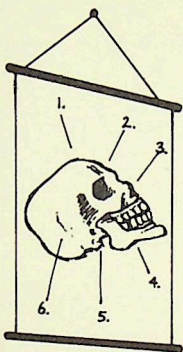


inside story


No 2 April 25p

GERY



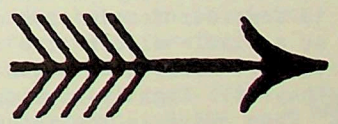
I'm sorry, Mrs Smith,
but I still can't
see why you need
an abortion...
(see page one)



Only three hospitals use this new abortion method. Why?

Left: an out-patient abortion at Preterm, an American non-profit making clinic, where 8,000 vacuum abortions have been carried out in a year without a single death. A local anaesthetic can be given to reduce discomfort and a counsellor talks the woman through the operation, which takes two or three minutes. Above: Dr Harvey Karman's 'catheter' - the latest vacuum method, disposable and hand-operated, which can help to undermine the mystique of the medical profession and give back to women control of their own bodies.



This month the Women's Abortion and Contraception Campaign gives evidence to the Lane Commission set up to examine the workings of the 1967 Abortion Act. Below we publish a brief account of the NHS abortion scandal, followed by three examples of women refused abortions.

Theoretically the abortion situation in this country provides a platform for a straightforward confrontation between women and the medical profession. In practice this doesn't happen because the majority of women wanting abortions know they are at the mercy of medical attitudes and whims: as isolated individuals faced with the edifice of the NHS within a society which views abortion as 'bad' rather than 'good', they are not in a position to confront. Rather, if they want an abortion on the NHS they are forced to accept a degrading drawn-out procedure meted out as a form of punishment for having ever got themselves in the position of needing an abortion in the first place.

Abortion is legally available on the NHS but in practice NHS provision is limited and discriminatory. Only 43% of all legal abortions are carried out on the NHS. The rest are done in private clinics most of which charge exploitative rates. Many women prefer to pay these rates rather than suffer the NHS obstacle course.

At this point in time the key to NHS provision lies with the 600 or more consultant gynaecologists throughout the country - doctors whose role is supposedly one of providing assistance to pregnant women. As yet, gynaecologists have a blinkered view of what a pregnant woman's needs are. Very few of them are prepared to consider termination of a pregnancy as a viable alternative choice to child-birth. Power over women is not something they will lightly give up.

Then there is the infamous regional variation in the availability of NHS abortions, which is due to the attitudes of individual gynaecologists. Birmingham and Leeds are the worst black spots. In both cases the consultant gynaecologists are prominent members of SPUC (Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child). However, even in those hospitals where the

attitude is 'liberal' there are delays caused by the apathetic and grinding machinery of the NHS delays which put women through unnecessary suffering.

The grind begins from the moment a woman approaches her GP to have a pregnancy test. The procedures general practitioners use in confirming pregnancy vary. When there is uncertainty about whether or not the woman is pregnant, ie during early pregnancy, some GPs will give the woman a course of pills which will bring on menstruation if she is not pregnant. This course takes one week before the results become known.

If the results are positive, the GP will then give the woman a form for her to take to a hospital along with a urine sample for pregnancy testing. When the woman has delivered the sample to the hospital, it may take up to a week for the hospital to send the results back to the GP.

If the results of the hospital test are negative but the woman is in fact pregnant, either the test was unreliable or the GP sent her before the test would reliably indicate that she was pregnant. In either case, another month's delay will take place before the woman again goes back to her GP to repeat the testing procedure.

When the results are positive, the woman returns to her GP to make a request for an abortion. If the GP agrees to refer her for an abortion, he will give the woman a referral letter and either he, or the woman herself, will then book an appointment at a hospital gynaecology clinic; this will be the hospital where the abortion will be performed if the woman's request is accepted by the hospital doctor.

The delays involved at this stage - even in liberal hospitals - can be anything up to a month. The reason is that hospitals feed both abortion patients and women who are continuing the pregnancy through the same appointment booking system.

Then once the consultation is over there is the wait for the operation itself. Here too even in liberal hospitals there can be a delay of up to a month because the ward and operating theatre are shared with obstetric and other gynaecological patients. If one woman was to experience the maximum amount of delay at each stage she would be around the 20th week of pregnancy - and very few doctors will carry out an abortion this late in pregnancy because of the risks involved.

It could be argued that hospitals are trying to be fair to all obstetric and gynaecological patients by sharing out appointment times, theatre time and bed space. But what is probably closer to the truth is that hospitals don't care very much for women seeking abortions and are not prepared to rearrange their schedules for this 'bad' section of their clientele.

The resulting delays force women to undergo abortions late in pregnancy when the operation is far more dangerous. The death rate for abortions carried out early in pregnancy before the 12th week is only 9 per 100,000, compared with 17 per 100,000 for abortions done at all stages of pregnancy up to 20 weeks. And on the subject of death rates it is a little mentioned fact that the death rate associated with childbirth is 19 per 100,000.

The only conclusion to be drawn from this is that certain sectors of the medical profession are wantonly risking the lives of pregnant women. Abortion before the 12th week of pregnancy can be done safely, simply and at comparatively little cost on an out-patient basis. This is being done on a limited scale in three NHS hospitals. Why is it not available within all obstetric and gynaecological departments? It is no exaggeration to say that, until it is, the NHS is killing women - the killer being a mixture of apathy and reactionary conservatism laced with a streak of puritanical righteousness.

Seven months ago I found I was pregnant. I am 16 years old and in the sixth form at school. I didn't want a child, not because of what the neighbours would think, but because I didn't think I was capable mentally and physically of bringing up a child. I value my freedom too much.

I went to my usual doctor's partner. He told me that no doctor up here (Bradford) would say I was suitable for an abortion. He told me to have it in a home, and get it adopted. I am adopted and no child of mine is going to be if I can help it.

I knew I could not get enough money to pay for an abortion, so I decided I would have to get rid of it myself. My friend got me some pills, and I knocked myself around a lot and generally did everything I wasn't supposed to do. I couldn't face using a knitting needle as my friend did, after being told that she couldn't have an

abortion either. Anyway I had a miscarriage.

After this I went back to the doctor and asked him about getting contraception. He was extremely unsympathetic and moralised a good deal. He said I could say no or use Durex. I said I objected to Durex on aesthetic grounds, and I didn't think they were safe, as my friend had two split on her - and my boyfriend didn't like them either. He said my boyfriend couldn't think much of me if he couldn't do that for me. I tried to make it clear that I didn't like them and I didn't feel they were safe - but he wouldn't listen. He also said Durex would stop me catching VD.

He asked me if I intended marrying my boy friend. I said I loved him, but I was under no illusion that it would last, and that I didn't really believe in marriage as an institution anyway. He then said I was being used as an 'innocent victim'. I got rather angry then and said he wasn't the first guy I'd slept with.

Anyway the doctor said it was against his morals to prescribe contraception for me, especially at my age (he is not a Catholic). He realized I would do it again, but that was my affair. He said I could go to the family planning, but he doubted if they would put me on the pill.

I went to the FPA. They asked me when I was getting married and said it would cost 3 guineas just for consultation. I couldn't afford this and still can't, so meanwhile I'll just have to cross my fingers.

It seems I would have to lie to get on the pill. I thought the doctor was totally irresponsible. I do not see why his morals should affect me. It is disgusting that I shall have to be dishonest at the FPA, if I can get 3 guineas. Dishonesty is against my morals.

I know if we had free contraception and abortion there would be fewer unwanted children. Other girls I know have come across the same difficulties in obtaining contraception and fear to go to their doctor - because they are afraid of what he will say, or that he will say no. And they can't afford 3 guineas and the cost of contraception on top at the FPA.

In 1969 when Helen Waller found she was pregnant she already had two children - a three year old and a baby of five months. Helen was still suffering from depression after the birth of the baby. She was

exhausted most of the time - the older child who was rather slow with her talking had a special place at a playgroup about a mile away, which meant that Helen had to spend quite a time each day running backwards and forwards - that is when she actually found the energy to get both children ready first thing in the morning.

Helen's husband, a council worker, was earning about £18 a week. They were living in a first floor flat - living room, kitchen, one bedroom and shared bathroom and toilet. This flat was over-run with mice.

Helen could not believe she was pregnant at first. Her mother, who was just horrified, suggested that she take Beecham's Pills in vinegar.

When these didn't work Helen turned to her doctor. She thought that he would understand that she could not have another child. She told him of her financial problems and her living conditions, and reminded him of the ages of her two children. He told her she was a strong healthy girl and wrote her a letter for the hospital.

This letter - which Helen steamed open - was booking a bed for the confinement. It mentioned, more as an after-thought, that Helen was talking of an abortion but completely dismissed the idea.

At the hospital, the doctor had a nice cosy chat with Helen. He told her that she would always wonder about the baby and that she would never forgive herself if she had an abortion. He assured her that they would look after her and that everything would turn out well. Helen had her one and only meeting with the Medical Social Worker that day. She promised that all Helen's problems would be resolved.

With the home cure having failed, and a NHS abortion refused, there was nowhere else for Helen to turn and so she went ahead and had her third child.

And now - the baby is a little over a year old. She has just been in hospital with a condition that Helen could have nursed herself if it had not been for her home conditions.

She is coping financially now. Her husband had a payrise but it is the extra family allowance that makes the difference.

She still suffers with her nerves, but she feels that she is lucky in that she only has to go and pick up a prescription from the surgery when they are bad.

Helen now could not imagine life without her baby but she says if it were 1969 again and she were to be offered an abortion she would definitely have it.

When Sue Small, who had had two previous abortions, became pregnant for the third time, she was in her own words 'appalled. I lived in a daze most of the time, praying it wasn't true. It was just a nightmare.

'I was physically fit but mentally unstable, partly because I was pregnant and also because my personal life had been unhappy for some years. My parents were quite kind throughout this period, but some of my relatives were very disapproving to say the least.

'My friends were very sympathetic: one girl found a back-street abortionist who was, unfortunately, unsuccessful. And at work (an underground newspaper) they were very understanding. If they hadn't been, I should have felt more suicidal than I did. I worked up to two days before the birth.'

Sue never had any doubts about wanting an abortion: 'I had no maternal instinct, no permanent relationship, no money.

'I had no cash whatsoever. I was working in an interesting and responsible job but was paid only £15 a week.'

The first person she went to see, when she was six weeks pregnant, was her family doctor. She gave 'mental instability' as her reason for wanting an abortion. The doctor referred her to a gynaecologist, saying she had no need to worry - but he was wrong.

'The gynaecologist who examined me was extremely curt and said that since I "hadn't learned my lesson" after two previous abortions he would not approve it unless the psychiatrist was convinced it would be a good idea. I felt that the gynaecologist thought me a tramp.'

