

womens voice

MONTHLY WOMEN'S PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

Big Red Diary

Pluto Press, £1 post free, discount for bulk orders from trade union branches and Women's groups. Pluto press, Unit 10, Spencer Court, 7 Chalcot Road, London, NW1

AFTER BEING asked to write a review of the 1976 Big Red Diary, I carried it around with me for a week. I liked the look of the thing, especially as this year its main theme is women. At first I could not form a more definite opinion. Then on Thursday night I attended my Trades Council meeting where the National Abortion Campaign was discussed, and gained overwhelming support. The following night at my AUEW branch meeting I found myself arguing hard with an old much-respected male trade unionist.

When I got home that night I looked at the Diary again and realised what it was all about. Just flicking through the pages with their old photographs and the details of the women's movement in the past alongside today's dates. It is perfectly clear that women have had to fight every inch of the way, even among our own ranks. That's what I like about the Diary. The very past and the present overlap so that we can see our own struggles are not just isolated incidents.

Looking at the beginning of the diary, I am sadly reminded that I am one of the four out of five women who stay home in isolation to look after my child because he can't get into a nursery through lack of places.

Of course machinery has made the drudgery of housework much easier, but I am still not liberated from servicing capitalism through the family with unpaid labour. And the women who work to produce the household gadgets have yet to gain equal pay.

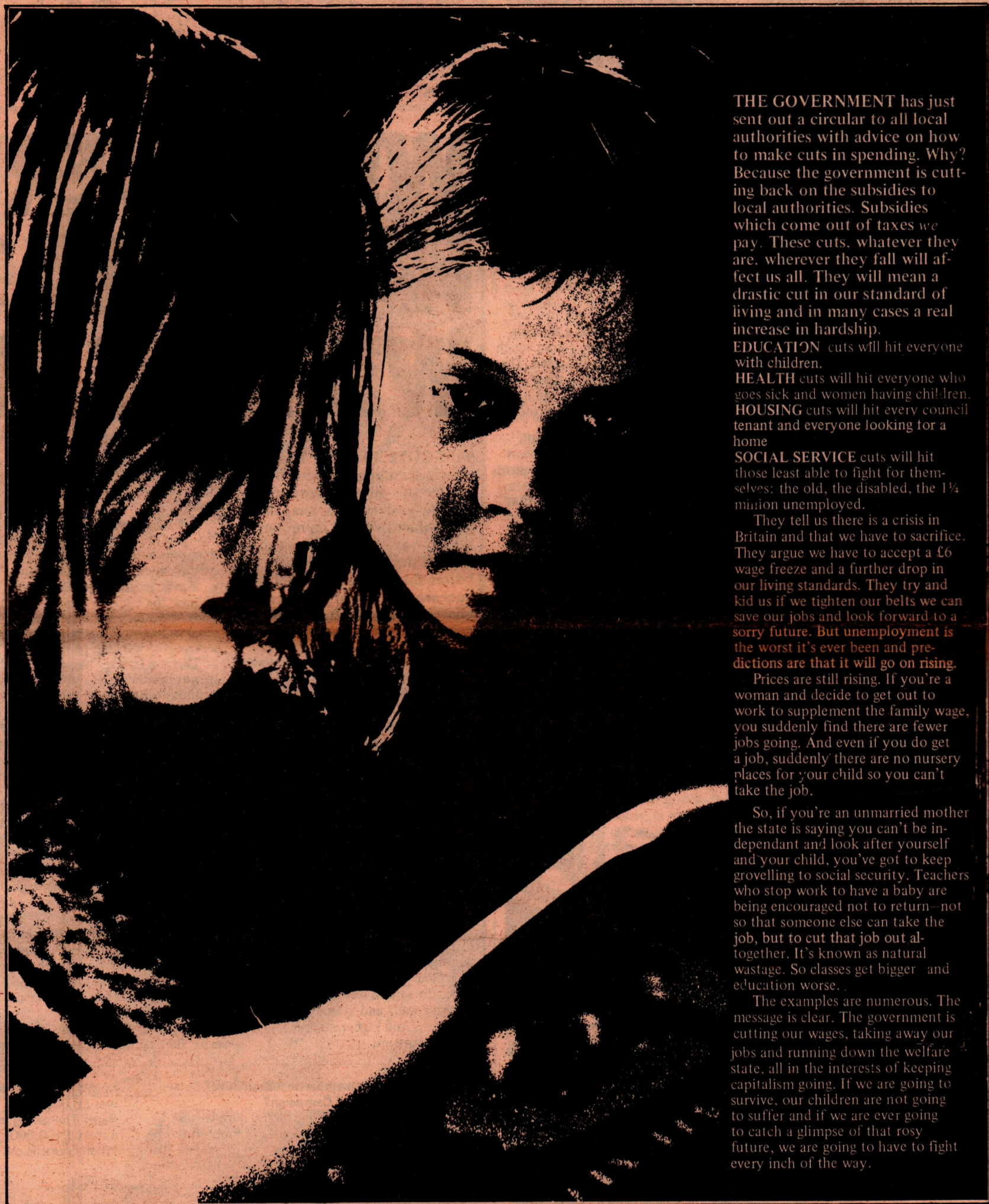
Despite the many sellouts by women as well as male leaders, we are still fighting and the struggle takes new forms. And the Diary is an inspiration to all of us who are fighting to liberate ourselves, a record of our own history and struggle so far. The most inspiring section is on 23 February:

The Russian Revolution, Petrograd 1917:

'In spite of all directives the textile women textile workers in several factories went on strike and sent delegates to the men workers with an appeal for support . . . it had not occurred to anyone that it might become the first day of the revolution. The initiative was taken of their own accord by the women textile workers . . . The overgrown breadlines had provided the last stimulus. A mass of women, not all of them workers, flocked to their municipal Duma demanding bread. It was like demanding milk from a he-goat.' TROTSKY.

That alone is worth buying the Diary for.

BERNIE DUNNE, AUEW



THE GOVERNMENT has just sent out a circular to all local authorities with advice on how to make cuts in spending. Why? Because the government is cutting back on the subsidies to local authorities. Subsidies which come out of taxes we pay. These cuts, whatever they are, wherever they fall will affect us all. They will mean a drastic cut in our standard of living and in many cases a real increase in hardship.

EDUCATION cuts will hit everyone with children.

HEALTH cuts will hit everyone who goes sick and women having children.

HOUSING cuts will hit every council tenant and everyone looking for a home

SOCIAL SERVICE cuts will hit those least able to fight for themselves: the old, the disabled, the 1¼ million unemployed.

They tell us there is a crisis in Britain and that we have to sacrifice. They argue we have to accept a £6 wage freeze and a further drop in our living standards. They try and kid us if we tighten our belts we can save our jobs and look forward to a sorry future. But unemployment is the worst it's ever been and predictions are that it will go on rising.

Prices are still rising. If you're a woman and decide to get out to work to supplement the family wage, you suddenly find there are fewer jobs going. And even if you do get a job, suddenly there are no nursery places for your child so you can't take the job.

So, if you're an unmarried mother the state is saying you can't be independent and look after yourself and your child, you've got to keep grovelling to social security. Teachers who stop work to have a baby are being encouraged not to return—not so that someone else can take the job, but to cut that job out altogether. It's known as natural wastage. So classes get bigger and education worse.

The examples are numerous. The message is clear. The government is cutting our wages, taking away our jobs and running down the welfare state, all in the interests of keeping capitalism going. If we are going to survive, our children are not going to suffer and if we are ever going to catch a glimpse of that rosy future, we are going to have to fight every inch of the way.

HANDS OFF OUR FUTURE!

DRUGGED UP OR FIGHTING FIT

JEANNIE WOODCOCK

HAVE YOU become a weary slave to a machine at work? Is the situation at home unbearable? Well, you can always go to your doctor with your depression and anxiety. The doctor has a cure-all. It doesn't matter how you come to be in such a state. It doesn't matter what your symptoms are. What you've got is 'nerves', and what you need is a little something to calm you down. Tranquillisers, Sleeping pills, Sedatives.

