

# WOMEN NOW



10p



# dear sisters

It's a year since we last produced 'Women Now'.

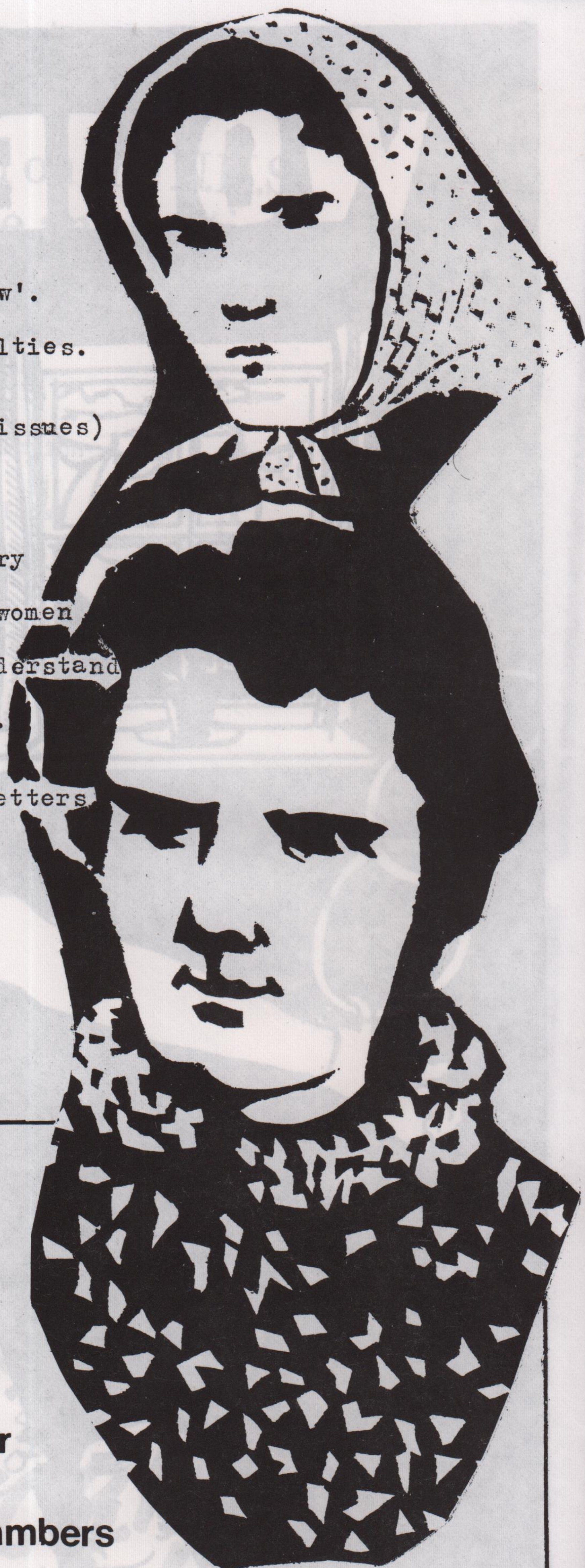
This is because we've had financial difficulties.

We hope that you will subscribe (40p for 3 issues)  
so that we can be sure of support.

We want our journal to survive because we try  
to make it speak to all women, not just to women  
in the movement. The majority of women misunderstand  
our aims, which are so often misrepresented.

Please write to us - send us articles and letters.

We need your support.



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However, the most damaging alteration made by parliament, in the light of the important role played by education in the discriminatory process, was the alteration to ensure the continuation of single sex schools. The bills' original supporters very definitely intended that a programme of co-education should be carried out with speed, Lady Seear went on record as saying, "The most important effect of this legislation would be on the schools, it would stop discrimination where it begins. There is no question of this change in the school system taking generations, with the backing of law and a vigorous team in the field to promote the ideas, you would get a lot of change in a very short time."

The 'team in the field' would be the sex discrimination board and its conciliation committees, who would police the legislation. The Bills, despite Lady Seear's use of the word "Vigorous", provide for a somewhat passive watchdog of a board which would receive and consider complaints and try to secure settlements. As a last resort it would have the power to bring an action in the High Court or County Court to seek compensation for the discrimination, and an injunction to prevent its continuance. An individual need not go through the board, he or she could sue in the court independently

That, then is a brief summary of the proposed legislation put before parliament by two private members, but it seems most unlikely that either will get onto the statute book. Since both are wholly, negative, and have many loopholes this is not at all a bad thing.

However, just because the present parliamentary moves seem to have come to a full stop we must not abandon our campaign indeed we must intensify it because on May 14th the Government announced its intention of introducing its own anti-discrimination legislation and of taking over the work of the parliamentary committees which had been considering the Private Members Bills.

Announcing the government's decision Lord Colville said that the scope of the Government's bill would not be expanded beyond that in the present bills (employment, training, education and T.V. etc. membership). He went on to say, "There are single sex schools and other educational institutions and the Government believes that these should be retained." The next day Robert Carr, Maurice MacMillan and Margaret Thatcher met the press to present the Government's reasons for introducing anti-discrimination legislation. Robert Carr announced that a consultative document would be drawn up. Mr. MacMillan said he

doubted if this legislation would be on the statute book before the Equal Pay Act came fully into force - December 1975. Mrs. Thatcher, according to the The Times reporter, seemed to regard the whole idea with considerable hostility. Not very encouraging.

That is the background against which the Women's Movement must now act. We must decide whether or not legislation is worth pushing for at all and if it is what sort of legislation we want, and how best to ensure that we get it.

I would suggest that it is worth campaigning for anti-discrimination legislation and involving as many women as possible in the campaign on this issue inevitably involving public debates and demonstrations could mobilise hundreds and thousands of women who up until now have had no connection with the Movement.

Our demand must be for effective, committed legislation - tokenism is not enough.

Why should the rallying-point of an anti-discrimination campaign be legislation? For two reasons - it is a concrete demand which contains a number of concrete, non-negotiable demands within it and as much makes a focal point for an educational campaign. Secondly if we get what we want it will make a massive practical difference to women's lives, and, hopefully, begin to change attitudes.

The legislation must abolish single sex schools and promote non-discriminatory educational programmes.

The legislation must cover all areas of discrimination, and this must include discrimination by the government (it is surely reasonable to question the integrity of a government which is unwilling to put its own house in order but is prepared to penalise others for discriminating). Taxation regulations, immigration laws, state pension schemes, unemployment benefit regulations and legal rights in marriage all important areas of discrimination MUST be included in the legislation.

Economic and social discrimination - amply illustrated in the rules of credit companies (a woman must almost always get a man to sign an H.P. form as her guarantor), the housing policies of many local councils (in Nottingham young men of 18 or over can register on Nottingham Corporation's housing list even if they are unmarried - but women have to wait until they are 30), commercial provision for supply of goods and services must be outlawed.

