

CANADA



A WOMEN'S
LIBERATION
NEWSPAPER

PEDESTAL 25¢

Vancouver BC.

Volume III No. 11

Dec. 1971



A Women's Poetry Supplement



Working Women

Shenandoa, Virginia.— As of October, women members of the International Union of Electrical Workers in a plant in Virginia been on strike for four months for wage raises, seniority rights, and a grievance procedure. The women were employed by a subsidiary of North American Philips and were hired largely because the company could pay them half as much as men: they were getting \$1.60 to \$1.76 an hour compared to \$3.10 paid to men in an Ohio branch. The union eventually withdrew its support from the women's strike, leaving them to fight the company alone.

Lancaster, England.— In June of this year women day cleaners at Lancaster University held a series of strikes and pickets to obtain a salary increase which would cover transportation costs to and from the University, which is located three miles from Lancaster. These costs took 10 to 20 percent of their salaries. In the past the women had approached the administration individually, with no results. Next they joined a union as a group and with support from the students held a series of strikes to obtain transportation costs. The university tried to have them accept a raise under the terms of the Equal Pay Act.

The university finally gave in to their demands but not without first trying to fire one of the cleaners involved in the strike. The women eventually won transportation increases for both full-time and part-time workers.



Lawyers

In the U.S., Human Rights for Women of Washington D.C. reports that according to a woman attorney, the bar association grievance committee "will impose strict discipline and unjust suspensions from practice on a woman attorney on the slightest complaint, even when the charge is proved untrue." Men attorneys have to be "unquestionably proved immoral, a thief, or in actual violation of the Code of Ethics" before the grievance committee will publicly discipline him.

Rape has been featured in a number of magazines ever since *Ramparts* published "Rape: the all-American crime" by Susan Griffin in the September issue. *Everywoman* and *Women's Press* have reprinted portions of her article.

In Berkeley, Calif., women's groups have proposed a city-run centre where rape victims could go for support and legal assistance.

Women take over

Copenhagen, Denmark.— On Sept. 15, thirty Red-stockings took over an unoccupied building owned by the Ministry of Education. They are trying to use it rent-free for a women's centre which will include living quarters for a women's collective, a cafe, a clothes exchange, a children's room, library, theatre and film room.



Media

In Windsor, one radio and one T.V. programme are devoted to "women's issues" and are for the most part put on by women.

In Oregon, women listeners of a country and western radio station are invited to "do something real nice for that man of yours" and describe in 50 words or less why "your country king" deserves a holiday weekend in Reno.



Art

Since the fall of 1970 the Women's Graphics Collective in Chicago has been turning out inexpensive women's graphic art. Posters range from 15 cents to \$1.50. They are available from Women's Graphic Collective, c/o Chicago Women's Liberation Union, 852 West Belmont, Chicago, Ill. 60657.

A Birks ad seen in cross-Canada newspapers:

"Who wants to be liberated!

**I want love and marriage,
a Birks diamond and 3 kids."**

"I'll lead a protest march against anyone who says we can't start a great life on a low budget and high hopes.

It's because of our budget that we're buying the ring at Birks—probably the best value place in town for diamonds—and where we can choose from stones of different qualities. We want to be sure we get the quality we pay for. And Birks guarantees exactly that.

Birks diamonds start at \$100. We may go a little higher, and someday exchange it for a bigger one. Birks will credit us with the original price we paid. Not a bad deal when you figure that might be 10 years from now!

Life's too short not to get your money's worth out of it."

CONVENIENT TERMS

Birks Diamonds
have the look of love.



The Woman's Place

A group of women met on November 21 to share their ideas about a women's centre. A vision emerged of a many-roomed house spilling over with warmth and activity, with a place for kids, and for quiet, and for getting to know each other better.

One woman said that there should be a Women's House wherever there's a safety—she was expressing the need of women for a place to go, for sitting, for conversation, for comfort. There would be some rooms available for women to stay in times of crisis. And we know that any day there would be a lot of talking. Someone else at the meeting said that we need a house so we don't have to have meetings in order to talk to each other.

A neighborhood House would bring women together at their home base, and could slice across the economic, social and educational boundaries which often isolate us from each other. There is also an emotional barrier which divides women who are mothers from women without children. Alongside the struggle for independence, a high value must be placed on the child-bearing and caring capacities of women: our House would include formal and informal child-caring facilities so that we could share the beauty of the children as well as the burden of perpetual supervision which a mother in our society currently bears alone.

The House would also make it possible for women to organize their projects out of a central place, conveniently and informally. The list of things that women said they wanted to do in this house includes: Yoga, sewing arts and crafts, women's library and book store, gynecology study group and women's clinic, information exchange.

It is true that the existing community resources may offer some of these activities; we would use our experience in a Women's House to approach these resources with our needs as a functioning group. Some of the more informal aspects of the House would not be subject to scheduling or to an institutional setting. The House would be in that empty social space between the home and the organizations that society already provides.

Which brings us to finances: at the meeting we were not able to resolve where the provision for the House should or could come. Some women objected to applying for government support (winter works project) because of the strings attached to that money and also because we had not yet clearly defined what we want this House to provide.

The possibility of the House being funded, at first by the donations of individual women was raised.

One objection to this was that private money can have just as many strings attached as the government's; another concern was that we might not be able to raise enough money out of our own pockets. After some discussion it became clear that the initial costs would not be enormous. Once a house is found which can serve as our Women's Place we can begin to find ways of perpetuating it, i.e. alternative sources of funding. But right now two problems are outstanding (1) acquisition of a house, (2) funds to pay—say two months rent.

We decided an appropriate next step would be to schedule an informal gathering which was held Friday, November 26. If you would like to work on developing a Women's Place or if you know of a possible house contact: Joan 876-7831 or Georgia 879-3153.



Women's Centre

For those of you who don't already know, the Vancouver Women's Caucus is no longer in existence. Rising out of its ashes came the Women's Centre, established in the same place, at 511 Carrall St., which has been open for the last four months. We spiffed up the centre with new paint, yellow, white and navy blue; arranged the space differently, put in some comfortable chairs, and tried to make sure the centre was staffed six days a week from 12-5. For several months this was accomplished by only a handful of women and at times was very difficult.

Needing and hoping for more women to share the centre, we called several meetings. The first one or two were unfortunately not very well publicized, and few women attended, although a winter works project application by the Women's Centre did result. The third meeting, which took place on November 20, a Thursday night, was more successful. Many things were discussed and many projects suggested. Better use of the Centre's bulletin

boards was recognized as a necessity, an exchange of information concerning doctors, housing, child care, interest groups, free stores, etc. If you have information you'd like to share or a notice to put up, your ideas are more than welcome.

The projects we considered included a wide range of ideas and interests: an artists' workshop, theatre workshop, acquisition of information needed by women, such as legal, welfare, medical, education, and job rights.

The artists' workshop is becoming a reality. Work on a Women's Liberation Calendar has already begun, which will be available within two weeks. The women in the workshop want to develop their concepts of "women's art and culture", and intend to learn and teach the use of silkscreening as a technique for producing revolutionary women's poster art.

The theatre workshop had its first meeting on November 29th. The intent is to put together a strongly-knit group so that improvisation and experimentation can take place among women who know each other well.

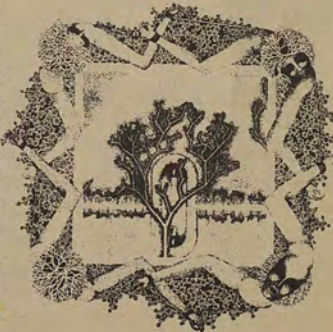
Frequent, special Open Houses (every day at the Centre is open house) parties were planned to introduce women to the Centre and to each other. One is planned for January for sure (time to be announced), and hopefully there will be one in December as well. (Not that you should have to wait for them to come by.)