In the questionnaire which Sue completed for the Women's Abortion and Contraception Campaign she described her encounter with the psychiatrist as follows:

Reasons she gave them for needing an abortion

Mental history - two attempted suicides, two periods in mental institutions.

Their reactions (advice, referral, etc)

Refused

Their attitude

Censorious

Then came the visit to the back-street abortionist. It cost £20 - and failed. 'I didn't return as the method used was so unpleasant and dangerous.'

That was it. The baby was born and adopted by Sue's married brother, while she went back to work after three weeks.

The questionnaire, in its laconic style, records one further answer of interest to the medical profession:

Effect of having baby on her mental health

Difficult to judge - have had no complete breakdowns since. But would never again consult state psychiatrist.

Where to go for an abortion if you can't get one on the NHS

The pregnancy advisory services listed below are not in it for the money. They will try to get you an NHS abortion, if they think you should have one, even if the NHS has already refused you. They charge as little as possible for a private abortion and can sometimes give grants or loans if you're really hard up.

Pregnancy Advisory Service, 40 Margaret Street, London W1 (629 9575)

Marie Stopes Memorial Clinic (Counselling Service: Dr Jacobs), 108 Whitfield Street, London W1 (388 0662)

Brook Advisory Centres (for Young People), 233 Tottenham Court Road, London W1 (580 2991)

Help, 10 South Wharf Road, London W2 (402 5231)

Birmingham Pregnancy Advisory Service, First floor, Guildhall Buildings, Navigation Street, Birmingham 2 (021-643 1461)
Branches of the Birmingham PAS:

Southern Pregnancy Advisory Service, Whiston, Hove (on the corner of Dyke Road and Old Shoreham Road)

Merseyside: Glooneys, Manor Road, Wallasey, Cheshire

Coventry: the Coundon Clinic, Barker Butts Lane, Coundon, Coventry

What went on at the Langham Street Clinic?

57 per cent of legal abortions take place in private clinics, most of which charge exploitative rates. And there is often a concealed connexion between these clinics and 'pregnancy advisory services'. The Liverpool Free Press has exposed the link between the £150-a-time Lynwood Nursing Home and Liverpool's Pregnancy Information and Advisory Centre. A company called Parviz Holdings Ltd financed the clinic and founded the information and advisory centre. Parviz Holdings Ltd is owned by Dr Parviz Faridian, who is also proprietor of the Langham Street Clinic...

This is the clinic - the biggest private abortion centre in Britain - which has recently had its licence to carry out abortions withdrawn by the Department of Health and Social Security. It has been suggested that the Langham Street Clinic was in fact suppressed because it broke the unofficial agreement between the Department and the private clinics that a certain proportion of beds would be kept for British women - as an overflow from the National Health Service. In other words the Langham Street Clinic is accused of having taken too many foreigners.

Below we publish an interview with Peter Stanley, the Langham Street Clinic's legal adviser.

Why was the Langham Street Clinic first established?

The clinic was opened shortly before the 1967 Abortion Act as a nursing home or private hospital, and licensed for medical and surgical work by the Westminster City Council, under the Public Health Act of 1936 and the Nursing Homes Acts of 1963. When the Abortion Act was passed we applied for permission to carry out terminations of pregnancies like many other nursing

homes that were well-equipped. Having gone to the expense of being well-equipped it cannot be denied that one applied for a licence because here was another field of medical practice which could bring additional work to the clinic.

What made the cost of an abortion at the Langham Street Clinic so high?

All private professional treatment whether in the medical field, law or accountancy is costly. The fee is always proportionate to the skill, eminence and experience of the professional person concerned. The Langham is, you may say, in a peculiar position: we do not employ a single doctor. The clinic rents out its facilities, its nursing staff, theatre, rooms and drugs to a surgeon who wants to make use of the clinic. When a girl comes to us she is referred to a Harley Street surgeon who is known to be working in our theatre on the day she can make arrangements to come into the clinic.

Half the women that come to us are married, and I suppose that they want to be sure of having their operations in a certain degree of comfort, which they know we provide - the Langham has televisions in every room and telephones by the bedside - and, being married, are in a position to afford it. A girl who has been let down by a boy is going to find it much more difficult to get the money.

What would happen if a girl came to the Langham for an operation but had no money?

It depended. In the early days there were not too many applications of this kind, but when girls came in this position they were usually helped. One had to be very careful because if word got around that the clinic was performing free abortions then we would have been inundated with charitable or semi-charitable requests -

and we were running a business after all. A lot depended on the doctor's letter a girl brought with her. If we had established a relationship with the doctor and he wrote a reference saying that he knew this girl and she came from a very poor family etc, the girl would certainly not be turned away.

Later in 1969-70, we wrote to Westminster City Council saying that we could perform for them five free terminations of pregnancy per week, if they could provide the facilities for screening and selecting deserving cases. They wrote back thanking us for our generous offer, but saying that they had not the facilities to screen, and suggesting that we select cases through GPs - as indeed we were already doing. What more could we do? We certainly couldn't advertise this service in the papers - one, because it was illegal, and two, because we would have been overwhelmed. We were committed in the long term to making a profit.

Was the refusal to renew your licence in any way justifiable, in your opinion?

Most certainly unjustifiable. We have always done our best to go further than just complying with the terms of the act. From March 1968 we have letters written to the Department of Health asking what else we should do to meet their requirements. We are not interested in providing the minimum requirements. As a business we exist because people prefer to come to us, and we had this long-term idea of the clinic with TVs and telephones, for the use of richer people who could afford such comforts.

The exact words used by the Secretary of State in his letter were that he was 'satisfied that the clinic has broken assurances regarding the use of beds for abortions'. We don't think we have. We don't know what assurances they mean. When we wrote in December asking them to what assurances they referred, we had no reply. For several years the Ministry of Health gave us our licence and the local health department fixed our number of beds at 35. In 1970 we applied for an increase from 35 to 55 beds and this was granted, after a survey by the local health department who felt we could cope with this increase.

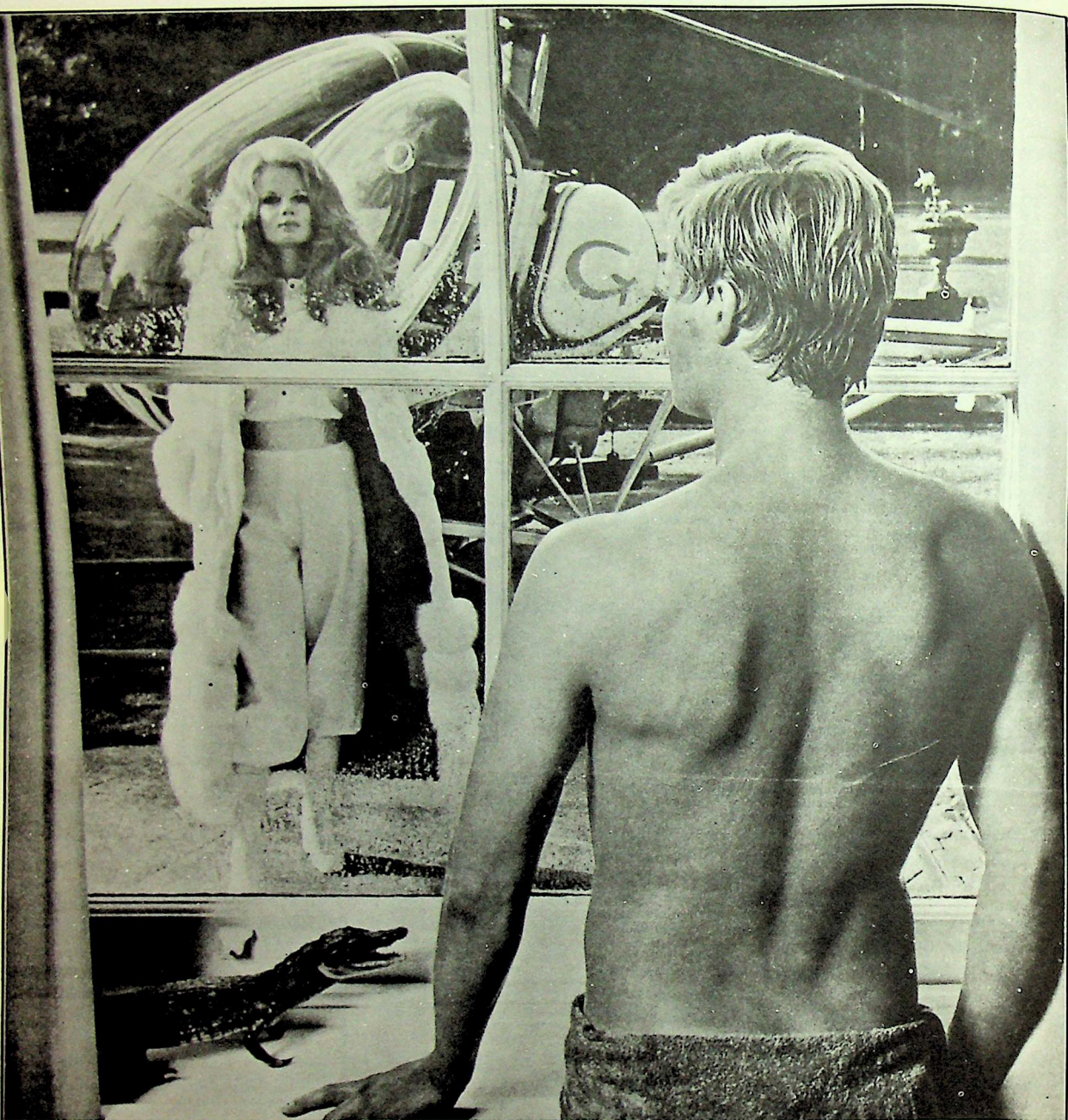
From August 1968 to 6 March this year we have dealt with 28,500 patients. Obviously

we don't solicit testimonials and this operation is not something the girls are going to want to discuss openly, but at Christmas time loads of Christmas cards are sent to the staff, often signed by one name only. Certainly as far as the medical records are concerned we see no reason why the licence should be refused.

The statistics are all available from the returns our doctors are obliged to make to the Health Department for the sake of records. There is no private hospital, probably, in Western Europe, which has done so many operations with such good results. We have written to the Department urging them to study these records. When we had performed 1000 operations, the Daily Telegraph reported this fact together with the information that there had not been one death or serious complication. Questions have been asked and satisfactorily answered in Parliament regarding our treatment.

There have been complaints about us, but I can count them on the fingers of one hand. One patient complained about three giggling girls at reception and that someone spoke to her in German. Well, we encourage our receptionist to be cheerful, but certainly there weren't three - nobody employs three receptionists on a Sunday morning. Another complaint came from a girl who said she was not encouraged to stay on after her operation. This is nonsense - she would certainly have signed a form discharging herself from the clinic and have been warned that it was best to stay overnight. The local authorities wrote to tell us that they preferred us to encourage patients to stay in hospital overnight, so we have always done this. But finally it is up to the surgeon to take responsibility to say whether or not his patient should go, or remain. One doctor also wrote after the report in the Telegraph to say that a patient had come to his hospital with septicaemia - but it turned out to have been just a mild infection.

