

Vol. 1 No. 2 june 1972

FOWNES STREET

JOURNAL



**Women's Liberation
Movement**

7 Fownes Street
DUBLIN 2

Telephone: 770679

PRICE: 5p

WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN

WOMEN'S LIBERATION

Joining Women's Lib doesn't mean that you have to commit arson with your underwear, beat your husband, swear like a trooper and drink pints.

What it does mean (for the young anyway) that if it is a successful movement you should be able to follow any career (including motherhood) for which you have the ability with no more of the setbacks than those common to the human race. This means, of course, that you should be able to receive the education suited to your talents - not just something thought suitable for the generalised woman.

It should mean that you will have equal rights and responsibilities running a house and family, and that if you are unfortunate and end up in a criminal court, there will be at least 6 women on the jury.

It should mean that planning your family is a matter for individual conscience and the teachings of your chosen religion, rather than for a matter for Government control.

It should mean that the care of the children falls equally on men and women and that the consequences of desertion, being the parent of an illegitimate child or losing a partner through death, depend on the nature of the misfortune, rather than on the sex of the victim.

It should mean that society will be neither male dominated as it is at present, or female-dominated as some fear it will be if Women's Liberation is successful.

It should mean that working conditions, salaries etc. depend on the job and not on the sex of the worker.

Women in comfortable circumstances, with understanding doctors, sympathetic confessors and good husbands who don't take advantage of their special position, women who are content and fulfilled in their homes, or happy in a job which offers reasonable rewards to women may think there is nothing in it for them but they should think of their less fortunate sisters who often through no fault of their own suffer indirectly from the inequalities of treatment, social and economic and legal, meted out by society.

We are anxious that women as a whole should participate more in public life and men more in domestic life. One cannot go on without the other. A family needs a mother and a father; society needs both sexes participating in its management. They don't necessarily have to do the same things, but what they do should depend less on their sex and more on their abilities. Heaven knows we have enough problems to solve without adding to them by setting up distinctions where there are none.

We are not, I hope, trying to prove that women are better or the same as men, but that as humans they are entitled to as much or as little as men, not to less benefits and more hardship, not to have to give more and receive less.

Contd. on page 2

Contd. from page 1

We do not think that women left to themselves would necessarily run society any better than men have; we only wish that such a difficult task should use all the talent available.

Some may think that the movement has gone to extremes but before all those 'reasonable' men and silent women condemn it out of hand, they should remember that the position of women in society is neither just or reasonable, and as is painfully evident at the moment, the oppressed can only get a hearing by protesting loudly. Movements which have a frivolous basis or are not necessary, seldom last.

HOW FEMALES ARE "FINISHED"

Mrs. F.D. Goode, Principal of Cygnets' House in London (one of the smarter finishing schools) feels the training of young ladies is a serious business. She says that the school has a serious purpose: "We are not frivolous. We want to teach the girls useful things". They learn English if they're foreign, French if they're English, with Cordon Bleu, cookery, dress-making, international history, home nursing and infant welfare. They have lectures on Life in the British Army today. They learn the arts too, the art of flower arrangement, the art of conversation: "Always avoid an icy silence. Turn to your partner and say 'Oh, and what do you do?' They also learn the art of leaving room(s) (Back towards the door and don't slam it) - and entering rooms (don't dither in the doorway, stride straight in)".

This is YOUR value?

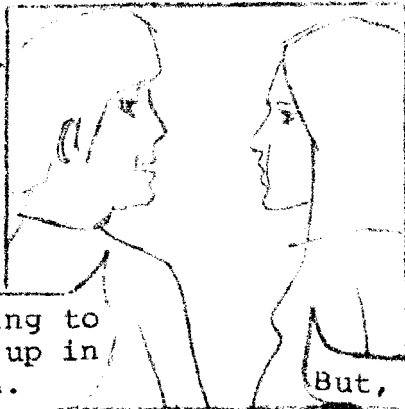
On BBC 2's Money Programme an average housewife had her routine work costed by a management consultant on an industrial basis.

