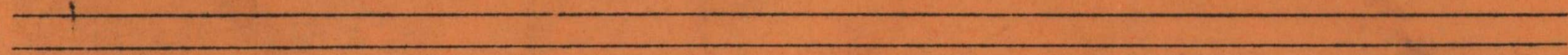


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LIBERTARIAN WOMEN'S NETWORK NEWSHEET



NO
12



A D D R E S S E S - additions and corrections marked @
We're putting this in again because it's important - Alison.

CLAIMANTS UNIONS AND UNSUPPORTED MOTHERS

Kate, 25 Powie Square (basement), London W11 (CU)
Jo, Sally and Jenny, 8, St Mark's Rise, London E8.
Pauline Gift, 66 Iver Road, Sparkbrook, Birmingham.
Tessa Forester, (moving soon) 102 Newcastle St, Silverdale, Newcastle-u-Lyne.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Amanda Bennett, 3, Belmont Rd, London SW4 (01-622-8961)
Dinah Rawlings, 8 The Court, Buryfield, Guildford, Surrey.
Tessa Forester- see CUs.

ABORTION AND CONTRACEPTION

Amanda Bennett-see W, Health-runs a pregnancy advisory service.
Pauline Gift-see CUs.
Jill Walker, 14 Clare Rd, Levenshulme, Manchester 19.

WOMEN'S HOUSES AND COOPERATIVE HOLIDAYS

Suzette Sorrell, 39 Balderton Flats, Brown Hart Gardens, London W1
Chiswick Women's Aid, 2, Belmont Terrace, London W4. (01-492-180)
Pauline Gift-see CUs.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Lee Sanders, 71 St Annes Lane, Leeds 4.

STRUGGLE AGAINST WOMEN AS SEX OBJECTS

Suzette Sorrell-see Women's Houses
Marion McCartney, 21d Pearson Rd, Hull, Yorks.
Ros Nathan, 29 Cardigan Rd, Leeds 6

WOMEN IN MENTAL HOSPITALS AND PRISONS

Suzette Sorrell-see above
Kate -see CUs
Marion McCartney-see above

EDUCATION

Jill Walker-see Abortion + Contraception
Alison Malet-see below.

SQUATTING

Gill Andrews, 47 Great Clarendon St, Oxford (also CUs)

UNSPECIFIED INVOLVEMENT

Jenny Laney, 8, Nightingale Lane, S. Clapham, London SW12
Caroline Charlton, % Elm Rd, London SW14
Margaret Dudley, 26 Wodeland Ave (is this right?), Guildford, Surrey.
Denise Kibble, 1, Fray's Court, Victoria Rd, Uxbridge, Middx.
Sarah Lutman, 8, Grove Terr, Canterbury, Kent.
Janet Northey, 16 Adelaide St, Stonehouse Plymouth.
Marilyn Porter, 21, Canynge Rd, Bristol.
Ellen Malos, Garden Flat Basement, 1 Apsley Rd, Bristol 8.
Cathy Maguire, Marine Biological Station, Portaferry, Co. Down, Ireland.
Sally Bavage, Flat 3, 35 Richmond Rd, Leeds 6
Judy Wheeler, 10 Crescent Rd, Plaistow, London E13.
Liz Willis, Flat 1, 24 Muirhouse Park, Edinburgh 4.
Hazel McGee, Hillcrest Farm, Hicks Mill, Bissoe, nr Truro, Cornwall.
Maggie Woolley, 100 Janefield St, Glasgow. (could you give us any info about Glasgow, as we didn't contact you?)
Alison Malet, 1, Lynnewood Place, Dundee.
Anna Livingstone, 25, Walton Well Rd, Oxford.
Una Stephenson (not now Turnbull) 60, Findowie Place, Fintry, Dundee.

Any sisters who may be in Scotland are hereby invited to visit us, Una and Alison, at 1, Lynnewood Place, on New Year's Eve. Or any other time!

scottish news

DUNDEE

The Dundee group has existed as a discussion group since the beginning of 1972. There is a fairly wide spectrum of opinion within the group, and individual members are also involved in the local Conservation Society, the Claimants Union, and the Anarchist Group. So far we have concentrated mostly on 'consciousness-raising' within the group, but we have also given out leaflets to University students, organised a jumble sale to raise funds and have met or plan to meet for discussion with several political and non-political groups within the town. We have also agreed to publicize and collect signatures for the nationwide petition against the replacement of Family Allowances by tax credits paid to the father. The group includes student and non-student members, mainly the latter; and some of us who have young children try to meet with our kids on other days from group meetings in an effort to break down our isolation.

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S T. A N D R E W S

We have been in existence as a group since late 1970; the group is mostly university members, but there are some townswomen also. We have a working core of approximately 12 members, but the number varies from meeting to meeting.

Achievements so far:

Spring '70: Charities Campaign: Women's Liberation disrupted the crowning of the Charities Queen, and tried to have a member infiltrate the Charities organisation, with a certain degree of success.

Fighting Discrimination: Jobs:- writing to firms which discriminate against women in the Jobs for Graduates directory.

Advertising: writing to advertisers to complain about sexist attitudes in their advertisements. In the former we were partially successful, in 1971.

1971: Bangla Desh Women: we produced a leaflet and made a collection of £60 which was sent to the IPPC.

Abortion Week: produced and distributed information on abortion and contraception, which was very much appreciated.

1972;1) British Birth Control Campaign: a group of members has started a St. Andrews branch of the BCC. A survey of contraceptives and their availability in Fife is being carried out, in order to produce a leaflet for distribution. Information available

gullubelle



Now let me see...
what did I file
the typewriter
under?

(Acknowledgements
to the Dundee
Courier)

from 15, Howard Place, St. Andrews.

