

Once a mother, always a mother; the emotional responsibility goes on until the children are totally independent (often never). Besides, the only job which makes allowances for school holidays is teaching. Which means that any woman who wants to work and look after her children must become a teacher - an ideological and professional extension of her maternal role. The middle class answer of an au pair system is one of the most hypocritical and exploitative solutions; not only are many of the girls exploited with no way to protect themselves, but the situation is such that the only way women with jobs can solve the problem of who is to look after their children is by taking a total stranger from another culture into the sanctuary of their private homes, as a 'substitute' mother who has no real commitment to the situation; it amounts often to a betrayal of the child's needs.

The answers will not come from simply juggling around with the existing elements of the present family structure; a tiny minority of couples can share the responsibilities of work and home between them. Most jobs are full time, and the opportunities for women to earn as much as men are still limited. Attempts like this, plus campaigns for community controlled nurseries will undoubtedly help. Campaigns for more jobs to be open to women, for equal pay, will all help. But the aim must be to transform the basis of the family structure, and those of our personal relationships. And while there is a great deal we can do now, we cannot achieve a complete transformation within the present political system.

Once we begin to realise that there is nothing wrong with thinking that there's a great deal wrong with the family, we are on the way to working for change. Ultimately this must apply to men as well as women. Unless men can also see the way they oppress women in the home, and what they themselves are losing by not taking responsibility for the care of children, we will not be able to push for any substantial change in the family structure - now or in any future system. We must also break down the ideology of possession which makes us consider our children as objects we own. People without children

must want to care for children as such, if we are to break out of the confinement of parental responsibility. Those of us who have children have to fight those elements in ourselves; we will have to learn to allow our children to develop close relationships with other adults. There is no natural law that says parents and children *must* like each other. At the very least we need a structure flexible enough for men, women and children to explore relationships and autonomy within a secure context, with as much responsibility and as little dependence as possible.

At the moment it is up to women to stop rocking the cradle and start rocking the boat. We cannot any longer accept our passive role. If we have never before accepted responsibility for what happens in our society, then now's the time to start.

The call to abandon their illusions about their conditions is a call to abandon a condition which requires illusions.

(Marx)

Michelene Wandor
1972



Functions of the Family

The pressure of the family ideal is so pervasive that people outside it - spinsters, bachelors, unmarried mothers, the divorced and gay people - symbolise either deviancy, personal failure or abnormality. It is because the family is the only sanctioned unit for living that everything which in any way threatens it takes on the proportions of a serious 'social problem' - that is, free contraception, 'promiscuity', abortion, illegitimacy, 'broken homes' and homosexuality. All these things threaten the stability and, indeed, the inflexibility of family life.

It's vitally important to capitalism that we should all be hooked on the dream of happy families. It is, actually, a visual dream, projected in the adverts and in children's story books, giving everyone an instant, composite, packaged dream of the 'average' (ideal) family. It's a handsome, briefcase-carrying man, a smiling, aproned woman (usually pictured serving food), a bright boy of about 8 and a sweet girl of 6, all living together with an assortment of consumer aids to easy living. There are no old people, no cross words, no illness, no poverty and no rain and no-one ever grows any older. It's a static dream to cherish which is never quite fantasy because it's always around the corner or somebody else has it.

We live in two families - the one we are born into and the one we make. The period when the second family is together is the shortest period in the whole family cycle, but it is the one by which the rest is measured. If we see the whole cycle as a film with a beginning, a middle and an end, we can see

that the time when parents and children are living together has been caught in a static frame and blown up out of all proportion, and is so projected as to de-signify the rest of the film. So it is that the family unit is the peak of the pyramid of the social hierarchy against which individual lives appear as one long 'before and after'. It is against this that the following startling facts fit into place. Less than one quarter of the country's households contain dependent children and 40% of the next generation are growing up in only 9% of all households. To put it another way, in one individual life span of 70 years, less than half of those years will be spent in an intact family unit.

On the face of it, the organisation of people on a mass scale into small, privatized units appears natural, inevitable, convenient and desirable. It also seems as though we are not pressured into the family but that, like measles or flu, families just happen to people. So we use terms like 'fall in love' and then, like night after day, children 'come along'. In fact, one chooses to live within the sanctioned unit as adults, because one would otherwise have to make what appears to be a negative choice - that is, not to fall in love, not to marry, not to try and buy a house and not to have children. What this means is that we do not choose the family; we are taken by the hand and firmly led into it. Because the nuclear family performs essential functions for capitalism which other social groupings would not do, it's imperative that we remain hooked on the dream and ignorant or suspicious of its alternatives.

If the family is the backbone of society (capitalism), as its defenders so fondly tell us, then institutionalised monogamy is the spinal cord. Instead of women and men relating freely together - and women with women and men with men - we have the one woman/one man principle which pressures two people into marriage at the first inkling of affection and later persuades them to breed and to love each other through thick and

thin and, if not, then at least to carry on living together - so that one woman and one man come to symbolise not two autonomous people but a joint institution. This institution is a fundamental form of *social control*. Admissions that marriage is a form of social control are hard to come by but John Ekalaar, writing a book on family law, let one slip:

The family is a social organism which arises to fulfil certain needs of society and of individuals and which is subject to natural processes of decay and ultimate dissolution. Society cannot eradicate these processes, yet it can, by social pressure and by law, so channel them as to lessen the risk of family disruption. To this end it employs the purely legal concept of marriage to confer special recognition upon certain family groups in order to enable them better to perform the functions required of them in society. (my emphasis)

In other words, marriage makes men into bread-winners and women into wives and mothers. It imposes on women and men functions which are in no sense natural to them but which act entirely in the interests of the system.

It is clear that marriage is the first and basic model of the division of labour and of power between the sexes, the legalised sanction whereby society justifies the public separation of men from women by throwing them together in private. Marriage contains the gross economic, social and sexual inequalities between men and women. It removes the struggle that women perpetually wage against male authority to an apparently safe and insignificant place - the home. This struggle has always been assumed not to exist merely because it takes place without spectators, and doesn't trouble the outside world. But it's there whenever we care to look - in the 'domestic' row, in the woman's silent hurts, the wells of resentment at male privilege and economic control, the bitterness at the loss of female autonomy, the slammed door and the not uncommon fear of violence. These are the cracks

in every marriage structure which romantic love merely papers over.

The bridge that marriage constructs across the sexes is an illusion which most of us are constrained to enact as reality. By disguising the division between the sexes which this society perpetrates and profits from, (e.g. the degradation of women as sexual objects), it reinforces the apartheid of public life and removes the battleground from the public to the private domain. Our personal lives may be disrupted by it, and in many cases, utterly destroyed, but all the while the wheels of capitalism turn smoothly, and indifferently. As long as men and women quarrel in private or submerge their differences in silence, while maintaining a married face to the outside world, the chasm between women and men will continue to serve the society that created it.

The family hinges on monogamy as capitalism hinges on the family. In fact, throughout the world, the growth of capitalism has ushered in the nuclear family, leaving in its wake devastated tribal and clan systems. A sociologist of the family noted, in a cross-cultural study, that:

in all parts of the world and for the first time in world history all social systems are moving fast or slowly toward some form of the conjugal family system and also toward industrialisation.

It is no accident. One of the first requirements of a capitalist economy is a mobile, docile workforce - that is, men and women who are willing to learn skills and sell their labour wherever they are needed, and this they cannot do if they are tied, either emotionally or physically, to a larger family or community network. That the extended family is now nothing more than a quaint anachronism, surviving in a few depressed pockets of industrial society (e.g. Glasgow, South West) is an indication of how effective capitalism is when it invades what we regard as the personal domain.

The arrangements most suited to serve the interests of the system are those most people are forced to make, so that what a worker travels with is that which will keep him happy, fed, clothed, rewarded for his labours, work-fixated, satisfied and perpetuated, i.e. wife and children. (Too many single men and women, without the much valued stabilising influence of a home and family, who are free to go on strike more easily, are an obvious threat to the economic system. So also are the shifting, light travelling brigade of building workers and other lump workers.) So the best arrangement a man can make, regardless of his class or education, is to:

1. take a wife who will care for him and see to all his needs and bear and rear his children
2. live with them in a small, isolated group, preferably away from his first family, with whom his links must be only nominal (aged parents are a liability)
3. be intent on maintaining or improving his standard of living, thereby committing himself to overtime or professional ladder climbing, both of which require long hours away from home and a patient, uncomplaining wife
4. be prepared to move house from time to time (in pursuit of higher paid work, or to move from areas of unemployment to industrial areas) but not to strike
5. support a wife and growing family.

The woman's arrangements must parallel her husband's. But, as well as applying herself to long, unpaid hours of work in the home, seeing to her husband's and children's needs, she must also be prepared to work outside the home for 'pin' money (low pay), but not to identify with her work role. She must only see her job as significant insofar as it adds to the family spending power and gives her something to do when the children grow up. Her work must not give her privileges or independence, because her husband's

mobility, which is so vital, depends on her dependence on him. Where he goes, so must she. So that, if she is laid off at work or subjected to terrible working conditions and pay, it will not affect her docility. Thus, two basic needs of capitalism are met. The family gives it a mobile, docile workforce and a secondary, casual workforce.

Most of the functions of the nuclear family hinge directly on the woman's role. We are told, for instance, that the family serves to contain the worker's discontents and alienation. In simple terms, it means that the industrial worker can punch his wife but not his boss. The sociologists have been busy documenting the problem of the industrial worker's alienation for a very long time. Here, for instance, is one typical statement:

At lower job levels the worker experiences little intrinsic job satisfaction; at higher levels he obtains more job satisfaction but is also subject to rather greater demands. At any level, the enterprise has no responsibility for the emotional input-output balance of the individual; this is solely the responsibility of the family, in the sense that there is nowhere else for it to go. The small family, then, deals with the problem which the industrial system cannot handle.

It's not the family which deals with the 'problem'; it's the woman in the family. But there is a gross over-sight. It is assumed that only men work and only men experience work alienation. What is conveniently forgotten is that two thirds of married women go out to work and most of them work in conditions equally as appalling as men's and for far less pay, but who is there to siphon off their work discontents? Who is there to cook the woman's meals, clean her house, put her children to bed, wash her clothes and smooth her brow? Who tries to get home before she does so that the place will be warm and welcoming for her?

It is *women* who represent the refuge from work, who attend to the worker's - i.e. the husband's - psychological, sexual and physical well-being and who

recharge his batteries so that he can continue to be exploited at work.

The function of the family which remains dominant in the ideology is its child rearing function. I don't have to point out that, here again, it is not the family's function but the woman's. If her husband helps, that is his choice but, with the way our lives are structured, even the best intentioned man will find it hard to take a constructive hand in child rearing when he must be away from the home for upwards of 40 hours a week. Whether women work outside the home or not, they take responsibility for and, in most cases, the bulk of the physical work of child care. What I want to stress here is that the child rearing function of the family has given rise to the notion that the family is nothing more nor less than a vehicle for love and nurturance - a tiny enclave of love and caring in a sea of materialism. What is forgotten is that the old, like children, also need loving care and attention. But the nuclear family, being tailored to suit the needs of a capitalist economy, has no space or time for those whose productive usefulness is exhausted. Where once the family was a defensive unit, with the able-bodied men and women working to support the dependent young, old and sick, it is now a unit wholly concerned with consumption and reproduction. The old are rejected because they cannot make economic contributions to society; the family must be pared down to include only those whom society can use. Knowing this, we are still shocked by the conditions in which many old people live - when starvation drives them to choke to death trying to eat cardboard, or when they've been left to die alone in their homes and their bodies are not discovered for weeks. And the judges at their inquests say that such things shouldn't happen in a 'civilised' society. What we must remember is that such things *only* happen in so-called civilised societies.

It was found that a hundred years ago, when cap-

italism was still struggling to co-exist with traditional family patterns, 80% of old people lived with their kin. Now the figure is nearer 10% and the remaining 90% are left to live out their days in poverty, in institutions and in geriatric wards of hospitals. Many are also vegetating in mental homes, though it is known that their only complaint is age and 'uselessness'.

While the dependent old represent a burden, the dependent young are an asset. They represent the future labour force, so that time, money and effort spent on them is not wasted as it would be on the old. I would maintain that children are not only reared in the family, they are, to a large extent, processed. They are stamped, labelled, educated and graded, first by reference to their genitals, then by reference to their class and then by reference to their 'intelligence'. To keep the economic system going (and the profits flowing), we need businessmen, bankers, scientists, technologists and academics and, to keep them in business, we need an army of men to mine their coal, assemble cars, build roads, forge steel and, to keep *them* going, we need an auxiliary army of women to work the service industries and, to support the whole unwieldy edifice, we need those same women to care for the children, shop, cook, wash, sweep floors and make beds. The family is capitalism's appointed agent for producing the kind of adults the system needs.

It is within the family that the child learns what has been described as its 'role obligations', and where, also, inappropriate values, expectations and behaviour will be screened out. The young girl who wants to be a vet, ballet dancer or doctor will be discouraged by her parents who, though they do not like it, must nevertheless *act on behalf of the capitalist system*. Society only needs a handful of vets and ballet dancers but it needs an awful lot of women whose life work is caring for men and children, with only the odd stop-gap job inbetween.

Perhaps the most vital function of the family under

capitalism is its economic one. The family consumes. It is, at one and the same time, the dumping ground for over-production and the pivot of the capitalist machine. The system demands that each family barricades itself in, in a small house or flat, in order to fill it with consumer goods. We have only to look at a tower block of flats with 80 homes, each one of which will have its washing machine, hoover, television set, radio, iron, private kitchen with assorted gadgets etc. Now we have the technology to collectivise and eradicate most of the menial tasks which each woman in each flat performs in isolation from every other. We have the technology for a chute in each flat which would carry everyone's dirty washing to a central automated area in the basement which would wash, dry, air and iron those clothes and return them. But the market for 80 washing machines, dryers, irons and ironing boards is eliminated at one blow, and so also is the alienated labour of the woman, standing mindlessly over the machine which is supposed to ease her labour. The profit system guarantees that 80 families will buy a washing machine in order for each one to stand idle for 90% of its time.

And, here again, it is the woman who is the prime target of advertising and consumer bombardment and who is asked to try and resolve the impossible contradictions in her role within the family by succumbing to commercial pressure. The family acts, then, as a multiplicity of isolated consumption units and provides capitalism with an almost inexhaustible market, guaranteeing wasteful production, alienated labour and profits.

It is women, more than men, who are both the victims and the casualties of this, because they are locked at the base of every family, upholding it and exploited and oppressed because of it.

Lee Comer
April 1973

Paper given at the Leeds Conference on The Family in April 1973. Subsequently published in RED RAG

The Family, Social Work & the Welfare State

Social work is woman's work in a double sense. Most social workers are women and most of their clients are women. This situation arises, I believe, out of the structural similarities between the nature of social work and the role of women as wives and mothers. Both social work and women's domestic labour within the family are concerned with ensuring the efficient reproduction of labour power. As they are both engaged in similar types of labour, women as social workers and women as wives and mothers share some similar attitudes to their labour and experience some similar contradictions. Professional women in teaching or social work are often considered to be very distinct from the 'ordinary housewife'. However, I want to suggest that there is a real unity of interests between these two groups of women (after all we're sometimes the same person), and that there are many issues on which we can fight together, not just on the basis of sisterhood, but out of the realities of our different situations.

The reproduction of labour power

Obviously any society has to have some mechanism for ensuring its own reproduction if it wishes to continue for any length of time. This means that capitalism, like any other society, has to reproduce its own relations of production, that is to say, it has to reproduce the class system. In particular, there has to be some method which will ensure that the working class (in capitalism the work-

ing man), gets up every day, suitably fed and clothed, with the requisite skills and attitudes to sell his labour power in the market, and which will ensure that there are children to carry on the great tradition. In advanced capitalism there are a number of structures which carry out this function, but one of the most significant is the family and women's domestic labour within it.

In other historical epochs the family was more or less co-determinous with the unit of production, although women were still subjugated within it. Under capitalism the family ceased to have a direct relationship with production and women and children were gradually excluded from the factories, mines and workshops. The change in the means and relations of production and the exclusion of women had, I believe, a profound effect on the family and women's labour within it. Women began to labour in the home to reproduce male labour power for the market.

This development had two further consequences. Only labour in the production of commodities for exchange were socially valued and paid a wage. Therefore women's labour in the home was systematically under-valued or not seen as labour at all. Instead, women's domestic labour was submerged in her 'womanhood' and under-written by a number of ideologies, ranging from crude biological determinism to the most sophisticated types of family case-work.

In fact, the actual work involved in reproducing labour is complex and varied. As it has been elaborated at greater length elsewhere (1), suffice it to say here that it includes reproducing the means of subsistence, shopping, cooking, cleaning, ironing, the reproduction, care and socialisation of children and the reproduction of interpersonal relationships, 'tension management' in all its bewildering psycho-sexual forms.

The Welfare State and the reproduction of labour power

The gradual exclusion of women and children from production under capitalism was also paralleled by increasing

State intervention in areas of life which had previously been the province of other institutions like the Church or the inalienable right of every man to do what he wished with his own. Indeed, the early factory legislation was opposed by many industrialists for this reason. There is only space here to indicate some of the developments in this process, so it is impossible to go into the contradictions and class conflict which led to the creation of a welfare system. It was out of these, however, that the Welfare State did arise and I in no way wish to suggest that it was just a devilish plot on the part of the ruling class.

The creation of an industrialised proletariat gave rise in the 19th century to several problems. On the one hand, capital was getting through nine generations of its workers in the span of three generations and epidemics were rife, often even carrying off members of the ruling class. Prince Albert died of cholera in 1865. On the other hand, the workforce was by turn and place both profligate and militant. As Tennyson's northern farmer remarked, 'Taake my word for it Sammy, the poor in a loomp is bad'.

To deal with both these situations and in response to working class demand, legislation was introduced throughout the century to improve the health and welfare of the working class and to create a State apparatus in local government and the civil service to administer this legislation. The two most crucial periods of reform were those that occurred under the Liberal Government prior to the 1914-18 war and the legislation of the Labour Government after the second world war. Lloyd George's government created the basic framework of a Welfare State with the introduction of insurance for maternity, health and unemployment, old age pensions and school meals and medical service. These reforms were consolidated by Atlee's government with the introduction of Beveridge's National Insurance Scheme, the 1944 Education Act and the National Health Act 1946. In the period after the war the principle of subsidised council housing was also generally accepted and local councils undertook massive housing schemes to replenish the homes lost during the blitz.

I believe that one of the effects of these reforms, even though they were paid for largely through working class taxation and insurance contributions, was to provide the material basis for working class family life. It meant that the working class adopted patterns of familial relations which had hitherto been exclusive to the upper middle classes. In short, they created a more efficient structure for the reproduction of labour power based on the family unit and women's labour as wives and mothers. Lord Beveridge remarked succinctly:

Taken as a whole the plan for social security put a premium on marriage in place of penalising it. In the next 30 years housewives as mothers have vital work to do in ensuring the adequate continuation of the British race and British ideals in the world.

The role of women

The glorification of motherhood and nationalism will some day deserve its own thesis. Beveridge's conception of motherhood represents an ideology of motherhood which was increasingly elaborated during the 19th century.

In a society where the productivity of labour is low, it is necessary for everyone, including women and children, to work. In these situations, marriage tends to be a working partnership if not an equal one. One piece of advice to servant maids in 1743 reflects this.

You cannot expect to marry in such a manner as neither of you shall have occasion to work, and none but a fool would take a wife whose bread must be earned solely by his labour and who will contribute nothing towards it herself. (2)

One characteristic feature of capitalism is the inbuilt tendency to increase productivity per head and as capitalism developed the necessity for women and children to work decreased. Marriage became instead the husband's sanctuary and retreat from the world of labour. In this 'sanctuary' the wife's task was to service the husband. A wife must have:

... the grace to bear even warmth and peevishness, she

must learn and adopt his tastes, study his disposition and submit in short to all his desires. (3)

As a mother, 'the consummation of the world's joys to a true woman', she was to 'generate beings who as women, may tread the footsteps of their mothers, or, as men, may excel in the higher virtues which these, to them softer and sweeter occupations, render it impossible that they themselves should attain.' Many feminists even used these arguments to support better training and education for women, arguing that well educated women would make better wives and mothers.

Certainly all these ideologies took some time to bite into the working class. The 1851 Census noted, for instance, that one in four women with husbands had 'extraneous occupations' and one out of every three widows. They also noted with some dismay that 'the districts where women are much employed (away from home), the children and parents perish in great numbers'. However, with the increased productivity of capital and State organised welfare, at least modified versions of these notions of femininity also took on a reality for working class women.

The role of social work

The history of social work has always paralleled the concern of the State for the indigent and feckless working class and in particular the domestic organisation of their lives.

The early origins of social case work can most conveniently be traced back to the Charity Organisation Society founded in 1869 to co-ordinate the charitable organisations in London and formulate some guiding principles. These guiding principles are quite clear. Firstly, case work was seen as a method of sedating the discontents of the working class. In 1872 a COS leaflet warned its readers, 'every household in Belgravia and Pimlico is in danger from a wide bordering hem of poor population'. In 1927 it was describing case work as, 'the only real antidote to Bolshevism'. Secondly, the function of case work was to distinguish between the deserving the undeserving poor. To ensure that only those persons received charity, 'who are

doing all that they can to help themselves and to whom temporary assistance is likely to prove of lasting benefit'. Thirdly, case work was to be 'morally regenerative'.

Although the class origins of case work are clear in these early writings there is little emphasis on the working class family per se. Indeed the material conditions of the casual poor in London were such as to make organised working class family life almost impossible. Octavia Hill takes up this point in an interesting way. In a lecture given to District Visitors and Clergymen in 1877, she said:

Depend upon it if we thought of the poor primarily as husbands, wives, sons and daughters, members of households as we ourselves are, instead of contemplating them as a different class, we should recognise better how the housetraining and high ideal of home duty was our best preparation for work amongst them.

Octavia Hill played a prominent part in the training of social workers. Her case work principles emerged from her housing schemes. The essence of these schemes was that poor and overcrowded courts were taken over and tenants were then 'trained' in 'punctuality', 'thrift' and 'respectability' through the case work skills of the landlord or lady rent collector.

Specialised case work and the psychiatric model

Octavia Hill's conception of social work as housetraining for the wives and husbands of the working class gradually became accepted. By 1912 training courses for social workers had become institutionalised in the Department of Science and Administration at the London School of Economics. A study by S. Clement Brown on *The Methods of Social Case Workers* which compared 80 case records made in 1904 with 80 records made in 1934 found that while the earlier reports were concerned with 'material conditions' and certain types of behaviour such as 'cleanliness, honesty and sobriety', the later records dwelt in far more detail on different aspects of personality and familial relationships. Generally though, specialised case work dealing with discrete aspects of familial life, child guidance, mental

health, medical social work etc, with a quasi-Freudian theory of personality, had to wait till after the second world war.

The reasons for this are, I think, clear. Firstly, of course, it was difficult for the specialised functions to develop within the context of the old Poor Laws. Until there was specialised legislation which gave social workers statutory obligation, specialised case work could not emerge. Secondly this legislation was part of a generalised intervention of the State to ensure a guaranteed minimum standard of living for the working class and thus to create the possibility of working class family life. When poverty could be considered a residual category, as it was during the fifties, before the social reformers rediscovered it, and the nuclear family was a dominant form of organisation in the working class, then it was possible for the problems 'clients' presented to be viewed as individual and psychological in origin. An interesting example of this process is given in the preface of a book issued by The Family Discussion Bureau, which was a 'new type of case work agency' set up by the Family Welfare Association in 1948. They say,

The setting up of State Welfare Services, in particular the implementation of the National Health Act and the National Insurance Acts, had taken over many of the functions hitherto carried out by voluntary welfare agencies, and had freed the Association sufficiently to make the quality of family and the personal happiness of its clients its primary concern.

The case histories quoted in the book are filled with success stories, achieved through psychotherapeutic case work, with women 'making astonishing moves towards femininity' and learning to become good mothers, and men rapidly overcoming their effeminacy and homosexual tendencies, achieving new status at work and doubling their earning capacity. Social work in this period, in supporting the current definition of sex roles, strove to lock women more tightly in domestic labour and thus played a part in ensuring the efficient reproduction of a striving and de-

radicalised working class. It is interesting to note that in this period the changing pattern of working class life was often used by sociologists to argue the bourgeoisification of the working class and the end of all class ideology.

The Seebohm Report, family case work and community case work

By the end of the sixties, however, these arguments looked a lot less convincing. In 1968 the Seebohm Report recommended a major reorganisation of the social services, suggesting that the family and indeed the community should become the primary focus for case work. William Jordan in a book called *The Social Case Worker in Family Situations* welcomes this change and criticises the previous 'narrow definition of the social worker which often led misleadingly to nominate one member of the family as the client'. It could be argued that he is saying that whereas previously there might have been a few wobbly members within the family, now we must realise that, in a number of cases, the family itself is a wobbly institution. The wobbles, to continue the analogy, seem to come from two directions. Firstly, the working class family has been less 'successful' in socialising its children suitably and in creating a fit and adaptable workforce than might have been predicted. Secondly, and particularly in the present period, working class standards of living are dropping or only keeping apace of rising costs. One of the reasons for this is the deterioration and even the withdrawal of certain welfare services and the attempt to exact an even greater relative working class contribution to pay for such benefits as do exist.

The debate about the present state of the family will no doubt continue loud and long. It is only possible to note a few points here:

1. The rise in juvenile delinquency. The spectre of the mob which haunted the 19th century seems to have been replaced by that of the rabid hordes of the juvenile delinquents. Interestingly the Seebohm Report takes the White Paper 1965 *The Child, the Family and Young Offenders*, which analyses the causes and

cures of juvenile delinquency in terms of familial control, as a major referrant for its proposals. (The Plowden Report takes the same line).

2. The rise in mental illness actually diagnosed, not to say the incidence of 'nerves' amongst women. R.D. Laing et al have also introduced a body of theory which lays this at the door of the family. Women, it seems, not only turn their kids delinquent and make them educational failures, they also send them mad.
3. The rise in marital breakdowns. There are also increasing numbers of young people, albeit a minority, who are choosing not to get married or not to live in a nuclear family type situation.

The changes in the Welfare State and the deleterious consequences for the working class are less problematic. The full scale introduction of a means-tested Welfare State (prescription charges, dental charges, loss of milk for school children, high school meal costs) means not only real deprivation for the working class, but it also means that the Welfare State is a much better instrument for manipulating wage demands.

Generic case work

The 'failure' of the family in many areas, the changing nature of the Welfare State and the rediscovery of poverty has made it increasingly impossible for social work to use the model of individual personality malfunctioning to either explain or solve problems. Especially in urban areas, the 'multi problem syndrome' is so large that it is difficult for even the most blinkered case worker to ignore it. This situation has led, I believe, to the introduction of generic case work; doing a bit of everything, case work, welfare rights, perhaps even a little collective action. Generic case work is potentially progressive in that it does seem to involve some putative understanding of the interlocking nature of social, economic and personal problems. It may mean that more social workers will begin to understand the need for what Seebohm calls the other basic

requirements, 'better housing, adequate social security benefits and good health services'. However, as Seebohm also notes:

An effective family service cannot be provided without additional resources and it would be naive to think that any massive additional resources will be made available in the near future.

So, in effect, the generic method applied to the family will involve social workers using women to provide more and more of the services which should properly be undertaken by the Welfare State, like caring for the sick, and the old and forcing families to stay together whatever the cost to the individual women, in order to keep down the demand for housing. No doubt, in order to achieve this, social workers will exert a good deal of ideological pressure on woman and support her endlessly in the drudgery of her domestic labour.

Conclusions

I have argued that social work is one facet of capitalism's attempts to secure the efficient reproduction of labour. The primary mechanism for this was the exclusion of women from the workforce. This in itself was not enough to secure the domestication of working class life and it was only possible for the working class nuclear family to emerge when the State actively intervened in the organisation of the reproduction of labour power. The creation of the social work profession was part of this process, but the nature and method of social work were always affected by the developing nature of both the working class family and the Welfare State. Finally, I would like to suggest that the present crises in the family and the Welfare State reveal the role of women as reproducers of labour power quite clearly and that in this situation there are a number of strategies which radical women social workers can adopt. We must start from the position that capitalism must pay for the reproduction of its labour power. This means a universal, complete and free welfare service, secondly we must oppose all the forces, legal, ideological and material, which lock women in domestic labour. In

practice this means we should concentrate on the following areas:

1. We must expose and oppose all elements of anti-feminist case work ideology. It seems to me that it will be very important, as well as rather difficult to do this at an individual day to day level, in dealing with one's clients, discussing other cases and general office relationships.
2. There is a mass of legislation, particularly in the welfare field, ranging from the cohabitation ruling to unequal national insurance benefits, which keep women in a dependent state. I think that it would be particularly appropriate for women social workers to campaign on these issues.
- 3 More and more women are going out to work. Some through choice and some because high rents, high taxation and national insurance claw back their husbands' wage packets. Whatever the reason, I believe that women at work should be supported by social workers. This means campaigning for and getting more free full time nurseries and also concerning ourselves with the conditions of women at work, from the size of their pay packet to the length of their breaks. The conditions of working women can be part of our 'community work' brief. We could also support our 'clients' by campaigning for more systematic educational and training opportunities for women. It is disgraceful, for instance, that nearly all government training schemes are closed to women. Such a campaign has great relevance in the light of some Councils' attempts to interpret their community work brief as the setting up of special sheltered workshops where unsupported mothers, unemployed men and truanting kids will be paid supplementary benefit rates and used as scab labour.
4. Women will never free themselves from the exclusivity of domestic labour until they can control their own fertility. We must campaign for the free availability of contraception and abortion. We must also oppose all attempts to treat sterilisation as the 'solution' for 'problem families'.
5. Finally, none of this will be possible unless we can organise successfully in the Union. The Union is important on two levels. Firstly, it must be forced to take up and

argue for general policies like the ending of the cohabitation ruling. Secondly, the Union is the only protection against the backlash which will certainly occur when women social workers start raising their voices.

Angela Weir
Spring 1974

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This is a revised version of an article which first appeared in the Women's Issue of CASE CON, Spring 1974.



Sexism, Capitalism + the Family

At this conference, we are attempting to discuss, as a feminist movement, the relation between sexism and capitalism. Often this relation is expressed as an opposition: is it a sexist society *or* a capitalist society? Are we interested in feminism or socialism? We see socialist women denouncing feminism as 'bourgeois' and feminists criticising socialism as being 'male dominated'. In my view the present society is both capitalist and sexist. I can't pretend to be offering here a 'theory' of the interrelationship of these two structures but I hope to show that one fruitful *preliminary* way of approaching the problem is to analyse sexism as the structure which dominates the world of reproduction of the species and capitalism as the structure which dominates the world of production. Further, that these two worlds are divided along a sex axis: the world of production is the world of men, the world of reproduction is the world of women, and the male domination of the world of production is an instrument for the economic oppression of women. At the centre of the world of reproduction lies the patriarchal family, within which male domination and female oppression are constantly reproduced. This family system, as we know only too well, is generally thought of as a 'natural' human structure. In fact it is an extremely artificial unit, depending on a high level of economic development to maintain it.

Our objective as a feminist movement should be the abolition of the sexist structure and of the patriarchal form of the family. This is not exactly the same as a struggle to abolish capitalism. The history of socialist revolutions has shown that socialism can coexist with the patriarchal

family. If the object of socialism is to make *men* more equal, women can not be expected to have a great interest in it.

As a focal point of this account of the relationship of the patriarchal family to capitalism, I want to take the working class family and try to analyse the situation of the woman there. For the sake of simplicity of exposition, I assume initially a family within which a classic sexual division of labour exists: the man is the wage earner (bread-winner), the woman a housewife and mother.

Sexism, capitalism and the housewife

The worker's weekly wages are usually divided into two parts - one part the man keeps for his own private use, the rest goes to the woman to provide the means of maintaining the whole family. She is responsible for budgeting, shopping, cooking, cleaning, mending and so on. It is her 'job' to ensure that, insofar as it depends on her household management, the husband will be able to continue in work. In repayment she receives board and lodging: she is in the situation typical of an economic dependent. The man's work is important to her because this supports the whole family. He is a wage slave, she resembles much more a real slave. Tied to her husband economically and legally, bearing his name, often living in a house which is under his control, and isolated within the home, looking after their children, the housewife is tied to her particular man by much stronger links than those which bind worker to a given factory. The ideal which this economic reality produces is that of good service. Many women have spent their adult lives in an attempt to achieve this ideal, dedicating their existence to performing menial tasks for their husbands and children.

It is against this perspective that we should look at the demand that women be paid for the housework they perform. Does this do any more than demand that instead of being an unpaid servant a woman should be a paid servant? What right does it encapsulate other than the right to have

- a paid servant? Is the right to a paid servant the kind of demand that we as a women's liberation movement should be making? That anyone who calls themselves a revolutionary should make? Surely one of our tasks is to work out ways in which housework, domestic labour in the home, as a task performed by one person for others, can be abolished. If the modern household can only survive by reducing one of its members to being the servant of the others, then that modern household must be abolished and replaced by different forms of communal living and a different form of family. Paying housewives (and that is what the demand concretely means) would serve merely as a new buttress to the patriarchal family.

Economically, the patriarchal family is of great assistance to capitalism. First, it is within the family that labour power is maintained and reproduced, at a relatively low cost. Secondly, the family has become a unit of consumption for the products of capitalism. Advanced monopoly capitalism has opened up the working class as a market for consumption - the 'consumer society'. This policy was determined by the capitalist experience of over-production crises. Hire purchase schemes - which mean that you pay more over a longer period of time, live out your life in semi-permanent debt - took care of the worker's inability to produce lump sums of money.

The pressures to buy are directed mainly at women, and are expressed through an ideology which reinforces the home and the individual household. What is being hawked is not so much a product as a whole life-style. The individual family, with its individual kitchen, its individual TV, washing machine, is an excellent environment for capitalist marketing, which aims at getting the maximum of its products sold. The women who are held captive within those kitchens hate and resent them. But that doesn't prevent them from being held out as living an ideal which other women can only aspire to. In capitalism's fantasy of itself as an 'affluent' society woman remains in her 'proper' place - chained between the kitchen and the bedroom.

