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## THE CLEANERS VOICE

Circulation: 1,000 Price: 2<sup>1</sup>2p

## Hello girls,

It's been a long time since you've heard from us, the reason being that we've been doing a lot of behind-the-scenes work. In doing this, we have dug up a lot of filth, which we cannot mention here because of laws saying that we must not, but we all know what we're talking about.

Girls are still coming in the union at the average of 25-30 a week. We're getting stronger every week. Girls are coming from as far away as Birmingham and Manchester and they all want to be united with the London girls as they have all the same sort of problems, as such as they work for the same contractors.

We hope to bring this sort of newsletter out perhaps every fortnight or monthly and if any cleaner would like to send letters in of problems or any details of what is happening to them on their particular firm. If you don't want your name to be mentioned in the letter, please state and only May Hobbs will know the name.

If we all stick together we can get anything we want within reason. We feel we have been a bit lenient in our demands for £16 a week. The figure should read £18.15.2. which is the official union rate. Girls on some union buildings are getting between £17 and £20 a week. So if one contractor can pay it, so can they all. On union buildings girls are getting almost full cover money, but we are now trying to fight to get the rest of it. Why should they have the benefit of girls being out sick? It should be us, if we're doing the work.

In our recent struggles with the Strand, did you know that everyone got a Christmas box in the form of £2 gift vouchers for Boots the chemist? This has never been known before in the whole history of the cleaning industry. Noting that all girls that were sacked and got reinstated also got a Xmas box. I cannot imagine why they should give them a gift voucher for the chemist. They would be much better of<sup>\*</sup> to give food vouchers, but perhaps they thought they needed to buy something to kee them going or awake.

It has been said that what I write is all lies. If any of you happen to hear manager say it's all lies, ask him if he would like to meet May Hobbs in front of all the girls on the building, or any place he chooses to prove that I'm a liar. The only liars are them, as we all know, among other things.

We have got a film coming out shortly all about London cleaners, which cost \$500 to make. Everyone will be welcome but contractors can decline as they know about themselves in any case and the exploitation of night-cleaners mostly, being they know we have to go to work at nights because that is the only time that we can go to work because of our family commitments. This also applies to morning and evening cleaners as well.

It would be in your interest to know for all cleaners working on government buildings, that it states in the contract that all women can join the union if they want to and on that understanding is one of the reasons they get the contracts. It is noticeable that most contractors are not abiding by the rules. On this alone, their contracts can be terminated immediately. So if anyone is threatened for joining the union, it is to be put forward to us where we can take legal action; which in one case we are taking legal action when they sacked a woman after 16 years' work without any holiday pay or redundancy money. We shall win this case and many more, if you know of anybody who has been sacked without holiday money or weeks in lieu of notice. Contractors have been hiding behind the fact that they think we're ignorant. They decide to call us casual labour. Is 16 years casual labour?

They are against us forming a union, but they fail to tell us that they are a union, called the Contract Cleaning & Maintenance Association, which there are 6C. Chief Boy Scout being Pritchards Holdings. Its main purpose, they say, is to keep member companies informed about political and economic developments affecting the trade, and you can't be in this Association without you have got a turnover of £30,000 a year.

It has been said that myself and Jean Wright, who is one of our most militant workers, and a supervisor at that, note, which we have quite a few of, that we are paid by the union. This is completely untrue. We do not get a penny off the union. We keep going by donations off of all classes of people, that feel very sympathetic towards us and see the rotten deal that we are getting.

/P.T.O.