Again it is nonsense to say that the clinic was shut on moral grounds. Half our patients are married with children already, and 90 per cent of the rest have steady boyfriends they intend to marry. Almost invariably their first question and major concern is whether this operation will affect their chances of having a child later.



Things happen after a badedas bath

(they say it's got something to do with the horse chestnuts)

The green badedas waters which bubble like vintage champagne. The mysterious action of a special extract of horse chestnuts.

The fresh smell of deep green continental forests.

But it's what happens afterwards

that counts. To the new, invigorated, re-born you.

What happens? Quite simply Lebenslust. Which the British, masters of understatement, call joie de vivre.

badedas

the most stimulating thing since bathing itself with extract of horse chestnuts



**How much
would equal pay
cost Cussons?**

**Things happen
after a badedas bath**

(they say it's got something to do with the horse chestnuts)
Foamy green waters bubble and tingle, the fresh tang
of deep green continental forests spikes the air...
badedas with its mysterious extract of
horse chestnuts is weaving its old magic. Forget about
soap. Just lie there... wallow... being cleansed
more kindly, more gently than you'd believe possible.
But it's what happens afterwards that matters, to the
re-born, invigorated you. Call it Lebenslust if you will
(the French shrug it off as joie de vivre). The British
simply revel in it.



badedas
the most stimulating thing
since bathing itself
—with extract of horse chestnuts

**About as much
as they spend
on TV ads.**

As an aphrodisiac Badedas does not discriminate
between the sexes, but in their factories Cussons do

At the end of last year the Industrial Relations Review and Report published a survey of the progress 46 big companies were making towards equal pay. Among those which blithely admitted that 'at present none of their women employees receive equal pay' was the Cussons Group, makers of Imperial Leather soap, Badedas bath oil and various cleaning and cosmetics products geared to the women's market.

Cussons plan to implement equal pay, gradually, by 1975. The reason they give for the delay - the main problem that equal pay represents to them - is money. It would, they say, cost them £200,000.

Cussons also reported the largest segregated area of the 46 firms (their process workers are all women) - keeping this segregation is the most effective way of minimising the potential cost of equal pay.

Cussons reported that they did employ women in skilled jobs - yet they were one of only two companies in the survey to admit to giving smaller pensions to women than to men.

But the most reactionary and complacent reply Cussons made was to the question: What in your opinion is the general attitude of the company's female employees towards equal pay? 'Not yet showing awareness' they said.

In an attempt to check this provocative claim an INSIDE STORY reporter approached the shop steward of Cussons' Manchester factory and suggested an interview with some women workers. The steward - who was, naturally, a man - was by no means enthusiastic, but he finally agreed. However, he added that it would of course be necessary to obtain the consent of the management before any interview could be arranged.

The personnel director was even less straightforward. There was, he said, only one possible time for an interview and that was the lunch break - but since the women only had half an hour for lunch he was sorry: there wouldn't be time for an interview.

The overall personnel director of Cussons, Mr John Burnett, made it quite clear that secrecy and evasion were general company

policy. 'We do try to follow the general pattern of staged increases towards equal pay,' he said but he refused to give any details. 'I'm not going to say what that is or what we're doing.'

And - sad to relate - the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers were equally uninformative: they admitted that they knew nothing about the progress of equal pay in the Cussons Group. And they weren't very concerned.

But there are a few facts available which will probably interest the women who work for Cussons. One is that the Group's 'financial problem' of finding £200,000 is not exactly insoluble. For in the six months ending September 1971 Cussons made a profit before tax of £255,000. And in the full year 1970-1971 the figure was £510,233.

Suddenly, £200,000 - the cost of equal pay for the women Cussons employ - doesn't seem such an impossible sum.

Or take profits after tax - the money available for distribution to shareholders: in the first half of 1971-1972 Cussons made £153,000 (compared with £132,000 in the first half of 1970-1971). So, after tax, the Group is now providing its investors with a dividend of £300,000 a year.

Spare a thought, too, for the directors of Cussons, one of whom was paid £12,303 in 1970-1971, while their company report revealed that a retiring director was presented with a golden handshake of £6,452. And the handouts didn't end there: there was also the odd thousand spent on charity by this firm which is too poor to give women equal pay. Last year Cussons gave away - to unspecified charities - more than £3000.

And, lastly, have a look at Cussons' expenditure on advertising: the ads themselves are difficult to avoid. In 1971 the Group spent a total of £319,837 on advertising. The money spent on TV ads alone - £233,034 - would have solved Cussons' equal pay 'problem'. If they'd wanted to solve it, that is.

THE EQUAL PAY ACT

Anyone assuming that the Equal Pay Act is going to be the automatic answer to the economic problems of the downtrodden women of this country, is in for a nasty surprise. Not only is there widespread opposition to the Act from employers - and trade unionists

- but the Act itself is full of loopholes inviting misuse and evasion.

The Equal Pay Act of 1970 prescribes equal pay for women workers by the end of 1975 for doing the same work as a man and for doing jobs which, though different from those of men, have been given an 'equal value' rating by a job evaluation exercise. The Act also bans 'women's rates' in collective industrial agreements.

But take job evaluation for instance. To begin with there are no conditions laid down about the method of evaluation - and there is no legal obligation on the employer even to carry out one of these 'exercises'. As the Industrial Relations Review and Report put it, 'It is well known that job evaluation can either be a tool for a more equitable pay structure (including equal pay for work of equal value) or, in given circumstances, a device to frustrate the intentions of the Act through deliberate over-weighting of factors where men can be expected to score high (like strength) and under-weighting of common female attributes (like dexterity).'

Another dodge is to make sure that men and women do different jobs, so that there are no comparisons and the women's wages can be kept down. Simply grading all the jobs usually done by women as, say, Grade Six and the jobs done by men as Grade Five to One is an ideal way of getting round the Act's ban on separate wage rates. The list of possible fiddles is endless.

The Equal Pay Act presents the trade unions with a real opportunity to show up the devious manoeuvrings of employers. But there is little hope of action from that quarter: most union leaders seem reluctant to risk the accusation that they're championing women's rights over those of their male members.

How the miners won - in spite of the NUM

What really happened in the miners' strike? How much credit can the NUM

claim for the gains won by the men? An INSIDE STORY industrial correspondent reports.

The Kent Area of the National Union of Mineworkers has 11,000 button badges with the message 'Solidarity with the miners' left over from the miners' strike. They should have no bother getting rid of them. Trendy Londoners are clamouring for them, with an official NUM Picket Badge the most valued piece of memorabilia of all.

The message of the successful miners'

strike has been trumpeted to the trade union and labour movement. It's the old line, 'United we stand, divided we fall'. Didn't the miners prove that conclusively? Well...

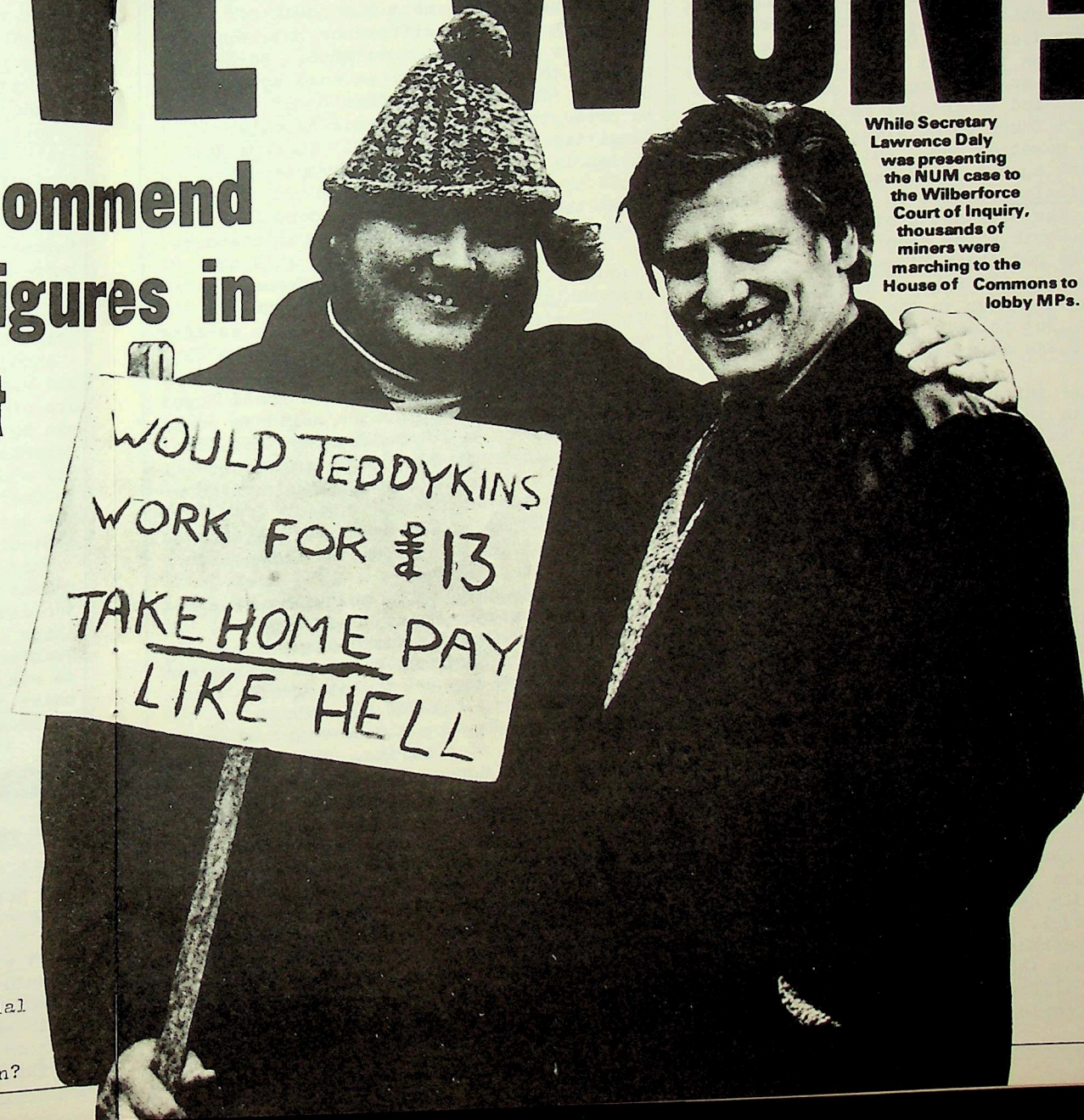
Joe Gormley beat Michael McGahey, the Communist President of the Scottish miners, for the Presidency of the NUM in June. Like the good loser he was, McGahey pledged

WE'VE WON!

