



a women's  
liberation  
newspaper

.15

# Pedestal

Vol. III, No. 1 January, 1971

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Vancouver

Royal Commission on Women



UP  
from the  
Kitchen  
UP  
from the  
Bedroom  
UP  
from  
Under  
WOMEN  
UNITE!



"Does it occur to you that the white lace which we wear is darkened by the falling eyes of the lace maker?"  
—Helen Keller, 1911

# Helen Keller Speaks

## on the social causes of blindness

... Our worst foes are ignorance, poverty and the unconscious cruelty of our commercial society. These are the causes of much blindness, these are the enemies which destroy the sight of little children and workmen, and undermine the health of mankind. So long as these enemies remain unvanquished, so long will there be blind and crippled men and women.

This case of blindness, the physician says, resulted from ophthalmia. It was really caused by a dark, overcrowded room, by the indecent herding together of human beings in insanitary tenements. We are told that another case was produced by the bursting of a wheel. The real cause was an employer's failure to safeguard his machines. Investigation shows that there are many clever safeguards for machinery which ought to be used in factories, but which are not adopted because their adoption would diminish the employer's profits.

... If you doubt that there is such a connection between our prosperity and the sorrows of the poor, consult those bare but illuminated reports of industrial commissions and labor bureaus. They are less eloquent than oratory. In them you will find the fundamental causes of much blindness and crookedness, of shrunken limbs and degraded minds. These causes must be searched out, and every condition in which blindness breeds must be exposed and abolished. Let our battle cry be: "No preventable disease, no unnecessary poverty, no blinding ignorance among mankind."

## on woman suffrage

The enfranchisement of women is a part of the vast movement to enfranchise all mankind. You ask for votes for women. What good can votes do you when ten-elevenths of the land of Great Britain belongs to 200,000, and only one-eleventh to the rest of the 40,000,000? Have your men with their millions of votes freed themselves from this injustice?

When one shows the masters that half the wealth of Great Britain belongs to 25,000 persons, when one says that this is wrong, that this wrong lies at the bottom of all social injustice, including the wrong of women, the highly respectable newspapers cry "Socialist Agitator! Stirrer of Class Strife!" Well, let us agitate, let us confess that we are thorough-going Social Democrats (those were the days when Social Democracy included Lenin), or anything else that they please to label us. But let us keep our eyes on the central fact that a few, a few British men own the majority of British men and all British women. The few own the many, because they possess the means of livelihood of all. In our splendid republic, where at

One of the few heroic women that we learned about in school was Helen Keller. Our books showed little Helen sitting by the water pump learning what W-A-T-E-R meant and later graduating from university with honors. The story was always how she learned to communicate, never what she said. Perhaps if the stories had told of her opposition to war and militarism, her advocacy of women's rights and socialism — perhaps we would have found something to identify with. Perhaps we would have accepted the example of strength and courage if she had been portrayed as a real woman, concerned with people, rather than a saint, a superhuman miracle, or the fulfillment of the American Dream (if Helen Keller — deaf, blind, mute and a woman — can make it, so can you).

election time all are free and equal, a few Americans own the rest. Eighty percent of our people live in rented houses, and one-half of the rest are mortgaged. The country is governed for the richest, for the corporations, the bankers, the land speculators, and for the exploiters of labor. Surely we must free men and women together before we can free women.

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A majority of women that need the vote are wage-earners. A tremendous change has taken place in the industrial world since power machines took the place of hand tools. Men and women have been compelled to adjust themselves to a new system of production and distribution. The machine has been used to exploit the labor of both men and women as it was never exploited before. In the terrific struggle for existence that has resulted from this change women and children suffer even more than men.

Yet women have nothing to say about conditions under which they live and toil. Helpless, unheeded, they must endure hardships that lead to misery and degradation. They may not lift a hand to defend themselves against cruel, crippling processes that stunt the body and brain and bring on early death or premature old age.

Working men suffer from the helplessness of working women. They must compete in the same offices and factories with women who are unable to protect themselves with proper laws. They must compete with women who work in unsanitary rooms called homes, work by dim lamps in the night, rocking a cradle with one foot. It is to the interest of all workers to end this stupid, one-sided, one-power arrangement and have suffrage for all.

We shall not see the end of capitalism and the triumph of democracy until men and women work together in the solving of their political, social and economic problems. I realize that the vote is only one of many weapons in our fight for the freedom of all. But every means is precious and, equipped with the vote, men and women together will hasten the day when the age-long dream of liberty, equality and brotherhood shall be realized upon earth.

## on war and revolution

What are you committed to — education or revolution?

"Revolution," she answered decisively. "We can't have education without revolution. We have tried peaceful education for 1900 years and it has failed. Let us try revolution and see what it will do now."

"I am not for peace at all hazards. I regret this war, but I have never regretted the blood of the

Party and later the I.W.W. (Industrial Workers of the World), Helen Keller often spoke out in defense of socialism and the struggles of the working class. Opponents of social change charged that she was "duped" and "exploited," to which she responded:

"So long as I confine my activities to social service and the blind, they [the newspapers] compliment me extravagantly, calling me 'arch-priest of the sightless,' 'wonder woman' and 'a modern miracle.' But when it comes to a discussion of poverty, and I maintain that it is the result of wrong economics — that the industrial system under which we live is at the root of much of the physical deafness and blindness in the world — that is a different matter. It is laudable to give aid to the handicapped. Superficial

charities make smooth the way of the prosperous; but to advocate that all human beings should have leisure and comfort, the decencies and refinements of life, is an Utopian dream, and one who seriously contemplates its realization must indeed be deaf, dumb and blind."

Indeed, Helen Keller spent much of her energies helping the deaf and the blind. She did this not as a philanthropist, but as a socialist. She was concerned about the social causes of blindness as well as the social cure: a change of society.

Following are some excerpts from her writings — ideas that were very much a part of Helen Keller, the "miracle woman," but which you won't find in the children's library. (For the full texts and many more see *Helen Keller: Her Socialist Years* by Philip Foner, International Publishers, N.Y. 1967.)

thousands spilled during the French Revolution. And the workers are learning how to stand alone. They are learning a lesson they will apply to their own good out in the trenches. Generals testify to the splendid initiative the workers in the trenches take. If they can do that for their masters you can be sure they will do that for themselves when they have taken matters into their own hands...

## in defense of the IWW

... Who is truly indicted, they or the social system that has produced them? A society that permits the conditions out of which the IWWs have sprung, stands self-condemned.

The IWW is pitted against the whole profit-making system. It insists that there can be no compromise so long as the majority of the working class lives in want, while the master class lives in luxury. According to its statement, "there can be no peace until the workers organize as a class, take possession of the resources of the earth and the machinery of production and distribution, and abolish the wage-system." In other words, the workers in their collectivity must own and operate all the essential industrial institutions and secure to each laborer the full value of his produce. I think it is for this declaration of democratic purpose, and not for any wish to betray their country, that the IWW members are being persecuted, beaten, imprisoned and murdered.

Surely the demands of the IWW are just. It is right that the creators of wealth should own what they create. When shall we learn that we are related one to the other, that we are members of one body, that injury to one is injury to all? Until the spirit of love for our fellow-workers, regardless of race, color, creed or sex, shall fill the world, until the great mass of the people shall be filled with a sense of responsibility for each other's welfare, social justice cannot be attained and there can never be lasting peace upon earth...

That long struggle in which they have successfully won freedom of body from slavery and serfdom, freedom of mind from ecclesiastical despotism, and more recently a voice in government, has arrived at a new stage. The workers are still far from being in possession of themselves or their labor. They do not own and control the tools and materials which they must use in order to live, nor do they receive anything like the full value of what they produce. Workmen everywhere are becoming aware that they are being exploited for the benefit of others, and that they cannot be truly free unless they own themselves and their labor. The achievement of such economic freedom stands in prospect — and at no distant date, as the revolutionary climax of the age.

# Love & Misery

excerpts from "White Niggers of America" by PIERRE VALLIERES

The English and American financiers, the French-Canadian petty bourgeoisie and the clergy-united by common interests despite their continual wrangling - were asking: "What is happening to our people who have always been so peaceful, so industrious, so profoundly religious (read: resigned), so submissive?"

