

# the pedestal

THE VANCOUVER WOMEN'S LIBERATION NEWSPAPER  
804 RICHARDS

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25¢

IF YOU'RE AFRAID TO SUCCEED  
AND AFRAID TO  
FAIL  
TRY HARD TO  
BE  
INDIFFERENT.



# WOMEN'S LEGAL AID CLINIC

\* WE ARE A WOMEN'S LEGAL RIGHTS GROUP PROVIDING LEGAL AID SERVICES AND PREVENTIVE LEGAL AID ADVICE FOR WOMEN IN THE VANCOUVER AREA.

\* Our clinical program has three objectives:

- to provide a legal aid service for women who do not have the financial resources to pay for professional lawyers' fees.
- to provide information to women on the ways legal problems can be prevented.
- to foster community awareness around the issues which are raised by laws and business practices which discriminate against women.

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Many legal difficulties can be prevented if we are aware of those rights which we do have, and if in the exercise of our rights, we work together to change the attitudes which have created and perpetuated the application and enforcement of discriminatory laws and practices.

#### SERVICES INCLUDE:

DIVORCE COUNSELLING  
INFORMATION ON FAMILY LAW MATTERS  
SMALL DEBTS COUNSELLING  
INFORMATION OF CREDIT AND FINANCING PRACTICES  
PREVENTIVE LEGAL AID ADVICE

#### HOURS:

MON. EVE: 6-10 pm  
TUESDAY 10-2  
WEDNESDAY 10-2  
THURSDAY 10-2  
or by appointment

- 45 KINGSWAY, RM. 4 -  
PHONE: 874-8525



"I promise to be sexually faithful and accessible and to keep his house."  
"I promise to support her."

Married! That's it. When we marry in this country that is exactly what we have contracted for in legal terms. As long as you remain sexually faithful, he must continue by law to support. What about his sexual fidelity, you might ask? Not in the contract. Well then, what about if she ends up supporting him? Not in the contract. Wait a minute. That can't be right! Well it is. So, to state the implications:

...if you separate and then make love to someone else you effectively lose your right to maintenance because you have broken your part of the contract pledging faithfulness.

...if your husband rapes you, you have no right to call it such because you swore before the justice of the peace that you would be sexually accessible.

...if you open a bank account out of your household money, money originally provided out of your husband's earnings, the money is legally his, because he supports you.

...if you separate and divide up the household goods and it was his earnings alone which provided capital for their purchase, the goods belong to him. That's ridiculous, you say. I worked for them too, cleaning, maintaining, polishing. No. Your household labour has no economic value since you contracted to do just that in return for support.

...if you want your own credit rating you are going to have to fight like hell to get it because remember it is his income and credit rating which determines the standard of living to which you have become accustomed.

The separation possibility is really as straightforward as the marriage contract. Just separate and you are considered legally separated. That's all. Just don't live together. However, all the arrangements around furniture disposal, child support, and maintenance, will have to be worked out either between the two of you or by a court order. If the two of you draw up an effective settlement, the contract which you have

decided on is effective as between you two and the breach of terms would give one party a right to contract. If you can't make up a suitable arrangement, you can submit the dispute to the family court who will decide on the particulars and the settlement is effective as between you and the court. After three years you apply for a divorce on that ground. Three year separation is a no-fault, no-guilt ground and is automatically granted if you can establish that the separation has indeed been that long.

From my experience with marriage and also at the Women's Legal Clinic, I think that in the legal contract situation which I have casually outlined, it is not the contract of marriage which causes the real problem. It is, really, so controllable. If you do X, then Y happens. The contract which becomes the difficult one reads something like this:

"Look, I'll let you be responsible if you let me be irresponsible; I promise to be practical if you promise to be artistic. If you stay stable, I'll be unstable. I'll be mother if you promise to be child. I'll let you make decisions for me if you promise to love and protect me. I'll be featherheaded so you can appear smart."

So when women come into the clinic for a divorce, we can easily help them with the legal contract. Pay \$50.00, fill out the papers and wait. But still remaining are all the effects of the psychological contract for which we can only empathize. For it takes so much more than 5 women law students who care about women and liberation to give back to a woman her sense of self-reliance after she has contracted away her decision-making power in a marriage which lasted many years.

Only one final thing to say. Many women come into the clinic wanting a divorce so they can immediately remarry. To us they say, "Marriage is fine. Only the man was wrong. Find me a better man and I would be perfectly happy." Many women come into the clinic wanting a divorce after the second marriage. To us they say, "Marriage is the balls up. The men were fine." I just wanted to pass all that on.

WOMEN'S LEGAL AID CLINIC  
45 KINGSWAY, RM. 4.  
PHONE: 874-8525

#### THE WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT BOUTIQUE

The Women's Employment Boutique has just opened its offices at 1129 East Hastings. If a woman has a criminal record, is on probation, or is for any other reason unemployable, The Women's Employment Boutique can help. Call Linda Stunnel at 255-0616.



HOMEWORK

The telephone is one of the most useful tools that women can use, for harassment, complaints, or just getting your views heard. Obviously government seldom listens, especially if the caller is a woman. But this is no reason to stop pushing - if enough women make their views public and are pushy enough about it, eventually the deaf ears of our "leaders" will begin to open. So this month we are publishing a list of special unlisted phone numbers for cabinet ministers' offices. By using these numbers you are less likely to be shuffled around in the phone bureaucracies and the things you have to say will be directed at the person who can do the most about them. We are not suggesting any particular issue this time, but are giving you the list so that you can tack it up near your phone and use it whenever you are angry about something the government is doing (or not doing), or want to find out information about anything that is in the jurisdiction of each department. For example, the next time you can't find a babysitter, why not call the ministers of Health and Education and tell them that we need more day care. Or the next time you apply for a job and are told they would prefer a man, call the Minister of Labour and complain. Or when you go to the store and find that the price of hamburger has risen again, phone the Minister of Consumer Affairs, and say that you are going to boycott hamburger until there are some clear price controls. Anyway, here is the list to use as you will. Have fun!

- \* CONSUMER AFFAIRS 387-3696
- \* AGRICULTURE 387-6580
- \* EDUCATION 387-6260
- \* HIGHWAYS 387-3181
- \* LABOUR 387-6071
- \* MINES 387-6240
- \* PROVINCIAL SECRETARY 387-6601
- \* RECREATION AND CONSERVATION 387-3980
- \* HOUSING 387-3954
- \* ATTORNEY GENERAL 387-6780
- \* HEALTH 387-6481
- \* INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT 387-6781
- \* LANDS 387-3980
- \* MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS 387-0661
- \* HUMAN RESOURCES 387-3603

vancouver women's bookstore on july 16 the bookstore opened. we feel very good about everything that has happened so far and even the magic toilet in the black pit that happens to be the pedestal space has failed to get us down. that piece of plumbing for sure has character.

we have had some bad publicity and some good publicity but mostly it has been an overwhelming reaction of support.

jeannine and nora - to start out at the good parts - got interviewed on judy la marsh's morning show. it was not disappointing. jeannine actually got there on time -9:30 am- and nora did too. the part i liked was when the open line thing happened and women would ask questions like "do you have 'survival' by margaret atwood?" and

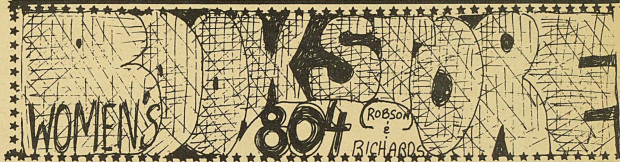
nora and jeannine could say "yes". very professional.

the sun and the province covered the bookstore opening, and radio stations, and on and on.

we've had people come in from tokyo, a woman from the hong kong feminists, women from all over the states and canada. it's really neat to listen to them ooh and ahh and tell us nice things, because we certainly deserve it.

we have a coffee place on the upper level where no men are allowed, and women are invited to sit down and talk, or to just enjoy feeling quiet, knowing that here is one place they are not going to get hassled by men.

up there in the coffee place we have drawings and things by local women artists, some of whom are josie cook. colette french, diana kemble and ruth.