We see the Centre as an open space for women, a place for women to drop in when they're downtown—to talk, read, relax or whatever. And a place for women to find out what's going on and what kind of activities could be of interest to you.

Feminists Plus

Just what is the purpose of a rap group? What direction should it go? As the group continues and communication becomes more personal and more filled with risk, these questions come up again and again. Each woman comes from a different background, a different set up childhood values, and here in Vancouver, possibly from a different country. The purpose of the group is something that slowly evolves as a group identity grows and each member makes a commitment to grow with it.

In Feminists Plus one of the first promises we made to each other was not to repeat anything said within the group. Recently, after about three months of weekly meetings, we have come to two other realizations about the sort of environment we all needed in order to evolve further. The first was that each woman in the group would have to make a personal commitment to come to every meeting in order for there to be a continuity. The second was a decision to close the group to new members and instead make ourselves available to help other women form rap groups. One such is now meeting at Gordon House in the west end every Monday night at 7:30. New members are welcome.



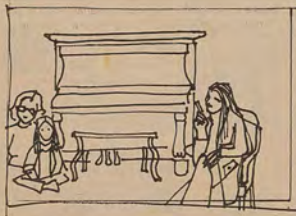
HOW THE B.C. FEDERATION OF LABOR HELD A CONFERENCE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The B.C. Federation of Labor held a conference on women's rights November 13 and 14, at Vancouver's Hotel Georgia.

Opening remarks were by George Johnston, president of the Federation, whose Meatcutters union just signed a contract with Safeway providing that men eggworkers shall earn 50 cents per hour more than women eggworkers. That contradiction between words and deeds helped set the tone for the weekend.

Johnston referred to press reports that the conference had been called under pressure. He agreed that an increased interest in women's rights and the activities of women's liberation groups were responsible for the calling of this "historic" conference.

The conference discussions made it clear that any such pressure came from outside the federation itself.



"If a woman has no incentive to join a union, if her pension is going to be smaller, if her retirement is going to be earlier, even though she lives longer than men and so will have to spend more years on a reduced income, if her job is designated by her union on the basis of sex so she gets less than her fellow worker who is doing the same job but happens to be a man, how can you expect her to be enthusiastic about unions?"

quotes from Grace Hartman who said most everything that was worth quoting.

There were 72 delegates present — a poor turnout in everyone's estimation. But then the federation was so careful not to invite the wrong people (unorganized women or members of non-affiliated unions) that it was difficult for the right people to find out. The conference was open to any member of a CLC-affiliated union who could get her/his registration form stamped by her/his union. (Several thousand women members of the Hospital Employees Union and the Municipal and Regional Employees were excluded automatically because they are not affiliated to the Canadian Labor Congress (CLC). And the invitation that went to the Public Service Alliance was apparently sent to Ottawa...) Many of those who were eligible to go would not have heard about the conference, which was publicized through BC Fed circulars to local offices.

Still, the conference was representative of women who are active in their unions. And it did reveal some important truths about the relationship of women workers to unions.

There was little discussion of what women unions could do to make their unions effective in fighting for the needs of women workers. Most of the conference was taken up by speakers — a member of the Royal Commission, a lawyer, a panel of women NDPers, and one panel of women unionists. Most of the discussion (typical of union conferences) was about legislation rather than about what unions can do as unions.

Some women, including Grace Hartman of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), spoke critically of their unions, giving shocking examples of discrimination. Then several women stood up and said that it was all the fault of women workers who won't go to union meetings. They dissociated themselves from the women they work with. "We want representation not as women but as dedicated unionists." And being a "unionist" means rubbing shoulders with leaders at conventions and conferences, not defending the people you work with.

In fact, practically the only discussion of how unions should change was about how to get more women into positions of leadership. It's a myth that women can change the discriminatory conditions existing in unions merely by joining the executives; just as it's a myth that getting individual socialists into power positions will substantially change society. But the women who spoke at the conference seemed more interested in securing positions for themselves in the union hierarchy than in criticizing that structure and discussing alternatives.

Near the end of the conference, a delegate from the BC Government Employees Union proposed that women delegates to the Federation Convention (starting the next day) should caucus as women during the convention. (At Fed conventions, any group of delegates that shares a common concern will meet together to press for certain motions or defend the interests of their group. For instance, the printing trades caucus to push for a motion banning all literature except that with a union label from Fed meetings.) The delegates seemed interested at first, until there were three hard speeches against the motion. "If we want to be treated as equals, we must separate ourselves off like that." "We must remember that we are representing our locals, not this conference." "We should put more emphasis on being unionists and less on being women." The motion was overwhelmingly defeated.

Meanwhile, the male leadership of the Fed caucused at the back of the hall. Once again, the unity of the labor movement was preserved.

The women's movement, and particularly the Working Women's Association, has been accused of being anti-union and dividing the workingclass. Let's take a closer look at some of the people who put forward that kind of argument.

The committee which organized the conference (and is now the Standing Committee on Women's Rights of the BC Fed) is headed by Lena Kress, of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). Lena Kress works at Lenkurt Electric, a large electronics plant which has an important place in recent BC labor history. In 1966, 257 Lenkurt workers walked off the job in protest of the company's overtime policy. Mass citizens' pickets were called in defiance of court injunctions. Four leaders of the Vancouver labor movement were jailed; Paddy Neale, secretary of the Labor Council; Tom Clarke, first vice-president of the I.W.A. Vancouver local; Jeff Powers, president of the Boilermakers union; and Art O'Keefe who was business agent of the Vancouver local of the IBEW until he was fired by the international for supporting the Lenkurt strike.

The strike had the support of the Labor Council and the BC Fed, but it was not endorsed by the international hierarchy of the IBEW. The Canadian Vice President arrived from the east, signed an agreement with the company and fired the local business agent and assistant business agent. They, and others, were suspended from the union, in spite of votes of confidence from the membership of the Vancouver local.

Lena Kress was one of those who crossed the picket lines, while dozens were arrested and hundreds were fired. Her loyalty was to the union leadership, not to the women she works with. She was made secretary Local 264 which was set up after the strike, when the international insisted on dividing the local. Last spring, the BC Fed executive appointed her chairman of their committee on women's rights.

"Women make up nearly 40% of the labor force. They make up only 17% of union membership."



AND CONVINCED US ALL THAT WOMEN CAN AND MUST ORGANIZE INDEPENDENTLY OF THE EXISTING UNIONS

There was no discussion of the problems of organizing unorganized women workers. When one woman tried to raise the question, she was told "that cuts across the whole point — this conference is for union women."

Of course, the whole point of unionism today has nothing whatever to do with organizing the unorganized — especially women. The organizing staff are not only male, they spend most of their time in union offices being waited on by women office workers; they have more in common with our employers, in terms of lifestyle, than with women workers.

The Working Women's Association has been accused of being divisive because we talk about organizing women independently. But the very structure of the "labor movement" is divisive, with each union out to protect its own members only. What could be more divisive than the attitude: We represent our locals, not women workers!

We are told that existing unions have the power required to organize women workers. But recent experience with some of the biggest most "powerful" unions belies this. The women who struck C.H. Hoken (owned by Cuningham's, now Shoppers Drug Mart) were members of the Retail Wholesale Department Store Union (Ray Haynes' own). After more than a year's strike, the company settled, closed down Hoken's, agreeing to a guarantee of 10 weeks work for the women workers.