Discrimination by trade unions and professional bodies must, of course, be

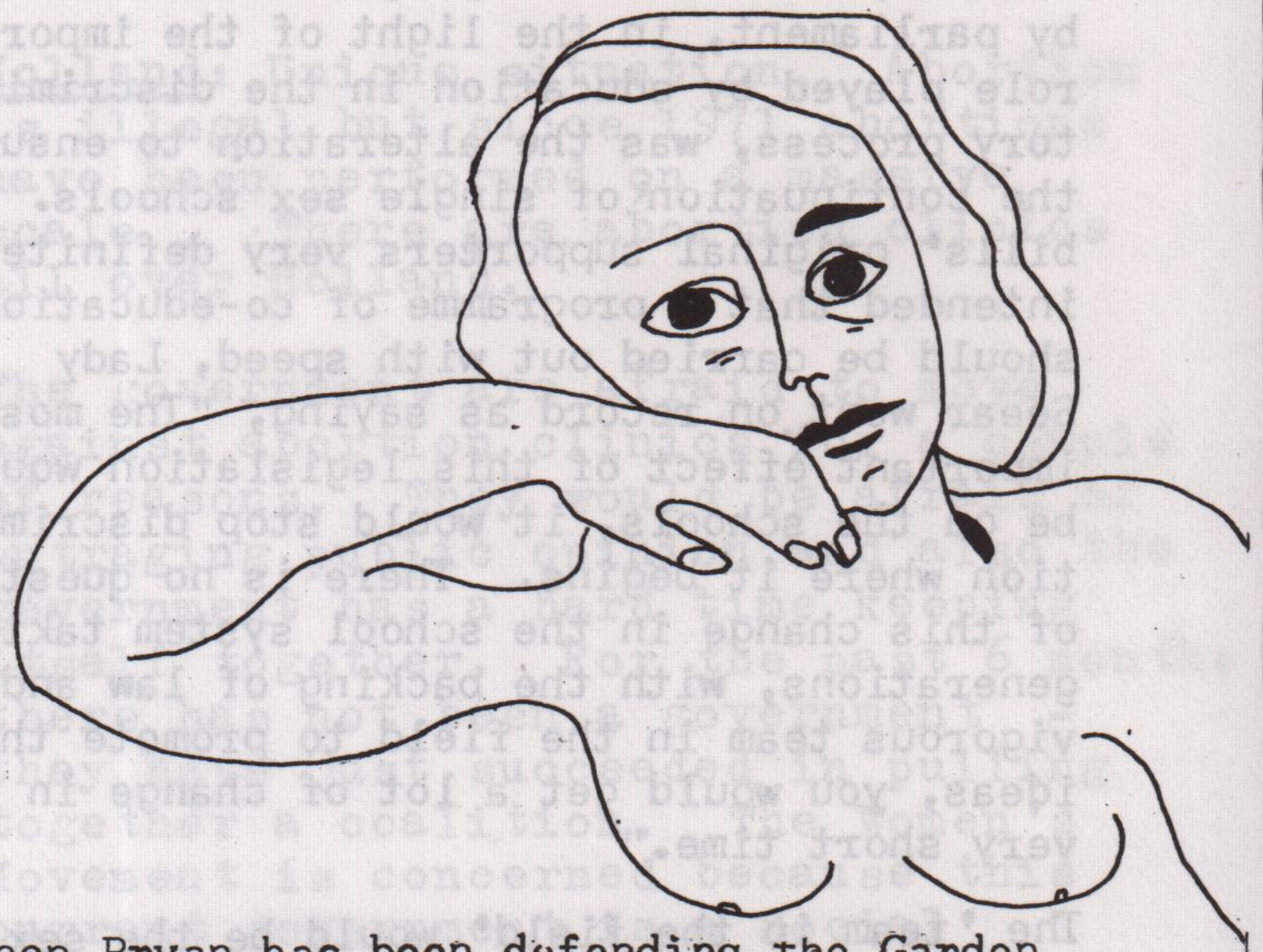


declared illegal, and apprenticeships must be guaranteed for women over a wide area of skills (not just hairdressing, as seems to be the case at the moment). Promoting the provision of creches and nursery schools, working out holiday schemes for mothers with schools-age children and advising on maternity leave provisions must be within the boards' brief, so that women can take their opportunities - without such provisions anti-discrimination legislation is more rhetoric. Retraining and refresher courses must also be made readily available to women wishing to return to work after having a family.

Having established its attach on discrimination the legislation must give the board power to promote an intensive publicity campaign - crusading legislation can falter badly on ignorance. The act, its provisions and what it all means must be made widely known. Firms and Trade Unions must be advised on the application of the act and on how to widen education, training and employment opportunities for women. Local Education authorities, must be made aware of their responsibilities under the Act.

We must let the government know we will accept no less. We must build a campaign of irresistible force - take to the streets as our sisters the suffragettes have done before us and demand loudly and clearly the first-class citizenship which is our right.

## Teresa Woodcraft



Canon Bryan has been defending the Garden of Eden story again in "Woman". He says

"It is true that in the first chapters of Genesis the woman is shown to be dependent on the man in some respects, but subservient. Most women I believe deep in their minds would have it so. As one psychiatrist has put it: "Man is the head of the home; the woman is the heart of the home". Both have different functions but both are equally important."

Notice the way the Canon has thrown the veil of scientific respectability over the old "Woman-is-the-heart - but - man is-the-head" chestnut. He says a psychiatrist put it that way. Which psychiatrist? Surely this is just a male assumption about women, it has no basis in scientific fact.

What does the Canon expect us to do with our heads if we are meant to be all hearts?

Difficult, isn't it, if you happen to have more of a head than your man.

The fact is, of course, that "Woman" is run by men who have their own reasons for wanting to persuade women to accept inferior positions - and who will pay the clergy to do the persuading.

As for that bit about "dependent but not subservient", it's rubbish. Eve was portrayed as so silly she couldn't see anything sinister in a snake accosting her, and so weak minded she couldn't keep her hands off the wretched apple.

Eve was silly, feather-brained, lightweight; that's the myth which has been used to justify the nature of female inferiority through the ages.

Don't forget sisters - God is a man!

## Helen Scalway



# Too Old at Thirty

## The Links between Age

The bias which exists in our social and economic set-up favour of the young as apposed to the middle-aged or elderly operates in favour of men. It is, in effect, a form of sex-discrimination.

Take marriage for instance. The average age of marriage for both sexes is lower now than it has ever been since records were kept. Those girls who are not going steady at 18 are regarded as odd, and those not firmly attached by 20 often consider themselves "on the shelf". From the age of 15 and even easlier, the energy of the average girl becomes increasingly involved in the race against time to secure a steady boy friend before she is too old. There is little time or incentive for worthwhile career training, or for experiencing other things in life (e.g. Women's Liberation) before she settles down in her semi-detached at 21 or 22 to have her 2.5 and a bit children. The average girl does not benefit from the trend toward early marriage, but the average boy probably does. He is usually older anyhow, his career is unaffected - in fact is is given extra motivation because of family responsibilities, which often even increase his eligibility for promotion.

Since women live longer than men; it would obviously work out better later in life if they married men rather younger than themselves. There would then be fewer lonely widows in their 70's and 80's. However, it is socially accepted as desirable for a woman to marry a man older than herself. The woman who marries a man even 10 to 15 years her senior is not regarded as doing anything undesirable; but if she marries a man 15 years her junior she is liable to be labelled a scheming baby-snatcher, and her husband will be considered a joke.

This is of course due to the fact that women are regarded primarily as sexual objects whose appearance is all important. Both sexes lose their looks as they get older. Men, too, develop wrinkles and double chins, and grow stouter - and balder. Yet only women are rejected because they

are losing their looks. What airline grounds its male stewards at 30 as many do their air hostesses? The faces of venerable male newscasters with wrinkles and bags under the eyes shine from the box into homes all over the country. Admittedly women are not allowed to newscast - yet - but do we know the faces of any middle-aged female announcers with wrinkles and bags under the eyes? I don't

The promotion of men in their thirties at the expense of older men in industry and the professions is known and understood to cause ever-increasing problems of redundancy and social re-adjustment. What is often not realized is that the accent on youth operates catastrophically against the woman whose career has been interrupted by having a family. By the time she has worked long enough after restarting to gain the experience necessary for promotion, she is too old to be considered. This probably accounts to some extent for the serious shortage of women heads of department in secondary schools.