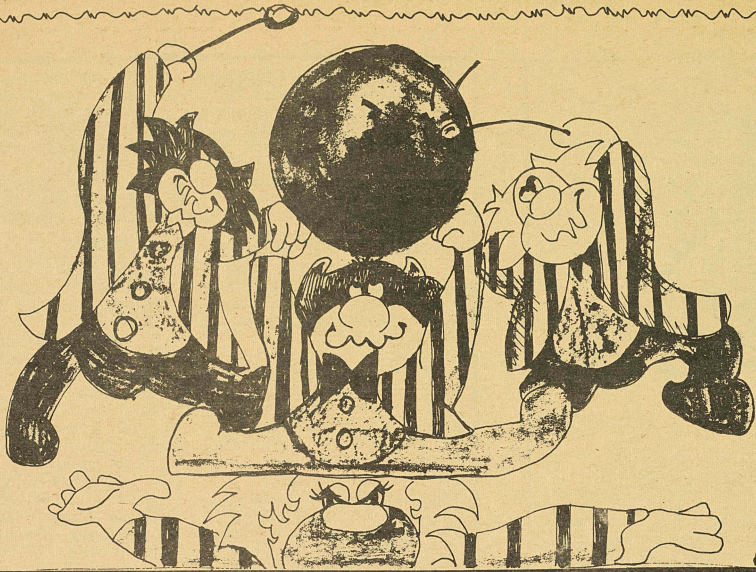
"It's a joy working for the Collective, isn't it, Madge?"

You too can work for the Collective. The Pedestal welcomes all willing hands especially if they can write, type, do layout Keep books and drive a car. Drop in at our meetings - 804 Richards - yes the New Women's Bookstore Sundays at 11 a.m. god willing and bring your knitting and suggestions for a brighter world.

Love from the Pedestal Collective

P.S. We need you.





My young friends think I am nostalgically hung up on memorabilia of my children, now long gone, because in the bathroom is the tiny pink duck-shaped nail brush and in the closet is the old, loosenecked brown stuffed dog and in with the scrabble game in the hall cupboard is a small jigsaw puzzle with sturdy wooden parts meant for pre-schoolers with measles, and because I have three boxes of children's books under the eaves in companionate storage with five cardboard cartons of scrawly drawings on yellowing paper.

But that ain't it. When the kids and I went our three ways and split up the household goods, there were some things of theirs that they did not take with them. Chris could not take the pink duck or the brown stuffed dog or the Grey Owl books along with his waterbed to his new communal pad with three other impoverished swingers. But some day, even twenty years from now, if he brings a little child of his to my flat, I'll say, "This was your father's when he was your age. You can have it." Little kids like that. Chris himself is fond of the small silver tumbler with XXV etched on it in the shapes of crossed bones which his father had from his father to symbolize the age of maturity in old Russia, when a young man could begin seriously to drink alcohol in public rather than sneaking punch in the pantry at parties.

My young friends look with amusement at the myriad over-exposed snapshots of butter-fat first baby, little red tongue poking out, Buddha stomach bare, curling fingers grasping grass (shades of future pubescent taste). "But why are there so many?" they say. Well, back then, I liked all of the snaps, and couldn't throw one of them away, no matter how blurred or lop-sided. I kind of like them all now, too, and keep them. When the child was seemingly permanently angry with me in his teens, I would take out the album and have a little cry over the lost affection that beamed out of the old pictures, but now I just keep them to show the grandchildren if they

ever appear, peace having come back to Chris and me. Kids like to know they have a place in the family history, and to be told "There is daddy," who was little like they are and who burned his finger on the one candle on his first birthday cake a second after the candle was lit and the photo snapped.

## I WONDER WHY THEY TOOK THE ICONS

A STORY  
BY  
B. THOMPSON

They like to know that grownups were small and ignorant once, smaller than they are now. I'm not going to say, "You look just like so-and-so" -- it is too eerie. Old Papa, my father-in-law, saw resemblances to every person in his family in my children, and many of those persons had long before perished in the revolution. It was a shivery thought. Little baby Mary when she arrived was said first to look like a long-dead great-aunt whose specialty had been to play Chopin by candle-light and later when she was at an age of chortling and squealing and peeking from behind her hands with one bright sparkling eye, Papa said she was very much like his sister Marotchka, whom he had previously told me spent her last years in London "completely mad" (his term for slightly eccentric) and who periodically had thrown up the window of her third storey rooming-house room and screamed imprecations at the people going about their business below. She

had been convinced that those on the street were a rabble about to overthrow the British monarchy (the Russian revolution had badly frightened her and made her a widow) and she several times had gone so far as to throw objects at the unconcerned masses from her vantage point.

Mary when she left home of course did not take the cradle or doll or miniature highchair by means of which I had ignorantly reinforced her conditioning by society. Sturdily independent, she took the potter's wheel and hand-spun wool cushion covers and back-to-the-land books and went to live on yoghurt, green vegetables, soybeans, herb tea and vitamin C, at last a proper diet.

Funny, each child took an icon (a little gleaming picture of an elongated, angular Christ) from home. Two had been left by their long-departed father. Each time I visit either child my eyes search out the shining remembrance of their Russian Orthodox heritage, hanging on the wall and somehow fitting well with the new individual lives.

I heard my friend Sara McKinnon talking about her grandchildren once, and I want to be the kind of grandmother Sara is. She said, "I've always worked, so I've never done much knitting or sewing for the grandchildren, but they come over and spend time with me, a day or two on a weekend, to give their parents a rest, and the kids think I'm fun to be with and they like my cooking. I don't bother with discipline with them, that's for their parents. They have a change with me. We have a good time together.

And an old doctor told me once that he had become a grandparent for the second time, in his life, that day, and when I asked him what it felt like to be a grandparent, he said: "Easy".

I can hardly wait.

# HAIL CESAR, HERE COMES GAIL

B. Thompson

We went to Hillcrest Hall in the Little Mountain area of Vancouver Friday night, June 1st, after leafleting the Shoppers Drug Mart stores. We went for beer and the promise of seeing Cesar Chavez. He was in town but for what? "Lettuce" someone speculated. "Now that the grape workers have won, he's helping the lettuce workers."

We had put on brave fronts to ask the shoppers to go elsewhere in support of the workers, feeling inside very fearful and apprehensive. One of the women picketing said she had been trained as an organizer by a Chicano (Mexican-American) from the Farm Workers Union, when she had enlisted in VISTA (a sort of Peace Corps that stays home). She said that there had been occasional social evenings, and when the grape workers' songs were sung, all the Chicanos always wept. "For them," she said, "Cesar Chavez is a saint. They love him."

I admitted that I sort of felt the same way after hearing his talk four years earlier when he was here about the grape boycott. His health had been damaged by his long, hard work. He had not been able to stand without support. Something was wrong with his back; a special orthopedic chair was on the program for him. He did not use it, however, and stood to talk, leaning on to the lectern to steady himself. The migrant farm workers who had working appallingly conditions for sub-minimum wages in the southwest U.S. were led by him and won their five year strike. Most of them were Chicanos like Chavez, but many were poor whites and blacks. The growers had tried to use racism of Chicano versus black and black versus white and white versus Chicano and black, to keep the workers divided and dependent, and had succeeded for many years, until Chavez & Co. had pointed out the pointlessness of falling for the ruse. As we handed out our leaflets, we continued to wonder what Cesar was here for now.

We got to the hall shortly after 9:00, walked into the darkness lit by guttering candles (I always think it looks conspiratorial, what with so many of the young men being bearded, and earnestly talking politics at those beer nights), got beer and sat down to talk about the Shoppers Drug Mart boycott. Tried to estimate how much business we had turned away at various stores. I had no idea.

Pam Smith, who had been the Vancouver organizer of the grape boycott for three years, may back then, came over and sat down. "I can't drink any more," she said "One beer and I'm stoned." She sounded okay to me. "I heard you had gone back to the States," she said. "No, I fell in love, so I'm in Canada for good. I've been working for the Tenants."

After 10:20, Chavez came in with a small company: his son-in-law, local members of the United Farm Workers' organization in Vancouver, Gail Borst and George Johnston of the B.C. Federation of Labour. The lights were turned on and all of us stood to clap for Cesar Chavez. He had no cases this time and stood smiling in his torn cotton clothes, a very small man. Stood smiling and waiting for quiet. He had just come from the dinner and discussion with union leaders; he looked tired. He spoke two or three sentences, saying he was back in Canada to ask us to once again boycott grapes because the growers in California and the Teamsters Union had set up "sweetheart" agreements that were aimed at breaking the Farm Workers' Union.

So it wasn't lettuce, it was grapes again. Okay.