The A.B. Dick strike was officially declared lost at the federation convention, after more than a year. They were members of the Office and Technical Employees Union.

The strike at Sandringham private hospital in Victoria still goes on. The 28 nurses aides are asking for \$2 per hour after two years work! Their union is the second biggest in Canada — the Canadian Union of Public Employees — and they've been on strike for a year and a half. When the strikers proposed an ad hoc committee of unions and community groups to support their strike, CUPE called a meeting with the Fed instead. That was months ago. The hospital is still functioning with scab labor.

None of these experiences were discussed at the women's conference or at the Fed convention. The role of the Fed and the CLC is not to plan organizing campaigns or solidarity actions, but to lobby governments. Putting individual women into positions of authority in this structure won't change the structure or its purpose.

"Here in BC in Victoria, this summer, your own Minister of Labor was challenged by the Voice of Women to look into the situation of the Sandringham workers who were striking for better pay. Labor Minister Chabot said he had no authority to intervene in the strike because 'the public interest and welfare' was not involved.

It is true that Chabot and his government should be attacked for refusing to consider the elementary needs of women workers as having something to do with 'public welfare'. But the Sandringham strikers are part of Grace Hartman's union — the second biggest in Canada — and surely they shouldn't have to depend on an anti-labor government to defend their rights. Even Grace Hartman went along with the general theme of the conference, that women unionists should work on changing laws and governments, rather than discussing how we can exert our power as women workers through collective action.

With this approach, the official labor movement has never been successful at organizing women. Even those 17 per cent of union members who are women were not organized by the Fed or its affiliates. Most

of them were organized independent of the Fed first (government workers, hospital workers). The rest were mostly organized in the days when unions were prepared to take on anti-labor laws, rather than using them as an excuse for not organizing or for losing strikes. The industries that are organized (steel, auto, the forest industry, etc.) were organized in defiance of existing laws, with tremendous campaigns of solidarity and courage. To organize banking, insurance, department stores, we will have to learn from the past of the union movement, not from its conservative bureaucratic present.

The women at the conference were saying to their unorganized sisters — "I'm all right, Jill." Although they earn less than men union members, and are discriminated against because they are women, they are still a privileged minority among women workers. There was no evidence of understanding that their gains must ultimately depend on the organization of other women workers. There are undoubtedly women union members who have been influenced by women's liberation. But many of them are not even aware that they are union members, and few of them would see their unions as relevant to their needs as women or as workers. They would be unlikely to express their women's consciousness through their unions, or through BC Fed conferences. Some women at the conference were sympathetic to women's liberation, but they mostly didn't speak (only about 10 of the delegates actually took the floor). The posh hotel, the imposing presence of the men leaders, the formal academic presentation of one speech after another, combined to intimidate most of the women. Until union women organize as women, individual women going to union meetings to discuss their problems as women and as workers will find themselves out of order and unwelcome.

The BC Fed's conference could have been the beginning of bringing union women together in their own interests. Instead it was a platform for aspiring women union leaders to denounce women's liberation and dissociate themselves from any notion of organizing women.

The conference was closed, appropriately, by Ray Haynes, secretary of the federation, with a pat on the head to the chairwoman, Lena Kress.

And we all went home, angry, but profoundly convinced that the tradition of militancy and collective strength which is still called unionism will be reborn through small groups like the Working Women's Association and not through the Fed or the CLC.

The union women bought lots of Pedestals — and it may have been their last chance.

Someone (who incidentally objected to the content of the Pedestal) proposed that all literature without a union label be banned from Fed-sponsored meetings. To get a union label, the publication must be totally produced in a union shop. This excludes the Pedestal (as well as a lot of other things) because we do our own typesetting and paste-up, although it's printed by union labor.

The new rule censors any group that can't afford to do all its printing commercially (coincidentally any group that is more radical than the Fed leadership).

The motion was passed by the women on the grounds that "union men will be out of work this winter." As a solution to unemployment, this has to rank as even more absurd than Opportunities for Youth...



WORKING WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

The Working Women's Association was formed at the conference Oct. 30. Our objectives are to help each other organize where we work, and to carry educational activities (meetings, leaflets, etc.) in support of women who are organizing and to encourage women workers generally to organize.

There is someone from the WWA at the Women's Centre (511 Carrall, 684-0523) Monday-Friday, 12:00-5:00. We are prepared to help women deal with various problems on the job — legal and individual problems, as well as problems that might involve organizing.

For the immediate future, we're planning to continue activities in support of the Sandringham strikers — and, our sisters at Smitty's Pancake House have just been certified in the Hotel and Restaurant Employees! So we're getting ready to support them in any way we can!

Please help! We need information of all kinds about work situations. We need members — as many women as possible committed to supporting each other in the struggle to organize.

Membership is \$1 per year. Send it to us care of the Women's Centre.

Everyone is welcome at coordinating committee meetings, Wednesdays, 7 pm at the Women's Centre. The next Membership Meeting will be Jan. 19, 7 pm at the library (Robson and Burrard), Rm. 307.



Christmas Gift Ideas ***Books

PIONEERING WOMEN ***

Moodie, Susanna Roughing it in the Bush
 Early 19th century description of
 pioneering
 Stanwell-Fletcher Driftwood Valley
 Two years in the bush in northern B.C.
 in the 1940's
 Carr, Emily Klee Wyck, House of Small

TODAY ***

Spark, Muriel Prime of Miss Jean Brodie
 Doris Lessing Golden Notebook
 Murdoch, Iris Flight from the
 Enchanter, Beneath the Net

POETRY ***

Atwood, Margaret The Journals of
 Susanna Moodie

PSYCHOLOGY ***

Laing, R.D. Politics of Experience
Bird of Paradise mental illness as
 self discovery not sickness

NOSTALGIA ***

Goudge, Elizabeth Scent of Water
Eliots of Damerselay family life in
 England through several generations
 Montgomery, L. M. Anne of Green Gables
Anne of the Island

TRAVEL ***

Blixen, Karen Out of Africa
 1920's and 30's in Kenya

ART ***

Di San Lazzaro, G. Klee; a study of
 his life and work Many good
 illustrations, not much text
Pitsoolak Pictures out of my life
 Life of an Eskimo woman artist
 beautifully illustrated with her
 drawings and prints
 Sterner, Dugald The Art of
 Revolution revolutionary posters
 from Castro's Cuba 1959-1970



WOMEN'S CALENDER
 People have gotten
 together and printed
 a calender. You can
 buy it for your friends
 from 511 Carrall St.



and
 for your
 own reading
 enjoyment -
 these four
 pages of
 women's
 poems...

