

COVER RE-SISTER: OLIVE WHARRY

Olive Wharry was the little known suffragette who carried out the longest hunger-strike of any of the imprisoned women activists of the time. She went without food for 30 days - she hid it, and sewd nails and pieces of metal into her clothes, and hung filled hot water bottles under her dresses to conceal the fact that she had lost weight (suffragettes were weighed regularly).

Olive Wharry was arrested for setting fire to the tea pavillion at Kew Gardens, and wrecking the orchid houses a few days earlier. In the magistrate's court, she threw a directory at the head of the chairman, councillor Bisgood, but unfortunately missed!

1913, when Olive was arrested, was a time of unparalleled destructive militancy on the part of the suffragette women. Street lamps were broken, Votes for Women painted on seats on Hampstead Heath, keyholes blocked with lead pellets, house numbers painted out, chairs flung in the Serpentine, seats of railway carriages slashed, flower beds damaged, golf courses all over the country scraped and burnt with acid: "Votes Before Golf", "No Votes, No Golf!" A bowling green was cut in Glasgow, the turf in Duthie Park, Aberdeen. A mother and daughter spent much of their time in trains in order to drop pebbles between the sashes of carriage windows, hoping the glass would smash when they were raised. Old ladies applied for gun licenses to terrify the authorities. Museums were closed as a precaution against works of art being damaged, to the distress of American tourists. Bogus phone messages were sent calling up the Army Reserves and Territorials. Telegraph and telephone wires were severed with long-handled clippers; fuse boxes were blown up, communication between London and Glasgow being cut off for hours. There was a window smashing raid in West End clubland; the Carlton, the Junior Carlton, the Reform club and others being attacked. A large envelope containing red pepper and snuff was sent to every cabinet minister; the press reported that they all fell victims to the trick. Boat houses and pavillions in England, Ireland and Scotland, and a grandstand at Ayr were burnt down.

£3 pictures were hacked in Manchester Art Gallery, and the glass of a jewel case was broken in the Tower of London.

Empty houses and other unattended buildings were systematically sought out and set on fire, and many were destroyed including Lady White's house near Staines a loss of £4,000, Roughwood House and a mansion valued at £10,000. There were fires at several houses in Hampstead Heath Garden suburb, at the Suburb Free School, at Abercarn Church, Monmouthshire, in Shipcoat Council schools, at South Bromley tube station, and in a woodyard at Walham Green. An old cannon was fired near Dudley Castle, shattering glass and terrifying the neighbourhood.

Bombs were placed near the Bank of England, at Wheatley Hall, Doncaster, at Oxted Station, and on the steps of a Dublin insurance office. Lloyd George's new house being built at Walton-on-th-Hill, was damaged beyond repair in a bomb explosion.

That all this was the work of suffragettes was usually made clear by literature left nearby.

Account of planting "Black Jennie"!

"Don't drop her, whatever you do," Lillian said. She led the way. We chose the front staircase as it was farther from the servants' quarters and, though near our host's bedroom, it was best. We had been given to understand that he was a heavy sleeper and only hoped it was so.

As we left the house Lillian began muttering aloud the instructions she had memorised. "Along the left edge of the field." We managed that without mishap. "Down a steep cutting on to the railway track." That, we found, was a little more difficult owing to the additional instructions at all costs to leave no footprints.

"Wise woman," was Lillian's quiet comment. "She doesn't want our footprints traced back to her house."

"Yes," I said.

"Now we're supposed to turn right where we come in and follow the cinder track to the picnic grounds."

I was forced to smile. Lillian's carefree way of carrying out a dangerous job was a lesson to me I was never afterward to forget.

As we went along the cinder path the picnic grounds came into view, and also the newly built railway station. We were creeping cautiously nearer to the place when Lillian whispered, "The roof's not on. That's good. I can climb in that way. There'll be no need to break a pane of glass."

We reached the platform of the little station and stopped to listen for a moment. All we heard or all we could hear was the spluttering and hissing coming from the bag I was carrying.

"I think I'd better climb up over the wall now. Jennie sounds restive. I'll unlock the door of the ticket office and you can hand her in to me."

I nodded. I stood there, shivering in the cold night air, listening hard for any possible pursuer. I was filled suddenly with horrible fear when Jennie seemed to bounce once inside the bag. Lillian, impeded as she was by her long skirts, was as good as any acrobat. She was soon over the wall and had the door open. Her hand came out.

"Take Jennie out of the bag," she said. I was trembling as I did this—she was making a great fuss for a mere, everyday marmalade pot. But Jennie was not the pot, she was whatever it was inside. Lillian had placed the thing in position and, before I could decide whether I was going to laugh or cry to be rid of my burden, she was over the wall again and standing at my side.

"That's that," she said. "But don't relax yet. The moon's come up so we'd better keep in the shadows. You follow me." I was so relieved by then that I think I would have followed her anywhere. Slowly, more cautiously than ever, we retraced our steps. We did not speak again until we reached the house, then Lillian tip-toed over to the grandfather clock in the hallway.

"It's one forty-five," she told me. "The bang should come about two-thirty."

Articles, letters & notification of event are still much needed, so please write to us at our old address:

RESISTER
C/O WOMENS CENTRE
229 WOODHOUSE LANE
LEEDS



british lies

March 1988 will be locked away in many peoples memories for years to come as the month when the British State committed major atrocities against the people of Ireland.

On 6th March, 3 IRA volunteers were murdered by the British Army in Gibraltar. They were shot in the back & were unarmed. Their relatives & comrades then had to wait a week until bodies were put on a plane bound for Dublin.

