

SW S/223/2017/1

**National
Assembly of
Women**



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S P R I N G - 1973

N E W S L E T T E R

283, Gray's Inn Rd. W.C.1.
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| W O M E N ' S S T A T U S I N S O C I E T Y B Y M A R Y S T O T T |
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Many, perhaps most, people believe unquestioningly that the division of labour between men and women is so fundamentally biological that it can't really be altered - only perhaps, modified a little. I think otherwise. In the first place, it is quite clear that the physiology of the human race has been greatly altered in the millennia since homo sapiens emerged from the hominids. To put it in the simplest terms, our arms are shorter, our legs are longer, our foreheads higher, our fingers and toes less prehensile, our chests less hairy. In the second place, it is quite clear that evolution means adaptation to environment. In the long history of the human race societies survived which were at least as much co-operative as aggressive; which divided labour both according to ability and to need. In a hunting society the women, burdened with children at the breast and in the womb, had to be left in the cave. In a farming society women worked in the fields.

So in our times too, civilised societies will only survive if they adapt to circumstances ... which means that there is an over-riding economic imperative for women's role, as well as men's role, to be sub-divided into many different tasks. If we continued to confine women to the one role of child-bearing and rearing it would mean that in a few generations we should so over-populate the world that the human race would be threatened by extinction through starvation.

Looked at in this broad perspective the struggle for the emancipation of women can be seen to be not only desirable but inevitable. I think all who work to establish the status of women as fully adult, independent human beings should take heart from this and have faith that they are campaigning not just for themselves and their sisters, but for the good of whole generations as yet unborn.

WOMEN'S STATUS IN SOCIETY CONT'D.

The division of labour can no longer be between the child-bearer and the family provider; the division of roles is no longer between the aggressive (male) and the passive (female). In our infinitely complex, work roles are divided in the most subtle and finely graded ways. At one end of the male spectrum you have the miner, the docker, the navvy, the deep-sea fisherman; at the other the gynaecologist, the paediatrician, the dress designer, chef and hairdresser; in the middle you have the accountant, the draughtsman, the proof reader. It is very obvious that the roles that need considerable physical strength and endurance and aggression are shrinking and the roles which need judgment, precision and sensitivity are increasing. It is only in the tough, physical roles that women are physiologically at a disadvantage; in the "growth" jobs they are at least on level terms except in so far as society conditions us to think otherwise.

Economic forces, I would almost say "natural forces" have been at work re-shaping women's lives and functions ever since the coming of the industrial revolution when the exploitation of labour drove women into the mines and factories to supplement the starvation wages of men. It was no accident, but part of the inexorable pattern, that from the time of the French Revolution, right through the 19th century, educated, independent women began to campaign for women's right to work, to be educated, to have control of their own property in marriage, to exercise the vote, the symbol of adult citizenship. We are beginning to learn more now about how women working in factories also joined together to establish their rights. (c.f. Sheila Rowbotham's recent, illuminating book, "Women, Resistance and Revolution").

I believe firmly in evolutionary pressures, but also in the power of individuals to give them momentum. Somewhere in the long line of evolution there was the first man to shape an arrowhead, the first woman to shape a baking dish from a lump of clay. There was the first woman to suggest that women might be in Parliament (probably Mary Wollstonecraft in her "Vindication of the Rights of Women", published in 1792); the first women to advocate birth control, Annie Besant and Marie Stopes; the first woman to campaign for family allowances, not only to aid mothers but to justify equal pay, Eleanor Rathbone. All these, and many more, helped on the evolutionary process more than they could guess. So did the Education Act of 1872, which was an irrevocable step towards the social equality of women.

Future historians may say that having won the franchise on equal terms with men in 1928, women sat back, as it were, and paused for breath. Having lived through this period I don't see it quite like that, though there was a sort of recession after World War II. But then, only a very few years ago, came a new evolutionary pressure, the Pill. The relationships of men and women, the structure of society are never going to be the same again now that all women can, if they wish, control their own fertility. It is an amalgam of the increase in higher education for women, the changing industrial and economic pattern and the ability of women to achieve a degree of economic independence, and the arrival of the Pill that has led to the resurgence of the women's movement which we now call Women's Lib. The skin is being peeled

WOMEN'S STATUS IN SOCIETY CONT'D.

from women's eyes -- but we still need the aware and the dedicated to get the movement rolling again -- to make equal pay a reality, to force the Government to pass anti-discrimination legislation, to evaluate women's work at its real worth and to remove legal, financial and social pressure on women.

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* F A M I L Y A L L O W A N C E S *

The Government is proposing to introduce a new tax system, one feature of which is that Family Allowance will be abolished. Child Tax Credits will replace both Family Allowances and Child Tax allowances. In the government Green Paper 'PROPOSALS FOR A TAX CREDIT SYSTEM' it is suggested that these credits are paid to the main wage earner, the father, in his wage packet. Although it states the government is open-minded as to whether child credits go to the father or the mother or are split between them, the Green Paper comes down heavily in favour of the money going to the father stating this would be cheaper, administratively simpler and quicker - and more in line with the present system.