How does the doctor know this is what you need? Listen to the advice placed in medical journals by the biggest producer of tranquilisers. 'Valium Roche helps your patient to enjoy his work'. 'Valium Roche for prisoners of the society of stress'. And crudest of all, 'She can't change her environment but you can change her mood with Serenid-D.'

Great humanitarians, Roche. Obviously really concerned about how we all feel, just like the other big drug firms. The fact that they made £30 million PROFIT out of the National Health Service in 1970 alone, is purely coincidental.

Whilst the health service is rotting, the drug industry is booming. One kilogram of Valium costs just £100 to make. Roche sell it to the National Health Service for £1962. Out of Valium and Librium Roche made £28,706,000 between 1966 and 1970.

Every penny of that money comes from us, through taxes and prescription charges. And we are paying for the privilege of being drugged to the eyeballs, in order to put up with conditions that are otherwise intolerable. The very last thing Roche

wants us to be is fit and happy. Then they might be out of business. And then if we were fit, we might also be FIGHTING-FIT, ready to take action against their filthy operations.

No-one really knows what these drugs do to you in the long run. If they start to make you feel too tranquillised and depressed, then the doctor will prescribe a pep-up pill. That's when you're really on the drugs roundabout.

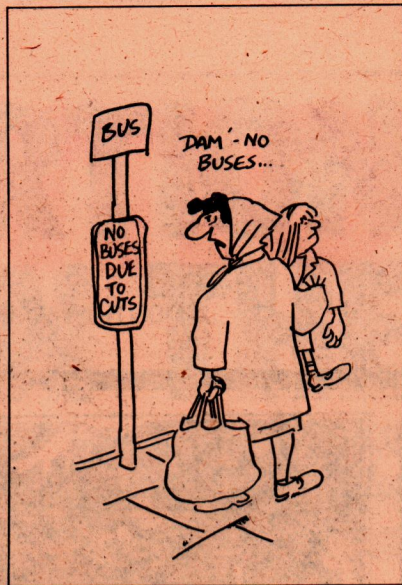
It's not long since over 10,000 children were born grossly maimed because of the effects of a sleeping pill called Thalidomide, a drug which had not been adequately tested. The compensation awarded to these children amounted to less than a tenth of the makers' annual profit.

Drugs should be for the health and benefit of everyone in the community, not for the private profit of a few rich and greedy capitalists. Healey's latest cut-backs mean that the health service will get worse, and GPs will be harder pressed. And life in general is going to get harder for us all in the coming year.

We could fight back. We could take charge of our own lives by fighting together. Being depressed is not just a personal weakness born of personal problems.

Depression comes from oppression, and that's something we suffer together. The real cure is to fight for a new society where we won't be exploited to such an extent that we have to be drugged into mindless submission.

MRS MARGRAVE'S LUCKY DAY...



WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE WELFARE STATE?

THE GOVERNMENT is cutting public spending. To a lot of people this doesn't mean much. No-one understands what the government spends its money on anyway. Anyone who thinks it's nothing to do with them had better think again. Because these cuts are going to affect every man, woman and child in the country.

EDUCATION cuts will hit everyone with kids.
HEALTH cuts will hit everyone who's ever ill.
HOUSING cuts will hit every council tenant and anyone who's looking for a home.
SOCIAL SERVICES cuts will hit those least able to fight for themselves: the old, the disabled, the 1½ million unemployed.
And that's not all. Even if none of those apply to you, you'll still be hit.
Everyone travels on the roads. Cuts mean fewer road repairs—more dangerous journeys.
Everyone has rubbish to get rid of. Cuts mean fewer collections—more health risk.
Everyone gets a bus or train sometime. Cuts mean less public transport—longer waits and more crowded journeys. And higher fares as subsidies are cut.

Cuts also mean no day nurseries for children, libraries and parks shutting earlier, old people's homes closed.

Are you paying less tax or rates? No—you're probably paying more than ever before. So why are you getting much less for your money?

The government pretends it's because the country can't afford it. They say they can't afford decent schools, houses, hospitals and social services for working people.

This is a fraud. The government spends thousands of millions of pounds every year on the army and weapons which are out of date by the time they're made. And there are two areas of public spending which are not being cut. On the contrary. Even more money is going to be spent on what is known as 'law and order'. That is—the police and probation service. And every year £2,000,000,000 is handed over to the banks as repayment and interest on local authority debts.

It's not a question of not being able to afford it. What the government is trying to do is keep our wages down so that profits can rise. They can't impose direct wage cuts like they did in the thirties, because they know they'd never get away with it. So they're attacking our wages from two different directions.

While inflation rages at 26 per cent, they con us into accepting the

£6 limit. If your family's earning more than about £30 a week then this is a real wage cut.

But even this isn't taking enough out of our pockets. That's why public spending is being cut as well. Because a cut in public spending is a cut in the 'social wage'. That is, the benefits which workers get from the health service, education system and so on.

These services have never been free. We pay for them through our taxes, rates and insurance stamps. A cut in these services is just the same as a cut in our cash wages. We work just as hard, but get less back for it.

Workers shouldn't stand for this kind of wage cut, any more than for a cut in their pay packets. To fight back we need to be organised, we need the strength of unity. Workers within the public sector, faced with redundancies and ever worsening conditions are beginning to fight back.

We must build the links between the workers on the inside, producing the services, and the workers on the outside, watching the welfare state disintegrate. Together we can defend our social living standards, and force the government to look elsewhere for its sacrificial lambs.

BY LINDSEY GERMAN AND ELANA DALLAS.

Remember the 'Switch off Something' Campaign?

Fact: An extra 260 people were killed or seriously injured on the darkened roads.

Fact: The cost in ambulance services,

hospital bills and lost working time was £6,000,000.

Fact: The saving in electricity was a mere £100,000.

When councils cut corners lives are lost.

Coventry cuts kill child

'CRIMINAL negligence', the dead girl's grandfather accused Coventry Council. Last month, four year old Carol Nichol fell 20 feet to her death on the concrete below. The Ivy Walk flats, Willenhall Coventry are well known for being in lousy condition. Two years ago Shelter singled them out in a report for being so badly maintained.

Carol was playing on the balcony—there is nowhere else to play—when she fell backwards through the guard rail. Her family say a rail was missing and they reported it two years ago, when they first moved in. The flats were repaired

last year, but no repairs were carried out.

A few days later, a similar accident happened. The panel of a balcony gave way, and young Terry Cranston fell. Luckily, bushes broke his fall—but he still broke his ribs.

As usual, the council was quick to act AFTER the event. They sent their maintenance men out to check all balconies of that type. The securing bolts and guard rails were found to be rusty and dangerous. In any case, the bolts are only 1/8 of an inch thick.

The Labour council's reaction was typical. The Housing Committee

chairman, Brian Collins, said kids shouldn't play on balconies. He also said that more maintenance would be carried out—the problem in the past has been manpower! He dares to say this at a time when the council aren't filling vacancies, are cutting spending and threatening redundancies!

Since the accidents, the council have been madly spring-cleaning the area, putting extra panels on balconies and so on. They are trying to cover up for the fact that the accidents were a result of cutting corners to save a few quid.

GLENNIS TEW. ACTTS

she can't
change her
environment...



but you can change her mood with

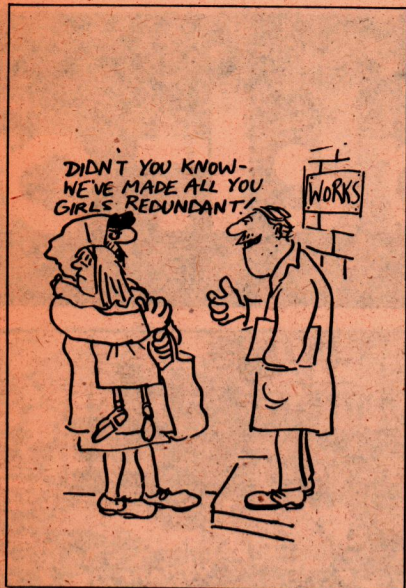
SERENID-D

Whilst neurotic illness has been shown to occur with greater frequency in women flat dwellers it should not be forgotten that it is an increasing problem in the community at large. SERENID-D (oxazepam, Wyeth) helps to control neurotic symptoms anxiety, tension, irritability etc. rapidly and with minimal risk of drowsiness or other untoward effects, thereby helping to restore serenity and calm to your patients' lives.