The lights went down and people took up their beers and conversations again. Pam introduced Gail Borst, the new grape boycott organizer for Vancouver and B.C. and we agreed to a time for an interview.

INTERVIEW WITH GAIL BORST (VANCOUVER ORGANIZER FOR THE UNITED FARM WORKERS NATIONAL UNION.) JUNE 6.

## WHY ARE-YOU IN VANCOUVER?

The farm workers are involved in two separate boycotts now. A lettuce boycott and a grape boycott at the same time. It's the first time that we've ever had to cope with quite that much shit at any one point. Vancouver has had Farm Worker staff people here intermittently, and now that the grape thing is coming up again, Vancouver is important because it's No. 12 in the world in terms of table grape consumption.

## IS THERE ANY LIKELIHOOD OF THE FARM WORKERS ORGANIZING CANADIAN FARM WORKERS LIKE THE BEET PICKERS IN ALBERTA?

I really don't have any idea. I know that some of the people in the B.C. Federation of Labour are upset with the fact that they have never been able to get decent legislation to let them be able to organize farm workers. We don't have any immediate intentions. For one thing, the union only goes where people asks them, and we haven't been asked. And number two is that we're in so much hot water, we've got a good 15 years' worth of struggle ahead of us in terms of the grapes, the lettuce, and probably citrus fruits; so that we can have a good firm base. Now that we're already organized, unless we really do it and stick with it and try to establish as wide a base as possible, other unions like the Teamsters are going to try to carve up the Farm Workers and once they do that, the Farm Workers are going to lose power. I mean they are not going to have as much power as they could have if they had a united union.

## WHEN WAS THE UNITED FARM WORKERS CONTRACT SIGNED?

1970. It was a 3-year contract. The name is United Farm Workers' National Union. The previous strike was from 1965 to 1970, five years. Let me tell you what's happening now. The grapes ripen in the southern part of the state of California and then up around Bakersfield and then up around Delano, as the season comes and people move from the southern part to the northern part of the state. And the first contracts that we signed were in the Coachella Valley, which is almost down by the Mexican border, and those contracts represent about 20 percent of the table grapes industry; 20 percent of what we have had, unionized - it's not the whole of the grape contracts, but there are 182 contracts in that area comprising 20 percent of the table grapes, and those contracts were signed in April, so that they come up again three years later in April. The big contracts, the other 80 percent, come up in July in the Delano area. That's where the big, big, big ranches are, the big grape spreads. And those growers have been talking to the Teamsters, but what they are doing is waiting to see what happens with the Coachella grapes, which they just started harvesting the end of last week. Now if we can stop them, they are not going to sign those contracts with the Teamsters. If we don't stop them, they will. Okay, what happened was that the contracts in Coachella expired at midnight of April 14th and for six weeks before that we were in negotiations with these growers, and at 9 o'clock on the morning of April 15th the Teamsters held a press conference and announced that they had signed up these growers.

## SO ON THE SLY, THEY HAD BEEN TALKING TO THE TEAMSTERS. WHAT WOULD MAKE THEM DO THAT?

The Teamsters might have said that they were not going to haul their produce, there may have been a little threat like that - but the strongest possibility is that the growers just don't like dealing with Cesar. They don't like dealing with the Farm Workers' Union; they don't like dealing with Mexican-Americans. They think we're too "damned democratic", because the people on the ranches have some say about their contracts and they deal with them and they enforce the contracts, and if anything is going to happen, they do it. And the growers don't like that they think it's terrible. They would rather deal with GOOD BUSINESSMEN, and the Teamsters are GOOD BUSINESSMEN. Plus the fact that in the contracts the Teamsters have signed up now the people working in those fields lost all the things that were in our contracts, like ten minute breaks, like cool, clean drinking water, with paper cups for everybody. It's not out there any more. The separate toilets for men and women are not out there any more. People are afraid to come off the field to go to the bathroom for fear they are going to get fired. The worst thing is that the Teamster contracts don't have a hiring hall, which our contracts do, so that the labour contracting system, which is a form of pimping, is still in effect.

## I DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT.

Labour contractors are the go-betweens between the growers and the farm workers. They have a stable of workers and they negotiate with the growers and get a certain amount of money for what they are going to accomplish and then they take their cut off the top and then they pay the farm workers what they want to pay. So that the growers essentially don't have to have anything to do with the farm workers. The labour

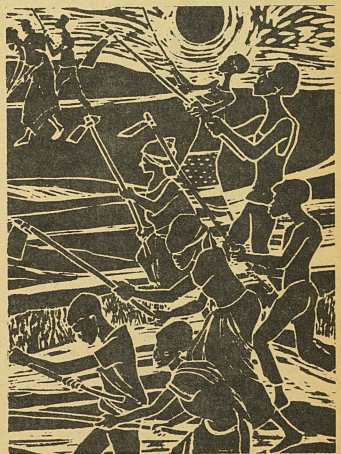
contractor takes care of all this dirty work for them. Some farm workers can deal with the complexities of American life, some can't; they just can't. They don't speak English, they don't have cars, they are afraid, some of them are illegal, some of them are maybe not illegal but they are still afraid they are going to get kicked out of the country, and so they are scared. The labour contractor plays on this fear, and also on their fear of losing their jobs. If they don't please that labour contractor, he'll blackball them with every other labour contractor and they won't be able to work. So if there's a young, cute daughter and the labour contractor wants to get cute with her, and they don't let it happen, they'll lose her jobs. If the labour contractor takes them out to the ranch and something happens on that particular day so they don't work, it's too bad, they don't get paid. They may have wasted five, six hours of their day and they won't be able to get any work that day. It doesn't bother the labour contractor any. He usually has them live in either a labour camp that he owns or a labour camp that he contracts with somebody, so that he is getting money for that. Not only that, if he takes them around in his bus or his truck, he charges them for that. If they need equipment, he charges them for that. Frequently they have to buy at a company store because there is no place else for them to do; they don't have transportation to go into town and buy at decent prices at a supermarket, so they have to pay this guy.

## WHO IS HARVESTING ?

There are some people who work for the Teamsters for one reason or another; they really need the money; they have large families or something, they are also trucking a whole lot of illegals in from Mexico to break the strike. We've got suits against the Immigration and Border Patrol people. They look the other way, I'm sure they're bought, too. That's one thing I've learned from working with the union these last two years: it's that there is an incredible amount of corruption; there's hardly anybody that isn't bought. The California legislature is unbelievable; those guys are bought, and sold until it comes out of their ears. It blows my mind. They're so crooked they'll call bills out of committee when there's not enough votes, or keep them in committee when there are, depending on how much pressure they are getting on it. I've SEEN it!

## HOW CAN PEOPLE HELP?

We are probably going to be having a lot of picket lines and we'll need help on picket lines. And the way that the union was built is through house meetings. Somebody like you gets a few of your friends together at your house and I come over and talk to them and see if there's any way that they want to help - if they can have a house meeting too, so that we can spread out into larger and larger segments of the community. Because we haven't either the money or the clout to use the media. The media like yours, yes. But the general media, no. In San Francisco we can't even get into the papers. Literally we can't.



The house meeting thing is really important because that way I can get to talk to people and then they understand why, they know the whole history of the boycott and the history of the oppression of the farm workers in California. It's just so obvious that it's a long kind of process that has definite benefits for certain people that they work to keep it structured that way.

#### WHAT ARE YOU PAID?

Everybody who works for the Farm Workers' Union, whether it's me, whether it's Cesar, whether it's someone who works in the field offices everyone works for \$5 a week and rent, plus \$5 food money. So the union will pay for this place (indicating the two rooms in which she was unpacking her boxes) although they would like me to raise money to pay for it, but all I have is \$5 a week to eat on unless I can get things like church groups to donate a little money or food.

I NOTICED THAT PAM SMITH THE OTHER NIGHT LOOKED A LOT HEALTHIER THAN SHE USED TO BE, WHEN SHE WAS THE GRAPE BOYCOTT ORGANIZER IN THE LATE SIXTIES. SHE WAS THINNER, BUT SHE LOOKED HEALTHIER. SHE PROBABLY ATE A LOT OF STARCHES BEFORE, IF SHE WAS ON A BUDGET LIKE THAT.

Right. I've put on 25 pounds since I joined the union. I can't fit into any union. I can't fit into any of my old clothes.!

#### LOTS OF TUNA CASSEROLES?

Right; and soy beans and irregular eating hours. I eat peanut butter sandwiches .....beans.....tortillas. It's true.