The Republicans of Ireland mounted one of the largest funerals ever seen for IRA volunteers. Thousands came from all over the north & south of Ireland to pay their last respects, with a show of unity & strenght similar to that shown after the death of hunger striker Bobby Sands.

On wednesday 16th March, the funerals took place, at least 20,000 people took part, & for once it looked as if the Republican community would be able to bury it's dead without provocation from the RUC or British Army. However, just as the coffins were being lowered into the ground, the funeral was attacked by a loyalist gunman, killing 3 & injuring over 60 people.

On March 19th, Kevin Brady, one of the 3 people killed in the attack, was buried. As the cortege made it's way to Milltown cemetary, an unmarked car drove into the mourners at high speed, mounted the pavement & turned into a side street. It reversed out & hit a group of mourners before it's escape was blocked. One of the men in the car then fired a shot & climed out of the window holding the gun. The two men in the car were attacked by the crowd, & later executed by the IRA. The execution occured once the men were identified as being British soldiers.

Immediately, the British press whipped up anti-Irish hysteria, claiming that it was 'murder by mob' & that the men died 'heros amongst cowards'. The British state knows that it wasn't 'murder by mob', & that the mourners were defend-ing themselves, it has used this event not only to justify the presence of it's troops in Ireland, but also to cover up the execution of Mairead Farrell, Sean Savage, & Dan McCann. This means there will be no enquiry into their deaths: no enquiry into the attack on Milltown Cemetary.

ALTON'S BILL

David Alton's tactics seem to be working. He knew that at 18 weeks his Bill would not get through but, if everyone is willing to compromise, then there's a good chance 24 weeks will get through - & everybody will see it as a victory, whether they be anti-abortion or pro-choice. If this Bill gets through at 24 weeks, it will be a devastating blow to abortion rights, & will make way for the introduction of other restricting measures to the abortion Act. It is ridiculous that when in fact we should be demanding more abortion facilities, instead we are having to defend the totally inadequate 1967 ACT.



On March 19th, a national demonstration against the Alton Bill was held in London, only about 15,000 people attended, when 100,000 were expected

only 1½ coaches went from Leeds. An appauling turn out. This Bill can be defeated, but our only power is showing our disapproval of such an attack on our rights as women. Organised demonstrations need to be well attended, no matter how demoralised you feel, because it's the only thing we've got. Don't let them introduce an act without a fight, we can't afford to let them get away with it.



roten zora

West Germany has recently been the scene of a clampdown on Roten Zora (Red Zora), the revolutionary feminist guerilla network there. Roten Zora have been operating since the mid 70's and have carried out numerous attacks, always spot-on within the context of current affairs. Their direct action policy has confronted issues of militarisation, nuclear technology, Palestine, South Africa, and lately genetic engineering and the selling of Asian women as brides for German businessmen.

Sabotage actions from Roten Zora have increased in the last 2 or 3 years, and public awareness and sympathy has grown too. Roten Zora is linked with the guerilla Revolutionary Cells, and the initials of both - R.Z. - are seen graffitied throughout Germany. During 1987, in support of the efforts of South Korean women striking for better conditions in German owned textile factories, Roten Zora launched a series of attacks against 8 stores of the Adler Company. The owners eventually capitulated and rehired the women, raised the salaries and met all the demands.

Are the authorities' claims of having paralysed this women's resistance network accurate or just police hype? To paraphrase an anonymous German feminist . . . 'the structure of women's organizations, and Roten Zora, has always out-imagined the police'. No, it is not likely that this first blow against Roten Zora since their beginnings will be successful at cracking their invisibility or crushing the women behind bars.

Last December the political police in West Germany decided to act against Roten Zora and carried out simultaneous raids on 33 houses in different parts of the country. 200 Federal members of the BKA (German equivalent of the FBI), assisted by local police took part. In W. Germany, the model capitalist state, being radical is practically illegal, so police action is often heavy. They sealed off streets and forced their way into women's homes, workplaces, and the homes of their families.



A billboard in West Germany publicising the plight of Ulla Penselin and Ingrid Strobl, reads 'The modern witchhunt ends in isolation cells... and begins with the beauty ideal, anti woman advertising, discrimination in the workplace, women as sex objects. The radical is prevented from criticism of existing conditions. Freedom for Ulla and Ingrid!'

As Ingrid Strobl wrote from prison early this year . . .

'The essential power interests of imperialism are attacked by the broad struggle against gene technology and refugee policy. This explains the almost hysterical activities of the State against people who lead this struggle on every level. That these activities primarily aim at women is also logical . . . All people who carry out these attacks must be intimidated, and the militant ones must be isolated and criminalized. Therefore, it is only logical that . . . be found and if one can't find them, even has to create them.'



ROTEN ZORA cont...

23 women were detained, photographed, finger-printed, questioned, searched, and in some cases strip-searched., before being released, but in Hamburg Ulla Penselin remained under arrest, charged with membership of the "terrorist" Roten Zora. 2 days later Ingrid Stobl was arrested in Koln, after a swat squad waited 2 days outside her house for her to return. She was charged with membership of "terrorist" Revolutionary Cells and Roten Zora, and suspicion of participation in the Oct 1986 sabotage attack on Lufthansa airlines, to protest both the forcible deportation of women seeking asylum and the promotion of S.E. Asia sex tourism. The police announced that they'd cracked 2 cells of Roten Zora, and announced a search for 4 further "terrorists-at-large".

