

no 7

15p.



# *banshee*

JOURNAL OF IRISHWOMEN UNITED



Women at Work.....Telephonists Strike.....Spare Rib.....  
.....Natural Superiority of Women.....Body Image.....



# EDITORIAL

Irishwomen United will not tolerate the banning of the British feminist magazine "Spare Rib" by the Irish Censorship Board. This ban is a blatant infringement of our rights as women to read the literature of our choice.

That the Censorship Board considers such an informative and factual feminist magazine as "Spare Rib" obscene is a striking proof of the utterly perverted values of our so-called "moral guardians".

The Censors, five Government appointees, exist to monitor literature coming into this country. They place absolutely no ban on many books and magazines which propagate sadism and degrades women, while titillating men. The husband, son or lover can learn how to be a rapist, but a woman cannot learn how to become a liberated individual.

The few rights we possess have been slowly eroded in recent months. Not only are we forbidden legal contraception but we are prevented from informing ourselves about contraception; witness the recent banning of the family planning booklet. The feminist classic "The Second Sex" by Simone de Beauvoir remains on the banned list, and the lesbian novel "Rubyfruit Jungle" has now also been banned. These acts of the Censorship Board are just one expression of the increasing repression of sexuality in Ireland. The Project Arts Centre lost it's grant because it presented two plays about homosexuality. A television series "Executive Suite" was withdrawn because it dealt with abortion and lesbianism.

As feminists we recognise these actions as forming a common consensus by the Irish establishment to deny women the right to control their own fertility and to freely choose and express their sexuality.

We will fight this assault on our rights, at every level, and particularly we will continue to buy and read the literature of our choice.

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## Disclaimer

The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of Irishwomen United.

## Irish Women United

we have moved

temporary address:

46 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.

## WHAT IS IRISH WOMEN UNITED?

We are a group of Women's liberationists who believe that the best perspective for struggle against women's oppression in Ireland lies in an ongoing fight around the charter of demands printed here.

We came together originally in April 1975 as a few individual women interested in the idea of building a conference to discuss a charter; what its demands should be and how a campaign should be built.

At this conference on June 8th, attended by approximately 100 women, we constituted ourselves as a separate group, Irish Women United - the only criteria for joining to be agreement on the demands of the Charter.

Irish Women United works on the basis of general meetings (discussions and action planning, at present every week in Dublin), joint actions (e.g. pickets, public meetings, workshops, at present on women in trade unions, contraception, social welfare and political theory) and consciousness-raising groups.



# red biddy

The archbishop of Florida, Coleman F. Carroll, intends to defy an ordinance banning discrimination against homosexuals. "I will not hire any known homosexual to teach in our parochial schools" said he. But does he realise that he runs the risk of losing half his flock (or more?) to the fold of the episcopalian church which has recently ordained a lesbian priest in New York, the first lesbian to achieve this dubious distinction.

\*

Italian women just won the right to legal abortion, which has driven the pope to new frenzies of woman fear. Waving his crozier in a trembling hand he declared that feminists demonstrating for sexual freedom and abortion on demand are a "sorry sight" and added that "fortunately these are over-excited and blown up minorities but they still represent a pathological phenomenon that must be taken into account."

If that's all we are why is papa getting so hot and bothered.

\*

And while he was at it, he reiterated his determination to ban women from the priesthood on the grounds that priests must be men because Christ was a man. Following this logic, may we expect a pronouncement that future priests must also be Jewish, circumcised, born of virgin mothers, capable of walking on water and best of all, be crucified at 33?

\*

Back at the ranch, the local clergy has its own unimitable crude advice for feminists. As stated by Ballyfermot resident "sing something simpleton" father Clery, contraception is unnecessary because most married women in Ireland have intercourse "up their back passage". Although he thinks that "wearing Durex is like going to bed with your socks on", he offered "an unlimited supply from a pal who has a garage full of them" for further details see the letter page.

\*

*The objective voice of science was heard at a symposium on family planning in a Dublin hotel last week. Prof. John Bonnar attributed the occasional failure of natural methods of contraception (the only methods he supports) to the fact that women are reluctant to watch for the vaginal secretions that indicate ovulation. "There seems to be a natural revulsion to mucus" he said. "I know for instance how my children detest being presented with a half-boiled egg".*

*This gross personal prejudice about women's biology reached its peak when our "scientist" closed his lecture by flashing on the screen a quote from the old testament, in which Moses describes women as "unclean" during menstruation. The pretext for this totally irrelevant abuse was apparently, to show, that knowledge of natural methods of contraception had existed for thousands of years. When a woman from the hall demanded that he apologise to all the women present he reluctantly did so. But when challenged by the same speaker on the point that the failure of natural methods of contraception was due not to women's attitude to their biology, but to men's inability to control their sexuality, he admitted that men might be at fault but added, that all too often the real culprit must be - wait for it - their mothers.*

*A further instalment of this academic sexism was heard at TCD a week later when the same doctor put forward as one of his arguments against abortion, the fact that it not only damaged the woman but also the performer of the abortion by making him less of a "man". His academic gown did not protect him from attacks from all sides of the hall by women who demanded the right to control their own bodies and who exposed him for the quack and professional misogynist that he is.*

*As for his claim that contraception leads to abortion, I guess it takes a male, and a professor of medicine at that, to see the logic of that one. Personally I always thought that it was conception which led to abortion!*

*The worst part of all is that this ignorant woman-hater has been imported especially from Scotland to become professor of Obstetric and Gynaecology for TCD at the Rotunda hospital. As if we didn't have enough of the home grown variety!*

And in case you thought that our pharmacists were any better than our doctors - let me tell you that a Dublin pharmacist, by the name of McManus, announced at a pharmaceutical conference on contraception, that if he knew that women were using the pill for contraceptive purposes, he would flatly refuse to fill these prescriptions and would turn them out of his shop.

Is this glorified grocer trying to tell us he really believes that hundreds of thousands of Irish women use the Pill for period regulation? If that is so it's no wonder that the rhythm method keeps failing in Ireland, with all these chronically irregular cycles around.

On one of RTE's radio programmes a letter was read from a man who believed that, since man came first, it has always been and always will be woman's lot to be second and, equal pay and women's liberation is all nonsense and bla bla bla, burble, burble . . .

Just to set the record straight one and for all: woman came first. Science states quite clearly that the male is a biological accident. The y (male) gene is an incomplete x (female) gene. In fact seen under the microscope, the y gene looks like a "crippled" x". For more detail, read "The Natural Superiority of Women" by Ashley Montague (yes a man) published by Collier Books New York. It can be ordered from most Dublin bookshops.

The recent banning of the feminist magazine "Spare Rib" led to an embarrassing incident for our "guardian of the peace", when a group of over zealous gardai raided a Chinese restaurant having heard that "spare ribs" were on sale on the premises.irate customers had some difficulty in establishing that their dinners were neither obscene nor indecent. The matter was finally resolved when a spokesman for the censorship board explained to the bewildered officers that "there are spare ribs and spare ribs."

Indeed, We feminists intend to make this distinction crystal clear.

\*

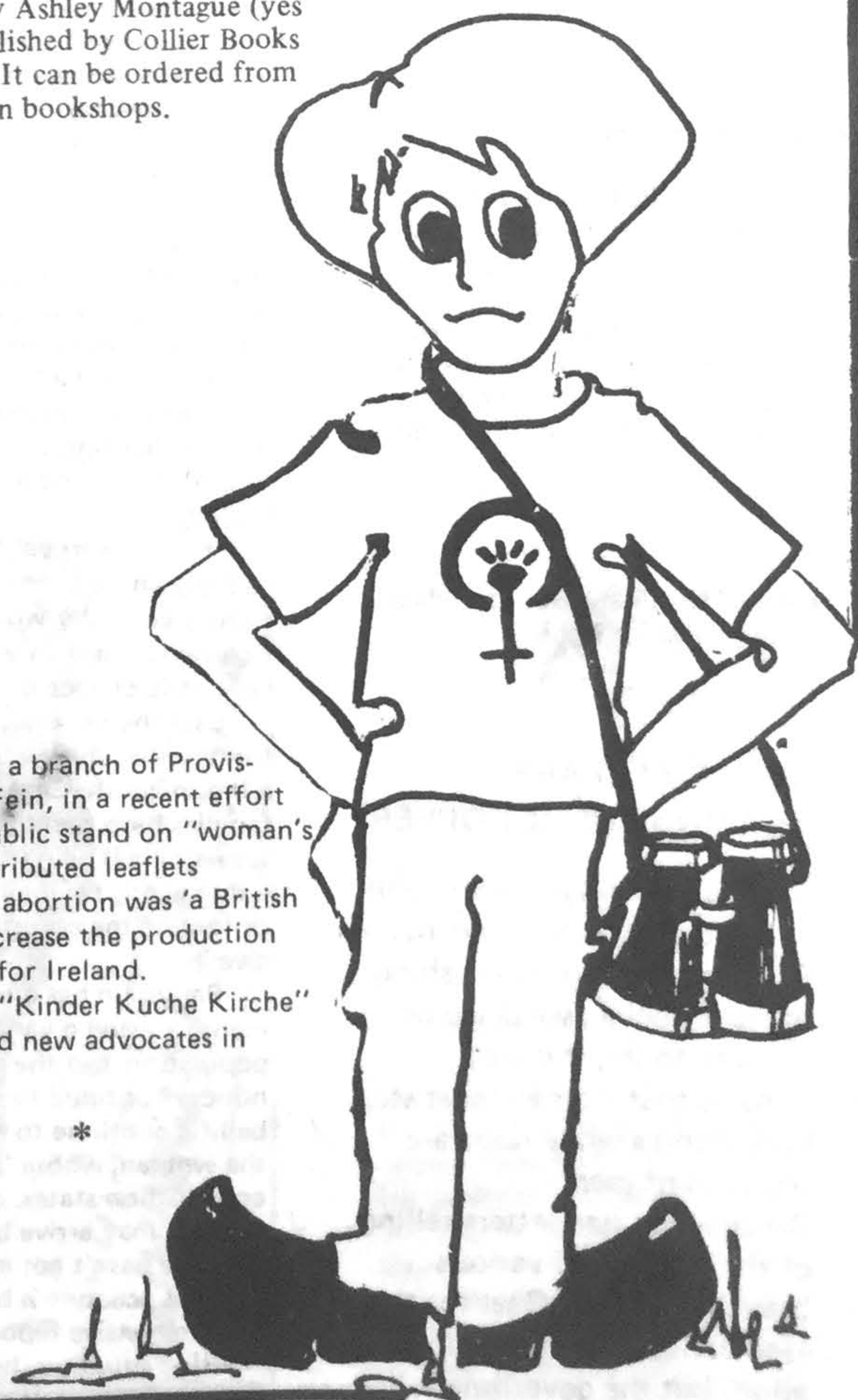
Another of our liberals, Garret FitzGerald, speaking in Cork, remarked - "We got rid of the discrimination that barred married women from working and we can't go back on that, but with the present level of unemployment I think that in many cases we should apply some form of gentle discouragement".

Already women are denied contraception, equal social welfare rights, nursery facilities and divorce and married women pay higher taxes than any other workers. What more "gentle" discouragement does FitzGerald have in store for us!

Members of a branch of Provisional Sinn Fein, in a recent effort to take a public stand on "woman's rights", distributed leaflets stating that abortion was 'a British plot' to decrease the production of children for Ireland.

Has the "Kinder Kuche Kirche" policy found new advocates in Ireland?

