

A WOMEN'S
LIBERATION
NEWSPAPER

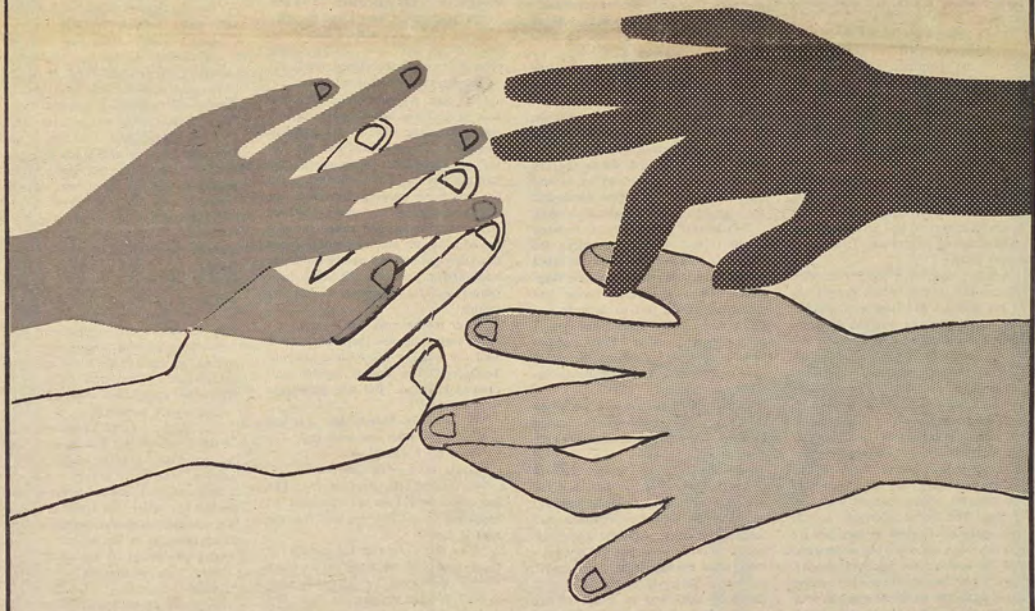
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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



MARCH 8

OLD TIMES



She and her sister talk of their mother and their childhood on those rare occasions when they see each other. They are beginning now that they are in their forties to be able to talk to each other without rancour.

Their mother was a thin-skinned, passionate girl who thought of herself as being sensitive and idealistic. She had read all of Dickens and often compared herself to David Copperfield's wife, who in her childlike way could not manage the housekeeping books. After the first blissful years of her marriage it was brought home to her that her husband was sleeping around, betraying her, his marriage vows, his children and God in heaven, and she cracked up, or rather *in*, and slipped into a fantasy life where she committed many amusing follies. And some not so amusing.

Their father's family, his sisters and their husbands, told him that his wife should be confined. He hesitated because of the Talk and because he had a tender heart. In the months while he hesitated she one night walked in her nightgown down the railway track. She had risen at dawn before the others in the household were awake, and slipped out barefoot. When she was missed, the searchers set off and soon found her, because her apparel was scant enough to invite attention, and early workmen pointed along her route. This was a minor folly.

Another time their mother emptied the contents of her bureau drawer out of her upstairs bedroom window. She had begun pitching out the furniture when she was stopped. "She always had a good reason for those things she did," their aunt whispered thirty years later. "That time she was giving all her possessions to the poor, like Jesus said. She was so happy doing it I hated to tell her to stop, but we couldn't have the chairs breaking." Another minor.

Those sent to serve their mother became enemies. They interfered with her missions, which changed from day to day. The Polish cleaning woman who spoke no English aroused her ire one day when she could not understand how to unhook the vacuum cleaner. Rage made their gentle mother scream abuse down the basement stairs at poor Doda, who stood with nozzle in hand at the bottom. The children, choked and petrified, watched beside their mother at the top.

One of them recalled a time that the table setting did not suit. The table cloth was ripped from the table and food and all scattered to the floor. No one ever seemed to laugh. If the excesses startled their father, they did not startle him into a new view of his wife's illness, and she continued to live at

home and in charge of the children.

"You only want to remember the bad times," mother said when they dared to reminisce. "You don't remember the lovely times when we had Sunday supper in front of the fire."

We remember, mother. Stiffly sitting at the wobbly card table, loathing the creamed peas on toast and afraid to say so. Having a "quiet time" of prayer when everyone was strangely ticking and gurgling.

"I always envied you because mother loved you the best," her sister said. Oh, Jesus, are we the Smothers Sisters? How to tell her that it was a hard-won love, it was a way of surviving in the family, it made her a very unreal person for a very long time, carefully placating the mother who could smell out and thwart any plan that might be considered unchristlike or selfish. She tried to tell her sister about the shrink. When was it? It must be 15 years ago now.

The shrink sat at his desk and the room was quiet and easy. He spoke once in a while and never pushed. He could listen. For weeks and weeks she had come in and sat down and he had said "Well how is it going?" and her tears would start and she would cry quietly for fifteen minutes or so and then they would say a few words and she would go home. This time she said,

"My mother tried to drown me when I was three," watching to catch the reaction. A good one was shocked belief; a bad one was disguised skepticism. Once a cheerful lover had chuckled, "Well, just so long as you don't wish she'd finished the job, I guess it doesn't matter." If she had not been so avid for his passion she would have been hurt and turned silent — instead, she laughed.

She watched. No reaction. A slight elevation of the eyebrows. He leaned forward. "Tell me more. You were how old?"

As a matter of honest fact she was never really sure of the date, and the two psychiatrists to whom she had told the facts on separate occasions had listened patiently while she fondered for the point in time. She did not even know when she had begun to remember the event. Certainly all her childhood had been shadowed by a fear of her mother. Perhaps she had picked up bits of information from her aunts, who were tirelessly garrulous and who had cared for her while her mother was confined in the provincial hospital for the insane. But the one memory she had that she knew was her own, nobody else's, was of her mother bending over her in the bath as the water splashed in, her mother holding her down, saying gently but firmly, "I don't want you to suffer as I have."

A Short Story

by B. Thompson

One of the doctors had told her that if her mother had wanted to, she could have done the job, since it wouldn't be that hard to drown a small child. Hearing that had been a great relief, because there she was, alive. "You see, I thought she must have loved me after all," she said. They were silent in the quiet office and faint traffic noises came in through the closed window.

"Go on," said the doctor.

"But then my aunt Irene came out here to the Coast and we got to talking about that time when I was so small and my mother was sick, and she said she was there when it happened. She said the way they knew what was going on, was water seeping out under the bathroom door and splashing down the stairs. She ran up and called through the door but my mother wouldn't open it, so they got my Dad and he broke the latch. Then they saw what was happening and they stopped it. Not my mother."

"Your mother was sick."

"That's what the other psychiatrist said. Said she was not responsible, she was demented." The doctor nodded and smoked his pipe. "But why didn't she want to stop?"

"She was not herself. She was too sick to know what she wanted."

"What do I want?"

"You'll have to tell me."

She relaxed. He thinks I can. The fear eased away. I am not demented. It I happened to me, but I'm not the one who is mad.

"Aunt Irene said that for months the family had told my father to have my mother committed, but he didn't want to do it. It was a big disgrace then." She thought, it is now too but I won't offend him by saying so. You are in a suspect profession doctor, and we who fervently visit you do not tell our employers of our ailment.

"Well, after she tried to drown me— (was I a cat, to be got out of the way?)—"

"my Uncle George, whose opinion carried some weight with my father, because he was a successful doctor, Uncle George said you've got to put her in a hospital, and father did. For two

years. The doctors said she would never get better.

"In those days," he began—

"Yes, I know," she cut him off, eager to say it all and be done.

"But my father brought her out after two years because he had become friends with some spiritualist who said my mother had behaved as though a demon had hold of her, a poltergeist, and that they could get the demon out by holding seances."

She cocked an eye at the doctor. Did he believe her? And if he saw it was true, and knew her father was a spooknut, a believer in the spirits, what would his verdict be of her, the offspring of two such mad ones.

"He took her out of the hospital?"

"Yes, he's very proud of it—he made liars of the doctors. He hadn't even finished high school and he made fools of men with degrees. He hired a nurse and my mother had all her meals in her room. My Aunt Irene looked after running the house and us children. And every Tuesday and Friday night the spiritualists came to the house and held seance with my Dad, downstairs, while my mother slept in her room upstairs."

"She wasn't present?"

"No! And my father says there were 14 devils in her that had to be gotten out, and that's what the seances did."

"How long did it take?"

She couldn't say. "Anyway, my mother got better, but I always feared her, and she was always terribly saintly, which is tough to live with."

"Are you afraid of her now?"

"No. Yes. Sometimes."

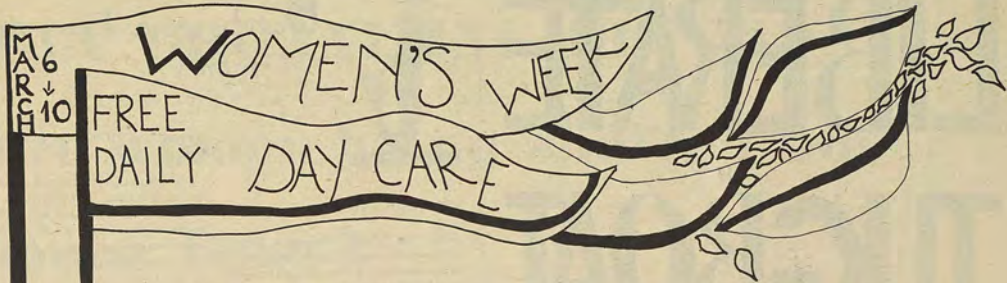
"When?"

She shook off the question and came back to the core. "Am I hopeless?"

"No."

The weight slid from the back of her neck and she stretched and smiled, "I'm NOT!" They sat quietly smiling as the relief sank in, and then she said softly, "Will you make me better?" and he, matter-of-fact, taking up his pen to write in the date of the next appointment, said,

"Yes."



WOMEN'S WEEK AT UBC

The University of British Columbia Women's Studies program is planning a Women's Week from March 6 to 10. Monday will be devoted to an examination of Women and Children in society, Tuesday to Women and Social Change, Wednesday to Women and Unionization, Thursday to Women and the Arts, and Friday to Sexuality.

Plans include guest speakers, workshops, seminars, readings, a display of art work — and space for people to come together to exchange ideas and problems. Day care for children will be provided in SUB, room 205, every day from 10:30 to 2:30. On Thursday from noon to 2pm there will be a lunch in SUB ballroom, with music and dance

provided by women in the performing arts.

As far as Women and the Arts is concerned, activities are extending off campus and into the city to the Vancouver Art Gallery, where there will be space all week for workshops, seminars, and a display of women's art in slide form.

Calendar

TUESDAY
Social change

12:30 *Women in China*. Slides and discussion by Joyce Marvin and Ann Harley. UBC, SUB Ballroom.
2:30 *Women and Socialist Theory*. Seminar with NDP-Waffler Hilda Thomas, sociology professor Dorothy Smith and others. UBC, SUB Art Gallery.
7:00 *The Women's Liberation Movement in Canada*. Discussion by Sandra Foster and Maggie Benston. UBC-SUB Ballroom.