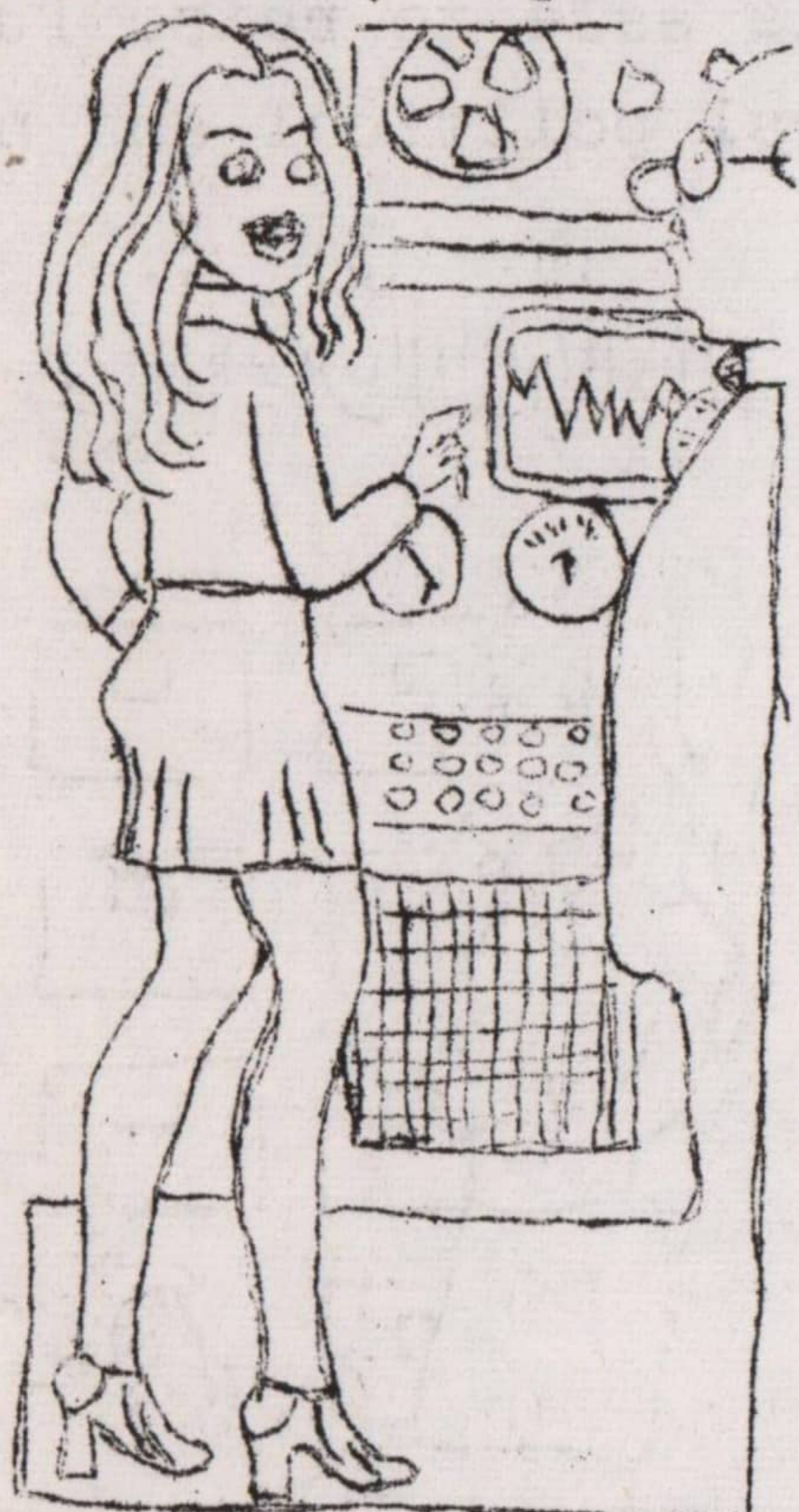
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2) Campaign against Proposed Changes in Family Allowances. In connection with the Child Poverty Action Group, members are producing a questionnaire, data to be assimilated for a possible leaflet.

3)- V.D. Project. This aims to increase awareness and information about V.D. Speaker and leaflet in prospect.

Liberation Week: run by all the leftist groups in the University, 10th-17th January. Contributions from Womens' Lib.- Poster exhibition, speaker on Womens' Lib, Film(in prospect), and Forum.

Sarah Turnbull.



'May I borrow the computer during my lunch break-to count calories?

EDINBURGH One of the groups is running a campaign on contraception, trying to pressure the Corporation into providing more adequate facilities, and advertising them. Petitions and questionnaires are being organised. Another small group is starting off, on the getting-to-know-you, consciousness-raising level.

EDINBURGH TENANTS STRUGGLE Rent increases averaging £1 per week, under the Housing Finance Act (satirically known as 'Fair Rents') came into effect in Edinburgh's council housing estates (the parts the tourists don't see) on November 20th. Large numbers of tenants are refusing to pay the increases. The campaign of resistance is continuing,

with door-to-door canvassing, leaflets, pickets at rent collection points, street- and factory-gate-meetings. Moves are afoot to convert the All-Edinburgh Tenants' Association into a Rents Action Committee, to unite workers and tenants in this common struggle. Industrial action is to support tenants' action, not substitute for it. This is a situation where women clearly have a key role to play. They are the ones who confront rent collectors, as well as having to make ends meet on a reduced budget. On this issue, men often mutter a non-committal 'Have to see what the wife says', and women set the pace. Knowing the family's standard of living is at stake, they can evince a high degree of militancy. We are also in a position to organise the day-to-day struggle, being stuck on the estates for most of our lives. Block meetings in each other's homes, talking to people at shops and shop-vans, break down our usual isolation and gives us a sense of solidarity which we need.

News of similar action in other parts of the country would be welcome, bringing home the fact that we're not fighting alone.

Liz Willis.

ABERDEEN The Aberdeen group split in the summer; the 'liberal' group is, as far as I know, still going strong and expanding, but there's been no contact between the groups. At present, the 'dynamic' group seems to have lost its dynamism, - maybe a partial reason for our failure was a total lack of contact with other womens' groups.

Lorna Dey.

GLASGOW

We contacted Glasgow, but we haven't received anything.

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"Certainly I expect you to drive me to my keep-fit class - you don't expect me to walk, do you?"

other news

LEEDS

Leeds W.L. group are starting a campaign on the proposed tax credit system - they hope to do a survey in several local areas, possibly leading on to public meetings on Womens' Role in Society.

The Society For The Protection Of The Unborn Child held a public meeting in Leeds last week, which was packed by Catholics shipped in by coach from surrounding areas. BCC and other groups went along to hear two speakers give a rabid denunciation of abortion, contraception, sex, etc. The third speaker was only slightly less rabid, but provided a liberal cover for the others; he admitted that contraception was necessary and should become more widespread. The SPUC hope to start a campaign against the new BPAS clinic that has recently opened in Leeds.

The University WL group staged a picket of a stag party with strip show organised by medical students in the University. There was a wide cross-section of people there from many organisations, but the strip went ahead despite the picket.

U.S. - ST. LOUIS.

(Extract from letter) We are trying to educate the student body on the effects and causes of the Vietnam War, and the necessity of ending that war now. But we have only 25 or fewer committed people out of a student body of over 11,000.

We also have an official university-operated Womens' Center that offers the following: -1) magazines and periodicals, 2) fiction by women's authors, 3) career information, 4) listings of local

Ob-Gyn doctors 5) tapes on psychology 6) childrens' literature
7) 'retreat' weekends in the country 8) references to professional
counsellors. This all probably sounds good, but the effective-
ness of the Womens' Center is limited severely by the fact
that the Jesuit university administration retains control over the
place, and live right next door to the Center, and though it
could be a vital force, it isn't. (There's a nun on the admin-
istrative staff, no less!) It's probably better than nothing.

Solidarity, Jay Amrod.

