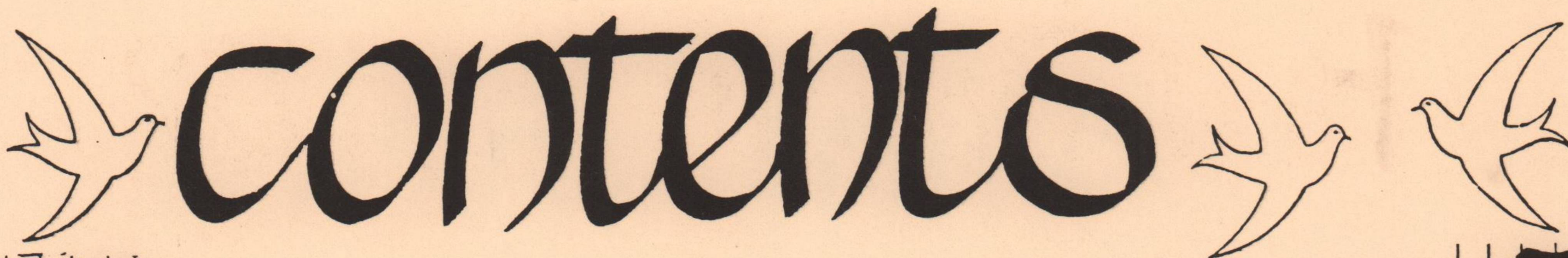


Women for Life on Earth



Winter 84/85 ⁵⁰¹² 70p



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Frome Women's Group are dedicating this edition of WFLOE to a sister, Andy Howieson. Andy died on October 4 from cancer - she died suddenly only 4 days after being at the Greenham peace camp for the weekend with Frome Women. Andy was a loving wife and mother, a devoted worker for a peaceful world. She had been looking forward to working on this magazine. Perhaps this edition is also for the future - when Toby, now 2 years and Polly, 3 years, can read it and come to understand the reasons for their mother's work for peace and understand the love her friends have for her and her spirit which goes on and on.

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This edition was put together by Frome Womens Peace Group.
Artwork by Eva, Anna and Diana.

Cover: Wood Engraving - Diana Francis.

How Precious Are We?

For Andy



I feel enormously privileged to have been close to her, firstly through the womens group and then later on becoming a special friend. I cannot begin to describe what she gave to me, I only know that from her I have a greater understanding of all things and that will last for the rest of my life. She was a truly good woman - gentle, sincere, compassionate, powerful and very very beautiful in the true sense of that word. So great was her commitment to the survival of our planet and so deep her belief that World Peace will come about through the will of ordinary people like ourselves. Andy believed passionately in the power within each of us to effect change, she was a living model of just how possible it is to assert ourselves gently yet powerfully,

Andy spent 28th-31st September with me and other members of our peace group supporting the last Greenham action, knowing that she was to be admitted into hospital on 1st October for her third cancer operation. It was only a lump. When the lump was detected during a routine check up two weeks earlier Andy felt shocked and angry that this body she was taking such good care of should let her down. However, her confidence slowly grew, her fears lessened and when she left me at the station it was with the quiet confidence of one who was about to give birth rather than someone about to undergo a major operation.

On Wednesday 3rd October she was comfortable after her operation.

On Thursday 4th October, she was dead. Dead because of an undetected brain tumour which haemorrhaged. A tumour which remained undetected despite having had a headache for four months, despite voicing her fears to her doctor that it may be linked in some way to her cancer.

I was at her home looking after her children, Polly (eight years) and Toby (two years), when the telephone rang and I heard that message - so final - so unacceptable to my ears - to my heart - to my very soul. I remember shouting out my defiance against this huge injustice as if my anger and non-acceptance could wipe it all out. Here, all around me was evidence of her life, her children, her clothes, her books, her records, her smell.

I don't remember much about those first terrible days except the pain of loss and of course the tears. We were all swimmers in a great sea of grief. The waves would come and go but never leave us completely. Feelings of hopelessness and helplessness were intensified by a lack of purpose. However, those feelings gradually changed. I don't know how or when but they have changed. Perhaps it is meeting our feelings which allows us to accept them. There is no easy way to accept death but that acceptance must be helped by expressing our feelings freely and truly, for experiencing our feelings is vital to the healing process. There is no way to avoid them. There is no way of avoiding the loneliness of loss, for if we did not care for others deeply we would not experience grief. "Let there be loneliness for where there is loneliness there is also love, and where there is suffering there is also joy." (Clark Moustakas)

Through Andy we can learn to give and give and then give a little more, working for peace with renewed energy and vigour.

But we must learn also to give to ourselves, to take care of our bodies and our minds for they are precious. At every action, for ever and ever, we must believe in our power - it is ours.

I will miss Andy always. But it gives me joy to know that this has been the happiest year of her life and I am so happy to have shared it with her. She will give me strength in the years to come. Her goodness will go on and on and on. Her faith will flow out of these pages and reach into the hearts of you, her sisters!

Goodbye Andy X

May radiance grow

On your soaring wings

Till you reach the

Rainbow of

Faith Worldwide

(Daisakull Ikeda)

There is no-one who knew Andy who has not been shattered, numbed and moved by the news of her death: - but through this disbelief there shines a pattern which brings us all together.

There is no-one who knows Andy who has not been encouraged, inspired and moved by the touch of her life upon theirs.

Hers was a gentleness which belied a power and a strength built upon Love: - Love for her family, Love for her friends, and a Love with which she believed in - reached out for - and touched the humanness that exists in all people.

Hers was a tranquility which bore a fervent and passionate belief in the power of Peace to create Peace, Love to create Love; - a belief in her power as a woman amongst women to fight for, and achieve, the ultimate in these ideals.

Hers was a quietness and patience which shouted with urgency the message to all of us to keep a place in our hearts for the human race and to keep it open wide: - to hold on and hold out. Hers was a caring which was deep and gentle and strong.

Ours is now a sadness which barely obscures a celebration of the legacy of her life: each one of us knows what we have individually gained. Collectively we have inherited a redoubled strength and power to fight for Peace and to reach out for and to give Love. Andy, - we are Holding On and Holding Out.

Andy is not gone from us, - she is with us now, and will be with us all for ever in the Spirit that is universal, and in the spirit that was, is, and will always be Andy; and you can't kill the Spirit. She is like a mountain - Old and Strong! She goes on and on and on.

Our loving is like a flower. It flowers & fades as do we ourselves.

Of flowers they fade because they are moving swiftly. A little torrent of life leaps up to the summit of the stream, gleams, turns over around the bend of the parabola of curved flight.

It sinks & is gone, like a comet, curving into the invisible...

Oh flowers, they are all the time travelling like comets & they come to us for a day, two days & withdraw, slowly vanishing again.

And we, we must take them on the wing & let them go ~

For what we might try to keep are not flowers; immortelles are not flowers;

Flowers are just a motion, a swift motion, a coloured gesture.

An age it takes to form a jewel;

And a flower?

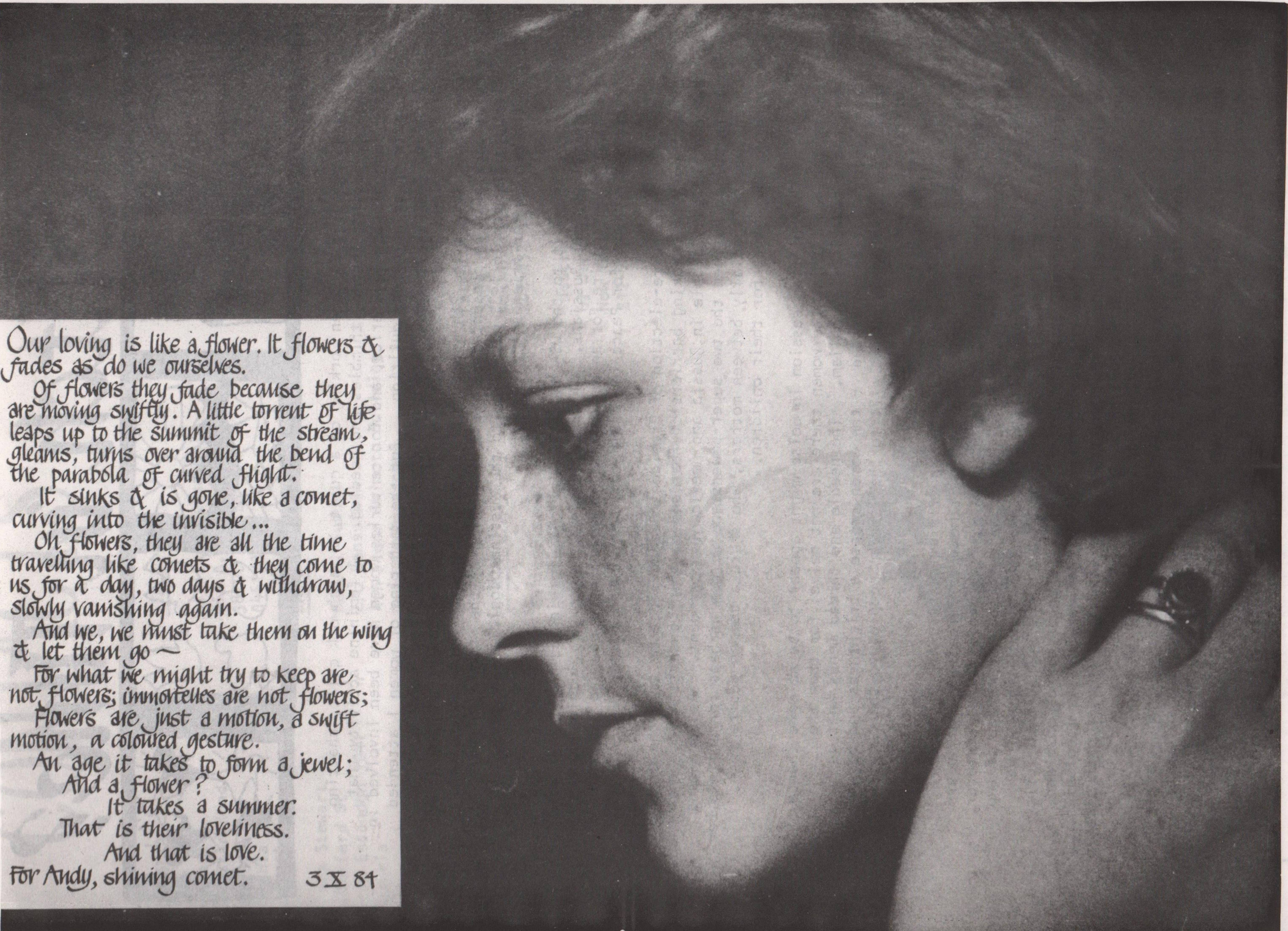
It takes a summer.

That is their loveliness.

And that is love.

For Andy, shining comet.

3 X 84



A Stitch in Time?



Imagine 20 women working on a quilt, a patchwork quilt, chatting singing, passing thread, thimbles and needles. A feminine activity that has a long history in America, and for centuries women have been involved in the arts of spinning and quilting. But the gathering of women I attended in Boise, Idaho, this Spring, had a different focus, a new meaning. The quilt contained 30 squares, sewn from drawings made by Soviet and American children. It was the 2th quilt in a series produced by Boise Women for Peace and is to be presented to the Soviet Union by the women. Their first quilt made in 1982 was given to the Russian people as an expression of the desire for friendship.

My visit to the USA had a similar aim, forging links of friendship with Americans and Russians. I travelled in America with Russian women speaking of our desire for an end to the nuclear arms race. We had been invited by Mothers for Peace in Washington, Denver and Idaho.

With the re-election of President Reagan since my trip the urgency of such work of breaking barriers of fear and building understanding between ordinary people in Russia and America is paramount. As Europeans we are poised between the two super-powers and we can perhaps forge links between people specially between mothers, who share a common desire to preserve the future for their children.

The quilting session in Boise might appear to be no more than a sewing bee but I think the women there are not naive, for them the work has a conscious symbolism. The needle and thread mends what is torn, joins what is separated - the women create a brightness and beauty that is new. This is then a gift to the Russian people, to the enemy in our target zones.

This expression of care and creativity clearly impressed the Russian women of their hosts genuine commitment to friendship and understanding. As we travelled together, Natasha, from Leningrad, a lecturer, with two sons - and Gulnora, from Tajikistan, a teacher, and mother of two girls, we felt the irrelevance of the great ideological divisions. We talked of our children, our ideas of education. We shared a curiosity about our experiences, an awareness of subtle differences of response and outlook - not the clear cut distinctions of British and Russian ideologies. We also became a group - I was trusted to negotiate with our over enthusiastic hosts about their tight scheduling.

The three of us showed a similar, perhaps reserved temperament. The Americans were more open, warm and I had never before been so hugged by strangers, and given so many tokens of friendship. We were affected and relaxed by this and it spilled over into our relationship with each other.

Our motivations for making the trip make interesting comparisons. My family had lost both maternal and paternal grandfathers in the two world wars - my parents lost their new home in the London Blitz and my cradle had been splattered with glass from shattered windows. Yet the images of that war are not around to remind us of the suffering and they were not the mainspring of my motivation for peace - my involvement sprang from a sense of the horror of nuclear weapons, their deadly ability to scar future generations when the reasons for the war have been resolved. People are still dying in Hiroshima today long after the war.

For Natasha, from Leningrad, the last war is a constant presence in war memorials and ceremonies. Women place food on the graves of those who died during the 900 days siege of hunger. Natasha's grandmother died of hunger during that time in Leningrad. Invading German armies had annihilated entire towns - 9,000 Byelorussian villages were burned down and there ^{were} many concentration camps on Russian soil. In contrast Britain had not been invaded. It was an awareness of the fear of invasion which motivated Natasha's work in the Soviet Peace Committee.

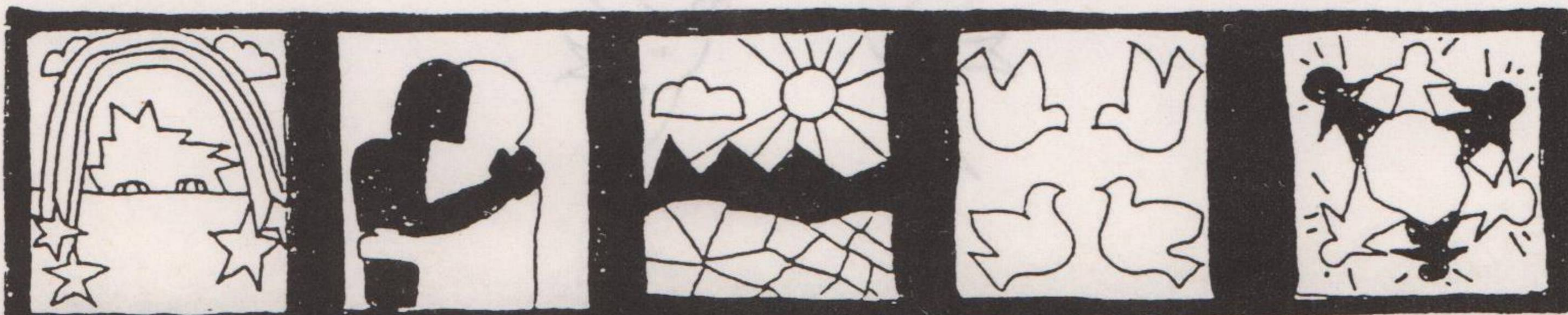
The Americans have not been invaded since the Eighteenth Century and World War 2 seems remote from their thinking. The Americans we met expressed guilt about war - their country's involvement in Vietnam and for some their fear that the USA would get more deeply involved in the Central American issues and put down the democratic country of Nicaragua. We felt their sense of shame when we visited the Monument to the Vietnam dead in Washington - the black stone carved with thousands upon thousands of names and the visitors openly weeping as they tried to find the name of a relative. So many died for bankrupt ideals.

