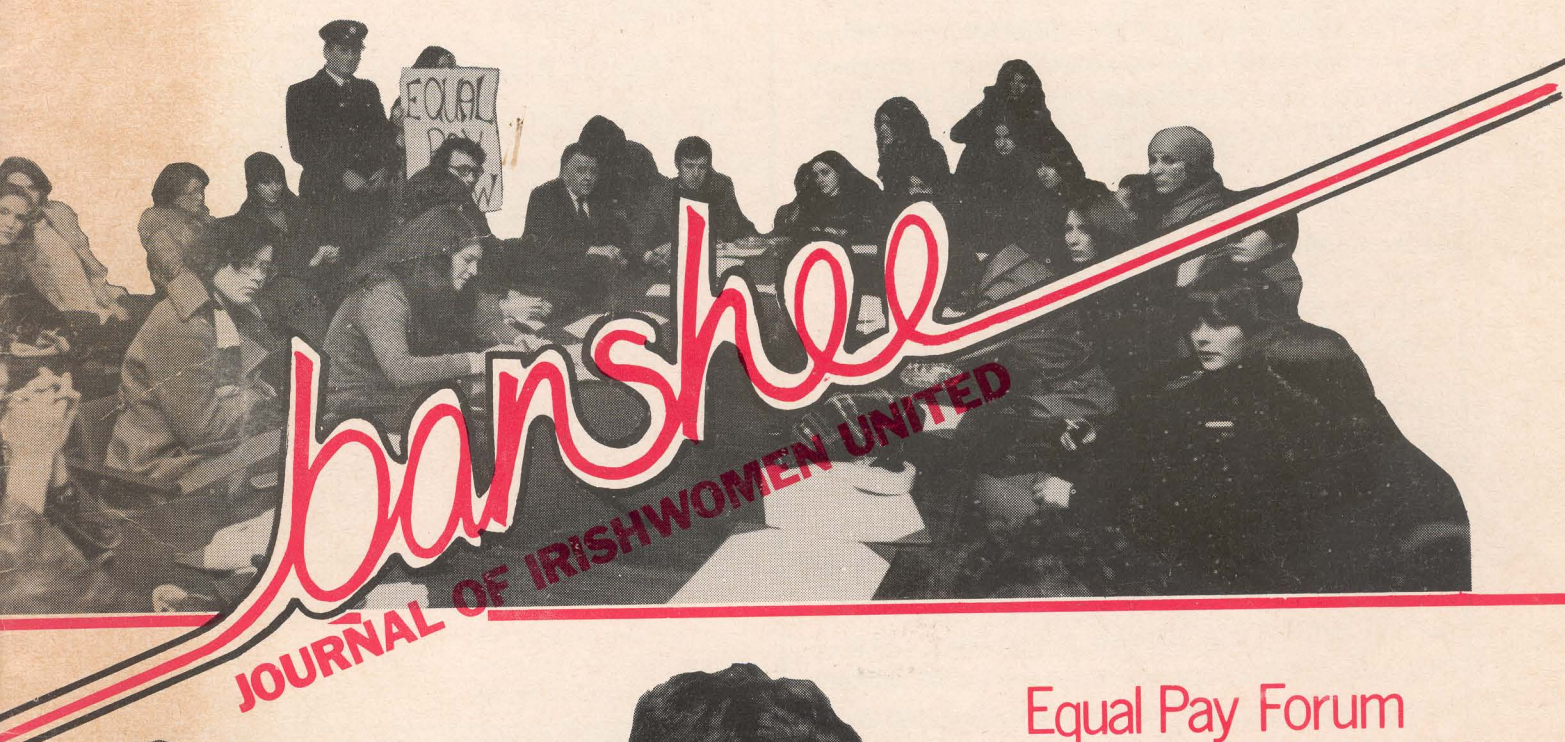
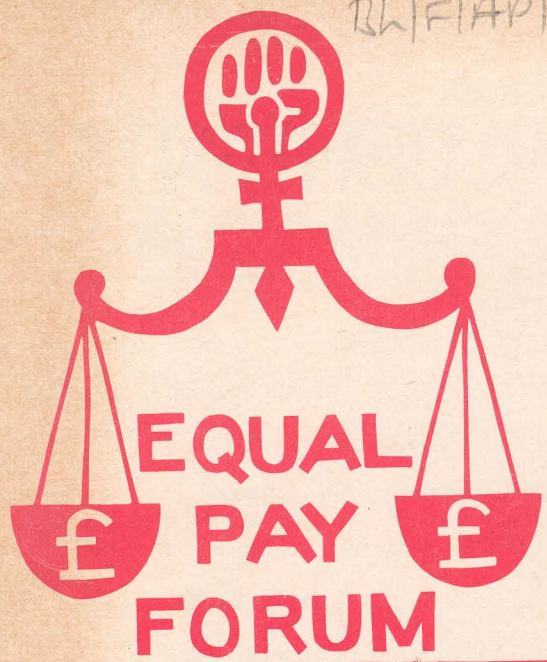


RW/F/AP/1515/1



ban shee
JOURNAL OF IRISH WOMEN UNITED



Equal Pay Forum
Women & Constitution
Contraception
Reviews, Outlawed
Pubs etc.

EDITORIAL

You've just read the daily papers. You've been listening to the radio. You're probably about to watch television. Would you know, from the attention devoted by the media to women, that females form fifty-one per cent of the population?

Did you notice any howls of justifiable outrage that Irishwomen are denied contraception, divorce and abortion? That we work for half the wages that men get? That we rear families, a difficult job indeed, under conditions that no trade unionists would tolerate for a minute in a factory — mothers get no pay, no paid holidays, no training for the job of child-rearing, and often no home in which to rear children? They don't even have the legal right to decide the religion, education or domicile of their children.

You've just spent the day learning nothing about women. And no-one wants to hear what you think.

BANSHEE is the answer of Irish Women United to the media silence. Our magazine will detail, monthly and minutely, the oppression of women and the means of removing that oppression. More positively, we will record our pride and joy in being women and our strength in unity. We have chosen the title deliberately. Banshee means fairy woman. Originally the fairy woman was a person of wisdom. Now banshee has come to mean a wailing person, without joy, whose voice means death.

This magazine will change all that. When we shout, it will be with justifiable anger — we will be announcing death to sexism and women's oppression. We will also be announcing re-birth. We are come again, as joyful women seeking our full development as people. We are, indeed, Banshees.

We invite you to celebrate with us. Rise in power with Irish Women United. The rising of the women means the rising of the race.

IRISH WOMEN UNITED

Meetings every Sunday 4 p.m.
Address: 12 Lr. Pembroke St. D.2.

CONTENTS

	Page
EDITORIAL: Banshee	2
CONTRACEPTION: The Slot Machine Government	3
WOMEN — on Strike and on the Dole	4
RED BIDDY: A monthly column	5
EQUAL PAY FORUM	6 & 7
WOMEN AND THE CONSTITUTION	8
RUMBLINGS: Reviews, Outlawed Pubs etc.	9
FATHER CHURCH:	10
OUTREACH: Women in other countries	11
IRISH WOMEN UNITED CHARTER	12

CONTRIBUTORS

Pat Coby
Mary Condron
Patricia Kelleher
Nell McCafferty
Bernadette Mc Cleavy
Marie Mac Mahon
Ailish Mc Shane
Barbara Murray
Ger Nolan
Marie Redmond
Anne Speed

WHAT IS IRISH WOMEN UNITED?

