

**Second Tape: Women's Caucus 1970 Spring to Fall—Discussion: Recorded April 5, 1997 at Pat Davitt's house.**

**Participants: Pat Davitt, Marcy Toms, Ellen Woodsworth, Jean Rands, Andrea Lebowitz, Anne Roberts**

**Transcribed by Pat Davitt and Anne Roberts in 2013. Material in parentheses is explanatory and was added later. Material in brackets is parenthetical and part of the original record.**

**Transcript:**

Anne: What should we do? Finish the organization stuff? We're in the Labour Temple; with meetings once a month, with abortion counselling: what else happened? Speakers' Bureau; the Pedestal was put out...

General: No, No. The first was the summer of '69.

Jean: But the actual work of the Pedestal was at Simon Fraser; that's where I used to do it (referring to the typesetting).

Anne: Having someone with close connections to the Peak (SFU student newspaper)!

Andrea: So all the activities happened around, and it was in, a dismal little room in the basement (of the Labour Temple)

Anne: Oh, I remember that hall. I hated that hall. It was so depressing!

Andrea: Why did we move? Did we need more space?

Jean: Yeah, we needed more space. That was a tiny little room. We had to book meeting rooms at the Labour Temple. I can't remember when it happened, but the labour movement moved out of that building. I don't remember how it all fit together.

Andrea: Yeah, I think we went before they did, but anyway, then we went to the Carrall (Street) site because we needed more room. We had the gestetner then. It had its own little room with no windows.

Anne: Who found that place on Carrall Street? It was a nice building.

Jean: That place used to be, when I was a Trotskyist, the headquarters of the Young Socialists.

Andrea: It had a long history on the Left. It's a tailor's now.

Jean: Did we take it directly from the YS or was there something in between?

Marcy: Was there some other group in the same building?

Pat: No, we had the whole ground floor of the building, and then upstairs there was an opium den or something.

Andrea: That building was condemned in 1935 and it's still standing. We painted it, though! *And* we did the cleaning!

Jean: So what else did we do there? That's what we want to know. We organized demonstrations. I remember we organized the stuff around the ... during the abortion caravan and while we were still in the Labour Temple, we did that thing of throwing red paint on the Federal building that Ace Hollibaugh got arrested for...

Anne: Most of the activities are going to be covered in the Pedestal. Somebody could go through and pretty much get all that, so I don't think we should deal with that. Maybe we should be dealing...

Ellen: With what? ...

Anne: Well, I don't know!

Andrea: I think that these kinds of issues that we've been talking about, sort of more political and philosophical, are really the more important ones. I agree with

you in terms of the depths of newspaper coverage, a person could reconstruct that shit should she want to, but the kind of things we thought we were doing...

Anne: Yeah, I think if we talk about that particular time, obviously people are against authority, hierarchy and there were real things against leadership, so our organizational structure was very loose. We never elected chairs...

Marcy: We had committees

Anne: Yes, we had committees, but we didn't elect the head of our organization; in fact, we were militantly opposed to that. We were trying to encourage *all* women to develop the skills, to go out to do public speaking, talk at a meeting, all of that. Although, God, it must have been so inhibiting, those meetings... really, when you think back about all those discussions. We were into everybody (giving)...long speeches. Everybody would get up -- and if you weren't comfortable talking in a group, that wasn't an easy environment. But, anyway, that was the emphasis. We didn't have a membership! I don't remember anybody paying...

Marcy and Jean: Oh yes we did!

Anne: We had a membership list of people we wanted to keep coming, but you had to pay to be a member?

Jean: Oh yes, and we had that statement: the Women's Caucus Program, so people knew what they were supporting when they joined. But my favourite thing about that business of not having "stars" or public leaders was the way we used to all say we were Emma Goldman, and the media had never heard of Emma Goldman (much laughter!). And they just *believed* us (more laughter). It was so funny! Seeing: Emma Goldman said... I really liked that stuff!