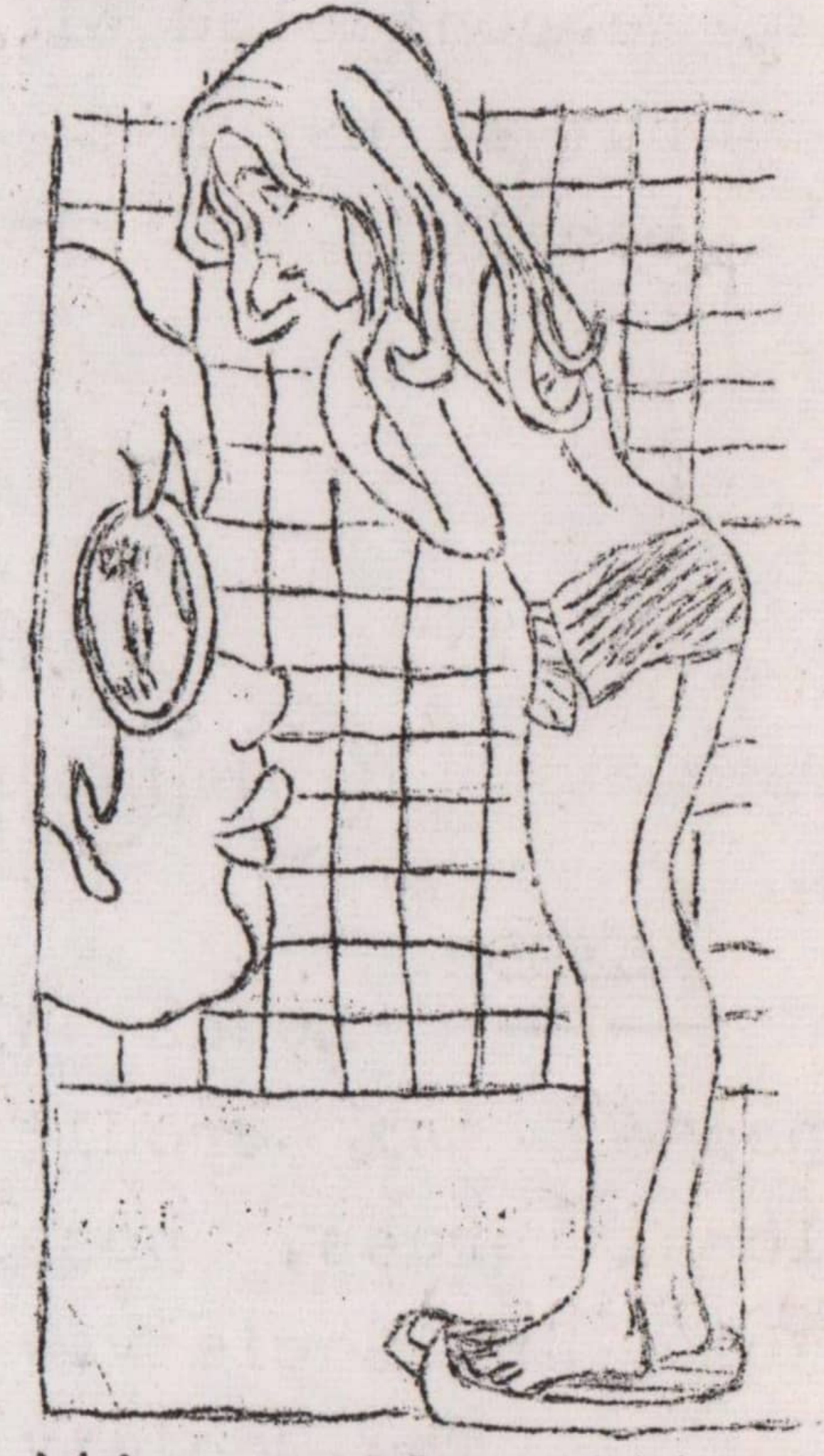
Jay also sends us a newspaper cutting about a Rape
Crisis Center opening in St. Louis, we have written to ask her
for more information about this.

LETTER

Dear Sisters

A group of us in Leeds Wo-
men's Lib are compiling an anthology of writing
on women's liberation. We want articles be-
tween two and five thousand words, cartoons, line
drawings, etc. Articles shouldn't assume too
much knowledge of women's liberation, as we
hope to distribute the book outside the move-
ment. Please send manuscripts (in duplicate if
possible) to Sandra Allen, 23 St. Michael's Road,
Leeds 6, Yorks.

Love and sisterhood, Lee
Sanders.



'I'm still putting
on weight-do you
think it can be the
face cream which
fattens me?'

PLUG ---- PEOPLE'S PRESS AGENCY.

The agency & the news service it will provide will not be the property
of any political group: it will be created for & by all those whose op-
inions & activities are ignored or misrepresented by the press, television
& radio - for example, Marxist, libertarian & left activists, trade union-
ists, unofficial strikers, black people, women's liberation groups, squat-
ters, claimants, the poor, & people struggling for liberation in Ireland,
Vietnam, Africa, the Middle East, & other areas of the world.

It is hoped that the agency will support itself from subscriptions,
but there will be starting costs of around £200. Any contribution to
these costs will be welcome; but this is not as important as active partic-
ipation. The agency will be operating by the end of the year. Please write
to us: c/o Inside Story, 3 Belmont Rd., London S.W. 4.

---- Has anyone any objections to the Newsheet being sent to the
PPA, for them to use Newsheet contents (not addresses) as news? ----

Obviously it depends on what you mean by class. Take Ros' definition of class:- 'A class is a section of people within a society, defined economically, in terms of status, aspirations, power within the society, and attitudes towards individuals within the same class, and to others in a different class.' Now taken as a whole women do have different status, aspirations, power than men and they do have different attitudes to each other and to men - in other words they play a different economic role than men. But surely, you may say, women are defined by biology. Yes, women are women because of biology, but biology is not the reason why they play a different economic role; the reason is the structure of our society. I am not saying that women are not a caste - they are - my argument is that a caste is not something fundamentally different from a class. A caste is an economic subgroup whose membership is delineated entirely by genetic criteria. All classes have always had to some degree a hereditary membership, and whether we use the word 'class' to include castes or not is entirely a matter of semantics. (A biologically defined group is not the same as a caste - for example we do not play a different role in society according to our blood-grouping.)

The Women's Movement has arisen because women are belatedly recognising where their true class/caste interests lie. A change in the role of women will necessarily mean a change in the structure of society - and this change has not already happened. True, women have been gradually accepted into the professions, and many of the blatant legal restrictions on women have been removed over the last 50 years, but this has given a very small minority of women a petty bourgeoisie status - most of us are still unpaid manual workers. To say that we are now losing our caste status is like saying that the working class no longer exists because of the occasional Rolls parked outside a council house.

I would like to call myself a feminist and a libertarian. It is really important to me to know if this is possible or if it is generally accepted that the libertarian position is not compatible with a feminist analysis of class.

Love and sisterhood,

Pip Clark.

Lullubelle



'If that's our new good-looking neighbour say yes. I can find out later what it's all about'.

jam, jute and journalism

by Kate

6

Lullubelle



'Do you also want double line spacing on the copy, sir?'

(From the Courier)

"Jam & Jute" may be past their economic heyday in Dundee, but "Journalism" is still going strong. Dundee is the home of D.C. Thomson's, famous for such literary icons as the Dandy & the Beezer. As well as having a stranglehold on the local press, they are also responsible for a large proportion of the weekly women's magazines on the market, particularly those aimed at the lower end of the socio-economic scale.

The publications under their aegis contain, in a heightened manner, the kind of propaganda which is antithetic to a libertarian viewpoint. The debasing aspects of women's weeklies are well known, but nevertheless it comes as a surprise to see how inherent such attitudes are through from editorial to advertising (or perhaps the other way round). The feeling that they are an offering to an economically important subculture is omnipresent, particularly in the advertising - would you, for instance, call £27.50 a give-away price?

The importance placed on trivia & the dismissal of potentially more important subjects is emphasized by the treatment of a letter in My Weekly. A woman who is obviously psychologically disturbed writes in to say that she is a compulsive gambler on one-arm bandits & bingo, & that her family is suffering dreadfully as a result. "Frances Hatfield" replies that the woman is lacking in willpower & that the answer is to go out on Mondays & spend all her housekeeping for the week on food. The idea that the woman may need more professional guidance than this is never considered. This kind of attitude is not only dangerous, it is subversive.

