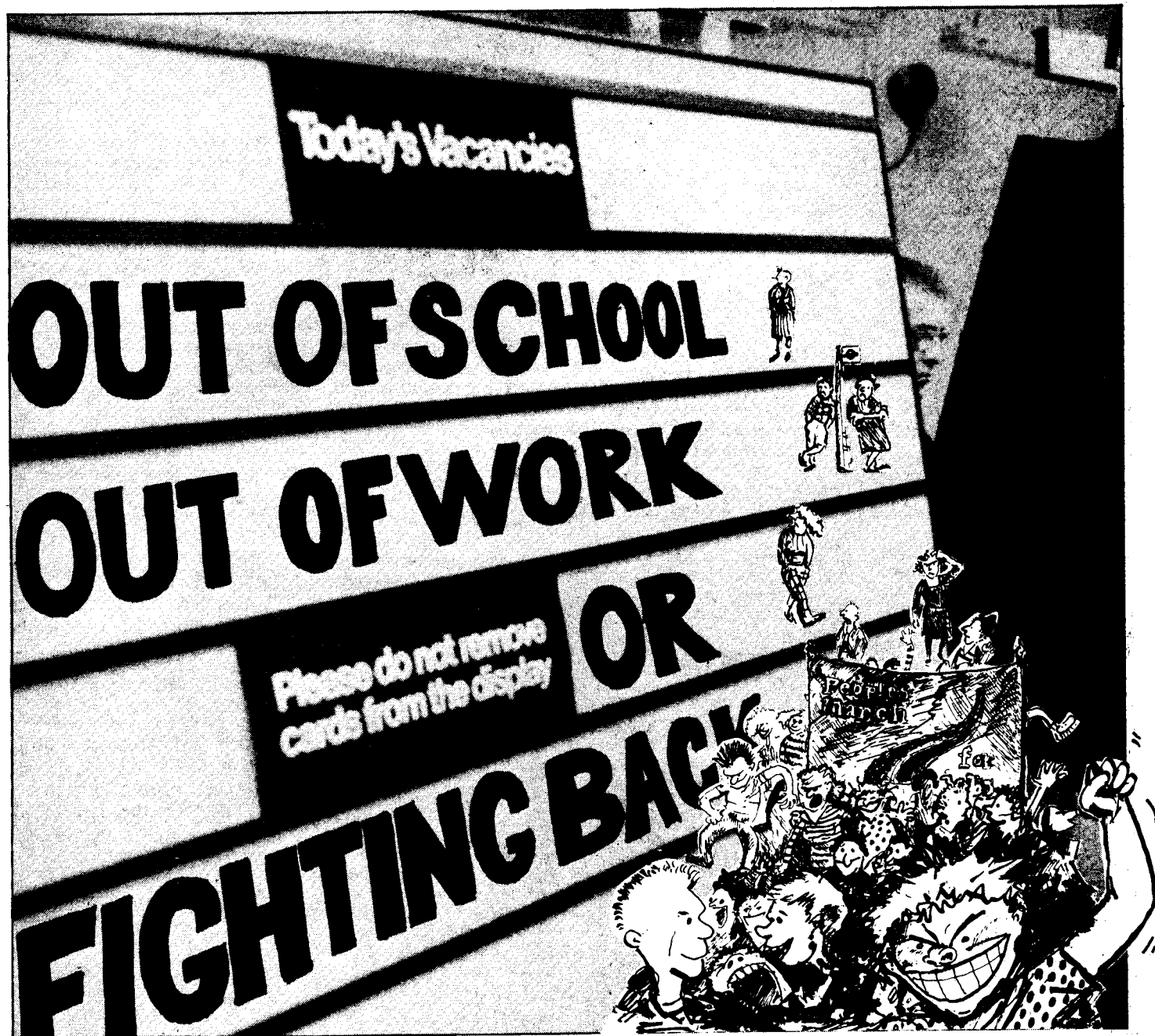
But even as the march

made its way from Liverpool, Yorkshire and South Wales, jobs were being lost in most of the towns through which it passed. Marching helps bring unemployment into the news, and the People's March does seem to have forced the TUC to do more than pay lip service to the unemployed.

But it is action, not talk which can turn back the job losses. Lee Jeans and Laurence Scotts occupations are worth more than all the promises of the Labour and union leaders, because they are workers taking action now to save their jobs, not waiting for the return of another Labour government.

The People's March needs to be the beginning of a wave of such actions, not just another protest.





This year over 100,000 young people leaving school or college will not be able to find permanent work. It is the worst figure for any year since the war. In the past, those young people would have been able to sign on for Supplementary Benefit, but this year the Tories have decided they can't, so they will have to rely on their families for money.

Their families will continue to get the measly £4.75 child allowance and that is all they will get until September 7. Many families, especially in the increasingly common situation where there is one or more unemployed, will find it almost impossible to manage. The government is effectively diddling young people and their families out of £10.50 a week (the difference between the supplementary benefit young people are allowed and the family allowance). That is a

considerable amount of money for any family to do without.

Most working class families rely on their children contributing to the family income after leaving school. The decision will mean grave financial difficulties for many—not just doing without the 'luxuries' like holidays and clothes, but cutting down on basics like food and heating as well.

Last year kids found it very expensive going down to the careers office or job centre. This year many will be staying away because they can't afford to come down, let alone travel to interviews. So even if there are any jobs going many kids will have to let them go because they can't afford the bus fare and it's too far to walk.

Pressure from their families to get round the new Supplementary Benefit rule, meant many kids left school at

Easter. They were unable to take O levels or CSEs because their families couldn't keep them. Leaving before exams in order to survive has lessened their chances of getting a job still further and makes a mockery of free education.

The demoralisation many feel at not getting jobs and being left on the scrapheap when they leave school is reinforced by having no money. The Tories' alternative is no jobs and no money to help you find one. Even worse is the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) where young people work to gain 'experience'. They normally work a 40 hour week for only £23.50. Not only is this gross exploitation, it also helps to disguise the unemployment figures.

Yet even this doesn't satisfy the Tories. They are proposing that the £4.75 child allowance

is deducted from the YOP wage which will mean an incredible £18.75 for a week's work. Now there is talk about encouraging all young people to do some voluntary service. How long before this voluntary work becomes compulsory, with young people 'earning' any benefits they were entitled to?

The Tories are picking on anyone they think won't fight back. But many young people are beginning to protest at these measures—by supporting the People's March for Jobs, through activity in the Right to Work Campaign and by starting to fight against the YOP schemes, showing them up for the cheap labour they are.

We should support them because the fight against unemployment is the fight for their future and ours.

Cath Potter

Money Making

The Jean Machine



BLUE JEANS. The single most popular item of clothing in most of Europe and America. Children and adults, women and men, everyone wears them, whether they come with a fashionable label or are cheapies from a local market.

Fifty five million pairs of jeans are sold in Britain each year. If you include every new born baby and every old age pensioner, that's one pair for everyone, every year.

Now, that's a lot of jeans, and a lot of people parting with a lot of money. And a lot of manufacturers making a lot of money—never mind what crocodile tears the manufacturers of Lee Jeans may shed about the difficulties they face in making an honest penny.

Perhaps, you might think, there is a limit to the number of jeans that can possibly be sold, a limit on the size of the market, a limit to the number of times the fashion pundits can discover denim as this year's look. But if you think that then you've seriously underestimated the imaginative effort the manufacturers will put into trying to make you buy just one more pair—in order that they can make just one more slice of profit.

Designer labels are the latest phenomena. Do you wear a pair of Gloria Vanderbilt's? If so, you're one more gullible victim of the drive to make you pay more, and buy more.

Gloria Vanderbilt jeans are manufactured by a company called Murjani, based in Hong Kong. Until 1977 the company had a small slice of the American jeans market, selling about \$25 million worth of jeans a year (that's a bit more than £1 million worth of jeans—in a country with five times the population of Britain). They

were selling jeans at \$10 (£5) a pair.

Then Murjani's American chiefs hit upon the idea of turning these ordinary jeans into something every fashionable woman must have—by sewing Gloria Vanderbilt's name on to the back pocket. She readily agreed. (She, by the way, is one of the wealthiest names in America.)

The decision was backed by a massive television advertising campaign. As a recent article in the Times put it: 'Ostensibly she was selling jeans, but in reality she was selling an image of fashion, wealth and elegance to New York's youthful millions, most of whom lacked both Miss Vanderbilt's money and her style but who were prepared to pay top prices to see if any of either might rub off. People stopped buying the jeans which look good on themselves and began instead to buy jeans which looked good on television the previous night.'

The jeans which had started life at \$10 a pair were now sold for \$40 a pair, and Murjani's turnover went up from \$25 million a year to \$150 million in the first year, and to almost \$300 million last year.

This is madness—yes, but this is also capitalism, and this is only one half of the madness. The story gets worse.

Such success will breed its imitators—there are now about 200 different makes of designer jeans on sale in the big stores in New York. Many of these will have only limited sales, but there are several big rivals to the Gloria Vanderbilt label—second is Calvin Klein, third is Jordache, fourth Sasson and fifth Sergio Valente.

If you take the whole of the jeans market in America, Levis are still the most popular and account for about a third of sales. Other long established brands and department stores 'own labels' account for another 60 per cent. So that leaves

just less than 10 per cent of the total market that the designer jeans manufacturers are battling over, and these sales are mostly in one city—New York.

That's why the television advertising war is so important—and so costly. Three years ago jeans were never advertised on American television. Now they are the third largest category being advertised in the New York area. The total turnover per year for the sale of designer jeans is about \$750 million. Of this \$75 million is now poured back into television advertising—to make people buy jeans at grossly inflated prices.

Not surprisingly much of the TV advertising had been criticised—for being sexually explicit and for being violent. Those which used children have already been banned by the television networks.