Andrea: The other thing, I don't think we've mentioned it, and I think it's really important, is that we talked a lot about motherhood and bearing children, which was interesting because none of us had any at the time

Ellen: Esther Phillips was pregnant.

Anne: And Liz Briemberg had two children: she was the only mother! (Laughter)

Andrea: And remember, Liz said at the reunion when Dodie was back, that she felt kind of alienated from us because we were all these bright young things going on about children when we had *no* experience whatsoever!

Anne: Also, we had all the time in the world!

Pat: I remember you, Jean, going on at great length about meetings going on until the wee hours when there were people there who had to get up the next day and go to work.

Anne: And did that affect us?

Chorus: No, no, no

Andrea: When you're younger, you need less sleep.

Jean: One of the things that I think was really interesting, a sort of recurring problem was the whole question of how decisions were made because there was this...for one thing, the Women's Caucus was sort of a contradictory thing: a combination of a membership organization and a coalition, and then there were all different ideas about the way we should make decisions. Some of us were more experienced with ordinary Roberts' Rules of Order type stuff; not just me, there were other NDP-type people who were involved. And others were more out of the student movement and into consensus about everything, which to me looked like saying whoever's prepared to stay up the latest gets to make the decisions! (Laughter)

Marcy: That was the reality.

Jean: So this kept going on... I think there was no right or wrong to it. People had to negotiate about it all the way along, and it worked out fairly well most of the time.

Anne: But the reality, I think, for a lot of people, was that people like ourselves who did spend the most time there, and could for whatever reason, were seen as the group that made decisions, and there was an elite group that you didn't

necessarily break into. I think -- talking to other people over the years-- I think we were just so enthusiastic and so caught up in it, it was our total lives, and going ahead with all these things, we were a bit oblivious. Things like motherhood and children and a job in the morning: we were just *oblivious* to it! I look back; I could *never* have been involved with young children or kids!

Jean: I don't think it's fair to say we were oblivious to it because it was an issue that kept being raised. We clearly didn't deal with it all that well, but we did try from time to time.

Andrea: And there is a basic structural problem that people who have more time get more power; they're there more often. I agree with Jean; we were aware of that and we tried to undermine that situation, perhaps not too successfully, but we weren't just totally...

Anne: But I don't think we dealt with it seriously. I think we were just caught up with lots of things going on. It didn't take a really big priority to deal with it.

Marcy: We tried to think about it and write about it in terms of childcare and what sorts of daycare centres would be ideal. (much laughter)

Anne: I look back on it now. I remember we would have somebody be responsible for daycare for our conferences; we thought that was great. So we had this *shitty* old room, empty, nothing, and one person would come in. And you're supposed to drop off your kids? I would no more drop off *my* kid in a situation like that! But, we didn't know any better.

Voices: We didn't *have* any kids!

Marcy: Well, Melody had her daughter, and she had another one, didn't she?

Anne: But we didn't put resources into the toys, and some kind of facilities to be able to have kids there. We didn't think of that, and we could have.

Ellen: But when we took on the issue of abortion, I think we really hashed through what would be the issues that could pertain to the most women in all sectors. I remember us discussing this in and out. It would relate to aboriginal women, to

young women, it would relate to older women. Older women were telling stories about how they had abortions; everyone did it, but nobody talked about it. And we really discussed it: what issue would be as broad-based as possible. But de facto, what you're saying is right, but there were discussions.

Jean: I remember another aspect of it was being really frustrated at having to justify working women's actions at Women's Caucus meetings, and getting people whom I considered to be totally middle-class academic types saying things like: But is it really revolutionary to try organize women into a union? And I felt like saying: Drop dead! (Much laughter) And also, the thing that freaked me out was that we would have a meeting in the working women's group, make a bunch of decisions and then, theoretically what was going to happen was that we would present them to the membership meeting and get them approved. But when the membership meeting threatened to overturn our decisions - when most of the working women weren't at the membership meeting because they didn't have time to come to that many meetings and they'd already been to the working women's meeting - that just didn't seem reasonable. So we ended up doing it (I think this was fairly near the end, though), we ended up deciding that we shouldn't....that the membership meeting was more of a reporting and exchanging kind of thing and to make decisions on things that we were all going to do, that required all of us, basically, but that the decisions on the individual campaigns could be made by the groups directly involved. Which was, I think, a practical response to that problem also because it was a way of enabling people who were not part of the main core of Women's Caucus - the really committed fanatics (!)...people who weren't part of that could have some power through those smaller groups. I think Anne is right; the big membership meetings were pretty intimidating for people who weren't used to it.