This attitude which is part of the pervading ethos of these "weeklies" even manifests itself on the cookery page. Two pages are devoted to instructions on how to make sweets with such compelling names as "marshmallow crispies" & "chocolate pennies", the whole presided over by a fat motherly old woman. Presumably, if we run out of "constructive" chores to do in the home, we can always turn our hand to making harmful delicacies.

The same travesties are apparent in the fiction also, where the woman outside the home is an oddity indeed. For example, a widower takes his small daughter into hospital for an operation; the surgeon turns out to be a woman --

⑦ "But you're a woman" he exclaims in amazement. And what's wrong with that? Well,

"She seemed so - feminine."....." It gave him an uneasy feeling. Unconsciously, he knew, he was thinking that a woman as pretty as Miss Hendish could not be a surgeon."

Nor has he reversed that decision by the end of the story, but he has decided to take her out for a drink!

The People's Friend is a less innocuous publication in that it aims at a more specific readership, with its almost unique Scottish basis & its emphasis on the conservative middle-aged woman who wants more 'good reads' than she wants advice on how to run a home. The adverts themselves prove this - thermal underwear, padded toilet seats, & ways to 'shrink' piles, all joggle with each other for advertising space. However, we are also informed that "During the pre-Christmas days no-one has much time or energy to spend in the kitchen." Do they ever?

This is mainly woolly nonsense, the really insidious publications are those which aim at the younger end of the market, the teeny & weeny boppers, the true subculture in this respect.

The attitude of a magazine like Jackie for example is bland & accepting. The most serious problems to be faced are quarrels with 'mum', loss of a boyfriend, &c. (And love at first sight is not a phenomenon here but a reality). Contraception & abortion never rear their ugly heads - Romance is alive & well & living in Jackie!

It is the loss of individual identity which such a magazine upholds which is most disturbing. The bogey of conformity is exploited to the nth degree. Even in their letters the readers don't sign themselves with names but as 'a protesting David Cassidy fan' (totally irrelevant to the content of the letter), or "a T Rex fan", "a Jackie fan".

Adolescent hero-worship may be a healthy sign, as is fantasy, but occasionally the counterbalance of reality is required. Here there is no such thing. The implausible doe-eyed heroines, falling into the strong man's clutches in the last frame never envisage anything beyond that final clinch.

The ever increasing possibilities for commercial exploitation at this end of the market precludes, presumably, any coherent view of relationships & identity being expressed. For Jackie & her sisters the sexes must be eternally polarized. A 'humorous' article tells how to get rid of an unwanted man -

'Of course if he looks like Robert Redford you're stupid to want to get rid of him!' The philosophy behind that remark leaves a very bad taste in the mouth indeed. And we are told finally "It's a whole lot easier to get rid of a boyfriend than it is to get him back!" How many Jackie readers one wonders are destined for My Weekly in a few years?



'Well, what's Mrs Jones got that you haven't got this time?'

two book reviews

8

FREDERICK ENGELS : THE ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY, PRIVATE PROPERTY
AND THE STATE. (Laurence and Wishart).

Women's Liberation cannot be achieved unless that almost universal social institution, the nuclear family, is transcended. This is the conclusion I draw from the line of argument Engels follows in showing us that monogamous marriage arises necessarily from the institution of private property, in turn the foundation of the capitalist mode of production.

'The Origin of the Family' is basically an anthropological work inspired by Engels' brilliant grasp of economics and sociology too, and rendered eminently readable by his trenchant style: "The overthrow of mother-right was the world-historic defeat of the female sex".

Engels argues indeed that the first class oppression was that of the female by the male, and that only as the means of production increased were class antagonisms further proliferated through slavery, an expropriated peasantry, and the establishment of the industrial proletariat.

To summarise Engels' argument might make some think it unnecessary to read the book itself; I therefore limit myself to a brief quotation summarising that part of his anthropological conclusions which are significant to the Women's Liberation movement:

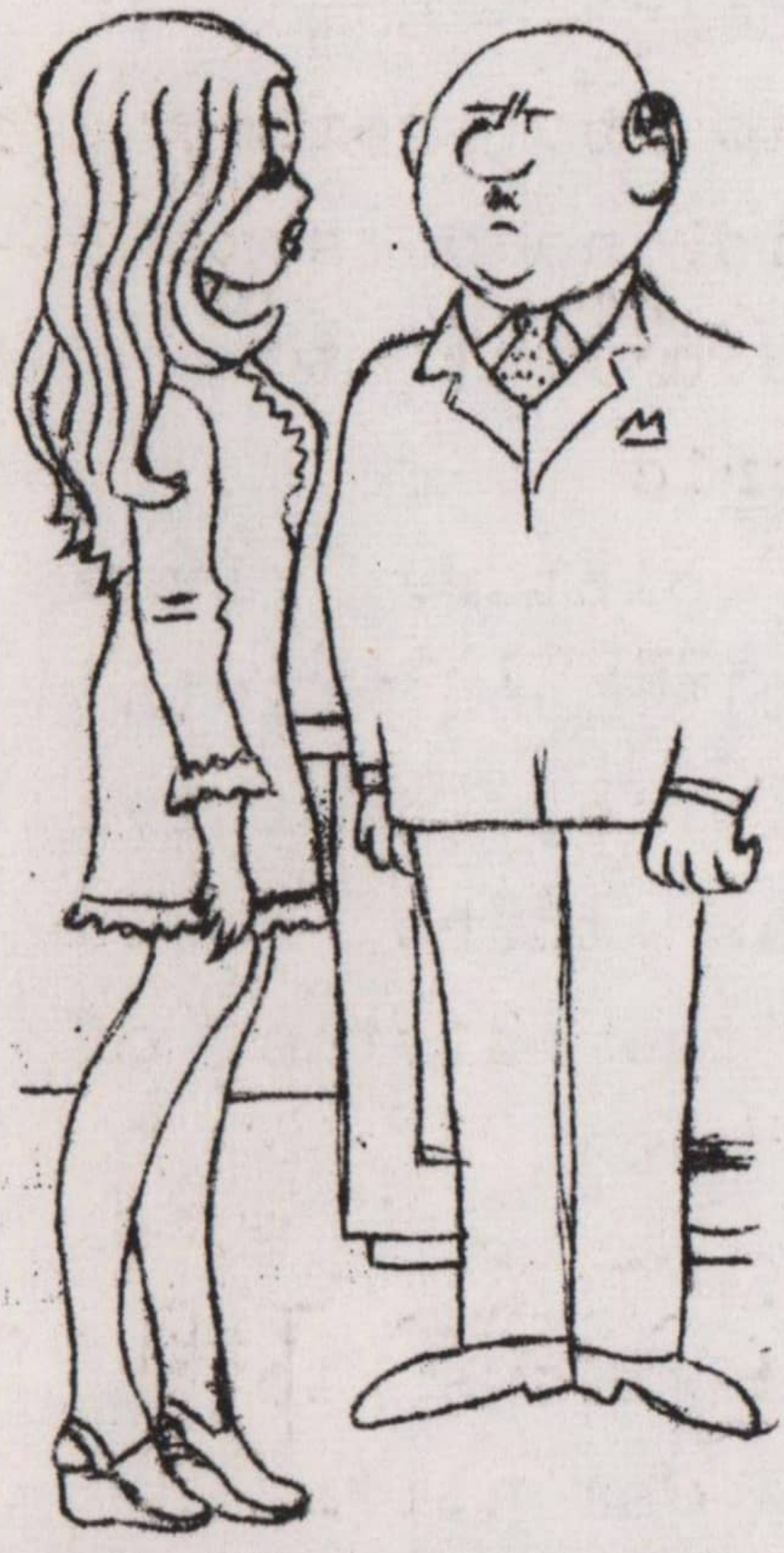
"the domestic labour of the woman no longer counted beside the acquisition of the necessities of life by the man."