Executive recommend Wilberforce figures in pithead ballot

"THE GREATEST DAY in the history of the National Union of Mineworkers," a tired but jubilant President Joe Gormley announced at 10 Downing Street in the early hours of Saturday morning.

While Secretary Lawrence Daly was presenting the NUM case to the Wilberforce Court of Inquiry, thousands of miners were marching to the House of Commons to lobby MPs.



FREE
Miner

SPECIAL BALLOT ISSUE MONDAY 21 FEBRUARY 1972

The last special strike issue of the NUM's

paper The Miner claims victory, but who did the fighting - the executive or the men?

his support for the new President and a month later was host to the miners' Annual Conference in Aberdeen. Now, the miners' conference has a left-wing majority while the Union's National Executive Committee has a right-wing majority. That explains why the Conference passes resolutions demanding high wages and, until the last couple of years, never got them.

Until 1969, the wages resolutions at the Annual Conference never stated figures. They always asked the Executive Committee to get 'a substantial increase'. Which they never did. The 1969 Conference in Blackpool was the last chaired by Sir Sidney Ford as President. A skilful bureaucrat and backstairs manipulator, Sir Sid didn't fancy being tied to figures in the wage negotiations. But he was.

And that autumn, 1969, saw the first of the unofficial strikes in Britain's coalfields. The militant Scottish, Yorkshire, Kent and South Wales miners came out. And the miners got their biggest increase ever. The Lord - as Alf Robens, the Coal Board's chairman was known to the miners - didn't like it. But as more than half the British coalfield was at a standstill, he had to lump it.

The same thing happened in 1970, when once again the Union's NEC had figures tied on their tail. Sir Sid was ill by now, and the Union was left in the tender care of Lawrence Daly, an 'attractive boat rocker' as the Guardian once described him, and its Vice-President, 'Whispering' Sid Schofield, the Secretary of the Yorkshire miners. No militant, 'Whispering' Sid.

But when Gormley won the Presidency in June, 1971, the Board audibly heaved a sigh of relief. Wasn't Joe a staunch right-winger? It'd be just like the good old days again when Sir Sid used to lead the miners up the hill and down again with coppers in their pockets for the effort. So the Board were advised by their Industrial Relations member, Cliff Sheppard, a former member of the Union's National Executive Committee who sold the jerseys to join the bosses in 1969.

With a new chairman, Derek Ezra, keen to show he was the right man for the job, advice such as this was palatable. With a strong rival, Bill Sheppard, the tough Deputy Chairman, equally anxious to show that he was the man for the job, poor Derek was in a difficult situation. After the strike, people were saying that's what

happens when you put the commercial traveller in charge of the factory. Perhaps they were right.

Now backstairs dealing is something of a tradition between the NUM and the Coal Board. The new boys, Gormley and Ezra, kept up that tradition. Just before the strike, they met at a Coal Society dinner. Joe, never a man to bite his tongue as Fleet Street's industrial correspondents found out at his daily press conferences during the strike, shot his mouth off by saying that the difference between the two sides wasn't all that much. Derek grabbed the opportunity to come up with the Board's 'final, final offer'. It was to be presented to the National Executive Committee a few days later. Someone had obviously told Derek that the Executive would accept it. We wonder who.

But the Executive didn't accept it. Someone had blundered. Ezra, for a start, had blundered. At the meeting with the Executive, Roy Ottey, the craftsman's representative, asked Ezra how much the Board's offer of an extra five days holiday was worth in cash. Poor Derek, new to the game and not sensing the implications of the question, blithely said the Board hoped it would cost nothing as the holidays would be taken on an individual basis. Now Alf Robens would never have been caught out like that. He would have made up a figure out of the top of his head.

So the NUM Executive stumbled, reluctantly into a strike for which the Union was totally unprepared.

Rather desultory talks had been going on with other unions, mainly Jack Jones's Transport and General Workers and Sir Sidney Green's National Union of Railwaymen - whose offices are on the other side of Euston Road from the NUM HQ - about physical help to stop the movement of coal should it come to a strike. Now something more had to be done. The NUM asked the TUC to call a special meeting of all the unions involved.

On 10 January, the TUC's Finance and General Purposes Committee met to discuss the NUM's request. They turned it down. A press statement was given out, and several industrial correspondents rushed up Tottenham Court Road from the TUC to the Crown and Anchor pub in Euston to give the news to NUM Secretary Lawrence Daly. Daly was dismayed, as was Gormley when he was told. So Gormley got on the blower to the

workers' champion, Vic Feather and asked what the hell the TUC were playing at.

Vic, trying to placate Joe's Irish temper, explained that the Finance and General Purposes Committee had felt there was no need for a special meeting as the NUM had already been having talks with these unions. But anyway, they had decided to instruct their members not to cross NUM picket lines. As most NUM picket lines were having their balls frozen outside pits which no other unions went near, that was no great concession.

But here the NUM stumbled again, only this time they stumbled onto the tactic that was to win the strike - a nationwide picket of power stations.

Slowly, the NUM communications machinery started to turn. The country was divided up, and responsibility for picketing outside mining areas was allocated to the NUM Area Offices. Busloads of miners were scattered throughout the country. The Union reckoned that at any one time there were 11,000 pickets out. Nine were injured, one was killed, and 48 were arrested by the end of the strike. But it worked - and nobody was more surprised than the NUM.

The London Area was given to the Kent and Midlands Areas for picketing. Dozens of miners arrived at the marble halls of Euston Road where the NUM has the most sumptuous and spacious of all trade union headquarters. Among them was Joe Holmes, the President of the Kent Area. Still in his 30s, over six feet and built to proportion, Holmes is reckoned to be one of the Left's long-term bets for national office. He soon made his authority felt in 222 Euston Road. But having hairy-handed miners running about the office wasn't to the liking of some of the staff. And after Holmes had been refused a room to hold a liaison meeting with delegates from other unions to organise the Trafalgar Square rally, he stormed out.

The NUM Head Office wasn't big enough for him, so the office bureaucrats said. And, anyway, who had given him permission to use Head Office notepaper, they also wanted to know. So he went to NATSOPA's smaller offices in Blackfriars Road and organised it from there. So much for the solidarity of the NUM Head Office. Not surprising really, when you consider that the Union advertises for office staff in the Daily Telegraph.

And so on to Cup Final Day at 10 Downing Street after winning the rigged semi-final with the Wilberforce Inquiry.

At the Inquiry NUM Secretary Lawrence Daly, smarting under the Union's tradition that only the President can speak to the Press (the fact that NUM Presidents are always right-wingers and Secretaries on the left might explain why) insisted on another NUM tradition that industrial relations are the Secretary's province and that he and not the garrulous Gormley would present the evidence to Wilberforce. Joe didn't like that but, being a stickler for tradition, he lumped it, except for one outburst on the second day of the Inquiry, when he announced that he was the Union's President and that he'd sat there and said nothing - something of a record for him.

For anyone naive enough to think that the miners might have started the revolution, the news on the Friday that the NUM had refused to accept Wilberforce's offer and were asking for more must have made their hearts beat faster. Little did they know that that decision was taken only by a 13-12 vote and that the NUM - and Gormley in particular - had decided that the game must be over by the time they left Downing Street. Anything else would have been playing politics, and we don't want nice union leaders doing that, do we?

Face to face with Heath and the Cabinet, Gormley and Daly knew the game was up as the National Industrial Relations Court was waiting in the wings. After a bit of banter, the NUM leaders, having cancelled President Pompidou's visit, screwed some considerable concessions out of the Board to tie up a very presentable package for the miners. As the victory issue of the NUM paper, The Miner, declared in giant headlines 'We've won!'

And they had, by an amazing process of accident. The most surprised people in Britain were the National Executive Committee of the NUM, whose right-wing majority, with a few exceptions, had stumbled about, writhing on the hook of the members' demand for a huge increase ever since their Conference in Aberdeen way back in July.

But our story does not end there. The NUM's Annual Conference takes place in Morecambe in July. And one of the resolutions likely to be on the agenda is from Kent demanding £40 for face workers, £32 underground and £30 on the surface.

Are you ready for that, Mr Gormley?

How they teach the teachers

One way to find out what's wrong with the education system in Britain is to look at the teacher training colleges - or 'colleges of education' as they are now called. Below we offer two glimpses of how they work.

I got my degree at the beginning of August 1970 and suddenly realised that I didn't know what I was going to do; the idea of a job was anathema and I hadn't got any courses lined up. I applied to do a 'Cert Ed' and was accepted by a London college through the clearing-house scheme after a very friendly interview.

At the interview, when asked my reasons for wanting to do the course, I replied that I wanted to find out whether I liked teaching and to read and write. I'd done Maths at university and thought I would enjoy a different academic emphasis. The guy who interviewed me accepted these reasons without any qualms and, feeling very sanguine about the prospect of doing the course, I went back home.

I found out that the college thought it was very avant garde in its relations with the students - no exams and a communal common-room so that staff and students could mingle as equals. The first day these advantages were mentioned several times and a very strange atmosphere of instant boy-scout friendship was propagated.

I was to find out as time passed that an important consequence of this atmosphere was to discourage criticism and to lower the intellectual tempo. The feeling was that everyone was doing his best. Critical examination of an argument was regarded as a personal attack which reflected on the critic.

We were split up into tutorial groups and on the second day the first tutorials were held. The guy chairing our discussion suggested that as a starter we introduce ourselves by giving our reasons for wanting to be teachers. To my horror everyone gave amazingly superior reasons about how they felt teaching was a worthwhile social task and contributed much more to society than the usual alternatives in industry.

I was the last to introduce myself and, determined not to lie, I said that it was

because I couldn't think of anything else to do. It was a mistake: the chairman was so embarrassed by my explanation that he made a joke of it - at which everyone nervously laughed. I protested that it was the truth but the subject was very quickly changed.

In like manner I succeeded in offending the rest of the staff who came to regard me as the rude radical who was always interrupting. I tried many times to get a discussion going about what the purpose of education was in a society like ours, because several features of the educational system disturbed me, but these attempts were always thwarted. Educational philosophy began and ended with the ideal of comprehensive schools. If kids didn't react to this ideal as they were supposed to it was because of bad teaching, not because of a fault in the system - thus all attempts to challenge this were blocked.

One of my tutors, Bob, was an outdoor type - he always wore an anarak, sturdy trousers and stout shoes as though at a moment's notice he would be ready to rise and join a mountain-rescue team. He had a shock of tousled hair that was always falling over his forehead and which he was always smoothing back with the hand that wasn't holding his Sherlock Holmes pipe. After I'd made a series of attempts to find out what he meant in his lectures he came to abhor and ignore me.

