

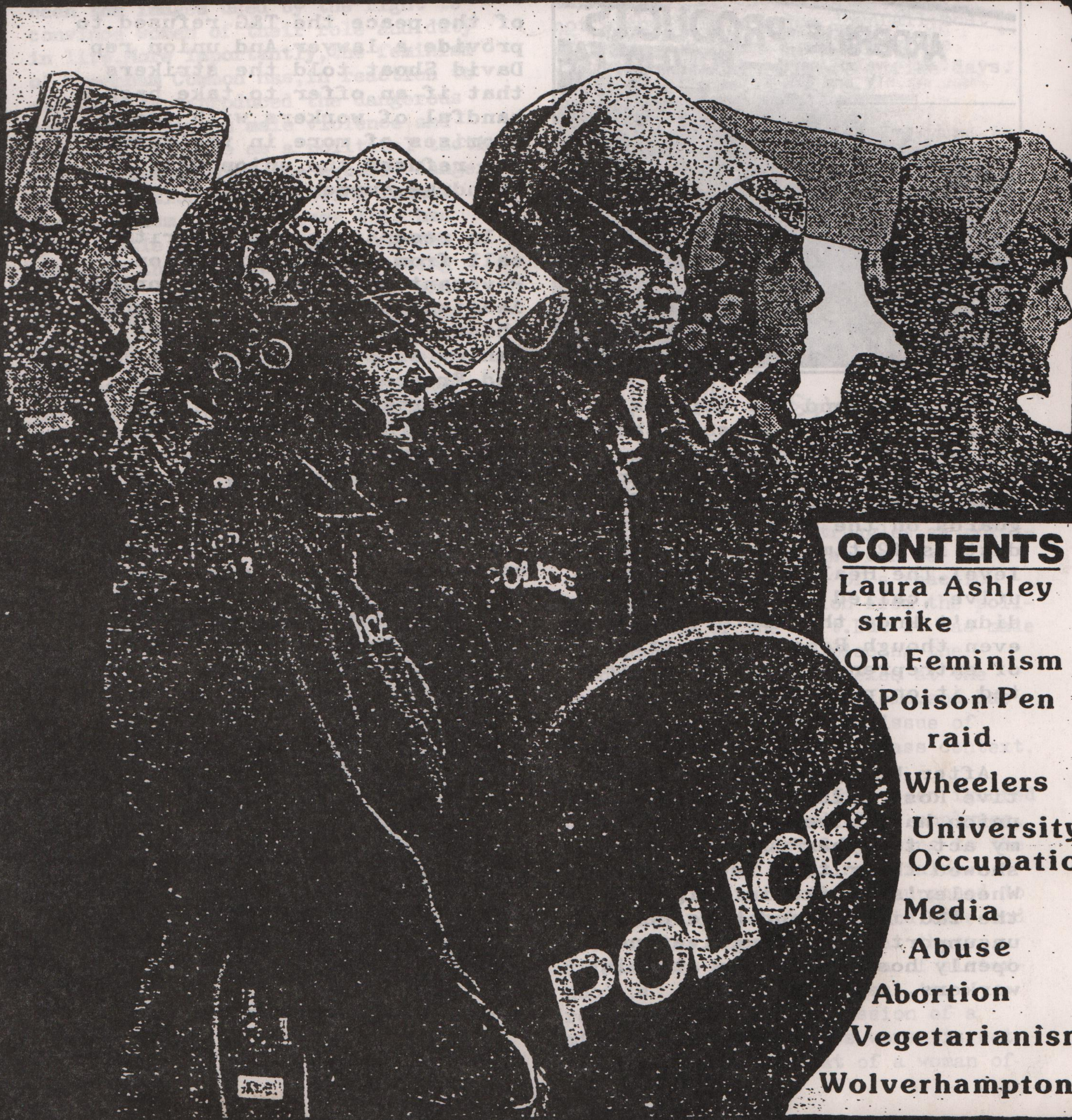
4199 W

WELCOME TO THE POLICE STATE

25p

BRIGHTON ANARCHIST PAPER

ISSUE 1



CONTENTS

Laura Ashley
strike

On Feminism
Poison Pen
raid

Wheelers

University
Occupation

Media
Abuse

Abortion

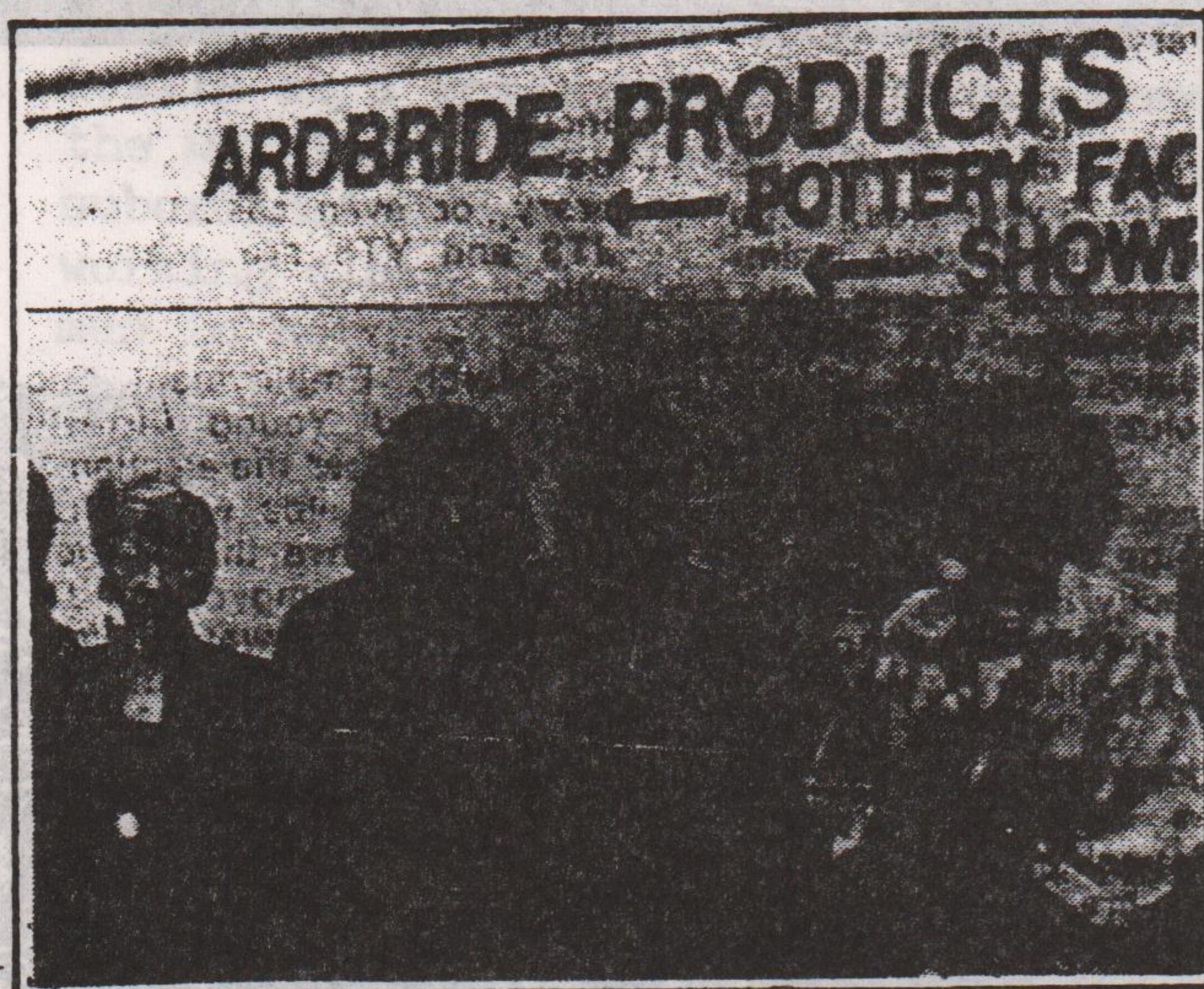
Vegetarianism

Wolverhampton

ARDBRIDE STRIKE

LAURA ASHLEY GETS A TRASHING

Since last September 21 men & women from the Ardbride factory in Androssan, Scotland have kept up their strike for an hourly rate of £2.50, the right to join a union and for safer conditions. Up until the workers struck Ross the owner of the factory which makes lampshades and pottery for yuppies and sloane scum at Laura Ashleys, imposed sweatshop conditions & £1.70 top slave wage.



The women and YTS workers suffered chest illnesses, shortage of breath and streaming eyes. Workers have fainted from glue fumes, there are no safety guards on the machines and the dust is 12 times the 'permitted' level. The Health & safety executive, called in by the TGWU, didn't know the factory existed even though Ross, a Shah breed of entrepreneur exploiter, started it on public money.

After being initially supportive Ross said of the TGWU 'the union have given me time to get my act together'. Just as they showed their true face in the Wheeler's strike in Brighton the T&G in Scotland have been unsupportive, obstructive and openly hostile to the striking workers.



Strike pay was refused on technical grounds and a 'hardship payment' was only offered after strikers gatecrashed a T&G meeting in Saltcoats. When 3 women were charged with breach of the peace the T&G refused to provide a lawyer. And union rep David Shoaat told the strikers that if an offer to take back a handful of workers with vague promises of more in the 'future' was refused the union would withdraw support.

In response to a solidarity call from the Direct Action Movement to other I.W.A. organisations syndicalists and anarchists have picketed Laura Ashley shops all over W. Germany and France and in New York.

In Britain there have been pickets in Bath, Bristol, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Leeds, London, Manchester, Shrewsbury and elsewhere. Stark contrast to the trade union inaction and proof that only by taking action for ourselves can we change anything. Pickets and other actions are desperately needed in solidarity with the Ardbride strikers to force Laura Ashleys to stop selling Ardbride lampshades and pottery and close down Ross' factory till he meets the workers' demands.

The Laura Ashleys branch in Brighton is at the corner of East St and North St opposite Hanningtons.

Support to; Anna Druggen,
28d Montgomerie Street,
Androssan, Scotland
KA22 8EQ

WELCOME TO THE POLICE STATE

The following comes from an emergency issue of the paper 'Poison Pen' which was suppressed recently and which we reprint in solidarity with those arrested for getting up the establishment's nose.