#### AND YOU WON'T BUY LETTUCE.

I won't buy lettuce. Oh, but there's B.C. lettuce coming in.

#### BUT B.C. LETTUCE ISN'T UNION LETTUCE.

It's very hard to make the distinction, but it's my understanding that most of the lettuce is grown by small family farms, and not huge large corporations. And we can't want to discriminate against small farmers. They've got a lot of problems anyway.

B.C. FARMERS HAVE A HARD TIME MARKETING THEIR GOODS ANYWAY. IT'S REALLY HARD TO FIND A B.C. POTATO IN A STORE. EVERYONE BUYS IDAHO POTATOS. THEY ARE FAMOUS.

Really? That's ridiculous. If they only knew! One of the consumer things that is really important about the farm workers is that we've been concerned about the pesticide problems since 1965, and the government wasn't even concerned about it then. Under the union contracts, the amount and kinds of pesticides that get on the food are really regulated. Like, we banned D.D.T. in 1967 and the government didn't get around to it till about three or four years later.

#### DID THE TEAMSTERS GET THAT IN THEIR CONTRACT?

No. They don't give a damn about that kind of stuff. They don't give a hoot. The lettuce especially that was being harvested down in the Imperial Valley; we finally got it tested because people were noticing that it was dark and brown looking. And some of that stuff had between 5 to 15 times the legal tolerance of pesticide on it. Monitor-4 pesticide is deadly stuff and that's what they put on lettuce. The original lettuce pesticide was Parathion.

OH YES. I WORK FOR AN INSURANCE COMPANY AND ALL OF A SUDDEN ABOUT 10 OR 15 YEARS AGO WE PUT ALL SORTS OF ENDORSEMENTS ON EVERY FARM POLICY WE HAD, AGAINST PARATHION. I'D NEVER HEARD OF IT TILL I WENT TO WORK IN INSURANCE. JUST LIKE WE HAVE NUCLEAR RADIATION EXCLUSIONS ON EVERY SINGLE POLICY WE WRITE. IT'S EXCLUDED. IF THE WORLD COMES TO AN END, YOU'RE NOT COVERED.

Yeah.

#### WHAT DO YOU THINK OF BOYCOTTS?

I think they're great. I'll tell you why: they are effective. First of all, it's a real grass roots action. People who go to a supermarket have a really simple choice. You buy those grapes, you aid people who screw the farm workers, you give them your vote that, yes, it's okay to go and screw farm workers. If you don't buy them you are saying NO, I don't go along with this and even if it means some small sacrifice on my part, I'm not going to. So that's an incredibly educational thing. It's effective. Like, by boycotting Safeway down in the States we have been hearing reports that 25 percent of their business is off in southern California. Their stocks are going down. Their minority hiring practices and especially their sex hiring practices are revolting.

I CAN SEE A BOYCOTT BEING EFFECTIVE IN CERTAIN FOODS, BUT I CAN'T SEE ONE WORKING AGAINST, SAY, THE INSURANCE INDUSTRY WHERE THE WOMEN DO THE SHIT WORK AND THE MEN HAVE THE EXECUTIVE POSITIONS. WHO CAN BOYCOTT INSURANCE? IT'S REQUIRED BY LAW.

Sure, but you can pick your company.

I CAN'T THINK OF ONE THAT ISN'T SEXIST.

The Farm Workers Union is working, around that by forming its own cooperatives. Our health insurance is cooperative. Every cent of it goes back to the people.

#### OUR GOVERNMENT IS TAKING OVER AUTO INSURANCE AND THEY HAVE RECENTLY RELEASED THE NAMES OF THE MEN WHO ARE HEADING IT UP. EVEN THOUGH THE MAJORITY OF WORKERS IN INSURANCE ARE WOMEN.

Yes. Yes. Let me tell you about women in the union. The Farm Workers Union is the best place I have ever worked for giving women a chance in the structure. Not only for being able to take charge, but also for getting responsibility shoved on you occasionally; and the union is doing a fantastic job with the farm workers in terms of breaking down some of the Mexican MACHISMO roles of man-wife, I mean, you can't have just the male person in the family involved in the union. And the women are out there working too and the women are often by far the strongest supporters; they'll hang in there and just clench their teeth on something. The things that I have seen happen have just been really great, both for the men and for the women.



After deputies handcuffed her, they beat Mavelina seriously while she was helpless. (GIUMARRA RANCH, KERN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA AUGUST 1973)

#### FOR THE MAN TOO? I WAS JUST WONDERING WHETHER THIS WOULD DEMORALIZE THE MEN IF THE WOMEN BECOME REALLY STRONG.

Not really, not the ones I've seen. The men start to get really pleased with the women and I think they enjoy having a relationship, having somebody else at home that they can TALK to now, you know? From what I've seen, it has brought them a lot closer. I'm sure that it's not true in all the cases; I know there are cases where people have been upset with the union, but for most of the people it is really, really good.

#### I HEARD ONE WOMAN HERE CRITICIZE THE IDEA THAT SOME PEOPLE THINK OF CESAR AS A SAINT.

I think that's mainly the people who are politically naive who think that Cesar is a saint. The nice thing about Cesar is that he's a real, live human being and he's a really nifty person on top of it. I suppose some regard him as a saint. But there's something about living where you talk at, living what you believe, living it out that gets people into a religious fervour some of the time.

#### MAYBE LIKE A COMMITMENT TO THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT?

Right. Like the women's movement. When you really start working at something that you all agreed that you believed in, but never quite put your body there, and then you DO put your body there, then the

working for the \$5 a week is great because there is no way the farm workers could relate to you otherwise. Here am I, I come out of the middle-class out of the city - I had tap-dancing lessons when I was a kid - the whole trip. My parents expected me to go far and just everything like that. But in this way, the farm workers know I'm serious; other people know I'm serious. You rapidly get shunted away from being comfortable. You can't be comfortable on \$5 a week and that's a good thing. For me, I wouldn't say it's a good thing for everybody.

#### YOU COULDN'T DO IT FOR YOUR WHOLE LIFE, COULD YOU?

I don't know. I don't have any plans for quitting at the moment. It depends too for me - for me, I have to keep learning. And if I don't keep learning, then I'm going to get very unhappy.

#### TELL ME ABOUT PICKETING.

Picketing first of all really gets your head together about what you're thinking and why you're thinking. Cesar's line about it is that "the only real education is on a picket line", and he just sort of gets everybody out on the line. The other thing is that most of the people that I've met on the line have spent most of their lives insulating themselves with money, with whatever they do, and they have very carefully kept away from anything like this, so confronting them with it is a difficult thing in a lot of ways, but in other ways, you get people coming back to you later and saying, "You know, I'm glad you brought this thing up."

And the important thing about picket lines is that you shouldn't be out there by yourself; there should be other people out there and there should be an exchange of ideas and encouragement. I find that for a lot of women what really gets through to them is talking about the fact that farm worker kids are out in the fields working when they should be in school and that means they aren't ever going to be anything else. You know they are going to be farm workers for the rest of their lives because they are not going to get past Grade IV. There's a lot of women that can really relate to that, they understand it, they know the background.

#### NOW THAT YOU HAVE HAD THIS CONTRACT FOR THREE YEARS, ARE THE CHILDREN STILL OUT IN THE FIELDS?

They were not for three years. They are now, under the Teamster contracts, or the places where there are no contracts. There are federal and state laws, but they are not enforced. They have maybe one person for a three state area to enforce the laws, and we've had experience where we've called up the officials and said, "Those kids are out there, we will show you, come on out and see." And we drag them down into the fields, and they don't do anything. They say, "Oh, it's good healthy work for the kids." One judge, God damn it, said, "It's healthy for an 8 and 10-year-old to be out there driving a tractor in the hot sun all day." That's baloney! Sometimes it's 120 degrees out there.

#### HOW CAN WE HELP?

Phone 733-2719. or 738-8147

# VANCOUVER WOMEN'S HEALTH COLLECTIVE VS. THE SOCIETY FOR OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNOCOLOGISTS AND THE FERTILITY SOCIETY!

Last month from June 13 to June 17, various women from the Vancouver Women's Health Collective attended the Society for Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Fertility Conference at the Bayshore Inn. We were curious to observe en masse a group of people who represented the medical/professional approach to women's health needs. We were interested in learning about their current research which was being presented in the form of short lectures. And we wanted the doctors to be aware of us as ten women who were potential patients and therefore concerned about the quality of our gynecological and/or obstetrical care, and as women who were offering an alternative to the kind of health care available from the medical profession.