People on Supplementary Benefit, those earning under £8 a week, the self-employed, and students are not to be included in the Scheme - this means that 10% of women now getting Family Allowance will be excluded.

A number of organisations are alarmed at the idea of Family Allowance being abolished and have been organising petitions and collecting evidence, both written and verbal to show that great hardship could arise for many women and children should this happen.

The response from women all over the country has been immediate and OVERWHELMING; we want to retain the F.A. as we know it, which means keeping our F.A. Books.

Mr. Barber, in his Budget Speech said that under the new system, women would be no worse off than they are at present; a new development but not good enough. At the moment women receive 90p a week for their second child and £1 for third and subsequent children.

Pittance as it is, Family Allowance is often the only reliable source of income, and during times of crisis, such as strikes can be the sole income for mothers and children. Since it is mothers who have the day to day responsibility for children they must receive the money allocated to them. Under the Family Allowance Act 1948 - the payment of F.A. to mothers with two or more children became a Statutory Right and is the only benefit which is not means-tested. Family Allowance is the only money paid to women in recognition for the important job they do in society, rearing the next generation. We feel that Family Allowance should be raised to a realistic level, paid to all children and PAID IN FULL TO ALL MOTHERS.

Jenny Bridge & Sue Murdoch,
(B.W.L. Group)

* COMMUNITY SERVICE *

At a time when the Advisory Council on the Penal System is expected to produce plans for radical changes in the penal system - the National Assoc. for Care and Resettlement of Offenders Conference at Norwich recently has been hearing suggestions that the Courts should specify a determinate sentence, but that 'treatment' should be decided by probation and 'expert' staff who would exceptionally be able to allow offenders to return home subject to safeguards - and at a time when Community Service Orders for adult offenders are being made by courts (in certain limited geographical cases initially) in lieu of prison sentences, it is perhaps appropriate to spare some time to consider what is happening in the lower age range.

The first surprise is that 'Intermediate Treatment' one of the major innovations of the Children and Young Persons Act, 1969 is not yet available. This was a scheme devised to give juvenile courts new and valuable options - to allow a child to remain in his home but bring him into contact with a different environment, interests and experiences and to secure the treatment of 'children in trouble' in the company of other (non-deviant) children and through the sharing of activities and experiences with the community. It is sad that an Act passed in 1969 which stemmed from Government White Papers going back as far as August 1965 has taken such a long time on coming to fruition. It is expected that these provisions will shortly come into force, but of course there will be limiting factors; the necessary period of initial trial and error, and the amount of time, energy and money that local authorities already overburdened in the sphere of the personal social services, can devote to this additional responsibility.

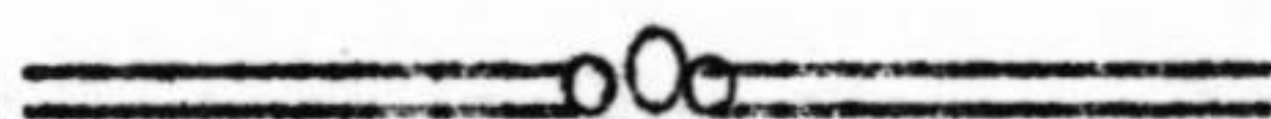
Turning to the 'custodial' orders which affect children, April 1st marked the transition for the majority of 'approved schools' into Community Homes. This was another major feature of the 1969 legislation, casting on local authorities the responsibility of providing a comprehensive system of homes to satisfy the needs of the children committed or received into care, and, not always consistent with this, the demands of society in relation to juvenile offenders.

While the whole concept of Borstal and Detention Centres for the over 17's has been thrown into the melting pot, one wonders whether the change from approved schools to community homes will be anything more than a change of name. The public need to be made aware of what plans there are for these 'homes' becoming a real part of the community. How far will these homes be situated from where parents, relatives and friends live and how much, if at all, will the regimes and training programme change. That changes are needed is beyond doubt, and careful consideration should be given to the quality of training of staff, the ratio of staff to inmates, and the aims and objects of such institutions. Absconding from the former approved schools was high, success rates in terms of re-offending was low, and the 'training' especially in relation to young girls, of somewhat doubtful relevance. If children are

COMMUNITY SERVICE CONT'D.

not to be simply 'put away' much more public awareness of these issues are needed, and, ultimately one hopes much more tolerance if indeed the word community is to take on a real meaning. At present juveniles of 14 and over can still be detained in prison and this is surely wrong. But local authorities who will eventually (how long one does not know) have to provide accommodation for unruly and severely disturbed juveniles are already planning 'secure provision'. The conditions in which children are at present contained and the meaning attached to security, leaves much to be desired. One hopes that it will not be too long before the changes, for which there already exists the statutory authority, will be forthcoming, not just on paper, but in reality.