THURSDAY
Arts

12:30 to 2:30. *Women in concert*. Two hours of readings, dance and song by women artists: actress Jackie Crossland, novelist Alice Munro, poet Judith Copithorne, Nora D. Randall and others. UBC, SUB Ballroom. Lunch provided by alternate food service for 35 cents per person at 12:30.
10:30 to 2:30
10:30 to 12:30 *Women through History: an experimental workshop, Part I* by Crista Preus. UBC, SUB Art Gallery.
2:30 to 3:30 *Women through History, Part II* SUB Art Gallery.
DISPLAYS: Paintings, sculpture and pottery of women artists. UBC, SUB Art Gallery, all week.
WOMEN ARTISTS ARE INVITED TO MEET AND TALK ALL DAY IN SUB ART GALLERY. BRING YOUR OWN WORK.

MONDAY

Women and children

11:30 *Daycare in B.C.* Marcy Cohen, Ann Harley and Carol Sayre. UBC, SUB Art Gallery.
12:30 *Organizing Mothers*. Sarah Spinks, from Toronto. UBC, SUB Ballroom.
1:30 *Women in Teaching*. Seminar with Reva Dexter and other members of WIT. UBC, SUB Art Gallery.
DISPLAYS: Library corner on non-sexist children's literature (Janine Lukac) tapes by Vera Rosenbluth, Children's writing and art, information on Day Care Centres and Alternate schools.
7:00 Performance at Vancouver Art Gallery.



WEDNESDAY
Work

12:30 A talk by MADELEINE PARENT, Quebec labor organizer involved in the recent Tex-Pak strike in Brantford, Ont. UBC, SUB Ballroom.
5:15 *To Join or Not to Join*. A staff debate on the current UBC union drive. UBC, SUB Ballroom.
7:00 Vancouver Art Gallery, Video and film night.

FRIDAY
Sexuality

11:30 *Information Table* Birth control, abortion and sex information available in SUB Concourse, UBC.
11:30 to 12:30 *Liberated Graffiti* from the local washrooms. UBC, SUB Art Gallery.
12:30 and 1:00 *Female Sexuality*. Two talks by Arts I instructor Shelagh Day and law student Diana Moore. UBC, SUB Ballroom.
2:30 *Three short stories*. Works by Jane Rule read by Helen Sonthoff and Shelagh Day. UBC, Blue Room of the Arts I Building.
Vancouver Art Gallery, *Women through History*, by Crista Preus. Time to be announced.



Free Day Care Daily in S.U.B. 205
10:30-2:30

LIBERATE TUGBOAT ANNIE

How would you like to walk into a theatre on Granville and see a movie about a talented professional woman who is being courted for marriage by a talented professional man. She is afraid that marrying anyone in our society would sap her vitality. He doesn't see it. They make love, talk, argue. Finally she is able to make him see the underlying sexism of our society which justifies her fears. He begins to develop an empathy for the problems she faces and they start to work out a relationship between them based on their needs as two individuals. Or how about a movie about a really sharp secretary in a business. There is an opening in management and she knows she's capable of filling it. Moreover, she wants the job. But she's afraid. To get the position she'd have to assert herself, step on a few male toes, and play some power politics with shares she's bought in the company over the years. She worries about losing her femininity, about becoming a bitch, about being unmarrigeable and resented. Finally she realizes that she is looking at herself through male eyes. She fears success because men fear successful women. But most importantly she realizes that she is herself and she has the power to decide what she's going to be like. She asserts herself, startles the management, lands the job and is very happy. Both she and the men discover that neither of them are destroyed or diminished by her success.

How about this one: a TV show in which, when a woman is physically assaulted, she defends herself?!

Actually, how would you like to see or read any story about a successful woman in which neither the woman nor the men are destroyed or diminished? By successful I mean healthy women with their own goals; people who decide what they want, plan how to get it and go after it.

Most of the relationships between people portrayed in our art forms today are tired. If they aren't tired they're sentimental or outrageous. The few that are vibrant and gutsy show the futility of trying to relate to all. (I think of Bergman's films especially.)

Much of recent fiction has been so-called or thin because its aim has been to expose the sorry state into which human communication has fallen. It's time now to move on. We need to make up new stories in which people relate to each other in fresh ways and are invigorated by it not destroyed.

At the same time these stories have to be tight and believable so that people reading or seeing them can imagine the possibility of their being able to respond similarly in a real life situation. One of the new characters that especially needs to be created is the successful, healthy woman. I think it would do wonders for curing neurosis in women if they could just once see in an art form a woman who is not neurotic. No male artist can create this figure. Only a woman who works for and accepts her own success can. Simone De Beauvoir has given us one example in the character of Anne in *The Mandarins*. We need others.

Women need to see themselves succeeding, if only to let them know it's all right. Both men and women need to see the successful woman as a builder; someone who strengthens rather than destroys or diminishes. It's a whole new field of positive realism and it needs women willing to change their attitudes toward themselves and to portray their successes and failures in fiction. This is a field in which the woman artist can decide what she wants and work for it. In other words, she can succeed. It's all right.



BY PAMELA HOWARD

John Vliet Lindsay, the svelte, blond, 50-year-old father of four, announced today that he is giving up gardening at Gracie Mansion and setting his sights on more fertile surroundings—the White House and its Rose Garden.

As he sipped coffee in the mansion's cozy, aubergine kitchen and his son, Johnny, age 11, whipped up an Angel Food cake, it was hard to imagine that the city's pert, cheery, number one househusband had spent all day traipsing through Bedford Stuyvesant with his best friends, Meade Esposito, the vivacious Brooklyn leader, and Sid Davidoff, his muscular man-in-waiting. His Rolan Meledandri suit and his blush of pancake makeup were hardly disturbed by the near-riot he caused when he walked through...

Silly, right fellas? Yet that's the way you write about *Mary Lindsay*—and, of course, just about every other woman who doesn't fit the masculine myth of how "the ladies" are supposed to behave. Take Bernice Gera, the 40-year-old woman from Queens who has the audacity to want to be a professional baseball umpire. When the New York State Court of Appeals ruled January 13 that it seemed a perfectly reasonable ambition, here's how the New York press handled the story: GAL UMP WINS THE DECISION COURT PUTS HOUSEWIFE AT HOME PLATE

"Women suffer as much from unconscious discrimination as from overt anti-feminism," wrote journalist B. J. Phillips in a long memo circulated to *The Washington Post* management back in 1969. "Most of the insulting references to women in the newspapers are references which, when challenged, are met with 'I never thought of that.'" At *Time*, where Phillips now works, she runs into that kind of unconscious discrimination all the time. Recently, the magazine's People section reported that Samantha Egger, the actress, was paying her husband alimony. The item was illustrated with a shot of the actress posed voluptuously on a beach wearing a skimpy bikini. "Being married to Samantha Egger," the item began, "has its obvious advantages."

Ellen Feysler, a liberated reporter at the *Daily News*, calls sexist language in newspapers "The Shapely-Blond-Divorcee-Former-Cocktail-Waitress-and-Secretary Syndrome." The label was unwittingly developed by a male reporter at the *News* during the trial of Alice Crimmins, the Queens woman who was charged with murdering her two children. One day, Feysler was assigned to cover the trial and write a sidebar. She worked with the male reporter who had been covering the story every day, describing Crimmins in his leads as THE SHAPELY, BLOND, DIVORCEE, FORMER COCKTAIL WAITRESS AND SECRETARY. Unconscious of what he'd been doing until Feysler pointed it out, the reporter filed his story that day and didn't use the "shapely-blond, etc." description—until the fourth paragraph.

Watch your language, men!

Reprint from MORE: A Journalism Review

Some women reporters are adopting tactics designed to eliminate such demeaning sexism. They are omitting questions about marital status in their interviews and are using the "Ms." form of address even when it violates their newspapers' style —by writing, "Mrs. Abzug," who prefers to be addressed as Ms.... They are eschewing physical descriptions of women unless the appearance of men involved in the same story is also discussed. In addition, here are a few guidelines that have been developed:

HEADLINES. When copy desks or reporters are about to treat women lightly, replace the word *black* for the word *women*. Would you say Black Libbers? Women also should not be called housewives, mothers or grandmothers unless germane to the story.

LAST NAMES. Women, like men, should be referred to by their last names in stories and headlines. Just in case you haven't noticed, women are almost always referred to by their first names in headlines. Why are Bella Abzug, Indira Gandhi, Golda Meir, and Shirley Chisholm so often Bella, Golda, Indira and Shirley in headlines while John, Dick, Gene, George and Henry are always Lindsay, Nixon, McCarthy, McGovern and Kissinger.

AGE. There should be a cut-off at 18 for using *boy* and *girl*. If man and woman seem wrong for those between the ages of 18 and 21 then *young man* and *young woman* should be used. This would keep women of 25 plus from being called *girls*.

GENERIC PERSONAL

PRONOUNS. Exactly how to solve this problem should probably be left to women grammarians like Mary Orován, a linguist, who suggests the creation of a new common gender pronoun like *co* to replace *he* and *she*. In the meantime reporters should use *they* as a singular, personal pronoun to replace *he* and *she*—usage which is already being tolerated by some copy desks. Remember New York State Assembly member Albert Blumenthal's blooper? "When we get abortion law repeal, everyone will be able to decide for himself whether or not to have an abortion."

ADJECTIVES. The adjectives reserved for women are as sexist as the pin-ups from Australia that appear on an average of about twice a week in the *Daily News*. Comely, cute, svelte, pert, petite, adorable, vivacious etc. should be abolished, an act that would certainly upgrade the literary quality of newspapers and probably result in more accurate reporting.

WOMEN'S COLUMNS. Columns like the one called "Confidential Chat" in *Boston Globe* and "Chatterbox" in the *Albuquerque (N. Mex.) Tribune* should be exercised and, in general, woman's pages should be demythicized, following the examples of *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*.

Equal rights for women is hardly a radical issue today. Even the conservative *Daily News*, which ridiculed the female umpire in its news columns, applauded her court victory on its editorial page. It's about time the newsmen caught up. Right, fellas?

UBC ORGANIZING DRIVE - are women being shafted one more time?

The Office and Technical Employees Union drive on the UBC campus still has around 200 applications to go before certification can be applied for. The target date for certification has now been moved to the end of March. Cards dribble into the union office at the rate of 10-15 a day, or so we're told. At that rate we'd make it by the end of March, but the trouble is that about all the people in concentrated, easily accessible areas like the library or the physical plant have signed that are going to sign. If people there aren't sending in applications, it isn't because they haven't heard enough about it. The task now is to get to the people who aren't hearing about it — all the secretaries in two- and three-women department offices or huts. It is pretty hard to walk into a small office you don't work in, and say anything about unionizing. It's even illegal if the people you're talking to are not on breaks or lunch hour. Last week a math professor designed a silk screen for us and helped us run it off, and we're going to use it to advertise an information table we're setting up in the Student Union Building from 12:00 noon to 2:00, February 28 on. We've tried phoning people at home after work, but there are hardly any phone numbers available for people outside the library, medicine, and the physical plant — all of which are pretty well organized.

we need students

Let's face it — if we make this last push, we're going to need help. The answer is students. If there are any readers out there who are UBC students, we need you. We need you to help us put up signs all over campus. We need you most of all to walk into your department offices and talk to the secretaries. Get them to tell you why they're against union or haven't joined, and tell them what you think about it. Also tell them about our table in SUB. If you want to take a few minutes to help us do any of these things, phone me, either on campus (ext. 4687) or at home (733-8444), or drop by my hut, a white panabode in the parking lot back of Brock Hall with an "Institute of International Relations" sign on it. It is also the only hut on campus with an OTEU sign on it, so you can't miss it.