On the morning of Thursday 26th March, about 30 police were involved in simultaneous raids on 3 premises in Hastings and St Leonards. All three are the homes of local people involved in the restarted POISON PEN anarchist rag. During these raids police took away two transit vans full of material and arrested six people. The police had search warrants issued by local magistrate Michael Chaloner (4 Hamilton Gdns, Hastings. Tel: 429179) granted on information given by Detective Inspector Paul Miller allowing them to search for:

things which there is reasonable cause to believe have been used or are intended for use without lawful excuse to destroy or damage property belonging to another or to destroy or damage property in a way likely to endanger the life of another AND articles which have been used or are intended for use in connection with threats to cause damage AND material and articles which have been used or are intended to incite or attempt to incite others to do so. (Section 6 criminal Damage Act, 1971)

Amongst the stuff taken were: typewriters, a duplicator, duplicating ink, staplers and other printing equipment.

This is quite clearly an act of political repression aimed at silencing POISON PEN. It has failed. We will not be silenced. We will not be intimidated.

Also people's personal possessions were ransacked and removed by the police including personal papers, diaries, letters, birthday cards, artwork, photographs etc. This is the sort of action that even establishment politicians and journalists recognise as oppression if it happens in South Africa - so what is it here?

The six people arrested were held at Hastings police station for 7 hours and then released without being charged but have been bailed to go back to the station on 22.5.87. In the meantime the police will not return any of the items taken in the raid.

The police have told the local papers that these raids and arrests are in connection with acts of damage to property that have occurred recently; if that is the case why is it that nobody was questioned about anything other than POISON PEN, who writes what, who prints it etc etc?

UNEMPLOYED?

At the moment Brighton Unemployed Centre is in the process of recruiting 2 paid workers to help run its activities. The first obvious question this raises is WHY?

The Centre is virtually unused by the unemployed in the town because Labour Party members have decreed that they don't want pool tables or any other entertainments at the Centre as it might attract the wrong sort of person up there.

The Labour Party have a stronghold on the administration at the Centre and not only has their attitude to the place prevented it being of any value to the unemployed but now they are plotting to continue this farce by holding fixed interviews for these jobs.

We received the above from a regular user of the unemployed centre who feels, as we do, that the proposal to have paid workers at the unemployed centre needs much greater discussion than it is presently receiving.