\*





# NEWS

## IRELAND — paradise for rapists.

*In Limerick six youths were cleared of a rape charge. The judge believed the woman was "willing", (even though she was covered with bruises when found by a passer-by minutes after the rape), because she had been drinking and knew some of the youths. She was an itinerant woman.*

*In Dublin a woman was gang-raped and the men acquitted because of "insufficient evidence", even though she identified several of the rapists.*

*In Northern Ireland a British soldier was released on a two year suspended sentence after raping a woman. The judge declared that he would usually have given a heavier sentence except for the specific circumstances. We know the 'needs' of British soldiers but what about those of Irish women?*  
**HIS SUPERIOR OFFICER WELCOMED HIM BACK.**

*In Cork, a woman was raped by two men. The men were tried separately so as not to "prejudice" their case. The first man to be tried was acquitted because the judge refused to believe THAT A WOMAN COULD BE RAPED BY ONE MAN. In the second trial, when it had become obvious even to the judge that two men were involved, the accused was found guilty.*

*Indeed, North and South, Ireland is a paradise for Rapists.*

## SOCIAL WELFARE AMAZING BUDGET OFFER

Despite the budget recommendations that the requirements of 52 stamps by women wishing to claim social assistance be reduced to 26, the fact remains that women must still have stamps while none are required of men.

Banshee has had letters telling of the support of various branches of Fine Gael for the eradication of this discrimination, but the government are still dragging their feet.

Since the launching of the

school-leavers petition, more groups have announced their support for the campaign including the Dublin Branch of the I.C.A., the National Youth Council, and the Union of Students in Ireland, who plan to bring a case to the Supreme Court.

The majority of school-leavers and women (including widows) who have been out of the labour force for more than four years cannot claim unemployment assistance.

For how long more are these women expected to live on air. With a general election on the way we can only quote to our male dominated government: "Rise up sirs, give your brains a racking, to find the remedy we're lacking or sure as faith, we'll send you packing"

## EVICTIONS Ballymun

While selling Banshee in Ballymun, our attention was drawn to the number of evictions taking place there and to the circumstances surrounding them. Apparently since the city sheriff refused to evict tenants, the county sheriff has taken over the task in the city part of the estate.

One woman in the towers got an eviction notice on a flat in which she had been 'squatting' for three years while paying rent. She went to the ISPC to find out what the implications of the notice were and returned to find all her furniture being moved onto the landing. Her young baby who was suffering from measles was being moved, cot and all. No attention was paid to the woman's protests and she, her husband and other children spent the night on the landing.

She was warned that if she had anywhere at all to stay that night, her family would not be regarded as destitute and would have little chance of being re-housed.

Late the next day, she was informed that she was to be given a flat in another tower, but many families have spent up to three weeks on a landing before either giving up their struggle or forcing the corporation to give in.

Ballymun has a high unemployment rate and a very young population but the eviction notices continue to arrive and the bailiffs continue to evict — and the woman, whose 'place' the constitution states, is "in the home", may arrive back anyday to find she hasn't got any home.

This account is by no means a comprehensive report on the Irish housing situation, but merely serves to draw attention to the appalling lack of concern for basic human needs.

# spare Rib

## A WEEK AGO THE CENSORSHIP BOARD BANNED SPARE RIB ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT IS OBSCENE AND INDECENT. ON SAT. THE 12th MEMBERS OF I.W.U. WENT TO BELFAST TO PICK UP 22 COPIES OF THE MAGAZINE, WITH THE INTENTION OF DEFYING THE BAN BY SELLING THEM OPENLY IN DUBLIN.

There we were, all 20 of us, bright and bleary eyed, aboard the 8.30 shoppers special to Belfast. Two and a half hours later, we arrived in Belfast where a sister from the Northern Women's movement was waiting for us to lead us through check points and back streets to a pub where we settled down to a lunch of sandwiches and Guinness at 33p a pint. A couple of hours later more women joined us with placards condemning the banning of Spare Rib, and we all set out to form a picket outside Board Failte which was conveniently situated right next door to the pub.

At 5.30 we were back on the train heading for Dublin with our precious booty of 200 Spare Rib. This time we commandeered the entire first compartment of the train and waited impatiently for customs officers to make their appearance at Dundalk. At Dundalk a custom officer walked straight through looking at his shoes; 3 of the women chased after him, to inform him that they were bringing banned magazines through. The official turned his back, raised his hand and said "that's alright, go ahead." Next

thing we were in Dublin station. We jumped out as soon as the train stopped, and linking arms formed lines of five and marched down the platform chanting "Lift the ban on Spare Rib" and "We'll read what we want not what we're told". At once, our sisters from the home team, awaiting us behind the ticket barrier, joined in the chanting and lifted placards for all to see.

The sisters from the train stopped at the barrier and let the other passengers through, with women both side of the barrier singing and chanting the whole time. We surged through the barrier and when a woman asked a guard if he would like to buy one of the copies he attempted to arrest her. We then began to chant "we are all selling Spare Rib". Totally unimpressed by this display of male legality we surrounded the Gardai and our victimised sister and with sustained enthusiasm we linked arms and took him for a frantic dance across the platform chanting "one for all and all for one" and "would you like to buy Spare Rib". At this stage, police reinforcements arrived and one guard losing his cool together with his cap, seized a brief case from one of the women and tried to run away with it. Eventually he discovered that it contained none of the "obscene" material. He returned it to its owner. Then at last realizing that they were over-powered ideologically and physically, the gardai gave up. As a sergeant later admitted to the press "An attempt was made to seize Spare Rib, the attempt failed".

And so we left, victorious in the first battle of the campaign.





# BODY IMAGE

## "I WAS A TEENAGE ELEPHANT"

I went out of style in the sixties when Twiggy came in and slimming turned into a big business.

I must admit that I was never sylph-like, as my mother would have preferred. She always laughed, and made rather hurtful jokes about my early ambition to be a ballet dancer. Well, I changed my mind about that anyway.

Actually, my ideal when I was fifteen was to look like Pan's People, that dancing team on Top of the Pops, I reckoned I might just get away with the legs but the rest... no! So I was condemned to life of dieting and doing stomach exercises till I was puce in the face, I always wanted to look like somebody else then Anybody but me. I'd learned dissatisfaction with my own body very early on.

I wanted a bra long before there was nay conceivable necessity for one. I got it too! and hoped the straps would show through my blouse so that everybody would know I was well on my way to being someone's idea of a woman. Meanwhile my best friend of school days who was even less well-endowed than I nevertheless had to get one too. She stuffed hers with cotton wool and her brothers socks and hoped no-one would notice. Now I look upon the days of bra-less freedom with nostalgia.

My next lesson in womanhood was shaving my armpits. I learned that the hair in my armpits, like having periods was pretty disgusting really and so, as they say in the ads, "Nobody knew but me when I had a period and I shaved everytime the stubble became noticable. Later I discovered that underarm hair has a function — to prevent friction so I let it grow again. Now I'm quite fond of it really. Actually, I shaved my legs at one stage, a remarkably silly thing to do\*!

Meanwhile, I was learning to decorate the newly de-fuzzed, deodorised me with make-up. At fourteen I acquired my first lipstick. It was peppermint flavoured and my mother disapproved. But there were all sorts of magazines telling you how to make-up, what cloths to wear, how to make a prettier me. All, of course, with one aim in mind — to attract a man, or probably men, so that one might have a choice in the matter.

This involved spending several hours before going dancing manufacturing the looks that

pleased. I wore mini-skirts in those days, so short that I couldn't sit down without at least a small portion of bum on display. Oh, well it was the fashion, what did it matter if I occasionally felt uncomfortable. At least at this stage, tights had come in — so that I no longer had to wear a suspender belt that gave me three spare tyres as opposed to my usual one. I also used to expose vast acreages of mottled thighs at intervals.

Trousers when I wore them, had to be tight even if they cut into my 'essentials' as my mother called them or restrict my circulation — already ailing from the chill of the mini-skirt. So there I was, a tight trousered, bulging, well made-up (I was quite good at that, an artistic streak) teenager.

But the horror that was later to haunt me had only begun to prey upon my unsuspecting young mind. By the time I was seventeen, my bosom had ceased to sprout gently and now seemed to be taking over, and the rest of me seemed to be making an attempt to compete. My mother was and still is obsessed with dieting. So I found myself packed off to school with two exceedingly nasty little slimming biscuits or a piece of soggy crispbread in my lunchbox everyday. This was a total failure. I started out with what I thought was iron resolve but by lunch time it was rapidly fading. I would consume my meagre ration and then gaze longingly at my companions till someone took pity on me and

gave me a sandwich. In this way I managed to devour not my own lunch but half of two or three others as well.

All this continued for years till I came to the stage when a radical re-think was necessary.

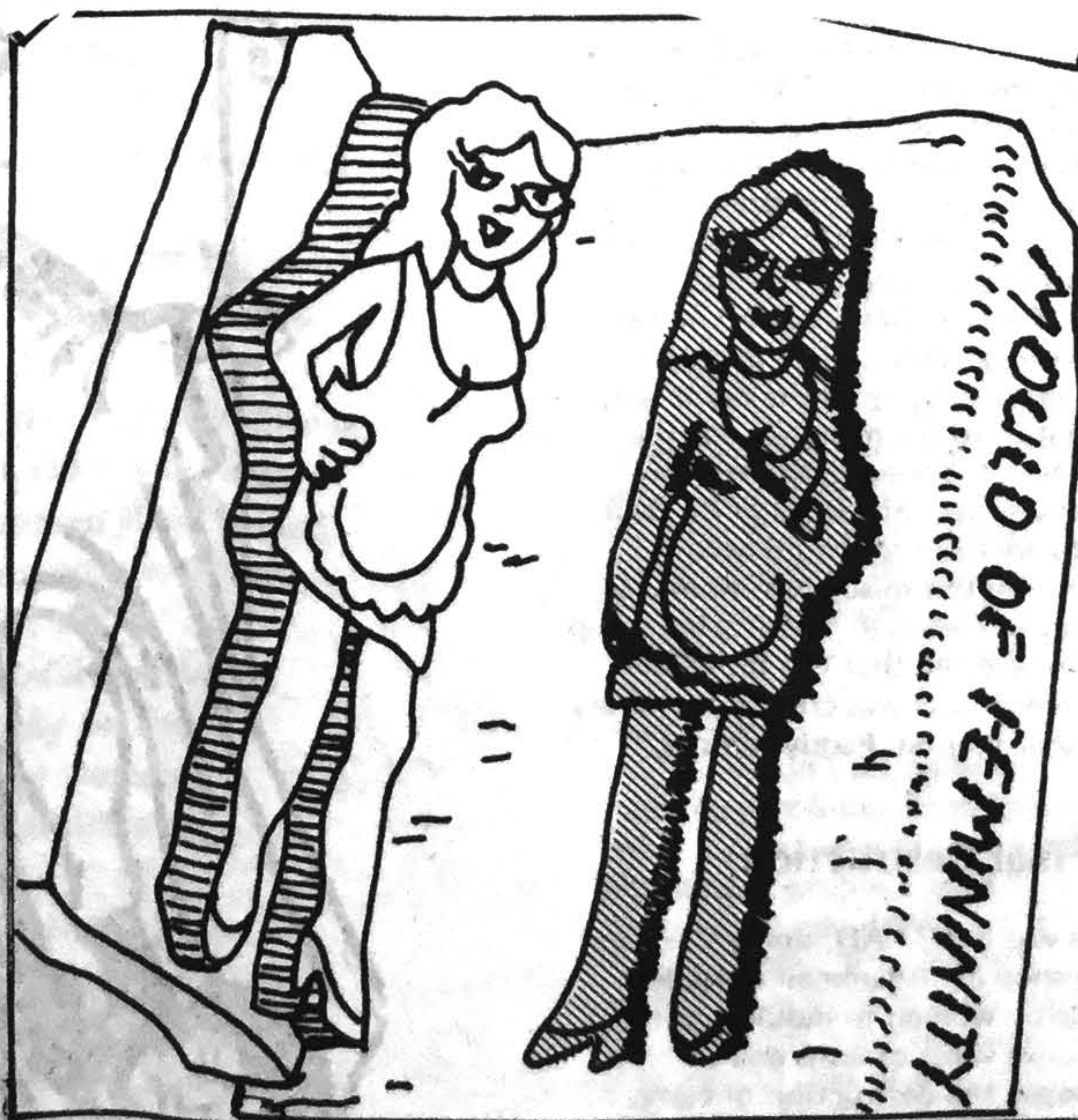
This re-think has taken quite a while. It is still going on,

*One of the fundamental questions I had to ask myself about my attempts at dieting and all other efforts to change my appearance was, why? Why was I spending so much time and energy on making myself look like someone or something else. What did I dislike so much about myself? If I was looking for someone to love or to love me, why was I going about it by trying to change myself beyond recognition? So I decided I'd better get to like myself as I really was, warts and all.*

I gradually phased out make-up and discovered that I could quite like my face the way it was.