We are a group of Women's liberationists who believe that the best perspective for struggle against women's oppression in Ireland lies in an ongoing fight around the charter of demands printed here.

We came together originally in April 1975 as a few individual women interested in the idea of building a conference to discuss a charter; what its demands should be and how a campaign should be built.

At this conference on June 8th, attended by approximately 100 women, we constituted ourselves as a separate group, Irish Women United — the only criteria for joining to be agreement on the demands of the Charter.

Irish Women United works on the basis of general meetings (discussions and action planning, at present every week in Dublin), joint actions (e.g. pickets, public meetings, workshops, at present on women in trade unions, contraception, social welfare and political theory) and consciousness-raising groups.

CONTRACEPTION

THE SLOT MACHINE GOVERNMENT

It is only a matter of time now until Contraception is a fact of life in Ireland? The question now to be asked is, what kind of contraception do we want? It is not enough to demand that it be legal. It is not even enough to demand that it be free.

The government legislation on family planning, which did not get through the Dail last year, shows that the government has a slot machine mentality on the issue. It offered to make contraceptives available, at a price, through certain retail outlets.

But there is more to birth control than swallowing a pill, or inserting a device. Contraception is as much a sociological issue as it is medical. It should not be treated like codeine, available only through chemists shops, as though that were the only safeguard required.

This article examines the government bill which will be re-introduced again at some future date, and presents the amendments which ought to be incorporated into it in order to ensure that women have full control, with full knowledge, over their own bodies.

WHAT EXACTLY DOES THIS BILL MEAN?

The most important thing to realize about this Bill is that the control over the sale/manufacture/importation/advertisement of contraceptives is completely in the hands of the Minister of Health.

SECTION 2 and 3:

The Minister will grant licences for the sale/manufacture/importation of contraceptives 'subject to such conditions as HE specifies in the licence.

Who would get these 'licences', or what would be the 'conditions' of the licences is not stated in the Bill.

SECTION 4:

All advertisement relating to

contraception and all written material advocating the use of contraceptives is FORBIDDEN unless:

- i) *it is displayed in licensed premises*
- (ii) *it appears in newspapers/periodicals specifying brand names, types and prices*
- (iii) *it is in medical journals, circulated ONLY to the medical profession.*

The Bill, as it stands, is concerned only with the sale, manufacture, importation, and advertisement of contraceptives, as a commodity. It is not concerned with contraception as such.

We believe that any Bill relating to birth control must incorporate:

- 1. the distribution of contraceptives through premises specifically designed for distribution, education, and all services relating to contraception
- 2. an educational programme to back up the legalisation of contraceptives
- 3. the right to publish literature advocating the use of contraception.

Therefore IRISH WOMEN UNITED have proposed the following demands to be incorporated into an amendment.

PROPOSAL FOR AN AMENDMENT by IRISH WOMEN UNITED

Because we believe that women in Ireland should have the full right to control their own fertility:

We demand **FREE LEGAL CONTRACEPTION**

1. We demand state financed birth control clinics. These be administered and staffed by those trained in all methods of birth control, and the education of men and women of childbearing age, in the use and the possibilities of birth control.

It should be mandatory for every regional health area to set up or finance existing clinics, for the provision of contraception and attendant services. These clinics should be based in, but independent from health clinics throughout the country. In areas where there are no health clinics, the provision of birth control clinics would be connected to the domicilliary service in the area.

2. We demand that contraceptives of all types and attendant services be provided free and where necessary importation of contraceptives (of all types) be done through the birth control clinics. Wider distribution of contraceptives would be provided through dispensaries.

3. We demand that a full sex education programme be provided in the birth control clinics, maternity hospitals, V.D. clinics etc. by those trained in such education. This programme should incorporate birth control education to schools (primary and secondary), teachers (at all levels), social workers, doctors, nurses etc. The objective would be to make birth control free and available in the broadest sense of the word.

4. We demand that there be the right to discuss, publish literature, distribute literature, publicly display, hold meetings etc. advocating contraception.

5. We demand that women in Ireland would at all times receive the best and safest forms of contraceptives, of all types, available.

6. We demand that all literature concerning contraception which is banned under the censorship act be immediately removed from the banned list.



WOMEN ON THE DOLE

Margaret

"When my boss found out that I was attending evening courses in drama, he asked me to leave. He said he wanted someone he could give a gold watch to after fifty years service. He said he wanted a lifetime devoted servant"

This is how Margaret began to tell me the story of how she lost her secretarial job and came to join the Friday dole queue at Victoria Street.

Margaret has been a secretary for four years and was feeling very dissatisfied at the prospect of spending her life as a "scivvy" to some male boss. She started going to evening classes in drama. She wants to be a drama teacher. Her boss found out that she was entertaining the thought of leaving his service at some future date and decided that the unemployment situation being what it is — he could easily fill the post with somebody without such aspirations.

This happened last November and Margaret didn't think of applying for unemployment benefit because she was a good secretary with four years experience and would have no problem getting another job. In January, the job situation began to look desperate so she decided to apply for the dole. Now six weeks later her case for unemployment benefit is still being considered because of a temporary two-week job she had during the fifty-two week period when her employer didn't stamp her card. While the Dept. of Social Welfare and the employer fight over the two missing stamps, Margaret receives absolutely no income.

After about 30 interviews she is losing hope of getting any employment. She says:

"It's absolutely degrading being interviewed by some man who thinks he is doing

you a favour giving you a job"
"They ask you questions like: 'What does your father do? What do your brothers and sisters do? Do you intend to get married?' — And you feel obliged to answer these ridiculous questions because at this stage I really need a job"

Margaret feels that 'good' looks is very often the factor in deciding who gets the job.

So what's in store for Margaret? She can see no prospect of getting a job. As the days go by she feels she has less energy to apply herself to another interview with the possibility of another rejection.

She would go to England where the situation is not much better but she wants to stay here to finish her drama course. All she can do is battle with the Dept. of Social Welfare to grant her enough money to feed herself.

Ann

Ann too was forced out of her job for much the same reason. She left university after two years to join an insurance company to train as an underwriter. She would have to start at the bottom they told her and so she began work as a filing clerk. Fourteen months later she was still a filing clerk — still at the bottom. *"By that time I was an excellent filing clerk of course, and I got the impression that they wanted to keep me that way"*

She left in April 1975, drew weekly dole benefit of £9.50 and began looking for better prospects. Six months and many interviews later, she was put on assistance of £8.10 per week. By February eleven months after she left the insurance company, and paying a weekly rent of £7, Ann was desperately applying for jobs as a waitress.