L. Goodman



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+ The N.A.W. mourns the passing of PABLO PICASSO,
+ a great artist and man, who died at the age of 91.
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+ From his earliest years he was an advocate and
+ supporter of peace among people and nations. His
+ hatred of Fascism and the cruelty practiced against
+ the Spanish people was responsible for his decision
+ never to return to Spain until such time as Fascism
+ no longer existed there. This he carried out.
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+ The Poster which will immortalise his name with lovers
+ of peace throughout the world, was the 'Dove' which
+ symbolised the World Peace Movement.
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+ Another of his great pictures 'Guernica' depicted the
+ bombing and destruction of this most ancient town of
+ the Basques and the centre of their cultural tradition,
+ and people throughout the world honoured this great
+ picture which enabled them to identify their feeling
+ of horror with the agony depicted in this work.
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+ During the German Occupation of Paris in the early
+ 1940's, a German officer to whom he gave a postcard
+ reproduction of 'Guernica' asked him 'Did you do this?'
+ 'No' Picasso replied 'You did'.
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+ S O U T H A F R I C A - 1973 +
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The Wind of Change is coming to South Africa. The black worker is listening and aroused. This time the call is to him.

Thousands of black workers are on strike in S. Africa. There is an upsurge of unrest and frustration; they are striking against inhuman living conditions - against starvation wages. For the first time in 25 years, since the National Government has been in existence, strikes are taking place throughout the country. No longer are the black workers prepared to give their labour for a pittance - barely enough to keep themselves and their families alive.

These facts have been brought to light by the Press which reports that British firms and employers operating in S. Africa are some of the worst offenders in the payment of low wages. The United Kingdom South Africa Association in a recent Study showed that nearly 80 per cent of African employees of British Companies were being paid at below subsistence level.

The low wages and inhuman system of Apartheid under which the S. African people live, denies them the elementary rights of every human being; according to the leader of the GUARDIAN of April 3rd.

"Apartheid is not just a minor social aberration. It is an intolerable oppressive form of society. It depends on the denial to Africans of equal human rights - on exploiting their labour, on a prohibition of normal political freedom and on police terror. These are not exaggerations.

The effect on low health is obviously malnutrition, and mental retardation is common. It is said that 40 per cent of the children in Transkei die before the age of 10. In urban areas the situation is not much better. In Port Elizabeth in 1969, 30 per cent of African babies died in the first year of life - education deprivation is comparable - only one in one hundred reaches secondary school. The Suppression of Communism Act can be used against any organisation or individual who wants to bring social, economic or industrial change."

Together with industrial action by the workers and the publicity of the facts which have now been brought out in the open, some of the British firms with subsidiaries in S. Africa have agreed to raise the wages of the black workers, in some cases by as much as 100 or 50%. With even such raises this has only brought the average wage of the workers concerned up to £5 per week (it has been pointed out that the lowest subsistence level of a worker's wage in S. Africa should be not less than £10 per week). The struggle continues.

There is talk of a British Government Investigation, but the South African Government through its Foreign Minister Hildgard Muller has threatened to ban such a move.

SOUTH AFRICA CONT'D.

The British Labour and Trade Union movement should immediately undertake an investigation into the whole shameful sorry story, and action and pressure in every way should be demanded by all decent-minded people. If we allow such conditions to continue without protest, we are guilty of a callousness of which we should be ashamed.

I hope women of the N.A.W. and subscribers to the Newsletter will initiate and support any action which will help to eradicate and banish from this world the cruel system of Apartheid and its consequences.

Jane Segal.

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IS THERE NO POVERTY IN ENGLAND? THE FOLLOWING MAKES YOU WONDER!

AS REPORTED IN THE BRITISH PRESS

* Mr. Derek Banks, age 27, married with two *
* baby daughters was one of the official *
* pickets outside St. Mary's Hospital, *
* Paddington, during the strike of *
* Ancillary workers. His gross wage is *
* £20.95p taking home an average of £19 - *
* and he handles with one other porter all *
* the mail and internal correspondence at *
* the hospital. *
* The rent for the two-bedroom council flat *
* at which he lives in Kilburn is £10 a week. *
* Another £3 goes on electricity and that *
* leaves £6 a week for food, clothing, *
* travel and extras. *

* WIDOW WITH NO FOOD ATE CARDBOARD *
* ===== *

"A 68-year-old widow who was found dead with her dog in her Corporation maisonette on Christmas Eve had not been seen by relatives or neighbours for about three months and, with no food, had choked and died while eating cardboard.

Mr. Ronald Lloyd, the South West Lancashire Coroner, said 'In a so-called modern civilised society, I find it incredible that an elderly person could be reduced to circumstances of this kind and live in this condition for so long, without any apparent concern on the part of relatives, neighbours or public authorities.'"
(Daily Telegraph 29.12.72)

* THE PERSECUTION THAT NEVER ENDS. *
* The ordeal of Winnie Mandela *
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* Hilda Bernstein *
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It is difficult for people living in a different sort of society to understand what it means to be 'banned'. The bans are restrictions placed on individuals and vary in scope from the total 24-hour house arrest to the less stringent confinement to a town or district. All bans include a total prohibition on gatherings, and on communicating with other banned people.

A gathering is defined as two or more people coming together for a common purpose, and has been variously interpreted by the courts. In effect it means no contact with any group of people, only with certain individuals, and includes all social gatherings, school functions, classes, and of course all meetings, whether political or not. This is stringently applied. When my husband was put under house arrest there was a specific clause allowing him to talk to me. He was prohibited from any communication with other banned people 'with the exception of his wife, Hilda.'