Surely the success cannot last? People will realise they are being conned, the fashion pundits will find something else. Perhaps. That's why the Gloria Vanderbilt ads now feature the name of the manufacturer—Murjani. They want you to remember this name of 'quality' so that as Murjani diversifies into footwear, sports goods and next year's fashion, you will know they are goods you can rely on—for being cheap in quality and expensive in price.

Margaret Renn

Gloria Vanderbilt
BY MURJANI

Gloria Vanderbilt achieve the perfect feminine fit because, unlike other jeans, they're designed for women, not for men. There's no gapping at the waist, no vice-like grip on your hips.

They're so well made that Cosmopolitan, Which and New York Magazine voted them the best jeans you can buy. Gloria Vanderbilt jeans fit in all the right places—in all the right sizes.

At selected branches of

EVANS

Gay rights under attack

Our rights at work are always under attack—the right to organise, the right to picket and increasingly the rights of gays. This month Julie Waterson looks at the case of Susan Shell, who was sacked for being gay, and how gay liberation will be achieved. And Sue Witherspoon tells of the experience of coming out at work and the rights of gay people to organise.

ON 13 MAY, after only three weeks in employment as a night care assistant in a girls' hostel in Barking, Essex—and with the 'discovery' that she was a lesbian—Susan Shell's employers, Barking Council, suspended her, formally sacking her a week later. Their excuse? Because they 'are responsible for the well-being of the hostel's residents'. Susan, with the backing of her union, the National Union of Public Employees, (NUPE), appealed against the decision. Predictably, she lost—Barking Council have refused to reinstate her.

The assumption on which Susan was sacked, that she would (or could) form a sexual relationship with one of the girls, is ludicrous. As Susan says 'it is an insult to my character to say that'. Is it assumed that for example, all heterosexual teachers will form relationships with their pupils? Of course not. The basis on which Susan was sacked is the view of gays as corrupt, perverse and medically inadequate.

This is not the first time Susan has been discriminated against because she is gay. 'The last job I had, working with girls in a youth treatment centre, I was refused promotion because I was gay. The management said I would manipulate the girls or they would manipulate me! I never realised at the time what support I would get or I would have raised it then—that's why I've caused havoc now. I rang Gay Rights at Work straight away—and I don't regret it.'

It is no surprise that Susan Shell, and many others in her position, have lost appeals—whether they be internal or through an Industrial Tribunal. The rights

of employers to sack gay workers are increasingly being legitimised by Industrial Tribunals, and industrial legislation holds no security for gays and others because the bias is in the employers favour. The recent decision by an Employment Appeals Tribunal that it was fair to sack homosexual workers on the basis of popular prejudice highlights the need to defend the employment rights of gay workers.

At a time when it is more and more difficult to come out (declare your sexuality) at work, gay people feel increasingly threatened. Susan Shell has shown that the attitudes of employers to the discrimination and victimisation of gays can be challenged. In a period of high unemployment fear and intimidation are used to keep wages down and implement redundancies. With vicious attacks on women's rights and the promotion of the 'traditional' view of women, looking after the kids and nurturing the family becomes a 'sacred duty'. Susan Shell has kicked these arguments and ideas in the teeth.

It is easy for employers to take away, or ignore, gay rights (what little there are) in the background of a well conducted campaign which feeds on the fears and divisions between people. This is a society that exists by dividing us—women from men, black from white and homosexual from heterosexual. This society depends on and feeds off oppression. It is our task to fight those divisions and our oppression. The only way is to build a socialist movement in which we can unite workers with oppressed gays, women and blacks. We are one—all of us together—but only when we fight together.

THE EXPERIENCE of coming out at work has been, for many of us, the same grim experience that coming out represents in the history of Industrial Tribunals. For many gay people (including me) it has been a positive experience of—understanding—surprise—openmindedness—interest—all these; and others which make me feel amazed at the phobias harboured before the event. But there was a feeling often experienced in the 70s that, 'we should have done this before'.

But here are the 80s and the phobias are still with us—and are being fed by the case laws of the Industrial Tribunals. The case of John Saunders lost its final appeal on 7 May. It is now legal to dismiss a gay person on the grounds of a prejudice that an employer thinks that his clients may hold. In plain words, dismissing gay people is justified on the grounds that people are prejudiced. Well people *are* prejudiced; and it's not surprising when they are fed daily on a diet of union-bashing, queer-bashing and anti-feminism by the Tory press. But people see through these myths every day of their lives, because they conflict with their own experience: unions are not uniformly malicious and 'queers' are not stereotypical child molesters; feminists are not 'muscular man haters'.

There was the case of Ian Davies, whose union branch (Tower Hamlets NALGO) was ready to go out on all-out strike to get him reinstated after he was sacked from his job for being gay.

There was the case of the gay worker who was sacked from his job for wearing a Gay Pride badge. His mates all went in the next day wearing Gay Pride badges. He was reinstated.

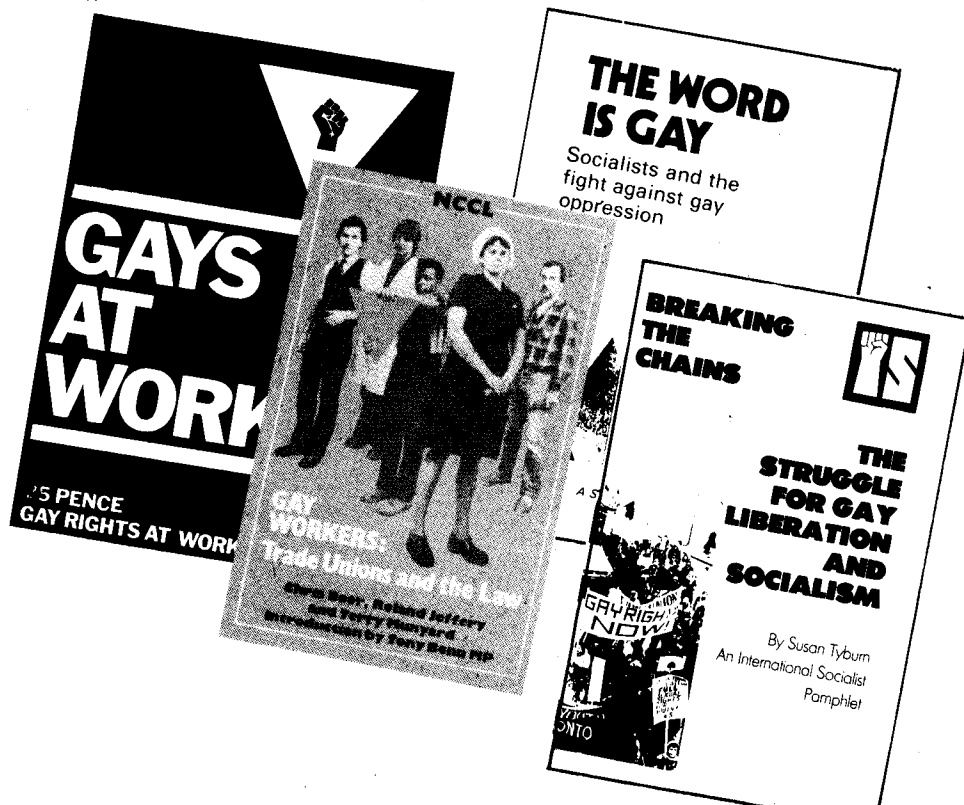
The action that has been taken to protect the jobs of gay people has been carried out by everyone—straight or gay. This is because the issue is one that affects us all. Scientific evidence showing that there is no basis to the myth that is propagated against gay people (that they are more likely to molest children) has been submitted to the tribunals—and dismissed. The reason that we are attacked in court is, that we are a minority. Anti-gay legislation means divide and rule.

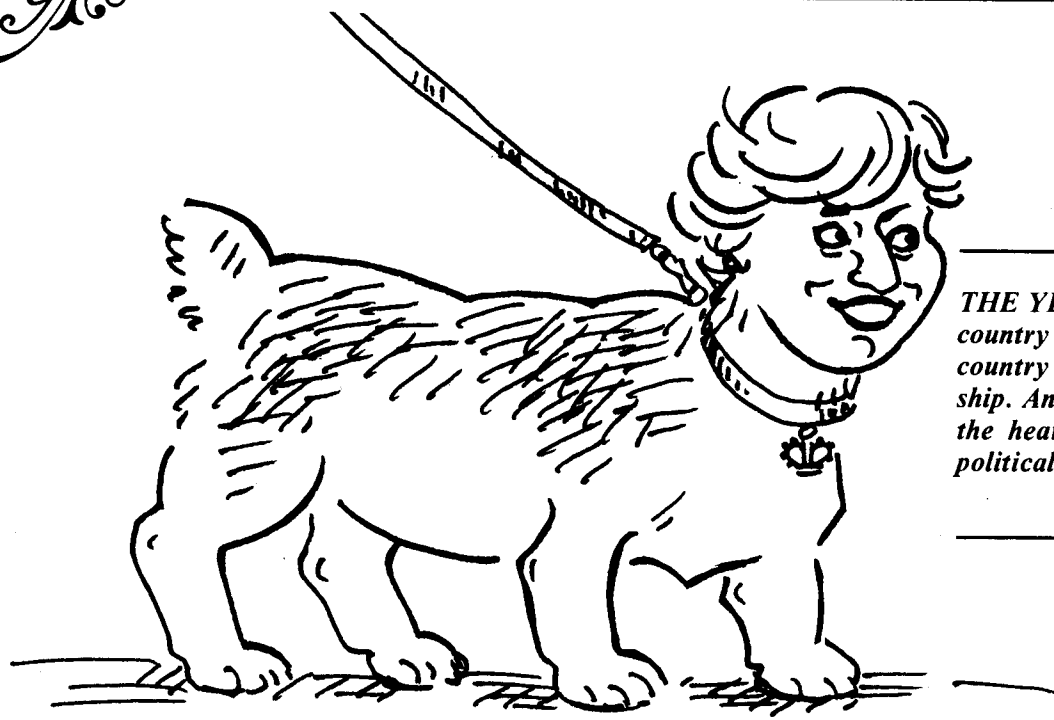
In law an employer doesn't have to prove that prejudice exists. This is just as well they may find it *doesn't* exist, as more of us come out—fighting.