If you are not a member of the Labour party then don't bother applying for a start - you could walk on water but it would make fuck all difference. If this was not bad enough members of the interview panel for the jobs think that they should only go to the people who work in the centre at the moment. Surely they have proved they're a fucking waste of time when it comes to running an unemployed centre.

The University of Sussex

OCCUPATION



Most readers in Brighton will have heard about the supposed 'orgy of destruction' that was the occupation earlier this year of a building at Sussex University. Aiming to cloud the real issues, the press has played upon popular dislike of students by exaggerating the damage which was done and blaming 'anarchists'.

Despite the popular dislike of students being justified, it is worth taking a closer look at student politics and the occupation. Most students are fairly apathetic. Most are content to undergo the transformation from schoolchildren to prosperous middle-class professionals without worrying about anything more serious than fashion, sex, drugs or possibly homework. Despite the brutality of capitalism that surrounds them, most only voice complaints which directly affect them like cuts in grants etc. Although most students are by no means well off, they know nothing of real poverty and are likely to end up earning a fair packet.

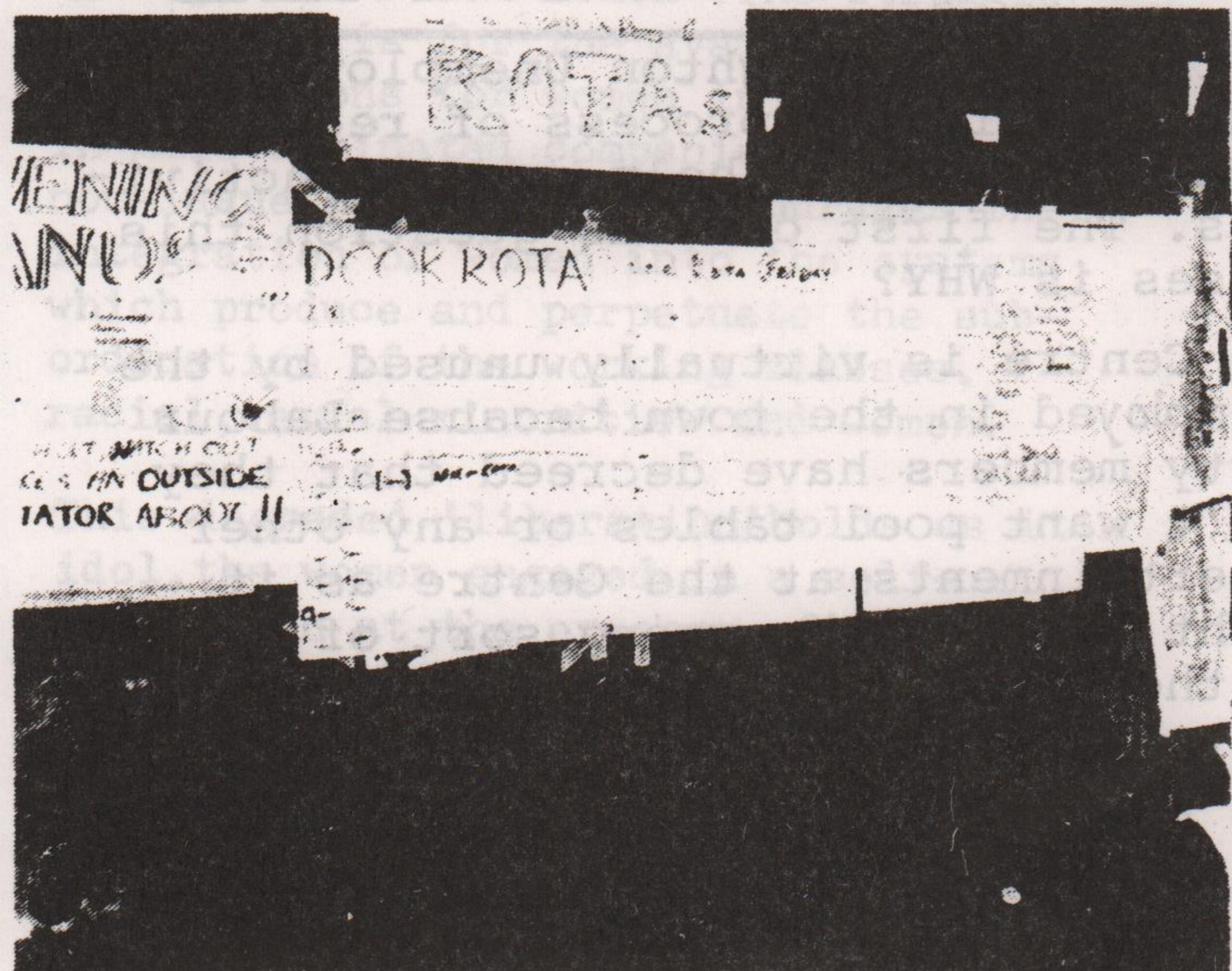
The minority of students who do care about issues affecting other people do not deserve a lot of praise either. Many are naive enough to think that Kinnock will actually benefit the working class rather than attack it from a different angle (remember the social contract?). Those that see through this are often patronising enough to put themselves forward as the revolutionary leaders of a class which they have decided needs them. Totally misunderstanding revolution, these peoples parties are nothing more than potential revolutionary hi-jackers, seeking credibility by reporting on others struggles as if they are somehow leading them.

The occupation was however an event largely motivated by a sense of solidarity with ninety campus workers and lecturers destined for the dole queues. A planning document had been drawn up by the University administration which proposed to cut jobs and spending in order to maintain their privileges in the face of cuts in the state funding of education.

A mass meeting of students attending a student union organised token gesture of disapproval decided instead to get off their knees and went into an immediate and indefinite occupation of the administration building. They resolved not to leave the building until there was a guarantee of no job losses or cuts in facilities.