There is only flimsy evidence against Ulla Penselin And Ingrid Stobl, and in fact both are well-known and active within feminist circles. Ulla has been running a community printshop in Hamburg for 10 years as well as organising, both locally and nationally, the network exposing population control policy and genetic technology. Ingrid Stobl has worked for 7 years as a journalist on the widely circulated feminist monthly, EMMA, and has campaigned for the rights of refugees and immigrants. At the time of her arrest, she had almost completed a book on the armed resistance of European women against German fascism. The 2 women are still in prison, but Ingrid plans to finish the book behind bars.

They are being denied bail on the prosecution's claims of "probable flight" and are confined under the 15 point programme of "special regulations for political prisoners". They are in solitary confinement, in cells for 23 hours every day, without windows and with neighbouring cells left empty. Their mail is restricted and censored, as are books, and they are only allowed 2 hour visits each month. They have to wear prison uniform, even though they are on remand, and with little evidence against them.

RE-SISTER/RE-SISTER/RE-SISTER/RE-

F-SISTER/RE-SIS

Because there is so little evidence, surveillance and intimidation of German feminists by police has increased since last Dec. A new term "Probable Attack Issues", coupled with Article 129a of the Criminal Code, which has wide implications, including terrorism, allows the authorities to harrass even aboveground legal work as well. They want to silence everyone sympathetic to Roten Zora - journalists, lawyers and health professionals.

Defense groups demanding freedom for Ingrid Stobl and Ulla Penselin have been set up in Germany:

- 1. **REVUE** Stadt Revue, Maastrichter Strasse, 5000 Koln 1, West Germany.
- 2. **PROZESSGRUPPE** Prozessgruppe/Schwarzmarkt, Paulinenplatz, 2 Hamburg 4, West Germany.

RE-SISTER/RE-SIS

Write to the women in prison at:

Ulla Penselin/Ingrid Stobl, c/o Ermittlungsrichter am BGH, Herrenstrasse 45a, 7500 Karlsruhe, West Germany.

R/RE-SISTER/RE-

E-SISTER/RE-SIS

ISTER/RE-

TE

RE-

SIS

RE-

SIS

RE-

SIS

RE-

SIS

RE-

SIS

German (and in fact European) guerilla networks are always quick off the mark to react to current events in all parts of the world, and often react, for instance, to events in Northern Ireland with actions against the British embassy in their country. it's about time we got off our bums and acted in support of Roten Zora. Here are some places you could contact;

- Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, 23, Belgrave Square, London SW1X. Tel: 01-235 5033
- German Chamber of Industry & Commerce in the UK, 12, Suffolk St., London SW1Y. Tel: 01-235 0282
- 01-235 0165.

Always prot- ity-which fact of the the anonymity deal or denial publish

German Chamber of Industry & Commerce in the UK, 12, Suffolk St., London SW1Y. Tel: 01-930 7251.

R/RE-SISTER/RE-SISTE

RE-SISTER/RE-SISTER/RE-

Lufthansa German Airlines, 10, Old Bond St., London W1X. Tel: 01-408 0442.

A BUDGET FOR THE RICH

Well we really had class inequality rammed down our throats this Budget Day! Subtlety went out the window, and in came vast tax cuts for the rich, nothing for the 15 million too poor to pay income tax, and even less for the NHS.

Of Nigel Lawson's £6 billion budget, he pumped £2 billion into slashing tax rates for the top 5% of the British salaried, from 60p in the pound to 40p. Thus giving Britain the lowest top tax rate of any 'leading' market economy. The Low Pay Unit calculated that those on £63,000 will be £127.66 better off per week, whilst those on a weekly wage of £122.35 just 10p!!

Sir Ralph Halpern, the £1.36 million a year chair of the Burton Group Empire, is set to increase his take home pay by more than £5,000 per week; Lord Hanson, chair of the Hanson Trust conglomerate will gain £247,000 per year, and Mr Tiny Rowland chair of Lonrho, £125,000 per year. All this, whilst not a single penny went to the NHS. Obscene isn't it? They even had the audacity to reduce the basic rate of income tax by 2p, to 25p, even when the people of Britain were calling upon him not to do so, but to maintain the 27p rate thus giving more money to the NHS.

Other benefits to the rich include tax relief to property companies building or buying houses for rent, in a move to boost private sector lettings. Thus enabling wealthy individuals to invest up to £40,000 and get tax relief on their investment - all fitting in very nicely with the new housing bill (see Resister No.12)

The inheritance tax threshold has been raised, thus they can now receive up to £110,000 from dead relatives (previously £90,000) before any tax needs to be paid.

Meanwhile, those worse off include students whose parents are in the middle income bracket, as covenants have now been abolished. An obvious move to force students into taking low paid vacation jobs, and it will also ease the way for introducing student loans.

The independent taxing of husbands and wives is to be introduced in April 1990, but to whose benefit? The only women who are going to benefit are those with investment income, i.e. rich women. For most people it is no more than the married man's allowance with a new name. However, it does mean that there are no gains for heterosexual couples staying unmarried. So we should see this move more as one to save the patriarchal institution of marriage, rather than giving women privacy in their financial affairs.

This reinforcement of marriage, is reflected in Lawson's moves to reform the tax treatment of maintenance payments by ex-husband

for divorced and separated wives. He has decided to restrict the tax deductibility of maintenance payments by ex-husbands (and the few ex-wives who pay them), thus giving divorced or separated men less incentive to make payments to children and former wives. Also, by decreasing tax relief for maintenance payers, the rules tighten a loophole whereby unmarried parents could take out orders against each other for the maintenance of their children. Thus, once again, encouraging marriage instead of cohabiting for heterosexual couples.

This has so blatantly been a budget for the rich, from vast tax relief for the wealthy to no increase on the spirit charges, cigars and pipe tobacco. Last year, the government sold off the nationalised industries Gas and BP, but has the money made been reinvested to the people's benefit? Has it fuck. There has been no money for housing, for infrastructure, education, the NHS, etc. Although need I add that the Royal Family has received a 4.1% rise to run each of the 11 households, an increase of £246,000, totalling in £5,535,700!