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It is hard for a people to learn to shake off a long period of disenchantment.

"It's all very well to revolt, but what good does it do?"

The husband, coming home from the factory where the whole day had been filled with the workers' anger against the system, would try to convince his wife. But she, who had spent the whole day alone contemplating the greyness that covered the city - and her life - could not believe in miracles. "Look," the Quebecois Wife would say, "look how wretched we are. Our servitude has become so complicated. There's no cure for it. War is coming. It's going to open up old wounds that are not yet healed and make new ones, even worse ones. Because these days they are much better equipped to spread death and suffering.

"Your friends talk about a new society because they want to take advantage of us.

"No, you're right, I shouldn't have said that.

"But why do they insist on reawakening a hope that will soon be dead and will have done no good? Can your friends prevent the war, depression, misery?"

"Once again the flesh of millions of men is going to rot in the mud of battlefields, just as yours goes on turning black in the sweaty soot of the Angus Shops of the CPR!

"Our flesh, that has never known the tenderness or the warmth of what I dare not name is only good these days for sowing the land with blood spilled for nothing. And you think that out of this universal atrocity there can one day come fraternity? You're dreaming, my friend, or else you like to forget reality..."

The Wife felt like crying aloud the anguish she felt as a solitary slave, a disillusioned and exhausted mother-hen.

The Husband, his face hard, his eyes wet, his heart full of kindness and anger, would place his worn hands on the Wife's shoulders.

"That's why I want to fight. You are right to complain. But you are wrong to be resigned.

"I know it won't do any good," she would reply.

"I know it will do some good... to somebody... to our children, maybe."

He would drop the discussion and say no more. Impatient as a child getting ready for a party, he would wash his face, his neck, arms, hands, consulting the newspaper the while to check the time and place of the meeting...

The misery created by the system pushed my parents into marriage after a brief acquaintance. This misery did not disappear by virtue of the sacrament. It remained unchanged, heavy, demanding. It separated husband and wife, enclosing them in two different universes. The system shut my father up in the factory and my mother in cramped lodgings.

At the factory, my father had the fraternity of men working together; the work was hard, but there were many of them doing it, and they all wanted to free themselves from it. At home, on the contrary, my mother was alone with the children, and she was always faced with the same drudgery; she was forbidden by tradition from trying to "escape her duty" as a Christian-mother-submissive-to-the-will-of-the-Good-Lord.

If love was there in the beginning, a host of factors very soon forced it out of this world monopolized by the million little worries that poverty engenders. And

this was not an exceptional "case." Only priests imagine that love can adapt itself to misery, to a stupefying daily routine, to crass ignorance of the laws and beauties of sexuality, to Jansenism and the dictatorship of capitalism. Only priests can see a kind of paradise in the proletarian hell? and how useful they are then, without knowing it, to capitalism!

When a woman makes love out of a sense of sacred duty and submits to her husband's passion the way a prisoner submits to torture by the military police, how can joy dwell in her? When a man abandons the control of his own destiny to his wife - to please her, or prevent her from making a scene - how can joy dwell in him? And when children grow up in an atmosphere of constant frustration, how can joy reach them?



Sometimes it seemed to me that my father was ashamed of himself, and that my mother was afraid of her own desperate eagerness to preserve present security and ensure it in the future. The more I became aware of this spiritual poverty that went round in a vacuum, the more I said to myself that to accept this state of things was a crime against oneself and against others, and that one had to do everything to break the vicious circle of misery.

In the beginning, the absolute evil, the foundation of this authority, seemed to me to be the family. Later, I came to understand that the family - more precisely, the working-class family - was only a product of the condition of the working class, which was itself the product of centuries of exploitation of man by man.

The terrible thing about the working-class family is the function, imposed on it by the present system of renewing and perpetuating the supply of slaves, of niggers, of cheap labor to be exploited, alienated and oppressed. And the inhuman thing about a workingclass childhood is the child's powerlessness to resist the conditioning not only of the system itself but of all the frustrations of the life around him frustrations that are generated by the capitalist organization of society and that contaminate him even before he becomes aware of their existence.

In Vallieres' early youth, the family lived in a slum tenement in east-end Montreal, where young Pierre soon learned the laws of the inner city. Although he was a good student, school was a secondary interest. His heart was in the street, where he dreamed he would one day lead his own gang. However, while he was still quite young, his parents joined the post-war wave of migration to Montreal's virgin south shore. His parents, too, had dreams, of escaping the urban rot for promised splendor in Ville Jacques-Cartier. They erected a temporary tar-paper shack, and along with hundreds of others, Vallieres' father spent his spare time trying to build a home.

While my father was expanding the house, to make it more liveable, my mother hardly dared invite "the relatives" to visit us. She was so ashamed of "the surroundings", as she said. In spite of the misery that encircled and penetrated his domain, my father was happy to have something to build... even if it was only an extension to this jerry-built shack. But my mother dreaded letting others - city people - see our poverty.

It was as if our entire existence was nothing but a daily obscenity. We had to hide that from people of the big city...

But the people of the big city and the rest of the province soon learned the truth from the newspaper headlines in capital letters reading: "THE WHOLE TRUTH ABOUT VILLE JACQUES-CARTIER" "BABIES DYING OF COLD IN COTEAU-ROUGE" "TERRIBLE POVERTY ACROSS THE BRIDGE" "A CITY OF SHEET METAL."

We would read these reports with rage in our hearts. What were we guilty of? Of having wanted freedom? We had never had it. Painfully, we were trying to achieve it. Why did these newspapers talk about us as if we were barbarians spewed out by Montreal, like bile spewed out by an unhealthy liver?

For some newspapers, which I need not name, we were not men but "the dirty masses" of Ville Jacques-Cartier, the human "scrap" of the biggest garbage dump in the metropolitan area.

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Angus Shops, Vickers, Canada Cement, Canadair, etc., were laying off hundreds of workers every week. And each time the unions said it would only be temporary.

Some families converted their sheds into lodgings, moved into them and rented out their shacks, so as to be able to buy enough "baloney" and Weston bread to feed "the little ones."

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Around 1950, a vast, slow construction project was undertaken to provide a complete system of aqueducts and sewers for "the dirty masses" of Ville Jacques-Cartier. The underworld rubbed its hands at the thought of the enormous profits it was going to reap from this very humanitarian enterprise. They began by raising taxes.

A few public drinking fountains were installed here and there, on the privileged streets, which were served by the aqueduct from the first year on. But after a lightning beginning, the work slowed down. Everywhere there were trenches, unusable wells and mud... mountains of mud.

Most families had to collect rain water in huge barrels or buy water by the pail every day from a tradesman to whom the city authorities had granted a monopoly on the sale of water. Water cost five cents a pail. Many families, including mine, had to tighten their belts to buy water for cooking, bathing, doing laundry, etc.

That lasted for years, years during which Duplessis was letting the Americans loot the rich iron deposits of northern Quebec.

The Americans were making billions off our iron, Duplessis was making millions off the Americans, the political machine of the Union Nationale was distributing its millions to the supporters and thugs of the regime... and we, poor starving wretches, had to buy water!



**The Pedestal:**

In response to suggestions for a study group:

Political effectiveness comes from being able to argue both sides of any question.

Mr. Drucker in "The End of Economic Man" argues that Marxism failed because it created more classes than the ones it wanted to eliminate.

What was your attitude to the city election of December 9th, 1970? Why did the press report that the Yippies supported Mr. Tom Campbell in the election? To hasten the downfall of B.C. fascism by perverted example? Would it have been worse to have a Mr. Bill Gibson in the mayor's seat and rapidly gained a rapid transit system?

Does marxism create a conservatism of the left? An elite who detract from their cause in the eyes of the people - just like the FLQ?

I being a bit of a pragmatist wanted to support Mr. Bill Gibson over candidates like Kate Porter and Mary Trew and Zaria Andrew, because I felt that experience and administrative expertise were more important than idealism or naivete in running for government. Likewise, I supported people like Pendakur and Harger, who seemed to know about pollution, and improving and conserving the environment.