Pat: And if you remember, I mean, after June of '70, we spent all of that summer arguing with the Trotskyists, meeting after meeting. Maybe I'm wrong, but it seems like we had one meeting a week; I don't think that could possibly be true...

Marcy: It was more!

Anne: We had all sorts of discussions all the time among ourselves; I'm not sure we had formal meetings every week.

Jean: We had lots of meetings, because we had meetings of all these different groups – the high-school women's group, the working women's group – plus all the sort of task oriented groups – the speaker's bureau sort of thing, and the Pedestal. It's true, and every one of them, the same debate would happen with the LSA (League for Socialist Action).

Ellen: And there was also that summer, the Vancouver Liberation Front, and the Yippies, all those groups that split up and some of us got involved with those groups.

Anne: Maybe we should talk some about what was going on in the debate with the LSA.

Andrea: I think so; we've alluded to it already, because it's was around the actions that should be taken: the priorities. Whether they should be reformist -- like starting a union -- or revolutionary, though nobody knew what the hell that was, but we spent a lot of time debating it.

Pat: I think it goes back to what Ellen was saying: the discussion we had around abortion being one of the broadest issues that affected the largest number of women of all different stripes and varieties, and we garnered a great deal of publicity through the abortion campaign in all its various aspects. It involved an awful lot of women, for here and then across Canada, and at that point, clearly, the LSA made its decision that this should be the focus for women's liberation. Up until then, they didn't have a...it seemed as though they didn't have a position about women's liberation, and so the women who were in the LSA and the Young Socialists just came and they were quite excited and they seemed to be just like everybody else. They were really gung-ho; in fact, some of our better workers, like shouldering an incredible amount of work. Like Mary Trew

Jean: I was thinking about her.

Pat: But once the LSA took that position, what they were really saying was that to organize women, you would get them involved in the abortion issue as a way of getting them in, and then from those women that you got in through the abortion issue, you would look to see who were the likely candidates to be able to move on to a higher level of consciousness. The higher level of consciousness would be achieved through the LSA and the YS, rather than the HLC -- i.e. becoming a socialist -- could ever be accomplished directly by being involved in a women's group! Oh no, no, no no! And they had seen the same thing: that this is the broad issue that gets to a lot of women that they hadn't been able to reach. Here you have them in a clump, and you can cream off the ones you want.

Anne: But, you know, yes, I think that was their kind of ideology – the way they analyzed how you developed political consciousness to make the revolution – but I don't think that impacted on us so much. They weren't taking people away from us to them. Maybe that was the idea, but it didn't happen. What impacted us was that they not only felt abortion was a priority, but thought it was the *only* thing to do. So all of us who had other priorities...in the olden days: “*we had this priority; we'll go do this*”; “*you guys had this priority, you go do your thing*”. It was so loose! But they wanted it all centralized. You guys can't do what you want because you have to follow this one correct line.

Pat: That was the debate: whether we should continue forever to focus on abortion or whether -- I think it was Jean -- I have a feeling it was you -- and probably some other people that brought forward this proposal that we should have quite distinct...

Andrea: Oh, the sub-caucuses; yes, that's probably where that came from.

Pat: Yeah, something about – you had a term for it – I don't remember what it was; it took me forever to figure out what you were talking about, which, of course, I never admitted to anybody. It finally dawned on me what you were talking about. But that was really a formalizing of the sub-groups.

Anne: A decentralized model.