Our first introduction to the conference mentality was on Wednesday, June 13 at the Fertility Society's panel on sexuality. Various approaches were represented-- a woman psychologist, a male physician, a female sociologist. There was a strong group of health collective women present who were active in the discussion following each presentation. A presentation by Anne Cubbitt, SFU psychologist, on the concept of love in which she spoke of a woman's need to be seen as a person, not just a wife or mother, was greeted by the question, "How old are you, young lady?"

Although some of us were able to converse with individual doctors and share information, in general the attitude was summed up by one particularly antagonistic doctor who whispered as one of us left the meeting, "I hope she's going home to make dinner."

The doctors from the Fertility Society met later that evening for a catered meal sponsored by Ortho at the home of a local physician whose wife was excused from cooking that night.

Thursday, June 14, was the opening of the Society for Obstetricians and Gynecologists (SOG) Conference. Two women from the Health Collective attended. Official registration was to take place the next day so there were only fifty to sixty doctors attending. Catherine described the meeting as formal, impersonal, with hardly any discussion or questions. "Gail and I felt very much stared at--I think we were more interesting to those present than the papers they were there listening to." Catherine and Gail heard a paper entitled "Abnormal Products of Conceptions from Abortions". The paper explained that a certain percentage of women who have therapeutic abortions would have spontaneously aborted anyway due to anomalies of embryo. She didn't get the details of what these anomalies could be...it was too technical. 214 therapeutic abortions were examined: in 12% abnormalities were found macroscopically, and 5.6% (of total) were confirmed microscopically. Mean gestation period for therapeutic abortions was 7 weeks; the mean gestation period of spontaneous abortions in their sample was 13.5 weeks.

The doctor's conclusion was that the fetus should be checked for abnormalities when a therapeutic abortion is performed. Any abnormalities found should be recorded in the patient's history. These abnormalities could indicate possibility of future spontaneous abortions.

By Friday, June 15, we, The Vancouver Women's Health Collective, wanted to be more aggressive and political about letting the doctors know who we were and why we were there. We decided to make a speech identifying ourselves to the conference participants before the morning coffee break. Our hope at communicating something about ourselves was somewhat shaken by the sight of approximately 400 doctors, 99% men and 100% suits. In fact, it was like being in a giant doctors' office I had the same queasy feeling of waiting for something unpleasant and feeling out of place. After listening to the three papers presented before the coffee break, we stood up as the doctors were adjourning and Melanie spoke into one of the floor microphones and identified our group. It was impossible to say very much as everyone continued to leave the room and chatted over her voice. We were angered and frustrated by their rudeness.

After, during the coffee break, some of us were approached by doctors who wanted to talk about our group or buy the Health Booklet, but these individuals were in the minority. One doctor I approached to ask if he wanted to know about the Vancouver Women's Health Collective simply said no and walked away. Despite the fact that in general we felt ignored at the conference, we recently learned that at the Society's meeting to discuss the conference we were one of the topics of discussion. Since we had not been listened to at the conference the discussion was somewhat vague and joking, best summed up by Catherine's one line analysis, "Who were those women and what did they want anyway?!" CONT'D ON P.14

FARM WORKERS' UNION CONT'D...

## AUGUST 1973

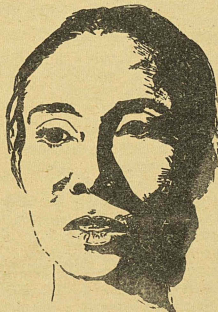
TWO MURDERS HAVE OCCURRED IN RECENT WEEKS AS A RESULT OF THE FARM WORKERS' STRIKE.

AN ARAPA FARM WORKER UNION MEMBER, NAGI DAIFULLAH, AGED 24, WAS IN A BAR WITH HIS BADDIES AFTER WORK. THEY AND OTHER FARMWORKERS HAD BEEN HARRASSED ALL DAY ON THE PICKET LINES BY POLICE.

NOW, IN THE EVENING, THE POLICE WERE GOING FROM BAR TO BAR QUINING THE FARM WORKERS AROUND TIME. NAGI RESPONDED BY THROWING A BOTTLE AT A POLICEMAN, WHO THEN GAVE CHASE. BEAR IN MIND THAT NAGI IS ONLY 5 FEET TALL. AS HE RAN, THE COP CAUGHT UP WITH HIM AND STRUCK HIM ON THE BACK OF THE HEAD AND NECK WITH HIS HEAVY FLASHLIGHT, AND NAGI FELL.

HE DIED THE NEXT DAY IN HOSPITAL, AFTER TWO OPERATIONS AND A RESPIRATOR THAT FAILED. THE PART OF THE BRAIN WHICH CONTROLS THE RESPIRATORY SYSTEM HAD BEEN DESTROYED BY ONE OF THE BLOWS.

THE POLICE HAD PUBLICLY CLAIMED THAT NAGI'S INJURIES WERE RECEIVED WHEN HE FELL DOWN, BUT AN AUTOPSY REVEALED THAT HE HAD TWO SKULL FRACTURES AT THE BACK OF HIS HEAD. ... IT IS IMPOSSIBLE, IS IT NOT TO BREAK THE BACK OF YOUR HEAD WHEN YOU FALL FORWARD???



THE OTHER "INCIDENT" HAPPENED AT TWO OR THREE IN THE AFTERNOON, TUESDAY OF THE SAME WEEK. TEAMSTER SCAB WORKERS WERE COMING OUT OF THE FIELD. JUAN DEL CRUZ, AGED 60, ONE OF THE ORIGINAL MEMBERS OF THE FARM WORKERS UNION, AND ALSO ONE OF THE FIRST TO STRIKE AT THE GIUMARRA VINEYARDS WHEN THE STRUGGLE FOR A LIVING WAGE FIRST BEGAN, WAS STANDING IN A CROWD OF UNION MEMBERS. THESE MEN AND WOMEN WERE HEAPLETING THE SCAB WORKERS AS THEY LEFT THE FIELD.

A PICKUP TRUCK CAME ROARING OUT OF THE FIELDS, A RIFLE CAME OUT OF THE WINDOW OF THE TRUCK AND SEVERAL SHOTS WERE FIRED INTO THE CROWD.

AT FIRST THEY THOUGHT NO ONE HAD BEEN HURT, BUT THEN THEY SAW JULIAN LYING ON THE GROUND. HE HAD BEEN STANDING BESIDE HIS WIFE, WHO SAW HIM SHOT.

CESAR CHAVEZ HAS CALLED ON THE JUSTICE DEPT. OF THE U.S. TO INVESTIGATE BECAUSE HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THE POLICE SHOULD INVESTIGATE THEMSELVES, AS THEY SAY THEY WILL DO.

HE HOLDS THE TEAMSTERS, THE SHERIFF'S DEPT. AND THE GROWERS RESPONSIBLE FOR THESE ACTS OF VIOLENCE.





**Women's  
Calendar**

Work has been started on The Canadian Women's Pocket Calendar for 1974. We want to include important dates both past and present.

It will be a collection of graphics, photographs, and dates from the past and present of Women in Canada.

For instance, do you know when Mother was first legally declared a person? Or when your own Women's Group was started?

We're looking for information and photos about women in Canada and if you have any suggestions or material, please send it to "THE CALENDAR COLLECTIVE", 804 Richards Street, Vancouver BC. If you would like to work on it, phone 684-0523 and leave a message for Pat or Sarah.



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Wellington  
RR#1  
Grand River

N.S.: c/o Women's Bureau  
P.O. Box 3596  
Halifax South Postal Stn.  
Halifax

N.B.: c/o Linda Gow,  
Y.W.C.A.,  
27 Wellington Row,  
St. John, N.B.

Que.: Quebecoises,  
3908 Rue Mentana,  
Montreal, P.Q.

Englishwomen,  
3694 Ste Famille,  
Montreal, P.Q.

Women's Info + Referral Center  
3595 St. Urbain  
Montreal I3I

La Centre des Femmes  
4319 St. Denis  
Montreal I3I  
Women's Centre  
3764 St. Laurent Blvd.,  
Montreal 130,  
P.Q.

ONT.: Women's Centre\*,  
136 Lewis St., (rear)  
Ottawa, Ont.