Winnie Mandela was first banned in 1963, the orders prohibited her from all gatherings, from communicating with other banned people, and confined her to Johannesburg. At this time her husband, Nelson, was on trial in Pretoria; she had to obtain special permission from the Chief Magistrate to visit him and to attend the trial, the permission including all sorts of provisions about time spent on the journey, route taken and so on. She was first arrested in 1963 for some small contravention of these orders.

Two years later she was served with new, more stringent bans, including a ban on entering other African townships, which meant she could no longer continue with her job as a social worker. She was also precluded from attending study courses she had taken under a scholarship from the London University.

Nelson was now serving a life sentence on Robben Island, one thousand miles from Johannesburg, and Winnie had to obtain special permits for the six-monthly half-hour visits. In 1966, finding the Cape Town train full, she caught a plane, fearing that her permit would expire before she could see her husband. She was charged with breaking her banning order, which required her to travel by train. Sentence: 12 months imprisonment, all but four days suspended. Returning to Johannesburg after the Cape Town trial, she was arrested again, charged with attempting to resist arrest in Cape Town. She was found not guilty; she accused the police of improper behaviour.

In June of 1969, Winnie was among about 35 people arrested under the Terrorism Act and all were held incommunicado in solitary confinement for seven months.* The case fell to pieces in February, 1970, and the accused were immediately arrested and put back into solitary confinement for another terrible five and a half months. They were re-charged, and after weeks of argument the Prosecutor announced the withdrawal of the charges. Winnie was acquitted, after 491 days in prison, most in solitary confinement. She was free for two weeks. She went to visit her father, ill in Durban, and her mother. She applied to visit her husband on Robben Island. It was two years since she had seen him.

WINNIE MANDELA CONT'D.

Then she was served with more stringent bans, and 12-hour house arrest. The application to visit her husband was rejected by the magistrate, and police came to her home three or four times a day to harass her. After further applications she finally received permission to visit her husband in November. Soon after the 30-minute visit she returned to Johannesburg and suffered a heart attack.

Right throughout the period of 1971 and continuously the sad story goes on with arrests and harassment on flimsy excuses of her sisters and small children visiting her house. Finally in February of this year she was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment, though whether this is a previous suspended sentence coming into operation or a new one, is not yet clear.

This abbreviated account has omitted facts about the persecution of Winnie Mandela's sisters and other members of her family, who have also suffered harassment, arrest, banishment from Johannesburg and other punishments when they have tried to help their sister. Winnie has a heart condition, and should not be forced to live alone.

Why has Winnie Mandela been made the target for this terrible continuous persecution? Undoubtedly, the fact that she is Nelson Mandela's wife is one reason she has been singled out; but this is not the only reason. (Albertina, wife of Walter Sisulu, also serving life imprisonment, has been subject to surveillance and restrictions but has managed to keep from arrests and jail). Winnie is tall, beautiful, intelligent, independent. Her self-possession, combined with her looks and her total refusal ever to show fear or servility towards the police disturbs them profoundly. Black - and a woman! It is more than they can stand. At any cost they must reduce her, humiliate her, since they cannot sexually assault - and I have seen the openly lustful glances that Security Officers have displayed. They must break her, destroy her spirit and her pride. But they cannot. They go on trying. They can succeed in one thing - the treatment she is receiving, and has received, could cause health deterioration, even death.

Not long ago, Winnie's elder daughter, only 12 years old, wrote to the United Nations appealing on behalf of her mother, fearing for her life. A physical attack, in prison or out, is not unlikely, and we know how easily pawns may be found for such tasks.

This article does not list ways to act - they are many, and members of N.A.W. must know and understand what they can do. If not, discuss it with other groups. Women everywhere must be made aware of her danger, and act in her defence.

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* Read an account of this trial in 'The Terrorism of Torture' from International Defence & Aid Fund, 2 Amen Court, London, EC4. 30 pence.

To a very crowded meeting of members and friends of the N.A.W. on January 19th, Lee Chadwick talked about her visit to Cuba and the tremendous impact the life and people had made on her during her stay. Due to lack of time she was unable to include in her talk an account of her visit to a "School in the Countryside" and I felt this was an opportunity for our readers to hear of this unique experiment in education and the life of the children in Socialist Cuba. (Ed.)

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* A SCHOOL IN THE COUNTRYSIDE - A Cuban Educational Experiment. *
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An outstanding quality of the Cuban Revolution is the frankness with which it discusses its mistakes - a sure sign that the Cubans are confident in the path they have chosen. In agriculture as in other spheres, progress has been made more difficult by the lack of trained people, the reasons for which go back into colonial history.

The purpose of our journey was to see what may prove to be one of the most interesting educational experiments of the Twentieth Century: CEIBA I, one of the big SCHOOL IN THE COUNTRYSIDE project; designed to meet Cuba's urgent need to increase agricultural production and at the same time provide for young people a way of living and learning which gives hand and brain an equal chance to develop. A thousand such schools are planned over the next decade to house Cuba's secondary school children (ages 13 - 15) in weekly boarding schools.

