

# PRIORITIES

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A PUBLICATION OF THE  
N.D.P. WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

*A FEMINIST SOCIALIST PERSPECTIVE*

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All unsigned articles are the collective responsibility of the Editorial Committee

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"The issues and demands raised by the Women's Liberation Movement are integral to the development of a democratic socialist society. The NDP actively encourages and provides support for women organizing around the demands of the women's liberation movement and commits an NDP government to creating the legislation necessary to realize these demands."

(From the B.C. NDP policy on Women's Rights)

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# LETTERS

Dear Priorities:

Here are some drawings; hopefully, one will make a cover for our issue on women in the arts. The doo-dabbles could be used as fillers.

The article I was to do just didn't get born, and I tried -- dammit! I racked my brains and wrote out all sorts of stuff -- pages and pages and pages, all squashed, crumpled and flung in a corner because I thought I knew where I was at as a feminist-socialist-artist-womanist and now I find I've never really even thought about it and now I have and feel there's no connection. The feminism-socialism is connected, naturally, but my being an artist feels very separate.

Pat tried to help by suggesting I tell of the conflicts and frustrations of being FSA (feminist-socialist-artist) but there haven't been any. At least none that I couldn't handle. It's just something I've done all my life, like breathing and eating. The biggest hassle is earning a living to support my eating and painting, and I can't get all upset about that because I've only been doing it less than a year and it's still fun. Eventually I want to make enough money with my painting that I don't have to do anything else, and if that doesn't happen in five years, then I will probably be depressed and frustrated, a hag-ridden artist. It's something to look forward to, hmmm?

Whitehorse is neat! Not neat enough to consider staying forever, but neat, and even the weather's been neat.

I had a good job but I quit today for a better one. I was working as a secretary to the president of Total North Communications, and starting Monday I will be

working as a waitress for White Pass & Yukon. I'll be at Lake Bennett (on the trail of '98!) where I get free room and board and good pay, and free passes on the train. Lake Bennett is a really beautiful area, and I'm planning on lots of hikes and backpacking trips.

There's an active women's group here in Whitehorse, and they read and love Priorities...Lots of jobs here that have traditionally been filled by men are now being made available to women. There are women working in the mine (underground, yet!); and women working for the city, in the sewers; and women driving heavy equipment on highway construction projects; and women field geologists; and this year I met two women who are working as assistant prospectors in a mining exploration camp. The Manpower office here still tries to channel women into the crap jobs of cooking and clerical work, so most of the women working at jobs such as the non-traditional ones I've mentioned have found these positions through friends.

Back to the article I didn't do. I feel sorry that I couldn't do it, but another reason it was difficult is that to me painting is such a private experience. I handle a lot of personal conflict through my painting, and I also handle a lot of super-joy feelings through it, and it's hard enough expressing these notions in paint, let alone in words. I could talk a bit about the sensation of alienation that for me is part of being an artist. It seems my views and perspectives are vastly different from those of other people and while I can mostly use this in my work, there are times when it causes me bewilderment and pain. There are things I'd like to share and can't because they seem to exist only for me. I tell myself that in painting, I am sharing, but it's rare that anyone sees in a picture exact-

ly, or even nearly, what I've put there. That doesn't matter to the painting, or to the viewer, but it sometimes matters to me, the artist. It's like singing or screaming into a vacuum. I find in feminist-socialist groups this feeling is not so intense, and I relax more. At least if they do not understand, they do not condemn or reject.

Must go now and do things to get ready for the Move to Lake Bennett. Really looking forward to Pat's visit here, and I'm sure you will get a fine article from her about her trip. Miss you all, and often wonder what and how you are doing. Please send me August issue, huh?

Tor  
Whitehorse, Yukon

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Dear Priorities,

All is not GLUM here in the heart of Tory-land! After our second run at the A-G, we came out 1½ percentage points better than the last time! Still 3rd alas! but the finest team and most exciting campaign imaginable in EGLINTON! As long as you publish, and Rosemary (Brown) hustles around the country in such tireless fashion, infusing hope in our hearts and a little more steel in our spines, we'll get there yet!

In sisterhood,  
Eileen Elmy,  
Toronto, Ontario.

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# UBW

UNITED BANK WORKERS  
LOCAL 2 SORWUC

Dear friends,

After waiting for many months, the Canada Labour Relations Board finally handed down an historical decision on June 14th, 1977, ruling that a bank branch is an appropriate bargaining unit.

Our Union and the Canadian Union of Bank Employees in Ontario, two small independent unions, successfully argued for branch by branch certification, even though larger and more established unions said that the CLRB would never accept this position. SORWUC has now applied for over 20 branches and a data centre, and we are engaged in a province-wide organizing drive. There are approximately 850 bank branches in B.C. and 15,000 employees. In order to organize the bank workers in this province, we will need an operating budget of \$5000 per month. In addition, our legal expenses arising out of the hearings before the Canada Labour Relations Board are over \$10,000.00.

The Service, Office and Retail Workers Union of Canada is an independent union formed to organize the unorganized, particularly in those industries where women are concentrated, and where established unions have had the least success. Because we are a new union, our expenses in a campaign such as the bank organizing drive cannot be matched by dues revenue until we have a collective agreement.

We are asking you to contribute to this campaign by making a donation. Many trade unions and district labour councils have shown us their support by giving us money. A victory for the bank employees of B.C. will be a victory for working women and for the entire trade union movement. We hope that you will consider our request and be able to make a donation - your cooperation and support will be greatly appreciated.

In solidarity,  
Elizabeth Godley,  
National Secretary,  
SORWUC.

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I looked in the mirror  
And talked to God  
And She said  
Van der Zalm is nothing  
But an unmitigated Clod.

Dan D'Lyon.