Pat: It was really fluid before; people would be in one or maybe two; or they'd go to some meetings and not others. But now it was really saying: let's look at it; let's diversify. And the people who want to work on the Pedestal will be self-defined, but there'll actually be a group, and the people who want to do working women, again, not that you couldn't go in between, but it would be very distinct, and we had proposed, initially, that abortion would be one of the areas.

Andrea: I can also remember feeling quite pissed off, that we, the organization was going to be used in that way. It seemed to link back to where we started this conversation today, whether or not women's liberation or feminism or whatever you call it can be more than just a reformist group. I mean, the whole LSA position was that it was just a reformist equity kind of issue, so they're perfectly legitimate to go in there and cream off the people who are ready for being transformed to the next step...

Marcy: The revolutionary vanguard!

Ellen: And the key question of whether there could be an autonomous women's movement. Or would we have to relate to the LSA or the CP (Communist Party) or Vancouver Liberation Movement or any of the others? And the men still did not see that there could be an autonomous women's movement. They thought that we *had to* go back to the main revolutionary group, whichever faction it was.

Anne: And also, it was very much that hierarchical, authoritarian type of structure versus the more New Left – loose, open, everybody do your own thing structure.

Marcy: By then, it was starting to fall apart generally, anyway, with the rise of more sectarian or Leninist groups that appealed to a number of individuals, who wanted to have a much more structured, quite traditional, actually, sort of a revolutionary vanguard, quite elitist organizations.

Anne: Yeah, but when did those groups start breaking away? I thought that was a bit later.

Marcy: Wasn't that about the same time – '70-'71? (General discussion)

Andrea: I remember that summer we had a meeting with men, and we discussed things like Quebec and whether or not we should be supporting Quebec...

General discussion: The Free Canada, Free Quebec...the FLQ stuff, that was the year before we had (Charles) Gagnon and (Pierre) Vallieres come out to speak....

Andrea: And then a lot of the men were sort of getting into that as being the place for civil rights. My perception, and I remember this fairly clearly, was that a lot of male radicals, lefties, were looking for a cause. They were really pissed off that we had one!

Anne: You had to remember that at Simon Fraser, the strike was long over; it sort of deteriorated into endless appeals and legal battles, and whatever, that occupied people more. All those men! We'd go to parties -- I remember this so clearly -- we'd go to parties. The women were all down at one end of the room, all of us. The men would just sort of hang around, and we were chirp, chirp, chirping (laughter). And there was a lot of resentment, and they had started up the labour education centre (Community Education and Research Centre).

Pat: And they were having a hard go on that without female support!

(Tape stopped for announcements and Ellen's departure; begins again in middle of on-going discussion not on tape.)

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Anne: ...that some group would follow up; abortion counselling service, that they would follow up about to talk about that, and get that down. And another one, obviously is the whole Abortion Caravan. But I think it should be, and it could be some people here, but it's a different group of people...

Marcy: Cathy Walker actually went across the country; she drove and stopped [Voices: and Barb Hicks went, and Marcy, and Ellen, and Marge, and Betsy]

Anne: So they should get together, really, with, I think, with their group; that would be the group -- if it's possible, that would be the group: Cathy Walker, Dodie (Weppler), Marcy Cohen, Ellen, Marge, Barb Hicks -- who else? .....

Marcy: That's certainly a good beginning group, if even five of us could get together.

Anne: So we were talking about the LSA; I don't know....you know, in some ways, there was so much written at that time – remember all the position papers in the Pedestal? And I don't know if there's anything to add to it.

Pat: I don't think we ever published our "purge document", did we?

Jean: No, I don't think...well, maybe we did; I don't know. (laughter)

Marcy: The position papers are in, yeah, the various positions of the four different groupings are published in the July/Aug. 1970 edition of the Pedestal.

Anne: They're very straightforward: there they are: One, Two, Three, Four. (Many voices discussing the positions...Who are you?)

Marcy: A strategy for organizing: the majority reply to Number 3, the Young Socialist position. That was offered by Jean Rands, a strategy for organizing. Number 2: it's the statement from the women who withdrew, from reading it, I guess. That??? would be the Women's Liberation people .