Further information on request. John Wyeth & Brother Ltd., Taplow, Maidenhead, Berks.

*trade marks

ITALY: IT CAN WORK



WORSE SERVICES, higher prices. This is what public sector cuts mean for us. This is how we are forced to pay for the crisis of a system we don't control—just suffer the effects of. But we can fight back and win. If only

workers use their strength, we have the power to defeat that tiny minority who run our lives while we create the wealth they live off. This is how workers in Italy fought rising prices:

Annalisa Ventura is a teacher in Mestra, a suburb near Venice, and near the industrial area of Marghera in North Italy. Here she describes a campaign by Italian workers last year to fight price rises in a revolutionary—and highly effective—way. Annalisa is a supporter of the Italian revolutionary socialist group, Avanguardia Operaia.

OUR CAMPAIGN started last November, when the electricity-board announced huge rises in the price of electricity. This came on top of a mass of other price rises in rents, food, and everything else. The response to this one was instant and very angry, because people had had as much as they could take.

In our region, the iron and steel workers and the shipyard workers moved fast. They held meetings and set up price-cutting committees. (The Italian name for these is 'Auto-riuzione', which means, literally, 'self-reduction'.)

This is how it worked. You took your electricity bill to the committee and they worked out how much you should pay, at the reduced rate. They also gave legal advice, in case of any problems.

Soon thousands of people were paying their bills at the new reduced prices,—prices which the workers themselves had worked out as being fair.

The committee became the backbone of the movement, for none of us felt isolated in the action we were taking.

Soon there were local groups in all the major work-places, in the working-class districts of the cities, and in all the outlying villages. Women played a vital role in spreading the action. In the school where I work, for example, we set up a joint committee of parents, teachers, kitchen staff, and cleaners—all of whom played an equal part in adjusting bills and spreading the word.

The committees involved all sorts, from the rank and file trade union militants in the ship-yards, to people like my mother. She is a bigotted Catholic, a supporter of

the right-wing Christian Democrats, but when I said to her, 'Mama, are you refusing to pay the increase?' she said, 'YOU BET!'

Working class women especially had a tremendous will to fight. After all, they bear the brunt of making low wages stretch to cover high prices. They joined the local committees; they were leafletting and fly-posting to encourage others to join in.

As many as a million people in Turin alone were involved in the action. But unfortunately the official trade union leaders were divided. And members of the powerful Italian Communist Party joined in, but their leaders refused support. They said this was an aimless form of struggle.

This proved to be a serious weakness, because in such a battle as this, you need a clear united lead if you are to win. The full-hearted support of the CGIL (similar to the British TUC) would have made all the difference. As it was, they let us down.

The electricity board became more and more threatening, and some people were frightened into backing down.

Then we had to go on the defensive, because two trade unionists were arrested. We campaigned hard, and they were released. But it diverted our energy from the main fight.

Yes, the campaign was gradually worn down. But the electricity board couldn't face any further trouble. They made big cuts in future charges. We made them sit up and think.

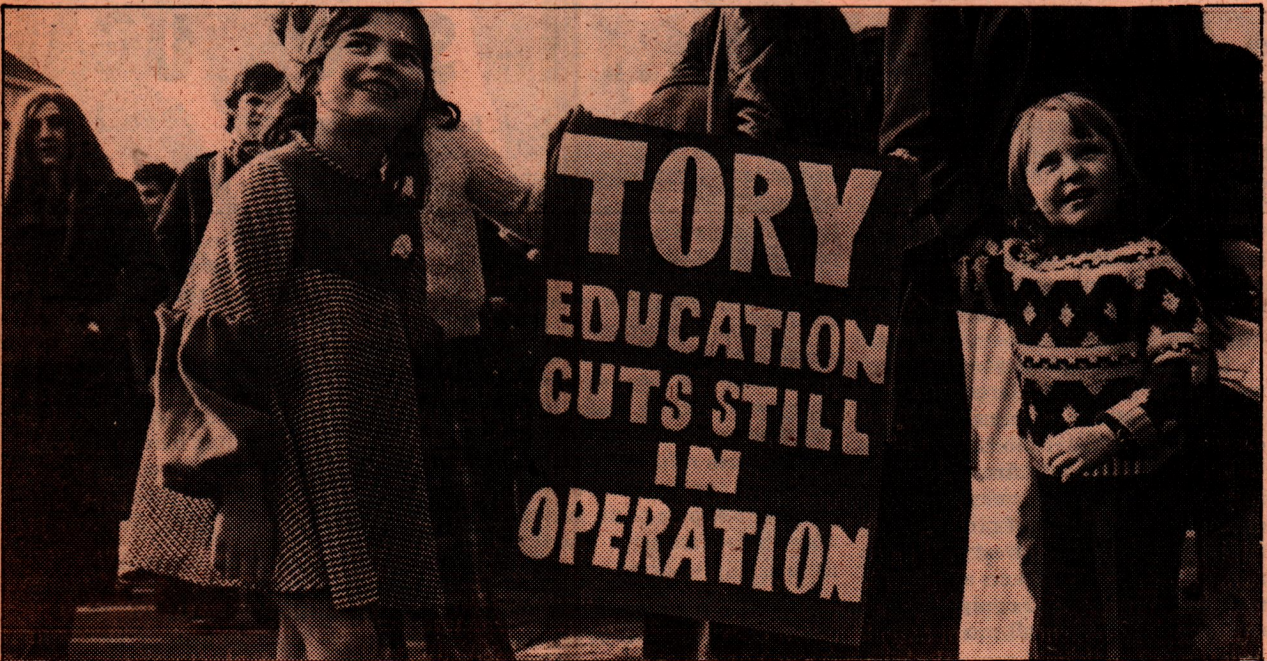
As for us—our next target is telephone bills. And this time we should have even more success, for we have gained a lot of experience, and a taste for struggle.



Picture: John Sturrock (Report)



Picture: Chris Davies (Report)



Picture: Mike Sharpy (IFL)

... Meanwhile, Hammersmith Borough Council have offered £2 million deposit to a firm of property developers for an estate of luxury flats. With five bedrooms, two bathrooms, overlooking the Thames, they'll cost £140,000 each. A real contribution to the housing problem

Social workers fight back

NOT EVERYONE is taking the cuts lying down. Last month social workers in the East End of London decided they'd had enough.

The social work team in Area 2 Tower Hamlets had been without any senior social workers for over a month. This put the whole burden on the juniors, and meant that no important decisions about social welfare could be taken.

The reason for this staff shortage was simple. Tower Hamlets pays

only the basic rate—so no-one would take the jobs.

Social workers went on strike for a day against the understaffing. It was a startling success. The strikers got good publicity and soon afterwards the council gave in. They agreed to pay Senior Social workers the going rate for the job.

Tower Hamlets social workers emerged confident from the strike. They should use it to prepare for the future.

WHAT DEMOCRACY REALLY MEANS

PORTUGAL: A threat to democracy. Danger of a "communist" dictatorship'.

This is how the British press portrays Portugal. A minority of army officers and Communist Party members wheeling and dealing behind closed doors—against the wishes of the majority. No doubt that's what many of these officers and CP members would like.

But they reckon, and so does the British press, without the activity of Portuguese working men and women.

For the last 18 months these people have been beginning to struggle for at least some control over their own lives. In many ways the Portuguese workers have achieved forms of democracy unthinkable in Europe. When the press talks of 'threats to democracy' this is what it means. The press does not mean the threat of fascism, a system suffered by Portuguese workers for fifty years. They suffered so that the Portuguese bosses and foreign investors could make more profit. For the same reason the fascists were prepared to fight a long and costly war in Mozambique and Angola to protect their profits. During all these years of fascism, there was hardly a whimper about 'democracy' in Portugal. On the contrary, the fascist regimes of Salazar and Caetano were highly praised and it was the 'in thing' to buy land in Portugal and spend the summer months on Portuguese beaches. At this time there were no political parties or trade unions allowed. Many British and multinational companies set up factories in Portugal under fascism, precisely because they knew it meant low wages and high profits.