So our preoccupations within the terms 'war and peace' were influenced by our different sense of history, these differences between us gradually focusing and clarifying throughout the trip.

The clearest and simplest impression of the difference between Russians and Americans we met on this trip was perhaps best characterized by the concept of community for the Russians, and individualism for the Americans. It is one thing to gain an abstract and indirect notion of this through received ideas of these two cultures, quite another to experience it by observing the way Russians and Americans saw life.

The Russians asked to visit Day Care Centres, hospitals and were upset by the way hospitals charged 750 dollars a day for care - all medical facilities are free in the Soviet Union, and good health is seen as the responsibility of the community not the ability of the individual to pay. They were amazed at the cost of some private junior schools - 3,000 dollars a year. Gulnora was especially surprised at the informality and casual way teachers and pupils addressed each other and their informal clothing. She was also amazed at the individualistic approach to the curriculum - in the Soviet Union the curriculum is centrally controlled and is exactly the same for each pupil within an age band. Gulnora also felt that peace studies should be on the curriculum - a subject unknown in the areas we visited.

The Americans we met felt it was their right as democratic citizens to be very critical of their government, whereas the Russian women were reluctant to criticise their own government. This might be seen as fear of dissent, and whilst there is some truth in this, their reluctance is also a strong loyalty to the patriots who died in the last war and the sense of being a victim of world criticism - especially in the Western press.



REGIONAL

American history is one of individualistic pioneering and value is placed on personal initiative rather than community action. Government is still seen as an impediment to initiative whereas the Russians viewed the State as a source of good to curb individualistic excesses and private gain.

Both then are loyal to their country's values, and such experiences as we shared suggest that the possibility of each culture having validity within its own history - but the cold war has frozen natural responses and feelings, denied the possibility of natural responses and feelings, denied the possibility of curiosity and comprehension. Values and attitudes that perhaps might never sit entirely comfortably together are exaggerated to simple caricature and set in implacable opposition.

Those children's drawings from America and Russia that form the basis of the new Boise quilt, even they reflected different qualities and interests - but they are part of the new quilt, they enhance one another do not clash.

It still has force for me as a symbol of the trip I made, though it would be naive to underestimate the forces ranged against such direct small scale attempts at friendship and understanding. So I remain grateful for the one thing the Russian and American mothers gave me, and each other, renewed hope.

Mothers for Peace - Coordinator, Pat Dale, 30 Gledhow Wood Grove, Leeds, LS2, INZ. Please write for literature and membership.



SENECA Womens Camp

The Seneca Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice is on a long country road that winds through strawberry fields and small towns with small stores, American flags, and people sitting on front steps. In the middle of this farming country which looks so lush is the Seneca Army Depot, a storage place for US Cruise Missiles and the neutron bomb.

The Seneca Women's Encampment appears as a flash of signs, banners, and a white house under trees with a barn painted multi-coloured with a giant spider web on one side. Along the side of the house there is a child care area, and a giant parking lot.

The Feminist anti-militarist movement has grown at a remarkable rate in the last few years with roots in the civil rights movement and the direct action pacifist community. It has a style which is decentralised and uses symbols and images from the everyday lives of women and tactics of non-violent direct action. We have taken our private pain and put them in public places - photographs, clothes, pillows with our nightmares written on them.

The Seneca Camp opened on July 4 1983 and actions happened daily, on the weekend of August 1 thousands of women converged on the encampment for the largest action of the summer. About 2,000 women walked from Seneca Falls carrying the messages and faces of the suffragists on placards. In Waterloo they were met by an angry crowd, many of them brandishing flags on sharp sticks. The women sat down in the street to decide what to do. The Sheriff was unable or unwilling to disperse the crowd, and he told the women to take a different route. Finally after several hours of negotiation the seated women were arrested for disturbing the peace. After this confrontation a dialogue was opened up between women at the Camp and the townspeople, and among townspeople themselves.

The differences that were to emerge with the townspeople had less to do with the explicit camp message - peace, freedom and no missiles in Europe - than they did with the women's culture expressed at the camp. Lesbians played a strong and a very visible role and for a time townspeople had more to say about their objection to lesbians than about their position on disarmament. Seneca was an attempt to provide a women's utopia, a free safe space for women to be themselves and develop a feminist culture and a vision of living in opposition to all forms of militarism.

Some Seneca critics have argued that Seneca took on too much. Some women worry about feminist energy being drained from longtime women's service projects like peace work, and some leftist activists have criticised the multi-issue counter cultural emphasis and visible lesbian presence as unaffordable luxuries.

It seems to me that feminism as a philosophy and a movement is at the crossroads. Seneca is located at that crossroad. Can feminism be a movement of all women without invalidating the experiences and concerns of some women? If we are to have such a movement, what is to be the relationship between Third World Women and White Women setting the agenda for the movement? The fact is all of us experience patriarchal oppression differently and perhaps that Seneca was about the confrontation not only with external oppression, but with ourselves.

Visit to the Soviet Union - Impressions

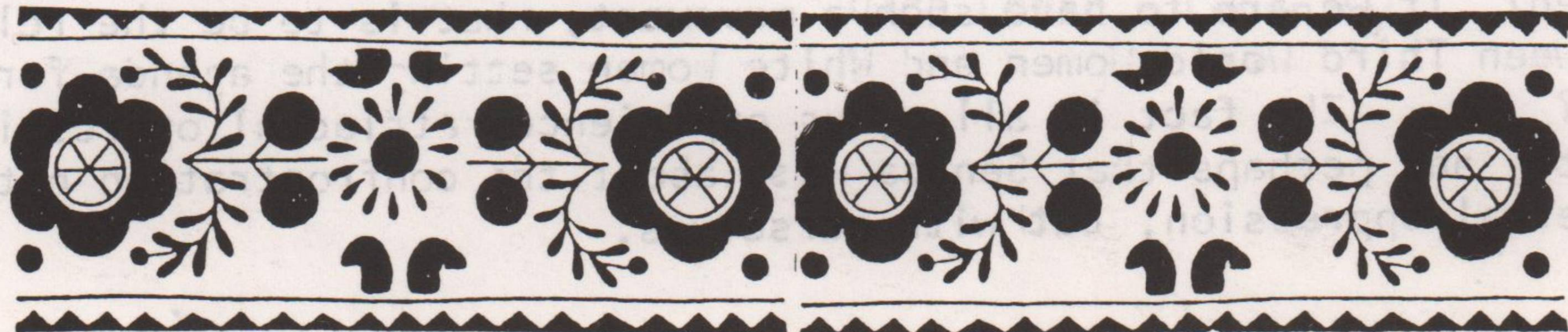
Mothers for Peace was the idea of two elderly Women, Lucy and Marion, who live in a Quaker Home for the Elderly. Lucy, lost the chance of marriage in the aftermath of the slaughter of a generation of young men in the First World War. She says that out of personal loss sprung a deep commitment to work for an end to war and to put her efforts into peace-making. Therefore, Mothers for Peace, is a small way of making peace between ordinary people, especially mothers who share so many common bonds, and the first attempts to develop understanding between the nations of the United States and the Soviet Union began with goodwill visits by British mothers in 1981. Since then there have been further visits to Russia and other Eastern European countries.

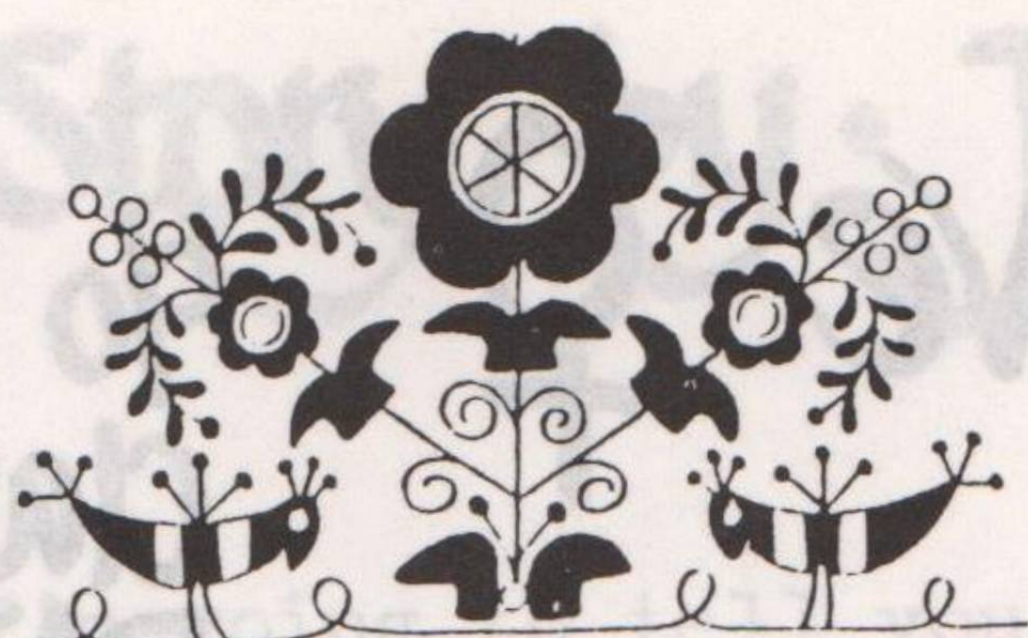
In April of this year, Sally Brown, a Sheffield mother, and a fluent Russian speaker, visited the Soviet Union with two other British mothers. This is what Sally wrote on her return: -

For me the experience of this trip was good because it enabled me to confirm impressions I had received from reading the Soviet press over the last years, impressions which indicated that things were not like the picture given by our media, but that this was a society in process of rapid change and development. Not only had much material progress been made since my last substantial visit here in 1964-5 but also there had been great gains in self-confidence. I could now see the early 1960's in their context, as being the end of a very terrible time. This progress, however, should not be taken to mean that the Soviet Union was going to 'normalise' until it became 'just like us.' Any study of Russian history would show that this could not be so. On the contrary, there is much in our society which is and has always been emphatically rejected, is not wanted. The longer we fail to understand this, and fail to understand the need felt there, to guard against the thrusts of an economic system which is by nature aggressive and aimed at destroying anything which it sees as a rival such as the socialist system, and the longer we fail to ask what things they do not like about us and are unready to face such questions, the less we can expect to be met by them with openness and honesty, and the more we stand to be the losers in the future.

The joy of surprise, even consternation, is that although the Soviet people are fully informed about the effects of nuclear war they do not live in such fear of the future as we do. Why is this? Are they too complacent, and too bothered about the last war? The answer is complex. In the first place though they know that nuclear war is the end and do have a tremendous concern to prevent it they also know, from their own past war experiences that human beings are capable of far greater feats of endurance and of sacrifice than we, in our comfortable lives, can ever know about.

The Russian people have a great belief in the capacity of people to do what is sensible, and to change their very nature. The level of optimism to which they aspire is a result of the vast changes which they have made in their own society during the present century. The world vitally needs areas which can maintain such optimism and faith, or it will destroy itself out of despair.





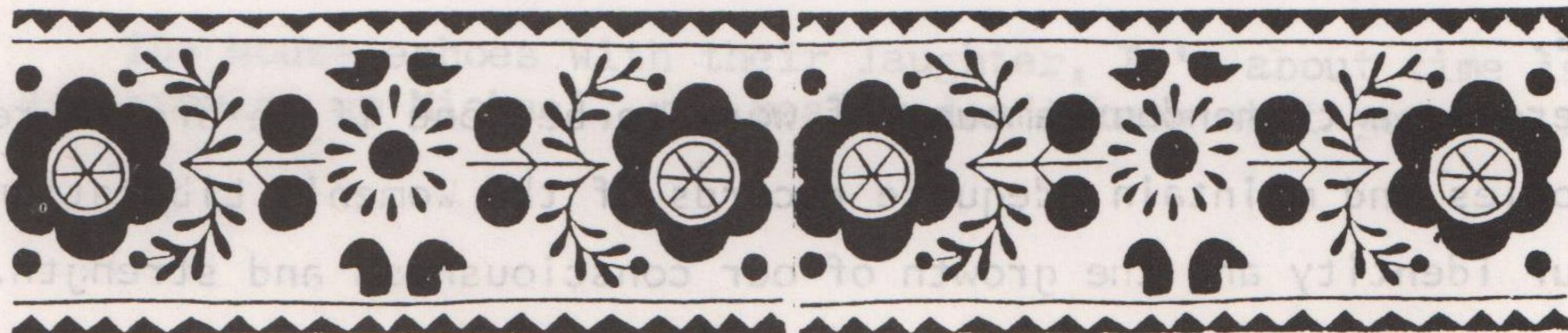
This gives them a greater belief in the capacities of people which extends to a faith in the capability of humanity to do what is sensible, and to change their very nature. The changes made in Russian society during the present century conduce to a level of optimism to which we in the West simply cannot attain. The world vitally needs areas which can maintain such optimism and faith, or it will destroy itself out of despair.

Whilst in many ways life in the Soviet Union has caught up with the general tenor of life in the West and one feels to be in a modern developed society (at least in the towns), nevertheless life does not move quite as fast as in our society. For instance in order to obtain an interview with us of just a few minutes provincial journalists would take a whole day for this, travel around with us, and get to know us first, which of course led to a relaxed atmosphere during the interview. In general we are under pressure to keep up a fast pace, to give snap judgements, quick answers. An illustration of this difference is the way crime is reported. Our press reports the sensation and the proceedings which follow. The Soviet press reports such things longer, after the event, if it is considered worthwhile, (i.e. instructive) with deeper and more general reflections upon the whole matter. We use our enforced hastiness as a refuge from deeper involvement with problems, both personal and universal.

To me the Russians possess special qualities and abilities which most other nations lack to some degree. These are the abilities to be open to one another- to share problems- a wonderful capacity for love- but this love can only be extended to those who can be completely trusted. The world needs qualities of this kind: but to enable them to reach the world a tremendous amount of work needs to be done to change harmful and hurtful attitudes coming from outside. What can we do to help this process? How can we get rid of that all-too-frequent remark, "So you're going to the Soviet Union. Hope you come back"? How do we persuade people to think beyond this line, enable them to change their perceptions of Soviet reality today? How can we do this for people who in the first place cannot conceive of any reality other than their own and in the second place will not look for fear their perceptions might have to change fundamentally?

My own feeling is that we have to start with ourselves. I am convinced that there is no real difference between the stand we take personally vis-a-vis other people and the stand we take together, so to speak, politically. Therefore we have to begin at home, with ourselves. If we in Britain are unable to meet each other, to open up and listen to each other, either personally or as social groups, if we are unable to give time and attention to each other here how can we expect to be successful in becoming open to far-off groups which seem alien. It seems to me that we should make use of our own personal interests to a greater extent and come together more to learn about each other- then we can extend this in order to reach out to groups in other countries with similar interests.

