

# women and education



We do the same job

I get paid only 38  
Weeks a year.  
I get no holiday pay.  
I get no sick  
pay.  
I can be sacked  
at a weeks notice  
I get no maternity  
pay  
and no job security.

**PART-TIMER**



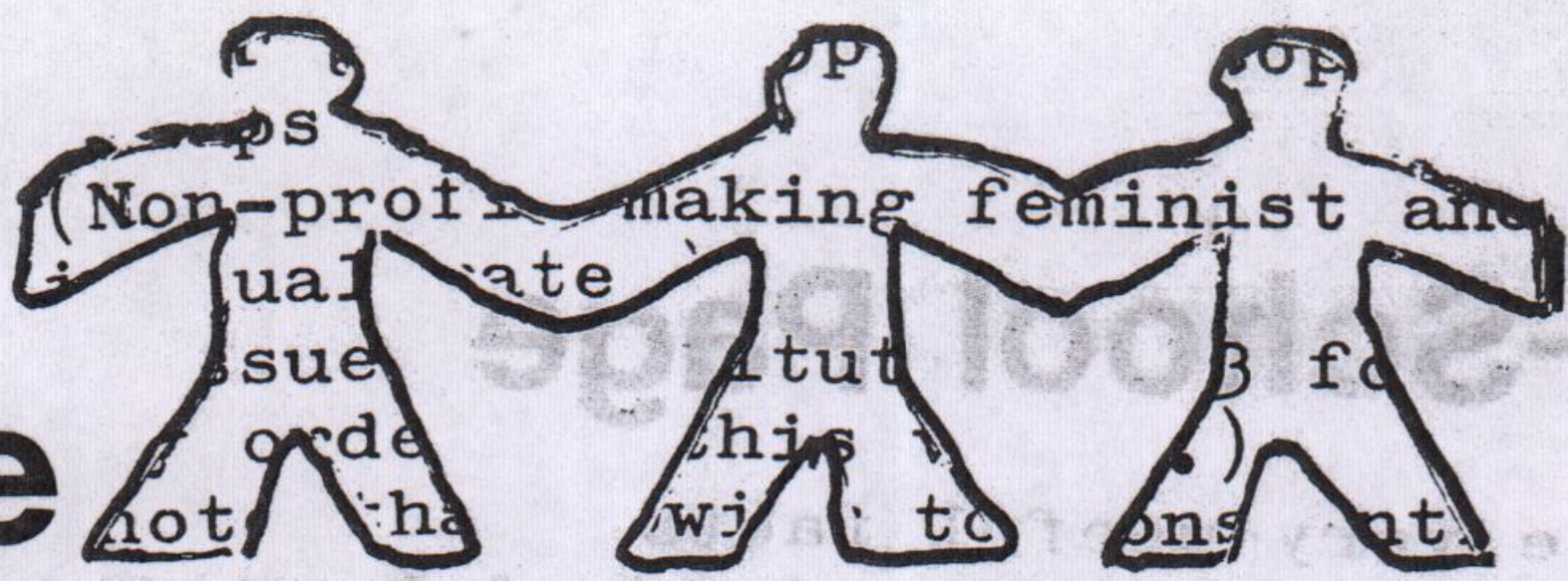
I get paid 52  
weeks a year.  
I get holiday  
pay.  
I get sick pay.  
I have job security  
I get maternity pay  
and my job back.

**FULL-TIMER**



20p

umber II



# Pre-School Page

## COMMUNITY CHILD CARE

To most people, child care means isolated women at home looking after either their own or other people's children, or institutions such as day nurseries where the work is done by paid professionals and where parents are completely uninvolved. But there is a third way: parents and local people can set up and run their own community nurseries. At least six different groups have now started up in London, working independently of each other, but with certain features in common. They are all run in ordinary houses, and aim to create a warm and homely atmosphere, and they are jointly managed by workers and parents, (some include parents and volunteers among their workers; others have a fully paid staff).

Community nurseries have many advantages. They are set up by local people and so are likely to be sensitive to local needs. They encourage new and different relationships between parents and paid workers, with the possibility of a partnership rather than the usual client/professional set-up. And they give parents and workers the chance to try out new approaches to child care, including non-sexism and the employment of men.

