

manawa bc

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No. 15

LIBERTARIAN WOMEN'S
NETWORK'S
NEWSHEET

from
notting hill womens action group
with love and revolution

It's gonna be a hot
hot hot summer



EDITORIAL

from Nottingham
Womens Action Group
60-70 St. Ekvans Rd.
London W.11.

A lot of the articles in this newsheet are about action, and give information on some kinds of action that women have been taking in this country and abroad. In the last newsheet it was suggested that it should be more theoretical, and that it should not just be an exchange of information and actions that women have taken.

We disagree with the newsheet becoming totally "theoretical," not because we are opposed to analysis, but because we feel that analysis and theory without actions and unrelated to them are completely useless and will never bring about the revolution.

We feel that writing about actions can give women some ideas of what can be done and the way we can organise. Also what type of actions are successful in particular areas, but fail in others, and why. How we build up organisation, and what type of tactics are necessary at any particular moment of time.

This newsheet has been produced by the Nottinhill Women's Action Group. We are a small group of women who are working in certain areas, like housing, the Family Allowance Campaign, and the hospital workers strike. Some of us also work regularly at the local Community Press, on "Nell Gate" the community Newspaper and the Claimants Union. Some of us have kids and are trying to build up more collective forms of childcare, most of us are squatting and are on Social Security so we are organising round these too. This sounds like a very long list of things that we do, one of the conclusions that we have come to is that we are trying to do too much in too many different areas of struggle. Thus our activities are fragmented our energies are drained and we don't do any thing well. This is part of the analysis we have made from our own activities. We have learnt that we must build up forms of strong organisation on a collective basis and that we must realise who we can work with and who we cant. That public meetings aren't necessarily a good way of getting women involved, that we need to work much harder by visiting women, talking to them and establishing friendship and trust before we can expect them to com to meetings and participate. We ~~are~~ are trying to build up the women's group in this way, and meet with other women and women's groups, round housing estates, tenants associations, women hospital workers etc to give support exchange information and ideas. We have also realised that we need to concentrate our energies in only a few areas and to think and work on a long term basis - that there are going to be no immediate spectacular results - things take a long time to grow.

We would like to see other women's groups writing about their own experience of struggle and organisation in the newsheet. The first four articles are about some of our experiences. We hope the articles from Palestine, Italy and Frankfurt, will encourage a more international perspective on the Womens Movement

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FAMILY ALLOWANCE

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We got involved with the Family Allowance campaign for a number of reasons.

1. At a local level, it is a way of getting to know more women
2. It is a national campaign which means links with other groups and the knowledge that our actions are not isolated.
3. A discussion of family allowances and the tax credit system leads us to a discussion and analysis of current government policy, linked to the needs of the bosses, - how the working class is attacked where it is least organised; we then have to discuss how to combat that.
4. The Family Allowance campaign is a campaign around a woman's needs to have some money IN HER OWN RIGHT, and not tied to her husband's wage packet.

It is very important to state these things first as on the whole in the movement there has not been enough serious discussion on the questions:-

- Why the Family Allowance campaign?
- Can women organise and take action effectively around it?
- And if they can't, is it therefore useful?

It seems that very few campaigns IN REACTION to government/capitalist legislation can be effective in radically altering law to result in a working class victory. We have seen this with the failure of the TUC demos against the Industrial Relations Act and the Freeze, and the fight against the Housing Finance Act.

Why has this been so?

Well, those campaigns have not been effective in reversing the legislation because in the case of the trade unions, because in the case of the trade unions the leadership maintains a policy of negotiations/bargaining/reconciliation, this, coupled with bureaucracy and remoteness of the leaders from the rank and file has doomed most of the large scale TU organised campaigns from the beginning. The fight against the Rent Act has been fragmented, and where led initially by the Labour Party or C.P. has been predictably sold out.

But looked at IN THE LONG TERM, it would be wrong to say that all the activities around those campaigns have been useless. On the contrary, the more the rank and file become disillusioned with the union leadership and organisation, and the more links they feel with grass roots organisations, the more militant they can become. Take the hospital workers for example:-

At St. Mary's in Paddington, before the strike the only person who tried to organise anything was one steward (who worked bloody hard). But after the strike had started, and people had decided to fight, they took the situation much more seriously. When NUPE backed down on the all out strike action that the workers had voted 90% in favour of, they began to see just what the union was not prepared to do. And at St. Mary's - the second time they came out - after one week, the union advised this one steward to get the ancillaries back to work, but the vote went against him and the Union, and they stayed out another week!

Now look at the Housing Finance Act campaign. The act is still there, but, for example the level of community organising in Merseyside has never been so co-ordinated and militant before.

There is support from several local factories and from the docks and a well co-ordinated group of flying pickets to prevent any evictions.

While on the Tower Hill estate the women, after picketing Birds Eye when 12 men were sacked for going on the rents demo and getting them re-instated, have now organised their own womens group to get nursery space for their kids - to run themselves, so they have more time for organising.

So to get back to the Women's Movement. In the long term I think we are fighting for collective control of our lives at work, and at home IN THE COMMUNITIES WE LIVE IN. Not just our fertility and our kids but control of our lives, the money we get, the rent we pay, rising prices, living conditions, facilities for our kids etc.

The Family Allowance campaign can be part of this. But not simply by lobbying M.P.s and signing petitions and giving reports to the Select Committee. This is fine if one clings to the myth of parliamentary capitalism, or believes (like the Child Poverty Action Group and other social workers) in papering over the cracks, and hoping to relieve a little hardship here and there. But if we are serious about organising for revolution, as the only solution to working class oppression, then our womens groups should be part of trying to build a base in our communities, around womens oppression, and womens needs. And the need for a woman to be independent, to have money IN HER OWN RIGHT, not attached to her husbands wage, is part of this. We can use Family Allowance to get to know more women, to share ideas and activities.

WHAT DID WE DO?

A meeting was called by London Women Claimants to talk about the F.A. campaign. Some had read the green paper and some not. Some had been to some national Campaign meetings, and some not. We spread all the information /leaflets etc we had out on a table and bit by bit pieced together an outline of the proposals. This took a long time. People asked a lot of questions about the difficult bits, but gradually we began to see how it was connected to the Housing Finance Act (Tax Credits and means tested rebates are there to divide the working class. A worker with a low wage who gets tax credits and rent rebates will not be willing to strike for a small amount more money which will make no difference to him - just less credits and less rebates) and the policies of the present government in the interests of Big Business. It was decided to make a cartoon/leaflet and 3 sisters worked on that.

We in the Womens Action Group in Notting Hill decided to use this leaflet and the petition to go round a local estate, where we already knew one or two women. This was better in the evening than during the day, when a lot of women were out shopping or picking up their kids. We talked to many women and a couple of times got asked in for cups of tea. But it was cold and tiring, so we decided to have a stall in the local market on a Friday and Saturday. This went down really well - we met some beautiful women, some of whom talked a lot about the needs of women, rising prices etc. We got lots of signatures for the petition, and we really enjoyed ourselves. *At this stage we discussed the possibility of holding a meeting to talk about further action, but felt very nervous about organising it all ourselves. In a way we had expected more women to get involved, as we had put our address on all the leaflets we had handed out. However a couple of weeks later before the Day of Action we felt that a meeting was the only way of discussing the possibilities of local action around family allowances, so we printed off 1,000 leaflets for the meeting and gave them to all the women who had signed the petition, as well as to most of the estate we had visited. We also had the stall again and gave more out there. The meeting was in a local school with an extra room for the creche which the men came and did. We held it on Friday evening, but only about 15 women came, and only 3 or 4 of these were people we hadn't known before. We were very disappointed by this. But came to the conclusion that women are not keen to come to meetings, even though they had sounded very enthusiastic about it

when we talked about it in the street. Possibly this is because women have so much to do, and Friday evening is a good time to relax. Maybe public meetings are not always the best form of agitation anyway! We'd be interested to hear about other meetings, and whether they've worked. On the following Tuesday we did picket the local post office, and again got a very good reception from women we spoke to/the street. Some asked us if we had meetings and now 2 or 3 now women are coming to our regular meetings.