There is some behind-the-scenes stuff going on in the drive now which I also want to talk about. As most of you who are out here or who pick up a *Ubysses* now and then will have heard, the competition between the OTEU and CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees) is getting pretty fierce. At a meeting last October at the Vancouver General Hospital when OTEU was launching its drive, CUPE organizers who were present told Lowe of OTEU that trying to organize office staff at UBC was hopeless (they have tried and failed three times in past years), but that they wished him luck and would stay out of it. Ole Johnson, CUPE organizer who has appeared on campus since October, denies that CUPE ever had any intention of staying out, that, in fact, a new CUPE drive had been planned long before October and that it was only waiting for him to arrive to get going officially. In any case, since the Christmas holidays, CUPE has been going at it hammer and tong.

The CUPE drive is an attempt to organize department by department, or unit by unit, trying to get 51 percent application from just the workers in that unit, rather than trying to get 51 percent of all the workers on campus as OTEU is. Or at least as OTEU has been, until last week, but more of that in a minute. CUPE tried to apply for certification for the library several years ago on the same basis, but the Labor Relations Board turned down the application for certification on the grounds that the library could not be considered an independent bargaining unit separate from the University as a whole. A few weeks ago CUPE put a big ad in the *Ubysses* announcing that it had applied for certification for three departments in the Faculty of Medicine. The case for these departments as independent bargaining units is even shakier than the library case several years ago, since there are only three out of eight departments in the Faculty of Medicine. How much hope CUPE has for getting these passed by the Labor Relations Board no one knows, but my guess is that they don't have any hope at all, and that the real purpose is simply to break the back of the OTEU drive. Application for certification sounds pretty sure and final to people who haven't heard much about unions — which is most people, including workers. The OTEU drive

has been going since October, and here suddenly CUPE is, applying for certification for three departments. People are beginning to think that the OTEU drive must be pretty much dead, and that they'd better jump on the CUPE bandwagon, or they'll just get left out in the cold. Others think — what the hell is all this squabble anyway, pox on both their houses.

men first again?

The development this last week was that OTEU has applied for certification for the physical plant. Since the physical plant does sit off by itself, doesn't include any faculty or have anything to do with the business of education proper but only with the supply and maintenance of buildings, it probably has a lot better chance to get passed by the Labor Relations Board than the CUPE applications do. But what will this mean? It will mean that the rest of us on campus will have to work up our own 51 percent minus the physical plant people. (The physical plant, by the way, is 98 percent organized by OTEU, and the number of workers there which would be subtracted from a 51 percent attempt by the rest of us is considerable.) It is all very suspicious, and smacks of an old pattern. A unit which is mostly men workers (more wage conscious, and certainly easier to organize than women) will be unionized, and who will get left out? The secretaries again. One friend of mine on the drive whose commitment is also to working women (not to trade unions per se) doesn't see it that way. She thinks it's quite innocent on the part of the OTEU, and that the motive is not to pluck a chunk, pull out, and leave the rest of us stranded. She thinks OTEU is doing it for publicity — to show the rest of the workers that OTEU hasn't been dead, and that the drive is still very much on. She thinks that with that publicity, it won't be any problem at all for the rest of us to find our own 51 percent, that, on the contrary, things will mushroom and we'll have it in no time. I can't feel comfortable with that. Do secretaries really feel so tied to physical plant that they will rush to the union which got it certified? Won't they rather think — the physical plant people, those men, got another union in. So what else is new.

It's hard for us on the drive to know what to do now. Maybe my friend is right and the OTEU has only innocent publicity motives. But if they don't if they mean only to make motions of working for all of us for a month more until the Board passes the physical plant application and they can snatch up that plum and beat it, we're not going to know it for sure until it's too late to do anything about it. The union, of course, will say that it has no such intentions, but that's no guarantee.

The conclusion a few of us have come up with is: 1) to work even ten times harder from now until the end of March, and get our sister students to help, so that by the deadline the OTEU will have a 51 percent majority of all the campus, whether they really want us or not, and 2) if the Labor Relations Board approves OTEU's application for physical plant before then, leaving us to find our own 51 percent minus their numbers — or, worse, minus the backing of the OTEU, then we're going to raise hell. We don't have to sit back and take it. There is a tradition of independent unions in the B.C. public service industry — B.C. Government Employees' Union, Hospital Employees Union, Municipal and Regional Employees' Union... Why not UBC Employees' Union? We don't have to be totally dependent on the OTEU or CUPE.

But I'm jumping to a conclusion that may be all wrong. To repeat, maybe the OTEU doesn't mean to abandon us. It's worth sticking with the OTEU drive for at least another month to see. Certainly it would be much more difficult to organize an independent union out here. The timid, reluctant, or just plain self-interested are much more likely to buy a huge, well-established outfit than they are something many will see as drummed up by a few indigenous nuts. Besides, the OTEU is 85 percent women, and the OTEU needs to be changed — as is true for every big union. I still think that working there, within the big union, we could maybe change a few things not only for workers out here, but also for all those women beyond the campus who belong.

So the plea for help on the OTEU drive still goes. We've got one month. Come help. And if we give it everything and lose, then we'll see what else can happen.



CAN WOMEN LOVE WOMEN?

originally in "Notes from the Third Year: Women's Liberation"

Men, with or without degrees in psychology, have wanted to believe that women become lesbians, or have lesbian relationships, for reasons to do with men. They were rejected by their fathers. They were unsuccessful with male lovers or with male society at large.

Conversely, men often reveal their egocentricity by insisting that a woman can be converted from lesbianism with ease - all she needs is a good man. Women are also seen as charming children not to be taken seriously. This is an attitude that pervades many areas of life, including discussions of homosexuality.

The current feminist fight against socially imposed sex roles has helped to present new options, not only by discarding old notions of what should be considered "natural", but by offering a definition of relationships based only on human qualities and capabilities. A woman is thus left free to like or dislike, to love or not to love, another person as she herself may choose.

Question. You said you have been friends for awhile before you realized you were attracted to each other. How did you become aware of it?

Answer. I wasn't conscious of it until one evening when we were together and it all just exploded. But looking back, there are always signs, only one represses them.

For example, I remember that one evening - we are in the same feminist group - we were all talking very abstractly about love. All of a sudden even though the group was carrying on the conversation in a theoretical way, we were having a personal conversation. We were starting to tell each other that we liked each other. Of course one of the things we discussed was: What is the thin line between friendship and love?

Or there were times when we were very aware of having "accidentally" touched each other. And Jennie told me later that when we first met she remembered thinking, "Abstractly" again, that if she were ever to get involved with a woman, she'd like to get involved with someone like me.

The mind-blowing thing is that you aren't at all conscious of what you are feeling; rather, you subconsciously and systematically refuse to deal with the implications of what's coming out. You just let it hang there because you're too scared to let it continue and see what it means.

Q. Was your relationship with a woman different than you thought it would be?

A. Generally, no. Most of the things that I had thought intellectually turned out to be true in my experience. One thing, however, was different. Like, I'd really felt that very possibly a relationship with a woman might not be terribly physical. That it would be for the most part warm and affectionate. I think I probably thought this because with men sex is so frequently confused with conquest. Men have applied a symbolic value to sex, in which the penis equals dominance and the vagina equals submission. Since sensuality has no specific sex and is rather a general expression of mutual affection, its value as an expression of power is nil. So sex with a man is usually genitally oriented.

Perhaps I wasn't sure what would happen to my sexual feelings once sex was removed from its conventional context. But one of the things I discovered was that when you really like somebody, there's a perfectly natural connection between affection and love and sensuality and sexuality - that sexuality is a natural part of sensuality.

Q. What would you say is the difference between this relationship and those you have had with men?

A. Well, one of the biggest differences is that for the first time I haven't felt those knots-in-the-stomach undercurrents of trying to figure out what's really happening under what you think is happening.

I think it all boils down to an absence of role-playing; I haven't felt with Jen that we've fallen into that. Both of us are equally strong persons. I mean, you can ask yourself the question: If there were going to be roles, who'd play what? Well, I certainly wouldn't play "the male", and it's just as absurd to imagine her in either one of those roles. So in fact what we have is much more like what one has in friendship, which is equalized. It's a more aboveboard feeling.

Q. What made you fall in love with a woman?

A. Well, that's a hard question. I think maybe it's even a bit misleading the way you phrased it. Because I didn't fall in love with "a woman", I fell in love with Jen - which is not exactly the same thing. A better way to ask the question is: How were you able to overcome the fact that it was a woman? In other words, how did I overcome my heterosexual training and allow my

feelings for her to come out?

Certainly, in my case it would never have happened without the existence of the Woman's Movement. My own awareness of "maleness" and "femaleness" had become acute, and I was really questioning what it meant. You see, I think in a sense I never wanted to be either male or female. Even when I was little and in many ways seemed feminine and "passive" - deep down, I think I never felt at home with the kinds of things women were supposed to be. On the other hand, I didn't particularly want to be a man either, so I didn't develop a male identity. Before I got involved in the Women's Movement I already wanted something new. But the movement brought it out into the open for me.

Another thing the movement helped me do was shed the notion that, however independent my life was, I must have a man; that somehow, no matter what I did with myself, there was something that needed that magic element of male approval. Without confronting this I could never have allowed myself to fall in love with Jennie. In a way, I am like an addict who has kicked the habit.

But most important of all, I like her. In fact I think she's the healthiest person I have ever been involved with. See, I think we were lucky, because it happened spontaneously and unexpectedly from both sides. We didn't do it because we felt compelled to realize our ideological beliefs.

Many feminists are now beginning, at least theoretically, to consider the fact

that there's no reason why one shouldn't love a woman. But I think that a certain kind of experimentation going on now with lesbianism can be really bad. Because even if you do ideologically think that it is fine-well, that's a political position. But being able to love someone is a very personal and private thing as well, and even if you remove political barriers, you are still left finding an individual who particularly suits you.

So I guess I'm saying that I don't think women who are beginning to think about lesbianism should get involved with anyone until they are really attracted to a particular woman. And that includes refusing to be seduced by lesbians who play the male seduction game and tell you, "You don't love women," or "You are oppressing us," if you don't jump into bed with them. It's a terrible thing to try to seduce someone on ideological grounds.

Q. Do you now look at women in a more sexual way?

A. You mean, do I now eye all women as potential bed partners? No. Nor did I ever see men in that way. As a matter of fact, I've never found myself being attracted to a man just because, for example, he had a good physique. I had a sexual relationship with whatever boyfriend I had, but I related to most other men pretty asexually. It's no different with women.

But there's a real question here: What is the source, the impetus, for one's

DRAWING BY
PERLE FELDMAN



SWEET GOLDEN GIRL
 REMOVE YOUR COLLAR
 SLAVE-DOG FITTING
 AND LOOSE YOUR TERROR GRASP
 FOR FINGERS FREE

WATCH PLASTIC SKIN OF NATIONS
 MELTING ROUND YOU
 AS SISTERS HANDS
 STRETCH NAKED
 SEA TO SEA.