The consultant isolated 11 different categories of work: nursing, teaching, maintenance, handymanning, laundry, book-keeping, public relations and social secretary. Love and companionship were left out as being above price. Points were awarded each category depending on the amount of time it had absorbed. The result was 145 points which placed the housewife in the same category as most clerical workers. The salary is given on a point basis. However, the total number of hours worked was 85. The financial reward for this was calculated as follows:

40 hours at the usual rate;
33 hours at time and a half;
12 hours at double time.

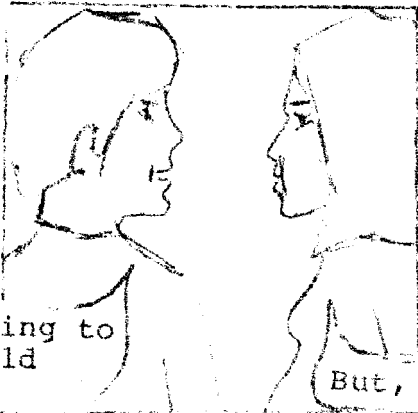
And the resultant wage -
£3,834 p.a.





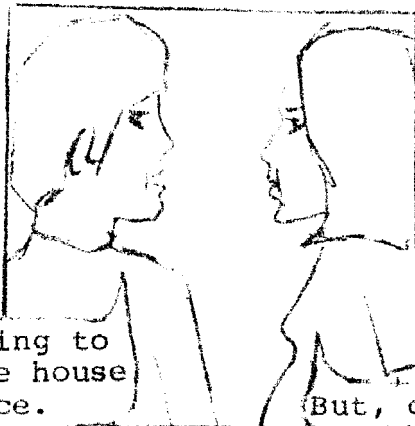
Baby is going to be brought up in my religion.

But, dear...



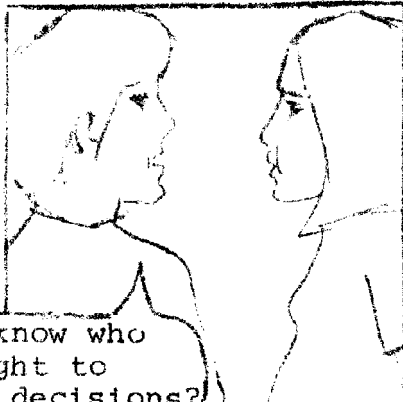
Baby is going to go to my old school.

But, dear...



Baby is going to live in the house of my choice.

But, dear...



Don't you know who has the right to make these decisions?

Why when my husband and I are together is he the one approached by paper boys? Can't I choose for myself or maybe I look illiterate?

Why when we go out to eat is he given the menu, winelist and finally the bill? Do I look a penniless teetotaler on a diet?

Why when we go to places of entertainment do the staff address him with "Yes, sir"? Am I invisible?

Why when a salesman is selling electrical gadgets or tools does he ask for the man of the house? Is it ever considered that I might be more mechanically minded?

Why do firms which advertise household equipment insist on addressing their jargon to "Mr. so and so"? This happens in some cases where there isn't even a man in the house. Does this mean that one must either have or procure a man before being allowed to purchase? I can see it all now - GIRL WEDS TO GET THE WASHING MACHINE OF HER DREAMS!

Why is it that in many firms a woman makes the tea, even if she has equal status to the male staff? (ie bank clerks) Hence the term 'tea lady'.

We must stop all this discrimination, beginning with the little things.

W O M E N A N D N O N V I O L E N C E

It is not enough for women who are aware of the inferior position society has marked out for them to be anti-society, or anti-discrimination or anti-men. That approach will do little to improve the inequalities every woman must face at home, at work, and before the law. As women struggling to end the oppression, we have experienced for centuries, we must ask ourselves two questions: What kind of world is it we want? What method should we use to build this world?