SO WHATS HAPPENING NOW?

We want to continue having the stall in the market to carry on talking to women in the street, where its not so formal.

We have got to know a few more women who we've been to see, and they are now writing something about their estate for Noll/Nod Gate, and want to come to our next meeting.

We are thinking about squatting a house with some other groups, to have a place for women to come to, with a croche for kids.

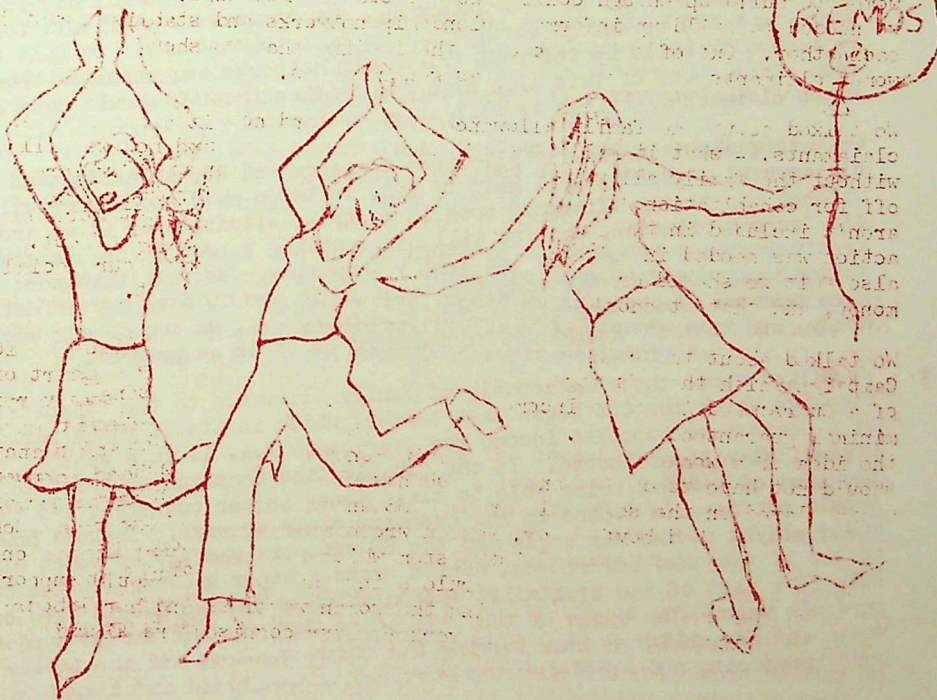
We are having regular meetings which all women are invited to.

We have started a baby sitting collective, where we all take it in turn to look after peoples kids, so that responsibility for kids becomes more shared, and to give people the chance to go out more (see Women Claimants article for more detail of how we are running this)

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

Well, in a way we hope to have broken through the isolation a bit. Feelings of solidarity necessary to take action take a long time to build up, when the capitalist state thrives on the divisions between us. We don't want to take actions for women, ~~women do it for themselves~~ Women have to feel the collective power to do that themselves. We are finding ways of doing that.

*We also gave out leaflets at local Social Security offices and talked to women there too, and in the Claimants Union. Also 2 of us wrote a double spread on women in the current issue of the local community paper, Nell Gate - with more ideas about women and the F.A. campaign.



WOMEN CLAIMANTS on WHITE

REPORT FROM THE WOMEN'S CLAIMANTS CONFERENCE

The need for a women's claimants conference seemed to come out of the feeling of many women that not much importance was attached to issues directly affecting women claimants. Also many women for various reasons which we talked about during the conference felt isolated and excluded from claimants meetings and conferences.

ONE OF THE first things we talked about was why more women don't come to claimants meetings, or if they do don't come back, or don't say anything, in these meetings. Some women said that they didn't have enough confidence to say what they felt, others felt that claimants meetings were boring and didn't involve things they felt strongly about, others said it was just too difficult to participate in CU activities when you've got kids to look after all the time, or pick up from school, shopping and housework to do etc. This point was one of the main things that came out, and we decided that for a start we must organise more around collective childcare arranging creches so that women could come to meetings and go down the SS offices, and that we should pressurise councils for promises for a nursery for women claimants. We all thought that women on Social Security need nurseries just as much as women who are working. (These of course should be under our control) We are working doing the housework and we need to get away from our kids and have free time to take part in struggles in our local areas, to enjoy ourselves and just sometimes to do what we want, like getting a night out and going down the pub. We felt that more men and women without kids should help in looking after them and that we should emphasise that kids aren't less important than political meetings and other political activities.

We also talked about the isolation women experience who live on SS, particularly unsupported mothers, who are stuck at home all day and night. This isolation seems to be reinforcing, and it is very difficult for many women to build up enough confidence to come to meetings. We felt that we needed to build up informal friendship networks and establish trust in each other. Out of this also came the feeling that we should have specific women claimants meetings as well as general ones.

We talked about the family allowance campaign and how it affects us as claimants, - what it will mean if F.A. is taken away and how we will be affected without the family allowance book in a strike situation or if we are cut off for cohabitation, when we will have nothing to get by on, as claimants aren't included in the new tax credit proposals. We felt that more direct action was needed in the campaign itself if it was to have any effect. We also felt we should organise around demanding F.A. on top of our social security money, and that it should not be deducted as it is at present.

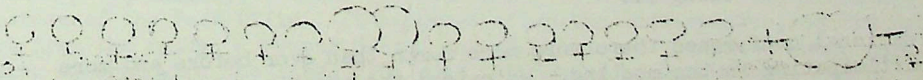
We talked about the relationship of Family Allowance to the Cohabitation Campaign which the CUs began last summer, which in itself was a part of the idea of a Guaranteed Adequate Income for everyone. F.A. is in a sense a very minimal guaranteed income. In the Cohabitation Campaign we tried to get over the idea of a woman being able to claim money in her own right and that she should not have to depend on her husband's claim or wage. Instead however the media played on the sex angle and the SS snoopers who spy on women claimants to see if they had boyfriends. Marion wrote a paper showing how the Cohabitation Rule is a part of the capitalist system which makes two people live on one person's wage. The basis of the rule being that the man should support the woman and her children thus leaving the woman wageless and her labour within the home (producing and servicing the workers) unrecognised and disguised

as a private service within the family. We therefore felt that we should be stressing more strongly a woman's right to her own money not just as a wage slave only recognising the work she does in the home but going beyond that idea towards the need for everyone to have a guaranteed income regardless of the work they are doing i.e. going beyond the work ethic.