"I couldn't believe it. When I went along for interview the employment agency told me they would let me know if I was on the short list"

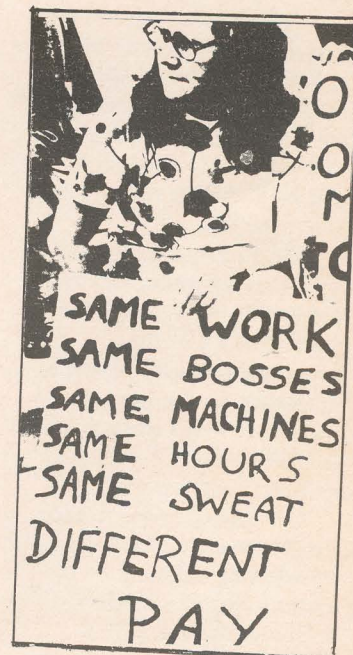
Short-listing and second interviews for a job as a waitress!!

Career profiles like the above, permanent secretary — permanent filing clerk, struggling to become just a waitress, have led many women on the dole queues to make the economically rational decision — choosing marriage as a career. That job at least brings the prospect of a house, a partner with higher-earning potential and tax relief and the alledged social status of wife and mother.

Josephine

Josephine, a married woman, put it quite bluntly *"I was earning £35 per week and bringing home £23 after taxes. Out of that I had to*

pay someone to look after my child and I was doing housework at night when I came home. So I left the job and get the dole now. It works out that I get almost the same amount of money because my husband gets the tax relief."



DIARY OF A WOMENS' STRIKE — THOMS DIRECTORY

The six women employees who last year fought for and won the right to join a trade union after 5 months on the picket line are now jobless. All six have been looking for jobs since the beginning of December. Employment agencies refuse to handle them and interviews resulting from job advertisements in the newspapers have ended abruptly at the very mention of their previous employer. Having won the right to join a trade union, they lost the right to work. The women claim that they have been blacklisted by the F.U.E. and that their names have been circulated to all members of that organisation.

The strike began in mid-July, when one of the women was dismissed by her employer, Mr. J. L. Wootton and replaced by another worker being paid £4 per week less. Feeling threatened by similar dismissals, eight of the other women workers joined The Irish Transport and General Workers Union.

When Mr. Wootton found out that his workers had become unionised, he informed them that he was about to go into liquidation. Nor was he willing to deal with a trade union. He gave the eight union members notice of their immediate dismissal. The ITGWU served strike notice

and a five month picket followed. Mr. Wootton did not go into liquidation. He carried on business with newly-hired non-unionised workers. The unions virtually powerless, could only ensure that the directory could not be printed in Ireland or England.

Following a march of trade unionists and womens groups the dispute went to the Labour Court for a full hearing — almost eighteen weeks after the strike began. The outcome of the hearing was that the women were reinstated. Mr. Wootton pleaded yet again that he was about to plunge into liquidation, this time giving himself three weeks notice. The women went back to work for the last two weeks before the closure of the firm, during which time they were to work out redundancy payments. They received only ½ of their wages backdated to the start of the strike.

Mr. Wootton closed his firm but re-opened three weeks later, employing non-unionised workers. The union is claiming victory and the women are claiming the dole. If six women can strike fear into the hearts of employers and employment agencies imagine what could be achieved if all women workers were organised. Until and unless we are all organised, the isolated few will continue to be victimised.

red biddy

The Irish footwear Industry last night announced that the EEC insistence on the introduction of equal pay for women would lead to large pay-offs among men workers. "The all-male government has been left without a leg to stand on", the industry said. "Talk about putting the shoe on the other foot . . . we mean, they've really put the boot in now . . . if you see what we mean"

The furniture industry called on the government to get up off its knees and use Irish wooden crutches.

*

Pope Paul has donated £280,000 for research into a new method of natural birth control. The updated Billings method claims that a woman can anticipate the fertility period by noting when the cervix secretes a particular kind of mucus. "The method is simple", the Pope said. "Women have always known that the worst accidents occur just when they're wearing dirty knickers. It's only a question of changing your knickers every day".

*

The pope also warned against the loss of femininity among supporters of Womens' Liberation. "Women must not become masculine", he said. The Pope was wearing a long purple gown, set off by a royal blue cummerbund, with matching purple slippers. His ruby ring caught the colours of his costume perfectly.

*

Patrick Cooney, Minister for Justice, told Cherish that he firmly believed that unmarried mothers should put their children up for adoption, because, he said, children suffered from the absence of a father in the home. Mr. Cooney's family home is near Monaghan. Mr. Cooney spends most of his time in Dublin. Not to mention the amount of time Government Ministers and the majority of dail deputies spend travelling abroad or around the country - the majority of them fathers to families.

Perhaps Mr. Cooney would

care to justify his belief by detailing the amount of time he spends, as a father, at home?

*

Admirers of Telly Savalas should note the following extract from a recent Kojak show. Stavros complained that a particular piece of detective work was extremely difficult. "That's what you're paid for" said Kojak. "If it had been easy we would have given it to the women to do".

*

The Irish Times prides itself on its commitment to the womens' cause. Readers will be delighted to know that the Irish Times Social Club, a premises which caters to after hours drinking (legally of course), forbids membership to Irish Times women workers.

*

Michael O'Leary, the Minister for Labour, is fifteen years old today.

The following historical events occurred in the month of March:

6th March 1971:

The first British national Women's Liberation demonstration marched from Hyde Park Corner for equal pay, equal educational and job opportunities, 24 hour nurseries, free contraception and abortion on demand.

8th March, 1910:

International womens day proclaimed to commemorate a strike by socialist women in the New York garment trade. Honoured ever since, and celebrated in Uruguay in 1970 by an all-women gaol escape organised by the Tupamaros.

21st March 1974:

Victorious strike in Glasgow of 300 workers, mostly female, at Maclaren Controls, a subsidiary of the ITT, ended after fourteen weeks. The factory was occupied for most of the strike and management agreed to the full claim.

23rd March, 1860:

Striking shoemakers, mostly women, in America, held a victory Ladies Procession under the banner "Weak in physical strength. Strong in moral courage."

26th March:

1,500 women discharged from the Royal Army Clothing factory in London, and told to re-apply for their jobs at lower rates. Emma Paterson formed a branch of the London Tailoresses' Union as a result of the dispute.

31st March 1845:

Twenty women and girls seriously injured resisting eviction in highland clearance in Scotland. "Better to die here than in America", the women shouted.

Nazis, long ago, demanded that all Jews in the Netherlands wear a yellow star to distinguish them from 'normal' people. The King of the Netherlands promptly donned a yellow star. The Dutch people followed suit.

Following the recent Vatican condemnation as 'aberrant' all those who practised lesbianism, homosexuality, pre-marital sex and masturbation, did you notice something about the Irish people? They were all behaving normally and looking normal - just like those who practise lesbianism, homosexuality, pre-marital sex and masturbation.

What a unanimous show of identification and solidarity with our sisters and brothers.

(A few people wore cloth dog-collars, testifying to their own form of sexuality - abstinence. Irishwomen United would be the last organisation in the world to deny them the right to their individual expression of difference).