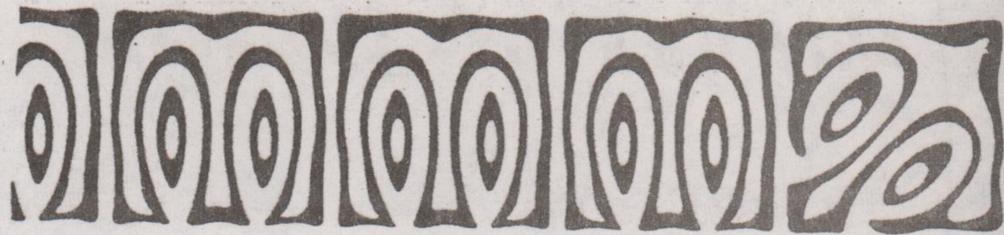
What a wonderful, caring, society we live in!

WOMEN ONLY

The woman who wrote in the last issue of ReSister that we must keep the mag strictly women only had a point. I'm continually amazed to meet men (and anarchist men at that, who definitely should know better) who have regularly read ReSister. I met a bloke last week who said, he didn't know if he was supposed to, but he'd read all the issues of ReSister!! If he wanted something to do, then he'd look through it. And I've seen men walk into women's houses and pick up ReSister for a quick read! Obviously ReSister is in lots of shops, houses, etc. where men go, but that's no excuse for them to read it.

The in-thing at the moment amongst anarchist men seems to be non-sexism, and they are beginning to accept women only things more (not that we feel that we need them to accept this). But they've obviously still got a long way to go. Respecting women's groups means also respecting women only papers, like ReSister.

I keep hearing rumours that it's OK for right on men to read ReSister. Well it's not. What's a "right on" mag anyway?? Different women certainly have different opinions on this!! I wouldn't have anything to do with some of the men that other women reckon have sound ideas! And I definitely don't want them reading ReSister. Resister says "women only" on the front, and that means no exceptions, not even these "right on" men! What is the point of us doing this mag for each other if men, and even women are going to abuse it?



The question of transsexual men has been cropping up lately, after a letter from one in Spare Rib, and an article in the Rad Rev newsletter. It really surprises me that some anarchist-feminists can regard these men as women. Because they are not. To say that they have women's bodies is questionable, seeing as they've only got a (male) surgeon's approximation of that.

A lot of what makes us women is our experiences as a child, and being girl children is so much different from the experiences of boys. These men just haven't suffered the discrimination that we have. They may have got a lot of shit for wanting to change sex, being transvestites, or whatever, and they will need a lot of support, but that doesn't mean that they are women, and that we start accepting them at women only events (which has been suggested!)

Men and women should be free to express themselves in whatever way they want, so long as that isn't oppressive to others, and if this means wearing women's clothes and adopting so-called "feminine" traits or characteristics, then that should be acceptable. Hopefully one day people won't have to go through such drastic operations, and try to pass themselves off as something that they are not to be happy and accepted.

"Slanderous in its drafting, vicious in its purpose. A pink triangle clause, produced and supported by a bunch of bigots" ... Neil Kinnock's denunciation of the Local Government Bill's anti-gay Clause 28 was

blistering. Pity he only spoke out after weeks of protest by lesbians and gays and the liberal arts establishment. **A**nita Dobson's signature was conspicuous by its absence from a petition signed by the rest of the *EastEnders* cast condemning Clause 28. Anyone can fall in love, as long as they're of different



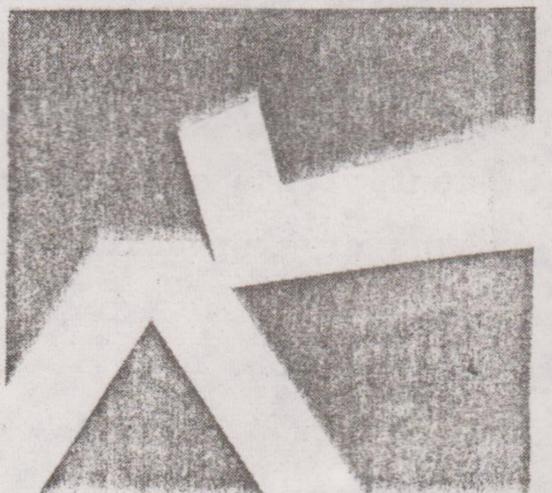
sexes.

PHILIPINE PICKET

An internationally co-ordinated picket against the sex trafficking of Filipinos was staged in front of the Dept. of Foreign Affairs Office in Manila on November 25th. This was the International Day of Protest Against All Forms of Violence Against Women.

One woman who survived and escaped this trafficking spoke at the rally. She explained how she accepted a job as a receptionist in the Netherlands but when she arrived there she was taken to a 'sex club'. She was told she would work there as a prostitute. For three long years she worked from 2 pm till 4 in the morning. She stayed alone in a guarded room and allowed to go to the toilet only when escorted. She received no money for this work. It was as she says 'sexual slavery'.

Similar protest actions were also held in Japan and the Netherlands where the export of Filipinos for the sex trade has already been institutionalised. Source: Gabriela



Images of Women

Punkettes or punky women are being seen more and more often in the media, but that doesn't mean that they (we?) are an accepted part of society. Punk women are usually used as a joke or as something sexually repulsive. There's the beer advert where a bloke's chatting up a "gorgeous blonde", desperately trying to ignore her pink haired friend, but then turns his attention to her when he discovers her dad owns a pub. Charming!! But she does see through him.