-MAUREEN

sexuality? Is it affection and love, or is it essentially conquest in bed? If it's sex as conquest, then the question you just asked is relevant, for adding the category of women to those you sleep with would mean that every woman who's attractive enough to be a prize worth conquering, of course, could arouse one's sexuality. But if the sexual source lies in affection and love, then the question becomes absurd. For one obviously does not immediately fall in love with every woman one meets simply because one is able to sleep with women.

Also, something that really turns me off about this whole business of viewing women as potential bedmates is the implied possessiveness of it. It has taken me this long just to figure out how men are treating women sexually; now when I see some lesbians doing the same kinds of things, I'm supposed to have instant amnesia in the name of sisterhood.

Q. Now that you've gotten involved with a woman, what is your attitude toward gay and lesbian groups?

A. There is a problem for me in focusing on sexual choice, as the Gay Movement does. Sleeping with another woman is not necessarily a healthy thing by itself. It does not mean or prove, for that matter, that you therefore love women. It doesn't mean that you have avoided bad "male" or "female" behaviour. It doesn't guarantee you anything. If you think about it, it can be the same game with new partners: Male roles are learned, not genetic; women can ape them too. And the feminine role can comfortably be carried into lesbianism, except now instead of a woman being passive with a man, she's passive with another woman. Which is all very familiar and is all going nowhere.

I guess to me, at this point in my life, feminism naturally incorporates the possibility of sleeping with and loving women; but it is only one of many elements in what I define as radical feminism—that is, the elimination of sex roles. The main point of feminism is still to understand that we as women are a political group living on the margins of a male society, that sex roles define our inferior "place" for us, and that radical feminism means the ultimate destruction of that role system. Within that perspective, sleeping with and loving women is only one possibility, and becomes a purely personal solution to living within a sexist society—unless it is seen in the larger light of destroying sex roles altogether.

The confusing of sexual partners with sexual roles has also led to a really bizarre situation in which some lesbians insist that you aren't really a radical feminist if you are not in bed with a woman. Which is wrong politically and outrageous personally.

We were sitting in a group talking about Women's Week and I was wondering, "Why a day on sexuality? What is to be done with that?" Then Ann asked, "Have you got any idea for the day on sexuality?" My first response was, "Pornography. We could have a showing of Danish pornography in the art gallery. Then maybe I could get hold of some dirty movies." And we all laughed. But there was an edge to our laughter that sounded a bit embarrassed.

Why a day on sexuality?

Now that I think about it, "Pornography" was a pretty flippant reply, defensive even, like I couldn't be straight about sexuality. So, that defensiveness, and the edgy laughter is precisely the reason to have a day on sexuality. For, through that kind of laughter, I faintly hear the same snickering and giggling that I heard and felt as a kid, when we talked about "tits" and "dinks" and "doing it". I hear the same kind of snickering and giggling, though more sophisticated, on TV talk-shows, in toothpaste ads, walking down the street getting a wolf-whistle or a "Hey, chickie". It's the kind of nervous laughter that goes a long way back, and exists all around in half-acknowledged daily incidents. And it's saying, "Hey, I made it through again. The sky didn't fall on my head when I broke the taboo." It

has a lot of power, this sexual taboo. It still exists, and we all feel the pressure of it in sexual suggestions that surround us all the time, pervading all sorts of relationships, often making them awkward.

But it is mostly suggestions, nothing said explicitly.

In relationships, sexual power and attraction is usually only implied. That's hard to deal with. It takes a lot of straight talking to get to some real, grasped explicitness about sexuality — like what I feel about you, you feel about me, we feel about them. Yet even sexual words are charged with taboo power, and often with anger and hostility. How can we talk about sex, loving, that power of touch, when words like "fuck" are so misused?

What is to be done with that?

Women, and men, will never be free until sexuality is taken out of the puritanical, locked up state it's in and made open, able to be talked about freely. If you believe, like I believe that sexual openness is intricately connected to power relationships and thence to the whole political-economic system, then this society has a great vested interest in keeping sexuality incommunicado, in making relationships awkward, in relegating awareness of sexual power to a bit of wit on toilet walls and apprehensive snickers at genitals.

But if you believe, like I do, that a tremendous energy is rooted in sexuality, then hopefully, by opening up areas for sexual expression, without locked-in, puritanical up-tightness, that energy will be free to use. Essentially, by making a place for fears and fantasies and needs to be brought out into the open, an anxious importance will be taken off sexuality, and we can get on with whatever it is we do.

And that's why a day on sexuality. To start to open things up a bit.

But what's to be done with it? Pornography obviously is not a good choice, being an expression of some fantasy that gets its fancy tickled by domination and subjugation. It's a big source of snickering. What did come up was the idea of taking graffiti out of the local washrooms and putting it out in the open. This could be a real source of communication between men and women, like saying, "Here are my real feelings about sex and people and whatnot that I keep locked up in the can." The rest of the day, with Shelagh Day, and Dianna Moore, and Jane Rule, talking from personal voices, exploring areas of sexuality, with imagination, I feel to be a positive way of opening up the field. For this is where the openness is beginning, with women speaking from themselves, finding new ways of knowing. And that's what the day on sexuality's about.

WHY A DAY ON SEXUALITY?

BY FRAN ISAACS



This is a translation of a manifesto about building a mass movement of women in Quebec, by a small group of women affiliated with the Front de Liberation des femmes Québécoises (FLF) in Montreal.

We women have never been, and are not now, very numerous in the various revolutionary groups in Quebec. This appears to surprise no one, not even the women who happen to be in these groups. It seems to go without saying: women are forever the absent ones. We are accustomed to seeing them only in their proper place — that is to say, in the kitchen. Certain people, both men and women, have directed attention to this question, but their answers, when they have found any, never resulted in a program of action. Anyway, the problem is quickly solved: there are so many other things for revolutionaries to do besides worry about women... After the victory, then we'll see.

And this is how, with short "radical" phrases, half the people are excluded from the struggle. Piff! It is a little tragic to see radicals succumb to the force of prejudices and myths which came out of the old society, the society which devours men, women, and children, the society which the radicals want, justly, to destroy. But it is still more tragic for us, the women who remain the victims of these myths.

Fortunately, there are more and more women who are quite fed-up with being victims, with being "good" women, with being poor, weak women. For some time, these women have been doing a bit of thinking. They are doing so much thinking now, that a good number of people are getting scared — even the radical men who often, to hide their fear and discomfort, employ laughter as a tactic (which in itself is not always a safe reaction). Thinking is often the first stage in revolution. And it's exactly that — a revolution — that we want. A revolution which will take us out of our subjection, our dependence. Of such a revolution, no one in Quebec has ever spoken. In the programs and manifestos, and in daily practice, we are ignored, or kept in the traditional feminine roles, including that of sexual

object. And the worst of it is that often we tend to justify this state of affairs, instead of changing it. We use the most irrational arguments, forgetting all about historical materialism, dialectics, and good revolutionary principles.

It becomes clear for us, as women, that we must make a revolution within the revolution, if we want things to change. What is at stake is not only our liberation, but also the liberation of all our people, and of all the peoples of the world.

Why are there so few women in our political groups? The majority of women in Quebec are housewives. As housewives, they work, for love or out of self-interest, about eighty hours a week, with never a minute to themselves because of their husbands, children, the meals, the laundry, errands, etc. This means they have little time to think and still less for doing other things, such as militating in a political movement.

housewives . . .

Moreover, being a housewife means being isolated and alone. One woman in each kitchen. Many women, each apart from all the others. Unconscious of their oppression, their problems, and with no perspective on the means to take to get out of their situation. "It's always been this way, so it will always stay this way."

Finally, being a housewife means being dependent on a man for your keep. It means having a relationship with him which is more or less one of submission. It means asking his opinion for the smallest difficulty, and his permission for anything that actually deviates from the ordinary (e.g., becoming involved in a political movement).

Women are locked up for sixteen hours out of twenty-four, isolated without any possibility of developing a collective consciousness, and for the most part subjugated. So we need not be amazed at the non-participation of women in revolutionary movements.

However, whether these facts are understood or not, no one has done anything to alter the situation. First of all, it hasn't seemed necessary, not even to the radical women who are well-schooled in male ideology, to formulate a theory of women's oppression.

This is to say that revolutionary propaganda is addressed exclusively to men, their women being included by implication. Nothing which might directly touch on women. If one wants women to participate in the struggle, it means being prepared to work so that women, right now, can free themselves from servitude and the fulltime job of rearing children. Radicals have always had, and still have, the time to go out and get stoned on weekends, but not the time to create day nurseries, to organize domestic brigades, without which women cannot be expected to make the revolution.

Consciously or unconsciously for radicals, women's liberation is unimportant, and can be put off till later. Certain people even say that it must occur after the real work (i.e. work with men). Let's concentrate on the men, and the women will follow. Well, they will not follow, just as they have never really followed... because they have not got any possibility of following, and because they will desire to less and less. At the extreme, they will try to prevent the participation of their men. It's the logic of things.

With housewives excluded by their "natural passivity", only relatively liberated petit bourgeois women have ever been able to pretend to be involved in the movement for an independent Quebec. The petit bourgeois women, mostly students, were above all rebels. We had deserted the sphere delineated for us by our families, and were leading an individual, confused, and sometimes heroic struggle to free ourselves as women. Some of us had entered radical politics specifically because we had had enough of woman's place, and felt that it was necessary to make a radical change in society before women could be liberated. Single, or married with no children, or with only one child, we had more time, more opportunity to join the struggle. This we did honestly, and with as much determination as the men.

disenchantment

For many it brought disenchantment. It was men who led the movements, who were the thinkers, the organizers, the martyrs. There wasn't much room for us, and still less in the area of leadership. But we were used to this

Intern

situation, and said nothing, hoping that they would recognize our value (!!) if we worked hard. We did work hard. We typed their tracts, painted their placards, listened to their speeches, marched in their demonstrations, shouted their slogans: "Power to the workers" (and to working class women!). Some of us, the least fortunate, worked entirely so that they could militate more actively. Often we supported them, prepared their meals, washed their clothes, cleaned their houses, took care of their children. We cuddled them, loved them. We understood them. And they made love to us... when we were pretty. When we weren't, they went elsewhere to fuck a nice body, in whose arms there was no question of politics. For them, too, we were all in pieces: a head, a body, but never both at the same time.

And all this seemed fine and normal to us. From time to time, we would rebel; frequently we did it badly, without going all the way. Some of us abandoned the movement, others participated without much enthusiasm, and came to reinforce, in men's eyes, the ideology of our passivity and incapacity, indeed of our uselessness. A few of us were able to break down the barriers and rise to positions of leadership. Afterwards, these women were contemptuous of the other women, whose main occupation was to make themselves loved and appreciated by the oppressor.

Because most male radicals are our oppressors, it took time before we pronounced this word. It took months of dissatisfaction, psychological misery, and great exasperation at the domineering, arrogant, or paternalistic attitudes with which we had to live daily. We needed to touch the limits of powerlessness before our rage was great enough for us to say what we were, and what we wanted.