It is at the point of consumption that the housewife

has her only direct contact with the capitalist process. During shopping she exchanges wages in the form of money for wages in the form of commodities (wage goods). It is one of the mystifications of capitalism that somehow the process of consumption and the process of production are separate from each other, rather than inter-connected aspects of the same process. Politically this mystification has been expressed as a division between the worker and the 'consumer', whose interests are supposed to be antagonistic to each other. It is similar to the distinction made about the workers and 'the public'. In the portrayal of the consumer, the housewife is often picked out as the one who 'suffers' as a result of the selfish actions of the workers. What is, of course, missing from this schema of housewives versus workers is the intervention of the capitalist interest, and the selfishness of the profit motive. This conservative government has already commissioned reports on the attitudes of housewives to strikes. The implications of such studies are clear - they assess the potentiality of the housewife as strike breaker. Capitalist ideology is always prepared to represent the cause of capitalist crises as the importunate demands of the working class. In the present economic crisis the standard of living of the worker is forced down, and is meeting with resistance both at the level of wages and at the level of prices. The only way in which the situation can be turned to its own advantage is if the housewife-as-consumer can be turned against the husband-as-producer.

It is because, given the present sexual division of labour, the shopper is almost always a woman, that housewives play such a central part in price campaigns. Popular agitation against the rising cost of living has always been an aspect of rebellion against capitalism. But we must treat price campaigns very carefully, if only because in the recent past this agitation has been treated as the limit of women's political potential. This last election was partly fought over the issue of rising prices, with open appeals being made by the conservatives to the housewife. I'm not suggesting for one moment that because price campaigns are instrumentalised

with such hypocrisy by political parties that this means that women in women's liberation should play no part in them. But we must be quite clear about the limitations of such campaigns, which are campaigns for an improvement in the conditions of existence within capitalism and do not, important as that aspect of struggle is, necessarily challenge either the capitalist system or the sexual division of labour. Price campaigns are to the working class woman what wage demands are to the working class man. Neither are intrinsically revolutionary.

A further complication lies in the fact that historically the only periods in which the capitalist state has been at all able to intervene to control prices (and even then not with outstanding success) have been periods of war and periods of fascism. And in both situations crippling limitations have been put on the political and economic freedom of the working class - strikes are illegal both under wartime regimes and in fascist regimes, and civil liberties curtailed. The capitalists are in these situations prepared to accept some restriction of their own 'freedom' to maximise profits, but only in return for increased repression of the working class. For the capitalist class has basically only one answer to rising prices, which is to keep wages down. Restrictions on the economic activity of the working class is one way of doing this, and both in the present government's terms of office and those of the Labour government's, attempts were made to introduce and practise State regulation of strikes, wage restraint and so on. These attempts have met with vigorous opposition within the workers' movement.

We must be clear that it is inconceivable that the capitalist market will transform itself into a rational distribution system, mass-producing the material conditions of existence cheaply and at uniform prices, with the aim, eventually, of providing them free. The capitalist system is based on competition, not on co-operation; the aim of the capitalist is to make a profit, not to perform a useful service. Once we start talking about socialised distribution in an economy

based on co-operation we are involved in a discussion about the need to destroy the capitalist system and to create a socialist society in its place. It seems unnecessarily devious to express the need for the revolutionary transformation of capitalism into socialism behind a slogan of 'no more rising prices'. To accomplish this task we need to develop a revolutionary politics which raises the question of State power. This is a demand which revolutionary movements make of themselves, not of the capitalist class. Capitalist power will be suppressed as the result of mass political struggle, not as the result of a withering away of capitalist market relations, which is what Selma James' pamphlet *Women, the Unions and Work* would seem to suggest.

I have tried to show why I think it is important to maintain our critical analysis of the divisions of labour between workers and housewife, and would stress the significance, for example, of the refusal of housework expressed in the paper from the Peckham Women's Liberation group at the first Oxford Women's Conference. (published under the title *Women and the Family in The Body Politic*, edited by Michelene Wandor, Stage One Publications). We must take a hard look at the conditions which make housework a full time job. Bad housing conditions turn the housewife's day into a constant battle against dirt and demoralisation. Price fluctuations as a result of competition make shopping a time consuming business when we have to shop around for the cheapest buy. The long working hours of the man exhaust him daily. Remember that demands for a shorter working week are often concealed wage demands; they are demands for longer overtime. But by far the most important factor is maternity, and the mother's constant care of small children.

Sexism, capitalism and the mother

Ideologically this society seems to see pregnancy and maternity as mysterious, natural processes which only women are really capable of understanding and knowing about, linked as they are to the vagaries of female psychology. This is the case even though in practice women are often denied real knowledge or control over their own bodies.

There is nothing intrinsically mysterious about pregnancy. It is a biological process through which, given the right conditions, most women can go. But it is a biological process which is overburdened by a heavy ideological weight. Female biology is only 'mysterious' to the extent that it is ignored; the contempt shown by male doctors for 'women's illness' bears witness to the lack of care and seriousness a male dominated society has for women's bodies. It is treated as worthy of attention only to the extent that female psychology is: as a deviation from the male norms. Through an analysis of maternity we can see the twin aspects of the present system - the patriarchy and capitalism.

The most striking feature of biological reproduction in the present system is that the woman, whose part is the longest, the most arduous and involves most responsibility, does not have control over her own reproductive capacities, individually or socially. Decisions which affect reproduction are made by an agency of the male dominated State: the National Health Service. It is significant that medicine is a profession which is proud of the exclusion it exercises against women - only 10% of medical students are women, because it operates a quota system. The main function of women in medicine is to service the doctor and protect him from the patients. These are the men who make the decisions about whether we're to have children, what contraceptive we should use, whether or not we can have an abortion (answer at a price) and if and when we should be sterilised. The birth rate has been a State concern in France for generations. In countries in the grip of neo-colonialist exploitation (like India) 'population control' (i.e. the regulation of the breeding capacities of a whole nation) is not merely the problem of national agencies, but of international agencies. At the other end are States whose problems are not overpopulation, but a fall in the rate of reproduction - i.e. girl children are not being born at a sufficient rate to replace the generation of mothers. Thus Rumania, faced with this problem, has repealed the provision of free abortion and contraception on demand and introduced new and stringent requirements to qualify for

abortions. The problem of biological reproduction is clearly a matter of State policy and certainly not a question of the individual woman and whether or not she herself feels in a position to bear that particular child. Pregnancy itself is a traumatic experience for many women. Inadequate ante-natal care, births taking place in over-crowded and under-staffed maternity wards of authoritarian hospitals, where the woman is treated like one object producing another object. No wonder so many women suffer from post-natal depression. This male medical system has to be challenged.

After hospital, the woman returns home with her child. What is the situation of the mother in the present patriarchal family? Early capitalist development in England created a vast new army of the property-less, who were forced to travel to new areas in search of work. Geographical mobility in search of work has been joined recently by the search for a house. The family has remained a biological unit, but pared down to its minimum. Only in ghetto areas can the old extended family be still seen to exist. The extended family is still a biological unit, still, in most cases, patriarchal, but had one immediate advantage for the woman which was a system of support and aid. One of the curious taboos within present society is that against intervening between mother and child unless one is a biological relation. The mystic biological link which is supposed to exist between the two is almost universally respected in practice. There is no other family system which forces women into such a close relationship with her children, creating a pattern of emotional interdependence and jealous mutual possession within which the struggle for domination and submission are carried out. Within the family the child goes through its first socialisation into the rules of survival in a patriarchal and capitalist society. It is within the family, in those early years, that the child learns about authority, power, control, competition, and inferior and superior beings. It is the early experience within the family which structures the individual's emotional development, and the present patriarchal family is a breeding-ground of neurosis. Some women seem to think that the working class family

is somehow different, but this is not the case. The working class may not have very many material goods, but in the present patriarchy individuals are regarded as property, the marriage and family system is a system of mutual possession. Neurosis is a mass phenomenon, and not the problem of a few tortured members of the bourgeoisie.

Female neurosis is so widespread that it is taken for granted. The modern patriarchal family drives women to the point of madness. Total responsibility for the child is hers. Not only is the woman supposed to ensure that her child is socially integrable, she is also supposed to teach learning skills in order to equip the child for school - fashionable educationalists no longer talk about the 'unsuccessful children', they talk about 'unsuccessful mothers' instead. The modern mother lives with an intolerable burden of guilt and anxiety. Can we really accept that paying her is any solution to the problem at all?

If the situation of the mother within the family is bad enough, that of the woman outside the family is even worse. Locked between the difficulty of finding a job because she has a child, and the difficulty of finding adequate care for her child if she finds a job, often the only alternative is Social Security, like all the appurtenances of the 'welfare state' which are paid out of working class taxation, are represented as the charitable benevolence of a paternal State, in a final turn of the hypocritical screw.

The capitalist and patriarchal State undeniably prefers making individual payments like family allowances to social provision of adequate creche facilities. The emphasis is on the individual making 'private arrangements' such as finding a trustworthy private baby-minder rather than the socialisation of child care. Our tasks as a women's liberation movement in this area seem to me to be two-fold. First we must continue our work in creating alternatives to the patriarchal family for women and children to live within: women's living collectives and communes are of inestimable importance. Second, we must continue our campaign for adequate and freely available creche facilities. The lived reality of the patriarchal family point to the need for its

abolition as a unit of social organisation. We must organise and press for alternatives.

So far in this analysis of women and the family I have described two ways in which women are in a situation of economic dependence - within the family on an individual man, outside the family on the male-dominated State. I now want to examine the alternative which allows women the possibility of some economic independence - work outside the home.

Sexism, capitalism and women workers

When women work outside the home, this work is an addition to housework and child care: this is what is sometimes described as 'women's double oppression'. Once women *do* work outside the home for the same hours as men, it is difficult to find any semblance of rational argument to justify her doing the housework and child care as well. Appeals to biology don't work. There is nothing 'biologically inherent' about doing the washing up or changing nappies; as for the 'biological link' between mother and child, isn't the father a biological parent too? The only appeal that can be made is to a 'natural' division of labour. It is certainly possible to see some remnant of an artisanal division of labour within the family - men still tend to do occasional repairs or potter around the garden if they have one. But here the man's work is sporadic, the woman's constant. And there is nothing 'natural' about this division - it is determinedly social. The very process of 'humanisation' which takes place in the patriarchal family trains women to expect to have to serve men, and trains men to expect to be waited on by women.

The spectre of the independent working woman who neglected her household duties and left her children to run wild terrified early capitalism. The advent of factory production destroyed the domestic economy which preceded it. In the domestic economy not only were women legally tied to their husbands, but the husband also controlled the labour of the family as a productive unit. It was the husband who organised and supervised the work and who

mediated the relationship between the family and the small capitalist who gave outwork to them. In industrialised capitalism women continued to spin, but in a factory, no longer in the home. Capitalism raised the possibility of mass female employment for the first time: this was the advance which it represented over the economic mode which it replaced. Of course, work in a capitalist economy liberates no-one, men or women, but woman's economic independence from men is one of the conditions of her liberation. Factory women were paid less than males, there was never any golden age of economic equality in early capitalism. Dr. Ure, writing in 1834, celebrated this with all the pompous complacency of the male chauvinist:

Factory females have in general much lower wages than males, and they have been pitied on that account with perhaps an injudicious sympathy, since the low price of their labour makes household duties their most profitable as well as agreeable occupation, and prevents them from being tempted by the mill to abandon their offspring at home. Thus Providence effects its purpose with a wisdom and efficacy which should repress the short-sighted presumption of human devices.

In early capitalism women were in competition with men for factory employment; their already existing inferiority was translated into an economic inferiority - they were seized upon as a source of cheap labour and used to undercut male wages. The mill girl, with her immorality and vulgar freeness horrified bourgeois society. Women, when given the chance to turn the tables on men, took it, and male reformers shook their heads over the sad reversal of the natural order. Engels noted, in his *Condition of the Working Class in England*, that:

very often the fact that a married woman is working does not lead to the complete disruption of the home, but to a reversal of the normal division of labour within the family. The wife is the bread-winner while her husband stays at home to look after the children and do the cleaning and cooking ... One may well imagine the righteous indignation of the workers at being virtually turned into eunuchs.

And later on:

We shall have to accept the fact that so complete a reversal of the role of the two sexes can be due only to some radical error in the original relationship between men and women. If the rule of the wife over the husband - a natural consequence of the factory system - is unnatural, then the former rule of the husband over the wife must also have been unnatural. Today, the wife - as in former times the husband - justifies her sway because she is the major or even sole bread-winner of the family. In either case one partner is able to boast that he or she makes the greatest contribution to the upkeep of the family.

Factory legislation restricted the work of both women and children within the new factories, and industrial production became a sector dominated by male labour, their interests protected by male trades unions, from which in the 19th century women were often openly excluded. By the end of the 19th century a movement was in train to teach domestic economy to working class women. The other main alternative to factory employment - domestic service - conveyed to women working there the 'proper' management of a patriarchal family. In this century the teaching of domestic science has increased rather than diminished, with women's magazines and courses in school supplementing the training they are supposed to receive in the home. The patriarchal family, which constructs woman as wife and mother through a process which blocks women's psychological, intellectual and sexual development, is deeply rooted within the human personality produced by the sexist system: this family is internalised, we carry it around with us.

Economic necessity still drives women out to work: in present day Britain most working class women do some work outside the home, in a situation of economic inferiority: the average wage of a woman worker is £13, that of a male worker £26. Working women still sell their labour at a cheaper rate than do men. The so-called equal pay act will hardly change anything, since only a minority of women workers can be proved to do the same jobs as men. Even

those women affected will probably not get their increase, since the employers have decided that wage increases for equal pay should be restricted by a £2 wage restraint.

The exclusion of women from industrial production effected by early capitalism continues. To find employment women have to go to the servicing sector of the economy, a sector which is itself dependent on the point of production. The sexual division of labour within the economy mirrors with startling clarity the division within the family. The mass-production of clothing employs female labour overwhelmingly, similarly food packaging and preparation, canteen work and cleaning. Nursing is almost wholly women's work and teaching is gradually becoming a woman's profession (with a consequent diminution in teachers' salaries) and the social services which prop up the family are staffed by women. Both the consumption and service sector and socialisation are maintained by women. Their relationship to the situation of women in the home, which I described earlier, are amazingly clear. Apart from that, women still work in textiles (traditionally a female occupation), in light industry (usually producing goods for the consumer market) and as clerical workers servicing the needs of male administrators. Here the patriarchal family and capitalism mutually reinforce each other. In the home and outside women's work bears a heavy ideological weight. The term itself can be used to attribute a kind of femininity to the work itself as much as to the worker.

It would be a mistake for us to underestimate either the importance of the economic base or the importance of the sexual division of labour. We should insist that women's 'right to work' means not the right to work inside the home, or the right to work outside the home at jobs determined by the patriarchal system, but the right of women and men to perform the same work, at the same rate of pay, and to control their conditions of work in a society based on co-operation. Women's liberation must develop a strategy aimed both at the patriarchal family and at the sexual division of labour in the economy. Both of these conditions of the oppression of women are built

into the capitalist system. The situation of women in the Soviet Union indicates that they can be built into a socialist system too - the patriarchy can survive changes in the mode of production.

The conditions of employment for women are usually worse than for working class men. In 'normal times' female unemployment is much greater than male unemployment, and is one of the forces which keeps women in the home. Women usually compete for jobs with other women in a low-paid sector with appalling work conditions and a low level of unionisation. The struggle of women for unionisation rights - which mean the same rights to mutual protection which male workers have, bring women up against male working class privilege, just as do demands for equal pay and equal job opportunity. A generalised struggle means to me that our movement should be able to articulate all the levels at which women are combating male privilege, in the home, in the State, in the factory.

The possibility of marriage and the family is constantly held out to women as the only attractive alternative to full time employment. And it does have its attractions: at least you're involved in relationships with other human beings rather than with machines. Moreover, through the childhood experience of the family, women have been conditioned to regard marriage and the family as their natural destiny. Represented as the way of fulfilling and channelling female creativity, the questions often only begin after women discover what the real conditions of family life are.

Nineteenth century reformers were quite straightforward about their determination to preserve the patriarchal family as at least one place in capitalist society where 'human values' could still be expressed. This has created a deeply-rooted fear that the abolition of the patriarchal family would mean the destruction of 'human values' themselves. To preserve these 'human values' women are coerced into putting the home and family first, almost to save men the trouble of having to think about them, and live with the burden of this imbalance. So great is the power of the ideology of the family that many unmarried women, faced

with bad work conditions, chose marriage rather than organise against them. The sexual competition, compulsive heterosexuality and repression of female sexuality which this entails are too large a subject to go into here. But passive female acceptance of the roles of wife and mother contribute to the continuation of women's oppression as much as the workers' acceptance of capitalism as the only economic system possible contributes to their continued exploitation. Feminism - the political movement of women to abolish their oppression - is a precondition, the main condition, of a women's revolution. To construct a feminist movement means developing a new form of female creativity, in solidarity and sisterhood with all women, against their day-to-day oppression and the structures which determine it.

Rosalind Delmar

Postscript

This was written as a paper for the Acton Women's Liberation Conference in 1972, when the movement was discussing the issue of wages for housework. Reading it through now, two years later, I'm aware that there are certain points in it which I would not now agree with, or would not necessarily put in the same way. However, I am still convinced that we are oppressed by social structures at once capitalist and patriarchal, that we need to develop an approach at once feminist and marxist. And I still feel that wages for housework is a regressive demand. Whatever its limitations I hope that this paper will still be of some use in the ongoing debates of the women's movement.

November 1974

TRYING TO STAY HUMAN

Women's Work in the Industrial Revolution

The women's liberation movement has become increasingly concerned with the problem of analysing how capitalist and male domination are interlocked in the oppression of women. What follows is an attempt to look at this question for the period in which British industrial capitalism emerged at the end of the 18th century and first half of the 19th century. Even though the forms of women's subordination have altered very much since that period, they represent a case study of the ways in which both capitalist and patriarchal domination of women are interconnected and can be modified in a period of major social change.

The rise of industrial capitalism did not, as assumed by Engels, abolish patriarchal relations between working men and women but re-established them in a new form. This process was very uneven, having different implications for different groups of workers and so, as well as trying to trace the general changes in the nature of sexism, it is also necessary to see how these changes reinforced divisions within the male working class. As feminists and socialists, we have not really looked at the ways in which sexism divides male workers, as well as dividing men and women.

The rise of capitalism in Britain was a very long process entailing two major stages - on the one hand the transformation of the majority of working people into wage workers and on the other the transformation of productive

processes into those of large-scale industry. (1) The first stage dominated the period from the 16th century to mid 18th century whilst the second characterised the next 100 years. During the first phase, the domestic family economy of the mass of producers, based on access to land or a trade, ceased to be self-sufficient; dependence on wage employment resulted from the loss of independent means of production through the enclosure of land and industrial changes like the development of the putting-out system in the textile trades (2). The majority of men and women came of necessity to work for wages, employed either as individuals or on a family basis, with women's wages generally lower than men's from an early stage (3). In the second phase, industrial production was transferred at a highly uneven rate out of homes and small workshops into large-scale steam-powered units of production - factories and mills - and traditional skills were superseded.

Engels, writing at that period, drew the conclusions that women's position relative to men's would be affected for the better by these changes for two reasons (4). Firstly, he held that patriarchy in pre-capitalist families was based on the private productive property vested in male heads of household and the power this gave men over women's labour and fertility. From this he concluded that capitalism, by depriving workers' families of their productive property and independence, would undermine patriarchy and create the basis for sexual equality in the working class. Conversely, bourgeois men in whom the private productive property of the society was now vested were able to maintain male supremacy and the bourgeois family came to represent an extreme example of the patriarchal family. Secondly, as women workers were drawn into the factories they would be employed as individuals on an equal basis with men and gain independence from the family.

Engels failed to perceive that although the rise of capitalism made the domestic economy of workers' families no longer self-sufficient, it by no means eliminated the role of women's domestic labour. Dependence on wage employment has never meant that all of workers' needs are in fact satisfied through the purchase of commodities

which a wage makes possible. Women's domestic labour has continued in changing ways to contribute to satisfying these needs at the same time as women have, in varying degrees, also shared the upkeep of themselves and their families through working for wages. In fact, with the development of capitalism, working men were deprived of all productive property except their direct rights over women's (and in the early stages to some extent children's) labour. Thus, patriarchy as a system of property relations between men and women was not abolished within the working class, but transformed to create a new form of inequality between working men and women.

Women's domestic labour, in fact, came to assume a quite different significance for men and women. On the one hand their rights over women's labour represented for men the only property rights which capitalism had left to them, their last remaining area of economic independence, in a sense, which they would therefore fight to preserve.(5) On the other hand, domestic labour, because it became totally dependent on incoming wages, either earned by the woman or by men in their families, was not a source of independence for women - in fact, the contrary, although superficially the work women did in their homes might appear independent, being outside direct capitalist control.

In addition, Engels overestimated the extent to which married women would derive economic independence through factory employment, since the majority of women factory workers in the first half of the 19th century were young and single and women's wages scarcely rose at all with age to allow for children's subsistence. (See Table I)

These are points to which I shall return by examining in greater details the changes that occurred in the industrial revolution, which was concentrated in cotton manufacture during the period we are considering.

It seems one can characterise the evolution of working class family economy, before the development of the factory system in the latter third of the 18th century, in the following way. All members of families depending on wages (the vast majority of families by this stage), from

small children upwards, were able to contribute to family earnings, but men were already considered as the major breadwinners because of the relatively higher adult male wages. Married women earned wages either through some form of domestic employment like spinning or through (predominantly seasonal) agricultural labour. Neither form of employment precluded women from also taking the major responsibility for care of home and children.

TABLE 1

Wage returns from Lancashire cotton mills 1833

Age	No. women employed	Average weekly wage	Men's wage
Under 11	155	2/4½	2/3½
11 - 16	1123	4/3	4/1¾
16 - 21	1240	7/3½	10/2½
21 - 26	780	8/5	17/2½
26 - 31	295	8/7¾	20/4½
31 - 36	100	8/9½	22/8½
36 - 41	81	9/8¼	21/7¼
41 - 46	38	9/3½	20/3½
46 - 51	23	8/10	16/7¼
51 - 56	4	8/4½	16/4
56 - 61	3	6/4	13/6½
61 - 66	1	6/-	13/7
66 - 71	1	6/-	10/10
Total	3844		

Source: Factory Commission 1834 quoted in Ivy Pinchbeck Women Workers and the Industrial Revolution.

The changes that took place over the subsequent 70 year period affected the working class family and economic relations between men and women in fundamental ways. To understand these changes it is necessary to look at factors such as the breakdown of traditional skills and transfer of industrial production from homes to factories; capitalist attempts to minimise labour costs and reduce the bargaining power of employees; conservative ideologists representing politically powerful groups; attitudes of old and new labour aristocracies.

The implications of Engels' statements concerning the effects of the industrial revolution on women's economic position are that increasing opportunities for factory employment would be available to married women and that such employment would be a source of economic independence for them from the family. A rather different conclusion appears to emerge from evidence discussed by Marx concerning the employment of married women. He refers for example, to a cotton manufacturer who:

employed females exclusively at his power-looms ... gives a decided preference to married females, especially those who have families at home dependent on them for support; they are attentive, docile, more so than unmarried females, and are compelled to use their utmost exertions to procure the necessities of life. (6).

Such evidence throws doubt on the argument that waged work represented a desirable alternative for married women to economic dependence on the family.

In the first half of the 19th century, married women's factory employment appears to have been uncommon except in Lancashire. In the Scottish cotton mills for example, there is evidence that married women were not generally employed. (7) In Lancashire, moreover, married women appear to have been in minority of female operatives, for example, only 18% of about 60,000 female workers employed in selected Manchester factories in 1844. (8) In addition those married women who were employed in factories were mostly younger married women with few or no children. (See Table II) From Anderson's study of Preston

TABLE 2

**Employment and type of employment of wives
co-residing with husbands by life-cycle stage:
Preston sample 1851**

Life-cycle stage	Percentage of all wives working	Of working wives percentage in factory jobs*
Wife under 45, no children	44	
Wife under 45, 1 child under 1	38	72
Children at home, none in employment	28	
Children at home, under $\frac{1}{2}$ in employment	23	52
Children at home, $\frac{1}{2}$ or more in employment	15	
Wife 45 and over, no children at home	16	19
All with children	23	52
All	26	52

* These figures are minima as they exclude weavers who made up 11% of working wives in life-cycle stages 1 and 2, 13% in 3 and 4, 25% in 5 and 6. Only some of these and almost certainly a smaller proportion in the later life-cycle stage would have been factory weavers.

Source: M Anderson, *Family structure in 19th century Lancashire*.

it appears that poverty was the major reason for mothers working and, where a family was well clear of the poverty line, wives appear to have worked only if they had no children needing care. (9) There is evidence from the study quoted above of Manchester factories in 1844 on the occupations of husbands of married women factory workers which indicate that a majority had husbands who were also factory operatives, probably in the lower paid categories, and a higher than average number were married to unemployed men. (10).

From Table II it is possible to conclude that, if Preston was typical of the Lancashire cotton towns in the middle of the 19th century, about a third of wives were working in factories before they had their second child, the proportion falling to ten or fifteen percent as more children were born but before many were old enough to contribute to family income themselves. When most children were able to get employment, the proportion of married women working in factories fell to a very low level. Thus, women's factory employment appears to have been important in many male-headed families in the early years of marriage and childbirth, but diminished to insignificance as children's earnings became a viable substitute.

To illustrate the economic pressures operating on working class families during this period, it is helpful to look at information on the wages paid to different workers and the amount required to keep a family at subsistence level. (11) If one accepts Anderson's assumptions on minimum subsistence needs towards the middle years of the 19th century, a family with two adults and four children would have required at least 26 shillings weekly income. The range of earnings of male workers was very great with skilled factory workers being paid over 20 shillings, rising to about £2.00 for mule spinners on the finest work, and unskilled factory workers earning 15 shillings or less. The desperate male hand weavers, still fighting for survival in their cottages if they worked alone, seemed to have been earning as little as 5 to 6 shillings by 1833 and their position continued to deteriorate thereafter. Amongst women,

the best paid were the power loom weavers who were earning on average about 10 shillings by the 1840's. Women working in spinning departments as piecers or throstle-spinners might be earning as little as 7 shillings, about the minimum subsistence for a single adult. There does not appear to have been any work by which women could earn sufficient to support adequately both themselves and several children (the minimum required for each child being about 3 shillings). Also, as can be seen from Table I, those men who were actually able to retain factory employment beyond the age of 21, mainly the minority of skilled workers, were able to increase their earnings substantially up to the age of 36. Women's earnings, on the other hand, at no age rose substantially above the level of individual adult subsistence. Finally, children under 15 appear to have been able to earn up to 6 or 7 shillings in factory work, nearly as much, in fact, as adult women.

What emerges from these figures is that whilst factory employment is no doubt a source of economic independence for many, young single women in this period, it does not appear to have provided a viable alternative to dependence on a husband and family for older women with children. In addition, families of unskilled male factory workers, low paid hand-workers and unemployed labourers were highly dependent on wives' earnings for periods when children's earnings were limited. In a relatively small number of working class families, those of the highest paid skilled male factory operatives, husbands were earning sufficient to eliminate for the first time their dependence on wives' earnings.

Although it is difficult to piece together the evidence, there does appear to have been a major change in attitudes to women's work on the part of the new factory based, skilled male labour aristocracy, exemplified by the cotton mule spinners in the period we are examining. In the early years of factory spinning in the 1790's, all mule spinners appear to have been men who were previously craftsmen such as hand weavers or millwrights. (12) During that period, the spinners' unions were also open to women who at that time were employed on some of the preparatory

processes. (13) The male spinners established a very strong bargaining position vis-a-vis employers at this time, having essential skills which could not be superseded owing to the very slow pace of mechanisation and their own ability to limit entry into the occupation, largely restricting it to sons and brothers. It also seems to be the case that these men still expected their wives to work and contribute to family income. As late as 1818 one finds a highly class conscious spinner lamenting the reduction in wives earnings arising from industrialisation. He refers back to the period when male spinners worked on large jennies and mules in small workshops and factories:

The cotton was then always given out in its raw state from the bale to the wives of the spinners at home, when they heat and cleansed it ready for the spinners in the factory. By this they could earn 8 shillings, 10 shillings or 12 shillings a week, and cook and attend to their families. But none are thus employed now; for all the cotton is broken up by a machine, turned by the steam engine, called a devil: so that the spinners wives have no employment, except they go to work in the factory all day at what can be done by children for a few shillings, 4 or 5 shillings per week.

This spinner's hostility to the way in which factory employment was then developing indicates both regret at the loss or reduction of wives' earnings, (this was before the somewhat better paid women's factory occupation of power loom weaving was introduced) and resistance to women's work removing them from the home and domestic duties. At the same time, there is growing evidence of male spinners feeling increasingly threatened in their work situation from female competition. Again in 1818 they are found expressing indignation at masters' attempts to employ women spinners, probably on the smaller mules, and at half the wages. (15) In 1824 the same process triggered a strike in Manchester. On this occasion a union official wrote in the *Manchester Guardian* that most of the women had only themselves to support whilst men had families, and thus the women were willing to accept less than the men. It is evident that resistance to employment of women and

girls arose from a whole complex of attitudes, and not just fear of their wages being undercut; this union official went on to add that girls from 14 to 20 were:

rendered independent of their natural guardians, who in many cases, indeed, become in consequence of this very employment, dependent upon their children.

There is no doubt however that the skilled men's fear of competition from women workers was very real and that, in addition, by the 1820's they were under pressure from a number of other factors, like the improved productivity resulting from the larger mules being introduced and the development of self-actor mules in place of manually operated ones. These changes were likely both to reduce the employers' demand for mule spinners and to undermine the bargaining position of those remaining in employment as their traditional skills were increasingly superseded. Thus the spinners adopted more and more defensive positions, one of which being the exclusion of women from their unions. By 1829 there were no women in the Manchester Spinners' Union and in the same year when an attempt was made to form a spinners' Grand Union, women spinners were deliberately excluded.

By the 1830's and 1840's the ideology of women's place outside the wage system and in the home was becoming a trend in the factory based male labour aristocracy. The skilled tailor, Francis Place, in a letter to a cotton spinner in 1835, wrote that the men who had been thrown out of employment in cotton were to blame for their own misery:

If then the men refuse to work in mills and factories with girls, as they ought to do, as other males have done, in workshops, and for those masters who employ women and girls, the young women who will otherwise be degraded by factory labour will become all that can be desired as companionable wives, and the whole condition of factory workers would soon be improved, the men will obtain competent wages for their mainenance. (16)

In the 1840's, during the agitation for a ten hour day, some of the short time committees representing male oper-

atives included in their demands one for the gradual withdrawal of all females from factories; this was based both on the fear of women's competition and on a desire to keep women at home to perform their domestic duties: 'home, its cares and its employment is woman's true sphere' ... women brought up in factories could not 'make a shirt, darn a stocking, cook a dinner or clean a house'. (17)

Whilst such arguments were made in part to express the ruling class to whom the workers' demands were addressed, there seems little doubt that this ideology was also increasingly adopted by the workers themselves. By the latter part of the 19th century, it appears to have become firmly entrenched in the organised sections of the working class, judging by statements such as the following, made the by secretary of the Trades Union Congress in 1875: he declared the purpose of unions to be:

To bring about a condition ... where their wives should be in their proper sphere - at home - instead of being dragged into competition for livelihood against the great and strong men of the world. (18)

The sharp decline in wages of the men who formed the old labour aristocracy of domestic craftsmen, exemplified here by the hand loom weavers, (in the first half of the 19th century) was caused firstly by the excessive numbers of workers who flooded into the occupation when their traditional sources of livelihood had been disrupted by the combined effects of enclosures and the industrial revolution. They also included wives and families of the hand loom weavers themselves, who were drawn into stem the declining wages but overall helped to intensify that decline. The second cause, which came into operation from the 1820's onwards, was competition with the power loom, which provided employment mainly for girls and women, and in many cases for the daughters and wives of hand weavers themselves. This was for two reasons. On the one hand, employers preferred to chose power loom weavers from those who already had some experience of hand loom weaving, and on the other hand by the 1830's and 40's, the weavers' families were in such a distressed state on

account of the low wages that in areas within easy reach of a mill, they were forced to seek factory employment (19).

It seems that for the hand weavers, who were men who had prided themselves both in their economic independence and in their craft, to see their wives and children becoming the major breadwinners and moreover, being taken out of the home where all the family had worked together, was the ultimate degradation. In 1835 some weavers protested against:

the unrestricted use (or rather abuse) of improved and continually improved machinery ... the neglect of providing for the employment and maintainance of the Irish poor, who are compelled to crowd the English labour market for a piece of bread. the adaption of machines, in every improvement, to children, and youth and women, to the exclusion of those who ought to labour - THE MEN. (20)

As they accepted the inevitability of power loom weaving, they put forward various proposals including the restriction of hours in power loom factories and the employment of adult male power loom weavers in place of women and children.

Evidence on the attitude of working class women themselves to these changes is very limited and does not give a clear picture. The expansion of factory employment for women certainly appears to have increased the economic independence of single women and widows, and to have provided a basis for women's participation both in radical politics and in independent trade union action (21) But there is also evidence of women regretting the loss of their traditional domestic role, which enabled them to earn their living around the homes and families. There is evidence too that what we refer to now as women's double shift was already becoming established for married women factory workers. In Preston at least they did their shopping and housework at weekends whilst men and single women took a holiday. (22)

It seems reasonable to argue therefore that the economic conditions of married women actually changed for the

worse during this period. Those who worked in factories maintained their role as important contributors to family earning, albeit by exhausting and debilitating work, but were no longer able to combine their paid work easily with domestic responsibilities. As a result of this they were on the one hand subjected to attacks from State officials, politicians and working men along the lines they were neglecting families and ignorant of domestic skills. (23) On the other hand, they were forced to work longer hours than those of the factory to comply with domestic commitments.

Conversely, the married women in families where husbands husbands, or husbands plus children, earned sufficient to enable wives not to seek factory work were able to concentrate their efforts upon homes and families; but again their domestic role had been totally transformed into one of total economic dependence.