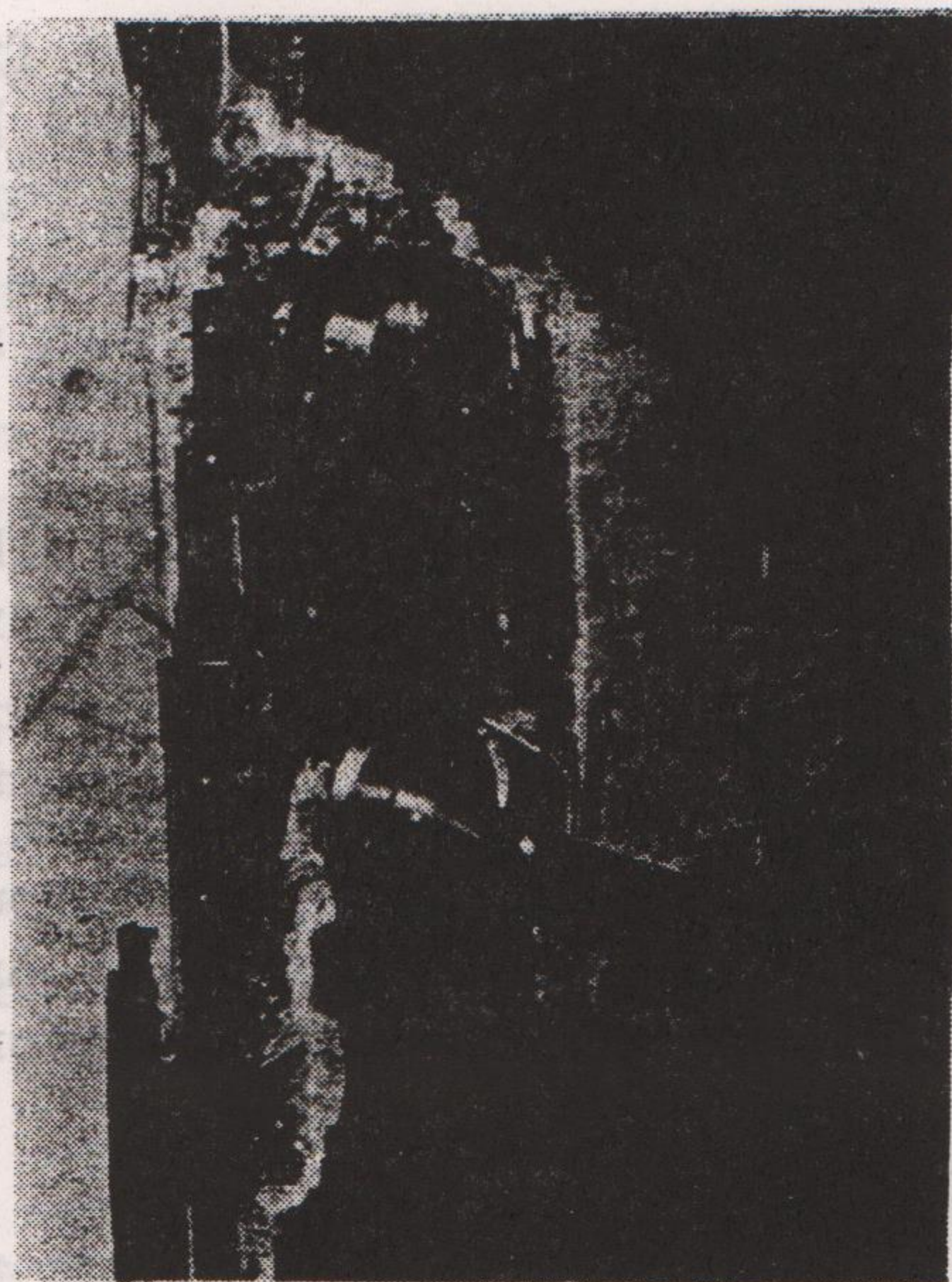
So what is the truth behind the the shit that the press is slinging? Extensive damage? Doors were kicked down in order to obtain vital information from confidential files. This included details of a network with the Deans of schools passing on information of supposedly politically active students to the administration. Evidence was found about the University handing information on students to the police. Plans to set up a private 'police' force to monitor and deal with 'subversive' students were also found.

Extensive pilfering? Well, a booze cupboard containing a large number of bottled spirits for the vice-chancellor to entertain his wealthy friends was put rather better use. Run by anarchists? The occupation was run the only way actions should be run; all decisions were made by daily mass meetings of everyone involved.



The occupation was smashed at 7am on the morning of day 11. Seventy police broke in, took students names and evicted them. Now the administration has bankrupted the student union and has formulated plans to curb its power. The local press has given a helping hand by using sensationalist lies to ensure the student population remains isolated from potential support. The repercussions have started around the country with other groups

of students going into occupations, and other administrations - such as Reading University, planning to smash their students unions.



It is debatable whether the student union in its present form is worth defending. Having to appear to represent the majority of students, including the right wing masses, it can act little more than as a talking shop and is likely to act as a millstone around the neck of radical action. As its funding comes from the administration it can be virtually paralysed anytime it appears to be a threat.

Forty six students are also facing expulsions, suspensions or fines for their parts in the occupation. No matter how we may feel about students, these people must be defended against victimisation when their 'crime' is to dare fight back. Student politics is a pretty irrelevant sham with regards to class struggle. But this sort of action and the debates which rage within it can potentially lead students to question matters beyond their campus, extending their dissatisfaction to a desire to be of capitalism and authority.

Students in France, Spain and China showed the way forward this winter. Chinese students rose to challenge state capitalism. Spanish students (including schoolchildren) are still stretching the resources of a state being attacked on many fronts by factory occupations, strikes and riots. French students defeated a proposed education bill designed to make it harder to go on to higher education. Their struggles were reminiscent of those in 1968 which took the De Gaulle regime by a storm when ten million workers came out on strike in support. Unfortunately the movement collapsed once the bill was dropped despite some excellent revolutionary literature evolving from the struggles. It is unlikely that we will see anything to compare with those struggles here. Higher education in this country is far more selective and so there are much fewer students here who are thrown out after a year, and having 'nothing to

lose' in taking action. French students have also seen the reality of an elected so-called socialist government and can not therefore sit back and wait for an election. We will however keep our fingers crossed and await further developments following the disciplinary hearings at the end of April.

MAY 12-14:
BRIGHTON ARMS TRADE FAIR,
MEET OUTSIDE THE METROPOLE
HOTEL.
MAY 16-17 SQUATTERS CONFERENCE,
MEET EVENING/AFTERNOON, FRIDAY
15th, 6 tickbury PLACE.

STOP PRESS

Some students have been before the disciplinary panel and received small fines. Due to a member of Militant "scabbing" on the defendants and using an expensive lawyer to get off the charge (which the rest can't), the rest of the hearings have been delayed until May 11th.