Unfortunately, I didn't think that \$1,000 baby bonuses or no income tax were supportable election issues. Any real improvement in one's standard of living can only come from extending and changing the family unit as in forms of communal living so that rent can be cheap, likewise food, and babies and children can be looked after 24 hours a day, and education take place through delegation of work tasks.

Nina Vesey  
204, 859 Thurlow St.  
Vancouver, B.C.

**Sisters:**

Re: Canadian Unions: A Debate [see Dec. Pedestal]

There is no question that Cathy Walker is correct. I am a member of one of the stooge U.S. Unions and deal daily with members of other "Internationals" who want out. Jean is correct in that Canadian Unions can also be non-representative, but they are the first step to democracy.

There are reasons for this apart from simple bureaucracy. Bureaucracy always functions in favor of the oppressing class and today the oppressor is U.S. imperialism. Around the world people are uniting to defeat U.S. imperialism once and for all. In turn, the U.S.

imperialists are preparing themselves for the struggle and they are consolidating their running dogs in the government, military and labor bureaucracies.

Canadian workers have always been more militant and progressive than their American counterparts, but history of the U.S. unions in Canada has always been one of co-optation and compromise (read The Trade Union Movement in Canada by Lipton).

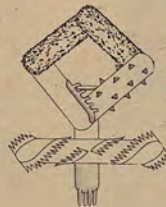
Now there is a progressive national trade union centre in the Council of Canadian Unions which deserves the support of all Canadians who want to promote the interests of the working class and fight U.S. imperialism. There will be no liberation for the women of Canada until Canada is liberated. Canadian women must join the world-wide united front against U.S. imperialism.

It is very good that women's liberation is going to assist working class women to organize. But it would be very reactionary at this stage to organize anyone into a U.S. union.

These unions say that they are "international" but only to fight the rising tide of nationalism in America's most vital colony.

Fraternally,

Bob Coppes  
Canadian Liberation Movement  
Box 481, Thunder Bay "F", Ont.



Dear Women's Caucus,

As is coming a new Earth, our struggle revive. And here is our flag in the wind, with fire-wind, up on the tomb of the repression.

Now happen the power of the freedom and woman's liberation, and the Eve's rubbing to Yumtise, and without the free woman ain't in progress.

The Spanish woman is coming back to a free home. We want the woman's liberation, and the rich devil of our sex and the male oppression, flap uselessly its wings in the walk of our rocks.

To want your real struggle, still known not by men, and by the medieval seal of our women live under the astio-fascist authoritarianism.

The religion will be wrecked by the free love. The marriage by the freedom. And that dirty wash, courted by the children, by the free abortion.

We want join our struggle. The woman has not time to aesthetic, but to the struggle, to the real revolution in a real Earth.

In solidarity,  
Dan,  
Madrid, Spain.

Dear Sisters,

Thank you for IDENTICAL. I am very pleased with yours. This is an excellent paper, with a good title, and I promise you to subscribe in the near future. I retain your friendship.

Thus far in your files,

Fraternally,  
*ant helle*  
LOVE & PEACE

Friends of Quebec will supply groups with speakers both from Quebec and from the Toronto Committee who recently returned from a fact-finding trip to Montreal.

Executive Committee:  
Gail Dexter, Graeme Nicholson, Nancy Pocock, Lawlor Rochester, Ian Turner

TO: Friends of Quebec, 10 Jean St., Toronto 5 (tel: 921-8600)

Enclosed please find \$ donation to Friends of Quebec  
I wish to participate as a Friend of Quebec  
I would like my name listed as a Friend of Quebec

NAME: .....  
ADDRESS: .....  
PHONE: .....

# across Canada

**MARITIMES**

Pat Berezford  
6124 Pepperell, Halifax  
Carol Hamilton-Smith  
748 Forest Hill Rd., Fredericton  
QUEBEC

Women's Centre (844-4838)  
3664 Ste. Famille, Montreal

**ONTARIO**

Shirley Greenberg  
3 Commanche Dr., Ottawa  
Janet Rogers  
c/o ANIS, Kingston

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

Women's Liberation  
374 Huron St., Toronto

New Feminists  
Box 597, St. A., Toronto

Lella Kheled Collective  
52 Elgin St., 922-8121

Toronto Women's Caucus  
c/o Dierdre Bekerman, 11 Pinewood  
Hamilton & Dixie, Women's Liberation  
297 Wentworth North

R. Feller (621-9393)  
297 Wentworth North

Pat Dewdney  
38 Craig St., London

Toni de France  
565 King E., Kitchener

Joan Baril  
12 Lyle St., Thunder Bay

Cynthia Gedye  
16 Ester Rd., Box 43, Site 18, Sudbury

**MANITOBA**

Women's Liberation  
Ste. 6068, 416 Main St., Winnipeg

**SASKATCHEWAN**

Women's Liberation (242-5830)  
517 Lansdowne, Saskatoon

Women's Liberation (525-6252)  
2259 Cameron, Regina

**ALBERTA**

Lorna & Linda Rasmussen  
722-10th St. S., Lethbridge

Jo Ann Dundas  
215-22nd Ave. N.E. Calgary 64

Sybiline House (432-7685)  
1113-83rd Ave, Edmonton

Women's Liberation (429-4463)  
Rm. 10-10168-100th St., Edmonton

**BRITISH COLUMBIA**

Women's Caucus (The Pedestal)  
511 Carrall, 684-0523, Van. 4

Van. Women's Liberation  
Fanshen House 879-5836

Women's Alliance (Van.)  
Mary Trew 685-2755

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

# from angela

The bourgeois press seized upon my recent capture by the Federal pigs as an occasion to inject more confusion into the minds of the American public.

Focusing the bulk of its articles on my personality and background, the press has clearly attempted to camouflage the political issues involved in my case.

Regardless of what degrees I may have, regardless of my external appearance and psychological make-up, the reality of my present situation is this:

The reactionary pig forces of this country have chosen to persecute me because I am a Communist revolutionary, participating together with millions of oppressed peoples throughout the world, designed to overthrow all of the conditions that stand in the way of our freedom.

While newspapers and magazines wasted pages upon pages, attempting to resurrect my past, they should have instead been cognizant of hundreds upon hundreds of American revolutionaries who have been confronted with a fate no different from mine.

Government agents incessantly employ the most devious and barbarous means to rid the country of all those who are challenging racism, exposing capitalist exploitation, and working, organizing and fighting for freedom.

Scores of members of the Black Panther party have been mutilated and murdered, hundreds from among their ranks have been shoved into the nation's prisons; and still others have been forced into exile.

And the Soledad Brothers continue to battle with the representatives of the repressive prison apparatus, programmed to offer death by gas to anyone who dares to speak out against racism and propagates the idea of freedom among captives.

Ronald Reagan and the State of California, having first demanded my job because I am a member of the Communist Party, are now demanding my life. Why?

Not because I am the dangerous criminal they portray; not because I am guilty of their framed-up charge for which there is no evidence whatsoever, but because in their warped vision a revolutionary is, a priori, a criminal.

Turning myself in to Ronald Reagan and his accomplices would have been equivalent to placing my head voluntarily on the executioner's block.

The death of Jonathan Jackson a San Rafael was not only a deep and crushing blow to me, his family and friends, but a profound loss to the world revolutionary movement.

No black man or woman can fail to understand the unbearable pressure which led Jonathan to his death, struck down in the midst of battle.

His courage and self-sacrifice leave us with a legacy which no force can eradicate.

My fight was unsuccessful. I have been captured. To me, this means I must strengthen my will to fight this monstrous system.

One more is being held captive, but more importantly, our revolution continues to grow in vigor and verve. Our enemies find themselves confronted with a growing awareness among the people that the concentrated effort to main and murder revolutionaries is just another form of the daily genocide of police brutality, and impoverished living conditions of ghettos and barrios.

If masses of people will fulfill their obligation to protect the men and women who have devoted their lives to the struggle for equality and freedom, let there be no doubt about it - victory will soon be ours.

Long live the memory of Jonathan Jackson.

Free Eric, Bobby, the New York Panthers, the Soledad Brothers and all political prisoners.

Power to the people.