On April 25th all that changed. The fascist regime was overthrown by a movement of young officers—the MFA (Armed Forces Movement). It was replaced by General Spínola, an ex-fascist, and Communist Party ministers were included in the new government. April 25th unleashed a movement of workers which started to go far beyond the reforms the officers involved in the overthrow of Salazar wanted. There was a mass wave of strikes for higher wages and for 'saneamento'. Literally this means 'cleaning out'—the way workers rid themselves of fascist bosses and spies. In some cases the bosses decided to leave well alone and get out of the country, thus forcing the workers to take over the factories. This pattern was accelerated after the attempted right wing coup in March this year, when many members of the ruling class fled to save their skins.

Over the last year workers in hundreds of factories have started to elect workers commissions as their leadership in the workplace. In some cases the role of the workers commissions is restricted to fighting over wages and conditions in the factory. In other cases the workers commissions are responsible for developing the involvement of workers in the political events as they unfold

in Portugal. They are expected to prepare the way for a time when the workers have to run the factories under workers' management, when the old capitalist order of producing for profit has been swept away. Whatever the function of the workers' commissions, the idea of democratic control is rooted deeply in the minds of Portuguese workers. Workers commissions are recalled if found wanting, as happened during a mass meeting recently in a Johnson Johnson factory, mainly women in Que Luz near Lisbon. They are bound to take any major policy making matters to mass meetings of all the workers for discussion and voting on. And the commissions are all very conscious of their own accountability. Elections are often conducted on a clear political basis with the workers stating their views about the Portuguese revolution. In many cases the struggle over jobs and other issues has led workers to challenge the entire structure of capitalist society.

In Republica, the workers started by challenging the right of the management to throw them out of work. This led to them challenging the owners' right to print only the Socialist Party's view of the matter and not the workers'. Thus developed the battle for control over Republica. It ended with the workers taking over the paper and running it as a co-operative in the interests of the working class in Portugal.

They stick closely to this, often publishing statements of their own and views of workers involved in the revolution. Imagine workers on Fleet Street being able to print their own side of the story when they are made redundant on papers owned by people like Beaverbrook and Thompson. That is what workers' democracy in Portugal means.

The situation at present is in the balance. The old rulers of Portugal are trying to regain control. They will go to any lengths, including all out civil war in order to reestablish control of their state and their army

They will be backed by the Catholic Church. The working class movement is on the verge of wresting control completely out of the hands of the old ruling class, smashing the old state machine, disbanding the old army in favour of a revolutionary army and rebuilding a socialist society based on real workers' democracy.

The working class in Portugal must win the confidence of all those, oppressed under fascism, who are now suffering the effects of the crisis. If the workers' movement can succeed in allaying the fears of the peasants in the North and offering a way out of the present crisis they will be able to lead the Portuguese revolution to its conclusion and start on the task of the building of a socialist society.

SHEILA MCGREGOR

Womens Voice will be supporting this demonstration in solidarity with our sisters and brothers in the Portuguese revolution. So Womens Voice groups, bring your banners on the march.

Portugal: It af



August 21st. United Front Demonstration supported by thousands of workers, shouting: 'Down with Social Deomcracy' and for 'People's power'.

Women throw off shackles of 50 years

WOMEN'S oppression is tied to capitalist society. But it seems to me that the situation of women in Portuguese society isn't unique. If you look at other capitalist countries, the difference is one of degree. Here, oppression is more marked because of the country's economic conditions. But it is that oppression that forces women to play certain roles—from the producer of workers to the guardian of the home and of ruling class ideas, including their role as object. An object in every sense, even though being an object of desire and respect.

Taken from an interview with Isobel do Carmo one of the leaders of the PRP.

Women in Portugal lived for fifty years under the brutal oppression of fascist dictatorship. Lived with all the dogma of the Catholic Church training them to see themselves as inferior, as mere extensions of their husbands—backed to the hilt by the fascist state.

The smashing of fascism 18 months ago opened up enormous possibilities

of freedom and liberation through action. Women were at last able to begin developing as human beings,

They have participated fully in the class struggles of the last year and a half. In the strikes, the occupations, the demonstrations, the workers commissions. Housewives have led in the formation of tenants commissions to fight the appalling housing conditions. And a whole new confidence has been gained through these battles.

There is no doubt that women feel greatly emancipated since the revolution. As a woman at Republica told us 'Relationships between people are much freer than they ever were. The strength of the workers movement has managed to break whole areas from the ideological hold of the Catholic Church. Attitudes,

amongst young workers in particular, are changing fast.

But the old fascist laws are still there. Divorce is still difficult—abortion illegal.

In Almada, a working class suburb of Lisbon, revolutionaries have occupied an empty house and turned it into a people's clinic. They provide medicine and contraceptive advice for local workers. At first they performed abortions at the clinic, but thought this could be used as an excuse to close them down. This clinic is typical of many. Doctors and women in Portugal are prepared to disregard the abortion laws.

But the ideas that kept women 'in their place' for fifty years can not be erased overnight. And male chauvinism will never be overcome within an oppressive class society.

Breaking the stranglehold of the church and the state is the first step. It has already led to great improvements. But women will still have to organise consciously to achieve their liberation. This can only happen if Portuguese workers—men and women—take control of society. In Portugal today, this is on the cards.

CANNING FACTORY IN S. PORTUGAL

'POWER TO the workers! That's what we're fighting for—and it's going on already—things are changing for us. If all the workers in Portugal were as united as we are in this factory we would win tomorrow.' Antonia works in a canning factory in Southern Portugal, tinning Marie Elizabeth sardines.

The factory employs about 100 women but is part of a large company which owns all the different stages of sardine canning—from fishing boats to tins. A family firm started in the 1930s, the old owners typically drained the firm of profits over the years, refusing to invest in new machinery. So the workers are left with ancient out-dated equipment—a problem we've seen all too often in Britain.

Now the factory is run jointly by a government administrator and

the elected workers commission. But this is no case of the workers being instructed by the 'expert from Whitehall'. On the day I visited the factory, the government man had just been kicked out by the workers!

'What we get is not enough'. 'The best change now would be in wages' Antonia told me. Despite a national conference last July, no agreement on wages was reached. Rates in the North were improved, but the bosses in the South refused to pay. So at Antonia's factory the women still get about 40p an hour, and the men 46p. Under fascism, we got as little as 16p an hour.

Antonia fears that if the company is nationalised the workers will be lumbered with all the problems left over from so many years of bad management—and we couldn't go

on strike'.

At present changes are fought for through the workers commission. Under fascism the old bosses had been 'generous' enough to provide the creche without which they wouldn't have got their cheap female labour. But what a creche!

'This creche has worse conditions than any factory in the town. There is no medical care, no heating, no chairs or tables, just bare floors and rows of tightly packed cots. Every day we have to bring food for our children.'