Practically the campaign was a failure not only because we didn't make our demands clear, but because we didn't involve enough women, mainly by the way we organised the campaign. Women are still being cut off for cohabitation and we realised that we need to build up stronger collectivity of women in Cus (by building up friendship networks, recognising women's needs etc) so that every time a woman is cut off for cohabitation we can fight in a strong collective of women in the SS offices and at Appeals tribunals. Some women also questioned the validity of having a short term campaign (in the summer it involved a week of action including demos etc) and this was generally accepted, it must be something we work on on a long term basis. However, we also thought that it is valid at certain times to have demonstrations and actions where we can demonstrate and build up a feeling of solidarity and put the Social Security on the defensive. We also felt we should organise more around married women claimants who cannot except under ~~xxxx~~ exceptional circumstances claim their money for themselves and their children in their own right, and who can't even claim clothing grants for themselves. We should push in the SS offices for them to get grants in their own right. We also saw the necessity for more women to attend national conferences and meetings and as most women don't have enough money to ~~xx~~ pay fares we should try and arrange coaches to conferences and raise fares so that as many women as possible could attend these meetings.

We talked about what we could do about rising prices, something which affects us all directly, not just in terms of what's sold in shops, but rents going up, laundrettes fares, electricity etc. It seems very difficult to be effective in bringing prices down in shops, although some women thought picketing shops and boycotting shops was a good basis for action, as it brought a lot of women together over a common struggle. Others thought we should organise more around getting free facilities like free laundrettes, refusal to pay gas and electricity bills, organised on a mass basis as in a rent strike. Other thought that because others thought that because we have to spend so much of our time shopping around for cheap goods and just worrying about how we are going to survive we should concentrate on getting more money from the SS.

About forty women had attended the conference over the weekend, and there developed a very good feeling between us. Everyone spoke, and the meeting lacked any of the usual competitiveness there have been in general Cu meetings, also we were able to have some constructive discussion without people launching into long speeches or being totally incomprehensible to everyone else.



SOME NEWS OF WHAT WOMEN CLAIMANTS HAVE BEEN DOING

One CU which has been having womens meetings since the conference has decided to occupy their local social services department to get premises for a nursery for women claimants.

An unsupported mothers group called SMASH (Socialist Mothers Action Group for Self Help) which is part of a ~~xxx~~ birmingham CU blocked a main road on the outskirts of Birmingham with prams and people for an hour and held up the traffic whilst they collected signatures for their petitions for the Family Allowance Campaign from the drivers of the cars the local pigs were very frustrated but didn't arrest anyone then they went off to the pub and came back in an hour and did it again. A day or two later the pigs came round to this womens group to investigate a bomb hoax (thinking that these women were something to do with the AB as one of the women told the investigating pig "If I'd planted the bomb darling it would have gone off!" This group meets regularly and has strong organisation and collective of women, they manage to ~~xxx~~ get payments of clothing grants and the basic allowance paid to the woman in some cases of married women claimants, they also have their own vigilantes watching out for snoopers trying to spy and see if they are cohabiting.

In Southend there are very many young pregnant women and no jobs, so the women can claim social security, but their local labour exchange tried to force them to take the only job they had on their books, working in a knickers factory for £7.50 a week far less than they would even get on SS. So the Southend claimants Union together with these women went and occupied the factory, the labour exchange and the Social Security Office, attacking on all three fronts, and because of this militant action the labour exchange were forced to take the job off their books and the women got their social security money.

In West London we have started to have womens meetings and have organised a baby sitting collective for the evenings where mostly people we know without kids men and women commit themselves to leaving one night a week free to babysit for some woman who wants to go out for the evening, we also take more collective responsibility for each others kids taking them round to each others houses etc. For the evening rota someone takes responsibility for one week to find out who wants baby sitters, and then tells the person or persons who are babysitting for that night. There is also a central phone number where women can ring in who want babysitters. We have found that so far it is working although not so many women are using it yet as we thought at the beginning, but it seems that we needed to have some formal structure before we could get people to make a firm commitment to doing it.

At the national conference there were more women than ever before and more women participating in the meeting. We raised the question of collective child care saying that we didnt think that just women should be involved in this and that CUs should make more arrangements for croches and be more responsible for the kids. As a result of this practically everyone at the conference took a turn doing the croches. Also as the conference was being held at Swansea university, the Cus had been refused access to the University Catering

Facilities because there was a Lions conference going on at the same time, (Some businessmens charity outfit). As we wanted to get cooked meals for the kids the whole conference decided to go over and demand the use of the restaurant facilities. We all went over there at lunch time and as a result they had to feed the kids and us.

Stop Press

Some women in Dunleary in Southern Ireland occupied a local supermarket and tipped the washing powder and washing up liquid all over the products and the floor, because the local Capitalist Gaelic Western had just put up the prices on these products.

Some comments on the Womens Day march in London.

There were about 5,000 or more women, and men, on the march, - the atmosphere for most of the march seemed to be easy going and friendly with balloons and banners everywhere, lots of smiles, street theatre, ... but some women told me afterwards that they got pretty bored especially when we got to the Square and the speeches went on interminably. A large peaceful demonstration in the centre of London with speeches at the end has very limited effect - people have been demonstrating in this style since CND - its predictable, boring, and has very little impact on the ruling class, since it presents no real threat, shows no real power, and allows itself to be stewarded by police, the agent of the enemy. The first womens march in London was different, because it was the first time women had marched through London, AS WOMEN in recent history, but now we must rethink tactics for demos.

What made the Womens March this year good for me was, firstly, rushing down Oxford Street and Regent Street with some other sisters sticking stickers on the shop windows saying "Smash Me"; "Everything Free Today - Womens Revolution"; "Bosses Freeze = Housewives Squeeze, Women Fight Back"; "Women have been robbed enough - increase family allowance". The shop managers and supervisors were furious and several tried to attack us, but we helped each other escape, and because of the numbers on the march they didn't dare call the police on us. It would have been better if we'd had the organisation to get together and shop lift from all the shops, showing that we mean it when we say women refuse to be exploited any longer - this would have required thought and planning.

Secondly, getting in a big circle with lots of other women, mostly women claimants, when we got to Trafalgar Square, and singing revolutionary songs and dancing - more sisters could have got that together, it was better than just standing about waiting for the speeches to start.

Thirdly, I think the best thing to come out of the march was the occupation of the Post Office. It happened after the last speaker, so did not divert from the rally. A rumour buzzed around the crowd that some women were thinking of occupying the large P.O. near the Square to demand that Family Allowance be increased. The last speaker in the Square, a woman claimant, announced that the occupation was taking place, which although it unfortunately drew the attention of the police, made the occupation known to the whole rally. About 200 women went to the P.O. and while about 70 were inside singing and

chanting, the rest sang and banged on windows from the outside. Eventually reinforcements of pigs arrived and dragged us out of the P.O. Hardly anyone went quietly - we all sat arm linked and refused to move and fought any pig that touched any one of us. Women pigs soon arrived - a ploy on the part of the police who imagined we'd go more quietly if they sent women - Some women started shouting "Equal pay for equal work" - I thought this was deliberately ironic to expose the liberal nature of the slogan, but I'm told some sisters were chanting it seriously, which is hard to believe, since this situation showed very clearly who's side the pig-women are on - and it certainly ain't ours! Outside the P.O., there was some fighting - as I was one of the last to be forced out, I missed a lot of it, but the boot was put into quite a few pigs. They attacked us, and we fought back, saving quite a number of sisters from arrest by collective action. Some were arrested, and a lot of us went up to Bow Street pig station, got solicitors and bail for them, and sang and shouted till they were released on bail. The charges aren't serious, and one hopes womens politics will come out clearly in the defence. The case comes up at Bow Street in July.