The Woman's Place,  
968 University Ave., W.,  
Windsor, Ont.

Women's Collective,  
300 ERB St.,  
Waterloo, Ont.

Women's Place\*,  
31 Dupont St.,  
Toronto, Ont.  
929-3158

Women's Place  
366 Water St.  
Peterborough

Women's Center  
306 Herkimer St.  
Hamilton

Women's Resource Center  
283 Dufferin  
London

L. SILVOMEN  
c/o 318 Marks St.  
Thunderbay  
'P'

MAN.: Women's Liberation,  
c/o Millie Lamb,  
#10, 812 Wolseley,  
Winnipeg, Man.

SASK.: Women's Centre,  
147-2nd Ave., S.,  
Saskatoon, Sask.  
Women's Center  
I Angus  
Regina

ALTA.: Women's Centre,  
11812-95 St.,  
Edmonton, Alta.

B.C. Women's Centre,  
#414-1029 Douglas St.,  
Victoria, B.C.  
Women's Center  
Box 521  
Nelson

Women's Resource Center  
2961 - 272nd St.  
Aldergrove

N.W.T.: c/o Nellie Cournoyea  
Inuvik

WOMEN'S NEWSPAPERS

QUEBEC: Quebecoises Deboutte,  
3908 Mentana,  
Montreal, P.Q.  
\$3.00 per year

Feminist Communication  
Collective,  
P.O. Box 455,  
Montreal 215, P.Q.

ONTARIO: The New Feminist,  
P.O. Box 597,  
Station A,  
Toronto, Ont.  
\$3.00 per year

The Native Sisterhood,  
P.O. Box 515,  
Kingston, Ont.

Tightwire,  
(Women's Penitentiary  
newspaper)  
Box 515,  
Kingston, Ont.  
\$2.00 per year

Windsor Woman,  
76 University Ave. W.,  
Room 603,  
Windsor, Ont.

ALBERTA: On Our Way,  
P.O. Box 4508,  
Edmonton, Alta.  
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B.C.: The Pedestal,  
804 Richards St.,  
Vancouver, B.C.  
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Priorities,  
c/o 2803 Wall St.,  
Vancouver 6, B.C.  
\$2.00 per year

Status of Women Newsletter,  
1045 W. Broadway,  
Vancouver 9, B.C.

DISCUSSION GROUP

Woman would like to meet  
with others for discussion  
and perhaps action - meet  
at respective homes. Call  
Marg at 876-3039

\* has a newsletter

# BOOK REVIEW

## BOOK REVIEW

### THE FIRST SEX

by Elizabeth Gould Davis

This is the first comprehensive history of the ancient world that recognizes the importance of matriarchal societies, and the patriarchal takeover. It is reasonably well-researched, rather ponderously written, and full of details that are somewhat overwhelming unless one has already done a great deal of reading on the subject.

Nevertheless it is an essential part of feminist analysis to understand the history of our oppression as women, and the factors that led to the formation of patriarchal societies.

She presents a solid view of the progression of civilization from early agricultural, vegetarian gynocracies to hunting, carnivorous patriarchies. She ties in data from every available discipline, a practice that most academics are sadly ignorant of. Her theories tie in with much of the latest archeological evidence, explaining quite clearly many of the phenomena that traditional scientists ignore, or label as "mysteries".

As a beginning attempt to break down scientific prejudice from a feminist perspective, her book is excellent. Many of the sources she draws from are works by men who have been condemned by traditional scientists because of their revolutionary perspective. Velikovsky, Reich and Jung, Bachofen and Briffault. She also points out the reasons for the suppression of information that proved the actuality of matriarchal societies and their overthrow. She sees this repression as part of the same historical process that a patriarchal system grew out of. The need to destroy the herstory of women is still strong, and still necessary for the survival of a male-dominated, classist, imperialist system. Because of this her book is a real breakthrough, and also likely to be ridiculed by the men who control "science".

We must accept it as a blueprint for further research into our herstory. We must analyse it and criticize it from a feminist point of view, so that it can be improved upon. We should summarize it, too, as an educational tool, since in its present form it is extremely hard to digest.

Which brings up the problem of women's herstory in general, and how we unearth it. It used to be considered that a study of women's history was a study of male history with some recognition of women's part in it. This process is still important. But it isn't enough. To accept patriarchal history as a starting blueprint is to accept the importance of events as identified by men. This may not be true. The great turning points of male history may not be even relevant to herstory. The great turning points of herstory are patently ignored by male historians.

I will try to explain this concept with examples. Prehistory, in male terms is that long, long time when word of mouth was the way history was preserved. It is described by male historians as a time when ignorant cave men grunted and groaned their way through thousands of years of animal-bashing and woman-rape. Except we know of highly developed civilizations that existed before written history could record them. We know that they were matriarchal. We know that there was a change of climate, a drastic catastrophe that changed the world. We know there was a patriarchal revolution after this. We know that there was a matriarchal counter-revolution after that. Lots of things were happening during that time that is so easily discounted by male historians. We know that the facts of what happened were and still are being repressed. Contradiction!

The gradual takeover of patriarchal thought in ancient times can be traced. This is herstory. Male history only recognizes the importance of wars, changes in the aristocracy, history of the ruling class. A people is defined by its rulers. This doesn't even apply today, when our communication systems and propaganda machines are much more sophisticated. It could hardly apply then. Medieval Europe is described in history as a constant phenomenon, not changed until the Renaissance. That during this time, one of the heaviest periods of matriarchal suppression changed the course of herstory, is seldom mentioned, except as a footnote. We see that the Church effected one of the major turning points in our herstory. It had little to do with wars and rulers. Contradiction!

Even recent history puts an emphasis on the development of world politics that led to World War One, and the reaction that led to World War Two. In fact, before, during and after the first world war, major developments in feminist analysis were changing once more the course of herstory. The war was a minor interruption in these terms. It had an effect, without a doubt. But it was a secondary effect, not a primary event. The repression of feminism, coincidental with and tied in to World War Two, the rise of fascism, and the reactionary fifties, is summarized by descriptions of women working in the war effort, and later back in the home, and the Feminine mystique. This must all be tied into a greater historical view if its importance is to be understood as anything more than just another example of sexism. Sexism is not a constant factor in society. It is affected by events, conditions, geography, technology etc. It changes in reaction to male historical events. It changes the course of male history itself.

Women have affected history. History has affected women. To analyze these events from the point of view of the condition of women is to start to develop a true herstory. The story of the other half of the human race. A different story that interconnects, but that also follows its own thread. This is a heavy task. It is a task that must be undertaken. The First Sex identifies a starting point. It is an outline of the origins of herstory. Now we must build on that.

Judith

## FREE BABYSITTING

### CROSSREACH

is a community self-help program sponsored for SINGLE PARENTS

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Meetings: Single Parents meetings every Thurs - 7-9:30 (Free babysitting) at 1811 West 16<sup>th</sup> Ave

We discuss:

- parental skills
- communication
- babysitting
- housing
- we exchange ideas

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- yoga and creative movement - Wed. eve.

For more information call 732-3245

Coordinator - Ann Hurst

CROSSREACH

# LETTERS WE GET

6215 Tyne St.,  
Vancouver, B.C.  
January 7, 1973.

Women's Caucus,  
The Pedestal,  
130 W. Hastings,  
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Editor:

I am enclosing a copy of a letter which has been duplicated three more times. One has been sent to the publishing company of the book in question. Another was sent to Eileen Dailly, another to the editor of the text, G.M. Chronister, B.S.D. Ed., Director of Graduate Studies, Faculty of Education, U.B.C.

My phone number is 433-8544. I am only home on the weekends, however I will try and come in to discuss the matter with you and plan some sort of action.

Yours truly,  
Gail Martin

"Dear Editor:

I am a student teacher currently doing a practicum. Today I was introduced to your textbook, "Accent on Reading" which is being used at the school. I was dismayed and upset after reading the book. I am sure that the pupils do learn to read with this book; they also learn prejudiced, biased attitudes towards women.

There are fifty-one stories in the book; of these, two relate events from a female characters' point of view. There is one female hero whose "girl's silly curiosity" led her into an adventure. The other heroine, Nancy, has to learn a lesson from her peers in order to conform to the high school crowd.

It is the boys who are the athletes, detectives, hunters, sailors - the brave daring heroes.

Do not the girls also like adventure? Apparently not; the females in the book are seen as helpmates to the males in their endeavours.