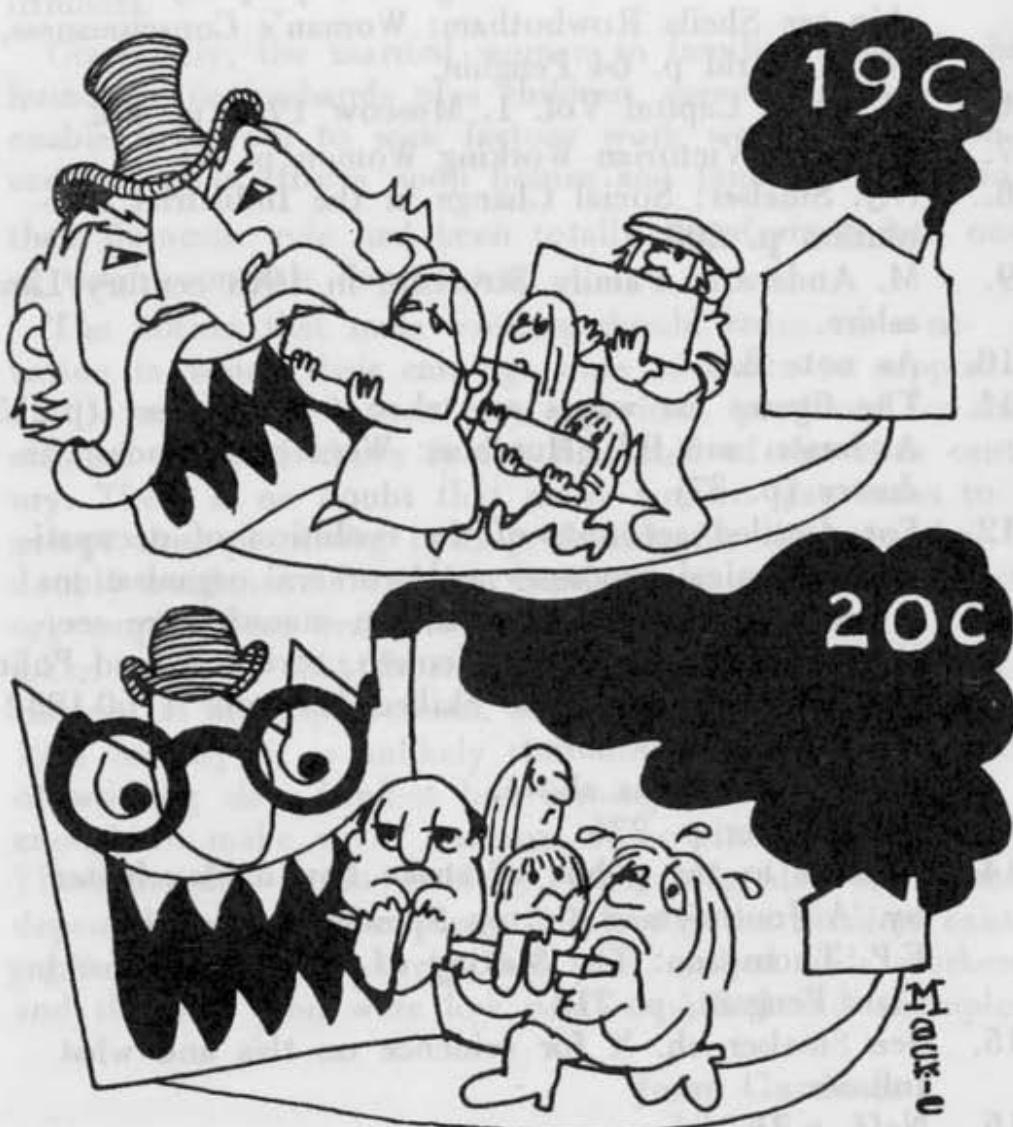
The notion that male workers should strive to a situation in which their earnings were adequate to support a wife and family was a very new idea, produced by the changes outlined above in the first half of the 19th century. There is no doubt that many women also came to accept this, perceiving it as preferable for them to the doubly burdensome and low paid alternative of most factory employment available to them. But this cannot be taken to mean that those women perceived these overall changes as an improvement. In addition, throughout the 19th century, it is unlikely that more than a small minority of working class families had earnings consistently high enough to make wives' earnings at no time necessary. Thus, the new sexist ideology, which degraded men who depended on wives' earnings, reinforced the division existing between the relatively high paid, skilled male workers and the men who were low paid, unskilled and unemployed.

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1974

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3. Alice Clark gives a very thorough account of women's wages and some of the likely reasons for the male/female differential.
4. F. Engels: *Origins of the Family*
5. For a discussion of marriage as a property relationship see Sheila Rowbotham: *Woman's Consciousness, Man's World* p. 64 Penguin.
6. K. Marx: *Capital* Vol. 1. Moscow 1961 p. 402
7. W. Neff: *Victorian Working Women* p. 40
8. N.J. Smelser: *Social Change in the Industrial Revolution* p. 203
9. M. Anderson: *Family Structure in 19th century Lancashire*.
10. As note 8.
11. The figures for wages are taken from Smelser (p.213), Anderson and B.L. Hutchins: *Women in Modern Industry* (p. 37)
12. For detailed accounts of the evolution of occupations, technical processes and workers' organisations in the industrialisation of cotton manufacture see:
H. Turner: *Trade Union Growth, Structure and Policy*.
J. & B. Hammond: *The Skilled Labourer 1760-1832*
N.J. Smelser: as above
Ivy Pinchbeck: as above
13. See Smelser p. 236
14. Address to the public of strike bound Manchester by 'A Journeyman Cotton Spinner' quoted by E.P. Thompson: *The Making of the English Working Class* Penguin, p. 218
15. See Smelser ch. X for evidence on this and what follows.
16. Neff. p.31
17. Pinchbeck p. 200

18. From the TUC Congress 1875 quoted by Turner p. 185
19. Pinchbeck p. 184
20. Thompson p. 335. Subsequent evidence on the weavers is taken from the same source.
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22. Anderson p. 77
23. For a critical discussion of these debates see Margaret Hewitt: Wives and Mothers in Victorian Industry.



Women's Work

The term 'women's work' in industry, has one indisputable meaning - *low pay*, and the term 'women workers' signifies *double exploitation*, that is exploitation as women and as workers. Unfortunately both terms are surrounded by many myths which often obscure these basic facts. First it is necessary to dispel some myths before going on to look at the particular forms the exploitation of workers take.

Attitudes towards women working in Britain not only alter from class to class but also appear to be a reflection of the economic fluctuations of the capitalist system. In the war women were encouraged to work, they were praised for their work and even middle class ladies worked for the war effort. Then came the fifties, the era of economic boom, the expanding economy which required the housewife to be a consumer whilst the husband's wages were rising faster than any time before. This was the era of the 'latch key' kids, the era when the press and sociologists railed against women who were 'selfish' and went out to work for 'pin money' and 'neglected' their children. Meanwhile the true wife and mother was at home consuming, and producing babies for the expanding economy. The late sixties saw rising unemployment, the increasing realisation that the boom was over, concern over the 'population explosion' mounted and consequently a change in attitude towards women working. It was recognised that many women needed to work to support their families or that many families could not survive on one income. This coincided with a feeling that the country needed less babies as the economy can't cope with such expansion. None of these changes have been concerned with the actual needs - psychological, material or physical - of women. By the 1980's, it is predicted

that women will form 40% of the workforce and it is hoped that some radical change in attitudes towards women working will happen, and not one which just reflects the whims of the capitalist system.

The employment of women in particular industries is more a case of economics, prejudice, training and availability than anything to do with inherent difference between the sexes. There are many examples throughout history to illustrate this. Women were traditionally 'spinners' until the advent of machines when men took over the jobs, jealously guarded them and even appealed to MP's and employers to help them protect them. In both world wars women have done most industrial jobs but the real thanks they got for their war effort was to be booted out of the skilled jobs and knocked off promotion ladders. Work is known to become 'women's work' when employers can't get men to do the job at the pay offered.

The picture now of where women work gives a very clear indication of the discrimination against women in employment and in training for employment. In the professional grades, women predominate as nurses and as teachers, both forming the wide, lowest paid base of their professional hierarchies. They form the bulk of skilled women workers; however, over half the women workers in this country are in semi-skilled and unskilled jobs. One third of all women work in industry, mainly in the distributive trade, electrical, tobacco and textiles. It is these women who have least access to any form of training. Apprenticeships are still almost exclusively a male preserve and women have only a little more access to day-release schemes. Clerical and office workers form the other main area of female employment.

Many reasons, mainly spurious, are used by employers and male workers to justify creating areas of so-called 'women's work'. One most frequently used is that women have a high absentee and turnover rate. It's about time this myth was finally busted. Low paid, unskilled workers have, understandably, a high absentee rate, a large number of women are unskilled therefore the average absentee rate for women workers is higher than that for men. There is no evidence to suggest that women in skilled grades have a higher absentee rate than men in the same jobs. Turnover follows roughly a similar pattern, although the statistics show that married women, who form 64% of the female workforce, when they return to work after having children, have a *lower* turnover rate than men.

Another reason used is that women can't work 'night work' and aren't prepared to work overtime. This is particularly used in evading the equal pay act. A woman shop steward neatly summarised the duality of attitude towards women and night work

You've got women you know, who can't work nights in most industries ...But in some jobs it's not only allowed but we clap them for doing it like nurses, we're human, we want our cake and eat it.... (imitating men). Our women must not work night shifts but if we go into hospital we want women to nurse us on nights.

In fact, factories can get dispensation to employ women on nights but as the same woman went on to point out

I personally don't think a man should have to work night shifts and I feel very strong on that as well because I think of the family life. I don't think they start to do it because they want to, they're probably made to. There's a night shift allowance and a lot of men get used to being paid that allowance and if they haven't got it, they've got a short week.

Surely unions should be fighting for a situation where any employer has to get dispensation from the State

to employ people on night work and not trying to expose more people to a vicious system of working. The same goes for other legislation which protects women and ought to be applied to protect all workers.

Not only are women in industry discriminated against because of their lack of training - which was never offered them in the first place - the skills which they do have usually go unrecognised and unrewarded. Ernie Bevin once commented that if men had nimble fingers they would demand a bonus.

Most systems of job evaluation and grading give muscle mass more value than manual dexterity; the former merely a fluke of birth, the second a product of upbringing and training. If there were any logic in the way we evaluate jobs, the women with manual dexterity should be given more than men with mere muscle mass.

At a GEC telecommunications factory in Coventry the women are asked in an interview for a job there whether they can knit or sew or are good with their hands. If the answer is 'yes' they are much more likely to get the job but are not likely to get recognition and financial remuneration for their skills. Here's how one worker describes the 'work at GEC and the skill involved.

I worked at GEC as a young kid, you know, and I went back. You have a spell inbetween because you're having children and that, and I started back because my husband was on short time and the two eldest boys, they were going like to the comprehensive school and it's rather expensive school uniform, books and everything else and I started back - well I was a coil winder and once you've done coil winding you never lose it. The product could be different but you never lose the skill.

The skill of coil winding? It would be the dexterity, the swiftness of the hands, the ability to read and understand prints and although your prints can be different they're still alike. The colours for wiring, you

never forget them. The touch with the machine it's all important. When I say touch, the type of machine I work on is a Swiss machine. It's very delicate the touch of it. You get your own tension on the wire, these wires are very fine that you use, and you learn your machine and you can have, we have had, six or seven identical machines, brand new and each one different.

It's about time they demanded a bonus but they're still struggling to get equal pay. The story is the same in many industries and reflects the singular failure of the union movement to negotiate recognition for women's skills. It's something for which women in unions should be pushing hard now.

The equal pay act leaves much to be desired, both for the way it was drafted and for what was left out. Many women workers don't come into the scope of the act and will have to rely on industrial strength to improve their wages. Even those who do manage to get some form of equal pay will find that what they take home at the end of the week will be significantly less than their male counterparts, the differential being made up by payments for such things as long service, merit, willingness to work overtime etc. For all the Act states that its aim is to eliminate discrimination between men and women in pay and other *terms* and *conditions*, it doesn't include sick pay and occupational pension schemes, which are important financially to the workers and make a substantial difference to the terms and conditions of the job. These schemes should obviously be equally available to all men and women workers on equal terms. However, the picture is very different from what it should be. Only 19% of women manual workers compared with 50% of men get occupational pension schemes; 48% of women are covered by sick pay schemes and 65% of men. The situation overall is, not surprisingly, much better for non-manual workers; 50% of women get occupational pensions schemes and 78% of men; 90% of women and 93%

of men get sick pay. The most disgraceful figure is for women manual workers. Like the non recognition of women's skills, this is another area where the unions have failed to negotiate decent schemes for their members.

In a survey done about eight years ago on the reasons why women went out to work, the four most frequently names reasons were:

- financial reasons	80.8%
- for company	39.5%
- to dispel boredom	29.5%
- for independence	11.5%

It is quite obvious that most women who work need the money. The second two main reasons are interesting and lead to another myth. No doubt if a survey was done with men, the middle two reasons would hardly appear in their ratings as they would not imagine themselves bored and isolated in their homes and therefore would not think of that as a reason for working. Faced with the choice of doing a boring, repetitive job isolated at home and a boring repetitive job with company for an independent source of income, many would chose the latter. However, many employers still argue that women only go out to work to gossip and that they are quite happy doing boring, repetitive jobs because they are then able to gossip, listen to Jimmy Young, worry about their families and not care about their jobs. For most women it is the other way round. They gossip in order to cope with their boring repetitive job which don't involve them in any way. It's a case of humanising a totally de-humanised situation. Workers have learnt it over the ages. In a factory in Nottingham at the beginning of this century a group of workers appointed one person each day to read to them. They listened to Dickens and Jane Austen whilst they worked. Women weavers learn to lip read in order to communicate over the deafening noise of the looms. One woman describes the art;

They seem to have this ability to concentrate on the job and they're going like the clappers, they're really working like mad and they're holding a really good conversation and I mean I've done it and you have a conversation with one of the machinists and she doesn't turn round and she's yakking away.'

Boredom, or rather isolation, is often compensated for when assessing jobs (housewives take note), i.e. a woman working on her own for instance, in a stores room, will, because of the isolation, get slightly more money than her shop floor mates. On the other hand, repetitiveness can be a bargaining disadvantage as one shop steward explained:

When you're talking of the piecework value, you can talk of the boredom and the repetitive part of it. Sometimes because it's repetitive, you might not get such a good value.

Where women, as workers, are most vulnerable and therefore most open to exploitation is as mothers. Women as a group are exploited because they are the child bearers but it is those women with children who suffer the most. There are obvious changes which would help women greatly, like proper maternity leave, jobs being retained for women to return to after having a child and also State run creche and nursery facilities for all. Women must learn to demand and expect these things, as of right, and not as a privilege. At the moment not only do many women, particularly with small children (who are discriminated against by employers) feel the employer is doing them a service by employing them, if they are then given a small amount of flexibility they feel positively grateful. One good, tough shop steward with children of her own thought her factory very good;

They're sympathetic to a married woman who has to take her children to a nursery, you know they'll allow them to come in at certain times, later and things like this and they're very good if you're sent

for. Say your child is off colour, they're very good that way.

Besides part time work some factories have changed from an eight hour shift system to a four hour system for their women workers. They put out a lot of PR about how it suits women, particularly with children. What they don't say is, productivity is considerably increased by having two separate four hour shifts but they still only pay out the equivalent as for the eight hour shift. Part time workers are notoriously exploited and vulnerable because of their responsibilities to their children.

Another shop steward, a clerical worker and a woman, alone with a child, said of her employers; *They're quite reasonable, I'm allowed to vary my hours, for instance if I get into work half an hour late in the morning I have to make it up in the afternoon or I'm allowed to work through the lunch hour which also lets me leave a little earlier.*

Obviously reasonable employers are better than unreasonable ones but people shouldn't have to work through the lunch hour because they have a child. It's about time that society recognised that child producing is an important function and that women or men who care for children shouldn't have to be thankful for the fact that their employers allow them some leeway to fit in children with their other productive life. The latter steward did suggest how workers could set about changing this;

If working women could get together and ask their employers if they could reduce hours for instance, they could enlist the support of the whole union, making it a collective issue - this would involve working fathers too - and ask them to be a little more realistic about hours where necessary and not just think along the lines of pay increases but the thing is that women must get in a union in order to introduce these demands.

The hopeful sign is that more and more women are joining unions and let's hope they make their presence felt. Women clerical workers have certainly been making their presence felt in their strike for equal pay at GEC SEI Salford. They're proving that women are having a hard fight to get what is allowed by law, let alone anything better. The most recent survey on the progress towards equal pay published by Incomes Data Study in July 1973 just confirms all the evidence available so far. They found that not only is progress towards equal pay slow, it was slower in 72/73 than in 71/72. It is clear that many industries will not reach 100% by the end of 1975. It also found that in some industries the differential between men and women's basic rates has increased. For instance, in Flour Milling the differential between the male and female rate has widened by 2% from 85% to 83%. It's going to be a long hard struggle to get even minimal equal pay for women workers, let alone any more recognition for their skills. Obviously, the whole question of women workers is inextricably tied up with the way society sees women's role, first as mother and housewife, secondly as worker, however much that contradicts both the facts and their needs. For men, the role is worker first and father second. Undoubtedly, the role women play as workers in the home, producers of children, of meals, clean clothes etc. for the male worker goes unremunerated by this society. This has led some women to suggest that women should be paid for child rearing and housework on the grounds that it is a form of labour which helps to produce profit. This would have two dangerous implications; one, it would tend to reaffirm women's role as child rearer and house worker even though men would be paid if they opted for that role, and secondly they would just form another group of exploited workers. An independent wage for women at home would be an improvement on the present state of affairs but it doesn't solve the basic problems of women at home or out at work. Personally I would like to see some system

of sharing, between couples or groups, the roles of child rearing and working. This would involve the recognition by society that child rearing is important and should be paid for. Any such system should have flexibility to suit the needs of the people instead of people being moulded to suit the system.

In thinking about how these roles and attitudes can be radically changed, one is led inevitably into considering how society can fundamentally be changed. Whilst we are caught up in a system which is guided by the profit motive, women can only improve their situation from being doubly exploited to being merely exploited and possibly they may do that at the expense of another group. The capitalist system operates on using pools of cheap labour and if women cease to provide that in this country, the employers will move to using other pools of cheap labour, like people from the Third World countries. We do not want our liberation on the backs of others.

Workers will only be able to control their lives, their work patterns, their family responsibilities and their roles when they control the means of production, that is when they own and control where they work and live. So the struggle for women workers must not just be a struggle to level up to men workers, but it should be, to quote August Bebel, a struggle for the *removal of all impediments that make man dependent on man and consequently one sex upon the other.*

Accordingly, this solution to the Woman Question coincides completely with the solution of the Social Question. It follows that he who aims at the solution of the Woman Question to its full extent, is necessarily bound to go hand in hand with those who have inscribed upon their banner the solution of the Social Question as a question of civilisation for the human race.

Sarah Boston

1973

First published in SPARE RIB, No. 16 1973.

The Independence Demand

At the Oxford Women and Socialism Conference in March 1974 on the demands and campaigns of the women's movement, it was proposed that we should adopt a new demand, one relating to women's status as dependent persons. Since then, a group of us in Oxford have been investigating the possibilities of such a demand. Unfortunately, we haven't had time to discuss the issues fully, indeed many questions about the family have arisen which we haven't been able to explore in this paper. Our ideas are only tentative, and we don't necessarily agree on all of them. We have tried to formulate the demand concisely as:

Legal and financial independence

We want to attack the State:

- for its role in upholding the family in its present form
- for forcing women into a position of dependence on their husbands
- for leaving single women with inadequate means of support

Immediate campaigns would centre around National Insurance, pensions, supplementary benefits etc. But our long term aim is that women should no longer be regarded by others, nor by themselves, as dependent people, but should have legal and financial independence and moral autonomy.

We want to add this further demand as it deals with serious problems, affecting all women, neglected by the four demands. It concerns the relationship

between the State and the family, and consequently the relationship between men and women.

This paper is a discussion of the demand, why it is important and what areas it can cover. The details relate to the summer of 1974, but the underlying problems are more enduring. First we try and place the demand in the context of the women's movement, and then we consider practical campaigns and examine in particular National Insurance and Supplementary Benefit.

Theory

Before discussing the issues involved in the demand itself, we want to place it in the context of the women's movement's struggle against oppression.

The demand covers two broad areas:

- a. The way marriage creates and reinforces the economic and legal dependence of women on men, and consequently hinders the development of our economic and social independence;
- b. The way the State underpins the marriage relationship in order to preserve the existing social structure, and so hinders the development of new social and sexual relations.

We do not wish merely to attack individual laws which deny women their independence, but rather to attack the way women's dependence is assumed by the State, especially in social and financial legislation. This assumption is not an unhappy historical accident: it is an integral part of the way society operates. This assumption of dependence has been institutionalized, and so in challenging laws we are also challenging the ideas on which they operate.

This kind of demand, however, has serious problems as it could fail to develop beyond a simple fight for equal rights within the existing social structure. This is a danger it shares with the other demands, i.e. that we demand from the State things which can be grant-

ed, but which can never be enough. If the demand became locked at this level, its potential to challenge the family and the State would be diverted into a struggle for legal changes as an end in themselves. It is precisely to avoid being trapped like this that we must attempt to examine from the outset what the long term applications and implications are. Careful discussion and consideration must take place when campaigns are being organized and we must never lose sight of the inter-relation between short-term campaigns and long-term ends.

In its curiously haphazard way, thinking in the women's movement does move forward. Thinking about the family is certainly now much deeper than can be sufficiently expressed in the demands for abortion and contraception or in the nursery campaigns alone. The connection between the family and inequalities in work and education are now much clearer. It is also clear that the inequalities under the 'welfare state' are based on the assumption that wives will be dependent on their husbands, and are designed in such a way as to preserve that system of dependence (tempered by the need to prevent people, especially children, from starving when the system slips up). Motherhood makes us especially dependent on husbands, but the existence of widows' pensions and of tax allowance in respect of childless wives makes it clear that the dependence is a way of ensuring the provision of housekeepers (if only part-time ones) for men, as well as housemothers for children. This demand, then, highlights the links between the State and the family, and the way the State systematically bolsters the dependent-woman family.

This demand touches those areas in which women are treated as a special category as the result of a State-recognised relationship with a man. And we are affected when we aren't in such a relationship as well as when we are. For the recognition by the State of certain kinds of relationship hinders the development of alternatives which are seen as aberrant - for example,

single and divorced people, those experimenting in communal living, gay people. Discrimination against social groupings outside the family is surely no accident. We will not be able to develop alternatives to the nuclear family unless and until we understand the ways in which marriage functions to perpetuate women's subservience in sexual and reproductive relations, and thus in society as a whole. In marriage a woman sells not only her domestic services, but her sexuality, in exchange for economic support. This demand can act to raise our consciousness in this area, as will become obvious when we examine women's relationship to the 'welfare state'.

It is hard for women to choose to have children outside marriage, for in the eyes of the State other kinds of households have no existence, and in the eyes of most employers, women need only be paid as subsidiary earners. The majority of women, therefore, have their children within marriage, with all the disadvantages of dependence while the marriage lasts, and the disadvantage of chasing husbands for support, should it 'fail'. It is impossible for our individual attitudes and behaviour to change fundamentally while the social context remains this way. All we can involve ourselves in is life-style politics, which, though important, have limited partial results.

This demand, therefore, is a most challenging one, because it calls for a rejection of one of the few compensations for our position of inferiority: the right to be supported by a man. The demand challenges us to think of the evils of the system as a whole, rather than the individual benefits.

Practice

This demand brings together the following main campaign areas:

Pensions and National Insurance contributions

Supplementary Benefit (e.g. Cohabitation)

Taxation

Separation and Maintenance Orders

Student Grants

Mortgages and Hire Purchase Agreements

Tenancies

Pensions and National Insurance contributions and the 'cohabitation rule' will be discussed later in this paper.

The issue of taxation should be taken up since the present system, based on the assumption that marriage is the norm, penalises those who are unmarried, whether they be sharing, 'cohabiting' or living alone. It gives the married man an allowance enabling him to 'keep' his wife at home while compensating for loss of her potential earnings. The whole system assumes that the husband is the main wage-earner. Also, there is only an allowance for mortgage repayments and not for rent, and rented accommodation is the kind usually occupied by unmarried mothers and single people.

Separation and maintenance orders are difficult to enforce. In a large number of cases women are left with an inadequate income. Women should not be forced to depend on their ex-husbands for financial support; nor should ex-husbands be expected to support them (except where young children are involved).

The main difficulty with regard to the student grants system arises out of the fact that a married woman is expected to be supported by her husband and her dependence upon him is assumed. This does not apply to married male students whose wives are working.

It is very hard (though getting easier) for women to complete hire purchase and mortgage agreements without the signature of a male guarantor, even if in all other respects they are 'credit-worthy'.

Finally, all women should be able to rent property without difficulty, and all tenancies where two or more people are living together, including husbands and wives, should be automatically registered in their joint names thus safeguarding all the tenants.

These issues are so diverse that no one law could cover them all. Some stem directly from the law, some are discretionary aspects of the Welfare State and some result from what is regarded as 'good' business practice.

An example

The Social Security scheme starts with the assumption that women are dependents of men. Because of this expectation, it almost forces them to be so.

For example, when trying to get supplementary benefits (i.e. support which hasn't been insured for by payment of stamps), a married woman must rely on her husband and not directly on the state for support (and if neither she nor her husband can support themselves it is he who must make the claim and collect the money). Whenever possible, the Supplementary Benefits Commission tries to force women who are not married into dependence upon men. If a woman can be shown to be living with a man then she is not allowed to apply for supplementary benefit herself but must rely on him for support. This is described as the cohabitation rule. Criteria for deciding whether or not a couple are living together as man and wife are complex, and give the Social Security people the right to investigate your life closely. This rule works reciprocally for men living with women, but does not effect so many of them, partly because they need supplementary benefit less often.

The form of discrimination encountered directly by *every* woman in this country is, however, the National Insurance scheme. Most benefits based upon it are unequal - but that is justified in the eyes of the bureaucracy because contributions are unequal. It is this seemingly rational 'fairness' in the relation of benefits to contributions which is so dangerous in perpetuating woman's secondary role, for behind it is the acceptance of the pattern of man as the breadwinner. The man is expected to make contributions 'on behalf of himself and his wife as for a team' (Social Insurance and Allied Services: a report by William Beveridge). And in consequence, over

a quarter of a century later, the statement by an official of the Department of Health and Social Security that 'married women...can generally look to their husbands' contribution record to provide them with a retirement pension' betrays the unchanged economic status of women. Lack of provision in the scheme for the apparently atypical turns such descriptive statements into prescriptive ones. Thus women are denied the exercise of full responsibility for their own well-being.

For example, a single woman cannot choose to pay more in order to get more, even in the (still rare) cases where her wage would allow her to. Her contributions are less than those of a single man, as are her benefits - at least until retirement age when single persons of whatever sex are belatedly acknowledged as being equally in need. But at least the single woman has individual rights: married women, whose ranks she is expected to join, still bear the full brunt of economic chatteldom. Occasionally there is a seeming recognition of the possible detrimental consequences of dependence: a divorced woman (if she does not marry again before the age of sixty) can adopt her former husband's National Insurance record to help qualify for a single person's pension, for presumably had she not married she would have had that work record as her own. But in general the system works to worsen the syndrome.

Even if she continues to pay insurance contributions in her own right, a married woman will receive less than three-quarters of the amount of unemployment benefit due to a single woman, despite the fact that she needs the same number of stamps to qualify. The sickness benefit scheme operates a similar differential. The judgment is evidently being made that married women suffer less hardship in these circumstances because they can depend on their husbands. The result is that they have little choice.

This assumption is explicit in the case of women who 'opt out' of the insurance scheme after marriage.

This is a tempting alternative for women who in any case get low wages and small benefits, but they then are made totally reliant on their husbands' stamps. The woman is not eligible for unemployment benefit, irrespective of how great a contribution her earnings have made to the family's living standard. And only when her husband retires will she be entitled to any form of pension - a married woman's pension, the full rate of which (payable only if her husband has a yearly average of 50 stamps over the 49 years between the ages of 16 and 65) is less than 70% of a single woman's pension.

To earn this same princely sum under current arrangements, a man or single woman would need to have collected 50 stamps a year for about 28 years. But even if a married woman has *bettered* this average, she cannot claim an increase. Unless, that is, she can pass the iniquitous 'half-test'. At present, to qualify for a flat-rate pension in her own right, a married woman needs contributions for half the number of weeks between the date of her marriage and her 60th birthday (unless married after her 57th one). If this condition is not satisfied, no retirement pension *at all* is payable on her own contributions, whenever they were made. Women who marry late, having perhaps 20 or 30 years of stamp payment behind them, find their own claims wiped out: those who happen as well to be older than their husbands have the situation compounded by the need to wait until the man staggers to the age of 65, at which point a married woman's pension can be drawn. It would seem that individual rights are not inalienable.

This particular manifestation is to continue, probably, under the new pensions scheme, which is still in a state of flux. Others would have been introduced under the Tory Government's Social Security Act. In addition to differential benefits during working life, *all* women of whatever marital status, have been threatened with the introduction of a lower pension rate, in both occupational and state reserve schemes. This was

justified on the actuarial basis that women need a pension for longer. Therefore the money, on this rationalisation, is eked out in smaller portions per week. But one parameter, at least, of this cold calculation could be altered: the age of retirement. Fix it at 60 for everyone, or float it between the ages of 60 and 70 for everyone - and part of the 'logical' basis of this argument collapses. On humanitarian grounds, it should not even have been contemplated.

Women should press for equal benefit rights with men, regardless of marital status. Specific campaigns might be:

- abolition of the cohabitation rule
- equal pension rights and equal minimum requirements in occupational pension schemes
- stamps to be credited for all people caring for small children, the sick and old people

One thing that is very clear is that none of these campaigns can be seen in isolation. Women's dependence on men and women's low wages go hand in hand: so must our struggles against them.

Katherine Gieve, Lesley Gilbert, Mary McIntosh, Liam Morton, Lucy Robinson, Margaret Wheatley and Leonora Wilson.

Amended version of a paper first given at the National Women's Liberation Conference held in Edinburgh in June 1974.



Trying to Stay Human

It's quite right to think that there is very deep rooted male domination in every aspect of our society. This permeates absolutely everything, every social grouping, every organization. Women are defined in terms of men and the working class is defined as male. The Trade Unionist is defined as the Trade Unionist with his *wife and family*. Well there are two and a quarter, at least, million women Trade Unionists and it's pretty self evident that they have no wives! So this stereotype that comes on of the Trade Unionist with his wife and family is clearly deriving from this picture of society as male. We are all some sort of sub-species and never more than when we join a Union, but you see two and a quarter million of us *have joined Unions*. The trouble is that we've made very little impact on those Unions so far.

Now it's true that *workers organise Unions and not Unions workers*. This, in a nutshell, is why I am a Trade Unionist. I am a Trade Unionist first and foremost as a declaration of class solidarity; I am not willing you see to have the class defined in terms of men. Because Trade Unions are run as if they are male working class clubs, that's no reason for me to let them get away with it is it? It seems to me that if we say that women are an integral part of the working class then we have to behave like this and so to me joining a Union is a declaration of class solidarity. I want women not only to join Unions but to participate, *to take them away from male domination*.

Now I think it's not a simple crude question of either you join a Trade Union or you participate in an autonomous women's movement because I think both these things are necessary. You see if you look at the question of why aren't women participating, straight away you're up against social questions .. the structure of Unions, the rules and

regulations, having to talk at meetings and the fact that meetings are at night when women are supposed to be washing up and putting *their* children to bed. *Their* children, the children of all these females here. Well I tell you my children were not my own product and have not been brought up as though they are my own product and when women are made responsible for children, part of the job of women's liberation and of women in Unions and of women in general is to make men realise that children are the children of both sexes.

The revolution therefore that we need in women's consciousness cannot be strictly defined in terms of work nor can it be strictly defined in terms of home. These things interact and the woman who is at home now without wages - she probably was out at work earning wages; she probably intends to go out to work in the future. There simply isn't a division between the woman at work and the woman at home. She is the same woman at different stages in her life.

Low level of consciousness

It's perfectly true that Trade Unions behave as if it's only those who are actually in employment that have any right to speak for the working class, but that is no reason why we should accept this. It is no reason why we should therefore believe that we have no place in the organization of class solidarity. Trade Unions are, or should be (some of them are, some of them aren't, but they all should be), defensive organizations for the workers. They're not really revolutionary organizations in their intention although some of them do include revolutionary aims - even my own Union does intend to take over the distributive trades but it's forgotten about that, that bit's not very often read! But they are defensive organizations and *women workers* do need defending and there isn't really any reason at all why we should accept the definition that the Trade Unions are the man's business.

Part of fighting the boss is fighting for control of our own organisation. It's difficult, of course it's difficult. Look

at the number who can really be called the ruling class at the moment and look at the rest of us, who work in one way or another, who sell our labour - there is a considerable disparity in numbers isn't there? So why does the majority put up with this minority rule? Because men and women alike are at a very low level of consciousness and of course it's difficult. It's difficult to help women understand that they are people, that they shouldn't always be defined in terms of their family or husband and so on. It's difficult to get all workers, men and women, to realise that they don't really need the boss and it doesn't seem to me that we make this difficult job any easier by behaving as though we lived in a strictly sex segregated world.

Effects of the women's movement

I believe that a woman's movement has a very important place. I didn't always believe this but I've learnt. I've kept my mind open and observed and the women's liberation movement *works*. You have meetings like this where women can come and take part and you have it spilling over.

Now I think that the job of raising consciousness, raising people's awareness, getting them questioning things is very subtle and it doesn't always show in membership figures or meetings but it can show in attitudes. It seems to me that in its short life the women's liberation movement can look around and see definite changes in consciousness. Of course the capitalist class try to cash in on this - look at all the adverts the new way to freedom which is some sort of product ... but it's interesting that advertising uses such methods - it shows that they think women are thinking in terms of freedom, liberty etc.

There's a tremendous film called *The Salt of the Earth* which has many lessons for workers in general and especially for women. You see it's about Mexican American miners who have the most oppressed conditions - worse than the non Mexican American miners so that in the surrounding pits all the non Mexican Americans can look at *this* pit and say well at least we're better off than them. And this, of course, is a well known bosses trick, it helps to

keep people happy if they can look and see someone beneath them. They feel that much elevated. We're taught in our society to measure ourselves by how many people there are underneath us and this is the second point of the film. But the essence of the film is that when the strike happened the men are unable to bring it to victory *on their own*. The women have definite demands they want to impose as well, they don't see why it should just be things relating to the men. They want it to be things relating to the home because this is a company town, you see, and everything is ruled by the company.

Now in order for the women to be brought actively into the strike and win it, they had to adjourn the Union meetings and have a meeting of the whole community instead. That's where it's at on a national and international level. The essential pre-requisite for this was the first action that the women took (and these were not employed women, they didn't have the right to join the Union - they weren't themselves miners and it was a miners Union), they *went to the Union meeting*. The Union meeting didn't become a meeting of the whole community just out of the blue. *The women went to the Union and insisted on their right to be there*. It's this development which is so important. If it works for women who are not even employed to insist on being involved in the struggles of the Union, how much more appropriate it is where women are employed. There is no need - there wouldn't be a need to adjourn the meetings of USDAW because it is mostly women. They are in a majority within our present membership and if we recruited our potential membership of two million, the majority would increase to 75%. The fact is they don't act as if they were in the majority any more than they act as if they were in the majority in the adult population at large, but we are. The job is not to adjourn the Union meeting in this sense but to *take it over*, and this is practicable and possible.