MEDIA EXPLOITATION

The last year has seen a hotting up in the TV soap opera viewing stakes, each looking for the juiciest storyline to attract new addicts.

Adultery is old hat, even on Emmerdale Farm and the Archers. And the unmarried ones are always trying to get into someones knickers so there's no new storyline there either. Crossroads has changed hands yet again and even brought back Amy Turtle! Brookside and Eastenders can't do that so they've taken another tack. They're beating up on women.

This is an old trick, even Peyton Place did it, but this time it's not the meek young teenager but the strong working woman.

Brookside started it a few months ago when Sandra, the nurse already divorced from a violent husband, got beaten up by her jealous boyfriend. She left the area for the love of another man while the boyfriend stayed on with only a modicum of disapproval from friends and neighbours.

In the same week that the boyfriend laid into Sandra, the working-class mother of 4, Sheila, was attacked and raped.

Channel 4 was so squeamish about this scene that their repeated showing did not include the last shots of her being dragged into bushes, screaming and kicking.

Phil Redmond, who devised both Brookside and Grange Hill, was questioned on script decisions and claimed that the storylines were planned months in advance. They had decided that rape was an important issue that they had not covered and chose Sheila as the victim to show women what not to do in the same situation.

The two attacks happening in the same week was "an unfortunate coincidence". The two strongest, most confident working-class women being attacked was not intentional. The fact that Sandra taking a better job and Sheila going out to college had indirectly led to their attacks was not seen as damaging. And yet it was made obvious that the other characters in these soaps thought that the women had brought the situation upon themselves by not keeping their mouths shut and "knowing their place".

Pretty much the same has now happened in Eastenders. Pat, ex-wife of one of the main characters has turned up on the Square.

Beaten up by her second husband, she has returned to be near her son. Rejected by him, ostracised by her ex and his family, she was forced to rely on old friends. She got herself a job as the barmaid at her ex's local and got

herself a flat on the Square when her son threatened to move out of the pub if she did'nt. In the background there were mild murmurings about "some nutter" beating up women in the area.

Pat became a "good time girl", exchanging sexual favours for meals and drinks, introducing the Square's unmarried mother to the business.

When pushed to the end of her tether by the self-righteous condemnation of her in-laws and her boss's posh mistress' obvious distaste for her "commonness" she started to fight back.

Racist comments about her sons Asian friend and questioning whether her ex really was his father were deemed as sufficient cause for both men to punch her. Why it should take 20 years for these traits in her character to appear was never explained.

Within a week she had become the attackers next victim, stalked to her front door after being sacked from the pub.

Although Pat had been beaten to within an inch of her life, our sympathies were obviously meant to be with her poor ex-husband, kept overnight as the main police suspect and questioned over and over again after his release.

ever been spoilt for choice?

HE WATKES WOMEN SHE DARE NOT GO OUT ALONE! GIRLS WHO LOVE BEATINGS!

Brighton Rape Crisis
P.O. Box 332
Hove
203 773
(24 hour answering service)
Womanned:-
Tuesday 6-9 pm
Friday 3-9 pm
Saturday 10am-1 pm

The fact that she did not regain consciousness for a fortnight was not meant to sway us. The storyline was obviously concerned with her ex's problem in finding an alibi, not with why people **are seemingly** so unconcerned that women can be attacked and left near to death with only a passing comment.

No doubt the attacker will prove to be an unknown nutter.

In Brookside it wasn't the family friend who berated Sheila in the back of a taxi, blaming her for the breakup of his marriage and affair. Or the lecturer with a crush on her refusing to take no for an answer. Or even the college friend's husband trying to get the address of the battered wives' refuge she had directed his wife and kids to. It was the taxi driver, seen for barely more than a minute in the whole week!

To add to the "drama", he'd set up such a smoke-screen that the family friend's wife had a breakdown and committed suicide, convinced that her husband was guilty. (She obviously knew that over 60% of reported rapes are perpetrated by men known to the victims.) The taxi driver was only apprehended when attempting to rape another woman.

Sheila spent more time helping her family and friends through the situation than they did her. Months later, her attempts to get her life back together are seen as being "selfish"! And Pat on Eastenders has more people urging her to clear her ex's name than sympathising.

Violence against women is not something to be used in a ratings war.

It is something that happens every day and can have a catastrophic effect on the lives of these women for years afterwards.

These storylines use women as objects for public titillation, in much the same way as pornographic films and magazines.

They forget that the majority of the population are women who have to face these fears throughout their lives.

We do not have to turn on our TV sets to see this type of violence and do not want to.

Emotional and practical support for women and girls who have been raped or sexually assaulted, however long ago and whether by a stranger, a friend or a relative.

All calls answered by women in the strictest confidence.

They will also accompany victims to the police, UD clinics, court etc.

ABORTION - A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE!

Recently the headlines were filled with the story of a woman in Oxford who wanted to have an abortion and her boyfriends attempts to stop her.

Or rather, we were told of the anguish of this poor man, about to be deprived of his child and heir by his selfish ex-lover.

In abject despair at this prospect he took the case to court.

LIFE came in as his standard-bearer, proclaiming the rights of the unborn child.

So sympathetic was the health authority they delayed the abortion until all the legal machinations were worked out.

The spurned boyfriend lost the case in court. 20 weeks into the pregnancy he appealed to the House of Lords, the final court of appeal.

The case was never heard as to do so would have taken the foetus past 24 weeks - the latest time for an abortion.

Very little was heard throughout this time of the woman or the problems that she faced if she had the child. It was almost implied that she wanted the pregnancy terminated out of spite or for totally selfish reasons.

Surely the plain and simple truth is that a woman's body is her own and no one else's.

That no one has a right to tell her what she can or cannot do with her body.

It was never made clear why the courts or the health authority thought the ex-boyfriend should have a greater claim over her body than the woman herself. The state's recent furore over surrogate motherhood would seem to imply the opposite.

The fact that the case did not go to the House of Lords cannot be seen as a victory - they threw it out because of the time factor, not because there was no case to hear.

The whole episode will probably be used as the basis for yet another attack on abortion rights, with the male hierarchy and "concerned" do-gooders trying to tell women what we can and cannot do with our bodies.

