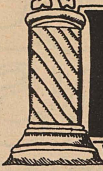




a women's
liberation
newspaper



PEDESTAL

Vancouver BC.

Volume III No. 6

June, 1971

15

FASHION



YOU AND SOMETHING YOU'D
with stuff on And it's YOU
Libraries, department stores, &c.



photo by Randy

All SEASONS PARK



On Friday, May 28, a group of mostly young and unemployed people (lots of women) occupied the site of the proposed Four Seasons high-rise development. They are building a park named All Seasons Park to support their demand that the property which is at the entrance to Stanley Park be used as park property. Among the newly-planted shrubs and flowers are little benches, a sandbox and other facilities especially for children.

Nine people were arrested and seven charged when the fence was torn down at the beginning of the occupation. The Four Seasons developers have said that the people can stay and develop their park and presumably no one will be charged with trespassing on private property until the bulldozers go in.

Neighborhood people are getting interested and donations of shrubs, plants, money are coming in from older persons living in the area. The NDP voted at their convention to support the move.

Topsil and a lot more work are needed if the park development is to become permanent. The occupiers are planning to stay indefinitely in order to stop the construction of the hotel complex.

Sandringham . . .

The following letter was sent to various unions and other groups, including Women's Caucus, by the 28 women on strike at Sandringham private hospital in Victoria. Hopefully, the meeting they propose will come up with plans for action in support of their struggle for job security, \$2/hour, and an 8-hour day. Watch the Pedestal for further news. Meanwhile, call or write Neil Cook, President, National Nursing Homes (1055 W. Hastings 688-9971) and express your support for the strikers.

Dear sisters:

We are writing to you to put the question — would you be willing to act on an Ad Hoc Committee to support our strike, to pool all support, both labor and sympathizers, in order to deal equitably with Mr. Cook and National Nursing Homes Ltd. against whom we have been on strike for 7 months.

We are new to the Trade Union Movement and are not totally aware of all the barriers and jurisdictional problems, etc. involved in asking such a question. There is one thing which is crystal clear to us, however, and that is that labor has formed an alliance across such barriers against the Mediation Commission and we have respected their position and abided by our promise not to go before, or apply for binding arbitration. We see no reason why such an alliance can not be formed informally to deal with a very big common enemy of labor, who has thumbed his nose at the labor movement and has successfully beaten unions in the past.

We believe, if our common brotherhood of purpose ever meant anything, it is time for it to be made manifest as it seems obvious to us that Cook and

National can not be beaten without extraordinary action and we are requesting it. It would behoove all unions to see this adversary (and friend of government's) put in his place and such an alliance could turn the tide on the issue.

The effort could be a history-making turning point for the organization of the service industry which so badly needs unionization.

We believe organizations might put aside differences and come together on the question preserving autonomy by leaders coming as individuals rather than official delegates to share their experience, knowledge and brain power and would, of course, informally enlist the support of the group they represent for whatever action could be defined as necessary once back in their own camp.

We are assessing the feasibility of such a plan and your immediate reply would facilitate a future meeting date being set.

The gathering can, when they come together, choose a chairman, or maybe, we can call on a clergyman who has been supportive of our local effort.

Your reply will decide the outcome. Please reply as soon as possible to

Yours fraternally,
Ray Hornsby
Chairman

Sandringham Strike Committee

P.S. A possible meeting place would be in Vancouver within 2 weeks maybe for one day. You could suggest an approach or agenda. It can be honestly stated that you will not be the first to agree if you do. Thank you.



The
Lettuce Boycott
is OVER...
at least until October

40% of the growers
have signed contracts
40% are negotiating
(apparently in good faith)

Lettuce currently on sale
is mostly locally grown



Lady Lumberjacks Direct Logs with Peavies and a Fike Pole

Women in Trade Unions are being gradually phased out, by the Companies hiring men when a woman terminates her employment.

I was asked to write about a hard fought grievance at Pacific Veneer and Hardboard (Canadian Forest Products).

I would like to digress with a little history leading up to the main subject which will show how much the female workers in the forest industry have been exploited.

When I started my employment at Pacific Veneer in 1946, half of the work force were women. We were paid a lower rate than the men. Hallelujah! In 1956 came Plywood Job Evaluation; this would equalize our rates of pay. No sir!! Management would not buy evaluation for females so most of our jobs remained negotiated. Where was our union leadership?

Our 1966 June 15th contract eliminated the female rate clause. This would give some female job classifications an extra 13 cents. On August 1st 1966 management notified the union that they would cease hiring females. Where was the union leadership?

By 1969 with a militant plant committee of 5 men and 2 women we could foresee many of the female jobs, which were a sub department, being eliminated through automation and technological change. In conjunction with our local union, we negotiated the elimination of this sub department. This opened all job postings to females.

One of our female members bid on a job running a fork lift truck. The job was awarded to a male with less plant seniority. The plant committee started the grievance procedure. The company called in the Factory and Elevator Inspection Branch of the Dept. of Labor, Re: Lifting by Female Employees.

A 1936 piece of legislation, revised in 1945, says: Regulation 3: Women shall not be required by the employer to lift more than 35 pounds in the course of their regular work.

Regulation 4: Women shall be prohibited by the employer from doing any type of overhead lifting or stacking.

The inspector was to report on the lifting (pushing) of a propane tank on the fork lift truck and two other jobs. Needless to say, he ruled in favor of the company.

The plant committee won the grievance at the fourth step when we proved women were driving fork lifts at two other plywood plants.

The same girl, after driving the fork lift for a while and proving her competency, bid on an Assistant Hot Press Supervisor job. The company again claimed she'd be lifting over 35 pounds (metal tubular trays). The committee counteracted by claiming safety comes first and that the trays should be moved by electric work-savers that she would be operating.

After four steps of grievance procedure, prostration and arbitration (fourteen months!), the three-man arbitration board ruled unanimously in favor of the grievor.

This remarkable girl worked on the job for 6 months to the satisfaction of her supervisors. Once again the company called in the factories inspector and once again he ruled in favor of the company.

Our local president, who during the time of the said grievances and arbitration was our plant chairman, obtained legal assistance. The company had to finally concede and put the grievor back on the job which was rightfully hers.

During the arbitration, the Forest Industrial Relations lawyer [F.I.R. is the employers' organization] and management claimed the female sub department was eliminated because of the Human Rights Act. Who are they kidding? They've ceased hiring women.

Marjorie Storm
Recording Secretary
International Woodworkers of America Local 1-357

The boycott of Cunninghams began last August in support of the women on strike at Hosken's, a Cunninghams subsidiary. After a year, the company still refuses to settle with the strikers, who are fighting for a union contract and the job security and other benefits that go with that.

Meanwhile, the contract at Western Wholesale Drug, another Cunningham subsidiary, has expired. The company won't negotiate seriously with them either. The workers there have voted in favor of strike action, and they have taken the stand that they will not sign a contract until the company signs with the Hosken strikers.

The clerks in the Cunningham stores have also begun to organize. But again they have run head on into the anti-union policy of the company.

women of the woods

Marge Storm won as Recording Secretary at the last I.W.A. elections, on this slate:

TO I.W.A. WOMEN WORKERS!

The women workers in the forest industry are discriminated against.

Job Security

The jobs which women previously held in the industry are being eliminated and no new ones are being made available.

Hiring

Women are no longer being hired in most plants since the elimination of female rates in 1966.

Job Categories

Women are restricted to a few menial job categories and due to technological change these are diminishing.

These problems can be overcome by:

Open Seniority

Women would have the right to bid on any job they feel they are capable of doing.

Hiring

Agreements that hiring will be done on a first come first hired basis. No discrimination because of sex of applicant.

Female Departments

Separate departments for females must be eliminated.

*Many of these can be negotiated at Plant and Local levels.

Other solutions to these problems could be:

Resolutions covering women's working and hiring conditions submitted to Regional convention, B.C. Federation of Labor convention, and Canadian Labor Congress.

Promotion of consolidation of women's problems with those of other locals with the goal of becoming an effective power with representation of females from each plant.

WE NEED LEADERSHIP WHO WILL GIVE
EQUAL ATTENTION
TO FEMALE ISSUES

"357 FOR CHANGE" CANDIDATES CAN PROVIDE
THIS LEADERSHIP

But...
the
CUNNINGHAMS
BOYCOTT
is still on...

The new ownership of the Cunningham empire (Toronto-based Koffler) has not changed the traditional Cunningham attitude to unions. (When Western Wholesale Drug was originally organized, the union had to take Cunningham to court for illegally intimidating employees.) The new ownership has not overlooked the striking women. They are no less annoyed and frustrated by the persistence of the Hosken women. Their pettiness is reflected in their latest tactic to harass the women picketing the Hosken's warehouse. They dumped foul-smelling fish fertilizer in the area where the women continue to picket day after day.

All that has changed is that the women face an enemy that's bigger than ever. They need our support more than ever.

I take my



pen in hand

NATURAL CHILDBIRTH

General Delivery,
Lytton, B.C.,
May 17, 1971.

Pedestal,

Just a brief note which is to express my pleasure in reading your May issue; it is a paper that truly is speaking to women and to the men who take the time to read it. The attitudes expressed and subjects covered are far more appropriate to the overall fight for a freer and more humane society than most information found in papers that claim to represent the problems of women. I might add that most of the newspapers I have previously read are from S. California. I plan to subscribe to your paper as soon as I have a permanent address.

I have a specific request now and I am hopeful that you will have some information. Although I have been living outside of Vancouver for some time, I anticipate returning to the Vancouver area in late June. I am expecting a child in August and I am of course quite anxious to make arrangements. First of all, do you know of any doctors who are progressive and hopefully have worked with women desiring to utilize the LaMaze method of childbirth? Secondly, are there any hospitals in the Vancouver area where the infants remain with their mothers and are not placed in nurseries? Any other information regarding the facilities available would be most appreciated.

Thank you for your time and keep up the good work with your paper.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Cumalander

Note: If anyone has information on this, let either Kathleen or us know. And if you have had experiences and information on childbirth, natural or otherwise, write in and let us know about it - we would like to do an issue on childbirth and maternal care.

FROM BERKELEY

Dear Sisters,
I come from Montreal, Quebec and I am living in the Berkeley area for a while.

Of all the women's newspapers I have seen yet, yours is definitely my favorite. I specially enjoyed your children's issue.

I am sending you a subscription for one year.