The women are determined to change all this through the strength of workers' organisation in the factory. 'Now we have kicked out fascism nothing can stop us changing things, now the workers have control'.
JOY LEMAN, ATTI

VICTORY TO THE PORTUGUESE WORKING CLASS
All Out on Saturday 20 September

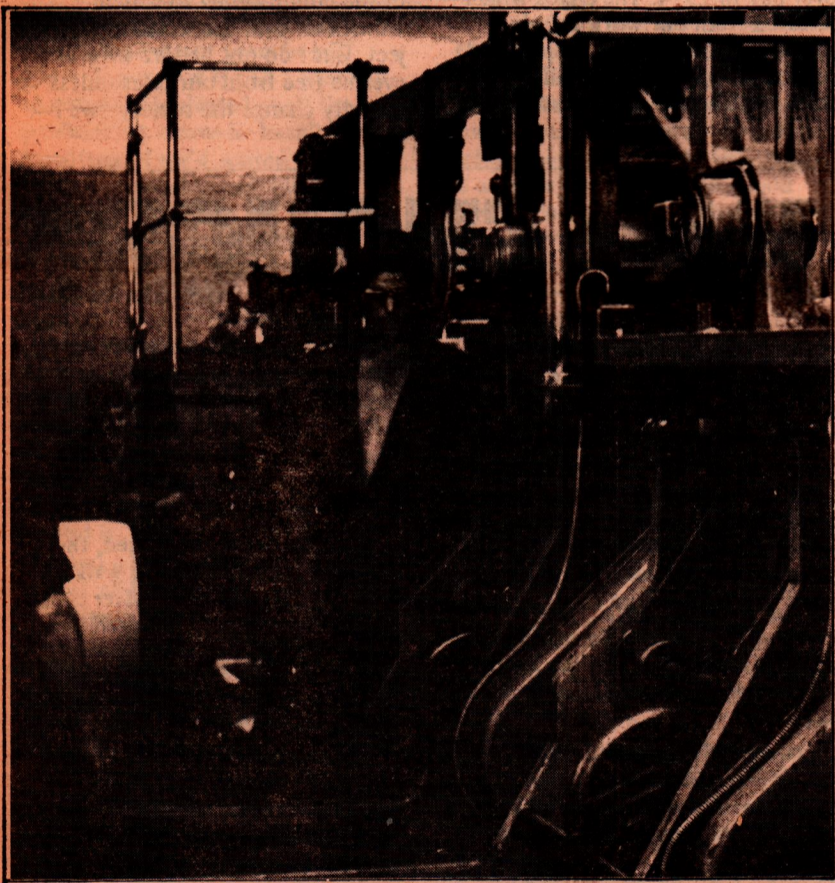
Charing Cross Embankment, London, 2pm.

ffects us all

OCCUPATION OF SOGANTAL FACTORY



The Abortion and Contraception Centre in Lisbon



Womens Voice report on Portugal compiled by Linsey German, Sheila McGregor and Elana Dallas



Bottom
August 21st Demonstration.
Pictures: Wendy Plimley

SOGANTAL is a small textile factory in a village just outside Lisbon. Until April 25 last year, the forty-four women employed in making track-suits were paid 1060 escudos (£20) per month, with two weeks holiday. The women got paid for this according to length of service and individual patronage. By way of contrast, the Portuguese manager received 14,000 escudos (£260) per month and the overseer (a woman) earned 5000 (£100 a month).

As soon as the Spinoia regime introduced a minimum wage, the women put in a claim for 2850 (£56) a month plus a full month's paid holiday. The french owner of the factory said he couldn't afford to pay that much and that if the women didn't withdraw their claim the factory would have to close. It was common knowledge that a second factory was soon to be opened in the area.

The women went on strike. After two weeks they decided to occupy. Having survived without wages for two months the women decided to try and sell the stocks in the factory.

At this point the french owner left Portugal.

To sell their produce, the women organised a rota for sellers to go round the factories, and offices in the Lisbon area. They got no support at all from their husbands, boyfriends or families who considered striking and other forms of political activity

the sole right of men and not women. It was also rumoured in the village that any women spending their nights occupying the factory were only using it as a cover for 'illicit' sex.

On August 19th, after 80 days on strike the owner came back to take over the factory. He returned backed by dogs and fourteen heavies. They had chosen that day to come back, knowing that the women were likely to be at a fiesta in a nearby village. By a stroke of good fortune a representative from the newly established Textile Workers Union (which they had just joined) turned up just at the same time as management. He immediately went to warn the women. This resulted in the entire fiesta tramping across to the factory. After some violent scenes, the management ended up barricading themselves into the office.

The reaction of both the army and the police in the area was neutral. They didn't intervene on either side; their personal attitudes towards the women reflected local prejudice.

All this happened over a year ago. The women are still struggling. They still need the basic materials needed to resume production.

During the struggle they have received little or no help from outside. They appealed to the Socialist Party which refused to do anything for them unless they all joined their

party. They appealed several times to the Minister of Trade and staged a demonstration outside the ministry. Under the Spinoia regime they were told that their occupation was illegal and they risked losing their jobs by continuing the struggle. Under the new regime, their requests for nationalisation were unanswered by the government.

Although the occupation has now lasted sixteen months, the village still regards their struggle as futile because they're women. One woman's marriage has broken up as a result of her consistent refusal to give up the fight.

The women have an all-women workers committee which is elected by anonymous ballot in the General Assembly. The assembly discusses not only the immediate problems of survival but also political issues like the role of women in the struggle, abortion, contraception, etc.

Of the forty four original women employed in the factory, twenty four remain. The income they receive from sales of the stock is less than they were paid under fascism. They have been constantly rebuffed throughout the struggle. Not only are there very few of them, they are also women. As one person said 'What revolution there has been has been a men's revolution'.

IAN REDDISH, NUT

Interview with two women cleaners from the newspaper Republica which was occupied in June and is now run as a co-operative.

The two women, both middleaged, worked six hours a day cleaning the offices of the newspaper. I asked them both why they did cleaning jobs.

Mrs A. I used to work in a dried fish factory. Then they put me on short time eight years ago. There was no other factory for women so I turned to cleaning to get a full week's work.

Mrs B. I worked for sixteen years for the railway company in the upholstery department. I got married and stopped work. Then my husband died. He worked in print at Republica. There was no pension, but Republica 'kindly' offered to let me work for them as a cleaner.

That was several years ago under the old administration. The wage was 2500 escudos a month (£50) and the women were allowed four hours to clean the whole building. Then came April 25th and the Revolution. The women joined the newly formed cleaners' union. The union was negotia-

Interview with two cleaners from Republica

CELIA DEACON

ting for big salary increases when the fight came at Republica.

Mrs A. The old administration was only putting over one point of view. It only printed the Socialist Party communiques. We don't know much about politics or political parties, but

FIGHT BOYCOTT, FIGHT FOR JOBS

THE TWILIGHT shift (6am to 10om) at STC (Standard Telephones and Cables) in Southgate, North London, have been made redundant.

The women are not protected by National Agreement, nor the Redundancy Act, as they only work 20 hours a week.

This means that about 300 women are to lose their jobs, with only a miserable compensation. The union has sold them out and accepted an offer of half a week's redundancy pay for every year worked with the firm.

The company blames the economic recession for a cut-back in orders. They have also introduced a new argument... one that other workers in different firms will no doubt be

hearing again.

They say that Portuguese STC/ITT factories have not paid for their orders. Normally they allow their Portuguese factories credit. We believe they are now operating an international boycott—along with other big multinational companies—to sabotage the Portuguese revolution. They are making Portuguese factories pay in advance.

We need to contact the factories in Portugal and find out if this is the case.

In this way, by demanding that supplies be maintained to Portugal, we can also protect jobs in Britain. Otherwise this lot of redundancies will prove to be the thin end of a very big wedge.

the workers here were right to take over the newspaper to put it at the service of the people. The newspaper was not defending the people before.

Mrs B. We were here the morning of the occupation and took part in it and all the workers' meetings against the old administration. Later in the day we went home and when we came back the police were guarding the works and would not let us in.

Mrs A. Things are better now. Here we have more hours to do our work—we get six hours a day instead of four—and the union asked for a salary increase—there was no problem with management refusing it, it was easy to get here. Now we get paid 6000 escudos a month (£120). We couldn't ask for more because this is the workers' Republica now; there is no boss.

I asked if the Revolution had really changed anything in their lives. Mrs B. Well money first—our salaries are better. My husband died thirteen years ago. There were no pensions under fascism. The government didn't even keep statistics of who died leaving dependants. The new government has asked all widows to fill in a form stating their claim to a benefit. I have filled this in and I am waiting to receive it. It is calculated on the salary of the husband, I think I shall get 900 escudos a month (£18).

Mrs A. My son emigrated to France two years ago because there were no jobs for him. No decent jobs. At the moment he will have to stay in France—he's better off there because there are still no jobs in Portugal. He should have the chance to work here. I then asked if they felt they understood politics more.

