

**A WOMEN'S
LIBERATION
NEWSPAPER**

PEDESTAL ^{25¢}

VANCOUVER B.C.

VOLUME IV NO 6

JULY 1972



**SPECIAL
SUMMER
BICYCLE
ISSUE...**
MORE PICTURES,
CUTOUTS AND FUN
STUFF INSIDE.

SUMMER HOSTELS FOR WOMEN IN VANCOUVER



CANADIAN YOUTH HOSTEL AT JERICO —
224 - 3208

A guest pass or membership card is required by those using the hostel. You can purchase a guest pass for \$1.00 which will be valid for 4 nights and covers only the cost of the pass. The 1st night costs \$2.50 and the remaining three nights will cost \$1.50 each. Sleeping facilities are separate dormitories for Women and Men. Linen and laundry facilities are provided. A light breakfast can be purchased. No age limit. No closets. Babies and children will be accepted if carefully watched.

Y.W.C.A. 580 Burrard 683 - 2531

Dormitories are available for women who have sleeping bags for \$1.00 - \$1.50 per night. For women who don't have sleeping bags and need a bed, there are dorms for \$ 2.00 - \$2.50 per night. Single rooms are available from \$5.25 up. There is a limit of two week residence. Children over 7 will be accepted.

THE BRIDGE 1390 Granville 681 - 9357

Accepts women between 18 and 25 who are without money or unable to support themselves. You must be either a Canadian citizen or a member of the Commonwealth. But identification is not always necessary. Occasionally **THE BRIDGE** will accept women with babies and children. You can stay one night at **THE BRIDGE** without being authorized by Welfare. Four days are generally allowed transients. Towels and linen are provided as well as showers and laundry facilities. Three meals a day are served and kennels are provided for pets.

CATHERINE BOOTH HOME 1190 Wolfe
731 - 7320

Run by The Salvation Army. For women 25 and over. Emergency residence for transients and other women in need.

KHALSA DIVAN SOCIETY 8000 Ross Street
324 - 2121
Will locate temporary sleeping arrangements for East Indian women.

A WOMAN'S PLACE 1766 West Broadway
731 - 9619

Right now a Woman's Place will refer only a small number of women to private homes. The women must be local women in need of temporary living arrangements. At this point A Woman's Place is unable to handle transients. Women with children are welcome.

WOMEN'S CENTRE 511 Carrall Street 684 -
0523

The Women's Centre has a crash referral list for women transients in need of temporary sleeping space.

INFORMATION CENTRES

Information centres throughout the city are expecting a list of places for transients. These information centres are open on the weekends:

Mt. Pleasant 876 - 0822
Cedar Cottage 874 - 4231
Kitsilano 738 - 9030

WORKING IN HOSPITALS

On Thursday and Friday, June 15th and 16th, the Working Women's Association leafleted Vancouver General Hospital, St. Paul's and Lions Gate Hospital raising once again the question of equal pay for equal work.

Over the past month the WWA has made contact with a number of workers inside VGH who indicate that the question of equal pay is again becoming a major organizing concern of women working there. Two years ago ten women applied for equal pay under the Human Rights Act. Although they were granted "equal pay" and \$2,400 in back pay compensation none of those women now make equal pay because VGH re-categorized their jobs.

On Monday, June 12th, the Hospital Employees Union put an information picket around Lions Gate Hospital because of a whole list of unresolved grievances against the administration. The basic grievance has got to be the systematic underpayment and devaluation of the work thousands of women do in hospitals.

The WWA is publishing a booklet about hospital workers. **WORKING IN HOSPITALS** analyses the hospital caste system and how it affects different groups of women within the hospital hierarchy (nurses' aids, laundry and food service, nurses and technicians). The booklet looks at struggles that women have been through to challenge that hierarchy through the Human Rights Act and through the Union.

The Hospital Employees' Convention happens at the end of June and the WWA will be there to distribute **WORKING IN HOSPITALS** and to support the women at the convention in their fight to win back power from the male dominated Hospital Employees Union (85 percent of its members are women but there is only one woman on the executive) so that the Union can be theirs in the fight against the medical establishment.

If you would like to help us or if you would like a copy of the pamphlet call or write the Working Women's Association at 684 - 0523, 511 Carrall Street.

This article was written before the Civic Workers Strike was ended. We are running it because it gives a good account of the strikers' grievances and was written by one of the members of the Union.

INSIDE CIVIC WORKERS STRIKE

Why are the Inside Civic Workers on strike for the first time in their 54 year history? The reasons are fairly simple. They have a series of genuine grievances. Their pay has fallen well behind the community average over the past ten years. Last year three civic unions were granted wage increases of approximately 18 percent, including an 8.8 percent catch-up clause. The Civic Workers' employers have refused to change their stand on wages since February 17, 1972. Despite the fact, that the union has twice lowered its demands, the employer still stubbornly refuses to negotiate. The City has sent out a bulletin with the current tax notices showing expenditures of \$132,420,510 for 1971. The City quotes the wage bill for all Inside staff, including administrators, etc., at \$12,682,548. If the Civic Workers were granted a 10 percent increase this would amount to less than 1 percent of your general taxes. The Civic Workers have never benefited from a 10 percent increase, but have often been used, by the employer, as an excuse for tax increases. This information is deceptive and often misleads the public.

The above represents merely a general outline of the problems of the Civic Workers.

To quote a few examples of wage scale differences—a clerk-typist in the Municipality of Burnaby starting wage is \$341.00 per month. Exactly the same qualifications would earn her \$57 a month more at B.C.Hydro, \$48 a month more a B.C. Telephone, \$64 a month more at MacMillan Bloedel and \$67 per month more at B.C. hospitals.

In 1961 the City of Ottawa paid the same wages for a clerk-typist 11 as was paid in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland. By last year the Ottawa job paid \$102 a month more than was being paid here. Other fringe benefits are being sought too. Such as extended holiday time and better M.S.A., etc.

One of the most significant things, about this strike, is for the first time in history all Civic Workers in Vancouver have gone on strike together. They have a joint negotiating committee and the unity for victory is very strong.

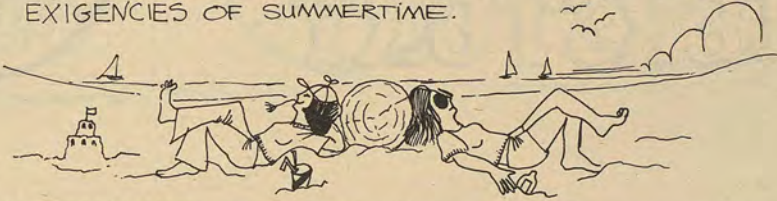
In years past the Inside Workers were considered much too weak to strike or take any militant action and some of this thinking developed around the erroneous argument that "The Women" in the union would not hold up — they were, it was said, the weaker force and would not be capable of carrying their share of responsibility. How false an assumption this was the true picture is that the union is approximately 50 percent women (only one woman is on the executive board) and they tell me, at the union strike headquarters (16th and Cambie street), that the best picketers, the best office workers, the best picketers, and among the best who say "we will not accept the B.C. Mediation offer" are the women. There is no doubt that though many women are sole supporters with dependents they are not prepared to lose their dignity or their right to strike and be militant. The attitude in the past was that "Our Bosses" were "good" to us — we were "part" of the set up. Come Christmas time one big happy family — come Red Feather time we'll give to put the "City" on the Red Feather Map — those days are gone — no more sharing with the employer. They now know that the employer is a spokesman for big business in the city and that Mayor Campbell, an integral part of big business, will have to go in December. 96 percent of the membership is participating in this strike. The strike pay ranges from 20 to 35 dollars per week. This is based on the number of dependents.

The Vancouver School Board members of the same local, though they have separate contracts, received one day's pay per week for the duration of the strike. The response to this levy has been very good covering at least 80 percent of the membership.

This is a brief article about the Vancouver strikers. It should be remembered that all the Lower Mainland is on strike, except North Vancouver, who are now locked out. This unity is all embracing and the B.C. Mediation Commission offer has been turned down by a very high percentage of all the locals. This is the kind of unity that can, if continued, with the democratic aspirations of the membership, help lead to the defeat of the Bennett government. These workers, the B.C. Government employees and other civil servants are angry and are determined to be looked upon as part of a strong militant trade union movement.



WE HOPE YOU HAVE NOTICED, DEAR READER, THAT THERE WAS NO JUNE PEDESTAL. WHEN A NEWSPAPER IS RUN ENTIRELY BY VOLUNTEERS, THESE SORTS OF THINGS ARE BOUND TO HAPPEN. THIS IS NOT TO BE TAKEN AS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS OR FAILURE, BUT SIMPLY ATTRIBUTED TO THE INIMITABLE EXIGENCIES OF SUMMERTIME.

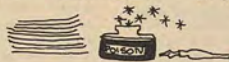


THIS MONTH A REVITALIZED SUPERORGANIZED PEDESTAL COLLECTIVE HOPES THAT FOR A SHORT TIME AT LEAST, YOUR PEDESTAL WILL ARRIVE ON TIME.

THERE IS AN ANONYMOUS DONOR RUNNING LOOSE TO WHOM THE PEDESTAL COLLECTIVE PROSTRATE THEMSELVES IN GRATITUDE.



WE ARE NOW ONLY ONE MONTH BEHIND IN OUR BILLS. THIS IS STILL NOT A VERY GOOD FINANCIAL STATE AND NON-PAYERS OF BILLS FOR BUNDLE ORDERS SHOULD EXPECT THREATENING LETTERS ABOUT THE MATTER SOON.