Sisterhood is powerful,
Marie Heald



FROM LONDON

182 Pentonville Road,
London, N. 1.

Dear comrades,

Having just seen a reprint of your article on Helen Keller and her writings in *Prairie Fire* I gather that the position of the *Pedestal* is quite close to that which we advance in *Socialist Woman*. I am therefore sending you a copy of the first issue under the new format as national paper of the Socialist Woman Groups, which are springing up in various parts of England - and soon we hope, Britain and further. If you would be willing to give our paper an ad in yours it would help us and we consider such international links to be of vital importance, especially in view of the particular task of combatting feminism and reformism in the ranks of the Women's Lib Movement, and building an internationalist revolutionary socialist consciousness among women.

Best wishes -
Linda Fuyd

ON TEACHING

Editor, The Pedestal

Dear Editor:

Please excuse the stationery. Spontaneity is worth a thousand sheets of hand-smudged linen.

I have just finished reading *Who Are You Today* in Vol. III No. 5 and had to make some comments:

1) Schizoid Comment (2 parts)
a) I dislike the intimation that schools generally are as hung up as suggested on the Sausage Machine concept.

Your author speaks of the "established order" in "the school", and how it conflicts with her desire to let the kids "be".

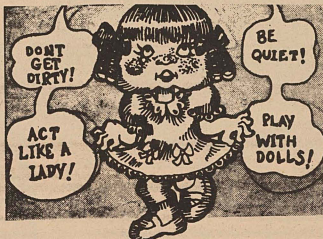
it's getting to the wrong people. I'm sure Ken Aitchison, the *B.C. Teacher* editor, would be glad to reprint it, where it would do some (more) good.

2) To The Author:

Your head is in the right place. You like kids, you like teaching, you're at least partially qualified.

The only way the system is going to change is if people get into it and change it.

You can't stop Vietnam unless you can become President (as one person). Teaching, however, is done by teachers. Nobody forces these duds to be right, they just came that way. I know a few administrators who have nothing but



She can't possibly think that this is the general rule, and that only the odd enlightened substitute, as a semi-outsider, has ideas in conflict with this concept. I have been teaching for five years now, and have many friends in the same business. None of them thinks in the terms she outlines. If they did, they wouldn't be friends, they'd be acquaintances. I admit that these clowns exist, but take strong exception to people suggesting that this is generally the case, particularly in the media.

b) I am concerned with those who still attempt to compartmentalize kids and subjects into neat little boxes. When I see comments such as those in the article, I am disposed to wish that they would get to where they will do some good - rather than merely being shotgunned out to the world at large, I'd like to see this article printed in a professional journal - the *B.C. Teacher* for example.

You may take exception to this, but the most rigid people I have run into in the teaching business have been women, although I am sure few of them read your paper. Interestingly enough, I can't remember meeting a woman teacher who was what I would laughingly refer to as a "Woman's Lib Freak", and also not a superior teacher, with her head in the right place, re regimentation, boxes, and the other disgusting things that sometimes happen in some schools.

What I'm trying to say is, it's an interesting and worthwhile article, but

headaches trying to derigidify teachers. It's one of the few places left where, when you see how things are being screwed up, you can change them.

The moral to the story is: work your ass off to get a Mickey mouse EB certificate, or whatever it takes, and get in and do it. Then stay on top of it and keep doing it.

3) To The Editor

I realize you're working against the same thing, but one really big problem re teacher rigidity is the little old ladies in the business who think only of flying out the door at 3:30 and getting supper on for hubby. They get hung up and ultra frustrated because they don't like the job, but can't quit because the family has become dependent on a second income of 7 or 8000 a year. Yet, they obviously consider it a second income (for the family) and a second job (for themselves), the first being wife, mother, and the 3500 other things wives are presently expected to be.

Maybe someday you'll effect a change on all that. For the time being, if you could get my comments to the author of the article, I'd appreciate it. Thanks.

Yours sincerely,

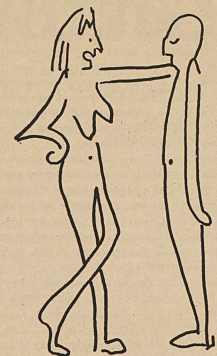
Pete Sniidal

P.S. I love your paper, but my wife never reads it. She spent the 22 years before I met her getting her head wrecked into thinking it's cool to be a dumb broad and not read things. How many more of them are there out there?



RE: DEGRADATION

To whom it may concern



I SOMETIMES WONDER
IF YOU'RE THE RIGHT ONE
FOR ME TO BE
SUBMISSIVE TO...

Staff List

Jean Rands, Helen Potrebko, Carole Phillips, Anne Hayes, Evelyn Berry, Pat Uhl, Anne Goldstein Barbara Todd, Elizabeth Briemberg, Marge Storm, Beverley Davies, Colette French, Lynn Ruschinsky, Jane MacDermid, Margaret Benston, Irene Allard, Heather MacAndrew, Schroeder

Suggestions for future special issues:

- Poverty, and the specific ways it affects women;
- Childbirth and maternal care in hospitals; and
- Hospitals- hierarchies, and the women within them: Patients & Staff

GREATER VICTORIA

LOW INCOME GROUP

932 Balmoral Street,
Victoria, B.C.

Senator David Croll, Croll Commission,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Sir:

The Greater Victoria Low Income Group urges your Commission to release an honest evaluation of the findings of your study on poverty.

Poor people all across Canada have exposed their personal lives in co-operation with your commission, as well as the Mario Carota Study in Alienation of the Poor. Their co-operation was based on the trust that an honest evaluation would be given and their poverty eased because of it.

The reasons for the resignation of four of your staff members have disillusioned the public about such costly studies. The four men who resigned are to be highly commended. Your study alone (to date) has cost well over one million dollars.

We don't need such studies, "by fat cats", to tell us the causes of poverty, and if the truth were released all Canadians will know that your study should have been on big business, large corporations (especially of the United States domination) and the affluent society in general.

Are the government's reasons for formulating such studies, not more than a means of pacifying the "over-taxed" public, and the angry poor?

We realize the total truth is ugly and frightening and evidence of this is the formation of over 300 poverty groups in Canada who will not be satisfied with

watered down solutions. If the report is acted upon honestly by the government we will see equal distribution of wealth, ending needless poverty in our country of rich resources, and vast wealth.

Watered down reports will not dilute the tempers of the poor in the militant poverty groups.

Sincerely,
Mrs. W. Olszewski,
Vice-President



AN OPEN
LETTER

An Open Letter to Senator Croll, Chairman, Senate Committee on Poverty.

The Honourable? David A. Croll:

May I be the first to offer you the award of the north end of a horse going south? It is an appropriate award for a man of your virtue.

Because of your interference and manipulation, the senate committee on poverty report is a series of biased deceitful documents; an instrument to stabilize the status quo of the 'Establishment', of which you are an integral member. I charge you with never honestly seeking solutions to poverty, but only with seeking all the glory and ego-tripping that would accompany the solution.

Many people will be concerned with the cost of the alleged study, and it is high. I am disturbed at the greater cost of your cold, calculated decision to not discuss the real or root causes of poverty. They would be, of course, shattering to the foundations of institutions, governments, the economy



and the life style of people like you.

The cost of your treachery will be borne by people like myself and my children. We will continue to live on the periphery of the "good life". Denied the right to education, dignity, employment, and sometimes even shelter and food, our lives will continue to be controlled by bureaucrats and

girls and choose the best looking ones. We refused to allow such overt degradation. We were also told by Miss McLeod that one of the girls had the job.

Wanting to confirm this, the girl called the employer, Gassy Jack's, and was unbelievably hassled. The management wanted a girl with waitressing experience, someone who could serve cocktails, someone who could operate their particular kind of cash register. The girl could start right away, she had two years experience in waitressing, experience in serving cocktails, and she also knew how to operate many kinds of cash registers. She was perfectly capable of all those things but was curly told, "I'll call you later, thank you."

WOMEN ARE NOT CATTLE TO BE LINED UP AND THE BEST ONES YOU WANT PICKED OUT. THEY'RE HUMAN BEINGS AND SHOULD BE TREATED LIKE HUMAN BEINGS.

WHEN WILL THIS KIND OF DEGRADATION STOP?

Isn't it about time we all did something to stop discrimination towards all people, not just what happened to us?

While the incompetence of MacLise (City Coordinator of Job Opportunities for Transient Youth) was disgusting and the hurt of the girls was equally so, what we are deploring is the treatment of women in this situation and the way in which a city official and department condones the kind of degradation that occurred.

Yours sincerely
Guyrene Johnson

plutocrats, even as the privileged moneyed few will abound in the wealth of Canada, consuming vast quantities of her resources, far beyond their needs.

To the balance of the senate committee, I would award a slimy black rose. This award to condemn their acceptance of your tyranny.

To your ex-staff with the fortitude to resign rather than succumb to your dictates, I can give only my deepest respect - for I am poor.

The only viable solutions to poverty will involve questions, and answers about our taxation system, foreign investment, reclamation of Canadian resources, redistribution of wealth, control of industry, responsive government, and citizen participation (in fact, not in principle). Then one must delve into social values, the educational system, environmental control, global policy, civil rights and equal rights for women. Add to that new priorities to involve housing, health and welfare, and... well, there's not much right with our government, is there?

Let you be overwhelmed, let me share in your shame. I cringe to admit that I, for even one brief second, had faith in you and the outdated, archaic, decrepit assembly you represent would ever have the ability to even ask the right questions, let alone find the answers. But I did. And my rewards? Humiliation, degradation, welfare... in short... poverty.

Mrs. Bobbi Spark,
1130-49 Montreal St.,
Kingston, Ontario.
Single parent for family of five -
all condemned!

WE KNOW we're Not Perfect, But...

The Pedestal collective urges all our readers to read the letter received this month from Marie Heald (see page 4). We heartily agree with her. It's our favorite paper too. However, like all things, we suppose it could use some improvements. In fact, our sisters in the Caucus discussed possible changes in the paper during the last two Thursday meetings. We thought we would share a few of these thoughts with our readers as well as a few of our own.

There was some debate as to whether we really were a newspaper or whether we hadn't become a journal. This emerged from a proposal that we should carry more news about the movement in the U.S. and Europe. As well, we all agreed to the usefulness of more articles written by women describing ways they've found to get together with other women and what they have tried to do together and how they did it. For example, it was universally agreed that the recent articles on leafleting at the Post Office, removing an anti-woman sign at a Shell gas station, and the Raymur women's story, were both entertaining and useful. There was little criticism of

specific articles that were not liked. However, there were criticisms of the use of unexplained political jargon.

While we agree that we should avoid rhetoric, we have never produced a theoretical journal. The paper is political in that it describes existing power relationships and discusses strategies for organizing to change those relationships. This is deliberate because women's oppression is political, but our attempts to discuss women's oppression have usually been very concrete.