From this action we felt our collective power, or potential power. Although in itself the action did not challenge the power structure, since we had no chance of holding the P.O. and did not intend to, what it did do was show that we are capable of getting together such direct action with each other, we are not prepared to march quietly, we will fight to save each other from the pigs. There were a lot of faces I saw during the occupation which I think were new to such actions - this is good - it means that more and more sisters are willing to take risks; to literally fight back. Further, we got some publicity and the trial will get more. The occupation points the way to a time when more women will be able to take more planned action to take back and keep what is ours!

Printing Press. 10.

We are two women who, amongst other things, work in, and help to run the local libertarian community press, in North Kensington.

Over the eighteen months it's been going, Crest has been run by a changing collective of people, other claimants, as we don't draw any money from it, sometimes all women, sometimes both men and women.

THE AIMS OF THE PRESS AND SOME OF THE PROBLEMS WE ENCOUNTER.

The machinery consists of two quite old offset litho machines, plate-making machinery, a duplicator, and guillotine.

The press has two basic aims,

1..To get stuff printed for local community groups and libertarian political groups such as claimants unions, tenants associations, womens groups, strikers, etc. groups who would not otherwise have such facilities open to them because of lack of funds, and the political nature of the work., Quite a bit of the things we print are not specifically for local groups, such as more general political pamphlets, but we do print quite a few different community newspapers, such as our own local one, Nell, Ned Gate.

The idea is to cover only the costs of printing (paper, ink etc.) plus the running costs such as rent, so that things work out as cheap as possible. There are now five similar presses in London alone.

2. To involve the people who use the press in the process of printing. To reach as many people as possible who need to use the press, and others who are interested so that they can do their own printing.

Ideally of course we would like everyone who uses the press to be involved in the whole process - but this requires time and some commitment which a lot of people do not have; This doesn't work out as well as it could do, and we need to think it out more carefully.

PROFESSIONALISM IS A MYTH.

All of us who work in the press taught each other how to print and it works out very well, but it requires a bit of time and patience, thats all. None of us are professional printers in any sense - and one of the things we are trying to do is to demystify such technical skills - in other words ANYBODY can print if they want to.

In this also it is important to try and change peoples attitudes to the printers - that it is not "our job" to do the printing and theres to be the client. This is often quite difficult to communicate to people, but the best way of doing it is by involving people in the process .

3. We encounter a lot of problems being women of course, that men do not have to face "Where's the boss" some people say on seeing women around the machines, or "Who's the printer then?" they say, looking about for a man, and of course are shocked to see its us! Working machines for ourselves is often a barrier to women because, of the usual role of housewife and mother is expected of us and forced upon us- technical and mechanical work is for the men. Also trying to work with men in such a situation has often proved difficult; because of their expected role men often try to take a superior position as regards to the machinery and running of the press and assume we are peripheral. But its common knowledge that women are much better printers than men!

Anuone interested and wanting to know more practical things abot the press, Come and see us, or write to us, at 154, IADBROKE GROVE W.10. 01-960-1975.

Vicky and Yvonne.

International Section^{11.}

Pauline Conroy is now a political exile living and working in Algeria. Many sisters will remember her from the Manchester Womens Conference when this newsheet was first set up, and other womens conferences and meetings.

Pauline has been forced to go to Algeria because of constant harassment in England by the Special Branch. At first she was charged with the Stoke Newington 8- accused of conspiring to cause explosions. The charge was then dropped. Six months later she was framed on a charge of conspiring to obtain firearms. While on bail she moved to Algeria with Mike, the guy she was living with, who was also continually harassed by the Special Branch and finally deported even though he had not committed any criminal offence. His only 'crime' was that of being a politically active immigrant. Pauline's case came up at the Bailey last month but she has had enough of British class justice and refuses to play the game, where the other side make rules and build the prisons.

But being in Algeria certainly doesn't mean stepping outside of political activity. There is always much to learn and much to do.

Pauline has sent us this translation of an article which was printed in an Algerian Magazine. In this section we have also printed some information on Womens struggles in Italy and Germany in order to begin to break down our parochialism and move towards a recognition and understanding of womens revolutionary struggle all over the world.

WOMENS LIBERATION

by Laila Khaled of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

1. What are women doing in the Palestinian Revolution?

Just as the Palestinian man has revolted against colonialisms and the political repression it represents as well as against social and economic subjugation, so has the Palestinian woman as well. In addition, the woman is in revolt against her social status which hitherto has been tying her hands and against her traditional role.

Hence as the Palestinian male is a victim of foreign occupation and economic exploitation in a capitalist or feudal society (a fate he shares not only with his fellow Palestinians and arabs but also with most inhabitants of the third world) so is the female victimized by her society. She is a victim of man's exploitation.

My purpose in this introduction is to clarify the degree of difficulty which the palestinian woman faces when she joins the

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revolution, tradition, and custom together with the economic structure of the society which compels the woman to be totally dependant on the man make it very difficult for the woman to decide to join the revolution and even more difficult to act on that decision once taken.

The achievements of the Palestinian woman in revolutionary work have been in comparison to all her handicaps considerable as well as admirable. They differ however from one group to another in the Palestinian resistance depending upon the ideological social and political tenets of each group. The woman's role in the revolution is directly related to the ideological and social stand adopted by a particular political or revolutionary group while keeping in mind that the liberation of the woman and her participation in the revolution cannot be effective and lasting except through organised channels. As far as the P.F.L.P. is concerned women enjoy full equality with men within the democratic structure of the Front she can reach the highest posts of leadership commensurate with her abilities.

Women fighters of the Front have demonstrated on many occasions that they are as capable as the best of men fighters. Comrade AIDA SAAD in Gaza now condemned to life imprisonment is a first rate fighter. The same is true of our martyr SHADIA ABU GHAZALEH murdered in Nabulus in 1968. We all remember AMINAH DAHBOUR and the combat assignment she had in attacking the Israeli El Al plane in Zurich in Feb. 69. In the Amman battle of September 70 in the Wadhat camp many still remember comrade NADIA who for ten days led that battle.

Aside from her combat role in which the Palestinian woman of the Front has proved her mettle she also contributes to the political and social education of the community and works diligently in the field of medicine and administration. Whatever work she does the woman has proved that what held her back in the past was neither her will nor ability but her subjugation to traditional social bonds and the unfreedom to play her proper role in a revolutionary organisation. The contribution of the women of the Front in educating illiterate girls of the community to use weaving and spinning machines so as to make them productive has been outstanding.

This does not mean that we have solved the problem of women's liberation. In reality what we have achieved has been more than what our adversaries expected and less than what we ourselves hoped to achieve. Much time and effort are needed for this kind of struggle. Liberation will no doubt be achieved when a real change takes place in the ownership of the means of production. This will then liberate women economically and so the total liberation of women will become possible, make more sense and produce bigger and more rapid results.

2. Is the role of woman in the Palestinian revolution affecting the role and status of women in Arab society in general and if so - how?

We must distinguish between one class and another. The phrase

'Arab society' is misleading in this context. What Arab women are we talking about? The villager of South Lebanon or the student of the American University of Beirut? The conservative lady of Damascus or the 'liberated' society woman of Beirut's Hamra Street? The Sudanese girl who bravely joins the National movement and works in it or the Bedouin woman of the Yemeni desert? I believe that we must adopt some sort of standard here so that this dialogue can be more meaningful. Since I am committed to the ideology of the P.F.L.P. the standard for me can be one of classes. Therefore the question can be answered as follows. The Palestinian woman who has joined the revolution is daily giving an example to the Palestinian and Arab woman of how women can be liberated, how they can decide for themselves how they can be truly free without losing 'honour' and how they can free themselves from man's tyranny and tyranny in society in general. Such an example does not of course achieve immediate results overnight nor miracles. At the beginning the woman who has been subjugated is amazed and then begins to admire the example. By slow degrees she begins to ponder the lesson which is being repeated and finally the example bears fruit.