Mrs A. Before April 25th there was no use speaking your mind about anything. Since then there are much freer relationships between people. People are free to speak to each other. Even so I don't know much about politics except what we face in the workers' meetings. We can understand well what is right and wrong there. The fight of the workers here is completely right.

INTERVIEW WITH A WEST INDIAN SRN by Khalid Rashid

I DECIDED to come to England at the age of 18 in 1956. It was an obvious move because we were always reminded that England was the 'Mother Country', and children were forever singing 'God Save the Queen' at school. Our conditioning was such that we actually believed that our very survival depended on this distant country.

When I first arrived I went to a hospital in Billericay and from there to East Ham Memorial. My memories of those years centre round the racial discrimination against black student nurses. Let me give you some examples: all new recruits were lodged at the Manor House about a quarter of a mile up a steep hill from the hospital.

After a certain time all new recruits were moved into lodgings in the hospital. But this didn't happen with us—nine black nurses. We stayed put while others moved on, even those who came well after us. And in the Manor House the sister refused to eat dinner with us, so we had to wait until she had finished by which time everything was cold. It was the same in the operating theatres where we were supposed to be training. We were always told to clean the instruments and swab the floors.

This used to upset me and I just used to cry a lot. I used to ask myself why I should have to suffer such humiliation just to get a bit of paper. I realised very early on that what I had been taught in Jamaica was completely different from reality.

But I fought back and got the other girls to stand up and fight. Complaining to the matron got us nowhere so we took things into our own hands and demanded better treatment. We got our hot dinners by taking them before the sister could take hers. But this treatment of black people I soon realised was not confined just to the hospital. It is part and parcel of life here. White and black people have all been conditioned into believing that blacks

are inferior and when I saw National Front posters up, and the popularity of Enoch Powell, I began to wonder if that was true.

But worrying does no good. We can't keep running away because it saps our energy and confidence. We have to stand up to people and show them blacks are as good as anyone else, and that we will not be frightened into submission. It's best to do this in a group, rather than on your own. I have tried to form a community organisation in Walthamstow so that in times of difficulty we can help each other.

For instance, recently two policemen tried to force their way into the house to talk to my young son. I refused them entry and eventually, after a lot of argument they left, saying they would make

'THEY DON'T MIND ORDERING US AROUND, BUT THEY WON'T EAT WITH US'

an appointment. I rang round my friends and found out my exact rights in the situation, so when the police came back we were able to handle them and we did not allow ourselves to be harassed in any way.

After my training as an SRN I went to a hospital in Waltham Forest. The atmosphere was much easier and much more relaxed. I am sure this was because 75 per cent of the staff there are black. Conditions at the hospitals weren't good and they haven't improved much since. This is mainly due to lack of money which meant there was overcrowding and not enough good facilities which are badly needed.

As a result we are always under pressure to get patients out as quickly as possible, so that most attention

can be given to those who remain.

Although I joined the union as soon as I moved to the hospital, I was never encouraged to involve myself in activity. All we did was pay our dues and we were rarely told about meetings. I went to a meeting at Whipps Cross Hospital once, but I felt isolated and totally out of place. I tried to get my friends to go but since no attempt had been made to involve them they showed no interest. We never felt that it was our union looking after our interest.

This changed during our campaign over pay in 1974. The chaos which resulted from our work to rule showed how much the hospital depended on nurses and ancillary staff. We weren't even on strike and yet, the whole hospital was in dis-

array and the laundry especially was in a terrible state.

All of us realised for the first time in our lives the importance of unity in struggle, and the importance of having an active union where rank and file workers have a say in the direction of union affairs. I feel that working class women have a lot to offer a union but not enough effort is made to attract them. They are too often taken for granted. In Waltham Forest the union always meet at Whipps Cross Hospital but if they want more members to take an interest in its affairs they should vary the meeting place and take it to other hospitals. They should explain the history of the union, why it was founded, what it stands for and how it works. I am sure this would help to attract members to meetings.

The abortion campaign is very important for working class women because it means women, who bear the backbone of the world are not second class citizens and are standing up for their rights. Not only do we want abortions on demand but we are also questioning our role in this society. The campaign for abortions on demand is part of our fight for control of our own lives. There is more to life than just bringing up kids and feeding your husband. Women will continue to be made into cabbages if their life doesn't go beyond the walls of their homes. My friends and I go to work and to college and we are breaking out of the conditioning to which women all over the world are subject. But I do not believe we will ever be free from our roles unless we actually change the society we live in.



TUC CONGRESS 1975
MARIE PATTERSON, OBE—Woman president of TUC. Her great contribution to the movement this year was to threaten to call in police to the congress to evict Ricky Tomlinson and other fellow trade unionists. Ricky was protesting at the failure of TUC to get Des Warren out of jail. Ricky and Des, the Srewnsbury Two, were sent to jail for fighting for higher wages and against the lump in the building industry in 1972.

'WE'VE HAD ENOUGH!'

CHELMSFORD, Essex: 'We've had as much as we can take.' That was the feeling of the nine women supervisors at Newport House, an observation and assessment centre for disturbed girls, as they walked out on a one-day strike on Monday 8 September.

The women—members of NALGO, the local government workers' union—had been driven to exasperation as chronic understaffing and management cynicism had led to a near breakdown at the centre—and, as a result, a rash of violent attacks on the women.

But when the women returned to work the next day, they found the reign of terror by some of the girls had got worse, not better.

That night, one of the women was beaten up, another attacked with a coffee pot and a third threatened with a seven-pound weight. Meanwhile, because of the unbearable atmosphere, one of the girls had smashed a window and was trying to slash her arms with a broken pane, while another was stopped just in time as she ran from the grounds to a nearby main road, where she planned to commit suicide by throwing herself from a high bridge.

The nightmare of Newport House shows clearly what 'welfare' work means in this society—and how the loyalty and decency of welfare workers is abused by management.

The centre is meant to help young girls on the receiving end of all sorts of social problems. In theory, they should stay for about six to eight weeks.

Instead, it has become a dumping ground for problem girls the authorities don't want to know about. A dumping ground short of staff and without proper training facilities.

One girl, who is particularly violent—the police said she was too violent to be kept at the police

station—has been there for nine months, rather longer than the six to eight weeks laid down.

The women want her—and another violent girl—taken from the centre and put in a more suitable establishment. That was one of their demands when they staged the one-day strike. They also wanted more staff and better child care.

Over the last two years, 41 staff have left. As the centre has been allowed to decay, so the violence has grown.

In recent months, the women have been subjected to beatings up and, in one incident, there was an attempted stabbing with a pair of scissors.

Town with no hospital

'GO TO HELL' said Councillor Ackland to the 160 demonstrating against the cuts at their local hospital. If the cuts go through, Maidenhead will be left with virtually no hospital facilities for a population of 60,000. Already there are no children's beds in our town. Soon there will be no casualty department or operating theatre. The Community Health Council which is supposed to represent the interests of the people in Maidenhead has

One woman, forced by the understaffing to work the night shift twice in one week by herself, said:

'One night, when I was looking after the nine girls in the centre alone, I was beaten up. I had a black eye for three weeks.'

Their patience exhausted, the women finally decided to walk out for a day. Management, after claiming that people who did such jobs had to 'expect' trouble, agreed to remove the two most violent girls and to improve the ratio of staff to girls.

But after the events that followed the strike, it seems that these women's struggle for decent care AND working conditions is only just beginning...

shown itself to be no more than a rubber stamp, blatantly ignoring the wishes of all of us. Ackland led the fight against the Windsor Pop Festival calling pop fans vermin.

He clearly has the same opinion about Maidenhead people fighting for their hospital. The committee, faced with the hostile crowd, was forced to refer the matter back for further consideration. We intend to carry on the fight.
MARGARET JONES

Joann Little is cleared

THE BLACK American girl charged with murdering her white prison guard has been acquitted by a jury.

Joann's defence was that the guard tried to rape her. The jury accepted this. 'A woman has the right to defend herself' said the foreman of the jury.

