

THE PEDESTAL

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Beauty Queen or Human Being?

As a protest candidate to the Miss Canadian University beauty contest, Janiel Jolley challenged society's view of women as objects. Simon Fraser University Student Society agreed to endorse a protest candidate chosen by Women's Caucus to publicize and expose the contest's exploitation of women.

Initially welcomed to the Jan. 27 pageant at Waterloo Lutheran University, Janiel planned to talk to the other women of the degrading aspects of having the shape of their bodies, the way they dress and their use of make-up judged and given a prize.

These are symptoms of the real problem that women are denied identities as total human beings. They are discriminated against in the work force and channeled into the roles of wife and mother. Women are defined through their biological functions — sexual and reproductive.

Four days before the contest, the Ontario University barred Janiel from the contest saying her



participation would embarrass the sponsor and the other women in the contest.

Cosmetic companies, clothes firms and fashion designers have an interest in perpetuating the notion that a "real woman" must look and act like a plastic, dazzling doll.

The Waterloo organizers were committed to paying for flight and accommodations, but this was cancelled. Contributions from the public and the SFU student society raised enough money to send Janiel, accompanied by Marge Hollibaugh, to Waterloo.

"As far as I'm concerned, I'm still a candidate. I'm going so I can speak to the women entered in it," she said.

The Vancouver Women's Caucus was earlier notified that two contestants from other universities planned to protest the pageant.

As we go to press, Janiel is in Toronto planning strategy with these women to struggle against the beauty contest's dehumanization of women.

1970
YEAR OF THE WOMAN



The international symbol of the struggle for women's rights consists of the biological symbol for female and the fist used by the black and student movements. Stickers of the symbol will be available soon in the Women's Caucus office. It is suggested they be stuck to obnoxious places ... like degrading advertisements, the Playboy fold-out, etc.

educational centre opens

LEARN FOR LIBERATION

A Community Educational and Research Centre, in downtown Vancouver, is opening January 24 to meet the needs of women, workers, unemployed, native peoples and youth.

The purpose of the Centre is "to provide research and educational facilities for those individuals and organizations in our community who are denied access to these, or who find access difficult and costly."

Mordecai Briemberg, professor at Simon Fraser University now suspended for his participation in the strike there last fall, and Ray Koob, of the Canadian Pulp and Paper Workers Union, members of the implementation committee, said in an announcement that educational and workshops are the focus of the Centre.

Educationally, to be held at the Centre at 434 W. Pender, will be on the nature of contemporary society, the way societies change and how they have evolved, the nature of science, and literature and art as expressions of man's struggle for freedom.

Women participating in these educational will have the

opportunity to relate the position of women to the general study of society, the struggle for women's rights to the struggles of other people, and the use and development of science, e.g. the pill, in relation to women.

"The Centre will gather together people who have particular training and skill to deal with the problems that are being discussed and researched," Briemberg said.

"We want to stress that those who are involved directly in a situation, the people who experience a problem, have the most valuable and indispensable information for its solution."

Workshops, with an emphasis on teaching people techniques of

research they can master and use to study their problems, will be established as requested by those participating (see article page 4 on the proposed Working Women's Workshop).

Workshops proposed concern labor history in B.C., racism and housing and the problems of tenants.

Research for immediate use in union negotiations, government hearings, high school and university classrooms will also go on in the Centre.

Library materials relevant to those people participating in the Centre are being collected and will be made available to members. Women's Caucus is collecting material on women for use in the Centre.

"Membership and the resources of the Centre are open to everyone and all activities are public," said Koob and Briemberg. "At the present time, the Centre is sustained by voluntary financial contributions."

More information is available immediately by writing to the Community Educational and Research Centre, 434 W. Pender, or by phoning 298-9638. People are also invited to drop in to the Centre, any day of the week, between noon and 10:00 p.m.

A general meeting to discuss the constitution, workshops and speaker series will be held February 4 at the Labor Temple, 307 W. Broadway.

In the early 1860's, Emily Howard Stowe, faced with an invalid husband and three children, returned to teaching. She saved enough to enter the medical profession.

Unable to enter in Canada, she went to Women's New York Medical School and graduated in 1868. She returned to Toronto to practice medicine.

Partially due to her, U of T opened its doors to women in 1886 and professional schools began to let down the doors. Dr. Stowe also strove to secure factory and health laws, a better Married Women's Property Act, and above all, the political enfranchisement of women. Emily felt that this was a powerful lever in opening the doors to other reforms.

Shocked by the apathy of Canadian Women towards women's rights, she began to lecture in several large Ontario towns on subjects of interest to women. After attending a meeting of the American Society for the Advancement of Women in 1876, she decided that the hour had come when some similar organization should appear on Canadian soil. Such a body would teach Canadian women what their rights were, and also help to secure their rights.

In 1876, Dr. Stowe and a small group of Toronto women launched the Toronto Women's Literary Club. In 1881 it organized the first deputations to wait on the provincial government in the cause of women's rights. The Club also succeeded in getting the Ontario Legislature to pass a law in 1882 permitting unmarried women with property qualifica-



Women In History

Emily Howard Stowe
Canada's First Woman
Doctor

tions to vote on municipal by-laws. Even then, concessions were given first to single women rather than married women in order to keep from "disrupting existing marriages".

By 1883 the Literary Club appears to have felt that the educational programme had been rooted deep enough to permit the formation of a new organization openly devoted to women's rights. The Club disbanded and a request was sent to the Toronto City Council for the use of the Council Chambers to hold a meeting on the night of March 9th. The request was granted and about 130 men and women accepted the invitation. At this enthusiastic meeting two resolutions were carried unanimously. The first endorsed the principle of equal suffrage and the second proposed the immediate formation of a society to achieve that goal. Mrs. Donald McEwen headed the slate of officers, which included men and women and about 200 persons enrolled as members. The new society cast aside subterfuge and called itself the Toronto Women's Suffrage Association.

In its first years the Suffrage Association made notable progress. The University of Toronto was opened to women students and the Ontario Medical College for Women was established. In October, 1883 as the result of a public meeting held on June 13, under the auspices of the Association, Dr. Augusta Stowe-Gullen, the brilliant daughter of Dr. E. Stowe was appointed the first woman member of the faculty of the new medical school.