When we say that AIDA or SHADIA or AMINA or NADIA are not important in themselves we mean that they sow the seeds in our society for the deeper and more pervasive revolution of the future.

3. How is the attitude of Arab men changing? - if it is - towards the role and place of women in the Arab society since the Palestinian revolution?

We need to recognise that the Arab man too at least with reference to classes we mentioned is also exploited and colonised. His own liberation will doubtless contribute to the liberation of the woman who is herself subjected to a double exploitation: she is exploited by those who exploit the man and is then exploited by the man himself.

The man will certainly not abandon his privileges easily. This does not mean that he will not abandon them if every sign points to the fact that such abandonment will not harm his interests in the long run. On the contrary once these privileges are abandoned he will find his way to a deeper and more fruitful and happy life. A large part of the subjection of women is present in mental make-up. Thus an important step on the path of women's liberation is taken through the liberation of man.

We in the P.F.L.P. maintain that the question of women's liberation involves more than a mere advice or persuasion or encouragement. Rather it is part and parcel of the total efforts being made to liberate society from all forms of repression and exploitation, politically, economically, and socially, and also free it from obsolete customs and traditions all of which form the roots of men's chauvinism.

Many men especially the older generation find a great difficulty in associating 'Women's liberation' with anything else other than free love, depravity and prostitution. We can understand this difficulty since the flood of Western imported films, newspapers and magazines picture Women's Liberation as if it were the freedom of the slave-girl to choose her master.

This flood is in effect telling us; 'Look this woman can now freely choose the man she wants to dominate her'. Naturally we refuse this since the 'sexual dimension' has come to pre-empt the true significance of the liberation we are fighting for. The media of a decadent society makes out that this flood of bogus liberation coming to us from the West is what Womens' Liberation will be like in our own country. This scares not only our men who are bound by traditions of deep rooted beliefs inherited from the ages of nomadism and feudalism but also our women who feel that this sort of liberation is a travesty of our oriental conservative heritage. We are fighting against the tyranny of the old society as well as the new; for genuine equality and genuine liberation. As a result we find ourselves in an interesting situation- at first our families put up a stiff resistance, it is extremely difficult to change their minds about womens liberation which to them means 'freedom to be depraved'; so when a woman leaves her family and throws off shackles, this is always a moment of drama, pain, unhappiness and anger. With time the family begins to realise that their daughters liberation did not lead to depravity, but on the contrary gave her a deeper confidence in herself, the respect of her comrades, a strength of character which she lacked and courage in the face of men. All this makes the family abandon their earlier recalcitrance - I know many of my sisters have had a similar experience.

This in general is the pattern of events, of course there are exceptions and men often find it more difficult to reconcile themselves than women.

4. What further changes do you see concerning the role of women in arab societies? Are other international influences from the womens liberation movements affecting arab women in their changing cultural identity?

The initial solution suggested by many is to call for wider and better education. But the problem is not that simple since education itself must be revolutionised when it is a question of womens liberation. I do not wish to appear as though i reject all the culture that comes to us from the capitalist west. But what i would like to emphasize is that we have gone beyond the stage at which we stand amazed when faced with the flood of that culture. The key to the future lies in our ability to use the revolution to do away with all the relations of production which dominate our society and are where the roots of repression find a fertile soil. We are certain that the problem of womens liberation can receive only a partial solution in a society which permits class, racial or religious discrimination.

We are watching with great interest the various movements of womens liberation in the capitalist world. For us, it signals a failure of the capitalists to subjugate women and the beginning of womens fight back. Naturally some movements strike us as being 'suicidally angry' more akin to a drowning man trying to save himself by drowning himself further. We recognise these developments as being a natural part of the attempt to find solutions: but we believe that collective revolutionary action designed to undermine all the old relations of production which constitute the real foundation of our existence is the only path. Admittedly it is the more difficult path, but it is the only one.

WOMENS STRUGGLE IN ITALY. ^{15.}

For four years the Italian Working class have been on the offensive. Women workers at home and out of it, men workers, children and students have come together to spread the struggle from the factories to the whole of society. With rent strikes, mass occupations, fights against rising prices, the fight for free transport, they have begun to challenge the power of the bosses over their daily lives. People have started to take control of their own communities. Women have played a major part in this.

Also over the last few years in Italy there has grown up an Autonomous womens revolutionary movement. There are various groups, but one of the largest is 'Lotta Feminista', which started as a womens break away from the extra parliamentary left organisation, Poere Operaio. We recently talked with some sisters from Lotta Feminista, who told us about some aspects of their movement, like the demand for wages for housework, like the struggle to get community controlled nurseries. We found that a lot of the discussion going on in the Italian Womens Movement paralleled that going on in our own. We hope to continue dialogue with Lotta Feminista, and hopefully get some contributions to the newsheet on their struggle.

The following articles are reprinted from a booklet entitled TAKE OVER THE CITY which is about community struggles in Italy. It costs 20p, and is available from Rising Free, 197, Kings Cross Road London W.C.1.

The first article is from an elderly woman who describes her experience of rent strike in Quarto Oggiaro, which is an area outside Milan where the working class people who have been expelled from the inner urban areas have been rehoused in municipal housing. On May Day 1970 about 2,000 people demonstrated in the streets of Quarto Oggiaro. This was a positive break with the tradition of public processions organised by the political parties and the trade unions. People were coming on to the streets of their own community. The march was an occasion for people to realise their growing strength and unity and for developing further their struggle. It culminated in a mass meeting held in a square in the centre of the district. A large number of people spoke about their experiences:-

"The struggle of us tenants began in January 1968. I was one of the first women to stop paying rent. Despite the many difficulties our struggle has developed. The young people of the area have had a lot of trouble, day and night. But our minds are made up. If anyone goes on rent strike, nobodys going to be able to evict them. Every time the bailiffs come we'll be there, all together, in front of the door, stopping them from getting in.

Not long ago 500 police were sent down from the Viale Romagna. 500 police to throw out the family of one poor worker on to the street. How come, when hundreds of evictions used to be carried out with only a bailiff there, it now takes a whole

army?

It's because here in Quarto Oggiaro people have got together to fight. Because here in Quarto Oggiaro there's the tenants Union. We're using a new type of weapon to fight against the rising cost of living, against the bosses exploitation of us in our homes. It's something really effective - a rent strike

I'm not speaking now to the young people, to those youths in the area who have been in the fore front of our struggle. I want to say something to the women who live here. Many of them still aren't involved and haven't realised the importance of this strike.

In the two years and five months that I've been on strike, I've saved a lot of money. I feel healthier. I've had more money to give to the children, to the ones who really need it. I've had some money to give to a few old age pensioners. I'm not saying all this to give you big ideas about myself. But just think for a minute. Rather than give your money to the bosses, keep it for yourself. Give it to the children. Give it to the workers who are struggling in the factories, who're exploited year in and year out.

People talk about the Autumn factory contracts. What did the workers gain? Nothing - absolutley nothing! I know what my familys finances are like. If you do the shopping, you see prices rising every day. I'd say we've lost out badly. They can laugh - the clever ones, the reformists, all those male politicians. But we're getting near election time, and we'll give our vote to those who deserve it - and thats none of them!