We are also not really a newspaper — in fact, a monthly newspaper would be a stale anachronism. Experiences that are analyzed from a feminist perspective can be relevant even if they occurred three weeks or even 300 years ago. However we do agree that we have failed to cover sufficiently the "news" of how women are building the movement in other places. We hope to try to begin to meet this need for more news in the next and all subsequent issues.

We also talked of the pros and cons of running special issues with a theme, like the February issue on children and the March issue dedicated to the women

of Indochina. While we agree that it's a good idea to occasionally run a special section of related articles (after all, it was our idea in the first place), we feel it is important to have enough variety of content and format in every issue to appeal to the interests of all sorts of women.

There was quite a bit of questioning of just to whom we were aiming the paper. The different points of view and style of thought and writing reflect the diverse composition of the paper's staff and of the Caucus itself — we are mothers and housewives, working women in offices and factories, students, professionals, 45, 35, 25, 15, hip and straight, and on and on. . .

One serious problem is that not enough women are trying to write and/or bring in ideas for the paper. Also, though we enjoy hearing that the paper is "beautiful" "great" etc. we really need to know more specifically which articles are useful, entertaining, thought-provoking, etc. and which are useless, embarrassing, dishonest or whatever. If you are not showing the paper to neighbors, friends, co-workers, fellow students, relatives, why? What could we put in it that would make it more useful for you?

These stores carry the Pedestal

Shum Organic Food Co-operative, 4366 Main
Vanguard Books, 1208 Granville
Duthie's Books, Ltd., 919 Robson
Duthie's Books, Parkade, 670 Seymour
Duthie's, University branch, 4560 W. 10th
Record Gallery, 912 Robson
Book Corner, Pender at Homer
MacLeod's Books, Pender at Homer
Brenda Grocery, 2443 Nanaimo
Axis Music, 3752 E. Hastings, Bby.
Tansar Crafts, 2002 W. 4th
China Arts & Crafts, 33 E. Hastings

Leather & Things, 1378 Water St.
Georgia Straight, 56-A Powell
Aardvark, 4185 Main
New York News, 2429 Main
Mayfair, 1515 W. Broadway
Astro and Igo, 4454 W. 10th
Little Song, 4th & Burrard
Nordic News, Hastings near Main
Universal Newstand, 112 E. Hastings
International News & Books, 169 E. Hastings
Odd Shoppe, 2648 W. 4th
Co-operative Food Store, Loughheed at Willingdon



A PROPOSAL FROM OUR AMERICAN SISTERS:

Toronto Women's Liberation
323 Church Street
Toronto, Ont.
May 15, 1971

Dear Sisters,

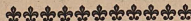
"Off Our Backs," a Washington-based WLM collective and newspaper, have asked Canadian Women's Liberation to publish an issue dealing with Canada and Quebec and our struggle. Our experience with the American women during the Conference planning, etc., showed us their complete lack of understanding of Canada and the relationship of our struggle with theirs against American Imperialism.

I am writing to ask you how feasible it would be for you to put out the issue. Attached is a copy of a letter I've sent to as many WLM groups in Canada as we have addresses for. I'm going to talk to *Cuerilla* and the *Eyep opener* about the possibility of using their facilities but there is a lack of skills in our group for putting out such a paper.

This is the first major decision that needs to be made so could you let me know as soon as possible if you can do it?

In sisterhood and love,
Sue Counsell
for TWLM

POWER TO THE PEOPLE!



Dear Sisters,

Canadian Women's Liberation has been asked by a Washington WLM group who publishes "Off Our Backs" to put out an issue on Canada and our struggle.

With the many problems that came up with our American sisters in the course of the Conference planning, it seems essential that we articulate and struggle out Canada's and Quebec's position in relation to "America."

If you, as a group, feel this project to be important could you initiate a collection of articles? eg. how your group is formed and what you are doing, poems, pictures, cartoons, stories, critiques, etc.

The main problem is one of editing, i.e. what articles can or cannot go in and we don't want to be caught up in and criticized for "arbitrary decisions on material." So if your group could select the best material to send in with the understanding that those people who lay out the paper may have to make their own corrections, we should have a smooth democratic process for this small venture.

At this time we are going to see if it's possible for Vancouver Women's Caucus to publish the issue, given their experience and availability of necessary tools for putting out a paper. Consequently there will be further communication with you about where to send material, but I think a tentative date for publication should be the end of June.

Therefore could you bring this project to the attention of your group and get the collection of articles underway as soon as possible.

Yours in sisterhood and struggle,
Sue Counsell
for TWLM



Review:

Woman's Place

Cynthia Fuchs Epstein
paperback \$2.45

One of the lovely things about putting out a newspaper every month that says "a women's liberation newspaper" right on the cover is that people take it seriously and treat us as if we were a real newspaper (as I suppose we are, in a way ...) and send us things like review copies of new books about women's liberation. One recent such gift is *Woman's Place*, by Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, a paperback published by University of California Press (also available hardbound and from the library).

Woman's Place is subtitled "options and limits in professional careers." It's about that, about the problems of a highly-educated, highly-trained elite in a society that only reluctantly allows women to use their skills and talents. The society is the United States, not Canada (extensive use is made of charts that have no relevance to this country). The language is sociological, not English. (A randomly chosen example: "The higher the rank of the statuses in a

woman's status set, the more easily she may be able to manage a greater number of statuses. This is probably true whether a total evaluation of rank (adding the rank of each status) of all statuses is used, or simply the rank of the occupational status (of the woman alone)." from page 145.) Nevertheless, many of the insights about U.S. society are probably true of our own, and many of the introductory statements about women's condition are applicable to underemployed office or factory workers as well as to the woman lawyer who can't get into a top firm or the woman doctor with trouble establishing a practice.

But mostly the book is about strategies for women professionals, ways to keep sane while at least partially satisfying the contrary demands of career, home and family, and while being properly "feminine." Epstein writes all this as a sociological survey and analysis, but it could easily be used as a survival manual — if you are a professional and agree that your first goal is "success" or "making it to the top" — and if you can get through the language.

AN

ECONOMIC VIEW OF FASHION

including a harrowing tale of the deadly microbe

By reading the many current articles on dress reform, one is led to believe that fashion is a matter resting on woman's vanity alone. Women are so easily influenced and led that if one among them would arise influential and eloquent they would forsake their evil ways, wear short skirts and common-sense shoes, and dress in a sensible and economical manner!

Pathetic appeals are made to those in high social position to "set a good example." These are based upon the idea that if the President's wife or the Princess of Wales would only dress plainly, and not cater to the caprices of fashion, all women would follow her example, the sex would be emancipated, and peace and plenty would reign.

If great evils could be so easily vanquished, I am convinced they would disappear. I have sufficient faith in the character of these august personages to believe that if, by their good example, they could work such beneficial results, they would wear divided skirts, or anything else that would lead their country women along the path of economy in dress.

Rapid changes of fashion are undoubtedly a great evil. Money is foolishly squandered and time is wasted in keeping one's wardrobe in the prevailing "style." Most women would face death more easily than they would wear in a public assembly a costume very much out of date. If this were confined to the leisure class, the harm would be comparatively small; but let Fashion issue a mysterious edict from some unknown quarter, and all classes hasten to obey, from the shopgirl on four dollars a week to the woman with unlimited money at her disposal - all are actuated by the same impulse; all are united in chasing the phantom "style."

Man's belief in the frivolity of woman is thus apparently justified. Many expedients have been proposed to change this dreadful state of things. High ideals have been held before us. The more hopeful spirits have attributed this feminine short-coming to our lack of interest in wider issues. Open the colleges; give women the advantages of men - all this weakness will soon disappear. We will have woman free and noble, fit to take her place beside man in the law courts, in politics, in the dissecting-room!

Well, the colleges have been thrown open; we are supposed to be educated; but the whirligigs of fashion follow one another more rapidly than before. . . . Th short skirts appear; there are signs of jubilant rejoicing - at last women have grown sensible! We are encouraged, and told we are fulfilling our high destinies - to become better wives and mothers. No more (we sweep up the deadly microbe, carrying death to our train. Alas! in spite of all this - in the face of our noble encumbrances - the vain, foolish, frivolous irresponsible creature called woman returns to 1 long skirts, made longer and costlier than ever. S will not listen to the woman reformer clad in garments above reproach, nor to the physician with his harrowing tales of the microbe. Truly, we are hopeless. There is no health in us. We are past saving either by example or precept. There certainly would be no hope for woman if, after all these years, with all this instruction and advice, vanity were still our motive in submitting to the caprice of the god Fashion. But the cause lies deeper.

Women are fond of pleasing, and so long as they are economically dependent upon men they will do all in their power to please them. This cannot be otherwise, and no doubt it accounts for much time and labor spent upon dress; but if this were the only reason, women would cling to beautiful fashions - invent them, if necessary. Instead, we often see her change a beautiful and comfortable costume for one



both ugly and uncomfortable. And, such is the power of fashion, men will admire the last state of the woman as much as the first.

If women were to do what men (and some women unversed in economic questions) wish them to do - throw off the tyranny of fashion - there would undoubtedly be a revolution; but not such a reign of peace and plenty as they are pleased to fancy would ensue. As my dressmaker said, when I remarked upon the folly of altering a perfectly good gown into the prevailing mode, "What would become of us if there were no changes of fashion?" And if women would

refrain from change, for any appreciable length of time, "What would become of us?" would be the cry that would go up from the manufacturers and their thousands of employees all over the world. Whole armies of men and women would be thrown out of work - into the ranks of the unemployed.

Rapid changes of fashion are caused by the self-interest of the vast industrial and economic organization upon whose existence the army of workers depend. Everything is done to stimulate and allure the customer. Costly advertisements and beautiful fabrics displayed in attractive forms tempt women everywhere. These things are forced upon their notice by the powerful machinery of modern industrial production.

Take the shirt-waist, for example - a fashion so comfortable that women will not discard it. What is the consequence? Manufacturers exhaust their ingenuity to invent new models; and, although the field is limited by making them of thick material one year and thin the next, starched cuffs and collars one season and limp the next, yokes some years and no yokes other years, they contrive that the woman who wears a last year's shirt-waist shall know it. Worse than all, her husband, her brother, her lover knows it.