Both men and women live far longer than ever before, and - most important - stay fit and active longer. How crazy for people to be in effect "written off" and find themselves without any hope of a satisfying job - or any job at all - when they still have thirty or more years of active life ahead of them! The majority of women are in just this situation!

Even when they retire, women lose out on the age question. Although they live longer than men, they are compelled to retire earlier, and if the present government gets its way, they will get State Reserve pensions up to 40% lower than men's!

The bias towards youth colours our whole attitude to the aged. In some societies the aged are looked up to and respected. We tend to regard them either as dear old souls to be humoured and treated like children, or as nuisances to be bundled into homes and forgotten - and of course most of them are WOMEN.

and

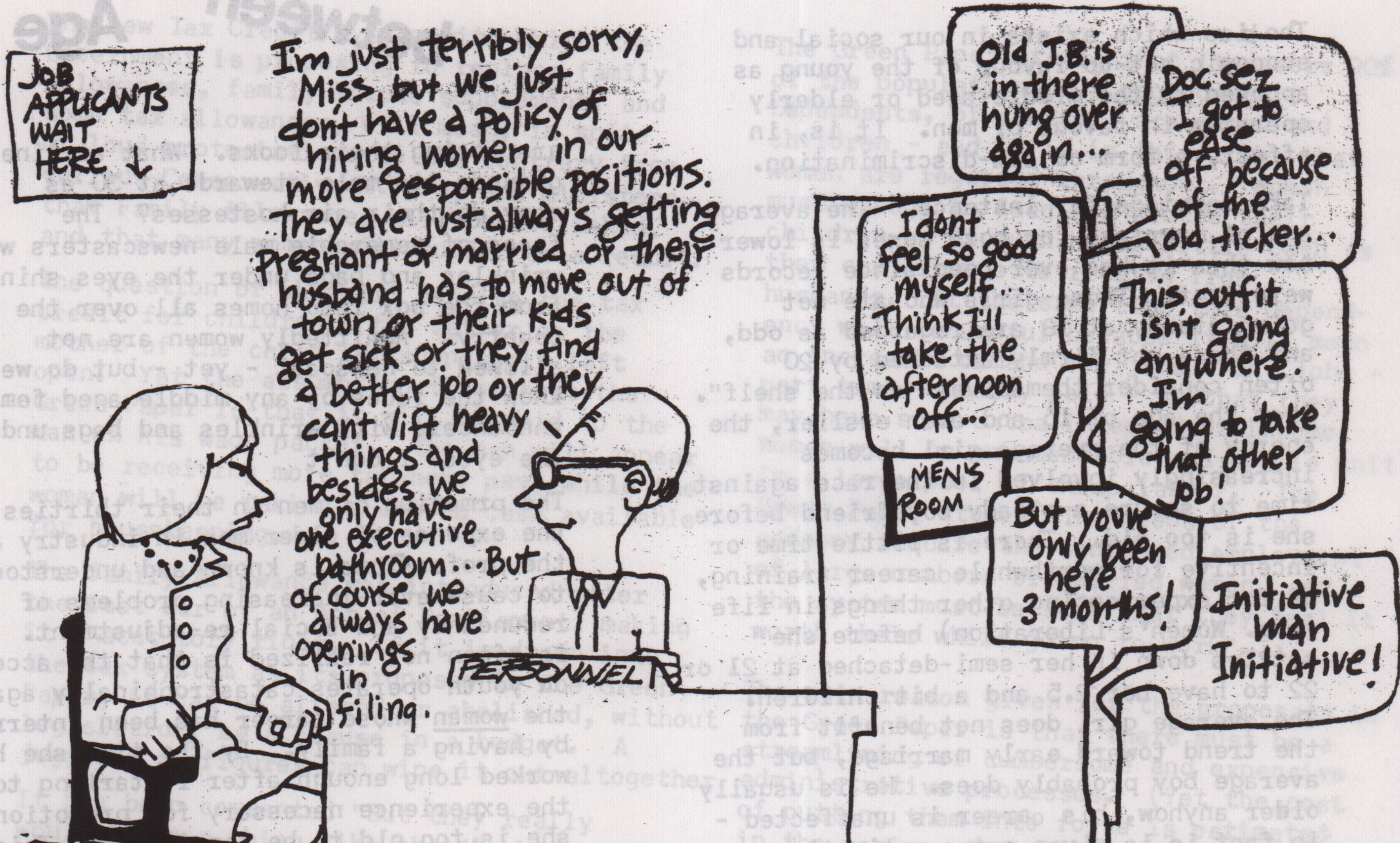
Sex

Discrimination

Jocelyn Wood



# The Anti-Discrimination Legislation



The Anti-Discrimination bills of Lady Seear and William Hamilton have become snarled up in the parliamentary machine; the Conservative Government have announced their intention to introduce anti-discrimination legislation in the next or subsequent session; and now the Labour Party intends to make discrimination on grounds of sex an election platform at the next general election - surely it is a good time to assess the bills, debates, speeches and promises that have been put before us over the last year and consider what our demands should be and the form our campaign for A.D.L. should take.

Before an idea or principle can become the law of the land, it must be formally presented and discussed in parliament. At this stage it is called a Bill and may be laid before parliament by the government (Public Bill) or, more rarely, by an individual M.P. (Private Members Bill). This Session's anti-discrimination bills (one in the Commons and one in the Lords) are the latest in a long line of Private Members sex discrimination bills which have foundered on the rocks of parliamentary procedure. Aimed at making

discrimination on grounds of sex illegal and providing machinery to prevent such discrimination, these bills attacked discrimination only in limited, although important, areas:- employment, education and training, and trade unions and professional bodies membership and rules.

And that was it! No mention of pension schemes, immigration laws, tax regulations, rights in marriage, credit facilities - all notorious areas of discrimination. Even within the limited areas that were covered, the bills were butchered in parliamentary discussion.

What happened? Huge qualifications were imported into the clauses concerning employment: discrimination in employment by the church ("I permit no woman to reach or have authority over men." St. Paul) could not, it was said, be covered by the legislation because of fear of a controversy over state interference in the affairs of the church. Lady Summerskill's observation that the bishops did not mind having women in a subordinate position cleaning the floors of churches was, perhaps, the most pertinent in the discussion. Child minding and midwifery are still to be regarded as women's work, because, according to M.P.s sex is here a genuine occupational qualification!



# woman power

'Womens Art' at the Swiss Cottage Library in London 7.28 April.

Five of us took part: Liz Moore from London, Ann Berg from Manchester, Roselyn Smythe, Beverly Skinner and I from Bristol.

There has been a long tradition in European bourgeois painting of showing women as sexual or luxury commodities who are there simply to please the male spectator - the owner of both women and paintings.

So..... when we have in our exhibition paintings of women, showing the rawness of sexuality and childbirth - the reality behind the facade of the 'happy housewife' (did you ever meet her?), women preoccupied with their own identity and women as mystic, high priestess, and a painting of 'God Giving Birth', then that is seen as a threat to the whole patriarchal culture - and so it is.