FUE OCCUPATION BY IRISHWOMEN UNITED

On January, 8th, Irishwomen United held a Board meeting in the premises of the Federated Union of Employers, in Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin, and forced the Vice-President of that organization, under the watchful eye of an Inspector of the Garda Síochána, to account for their denial of equal pay to women workers. It was the first and only occasion on which the F.U.E. publicly answered questions on the issue. They admitted, in the presence of the national media, that no section of industry had submitted any information to them on whether or not they could afford equal pay; that only one sector of the shoe industry had stated that equal pay would result in the loss of jobs; that the shoe industry was facing disaster whether or not equal pay was implemented; and that, without any information or proof, they had nonetheless advised the government to deny equal pay to women workers.

When Irish Women United suggested to the F.U.E. that their denial of equal pay to women workers was both immoral and illegal, the F.U.E. replied that it was up to the government to enforce EEC regulations; and that they had always given the

unions what they wanted. Until January 1976, the unions, the F.U.E. said, had not asked that women workers be given the same pay as men.

"F.U.E. often finds itself in a position where it feels compelled to oppose, comprehensively or in detail, socially desirable legislation".
Federated Union of Employers
Annual Report 1974

They answered questions unwillingly, of course. When Irish Women United first occupied the premises, the F.U.E. stated that under no condition would they talk with us. They then sent for the police. Irish Women United told the Gardai that they were willing to go to jail rather than leave the premises without having the Board meeting. The F.U.E. was faced with the prospect of prosecuting women in the Courts, who were protesting against the refusal of state and industry to implement EEC law on equal pay. The subsequent

1st February 1975

"With Mr. O'Leary as President of the EEC Council of Ministers for Social Affairs, and Dr. Hillery responsible in the Commission, it seems that Irish women can be assured of full representation in Brussels".
Liam Cosgrave at R.D.S.
seminar on Equality,
Development and Peace

international publicity would have done women a world of good.

Then — in no time at all — the Vice-President entered the board room and answered every question he had earlier refused to even comment on.

One hour after the occupation, the government went on national television to announce that they were giving equal pay in the civil service.

We're not saying that there is a total connection between our occupation and government capitulation. We are saying that the time for soft shoe shuffling is over.

Get into the Labour Court and Fight!

5th MARCH 1974:

"I have given careful consideration to the question of the date for full implementation (of Equal Pay) before deciding that the Act should be in operation on 31st Dec. 1975. As a Government, we are convinced that there should be no further delay . . . While the implementation of equal pay will involve additional costs, I do not think that this problem must stand in our way."

Michael O'Leary, Dail Eireann

3rd December 1975

"The greatest contribution we can make as a Government (to advancing the status of women in Ireland) is the enactment of progressive legislation . . . A satisfactory start has been made during International Women's Year . . . As from 31st December 1975, the legislation ensuring equal pay for like work will come into operation"



PROGRESS EQUAL

IRELAND

1950: Ireland, alone of all the European members of the United Nations, refused to ratify ILO directive on equal pay

1969: Fianna Fail Government established the Commission for the Status of Women, whose brief involved an examination of the implications of equal pay.

1972: Report of the Commission on the Status of Women recommended December 1977 as the target date for implementation of equal pay.

1972: National Wage Agreement made provision of a 17½% reduction of the earnings differential between male and female workers doing work of equal values. This was followed, in the 1974 Agreement by provision for a further reduction of 33 1/3rd%. Only a small proportion of firms acted on these recommendations.

1974: Anti Discrimination (Pay) Act brought forward the date for implementation of Equal Pay from December 1977, as proposed by the Commission for the Status of Women to 31st December 1975.

1975: December 18th, Michael O'Leary, introduced by proxy, an amendment to the Equal Pay Act, proposing that its implementation date be postponed in certain cases in the private sector. Application was later made to the EEC Commission for permission to derogate from the principle of equal pay. In addition, it was proposed that, in the public sector, discrimination between women and men of the same marital status, be removed, but that the marriage differential be maintained.

1976: 18th February, Richie Ryan, Minister for Labour, said "the Government must pay" for the cost of introducing equal pay, previous representative of the Coalition Government



Irish Women United confront directors of the F.U.E. during their occupation of the F.U.E. H.Q.

STEPS TOWARD EQUAL PAY

INTERNATIONAL

1950: Principle of Equal Pay was first declared in Directive 100 of the International Labour Organisation.

1957: EEC Treaty article 119 obliged member states to 'ensure and maintain the principle of equal pay for the same work undertaken by men and women'.

1962: Implementation of Article 119, due in this year, was postponed to 1964. Full application of the principle of equal pay was not achieved by this date in any of the members states.

1975: January 1st marked the start of International Women's Year. In Ireland Michael O'Leary took up Chairpersonship of the Co-ordinating Committee for International Women's Year. During this year, he reiterated, on several occasions his commitment to introducing Equal Pay in Ireland, come what may.

1975: EEC Directive No. 117 of 10th February, set the final date for the full introduction of equal pay as 1st January 1976. This directive gives legal backing to the equal pay principle as set out in the EEC Treaty. It was signed by Garret Fitzgerald, then President of the Council of Ministers.

1976: EEC Commission, in a statement made by Dr. Patrick Hillery (Commissioner for Social Affairs and ex-Fianna Fail Minister) refused to consider Ireland's application for the postponement of Equal Pay.

... Minister for Finance, says "Commission ... ing equal pay. Responsibility for ensuring ... ously undertaken by Michael O'Leary, as ... verment, is thus transferred to the EEC.

EMPLOYERS UNITE ON CRISIS INDUSTRIES

The Government's acrobatics on the Equal Pay Bills implementation in the Public Service sector, would make a cat laugh! Their most blatant attempts to deny women in the public sector their right to equal pay, have been obvious to all. They are not however the only characters on stage in the current drama. Also in the ring we have, the Federated Union of Employers (F.U.E.) representing employers in the private sectors. And their antics have gone on, largely unnoticed until very recent times. It was the picket and occupation of their national headquarters (see article on F.U.E. on this page) by Irish Women United, that were largely instrumental in exposing the propaganda of the F.U.E.

And just what have they been up to? Well, at a Press Conference held in Dublin during February, Mr. John Dunne and Mr. Eugene McCarthy, two divisional directors of the F.U.E., lamented the fact of the government's inactivity on the F.U.E.'s proposals "made to it for the past 18 months". Isn't it interesting to find the F.U.E. preparing for the last 18 months to defer Equal Pay and not preparing as they should have been, to implement it?

They also went on to say: "... that there were major other problems in firms and industries other than those engaged in footwear manufacture" ... "any aid programme would have to cater for the needs of industries such as Sugar, Confectionary, Radio and T.V. assembly, Light Engineering and Electronics, Printing and Pottery, Textiles and Clothing, Food Processing and certain areas in the Service and Distributive industries. ..." Surprise! Surprise! So now its not only an industry in which women are employed but practically all the industries that cannot afford equal pay! The Sugar Confectionary industry employs about 2,390 women workers; Radio and T.V. Assembly: 3,050 Light Engineering and Electronics 1,216 Printing and Pottery 2,608 Textiles & Clothing 24,606

Food Processing 5,100
Footwear 1,500

Much of the F.U.E.'s arguments have centred on the footwear industry; the I.C.T.U. have challenged the analysis made of the footwear industry and the Vice-President of the F.U.E. Mr. Dempsey admitted publicly to Irish Women United, that apart from ONE SECTION of the shoe industry, NO other sector of industry had submitted detailed documentation of their reasons for a deferral of equal pay. The "apparent" crisis in the footwear industry is definitely not helped by the continuing importation of cheap foreign footwear.