Joann's acquittal came about after a well-publicised international defence campaign. It was an uphill

fight. The jury was challenged until blacks were put on it. The place of trial was moved. A massive defence fund was raised. There were demonstrations in Joann's support. All these helped her final victory. Joann herself is clear why she was acquitted: 'I have never been pessimistic about the power of the people. I knew that if the people stood together, we would win.'

GEORGE DAVIS IS INNOCENT OK?

ON THE night before the last day of the test-match at Headingley, holes were cut in the wicket and the match had to be abandoned. On the wall were written words familiar in the East End of London. 'George Davis is innocent. OK.'

George Davis is a taxi-driver from Bow. He is at present serving 20 years in Albany prison for armed robbery. Only five witnesses out of 38 picked him out on an identity parade. All five were policemen. This

and many other features of the case has led to widespread support for the Free George Davis Campaign, and a growing conviction that he was framed by the police.

Active in this campaign are Rose Davis and Shirley Chappell, whose husband Peter is charged with conspiracy in connection with the events at Headingley. Rose and George Davis have two children. Shirley and Peter Chappell have three children, including a baby of 7 months.



Rose Davies and Shirley Chappell

Rose Davis

WHAT'S A game of cricket to a man doing twenty years in jail? Every day to him is like a year. So of course he's pleased at all the publicity. It means he hasn't been forgotten. If we'd waited it could have been months and months wasted.

These other people in the campaign, they're fantastic. I don't know what else to say about them. I've been very fortunate with my friends and relations, with all the support they've given. And the children: They're funny how they take things aren't they? They know all about it.

If you ask who we're up against, it's the system. Stonehouse proved it. There's a law for the rich and a law for the poor. Money speaks all languages.

In particular the law of identification is all wrong. George was identified by five policemen, but not by any other witnesses, except one woman who identified him a year after the robbery, and had failed to pick him out on the identity parade.

TWICE IN the last three months the headquarters of the managerial union ASTMS has been hit by strikes over women threatened with the sack.

First of all, the clerical workers came out in support of Gloria Lazenby, an administrative officer known for her support of women activists in the union. She was threatened with the sack for leaving a note saying she was taking referendum day off to campaign; it seems she should have made application through "formal" channels. The strike stopped the immediate threat of dismissal but Gloria has been constantly harassed since. Her good relations with rank and file members are frowned upon. At the national women's workshop the Assistant General Secretary tried to use Gloria as a scapegoat for the failure of the union to organise effectively for women. When workshop delegates responded with a vote of thanks to Gloria for her work, the Assistant General Secretary's scowl was unmistakable.

Judy Cotter, a Communist Party member, was a trainee-officer with the union—one of a handful of women officers. After six months appointment, she was arbitrarily sacked. Her training officer Terry Comerford reported her unreliable; she had been late for meetings—al-

It's just crazy. And none of the forensic evidence, not one of over 200 exhibits, could be connected with George.

Now these four have been charged with conspiracy for digging some holes in a cricket pitch and writing a slogan on the wall. If it had been some toffy-nosed public school boy, they would have called it a prank and the charge would have been quashed. But us ordinary people, when we do anything—we're hooligans.

Well, we didn't ask for all this, it's something that came to us. It's just turned us upside down. What I want is to get back to normal living 24 hours a day, with my husband. It's been sixteen months of strain.

Shirley Chappell

PEOPLE THINK we must be life-long friends with George and Rose Davis to get this involved in the case. In fact we'd only known them a while. I'd never been to their house before all this happened.

If I thought for a moment George

Davis wasn't an innocent man I wouldn't get involved. The same goes for Peter, my husband. But that's the kind of man Peter is. He'd go out and do the same for the man next door no matter who it was if he thought he was innocent. People say how do I put up with it? Well, that's the man I married. He's just got feeling for people. I understand him and I like him that way.

We had to turn to direct action because there was no other way. We've lobbied our MPs and they just didn't want to know. Between us in the last sixteen months we've done all kinds of things. Put out the Christmas tree lights in Trafalgar Square. Protested at the British embassy in Paris. Driven a car into Buckingham Palace gates. Climbed the dome of St Paul's. We all chained ourselves up in the middle of Fleet Street, and we sat down in the road in Bethnal Green.

They arrested everyone except me that day for obstruction. So I went to the police and told them to charge me as well. The sergeant didn't want to know. He took my arm and tried to steer me out of the station. But I brushed his hand off. So they did me for violent behaviour.

In court they had a policeman as witness who was in a backroom at the time. Peter stood up and protested, so they gave him three months for contempt of court. He served 14 days of that sentence before he got bail pending his appeal.

All this and no one took any notice. Then you dig up a bit of cricket pitch and they're up in arms. I think when we went for cricket we upset the upper crust. Funny thing is, George Davis is a real cricket fan. He was listening for the score that day when he heard what the others had done. You've just got to compare what's at stake. George Davis has got twenty years to serve. They can always play a cricket match again. But they can't give an innocent man those years back. Most people understand that. We've never hurt anyone, only property. And now they've charged the four of them with conspiracy.

But with us, everything's done on the spur of the moment. It's not a conspiracy. Someone gets an idea, and they have to run round and find everyone else. For the marches we relied on leaflets and word of mouth. The people who came and

marched don't know personally that George Davis is innocent, not like Peter does, who saw him on the day of the robbery. But they know the kind of person he is—he's no armed robber. And they know the facts of the case, they believe he was framed.

I've never done anything like this before. My mum's quite shocked with me. I'm usually so quiet. But I'm convinced, and if I had no children, I'd do a lot more. I've learned a lot—the last sixteen months. I never honestly knew the police did this kind of thing, till this case. My eyes have been opened, I can tell you. I don't mean I'm anti police. If one of my kids was missing, I'd go to them, of course I would. But I don't think I'd ever trust one again, not really. I never knew they'd go to this extent.

With all the charges, I'm not expecting Peter home this Christmas. But we all went into it with our eyes open. Peter won't rest till George Davis is outside those gates. For that I feel very hopeful now. I think it's got to the stage where they'd like to just open the gates and let him out to get rid of us all.

INTERVIEWS BY JUDITH CONDON

LEFT TALKING JENKINS SACKS OFFICIAL

ways with a reasonable excuse—had been sick. Moreover, when she went into hospital to have an abortion, she didn't tell him the reason. After complications arose, she told him the full story. Judy was then accused of giving a false medical report and this was taken as further evidence of her unsuitability.

On Comerford's report the top man, Jenkins, sacked Judy. No one had questioned her competence and no rank and file member was on record as having made complaints against her.

Judy was given no right of appeal or union representation. She is a member of ASTMS like all full-timers, but Jenkins ruled out any formal negotiations. He had decided to sack her and as far as he was concerned, that was that.

The officers went on unofficial strike for 18 days. Members in at least two divisions voted to support them and called for Judy's reinstatement.

ment. But their views were yet again ignored. Jenkins went round the back door to resolve the dispute; he got Bert Ramelson the Communist Party's industrial organiser to do the dirty on Judy, getting the Communist Party members amongst the officers to accept arbitration, which they had previously rejected as a way of helping Judy. They returned to work without much prospect of Judy's reinstatement.

Both cases show how little the views of union members count at the top. Gloria Lazenby has widespread support amongst women active in the union for what she has done on their behalf. But the hierarchy are a law unto themselves, sweeping aside the main demands of women members as well as key employees with those interests at heart.

Throughout the Cotter case, the opinion of union members, who are after all those most directly affected

by how good a full timer is, have been ignored. What we as members need in our fight against our bosses are men and women full timers answerable to us, that means elected and re-elected by us on the basis of the job they do, not appointed and sacked on the whims and prejudices of top bureaucrats nobody ever elected.

IRENE BRUEGEL
ASTMS
DIV 15

I would like to know more about the International Socialists

Name _____

Address _____

Please post to:
Womens Voice,
8 Cottons Gardens
London E2 8DN

ON 11 October, there will be a lobby of the NEC of ASTMS at the Great Western Hotel, Paddington, at 10am. This is to demand a meeting of the Women's National Committee to discuss women's action in ASTMS.