One day we had a visiting lecturer who related her experiences in a multi-racial school in Islington. The most striking thing she said was that nothing we did at the college was of any relevance to the teaching situation. The next morning at Bob's tutorial I repeated what she'd said. Bob paused for a moment, took his pipe out of his mouth, smoothed back the shock of hair with his other hand and said - not just to me but to the rest of the tutorial group - 'It's people like you who proliferate that sort of opinion who have put this country in the position that it's in today.' I was profoundly upset but I never tried to talk to Bob again.

I became more and more depressed and frustrated as the term wore on. Thus dampened, my efforts at communication became more and more infrequent. The course seemed pointless and directionless.



After a particularly abortive 'field trip' to Wales I decided that I must leave. The days at the college left me feeling empty, there was no work to do and I was more bored than I had ever been in my life.

I went to see the Head of my Department and told him that I wanted to leave. He asked me why and I told him that I was constantly bored. He said he found this difficult to believe and asked me to reconsider and go and see him in two or three days time. When I saw him three days later he was very different.

HIM: I've found out a bit about you - you're a left-wing radical who believes that schools implant middle-class values on working-class kids. You're a trouble-maker and I've had some very disturbing reports about you.

ME: What are you talking about? Who says I'm a trouble-maker?

HIM: You don't want to leave because you're bored, you're just a trouble-maker. Well let me tell you that the direction you're going in is just a one-way trip to the gutter. I knew a person like you once before and he ended up going around with prostitutes and living in the gutter.

ME: What are you talking about?

HIM: It's a good thing you're going, just come in every day until the end of term and try to keep out of trouble will you?

My desolation and demoralisation were complete; I couldn't be bothered to argue with him. I only went in once more. It was to attend a general science group at which for no reason at all I had the choice of dissecting a pig's trotter or peddling a bike mounted on a platform to see how much energy I expended. I chose the pig's trotter and finished it by the time the coffee-break came. There was no report to write, no explanation to give to anyone: it was just an isolated act. I left when the break arrived, unable to face the thought of the bike-peddling, and never went back.

My course takes four years and is for married women with children. Ages range from 24 to 50 plus. Most of the women have had little or no higher education: they've left school, maybe worked for a while, married and either come after their

second or third child reached school age or waited until their youngest was in secondary school.

It's called a college of education but it's really a training school for primary teachers - and the emphasis is on training. Few concessions are made to the fact that we are adult individuals and mothers. We have to sign a daily register so that the college and the Department of Education can check our attendance. For the first two years we had to sign a register at every lecture or class we attended; this meant signing in two or three times a day.

The college holidays used to be timed to fit in with local school holidays so that we could look after our own kids. After a directive from the Department of Education - and without consulting the students - that was all changed last term. Now we have two days only. There used to be a children's room in which students could organise classes/amusements for their kids if they had to bring them in on holidays. That was given - also without consultation with students - to the local teacher's centre as a display room, last year.

The lectures are compulsory and often boring and irrelevant to actual teaching or intellectual activity. We 'do' philosophy, sociology and the history of education as part of the education course. The staff have sometimes invited criticism and personal comment but they often seem unable to conduct a dialogue about their own or other people's ideas: they treat criticism and discussion as a personal attack upon them. If politically radical ideas are brought up either they are ignored or the individual is dismissed by both staff - and many students - as a nuisance for taking up valuable time, which could be used for learning information, which will help pass final exams.

It's ironic that all emphasis on academic work in college is formal and heavy-handed. The education lecturers stress constantly the need in schools for 'education for its own sake' and the use of creative and project work which encourages kids to be highly motivated and involved in areas which they've chosen themselves.

All students in college have to have a main subject - English, History, Social Biology or Art. In History all students are asked to produce ten 5,000 word essays and a special exercise of 20,000 words;

in English it's ten 10,000 word essays and a special exercise of 20,000 words. I started off doing Social Biology. I didn't choose English, which I originally wanted to do, because I was interested in modern American literature and it was obvious - though the college said I could do this as a special exercise - that the bulk of the work was going to be Chaucer, Shakespeare, Eliot and a few modern poets.

Social Biology consisted for a whole term in taking down in longhand - word by word - the notes of a very boring lecturer. Later when we were asked to write an essay on this material I found the notes facile and useless. When I asked if we could have the notes duplicated, as happens in philosophy and psychology, and spend the time discussing the notes or stuff we'd read or had ideas about, I was given a definite no. In the lecturer's opinion students only learn work if it is written down in longhand first.

When the time came to put forward ideas for the special exercise and I suggested child rearing in urban communes it was definitely not on. I was asked how I knew communes existed and then told I'd have to do field work there which would mean living in the place for a while and what would I do with my children? So I said I'd be quite happy to take my kids along as well. Finally I was told that this wasn't a suitable subject: the course was social biology not sociology. So now I'm doing main course Art.

Perhaps the staff's reluctance to accept criticism of ideas and course work is because they feel inadequately prepared to act as tutors in a free learning situation. Even though the emphasis in the main subject is on academic work, students often feel that their tutors aren't sufficiently aware of the standard of their work to advise them if they haven't done enough. Five students at the end of their third year were asked to leave because the college didn't think they'd pass finals as they hadn't completed enough work in their main courses. Three refused and insisted on coming back for the final year and two have taken a year off to catch up. The students were not in fact warned in their third year that they were so behind in the work although the college claim they were.

Teaching Practice is another part of the training. Even though we work in schools as unpaid teachers - and some of us have

previously taught as unqualified teachers for anything up to 4 years - we are expected by both college and schools to be completely uncritical of conditions and attitudes. On a fourth year TP a head rang the student's tutor and asked if she would pass on a message to the student. This was: please would the student not sit in the comfortable chair by the door but in the hard one by the sink. The student was a little upset by this but realised she had to put up with it as it was a final practice and the worst thing possible was to antagonise the head.

Later, on a pre-practice visit, she mentioned the chair episode to the head and said that she hoped she wasn't causing too much disturbance but what was she advised to do about lunch as she didn't eat school meals, would it be all right for her to take sandwiches into the staff room? The head said she had already discussed this with her staff and they felt that their privacy was at risk and her job was to make sure they were content in their work. It would be best for the student - aged 35 plus with teenage boys - to have her lunch in the medical room - she could sit in a chair there and rest her lunch on the bed. The college's attitude to this was: it's a useful experience for the student - she will learn how staff rooms operate.

A third year student who had already taught as an unqualified teacher for 4 years in a Junior School was doing a practice in a nursery class attached to an Infant School. The nursery teacher is semi-autonomous as she is in charge of her own department. The student arrived very keen to work with the children. She had spent her Easter holidays preparing interesting things for them all to do. But the nursery teacher was very reluctant to let the student teach at all, though she was allowed to wash the kids' hands and faces and do odd jobs.

When the student made tactful suggestions that the teacher look at her file - which all teachers are supposed to do daily - to see the work she had prepared, the teacher wrote over it 'grossly overprepared'. The student of course was very dissatisfied with her position and asked the college to find her another place. The college decided that was out of the question: the student had better finish off her practice as cooperatively and unobtrusively as possible.

Workin' for the (underground) man

Marsha Rowe, who worked on Oz and Ink, describes what it was like - and explains why she now feels a new women's paper is necessary

The worst year of my life was the year after I left school. That was 10 years ago. I spent one night during that year lying screaming on my bed 'Why was I born a woman' - terrified by the awful inevitability of my future - and I can remember vividly the uncomprehending look on my father's face when he tried to tell me I would grow out of this pain, it was only teenage neurosis. Nevertheless my 'neurosis' got worse - to the point where I would have succeeded in killing myself 5 years later if my mother hadn't come home unexpectedly and rushed me to the doctor. So I gathered myself together and thought 'Oh God, here we go again' and went back to my £30 a week job in the glamorous offices of Australian Vogue.

The point of this embarrassing emotional history is that it is not just my story but one you hear all the time from other women.

In my last year at school I didn't apply for a university scholarship because my parents could only afford to support me for one more year, after which I would have to give them money to add to the family income. They could not see any point anyway in my wanting to go to university - a matter of course for my two younger brothers. So I spent that following grey year waking up with mounting doom each morning learning to be a secretary - trying to reconcile myself to the fact that it was necessary to waste a whole hour in a day practising excuses which would enable my future boss to avoid unwanted telephone calls, sitting in a class room in the Sydney Tech - appropriately enough one of the modern buildings that seem to decay as soon as they are put up - and wondering if smelling salts would be any help in blocking out the fumes from the brewery up the road which used to make me sick.

Although I felt no direction towards a particular career, I decided to go to university anyway; I could earn enough to pay part-time fees and still give money to my parents. Which I did for the next 3 years.

But an odd suspicion developed that university was a con. I discovered an interest (at long last) in anthropology but couldn't work out a way of studying it since it was only open to day students. A degree and an academic career meant nothing to me. I wanted to continue learning. I felt resentful and shattered when my tutors would suggest staying behind to discuss work and it turned out they didn't want to discuss anything but a fuck. The favourite trick was offering to show you the passage up the Clock Tower so you could look over the quadrangle.

In the meantime, Oz magazine, inspired by the amazing personality of Richard Neville, entered the picture. Or rather I entered it, taking over from him the task of defying the doors of the ancient lift at 16 Hunter Street to sit down punctually at 9 o'clock every morning behind the one desk in the chaotic office. Actually the office was shared with a mysterious property business.

Immediately I bumped up against a problem which I didn't have the nerve to say anything about: he'd been getting £20 a week and I got £14 a week, and he had not been getting the extra £6 a week for extra work - especially since I, having been moulded into the nice, reliable, efficient secretary, was going to do dutifully all those boring jobs like subscriptions and accounts and explaining why manuscripts had been lost etc which had previously been evaded whenever possible. However, this was Sydney, Australia, 1964: things have changed a lot since then.

Anyway, I had a great time there getting cow gum on my fingers pasting up, discovering a fascination for printing machines, court cases, trundling up to the library to find out what Prime Minister Menzies had written in his school magazine - Oz was a very different magazine in those days - interviews with gangsters, hiding from the police in station lavatories clutching buckets of flour and water when sticking up Oz posters. Oz was certainly more fun than university and I can't really remember whether work, or the fact that I left home to live with Michael Ramsden a few weeks before the third year exams, meant that I turned up for one of them and not the rest - probably both.

But I was scared at Oz. Arriving there

Third-War
Wars

A Parents Guide to Drug Abuse

See Misuse of Drugs Bill - Page 13

Sagging of breasts
- mandrax

Profuse perspiration and body
odour - amphetamines

Sunglasses worn at inappropriate
times and places hiding dilated
pupils - LSD

Unavoidable feeling of euphoria
- cannabis

Irresistible desire to be affectionate
- LSD or "acid"

Redness and watering of eyes
glue sniffing

Running nose
- heroin, morphine, codeine

Red raw nostrils - sniffing cocaine

Constant licking of lips to keep
them moist resulting in chapped
rawness - amphetamines

Tremor of hands
- amphetamines

T-shirt worn constantly to
hide needle "tracks"
- heroin, methedrine

Staggering, disoriented
- barbiturates

Drastic loss of weight
- heroin, opium

Diminution of genital area
cocaine

A typical Oz cover but even in the underground who's really on top - men or women?

incredibly naive didn't help. I remember being shown a newspaper clipping 'Lord Root's dead' to root: to fuck, to dig for roots etc and not understanding the joke. But one progresses and when one day Richard threw tea at the mirror because I, not yet knowing the temperament of the electric kettle, had not made it with boiling water and then when he gleefully rushed to the bottom desk drawer to pull out my sanitary napkins which I thought were discreetly hidden to mop it up, saying he'd been dying to find a use for these, well, then I laughed.