I tend not to wear provocative clothing because I found that I felt more comfortable that way.

I still have a weight problem but now I see it in a somewhat different light and it doesn't matter so much any more. I have spent years being told how I should look and I will never be outside the influence of others in this area. But at least I am learning, however slowly to be more true to myself. I think that my experience is not unique. All women are subjected to the same pressure in our society. There is a lot of money to be made from the distance between ourselves and our bodies. We are going to explore this idea in a series of articles dealing with such topics as the cosmetic industry, fashion and weight watching. We hope that you will find this interesting and will write in to tell us of us of your own experiences and perhaps give us some suggestions for future issues.



## LATE NEWS

### FUNNY BUNNIES AND BIRD BRAINS:

The Dublin City Council must surely have suffered a cut back in intelligence during the economic crisis. This can be the only explanation for the sudden rise to fame of one Ned Brennan. He has recently appointed himself, with the support of his colleagues as a Guardian of Public Morality. Mr. Brennan wins our "Parochial mentality of the year" award.

Jim Mitchell, our Lord Mayor and some of Ned's fellow councillors are still bleating feebly about the financial reasons behind their action in refusing the Project Arts Theatre its promised £6,000 grant. This despite glaring evidence to the contrary. Also despite glaring Mr. Brennan who said on the Late Late show that "he would be unable to support the grant even if given cast iron assurances of renewal of the Projects lease."

It is quite obvious what is troubling Ned and his cronies consciences so greatly is all those "Funny Bunnies from across the water" who are invading our country with filth and dirt. The funny bunny incidently is Mr. Brennan's terminology for the members of the Gay Sweatshop who gave such an entertaining and thought provoking performance in the Project last November.

Are we to let Ned and his cronies away with this? Who knows what the paranoid fantasies of their unbelievably insulated minds will produce next. We demand our right to determine our own sexuality free from the petty minded bigotry of Brennan and his like. YOU elect these councillors so YOU tell them what to do with their nasty little minds. Support the Project and make them hand over the money.

*Petitions in support of the Project are available from the theatre itself.*

*Contact Project Arts Theatre, Essex St., Dublin 2, and letters of support should be sent to the Project and the City Manager, City Hall, Dublin.*

spare **Rib**

**WOMEN HAVE BEEN THE SECOND SEX FOR TOO LONG. THE FIGHT IS ONLY BEGINNING. GOOD LUCK SISTERS"**

Simone de Beauvoir

His telegram was read at the Mansion House on Feb. 28th during Irish Women United's meeting, "Spare Ribs Lives". Members of Irish Women United openly flaunted the law by auctioning copies of the banned magazine. 500 women applauded as gardai took names & addresses. Prosecutions are pending. Meanwhile, we shall continue to flaunt the law by reading 'Spare Rib'.



# FATHER CHURCH

## HOW MOTHER CHURCH BECAME FATHER CHURCH

We're always being told that things are much better for women in the modern world than they were in the past. We are also constantly told that the Christian religion raised the status of women and bettered their social position. In fact nothing could be further from the truth.

### Life before Christianity

Women in ancient times enjoyed a freedom that is almost unimaginable to us in the twentieth century. Moreover our own present day chauvinist pigsty — Ireland, was for centuries a model for the rest of Europe of equality and freedom for women. In the very distant Celtic past, women were in complete control and their culture was matriarchal. But even in the early Christian era when women's power had declined they still had full legal equality with men. They had for instance, the right to divorce, contraception, abortion, the ownership of property, the inheritance of estates, and the bearing of titles. As the Roman historian Tacitus tells us they had a remarkably developed legal code. They had no slaves, no capital punishment, they practiced complete equality of the sexes, women presided at the tribal councils, their chief men were elected while the monarchy was hereditary and in the female line.

### Religious Beliefs:

Their religion was matriarchal founded on the belief in the Great Goddess. They worshipped her as the supreme being. They believed that she intervened in human affairs, and visited her people when they needed her. She was obviously a compassionate and merciful Goddess, for as Tacitus again tells us when she visited her people — "Great rejoicing, peace and harmony are known at these times, until the Goddess weary of human intercourse is at length restored to her temple, which is on an island in the ocean, amidst a grove of oaks" —

The original Goddess was named 'Dana' and she reached Ireland about the time of Moses. Her name was eventually masculinized into 'Danaus'. She was the daughter of the Great White Goddess — "Albina" — after whom the Romans named England — Albion. The influence of the Goddess Dana can be traced throughout Europe through such place names as those of the rivers Dan and Danube, Denmark and the Danes, all of which were named in her honour. London was also called after her in 1108 BC, from the Celtic Lan Dian for the temple

of Dana or (Diana). And while we are on the subject it is interesting to know that Ireland itself was called after a woman "Eire" after the great queen Eire who defeated the first Milesean invaders.

### Golden Age — Womens Age:

During the dark ages of the Christian western world it was Celtic Ireland, as we all know which kept a light the lamp of learning. What they don't tell us at school is that this golden age was dominated by women, the last survivors of the earlier matriarchal era. It was women who developed the Brehon Laws which were the most developed system of justice in existence at the time (and far ahead of our present day legislation) and it was on these laws that King Alfred the Great of England eventually based his code, The origin of the Common Law. Women were of course, in the fore front of scholarship and the Arts. Most of the great teachers were women of whom St. Brigid is the only one even given a mention today.

### Ireland's First Male Chauvinist:

It was not until the Sixth Century and the coming of Saint Patrick that Irish women began to lose their ancient dignity and power. In a rewriting of the Brehon Laws called "Senchus Mor" — we find this extraordinary statement — "The man has headship in the marriage union. It is proper to give superiority to the noble sex, that is, to the male sex, for the man is the head of the woman." As you see this stinks of St. Paul. No ancient Celt could have written this misogynist nonsense, and sure enough recent scholarship has revealed that this bit of the Brehon laws was created by none other than St. Paddy himself.

### Final Destruction:

It was in 697 AD, that a Christian bishop St. Adamnan forbade Celtic women to indulge in the active sport of arms and so began the destruction of Celtic society. Within a few centuries Celtic women had been totally

debased by St. Paul's brand of woman hating Christianity. A French historian describes the once proud Celtic women thus " . . . . Limbs bruised and discoloured from whip and club. Enslaved by law, abused and exploited by her husband, made sport of by her Christian liege — lord, tricked and soiled by priest and friar, she has become an overworked, beaten, hopeless object." It could be straight from a report on our present day status, couldn't it?

The poisonous philosophy that brought about this degradation is perfectly expressed in this poem translated from the Irish which was written after a few hundred years of Christian abuse. "I am Eve, the wife of noble Adam; It was I who violated Jesus in the past; It was I who robbed my children of heaven; It is I by right who should have been crucified.

It is I who plucked the apple; It went past the narrow of my gullet; As long as they live in daylight women will not cease from folly on account of that.

There would be no ice in any place, there would be no bright windy winter, there would be no hell, there would be no grief, there

would be no terror, But for me."

You see they even blame us for the weather! Well that's the power of Father Church for you.

### Evils of the Modern World

So, one and a half thousand years later, the triumph of Christianity over Irish women is complete. Now women have no legal rights or political rights and practice a religion that didn't even grant them a soul until the Twelfth Century. Fifteen hundred years ago, Irish women had means of contraception and abortion and the right to divorce. And now in 1977, Pope Paul in his latest pronouncement decrys the evils of the *modern* world, and expresses horror at the idea of women even *contemplating* abortion.

If only Irish women would follow the advice of the clergy and reject "modern alien influence" they would inform this jumped-up Italian that fifteen hundred years ago Irish women were not only contemplating abortion they were carrying them out. What we need are a few more reactionary, insular women!! . . . . .





# WOMEN + WORK = DISCRIMINATION

"And what are you going to be when you grow up?" asked Mrs. Ryan.

"A Nurse" my sister piped up.

"A Nun" said I remembering the one other occupation a woman could have. Older brother as I recall, hadn't yet decided whether to be a farmer, a bus driver or a doctor. None of us was more than eight years old at the time but society's dictates on job choice had obviously registered.

As I got older I learned that women do other jobs too — like my aunt who was an evening cleaner or the neighbour who did outwork for a garment factory. Or if you could stay longer at school, a teacher. The nuns constantly reminded us that the way to avoid the terrible fate of ending up in a shop or factory was to become a lady and work in an office until that wonderful day of matrimony. They were backed up by the various grooming and etiquette advisors invited to the school. Their attitude was simply to make the best of a bad lot.

Four fifths of all women in this country working outside the home are employed (1) Industry (2) As shop assistants (3) As clerks (4) Maids (5) Typists.

It appears that the nuns read our futures quite accurately. However the main deterrent is not this conditioning alone but the blatant discrimination against the working woman in every aspect of employment.

Employers attempt to justify themselves by saying that women "Will get married and leave after only a few years". "Miss more time from work than" and "can't work as hard as" men. These excuses to refuse employment, promotion or retraining and of course to deny women equal pay!

Juliet Mitchell's "Womens Estate" explodes many of these myths. Also, a comparison of daily working routines of parents in employment reveals that in fact women can, and frequently do work longer hours under worse conditions than men. Married women who do a full time job and all the housework as well will testify to this.

Absenteeism has many causes. Among these are the boring nature of the work many women are forced to do. Also the fact that women are more likely to be called upon to cope with any irregularities arising in the home, sick children, parents, emotional crises or deaths.

That women marry and leave their employment is often not due to the wishes of the women themselves but to the policies of the employer.

There is a great lack of child care facilities and semi-state bodies still pay a marriage gratuity to women who leave their job on marriage.

The Irish Constitution specifies that a woman's place is in the home. Rather than helping married women this provision is designed to ensure that women stand behind men in the job queue and are drawn on only as subsidiary labour underpaid and denied even basic rights.

The privileges won by the rights established by the unions over the last century cater mainly for men. Consequently we find that the pregnant woman is required to live on a pittance of social welfare while on maternity leave.

In some employments which claim to have paid pregnancy leave it is regarded as part of the annual sick leave. Also pre-natal visits to the clinic often go unpaid.

With the proportion of married women in the labour force so low (3.5%) their power to force unions to put

claims on their behalf is minimal. This 3.5% are those who are supposed to be ruining the economy by depriving male breadwinners of their jobs. This small figure is unlikely to increase. Leaving aside the massive unemployment situation there is the great tax burden borne by married women. Also there is discrimination against them under social welfare; the limited variety of employment which is available to them. And what about Richie's latest encouragement of leaving married women's tax free allowance frozen!

As for recent events in the struggle for womens rights — the recent maternity leave claim made on behalf of the women at Brook's Thomas was referred to the labour court, they turned it down on the basis that provision of maternity leave was not standard practice. No further action has been taken since.

What is needed is comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation covering every sphere of life from education and employment to pension. The E.E.C. has made it compulsory for the introduction of such legislation in Ireland by the end of 1978. The government's offering which passed its second reading in the Dail last December is totally inadequate, ignoring as it does anything other than employment and many situations relevant to the work situation. It also lacks an enforcement agency, adequate penalties for offenders and has too many loop-holes for employers. Most important of all is probably the fact that no one can insist that a woman sacked for bringing an action under the proposed legislation be reinstated. (A future issue of Banshee will carry a more detailed article on anti-discrimination legislation).