Jean: What's number 2?

Marcy: Two is the alternative within Women's Caucus, which is Bev Gibbs: the majority reply to Number 1. And then the YSA position, which is Number 3 position...

Anne: That is more detail than anybody wants!

Marcy: But I love detail!

Jean: It's the only thing I am interested in. Bev Gibbs was the YS, wasn't she?

Marcy: That's what I thought; no, she would be in the LSA then, wasn't she? She divested herself of...

Pat: No, no. See, the women who left to become Vancouver Women's Liberation sort of marched out with banners and all the rest of it, leaving all of us, including all the LSA people.

Jean: So at that point, the majority was us and the LSA.

Marcy: Right, that makes sense.

Andrea: And then, it happened all over again, and we kicked them out.

Pat: But obviously, you know, for the Women's Liberationist people, I think it was clear, looking back, that the abortion people, going on that trip, really got them thinking in a particular ... I mean, something happened in the light of the discussions and the experiences they had, that really propelled them in a particular direction, as opposed to all of us. 'Cause I think that just about everybody who left, and in the statement from the women who left, were people who were on that caravan.

Andrea: Did they stay together as a group after that?

Marcy: For like three months...

Jean: But they didn't do much. They had a hard time maintaining their autonomy from the Vancouver Liberation Front.

Marcy: I think what happened...I was away for the whole summer, but when I came back, this had transpired and what ended up happening very quickly with a number of women who left the group got involved with a couple of political parties that were organizing, which eventually got them into the CPC-ML: DJ O'Donnell, and Dawn Carroll was another...

Pat: And because quite a few of the guys then moved over. Because David Hemmingway ...

Jean: and Sue Claus. [Voice: No, she went off to the Interior.]

Marcy: A number of them ended up in the CPC-ML; quite a few of those people. In fact, if I can find the minutes, that would pretty well...

Anne: Where are we now? What time period are we talking about?

Jean/Marcy: 1970. July, '70.

Andrea: I asked what became of the people who left?

Anne: When did people leave? When was the purge?

Pat: There were two groups leaving. The group who left voluntarily, in fact, militantly left, was in June of '70. The purge was accomplished by the end of August.

Andrea: It was all the summer of '70, early and late.

Anne: It was still in the summer of '70? Because I had gone to Edmonton to work, and I thought I was here for it. When did it actually happen?

Jean: It happened at the end of August. There was a huge meeting [Anne: in September?] The LSA got something like 300 people or something at that meeting! It was just packed!

Andrea: There were long, long speeches!

Pat: Because we voted on it at least three times; it was all re-organization; in fact, it was Number Four there (pointed to the Pedestal articles).

Anne: But, you know I do remember for all the positions written and we had organized and on and on, people were -- those of us who were very, very involved -- were really fed up and felt manipulated by them (the LSA), and they were stymie-ing us by their activities. We felt a big frustration and anger about it. So that hardened into quite hard positions. I think that when we were speaking and arguing about it, it was a pretty tough kind of thing. And then on the other side, the LSA again, they knew what they were debating, they'd figured it out. But a lot of the other women there, they were so confused, hurt: why can't we get along together? Why can't we just resolve this? It was pretty brutal and actually...

Pat: It was a major problem, and I can remember discussions about this. How do we get these poor women who have come to their first meeting or their second

meeting to realize the kind of threat that this posed to the whole organization? And to actually to take such a horrific step to say that a whole bunch of women can't ...

Andrea: Yeah, and that's was why I mentioned that sense of resentment before. That's where my personal sense of resentment was coming from. It was clear that these who this was their first or second meeting were just like being beaten up, not knowing what the hell this was all on about... It was really awful.

Jean: Yeah, you were right. One of the things we were feeling really angry about was that we felt driven to do this – this thing that seemed like the most impossible thing to do. But, basically, we felt that it might be the end of Women's Caucus, which it pretty much was, but at that point, we felt, well, that the choice is either that there's going to be nobody left in Women's Caucus but the LSA, and new people who get brought along sometimes, or...