Obviously to media men, peddling images of stereotyped women, leather, chains, spikey hair, etc. can only be treated as much less than perfect, the sign of a defective mind, or as a joke. Just as these women's looks can't be taken seriously, the implication is that their brains can't be either - you must have a screw loose if you want to look like THAT.

Mary in Eastenders is a woman who's always in difficulties, sometimes suggested that she brings trouble on herself. She's scatterbrained, and does not take proper care of her appearance. Other characters, from Dot, Sue & Wilmoth-Brown to Andy tell her she should "smarten herself up". (What for?) Andy once did persuade her she'd look much prettier with a straight haircut and without the dramatic make up. But changing her image did nothing to change Mary's life, and thankfully she reverted to her own look which she obviously felt happier with and was one of the few means of expression open to her.



Punkettes are often portrayed (and often thought of) as tough or hard. Quite funny really that men can be scared just by women's appearance. Take another beer advert (guaranteed to be sexist)

where punk women entering a pub scare off 2 male ghosts!

In 1977 the BBC wouldn't allow Siouxsie & the Banshees to appear on Top of the Pops because they thought Siouxsie would scare any children watching!

We know that positive images of women are few and far between, and ridiculing punk women is just another way of putting us all down. We can wear what we want, look as revolting or threatening as we like, and it doesn't mean we're stupid or worthless. It means we're being ourselves.

Dutch Dykes' Solidarity

On Saturday 16th April a national demonstration against Clause 28 will be held, but this time it is in Amsterdam. It's organised by the Dutch Lesbian and Gay community: *'Dutch Lesbians and Gay men want to show our solidarity with the UK lesbian and gay community, and to express*

our anger at the ramifications this new law implies. We see it as a clear shift to the right in a neighbouring country.' This shift to the right is expressed through the 'European Block' mentality which is being promoted in West European countries; there are suggestions of no border controls between countries, uniform 'anti-terrorist' measures and a European passport.

In the Netherlands itself there has been a general tightening up of the Dutch police and judicial systems with such worrying effects as: the compulsory carrying of

ID papers at all times; the proposed article 140, where 'intent to commit a crime' becomes a crime itself, and disturbing trends in the refugee policy.

These changes in Dutch law go hand in hand with repressive legislation in Holland's more right-wing neighbouring states. Thus Clause 28 is seen as a direct threat to lesbians and gay men in Holland. There has

been a call for all Lesbian and Gay men and anti-fascist groups in the Netherlands *'to participate in this show of anger and disgust'*. The organisers of the demonstration hope that people from the UK will join them and have offered to put people up for the weekend.

They can be contacted at: de Wilde Roos, Harlemmerstraat 95, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Phone Resi (20) 921 346 or Peggy (20) 658 083.

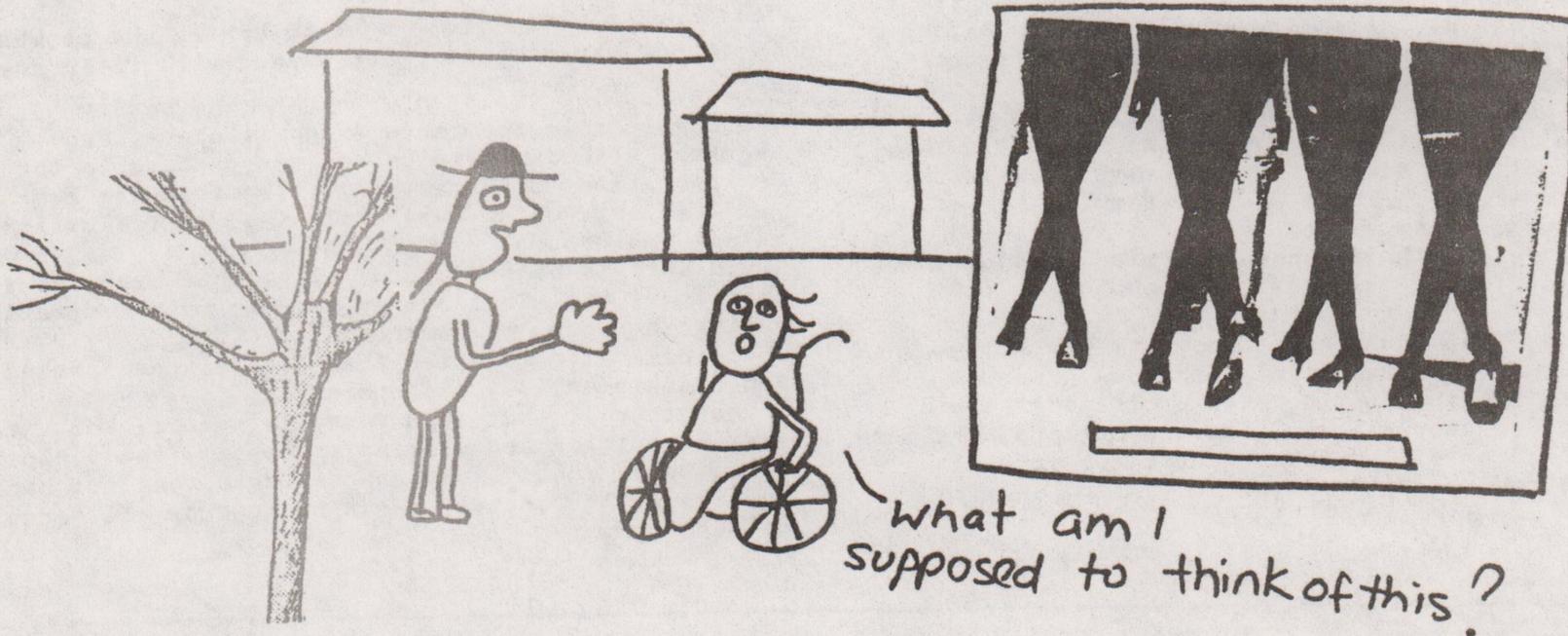
"GODS WILL"

When you've resigned yourself to facing the rest of your life doomed to be a hardened cynic, it's hard to imagine yourself jumping around with glee at a 'coming out story', especially when the story comes from the 'News of the World'.