Today private domestic labour remains the rule for all women with young children, and in many respects the institution of marriage is emptier now than it was when Engels wrote his book in 1884. Domestic labour has become less significant than it was a century ago: modern technology provides electricity and gas for cooking, washing and heating, and even meal preparation seems ridiculous when the shelves of supermarkets are weighed down beneath instant foods of all sorts. The family has become exclusively a unit for consumption, for simply buying the products of a capitalist society, and it fulfills no productive function apart from the rearing of children.



'One thing about it, dear....you don't give up easily!'

This sole remaining social function of the woman, to produce and rear children, is nowadays a task carried out in the isolation of the private family home. Increased mobility means that the extended family plays a far smaller role in sharing the child-minding burden, and many women find their social intercourse reduced to conversations with babies and toddlers. The bourgeois ideal of the single family home comprising two adults and their one or two offspring grows more and more unbearable for the individuals comprising it, and particularly the woman. As Engels puts it, 'The word Familia did not originally signify the ideal of our modern philistine, which is a compound of sentimentality and domestic discord.'



'The emancipation of woman will only be possible when woman can take part in production on a large, social scale, and domestic work no longer claims anything but an insignificant part of her time.' Engels argues that this is now a possibility through the development of large-scale industry. This author is one of the brilliant minds of our time, and the women's movement is fortunate to have so fine an expositor of the nature of the problems facing them in our society. The book remains stimulating and controversial to this day.

'Miss Lulubelle, with this morning, the tea break and lunch, you've managed to get here late three times today!'

Jane.

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DOWN AND OUT IN BRITAIN, by Jeremy Sandford
 (just published in paperback by New English Library Series, 40p.)

This book, by the author of 'Cathy Come Home', gives us another badly-needed rude awakening. It's an emotional book; it made me sad, horrified, and very angry. Jeremy Sandford doesn't just confine his research to the dossers' problems, but covers several other groups of 'social misfits'. The book is in six parts:- Pt. 1 'Sleeping rough, and days in the kiphouse'.

Pt. 2 'Tales from the Nick and the Bin and the Police Courts.'

Pt. 3 'Homes for the Homeless' - a good example of the violence of the state. I think some quotes say more than my words: a homeless mother describing a dormitory in Part 111 acc-

ommodation:- 'There's nine women and thirty-nine children....there are two bathrooms between us, and five toilets which we have to share, and there's one copper boiler for each of us to use',- this is the way we help people! The conversation at the end of the chapter is hard to believe:- 'We can't help this family. They are not homeless..... 'You know they're living in a car, and yet you won't call them homeless?' 'Well, they're not officially homeless.'

Pt.4 'Children in Care! Here there are more examples of emotional batterings by the state in the name "help". Some of the author's reasoning in this chapter does seem to be rather strained, however; some of these people obviously did need some sort of help;- but not the treatment that was handed out to them.

Pt.5 'In an Unmarried Mothers' Hostel! The picture given is one of slow improvement, with more humane hostels and flats opening up, but so many are still run on moralistic, punitive lines, just when a woman needs most help. I think there could have been more discussion about legal reform of the status of illegitimate children.

Pt.6 'The Violence of the State.'

Although the book is often repetitive, and tends to jump abruptly from one aspect to another, it is essential reading for anyone concerned about the people suffering in our callous society. Quote from the book:- 'Yet the state is our creation. We must learn to bust it.'

It's an emotional book; it made me sad, horrified and angry.
Cathy.

MORE JAM, JUTE AND JOURNALISM - AND OTHER COMMENTS:

Every town in Britain probably prides itself on having the country's worst local paper; here in Dundee we boast lugubriously of D.C,Thomson's Courier,(whence we extracted the cartoons which decorate this issue of the newsheet), its retarded little brother, the Evening Telegraph, and the egregious Sunday Post, which runs an interminable series of cartoons and articles against Social Security claimants, who are all living in idle luxury and ruining the country, and Prisoners, who all enjoy colour T.V., ham-and-eggs, and regular weekend leave; this interspersed with Granny's mawkish reminiscences of the Good Old Days, when the Homely Virtues were instilled with plenty of Homely Violence.

A recent advert. in the Courier claimed that its women readers prefer the ads. to the editorials; this is scarcely to be wondered at, as the latter, which patronisingly assume a very low intelligence on the part of the reader, are monotonously anti-immigrant, anti-Trade Union, pro-Rhodesia, and Let-the-Army-Shoot-First-in-Ulster.

In defence of the Courier, let it be said, it carries no semi-nude glamour-pictures to boost sales, but this seems to stem from a deep-rooted puritanism. 'Sex' gets little coverage; even Longford and Whitehouse hardly make its sober headlines; and the Correspondence Column seldom warms beyond lively controversy as to Who Saw the First White Blackbird.

Women's Lib has been loudly ignored by our local press, but last week they clearly enjoyed associating the defendants in the Angry Brigade trial with W.L. (Booby prize to the first paper to produce a cartoon of a well-breasted girl whipping off her bra to reveal two bombs!-)

From the Sunday Post, 10/12/1972;

"My husband doesn't give me a penny more house-keeping now than he did 14 years ago. Yet his wage has more than doubled in that time. Is there any way a wife can compel her husband to give her an adequate allowance to feed and clothe her and the children?"

Answer:-" Not really. A husband is entitled to determine the standard of living of the family."

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Marge Proops, (Sunday Mirror 10/12/1972) writes "...But did you know that if a married woman wants to be fitted with an intra-uterine device, she has to get the written permission of her husband?"

Doctors, though not legally bound to do so, almost always insist on a husband's name on the dotted line. Doctors are advised to get a husband's signature because he is considered to have the right to the opportunity of fathering children.

Fighting this unfair, if unwritten, rule, is Dr. Janet Croft, of the National Council of Women, who says, "I am against this form of consent. It's not necessary for any other contraceptive, so why for an IUD? A single, divorced or separated woman can have the coil fitted without consent, why not her married sister?"

The Courier, (28/11/1972), carried a news item about a

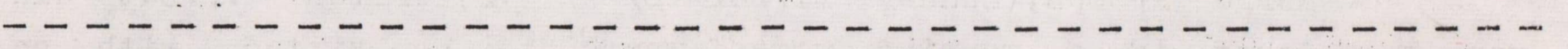
woman who killed her 14-month-old son. She had tried to have herself sterilised after the birth of her fourth child; her husband refused permission. Pregnant again, she applied for a legal abortion; her husband withheld consent. Since the baby's death, her husband has 'changed his mind,' and she has been sterilised.