The painting 'God Giving Birth' was the one that many of the complaints were about..... it was supposedly pornographic and blasphemous. I would say

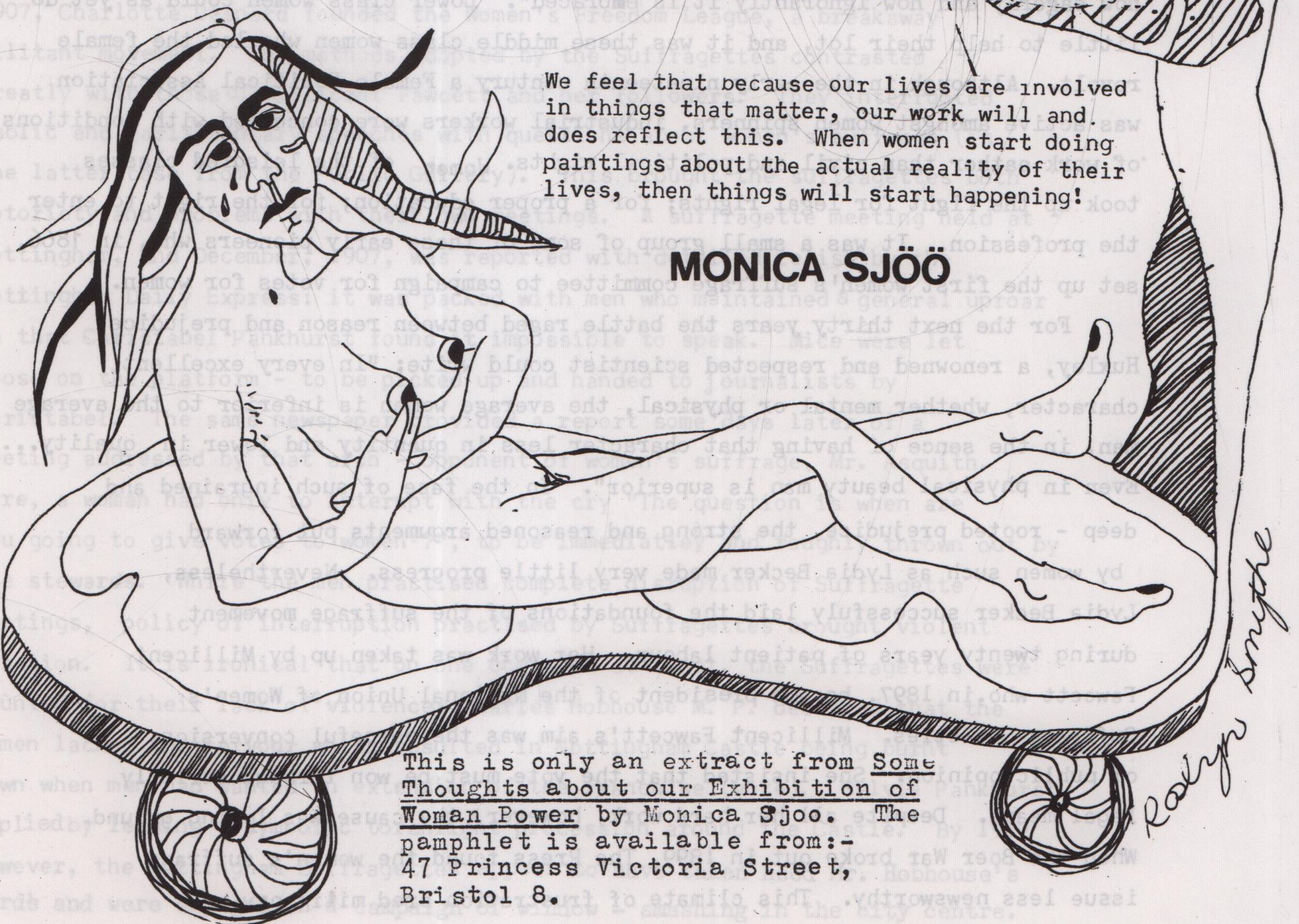
that because 'God' is seen as a nonwhite woman of great dignity, looking straight ahead unsmilingly, with a child coming out of her womb, between her legs...it is disturbing. What I mean is that if it had been painted in bright colours, the 'God' had had blonde hair and been pleasantly smiling that would of probably been okay because she would at least been seductive to men. Also the image attacks the absurd myth that the creative force is male and phallic.

When an English artist Allan Jones does degrading sculptures of women as tables, on their knees wearing black stockings and garter belts, he has the nerve to call them female experiments and gets away with it.....but then of course anyone can go down to the nearest London tube-station and find almost equally degrading images of Women everywhere (adverts & posters) selling everything from toothpaste to cars. But when a woman states her belief in 'God Giving Birth' the same people who take these adverts and images of women as perfectly 'normal', will try to close our show down or threaten to deface the paintings.

We feel that because our lives are involved in things that matter, our work will and does reflect this. When women start doing paintings about the actual reality of their lives, then things will start happening!

**MONICA SJÖÖ**

This is only an extract from Some Thoughts about our Exhibition of Woman Power by Monica Sjöo. The pamphlet is available from:-  
47 Princess Victoria Street,  
Bristol 8.







# "This Mad, Wicked F

Agitation for Womens Rights dates back to the early eighteenth century, when, for example, "Sophia, a Person of Quality" wrote a controversial pamphlet in 1739 called "Woman not Inferior to Man". Her arguments made very little impact on society: to the vast majority of men and women the idea of equal rights, which she put forward, was ridiculous. It is sad to reflect that over two hundred years later the selfsame arguments receive, in many quarters, a similar reception. There are still many who would agree with Lord Tennyson:

"Man for the field and woman for the hearth;

Man for the sword and the needle she;

Man with the head and woman with the heart;

Man to command and woman to obey;

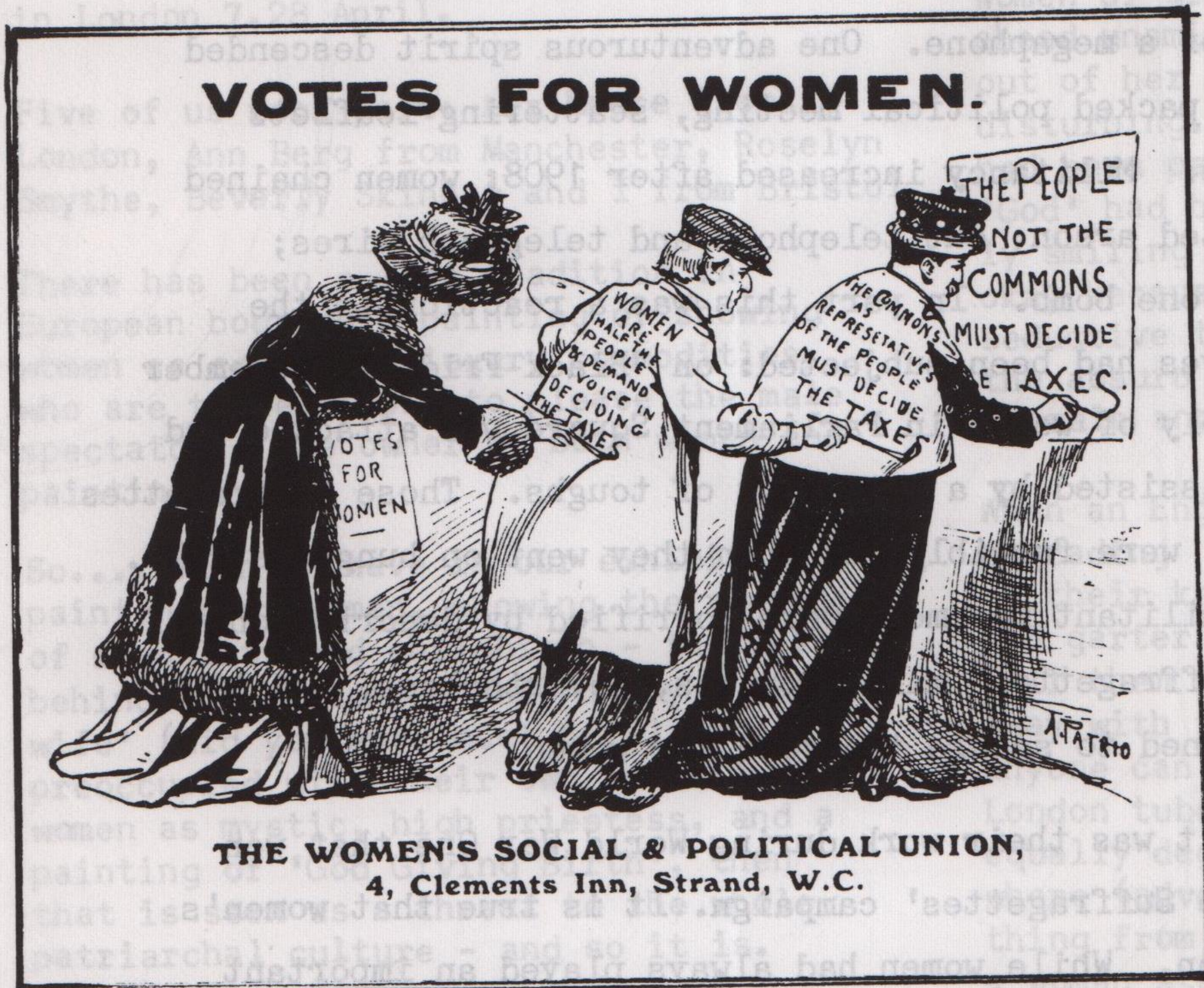
All else confusion."