Angela Yvonne Davis  
Women's House of Detention  
New York

Nov. 10, 1970

Last month the B.C. College of Physicians and Surgeons erased Dr. Makaroff from their register, making it illegal for him to practice medicine. His crime: performing safe abortions on hundreds of women in need. The latest "punishment" came shortly after his release from jail (he was sentenced to 3 months and \$15000 last August). The following letter is reprinted from The Sun.

Editor, The Sun:

I believe it is nothing short of outrageous that Prime Minister Trudeau should delay removal of the subject of abortion from the Criminal Code by one more day.

There is hardly any other issue on which there is now such wide agreement. The direction of public opinion is clear. Both the legal and the medical professions are now calling for action.

The dizzy speed with which the government acted in the case of the FLQ terrorists contrasts strikingly with the offhand dismissal of briefs urging abortion reform. The death of Mr. Laporie was a tragedy; whether this justified even the temporary suspension of civil liberties is a matter of opinion.

But women, particularly, should note the contrast between the way Mr. Trudeau acted in setting aside govern-

ment business and due process of law when government officials (male, please note!) were faced with the threat of terror, mutilation and death, and the way he continues to temporize on abortion law reform.

I was arrested in March 1970 for doing illegal abortions. In June, a young mother living only a few miles from my office, died, the result of attempted self-induced abortion. It will forever remain an enigma whether this tragedy would not have occurred if my destiny had been different. But it would certainly not have occurred if abortion was strictly a personal and medical decision.

The long years of fear, humiliation and periodic fatalities resulting from the refusal of society to face the facts about the problem of abortion must be ended. What is the government waiting for?

Dr. Robert Makaroff



this issue - we made it to Volume III already! with the help of Pat Hoffer, Pat Uhl, Nikki Ross, Kitty, Carol Phillips, Helen Potrebanko, Anne Roberts, Ingrid Szabo, Jean Rands, Barbara Todd, Luessen, Kathy Kopinak, Elise Stoesser, Pat Dowedney, Alisa Rands.

next issue will be a big special about, by and for the children!

THE PEDESTAL is published monthly by the Pedestal Collective, 211 Canal St., Vancouver 4, B.C. Subscriptions: \$2/year, \$2.50 outside Canada, \$10.00 institutions. Single copies 15 cents.

## JOIN US

for meeting dates see Calendar p. 12

### ABORTION INFORMATION

Joint project with Van. Women's Liberation to help women through the therapeutic abortion system. If you'd like to counsel, call the office, or D.J. at 879-5836.

### THE PEDESTAL

Always needs more people for writing, layout, proofreading, typesetting. ANNE 988-0950

### OFFICE

Everyone can help in the office - answering mail & phone, mailings, etc. MARY 879-6086

### CHILD CARE

Small group needing interested members to organize child care centers. MICH TENNEY 876-2677

### EDUCATION

UBC - Mostly general education around women's liberation - selling literature, talking in classes, etc. JANE RULE 224-0357

SFU - General education plus the Indignity Centre: to receive all complainants about male chauvinism, male supremacy on campus. Guerrilla theatre, etc. JAN 524-4598

VCC - Cathy Wilander 433-0290  
High schools - women's liberation

groups formed in a couple of schools, trying to break into others. TRUDI 939-7713, ROBIN 987-5048

### WORKING WOMEN

The working women's workshop is making some changes for the new year. Meetings will be every Tuesday, 8pm, at the office. Each meeting to include general educational discussion & discussion of individual work situations (problems and possibilities each of us faces in trying to organize) as well as discussion of our current campaigns. For January the educational discussions will be around WOMEN AND UNIONS: past, present and future.

A PUBLIC MEETING is planned for JAN 29 (FRI.) to discuss WOMEN IN THE WORK FORCE. We hope to open a discussion with men workers about the implications of women's struggles for the workingclass as a

whole, particularly in this period of unemployment.

THE BOYCOTT OF CUNNINGHAM'S stores in support of the Hosken strike continues.

We now have a draft constitution for the WOMEN'S UNION and hope to make specific organizing plans immediately.

JOIN THE WORKSHOP, come to a meeting at call BOKU 254-6673 or JEAN 298-8430

### MEDIA PROJECT

Learning to do propaganda for women-mixed media, slide shows, photography, media guerrilla attack - maybe even a movie this spring. PAT 731-5412

### COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Includes representatives from each workshop; open to everyone. Coordinates us, exchanges ideas, plans general meetings.

### GENERAL MEETINGS

Once a month - where we bring it all together, with reports from workshops and discussions of general strategy. The last one, just before Christmas, was small & informal. Reports from some of the workshops let us all know what others in the Caucus were doing. A major item on the agenda was the discussion of our involvement in planning the Indo-Chinese Women's Conference, to be held in Vancouver in late March or early April. We decided tentatively that such a conference could mean a new direction for Women's Caucus, focusing on international politics and placing our struggle for liberation in a much broader perspective. A further meeting to discuss plans and projects relating to the conference was called for Jan. 3 at 2:00pm in the Caucus office.

# inside agitation at the post office

*You wake up in the morning,  
hear that ol' alarm ring,  
go marchin' to the table;  
it's the same damn thing...*

"Oatmeal!"  
"Now honney, you said you always get so hungry  
before lunch."

It's true. I can't deny it. The work isn't very strenuous, just boring and tiring. But I'm always starving by 11:00 and lunch isn't till 1:00. So I down the thick stuff without another word and pray that heavy lump feeling in my stomach will last at least till noon.



Then it's on with my coat, grab my lunch and out the door and into the working world. It's eight o'clock. The cold morning rain (8 days out of 10) wakes me up. I start to walk unaturally fast — like everyone else on their way to work. I check every clock I see.

Finally I turn the corner and the Post Office comes into view. The nobility of the ever faithful mail carrier etched out on the corner stones belies the ugliness that resides in the bowels of this building. In this last block I am always joined by fellow postal workers. I can usually recognize them though we are an odd assortment of humanity — very young girls who look as though they've never worked before; older tougher women who look like they've worked in factories all their lives; old men in old clothing and lots of hippie types in jeans and beads and hairbands and coats from the Sally Ann. We hurry past the fancy front doors around the corner to the back of the building and through a large garage door. We flash our temporary helper buttons at a friendly commissionaire who waves us on and warns us to watch out for the mail trucks which enter and leave the same way we do.

As we trot down the curved driveway into the garage-basement the stale warm air replaces the fresh morning air. A certain dull tired feeling begins to creep over you. Your lungs seem to sigh with a weary recognition of the products of the sleepy yawning of the graveyard shift. You sign your name next to your number, collect your time sheet, check your coat, and take your place on the assembly line.

Like anonymously numbered machines we line up before "our" boxes. We form into long rows of sorters standing before sets of labelled cubicles into which we are to place the sorted mail. We each work a set of 60 to 70 addresses. The concrete floor is covered with long thin rubber mats where we stand. Light is provided by rows of bare light bulbs. Some areas are known as headache regions because of the poor lighting. One side is reserved for parking spaces for the cars of the bureaucrats who inhabit the floors above ground. Everyone is convinced that it is the carbon monoxide given off by these cars and the mail trucks that is putting us all to sleep. Everything is filthy. The cases into which we sort the mail and the floors below them are thick with dust which especially troubles those with allergies.

The work is simple — too simple. There is no decision-making involved except to decipher an occasional illegible address. And according to written instructions (handed out the day we had to swear we would not tamper with the Queen's mail), "if in doubt, ask a supervisor, NOT the sorter next to

you..." We always asked each other anyway, just so as to have an excuse to talk to one another. Sorting is simple but demanding. It is difficult to think in words while reading addresses. At best we could only daydream. As a result we were usually eager to talk during our coffee and lunch breaks. Unfortunately, coffee breaks were so short that by the time you stood in line to buy a coffee, if you talked to your neighbor you wouldn't finish your drink before time was called. The first days people jumped up and rushed back to work when the supervisors called time (especially the very young women) but later individuals would shout for more time and refuse to move. Though there were no direct confrontations the breaks got a little longer.

It was mostly during these breaks that we began to get to know each other. Because the jobs were temporary people did not seem to repress their dislike for the work. They readily expressed disgust with the working conditions and compared experiences with other jobs.