Eat sirloin steaks....don't go handing your hard- earned money over to the theives in the Viale Romagna!

After those 500 police came to Quarto Oggiaro our struggle expanded a hundred times. Even the very next day. Anybody who's still paying rent just remember this. You won't get a penny of it back from the authorities. Follow the example of the young people. Even if you don't give them responsibilities a lot of the time because they're so young. But they're much tougher and braver than us. Because after fifty years of struggle we can't get the same results we used to.

Personally I can say this. Since the time I first went on rent strike things have gone better for me.

Long live the working class! And long live the struggle of the tenants!

A woman worker from Fiat speaks:-

"After four months of strikes in the factories I was in trouble trying to live on a wage that just wasn't enough. I have three children, all of them very young and dear to me. And I just couldn't afford the rent I was paying to this private landlord. So they had me evicted. I didn't get help from anyone.

Then I heard there was a flat empty in Quarto Oggiaro, and I decided to squat in it. Now the authorities have told me I'll have to get out in ten days time. Well, the authorities had better learn this. I love my kids and I'm going to make sure that they've got somewhere to live. And I can show them a thing or two.

A home is a right, and, in the name of that right I've taken one! "

IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN FRANKFURT.

The following article is also taken from the booklet, TAKE OVER THE CITY.

Women fight for a nursery.
Autumn '72.

Early in September a group of women who had been involved in occupations and rent strikes began meeting to discuss their problems. The rising cost of living and soaring taxes are cutting into their husbands' pay packets, forcing many women to look for jobs outside the home. They go cleaning toilets for three Deutschmarks an hour or work in factories where they are made fun of and insulted every day.

The immigrants share one room to a whole family. The women come home from work exhausted and have to prepare supper while the children run around shouting and screaming. The smell of food permeates everything, even the blankets on the beds. There are frequent fights because there's not enough room to live in. The kids are particularly nervous and aggressive because they have nowhere to be alone and no space to play in. Just as there are no decent houses for immigrants to live in, so there are no schools or day care centres for their children. Here you're only allowed to produce and be exploited; really living is forbidden! Children aren't productive so there's nothing for them, not even a barrack or a nursery.

The women's meeting decided to begin by fighting for a large multinational day care centre as a first objective. Here children could learn to play and to struggle together. In their leaflets, which were printed in every language and distributed all over the city, the women said that they wanted to organise this centre for themselves, because they didn't trust paid professional people, with their military type discipline. However this centre should be paid for by the city because the taxes taken from immigrants' wages (nearly one third of an average wage packet) would easily cover the costs. The meeting decided to hold a demonstration on Saturday, Nov. 4th, with the slogan: 'A decent house for all working class people and a multinational day care centre for all immigrant children and German working class children!'

On Thursday, November 2nd, a delegation of immigrant women, about 30 of them with their kids, as well as a good number of immigrant workers and German women, met at the Town Hall, a beautiful old building with lots of windows, to announce Saturday's demo. In a statement to the press they accused the City of shirking its responsibilities for housing and child minding problems.

About 60 people went into the town hall, and when they found the office of the mayor, Social Democrat Rudi Arendt, they decided to pay him a visit. The children went in first and occupied all the chairs in the room and rolled around on the lovely soft carpets, while the women surrounded the mayor. The mayor tried to put on a good show despite the 'bad joke' and he listened to the first demand with a long suffering but kindly attitude. The second speaker, a Spanish worker from Eppener Street protested against the fascist decision of the courts which had ordered the eviction of a Yugoslav family for going on rent strike. At this point the mayor, who was nervously thinking about the coming elections, began shouting 'Raus' 'Out!', and shouting at the women. 'If you're Communists why didn't you emigrate to Communist countries? The city of Frankfurt never asked you to come here!' The women were furious and suddenly found that they could speak German like never before. They started to insult him back in return, shouting that they didn't choose to emigrate, and that German bosses need immigrant workers to get rich. When the mayor tried to leave the room the women blocked the way while the kids took over his desk. The mayor realised that things were going badly for him so he tried another dirty trick. He tried to divide the women from one another by saying that the German women were extremists and that he wanted to speak to the immigrant women alone. But this disgusting trick got him nowhere, because everyone shouted back, 'The German comrades struggle side by side with us - they're the only ones who care because they have the same problems with housing and child care.' As the discussion went on it developed into a public popular trial of the mayor.

Finally the women told him that he'd better meet them again when they'd clarified their demands and each side had their own interpreters.

The meeting was fixed for Monday, after the demonstration on Saturday. The German press gave the demonstration sensational coverage, implying that the immigrants were being manipulated by German extremists. The front page of Bild Zeitung, the reactionary newspaper, read by all German workers, carried this headline in large letters: 'FRANKFURT - MAYOR AND OFFICE ATTACKED!' They were out to use the women's protest in Frankfurt as propaganda for the election campaign.

Saturday's demonstration was due to start at 11 a.m. Police gathered in the square, used loud speakers to announce that the demonstration was unauthorised and that the women and children should leave. They also gave out hand outs emphasizing the illegality of the demo. Instead the women and children stayed and went on shouting slogans about housing and play groups.

Eventually there were about 1,000 people in the square, a mixture of immigrant women and children and some German students. A cordon of mostly Italian and Turkish children went to the head of the march and, followed by the women and other people they began marching around the square, forcing the police to keep moving. Then, with the children still at its head the march set off down the street. The police tried to block the streets with lorries, but they still managed to march around the working class districts for 2 hours, with the police still shouting over the loud hailer that the demonstration was unauthorised. Finally they reached a park where they held an impromptu party.

By this time there were about 1,500 people on the demo. They started back to the centre of town where the march broke up into small groups, each one improvising its own demo. There was a big protest against the mayor who had sent out the police. Then they headed for a house in the immigrant quarter where 10 Italian and Turkish families were on rent strike.

Here the demo ended after the decision that Mondays meeting with the mayor would be a mass meeting.

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* Some sisters may remember the pamphlet A PLAN FOR ACTION *
* which was put out by a group called the Tough and tender *
* collective and distributed at the last Womens Conference *
* at Acton. The collective, which includes some women from *
* the Notting Hill Womens Action Group are planning to *
* produce a Plan for Action No.2, since we have grown and *
* changed since the first document, and we think that there *
* is a need in the womens movement for more clear written *
* work on what women are doing in England and elsewhere *
* how this all connects up, the general direction of where *
* we are going and where we should be going. We would like *
* sisters to think about this, and send us stuff on what *
* they've been doing, what they know other women to have *
* been doing, and what they think about this. What we *
* omitted in No.1 was a) the struggle of women in the *
* place of work, b) ideas for more coherent organisation, *
* c) ideas of what we are aiming for. but we still want to *
* discuss housewives and communities struggles. Please *
* contact the Notting Hill Womens Action Group, at 60, St. *
* Davans Road, London W.10. *

many letters

(Ros sent this letter from Pat Sturdy on to us so we are reprinting it in full)