Andrea: Yes, and I also, speaking personally, felt that -- well, I'm not sure that I had that much of a doomsday vision of it -- I was damned if the LSA was going to walk off with the Women's Caucus!

Marcy: That was an issue; that would have been an issue.

Andrea: Because by that time, we had a pretty high visibility, and to use that name for their nefarious ends (laughter), etc., I guess I never really saw it as we might kill it ourselves, but I certainly felt that it was important to keep the name from going under.

Anne: Looking back, does anyone have any second thoughts or analyses? You know, we sound the same, forty years later! (Laughter) I'm just curious, because in a way it did lead, one way or the other, to the destruction of it. I mean, other forms came out of it, but...

Andrea: I don't agree with that.

Anne: Oh, it was part of it.

Marcy: I think it was going to happen.

Andrea: It was going to happen because the issues were getting too disparate, too broad, and you couldn't keep that kind of caucus thing going. And you tried to set up that structure where we report back so that we can remain in kind of friendly contact, which was a good idea, except that people didn't have the time to do all of that. So basically, I think that the subsets just drifted off to their own work...

Marcy: Which was totally inevitable...

Andrea: Yes.

Marcy: It wasn't just the same number of women who you knew. You know, in the late '60s, everybody who was a sort of second wave feminist, if that's what we want to talk about, we knew everybody. And then three -- or fewer-- years after that, it wasn't like that anymore.

Andrea: And that's the story with all brands of feminism. I mean, it's the story with, say, feminist literary criticism or whatever, that initially you know everything, you read everything, you discuss everything, and then it's just too fucking big. And so the other kind of sub-branches....Every history of some kind of feminist inquiry or action you look at, the same thing happens: that it gets too big and disparate at a point, and it divides down into different interests, kinds of focus. So, I don't agree, Anne. I really strongly don't agree with that. And the question "Would we do the same thing now?" is: I don't know because would the LSA have that kind of power to compel the women in it? You know, all the circumstances are so changed that I don't know whether we'd even have to do it.... I think we'd have to deal with the same thing.

Marcy: I want to borrow one of these (copy of the Pedestal?) and take it home; because of course I don't have copies...Because it's very interesting to look at the way the points of view are framed, and the kinds of language that is used -- particularly embarrassing, actually to read Number One. Just take a look. I mean, had I signed that, which I didn't, it would be very...just take a look at it, in terms of the language. Now, the one Jean's written, which is the only one I've really taken a look at, is much more: "OK, here's some problems. Here's what we need to probably do to deal with those problems in this way." So it's a great deal more

grounded, if I can use that word -- I'm not sure I want to but -- in sort of an analysis of some problems that you can do something about them. Whereas this is like pretty abstract. It appropriates very interesting language that reminds me of kind of..."Gee, we'd really like to be in the United States, working in the Black struggle because that's what's a lot more important than our piddly little struggle up here." That's a somewhat frivolous way of characterizing it, but if you look at the words, it's pretty telling. So, I think there are some seeds, here, of some contemporary, obviously, trends.

Andrea: Well, also, I mean, none of us were unaffiliated, personally or in other political organizations. And all of those relationships were having a pull on us too, you know. I think, like Liz (Briemberg), for example. Obviously, her loyalties to Mordecai, that's creating all kinds of pull on her. Not to single her out, but she's one person, and I think that probably all of us are marked by all those personal and political relationships which ...I mean, these are real people.

Pat: I look back on it, and I have no qualms about the way it went. I always had qualms about how long it took. On the other hand, we had an incredibly tough job to do, to persuade essentially a whole lot of working class, middle class women who'd never been involved politically before to see the danger that our kind of organization could suffer if you had a committed cadre of people who had single tunnel vision boring into it. And they kept it up, too.