Cogs in a machine

I found that a lot of things said about women are quite

untrue. Women are not averse to being in Trade Unions. Women workers are just as interested in their working on conditions as male workers, *but sometimes in different aspects* and this is not dealt with by Trade Unions. Women aren't interested just in wages, equal pay is much more than a wage demand. Equal pay is a demand for self respect, it's more than just a demand for equal money, it's hygiene, safety, cold and things like that.

Women are interested, in other words, in their working conditions as much as, or more than, their wages, because women are *trying to stay human*, even while working. Now the male Trade Unionist is too pat to allow himself to become part of his machine - you've got good wages in car factories by my God at what a cost. And all the things like tea breaks on the job.. it's an acceptance of money as the capitalist evaluation of people - they're economic units. Men are taught to value themselves as bread-winners, that's why they get so worried by things like equal pay - they're like the American miners looking at the Mexican miners - they've got to have somebody beneath them. There's no doubt about it that many working men get compensation for being cogs in a machine at work by coming home and being 'head of the household'. And there's no way of breaking it down but battering it. And it's difficult - autonomous women's movement, Trade Unions or both - as I think it should be - it's a difficult job.

So I maintain that women are interested in their working conditions, because they're trying to remain human. They're interested in *personal relations*. 'Women aren't interested in management', 'women aren't interested in top jobs', 'women haven't got a sufficiently responsible attitude to work'...well, bravo say I. I'm not in women's liberation to get women top jobs - I'm in women's liberation to get top jobs abolished. We get too apologetic. We get too accustomed to accepting the male definition of us - and this applies to all of us, no matter what field of activity we chose.

At sixteen I went to my first Union meeting - it was

all men and they voted in alphabetical order.... I couldn't bear it and I just wasn't confident enough to deal with it. Nowadays I've had young girls come to my branch meetings and they're perfectly happy to talk because they're listened to. They have a perfectly logical, sensible attitude to their work, and they're delighted if things get taken up because of their attendance. But the way to come to political terms - and survive - in the movement is to look around at what is and say well this is it, how do I change it? And the way to change it is, you say is there any positive feature in the situation, and you will usually, if not always, find that there is a positive feature. The positive feature about men asking for overtime is that they want more money, so you have to build on that ... and show them that's it's not the right way to go about it.

Producers and consumers

Women at work have many positive features - including the fact that they are not so inextricably tangled in the work machine as men are. The fact which we usually regard as a weakness, i.e. that we are conditioned to be mothers, that we are at home and so on - this keeps us at one degree remove from the work situation, just one degree. It doesn't keep us out of it - it gives us the extra dimension. We are producers, we are consumers - there isn't an aspect of life which doesn't touch women at some stage, whereas there are many aspects of life in which men aren't involved. So what we should do is build on this - build on this complexity. So of course it's quite right to campaign on prices, for instance, but I believe that the essential dividing line between just a movement for a palliative and a movement for a basic change, isn't the issue itself, it's the lessons that you draw from the issue and the way the issue is presented. Such as nurseries ... we can succeed in getting nurseries - we've had them before, for instance during the war when the female labour force was needed. And this shows it isn't for *liberation*, if you get nurseries given to you by the employers, it's for the *employers' benefit*, and of course it's very right to talk

about community control of these things. Now it's fraudulent to campaign for price control *as if this can be done in the present system*, because the present system depends on profit, and profits depend on freedom to charge what prices they like and what prices they can get. But it's good if you campaign on prices and show this - and strike at the root of the system.

A different economy

On the question of night shift - one of the best moments I ever had at a meeting was at the Gloucester Trades Council. My position was that in the factory such protection as women workers had got should be retained, that we should not accept a levelling down, so that in return for equal pay women gave away this concession and I was being told by a male Trade Unionist the usual things - 'won't accept responsibility' and 'the economy demands it' and 'what about exports - we'll price ourselves out of the market' - and up got a woman, beautiful creature - and said 'if the economy wants me to work night shift, *THEN I WANT A DIFFERENT ECONOMY!* And it was said in exactly those words. And that is the consciousness we've got to get. We've got to get it, I think, by participating in all the organizations of the working class to *make them class organizations*, and in our own organization as well.

We get used to a picture of society that is almost entirely a male picture, and I believe that - it's my personal rule - we must challenge this at every point. *Don't let men say that women are backward.* When you're talking to a woman, and she says that she doesn't want equal pay, what she usually means in the end is that she doesn't want night work and so on - she doesn't want *conditions negotiated by men* - which often they should never have accepted. So she is saying, when she says 'I don't want equal pay', 'I don't want to worsen my working conditions even for more money'. Far from being *backward*, there is a really progressive voice. If we talk enough, get these conversations going and realise that it *is* a progressive voice, that when male Trade Unionists talk only in money terms they are accepting the system I just saw an ad in Euston

Station for National Savings which showed a young lad and he's saying to his mate 'My Dad's better at making money than your Dad - and he's got certificates to prove it'. So you see the *values* - talk about conditions for *women!*

There are all sorts of things about which you can feel resentment. For instance, if you have an injury at work and you are a woman and you get compensation through your employers' insurance (not the Industrial Injury benefit but the lump sum sort of compensation), your husband signs. They do make the cheque out to you, but your husband signs. In fact, I lost the vote in Union elections of a large branch because I had the temerity to object to this and to take it up on behalf of the women in that branch. I discovered that the reason given is that insurance companies are afraid that men will sue for *loss of their wives' services*. Therefore, they have to indicate that they are satisfied with the compensation but it means that women have no privacy. I think it's a pity if they need privacy but often they do and anyway it should be their choice. Taking this up, which seemed to me quite straightforward, that a woman worker who is injured should get compensation for her injury full stop I found a hornet's nest around my head with the men in the branch who all immediately felt threatened by this. And on the question of unfair payment, unfair training opportunities, there is only lip service paid to it, if that, and in the end we come down down to the fact of *the breadwinner* - 'I'm the breadwinner' and frequently they're *not* the breadwinner. They are older men who are putting this point of view and their children have ceased to be dependent and their wives work but ipso facto the man's the breadwinner.

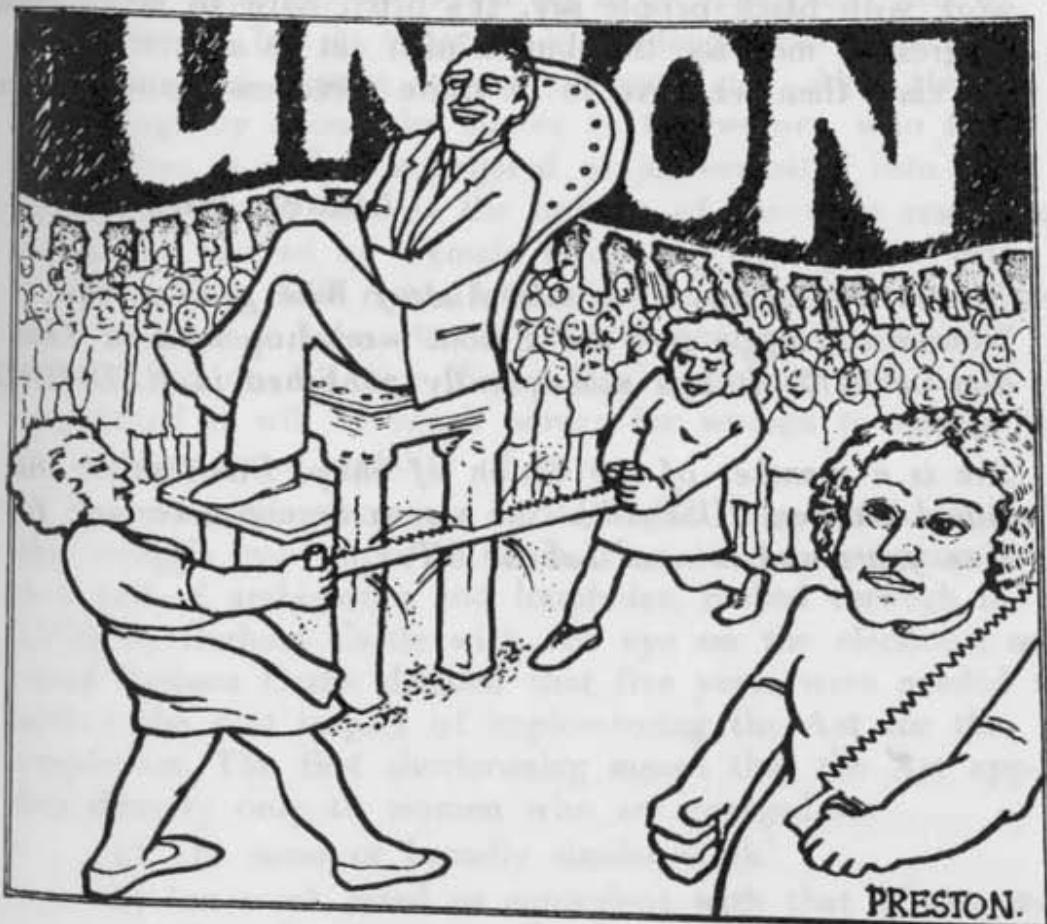
And then there's also the deep-rooted male terminology. At one meeting I was at, the chairman used the term 'old women of both sexes', and when I objected to the term old *women* being used in a derisory fashion, I knew I'd be told I had a trivial mind - 'Oh the trivial minds these women have always going off and so on' - and sure enough up got the other speaker and said 'I'm very surprised at

Comrade Wise bringing us down to this trivial level'. But you see it isn't trivial and you have to take a very deep breath to stand up for women as a sex, as people. The kind of attitude expressed by 'You are good *for a woman*' and all that sort of thing can only be broken down in struggle but it can be broken down. We live in a mixed world and we must break it down in all the organizations of the working class.

The demand for a shorter working week is, I believe, an absolutely crucial demand. Now it's a demand which should fit in with the way political things are going - you've got a million unemployed - and the men should be insisting on a shorter working week for themselves. In fact, it's commonplace that they work overtime, never mind a shorter working week. So the reason this demand is crucial for women is that we need not be at work, then at home, then at work; we need not to have our lives in this sort of compartment. We need to be at work and at home *simultaneously*. And in order to get that we need to have men at home and at work simultaneously. So a shorter working week for men and for women gives the grounding for the removing of sex typing in working class homes, in a way that there is no opportunity for at the moment. It is just too much to expect a man who has worked 50 hours perhaps (do you know that lorry drivers' negotiating rate are on 60/70 hours a week - sure they demand a 35 hour week but they negotiate their rates on the basis of 60/70 hours a week) to share the housework. It's imperative that we put our voices behind the demand for a shorter working week for everybody, precisely so that men can take *their rightful place at home* with their children. Of course we want community care, community support, nurseries - there shouldn't be a block of flats built without games rooms and toddlers' rooms and everything - but we don't just want the situation where we free ourselves to go and work the hours that men work. Double exploitation is the danger.

One field that we, women's liberation that is, miss the boat completely on is secretarial work, generally regarded

as the office wife type of thing. It's true to some extent that it's a carry over from the home role but in fact it is a skilled job and lots of girls know that they can make a better shot at the boss's work than he could at shorthand and typing! I think we should elevate women's self respect at all times so that instead of saying poor thing, office wife and go and cry in the cloakroom, why not say, skilled worker and what about skilled workers' rates? I think women's liberation often unconsciously slighted women as mothers and workers by accepting male evaluation. There's a tremendous amount of skill in the work women do and it just isn't recognised by society nor is it paid for and it's often not recognised by the women themselves. I believe you'd get a better movement among people who have gained some self respect, who are standing on two feet and not just crying, poor little me, I'm badly done to.



I don't think you'll get the overthrow of capitalism, not in a progressive direction that is, without the participation of women. Without women really kicking up, I could see a fascist development being much more likely and people being relegated much more to just bits of machinery. The two things interweave all together. The only way to smooth it a bit is the more that women are asserting themselves in their home, at work and everything, the more they back each other up, they give each other credit and confidence and of course, I believe very firmly that men will realise that this is an improvement for them as well. I mean it isn't a generally anti-men movement, it's a pro people movement, but undoubtedly if you find men who act as blacklegs then you've got to expose them - if they strike because they don't want women working beside them, or women driving buses or whatever, then you've got to treat them as if they were striking because they didn't want to work with black people say. It's often hard to make even progressive men see this but if men act as agents against the class then we have to be quite merciless against them.

Audrey Wise

This article is part of a talk Audrey Wise gave at the Women's Struggle and the Unions workshop held in London in 1972. It was subsequently published in RED RAG, No. 3.

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AND THE STRUGGLE GOES ON

Equal Pay

In reviewing the situation to date with regard to the implementation of the Equal Pay Act, the outlook is bleak. Knowing what has happened so far is important, not to commiserate, but in order to understand what tactics are being used to deprive women of equal pay. Also, there is some urgency about the matter as the women who find themselves re-graded, segregated or job-evaluated into the same badly paid jobs at the bottom of the wage scale, but called 'D' instead of 'Female rate', will have greater difficulty getting their rights later than now. Whilst employers have to change rates, terms etc., women can push their claims, but once a new 'Equal Pay' agreement has been negotiated it will be much harder for women to re-negotiate to get some real equality of pay.

Two basic shortcomings in the Equal Pay Act have made the struggle even more difficult. First it is a compromise Act full of ambiguities and loopholes, rushed through in 1970 by Barbara Castle with one eye on the elections; second Barbara Castle decided that five years were needed to soften the cost impact of implementing the Act for the employers. The first shortcoming means that the Act applies directly only to women who are engaged in:

- a) 'the same or broadly similar work'
- b) 'on work rated as equivalent with that of any men, if, and only if, her job and their job have been given an equal value'

Therefore, it does not apply, in the main, to the areas of traditional, low paid female work. Also the ambiguity in the wording of the Act leaves it open for the employers to take the narrow interpretation of 'equal pay for equal work', and not the much broader concept of 'equal pay for work of equal value'. The second shortcoming means that the employers have plenty of time, often unopposed by the unions, to re-organise their labour force and re-write agreements in order to minimise costs very substantially.

Besides the shortcomings of the Act, progress towards Equal Pay was undoubtedly hampered by the Tory Government wage restraint policies and its repressive Industrial Relations Act. Although Phase II of the Tory Government Wage Policy made special provision for Equal Pay, it only allowed women to claim one third of their existing differential with men over and above the £1 and 4% allowed on all wage claims. That meant that all women (a substantial number), with an existing differential of 85% or less than the lowest male rate could not and did not achieve 90% of the male rate by the end of 1973 - the date by which the Act hoped most women would have reached the 90% mark. Given that there might be slow progress in achieving Equal Pay, Clause 9 of the Act empowered the Secretary of State to order that women's rates be raised to 90% of the male rate by the end of 1973. Not surprisingly, Maurice Macmillan, then Tory Secretary of State, did not choose to wield the power given to him. Speaking at the 1973 TUC Conference on Equal Pay he said that the government would make no such order, for to do so 'would be to use a crude weapon in the orderly progress towards equal pay'. The Labour government missed the date by only being returned to office in spring 1974; however, it did not see its way to making another interim order.

The Office of Manpower Economics report of 1972 is the most comprehensive study so far on the implementation of equal pay. It was commissioned by the Tory government to give a solid body of information on which the Secretary of State could make his decision about Clause 9. He obviously ignored the findings of the report which

found very little progress and not much order. In fact, they found, out of 169 agreements studied, 24% had made no movement towards equal pay, 57% minimal or negligible progress and only 19% had a phased plan or had eliminated differentials ... and of 200 small companies not covered by collective bargaining or wage council agreements, only four had made plans to introduce equal pay. It also found that some employers were circumventing the Act, some didn't know of its existence and many thought it didn't apply to them. The unions have an equally unimpressive record. The report found that only a quarter of firms visited had experienced agitation by the union for equal pay, and in some places unions had agreed to management plans for circumventing the Act. Recent evidence does not suggest that much has changed since that report; if anything the situation has worsened. The gains made in 1971 were not equalled in 1972 and it would appear that progress is slowing down. Women who idly thought that by 1975 their wage packet would have risen substantially are beginning to learn that they will have to fight for that rise.

The employers

First a look at how the employers are organising themselves. In fact they began organising when the Act was but a Bill. A document circulated by the Engineering Employers Federation to its members after the first reading of the Bill indicates how the Federation with other members of the CBI intended to pressure parliament into minimising the scope of the proposed Act. Fortunately some of their suggestions were not accepted, for instance, *The five year period of implementation is irresponsibly short.* With regard to the '90% end of 1973' clause, they, in fact, have finally got their way... *It is hoped that any attempt to use this so-called 'intermediate stage' as a means of implementing in full some or all of the clauses of the Bill (in the light of Trade Union demands for full implementation in 2-3 years) will be strongly opposed in parliament.*

The other clause which caused them great distress is the

one which relates to claims from *her employer or any associated employer at the same establishment or at establishments in Great Britain*. The Federation were terrified that a woman employed in one member firm in the North East (low paid area) could claim comparability with a man doing the same job in a member firm in the midlands (high paid area). The Federation won in the interpretation of the Act. The DEP pamphlet interprets two companies as being associated when they are under the same financial control.

Since the passing of the Act one main message is being proselytised by employers' organisations. The message is - organise now, evaluate, adjust, re-write, move, whatever, but sort it all out before December 1975. *You can do anything now to eliminate the cost - so act quickly* they advise, *Because after December 1975 you may be caught by the Courts and have to pay out.* The CBI, in a letter, advises its members that before 1975 *it is open to the parties to negotiate any methods of eliminating discrimination which may appear appropriate* and in their pamphlet on the matter they warn*if action is not taken before the end of 1975, the legislation could have the effect of raising the pay of many women to the level of the minimum rate laid down in collective agreement for men ..*

Specific Employers' Federations have similar advice to offer, act now and *determine the least costly and most effective method.* Anne Mackie (Unilever), speaking to a conference recently organised by the Institute of Personnel Management, re-iterated the point by advising them to settle equal pay disputes before December 1975 so that they might get a less costly settlement than that which might be imposed by the Industrial Arbitration Board.

The other main discernible trend in the employers' approach to equal pay is their determination to keep women as a separate section in the work force, mainly at the bottom of the wages pile. Although it will be illegal to use the terms 'male' and 'female' in agreements etc., grade, areas of work and certain jobs will remain exclusively female. Again Ann Mackie gave the clearest indication of this trend with an illustration of how the employment distribution will look before and after the Act.

As is evident, nothing much has changed and it appears that there is an implicit assumption that the present female rate will be the new trade minimum. This is borne out by the Paper Box Federation who advise their members *Fundamentally the women's existing rate should become, at an agreed date, the minimum rate for each industry.* Anne Mackie also gave a few handy hints as to how employers could re-arrange the work distribution pattern in anticipation of an Anti-Discrimination Act. She advised the employing of *a few women at the top and a few incompetent men at the bottom so that you can defend it legally.* She did concede that it may not be good for the firm's industrial relations to use such tactics.

Employers and unions

The ways and means of keeping women separate and depressed takes different forms. The crudest is to move employees around so that they are physically separated. *Firms, may, as a part of their equal pay policy, consider isolating these individuals, sections or departments, by ensuring that no males are recruited into these fields...which is what the Engineering Employers' Federation advises and evidence shows that some firms have already acted on this advice.* Another technique is one which is being used at a firm in Worcester. There, the women have negotiated a rise which brings them up to the male minimum rate; and Equal Pay situation? Not exactly as none of the men receive the minimum as a basic rate. They all receive as a basic rate about three pounds above the minimum and it is quite obvious that the minimum has been kept static purposely

- a) to minimise the women's wage rise and
- b) to protect the male differentials.

But the greatest dangers lie in the area of grading schemes, job evaluation schemes and word games called 'job description'. Although Unions are usually represented in such schemes and can object to them, it does appear that the Unions have not been acting with the interest of women in mind and in some instances have collaborated in schemes which have blatant in-built loading against wo-

men. From the following it would seem you can call a job what you like and fix rates accordingly, that is if the Unions and the employers agree.

In the Shoefayre agreement, male shop assistants are designated 'Trainee Manager' and paid three pounds more than a female shop assistant who receives £12.50. Shoefayre are based in Leicester and are part of the co-operative union although they negotiate separately with USDAW. (Incomes Data Survey, July 1972)

The most obvious element available for loading schemes against women is the 'heavy' and 'light' work factors. The Paper Box Federation advise re-negotiating agreements with this in mind.

- a) Men's rates should be re-written for heavy work, e.g. shifting coal
- b) Women's rates should be re-written for light work, e.g. making cardboard boxes.

An agreement which reflects this obvious loading was one negotiated and signed by USDAW and covers workers in the bacon curing industry. This agreement replaced an old grading scheme with a separate women's rate and provided a new four grade structure open to all men and women in accordance with the Act with a plan for the phased reduction of the differential between men and women. On the surface it sounds reasonable until you look at the grades and the sex distribution in those grades. G. Sheridan analysed this agreement in an article for *The Guardian* and found that 80% of the women found themselves in Grade D (bottom) which was defined as 'light work requiring limited training' (no men in this grade), and most of the remaining 20% of women were in Grade C1 defined as 'work involving a considerable degree of manual dexterity', but of light nature. Conveniently any men in Grade C fit into a different category C11 'Heavy work requiring limited training'.

Just in case such factors don't give enough scope for loading things against women or the men employees are demanding that their differentials be preserved once again the Paper Box Federation have the following suggestions

to make 'seriously', not 'cynically':

Discrimination factors available:

Long Service

Merit

Attendance Bonus

*Willingness to work overtime to a given number of hours
(NB. Extra daywork rates could be paid for those willing
to work a given amount of overtime)*

The Act provides other loopholes which give scope to the employers to circumvent it. There is the whole area of 'material' difference whereby some small task can be attached to the male job to establish its difference. On this a final bit of employers' advice is:

Jobs should be changed now where areas of conflict are likely to arise, i.e. the lavatory cleaner. NB. In this connection it is suggested that if for any reason it should be impossible to designate this as a woman's job, then outside contractors should be brought in to take care of the situation, and similarly of course with other jobs at present done by both men and women, and where it should prove impossible to change a light job over to women.

If all this fails, there is always automation and the resultant redundancies for women. As yet it is difficult to ascertain how many redundancies are due to Equal Pay negotiations and how many are just a reflection of general economic trends.

The Unions

As is evident, the union position is considerably more equivocal than that of the employers. The employers aim to minimise the costs by one means or another. There is no such clear policy with the unions. in 1888 the TUC passed a resolution demanding that women should receive equal pay for equal work. Since then they have accepted the principle of the ILO Convention of equal pay for work of equal value. The Tory government, rather quietly, also ratified the Convention. No doubt it was a concession they had to make for their treasured common market but one which they haven't publicised to the employers who pre-

fer to stick to 'equal pay for equal work' formula. So publicly and in principle the TUC supports a liberal interpretation of equal pay but in practice the picture is very different.

The *New Unionist (G & MWU)* edition on equal pay provides a brief resume of the broad spectrum of opinion amongst its members with regard to women workers and equal pay. Many of the traditional ideas are there, the myths and misinformation, but also there are some good points made too. For instance, a bloke at a cigarette factory maintained that women wouldn't work in bad conditions like heat etc. and a fellow worker quickly replied.. 'Who works in greater heat than the girls in the canteen?' Another thing that emerges is that different traditions are set up in different industries and are governed largely by supply and demand. In the laundry trade, certain heavy jobs were done by men but when they couldn't get men to do the job for that pay, women took over. The war is the classic example of traditions being broken because of economic necessity. Many statements also reveal the fear amongst many men and women workers that one or other section will be made redundant. *Where will they work, it's inflammatory. Industry won't pay for it, the community will have to pay for it* - the frightened male worker and a female worker in the same factory said *with equal pay management would think twice about putting women on the same job*. Although many saw that equal pay was related to job opportunity, training and educational facilities, there was a sad lack of any radical viewpoint in relation to the role of women.

The official Union attitudes along with that of the Union leaders, so called, is little more encouraging than those expressed by the rank and file. The one day conference on Equal Pay held by the TUC in 1973 gave a good indication of their thoughts. The importance Vic Feather attached to the issue was succinctly shown in the way the Chairman begged us to thank him for having devoted less than an hour of his precious time to attend and address the conference. The conference had a small

attendance and a large number of delegates were full time officials of one kind or another. Many were keen to trumpet the achievements and commitment of their Unions in the equal pay matter. It sounded pretty hollow particularly in such cases as USDAW whose record in some agreements leaves a lot to be desired. One other indication of how the TUC pays lip service to the matter but very little active support, is the lack of information they have provided on the subject. The conference had to use the Office of Manpower report as a basis for discussion which, as I have said, is a good enough report but good hard factual information culled from the shop floor would be of great help and that is exactly what is lacking.

No doubt it is lacking for another reason too. The hard facts about grading schemes, about agreements such as one mentioned by a T & GWU delegate, where differentials between men and women in some areas of textiles have increased since a new 'unisex' agreement was introduced, are just the facts the TUC would not want to be publicised. Fortunately there were a few good contributions made, some basic questions asked about 'value' and 'value to whom?' of one's labour; some basic demands made for a rate for the job and a decent living minimum wage and some basic connections made about the struggle for equal pay being related to the struggle of the Trade Unions against the attacks of the Tory Government. One AEU shop steward from Manchester summed up the conference with : *So much for this lot, we'll just have to go back and do what we always do ...fight it on the shop floor.*

If women are going to get any real form of equal pay they are going to have to do just what that shop steward said. First they must join unions (a hopeful sign is that they are doing so in increasing numbers) and secondly they must become active members who assert themselves and make sure they are party to all negotiations, evaluation schemes, whatever. Women must make their Unions work for them and just as men expect support from women Trade Unionists, so women have the right to demand and expect support from men.

Until the Act is fully in force this is the only course open to women but from January 1976 they can take their cases of 'unequal pay' to the Industrial Tribunals. Once again women must make their Unions take up and fight their cases for them. Women workers should not be left as isolated individuals to fight for what is their right by Law. Cases may, and will we hope, be won at Tribunals and a few successful test cases could have a strong influential effect on employers, but Tribunals are no substitute for winning the battle on the shop floor, which means women actively ensuring their Unions work for them.

The following example is an indication of how women flexing a little bit of industrial muscle can make substantial gains. A group of clerical workers (wage clerks etc. 95% women) in APEX threatened to strike for a new equal pay related grading scheme. The management were slightly bemused by this expression of militancy from a recently organised group of workers led by a woman shop steward and didn't believe that they could carry through with a threatened strike. The situation changed very dramatically when the men on the shop floor pledged their support and said they would refuse to accept their wage packets from 'black' labour or in any unproperly calculated form. The management settled up pretty smartly and the clerical workers didn't even have to go on strike.

Sarah Boston
1974.

This is a revised version of an article which first appeared in SPARE RIB May 1973.

Some Facts about Equal Pay

The Equal Pay Act, introduced by Barbara Castle and brought in by the Labour Government in 1970, provides for equal terms and conditions of employment for men and women workers working in the same establishment, or in other establishments owned by the same employer or associated employers, if they are employed on 'like' (the same or broadly similar.) work. The ruling about other establishments does not apply unless the employees have common terms and conditions of employment between establishments, either generally or within each class, e.g. men and women; otherwise women can only claim equal pay with men in the same establishment. 'Equal conditions' doesn't apply to retirement, marriage or death matters. The final decision on whether work is 'broadly similar' is to be taken by an Industrial Tribunal. The Act provides for equal terms and conditions for work rated as 'equivalent' under a job evaluation exercise, but does not enforce job evaluation. (Job evaluation schemes place all jobs at a given place of work, or within a company etc., within a rigid system of grading so that they are paid according to the value of their content, according to 'scientific principles').

The Equal Pay Act is supposed to come into force on 29th December 1975. Under the Act, the Secretary of State was empowered to make an order for women's rates to be raised to 90% or more of men's, if he thought 'orderly progress' was not being made by 31st December 1973. Before doing this, he had to consult 'such bodies appearing to him to represent the interests

of employers or of employees as he considers appropriate'.

A report published by the Office of Manpower Economics in August 1972 gave evidence of deliberate circumvention by regrading and the separation of men and women workers - with union agreement - general lack of progress and a widespread attitude among employers that they would wait for the Act to be enforced before doing anything. Only four out of two hundred companies investigated had made any plans at all.

However, the then Tory Secretary for Employment, Maurice Macmillan, reached agreement with the TUC and the CBI that he would not use his powers to enforce progress (owing to the inflationary situation etc.)

The Incomes Data Services Study of 31st May 1974 showed that 36.5% of industries looked at were still paying rates to women of less than 91% of the men's lowest rate, and 79.2% were paying less than 96%. The average women's rate was 92% of the men's lowest rate at that date - an average cash differential of £1.49. (If actual *earnings* are compared, the disparity is much more striking; a New Earnings Survey for April 1973 shows a cash differential of from £18 to £22 between the average gross weekly earnings of adult men and women, a percentage differential of 46% - 48%).

However, the Labour Secretary of State for employment, Michael Foot, discussed the matter with the TUC in June 1974 and again it was agreed not to push the matter.

As for the European Economic Community, the provisions for 'equal pay for equal work' under the Treaty of Rome of 1957, with special procedures for implementation within three years added in 1961, have not so far led to equal pay for women at any level in any of the EEC member countries. A survey conducted in France in 1970 showed an average 33.6% discrepancy between the pay of men and women. France has had equal pay since 1946.

The great upsurge of interest and activity around Equal Pay in 1968-9 lost most of its momentum with Labour's introduction of the Equal Pay Bill in 1969. There is plenty of evidence that the collapse of the movement was not merely due to blind trust by women workers in Parliamentary methods, but also to organised resistance by employers and inertia (if not opposition) from the unions, especially in their traditional strongholds. Apart from noting yet again that the sanctity of the Law is only a matter of the class relationship of forces (and in this case the working class's representatives have been objectively helping business interests), we need to take a closer look at the many and varied kinds of 'equals' that have been dragged in to befog the discussion so far, which have been preventing any effective action from being taken.

Equal pay for equal work

The Equal Pay Act, even if implemented, and even without the numerous loopholes devised by ingenious employers, management advisers and the like to get around the wording, would affect, at best, only about one third of the female workforce, for the simple reason that the majority of women *do not do* 'the same or broadly similar work' to male workers.

Traditional female areas of employment are women-only jobs at the bottom end of the manufacturing industries - over half the female workforce is in either semi-skilled or unskilled manual jobs (and this percentage is increasing), or in the badly organised distribution and service sectors. We saw earlier the huge differentials between men's and women's average pay which the Equal Pay Act, as it stands now, will not touch.

So while we must, of course, fight for the 'rate for the job' for women in all cases, 'equal pay' in this sense, really amounts to little more than smoothing out a particularly glaring anomaly in a rather restricted area of women's employment.

Equal pay for work of equal value

This is a slightly more liberal interpretation of 'equal work'; it is the definition used by the International Labour Organisation and is a possible meaning of the part of the Equal Pay Act which allows for equal pay for *equivalent* work as rated by a Job Evaluation exercise. For this reason it is a more dangerous interpretation, and one that has caused confusion in the labour movement.

To talk of 'value' and 'evaluation' raises the question 'value for whom'? And as we live in a capitalist society where individual workers must sell their labour power to their employers in order to survive, it is the employer who is in a position to answer the question in terms of *value to him* - his profit.

We can argue that job evaluation should take account of value to society as a whole, but in practise any job evaluation exercise is going to be done at company level or even lower, and all within the context of what the 'market' and profit margins will stand.

And since we are only working because we have to - and not for the sake of the company profits - our 'value', in the sense of profitability (or even 'value to society') is of no interest to us, as long as we get our wages. (Though in a socialist society where we would be producing for the benefit of all, we would be very concerned to make a valuable contribution through our work.)

So to argue for pay to be based on 'value of work performed' can only end up in everyone competing to see who can be of most value to the employer - a recipe for low pay all round. It is also particularly irrelevant as a criterion for women, in that it cannot take account of the reason for their inequality on the labour market in the first place - the value of their contribution to society in unpaid domestic responsibilities and child rearing.

A fair wage

In actual fact, of course, as labour power is a commodity for sale like any other, rates of pay are ultimately based on the state of the labour market - taking into account not just local conditions but availability of all kinds of labour power in society as a whole. Broadly, the availability (and therefore price) of a particular kind of labour power will depend both on how easily it can be produced (taking into account necessary training etc.) and on the strength of organisation of the working class in that field. It is the traditional function of trade unions to defend the living standards of the working class by restricting the number of workers willing to work below a certain wage: the greater the unity and solidarity of the working class, the better the price.

But we also have to take account of the many complex factors which determine what the union membership considers a 'fair wage' to hold out for, beyond which the necessary unity cannot be maintained. These will include custom, prestige etc. (for whatever historical reasons) and factors such as unpleasant or dangerous conditions, which again push up the scarcity of the labour power available for a particular job, and therefore its price (though the presence of under-privileged strata such as immigrant workers for whom this is the only work available may complicate the matter). One important idea in negotiating for wage claims is that of comparison with other workers, via parity claims or 'leap-frogging' to re-establish the differential. The workers picked for comparison are not necessarily in the same area or even the same country, so there is an ideological factor involved; it is not just a case of threatening to go to an employer who pays better (and thus adjusting the state of the local labour market).

Many different methods of payment have been peddled by the employers as being more 'just' and 'rational' than each other. Payment by Results was favoured till

the 1950s when Measured Day Work began to be introduced; the bourgeois press even discussed a *national* job evaluation scheme on the lines of the one tried unsuccessfully in Holland. The idea, of course, is simply to introduce confusion into the second, subjective factor determining wages, and profit by dividing the interests of the working class. Hence the introduction of grading schemes where each has his bit extra to defend against the one below, merit payments etc.

This is where women workers lose out, as with all the weight of everyday social relationships and pressures, backed up by the media, reinforcing the idea that women's domestic role gives them different interests from those of workers at the point of production, the trade union movement in general (including women workers themselves) cannot see the interests of the working class as a whole and fails to take up seriously the question of equal pay.

The militant AUEW, for example, has repeatedly chosen to drop the 'equal pay' part of its claims both at local and national level, despite its nominal support of the idea at conferences. The April 1974 agreement brought women - whatever their degree of skill - up to only 91% of the unskilled male rate, a level previously reached in 1968 and lost again. (An intermediate increase for women in November 1974 brings their rate to 96% - but still only of the *unskilled* male rate). In addition, divisions may be reinforced inside the unions, with graded membership according to sex and skills.