## double workload

WHO WORKS AN 18 HOUR DAY? GETS NO PAY AND LESS THANKS — NO SICK LEAVE, NO SOCIAL SECURITY, NO HOLIDAYS, NO RETIREMENT, AND NO PENSION?

WELL THERE IS ONE IN EVERY HOME — SHE'S CALLED A HOUSEWIFE. AND WHEN SHE WORKS OUTSIDE THE HOME AS WELL SHE HAS EVEN MORE TO DO.

Ann is married with four children. Her husband has been unemployed for two years. She works as a waitress to supplement his dole money. When asked how this situation has helped to change their roles, particularly with regard to who does the housework, Ann replied:

"He doesn't lift a finger, when I come home from having spent the day handing out meals and serving people, I have to turn around and do the same for my family. Then there is all the other work to catch up on. He says it is not his fault if he cannot find proper work, and he wouldn't be seen dead doing housework or cooking.

Before when the kids were small and I'd have to slip out to do some shopping on a Saturday when he was home, I'd ask him to keep an eye on them. Well he'd sit on the couch with his newspaper up against him and if the kids started crying he'd shout at them and go back to his paper."

### SEXUAL DIVISION OF HOUSEWORK:

This attitude shows to what degree men have been crippled by their own role stereotyping and to what extent they are prepared to exploit it. More, it is an indication of how they really consider housework: It is not "proper work", it is 'womens' work and therefore beneath them. It would appear that Ann's husband would prefer to see his wife herself into a state of ill-health rather than offend his sensitive male pride by helping out.

The nasty logic of role stereotyping goes like this — the man is the bread winner i.e. the one who 'goes out to

CONTINUED ON P.10



## We Supply Everything for the Office

Patty runs her boss's office for him and enjoys the responsibility but also the fact that she is not the ultimate authority. She's practical, clever and is her boss's right hand person. She enjoys her prestige more than her generous pay, although in practical terms you are judged "more on salary".

*Patty is surrounded by men in her life, her husband, her father and her boss (of course she has her 'girl friends')*

Promotional prospects: "it was my own fault, there could have been. I wasn't ambitious enough". At the moment because of the recession there are no promotion prospects for anyone within the company.

Another important aspect of her job is that she works alone and provides the vital link between different parts of the company. This is where she (alone) can fill the gap, play her part.

The tenor of her relationship with her boss is naturally very relevant to her job satisfaction.

*(She is very aware of how she appears to others and how women working for men can take advantage of this, "with a nice dress or hair nicely done, you might get away (more easily) with a letter badly typed or something. "There is a thing between the sexes".*

Has she ever worked for a woman? Yes, once, and she was "well, surprised" that it worked out so well. In fact she has been lucky that in nearly all her jobs she was treated well. In an office people "follow the lead from the top".

There are many more women in positions like Patty's with a lot less recognition for the work they do. While under the title of typist they in fact run the office, keep the show on the road. A man doing this type of job would be classified as middle-management with the salary and status that accompany such a responsibility.



SUPERSEC.

## MOTHER & STUDENT

I have been asked how I manage to do two jobs — look after a baby and be a student. So here are my set of rules for combining any two full time jobs.

If you are living with someone, get the co operation of her or him. Though not essential, it certainly makes a big difference if you have someone who will not just say "its great, you're managing", but instead, will get into cleaning dirty bottoms, sorting out wet from nearly dry to completely aired nappies, and letting you sleep in on Saturday morning (N.B. essential)

Secondly, you must get yourself organised — what precisely that means you can decide for yourself. People keep telling me that if I was a "little bit better organised things wouldn't seem to pile up" So I presume organisation must be a great thing. Thirdly, and this is the secret, do not think about it. Take it from day to day. If I were to sit down and consider deeply that I spend 20 hours weekly at lectures, 10 hours getting to and from them, at least 45 hours looking after baby, 5 hours studying, 3 hours for I.W.U., 6 hours in Maynooth nursery ..... so far, that's 89 hours per week. I wouldn't do it, would I?

Precisely because I don't think about it I can't really answer the question very well. All I know is that

**I'M NOT BORED**

## PROSTITUTE:

"You'd have to be stupid to love a pimp, its like being married, it just suits the men"

At fifteen, Joan found herself pregnant by a man who already had a wife and five children. She went looking for a man, any man willing to give her child his name. "I just didn't want my baby to be a bastard". She did find a man whom she neither liked nor loved, and married him. He drank, refused to work and started beating her up within weeks of their marriage. When the child was born, they were squatting in a one room flat and their only income was his unemployment money, most of which he drank. "I worried about the child, I had to get some money. I couldn't get a job, I didn't have a choice". She became a prostitute.

"... I went out at night while he was out in the pub and the baby was asleep. You know, it wasn't that hard really, they treated me better then he did, and they payed. When he found out, he beat me, but that didn't stop him drinking the money. Then he started sending me out, he said I wasn't earning enough money. With him taking all the money, I was as bad off as before. I couldn't stick it any more. One night he was picked up for pimping. I did nothing to defend him and he was sent off. I was rid of him."

Now she has her own flat with a colour television and lots of clothes, and she pays her mother to take care of the child. Has she any money saved? "Not really, in this business, you get into the habit of spending money when you have it."

What about her relationships with men?

"When I'm not working I couldn't be bothered with them, they're all the same, they're like animals really, all the other girls have boyfriends who look after them and take their money. You'd have to be stupid to have a pimp, it's like being married, it just suits the men." What will she do when she gets older? "Lots of the girls are old, it doesn't bother the men."



## HOUSEWIFE?

## The Female

I have been married for about 7 years and have 2 children, twins a boy and a girl. I worked for 5 years after I was married and left when I became pregnant. Since the children were born I have been more or less confined to the house. I didn't mind having to stay at home for the first 2 years but in the last year I have become really frustrated and bored. I think it's because when the children were very young they needed constant attention and I didn't really have time to think about myself. I enjoy being with the children BUT NOT TO THE POINT WHERE I SEEM TO HAVE NO LIFE OF MY OWN. Housework is a routine. It seem to be the same thing every day. Sometimes I feel I could do the work with my eyes closed I found that when I was working I could fit the housework in my working day but now I find the more time I have the less organised I seem to be. I think its because I'm bored and literally trying to fill in the day.



# AT WORK



## Male Automaton

My husband says to me I should get a job but that's much easier said than done. I used to work as a secretary and I'd love to go back to that job, not only because I liked the work, but I would be mixing with people and that's one of the things I miss. Sometimes I feel very isolated in the house I went down to the 2 nurseries in my area but both of them only take children on a part time basis and I have found that trying to get a job to suit these hours is quite impossible. Anyway I would have to get a job that paid well because the tax is heavy and I'd have to pay for the nursery. Getting out at night is also a problem. I find it very difficult to get babysitters sometimes. I would take up some sort of night class if I knew I could be sure of getting somebody to mind the children. My husband is a traveller so he can't always be available.

My mother said she might be able to mind the children for me full time in a couple of months so hopefully I might get a job then.

## NURSE

### Myth of the Caring Woman

Maire: Her experience of nursing was very different to what she had anticipated.

In nursing she learnt, efficiency (for its own sake) not help (for the patient) was at a premium. Efficiency was only supposed to be a means to an end, the end of looking after a patient and nurturing recovery. But it soon becomes a case of the means obscuring the end.

This comes about because of the precarious standing that a nurse has in the hospital hierarchy. A trainee nurse is taught that as a nurse she is the least important factor in a situation in which the doctor figures as vital. So she must prove herself by being efficient on ward level and a social hit with EVERYONE both patients, doctors and staff nurses. She is tacitly expected to call the consultant 'SIR' (That's if he ever addresses her)

### Social Pressures

There is great competition between the nurses themselves to "make it" with the doctors (men), be gregarious and mix well. If you didn't have the right type of 'open' personality, Maire said, it was difficult to be accepted in the semi-claustrophobic atmosphere of hospital life where you worked and lived in the same building with the same people. At work you needed the affirmation of a superior's approval to confirm your identity — justify your existence. Maire further pointed out the great importance attached to seniority, especially in the first two years (before you were accepted) even where it was only a matter of three months.

### Constant Questioning of Other's Work

There was much rivalry and back biting amongst the nurses themselves. This would take the form of criticising another's decision or their "method". These snide remarks were made under the guise of professionalism and "the good of the patient". Both nurses and doctors were involved in this. The nurses often put down by the doctors would retaliate strongly, jealous of the doctors' status. The doctors would use their "superiority" to abuse the nurses. When they got into delicate situations (for instance in the operating theatre) they would often castigate the nurses in order to absolve themselves. Yet after a successful recovery the doctor would never eagerly give credit to the valuable nursing done. Maire had "dirty bloody trays" thrown at her during a tense operation. Another time the surgeon demanded that she blow his nose for him. Up till recently it was widespread policy in hospitals to have different dining halls, different cutlery and different meals for the doctors and nurses. In some hospitals this continues.

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### Mystical Vocation

One of the reasons she felt, for the low and frequent bad working conditions was this "silly idea" that nurses had a mystical vocation in which money etc. played no part. Coupled with this is the stifling puritanism of most hospitals — particularly those run by religious. These attitudes are instilled into the nurse during her training. For example a female nurse cannot perform catheterisation on a male patient. (This is very painful, involving the insertion of a tube into the bladder, in order to drain off urine) The great fear is that the man might become aroused sexually and of course, the nurse could not deal with that situation!

She went in with the idea that nursing was a helping, caring profession. It soon became obvious that the help you could give a patient depended on many other factors. One myth she would like to see dispelled is this myth of the "caring women".

SERVICE WITH  
A SMILE.



## "WAITRESS!"

### Service with a Smile

Stephanie is a waitress in her mid 30's — she is married for the last 12 years. Her husband has been unemployed for the last few years. Since then she has been back at work after a seven year period at home.

"I don't like it when customers are abusive or start putting their arms around you — I always tell them to get stuffed and take their arms off me!"

"Most drunks wouldn't go on like that with men serving. That's men all over, treat you like a chattel."

"I don't mind working in general but as a dead end, to survive. It gets you down. It's o.k. if you're working for luxuries, but if you find that you can't even afford to be sick..."

"If I was at home all the time I'd be bored, if I had time I'd like to go back to school, I'd like to be able to live. This isn't living at all. When I was at home, I had no other life outside the house, and no interests, he could go out for a few drinks or playing darts — but I had no life of my own."

"I think it's wrong if a woman goes out to work and still has to face into housework. She has no life of her own, and is only coddling herself if she thinks otherwise. But work outside the home is good for a woman. Sitting at home looking at nappies would drive me mental."

"I feel tipping is not worth the effort. I'd prefer a 10% charge on the bill. Tipping makes me feel a bit low, the underdog. Sometimes when they put something into your hand — it turns out to be a penny — you feel like throwing it after them."

"I'd like to see girls getting better educated and not marrying so young. Men need to be educated too. They have an awful lot of old-fashioned ideas and think women are just chattels with no minds of their own."