There in the middle of the fields stood the attractively designed prefabricated white buildings of CEIBA, interspersed with patios and playing space, with greenery visible from every angle. The peace of the place made it surprising that these buildings housed 500 pupils, half boys and half girls. It turned out that our arrival had been unannounced, so I was seeing a completely normal day.

Cuba is a country which trusts its young people with great responsibility. Of its 8½ million population a large proportion are under 14 years. I had already met a young girl of 23 years who was head of a similar school and the Director of this Escuela en Campo in charge of 500 pupils was a young man of 20 years! "Two years ago," he explained "all pupils of secondary age travelled to the country to help work in the fields for 45 days each year. This was a great experience for them and some help to production but it interrupted the school schedule. This is why Fidel thought out a new kind of school which would combine productive work and normal school activities - schools which would be situated in the countryside.

In these schools the very best conditions have been built for every type of activity so the cost is high - but it is planned that over a period each school by the productive work of its community will cover the costs so that we can continue to build others.

We find already that kids love the work out of doors, that physically they are better developed and have a better attitude towards work and life and responsibility. They are given an opportunity to develop as a whole person with theatre, dancing, music, as well as sports and swimming." "Pupils" said the young Director "spend 4 hours in the classroom daily and 3 in the field."

A SCHOOL IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, CONT'D.

Boys and girls take part together in every school activity. I was interested to see both sexes cleaning the dormitories. Traditionally this would have been a rare sight in the average home in Cuba with its Spanish tradition of "machismo" which looked upon such co-operation as a departure from masculinity. In the gay, well designed dormitories both boys' dormitories and girls were named after a Latin American country - typical of something one sees everywhere in present day Cuba: international friendship particularly for countries still suffering from oppression and under development.

After a very thorough tour and much discussion we left the School in the Fields to its own busy community life, and on the way home I caught my one and only glimpse of Fidel typically in his jeep visiting the farming projects in his beloved countryside.

Lee Chadwick.

(NOTE: A full account of this Educational experiment first appeared in an article by Lee Chadwick in The Times Educational Supplement of August 18th 1972: "Cuba: Schooling the Whole Man.").

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POINTS TO NOTE FROM OUR
SECRETARY - DEANA LEVIN :
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As a result of a proposal by the
Women's International Democratic
Federation, 1975 has been declared
by the United Nations as
"International Women's Year".
More about this in a later issue.
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VIETNAMESE COOK BOOK:
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The Cook Book
is selling well; we still have
copies at the office, so please
send your orders and help to clear
the stock. (1 copy 80½pence, 2
copies £1.61½ post free). All
royalties to the funds for the
Int. Friendship Hospital in Hanoi.
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As you read this, do (if you have not already
sent it) show your appreciation by sending
your 50 pence (minimum) for 1973 and anything
further you can spare as a donation. We need
this to cover expenses for the

NEWSLETTER & POSTAGE
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* B.R.I.D.G.E. WOMEN'S DELEGATION TO THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC *

At the end of October last year I was a delegate from the Nat Assembly of Women on a women's delegation for one week organised by 'BRIDGE'. Together with 9 other delegates from various organisations in England we visited Berlin and Halle, arriving in Berlin on Sunday evening, Oct. 22nd.

A very full and complete itinerary had been arranged beginning with a visit to Halle Neustadt, a new town still under construction which houses workers in the Chemical industry. Following a coach tour of the town, we were received by the Town Planning officer - a young woman in her late twenties. We were given insight on how the town was being built and also examined models and colour slides relating to the town. Questions and discussion were interchanged on Socialist Town planning and this was followed by lunch in a 'Family Restaurant' where families were enjoying excellent and very cheap meals.

We were met on Tuesday morning at the Halle Town Hall by a group of women deputies who explained the structure of Social and National Government in the G.D.R. - how candidates were nominated and the role played by deputies. We were also given useful information about social services, housing etc relating to Halle.

The next day we visited a Soap factory and were again met by a woman director and her 2 men assistants. During a conducted tour there was an opportunity to talk to some of the workers on the production line. This was followed by discussion with the Director, Trade Union officials and workers. Lunch was served to us in the factory canteen before leaving.

During the same afternoon we visited the County Prosecutor's office and were given a talk about the Legal System operating in the G.D.R. - this included a comprehensive explanation of the Amnesty which was in operation while we were in the country. The afternoon ended with discussion, including an all-round debate on Capital Punishment.

Our destination on Thursday morning was a Kindergarten, catering for 174 children between the ages of 3 - 6. The building was bright and airy and well-equipped. The children sang to us and presented us with gifts of handicraft made by themselves. We then moved on to a Secondary School for 800 children between the ages of 13 and 16. The headmistress talked to us about job training, parent participation, and the role of the Pioneers etc. Lunch was given at the House of Teachers, the social and cultural centre for teachers in the area. Also of interest and value was the discussion with the Director on Education generally in the G.D.R.

Friday our last day in Halle. This was spent in the morning by visiting the County Hospital and we were received by the Senior Gynaecologist, the Matron and several doctors. There was an interesting and stimulating discussion with them about the G.D.R. Health Service, particularly about Abortion and Contraception. We also had the opportunity to see the Intensive Care Unit and Children's Unit, both of these impressed us greatly.

VISIT TO G.D.R. CONT'D.