A few years ago the Daily Record headlined the story of a middle-aged woman who urgently needed a hysterectomy for medical reasons, and could not have it, because her husband had deserted her, and could not be traced to give his consent.

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According to M. Proops, we are now categorised by the advertissrs as Stern Bespectacled Brunettes Reading High-Brow Weeklies. If the H B W in question was this week's Sunday Timeserver, (10/12/72), we learn that Mrs, Oppenheim, (Conservative M.P. for Gloucester), "dismisses the militant members of Women's Lib as bigoted, strident and ill-informed.....Her ideal woman trains for a job, works, gets married, brings up her children, retrains, goes back to work.....in other words, what she's done herself. Mrs. O. says she is totally dominated by her husband, and likes it that way. "

Last word to The Pope;- "...Women's Liberation did not lie in formal and material equality with men, but in recognising women's specific and essential role: the vocation of becoming a mother." (Observer, 10/12/72.)



EDUCATION - OR INDOCTRINATION ?

We notice that the Queen (Sunday Post, Nov. 26th) gives a whole hour a day to her children. Doubtless she had a similar baby book to the one I was given before I had my first child (in London). It said in its timetable for the day '4 - 4.30pm - play with baby....' I could not imagine taking such a thing seriously now, two babies later! Children are not credited with any knowledge of their own basic needs - even something as basic as hunger. I can see the young mother, with her first baby, really trying to follow this book to the letter. Waking the baby up at 6am(!) for orange juice. Feeding her precisely every four hours - and you still get doctors

doctors who say 'Let her wait, let her cry, shut the door on her if you can't stand it' ie. ignore your own very proper feelings.- And restricting play and love and communication, a very important part of a child's growing up, to a single set half-hour. Or is it that if it wasn't mentioned in the book, the poor mite might be ignored altogether except for feeding and changing? Either way, the implications are repellent.

This leads me on to quote from a book that should be of interest to any mother who calls herself a libertarian - and many others too. It's called 'The Free Family' by Jean and Paul Ritter. (My edition - 1959 - is out of print, but I hear that this book has been reprinted and added to recently - I should be glad of information about the new edition.) To continue: they say (Chapter 1)

'Our attitude offers vastly more freedom than it is customary to offer to children; for it is the tradition to interfere as a matter of course at birth, with breastfeeding, taking nourishment in general, sleeping, washing, dressing, and wherever else possible. The notion that a child is not capable of judgement, and must have its life regulated from without, has insidiously grown into law: the child must be trained, trained on the further assumption that adults know what is right or wrong...We recommend the principle - of selfregulation - as possible, efficient and pleasurable.'

I have found - by trial and error at first - that I am more relaxed and the children are more relaxed if they are allowed to play/eat/sleep as far as possible when they want and what they want. This book stays mostly within the confines of the nuclear family; but it does an amazing amount of overturning of one's concepts of what children can do.

PARENTS NOT
ALLOWED
PAST THIS
POINT

Again, the child is not credited with any innate knowledge of how to learn, by many homes or by most schools. Actually, young children are voracious learners. Just watch a baby beginning to walk, and listen to his vocabulary increase.

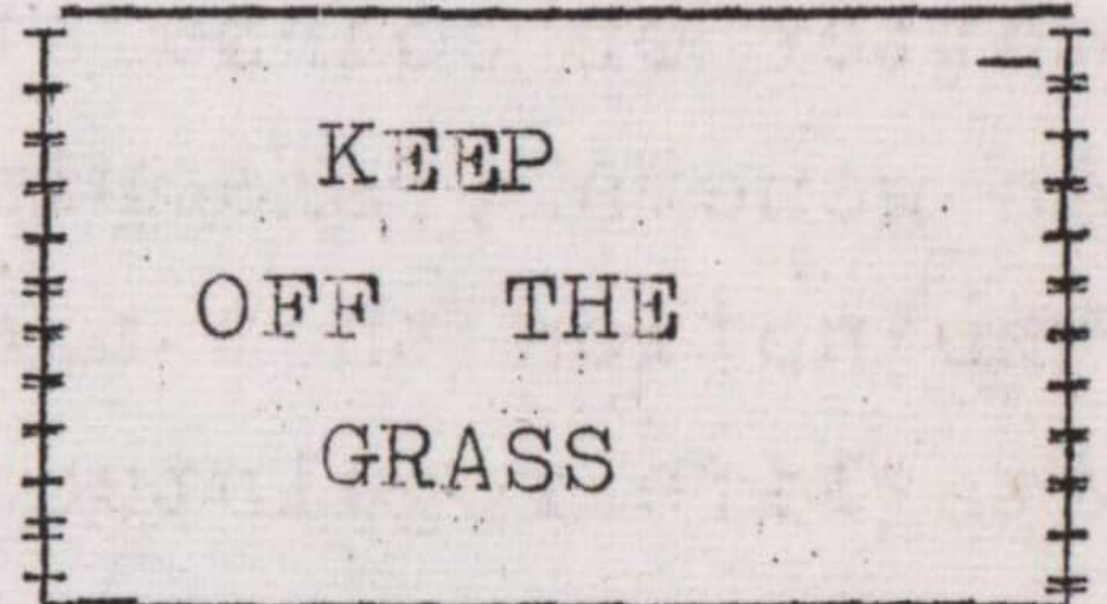
When they first go to school many children are upset for weeks, To start with; state schooling is compulsory.-This may seem an elementary point, but to the child it means literally that at any one time he/she is supposed to be doing one particular thing, and has no choice about what he does - in most schools, anyway. (Is it surprising that many people, and especially girls, grow up unwilling and indeed unable- having had very little practice- to make decisions affecting their own lives?)

The child is expected to conform to the school system.

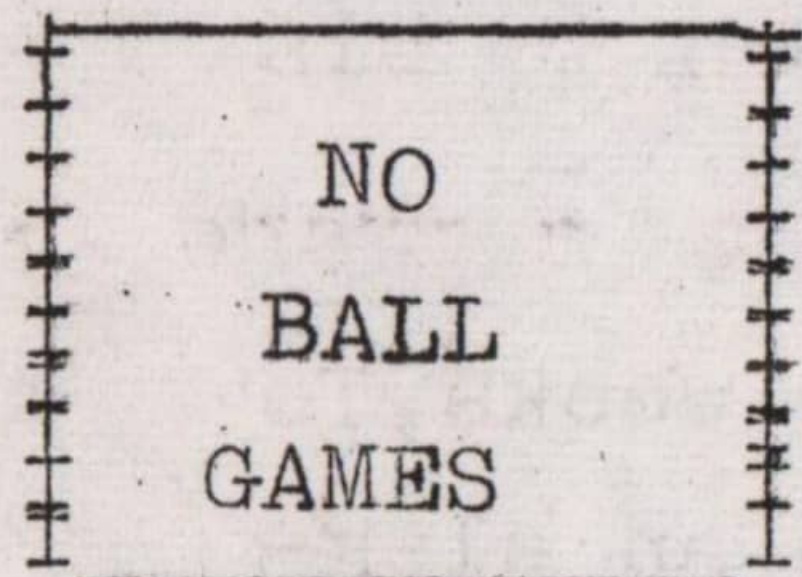
'One hears of kids not sleeping well at night because they fear a strict new teacher, or because they worry about low marks and bad exam results. One hears of kids erupting into violence in the playground after yet another frustrating, wasted seven hours at school' (Yes, all within my experience.) 'Children are subjected to rigidly authoritarian teachers, to religious and moral indoctrination, to a series of boring and irrelevant lectures on subjects for the most part not of their own choice, and all this in the prison-like structure of a box-shaped class-room, where they may be crowded in with 39 other kids ... in the institution of the school itself, with its monotony of petty routine and rules and regulations...which for many is totally against their will.' (Deena Jefferys in Rat Myth and Magic)

This does not of course make for relaxed learning and indeed can be a situation of great stress for a child.