PLEASE BE ASSURED, HOWEVER, DEAR READER, THAT EXCEPT FOR THE ABOVEMENTIONED PROBLEMS OF DEBTS, DISORGANIZATION, DISAGREEMENT AND ALL OTHER CRISES WHICH VOLUNTEER NEWSPAPERS MUST PERIODICALLY SUFFER, WE ARE IN FINE SHAPE AND WE, THE PEDESTAL COLLECTIVE, HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE OLDEST WOMEN'S LIBERATION NEWSPAPER IN CANADA WILL CONTINUE FALLING THROUGH YOUR MAIL SLOT INDEFINITELY.

THE MAY ISSUE RAN AN ARTICLE WHICH WAS INCORRECTLY TITLED "RADICAL FEMINISM" - THE ARTICLE SHOULD HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS "LESBIANISM AND FEMINISM" BY ANNE KROEDT. IT WAS REPRINTED FROM "NOTES FROM THE THIRD YEAR WOMEN'S LIBERATION" COPYRIGHT (1971) BY NOTES FROM THE SECOND YEAR INC.



FILE UNDER:

WOMEN IN HERSTORY



ETHEL ROSENBERG

It is 19 years this June since Ethel Rosenberg and her husband, Julius, were sent to the electric chair. Her children must now be in their twenties. I was thirteen years old at that time and lived in a small English village. My parents were Christian 'humanitarians' — neither socialist nor communist — but we followed the trial and appeals with anxiety and horror. At that time anti-communist hysteria did not run rife amongst ordinary people in England as it did in North America, although Churchill and other English politicians were dedicated Cold War warriors.

For me the reality then was that the U.S. had dropped the A bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and nothing could justify that. The Russians meanwhile had never been presented to me as Red Devils and had been our allies in the 1939-45 war. To kill the Rosenbergs was one more crime committed by the U.S. in attempting to continue as Atomic-Bomb Master of the World. This killing was to me a terrible awful injustice meted out by the U.S. Government. The far-reaching effects both on me and on the U.S. I cannot begin to assess. That period of North American history cries out for study — anti-communism and intimidation were the order of the day — and many good people, struggling for union rights, civil rights and justice were broken during it. But Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were killed.

Who was Ethel Rosenberg? At the time of her arrest in 1950 she was a 34 year old New York housewife, mother of two sons. She was Jewish and a Communist. Before her marriage she had held several clerical jobs and was an active unionist. Her husband, Julius, was owner of a small Manhattan machine shop, having been fired earlier from a government job because he was a communist. He did not do well financially and they lived in a small three room rented apartment.

For some time after the detection of the first atomic bomb test in the Soviet Union, rumours spread that there were 'atom spies' in the U.S. But it was in May 1950 that the first arrest was made of a man who pleaded guilty to being an accomplice of Klaus Fuchs, the nuclear physicist in England who had passed 'atomic secrets' to the Russians and had been jailed for spying. This arrest was followed by others — one of whom was David Greenglass, an ex-G.I. who had been stationed at Los Alamos, the U.S.

atomic bomb centre, during the war. Greenglass was Ethel's brother and it seems that he implicated the Rosenbergs in an attempt to save his own skin. It was basically on the evidence of Greenglass and his wife that the Rosenbergs were convicted of spying.

There follows a horrific complexity of confessions, accusations, family vindictiveness, and wildly conflicting evidence, but the three people who maintained their innocence throughout were Ethel and Julius Rosenberg and a friend of theirs, Morton Sobell. The F.B.I. found no evidence of their guilt. In fact the total proof on which Ethel was put to death was 1) a witness said Ethel had referred to a new table as a gift while Ethel had said in the trial that it had been bought at Macy's; 2) a photographer with no written records, said that she and her family had ordered passport photos; 3) and an electoral petition nominating a Communist Party candidate for the New York City Council had been signed by her in 1939.

Why were they killed? A long examination of this trial concludes that they died because, pressured by a vast state apparatus to tell a story they knew to be untrue they refused to do it, and stood by their innocence right up to the electric chair. Up until minutes before they died a telephone line was kept open to the White House so that clemency could be granted if they agreed 'to confess'. In a period of expediency and cynicism they refused to cooperate, refused to save themselves at the expense of others.

The fact that the death penalty was called for is not surprising. The U.S. was fighting a losing war in Korea, the Chinese Communists had come to power in China, and America's much vaunted military might, based on atomic technology, was already being challenged by the development of atomic weaponry in the U.S.S.R. To rationalize U.S. expansionism abroad and to contain dissent within the country, the myth of a giant Communist conspiracy to overthrow the U.S. was constantly propagated. As the Korean fighting continued unabated, American public opinion concerning the need for drastic action against U.S. communists hardened. The Judge in the case reiterated his belief that the Rosenbergs had been a 'contributing cause' of the Korean war. The Rosenberg case was in fact the most famous and outrageous in a long succession of repressive actions against radicals during the 'McCarthy period'. The fact that it was a confession implicating the Communist Party with a spying conspiracy that the U.S. Government was trying to bring out of the Rosen-

bergs under the threat of death validates this assertion. Two days before they died the Rosenbergs sent a petition to President Eisenhower which says: 'Our accusers torture us in the face of death, with the guarantee of life for the price of a confession of guilt... We refuse the iniquitous bargain, even as perhaps the last few days of our lives are slipping away. We cannot besmirch our names by bearing false witness to save ourselves.'

Ethel Rosenberg comes through as an enormously courageous woman. She had been born in the slum tenements of New York's lower East side and had been introduced to leftist ideas and activities during the Depression years. She had taken singing lessons at some point in her life and throughout her imprisonment there are references to her singing in the jail. In fact she sang an aria from 'Madame Butterfly' when in the detention cells directly after being sentenced to death in an attempt to communicate and give comfort to her husband in a nearby cell. Her prison letters are characterized by simplicity and strength. Her separation from her children hurt her very deeply. She had been arrested without warning and did not see them again for over a year and the younger boy was only three. She was constantly worried about the effect that her imprisonment and sentence and that of her husband was having on the children. In fact she was inordinately hurt by the judge implying when sentencing her to death that she had been prepared to sacrifice her children to 'the cause', and that she loved her children less than 'the cause'. Ruth Greenglass thought Ethel would 'confess' because of her children. But in Ethel's last letter to her children she wrote 'Your lives must teach you, too, that good cannot really flourish in the midst of evil; that freedom and all the things that go to make up a truly satisfying and worthwhile life, must sometimes be purchased very dearly... Always remember that we were innocent and could not wrong our conscience.'

BY LIZ BRIENBERG

BOOKS TO READ:

Schneir, Walter and Miriam. *Invitation to an Inquest*. This is an excellent and detailed assessment of the trial.

Horowitz, David. *From Yalta to Vietnam*. A Penguin Special on American Foreign Policy in the Cold War.

Miller, Arthur. *The Crucible*. (a play). This was filmed under the title *The Witches of Salem*.





CONSTANCE MARKIEVICZ



HANNAH MITCHELL



FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

Constance Markievicz was a high-born member of an Anglo-Irish family who overcame the disadvantages of her birth and upbringing to earn an honoured place in the history of Ireland's struggle for independence.

Born in 1868, she was the sister of Eva Gore-Booth, the Irish poet and contemporary of W.B. Yeats.

As an adolescent this beautiful, aristocratic woman excelled at riding and the hunt. She was well-known to those around her for her generosity and compassion towards those less fortunate than herself. As a young woman she and her sisters Eva and Mabel worked for the women's franchise movement in Ireland.

In her twenties she studied painting in London and then in Paris, where she met her husband, Count Casimir Markievicz.

Until she was forty Constance led the slightly unconventional life of a privileged, wealthy, woman who painted pictures and attended balls at Dublin Castle, the traditional symbol of English oppression in Ireland. She knew many of the Irish nationalist poets and literary figures of the time but not until 1908 did Constance become totally involved with them in the struggle for Irish independence.

In 1906 Constance began work with the Daughters of Erin, a group of women devoted to militancy, separatism and feminism. The other members of the society were often taken aback by Constance's dazzling clothes, her equally dazzling disregard for them, and the fact that she still attended functions at Dublin Castle.

But Constance overcame the doubts of the women and the sarcasm of playwright-labourer Sean O'Casey by her intense dedication to the cause of Irish independence.

In 1909, Constance formed a battalion of young boys, called the Fianna Boys, whom she trained in the use of arms. They were to stand in good stead during the rising of 1916.

By 1910 Constance was working for James Connolly, the nationalist labour leader. She worked with him during the great strike and lockout of 1913.

In the Rising of 1916 Constance drew up many of the plans of attack against key points in Dublin. On Easter Sunday she led the offensive many times and tried valiantly to hold out against the numerically superior British armed forces.

She was one of a dozen leaders including James Connolly who were herded off to jail. Connolly was almost dead of gangrened leg wounds, but the British lost no time in court-martialing him and condemning him to death. They had to prop him up on a chair to shoot him, as he was too ill to stand.

The British also shot eleven other leaders but Constance was spared. Instead she was sentenced to penal servitude for life. She was then incarcerated in a British jail, presumably to keep her away from her sympathizers in Ireland.