However, this week's 'scoop of the century' managed to make me do just that. Manchester Chief Constable, James 'Cesspit' Anderton's daughter is a LESBIAN!!! The story of Gill Anderton's coming out was met by suggestion that perhaps Manchester's Parents support group should contact Mr 'Bigot' Anderton, who was reported to be 'bravely facing up to the fact', although 'tears came to his eyes' when he heard. (My heart bleeds for him.)

Facing the world with new opinion after this timely reminder that 'every family's got one', I just can't help but wonder about which other closet doors could be ready to burst open...the possibilities are endless.

the
trades club
boycott
is still
on



women miners

The dramatic events of the 1984-85 miners' strike brought public attention once again to an industrial occupation that has come to symbolise the ideals of masculine working class militancy. A significant battle took place not only industrially but also culturally between what miners had come to represent and the state. What disrupted the battle is the way in which women came to the forefront within the strike. Although the media tended to re-present women in traditional feminine roles of support "behind the men" - in soup kitchens or at jumble sales - their militant political activity could not be ignored, nor could their place on the picket lines, or the real effects this had on the social roles of both men and women. Women's involvement with the mining industry was receiving public attention once again, but, as ever, this was divorced from their historical connections and past struggles within that industry.

Between 1750-1850, coal production in England doubled from 5 to 10 million tons, and coal mining was central to the new industrialisation. Women had a long history of mine work prior to industrialisation. It was during the late 18th century that women began to disappear from pits. There were three main reasons - the introduction of tramways and horses, the influx of small farmers displaced by the agrarian revolution, and the opening of new industries. These definitely did have effects, but it is misleading not to relate them to the growing moralism of the middle and upper classes, and the beginnings of their intervention into middle class life and occupations.

By the 1840's, when the Children's Employment Commission decided to investigate child labour in mines, women's employment was common in only 4 major areas, West Lancashire, Yorkshire, East Scotland & South Wales. The cultural differences between how middle class men viewed femininity and women miners' occupations led to their inclusion within the report. Public morality was shocked and an exclusion act was implemented in 1842 banning women from underground work.

The term "pit brow lass" originated in Lancashire and became a popular term referring to women who continued to work in the mining industry on the pit head. Because public attention was focussed on Lancashire (Wigan) during 1860's and 1880's (when attempts were made to remove women completely from the industry) "pit brow lass" has come to refer to all female work above ground, from different areas and pits.

Photographers at this time, e.g. Arthur Munby, Dugdale, Little & Cooper, took photographs of women which were on public display, like tourist photos for the middle class who were "discovering" the north. The public was very interested in pit brow women, so these photographs were very popular.

Women's employment in Wigan was divided between the mines and mills. During the cotton famine many women moved from mill employment to work on the pit head. The image of the "mill girl" was constantly played off against her "sisters" on the pit brow. Often interpreted as a more respectable and homely occupation, in fact the mill woman did have problems in terms of employment, the main considerations being heat and dirt in the mills. Also the proximity to men in the mills was seen to encourage immoral behaviour.

The development of the railway system in the first 1/2 of the 19th century offered a mobility never before conceived of. The Northern town and Northern people became a place & a people to be discovered. A discovery that was bound up with exploitation and cultural intervention into what was perceived of as another way of life, an attitude similar in many ways to British colonialism overseas. There was an assimilation of distinct groups, cultures and ways of life within British culture. With this came the mass production of elements of different cultures, e.g. photos of pit brow women.

As early as 1743 the mining community was being written about as a distinct and dangerous group. Wesley in his "Journal of the People of Huddersfield" wrote, "A wilder people I never saw in England, the men women and children filled the street as we rode along and appeared just ready to devour us".



58. Louisa Millard of Wigan, 'A Miner and his sister', 1869. Both wear the padded trousers from Wales with clogs, but otherwise they are differently dressed. The pitbrow woman with her shovel and sieve has a shirt, a waistcoat and a padded skirt, with a linen cap topped by a scarf. Her brother has a moleskin jacket and waistcoat, shirt and peaked cap, along with his pick and safety lamp.

Mining communities were situated around the pit, isolated and segregated from other workers, a number of factors made them a distinct group. Mining was a family business, the management only hired the principle operative who was paid one wage to divide between his workers. Thus to keep this wage within his family he employed his children, including his daughters, so the money wouldn't go to outsiders. Their isolation allowed them to keep a distinct dialect, their living space had their own entertainment and pubs. Pit brow women could be seen as distinct on a number of levels. First, they worked outside, when in Victorian times the outside space was masculine. Socially they were only seen coming to and from work, in their pit clothes, often dirty, a uniform of striped apron and trousers. These marked them out from other working class women. Victorian morality based femininity on the image of the "Angel in the house". Upper class women were confined to the interior of the home, protected from the corruption of the outside world, chaperoned and shielded if they went out. Mining women were outside in the open rather than inside, in mills or factories. Men focussed on the moral implications of working outside, making women into savages because they were doing work unfit for them.

"AS long as women are taught to handle the crowbar, we cannot expect them to be expert with their needles".