But there are also problems. Adequate, long-term finance is hard to come by, and so are well-maintained premises. Local authorities give little help or encouragement, so a lot of time is spent on fund-raising and getting basic repair work done rather than on involving new parents and building up the group and its place in its community. Formerly the nurseries have existed in isolation, lacking a support network or even ways of contacting each other. Since April of this year, however, a group of people from community nurseries plus other

child care workers who are interested, have been meeting to discuss the possibility of setting up an organisation to support them and promote their aims. They are planning a workshop, (possibly July 9th) in London for anyone interested in finding out more about community child care or sharing their experience of it, and if you'd like to go, or to get involved in the group in any way, write to Gill Pinkerton or Peter Moss at:

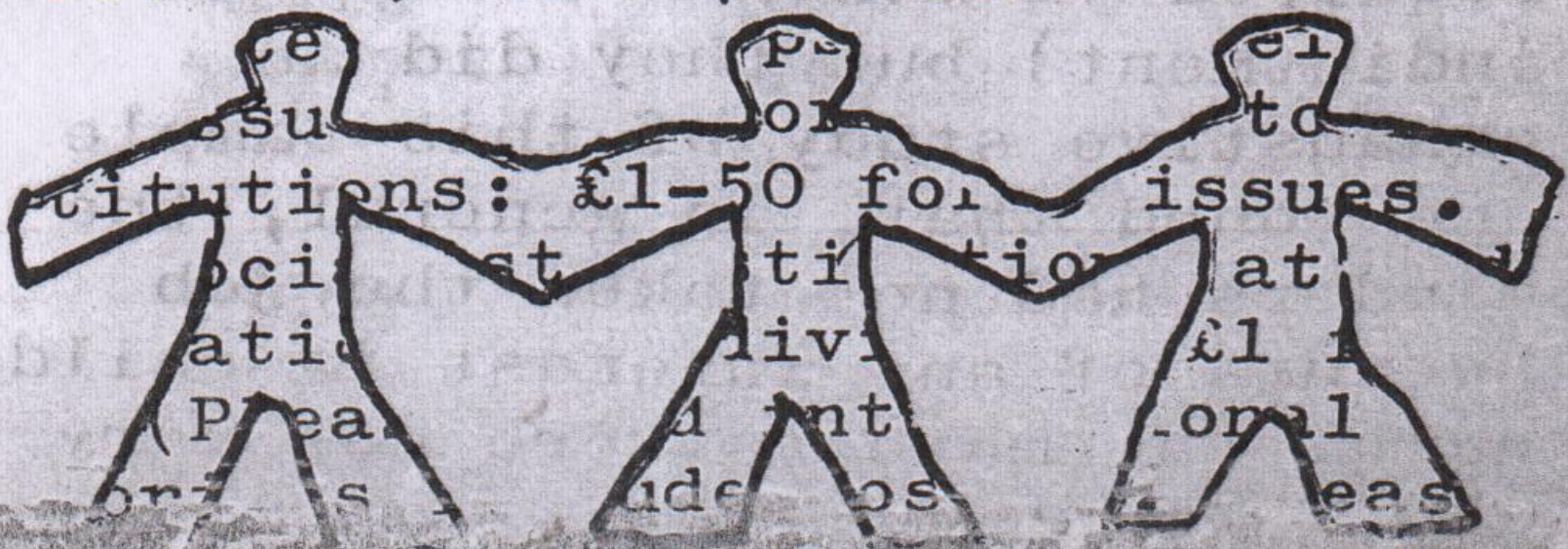
The Thomas Coram Research Unit,  
41, Brunswick Sq.  
London WC1N 1AZ

01-278 2424.