LEARNED INFERIORITY

Women in contemporary society face a myriad of social forces acting upon us determining our image of ourselves, our social roles, our job opportunities. The family creates children in its image in extremely profound ways.

The schools build on the roles already learned in the family to further condition girls to the roles they are expected to play later in life.

From the first "Dick and Jane" readers to the final guidance text book which lists acceptable "jobs for women" and stresses her natural role as wife and mother, a girl is taught how she should behave.

By presenting women with an extraordinarily narrow image of who they are and what they can do, media acts as one more agent

for channeling women into low paid jobs and housework.

Power has been defined as the ability to define and influence phenomena (Huey P. Newton). As women we don't have the power to define our own lives.

Parents, schools, television, husbands, employers working in some unholly alliance define and control what women are and

what women do.

How can we gain control of our destiny?

We must redefine the categories through which we are controlled. We must understand the historical alternatives to the role of women in the family and her place in the work force.

We must fully comprehend the nature and extent of overt channeling pressures and more subtle psychological mechanisms of social control.

Recognition of the way women learn to be inferior does not in itself improve the situation. Understanding must be coupled with action.

In order to broaden the understanding and stimulate action to liberate women, the Women's Caucus is offering a course "The Education of Women: or how we learn to be inferior."

We must cease to accept the definition of women made by others to bolster their interests. We cannot hope to have influence over our own lives until we create a new definition of what it means to be a woman.

Come and discuss these and other approaches to the question of Women's Education for inferiority. Wednesday evenings at 8:00 in the Labor Temple, Room 6, 307 W. Broadway, 879-9722.



course outline; THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN: or how we learn to be inferior

Jan. 28	Freud & The Family: Education of Pre-school children in our Society	Sibylle Klein Liz Briemberg
Feb. 4	Channelling in the Schools: the example of teachers	Bev Gibbs
Feb. 11	Text books & Women's Place — a) stereotypes in literature b) literary without women	Laura Neame Dodie Wepler
Feb. 18	Adolescence: Rebellion or Conformity	Marcy Cohen
Feb. 25	Media: Images of Women	Catherine Stone

NEWS BRIEFS

OTTAWA — Approximately 45 women are holding educational classes on history and anthropology of women, suffragettes, women in the labor force, etc. They plan to publish a small newspaper and actively worked for women representation at the recent federal NDP convention (see article last issue).

EDMONTON — Women's Day to be held at the University of Alberta January 28 for purposes of educating the community and particularly women students. A film "Women on the March" was to be shown and Mary von Stolk will speak on Canadian suffragettes. A panel, consisting of women from typical women's roles, will take and answer questions on women's liberation. Edmonton Women's Liberation is demanding:

- 1) women's right to control their own body — free birth control and legalized abortions
- 2) social care of children
- 3) enforcement of equal pay for equal work laws
- 4) an end to the feminine mystique
- 5) inclusion of an end to sex discrimination in Alberta and Canadian human rights bills
- 6) end to the tracking system in high schools and universities.

LOS ANGELES — Judge Paul G. Mast of Santa Anna, California, ruled that the right to choose to bear children or not is a fundamental right of every individual woman and "may not be in anyway abridged by law." The municipal judge dismissed felony abortion charges against a doctor Jan. 9 stating that the abortion law is unconstitutional. A district attorney for Orange County said he would attempt to overturn the ruling.

LONDON — About 10 women were on the first \$1,250 abortion excursion to Britain in Jan., arranged by a Springfield, Mass. travel agency. An MP says the promoter must be making nearly \$500 profit on each woman. British doctors charge from \$50 to \$500 for the operation.

VANCOUVER CITY COLLEGE — The major project of City College Women's Liberation group is the organization of a co-operative day care centre on campus. They have also distributed birth control literature widely. There is considerable interest in Women's Liberation on campus, and one result of activities so far has been the establishment of a non-credit course on Women, organized by a sociology prof.

REGINA — Regina Women's Liberation has organized a co-operative day care centre on campus. They carry out regular educational meetings, and have established a regular literature table on campus. Members have been doing research and educational work on women in their courses. Off campus, the women are involved in distributing Prairie Fire, a community newspaper, to women in subsidized housing projects. The main issue there is the regulation that women must leave the low-cost housing if they take jobs.

VICTORIA — Mrs. Elizabeth Morrison, due to give birth to her fifth child in May, is circulating a petition to have federal legislation on abortion eased after she was refused an abortion.

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA — The Parents Co-op Nursery, a group of about 25 men and women, are struggling with the university administration for space to set up a day-care centre for children five years and under. Presently, they are still working through normal channels.

Educational on Women's Liberation will be held every Wednesday at 12:30 in the Students Union Building (SUB) room 207.

WHAT IS A BEAUTY CONTEST?

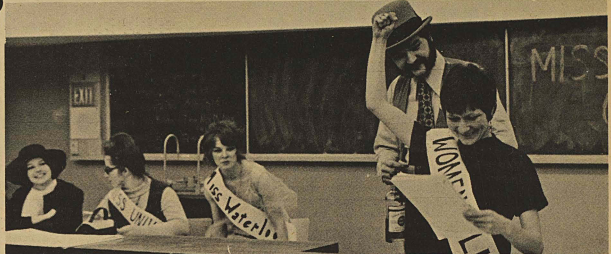
By MARGARET BENSTON

No one would argue that if we put an end to beauty contests, somehow the status of women would magically change. Beauty contests do not, in themselves, cause anything. They are a symptom; they show the reality of what this society thinks about women. Beauty contests also symbolize and reinforce the channelling of women into their proper place.

What in essence is a beauty contest? A pleasant entertainment? A chance for a girl to get her name in the papers? A harmless exercise in girl watching?