From then on, a few women started to meet to talk about women. And this was the grand beginning. Under the thrust of feminist movements all over the world (and those in France and the U.S. in particular), the Quebec women's movement was created, with the intention of working on our own real and specific oppression. At first it was consciousness groups, where we began to elaborate a theory of our oppression and our struggle, based on women's experience. It was a confused theory in the beginning, so great and complex was our oppression, and apparently so much in contradiction with Marxist systems of analysis. The theory gradually became more precise, and in the context of it we found we could speak more loudly.

As the theory evolved, it became necessary to think in terms of the organizational problems which the question of female separatism posed. Often the discussions which this question raised unfolded in the most total ignorance, in the midst of a kind of arrogance on the one hand, and one the other a very great exasperation. We have to admit that these discussions were sterile. No one convinced anyone else. So finally, it was not a question of convincing anybody. There were things to do.

National Women's Day

We mean, from now on, to struggle for our demands, making sure that in the process, all women feel involved in the national and social liberation movement, because their interests lie within it. We want to organize ourselves so that after the victory we will be in a position to go on fighting to make our liberation a reality.

Even today, some men tell us that we are going in the wrong direction, and that our liberation will come when we take up arms and fight alongside of them. It's still necessary to get their permission before we arm ourselves. Up until now, we've cleaned their guns. But we know too well what their words promise for the future. One does not ask for freedom, one takes it. It is for the cause of freedom that we intend to organize a women's movement. When the time comes to arm ourselves, we will march with the men of course. Many of us will march. We will be so many, and so well organized, that we will be in a position to set down a few conditions.

building the movement...

Now we are left to create this movement. Theorizing is easy, but the building of a mass-based women's movement is a lot more difficult, arising out of a long process which has already begun, though it has not yet succeeded. Conceived originally as a national organization, the Front de Liberation des Femmes Quebecoises (FLF) has come to be divided into separate collectives without any precise link between them, struggling on specific problems, like abortion and day care. Therefore, all women can claim to be members of the FLF if they support national liberation and women's liberation. This set-up in itself does not favor the dawning of a strong women's movement with its own ideology, concerted strategy, and struggle tactics. Disorganization has never led anywhere.

However, it seems that militant women are still afraid. It was fear that led to their participation in those often authoritarian groups based on competitive male leadership, which reproduced the structure of our oppression in patriarchal capitalist society. From this experience, women tended to confuse organization with Bolshevism, leadership with domination, common objectives and priorities with dogmatism. But the situation of Quebec and of women in Quebec is not rosy enough to warrant our wasting time in being afraid of being afraid. Since October 1970, the left has had a hard time getting back on its feet. C.A.P. St. Jacques and the FLF now maintain a semblance of cohesion. We must stop just surviving. We must create. We must organize the struggle so that it can be victorious. And we must organize on the basis of and understanding of the actual conditions.

The FLF must be a strong movement. This is of primary importance, both for the liberation of women and for national liberation. We must base our action on this dual purpose. This means that the women of the FLF have very precise tasks to accomplish.

From the standpoint of theoretical work, we must ceaselessly pursue our research, and support our position with statistics, testimonies, and concrete facts. We must take our oppression in its totality, understand it, explain it, expose it. Through theoretical work of this kind, we will be able to lay a true basis for a women's organization. But it is essential to begin with what is already known, and to formulate the priorities through struggle, and to combat systematically all the forms of our oppression.

Unfortunately, to date, nothing has been very systematic. Attempts to establish daycare centres, an abortion collective, a few guerrilla actions sustained by nothing, Newspaper projects. Nothing solid, never any follow-up. No progression. We mark time, acting according to the feelings and whims of the moment. We waste our energy working on ten things at once. We don't know where to start.

The first thing to do is to restructure the movement, define its objectives, and establish priorities in action, and then harness ourselves to the task.

The cell-based structure can be maintained, but it should serve our specific needs. By creating cells which really answer the needs of women, the movement could expand rapidly on the condition that the radical women militate for real, important objectives.

The format could be as follows: there could be a cell for recruitment and education, an information cell, a day care cell, an abortion cell, a sexual liberation cell, a domestic brigades cell, a cultural cell, a crisis-services cell, a research cell...

[There follows a description of possible activities of each cell, omitted because of shortage of space]

Evidently, we cannot do all that has been suggested above. But we must organize ourselves so that it becomes possible for us to start, using two or three cells as a base (in particular those working on recruitment, information, and day care). Furthermore, the collectives need to have a certain cohesion and to function in a coordinated way. It might be advisable to have a coordinating committee, whose task would be, precisely, to see that energy is not wasted. It would be composed of one or two representatives from each cell, not necessarily always the same women. The committee could publish an internal newsletter to join the various cells, and could organize a general meeting of all women once a month.

In the end, the form of the organization doesn't matter. What is essential is that one should exist. It is for the women to choose: create an organization which will gather the largest possible number of women to support the objectives of national liberation and women's liberation, an organization which would be a strong force in the struggle we are carrying on, — or vegetate pitifully in incoherence, confusion, and "action-freakism", only to be crushed in the next wave of repression. We will neither desire, nor provoke, such a repression, but we will be its victims.



Angela's Free

Angela Davis is free — free on bail of \$102,000. Through an intense public campaign to insure constitutional and human rights, the Supreme Court of California decreed that capital punishment was cruel and unusual punishment, and a violation of human rights under the Constitution. Therefore, all prisoners in California being held for capital crimes were then eligible for bail, including Angela; she is no longer in jail.

But hundreds and thousands of people are still incarcerated unjustly — poor people, black people, Indians, women. These are people who don't have money to buy their way out or hire lawyers or have an "interesting" or "significant" enough case to be taken up as a political cause.

The Free Angela campaign has grappled continuously with the problems of individualism and martyrdom, and as much as possible, discussed her case in the context of the thousands of injustices within the legal system. Angela has said that justice is only achieved, that freedom is only achieved, when it is an unconditional right involving all people, neglecting not even one.

The struggle is to create a society where this is a reality.

The Medieval Inn, in Vancouver's swinging gastown, is one of those places where women are on the menu (specifically a photo of the head and mostly exposed chest of a "wench"). The Inn is famous for its banquets, where people are supposed to get roaring drunk and enjoy themselves—including pinching and grabbing the "wenches".

Serving the banquets, particularly, is really hard work. And the wenches

used to get \$4 an hour plus tips. In January, the management fired most of the waitresses, and cut wages in half. This is the story of the firings, and the attempts of the women to gain justice through appealing to the Department of Labor.

The Working Women's Association is urging everyone to boycott the Medieval Inn. We hope to spread the story of what happened there through picket lines, leaflets, articles, etc.

Many of us are afraid to join a union, or stand up for our rights, because we might lose our jobs. The experience at the Inn shows that our jobs are never secure unless we do organize.

We hope to accomplish two things with the boycott: First, to get the news to other working women; Second, to show the owners of the Inn that they can't get away with this any longer.

Join us. We will be picketing every Friday from 6-8 at the Inn.

Monday, Jan. 26

Clarke Jackson, manager, was asked to resign and John Jones, principal owner of Medieval Inns, told head wench present at work that the Inn was to close that same afternoon for renovations, would reopen Friday the 28th, and to call other staff members to inform them of this and ask them all to report for work Friday as usual. At this time no mention was made of the fact that the manager was no longer, (this information had been received through another source) or any other indication given that there were any changes that had taken or would be taking place—simply a closure for renovations.

Tuesday, Jan. 27

The next day, Tuesday, we learned that many girls who had previously applied for work at the Inn had received phone calls requesting them to appear for an interview on the following day. The reason given was that the Inn was hiring twenty new girls—a number sufficient for a substantial, if not full, staff. The head wench whose responsibility it was to arrange such interviews was at no time informed or consulted about this by anyone from the Medieval Inn.

Wednesday, Jan. 28

On receipt of this information (and slight panic among the female staff of the Inn) a meeting was called for Wednesday morning at which time well over 51 percent of the Medieval Inn staff joined the Hotel and Restaurant union Local 28 in an abortive attempt to save their jobs. On this same afternoon one of the girls was called by the "coat-check girl" and told that her services were no longer required. All of the other girls returned to work over the weekend as scheduled.

Friday, Jan. 30

When the employees showed up for work on Friday, each of these girls were relieved of their uniforms and

told they would be contacted in the future which, of course, they were not. This task was performed co-operatively by John Jones and Robin Hughes, owners of the Inn, who had never even met many of these girls they were now dismissing. Among the girls fired were also a number who had been working at the Inn since its opening one year ago February 1st. It should also be added at this time that not all of the girls on staff were fired. Out of a staff of twenty-two girls there still remain about five or six who were not let go for various reasons.

But why?

Before the turnover at the Inn the wages for working a banquet were \$4 per hour plus gratuities. It is now \$2 an hour and no gratuities. The new management also made an attempt to ban anyone wearing blue jeans and also any men with long hair.

It is felt by a great number of women from the Inn that the lowering of wages and other such new policies were a major contributing factor towards this mass dismissal. It can be said that the owners fired those of us that they know well because they could safely believe that we would not have agreed to any of these new terms or conditions. But what of those women whom they had never before met? For what reason could these women possibly be dismissed?

On with the battle. Some of us signed formal complaints at the Dept. of Labor to the effect that we had not been paid for the two hours "as stated in the wage act" for our appearance at work on Friday the 28th (the day we were dismissed). None of us (with the exception of the one girl previously mentioned) had been informed of our dismissal until our return to work on the weekend. These complaints were dealt with by the district representative from the Dept. of Labor.

The Dept. of Labor

The Dept. of Labor representative called a meeting between John Jones, Robin Hughes, and the women who signed complaints to determine who was telling the truth in this matter as John Jones had told him that we had been dismissed Monday the 24th

(therefore making all union cards invalid). During my discussion with this gentleman prior to the meeting he referred to what I said as "your allegations" and what John Jones said as "the statement I received from Mr. Jones." At this time he told me that John had said he fired me on Monday and told me that I was to inform the other girls of their dismissal as well.

I pointed out to this gentleman that if I had been fired on Monday that therefore would relieve me of any further duties including dismissal of other staff. Unfortunately, the people from the Dept. of Labor seem to lack any power to reason as this point meant nothing to them. So a meeting is set up.

Due to the obvious bias of the Dept. of Labor we felt it best to bring legal counsel to this meeting which apparently freaked everyone out and the meeting was post-poned, apparently so the other side could regroup themselves for a more difficult battle. But unfortunately, the power structure won once more as the meeting never happened. The following week I received another telephone call from our friend from the Dept. of Labor who informed me that he had no reason to believe that we were telling the truth and didn't feel a meeting would alter his opinion in the matter. He did say however that if all of the women who were dismissed would sign formal complaints he would "consider" changing his mind. He was not willing to consider the word of three women against that of John Jones but he would possibly consider that of fifteen women against J.J.

As I am sure the Dept. of Labor expected, it proved a difficult task to reach these women and those we did contact felt it was pointless to carry on. They had already lost the one important factor—their jobs. Those of us who feel strongly about the issue are suing for illegal dismissal—in hopes that perhaps Mr. Jones and Mr. Hughes will hesitate before again undertaking to exert their power on working people for their own personal gain. Because there are so many people of this nature in positions of authority, all working people should be aware that unless they demand some sort of job security, their position is in constant jeopardy. Do something now—before the need arises—and it is possibly too late. P.S.: As far as our application for certification of the union: It must also be processed by the Dept. of Labor who send the same district representative to check the payroll and he, of course, has already decided that we were dismissed two days before signing cards. Since he considers we were no longer employees when we joined the union, the application is considered invalid.