One prime example is in the story entitled: "Jake Was a Tomboy". She was as active and adventurous as her friends until she went too far and had to be saved from drowning by her male companions. The underlying value learned is that a girl needs boys to protect her and when she grows up they will also run the business of the country while she stays home as wife and mother.

I realize that sixteen of these stories were written by women who also perceive little boys as more exciting than little girls. This is probably because most of your stories are taken from magazines

dated in the thirties, forties and fifties. I am sure enlightened women today are writing non-sexist episodes which help girls to see themselves as equals to men - not inferior beings as your book implies!

Our concept of ourselves is formed partly in the schools. If girls cannot read about leaders in education textbooks, they will never put much value in themselves. There are a growing number of Canadian women who are determined to wipe out the insidious stereotyping of women and men which fit them for degrading roles in our economic system.

I am going to write our provincial education minister, Eileen Dailly, and inform her of the damaging effect of your book. I will also contact the Women's Caucus in Vancouver. I would like to have "Accent on Reading" removed from the curriculum.

In cities across Canada Women's Liberation groups are compiling bibliographies of non-sexist stories. If you contact these organizations you can obtain suitable books that will teach children of each sex to respect each other as equally valuable citizens.

Yours sincerely,  
(Ms.) Gail Martin "

Sisters:

Having worked now for half a year as an assayer in a B.C. copper mine and having kept an open eye and ear to the mood of heavy industry, I would like to make a suggestion. There is still a lot of sexism and resistance to hiring women for traditionally "men's jobs" but it is softening fast...especially since those few of us already in these jobs make ourselves visible but still fit in well.

I think there should be a big push by women to get into these other jobs. Few, if any, require great physical strength, and although industrial work isn't necessarily a beautiful trip, the pay is far better than women are accustomed to.

The trouble is we are simply not applying for anything but secretarial jobs and at least some personnel people are ready to take us in different fields.

If women would suddenly flood the mines, sawmills, paper mills, etc. with application for non-clerical work, at least some would get in and the second invasion would be still easier, and the third etc.....

So why do I have to work with only men? Where are you, sisters?

Bonnie Bukwa,  
Lornex Mining Corp.  
Logan Lake, B.C.

P.S.  
I think the last issue of the Pedestal (June) was quite a bit more interesting than it had been for a long time.

Dear Sisters:

Re: Feminist Federation

The Woman's Office and Women's Action Group of U.B.C. called together a conference of women in the province known to be involved in education for the purpose of finding out how we can get funding and for the purpose of rewriting specific educational legislation. In the course of the conference another priority spontaneously emerged - specifically that there was a great need for a confederation of all feminist women's groups in the province so that women can get their due share of the power. The next step was how we should join together. Since we were not representative of all women's groups we felt at this point we could only form a co-ordinating committee to attempt to contact all the groups who have an interest in becoming associated in some form and structure.

To this end we are writing to ask if you feel the same need exists and what your ideas are for the form of such association.

Some of the questions that came up in the meeting were:

1. How to insure autonomy for individual groups under an umbrella organization.
2. What the functions could be: eg. funding, political/economic/social pressure, communications network, etc.
3. Anything else you can think of.

The Vancouver Status of Women has offered us their office to serve as a mailing address for your response to this idea. Please send all your ideas to the Interim Coordinating Committee at 1045 West Broadway, Vancouver 9, by the 15th of September so that a large meeting could be planned before the snow flies. October??

Please consider this a chain letter and pass it on to any women or women's group who would be interested.

The idea of confederation generated much energy and enthusiasm. We hope you'll join with us to make it a reality.

The Mothers of Confederation

# M I C R O N O R

In the last issue of the Pedestal, an article appeared about a newly available birth control pill. Unfortunately, in the transmission into print, some serious typographical errors were made, including the misspelling of the pill itself.

If we are going to have information which has been concealed from us until now, it is crucial that the information be absolutely correct.

For that reason, we are re-printing the article, with the errors corrected, below.

## M I C R O N O R

It has never been our practice in health groups or at the clinic to tell a woman what she should or should not do (or swallow or say). Rather, we want to make information available to a woman so that she can become actively involved in decisions about her own body.

It is in this context and spirit, then, that we present some information about Micronor. More details and conversation are available at the Health Collective.

### The No-Estrogen Pill

Micronor is the brand name of a birth control pill manufactured by the Ortho Pharmaceutical Corporation which contains only a synthetic progesterone, called norethindrone. It is also referred to as the "mini pill".

Micronor is being prescribed fairly widely in Vancouver these days. Most doctors present it to a woman as a safer alternative to the "regular" combination-type birth

control pills which contain small amounts of progesterone and estrogen. It is estrogen which has been associated with most of the side effects which worry us, such as thromboembolism (blood-clotting) and strokes, as well as with the "nuisance" problems such as bleeding, mood change, breast tenderness, for example.

In the United States, Micronor has not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration. It is still in the experimental stage in that country.

### Dosage

The dosage of Micronor is different from most of the other pills. One pill is taken every single day. It comes in packages of 35

pills; when one package is completed, another is begun without taking a break.

### Mechanism

The mechanism in Micronor seems to have three major effects which make it an effective contraceptive:

- 1) It acts on cervical mucous to make it thicker and less

slippery so that sperm cannot penetrate it. Sperm is thus prevented from moving into the uterus and tubes where it might meet an egg.

- 2) It acts on the endometrium (lining of the uterus) so as to make it inhospitable to an egg even if one does happen to get fertilized.

- and 3) It interferes with the action of the pituitary gland so that the hormones which cause an egg to develop and rupture (ovulation) are not secreted. If there is no ovulation, there cannot be a pregnancy. (This is the major mechanism of the regular combination-type pill.)

3A) Sometimes, ovulation is not suppressed, and in these cases the contraceptive mechanism would rely entirely on the actions of 1) and 2). For this reason, Micronor has a slightly higher rate of pregnancy than do the regular, combination-type birth control pills.

### Side Effects

The major side effect of Micronor is very irregular bleeding (with intervals of 10-60 days); This problem particularly affects women for whom ovulation is suppressed by Micronor. This is inconvenient because of its unpredictability and disturbing because of fears of possible pregnancy. Irregular bleeding is not associated with the regular, combination-type pills. In fact, the predictability of menstruation on those pills is one of the extra dividends for many women. At the same time, the progesterone pill has not been associated with the serious complications that seem to be estrogen-related.

### Who Is Taking Micronor?

The only reasons for a woman to take Micronor would be if:

- 1) She wants to use a birth control pill for contraception.
- and 2) She cannot tolerate estrogen because of her maternal family history (breast or uterine cancer) or her own physiology (such as a history of blood-clotting, varicose veins, heart failure, or stroke).

Otherwise, it simply does not make good sense or good health for a woman to take a pill daily which is still being researched when there is uncertainty about its exact mechanism and effects, and when it causes highly irregular "periods".

CONT'D P. 14



# M I C R O N O R

## WOMEN'S HEALTH CONT'D FROM P. 7...

What we learned at the conference reinforced our experience that gynecologists are not becoming sensitive to the needs of women. Their interests are in developing and evaluating gynecological and obstetrical techniques with the emphasis more on research of the methods and how they work on the patient than on developing a concept of health care that includes, informs and educates the patient/woman.

The papers were presented on Friday were all in the field of genetic counselling, and sometimes the technical jargon was difficult to follow. From the first paper I got the impression that maternal age was the largest single factor in contributing to the birth of deformed or mentally retarded children. That is, as a woman's age increases the possibility of giving birth to a deformed or retarded child increases, especially over the age of thirty five. The second paper recommended a procedure called amniocentesis which involves removing fluid from the amniotic sac (placenta) and analyzing it for chemicals indicative of genetic diseases in the fetus. In this way many genetic diseases can be discovered and a therapeutic abortion performed. The third paper talked about the importance of examining stillborn babies in order to determine the cause of death and possibly prevent it in the future. All in all, it was a rather gruesome morning.

Saturday no one from the Health Collective attended the conference.

Sunday, June 17, more papers were presented. By this time our faces were more familiar and a few doctors were approaching us with questions and comments, although the majority still held themselves aloof from us.

The following are selections of comments, our reactions, and information from the papers presented on Sunday.

1. The bias was to discuss birth control totally in terms of it being a woman's responsibility rather than discussing or researching male birth control. The major birth control method discussed was the combination estrogen/progesterone pill with no mention of research into its side effects. Research about micronor, the all-progesterone pill, was presented and received without any questions or criticism from the floor.