Only a couple of weeks ago in the Dail, Conor Cruise O'Brien was challenged over the importation of 400 sports boots for the Irish Army! The closure of certain factories within the industry and the reasons for these closures should be more closely examined. In mid-January, over 80 workers were let go at the Cork Shoe Company and a further 107 had their employment extended on a week to week basis until orders in hand have been completed.

These redundancies of nearly 200 workers, who will have very little chance of re-employment, have been questioned by the workers leaders, ...

"... 'What is bitter about this closure is that there is no shortage of orders, no contraction of markets and no lack of skilled workers' ... 'a director of our biggest Irish customer has told us that he wrote to the Minister to tell him that, because of the closure his company will now have to import a quarter of a million slippers from overseas.'"

Similar developments are occurring in the textile industry. Many factories, workshops etc. are closing down - laying off half their employees - while imports of cheap clothes and cloths continue to grow, especially from countries like Taiwan, formosa whose industries thrive on cheap sweated female labour.

Familiar arguments which blame rising wage -rates for the high level of unemployment, must be cast aside, particularly in regard to equal pay. Years of profits and low costs have seen the employers in

the footwear and textile industries grow rich and mean. The underdevelopment of the plants concerned, lack of investment, the bosses failure to prepare adequately for foreign competition, has led the way to the present collapse.

And to correct this situation and enable the payment of equal pay what are the F.U.E. and employers proposing:

- a reduction in the employers contribution to Social Security (which would mean workers would have to pay more!)
- aid from the unemployment premium scheme
- a transfer of funds from Anco the Industrial Training Authority (this would mean a reduction in funds for training/retraining workers)

Over 100 member companies of the F.U.E. have already informed the labour court of their inability to pay! Women workers who are organised in unions and are working in the companies concerned, should insist on the male rate for the job! If their representatives pursue the fight through the Labour Court, instead of fighting on the shop-floor through militant action, they should insist - that these hearings are public;

- i the company open the books not just for the lean years but also for the profit rich years and insist that these are the production plans; purchase/sales records
- ii that no redundancies (which are usually among the women) are accepted as part of any package deal between the unions and employers

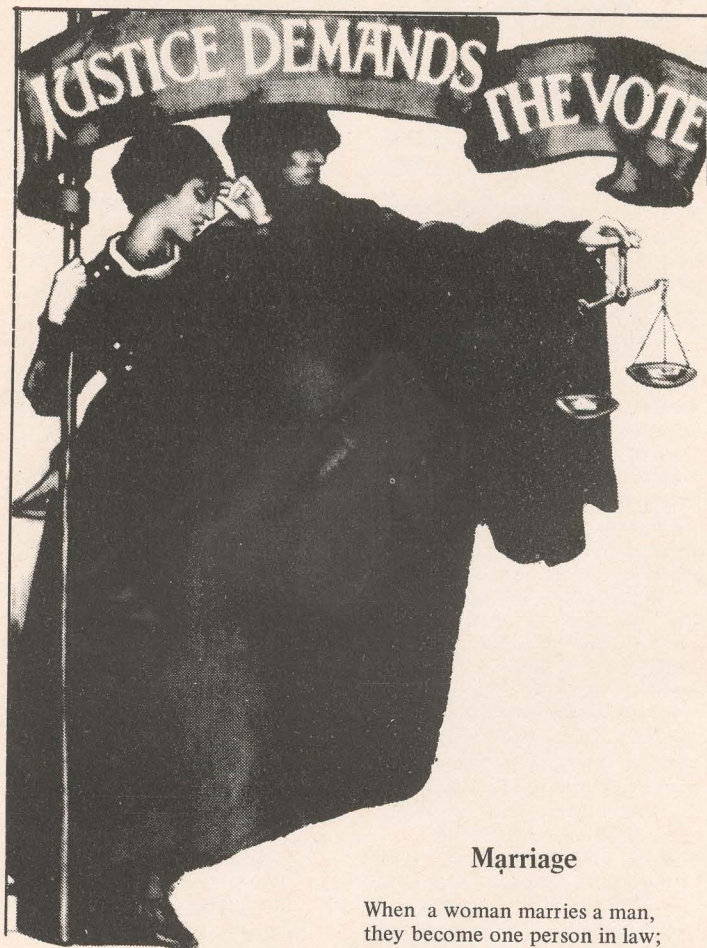
The chronic state of unemployment in the textile and footwear industries which is being used to deny women workers in these sectors of their right to equal pay, must be challenged. Women workers in these industries should raise the demand of placing embargoes on the cheap imported goods which directly threaten the security of their jobs. The workers concerned themselves should maintain these embargoes until their jobs are guaranteed.

To win Equal Pay for women is a struggle which cannot be won by women workers alone. It implies fighting for job security against redundancies. The women in the textile and footwear industries have a hard fight ahead of them.

18th December 1975

EQUAL PAY LEGISLATION TO BE AMENDED
SAYS COSGRAVE - MINISTER (FOR LABOUR)
FACING QUERIES BY EEC
Irish Times Headlines

WOMEN & THE CONSTITUTION



Marriage

The Irish Constitution states that "all citizens shall, as human persons be held equal before the law". Having struck that hopeful note, it goes on to say that the State in legislating for these citizens may "have due regard to differences of social function".

The social function of men is not defined in the Constitution; it refers, however, to women in one exclusive context only — that of the home, as wives and mothers. Without women in the home, it says, the common good cannot be achieved. In recognition of this, the State undertakes to ensure that mothers will not be forced by economic necessity to take a job and "neglect the duties in the home". (What home? There are 10,000 families on the Dublin housing waiting list). What money does the state provide for mothers? Deserted wives, widows, unmarried mothers and battered wives are all living on a government allowance which wouldn't feed a single person never mind a family. Ten per cent of working women are married mothers. Most of them working because they need the money to supplement their husband's income. The State has thus forced 26,000 married women to work outside the home "through economic necessity".

When a woman marries a man, they become one person in law; the personhood being invested in the man. The woman surrenders many of her legal rights to her husband. On marriage, a woman loses her identity and in many legal respects ceases to exist.

For example, the law of domicile states that a married woman's home is the same as that of her husband, even if they are living apart by consent or are legally separated. This still applies even if the husband commits bigamy or deserts his wife. Besides denying the wife's existence as an independent individual, this can create difficulties in many matters such as inheritance.

Under Irish law a woman is also the exclusive property of her husband. An Irish husband may claim monetary compensation from any man with whom his wife commits adultery, she cannot do the same if he is the offending party. The husbands claim involves an assessment by jury (until the recent High Court decision, juries could only be made up of males) of the wife's value, i.e. her physical condition, her reputation and character, her capacity for work etc. Recently, a husband was awarded £14,000 in the High Court "for loss of services" when his wife went to live with another man. This is perhaps the most glaring illustration of how a married

Irishwoman is regarded before the law, not as a person, but as a piece of property.