50¢

"She Named it Canada
 because that's what it
 was called"
 Read it because its the
 only good history of Canada



SHELAGH - FOR HER VOICE

HER MIND IS A FINE
 WHEATING STONE
 SHE HONES HER THOUGHTS
 TO A POINT CARELESS WHERE
 THE SPARKS FALL CAUGHT UP
 IN THE SHARPENING
 WHIRL AROUND THE CIRCLE
 SHE GUESSES SPARKS
 TO CATCH FIRE

SOMEWHERE
 I THOUGHT I HEARD
 A WHINE IN THE TREES
 BUT IT WAS JUST HER FINE
 SHARPENING SHE HAD TURNED IT
 TO A SONG

AS MUCH AS THE WIND
 IT WAS HER SONG ALL ALONG
 THE THIN EDGE SHE WORKED
 A HAIR'S-BREATH INTO NOTHINGNESS

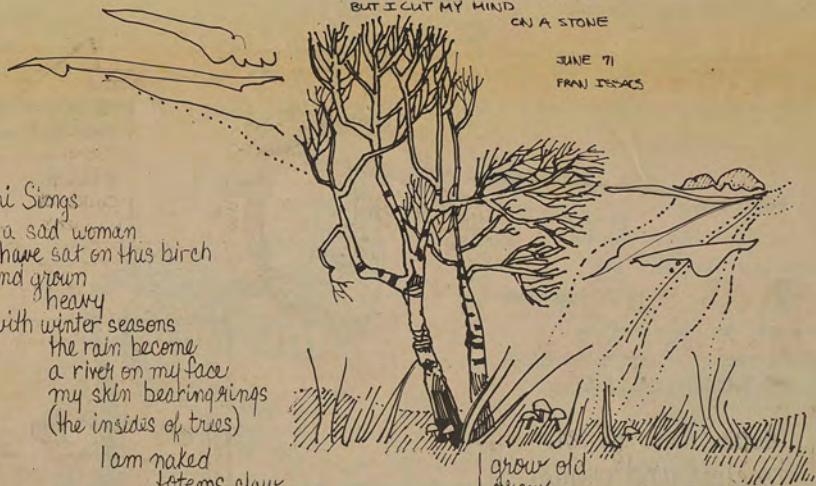
(SHE CAN PULL VOICES OUT OF A ROOM
 THEN COAT ME WITH A FLOW OF HAIR)

SPARKS FLEW OFF ANGRY AND WHITE
 I WAITED FOR THE CHANCE

I SAW
 HER GRATING AT THE SENSES
 SHE PULLED ME TO HER SAYING
 WE WILL
 LOOK THE AIR IS WHITE WITH WAITING
 WE WILL BEGIN THE HUNT NOW
 WE WILL
 CHOOSE OUR WORDS CAREFULLY
 WE WILL
 DRAW OUT THEIR BEAUTY CAREFULLY
 THE KNIFE IS SHARP NOW
 AND BEFORE

I KNEW IT I WAS OVER
 THE WALL INTO THE GARDEN
 BUT I CUT MY MIND
 ON A STONE

JUNE 71
 FRAN ISSACS



Naami Sings
 I am a sad woman
 I have sat on this birch
 and grown
 heavy
 with winter seasons
 the rain become
 a rivet on my face
 my skin bearing rings
 (the insides of trees)

I am naked
 Totems claw
 into my shoulder
 the sky fills
 the tail of the weasel
 the tail of the fox
 tongue of the lizard
 the turtles eye... eyes
 spirits gather
 become solid
 water thunders over rock

I grow old
 I grow
 old under an open sky
 the animals have entered
 my bones
 they have wandered
 & found their trails
 thru this forest
 I am intruded upon
 by mushrooms
 this cluster of violet.

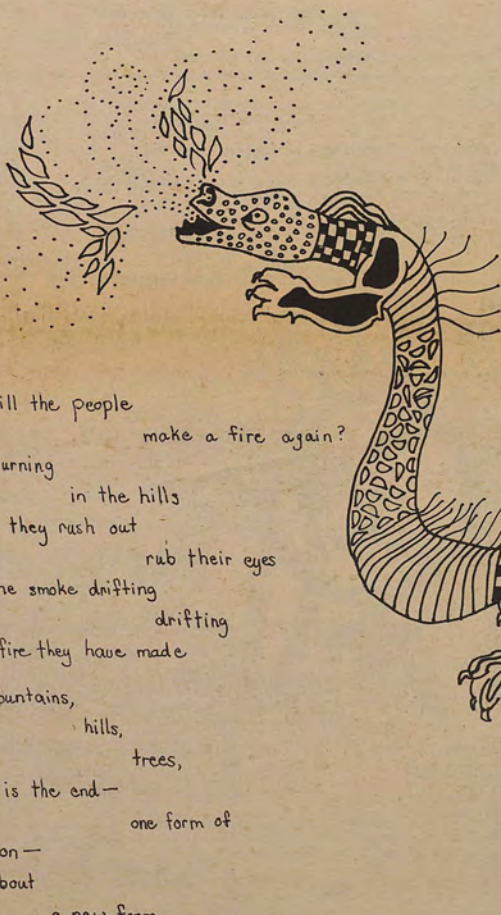
S. Sandell

all this coldness
 in coldness begun
 is it because of winter
 that your mouth is frozen
 against all words

but still I remember
 summer warmth —
 tho not for me
 yet warm

now, no words past
 a frozen smile, unthawing eyes
 no words, for me,
 for anyone

-pam



When will the people
 make a fire again?
 the fire burning
 in the hills
 when will they rush out
 rub their eyes
 and see the smoke drifting
 drifting
 from the fire they have made
 over the mountains,
 hills,
 trees,
 Knowing it is the end —
 one form of
 destruction —
 to bring about
 a new form
 of life.

- gwen

A TREE AS ALWAYS
 WAITING FOR SPRING TO START
 BUDDING

THE OCEAN WAITING FOR THE WIND
 START WAVING

THE WIND FORMING INTO CLOUDS
 WITHOUT WRITING

THE MOUNTAINS WAITING
 ALL THROUGH TIME

THE SUN SHINING
 BEHIND

THE MOON RECYCLE

HELLO OUT THERE - COMING IN CLEAR
 THANK YOU - COME AGAIN.

J 71

THE WIG QUEEN WILL BREED instead of eating moisture my skin eats a word or two, three images of a rotting ocean, five lives, each one a little man, taking apart the life it is my social duty to keep together, beauty, radiance, thy duty slave to life, one wife of the king who takes himself and other kings

oh, a secret, dearie, we all do

derivative sitting compliant flesh at \$1.50 per hr.

later sitting compliant smile for O or a
a guarantee of an eternity of compliant

good
Cornish pasty
filled
with potato,
onion,
and a bit of meat

no
complaint;
rain, red
neon, flagree
metal
out of
owned dark ground
laughs, an earthquake
no joke to
rainbow thin man
in Peru

a lone forty-three year old obviously crazy sad valiant denied
the privileged position of being bewigged six clown of the town for sale
\$1.50 per hr. no kick-back yet required
everyone

agrees to be less than they dream but the long-hairs, doomed comets

cockroach kings, kicking in
chains of smoke, no
mettle, man; woman to be worn out before you get out of yr own

womb

but imagine me, with my mere bitterness seeing this and only this

in armour of minimum wage going
right down the centre of every vision in the middle of the town
seeing scores of eagles' eyes flying to the edges of the rain
to gardens with quail and golden oak OFF THE BODY
OFF HEARING OFF SEEING OFF MEETING

THE CLOWN: OFF INTERNATIONAL BUYER AND SELLER OF STUD HORSES AND WOMEN
OFF SMILES, OFF THE PINK OCTUPUS, OFF THE LIMOUSINE, OFF THE WIG, OFF THE JOB
OFF THE TENSION, OFF THE MACHINE * OFF THE DREAMS * OFF THE DESIRE * OFF THE WINE
OFF THE COCK * OFF THE CUNT * OFF THE WATER * OFF THE SKY * OFF THE BOOKS OF HISTORY
OFF BOOKS OF RELIGION * OFF VISION * OFF SMELL * OFF KNOWLEDGE * OFF FEELING * OFF K
OFF K
OFF K

you know a hustler will be born and those born old will be made aware that

a child will

to beborn to who goes
in where she should not go, gets thrown out, full of child, wildly hustling
for THE WIG KING, THE WIG KING KING OF KANADA with a fake crown fr every drab
who must
hustle
for a life come down to the ground/come out of the ground, gold, go to the hustler