Anybody who is interested in making use of the arts for a means of getting to know Soviet people please write to me. Music is my particular art form. Sally Brown, 2, The Fairway, Sheffield, S10 4LX



Feminist Archive ♀

90 University of Bath
Claverton Down
BATH AVON
BA2 7AY

The Feminist Archive was established as a regional reference library and museum in 1978. It is devoted to identifying, preserving and producing work of women - to tell the story of women and to make it available for reference and interests. It will assist the research and study of all aspects of women in society. The Feminist Archive is documenting the development of the Women's Liberation Movement and maintains national and international links.

The growth of the Feminist Archive is entirely dependent upon the support of the people for whom it exists, as we are not able to buy material. The Archive is the living memory of our history, our development and change. It relies on the content and form of material women send.

The Archive intends to acquire complete sets of periodicals and newsletters. Early numbers of many are now out of print and it is only through the cooperation of individuals that these sets may be made up. Please send the papers and leaflets of any conferences, events, meetings and actions you attend. Posters, badges, records, clothing, photographs, postcards and other ephemera are also important to a representative collection - especially as much women's work uses different forms than are traditionally preserved in libraries and museums, employing many different forms of resistance. It is hoped that women will donate these items when they no longer have a personal use. Please remember to put the year on all items as this information is easily lost. Also please be sure to indicate any restrictions you wish to place on the availability of any of the material you donate, particularly if it is for the use of women only.

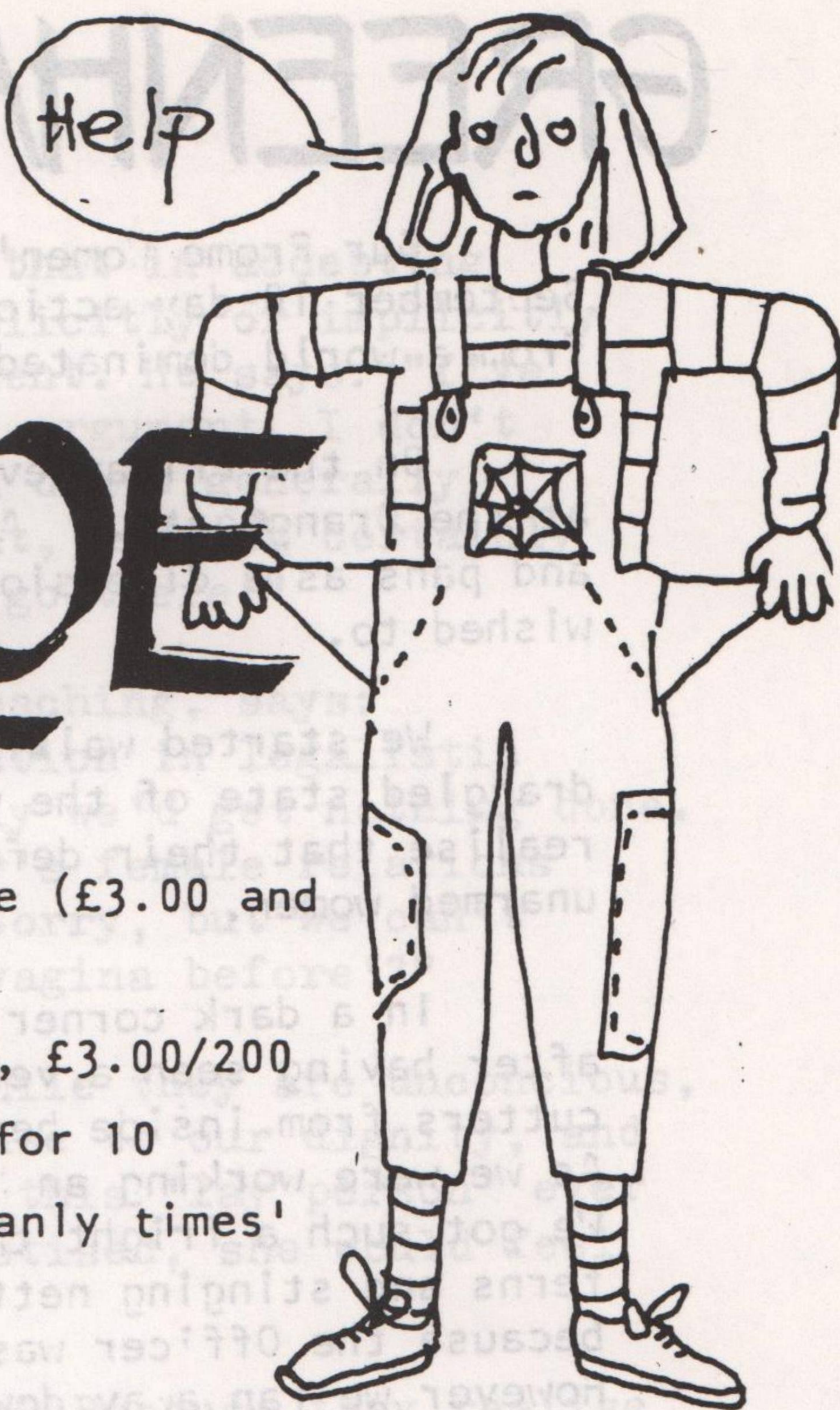
Material in any language or medium is welcome. If you send photocopied material please use a machine which dry copies, as these produce more readable and long lasting prints. The Archive has access to a dry copier, for copying of material, the original or the copy of which can be returned to you. Postage and contributions for copying much appreciated.

The Feminist Archive is a registered Charity - Charity Number 282631 which means that it can be used as a channel for research grants. Anyone wishing to undertake a study project is encouraged to contact us at the above address.

There is a tremendous amount of work to be done if we are to record our own histories and maintain adequate records of the Women's Liberation Movement - our identity and the growth of our consciousness and strength.

SUPPORT

WFLOE



★SILVER SPIDERWEB EARRINGS. £3.50 per pair, £1.75 single (£3.00 and £1.50 to WFLOE network)

★SPIDERWEB ENVELOPE LABELS - £1.00 per 50, £1.75 per 100, £3.00/200

★RECLAIM THE EARTH CARDS - Full colour. 50p each, £4.00 for 10

★RECORD SINGLE BY FRANKIE ARMSTRONG. 'Shall there be womanly times' £1.00

All available from: Mary Upton, 1 Hamilton Terrace, St Julians Rd, Shoscombe, Bath. Tel: Radstock 34937

In response to our request for help with the increasing work-load of coordinating the WFLOE network and magazine we have managed to decentralise the coordination as follows:

Fund-raising items are now being handled by Mary Upton, address as above.

Printing and Distribution of the magazine : Linda Botteau-Jones, 'Beulah',

Saron, Nr Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL54 5UL Tel: Llanwnda 830827

General enquiries: Veronica Bennett, address as below.

new address

new address

WOMEN for LIFE on EARTH

2 Bramshill Gardens,
London, NW5 1JH

Tel: 01 272 3449

new address

new address

Our advertisement rates are: (negotiable!)

Full page £40

Half page £22

Quarter page £12

Eighth page £7

Sixteenth page ... £4

Cheques payable to
Women for Life on Earth

GREENHAM - 10 DAY ACTION

Our Frome Women's Group went to Greenham on the last weekend of the September 10-day action. This called on women to withdraw support from a world dominated by aggression.

On the Friday evening it was agreed to have an action at 8pm at the Orange gate. A great amount of noise was made with spoons and pans as a diversion tactic for women to go over the fence if they wished to.

We started walking around the perimeter fence enjoying the bedraggled state of the wire and hoping the occupants inside would realise that their defences of the cruise missiles would not keep out unarmed women.

In a dark corner Andy, Debbie and myself started unpicking the fence after having seen a very smartly dressed woman take out 3-foot wire cutters from inside her coat and snap through a whole length of fence. As we were working an M.O.D. Officer from inside shone his torch on us. We got such a fright that we crawled into a wood and hid behind some ferns and stinging nettles. Then we realized how absurd we were because the Officer was behind the wire and could not get near us. However we ran away down the road and after a while I turned back to find that Andy and Debby had returned back to fence and were crouching down busy at work again.

I have my most vivid memory of Andy and Debby as they were lit up by the yellow lights inside the wire, and I thought how brave they were and how great it was to be with them. I joined them again.

Suddenly we heard people rushing towards us and torches swinging - we started running with fright but a policeman grabbed my arm. The M.O.D. Officer identified me as been seen at the fence and the police said they were arresting me. Andy and Debbie clung to me, but the police pushed them away and said I was going with them alone.

I was extremely frightened. They drove me to the police station. I was marched down long dingy corridors and through clanking locking doors. I was taken into a small room where a woman police officer did a quick check of my pockets and patted down my arms and legs. A male policeman then made me empty my pockets to take all my personal effects away - I only had a lighter and necklace. They wanted to take my mother's wedding ring from my finger but I resisted this.

I was then marched along more corridors and through more doors that clanged and locked behind me. I was locked in a cell and my boots taken from me. It was cold.

The cell was sickly cream, the door had a peep hole in it. I sat on a long wooden bench. I could not see out as the only window had thick glass and was high up in the wall.

I was there for a very long time - ages. I had to fight off waves of claustrophobia, and realised how unprepared I was for this.

we, as women, must never settle for anything less than absolutely everything.

I wanted to do a pee - I kept ringing the bell and shouting, but no-one came. I hadn't intended to be in the clutches of the police and I felt truly terrified. I know many of the Greenham Women are going through so much but I was not really prepared for this unexpected event.

While I was feeling extremely bleak having been left alone for such a long time I suddenly heard the Frome women calling my name from outside the window. It was so wonderful to hear them. They had climbed around the back and were risking arrest themselves in doing so. They promised to wait for me although it must have been about 2.30.am. I was tremendously comforted to know they were close by. Eventually, I was allowed to go to the loo where a policeman stood outside the curtain and a policeman guffawing said "Has she shit her pants then?"

As I came out through the curtain there were a few policemen standing round grinning and I saw a photographer poised to take my photograph. I quickly turned my head away and realised I was surprised they did not tell me to stand still. I felt so afraid of the police I would have done anything.

I was then taken to a second cell and it was more comfortable with a mattress and on the wall were wonderful messages scratched by Greenham women. The messages made me feel less alone.

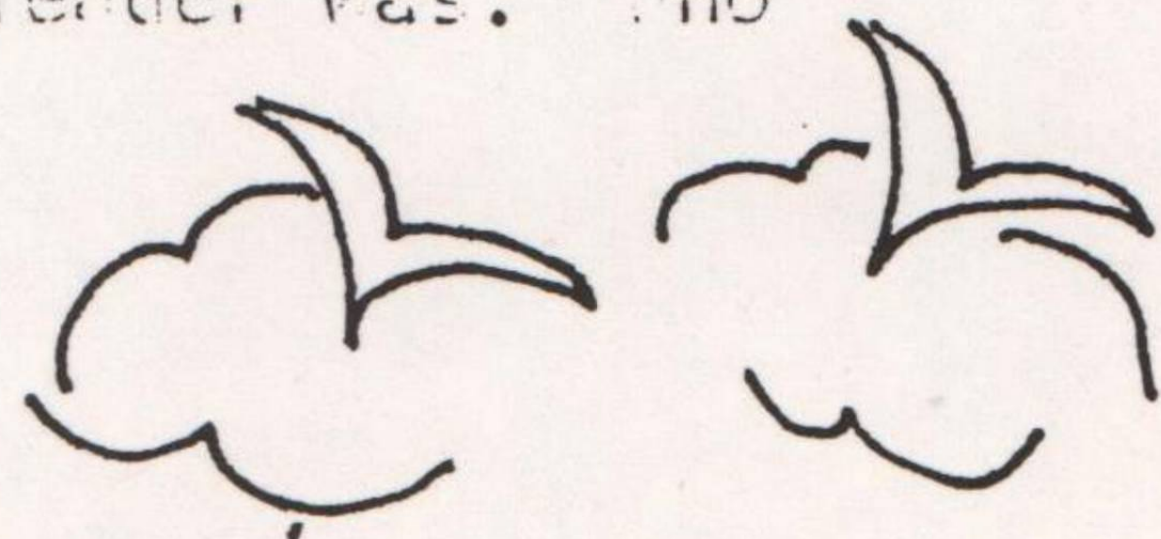
At some stage I was taken out and asked for a statement and was told I would need to wait only a few minutes in my cell. I was actually there for another two hours before I was taken before the Superintendent, who snarled that I was a stupid woman who wasn't in his words worth the bother of prosecuting and I was set free to go with my beautiful friends who were still waiting outside.

I feel very afraid of the police now and the power they have over our lives. Had I not had my loving friends outside all night arguing my case I would have been kept for longer - the police did not have a shred of evidence against me.

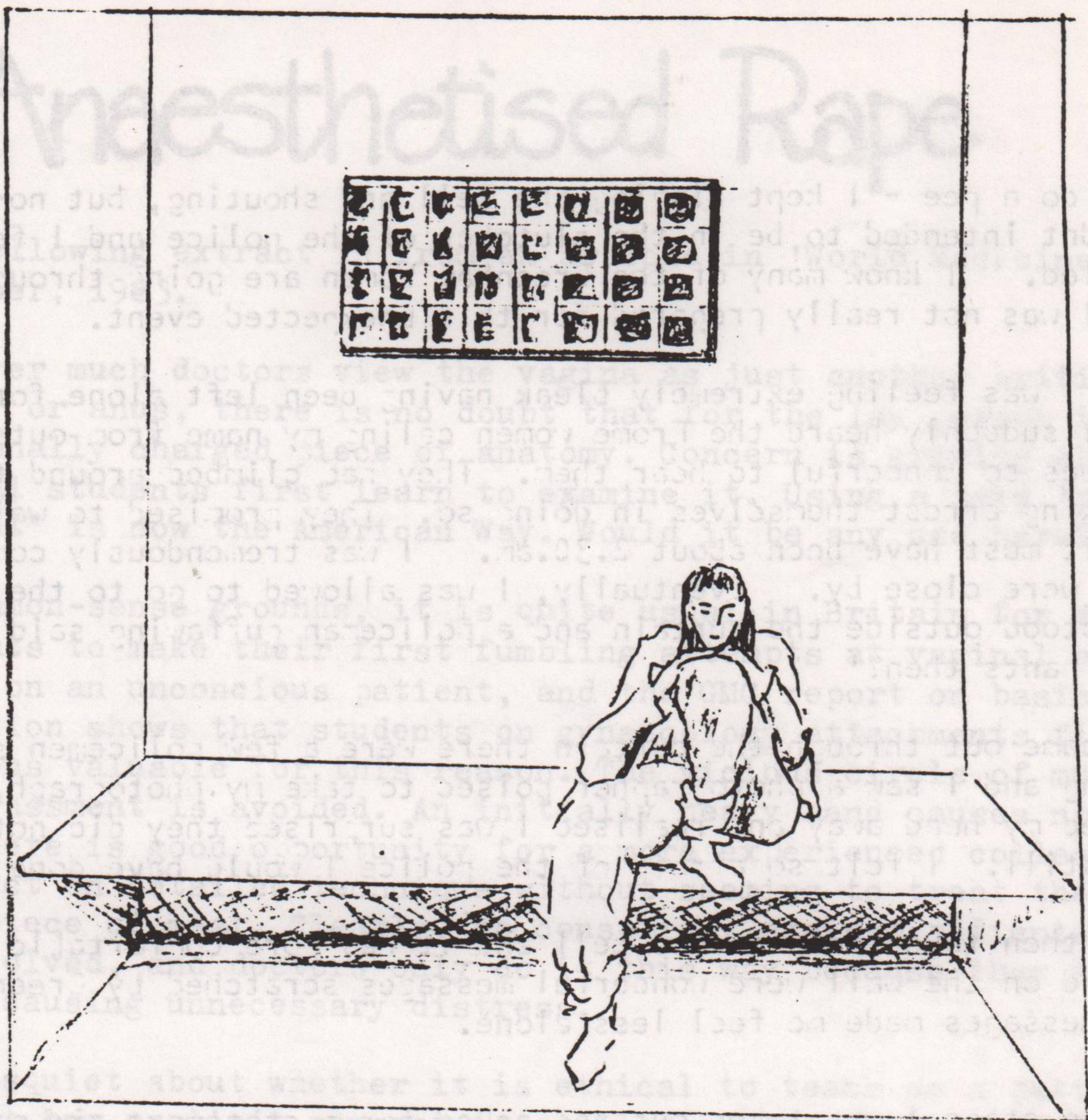
On Saturday, the nightmare of the previous night diminished in the sunshine, when at 6.p.m. we held another action. During the joint action I lost all sense of my own frailty and inadequacy in the face of the police. It was one of the most phenomenal experiences I have ever had.