One woman said she was only working to earn some extra money for Christmas presents. But when a bearded fellow said welfare had threatened to cut off him and his wife if he did not work at the Post Office, she admitted that she was a widow with a young son and having a pretty hard time herself. Over the weeks a kind of conspiracy developed whereby many of us were sorting all welfare, unemployment and pension checks first and misrouting any mail from collection agencies.

Everybody was talking about feet. What part of the foot was hurting most. What were the best remedies for sore feet, etc. Many of the older women carried extra shoes. But every night many people from the young girls in uncomfortable shoes to the old men were limping as we walked out.

One woman who was trying to earn enough money to pay for a jacket she had bought for her husband for Christmas, was worried about what her friends would think if they knew she was there. At first she said she was working because it was so boring staying home, but later she indicated that while her husband earned enough to send the kids to university, he kept her on a pretty stingy allowance.

The older men and women often expressed dismay that so many young people could find work nowhere else. When some of us finally admitted that we had degrees, they were appalled. The younger ones of us were upset by the number of old people who had no security after working all their lives and were forced to take such low paying and exhausting jobs.

One of the supervisors admitted to some of us that never before had the turnover been so minimal. People were sticking it out because they needed the money. When we were sent home two hours early one day many people complained that they needed the money more than the time off.

One day an old man next to me asked me how



many letters I thought I sorted in a day. I muttered something about as few as possible. He laughed and bet me it was over 5000. So we each counted for five minutes several times and averaged the results. Counting slowed us down but still we averaged at least a hundred every five minutes.

That night I ran off a leaflet I had written with suggestions from a few others sorters. The first paragraph described how most of us were sorting a minimum of 8400 letters a day and earning about a penny for every ten. The leaflet talked about the conditions everyone was familiar with. It described the projects of the working women's workshop and urged women to join us. The leaflet was distributed at the garage door and another side door (used by the upstairs help and the carriers) at the beginning of the shifts.

During the week before I had had several conversations with other women about our oppression as women. When there was no one to talk to I would read a paperback of essays on Women's Liberation. Many people must have noticed because quite a few asked me about the leaflet. Even the men were using the figures to calculate how many letters they would have to sort to pay for their lunch or for a bottle of rye or a turkey for Christmas.

Some of the women though the male sorters were being paid \$1.90 (the wages of porters — all men) while we were getting \$1.65. Some went around challenging the men demanding to know what they were earning.

One of the jobs of the porters was to bundle the sorted mail when our boxes got full. Often we were too fast for them and we would be stuck trying to force letters into overstuffed cubicles. When people learned through the leaflet that the rubber bands were giving the bundlers blisters, many sorters began bundling their own mail. Bundling provided a welcome change from sorting. During the last hour of my last day (Christmas Eve) I was bundling mail when my supervisor came along.

"Hey don't do that, I'll get the boys to do it."

I was so tired and bored I snapped back, "What the hell, do you think just because I'm a woman, I don't find sorting just as boring as you?" He just backed off in surprise, but for the next hour there were bundlers constantly at my elbow.

Because our jobs were so temporary (according to our contracts we could be fired without notice), there wasn't much opportunity to organize any major confrontations on the job. But I do think quite a few people came away with a very different conception of what the movement for women's liberation is all about.



Pat

# meanwhile... outside



Helen

What's this? she asked me. I said it was a leaflet, and then we looked at each other for a while. What sort of a leaflet is it? she asked. It's about child care, I explained, since the title said something about child care. You're not one of them Women's Liberationists? she asked accusingly. I kicked an invisible stone on the pavement and allowed as how I was. She came up closer and fixed me with a reproachful stare: Why aren't you wearing the button then? I had taken off the button because I wasn't allowed to wear it while working and had forgotten to put it on again which now felt like criminal negligence. The button is only a symbol, I said and I don't need a symbol; my heart belongs to women's liberation. You sure? she asked suspiciously. I'm sure. You should wear your button. I'm sorry, I muttered guiltily, next time I'll wear the button. I've wanted to talk to you for a long time, the woman said, because you say some really stupid things. I do? Well, yeah, I probably do. Abortion is murder, she announced in a satisfied tone. Oh? The foetus is alive. Well, yeah, but like, the egg and the sperm, like, even before conception, they're um... well, life, too ya know. It's not the same thing, she said and I thought probably it wasn't. You shouldn't go around killing babies, she said. I said we weren't killing babies, I was quite fond of babies myself, but only we were advocating free abortion on demand. She said that was the same thing, and I said if babies were the same as foetuses, then the egg and the sperm before conception were the same as the foetus, and then there was another awkward silence.

I never wanted any of my babies, she said, and then when I had them I loved them anyway. Everybody doesn't want babies. Some people want babies, I said. Nobody wants babies, she said, nobody. But they have to be made to have 'em and then they love them anyway. Everybody loves babies. She fixed me with a guilt stare again and said, moving even closer: Your mother loved you, didn't she? I didn't want to add lying to all my other sins, so I pressed closer to the wall, hanging my head, and muttered, no, she didn't. The woman looked at me with perplexity and then went away, shaking her head and muttering to herself.

Nobody else came for quite a while. I got as close to the wall as I could hoping no one would come and if they came, they wouldn't notice me. It was cold. I thought if I was James Thurber I could imagine I was Walter Mitty who pretended he was doing all sorts of heroic things, instead of hugging a wall and not handing out leaflets about child care. But I wasn't James Thurber. Well, I could pretend to be James Thurber, pretending to be Walter Mitty, pretending to be... But I couldn't think of any heroic things to be. Instead, I thought it was 20 years after the revolution already and everybody was liberated except me, who had died of pneumonia because I had no money for antibiotics. Three grey haired women were sitting around and talking about the time before the revolution, and they discussed the people who had made it possible. There was that one, the first grey-haired woman said, who died of pneumonia, but I don't remember her name. Some weird name it was, the second grey-haired woman said, one of the many anonymous people who laid down their lives so that we might be free. Many, agreed the third woman, nodding her grey head, but that one who got pneumonia while handing out leaflets at the post office... she was... well, they say she was a *lampenproletariat*, but she had... nobility. Aye, said the first old lady, that's the word... nobility. I stood up a little straighter, brushed the hair out of my mouth, and started rolling a cigarette.

I had taken a birth control pill, a vitamin pill, and a pill for my allergy when Hilda came in to say we were going to distribute leaflets at the post office, so I added a pill for headache. I'm not going, I said. Go and put on your shoes, you're going, she said. I'm not going, I said putting on my shoes. I applied for the \$1.90/hr job instead of the \$1.65/hr job like the leaflet said I should, and so I didn't get any job at all, but nobody cares, and the Hydro is getting cut off because none of us have any money. You drive, Hilda said, I don't have the car today. I'm not going, I said, driving down Powell Street, I went to all sorts of things in the last three weeks and nobody else came and it really makes you feel dumb and what with applying for the job like they said, and nobody caring, I really feel like a sucker. Stop at the office and I'll run in and get the leaflets, Hilda said. I'm not going, I said, it's silly to say we're not competing with men for jobs, we are competing with men for jobs but only the men always win and I'm just a sucker.

There's a parking spot, Hilda said. I'm not going, I said, it's cold and wet and I'll get pneumonia and I haven't got enough money to buy antibiotics. Here you take half the leaflets and stand at this door and I'll go around the other side, Hilda said. I'm not going, I said, I'm not handing out no leaflet I haven't even read and it's probably a rotten leaflet anyway, but Hilda had disappeared.

There was nobody at the door and hardly anyone walking by which was comforting except that my hands were cold already. If nobody came along to hand out leaflets to, I wouldn't have to hand out any leaflets. I was much happier not handing out leaflets than handing out leaflets except that my hands were cold. I stuck them inside my sleeves and was just getting comfortable when a woman came along, and I deemed it my duty to hand her a leaflet, which she took, looking at it suspiciously as if it might be impregnated with a fatal poison.

# pie in the sky

royal commission on women

"Paid vacations for housewives!" So the Vancouver Sun announced the release of the report of the \$3 million, 3 year old royal commission on the status of women. Many of us read with some surprise the recommendations of the Commission: maternity leave with pay, free abortion on demand, a national day-care program, equal job and promotion opportunity, pensions and paid vacations for housewives, guaranteed annual income for all one parent families, an end to sex-typing in the classroom, liberalization of divorce laws, etc., etc. . .