WHATEVER SHE DOES, sittin in the back pretending not to exist,
a pelt of humiliation hardly causing a stink in her potato mind, hardly,
hard, to wit: irrelevant

good to know no Indian high dignity around here; she smiles and smiles
believing they will see beyond the symbols and some
some some r roe fleece tellurian rise, (crest
trough)

back alley gob trip thyme bell
Type script, ink, editor, bank clerk, comedian, diamond, file of

all yr debts, yr credits
due all petroleum, parts
to fake you where

you always wanted to be
in the sea
under the star

in hibiscus pollen
eating
a biscuit that you feed it, there must
must must
must and ambergris, musk
dusky

person
you athletic loving person of
cock and car and home-on-the-earth, from way back, like
everybody at the bank

kin, you see to say
a splinter of conscious radiance is worth
any total (assumed) godhead, now, ok. I knew
what this doesn't add down to (can't: 2 minus 4 1/2 or
whatever long golden thoughts are stood up against,
I'm obviously willing to bring the standard down, and
even the red flag just to say
I see each single mind waving to say it's hard that way, that king of sight

I confess
I'm lying to be braver than this day this day that I am,
too dull a light in
side like you want
an atom blast?



-Maxine *

Baton Rouge Poem no. 2

"Busted flat in Baton Rouge
waitin' for a train..."

and always there's no train
and no way
to get out
(not that I'd want to
anyway...)

"harpoon my harpoon
and my dirty red bandana"

I asked what the name
of the band was
"Rainbow," he said,
"the color of love"
so wrap yr rainbow
around my
head," / I said
and maybe the red songs
will go away

* * *

"a look like a whiteman
about to be attacked
by indians,"
i said

and sure enough,
there they were
leaping and whooping
around the cabin
"O, baby, hide the baby,"
Ma said

tears dribbling
down her cheeks
"Yes'm," I said
and rushed
to the outhouse
threw the baby
down the hole
& watched the cabin
burning down
(always did get
upset about them
settler's wives
and never did know
what to do
about the baby)

don't you think
that's a bit much?
the rainbow
cowboy said to me
"no, not at all, it's just
the beegining,"

* * *
hey, kid, shut up
i said
can't you see the injuns
are burning down
the cabin?

no use to cry
anyway
can't you see they all know
i'm their long-lost
baby sister
and I'm going to
bring them home

i said holding
a scalp up
in my hand
(the rainbow
cowboy
had just been left
left without his hair that is)

* * *

i always did try
to make it
sound like love
but the only place
there were ever any flowers
trees or grass was in
the long-house--
the forests were pretty
dark and green
and the settler's cabins
were full of shut...

* * *

meanwhile back at the
long-house
Ajax was teaching
his sister to swim
And Pollox was talking about
swimming around
while she had her baby
at the top of Siwash Rock
(it was considered dirty
for women to have babies)

sort of a sink--
or swim
proposition--
what if it falls
on its head?

I said
(i found out I'm under
the whale, after all
and not
Taurus, as I thought)
no use to worry
about sharks,
cowboy.

(wait till the cards
fall on your head)

-qwen





WHICH SIDE HAS POWER?



THEY DO!



HOW THE TEXPACK STRIKE WAS WON

Reprinted from Canadian Dimension Magazine

BRANTFORD, Ont. — It's hard enough to strike a branch plant run by a world-wide corporation and absentee management. It's tougher to strike a vanishing plant. Brantford learned how tough when the tiny Canadian Textile and Chemical Union struck Texpack Ltd. in July. As the strike dragged on through the summer with no end in sight near Labor Day, what had happened was clear.

The company, with the indifferent Tory government collaborating, was willing to deprive 150 workers of their union and turn the plant into a warehouse to stockpile imported products if the union made business too costly. With policemen from four forces riding shot-gun for a scab bus, the desired picket-line confrontation was provoked. The standard injunction was issued in court to limit picketing so the company could conduct its business.

Ontario's industrial ghettoes have seen a plethora of hopeless strikes in the past few years. But seldom has management acted so truculently. It dared the union to strike and promised to hire strikebreakers. "We intend to win," a letter to employees boasted.

"Our corporation has weathered strikes of up to nine months' duration against such worthy foes as the Teamsters in Canada as well as the United States."

Fitting the puny resources of the Textile and Chemical Union (1,500 members, five locals) against Texpack's owners made a bizarre contest.

Texpack's parent, American Hospital Supply, is a world-wide medical supply house headquartered in Evanston, Illinois, a Chicago suburb. The company was family-owned until 1964 when it became a public company, expanded with government grants, and was gobbled up by AHS. American Hospital, the union charges, has followed a policy of laying off in Brantford while expanding its Canadian sales through imports. What it bought, says York University researcher John Lang, was a ready-made salesroom for American-made goods. Of 250 men and women employed when Texpack was bought four years ago, 126 have been laid off permanently.

As luckless as the workers' plight might seem against the giant AHS which ranks in the middle of Fortune Magazine's richest 500 corporations, profits over \$25,000,000, sales over \$450,000,000 — the strikers' spirit was good.

The Textile and Chemical Union has been a maverick in the province's labor history, picking up members mostly from raids on other unions.

Despite the union's adverse reputation support flowed from Brantford and the nearby labor community. Ten militants from the giant Local 1005 of the United Steelworkers of America in Hamilton's Steel Company of Canada workers showed up to defy the injunctions. They were all arrested, including the Steel Local's secretary Harry Greenwood.

At a huge rally August 26th, some 700 persons turned out. A few rushed the plant. Some garbage was set afire and the rear of the plant charred. Kent Rowley, the Chemical Union's president, was arrested, jailed and charged with committing arson.

Rowley is an outcast in the labor family. Purged in the anti-communist witch hunts of the 1950's, he has plucked away like a scavenger at the malcontents and neglected membership of American-based unions.

The old hates die hard in organized labor, and Rowley was not expecting all-out labor support. Earlier this year at the Canadian convention of the Textile Workers Union of America, the international union's Canadian director, George Watson, made a tactless reference to Rowley's demise from the mainstream labor movement for alleged communist activities, whatever that means.

The T.W.U.A. later became a major factor in the strike. The Steelworkers and the United Electrical Workers, both of Hamilton, gave solid support to the striking women. Workers from the U.A.W. Massey-Ferguson local appeared on the picket line daily. But the Brantford District Labor Council initially refused to support the strikers on the ground that the C.T.C.U. is not part of "the legitimate labor movement." But local rank and file pressure forced it to change its position. One month after the strike began, the Council finally issued a statement condemning Texpack and the actions of the city police. But it refused any financial support and it went to some lengths differentiating itself from the C.T.C.U., repeating a charge that the C.T.C.U. is a renegade union.

The strike heated up again in early September when, led by the Ontario Waffle labor committee, dozens of people outside the labor movement began showing up daily on the Brantford picket line, trekking 50-75 miles each day in some instances. The core of the picket line was still the striking women. Each striker put in 30 hours a week picket duty. The

union paid strike relief of \$18 a week for singles and \$36 a week to the head of a family. Rowley and his chief officers were there daily. John Lang was run over, and Professor Ian Lumden was hit, both by a Chicago goon driving one of the trucks bringing scabs to the plant.

The strikers adopted a new strategy as their ranks were strengthened. Besides picketing in front of the Brantford plant, picket lines were set up at the Hamilton depots where the scabs were picked up daily for the rides to the Brantford plant. Several other unions now added their support. Led by Hamilton Steel Local 1005, they picketed around the buses. The buses couldn't be filled. Day after day, they returned empty or near empty. The Texpack management finally was forced to close the plant down.