Looking at the world which has for so long regarded us as second-class citizens, we see it as one characterized by domination, exploitation, and aggression. It makes no sense to ask for an equal role in that world. What value is there in turning the oppressed into the oppressor?

It is to the philosophy of nonviolence that women must look for an idea of the world we want and the method we will use to achieve this. Non-violence demands that competition be replaced by cooperation. It demands that each person be allowed to develop their full potential and not be forced to play a sex role. It demands that injustices be actively opposed. But it refused to physically harm the opponent believing that the method of violence only causes a situation to polarize and deteriorate. To fight for a different world we must use a different method. "The means are the end in the process of becoming". Violent means will only produce more violence.

Nonviolence is not the approach of the weak. It demands courage, imagination, and a willingness to suffer. Because it does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent but to win him over, it is the only method possible for women who hope to create a new society.

The methods of nonviolence are many: boycott, picket, strike, fast, civil disobedience, etc. They have been used for centuries to achieve everything from the right to vote to national independence.

The task facing women is to inform themselves of the past examples and potentials of nonviolence. We are rejecting the existing society as being unjust to half its members because they were born female. We must also reject the methods of that society - violence, domination, exploitation - and search for nonviolent alternatives if we are to build a world where women have the chance to develop as full human beings.

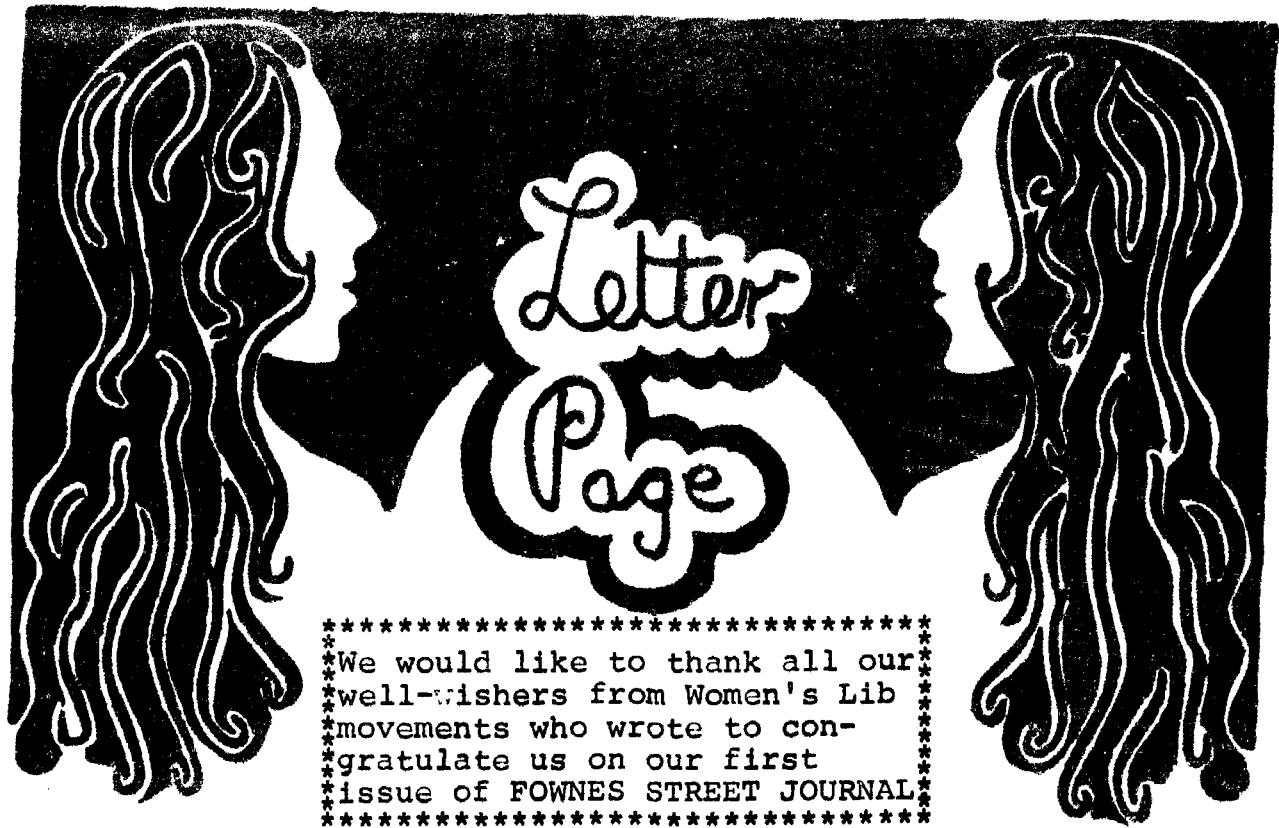
General Meetings: 14th June
28th June
12th July