We started the action by rocking the fence very nearly bringing it down. More and more women gathered at the gate, making a tremendous noise wailing and whooping. The atmosphere was electric, the police were acting very alarmed running frantically along the fence, when suddenly through the most beautiful communication we all sat down and after a long silence we began to wolf-whistle the Irish Guards who had come to Greenham that day. We followed this by a dance and we all linked arms in rows which went forward and back from the wire and the alarmed police did not know how to deal with such gaiety. Following this we made a tremendous noise again, and they must have thought the Banshees had collected outside the gates of Greenham. Then all was silent. We sat down and gently sang "All We are Saying is Give Peace a Chance."

Waves of instant communication went on all evening and it was incomprehensible to one policeman who demanded to know who our leader was. Who was telling us to do these things.



Anaesthetised Rape



It was wonderful to be there that night with all the women knowing we are capable of such subtle and powerful co-operation and communication. Let us grow - let us join hands with all our sisters and brothers in this world and rid it of the horrors which ravage it.

ANON.

PEACE PROTEST CALL

Total arrested to date UK and Eire - 6,173

Greenham - 1909	August - September
London -- 470	September
Leeds - 102	August
Alconbury - 140	August
Glasgow - 11	September/October
Sculthorpe + 5	October
Vatton - 22	November



For Phoebe

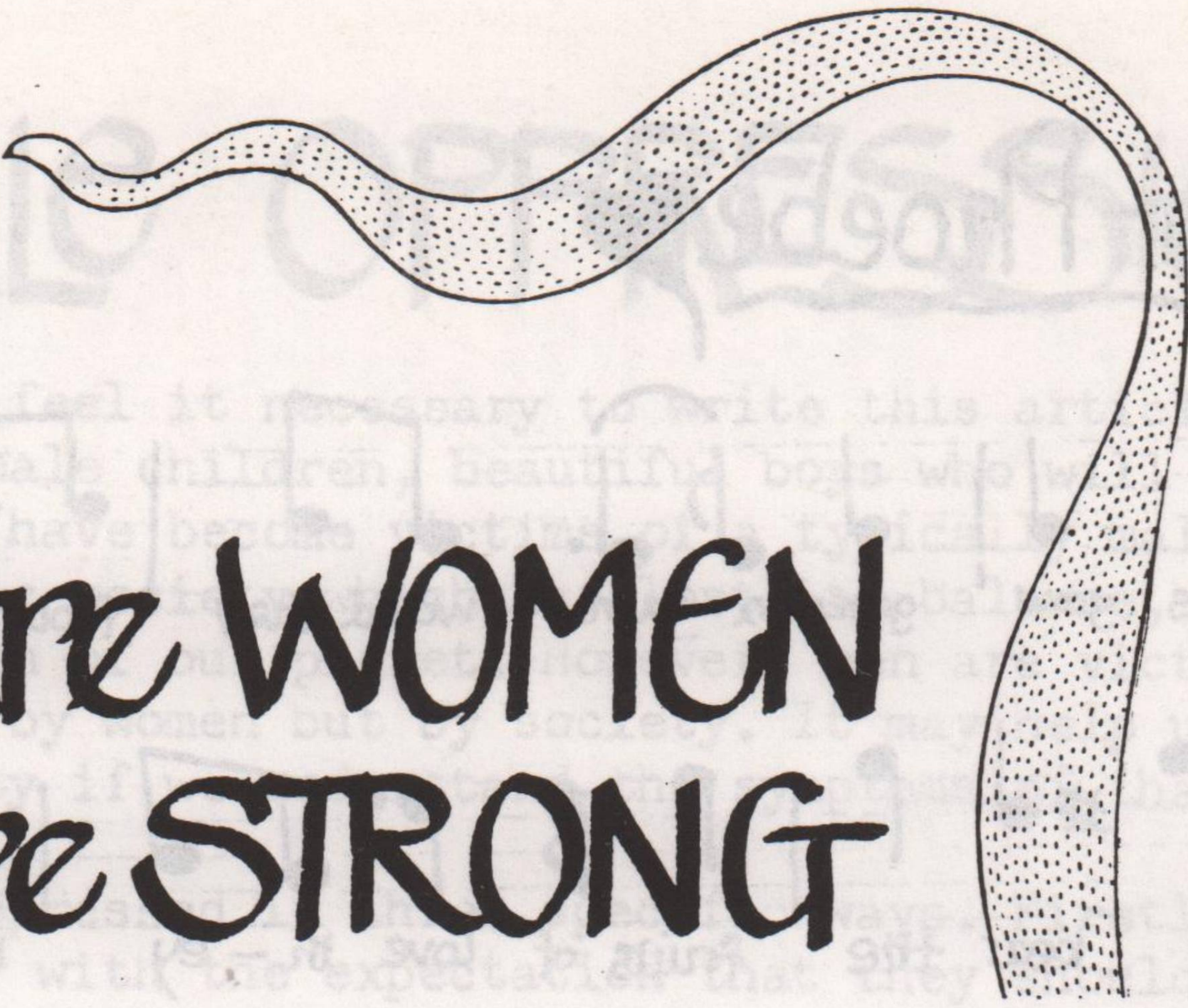
Handwritten musical score for a song. The score is written on five staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are written below the notes.

Would the leaves on the trees grow green a gain would they flourish and bloom do you
know — If they'd ev-er bear the fruits of love th-ey bore so long a —
go — oh — No — oh — No — Would the no — as I
rock you in my arms my love your trusting ang-el face smiles up at
me with eyes so bri-ght and I know it's not too late They-'ll

Would the cold grey world grow warm again
would the wind blow away our pain
could our hearts embrace the emptiness
could we ever be the same
oh no - oh no

They'll not destroy the world for you
We will make them set you free
and this angry world will find peace
at last
no more misery
oh no - oh no





We Are WOMEN We Are STRONG

As women we are working for peace. We are powerful people. We can stop Cruise and all the other wicked weapons of war from destroying this planet. Therefore we must take care of our bodies - we need them to be as strong and healthy as possible in order to keep working for peace.

We have the right to cervical smear tests when we feel that we need them.

Having worries about our health, we should be firm with our doctors and ask for tests and examinations until we are really satisfied with the treatment we are receiving.

We must all learn how to do breast self-examinations, and perform them regularly.

Sensible diet, fresh air, and exercise not only helps to keep us healthy, it also keeps us mentally and physically in tune with our world.

We have wonderful, miraculous bodies - let's treat them with the love and respect they deserve.

BIRTH CONTROL BY OBSERVING NATURAL CYCLES

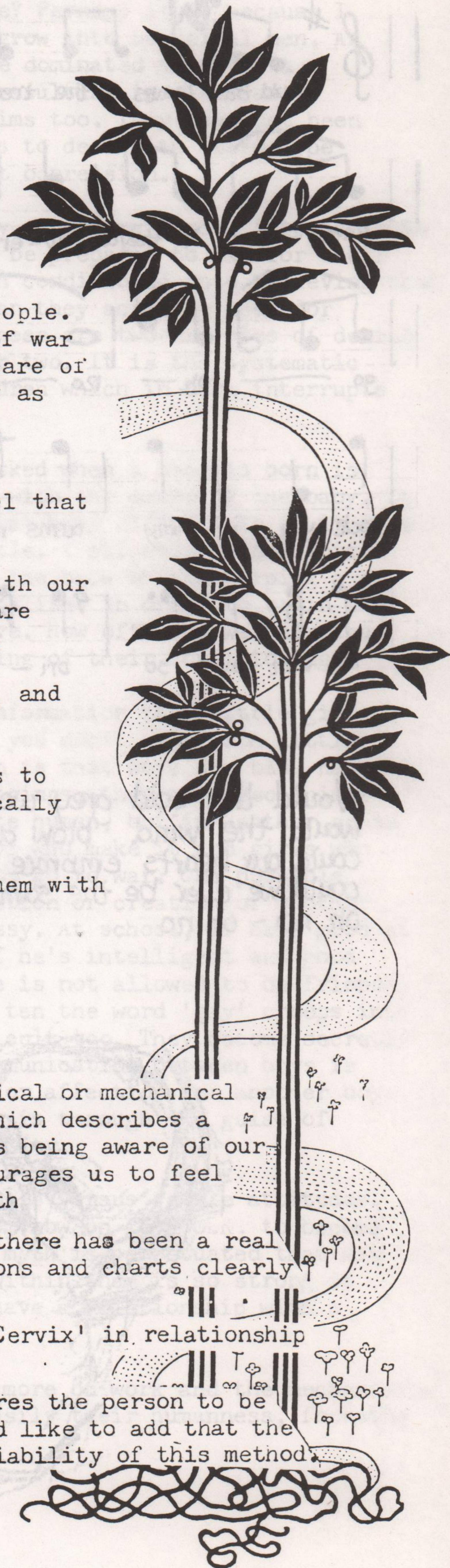
Lifespan Community Collective Ltd. 1983 - 60p


For those of us who have become disillusioned with chemical or mechanical methods of birth control available, here is a booklet which describes a healthier approach to contraception. At the same time as being aware of our cyclical patterns biologically and emotionally, it encourages us to feel positive towards our bodies and take charge of our health

The main strength of the book lies in its readability; there has been a real effort to promote understanding, and the the illustrations and charts clearly reinforce the methods available.

Of particular interest was the subject on 'Position of Cervix' in relationship to the changes in hormones through the menstrual cycle.

Though this booklet is overall well presented, it requires the person to be disciplined and motivated in this daily routine. I would like to add that the author of this book has not made any comment on the reliability of this method.





Principles behind the Holistic Approach to Health

I recently attended a seminar in Bristol on the theory and practice of Homeopathy. It takes no persuasion to convince me that a holistic approach to health and the principles which lie behind it, are the right ones.

Homeopathy is an effective system of healing which stimulates the bodies' natural tendency to cure itself. It recognises that symptoms of all ill-health are expressions of disharmony within the person and the failure of the persons constitution to adapt to changes/stresses within his/her environment. Disease is a disharmony of our whole being, one part cannot be effected without the others, one cannot separate the physical from the emotional and mental states-i.e.: the holistic approach.

In homeopathic terms health equals vital force, zest for life, energy, adaptability and harmony. The homeopath helps the patient to achieve a potential of vital health, by stimulating the bodies immune systems, assisting the patients own healing power. The homeopath applies the way of similars. For example, in the case of insomnia-the way of opposites is to treat sleeplessness by giving a drug to bring on artificial sleep, often involving large doses which can cause side effects or addiction. The way of similars, is to give the patient a minute dose of a substance which, in large doses causes sleeplessness in a healthy person. Because of the minute dose no side effects or addiction result. The smaller the substance the more potent the remedy.

The Allopathic or conventional approach to health is that of the masculine, aggressive, getting rid of signs of illness by an intensity of stimuli which in turn create side effects and imbalance within the system - thus creating more disease by using drug therapy.

Recent we have witnessed dramatic growth in scandals surrounding the pills we are given. Preventive medicine is lacking in the allopathic/conventional approach. It is detrimental to the bodies' system to suppress illness which will express itself at a later date, in some other form, pathological or physical. For example, there are instances of eczema which when treated with allopathic or conventional creams re-emerges as forms of asthma.

Clearly drug therapy has been an inspiration in the fight against illness, and Western medicine can claim success in both acute and chronic disease. However, rarely mentioned in Western medicine is the relation between dysfunction and mental and emotional states. In the light of this we should examine the meaning of health and what it involves. One conclusion is that drugs are not safe and should only be used as a last resort.

Sources Homeopathy Simply Explained, pub..Society of Homeopaths. 1983.

Article by Simon Eeles (Practitioner of Homeopathy) May 'Traces' 1984.

Further Reading Homeopathy Medicine of the New Man by George Vithoulkas

The Science of Homeopathy by George Vithoulkas : Pub. Grove Press.



Some Thoughts on Women... in Rural Changing Africa

When first light comes unannounced - as if slipping in through a half open door in the eastern sky - day has already begun for women living on the high plateau above the river. - It is mid-February and the rains are due any time now: people start work early to compensate for the rest period during the hottest part of the day. Mist spirals up from the river below the sound of frogs, croaking and burping like mud pools enacting a primordial rite of creation is abruptly silenced for another twelve hours span. Pink rays of light stroke the sub-scorched landscape, touching mud huts under conical roofs, sharp against the sky as young up-turned breasts. Leaning against the smooth elephant grey bark of a giant baobab tree - rooted in antiquity - I wait for another day to unfold.

Despite the changes coming to much of rural Africa, the daily rhythm of essential tasks has probably altered little in centuries. Diesel trucks ply between major towns on asphalt roads as witnesses to progress. But in many areas, only the successful (those lucky enough to have education and an opportunity to find work) ride bicycles, and most people walk from place to place. In front of me, a web of narrow pathways - ribbons of yellow sand made by countless passing feet - link the villages across the plateau, and as the sun rises swaying figures appear - women on their way to the well. They come singly, and in twos and threes, their containers on their heads and babies bound to their backs. I hear laughter as they greet each other, and behind them smoke rises from the embers they fanned into life before coming to the well.

The sight of the women or children carrying water is such a part of rural Africa that the very act stands for life and fertility. A Nigerian proverb says, in defence of saving the life of a mother rather than her new-born child that 'it is better for the water to be spilled than the pot broken,' as a sound pot can always return to the water. For me, however, watching those women at the well, illustrates the hard life of women in rural Africa today. South of the Sahara, women still do 60 to 80 percent of all agricultural work and produce virtually all the food for their own families.