C.T.C.U. had won a round.

Then, Texpack in the first week of October announced that it was closing the Brantford plant completely. It would switch its operations to Rexdale. Its plans were put into motion. Contact was made with the Textile Workers Union of America. It agreed to a suggestion by the company to organize the run-away plant. T.W.U.A. organizers crossed picket-lines and within a few days had signed up most of the scabs with the cooperation of the company. The application for certification was to come before the Ontario Labor Relations Board on October 29.

David Archer, president of the Ontario Federation of Labor, and himself still a card-carrying T.W.U.A. member, was asked to act consistently with a statement he made earlier condemning the strike-breaking action of Texpack. In a letter sent to Archer, Kent Rowley asked the OFL president "to restrain the conduct of its affiliate union."

Archer confirmed that his union had applied for certification but he is reported to have denied that the T.W.U.A. was guilty of any breach of labor solidarity.

A major turning point of the strike was the announcement by the Saskatchewan Department of Health that it had instructed its hospitals to refrain from buying Texpack's non-sterilized army bandages and other supplies. The Manitoba Government was considering similar action. Cont. on Page 12 →

MASSES MARCH

Vancouver is the Abortion Capital of Canada, but we were never very good at organizing the masses to march. This march had 65 intrepid, drowning marchers, which isn't so bad, all things considered. Other pedestrians took to the streets in Ottawa, Toronto, Regina, etc. Which is also fairly cool — if they would continue their marching into doctors' offices, medical conventions, lawyers' meetings and even into parliament.

The trouble is, no one really believes that marching alone will do it — or even marching plus petitions. What gave Vancouver its claim to fame (A.C. of C.) was disrupting the Vancouver Medical Association meeting (in the middle of cocktails), flooding the hospitals with abortion applications, demonstrations that violated HOSPITAL QUIET zones, and being rude to the Prime Minister.

But if you really got off on marching and petitions, contact the Abortion Law Repeal Coalition, 483 E. 28th Ave., 876-6424.



Cont. From P. 11

The tide had again turned. Rowley, the C.T.C.U., the Texpack women and their many supporters held fast. The company caved in. It offered to recall almost all the strikers under a new two-year contract.

Madeline Parent, Secretary-Treasurer of the union said that "A main part of our fight was against the company's plans to phase-out jobs and turn the Brantford plant into little more than a warehouse. We know it is not a rich money package, but we think we haven't done too badly considering the odds."

The bread and butter issues of the strike involved wages, vacation and holiday pay, improved welfare provisions, and cost-of-living allowance. The women also talked of the poor working conditions. There is no air conditioning in a plant that often reaches temperatures of 100 degrees and only two washrooms provided for the 150 employees.

The average wage at Texpack is \$193 an hour and this giant multi-national corporation only offered a 20 cent increase over two years. The union demanded 65 cents over the same period of time. The ultimate contract agreed to by the union gave the workers a 44 cent increase over the two years, a significant compromise for the union.




But beyond wages and working conditions lay the whole question of the future of Texpack in Canada. The company wanted to phase out all manufacturing in Canada and import its product from the parent U.S. company, while using the Brantford plant as a warehouse. For the C.T.C.U. this was the main issue. Winning vastly improved wages for a handful of shippers in a warehouse would have been a fatal rout of the union.

The Texpack strike has come to be seen as a microcosm of Canadian underdevelopment involving plant shutdowns and relocation, maintenance of minimal repackaging operations to evade Canadian custom laws, intensive exploitation of women workers, foreign ownership and foreign-controlled conservative trade union opposition.

The Canadian Textile and Chemical Union has now given the lie to the myth that independent Canadian unions can never win against powerful multinational corporations. Granted, it did not do it alone. What was critically important was the support it was able to muster both inside and outside the labor movement. But that is the real lesson. It is not the existence of international unions that gives labor its strength — but dedicated union leadership, a militant membership and strong support from the rest of the of the labor movement.

ACROSS CANADA

LOOKING FOR WORK 



Women's Liberation
3694 Ste. Famille, MONTREAL

MARITIMES
Pat Boreford
6124 Pepperell, HALIFAX

Carol Hamilton-Smith
748 Foree Hill Rd., FREDERICTON

ONTARIO
Shirley Greenberg
5 Commance Dr., OTTAWA

Janet Rogers
c/o ANIS, KINGSTON

Ellen Hunter (745-7442)
774 George St., PETERBOROUGH

Women's Liberation
323 Church St., TORONTO

Toronto Women's Council
c/o Dorene Bekerman, 11 Pinewood

Hamilton and District Women's Liberation
297 Wentworth North

R. Feiler (821-9393)
Apt. 4-86, Yarmouth, GUELPH

Pat Dowdley
38 Craig St., LONDON

Toni de France
565 King E., KITCHENER

Women's Liberation
Box 461, SUDBURY

MANITOBA
Women's Liberation, Sec. 400B
416 Main St., WINNIPEG

SASKATCHEWAN
Women's Liberation (242-5830)
210 Ross Block, 116-3rd Ave. S.
SASKATOON

Women's Liberation (525-6252)
2559 Cameron, REGINA

Women's Liberation
324 Grandview, MOOSE JAW

ALBERTA
Lorna and Linda Rasmussen
722-10th St. S., LETHBRIDGE

Jo Ann Dandias
215-22nd N.E., CALGARY

Sybiline House (432-7685)
1113-83rd Avenue, EDMONTON

Women's Liberation
c/o Janice Leishman
10638-84 Ave., EDMONTON

BRITISH COLUMBIA
Women's Centre (Pedestal Office)
511 Carrall St. - 684-0523

Women's Liberation
Fanshen House 879-5836

Women's Liberation Alliance
684-3535

Terry Inglis (384-5894)
1278 Centre Rd., No. 4, VICTORIA

Bonnie Ann Dakwa, Chem. Dep.
N.D.U., NELSON

in insurance

On the suggestion of a reader, the Pedestal is trying to present a regular feature for our readers who are looking for work. If you know of jobs that are available, write up what you know and send it in.

One thing about the "insurance industry" is that there are always jobs available. The turnover is amazing at first glance, but there are always lots of good reasons for leaving the jobs. What is amazing is that some women stay at one job for years and years.

(I have a theory that the companies deliberately encourage a high turnover so we can't get to know each other well enough to organize to do something about the the lousy wages and degrading working conditions.)

If you have any insurance experience at all, you should be able to start at \$350 or \$400 a month. If you don't have experience, you may start around \$275. (They don't usually check on your experience if you say it was someplace like Toronto.)

Don't automatically take the job with the highest monthly salary. There are sometimes other disadvantages that cancel out a pay difference. Longer hours, for instance (37 1/2 or 40 instead of 35). Or strict dress regulations. Some companies let you wear almost anything; some not only insist on skirts and dresses but tell you what length you have to wear them. An extra \$20 per month won't go far if you have to buy a whole new wardrobe of clothes you don't even like.



Aside from the low wages, there are other disadvantages to insurance. The jobs are boring and fragmented — you hardly ever know why you're doing what you're doing. Even if you stick around long enough to figure that out, it's hard to get a feeling of accomplishment. The whole insurance industry is such a racket: compulsory auto insurance for the big companies to profit from; life insurance you can't afford unless you don't need it; fire insurance you have to buy if you want a mortgage so the mortgage-holder won't lose money if your house burns down; blatant price-fixing by the biggest companies, etc. etc.