I am well aware of the argument usually advanced by the old school of economists to expose the alleged fallacy of this contention. It is something like this: If a man is employed in useless labor (and surely these absurd demands of fashion are useless), let him be prevented from thus wasting time and material. Straightway he will turn himself to some useful form of production - make two blades of grass grow where one grew before, or raise wheat for the hungry. Under some circumstances this would be true; but, owing to the development of machinery and the consequent improvement in the methods of production, only a small portion of the available labor is needed to produce the necessary clothes and food for the world. No one can doubt that by further utilizing the material forces, together with more concentration of capital, still fewer men would be required, and we would have more men and women out of work. At present a portion of this labor, being shut off from useful production, finds employment in producing articles of useless luxury for the rich - pandering to artificial appetites. So true is this that, if in any town or city a man would invent something to tickle either the fancy or the palate, he could organize what would be called a profitable industry, and receive the thanks of his fellow-citizens as an "employer of labor."

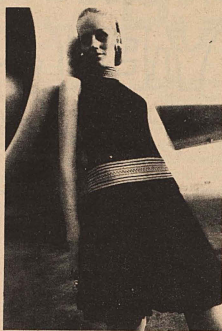
Sexual attraction and woman's vanity play their part; but behind these are the great forces of modern industrial competition and production. Women are not the fools they appear to be on the surface. True, our dry-goods establishments are filled with useless articles, but woman's folly alone is not the cause. So long as the present industrial system continues we will have rapid changes of fashion - and men and women idle. On one side, the possessors of wealth, looking idly around for something to spend their surplus revenue upon; on the other side, men doing all in their power to invent new channels to divert this surplus.

Not the least of the Socialists' claim upon our attention is the fact that they propose to release both men and women from the tyranny of fashion.

Julia Cruikshank
Fort Erie, Ontario

Reprinted from *The Arena*, the "World's Leading Review" of April, 1902.

PATRICIA STEVENS SPEAKS



"No way," I murmured as I stood before the long winding staircase in my fashionable but impractical loose and wobbly sandals. I decided to descend with care since I had been walking in and out of the shoes all down the street!

I made it to the very plush reception room, reminded the lady of my appointment with a Miss Hickey and took a seat.

An attractive woman, fortyish, wearing a medium length yellow suit and a black hat approached me and commented on my shoes.

"Are they difficult to walk in?" she inquired.

"Oh, not at all!" I said. "Well, they're not so bad once you get used to them."

"Are you here to take a course, dear?"

"No, I'm here to write an article... I mean — I'm writing an article for a Women's Liberation newspaper."

"Oh, yes!" she seemed to shout. "I remember you now," and she motioned to me to follow her.

We each took a seat on opposite sides of a small table near a hallway. We chatted a bit about both of us being new arrivals to Vancouver and then I asked my first question.

Miss Hickey, what does Patricia Stevens Finishing School do for a woman?

We build up a woman's confidence by teaching her how to relate to people.

Well, what exactly do you teach?

We offer instruction by closed circuit TV. You see we're not just another finishing school — we also offer courses in merchandizing, marketing, etc.

What do you teach on closed circuit TV? Do you show a woman how to move her body — to stand a certain way?

Well, when a woman comes in here all down in the mouth because a man has hurt her, we help her to gain back self confidence by building up her physical image thereby making her feel more attractive and intelligent.

But by building up the physical image, aren't you emphasizing the most shallow part of a woman?

A secretary interrupted — "Can you take a call, Miss Hickey?"

Busy place, I repeated the question.

But people do judge you by the way you look — you know that it's hard to get a job if you don't look nice. Even men have to worry about looks.

Yes, but men aren't preoccupied with how they look. They don't have to wear a smart new outfit every day or waste a lot of time putting on make-up.

But they have to shave!

Well, Miss Hickey, don't you think that it's unfair that a woman is judged by how she looks when she applies for a job?

We don't just deal with appearance — we also put an emphasis on personality.

Another secretary interrupted to ask for a stapler. Miss Hickey looked all over the place and then apologized to the young girl for not having one. Nice lady, really.

We show a woman that if she acts a certain way she can get others to react to her in the way she wants them to — This helps a woman in business — The trouble with women in business is that they can't control their emotions.

Well, if this is true, isn't it understandable — I mean the role that society requires that a woman play doesn't exactly prepare her for the business world.

I don't think that many women can handle jobs in the business world — they shouldn't blame men for this, it's their own fault. Women just can't control their emotions. They can't argue with men — their voices get high and squeaky!

I think that it's debatable whether or not women can handle the jobs — the fact is that they're really not given a chance. There are not many high positions in business offered to women.

I don't know that this is true. I've been making \$10,000 a year since I was 17. I make \$25,000 now. I've worked hard and I've never had trouble finding a job.

I'm sure you haven't, Miss Hickey. Do you mind if we switch to the fashion industry now? Do you consider it possible that you aid the 'beauty industry' because you encourage women to wear certain clothes and make-up?

Oh no, women spend about half as much on clothes after they leave our school. Of the whole course that we offer only eight hours are spent on wardrobe.

At this point Miss Hickey answered the phone for a "Mr. M." as he passed by us on the way to his office. I wondered to myself why he had the big private office when Miss Hickey, the "director" of the school, had a small table near a hallway. Could it be that "Mr. M." was in charge of this school for women?

You see, I'm really on the side of Women's Liberation. I think it's terrible the way women are exploited by the fashion industry. I usually buy at least \$200 worth of new clothes each year but this year I have bought nothing. I know that I'm not the only woman who doesn't want to buy the pants that are on the market.

I guess that you're irritated by advertising, too.

Yes, I especially hate the way TV makes women look so stupid.

Yes, I agree with you, Miss Hickey. I hate the way the media makes women look so stupid. But I also hate the way Patricia Stevens Finishing School helps women to be so stupid: Building up a woman's confidence by "building up her physical image" is an absurd statement to make. The unhappy and frightened young woman who spends her time acquiring a good posture and learning how to walk placing one foot directly in front of the other without falling over is still going to be unhappy and frightened if she doesn't concentrate instead on gaining an understanding and respect for her inner self.

It was almost a command performance because they billed it as "Fashions for the Liberated Woman". It should be obvious what's wrong with that. How much bullshit it is, and how it's like the ultimate in insulting co-optation, trying to change something real into the context of a fad, something that's in this year and maybe won't be in next year.

Right, and to sell things too, to sell clothes.

Exactly, and to sell conformist clothes, in other words, the opposite of being liberated and getting clothes you really dig.

It blows my mind that they would actually have the nerve to do that because it's the antithesis of liberation. It's just the whole fashion industry thing. And I know they only have to do that a few times, have a fashion show and do something as outrageous as bill it as "Liberated Fashions", and people will start to believe it after a while. The terms will become like all the groovy words that they used in Coca Cola commercials that don't have anything to do with what they really started out meaning.

Like "The Revolution." I saw an ad for 'You have to start the revolution somewhere' and it was an ad for shoes!

There's ads for revolutionary male crotch spray!

Right! Be liberated, be free. Spray your crotch.

With DDT!

Crotch crickets? No more!

Eatons and the Bay and places like that sell clothes that are mass-produced: 40 million of the same thing in 47 different sizes. It's hard to believe any kind of creative effort went into that. But we were saying that in some ways the clothes we wear are just as conformist to our own particular group, right? Like, blue jeans and the whole number are just as conformist in our own weird way.

Well, it's not just conformity of the clothes you find at Eatons or the Bay; that's not the most objectionable part of it. I don't really care if there are 40 million something-or-others if they're really nice,

if they're practical and well-made and it's obvious that some thought's gone into the design, if they're designed for people to wear on their bodies instead of just slapped together to make a buck.

And blue jeans really last too, a couple of years.

That's exactly it: The costume, or uniform of freaks is the most practical, longest-wearing stuff that you can buy at the Army & Navy. And individuality branched off from there with how you decorate it or embroider it or what color things you stick in the sides of your pants. But it's a matter of necessity, because you have to have something that's cheap enough and lasts for a long, long time. So, essentially, conformity isn't all that bad. But you know that if you buy something there, you're being exploited directly, because you know that someone created it for the money and they made it so it's going to fall apart in three months, and they charge you outrageous prices for it.

It's really true that if you want to wear something really pretty you find that all the dress-up clothes in working-girl price ranges pull a seam. And anyone who tries to find a dress for \$20, it falls apart. But that's all working people can afford.

Anything under \$45 or \$50 for just a plain dress, or \$75 for anything more fancy than that, is very seldom more than basted together. An armhole seam is bound to go within two weeks and the only thing that you can do is take it home and restitch all the seams.

Not only that, but over half the stuff you buy off the rack has to be dry-cleaned, which is just another part of the racket.

Right, it's really true. Like I got a dress on sale that was \$5 because it was out-of-season and end-of-line. A really nice, practical little dress that you would wear to an office or out on the street, nothing fancy at all, and I had to dry-clean it. It was the kind of crepe that if you so much as dropped it in water it immediately shrivelled — which of course it did, because that's what I did to it!

I did the same to one that I got and it was exactly like that; it ended up 14 sizes smaller! It was quite amazing.

Oh, is that the kind of crepe that goes hard?

Yeah.

And crinkly? And shrinks?

Yeah!

And you have to pound it out with a rock?

I gave up on mine and gave it to the Salvation Army for some midget to wear!

Manufacturers must have fulltime staff working on developing stuff like that: "I-lar, har, har! We'll get them this time! If they bring it near warm water, it will atomize!"

REMINISCENCES ON FASHION:

being a meandering conversation with the good folks of Better Homes and Gardens (the commune, not the magazine) about clothes, fashion shows, and the Hotel Vancouver...

What about clothes expressing our own personality? Tripping out on clothes?

Well, it doesn't work out that way because you can express your personality within the very limited bounds of what's offered this year at Eatons. You can have pink or you can have blue! Big...deal!

Well, if they have to make it for ten million people to buy

Then they're saying that they think we all have the same personality!

Well, the biggest thing that's wrong is what's wrong in every kind of industry that produces stuff to sell, that the people who are producing it don't give a shit about it; all they care about is the money. So consequently, except for couture designs and really super expensive clothing...

And some boutique things...

...And handmade stuff, boutique stuff, except for them, the people who are responsible for what goes on the market, they're not designers or clothes freaks or something like that. They're "Let's run it up the flagpole and see if it flatters" types. They're salesmen, you know. And we get their taste. Eunch!

We get what they think our taste is.

Or what they think our taste should be. That's the other thing with fashion, even more so than other industries: they don't even have to bother thinking about what you like because they can force you to like something just by paying enough models to wear it.

Like the midi and now hotpants. As soon as it comes out all you hear is: "OOOOH, it's horrible! It's disgusting! I'll never wear THAT!" And then inside a month or so, after every billboard you look at has this particular design on it, everybody changes their mind and they really do like it.

But that's one of the most astounding things that's happened. The midi flopped...