"These females employed with the men, hardly distinguishable from them in their dress, and begrimed with dirt and smoke, are exposed to the deterioration of character arising from the loss of self-respect, which can hardly fail to follow their unfeminine occupation".

"Hard work is degrading in its effects upon the female character, the girls are exposed to much temptation during the hours of darkness"!!!

Journals also reported that some of them smoked pipes and drank beer, masculine habits.

Men thought they were sexually immoral too, from working outside and wearing trousers - men's clothes. Daily News, 1868: "It is acknowledged that the habitual wearing of the costume tends to destroy all sense of decency".

WOMEN
MINERS
cont...



Women were not to lose their jobs and the public debate didn't focus on them again until 1886 when Gladstone's Liberal government provided an opportunity to argue for women's exclusion from mining. In 1887, a women's deputation in full costume, clean, new and provided by the management, marched through London to protest about losing their jobs. In fact the process of women leaving the mines had more to do with the cultural intervention of upper class ideals and demands of femininity into working class culture than any parliamentary Exclusion Acts.

During 1860's many male miners had been incorporated into the cultural ideals of the upper class regarding correct femininity. In 1859, the secretary of the Miners' Amalgamated Council appealed for information on grievances at work and suggested female pit work as one area. In the conference of the National Association of Coal Lime & Ironstone Workers of Great Britain held in Leeds in 1863 these grievances were discussed. Women's pit work

came under attack, but specifically in the area of their costume, their work and their morality. The consequences of this conference resulted in a petition being sent to parliament in 1865, signed by 14,000 miners. It contained the complaint (one among many) "that the practice of employing females on or about the pit bank is degrading to the sex, leads to gross immorality and stands as a foul blot on the civilisation and humanity of the kingdom".

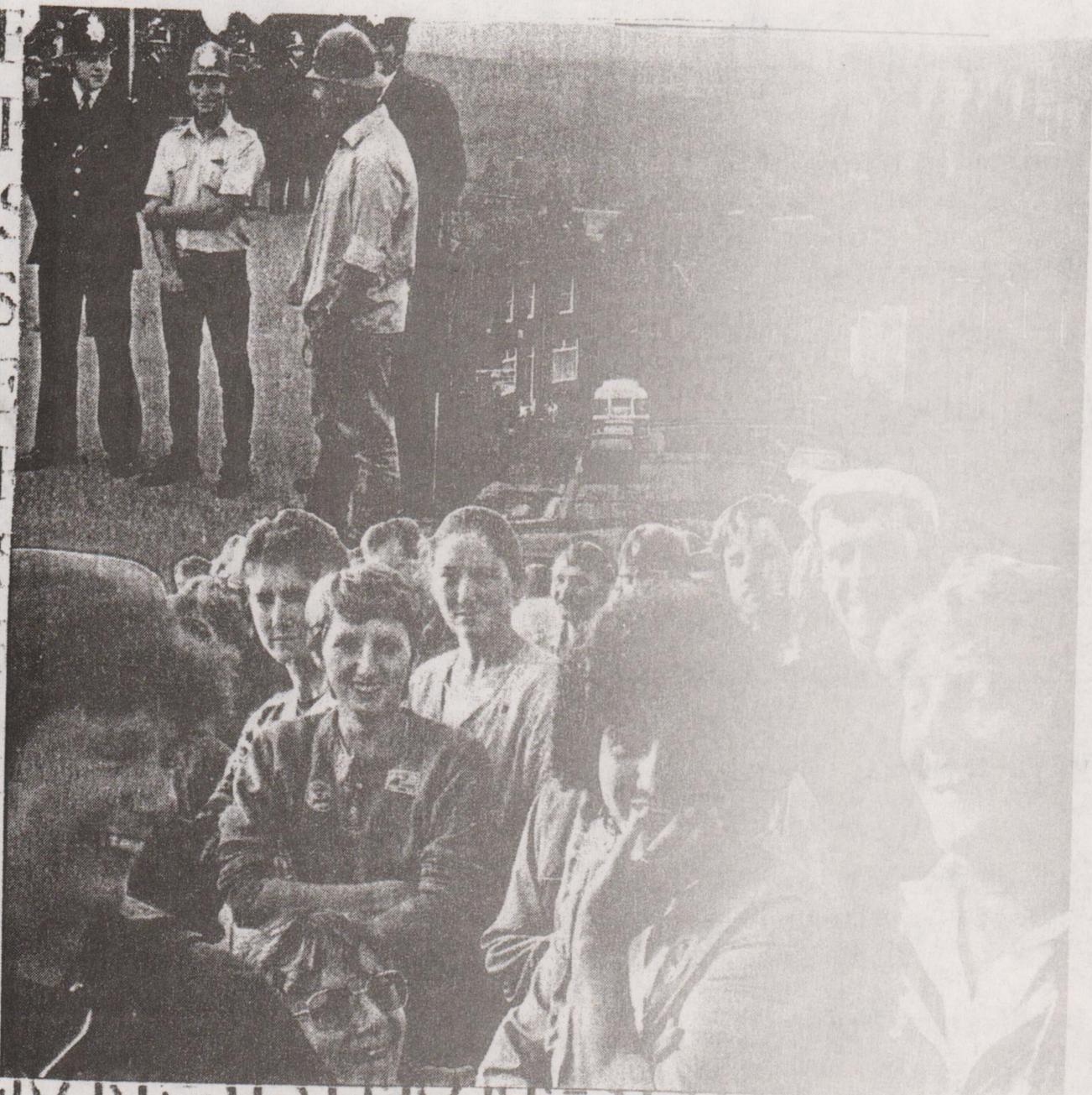
Photographs of pit brow women were used as evidence during a Select Committee's investigation into immorality caused by their occupations and dress:

"IT is rather a man's dress they wear, is it not? In some cases it drowns all sense of decency betwixt men and women, they resemble one another so much." Dress is "one of the features of the degrading character of the employment".