Gay Rights at Work is a campaigning organisation that fights for gay people to take up the question of their own discrimination within their workplaces and their unions.

Gay Rights at Work believes that gay liberation can only come through the combined action of all workers—fighting in offices, factories and shops—against their common enemy, the bosses.

They produce a regular newsletter, and can be contacted at 7 Pickwick Court, London SE9.





THE YEAR 1981 will always be remembered with affection in this country and, indeed, all over the world. This was a year when the country found a cause for great rejoicing, less so for the rest of the world. And as we remember the year 1981 with affection in the hearts of our citizens. We will be sure to remember the politically and economically bankrupt system of the Royal Family.

written by Hriet
illustrated by S

JULY 1981. The press, the TV and the Tories are producing this sort of drivel daily as they work themselves into a frenzy over the forthcoming wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer.

Speculation grows over who will be invited to the great event—and who will decline the invitation. Ken Livingstone, the Labour leader of the Greater London Council, is condemned to the Tower of London as a traitor in the minds of Britain's rulers for refusing an opportunity to mingle with Royal flesh and blood.

The timing of the wedding is seen as a godsend to the Tory government. Amidst the 'hoorays' which greeted the announcement there were sighs of relief. The unemployed, the low paid, the homeless and the rest of us who suffer under this brutal government will be distracted, they hope, from worrying about a miserable present and a non-existent future by the spectacle of unnecessary pomp and ceremony at our own expense.

The Daily Express voiced this relief four months ago: 'A royal engagement and a summer wedding could not have come at a better time. The mundane facts of British life at the moment are pretty grim. The dreary statistics of unemployment and falling production, strikes and threats of strikes, have depressed us far too long. What better than a royal romance to warm and cheer all our hearts?'

The royal family are regularly wheeled

out on public view. They wave, smile, shake hands and generally appear gracious and radiant. Thousands of working people and their children wave, smile, and cheer back. Royal appearances make headline news over and above a hundred thousand people marching through the streets protesting at massive unemployment, or the closure of factories and hospitals, or a child being killed by plastic bullets fired by the 'peacekeeping' forces in Northern Ireland.

Britain loves its royal family. There is a monthly magazine, *Majesty*, which devotes its glossy pages entirely to the royal family. It costs 75 pence and it sells more than 120,000 copies.

Newspaper stands have been deluged with full colour 'specials' about the lives of Prince Charles and Lady Diana and their wedding. They cost up to two quid, but are selling fast. As well as all the usual royal occasion plates, mugs and ashtrays, this time you can buy 'superbly crafted medallions... specially crafted in limited editions to mark a very special occasion'. These gross trinkets have a picture of Charles and Di on one side, and St Paul's cathedral on the other. The gold ones can be snapped up for a mere hundred quid.

Or if you haven't fixed up your holiday this summer, how about seven nights in a posh London hotel, with a few sight seeing tours thrown in and a chance to watch the TV coverage of the wedding in a banqueting suite, for about £450?

The royal family represent everything that is, apparently, good and solid in our society. They are honest, hardworking and patriotic. They believe in the virtues of family life. We are told that, beneath the strain of being royalty, they are 'ordinary folk'. At the same time, they are worthy of every ounce of praise and adoration heaped upon them. Above all, their function is to set us an example and yet keep us in our place.

We are expected to be overcome with gratitude for their very existence. But the Royal family epitomises everything that is rotten about this society. They are no more than parasites.

When the royal engagement was announced, the papers worried about where the couple would live. After all, said one, Buckingham Palace is 'full to bursting with Royals'. Buckingham Palace, a bargain in 1761 for £21,000 and worth nearer half a million quid now, has got 600 rooms. The front of the 'house' is a quarter of a mile long, and it needs a staff of 500 to run it.



...with great affection by the people of this
...as the year, they will say, when the entire
...pilate growing unemployment and hard-
...arm, glowing feeling will spread through
...are in the knowledge that, even with a
...of government, at least we still have The
...Family.

...by Sherwood
...and Sophie



...the building is set in 40 acres of garden and
...ke, and it holds an indoor swimming pool,
...private cinema, a post office, an art
...allery—and more.

...But that is only one of the properties
...owned by this family of 'ordinary folk'.
...here's Balmoral Castle, used for only three
...months a year, and set in 80,000 acres of
...land; and Sandringham, a fairly small place
...in comparison, which cost £22,000 in 1861.
...Other homes and country cottages include
...Windsor Castle, Kensington Palace, St
...James' Palace, Holyrood House, Hampton
...Court, Clarence House, and the Royal
... Lodge. But Prince Charles and his bride will
...live in Chevening House, an 83 room
...cottage in 3,500 acres of park and farmland.
...In 1971/72 the heating and lighting bill
...for Buckingham Palace was more than
...£5,000. The upkeep of the royal residences
...costs about £3 million a year—and it is paid
...out of public funds.

...There are more than three million homes
...in England and Wales that are unfit or lack
...basic amenities. That money would build

...about a thousand new houses every year.

...The royal family never have to worry
...about their next meal, or the electricity bill,
...or the rent, and nor do they worry about
...their day-to-day expenses. The 'Civil List' is
...the inflation-proofed allowance paid to
...members of the royal family to cover their
...occasional needs. In 1976 the Queen got
...£1,665,000.

...For the last few years we have been told
...by our governments that, because of the
...economic crisis, we must all tighten our
...belts and make sacrifices in the 'national
...interest'. No-one can find a belt long
...enough to go round the overfed, overpaid
...collective stomach of the royal family.

...Governments claim that the royal family
...is above politics. But they are used
...politically to curry favour with other
...countries and to squash discontent in
...Britain. The Queen and her mob symbolise
...this mysterious and mythical 'national
...interest' of which our rulers are so fond.

...In 1972 the Queen played hostess to the
...Shah of Iran. He was courted, wined and
...dined at public expense in the hope of
...increasing British exports to Iran and
...thereby further enriching Britain's ruling
...class. Meanwhile the Shah's secret police,
...SAVAK, were torturing and killing Iranian
...men and women who opposed the Shah's
...tyrannic regime. In 1976 the President of
...Brazil was entertained by the Royal family
...for the same ends while 2,000 political
...prisoners were forgotten in Brazil's jails.

...Recently Prince Charles was seen making
...'small talk' with President Reagan, the man
...who may obliterate the world through his
...missile madness. And of course, the Queen
...has just finished entertaining that well-
...known liberal, the King of Saudi Arabia.

...This is the family that is supposed to
...represent the interests of all of us—rich and
...poor, boss and worker. This is the family
...that is supposed to make us proud to be
...British, proud to have such a glorious
...heritage. This is the family that is supposed
...to make us ashamed for striking for higher
...wages, occupying against redundancies,
...opposing nuclear arms, 'necessary for the
...nation's defence', and protesting at a brutal
...occupation of Northern Ireland.

...So on the day of the royal wedding we are
...expected to forget our differences with the
...people who are about to put us on the dole
...or reduce the money in our pockets and cut
...our services even further. Instead we are
...expected to join hands with them and sing
...hallelujah while a huge sum of money is
...squandered on a small number of people.

...There is no 'national interest' in Britain
...or anywhere else in the world. There's the
...interest of the royal family, the Tories, the
...bosses and the bankers; and there's the
...interest of the vast majority of people who
...are struggling to make ends meet. The royal
...family and Britain's rulers need us to prop
...up their rotten system, but we don't need
...them. The sooner we get rid of them, the
...better.





For better or worse?

by Margaret Renn

The Royal Wedding has now got to the stage when people only have to refer to 'the wedding' and everyone automatically knows what it means—the wedding. Every women's magazine—adding up to several millions of copies per week—is talking about it, describing it, competing for some new angle on it. And then they will be encouraging other women to copy it.

This summer there are bound to be a rush of weddings, and the ages of young couples pounding their way up the aisles and bursting through the swing doors of the registry offices will drop dramatically.

Over the past few years the average age for getting married has steadily been getting older—and that's true for all women, not just those who have a career to follow. But now this may change: the wedding feature run by *Company* magazine this month is 'The Case for Young Marriage'.

Is there a case for it? Well, yes, if you read *Company*. The journalist who wrote the piece has managed to drum up half-a-dozen happy couples who have all been wed since their late teens or early twenties and are still happily stumbling along through life—but that doesn't exactly make out a case for young marriage, or, indeed, any sort of marriage at all.

On the other hand, the statistics would seem to make out the opposite case—even though couples are older before they make the great decision, this doesn't seem to help them make the right one. In 1979 (the latest year for which figures are available) there were 368,851 marriages and 138,706 divorces. Once bitten twice shy? No such luck. In the same year 76,099 women and 78,844 men got married for a second time!

So why do people get married, early or late?

Well, if you were Lady Di, who wouldn't? Prince Charles may not be your vision of the

ideal mate in life, but coming, as Di does, from an extremely rich background there are standards to be kept up, and looking down the list of other likely candidates who are all equally gormless, it seems eminently sensible to go for the richest and most prestigious one.

And that is certainly what the two families involved will think. If you own the vast quantities of wealth which they do you can't go round making legal contracts to share it and leave it to just any old heirs—they have to be of the right blood, out of the same mould. It's a sort of grand closed shop. Lady Diana is, you should know, 16th cousin of Prince Charles.