The heart of the thing is a competition between female human beings to see which one can best fulfill the standards that our society sets for "true" femininity. The centre of the contest is of course physical appearance — this is after all a *beauty* contest — but the "talent" and "poise" categories are not just concessions added to give the whole affair some class. The standards for Today's Woman include the ability to charm hubby's boss, to be a good "hostess" and to provide intellectual companionship and an adequate cultural level for the children. All this in addition to being the physically exciting, perfectly groomed and dressed sex "partner".

Beauty contests are staged for the benefit of men but they are directed at both men and women. The implicit assumption in the whole affair is that the ideal woman is Man's Best Friend. (That is *not*, by the way, a Women's Liberation rhetorical exaggeration — the title of an article in Weekend Magazine, carried in the Sunday Vancouver Sun some months ago, was "Man's Best Friend is His Helpmeet.") Women exist, so the contest proclaims, to be some man's girl friend or wife. Therefore, the



Women's Liberation stronger than plastic doll Miss Waterloo, 1942 Miss University, and fashion editor in Janiel Jolley Day skit at Simon Fraser University.

object is to display the kind of woman a man should want — both so men can see what to shop for and so women can see what they should do to beat the competition.

The standards implicit in every major beauty contest, and particularly those held around universities, are middle class. They are geared to middle class education, middle class incomes and middle class goals. These standards are mostly myths even for the middle class — being a wife and mother is not at all what the beauty contest says it is even for wives of executives and professionals. What is even worse is that these values and goals are taken over by nearly everyone, even by those who have no chance of ever realizing them. The consequence of this is a false consciousness for working men and women — one which makes it nearly impossible for them to deal with and change the problems and unpleasant realities in their own lives.

There is more to it than that though. A new twist is added by the sponsors and well wishers of beauty contests. These are not simply philanthropic men eager to promote social stability in this admirable

way. On the contrary, these are the men with something to sell . . . cosmetics, clothes, perfumes, the lot. Everything no girl can be without. To quote McCall's magazine:

"What makes up a desirable woman? Sugar and spice, blusher, taupe eyeshadow, and an open mind. For the desirable woman is the kind who tries what's new in toiletries. And make-up. She tracks down the new lower-lid false eyelashes and practices for hours to get them right. She hunts through half the stores in town for the latest deeper lip gloss."

It is no accident that even if the odd beauty contest may have occurred before, the heyday of them has been after women won the vote and were, in theory, emancipated. Winning the vote coincided roughly with the beginning of the great Advertising Revolution arising out of the economy's need for a public that consumed more and ever more. One thing the new emancipation of women seems to have meant to capitalism was simply that women were now much freer to openly compete for a husband, and to pay for the products to help her compete. In that competition, the various hucksters could promise all sorts of marvels to help. With the help of these various industries there has grown up the grotesque ideal of the Beauty Queen — the mass-produced, plastic coated, interchangeable doll.

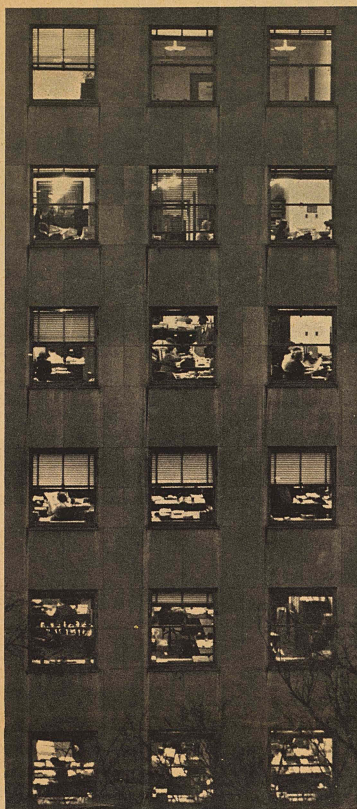
As this ideal is directed at both men and women, so it affects both groups. It distorts and dehumanizes the relationships between men and women. Men are caught between being sold a beautiful, passive, "helpmeet" to prove and maintain their manhood and wanting a real relationship with a real person. Women are caught between trying to live up to the ideal, which leads them into mindless narcissism, and their fear of not getting a man or of somehow not being a real woman. But the heaviest burden of this ideal falls on women — it is they who are limited and stunted, who are channelled into dollhood instead of being allowed to be human.

Beauty contests do not exist alone; they are the tip of the iceberg. Underneath them is the whole system which uses men and women against each other, the system which denies women dignity and the right to be first class humans. Beauty contests are both a symptom and a reinforcement of this system. The commercial interests which support them are quite clear about the functions of such contests and we must be too. Janiel Jolley, the SFU protest candidate from the Women's Caucus, has been barred from the Waterloo Lutheran "Miss Canadian University" contest as we go to press; one reason given was that the sponsors of the contest might back out if she were allowed to continue. She had previously assured the contest chairman that she did not intend to attack the other candidates. She wanted to talk about women's place in Canada, that was all. Her physical acts of protest were to consist of wearing no makeup and not emphasizing clothes in any way (she planned to wear the same simple, attractive short dress for all daytime affairs and a similar long dress for evening ones).

Why are they so disturbed about such minor matters? Because that is what the contest is all about — to demonstrate the skills of Canadian womanhood in makeup and clothes. The sponsors of this contest and many others have a heavy stake in perpetuating the image of women in these terms. All of the major institutions of this society depend in fact on women keeping to their present, secondary, place.

If beauty contests and all they represent are to end, there is no one but women, working together, to do it.





regina secretaries

part of furniture

By SALLY MAHOD & MAIJA CRANE

An often ignored group of people in the university community is its employees. They are denied a role in the decision-making process and the questions that concern them are rarely raised.

Their only representation is through their union. Limited as this representation is, it is considerably more than that enjoyed by their counterparts in other universities.

The University of Saskatchewan is the only university in the country whose employees have organized themselves into one union. The union includes caretakers, maintenance, clerical and food service staff.

Some of the food service staff were paid only minimum wages until the union won the right to act as their bargaining agent.

Previously their wages rose only three to four per cent per year. Through the efforts of the union, wages have increased 25 per cent over the last few years. However, lower paid classifications are still below the poverty level.

The last contract included provision for maternity leave. These benefits which university employees enjoy are not attributable to any great concern on the part of the university administration for its employees. The union struggled hard for these gains.