For two days the papers gloated over the promised liberation of women. Those of us who have been fighting so hard for many of these very demands could hardly help but be impressed.

And yet an actual reading of the report gives less reason for optimism. It is hardly surprising that the demands in many ways echo our own. Some of us made submissions to Commission hearings. The commissioners themselves have spent many months listening to accounts of the oppression of women in Montreal and Toronto to angry Indian women in the Yukon. The only surprising thing about the recommendations is that it should have taken three years to document our obvious needs.

In fact, given three years and three million dollars (of tax dollars collected from 2.3 million underpaid working women), the recommendations of the Royal

Commission are remarkably short-sighted. While the commissioners were shocked into recognizing that women are oppressed, they failed somehow to understand the root causes of our oppression. For example, they recommend equal job opportunities and lament the ineffectiveness of the existing legislation which is supposed to guarantee women's right to equal pay for equal work. They argue that women should be admitted to the boards of directors of the major corporations, federal boards, task forces, the Senate. It is hard to believe that they can be so naive. When the recommendations of the Commission were made public, the response of business to the recommended provisions for working women was made quite plain by the president of the Employers' Council of B.C. He promised that the companies would simply stop hiring women. This is no empty threat, as B.C. women laid off in the forest industry after fighting for equal pay can testify.

The federal government itself has been notoriously lax in its hiring and wage policies vis-a-vis women. The question to be asked is why a government closely inter-linked with business and industry would effect laws which will cut off a cheap pool of labor? Why equal pay? Why equal job opportunity? Big business is concerned about profit, not human equality. As women we are oppressed by the kind of society we live in - an economic system based on the exploitation of many by a few powerful owners and a social system dependent on racial, national and sexual chauvinism. A few token women or even a significant minority of women sitting in corporation board rooms will not and cannot liberate women whose exploitation is the key to profits in quite a few industries.

The discussion of the recommendation for a national day-care program also suffers from a similar misunderstanding of the sources of women's oppression. Most women need to be liberated from their almost total and overwhelming responsibility for the socialization of their children. But most parents also love their children and take this responsibility very seriously and will not happily turn their kids over to public institutions if those institutions are to be just one more of those "pu'lic" services over

WOULD SOMEONE PLEASE EXPLAIN WHAT'S GOING ON?!



which they have no real control. Who will run them? What values will be reflected in their programs? Will parents be able to control them, to share ideas with other adults, to see them realized in the day to day functioning of these centres? The care of children has been a haphazard individualized affair for so long that social responsibility for child care will require a lot of thinking, talking and experimenting. Most public institutions are neither flexible nor democratic.

The media coverage of the Commission's report has given a lot of basic demands a wide hearing. As these demands gain wider and wider support it is important to investigate and make clear those basic changes which will be necessary to make the liberation of women a real possibility. We should not be fooled into thinking we have won any major victory in the mere publication of the recommendations of the Commission. We have already seen how limited even legislative reforms can be with the B.C. Human Rights Act (see "Equal Rights", Pedestal, November 1970), the abortion laws and the Ontario Equal Opportunity Act (see story page 9). Given the usual plight of the recommendations of Royal Commissions, there is reason for a certain cynicism about the likely destiny of this report. Traditionally these studies seem to serve to fire the enthusiasm of groups on the move and to keep them quiescent during the following years when the promised changes are supposed to be imminent. All too often, despite the intentions of the liberals who serve on them, these studies end up as mere political ploys to win votes. The pitiful changes wrought by the much touted Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission should serve as a warning to us not to be fooled by mere words.

The liberation of women will take more than a few legislative reforms. Our oppression is basic to the smooth functioning of our society as presently organized. Only an organized and determined women's movement can understand what's necessary and desirable and make it possible. We may gain a few minor improvements in our general condition through the efforts of the Commission, but for the most part it's likely to turn out to be just pie in the sky to assure the ladies that if they'll just be patient they'll all be free bye and bye.





## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES BUT...

The Conservative Government in Ontario in all its benevolent paternalism probably considers itself a jump ahead of the Royal Commission Report, since its *Women's Equal Employment Opportunity Act (Bill 83)* already came into effect Dec. 1, 1970. The Act is supposed to "prohibit discrimination in employment on the grounds only of sex or marital status." (Wage differences were "covered" in 1968 by the Employment Standards Act.)

The main selling points in this Act are 1) the outlawing of discrimination on the basis of sex or marital status in employment practices, and 2) maternity leave of six weeks both before and after delivery.

### DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT

This section covers discrimination in recruitment, promotion, employment agencies, employment classifications, etc. It only applies where six or more people are hired. Then, even where it does apply, virtually every clause states that there should be no discrimination unless "the work cannot be reasonably performed by persons of that sex or marital status." "Reasonably", of course, has no definition, and is ultimately left once again to the discretion of male judges.

The philosophy behind the law is also a negative, prohibitive kind of thing. In no way is it intended to encourage women to move beyond their current roles. It is not a progressive piece of legislation. It states that you can't have "any employment classification or category that ... excludes any person from employment or continued employment on the grounds of sex or marital status..." The important word is "excludes" — you can totally discourage women, but as long as you don't technically "exclude" them, it's OK. Advertising which "expressly limits a position to applicants of a particular sex or marital status" is prohibited. Here again, they say they wouldn't go so far as to deny a woman the chance to apply if she got the idea into her head, but neither would they lift a finger to help. There is no attempt here to support the women's struggle. The only kind of woman this could possibly help is the one who thinks she has made it, or soon will.

A good example of this interpretation can be found in the way major Ontario newspapers have responded with one accord to this new legislation, in their job classifications. Before the new legislation was enforced, the *Globe* and *Mail* went so far as to re-classify its ads under "Jobs of Interest to Men", "Jobs of Interest to Women", "Help Wanted Male and Female", and the usual neuter Teaching classification. Presumably this was to prepare readers for the great shock coming Dec. 1. But they might as well have left it as it was, since December issues are headed "Help Wanted Male", "Help Wanted Female", and "Help Wanted", with the two sexual categories prefaced with this warning:

"The 1970 Women's Equal Opportunity Act prohibits discrimination because of sex or marital status. With certain restrictions, these occupations are considered more attractive to persons of the same sex than the other. Advertisements are placed for convenience of readers. Such things are not intended to exclude persons of either sex in violation of the Act." Ontario Women's Bureau, Department of Labour, 14 Victoria Street, Toronto 21A, Telephone 563-3131

The *London Free Press* has followed a similar policy, although the only change there has been the inclusion of a paragraph very much like the one in the *Globe*. A statement from the Women's Bureau to employers and unions advises that "separate help wanted columns — Jobs Primarily of Interest to Men (Women) — may be continued for convenience sake but must not be restrictive in effect." This seems to be where

the newspapers took their cue. The whole concept is an insult to women, assuming as it does that certain kinds of jobs, with their characteristic low pay and other limitations, are the kind of thing that women especially groove on. Classifying managerial and higher paying jobs, on the other hand, as being "of interest to men", is, more importantly, in their interest. The main concern of this legislation is to leave things basically undisturbed, with that interest protected.



... and lady jocks?

### MATERNITY LEAVE:

The second provision is for maternity leave to a total of twelve weeks, without dismissal, and with full rights to seniority and benefits previously accumulated. This is all very lovely, except it does not apply where fewer than 25 people are employed, and it only applies to women who have been at that job for a year prior to their leave. It provides no income whatsoever for that woman during the 12 weeks, when she will need it most. The Royal Commission on the Status of Women, incidentally, recommends that women receive 18 weeks of maternity leave, with pay, from the Unemployment Insurance Commission.

The prerogative for taking the time off may rest with either the employer or the employee. When her doctor provides proof that she is indeed pregnant, the woman may demand the time off. She may return earlier if her doctor agrees, but during her pregnancy she may be asked to leave at any time when her employer says that "the duties of her position cannot reasonably be performed by a pregnant woman." The leave cannot be extended beyond six weeks post natal. In other words, if the employer does not want a pregnant woman around, he can easily get rid of her, but if she requires more than six weeks to recuperate, she loses her job.