So for Lady Diana the future was assured from birth. She was going to do it, with one or another of these chaps, and appeals for her not to do it seem a bit of a waste of time.

The flush of young weddings this summer won't join any great properties together—most young couples start off with a washing machine and a canteen of cutlery. Property is not the reason. Love and security are.

You must remember the words of that song: 'Love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage.' I remember Alma Cogan singing that over 20 years ago, and in general the message hasn't changed much since then, even if the form has.

For instance, about a year ago Anna Raeburn and Clive James ran a late night television series about sex and such like. One night they visited a mixed comprehensive school in Hackney, London and asked groups of 14-year-old boys and girls to write down their thoughts about their future lives. The boys wrote about the jobs they were going to do when they left school. A lot of it was fantasy, but nevertheless they saw themselves going out in the world. Only one of them mentioned anything about children.

The girls wrote exclusively about their marriages, their husbands, their children, right

down to the names of the boys and girls they were going to have. They saw their future on an altogether different scale, in a very small and private world.

All sorts of things have changed for girls and young women in the last 20 years, but one thing hasn't—they are still brought up to believe that marriage and home life is their future. This is to be their fulfilment. This is why they were put on this earth—to perpetuate the cycle that brought them into existence.

It a belief which has been diluted in those years by the pill, and the freedom it brings to sexual relations; by the change in the sorts of jobs that women do, and their expectation that they have a right to work; by changes in the divorce laws which make it easier to resolve mistakes. But between them, royalty and unemployment are going to reinforce the flagging mythology.

Marriage is *not* a liberator, from the constraints of life at home with mum and dad, a chance to spread your wings, develop your personality, a sign of growing up. All of those things can happen without marriage.

No, for young women in particular, marriage is the time when the door gets firmly shut in their face.

It is, at its most basic, a legal contract which enshrines the responsibilities that two people who are friends should feel for each other anyway. So, it's a contract which matters more when things are going badly rather than when things are going well.

It is, some will say, the ultimate commitment, a public demonstration of love. But commitments aren't made on paper, or in heaven. They grow out of friendship and comradeship, out of relationships which are equal; when neither partner is financially dependent on the other; when neither is socially dependent on the other for a circle of friends; when both live in the public, outside world, and one is not shut up between the four walls of her home.

Child battering: why does it happen?

'It was November, just another day. Things were going from bad to worse. My two year old daughter, Ann, had been crying all day. Then the baby started screaming just after I'd fed him. He'd been screaming non-stop for 36 hours. At the time I didn't know it, but he had an ear ailment which was making him cry. Suddenly something snapped inside me and I threw the baby towards the bed—I don't really remember what happened next except that I ran outside looking for someone. The doctor came and said that the baby had a fractured skull and arm.'

Jean is 19. She married John when she was 16 and already pregnant. She was refused an abortion by her doctor when she was pregnant with her second child. They live on the seventh floor of a multi-storey flat, for which they pay over £20 a week in rent. The lifts are usually out of order, which means that Jean has to carry both small children up and down seven flights of stairs every time she wants to go out. Their flat is so damp that the fungus grows on the walls of the children's bedroom. John works in an electrical plant and had been on short-time and under constant threat of redundancy the previous year.

'He'd been drinking heavily and I hadn't slept properly for weeks, worrying about it all. I don't know what happened that day—I love my kids.'

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) annual report published in June indicated that the number of children they dealt with who were suffering from

suspected 'non-accidental injuries' had increased from 1,052 the previous year to 1,383 last year. In the absence of a national register Dr Alan Gilmour, NSPCC's director, was unsure as to whether this increase was due to 'non-accidental injury' or merely an increase in the number of reports to the NSPCC. Jean could have given him the answer to that. In a society with three and a half million people unemployed and increasing attacks on our social services and housing, an increase in the rate of non-accidental injury to children seems fairly inevitable.

Dr Gilmour's confusion is not surprising when placed within the context of how professionals view child abuse. Social workers, doctors, nurses and psychologists are trained to concentrate exclusively on the problems of the 'child batterer'. Reports are peppered with words like 'inadequate, immature, insecure...'. Women living in intolerable conditions are often described as inadequate when they take



Nick Hedges

The woman in this photograph has no connection with the woman named in the article

valium prescribed by 'professionals'—who would crack up if they were forced to live in similar circumstances.

Very few parents haven't experienced violent impulses towards their children at some time. When these feelings are accompanied by a lack of nurseries, and play-facilities, poor health provision, overcrowding and the struggle of trying to make ends meet—the chances of a child being beaten increase. Yet the vast majority of social workers, doctors and other 'professionals' continue to focus on child abuse as a psychological problem and refuse to recognise it as a political issue.

Over the past ten years public hysteria about 'child batterers' has been whipped up by the media. Women charged with 'non-accidental injury' have needed protection. Not the slightest trace of sympathy is ever shown and the public have been encouraged to think of them as cruel, cold evil people. Many have been sentenced to long terms in prison.

The branding of individuals as evil criminals effectively directs attention away from the real causes of child abuse and allows Thatcher to continue hacking away at the services which would help to prevent it. The way is paved for Tory politicians and the professionals to gain support for their proposals that 'inadequate' parents be sterilised, served with a certificate of unfitness to raise children and their civil rights, including their right to vote, removed.

By contrast the practice of wealthy parents—packing their children off to boarding schools where systematic beatings are commonplace—is greeted with admiration as a character building exercise. Beatings are also legalised through practices such as birching in the Isle of Man.

It's not surprising that child abuse is common when high unemployment, nursery closures and bad housing mean terrible conditions in which to raise children. It's on these things we should focus our anger.

**A member of
Coventry Womens Voice**



Constance Markievicz

The Red Countess

Constance Markievicz was born in 1868 to Lord and Lady Gore-Booth, a landed Anglo-Irish family of County Sligo, and was married to a Polish Count. It is incredible to learn that she could have played a prominent role in the Easter Rising of 1916. But that is precisely what she did. So how did she become involved in politics at all, and in revolutionary politics in particular?

Her childhood was the same as for any other upper-class girl of that period. Politics and Irish history were not discussed at home, in spite of the great political controversies raging in Ireland at the time.

In 1900, after some years in London and Paris, Constance married Casimir, a Polish Count, and travelled to his father's lands in the Ukraine. Poland was, by all accounts, a shock to Constance. The peasants' poverty and the way the landlords treated them pricked her conscience as she thought of her own family in Ireland.

After their daughter was born, she and Casimir went to Dublin and enjoyed a few leisurely years of society life there. And then, suddenly, Constance realised the gulf between her life, which was centred around Lady Aberdeen, wife of the British governor of Ireland, and the élite of Dublin Castle, and the life of the Dublin working classes living in slums. She said: 'I saw the hollowness of all that Castle business and I wanted to do something for the people.'

From then on she dabbled with the nationalist politics of the Gaelic League and with *Inghinidhe na hEireann* (Daughters of Ireland) a movement of nationalist women which had been founded in 1900. Through this she came into contact with the Irish suffragettes.

But however much she supported the suffragettes' cause, she was never prepared to commit herself wholeheartedly to it.

Instead she turned more and more towards Sinn Féin. Her first serious political work concerned the formation of *na Fianna Eireann* in 1909, following the success of Baden Powell's boy scouts in England. Instead of learning how to tie knots and do a good turn, these boys were trained to be soldiers. By the time the Irish Citizen Army was founded there was already a large supply of trained men ready to show the increasing number of volunteers how to fire a rifle.

Her marriage foundered but she became even more active and found herself moving towards socialist politics and began to see where she could fit into the struggle for the liberation of Ireland from British colonial rule. Her comrades were Jim Larkin, the organiser of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union and James Connolly.

The summer of 1913 saw one of the most bitter struggles of Irish labour history. Larkin had managed to organise all the manual workers in Dublin with the exception of those who worked for Guinness's (their conditions of work were too good) and those employed by the Dublin United Tramway Co. Larkin set about organising them. The company retaliated by putting workers who dared to join the union on the casuals list. The workers struck, and the strike spread throughout Dublin. 400 employers then locked out all union members. Soon, there were 25,000 men out of



work. Constance became involved by protecting Larkin from the police and by organising food for the strikers and their families. The lockout ended early in 1914 because of a failure to gain support from English workers. Dispirited workers signed a pledge against the union and drifted back to work.

But it was not a total defeat. From the lockout came the inspiration for the formation of the Irish Citizen Army. At its inaugural meeting, with Constance present, it was decided that 'The first and last principle of the Irish Citizen Army is the avowal that the ownership of Ireland, moral and material, is vested of right in the people of Ireland.' A further clause stated that to enrol in the Army you had to be a member of a Trades Union recognised by the Irish TUC. Constance went on a recruitment drive throughout Ireland and training began.

By this time the Liberal Government were beginning to negotiate over the question of Home Rule. The Ulstermen armed themselves and prepared to fight to maintain the union with Britain. The time was ready for the Citizen Army to also arm themselves, which they did in July of 1914. Nine days later, Britain declared war on Germany. This event split the republican movement down the middle, with half declaring support for Britain against Germany. The other half seized the opportunity to plan an insurrection in Ireland. Constance

was of course, on this side. She had a commission in the Citizen's army and was busy training men and women to fight.

The date for the insurrection was set for Easter Sunday 1916. The Volunteers were ordered not to take part, but 700 of them turned up and with 120 from the Citizen Army the Irish Republican Army was born and proceeded to take over key positions in Dublin. Constance's role was as second-in-command to Mallin. The British Army responded quickly and with force and, after six days of siege, the rebels were compelled to surrender. Constance was taken to Kilmainham Jail to await trial. 16 of her male comrades were found guilty of insurrection and were shot. She was also sentenced to death, but because she was a woman, her sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life. She was taken to England to serve it, but in the end was only in prison for a year since all political prisoners were reprieved in 1917.