Our last visit was to a 'Sunset' Home. The residents had single and double bed sitting rooms and were encouraged to have their own possessions and furniture, this giving each room an individual atmosphere. The old people were delighted by our visit and were keen to entertain us in their own rooms. Those who were able played an active part in the running of the home, helping in the kitchen and the garden etc., as well as having representatives on the Management Committee.

On Friday evening we returned to Berlin and spent Saturday our last day - sightseeing and shopping, and preparing for our returning home on the following day. Sunday morning we were seen off by our interpreters and representatives of the G.D.R. and British Society, who had done a magnificent job during our stay, managing to get us to our appointments on time without any hitches. They even managed miraculously to produce tea when we were beginning to wilt on a number of occasions. We all became very firm friends and our farewells were very sad and tearful.

Throughout our stay we were encouraged to talk and ask questions, to see for ourselves the monumental task of building a new Germany in which all could participate. The standard of life is good. The shops are full of consumer goods and a feeling of purpose and hope pervades the country.

The visit was a never to be forgotten experience for me and I am grateful to the National Assembly of Women for asking me to represent them and to see first-hand the building of a Socialist Society.

Pat Cox.

THE ANTI-DISCRIMINATION BILL

The Anti-Discrimination Bill after much discussion and uproar and supported by hundreds of women when it was recently discussed in the House of Commons, has now received its Second reading and passed into Committee stage. We are however informed by Willie Hamilton, M.P. who is sponsoring the Bill through Parliament "that there is no prospect of it becoming law in this session, which means that there will be no law on this matter within the next 12 months".

The Drafted Bill covers (among many others) the 3 following points and out-laws discrimination on the grounds of sex :

1. The refusal to employ a person on the grounds of sex when that person is qualified and the work is available.
2. The refusal on grounds of sex to offer a person equal terms of employment, conditions of work and opportunities for training and promotion as are offered to other employees of similar qualifications engaged on similar work.
3. The dismissal of a person because of sex.

The Bill suggests an Anti-Discrimination Board should be set up for the purpose of dealing with any complaints or enquiries arising from the implementation of the Act, and if satisfied after enquiries that there has been discrimination, the Board should have the power to take legal action.

Continued on Page 17.....

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VIETNAM'S CAUSE STILL OURS -
Hilda Vernon

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A great sigh of relief sounded all round the world when the Agreement to end the War in Vietnam was finally signed last January. We all welcomed it as ending the long period during which the American war machine had been sowing death and destruction on the Vietnamese people and their land.

The Vietnamese people hailed it as a great victory for their cause, as indeed it was. It re-established their right to nationhood. Article 1 declares: "The United States and all other countries respect the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam as recognised by the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Vietnam". This means that Vietnam may not be the subject of aggression and foreign intervention in her internal affairs. The U.S. has undertaken that its war machine can no longer be deployed against this far-away small country which presented no threat to America's security - its only fault being the refusal of the Vietnamese people to accept foreign domination or permit their country to be used as a pawn in the service of U.S. ambitions.

When I say that the ending of the pitiless bombing raids for so many years all over Vietnam is a cause for great rejoicing and relief for Vietnamese women, I do not discount the natural feelings of Vietnamese men, but women, especially in a country like Vietnam, do have the special responsibility for the safety and well-being of the children. The pangs of separation through evacuation are over - the children will not have to receive their education at night, in safety trenches and underground shelters. They will be safe as they play in their homes and villages, or sleep in their parents' homes. They will not be born deformed because their mothers have been affected by the noxious chemicals poured down in hundreds and thousands of tons over South Vietnam, or poisoned through contaminated water and crops. A new bright future opens up for the children of Vietnam.

The Agreement, if properly carried out, opens the way for a new era of peace and democratic advance in the South - a period of National Reconciliation and Concord - as it is phrased in the Agreement. Of course, Thieu and his clique in Saigon are going to do their utmost to prevent this coming about. Their whole existence has been based on their collaboration with the U.S. and its war, and the U.S. has seen that they still have all the means of war at their disposal.

We talk of "the devil fearing holy water" and there is no doubt that in like manner Thieu is in mortal fear of the democratic elections that the Agreement stipulates shall be held. He knows, better than anyone, that the popular verdict will go against him. It is for this reason that he ordered a new wave of mass arrests up to the signing of the Agreement. Thousands of patriotic men and women were snatched up and carried off to prisons and concentration camps in remote parts, where conditions are so appalling that many will not survive. We have already seen what trickery he has engaged in over the release of political prisoners as laid down in the Agreement.

VIETNAM'S CAUSE STILL OURS CONT'D
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And of course it has to be recognised that the Nixon Administration could not be expected to accept the defeat of its ambitions in Vietnam, and indeed in the whole of Indo-China, with good grace, whatever fair sounding public utterances he may have made. So they seek pretexts to make accusations and threats against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the North.

Nonetheless, while recognising all the dangers and difficulties inherent in the present situation, the people of Vietnam face the future with confidence and enthusiasm, as well they may considering what they have been able to achieve despite all the armed might the U.S. arrayed against them.