The Women's Bureau says that "the intent of the legislation is that the employee shall return to the same position or a comparable one in terms of work setting, level of responsibility, and remuneration" (their emphasis), but we do not have any assurance that the woman will really get the same job back, although they are obliged to pay her at the same rate.

Certainly the intent of this section is not to make the pregnancy a pleasant one, since you are required to live in most cases for at least 3 months without any income. The main concern expressed is that the employees, who are accustomed to freely exploiting women, shall not be disturbed.

An indication of the way this Act is being received was brought out in the *London Free Press* of Dec. 16 when the Kent County Board of Education decided to ask its solicitor how the new legislation affected its relationship with its female teachers. The fear was ostensibly that teachers would ask for twelve weeks off, which would disturb the "teacher-student relationship". The trustees' council is making a

presentation to the ministers of education and labour "outlining the unhappy effects of the new legislation on education." In the past many school boards have had a policy of requiring a pregnant teacher to resign (usually with no privilege to return, except if re-hired) at Christmas or the end of the school year. The decision handed down in this area will be significant. If no exemption from the law is made for School Boards, it could make the boards even more cautious than they already are in hiring women; and with the surplus of teachers that we have in this province, this could be crucial to many women.

The problem of enforcing even the extremely weak terms of this law is enormously complicated. The Department has decreed that the penalty for breaking it shall be a maximum of \$800 (for an individual), or \$3000 (for a corporation, etc.). Only the well-informed will know about the complaint process, and of them, only the brave and wealthy will be likely to undertake a formal complaint. Most will run out of resources after the first round. The bureaucracy outlined takes several pages more to describe than the actual terms of the legislation. The law is to be administered by the Department of Labour Women's Bureau. Failing that, we move up to a board appointed by the Minister; and, finally, even this decision can be taken to Court of Appeal. This could take many, many months. One member of London Women's Liberation has lodged an appeal against the *London Free Press* and phoned the Women's Bureau to find out when she could expect some action. She was told that no estimate could be made, and got the impression that it could take almost literally forever.



The Mother Truckers moving furniture in Manhattan.

We cannot rely on the government to enforce even this kind of minimal legislation. Because of this, and because of the limitations of the Act even when enforced, we should encourage women to include specific benefits such as maternity pay, in their contracts, where they have unions, and to organize unions where they do not exist. We cannot expect that many women will learn about these new laws and procedures, so we must explain to them what is happening.

Finally, the last straw has to be Section 33, Subsection 1a: *The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations, exempting any class of employers or employees from the application of this Act or the regulations or any provision thereof.* Of course, we are expected to conclude that this will be handled with discretion, and will not contradict the intent of the law; but the power to nullify the Act is still there. This clause makes it in fact a kind of War Measures Act for women, that can be put into effect at any time at the wish of the Government. This prerogative could be used, no doubt, in the event of some "emergency" such as "massive unemployment". Even the Royal Commission notes that "during the Depression there were some restrictions placed on the employment of married women who were not self-supporting." Legislation such as Bill 83 provides the ideal framework in which to rigidify the tendency to squeeze women out of jobs during periods of high unemployment, such as we are presently facing.

This Act is an attempt to hold the line, to reinforce many existing practices, and to provide only the illusion of creating greater opportunities for women, while protecting the positions of their bosses.

by Leucen  
with help from Kathy Kopinak  
Elise Stoesser  
Pat Dewdney

## the feminine touch

My secretarial course is in many ways the least painful one in Regina. The stuff we are put through doesn't compare to the horror stories we hear about the private "Reliance" and "Success" schools. In these schools the student pays according to the length of time she can stick it out. The pressure is put on to get the students to stay longer and longer in order to get more money out of them.

The course I am taking is a post-high school course in a high school. It is paid for by public school taxes with a nominal registration fee. For some reason, partly high entrance requirements and lack of publicity, it seems to be those who could afford tuition who end up in this almost-free course.



The typewriter with the feminine touch.

Ailsa Rands

Because it is in a high school, the rules and regulations are those for the whole school and therefore not specifically aimed at secretarial students (unlike the rules at the private schools which stress dress, poise, loyalty, etc.). Of course these things — proper dress, poise, loyalty, etc. — are stressed, but more through our texts — the content of the shorthand we practice every day, the content of the copy we type over and over again to increase our speed.

In our communications class we learn how to write business letters with the psychology of letting the reader think the company is doing something for him so as to enable the company to get something out of him.

We are given topics to talk on for a minute and a half on the spot. We are told whether to agree with the subject or not. This is emphasized as an important skill to learn — talking in favor of things you don't agree with. One of the girls in the class was given the topic, "We don't need women's liberation." It was interesting that the teacher was assuming that every one of us would have trouble speaking against women's liberation, but the speaker was patted on the head and given a chocolate for speaking so well against what she knew was right. My mind immediately flipped back to the many times we'd been told of the importance of loyalty to the boss and the company. It all fitted very nicely.

The men teachers constantly crack jokes about boyfriend, tease those with engagement rings, tell to women aspiring for MRS degrees, etc. etc. One woman teacher spent a shorthand class telling us that we would naturally want to be placed in an office with lots of men. She went on to point out how picky and petty women are, how easily the jealousy — naturally bred in an office full of women — could ruin a good job.

Another woman teacher, when telling us about work training opportunities, described one particular job as being ideal because of the young rugged boss.

We learn that the interests of the company come first. We must keep in good health, visit our doctors regularly, not for our sakes but so that we don't miss too much work. We are told that it is a privilege to get a job, that our bosses do us a favor to hire us in the first place. No doubt it would be considered quite unmannerly to question pay, working conditions, etc. on the job.



The boycott  
of Cunningham's  
is continuing —  
BUT  
WE NEED IDEAS

about how to  
make our  
Campaign more  
forceful —

If you have any  
thoughts on  
what we can do:  
guerilla action,  
Subversion, etc

Why not let us  
know??  
or just show &  
DO IT!

# SPEAKING UP

I'll never get used to the idea that a woman has the earning power of a third of that of a man, even though she is expected to dish out the same amount for rent, food and more for clothing than a man.

In our modern pushbutton world very few jobs actually need pure muscle power. In other words, a woman could be trained for most jobs in the same time as a man. But even though women may apply for various types of training and jobs, their applications mysteriously keep disappearing, and that leaves jobs open for them with low pay, except for a very few positions which are open for an exceptionally few women who have to show about three times as much training and ability as a man, and (of course) look young and attractive.

It is an effective, ages-old technique to keep "women in their place," namely by economic suppression. Through history it has changed a little in its application: In the old days, women got married young, had many children and stayed put — happy or not. Divorce was incredible, there was no welfare, and employment didn't pay enough for her existence.

Now women have the same basic education as men. There are plenty of jobs for them, and there is welfare. Divorce laws have changed, and divorcees and unwed mothers are more respected in society. It is easier for a mistreated wife to leave her husband.

Man's happy time is over. He's got to behave, quit running around with other women and quit getting drunk and beating her up — or else she won't stay.

But men are still in charge of governing this earth and enforcing the laws in our society, and they will always be, as long as women keep having babies. As children need their mother's love and care full time, she cannot dedicate her time going into training for politics. Women trust their husbands to run the world, and look what they do to themselves!

Men make sure they got us where they want us. They give lip-service only to equal rights and leave loopholes in the minimum wage law, very little they enforce the law by which a man is supposed to support his children. This accounts for 85% of deserted wives receiving no support for their children, 95% of unmarried fathers not supporting their offspring, while they as single men live quite well on an average \$3/hr wage. Welfare "takes care" of her and the kids. 90% of these women are better off on this than trying to work. On \$1.50/hr average wage it is easy to figure out how much she has left for rent and food, after taxes, dues, medical, busfare, babysitter, dentist, prescription etc. is deducted. Of course she can't afford a lawyer, and until recently not even a divorce.

All she has in her existence is a dingy basement suite in a rundown neighborhood unless she is one of

a few lucky ones to get into a low rental housing project. She'll just have enough food to get by, if she knows how to budget she has a little meat several times a week. Clothing and furniture of course are second hand. Entertainment comes when a boyfriend takes her out.