Here, on the plateau, there is a pastoral way of life, herding goats and cattle - the long legged, long eared and long-horned variety! The river helps people in many ways, providing fish to eat and sell, driftwood, washing facilities and an opportunity to operate a local ferry service by dug-out canoe. Herding livestock and fishing are almost exclusively male activities. Both sexes launder although women usually wash family clothes while men gain a small income from washing clothes for other people. Here women are freed from some of the daily tasks that exist in many rural areas in the Third World. Only the poor in the West are still engaged in hard physical chores.

In other parts of Africa many women are sometimes subsistence farmers, raising crops to feed the family, and selling any surplus in the local market. A woman subsistence farmer normally cultivates crops, whilst bearing and raising children, and maintaining her house and compound. A typical day's work might include the following;

- rising at or before dawn to walk to and work in, the fields before the sun gets too hot.

- Cultivating, planting and weeding by hand, using traditional tools.

- Collecting water for washing, cooking and drinking.

- Collecting and carrying firewood.

- Collecting and carrying locally available materials for food, fencing and household repairs.

- Pounding yams, manioc, corn and grinding grain and other basic food stuffs.

- Keeping the compound clean and cooking with traditional equipment over open fires.

- Making and maintaining clothes and household goods.

And what of the men in country areas? At first sight it seems as if they mainly pray for their households (if they are Moslems), attend men's meetings, smoke, gamble, entertain, and prepare and consume their local brew made from natural sources such as palm sap, millet, honey or bananas. To be fair, they maintain hut roofs, and may do other carpentry tasks, depending on the local economy, some may farm, hunt, fish or even work in a nearby settlement. But my overall impression is that women do most of the work in rural areas. Indeed, men readily acknowledge the important contribution that women make. The proof lies in the traditional payments in some societies, of compensatory gifts to the bride's family by the prospective husband, and in the provision for several wives (a still widespread practice) so as to ensure an economically secure future.

Not surprisingly, children share the burden of woman's work of time-consuming chores from an early age, and the partnership between man and wife is essentially an economic one. As a young man said to me one day "We Africans have little time for love and romance in marriage." Many people still hold that child-bearing is a woman's basic role, and claim that their children are an insurance against hardship in later life. On the other hand, bringing up children is also the main area in which women may assert their own rights. Traditionally, if a particular society requires a woman to marry and move into a man's family group, she may not only have to cope with the mother-in-law's hut next door, but also other wives, unfamiliar customs and a different language in a new area.



Yet traditionally it is also common for women to conduct most of the market trade. Where they are active in the economy, taking produce to local markets and trading, women are gradually asserting themselves and making their voices heard on issues affecting their communities.

This seems to me to be crucial in the development of an African movement for women's rights. They may not face the inequality imposed by the legacy of Puritanism and Victorian attitudes towards the 'fairer' sex and 'weaker' sex. They have no choice but to do hard physical labour both within and outside the home and they receive no special, differential treatment to spare them from the violent struggle among those pushing and fighting to board a bus, truck or swaying ferry boat.

Some of the so-called privileges that campaigners in the Western world are striving for are African women's activities through necessity already, through their role in the economy and the common struggle for survival. Yet this very equality is oppressive! Until they can be liberated from the dual pressures of combining family with work inside and beyond the home - legal and social responsibilities that women in more developed countries are actually seeking to attain - there will be no real sexual equality in rural Africa.

Is there an answer to this paradox? Can technological development and labor-saving devices, which have actually liberated women from some domestic servitude elsewhere, help women in Africa? But where country areas are developing, subsistence farming - based on food crops and female labour is changing to large-scale cash crops often for a distant market. Men, not women, operate the new machinery and manage the larger farms. Women are losing much of the status, independence and income formerly derived from their own farm and trade. They face heavier work on the new intensively run farms and plantations, whilst maintaining their domestic roles and family cultivation plots. Modern economic growth actually threatens further oppression, by increasing the unskilled work of women, rather than giving them more time for their own welfare and education and that of their children. It is ironic that technology brings access to soil fertilizers more quickly than improved social provision! Economic progress will only lessen sexual inequality if better medical and educational amenities can be introduced into the lives of these women. Support should be given to local initiatives, together with small-scale and inexpensive technology. Given the opportunity, I wonder, could the rural African women build on the strength of her traditional importance, and attain greater equality than those who are still attempting to prove their worth in more developed societies?

Here on the plateau, the early morning sunshine has grown more confident, and already burns fiercely in a clear blue sky - I shift position under the twisted branches of the baobab tree, and look up at three sacred ibises circling overhead.

The well is deserted now in the shimmering landscape. I imagine how water pumps, power-driven mills and solar stoves could transform women's lives on this plateau. As I ponder an unknown future, today's certainty makes itself heard everywhere the sound of women pounding food, rhythmic and constant, and still the heartbeat of rural Africa.

Womens' Movement in Palestine

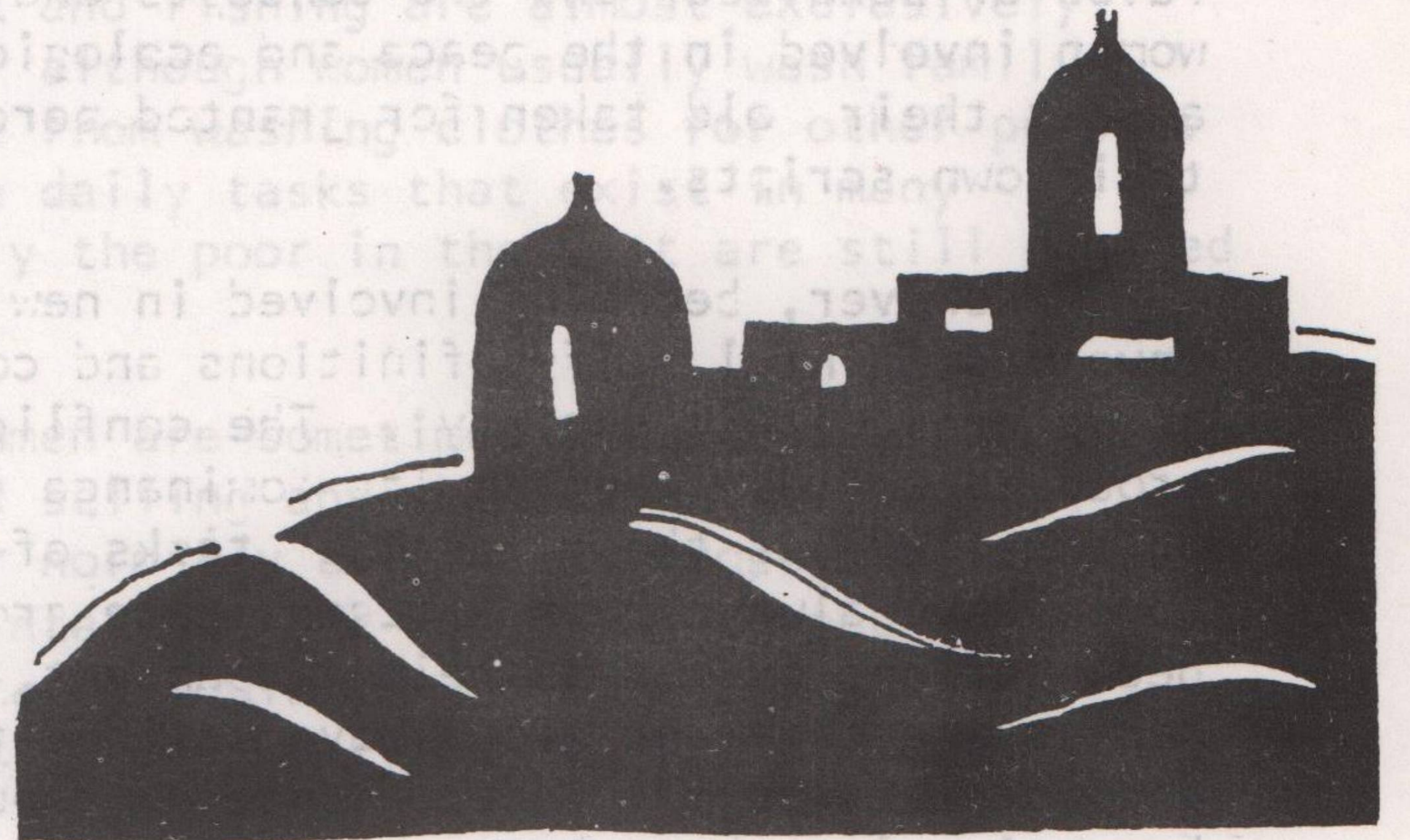


In the recent past, much attention has been given to the 'Palestinian question'. Politicians and researchers have investigated the impact of the 1948 and 1967 wars, dispossession and dispersion of Palestinians all over the world, and Israeli military occupation of the West Bank (WB) and Gaza Strip (GS), on life in general. Yet little attention has been devoted to the problems of Palestinian women.

The situation of Palestinian women is essentially the 'triple struggle' of many Third World women, against imperialism (in the shape of Israeli Zionist occupation), against poverty (essentially the class struggle) and against oppression by men. On each of these three levels there are active political and social organisations resisting the oppression, all are organically linked to the national struggle for self-determination in a State of Palestine. All activities must be, and are, related to this, as its relevance is obvious in all aspects of everyday life. It is the solution to the continual expropriation of land, the demolition of houses, the constant threat of harassment, arrest, house or body search by the Israeli defence force, who are present everywhere. Yet like many oppressed people throughout the world, Palestinian women realise that change will come only through mobilising their own efforts. The Palestine national struggle has been formally organised since the 1920s and so too have women been struggling since this time. In 1921 the first Palestinian women's organisation began in Jerusalem. Though very little material exists today to shed light on how and why these women began to organise it is clear that a major impetus was the overall national problem. Women were actively involved in training and providing first aid to Palestinian revolutionaries, in organising and taking part in demonstrations and other activities directed against the British Mandate Authorities.¹ The 1948 Arab-Israeli war and the resulting flood of refugees to various parts of the Arab world, including the WB and GS, led women to organise into charitable societies which turned to the relief rather than the solution of problems.

When the 1967 Arab-Israeli war led to military occupation of the WB and the GS by Israel, women's charitable societies began to adopt new roles, based on the emerging needs of a society under occupation. This led to a qualitative change in the women's movement in the 1970s, at a time when women's aspirations were being mobilised all over the world in feminist organisations. It was reflected in the adoption of literacy programmes, vocational training and the creation of committees for the preservation of heritage and culture.

Their success has been limited by the occupation, but also because of the structure and nature of the organisations themselves. The philanthropic origins are still reflected in their work today. They support prisoners and their families, give women the capacity to produce and earn an income to maintain their families, and generally help to sustain the Palestinian society, though not to change it. They do not challenge social relations within the society, and do not go beyond the role that is imposed on women by an Islamic society and the general domination of men's ideology over women. This rather limited outlook did not satisfy the younger, more educated and politically motivated women, and a new more radical phase in the women's movement developed.



In 1978 the Women's Work Committee was set up in Ramallah, a town in the WB. The perspective of their work was not charitable, but more directed towards the building of a united, mass-based women's movement, including uniting women actively in the defence of the Palestinian people's national rights. This and other new committees are more democratic and less centralised than the charitable societies. They work primarily from local groups in towns, villages and refugee camps, from the roots up. This new organisational and structural framework allows for the representation of the needs and aspirations of women from all sectors of society. There are now four different women's committees working in the occupied territories, the committees are essentially split along political lines, reflecting the structure of the PLO. The success of the women's committees is exemplified by the 150 women's centres that have been established since 1978, the kindergartens, literary classes, English and Arabic classes, political lectures, health lectures, health clinics in the centres, 'medical days' ... The work is growing and spreading – 1982 saw the first magazine published called *Voice of Women*. Since 1982 the Working Women's Union (based in Jerusalem) has succeeded in convincing more than 100 factories and institutes to consider March 8 and May 1 as paid official holidays for all women workers!

The women are restricted by the Israeli military authorities, centres are ransacked, women arrested and tortured, and belongings confiscated. But the women also face financial difficulties, all the funds are raised by themselves. Therefore if anyone is interested in more information about women in Palestine, or in raising funds for future projects such as a women's workshop to make furniture and toys for the kindergartens, nurseries, healthcare ... please contact:

Sara Gowen
51 St Johns Road
Clifton
Bristol BS8 2HG

1. Britain had mandate over Palestine from 1918 until the State of Israel was unilaterally declared in 1948.



"AD-LIBBING"



"Most days I'm ad-libbing I don't follow the script I used to know."
The words of a woman in "Towards a New Psychology of Women" by Jean Baker Miller.

The scripts we acquire from childhood have embedded in them the rules of behaviour and the concepts and language we use. But recently women involved in the peace and ecological movements have begun to reassess their old taken for granted perceptions of the world and recreate their own scripts.

However, becoming involved in new activities acquiring new knowledge involves painful self-definitions and conflict with the overall values and structures within society. The conflict arises because the dominant group in society whether its dominance is based upon caste, race, class or sex, defines the roles and tasks of the subordinate group. Women have always been a subordinate group and their character traits have been defined by men as being dependent, weak, vulnerable and over emotional. Men as the dominant group have defined their own characteristics as physical and moral strength, independence of thought and action and the ability to be rational rather than emotional.

The relationship between men and women has not been one of equality since men have cornered the market of the so-called 'superior' character traits. In consequence human experience has been divided up and those parts assigned to women are seen as inferior and devalued - men and women are deprived of the freedom to explore the psychological levels ascribed to the other.

Women -- independent and strong learn to disguise their true feelings and abilities if it is necessary to avoid conflict - they even under-achieve at work or school, in order to maintain the male version of womanhood and so prevent problems. Inevitably, men are ignorant of how women feel and how their behaviour affects women. This ignorance prevents them from having access to self-knowledge because the consequences of their actions and words are not known. Self-knowledge grows when we are able to change and develop our attitudes and behaviour as a result of learning about others.

Since childhood, women have acquired skills of reading signals, noting cues and responding to the feelings of others and accommodating to them - their own needs are put aside to avoid conflict. To give in to their own needs is seen as selfish and so girls and women deny their abilities and independence. Their response to this has been to concentrate on the skills of maintaining relationships.

Boys are encouraged to be independent because they will eventually go "out into the world" and will need to be strong so that others 'women and children' can be dependent upon them. For some men such responsibilities creates anxiety, they perceive women as a burden and not an equal.



Alongside the characteristics ascribed to men and women are the tasks which each sex is assigned - women to cook, clean, nurse and care for children tasks which actually involve them in nurturing and responding to human growth and change. However, these most vital and most important of human skills are relegated to 'women' and deemed less important and inferior to men's work. Although, on a superficial assessment men are taking part in housework childcare they spend only a fraction of the time women do and still have the old attitudes that they are not real or important activities.

The consequences for men and women have been tragic. Men have for so long rejected feelings of weakness, vulnerability and dependence and seen them as only female characteristics that they have not acknowledged them in themselves. In order for self-knowledge to grow, feelings need to be named and then they can be examined and come to terms with. Men have denied fuller human experience by ascribing certain areas of human need as belonging to women's experience. Also by being cut off from participating equally in the service of others - by not being involved in child care and early education men have a limited understanding of how human beings grow, change and how to respond to that growth.

However, the women's movement has been reclaiming the character traits assigned only to men, strength, independence, rationality, and also affirming that womanly feelings of dependence, weakness and emotions are also within all of us to be valued as natural responses to the problems of human life, they are essential components of all human experience. Women have spent a long time trying to understand others - men, children other women - they have not felt the need to give time over to self-awareness and knowledge of themselves - this too has hindered their own emotional and intellectual development.