31 Hogarth Ave
Rosa Hill
Burnley

phones: 31783,

20.2, 73,

Dear Ros,

Thanks for your letter, glad to hear from you. The women's Industrial Union is amalgamating with the AUEW. Its now being dealt with by both solicitors, so overthings OK. The women are getting a new branch of their own. I'm now doing a part time job as I left Lucas for health reasons and I went back nursing, but decided to do part time work as I want to take more interest in women's role in the trade unions. But I am disappointed that women don't realise that they are going to have to fight more if they are going to get anywhere. They do not organise themselves at all, too many small action groups, and some are damn good, but I want to see them in one big Womens Action Group. I went to Bradford the other week, speaking to women there, and they are a good group. But things are moving too slow Ros. Women need to be made to see that they can help change the society we live in. I was interested in your statement in the Womens Lib paper, its just about what I've been saying to groups that I've talked to. Another important thing- women must be made to see things through papers. It needs spreading around more. Yes, I'm pleased about the discrimination act, but like you, I don't think it will achieve anything if women don't force it. Women must be made to see its no good sitting at home and moaning about money and the cost of living if they're not going to do anything about it. It makes no sense. The time has come, women need a leadership, what do you think? I've met Nancy from Fakenham. She's good. If you can put a story of what I've said in this letter in your paper perhaps it will do some good. Say that Pat Sturdy says its time that women woke up and got together in one large group, not called womens lib as the men use this as a gimmick. I've told women this that I've met, and they agree. The result is they now call themselves the Womens Action Groups. So if you can write a little bit more and make a story of this, I would be happy if you could put it in any papers that you can. I did have something I believe printed in Red Mole a while back. If you want to ring me up for more information you can.

See you,

Pat Sturdy,

P.S. I'm better at talking to people than writing. Talking makes more of an impact, Pat.

WHOSE CHILD CARE?

A group of women are starting to put together a pamphlet on the situation around child care orders. We want to produce a practical manual which will explain what the different child care orders mean, what the child care/welfare officers are and are not entitled to do, what demands you should make on them, and the ways in which mothers have successfully fought to get their kids back. If anyone is interested in working with us or has experiences to share, come on Wednesdays 2-5 to "UP AGAINST THE LAW" (UPAL) women's meeting

1 Elgin Ave

London W.9 (289 1123)

or see Fran

Basement flat 25 Powis Sq,
London W.11

We received this letter from a sister who wishes to remain anonymous:-

TERRORISM OR TACTICS.

Just for the record.....

There has been a lot of talk glibly thrown around in the Newsheet about the trend towards so-called 'terrorism'. On reflection, I could not in fact recall any specific article which dealt with how to make an 'explosive device likely to cause serious damage to property'. What I do recall, is I think one letter from the Stoke Newington 8 defence group calling for support for the trial and the pickets, and a description of Michelle O'Callaghan's arrest and trial. To support these people is not necessarily to defend 'terrorism', but to show solidarity with people who are being victimised by the State. These sisters still need our support in Holloway-Prison Nos. at end of letter.

But the question is not simply for or against terrorism. If we are revolutionaries the only question must be a tactical one. From our analysis of the current political situation we must decide what to do about it. If the local Tory mayor sends gold embossed invitations to his annual reception to the local tenants association representatives who live in the slums, then something must be done about it. The decision to hold a demonstration has to be matched up with what you can achieve. In one case of such a demonstration people in fact underestimated the show of force of the pigs, and seven people got arrested. However the only reports in the local papers of the mayor's reception were those which carried lurid descriptions of police attacking people, so the effort was a good lesson in communication.

In another situation different tactics have to be used. As with the bombings in Whitehall and the Old Bailey last month. It achieved the aim of bringing the war back home, of showing what the British Army is doing in Belfast EVERY DAY. Criticism could be made of the fact that the actual damage that was done to the Bailey and the pigs was minimal. It could have been better placed. However to dismiss the acts as "blind terrorism" is not only to ignore the revolutionary situation in Ireland, but the potential revolutionary situation here.

But one thing is clear - the best tactics are those which are firmly rooted in working class struggles.

- Do you know what your local tenants association want to do to the rent man?
 - Do you know what every mother claiming family allowance wants to do to Anthony Barber?
 - Do you know what your local squatters want to do to the property speculators?
- DO YOU ?

FREE OUR SISTERS.

FREE OUR SELVES.

Hilary Creek.....10 years for Conspiracy to cause explosions. Prison No 971225
Anna Mendelson....10 years for Conspiracy to cause explosions. Prison No 971226
Michele O'Callaghan..18 months for Possession of explosive substance. No 971823

(All in Holloway. Address of Solidarity with Stoke Newington 5 committee:
54, Harcombe road, London N.16)

Dolores Price, Marion Price, Roisin McNeary all in Brixton Prison on remand charged with Conspiracy to cause explosions.

Theresa Holland, Liz McKee, Margaret Shannon and Ann Walsh all interned in Northern Ireland.

These sisters and many more like them are victims of State repression. They need our support!

MARCH in solidarity with the Stoke Newington 5 and all prisoners on Saturday
MAY 12th at 3.30 pm from Hyde Park Corner to Lincoln Inn Fields. In the evening Angie Weir and others will be speaking at a meeting in support of the SN5 and Anti-Repression campaign. This is at 7.00pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq.

THOUGHTS ON WOMENS LIBERATION AS A REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT.

Many of us in the women's liberation movement consider ourselves revolutionaries; that is, we do not believe that alterations made to our present society can have any meaningful effect upon the relationships (economic, social and personal) within that society. We need to start again, totally.

The revolutionary society I want to see is one in which power literally belongs to the people; that is, events are controlled by those who are affected by them. This means workers in control of their factories, students (of all ages) in control of their education, women in control of their fertility, all of us in control of the health of our own bodies, of the planning of our own homes etc, etc...

From this it follows that revolutionary activity is whatever leads to people having greater control of their own lives. I cannot lay down specific guidelines for this, as the activity depends on the reality of the situation. An action may be revolutionary in one context, reformist in another. Ultimately all struggles can be co-opted into the present system except the struggle to control one's own life.

I would like to illustrate this by examples from the women's movement. My view of any campaign is obviously not the only one. I do not know how the different women involved see their actions. Please write in and discuss. My aim is to show how most campaigns have both a revolutionary and a reformist side. It is up to us which side we concentrate on.

Contraception/ Abortion Campaigns.

These are revolutionary in so far as they help women to realise they can control their own fertility and hence have a greater control over their own lives. They are reformist if they concentrate solely on pressurising authorities into providing better facilities without making people aware of their existence, and without considering at the same time the situation of women who want to have children but, for a variety of reasons, cannot. After all, it is not difficult to visualise a totalitarian society in which free contraception would be dealt out to all women from puberty until the age that the state decided was best for producing future workers and soldiers. Or take the present situation in most Eastern European countries. Abortion is more readily available there than in the West, but it can be (and is) withdrawn if the birth rate falls below what is considered necessary. Contraception is far less readily available, as being less easily controlled. The revolutionary demand here is the right to choose, all others are co-optable.

Nurseries

If a woman is confined without choice to the role of child-rearer, she has little control over her own life. If nurseries give her the choice of how much time she spends with her children, this is a step forward. But what if she has to put her children in a nursery in order to earn a decent amount of money? What if she prefers to look after her children herself but cannot? And what about the factory nurseries, which an employer can use as a means of control over his workers, threatening them with loss of its facilities if they press other demands? And in any case, what are nurseries like? Some produce very obedient conformist children. Is this what we want? What exactly do we mean by "community controlled" nurseries?