So why work in insurance? First, because you need the money and it's no worse than most other jobs. Second, it's fun to think of what will happen when women insurance workers organize and what a force we will be. It's OK to feel part of that potential. And as you get to know the women you work with, the dream does seem possible. (Although it's still frustrating to compare the future possibilities to our present powerlessness and isolation from each other.)

If you do want a job in insurance, don't look at the ads, don't go to Manpower or a private agency. FIRST see us, the Working Women's Association. A few of us are already there, and we get kind of lonely and could use some help where we work . . .

* * * * *

* The Greater Vancouver Variable Committee is organizing a Christmas Party for people especially helped by the system, running for Special Ampt

* before Christmas. It's still for a private meeting. If you'll donate a few more dollars, we'll be able to give a gift to the people who have helped us. Please contact 252-1141

It's that season of the year when wine and cheese parties spring forth like crabgrass in your lawn in summer times.

But before you stock up on the party goodies, read on:

BOYCOTT SEAGRAMS who are not using union grapes in their wineries and who own non-unionized grape farms.

BOYCOTT KRAFT FOODS. The National Farmers' Union is trying to bargain collectively on behalf of dairy producers. Kraft has the largest monopoly of dairy products and has refused to negotiate. Kraft is the largest dairy monopoly in North America with sales of \$2.6 billion. They pay their own workers low wages and are notorious union-busters.

HELP WANTED—WOMEN'S LIBERATION TYPES

We've applied for a federal grant to start a daycare centre in Kitsilano for 1 to 3 yr. olds from low-income families.

We need staff interested in non-sexist education, Summerhill-type stuff, and in providing children with a non-authoritarian, free environment.

We're looking for:

STAFF: 1 FULLY QUALIFIED SUPERVISOR and 6 ADDITIONAL SUPERVISORS — qualifications not necessary, but must have some experience working with children in groups. Those with experience with children under 3 preferred. One of these people should have some kind of medical training.

KIDS: only have room for about 24.

PARENTS: low-income and welfare folks, must be interested in an eventual parents' co-operative.

TOYMAKERS, ORGANIZATIONAL PEOPLE, BOOKKEEPER, SEAMSTRESSES, and other positions available. If you're interested, call Jane at 261-1729



WE'RE RESPONSIBLE:

The staff of Pedestal for this month has ballooned to include the following heavy sisters: Ann Hayes, Helen Potrebenko, Lynn Ruschinsky, Jean Rands, Judy Hopkins, Beverly Davies, Margaret Barrie, Donna Hayes, Diana Kemble, Josie Devlin, Joy and Joyce from Kitchener, Pat Hoffer, Sharma, Annette Wrinkle, Barbara Jette, and Melanie, Georgia and Joan from the "Women's Place" with poems by Gwen Hauser, Pam Olson, Maxine Gadd, Fran Issacs, S. Landell, and Judith Copithorne and with photos by Donna Hayes

Last month there were the usual gross errors, mostly of omission — we forgot to credit Gwen Hauser for her poetry, Colette French for her photographs, and Frederick Engels for his discussion of "When a Women Works". To all these revolutionary sisters and brother, our apologies!

LETTERS



Dear sisters,

We would like to help in the financial difficulty of The Pedestal. The Pedestal gives a socialist voice to a Canadian women's liberation newspaper that must not be stopped. I hope you can get the debts paid and publish again. The last Pedestal I saw was July.

Enclosed is a check for fifty dollars. I hear you got a Sept. issue out. Please send it along.

Yours for sisterhood
and socialism,
Heather Fletcher
Winnipeg Women's Liberation
606B 416 Main St.



Lamond Grayson
No. 118176
P.O. Box E
Jackson, Michigan 49204

Dear Miss Wonderful,

I am very proud to see "Women's Liberation" getting together regularly to share their past experiences and find means in which to solve them. Being a Black Man I find myself related to the same problem: Only difference is I am a Black Male: Our cases are similar to

the condition that exists for all Women of today. That's why once a distorted picture is painted of something it's hard to change a thought concerning it. Women are not considered to be strong, but I find them to be much stronger than the male, mentally speaking. Therefore, knowing the manner in which a certain group of people must live, I find myself understanding the situation which this society has forced upon Women today. I am a Black man of thirty years of age; I lived a hard life because I prove to be more than the picture that was painted of me. But now I am incarcerated in prison for a crime I'm innocent of. Only because of the color of my skin and being charged with a crime I'm here today. I had people from out of town come to court: White People; and other things to prove it was impossible for me to be at the scene of the crime, but the jury thought because I am Black I must be some kind of criminal. But actually, I believe that Black Men and all Women are incarcerated in different places and in various ways. The heavy foot is on us in more subtle places than jails. Sometimes those jails carry the misleading titles of Equal Opportunity Employer and other things which, on the surface, appear to be a beautiful dream. I would like to correspond with anyone concerning the present state.

Peace and happiness,
Lamond

Dear People,

We have changed our address as of November 17 from 322 Avenue C South, Saskatoon, to:

210 Ross Block,
116, 3rd Avenue South,
SASKATOON, Saskatchewan.

(Tel. number still the same—242-5830)

—so, if you're still giving details in the Pedestal, can you make them up to date?

We are getting together again here after summer dispersment, currently involved in a protest march scheduled next Saturday in Regina urging repeal of the abortion law. Also have in mind some work on women's unions and would appreciate any help you can give on that re things happening at the moment in Vancouver.

Peace from
Women's Liberation in Saskatoon

(Ed. note: For lots on the Working Women's Association and their activities, see the many articles in this month's Pedestal.)

8758 Armstrong Ave.,
Burnaby 3, B.C.

Dear Editor:

I have just sent the enclosed letter to the Sun, Vancouver, and the Columbian, New Westminster with a note to the Editor of each paper saying:

"Please find a Canadian woman with concern for justice and survival to replace Ann Landers.

I am not anti-American (my mother was American), but I am sure we have thousands of brilliant Canadian women who could better serve Canadian women and your readers.

Jai Hind
Lin Latham



Dear Diana,

How are you? I am truckin' along. I have enclosed an article for the Pedestal. It is about cigarettes. I really got off on the Pedestal. Hey! I really would like to send the Pedestal to granny. I mean a subscription. I will send the money soon.

Lots of sisterly love,
Julie Perygo

Do you know about those cigarettes for women, such brands as Virginia Slims, Eve, etc? I think they are very silly and obnoxious. I will give you some reasons why I think so.

Dear Pedestal,

Love your paper, but your book-keeper is confused. I just ordered my subscription in August, so it couldn't have expired already. Please check — and add the enclosed \$2 as a renewal when it does run out next summer.

Speaking of male-dominated arts — how about doing an article on the problems of women students in art colleges? I teach at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, where girls are systematically excluded from the mainstream of contemporary art studies because "serious" painting, sculpture and conceptual art faculty are all male and don't take women seriously as artists. They (the women) wind up weaving, throwing pots, making jewelry — all well and good, but it leaves the school with an overwhelmingly male "image". The aggravating part is that the art men are making is generally dull and stupid.

A recent WL meeting at Dalhousie drew more than 50 people, quite a surprise in sleepy Halifax. I think things are beginning to move here.

Best regards,
Elizabeth Zimmer

By telephone I found out that the Sun pays \$30 per week for Lander's crap. Multiply that by the number of papers that carry it and you have some idea of what we are losing. Maybe, at first one of you couldn't maintain a daily stream that papers would print while at the same time concealing messages for real women, but surely a small group "selective collective" could. Let's choose a rather square-looking type as "front woman"; give her a sheaf of letters with corny answers and send her off to see Mr. Galt(?) at the Sun and make a pitch.