Over the last four years the union has negotiated two contracts, each taking ten months at the bargaining table. By the time one contract has been agreed upon it isn't long before the union faces another ten-month battle.

Over half the university employees are women, and most of these women are secretaries. Secretarial work is the traditional catch-all for women who work, both before marriage and after.

Secretaries perform many duties which far exceed any job description, including their own.

As one secretary said, "Your duties depend on the day-to-day whims of your boss, from carrying coffee to arranging meetings, to occasionally being chased around the desk."

Secretaries have to contend not only with the boss but with students who arrogantly regard them as part of the office furniture.

The bureaucracy in the university is such that only the secretaries keep the institution functioning. They must make it their business to know who and what department is responsible for each individual problem that arises.

"If it weren't for the clerical grapevine, everyone would be lost," one secretary remarked.

On entering the university, students are at such a loss that it is often only the secretaries who can sort things out. Despite the fact that counselling is considered too "academic" a job for mere secretaries, they end up doing a great deal of informal counselling without credit or pay.

During the hectic rush of registration, secretaries sometimes miss coffee breaks or work overtime without compensation. The boss asks it as a favor, and the secretary knows wage increases are at the discretion of the boss. Therefore she finds it difficult to refuse.

All the employees face similar problems, but the secretaries face certain problems peculiar to themselves as women. Unless you are particularly skilled, it is to your advantage to be young, pretty, and to wear a mini-skirt.

A secretary is expected to project the image of her employer. This creates pressure from above and from the secretaries themselves to spend much of their hard-earned salaries on their appearance.

As one university employee put it, "The snobbery of the academic community is reflected in the attitudes of the secretaries. They regard themselves as somewhat better than the secretaries who work downtown."

"Instead of identifying with other women in similar positions, the university secretaries identify with their employers. They're encouraged to do so."

This is unfortunate. If secretaries began to recognize their own interests as employees, they'd see that together they hold the power to greatly improve their own working conditions. They could bring about real changes in the institutions in which they are an integral, though often ignored part.

My hips are a desk.
From my ears hang
chains of paperclips.
Rubber bands form my hair.
My breasts are wells of mimeograph ink.
My feet bear casters.
Buzz. Click.
My head
is a badly organized file.
My head is a switchboard
where crossed lines crackle.
My head is a wastebasket
of worn ideas.
Press my fingers
and in my eyes appear
credit and debit
zing. Tinkle.
My navel is a reject button.
From my mouth issue cancelled reams.
Swollen, heavy, rectangular
I am about to be delivered
of a baby
xerox machine.
File me under W
because I wonce
was
a woman.

—Marge Piercy
from Motive

WORKING WOMEN ORGANIZE



B.C. Human Rights Commission hearing: provoked Women's Caucus protest against lack of protection of women's rights: 1969 — woman chained to stove; 1969 — woman picketing: 1977 — woman with a gun.

learn and fight

At the general meeting of Women's Caucus held Thursday, January 22, the following proposal for a Working Women's Workshop in connection with the Community Educational and Research Centre was presented by Jean Rands.

If you are interested in participating in this kind of project, call Women's Caucus at 879-9722 or Jean Rands at 298-8430.

More and more women in the work force are interested in organizing themselves around those issues which affect them as women workers: equal pay for equal work, job security, equal opportunity, day care, maternity leave, sexual objectification on the job, etc.

As Women's Caucus, we are getting requests from groups of working women to discuss with them, and support them in their struggles.

To do this most effectively, those of us who are in the work force, and concerned with organizing on the job, need to get together, to work together and exchange experiences, more consistently. The facilities of the Educational and Research Centre can be very valuable to us in this work.

The direction of the workshop should be determined by the needs of the working women who become involved in it. The research we need most now is not just information on how bad the situation is. By and large, that information is available — and all the statistics only bear out our own personal experiences of discrimination. What we need is information which demonstrates the possibilities for changing our situation, and gives us clues on how to organize to change it.

This means that a lot of what is necessary will be found in discussions, exchanging experience, bringing together

and generalizing our individual experiences, rather than in books of statistics.

The workshop should set itself tasks which are directly related to our own situations, inside and outside trade unions, and to our struggle to organize women where we are. The following outline represents some ideas on what those tasks are, to be changed and expanded as the workshop develops.

Research areas

Some historical research is necessary to enable us to deal with present problems. The history of the organization of women in the past, trade union organization as well as movements like the suffragettes, is ignored and distorted in the educational system. We need to know the lessons of those struggles.

It is also important to look at the history of women's role in the industries that we are working in. When we argue that discrimination in hiring should be ended, it helps to know that many jobs that are now "men's jobs" have been done by women in the past — particularly during wars. This kind of research involves mostly talking to the women that we work with, who were working during the war.

We need a better picture of the situation of women in relation to the labor movement, not just historically, but in the present. We know that only 12% of women workers in B.C. are in unions, compared to 60% of men. But we don't know which unions are organizing women, and around which issues they are being organized. We don't know in detail the proportion of the membership of various unions that is women, the role that women play in various unions, the issues that affect them most directly and the position of the union on those issues.

We should discuss recent trade union struggles for equal pay for equal work, how they were won, and what the results of the victory were.

Since many of us are members of unions, pieces of this information are known by us as individuals. We can learn important lessons from each other's experience.

All of these discussions should be related to our major task, the organization of the 88% of women who are not organized in any way. We know that the number of women working has been increasing rapidly for the last decade or so. Our potential power is great. But that potential can only be realized if we understand the concrete situation of unorganized women, where they are, where they are concentrated. We need to discuss our experiences in offices, stores, restaurants, and find the issues that affect women there most directly. We need to study the problem of part-time or temporary work, its effects on the thousands of women who do it, and the problems it poses in terms of organizing.

Publications

Out of our discussions, we should attempt to write short pamphlets, useful as organizing tools in various areas. Women in this society are not taught to write, to express ourselves, and one of our greatest problems in organizing is our lack of literature which exposes the situation of women and poses alternatives.