Workshops:

Monday - Equal Pay and Education
Tuesday - Nonviolence
Wednesday - Ideology
Thursday - Legal, Housing and Contraception

"She gazed deep into his eyes, between them was a bowl of daffadills".

Quoted from Woman's Magazine



Dear Sisters,

My occupation: Assistant Librarian employed by a local Authority;
 Salary: £1750 p.a.;
 Age: 25 years;
 Status: Single, engaged to be married;
 Grouse: Being forced to resign on marriage.

I have worked in the Library service since leaving school in 1964. I chose the position of library assistant in preference to an University scholarship, teacher training or junior executive in the Civil Service. With passionate interest, I studied in my spare time to pass the Library Association's exams for a professional qualification. This took 3 years and I spent the next 3 years researching a thesis which I have just submitted. (All in my spare time). For these 6 years hard work, I hope to receive a Fellowship of the Library Association of Ireland (F.L.A.I.) I will then be regarded as a fully qualified librarian. In 1969, I was promoted to my present position.

However, the conditions of my employment force me to resign on marriage. Thus, just as I become fully qualified, my services are no longer needed. As I live in a rural area, I will have no opportunity of employment in my profession. It all seems a perfect waste. Yours, etc. (this reader wishes us to withhold her name due to possible repercussions)

The list of Careers Information leaflets issued by the Dept. of Labour provides an interesting index to the attitudes of Irish society towards women. While the mere fact that women are considered for jobs outside of the home may be regarded in some circles as an advancement to be applauded, the underlying attitude towards women's capabilities and interests is still discriminatory and paternalistic.

The list of pamphlets seems to be comprehensive, covering a wide range of careers, but at the same time it is limiting in that after each pamphlet listed there is a designation as to which sex has been deemed suitable for this particular occupation. Looking through the list, it is hard to discern what criteria the compiler used in assigning "girls", "boys" and "girls and boys" to each of the careers listed. As can be seen from the last classification, the list does include jobs considered suitable for both sexes. Here the criterion used seems to be one of ability rather than sex - and that is as it should be. Jobs such as computer programmers, journalists, teachers, solicitors, driver testers, accountants and doctors are open to both sexes. While it is heartening to see that women are considered capable of employment in these fields, it leads one to ask

why are we not considered competent to manage in other fields where the marking "boys" only is noted.

My argument (at least in the context of this article) is not that the list offers only a few areas of employment open to women but that by its classification of jobs by sex it perpetrates the idea that some areas of employment must remain closed to women. Leaving aside the jobs where one could argue that muscle power peculiar to men is required, we are still left with a number of jobs on the list which are labelled for "boys" only. This labelling seems to be based on nothing more than traditional prejudice which dictates that there are certain jobs which girls "can't" or "don't" do. How else do we explain that women are capable (according to the list) of becoming doctors but not plasterers, journalists but not compositors, physiotherapists but not plumbers, dieticians but not chefs, computer programmers but not bus conductors? Similarly "girls" classifications imply that only women are able to become telephonists, clerk-typists in the civil service, fashion models, calculation machine operators, domestic science teachers and dental surgery assistants. Why should this be so? One suspects that in many cases men "permitted" women to be freed from the home so as to have access to a cheap work

Contd. from page 6

force or to train future generations of women to accept the idea that it is they only who have any responsibility when it comes to running a home. Again this strikes me as a blatant example of prejudice. Traditionally, women have not been considered capable of becoming chefs or bus conductors or plasterers but they have been considered useful as the ones who performed the less interesting, ill paid and domestic orientated jobs. In short, jobs considered tedious or low paid or slavish have been readily doled out to women, being "unfit" for men.