Division Five are calling for an investigation into Jenkins' sacking of Judy Cotter on the grounds that it brings the union into disrepute.

THE STRUGGLE over abortion has become the symbol of the struggle for women's rights in 1975.

SPUC and the Catholic Church are mobilising with petitions, public meetings and lobbies of MPs, leading up to an enormous demonstration in mid October. The right-wing is clearly on the offensive, demanding that women be individual baby factories, bearing as many children as God sends, and chained to the kitchen sink.

The fact that many women have begun to loosen their bondage, with the help of the welfare state, and to challenge their ascribed role, makes the right-wing more determined to drive women firmly back 'where they belong.'

SPUC is the spearhead for all the fake morality-mongers and union-bashers like Mary Whitehouse and Malcolm Muggeridge. Our fight against the James White Bill has driven them back, and set in motion the argument for abortion on demand. Thousands of women who may have been complacent before have been mobilised by the campaign.

These same women are now being faced with the closure of maternity hospitals and nurseries for the under-fives; wage cuts and unemployment. And all the other effects of Labour's plan to make the workers pay for the bosses' crisis.

ABORTION CAMPAIGN IN THE BALANCE

The hypocrites who lead SPUC and LIFE are the same people who call for workers to make sacrifices, for cuts in the social services and for 'law and order'. They believe they have the God-given right to dictate to us, about our morals and about everything else. They have ruling-class attitudes and they pursue ruling class objectives.

In such a situation, the fight over abortion is crucial to the building of a real militant movement amongst working-class women against all the attacks of the Labour Government.

It is becoming more and more clear that the struggle for women's rights must be taken up by the working class movement. Women workers can spearhead that struggle, and give a lead to all those thousands of women who are not at work, but

who nevertheless suffer all the effects of the crisis.

At the moment those women, organised in their thousands at work, are missing from the ranks of the campaign. The resolution passed at the Trades Union Congress conference in Blackpool in September calls for abortion and contraception 'on request', and opposed any attempt at restrictive legislation detrimental to the health and safety of women. This resolution gives us a fantastic boost. We can go to trades councils and union branches up and down the country and ask for the campaign to start. It is the opening we have been waiting for. The TUC leaders will not organise the mass action that the resolution calls for. But we can use it and start the organising at grass-roots level.

It is for all these reasons that

Women's Voice and Socialist Worker supporters were bitterly disappointed by the attitudes of the International Marxist Group, Communist Party and Labour Party supporters at the meeting of the National Abortion Campaign on September 6 in London. Where Women's Voice argued strongly for a national offensive in the Autumn and a big demonstration at the beginning of the next parliamentary session in November in order to counter the SPUC campaign and state loudly and clearly to the House of Commons where our movement stands, we were met with complete opposition.

All those who argued 'we are in favour of another demonstration, but not in November' while offering no alternative action are effectively arguing for the burial of the campaign.

They are allowing SPUC the run of the streets in the Autumn. Worse, they are offering no rallying point for all our supporters, those we have already and those we intend to gain through our work in the coming months. The national conference of the NAC in October is vital for discussing perspectives for our work, and for exchanging experiences. It is not a substitute for action. There is no substitute for mass action, because passivity only breeds further passivity. It also breeds confusion in those waiting for a lead from our side.

We were also highly disturbed at the way in which so-called revolutionaries at the meeting were prepared to argue for accepting postal and telephone votes. The vote of a delegate who attended but had to leave early was not taken.

Telephone votes are completely unheard of. Anyone can post a letter, or make a phone call. It costs next to nothing. The right wing in the trade union movement is renowned for using the postal ballot system.

All this makes the October Conference of vital importance. All those women who see the abortion campaign in the light of the other attacks on women and the workers' movement must go to the conference and argue for such a perspective. We must ensure that our voice, the voice of revolutionary feminism, is heard loud and clear on October 18/19.

SHEILA MCGREGOR

EVENTS FOR THE AUTUMN

MANY AREAS are planning forms of action to spread the Abortion Campaign and take it into the Labour Movement. **MANCHESTER, NORWICH** and **BRIGHTON NAC** groups are all planning 'weeks of action', including factory-gate meetings, street theatre, public meetings and local demos.

WEST LONDON is planning visits to schools with a film, putting the NAC case. The **Trades Council in BRADFORD** and the **Metalbox (Shipley) Shop Stewards Committee** have sponsored a public meeting in the Queens Hall on 6 October. And on 6 September there was a picket of anti-abortion MP Tom Pendry's surgery in **ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE**.

SCOTLAND has its own NAC Conference the week after the one in London.

DUNDEE Trades Council has formed a NAC committee and is sending speakers to trade union branches and factory gate meetings.

SPUC has an advice centre in **GLASGOW**, which is being picketed by NAC supporters.

EDINBURGH has got NAC speakers invited to many trade union branch meetings. If you're a bit short of publicity material, take a couple of ideas from **BRIGHTON**. They are producing a new poster and starting a sticker campaign. The slogans are 'Free Abortion', 'SPUC OFF' and 'Back-street Abortion Out'.

If you live around **BIRMINGHAM**, mark the 20 September in your diary. There's a picket of The World Federation of Doctors with Respect for Human Life Conference—a group of unpleasant anti-abortionists whose concern for human life stops when the child is born. Contact IS Books in Birmingham, 021-643-5717, for exact time and place.

GOOD NEWS

The Women's Voice Factsheet on Abortion has been reprinted. Full of all the arguments you need, and good value at 1p. Order a bundle to sell to your mates at work or on your estate, or when you're getting signatures in the town centre.

Orders from Women's Voice, 8 Cottons Gardens, London, E2.



August demonstration in protest at the death sentences hanging over Garmendia and Otagui—two Basque militants—fighters against Franco's fascist regime in Spain. For fighting for their rights, these two and many others face death by garrotting—slow strangling with a metal collar.

Picture: Andrew Ward (Report)

IT'S NOT just the £6 limit that's leeching our living standards. Take the case of the Ritz workers in Glossop.

Ritz is a Marks and Spencer sweat shop. For 20 years or more, Ritz workers have sewn top-quality shirts and blouses helping swell the Marks and Spencer profit mountain. Now that inflation is running at 25 per cent, is there a scraping or two off that mountain to tide the workers over? Far from it! after weeks of existing on fat rate, Ritz workers were offered a big new order by Marks and Spencer on condition they took a cut in time allowed for the job. Collars timed at four minutes were now to take only three and a half. In other words workers were offered the choice of staying on the miserable flat rate of 54p an hour or accepting a wage cut of 12½ per cent.

A mass meeting of the 200 machinists voted two to one to refuse the order on these crippling terms. As one worker put it, 'we have no choice; we can't afford things now—let alone taking a wage cut.'

Management's reaction was swift—

Collared by M&S

workers returned from their annual holiday in August to a three day week.

Now a new order has emerged from the blue and Ritz is back on five days this week... BUT... management craftily took advantage of a half day's absence by vigilant Tailors and Garment Workers' shop steward Betty Done. They steamrollered through re-timing on a new basis, which means doing a collar in two minutes. In the first week of this struggle

workers were offered a 12½ per cent wage cut. Six weeks later they are being offered a 33⅓ wage cut.

Ritz workers will not put up with this. Betty has wrung agreement from management for payments at the old rate, while discussions go on with the union officials.

'The girls must realise that the union is only as strong as they make it' says Betty. 'It's no good saying 'We'd better go along with management or we might lose our jobs'. What good is a 'safe' job if you end up getting paid less than peanuts for it? About as good as a 'safe' boat made from a colander'. Betty points out that a really firm refusal to accept the re-timing by the 20 collar hands would stop the manager making cuts for all 300 workers. 'What good will his blouses be if they have no collars?'

Betty is quite clear that workers are being attacked and that the only way to resist is to stand firm together. 'Our real enemy is Marks and Spencers and the only way to fight them is to stick together and to force the union to organise across the factories.'

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75p for 6 copies, £1.50 per year.

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