"They get as black and grimy as those down the mines".

The very last 2 pit women left work at Whitehaven in Cumbria in 1973.

RE-SISTE
SISTER/
TER/RE-S
R/RE-SIS
RE-SISTE
SISTER/
TER/RE-S
R/RE-SIS
RE-SISTE
SISTER/
TI
R.



The cover of "The Heart And Soul of It", a documentation of the 1984-85 miners' strike in the pit village of Worsbrough.

RE-SISTE TER/RE-SISTER/RE-SISTER/RE

whats on

April 15th, 16th, 17th - Conference for lesbians & gays with disabilities, Manchester Poly Students' Union. Contact 01 802 8981.

April 16th - Demo against Clause 28 in Amsterdam, 2pm Homomonument, Westermarkt, Rozengracht. Rally, speakers, bands, etc. in support of the British campaign against Clause 28. Accomodation available.

April 30th - Demo against Clause 28, London. Assemble 12 noon, Embankment Tube, London WC2. Ends at Kennington.

April 30th - Leeds Mayday March, in support of NHS, the campaign against Clause 28, and against the Alton Bill. Starts 11am, Town Hall

May 7th - Women's Reproductive Rights Campaign Day Conference, "campaigning for reproductive rights in the present political climate". At Woodhouse Community Centre, Leeds 6, 11am-5pm. £2/£1. Contact Leeds 446838.

May (last 3 weeks) - Lesbian extravaganza in Sheffield. Events include films, cabaret, sport, concerts, disco, workshops. Contact Liz 0742 768555 ext 4900.

May to Sept - Women only B&B in Penzance, Cornwall.

Aug - combined holiday/basic video making courses at Penwith women's film & video making workshop. Tel: 0736 67164 for leaflet.

REGULAR MEETINGS

WOMEN AGAINST DEPORTATIONS every fortnight, 4pm, from 19th Jan. Harehills Housing Aid Roundhay Road.

WOMENS REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS meet once a month. Ring 625445.

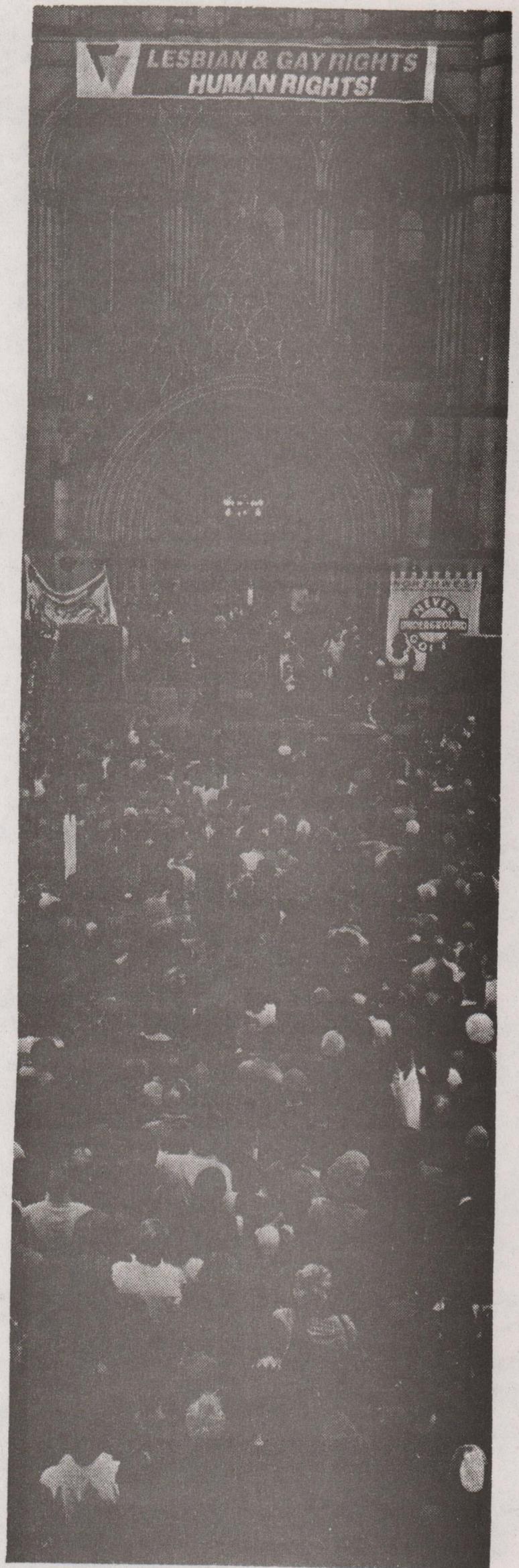
LEEDS OLDER FEMINISTS Monday nights. Tel 664761.

CLAUSE 28 CAMPAIGN Watch LOP for details of meetings.

WOMEN ONLY DISCOS

Rockshots - Call Lane. Fortnightly on Thurs from Aug 6. 10.30-2am £1/50p

Checkpoint - Bradford. Fortnightly on Thur from Aug 27



Over 20,000 people took part in the record breaking march, organised by the Northwest Campaign for Lesbian & Gay Equality, on 20 February in Manchester

WOMEN AND IRELAND last Wed each month. 8pm

WOMEN AND MANUAL TRADES 2nd and 4th Wed each month, Primrose pub, Meanwood Rd, 8pm.