Divorce is of course forbidden in Ireland. Even if the couple get a Church annulment, they are still married in the eyes of the State. Given the bonds imposed on women within marriage this is the most cruel bond of all. Even if a woman is deserted, battered or living in misery with a man, there is no way out of the marriage.

Employment

Implied in the Constitution's view of women as primarily wives and mothers is the idea that women are merely "passing time" and not to be considered in the same light as their male co-workers. This presumption has led to women being paid less than men for equal work. Many women are exploited as sources of cheap labour in menial jobs which have been rejected by men for jobs offering better pay and prospects.

The married working woman is considered for reasons of taxation to be dependent on her husband. Most of her tax-free allowance is included in her husband's allowance. It is possible

to have separate tax assessments but most married women don't bother because the Dept. of Inland Revenue is so inefficient.

Social Welfare

More restrictive still are the limitations imposed by the social welfare system on married women. For instance, if the woman tries to be the breadwinner, she is not entitled to unemployment or sickness benefits, as long as her husband is fit for work. Needless to remark, the reverse is not possible.

Men are entitled to the dole, though they have never worked, while women MUST have worked for at least one year to qualify. All this in a society which claims that it holds all citizens equal!

These are only a few of the inequalities and discriminations against women enshrined in the Constitution. Piecemeal changes are gradually being made in the laws but these do little to destroy the image of women created by such laws. Women will have a long fight to gain the equality rightfully theirs before the law.



RUMBLINGS



While the year is still young it seemed a good idea to hear what the Irish record companies were producing in this soon-to-be season of throbbing, ecstatic life commonly called Spring. And so we set the stylus down gently on "Come Back Billy Joe" an INTUNE Ltd. production on the Hawk label, featuring The Fairways and Sandy Duskey, lyrics and music by Mitch Murray and Tony McCauley.

Ah such life! Such mystery! (Irish style).

Who says our pop culture lacks a national character? Lovers of the Erse might deny the fact but is there any mistaking our own native touch in this little ditty?

Why don't you call your mother more than you do

She lies awake at night and cries for you

Why don't you write a letter or even better

Take the morning train and head for home again

*Oh come back Billy Joe
Your Mama needs you
She's making apple pie
The way she used to*

*Come back Billy Joe
She longs to see you
You could be here in no time
If you choose to*

You always were an independent guy

But you've had time enough to see the world

*So come back Billy Joe
Your Mama needs you
And everybody knows - I need you too*

When you were just a child of twelve and a half

The games we used to play were just for a laugh

*As we grew up together
I never dreamt you'd leave your family*

Your old friends and me

Oh come back Billy Joe etc. etc.

All the familiar phantoms of the Irish love ballad are here: absent lover (male) pining lover (female), and the great mantle of motherhood and family spread out to cloak all hint of love and sex.

But for that little give-away "I need you too" one would hardly know that this is a love song. It is. Who is the woman so lonely? Or more precisely, how is she portrayed by the lyricists (males)?

Simply, she reflects the dominate Irish male image of

womanhood. She is, above all else, a domestic, mothering creature, made for suffering, waiting and baking. Blitzed of any personality or identity of her own, she appeals, significantly, to her love through His family, His friends, His home. None of her own would have any meaning. It is, after all, strictly a man's world. With a bit of luck, in time she too could be making those apple pies. Her self-effacement is so complete, it is not until the fourth stanza that she speaks of herself.

The other caricature is the mother. She is slotted into the sentimental roles of domestic drudge and clutching hen, both of which are very, very nice for those who receive the services involved. However, their value is counterfeit; the real gold, as Billy Joe knows, is in the world and he has gone after it.

Billy Joe is either a genius or a lout.

A genius if he decided not to get trapped in such a restrictive system of roles that is crippling to everyone, male and female.

A lout if he just took a notion to go across the ocean. It is his male prerogative. When he gets cold and tired and hungry, he can assume mother and sweetheart will be waiting for him.

But will they? In reality will they? Here is a pair of songwriters who obviously don't know that the times they are a changin'.

With lyrics you'd rather not hear and a beat somewhere between a 4/4 martial thrump and a country and western whine, there is not much to recommend this disc except, perhaps, a love of the absurd, a taste for the antique. To this latter point, however, must be added a certain fraudulent condition: the record was cut in 1976.

All things do not move at the same time in all places.



If you know of a place that discriminates against women just write down the name and address and forward it to Editorial Committee, Irish Women United, 12 Lr. Pembroke Street, Dublin 2.

BOYCOTT THESE PUBS!

Irish Women United intend to continue their campaign of protest against places who discriminate against women socially.

In future issues of *Banshee* we will highlight and expose places of entertainment, sport etc. where women are banned or discriminated against.

This issue we will begin by naming a few of the places who either refuse to serve women at all or who refuse to let them drink from pint glasses:

Either boycott these pubs or else go in with a few friends and demand to be

served the same way as men are:

NEARY'S
1 Chatham Street, Dublin 2.

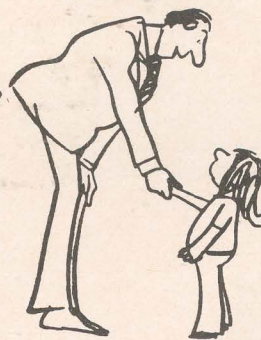
BRIAN BORO
Cross Guns Bridge,
Glasnevin, Dublin

LOWES,
Dolphins Barn, Dublin 8

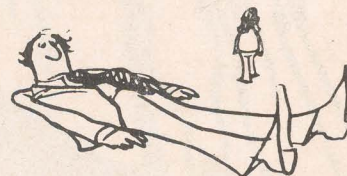
SEARSONS,
42 Upr. Baggot Street
Dublin 4

SCOTCH HOUSE
6/7 Burgh Quay, Dublin 2.

More next issue and all future issues!



"What did you learn in school today?"



FATHER CHURCH

For women to seek after equality in the church has recently been compared to an attempt for black people to seek equality in the Ku Klux Klan. That women have been successively suppressed, subjugated and persecuted in the history of the church is something no one can deny, but however interesting a study that might be, the most insidious aspect of the church's dealings with women is the way in which it has defined 'God' in sexist imagery and language, thereby cutting us off both from the promises of the Gospel and our own deepest spiritual consciousness.

The question of discrimination against women in the church is not merely that of their exclusion from the priesthood, but a question of the whole way in which our modern images of God, our ways of working, our concepts of authority are patriarchal. The emphasis on a male church is far removed from the model set by Jesus. One of the most striking characteristics about Jesus, for example, is the way he took over the anti-female Jewish law and transformed it. According to Jewish Law for instance one

was never to look at or talk to a woman who was not one's wife, but Jesus disregarded this rule to the astonishment of his disciples.

In the Old Testament there are many instances where it is said that to touch a woman who is menstruating or with any kind of discharge, is to render oneself unclean. But again Jesus rejects this idea and when a woman who is unclean according to Jewish law comes up to him and touches him anonymously, he demands that she make herself known.