Constance spent a little over a year in jail, where she scrubbed floors, worked briefly in the sewing room and made the acquaintance of other inmates. Her chief tie with the outside was her correspondence with her sister. Eva had remained the only one from her family or former life to understand and sympathize with Constance, and the bond between them was very close.

In 1918, while serving a second term in jail, Constance was elected M.P. for Dublin St. Patrick's division. Although she was technically the first woman elected to the British Parliament, she never took her seat, as the Sinn Fein party was determined to boycott Parliament as long as members had to swear allegiance to the British king.

Meanwhile, Constance was appointed Labour Minister in Ireland's Republican shadow parliament.

In 1922, after another bout in jail, Constance toured the United States to gain support for the Irish Republican movement.

By 1923, after the Civil War between Free States and Republicans, an estimated 11,316 men and 250 women were in prison. Many of the men prisoners went on hunger strike for the release of the women. Constance, arrested again, was put in with the imprisoned women. She promptly went on hunger strike herself, much as she dreaded the thought. The women were eventually freed.

One died in 1926, leaving Constance bereft of the one person who understood her and loved her for it. Although only 59, Constance was now an old woman, her beauty gone, her sole interest the welfare of Dublin's poor and aged and feeble.

She died in 1927 in a public ward in a Dublin hospital, attended by her old friends, and mourned by half of Dublin. (The other half mourned an assassinated Free Stater). Thousands lined the streets for her funeral and all the official Irish organizations marched. At the cemetery, the Irish Free State soldiers were armed to prevent a volley being fired over her grave. Her Irish Citizen Army uniform was buried with her. BY ANNE HOGAN

BOOKS ON CONSTANCE MARKIEVICZ

Marreco, Anne. *The Rebel Countess*. Corgi Books, 1967. \$1.25.

Van Noris, Jacqueline. *Constance de Markievicz in the cause of Ireland*. U. of Mass. Press, 1967.

Hannah Mitchell was a tough lady. Her account of her life and times as a poor working class child who grew up to become a militant suffragette and warrior for the working class isn't just interesting it's positively inspirational. She describes running away from virtual slavery at home as a teenager to become a housekeeper-cook for a family of six for 4 shillings a week. Later she worked as a seamstress in various sweatshops where a twelve or sixteen hour day was the norm and women would spend their one free day a week lying in a darkened room trying to recover from eyestrain. Except for two weeks of schooling, she was entirely self-educated. She spent time in jail,

got beaten up, ran for and was finally elected to city council and through all this had to see that her husband got breakfast, dinner, tea and supper every day. She once walked ten miles home from a demonstration because she couldn't afford the train fare and then did the family wash. Housework was a burden and a plague to her all her life and eventually she had a complete breakdown from trying to cope with so much. Still she survived. Labouring under every disadvantage she and other women like her changed their own lives and the lives of all of us who came after.

Hannah Mitchell had to struggle to find the time to work for what she thought was important. Florence Nightingale came from the opposite end of the social scale and had to fight bitterly to be allowed to do anything at all except get to parties and look after sick relatives. She is one of the most maligned and undervalued women that ever made it into the history books and that's saying a lot.

Nursing, a profession she literally created from scratch, was one of her minor accomplishments. What they never told you in school and never show in any of those awful movies is that she was probably the administrative genius of her age.

To her knowledge she was the first person to illustrate statistics with graphs and in fact compiled the first statistics ever used in government reports. She designed hospitals starting with actual building plans and finishing with details like bedpan distribution, rolls of bandages needed and special diets. She understood the connection between bad sanitation and the spread of disease before germs were discovered, and designed the first hospitals with separate wards for different disorders. She was the first to suggest and put into practice maternity wards which reduced death at childbirth for mother and child by more than 50%. She was responsible for creating a system of bookkeeping which was reviewed in 1949 and found to be as practical or more so than the latest innovations. She was also personally responsible for the complete reform of the medical and sanitary conditions of the common British soldier which were so bad that men in barracks had often double the mortality rate of the general population. After a while your mind gets tired trying to absorb the staggering amount of work she did most of which she never received any recognition for - she kept her name off reports so that they would be read.

Both of these books are exquisitely written as well as being valuable and all too rare historical documents about women. BY COLETTE FRENCH

BOOKS TO READ

Woodham-Smith, Cecil. *Florence Nightingale*.

Mitchell, Hannah. *The Autobiography of Hannah Mitchell, suffragette and rebel*.

INSIDE WOMEN'S RAP GROUPS

About nine months ago, I joined a woman's liberation rap group. Except "joined" is probably a misleading way of putting it — "started to help form" is better. Last October there were three or four of us who wanted to be in a group. So we met to discuss it in each others' homes and talked about it to our friends, and brought some of them with us the next week...and when we noticed that the same people were meeting every week we decided we were a group. Our membership has stayed fairly consistent. In the first months two or three women came for a few weeks before deciding they didn't want to belong to the group. We kept adding people until about February when we noticed that it was taking longer and longer for new women to feel like part of the group. So we closed. And now when women we know want to join a group, we direct them to other groups or help them form their own.

I didn't have a very clear idea of what I wanted from a group last October. None of us did, really. I had been active in the movement, more and less, for a year or so, in and around groups doing all kinds of things, including putting out the *Pedestal*. I guess I was looking for something more personal — or maybe I just mean reflective I felt I needed time to think and work out ideas, without the pressure of acting on them immediately. Also, my lover was coming back to me after a year's absence and I wanted a particular kind of help with that situation — I wanted a group of people who would help me hold on to all I had learned and become in that year. If I could have both my self and my lover, well, that would be ideal. But if I had to choose, I wanted, this time, to choose myself.

I didn't get exactly what I expected from the group, but I'm pleased with what got. Just belonging to the group somehow gave me the self-confidence I needed to decide, with my lover, that we could love each other best apart. It was painful, but it was also the least confused or bitter break I had made: the group helped me keep things clear. As for reflection and analysis, well, we discuss women's liberation

ideas sometimes — books we have read or talks we have heard. And sometimes we try to fit what is happening to us into an analysis we believe in or, more rarely, try to build our own theories explaining our experience. But mostly we support each other, and learn to support ourselves.

It's hard to remember all the changes we all and the group have been through. At first we were getting to know each other. We spent several meetings doing what we called, with embarrassed half-smiles, "telling our stories." We told each other all the things our friends knew and all the simple, common things we had kept locked up as Dreadful Secrets — all the things, that is, that we knew names for.

We began by putting ourselves into boxes labeled Lesbian or Woman Who Had An Abortion — and found, of course, that putting ourselves in those boxes freed us from them — that the other women in the group might believe in their own categories but certainly not in ours. We were individuals to each other if not to ourselves.

But that wasn't the end of it. Sometimes, later, now that we have eased the obvious tensions, we hear one of us talking about some bind she is in and realize almost simultaneously that we are in it too and that it is no bind at all. So that a tension is named and relaxed all at once: incredible!

How did we accomplish such marvels? We began by gently listening to each other and to ourselves. Slowly, we learned to ask questions, to give answers, to advise and comfort and support and chide. We learned by watching each other and copying one another's special skills. We learned by trial and error — shyly sometimes, but sometimes also taking bold chances and making bold successes and errors. When I count the things I have learned in the group, the things that make me a better feminist and a happier person, what I put right after learning not to objectify myself is learning to give and receive aid and comfort.

By now, after nine months, the group is a family. It has an existence apart from its meeting-time. We

began early-on to make friends outside the group. Now we find each other jobs, we help one another move and clean house, we give each other food and shelter at times of crisis as well as kind comforting words. We love each other. We take care of each other.

It makes a tremendous difference, of course. We are all doing braver, harder things than we have ever done before, secure in the knowledge that the group will back us up. I think that is one reason we have, so far, remained primarily a support group. We began by asking for a very passive kind of help: we wanted to endure and understand. Now we are trying to change our lives. *Anne Goldstein*

TRUE CONFESSIONS: I WAS A MEMBER OF A WOMEN'S LIBERATION RAP GROUP

HOW TO WRITE A PEDESTAL ARTICLE, OR WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO COLLECTIVE WRITING

In _____ (date), I joined (name) _____
 At this time, I was _____ (state of mind) _____
 I felt _____
 To my amazement, _____
 Never before, _____
 never before _____
 No longer was I _____
 The other women _____ me, _____
 and I _____ them. _____
 Finally we _____ and then _____
 went _____ My memory of these times _____
 is _____ and I shall never forget how _____

 My entire life changed. Instead _____
 of _____, I am _____
 now _____ where there was _____
 _____ there is now _____
 where there was _____ there is now _____
 there is now _____

CONFESSIONS OF A FLESH PEDDLER

She had an MA in English and wanted a management trainee job; she was well dressed and well spoken—a perfect candidate. This left me with two options; I could give her the usual battery of tests and refer her to jobs which she would be offered but would not want, or I could send her around the corner...to the men's department of the employment agency I worked for. I don't remember which I did...it doesn't matter...because she was neither fish nor fowl and did not fit into our neat little categories of applicants. The women got jobs as clerks, bookkeepers, typists, secretaries, receptionists, and if they were lucky, girl Fridays (fancy name for do all of the boss's work but don't take shorthand). The men had jobs as clerks, bookkeepers, administrative assistants, and trainees in accounting, sales, technical work, and management. We shuddered when a woman with a degree walked in, because the first thing we asked was "How fast can you type." Then we told them about all the women's jobs, which they usually did not want, then we sent them to the men's, where they were told that nobody hired women for those jobs. I don't know what happened when they left our office. I imagine most of them waited as long as they could and got jobs as clerks or waitresses and wondered just why they had spent those years in college earning their meal tickets that nobody would accept. That was in permanent placement. Temporary is even better, or worse, depending on your viewpoint. Permanent jobs are between applicant and employer, once they leave the agency office, but the temp jobs are more incestuous. Temp agencies work as follows: X comes into my office wanting a job for a week or month or so, and after putting her through a bunch of tests (to check out skills and see how much annoyance she puts up with) I send her for a designated period to Company Y. Assuming she is a secretary (and attractive) I will bill Company Y for every hour she works, and I will pay her about \$3. I keep the other \$2, out of which comes overhead (rent, phones, advertising expenses, workers

in my office, taxes, etc.) plus a big fat profit. The last temp agency I worked for insisted on a minimum 30% differential between amount billed and amount paid. Why would anyone pay so much for a worker.