Brighton Women's Centre. ♀
6 Marlborough Place, Brighton.
600526 most days 11-2pm.
Free pregnancy testing, advice,
counselling and information about
pregnancy, abortion and all aspects of
women's health.
General information on women's issues.

WHEELERS

STRIKE : SELL-OUT!

The strike at Wheeler's restaurant, Market Street, Brighton began on 10th November '86 when 1 Chinese worker was sacked for opposing their employer Dennis Bailey, and 3 others walked out in support, Bailey, a rich stockbroker, holds the franchise from the multi-national Kennedy-Brookes for this up-market fish restaurant. Since he took it over in February '85 Bailey has increasingly exploited the workers, imposing new working conditions on them such as unpaid overtime and a probation period of 13 weeks. In October he refused them a pay rise in line with the other Wheelers restaurants in the chain. Instead he wanted to change the menus without consulting the chefs. These actions led to the first strike by Chinese workers in this country. Bailey had shown his appreciation for a total of fifty years work.

After a few days of picketing at the restaurant Bailey paid £1200 for an undertaking to reduce the picket line to 6 people. He was obviously surprised and worried by the quantity and speed of support that the workers received. T+GWU involvement was minimal from the start. All leaflets and other publicity was organised and financed by the support groups. Attempts to contact other T+G branches were frustrated by the district officer, Brendon Gold, who refused to pass on the necessary addresses. The union also threatened to pull out of the strike if the strikers sought independent legal advice concerning the industrial tribunal. Strike pay took 2 weeks to arrive and only as a result of a lobby of a T+G regional meeting in London did they agree to pay the interpreters expenses.

Action

In spite of very limited resources autonomous action was very successful. Two benefits were organised in Brighton and an illegal demonstration attracted 200 people who, ignoring police instructions, marched to the restaurant. Leaflets were distributed on the picket line and amongst the Chinese community in Brighton and London where a great deal of physical support and solidarity was shown. A number of mass pickets were organised when deliveries were turned back or left outside the restaurant. The

effect of these and other actions taken by more militant supporters soon had a very positive effect, reducing Bailey's custom by over 50%. Expensive lead windows were trashed, deliveries liberated, scab's tyres slashed and potential customers "persuaded" not to enter the restaurant.

The strike was being watched with interest by Chinese communities all over the country. Hundreds of pounds were collected for the strikers and as a direct result of the strike many Chinese people decided to join a union.

In February the T+G decided to get involved in a demonstration and public meeting organised by the support group. Brendon Gold offered to contact other groups, finance the publicity and to not notify the police - a proposal gladly received by the strikers and supporters. A large, well organised, well publicised demonstration seemed imminent.

Union Sell-out

The march never took place. The strikers were informed by Gold, only 2 hours before the public meeting, that a deal had been made between Bailey and the T+G under which they would get



£5000 each. There was to be no demonstration, no industrial tribunal, no more action. The agreement was as yet only verbal but Gold had already informed the police and the other people previously invited that it was off. Bailey and Kennedy-Brookes were

obviously worried by the effectiveness of action taken by supporters, They wanted a quick end to the strike. There had been no consultation with the strikers about negotiations until the deal had been made.

"Support" from the Revolutionary Left

The support group consisted of many groups and individuals. The Labour Party gave a typical display of hypocrisy when one of the strikers was asked to present a letter of support at a rate capping meeting. He was told that those attending would then join the picket line. He did so, and not one person arrived at the restaurant. At a later meeting and benefit he was asked to speak and present a petition. The petition was presented but Mr Cheung was not allowed to speak. From the turnout at the picket line the rota of 2 people a day also appeared to be non-existent. There was little

individual support from SWP members, although they stuck rigorously to the party rota. Fortunately the RCP's original attempt to take control of the support group was unsuccessful and after a few meetings no more was seen of them. Such is the cynical attitude of the Revolutionary Left!

The strikers showed courage through a strike made much harder because they spoke little English, and often had to rely on interpreters to communicate. They have made a precedent for other Chinese workers who have gained more confidence from their fight.

Trade Unions can be useful in a struggle, but trust them, or let them take control and the result is predictable. They will sell out time and time again.

KEEP FIGHTING...TAKE CONTROL!



MEAT-EATING - why people still do it

This article was prompted by seeing "The Animal Film" narrated by Julie Christie at a recent AnarchoFeminist conference.

The film shows typical scenes of mass meat-producing and animal experiments

- chicks having their beaks cut off so they can't damage each other when penned in;
- sows chained in cubicles, unable to move away when the boar is let in to mount at will;
- animals chained so that they are permanently in position for their particular role in life, whether over-feeding, milking or suckling young;
- experiments still being carried out involving the maiming of animals where conclusive results were obtained 20 years ago.

Women came out determined to "mend their wicked ways" - vegetarians vowed to become vegans, meat-eaters promised to stop forthwith. Few kept to their promises.

This cycle has been run many times before with very much the same conclusion - good intentions falling by the wayside. The conclusion of people who have performed this cycle is that the starting point was wrong.

The makers of such films seem to assume that by reeling off large numbers and showing gory pictures they will win more converts to their cause. If it works at all that is exactly what they will gain - converts. And the worst possible recruit to any cause is a convert. Anyone who can be convinced by the type of Shock-Horror-Probe tactics usually associated with the Sun will have problems explaining their "reasoning" to other people. Or do Julie Christie and her cronies really believe that the working classes are so stupid that they can only be won over by sob stories of what happens to "poor little baa lambs that should be bouncing about in the fields"?

No, the scenes of animal degradation shown in

the film should not be allowed. No, no one should be allowed to breed animals in order to line their own pockets. But surely the problem lies in the methods that are used? Farmers and scientists employ these methods for profit or prestige. In a perfect society we would be working for need, not greed but that does not automatically mean that we would all be vegan or vegetarian.

The biggest lie told by the ruling classes to the working classes and dispossessed majority is that we could achieve what they have. In all cases this has meant parallel achievement

- they get £60,000 a year, we get poverty line wages or the dole;
- they get semi-detached suburbia, we get council flats (if we're lucky!);
- they get Roland Klein, we get C&A;
- they get Cordon Bleu, we get McDonalds.