Industrial failures! The Midi and the Edsel! I really don't understand why. Like the midis almost worked...

They made them out of really shoddy wool material. A foot of cheap material in a mini skirt was one thing, but 3 1/2 feet in a midi was ridiculous!

That's really true!

Also, fashion is designed for the very slim woman. The industry tries to convince women who are large or overweight that they should either diet or take pills, but if they're naturally overweight then they can't possibly be fashionable. Some women like Mama Cass at some time in their lives just said, "This is what I look like and this is me," and it's really far out...

Yeah, and it takes a lot of courage to break the stereotype, of like "I don't fit the image." I'm not ugly - because people aren't ugly. But people are brought up and programmed all their lives to think they're ugly.

Yeah, it's true...

The first time I learned that was when we used to draw people in (art) school, and I would look at some woman who was 45 and looked like 45, and she was beautiful. Only she would never think that she was beautiful.

It seems to me that the whole idea of "freak" fashion is different. Straight fashion is a single concept, right, a single idea, with everything as an ensemble. Everything fits. Everything matches.

And the freak thing is the whole Salvation Army concept where you find something you really dig and you get it...

Stick it on yourself, right?

far out. Rather than the whole trip of being told what everyone has to wear this year...

I could really dig to go and see a showing of Yolante's stuff, because she's an artist and she designs clothes and she really loves clothes. And she doesn't expect everyone in the world to wear her clothes...

Oh, and another thing that's dear to my heart is what they've done with children's clothes over the last 2,000 years.

It's all pink or blue...

But put pink on your little boy and obviously he's a little girl, or you're colour-blind...

Or you're trying to turn your child into a homosexual!

There's nothing with any soul left in it. You can't buy a good baby blanket for under 7 or 8 bucks. Anything less is made out of laminated industrial waste. Some kind of weird stuff that flattens out in the washing machine and is never the same again. Some kind of spongy mess... and it's the same thing with those neat little stretch sleepers. Well, they're Trip City if you pay 6 bucks for them...

The strongest thing on them is the metal and that falls off first!

Cheaper than that, and after one washing you can spit through it and all the metal things fall off. It's all going downhill, you know. What's next? Are they going to make things out of Kleenex?

It's all getting worse and worse and wasteful, which seems to be THE PLAN. Every consumer product is becoming more and more destructible...

Salvation Armies are bulging, overflowing, exploding with old clothes - all of them ugly, UGLY, so many ugly clothes in there, and not ugly with FLAIR, you know, just Baaaah clothes, shifts with daisies on them!

It's so sad, because you really have to rummage. I'm not that particular - I like all kinds of weird stuff - but I have to rummage through crates and crates full of shifts with daisies! Really bad!

Clothes are something that should be functional, or you should wear them because you love them. You pick them out because you really love them or you really appreciated what somebody did, or because you took the time and care to do something really beautiful that you really liked, and not just so you'd look cool.

Well, good clothing, maybe handmade, like really old stuff, it's art. That's what it is.



What's amazing is that no matter how freaky you want to be, what really does affect what you wear is what you can buy. If the stores don't sell it any more, you just can't get it. You can look for it in the Salvation Army and good luck!

One thing that immediately comes to mind in women's fashion is the no-run stocking a couple of years ago. Remember?

Right. It lasted for one year, until the stocking manufacturers' sales dropped, plummeted, because of course, everyone wanted them and then you could just never buy them. You can't buy them now. You can search till you're blue in the face and still you'll never find them...

And there'll be a lady in the supermarket wearing a pair she bought four years ago!

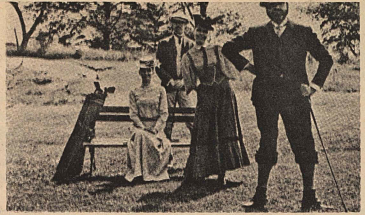
Right, and you keep adding these layers and layers of strange and wonderful things and you come up with something that's you...

That's what fashion is, for freaks - and it's not some image that you're trying to project or something that's outside yourself that you're trying to be. It's stuff that somehow fits. You found it and it was RIGHT and you got it. It was you.

Yeah, you know, I could get off on fashion shows, if the whole emphasis was different. If a fashion show meant someone had discovered a design that hadn't been seen very much before, whether it was old or brand new or whatever, and wanted to show it to people, that would be



GAY NINETIES



From Prisoners of Poverty: Women Wage Workers, Their Trades and Their Lives (1894)

"The emancipation of women is certainly well under way, when all underwear can be bought more cheaply than it is possible to make it up at home, and simple suits of very good material make it hardly more difficult for a woman to clothe herself without thought or worry, than it has long been for a man."

This was the word heard at a woman's club not long ago, and reinforced within the week by two well-known journals edited in the interests of women at large. The editorial page of one held a fervid appeal for greater simplicity of dress and living in general, followed by half a column of entreaty to women to buy ready-made clothing, and thus save time for higher pursuits and the attainment of broader views...

For emancipation on the one side has meant no corresponding emancipation for the other; and as one woman selects, well pleased, garment after garment, daintily tucked and trimmed and finished beyond the capacity of any ordinary home sewing, marvelling a little that a few dollars can give such lavish return, there arises, from narrow attic and dark, foul basement, and crowded factory, the cry of the women whose life-blood is on these garments. Through burning, scorching days of summer; through marrow-piercing cold of winter, in hunger and rags, with white-faced children at their knees, crying for more bread, or, silent from long weakness, looking with blank eyes at the flying needle, these women toil on, twelve, fourteen, sixteen hours even, before the fixed task is done. The slice of baker's bread and the bowl of rank black tea, boiled to extract every possibility of strength, are taken, still at the machine. It is easier to sit there than in rising and movement to find what weariness is in every limb. There is always a child old enough to boil the kettle and run for a loaf of bread; and all share the tea, which gives a fictitious strength, laying thus the foundation for the fragile, anæmic faces and figures to be found among the

workers in the bag-factories, paper-box manufactories, etc.

"Why don't they go into the country?" is often asked. "Why do they starve in the city when good homes and ample pay are waiting for them?"

It is not with the class to whom this question is applicable that we deal today. Of the army of two hundred thousand who battle for bread, nearly a third have no resource but the needle, and of this third many thousands are widows with children, to whom they cling with a devotion as strong as wiser mothers feel, and who labor night and day to prevent the scattering into asylums and consequent destruction of the family as a family. They are widows through many causes that can hardly be said to come under the head of "natural"... One great corporation, owning thousands of miles of railroad, saw eight hundred men disabled in greater or less degree in one year, and still refused to adopt a method of coupling cars which would have saved the lives of the sixty-eight brakemen who were sacrificed to the instinct of economy dominating the superintendent. The same man refused to roof over a spot where a number of freight-handlers were employed during a stormy season, rheumatism and asthma being the consequences for many, and his reason had at least the merit of frankness, — a merit often lacking in explanations that, even when most plausible, cover as essential a brutality of nature.

"Men are cheaper than shingles," he said. "There's a dozen waiting to fill the place of one that drops out..."

Is this digression hardly to be pardoned in a paper on the trades and lives of women, — a deliberate turning toward an issue which has neither place nor right in such limits? On the contrary, it is all part of the same wretched story. The chain that binds humanity in one has not one set of links for men and another for women; and the blow aimed at one is felt also not only by those nearest, but by successive ranks to whom the shock, though only by indirect transmission, is none the less deadly in effect...

... here are a few of the methods by which this prosperity has been attained, and goes on in always-increasing ratio.

... To each woman who applied for work it was stated:—

"We send all packages from the cutting-room by express, the charges to be paid by you. It's a small charge, only fifteen cents, to be paid when the bundle comes in."

"We can come in for ours. We live close by. We don't want to lose the fifteen cents," a few objected, but the answer was invariable:—

"It suits us best to make up the packages in the cutting-room, and if you don't like the arrangement there are plenty waiting that it will suit well enough."

Plenty waiting! How well they knew it, and always more and more as the ships came in, and the great tide of "producing power" flowed through Castle Garden, and stood, always at high-water mark, in the wards where cheap labor may be found. Plenty waiting; and these women who could not wait went home and turned over their small store of pennies for the fifteen cents, the payment of which meant either a little less bread or an hour or two longer at the sewing-machine, defined as the emancipator of women.

In the mean time the enterprising firm had made arrangements with a small express company to deliver the packages at twelve cents each, and could thus add to the weekly receipts a clear gain of three cents per head. It is unnecessary to add that they played into each other's hands, and that the wagon-drivers had no knowledge of anything beyond the fact that they were to collect the fifteen cents and turn it over to their superiors. But in some manner it leaked out; and a driver whose feelings had been stirred by the sad face of a little widow on Sixth Street told her that the fifteen cents was "a gouge," and they had all better put their heads together and refuse to pay more than twelve cents.

"If we had any heads, it might do to talk about putting them together," the little widow said bitterly. "For my part, I begin to believe women are born fools, but I'll see what I can do."

This "seeing" involved earning a dollar or two less for the week, but the cheat seemed so despicable a one that indignation made her reckless, and she went to the woman who had first directed her to the firm and had been in its employ almost from the beginning.

"It's like 'em; oh, yes, it's like 'em!" she said, "but we've no time to spend in stirring up things, and you know well enough what would be the end of it if we did, — discharged, and somebody else getting our wages. You'd better not talk too much if you want to keep your place."

"That isn't any worse than the thread dodge," another woman said. "I know from a clerk in the house where they buy their thread, that they charge us five cents a dozen more than it costs them, though they make a great point of giving it to us at cost and cheaper than we could buy it ourselves."

"Why don't you club together and buy, then?" the little widow asked, to bear again the formula, "And get your walking-ticket next day? We know a little better than that."

"But the women? Does it seem quite fair that they should be the losers?"

"Fair? Anything's fair in business. You'd find that out if you undertook to do it."



IN A POOR SEWING WOMAN'S HOME.

cheap labour

The Montreal weekly newspaper *Quebec Presse* published a story two weeks ago about the first strike in thirty years declared by the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union in Quebec. A picket line has been set up in front of a factory of the Exquisite Knitting Mills (Canada) Company in North Montreal. This company was recently bought out by Dominion Textile, the textile giant of Canada.

The 85 employees of Exquisite Knitting went out on strike on April 19. The dispute centres on wages and especially work conditions. The owners have in effect proposed an accelerated time schedule divided over 24 hours, seven days a week, which means a 47½ hour work week on the average, and up to 75 hours in certain cases. The average wage in the clothing industry is around \$74 a week.