Women in the peace movement often say that it was a recognition of their fears of nuclear weapons and a belief in the worth of giving their fear a voice that led them to evaluate their role as dependent on other people's decisions and affirm a desire to become more independent. Women's fears that the nuclear arms race threatens the future of their children has led them to cooperate with other women in action against militarism. By so doing they have thrown off the traits of weakness and dependence and valued their own emotions as being a valid motive for action. At the Greenham peace camp, the song "We are Women ... We are Strong" expresses simply a new found strength and a challenge to the myths of female weakness. Women have left their vulnerability at home as they confront the wire.

In our male led society it has become evident that the most problematical concerns of our age, nuclear war, pollution and world hunger have become women's domain - women are taking on humanity's highest priorities.

Men when feeling dependent or helpless in the face of social issues or personal failure often do not try to understand their anxieties or needs by exploring and sharing them, but ignore them and remain fixed at one emotional level. They fear weakness and cover it up with sometimes over-stressing male characteristics of assertiveness and physical strength.

Recently, the miners strike has shown that men facing unemployment and social pressures have resorted to violence to express their fears and anger - faced with police violence they have retaliated violently too.



Another way of expressing their cause could have been found- the miners might have followed the example of activists in India, America and South Africa and used non-violent resistance. The non-violent means would have led to more understanding of their feelings by others not directly involved in the strike and the miners might have gained more self-knowledge about the roots of their own anger.

Conversely, the women at Greenham Common have used traits assigned to them of gentleness, passivity to good effect. They have let the policemen move them, imprison them, burn their benders and belongs. The women have not fought back, not given way to emotion - an understandable response of anger - but have gained admiration for their courage.

Their power has been one of controlling emotions of being physically strong when facing the hardships of treacherous weather, the isolation and the media attacks. That women admit to feelings of fear, anxiety and weakness gives them the opportunity to overcome them. To ask men to admit to their fears and dependence openly and to trust others to help them is to ask them to forgo their very concept of what it is to be a man.

The Greenham women are seen to threaten the idea of what it is to be a woman and their strength and courage are portrayed as odd, wierd, the subject of cruel taunts. Other women too feel betrayed as if to aspire to independence would result in conflict at their own hearth-redefinition of **their** role and emotional needs **it is** a painful process and many people are not really prepared to go through it and the resulting conflict with family and friends. For women to follow their own needs and ideas is often to put them at odds with themselves because their usual role is to serve others and not to put themselves first. It is a tension women are trying to resolve but entails conflict which can often drain womens hopes and energies- often the hardest conflict for women is the conflict they have with the old image of themselves, the old script acquired as a child. In the midst of this conflict is the need for other women and now women in the peace movements and ecological movements are sharing their anxieties and takings risks together.

Women are showing the way in our dark age - to show that it is essential for the survival of our planet that problems are solved by rational understanding without resort to violence or the threats of violence. Let us hope that if men are able to reclaim the parts of themselves assigned to women - gentleness, emotions of caring and non-violence they might be able to join equally with women in working for a safer world.



The Feminist Archive has community programme funding for four workers (23 hrs. per week). The jobs will last till mid-November 1985. You need to have been signing on for 6 months (if you are under 25) or one year (over 25) to be eligible. Please write as soon as possible to:

Feminist Archive,
University of Bath,
Claverton Down,
Bath, Avon BA2 7AY.

MAKING LINKS

Peace Women & the Miners In Somerset

Miners from the Six Bells Colliery, Abertillery were regular visitors to Westbury and Radstock until the South Wales NUM funds were frozen about three months ago. They came to try to stop the movement of coal from the old spoil tips at Radstock to the furnaces at Westbury cement works. They were not successful. Lorry drivers ignored their union's directive and crossed the picket line.

When the first dozen men arrived, they had nowhere to stay and insufficient money for meals. Labour Party and Women's Peace Group members offered accommodation, food, presents for their children, badges and discussions. Miners attended CND meetings where they learned of the medical effects of nuclear war and saw Dr Helen Caldicott's video, 'Critical Mass'. They became aware of the links between nuclear power and nuclear weapons. The nuclear power programme threatens the jobs of many men living in areas where there is no other industry except coal mining. It is expensive and dangerous producing unacceptable bi-products such as radio active waste and bombs. The psychological effects on a population living under the threat of nuclear war are somewhat similar to the threat of long term unemployment - insecurity, fear, depression with no hope for the future. Capitalism demands competition and profits before people. The economies of the world are controlled and distorted by the arms race. In this country, money spent on Trident is taken away from education, housing, health, social services, investment in industry and overseas aid. Both Labour and Peace movements are attempting to turn the tide and asking questions about the kind of society we want to live in and how we can move towards it.

Experience of police tactics at Orgreave were compared to the women's experience at Greenham Common. The use of non violent direct action techniques and the way the media makes use of reports of violence to obscure the issues was discussed. Women and miners deplored the way that arrests had been made and people gaoled for minor offences such as obstruction and trespass. They could also foresee a time when peace protestors would be prevented from crossing county boundaries freely, as miners had been.

Staying in the homes of some of the Peace Group members had been a new experience for miners and especially tasteing vegetarian food. Those of us who have visited Abertillery have been met with a warm, friendly welcome. We were impressed by their community spirit and their support for one another. Wives have found a new role, becoming more active politically, organising marches and rallies and running a warehouse for the distribution of food and other items. Their worries over mounting debts to banks and building societies have made them no less determined to support the strike.

Recently a group of miners accompanied the Lymes Glee Singers when they gave a concert in Westbury. It was well supported and they were able to take back food, clothes and money as well as the knowledge that they have many friends and supporters outside their own community.

The links which have been made are continuing. Plans are afoot to provide some gifts for children at Christmas. Not only do we sympathise on a personal level but we recognise that they have a legitimate case. Their struggle is linked with ours and if they are crushed by this government the implications for us all will be very serious.

MALE OPPRESSION



Why did I feel it necessary to write this article? Perhaps it is because I have two male children, beautiful boys who will grow into beautiful men. As women, we have become victims of a typically male dominated society, a mechanistic society which has lost its balance, resulting in the slow destruction of our planet. However, men are victims too. They have not been oppressed by women but by society. It may help us to deal with stereotype masculinity if we understand the symptoms of that oppression.

Men are oppressed in three specific ways. Firstly, they are forced into the role of warrior with the expectation that they should be prepared to die for their country - for liberation. Secondly, men have been conditioned into believing that they should go out to work to earn more money than they actually need for themselves - wage workers to support a family. These are two examples of denial of choice. The third example reinforces the other two. It is the systematic smashing of emotional release in small male children which in turn interrupts the essential healing process.

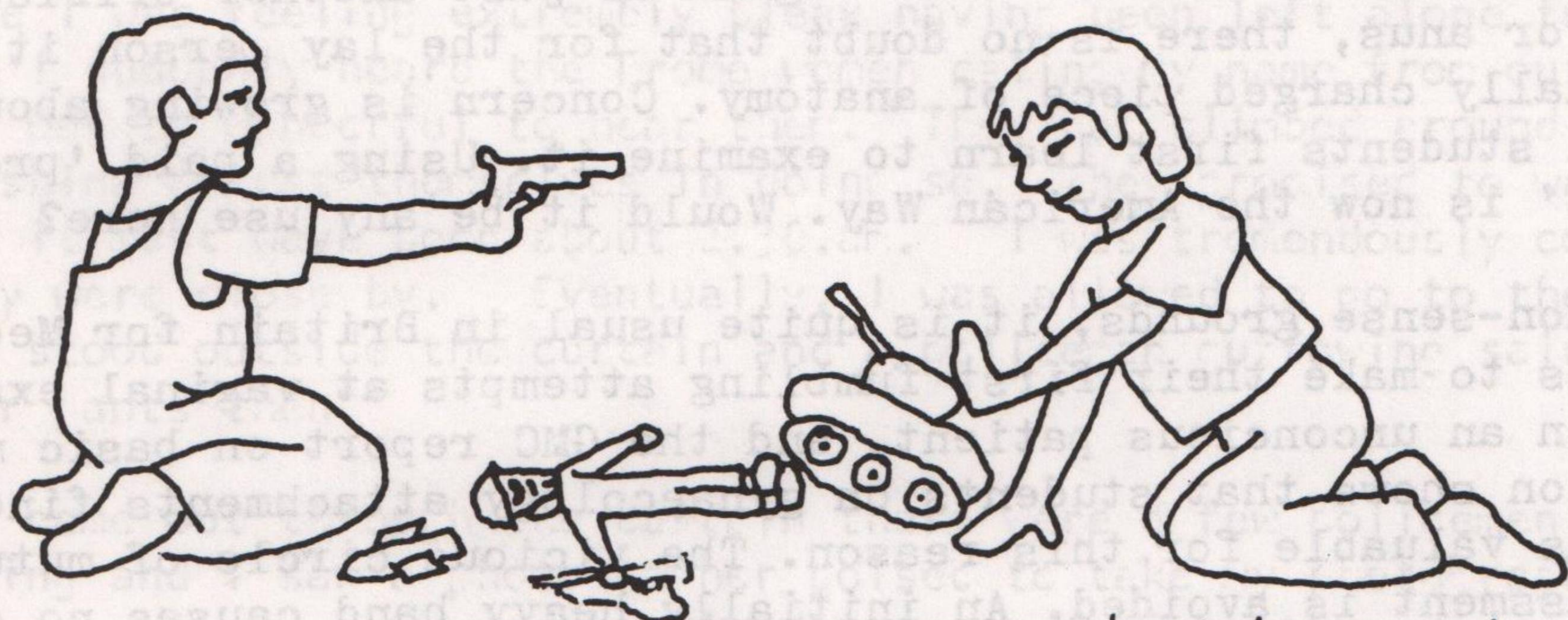
So how does it happen? The very first question asked when a baby is born is: "Is it a boy or a girl?". This has nothing to do with the needs of the baby. It is entirely because that adult wishes to treat that baby differently if it is a boy or a girl. These differences may be very subtle. A slightly softer voice tone for a girl baby or a slightly harder pat on the back whilst burping a boy baby. Male children at some point have to be brutalised in order to train them to die for their country or to become a wage slave. How often do we hear the words: "big boys don't cry.". This is the beginning of their conditioning.

As a little boy grows, he is rapidly given the information that little girls are second class citizens - they don't make it - you don't play with little girls or their toys. Another piece of information is that boys are bad, naughty, dirty and although on the surface these are bad things, they are also things to be proud of. So in one sense boys are not quite human, but in another sense they are 'better than'. There are two classes, boys who make it and girls who don't . . . but these boys have to be trained to go to war. One possible theory about how this is achieved is the introduction or creation of another class of men, boys who are not real men - the cissy. At school, if he's good at sport but not good academically - he's thick. If he's intelligent and good academically then he is called a super-creep. He is not allowed to be friends with girls and then suddenly by about the age of ten the word 'gay' creeps into the vocabulary making friendships with boys difficult too. They become secretly terrified about being gay. Vocal and physical communication between boys is cut off. There is no possibility of showing love or affection for another boy. The only means of communication left open to them is through the guise of fighting which gives touch a masculine respectability.

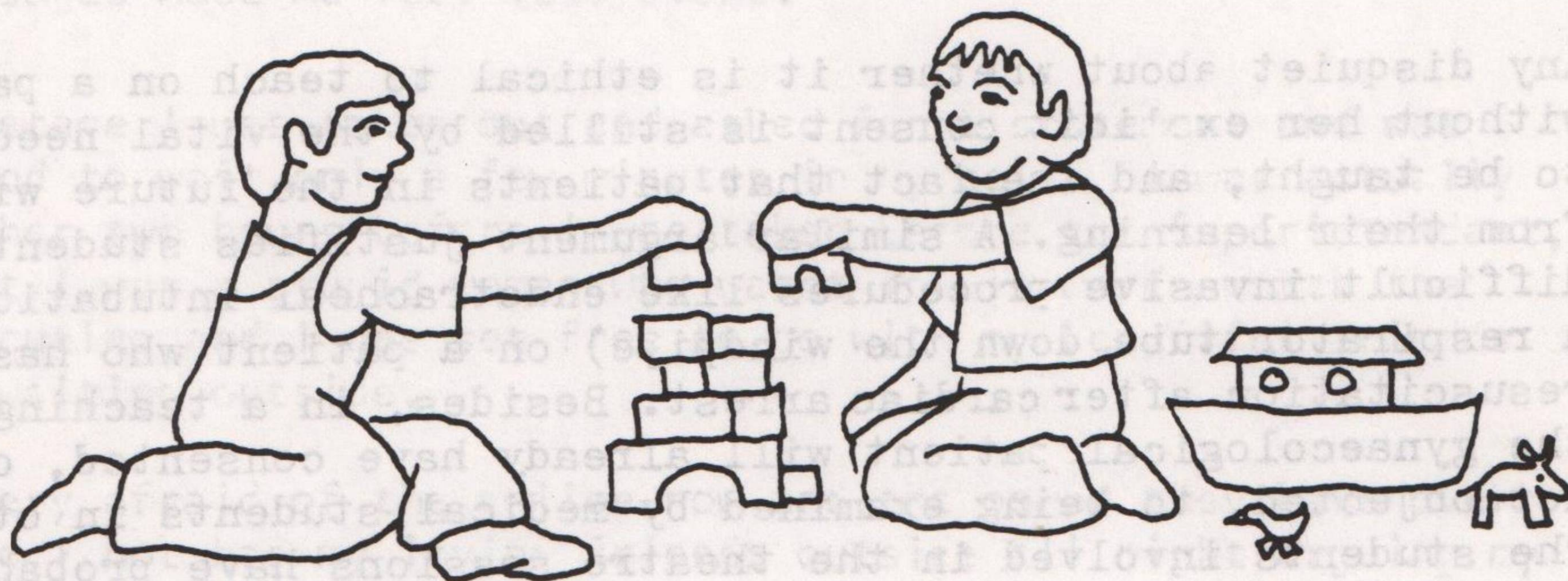
Even more confusing is the complete reversal of male versus female attitudes. Around this time girls become sexual objects. From now on it's O.K. to become close to a girl but sex has to come into it. The myth is perpetuated that man is a wild beast who has to have sex, that the urge within them is so strong it cannot be denied. Therefore it is impossible to have a relationship with a girl without sex.

These processes result in boys focusing more and more on work and the mechanistic world view while allowing girls to retain more easily their humanness, focusing more on relationships.

We, as women, must never settle for anything less than absolutely everything. Men must recover their ability to feel their emotions - to establish loving and deep relationships with other men. It is their right and we can try to understand. For the joint liberation of men and women there must be absolute unity!



must war start in childhood
with war toys and war games?



buy for peace not war

Peace is not war. It is peace and quiet. Like flowers in a meadow.
Peace is like green grass in the meadow.
The sea is calm and the waves are gentle. The rocks are slippy and seaweed is on the rocks.
The rockpools have crabs in them and the crabs are pinchy.
Fish are swimming with their fins in the water and that is quiet.
Peace is silence.
Some people want war and it is not silence it is big bombs dropping on villages making big bangs.
Shooting is war.
Peace is quiet and gentle. Wool is gentle like peace.
Lots of things are gentle.
Some people love each other.
That is peace - Loving each other.