In North Vietnam they are starting to rebuild the towns, schools, hospitals, roads and other means of communication and industrial enterprises shattered in the raids. They have the advantage here in that under their system of society the search for personal profit even in others' misfortunes does not exist - there is no private ownership in land or of the means of construction and production. No-one can take advantage of the willingness of all to give of their utmost in this gigantic task of reconstruction. Added zest to their work comes also from their confidence that the day will come when their country will be peacefully re-unified and the illegal partition into the South and North Zones will at last be ended. This too is stipulated in the Agreement.

We here in Britain can help to right the wrongs of the past. On the one hand, we must use all the means at our disposal to ensure that the January Agreement is properly implemented, and here it must be stressed that our own Government has endorsed the Agreement, and so has a responsibility in the matter.

Secondly, we can contribute to the work of reconstruction. And we have the chance to do this immediately by raising funds towards the building of the International Friendship Hospital for Women and Children in Hanoi - a cause which the Women's Assembly has already done much to further in this country.

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THE VIGIL

The daily noon hour Vigil outside the American Embassy in Grosvenor Sq., London, was brought to a close on Wednesday March 28th with a final rally of more than 500 people. For just under one year commencing April 17th 1972 this daily rally protested against U.S. involvement and bombing in Vietnam. The British Council for Vietnam Medical Aid, Peace Groups, Trade Unions, sections of the Labour Party, C.P. and N.A.W. were well represented and leading personalities of theatre, screen, church and humanitarians were present and took a prominent part. Letters were handed to the Labour Attache of the American Embassy to be forwarded to President Nixon protesting at the continued interference of the U.S. in the internal affairs of Vietnam. The N.A.W. takes this opportunity to record its appreciation of the splendid courageous effort organised by Mia Lord and her group of helpers.

* INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN & CHILDREN IN HANOI *

The longed-for peace treaty has at last been signed in Vietnam and the people in that war-ravaged country must be looking askance at the enormous tasks which face them in restoring towns and villages and the countryside.

To build a hospital to replace just one of the many hospitals bombed and destroyed during the war, may seem so insignificant as to be hardly worth doing. Yet the project to build the International Friendship Hospital for Women and Children in Hanoi does offer individuals throughout the world an opportunity of personally involving themselves in reconstruction and reparation in Vietnam.

The building of this hospital was conceived some years ago. The idea was born on a wave of indignation and sorrow after a hospital in Hanoi with a maternity wing was almost totally destroyed in one of the first waves of bombing. There was an immediate reaction from women in many different countries who wanted the rebuilding to be an international tribute, and, through the agency of the Women's International Democratic Federation, got agreement for this with the Ministry of Health in North Vietnam. The hospital would be one for women and children and have a research centre attached. It would have 300 beds, be part of the University of Hanoi, be a teaching-hospital to train gynaecologists, paediatricians, pharmacists and general medical personnel, and act as the headquarters for all maternity centres in the north. The Research Centre would concentrate on the effects of chemical warfare on mother and child throughout the whole of Indo-China.

Many countries have already collected money but here in Britain the work has only just begun. It is being sponsored by a group of women well-known in all walks of public life and has Dame Sybil Thorndike Casson, that ever-caring and loved figure, as President. Joan Lester M.P., in spite of all those commitments that she already has, is finding time to act as Honorary Treasurer. The British Appeals Committee has been meeting once a month and already more than £1,300 has been raised, some in large, many in small sums. Some came from a sale of Folk Art and Craft, opened by Dame Peggy Ashcroft, in the lovely Hampstead house of Ella Winter; some from half the proceeds of a concert for children arranged by the Ealing Medical Aid Comm; some from a collection taken, by courtesy of the organisers of International Women's Day, in Trafalgar Square on March 10th; some as a result of a coffee-morning in Clare, Suffolk; some as the result of a sale of work at Dartford, Kent, by a group of women. Now, too, Collection Sheets are beginning to be returned - one from Glasgow with contributions from 120 people collected by two women in a house-to-house effort.

However, good as has been the start of the campaign, much more remains to be done. Readers of this Newsletter may well have ideas on how they can help. The Hon. Secretary of the British Appeals Comm. of the I.F.H.W.C.H., Marie Philibert of 3 Essex Grove, London, SE19 3SX (Tel. 01-653 0950) will be only too pleased if asked, to supply Collection Sheets, Appeal letters, facts about the Hospital etc., or to be of use in any way that she can.

ELEANOR MARX by Yvonne Kapp
Published by Lawrence and Wishart at £4.50
Volume I. FAMILY LIFE 1855 - 1883
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As its title suggests, this first volume of "Eleanor Marx" is a vivid picture of the life of the Marx family, with Eleanor herself as the central figure. The background of nineteenth century political and social life is an integral part of the story. The frequent pregnancy of Mrs. Marx and the loss of many of their children make us realise what a burden the lack of contraceptives made to her life.

The extreme poverty of the Marx family was mixed with some of the strangest bourgeois notions that, for instance, wine was essential to health, daughters should be given an education well suited to people of comfortable means who would have no need to earn their living, a "front" must be kept up before visitors. All this, added to Marx's obvious inability to keep accounts or to know how to spend what little money he had in an economical way, made life for him and his wife full of difficulties.