Where do I go from here - how personal do you get - two years later Michael announced to both Oz editors that he didn't want me to work at Oz. I used to go out with Richard Walsh and Michael decided he was jealous - there was much screaming, Michael kicking down doors, bashing me up, smashing his paintings in a rage.

I left Oz.

A few odd jobs later I joined Vogue. On the way I'd been told by someone in a newspaper that I worked for that my boss had hired me because I wore stiletto shoes on the day of the interview. Vogue was an educational two years - but I learned more about bitchy competition between women than I learned about production and lay-out and since trendiness was not really my scene I got myself employed as a cashier behind the bar on a Greek ship headed for London. At one point during the two month voyage I lost my temper violently when the Chief Purser, after accusing me of sleeping in the cabin with a member of the ship's band and threatening not to pay me refused to believe my denial - after all, I was a woman.

One hippy trail later I was back at Oz which had become a much more functionalised institution, lacking the spontaneity and enthusiasm which had pervaded the Australian office and with specific jobs designated to different people. The most familiar event was the policeman solemnly inquiring about Oz 28 - that was just like old times.

By now the way of life - a community of zest and sharing - I had with a few people in Sydney had mushroomed: the underground had been acknowledged by the world and was already on the wane, although I didn't realise it at the time. When Oz joined with Friends to bring out Freak News at the Isle of Wight Festival 1970, it seemed over the candle grease on the wobbly

benches - freaks aged from 14 to 34 rushing in with the news and helping turn the inky handle of the stencil machine - that the excitement was still there and that alternative news was important.

So I stayed on writing letters at Oz, neurotically trying to play housewife at home, realising that I was neurotic because I wasn't achieving anything, and feeling quite incapable of ever doing anything effective. 'Initiative' was the most threatening word imaginable. I stayed on waiting for Ink to surface - that was to be different for me and everyone else. It was certainly different but not in the way anybody intended.

This had a lot to do with the way it surfaced and, in fact, with what the intentions were in the first place. I can focus now on one particular meeting which set the pattern and outlined the future structure of Ink. It was held right at the beginning of the planning stage. The entire staff of Friends, Andrew Fisher, Richard Neville, Felix Dennis, other people who were interested, and Ed Victor who, unbeknown to anyone, except I suppose Richard and Andrew, was contemplating becoming an editor on Ink, were squashed into a basement room. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the possibility of Friends combining with future Ink people to bring out the new alternative newspaper, which was to bridge the gap between the underground and straight press.

The room was crowded, smoky, looming renaissance coloured clothes and Albie Thoms, an Australian underground film maker, was talking from his place on the bed about the importance of communal activity within the paper. He was virtually ignored. Company set-ups took up most of the discussion time.

Afterwards, when everyone had left, the Oz colleagues significantly decided to go it alone. Richard asked me why I hadn't said anything and I didn't answer him, not knowing how I could explain that it was impossible for me to say a word in front of that enormous number of people, and he went off to dinner with Ed and Andrew to discuss the whole thing in detail.

Ed Victor decided to leave the publishing world and join the Ink team, money was raised, other recruits were gathered, meetings and office work were set in motion, and the idea of an editorial collective flirted with. This was only a flirtation.

After Ink began, the weekly meetings which were held to discuss the issues were always instead centred round how to solve production problems. The arguments that spluttered and raged every day about the paper, sapping everyone's morale, stemmed more from personality clashes than ideological conflict. The production problems were terrific and, as with the question of how the proposed structural organisation was going to work, not enough discussion took place beforehand to resolve often the most obvious problems. And losing both the art editor and the news editor in the first week didn't help.

I enjoyed working incredibly hard for weeks. On the first issue I went two nights running without sleep and I don't think I had one day off and hardly a night until a month had passed.

However it was, at the same time, a disillusioning month. The madness in the method of the hierarchical, arbitrary structure that had been set up was becoming discernible and I felt fractured by it - though then I as usual wondered if I was cheating myself. I had talked to about 30 journalists on local papers whom I was to contact every week for their news, then handing the stories over to someone else who would decide whether or not to print them. What's the point of that?

After the first week I did not feel right about asking for the news behind the news of the death of Stephen McCarthy, for example, when I would take no part in discussing it or deciding whether to use it. Most of my time was devoted to being oil in the machinery and, inwardly unhappy, I decided to concentrate on production. More weeks went by and more issues were printed and more people were hired and fired - people were manipulated left, right and centre in the attempt to get the paper out efficiently. Some of them have taken months to recover.

Just before the Oz trial last year I resigned from Ink in protest against the following story. I had met a 17-year-old Irish girl who had just completed her secretarial course. Since we desperately needed another typesetter she agreed to stay in London and work on Ink. As soon as work allowed she went back to Dublin to store her belongings and returned to Ink a few days later. I had also taken a week off and returned to find that she had been thoughtlessly fired because a change in

the system had required it - the typesetting was to be farmed out. I was absolutely staggered and furious.

The internal workings of the alternative newspaper were far from alternative. That has since changed, but I did not stay to participate.

The next two months were similarly spent working day and night - this time for the Oz trial. Interviewing witnesses, slogging away at 2 am in the morning, which was the inevitable time for planning the next day's act in court, but, as usual, Workin' for The Man - along with The Cause. The Man now being Geoff Robertson who really engineered the Oz defence. I then worked with him editing and typing up the transcripts to be used in the Appeal, his book on the trial, and the Oz play. My attempts at helping construct the book were frustrated and a failure.

To put it pompously, I am now taking control of my own destiny. Only through the Women's Liberation Movement have I regained some of the confidence I had 10 years ago and a return of a vitality I'd forgotten. Gradually I've understood why I've been so neurotic. Now I've stopped feeling guilty about it. Instead I have an excitement and strength which I believe I can only maintain by working with women. I don't believe that this will always be the case but right now, and perhaps for a long time, I need this solidarity.

This is what women's liberation is about. Our politics begin with our feelings. Women are now politically disorganised and ineffective and there is a need for a collective voice that explores women's liberation, protests specifically against exploitation, prints news on women's actions and on events that concern women's position in society as well as questioning the capitalistic structure of that society.

I am working with Rosie Boycott and others to launch Spare Rib, an alternative news magazine for women. There is an urgent need to reach other women who feel desperate and cut-off so they can realise they share a common experience and frustration - simultaneously to open everyone's eyes to the disaster involved in society's accepted conventions and attitudes to women. There should be an accessible alternative to Woman's Own which will deal with the practical problems of a housewife, which will not isolate women and ignore their problems.



1971 CENSUS — ENGLAND

H Form For Private Households

A household comprises either one person living alone or a group of persons (who may or may not be related) living at the same address with common housekeeping. Persons staying temporarily with the household are included.

To the Head (or Acting Head) of the Household.
Please complete this form and have it ready for collection on Monday 26th April. If you need help, do not hesitate to ask the enumerator.
The enumerator may ask you any questions necessary to help him complete or correct the form.

The information you give on the form will be treated as CONFIDENTIAL and used only for compiling statistics. No information about names of individuals will be passed by the Census Office to any other Government department or authority or person. If anyone in the census organisation improperly discloses information you provide, he will be liable to prosecution. Similarly you must not disclose information which anyone (for example, a visitor or boarder) gives you to enable you to complete the form.

The legal obligation to fill in the whole form rests on YOU, but each person who has to be included is required to give you the information you need. However, anyone who wishes can ask the enumerator or local Census Officer for a personal form which can be returned directly to the enumerator or local Census Officer and then you need answer only questions 1 and 5 for that person.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE
There are penalties of up to £50 for failing to comply with the requirements described above, or for giving false information.
When you have completed the form, please sign the declaration at the foot of the last page.

MICHAEL REED
Director and
Registrar General

Office of Population Censuses and Surveys,
Titchfield,
Fareham, Hants.

Answer questions A1–A5 about your household's accommodation and then answer questions B1–B24 overleaf and if appropriate answer questions C1–C7.

PART A

A1
How do you and your household occupy your accommodation?
1 As an owner occupier (including purchase by mortgage)
 By renting it from a Council or Town

A3
How many rooms are there in your household's accommodation?

Do not count Small kitchens less than 6ft. wide, bathrooms and toilets, sculleries not used for cooking, closets, pantries and storerooms, landings, halls, lobbies or recesses, offices or shops used solely for business purposes.

A5
Has your household the use of the following amenities on these premises?
a A cooker or cooking stove with an oven

b A kitchen sink permanently connected to a water supply and a waste pipe

c A fixed bath or shower permanently connected to a water supply and a waste pipe

d A hot water supply (to a bath, kitchen sink, or bath, heating appliance, etc.)

- 1 YES — for use only by this household
2 YES — for use also by another household
3 NO

- 1 YES — for use only by this household
2 YES — for use also by another household
3 NO

- 1 YES — for use only by this household
2 YES — for use also by another household
3 NO

- 1 YES — for use only by this household
2 YES — for use also by another household
3 NO

C.D. No.	Encl. No.	Form No.	Ref.
If sharing with another household:—			
Hall, staircase, passage, etc., shared <i>only/not only</i> * for entry to accommodation. *delete whichever is inapplicable.			
Number of rooms shared.			
Name and full postal address:			
.....			
.....			
.....			

Where boxes are provided answer by putting a tick in the box against the answer which applies. For example, if the answer is 'YES': YES NO

PLEASE WRITE IN INK OR BALLPOINT PEN

300,000 people in London alone didn't complete this form

A year after the census INSIDE STORY looks at what went wrong.

Down at Titchfield in Hampshire the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys is seething under pressure to speed up the production of tables from the 1971 census.

There have been a number of staff resignations and dismissals. A civil servant in the London section of the Office — at Somerset House — said recently that some people had been sacked on the grounds that they were 'Maoists'.

The census computer is being snowed under by queries from overseas. Essential work still required on processing and sorting the basic information contained in the 18 million forms completed at the time of the census a year ago is being slowed down — by the flood of applications from commercial firms, including those in Common Market countries.

Information provided for these private applications is not available to the general public. In fact the only official reports based on the census yet released for public information are the interim statement on population figures, issued last August, and a number of regional county tables now available at the

Stationery Office.

There is no official estimate of when the full breakdown of census information will be ready, though it is rumoured that this will not be until after the next census in 1981.