SMITTY'S DRAGS

ITS FEET

After a four month union struggle, Smitty's Pancake House workers are ready to sign a first contract agreement with the management. The final agreement contains an average pay increase of thirty cents an hour, overtime rates, a health and welfare clause, a union security clause, and several stipulations concerning working conditions (lunch breaks, janitor service, etc.).

It is unfortunate, though not unusual, that the waitresses received the worst conditions under the contract. They received the poorest wage increase, and several stipulations they demanded (for example they asked for a laundry clause concerning their uniforms) were totally rejected. It was the women at Smitty's Pancake House who originally began organizing at the shop and who in the end kept the workers together in the strike vote.



The union leadership, however, pushed the workers to accept the contract, saying "this is better than nothing" and "further negotiations could bring a worse contract." The workers voted to approve the contract.

The contract successfully meets several needs of the individual but the next struggle must be for much higher stakes. The next issue must meet management on a much higher level: job control. It is the workers who receive the customer's abuse for rotten food, poorly organized service, and exorbitant prices. It is time the workers had a say in what's going on behind those closed office doors.

AS WE GO TO PRESS the contract still has not been signed, though it has been ready for signing for three weeks. The owner of Smitty's is avoiding the union representatives, and apparently avoiding signing the contract. He is also talking of moving the restaurant at a new location, which might mean that he is attempting to slip out from under the union agreement. The struggle at Smitty's may not be over... Watch the Pedestal for further developments.



No room at the Inn

We, the waitresses...

Pizza Patio Management Limited

Dear sirs:

We, the waitresses at the Pizza Patio on Denman Street, write this letter of complaint regarding the treatment of waitresses by the Pizza Patio management. Our principal concern is over wages.

The detailed explanations following should not have been necessary; it seems obvious that \$1.50 per hour is insufficient wage to live on, and we definitely work hard enough to expect a decent living in return for our labor. The wages which Pizza Patio pays would work out to a total of \$2880 yearly. If we add tips of about \$3.50 daily, our gross earnings would be \$3720. This is within the poverty level.

3) Unsatisfactory break periods, but automatic deduction from pay. **THIS IS ILLEGAL AND WE EXPECT THE DEDUCTIONS TO CEASE IMMEDIATELY.**



4) Night shift hours deserve compensation for upsetting normal life.

5) Getting off work at 4 a.m. . . . Waitresses cannot afford to own cars or travel by taxi each night. Cooks and managers are helpful but then waitresses must wait an extra hour for a ride home. Some cooks do not have cars. Getting waitresses home safely should not be the responsibility of equally underpaid cooks and managers. We are not asking Pizza Patio to take parental care of the waitresses; we ask only that it show some reasonable concern for the staff. The restaurant profits by staying open very late, but overhead costs naturally increase also. It is only reasonable that transportation additions to staff wages be an expected part of the overhead.



A company cannot expect to have any continuity of staff if the employees cannot live on the wages paid.

We suggest that the expense of better wages would be offset by the increased productivity of Pizza Patio staff. Think of the man hours wasted in training new staff every few weeks, and the poor impression on the public. Experienced waitresses would be able to work much more efficiently, but Pizza Patio cannot keep waitresses long enough (because of wages) to allow them to work efficiently.



6) Comments in anticipation of comparison between Pizza Patio waitressing and clerical jobs which often pay poorly to start:
 —very few clerical jobs pay only \$1.50 per hour and none pay less
 —clerical work involves regular hours and breaks
 —waitressing is hard labor
 —most jobs offer medical insurance plans etc.
 —clerical positions offer scheduled increases in salary



We resent that Pizza Patio is asking us to improve service and increase sales, when Pizza Patio has not been willing to pay us decently. Efforts to increase productivity are understandable.

But we cannot have enthusiasm or interest in a job which forces us to live in virtual poverty.

Some aspects of our job, for which we should be paid more than the minimum wage, are listed below.

- 1) Physically tiring work.
- 2) Responsibility for cash, but not enough time to handle it carefully enough while also serving customers, clearing tables, washing dishes, etc. Shortages are deducted.

CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The Working Women's Association is a group of women who have gotten together to discuss working women's problems and to do support work for women who are currently involved in struggles at their work places.

March 8th, which is International Women's Day, commemorates the militant activity of women in industry in the early 1900s. Since 1910 this day has been traditionally recognized as an international working class holiday in honor of women's struggles.

The Working Women's Association

is planning a celebration of this day to take place at the Women's Centre, 511 Carrall Street, at 7:30 pm. There will be music, coffee, and a chance to rap with other working women. We have also invited MADELEINE PARENT, the secretary-treasurer of the Canadian Textile and Chemical Union, to talk with us about the recent strike of the TexPak workers in Brantford, Ontario. Madeleine Parent played a significant role in organizing the workers and in publicizing the specific problems of the women workers.

Come and bring your friends for a fine celebration.

The Working Women's Association now has several projects underway — with a newfound enthusiasm and energy. Now is a good time to get involved.

EVERY WEDNESDAY
 From 6-8 the Coordinating Committee business meetings are held at the Women's Centre. Everyone is welcome.

EVERY FRIDAY
 From 6-8, we will all be picketing the Medieval Inn.

WED. MARCH 22
 Is the General Meeting at the Library, Rm. 307, 3rd floor, 7:00 pm. To talk about the booklets we're working on, and about all the stuff that's happening.

SAT. MARCH 11
 Drop in for an informal discussion, about 2 pm, at Elizabeth Gowland's, 2620 Hemlock, Apt. 5.

SAT. MARCH 25 and APRIL 8
 Similar informal discussions at Evelyn Berry's, 1047 Pacific.

WAITRESSES
 Waitresses are starting to organize — witness articles this issue from Pizza Patio, Smitty's, and Medieval Inn. Waitresses in the WWA are thinking of forming an action group of waitresses specifically. If you are interested, call Elizabeth, 732-8471.

BOOKLETS
 There is so little literature by, for and about working women that we've decided to write, print and circulate some ourselves. If you would like to help, call us at the Women's Centre, 684-0523, or come to a meeting.

SANDRINGHAM
 We need HELP circulating the petition. See below.

SANDRINGHAM'S

Sandringham Private Hospital workers are entering a new phase in their dispute with the owners for a first contract. The Labor Relations Board, in a statement on February 22, declared that the Hospital was not bargaining collectively with CUPE (Canadian Union of Public Employees) who have been attempting, for the last 16 months, to bargain for the striking women.

The latest news is that Sandringham owner Russel Shepherd, is appealing the Labor Relations Board decision.

Aiding him in his fight against the union is Labor Minister Chabot, who has expressed doubts about the validity of the Labor Relations Board ruling. Chabot, who has hardly distinguished himself as champion of workers' rights since his appointment to the cabinet last summer, feels that collective bargaining may indeed have taken place. He bases his statement on an application CUPE once made for a mediation officer. Such an application, according to Chabot, implies that at least 10 days of negotiations have taken place. He does not accept the fact that the company has never sat at the bargaining table. Nor does he interpret the request for a mediator as a last



ditch effort to bring about some kind of action on the matter.

The petition campaign, in support of the strikers, is continuing with a special appeal going out to union members. But it is also important to get support, and signatures on the petition, from women throughout the community. If you could circulate the petition on your campus, in your neighborhood, or in community groups, call the Women's Centre, 684-0523, or drop in between 12 and 5.

Yours sincerely,

(signed by all the waitresses involved.)



Pam Says

No. 211

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It isn't bad enough to have to work in an office, but they give you stuff like this to read besides...

the feminine female

1.

Whatever you forget today — don't forget to be feminine. Whatever you do, between now and closing time, do it like a woman. Whatever you overlook — don't overlook your sex. And in case you forgot: a woman is a graceful, charming, understanding human being — even in the office...

2.

Women are by nature sensitive, sympathetic, warm-blooded creatures. It is part of their makeup to want to protect, pacify and placate. Don't stifle these instincts in yourself. Being businesslike doesn't mean being cold, clipped and calculating. Be sensitive to the moods of your boss and fellow employees.

3.

Could you rise to the occasion if you're asked to handle an angry customer? Womanly sympathy packs more wallop than a male apology. Take his complaint very seriously, listen to what he has said, try to make an intelligent comment or suggestion — above all, show you're *concerned*, using your female sensitivity and understanding. Sympathetic *listening* may turn that complaint into new business!

4.

Personnel problems can be anticipated by a perceptive secretary. Growing friction between staff members may go unnoticed by your boss — and explode unpleasantly before he's even aware of it. If you see trouble coming, you may be able to help smooth it over yourself. If it's too hot for you to handle, the sooner your boss is aware of it, the better.

5.

Oh, and be forgiving. In these days when everyone stands on his rights, demands satisfaction, resents interference, there's such a need for tolerance and forbearance. When your boss is tired, moody, snappish — don't take his brusque remarks personally. Would your temper stay sweet if you had his decisions to make, his responsibilities to bear? Forget, forgive.

6.

When you enter the office, leave pettiness behind. Take with you your womanly tact, sympathy and understanding.

Make it your concern to help oil the wheels of the office operations, to keep it in smooth running order. Women in America have won emancipation — but have we lost the old-fashioned virtues of gentleness and patience? Remember how King Lear spoke of his beloved daughter Cordelia after her death — "Her voice was ever soft, gentle, and low — an excellent thing in woman." It's a nice way to be remembered.



I WASN'T TO NO

I AIN'T NO SPEAKER, BUT Jean told me to go speak to the nurses because there were students and SWACC people going, but no ordinary people. I'm not ordinary, I protested. No, Maggie agreed, but you do have this ability to swoop down from the lofty heights and put your finger squarely on the pulse of the masses. (We had drunk a lot.) Maggie insisted she hadn't plagiarized the sentence from anywhere and that she'd only just made it up that instant and that I could use it. But I still wasn't going to talk to no nurses. I hate nurses, I told Jean. What about Mary Stolk, you just spent an hour telling us how much you liked Mary Stolk, and Mary is a nurse. She is *not*, she's an *ex-nurse*, and *ex-nurses* are good people but there's no way I'm going to speak to 30 nurses. Why don't you think of them as 30 potential *ex-nurses*?

So there I was, smelling of gin, at BCIT. The reason I smelled of gin was because there wasn't any rye to drink. There was to be two sessions with two different groups. The nurses are taking a course called something like the community and health care or health care in the community or nursing in a changing world or some such thing. I had worked for 3 days and hadn't enough money to buy rye, let alone pay my rent and I'd had a bad time in general, and was really strung out. Even in my normal state, I am no speaker.