In February, *Quebec Presse* published a background article on the clothing industry entitled "The 'Cheap Labor' of Clothing: 64,000 Workers." Much of what follows comes from that article.

The Industry

Quebec produces 60% of all clothes made in Canada and the industry is largely concentrated in Montreal with 85% of the total of 64,000 workers being employed in that area. The clothing industry is an industry with a very low initial investment and the return on the invested capital is among the highest in the manufacturing sector. It is therefore the favorite of small and middlesize businessmen and the number of manufacturers in this field is rising steadily. At this time there are over 1600 different and competing firms in the industry and most of them are in Montreal. The total value of the manufactured goods was higher than \$800 million in 1970.

Despite certain technical developments, many of the operations have to be done by hand and therefore the workers are the key factor in the industry. In a brochure put out by the Ministry of Industry and Commerce of Quebec, 1968, it states that one reason for the size and growth of the clothing industry in Quebec is 'the abundance of competent female workers.' In another government document written to attract the small investor one finds: 'Certain regions of Quebec, where the degree of industrialization is relatively low but which possess a large surplus of female workers, offer appreciable advantages for the location of factories for ready-made clothing.'

The industry is in fact the largest employer and pays the lowest wages of all manufacturers in Quebec. This is so despite the fact that 48% of clothing workers are unionized whereas only 33% of all workers in Quebec are unionized. The average wage between March 1968 and March 1970 was between \$70 and \$80 a week, which is close to the poverty line as defined by the government. Of the 64,000 workers, 61,000 are women. These women are the victims of shameless discrimination, so that in some instances they earn 35% less than do men for the same work. However the wages of all, men and women, are miserable.

Discrimination Against Women Workers

The discrimination against the women workers (80% of the total work force) is written into all the statistics, the work rules and even into the collective agreements. In the work rules relating to the fur industry for example, one finds flagrant discrimination:

Wholesale trade (fur): The minimum weekly wages are the following: followed by a list of job descriptions with their allotted wages, of which: *Machine stitcher, male, 1st class... \$100; Machine stitcher, female, 1st class... \$83.*... Examples like these can be multiplied from the regulations and these regulations result from general agreements between the unions, the owners and the government. These collective agreements, negotiated by the unions, sanction this discrimination. Take the case of the Ladies' Garment Workers, specifically the pressers, who are in the minority and privileged among clothing workers. A new employee starts work as a presser, and the following are the negotiated wages actually in force: first two months, male and

female, \$1.25; after 6 months, male \$1.79 and female \$1.71; after 8 months, male \$2.14 and female \$1.97; after 14 months, male \$2.84 and (maximum wage) female \$2.49.

In the collective agreement that governed working conditions for shirt workers (an agreement signed by the Guild of Shirt manufacturers on the one hand and by the National Federation of Garment Workers on the other hand) one can read in the section concerning wages paid in the metropolitan region of Montreal: Non-specialist wages: Women \$1.28, Men \$1.87. The men receive 59 cents per hour more than the women, which works out at a 32% higher wage.

The Unions

Underpaid in the industry, the women who are 80% of all the workers, are practically absent from decision-making within the Unions. The hierarchy of power is the same in the industry and in the unions: at the bottom, new-Canadian and French-speaking Quebec women; a notch higher, new-Canadian and French-speaking men; and in control, the English-speaking Canadians.

The unions were originally organized early in this century. 1906 saw a large influx of Eastern European Jewish immigrants. They were poor tailors who little by little built up what is now a large industry in Quebec. Unionism was introduced by the Jewish workers, first in locals of the I.W.W., then as independent locals and later within the I.L.G.W.U. The exemplary militancy of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) has remained famous in union history. However, today the former heroes of those struggles are still to be found at the head of these same unions, but they are now very, very moderate and weak, having become 'bons papas!' The present head of the ILGWU in Quebec was elected to that post 35 years ago and that Union last went on strike more than thirty years ago. The workers at the bottom of the Union ladder, the French-speaking 85%, are beginning to discover that their union boss of many years understands fewer and fewer of the workers as he has not had the time to learn French!

Union Paternalism

The unions live on the memories of the heroic epoch when militancy was founded on the hard daily reality of the 1930's: the law of the jungle imposed by the factory owners, for example, often forced workers to sleep with the owner if they wished to keep their jobs. Today the union leaders are meek

towards the companies but severe towards their 'children' — the workers. How can the workers of 1970 be unhappy with their lot? In the old days... And the tirade on the young people of today follows: Between the heroic epoch and the spiritless system of today, the unions have built a network of small benefits or sops for 'the protection and welfare of the workers': health services, courses in fine arts, little trips... and burials for the children! But, basically, the workers, living in 1971 and not in 1930, still find the hours too long and the wages much too low!

The solution is to be found in the mobilization of the union members and the democratization of the union as such, or better, of the union movement itself, throughout the entire industry. At \$3000 or less each year, the average wage in the industry, life is difficult. It is not for nothing that employment offers are made in Italian, Greek and French. Ink is not wasted in making such offers in English! That also, the union leaders seem to accept along with the rest.

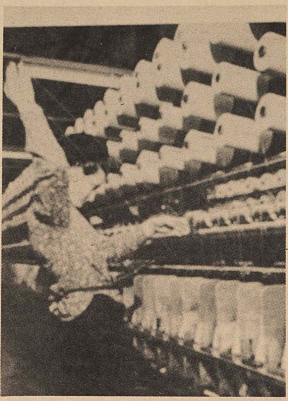
The fact that the managers and owners of many of the factories as well as many of the union leaders are English speaking Jews, while the employees are generally French speaking or new-Canadians has led to problems of either anti-semitism or of charges of anti-semitism. When unionists complain about the operation of the union and the lack of fair representation of the membership in the running of the organization, they are sometimes accused of anti-semitism and they then feel guilty and do not push their grievance. Unionists, who are somewhat more conscious, are displeased that decisions and the use of their dues are taken without their agreement for ends outside of the union interests. 'What we want' said one of them, 'is just simply to democratize the Union. That it be neither Jewish nor English but that it be Quebecois. That's all. That it have a leadership which is truly representative of its members who are overwhelmingly French speaking.'

Perhaps this strike, which began April 19, has signalled the beginning of major changes within the clothing industry and the clothing unions of Quebec. Changes which will stop the discrimination against women in this industry and give them fair representation within their unions are too long overdue.

[This article is based on an article by Jacques Keable published in *Quebec Presse*, 7th February 1971, and translated by Elizabeth Bremberg.]



the man from... ILGWU



An interview with the man (of course) behind the desk at the Vancouver office of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

How many members do you have in Vancouver?
About 500... 550 maybe.

What proportion of the clothing industry here is unionized?

Well, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers have about the same number as we do. I guess together we'd have about half the industry.

Do you have any idea how the conditions in the union shops compare to the non-union ones?

No, not really, but I think you'll find that the union members are better off... They have job security, a health and welfare plan, pension plan...

What about wages? Do you have a contract I could look at?

Well, we sign contracts, of course, but I'm afraid we don't show them to people... As far as wages go, most of the women work on piece work. We negotiate a minimum hourly rate. For the first 6 weeks, they make \$1.50 an hour. After that, they're permanent employees and the minimum hourly rate is 10% higher than the provincial minimum wage. The men are usually more skilled — cutters or pressers — and they get paid by the hour — \$2.25.

Mostly, though, people join the union because of other benefits — job security, the health and welfare plan, the retirement plan — for instance, a woman can retire at the age of 60 and get \$60 a month for the rest of her life!



Judges of Fashion

Five women on trial for creating a disturbance in a public place (Hotel Vancouver and Vancouver Public Library) and assault were found guilty of singing in the library and were punished with two-year suspended sentences. Two of the women were additionally fined \$75 for the guerrilla theatre at the hotel. They were acquitted on the assault charges.

The judge, in sentencing the women, stated: "What you probably need is three good cracks on your unprotected backsides from a bull whip."

With such benefits it's easy to see why the union might well prefer that the terms of its negotiated contracts remain a secret. After all with a partner as big as the provincial government setting the pace of increase for their hourly rate, what need have the garment workers for a militant union to bargain for them? Especially when that union judges that men who iron or cut cloth are obviously more skilled when compared with mere women operating sewing machines. Their "unskilled" labor is, of course, only worth 2/3 of the wages paid to the male pressers and cutters.

One can't help wondering if women bid for jobs as cutters and pressers, whether their experience with ironing and mending would make their labor "unskilled" and cheaper in these jobs, too?

'CAN I HELP YOU?'

She was still asleep when I slipped into her hospital room. I was relieved for I could think of nothing to say. I moved a chair close to the window and leaned back to relax. I couldn't stop thinking about why this had happened to her.

She had retired a month before, after working for forty years in a major department store downtown. The main thing that I remembered about her life was that she always had to work when other people didn't — Friday nights, Saturdays, even Christmas Eve — I remembered this especially well because my mother, who was her sister, and I had to keep her grandchildren entertained until she got home from work around 9:30. It was important to her that the whole family open presents together on Christmas Eve.

There were many ways that they tried to dehumanize her during those forty years. Not only did she have to work holidays, she never received over

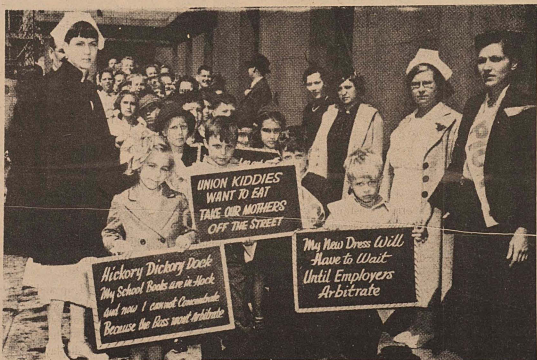
two weeks vacation a year, her salary never exceeded \$2.00 an hour, she never had any spare time, she never had any extra money, and she never had really close friends among her fellow workers. How could she? They all fought tooth and nail to get those sales — if they didn't — no job.

Her work routine wasn't exactly fun either. She put in time lifting boxes of towels and blankets, unpacking boxes of more towels and more blankets, arranging counters of linens, measuring draperies, taking long train rides to Raleigh to order and buy more merchandise, too much merchandise.

She fought back in a way. In spite of her salary, she helped her husband send the kids to college. She managed to keep some principles. She was loyal to the store and she took pride in helping her customers. She often mentioned being happy about helping a customer pick out the right draperies. Also she was happy about helping her family and friends by watching out for bargains. She bought my mom a whole bunch of stuff.