On her return from England she took her place in the Dail Eireann, the provisional Irish government, as Minister for Labour. But after Partition, she refused to swear the oath of allegiance to the English King, so she lost her seat. Throughout the years of civil war which ended in the eventual partition of Ireland, she had vigorously opposed the concept of the Irish Free State and argued consistently for an Irish Worker's Republic, according to Connolly's teachings.

When she died in 1927, aged 59, (she never recovered from appendicitis) half of Dublin came out onto the streets to mourn her. Men and women cried quite openly for the loss of 'Madame'. She had managed to achieve popular support, despite the fact that she came from the enemy class, because of the energy she had put into fighting for the revolution in Ireland. Whilst it is possible to question what she did or didn't do whilst it is possible to criticise her, as Sean O'Casey did, for not thinking through her politics thoroughly enough and for acting on impulse, it is not possible to doubt her sincerity. In her 20 years of active struggle she quite literally wore herself out for the cause which she believed in. Denounced by her family and her class, imprisoned for her beliefs, and prepared to die for them, she fought with and for the working people of Ireland.

Claire Harris



Constance and her *Fianna* boys

WOMENS HEALTH

The Ladykillers

I HAD only to read through the first few pages of 'The Ladykillers' before I realised that the packet of cigarettes I had at my side was turning me into a statistic and that I do indeed have a problem. The book begins with four gruelling accounts about marriage break-up, heart attack, lung cancer and death—all attributable to cigarette smoking.

If that wasn't enough to have made me feel squeamish next came the statistics:

The average woman in Britain smokes more than 15 cigarettes a day. In the USA women now smoke 60% more cigarettes a day than a generation ago. In Britain one woman every hour of the day and every day of the week dies of lung cancer. Not only do women

that this society puts upon women in all types of employment? I hoped that by the end of the book I would find the message she was trying to get over. Why do I, as a trained nurse, continue to smoke? Why do men in general find it easier to stop smoking? Why have the health educators failed with women despite the thousands of pounds ploughed into campaigns which were only successful with men to a certain extent?

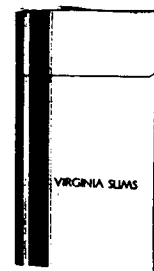
Maybe, as the author points out, they only hope to deter women by reinforcing the idea that a woman's goal in life is to nurture her husband and children. They focus their propaganda on the fact that smoking can damage the unborn child but forget the



We've come a long, long way.

VIRGINIA SLIMS

Virginia blend Slimmer than the fat cigarettes men smoke.



At last, a cigarette we can call our own.

ways of helping to overcome the addiction and is full of useful tips and quizzes which determine what type of smoker you are, and,

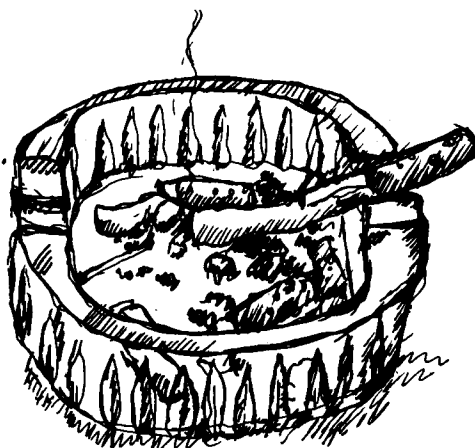
“In Britain one woman every hour of the day and every day of the week, dies of cancer.”

smoke more heavily than 25 years ago, women smokers are also much younger. Along with the figures of smoking patterns, not only in Britain, but in Europe and other parts of the developed world, the book raises the problem of why women find it more difficult to sleep than men, a fact which appears to have no class barriers. Whereas marriage, parenthood, and successful employment tend to facilitate a man's ability to stop smoking, they have the opposite effect on women making it *less* easy for her to stop.

The author, an ex-deputy director of ASH (Action on Smoking and Health), has an unending supply of information concerning a wide range of topics.

She looks in particular at why women smoke. For example, is it just nicotine addiction? Is there a smokers' personality or smoking type? Is it fear of weight gain? Or unlike men do women smoke *not* to accompany feelings of anger, frustration or anxiety but *instead* of expressing them.

The book is dotted with experiences of women who have tried to stop smoking. Some were successful and some failed. Other women talk about their reasons for starting. Is it just the influence of advertising, albeit a subtle and sexist hard sell? Is it the stresses



mother. Why, as the author states, in a fairly scathing attack on the women's movement, has it remained silent on the issue? Has it become so obsessed with genitals not to have realised that women's health is a much wider issue? For example The Boston Women's Health Collective handbook *'Our Bodies Ourselves'* has no section on alcoholism or smoking. 'There was not sufficient room in the book and we did not have the resources to do the research'.

The final section of the book deals with

a variety of interesting and sometimes bizarre methods of stopping.

However, although I found the book an easy but disturbing read, I was left with the feeling that to stop smoking would not solve the problems of the housewife at home with demanding toddlers, or the woman at work with another equally demanding job at home. Even the 'successful' woman, for example the doctor quoted in the book, had to continually prove herself in a predominantly male world.

The problem I'm afraid does not lie within ourselves but in the system which operates sex barriers and creates conditions which affect women differently from men. The battle for socialism will not be won if we stop smoking on an individual level. We are forced to choose between cigarettes, alcohol or jogging. So I'm afraid for the time being, Cheers! or in my case, no thanks, not a third light!

Liz Gibson

'THE LADYKILLERS' Why Smoking is a Feminist Issue. by Bobbie Jacobson. Pluto Press £1.95 paperback.

REVIEWS

TESS

DIRECTOR: ROMAN POLANSKI

POLANSKI HAS a reputation built on potent and chillingly atmospheric films like *Rosemary's Baby*, *Macbeth* and *Chinatown*. *Tess* hardly follows in that tradition. Polanski has now opted for 'respectability', for pretty images and dumb characters. Although *Tess* is a good reconstruction of Thomas Hardy's novel it doesn't even scratch at the powerful and important social questions that are the hallmark of Hardy's work.

The result is a film that is without substance—but is pretty to look at.

In order to have the beautiful Nastassia Kinski on the screen for almost the entire three hour duration, Polanski chiselled away much of the original story, which is about how a woman suffers from the hypocrisy of men. Sadly it is the other characters that suffer. They become little more than props for Tess, when for Hardy they were vital as images of the social conventions that bind us all.

Most disappointing is the portrayal of Tess. She is shown as a passive creature, meekly defenceless in the face of the arrogant and cruel Alec D'Urberville and the harsh idealism of her husband, Angel Claire. Gone is the original Tess, who was strong and hard, all we are left with is a pouting face in a Laura Ashley dress.

Hardy was anxious to recognise women's oppression as a social force. And it was this that affected much of his work, and made the book slay the suffocating and destructive morality of his time.

It is a shame that Polanski has taken all that away and left us with nothing to look at but pretty pictures.

Marta Wohrle



WOMEN AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

NORTH WEST LABOUR HISTORY SOCIETY BULLETIN £1.50

OUR HISTORY is important to us because it helps us to sort out myths and lies about what women are capable of—and it can also help us to avoid repeating old mistakes. This little book goes over the arguments about why we need history, and what sort of history, and then goes on to provide examples of what feminist history can do.

It's not simply a question of constructing lost worlds of goddesses and amazons, rather a question of re-examining the world that our grandmothers helped to make and fought to change. It goes through the obstacles that hide women from the pages of 'official' history,

and shows ways around them. It's a really good read, recommended for anyone who has already read the classics like *Hidden From History*, and who wants to know more about where 'history' comes from—and where it can lead us.

Lin James

This book is available from: NW Labour History Society, c/o 111 Kings Road, Old Trafford, Manchester 16.

**ORIGINAL SINS
LISA ALTHÉR
THE WOMENS
PRESS £6.95**

FAMILY novels have always fascinated me; the dramas are all recognisable but larger than life, so that they reflect back and make everyday life seem more dramatic and interesting. This novel is a classic larger than life family drama—but its author

consciously makes the family dramas part of the drama of the American South during the Civil Rights movements.

She shows how the hopes and dreams of childhood become tarnished and compromised as you grow older—not just for women, but for men, for whites as well as blacks. Women writers have often been criticised for not describing 'real' men in their novels. It's difficult for me to judge, but I think Lisa Alther here provides some of the most sympathetic male characters I've ever come across in a feminist novel.

It's a shame this is only available in hardback at the moment: if you can, try to get it from the local library and take it away on holiday. It may not have the solutions to all our problems, but it made me laugh while describing what the problems were, as well as making me angry because of the truth of its descriptions. A rattling good read, as they say.

Lin James

THE FAMILY IN THE FIRING LINE
JEAN COUSSINS,
ANNA COOTE
NCCL/CPAG £1.20

THREE OF the main points in 'The Family in the Firing Line' echo what *Womens Voice* has been saying for a long time. Anna Coote and Jean Coussins argue that the Tory family policy is nothing but an attack on women's rights; that it is in any case a cynical hypocrisy, covering up a vicious attack on the living standards of ordinary people and, thirdly, that the record of the Labour Government was hardly better than the Tories'.

Anna Coote and Jean Coussins also take on the question of trade union collusion in this attack.

The history of the British trade union movement is a history of support for the bourgeois family, a family where the husband is always the breadwinner and the wife is confined to the home. Because it has never challenged this arrangement, the trade union movement has generally pressed for men's wages to cover the cost of keeping a family and has been happy to leave women badly paid. It has also not been too concerned to raise what is known as the 'social

wage'—state benefits to families—and has done next to nothing to stop cuts in benefits.