Way before Women's Liberation and communes, I used to live in women's communes and spent some of the happiest days of my life in them. To be perfectly accurate, the only happy days of my life were while I was living in nurses' residences, but that didn't have completely to do with the style of life. We were doing this thing, see, where we were caring for the community's health needs, and we were a *team*, see, involved in healing, and the way I was in them long gone days when I was a lab technician working in hospitals and living in nurses' residences, was that my mind boggled every payday that society should not only let me do this kind of work, but *pay* me too. Boy, that was a long time ago. I was a first-class sucker and I was told and I believed that hospitals were places of healing; that doctors were the head of the health team, and the rest of us should be grateful to spend our life in servitude to these men who were selfless and strong. Boy, that was a long time ago. Later, the scales fell from my eyes and I began to wonder why we never hardly cured anyone, and recently I saw "The Hospital" which is what it was like, and everybody should go see the movie. And since that's what it's like, it's really strange and pathetic and contemptible for nurses to still go around and talk about healing, for chrissake, and to say doctors deserve the highest professional income in Canada because they work so hard. I hate nurses.

Back in the class there were these 20 or so potential *ex-nurses* and they were

about to be harangued by me and SWACC and two women from the Women's Place. The Women's Place women were really fine women but they were wearing jeans with patches on them and like that, and the nurses were in dresses and panty-hose and like that. It isn't that clothes are so important but that jeans with patches on them usually means that people talk funny. They use words like sensitivity, support, awareness, consciousness and a whole host of others which undoubtedly mean something to them, but are sometimes as hard to decipher as an entirely new language. The nurses didn't seem like they could decipher them, and while it's important that nurses become aware that there is a whole new culture growing up around them, the culture of the youthful unemployed, or maybe it's a new class, anyhow, they sure talk funny, that part of it didn't seem to lead to anything.

The nurses liked the SWACC lady mostly because she talked a common language, but I didn't (like her). She talked about *prominent* people all the time, and about how she'd been talking to them politicians in Victoria, and not only that, she was telling the nurses that this kind of game was useful, for some purpose or other. No kidding. She said we should elect a whole bunch of women politicians and the image of Pat Jordan multiplied by 100 depressed me unutterably and she said women should be senior executives and be appointed to the Senate. I didn't argue with her very much in the class, as it seemed to me the nurses were having enough trouble without being subjected to a factional dispute. I did, however, keep making comments which Tom thought were irrelevant and he said if he had asked me to come there to explain to the nurses why Zero Population was anti-nurses, maybe I'd then have talked about Women's Liberation. I would have struggled with him about the narrowness of his definition of women's liberation, but he'd have undoubtedly considered that to be a digression also.

It's all kind of a gas. There's SWACC and the Women's Place holding forth and me making comments like all doctors are crazy and free clinics don't work, and the nurses are sitting around quiet bewildered.

We had a coffee break, which caused me to be less strung out and so I said to the nurses that it had been brought to my attention (it had) that in spite of the class background of doctors, in spite of their training, in spite of the pressure of other doctors, in spite of capitalism, there was still one or two who were human beings, it just happened I'd never met them. Then I told the nurses I was going to tell them about the Working Women's Association which was a lie because I know hardly anything about the WWA. What I did tell them was what I thought the WWA should be doing, albeit presenting it as if that's what they were doing. The Working Women's Association, I said,

GONNA TALK NURSES

did not think it worthwhile to make room at the top for women because there wasn't that much room at the top for anyone and if a few women get to be senators and senior executives, that still leaves the rest of us sweeping, typing, waitressing and the like. The WWA therefore, didn't even talk much about equal pay because getting equal pay for men and women wouldn't do anything for most women's jobs which men didn't do. The answer, I said, was to organize women in predominantly women's jobs so that they could get good pay for women's jobs, instead of concentrating, like SWACC, on getting women out of those jobs. It's a matter of priorities, I told them, and changing laws didn't change anything else hardly ever. I didn't say it all that coherently, you understand, being a rotten speaker and one who frequently says . . .

. . . hm . . . for about 5 minutes, and I often forget in the middle of a sentence how I was going to finish it, and besides that I felt obliged to digress into all sorts of related fields like cab-driving, overpopulation and the abortion campaign. Then I said that there was serious problems about organizing women into already existing unions and I said for one example of a bad union take the RNABC [Registered Nurses' Association of B.C.] who protects the employers against its members and does fuck-all else. Turned out the only man in the class was also the vice-president of the RNABC and he took umbrage with this statement as he had taken umbrage with every statement I'd made. (I drank coffee, not being too fond of umbrage after gin.) He said the RNABC was a good union and the trouble was that nobody came to the meetings. I said it was a lousy rotten union and I went out on a limb by saying that there had never been a case in recorded history of the RNABC protecting a member which shows you why gin and cab-driving don't mix. The man said there was so, I said there was not, but after saying that about 20 times, I thought that was the wrong way to argue and I had better shut up. As soon as I did, several women began haranguing the guy and giving him examples of nurses being fired and the RNABC not giving a damn. One of the examples involved a nurse who thought a particular situation was dangerous to patients so she complained, and was fired, and the RNABC wouldn't even investigate because they thought she'd been fired for "just cause". The man said nurses didn't have the right to disagree with hospital policy and that if they did, they shouldn't complain, they should quit. This bogged several women's minds and they even went so far as to explain that hospitals were supposed to be there to cure patients. *Morals*, in the 20th century, if you can believe such a thing. Not only that, one of the women felt they should remake the RNABC into a group responsible to its members, and then they began discussing

why they hadn't thought of that before which got into the socialization of girl children and the hospital structure and all. There was these two young women in the class (all the rest were over 30) and the young women looked like they'd walked off the cover of Harlequin romance and they defended doctors and the vice-president of the RNABC and were quite furious with the rest of us. At one point one woman said ironically one of the reasons women didn't rebel was because that was unladylike and would blacken the name of womankind, and these two young women applauded. After the class one of the older women apologized to me for them and said they hadn't had much experience except for their training and they still believed what they'd been told in training, and they probably still thought they would marry doctors,

even. I was really embarrassed about my previous contemptuous attitude towards nurses, and at the same time wildly exhilarated that I'd been so wrong and I was really strung out that evening as I've said a hundred times already and I hate speaking. So after that I turned to the woman from SWACC and asked her what was this shit about *prominent* people. What emerged is really confusing and I can't say any more about the sequence of things or anything only give the general gist of the conversation. The SWACC lady said she realized access to prominent people wasn't something all groups had and she sympathized with our struggle and felt we were being brave and suchlike. Previously she had characterized the differences in Women's Liberation as between the ones who were sensible and the ones who weren't. I understood that to mean the radicals vs. the liberals. But now from her patronizing, sympathetic attitude I thought she meant the difference was between middle-class women and lower-class women. I said we (not

knowing, however, who "we" were) didn't even *want* to have co. tact with prominent people. She said she understood that also, but it happened that a lot of the people one went to school with turned out to have prominent positions in business and government and naturally one would want to use what contacts were available. The whole thing was getting way beyond me and while not being certain what was going on, I was nevertheless certain that whatever it was I didn't like it. I wanted to bring the discussion back to some kind of rationality but instead I found myself saying with conviction: well, all the people I went to school with turned out to be drunks. (which isn't true, by any means. Only one woman that I know of was a drunk and she is dead. Mary went to university after being widowed, remarried, divorced and having 5 children by 3 fathers. Jenny married a chick-sexer and I have no reason to think they didn't live happily ever after. Alice Blake married a Catholic farmer, and maybe turning into a drunk would have been preferable. I've lost track of a lot of them but last summer I discovered Helga working in the post office in Whitehorse. That leaves only Mike and Pete Cherneski, Harry Sawchuk, Nick and Steve Siderowsky, Nick Andrechuk as the people I went to school with who turned out to be drunks.) This pronouncement, however untrue, roused the sympathy of the SWACC lady even further and she said she was terribly sympathetic and that she knew how it was and that's why she was working so hard for women. She herself didn't need day care for example, and she'd never received lower pay than a man, so it wasn't for herself that she was doing all these things. (Oh yeah, Lloyd Kruger runs a gas station at Mile 100 of the Alaska Highway and isn't a drunk. I wonder what happened to the other Kruger family? Janet blew up a Chemistry lab in high school and was considerably scared. I wonder where she is now.) (Oh yeah, and the other


Mike Cherneski married a Catholic woman and turned Catholic and he is now a foreman in a plywood factory and terribly successful and not at all a drunk.) She had never personally been discriminated against as a woman, and so she wasn't in it for herself, but because she wanted to help all the people. Even you, she said to me kindly and with sympathy and understanding. I was really all confused and simply muttered about not wanting charity and turned to Joan Abbott and I guess the SWACC lady went away then, probably suffused with the milk of human kindness but perplexed by the attitude of the lower classes. (I wonder where Lorraine Giesbrecht is. John Sawchuk became a chartered accountant and just recently married into an ex-Polish, ex-bourgeois family.)

By the time the next class came around, I was considerably less strung out and only smelled of apricot liqueur, a much superior smell to gin. There was a different person representing SWACC and this person was entirely unlike the first SWACC lady and a really fine woman. I found I no longer had any virulent arguments with SWACC since this woman agreed that laws didn't change societies and saw SWACC's role as mainly educational, a job they do reasonably well. It was a much better presentation altogether. I never once interrupted anyone or sneered about doctors and introduced only one digression and all together we made fine speeches full of virtue and encouragement and understanding and the nurses thanked us for being interesting and went home to starch uniforms for the next day.

I wonder what happened to Helen Kruger. Vera married that schoolteacher. Joe married a Novak. Franz married an older Novak first and then Joe married Faith who was about 10 years younger than him. Joe and Franz are drunks and Franz beat his wife in the old days. The older Novaks all died young. I wonder where they are now.



Sisters Sister sisters



by Liz Briemberg

I was asked how to join Women's Liberation when I was in Coquitlam last week. Was it a national organization with local chapters, membership dues, presidents, and so on? The women talking to me wanted to be active and involved but they had no idea how to go about it and were somewhat intimidated by this image of a monstrous organization they knew nothing about. Intimidated but also attracted.

They told me that they are tired of hearing the general descriptions of how women are kept down and they want to do something about it. Similarly, some women on the U.B.C. Studies Courses are finding the talk repetitive, and meanwhile nothing changes—they too want to get active and get the thing moving.

It seems that the women's movement is at a fairly critical stage right now. Understanding of sexism—discrimination on the grounds of sex alone—is much more widespread than it was three years ago.

But, at the same time, much of the sensitivity towards sexism is at a pretty superficial level, and token acknowledgement of it abounds—whether it be the appointment of a woman senator or the generous grant of one evening a week out by herself for the wife. In some ways, as shown by the recent use of an injunction to prevent an abortion, the situation is getting worse.

Government and business leaders reacted to the first protests of Women's Liberation with anger and derision, but since then alternate responses have emerged, designed to defuse and deflect the women's movement.

A Royal Commission wandered up and down the country, politicians voice concern occasionally, newspaper editors patronizingly discuss "the problem," the Women's pages and magazines are clogged with stories on it, columnists and TV interviewers try to undermine its support by posing "People's Liberation" against "Women's Liberation." And headlines abound which refer to Women's Liberation with muffled sarcasm.

This bombardment of publicity and "concern" obliterates the basic questions of how extensive social change can occur. It also obliterates the fact that little or no change is actually occurring.

In Vancouver, women started organizing around issues—child care and abortion—which immediately confronted the Law, the Medical profession and the Educational system, with some limited success. Many of the women who were part of that organizing could not feel comfortable with each other for a whole range of reasons. Political, class, educational and social divisions were always there and "sisterhood" was very frail in the face of them. The organization split up and several groups were formed pursuing different interests.