Women were forbidden to study the Torah or to go in for any kind of learning, so Jesus in praising Mary over Martha was reversing the traditional roles. Similarly with the woman caught in adultery, Jesus tells her to stand up and affirm her womanhood and turns to the crowd asking 'who has not sinned?' knowing full well that for every female prostitute there are dozens of men, unknown and unrecognised, who use her services and get away scot free. In this incident Jesus tells the woman that she must stand up and affirm her womanhood and when she does, her personal liberation begins.

Jesus was not interested in having people grovelling before him. It was only when persons could affirm their value as human beings despite all the labels that society imposes on them, that

liberation or salvation could begin.

It is not enough therefore for feminists to reject Jesus and leave it at that. There are much deeper questions to be asked about the historical manipulation of the image of Jesus and indeed the manipulation of many women prophets who were persecuted by the church during their lifetimes and canonized after their deaths — thereby incorporating them into the church as new instruments of oppression. St. Joan of Arc is an obvious example but much more subtle forces are at work in the canonization of someone like St. Terese of Lisieux who said she would rather die at the age of twenty-four (the traditional age for men to become priests) if she could not be ordained. After her death (at 24!) she was made special patron of the missions and subsequently numerous guilds 'to pray for priests' have been founded in her name.

Male power in the church is largely dependant upon the extent to which the historical Jesus who posed such a threat to church and state alike could be elevated to a new plane of mystical impotence (the historical function of religion), leaving him somewhere around the position left vacant when he removed the false gods from the Temple, to look down for ever more as the ruler of a Jerusalem he once wept over.

Theologians for generations have never batted an eyelid when they quote the classic misogynist Paul who extrapolates from the fact that as Christ rules over the church (and loves it) so the man must rule over his wife and love her. The illogic of this is that as God in Christ has the right to rule over lesser beings, so males (not females) share this divine right of rule. The fact that Jesus never talked about ruling anyone, but only of service to all, escapes the theologian.

Through theologians, the male channel of copyright has ensured, for example, that the old Mother Goddess 'She Who Created Without Spouse' is turned into the 'virgin who conceived without

sin' in Christianity.

The debunking of the theological support for male superiority, the reclaiming of the Word of God, are surely the prophetic tasks for our time. The history of women prophets is a history in which women can take great pride. I believe that this is our task today. Rather than buying into the masculine ethic of hierarchicalism and elitism, i.e. priesthood, we must look far beyond to our prophetic function.

We must begin to reclaim the right to name our own experiences of that dimension of existence traditionally called 'God', with language which can bring about our liberation. This does not mean that we must fall into the trap of 'My God She is Black and does not wear a Bra' which the male dominated media has used to trivialise the women's movement.

To be made 'in the image of God' could be interpreted as our embodying in some form the same creative potential which men attribute to God, a creative potential which no longer allows us to lie down and let life flow over us as the patriarchal image of God would suggest, but which both enables and challenges us to take full social and political responsibility for our lives.

To refer constantly to the all-known wisdom of the Father has had the effect of endorsing the sexist status quo in God's name, as women have too painfully discovered. The ever-benevolent image of the Father has been one of the main tools of patriarchy and far more successful than any autocratic image which could have been exposed immediately.

Above all our languages about God must keep sight of the dialectics of human existence and resist the temptation to reify (or idolize by making into a permanent image) the process at either end. Only when this happens can we assure that God-language maintains its political importance and spiritual relevance and its manipulative function is totally subverted.



FOR THE BANISHED CHILDREN OF EVE

A feminist critique of theology, containing articles on the suppression of women by male clericalism, the Bible, Natural Law, Tradition, liberal theologies, the Virgin Mary. Also 'God According to a Woman'; an article on the 'Woman's Bible', and 'The Lady was a Bishop'. A detailed bibliography on women and the church is also included. Contributors include, Rosemary Ruether, Donal Flanagan, Mary Condren, Una Kroll, Anne McGrew Bennett, Elaine Hubert and Joan Morris. Available from Student Christian Movement Publications 14 Prince Arthur Tce., Rathmines, Dublin 6. (40p inc. post & packing) Also 'Towards a Theology of Gay Liberation' (40p inc. p & p)

FRANCE

The French government is proposing payment for housework — £90 a month to women who leave employment and return to being a housewife. A further £30 per month is proposed over and above the childrens' allowances for each baby under three years old — encouraging women to have babies. Men under 22 years of age who are fathers, married or not, would be exempt from military service. This is an enticement for men to get a woman pregnant — any woman.

The big womens' organisations "Les Petroheuses" and "Femmes en Lutte" (The Firebombers and Women in Struggle) have joined together to oppose this new legislation which would turn women into baby factories.

INDIA

One of India's 22 states may make parents' refusal to undergo sterilisation after their fourth child, a criminal offence. *"Our state may be the first to make non-acceptance of sterilisation after the fourth child a cognisable offence"*, Begum Zohra Jung, wife of Governor Ali Yavar Jung of the western Maharashtra State, told the

National Committee of International Women's Year. Another Indian state has announced that couple who have more than two children will not be entitled to social welfare benefits or public housing. Bangladesh has announced similar measures.

BRUSSELS

The response by the EEC Governments to the possibility of using the Community's social fund specifically for the industrial training of women has been "disappointingly small" said Dr. Hillery recently. He said that the Commission would be giving special consideration to the question of how to promote the greater use of the social fund for the benefit of women.

The Commission is also working on a programme aiming at the gradual elimination of inequalities in respect of women in the social security field. Dr. Hillery acknowledged that equality was not exactly running wild inside the commission itself. There has never been a female Commissioner and of the hundreds of top-level officials only one is a woman.

Thirty-two countries will take part in an international Tribunal on Crimes Against Women which is being held in Brussels from March 4th to March 8th. The

function of the Tribunal will be to document the oppression of women, country by country, and decide how best to co-ordinate international pressure to remove such oppression. Evidence will be presented in the form of personal testimony, detailed research papers, film and video-tape recordings. The Belgian government is providing, free, a conference venue and multi-lingual translation facilities for the event.

Crime will be presented as the immorality of certain laws which militate against women, and the absence of certain laws to protect them from abuse. Third world countries such as India will give evidence of female slavery; America will indict the medical profession for experimentation on womens' bodies; Germany is examining pornography. Irishwomen United has sent a delegate to testify to the denial of contraception in Ireland (the only country still suffering from this); the denial of divorce (still forbidden in only six countries in the world); the denial of equal pay;

Other Irish delegates will testify on criminal conversation — the method by which a husband may claim damages in court from any man who commits adultery with his wife. (the wife has no reciprocal right). And on the commission of women to mental hospitals on the sole signature of a husband and doctor. (Private patients must be examined by two doctors).

The next issue of Banshee will carry a report on the conference which is expected to command attention from the International media.

UNITED STATES

Betty Ford has spoken out against her husband's presidential opposition to abortion. She says that abortion in America ought to remain a free legal right.

CANADA

Ms. Trudeau has complained that "she is only a rose in the label of her husband the Prime Minister". She has demanded time to appear on television talk shows to present her own viewpoint on politics, and announced that she is returning to paid work outside the home, to

show that a mother can combine a career inside and outside the home.