The problem is that of all these carrots held out to us, meat-eating is the most insidious. Food plays a far greater part in peoples lives than any of the others. Every culture has its own rituals in the type of food, its preparation and presentation. In most cultures meat plays a major part in these rituals. Even in Britain where regional habits vary greatly, meat is almost revered. Working class people do not really expect to have palatial dwellings or the latest in Haute Couture but feel incredibly deprived if they can't have their pork chops!

Meat-eating has been an accepted practice in this country amongst all classes for many hundred years.

Until non-meat-eaters can find a better means of dissuading people than guilt-tripping them, then vegetarianism will remain "trendy".

(PLEASE NOTE:- THIS A PERSONAL VIEW. ANYONE WHO DISAGREES IS WELCOME TO WRITE IN WITH THEIR OWN OPINIONS ON THE SUBJECT.)

ON FEMINISM

Feminism as an ideology has often been preoccupied with a critique of society as patriarchy. This generalised concept has, in many ways, only helped to blur an insight into the sources of womens oppression and taken it out of the very specific contexts in which it is produced in varying forms. Western society (amongst others) has a history of patriarchy; it has been and continues to be male dominated. But, this is not it's only quality - it is a class based society which oppresses men and women. The idea put forward by some feminists, that such a society could not be created by dominant females, is not valid for this implies that women are somehow less aggressive (and thus more passive) than men, when in fact both qualities are social. Social and sexual inequality are mutually dependent. Just as sexism cannot exist without a social system generally based on inequality, a society based on class divisions needs to create other divisions such as those between the sexes, races, nations, in order to sustain itself. (Divide and rule).

The oppression of women is by no means a pre-requisite of capitalism (as it pre-dates this social form) but it is a major factor in the sustaining of this system. One example of the inextricable link between the two, is the fact that the relegation of women to low-paid jobs enables wages generally to be kept low. In working class families the bread-winner (usually the man) will often not bring in enough income. The woman therefore, unable to claim state benefit as she is seen as dependent on the man's wage, will take on low paid work.

The state subordinates women by denying them relative financial autonomy - that is, by assuming that married or co-habiting women can live off the wage or benefit of men. (The government is consequently able to manipulate the unemployment figures). Many women are pushed into a corner where they are either dependent on a man or exploited in often non-unionised, low paid jobs (from which they are at least three times more likely to be made redundant than men). The Equal Opportunities Commission made the excuse that women are generally lower paid because; "They work in lower-paid occupations though it is unclear which factor is the cause of the other".



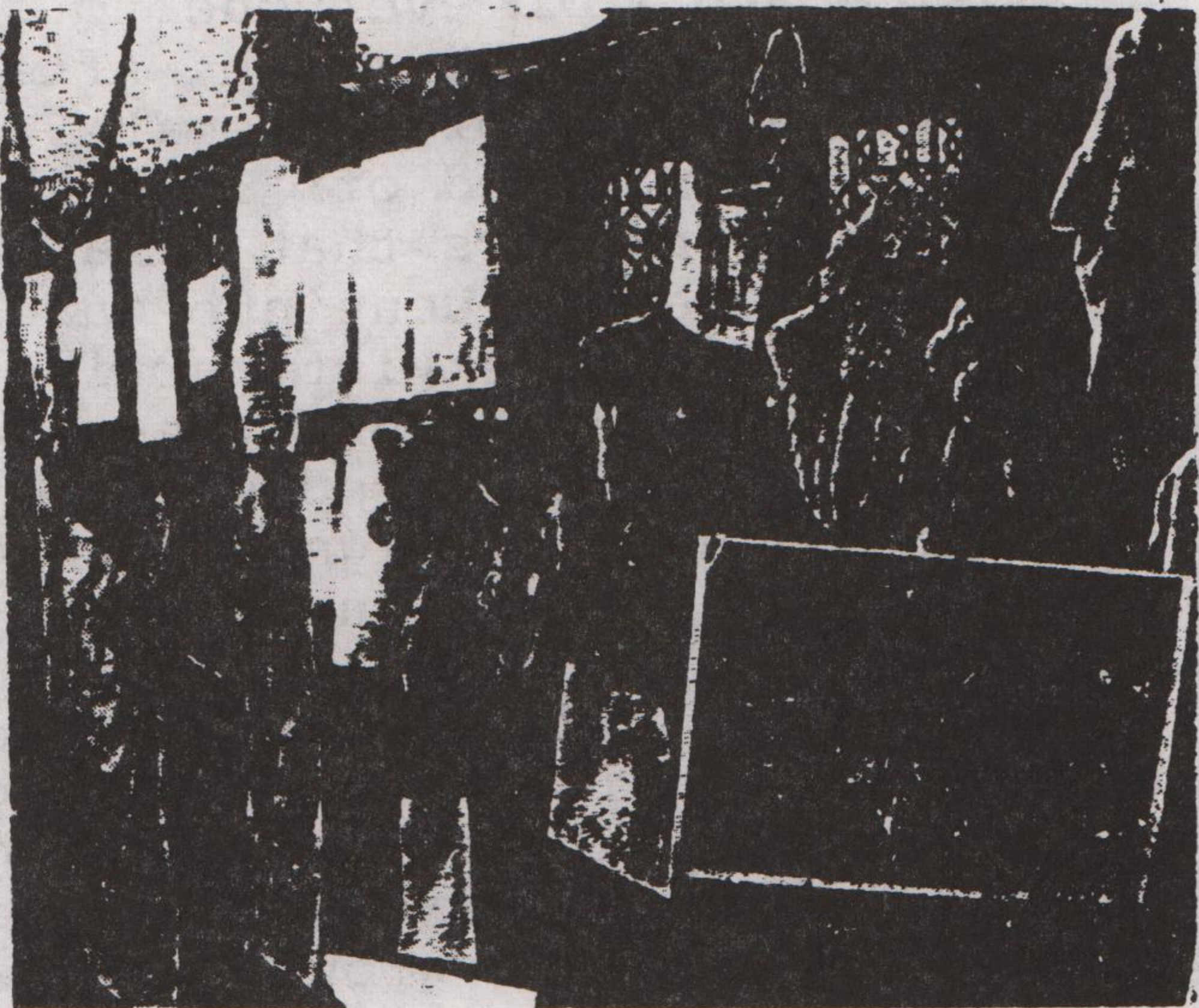
Given this double subordination of working class women, feminism has done little to further their cause. Instead, it has, in it's elite form, concentrated on addressing already at least economically privileged middle-class women. In it's popular form, the 'radicalism' of early 70's feminism has degenerated into for example; 'liberated' women's magazines; 'Company', 'Cosmopolitan', '19', whose symbol of '80's emancipation is the 'professional woman'. The struggle shown here, is for the availability of top positions for women in the city or in male-dominated companies. This is a non-issue as it simply encourages the integration of women into the systems which produce and perpetuate the subordination of the working classes, racial, sexual minorities and women.