So the trade unionists who maintain that equal pay can only be achieved through industrial action (and not through legislation, job evaluation etc.), while entirely correct in one sense, rather beg the question of how such industrial action is to come about, since the TUC has been calling for equal pay for the last 80 years or so without noticeable results.

Working class organisation

In fact this problem highlights the basic contradiction in the position of the trade unions in a capitalist society like ours; that they defend the standard of living of the working class against capital - the employing class - but at the same time, by operating within that framework, reflect the basic social structures and ideologies of capitalist society within themselves.

So if we say that the gaining of equal pay is a matter for the unions, we immediately run into the union version of the 'relative value' principle used by the employers. Since the unions defend the working class only as *workers at the point of production*, it is logical that their view of the matter will be similarly limited. The eligibility of women for equal pay, in their eyes, will depend on their 'equal' contribution at the workplace, ignoring women's social role. So we meet arguments that women 'can't lift heavy weights, aren't available for awkward shifts, don't work nights, retire earlier, take days off when their children are sick etc.' In other words, we're all for women's access to equal work *and* equal pay as long as they pretend they're really men.

This opens the door to the favoured few (and should be taken advantage of), but does nothing to improve the situation of the mass of women workers who, because of their social role and family responsibilities - to say nothing of probable lack of training and confidence - are not in this position. What this attitude by the unions really boils down to is an acceptance that the working class itself - via working class women - should take full responsibility for keeping itself going for capitalism.

The union movement (and the left in general) will have to take the problem more seriously than that. The economic crisis is now continually forcing the ruling class and its government (*any government*) a policy of breaking the working class's organised resis-

tance to increased exploitation. So union members must see the choice before them clearly: if the unions don't take up seriously and fight for the needs of the working class *as a whole*, but instead go on upholding sectional privileges and prejudices, then they lay themselves open to the only alternative - division and control by the State.

Equal pay and equal work

So how can we go about turning the unions into real working class organisations? To help to put the principles of equal pay and equal work into practise - and so also increase the confidence of women workers that their demands are justified - there are many issues we must fight on at a very basic level; not only equal pay and job opportunities, but also the right to the training that can make this a reality (in 1970 there were 110 female apprentices to skilled craft occupations, compared with over 112,000 males; 8.9% of young women workers outside national and local government get day-release, compared with 39.7% of young men, and this falls to 2 or 3% in industries with a high female workforce).

The fight for equality shouldn't only go one way, either; if women need protective legislation, restrictions on night work and retirement at 60, then so do men. Women lose out both at work and in taking an active part in union affairs by their home responsibilities; the unions must make sure that marriage or time off for pregnancy does not cost women their jobs. They must also make it *possible* for women to take part in activities by providing creche facilities where needed and by finding out at what time women can attend meetings - if the only time available is in working hours, so much the better.

Reforms of this kind are valuable not only in themselves, but also in changing attitudes of the people involved, so that ingrained ideas and habits can be challenged and changed.

If we take these reforms seriously, we must also fight for the means to bring them about. So we must fight, not only for women's right to equal union membership, but also for their right (and the right of other oppressed groupings) to have their own organisations inside the unions to fight around their particular problems and needs. Such organisations can only be active rank-and-file organisations: we must resist any attempt to substitute token 'Women's Advisory Committees' and the like, as these have no effect and only serve to confuse the issue by taking women's questions *out* of day-to-day activity, rather than ensuring that that is where they are fought.

So the demands we would put forward for women workers inside the unions would include both our long-term goals and immediate demands which will begin to make their achievement possible. For example, while we will always put the demand 'Equal Pay Now', we will also always fight against any increase in the cash differential (as always happens where equal percentage increases are agreed to): equal cash increases for all, as a minimum. Other principles would include:

- Equal Training and Job Opportunities
- No inequality of status between union members
- Proper representation of the interests of *all* workers affected over any agreements made in their name
- The right of specifically oppressed sections - women, black workers, youth etc., to organise themselves

Finally, we must recognise that the trade unions themselves, by their very nature in representing the interests of the worker against the boss, cannot solve the basic problems of our society: that will only be done by removing the boss altogether and taking over ourselves. So as it becomes more and more necessary for the unions to go onto the offensive against the capitalist class merely to maintain the living stan-

dards and rights they have won so far, it also becomes increasingly obvious that we must extend not only the scope of our ideas, but also our organisations which express them, beyond the relationships of the workplace to take up the questions of the whole of society.

For example, in the case of women workers, it is clear that, although we can help to free women to fight for their rights, nothing will really be solved until the central question of women's responsibility for housekeeping and child rearing is dealt with, and that will take a complete reorganisation of society, calling in far wider forces than the present membership of the unions.

The women's liberation movement has a vital function to perform here, and not just in the long term. It is important that those of us outside the union movement, or in its newer, less male-oriented white-collar sections, both support the efforts of women workers in getting the unions to represent them, and take up the wider issues relating to the oppression of women in the family and society - childcare facilities, maintenance, housing, contraception and abortion rights etc. Given the balance of forces against us, we must find every way in which these essentially inter-related struggles can lend each other strength.

It is a good comment on the nature of our society that it will take a thorough-going social and economic revolution to concede such seemingly basic democratic rights as equal pay and equal work. As a first step, we must start to build the degree of political organisation to achieve this by involving all the different forces concerned in work towards these goals on a day to day practical level.

Felicity Trodd
1974

A revised version of an article which first appeared in SOCIALIST WOMAN November/December 1972.

The Nightcleaners' Campaign

The night cleaners' campaign occupies a special position in the history of the women's liberation movement. It was the first time - in London at least - that the women's movement became actively and publicly involved in a struggle among working women to organise themselves at their place of work.

Several questions arose out of the campaign, some of which remain unresolved within the present practice and development of the women's movement. Firstly, the cleaners' situation highlights the position of women on the labour market; it tells us much about the relationship between the sexual division of labour and class exploitation. Secondly, a whole cluster of questions arise from the contradiction between our aspiration to be a movement which involves all oppressed women and our present predominantly middle class membership. For example, how do we extend our practice beyond its existing constricted boundaries? What is our attitude, as a political movement, to the Trade Union and socialist movements, etc?

This article cannot attempt to resolve these questions, it will simply describe the context in which they arose and offer some hopefully useful observations. But first I must give as concise an account as possible of the campaign. (See also *Nightcleaners Shrew* December 1971; *The Body Politic* edited by M. Wandor, Stage One 1972; May Hobbs' *Born to Struggle Quartet* 1973)

How did the women's movement get involved?

In October 1970 May Hobbs, a night office cleaner who had been trying to organise cleaners for the previous eight

years, approached the International Socialist Group. Through them she went to a meeting of the Dalston Women's Liberation Workshop. Almost immediately women from IS and the Workshop began leafleting cleaners outside their buildings as they went into work. The leaflets explained the purpose of collective action, and urged the women to join the Union. An incident on a Board of Trade building in which two women were sacked gave impetus to the campaign, and an atmosphere of urgency was generated by the wider struggle of the Labour Movement against the Industrial Relations Bill. Despite the unfavourable outcome of the Board of Trade picket, the early months were full of enthusiasm and optimism.

Formation of the Cleaners' Action Group

It soon became clear that helping the cleaners meant more than catching them as they went into work at nine or ten o'clock and persuading them to sign a Union form. In order to unionise cleaners we had to organise ourselves. We formed a collective, the Cleaners' Action Group, which sometimes, early on, fell under the domination of women in the IS and International Marxist Group. This was probably because these women were more articulate than us, self confident in the knowledge that they had a 'line' - from the groups - to push on the Trade Union Movement, whilst we, in the London Workshop, hadn't even got a line to push. But May was always the most vigorous and enthusiastic spokeswoman for the cleaners, the one person who could both encourage and inspire the cleaners, and speak for them as a group. After some months, both IS and IMG withdrew from the campaign, although they contributed valuable support during the 1972 strike. At the same time, a film collective of three men and one woman was formed to document the campaign.

The collective met at regular intervals for several months; lists were kept of which group was leafleting which building; other women stepped in if a leafleter went on holiday or dropped out. Leafleting a building meant visiting it on the same night, and getting to know the cleaners, many of

whom were often too nervous to speak to us for fear of victimisation or intimidation. When or if the women joined the Union, we continued to visit the buildings to collect their dues, and to establish a link between them and the Union. This was much more difficult than it sounds. The women work in small groups on separate buildings scattered throughout central London, which makes any contact amongst themselves almost impossible. But also, and even more important, the Union, The Transport and General Workers Union, was extremely reluctant to take cleaning seriously as an area of recruitment. We found, therefore, that we had to put on the pressure at two levels - the women to join the Union and the Union to take the women seriously. Partly because of these difficulties there was a rapid turnover of leafleters in the first one and a half years. But enthusiasm in the Workshop ensured that if one person dropped out, another woman stepped in to take her place.

Strategy

The CAG considered and discarded several different campaign plans. In the beginning we did not seriously question the feasibility of Union organisation for the nightcleaners. Our aim was simply to organise the cleaners into one Union, the T &GWU to set up a cleaners' branch within it and to make May Hobbs branch secretary. In the meantime, however, the nightcleaners would enter the window cleaners' branch.

Next we turned to the problem of recruitment. The first plan was to systematically leaflet every building being night-cleaned in London. Lack of resources made this plan completely impracticable. There were not enough leafleters and too many buildings. Next we decided to concentrate on the buildings of one individual employer. This also proved unsuccessful for several reasons. It was not always possible to discover which contractor worked the building; leafleters also worked better if the building was near their own home. Most important, the contractor would either move, or sack a cleaner he suspected of joining the Union. To be moved on to another building can be an effective form

of victimisation. Many cleaners, particularly the ones who have stuck in jobs for several years, have chosen their place of work with some care. Either it is near their home, or on an easy transport route, or the pay and conditions (which vary considerably) are better than most, or they are working with their friends, etc. It is difficult to prove unfair dismissal since the cleaner is always sacked on some pretext, e.g. inefficiency, late attendance, or changing over from night to morning and evening cleaning. May did take a case through the courts in the summer of 1972 but the contractor naturally won it.

Our third and final plan was to unionise one large building which employed lots of cleaners. This group could then form the nucleus of the cleaners' branch. The two Shell buildings in Waterloo, Shell Centre, were selected because May knew that the T & GWU had always been interested in them.

By this time (summer 1971) it was beginning to appear as if the Union's apathy towards the nightcleaners were unsurmountable. May's demands and protestations merely aggravated the Union Officers, while at the same time, they were wary of the publicity she might provoke. The cleaners and ourselves were treated with almost total indifference by the Union Officers. There had been some discussion within the CAG of forming our own Union. But the problems facing Pat Sturdy and her co-workers demonstrated the futility of attempting to build up a strong workers' organisation outside the official Trade Union movement.

(She broke away from the AUEW at the end of 1971 in Blackburn and formed the breakaway Industrial Women's Union.) We also considered the possibility of forming a cleaners' co-operative, but this would have meant running a business, which neither women's liberation nor the cleaners themselves wanted to do!

We began to experience the frustration and limitations of Trade Union work, and to recognise the particular resistance male Trade Unionists showed towards women workers, but we decided to have one last attempt at arousing their interest and assistance. Shell Centre was the carrot

we hoped to dangle in front of a Union Official's eyes.
It almost worked.

Shell Centre and the T & GWU

About half a dozen women from the Pimlico and Chiswick Workshop groups started leafleting Shell. Straight away we made friends with three cleaners, and soon we were visiting every week to collect the dues, bring new forms and liaise between the women and the Union Officers since most women were not on the phone. Several meetings with the Union Officers were arranged, and each time the women stated their demands firmly and clearly. To start with there were lots of 'small' complaints about working conditions. For instance, in the summer the air conditioning was turned off, the heat was stifling but the cleaners were not allowed to open the windows. In the winter, however, it was the central heating that was turned off so there was the opposite problem. There were no proper facilities for making tea so unless the cleaners brought a thermos they went without. There was one dinner break at 1 a.m. for an hour but no other tea or coffee break. The women were locked in the building at night, and were not allowed to leave their own floor to visit a friend. There were also the usual demands of three weeks holiday with pay, adequate staffing, proper equipment, notice of dismissal etc.

After two meetings between us and some of the cleaners in a cafe near work we drew up a formal list of demands and asked for a meeting with Mr. Ferriman and Mr. Churchose of the T & GWU. In spite of the Union's insistence that cleaners never turn up for meetings, seven or eight women came, as well as May, the leafleteers and the film group. We had the names and addresses of the other 25 or so women on Shell who had joined the Union. Their Union dues were up to date but they were unable to attend because of baby-sitting problems. The Officers did seem impressed by our efficient paper work and thorough record keeping. They must have been grateful that we were doing their work for them. In fact, we wanted to be certain that we would not be dismissed with the usual complaint about

women not joining Unions. On the contrary, having visited Mr. Fred Sage, the Secretary of the window cleaners' branch, we discovered that in the previous couple of years almost a hundred women night cleaners had joined the T & GWU. Union apathy had led to their eventual falling behind with their dues.

The two Union Officers assured the cleaners that they would write to their employers demanding Union recognition. They also explained that when the Union puts in a wage claim, other conditions necessarily follow, so some demands were superfluous. The first step anyway for any Union was to win recognition, then the Union would put in a wage claim after one from the women themselves had been turned down. The situation was complicated on Shell because the two buildings - the upstream and the downstream - were contracted to different cleaning firms. To overcome this sort of problem, Mr. Ferriman explained, the Union was working to establish a national negotiating structure with the employers' association, The Cleaning Contractors Maintenance Asscn., but this of course might take years.

Perhaps the most urgent demand of the cleaners was for Union meetings at their place of work. Baby-sitting is a constant problem, the weekend is spent shopping and catching up with domestic chores. There is no time for women to go to Union meetings outside working hours. Most important, the cleaners who were too nervous to join openly the Union would be more reassured by the presence of a Union Officer at work than by women from women's liberation.

Escalation of the campaign

Several other meetings were held with Mr. Churchhouse, Mr. Ferriman and other T & GWU Officers. Sometimes we visited their offices, once we sent a petition to Jack Jones signed by all the Shell cleaners asking for their own branch. We, the leafleters, talked to the women regularly as they went to work or before work in the cafe. We took as many who could manage it to other meetings and demonstrations relevant to the TU or women's struggle. We also leafleted the TUC and the T & GWU Womens Confer-

ence and attempted to make links with other groups of women workers. We spoke to every Officer in the T & GW GWU who would listen to us. May travelled to different parts of the country where cleaners were organising. The CAG began to build up national contacts and its magazine, *The Cleaners' Voice*, helped to spread news and keep everyone in touch.

In spite of all this activity, however, Mr. Churchouse, the T & GWU Officer responsible for the nightcleaners, was very elusive. He seldom replied to letters or telephone calls, twice he did not turn up for meetings and specific requests for help on issues such as victimisation, unhealthy conditions etc. were ignored. We made two formal complaints. Eventually Mr. Ferriman, a group secretary, agreed to replace him. Both men finally did meet the employers, however, and on the second occasion they took the two shop stewards from one building to negotiate with them. One or two small gains were made. The cleaners were given two rises of 50p within a few months (their first for two and a half years), making their wages up to £13 and the cleaners on the upstream received a bonus for Christmas 1971 and 1972. In 1973 there was another small wage increase. Each time the rise had been given independently of Union negotiation. The contractors' representative did not turn up to the second meeting arranged between them and the women shop stewards, and the Union Officers never took the matter up. Sometimes the Officers' attitude seemed absurd. For instance, the shop stewards were told by Mr. Ferriman, in all seriousness, that the contractors refused the demand for open windows on the grounds that, as it was well known that women are hysterical, they might throw themselves out.

The Fulham cleaners strike

Meanwhile the leafleting on other buildings gradually stopped. Finally in the summer of 1972 when the numbers of leafletters was sadly depleted, and May and the CAG were growing despondent, the cleaners on the Ministry of Defence building came out on strike for more pay and adequ-

ate staffing and equipment. Two other government buildings followed suit. These three buildings were in the Civil Service Union which, during that year, had been mounting a campaign to unionise nightcleaners. The CSU made the strike official and paid ten pounds a week strike pay. Other cleaners, Trade Unionists, and groups of workers came along to support the picket line which had to be maintained day and night. The left groups and women's liberation were also there in force. The atmosphere was one of great excitement, and enthusiasm, as cleaners brought their children and husbands down to the picket line, spoke at workers' meetings, and visited other cleaners as they went to work. The strike received sympathetic media coverage, especially in the liberal press because nightcleaning has always been a potent liberal issue. (In the 1930's for instance, the Women's Co-operative Guild raised the question of nightcleaning in the media whenever they could.) But *The Morning Star* gave the strike the most sympathetic and consistently encouraging support.

Victory was won after two weeks but the cleaners had to stand firm to maintain it. On one building the contractor changed over to morning and evening cleaning and none of the women strikers who applied were given their jobs back. The conditions of the Fulham cleaners have been maintained and improved by the action and solidarity of the women themselves. Their wages were raised at the end of 1973 to £21 a week — not very high but £6 or £7 higher than average.

After the summer of 1972, the CAG concentrated on two issues. First of all, it continued to press for a cleaners' branch in the T & GWU with May as branch secretary. This was promised in Christmas 1972 and we are still waiting. May has become more involved in other issues — housing, women's prisons etc. and has had less time to devote exclusively to the cleaners; so unless the CAG can raise the money to support women other than May to become full time organisers the branch might never materialise.

The second policy of the CAG has been to raise the

question of contract cleaning on government buildings in the House of Commons. Joe Ashton and Lena Jeger head a lobby of sympathetic MP's and they arranged meetings with the relevant minister. In 1968, Harold Wilson successfully cut down the size of the Civil Service by sacking all direct cleaners and contracting the work out to Office Cleaning firms. This means that the lowest figure receives the job, and since labour is the single biggest cost factor, wages reduced to the absolute minimum. It is hoped that by abolishing contract cleaning on public buildings, something will then be done in the private sector. The abolition of contract cleaning will not unionise nightcleaners, but will raise their wages by removing the middle man between the cleaner and their employer.

The CAG is smaller now than it was a year ago and more diverse. It includes men and women from the Labour Movement and the Communist Party as well as women's liberation. There are no longer weekly meetings and leafleting has stopped. But there is now an office at 66 York Way, Kings Cross London N.1 where May answers enquiries and deals with cleaners' social problems (e.g. rate rebate claims etc.) as well as the question of unionisation. The CAG has applied for money from a Trust which is vitally needed to support more cleaners as full time organisers. May has always emphasised the importance of women organising themselves.

It is still hoped that when the film of the campaign is finally finished it will be used to publicise the cleaners' situation and to recruit more leafletters. Meanwhile, however, there is no doubt that the campaign has encouraged cleaners in different parts of the country to organise themselves. May and the CAG often receive news of cleaners waiting to participate in the campaign or asking for information and support.

Women's liberation and the nightcleaners

Women's liberation first began to work with the nightcleaners because May Hobbs asked for help. Our participation was not a strategic intervention in the working class

struggle. In the true spontaneous tradition of the womens movement organisation, politics and strategy developed as we went along. The contrast between the cleaners' lives and our own was one of the initial influences on us.

There are between two and three thousand nightcleaners in England, of which about one thousand eight hundred are working in London. This is probably an underestimate as many women work without cards, moving from job to job. Cleaning workers have always been one of the most exploited groups on the labour market, but the exploitation has dramatically increased with the introduction of contract cleaning in place of direct employment. For more about the contract cleaning industry see *Prices and Incomes Board Report 1971*. Labour is the biggest single cost factor in the industry, so contractors ruthlessly compete with each other to win contracts by lowering wages.

The cleaners are mostly between the ages of 20 and 60, but there are a substantial number over 60. They nearly all have several children whether, divorced or widowed. Lack of nursery facilities forces women out to work at night. The women are either the sole providers in the family or else their husbands are low paid. Some do two cleaning jobs, one in the day or early evening as well. Others take different part time work during the day. A large percentage of the women are immigrants: West Indian, Asian, Greek, Spanish, Irish. Immigrant women are uncertain of their rights, cannot always speak English very well and are the most easily intimidated. Cleaners work in small groups on different buildings throughout London. This isolation is accentuated by the different nationalities, or rather the attempt of the supervisor or firm's manager to victimise one or two 'troublemakers' and to provoke racial tension. In fact, the women work together very well, but we have never met a black supervisor, although over half the cleaners are black.

Very few supervisors are sympathetic to the Union. They often have their employers' interests at heart. A great deal of fiddling goes on in contract cleaning and sometimes it suits the supervisor to be able to manipulate the women

by threatening their jobs. When economic pressures are so great, fear of losing one's job or even a week's pay keeps the cleaners silent. It is important to be on good terms with the supervisor because taking a night off to care for a sick child will depend on her good will, so will 'cover' work, which brings in an extra few shillings a week.

The contractors themselves vary in their attitudes towards the Union. Generally, the larger the firm the more indifferent they are to it. It is the smaller firm which is the most vigilantly anti-Union. Because the small firms are gradually being swallowed up by the larger ones, they desperately undercut to stay in the market. Their survival depends on paying subsistence wages.

These facts, and many more, we learnt as we worked and talked with the women. The dreary round of house-work interspersed with a menial job during the day, then more housework all night for a pittance, with no sleep all week, aroused our sympathy and concern and made us do all we could to support the cleaners. Loyalty to the women with whom we had made friends prevented us from dropping out when we felt most inadequate - which we did feel very often.

We leafleteres were mostly young women in our twenties and early thirties: students, teachers, young mothers. (There is a strong tradition of co-operation between middle class feminists and the working class in the history of the labour movement, e.g. Annie Besant and the matchgirls, Eleanor Marx and the gas workers, Sylvia Pankhurst and the East London Federation.) Because of the cleaners' isolation, they need help in maintaining contact with each other. Lack of time prevents them from attending every meeting and keeping up with the bookwork. However, our role could only be limited and we were never sure quite what those limits were.

Criticism and self criticism

The CAG indulged in self criticism on several counts. Perhaps our most serious failing was that we never managed to develop leadership and direction among the cleaners

themselves. We should have raised the money to support one or two cleaners while they worked on the campaign for a few months. We could have used the film (or part of it as it is not yet finished) to help raise the money, and at the same time to publicise the nightcleaners' campaign among other groups of workers, men and women. It is possible to leave groups of cleaners on specific buildings to their own devices until they ask for support, but there is no way of spreading this self activity.

Part of the problem has been that as feminists we tend to reject the concept of leadership. We recognise the need for self activity and for direction within a campaign, but we associate leadership with domination, lack of democracy and male politics. We ignored the fact that May, at least, was already providing leadership and that the burden of that responsibility was too much for one person. The women's liberation was also, *de facto*, providing leadership. In practice we tried to avoid this. We shifted nervously from one foot to the other, explaining the Union to the cleaners, and the cleaners to the Union, feeling unable to identify strongly with either, albeit for different reasons. We could neither urge the women to strike, since the effect of militancy on their lives was so uncertain, nor could we openly attack the Union, since there seemed to be no other way of helping the cleaners.

It was difficult to raise the subject of women's liberation with the cleaners. Most of the women could only spare a couple of minutes outside the door before they rushed into work. Those who arrived earlier were obviously more interested in hearing about the Union than anything else. We were known to the women as 'the Union girls'. Whenever women's liberation was raised, there was initial self consciousness on our part, and probably a joke about bras or man-hating on theirs. The cleaners often talked about their feelings as women, and especially the burden of two jobs, in the home and at work. It is easy to talk to any woman about children, schools, shopping etc. but some of the problems that occupy feminist consciousness raising groups feel awkward in discussion when women's

lived experience is so different. Abortion is an obvious example. The difference between a middle class private abortion (unpleasant though that can be) and the abortions of women who have neither the money to pay nor the self confidence and determination to obtain one from the national health, need hardly be emphasised. Class differences were complicated by our own reticence as a movement about ourselves. This was much truer two or three years ago than it is today. Then there was a strong belief that the movement should speak for itself, that we must not proselytise or harangue, women will discover us when they need to. The media will always distort everything we say so say nothing. This is an overstatement, of course, but when that belief - inarticulate though it might be - is accompanied by middle class self awareness of privilege etc. it can be quite an inhibiting force. The women's movement like the rest of the left, still has to learn how to popularise its ideas and politics successfully.

The nightcleaners, trade unions and women's work

Several Unions have nightcleaners in their membership, but cleaners are only effectively organised in factories or firms where there is a strong closed shop already operating, e.g. some engineering works, or government buildings. Otherwise nightcleaners have remained outside the Trade Union movement both because their work is classified as unskilled and casual - the sort of work which historically has always been more difficult to organise - and because most cleaners are women. Low pay inevitably accompanies women's work and casual status. But high wages are determined by the firm's profitability and the collective militancy of the workers, not the degree of skill. So - why aren't the cleaners organised?

When women's liberation first began to help the cleaners we were very conscious of our naivety and ignorance and sought the advice of experienced Trade Unionists. Some women in left groups tended to be combative in their attitude towards the Unions, but we felt tentatively that we might make more progress if we adopted a more

conciliatory approach. We listened as male Trade Unionists inside and outside the T & GWU patiently explained the problems of organisation, emphasising the limitations of TU resources. Few were as succinct as the 1971 PIB report on the contract cleaning trade which stated that Trade Unions had not promoted the campaign because *workers are widely dispersed, in isolated small groups and working at inconvenient times for Union organisation.*

Some Officials were more helpful than others. Fred Sage, for instance, the window cleaners' branch secretary, emphasised the need to establish a skill. But all that most emphasised was that women are notoriously hard to organise because they are home oriented, women are not interested in Union work, and women are easily intimidated.

Some of these arguments carried more conviction than others. In particular, the problem concerning the organisation of casual workers, and the cleaners' vulnerability to intimidation. Like most women workers, cleaners have interiorised their inferior economic status. They see themselves primarily as wives and mothers, and regard their job outside the home as a necessary but temporary expedient. They feel fatalistic about changing this situation. However, those who do have the courage and energy to start helping themselves and their workmates, quickly generate enthusiasm and optimism. The cleaners are not uninterested in Union work. But they are sceptical of the effectiveness of Trade Unions. Their scepticism has been nurtured by the Union's neglect. When the Officers fail to reply to letters or phone calls, do not arrive for meetings, ignore their most deeply felt demands, then paying out a shilling or more a week becomes an unnecessary strain on a tight budget.

Male Trade Unionists have always had an ambivalent attitude towards women workers. On the one hand, their wives go out to work, their income is vital for the family, and they recognise the need for working class solidarity. On the other hand, most men believe that woman's place is in the home and that she should stay there. Working class men's support for the sexual division of labour in the family is not just backward ideas which will change

when men recognise the source and extent of women's oppression. Its origins are complex, but one of its deepest roots is the very real fear that the entry of women into a trade or industry will reduce wages, lower job status and throw men out of work. Historically, women have been used to break strikes and undercut men's pay. From the beginning of capitalism women, restricted by child bearing and discriminated against on the labour market, have been forced to accept the most unpleasant jobs, for the lowest wages. This situation was accentuated by the separation of home and workplace. Women on their own have always been the worst off. Denied proper education, apprenticeship, or training and without nursery facilities or a male wage to prop up the family income, they have had to accept any work available even if it has meant blacking a strike.

But women's exclusion from the Trade Union movement has confirmed and perpetuated their weak and secondary status on the labour market. As Audrey Wise has shown in her pamphlet *Women and the Struggle for Workers Control* (Spokesman) women are at present 38% of the labour force, but concentrated in the lower paid jobs, and the situation is getting worse. Many women work part time and intermittently throughout their lifetime, and this work is termed 'casual' and given a lower status by employers and Trade Unionists alike. It is no more regarded as *real* work by male Trade Unionists than housework and childcare.

Nightcleaning occupies just such a position. It is described as casual (although the women work a 40 hour week) and 'unskilled', and it is performed by women and immigrants. Nightcleaning has a further claim to secondary status in that it lies outside commodity production in the service sector of the economy (again, like much women's work), that is, it is regarded as 'unproductive' labour, a category which is often ascribed an inferior value by the left. In fact, the service sector is not peripheral to capitalism, it is an expanding sector of the economy and the workers in these sectors are as vital to the British labour movement as the assembly line workers at Fords.

Like many women's jobs nightcleaning is labour intensive, i.e. it could not survive without a large supply of cheap labour. Two demands of the women's movement - nurseries and equal pay and job opportunity - would remove the worst conditions of nightcleaning and other night work, since women would then have an effective choice of employment (within the restrictions of capitalism). But these aims recede into the distance in the present economic climate. Women workers *must* organise themselves at work, both to win better pay and conditions, as well as to effect wider changes in society.

Men workers will have to radically change their attitude towards women. Trade Unions are the backbone of the working class movement in this country, and they are the bastions of male privilege. At every level in the hierarchy of the labour market, women occupy a weaker position than men. The Unions are doing nothing to alleviate this situation. Out of 600 full time Officers in the T & GWU for instance only one is a woman.

Conclusion

By arguing for women to organise at work outside their homes I am not advocating that all women should go out to work, participate in production, and thus ease the road to socialism. Nor am I advocating Trade Unionism as the panacea for women's oppression. Nor am I putting it forward as an alternative to organising around the family or in the community. The struggle against capitalism and sexism must be fought at every level - TU organisation is only the first tentative step towards workers' self consciousness and unity. For this reason alone the women's movement must actively support it.

But the nightcleaners campaign also revealed two other urgent priorities for the women's movement. We vacillated between co-operation with and ineffectual criticism of the Unions because we never resolved the dilemma of being neither the cleaners nor the Union. Strategy is learnt through political practice as well as from theory. As we had no immediate experience of our own to draw on, and

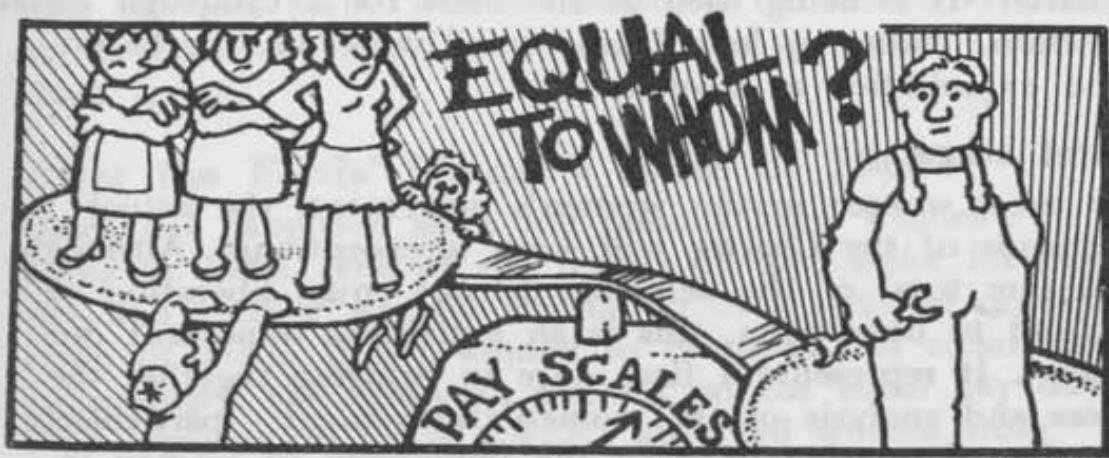
as political practice is hard to learn out of books, it is not surprising that we were hesitant. But marxist feminists are needed in the labour movement. We must develop a guideline for action within the trade unions. At the same time, of course, the most effective support for women wage-workers is a strong articulate feminist movement whose ideas and actions penetrate and transform class struggle.

Secondly, the women's movement must produce a historical materialist analysis of the position of women's work in the labour market - i.e. the relationship between women's work (both waged and non-waged domestic labour) and capitalism.

At present, women's secondary status on the labour market is echoed in the class struggle - because they are casual workers, because they are low paid, un- or semi-skilled, because they work part time, because they are wives and mothers. We are not asking simply to participate in the class struggle as it is - by challenging the sexual division of labour the Women's Liberation Movement will necessarily redefine it.

Sally Alexander
Nov. 1974

Revised version of an article which first appeared in RED RAG No. 6



Working Women's Charter

A campaign has been launched in over ten towns up and down the country to fight for the demands in the Working Women's Charter. In March 1974, the London Trades Council circulated the Charter throughout the London labour movement and later called a Conference.

At the conference, attended by over 200 women, many of them delegated from their Union branches, there was a split between those who saw the conference as a talk shop to share experiences, and others who wanted to defer discussion on the detailed demands of the Charter in favour of a discussion on how to use the document to initiate action in the labour movement around the problems of women workers.

This disagreement was not resolved by the conference. No clear decision was adopted 'for lack of time'. However, since the conference, it is being resolved in practice by Union branches, Trades Councils, women's groups and individual Trade Unionists which are now promoting the Charter. It is being used as the basis for a campaign among workers, taking up many aspects of women's oppression and exploitation as workers.

First stage

To most women in the women's movement, the actual demands of the Charter will seem unexceptional. Although the sum total of the demands do not equal liberation or an end to oppression, this is an extremely important document. It represents a first stage in bringing together the ideas and analysis of the women's movement - particularly on the relationship between the oppression of women in

the family and their exploitation as workers - with the strength and organisation of the labour movement.

The labour movement generally accepts the unwritten rule that there is a definite sphere of influence for the Trade Union: they deal with problems of wages *on the job*. Men see a relatively clear divide between problems of home and problems of work, so this unwritten rule seems to be adequate for them.

Bills, household budgets, baby-sitters, and another baby on the way are all 'individual' problems - not ones to be tackled by the Unions. But for women workers, especially for those with children (whether single or married), that kind of separation is rarely possible. Never before has the Trade Union movement acknowledged this impossibility in such a clear way as it does in the Charter. Alongside demands for equal pay, opportunity and training, are listed ones for contraception and abortion, for nurseries, for changes in the laws relating to passports and HP agreements.

This is neither a haphazard development nor an isolated one. Only a couple of weeks prior to the London Trades Council conference, the National Council for Civil Liberties held a conference for women Trade Unionists in London - followed up recently with others outside London - on the question of women's rights. Over 500 women attended this conference and again many were Union delegates. The discussion broadened from the strict 'Trade Union' issues to one on the interrelated nature of the problems of women workers. Many women identified themselves as belonging to both a Trade Union branch and a women's liberation group.

After the Fords' Women's strike of 1968

Much has happened since the famous Ford Women's strike in 1968. One of the results of that strike for equal pay and grading was the formation of a national organisation of Trade Union women to campaign for equal rights. Increasingly, the campaign centred on the equal pay demand. This organisation (NJACCWER) attracted women from

many unions up and down the country. But with the introduction of the Equal Pay Bill, the campaign lost all impetus. It faded away just as the new women's movement was beginning to emerge. By the time of the first conference of the women's movement, held at Ruskin College, Oxford (Feb/March 1970), the NJACCWER had more or less died. As there was little overlap between the membership in the two groups, the possibility of a structured relationship between them was still born.