The examples quoted above indicate that there is prejudice in at least the Department's notion of what is Irish society's attitude towards women and work; the important question is whether this prejudice is conscious or unconscious. If the latter, then the task of organisations such as ours is to foster awareness, but if this discrimination is a conscious policy, the fight will be long, and difficult in the extreme.

"At this time of year the heart of every woman turns to marmalade".

Quoted from 'The Lady'

Do you know.....

If a woman saves money out of the housekeeping allowance which her husband has seen fit to give her, it is still legally 'his' money and she may not spend it as she pleases.

LITTLE GIRL

Little girl, little girl
Come play with your toys
You will dirty yourself
If you play with the boys

Be a lady
Like the other girls
And I will buy you
A string of pearls

I will make you a dress
of satin frills and lace
And curl your hair around
Your pretty face

Take heed to what
Your parents have to say
And without doubt you'll be
Married some day

WOMEN'S LIBERATION MEMBER

FIRST WOMAN TO SIT ON

CORONER'S JURY

Derry McDermot broke an eight century long tradition when she acted as a member of a coroners jury on 31st May. Although the Coroner's Act (1962) merely lays down that every person over the age of 21 years who resides within the coroner's district shall be liable to serve on a jury, women up to now have not been considered for this service.

The situation regarding women jurors in criminal cases is somewhat different where jury service is restricted to property owners. Because women make up such a small percentage of property owners it is not considered worth while to include them automatically on lists of jurors. A woman who is eligible for jury service and who considers it her duty as a citizen must apply to the city sherriff to be included on the list of jurors. Here is where the system breaks down in a CATCH 22 stalemate: The occasional woman who appears on a jury is generally objected to on the grounds that volunteering indicated a dangerous tendency and who but a crank would do so?

Trial by jury is based on the idea that judgement by 12 peers is the most effective form of justice possible. In Ireland however, trial by jury means trial by 12 male property owners and this is reflected in the "justice" meted out in our courts.

P...

Those of you who saw the article and photograph of Derry in a certain daily newspaper of 1st June last may be interested to know that she was originally asked to pose with her knee under her chin. How this would have added to the KNEESVALUE of the story is difficult to see!

Due to lack of space, we did not carry our story on VD. It will appear in next month's issue.

* A D V E R T I S I N G *
* I N T H E *
* F O W N E S S T R E E T *
* J O U R N A L *
* We will be carrying ads *
* in our next issue; layout *
* details, costs, circulation *
* figures, etc. on application. *

All articles were contributed by various members of the movement and future contributions by any woman on any aspect of women's liberation should be sent to our office at Fownes St.

All rights reserved throughout the world. Reproduction in any manner, in whole or part, in English or other languages, prohibited, except by Women's Liberation Movements.

Title: Fownes Street Journal, Vol. 1, No. 2

Organisation: Women's Liberation Movement

Date: 1972

Downloaded from the Irish Left Archive.

Visit www.leftarchive.ie

The Irish Left Archive is provided as a non-commercial historical resource, open to all, and has reproduced this document as an accessible digital reference. Copyright remains with its original authors. If used on other sites, we would appreciate a link back and reference to the Irish Left Archive, in addition to the original creators. For re-publication, commercial, or other uses, please contact the original owners. If documents provided to the Irish Left Archive have been created for or added to other online archives, please inform us so sources can be credited.