Meanwhile security precautions at the Census Office in Titchfield have been reinforced at the expense of the greatly expanded staff. In five years the place has grown from a few wooden huts, with only a handful of people, to a vast complex of outbuildings centred on the large modern concrete and glass headquarters which houses the main computer. All entrances are patrolled by uniformed security guards and dogs.

The Census operation itself got a lot of publicity at the time - as did the public refusals of a number of people to complete their forms. But journalists have been remarkably uncritical about the Registrar-General's claim that the census was a great success.

On Census Day the Times quoted him as saying: 'In the areas that I have visited only about one person out of 10,000 - 15,000 seems likely to refuse to fill in the form.' And on 16 December 1971 a government spokesman asserted in the House of Commons that the total number of uncompleted forms was only 3,000 - about the same as that predicted by the Registrar-General.

The spokesman also said that 532 summonses had been issued and that 500 cases had been dropped 'on compassionate grounds or in other mitigating circumstances'. Which leaves 2,000 unprosecuted lawbreakers.

But all the available evidence suggests that the actual number of people who did not complete a census form was far higher than 3,000 - at least a hundred times higher in fact. And the National Council for Civil Liberties says unofficially that - including people who deliberately gave false information on the form - the number of non-cooperators could have been as high as a million.

As the census operation got under way it was clear that the authorities had miscalculated the extent of ordinary people's hostility. As early as 22 April - before Census Day - 60 enumerators in Southwick and Shoreham were said to be asking for more money because 'they did not expect to be abused on doorsteps or have doors slammed in their faces.'

And two days later the Registrar-General, Mr Michael Reed, cancelled a 'meet-the-people' walk in Birmingham after the disastrous failure of a similar outing in Liverpool: Reed had been jostled by an angry crowd and later was obliged to apologise for calling two young Liverpool men 'bastards' - a remark heard by millions of television viewers.

Early in May the Leeds census supervisors wrote to the Registrar-General saying that staff were working twice as hard and twice as long as they had been led to expect. 'Apart from all the abuse and open hostility which can never be adequately compensated, we just cannot get enough hours in the day to finish what we have to do. Some of the enumerators would cheerfully give up the job tomorrow if they could, and will certainly not volunteer for it again.'

Unrest among the enumerators was reported in London, Manchester, Bradford and other densely populated areas: some had been forced to return seven or eight times to 'difficult' households. The Registrar-General's press office had to confirm that 'enumerators had been shocked at the amount of work.'

But the authorities stuck to their story that, in spite of all the difficulties, the census was going according to plan: people were in the end co-operating. When a Midlands census supervisor gave a hint of what was actually happening, he was quickly slapped down.

The supervisor, Mr William Kelly, whose area was Derbyshire and North Leicestershire, told the Telegraph on 4 May that, if his reckoning were correct, there would be 'a catastrophic rise this year' in the number of people not filling in their forms.

He was right - and the official spokesman who contradicted him wrong. But Mr Kelly went on to say: 'I can promise that the people concerned will be prosecuted.' And there Mr Kelly was wrong.

In two areas resistance to the census was particularly strong. In Northern Ireland many Catholics refused to co-operate with the Census as a protest against Stormont. A group of 27 priests announced on Census Day that they were not completing their forms: their protest was immediately given 'unqualified support' by a further 18. The same day the Telegraph reported that one group of Republicans had sent the ashes from 400 forms to the Northern Ireland Registrar-General.

And in London it was also difficult for the authorities to maintain their claim that the census was going well. It was in London that the Young Liberals carried out their public burnings of the census forms - they have since reported that none of the 32 who took part in this protest have been prosecuted.

One enumerator, who covered a district of North London, told INSIDE STORY that he had no way of being sure how many separate households there were in the various houses he went to. 'Sometimes I would be told by one occupant that there were four households - then I'd go back to be told by another that there were only three. It was often impossible to know how many people there were in a particular house. I'm sure that landlords, for instance, often concealed the number of tenants - because they were avoiding tax.'

And if you were being paid 10p an hour - which was one calculation of the enumerator's rate in an urban area - there wasn't much incentive to keep a 24-hour vigil outside every house to make sure that nobody slipped through the net. So hundreds of thousands of people did just that.

For when the interim statement on population figures was finally produced last August it was clear that things had gone seriously wrong. As well as its news report the Times published a feature analysing what had happened, but without drawing the simple and obvious conclusion: that the census operation was a massive defeat for the Tory government and the state.

The Census Office, said the Times, 'estimates that due to the non-return of schedules which were left at apparently unoccupied addresses which were in fact occupied, some 80,000 to 100,000 people were not accounted for ... Some 25,000 occupied households were omitted from enumerators' lists in the first place...

'Nothing in the census results is so surprising as the extremely low figures produced for Greater London as a whole - 7,379,014 - almost to the level the GLC originally foresaw being reached in 1981. The Greater London figure is 324,000 lower than the General Register Office official estimate for mid-1970... The General Register Office has informed the town clerks of most London boroughs that the Greater London count, taken as a whole,

seems to account for a fairly large slice of the estimated under-enumeration nationally.

'With its shifting population and special problems of old houses, the capital is recognised as the most difficult area for any operation of this kind... So the census figure will not be used as the mid-1971 estimate but merely taken into account and this estimate will itself be revised a year later.'

Nobody can say exactly how many people slipped through the census net - though, if the figure for London alone was more than 300,000 down on the official estimate for mid-1970, the total for the whole country may have been half a million - a million: who knows?

But the failure of the census in London is shown by the simple fact that the authorities do not believe the figures they have so laboriously collected. And it's hardly surprising that the government has decided not to prosecute all those Londoners who broke the law on 26 April last year: you'd need the capital's football grounds to put them in.

SECRET AND THE CENSUS

Most of the political protests against the census stressed that there could be no guarantee that information included on the form would be kept secret. And during the census operation a number of incidents were reported which proved the point.

Probably the most notorious was the case of the Camden man who told his enumerator that he was using a flat for work - only to find a council rating officer on his doorstep within hours who wanted to know why he wasn't paying the business rate for the flat. The enumerator worked in the Camden Council Rating Department.

A large number of enumerators were in fact government and local government officials - including Inland Revenue, rent and welfare officials, Customs and immigration officers. As a civil servant told INSIDE STORY, 'They sent round a special circular suggesting that we work on the census.'

There was the case of Martin Whitaker of Moulshford, Berkshire, who deliberately called himself 'Scott' on his census form 'as a test to see how confidential these forms really are' - and then received a letter addressed to 'Martin Scott' from his

local council.

Then there was the outrageous case of the Northampton hospital gardener who was sacked and evicted after he'd torn up his census form: his enumerator was the deputy secretary of the hospital management committee.

There was the case of the former nurses who'd filled in census forms and then found themselves selected for a second survey - on the state of nursing in the National Health Service.

It was also clear that the government did not trust the 'confidentiality' of its own operation: the Ministry of Defence instructed personnel not to complete the question which asked for detailed job descriptions.

There was the case of the enumerator's boyfriend at Winsford, Cheshire, who went back to collect one of her forms; the two paper bags full of completed forms found by the milkman at New Cross, London, after being left outside the wrong house; the 150 forms found in a stolen car at Speke, Liverpool. Ordinary everyday occurrences which showed that the government couldn't guarantee that its 105,000 enumerators would all deliver their goods unseen.

Those who didn't trust the enumerators could of course post their forms or take them direct to their local census officer. But as a Shrewsbury woman said in a letter to the Sunday Times, 'The other afternoon our local enumerator politely informed me when I told her we proposed to do just that, "I shouldn't bother. He will have to return it to me in any case so that I can complete my forms."'

But the most hilarious - and for the Registrar-General embarrassing - letter came from Sir Anthony Wagner, Garter Principal King of Arms. He'd written to the Times already in the summer of 1970, but a week or so before the census he aimed a second straight left at the exposed chin of the Registrar-General: 'At the time of the 1951 census I was staying in a club of which the Registrar-General was himself a member.

'I came in late in the day to find awaiting me not only my own census form for completion, but the completed census returns of all others living there, which I read with interest. Since that time I have not believed that the Registrar-General with the best will in the world can absolutely guarantee confidentiality.'

How clean is Ariel?

The Ariel Foundation was set up by the late Iain Macleod to counter white racist opposition to British colonial policy. But recently the foundation has been used to promote the British sell-out to the Smith regime. INSIDE STORY looks at the men - and money - behind Ariel.

Attempts by two British MPs to intervene in the Rhodesia crisis have not helped the image of the influential Ariel Foundation, the allegedly 'bi-partisan' African aid organisation based in London.

Maurice Foley, Labour MP for a Birmingham constituency, and Nigel Fisher, Conservative MP for Surbiton, turned up recently at the special African meeting of the Security Council held in Addis Ababa. There they tried to get the Zimbabwe African nationalists to revise their all-out opposition to the Rhodesian settlement terms.

The Africans say they were 'confused' by the way Foley appeared to be working openly to prevent complete British isolation over the Council's resolution on Rhodesia - by trying to remove from it all reference to the Pearce Commission.

Marcellino dos Santos, the spokesman for Frelimo, the anti-Portuguese resistance in Angola, says: 'What was the point of having a Security Council meeting in Africa at all? They might just as well have stayed back in the UN headquarters if the operation was to be turned into another

exercise in frustration through British opposition.'

Ariel - for which Maurice Foley now works virtually full-time - was set up by Iain Macleod in the heyday of decolonisation as a 'bi-partisan' organisation. Its first purpose was to counter and outflank the determined efforts of the Rhodesian settlers - then led by Sir Roy Welensky - to resist the policy of decolonisation. They were as determined then to maintain their white supremacy under the so-called Central African Federation as they remain under the Smith regime.

Welensky, with the help of Voice and Vision, the public relations affiliate of the Tory Party's pet advertising agency, Colman, Prentis and Varley, was spending money hand over fist in a campaign to establish a powerful lobby among MPs of all parties.

The nucleus of British right-wing Tories, then prominently backing the welensky effort, included many of those who now identify themselves with the Smith regime - Patrick Wall, John Biggs-Davison, Ronald Bell, Sir Frederick Bennett.

Macleod set out to counter attack diehard opposition through Ariel. A 'bi-partisan' board was recruited, in which Maurice Foley, a prospective Labour candidate with strong Irish Catholic affiliations, was paired with Charles Longbottom, Macleod's parliamentary private secretary. Dennis Grennan, a radical liberal student leader - now at Sussex University - was included in the nucleus.

Ariel concentrated on capturing the loyalty and support of African nationalist leaders like Kenneth Kaunda (Zambia), Milton Obote (Uganda), Tom Mboya and James Gichuru (Kenya). They were offered development planning, finance, educational assistance, training grants and facilities abroad for fund-raising, particularly in Canada, Scandinavia and Holland. The idea was to train new black managers to take over from white settlers and former colonial administrators.