A very general attitude to schoolchildren is shown in a recent report (Glasgow Herald) from the National Association of Schoolmasters. I quote again: 'Children from anti-authoritarian or excessively permissive homes are likely to be



difficult at school because parents have not instilled in youngsters appropriate habits for meeting school requirements 'and the responsibilities and capacities for learning' (!) Nothing to do with the school of course. New teachers 'may well relate the child's difficulties to their own lack of experience' but oh, no, according to this report it's not the teacher's fault, or the school's, or the educational set-up, but the ineffective bringing-up by the parents, who are therefore blamed for classroom and playground violence. The extraordinary thing is that nowhere in the report is corporal punishment - official control by violence, very widely used especially in Scotland - ever mentioned. The children are obviously supposed to need more discipline,



More restrictions - whereas the root of the trouble lies in too much control and too little understanding.

This society does not know how to let people learn - our concept of education and the role of the schoolchild - again a stereotype - is very narrow and restricted one - this is not education!

+ + + + + + + + + + +

The above is actually considerably shortened, although it may not look it! However it says something of what I feel - Alison.

(Excerpt from a longer article we would have liked to have included in full.....but space is short!)

Because women are an oppressed caste, helpless, isolated, and bear the brunt of the increase in the cost of living and the misery of bad housing and so-called welfare and social security, they need to get together in groups for mutual aid, on a local neighbourhood basis, far more than men do.

But they won't do it spontaneously, they must be shown in practice how it works. Not by settling in a neighbourhood all together in a hippy commune which would be obviously bizarre and not for normal people- one has to start **from** where people are, not from where one imagines they are or ought to be. Three or four anarchists, living outwardly normal lives- in digs, families, and so on, could act as a ferment in a neighbourhood if they were prepared for a long and rather boring stage of preparation. First getting to know their neighbours, joining local social groups, clubs and so on; talking to people in the local pubs. If married with children, getting to know the other mums, attending jumble sales, and getting jobs in local factories, etc. Then start some communal effort, preferably with some nonanarchists in from the beginning, but this is not necessary. Eg. take over an empty shop (either at low rent because about to be demolished, or free for some reason), or use a room in ones own house, and call it a mutual-aid club, for exchanging jumble, helping old people or overburdened mothers with shopping, looking after children, play groups, informal youth club, anything that might fill a local need. From there one could branch out into all sorts of things; eg. an adventure playground, taking over of streets from cars and lorries by organising barricades and so on; a communal restaurant; a co-operative craft centre or shop where things can be bartered without having to pay VAT. Taking over empty houses for homeless people could become a real beginning of an anarchist commune if it had a firm local base and a resident anarchist group on the spot, I mean living near enough to participate in the daily life, not just on call to fight the bailiffs, I would suggest also cultivating gardens and even taking over allotments; home-grown vëgs are much better and cheaper. I know this kind of thing will not appeal to a good many anarchists; they will find it tame compared with bashing fascists or battling the police; but making a revolution is like cooking - the pot takes longer to warm up than to boil over.

ANNE VOGEL.

Historically the libertarian left in this country has been largely made up of the conscience-stricken middle-class rather than working people. This is in striking contrast to many other countries—for instance, most of western Europe. The position of the women's movement in this country (and from what little I know of it, on America too) bears some parallels.

I should say at once that there is nothing wrong with this as a) you have to start somewhere b) you need some kind of conscience to recognise the existence of exploitation c) I myself am one such! There will always be exceptions, eg. May Hobbs, and the Fakenham women, but the general point holds.

One of the biggest reasons for the gulf and its self-perpetuation is the ability and wish to express oneself intellectually. An anti-intellectualism sometimes going as far as nihilism can be very tempting for either the conscience-stricken intellectuals or 'self-made' working people. This shows, I think, in the latter part of the Oxford 'collective' editorial in Newsheet 11—throwing out the baby with the bathwater.

This however is internal argument, in my opinion, based on hangups from the past. The crucial problem is the fact that the most articulate are often the least exploited, and vice versa. Teachers fall into the first category, lavatory cleaners into the second. In the case of women the shift toward the bottom end is accentuated by the relatively few in high positions.

I am assuming a general, but certainly not total, concurrence among readers of the LWNN that it is both desirable and necessary for a libertarian revolution that the self-activity and theoretical awareness of all working people be encouraged to the point where our encouragement is not needed. How? There is no easy answer except to keep plugging away with stuff that we consider both readable and relevant, and to be prepared to alter our concepts of these two qualities as necessary. At the same time we must avoid the dangers of the single-sentence paragraphs of the 'Courier'-type of paper, and at the other extreme the faults of a paper like the Trotskyist 'Red Flag', which is completely jargonised. Somewhere in between lies the language and articles we should aim for. Nor is this necessarily restrictive; it can include a 'populist' approach—topical issues put over in a chatty way; we found this worked quite well in our Aberdeen 2-sided scandal-sheet, the Fighting Mouse, which is still going;—or it can also include a well-written theoretical journal.

(abbreviated)

MIKE MALET.

I beg your pardon, but will you kindly step outside for a moment ?

I realise that internal accusations and counter-accusations are distasteful to anyone not directly involved. It is with reservation that I send in this letter for publication in the Newsheet, but since statements and implications have been made which are untrue, I feel I must refute them. A week after receiving Newsheet No.11, I am still very angry, but anger will not take the form of unfounded attack on my unknown attacker.

To take comments one by one from the section "Libertarian Womens Newsheet No.11", on the 3rd page :-

1. "...We're sorry about the delay in bringing it out, but didn't get the address list (etc)...till after the theoretical day of production..."

In case, in the context of what followed, this was understood to mean that I had not sent the stuff to Oxford on time, I can state that it was all posted on Tuesday, before the weekend of production, first class. It was sent to Anna Livingstone, and not to Gill Andrews, at their request. The date of production had been agreed by the people from Oxford, at the meeting of libertarian women in October, and confirmed by Anna at the National Conference on Nov 5th. The Newsheet has been useful as an information sheet, mainly because it has come out regularly. Of course I know what it's like trying to produce it in the middle of lots of other things, all of which reach crisis point the weekend the Newsheet is to be produced. There's no blame in that ... but don't try and imply that one of the causes was my not getting the stuff to Oxford in time.

2. "...unlike Ros Nathan none of us is a member of the Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists - nor are many of the women who subscribe to this Newsheet. Many of us have no wish to join an Organisation of any sort."

I don't know where to start with this one, as it's got all sorts of nasty implications but doesn't say anything I can argue logically with. I can start out by pointing out that I have always openly said that I am a member of ORA - in the very first meeting at the Manchester Conference at which the Newsheet was born, in the libertarian womens meetings, and in the ideas I have written in the Newsheet.