In spite of all this, the Marx family emerges as a united and loving one, Marx himself always finding time to play with his daughters, to tell them stories and to go out with them. There is a picture of him sitting at his table working on Capital while his children play trains on the back of his chair.

It is a miracle that Marx was able to finish even one volume of his masterpiece in the cramped quarters in which they lived. And Engels was the perfect friend, always ready to send money, wine, food and advice when called upon, which was often. He kept on his job, which was distasteful to him, for years in order to have the money for this purpose.

Eleanor grew up in this political atmosphere, the time of the French Commune, the activity of her father, and began at a very early age to be interested in politics herself. She emerges as warm-hearted, intelligent and passionately fond of her family, including her sisters' children.

The book is brilliantly written, carefully researched. It is exciting to read and our knowledge of the period, the personal life and problems, and the characters of the Marx family is greatly enriched by it. I cannot recommend it too highly and am eagerly awaiting Volume 2.

Deana Levin

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION BILL CONT'D FROM PAGE 13

We would urge our readers to keep an ever watchful eye on the progress of the Bill, which does not yet deal with many aspects of discrimination, further sections of which have still to be worked out.

A Petition form is already in circulation, and on application to our Secretary, she will be pleased to send one or more copies.

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B O O K S !
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A PIECE OF TRUTH by AMALIA FLEMING
(Jonathan Cape £2.95)
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In the Prologue to her graphic and moving account of her own experience of life in Greece under the Junta, Amalia Fleming writes :

"During the occupation of Greece in the Second World War I took part in the resistance out of a natural feeling that people have a right to be independent, to rule their own country in the way they choose, and to refuse to accept that foreign forces should tread their soil and become their masters."

And in this book she draws a vivid picture of her uncompromising defiance of the masters who, with American connivance and assistance, had usurped the government of Greece. She speaks of it as "a foreign occupation with one or more Quislings kept in power by foreign officials with obsolete ideas."

She had had a medical training, and after the war she applied for a British Council scholarship to work at the Wright-Fleming Institute under Alexander Fleming. Having topped the list of 45 applicants she went to London in 1946, and Fleming - the discoverer of penicillin - accepted her to work with him for 6 months. While working with him, she acted as a kind of liaison personality between Greek invalids who came to England for medical treatment, and so she became the centre of a wide Greek circle. All she tells us about her romance is that in April 1953 she married Alexander Fleming. He died suddenly in March 1955, and these two years were the only ones when she had no longing whatsoever for Greece. But a few years after his death Greece started haunting her, and she decided to make Athens her home again. She writes:

"On March 15th 1967 my last belongings arrived from London. Five weeks later, on April 21st 1967, a group of what to most people were unknown Greek officers took over the country, abolished all freedom and all our rights.

They began their regime by rounding up and deporting to a barren island everyone connected with the election due to be held the following month, and which was confidently expected to return the liberal candidate George Papandreou. He himself was arrested in the early hours of the day of the Colonels' coup. Another one of their victims was her friend Christos Sartzetakis, the young judge who figured in the film 'Z', who brought to justice the high-ranking police officers responsible for the death of Lambrakis. Women came crying to Amalia for help for their tortured husbands, so beaten and kicked about that their ribs were broken and they could not lie down for pain. When she alerted the Red Cross she found that at the head of it was one of the gang, a Right Wing General who said 'we' speaking of the colonels, and referred to their victims as "criminal communists."

A PIECE OF TRUTH - CONT'D

She herself escaped arrest until August 26th 1971, and the bulk of her book is a detailed account of the events which led up to it and the interrogation and brutal treatment which she suffered. She had agreed to assist in an attempt to free Alexander Panagoulis, the heroic young parachutist arrested after an abortive attempt to blow up the road along which Papadopoulos - the arch Colonel - was expected to travel, and who had since been subjected to the cruellest imprisonment and torture. Her interrogator was a man she despised, who over and over again commanded her to tell him where she had been and with whom and what she had been doing the day before they arrested her; "Everything" he thundered "everything you did at every single minute from Monday morning until you were arrested." She refused and so she was imprisoned and told to write the report in her cell.

She stayed in her cell for 31 days until October 1st 1971 and the bulk of her book is a detailed account of the brutal treatment and the interrogation she continuously had to undergo. During this period she suffered terribly from the heat and mosquitoes. The cell smelt horribly of lavatory and mould. These conditions caused her to have diarrhoea. A dirty lavatory was directly across the corridor and soldiers let her out and in. Understandably by the end of this period she suffered a severe haemorrhage.

There was a trial. She was sentenced to 16 months' imprisonment and taken to a decent prison, the Korydallos, where her cell was 'Buckingham Palace': much larger, clean, with running water and a basin, a window which she could open, and an electric light switch which she might use. Also she was allowed to communicate with fellow prisoners for some hours every day. However the British Ambassador intervened after three weeks; on October 21st she was released and allowed to go home. She was recovering from exhaustion when, a month later, she was kidnapped, and against her will and protestation put on a plane for England and formally expelled from Greece.

Her book conveys the impression of a humane and valiant Greek patriot - whose first concern on sudden arrest was who would feed her cats!

Naomi Birnberg

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