This degraded 'liberation' holds as it's idol, the women engaged in a self-liberation at the expense of others. Admittedly, this is not feminism, but it is an illustration of how ideas that stemmed from the womens movement have been open to abuse and become marketable by capitalist culture because it has been reluctant to take a class-conscious stance.

ON

FEMINISM ...

At the other extreme the women's movement resulted in Greenham Common. Ironically, the women involved set out to challenge male dominance in the attempt to take the anti-nuclear struggle into their own hands. But it's anti-masculinity turned to pro-femininity instead. An example of this is the celebrations of the joys of womanhood manifested in the nappies, baby clothes and flowers hung on the fence around the base. Significantly, these could have been the images used by the right to convince women of their role and duty in life. More importantly, the feminism of Greenham Common has, in reaction to masculinity, reproduced the dangerous confusion between male violence and militant violence as a political tactic and has perpetuated the equally dangerous connection between being female and pacifism. In this sense this has done little more than play into the hands of the oppressors by inciting political women to be pacifists and discouraging them from active participation in necessary class struggle violence—something men are only too glad of. The sham of Greenham became particularly apparent during the miners strike. (Although some links of solidarity were forged between both struggles in the face of government attacks).



In the course of this class struggle (albeit initially a struggle of men for work) women developed relative autonomy at least while the strike lasted: they formed collectives and were physically active on picket lines. They recognised their role in the strike as extending beyond merely standing by the men, and along with miners, developed a view of the strike as an effective weapon to counteract the destruction of their community by the government and the National Coal Board and the supremacy of capital over human beings. Surely the extended political insight which develops as a result of working class struggle is more valuable than the self-development of predominantly middle-class women at Greenham? However, this aspect of the miners strike was not without its major downfall; most of these women are now living the domestic lives of the pre-strike days.



These sort of defeats for women which have occurred throughout history, have helped to lead many feminists to see working with men in struggles as pointless. Feminist separatism can be explained as a product of a reaction against women's exclusion from the political arena of the left. But it has made the desperate move of placing the inequality between the sexes at the centre of the world's problems, and has the mistake of taking the issue of women's oppression out of class context.

Women's issues having often been ignored by left ideologies, and class analyses, separatism has reacted by going to the other extreme of creating a false sisterhood where women are supposed to unite regardless of class and race and the varying experiences that these differences entail. The idea of sisterhood is an explicit refusal to recognise that the oppression of a middle-class/upper-class woman is not always the same as that of a woman of

ON FEMINISM . . .

an ethnic minority or the working class. Having said this, there is a major sense in which all women are oppressed by the same factors; eg. pornography where women are presented as objects and commodities to be consumed visually or physically; language which addresses a male world and excludes women or makes them appendages of men (the use of him, he, his to refer to women as well as men). Paradoxically, a feminism that fails to recognise the oppression of the working classes by capitalism, the state and its institutions, also fails to recognise the major source of oppression for the majority of women. It is true that the middle-class woman is oppressed specifically as a woman, but as I have stressed, the working class woman is in a doubly subordinated position as a member of the working class and in relation to other men in her class. In addition to this there is the further complication of women being subordinated by a 'ruling class' that includes females; ie the rare female boss, lawyers and policewomen, and the even rarer phenomenon of Margaret Thatcher. Given this situation can there be a place for sisterhood?

ANGER IN WOLVERHAMPTON

Since early March there has been sporadic, unreported rioting in Wolverhampton.

Since we heard about the 24-year old black man, Clinton McCurbin who was strangled by two pigs on suspicion of shoplifting, what has been happening?

The media outside Wolverhampton has ignored subsequent events, so here goes:

A march through Wolverhampton, passing the Police station, the shop and the town centre was called to protest at the killing and to oppose police intimidation. About 2000 people turned up (including several coaches of youth from Toxteth and Handsworth. Unfortunately the march was stewarded by the Black Community Action Group and the RCP, who kept people four abreast (so it was easier for police to control the march). When the march went through the town centre, passing the street where the murder took place, hundreds of angry black and white residents were throwing snowballs, ice, and bottles at the police (there

It is also absurd to maintain faith in the existing social structures or in any ideology that seeks the power of a minority over the majority, if one wants to eliminate sexual inequality. The fight against sexism must be fought with, and not to the exclusion of, the class struggle. But equally, it is not satisfactory to ignore the issue of sexism as it exists now, in the hope that it will sort itself out after a social revolution. It is no good pretending that the problems which are specific to women do not exist. Sexual harassment from the infuriating wolf-whistle in the street, to sexual attack or rape which can ruin someone's life, the legal non-existence of rape within marriage which is a blatant legitimization of it—these are but a few of the things women of all classes face or potentially face. Recognising these forms of oppression and fighting them, must not be seen as a deviation from the main point of class struggle, but neither must this become a single issue. Instead, class, racial, colonial and sexual oppression, must be understood in terms of one another and not as has so often been the case, to the exclusion of one another. It is equally important for women not to put all the blame and responsibility on men alone for this implies a denial of women's power to take control of their situation. It is up to both sexes to change, to destroy their prescribed roles. The oppression of women has to become men's problem too if the separation and inequality of the sexes is to be eliminated.

were about five hundred pigs). The stewards stood between the crowd and the police, and told everyone to stay calm and continue the march. After about half an hour of stalemate, all the trots had marched off like sheep, and the small numbers that remained could do little but continue marching.

The various Trotskyist parties and community "leaders" were pleased with a march which to them represented the start of another campaign which would draw the "politically uneducated" into their "right-on" organisations. Yet most local kids were angry and frustrated, seeking revenge through direct action, rather than joining "legitimate", middle-class, dogmatic parties and pressure groups. I heard some of them saying "marching is a middle-class thing", and planning "blood and fire" in the evening. On hearing this, an RCP paper seller said, to another, "such attitudes show the need for these people to join our revolutionary party", (arrogant bastard!!)