Many companies have extra work at times but don't want the hassle and expense of paying employees all the time, keeping records, and paying fringe benefits, vacations and so on. It is actually cheaper for the companies to use a temp worker; most temp agencies don't pay any fringe benefits, and the only time vacations are paid is if a worker has worked continuously for 6 months to a year. Most temp workers either don't want to or cannot get work continuously, so no expense there. It's very much like renting a typewriter.

One terribly important area of concern to the flesh peddlers (permanent or temporary agencies) is appearance; they are about as blatantly sexist as is possible to be. The applicants should have some kind of skills or experience, but they must be attractive.

A very attractive or manipulative applicant can sometimes get a cushy job on those qualifications, but it is a buyers' market, so not often. One of the first things we had to check out was their appearance, dress, manners, speech; there was a complicated coding system on each application form, like at the horse races or dog show. If there were several people equally well qualified on paper for a job, we knew the one who'd get it would wear sexy (but tasteful) clothes, show just enough leg on interviews, and be competent but still terribly passive and feminine. We had to lecture deviants; depilatories for facial hair, a smoother hairdo, long hair put up, short hair curled, wear a bra, wear stockings, wear high heeled shoes; not too much make up, but definitely some; always say you are divorced or widowed, never just separated, because they might think if you are reconciled you would quit. If you are married, be prepared to explain what contraceptive method you are using, and what

child care arrangements you have if needed. The ugly ones got sent to grungy industrial offices with grease on the floor, the hippie types who refused to fake it we refused to work with, and the ones who flunked their tests we secretly worked with until they had them memorized...then they got jobs as file clerks. Job orders came in requesting young women, good looking women, swinging women; we filled them. We used to joke at lunch about working in a body shop, but we didn't think it was funny.

After five years of that, I quit. I gave away my work clothes, and came back to school, so that I could get a degree. But I know that if I go to an agency and ask for a management or administration trainee job, they'll ask me some questions. "How fast can you type, dearie." "I see you've had personal experience. Mr. X needs a girl Friday, and it starts at \$400." "I realize you have a degree in commerce but firms are reluctant to hire women for management jobs, you know...but if you practice your steno, we could place you as assistant to the comptroller." I wouldn't be eligible for any of the neat jobs...I don't wear makeup or fix my hair and I am past thirty now...I loathe sexy clothes and am no longer able to play coy or submissive...all that I have to offer is a well trained mind, ten years of business experience, an aggressive and hardworking temperament. Read the want ads; these are qualifications listed for men for "good" jobs. For women, they are liabilities. Certainly, many of us are completely disinterested in that sort of life, but some of us are not. But the market is for flesh, not minds; it was the bodies I sold and rented, and the work they did, not the people in them.

I was as bad as the rest of them for I never questioned; I just made my \$10,000 a year and felt thankful I was an exception. I exploited my clients and my workers, on the assembly line of the employment agency. I wrote the ads, I told the lies. That's the way the world is, for now. But we'll change it together. I hope.

CHILDBIRTH PRACTISES STUDY GROUP

What is it?

It's a group of nine women working out of Women's Place on an Opportunity for Youth Grant.

What are you trying to do?

We want to explore women's attitudes towards their pregnancy and childbirth experiences, especially in relation to how they were treated by their doctors and by the hospital.

The objectives are basically education—of women, of doctors and hospitals, and to create through education some pressure for changes to be made. A fact sheet on hospitals will be put out, simply listing facilities of various hospitals in the Lower Mainland and their policies on things like rooming-in, allowing fathers to be present in the delivery room etc. We're also going to publish a guide to existing agencies which help women with various aspects of childbirth: legal rights, places to get cheap food, drugs, clothing; encouragement for women wishing to breast-feed, daycare for the newborn, etc.

We want to conduct interviews with women who have just delivered, and make up a report from the information gathered that will hopefully have some credibility with doctors and hospitals. One way of bringing about changes would be to provide solid information on what women experience in childbirth and how they feel about the present policies of maternal care to the people who make those policies.

What problems are you running into?

Well, for one thing, the problem of maternity care is much more complicated than just dealing with doctors and hospitals (which is complicated enough!) There is also the fact that many hospital policies are directly affected by the lack of adequate financing by the Provincial government. For example, in one of the biggest hospitals in Vancouver the maternity wing was built in the 1920's; the ward has 16 mothers in one room. Now, you can't have rooming-in with 16 newborn children and even 16 new mothers in one room: not only would there be chaos, but it would be medically unsound. But there's no money available to make the structural changes necessary to allow rooming-in. So it isn't just the hospitals or the doctors, it's the lack of concern at the provincial level for health care.

But some changes are possible at the local level. While we on this project may not be able to put much pressure on doctors and hospitals to change, we can make women aware of what rights they do have, and what demands they can make. Then they can put pressure on their own doctors to have their husbands with them during delivery or whatever.

What have you done thus far?

We've contacted hospitals to start collecting information for the fact sheet. We're asking them about rooming-in facilities—whether they allow it and how it operates; whether friends are allowed in the labour and/or delivery room; how well staffed they are and the nurse/patient ratio, and generally about hospital facilities.

We've had several interviews with hospital administrators usually the nursing directors, and we've toured some maternity floors. We're working now on a rough draft of a questionnaire to be given to the women themselves.

Have you interviewed any women yet?

No, not in regard to the question. We are collecting stories of women's experiences in childbirth, and we would like to hear about women's experiences, particularly those women who have had children in the last few years and in the Vancouver area. Although, information about other parts of the country or wherever is useful too, for the purposes of comparison.

Also if anyone is having a baby this summer and would like to participate in this research by making her experiences available to other women, you can call the project members at 738-3644 (Women's Place) or Andrea Wilkinson at 874-2888.

Is it possible for other women to get involved?

Oh sure volunteers are always welcome. We have our meetings at A Women's Place at 1766 West Broadway. Usually we get together Mondays and Fridays at 9:30 am but we're not always too organized so people should phone first to make sure the meeting is really happening. But it would be far-out if other women would get involved because then we could consider more ways and means to get the information out to women who can use it.

ELEMENTARY MY DEAR WATSON... BY NORA D. RANDALL



I have a 10-speed bicycle named Watson. (I'm Sherlock Homes.) We had quite a pleasant life together until the service department at my bike dealer and women's liberation conspired against us.

The service department I suppose is typical. It consists of one woman who doesn't know anything and one man who's always too busy. Normally I would have waited around in humble supplication, probably for several years. Lately, however, it has become increasingly clear to me that 'normal' is a disaster so I decided to take matters into my own hands. This was not an easy decision since the only thing I've ever tinkered with was the idea of leaving college. Being one of those types the first thing I naturally did was to buy myself a book explaining how anybody could do anything to any bicycle. I thought, any book that starts every section by reminding you that clockwise tightens a bolt and counter clockwise loosens it has got to be my speed.

Well.....I took Watson and the book over to Tim's house. (Tim has all kinds of tools and has been using them for years.) I turned Watson upside down for the great overhaul. This presented the first problem—Remember the book and the clockwise and counter clockwise. Well, did that mean when the bicycle was right side up or up side down or did it make a difference?! I can't actually remember how it worked out but I got the wheels off. Then I filled a big pan with bolts, nuts, axles, cones, bearings, wheels, cogs, changer parts. It was amazing. Then I covered everything in sight with cleaning solvent—my clothes, my face, my hair—and went home, because I knew very well that I didn't know where any of those parts in that pan belonged and I didn't know quite what to do about it. Poor Watson, I thought, she's undone.

I waited three days but Watson didn't pull herself together. I've got to go over there and put that bike

together. I thought, there's not going to be a resurrection. So I went over to Tim's house, greased absolutely everything and put it somewhere. It took me two days and when I was finished I only had two washers left over. I decided that the kids had put them in my pan to torment me and let it go at that.

I had imagined that once I had reached this stage a glow of satisfaction and self-confidence would make me a master mechanic. Not so. When it's back together you have to keep adjusting all the little parts so they work together again. Simply a matter of a turn of a screw here and there, tightening or loosening this or that and PATIENCE! Regrettably Watson has more screws and bolts than I have patience—a lot more. On that first day we reached an uneasy truce and pedaled off into the sunset.

Three days later we were going up Point Grey Road. I shifted gears and Watson threw her chain off. I put the chain back on and promised I wouldn't shift anymore gears until I had talked to her screws. A mile later I put on the breaks and Watson skidded out from under me. Some nine year old boys were pedaling by at the time and apparently thought it was the funniest thing they'd seen all day. Cheer up, I thought, it's early. Six blocks later for some undiagnosed reason Watson threwme into the weeds where I spent twenty minutes searching for my glasses.