In her loneliness and poor living standard she has an increased emotional need to be loved and cherished. Naturally she falls easily for a man's line: "I'll take care of you," and gives what he wants her to — as long as he wants her. After that he can throw her away and seek another easy mark as her. Of course she looks for a husband and her need for security and companionship drives her into a quick marriage often with disastrous results. But she is willing to put up with a lot of unhappiness because when there is an argument, she will hear it over and over again: "I take care of your brats," and "I fished you out of the gutter," and "you never had it so soft!"

So, economic suppression is doing an effective job for the modern man: to master the female. Do we continue to put up with this? Or should we stick together to fight and get a few laws enforced to get women out of their rut? Should you (who may be sitting pretty with an angel of a husband) remain silent while your sisters are suffering? — I don't think so, and I am speaking up!

Ingrid Szabo

I have just realized that the stakes are myself  
I have no other  
ransom money, nothing to break or barter but my life  
my spirit measured out, in bits, spread over  
the roulette table, I recoup what I can

nothing else to shove under the nose of the maitre de jeu  
nothing to thrust out the window, no white flag  
this flesh all I have to offer, to make the play with  
this immediate head, what it comes up with, my move  
as we slither over this board, stepping always  
(we hope) between the lines

The value of an individual life, a credo they taught us  
to instill fear, and inaction, "you only live once"  
a fog in our eyes, we are  
endless as the sea, not separate, we die  
a million times a day, we are born  
a million times, each breath life and death:  
get up, put on your shoes, get  
started, someone will finish

Tribe  
an organism, one flesh, breathing joy as the stars  
breathe the destiny down on us, get  
going, join hands, see to business, thousands of sons  
will see to it when you fall, you will grow  
a thousand times in the bellies of your sisters

avoid the folk  
who find Bonnie and Clyde too violent  
who see the blood but not the energy form  
they love us and want us to practice birth control  
they love us and want the Hindus to kill their cows  
they love us and have a colorless tasteless powder  
which is the perfect synthetic food . . .

Left to themselves people  
grow their hair.  
Left to themselves they  
take off their shoes.  
Left to themselves they make love  
sleep easily  
share blankets, dope and children  
they are not lazy or afraid  
they plant seeds, they smile, they  
speak to one another. The word  
coming into its own: touch of love  
on the brain, the ear.

We return with the sea, the tides  
we return as often as leaves, as numerous  
as grass, gentle, insistent, we remember  
the way our babes toddle barefoot thru the cities of the universe.

Every time you pick the sport for a be-in  
a demonstration, a march, a rally,  
you are choosing the ground  
for a potential battle.

You are still calling the shots.  
Pick your terrain with that in mind.  
Remember the old gang rules:  
Stick to your neighborhood, don't let them lure you  
to Central Park, every time, I would hate  
to stumble bloody out of that park to find help.  
Central Park West, of Fifth Avenue, which would you  
choose?

go to love-ins  
with incense, flowers, food, and a plastic bag  
with a damp cloth in it, for tear gas, wear no jewelry  
wear clothes you can move in easily, wear no glasses  
contact lenses,  
earrings for pierced ears are especially hazardous

try to be clear  
in front, what you will do if it comes  
to trouble  
if you're going to try to split stay out of the center  
don't stampee or panic others  
don't waver between active and passive resistance  
know your limitations, bear contempt  
neither for yourself, nor any of your brothers  
NO ONE WAY WORKS, it will take all of us  
shoving at the thing from all sides  
to bring it down.

## revolutionary letters revolutiona letters revolutionary letters rev

Diane DiPrima

advocating  
the overthrow of government is a crime  
overthrowing it is something else  
altogether, it is sometimes called  
revolution.  
but don't kid yourself: government  
is not where it's at: it's only  
a good place to start:

1. kill head of Dow Chemical
2. destroy plant
3. MAKE IT UNPROFITABLE FOR THEM

to build again.  
i.e., destroy the concept of money  
as we know it, get rid of interest,  
savings, inheritance  
(Found's money, as dated coupons that come in the mail  
to everyone, and are void in 30 days  
is still a good idea)  
or, let's start with no money at all and invent it

if we need it  
or, mimeograph it and everyone  
print as much as they want  
and see what happens

declare a moratorium on debt  
the Continental Congress did  
"on all debts public and private"

& no one "owns" the land  
it can be held

for use, no man holding more  
than he can work, himself and family working

let no one work for another  
except for love, and what you make  
above your needs be given to the tribe  
a Common-Wealth

None of us knows the answers, think about  
these things.  
The day will come when we have to know  
the answers.

the vortex of creation is the vortex of destruction  
the vortex of artistic creation is the vortex of self destruction  
the vortex of political creation is the vortex of flesh destruction  
flesh is in the fire, it curls and terrible swags  
fat is in the fire, it drips and sizzling sings  
bones are in the fire  
they crack tellingly in  
subtle hieroglyphs of oracle  
charcoal singed  
the smell of your burning hair  
for every revolutionary must at last will his own destruction  
rooted as he is in the past he sets out to destroy

When you seize Columbia, when you  
seize Paris, take  
the media, tell the people what you're doing  
what you're up to and why and how you mean  
to do it, how they can help, keep the news  
coming, steady, you have 70 years  
of media conditioning to combat, it is a wall  
you must get through, somehow, to reach  
the instinctive man, who is struggling like a plant  
for light, for air

when you seize a town, a campus, get hold of the power  
stations, the water, the transportation,  
forget to negotiate, forget how  
to negotiate, don't wait for DeGaulle or Kirk  
to abdicate, they won't, you are not  
"demonstrating" you are fighting  
a war, fight to win, don't wait for Johnson or  
Humphrey or Rockefeller, to agree to your terms  
take what you need, "it's free  
because it's yours!"



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## NEWSPAPERS

A new workshop, called to fill the educational needs of women in the Caucus met Tuesday night. We found that the needs were very different among us, but we managed to agree on a basic form. A tutorial form would discuss the basic skills of political analysis and current affairs. This would be led by someone familiar with these fields. A second form would be unstructured discussion with subjects to be decided on by the groups (hopefully the groups can be small - about eight women - and meet around the city). Some interests expressed were: the family, women in history, Marxian economics, and discussion of specific books, e.g. Sexual Politics.

The two groups plus others who are interested could hopefully meet one Thursday a month to discuss a specific topic, e.g. the Quebec situation.

Anyone interested in the tutorial form or in more information please call Carol at 298-5977. The group discussions will begin Wednesday, Jan. 6 at the Caucus at 8:00. The agenda is to propose bibliographies and/or specific questions you would like to see discussed. All are welcome and the beginning groups will be formed.

JANUARY CALENDAR				MEETINGS AT 511 CARRALL ST. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.		
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					Happy New Year!	2
PEDESTAL <sup>3</sup> 11:30 INDOCHINA CONFERENCE MEETING 2:29	UBC - 8:00 <sup>4</sup> 2449 B10-SC1	WORKING WOMEN 8:00 <sup>5</sup>	POLITICAL EDUCATION WORKSHOP 8:00	INFORMAL DISCUSSION 8:00 <sup>6</sup>	8	9
PEDESTAL <sup>10</sup> 11:30	CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE 8:00 UBC - 8:00 2449 B10-SC1	WORKING WOMEN 8:00 <sup>12</sup>		INFORMAL DISCUSSION 8:00 <sup>13</sup>	15	16
PEDESTAL <sup>17</sup> 11:30	UBC - 8:00 <sup>18</sup> 2449 B10-SC1	WORKING WOMEN - 8:00 <sup>19</sup>		INFORMAL DISCUSSION 8:00 <sup>20</sup>	22	23
PEDESTAL <sup>24</sup> 11:30 TBA. 31	CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE 8:00 UBC - 8:00 2449 B10-SC1	WORKING WOMEN - 8:00 <sup>26</sup>		GENERAL MEETING 8:00 <sup>27</sup>	28	30
					PUBLIC MEETING WOMEN IN THE WORK FORCE 8am 511 CARRALL MEN WELCOME!	29

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