By DAN - 5 years.

Anaesthetised Rape

The following extract is from an article in 'World Medicine' 26th November, 1983.

"However much doctors view the vagina as just another orifice, like an ear or anus, there is no doubt that for the lay person it is an emotionally charged piece of anatomy. Concern is growing about how medical students first learn to examine it. Using a paid 'professional patient' is now the American Way. Would it be any use here?

On common-sense grounds, it is quite usual in Britain for Medical students to make their first fumbling attempts at vaginal examination on an unconscious patient, and the GMC report on basic medical education shows that students on gynaecology attachments find theatre sessions valuable for this reason. The vicious circle of mutual embarrassment is avoided. An initially heavy hand causes no discomfort. And there is good opportunity for a more experienced colleague to instruct on detailed technique without seeming to treat the patient as a piece of meat. Clearly, no conspiracy against patients' interests is involved, and doctors only do it this way because they want to avoid causing unnecessary distress.

Any disquiet about whether it is ethical to teach on a patient without her explicit consent is stilled by the vital need for students to be taught, and the fact that patients in the future will benefit from their learning. A similar argument justifies students practising difficult invasive procedures like endotracheal intubation (ie. putting a respirator tube down the windpipe) on a patient who has just failed resuscitation after cardiac arrest. Besides, in a teaching hospital the gynaecological patient will already have consented, or at least not objected, to being examined by medical students in other contexts. The students involved in the theatre sessions have probably already clerked her in, and are likely to take part in continuing care. Even if the patient might feel unhappily vulnerable at being exposed to vaginal examination while unconscious, she does not know anything about it. So where, doctors ask, is the problem?

The difficulty is that patients are likely to see something of an ethical dilemma. This is partly because of the particular significance attributed to their reproductive organs, but mostly because they are in hospital to be treated, and this practice could seem like using them as a teaching aid. For all that doctors may disagree, Ian Kennedy, professor of medical law and ethics at King's College, London, and a former Reith lecturer, is inclined to see it that way too.

"On one hand you've got the desire and need to train people, and on the other you've got a clear invasion of the privacy and integrity of the woman. And the latter should be paramount," he says. "Admittedly, it can be said it doesn't harm her, and at one level it doesn't. But what if, for example, she finds out, and feels she's been, figuratively raped?"

What would be the position if anyone complained? "At one level the doctor in charge might well be judged to have acted unethically. He or she may also have acted illegally because this would be an assault. If she hadn't been told, she can't have consented to it. Consent is only worthwhile if you know what you're consenting to."

Professor Kennedy is unimpressed by the idea that in accepting treatment at a teaching hospital patients explicitly or implicitly agree to students taking part in their treatment. He says: "I've never been persuaded of the teaching hospital argument. I don't think you give blanket consent like that. You don't generally choose that hospital. You go where you're sent, and you certainly don't abandon all rights to privacy when you go there."

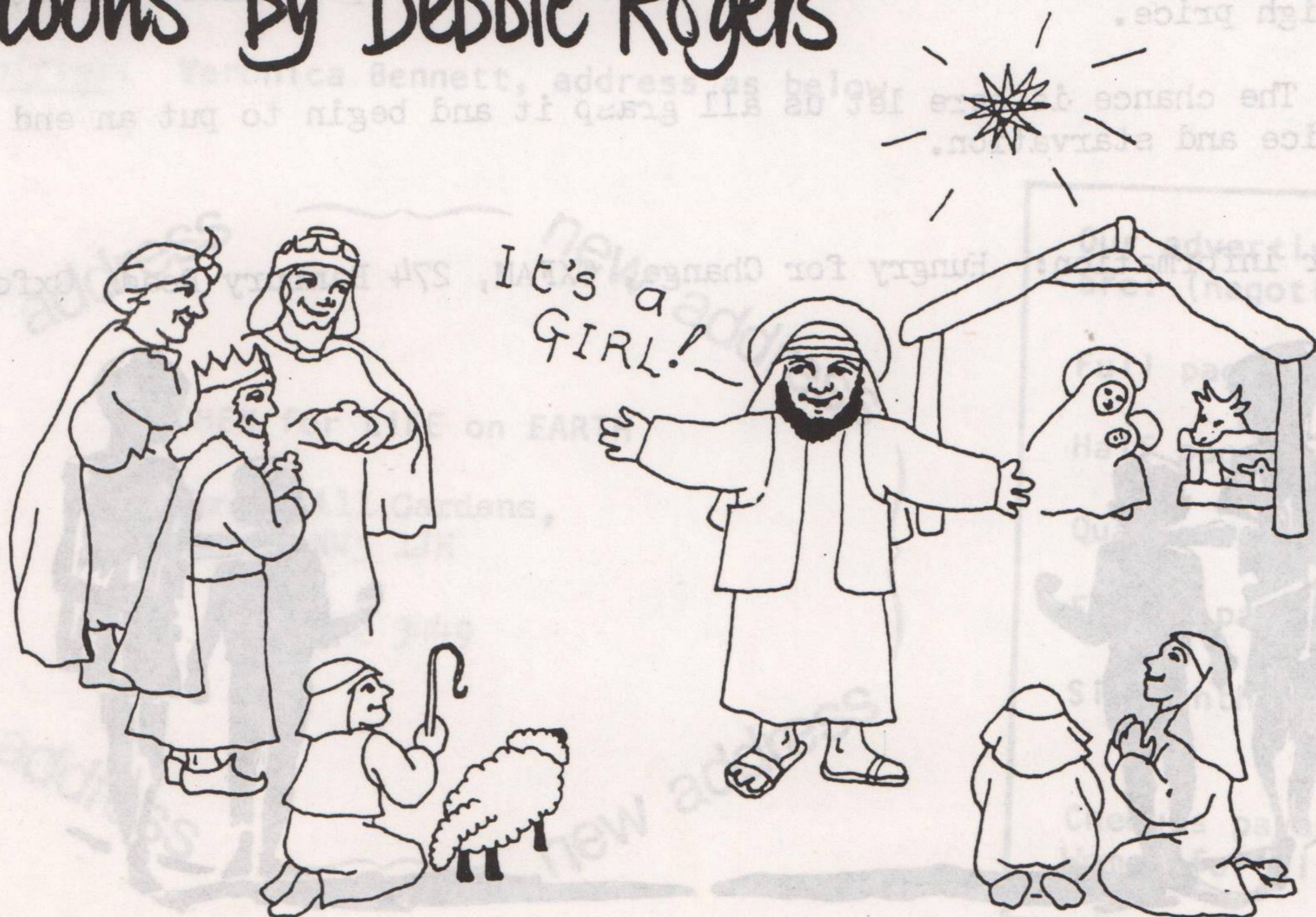
But one registrar, with responsibility for teaching, says: "Professor Kennedy offers a counsel of perfection in legalistic terms. If we took everything he said seriously we'd get nothing done. What would happen if one of Professor Kennedy's female relations had a gynaecological emergency and we said 'Sorry, but we can't help because no one has stuck a finger up a vagina before'?"

The practice of examining women internally while they are unconscious, without our knowledge or consent, is an offense to our dignity, and reeks of oppression in its worst form. Should this 'lay person' ever find that she has been examined while anaesthetised, she would feel raped! There's no 'figuratively' about it.

Why have we not been asked for our permission? Because they realise that many women would not consent - most of us would prefer to know what was happening to our bodies - and we would prefer not to be given a 'grope under dope' merely to spare some medical students blushes. How would a certain senior teaching registrar feel if he had been given a rectal examination under anaesthetic without his consent?

We choose whether a lover should touch us - whether we birth babies. We must have the power to choose whether, when, and how we have a vaginal examination. Anything less is an insensitive violation, which disregards our feelings and does indeed treat us like pieces of meat. Are we going to let them come, like thieves in the night, and take that which we do not freely give?

Cartoons by Debbie Rogers



Hungry for Change

This new Campaign is about reaching out to many new people, it is about self-education, publicity and above all, for me, it is about making the links between the Arms Race and Third World Poverty. At last the links between Arms spending and starvation are being made public (see OXFAM's "The Arms Race Kills" leaflet). Had this Campaign started two years ago the general public would not have been ready, but I feel that now is the right time and I feel immense hope that this new project will expand and involve and educate on a very wide scale.

It has, it is true, coincided with the Ethiopian famine which has touched so many people and motivated them into action, but the Campaign not only dwells upon Africa, but informs us about poverty in such countries as Brazil, India and Peru, it gives food facts about E.E.C. destruction of food policy, it talks of cash cropping, of prime land being used for exported goods, of the banning of the sale of peanuts in Guinea Bissan, thus enabling the maximum amount to be exported whilst children lose their main source of protein. The Campaign also urges people to lobby M.P.'s, M.E.P.'s, County Councils, Unions, the Press and the Churches.

Hungry for Change will involve people in all societies and at all levels. It will prove that a £5 donation will not make the problem go away, but that the problem is becoming larger and need continuing help for years.

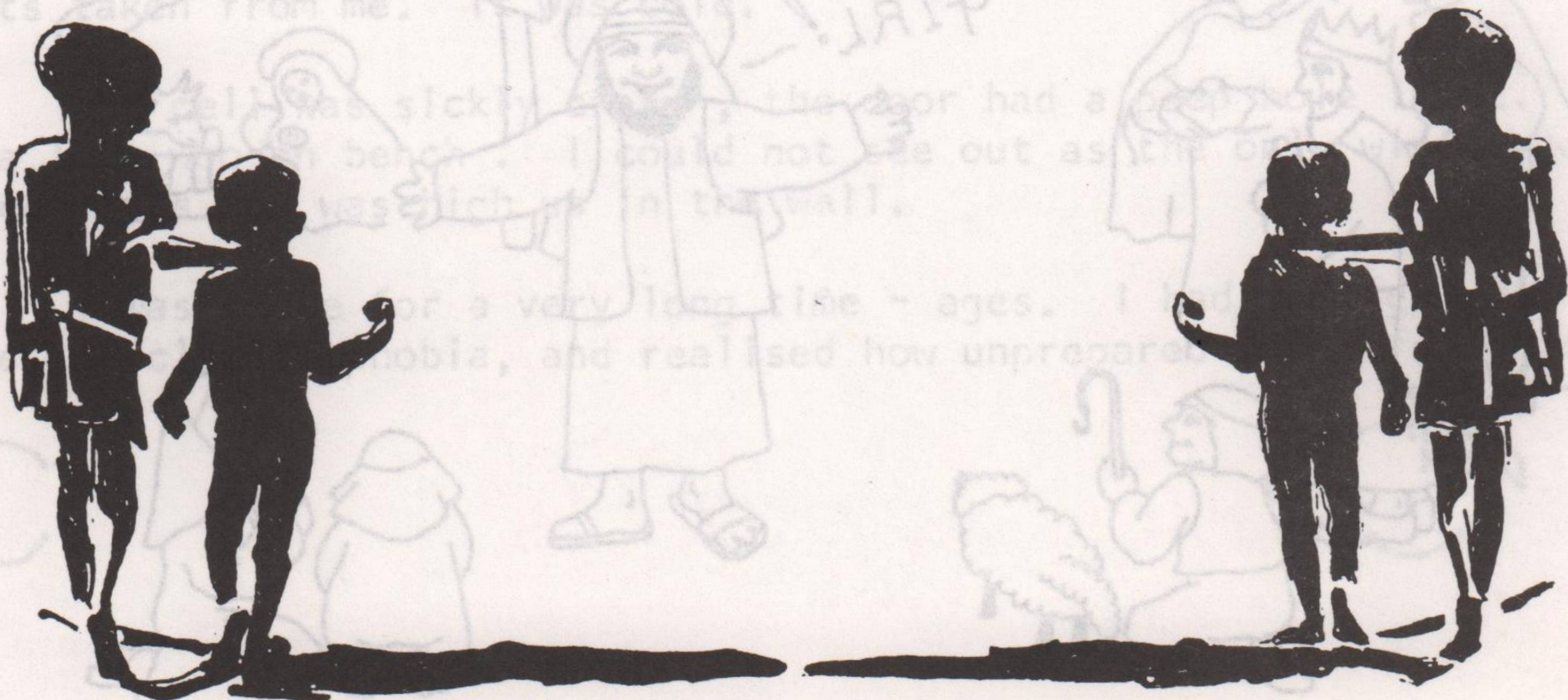
In a time when we have the technology, the resources and the food but not the political will for fairer distribution, then there is need for change and change comes from the grass roots population.

This Campaign will create that change. People, through being informed and educated, will see that the different systems are unfair and will demand that there has to be a better way of distributing food and other resources.

Remember it was only through pressure from the general public that made this Government eventually relent and send emergency Aid to Ethiopia. The Thatcher government was shamed into its action largely because OXFAM had to buy its emergency grain for Ethiopia on the open market and at a very high price.

The chance is here let us all grasp it and begin to put an end to injustice and starvation.

Further information: Hungry for Change, OXFAM, 274 Banbury Road, Oxford.



• A Short Story • by • Jill Miller •

Dear Michael,

How are you? I'm going to tell you how I am. If only you could feel my feeling's, be on the inside of my head, watching me think, and with such clarity, it would surprise you.

Well, this is the first year of my new found life, and freedom. Have you, like me, been counting the months? I wonder?

I was told, and by a great number of people, that the first few month's would be hard, and fairly miserable, getting myself adjusted to a new way of life, and completely new routine. Quite honestly, I can't wipe the grin from my face.

I half expect to wake up every morning feeling awful, and down in the mouth, just waiting for cronic depression to set in. It's been month's Michael, and it just isn't happening.

All of the misery that was my share as a woman, must have been sewn up in our ten years together, in fact there just doesn't seem anything left to shed one solitary tear over.

You not being with me, is like a big black cloud miraculously lifted from above my head, it's been replaced by continual sunshine.

I don't sigh, turn over, and lay in bed anymore, there is so much to get up for. I don't shout at the children, they stare at me, their youthful eyes sparkle with both pleasure and amazement.

Michael, you will never know how wonderful it is to at last feel like a woman, and not a retriever dog, picking up your shit all day long, month after month, year in and year out. If I never see another pair of Y fronts again, it'll be too soon.

I had to hide a smile yesterday, I asked the girls if they missed you. Michael you'll love their answer,

"Isn't it typical of Dad to go before he had mended the hamsters cage." So you see dear, it didn't go unnoticed by them, I should think that even holidays with you seem a remote possibility just now.

You can forget about coming for the remainder of your things, I gave up waiting, they now lay on the top of the town tip.

Your tool box fetched enough at the local auction, to pay for two school trips, and a turkey dinner for easter. We weren't allowed to have turkey, were we? You didn't like the smell of it being cooked. I bought a fourteen pounder, it lasted for days.

We had the smartest guy in the neighbourhood november past, he went up beautifully in your pin-stripe suit. You know the one dear, the one I did without for, and you never stopped criticising.

The children have their friends in a lot of the time now, I converted your workroom into a playroom for them.

The house echoes with their laughter, It's about time isn't it? They are growing up Michael, you really don't know what you are missing.

I heard that there was another woman on the scene, are you thinking of marriage again, please give the poor woman in question my deepest and most profound sympathy. Does she do your eggs, sunny side up?