Some of us thought that rap (discussion) groups and or women's communes would be the only way to break through the divisions to achieve real sisterhood, and in North America that has been a general trend. Yet where rap groups have not combined talking with organizing, they have turned in on themselves to such an extent that outsiders feel and are excluded which only creates further divisions between us.

Many such rap groups seem to be adopting the sensitivity and gestalt techniques of psychotherapy in mild or rabid form. This places the burden of change on each individual (with the helping hand of her rap group). AA does this with alcoholics and numerous psychiatric groups do this with mental patients.

It can be frighteningly manipulative but, at best, it can only achieve limited change. It does not touch the major causes of women's position of inferiority and those divisions between women.

Women have very limited choices, not because they are unaware or haven't had a rap group's help in examining their "problems" but because their secondary position is built into every corner of the fabric of this patriarchal, capitalist society. Equally all those divisions we found between women are the direct result of living in a racist, sexist and class-divided country.

We have to develop political groupings and organizations which constantly struggle for rights and dignity of all women while also providing for friendship, support and continuing personal help between the women involved. Such groups can develop around specific interests and projects or they can develop as caucuses within other political organizations. They can be formed by women at home getting together with others in the neighbourhood.

After some discussion sessions, you can start projects of concern to you and all people living in that area—it could be a working women's group, a day care project, a free health clinic, a group working for free public transit, a group researching the shenanigans of the local city council, the sexism in school textbooks, and so on. One which would be good would be a group to set up Little League games for girls on Saturday mornings—basketball, field hockey or lacrosse.

I list below some groups in Vancouver that you can join or at least contact. If you live outside Vancouver, it would be far better to start local groups, but anyone in the groups listed could give you information or help in getting started. There is no national organization, it is all bubbling from the grass roots, or thereabouts.

WOMEN'S CENTRE, 511 Carrall St. Phone: 684-0523 Hours: 12:00-5:00

This is the old Women's Caucus office on the corner of Pender and Carrall. A number of groups use it now so it is a good place to get information.

The Vancouver Women's Liberation newspaper, *The Pedestal*, comes out of here and you would be welcome to get involved with its production and distribution. The Working Women's Association meets here Wednesday at 7:00 if you want to help in the struggles of working women. A workshop on the use of videos held at 1:30 on Wednesdays. There is a theatre group which has now closed its membership, but which could give help if you would like to start another one. The Centre is a good drop-in place as it has magazines, books and newspapers and some women to talk to.

WOMEN'S PLACE

This is still in the planning stage. About thirty women have been meeting as a collective over the last three months with the intention of setting up a centre with dual functions. One is a place where women in trouble or distress can stay a while and the second is a place where projects can develop. They are looking for a large house in a central area but meanwhile have been exploring the possibility of developing a health clinic for women. C.Y.C. has given them a grant for the salary of one of their workers. Anyone interested in the medical care of women could contact them either to join their group or to learn some of their information on health clinics so that more can be created elsewhere. Until they have their own house, they will be working out of the Women's Centre office, so phone them there.

WOMEN'S LIBERATION ALLIANCE 483 E. 28th. Phone: 876-6424

This organization has a general action group concerned with campaigning for 24-hour day care, abortion law reform, and equal pay for equal work for women workers. They meet on Wednesday at 7:30 and are now in the middle of a series of classes on Women's Liberation. The B.C. Women's Abortion Law Repeal Coalition meets at this address on Tuesday at 7:30 and they are involved in a petition campaign. The High School Women's Birth Control Rights Committee also works out of this office, and they are concerned with getting information on birth control into the schools. All these organizations are affiliated with the League for Socialist Action and The Young Socialist.

You can phone their office for abortion referrals as well.

WOMEN'S ABORTION REFERRAL BUREAU Phone: 872-0284 (Judy or Maryann)

At the moment, this group has enough volunteers but is desperately short on funds. They would be happy to help anyone set up a similar counselling service.

U.B.C. WOMEN'S STUDIES COURSE Rm. 215 SUB Phone: 228-2082

There are five lectures remaining in the series and they include one on the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, one on Women and Revolution, and one in which Margaret Atwood will read her poetry. Tuesday at 7:00. Price: 25 cents each.

STATUS OF WOMEN ACTION COORDINATION COMMITTEE. Suite 101, 1045 W. Broadway Phone: 733-1421

This is a conventional style of organization—with President and executive—and there are about 200 members who meet monthly. Their aim is to get implementation of the various recommendations of the Status of Women Report and to get more women involved in running for public office in the next elections. They have an L.I.P. grant. For \$1.00 you can get a monthly newsletter.

WOMEN IN TEACHING. Phone 291-8184 (Gail Neuberger)

This is an action group which meets twice monthly. They have taken several resolutions to the B.C. Teachers' Federation concerning discrimination in the schools, and the Federation has now set up a Status of Women Committee. They would like to get to speak to Parent-Teacher groups also, and they need more active members.

FEMINISTS PLUS. Phone: 685-1187 or 873-2288

This group has set up some rap groups and although their rap groups are not admitting new members they would be glad to help anyone who wants to do likewise.

LETTERS

Dear sisters,

Please find enclosed a money order ... for past deliveries of your paper. ... Our distribution system is as disorganized as the movement in Saskatoon has been. However, with the New Year, we are gathering threads together and attempting to get on with necessary work. Two projects that appear to be well on their way involve the attempt to pressure for the organization of a city-wide daycare system, and efforts towards making contact with and providing organizational resources for working women. In both cases your paper has provided very useful information. Anything more that you can send will be much appreciated.

Yours in sisterhood,
Wendy Land
c/o Women's Liberation
Rm. 210, 1163 Third Ave. S.
Saskatoon, Sask.

Dear Pedestal,

We are glad to receive your letter on 2nd February. Thank you very much. It is a great pleasure to hear from you. We will bear the expense and when you will send us something from now on, will you claim for the expense each time.

Now, we are students of Kogawa University. When we think of our life in future, we face a wall by all means that we are women. Therefore, we began to think of Women's Liberation. We are going to form a group (four members).

Though we would like to give notice much, we cannot now. After we read your materials well and we realize Japanese Women's Liberation, we will send a letter in detail.

4-11 I Chome
Shiogami Cho
Takamatsu City
Kogawa Ken, Japan

In the grand historical manner of women the following have selflessly and without thought of personal reward sacrificed their time so that you might be correctly educated. Appreciate us.

Jean Rands, Diana Kemble, Helen Potrebenco, Nora D. Randall, Josie Cook, Ann Hayes, B. Thompson, Pat Hoffer, Evelyn Berry, Bev Davies.

Dear People at the Pedestal,

I would like to subscribe to the Pedestal. . .

I am also looking for a woman with or without children to share a large farmhouse with me, and housework and babysitting, and thought that possibly someone on your staff might know of a girl who wants to spend some time in the country or that I might be able to put an ad in the Pedestal. It is a large (9 room) 80 year old log house in a creek valley — a very pretty place. There is no phone or hydro, but I have a generator to run the stereo. The next house is 3 miles away, and I am 15 miles from Kamloops. I think it is an ideal place for children — mine, a boy 3 1/3 and a girl 1, love it here, and so do I.

If you could put an ad in the Pedestal I would like it to be worded:

I wish to find a woman to share a large country farmhouse in a beautiful location near Kamloops, with a mother and two pre-school children. Your children are welcome. For details, write Louise Crawford, Knutsford, B.C.

I would very much appreciate your help passing along the information by word of mouth, putting in an ad, or by letting me know of women's organizations to whom I might write (or any other ideas).

Sincerely yours
Louise Crawford

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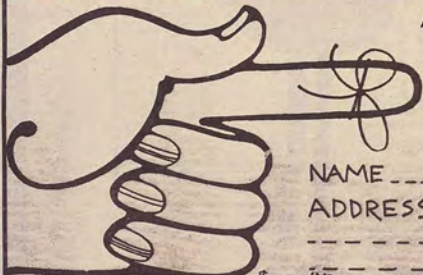
Photography Show
Feb. 26 - Mar 11
Noon - 5 p.m.
Monday - Saturday
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Admission Free!

MARCH 1972						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
PEDESTAL MEETING- 11:00 A.M. WOMEN'S CENTRE 5	WOMEN'S WEEK SEE PAGE 3 FOR SCHEDULE 8:00 PM WOMEN IN TRANSITION MEETING- 4465 QUE BEC 6	7:00 P.M. GYNECOLOGIST FREE CLINIC 1952 W. 4TH DR. WEBB WOMEN'S STUDIES 7:00 P.M. UBC SUB BALLROOM 7	WOMEN'S WEEK SEE PAGE 3 FOR SCHEDULE 6:00 PM WWA MEETING- WOMEN'S CENTRE 8	WOMEN'S WEEK SEE PAGE 3 FOR SCHEDULE 9	WOMEN'S WEEK SEE PAGE 3 FOR SCHEDULE 7:00 PM PICKET MEDIEVAL INN 10	2:00 P.M. PRE-NATAL CLINIC 1952 W. 4TH 2:00 P.M. WWA INFORMAL DISCUSSION 2620 HEMLOCK # 5 11
PEDESTAL MEETING- 11:00 A.M. WOMEN'S CENTRE 12	13	7:00 P.M. FREE CLINIC WOMEN'S STUDIES 7:00 P.M. UBC SUB BALLROOM 14	6:00 PM WWA MEETING- WOMEN'S CENTRE 15	16	7:00 PM. PICKET MEDIEVAL INN 17	2:00 P.M. FREE PRE-NATAL CLINIC ABORTION ACTION CONFERENCE SEE # BELOW 18
PEDESTAL MEETING- 11:00 A.M. WOMEN'S CENTRE 19	20	7:00 P.M. FREE CLINIC MARGARET ATWOOD 7:00 PM UBC SUB BALLROOM 21	6:00 P.M. WWA MEETING- 22 LIBRARY 22	23	7:00 PM PICKET MEDIEVAL INN 24	2:00 P.M. FREE PRE-NATAL CLINIC 2:00 P.M. WWA INFORMAL DISCUSSION 1047 PACIFIC KOMMIE KIDS 25
PEDESTAL LAYOUT SFU. 26	27	7:00 P.M. FREE CLINIC 28	PEDESTAL LAYOUT SFU. 6:00 PM WWA MEETING- WOMEN'S CENTRE 29	PEDESTAL LAYOUT SFU. 30	7:00 PM. PICKET MEDIEVAL INN 31	2:00 PM FREE PRE-NATAL CLINIC 1
EASTER 2	3	7:00 PM FREE CLINIC 4	6:00 P.M. WWA MEETING- WOMEN'S CENTRE 5	6	7:00 PM PICKET MEDIEVAL INN 7	2:00 PM FREE PRENATAL CLINIC 2:00 PM. INFORMAL DISCUSSION 1047 PACIFIC 8

* CROSS COUNTRY ABORTION ACTION CONFERENCE. Winnipeg, Manitoba, March 18-19. If you would like to attend write or call: BC Women's Abortion Repeal Coalition, 576 Seymour, Suite 308, Vancouver. Phone: 688-7133. Housing and child care will be available.

WOMEN'S PLACE MEETING- SATURDAY MAR. 11TH. FOR TIME AND PLACE INFORMATION PHONE THE WOMEN'S CENTRE 684-0523. BABYSITTING WILL BE AVAILABLE.

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