Jai Hind
Lin Latham

First, I think that they are very expensive, because they are fancier than "men" cigarettes. But, all it is is fancier paperwork and a fancier package. The manufacturers think we have a lot of money.

Secondly, I think that they are discriminatory against women! They think that women are unequal, and that they should have their own cigarettes, wear sexy bras, and have separate advertising.

So that's the way I see it!

Love,
Julie,
a young sister!



"And for extra safety, the withdrawal cord is chain stitched the entire length of the tampon. Disposal is no problem either, because both the applicator and the tampon are completely flushable."

Sisters

The Quilts and Babies issue was very good. I'm a student doing a study on women who have (or want to have) their babies at home. I'm trying to find out how many women in Vancouver have actually delivered at home, how it went, and how women feel in general about hospitals and health care. Would you or any readers help? Write and tell me what experiences you have had with childbirth and doctors that you would like to see changed, or copied. The address is:

Kirsten Emmott
602-525 W. 13th
Vancouver 9

I am also interested in people's ideas about what changes, if any, they would like to see in health care for women. For instance, do women place more confidence in male or female doctors? What do you think of midwives? and so on...

Yours,
K.E.



"Please, doctor, isn't there an easier way to deliver a baby?"



DISILLUSIONED



**"THE SOCIALISTS!
THEY'VE DONE NOTHING
FOR ME!"**

Dear Pedestal,

I have been attending the Women's Studies program at UBC. The lectures and group discussions are informative but I feel that there is a sharp contradiction behind the assumption that feminism is somehow relegated to the political left. This is unfortunate, a little common sense reveals that a leftist ideology is neither necessary nor desirable. We can rid ourselves of oppression and find fulfillment more effectively in the ideology of "Neo-Liberalism"—derived from the writings of Herbert Spencer.

Neo-Liberals and Canadian women have a common enemy: tradition. The aggressive, combative liberals of the 19th century fought tooth and nail against the rigid, ossified dominance of hereditary aristocracy, against obsolete customs. Modern women also chafe against the 'aristocracy of sex'. We become most militant (listen to the speakers' voices) when attacking the enforced caste consciousness and traditional roles—housewife, sex symbol, and beauty queen. Herbert Spencer, more than the Socialists, attacked the restrictive influence of caste and

custom; he would strongly support the attempts to break free from skirts, corsets, and cosmetics.

One speaker said the greatest hangup of women is their 'fear of success', the fear of competing and beating men. Socialism is an ideology which emphasizes discipline and collective action; Spencer's Liberalism does not seek to shrink the ego, to tame womenkind's natural competitiveness, and self-assertiveness. One speaker was ambivalent about whether women should seek to enter and succeed in the presently male dominated professions. She should have used her common sense. The woman who rises to the top, who pioneers her field should be admired, not rejected. Women who show they can dominate, rule and enforce the respect of thousands—as industrial plant managers or policemen—should be recognized as our true heroines. They haven't feared to succeed, and we should emulate them. To dominate, to rule allows the highest degree of freedom, the greatest play of self-expression.

Psychologically, Neo-Liberalism is an ideology of individualism. As I

listen to the speakers and the audience I hear women who see women's liberation as a means of self-improvement, of self-identification. Nancy Corbett hit the nail on the head when she said women should 'discover themselves and take what they need'. Ruthlessly if necessary. No more shrinking violets, no more feeble protestations. Let us be ourselves—as Herbert Spencer, not Karl Marx, would want us to be. (Marx always wants to restrict our personalities to class, social beings, and producers. He would hardly have approved of women's encounter groups where we seek out our real selves.)

Furthermore, our movement is too broad and diverse to be a leftwing movement. Women are more than half the population. The Negro is a small minority—they must stand together, give up their individuality, and cast out "Uncle Toms". Women have no "Uncle Toms", only different individuals, with differing needs. We need an ideology that can embrace the rich and the poor, the straights and the lesbians, marrieds and singles. Only Liberalism fosters this variety and provides a framework within which our differences can be resolved—let married women defend themselves vigorously against single sisters. Each of us can take care of herself, our struggles strengthen us.

The logical economic ideology for women is "laissez faire Liberalism" as interpreted by Spencer. Most of us do not want the obligation or duty to work for the community or the state as in socialism, but the opportunity to get out of dreary, boring jobs in the bureaucracy. We are fully capable of being artists, writers, and musicians—we don't need socialistic laws to do that for us. Women do not want the "abolition of the wage system"; we want a "fair day's pay for a fair day's work". We will work, we will sell our skill and labor—but we won't be underpaid. Equal pay, not no pay. Spencer allowed the state the role of providing aids to a laissez-faire economy—e.g. roads, post offices. We can get our child care centers from a limited state in a non-socialist economy.

In politics we do not need more laws but fewer. Spencer measured Parliament by how many laws it repealed, not passed. We want to repeal abortion laws, repeal labor legislation protecting (and segregating) women, repeal the very words "woman," "spouse" and "wife" from the statutes.

Why then do women still jabber like parrot socialists? For three reasons: first, we have forgotten that 19th century Liberalism was active, aggressive and successful. Even Marx himself commented on how powerfully corrosive liberalism was to the letters of traditionalism and feudalism. Second, most contemporary movements have been leftist. The Negroes, students and colonialists find a natural enemy in Liberal Imperialism. Mistakenly we assumed we had to be leftist too. Women have little in common with these communists—and most feminists you will notice are wishy-washy when they talk of Cuba or China. Women are not 'oppressed colonialists'; they are more like slaves—slaves to husbands, etc. We can get the boss' job, but we will have to overthrow the slaveholders. We can form an international sisterhood with other women, the women who are building bridges, canals and making jobs for the weak and primitive Third, we mistakenly believed that rejecting our "princess" roles meant we were becoming part of the counter culture which is leftist. But a change in life style doesn't mean we have to become socialists. When Liberal men gave up wigs and silk stockings they didn't become communists, but Spencerian liberals.


I know some of you will disagree with this analysis, but I hope you will read it with an open mind. I invite criticism, correction, and amplification.

Mary Howland

(Yes, we of the Pedestal staff do disagree, but we would like our readers to consider seriously and develop their own criticisms of the ideas presented here. We invite you to write and tell us what conclusions you come to, and we will undertake to present our own thoughts on the matter next month.)

1971

DECEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			WORKING WOMEN'S ASSOC.			
			1 1PM 2	3	4	
			WORKING WOMEN'S ASSOC. WOMEN'S CENTRE			
	5 11 A.M.	7	8 1PM 9	10	11	
	PEDESTAL WOMEN'S CENTRE		WORKING WOMEN'S ASSOC. WOMEN'S CENTRE			
	12 11 A.M. - 3	14	15 1PM 16	17	18	
	PEDESTAL WOMEN'S CENTRE		WORKING WOMEN'S ASSOC. WOMEN'S CENTRE			
	19 11 A.M. - 20	21	22 1PM 23	24	25	
			WORKING WOMEN'S ASSOC. WOMEN'S CENTRE			
	26	27	28	29 1PM 30	31	

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* ALLIANCE Rap Group

483 E. 28th 7:30

* INDEPENDENT FEMINISTS Meet Every WEDNESDAY, Phone 681-1790 for info.

SELL

AND THEN THIS BIG SCARY WOMAN MUST HAVE BEEN ABOUT 5'2" CAME UP AND DUNKED A BANGS BOTTLE ALL OVER ME AND THEN...



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