Tennyson was writing in 1847, when lower class women were labouring in the cotton, silk and woollen mills for less than half the meagre wage of their menfolk; when middle class women were becoming more discontented with their social role and education ( or lack of it ). Florence Nightingale wrote: "The Family uses people, not for what they are, but for what it wants them for.... this system dooms some minds to incurable infancy, others to silent misery. Marriage is the only chance (and it is but a chance) offered to women for escape from this death and how eagerly and how ignorantly it is embraced". Lower class women could as yet do little to help their lot, and it was these middle class women who led the female revolt. Although in the early nineteenth century a Female Political Association was active amongst women spinners, industrial workers were concerned with conditions of work rather than civil and political rights. Women of the leisured classes took up the fight for legal rights; for a proper education; for the right to enter the profession. It was a small group of some of these early pioneers who, in 1866, set up the first women's suffrage committee to campaign for votes for women.

For the next thirty years the battle raged between reason and prejudice. Huxley, a renowned and respected scientist could write: "In every excellent character, whether mental or physical, the average woman is inferior to the average man, in the sense of having that character less in quantity and lower in quality... Even in physical beauty man is superior". In the face of such ingrained and deep - rooted prejudice, the strong and reasoned arguments put forward by women such as Lydia Becker made very little progress. Nevertheless, Lydia Becker successfully laid the foundations of the suffrage movement during twenty years of patient labour. Her work was taken up by Millicent Fawcett who, in 1897, became president of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. Millicent Fawcett's aim was the peaceful conversion of public opinion. She insisted that the vote must be won through strictly legal means. Despite all her hard work, however, the cause was losing ground. When the Boer War broke out in 1899, The Press found the women's suffrage issue less newsworthy. This climate of frustration bred militancy.



# olly of Women's Rights''



pat  
rhead

The Militant suffragette movement was born in 1903, when Emmeline Pankhurst founded the Women's Social and Political Union (W. S. P. U.). Later, in 1907, Charlotte Despard founded the Women's Freedom League, a breakaway militant movement. The methods adopted by the Suffragettes contrasted greatly with those of Millicent Fawcett and her followers. They interrupted public and Parliamentary speeches with questions about women's suffrage (in the latter case from the Public Gallery). This brought the suffragettes both notoriety and problems with their own meetings. A suffragette meeting held at Nottingham, 2nd December, 1907, was reported with detailed relish by the Nottingham Daily Express: it was packed with men who maintained a general uproar so that Christabel Pankhurst found it impossible to speak. Mice were let loose on the platform - to be picked up and handed to journalists by Christabel. The same newspaper provided a report some days later of a meeting addressed by that arch - opponent of women's suffrage, Mr. Asquith. Here, a woman had only to interrupt with the cry "The question is when are you going to give votes to women?", to be immediately and roughly thrown out by the stewards. While the men practised complete disruption of Suffragette meetings, policy of interruption practised by Suffragettes brought violent reaction. It is ironical that on one occasion at least, the Suffragettes were taunted for their lack of violence: Charles Hobhouse M. P. declared that the women lacked the fervour which resulted in Nottingham Castle being burnt down when men had wanted an extension of the franchise (vote). Sylvia Pankhurst replied by leading a symbolic torchlight procession around the Castle. By 1912 however, the Nottingham Suffragettes appear to have taken heed Mr. Hobhouse's words and were engaged on a campaign of window - smashing in the city centre.



The suffragettes were certainly novel. The General (Flora Drummond) regaled M.P.s on the Terrace of the Houses of Parliament from a decorated launch on the Thames by means of a megaphone. One adventurous spirit descended on a rope from the roof into a packed political meeting, scattering leaflets and voicing suitable sentiments. Militancy increased after 1908: women chained themselves to railings; committed arson; cut telephone and telegraph wires; slashed paintings; and planted one bomb. In part this was a reaction to the violence to which they themselves had been subjected: on "Black Friday", November 18 1910, for example, an assembly of women in Parliament Square was attacked and beaten up by the Police, ably assisted by a few gangs of toughs. Those Suffragettes who were imprisoned, of course, were forcibly fed when they went on hunger-strike. Even those disapproved of the militant movement were horrified by descriptions of this barbaric practice. The Suffragettes' militancy was, nevertheless, a deliberately contrived policy, designed to secure the vote for women.

It is often claimed that it was their work during World War One that won women the vote, rather than the Suffragettes' campaign. It is true that women's war effort changed the situation. While women had always played an important part in the economic life of the country, this fact has largely been ignored before: now it was no longer possible to ignore their participation. Everybody could plainly see that it was women who were driving buses; tarring roads; working in munitions factories. In addition, women as well as men gave their lives at the Front. When Edith Cavell was shot by the Germans in 1915 for helping wounded Allied Soldiers to escape, Asquith naively admitted "There are thousands of such women, but a year ago we did not know it". The women's war effort undoubtedly brought about a change of heart in many on the suffrage issue, but it is also true to say that it provided an acceptable reason for those who feared another bout of militancy to change sides without losing too much face. What can be safely stated is that the vote would never have been given after the War had it not been vigorously demanded before. It was the activities of the Suffragettes that brought into the limelight the cause for which Millicent Fawcett and her followers had so patiently been working. It was activities of the Suffragettes that - in the final analysis - ensured that the demand "Votes For Women" would have to be met.

## Whose Choice?

"With the increasing number of machines and of girls employed to do routine clerical work, men entering banking do not now, have to remain clerks for as long as they did previously".

from an article on Banking in -  
"Your Choice Beyond A Degree"  
published by the Careers Research  
Advisory Council



Italy: There is a very large and active Women's Liberation Movement in Italy; there are three or four groups in every major town and even in Sardinia and Sicily where the women are most oppressed groups are beginning. Women are definitely at the bottom of the ladder of society in Italy. Abortion is totally illegal, and because of this there are two million to three million illegal abortions each year. There are fifteen thousand deaths from illegal abortions each year. Contraception has been legal for several years now but less than two per cent of Italian women use contraceptives and there is no effort on the part of the government to inform them about contraception, or to make it available. In Rome for example there is one clinic open one day a week for three or four hours - it's completely inadequate.