Together, we can develop literature on the situation of women in different occupations — in hospitals, offices, restaurants, etc. We need pamphlets too that cut across those divisions, around issues that affect women wherever we work. A pamphlet on equal pay for equal work, to help us in arguing with the men we work with as well as women. Something on job classification and job security. The problem of day care, related to the economic situation of women workers. And, of course, the problem of sexual objectification on the job — the definition of women as "playthings" which follows us everywhere in this society and compels us to spend a good part of our low wages on our appearance (often under threat of being fired on grounds of "attitude" or "not fitting in").

Most importantly we need to help each other actually organize the women where we work.

We can bring to the workshop the problems and obstacles we daily encounter on the job. Helping each other to develop strategies for particular situations, we will be able to confront unions with women's issues and get unorganized women to organize themselves into unions.

Hospital employees may be able to develop a common solution to the problems faced in all hospitals or union workers will be able to provide information to the unorganized.

We can use the Centre to gain the knowledge we need to improve our lives and gain our rights as women.



Unequal pay for equal work for women hospital employees is a harsher reality than the romantic life portrayed by novels and the media.

hospital workers demand equal pay

At the Vancouver General Hospital unit of the Hospital Employees Union local 180, a struggle for equal pay for equal work is starting to grow. The VGH unit has a membership of 80% women, yet has only one woman on the executive of 8.

Two women were nominated to run for the unpaid executive positions of Trustee. They are running against 6 men. These women campaigned on the basis that there should be equal pay for equal work in all departments of the hospital.

At present the hospitals are discriminating in their hiring policies, by hiring employees according to sex, not according only to ability. Both the nurses aides (female nursing assistants) and orderlies (male nursing assistants) are hired on the basis of two years experience working in the hospital, and both do essentially the same work.

The men in most departments are earning about \$100 a month more than the women for doing substantially the same work.

		Example: Nursing Department				
		starting pay	6 mo.	12 mo.	24 mo.	5 yrs
(women)	Nurse aide	336.00				
	Practical nurse	378.50		349.25		365.50
(men)	Orderly	471.75	490.00	508.00	526.25	

As long as the hospitals can hire women for low wages, they will not need to pay men or women decent wages.

Anyone interested in the struggle for equal pay for equal work in Hospitals, please contact Vancouver Women's Caucus at 879-9722.

Movement Grows In Maritimes

By CATHY WALKER

The core of the Halifax Women's Caucus, created in mid-September, is the Dalhousie and Dartmouth New Democratic Youth (NDY) — organizations identified more with Students for a Democratic Caucus (SDU) or Revolutionary Student Movement (RSM) in terms of structure and activity, than most NDY's — and members of the Rosa Luxemburg Co-op. Other women, high school teachers and students, secretaries, and professors, among others, subsequently joined. The group now has a membership of over thirty people.

The meetings began by reading and discussing papers produced by the Vancouver Women's Caucus, Toronto Women's Liberation Front, Canadian Union of Students (CUS), and elsewhere to develop an understanding and analysis of women's role in capitalist society, as well as discussing personal experiences which helped to develop solidarity within the group.

One of the first projects of the group was to develop a comprehensive bibliography of books and articles on women. This major project will probably be completed in mid-January at which time it will be distributed at cost price to all the women's groups across Canada for whom we have addresses.

birth control issue

The first issue that we began organizing around was the birth control issue. Two thousand copies of the McGill Birth Control handbook were ordered from CUS and were distributed at Dalhousie. After being Ok'd by the University Health Service, difficulties were encountered with the Dean of Women at the women's residence but a surreptitious distribution went on through sympathetic dons and a serious confrontation did not develop. The rest were left in the Student Union Building and at the Health Service and were quickly gone.

For follow up to the distribution at Dalhousie, a successful panel was held with a psychiatrist, a doctor, and a representative of Halifax Women's Caucus answering questions from the audience on birth control and women's problems in general.

Two hundred copies of the handbook were ordered for the Mt. St. Vincent University, a Catholic, all-female institution. The Student Council president left 50 in the student council office and told five people about them. In two hours they were all gone. By similar word-of-mouth communication, the rest were gone in two days. Because of the eager response, the liberal administration is now ordering 1,000 more. The Students Councils at the University of King's College, St. Mary's University, and other universities in the Maritimes, such as the University of New Brunswick at Fredericton and

University of Prince Edward Island, are ordering copies of the birth control handbook.

media exposure

One of the women from the Halifax Women's Caucus was asked to be on a local afternoon television program called Home Base and was so successful in debating a 'typical housewife' they asked her back. On the second program she did even better. Afterwards a CBC commentator (male) gave an excellent monologue about the need for women to examine their situation and ended with, "when you have a revolution, remember, I was on your side."

Most women students in the group are doing papers on women for their courses and discussing them in the Caucus.

Articles on women have been written for several Maritime newspapers. I've written a program, similar in content to the Vancouver Women's Caucus program, to introduce people to the topic. It has been run in various Atlantic Region university newspapers. Articles are being written for *The Fourth Estate*, a bi-weekly leftist newspaper as well as *The Port Hawkesbury Sun* and *The Cape Breton Highlander*, similar publications. I'm writing a comprehensive article on the status of women in the Maritimes for *The Mysterious East*, a monthly publication from Fredericton having good political content.

future plans

A literature table at Dalhousie University will be set up as soon as "The 1935 Revival" (the name of the Dalhousie Women's Group) is granted formal recognition from Student Council. Literature on women is presently being sold at the NDY table.

A day-care centre is now in the planning stages and papers and discussions around that issue are taking place.

A weekend retreat is planned for interested Halifax women in late January. Each woman will read a book or prepare a paper to be discussed at the seminar.

Discussion of how to get working women involved is going on at meetings. A telephone operator who is a member of our group is doing extensive work in forming links with women in her place of work.

A women's group has just been formed in Fredericton with a core group of Canadian Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) women. It should prove equally as active as the Halifax group. Women are interested in Charlottetown, St. John's, Sackville, and elsewhere, but as yet are too few to organize themselves into viable groups.

our history has been

stolen from us.

our heroes died

in childbirth, from peritonitis

of overwork

of oppression

of bottled-up rage

our geniuses were never taught

to read or write

we must invent a past adequate

to our ambitions

we must create a future adequate

to our needs

from

The Old Mole, Cambridge, Mass.