Anne: Let me ask a question. Talking to Cynthia (Flood) later, never in all that much depth, although I'd like to at some point, but you know that was a very painful time. They were shocked that they were kicked out. And they were so hurt. She said it was just a devastating time in her life. She viewed all of us as sisters; we were working together. She happened to be in the LSA and believed a certain political line. I don't think that she felt, or they felt, that it was quite so much a directive from on high ordering them to do whatever. You know, I'm just saying that from their point of view, I'm not sure it was such a unified course about what they should do.

Pat: The point we always made was that the people who were in the LSA got to have the debate that they had, right? They had their debate. They could freely



and whatever, have their debate within the LSA, and they did. But what we saw, I mean once they had that debate, it was closed. That's it. Everybody carried the same party line. So we never saw one iota of any disagreement between any of those women, and that's what was so hard to take. We knew that there had to have been people all over the map on the question of where women's liberation or where the women's movement would be going, but we never saw that because they had that central discipline, and once they had decided, somewhere over there, then they all came in, marching. So I can see why she would think, yeah, well, we had a debate. They had a debate; they didn't have it with us.

Andrea: Yeah, they may well have thought they did because I remember, actually, that that was the subject of part of one discussion and Mary (Trew?) kept saying, "But we have different positions". And maybe it was you, or someone else, kept saying, "Not here, you don't." And I can remember that really, really clearly. I know, again just speaking personally, I was just so thoroughly pissed off because I thought it was just another patriarchal organization telling us what to do again. I probably wasn't very sweet and loving because I was just infuriated – you leave the church, you leave .....(laughter)....you know.

Anne: Should we try to go back – you know sometimes we get too much analysis on this tape – I'm not sure of the object of the tape – but should we go back to get more concrete details of what happened over that summer? Like, should we try to reconstruct it? Or it's in the Pedestal...(voices)

Jean: It's pretty well documented, yeah. I want to make one other point about what came out of all that is that I think that we had to do what we did, and that it, and that Women's Caucus and the Working Women's organization that came out of it, led to the formation of AUCE and SORWUC both, and I think that in spite of the fact that those organizations no longer exist, they were really important experiences. And I don't know if that would have happened if we had put all our energy into trying to hold Women's Caucus together. I think that, I think we had to do the thing of freeing the different components of it, and I mean, maybe there would have been a way to, like I'd hoped we could do, like keeping everybody connected. To some extent, we did keep connected; I mean, all those other

organizations kept in touch with each other to the extent that they continued, but...

Pat: And also through the Pedestal. The Pedestal, in a lot of ways, became the link. I mean, there are reports on most of those kinds of activities in the Pedestal in the next year, year and a half.

Andrea: Right. It kept going for quite a while before that sort of centrifugal...or whatever one ...sent everyone off. I mean, because Women's Studies wouldn't have come about either without that core of people, so...

Jean: And the BCTF Women in Teaching and the Status of Women Committee...all of that, really, came out of Women's Caucus. Even though, I think it is...it is really unfortunate that we don't have a kind of on-going coalition of women groups in Vancouver. I think it is bizarre how fragmented everyone is, but I think that Women's Caucus never really was that anyway, since there was the Status of Women group and there was Voice of Women at the same time too.

Anne: One thing we should talk about, just a little addendum there, is about the Voice of Women – although we didn't really have contact as far as I knew at the beginning, there was around the Indo-Chinese Women's Conference. They got hold of Kathleen (Gough Aberle) to say: Can you be some kind of bridge or connection here, because they trusted her, and the Vietnamese did. So there was that link through them.

Andrea: And that was...I mean that's why I don't think expelling the LSA was the end of the story by a long shot because all of that happened after: the Indo-Chinese Women's Conference, the writing of *She Named It Canada*, all that was still in the future. And so that subsequent year, after they were gone, was actually very fruitful.

Marcy: Yes, a very productive year.

Anne: It's not like it just fell apart. (Laughter)

Jean: When was the Indo-Chinese Women's Conference?

Marcy: Around February of '71...or March, something like that.

Anne: Well, it was in the Pedestal; we had a whole issue on that.

Andrea: We worked on "She Named It Canada" all through that fall. And that's another thing: SNIC also brought together people who had left, in the group who had left, because Marge (Hollibaugh) was in that.