Unionisation of Women

Fairly obviously, the TUC is not a revolutionary organisation, nor are its member unions. A few examples should suffice. Several NUPE officials in different parts of the country have recently resigned, while hospital workers in their thousands are acting militantly for the first time. The gas workers' union officials continue to call for partial stoppages, while in Bristol some of the workers themselves took over the Gas Boards office to demand the

cutting off of all supplies to industry. The NUT executive refused to allow a motion from the floor of the meeting to be put, to demand an end to the wage freeze. I am not saying that all unions should immediately tear up their union cards. Trade Unions have considerable value as friendly societies. In situations such as that of the night cleaners, unionisation is a big step forward, since by doing so the women acquired many basic rights. I am saying that you cannot expect a revolutionary lead to come from the trade unions, so it is of little use to work in that direction. You cannot work democratically through an undemocratic organisation; if you work through a bureaucracy you end up as a bureaucrat. Meaningful change on the shop floor can only come about through the actions of those who work there.

Women's Centres

Firstly, a women's centre has a very practical value for the group that runs it. They no longer have the problems of trying to book rooms for meetings (was Manchester unique in being so often double booked?) or find places to store banners, or wonder just where those necessary loafers are likely to be. As such, it can free women for other activities.

But the day to day chores of running a women's centre can be considerable, as I know from experience. Also, it can take a great deal of money that could well be used on other projects. The sheer effort of running the centre can prevent a group from engaging in revolutionary activity.

Used properly however, a women's centre can be a place where women can come to express their problems and ideas, and to plan their campaigns. It can provide the setting for unplanned discussions and help members to get to know each other better. It can also show other women how it is possible for women to work together.

Terrorism

In the last newsletter (No 14) there was a suggestion that one way for women to fight against their oppression was to heave a brick, or a bomb at oppressive institutions. This I disagree with entirely. I don't see this as revolutionary, or even reformist. Chucking bricks or bombs about doesn't change anything, though it may help to get your head clear. Even if you were to succeed in bombing Biba's (let us say) to bits, another store would soon be built on its ashes. This will continue until women generally no longer accept the idea of femininity set out by such an institution. Only by women acting together can oppressive conditions be radically changed. It can't be done by any elitist group acting on behalf of the oppressed.

This after all is what I mean by revolution: the conscious collective action of those who feel themselves to be oppressed, in order to change their situation so that they are in control of it. Who else can know where the shoe pinches? It is vital that we consider all our campaigns in this light; do they lead people to taking more control over their own lives or not? I've only considered a few forms of action here, and am well aware that I've not said the last words on any of them. I hope that other sisters will write in to continue the discussion, and will continue the discussion, and will consider the implications of other campaigns that I've not mentioned, such as family allowances, Women in Media, Pregnancy Testing etc, etc which seem to me to have both revolutionary and reformist potential. I'd like to know how sisters see these and other actions.

Love and liberation
Jill Walker.

Jill Walker lives at 14, Clare Road, Levenshulme, Manchester 19.

from: Notting Hill Womens Action Group,
c/o 60, St. Ervans Road, W.10.

1. DISTRIBUTION.

We have duplicated 450 copies of this issue, because we want to make the network bigger. Since this is the decision of our group, we will pay the extra cost.

We intend selling copies at 4p each through COMPENDIUM BOOKSHOP, 240, CAMDEN HIGH STREET N.1 and RISING FREE, 197, KINGS CROSS ROAD, WC.1. Also we are sending it to women/womens groups who we think will be interested but who are not currently on the address list. If those women want to become part of the network on a regular basis, subscription rates are 40p for 10 issues, but if you are claiming just let us know that you want to be on the list, and its free. Send subs to us at the moment - we are trying to arrange a central place for subs though, so that we don't have to keep changing the address for them.

2. How can the Newsheet be organised from now on...

Previous to this issue the responsibility for the Newsheet has fallen largely on one person, Ros Nathan. we don't see this as how it should be organised, it should rotate around the network. We reckon it could come out once every 4-6 weeks.

Can a group volunteer to do the next issue?

If sisters, and groups want the newsheet to continue could they contribute to it - send stuff to us and we'll forward it to the next group.

3. PRODUCTION NOTES.

Cost:- Ink. We made the mistake of buying one tube from Gestetners, Euston Road, but it is cheaper from Banner Books, Camden High Street N.1.

1 tube of red gestetner ink from Gestetner.....	1.80
1 tube of black gestetner ink from Banner.....	90
Stencils, 25 at 4p.....	1.00
Paper(cheaper to buy it in reams and cut it up oneself, can be bought wholesale from wholesalers like Capital*	
4 reams at 1.30 per ream.....	5.20
130 stamps.....	3.90
Approx. cost of envelopes, staples and electro stencil.....	.80

TOTAL COST 13.60

We are taking £2.15 from the kitty (subs paid for this issue) and paying for the rest ourselves, leaving approx. £8 which we will send on to the next group.

We were lucky to have the guillotine and duplicator at Crest, but any group doing the newsheet can use these(Crest Press, 154, Ladbroke Grove, W,10 969 1975). The cover was done by electro stencil at the Community Press, at 11, Hemingford Road, N1. 837 3997

(phone 928 9282)

* Capital Paper is at Broadwall SE.1/ We managed to get 4 reams of large paper which we then cut up on the guillotine to give us three lots. Another cheap paper suppliers is: WM Printing Co. 28 Darlington St., Wolverhampton WV1 4NH Tel: W'TON (0902) 23720. They do duplicating paper at 55p a ream (foolscap)

 *The Kingsgate Place Womens Centre, 1, Kingsgate Place, London N.W.6.
 *Phone 01 624 - 1952, has been open for the last few months, and have
 *asked us to say that the house is kept open every day by a rota
 *system, that they want women and children to drop in any time (they
 *have a kids room), they can do pregnancy tests, help women with
 *Social Security and some legal advice. They also want women to come
 *and help.

 *The next NATIONAL CONFERENCE has been set for Friday 13th July, 7.00 p.m.
 *until 5.00 p.m. Sunday 15th July, to be held at Bristol University
 *Union, Queens Road, Bristol 8. If you want details of creche or
 *accommodation, or plans so far, or if you want to make suggestions
 *write toll, Waverly Road, Redland, Bristol.6.
 *The next National Conference planning meeting, is on 19th May, Saturday,
 *at 11 a.m. at Waverly Road.
 *On Sunday 20th May the Bristol Family Allowance campaign have called
 *a national meeting on the F.A. campaign, at Hall flat, 18, Beaufort
 *Road, Bristol 8. at 10 a.m.
 *Anybody wishing to go to both meetings who need accommodation write to
 *Waverly Road.

TAKE OVER THE CITY (a song from the pamphlet on the struggles in Italy already
 mentioned in the Newsheet)

Our struggle involves everyone
 Who doesn't want to be a slave anymore
 Who's conscious of their strength
 Who's not afraid of the bosses anymore
 Who wants to change the world in which we live
 Into the world we want.
 Who knows that the time to fight is NOW
 that there's no time to wait.

If we don't have a house we take one
 In our communities we fight against rent
 We defend ourselves from evictions
 We want justice for the people
 And to be free to live a communal life

Together, we, the working class are rising
 We know that the barracks we live in
 are a weapon used by the bosses
 From the estates to the shanty towns
 From the factories to the schools
 There's only one struggle.

We've turned the bosses' schools
 into Red Bases
 Bourgeois culture can't touch us anymore
 There's a revolt in the prisons too
 Soon they'll be empty
 To make room for the bosses

REFRAIN

A red wind is blowing
 Over the factories and estates
 It unites everyone of us
 Who've decided to fight
 For revolution
 For freedom
 LETS TAKE OVER THE CITY