JOIN WOMEN'S CAUCUS

LITERATURE

Reading material available by writing, or dropping in, to Women's Caucus, 307 W. Broadway, Van. 10.

Poverty: Canada's Legacy to Women — Alice James (10 cents)
Women in the Work Force — The Problem as Stated by DBS (10 cents)

The Political Economy of Women's Liberation — Margaret Benston (10 cents)

Bread and Roses — Myrna Wood & Kathy McAfee (15 cents)

Socialist Perspective for Women — Jean Rands (10 cents)
The Radical Feminist Position — Ellen Willis (10 cents)

Women in the Educational System — Marcy Toms (10 cents)

Education as a Priority — Pat Hoffer & Marcy Cohen (10 cents)

Day Care — Melody Kilian (10 cents)

McGill Birth Control Handbook (free)

Back issues of the Pedestal (10 cents)

Women's Caucus Program (free)

Suggested reading:
The Golden Notebook — Doris Lessing

The Feminine Mystique — Betty Friedan

Born Female — Carolyn Bird

Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State — Frederick Engels

Mother — Maxim Gorky
The Doll's House — Ibsen

NEW MEMBERS
Women's Liberation "orientation" sessions are held regularly. Contact Women's Caucus office between 11:00 and 3:00 daily to join one. 879-9722.

GENERAL MEETINGS
Discussions of general women's liberation topics and decisions on actions and projects, Thursdays, 8:00, 307 W. Broadway, Room 6.

LUNAR NEW YEAR

A Lunar New Year Celebration, Feb. 6, is to be held at the Women's Artists Co-op with live music. An admission charge for the caucus.

ABORTION

Abortion Information Centre, Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m., 307 W. Broadway, Rm. 6.

ARTISTS

Contact Women Artists' Co-op, 137 Water Street, or Pat Hoffer, 731-5412. Leather, batiques, groovy things.

NORTH SHORE

Educationals on women are to be held on the North Shore Thursday, March 12 and Thursday, March 19 at the Park Royal Lanes Building at 8:00. "Feminine Mystique or Real Oppression?" is jointly sponsored by the Women's Caucus and Capilano College. Admission — \$1.00 per evening, students 50 cents.

"No woman can call herself free who does not own and control her body," declared Margaret Sanger in 1920, founder of the Planned Parenthood Association. "No woman can call herself free until she can choose consciously whether she will or will not be a mother." The ultimate freedom remains the right of every woman to legalized abortion. Canadian women are still denied this most fundamental human right by Trudeau's "Just Society" laws — just laws forcing a woman to uncontrolled fertility with compulsory pregnancy and motherhood.

These laws are man-made laws and in their present form date back only one hundred years. Most societies of antiquity practiced abortion and records of an abortion technique go back 3,000 years before Christ in the Royal Archives of China. The early Christians followed Aristotle's view that the soul developed in three stages. The vegetable soul at conception was followed by the animal soul and finally by a rational soul. The Church, therefore, punished abortion only after the soul became rational, a point arbitrarily set as forty days for the male fetus and eighty days for a female.

Thomas Aquinas added the principle of motion to Aristotle's three-stage soul and British Common Law then set the beginning of life and the soul as the time of quickening and prohibited abortion only after the mother felt the fetus move in her womb (about 5 months).

science and religion

The German biologist, Ferdinand Keber, in 1953, witnessed under a microscope the penetration of female ovum by male sperm. "Instant animation" was then supported by the Church and the soul was considered created at conception. The same discovery by Keber allowed some fairly effective methods of birth control to be developed in France. In ten years the birth rate in France dropped fifty percent.

This so alarmed the Emperor and Church, with many wars to fight and colonies to populate, that laws regarding contraception and abortion were immediately enacted. Pope Pius IX in 1869 decreed that all abortion from the moment of conception was now murder and "that the people adhering to the worship of God and our Savior should daily increase." (Casi Connubii, Pope Pius IX)

It can be seen that these laws, far from being the "natural" law and a permanent part of our social fabric, are in fact recent innovations stemming from a heritage of female degradation and male supremacy. Man-made laws which fail to grant the choice of motherhood not only condemn women to the level of "brood" animals, but deform the sanctity of birth itself. Children should be created as an achievement, not flung into the world as disastrous accidents. We can create laws forcing a woman to bear an unwanted child but we cannot ensure that she will not bear resentment toward that child.

unwanted children

"Nothing is more tragic, more fateful in its ultimate consequences than the realization of a child that he is unwanted," said Dr. K. Menninger. Our laws must not demand the survival of the embryo without being equally concerned about his welfare as a human being.

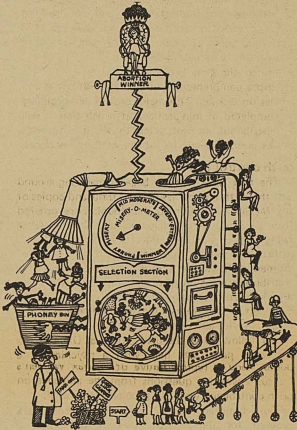
Before being elected as president of the Association for the Study of Abortion, Dr. R.E. Hall said:

"My answer as an obstetrician is that doctors should not be asked to determine which women qualify for abortions. We are no more qualified to do so than accountants or street-cleaners. Nor do I think lawyers, psychologists or theologians are better suited. Who then? Who but the prospective parents themselves? They know as much about animate and inanimate fetuses as the highest priest and a great deal more about their own ability and desire to raise a child than the fanciest physician. They are not going to create a pregnancy for the sole purpose of destroying it; yet if its destruction seems imperative to them, they will be spared a great deal of otherwise inevitable guilt if the society sanctions what they do."

The Vancouver Women's Caucus has begun an active campaign for the repeal of all abortion laws — all other solutions are considered compromises. At the beginning of December, the first Abortion Information Service in Canada was opened every Tuesday evening at their office in the Vancouver

Labor Temple. Women requesting information are counselled on the available existing facilities for obtaining abortions.