## You Supply the Workplace —

## We'll Supply the Pittance.

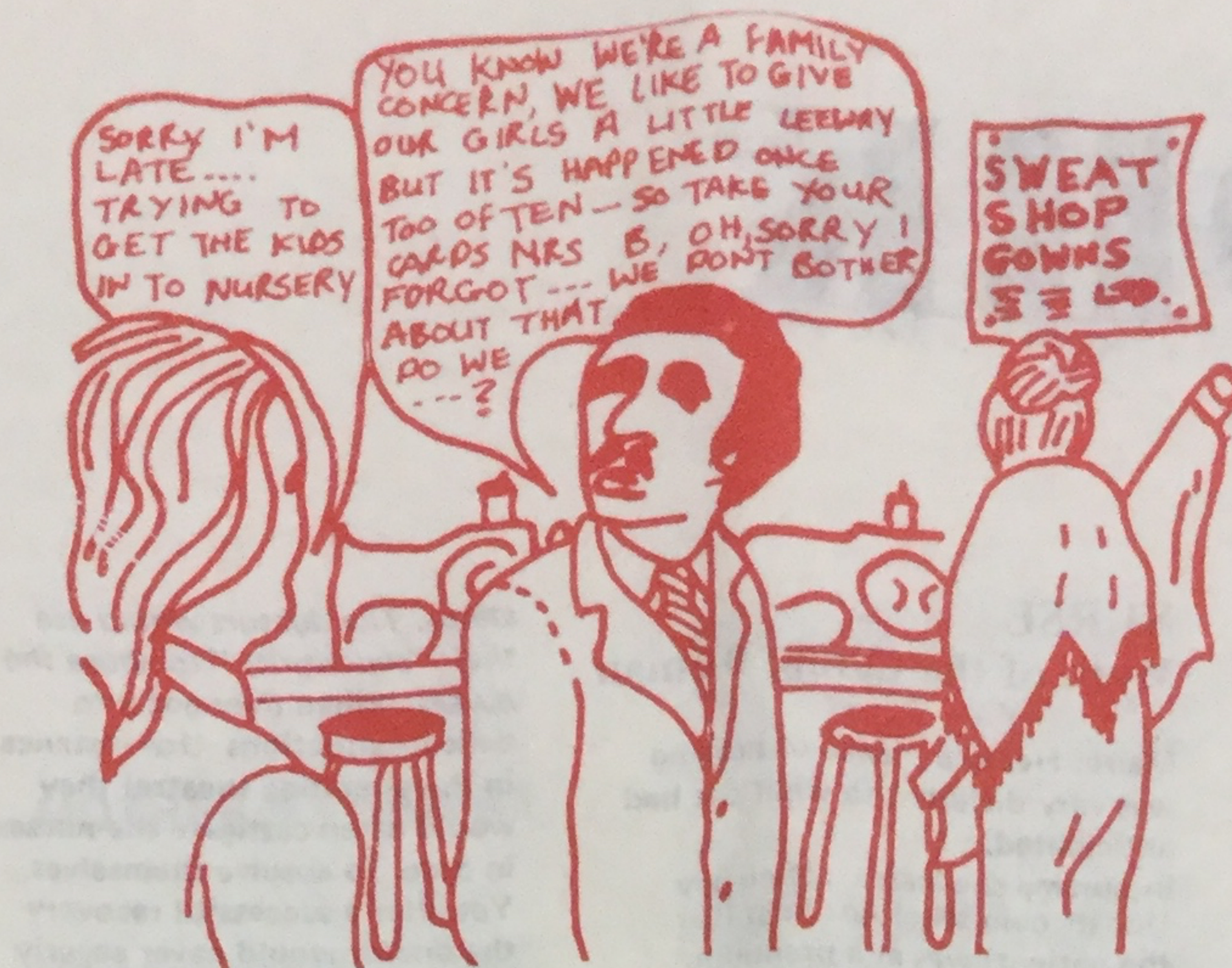
It is amazing the different price ranges of womens clothes if you look around Dublin shops, boutiques and markets. You might find a dress in the Dandelion or Dunnes Stores for £4 and much the same dress in an elegant boutique for £15. Someone along the line is losing out and someone else is making a neat fortune.

There are dozens, if not hundreds of small clothing factories in Ireland where the workers are nearly all women. Because these sweatshops are small the women are not organised in a union and they are being exploited by an employer whom they may know in a half friendly way and so he is harder to stand up against. When he fobs them off with bad wages.

Even worse off than these women are what are called home-workers. These are generally women who are forced to work at home because of the lack of nurseries and the difficulties in getting part time jobs. The clothing factories will give these women garments to make up at home in their own time. These would be very convenient to a woman in such a position but very often it's her only choice, therefore the factory can and does treat her extremely badly. Garments are delivered to her every week by van and these can be anything from easy straight-forward skirts to detailed coats, depending on the factory and how good (for the factory) the woman is. The woman uses her own premises, machine, light and heat. *For her own sanity she would probably need a separate room though I'm sure a lot of women would not have this extra and are expected to mind the children and have the meals ready just because they are at home.*

When you realize the fact that the employers do not pay any overheads it is shocking to see what these workers are paid. It differs according to the amount of work in the garment. A woman I spoke with told me she got a dress to do with pin-tucks down the front, a high collar and long sleeves with cuffs and she was getting 40p for each item. Before that she had had a heavy coat with plaid that she had to have perfectly matching with pockets and lining and she got 60p each! 63p was the most she had ever got for one garment. She had worked for years in a factory before this and was quite an experienced machinist and it would take her more than an hour to do the dress mentioned above.

*One of the worst facts of this work and the thing that will ensure its survival is the complete isolation of the woman worker. She sits at her machine in her*



*own home and she has no idea how many more like her there are, or where they are, or if they are as badly off as she. She has no way of meeting her sister workers and misses out on new friendships and new ideas that might be flowing around.*

This of course means she is not a member of a union and has no one to stand and fight with or speak up for her when she is treated badly. As it is, if she complains about rates that's the end of her — the factory can always find another woman who is in need of money. She is paying no tax or insurance which on one hand means she can draw dole if she has stamps from previous work, on the other the employer is saving the money they would have to pay in tax and insurance if she were working on the premises.

In England there has been an attempt to unionise these women, which is extremely difficult as factories are very careful about letting out information on who and where the workers are.

It makes me very angry to see women in such a position where they can be used and abused at the whim of an employer. Women must demand their right to a decent job with good conditions and a decent living wage. We must demand complete availability of contraception to all women who want it, and well run child care facilities, so that we have the power to plan our own lives in a positive way. Then let us hope these women realise their real worth and show these employers a thing or two!

### A VERY AVERAGE DRESS COSTING for 40p dress mentioned.

Material	£2.50
Cutting & overlocking	.50
Thread, zip etc.	.30
Delivery Collection	.30
Making	.40
Overheads —none	£4.00~
How much will it be sold for?	£10, £12, 15 ???

## DOUBLE WORKLOAD

Contd.

work' while the wife stays at home to work. She doesn't get paid for it. Her work is not recognised as being work. It only gets noticed when NOT done. She has no set hours of work and consequently none of leisure either. She is isolated in her work setting. Her work is unrewarding boring, and repetitive. She learns nothing from it. She doesn't develop through it. Her hours, days, years pass within the same four walls. The family changes, the wallpaper changes, she just gets older. And worst of all, she has no time to enjoy the one potentially fulfilling aspect of her life: her children.

### WHY DO WOMEN GO OUT TO WORK:

When the husband doesn't give his wife enough money to cover their needs (and particularly the children's needs) she feels justified in going out to work. Margaret, a part time factory worker says she has to work for the money: 'He spends too much on drink and therefore I've always had to work to make my own money up. I couldn't dress the kids if I didn't work. I don't know how much he earns'. In her case her husband not only refuses to help with the housework but insists that the washing and ironing be done before he comes home. Asked if she agreed with mothers working generally she replied: "Yes, I think it does a mother good to get out. The times when I haven't worked and I've been doing housework all day I've gone mad!"

The problems faced by the married woman who goes out to work highlights the difficulties in trying to widen the narrow role women are forced into in our society. From the beginning we are forced to think of ourselves as mothers and housewives,

and not primarily as workers. We are not encouraged to continue our education and we do not qualify for the same training schemes available to men. Even when our educational qualifications are good we are discriminated against e.g. men are chosen in preference to women, paid more, and promoted much sooner. If we are married we may be barred from work altogether.

### WHAT KIND OF WORK CAN WE DO?:

The job market narrows as we get older. And the only possibilities remain in those areas which provide an extension of our housewife duties such as: waitressing, cleaning, nursing, and teaching. The only other work available to women is on the factory floor where we get the worst jobs and the lowest pay.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE:

The married women who go out to work not only has to deal with the hardship of having a second rate job where she takes home only half her pay (Richie Ryan takes the other half) and where there is little or no union protection, but she has to cope with a second job when she gets home. For this second job she gets no pay at all and very little thanks from society. She does it because she has been conditioned from childhood to think of herself as a 'failure' if she doesn't. The need to fulfill her womanly role places enormous psychological and physical pressures on her. The state of her home for instance is seen as a personal reflection of her as a wife and mother. She has to try and live up to the standards set by her mother sometimes her mother in law; she worries about the criticisms of her neighbours and of course fears complains by her husband.

### SO WHAT'S THE ANSWER:

Women must refuse to function as unpaid workers in their own homes. EVERYONE has a right to a place in the work force — to a paid and socially rewarded job, one in which they can both express themselves and communicate with others. Housework should be the responsibility of the whole community, both women and men, leaving individuals free to do the job of their choice.

Until housework is socialised and women play an equal part in the workforce, married women will continue to carry the can for everyone else — functioning both as unpaid home makers and as cheap labour. But if housewives have twice the burden of other workers, we also have twice the power.

We too can strike!!



# EQUAL PAY

Prior to the enactment of legislation on these matters, claims could be brought under the N.W.A. to the Equal Pay commissioner. Of the only three cases dealt with by this man, one concerning plant nursery workers (approx. 20) was won. The other two, involving bakery workers and telephonists were turned down on rather arbitrary grounds. The bakery workers lost because men were supposed to be carrying heavy trays which women were forbidden to lift. The telephonists lost their claim for the same basic rate as men on the grounds that the men do night work (which the factories Act forbids women to do,) notwithstanding the fact that the men are paid a special bonus over and above the basic wage, for night work. Also the women (dayworkers) have a much heavier workload than the men. When the women went on a go-slow and the men voted to support them, the union called off the strike in favour of "talks" on the eve of industry's resumption after the Summer recess. Now the women have voted to take strike action. The 'Trico's 22 week equal pay strike in Britain has shown that unfair decisions of tribunals can be beaten by strike action.

Since the passing of the legislation the unions claim to have won equal pay for some of their members, but many of these claims are only partial ones and could have been won in ordinary collective bargaining situations.

As was predicted, the introduction of equal pay without the protection of anti-discrimination or unfair dismissals legislation has led to a replacement of women by men. Over time women cleaners in Bolton & Kevin Street techs. have been replaced by men while women cleaners in other educational establishments are being slowly phased out. In the meantime they have been re-classed as "maintenance staff" but are not getting equal pay.

The majority of women cleaners are, however, non-unionised and work under very poor working conditions, with very low pay. Their struggle has yet to begin.

The majority of women cleaners remain un-unionised, while working under atrocious conditions for appalling pay. Their efforts to make ends meet takes so much of their energy that any struggle in their work situation will need a lot of support from both the trade unions and the women's movement.

Meanwhile, the estimation last June, of average wage rates, shows a great gap between men and women despite the legalising of equal pay. The rate for men is £66.22 for 43.6 hours per week, while £32.3 for 37.2 hours per week is the average rate for women.

The latest recommendations for a national wage agreement have a clause which prohibits striking for equal pay, which is totally against the interests of women. If you get the opportunity to vote on this issue, vote against any restrictions of action in the fight for equal pay.

## NURSERY TALES:

Nursery facilities at anytime in Ireland have been totally inadequate and an economic recession such as the present one has done nothing to help. Since the Government has cut back on social welfare expenditure even existing nurseries are threatened from lack of funds.

These cut backs affect women more than any other group. Nursery provision is either provided on a fee paying basis which excludes the poor or is confined to children in "distress". Health boards, local authorities and voluntary organisations are the main contributors to these

facilities. None of the relevant government departments such as Health, Social Welfare or Education have a policy on the matter. The Eastern Health Board is the only board involved in nursery provision to any appreciable extent. They give grants to voluntary organisations to run eleven day nurseries. Yet these nurseries are again for children with a problem background. Other forms of provision for the under fives are pre-schools. These are generally private and fee paying. Dublin Corporation provides pre-school Play group facilities whenever a community indicates a "need". They are also involved in play group provision which include some Kinder Garten like facilities, — again totally inadequate.