Since then Watson and I have spent many hours together in the basement. I hold a screwdriver in one hand and my book in the other and say soothing things to Watson like 'Fuck all' and 'Goddamn it'. I also groan a lot. I know because my landlady noticed it and called it to my attention.

Is it worth it, you may wonder. To be truthful, not yet. But it will be. Like most things it takes time but I'm confident I can get the hang of it and that's the point.

BICYCLES

The term Bloomer girls conjured up for me some kind of fashion freak-out so, naturally, I was surprised to discover that Amelia Jenks Bloomer's theories as expressed in her dress contributed to women's liberation. AND she was preceded in liberation by an unnamed woman who adopted Oriental harem pants to suit her freedom. The style was embraced by the women of the Oneida Community sometime in 1848. It seems that the men were building a new meeting house and women wanted to help, so the ground-sweeping skirts, half-dozen petticoats and tightly laced stays were abandoned in favour of



Before Amelia women were cyclists in a restricted way in the early 1800's but as the drawing shows mobility was impeded by skirts.



A later (1879) women's bicycle design was a further practical disaster. "The rider sat almost over the big wheel in the rear, with her skirts protected by an elaborate guard. A handle bar in back of her and lower than the saddle made her position on the seat awkward and uncomfortable. Furthermore, the lady cyclist could neither mount nor dismount without assistance." (Male plot?) Another difficult gymnastic feat was necessary for a woman to mount the..



Once on the bicycle, safety was a consideration. The instructions that came with the machine said things like: "It is an excellent thing for a beginner to learn to fall properly, and without injury to either herself or the wheel. There are of course only two directions in which she can fall, that is either to the right or left. If she loses her balance to the right she should not attempt to jump from the machine or try to slide off, but the moment she finds herself going she should throw her left leg forward and around the steering rod and reach her right foot out sideways as far as possible, she will then land on both feet astride the handle bars and holding them to prevent the machine from striking the ground. Of course if she falls to the left, her right leg should be thrown around the steering rod."

In 1887 the woman's drop-frame machine appeared and a women's bicycle club was organized in Washington, D.C. "Bicycling for women became an established diversion but was still frowned on in England." And eventually Amelia's bloomers came to be accepted as the correct dress for freedom, although "the ultra-conservative...stuck to skirts, and in order that not a thread of cotton stocking should show, high button shoes or laced boots guarded their modesty."

By 1899 modesty was not as much fun as following the emancipated lead of the "Heavenly Twins" (women) who terrorized the Brooklyn-Coney Island cycle paths dressed in "close-fitting bloomers, waistcoats and mannish jackets, with sporty cycling caps at a devil-may-care angle."

Although not as stylishly dressed, we had our own bicycle day at the Women's Picnic to usher in Summer and celebrate the continued mobility and liberation of women.

Bibliography: Palmer, Arthur Judson. *Riding High: the story of the bicycle*. N.Y., Dutton, 1956.



PEDAL
PUSHERS
ARE IN...



class

by B. Thompson

Sixteen years ago, when the kids were babies and I was still in awe of

the White Russian aristocracy my husband's expatriate family represented, we encountered Madame Mozalevsky. We were hunting for a cheap flat in the West End, which then had a lot of old houses fractioned into suites and rooms — like Kit-silano does now. Madame Mozalevsky was proceeding regally down the sidewalk like a latter-day Queen Victoria, in the company of her dark-eyed daughter Tania, and drew to a halt when she heard my own mid-Western peasant yell at my small son to STOP crossing the street all by himself.

The Madame paused and surveyed us with interest, eyeing the Slavic features of my husband, then the ponderous rooming house from which she had just issued. We could see a sign in one of the basement windows — TWO ROOM SUITE — and we said to each other that we were being evaluated as prospective tenants. Such was the dignity of the old lady that I knew she could not be the proprietor — she was much too neat and tucked-in to be anything but an impetuous renter.

We took the suite for a month, hoping we would find a better place in that time. The lady who took our money explained in Russian to my husband that the landlord did not live there, and that she had no change for him because in that house they were all poor Russian immigrants. My husband, whose parents had emigrated from Russia in a hurry during the 1917 revolution and settled in Italy where he had been born, nodded as though he too had just evaded the Soviet yoke. It was a week before we found out that these people too had been evicted during the overthrow of the Czar in 1917, and had settled in China to raise their families.

The flat we had in the house was in the basement, running with cockroaches and silverfish and trickles of moisture on the cement floor. A small electric heater warmed us but when Madame Mozalevsky turned on her hot plate upstairs the lights and heater went out, and we learned fast to check on the lady's eating times. The closest running water was in the laundry tubs down the hall, so we juggled the dishwashing with the diaper washing and the laundry of the senior tenants.

Madame Mozalevsky, whom I encountered on the dark stairs or near our communal refrigerator upstairs very frequently, was always exquisitely polite, even in her depressed moods, and exquisitely composed. Even when her boiling plums overflowed onto her hot plate and down the table leg to the floor, she maintained her dignity. In my hasty way I swabbed at the sticky mess with a facial tissue, which glued itself to the table leg, but the Madame clammy administered her large linen handkerchief and waved me on my way. I found myself backing out of the little hallway like an apologetic serving woman.

The Madame's English was as inadequate as my Russian, confined to "please," "thank you," "What time is it?" and a few more words, and we made our exchanges almost silently. With my tiny daughter she spoke baby-Russian and in the international child-adult way of meowing, barking, mooring and clucking, with much laughing all round and extra help from the baby's just-turned-four-and-very-vocal brother.

One day, exchanging pleasantries at the laundry tubs with a British girl from the second storey up, I learned that Madame Mozalevsky had been a dentist by profession, and the wife of a Czarist general. They had lived in Shanghai for years and spoke French. From then on I used my Diefenbaker-style French on her.

During the third week of our tenancy, my husband began having long conversations with Madame in Russian. He would say, just before we went to bed, "Let's have some tea," and run up the stairs for the milk, and I would not see him for twenty minutes or an hour. He would return slowly, shaking his head and saying, "Poor old lady," and tell me what the Madame had told him. Her life had been very full — she had been the second wife of General Mozalevsky, and had raised his two children as well as Tania. The General had been an ardent collector, and she showed my husband photographs of their thousands of buddhas, and the many gold-threaded ceremonial gowns they had acquired in China after fleeing Russia, obviously with well-lined pockets.

I was allowed to see the photographs and the gowns one day when we drank tea in glasses with her. She broke off the melodious flow of her Russian speech to explain to me with her hand on her heart, "My husband love me VERY much." Now she was seventy years old, too old to practice her profession and quite penniless. The general had died soon after the Chinese revolution (I never learned how, whether naturally or sabre in hand defending his treasures, bought cheap from sweated labour) and Madame had left their home to go to Australia with the three children. One daughter had married and later died of stroke in her Australian garden. The young son-in-law had died six months later. Tania and Madame had moved to North America, and here they were, in a Comox Street rooming house after four years in Edmonton, living in one room and a snatch of hallway. The last night we stayed in the suite, I heard quiet footsteps moving about above us from early dawn. As I packed our belongings that day, Madame Mozalevsky told me what had happened. Her heart had pained her and beat with difficulty, and Tania, who worked as a nurse's aide at VGH, had been "tres fright."

"Eyes BIG," said Madame impressively, enjoying the telling of what might have been her death scene. She told me that Tania earned only \$150 a month, very little for two people to live on. Our landlord, the usual warmhearted type, had raised their rent by

\$6 that month. Gradually Madame worked her way to her specific request: in Edmonton her landlady, a lovely kind woman who spoke English well, had gone with Madame to the authorities and had spoken for her. "Me old. Bad heart, eyes, no work," and the City had grandly given her \$40 a month welfare. When she had been sick, the doctor and hospital bills had been paid by the City. I said I thought she could get the same treatment in Vancouver, and she said,

"I here two months. I no speak English. I not know where to go. You some day Madame, go with me to City." I nodded, accepting the command from the general's lady.

We moved that day, and soon after my own life started to fall apart. The day Tania phoned to ask me to go with her mother to City Hall I had a practice teaching session which was to be observed for marks, and at that time I thought the only way I would be able to support my kids would be by teaching, and that if I missed the exam the year would be lost and I would be trapped forever. That sort of an unreal box of thoughts, I refused to go with the Madame, and Tania bitterly told me that I was like all Canadians and that she had not wanted to phone me but that her mother had insisted I would help.

"I tell her now," Tania said, "Nobody help." I could find no defensive words, nothing to explain that the happy family group we had presented on Comox Street had been a charade, that reserve and social pretense had covered the hatred and anguish of recognizing the marriage had failed, and that the kids had no one but us in the world.

"Another time," I said, and Tania said, "No."

When I think about it now, after fifteen years of struggle to survive without my own husband, it dawns on me that few women have a class they can call their own, either "ruling," "middle," or "lower." Middle-class women are middle class only as appendages of their middle class fathers or husbands or lovers. Same with ruling class, with rare exceptions. The woman may acquire the style of the world their men have power in: they may "have class" like Madame Mozalevsky, but without the power of a male protector she was just a foreign dentist, and in old age a cipher to the welfare department. She couldn't even vote.

Now I know the difference between airs and graces ("ain't she got class") and ruling class "class." It's power.