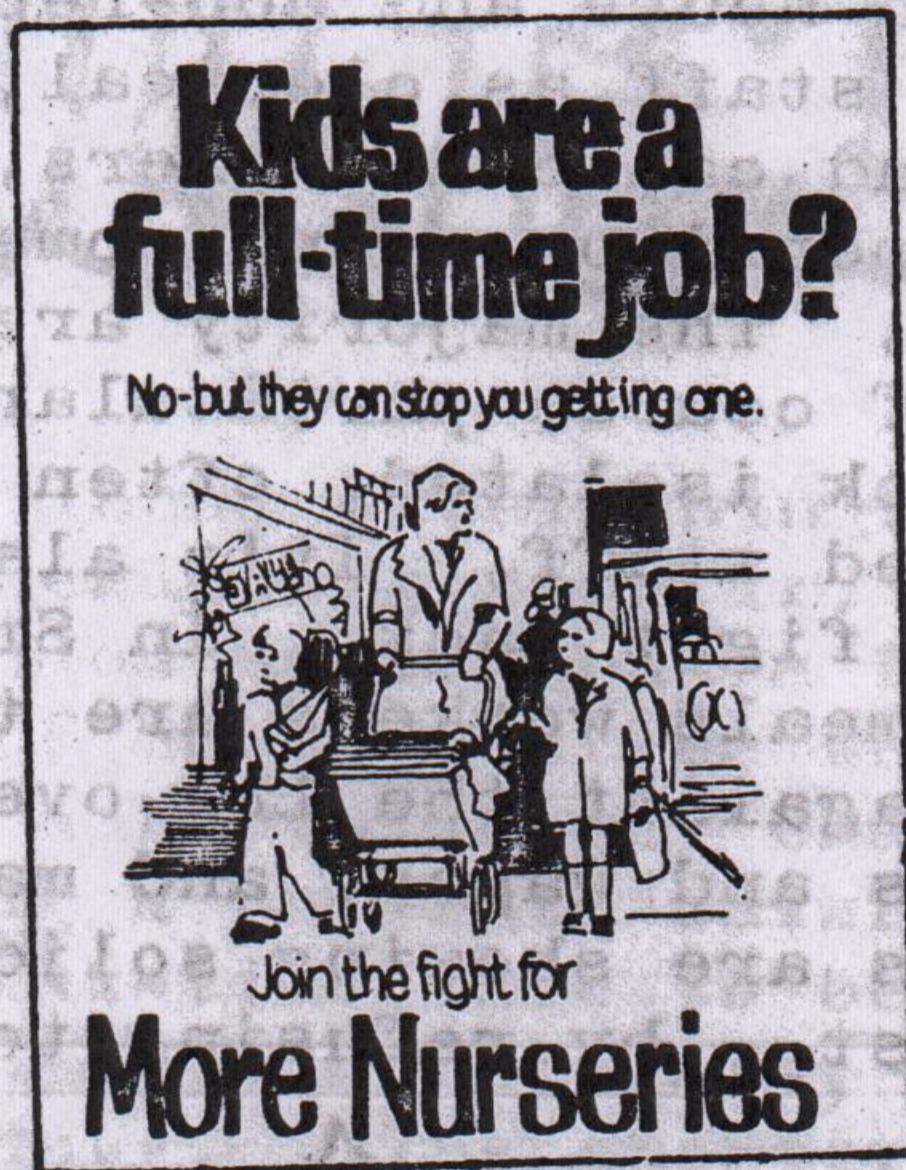
## CHILDMINDING STUDIES

This is a bumper year for child minders. So far they've had their first ever, 19 part television series, (reported in W and E N no 10), and three major research studies on them. The series was aimed at minders, and so was short and simple, not so the research which is often long, intricate and specialised. Still, if you're interested in the arguments surrounding the current government preference for childminders over day nurseries, these studies



## Women and the cuts

tion: compare the 16+ apprentice day-released on full pay with fees paid by his firm, with the 16+ trainee secretary, not paying fees because she's under 18, but with parents and/or part-time jobs contributing to her maintenance. Many adult women also want f.e.e. courses; women are more likely than men to have an interrupted education, or not to have gained qualifications for what they now want to do. They may need preliminary qualifications to enter advanced courses (O/A levels for teacher training). They are likely to need part-time courses because of child-care problems.



Mandatory awards (those the LEAs must give, providing certain conditions are satisfied) go to those attending full-time, advanced courses (degrees, high-level diplomas, teacher training etc.) These awards provide payment of fees and maintenance. Lower level and part-time courses (GCE, ONC, Art Foundation, many technical courses, Open University) get discretionary awards; these mean payment of fees plus, perhaps, maintenance and travelling expenses. These awards are an obvious target for cuts, and various LEAs have stopped giving grants for the courses I've listed. There is also the possibility that in giving grants LEAs may prefer to help school leavers rather than older people. At the same time, there are massive fee increases being made. So women may be caught in the pincer movement of higher fees and fewer grants, if they want or need to get qualifications. The

EOC has investigated the grants system and how it may discriminate against women.

Closure of courses is also important: some LEAs (e.g. Bolton) have cut evening classes very heavily, hitherto a relatively cheap, though exhausting, way of gaining qualifications. Courses can be cut openly, or indirectly by imposing a high minimum enrolment. Some cuts have a domino effect: cuts in nursery places are an excuse for training fewer nursery nurses - while women's difficulty in finding jobs is used as evidence of a lack of demand for nursery places!

Teacher training is the most notorious case of cuts affecting opportunities for women. It has been the major form of higher education for women, and the likely phasing out of the Teacher's Certificate in favour of the B.Ed. (the latter requires 2 A levels for entry) will further reduce women's chances. Shirley Williams has admitted that there is no advanced non-vocational course leading to a national qualification (and attracting a mandatory grant) for the women who would have taken the Certificate. Glib talk about women taking technological courses doesn't solve the problem of the accumulated educational disadvantages; stereotyping can't be removed like that.



We need to watch for and document the discriminatory effects of education cuts. I've found that these are not at all obvious to the majority of members of my union, and I'd guess this is so in others. Often, in fact, they will go along with the 'priorities' put to them by management: this course/subject is 'obviously more important than that; school leaver 'must come first', etc. We have to argue the case for students and workers. But, in addition, we should argue for