But Anna and Jean fail to see why trade unions have acted as they have done. It isn't just a question of the male chauvinism of trade union leaders but of their politics and organisation. Trade unions are organised at the workplace, that is where they have the muscle. However they have consistently refused to use that muscle for political ends. And this is just what they would have to do to force the State to pay decent benefits.

Anna and Jean don't raise this question at all. They simply set out proposals for a future Labour Government to enact from on high. Have they forgotten the abysmal record set out at the beginning of the pamphlet?

What's lacking in the pamphlet is a strategy for action. Anna Coote and Jean Coussins appear to think that a quiet word in the ear of men in power will bring about the changes women need. But governments and trade unions have only been able to get away with using the family against women because women have not been organised to resist. On that question and how to overcome it, the pamphlet has nothing to say.

Irene Bruegel



CHINA MEN
MAXINE HONG
KINGSTON
PICADOR £1.50

THIS is a stimulating and enchanting book. It tells the story of how it felt to be a Chinese migrant in the United States at the beginning of the century, highlighting the iniquity of all immigration and nationality controls. In one year 40,000 Chinese miners are driven out of their jobs and prevented from finding other employment by racist legislation. These laws prevent the Chinese from owning land, or business licences, from living in certain areas or working for the government.

Taxes are placed on anything that can be connected with the Chinese; the wearing of the pigtail, laundry and cigar shops, carrying produce in baskets on poles. Each migrant worker has to learn to fight this crushing oppression. The State's response is to impose an additional 'police tax' to pay for the extra policing 'that the Chinese presence demands'.

Chinese habits and traditions are lost in this process, families are split up, village

support systems become useless and the ways of the White Demons rule supreme. The ghetto of China Town provides some consolation but it is isolated from events outside. After the Chinese Revolution of 1949 the workers in America are forced to swear official oaths of allegiance, rejecting communism. It becomes illegal to send money back to China. Assimilation, however, is also difficult. If an American marries a Chinese person US nationality is lost. Fighting in the Vietnam War could entail brother fighting brother.

Maxine Hong - Kingston tries to come to terms with the way this history has affected her life. To do so she uses an ancient Chinese legend. Tang Ao goes in search of the Golden Mountain, a land where there is no war or famine. Across the ocean he discovers the Land of Women, is captured, has his feet bound and is made into a slave. 'Some scholars say that the country was discovered in the reign of Empress Wu (694-705) and it was in America'.

I'm off in search of Maxine Hong Kingston's other book, 'The Woman Warrior'.
Sylvia Gibbs

LETTERS



Lobbying MPs won't deliver the goods

Dear Womens Voice,

I've just seen a copy of the 1980 Annual Report of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC).

One of the main points they stress is that women's earnings are only about 73 per cent of those of men, and that this has been the case for the last five years—although they don't give figures for before 1975.

The EOC say that they are 'convinced that no further progress can be made without substantial amendments to the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts'. It was only a short while ago that the EOC were welcoming these Acts as guarantees for women's equality. Now they realise that women aren't any better off than five years ago, and they think that by changing the odd word or sentence here and there in the Acts we will have a victory for women's rights.

When will they realise that the inferior position of women in this society isn't really going to alter through acts of Parliament, or amendments to existing acts? It's going to take a lot more than lobbying a few MPs to achieve true equality.

Sally Osborne
Liverpool

If you have something to say, if you disagree with an article, want to tell us about a picket line, a fight to save services, or trouble in your workplace—write us a letter at the address above.

Open the windows on health and safety

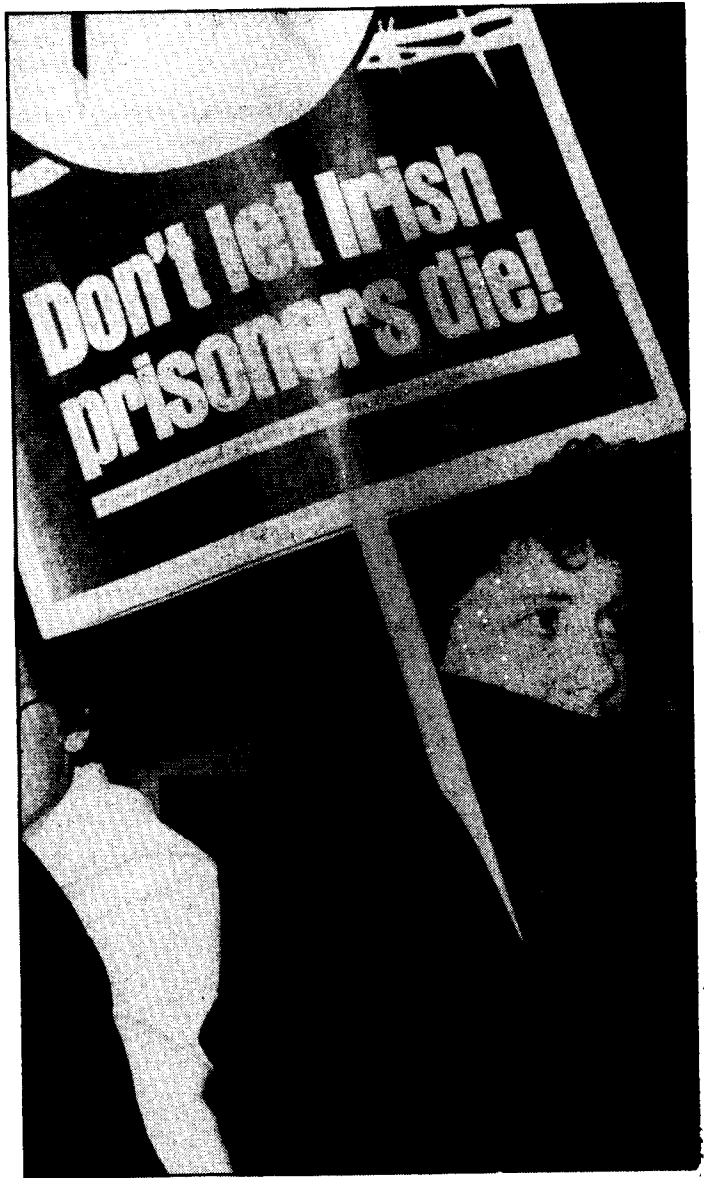
Dear Womens Voice,

I am an official of the Fire Brigades Union in the Strathclyde Fire Brigade. Your May issue contained an article about health and safety in the office which referred to the health hazards associated with working for prolonged periods in artificial light and in windowless rooms.

The Strathclyde Fire Brigade is at present rationalising the mobilising or turn-out system in the brigade which involves amalgamating the six present control rooms into *one* control room in future. We carried out a health and safety inspection of the future control room and found it had no windows. This means that the people who will be working in it, mostly women, will be working in artificial light in a room without windows for the whole of their working day.

Now we are trying to get information which we can use to argue the point forcibly with management that they will have to install windows in the room involved.

Ronnie Robertson
Glasgow



Tribute to Bobby Sands' family

Dear Womens Voice,

After the shocking deaths of the four hunger strikers, I had to write and offer my condolences to the families of the dead martyrs.

I would also like to pay a tribute to the long suffering mother of Bobby Sands, MP. She was always very brave while her son was dying. As Socialist Challenge reported, 'She knew her son was dying, that he had to die to maintain his honour and the honour of his people.' If ever there was a fighter it must be Bobby Sands' mother.

Also I must mention his two sisters Marcella and Bernadette. When I was in Ireland, in Co. Monaghan there was a march through the town of Monaghan in honour of Ray McCreesh and Patsy

O'Hara. Bernadette Sands was present. She made a speech condemning both the Irish and British Governments for the death of her brother. To me she had courage and determination to get the five demands for the prisoners of Long Kesh concentration camp.

But I must not forget the other suffering families of the dead hunger strikers and the prisoners who are now on hunger strike. Let us not see more mothers grieving over their dead sons. The British Government think that the British people are behind them. Let us show this inhuman government that we are not. Let us tell them to stop murdering any more prisoners in Long Kesh.
Maira McMahon
Birmingham

Socialism cannot come from above

Dear Womens Voice,

I went to the Labour Party women's conference last month. One of the resolutions that came out of the conference called on the TUC 'to resist attempts by employers to make women suffer an unfair share of job losses and redundancies'. It seems that instead of a re-distribution of wealth, the Labour Party is in favour of a re-distribution of redundancies rather than fighting *all* job losses.

The conference seemed undemocratic: every time a motion came up there would only be speeches in favour and general discussion, with no speeches against.

Many platform speakers, including Jo Richardson, suggested that the solution to the present crisis was to join the Labour Party which would, when elected, regenerate the economy. Most Labour Party members seem to ignore the fact that it's the structure and foundations of this society which oppresses and exploits people, not just when it's not making enough profits.

In spite of a frustrating day we sold 25 copies of *Womens Voice*. I hope that the women there come to realise through the experience of past and future Labour governments that socialism cannot come from above. It has to come from women like those at Lee Jeans and Royal Pride who have more power to change society than five times their number of Jo Richardsons and Tony Benns.

Ann Doyle
Sheffield

DIRTY LINEN

Some men bash women. Others just like to make little jokes about it. Like magistrate Basil Wisbey of Chichester who, when he was told that a woman had returned to a husband who attacked her, quipped: 'That reminds me of the old saying—a woman, a dog, and a walnut tree, the more you beat them, the better they be.'

In fact, Basil Wisbey sounds altogether like a magistrate to avoid coming up before. According to his wife, 'He does say silly things, but they're quite used to him at court.'

And a Barnsley woman, who had been assaulted for many years by her 'karate-loving husband', found her way into court.

She came home roaring drunk in the early morning, knocked the living room door off its hinges, and struck her husband over the head with his bullworker until it shattered. He was knocked unconscious and needed six stitches. She got two years probation. And presumably some satisfaction.