It would be good to share the power over our destinies with each other, with affection and respect. I wish I had missed that practice teaching session. I bombed at teaching anyway and we were able to survive on the \$200 the insurance company paid me to type. And I think the Madame must be dead by now.

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROSEMARY BROWN BY B. THOMPSON



Some people thought the fact of a male bank teller appealing to the Status of Women Ombudsman was interesting — The Sun and The Province ran the story, and the Ombudsman, Rosemary Brown, says it elicited more response (predictably?) than any case of injustice against a woman which she has exposed. The plight of the bank teller was:

ROSEMARY: Well, this is a young Israeli immigrant who worked in Israel in a bank for two or three years and emigrated to Canada and tried to get on in the Foreign Exchange Department of the banks and found that there were no vacancies in any of these and therefore started applying and applied to every bank and every insurance company and every trust company in and around Vancouver for a job as a teller, and in each case he was told that the banks, trust companies, insurance companies prefer to hire women to do this kind of job; that they didn't hire men to do this. That their system of hiring a man was for him to immediately go on to a training program and, you know, prepare himself for a career in banking — you know, management level kind of thing.

I phoned the personnel managers of the six really large banks in Vancouver, that's the Canadian-Imperial, the Royal, the Bank of Montreal, the Nova Scotia, Toronto-Dominion, and the Bank of British Columbia. Those were the six. They all said, this was true, they didn't hire men to be tellers, that the men would go on a training program which would involve their being a teller for maybe a week or two. And I said, well, what if a man decides he really enjoys being a teller and wants to stay there, and they said no, he couldn't and then I said what about a woman, and they said, Yes, she could remain a teller for the rest of her life. If she wanted to, that was fine. What happens, of course, is that when they hire women they don't even come in as tellers usually, they come in as clerical, which is below teller, and then they work their way up to teller, you see, and the men come in above teller and keep on their rise to the top, kind of situation.

INTERVIEWER: In that newspaper article too was there not mention of the banks telling you that women have a natural aptitude for this sort of work.

ROSEMARY: Yes, that they are much nicer with the public and they have the patience for this monotonous kind of work. Men are, you know, more impatient and they want to get on and get the job done and women don't mind the kind of routine kind of thing.

One interesting thing that came out of this was that as a result of the newspaper story I received a number of phone calls and visits down at the Status of Women office from women who had been tellers and who presumably fell into this category of lack of ambition, liking monotonous things and stuff, who had left the bank, and included in this group were a couple of lawyers, two medical students, some accountants, one woman with a degree in educational psychology, you know, and on and on and on and on goes.

We asked her about the Identity Crisis Group that the Status of Women Council proposed, advertised and started off:

ROSEMARY: The Identity Crisis Group came about as a result of women who were mostly either married or living in ongoing relationships with men and trying at the same time to establish themselves as individuals, that is they are either working or going to university or they were professional people, and they were saying how difficult it was to combine these two roles because as they asserted themselves, as they became more assertive, the man with whom they were living would become more defensive and be more threatened by this and there would be all sorts of difficulties arising around the relationship as a result of this, and so what we thought we'd do would be to get a group of these women together and have one psychiatrist, a woman, who is also a member of our organization, just sitting in, and we'd just sit and rap about what it was like to be struggling to be an individual without upsetting the relationship that you were in at the time.

INTERVIEWER: How can women get in to another group?

ROSEMARY: Just phone in to the Status of Women Office 733-1421, and put your name down. Say, you want to be in the Identity Crisis Group and put your name down. If we get enough women going we'll probably have two groups or three groups. But keeping in mind that it's an unusual kind of group, it's a very specific kind of group. We're dealing really with women who are juggling all these roles and beginning to run into some discomfort in a particular relationship, as a result of trying to do this. Okay? It's not a consciousness-raising group as such.

Rosemary cares enough about injustice to submit herself to the tearing wolves of the political arena.

ROSEMARY: I find that the political arena is very tiring, it's discouraging in many areas, it just is completely alien to me, you know, it's not something that I enjoy by any means, but it's something that I feel has to be done. And I don't really think it takes a special kind of woman or a special kind of person to be in it, I would like people to feel that anybody who feels this kind of commitment should be able to get up and say, okay, I'm going to get in there and start plugging away at it, and to get away from this shrinking violet kind of philosophy which we've had for so many generations that "what we need is a good man" and then we'll stand behind him and feel really proud of ourselves when someone says, "Behind every good man there is a woman." Why does she always have to stand behind him? It just doesn't make sense any more; we no longer faint at the sight of blood and we just don't do any of these things, and now we can afford to stand beside him. We don't have to stand in front. We can stand beside, which is what it's all about.

I feel that everything that one does in one's struggle for independence, in the struggle for women's rights, whatever it is that you do, it's a political action. I don't think you can divorce it from politics. By joining a formal party and running

for a seat I think I'm just putting into practice some of the things I've been saying all along, which is that women have to take more responsibility for what is happening in the world today, and one of the ways of doing it is to be in on the decisions when they are being made. We have to be part of the decision process. And this business of "finding a good man to support" and rushing around and helping him get elected and letting him do all the work that's to be done is just not good enough any longer.

We asked her what she thought about the incident in which a member of the B.C. Provincial Cabinet, Cyril Sheldford, was whammed with a 2 x 4 in New Westminster.

ROSEMARY: I think the only thing that that probably did was to get a lot of Social Credit sympathizers determined to work even harder for Social Credit. I think that the real tragedy of that is that it wasn't a planned thing or anything, it is really a manifestation of people who had just reached the end of their frustration. They were just so angry and upset by the way they were treated by the government that the sight of all these Ministers all dressed up, you know, and dolled up, going into some kind of social function while they had been without work for such a long period of time was just too much. They just lost control, and I don't really think they planned to hit him, and I don't really think that he was badly injured either, but nonetheless, I think what we saw was an indication of what happens when you push people too far, and I think that this government, especially within the last year, pushed everyone just about as far as they can go. At the last sitting of the house, they brought down some of the most repressive legislation ever brought down anywhere outside of the banana republics of the world. The government has become completely irresponsible in its treatment of people. They really don't care and they are making it very obvious that they don't care; they are using and abusing their power, and not just directed at one group or two groups, but just about at every group in society that you can think of except big business. And they really are the government of big business and they don't care about anyone else. And now with an election in the wind, Mr. Bennett has started throwing his little peanuts in various directions. He goes forth and he scatters his little goodies; a little bit here to the senior citizens, a little bit there to the handicapped people...

INTERVIEWER: ...who can't help but be grateful because they have so little...

ROSEMARY: Right. What the voters are beginning to realize, we hope, is that that is just not good enough. That this is a very very bad government and regardless of the 8 cents a day that they give the senior citizens and the 2 and a half cents a day per child on welfare that's coming across, the other things that they are doing are so destructive that it just doesn't justify it, and who is to say that another government coming in wouldn't do more on behalf of the senior citizens and the poor and the other people of the province, than this government has been doing.



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LETTERS

Dear sisters of the Pedestal,
Re Page 2, May issue A Women's Place

I was really upset and shocked to begin reading an article on a house where sisterhood is to begin growing, and to find in the second sentence a description of the house as a "depressing, dirty, skeleton in the closet type place" (to a comfortable, welcoming home).

I have spent much time in that house. So have many many other women. It has provided a centre for a women's theatre group, a home for a large group of women coming from San Francisco to the Indochinese women's conference not to mention all the other women's meetings, discussions, and very warm intimate conversations between women that have taken place. I feel the women who wrote that article and of those who published it should have thought and felt a little more deeply.

Please think about what I have said. Perhaps an apology might be due the house and former occupants. What would be very interesting would be an interview with the former occupants and a short history of all the women's creations that have sprung from or been greatly supported by the house and the family living there.

A house is only loving warm and supportive if the women who live there are also. I only hope the women who are working on the house understand and really make it as welcoming a home as it has been in the past for women discovering themselves, trying to change and grow stronger.

Sincerely
Ellen Woodsworth

Dear Ellen,

No put-down of your experience at 1766 W. Broadway was intended in the article you referred to. The description of the house reflects one woman's perception of the physical structure—the house was indeed in need of much repair and refurbishing when we rented it, for it is an old house which has withstood much heavy use.

Many women have spoken about the support they received from Diana and her family and others who previously lived in this house. We wish to continue in the spirit of the house's past; to provide a warm supportive atmosphere for women to be together and to do things together and help each other grow. I think the interview you mentioned would be valuable. Would you be interested in doing the history from your perspective? Several of us from the Women's Centre and A Woman's Place have talked about putting together a kind of history of Women's Liberation in Vancouver. The background of this house would be an important chapter.

To give you a brief idea of what's going on here: The Women's Referral Bureau operates daily, mainly doing abortion referrals and counseling. We

have recently established a gay Women's Resource Centre. Most women are involved in some health-related activity—the medical questionnaire (to collect and publish a directory of doctors good for Women) the health self-education groups, yoga, self-defense, the childbirth practises study group. A children's space is being created by one group in the basement. So much is going on here that there is little quiet living space left in the house.

We are looking at present for another house to serve as a retreat and place for women in transition or distress.

This is only a scanty, dry description. The house is full of life and warmth. I experience it as a good place to be.

I hope you will come by when you are in Vancouver next.