Groups within the women's movement wanting to work with working women supported local strikes as they happened, or campaigned with working class women on issues such as nurseries, mainly outside the job situation. But with the death of NJACCWER there was no longer any single focus for this continuing radicalisation among women; it was evident in local struggles but they lacked any national character.

What is happening now bears examination. The women's movement has not grown numerically recently, and has not attracted large numbers of working class women. Instead, there has been a *qualitative* development in the movement: the socialist current has hardened out as is reflected in the increasingly sophisticated debates. Socialists in the movement are seriously considering the relationship between the class struggle and the women's movement. Given this new level of debate, it is no accident that the number of socialist women joining trades unions is on the increase.

In addition to a physical overlap between women trade unionists and the socialist current within the women's movement, there is also the general impact of the women's movement on the consciousness of women (and men) whose experience is strictly trade union. There are cracks emerging which indicate that the very backward ideas towards women within the trade union movement are beginning to give. These ideas could be severely ruptured by systematic work and significant struggles over the coming months.

Maximum gains

The importance of a document like the Charter in this situation is that it can be used *now* as the basis for campaigning among the *entire* labour movement — but specifically aimed at women workers — to lay the groundwork for the maximum possible gains out of any future struggles involving women. The equal pay struggle at Lentheric's perfume factory in North London in April 1974 indicates that women workers are being forced to think of things like equal pay in order to maintain their standard of living against the ravages of inflation.

Although the Equal Pay Act is partially implemented, women still receive only 50% of the male rate, on average. In the months before its full implementation, employers will continue to find ways to escape the Act and women will see attempts to maintain the low rates paid to them. So we can expect Lentheric's factory to be only the first in a long line of such struggles. In many cases, the battle will be more difficult and prolonged.

Women in struggle need all sorts of assistance. The Charter campaign can draw together the trade union movement to provide solidarity for women involved in a difficult dispute. Male workers will not automatically down tools to support a fight to reduce differentials, especially when their own wages won't be increased at the end of the fight. The Charter campaign can prepare the way for male trade unionists to understand the need for solidarity when such a situation arises.

The campaign could lead to significant developments in the level of struggles involving women, thereby effecting permanent changes in the degree of male chauvinism within the Unions and the degree of involvement of women in working class struggles. Only then can a much more effective and co-ordinated challenge be raised to the present attacks on the working class as a whole. The division between social and economic problems, between home and work, between the responsibility of the individual and the class as a whole, and the division between what is the re-

sponsibility of the Unions and those of the politicians, must be broken down. The Charter campaign could begin this process.

Linda Smith
1974

First published in SOCIALIST WOMAN

THE WORKING WOMEN'S CHARTER

We pledge ourselves to agitate and organise to achieve the following aims:

1. The rate for the job, regardless of sex, at rates negotiated by the unions, with a national minimum wage below which no wages should fall.
2. Equal opportunity of entry into occupations and in promotion, regardless of sex or marital status.
3. Equal education and training for all occupations and compulsory day release for all 16-19 year olds in employment.
4. Working conditions to be, without deterioration of previous conditions, the same for women as for men.
5. The removal of all legal and bureaucratic impediments to equality, e.g. with regard to tenancies, mortgages, pension schemes, taxation, passports, control over children, social security payments, hire-purchase agreements etc.

6. Improved provision of local authority day nurseries, free of charge, with extended hours to suit working mothers. Provision of nursery classes in day nurseries. More nursery schools.
7. 18 weeks maternity leave with full net pay before and after the birth of a live child; 7 weeks after birth if the child is still-born. No dismissal during pregnancy or maternity leave. No loss of security, pension, or promotion prospects.
8. Family Planning Clinics supplying free contraception to be extended to cover every locality. Free abortion to be readily available.
9. Family allowances to be increased to £2.50 per child, including the first child.
10. To campaign amongst women to take an active part in the trade unions and in political life so that they may exercise influence commensurate with their numbers and to campaign amongst men trade unionists that they may work to achieve this aim.



Striking Progress

1973

July

H.K. Porter (GB) Sterling

87 men and 13 women strike for one week demanding £18 minimum basic rate for women workers. Settle for rise in the basic of 27p

Civil Service

Women cleaners win an equal instalment of 60p a week backdated to April with the aim of achieving parity.

Chelsea Quilt Factory, Barnstaple, Devon

24 women end two week strike over management attempt to alter differentials and deny Union recognition. The Union and shop stewards are recognised, differentials unaltered and the future regulation of conditions and procedures to be made with Union representatives.

Salford

Over 150 housewives march in protest through the shopping precinct of a large housing estate in protest at the rising prices in the local shops.

August

Salford Electrical Instruments, Heywood & Eccles, Lancs.

11 week strike of clerical workers for equal pay ends in increase of £1.65 for women, £2.00 for men. Manchester Women's Liberation member accused of assaulting a policeman on one of the picket lines.

GEC, Spon Street, Coventry

The strike by 200 women workers is renewed after the

annual two week holiday. Management attempt to intimidate the pickets by calling the police. The AUEW convenor, Albert Beardmore, violently hostile to the women's case has 1) instructed his own Union members to break the picket lines although the women are also members of the same Union in the same factory; 2) attempted to take away the AUEW card from Elsie Noles, the deputy convenor, who is trusted by the women on strike; 3) repeatedly told the strikers that they were acting 'illegally', confusing them and attempting to frighten them out of their rights; 4) has crossed the picket lines, even to work overtime, while his own members on strike.

Wilderspool Sports Leisure Centre, Warrington, Lancs.

Maureen Spiers, women cleaners' shop steward, TGWU, sacked for challenging weekend work rate of 35p per hour (the ordinary rate). Women picket all weekend.

Seiko, Kilburn

8 women and 16 men, recent recruits to TASS, the clerical section of the AUEW, come out on strike when one of them is sacked for 'non-co-operation' with the under-manager at this Japanese watch repair centre.

September

Slumberland Beds, Paisley

29 office and supervisory workers, mainly women, on a 10 week strike for Union recognition (ASTMS)

Crompton Parkinson, Dundee

400 women on strike since August 31 over management pay offer of £1.80 (to men) which would increase differential. Union negotiators say women are entitled to an increase of 1/3 of this as a step to equal pay.

GEC Telecommunications, Stoke, Coventry.

48 hour strike wins women pay parity with men.

British Marco, Grantham, Lincs and Thomas Bolton & Sons, Stoke and W. & T. Avery, Digbeth, Birmingham.

APEX authorise strike action over equal pay

Pilkingtons

16 women representing female staff in every site meet to push forward women's demands in ASTMS regarding pay and job opportunities since women are in the bottom eight grades.

Tampax, Havant

AUEW fitters on strike for Union recognition are gradually joined by women workers in the factory. The women hold a one day total stoppage in support. Meanwhile, members of the shopworkers union black Tampax supplies at Boots central warehouse in Nottingham.

SEIKO, Kilburn

After 5 week strike for union recognition and reinstatement, 15 men and women barricade themselves in when it's rumoured that the US 'trouble shooter' working for the Japanese firm is about to shut down the factory. They occupy the manager's office with sleeping bags, plenty of food, television and hot and cold water laid on. Since they are now in charge of 5,000 watches and £60,000 worth of equipment, the management can't cause too much trouble in retaliation — they cut off the telephones and lights and lock the fire exits. Members of the strike committee complain that they are treated like 'robots' (they are continually monitored by TV cameras for 'security reasons') and that management had stirred up racial antagonism by demanding that Ugandan Asian workers only talk in English.

At the end of this 24 hour sit-in, all their demands are met - management agree to recognise the Union, reinstate the strikers and pay them for the five weeks they had been on strike.

But three months later: All of them get dismissal notices two days before Christmas and the watch repair centre is closed down.

Hungerford School, N. London

86 teachers in a one day protest outside the school, supported by many parents, in support of Ms. Dorothea McColgan. A teacher for 20 years, she had been victimised for her anti-authoritarian views which she had made public in a magazine. ILEA was 'transferring' her into a supply teachers' pool, though she was a very popular teacher at the school.

GEC Spon Street, Coventry

Factory is completely shut down after lay-offs resulting from 5 week strike of women workers. A mass meeting over-rules convenor Albert Beardmore and votes to continue the strike against management's retiming of jobs and not to hold another meeting for a further two weeks. Beardmore is continuing to work and has organised a kangeroo court of shop stewards which has voted to expel deputy convenor Elsie Noles from the AUEW branch. She is immediately reinstated by the AUEW District Committee.

October

London Transport and Central London

Bus delegates committee starts talks on full job equality for women

Adwest Engineering, Reading

400 men and women occupy in order to prevent closure, winning an important victory after controlling the plant for 6 weeks. Management agree to job guarantees and across the board increase of £2 per week, coupled with bonus increases which would raise earnings between £3 and £6 per week.

Pressed Steel, Cowley

Women office workers strike for a week for equal pay. Men in the office support them with a work to rule and ban on overtime. The switchboard completely dead and the wages department in chaos. The men hold a one day sit-in when management send out letters to the women threatening sacking if the strike continues.

GEC Stoke Plant, Coventry

60 women workers in strip wiring plant threatened with lock out, after a 2 week work to rule in protest at low piecework rate.

Rotaprint, Queensbury, NW London

450 strike when 2 are suspended for refusing to clock on. In one assembly shop, 21 women are split by the management who pay 9 the male rate for the job, while the other 12 women are being paid the lowest semi-skilled rate, which was supposed to have been abolished in a previous strike 2 years before.

Triumph, Meriden Works

1750 workers occupy this motorcycle factory near Coventry when closure is threatened. Some wives of the Triumph men form an action group which calls on all wives to back the sit in and organise to get payments from the Social Security.

November

Hawker Siddeley, Chadderton & Woodford Factories, Lancs.

Men and women workers on strike for the demand of £1.50 a week increase for women.

Reading

70 women workers are BiroBic in dispute for Union recognition. It began with a petition signed by all the women but one, asking for elementary improvements in conditions, tea breaks for example are not allowed. After two half day walkouts, 60 apply to join the AUEW and elect three shop stewards. The factory is a sweat shop with women working from 7.15 a.m. to 4.15 with one 30 minute lunch break. Take home pay is £15 a week, and if anybody misses a day they are fined £1.75 on top of lost wages.

Hattersley Newman, Henders Valve Manufacturers, Ormskirk, Lancs.

APEX members strike for equal pay. They have a 24 hour picket.

December

Babcock and Wilcox, Renfrew

200 women clerical workers win settlement in move towards equal pay.

Lyons, Greenford

200 maintenance fitters, 300 process workers (women and truck drivers, white and Asian) strike for wage increase of £6.

Oxford

Provincial journalists in NUJ campaign for £15 a week increase. At Oxford, Ann Edwards, Mother of NUJ Chapel was picketing *Oxford Mail* offices; a delivery van accelerated away from her while she tried to talk to the driver - her arm was caught in the window and her shoulder was badly wrenched.

Maclarens Control, Glasgow

300 workers, mainly women, at this subsidiary of ITT strike for 5 weeks for £5 pay rise. When threatened with the sack in 7 days, they occupy the factory. ITT try to break the occupiers' morale by sending them their insurance cards just before Christmas, but the workers collected them up and gave them to the stewards. They hold Christmas and Hogmanay parties inside the factory, and delegations of workers come from nearby factories to help out. The strike is to last 19 weeks, with the occupations lasting 15 weeks. By March, management agrees to meet the full claim, but the number to be taken back is reduced - this agreement follows pledges by shop stewards in the Glasgow area to step up support and blacking, and the ITT management really are frightened when steps are taken to set up an ITT combine committee of shop stewards.

1974

January

Rank Radio International, Camborne, Cornwall

Women shop stewards threaten strike action when working week is re-organised so that women have to work on New Years Day (supposed to be a paid holiday) and stay away another day, thus losing one day's paid holiday. The threat is successful - they get extra pay and another days holiday. There was a rumour that Ranks chairman was planning to send Valentine cards to all his women workers.

Beverley, Yorks.

Jean Jepson, convenor at Armstrong Patents, is sacked for refusing to accept 3 day week. Management have the cheek to announce over the internal loudspeakers 'Your convenor has been dismissed. Anyone who supports her can leave as well'. 80 men and women in the 500 strong workforce walk out. The management has been trying anything to get rid of Jean; on one occasion they offered her £5,000 to leave, another time she was offered a supervisors job so that her militant activities could be restricted. Hull dockers black Armstrong Patents products in the following weeks. A Dept. of Employment enquiry subsequently approves her dismissal, while the local TGWU official fails to give the pickets any support, recommending a return to work. Management blackmail Jean, compiling a dossier of slanderous personal accusations which they send to the Union. The local TGWU officials while mouthing support for Jean and the other women, never recommend any kind of action. Eventually, 100 women leave Armstrongs after picketing into the summer.

February

During the miners strike, many miners wives form action groups to look after children and provide pickets at the collieries with food.

500 delegates attend one day conference on trade unions and women's rights organised by the NCCL. Delegates from

Trade Unions, women's liberation groups and trades councils.

March

London Trades Council

Draws up Working Women's Charter

Coventry

200 women at Raglan Street GEC on strike to defend jobs. Management intend to 're-deploy' women in electronics production unit, moving the work to their Treforest factory, near Swansea. Their excuse is a cut in Post Office spending on telecommunications, but the strikers believe the real reason is to break trade union militancy in Coventry which has won them high wages in the past.

Dundee, Timex

3 week strike at the firm's three plants is broken on the instructions of the AUEW officials. Two thirds of the labour force are women and the strike is in opposition to the Phase 3 pay laws and the threat of closure. Wage rates at Timex are £6 to £7 a week lower than other engineering factories in Dundee. Basic rates include £27 for toolmakers, £21 for labourers, and £19.11 for women production workers. In the past, management have exploited sex differences to take on one shop at a time and beat them. This is the first time the entire workforce, men and women, strike together. The claim for £10 across the board is met with a £2.50 offer plus 85p on the bonus rate for women. During the strike, women are the most militant. 'I didn't have a chance to make a recommendation to my members', said a woman steward. 'They were out of the door as soon as they heard the management offer'. There is great bitterness at the capitulation of the union to the phase 3 limits.

Dundee Bonar Long

All 500 workers walk out in support of three women laid off for refusing to accept £3 drop in earnings after being

transferred to different work. A strike takes place against the productivity agreement which allows the firm to move labour from job to job, without paying bonus rates while the workers are learning the new job.

Birmingham Lucas

2,000 production workers, 90% women, walk out and claim a lay-off when management announce a number of redundancies. A mass meeting votes to sit in against the sackings. 800 tool setters at another Lucas plant nearby strike in support. Management agree to take women shop stewards demands for greater job security and no further sackings back to the Lucas directors.

April

Letheric, N. London

290 women strike because they are getting between £7 and £8 less than the lowest male rate. Their take home pay is about £15. 70 men come out in support. They win increase of £2.25.

British Domestic Appliance, Peterborough

1,300 workers, one third women, come out on strike over £10 a week increase and equal pay.

Chrysler Subsidiary Auto Machinery, Coventry

190 men and women strike for parity with workers at Chrysler Stoke plant, on the same site; they also demand a step towards equal pay which would give women 95% of the men's rate.

Carruthers, a subsidiary of Burmaki Oil, East Kilbride, Nr. Glasgow

6 typists win increases of £4 - £6 after five week strike. One girl aged 21 was only getting £14 a week and they offered her another £1 with strings. The girls, members of TASS, quickly got their demands when engineering union members on the shop floor blacked deliveries in support.

NALGO, Islington

Men and women members of NALGO strike for 15 weeks

in pursuit of higher London allowance.

British Airways, Overseas Division, Heathrow

Men and women cabin crews vote to take strike action in a fortnight's time for a reduction in working hours from 12 to 10½ a day and additional pay for working anti-social hours.

Jonas Woodhead, Ossett, Yorks.

Part time women workers on the evening shift at this shock absorber plant, join up in the AUEW and elect stewards at a mass meeting. It is discovered that management is allowing men to work in the evening shift in defiance of national engineering overtime ban. Management back down after the meeting and recognise the union.

May

Renold Gear Division, Milnrow, Lancs.

100 clerical workers strike in dispute over equal pay.

London Transport

First woman bus driver

Thomas Danby College, Leeds

Trainee nursery nurses at this college are fighting a proposal to cut wages of future nursery nurses by £8 a week, from £20 to £12. Councillors have to run the gauntlet of silent pickets at Council meetings at the Town Hall.

Penguin Books, Harmondsworth

Claire Walsh, one of the pioneers of trade unionism in publishing, is re-instated by Penguin one week after she was victimised and sacked. 41 workers on strike took over the offices and switchboard, and 250 printers blacked the production of all hard back books. They got official support from ASTMS and won guarantee of no further redundancies. 'Penguins were amazed that their workers responded so violently'.

Nurses

Nurses begin nationwide campaign for substantial increases

in pay. In Edinburgh 250 nurses hand petition into the Scottish Office. In Leeds nurses call for public support - getting signatures outside Leeds United Club Ground and petitioning in the city centre.

British Leyland, Cowley

Women workers and car workers' wives outvote an attempt to set up a 'housewives association' by Mrs. Carole Miller. She and others have received widespread publicity when they picket British Leyland in opposition to the strike by transport drivers, claiming that TGWU convenor, Alan Thornett, and small minority are keeping their husbands on strike. The women with her are manipulated by both the press and British Leyland in an attempt to break the strike, though most men's wives support the strike action. Speakers say that it is British Leyland that is keeping the men out, not convenor Alan Thornett, and that the women should be putting pressure on the management, not on the unions.

Imperial Typewriters, Leicester

700 men and women, mainly Asian, come out on strike over long standing grievances: confusing bonus rates which mean their wage packets change from week to week; not being allowed to elect their own shop stewards; widespread racial discrimination, on the shop floor by management, the TGWU work convenor and some of the white stewards. District union secretary, George Bromley, JP, condemns the strike so the strikers march on the union's district office. three weeks later, they hold a protest demonstration outside the TGWU London headquarters.

Reg Weaver, the works convenor, and Bromley refuse even to call an official branch meeting so the strikers hold an unofficial meeting which both officials refuse to attend. All this time the 500 strong white workforce at the factory continue working.

On the pickets, the traditionally quiet and docile Asian women are the most militant. At the start of the strike, they taunt the Asian men who try to cross the picket lines by offering the men their wrist bracelets which are

a traditional emblem of the women's inferior position in Asian society. The women earn £18 a week on average to the men's £25. The women are pushed around by the white foremen who play on racial differences to keep them ignorant of the complex wages scheme by which bonus rates are calculated and also never explain the details of union organisation to make it deliberately difficult for them to elect their own representatives to do something about the payments system.

The strike does not end until July when management finally reinstate all the strikers, including what they call the 25 'strike leaders' whom they had been trying to make a bargaining point in the negotiations. If they'd been successful, it would have set back the cause of union organisation among the Asian workers. Their return is accompanied by a one day strike by the white workers in the TGWU in protest: the bitter racial divisions still remain at this factory and, if anything, the union officials have made them much worse.

Nurses Pay

Marches in Teeside, Nottingham and Liverpool. In Liverpool there is a one hour lightning strike at the General Hospital by members of COHSE which is to set a precedent for similar actions up and down the country by COHSE members. The demand is also raised for an end to agency nurses - these are nurses who are trained on the NHS, contract out and are then re-employed from private agencies at higher wage rates than those paid from the NHS. This divides hospital nurses and makes it easier to keep the wages of NHS nurses down.

National Switch Factory, Keighley

A strike, which started among women assembly line workers, is subsequently joined by the men who also work at the factory. 400 women strike for 8 days when management Welch on the national wages agreement for the engineering industry which would have given rises of £3.75 for women, £3.50 for skilled men, £3.10 for unskilled men. The men had worked to rule for over a month without getting any-

where until the women struck. 'This struggle has proved that women can fight for men. It's proved that men on the whole can't fight for themselves in a factory where more than half the labour force is women,' said one of the women strikers. 'When we first came out the men were amused and so were the management. Because we do repetitious work, they think we're cabbages.' After a day, the men joined the women strikers and the management moved to settle; the final offer accepted gives women £2.62 with a further £1.70 in the autumn towards equal pay; £3.25 for skilled men and £3.10 for the unskilled. 'We lost out in the end. But ... if there's another dispute over our equality money, then we can turn to the men for support and remind them that we came out for them when they weren't going to get any of the national agreement.'

June

Nurses Pay

In Newcastle more than 4,000 manual workers at C.A. Parsons Engineering factory hold a one hour strike in support of the nurses. They march to a town centre demonstration led by 100 nurses in uniform.

In Nottingham a joint demonstration between nurses in COHSE and NUPE and miners takes place, led by the band of Calverton colliery.

In Carmarthen 200 nurses and trade unionists march.

In Portsmouth nurses at St. James Mental Hospital hold a one hour strike and, at a mass meeting, decide to ban all overtime work.

In Manchester, 1,000 nurses, radiographers and student doctors march. Dockers strike for one day in support of the nurses.

In Liverpool, 400 hospital workers march to the pier head.

In Doncaster, busmen strike for four hours in support. Workers at British Ropes and at Cementation promise strike action in support of nurses pay demands.

In Teeside Darlington NUPE sponsor two one day strikes by market workers and dustbin men in support.

In Leamington workers at Automotive Products stop work for an hour when local nurses picket the factory gates.

In Romford, Essex, 700 nurses march through the shopping centre. Several hospitals in the area hold two hour lightning strikes.

In Norwich, several hundred nurses and trade unionists on the march.

In the North East, the Nurses Advisory Committee consisting of 30 nurses representatives for the whole area, decide to ban the treatment of all private patients until their pay claim is met. In London, Ms. Brooksone of NUPE puts an end, until the nurses get a tangible increase in pay, to the luxurious treatment of private patients at the new Charing Cross Hospital paid for the NHS.

London Teachers

500 women and men members of the Rank and File Teachers group occupy the NUT headquarters after a lobby of the union action committee, demanding greater action for an increased London allowance. They hold an unofficial meeting which votes overwhelmingly in favour of unofficial strike action.

New English Library

Frieda Lockart, assistant editor at this large publishing house, is sacked for 'inefficiency' after she joined the NUJ and started campaigning for union recognition, better wages and conditions, and an end to management's paternalistic treatment of women. With two NUJ men she pickets NEL turning away postmen and dustmen. SOGAT workers, who distribute NEL's books and periodicals, threaten to black all their stuff: Frieda is unconditionally reinstated and wins an extra week's holiday into the bargain.

Nurses Pay

In Woking Trade Unions demonstrate in support of the nurses. There is a one hour stoppage by all ancillary work-

ers at All Saints Hospital at Birmingham. In London, the Central Middlesex and Bolingbroke Hospitals put ban on private patients. In Sunderland 500 nurses, supported by 100 miners, march with union banners through the town. In Edinburgh there is a 500 strong demonstration of nurses and other hospital workers. In Manchester, dockers hold a further one day strike in support of the nurses pay demand.

Glasgow University

ASTMS members working on computers throughout Scotland on strike over regrading of jobs. 31 women operators picket Glasgow University, bringing much research work to a stop. At Strathclyde, women computer operators occupy the computer premises.

London Teachers

One day strikes in various London schools for a rise in the London allowance.

July

First national women's workshop to be organised by ASTMS.

Wingrove & Rogers, Old Swan, Liverpool

250 workers, mostly women, strike at this electrical engineering factory for five weeks over take home pay of £15 for a 40 hour week on average.

Easterbrook & Allcards, Sheffield

Women involved in strike of 600 workers at this small tools factory, demanding higher rises in pay under the cost of living threshold agreement.

London Hospitals

Technicians and Radiographers, many of them women, come out and join the nurses in a strike for 30% increase in basic pay.

Smiths Industries, Cricklewood

A 2 day sit-in takes place at this factory where they make car speedometers, when 177 women are laid off without pay. Management withdraws the lay off notices.

Nurses Pay

In Swansea a nurses flying picket brings out a 1,000 miners on a one day strike in support of the Swansea Nurses Action Committee. The nurses unfurl banners outside the colliery saying 'Strike a blow for the nurses' and hand out leaflets. Nurses' representatives address meetings of the miners at Morlais, Graig Merthyr and Bryn Lliw Collieries - saying that they have had ladlefuls of sympathy but what is needed is united industrial action in support of nurses to get their pay demands met.

Kenilworth components, Leicester

Asian women, paid £12 a week for working 48 hours come out on strike - other Asian workers, from Imperial Typewriters, help them to organise a strike lasting two days.

August

Courtline Aviation

40 men and women strike over sacking of station superintendent.

London Transport

Has first three women bus inspectors

Highbrook Hospital, Birmingham

First ever 24 hour strike takes place when nurses walk out for a whole day at this 700 bed psychiatric hospital.

September

Persona Razor Blades, Hillingdon, Glasgow

Two week strike for equal pay. Women on average paid £6 a week less than men. It ends in acceptance of managerial offer of a job evaluation committee of 2 union and 2 firm members.

Vauxhall, Luton, Beds.

Women office cleaners, members of the Transport Union, on strike for 3 weeks over pay of £9 for a 15 hour week. Victory of immediate 10p an hour increase and one week extra holiday.

Fords, Dagenham

Women machinists seize store of seat covers they have produced in defiance of management bid to pay them off because of a dispute.

Wingrove and Rogers, Old Swan, Liverpool

Strike now in its 15th week. 14 men are out in support and no lorries are entering the factory. Firm's supplies and products blacked by Merseyside dockers.

October

Salford Electrical Instruments, Heywood, Lancs.

40 women, members of AUEW, occupy the switchboard (they tried to occupy the whole factory) as part of an equal pay dispute. Male members of AUEW blackleg and management employs security guards in an attempt to intimidate them. The fight is for a bonus rate equal to that paid to men doing the same work.

M. Edney & D. Phillips

These reports were compiled from SOCIALIST WORKER and MORNING STAR.

For STRIKING PROGRESS 1972-73 see RED RAG, No. 5.



SPECIFIC PROVISIONS

*Personal Wishes
and Health Care Directives*
See Article 16 above. These documents allow
you to appoint a person to make decisions
about your health care and welfare.

Adequate instructions can be incorporated directly
into the will or can be provided in all those necessary to
enable the testator to "attend to his wife & family. I
desire you will be willing to do what you can
and, if possible, find the time to do what I desire
and attend to my wife & family."

Each leave of every member of every family should be made
available for the practical administration of the will.
Adequate instructions should be given to the executors
and administrators of the estate to make arrangements
for the disposal of any personal effects.

Documents

Leave of the testator to dispose of personal effects
and to make arrangements for the disposal
of any personal effects and instructions to the executors
and administrators of the estate to make arrangements
for the disposal of any personal effects.

Instructions for funeral and burial expenses
and to make arrangements for the disposal
of any personal effects and instructions to the executors
and administrators of the estate to make arrangements
for the disposal of any personal effects.

Working Mothers' Charter

BASIC PRINCIPLES

1 The right to work

Every woman, regardless of family commitments, should have the same right to work as every man.

2 Social services

Every woman with dependant children should have access to supportive services to allow her to work and no woman should be deprived of the right to work because of inadequacies in the social services.

3 Education and training

No woman should be deprived of the right to work because of lack of education or training. Every woman should be afforded the opportunity to complete or further her education, or to acquire new skills.

4 Discrimination

No employer should be allowed to discriminate against a woman because of her marital status or family commitments.

5 Vocational guidance

Every woman should be entitled to vocational guidance in order that she may realise her full potential.

6 Earnings

Every woman should be able to earn sufficient to enable her to be economically independent.

SPECIFIC PROVISIONS

Pregnant women

See Mothers in Action's '*Target' Maternity Leave Campaign*', page 353

Mothers and children

- 1 Adequate substitute care for babies and young children should be provided at all times necessary to enable the mother to work without undue worry.
- 2 Offices and clinics of welfare and social services departments to which mothers may require access should open one evening a week.
- 3 Paid leave of two weeks per annum should be available, on production of a doctor's certificate, to enable mothers to stay at home with their sick children if they so desire. Beyond this time, unpaid leave should be freely available. This leave should also be available to mothers who wish to stay with their children while they are in hospital.
- 4 Home helps and nursing assistance should be made available to the mother if she or the child is ill.
- 5 Unpaid leave taken because of family commitments should be treated as working time for the purpose of assessing sick pay, unemployment and pension rights.
- 6 A comprehensive scheme of play centres and other recreational facilities should be made available by the local authority and local education authority working, where appropriate, in conjunction with other voluntary and statutory bodies.
- 7 A reasonable amount (about two weeks per annum) of unpaid leave should be made available to a mother to enable her to spend additional time with her child during school holidays.
- 8 Employers should, as and when necessary, allow mothers flexibility in their working hours.

ACTION NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THE CHARTER

Legislation

- 1 To provide adequate facilities in rest rooms for pregnant women.
- 2 To forbid dismissal of pregnant women.
- 3 To give minimum maternity leave of twelve weeks.
- 4 To ensure restitution of mother in former position after maternity leave.
- 5 To allow time off to attend clinic, hospital, etc. during pregnancy.
- 6 To allow five days unpaid leave per annum to enable mothers to spend extra time with their children during school holidays.
- 7 To allow two weeks paid leave per annum and further unpaid leave where necessary when a child is ill on production of a doctor's certificate.

Legislation and finance

- 1 To set up sufficient day nurseries to cater for all mothers requiring this service.
- 2 To set up play centres and similar facilities to cater for the out of school needs of children of working mothers.
- 3 To recruit and train nursing auxiliaries to allow mothers to work during their children's illnesses.

Mothers in Action

'Target' - Maternity Leave Campaign

1. No woman should be dismissed from her employment because of her pregnancy or during maternity leave and her position should be held open during her absence on maternity leave.

We know that many women will still wish to give up work when they have a baby, but they should be able to make the genuine choice between staying at home and going out to work. At present, even if a woman intends to continue working after her child is born, she is, more often than not, expected to leave her job before the birth and reapply after the birth. This is absolute 'nonsense'. Every woman should have the option of having a job held open for her during maternity leave.

2. Every woman should be entitled to a minimum of 12 weeks maternity leave with net wage to cover the ante and post natal periods.

We have been criticised for asking for this as we are told that the burden would be borne by the employer. In fact what would happen would be the woman would claim her maternity allowances and earnings related benefits and the employer would make this up to the normal net wage as if she were on sick leave. This system is used in Germany and Austria and raises no problems there.

3. Maternity leave to be considered as a period of employment for purposes of assessing pension, sick pay and unemployment benefits.

It is essential that the period of maternity leave should be counted as continuous employment so that the woman concerned is not penalised in any way.

4. Pregnant women should be entitled to time off, with pay, to attend a hospital or clinic.

It is vitally important that pregnant women should be seen by a doctor before the sixteenth week of pregnancy and that they should attend a maternity clinic regularly thereafter. At present, some women, particularly those who are single, are reluctant to ask for time off for this purpose and, indeed, many may lose money by doing so. It should be recognised by the employer that attendance at the clinic is essential for the health of the mother and expected baby alike and therefore time off for such visits should be allowed without question.

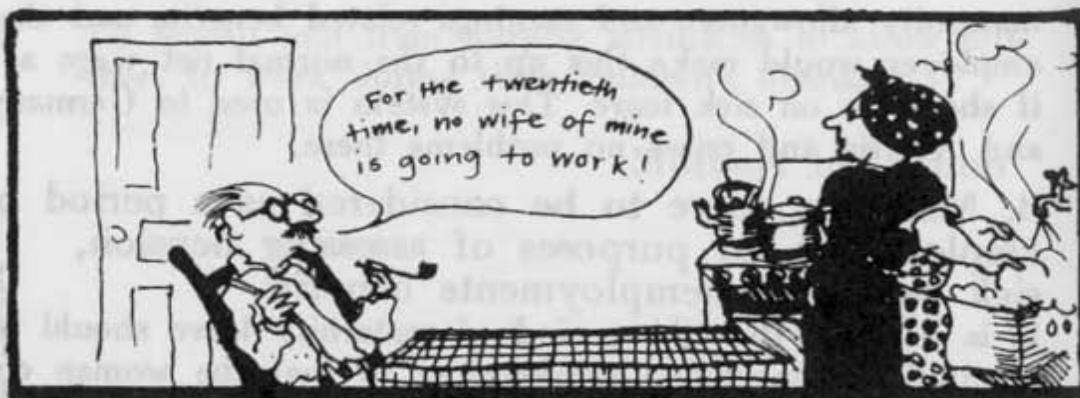
5. Sick leave should be granted during pregnancy on production of a medical certificate.

It sometimes happens that a doctor will order a woman to take some time off or to work shorter hours during part of her pregnancy. This should be allowed on production of a medical certificate.

6. Nursing mothers in employment should be entitled to sufficient time off for this purpose.

In some countries, e.g. Germany and Italy, it is the practice to allow nursing mothers to work shorter hours than usual in order that they may continue to feed their babies.

Mothers in Action



TUC's Best Practise Maternity Leave Recommendations

1. Eligibility

The best agreements apply to all women employees, irrespective of marital status and some include part-time employees provided that they are eligible for paid sick leave.

2. Qualifying period of service

Normally twelve months' continuous service at the date of application for maternity leave. The best agreements also make provision for some break in service (for example: a period of less than three months between the termination and resumption of employment is not regarded as a break in service).

3. Application for maternity leave

Normally application must be made not less than three months before the anticipated date of confinement. Some agreements require a declaration at the time of application that the woman intends to resume employment at the expiry of the leave.

4. Length of maternity leave

The 'best practice' is 18 weeks (but see paragraph 5 below): The period before and after the anticipated date of confinement varies but the best is 11 weeks before and seven weeks after. If the child does not live, the period after confinement is sometimes reduced to four weeks. Leave in excess of eighteen weeks may be granted

in exceptional cases. Further absence due to, or attributable to, the pregnancy which occurs outside the period of eighteen weeks is usually treated as absence on sick leave within the provisions of the sick pay scheme.

5. Scale of payment

The outstanding example is undoubtedly one nationalised industry which incorporates maternity leave into the normal sick pay scheme (thirteen weeks full pay less NI benefit and thirteen weeks half pay without NI deduction). Generally speaking, however, 'best practice' is four weeks full pay less NI benefit (irrespective of whether or not the woman herself contributes to National Insurance) plus fourteen weeks half pay without NI deduction — unless the combined total of half pay plus benefit is more than the normal full pay (in which case payment is that sufficient to bring NI benefit up to full pay).