As the situation stands now therapeutic abortions in hospitals are available to only a tiny percentage of women. In order to obtain a therapeutic abortion in British Columbia, a woman must have a signed referral from usually one general practitioner and two gynecologists if the application is on physical grounds or from a general practitioner, one gynecologist and one or two psychiatrists if the application is on mental grounds. This takes three or four weeks of appointments. If all the doctors sign the necessary papers, the case is presented to the local hospital board which may or may not approve the applicant for abortion. Even if they do approve it, the woman must wait for an available bed and be hospitalized for two or three days. Yet, if the abortion is done in the first twelve weeks of pregnancy it is not even a hospital procedure. The situation would be ludicrous if it were not so tragic.



THE ABORTION MACHINE

Ironically, since it is impossible to have a safe illegal abortion in twelve weeks, a woman who attempts a legal abortion risks losing her original option of an illegal one because her pregnancy has advanced too far.

The new abortion law, brought into effect in August, 1969, includes a threat to the "health" of the mother as an indication for therapeutic abortion. No attempt has been made in the law to define the word "health". Theoretically, it allows the individual doctors concerned considerable leeway in interpretation.

Although the World Health Organization defined "health" as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease; doctors still seem to be cowed by conservative interpretation of the law. The case of the average woman demanding abortion, the case consistently rejected by abortion committees, goes beyond the immediate limits of medicine into the socio-economic realm. Surely the patient's life must be considered in its entirety and when socio-economic factors affect her existence they must be included with everything else in a decision concerning abortion. Why should these women be penalized because they are stable enough under straining to resist committing suicide?

Since the new law has yet to be fully tried, doctors bending backwards to stay within the law do not know which cases to refer to the abortion committee. A test case, forcing interpretation by the court, might give physicians enlarged freedom of judgement in abortion cases.

The rate of therapeutic abortions has increased at Vancouver General Hospital from 0 in 1967 to approximately 1 a week in 1970 but this is still obviously inadequate. One of the major drawbacks

of the present law is the requirement that abortions be performed in a hospital only after the case has passed the therapeutic abortion committee. The committee sits as the high court of justice often having no contact with the patient other than through her records. Removed from the control of her personal physician the patient becomes a pawn in the bureaucracy, often more intent on preserving hospital status than concerned with the welfare of the patient.

To counter the threat of being charged with an illegal operation Doctors developed the defense of the second letter of approval. This has been enlarged so that the abortion committee, representing the hospital itself, stands behind each operation. Certainly, the decision to perform such an abortion is a grave responsibility, but so are all decisions for surgery. If two specialists, involved closely with the patient, cannot be trusted with an abortion decision what makes a committee more dependable? Only 5 out of approximately 65 women who in one month requested information from Women's Caucus Service were actually able to obtain a therapeutic abortion. This means the remaining sixty had to find an alternate solution which nearly always means an illegal abortion. Contrary to prevalent opinion, safe illegal abortions are not easy to procure in Vancouver, especially if the \$500 to \$2000 required makes this financially impossible.

Only Vancouver General Hospital seems to have a relatively progressive approach towards abortion. Obviously, one hospital and a handful of enlightened doctors cannot handle the main case load for the whole lower mainland.

therapeutic abortions

The existing facilities for therapeutic abortion evade the real problem and touch only a fraction of cases, the classical extreme cases. The law states that an abortion may be performed when there is a threat to the life or health of the mother. With the advancement of medical science illnesses like diabetes and heart disease, once considered severe threats to the pregnant women, can now be so controlled medically that they rarely qualify as grounds for abortion.

One of the most obvious weaknesses of the committee system is the resulting chaos. High-powered specialists waste valuable time processing applications and their disinterest in the procedure results in seemingly arbitrary and inconsistent decisions varying from hospital to hospital and day to day. In short, if the purpose of the committee system is to limit the freedom of the individual doctor and limit the number of abortions performed, it has succeeded brilliantly.

According to a CBS film on abortion, for every 1 therapeutic abortion performed in the United States, there are 110 illegal abortions. These shocking figures reveal the failure of the legitimate medical profession to deal with a threat to life as great as many of the major diseases they are trying to eradicate. Yet the sordid results of butchers and quacks continue to flow into the emergency wards of hospitals. Doctors who ease their conscience by relegating these girls to the position of mere fools would do well to consider that despite so powerful an instinct as motherhood, it is a very desperate state of mind that allows these women to willingly face self-destruction to terminate an unwanted pregnancy.

abortion solution

Medically, abortion is a very simple surgical procedure which in the first twelve weeks of pregnancy can easily be done under a local anaesthetic in a clinic situation. Forcing abortions into an elaborate hospital operating room and making it dependent upon the written recommendations of many doctors and committees is impractical, expensive and unnecessary. Since abortions must by law be performed in accredited hospitals and the laws governing accreditation of hospitals are provincial, the most obvious solution is the conversion of a small accredited hospital (such as a convalescent home) into a properly licensed clinic where doctors wanting to perform abortions can do so quickly and inexpensively.

This is not a preposterous solution for such clinics now exist in Scandinavia and England. At the present time abortions are available on request in Russia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Japan. These countries have proved that the system successfully controls the population crisis and virtually abolishes the dangers and cruelty of underworld abortion. It is ironic that the most "civilized" society in the world built on the taming of nature, has not yet allowed reason to triumph over blind instinct in the procreation of its children.

MANPOWER AGAINST WOMEN

A woman seeking work is not often openly told "no, we don't hire women" or "I personally don't have anything against women, it's just against company policy."

Discrimination against women usually occurs before contact with the employer — frequently at a Canada Manpower Centre.

Documentation of the kinds and forms of discrimination practiced by this federal agency was presented December 12 to ten Vancouver-area managers of Manpower at a board meeting, by Anne Roberts for Women's Caucus.

"A woman who seeks work at a Manpower centre is faced with work listings blatantly segregated by sex," said the brief prepared by Alice James, Mary Borsky and Anne Roberts.

"Manpower forbids 'whites only' or 'Catholics only' but apparently sees nothing wrong with discrimination on the basis of sex."