The Newsheet was produced with the explicit reason of combining a newsheet with a discussion sheet - of course I'm going to say what I think in it ! In fact I have only come to think as I do now by thinking about what other women have said in the Newsheet, and by clarifying my own ideas in reaction to others!

I think the main nasty implication in the above quote is that it implies that I have been using the Newsheet to get people to join an organisation in an underhand way. As it happens, I believe I am not guilty of this horrendous crime. The whole thing really hinges on the emotive, underlined, capital-lettered word, "Organisation".

I have a certain view of the world. I share much of this view with a number of other people around England, in Scotland and in Wales. We are all the Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists. I want to take action on the things which my ideas lead me to believe are necessary to change in this society. I want to change how things are, and other people's ideas of how things should be, eg. I want to destroy capitalism, the power of the people with money, the family etc, I also want to change people's ideas of what women are like (and thus incidentally what men are like). To be more efficient in changing things, I want to learn what works and what doesn't; where my ideas are unclear; whether the things I want are possible to achieve, and if so, how.

The most efficient way of doing this is to discuss my ideas and actions with as many people as possible. To discuss with both those who don't agree with my ideas, and those that do. I also want to discuss and think about their ideas and actions. So we have arranged (organised) to produce a regular bulletin - not unlike this Newsheet - with news, ideas, discussion, analysis, etc: we meet to further this, and to take decisions on action (eg. to agree to help each other in a particular campaign): we produce a magazine to discuss our ideas more fully: we are hoping to produce a newspaper to get our ideas out to people who haven't come across them before.

We have no leaders, we are aiming at forming a cohesive network organised in a libertarian way. Production of the various newsheets, etc, is moved round from

group to group and decisions are taken collectively (through the internal bulletin and at conferences). Of course this doesn't all work with no mistakes, no left-overs from the conditioning we have received in this capitalist, sexist, racist, hierarchical society ... but we're damn well trying to create between us an organisation which develops its activity through understanding what is happening in society, and which is aware of the way its own organisation works ... so that our activity is efficient in changing this society, because we are capable of learning from each other and from others who don't agree with us.

Many of us live in collectives, in trying to combat the nuclear family, sexism and property hang-ups in our own lives - but also so that we are more effective in working politically, and linking personal and political.

So much for the scare word "organisation". Now, the question of whether I have tried to get people to join in an underhand way. I have written to people about ORA, when they have requested information. I have said things in the Newsheet which many people in ORA would agree with. This was obviously done with the intention of convincing people to my way of thinking, or at least to get them interested in my ideas. It's what everyone does, and certainly what the Oxford women, and every other woman who has contributed ideas to the Newsheet, has done.

However, I have included in the Newsheet all articles I have been sent (except one which I discussed with women at the second libertarian meeting, and it was decided that it would be left out as it was factually incorrect and misleading.) Many of the articles, and letters have been in clear and absolute antagonism to my own ideas .. eg. articles pro radical feminism, pro angry brigade, etc. I have put in plugs for literature from ORA, but also plugged demonstrations for the Stoke Newington Eight (which I have reservations about), and pamphlets with which I strongly disagreed. It is noticeable that the Oxford Newsheet contained articles, letters and cartoons that they agreed with, and that they returned other articles to me.

3. "We also repudiate ORA's insidious takeover of the word libertarian.."..
Bullshit! (Sorry, but I'm angry.) Many, but not all, of the people in ORA now call themselves libertarian communists. We have a clear definition of what this means. We adopted the phrase from Ida Mett, Nestor Makhno, and Piotr Archinov, who called themselves libertarian communists in opposition to Leninism, in 1926. They had taken part in the Russian Revolution, but were exiled for their opposition to the hierarchical organisation of the Leninists. What does the word libertarian mean to you?

4..."the Libertarian Monthly, and even though they're generously devoting a whole half-page to so subsidiary a subject as Womens Liberation .."
Actually the paper will be called 'Libertarian Struggle', it was plugged on the back of Newsheet No.10, in a very obscure way, because looking at it again I see that one could read it and think that it meant what is suggested in the quote above. To explain: the newspaper is being written by everyone in ORA who feels that the newspaper is important, and who has committed her/himself to writing a certain amount each month. It's up to each of us to say how much we can cope with. The women in ORA said we would commit ourselves to at least half a page-worth of articles and news specifically on women. If this isn't enough, criticise us, not ORA - there are no chauvinistic ORA males limiting the amount to be included! We proposed that the half-page is not put as a separate and special place, labelled "womens half-page/section/hideaway", but that the articles are dispersed throughout the newspaper - as we believe that the womens struggle is intrinsic and inseparable from revolutionary struggle.

5..."..we also HATE another ORA tendency - JARGON"...
Just a list of points, as I don't want to drag this out, but cannot let the lies, (mistakes?) go. ...

a) we have no member in Notting Hill. Who did write it? Is there a name or address?

b) With reference to jargon - the class/caste article I wrote may have appeared to you to be jargon-filled and masturbatory. It was a serious attempt to analyse and understand Selma James' ideas, Radical Feminism, and the Womens Movement, and

was put in to provoke reaction, discussion, etc. Does the fact that the only reaction it received was this old-style smear * mean that you can't answer the points you disagree with ? (* so much for the view that sisters don't go in for old male-agressive politics !)

A lot of 'jargon' words are used with the people who are trying to communicate meaning different things by them. I had noticed that the word "class" was being used by different people in ways which showed that the meaning of the word differed. I was trying to clarify thought by clarifying what I thought the word meant, and using the word "caste" where the word class was not applicable as I had defined it. This was not an academic exercise. What the hell is the point of doing lots of things without first thinking of why they are being done, and what they are supposed to achieve ? Thus, while taking part in activity, I reckon you should try to understand the reasons for it, and evaluate its successes and failures in the light of this. So, unless you're trying to work out whether women are part of a socialist revolution, or whether the socialist revolution can be brought about by women alone, or whether the change in the role of women has nothing to do with socialism and the destruction of capitalism, what is the point of doing things ? Apart, that is, of doing it to satisfy your own personal needs - this is a perfectly valid reason, but shouldn't be confused with being revolutionary.

Ros Nathan.

Since, to be honest, we think this is rather long already, we've decided to restrict other comments to what will go on this paper, provided by Ros. We think she's reading some unnecessary implications into the Oxford editorial, BUT they should take into account that Ros has done a lot of the work on the previous issues of this newsletter. We (Alison and Una) are libertarians, but as of now we don't identify with ORA, we see our women's group as more directly relevant to us; and certainly all the women who are helping with this issue are not libertarians. Looking at the adress list it seems that although this newsletter was started by ORA women, it may be that it is now playing an important role in communication between local Women's Liberation groups, whose members are not all libertarians. (any comment?)

We are glad to have Ros' statement about women' news in the ORA paper, which we did have our reservations about. (Are there really no chauvinistic ORA males? Perhaps they are an improvement on certain contributors to Freedom!)

We think irritations should be aired, anyway.

Alison and Una.

LETTER on the same subject:

Dear Sister,

To start with, let me declare my bias as I am a member of ORA. The Newsheet is a coordination sheet for libertarian women, to inform autonomous groups of individuals of activities and also to act as a forum in which to discuss our differing ideas, this is surely what libertarian means. ORA represents one specific tendency within