Where did Ariel get its money? Initial capital was provided by Macleod from Colonial Office reserve funds and private backers. There are also grounds for believing that Ariel has had significant economic links with equivalent US aid and finance organisations.

The pattern of the foundation's work was clearly shown before Kenya's independence,

late in 1963, when a survey of its economic and social potential was prepared for Kenyatta's African National Union. The Outline Programme for Economic and Social Development in Kenya was commissioned by Ariel from Arthur Gaitskell - brother of the late Labour leader - who was a highly experienced colonial administrator from the Sudan.

But the Gaitskell report followed closely on the heels of a similar survey carried out in Tanganyika. And this plan was commissioned by the official United States AID organisation, using the highly specialised commercial firm, Arthur D Little.

More recently Ariel has depended on the powerful American foundations, Ford, Carnegie and Guggenheim, to back its projects. And it has also come to rely on continual financial contributions infiltrated by the major oil companies, both in Britain and other parts of the world.

Maurice Foley, who was a junior minister at the Home Office in the Wilson government - largely concerned with immigration and Northern Ireland - returned to work for Ariel when he lost his job at the last election. But his return has done little to resolve the foundation's developing crisis.

For some of Ariel's most enthusiastic African clients and supporters now clearly mistrust it. Recently Tanzania cut its last links with Ariel: a project connected with Nyerere's pet political training school, Kivokoni College, Dar es Salaam, was abruptly terminated. In fact there has been a notable decline in the number of Ariel projects in East Africa since the assassination of Kenya's Catholic minister, Tom Mboya.

Foley has recently attempted to find new openings in Latin America. Projects have been mooted in Chile and Peru. A number of priests concerned with increasing Catholic influence in liberation organisations have come under Ariel sponsorship.

But the Foley programme has hardly helped the delicate political balance in Ariel and resignations are in the offing. Founder Tory member Charles Longbottom has been waiting for a suitable opportunity to bow out. His resignation would leave the treasurer, Barney Hayhoe, as the sole surviving Tory MP on the board of this carefully devised pressure organisation.

The workers who earn too little to be in a union

Freelance journalism pays some people very well - and others very badly. Many people will be surprised to learn that the worst-paid are not even able to join the National Union of Journalists.

Although there are agreed rates for news stories supplied to the papers by freelances, there are none for features - apart from an NUJ recommendation that members be paid according to the publication's advertising rate. But this means very little: it certainly does not give a feature writer any right to payment on this scale.

The position of some women freelances working for provincial and local papers is spectacularly worse even than this: not only are they forced to accept very low rates of pay, but they can't even join the NUJ in an attempt to improve them.

Take for instance the case of Mrs Jean O'Keefe, once a full-time journalist and NUJ member, who is now earning £3 a week on the Middlesborough Evening Gazette for a minimum of 11 column inches. She is one of a number of women who have forfeited all their professional and trade union rights by committing the sin of marrying, having children and then wishing to return to work. Now she finds that she cannot rejoin the NUJ since it is impossible for her to fulfill the membership requirements of its freelance section.

Jean O'Keefe wrote a series of feature articles for the Middlesborough Evening Gazette and had them all accepted. For her regular weekly feature she was paid £3. Recently she was offered a weekly column of her own at the same slave rate. In spite of this, she accepted - only to hear from the editor a few days later that the idea had been dropped, apparently at the instigation of the NUJ Clerk of the Chapel.

His argument was that the union must protect its members from non-union freelance women such as this and he proposed that the column should be given over to one

of the regular staff of the paper. He failed to mention, however, that none of these staff members wished to undertake such a task.

Since this incident, Jean O'Keefe has had none of her articles accepted. The latest news is that the editor is trying to reach some sort of compromise - although £3 will remain her weekly rate.

Another woman in similar circumstances is currently writing the material for a woman's page - a whole page - for a mere 3 guineas a week. She has recently had a rise - from 2 guineas.

What in fact are the NUJ membership requirements for freelances? The union rule book states that membership is restricted to 'full time freelance journalists, that is persons whose major occupation is journalism, who are mainly dependent on their own journalistic work, and whose incomes from such work exceed 60 per cent of the minimum salary scale in that area'.

Effectively this rule excludes from membership of the NUJ precisely those freelance journalists who are worst off - those who can't find enough work, or who have to work part-time, or who contribute to papers which pay low rates (this of course includes the whole underground press).

Invited to comment on this situation an NUJ official said: 'It's all very well, but we in a trade union are not in the social security business: we protect our members' rights. It's hard luck on this girl (Jean O'Keefe) but these people are diluting the credibility standards of journalism. If I gave in to them, I wouldn't be able to demand good rates in Fleet Street any more.'

So you have the paradox that a trade union which is quite unable to secure reasonable rates of pay for many of its own members says to the lowest-paid workers in journalism: 'We won't let you in because you will lower our standards.'

For freelance journalists the NUJ is not so much a trade union, more an exclusive private club.

woman's page

Mr George Viner, who is the NUJ's education and research officer, was recently asked: why are there so few women photographers at the top - or anywhere else - in press photography? His reply, recorded on tape for posterity, was: 'I would not suggest that it was a very good idea for women to aim at a career as press photographers on national newspapers or national picture agencies.' So much for education and research.

Recently the Sunday Times colour magazine celebrated 10 years of lavish living with a gigantic piss-up in the Grosvenor House Hotel - at a reported cost of £3000. The 600 boozers present were, it would seem, mainly men - and mainly admen at that. After the cabaret Private Eye's Lord Gnome - that's to say Peter Cook - jumped up on the stage and declared: 'Not having wives, mistresses, lovers or whatever was fucking stupid.' After which there was silence.

Note: it is the Sunday Times which publishes regular articles by Germaine Greer and a smug little weekly feature on sex discrimination called 'Woman's Role'.

In March Time Out seemed to take a masochistic delight in publishing critical readers' letters. One, from Marshall Colman, was a masterpiece of brevity and wit: 'When Women's Lib demonstrated so photogenically at Miss World, it was full coverage and Right On from Time Out. But the week after they break up your own conference on the suppression and manipulation of news, it's dead silence and tits as usual.'

The conference, by the way, cost over £1,000 - including more than £400 worth of damage and 'theft'. And the 'instant' newspaper which was to have been given out on the day is now unlikely to appear.

In Manchester there are 23 day nurseries for 1,073 children. Since there are 52,000 under-fives in the city the provision of nurseries falls far short even of the government's aim of catering for 'priority cases'.

Yet when thousands of women were needed to 'contribute to the war effort' from 1941 onwards, the authorities spared no effort to make this possible. 30 prefabricated buildings were put up in less than four years.

The peak year for the number of nursery places in Manchester was ... 1945. The city's 30 day nurseries took 1,508 children. (Manchester Free Press)

If, as a self-employed woman, you want to take out insurance to cover loss of earnings caused by accident or sickness, you will find yourself paying a premium 50 per cent higher than that paid by a man for exactly the same benefit.

Stephanie Colasanti, a freelance photographer, has been insured since 1963 with the Friends Provident and Century Group. Since her Accident and Sickness policy is arranged through a special Institute of Incorporated Photographers scheme, she gets a discount of £4. But her premium is still over £28 a year.

'A friend of mine investigated the whole field to try and get me a better deal last year,' she says, 'and the outcome of it was that every company in this type of cover loaded females by 50 per cent, which means that we pay a 50 per cent higher premium than a man for exactly the same benefits.'

For Stephanie Colasanti's policy is very specific on this last point: 'Disability by sickness or accident if caused by pregnancy or childbirth is excluded.'

Visionhire - the television rental company with 14 branches on Merseyside - has joined the ranks of firms discriminating against women. If a woman wants to rent a set, she has to have a male householder to stand as guarantor - even if she is herself a householder. (Liverpool Free Press)

satire section

Protest! magazine is the latest of all those ill-fated attempts to 'bridge the gap' between the underground and the establishment. Its first issue included such profound and radical observations as: 'It is true money corrupts. But is it equally true that money can liberate.' 'If the people who are interned will make public declarations condemning all who use violence, then Protest! will join the campaign for their release and work with them for their just causes. Until then we are unwilling to choose between evils.'

But the real question is: how willing are you to choose between the Sunday People, which Graham Jay used to work for, and Protest!, which he now edits?

Unlike the Oz Obscenity Trial the prosecution of the IT family for the first issue of Nasty Tales has not attracted much attention from the residents of NW1 and SW3. Police interest was apparently aroused last June by a complaint from a mother who'd caught her eight-year-old son immersed in a copy of the comic. And the prosecution case rests on the claim that Nasty Tales was aimed at children. But there was no mention of the mother and her complaint when Paul Lewis, Mick Farren, Joy Farren and Edward Barker appeared at Marlborough Street magistrates court some weeks ago.

The case has now been referred to the Crown Court, Newington Causeway - but will probably not be heard for some nine months. The IT family is said to be 'thoroughly bored' with the whole affair, which is why no attempt has been made to set up the kind of publicity machine Oz had. But there will be heavy costs to pay: it would be a pity if IT - the only underground paper to have survived for six whole years - were forced to close down.

IT of course recently changed into a magazine on the grounds that there were 'four radical tabloid newspapers fighting for custom': after the well-publicised death of Ink and Seven Days we're left with Frendz. In the issue of IT which announced its new format a reader's letter complained that Mick Farren had successfully stopped the publication of a novel which 'libelled' him. Mick replied at length, but admitted: 'Sure I used the legal system to deal with the situation.' Maybe Mick sees himself as the new editor of the Statesman.

The offensive and ludicrous display which the Burtons put on in Budapest did at least produce this gem recorded by the Sunday Times: Stephen Spender met Ringo Starr, decided that he'd like to see him again and said so. At which the Beatle asked the venerable bard his name, then told him 'to ring Apple and to be sure to mention that we met at Elizabeth Taylor's party'. The New Statesman then announced that people who found this funny were showing their 'cosy feelings of snobbery' - only to be accused in its correspondence column of 'condoning cultural pollution'.

Surely the joke must be over - but no: the Listener's earnest readers were then treated to a long article by Spender himself which included the grave words: 'It is not false modesty to say that there is every reason why I should know who Ringo is and very little reason why he should know who I am.' The ageing poet proceeded to deplore the effects of publicity on the writer.

Which leaves two questions: if publicity is so bad for writers, what was Spender doing with all those gossip columnists in Budapest? And if Karl Miller - editor of the Listener - does end up running the Statesman will he make Stephen Spender his rock editor?

SMALL ADS

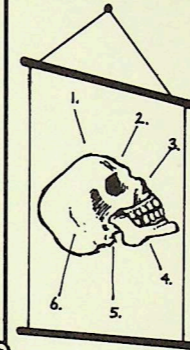
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inside story

No 2 April 25p

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SURGERY



I'm sorry, Mrs Smith,
but I still can't
see why you need
an abortion...
(see page one)