## Standard of Nurseries:

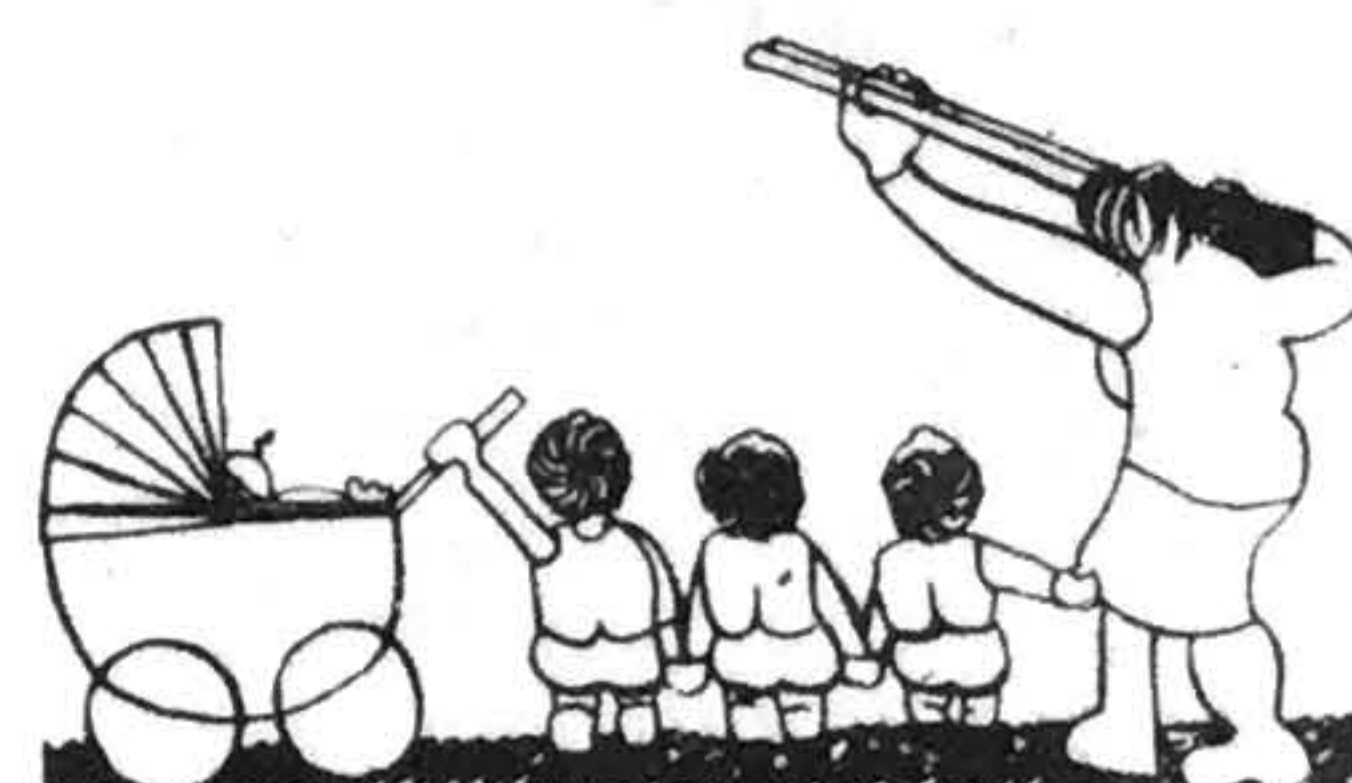
It is interesting to note the varying standards applied in two of our present nurseries in Dublin. Mountjoy Square nursery is an excellent example of the standard of care that is demanded. Despite the fact that the Eastern Health Board pays no more than a 40% grant towards costs, the staff includes a social worker, two Montessori teachers, a speech therapist and a cook. The three nursery workers are usually also helped by a student on leave from one of the university social science faculties. THE AVERAGE WAGE OF A NURSERY WORKER HERE IS £25 PER WEEK. As concerned mothers we owe our support to the Association of Nursery Workers' demand for a basic living wage. The regulated Montessori day with its emphasis on widening and integrating a child's perspective and a free play period in the nursery's playground, the nutritious diet provided for each child and the general care taken within this nursery is reassuring to any mother leaving her child there. In sharp contrast to this voluntary nursery, we have the Meath Street creche, funded by Dublin Corporation which teaches us the need to be on our guard when faced with facilities provided by the authorities. This creche is on the first floor of a building which was formerly a poor house. A gloomy room heated by an open turf fire is the play room. Play is even more restricted by the fact that the old folks have their social centre on the ground floor and consequently the children must stay as quiet as the proverbial church mouse so as not to disturb them. During the agonised week my neighbour spent there not a whisper was heard from these children. They assembled on wooden benches each

morning, were fed jam sandwiches and a hard pressed working mother did not dare contemplate how they spent the remainder of the day. The "official" nursery to which children are referred by social workers, caters for infants and cannot even boast the convenience not to mention the hygiene of a sluice. Social workers take notice! "EVEN CHILDREN AT RISK NEED MORE THAN THIS".

## Working Mother

The full burden of child rearing is placed on the mother in the isolated nuclear family without the necessary community based systems. State financed community based and community controlled nurseries should be seen as a necessary provision for all children. Nurseries and creches should be financed by employers as an addition or supplement to those of state financed.

It is interesting to note the relationship between the popularity of particular social psychological theories of child rearing the the needs of the economic system at any one time. DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR IN ENGLAND WHEN WOMEN WERE NEEDED TO WORK IN INDUSTRY, THERE WAS VERY LITTLE TALK OF MATERIAL DEPRIVATION AND ITS SUPPOSEDLY HORRIFIC EFFECTS. However, in times of economic recession with its accompanying rate of unemployment, there is a strong tendency to drive women out of the labour force and relegate them to the home, as full time housekeepers



and child minders. Also many mothers are accused of neglecting their children when they choose to work outside the home. These result in a catch 22 situation, where the working mother has to cope with inadequate or non-existent day care facilities plus social disapproval of her decision to work, and often uncertainties about the rights and wrongs of the situation in her own head.

NO GOVERNMENT CAN EVER TALK ABOUT EQUALITY FOR WOMEN, WHILE IT CONTINUES TO SEPERATE HOME AND WORK. Society WILL NEVER consider women equal to men while women continue to take the major share of responsibility for the daily housework tasks and childcare. All it does is to reinforce the isolation of women who stay at home and does nothing to alleviate the double burden of women who also work outside the home.



# STRIKE for EQUAL PAY

## The Claim

The claim by the Post Office Workers Union is that the female telephonists grade should have equal basic pay with the male night staff. As the parties failed to agree on whether the jobs of the two grades were equivalent, the question was referred to the Equal Pay Commission.

## Ultimatum

In Feb. 1977, the female telephonists in Dublin overwhelmingly agreed to press the Dept. into resolving their 8 year claim and threatened to take action if no acceptable proposals were forthcoming from the Dept. before March 7. As usual the Dept. ignored their stand. Thus the present action for a settlement to their long awaited claim began.

After eight years of fighting for equal pay, the telephonists are sure of one thing — this time they will win. Last August, they were fobbed off by the FUE (those notorious opponents of equal pay) and the Government (of referred to as the FUE solidarity committee). Now however, they are in a very strong position. At all the exchanges around the country, telephonists are ready to down tools at the signal of the strike committee. The male telephonists are also cooperating fully with the women.

## In the White Corner

Nevertheless the opposition are not to be underestimated. With the acceptance of the last National Wage Agreement, the unions waived their right to strike for equal pay. The employers, i.e. the Dept. of Post and Telegraphs and Richie Ryan are already guilty of breaking the terms of wage agreements, so who are they to point the finger!

Because the Government pays the salaries in the Dept. of P & T and in the Labour Court, it is reasonable to assume that the latter's rejection of the equal pay claim was less than unbiased.

A further problem is that the Minister for Post and Telegraphs is a well-known figure who gets plenty of media time, which he has recently used to distort the facts surrounding the strike. He claims that the women want the same pay as the men but that they won't all agree to do night work. The facts are, that the women want ALL workers to have a CHOICE about night work and want to maintain a £1 liability payment and an extra allowance for night telephonists, but want the same BASIC pay for everyone. (When men work in the daytime they are paid a higher basic rate than the women)

## Significance of Victory

If the women are successful in their strike, they will have beaten the Labour Court, the Government, Richie Ryan, who has put an embargo on all pay rises outside the NWA in the public sector and by breaking the NWA, they will probably leave the FUE hopping mad to boot!

The biggest victory of all will be the break-through on the issue of equal pay on which the law has been so narrowly interpreted as to stave off the majority of claims.

## Her Story of Post Office Workers

The women I talked with told me of two previous pay victories and of the Dept.'s efforts to defeat these.

The first was on behalf of the 2 or 3 women who deliver mail. These women had to agree to take on the liabilities of postmen, which involves carrying heavier bags and being available for night duty, both of which are rare occurrences. The Dept. argued that male liabilities would be reduced by virtue of the women being in the same grade and that equal pay therefore should be instituted by cutting the male rate. Happily the Union did not agree.

The other claim was made on behalf of women cleaners. In this case the argument was that because the women used a sweeping brush which was ½ inch shorter than that used by the men, they were allocated a slightly longer time for the sweeping of a room. Thus they did not do the same work. Once again the women agreed to work under the same conditions as the men and won the claim. Unfortunately the Dept. now says, the number of workers required must be reduced and it is thought that they will try to make some of the temporary workers (mainly women) redundant in the near future. The Union intends to resist any proposals of this kind.

## Married Women — Gentle Disincentives

But equal pay is not the women's only quibble with Conor Cruise-O'Brien. Since the lifting of the marriage bar, women who remain at work for more than two years after they receive their marriage gratuity become unestablished workers, which means not just a loss of prior superannuation, but a lower rate of pay, a loss of seniority, no right to promotion and puts them first on the list for any redundancies. The POWU has succeeded in obtaining the same basic rate for unestablished workers but their own rights have still to be won.

Not surprisingly then I was told that some of the strongest supporters of the strike are the married women telephonists.

## The Strike goes on

At the time of going to press, the women at Dame Court have not yet received their previous week's wages. For two days last week, they took strike action and although deductions are normally made a week on arrears, the Dept. has instructed the wages officer to delay payout until relevant money has been deducted. The women feel that this tactic is meant to depress them.

Another matter is that the Dept. refuses to negotiate while under threat of industrial action. The women think that in the same way as the women in Hickey's dispute were arrested for attacking scabs, the bureaucracy is pressuring them because they think women are more susceptible to respectable settlements.

The women are on the move and they are strong, but they may have a long fight ahead. Get your office/factory/college/union etc. to send messages of support and donations to the strike fund at 52 Parnell Square.

(Thompson's court case;)

## KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT — IF YOU WANT TO KEEP YOUR JOB:

This seems to be the attitude of the management at Gordon Thompson's a department shop of Thomas Street, but their employees think differently. They are on strike in support of a colleague who was dismissed because "they couldn't afford to pay her. The rest of the staff say "this isn't the reason." If it were, the policy would be, last in, first out, which is not the case here. The say that she spoke out against management on several occasions, and they are now exacting their revenge.

Fortunately these women and one man are backed by their Union, The Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks. But one third of all women in employment are un-unionised. The rates of redundancy among women is higher than that among men. Women must unionise and make themselves heard in their Unions. By doing so, they can organise to fight the victimisation.