BRITAIN

Ms. Barbara Castle announced recently equal rights for women in occupational pension schemes. A widow will be entitled to inherit all of her husband's pension entitlement and working women will be able to base their pension on the 20 best earning years of their working life.

Under a "home responsibility provision", any additional time spent at home bringing up a family or looking after a dependent relative will count towards the woman's basic pension.

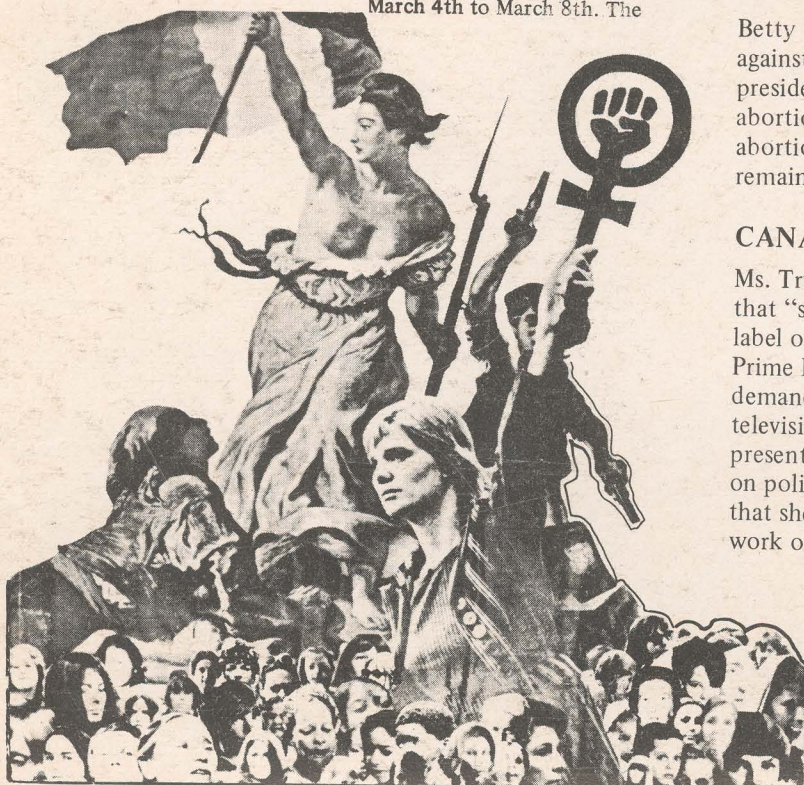
"Women will no longer be penalised for doing one of the most important jobs for society" she said.

ICELAND

Finally, on the 23rd October last MOST of Iceland's 60,000 females over the age of 19 went on a ONE-DAY STRIKE severely disrupting the running of the country. The strike was to show the importance and value of women in all walks of life.

One of the reasons for the one-day strike was to demand higher salaries for women who in some jobs earn up to 25% LESS than their male counterparts doing the same thing. *"Today is our national women's day and this is our way to draw attention to our case"*, said a spokesperson for Iceland's organisation for women. *"I think we have succeeded because almost every woman in Iceland is on strike"*.

Right on Sisters! — roll on the day when Irish women will go on an all-out strike to demand their rights!



OUTREACH

IRISH WOMEN UNITED CHARTER

PREAMBLE:

At this time, the women of Ireland are beginning to see the need for, and are fighting for liberation. This is an inevitable step in the course of full human liberation. Although within the movement, we form diverse groups with variant ways of approaching the problem, we have joined together around these basic issues. We pledge ourselves to challenge and fight sexism in all forms and oppose all forms of exploitation of women which keep them oppressed. These demands are all part of the essential right of women to self-determination of our own lives — equality in education and work; control of our own bodies; an adequate standard of living and freedom from sexist conditioning. We present these demands as the following women's charter.

1 THE REMOVAL OF ALL LEGAL AND BUREAUCRATIC OBSTACLES TO EQUALITY:

- 1 i.e. with regard to tenancies, mortgages, pension schemes, taxation, jury service, equal responsibility for children, social welfare benefits and hire purchase agreements.
- 2 The right to divorce.

The Constitution should be reviewed with a view to examining the role of women and updated to eliminate discrimination against women.

2 FREE LEGAL CONTRACEPTION:

- 1 State financed birth-control clinics.
- 2 The right to a free, legal and safe abortion.

3 THE RECOGNITION OF MOTHERHOOD AND PARENTHOOD AS A SOCIAL FUNCTION WITH SPECIAL PROVISION FOR:

- 1 State support for programmes implementing the socialisation of housework, i.e. community laundries, kitchens, eating places etc.
- 2 State provision of an adequate place to live, irrespective of sex, age, number of children and marital status.
- 3 The provision of local authority, free of charge, twenty-four-hour nurseries, giving every satisfaction in respect of hygiene and education; to be staffed by trained personnel and under the control of the communities in which they are located.

4 EQUALITY IN EDUCATION— STATE-FINANCED, SECULAR, CO-EDUCATIONAL SCHOOLS WITH FULL COMMUNITY CONTROL AT ALL LEVELS, SPECIFICALLY:

- 1 An end to enforced conditioning of sex roles through curriculum, teaching methods and materials (i.e. textbooks, games etc.)
- 2 The provision of local pre-school centres for all desiring to use them
- 3 An end to segmentation of education, to be replaced by fully comprehensive second and third level schools, incorporating both technical and academic learning.
- 4 Ending of discriminatory barring from particular courses traditionally relegated to men; encouragement for women to enter these courses through programmes of reserved places, etc.
- 5 Funding and encouragement of a Women's Studies Programme at second and third level.
- 6 Provision of free creches on campuses
- 7 Provision of a women's centre on campuses
- 8 Equal access to further education for all women, regardless of age or marital status.

5 THE MALE RATE FOR THE JOB WHERE MEN AND WOMEN ARE WORKING TOGETHER:

Where the labour force is wholly female, the jobs done by these women should be upgraded and a national minimum wage implemented, linked to the cost of living increase. We reject the use of job evaluation techniques for the purpose of negotiating pay claims.

The right of women to have access to all types of employment, including all types of skilled, and promotion regardless of marital status, pregnancy or maternity.

The right to training and re-training for all occupations including apprenticeships, and the present system of apprenticeships to be restructured. That it be compulsory for all employers to make readily available day release courses, with pay, for all employees.

Working conditions to be, without deterioration of present conditions, the same for women as for men: in addition, the institution of worker-determined flexible hours. The removal of protective legislation should not be a condition to gaining equal pay, and should be extended to include men.

The right to statutory maternity leave of twenty weeks with full net pay; additional leave with pay in cases of illness connected therewith, the right to attend pre-natal and post-natal clinics as required.

Prohibition of dismissal from employment on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity.

Employers to ensure that every effort is made to facilitate employees who are pregnant insofar as the latter's duties are concerned, the guarantee of reintegration into employment without loss of status or service, the right to further training or re-training after statutory or prolonged maternity leave, and the option for equivalent forms of paternity leave.

6 State provision of funds and premises for the establishment of women's centres in major population areas to be controlled by the women themselves.