You say why didn't she belong to a union. A union! To a woman raised up in the rural South surrounded by people who thought that FDR was a communist, the act of joining a union would be unpatriotic. Besides, there were no unions. I suppose she could have retired when the children grew up — but what would she have done? She knew nothing else — not even how to live!

They forced her to retire at age 65. A month later she had a nervous breakdown.



Strikers' children carry picket signs in the San Francisco department store strikes of September, 1938

I was sixteen when I got my first job in a suburban department store. It was one of my few bad memories that hasn't softened much with time. For the first few weeks I was a floater which meant I moved around from department to department sometimes even a couple of times a day. It meant that I never really had a chance to become familiar with the merchandise and faced every customer with a certain dread of looking like a fool as I searched the department for the item requested. What was much worse though was always being the new girl and not really getting a chance to get to know anyone well. Still, because I was so obviously young and scared many an older saleswoman mothered me through this awful period of initiation.

FUN IN TOYS

The first department I worked in for any length of time was toys. There were only two of us working full-time, the department manager (a young guy) and myself. It was really more of a babysitting job than a selling job. Mothers would park their kids in the department when we weren't looking and take off to shop by themselves leaving their kids with a dollar and an hour or more to decide what to buy. Unfortunately with sales tax all dollar items cost \$1.03 and the manager and I were constantly making up the difference out of our own pockets to keep the kids quiet. The manager was also the buyer for the department so half our time was spent playing with the new toys he had just bought.

One day I discovered there was an employees' cafeteria. I decided to try it. I went through the line, found a seat and sat down. The place began to fill up. Every table was filled with chattering workers except mine. I felt ridiculous hogging a whole table to myself. I kept wishing someone would sit with me. But though three different people came to the table, they just took the chairs and went to sit somewhere else with friends. I felt naked and miserable sitting alone in the middle of the room. I gobbled my sandwich and left in haste. From then on I spent all my lunch hours wandering alone through the other stores of the shopping centre and wondering if their salesclerks could be as miserable as I was.

One day I took a phone call from an irate father about a thirty dollar swing set that was delivered on his kid's birthday without the screws. I could hear the boy screaming in the background behind his father's hollering into my ear. Suddenly there was another scream in the department. "Let me go, let me go." "I didn't do anything." The store detective was a young woman named Pat who was about twenty-five and had scars from bites and scratches inflicted by desperate shop-lifters all up and down her arms. She had two little girls - they looked about six or seven. She had caught them lifting Barbie Doll clothes. The kids later confessed they were part of a sort of family racket and had been trained to shop-lift by their parents who then sold the goods.

WOMEN'S "BETTER" DRESSES

After about six months I was transferred to women's better dresses. I hated it. The neighborhood was largely upper middle class and the department had a real snob appeal orientation. I was terrified of the customers who seemed to feel it befitted their status to harrass the salesgirls and demand superior service from such a big name store. The simple process of going up to ask "May I help you?" caused acids of anxiety to flow in my stomach. Because the clothes were so expensive the sales were few and far between. Half the people were just trying clothes on for kicks, to kill time, or to get ideas of what to look for in the basement or in dress patterns. Because the sales were so low the competition for a sale was more intense than say in hosiery or notions. As a result, salesgirls were reduced to stealing sales from one another by grabbing each other's customers as they walked out of the dressing room. I feared the wrath of the other salesclerks far more than that of the customers. Some days I didn't make a single sale and spent half my time trying to disappear behind the racks of dresses. While we weren't working on commission a record of our sales was kept as we each had a special drawer in the cash register. Finally I was transferred to Budget Sportswear with dire warnings that my selling record had better improve or else. Actually I was just told that I must "try to become more aggressive, dear" but somehow it came across to me as a thinly veiled threat.

she had a ... fat thumb

BUDGET SPORTSWEAR

Budget sportswear was much better. It was on the ground floor and daylight entered the floor through big show windows at the front of the store. It seemed much cheerier and the customers were poorer and much less haughty and demanding. We had lots of big sales which I really liked because the more customers there were the more of your day was spent just standing at the register ringing up the sales. Through no effort of my own my status as a salesgirl improved. In fact, I even began to form some friendships with the other women. I was appalled to learn that every other woman in the department worked because she had to. (I still lived at home and worked because my parents thought it would be good experience.) Several women were divorced. Several had husbands who were ill or could not find work. Most had children. All of us except for the supervisor made \$40 a week.

One day I was called upstairs. I was being promoted to Assistant Supervisor of the department. I would make 5 cents an hour more. My job would be

and as I struggled to squeeze it in and still maintain some semblance of expertise the seam gave. She assured me it was my fault and that there was no way she was going to pay for them. (I sewed them by hand later and stuck them in the bottom of a drawer of handkerchiefs.) Finally she decided on another pair, also quite expensive. I was gloating over the impending big sale when she pulled a pair of leather gloves out of a bag and said it was an exchange. I gulped and smiled. To do an exchange it is necessary to get the signature of a supervisor on the salescheck. The woman was most impatient and I couldn't for the life of me find a supervisor anywhere on the floor. Finally, I just forged someone's name on the thing and rang it up. For weeks I waited expecting to hear about it. Finally I forgot about it. About three months later, they caught up with me. I was called up to the personnel office. I was told they had kindly decided not to prosecute (they made it sound like I could be sent to jail for years for it). However, of course it would have to go on my record. But if my sales improved considerably in the next few months they would consider removing it from my file.



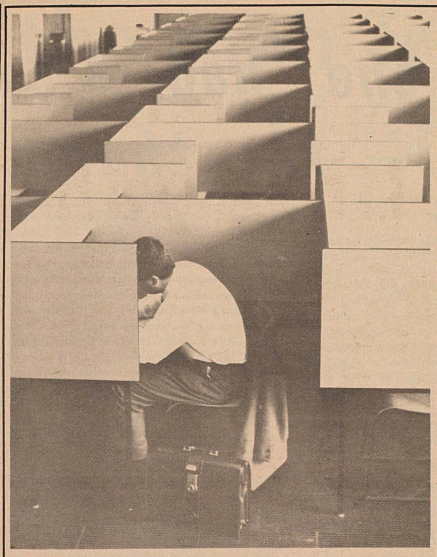
the same except that all complaints and returns would be channelled through me. It was an insult to the other salesclerks, some of whom were old enough to be my grandmother and had been working for the company since they opened the suburban store. The complaint procedures were a nightmare. If I accepted a return I had to account for it. If a customer complained to the accounting office because I wouldn't accept a return I heard about it. I once even got in trouble for refusing to accept a two year old pair of slacks returned "because they wore out too soon."

GOLDEN GLOVES

Finally I was put in charge of the glove department. (I was now making \$110 an hour as the minimum wage had gone up.) The department was sort of isolated off in the corner. There were few sales as it was summer. Most of the time I just stood around with a book propped up and hidden by the cash register and read. One day a woman came in and asked to try on a pair of gold gloves. They were \$19.95. I could hardly believe she was serious. We had only the one pair on display and they were actually two small for her but she insisted. On top of everything she insisted that I put them on for her. It was quite a struggle; she had a particularly fat thumb

Though it took several months to catch up with me that time, and though all of us stole as much as we could without getting caught, they did have an efficient spy system in one area. The store had a staff of "checkers" whose job it was to do reports on everyone's selling techniques. They would go around buying things and grading the salesclerk as to whether she tried to convince the customer to buy a more expensive version of the desired item or to buy something extra to go with it. You were supposed to come across as an expert in fashion with tidbits of advice as to what would make the customer look more thin or fat or tall or short or whatever was presumed to be lacking in her particular physique.

I was lucky. I only worked as a salesclerk for a little over two years. Most of the other women had been there for years and had no prospects for working at anything else. There have been many attempts to organize department stores but very few successes. It is a labor intensive industry and the low wages are key to the high profits. The high turnover, the high percentage part-time workers, and the competition between workers for sales make it a tough industry to organize. Nevertheless, there are too many women working for minimal wages with little security in this business to overlook it and it's just got to be done.



"These books are due May 28."
 "Sorry, I can't renew this book — someone else has reserved it."
 "Check it out at the main loan desk, please."

Anyone familiar with a university library, either from the inside as staff, or from the outside as a student, will be familiar with these or similar oft-repeated declarations. They reflect one aspect of the university library system — the conditioned responses to routine work.

Because of the present organizational nature of most university libraries, specific problems have arisen for staff and students alike. University libraries function slightly differently from public libraries. They deal with a more narrow range of people — mainly students and professors — and therefore must be able to handle the most obscure research problems in the most efficient manner. Great numbers of books are added to the collection every year and with each new arrival comes a fair amount of work which must be completed before the book finds its way into the stacks. Much of said work is routine — rote — boring — and someone must do it. Who?

The division of labour in most libraries is bound up with the hierarchical structure. For the most part the top echelons of decision-making are staffed by men. This is especially true of the "personnel managers" many of whom are the products of training in business management and not library science. Then there are the head librarians of the different libraries or departments within the system. These too are often men even where the vast majority of librarians employed in the system as a whole are women. Quite often the women who do hold administrative positions administer systems rather than people. It seems the same prejudices, inhibitions and problems surrounding women in authoritative roles in business affect women in library work as well. As well, many women and men who go

into library work do so to avoid the more aggressive and harsh roles demanded of people or responsibility in profit-oriented enterprises. The very concepts of cooperation and trust that underlie the conception of the public library and free access to books is in contradiction with systems of hard-nosed business ethics and management. It would seem that the people who go into library work and the purpose of the institution should favor the development of systems of organization, decision-making, and employee relationships which are more egalitarian, cooperative, and flexible. In large library systems like those typical of universities the distinctions of status and tasks are most rigidly spelled out for the lower levels of library assistants, clerks, technicians, and secretaries.

The nonprofessional staff is graded or categorized according to either education or training and/or working experience. When I look at the women with whom I work it seems quite obvious that the male administrators who hired us had a fairly rigid ideal in mind, namely a relatively good looking, passive, intelligent female, inexperienced and therefore less demanding and less expensive.

Wages are based on a scale graded for each category. Library assistants are graded on a scale from one to five making promotion to higher positions possible. Anyone with a university degree (other than in library science) automatically starts as an LA III. Someone with a high school education and no previous working experience starts as an LA I. As might be expected, the one's and two's end up with much of the shit work. With some kind of reasoning apparently known only to the Administration, each position is evaluated according to the mental (presumably) ability needed to do it. The kinds of positions differ of course, but a certain portion of it is absolutely mindless and mechanical. Now this obviously begins to look ludicrous when

LIBRARIES AND MAUSOLEUMS

one realizes that it takes no more than an IQ of 70 to sort books onto shelves, file catalogue cards or put cards through an IBM machine. If you are an LA I you are expected to do it. If you are a two, you may do some of it. A three might have to "supervise" such tasks. This in itself often creates tensions over an absurd kind of one-up-manship.