Sincerely,
Joan Abbott

Dear Sisters, especially Helen Potrebeko,

The book review by Helen Potrebeko of Nancy Milford's book *Zelda* seems to me to cry aloud for an answer.

First of all, why apologize for caring about Zelda Fitzgerald? She was an interesting, creative, beautiful, tormented human being, well worth writing and reading about. "Nothing human is alien to me" said one great thinker. Second, she was a woman, suffering from the special disabilities of women in our time. She was no Ilse Koch making lampshades of human flesh, so we need not shrink from her because she wasn't born poor or because she accepted the prevalent ideas of her upper-class upbringing. If we believe in the brotherhood of man, we surely believe that all women are sisters and we care about our gifted sisters, no matter whose children they are.

The chief thing I want to write about is her schizophrenia. By now many scientists do not accept the prevalent psychological or psychoanalytic ideas about mental illness. In fact, they don't accept the term "mental illness". They believe that it is an abnormality of the metabolism, a bio-chemical failure to break down products in the body as most other people do. The particular product that a good many doctors think is involved is adrenalin. Because the adrenalin is broken down differently, the brain and nervous system are being contacted or bathed with fluids, chemicals or blood products which change the perceptions and responses of the people involved.

A great deal of work is being done right now to prove that the body chemistry of schizophrenics is different from the body chemistry of the rest of us. It has been shown that the perspiration of people who are in an acute phase of schizophrenia has an ingredient that the rest of us don't have, with its own very special, unique odor which no amount of washing

changes. It's been shown that the urine of people with schizophrenia contains a chemical called the "mauve factor" which the rest of us do not have. It's been shown that when blood products taken from acute schizophrenics is injected into "normal" volunteers, schizophrenic behavior for a few hours may result. Since the volunteer's body is not producing quantities of the "causative" chemicals, the effects soon wear off.

We all know that mental illness, so-called, attacks the young and the old and the middle-aged. It hits the rich and the poor, the married and the single, those with children and those without. It hits the bright and the stupid and the talented and the "average" among us. It happens to those whose lives have been very stressful and those whose lives seem to have been relatively easy. Of course stress can trigger or aggravate an acute attack of schizophrenia. In this it is like all other illnesses. Stress can trigger or aggravate heart conditions, diabetes, rheumatic or arthritic conditions, stomach ulcers and other chronic complaints. And like all other illness, schizophrenia can be treated best if it is caught very early.

For this reason, many who believe in the biochemical nature of schizophrenia are quite upset about new patients being "treated" by talking at or to them, by trying to find deep-rooted, hidden psychological causes for their distress, while the illness itself is becoming more established and difficult to treat. They would like to see all new patients carefully diagnosed, with urine tests, and other diagnostic measures. Many doctors believe that early treatment with massive doses of Vitamin B and Vitamin C (niacin and ascorbic acid) will relieve symptoms and ameliorate distress.

The reason I am writing you, and the reason I hope you will print this letter, is this: to help people who suffer from schizophrenia or so-called "mental illness" and their families. I would urge that new patients (and also chronic

patients) SEEK HELP QUICKLY. Do not accept the theory that wrong handling in infancy or childhood, or trauma and stress in adulthood is responsible for the trouble. Women must not blame their illness on the position or status of women in our society. This is not to say that our position is all right and that we should accept it — not at all. The position of women is inferior, we are all oppressed to some extent, but only some of us have schizophrenia. We must struggle against oppression, we must try to improve our status, but this will not help the individual woman who is suffering from schizophrenia. She must seek treatment.

In Canada there is the Canadian Schizophrenia Foundation, 347 Bay St., Toronto 1, Ontario, with chapters in Saskatoon and New Westminster, B.C. In the United States there is the American Schizophrenia Foundation, 56 West 45th St., New York, N.Y. 10036, with chapters in 25 states. There are two excellent books which can help the sufferer and her family: "The Schizophrenias, yours and mine," prepared and published by the Professional Committee of the Schizophrenia Foundation of New Jersey, Drs. Carl C. Pfeiffer, Jack Ward, Moneim El-Meligi and Allan Cott, available in both paper-back and hard-cover from the Foundation, Box 25, Skillman, N. J. 08558. And, "How to live with Schizophrenia," by Dr. Abram Hoffer, a Canadian, and Dr. Humphry Osmond, available from the Canadian or American Schizophrenia Foundation. There are also good pamphlets available from both — "What you should know about schizophrenia," and "How to choose a mental hospital."

Yours sincerely,
Esther Landau



Non-Sexist Kids Stories

The Mt. Pleasant Public Library (141 East Broadway, 872-1331) has a story hour every Saturday at 2 pm for kids over 6 years old. During the free time after the story hour, the kids can play with puppets and get together their own puppet show. On Tuesday at 10 am there is a story hour for preschool children and free time to play with puppets. Any group of women with children are asked to contact Judy Caldwell to arrange a time for story hour.



MORE LETTERS

Dear Pedestal:

I'm enclosing a cheque for a subscription. I've only seen a few issues of your paper but...this is very difficult for me to write. The last issue I saw was some time ago and it prompted me sit down and write about me growing up, about me losing the together, dirty, aggressive, happy little person I was. The prepuberty, asexual being who was such a groove to be. I wrote how I would play with my two friends (female) and how we'd be western heroes, riding out to save the wagon train, or Super Wonder-women performing incredible feats and how as our childhood was drawing to a close, our game subtly altered. We began to allow boys to play with us and although I can't recall the specific day it happened, my robust, heroic self was reduced to a side-saddle riding, simpering, dimpling idiot. Our games changed and now I was the rescued. No longer could I run with wind...I had discovered boys and so I would run only a few feet before I'd succumb to the traditional female accident, 'twisted ankle,' and would have to be carried to safety by my current hero.

I wrote all that above in much more detail. When I had finished and reread it I was excited. It was good I thought. I had managed to capture an important time in my life, a significant time. I'll send it to the Pedestal and so I put it aside. Some weeks later I found my story, read it, tore it up and threw it in the fire, feeling chagrined to say the least. Now I realize that I just did another job on myself. Now I realize that for years I have been throwing away much of myself that is vital, exciting and I am beginning to suspect, the best part of me. The goddamned self-oppression that began at puberty is still functioning full strength. I had many reasons for throwing my writing away...I have never written before so it must be bad...I don't have a university education and so how could I presume to write... the women at Pedestal are likely all highly-intelligent-university-types who would laugh at my attempts. Now, that's all horseshit isn't it. I have, in examining my motives more closely, begun to suspect I'm suffering from twisted ankle again and its absurd because I have fine, strong ankles and even now at 30 I can still outrun most people. Outrun them that is, if I let go and get into a good foot pounding, tit-jarring, fist churning run, against all my old programmed "lady,feminine" style, lock-kneed and limp wristed, don't muss your hair "run for the bus" crap. This feels so good, writing this way. It's been such a lonely struggle for so long and now I too get small glimpses and pulses of my

strength and its exciting and terrifying. One of my biggest problems is trying to reconcile the multi-people I am...

I went to work as a clerk-typist when I was just turned 16, then spent 8 years in a succession of office jobs. One part of me was caught up in that whole trip; clothes, movies, office-gossip, but another part of me was outside of it all, the part of me that is an artist and that is the biggest part of all. (I hesitated for quite some time before I used the word artist in reference to myself..... weakening ankles ???)

The artist consciousness had no outside support, for this was the late 50's and early 60's in Winnipeg, not exactly the cultural hub of the world. I found it hard doing battle against the coffee lounge,the confession mentality of my working sisters and must admit, my own convictions were shakily held and easily put down (but they persisted and would resurface again and again and again.) That was the pattern of my life. Of course, a woman's ultimate role is wife, mother.

Of course I must be neurotic to feel stifled and terrified visiting married friends in their newly furnished bungalows, of course I must be sick not to like showers and weddings...of course I must be weird if I couldn't stand being told I was cute and being patronized by some guy. When I think of my anger and frustration...when I think of all the years I spent doubting my sanity. You can well imagine how I felt when someone recommended I read *The Female Eunuch* !! I sat down and read it right through...bang!

Today I am trying to unify myself, to build confidence and it's so hard.

In 1968 I finally got myself together enough (with my husband of 6 years help) to enter art school. It had taken me all of 10 years to fulfill a dream (makes me sound wishy-washy...but that's another story--or part of this same one.) by the end of my first year I was pregnant. I have just completed my second year at the school. I am now 30 and my daughter is two and a half and I have received an incomplete for this term because of marriage hassles, daycare hassles and all I have received is an overwhelming feeling of lack of ability and defeat. However, all is not totally black. I'm learning about myself...making attempts at some kind of honesty in that regard and feel I may just rediscover that grimy enthusiastic little person that went underground about 17 years ago.

Thanks for listening.

Penny Wilson

p.s. In writing this I have discovered that I have an awful lot to say and I think I will just start writing it all down.

HAPPENINGS AT WOMEN'S PLACE

Are you interested in: women's health education? gay women's groups? childbirth practices and childcare? women's library and resource center? rap groups? women in crisis?? Call or come by A Woman's Place, 1766 West Broadway, phone: 731-9619.

We are always open to new sisters who want to get involved or who just come by for a chat. General meetings are held every third Friday at 7:30 pm. The next one will be July 21.