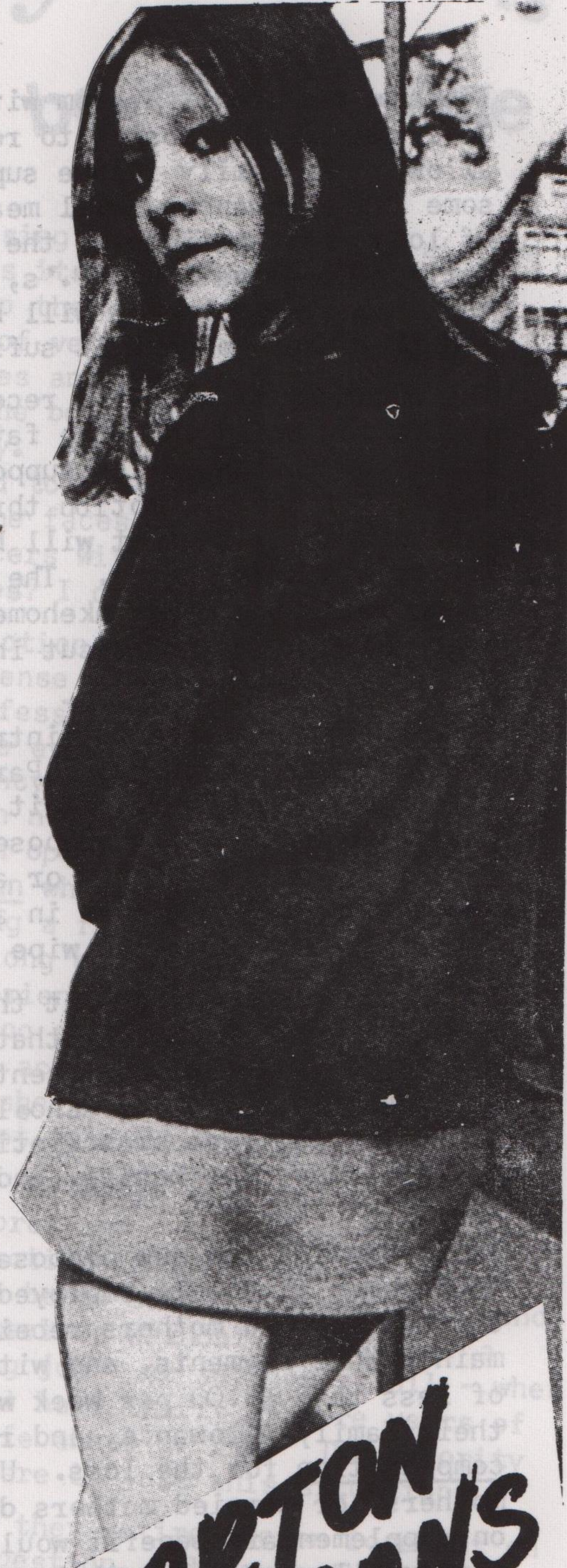
The Women's Movement started in Rome in 1971. Their first public action was a demonstration in favour of abortion in November 1971 when there were demonstrations in a number of countries. There were only fifty women at this first action, and everyone thought they were completely crazy, but they got a lot of publicity, and the movement began from there. Now there are all kinds of different groups. One of these, 'Lotta Femminista' (Women's Struggle) has raised the demand for wages for housework which they feel is a very relevant demand for women in Italy to raise. There is a big controversy in the Women's Movement over this demand; many people feel that because of the impossibility of women getting jobs that this is the most important demand yet raised.

There was recently a reform in the divorce law which said that after five years of not living together a man and woman could be divorced. The Facists and other Right Wingers have succeeded in getting a referendum to try to repeal this very minor reform.

Only nineteen per cent of women in Italy work which means that the overwhelming majority of women are completely isolated in their own homes, unable to get work even if they want it. dependent on their husbands and at the mercy of the fact that they can't get abortions or contraceptives. Italy needs the Women's Movement very much.

From a tape recorded talk by

Susan Lamont



**ABORTION  
A WOMAN'S  
RIGHT TO  
CHOOSE!**



**Yes...**

## **it does mean abolishing Family Allowances**

The new Tax Credit System with which the Government is proposing to replace family allowances, family income supplement, and some tax allowances, will mean, in spite of loud protestations to the contrary from various Conservative M.P.'s, and ministers, that Family Allowances will be abolished, and that many women will suffer as a result.

The question of who will receive the tax credit for children - the father or the mother of the child is, supposedly left open. Yet the assumption throughout the Green Paper is that it will be paid to the man in his wage packet. The man will appear to be receiving more takehome pay, while the woman will be taking a cut in cash available for housekeeping.

The family Allowance was introduced after the last war by an Act of Parliament, making it a statutory right. If it is drawn into the tax system as its proposed in the Green Paper, it can be altered or abolished, without legislation, by a clause in a budget. A juggling of figures can wipe it out altogether.

It has been commented "But they really wouldn't do a thing like that"! Let us not kid ourselves. In recent years we have had taken away from us school milk, cheap school meals, free prescriptions, cheap welfare foods for babies, and controlled rents!

If we examine the new proposals, we find that women with self-employed husbands, and unsupported mothers receiving maintenance payments, and with incomes of less than £8.00 per week would lose their Family Allowance, and receive no compensation for the loss. Unsupported mothers, or married mothers depending on supplementary benefit would lose their Family Allowance, but their supplementary benefit would be increased to compensate for the loss. There would however, be no compensation for the loss of security involved. The allowance book which just has to be presented at the Post Office is a far more reliable source of money than social security payments to which are always subject to fluctuations because of changes in the claimants conditions, and sometimes of uncooperative social security offices. The student mother is left out of the new system completely.

The Green Paper states that it covers "90% of the population plus dependents. Dependents, of course, are women and children - and it is in this light that women are regarded throughout. Women must manage to feed and clothe their children on as much or as little cash as they can arrange to receive from husbands. At the same time this dependency will be useful because it will mean an increased demand for jobs - any jobs - part time - poorly paid - so that they may have some extra independent income. Women will be an amenable and docile unit in a large pool of cheap labour. The Green Paper states "The needs of the economy require the continued employment of large numbers of married women, and the system must be such that they feel it worth their while going to work".

The main reason given for the proposals in the Green Paper is that there must be a streamlining of cumbersome and expensive administrative processes. (Yet the cost of putting them into force is estimated in the region of £130,000,000). In outlining the proposals, it is even admitted that some mothers may experience hardship - yet the proposals are pushed forward regardless of this - on the excuse of more efficiency and questionable economy.

The Government claims that it is not really concerned about the method of operating that tax credit system - about the way, or to whom, child credits are paid - but we are concerned. There is only one way to cut through all these discriminatory implications, and that is to make sure that they are widely known, and to campaign and fight for the following:

- (1) That Family Allowances remain a statutory benefit payable to the mother.
- (2) That Family Allowances be extended to cover the first child.
- (3) That Family Allowances be increased to cover the rise in the cost of living since they were fixed at their present rate.
- (4) That automatic increases be made yearly to cope with inflation.

## **Nottingham Family Allowance Campaign**



# ABORTION IN EUROPE

I was able to visit nine countries on behalf of my organisation WONAC. It would be easiest if I just go through the different places that I visited and told you a little bit about them.