Women's Caucus listed as an example of this kind of discrimination Manpower's hiring of Christmas help for the post office. The \$1.25 an hour jobs were listed for women, the \$1.50 an hour jobs for men.

Examining the kinds of jobs offered to a woman, Anne Roberts said, "One sees that 'female occupations' as listed in Manpower offices, are those which are extensions of the work women do as housewife and mother.

"The stereotype perpetuated upon women is that they enjoy menial labor, they are good at repetitious tasks, and they are not good for much other than making a man happy."

A woman's life is a process of learning to be inferior, the brief said. A long history of discrimination had resulted in women having limited expectations, few skills and little education.

"Women make up a large pool of unemployed labor, a large pool of cheap labor, which can be pulled into and out of the work force as the economy dictates. The fact that industry and government can hire women at very low wages means they will not hire both men and women for decent wages," she said.

Manpower's actions reinforce the limited expectations of women, the brief said. Manpower offers women only the menial, low-paying jobs.

A Women's Caucus member was asked by a Manpower counsellor what her typing speed was before even looking at her job qualifications.

At a time of increased automation and specialization, when people need to learn new skills in order to survive, the brief said, Manpower still trains women only for the female, i.e. the low-paid occupations — nurses' aides, cooks, secretaries, typists, etc.

"A woman with some experience in welding applied to Manpower for a welder course offered at the Vancouver Vocational Institute," the brief said. "She was told that for a woman to be allowed into the course, she would have to obtain a letter from an employer guaranteeing employment after the completion of the course.

"Besides the fact that this is not a requirement for men, an employer can hardly be expected to guarantee employment to someone who has not yet passed the course or who may even fail the course."

Managers of Manpower Centres responded to these charges by claiming they would become ineffective and useless if they ended job discrimination by sex.

"Our job," said one manager, "is to provide bodies as quickly and efficiently as possible to employers. Canada Manpower was established to serve the interests of the economy."

While Trudeau's federal government promises us a 'just society' out of one corner of its mouth, one of its agencies openly defends its policy of discrimination on the basis of efficiency.

The needs of employers are more important to Manpower than to ensure equal job opportunity for women.

Three demands were presented to Manpower officials — demands women must continue to press until it is forced to end prejudice and discrimination in the job market.

- 1) an immediate end to job classification by sex. Qualifications, not sex, must be the criteria for hiring.
- 2) sponsorship for women in all training programs.
- 3) the adoption of an education program to erase prejudice against the hiring of women in all occupations.

WOMEN AGAINST MANPOWER

RALLY FOR EQUAL JOBS

About 60 women and men gathered in front of the Vancouver post office Dec. 13 in rain and cold, to protest discrimination against women in hiring of Christmas temporary help.

The rally, with guerrilla theatre and speeches, and subsequent march through downtown distributing leaflets, was called by Women's Caucus after the post office advertised for female help at \$1.25 and hour and males at \$1.50.

Women's Caucus claimed, in the leaflet, that "so long as this discrimination exists, so long as employers hire on the basis of sex rather than qualifications, so long as women in Canada earn an average of less than 40% of the wages of men with the same education, women will have to be grateful for jobs at \$1.25, and qualified women will be available to work at starvation wages."

The protesters advocated union wages for all temporary help. As long as the federal government and other employers can hire women at low wages, they will not hire men and women at decent wages.

Our recent Human Rights Commission and Canada Manpower briefs, as well as our Manpower and Post Office demonstrations, have convinced us, as women, of the daily consciously practised discrimination against women on the part of Canada Manpower.

If any voluntary agency were to do the same thing and then appeal to us for financial support, we believe we would refuse them. We do not see how we could do otherwise; for to support an organization which daily oppresses us and our sisters is to add degradation to oppression.

Federal agencies are no different. Canada Manpower is supported by our tax money (incidentally with no tax credit for decreased pay we get for doing the same work as men). We, as taxpayers, are paying the salaries of those counsellors and employees who deny equal job opportunity and the training needed for meaningful jobs, who force our sisters onto welfare and at year's end give us the privilege of working for several whole weeks at the post office at \$1.25 an hour. Therefore, Women's Caucus, at our January 22 general meeting, endorsed in principle this proposal:

All women who file a federal income tax return in April, 1970, should deduct by either withholding or requesting a refund, that amount of their tax money which will go to supporting Canada Manpower.

Percentages to be deducted and further information can be obtained at the Women's Caucus office, 307 W. Broadway, 879-9722.

PLEDGE TODAY

Celebrate March 8

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

"The proletariat cannot achieve complete freedom unless it achieves complete freedom for women." — Lenin

International Women's Day commemorates a demonstration of socialist working class women in New York City in 1908. The International Socialist Congress in 1910 declared March 8 an international working class holiday, in honor of women's struggles.

Women's Liberation groups around the world will be celebrating this day. In solidarity with our sisters, Vancouver Women's Caucus plans to hold a public teach-in on women and invite all city women's organizations. If you are interested in participating, please call Women's Caucus office, 879-9722.

YOU give, give, give — to everyone but yourself.

LIBERATE yourself from Drudgery, Isolation, Loneliness, and Dependence

by supporting

WOMEN'S CAUCUS
pledge \$5, \$10, \$25, \$2 or ?
write post-dated checks
NOW

if you can't give money, give moral support

Abortion Campaign

Valentine's Day marks the beginning of a mass campaign to remove abortion laws from the Criminal Code.

In Vancouver, a rally with speakers, films and information on abortion, is to be held on February 14.

Women across Canada are beginning to organize for a demonstration in Ottawa demanding the right to control our bodies.

On Mother's Day, a cavalcade will leave Vancouver with a black coffin symbolizing the thousands of women who die each year from illegal abortions.

The cavalcade will gain support as it moves through major Canadian cities and end with a mass protest in Ottawa.

Abortion is not a crime. It is our right.

THE PEDESTAL will now be published MONTHLY. We're looking forward to articles, letters, etc. from all across Canada.

and subscriptions. We need your help!

(bulk orders of 100 or more, 7 cents per copy.)

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