6. Relation to sick pay scheme

Pregnancy is not considered, medically, to be sickness but a number of schemes do incorporate maternity leave payments within the undertaking's sick pay scheme. 'Best practice' is that the period of maternity leave is not taken into account for the purpose of calculating sick pay entitlement.

7. Resumption of work

Most agreements include certain restrictions designed to ensure that the woman will resume employment for a specified minimum period after maternity leave. 'Best practice' is considered to be the withholding of payment for the last four weeks of maternity leave until the woman has been back at work for a minimum period of four weeks. One agreement provides that this payment will not be withheld if the child does not live. Another agreement which withholds payment until the completion of three months' service, enables the woman, however, to resume initially on a part-time basis, provided that this is at least half the hours normally worked each week before the pregnancy. No agreement provides for appeal against the

with-holding of payment of the last weeks of maternity leave if work is not resumed. It is considered that, while it is reasonable to include some restrictions of this nature in the agreement, there should be provision for appeal and that each case should be considered jointly by the appropriate trade union and management.

8. Protection of health

Only one agreement examined included any protection for the health of the pregnant woman (relating to contact with german measles). Restrictions to protect the woman's health should be kept to the minimum and will vary according to the industry and the requirements of the particular job. Therefore unions can themselves best judge what protection is desirable for their women members. However, one issue which should be included in all agreements is that pregnant women should be granted leave, without loss of pay, to attend ante-natal clinics.

Women's Advisory Committee of the TUC

These recommendations have been taken up by such public employers as the Post Office and the UK Atomic Energy Authority. These 'Best Practice' maternity leave arrangements are guidelines for union negotiation.



Battered Women's Guide to the Law

First find a solicitor

It is not always easy to find a solicitor who is either or able or willing to handle these sorts of cases. Many of them have little experience in this area and they often prefer to avoid these cases which can be time consuming, not particularly lucrative and which often interfere with other work because of the speed with which action has to be taken.

First go to a Citizens Advice Bureau who will give you a list of local solicitors; if they are unhelpful, you can contact the Law Society for advice. Remember that if you have no income of your own (or a small one) you are entitled to free legal advice (watch out for a sign in the solicitors' window showing two people at a table) and legal aid. In emergencies you can get *emergency legal aid*, this means that the solicitor will help you fill in a legal aid form and an emergency application form. The two factors that the Law Society are looking for when they decide about emergency aid, are whether there is already extreme suffering or whether there is likely to be if nothing is done.

The solicitor should mark the application URGENT and telephone the legal aid office before sending it in. He should also be prepared to argue on your behalf if aid is not granted. It should be possible to get a decision from the office within 24 hours.

Now there are five different courses of action open
a) The Magistrates Court

The wife may take out a 'matrimonial summons for cruel-

ty'. This usually means that the husband is fined and bound over to keep the peace. Nothing more can be done to prevent violence recurring, if he does not comply with the order he will simply be fined again. Experience at Chiswick Women's Aid has shown that it is not really advisable to use the magistrates court particularly as the magistrates who are usually both male and middle class tend to be extremely patronising and unsympathetic towards battered women. They seem to feel in general that a woman who is beaten must have done something to deserve it, and that (particularly if she is working class) she should be prepared to put up with a bit of rough and tumble as a normal part of married life. They tend to regard the cases as private tiffs and are likely just to indulgently tell the couple to 'kiss and make up'.

b) The High Court

An injunction (a court order preventing harrassment) can be taken out against the husband without petitioning for divorce. This is not usually done. The husband is not presumed guilty but if he breaks the injunction he can be imprisoned for contempt of court.

c) Police Criminal Prosecution

The Police are reluctant to interfere in 'family matters' and in any case injuries must be severe and there must be evidence to prove that the husband was responsible.

d) Private Criminal Prosecution

This would mean the wife taking action against the husband herself and having him convicted of assault.

e) Divorce Registry or County Court

The wife may petition for divorce or for judicial separation, and at the same time, apply for an immediate injunction.

This has been found to be the most successful kind of action because it means that the woman is entitled to legal aid and she can be quickly reinstated in her home, financial arrangements can be made and a degree of legal protection against harrassment can be obtained.

Preparing the Case

The solicitor should contact a barrister and arrange a meeting with you within 24 hours of your contacting him. At this meeting a statement will be taken. You will need to give the names of possible witnesses, the name of a doctor or hospital who has treated you after an attack and a statement which should be written saying that you or your children would suffer unless you are separated from your husband and regain possession of your home.

The Barrister will now 'draft a summons for injunction', 'an affidavit' (signed statement) giving your evidence and a petition for divorce. The injunction can cover a number of things. The object is to prevent him from doing anything to hurt, frighten or worry you or your children. It can include getting him to leave your home so that you can live there, granting interim custody of the children and arranging money matters.

Going to Court

The case will go either to the family division of the High Court in London or to a local divorce county court. The injunction will be read out and handed to the judge, at the same time, the solicitor will promise to issue the divorce petition within 24 hours. If he is satisfied that the case is serious, the judge might grant everything in the injunction immediately (except vacation of the matrimonial home), even though the husband will not yet have had time to appear in court. A second hearing will be arranged for about a fortnight later and in the meantime the husband will be served with the injunction and the petition.

For the second hearing the solicitor will have to gather evidence against the husband, and he will have a chance to defend himself. On this occasion, the temporary injunction may be continued and possession of the matrimonial home should be arranged for the wife.

If the husband does not keep to the terms of the injunction, the solicitor should take out an application for a further hearing asking that the husband be sent to prison for

contempt of court. After this, it is simply a matter of waiting for the divorce proceedings to go through. The time this takes can vary a great deal, particularly if the husband is defending, but at least the wife should be economically secure and have a home with the knowledge of legal support should her husband mistreat her in the meantime.

There are no real remedies to this sort of violence in a society which extols strength as the greatest manly virtue and firmly believes that every woman is just waiting for some man to come along and beat her into submission. Heavier sanctions against violent husbands are unlikely to have any real preventive value while James Bond can bring people rushing to the box offices. However, the establishment of more women's aid centres will be the first step towards protecting women from the effects of an over-developed male ego.

Angela Phillips

This was first published in SPARE RIB 17 and is based on a report entitled BATTERED WOMEN AND THE LAW, from Chiswick Women's Aid.

NB Since this was written, an injunction kit for battered wives has been prepared. For details see page 358



Statement of Aims

**No womens liberation without socialist revolution
No socialist revolution without womens liberation**

Sexual exploitation and repression

We aim to end the idea of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' and therefore to end sexual repression and exploitation, e.g. an end to the use of women as passive sexual objects, as in advertising. We want to be able to live freely together, women with women, women with men, men with men.

Education

We aim at education geared to and controlled by the needs of the community and the individual in a socialist society.

- an education which does not define children as a separate species to be hived off from 'real' society.
- an education which treats everyone as people and does not foster sex and age roles
- an education which is based on a more flexible system, not centred in compulsory schools but which use community resources which now exist and which need to be developed
- an education which emphasises critical learning rather than 'being taught'
- an education which is open and readily available and accessible to all age levels

Fertility

We aim to control our own fertility. This should not be interpreted as an encouragement for individuals to please themselves regardless of the community, but it does mean that any decision about contraception, abortion and steril-

isation would be taken by the woman herself, *not* by doctors, social workers, psychiatrists etc. We also demand research into better and safer methods of birth control.

The family

We recognise the role of the nuclear family as a prop to the capitalist system

- using women to service the male labour force, physically, sexually, emotionally, and psychologically
- containing the militancy of the male labour force by compelling them to support women and children
- providing a reserve of cheap unorganised female labour
- preparing the future labour force
- functioning as a multiplicity of isolated consumption units which provide capitalism with an inexhaustible market and encouraging wasteful production and rapid obsolescence
- transmitting the dominant ideology (e.g. competitiveness, stereotype sex roles, possessiveness etc.)

The nuclear family is an oppressive institution. In theory it satisfies our emotional needs but in practice it stunts our emotional development. It restricts our intimate relationships to the family unit and divides us from each other. The nuclear family represses children by defining them as possession of their parents and subjects them to their arbitrary authority. Their socialisation is largely determined by two people about whom they have no choice - their parents - and gives them only limited exposure to other role models.

The nuclear family oppresses woman especially by giving her no option but to be a housewife regardless of whether or not she works outside the home. The survival of the family depends on her continuing unpaid labour, seven days a week. The housewife is in the classic colonised position - she is denied social, psychological, sexual and economic autonomy. She does not belong to herself.

We aim to create

better ways of living and working in which the nuclear family will be only one of many alternatives. We must break down obstacles to group living (conventional architecture, the law, planning, social prejudice).

community controlled child care facilities geared to the needs of those who use it. We want to end the idea that child care is women's work; men have as much right and as much responsibility as women for children.

community care of the sick and the old, for which men and women have equal responsibility.

facilities for communalisation of household functions (cleaning, cooking, shopping) thus ending the enforced privatisation of housework. This work is of course the equal responsibility of men and women.



In order that these responsibilities can be assumed by everyone, we must redefine 'work' — i.e. we must break down rigid job definitions.

Economic

From all according to their ability; to all according to their needs.

We aim to create a society where work is meaningful because we do it for ourselves in co-operation and not under someone else's orders or for someone else's profit.

We aim to work towards a society in which every individual enjoys as a right a fair standard of living not gained at the expense of other societies.

In working towards this we aim to take action in the following areas:

- we will encourage women to organise in unions and groups to fight for equal treatment and to fight against male chauvinism in the work situation and in the unions themselves.
- we will fight for an end to the trivialisation of the work women do and their exploitation as a reserve of cheap labour.
- we will fight against the definition and divisions of 'men's work' and 'women's work'.
- we will fight for equal pay for work of *equal value* for everyone, male and female, young and old.
- we will fight for equal job opportunities but we are not just fighting for an equal chance to be unequal.
- we will work for increasing ownership and control of the work situation by workers (i.e. organisation of work, hiring, firing, promotion), an end to rigid work discipline and an end to the industrial hierarchy.

We aim to make the production unit more responsive to the needs of the community.

But the struggle for economic rights does not end in the factory.

We aim to get

- more control over *real* wages — i.e. what our money can buy. We aim to do this by such means as resisting price and rent increases, organising consumer co-operatives and consumer protection.
- more control over our welfare provisions either by working with existing groups or setting up our own.
- an end to sex discrimination in welfare benefits and we will fight attempts to erode welfare provisions.

We want to abolish the economic dependence of —

women on men

children on parents

the old on the young

Members of the North Eastern women's groups - York, Leeds, Hull & Durham.

October 1972

This paper was presented at the National Women's Liberation Conference held in London in October 1972.



AWARE

AWARE is an advice, research and education project run by women for women

Since the emergence of the women's movement, it has become clear that there are large loopholes in the social services network. Often problems are not recognised, and assistance not readily obtainable. The women's movement has spotlighted the existence of battered women, given rise to support groups for women experiencing post-natal depression; it has examined the treatment (or ill treatment) of women by doctors and psychiatrists, and has pointed out inequalities like the cohabitation clause and in pension schemes.

Traditional advice centres (citizens advice bureaux, legal aid centres, family planning clinics) give traditional advice, ignoring new areas and perspectives that women are beginning to formulate about their needs and their positions in society. Since these agencies do not adequately service women, we need to answer our own questions, and trace our history and the roots of our problems so that we find the answers we need. We must do research and co-ordinate and index it with reference to those needs.

The history of AWARE

In early 1971 during the campaign for Willy Hamilton's Anti-Discrimination bill, the Women's Lobby received frequent enquiries from MP's and journalists requesting information about discrimination. The information was not readily available. *Women's Report* was started, in co-operation with the Fawcett Society, in an effort to collate and distribute information about women's activities. It soon became clear that a bi-monthly, small circulation magazine generated more enquiries and posed more questions than it could answer. The need for an information and research

centre for women was clearly urgent and a public meeting was held to discuss the matter. The response was overwhelming and it came from women in many different fields, some already involved with women's activities and many others who came from a sense of personal frustration.

Since then a collective has been formed which meets every month. Already many different research projects are under way and as soon as sufficient information has been collected we will open our centre at the

SOUTH LONDON WOMEN'S CENTRE

14 Radnor Terrace London SW 8

Initially the centre will be run on a volunteer rota basis but we hope to raise enough money to employ full time staff as soon as possible.

Archives collective

This group is responsible for collecting information which especially concerns women, from various sources e.g. magazines, newspapers and individuals. Information and research already gathered for *Women's Report*, articles for *Spare Rib* and the Penguin *Women's Rights: A Practical Guide* are also available to the group. The information is classified, collated and filed. We hope to provide an individual question/answer service by letter, telephone or personal visit. The service will be run by voluntary workers operating on a rota basis. At first it will be limited to a few hours per day, but subsequently we hope to employ full time workers. We also envisage producing information sheets concerning subjects about which we have most frequent enquiries.

Women's research index

We are compiling an index of work completed or in progress, in any subject area, at any level, by women, of interest to women, or with a feminist approach. Although published indices to university theses are available, we hope to cover non-academic areas also, so that women can share their knowledge and skills in more informal ways,

thus avoiding duplication of effort.

In this way women can gain a sense of their own history and achievements, by exploring their past and their talents. We hope the existence of the index will encourage further research by highlighting gaps, as well as making readily available to all, work already done. Also it will form a network for sharing skills and crafts, thereby opening up possibilities for self expression and self fulfilment for women.

Women and health collective

This group has two main aspects: research and self help. On the research side, a survey is under way to examine the attitudes of GP's to women patients and to document women's experience with the medical profession in general. Questionnaires form the basis of interviews for both and the main areas covered include vaginal and urinary infections, contraception, abortion, alleged psychosomatic disorders and childbirth. The results will be analysed and published with the intention of reaching a wide audience.

On the self help side, members of the group are becoming acquainted with self help techniques which initially involves self examination of the cervix. It is hoped to start up self help groups all over the country. An ultimate aim will be to establish in London a clinic staffed by feminist doctors and trained para-medics.

Members of the group are increasingly being asked to talk to community groups, women's groups and other organisations. We have been amassing a large amount of material on the NHS and the health care field in general and wish to spread this information and our views on various developments. Recently, two members have been invited to construct and teach a unit on women and medicine as part of a community medicine course at a medical school. We charge for such activities as this provides us with our sole source of income at present.

Alternatives to the nuclear family

This group arose out of discussions at the National Women's Conference in Bristol (July 1973). Many women expressed interest in trying to organise living situations outside the traditional structures of the nuclear family but had difficulty in finding like-minded people. Two women from AWARE agreed to set up a national directory to record the names of women who were living in 'alternative' situations or who would like to do so. The directory would be used to put people in touch with one another, to give advice on buying houses, setting up housing associations or simply giving women the chance to compare experiences. The project is still in its early stages but clearly, as more women - particularly single mothers - see the benefits of sharing facilities, the directory will become a valuable source of information.

Women in psychiatry

This group started independently of AWARE through a conference on psychiatry. Since then the group has received publicity through an article in the *Sunday Times*. The response was immediate and overwhelming. Over 300 letters were received providing fascinating though depressing evidence that discrimination and sexist attitudes are still widespread among doctors and psychiatrists.

The group has been answering letters and is in the process of compiling information sheets on the facilities available to these women. It hopes also to help the women contact others who are in similar situations.

Advertising project

The report produced by this group will not be as practical a guide as some of AWARE'S other material, but it is hoped that the findings will be of some interest and value in the fields of anti-discrimination and the image of women in the media. The study is divided into two sections:

1. A detailed analysis of selected advertisements from wo-

men's magazines. This section includes a description of the letters received from the advertisers, their agencies and the Advertising Standards Authority about AWARE's complaints of the selected advertisements.

2. A survey of all advertising in a) one month's weekend colour magazines and b) one month's selected women's magazines to discover the ratio of men to women depicted in different job and leisure pursuits. The aim in part is to compare the presentation of women in these two media, one of which is aimed almost exclusively at women while the other caters for a mixed audience. Most of the basic research has been completed already, and the group hopes to write up the data in the near future.



Mortgages collective

This group, as yet in its early stages, was formed with the intention of conducting a survey to find out whether building societies and other housing loan financiers discriminate against women in giving mortgages. A questionnaire has been drafted to this end, together with a letter to the Press, publicising the survey. It is hoped that the building societies etc. would be less likely to refuse information if the survey received wide publicity.

Women's art history collective

We are examining the role of women in art:

- a) to explain and erase the prejudices which exist today concerning women's creativity;
- b) to discover what characterises the values and framework of art which favours a small group of people and discriminates against women
- c) to make up for the very real neglect of women artists of the past

One of the attitudes we share is a dissatisfaction with existing methods of teaching within the present structure of art education. We are attempting a method of collective teaching that logically develops out of our group work

For further information contact AWARE at the South London Women's Centre, 14 Radnor Terrace, London SW8 Telephone 01-622-8494 or Julie Tant at 01 733 8630 or June Wilson at 01 445 0580

August 1974

AIMS

AIMS is a voluntary organisation which was established in 1960 with the object of bringing about improvements in the maternity services. Membership is open to anyone who is concerned for the welfare, physical, mental and social, of women and their babies during pregnancy, in labour and in the early post-natal period.

Early in its existence AIMS was recognised by what was then the Ministry of Health as representing the consumer; through meetings at the Ministry (now the Department of Health and Social Security) and through written comments on relevant DHSS reports we have since our foundation worked to put forward the views of our members at the highest possible level. To collect evidence in support of our cause we have conducted an essay competition, through the *Midwives' Chronicle*, entitled 'How to recruit and re-train more midwives' (1965) and a national survey on the kind of maternity services mothers would like to see (1971). Currently a local AIMS group is preparing another national survey, on mothers' experiences of 'daylight delivery'. As a result of such investigations as these, and using also the views expressed by members over the years, we have formulated a list of objectives:

- 1 No loneliness in labour
- 2 More midwives and more money for the maternity services
- 3 Research into pain relief and into the training of medical staff in the understanding of the psychological effects of childbearing
- 4 The treatment of women throughout pregnancy and confinement as human beings, not as objects to be processed.

To achieve these objectives, AIMS must continue to make its voice heard, in order to alert the medical and social

services to the needs of *everyone* concerned in the events surrounding childbirth; to draw attention to deficiencies where they exist; to suggest improvements and ways in which they may be made; and to influence future developments, for the ultimate benefit of society as a whole. The executive committee (elected at the AGM) is therefore in regular contact with the general and specialist press and with related organisations (e.g. National Childbirth Trust, Patients' Association). As well as offering advice, information and comfort where these are wanted, AIMS issues to members a quarterly newsletter which discusses maternity matters generally as well as the activities of the Association.

What you can do

First, you can make your views as an individual known by joining AIMS, and through your subscription help us to continue our work: we are a voluntary organisation (not a charity) and so our income is derived entirely from subscriptions. Next, you can join or help to form a local group — there are local groups in Bury, Bedford and Farnham — to meet other like-minded people, to discuss matters of interest, to put forward collective ideas or to give practical help in a maternity hospital in your area by sitting with mothers in labour, fund-raising, etc. If problems arise locally, you can use the support of the national body to back your individual or concerted course of action. Do any of these things and you will be helping AIMS to achieve its most important objective, which is to become, one day, happily redundant.

H.Q. AIMS, West Hill Cottage, Exmouth Place, Hastings,
Sussex TN 34 3JA Tel. 0424 420591

Annual Subscription 50p: Treasurer, Barbara Davies, 40,
Mendip Crescent, Bedford.

May 1974

WACC

The beginning

Our campaign arose out of the women's liberation movement. All over the country, women were meeting and beginning to talk to each other about their experiences of abortion, contraception, about their sexual feelings, and relating it to their place in society. Some of us wanted to do something concrete about the facilities available, and so we began to meet in separate groups in order to discuss and organise.

In January 1972 the London Abortion Action Group called a meeting and many women from other cities went to it. It was at that meeting that The Women's Abortion And Contraception Campaign (WACC) was formed and we set out our demands.

Class and sex

The right to choose when, and if, to have a child is a fundamental women's right and is basic to the liberation of women. If we cannot decide when we are to give birth then we cannot decide anything about our lives.

The medical profession is male-dominated: medical schools deliberately restrict their intake of women, and of the working class. How do men know how women feel about pregnancy, abortion, about bearing a child they do not want? There is no question that the right to control our own fertility is important, but women who consider themselves to be socialists must realise the special importance of this right. Manipulating the family unit, even to the extent of manipulating its size, is to the advantage of the class in power. It is in the interests of big business and their representatives to be able to control reproduction, just as it is in their interests to control production. We must fight for more control over our lives in every sphere,

every victory for us is a defeat for them.

Beware the complacent attitude that abortions are easily available nowadays, and that any woman who wants one can easily obtain it! Getting an abortion still depends on where you live and how much money you have. For instance in 1972 in Newcastle there were eleven NHS abortions for every hundred live births, whereas in Birmingham there were 3.2 abortions for every 100 live births. The number of abortions performed has risen, it's true, but the number of *NHS* abortions has declined. More women are turning to the private sector — in 1969, 62% of all abortions were *NHS*, whereas in 1972, 36% of all abortions were *NHS*.

There has been much talk about free contraception on the *NHS*, but we still have not got that. Contraceptives are available on prescription — but the prescriptions have to be paid for. Doctors — who have dragged their feet for the past 50 years on birth control — are still reluctant sometimes, they don't want to prescribe condoms, and they have the power to decide on quantities.

We know that for women to able to have the right to choose they must also have the necessary housing, money, social support, to enable them to bring up the children they want. We do not need to be told that the WACC campaign does not fulfill all the needs that women have, but that is not an argument against WACC, it is an argument for more campaigns, and for the Women's Liberation Movement to be the co-ordinating body of all those campaigns, making up a whole feminist platform. There are women who want the right to choose, but perhaps are not convinced that nursery centres are the right thing for children, or they may not believe that an equal pay campaign is a must. A separate campaign with specific demands can win support, and we will learn from this involvement in action. If we keep hedging everything round with 'ifs' and 'buts', we finish up doing nothing.

The demands

The policy statement which we drew up when we formed

WACC demanded the right to choose and the following:

- 1 Free, safe and reliable contraception available to every woman on the National Health Service.
- 2 Abortion — a woman's right to choose; any woman who is unwilling to continue her pregnancy should have the undisputed right to a free and safe abortion.
- 3 No forced sterilisation; pressure should not be put on any woman to accept sterilisation as a condition for abortion.

Some of us had been very unhappy with the slogan 'Abortion on demand' which was commonly heard in the women's movement. There were those who felt it was highly emotive, and unnecessarily provoked an antagonistic response. But more important, we felt that it did not reflect our need to control our own fertility, but simply suggested that what we all needed was *not* to have children. Abortion on demand is not a revolutionary slogan, just because it is phrased in apparently militant language. We must not be taken in by revolutionary phrase-mongering. The right to chose reflects the needs of women, is easily understood and supported by women, and potentially much more of a threat to the State than abortion on demand will ever be.

The groups

There are a number of groups and the addresses of these can be supplied by the group which is currently doing the newsletter. They fluctuate largely from city to city, and from time to time. Sometimes groups fold up for a while, but someone picks up the pieces and has another go. There are groups which always exist, although their level of activity may vary from time to time. In other words, the groups are typical of any campaigning force!

The groups are autonomous, in the same way that the groups in women's liberation are, except that we have an agreed, recognised set of demands around which we work and ask for support. The groups decide their own activities, and their own direction of work - whether it be political campaigning, self examination, or pregnancy testing or a combination of all of them.

WACC and the anti-abortionists

One of the most consistent activities that we have carried out has been the counter demonstrations against the anti-abortionists. The Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) and the 'Life' groups have had rallies and marches in all the major cities. Sometimes with very small, but always very vocal support, we have taken our slogans 'Back Street Abortion Kills Women' and 'Women must Decide their Fate, not the Church and not the State' and made our presence felt. These demonstrations would have been impossible without the help and support of the women's liberation movement (and more recently, some help has been coming from left groups too).

It is very important that we should be seen opposing the anti-abortionists. Think of all the women who have had an abortion, and of the great difference it must make to see groups of women (and men) who believe they are entitled to make a choice. Sometimes some of us come back a bit disheartened because the anti-abortionists seem so powerful but we have women's real experience on our side.

The main arguments of the right-to-lifers are centred around the question of when life begins and their literature talks only of the needs of the foetus (which is always male - until we challenge them, and then they rather awkwardly try to remember to say 'she' sometimes). We can and must combat their arguments by talking about viability, and about when it is possible for the foetus to have a separate life from the woman. Until that time, it is the woman who must be able to decide whether or not to become a mother. The rights of the foetus must not be put before the rights of the woman.

Increasingly, SPUC has been turning its attention to parliament where it has powerful support, and it has had letter writing campaigns and deputations to MP's. They would like to get the 1967 Abortion Act repealed, which would mean that the previous more repressive Acts would come back into force. If not repealed, then they would

like to see the Act reformed to make abortion more difficult. They are on record against IUD's, as abortifacients, and would like to ban their use.

WACC and the over-populationists

The over-population groups are potentially just as reactionary and just as anti-woman as the right to life groups. Their arguments are based on the point of view that our economic and social problems are caused by the indiscriminate breeding of women and men. In a leaflet produced for Population Day in May 1973, they say that over-population is responsible for the shortage of land for building houses, for our school classes being overcrowded, and for rises in prices, among other things.

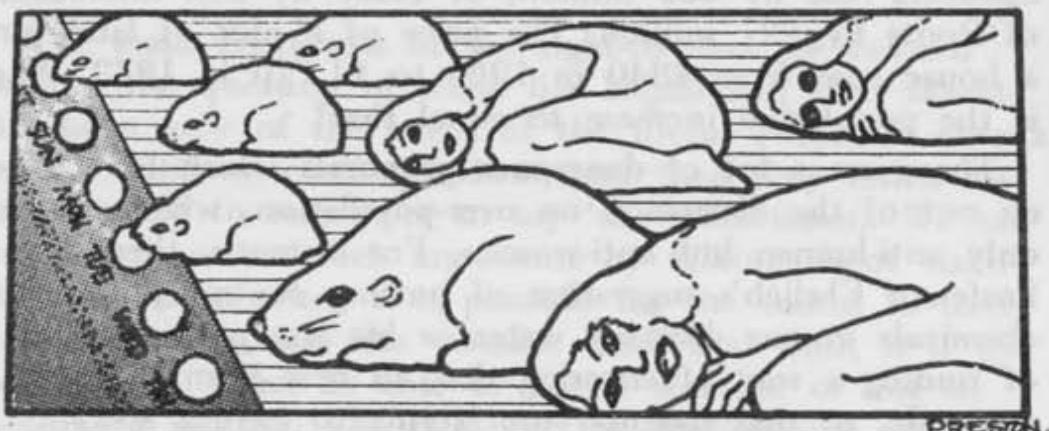
These people are very fond of quoting massive lists of figures and statistics about world population and food resources. We must quote them some figures of our own which are more relevant to an economic system in which maximum profit is the driving force, and not people's needs. In the first six months of 1973, the profits of Marks and Spencers rose by £35 million, of Tesco by £10 million and of Boots by £27 million. The price of a plot of land for a house rose from £840 in 1969 to £1,770 in 1972. Where is the population increase to equal that?

There are a lot of dangerous proposals which have arisen out of the discussion on over-population, which are not only anti-human but anti-woman. For instance, there is Professor Ehrlich's suggestion of putting contraceptive chemicals in our drinking water or his less publicised one of finding a way of ensuring that all first born children are male, so that parents stop 'trying to have a son'! Then there is Dr. Shockley's proposal that everyone with an IQ of less than 100 should be sterilised, and the London Councillor who thought that people applying for Council houses should be sterilised. The final solution to the woman question is the suggestion of the Professor at Sussex University who thinks we should try and find a pill which would produce male children only so there will be very few women to bear children

While these groups are often on record for better abortion facilities and better job and educational opportunities for women, don't be fooled! They are very silent on abortion, almost as silent as the anti-abortionists are on contraception. They have a very judging attitude about the use of contraceptives, and label people 'careless' or 'irresponsible' if they don't achieve a 100% success with less than 100% effective methods. They must understand that we are not going to exchange having children we don't want for *not* having children we do want. They should be campaigning for women's rights, not for government control of population.

Betty Underwood
1974

An abridged version of a paper presented at the Women and Socialism Conference at Oxford in March 1974.



Women & Psychiatry

Who are we?

An informal group of women concerned with society's attitudes to women suffering mental stress. Our group includes psychologists, therapists, psychiatric social workers and nurses, journalists and teachers, women who care about this issue without being professionally concerned and women who have been patients. We are trying to understand how social attitudes about women's role and identity produce not only current psychiatric theory and practice but also psychiatric disorder. The current upsurge of interest in women's roles and conflicts in society has given us additional insights, convincing us we have a vital contribution to make to understanding these questions.

What are we doing?

- 1 Research into
 - a) the causes of mental stress in women
 - b) attitudes to and treatment of mental stressWith this object we are currently building up a file of relevant material.
- 2 Education. This will involve both acting as a resource for professional conferences (such as the MIND conference) and setting up our own discussion groups, seminars and conferences.
- 3 Forward thinking about the provision of treatment networks and centres which take due account of women's social and psychological problems without focussing on one at the expense of the other. These activities are not, of course, discrete but feed back into each other.

How did we start?

Our group originated when one or two of us decided to organise a conference on women and psychiatry. The large number of women who came suggested this was a crucial issue. Afterwards this Workshop, based in London, was formed. An article in the Sunday Times mentioned us and, as a result, we have received about four hundred letters from interested women. Many of these letters confirm our impression that women's psychological problems are inadequately understood. We have compiled a detailed reply sharing our perspective about women's experiences and the factors causing psychological stress in women. We have compiled a list of resources that may be helpful to women under stress and a reading list. If you would like a copy of this list, please send us 10p and we'll send you one.

What can you do?

There is enormous scope for any of you with definite interests to pursue them with the workshop. And, if you live outside London, we can help you set up similar groups and we can work together.

Further inquiries:

Women and Psychiatry Workshop,
c/o Vicky Randall, Room 708, Polytechnic of Central
London, Elsley Court, 20-22 Great Titchfield Street,
London W.1.

Guide to Groups

WOMEN'S CENTRES

- Acton Women's Centre**
c/o The Priory Youth Centre,
Petersfield Road, tel. 01 994 4244
Acton, London W.4 tel. 01 997 3275
- Open Monday and Tuesday afternoons 2 - 4 p.m. (toddlers club). Thursdays 7.30 to 9.30 pm (Information Service on housing, squatting, help etc.) Also a nursery education campaign in connection with Working Women's Charter Campaign (WWCC).
- Brent Women's Centre,**
138 Minet Avenue,
London NW10 tel. 01 965 3324
- Brighton Women's Centre**
79 Buckingham Road,
Brighton Sussex tel. 0273 27612
- Open day and evening and used by several women's groups including women's liberation and Working Association of Mothers. There is an information service, library, play group, health collective, women's studies and WWCC group. A pregnancy testing service is planned.
- Bristol Women's Centre**
Basement,
11 Waverley Road,
Bristol 6 tel. 0272 38120
- Open 10 - 12 a.m. and 2 - 4 p.m. weekdays; 10 - 12 a.m. on Saturdays; 8 - 10 p.m. some evenings. The centre is a meeting place with an information service, bookshop and library. There is a free pregnancy testing service on Saturday mornings and Thursday evenings. Also local groups in South Bristol, Westbury Park and Clifton. The Children's House happens every Thursday - contact Jill Robin 40611. The Gay Women's Group meets every Wednesday at the centre at 8 pm. The Wages for Housework group - if interested contact Suzie Fleming 422116. The Women's Abortion and Contraception Campaign also based at the centre. (See

Documents) Sistershow Theatre Workshop - see *Women & the Arts*)

Brixton Women's Centre

207 Railton Road,
London SE24

tel. 01 733 8663

Not directly involved in the women's movement, but is used by both women and men. An integral part of the community together with the Gay Centre (78 Railton Rd, tel. 01 274 7921), People's News Service, Food Co-op, Black Women's Group (see below) and the Women's Place. Squatting group meets Tuesdays at 8 pm, new squatters at 6.30 pm Brixton Claimants Union meets on Mondays at 8 pm. Thursday there is legal advice and Friday the women involved in the Centre get together. The Centre is also open every afternoon between 2 and 5 pm.

Black Women's Group

65 Barnwell Road,
London SW2

Meet every Wednesday from 8 pm and together with some nurses are conducting a campaign against the banning of agency workers.

The Women's Place

80 Railton Road
London SE24

tel 01 274 8498

Includes in its activities a self help play group - weekdays 10 - 12 a.m.; a Working Women's Charter group - Wednesdays 6 - 8 pm (contact Ann 01 701 5601); a general meeting - Wednesdays at 8 pm (discussions, films, work on campaigns etc.); a self help group - time not decided.

Cardiff

No centre as such but 108 Community Bookshop is used which the Women's Action group help to run. There is a general meeting every Monday at 7.30 pm at The Friends Meeting House, 43 Charles St, Cardiff which is a business/discussion meeting where new members can find out about the group. There is also a health group which

meets every three weeks, a women's socialist study group and a consciousness raising group. Some of the women are also involved in running Women's Studies courses under the auspices of the WEA and Adult Education in Cardiff, Caerphilly and Newport. For further details contact
108 Community Bookshop, 108 Salisbury Road,
Cardiff tel. 0222 28908

Kingsgate Women's Centre,
1 Kingsgate Place,
London NW6 tel. 01 624 1952

Offers information on London groups, pregnancy testing and advice, help with medical problems and referrals. The Women & Ireland collective, concerned to make people aware of women's problems in Ireland, occasionally meets at the centre. There is also a WACC group. The centre is open Tuesdays 2 - 5 pm, Wednesdays and Thursdays 2 - 5 and 7 - 10 pm, Sundays during the day.

Lancaster Women's Centre
33 Primrose Street,
Lancaster tel. 0524 64785

Advises on social security etc. and gives support to battered wives though as yet they have no accommodation. There are business meetings every Monday at 8 pm. Other groups include WWCC, consciousness raising, older women and a lesbian group. Some members are also interested in self defence.

London Women's Liberation Workshop
38 Earlham Street,
London WC2 tel. 01 836 6081

Information and co-ordination centre with bookshop. Open Tuesday to Friday 10.30 am to 8 pm and Saturdays 11 am to 4 pm.

Manchester Women's Centre
218 Upper Brooke Street,
Manchester 13 tel. 061 273 2287

Runs an information service 7.30 to 9 pm Monday to Friday. No longer do pregnancy testing as there is now a

local branch of the British Pregnancy Advisory Service. (BPAS) Groups using the centre include Women and Health, Women and Education and WWCC.