France: In case you are not familiar with what happened in France last Fall, I'll say a bit about that. 17 year-old Marie-Claire Chevalier was denounced to the police by the young man who had got her pregnant, for having an abortion. Usually in cases like these the woman who has had the abortion and the people who helped her plead guilty, say they're sorry and get off fairly lightly. But in this case Marie-Claire and her mother decided that they were not guilty, it was the French abortion law that was guilty and theirs was a political trial. At the trial, Simone de Beauvoir and others testified and denounced the law. There was a big uproar because this was the first time the question of abortion had been brought to the fore in a forceful way in France.

There was a suspension of arrests for abortion for some months while the government tried to figure out a course of action. Then two things happened. 331 doctors signed a manifesto saying that they performed abortions and that they thought the abortion law in France had to be changed. This was followed by a manifesto issued by several hundred other people - psychologists, social workers, teachers etc. - also saying the law should be changed. The doctors who had signed the first manifesto then began actually performing abortions and opened up clinics in Paris, Marseilles and Grenoble using the Carmen method.

Then, on May 8, a doctor in Grenoble - Dr. Annie Freyer-Martin was arrested for performing an abortion on a young woman. Her arrest sparked off a gigantic protest. On May 11 there was a demonstration of 10,000 people in Grenoble demanding her freedom.

Since then Pompidou has made an announcement that the French Social Security will pay for abortions for women who become pregnant because of rape, incest or if the foetus is deformed. This is good, but of course it is completely inadequate. It's certainly not what the Movement in France is demanding.

Inevitably there is a 'Right to Life' movement in France and they held a national convention in Strasbourg on 5,6 May. The pro-abortion groups organised a counter demonstration, they also held a large demonstration in Paris on the same day which was broken up by vicious police action.

The MLF (Movement for the Liberation of Women) has been active in the French abortion campaign. In addition to discussing abortion they are also raising the questions of sexual education and contraception.

The Grenoble demonstration was one of the biggest pro-abortion demonstrations ever held. I am convinced that they are going to succeed in getting the law changed quite soon.

Belgium: The developments in Belgium are similar to France. In January a doctor was arrested for performing an abortion on a young woman who was mentally retarded and had been raped. Her father led the police to Dr. Piers. This sparked off a great feeling of outrage and a few days later 10,000 were on the streets demanding Dr. Piers' freedom and a change in the abortion law. 20,000 people signed petitions in support of Dr. Piers and the authorities were forced to release him. On 24 February Dr. Piers marched at the head of a demonstration of 6,000 in Lieges demanding the repeal of the Belgian abortion law.

Interestingly enough, the Catholic Church has taken a relatively enlightened stand on abortion. The Belgian bishops sent a letter to all their parishes saying they would have



to get used to abortion and in some cases condone it. So although this is a largely Catholic country the Catholic church is not playing the same sort of active role in terms of organising a counter campaign.

Germany: The first thing I noticed when I got off the train were the kiosks with posters that say, "Yes to life. No to death. Abortion destroys". These posters had been put up all over Germany by the Right to Life people. The reason for this is that in Germany there is now a debate which opened up on May 15 in the German parliament over whether or not the German abortion law should be changed. There is a proposal put forward to legalise abortion up to 12 weeks. At the moment it is not certain what is going to happen. Obviously a lot depends on the kind of campaign the women's movement can organise to respond to the Right to Life campaign and how it demonstrates the overwhelming support (illustrated by a recent survey) that exists in Germany for abortion.

On June 2 there was a demonstration in Bonn in support of the "12 Week Bill" organised by the Social Democrats and the women's movement. This sparked off a debate within the movement - some groups being in favour of the demonstration, others claiming that the only supportable demand was "abortion on demand, a woman's right to choose". In the end most groups supported the demonstration as they thought it was important that this be a strong show of force against the Right to Lifers and also that was a very good way to get at the ideas of the women's movement on this question.

# BOSS IN MY OWN BELLY

Holland: Unique situation. Abortion is illegal but since 1971 abortions have been performed on a massive scale. There are abortion clinics all over Holland.

The government are afraid to move against abortion clinics for a couple of reasons. They would be afraid of outraging public opinion and also the government has a hard time keeping itself together. For the past 6 months there has not been a government - they have just succeeded in pulling together a coalition. The Women's Movement is concerned because this current government is a Social Democratic one but was formed only with the support of the religious parties - Catholic and Protestant - who may force a compromise and start cracking down on the performance of abortions.

The main women's group in Holland is called the Dolaminas who formed in 1970. The first things they did were spectacular - they would hand out condoms in the street and they painted slogans on their stomachs: "Boss in my own Belly" (which became a famous abortion slogan). In 1971 they got a covered wagon with horses and went all through Holland for a whole month on this 'abortion caravan' explaining to people why they should be for abortion and giving out literature. This got them a tremendous amount of publicity.





# No Comment.

Love-hungry girl students worried about their looks are crying themselves to sleep nightly in British universities, a university doctor says.

Some girls believe that they are too ugly to be loved because they do not match up to models in television advertisements.

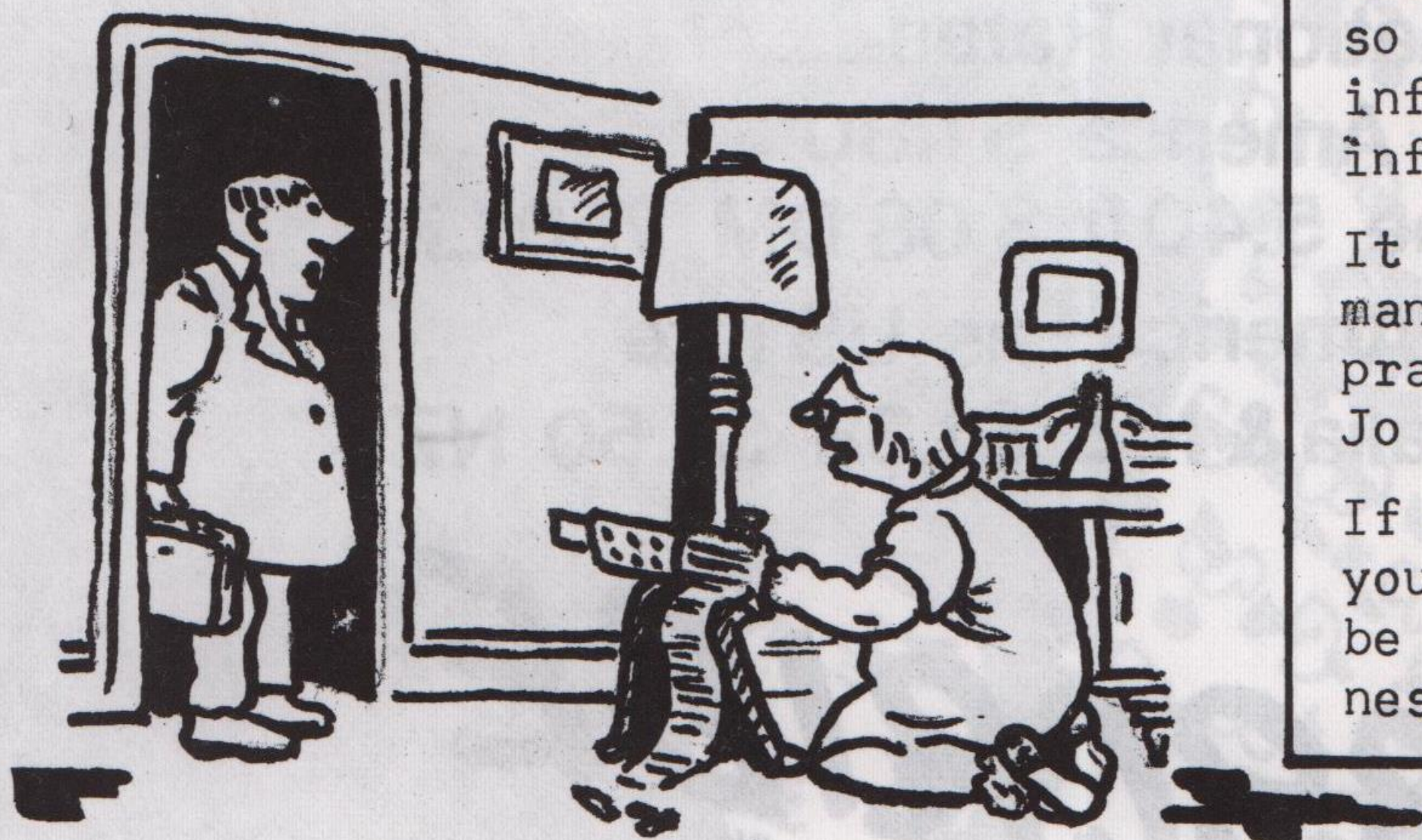
But Dr. Philip Cauther believes they are mistaken. Every type of girl suits some type of man, he says. Some men like hairy girls best, though it is often difficult to persuade hairy girls of this.