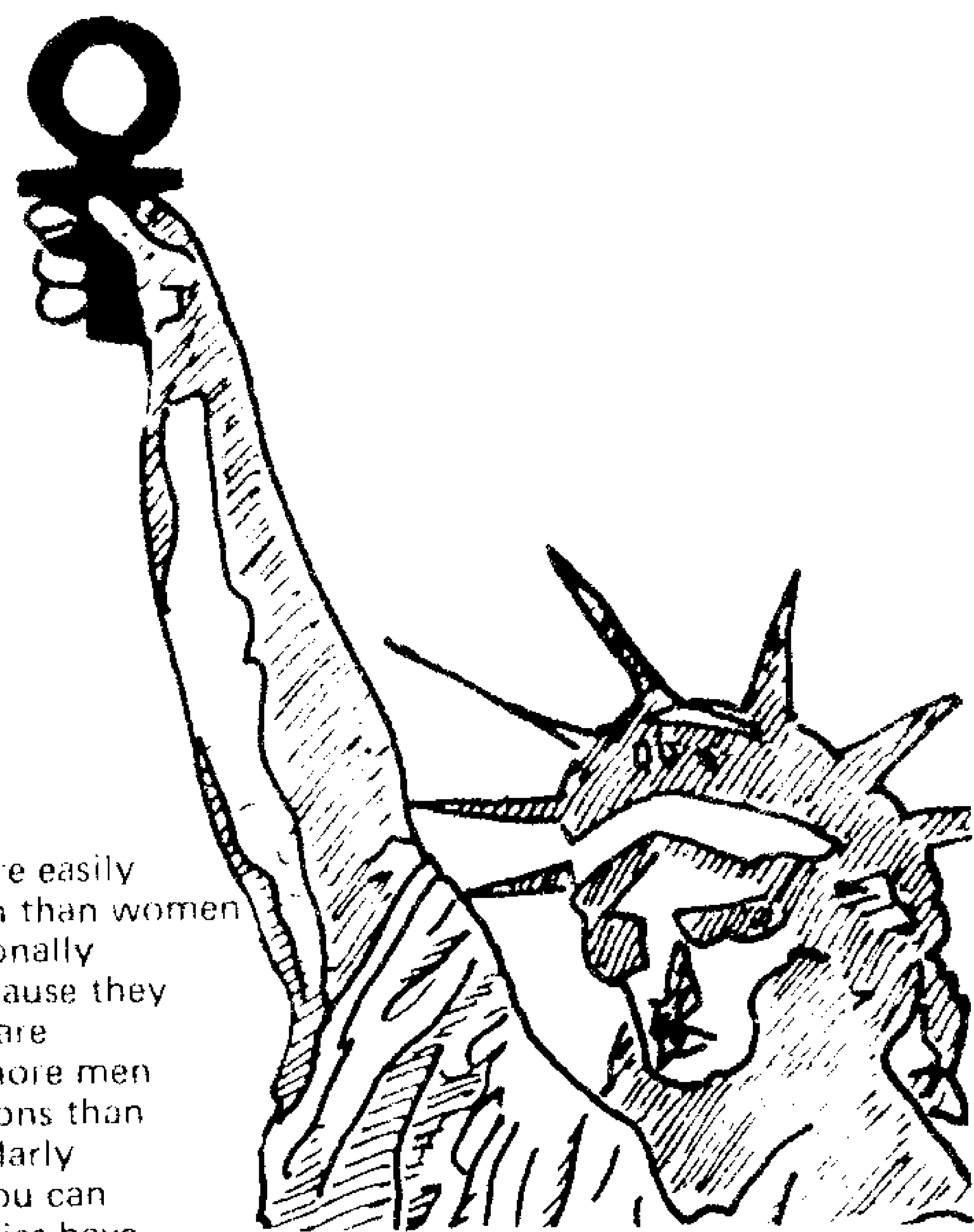
UNITE AND FIGHT!



TELEPHONISTS' STRIKE FOR EQUAL PAY



# The Natural Superiority of WOMEN



Or how, as proven by MALE scientists, the so-called "weaker" sex is in fact the superior sex, biologically, physically and intellectually.

## X DOESN'T EQUAL Y

The sex of all humans is defined by their chromosomes, the x being the female chromosome and y the male chromosome. A female is made of 2 x chromosomes and a male of an x chromosome and a y chromosome. The y chromosome is a mutant, that is to say it is an x chromosome gone wrong. Seen under a microscope it looks like a "wrinkled up wretched looking runt" as noted American anthropologist and scientist Ashley Montague describes it.

So what? Nothing except that this mutant turns out to be as much of a nuisance as it looks. Indeed biologists are hard put to find anything positive about it, where as the list of higher occurrence of ailments associated with it is impressive such as:

- absence of central incision teeth;
- degeneration of eyes
- mental deficiency;
- epilepsy;
- cataracts;
- colour blindness;
- day blindness;
- growth of hair in the ears etc.

more boy children are born with mental deficiency than girls;

## FAMILY PLANNING CLINIC IN BALLINA

Here in Ballina, we are trying to establish a family planning Clinic and already have the support of the F.P.S., F.P.A., and I.W.U. There is a little, though adequate local support and now we need to find a doctor and premises. We intend to hold a public meeting in the town very soon, and from this, hopefully, will emerge a group of stronger women who will go on to fight for feminism, particularly in the rural areas.

*Moir, Wendy,  
Castletown House,  
Castleconner, Ballina,  
Co. Mayo.*

**Late News: 400 SIGNATURES FOR CAP PETITION . . FRONT PAGE COVERAGE IN "WESTERN PEOPLE" . . . . HUGE PUBLIC SUPPORT**

Children every age range, more males die than females; female foetus survive better than male foetus and the poorer the nutritional and environmental conditions the more likely is the infant female to survive than the male. Women are healthier than men (by that we mean the capacity to deal with germs and illness). Females recover from illness more frequently than males do. Death from almost any disease is more frequent in males than females. For every female stutterer there are five male stutterers. Word deafness — the inherited inability to understand the meaning of sounds — occurs more frequently in the male than in the female, and so does baldness, gout and ulcers of the stomach. We could go on — the evidence is clear: from the constitutional standpoint, the woman is the stronger sex. The explanation lies largely in the female's possession of 2 x chromosomes and the male's possession of only one. But that's not all. That the male is endowed with a y chromosome seems to put him at a greater disadvantage than if he had no y chromosome at all, as several unfortunate conditions are associated with it. Some men have 2 y chromosome instead one. That double y has often been found in psychopaths, that is violent criminals. Need we say more?

So remember sisters: next time he tries to tell you he's superior, put him back in his place and tell him y.

## SEXUALITY

Men have prided themselves on their sexual athleticism, but this is nothing compared with what women are capable of. The clitoris is vastly more sensitive than the penis. The Penis has a very poor nerve supply and compared to the clitoris it is almost without sensation. Women are capable of far more continuous orgasms than men. Men have tended to claim that with the menopause women's interest in sex declines. Nothing could be further from the truth. Although the duration of female reproductive capacity is shorter than that of the male, her sexual abilities are much greater and considerably outlast that of the male. It is the male sex that is the impotent sex, and women's so-called "frigidity" is more often than not the product of an incompetent male.

## AND WHAT OF EMOTIONS

Though women ARE more emotional than men, men are emotionally weaker than women,

that is, men break more easily under emotional strain than women do. Women are emotionally stronger than men because they bend more easily and are more resilient. Thus more men are in mental institutions than women, a fact particularly annoying to men as you can imagine. Women, studies have shown, have more than men, are less easily flustered and embarrassed and retain their self-possession longer under adverse conditions. For every female who commits suicide, 3 or 4 males do so. Finally, and you'll love this one, a study made during world war 1 in heavily bombed areas of London and Kent, showed that almost 70% more men broke down and became psychiatric casualties than women. So much for the stiff upper lip.

## PHYSICAL STRENGTH

The female is generally shorter, slighter and muscularly less powerful than the male. But do the greater size and muscular power of the male confer greater survival benefit upon him? Since the survival of humans does not depend upon violent conflict with anyone else, the answer is clearly no. Which sex survives the rigours of life, whether normal or extreme, better than the other? The female sex. Women endure all sorts of devitalizing conditions better than men: starvation, exposure, fatigue, shock, illness and the like. Indeed in so far as 'sheer muscular efficiency and endurance are concerned, the performance of the shorter, slighter female as a cross channel swimmer, suggests that the best women can do at least as well as the best men — the English channel race from France to England in 1957 in which both women and men competed, was won by a female swimmer.

And closer to home, the Dalkey Island swim is regularly won by young girls who defeat their fathers and brothers.

## WE'RE SMARTER TOO — BUT YOU KNEW THAT

The average weight of the brain of the European male is about 1.385g. and of the female 1.265g. That is to say, the male brain weights, on the average 4 oz. more than the females. The biggest human brain on record was that of an idiot (2.850g) and the smallest that of the gifted french writer Anatole France (1.100g) No comment on that!

The elephant and the whale have larger and heavier brains than humans, but no one has yet suggested that they are more intelligent than humans. And anyway they are bigger than humans which brings us to the relation between the size of the body and the size of the brain. When allowance has been made for the general size of each sex, the female emerges with the advantage in brain size — Granting that, what about the size, shape and the form of the supposed seat of intelligence, the frontal lobes? Well the frontal lobes are larger and more globular in the female than they are in the male. Finally the woman has a better blood supply to the brain to ensure perfect functioning of this proven superior machinery.

But does she do anything with it? In other words does it make any measurable difference? Well guess what? With the exception of arithmetic, mathematics, mechanics and mazes, females achieve significantly and consistently higher in the intelligence tests than males. At age 3 girls have higher IQs than boys. From infancy to adulthood, the female superiority in verbal or linguistic functions is consistent and marked. On tests designed for testing the intelligence of Army inductees during world war 1, women attained a significantly higher average than men. Girls excel in most test of memory. They also tend to excel in LOGICAL rather than rote memory. Women are characterised by a more vivid imaginary than men. Girls excel, on the whole, in general school achievements as measured by achievement tests and school grades etc. etc.

As far as intelligence scales and other indications of what we call intelligence go, the conclusion is clear, girls do better than boys on whatever it is that the intelligence tests and other tests measure.

And yet who runs this world? Men, which explains the mess its in!

We of course, don't think that these INSECURE comparisons count for anything — we are looking forward to an egalitarian society such as the early matriarcal societies.



Dear Editor,

I would like to remark on the historically obscure and inaccurate article in your last issue on "How Irish Women Won the Vote". You refer vaguely to the position of Irish Rebels and Republicans while only dealing concretely with the views of the most reactionary sector of the Irish middle class i.e. that represented by the Redmondite party. It does not surprise me to hear that a party which opposed workers' rights to join a trade union, or to arm in defence against an occupying army should similarly stand against votes for Irish women. It was not necessary that these should "change to extreme Tories . . . . at the whisper of Votes for Women". They were conservative and backward-looking in an overall sense, as are their children in today's coalition government.

Contrast these positions with those of James Connolly or the Republican organisations. Connolly was himself involved in the setting up of Ireland's original Irish Women United and in pressing for full female suffrage. The latter demand appeared in the earliest Republican programmes. Although the Republicans were not "feminist" in our developed sense of the word, they were certainly conspicuous by their forward-looking approach to the oppressed position of women. It was in an effort to win off the socially aware anti-Treatyites that the first Treatyite government granted full adult woman suffrage to Irish women. In fact this was several years before our English sisters achieved parity.

In the brief context of this letter I must restrict myself to one more point. It is simplistic in the extreme to accuse Republican women of being "distracted and divided" or "sidetracked" by the struggle for National Independence. Ireland's economic backwardness has been caused by Britain's political and economic stranglehold over her. This has led to the inordinately strong position of the Catholic Church in education and in social legislation (such as contraception, divorce.) To see the struggle for the liberation of women and the struggle of national liberation as mutually exclusive, shows a complete lack of understanding of the effects of the latter on the former.