Nottingham Women's Centre

26 Newcastle Chambers,
Angel Row,
Nottingham

tel 0602 863894

There is a weekly meeting at 8 pm on Thursdays. Several campaigns are being run from the centre; Anti-Discrimination Campaign - contact Margaret Purdy 863894; WACC contact Rose Knight at the Women's Centre; WWCC -contact Gill Haynes 604074; battered women's campaign - contact The People's Centre 411227.

Scottish Women's Liberation Workshop

31 Royal Terrace,
Edinburgh

tel. 031 556 5655

Monthly general meetings on the first Monday of every month at 8 pm to discuss running of the workshop, reports of sub groups, to meet new members and time permitting, discussions on a topic agreed at a previous meeting. Other weekly groups; Monday - Campaign group (initiates campaigns, calls on support from general meeting); Tuesday - new members group (old members have a rota for meeting new members in a more informal atmosphere than the general meeting); Wednesday - Sexuality group; Thursday - Working Women's Charter.

South London Women's Centre

14 Radnor Terrace,
London SW8

tel. 01 622 8495

There is an AWARE general meeting once a month, a health collective meeting once a month and a lesbian meeting every Monday. The centre is also used by the feminist artists' group (see *Women & the Arts*)

Essex Road Women's Centre,
108 Essex Road,
London N. 1

Tel. 01 226 9936

NB. Many women's groups are, at the time of going to press, in the process of setting up Women's Centres in their towns. To find out about your local women's group, write or telephone your nearest women's centre, or contact the London Women's Liberation Workshop who keep an up to date list of women's groups throughout the country or write to SPARE RIB (9 Newburgh Street, London W.1) who put women in different parts of the country in touch with each other. Check SPARE RIB's Classified Advertisement section for new and established groups.

WOMEN'S AID HOUSES

It has been found, through experience, that it is inadvisable to publicise the addresses of refuges for battered women. For this reason we are listing here only the telephone numbers of the contacts for the houses or an organisation through which they can be contacted. All the houses need help - in terms of womenpower, money, and usually household equipment.

Acton	01 567 4708
Brighton	0273 61664 (Citizens Advice Bureau); 0273 27612 (Women's Centre)
Birmingham	021 772 5017
Chiswick	01 995 4430
Edinburgh	031 443 9832
Glasgow	041 429 5398 (Mary Redfern)
Hackney	Citizens' Advice Bureau
Haringey	Citizen's Advice Bureau
Hull	0482 23218
Islington	01 607 2461 (Islington Community Law Centre)
Lambeth	01 674 3692

Leeds	Citizen's Advice Bureau
Lewisham	01 692 0231
Manchester	061 881 4106 (Not really suitable for children)
Norwich	Citizen's Advice Bureau
Teeside	0642 783 513 (Social Services Department)
Tower Hamlets	Citizen's Advice Bureau

There are also many other houses being opened all over the country. For details contact the local Citizen's Advice Bureau or Jo Sutton (01995 2082) who is co-ordinating information on women's aid houses.

Injunction Kit for Battered Wives

Shows women how to apply in the divorce courts for a non-molestation order and expulsion of their husbands from the matrimonial home. Notes for lay advisers and women's aid homes are also included.

Available at 25p plus postage from:

Ruth Holt, Paddington Neighborhood Law Centre,
465 Harrow Road, London W.10.

Getting Unmarried

A comprehensive pamphlet of self help accounts. 5p plus postage from:

Swansea Women's Liberation,
53 Bryn Road, Swansea.

SUPPORT TO SINGLE PARENTS

The Child Poverty Action Group

1 Macklin Street,
London WC2

Campaigns on issues such as improved family allowances for all children, payable to the mother and has carried out research into the cohabitation rule and the treatment of single mothers on supplementary benefit, amongst other areas. CPAG's Citizen's Rights Office at the same address gives advice and assistance on social security,

national insurance and tenancy problems.

The National Council for One-Parent Families

255 Kentish Town Road,

London NW5 2LX

tel. 01 267 1361

Exists to help all one parent families through practical advice, professional counselling, and direct financial aid. The Council also fights for the rights of one parent families to a special cash allowance, better community services, a fair share of housing and for a reform of the present system of family courts.

Gingerbread

9 Poland Street,

London W1V 3DG

A self help association which pressures for a better deal for lone parents and their children. Gives information and advice, by letter on legal, money and other matters. 160 groups throughout the country.

Mothers in Action

9 Poland Street,

London W1V 3DG

Have produced a publications list comprising survival kit, fact sheet, study pamphlets (unsupported mothers, adoption) and TARGET pamphlets (recommendations on pregnancy, day care, housing). Available with order form from the above address (see documents section)

SUPPORT TO PRISONERS' WIVES

Prisoners' Wives Union

14 Richmond Avenue,

London N.1.

Is pressing for family visiting centres in prisons to maintain relationships between prisoners and their families. The Union has a house at the above address - near to Pentonville Prison - for the use of visiting wives and their children, with a play centre, open 10 am to 5 pm five days a week. For more information contact 01 278 3981 or 01 883 2001

Prisoners' Families and Friends Association

**29a Hornsey Rise,
London N.19**

tel. 01 263 2288

A pressure group for prisoners' families and friends demanding that all prisoners be allocated to prisons near their homes and should get automatic parole after serving one third of their sentence, that the present system of categorisation be reviewed and that a maximum ceiling of 7 years be fixed on all sentences. The Association also helps with housing and social security.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

National Council for Civil Liberties

**186 Kings Cross Road,
London WC1 NDE**

tel. 01 278 4575

Are campaigning around the anti-discrimination bill and hope to organise advocacy courses to help women use industrial tribunals and courts to bring cases under the new law. They are publishing a leaflet on the legal rights of battered wives.

Sex Discrimination Act Campaign

**c/o Pat Howe,
148 Bushey Mill Lane,
Watford, Herts**

The Campaign's aims are:

1. to have parliament recognise that any legislation that treats women differently from men solely on the grounds of sex e.g. taxation, pensions, social security, welfare benefits and industrial legislation militates against the psychological, economic, political and social development of women.
2. to secure the passage through parliament of legislation declaring discrimination on the grounds of sex to be illegal and providing for the equal treatment of women with men under the law through the gradual repeal/amendment of existing discriminatory legislation.

National Union of Students Women's Campaign

Sue Slipman,

NUS, 3 Endsleigh Street,

London WC1H 0DU

tel. 01 387 1277

Is pressing the NUS to highlight the married woman's grant campaign; demanding nursery facilities within all colleges; asking for an end to restrictive quotas; attacking the use of sexist material in education at teacher training level; supporting the demand for free contraception and abortion on demand; pressing the Students Union to refuse to allow firms denying opportunities for women to recruit on campuses.

Campaign for Independence

Leonora Wilson,

21 Castle Street,

High Wycombe,

Bucks.

tel. 01 671 2779

See page 269

Working Women's Charter Campaign

National WWCC Newsletter,

31 Panton Street,

Cambridge,

London WWCC

Flat 4,

20 Queens Gardens,

London W.4

There are many groups all over the country. Contact London address for details of local groups.

Equal Pay and Opportunities Campaign

20 Canonbury Square,

London N1

tel. 01 226 5261

Is a pressure group of men and women campaigning for women's rights in employment and within the trade union movement. Also provides information and practical help to women in the area of grievances under the equal pay and sex discrimination legislation.

Power of Women Collective

64 Larch Road,

London NW2

tel. 01 452 1338

Groups also at 79 Richmond Road, Montpelier, Bristol (tel. 0272 422116); Joan Hall, 11 Chedworth St., Cambridge (tel. 0223 52867); Jenny Lister, 32 Ambassador Bracknell, Reading, (tel. 0344 28169

A Wages for Housework group who publish, among other things, a journal of the same name (available from London address) and will be setting up a stall in Church St. Market, London NW1 to raise money and to provide publicity.

The Nursery Staff Action Group

St. Peters Toddler Club,

St. Peters Church,

Eaton Square,

London SW1

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Independent Child at Risk (ICARE)

39 Stoke Road,

Linslade,

Leighton Buzzard,

Beds.

tel. LB 4156

'Our aim is to make clear that the attitude towards the child at risk and the policies involved in 'helping' that child are always adult-biased and we want it changed. Children under threat should be judged on one maxim

only: a child belongs only where it loves and is loved'.

Parent to Parent Information on Adoption

Services

26 Belsize Grove,

London NW3

tel. 01 722 5328

Assist in the placement of older, mixed race or medically handicapped children. The group hopes that a better network of information will help many more people to adopt children who would otherwise grow up in care.

Children's Rights Workshop

c/o 73 Balfour Street,

London SE 17

tel. 01 703 7217

Are 'looking into the different areas and levels of children's reality (at home, in the street, in institutions, at schools etc.) and report on all that is being done by and for children'. See also Childrens Books Section.

CHILDREN

Children's Community Centre

123 Dartmouth Park Hill,

London N19

tel. 01 272 9383

An experimental community nursery for 18 children aged from 2 to five years, open five days a week from 8.30 am to 6 pm. There are no fees; parents pay for food and give their time. The centre is also used for films, meetings, workshops and a weekly food co-operative. Intake has to be confined to those living in the immediate area but the collective welcomes visitors who are thinking of setting up similar centres.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS GROUPS

Children's Rights Workshop Book Project

73 Balfour Street,

London SE 17

tel. 01 703 7217

Have produced a list of children's picture books which are

either 'non sexist, non racist, socially realistic, avoids class bias' etc. The project aims to campaign against bad children's books and to develop a more grass roots distribution of good children's literature.

CISSY: Campaign to impede sex stereotyping in the young

Sheila Ebbutt,
(Information officer)
35a Eaton Rise,
London W5 tel. 01 997 0846

Helen Pettit (press Officer)
24 Cressida Road,
London N19 tel. 01 272 0784

Is a feminist group which wants to get rid of the stereotyped (traditional) sex roles offered as models in most children's books. The group has made surveys of sexism in reading primers, elementary science books, sex education books, under fives picture books and career novels.

The Education Collective Kids Books Group

'The kids' books group is a group of 12 writers and illustrators who are attempting to produce a series of supplementary readers for remedial kids aged 6 - 16. It is hoped the books will be non sexist, non racist and free from class bias.' The group meets twice a month for mutual support and criticism.

Children's Books Study Group

c/o Jill Pinkerton,
42 Kynaston St.,
London N 16

A closed collective of men and women who have been meeting regularly for a year to examine the contents of

children's picture books with regard to sexism, class bias or racism. Hopes eventually to publish findings.

Merseyside Children's Reading Scheme Group

c/o Jenny Flintoft,
25 Byron Road,
Lydiate,
Liverpool

tel. 051 526 2176
(evenings)

A group of women have been writing a non sexist children's reading scheme for the past two and a half years and have now written 12 books. They are also in the process of writing a novel for seven year olds and looking for illustrators and publishers.

Leeds Women's Literature Collective: Children's Books

c/o Anne Geraghty,
22 Stanmore Road,
Leeds 4.

A small group of women who produce a twice yearly newsletter containing reviews of non sexist, non racist socially real children's books with occasional articles and letters. Subscription 50p for four issues.

Librarians for Social Change Children's Group

c/o John Vincent,
7 Dellcott Close,
Welwyn Garden City,
Herts.

Puts interested people in touch with each other; gives information of and attends meetings/conferences/seminars in connection with children's books.

WOMEN AND EDUCATION

The Women's Education Collective

c/o Glenys Lobban
41 Durham Road,
London N.2.

tel. 01 883 3145

Is a group of London based teachers and others interested

in education who meet once a month to discuss all aspects of sexism in schools. Under its umbrella several groups have emerged; one fighting sexism in the teachers union; one compiling a book of personal experiences of sexism in schools; one planning to make a film on sexism for use in schools and the Women's Education Collective Kids' Books group.

Feminist Teaching Resources

c/o Sarita Cordell,
139 Hemingford Road,
London N1

tel. 01 359 2831

A small group formed as a result of the Institute of Education conference on sex role stereotyping which has collected and held an exhibition of feminist teaching resources, including films, slides and books.

The Homosexual Teachers Group

See Lesbian Groups and Organisations

Librarians for Social Change

Anne Colwell (Feminist Co-ordinator)
35 Hardy Road,
London SW19

Produce a journal several times a year containing articles on information sources, children's literature, libraries, action groups etc. Subscription 60p for 3 issues from John Noyce, Flat 2, 83 Montpelier Road, Brighton, Sussex.

Women and Sociology

Jalna Hanmer,
LSE, Houghton St.,
London WC2

also: Helen Lewis Jones, 2 Bank Mansions, 140 Herne Hill, London SE24 and Margaret Jarvie, Moray House College of Education, Holyrood House, Edinburgh 8.

A number of caucus groups have been set up within the British Sociological Association, concerned with women's studies and the treatment of sex roles in sociology studies.

Manchester Women & Education Group

See Newsletters Section

WOMEN'S STUDIES

It is thought that the following courses will be run again in 1975.

WOMEN'S HISTORY

Contact Sally Alexander, 91 Alderney Street,
London SW1

HISTORY OF WOMEN'S ART

Holloway Institute, Montem School, Hornsey Rd.,
London N.7

From patchwork to painting and a look at images
of women in advertisements, cartoons etc.

WOMEN IN SOCIETY

Dept. of Extra Mural Studies, The University,
Birmingham.

a 20 week course

WOMEN'S STUDIES COURSE

The Women's Liberation Group,
c/o LSE Students Union,
Houghton St., London WC 2

Will either be run by the women's group or in
association with the sociology unit.

RETURN TO WORK

N.M. Page, Extra Mural Dept., The University,
Manchester M13 9PL tel. 061 273 3333
ext. 524

A course for women who have interrupted their
careers and now wish to extend their capabilities
in the light of changed circumstances.

WOMEN'S STUDIES

For details of courses at London University contact
Margherita Rendel, London University Inst. of
Education, 55 Gordon Square, London WC1H ONT

WOMEN'S STUDIES GUIDE

c/o Oonagh Hartnett,

Dept. of Applied Psychology, University of Wales,
Inst. of Science and Technology, Llwyn-y-Grant,
Llwyn-y-Grant Rd., Penlan, Cardiff CF3 7UX

Margarita Rendel and Oonagh Hartnett are compiling a guide to women's studies throughout the UK.

NUS

The National Union of Students have also produced a booklet on women's studies. Available from Student Union Offices or 3 Ensleigh St., London, WC1

WOMEN AND HEALTH

Women and Community Health

Archway Women's Group,
Joan Scott, 3 Churchgarth,

St. Johns Road, London N.19 tel. 01 263 2809

A group set up to question how women's health can be introduced into the consciousness of community health councils and has one member elected to the local council.

'Having Your Baby'

Swansea Women and Health,
53 Bryn Road, Swansea

A comprehensive self help pamphlet, full of pictures and with a useful glossary of medical terms. 5p plus postage.

National Childbirth Trust

9 Queensborough Terrace,
London W.2 3TB

tel. 01 229 9319

Through its teachers, ante-natal classes and film shows, parents are prepared for childbirth. Support and non-medical advice is given in the weeks following birth and breast feeding is encouraged where this is desired.

Every major town has a local teacher/group., which hold classes, film shows etc.

Association for the Improvements in the Maternity Services (AIMS)

Anne Taylor, (Secretary),
West Hill Cottage, Exmouth Place,
Hastings, Sussex

See Documents Section. Annual Subscription and newsletter 50p available from Barbara Davis, (Treasurer), 40, Mendip Crescent, Bedford.

Pressure Group for Home Confinements

c/o Margaret Whyte,
17 Laburnam Avenue,
Durham

A pressure group to ensure that women have a choice of home confinements and to see that these aren't phased out.

Mastectomy Association

c/o Betty Westgate,
1 Colworth Road, Croydon CR)
Croydon CRO 7AD tel. 01 654 8643

A nationwide organisation planned on a personal basis so that women who have had a mastectomy can talk with and reassure other women who have recently had a breast removed. Also information regarding breast prosthesis, swimwear etc.

Women's National Cancer Control Campaign

9 King Street,
London WC2 8HN tel. 01 836 9901

Co-operates with local health authorities by leading fully equipped mobile units for cervical smear screening programmes throughout the country. Also have available pamphlets on self examination of the breast.

Self help

Nancy McKeith,
c/o Feminist Books,
P.O. Box HP 5
Leeds LS6 1LN

Nancy McKeith trained in a self help clinic in America and now helps to set up new groups, sells speculums etc. Is compiling a self help pamphlet and welcomes contributions.

Rape

A Woman's Rape Crisis Centre is in the process of being set up to offer medical advice and emotional support to rape victims. For more details contact Judy Gilley at 01 458 1348.

CONTRACEPTION AND ABORTION

The British Pregnancy Advisory Service,
Branches at: Birmingham 021 643 1461,
Brighton 0273 509726, Coventry 0203 51663,
Leeds 0532 443861, Liverpool 051 227 3721,
Manchester 061 236 7777

A non profit making organisation which offers contraceptive advice, sterilisation, vasectomy and free pregnancy testing services. Runs three nursing homes for abortions - Leamington Spa, Liverpool and Brighton and the cost of abortion is £66 unless the pregnancy is over 17 weeks, in which case the cost is £115.

Marie Stopes Memorial Clinic

108 Whitfield Street,

London W1P 6BE

tel. 01 388 0662

A private charity which provides the following services; 'All methods of birth control, help with marital and sexual problems, and with menopause problems, pregnancy testing, advice and referrals for termination of unplanned pregnancies, male and female sterilisation'. The fee for consultation is £15 which covers the cost of a pregnancy test if necessary (also the fee for birth control advice for one year). The standard nursing home fee is £35 providing the pregnancy is no more than 12 weeks.

Brook Advisory Centres

Caroline Woodroffe (General Secretary),

233 Tottenham Court Rd.,

London W1P 9AE

Tel. 01 580 2991

A registered charity with 19 centres offering advice about birth control, help with sexual problems and relationships, pregnancy testing and referral. Consultation, contraceptive supplies and pregnancy tests are free at the centres in Birmingham, Edinburgh and London. Abortions are referred to the NHS where possible, otherwise to sympathetic doctors, the cost being between £50 and £60. There are centres in Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Coventry, Edinburgh, London and Liverpool and addresses are in the local telephone directory or write to the above address.

The Family Planning Association

Head Office: Margaret Pyke House,

27/35 Mortimer St., London W1A 4QW

Central enquiries: Tel. 01 636 7866

Over 800 clinics throughout the country which offer help with birth control and medical advice including examination, consultation, prescription and regular medical supervision; investigation of fertility problems; sexual problems; cervical smear tests; pregnancy tests; sale of contraceptives; home visiting schemes for those who cannot attend clinics or car ferrying service and vasectomy sessions (in some clinics). In most clinics consultation, advice and contraceptive supplies on prescription are free. For local addresses see Telephone Directories or phone as above.

The London Pregnancy Advisory Service

40 Margaret Street,

London W.1

tel. 01 409 0281

Free pregnancy testing service and abortion referrals. Up to 16 week pregnancy £67.50p including counselling fee.

Release

1 Elgin Avenue,

London W9

tel. 01 289 1123

Pregnancy counselling and referral to sympathetic doctors (within the NHS where possible). Abortion up to 16 weeks of pregnancy costs approximately £80 incl. Release may also help with legal problems.

NB. All the above mentioned organisations stress that fees may be reduced in cases of financial hardship.



ABORTION & CONTRACEPTION ACTION GROUPS

The National Committee against SPUC

Jackie Titton, 37 Kinross Close,
Kenton, Middx.

Formed as a result of the anti-SPUC (Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child) rallies and the Oxford Conference and has produced printed postcards for sending to the Department of Health and Social Security in support of the present abortion law. Also two anti-SPUC posters (10p for 10 plus 3½p postage) and sheets of stickers (10 sheets for 20p plus 5p postage).

Abortion Law Reform Association

c/o NCCL, 186 Kings Cross Rd.,
London WC1 9DE

tel. 01 278 4575

'Aims to obtain and publish information on the legal, social and medical aspects of abortion, to encourage research into these aspects and to secure such changes in relevant British Law as may be considered necessary. The Association was formed in 1936 to campaign for a change in the law on abortion which was still based on a Statute of 1861. As a result of ALRA efforts, a bill to liberalise and clarify the law was passed finally in 1967.'

Women's Abortion and Contraception Campaign (WACC)

Active groups, or individual contacts for groups, within WACC

BIRMINGHAM

Angela Lloyd, 27 Prospect Rd, B'ham 13

BIGWEE
BOLTON

Elaine Glover 3 Lighthurn Ave.

BRIGHTON

Kate Packham 20 Milnthorpe Rd Hove

BRISTOL

Rate Packham 20 Minthorpe
11 Waverley Rd Bristol 6

**BRISTOL
CAMBRIDGE**

11 Waverley Rd. Bristol 9
c/o Broadcast Advisory Group 40

CAMBRIDGE

c/o Fregn
E 1 - S.

CHELTENHAM

Horse & Groom, 30 St. George's Place

CHIPPENHAM

Kate Teller, 61 Long Close

**THE UNIVERSITY
OF EDINBURGH**

Ruth Fenner, 31 Royal Terrace, Edinburgh 7

**EDINBURGH
EXTEP**

31 Royal Terrace, Edinburgh ;
Cham'l Price, 57 East St, Crediton

GLASGOW	Kathleen Engleman, 156 Wilton St.G2
LUTON	Liz Durkin Partisan Books, 34 Dallow Road,
MANCHESTER	218 Upper Brooke St. Mer. 13
MERSEYSIDE	c/o Seel St. Liverpool 1.
MIDDLESEX	Sue Spilling, 54 Pinner Rd., Harrow
NOTTINGHAM	Rose Knight, 3 Dunlop Ave.Lenton
SHEFFIELD	Rose Star, 7 Coupe Rd. S.3
SOUTHEND	Jane Kearsley, 67 Burnham Rd. Leighton on Sea, Essex
YORK	Angela Levine, 2 Spring Lane, Heslington.

WOMEN AND PSYCHIATRY, CO-COUNSELLING and GROWTH

Women and Psychiatry Workshop

c/o Vicky Randall,
Polytechnic of Central London, Room 708,
Elsley Court, 20/22 Gt. Titchfield Street,
London W.1.

See Documents section

Depressives Anonymous

London area: Anne Gaines, 243 Dartmouth Road,
London SE 26 Tel. 01 699 1655
Midlands Area: Mr. K.G. Middleton, 5 Newport Drive, Alcester, Warks. Alcester 2741
Hants,Wilts, Dorset: Jean Stevenson, 19 Merley Ways, Wimborne Minster, Dorset Tel. 020 1253957

An organisation of men and women recently formed to provide help for those undergoing a period of depression who need to talk about their problems to someone who is willing to listen and who has experienced similar feelings.

Lesbians and Psychiatry Collective

c/o 4 Manor Park Road,
Glossop, Derbyshire.

Are writing a booklet about lesbians and their experiences of medical and other professional organisations. It should

be available in spring 1975 and will be distributed amongst the professions.

MIND

22 Harley St.,
London W.1. tel. 01 637 0741

Sponsors all aspects of mental health. Services include counselling, with psychiatric social workers and referral where necessary to appropriate organisations and advice on patients rights. MIND organised the 'Women and Psychiatry' conference held in London in Autumn 1974 and will continue to work in this field.

Co-counselling classes

Flat 7, Callcott Court,
Callcott Road, London NW6 tel. 01 624 9131

Classes to teach the technique of co-counselling. The course is about 40 hours and the charge about £10.

Bio-energetic Movement and Encounter

Community, 15 Highbury Grange,
London N5 tel. 01 359 1372

Various groups including a Women's Movement Group: working through many of the feelings associated with shame, jealousy, fear, pain, pleasure, spite, sexuality and the need for sincere friendship with other women. A 4 week course costing £5.40 and a group for bi-sexuals: ongoing groups for gay women and men between 21 and 35 who are coming out.

Women against Ageism

Margaret Morgan,
40 Cork Road,
Lancaster

Its general aim 'is to examine the images of the 'older woman' in our society; to discover her vital interests and to tackle these factors in society and in ourselves that prevent us from seeing the process of ageing in women in positive terms of growth and development'. No age

limit either way as long as there is strong interest in the questions affecting middle aged and older women.

LESBIAN GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS

Campaign for Homosexual Equality (CHE)

28 Kennedy Street,
Manchester M2 4BC

Tel. 061 228 1985

Gradual recognition of specific women's problems led to the setting up of the women's campaign committee which aims to contact and befriend gay women and encourage separate women's groups within CHE. Also to inculcate feminist principles in male CHE members and CHE policy, and to provide befrienders for FRIEND, CHE's befriending and counselling service.

Sappho

BCM/Petrel
London WC1 6XX

A monthly magazine published by homosexual women for all women - 40p including postage.

There is a meeting the first Monday in every month in the Upstairs Room, Euston Tavern, Judd St/Euston Road, London NW1 at 7.30 pm.

Lesbian Collective

c/o 4 Manor Park Road,
Glossop, Derbyshire

'We want to find out what it means, to ourselves, to be lesbian in work and social situations and from our understanding of our position, fight against discrimination against lesbians we feel that it is very important for the group to offer support and sisterhood to its members in their individual struggles, as isolation is the worst form of our self oppression'. The collective is working on two projects; the lesbian survival kit - a guide for women coming out in society as lesbians, covers the N.E. of England to be published in Spring 75. The Lesbians and Psychiatry Collective - see 'Women and Psychiatry' section

Teachers in the collective have set up a homosexual teachers group to try to stop discrimination against homosexuals and get a ruling from local authorities on their attitudes to homosexual teachers.

Icebreakers

Tel. 01 274 9590

Homosexual men and women can ring icebreakers every evening between 7.30 and 10.30 to talk over their problems with other gay people. More men than women use the service and more women enquirers and 'icebreakers' would be welcome.

WOMEN AND THE ARTS

Women & Music Collective

38 Earlham St.,
London WC 2

tel. 01 836 6081

Meetings for discussions on the history and role of women in music and holds workshops for jam sessions etc. on Fridays at members' homes.

Northern Women's Rock Band,

c/o Angie, Manchester Women's Centre,
218 Upper Brooke Street,

Manchester 13

tel. 061 273 2287

Six women playing music (political, against sexism) by women for women. Only at weekends. Any profits go to women's organisations in financial need.

Disco Collective

Holds a women's disco every Saturday night at the Crown and Woolpack, St. John St., London EC1 (Angel Tube Stn.) 8 pm. Always phone 01 837 0164 on Fridays to confirm.

Feminist Artists Group

South London Women's Centre,

14 Radnor Terrace, tel. 01 622 8495
London SW8 (Kate Walker) 01 733 6929

A loose association of women working together and

moving towards setting up a co-operatively owned gallery.

Women's Workshop of the Artists' Union

c/o ICA,
Nash House,
The Mall,
London W1

A group of women who exhibit together and are attached to but have an independent life to the Artists Union. Members meet every two weeks in each others' homes to see each others work. For details write with s.a.e.

Free Art Alliance Centre

c/o WLW,
38 Earlham St.,
London WC2

For women wishing to explore/express themselves creatively. Formerly of King Henry's Road, NW3, the group have been forced to look for new premises.

Writers Workshop,

c/o Astra Blaug Tel. 01 346 1900

A group of women who meet in North London and have been active for over a year writing political poetry etc. and have produced a booklet of their work. Open to all women.

Sistershow Theatre Workshop

c/o Jackie Thrupp,
49 Berkeley Road,
Bristol 6 Tel. Bristol 32843

Put together and perform plays and sketches for and about women. They meet on Wednesdays at 8 pm at Durdham Park School (off Blackboy Hill) Bristol.

The Women's Theatre Group

Tel. 01 794 2445
or 01 624 5343

The work of the group is 'directed towards exploration of the female situation from a feminist viewpoint. It aims also at increasing understanding of the political and social

context in which women operate'. The group is planning a tour of schools, colleges and youth clubs with a show for teenagers about the sexual contradictions and problems confronting adolescent girls.

WOMEN'S FILMS

Bolton Women's Group Video Tape

HOW IT IS, 25 minutes long and made by the group with Further Education audiences in mind. It is intended to raise issues of sexism and stereotyping and includes a discussion of the aims of the Women's Movement. For use on a Sony CV-2100 ACE video recorder or a Shibusawa EIAJ/1 610/620 machine. Available from Bolton Women's Group, c/o 3 Lighthill Avenue, Bolton, Lancs.

The London Women's Film Group,
c/o WLW,
38 Earlham St.,
London WC2

Make and distribute films for women and like to send a speaker with the films to encourage discussion after the show. The following films are available from the group or The Other Cinema, who also distribute their films.

BETTESHANGER, KENT 1972	10 mins.
WOMEN OF THE RHONDDA	20 mins
FAKENHAM OCCUPATION	10 mins
MISS/MRS	6 mins
SERVE AND OBEY	3 mins
WOMEN AGAINST THE BILL	20 mins
PUT YOURSELF IN MY PLACE	25 mins

The Other Cinema,
12/13 Little Newport St.,
London WC2

tel. 01 734 8508

Films include:

BLOW FOR BLOW	90 mins £20 rental
THE WOMEN'S FILM	40 mins £5
COME TOGETHER	22 mins £5

Free film list available from the above address.

WOMEN AND THE MEDIA

Women in Media

c/o Sandra Brown,
Flat 10, 59 Drayton Gdns.,
London SW10

'Is for women who work at every level in journalism, television, publishing, radio, cinema, theatre and publicity who believe in women's liberation and want to work for an improved situation for all women'.

Sub groups: Advertising, Broadcasting, Education and Anti-Discrimination Action Group. The main group meets monthly at the ICA in The Mall.

See Red Women's Collective

Aim to put forward a positive image of women by making posters and providing facilities and showing printing methods to other women so they can do the same. The collective also collects past, present and future images which indicate the position of women in our society.

Contact Pru (01 267 2309); Susie (01 720 4746); Julia (01 720 4746); Christine (01 272 3252) Michael Ann (01 607 4728)

Feminist Press Collective,

c/o 4 Compton Terrace,
London N.1 and
139 Hemingford Rd.,
London N.1.

A group of women who are working together in order to set up a women's printing press co-operative, with the aim of printing and publishing feminist material. Some members of the collective are studying printing.

Women's Press Group,

c/o Lilian Mohin,
89 Ladbroke Grove,
London W.11

A group of women working towards setting up a woman's press which will print and publish work by, for and

about women.

Women's Writers Group,
c/o Judith Kazantzis,
7a Clarendon Road,
London W.11

Published Women's Liberation Review Nos. 1 and 2 and
an anthology of recent work. Continues to meet regularly.

PUBLICATIONS

Down Tools Occasional journal
Colchester Women's Group, 39 Charles St., Colchester.

Enough Occasional journal
Bristol Women's Centre, 11 Waverley Rd., Bristol 6

Power of Women Journal
64 Larch Road, London NW2

Red Rag Quarterly journal
9 Stratford Villas, London NW1

Sappho Bi-monthly lesbian journal
BCM/Petrel, London WC1

Shrew Occasional
c/o WLW, 38 Earlham St., London WC2

Socialist Woman Quarterly
97 Caledonian Rd., London N.1

Spare Rib Monthly magazine
9 Newburgh St., London W1

Women's Report Bi-monthly
75 Albert Palace Mansions, Lurline Gdns., London SW11

Women Speaking Quarterly
The Wick, Roundwood Avenue, Brentwood, Essex

Women's Voice bi-monthly
61 Tylney Croft, Harlow, Essex

Case-Con Radical Social Workers Journal
c/o 23 Haverstock St., London N1

Women Now Occasional
c/o Jane Williams, 36 Beardall St., Hucknall, Nottingham,
NG15 7RP

SUPPLIERS

Feminist Literature Distribution Network

Feminist Books,
P.O. Box HP 5,
Leeds LS6 1LN

A national network for the distribution of literature produced by the women's movement. All the above periodicals as well as other books, pamphlets, posters, cards and newsletters are available. The network always needs volunteers to ensure that these publications reach their local bookshops, women's centres and bookstalls and conferences in their area. Catalogues and mail order forms available on application. Bulk discount rates on application.

Retail/Mail Order Suppliers

WOMEN'S BOOKS 11 Waverley Road, Bristol 6

SCOTTISH WOMEN'S WORKSHOP, 31 Royal Terrace,
Edinburgh

WOMEN'S LIBERATION WORKSHOP, 38 Earlham St.,
London WC2

SISTERHOOD BOOKS, 22 Windmill St., London W1

108 COMMUNITY BOOKSHOP 108 Salisbury Rd., Cathays,
Cardiff

NEWSLETTERS

BRISTOL NEWSLETTER AND WACC, 11 Waverley Road,
Bristol 6

GLASGOW WOMEN IN ACTION NEWSLETTER, 87 Gibson St., Glasgow

LONDON NEWSLETTER, WLW, 38 Earlham Str., London,
WC2

MANCHESTER WOMEN'S NEWSLETTER, 218 Upper
Brooke St., Manchester 13

MOTHERS IN ACTION NEWSLETTER, Munro House, 9
Poland St., London W1
NEWS FROM WOMEN'S LIBERATION, 2b Batoum Gdns.,
London W6
SCOTTISH WOMEN'S NEWSLETTER, 31 Royal Terrace,
Edinburgh 7
WOMEN AND EDUCATION NEWSLETTER, 107 Egerton
Road, Fallowfield, Manchester 14
BIRMINGHAM WOMEN'S LIBERATION NEWSLETTER,
55 Grove Avenue, Moseley, Birmingham.

Compiled by Jan Savage December 1974



PRESTON

WEDLOCKED WOMEN

Lee Comer

Writing from the inside, from her own life and the lives of housewives she interviewed, Lee Comer describes the real mechanics of female oppression, as it is experienced by the great mass of women in their role as housewives and mothers. She writes with warmth and insight about the housewife's isolation, social and economic subordination and the effects these things have on women's consciousness and self image. There are chapters on motherhood, child rearing, female identity, marriage and the place of the family in society.

£3.95 cloth £1.00 paper

ISBN 0-904426-01-7 ISBN 0-904426-00-9

Published 1974 by Feminist Books Ltd.

P.O. Box HP5
Leeds LS6 1LN

BIG BOYS DONT CRY DONT DO ONLY SISSIES THAT ITS NOT LADYLIKE TO PLAY WITH DOLLS GIRLS DONT CLIMB TREES



GET OUT THERE
AND KNOCK
EM DEAD
SON

COME IN
HERE AND
HELP MUMMY
WITH THE
WASHING UP

IM EXPECTING
GREAT THINGS
OF YOU MY BOY
NEED TO BE CLEVER



WHEN YOU
GROW UP AND
MARRY A
NICE GIRL

YOU'LL END
UP AN
OLD MAID

AN IDEAL COUPLE
THEY WERE MADE
FOR EACH OTHER