Changing the hierarchical structure and division of labour could quite possibly mean changing the whole organizational nature of the library. If this is not immediately foreseeable a couple of points could and should be considered. Firstly, how much of the rote work could be eliminated altogether? Some tasks, such as the filing of catalogue cards, seem inevitable, however others, such as the stamping of book pockets and date due slips, etc., could surely be done at the other end before they ever reach the library. If there is no way around some tasks, how does one cope with them? How long can one be expected to do rote work? Perhaps such work could be more widely distributed so that everyone did some of it and no one had to repeat the same mechanical process over and over for hours. Most university libraries are computerized, so perhaps students themselves could check out their own books, so that relating to borrowers would not be reduced to rote work but expanded to providing useful information and advice.

The general atmosphere of many university libraries is not all that it

could be. A fair amount of tension often arises between staff and students and among staff members themselves. Part of this occurs from such problems as too many students and not enough of the books in demand, assorted rules and regulations regarding borrowing procedures, etc. Some of it, though, arises from the very physical structure of so many libraries, with too many people in too little space, dull functional colours, high ceilings and windows. Again, by their very nature university libraries must maintain a certain standard of organization and rows of catalogue drawers and endless stacks of books, intimidating as they may seem, are difficult to avoid. However, one shouldn't enter a library with the same degree of solemnity as befits a mausoleum. A few well-placed lounge areas, where students could smoke or talk or leaf through paperbacks and magazines, could make a big difference — especially in larger libraries. Also, the staff's interaction with the students needn't become rote work, with the kind of endless parroting of phrases quoted at the beginning of this article. Perhaps if the atmosphere were more casual with students partaking in the checking out of books, etc., (after all, it is *their* library) then staff would stop associating faces only with course and call numbers. Too often in a drive for efficiency and order the human element gets pushed out of library work and the priorities become confused.



hey librarian!

"Hey librarian, when you gonna open the door?" I crouched down behind the high circulation desk so they wouldn't see me. The branch was always closed over the supper hour but still the kids would keep coming. They would collect on the front steps and if they knew you were inside they would shout through the mail slot demanding to be allowed in. It was the same on Saturday morning from 8:30 till 9:00 when we unlocked the doors. During the summer sometimes they would come and spend whole days just "chatting" with the librarian.

Although many of the kids were friends of mine, I did find I got tired of them, rather like a frustrated mother cooped up with her brood day after day. In fact, I found out that many of the kids either had been thrown out of the house by desperate mothers or were locked out after school till "Mom gets home from work." One little girl once told me in a very worried tone about her mother's new job as a dishwasher at a neighborhood cafe and how tired she

for something new for them. Some would try an occasional biography or travel book, but most were rooted to their favorite authors and would rather fight than switch.

One other group I got to know in the branch were the mothers of the preschoolers who came once a week for story hour. The librarian and I took turns telling stories and on our off weeks one would sit and chat with the mothers while the other took the kids. I was amazed at how much these mothers were wrapped up in concerns for their kids. They would go on and on about Jessie's cough or Sam's appetite or Tony's extraordinary number of teeth, etc., etc. Sometimes it depressed me that they seemed to be confined to this domestic world, but perhaps it was just that the kids were the one thing they all had in common.

The library neighborhood was poor and deteriorating. Many houses were humble but homey, but an increasing number were just shacks. Few

neighborhood for all sorts of programs, meetings, parties, whatever. We did have the time and staff to plan and carry off other programs, but we were too divided among ourselves. Our wages, our authority and our responsibility for our jobs varied drastically. And yet all of us were familiar with the needs and several of us, especially among the pages and clerks had special talents in music, drama, art and cinema. But the complicated hierarchy of authority and attendant fears and jealousies made it impossible for us to sit down together and plan anything. Instead, ideas were supposed to be generated from the top and executed from the bottom. Even the librarian in charge feared criticism from the head librarian. As well, all the branch librarians resented the experiments of one other librarian who turned her branch into a community center. And so while we all continued to discuss the obvious needs of the neighborhood's kids, teenagers, and old folks, not much ever got done about it.



always was since she had started working.

But the little kids weren't the only ones who seemed to have no place to go and nothing to do. The neighborhood "teenagers" who were really 10 to 13 years old also hung around the library with apparently nothing to do. For lack of anything else they would gather round a table stacked with old National Geographic and *ggle* over the bare-breasted women of Africa and Asia. Or for kicks they'd light up a cigar in hopes of an hysterical howling out from one of the librarians. To the kids there were no hierarchies. Pages, library clerks and assistant or pedigreed librarian — it was all the same. The only distinctions were between the irritable "crabs" and the scared pushovers — and the couple of us who were just plain unpredictable.

Another group of people from the neighborhood who spent a lot of time in the branch were pensioners, living alone in a world of mysteries, westerns, or love stories. They quickly read the branch dry and we had to be constantly on the search

children had books of their own especially in the Indian and Metis families and our collection was treasured by quite a few young readers. I was amazed to watch how fast some of them progressed through the books. I was greatly relieved when children's fines were finally abolished and no longer a matter of winning the favor of the "librarian" in charge. It seems a scandal to me to risk the loss of a reader for the sake of a 10 cent or 15 cent fine. Children and adults should be asked to care for and return books out of concern for other borrowers and to ensure that the system succeeds and never out of fear. While it was a real delight to help people young and old search for books and hear about the ones they enjoyed and to see the faces of the toddlers light up or frown in response to a story, still I couldn't help feeling surrounded by unmet needs.

We tried a few programs — films for teenagers, puppet shows, more story hours — but most of the time the library was either empty or filled with restless kids. We could have opened the place to the

In thinking back, it seems that this difficulty we experienced in working together with trust and confidence could have been overcome if we had shared some consciousness of our oppression as women. Work is so often an almost schizophrenic experience where we expose only the most acceptable, conformable and sellable aspect of our natures. While I did try to talk about social issues including the women's movement, and we did get rid of the shelves marked "books for boys" and "books for girls," my degree tended to be a millstone around my neck by making me "different." (Of about 25 people with whom I worked, I was the only person with a degree.) If, however, we had been a sort of cadre of feminists who knew each other in and out of our work situation, our chances of overcoming our divisions and mustering the courage to transform the branch would have been much better. It seems to me to be very important that women in the movement begin to think more and more about developing such cadres with our sisters at work.

building the MOVEMENT

Whither the goest

We need money to keep going...
Send monthly post-dated cheques payable to
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PEDESTAL - Did you like this issue? What should be changed? Are we ignoring issues you find important? Write to us at 511 Carrall Street and better yet, help us produce it. ANNE - 988-0950

ABORTION COUNSELLING - Help women obtain the abortions they desperately need. Learn the ins and outs of abortion in Canada and share it with others. D. J. - 732-9338

EDUCATION - Talking and doing things around women as students and teachers in the schools.
UBC - Jane - 224-0557
VCC - Cathy - 433-0290
SFU - Bonnie - 937-7130
High Schools - Trudi - 935-7713, Robin 987-5048

TRADE UNION WOMEN - The Trade Union Women's Workshop has disbanded for the summer. However, there are women on strike in Vancouver and Victoria who need help. For further information about women in trade unions and struggles that are going on see p. 28 & 3.

MEDIA - Are you outraged by the media's use of women - objectifying us, talking down to us? Why not do media for women? Slide shows, photography, media guerrilla attacks. PAT - 731-5412

OFFICE - We answer letters from Alaska to Florida about women's liberation in Vancouver. We keep in order newspapers, newsletters, leaflets, etc., from across North America. Come in and look through the files - find out about the movement as a whole. Help us too. HELEN - 298-8430

WORKING WOMEN'S WORKSHOP - All women interested in working around the problems of women in the work force. Now working on summer series of noon-hour discussions downtown, and on long-term strategy. We NEED people who aren't working at the moment! Come to a meeting or call Jean 298-8430 or Pat 881-3964.

CHILD CARE - Trying to get a group started to help solve child care needs. Needs people. ISOBEL - 732-7059

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3694 Ste. Famille, MONTREAL
MARITIMES
Pat Beresford
6124 Peppersill, HALIFAX
Carol Hamilton-Smith
748 Forest Hill Rd., FREDERICTON

ONTARIO
Shirley Greenberg
5 Commanche Dr., OTTAWA
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Women's Liberation
324 Grandview, MOOSE JAW

ALBERTA
Lorna & Linda Rasmussen
725 10th St. S., LETHBRIDGE
Jo Ann Dundas
215-22nd N.E., CALGARY
Sybiline House (432-7685)
11113-83rd Ave., EDMONTON
Women's Liberation
c/o Janice Leishman
10638-64 Ave., EDMONTON

BRITISH COLUMBIA
Women's Caucus (Pedestal)
511 Carrall St., 684-9523
Women's Liberation
Fanshew House 879-5836
Women's Alliance
684-3535
Terry Inglis (384-8894)
1278 Centre St., No. 4, VICTORIA
Bonnie Ann Dukwa, Chem. Dept.
NDU, NELSON

ABORTION COUNSELLING SERVICE

EVERY WEDNESDAY
6 - 9:00 p.m.
511 Carrall Street
684-0523

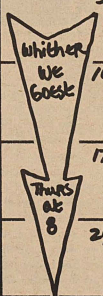
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One for you.....one for a friend.....

Dear Sisters:
Enclosed find \$..... forsubscriptions to the Pedestal.
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JUNE Meetings at 511 Carrall St. unless otherwise noted.						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Working Women 8:30	2 6-9pm Abortion Counselling	3		4
6 Pedestal 11:00 am	7 U.B.C. 2449 Bio.Sci 8:00	8 Working Women 8:30	9 Abortion Counselling 6-9	10	11	12
15 Pedestal 11:00	14 U.B.C. 8:00	15 Working Women 8:30	16 Abortion Counselling 6-9	17	18	19
20 Pedestal 11:00	21 U.B.C. 8:00	22 Working Women 8:00	23 Abortion Counselling 6-9	24	25	26
27 Pedestal Lay-out S.F.U.	28 U.B.C. 8:00	29 Working Women 8:00	30 Abortion Counselling 6-9			



WHITHER WE GOEST - What's wrong, what's right about Women's Caucus? Every Thursday evening we're talking about what we've done - like the boycott of Cunningham's - and asking how it could have been done better and is it the kind of thing we should do in the future. What should be our priorities? Have you stayed away from Women's Caucus for specific reasons? Come and share them. We're working it out together.