Pat: Marge and Dodie (Wepler). Dodie did a bit of research for us before she left. She left that fall, 1970.

Andrea: To get back to that other question about what happened to the people who left. In a way, they still had plenty, when they were working on women's issues, still affiliated with specific issues.

Pat: Because I was just thinking that when Dodie left...because Dodie and Marge and I started meeting to play the guitar. I met Marge at a party at Eddie Haskell Bunker in the fall of 1970, and by then, she and Dodie were already on the outs with everybody in the group that had left, and we talked about playing the guitar, and she had a guitar and I had a guitar, and it turned out that Dodie had a guitar...

Well, Marge and I were going to get together, and Dodie wanted to, too, and that was the beginning of the Euphonious Feminists (singing group). And so Dodie was here at least into 1971 because we were getting together to learn how to play the guitar...

Andrea: And because the collective that started to write SNIC was bigger and then kind of settled down.

Pat: There were eight of us, initially.

Andrea: Weren't there more?

Pat: Nope. Well, there might have been more.

Andrea: Yeah, I think there might have been more, because Doreen (Boal) was involved for a little while, and Karen Cameron....

Pat: Dodie's listed on the list of people who worked on it.

Anne: Now let's go back ...I don't know where we are.

Andrea: And you wanted us to go back? (Laughter)

Anne: Let's get organized a bit. OK. So the LSA was expelled, somehow – late summer, early fall of '70. OK, what happened right after that. The Indo-Chinese Women's' Conference we began to plan – when was that? I think it was actually October when we went down to the states, Portland in October, wasn't it? So that would be from September, then, really, that a group of us were totally involved in organizing the Indo-Chinese Women's Conference.

Andrea: Well, not totally, because there were all these other things that kept turning up....

Jean: And don't forget that was the FLQ crisis right then, in October '70, the War Measures Act. There were demonstrations; we went down there; I was madly typesetting the FLQ manifesto.

Anne: And distributing it, and we didn't know if we would be arrested for it ...

Marcy: Because a lot of people did get picked up but not charged...

Jean: And the Pedestal was involved; we did some stuff about women in Quebec.

Anne: There were women travelling out from Quebec. We were really caught up in that. OK. Also, the working women's association, which we really haven't talked about at all, and maybe we should get down the names of all the beginning people in it...

Jean: Well, the Working Women's Association itself ...

Marcy: Well, excuse me: there's a calendar of activities ... Whoa! It takes the whole page (in the Pedestal).

Anne: But the Working Women's Association started when?

Jean: October, '71

Marcy/Anne: Working Women's Workshop, within the Caucus.

Jean: The Working Women's Workshop started in October, '70...

Marcy: No, there's one here in July (in the Pedestal)

Jean: What did we call it then?

Marcy: It's here in the Pedestal: the Working Women's Workshop. Sorry. Jean McLaren, who left the CP (Communist Party), Bouk Elzinga...

Anne: I remember her, she was the nurse, right?

Marcy: So, right here (pointing in the Pedestal), there's the education workshop.

Anne: Jean McLaren and Bouk; who else was involved?

Pat: Esther Phillips, and Andrea.

Marcy: That was in the education workshop.

Anne: Esther Phillips! She's in COPE Ed (education committee of the municipal political party, Coalition of Progressive Electors) now; I didn't know she started out in Women's Caucus!

Marcy: She's in the COPE Education Committee?

Anne: Yeah, she comes regularly; she has for twenty years, or I don't know really how long!

Let's get the Working Women's here: Jean; Bouk Elzinga, Jean McLaren, probably Sharon Boylan.

Pat: There was a strike support thing she was doing (Sharon).

Marcy: Donation a dollar to the benefit party for strike support.

Anne: We're talking about when, the working women; it couldn't have started then...

Marcy: July, 1970

Anne: But it started before then, didn't it?

Jean: Well sure. It started ... We had...I'm not sure....

Anne: Way early, way early....

**End of side**