No one could deny that Irish women are in a far worse position than their English or American counterparts, and this is obviously caused by Ireland's domination by Britain.

None of this undermines the need for women to rely on their own strength rather than that of their Socialist or Republican brothers, in fighting their oppression. In the words of James Connolly — "There is none

so fit to break the chains as those who wear them"

sisterly greetings,  
Betty Purcell.

Dear Banshee,

In the previous issue of Banshee I find more examples of the emotionalism that is putting down the standard of Banshee and limiting its appeal. The article on Prostitution "They keep women on subsistence wages (or no wages — housewives) so that many of us may be driven to it (prostitution)" and "Our Bodies, Ourselves": "The Catholic Church . . . is concerned. . . in keeping its power over women", for example are all very well for people who have rejected marriage and the Church, and the norms of a male dominated society, but for the majority of women, for whom marriage etc. is a very important part of their lives, this kind of article is not going to have any effect. A threat to a whole life style even if it is well founded, always arouses strong resistance, and the emotionality of the article in Banshee is a perfect excuse to dismiss the whole feminist cause as extremist and irrational.

In a society where the very mention of women arouses emotional response, it is surely essential to have back up support

for statements, and to write persuasively, with an understanding of the social, cultural and economic conditions which have led to the subjection of women, if Banshee is to have any broad appeal or make any impact on its readers.

Geraldine Moane  
Loughlinstown,  
Co. Dublin.

Dear Banshee,

While our members were campaigning recently for the Contraception Action Campaign, they were encouraged by the enthusiastic support given to the campaign. However, three of our members had an unpleasant experience in Ballyfermot, when they encountered a certain priest of singing fame, (Fr. Michael Clery). We would like to relate some of his comments to your readers.

In the course of being interrogated by his reverence, they were told that the C.A.P. campaign should be renamed "Durex Action Programme". His belief being that the PILL is readily available. He offered to arrange unlimited supplies of Durex for us, from a "pal" who "has a garage full of them". He assured them that wearing Durex was like "going to bed with your socks on". We'll take his word for it. He related

some of his experiences as a Catholic marriage counsellor and claimed that perversion rather than contraception was the main problem in marriage. He graphically described a case concerning a woman parishioner who sought his CONFIDENTIAL advise. Her husband had beat her with his belt and then wanted to have intercourse "up her back passage", to use the priests words. Contraception was not necessary in cases like this, he said.

"you fucking women libbers are a breed apart.  
You're talking a load of arseholes,  
You should be collecting for the poor  
You're a Red plot  
You're fucking indoctrinated.  
The most beautiful time for a woman to have intercourse is when she can't conceive".

are just a few of the comments put to our members by him. We will leave out the more sordid details.

Womens Liberation Movement  
P.O. Box 662  
Dublin 9.

Dear Sisters,

In her letter about Feminism and Socialism your correspondent

individual love relationships whose full development is hindered and sometimes destroyed by the insidious economic, social and sexual binding of marriage". The legal discrimination described above is not "insidious". It is blatant and undeniable. In the past, the business-like character of marriage was perfectly obvious, marriages were arranged and the individuals involved had little say in the matter. In the past fifty years individuals may have been encouraged to choose their partners and much emphasis has been made of the importance of a love match. Consequently some women imagine that the marriage relationship is purely personal and private, whereas in fact the legal contract remains fixed; A contract whereby a woman surrenders her legal rights in return for a certificate of legitimacy for her children.

Every marriage is a public vote of support for the system which considers all other relationships, whether heterosexual or homosexual ILLICIT, and considers all children born outside of marriage ILLIGITIMATE. Our charter pledges us to fight all forms of legal and economic discrimination against women. The very function of marriage is to discriminate against women. Therefore we, as feminists, must do everything to abolish it.

Rosine Auberting.

Dear Sisters,

I must express a feeling of disappointment that I felt on reading the review on Erica Jong's "Fear of Flying". I read this book but seemed to have got more from it than the reviewer. I found I could relate to Isadora and I think a lot of women who are thinking on feminist lines but have not yet worked it all through, could also identify with her. The review was unsympathetic in this way.

She seemed to have missed what I considered the crunch of the book at the end of the 17th chapter where sitting over her diaries Isadora realises she is on her own and begins to see that in a positive light. She knew then that it was her life, and with or without a man she was improving as herself and intended to continue to do so.

Her relationship with her mother and family was also interesting in the book. On the whole I found "Fear of Flying" more positive than the reviewer seemed to.

Yours in sisterhood,

Anne O'Brien

Anne Speed makes some comments about marriage which I think are self-contradictory.

She says: "To equate ancient forms of slavery with the present marriage seems to me to be somewhat facile". It is not facile, because the modern form of marriage doesn't differ essentially from marriage in the past. Marriage, in all societies we know, of, is a legal contract in which a man buys a woman's sexual, reproductive and domestic services in return for the promise of financial support (bed and board) And this is not a matter of personal opinion, it is a definite fact that can be proved by examination of the law. A wife is still bound, in Ireland and in many other countries, to supply sexual services. So a husband can sue another man who, has an affair with his wife for depriving him of the said sexual services: "Criminal Conversation" Act. A woman is still legally considered to live wherever her husband lives, has no legal rights over her children independently of her husband, must have her husband's consent for many surgical operations to do with her reproductive system (hysterectomy etc.), she can be refused employment, is denied full social welfare and pays extra taxes, all because she is a wife.

Your correspondent continues: "many marriages today are based on



# POEMS

## WHEN I THINK OF WHAT THEY'VE DONE TO US

When I think  
of what they've done  
to us  
I hold you closer

When I think  
how they've stripped  
us  
of our past  
our culture  
how they've raped  
our minds and bodies  
and made of each woman  
they've touched  
an enemy of her sister

When I think  
how they've broken us  
into two opposing camps  
of their mothers  
and their whores  
Our mothers  
Our sisters

When I think of this  
I hold you closer  
and know  
one small territory  
they will never conquer.

## woman to woman

### LOVE

Was it you who came  
or I  
Is it your heart I hear  
beating so wildly  
or mine  
Whose breath is that I feel  
rushing in my ear  
and that sudden shudder  
in our limbs  
am I to blame  
or you

Our nerves  
are so entangled  
I have no way to tell  
your body from mine  
and that cry  
that long aching cry  
is it my heart breaking  
or yours.

### BETWEEN WAKING AND SLEEPING

If love dies out  
in the long hours of promise  
and sworn commitment  
it flares in the glance  
I almost missed  
or in the touch  
you let slip  
between waking and dreaming

Between waking and sleeping  
my heart opens  
and closes  
in those dark hours  
half remembered in day light  
when you turn from your dreams  
all unknown to yourself  
and whisper your love.

### EXILES

We  
have no part  
in this world,  
they made it  
not us.

The rules are  
theirs,  
The power is  
theirs  
The monuments  
and the wars,  
Even the Gods  
are theirs.

We do not live  
in their world.  
We survive  
in occupied territory  
They offer us reservations,  
We want a revolution

And it depends  
on us, my love  
only we and  
our sisters  
can reclaim our heritage,  
recreate the past  
and forge the future

So when we fight  
and split ourselves  
over their hairs,  
I tremble  
for our dreams

For we are all  
we can discover  
of that lost age  
of women,  
and our fragile dreams  
are all we can imagine  
of the times to come.



### FAITHLESS

We build love  
as a bulwark  
against fate,  
to protect ourselves  
from the pitiless  
and careless  
laws of nature.

If there is no god  
and no ultimate purpose  
must we then create  
in this world  
an empathy so mystical  
it can defie  
time and space  
and lift us above  
all petty dictates  
of mortality

And yet we know  
just five hundred miles away  
you dreamt of me  
without my knowing  
and only five hours  
seperated  
I woke in the night  
calling your name  
and you say  
you didn't hear me.







# IRISH WOMEN UNITED CHARTER

## PREAMBLE:

At this time, the women of Ireland are beginning to see the need for, and are fighting for liberation. This is an inevitable step in the course of full human liberation. Although within the movement, we form diverse groups with variant ways of approaching the problem, we have joined together around these basic issues. We pledge ourselves to challenge and fight sexism in all forms and oppose all forms of exploitation of women which keep them oppressed. These demands are all part of the essential right of women to self-determination of our own lives — equality in education and work; control of our own bodies; an adequate standard of living and freedom from sexist conditioning. We present these demands as the following women's charter.

### 1 THE REMOVAL OF ALL LEGAL AND BUREAUCRATIC OBSTACLES TO EQUALITY:

- 1 i.e. with regard to tenancies, mortgages, pension schemes, taxation, jury service, equal responsibility for children, social welfare benefits and hire purchase agreements.
- 2 The right to divorce.

The Constitution should be reviewed with a view to examining the role of women and updated to eliminate discrimination against women.

### 2 FREE LEGAL CONTRACEPTION:

- 1 State financed birth-control clinics.
- 2 The right to a free, legal and safe abortion.

### 3 THE RECOGNITION OF MOTHERHOOD AND PARENTHOOD AS A SOCIAL FUNCTION WITH SPECIAL PROVISION FOR:

- 1 State support for programmes implementing the socialisation of housework, i.e. community laundries, kitchens, eating places etc.
- 2 State provision of an adequate place to live, irrespective of sex, age, number of children and marital status.
- 3 The provision of local authority, free of charge, twenty-four-hour nurseries, giving every satisfaction in respect of hygiene and education; to be staffed by trained personnel and under the control of the communities in which they are located.

### 4 EQUALITY IN EDUCATION— STATE-FINANCED, SECULAR, CO-EDUCATIONAL SCHOOLS WITH FULL COMMUNITY CONTROL AT ALL LEVELS, SPECIFICALLY:

- 1 An end to enforced conditioning of sex roles through curriculum, teaching methods and materials (i.e. textbooks, games etc.)
- 2 The provision of local pre-school centres for all desiring to use them
- 3 An end to segmentation of education, to be replaced by fully comprehensive second and third level schools, incorporating both technical and academic learning.
- 4 Ending of discriminatory barring from particular courses traditionally relegated to men; encouragement for women to enter these courses through programmes of reserved places, etc.
- 5 Funding and encouragement of a Women's Studies Programme at second and third level.
- 6 Provision of free creches on campuses
- 7 Provision of a women's centre on campuses
- 8 Equal access to further education for all women, regardless of age or marital status.

### 5 THE MALE RATE FOR THE JOB WHERE MEN AND WOMEN ARE WORKING TOGETHER:

Where the labour force is wholly female, the jobs done by these women should be upgraded and a national minimum wage implemented, linked to the cost of living increase. We reject the use of job evaluation techniques for the purpose of negotiating pay claims.

The right of women to have access to all types of employment, including all types of skilled, and promotion regardless of marital status, pregnancy or maternity.

The right to training and re-training for all occupations including apprenticeships, and the present system of apprenticeships to be restructured. That it be compulsory for all employers to make readily available day release courses, with pay, for all employees.

Working conditions to be, without deterioration of present conditions, the same for women as for men: in addition, the institution of worker-determined flexible hours. The removal of protective legislation should not be a condition to gaining equal pay, and should be extended to include men.

The right to statutory maternity leave of twenty weeks with full net pay; additional leave with pay in cases of illness connected therewith, the right to attend pre-natal and post-natal clinics as required.

Prohibition of dismissal from employment on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity.

Employers to ensure that every effort is made to facilitate employees who are pregnant insofar as the latter's duties are concerned, the guarantee of reintegration into employment without loss of status or service, the right to further training or re-training after statutory or prolonged maternity leave, and the option for equivalent forms of paternity leave.

### 6 State provision of funds and premises for the establishment of women's centres in major population areas to be controlled by the women themselves.

### 7 The right of all women to a self-determined sexuality.

SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL



**Title:** Banshee, No. 7

**Organisation:** Irish Women United

**Date:** 1977

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