New projects and activities are starting all the time: self-defense, yoga, carpentry...bring your own ideas! Contact people for some of the projects are:

Women's Referral Bureau (abortion referral and health line): 736-8471 or Jane 732-7090

Thursday Night Health Group: Nym 874-6902

Rap Groups: Lynn 733-0898

Women in Transition: Joan 876-7831

Gay Women's Resource Center: office 738-3644 or Pam 876-7831

Childcare Group: Shirley Anderson 253-8755

Medical Questionnaire: Dougal 228-2956

Childbirth Practices Study Group: Andria 874-2888

Yoga: Georgia 733-7261

Library: Dougal 228-2956

Canadian Women's Educational Press
280 Bloor St. W. Suite 305
Toronto (416) 962-3904

The Canadian Women's Educational Press is a group of women working together because of our concern for the appalling absence of available material written by or about Canadian women.

The press operates on a non-profit basis; proceeds from sales are channelled to further publications.

Initially our aims are:

--To solicit, publish and distribute material written by, of interest to or about Canadian women

--To train ourselves and other women in publishing skills.

Here's how you can help us. Anyone sending their name, address, and \$3.00 or more will receive a free copy of the book when it is printed. This is not an advance sale. This is a request for a donation with a promise to send the book to you as soon as it is published. Thanks.

SOCIALIST WOMAN

182 Bentonville Road, London N1

Sisters,

We are sure that many of your readers will be interested in our new publication: 'Women Workers in Britain', by Leonora Lloyd, price 25p. We hope that you will mention it in your paper. It can be ordered from the above address or through booksellers. (One third discount on orders of 5 or more.)

Please note that 'Booklist for Women's Liberation' is now out of print, although a new edition is being prepared. We also have 'Women Unite' posters in red and yellow, price 25p.

NOTES FROM THE THIRD YEAR: WOMEN'S LIBERATION COPIES \$1.50 FROM 'RADICAL FEMINISM' P.O. BOX A.A. OLD CHELSEA STATION N.Y.C. N.Y. 10011

Sisters,

In reading the Pedestal I am always frustrated by the many articles which appear with no indication of source, authorship, and most particularly, authority or basis for making statements or taking stands. When reading an article on a topic of interest to me and it says: "I think," I want to know who thinks that. Authorship is the major factor in the weight or credibility I give to the article. If it's a policy statement of the Pedestal itself, or reflects the paper's position on the matter, then it should be indicated to be an editorial.

I understand that some Pedestal staffers prefer an anonymous position with the idea that it is more in keeping with a collective or community spirit. Although I can appreciate a desire for anonymity in something like the Anger article, (which didn't lose anything because the writers were not separately identified); generally speaking I strongly disagree with a community identity.

If liberation means the right to develop our own identity, each in our own personal way, then following on that reasoning we should, each of us, be individually identifiable. I see no difference in the label of 'wife', or 'mother', or 'Pedestal staffer'. All are categories or slots into which individuals are crammed. What's the purpose in self-actualizing if that development is then going to be camouflaged into a neutral group?

Stand up and be seen Pedestal staffers! I have the good fortune of knowing some of you personally and so know of the various backgrounds and experiences that go into putting out the Pedestal. That adds dimension to the paper and should not be hidden. In fact, rather than just a name on an article, I would like to see a little blurb about the writer, i.e. age, experience, education, interests, and any other details that would help us get to know you better.

Yours for individual sisterhood,
Rachel M. Cormier

ps. I would like to see some replies to the opinions expressed above, both from the staffers and from readers generally.

Dear Rachel,

I've gone through some of our recent back issues and I can see why our by-line policy might frustrate you. Generally our policy looks like this:

Unless we error by omission all articles that we reprint from other sources are identified by the publication we have taken the article from and the author's name if it is given.

When an article comes to us specifically for the Pedestal written by someone other than a Pedestal collective member our policy is guided by the decision of the contributor. For example, most of our labour articles are written by members of the Working Women's Association. These articles come in unsigned and that's how we run them.

As for our policy on Pedestal collective people: it depends on what kinds of outrageous statements we're willing to accept from each other (if we don't agree the article gets a by-line) or on whether the article was hashed over in a group or by an individual or on whether or not the writer expresses a personal opinion. (We agree that if an article says, 'I think' the reader has a right to know who the 'I' is. And again personal opinion plays a part in the by-line decision. Some of the women in our collective think liberation has more to do with freeing ourselves from individual identity rather than developing it.

This policy statement, nebulous as it is, is as close to an editorial position as the Pedestal comes. The reason for this is that to belong to the Pedestal collective and take part in the decision making all a woman has to do is show up and work on some aspect of production. A lot of people come and go so that to a certain extent we 'change our mind' every month.

What it all boils down to seems to be this: since some of our articles are unidentified and we have a weak editorial position it is often necessary to develop an opinion on the article solely from the information given. (Mostly, I think, the Pedestal fails to give a coherent political context.) The people now working in the collective think this lack of context is useful because it doesn't give readers a chance to form opinions based on political, social, economic or educational prejudices. We believe that what is said is far more important than who said it and that the context for an article should come largely from the readers judgement.

And that's as close as I can come to describing our present position. Answering your letter has raised a lot of questions. I'm also hoping readers will write in and tell us what they think. Thanks for raising the issue.

Yours in question
Nora D. Randall
for the Pedestal collective

A Gay Women's Resource Center has been set up at 1766 W. Broadway within the Women's Place.

The purpose of the center is to give gay women, who have been totally isolated due to a total lack of any place to be or meet other gay women, a place of their own.

Included in the center will be a comprehensive collection of all publications in Canada and the U.S. by and about lesbians and their lives.

Our hope is through furthering communication with each other, we will deepen our understanding of ourselves, and grow stronger together.

We will have a "Gang Night" every Sunday at 8:00 at 1766 W. Broadway. Our phone number is 738-3644. Counseling and rap groups are available. Sisters are welcome any time. Come see us. We need lots of support and positive energy.

PLANNING MEETING

On July 5 at 8:00 PM a meeting will be held at 1045 W. Broadway, room 101, to discuss plans for a conference to be held in Vancouver late this October. The conference will bring together as many local women as possible. The planners hope to have booths for all the existing women's groups, and to exhibit the work of local woman artists, writers, musicians, photographers, and the like. Any woman who is involved with a woman's group not already represented in the planning, any woman artist, writer, etc. or any woman who would like to become involved in the planning and preparation for the conference, is invited to the meeting.

For further information, or if you miss the meeting, call Sandy (298-0384) or Niki or Shelley (255-0357).

The National Film Board is willing to make films for women's studies programs, etc. but don't know what we need. Anyone with ideas or film making knowledge phone Liz 299-0816.

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Taking time off from their heavy bicycling schedule the following women put together this month's Pedestal: Josie Cook, Nora D. Randall, Anne Goldstein, Carol Dear, Diana D., Colette French, Barbara Roberts, Lynn Alway, Susan Gillingham, Terry Haughian, Beverly Davies, B. Thompson, Helen Potrebeko



JULY 1972

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
THE WOMEN'S CENTRE 511 CARRALL ST. 684-0523 A WOMAN'S PLACE 1776 W. BROADWAY 731-9619					0 IN '95 TILL THE 22ND THEN 6?	
GANG NIGHT 7:30 A WOMAN'S PLACE		W.W.A. GENERAL MEETING 7:00 REPORT ON THE LABOUR MOVEMENT IN QUEBEC AT THE LIBRARY LITERATURE COLLECTIVE MEETING AT DIANAS 8:00	NON-ELITIST WOMEN ARTIST COLLECTIVE MEETING 6:30 AT JOSIE'S 2-715 W. 16TH AVE EVERYONE'S WELCOME!			1 W.W.A. RAP 1173 FENDRELL 2:00
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
GANG NIGHT 7:30 A WOMAN'S PLACE	1917 - EMMA GOLDMAN SENTENCED TO TWO YEARS IN PRISON FOR URGING DIRECT RESISTANCE.	W.W.A. MEETING WOMEN'S CENTRE 7:00				DEADLINE FOR COPY FOR AUGUST PEDESTAL
9	10 NEW MOON	11	12	13	14	15
GANG NIGHT 7:30 A WOMAN'S PLACE		W.W.A. MEETING WOMEN'S CENTRE 7:00	1948 - FIRST WOMEN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION HELD IN SENECA FALLS, N.Y.		MRS. FRANCES COK, SUFFRAGE ADVOCATE PUBLISHER, AND LINGUIST WHO CONVERSED IN 19 EUROPEAN LANGUAGES BORN 1820	W.W.A. RAP 1047 PACIFIC 2:00
PEDESTAL MEETING 11:00AM WOMEN'S CENTRE			TYPESETTING FOR AUGUST PEDESTAL	MORE TYPESETTING!		LAYOUT FOR PEDESTAL 3-F.U.
16 MARY BAKER EDDY BORN 1821	17	18	19	20	21	22
GANG NIGHT 7:30 A WOMAN'S PLACE	AMELIA EARHART BORN 1898	W.W.A. MEETING WOMEN'S CENTRE 7:00			ANNE HUTCHINSON BANISHED FROM BOSTON BECAUSE SHE THOUGHT WOMEN SHOULD HAVE A VOICE IN CHURCH AFFAIRS BORN 1691.	
LAYOUT FOR PEDESTAL AT 3-F.U.	24	25	26 FULL MOON	27	28	29
GANG NIGHT 7:30 A WOMAN'S PLACE		AUGUST	AT A WOMAN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION, ELIZABETH CADY STANTON TELLS HER SISTERS			
30	31	1	2	3	4	5

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