2. Problems of unwanted pregnancy were discussed, but the possibility of failure of the birth control method was only mentioned by one layman from the Planned Parenthood Association. In general the woman was presented as irresponsible or stupid. The doctor's goal seemed to be

to prevent pregnancies in a woman rather than focussing on each woman's individual and unique reaction to various birth control methods and helping her make a decision about birth control based on her knowledge and concept of herself and her sexuality.

3. The doctors seemed bewildered by the sexuality of the adolescents they see and many were unsure of how to advise them without letting their own biases influence their willingness to prescribe birth control. One week after the conference a young woman came to the Health Collective. She was fifteen years old and her family doctor had refused to give her birth control because she would "get into trouble." She did not know anyone else to ask; now she is eight weeks pregnant.

4. It was significant that only the one layman who presented a paper mentioned such paradoxes as male doctors speaking about birth control which is almost totally the responsibility of a woman. He asked the male doctors who had spoken or were attending the conference if any of them had had a vasectomy, then pointed out that probably every woman present had tried some form of birth control at least once and probably many more times. He also spoke of the need for volunteers to help to inform and educate an individual before

going to the doctor and of the need for medical professionals like nurses to acquire more medical responsibility in their roles. In every other case the doctor was presented as the leader of the team. Qualities of a good research doctor were mentioned and sounded like a boy scout handbook: brave, outstanding, aggressive, and true. The authority of doctor over patient was clearly evident. The doctor has and gives all the answers. One doctor spoke of allowing a woman to continue her pregnancy, then corrected himself and said that she chose to continue her pregnancy. No paper was presented which questioned the traditional doctor/patient role, and from our reception at the conference I would not think this questioning was even discussed informally.

5. Although we were hoping there would be a paper on menopause, especially regarding hormone replacement, there was not one paper on this subject and its social, physiological, social, and psychological implications.

6. One study was reported on a morning-after pill to be taken within five days of unprotected intercourse (preferably within three days). Approximately 100 university women who had had unprotected inter-

course were given a hormonal dose which induced bleeding within about 7 days. There were very few side effects reported, i.e. no nausea or vomiting, and the bleeding was like a normal period. Three pregnancies were later confirmed but it was felt that this was due to either receiving the hormone too long after unprotected intercourse or possibly the woman was already pregnant from an earlier intercourse and the hormone would have no effect on an established pregnancy. The hormonal dose used in the study is equivalent to taking 2 OVRAL birth control pills.

Clearly the doctors were bewildered and threatened by the revolution of women and specifically of their potential women patients. The importance of informing more doctors about our work seemed quite clear. The necessity of using our power to interact with theirs to establish the validity of individual responsibility for and awareness of one's health is a crucial concern. The idea that we as women are capable of saying "If you don't give us what we want we'll do it ourselves" and of acting on that principle is shocking to many doctors, but they are beginning to listen. We plan to continue attending conferences - join us in our next encounter.

July 16, Morgan Fox.

# MICRONOR

CONT'D FROM P. 13.

If your doctor has prescribed or even offered Micronor to you, it would be important to know his/her reasons.

We know of young women whose doctors have prescribed Micronor as their first birth control pill when there was nothing in their medical background to indicate its necessity.

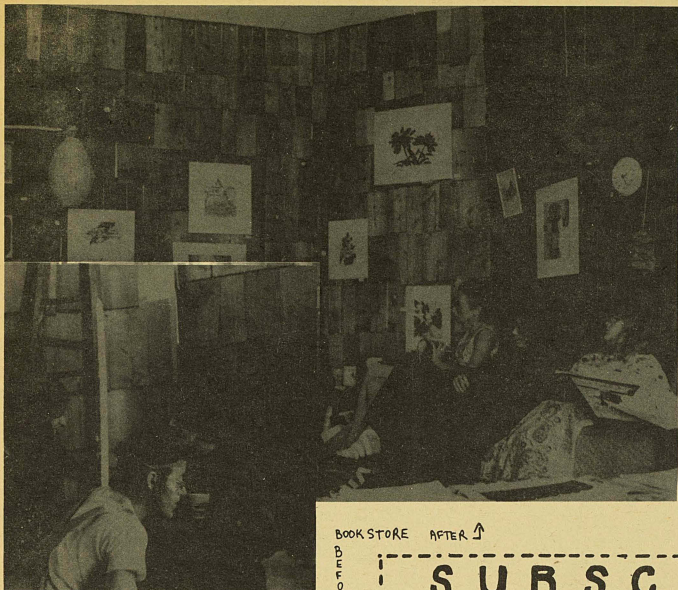
## What We Need To Know

We need to know who is prescribing Micronor, and for what reasons. We need to know what kind of information women are being given about Micronor, and what their experience with this pill has been.

Interestingly, the May 25th, 1973 issue of "The Medical Letter", a bimonthly 4-page publication which reviews drug products, discussed Micronor, and recommended against its usage. (That issue and other information about Micronor are available for reading at the Health Collective office.)

If we share our experience and our knowledge we can ensure better health for all of us!

405-1875 Robson  
Vanc 5., B.C.  
August 23, 1973



BOOKSTORE AFTER ↗

FORWARD

Ms:

The Women's Bookstore sent me a copy of the Pedestal. Enclosed find \$3.00 for subscription.

The book reviews alone are worth it. You ask for suggestions, have you considered the older women? There must be someone who could write in your magazine for them & from their point of view.

Many of them have been interested for years & could do nothing about it because of pressure of work both inside & outside the home.

Society was smoldering for a long time but seems now to have divided into groups. As Maria Campbell notes in the by-word to her book in your paper, we "need to survive" also & pass on the need to our grandchildren for a woman to be an individual.

Yours truly  
Panny Ward

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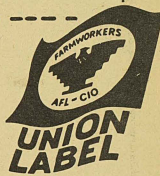
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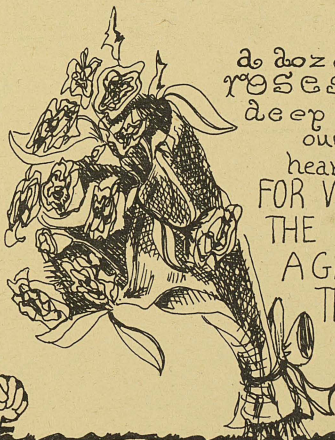
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## BOYCOTT GRAPES



### CONGRATULATIONS



do dozen red  
roses from  
deep down in  
our  
heart  
FOR WINNING  
THE FIGHT  
AGAINST  
THE SHOPPERS  
DRUG  
MART!

@We as products of the school system do not accept any excuses or justifications ... now please let us explain our reason for the delay of this issue (4 months since last!)

@As you can see above, we now are vendors of books - woman oriented books and we are proprietors of a bookstore - a woman oriented bookstore.

This effort has had to dispel energy and that energy has affected positive and negative change.

The negative being the delay of this issue.

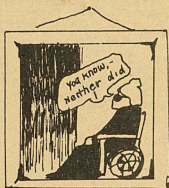
Now the bookstore is functioning.

The Women's Centre is functioning, and now hopefully the Pedestal begins to function again.

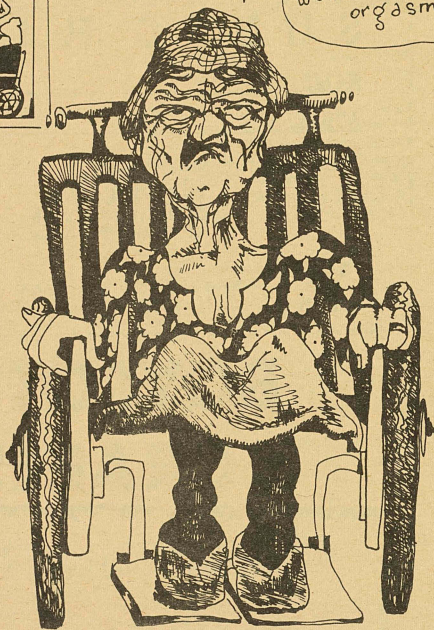
the pedestal people collective has been

- margaret
- Judith
- Pat
- Carolyn
- Liz
- Bonnie
- &
- Bethoe.

CTWO STEPS FORWARD AND ONE UP!)



you know,....  
I never knew  
women could have  
orgasms.



BONNIE BECKMAN 9/73