I do hope she recovers in time to think hard about what she's doing.

By the way, I had my wedding ring (or should I say our's) melted down a few days ago, there doesn't seem to be any end to the excitement. I intended to have it melted down for June's tenth birthday, my heart turned over when I thought of all the misery that could be passed onto her. I sold the lump of gold to the jeweller instead, bought June a pendant, and had some change. Some price for your slave, eh Michael?

There are so many pleasant things that have crept into my life, on your departure, far too many to list, but I want you to know that I'm not bored and eating my heart out. Most of all, the very most important of things, is the reclaiming of my intelligence, and thinking processes, Yes, they were always there Michael, but they were sapped by you along with my confidence.

Bet this will surprise you, I also hold down another full time job, as well as Mothering, with an advertising agency. I've been promoted too, twice in seven months. I have a male boss, who treats me with the full respect that I have always deserved as a person. (Got the job wearing trouser's incidently).

The children and me made a new cage for the hamster yesterday, it looks a treat, plenty of room for Percy to run around now. I use tea bags too, and we eat out of tins now and then for convenience. The house stinks of the junk food that you hated, and me and the children love. We are all going camping too this year, sold your briefcase dear, for the deposit on the tent.

The house is terribly untidy most of the time, can't remember when I made the beds last, on a regular basis. I know this must be just a rebellious phase that I am going through, but it aint arf fun Michael.. I can't emphasis how much I appreciate you finally legging it.

Tea time is anything between four thirty and eight o'clock, we eat just when we want to, nothing to order anymore, the washing is piling up both sides of the basket in the bathroom, I iron very little and nothing with collars and cuffs. The television was the first thing to go, It's so peaceful without you.

I lay in bed some nights unable to sleep, just waiting for the time when you would have come staggering in, I take a good long look at the clock, smile to myself, then turn over and drift off into a very contented sleep.

It's great to be alive, flushed my valium down the toilet, months ago, I don't need them anymore, I never feel on edge these days, how about your Michael ?

Everyone I meet, anywhere I go, stop to talk to me, it's the energy and zest I now have for life, it's quite contagious, people catch on fast to happiness.

It's so good to be without you.

I've made lots of new friends, they call on me most days, the house is like Trafalgar Square at ne year's eve, the door is never closed. I'm not afraid now of making people feel welcome. (well, of your reaction).

The telephone number is x directory, soeven if you tried, you couldn't get through to annoy me.

June's rash is almost gone, it was emotional after all, Sally and Lisa don't wheeze either. I didn't think that being a one-parent family could be so wonderfully relaxing, and so much fun.

The girl's latest school reports, left me speechless, and exhilarated. I couldn't help but read them over and over again. Nothing but praise and encouragement from every teacher, showing clearly how much more settled they are.

No more fretful nights listening to us rowing, confusing mornings when they woke up to find me sleeping on the settee, no more having to face the neighbours with a different excuse every week for the marks on my face.

I don't hate you Michael, in fact I feel rather sorry for you. I'm also elated that I've been given a chance to prove to myself that I can manage without you, and manage damn well. Deep inside, I always knew that I could, but after years of listening to you telling me how hopeless and helpless I was, I almost began to believe it.

Freedom came just in time, Michael, Thank you.

I wonder what you are doing today, Michael, I half expected a card from you, did you forget? Or was it that you remembered?

No matter, I've spent a lot of birthdays lonely in some capacity or other.

The sun is streaming in from all windows Michael. The first day of Spring.

This feels like the most important birthday, that I will ever have, I watched the dawn break this morning, do you know what fascinated me the most? Those little silver drops of dew, the way they hung in there refusing to move from the blades of grass outside the window, so very loyal, rather like me, with you all those years.

Now it's over Michael.

I think I may walk down to the river this morning, stretch out somewhere secluded along the bank, I'll take off my shoes and socks, roll my trousers up to my knees, and dip my toes into the cool, clear water. The sun will be warm on my face, I'll shade my eyes now and then, and watch the ripples that the insects make on the rainbow surface.

It's great to be alive, Michael.

I'll meet the children from school with a picnic, they would like it down by the river, they really have found a taste for freedom.

I just wish that I could tell you all of this, write it down on paper, and post it to you, they won't give me a pen or pencil in here, they have the strangest notion, that I may harm myself. They do say though, that I might be well enough to come home for a weekend soon.

Will you come down for me, Michael? I promise I'll be very good, and take all my pills, tell them, Michael, they'll believe you.

Love Lucy.

X

Jill's book 'Happy as a Dead Cat' is published by Womens Press.

Letters

Dear WFLOE,

The articles in the last issue distort many of the problems at Greenham. Some pieces express feelings prevalent at particular fires where my kind are not welcome, though we may be tolerated in the name of good public image. Feminism was referred to yet feminist practices such as not interrupting women who are speaking, and sharing information resources are not practised at Greenham nor is there even theoretical agreement that they should be. The camp is not feminist regardless of what the papers say, and being a women's community does not make it so. Nor have the writers by personal example provided role models or good examples of commitment to non-violent behaviour in the face of petty frustrations and the upsetting trivia of daily life at the camp. The resentment they feel masked in the magazine by their hypocritical generalisations and vague insinuations has poisoned the atmosphere in the same way as nuclear radiation. The idea we can save the world without radically changing ourselves and the way we relate to one another reflects the bourgeois blinkeredness at the Greenham Common peace camp and the peace movement.

Yours in struggle - Jean Freer

Dear WFLOE,

I'd like to add my voice to the debate about computers. I feel most strongly that we should have nothing to do with them. I find it really sad the way some sisters are looking at this form of technology as if it were a bright new toy we can put to our use, and failing to see why this glittering thing is not gold nor can it be transmuted to higher motives. We can either learn wisdom by thinking and understanding what all the implications of computers are by looking at what has already happened or else the hard way involves human sufferings - by using them and by what they bring.

It is all the more sad that we have the potential to be the wise women in this age and yet I know of feminists who help African countries solve their economic problems by the use of computers. This is another form of colonialism and takes away people's power to govern themselves.

My guiding Divine teaching has been "It is not possible that a flute should play at once two tunes - nor may any maid pursue at once true wisdom and false."

I understand women would want to see the good in everything but not at the expense of being blind to the evil that has already come about through the use of computers.

Olga Lotar - Coventry.



Dear WFLCE

I am a 15 year old girl from New Zealand, and for a while now I have felt a growing concern about the nuclear threat and find myself getting more and more frightened and panicky, I really cant understand how these people in power, who I always thought were helping to make this world a better place are really in fact planning the total annihilation of everything we have ever known or loved.

This is a poem written by myself about what I think people will feel when it is too late.

AFTER

I sit waiting
My outsides burnt and dying
But inside, I still
think, I still
the times when greed and
power never affected my
narrow content life
But now it is too late
I realise now how wrong
we were

Skinless corpses lie about
me now,
Red and grotesque.
Cries from the victims
now understanding what
it was all about.
Now we know, now we
understand what the
minority were fighting
for.
We didnt believe
We pushed them aside
Ignoring what was being
screamed at us
Until we came face to face
with destruction.

From a dedicated supporter,
Andrea Williams,
Havelock North, New Zealand.



Dear WFLCE

Your newsletters are an unusual mix of feminism, symbolism and earth worship and witchcraft, as well as politics personal and otherwise which appeal to many facets of my beliefs and understanding of the world.

It is really good to know that the web gets larger and stronger day by day as we each weave our own threads into to it.

Keep up good work

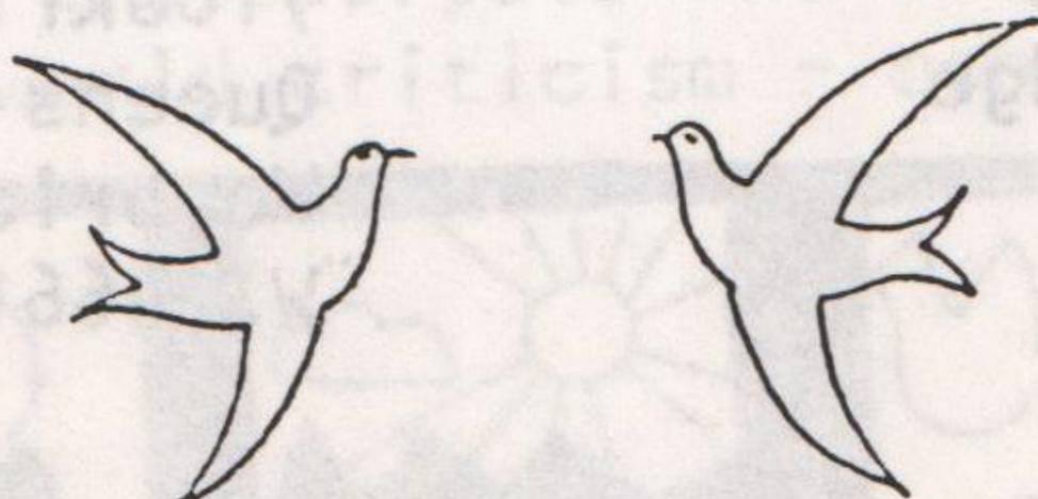
Harjorie Lee, Purley, Surrey.

Dear WFLCE,

Going home in the coach from the Ecology Party Conference I was thinking of the many friends there I would not see for another six months, and of the Holesworth Green Village, the Greenham women, and the coming winter and so on.. and I reflected upon the sudden, extra, attunement we had observed when the debate on the name change was getting a little fraught.

An idea hit me..how we could all keep in touch although physically out of touch. At 9 o'clock each morning I shall think specifically of all my Green friends for 1 minute - sometimes individuals sometimes the peace camp. So make a start tomorrow morning at 9 am.

Cynthia Barth, Essex.



REGIONAL

through Andy we can learn to give and give and give a little more, working for peace with renewed energy and vision.

But we must learn also to give to ourselves, to take care of our bodies and our minds for they are precious. At every moment, now and ever, we must believe in our power - it is ours.

I will miss Andy always. But it gives me joy to know that this has been the happiest year of her life and I am so glad we have shared it with her. She will give me strength in the years to come. Her goodness will go on and on and on. Her faith will flow out of these pages and reach into the hearts of you, her sisters.

Goodbye Andy X

May radiance grow
in your soaring wings
till you reach the
rainbow of
earth worldwide

(Daisaku Ikeda)

There is no-one who knew Andy who has not been shattered, numbed and moved by the news of her death: - but through this disbelief there shines a pattern which brings us all together.

There is no-one who knows Andy who has not been encouraged, inspired and moved by the touch of her life upon theirs.

There was a gentleness which belied a power and a strength built upon love: - love for her family, love for her friends, and a love with which she believed in - reached out for - and touched the humanness that exists in all people.

There was a tranquility which bore a fervent and passionate belief in the power of peace to create peace, love to create love; - a belief in her power as a woman amongst women to fight for, and achieve, the ultimate in these ideals.

There was a quietness and patience which awaited with an open heart the message to all of us to keep the light in our hearts for the human race and to keep it open wide: - to hold it out, strong. There was a caring which was deep and gentle and strong.

Ours is now a sadness which barely obscures a celebration of the legacy of her life: each one of us knows what we have individually gained. Collectively we have inherited a redoubled strength and power to fight for Peace and to reach out for and to give love. Andy, - we are holding On and Holding Out.

Andy is not gone from us, - she is with us now, and will be with us all for ever in the spirit that is universal, and in the spirit that was, is, and will always be Andy; and you can't kill the spirit. She is like a mountain - Old and Strong! She goes on and on and on.

CONTACTS

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for
LIFE
on
EARTH



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of the newsletter instead of paying a sub.

Twenty-Seven Hours

How quickly my life was turned upside down
by losing my 'liberty' in the name of 'Justice',
wrongfully arrested, falsely imprisoned,
I faced hostile police who'd heard it all before
of innocent people who later they proved 'guilty'.

Naive in my innocence that they would
eventually realise it could not have been me!

But left in a cell so cold and unfriendly,
forgotten, alone, unprepared for the damage.

My faith in justice shattered by their bribes,
insinuations, threats and abuse.

'But I'm innocent' is not what they want to hear.

How much torture can they put upon our innocent?

Alone for hours, not knowing how many hours went by,
my mind took some battering, I even thought I was guilty,
as their powerful play took over my very soul.

Released on bail but too weak to protest,

I just want to be home safe...

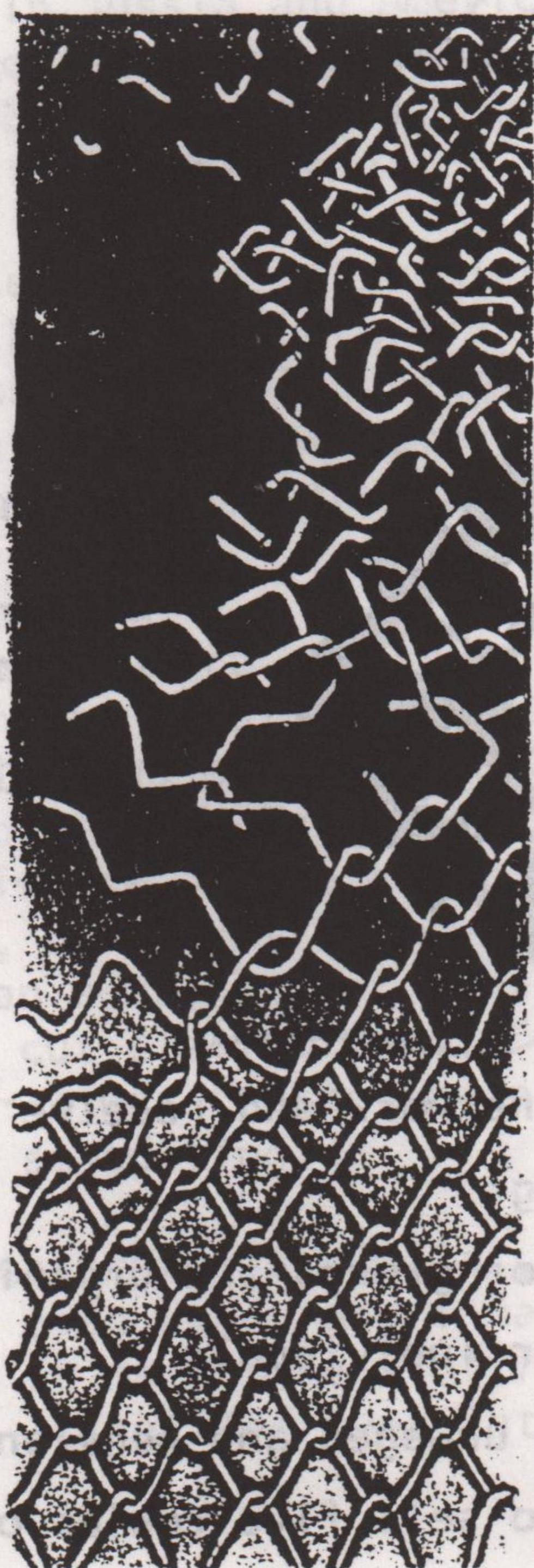
...my illusions of safe are shattered now,
my family feel threatened, used and abused.

I'm prepared now for anything,

but too scared to use this.

When will the pain go away?

'But I'm innocent'?



Order \Rightarrow chaos
- an allegory

Etching by JE Terrie