Dr. Cauter believes that there should be more love education and sex education at universities and colleges. (Guardian - July 2nd.)

# Know Thy Place..

"The Roadrunner report on the recent Church Leaders' Conference implied that a better conference would be . . . differently constituted as regards clergy, laity and women."

David Hart, Movement, S.C.M., No.6, p.3



For twenty years you've come through that door every night and said: "What's new my little chickadee?"

# The Tyranny of Structurelessness

Women Now has been asked to review this very interesting pamphlet which makes some vital criticisms of the way in which womens' liberation groups work, both in America and in Britain. Its main argument is this:

Womens liberation groups place a great emphasis on doing without a fixed structure - chairperson, secretary, treasurer, etc. But all groups form natural pecking orders; however 'democratic' the group, there are always more dominant personalities, and less dominant ones. Informal cliques are bound to arise.

A group without a formal structure, formal chairperson etc., is very good at getting women to talk about their lives; it isn't very good for getting things done. The situation can be especially treacherous when we realise that, if there isn't a formal structure, a formal way of disagreeing with a decision, for example, there often is no way of defending the interests of the less powerful members within a group. In a completely 'democratic' group, the less dominant simply are not heard and while the informal cliques wield the power, there is no way of countering them whatsoever.

The pamphlet makes some excellent suggestions about overcoming the difficulty. Authority must be delegated as widely as possible; those with authority must be held responsible to those who elected them; tasks should be 'rotated' around the group so that they become no one's 'property'; information should be spread, because information is power.

It is interesting to see that in Nottingham many of these suggestions had been put into practice way before any of us had heard of Jo Freeman's pamphlet.

If you want an insight into how a group you think is 'democratic' may perhaps really be working - The Tyranny Of Structurelessness can be recommended.



# Women's Abortion and Contraception Campaign.

If you agree with the following:

1. Free contraception on the N.H.S.
2. The right to choose an abortion
3. No forced sterilisation

The campaign needs your support.

Tick -

- ☐ I am willing to work for the campaign full-time / part time.
- ☐ I would like the address of my local W.A.C.C. group.
- ☐ I would like a button - "Abortion - a woman's right to choose".
- ☐ My group would like to sponsor this campaign.
- ☐ I enclose a donation of .....
- ☐ I would like to receive the campaign newsletter regularly. Enclosed 30p for 10 issues.

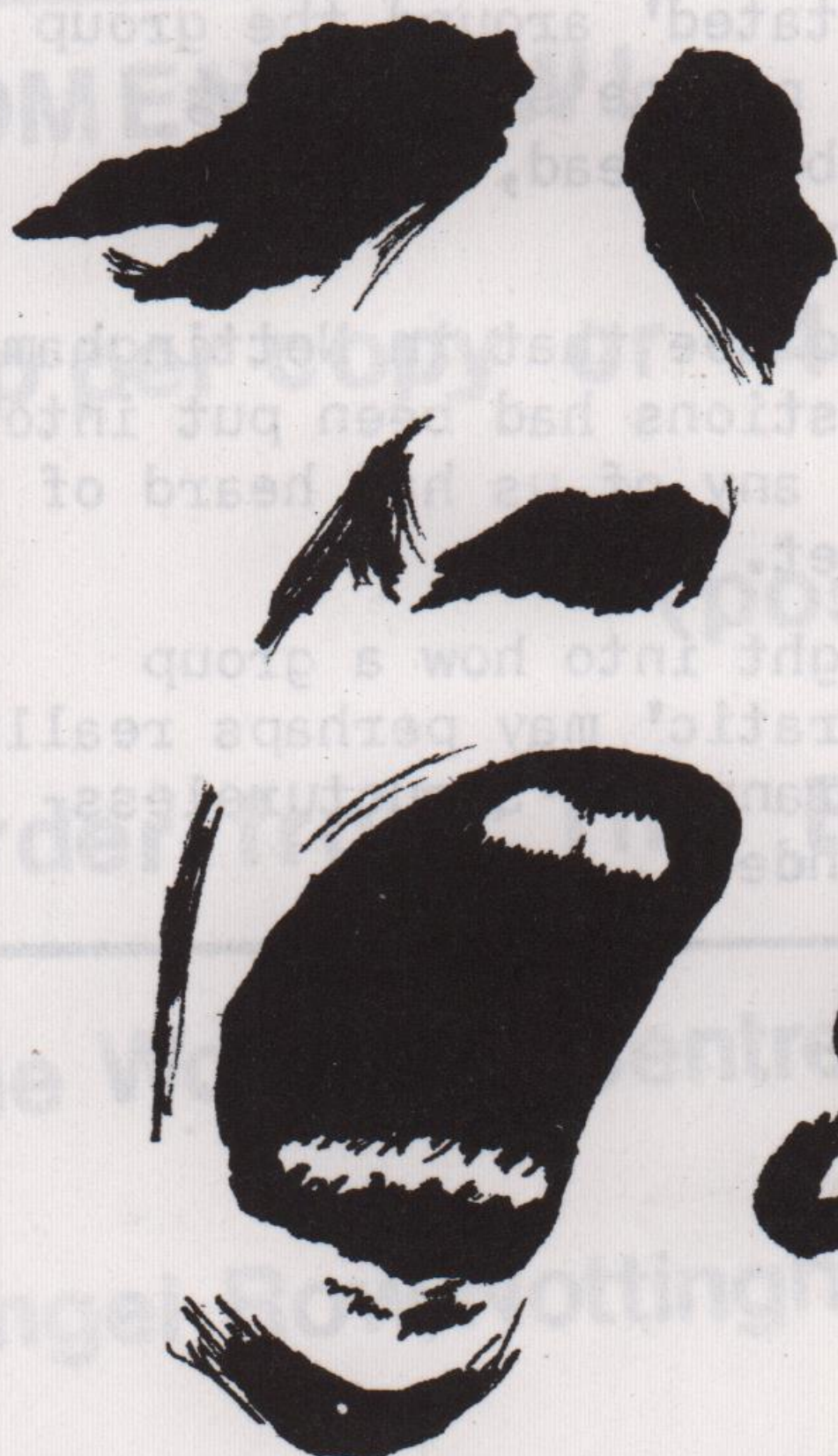
Return to :

London WACC  
14 Radnor Terr  
LONDON S.W.8

Name....

Address....

I enclose 40p for 3 issues and a donation of .....



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