The woman who is going to marry the Prince of Wales was made up by a man who has made up women who take part in porn movies, according to a 'Porn film secret of Di's make-up man' story in the *Sunday Mirror*.

Does this mean It Is All Over?

The *News of the World* is asking readers to write in and say whether they think self-service beer machines are a good idea. They have interviewed members of the British Legion Club in Teddington who complain of the machines: 'They don't have much of a figure—and they never seem to grasp that the wife doesn't understand you.'

No-one mentioned loss of jobs for bar staff.

FABULOUS RECORD
OFFER

Loving's
Wedding
Day Single

yours—for the price of a stamp!



Yes, folks, we've got together with *Creative Recording and Sound Services* to offer you the chance of making your wedding day just that bit extra special, with this romantic song, *Our Wedding*, by Joy De Vivre. There's no limit to this great write in, so all you have to do is simply fill in the coupon below and send it off, together

with stamps to the value of 18 pence and this super flexi single will be yours.

Joy De Vivre has captured all the happiness and romance of that all-important big day - your wedding - so make sure you send off for your copy in time for the grand occasion - it's a must for all true romantics!

The teen magazine, *Loving* still wants it readers to believe in love and marriage. Recently it ran a brides' edition which included a special offer of a song called *Our wedding* by a group called 'Joy de vivre'.

'A chance to make your wedding day just that extra bit special with this romantic song,' the ad said, 'a must for all romantics'—just for

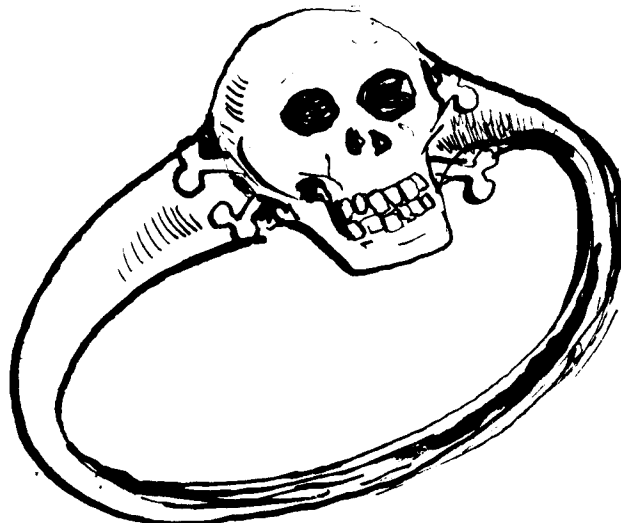
the cost of the postage.

But it is all a cruel hoax: the romance is a sham and a Mickey-take. *Loving* was sick at heart to learn that the song they're helping give away comes off an album which is 'a sneering attack on love and marriage', with a title that even *News of the Screws* finds 'too obscene to print', by the punk group Crass.

A two paragraph story in another newspaper reported that the jewellers who supplied the Royal engagement ring, and who are probably making a discreet killing out of the

wedding, are endangering the health of their workers.

Garrard's of Regent Street has been fined £805 for poor safety standards in the use of cyanide in their silver polishing department.



SANDRA

'UNFINISHED BUSINESS'

S'INTERESTING... IT SAYS HERE THAT WOMEN SUFFER MORE FROM THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE THAN MEN

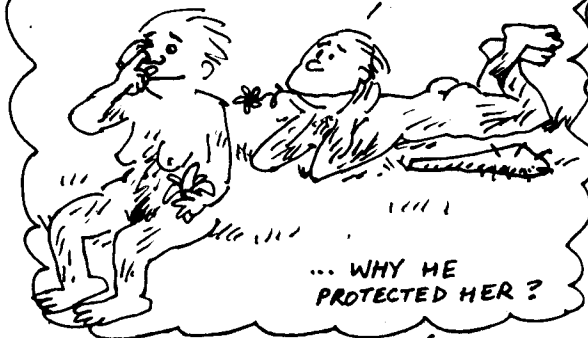
AND THIS DEPRESSION IS DETERMINED BY EVOLUTION! FOSSILS PROVE...

... THAT EARLY WOMAN WAS PROTECTED BY EARLY MAN...



... WHICH IS WHY SHE BECAME EMOTIONALLY DEPENDENT ON HIM

WHAT IT DOESN'T SAY IS...



... WHY HE PROTECTED HER ?

BUT THE THING WHICH REALLY PUZZLES ME IS...



HOW COME I'VE NEVER HEARD OF THIS EARLY WOMAN BEFORE ?



Dear Jane

Christina Howarth in her letter (May WV) says 'When are pro-feminist men going to own up that just because they personally are not oppressing us, it doesn't mean that all other men aren't either?'. This is a question that has been raised several times over the last few months. It's good to know that there are men who take an active stand against sexism, and are prepared to speak out publicly. They are unfortunately still a tiny number, but, more importantly, still in the minority amongst men who are active socialists.

Christina Howarth goes on to ask, surely we should expect nothing less than a commitment to be 'pro-feminist', from socialists. We may not expect anything less, but we do unfortunately get a great deal less. It is not possible to equate a man who is a socialist to one who is prepared to take an

active and public stand against sexism in either his public or personal life.

The important point should be that men not only support stands against sexism but that they should also be initiating them. Along with the idea that in some way women should be grateful for the existence of anti-sexist men, is an assumption amongst many socialist men, that it is still largely the responsibility of women to be the educators and encouragers of men in their struggle to be non-sexist.

Both men and women are the products of their upbringing, and of the deep-rooted stereotyping of roles and attitudes. I get the impression however, that there is a cop-out amongst many socialist men, in examining their own attitudes but more particularly, in their own practice of what they profess to believe about

sexism.

'Sexism is so deeply ingrained in us men that it's very difficult for us to overcome all this. Women have got to help us'. This places women right back into conventional role of supporter of men, nurturer of tender male egos as they challenge their masculine roles. I am not advocating women should cease to challenge men on sexism, but there does seem to be a lack of effort amongst men to initiate this.

Some efforts have been made by men adopting the idea of using consciousness-raising groups in the way that the womens' movement does. For a number of men this provides a place to critically examine their own and other men's ideas. But this is only effective if the result is a public challenge to sexism and not just internal discussion within a small group.

I heard a report of a meeting, where one male person was dominating the proceedings in a particularly macho way. One of the other men present stood up and announced that as a man he found it disgusting and wished to disassociate himself from this. It is one of the first times I've heard of something like that happening. We shouldn't have to feel grateful when incidents like that happen, we shouldn't just expect it, we should demand that kind of response and action from socialist men.

Women should also expect men to look at themselves, without always being prompted to do so by women. There must be a more active and public commitment by men to change and challenge sexism. When there is they will get the support that they deserve from women.

Jane Foster

You're Worried

why I became a socialist

'It's only in the last ten years that women have even bothered to vote. I was brought up thinking that I shouldn't bother with politics. At 19 I was a liberal. But once you start to question one thing, it all follows on. AVRIL HUXTABLE is 44 and lives in Waltham Cross, Essex. She is a TGWU shop steward at Thorn Electrics in Enfield, London. She talked to *Womens Voice* about what has made her a socialist.



I was brought up in Enfield, got married very young, and had all the problems of a young wife in the 50s—trying to make ends meet, and so on. That was before the days of 'you've never had it so good'. Looking back, I don't think it was a good idea to get married, but it was the proper thing to do at the time. You only left home when you got married.

Fourteen years later, I ran off to Rhodesia with a man I'd known for a long time. It didn't work out—when the government was recruiting an army to fight the black guerillas, this bloke decided to join up! I kicked his combat jacket out of the room and said 'this stinking war is nothing to do with me.'

But I had to start questioning it, because it was something to do with me. I knew there was going to be a bloody struggle: what worried me was that I didn't know which side I would be on. I wasn't very political when I went there, in 1969, and I couldn't relate either to the upper-class whites, because I worked for my living, or to the blacks, because of the social segregation and their distrust of whites. I got on best with the coloureds, because I was as alien in that society as they were.

I decided I had to come home, and I worked in a bar—that's where the money was—for ages to save up the fare. I'd never done the work before—I had to adapt. That's what makes me mad about Thatcher, saying 'people just have to adapt' to things getting worse. You ask any working woman—we're wonderful at adapting: we have to be.

When I came back to England in 1973 I had £20 left. I'd left school at 15, so I didn't have any qualifications. I went to work at Thorn Electrics. It was awful going into the factory. They offered me factory or office work. I asked which had the most money—it was the factory. So I had to take it.

When I filled in the union form, I was told I couldn't join on Scale 1—which had higher benefits, and you paid more—because I was a woman! This was from a woman convenor. I was really angry—I was on my own and I needed the benefits. I couldn't believe a union was going to discriminate against me. So I got some advice and sorted it out. I went to all the union meetings, and then I eventually became shop steward, because no-one else wanted the job. We had some real fights

'you need an organisation to achieve anything concrete. I don't believe people are born vile—it's this system that makes them vile.'

sometimes—but one of the biggest things was arguing with the other women why they should be in a union at all.

After a couple of years our division of Thorns was 'reorganised' and we were redeployed in another factory—still part of Thorns. I didn't want to be a steward again for a while because you have to watch your step so much, be so sensible. Otherwise you're letting your membership down, if you get into trouble or do things wrong.

There was an SWP member working with me, and we used to argue politics all the time. I wouldn't join a political

party because I thought the trade union should be enough, to give information about your company, do the research, and so on. But the union's top-heavy—if you get involved in all the committees, all the meetings, you'd never have any home life. I have to help look after my stepfather, who lives over the road. But the union types, they think that because you've not got kids you've got all the time in the world.

Then I got involved in the Enfield Campaign Against the Cuts. I was at a meeting and someone said, 'If you're not involved in politics, you're not living'. I thought, that applies to me.

We worked really hard in the campaign but it was a total wash-out. We called a final public meeting to get support and only 15 people turned up. I felt very alone—I thought then that if only I had an organisation behind me, it could work. The only people who had done anything for us—encouraged us, done leaflets for us—were SWP people. And whenever I've been involved in something, my SWP associates have been there. I mean, what political parties are there who will come out and say, 'we don't want to waffle about with parliament and nuclear power?'

I always thought I didn't have time to go into all the theory of socialism, or time to have all the arguments off pat. Then I realised that you don't need three years in college to know what's wrong. But do you need an organisation to achieve anything concrete. I don't believe people are born vile—it's this system that makes them vile. I want the destruction of this system. It makes people live in fear all the time. My driving instructor is frightened of the Russians. What I'm frightened of is the world being blown to smithereens because someone wants to be more powerful than the rest.

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.

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WV groups

- **ABERDEEN WV** Liz 51059
- **ABERYSTWYTH WV** c/o Students Union, UCW, Aberystwyth
- **ACTON WV** Ruth or Jude 740 6660
- **NORTH BIRMINGHAM WV** Maggie 021 449 4793
- **SOUTH BIRMINGHAM WV** Jill 021 459 1718
- **BLACK COUNTRY WV** 27 Glen Court, Compton Road
- **BRADFORD WV** Trish Bradford 585 913 for details of meetings and activities
- **BRIGHTON WV** phone 696897
- **BRISTOL WV** Katrina 46875
- **BURTON ON TRENT WV** Kim 33929
- **Cambridge WV** contact Trisha Cambridge 68226
- **CANTERBURY WV** Barbara, Lyminge 862 742
- **CHELTENHAM WV** meets every Thursday. For babysitters and information Jacqui 511370
- **CHORLTON WV** Claire 226 1048
- **COVENTRY WV** meets Hertford Tavern fortnightly, Mondays 8pm. 361 585
- **COLCHESTER WV** 22 5650 for details
- **DUDLEY WV** Brigitte Brierley Hill 78308
- **EALING/SOUTHALL WV** Christine or Jane 571 1838
- **ECCLES AND SALFORD WV** Jannie 707 2557 or Ann 737 3800
- **EDIINBURGH WV** Penny 57 0731
- **EDGE HILL COLLEGE WV** Bev Southport 212 140
- **ENFIELD WV** Nora 807 1741
- **FINSBURY PARK WV** Wendy 01 254 9632 (days)
- **GLASGOW WV** Clare 357 1157
- **GLOSSOP WV** Derbyshire - Carol, Glossop 64287
- **GLOUCESTER WV** Maggie Gloucester 413910
- **HALIFAX WV** every Friday 12-1pm, Co-op Arcade on the Precinct
- **HAMMERSMITH AND WEST KENSINGTON WV** Ginny 749 7292 or Eileen 960 6088
- **HATFIELD AND WELWYN WV** phone Cathy Hatfield 65238
- **HEMEL HEMPSTEAD WV** Val, Berkhamstead 74468
- **HORNSEY WV** Maggie 341 1182
- **KENTISH TOWN WV** Pauline 586 5693
- **KINGSTON WV** Emma 979 9682
- **LAMPETER WV** c/o SDUC Lampeter, Dyfed, Wales
- **LANCASTER WV** ring 36196
- **LEEDS WV** Gilda 622 800 or Bev 457 098
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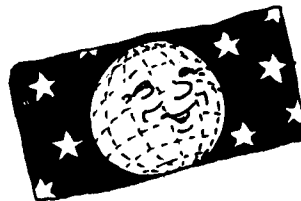
- **LEYTONSTONE WV** Anne (556 5595) or Pam (558 1509)
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- **LOWESTOFT WV** c/o 107, Montgomery Avenue, Lowestoft
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- **MEDWAY WV** Lici, Medway 571628
- **NORTH MANCHESTER WV** phone Sandy 205 0384 or, Maria 205 7657
- **NEWCASTLE WV** Liz 854 782
- **NEWHAM WV** Pam 534 1417
- **NORWICH WV** c/o 56 Benedicts St, Norwich
- **NOTTINGHAM WV** Chrissie Langley Mill 62356
- **PIMLICO WV** Helen 730 7983 or Leslie 834 0760
- **READING WV** Shirley 585556
- **ST HELENS WV** Carol, St Helens 28178
- **SHEFFIELD WV** Sue 613 739
- **Slough WV** Sharon maidenhead 26862
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- **SOUTHWARK WV** c/o PO Box 82, London E2 9DS or Elaine 670 3774 (day)
- **SOUTH WEST LONDON WV** Marion 947 0560
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Small ads

COVENTRY Womens Voice Public Meetings
'Women Against the Nazis'
Monday 6 July, 8.00 p.m.
'A Woman's Right to Work'
Monday 20 July, 8.00 p.m.
Hertford Tavern
Details and babysitting:
Coventry 361585

RADICAL NURSES' GROUP
Fourth National Conference
Saturday 1 August, 10am - 6pm
Nuffield Nurses' Home,
Queen Elizabeth Hospital,
Edgbaston, Birmingham 15.
Further details: send SAE to
RNG, 53 Park Road,
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DO IT YOURSELF

PRINTING A POSTER

YOU MAY find at some time that you need to produce a poster or series of posters to advertise a meeting, to carry on marches or to fly-post. Getting them printed professionally is expensive and not really necessary, as anybody with a flat surface such as a kitchen table can print a poster.

DESIGNING A POSTER

Keep it simple. Remember that every colour requires a separate screen, and every time you print another colour you have to line up the screens which increases the chances of mistakes and wastage. Large flat areas of colour are easier to print than terribly fiddly ones, because of screen preparation. Keep lettering as large as possible; it's easier to prepare on the screen.

MAKING A SCREEN

A silk-screen is basically a wooden frame covered with a fine-meshed material which allows ink or paint to pass through evenly. Any wooden frame which is not warped will do, such as an old picture frame. You can make your own out of 2x1 wood. It doesn't need mitred corners, just squared pieces nailed together. Staple or drawing pin organdie or terylene (plain fine-meshed net curtains are good) evenly over the frame. It must be tight. A good test is to drop a ½p piece onto your stretched fabric. If it bounces several times your fabric is

tight enough. Mask off the screen all around the edges and about 1½ inches in, using masking tape or brown sticky tape. This ensures that the ink doesn't shoot out of the end of the screen, and gives you a dye-well, that is a place for the ink to sit between prints.

PREPARING A SCREEN

There are several methods, from very elaborate to simple. If you have access to a local print-shop they could help you with photographic methods which are the best but need special chemicals and lights. The next most efficient method is to cut stencils from a material called Profilm (for use with water based inks and organdie) or Greenfilm (for use with turps based inks and terylene). Both are a film attached to a backing sheet. The area to be printed is cut away leaving the backing sheet to hold it all together. This means that you can cut lettering to quite fancy images without the whole lot dropping to pieces. Both films are attached to the screen by heat (ironing) and the backing sheet then peeled away, leaving the cut areas clear for ink to pass through. The disadvantage of this method is cost. It is relatively cheap, but not as cheap as Paper Pick-up. This method works on the same principle but you are cutting thin paper such as newsprint without a backing sheet which means that you cannot be as complicated in your design. Also, once you clean the screen, your stencil is lost, so all printing must be done in one go. Cheap, but fiddly.

A good alternative to these methods is to block out the screen directly in those areas you

don't want ink to pass through. Again, several methods. You can paint Shellac (obtainable from D-I-Y shops) onto the mesh but your material is ruined and cannot be cleaned for re-use. However, Shellac will last for up to 5,000 prints, as will Copal Oak Varnish (permanent blockage). A re-usable blocking method is wax, ordinary household candles or paraffin wax melted down and painted onto the mesh. For really fiddly areas it is possible to draw directly with the wax onto the mesh, but check that the screen is blocked by holding up to the light. The wax will last on the screen until it is washed in hot water. Clear any lumps of wax off the screen by scraping with a ruler.

INKS

The best inks are oil-based but they are very expensive and very messy, as you need a lot of turps rags to clean the screen. They are also very inflammable, but they are totally waterproof and will probably outlast the paper. A good cheap alternative is powder paint mixed with cellulose wallpaper paste (Polycell). It is water based, so cleaning up is easier, and it dries to a waterproof finish.

PRINTING

You will need a hard flat surface, a stack of paper and a squeegee (a rubber edged wooden blade) but if this is unobtainable a wooden or plastic ruler should do. Place the prepared screen image-side down on top of the stack of paper, pour a reasonable amount of ink into the dye-well (ensuring that you have masked the screen up to the edge of the design so that ink doesn't appear where you don't want it), hold your squeegee or ruler so that the blade is at right angles to the screen surface. Draw the blade across the screen pushing the ink with the blade. You will need to press quite hard, but don't kill yourself. You will also need a friend, to hold the screen down as you print, and to remove the paper you've printed.

Each print must dry separately, and they take several hours so ensure that you have plenty of flat space to lay your prints on before you start. For two colour prints you reprint over the first colour, with a re-prepared or second screen, and so on until you have printed all your colours. There is no easy method of lining up colours on separate screens without proper print tables or base-boards, which are expensive, so it's guess-work and looking through the screen till you get it right.

MATERIAL SUPPLIERS

Usually in Yellow Pages under Screen Process Suppliers, but one of the friendliest and most helpful (and they sell small quantities and will post to you) is Selectasine, 22 Bulstrode Street, London W1. Telephone 01-935 0768. Sericol, 24 Parsons Green Lane, London SW6, Telephone 01-736 3388 are also useful but deal in larger quantities.

Jill Brownbill

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